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Dùthchas: locating and nourishing the roots of Scotland's land reform revolution

Dziadowiec, Ryan Jaromir

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Dùthchas: locating and nourishing the roots of Scotland's land reform revolution



by Ryan Jaromir Dziadowiec

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the University's
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant: Ryan Jaromir Dziadowiec

Project Title: Dùthchas: Locating and Nourishing the Roots of Scotland's Land Reform Revolution

This is to certify that the above-named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk.

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*Dziś mogę powiedzieć szczerze z ręką na sercu
kocham przeszłość, dzięki niej jestem w tym miejscu*

HV/NOON ft Jotuze, 'Heimat'

Abstract

Dùthchas is a Gaelic concept which encompasses notions of kinship, heritage, and connection to place. In recent years, there has been an unprecedented explosion of interest in relating *dùthchas* to contemporary environmental, political, and social issues affecting Scotland's Highlands and Islands. For around half a century, Scottish historians have recognised the term's relevance in studies of clanship or historical land use patterns in Gaelic Scotland, but *dùthchas* has never been the focus of any systematic scholarship. This has largely been influenced by the fact that until recently, interest in *dùthchas* has been predominantly historical but very few Scottish historians are proficient Gaelic speakers, limiting their ability to interact with Gaelic sources and restricting them to mentions of the term within Anglophone sources.

This thesis targets this lacuna. It begins by seeking out the earliest usage of the term within Irish sources to establish its origins. Subsequently, it investigates the way *dùthchas* evolved between 1640 and 1900 in Scotland, beginning around the start of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and ending several years after the peak of political action associated with the Land Agitations and the Highland Land League. *Dùthchas* is analysed synchronically and diachronically, exploring how its meaning shifted over time and how it was used in response to specific historical contexts. This is done by compiling an extensive corpus of instances where *dùthchas* was used in Scottish Gaelic poetry from 1640 to 1900, and analysing it using a bespoke methodology inspired by works from the fields of intellectual history and anthropological linguistics which explore the way concepts or words evolve over time. Such an approach is required when exploring a polysemic word which is a cultural, political, and epistemological concept. Poetry is the primary source of choice for this study, as the practitioners of this conservative art form were seen to be fulfilling the public role of contemporary Gaelic society's social and political commentators. It is also the most abundant Gaelic-language source in the period under scrutiny.

This study reveals that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, poets predominantly used *dùthchas* in panegyric poetry addressed to clan chiefs or the clan gentry. The term bound together the addressee's genealogy, territories, and personal attributes to lay out the expectations held of them by the people. Deviating from these would make a leader illegitimate. However, a novel grammatical formulation becomes the predominant way *dùthchas* is used in the nineteenth century, reflecting the term's evolution in response to agricultural Improvement and the Highland Clearances, with poets reformulating *dùthchas* as an inalienable right possessed by the tenantry independent of the clan gentry. The term also resiliently retained its association with hereditary characteristics and

identity across this entire time period: it was a key aspect of clans' kin-based identities, invoked in times of crisis, while also being a key aspect in the Gaels' ethnic identity, as evidenced by its use among Jacobite propagandists and the poets of the Land Agitations alike. This thesis locates the roots of *dùthchas* in early medieval Ireland and improves our understanding of what *dùthchas* meant in Scotland between 1640 and 1900. It contributes to our understanding of the emotional and conceptual framework which underpinned the Land Agitations and paved the way for Scotland's twenty-first-century 'land reform revolution'. Finally, by exploring *dùthchas* as a cosmological and epistemological concept, it encourages the examination of other Gaelic concepts in this way.

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Declaration

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely the result of my own work. I have referenced all of the sources which are the work of others. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree at Coventry University or any other institution.

1. Introduction

Few Scottish Gaelic words have received as much attention in the past two decades as *dùthchas* has. This statement is relative, since Gaelic words do not tend to receive much attention from the Scottish and broader British public in the first place, with Gaelic now being spoken by a minority of people in all of Scotland's council areas, including its former vernacular 'heartlands' (Mackenzie and Cheyne 2024; Ó Giollagáin et al. 2020). In the last four years which I have spent researching this term, I have seen it be tweeted about by a famous proponent of economic degrowth (Hickel 2020), appear in an MSP's contribution to a Scottish Parliament debate on climate change (Allan 2021), be the central theme of an event organised by Community Land Scotland as part of the COP26 summit in Glasgow in November 2021 (Community Land Scotland 2021), feature prominently in a newspaper article written by a professor of Scottish literature (Riach 2020), and become the title of *Dùthchas: Home*, a moving film about Berneray and its people (MacDonald and MacKinnon 2022), to name but a few examples. If we use the opening of an upmarket restaurant in Leith called *Dùthchas* as a barometer with which to gauge mainstream awareness of *dùthchas*, then there is evidently no lack of interest in the term in 2024.

Before the term's popularisation in the context of contemporary Scottish environmental and socioeconomic issues, multiple historians had noticed that *dùthchas* appears to have played an important part in the traditional social and tenurial frameworks of the Scottish Highlands and Islands (Devine 1994: 9-12; Hunter 2018: 218; Hunter 1995: 65-6; Dodgshon 1981: 110 and 115). The term's relevance to historical landholding converged with the contemporary context fifteen years ago, when *dùthchas* was used in an attempt at challenging the grounds upon which land is held in Scotland. The story begins in 2006, when Ranaid Alasdair MacDonald took up office as the 22nd clan chief of the MacDonalds of Keppoch, a clan which had been without a chief since 1855, when Angus MacDonnell of the 'original' MacDonnell of Keppoch line died without issue. Three years later, in 2009, the clan chief presented the Scottish Parliament with public petition PE1297 titled 'Ur Dutchas' [*sic*]. In it, MacDonald 'urge[d] the Scottish Government to investigate... the "Dutchas/Duthchaich" [*sic*] or "native title" system of land tenure' with a view of 'reclaiming [his] Clan territory' (MacDonald 2009). Catriona Hardman, Deputy Keeper of the Registers of Scotland, responded to the petition by saying that 'there is no evidential basis for the recognition of a system of land rights flowing from "Dutchas"' and that recognition of tenure 'based upon historic possession rather than written title' would have 'extremely serious consequences for the integrity of the Scottish system of registration of rights in land based on title deeds' (Hardman 2010). Indeed, the land MacDonald was petitioning for

extended to some 2000 square miles of Lochaber. Andy Wightman also responded to MacDonald's petition, concluding with the emphatic statement that as far as tenure is concerned, *dùthchas* 'is dead' (Wightman 2010).

MacDonald's petition clearly drew its inspiration from indigenous land reclamation movements and indigenous activism for the recognition of 'native title', particularly in Australia.¹ MacDonald's website has been defunct since 2021,² and the recording of his speech which purportedly set out the objectives of his petition has not been accessible since at least 2020. His petition makes mention of 'reclaiming my clan territory' (MacDonald 2009, emphasis my own) as well as 'our clan territory' (ibid, emphasis my own), and it is unclear whether his overall aim was recovering the Keppoch lands to exercise a type of trusteeship upon them as clan chief or if he envisioned a form of community land ownership based on clanship, or indeed something else entirely. The argumentation of this petition contains many statements which historians might find objectionable – the likely reason why the Law Society of Scotland 'abstained from giving an opinion on PE1297' (MacDonald 2010) – and the argumentation is regrettably at its weakest when referring to Gaelic concepts and history, making the petition's unsuccessful outcome unsurprising.³ MacDonald did, however, draw attention to the fact that udal tenure in Orkney and Shetland⁴ had been researched, discussed, and exempted from abolition through the Scottish Government's *Abolition of Feudal Tenure etc. Act* of 2000. The clan chief was critical of the fact that '[*dùthchas*] was not given the same opportunity as Udal law for discussion during the Bill's process as no one raised the subject' (MacDonald 2009).

There are likely multiple reasons for why udal law has been recognised in Scots law and a customary Gaelic land title – whether stemming from *dùthchas* or otherwise – has not. One reason may be historical, stretching back to the Treaty of Perth between the Kingdom of Norway and the Kingdom of Scotland: from 1266 onwards, all the inhabitants of the Hebrides were to be subject 'to the laws and customs of the kingdom of Scotland' (Donaldson 1984: 18, 26). The treaties of 1468 and 1469 which absorbed Orkney and Shetland into Scotland did not contain such a clause (Ryder 1988: 4-5; Grohse 2017: 189-222), even if Norse law did subsequently give way to Scots law in the Northern Isles. The extensive historical records of udal or *odel* law from as early as the ninth century

¹ For a case of 'native title' recognition in Queensland, Australia which MacDonald refers to in his petition see Ardill 2013.

² Parts of the website may still be accessed using the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine – see MacDonald 2021.

³ MacDonald's petition does not refer to the seemingly pertinent fact that the MacDonalds of Keppoch are said to have been 'the last family to hold [their land] by *duchas*, without sheep-skin charter' – see Lang 1898: 166; Dodgshon 1998: 10; and the Conclusion of this thesis.

⁴ Udal is a form of allodial landholding derived from Norse legal customs – see, for example, Ryder 1988.

in other areas of Norse influence have provided the basis for udallers to defend their customary rights from at least the seventeenth century onwards (Linklater 2002: 4-15). There is no equivalent record of *dùthchas*-derived law in either Scotland or Ireland, and scholars have interpreted this to mean that *dùthchas* was ‘more part of the socio-cultural sphere than of the legal sphere’ (McQuillan 2004: 32). Udal was ultimately a person’s right to inherit their father’s allodial holding, and could be integrated into an individualistic landownership system of sasines with relative ease – something which cannot be said of the customary landholding structures in the *Gàidhealtachd*.⁵ In the *Gàidhealtachd*, landowners typically held land by charter from the Crown – not allodially – and historians have suggested that these landowners simultaneously acted as clan chiefs who exercised ‘trusteeship’ of land on behalf of their clanspeople, and derived the authority to do so from a hereditary right which constituted their *dùthchas* (Macinnes 1996: 3; Dodgshon 1998: 34-5). Historians have noted that *dùthchas* appears to also have been the hereditary right established by tacksmen⁶ upon their ‘tacks’ or holdings after several generations’ continuous habitation therein, and that *dùthchas* seems to have extended collectively to all of the tenantry within a given township or area (Macinnes 1996: 16). This apparent fluidity and complexity of *dùthchas*, combined with the fact that when these rights were denied in later centuries nobody appears to have ever successfully used *dùthchas* as the legal precedent with which to restore said rights,⁷ has meant that unlike udal, *dùthchas* does not have legal recognition as a form of tenure, despite MacDonald of Keppoch’s best efforts.

⁵ A’ *Ghàidhealtachd*, referred to throughout this thesis as ‘the *Gàidhealtachd*’, is a Gaelic term meaning ‘Gaeldom’ or ‘land of the Gael’. In this thesis, the term *Gàidhealtachd* is used to refer to the cultural, political, and geographical area inhabited by a majority Gaelic-speaking population during the period in question, 1640 – 1900. This area includes the Hebrides, the islands off of Scotland’s west coast (though excludes the northern isles of Orkney and Shetland, whose cultural and linguistic ties are Norse) as well as large parts of mainland Scotland, such as Argyll, so-called ‘Highland Perthshire’, western Aberdeenshire, and virtually all of Scotland north of the Great Glen. It is worth noting that this is a ‘historical *Gàidhealtachd*’, as according to the 2022 census Gaelic is now a minority language in all of these areas. The use of the term *Gàidhealtachd* was the subject of academic dispute recently – see Armstrong et al. 2022, which is a response to Oliver and MacKinnon 2021.

⁶ Tacksmen were members of the clan gentry – also referred to in this thesis by the equivalent Gaelic term *daoine uaisle* – who held the ‘tack’ of a township of area from the clan chief and were effectively the ‘middle-men’ between clan chiefs and the tenantry.

⁷ In 1888, two years after the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act of 1886 was passed, the Marquess of Salisbury defended the Act by stating that ‘up to a comparatively recent period, [the crofters] had held upon a tenure [which was] not the general tenure of [Britain]’, and that the Act aimed to remediate the ‘unjust disadvantage’ the crofters had been subjected to when ‘the old clannish tenure... had slipped into the law of landlord and tenant, entirely to the advantage of the landlord’ (Marquess of Salisbury quoted in Crofters Commission 1902). As such, there is an indication that ‘the old clannish tenure’, *dùthchas* and the Crofters Act were not entirely unrelated, but the Act did not create precedent for crofters to make claims ‘back-dated’ to the time of ‘the old clannish tenure’, for example.

We shall examine the existing literature on *dùthchas* more closely in the Literature Review below. At this stage, it is enough to state that despite attracting attention from historians, clan chiefs, politicians, public bodies, and restaurateurs, the term has not, until now, been studied systematically. With interest in *dùthchas* growing, and the term being used in a variety of contemporary contexts, a detailed study of *dùthchas* is necessary. One reason for this is that in recent years, people with no Gaelic language ability have been defining the term in ways which do not reflect the word's polysemic nature or cultural and conceptual depth. For example, *dùthchas* is being used as the leading slogan of Heritage Horizons – Cairngorms 2030, a 'partnership of over 70 organisations' which aims to '[put] the power to tackle the climate and nature crises in the hands of people who live, visit and work in the UK's largest national park' (Cairngorms 2030 n.d.). However, the only time that Gaelic is mentioned on the Cairngorms 2030 project's website is in a sentence stating that the Gaelic word *dùthchas* 'inspired' it, and the project appears not to entail any commitment to the language. Cairngorms 2030 defines *dùthchas* as 'the deep-rooted connection between people and nature' (ibid), but with no sources cited, it is unclear where the Cairngorms National Park Authority procured this definition of *dùthchas* from, though it has been using and defining *dùthchas* in this way since at least 2021 (Cairngorms National Park Authority 2021).⁸ When concepts from minority languages are invoked in Anglophone discourse, particularly in translation, there may be an assumption of 'full equivalence' (Cronin 1998: 153; c.f. Price 2021). Would the terms 'deep-rooted connection', 'people', and 'nature' mean the same thing to a native Gaelic speaker as they might to someone drafting policies for public bodies with no connection to the Gaelic language? When individuals and organisations with no commitment to deeper engagement with the Gaelic conceptual and linguistic framework to which *dùthchas* belongs use the word as a convenient umbrella term or a 'trendy buzzword' like 'sustainability' (Shilling 2018: 3), is it extractive and a form of cultural appropriation? What happens to concepts like *dùthchas* when they are perceived solely through the lens of Anglophone translations, and even Gaelic speakers are more likely to have formed their understanding of *dùthchas* through this Anglophone lens than through the intergenerational transmission of language and traditional knowledge?

These questions not only highlight the reasons why a study of *dùthchas* is important, but also why such a study must have Gaelic sources at its heart. A Gaelic concept could not be satisfactorily studied through the lens of Anglophone sources. I realise that there is an irony in my saying this in the introduction to a thesis written in English. Though my primary sources are Gaelic, the language of the analysis will be English, and while I will try to point out discrepancies in

⁸ See Cairngorms National Park Authority 2023 for an example of a more recent arts-based project commissioned by the National Park which engages with the term *dùthchas* through the medium of Gaelic.

translations or multiple possible interpretations to the best of my ability, some meaning will still be lost in translation. I also believe that it is important to make this study accessible to as wide an audience as possible. Despite being a Pole with no Gaelic family background, I have been very privileged to be able to learn Scottish Gaelic to fluency in the last 10 years: privileged to have been able to study it at university and to get jobs which allowed me to use it in my professional life. I know many have not had this privilege, whether due to systemic failures of the education system, the lack of availability of a Gaelic-language education, intergenerational trauma causing older Gaelic-speaking relatives not to pass the language on and believing they were doing the younger generation a favour (Meighan 2023), displacement, and a host of other reasons. Writing this study in English makes it accessible to them, as well as to the rapidly growing cohort of people with no knowledge of Gaelic or Gaelic family background who are interested in *dùthchas* due to its contemporary relevance.

There will be benefits to improving our understanding of *dùthchas* beyond addressing a scholarly lacuna. To showcase these, I must first reiterate that it is a polysemic word. Edward Dwelly's 1902 Gaelic-English dictionary attempted to define it as:

1. Place of one's birth.
2. Heredity, native or hereditary temper, spirit or blood.
3. Visage, countenance.
4. Hereditary right. (Dwelly 1902: 375)

Dwelly's definitions give an indication of just how broad the semantic field within which *dùthchas* operates might be. Indeed, it would appear that the aforementioned instances where people have defined *dùthchas* either as a type of 'native title' or a 'deep-rooted connection between people and nature' have unintentionally constrained it. When examined through Dwelly's dictionary definitions, *dùthchas* appears to pertain to space (as the 'place of one's birth'), time (through its connection to heredity and ancestry), and the way in which people relate to these (as a 'hereditary right' to the place a person belongs to, or a sense of recognising the characteristics one shares with their ancestors). In his foreword to *Dùthchas nan Gàidheal*, Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul called *dùthchas* a 'focal web of belief and kinship' (Caimbeul 2006: xi); we could thus postulate that *dùthchas* is a focal web working in all four dimensions of space and time, perhaps even breaching the boundaries of the material world through its association with 'belief'. Such breadth and profundity of semantic association suggests that *dùthchas* is a fundamental concept within Gaelic cosmology and epistemology. However, as ethnologist Ullrich Kockel has pointed out, 'any postulate of an ontological datum nowadays arouses accusations of essentialism' (Kockel 2015: 29). Postulates regarding a Gaelic cosmology and epistemology, let alone *dùthchas* being a fundamental part of them, could

certainly be vulnerable to such accusations. Kockel differentiates between two types of ‘essentialisms’, stating that whereas

a ‘shallow essentialism’ makes unreasonable assertions about the nature of a presumed ‘reality’ of people and places, a ‘deep essentialism’ seeks to establish, rather than assert, the relationships and processes through which people engage with places and vice versa... ‘Place’, in this framework, may be regarded as a kind of Third, the arena where the Self and the Other engage, and... always an integral part of our various relationships. Moreover, it is ultimately ‘place’ that brings us together and enables relationships – and the activities they engender – to ‘take place’. (ibid: 30)

Where the language of this thesis essentialises *dùthchas* by recognising it as a conceptual component of a Gaelic cosmology, ontology or epistemology, it aims to do so through a ‘deep essentialism’ – by coming to an understanding of the relationship between Gaels invoking *dùthchas* and the people and places they are engaging with. This is in line with the way Gaelic scholar John MacInnes himself described *dùthchas*. In his words, a Gael who has been instructed in traditional *bàrdachd* – bardic poetry – develops a ‘native sensibility’ which ‘responds not to landscape but to *dùthchas*’, a term with a range of meanings from ‘ancestral or family land’, ‘family tradition’, and ‘the hereditary qualities of an individual’ (MacInnes 2006a: 279; italics my own).

Anglophone intellectual historians study ‘concepts such as empire, property, occupation, citizenship, the republic and liberty [which] have been reformulated over thousands of years’, asking the ‘question of why certain ideas, or certain arguments, persist longer than others’ (Fitzmaurice 2014: 20).⁹ Arguably, the scholarly and layperson’s curiosity in *dùthchas* over the past half century or so suggests that the term has already implicitly been accepted into an equivalent canon of foundational political concepts of the *Gàidhealtachd*. Thus, the study of *dùthchas* as a unique Gaelic cosmological and epistemological concept acknowledges the existence of a broader canon of ‘foundational concepts’ within a Gaelic cosmology and epistemology, and encourages them to be studied in the future.

This thesis has two main aims. Firstly, it aims to collate instances of usage of the term *dùthchas*. My primary sources for doing this will be Scottish Gaelic poems composed between 1640 and 1900. A more detailed account of why poetry is the primary source of choice and why I selected this period as my time scope may be found in the Methodology chapter below. It is worth reiterating that a single Gaelic concept has never been the subject of extensive academic scrutiny, and my method is therefore completely novel in a Scottish Gaelic context. Once I have created a database of

⁹ For more details on how this thesis will engage with the field of intellectual history, see the Methodology chapter.

uses of this term across multiple centuries, I will move onto my second aim, which is analysing these instances of *dùthchas* synchronically and diachronically. This will entail trying to understand what *dùthchas* meant to the poet using the term in any particular instance, as well as looking for trends indicating how the way *dùthchas* was understood may have evolved over time. The database will allow me to use a mixed approach which predominantly focuses on qualitative data and analysis while also enabling me to draw on quantitative methods when required. I intend to adopt an exploratory perspective which is broadly guided by these main research questions:

- What did *dùthchas* mean to Gaels between 1640 and 1900, and did this change over time?
- Did Gaelic poets invoke *dùthchas* at points of crisis – whether local, like the dispossession of a kindred, or national, like the Highland Clearances – and if so, why?
- Did *dùthchas* form part of the intellectual framework which underpinned the Land Agitations of the late nineteenth century?

In order to answer these questions as satisfactorily as possible, the second chapter – my Literature Review – will give an overview of the extant literature in which *dùthchas* features. We will then move onto a detailed account of the Methodology of this study, where I explain the processes of creating an appropriate research method for this groundbreaking study, selecting source texts, and designing a database for organising my primary sources. We will then move onto medieval sources from both Scotland and Ireland as we seek out the earliest written instances of *dùthchas* in the fourth chapter, establishing the historical background to the term's usage between 1640 – 1900. The analysis of poetic sources will begin in earnest in the fifth chapter where we will look at the way *dùthchas* was invoked by the 'classical' Gaelic poets in the 1640s. The sixth chapter will explore the crucial role which *dùthchas* played in the *Gàidhealtachd*'s kin-based society by analysing poems composed by 'clan poets' from the mid-seventeenth to the early eighteenth century. We will then see how Jacobite propagandists used *dùthchas* in the poetry of the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite Risings in chapter seven. Chapter eight will explore the use of *dùthchas* in the late eighteenth century, focusing on the work of Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre and Mairearad Ghriogarach as case studies. These prolific poets will act as contemporary witnesses to the fragmentation of the *Gàidhealtachd*'s kin-based society, and to the early Clearances. In the ninth chapter, we will look at the way *dùthchas* was used by the poets of the nineteenth century. Through a detailed analysis of this century's poetry, we will examine what a particular grammatical development in the way *dùthchas* was being used suggests about the way Gaels were reformulating and recapitulating their inalienable right to land in a century

which saw mass dispossession and a popular political response to it through the Land Agitations. Finally, chapter ten will conclude the thesis.

2. Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature on *dùthchas*. It will introduce the most pivotal texts which have referred to *dùthchas*, which belong to a variety of academic disciplines, in order to situate my own research within the existing body of work. It will highlight weak points which this thesis aims to address. Thus far, scholarly engagement with *dùthchas* has largely been constrained to fleeting mentions, none of which have amounted to more than a few paragraphs in the course of an entire monograph. The texts examined in this chapter are arranged according to three main categories: first, those which look at *dùthchas* through a linguistic lens, followed secondly by a brief exploration of how *dùthchas* came to be associated with nineteenth- and twentieth-century debates on historical property rights, and, finally, the way *dùthchas* has been discussed in relation to the *Gàidhealtachd*'s kin-based society, both in regards to the material world as well as intangible cultural heritage. It is worth stressing that many Gaelic scholars have recognised the importance of *dùthchas* to Gaelic culture, despite the term not being subject to detailed examination thus far. This is embodied by the title which Michael Newton gave to the collected essays of John MacInnes, *Dùthchas nan Gàidheal* ('*Dùthchas* of the Gaels'), and by the fact that Meg Bateman and John Purser's 900-page long study of 'Culture and Environment in the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*' states that 'the whole purpose of this book and its contents is derived from [*dùthchas*] and hopes to elucidate it in the context of the visual through the ages' (Bateman and Purser 2020: 84).

Dùthchas, language, and linguistics

Scottish Gaelic dictionaries are the first type of source which we shall look to in this section. The majority of historical Scottish Gaelic texts, both poetry and prose, in which we might find the term *dùthchas* do not define the term's meaning or meanings – the assumption being that since the intended audience was comprised of Gaelic speakers, the term would be understood by all. The first Scottish Gaelic – English dictionaries were all compiled by Gaelic speakers, however, and thus show us how the term's meaning was conceptualised in relation to English terms which the respective authors believed to be the closest equivalents.

The earliest of these is a bilingual Gaelic vocabulary book compiled by Alexander MacDonald, better known by his Gaelic name Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair.¹⁰ His book, *Leabhar a Theagasc Ainminnin / A Galick and English vocabulary*, was published in 1741 on behalf of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), an organisation founded in 1709 which aimed to 'set up and maintain schools' in the *Gàidhealtachd* and believed 'that schooling, in English literacy and Presbyterian doctrine, was the means by which hearts and minds would be won for the post-1690 Revolution settlement and, latterly, the British imperial project' (Kelly 2020a: i). Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's book is not a 'dictionary' as the term is understood today but it does give definitions for various words, although *dùthchas* is not one of them. It does, however, define the word *dùthchasach*: '*Neach a bheirthair ina leithid so do thalamh, no Dhùthaich*' ('A person who belongs to/is born in a particular land, or country', my translation), with the English equivalent given by the author simply being 'a native' (MacDomhnuill 1741: 40).

In 1825 Robert Archibald Armstrong published *A Gaelic Dictionary, in two parts: Gaelic-English and English-Gaelic* – the first ever comprehensive, alphabetically-ordered Gaelic dictionary. Another dictionary was published three years later (the two-tome *Dictionarium Scoto-Celticum*) but we will focus on Armstrong's dictionary as its definition of *dùthchas* differs somewhat to those found in other dictionaries. Armstrong defines *dùthchas* as: 'hereditary right; a prescriptive right by which a farm descended from father to son; a native country; hereditary temper or blood; a birth-place' (Armstrong 1825: 218). This is the only instance I have been able to find where the aspect of *dùthchas* associated with an 'hereditary right' is specified as being an inheritance custom pertaining to farmland passing from 'father to son'. Armstrong also provides definitions for *dùthchasach*, meaning 'hereditary, natal; national; natural to one's family, native; also, substantively, a native of the same country', and *dùthchasachd*, 'the circumstance of being hereditary, natality, nationalness, nativity' (ibid), showing a connection between *dùthchas*-derived words and a sense of 'nation' or 'nationalness' which may be found in some twentieth-century dictionaries.

The most recent, and arguably most influential of these is that compiled by Edward Dwelly, already quoted in the Introduction. Dwelly's definition of *dùthchas* is four-fold: '[the] place of one's birth; heredity, native or hereditary temper, spirit or blood; visage, countenance; hereditary right' (Dwelly 1902: 375). This appears to be a near-calque of Armstrong's definition of the term. Since Dwelly's dictionary is the basis for the two most commonly used online Gaelic dictionaries (faclair.com and the LearnGaelic.scot dictionary) it could be argued that the formal definition 'meaning' of *dùthchas* will remain the same until the completion of the *Faclair na Gàidhlig* project

¹⁰ This vocabulary book and Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's poetry are mentioned again in chapter 7.

which aims to produce a Scottish Gaelic dictionary for the twenty-first century. It is worth bearing in mind that dictionary definitions are most often based on what would be termed ‘denotations’ in the linguistic field of semiotics, that is ‘surface-level’ interpretations of words which do not consider words’ hidden or double meanings, and as such are limited in their ability to explain polysemic words or complex concepts. Likewise, as this study delves deeper into the meanings of *dùthchas* and what they signify, it will likely become more apparent that as cultural reality changes and languages evolve, so must the meanings of *dùthchas*.

The final text which we shall examine in this section pertains to Irish, rather than Scottish Gaelic. In 2004, Irish scholar Peter McQuillan published a monograph focusing on the *dú* language family: *dúthaigh*, *dú[th]chas*, *dual*, and *dualgas* (McQuillan 2004).¹¹ McQuillan’s study found that all the *dú*-derived words outlined above ‘are in some way concerned with what is ‘right’ or ‘natural’, ‘lawful’ or ‘proper’, either by way of hereditary right or sanctioned by custom’ (McQuillan 2004: 5). The relevance of McQuillan’s study to the Scottish Gaelic context is not inconsiderable, since many of McQuillan’s sources date to the mid-seventeenth century or earlier, a time when ‘Gaelic Scotland and Ireland [formed] one cultural and linguistic province’ (MacInnes 2006a: 266). In Scotland, scholars have frequently remarked on how difficult to translate *dùthchas* is (Newton 2019: 306; Bateman and Purser 2020: 84), or even dubbed it ‘untranslatable’ (Paterson 2020: 14). McQuillan and others remark that Irish speakers will often assume they know the meaning of *dúchas* ‘until someone asks [them] to explain... or translate [it] into another language’, that it is a word that is understood ‘better with the heart than with the mind’ (Ní Thiarnaigh quoted in McQuillan 2004: 9). This is significant in terms of this thesis because – as outlined briefly in the introduction – I aim to focus on Scottish Gaelic sources and to prioritise Gaels’ own understanding of what *dùthchas* has meant historically.

Peter McQuillan later builds on the concept of semantic fields, which proposes that groups of lexemes ‘contain words or meanings cohering around a particular concept or topic’ meaning every ‘word must therefore be considered in relation to the other word within its field’ (McQuillan 2004: 22). This concept is later applied to the *dú* language family, and McQuillan states that the Irish term *dúchas* functions:

both on the individual and the collective level: *dúchas* as a sense of origin (where you come from); of relations (to whom and where you belong to); of heritage (what is natural to or appropriate for you);

¹¹ McQuillan’s work was also helpful in crafting the methodology of this thesis, something explored in further detail in the next chapter.

of tradition (what it tells you about yourself); of identity (your country and culture). It will be seen also that *dúchas* operates both within and without the individual, is both external and internal... (ibid: 23)

The author suggests that the term 'is more part of the socio-cultural sphere than of the legal sphere' since it does not seem to appear in the early Irish law tracts (ibid: 32). Despite this, McQuillan believes that prior to the seventeenth century, *dúchas* seems to have frequently carried an 'external' dimension, being used as a concrete noun referring to a place imbued with significance to a person or group of people. According to McQuillan, from the seventeenth century onwards, after the English conquest of Ireland and the flight of the Gaelic aristocracy in 1607, *dúchas* takes on an increasingly 'internal' dimension (ibid: 40). Phrases like '*tír dúchais*' ('land of one's *dúchas*') replace *dúchas*, with the physical noun *tír* denoting 'land' and the role of *dúchas* being pushed out of the physical domain towards signifying 'native'. This leads McQuillan to state that

to refer to Ireland as your *dúchas* is to say that it is, in effect, as inalienable from you as inherited personal characteristics. However, in real life, as the Irish people discovered to their cost in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the land could be, and indeed was, largely taken away... It is as if Irish-speakers are saying: the land as a physical and material entity (*tír*) may well be taken from us, but the ideology of the native land and our identification with it (*dúchas*) cannot.' (ibid: 42-43)

Subsequent chapters will analyse Scottish Gaelic poetry in order to ascertain whether similar patterns can be seen in the way *dùthchas* was used in the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*, and what historical events may have influenced such a change in patterns of use. This will provide fresh insight into how Scottish Gaelic poets perceived the social and economic changes of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These had severe consequences for Scottish Gaeldom, but have always been perceived as markedly different to the changes in Ireland which McQuillan refers to above, due to the fact that the majority of the chiefly families held onto their positions for most of this time period (c.f. Hunter 2018: 45, 138).

Dùthchas and the dichotomy of individual and collective property rights

The context within which the limited scholarship on *dùthchas* most often discusses the term is that of historical landholding – the 'prescriptive' and 'hereditary right' of Armstrong and Dwelly's dictionary definitions. In this context, *dùthchas* has generally been seen as a *Gàidhealtachd*-specific,

localised historical right acknowledged by customary law or simply unwritten 'custom' (c.f. Houston 2011), which was more or less at odds with property rights acknowledged by Scotland's legal system. At least as recently as the 1880s, the majority of the tenantry of the north-western Highlands and Islands testified to having 'an inherited inalienable title to security of tenure in their possessions while rent and service are duly rendered' which was never 'sanctioned by legal recognition and ha[d] been long repudiated by the action of the proprietor' (Napier Report 1883: 8; c.f. Crofters Commission 1902). When the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act of 1886 was enacted, crofters were granted security of tenure and the right to inherit their father's croft so long as rent was paid. While the rights granted to crofters in 1886 appear to share some similarities with Armstrong's 1825 definition of *dùthchas*, the Act made no provision to recognise the rights of cottars and squatters, though they had also frequently testified to living on 'recognised holdings from time immemorial' and paying rent (Napier Commission 1883: Q. 34252; Hunter 2018: 180). By granting crofters security of tenure, it created laws which in a sense replaced the moral principles that had, according to Hunter, prevented the landowners from turning holdings into sheep farms in the past (Hunter 2018: 42, 290). Evidence of the Gaelic tenantry's belief in their customary land rights did not first materialise alongside the Land Agitations of the 1880s but can be seen in Thomas Pennant's late eighteenth-century and Lord Selkirk's early nineteenth-century comments on the peasantry's 'inviolable' and 'sacred' right to 'the permanent possession... of their paternal farms', with the former mentioning *dùthchas* explicitly (Pennant 1774: 423; Selkirk 1805: 119-20).

In the late nineteenth century, historians such as William Forbes Skene saw links between landholding patterns under clanship and the 'tribal' tenurial arrangements of the *túath* in Ireland in the early Middle Ages which pre-dated the 'emergence' of private property (Skene 1890: 137-9). Contemporary critics of the Crofters' Act and Land Agitations felt compelled to write their own accounts of 'historical truth' (Campbell 1887). George J. D. Campbell, the 8th Duke of Argyll, argued that mentions of land being sold in the 'old Celtic charters' of the eleventh century proved that by this point in time the concept of private property must have been firmly established, since the 'man who sold it had held it as his own lawful land' (ibid: 12). On the one hand, Skene's portrayal of communal life in early Gaelic Ireland and Scotland has been critiqued for creating a 'vision of Celtic agrarian society as a kind of golden age on which Anglo-Saxon ideas of private ownership and landlord rights had been imposed' (Pittock 1999: 75). On the other, contemporary conservative responses which negate the possibility that a customary, partially communal landholding structure could have existed in the *Gàidhealtachd*'s kin-based society alongside notions of private property could also be seen as reactionary. After all, the 1880s had seen the Land Agitations, the third Reform Act of 1885 extending suffrage across Britain, and five Crofters' Party MPs elected in the 1885

general election. The notions of advancing Anglo-Norman ‘feudalisation’ as a force which introduced property rights to a ‘pre-feudal’ Celtic Scotland are at least as old as Skene and Campbell’s late nineteenth-century discourse and still periodically resurface in modern-day scholarship (e.g. Wightman 2013: 13-4). Although *dùthchas* has sometimes been mentioned in the context of these debates, they are not the focus of this study.

In 1976, historian James Hunter stated that in the *Gàidhealtachd* there was a ‘notion’ or ‘right’ called *dùthchas* in Gaelic, ‘established when a family had maintained the effective occupancy of a township or farm for three generations or more’, and that because this right was ‘recognised by the whole community, [it] was, in principle, inviolable’, even if, ‘as far as landlords were concerned, [it] had no historical or legal validity’ (Hunter 2018: 218).¹² When seen in this light, Hunter’s definition of *dùthchas* resembles the Scots concept of *kindly tenants* – a type of tenancy often raised by historians as an example of an unusual, customary form of tenure (Large 1986: 4; Whyte 1979: 30; Sanderson 1982: 56-63). These tenants held their lands based on a claimed ‘*kindness*’ or hereditary title (the word being derived from ‘kin’ – see ‘kindly’, adj. in Dictionary of the Scots Language 2004), and in some cases this claim was of several centuries’ standing (Thomson 1897: 73). It is interesting to note the resemblance between *kindly tenants* and Hunter’s definition of *dùthchas* in light of the fact that in 1606 the dispossessed Gaelic-speaking clan chief of the MacDonalds of Dunivaig used the Scots term when appealing for the restoration of his *dùthchas* to a Scots-speaking audience (e.g. MacPhail 1920: 86, 88, 223, 246, 264, 268, 278), while the nineteenth-century historian Alexander Mackintosh Shaw used the terms almost interchangeably (Shaw 1880: 155-6).

Allan Macinnes, a Scottish historian, has defined the clan nobility’s legally recognised, charter-backed lands as their heritable *oighreachd*, which did not always align with the actual ‘territories settled by [the] clan’, and states that this would cause feuding ‘between proprietary and non-proprietary clans’ (Macinnes 1996: 5-6). Before the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles in 1493, many of the clans of the western seaboard and the Hebrides appear to have held by charter of the Lord of the Isles, while the Lord of the Isles held of the Crown. After 1493, clan chiefs began securing their land claims directly by Crown charters without the ‘intermediary’ of the Lordship of the Isles; this necessitated changes in the clan chiefs’ political loyalties and the resulting prolonged period of violent feuding is remembered in Gaelic tradition as ‘*Linn nan Creach*’ or ‘the age of forays’. Twentieth-century Scottish historians have stated that ‘in the Western Isles in the seventeenth century and for many years before, according to the evidence of extant charters, the only terms on

¹² For a similar view of *dùthchas* as a crucial ‘ideological’ component of customary landholding structures in the *Gàidhealtachd*, see Withers 1988: 77-8, 177-8, 206-7, 214.

which lands were held were feudal’ (Shaw 1980: 31). Even the sole surviving Gaelic-language charter from 1408, in which the MacDonald Lord of the Isles grants lands in Islay to a follower, is written on terms that seem ‘feudal’ (Munro and Munro 1986: 21-27). However, charters only provide us with an understanding of how the clan nobility or *daoine uaisle* held their land of the Crown and do not provide insight into the reality of landholding customs among the tenantry, or how these may have coexisted. It is dangerous to assume that landholding was standardised across the *Gàidhealtachd*, even if the charters suggest that ‘the only terms on which lands were held were feudal’; for example, in the 1810s Sutherland factor James Loch discovered 408 families ‘living in remote parts of the estate who held neither of landlord nor of any of the tacksmen; and who, in short, enjoyed the benefit of residing upon the property without paying any rent whatever’ (Loch 1820: 81–2; c.f. Given 2004: 149).¹³ Indeed, though almost all clan chiefs took ‘sheepskin grants’ and charters from the Crown (Pine 1972: 78; c.f. Wightman 2013: 59-60), charters did not govern the day-to-day tenurial arrangements at the level of the *baile* or township. This could suggest that to some degree Gaeldom existed as a society within a society, which enabled customs like *dùthchas* to continue being observed despite the *Gàidhealtachd* undergoing a process of transformation from at least the start of the seventeenth century (Macinnes 1996: x; Bannerman 1986: 120).

From ‘common heritage’ to ‘a formal order of experience’

One of the issues raised by historians regarding *dùthchas* as a form of landholding is the apparent absence of *dùthchas* from the historical record, particularly any mentions of *dùthchas* as being a collective right governed by kinship. Skene’s aforementioned legal histories blended historical evidence from the Brehon laws of Ireland with a sort of speculative anthropology, and he theorised that clanship stemmed from a tribal past since both were characterised by ‘the belief in a common descent from a mythic *eponymus* from whom the tribe took its name’ and the tribe’s *rí* (modern Scottish Gaelic ‘*righ*’ meaning ‘king’) having ‘a hereditary claim to their obedience’ as the most direct descendant of this common ancestor (Skene 1890: 140-1, 147-8, 210; for the Scottish context of clanship and organisation of *bailtean* see 323-4). Skene’s preoccupation with a near-prehistorical past means that beyond his in-depth description of the communal organisation of labour in a *baile* or township prior to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century agricultural ‘improvement’ (ibid: 368-370,

¹³ For another mention of Sutherland tenants who ‘acknowledged no landlord or superior’ see Falconer 1793: 295 – many thanks to Gemma Smith for alerting me to this reference. This is explored in much further detail in a chapter of Gemma’s PhD thesis, ‘Case Study 2: *An Doire Mòr*/The Reay Forest, Eddrachillis’, Smith 2025.

381-4, et passim) there is little concrete evidence in his writing for *dùthchas* having pertained to the clanspeople as much as to their chief.

In *The Making of the Crofting Community* Hunter mentioned ‘the long-standing belief that all the members of a tribe, a clan or a community were entitled, simply by virtue of their belonging to such entities, permanently to occupy the land on which they lived’ (Hunter 2018: 218; cf. Hunter 1995: 65-6); this may be based on Skene’s writings, though Hunter does not refer to a specific source. Hunter then states that the tenantry ‘clung steadfastly to the... profound conviction that prolonged occupation of land gave a right to what amounted to a permanent residency of it’, which was ‘referred to in Gaelic as *dùthchas*’ and was ‘established when a family had maintained the effective occupancy of a township or farm for three generations or more’ (Hunter 2018: 218). The impact Hunter’s work has had on subsequent scholarship of Highland history and land reform should not be underestimated. This appears to be especially true of the latter in Assynt, where Hunter was involved in the crofters’ land buyout of the North Lochinver estate; pamphlets and theses written by the people of Assynt linking historical landholding practices with the 1993 buyout have referred to ‘clan chiefs [holding] the land in trust for all clan members, who, by blood lineage, had rights to use of land and water’ (MacKenzie 1997: 4), *dùthchas*, and the ‘belief in a hereditary right of occupation’ ‘thought to have been established when a family had maintained effective occupation of township or joint farm for three generations’ (MacPhail 2002: 30, 50, 198). MacKenzie’s pamphlet is based on a talk and does not explicitly cite sources, but MacPhail clearly sourced the information about *dùthchas* and hereditary rights from Hunter.¹⁴ Hunter does refer to a number of nineteenth-century sources which evidence travellers to the *Gàidhealtachd* as noticing an apparent duality between the clanspeople’s belief in the permanence of *dùthchas* and the chiefs’ or proprietors’ disdain for it (e.g. Selkirk 1805: 119-120; Jamieson 1876: 176-7). The claim of a right being established after three generations is murkier, however. Hunter cites two sources – one merely gives the figure of three generations without citing any evidence (MacPherson 1966) while the other (Grant 1995: 7) cites a book that gives the same figure of three generations but without any convincing evidence (McKerrall 1948: 12, 134-5). McKerrall claims that a process had been taking place in seventeenth-century Kintyre whereby shorter, three-year leases were replacing ‘lifelong’ leases or even ‘native tenancies’ (ibid: 135), and I presume the latter may have been akin to *kindly tenancies* or *dùthchas*. Grant’s background as an ethnographer as well as historian likely encouraged her to view *dùthchas* through a more interdisciplinary lens, and the sources she cites connect the crofters’ grievances recorded by the Napier Commission in the 1880s with much earlier seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources.

¹⁴ Especially Hunter 2018: 218.

These include the story of a Mackintosh selling his 'birthright of the place (commonly called a *duchas*) for five hundred merks' and the dispossessed MacGregors 'again and again vainly claim[ing] a right of *kindness*' to the lands they lost (Grant 1995: 8). The figure of three or four generations being required to establish *dùthchas* upon land recurs throughout the historical literature on the subject, however, and in instances where a source is given, it often leads to a 'dead end' like the one previously described in McKerral (McKerral 1948: 12, 134-5; cf. Macinnes 1996: 16; Withers 1988: 331; Withers 1998: 34; Munro 1981: 124). Despite lacking any citations for its claim about three generations' occupation warranting a claim to *dùthchas*, the 1966 article by MacPherson cited by Hunter does propose a framework for how genealogies could be used to track the evolution of terms by which land was held in Strathspey and Badenoch, finding a family's *dùthchas*, or determining whether ancestral possessions remained in one family across multiple generations (MacPherson 1966).

Two studies published in the last decade have reckoned with *dùthchas* in more detail than previous scholarship, indicating a positive trend. The first of these is David Taylor's 2015 thesis, *A Society in Transition: Badenoch, 1750-1800*, which was supervised by Hunter and has since been published (Taylor 2016). One of the focuses of Taylor's thesis is the transformation of the tacksman class and the Highland gentry in Badenoch. Taylor defines *dùthchas* as a 'traditional right, or heritage, to land based on continuous occupation over at least three generations' (Taylor 2015: 26); however, the authors cited by Taylor fail to provide substantial evidence for the claim of 'three generations' (Macinnes 1996: 16; Devine 1994: 11). Neither Thomas Devine nor the sources quoted by him mention this claim at all; Macinnes does, but as far as I have been able to ascertain none of the sources quoted by him mention the 'three generations' at all. Taylor states that such a length of habitation was 'not difficult for most Highland gentry to substantiate' (Taylor 2015: 26). This is a crucial point in light of the vast amount of written evidence Taylor finds for various lands held as *dùthchas* in Badenoch, particularly in the eighteenth century. These include a John MacPherson of Crubenmore who took 'the tack of Uvie even though rack-rented [as he looked] "upon Ovie as part of the Duchus of his family'; 'Duncan MacPherson of Breakachy, as late as 1784 [trying] to regain lost family lands in order "to recover & possess the Duchas of our Predecessors", or an estate 'allowing William Mackintosh, in spite of substantial arrears, to remain on his farm, "for which he has a great Passion as his Duchass"' (ibid). The evidence above suggests that in eighteenth-century Badenoch tacksmen or lesser clan gentry still had 'a great passion' for their *dùthchas*, while others were able to use it in their favour as a bargaining tool when negotiating with local landowners. Taylor also refers to a document from 1750 in which 'certain tacksmen' are referred to as 'Douchassers', a class that the commissioners of the Gordon Estate saw as dangerous, saying that it would have been 'more

desirable that these Douchassers were wholly Removed, In respect of the power they Assume in the Country and a Right to possess without any Tack from his Grace' (ibid: 133-4). This statement suggests that the commissioners of the Gordon Estate were hostile to this class of tacksmen and saw their power – presumably over the tenantry – and independence as a threat.

Taylor admits that clanspeople of the lowest social orders are significantly less visible in the historical record and claims that 'without lease or security it was unlikely that any subtenant could claim a three-generation occupancy of specific land, so the only *dùthchas* rights he might have would be to the wider clan lands, particularly those of his tacksmen' (ibid: 36). The idea that a member of the tenantry had claims 'to the wider clan lands' through *dùthchas* is substantiated by citing Rosalind Mitchison – who remarks that *dùthchas* appears to have been a right 'of the society' rather than an individual (Mitchison 1981: 16) – and Alan Macpherson, who states that the Gaelic peasantry had 'a traditional way of life, rooted in at least a thousand years of folk history', but says this in relation to the resilience of the *Gàidhealtachd*'s kin-based social structures rather than *dùthchas*, and does not provide further evidence for his claims (Macpherson 1967: 189). Taylor then suggests that there was a 'lack of security' among the tenantry, 'confirmed by a pattern of high tenant mobility' in Badenoch, giving the examples of 'Malcolm Macpherson [who] had been tenant in at least three local farms, Brae Ruthven, Craggan of Nuide and Strathmashie, all within twelve miles' or 'James Macpherson [who] had farmed in Cluny, Dalnashalg and Pittagowan, all within two miles, and [on] traditional Macpherson land'. Taylor posits that 'the majority of tenants [moving several times, but] generally within a very tight radius' is indicative of 'clan *dùthchas* rights' (ibid: 36-7). If more evidence of this sort was collated from different estates, it could provide a strong counterargument to historians who perceive records of high tenant mobility as a clear sign that the clan tenantry had no heritable rights whatsoever and were entirely 'tenants-at-will' (Boswell 1985: 212-3; Dodgshon 1993; Richards 2007: 28-29; Houston 2011).

The other of these place-based studies is Aonghas MacCoinnich's monograph *Plantation and Civility in the North Atlantic World: The Case of the Northern Hebrides, 1570-1639* which examines the background, events, and aftermath of the Crown-sanctioned plantation on the Isle of Lewis, 1570-1639. Both the Fife Adventurers who were the initial planters and later the MacKenzies of Kintail were granted land in Lewis by the Crown despite having no blood-tie or ancestral claim to the island, making *dùthchas* pertinent to MacCoinnich's discussion. MacCoinnich notes that the few contemporary sources on the subject (e.g. MacPhail 1916: 270; Gregory 2008: 102) emphasise 'the loss of customary rights...' of the MacLeods of Lewis due to the 'driving away of the "ancients inhabitants (*sic*)" [meaning] the loss of their kindly tenure or *dùthchas*: a customary (if nebulous) right in law to lands obtained through length of possession' (MacCoinnich 2015: 157). Although

‘MacLeod of Lewis, tenant-in-chief [who held] his lands directly off the crown... had his lands forfeit... the major tenants on the island might have hoped they could continue in possession of their *dùthchas* or hereditary kindly tenancy’ (ibid). MacCoinnich suggests that this was because the tacksmen’s *dùthchas* was independent of their clan chief, and in the footnotes he goes on to explain that ‘grievances’ surrounding perceived transgressions of *dùthchas* would continue to be at the centre of conflict in the *Gàidhealtachd* for centuries in places like ‘Islay, Kintyre, Ardnamurchan... and the MacLean lands in Mull’ in the seventeenth century,¹⁵ and again more than two centuries later when the Lewis tenantry was testifying to the Napier Commission about the loss of their customary rights (MacCoinnich 2015: 157-8). Although entirely outwith the 1570-1639 time scope of his study, MacCoinnich – himself a Gael from the Isle of Lewis – sees the cultural continuity of *dùthchas* in the context of landholding from ‘time immemorial’, interrupted but unbroken by the Fife Adventurers and the MacKenzies of Kintail, through to the Land Agitations of the late nineteenth century.

When initially explaining *dùthchas*, Taylor cites Devine and Macinnes. Devine states that the ‘areas settled by each clan were regarded as their collective heritage, or *duthchas*, and the gentry were seen not as the individual masters of these territories but as their guardians, protectors and trustees’ (Devine 1994: 10-11), echoing the statements of the other historians previously mentioned (Munro 1981: 124). Devine’s statement has been frequently cited by other scholars (e.g. Mackenzie et al 2004: 160), but it is unfortunately poorly evidenced, referring to a single ‘Clanranald rental for the Isle of Eigg’ from 1718 in which the chief of Eigg ‘[asserted] his power of keeping in his own Kinsmen and tenants on this isle’ quoted by Robert Dodgshon in a 2005 article. Dodgshon’s article provides more evidence, quoting a number of historical instances referring to ‘doughtous’ or ‘kindness’, and culminates in the author stating that ‘many Highlanders saw themselves as having a customary right to the hereditary possession of their holding, or what was known as right to the *dùthchas* or kindness’ (Dodgshon 2005: 181-2). However, the historian adds that ‘these are irritatingly obscure terms’ which vary within the corpus of written evidence from being ‘a right so tangible and explicit’ that it was being temporarily renounced by John McPherson of Blarogie Beag, Inverness-shire in 1683, to ‘an emasculated concept, one that carried little force of meaning’ (ibid). I hope that over the course of this thesis I will make these terms less ‘irritatingly obscure’.

Another historical study which has engaged with *dùthchas* is Allan Macinnes’ *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788*. The author’s aim is ‘to attempt an authentic appraisal of clanship’, examining ‘Scottish Gaeldom... as a geographic and cultural entity’ through a

¹⁵ For the ancestral Maclain lands on Ardnamurchan being referred to as their ‘old Duchus’ see Mackintosh 1895: 70.

combination of ‘historical... methodology’ and an ‘inter-disciplinary borrowing from sociology and social anthropology’ (Macinnes 1996: ix). The study received acclaim for this interdisciplinary approach, which included Gaelic ‘oral tradition, documented patronymics and extant vernacular poetry’ among its historical sources (ibid: x). Macinnes did not, however, clarify that he is not a Gaelic speaker and that he engaged with all of these sources in translation. As I will demonstrate, this undermines the credibility of some of Macinnes’ claims regarding Gaelic terminology – claims which have been highly influential, since this monograph has been widely cited in other scholarship, including the aforementioned works by Devine, MacCoinnich, and Taylor.

Macinnes states that *dùthchas* ‘can be most appropriately translated as [the chiefs and clan gentry’s] exercise of trusteeship’, as well as their ‘personal, but hereditary authority... to protect and administer justice to their clans’, a focus unsurprising in what is effectively a study of clanship, though it is disappointing that the author did not acknowledge the term’s complex, polysemic nature while defining it (Macinnes 1996: 3). The author follows this by noting that ‘bards and poets’ propagated the idea of *dùthchas* representing ‘a hereditary determinant of behaviour’ which ‘led to a pretentious veneration for genealogy’ as well as ‘a pernicious assertion of ethnic superiority of the Gael over the *Gall*’ (ibid). This suggests that Macinnes is aware that *dùthchas* appears to overlap across multiple semantic fields – personal characteristics or behaviours inherited from one’s ancestors, for example – but he does not acknowledge this in the book, referring instead to the definition of ‘*dùthchas* as trusteeship’, which he likely felt was most relevant to his subject. If *dùthchas* was as central to Gaelic society as clanship was, writing a comprehensive study of the latter is almost impossible without acknowledging the complexity of the former.

Macinnes seldom mentions *dùthchas* without mentioning *oighreachd*, a word defined in Dwelly’s dictionary as meaning ‘inheritance’ or ‘landed property’. In fact, this dichotomy becomes one of the author’s main arguments: he proposes that *oighreachd* refers to a tangible ‘bestowal of title and heritable jurisdiction over the estates owned by the *fine*’, usually backed by law and charter and granting authority ‘equivalent to private estate management’, while *dùthchas* refers to the more abstract ‘heritable trusteeship exercised personally by the *fine* over the territories settled by their clan’ (ibid: 5). Macinnes posits that in an ideal scenario, these two very different claims to land would be ‘harmonised... through royal benevolence’ (ibid), but by the time of the reign of James VI, increasing numbers of clansmen were living in constant ‘territorial insecurity’, as the land they lived on was ‘not held under charter by their *fine*’, and the ‘endeavours to align *oighreachd* and *duthchas*’ created ‘the grounds for feuding’ (ibid: 38; cf. Gregory 2008: 63-4, 82-3, 94-5, 102-6). In later chapters, Macinnes also provides arguments for seeing the social and economic changes in the *Gàidhealtachd* as a transformation of ‘the Highlands [into] another internal colony on the Celtic

fringe' (Macinnes 1996: 223-4; cf. Macinnes 1988: 85-7), as well as explicitly referring to the early seventeenth-century plantation of Lewis as an attempt to 'colonise' it. The author suggests that the clan gentry's increasing absenteeism and changing perception of their territories as commercial property (Macinnes 1996: 80-1) enabled 'what had hitherto been deemed unthinkable - the marketing of their *duthchas*' (ibid: 123) and eventually culminated with the collapse of the clan-based society. Subsequent chapters of this thesis will examine how Gaelic poets used *dùthchas* in response to these changes.

As I have intimated above, there are weaknesses in Macinnes' engagement with Gaelic sources and Gaelic terminology. His glossary of Gaelic terms defines '*fine*' as the 'clan elite', namely the 'chief and leading gentry' (ibid: xiv). However, Dwelly defines '*fine*' as 'tribe, family, kindred, clan', and in the course of my research I have not come across any conclusive evidence which would suggest that the term *fine* refers exclusively to the upper echelons of the kindred, rather than the clan as a whole.¹⁶ The author also claims that there was a widely-recognised concept of *beathachadh bòidheach* ('comfortable sufficiency'), meaning the expectation of the tacksman, the 'manager of the *baile*', to create comfortable economic conditions for clanspeople and clan gentry alike (Macinnes 1996: 18) – despite the fact that the term appears only once in a single poem by Iain Lom (MacKenzie 1973: 178). While other scholars have written about the redistributive exchange of 'goods between kinsmen and their chief' (Dodgshon 1988: 31), it is Macinnes' use of *beathachadh bòidheach* as specific terminology – included in his book's glossary alongside *fine* – which poses methodological questions about his treatment of complex Gaelic concepts. He makes many of the same assumptions made by his peers when examining the nature of *dùthchas*, such as stating that tacksmen of non-proprietary clans (those with no charter or lease) lacked 'legal security of heritable title, [but] in practice accorded a customary right of occupancy which, if effected for three generations, established a *dùthchas* for the tacksmen and the clansmen settled as tenants in each *baile*/township under their control: a collective equivalent to the kindly tenancy enjoyed individually by many tenants on Lowland estates' (Macinnes 1996: 16). As I have mentioned above, I have been unsuccessful in finding any mention of *dùthchas* or a customary tenancy being established after three generations' continuous occupation in any of the sources cited here by Macinnes. The one Gaelic source cited by Macinnes – four pages of a poem by *An Clàrsair Dall*, which we shall return to in chapter six – does not evidence Macinnes' claim, either; the poem instructs the clan chief's son

¹⁶ For example, the poem A:22, '*Òran nam Fineachan*' ('Song of the kindreds'), which is discussed in chapter seven, uses terms like '*uaislean nan Gàidheal*' ('the Gaelic nobility') to refer to the clan elite, rather than '*fine*'.

not to forget his noble ancestry, not to slight his name, not to show '*marbhgean*' ('a malevolent will') toward his '*uaislean*' ('the gentry of his clan'), and thus inherit his birthright (Matheson 1970: 54-5).

What has become clear in the course of this literature review is that any attempt at understanding *dùthchas* which does not deeply engage with Gaelic source material nor attempts to view it through the lens of a Gaelic epistemology will simply follow the same 'dead end' trails which the Anglophone scholarship has thus far. To give a positive counter-example, John MacAskill's book about the 1993 crofters' land buyout of the North Lochinver Estate explains *dùthchas* in a holistic way which is also respectful of the long cultural continuum linking twentieth-century land reform with previous centuries' cultural practices (MacAskill 1999: 24-5). In the footnote to this paragraph, MacAskill acknowledges the help he received from Donald Meek, a native Gaelic speaker and scholar, to better understand this 'word... which is full of significance to the Gaelic community'; it is likely that Meek also alerted MacAskill to 'the link between the word *dùthaich*, meaning a particular country or locality, and the word *dùthchas* [which] helps to explain why native Highlanders have often had such a deep attachment to their own locality'. MacAskill cites the scholarship of Devine, Hunter, and Withers on this subject, but also explores the epistemological dimension of *dùthchas* by suggesting that 'the land sustains the *dùthchas*, but the *dùthchas* helps to sustain the land', and that the 'affirmation of *dùthchas* is seen in the words of the Gaelic poets, in songs and in the language, and proverbs and proverbial sayings were one of the ways by which the concept of *dùthchas* was defined and elaborated in the Gaelic context' (ibid).

The further exploration of the epistemological dimension of *dùthchas* was also recommended in an autoethnographic reflection by Peter Gow, a Scottish anthropologist whose research primarily focused on Amazonia. Gow highlights the existing literature's tendency to use diction which implicitly downplays the concept's validity, even if Gaels 'knew it to be both real and reasonable' (Gow 2011: 28-30). Gow connects this modern academic tendency with the rationalist and empirical epistemologies of the Scottish Enlightenment, the very same epistemologies which set in motion the processes of agricultural Improvement and Clearance in the *Gàidhealtachd* (ibid: 22-8).¹⁷ Gow declares that 'participant observation [of] eighteenth-century Gaelic speakers' is an impossibility, but fails to recognise the possibility of using Gaelic sources to reconstruct 'the rich meanings of eighteenth-century Gaelic lexicalized concepts', mentioning only Anglophone historical sources (ibid: 29). Still, Gow acknowledges that this 'generally unrecognised conception of right of access to land in Highland Scotland... was, and perhaps still is, important' (ibid: 28).

¹⁷ The way a reaction to these processes may be seen in Gaelic poetry is explored further in chapter eight.

I would argue that one of the most holistic approaches to understanding *dùthchas* in scholarship to date has been that of John MacInnes. This is likely because his scholarship was informed by personal experience as well as his fieldwork as an ethnologist collecting oral and literary Gaelic tradition for the School of Scottish Studies which began in 1953 (Newton 2006: xxvi). He was a native Gaelic speaker born on Raasay into a family of tradition bearers, a tradition which he loved and devoted his life to studying, something which doubtless affected his conception of *dùthchas*. The breadth of topics covered in his essays collected and published as *Dùthchas nan Gàidheal* represent a lifetime of scholarship on Gaelic poetry, linguistics, folklore, religion, clan sagas, the supernatural, and even literary criticism, spanning a thousand years of Gaelic history. The fact that all of these topics are interwoven may be gleaned from a comment made by Caimbeul in the foreword to this essay collection:

...each of the many subjects covered by Dr MacInnes in these essays are necessary explorations of his central theme of *Dùthchas*, the focal web of belief and kinship which is at the cosmological centre of MacInnes' world... [His insights are] authentic versions of a Gaelic-centred ontology – and therefore epistemology – of what it was like to have been a Gael in a complete if simultaneously expanding and diminishing world. (Caimbeul 2006: xi)

Both Caimbeul and Newton, the book's editor, agreed that *Dùthchas nan Gàidheal* was a fitting title for this collection, with Newton explicitly mentioning the difficulty of translating the English term 'heritage' into Gaelic and the semantic complexity of the term *dùthchas* (ibid: xxii). As a native Gaelic speaker, MacInnes acknowledged this complexity as follows:

Just as 'landscape', with its romantic aura, cannot be translated directly into Gaelic, so '*dùthchas*' and, indeed, '*dùthaich*' cannot be translated into English without robbing the terms of their emotional energy. The complexity involved can be appreciated by reflecting on the range of meaning: *dùthchas* is ancestral or family land; it is also family tradition; and, equally, it is the hereditary qualities of an individual. (MacInnes 2006a: 279)

MacInnes was aware that terms like *dùthchas* with a wide 'range of meaning' were 'robbed of their emotional energy' when they were dovetailed into a language with a different worldview

through careless translation.¹⁸ He sees *dùthchas* as a central tenet of the Gaels' intangible cultural heritage that elicits strong emotions, emotions 'which give the individual a place, historically and psychologically, in the vision of his own people' (MacInnes 2006b: 478). Both John MacInnes and Allan MacInnes note that 'the emphasis on heredity is exceedingly strong in Gaelic society and is used to explain personal qualities, artistic abilities, mannerisms and the like' (MacInnes 2006c: 449; MacInnes 1996: 3). However, only MacInnes draws out the connection between the depth of cultural understanding possessed by Gaelic poets who had received a thoroughly Gaelic 'schooling' in panegyric poetry, history and lore of their people and place, and the ability for *dùthchas* to then become their way of seeing the world:

The native Gael who is instructed in this poetry carries in his imagination not so much a landscape, not a sense of geography alone, nor of history alone, but a formal order of experience in which these are all merged. The native sensibility responds not to landscape but to *dùthchas*. (MacInnes 2006a: 279; c.f. Newton 2019: 306)

MacInnes suggests that through *dùthchas*, the past is able to inhabit the present, and the more-than-human landscape becomes 'a dynamic, perhaps even heroic, territory peopled with figures from history and legend' (MacInnes 2006d: 29). This interplay of culture and emotion, past and present, becoming 'a formal order of experience' to a Gael schooled in panegyric poetry strongly suggests that Gaelic poetry will be the key to deepening our understanding of *dùthchas*.¹⁹ Recent scholarship by Martin MacGregor has highlighted the importance of using Gaelic poetry as a historical source, stating that it is 'the most sensitive diagnostic tool bequeathed to us by the past: a seismograph of social change' (MacGregor forthcoming: 4; c.f. MacGregor 2023), and the next chapter will clarify how I intend to read and use this 'seismograph of social change' in my analysis.

Conclusion

This literature review has highlighted the various lacunae in the existing scholarship about *dùthchas*. Commonly cited claims – such as *dùthchas* becoming established as a customary tenancy

¹⁸ For further scholarship on the dangers of translation and equivocation when studying indigenous cultures, see Viveiros de Castro 2004: 4-5 *et passim*.

¹⁹ See Newton 2009 for a Gaelic-language article which explores MacInnes' writing on *dùthchas*.

after ‘three generations of continuous occupation’, or that the clan’s territories were perceived not as belonging to the clan chief or the *daoine uaisle* but being held by them ‘in trust’ as the clan’s common heritage – have become accepted in the literature, but the fact that they appear not to have been evidenced properly demonstrates the urgent need for both their revision and a systematic study of *dùthchas*. There are many examples of scholarship successfully using Gaelic poetry as a supplementary source (e.g. Newton 2019, Murphy 2009, Grant 2016), but the passages quoted by Allan MacInnes when attempting to define *dùthchas* do not do so effectively. John MacInnes’ belief that Gaelic poetry was a core method of transmitting cultural knowledge, and that to the trained mind *dùthchas* formed a cosmological and epistemological framework, suggests that Scottish Gaelic poetry may always have been the key to understanding *dùthchas*, which would give a deeper meaning to it being my choice primary source beyond wide availability of source material. The way Irish Gaelic sources were used by McQuillan in his anthropological-linguistic study of *dúchas* and semantically-related terms was encouraging when designing the methodology with which to approach Scottish Gaelic sources, and the next chapter will outline how I did this.

3. Methodology

There are two main parts in this methodology chapter. The first part introduces the theoretical framework of this thesis. This includes an overview of the process I went through when selecting an appropriate research approach and the challenges posed by the polysemic nature of *dùthchas*. This is followed by a section that puts forward several pieces of indigenous scholarship which introduce concepts which I found relevant and helpful in my attempt at understanding the hereditary, kin-based framework of ethics and reciprocal responsibilities which underpins *dùthchas*.

The second part focuses on practical aspects of the methodology. While the first part explains the research approach and the process behind selecting poetry as the primary source for this thesis, the second part delineates the process of establishing the start and end points of my time scope. It demonstrates how I proceeded when selecting source texts. This is followed by a list of all the source texts used in creating the database which contains all of my raw data (Appendix A), as well as a section which details the structure of this database.

Methodology: theoretical framework

I will now delineate the theoretical aspect of this study's methodology. The first section outlines the challenges of selecting an appropriate research approach for this type of interdisciplinary study, why I deemed the field of intellectual history to be the most appropriate blueprint, and why the research subject does not neatly fit into the field of the history of ideas. At the end of this section, I introduce the analytical process of asking questions and seeking answers to understand the way in which *dùthchas* was being used in a sample instance. The second section delves into the way that the polysemy of *dùthchas* poses additional challenges to this study while simultaneously extending its importance by allowing us to glean an understanding of concepts which are semantically related to *dùthchas*. The third section summarises the weakness associated with focusing on one aspect of a polysemic concept, such as trying to understand *dùthchas* solely through its connotations with customary tenurial arrangements.²⁰ It also explores the idea that traditional Gaelic social structures held *dùthchas* as one of their central tenets and how this can shape our line of enquiry into the role of *dùthchas* in Gaelic ways of knowing. The final section then delves into the

²⁰ See, for example, Houston 2011.

relevance of indigenous scholarship for the study of this central tenet of Gaelic ways of knowing while acknowledging the many ways Gaels were involved in colonialism and imperialism.

Choosing the approach: an intellectual history of *dùthchas*

The Literature Review chapter highlighted the lack of comprehensive scholarship on *dùthchas*, especially scholarship which would reflect the polysemic complexity of this concept. Indeed, no detailed scholarly work exploring the semantics and history of any one Scottish Gaelic term has been undertaken thus far. This means that there was no ready scholarly or methodological blueprint for this study of *dùthchas* to follow, placing this thesis at the cutting edge of Gaelic scholarship.

McQuillan's 2004 study, also introduced in the Literature Review, explores the way the words *dùchas*, *dùthaigh*, *dual* and *saoirse* relate to concepts of 'right' and 'freedom' in Irish. McQuillan's methodological framework primarily derives from the field of linguistic anthropology (McQuillan 2004: 1-4), much of which is relevant to this study of *dùthchas* in Scottish Gaelic. While McQuillan makes connections between the broader historical context within Gaelic Ireland and the meaning carried by *dùchas* at different points in time (ibid: 39-45), this is not the monograph's main aim. The corpora of Irish and Scottish Gaelic texts also differ in notable ways,²¹ meaning McQuillan's methodological approach is not exactly transferable to a Scottish Gaelic context.

As established in the introduction, the thesis aims to explore the meaning of *dùthchas* between 1640 and 1900 synchronically and diachronically, guided by research questions regarding the nature of this concept. The introduction also posited that *dùthchas* could be deemed a cosmological, philosophical, political and intellectual concept. The study of the history of ideas or concepts is also referred to as 'intellectual history', and researchers in this field tend to explore the historical use of a certain concept while analysing the background and context of its usage. This thesis, therefore, aims to write an 'intellectual history' of *dùthchas*. This does come with numerous challenges, however. Let us take Quentin Skinner's essay *Liberty Before Liberalism* as an example of an intellectual history of a concept, in this case 'liberty'. In order to analyse 'the rise and fall within Anglophone political theory of [the] neo-roman understanding of civil liberty' in the seventeenth

²¹ This is delineated in further detail at the start of the fourth chapter on the 'Earliest usage' of *dùthchas* below.

century (Skinner 2018: ix), Skinner examines the writings of leading intellectual figures discussing the nature of liberty and related concepts, such as sovereignty. His line of enquiry asks: how did the mid-seventeenth-century historical context – with its ‘constitutional crisis’ and civil war in England (ibid: 1-3) – influence contemporary political thought? Where did the political allegiances of individual writers lie, and what intellectual, philosophical, and political tradition did they belong to? Skinner’s work benefits from its ability to draw upon a broad modern era canon of relevant Anglophone political theory and polemical prose texts. For a number of reasons which we will return to in a few paragraphs, there is no equivalent canon of philosophical treatises in Scottish Gaelic. If we treat *dùthchas* as a concept relating to ‘property’ – which would unnecessarily restrict the semantic field within which we were examining it – we would not even be able to use Scottish Gaelic legal documents to reconstruct a history of its use in this field, since *dùthchas* appears in only one such document.²² This is not to say that Gaelic society did not have a long legal and judicial tradition. Gaelic law – also called ‘Brehon law’, particularly in the Irish context – probably arrived in Scotland with the first Gaelic colonizers entering Dal Riada (Bannerman 1974: 134-146; c.f. Campbell 2001 for a revisionist approach). This theory is supported by the presence of terms of Gaelic origin in the extant corpus of medieval Scots law – typically written in Latin or French (Kelly 1988: 324-5). William Sellar adds that in their time as *Rìgh Innse Gall* (literally ‘Kings of the Hebrides’ but translated into English as ‘Lords of the Isles’) the MacDonalds kept *breitheamhan* or hereditary lawmen employed until the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles in 1493 (Sellar 1989; Sellar 2001: 381-2), while MacCoinnich has written about the Morrison ‘brieves’ or *breitheamhan* who acted as lawmen for the MacLeods in Lewis until at least the 16th century (MacCoinnich 2015: 34-5 and 51-5; MacCoinnich 2014; Hore 1857: 40). Although evidence points to the existence of a Gaelic legal tradition in Scotland, the fact remains that no corpus of texts survives from these ‘brieves’ which could be used as primary sources for writing a legal or intellectual history of *dùthchas*.

My solution to this issue has been to turn to the corpus of extant Scottish Gaelic poetry or *bàrdachd* instead.²³ An initial search of the Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic indicated a promising prevalence of *dùthchas* in poetic sources, and that availability of material was not going to be a limiting factor. The more subjective nature of poetry means that it is not the intellectual historian’s preferred genre of primary source, although Skinner states that the Anglophone corpus of poetry and drama tends to comment on ‘similar ideas’ to those under debate in contemporary polemical prose (Skinner 2018: 11-2). The nature of poetry in the Scottish Gaelic tradition arguably makes its

²² The fourth chapter highlights the paucity of Gaelic legal documents in general.

²³ There are many Gaelic terms for ‘poetry’, some of which have specific connotations of style and register. For purposes of standardisation, all these disparate genres will be referred to by the English term ‘poetry’ in this thesis.

use as a primary source even more suitable in the context of an intellectual history of *dùthchas*. Firstly, the origins of the ‘bardic order’ in the Gaelic world are so ancient, they are in fact prehistoric (Koch 2006: 169-176, c.f. MacInnes 1999: 321-4), the chronological equivalent of Anglophone political theory tracing its roots back to classical antiquity. Secondly, the elite-class ‘classical poet’ or *flidh* of Gaelic Ireland and Gaelic Scotland has been described as the equivalent of a ‘professor of literature and a man of letters’ who held ‘an official position by virtue of his training, his learning, his knowledge of the history and traditions of his country and his clan’ and ‘was often a public official, a chronicler, a political essayist’ (Bergin 1913: 154; c.f. Black 1976: 198-9 and MacGregor 2024a: 8). Such a description is not far-removed from the Anglophone political philosophers and theoreticians studied by intellectual historians. Furthermore, these ‘public’ aspects of the poets’ social role mean that their poetry was not only meant to represent their personal views, but those of their entire social group – whether this was their extended family, clan, township, or a ‘we’ defined loosely along ethnic lines. If we accept MacGregor’s suggestion that the poets’ role in Gaelic society was upholding the ‘social contract’ which bound this conservative, kin-based society together, and ensuring adherence to its moral and behavioural norms, then poetry may indeed be viewed ‘as the most sensitive diagnostic tool bequeathed to us by the past’ for analysing ‘social change’ in the *Gàidhealtachd* (MacGregor forthcoming: 3-4).

Naturally, poetry was composed at all levels of society, in different registers and forms, and the poems and songs composed by people who did not undergo ‘bardic’ training often were not even composed in the same language as the compositions of these ‘classical poets’.²⁴ Indeed, ‘people’ is a word worth emphasising here, as well over a quarter of all the instances of *dùthchas* which will be analysed in this thesis are found in poems composed by women. I do not believe any other type of primary source from the *Gàidhealtachd* of the early modern period would have given us insight into women’s views on and experiences with *dùthchas*.²⁵ As later chapters will show, in the 1640 – 1900 period only two poems containing the term *dùthchas* were composed by ‘classical poets’, and the vast majority of poets who used the term in this time period were not members of this trained ‘classical’ poetic elite. In fact, by the eighteenth century the ‘classical’ poetic tradition was in terminal decline in Scotland. This does not mean that there is nothing left to study past this point; indeed, though the language and metrical patterns were no longer the same, even the poetry of the twentieth-century *bàrd baile* or ‘township poet’ was ‘rooted within a historical continuum’ (Neat 1999: x) and was arguably the articulation of a tradition which stretches back to these very

²⁴ See the introduction to chapter five for a further discussion on ‘classical’ and vernacular Gaelic.

²⁵ For an overview of scholarship on the way women were historically excluded from the field of philosophy and political thought, see Kuokkanen 2006: 252.

same learned *filidh* of Ireland (c.f. MacInnes 1999: 321-4; Koch 2006: 169-176, particularly 174-6; Thomson 1989: 11-6; Coira 2012; MacInnes 2006d and MacInnes 2006a).

Thus, my method will be based on using the corpus of extant Scottish Gaelic poetry to examine what *dùthchas* has meant to these poets and their audiences across multiple centuries. I aim to recover ‘the meaning the [poet] intended to convey by reading the text in light of the available conventions and assumptions, and so of coming to understand it in those terms’, to paraphrase Tully (Tully 1993: 98-9). Let us take ‘Òran’ by the poet Mairghread nighean Lachlainn (A:4)²⁶ to showcase an example of my analytical process. The term *dùthchas* appears in the phrase ‘[cha] robh cron ri aithris ort / ach leantail do rìgh dùthchais’ (‘no crime was ever imputed to you except following your hereditary king’). To analyse what is meant by the word *dùthchas* here, I would seek out the answers to multiple questions. Who was Mairghread nighean Lachlainn? Who was the ‘you’ whom Mairghread was addressing? Who was the ‘hereditary king’ this person served? Why was their innocence being emphasised and why was this person’s loyalty to the ‘hereditary king’ perceived as a crime? When was this song composed and where did Mairghread and the subject of her poem come from? Was *dùthchas* frequently collocated with words which refer to the monarchy? Did *dùthchas* frequently appear in this attributive genitive form, where it appears to bestow the quality of something or someone being ‘hereditary’ upon another noun? How were Mairghread’s contemporaries using the term *dùthchas* and what does this tell us?

The etymology and polysemy of *dùthchas*: the *dù*- lexical field

This section will briefly look at the linguistic aspects of *dùthchas* which contribute to its conceptual complexity. McQuillan’s scholarship is particularly helpful here, as the Irish scholar studied the term *dúchas* together with other semantically- and etymologically-related terms. This lead McQuillan to employ ‘lexical field theory’ in his study, a theory which

argues that word meaning should be studied by looking at the relations holding between words in the same lexical field. A lexical field is a set of semantically related words whose meanings are mutually interdependent and which together spell out the conceptual structure of a given domain of reality. (Luca and Marconi 2021)

²⁶ See section ‘The Database – Appendix A’ below for an explanation of this shorthand notation system used in this thesis.

McQuillan refers to Ó Doibhlin's web of lexical associations of *dúchas*, which included Irish terms relating to 'people', 'birth', 'descent', 'race', 'genealogy', 'resemblance', 'relation', 'heritage', 'folklore', 'tradition', 'natural state', 'character', 'spirit', 'culture', 'ancestry', 'identity', 'native land' [*tír dhúchais*], 'nation', and others (Ó Doibhlin quoted in McQuillan 2004: 22-3). While no Scottish Gaelic equivalent of Ó Doibhlin's analogical dictionary of Irish has been created thus far, the dictionary definitions of *dùthchas* which we have examined in the Literature Review suggest that the lexical field of the Scottish Gaelic *dùthchas* could be very similar to the Irish.

Since the aims of this thesis differ to those of McQuillan's monograph, lexical field theory will not play a central part in the discussion. Nonetheless, in the course of my work I noticed that *dùthchas* often appeared together, or was used interchangeably, with other words which seemed to be semantically related to *dùthchas*, such as *dùthaich*, *dù[th]*, *dual*, and *dualchas*. The point of overlap between *dùthchas* and *dùthaich* is their connotation of 'native place' – a tangible, physical aspect of *dùthchas*. The point of overlap between *dùthchas* and both *dùth* and *dual* is their connotation of something being 'natural', 'hereditary', 'native' or 'fitting', and the fact that all three may appear in the grammatical copula form (*dùth* and *dual* almost exclusively so), e.g. '*is dùth X do Y*', 'X is natural to Y'. The point of overlap between *dùthchas* and *dualchas* is their connotation of someone's physical or psychological hereditary qualities, of the 'way of their ancestors', of 'heritage' tangible and intangible; furthermore, at the grammatical level, they are both abstract noun forms of their root words *dùth* and *dual*.²⁷ The interplay of these semantically-related terms will frequently resurface in the poetry analysed in subsequent chapters

Interestingly, the Irish terms alongside which McQuillan studied *dúchas* were *dúthaigh*, *dú*, *dual*, and *dualgas* (McQuillan 2004: 4-5, 23-7), all closely related to the Scottish Gaelic terms I identified above. Since Scottish Gaelic is a Goidelic language, the etymological roots of the aforementioned Irish terms should be the same as that of their Scottish Gaelic counterparts. Thus, like *dúchas*, the Scottish Gaelic *dùthchas* appears to originate from the Proto-Celtic root **gdon-*, a noun meaning 'earth' or 'place' which became the Old Irish word *dú*, meaning 'place, spot' (Matasović 2009: 155). It also appears significant that the Gaelic word *duine*, 'human, person' originates from a closely related Proto-Celtic root, **gdonyo-* (ibid: 156; McQuillan 2004: 25). This 'earthy' quality – a 'rootedness', 'groundedness', or 'relationship with place' – could be seen as a

²⁷ To the adjective *luath* ('fast'), *luath[a]s* is the abstract noun meaning 'fast-ness' or 'speed'; the abstract noun derived from *dorcha* ('dark') is *dorchadas*, 'darkness'. Thus *dualchas* is the abstract noun derived from *dual*, and *dùthchas* derives from *dùth*.

fundamental element of what it means to be human within the Goidelic languages, and is an idea which we shall return to.

Dùthchas, rights, and property

The Literature Review has highlighted the work of a few historians who have used *dùthchas* as a sort of conceptual shorthand for the way landed relationships were organised within the *Gàidhealtachd*'s kin-based society, where *dùthchas* was 'the concept of trusteeship exercised over the territories possessed and settled by the clans... [by] the chief as *ceann-cinnidh*' or 'head of the kindred' (Macinnes 1996: 5). The dictionary definitions also point to an aspect of *dùthchas* being some kind of 'hereditary right', a meaning possibly shared with other words in the *dù*- lexical family. The closest translation for the word 'right' in Scottish Gaelic is *còir*, both a noun and an adjective. Semantically, *còir* is both 'right' in the sense of an individual or collective right *to* something, including land, as well as something *being right*, in the sense of being proper, fitting, decent, virtuous or civil (Dwelly 1918: 231). There is a significant semantic overlap between *còir* and the meanings of the words in the *dù*- lexical family, as discussed above; furthermore, *còir* also frequently appears in the copula form, that is, '*is còir X do Y*' ('X is proper for Y'), similarly to *dùth*, *dual*, and *dùthchas*. Subsequent chapters will show that *dùthchas* has been collocated with *còir* by poets across virtually the entire 1640 – 1900 period.

The semantic association of words which describe an individual's or group's 'native place' with that which is 'fitting', 'proper' and 'hereditary' seems to suggest that the way belonging to place was conceptualised in the *Gàidhealtachd*'s kin-based society reflected a reality where *dùthchas* was somehow related to tenurial customs. Customary tenancies determined by kinship were not unheard of in Scots law or society,²⁸ but 'kindness' and 'kindly tenants' did not frequently feature in Scots poetry in a way that would suggest these terms possessed the emotive power and cultural significance which *dùthchas* did. Macinnes' definitions of *dùthchas* suggest that it was understood to be hereditary, had a collective dimension, was embedded in a web of intergenerational, interdependent land-based relationships of clan chiefs with clanspeople who believed that they 'were members of an extended common family', and that this compelled the chief to protect the clan's territories, provide hospitality for his clan, and 'succour the needy' (Macinnes 1996: 2-5), and the scholar effectively places *dùthchas* at the very core of clanship. Caimbeul's comment on *dùthchas*

²⁸ See the discussion of 'kindly tenants' in chapter four on the 'Earliest Usage' of *dùthchas* below.

which we have already seen in the Literature Review described it as a ‘focal web of belief and kinship’ (Caimbeul 2006: xi). These characteristics of *dùthchas* resonate strongly with the description of indigenous philosophies given by Rauna Kuokkanen, where ‘the world as a whole is constituted of an infinite web of relationships extended to and incorporated into the entire social condition of the individual’, where ‘people are related to their physical and natural surroundings through genealogies, oral traditions and their personal and collective experiences pertaining to certain locations’ (Kuokkanen 2006: 258).

These characteristics would also have become increasingly hard to reconcile with the individualist trajectory which British political thought on property was following by the early modern era. At the same time that Gaelic poets were invoking *dùthchas* in the context of clanship, influential Anglophone philosophers like John Locke were creating a canon of writings which twentieth-century political scientists would come to see as the foundation of ‘possessive individualism’, a theory in which society is a set of market relations (Macpherson 1962: 1-4). Locke’s *Two Treatises* were also influential with the major philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, with the likes of Gershom Carmichael and Adam Smith using them to justify ‘commercial society’ and the accumulation of capital (Tully 1993: 90-2, footnotes 51 and 53). This is a simplification of complex processes and ideas to which many scholars devote their entire careers, but the overall individualist trajectory within much Anglophone writing on society seems at odds with an epistemology centred around webs of kinship and belonging to place. The analysis of the poets’ use of the term *dùthchas* in subsequent chapters will consider the possibility that the poets may have been taking a stand against the clan chiefs’ and clan gentry’s own understanding of landed relationships and society, which over time became increasingly influenced by Anglophone political thought.

Indigenous scholarship, Empire, and *dùthchas*

The section above has drawn attention to the fact that the existing literature on *dùthchas* describes the philosophy which underpins it in terms which are evocative of Kuokkanen’s description of indigenous philosophies. This section will introduce other works of indigenous scholarship which have contributed to the theoretical framework of this thesis, as well as explaining in further detail why this scholarship is relevant to the study of *dùthchas*.

Firstly, it is worth reiterating that the philosophical developments in the Anglophone world which have been alluded to above, particularly those regarding property and capital, were

inextricably linked with the expansion of overseas British colonies (Hyam 2010: 133-52; c.f. Fitzmaurice 2014: 1). Locke was personally involved in the creation of a British colony in Carolina from 1669 onwards, and has been described as 'more deeply involved in the practical business of promoting and running overseas settlements than any other European political thinker between the early seventeenth... and the nineteenth century' (Armitage 2012: 86-7; c.f. Tully 1993: 137-176). 'Domestic' political theory was influenced by developments in the colonies, and vice versa.

Historiography has only recently started to more openly acknowledge that 'Scotland as a whole... had immersed itself in the exploitation of enslaved Africans and their descendants' (Alston 2021: 5 *et passim*). This was true not only of the sugar and tobacco merchants of Glasgow (Mullen 2009) but also many members of the native clan gentry of the *Gàidhealtachd* (Macinnes 1996: 228-33; McKichan 2018; Alston 2021). Nor were slave plantations in the Caribbean and colonies in North America the only places where Gaels benefitted from British colonialism; 'the East', particularly India, was also a profitable theatre of colonial exploits for many. One such profiteer was Sir James Matheson 'who had bought the Lewis estate from the bankrupt MacKenzies of Seaforth in 1844' and had made his fortune as a 'tea and opium baron' in China and Hong Kong (Hunter 2018: 102).

Scholars have drawn attention to the fact that at the same time that Britain expanded its colonial projects overseas, the *Gàidhealtachd* was subject to a process of enclosure, resource extraction, and the exploitation and dispossession of the local populace in ways which resemble aspects of British colonialism and imperialist expansion across the globe. As early as 1975 Hechter introduced the concept of British 'internal colonialism' affecting the Celtic nations – Hechter defined this as an 'uneven pattern of development' between the core (England) and periphery (Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Cornwall) of Great Britain, 'the first industrial society' (Hechter 1975: 350). Hechter's theory was critiqued by Hind who believed it relied heavily on 'artificial' analogies with more 'traditional views of colonization' (Hind 1982: 552-4). MacKinnon's more recent scholarship has explored the possibility of 'internal colonialism' in the *Gàidhealtachd* by attempting to 'recover the point of view of [the] promoters and managers of tenurial change and industrial development [in the *Gàidhealtachd*]; demonstrating 'that proposals and projects to encourage internal or "domestic colonization" and establish colonies in the area were prominent and recurrent in Scottish and British political discourse from the middle of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth'; and analysing 'generally held views about the nature and character of Gaels at this time' (MacKinnon 2017).²⁹ The latter has been explored by other scholars – for example, when considering whether Scotland could

²⁹ These 'domestic colonisation' projects could in fact be argued to go as far back as the late sixteenth-century Crown-sanctioned attempt by the so-called 'Fife Adventurers' to colonise the Isle of Lewis.

be considered an English colony, Stroh has emphasised the need to distinguish between the experience of Gaels and Lowland Scots, noting that

the Gaels were long considered as a separate ethnic group within Scotland, set apart not only by their language and their [locality] ...but also by different political, legal, administrative, and economic structures, as well as distinct cultural traditions... (Stroh 2017: 16)

Stroh suggests that Gaels have been racialised as ‘Celts’ since the time of Julius Caesar’s conquest of Britain, and that this has often meant that the status of Gaels within Britain was ‘comparable to overseas colonized subjects’ of the British Empire (ibid). This is a complex matter, considering that despite the Gaels being racialised, categorised as ‘Other’, and compared with Native Americans by contemporary writers, the former played a major role as ‘colonial settlers’ on the territories of the latter (ibid: 139). Calloway argues that

a whole nation need not be colonized for colonialism to exist. To say that Highland Scots and American Indians experienced colonialism is not to say that they faced the same colonialism or were subjected to it in all the same ways. Both groups encountered their own brand of internal colonialism... Highland Scots fared differently from Lowland Scots, and Highland peasants differently from Highland landlords... (Calloway 2008: 13)

I will proceed through this thesis acknowledging both the Gaels’ significant role in overseas British colonialism, as well as working from the basis that some dimension of internal colonialism appears to have been influencing the *Gàidhealtachd*³⁰ and that it disproportionately affected the *tuath* or tenantry, the lower class of Gaelic society. If we go back to Stroh’s statement about the Gaels having been considered a separate ethnic group within Scotland, with a ‘distinct language, locality, political, legal, administrative and economic structures, and cultural traditions’, it seems to follow that this ethnic group would also have had a distinct cosmology and epistemology. Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the fact that there is a body of Gaelic Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Scotland (Ní Mhathúna 2021), with Traditional Ecological Knowledge being a term pioneered by, and most often associated with, Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing (Cajete 2018: 15). Distinct Gaelic ways of knowing have generally gone unrecognised by scholars, possibly due to the inherent duality of an intellectual tradition which is thoroughly Gaelic as well as simultaneously being influenced by the western philosophical tradition, particularly Judaeo-Christian cosmology. To acknowledge, as this thesis does, that a Gaelic epistemology and cosmology existed in the past also encourages questions about what these ways of knowing look like nowadays, after at

³⁰ See, for example, hostility towards Gaelic and Gaels from the sixteenth century onwards in MacGregor 2007: 7-48, particularly at p. 30.

least four centuries' worth of active suppression of Gaelic language and culture and policies which aimed at culturally assimilating Gaels into Anglophone British society. This is outwith the remit of this thesis, but I hope this study contributes to this emerging conversation.

To use the term 'indigenous' in the context of an European ethnic group which not only benefitted from but also directly participated in the colonisation and subjugation of other racialised ethnic groups overseas is contentious. To enter here into an in-depth discussion of whether the use of this term is applicable to Scottish Gaels or their culture would sidetrack this thesis. I will, however, argue for the relevance and applicability of indigenous scholarship to the Scottish Gaelic context, particularly to the subject of this thesis. Kuokkanen argues that 'indigenous knowledge is... constituted in response to past circumstances and shared with other members of the community through language, oral tradition and ceremonies' (Kuokkanen 2006: 254; c.f. Cordova 2007: 54-60). While *dùthchas* may not have been the subject of philosophical treatises or university lectures, its embeddedness within clanship suggests that, as a concept, it was experienced communally and shared among Gaels 'through language, oral tradition and ceremonies',³¹ with the public performance of Gaelic poetry being an expression of all three of these. Subsequent chapters of this thesis will show that by using the term *dùthchas* in their work, Gaelic poets were attempting to reaffirm, recapitulate, and even reformulate cultural and behavioural norms. A theoretical concept which was highly influential in the writing of this thesis, particularly its later chapters, is what indigenous scholar Glen Coulthard calls 'grounded normativity'. Coulthard states that 'grounded normativity' is the 'place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice' and defines it as 'the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time' (Coulthard 2014: 13). I interpret the word 'normativity' as referring here to that which is 'proper', 'justified' or 'ethical': a framework of reciprocal expectations at the heart of what anchors an individual from a traditional background among their people and within their culture, out of which emanates the way this individual relates to the world around them. This normativity is 'grounded' because Coulthard sees the land itself, with all of the human and more-than-human relationships which it engenders, as the source of this ethical system.³² This concept is the closest conceptual and semantic fit for what I understand to be at the centre of *dùthchas*. In the section on the 'etymology and polysemy of *dùthchas*' above I mentioned

³¹ These ceremonies included the inaugurations of chiefs or kings, where a *seanchaidh* – a Gaelic term for a tradition-bearer, historian and genealogist – recited the ancestry of the leader being inaugurated. See, for example, Newton 2019: 132-4.

³² As per Coulthard's own definition of 'grounded normativity' as an 'ethical framework' stemming from 'place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge' – see Coulthard 2014: 60.

the ‘earthy’ quality of the etymological root *dù-* apparently shared by *dùthchas*, *dùthaich*, *dual(chas)* and *duine*, and the idea that *dùth* and *dual* refer to things which are ‘due’, ‘right’, ‘just’ and ‘proper’ suggests to me that *dùthchas* could be a central aspect of a Gaelic ‘grounded normativity’, albeit one ruptured by the incursion of many western norms and attitudes. Subsequent chapters of this thesis will explore how *dùthchas* appears to have shaped people’s relationship to place as well as their social relationships, and how this evolved over time.

Finally, if we perceive at least some of the Anglophone pressure exerted upon the *Gàidhealtachd* as that of a coloniser, then examining the *Gàidhealtachd* through mainly Anglophone sources would run the highest risk of accepting the coloniser’s view of the *Gàidhealtachd*. This is the reason why this thesis gives Gaelic sources primacy, inspired by the suggestions of Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith for what ‘decolonising methodologies’ should look like. Smith states that centuries of dehumanisation and othering of indigenous peoples have excluded them from history and from writing their own accounts of it. She speaks of how ‘indigenous societies had their own systems of order’ and that this was ‘dismissed through what Albert Memmi referred to as a series of negations: they were not fully human, they were not civilized enough to have systems, they were not literate, their languages and modes of thought were inadequate’ (Smith 1999: 28). Anglophone voices seem to have used this series of negations to deny the idea that there was a Gaelic ‘system of order’, too, accusing Gaels of ‘barbarity’ and ‘incivility’ since at least the time of James VI (c.f. MacGregor 2007: 28, 30, 36). By looking at what appears to have been a central aspect of Gaelic epistemology, this thesis aims to bypass Anglophone assumptions about Gaelic ways of knowing and ‘systems of order’, and to further our understanding of how Gaels existed within the British Empire, at once resisting it from within as well as propagating it.

Methodology: the practical framework

I will now delve into the practical aspects of this study's methodology. I will first discuss what informed the decision to choose 1640 – 1900 as the time scope of the study, and what challenges this came with. Secondly, I will explain the process of primary source selection. The third section lists the titles of the primary sources which were used in the creation of my database containing instances of *dùthchas* (Appendix A) and notes a few quantitative features of this otherwise qualitative study. The final, fourth section explains the structure of the database (Appendix A).

Time scope: 1640 to 1900

The decision to use Scottish Gaelic poetry as the primary source for this study also helped shape its time scope. As the section on 'source selection' below demonstrates, I believe that having as large a sample size as possible will allow me to write a comprehensive analysis of the history of the usage of *dùthchas* in the *Gàidhealtachd*. Despite this, the study had to be constrained within a specific time scope in order to keep its sample to a manageable size.

I decided to use 1640 as the start date. This roughly corresponds with the start of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, a series of conflicts which heavily affected parts of the *Gàidhealtachd* and had lasting political repercussions for all of Scotland (Stiùbhart 2021a: 27; Thomson 1991a: 155; Dow 1979: 61-71). Certain aspects of Gaelic society appear to have been in flux since the start of the seventeenth century, and after the Tudor conquest effected the collapse of Gaelic Ireland, the 'traditional political and cultural links between Scottish and Irish Gaeldom were weakened and broken' (McLeod 2004: 194-219 at 194). Internal tumult and feuding in the *Gàidhealtachd* seem to have been fomented by the policies of James VI, a monarch who denounced Gaels as 'wild savageis' and popularised the use of the term 'Erse' (Irish) when referring to Gaelic which made it seem foreign to Scotland (Hunter 1999: 175-6). Just before the start of this century, a group of Lowland colonists had been sent to the Isle of Lewis to 'civilise' its people (MacCoinnich 2015), while 1609 Statutes of Iona seem to represent the central government's intensified desire to bring the Hebridean clan chiefs within their Anglophone sphere of influence.³³ On one hand, having the data collection begin at a point in time when 'the break-up of the kin-based society [had] began to happen in the Highlands' (Bannerman 1986: 120) may seem counterintuitive – surely, to best

³³ See discussion of the Statutes of Iona in the introduction to chapter five below.

understand a concept which was at the very heart of this kin-based society one should turn to sources which date to a time before its 'break-up' began? One major hindrance to doing so is the paucity of Scottish Gaelic poetry dating back to such a time. Availability of material is not the only factor which favours starting the time scope of this study in the seventeenth century, however. Subsequent chapters will show that the poets appear to have been appealing to *dùthchas* precisely *because* the kin-based society which was held together by it was disintegrating, and the poetry was intended as a reminder to the clan chiefs and *daoine uaisle* or clan gentry to adhere to the ethical framework encoded in this Gaelic form of 'grounded normativity'.

The next chapter of this thesis will look at the earliest sources containing the term *dùthchas* – many of these have an Irish provenance, to help mitigate the limiting factor of source paucity in Gaelic Scotland. The fifth chapter is where the main analytical part of this thesis starts, with an in-depth analysis of two poems dating to the 1640s, relating to the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, and composed by 'classical poets'. The sixth chapter will look at the work of various 'clan poets' whose language and style sets them apart from the 'classical poets', whose poetry focuses on their chief and clan, and whose work is dated predominantly to the second half of the seventeenth century. The seventh chapter will look at how the Jacobite poet-propagandists used the term *dùthchas* in relation to the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite Risings. In chapter eight, the poetry of Mairearad Ghriogarach and Donnchadh 'Bàn' Macintyre will be used as a case study to analyse the way *dùthchas* was used by one obscure poet and one of the best-known Gaelic poets of all time, and how the late eighteenth-century context influenced this. Finally, in chapter nine we will look at *dùthchas* in the poetry of the nineteenth century, from the relative paucity of material and dejected tone of the first half of the nineteenth century, to the zealous anthems of the Land Agitations of the 1880s.

This leads us to the end of the time scope which falls on the year 1900.³⁴ A line had to be drawn to keep the project manageable, and the end of the century seemed appropriate. This would allow me to look at the way *dùthchas* was used during the Land Agitations as well as in their aftermath. The Land Agitations, especially if seen as a response to the Clearances, appear to have provided the ideological stimulation for renewed political activism a century later, during the 'land reform revolution' which spread from Assynt and Eigg to almost three-quarters of na h-Eileanan Siar from the 1990s onwards (Hunter 2018: 296-314; MacKenzie 2013: 38-44, 66-72, et passim; MacPhail 2002; MacKenzie 1997: 7-9; MacAskill 1999: 24-5 as well as footnotes). If *dùthchas* was implicated in the ideological framework of the Land Agitations, it would thus also be implicated in contemporary Scotland's land reform movement. Choosing the end of the time scope was not easy considering

³⁴ The latest poem in my corpus, A:46, is dated to around 1895.

many of the burning issues at the centre of the Land Agitations – such as land hunger and the lack of legal protection for cottars – did not disappear at the end of the century but continued into the twentieth. Land raids carried on, such as the famous ones on Vatersay in 1906 (Buxton 2008), and even seem to have intensified for some time after the First World War, when the government promises of ‘land for heroes’ did not materialise (Robertson 2002: 37-52; Robertson 2016: 45-53; Hunter 2018: 265-71; Buchanan 1998: 93-127). My research has indicated that the term *dùthchas* continued to be used at this point; indeed, many of South Uist’s most famous *bàird baile* or ‘township bards’ were using the term in a traditional manner well into the second half of the twentieth century, and modern Gaelic poets continue using it to this day. Although I will not reach this material in this study, I believe this thesis will highlight how important researching this concept in the context of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries would be.

Poetry and source selection

When outlining the research approach of this study above, I have already mentioned the reasons for choosing Scottish Gaelic poetry as the primary source for studying *dùthchas*. In this section, I will briefly outline the process of source selection and analysis.

My primary aim was to have as large a sample size as possible. Although I knew that my corpus of instances of *dùthchas* in Scottish Gaelic poetry was not going to be completely comprehensive, I also believed that a large sample size was the best way of making the corpus as representative as possible. Material survival was always going to be the limiting factor of such a corpus. For example, geographically-speaking, my corpus is skewed towards poetry from the western *Gàidhealtachd* – the Hebrides, Lochaber, northern Argyll – but this reflects general survival trends of Gaelic poetry which favour these localities over others. Chronologically-speaking, my corpus contains 25 poems dated to the second half of the eighteenth century, compared with 6 poems dated to the first half of the nineteenth century. Again, this reflects a general lacuna in survival of early nineteenth-century poetry rather than a conscious or subconscious bias favouring late eighteenth-century poetry.³⁵

I cast my net as wide as I could in two distinct ways. The first of these was by using the ‘standard query’ search function on the Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic website (DASG, ‘Corpas na Gàidhlig’). I was able to include ‘lenited forms’ and make the search ‘accent insensitive’ to maximise

³⁵ For more on this early nineteenth-century lacuna, see MacGregor forthcoming: 2-3.

results; since *dùthchas* is a word which slenderises, I also conducted a separate search for its slenderised form (i.e. *dùthchais*). Furthermore, orthographic conventions in Gaelic have evolved over time, as in any living language: *dùthchas* was also spelled *dùchas* in the past, and my search included this historical form. Although the DASG corpus has been invaluable in helping me determine which publications might be most germane for this study, DASG's corpus of Scottish Gaelic texts is not complete, and over half of the anthologies consulted for this thesis have not been catalogued by the DASG project.³⁶ What this has meant in practice is that even with DASG's help, most of the data collection has entailed a line-by-line close reading of the source texts for *dùthchas*.

This line-by-line close reading was the second way in which I cast as wide a net as possible. The source texts of choice were anthologies of Scottish Gaelic poetry which corresponded to my time scope. Although I did not keep track of the total number of poems I analysed in this way, the number of poems in all of the source text anthologies is 930, which gives an indication of the scale of this project. All of these are named in the section 'The sources' immediately below and generally include anthologies confined to a particular period (for example, Meek's anthology *Caran an t-Saoghail*, an anthology of nineteenth-century poetry) or the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society's anthologies of the work of a particular poet (for example, the 2014 publication of Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh's poems edited by Ó Baoill). I included the anthologies *Bàrdachd Albannach* (1978) and *Duanaire na Sracaire* (2019) among these despite the former containing poetry composed before 1542 and the remit of the latter ending around the year 1600. This was because I wanted to understand the context the term was being used in prior to my starting point of 1640. The one instance of *dùthchas* in *Bàrdachd Albannach* is a significant discovery, as it is the earliest datable instance of *dùthchas* originating in Scotland. Nonetheless, the pre-1640 usage of *dùthchas* in a Scottish context appeared to be rare even in an anthology as extensive as *Duanaire na Sracaire*, and much of the poetry in the *Duanaire* pertained to Ireland. This made me realise that if I wanted to find instances of *dùthchas* that pre-dated the sixteenth century, I would have to turn to Ireland for these. This led me to use the search functions of the Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language and Katharine Simms' online Bardic Poetry Database. This line of enquiry was very fruitful and resulted in an entire chapter – 'Earliest Usage', chapter four – which gives an overview of the antiquity of *dùthchas* in the Irish context, with evidence suggesting the term was known in Scotland by the thirteenth century.

³⁶ These include *Duanaire na Sracaire*, *The MacDiarmid MS Anthology*, *Òran na Comhachaig*, *Gàir nan Clàrsach*, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, *The Gaelic Bards of Morvern*, *Màiri Mhòr nan Òran*, *Mairghread nighean Lachlainn*, *Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair*, *Iain mac Mhurchaidh*, *Clàrsach an Doire*, *The Glendale Bards*, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin* and *Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh*.

In those instances where DASG was able to provide me with a page number where an instance of *dùthchas* may be found, all other data – what poem the term appears in, the poet’s name, their geographical affiliation, the date of composition, and any other supporting contextual information – had to be entered into my database manually, which was a slow process. I had to translate the relevant stanzas where *dùthchas* appears into English wherever an anthology did not include English translations, though fortunately most of the anthologies published by Birlinn and the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society have side-by-side English translations. Translations are given ‘as is’ in my database, but in the few instances where I disagreed with an editor’s choice of translation, I made this evident in my analysis. Likewise, when the source texts of my database entries or fragments of poems are quoted anywhere in this thesis, the text is given exactly as it was by the editors of the respective anthologies, even if this does not follow the modern Gaelic Orthographic Convention spelling rules. The structure of my poetry database, Appendix A, is explained in a section below.

Three cases of ‘remedial action’ have been taken to make the corpus intentionally more representative. The first of these relates to the poetry of Mairearad Ghriogarach. DASG searches indicated that there were two late eighteenth-century poets whose printed works included several instances of *dùthchas* each, a remarkable prevalence. These were Mairearad Ghriogarach and her contemporary, Iain MacGhiogair.³⁷ Both collections were printed in the early nineteenth century with no modern-day editions available – I have generally avoided these types of publications for pragmatic reasons, as the time constraints of a doctoral thesis have meant I would not have enough time to analyse each individual poem for its contextual background and plausible date of composition. I decided to make an exception and include Mairearad’s poetry in my corpus and database while omitting Iain’s. I made this choice because the corpus of Scottish Gaelic poetry – and thus my own database – is heavily skewed towards male poets. I believe the corpus needs to include as many female voices as possible in order to be representative of the Gaels’ understanding of *dùthchas* and allow for an analysis of how gender influenced one’s experience of *dùthchas*. Another welcome effect of including Mairearad’s poetry was remedying the geographical bias due to this poet’s Perthshire provenance, a region underrepresented in the corpus. The reasons listed above meant that additional time and effort was required to analyse Mairearad’s poetry, but I believe that the analysis in the eighth chapter demonstrates that this was a worthwhile use of time and effort.

The second instance of ‘remedial action’ relates to the poetry of Niall MacLeòid (Neil MacLeod). A line-by-line search through Meg Bateman’s 2014 edition of *The Glendale Bards* – which

³⁷ The fact that both of these poets were contemporary MacGregors of a Perthshire or Rannoch geographical provenance, and their work contains an unusually concentrated prevalence of the term *dùthchas*, is in itself important and deserves further study.

includes the poetry of Niall, his brother Iain Dubh, and their father Dòmhnall nan Òran – yielded only one result of the term *dùthchas* (A:73). I knew that Bateman’s publication was not a comprehensive anthology of all of Niall’s poems, as the popular poet’s repertoire was exceptionally broad. I acknowledge that being guided by intuition is not a generally accepted method of conducting research, but I felt an urge to also search for *dùthchas* in *Clàrsach an Doire*, a collection of Niall’s poetry and short stories first published in 1883 and the most-reprinted Gaelic poetry book of all time. I found three instances of *dùthchas* in this collection, and I hope that as with Maireadar’s poems, the analysis in the ninth chapter where we explore nineteenth-century poetry demonstrates that this was an important exception to make, even if additional time was required to date, translate, and contextualise these three poems.

The final instance of ‘remedial action’ relates to the work of the ‘classical poets’ operative within Gaelic Scotland. As I have hinted above, the chronological remit of *Duanaire na Sracaire* ends before the start of my time scope, and the anthology contains very few instances of *dùthchas* in poetry which was either composed by a ‘Scottish’ poet or directly pertained to Scotland.³⁸ I knew I would have to turn elsewhere to find classical poetry which fit within my time scope. While classical poetry is linguistically and stylistically distinct from the vernacular poetry which constitutes the bulk of my primary source material, I believed that including this genre in my study was important as it is Scotland’s direct link with the centuries-old classical ‘bardic’ tradition and would demonstrate the relevance of some of the Irish sources examined in the ‘Earliest Usage’ chapter below to the Scottish context. I am grateful to my supervisor Martin MacGregor who was able to point me in the direction of seven articles by various Scottish Gaelic scholars containing items of otherwise unpublished poetry by Scotland’s ‘classical poets’. Two of these contain the term *dùthchas* and date to the period in question, and the title of these articles is given below.

The sources

The following is a list of the 27 sources which were consulted in the creation of the database (Appendix A). Those which have an asterisk next to them are sources which were analysed line-by-line, but did not contain any instances of *dùthchas*. The sources may be divided into three categories:

³⁸ The introduction to chapter five where the work of the ‘classical’ poets is analysed discusses the challenges in classifying material as such.

- 1) edited anthologies covering a specified time period and/or geographical area, including the works of multiple bards. These have, for the most part, been published in the twentieth or twenty-first century and include English translations of the source texts, as well as editorial remarks, such as biographical details about the bards or approximate dates of composition.
- 2) edited anthologies covering the work of one particular bard. Like the anthologies above, these have mostly been published in the twentieth or twenty-first century and typically include English translations of the source texts, as well as editorial remarks, such as approximate dates of composition.
- 3) all other types of sources. These include poetry collections which were first published before the twentieth century and tend not to contain English translations or editorial remarks. These also include two articles containing unpublished 'classical poetry'.

The following sources fall into the first category and are arranged in order of their chronological remit:

- McLeod, Wilson and Bateman, Meg (eds.) (2019) *Duanaire na Sracaire: Songbook of the Pillagers, an Anthology of Scottish Gaelic Verse to 1600*. Revised edition, first published in 2007. Edinburgh: Birlinn
- Watson, William J. (ed.) (1978) *Bàrdachd Albannach: Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*. Revised edition, first published in 1937. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.) (1997) *Duanaire Colach, 1537-1757*. Aberdeen: An Clò Gàidhealach
- Ó Baoill, Colm and Bateman, Meg (eds.) (2019) *Gàir Nan Clàrsach - The Harps' Cry: Anthology of 17th Century Gaelic Poetry*. Revised edition, first published in 1994. Edinburgh: Birlinn
- Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.) (1979) *Bàrdachd Chloinn Ghill-Eathain: Eachann Bacach and Other Maclean Poets*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- Black, Ronald (ed.) (2019) *An Lasair: An Anthology of Eighteenth-century Gaelic Verse*. Revised edition, first published in 2001. Edinburgh: Birlinn
- Campbell, John Lorne (ed.) (1984) *Highland Songs of the Forty-five*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- *Thomson, Derick S. (ed.) (1992) *The MacDiarmid MS Anthology*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society

- Thornber, Iain (ed.) (1985) *The Gaelic bards of Morvern*. Morvern: Iain Thornber
- Bateman, Meg (2014) *Bàird Ghleann Dail: The Glendale Bards*. Edinburgh: John Donald
- Meek, Donald (ed.) (1995) *Tuath is Tighearna / Tenants and Landlords: An Anthology of Gaelic Poetry of Social and Political Protest from the Clearances to the Land Agitation*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society.
- Meek, Donald (ed.) (2019) *Caran an t-Saoghail / The Wiles of the World: An Anthology of Nineteenth-century Gaelic Verse*. Revised edition, first published in 2003. Edinburgh: Birlinn

The following sources fall into the second category:

- Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.) (2009) *Mairghread nighean Lachlainn, song-maker of Mull*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- *Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.) (1972) *Bàrdachd Shìlis na Ceapaich / Poems and Songs by Sileas MacDonald*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- Ó Baoill, Colm (ed.) (2014) *Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh: Song-maker of Skye and Berneray*. Glasgow: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- MacKenzie, Annie M. (ed.) (1964) *Òrain Iain Luim: Songs of John MacDonald, Bard of Keppoch*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- Matheson, William (ed.) (1970) *The Blind Harper / An Clàrsair Dall: The Songs of Roderick Morison and his Music*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- *Thomson, Derick S. (ed.) (1996) *Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: Selected Poems*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- Matheson, William (ed.) (1938) *The Songs of John MacCodrum*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- Chaimbeul, Màiri Sine (ed.) (2020) *Iain mac Mhurchaidh: the Life and Work of John MacRae, Kintail and North Carolina*. Glasgow: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- MacLeod, Angus (ed.) (1952) *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin / The Songs of Duncan Ban Macintyre*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- Calder, George (ed.) (1937) *Gaelic Songs by William Ross*. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society
- Meek, Donald (ed.) (1998) *Màiri Mhòr nan Òran: Taghadh de a h-Òrain*. Revised edition, first published in 1977. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society

The following sources fall into the third category:

- MacIntoisich, Donncha (ed.) (1831) *Co-chruinneach dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghaeleach Nach Robh Riamh Roimh ann an Clo-buala*. Edinburgh: John Elder
- MacLeòid, Niall (1975) *Clàrsach an Doire: Dàin, Òrain agus Sgeulachdan*. Revised edition, first published in 1883. Glasgow: GAIRM
- Watson, William J. (ed.) (1927) 'Unpublished Gaelic Poetry – III' in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 75-91.
- Watson, William J. (ed.) (1931) 'Unpublished Gaelic Poetry – IV, V' in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. 3, pp. 139-59.

It is worth noting that only three of the anthologies which I analysed in the course of my research did not contain the term *dùthchas*, a figure which was influenced to some degree by my ability to 'pre-screen' some texts using DASG's search function, but nonetheless reflects the general prevalence of the term in Scottish Gaelic poetry. There are 77 total instances of *dùthchas* in my database, 69 of which date to the 1640 – 1900 period (eight of them pre-date the start date of 1640). Out of the total 930 poems which I analysed line-by-line, 807 fall into the 1640 – 1900 time scope. This means that *dùthchas* appears in just under 9% of all the Scottish Gaelic poems composed within my time scope. Because this is a ground-breaking study, I am unable to compare this frequency of use to other concepts. A preliminary comparison can be made using DASG's corpus of Scottish Gaelic. The DASG corpus is made up of 625 texts – though it must be noted that not all of these are poetry – and *dùthchas* with its lenited form *dhùthchas* appears in 133 of these 625 texts (around 21%); by way of comparison, *aoigheachd* (meaning 'hospitality') appears in 103 out of the total 625 texts (around 16%), *dìlseachd* (meaning 'loyalty') and its lenited form *dhìlseachd* appear in 172 of these 625 texts (around 27%), while *càirdeas* (meaning 'kinship' or 'friendship') and its lenited form *chàirdeas* appear in 361 out of the total 625 texts (around 58%). I believe that the fact that *dùthchas* appears in Scottish Gaelic texts more often than the word for 'hospitality' and just slightly less frequently than the word for 'loyalty' supports the idea that this concept was central to this kin-based society and its use was prevalent.

The Database – Appendix A

The database of all instances of *dùthchas* which I have collected is called Appendix A and appears at the end of this thesis. I also occasionally refer to it as ‘my corpus’. The database contains the word *dùthchas* in all its grammatical variations, including its lenited and slenderised forms (*dhùthchas*, *dùthchais*, and *dhùthchais*). It also contains the six instances of adjective *dùthchasach* with its lenited and slenderised forms.³⁹ The database is comprised of 77 entries, 69 of which date to the period 1640 – 1900. It is worth noting that most entries are composed of at least one quatrain of *bàrdachd*, meaning some entries contain more than one term from the *dù*- lexical family – where relevant, this has been highlighted in the analysis.

There are columns in the database. The first column contains an identifying number for each entry which is the shorthand I will most commonly use to refer to them. Thus, the second entry in the database (Appendix) would be referred to as ‘A:2’ in this shorthand; the fortieth entry would be ‘A:40’, and so on. With every entry in the database having an identifying number, I was able to sort the database according to different criteria (chronological order of composition, for example) without changing what individual entries were referred to.

The second column contains the name of the poet, if known. The names tend to be given in their Gaelic form with the English form given in parentheses, but this is not standardised – some poets are in fact referred to by their *far-ainm* or pseudonym. This is because many Gaelic poets are known by multiple names – the renowned Iain Lom is far better known by his pseudonym than by the English form of his name, ‘John MacDonald’, which is rarely used. Some poets are referred to by their patronymic (*Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh*, for example) while others by their ‘clan’ name (*Uilleam Ros*, for example). The poet’s identity is always discernible from the information supplied in the other columns, should any uncertainties arise.

The third column contains the name of the composition or its first line. This has not been standardised either, as there are many songs in the Gaelic tradition which are known by more than one title. As with the poets’ names, I hope that the supplementary information and detailed references to printed texts will streamline their identification in case of any doubts.

The fourth column contains the approximate date of the poem’s composition. Some poems were composed in the aftermath of a datable event which make it possible to accurately date the composition down to the month or even day in which it was composed. However, establishing a date

³⁹ Such as ‘*fearainn dhùthchasaich*’ in A:5.

of composition for many of the poems in my corpus is not a straightforward matter. Some poems cannot be dated with any certainty at all, or there are multiple equally-plausible interpretations. I have benefitted from the fact that almost all of the source texts used to create my database are edited anthologies (see ‘The sources’ above), which means the overwhelming majority of the dates given in this column were established by the anthologies’ editors. In the case of Mairearad Ghriogarach’s poetry (MacIntosich 1831) and some of Niall MacLeòid’s compositions (MacLeòid 1975) I have exercised due diligence and attempted to provide as accurate an estimate as possible, using any contextual clues from the poem itself or the poet’s lifespan if no other supporting information could be gleaned. In many cases the dating is a *terminus post quem*: a song about a battle cannot have been composed before the skirmish took place but could hypothetically have been composed several years after the event. Nonetheless, the nature of Gaelic poetry is such that it tends to comment on contemporary affairs and it may be assumed that in the majority of cases the composition was created shortly after the *terminus post quem*.

It is important to bear in mind that much of Gaelic poetry was composed (and intended to be performed) orally, and poems which originate in the seventeenth century may only have been collected from the oral tradition more than a century later. Likewise, a number of poets in my database are known not to have been literate, with Donnchadh ‘Bàn’ Macintyre being one famous example. What this means is that in most cases, even the earliest extant copies of these poets’ compositions are secondary sources. Typically of oral tradition, many poems appear to have been in circulation in different forms at the same time, with verses being added or forgotten and words changing over time from whatever the poem’s ‘original’ state may have been.

The fifth column gives the geographical origin or affiliation of the poet wherever it was possible to establish this. This may include information about the poets’ family origins, as identifying these ancestral connections may allow a better understanding of the context within which they composed their poetry. In a sense, I feel that this is in itself an indicator of the importance of *dùthchas* within Gaelic society: in a culture which didn’t believe that poesy was a gift inherited from one’s ancestors, or a culture which didn’t emphasise a collective connection to place through ancestral birthright, information about a poet’s parents and their origins could not be as informative as it is in this context. Finally, some poets are associated with more than one place. There are many possible reasons for this, as some bards lived relatively mobile lives and moved, emigrated, or were cleared to different places in their lifetime. Wherever such information was available, it has been included in this column.

The sixth column contains the excerpt of text itself. The Gaelic original appears first and an English translation always follows below. The translations provided are the work of the respective editors of the source text. If no English translation was available, I have clearly marked the translation as my own. On one hand, the length of excerpts has meant that the database has grown somewhat unwieldy, however context is crucial when determining the nature of an utterance and its effect within a sentence or within a verse of a poem. Therefore, the excerpt is frequently a quatrain or an entire verse. At times, text from multiple verses appears if there is a strong thematic or, indeed, semantic link between the lines. Omissions are represented with ellipses.

The seventh column provides summary context for the excerpt. It often originates from the editorial work on the source texts and contains biographical information about the poet or the background of the composition itself. If a composition addresses a particular person or event, as Gaelic poetry often does, I have also tried to include some information about the subject.

The eighth column lists the source of the excerpt. This includes the title of the publication in order to enable its identification, followed by page numbers and line numbers where these were available. Certain publications do not have numbered lines, in which case the line numbers were calculated by me and recorded to assist with the location of lines or excerpts within the source texts.

4. Earliest usage: *dùthchas* before 1640

The main goal of this chapter is to investigate whether the term *dùthchas* was used in Irish and Scottish Gaelic prior to 1640. If so, such attestations will provide a contextual base that allows subsequent chapters to analyse post-1640 usage of *dùthchas* in Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd* as forming part of a cultural-linguistic continuum that is both conservative and constantly evolving. I will begin by discussing the low survival of medieval and early modern Gaelic manuscripts in Scotland, which will lead me to justify the relevance and practicality of looking to Irish sources for early uses of the term *dùthchas* in a thesis focusing on the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*. After this introductory section, I will examine three Irish prose sources in chronological order, followed by a few instances of *dùthchas* in early 'bardic' poetry which survive in Irish sources, but were composed by men who had links to Scotland. I will then examine the earliest instances of *dùthchas* in Scottish sources – one in a poem, one in a legal document, and both dating to the sixteenth century.

As I have alluded to above, the corpus of extant medieval and early modern Gaelic manuscripts pertaining to – or originating from – Scotland is small, especially if compared with the extant contemporary material from Ireland. The contrast is so stark that Kathleen Hughes has suggested these low rates of survival reflect on Scottish society of this period as one in which little was being written down (Hughes 1980). Other scholars have suggested that language shift – from Gaelic to Latin and Scots – in Scotland's royal court, ecclesiastical centres, and coastal Lowland burghs may have influenced manuscript survival and that much of the earlier material in Gaelic simply stopped being copied (Sims-Williams 1998: 20; c.f. Ní Mhaonaigh 2013: 103, MacGregor 2002: 227, Hogg & MacGregor 2018: 114-6, MacGregor 2006a: 209-18, MacCoinnich 2008).

There are other challenges associated with the surviving corpus of written medieval and early modern Gaelic. It is often difficult to classify a Gaelic-language manuscript as 'Scottish' (Coira 2012: 31-2). This is because for most of the period from about 1200 – 1650, the language of Gaelic literature in Ireland as well as Scotland was usually – with notable exceptions – Classical Gaelic. This was a conservative '*lingua franca* of the Gaelic literati' which 'differed... from the vernacular Gaelic of Scotland and from that spoken in many parts of Ireland' while still giving the learned class a tool for 'easy communication within the wider Gaelic world' of this period (MacCoinnich 2008: 309-310). This would make it hard to definitively classify a manuscript written in Classical Gaelic, using *corra-litir* or Gaelic script, containing few details which aid identification, as either unquestionably 'Irish' or 'Scottish' (Black 1989: 150).

There is far more surviving medieval Gaelic material classified as ‘Irish’ than that which is ‘Scottish’. MacInnes argued that in the period when Classical Gaelic flourished – and perhaps up until the War of the Three Kingdoms – Ireland and Scotland’s *Gàidhealtachd* formed ‘one cultural and linguistic province, if not exactly a unity’ (MacInnes 2006a: 266-7). The notion of pan-Gaelic political unity – sometimes referred to as ‘Greater Gaeldom’ – has been thoroughly scrutinised (McLeod 2004: 1-13 *et passim*) but it has still been suggested that ‘if there is a current consensus, it may be acceptant of the idea of a late-medieval Greater Gaelic culture-province rather than anything more’ (MacGregor 2024a: 7).⁴⁰ There is evidence of skilled craftspeople like learned poets, physicians or stonemasons crossing the marine borders of this ‘culture-province’. Indeed, Gaelic Scotland’s most renowned dynasty of highly-trained bards, the MacMhuirich family, traced its ancestry back to Muireadhach Albannach, an Irish Gael who settled in Scotland (MacGregor 2024a: 18-20). The literary language of Classical Gaelic aside, the vernacular languages spoken in the different regions of this ‘Greater Gaelic culture-province’ are closely linguistically related. Many words in these Goidelic languages share etymological roots and have a history of similar – or parallel – usage. *Dùthchas*, spelled *dúthchas* or *dúchas* in Irish, is one such word (McQuillan 2004: 20, c.f. Dwelly 1902: 375). Considering the remit of this chapter is examining usage of *dùthchas* before 1640 and there is dearth of Scottish material which fits this chronology, including Irish instances of this term in my analysis significantly increased the material available for analysis.

⁴⁰ The page numbers for this article may not match the ones in the published version as I was referring to the pagination of the unpublished manuscript.

Éire: Ireland

I must preface this entire section by saying that I am not a speaker of Irish nor a scholar of medieval Ireland. The existence of the search function in the Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language (eDIL) is what enabled me to interact with this material. The eDIL database is fundamentally different to the corpus of the Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic. eDIL is a digitalisation of the *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, a mammoth project which began in 1913, and saw regular publications until its completion in 1976, with some 35,000 entries in total. As such, eDIL is comprised of ‘illustrative’ examples of historical usage of certain words or phrases, rather than being a comprehensive transcription and digitalisation of all medieval Irish MS ever compiled.⁴¹ While considering the findings with these limitations in mind, we can still confidently state that *dúthchas* appears in *at least* 31 unique sources spanning several centuries of Irish literary history. These sources range from annals (such as the early sixteenth-century Annals of Ulster and the Annals of the Four Masters, compiled 1632-1636), genealogical tracts (of the Hy-Fiachrach and the Hy-Many), the writings of Geoffrey Keating (c. 1570 – 1644), hagiographies (the sixteenth-century *Betha Colaim Chille* and *The Birth and Life of St. Moling*, edited from a manuscript compiled 1628-1629), the Great Book of Lecan (c. 1380 x 1417), the Book of the O’Conor Don (compiled 1631 but containing bardic poetry from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries) to William Bedell’s Irish Bible (published posthumously in 1685), among many others (eDIL: *dúthchas*, online).

The thematic and chronological breadth of sources wherein *dúthchas* appears is vast. However, the eDIL search results do not yield many instances in the early Irish law tracts. This has caught McQuillan’s attention, who suggests that this absence sets *dúthchas* apart from ‘many of the terms with which it is associated [such as] *dligheadh*, *ceart*, *díre* and *díleas*... which are important *legal* terms in their own right’ (McQuillan 2004: 181). Because the preferred term for ‘inheritance’ or ‘patrimony’ in the Old Irish law texts is *orbae*, McQuillan concludes that *dúthchas* ‘is more part of the socio-cultural sphere than of the legal sphere’ (ibid: 32). There is, however, much evidence to the contrary, even if it does not date back to the Old Irish period. For example, *dúthchas* is attested in *Córus Bésgnai*, a law tract on the relationship between the various social strata of early medieval Ireland, particularly the Church and lay-people. It does appear in a later gloss, though, rather than in the original eighth-century compilation of the *Senchus Már* (‘*cach aircindchecht iar nduthchus do reir*

⁴¹ This was kindly explained to me in an email by Professor Gregory Toner, who digitised the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* between 2003 – 2007.

choir’ or ‘every superior-ship by hereditary right in accordance with justness’ in Breatnach 1989: 32; emphasis my own). This may well be the earliest instance of *dúthchas* appearing alongside the semantically-related term *còir*, a collocative relationship which will continue featuring in every subsequent chapter of this thesis. *Dúthchas* and *dúthaigh* also appear together in an inheritance-related law tract within the MacEgan legal treatise (1309), determining the number of cows due as recompense in a legal dispute based on the social rank of the parties involved (Kelly 2020b). According to MacEgan’s treatise, a *toisigh* (chieftain) without ‘*aireachta nó fearann toisigheachta nó seoid nó eineach nó ionnracas nó dúthchas*’ (‘retainers or land of chieftainship or chattels or honour or integrity or hereditary land’, emphasis my own) would receive two cows, while the judge would be paid the value of a third of a cow (ibid: 86-7).⁴² The text’s author, *Giolla na Naomh Mac Aodhagáin* (MacEgan), was the chief judge of the province of Connacht and thus educated in matters of Brehon law; this attestation suggests that *dúthchas* was widely recognised by the law-men of Ireland in the early fourteenth century, and perhaps earlier.

Dúthchas – as well as *dúthaigh* – are also found in Irish Gaelic legal deeds dating from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The survival of Gaelic legal deeds in Ireland is far superior to that in Scotland, with 39 such documents translated and published by James Hardiman in 1826, and a further 25 unpublished deeds available online (The Late Medieval Legal Deeds in Irish 2018). Of those which have been transcribed into normalised Latin script, I have identified two that mention *dúthchas*, compiled in 1493 and 1604 (Hardiman 1826: 51-3; The Late Medieval Legal Deeds in Irish 2018: Deed 16), and a further two which mention *dúthaigh*, both compiled in 1582 (ibid: Deed 18, Deed 20). The term *dúthaigh* appears to indicate ‘territory’ in both texts which it appears in, with some emotive connotations in one caveat against eviction (‘*Agus d’éacht ar Sheón gan aonduine aguinn do chur as bhar nduthaige...*’ = ‘And Seón is bound not to eject any of us from our lands...’, ibid: Deed 20, emphasis my own). In the deed of 1493, an agreement between the *Meic Seaáin* (‘Sons of Seathan’) and the *muintir Slatra* (‘people of Slattery’), the term *dúthchas* indicates an inheritance assured to be made good in writing before ‘court and council’ (‘*a mbarantus acus a lamha acus a litir do bheith aig muintir Slatra re ndul a ccuirt acus a ccomhairle do chosnamh a nduchuis agus a ngill doibh a mBaile I Slatra*’ in ibid: Hardiman XVIII; Hardiman 1826: 51-2, emphasis my own). By contrast, the 1604 deed is a bond by which the *Sliocht Mhaoil Sheachlainn* (‘Progeny of Maol Seachlainn’) transfer lands and pledge themselves and their heirs to Donnchadh Ó Briain, 4th earl of Thomond. The document lists the people and lands affected by this agreement by name (‘*Sliocht Maoil Sheachlainn, agus Baile Í Bheacháin agus an Beann Ruadh*’) before adding ‘*agus a*

⁴² I am immensely grateful to Dr. Fangzhe Qiu at University College Dublin for this reference as well as his support in matters relating to Ireland’s Brehon laws.

gcuid fineachais agus dúthchais ('and their hereditary land and patrimony'). eDIL defines *finechas* as 'the land and possessions held by a *fine*; hereditary territory' (eDIL: *finechas*, online); this phrase in the 1604 deed would appear to be a caveat ensuring that *all* lands over which the *Sliocht Maoil Sheachlainn* claims a right, whether legally recognised or sanctioned by ancestral connections and custom, are within the catchment of this bond. A very similar phrase differentiating between *dúthchas* and *tighearnas* appears in the legal agreement signed between the Duke of Argyll and Ó Domhnaill in 1560, which we will explore in the section on early Scottish sources below.

Three medieval Irish prose texts which contain the term *dúthchas* are examined in further detail below: *Cogad Gaedhel re Gallaibh*, which is likely to be the oldest secular text to mention *dúthchas*; *Tecosca Cormaic*, a Gaelic wisdom-text providing instructions for rulers; and *Betha Colaim Chille*, which despite being a hagiography of the sixth-century Irish saint can tell us about how *dúthchas* was being used by writers in response to the Tudor conquest of Ireland in the sixteenth century. A fourth section also looks at *dúthchas* in Irish bardic poetry, specifically in the works of two bards who may have been Scottish Gaels or at least spent considerable time in Scotland.

Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib – the War of the Gael against the Foreigner

Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib is a medieval Irish text which narrates the Scandinavian invasions of Ireland of the late 9th and 10th centuries and is strongly biased towards Brian Borumha and the Dál Cais dynasty. The text is important to Irish historiography: fragments of the *Cogad* are quoted in the Annals of the Four Masters, the historian and poet *Seathrún Céitinn* (Geoffrey Keating, died c. 1644) frequently cited its contents, the hagiographer and cleric John Colgan (d. 1658) was familiar with it (Todd 1867: xix), and pertinently to the section on *Betha Colaim Chille* below, it was 'read and cited by [Manus O' Donnell]' in his hagiography of Columba (Cunningham & Gillespie 2013: 497). Scholarly work by Máire Ní Mhaonaigh dates *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* to the reign of Brian Borumha's grandson, Muirchertach Ua Briain, specifically sometime between 1103 – 1113 (Ní Mhaonaigh 1995: 377). Among the secular texts catalogued by eDIL, *Cogad* thus appears to contain one of the earliest instances of the term *dúthchas*.⁴³

⁴³ *Tecosca Cormaic* discussed in the section below appear to have been copied into a manuscript a few decades after *Cogad* was composed, though the linguistic features of the text suggest a much older, eighth-century provenance, complicating the identification of 'the oldest' usage of *dúthchas*.

Stylistically, the text has been described as bipartite, beginning with ‘an annalistic section’ about the initial invasions and their devastating effect on Ireland, followed by a narrative section that resembles ‘the Scandinavian Sagas’ (Todd 1867: xxviii) detailing ‘the activities of Mathgam[h]ain [mac Cennétig] and [his brother], Brian [Borumha]’ (Ní Mhaonaigh 1996: 102). Ní Mhaonaigh argues that even this stylistic choice contributes to the effectiveness of the *Cogad*’s political messaging: ‘after all, Brian’s final achievement is all the greater for his having overcome invaders who had managed virtually to overrun the whole country a few short years previously’ (ibid). Presenting the Viking invasions as a proto-national war of Gael against *Gall* – foreigner – was a work of ‘brilliant propaganda’ on part of the compilers (Ó Corráin 1997: 105-6) and may have had a permanent influence on the meaning of the term *Gall* in both Ireland and Scotland (Todd 1867: xxix).

Two instances of *dúthchas* in *Cogad* are indexed by eDIL and will be discussed here.⁴⁴ The text also contains multiple instances of other words of the *dú* semantic family, and these are often collocated. For example, *dúthchas* occurs in the text after a long discussion between Mathgamhain and Brian, wherein Brian reproaches his brother for agreeing a truce of peace with the foreigners. Brian tells Mathgamhain of the brave deeds of his ancestors who would never have agreed to such a truce – Mathgamhain responds that his truce allowed many to avoid death. Brian replies that ‘death is native and natural to them and to all Dál Cais’ (*‘ba dúthaig doec, ocus ba dúthaig do Dailcais ulí*, emphasis my own) for their forefathers have all met death; but ‘it was not natural or hereditary to them to submit to insult or contempt’ (*‘nirbo dual imorro, ocus nirbo dúthaig doib tár... do gabail*, Todd 1867: 68, emphasis my own). All the Dál Cais were then assembled and the *vox populi* sought on whether truce or war was to follow, of which the people unanimously chose to fight at all costs. Recognising that the people’s decision was rightful (*‘coir*’, another early instance of this term being collocated with *dúthchas*), Mathgamhain says they ought to expel the Danes from Cashel, a place with sacred and political significance to their people which was also ‘the place of their origin and their ancient birthright’ (*‘ba he a m[b]unadus ocus a senducus badein*, Todd 1867: 70, emphasis my own). The sentence which follows appears to grant further legitimacy to ‘battle and combat for their inheritance and for their native right’, especially in contrast with warring ‘for land acquired by conquest and the sword’ (*‘ba farr a fir catha ocus comlaind sin innanduthaig, ocus imma leisclama bunaid innas im an ferand forgabala ocus claidim*, ibid; c.f. McQuillan 2004: 69-70; emphasis my own). As McQuillan points out, ‘*bu dúthaig*’ is the phrase here that carries the sense ‘of something being “right”, “fitting”, or “natural”, but which also denotes “(native) place”, “land”, “territory”’. The abstract noun *dúthchas* (*senducus* or ‘old-*dúthchas*’ here) and the noun *dúthaig* ‘often seems to be

⁴⁴ There are likely more instances of *dúthchas* in the text as a whole, since at least one instance of *dúthchas* from the *Cogad* analysed in McQuillan 2004 does not appear in the eDIL catalogue.

synonymous’ and at times even ‘indistinguishable’ from one another, suggesting to McQuillan that ‘the physical, moral and emotive elements of the land as elaborated by this particular lexical family are considered inseparable’ in Gaelic (McQuillan 2004: 24). Much of the poetry analysed in later chapters explores the ‘conceptual or ideological connection between [a] place as heredity or ancestry’, as well as an evolving understanding of ‘the naturalness or rightness to want to defend it’ which McQuillan exemplifies using fragments of the *Cogad* quoted above (ibid). The phrase which appears in the *Cogad* as ‘*ferand forgabala ocus claidim*’ (‘land acquired by conquest and the sword’) exemplifies the ancient connection between concepts relating to land, legitimacy, conquest, and *dùthchas*. We will re-visit this in the next chapter when examining the poetry of the classical poets of the 1640s, which contains the Scottish Gaelic term ‘*còir a’ chlaidheimh*’ or ‘sword-right’.

The second instance of *dùthchas* indexed by eDIL occurs later in the text, in the run up to the Battle of Clontarf, a battle in which one of Brian Borumha’s sons, Murchadh, had a leading role. Before the battle begins, Murchadh is told a prophecy that he is fated to die that day. Bold in the face of death, Murchadh says: ‘Often was I offered, in hills and in fairy mansions, this world and these gifts; but I never abandoned for one night my country nor my inheritance for them’ (‘*is menic tarcas damsa i sithaib, ocus i sithbrugaibh, in betha sin, ocus na comada, ocus nir treigius oen aidchi mo tir no mo duchus oro*’, Todd 1867: 172, emphasis my own). Rather than ‘my inheritance’ as Todd’s translation puts it, I believe the phrase ‘*mo tir no mo duchus oro*’ is in fact saying that Murchadh would not abandon ‘his land(s) or his ancestral right to them’, where *duchus* is a sort of claim which Murchadh has over his country or ‘*tir*’. Murchadh’s reference to his own *dùthchas* (‘*mo duchus*’) may very well be the earliest instance of a person using this personal possessive pronoun with the term *dùthchas* and discussing their personal relationship with this concept. Besides the curious reference to Otherworldly riches, this fragment illustrates the way that bards were harnessing the emotional energy of *dùthchas* from at least the early twelfth century.

Tecosca Cormaic – the Instructions of Cormac

Tecosca Cormaic ('The Instructions of Cormac') is a gnomic text composed in Old Irish. It was written in the form of a conversation between the mythological high king of Ireland, Cormac mac Airt, and his son Cairpre Lifechair. The text's importance and prevalence in medieval Irish society can be gleaned from the fact that it was copied into at least seventeen separate manuscripts (Fomin 2013: 147), including the Book of Leinster, The Book of Lecan, the Book of Uí Mhaine, and the Book of Ballymote. The latter three are from the 1390s, while the *Book of Leinster* was compiled c. 1160. In terms of dating the text in question itself, however, Kuno Meyer stipulated that the linguistic features of *Tecosca Cormaic* suggest it had been originally compiled '[no] later than the first half of the ninth century' (Meyer 1909: xi), meaning the antiquity of this text may even be greater than *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*.

The dialogue between Cormac mac Airt and his son is in the form of questions and answers relating to good kingship, though not exclusively. Colin Ireland suggests that – unlike early Irish maxim-texts – *Tecosca Cormaic* was a type of *speculum* text. The *speculum* genre was 'compiled for a socially high-ranking audience by specifically addressing its concerns', contemplating questions such as 'how one should govern' (Ireland 1999: 13-4). María Pía Coira has noted that the advice contained in *Tecosca Cormaic* recurs 'again and again in pre-classical as well as classical Gaelic panegyric', and that the Gaelic ideal of kingship presented within differs from the equivalent 'Latin and Scots traditions' (Coira 2012: 17). The adherence of *ríoghaibh* (kings) to such a text would have made it influential across all echelons of a society as stratified as the one of Gaelic Ireland was. While it is impossible to gauge whether *Tecosca Cormaic* was as widely circulated in Gaelic Scotland, many of the classical poets operative in Scotland were familiar with Irish manuscripts, and a treatise on good kingship would have been of interest to those poets whose function included the legitimisation of power.⁴⁵ Another reason why this text would have been of interest to many in the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd* is the fact that Cormac mac Airt's grandfather was believed to have been Conn of a Hundred Battles, an ancestor of Clan Donald who was frequently alluded to by MacDonald *seannachaidhean* and bards.

⁴⁵ See further chapters of this thesis, particularly chapters five and six.

The word *dúthchas* appears only once in *Tecosca Cormaic*, in line 5.5a in Maxim Fomin's edition of the text (Fomin 2013: 148-61). In this section, Cairpre addresses his father as Cormac, grandson of Conn, and asks:

'Cid asa ngaibther flaithemnas for túathaib 7 chlandaib 7 chenélaib?'

[What is it by reason of which the sovereignty is taken over kingdoms and families and kindreds?]

To which Cormac answers:

'Ní ansae... A feib chrotha 7 chenéuil 7 ergnai / A gaís 7 a ordain 7 a eslabrai / A feib dúthchusa 7 airlabra / neurt imгона 7 sochraite gaibther.'

[‘Not difficult... On account of excellence of appearance and kindred and understanding / On account of sagacity and honour and generosity / **On account of excellence of lineage** and eloquence / By the strength of battle and alliance it is taken.’] (Fomin 2013: 158-9, emphasis my own)

The above fragment would have been of utmost importance in a society organised around kingship, as it lists the ‘different virtues that establish the legitimacy of the ruler over his people’ (Fomin 2013: 173). It justifies the rule of one person over ‘kingdoms and families and kindreds’ (*túathaib 7 chlandaib 7 chenélaib*) with a list of virtues that, presumably, set a *rí* apart from a member of the *túath*. It also notes the importance of military prowess and ability to amass followers, friends, and allies (*neurt imгона 7 sochraite gaibther*), though these are listed last. The term *dúthchas* is preceded with the intensifying adverb *feib*, translated by Fomin as ‘excellence’, with the full phrase translated as ‘on account of excellence of lineage’. Cormac lists three virtues first: ‘excellence of appearance and kindred and understanding’ (*feib chrotha 7 chenéuil 7 ergnai*). These three virtues – if not all the virtues listed by Cormac – would most likely have been perceived as hereditary in Gaelic Ireland. Since ‘excellence of kindred’ (*feib... chenéuil*) already implies that one is predisposed to ruling over others simply by virtue of being descended from other rulers, that is to say members of such an ‘excellent kindred’, the translation of *feib dúthchusa* given by Fomin (‘excellence of lineage’) reads almost like repetition. However, it appears that to the Old Irish compiler, *feib chenéuil* and *feib dúthchusa* were not duplicate statements, and *feib dúthchusa* carried an additional meaning to ‘excellence of lineage’ – perhaps relating to the strength of claim a ruler with *feib dúthchusa* had, or the extent of said individual’s ancestral territories. Its collocation with *airlabra* (‘extraordinary gift of speech’, or ‘eloquence’ in Fomin’s edition) appears incidental, as

the latter maintains the paragraph's rhyming pattern, though it does invite speculation regarding the relationship between *dùthchas* and poetry, particularly in its oral form.

As later chapters will show, the association of 'excellence of *dùthchas*' with leadership, legitimacy, and ancestral right would continue for many centuries after the compilation of *Tecosca Cormaic*. We shall continue to see it well into the eighteenth and nineteenth-century vernacular poetic tradition of Scotland. Likewise, we will see the association of *dùthchas* with martial prowess and the ability to gather allies as one of the core features of panegyric poetry – both classical and vernacular – addressed to clan chiefs across multiple centuries in Gaelic Scotland, and even used in Gaelic propaganda poetry composed during the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite Risings.

Betha Colaim Chille – the Life of St. Columba

Betha Colaim Chille is said to have been compiled in 1532 by Manus O' Donnell, though it is more likely the work of one or more anonymous scribes under O' Donnell's patronage (O' Kelleher & Shoepferle 1918: xxxiii). Manus succeeded his father, Sir Hugh Dubh, as *rí* of the O' Donnells of Tirconnell and was eventually succeeded by his son, Calvagh O'Donnell – make a note of this name, as Calvagh is one of the signatories of a document which contains perhaps the second-earliest datable attestation of *dùthchas* from Scotland, and we shall return to him in due course. *Betha Colaim Chille* is allegedly a combination of translations of Adomnán's hagiography of Columba from Latin, as well as a modernisation of old Gaelic hagiographies – the language of which was considered 'hard' by Manus' lifetime (ibid). This methodology means that it is impossible to say with certainty what terminology in O' Donnell's *Betha Colaim Chille* – if any at all – is a verbatim transcription of history (or oral tradition) dating back to Columba's sixth-century lifetime. For this reason, though the events in the text may be set in the sixth century, we must still treat it as a sixteenth-century composition. Indeed, the historical context of this document's compilation is more significant than its early-Christian-era narrative setting. In Ireland, the 1520s and 1530s saw an intensification of conflict between the 'Tudors, the families of Hiberno-Normans, and the descendants of former Gaelic Irish kings' (Böhm 2020: 36). For 1531, the year prior to Manus' completion of *Betha Colaim Chille*, the *Annals of the Four Masters* record that Manus and his brother(s) 'were at strife with each other' and their father, Hugh Dubh, feared that 'one might attain to the chieftainship in preference to the other, after their father's death, for the name and renown of Manus O' Donnell had spread not only through all Tirconnell, but through external territories' (O' Donovan 1856: 1405-7). Unsurprisingly,

when Hugh Dubh died in 1537, the son who succeeded him was Manus – inaugurated ‘by the successors of St. Columbkille [i.e. the Bishop of Derry and the Coarb of Kilmacrenan], with the permission and by the advice of the nobles of Tirconnell, both lay and ecclesiastical’ (ibid: 1439-41, emphasis my own). There were clearly political motivations behind Manus’ patronage of what continues to be one of Ireland’s ‘foundational myths’ (Gillespie 2014: 9) and these will be expanded on below.

One instance of *dúthchas* occurs in a passage detailing how great Columba’s sacrifice had been when he chose the life of a missionary – that for God, Columba had forsaken the kingship of Ireland (‘*treig C. righacht Erind air*’), though it was ‘due to him by birthright and blood-right’ (‘*oir fa dual do o dúthchas 7 o folaidhecht*’, O’ Kelleher & Shoepperle 1918: 60-1, emphasis my own). Indeed, Columba’s entitlement to the kingship of Ireland ‘by natural right of blood’ (‘*budh dual do do beith aige o fholaidhecht*’) is established on the first page of *Betha Colaim Chille* (ibid: 2). Two linguistic features are noteworthy here: firstly, that *dúthchas* appears beside the term *dual*, a term closely semantically related to it through their common root ‘*dú*’ (McQuillan 2004: 25) which we shall see collocated with *dúthchas* in later chapters. Secondly, that *dúthchas* appears in a discussion on the rightfulness of Columba’s claim to authority, and as a type of right which was different to *blood-right* or *descent-right* (*folaidhecht*), probably relating to a multi-generational link to place rather than descent. The political implications of this passage are also noteworthy. Manus O’ Donnell may well have been a ‘renaissance prince’ (Bradshaw 1979) and had a genuine interest in collecting and compiling manuscripts, but Manus’ political motivations for creating a new hagiography of Columba were hardly secret. A few pages into *Betha Colaim Chille* we read that Manus was driven to this task by ‘the love of a brother for his high saint and kinsman by lineage and his dear patron that he was bounden to in steadfast devotion’ (O’ Kelleher & Shoepperle 1918: 6, emphasis my own). Composing a manuscript which stated that the ‘*righacht Erind*’ or ‘kingship of Ireland’ belonged to a kinsman – and no ordinary kinsman at that – of the O’ Donnells by right of *dúthchas* and blood bestowed ‘cultural authority’ upon the possessors of the manuscript (Gillespie 2014: 11). Cunningham and Gillespie have also pointed out that secular and ecclesiastical power were not far removed in medieval Ireland; since Columba ‘was connected to the present lordship through genealogy as well as bonds of lord and patron’, *Betha Colaim Chille* ‘provided a model for lordship’ – Columba being frequently compared to the Biblical Moses, who ‘was a political figure among the Israelites as well as a holy man’ (Cunningham & Gillespie 2013: 492)

There are multiple other instances of *dúthchas* in *Betha Colaim Chille*, but I will only look at two. A young Columba was leaving Ireland in his coracle, sailing down Loch Foyle, surrounded by gulls and seabirds whose ‘speech of sorrow’ he could understand ‘as he would understand it from

human folk'. The saint realises that 'so great was his gentleness and his love for his land and the place of his birth' (*'an oiret sin do daendaigecht 7 do gradh ag C. C. ar a tír 7 ar a athardha duthchusa'*, emphasis my own) that 'parting from her human folk' was equally painful to him as 'parting from the seagulls and the birds of Loch Foyle' (O' Kelleher & Shoepperle 1918: 194-5). In this emotive scene of parting, the saint sees his native country from the 'emigrant's perspective' and the love felt for his land (*'tír'*) and fatherland (*'athardha'*, see eDIL: *atharda* online) appears to be intensified by the use of *dúthchas* with all of its emotional and cosmological connotations. Later on, an elderly Columba chose to die from 'fasting and abstinence' as a form of final penance. To increase the severity of pain and sorrow this death would cause, he chooses a death in lifelong exile 'from my country and my home and my fatherland' (*'mo tíri 7 mo talaimh 7 m' athardha duthcais'*, O' Kelleher & Shoepperle 1918: 52-3, emphasis my own). These two examples suggest that in Irish, the terms *tír*, *talamh*, and even *athardha* lacked a level of place-based emotional depth which is supplied by the term *dúthchas*. McQuillan also draws attention to the use of *dúthchas* as a qualifying word in these two instances: *'m' athardha duthcais'* and *'a athardha duthchusa'*. Linguistically-speaking, *dúthchas* is bestowing the quality of being 'native' (via the genitive forms of *dúthchas*) on the word *'athardha'* meaning 'fatherland' or 'patrimony'. McQuillan suggests that from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards, *dúthchas* lost its concrete, material meaning of 'land' and was used more often in conjunction with a concrete noun (like *'tír'* or *'athardha'*) in the genitive form as a 'qualifier' of said concrete noun. He interpreted this as a collective expression of uncertainty regarding one's ability to retain their native soil in Ireland due to English conquest and the collapse of Gaelic Ireland (McQuillan 2004: 32 and 39-44). A parallel development which is discernible in Scotland a few centuries later will be explored in chapter nine: *dùthchas* used as a 'qualifier' in phrases such as *'tìr mo dhùthchais'* came to be the most common form of the term in the very same century which saw the Highland Clearances and a people dispossessed and disconnected from their 'native soil' or *dùthchas*.

Irish 'bardic' poetry

The term *dúthchas*, in various grammatical forms and under a variety of spellings, is also well-attested in the corpus of Irish bardic poetry. 'Bardic' in this context means 'classical', that is composed in Classical Gaelic and using formulaic, conventional styles which make it 'difficult to date most of these poems even to the nearest century' in the absence of 'a named author [or] patron' being mentioned in the manuscript (Simms 2009: 60). I turned to the corpus of Irish bardic poetry

with two main research questions: firstly, what was the earliest datable instance of the term *dúthchas* in Irish bardic poetry? Secondly, did *dúthchas* appear regularly in poetry from later centuries, or was the earliest instance an outlier? Scholar Katherine Simms has created a searchable online database of bardic poetry which catalogues thousands of bardic poems dating from the twelfth century and prior to the late seventeenth century (Bardic Poetry Database, online). This tool allowed me to quantify the instances of *dúthchas* in the Irish corpus with relative ease. *Dúthchas* appears in around 100 different bardic poems, mainly occurring once per poem, with a few instances where it is used multiple times or in different grammatical forms (e.g. ‘*Do-chiú meirge chatha Cuinn*’, a late fourteenth century poem by an anonymous bard in which both *dúthchas* and *dhúthchais* make an appearance).

There are three instances of *dúthchas* from the first half of the thirteenth century in Simms’ database, and these are the earliest mentions of *dúthchas* in the catalogued material. These three poems were composed by two bards who were contemporary with one another. The first of these is *Tabhraidh chugam cruit mo riogh* (Bardic Poetry Database, online: 1759). This poem was composed in *deibhidhe*, a complex type of rhymed syllabic poetry, by Giolla Brighde Albannach for Donnchad Cairprech Ó Briain (d. 1242), king of Thomond, one of the nine sons of Domnall Mór Ua Briain and Orlaith, daughter of Diarmait Mac Murchada (ibid). Frustratingly little is known about Giolla Brighde, other than that there are eight surviving poems attributed to him, and ‘that he journeyed to the eastern Mediterranean on the Fifth Crusade in 1218, apparently in the company of Muireadhach Albanach’ – the author of the other two thirteenth-century poems, to whom we will return shortly (McLeod 2004: 87). Over many decades, scholars have made different claims regarding Giolla Brighde Albannach’s nationality due to the somewhat conflicting evidence in his own poetry. One school of thought has looked at the bard’s epithet *Albannach* as literally meaning ‘Scotsman’, even if the bard worked in Ireland for Irish patrons, and connected this evidence with the very line from *Tabhraidh chugam cruit mo riogh* where *dúthchas* is to be found (Bannerman 1989: 143-4):

Ionmhoin lem-sa—**duthchas damh**—

fiodhbhuidhe áille Alban;

giodh ionmhain as annsa leam

an crann-sa d’fhiodhaidh Èireann.

Dear to me (**my heritage**)

Scotland's lovely yellow woods;
though still more dear to me yet
is this tree of Irish wood.

(Bardic Poetry Database, online: 1759; Clancy 1999: 257. Emphasis my own)

As further chapters of this thesis will show, calling a place one's *dùthchas* typically implies a multigenerational connection to said location. It is, perhaps, all the more remarkable that another one of Giolla Brighde's poems, *Fada dhamh druim re hÉirinn*, is 'cast in the mould of the Irish exile's lament, expressing fondness for the homeland while away in an alien country', which Gaelic scholar Wilson McLeod notes to be 'an odd idiom for a Scotsman to adopt to express his feelings for Ireland while at home in Scotland' (McLeod 2004: 88). Derick Thomson believed that Giolla Brighde was an 'Irishman who was domiciled in Scotland' (Thomson 1963: 279) and the bard's byname, *Albannach*, may equally have been given to an Irishman who had lived in Scotland for a long time (McLeod 2004: 88-9). The limited amount of evidence means that the bard's national origins may be considered inconclusive. However, in spite of the fact that all of Giolla Brighde's 'surviving poems, other than those of a religious nature, were composed for Irish chiefs' (Ibid: 87), I would argue that the reference to Alba being his *dùthchas* is unequivocal, and is less likely to have merely been used for poetic effect than the longing for 'Ireland as homeland' in *Fada dhamh druim re hÉirinn*, especially since the latter appears to be a generic praise-poem to Ireland composed for an Irish audience (Bardic Poetry Database, online: 882).

The two other thirteenth-century Irish bardic poems in Katharine Simms' database are *Éistidh riomsa, a Mhuire mhór* (Bardic Poetry Database, online: 858) and *Tomhais cia mise, a Mhurchaidh* (Bardic Poetry Database, online: 1839). As mentioned above, their author is Muireadhach 'Albanach' Ó Dálaigh, of whom more is known than Giolla Brighde, though it is worth keeping in mind most of this information comes from seventeenth-century annals compiled from earlier sources. Muireadhach's family, the Ó Dálaighs, traced its pedigree back to Fearghal mac Maoile Duin, 'an Irish king of the eighth century' and 'appears to have become established as a literary family in the twelfth century', evidenced by annals for 1139 reporting the death of *Cú Chonnacht na Scoile*, an Ó Dálaigh of the twelfth century who had likely been 'in charge of a bardic school or secular academy' (Thomson 1963: 277). Muireadhach himself appears in an entry for 1213 in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, where he is described as the '*ollamh* (poet of the highest rank) to Domhnall Ó Domhnaill' – a king of Fermanagh and Tirconnell who died in 1241. In 1213 Muireadhach killed Ó Domhnaill's tax collector with an axe, causing the king to banish his *ollamh* to Scotland (McLeod 2004: 85-6; Thomson 1963: 277-8). At least twenty of Muireadhach Albanach's poems

survive, and, significantly, two of these are ‘addressed to persons in Scotland’ – ‘Alún, Earl of Lennox, who died c. 1217’ and ‘Amhlaoibh, very probably the son of Alún of Lennox’ (ibid: 278). Muireadhach – perhaps on account of his former occupation as *ollamh* and family connections – appears to have quickly built up a relationship with the family of Lennox. In later years Muireadhach felt the relationship was secure enough to vocally express his ‘dissatisfaction that his expectations and perceived entitlements were not being fulfilled’ in his poem to Amhlaoibh, the first line of which is *Mairg thréigios inn, a Amhlaoíbh*, ‘Woe to him who abandons me, o Amhlaoíbh’ (McLeod 2004: 86). Though the evidence is not indisputable, it is possible that a ‘Kathil Macmurchy of the Levenax [Lennox]’ who witnessed a sale of land at Dumbarton in 1259, was one of Muireadhach’s sons (Thomson 1963: 281). It is unclear whether Muireadhach – or any other members of his family – ever returned to Ireland or not,⁴⁶ but scholars have noted that Muireadhach’s participation in the Fifth Crusade is attested in the bard’s own poetry as well as oral tradition from the late eighteenth century (ibid: 279-80). This is the same crusade Giolla Brighde Albannach took part in. Indeed, the connection between the two bards has been central to John Bannerman’s conjectures about Giolla Brighde’s nationality being Scottish (Bannerman 1989: 143-4).

Although both bards’ use of *dúthchas* follows the conventions of Gaelic praise poetry, Giolla Brighde’s personal usage of the term, ‘*dúthchas d[homh]*’, is more unique than Muireadhach’s exaltations of the *dúthchas* of the Virgin Mary or Murchadh Ó Briain, king of Thomond. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that in *Éistidh riomsa, a Mhuire mhór* the poet appears to petition the Virgin Mary to take mercy ‘upon her kinsman’ by claiming kinship to her through God (‘*Cá beag liom do dhúthchas damh... ót Fhior?*’), praising her noble descent and appearance, and pleading for her hospitality, precisely as a poet would petition their chiefly patron (Bardic Poetry Database, online: 858). Perhaps even more noteworthy is the fact that ‘two of the most important early bardic poets, both active in the early thirteenth century, share the nickname ‘Albanach’ and an evident connection to Scotland’ (McLeod 2004: 85). Furthermore, both of these bards use the term *dúthchas* in their work. Due to a lack of evidence, any further causality would be purely speculative: did one of the bards use the term *dúthchas* in his poetry, inspiring the other to do the same later on? Was *dúthchas* a term which any respectable thirteenth-century poet was expected to use in their work? Did Giolla Brighde’s time spent abroad, regardless of whether ‘abroad’ meant Ireland or Scotland, inspire the bard to dwell upon what his ‘native land’ really was?

⁴⁶ Thomson (2000: 102) notes a poem by Muireadhach in which he petitions an Irish patron in the 1220s, asking him first for patronage, and then ‘Let me go to my own land, O smooth-skinned Donnchadh Cairbreach, to Scotland of the woods and the grass, of the feasts, the hills and the isles’.

The second research question – whether *dúthchas* was in continuous use throughout the five centuries when bardic poetry was being composed in Ireland – is easier to answer. According to Katharine Simms' database, there are 8 bardic poems containing *dúthchas* from the fourteenth century. For the next three centuries, rates of survival appear to increase exponentially: 11 unique fifteenth-century poems contain the term *dúthchas*; 32 unique sixteenth-century poems do; and 60 unique seventeenth-century poems do. It would appear evident, then, that neither was the word unattested in the earliest surviving Irish sources, nor did it go out of use in later centuries.

Alba: Scotland

This section looks at the earliest datable uses of the term *dùthchas* which certainly originated in Scotland. As has been established above, classifying text as ‘originating from Scotland’ is complicated by the nature of Classical Gaelic, as well as by the existence of classical poetry dating back to the thirteenth century which mentions *dùthchas* and may have been written by Scots living in Ireland or Irishmen living in Scotland. Some of the earliest surviving Gaelic poetry with definitively ‘Scottish’ features, composed in Scots ‘secretary hand’ using a phonetic spelling of Gaelic based on Scots, rather than Classical Gaelic, may be found in the Book of the Dean of Lismore, an early sixteenth-century manuscript from Perthshire. The term *dùthchas* appears in one of the poems in the Book and since the manuscript was composed between 1512 and 1542, this appears to be the earliest datable ‘Scottish’ instance of the term *dùthchas*.

Subsequent chapters of this thesis use poetry as the primary source to analyse the evolution of *dùthchas* over multiple centuries; for this reason, I wanted to search the small corpus of extant Scottish Gaelic prose texts, especially those relating to matters of land and law, to somewhat broaden this narrow focus. Finding *dùthchas* in the Irish legal deeds explored earlier in this chapter further encouraged me in this endeavour. I examined the *Senchus Fer n-Alban* (tenth century), the Gaelic marginalia in the Book of Deer (c. twelfth century), the ‘Islay Charter’ (1408), the confirmation of the Argyll – Ó Domhnaill Treaty (1560), the MacLeod Contract of Fosterage (1614), and a Gaelic ‘Contract of Lease’ (c. 1603 x 1616). Out of these texts, only the Treaty of 1560 contains the term *dùthchas*. I will move through this section chronologically, then – first turning to the poem from the Book of the Dean of Lismore, and then onto the Treaty of 1560.

The Book of the Dean of Lismore, 1512 x 1542

The manuscript known as the Book of the Dean of Lismore was written in Perthshire sometime between 1512 and 1542, although some of the material within is considerably older. It has been called ‘the single most precious manuscript to have survived from late medieval Gaelic Scotland’ (MacGregor 2006b: 35). One feature which sets the Book of the Dean of Lismore apart from other Scottish Gaelic manuscripts is the fact that it was written down in Scots ‘secretary hand’ using a phonetic spelling of Gaelic based on Scots, rather than Classical Gaelic spelling or *corra-litir*

script (Ó Baoill 2010: 14). This has meant that the Scottish Gaelic in the *Book* can more readily be analysed for its ‘vernacular’ features (Watson 1923). The consensus appears to be that its two main scribes were the eponymous Dean of Lismore, Seumas MacGriogair (James MacGregor), and his brother Donnchadh (Duncan), both sons of Dubhghall Maol (MacGregor 2006b: 35-6). Seumas and Donnchadh were not the first members of their family to attain literacy; ‘both the Dean and his father were notaries public’ (ibid: 43). The manuscript was compiled in Fortingall in Perthshire, at the eastern bounds of Breadalbane, and it would appear that the branch of MacGregors that the Dean belonged to had a connection to Fortingall since 1406, when Dubhghall Maol’s grandfather is recorded as ‘the vicar of the parish church there’ (MacGregor 2006a: 210). The Dean’s death in 1551 almost coincides with the changing luck of the MacGregors, to whom the second half of the sixteenth century brought dispossession, ‘feud, crisis, and struggle for survival’ (MacGregor 2006b: 48-50), making the manuscript a valuable snapshot of these MacGregors’ world prior to this watershed.

The Book of the Dean of Lismore was likely called a ‘*duanaire*’ in Gaelic, meaning a written collection of works composed by various poets. This is how the poet Fionnlagh Mac an Aba refers to it in the poem *Duanaire na Sracaire*, where he urges Dubhghall Maol – the aforementioned father of Seumas and Donnchadh MacGriogair – to participate in its compilation (McLeod and Bateman 2019: 352-7). Watson surmised that the poetry in the *Book* was both ‘copied from manuscripts [as well as] written from memory or oral tradition’, arguing that the manuscript contains errors of ‘anticipation, that is, writing a line before its proper place, and then correcting it’ (Watson 1923: 261). This *duanaire* also contains ‘excerpts of poetry from Lowland Scotland and England, and a mass of non-poetic material, mainly in Latin and Scots... a local chronicle...’ and writing on topics like ‘music, topography, physiology, astronomy, chronology, law, religion, morality and superstition’ (MacGregor 2006a: 210). Such a breadth of subject matter being demonstrated within Scottish Gaeldom’s literary tradition of the first half of the sixteenth century showcases the erudition of the learned Gaelic literary caste.

One poem in the Book of the Dean of Lismore relates directly to this thesis’ subject matter. Its first line is ‘*Ciallach Duine Fíoruasal*’ (A:64) and the stanza in question is:

Tá mo **dhúthchas** i nIarlaidh,
iarua mé do Chloinn Domhnaill;
ionnua mé Chloinn Ghill-Eathain,
bheireadh na catha comhraig.

My ancestral country is in Airlie,
I am a great-grandson of Clan Donald;
I am a descendant of Clan MacLean
who waged many a battle.

(Watson 1978: 236, lines 2311-2314; emphasis my own)

Although the authors of some of the verse in the Book of the Dean of Lismore are known, this particular poem is, unfortunately, anonymous. The language appears roughly contemporary with the manuscript itself; Watson notes that ‘this poem, though syllabic, was not composed in the literary dialect’, contains some ‘vernacular features’, and has an irregular metre and shows ‘rough workmanship... [that] leaves something to guesswork’ (Watson 1978: 303). The literary voice could be read as satirical, juxtaposing the state of being a ‘*duine fìoruasal*’ [most noble] with going ‘*ré faoighe*’ [thigging], before stating his (or her, but the author’s voice appears masculine) kinship to all the major kindreds of the *Gàidhealtachd* – useful when begging. Alternatively, it could be a hyperbolic boast where the author’s blood relation to one and all is to be taken literally; ‘roll-calls’ of the clans appear in other Gaelic poetry from later centuries and such ‘shout-outs’ would certainly warrant a gift from the chief whose people were mentioned. Watson claims that the poem’s style suggests the author was not one of the learned *filidh* – it could therefore even be read as a satire on patronage. Whatever the case may be, the bard says that his *dùthchas* is [in] Airlie; there is an Airlie in Angus, 50 miles east of Fortingall, although Skene suggests an ‘Arile’ located ‘between Tobermory and Aros in Mull’ as the bard’s place of residence (MacLauchlan & Skene 1862: 132). The kindreds listed include many island clans, although the Airlie in Angus could still have been the homeland of a poet who was also familiar with mainland clans like the *Catanaich*, MacGregors, Lamonts, and locations like Balquhiddar and Breadalbane.

Martin MacGregor notes that there is a copy of *Bàrdachd Albannach* in the National Library of Scotland in which an anonymous scholar has annotated the margins with a re-interpretation of the phrase under scrutiny here as saying ‘*Tá mo dhúthchas on Iarla*’ instead, that is, ‘my ancestral place is [held] from the Earl’ (pers. comms. 2023). There may be some merit in this interpretation, as the line about the poet’s *dùthchas* is repeated, although in its first utterance in Watson’s *Bàrdachd Albannach* it appears as ‘*Tá mo dhúthaigh i nIarlaidh*’ at the end of the previous *rann* or stanza. In this prior stanza, the poet identifies himself as a ‘*comhdhalta*’ (foster-fellow) of Mac Cailean (Argyll), a man who gives gold to ‘*[a]r cliaraibh*’ (our poet bands); in face of such generosity, the poet asks: ‘*créad fáth má mbeinn go múchnach*’ (what cause have I to be gloomy?), before finishing with ‘*tá mo*

dhúthaigh i nIarlaidh, ‘my native land is in Airlie’ (Watson 1978: 236, lines 2307-2310). Because of the Book of the Dean of Lismore’s phonetic spelling, it is difficult to certainly identify the last word in both of these lines as either *Iarlaidh*, a place-name, or *Iarla*, meaning Earl – and the mention of Mac Cailean, who was referred to as *Iarla* elsewhere in the manuscript, further complicates matters. The structure would suggest some semantic connection between either the bard’s *dùthchas* and the generosity to the ‘poet bands’ (*cliarairbh*), or the bard’s *dùthchas* being located in *Iarlaidh* and his close relationship to the Campbells, MacDonalds, MacLeans, and other clans. If the poem were written from the perspective of one of the marauding poet-bands or ‘*cliar sheanchain*’, whose claim to patronage was being kin to all the major Gaelic kindreds, it still would not explain the claim to a ‘native place’ for these peripatetic entertainers.⁴⁷

Regardless of the above, this line in the Book of the Dean of Lismore is the earliest attestation of the word *dùthchas* being used in Scottish Gaelic that I could find; it is noteworthy that the word appears in a poem, and one naming kindreds and places at that. This attestation is also an example of a bard using the personal possessive pronoun *mo* in connection with the term *dùthchas* to describe their native place or ancestral connection thereto – it is certainly interesting that the next instance of the phrase *mo dhùthchas* I have been able to find only dates to the final decades of the eighteenth century.⁴⁸ As subsequent chapters will show, the preponderance of panegyric praise poetry directed at chieftains makes personal utterances of *dùthchas* – i.e. ones referring to *mo dhùthchas* or *ar dùthchas* – relatively rare, especially in the ‘Classical period’ of Gaelic poetry.

The Argyll – Ó Domhnaill Treaty of 1560

The forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles left a power vacuum in Scotland’s western seaboard, and much of the history of the sixteenth-century *Gàidhealtachd* is the internecine conflict and intrigue which filled it (Crawford 2016). The Scottish crown staged several interventions which had a tendency of worsening the already-tense political situation in the Gaelic-speaking regions, perhaps on purpose; for example, James V appropriated ‘the title of Lord of the Isles’ for himself and ‘went on a naval expedition to the Hebrides in 1540... to “daunt” his Hebridean subjects’ (MacCoinnich 2019: 45). There were those in the *Gàidhealtachd* who supported the re-establishment of the Lordship of the Isles (Caldwell 2017: 77-8; Bannerman 2016a: 347), and this occasionally culminated in insurgencies, such as Donald Dubh’s rebellion (MacCoinnich 2019: 45; Cathcart 2012).

⁴⁷ The ‘*cliar sheanchain*’ will return in the introduction to the following chapter.

⁴⁸ See the discussion of Mairead Ghriogarach’s poetry in chapter eight.

Armed conflict across this century was by no means some guerrilla war of dissenting Gaels facing an ‘increasingly-Anglophone’ state (MacCoinnich 2019: 44), though the latter’s increasingly institutionalised hostility towards Gaels at the end of the sixteenth century is notable and will be discussed further in the introduction to the following chapter in the context of the 1609 Statutes of Iona. Nonetheless, many of the bloodiest battles, such as *Blàr na Léine* (1544), were fought between rival clans, while Islay became the nexus of feuding between the MacDonalds of Ardnamurchan (also referred to as Maclans through their progenitor, Iain Sprangach), the MacDonalds of Dunivaig (also referred to as *Clann Eòin Mhòir* through their progenitor, Eòin Mòr Tànaiste),⁴⁹ as well as the MacLeans and the Campbells. Since Islay’s *Eilean na Comhairle* (‘Island of the Council’) had been perceived as the symbolic centre of the former Lordship’s power, the MacDonalds saw re-gaining control of the island as symbolic of re-gaining *Ceannas nan Gàidheal* (‘headship of the Gael’ – see McLeod and Bateman 2019: 140-53; MacGregor 2024b). Furthermore, as is pertinent to the document which will be examined below, the economic and political links between Ireland and Scotland were strong in the sixteenth century. Scotland’s *Gàidhealtachd* had for centuries been a source of mercenary manpower for Irish kings and lords (Crawford 2016: 20, 38, 70-2; Macdonald 1994: 26-84). Culturally, the region also arguably formed a ‘Greater Gaelic culture-province’ at this time (MacGregor 2024a: 6-7), with propagators of aristocratic Gaelic culture – such as poets or harpists – regularly going on a *cuairt* or tour, performing around the households of clan chiefs and local lords. The bards often referred to Ireland as the Gaels’ cultural capital and place of origin (McLeod 2004: 109-11), with one even referring to Scotland as being *andúthchas* (‘un-native land’) to the MacDonalds when compared with Ireland (A:2; McLeod and Bateman 2019: 126-39). The Scottish MacDonalds of Dunivaig claimed a right (through a marriage in the 1390s) to the Glens of Antrim in the north of Ireland, while the Irish Ó Néills and Ó Domhnaills vied to marry Scottish brides in desperate attempts to increase their military capacity (Morgan 1988: 16). Throughout the fifteenth century, the Stewart monarchs of Scotland used alliances with the Ó Domhnaills of Tirconnell to curb the power of the MacDonald Lords of the Isles, who would then turn to the Ó Néills for support in fighting the Ó Domhnaills (Egan 2016).

Particularly after 1534 and the start of the Tudor conquest, the political situation in 16th c. Ireland was even more turbulent than that in the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*. Two powerful kindreds, the Ó Néills of Tyrone and the Ó Domhnaills of Tirconnell mentioned above,⁵⁰ were feuding with one another while also being embroiled in the macropolitics of the English conquest and internal

⁴⁹ Eòin was one of the witnesses of the only surviving Gaelic-language charter from Scotland, often referred to as the ‘Islay Charter’ of 1408.

⁵⁰ See discussion of *Betha Colaim Chille* in the section ‘Éire: Ireland’ above.

fratricidal, nearly-patricidal, strife for succession (Morgan 1988; MacKechnie 1953: 94-5). Calvagh Ó Domhnaill was the ambitious eldest son of Manus Ó Domhnaill, Lord of Tirconnell, who by 1545 had turned on his father's brothers. In February 1548, Calvagh engaged his own father in battle at *Srath bo Fiaich* but was heavily defeated; Calvagh determined he would need military support to overthrow his father and made his way to Scotland in 1555 (McGettigan 2009). There, Calvagh Ó Domhnaill entered into a treaty – deemed unfavourable by some scholars (Morgan 1988: 16) – with Archibald (*Gilleasbuig*), the 4th Earl of Argyll. Since Archibald died three years later, the treaty was confirmed with the 5th Earl of Argyll, also Archibald, in 1560. This was in the 5th Earl's favour, as by then Manus Ó Domhnaill had been deposed and imprisoned by Calvagh, who in 1560 was signing as *de-facto* Lord of Tirconnell. Only the 1560 confirmation document survived, and it is analysed below.

The treaty was written in Classical Gaelic, using *corra-litir* or Gaelic script. A contemporary copy was also composed in Scots, which could suggest that the Earl of Argyll did not fully trust a Gaelic-language treaty to be legally-binding in Scotland, although it was evidently perceived as such in Ireland. The document begins by introducing both parties and emphasising the *caimhnes agas an phairt* ('kindness and relationship') which had existed between the Earl and Calvagh as well as their predecessors (MacKechnie 1953: 97). The document then stipulates the dues and expectations on both sides of the agreement: Argyll agrees to '*chomhnamh agas do cuideachagh le On Domhnaill fa dhuthaig 7 fa thigerrnas athar 7 shenathar i Dhomhnaill*' ('support Ó Domhnaill in keeping the patrimony and lordship lands of his father and grandfather') while Ó Domhnaill will be kept '*fa smacht agas fa umhlacht*' ('under control and submission') of the Earl's might (ibid). The Gaelic text makes a clear distinction between lands held by Ó Domhnaill by lordship (*fa thigerrnas*) and by a type of hereditary – perhaps disputed – right (*fa dhuthaig*). It is noteworthy that the Scots version of the document makes no such distinction, referring simply to Ó Domhnaill's 'fathers and gudesheires estait' (MacPhail 1934: 213). The term *dùthchas* appears when the treaty explains what lands Ó Domhnaill's annual tribute should be raised from. It is to be raised '*an duthaig i Domhnaill uile sa cuigeadh Ultach 7 na thimcheall fa thigerrnas agas fa dhuthchas i Dhomhnaill fein*' ('in all of Ó Domhnaill's patrimony in the province of Ulster and territories surrounding them which are under Ó Domhnaill's lordship and *dùthchas*', ibid, emphasis my own). This line defining Calvagh's holdings first mentions all of the patrimonial 'native lands' or *duthaig* located in '*cuigeadh Ultach*', the province of Ulster, then moves onto the more peripheral lands '*na thimcheall*' ('surrounding them'). These lands are held by Calvagh in two separate ways: either by lordship (*fa thigerrnas*) or by *dùthchas* (*fa dhuthchas*). The former has linguistic connotations with domination and possession (eDIL: *tigernas*, online) and is semantically distinct from the latter, which has connotations with ancestral claims and hereditary rights (eDIL: *dùthchas*, online). Perhaps lands *fa thigerrnas* were legally recognised as

Calvagh's while the legitimacy of those *fa dhuthchas* was being disputed by the Ó Néills or other kindreds, but had been historically under Ó Domhnaill control. In any case, it appears that holdings *fa thigherrnas* and *fa dhuthchas* alike were seen as legitimate – each in their own way – by the Treaty's two parties. While it was in both Ó Domhnaill's and Argyll's best interest for Calvagh to be able to raise tribute in as wide a territory as possible, if Calvagh raised tribute from areas which did not widely recognise his sovereignty by forcefully raiding them, Argyll would have had to provide Ó Domhnaill with more military support, possibly negating any benefit.

'Kindly tenants' – a Scots relative of *dùthchas*?

Notably, the Scots edition of the 1560 Treaty given by MacPhail fails to distinguish between '*tigernas*' and '*duthchas*', stating simply that the rent is to be 'raised and uplifted in O Domnialls dominiones of Guigula⁵¹ and the wholl contreis therabouts' (MacPhail 1934: 213). One could assume this lack of distinction in the Scots text means that there was no relevant concept in Scots which the scribe could have used in his translation. However, there is a recurring concept in the Scots written record where people are referred to as 'kindly tenants', that is, tenants who claimed to have a heritable right to land through their kin or ancestors, a 'kindness' (Dictionary of the Scots Language 2004). Interestingly, there seems to have been an upsurge in reference to 'kindly tenants' and 'kindness' in the sixteenth century; Sanderson argued this was caused by the Reformation, when former Kirk lands were subject to a sudden land grab, much Scottish land changed hands, and those who had been the 'kindly tenants' in previous tenurial arrangements attempted to have their customary rights recognised (Sanderson 1982: 63). We will now examine a few instances of 'kindly tenants' which refer to Gaelic-speaking areas and may well have been Scots renderings of terminology related to *dùthchas*.

The claims of kindly tenants were, at least at times, viewed favourably by the law; in 1581, James VI himself chided the Laird of Lochleven for removing 'kyndlie and native tennentis' from 'thair rowmes and possessionis' on his land, instructing him to reinstate the kindly tenants in their holdings (Registrum Honoris de Morton 1853: 130). Contemporary evidence of the dispute between the MacDonalds and MacLeans over the Rhinns of Islay shows both feuding parties laying claims to Islay based on 'whom these lands "were most *kindlie*" [to]' (Munro 1981: 124). On 10 September 1606, Angus MacDonald of Dunivaig, possibly imprisoned by his own son at the time, unsuccessfully

⁵¹ The Scots scribe was evidently not a Gaelic speaker, and this seems to be a phonetic render of *Cúige Uladh*, i.e. 'the province of Ulster'.

petitioned James VI to produce a document with the king's signature which would allow him to 'continue... in the possession of these kindly rooms which [his] forbears and [himself] have had of [his] Majesty' (Fraser-Mackintosh 1895: 55-6). A petition supporting Angus' pleas was also sent to the Privy Council around this time, signed by several of Angus' principal office-holders and tenants, in which Angus 'and his forbears' are described as the signatories' 'native superiors above us under His Majesty's hands and grace', beseeching the Lords 'to let us have our own native said Master your subject during his lifetime' on the basis 'of his native kindness of superiority over us' (ibid: 56). It would appear that these native Gaelic speakers were attempting here to render their understanding of Angus MacDonald's *dùthchas* as chief into Scots by referring to his 'native kindness'. The link between *dùthchas* and kingship or chieftaincy has already been explored in the Irish context above, and the fact that MacDonald's subjects used his 'native kindness of superiority' as a justification within their appeal is reminiscent of *Tecosca Cormaic*, where 'excellence of *dùthchas*' is one of the prerequisites of legitimate kingship (Fomin 2013: 158-9).⁵² Sir James MacDonald, Angus' son and heir, was no stranger to this terminology, either. On 18 July 1594, James – then called 'apparent of Dunnyaig' as his father was still alive – signed a bond of manrent and fosterage with the MacNeills of South Kintyre, promising 'to maintain, fortify, warrant, assist, and defend the foresaid persons, and all their surname, defenders and kindly tenants in all their doings, and in all things as becometh a foster to do to such fosters and foster fathers' (ibid: 57; emphasis my own). Even after his father sold Islay to the Campbells in 1612, Sir James MacDonald continued to write letters appealing for the restoration of his 'kindly room[s]' (ibid: 60-4). Although most of the examples quoted come from the sixteenth century, Sanderson has shown that the term was used in this context since at least the fifteenth century (Sanderson 1973: 125).

There are also several instances of the term 'native' being used in ways which suggest they could be translations of the Gaelic *dùthchasach*. The earliest attestations of *dùthchasach* in DASG's corpus come from the seventeenth century, and the word appears in Scottish Gaelic poetry almost exclusively as an adjective. However, Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair included the term *dùthchasach* as a noun in his 1741 bilingual vocabulary, *Leabhar a Theagasc Ainmminnin*, where its English equivalent is given as 'a native' (MacDhòmhnuill 1741: 40).⁵³ In the Irish context, *dùthchasach* had been in use since at least the fourteenth century, and appeared as a noun meaning a 'hereditary proprietor' as well as a 'clansman', 'follower', in the sense of a person or family 'settled on a territory and owing fealty to its hereditary chief', and even more generically 'an inhabitant' (eDIL: *dùthchasach*, online). It is certainly noteworthy that eDIL suggests *dùthchasach* could refer to a

⁵² See the texts discussed in '*Éire: Ireland*' above.

⁵³ This publication will be mentioned again in chapter seven.

person in a hereditary position of leadership as well as a member of their tenantry – two layers of society kept semantically distinct in every instance except within the paradigm of *dúthchas*. In the Scottish context, there is a transcript of a feu charter and confirmation originally made on 10 July 1547 by Archibald, the 4th Earl of Argyll (‘with consent of his wife, Katharine N’Lean’) ‘to his beloved servitor, John M’Douill M’Gillechallum V’Eyseg, and his heirs of the 2 merk land of Corvorrabeg in Craignish’, along with the hereditary offices ‘of sergeandry or mairship of the tenendry or bailliary of Craignish’ and several adjacent areas (Miscellany of the Scottish History Society 1926: 269-70). The document then stipulates that all these areas ‘were formerly included in the tenendry [of Craignish]’, followed by the Latin phrase: *‘libere hereditarie dno mak doule cragnische et dicto Joanni a predecessores suis tanquam sue native terre hieburnice dowissach’* (‘formerly freely and hereditarily held by the Lord MacDougall of Craignish and by the said John from his predecessors as natives of the land, from the Gaelic dowissach’ = *dúthchasach*, *ibid*).⁵⁴ There is also a transcript of a ‘bond of manrent by Dougall M’Minister alias M’Gra... to Ronald Campbell of Barrichbeyan and his heirs’ originally compiled 26 August 1615, which acknowledges ‘that Dougall’s ancestors and predecessors had been “native men and servandis” to Ronald’s ancestors and predecessors... past memorie of man’ (*ibid*: 282). The way this bond of manrent conflates ‘native men’ with their state of being loyal to Campbell for multiple generations since time immemorial is evocative of the term *dúthchasach*, but the interplay of Scots, Latin and Gaelic terms relating to both ‘native’ and ‘kindly tenants’ is an area which requires more scholarly examination.

Considering the 4th Earl of Argyll must have been familiar with the term *dúthchas* in order to fully understand the conditions of the 1560 Treaty, and a semantically-related Scots term was in relatively frequent use in contemporary Scotland, it is all the more curious that the Scots scribe of the Argyll – Ó Domhnaill Treaty decided to omit the term.

Conclusion

This chapter began by showing the range of texts – poetry and prose, narrative and legal – within which the word *dúthchas* may be found in Ireland. Attested from at least as early as the twelfth century and occasionally used by lawmen since at least the start of the fourteenth, the concept had emotive cultural currency which could evidently, at times, translate into the legal

⁵⁴ I am very grateful to Martin MacGregor for bringing this reference to my attention.

recognition of a *dùthchas*-based claim to land within Gaelic Ireland's legal system. We also saw that *dùthchas* was familiar to members of the learned poetic orders, with attestations in every century from the thirteenth to the seventeenth.

Among texts which originate in Scotland, we found that the term *dùthchas* first appears in a poem in the Book of the Dean of Lismore (1512 x 1542). *Dùthchas* also appears in Scotland's corpus of extant non-poetic texts in 1560, in a treaty between the Earl of Argyll and Ó Domhnaill. It is notable that where this mid-sixteenth-century treaty mentions *dùthchas*, it is in fact referring to lands in Ulster, held by an Irish *rí* by way of his 'lordship and *dùthchas*' (*fa thigernnas agus fa dhuthchas*). The term is absent from a Scots-language version of the agreement, which was also written at the time, as are any references to 'kindness', the closest Scots-language semantic equivalent to *dùthchas* which we have seen in other Scottish law texts dating from around this time. It is difficult to establish why the Scots version did not seek out to translate the term *dùthchas*, and there is evidence that the Campbells were familiar with the term. Archibald Campbell, signatory of the original 1555 treaty with Ó Domhnaill, was the one who granted the aforementioned charter which refers to a servitor's family as 'dowissach' or '*dùthchasach*' to said lands; Archibald's aunt Agnes was married to the very same Angus MacDonald of Dunivaig who pleaded the king to restore his 'kindly rooms'. While recent scholarship has remarked on the apparent similarity of *dùthchas* and 'kindly tenants' or 'kindness' (MacCoinnich 2015: 85, 157, 162, 196, 246; Crawford 2016: 60-1), a further, comprehensive study is required to better understand this relationship.

Considering the very robust tradition of Scottish Gaelic poets using the term *dùthchas*, which the chapters below explore, it is perhaps unsurprising that the earliest attestation of *dùthchas* in Scotland appears to be in a poem (A:64). Perhaps the reason why *dùthchas* is only to be found in one non-poetic Scottish Gaelic text dating to the seventeenth century or earlier is that only a handful of such texts survive. Were the corpus much broader, as in Ireland, perhaps there would be many instances of *dùthchas* to be found in a range of texts describing disputes and agreements over land. However, it seems that matters pertaining to land and law in the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd* were handled through a Scots law framework which conducted business in Latin or Scots from the late medieval period onwards. The poets often discussed and even passed their judgement on matters pertaining to land and legitimacy, but they operated within a Gaelic linguistic and cultural framework where *dùthchas* retained its fundamental epistemological power. Highland chiefs cannot be equated with an Irish 'king' or '*rí*', but Newton and Coira have both noted the fact that the chief's 'inherited many of [the *rí*'s] characteristics', especially 'the belief that the chieftain had a special relationship with the [clan's] territory' (Newton 2000: 112-3; Coira 2012: 32-3). The fact that in Scottish Gaeldom poets performed the role of legitimators of chiefly authority, and that *dùthchas* was an essential

component of chiefly legitimacy,⁵⁵ strongly suggests that poets had a special relationship with *dùthchas*. We will now turn to examining the nature of this relationship in the work of the classical poets of the 1640s.

⁵⁵ See Martin 1999: 72 and subsequent chapters, particularly chapters five and six.

5. *Dùthchas* and the classical poets of the 1640s

This chapter will analyse two poems which contain the term *dùthchas* and date to the 1640s, a decade shaped by the intense conflicts of the War of the Three Kingdoms (1639 – 1653) playing out in much of Britain and Ireland. Since the two poems under examination in this chapter were composed by ‘classical poets’ or *filidhean*, I will first give an overview of who the *filidhean* were, and what was happening in the seventeenth century to the centuries-old intellectual tradition shared by Gaelic Scotland and Ireland which they represented. I will also simultaneously introduce the historical context of the seventeenth century as a whole in the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*, in order to contextualise the two poems of the 1640s. The analysis will follow thereafter.

Bannerman has identified the seventeenth century as the point at which ‘the break-up of the kin-based society... began to happen in the Highlands’ (Bannerman 1986: 120). Looking more specifically to Scottish Gaelic literature, Thomson has called the seventeenth century ‘a period of significant change’ (Thomson 1991a: 155). One of these major changes concerns ‘bardic verse’ – referred to as ‘classical poetry’ throughout this chapter – and, more specifically, its demise. This poetry was composed in ‘Classical Gaelic’, a conservative literary form of the Gaelic language used by poets in both Ireland and Scotland, and was characterised by its complex metrical patterns of varying strictness, rather than the ‘stressed’ metrical patterns of vernacular Scottish Gaelic poetry. Of the learned, classical poet in Ireland, Bergin said that

he was... a professor of literature and a man of letters, highly trained in the use of a polished literary medium, belonging to a hereditary caste in an aristocratic society, holding an official position by virtue of his training, his learning, his knowledge of the history and traditions of his country and his clan. He discharged... the functions of the modern journalist. He was not a song writer. He was often a public official, a chronicler, a political essayist, a keen and satirical observer of his fellow-countrymen. (Bergin 1913: 154)

The education these poets undertook and the functions they performed in society meant that they were key to propagating many aspects of a Gaelic epistemology – or ‘genuinely binding intellectual system’ – among ‘the Gaelic aristocracy in both Scotland and Ireland’ (McLeod 2004: 114). However, the trajectory of change in the seventeenth century *Gàidhealtachd* was such that the ‘classical poetry’ entered its terminal decline. Surviving a little longer in Scotland than in Ireland, the century from 1618 to 1719 was nonetheless ‘the last century of Gaelic bardic verse as practised by successive members of an ancient hereditary line of poets [in Scotland], the MacMhuirichs’ (Thomson 1977: 221). Thomson believed that Scotland’s Classical Gaelic poetry belonged ‘to a pan-

Gaelic context, and [was] closely thirled to a social structure which was real and actual in the earlier history of this type of verse, but... was losing much of its relevance in the century [from 1618 to 1719] despite the intensely conservative nature of [Gaelic] society' (ibid). McLeod expands Thomson's assertion and argues that the 'breakdown of the established Gaelic world over the course of the sixteenth century' caused the beginning of a 'fundamental transformation in the relationship between Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland' and the 'traditional political and cultural links between Scottish and Irish Gaeldom were weakened and broken' (McLeod 2004: 194-219 at 194).

It is evident that there were multiple factors causing this 'breakdown' (ibid: 194). On the Irish side, the 'breakdown' may be traced to the sixteenth-century Tudor (re)conquest of Ireland. In the early seventeenth century, the dissident Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell escaped to Spain (1607) and the Plantation of Ulster began, which is often perceived as the end of Gaelic Ireland.⁵⁶ In Scotland, the Reformation catalysed major sociopolitical change in the 16th century, but Thomson suggests the full force of the Reformation's political repercussions 'only bec[ame] apparent in the seventeenth century' under the guise of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, and that its destabilising effects could arguably still be felt in the *Gàidhealtachd* some two centuries later during the 1745 Jacobite Rising (Thomson 1991a: 155). At a basic level, the Reformation also set into motion a growing religious schism between Gaelic Ireland, which remained Catholic, and Gaelic Scotland, which – with notable exceptions – grew increasingly Protestant over time. However, the Reformation and its consequences were far from being the only major political changes affecting the *Gàidhealtachd* during this period. Two further watershed events included the 1603 Union of the Crowns – when James VI of Scotland also became James I of England – as well as the 1707 Treaty of Union which unified the governments of England and Scotland, though Scots law and church government remained distinct (ibid). The halfway point between them, the decade between 1650 and 1660, was marked by the Cromwellian conquest and occupation of Scotland (Dow 1979), which had considerable repercussions for the *Gàidhealtachd* (ibid: 61-71; c.f. Davis 2021: 1). Furthermore, at the turn of the seventeenth century Scotland's central government diversified the strategy to expand its control over the Highlands and Islands. This is arguably the beginning of a prolonged movement which aimed at 'civilising, that is assimilating, the Gaels as serviceable, industrious and dutiful subjects of [the Crown]' through the three 'watchwords' of 'property, progress, and Protestantism', a campaign which Macinnes saw continuing well into the period of the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite Risings examined in chapter seven (Macinnes 1996: 211). At the start of the seventeenth century the government's primary strategy for this civilising mission appears to have been intimidation of the Hebridean elite, whether with the

⁵⁶ McQuillan has examined the impact of these events on the use of *dúchas* and *dúthaigh* in Ireland – see McQuillan 2004: 55-98, esp. 60-9.

threat of 'colonisation' as had happened on the Isle of Lewis in 1598, of 'transplantation', or of violence. Lack of subordination was to be met with '*all kynd of hostilitie yf thay continew rebellious and dissobedyent*', to quote the commission of Andrew Knox, the Bishop of the Isles instrumental in settling the Statutes of Iona (MacGregor 2006c: 115-6), which we shall now discuss in relation to seventeenth-century Gaelic society.

The 1609 Statutes of Iona were effectively a series of contracts which the major Hebridean clan chiefs were coerced into signing. Historians have seen the Statutes as epitomising this new approach to 'civilising' the *Gàidhealtachd*, particularly the Hebrides (Gregory 1881: 330-3), though more recent scholarship has challenged this (MacGregor 2006c). The efficacy of the Statutes has also been questioned (ibid; Goodare 1998: 52 *et passim*). Nonetheless, multiple parts of the Statutes seem to have been attempts at challenging and changing the Hebridean chiefs' lifeways, implicitly or explicitly criticizing their customs which were evidently not acceptable for men of 'thair rankis'. This included the chiefs' mobility and lack of fixed address, the style of their dwellings, their farming practices, and their 'idilnes [*sic*]' (MacGregor 2006c: 179). I believe this is strongly evocative of what Linda Tuhiwai Smith calls 'colonial discourse' about 'native life', where the latter is represented 'as being devoid of work habits' while the 'native people' are portrayed as 'lazy' or 'indolent' (Smith 1999: 53). The idea that the Statutes were an *attempt* at colonising the Gaelic Hebridean heartland is further bolstered by the fact that the eldest children of all clan gentry or *daoine uaisle* with a net-worth of 60 cattle were thereafter to be educated in the Lowlands, removing them from their family home 'whair thay sie nothing in thair tendar yeiris bot the barbarous and incivile formes of the countrie' (MacGregor 2006c: 145). Under the guise of a proto-capitalist spirit of 'individual self-sufficiency and responsibility' (ibid: 142), the Statutes – and subsequent government legislation up to 1616 – attacked all forms of itinerancy. The chiefs' fleets were to be diminished to 'one *birlinn* or galley each' to eliminate their 'peripatetic lordship' (ibid: 131). Chiefs' retinues were to be reduced in number and an end put to the *daoine uaisle* who had served as mercenary '*buannachan*' in Ireland but were supported by their chiefs' tenantry while 'off-duty' (ibid: 141-2). Finally, the Statutes threatened with 'incarceration and deportation' all bards, vagabonds, beggars, and other 'cultural itinerants' (ibid: 147). It has been argued that the bards in question were not the 'aristocratic, inordinately status conscious' classical poets (ibid) but rather *cliar sheanchain*, 'parasitical troupes of roving entertainers operative at lower social levels' which had been the subject of government persecution in previous centuries (ibid; Macinnes 1996: 66-7). However, these 'parasitical troupes' are known to have incorporated 'various levels of poets', including the learned *filidh* (Shaw 1992: 142-3) and it has been argued that they were repressed by central government because they 'represented the intellectual class of Gaeldom and encouraged Gaelic separatism' (Campbell 1975:

55).⁵⁷ Even if the Statutes only banned poets operating ‘at lower social levels’, Coira emphatically states that such poetry ‘echoe[d]... the principles for the government of society established in the ancient Gaelic laws’ and aimed ‘to preserve social order and cohesion’, just as the poetry of the *filidh* did (Coira 2012: xi). The reduction of such poetic activity could therefore have disrupted social order and cohesion in the *Gàidhealtachd*, and it is clear that from the government’s perspective, the circulation of culture and information – both historical and contemporary – across all of Gaeldom by these *cliaran* was not seen as an acceptable ‘craft’ for the Crown’s subjects to undertake (MacGregor 2006c: 142).

It is also worth noting what the poets’ perspective on the *cliar* was, at least in the seventeenth century:⁵⁸ Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh was proud to call Dunvegan ‘*dùn ud nan cliar*’ (‘yon fort of the poet-bands’), the *dùthchas* of MacLeod,⁵⁹ and Catrìona NicGilleathain stated it was the late Lachlann MacGilleathain of Coll’s *dùthchas* to be ‘*ceann nan cliaran*’ (‘chief of poet-bands’), as his father had been.⁶⁰ The poetry analysed in the sixth chapter demonstrates that there was a culturally-sanctioned connection between a chief’s liberality towards poets and proper treatment of the tenantry.⁶¹ That this connection was coupled with *dùthchas* suggests it was ancient, inviolable, and ultimately related to land – I suggest it may be viewed as sanctioned by what Glen Coulhardt refers to as ‘grounded normativity’, meaning Indigenous peoples’ ways of living which are ‘deeply informed by [a] system of reciprocal relations and obligations’ between people and the land (Coulhardt 2014: 13). Thus, even if we accept the Statutes of Iona as being against the ‘parasitic’ bards of the ‘lower order’ rather than against the *filidh*, they still oppose the sheer concept of either chiefs or tenants providing subsistence for itinerant poets, willingly or not. This, in turn, allows us to see the Statutes as attempting to drive a wedge into the ‘grounded normativity’ of Scottish Gaeldom’s ‘social contract’ between poets and chiefs: by outlawing the bardic itinerancy which played a part in disseminating Gaelic culture, by outlawing chiefly itinerancy which doubtless influenced their ability to have relationships with clanspeople in their more distant holdings, and by requiring first-born sons or daughters to be educated far from their native culture area. This ‘advanc[ed] internal colonialism’ (MacGregor 2006c: 131) by putting a ‘gradual but continuous pressure... on [clan] chiefs in many related ways between about 1596 and 1617’ (Goodare 1998: 57) which resulted in them developing ‘a dual persona’, whereby ‘they continued to be Highland chiefs,

⁵⁷ See also McLeod 2004: 114 on the ‘genuinely binding intellectual system’ of the *filidh*.

⁵⁸ This may also be seen in the classical poet Cathal MacMhuirich’s words, composed sometime before 1618, that ‘the Hebrides were a haunt of poets’ (*foraois éigeas Innsi Gall*) – see Thomson 1977: 233-4.

⁵⁹ See A:6 and discussion of this poem in chapter six below; compare with Shaw 1992: 144-5.

⁶⁰ See A:41 and discussion of this poem below.

⁶¹ See A:18, A:14, A:41, A:17, A:6, A:21 and the section on ‘Passive and active instruction to the chief’ in chapter six below.

but they also came to see the value of cultivating a second identity as British gentlemen' (ibid: 55). The latter in particular may be seen in terms of an 'inferiority complex' experienced by the colonised Gaelic *daoine uaisle* in relation to their English- or Scots-speaking counterparts, causing these Gaels to don the 'mask' of a British gentleman, to paraphrase Frantz Fanon's seminal work on colonisation, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon 1986: 83-108 at 85).

Devine has said that the 'combined forces of state action, absenteeism and conspicuous consumption' had resulted in 'a massive increase in the indebtedness of the Highland elites' in the fifty years after the Statutes of Iona (Devine 1994: 15). Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart also broadly agrees with the idea that from 1650 onwards 'the system – if not the ideal – of clanship [is] gradually wither[ing]' and that 'chiefs and clan elites increasingly managed estates commercially, treating erstwhile clanspeople as rent-paying tenants' (Stiùbhart 2021a: 25; c.f. MacInnes 1996). The position of professional poets within Gaelic society had been a privileged one for centuries, and the gift of poesy was believed to be hereditary and thus part of a person's *dùthchas* – for some poets this in itself was an inalienable credential.⁶² Professional poets enjoyed generous patronage, choice lands held for nominal rent, and a virtually guaranteed, hereditary job for a male in the kin-group, though not necessarily the poet's firstborn son (Bannerman 1986).⁶³ This chapter will examine one poem in which a classical poet reacted with resistance to his chief's breaking of the 'social contract' between poet and ruler (MacGregor forthcoming: 4; A:69). It was naturally in the poets' interest to believe in the sanctity and importance of their work. Still, there is something prophetic in the words of Maol Domhnaigh Ó Muirgheasáin – a member of the hereditary Morrison *filidhean* who first acted as poets for the MacLeans of Mull and then for the MacLeods of Lewis and Harris – who in 1642 said that 'the dereliction of the schools of poetry [would bring] chaos and the ruin of Gaelic society' (Black 1976: 198-9). Black suggests the poet's words show a keen understanding of a poet's capacity as 'advocate, arbiter and oracle' as being 'essential to Ireland's tribal framework', and, by proxy, to Gaelic society in Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd* also (ibid). We may perceive this aspect of the poet's role as responsible for the upkeep of Gaelic society in a literal sense, through his knowledge of social structure. The poet used his knowledge of history, role as tradition-bearer, and oratorical skills to make the *tuath* recognise the superiority of their leaders' *dùthchas*, as stated in the proverbs of Cormac mac Airt himself.⁶⁴ On the other hand, should a poet feel that his superior was not fulfilling

⁶² See A:69 and A:60 for examples of the gift of poesy being conceptualised as part of a person's *dùthchas*

⁶³ See also MacInnes 1999: 335; Bannerman 1986: 86-8 for the discussion of the 'kin-based system of succession' in relation to the offices of hereditary Gaelic medical families; and Watson 1915: 133-9 for the lore behind the place-name *Achadh nam Bàrd* in Trotternish in Skye, which derives its name from it having hereditarily belonged to the MacRuairidh bardic family when they were bards to the MacDonalds of Sleat.

⁶⁴ See discussion of *Tecosca Cormaic* in previous chapter.

the responsibilities expected of him by the *tuath* and dictated by Gaelic custom or ‘social contract’, it was theoretically possible for the poet to rebuke a chief so severely as to impact the security of his position of leadership. Eventually, in the eighteenth century, even the longest-standing hereditary bardic families such as the MacMhuirich poets lost their paid position in their chiefs’ retinues (Thomson 1987: 186; Clancy in Koch 2006: 453; c.f. MacInnes 1999: 328-9). The disruption in support for the classical poets could serve as an indicator of an epistemological shift occurring among Gaelic Scotland’s aristocracy who were increasingly seeking the services of Anglophone intellectual figures, likely due to their own Anglophone education, while the judgement of the poet as legitimator of authority gradually ceased to be seen as the source of the chief’s power.

On one hand, the demise of the classical poetic tradition certainly affected Scottish Gaeldom: it was, after all, ‘a genuinely binding intellectual system’ which upheld the ideological values of the ‘traditional Gaelic world’, particularly among the Gaelic aristocracy (McLeod 2004: 114). On the other hand, poetry – albeit vernacular – continued to be composed and patronised. As subsequent chapters of this thesis will show, the vernacular poetry continued to draw its ideological inspiration from the ‘intellectual system’ of classical poetry, despite innovation. This is why examining the usage of *dùthchas* by the classical poets at the outset of this thesis’ chronological remit creates a linguistic and contextual base from which subsequent analysis may be drawn out, since neither the classical nor the vernacular tradition existed in a vacuum.

Rug Eadrain Ar lath nAlban

The earliest poetic text from the 1640 – 1900 time period in Appendix A, my *dùthchas* database, is ‘*Rug Eadrain Ar lath nAlban*’ (A:69), composed 1641 x 1645. The author is a MacEwen – most likely Niall MacEòghain, who Derick Thomson believed to have been born *ca.* 1570 (Thomson 1987: 170-1). These MacEwens were a hereditary bardic family who acted as genealogists, historians, and poets for both the MacDougalls of Lorne and the Campbells of Argyll (Clancy in Koch 2006: 1577; MacNicol 1779: 245). This could suggest that their hereditary office was in fact as poets to the lords of Argyll, meaning they served the MacDougalls before the Campbell takeover of the lordship of Argyll. Oral tradition states that the MacEwens held their lands free of rent by virtue of their bardic profession (MacNicol 1779: 245), but their rights ‘*imperpetuum*’ [sic] to two merklands in Barmullocht were also enshrined in writing through a 1558 charter granted by Colin Campbell of Glenorchy (Innes 1855: 408-9). These merklands lay somewhere around today’s Barmolloch (NR 87825 99683), south of the southwestern tip of Loch Awe and east of Kilmartin. The MacEwens’

traditional family lands were said to be at Kilchoan in Ardnamurchan, overlooking Loch Melfort (Watson 1931: 141). It may be that the lands at Kilchoan were the MacEwens' original holding, to which Barmullocht was added after 1470 when the Campbells acquired the lordship of Lorn; Lorn was also the original heartland of the MacDougalls, meaning it is also possible that the MacEwens had Barmullocht since time immemorial and all that changed during the Campbell takeover was from whom they held the land.⁶⁵ The fate of the MacEwens took a dramatic turn when in the 1630s they lost the right to these lands (Bannerman 2016b: 444-5; MacGregor 2008: 359-361; Stewart 1992: 172-3; McLeod 2004: 66). This dispossession – likely not expected by Niall, who had been 'infected in his late father's lands of Kilchoan in 1627' and 'had to dispose of them' in the next three years (Bannerman 2016b: 444) – is the backdrop to the poem in question.

The subject and addressee is Gilleasbuig, 1st Marquess and 8th Earl of Argyll, who apparently inherited his father's sobriquet *Gruamach*. Watson narrowed down the poem's probable date of composition to sometime after 1641, 'the year in which MacCailin was made Marquess', and no later than the Campbell defeat at Inverlochy in February of 1645 (Watson 1931: 141). In Watson's estimation, the technique with which the author composed this poem in *deibhidhe* metre is 'sound' and gave 'evidence of thorough training in the art' (ibid), confirming that Niall MacEòghain and his work are to be classed among the classical *filidh* and their metrically strict compositions, presumably the product of extensive bardic education. This education was evidently not restricted to Gaelic literature or history, as the author made numerous references to figures and events of classical antiquity, comparing Gilleasbuig Gruamach to Hector, Cato, and Caesar as comfortably as he compared him to Oscar and Cú Chulainn (Watson 1931: 153).

Precisely because Niall MacEòghain appears to have been part of a hereditary family of *filidh*, and a practitioner of panegyric poetry which, William Gillies notes, has been 'castigated' by some modern critics 'for being insincere, frigid, artificial, unoriginal, unnecessarily obscure, generally dead, and a massive squandering of talent' (Gillies 1986: 108), his poem '*Rug Eadrain Ar Iath nAlban*' is of huge importance. Of all the 77 entries in the *dùthchas* database, A:69 is the only example in the whole corpus where a poet is directly petitioning a chief with a request for their family's *dùthchas* to be restored (stanza 17):

Léigidh dhamh **dùthchas m' athar,**

a n-onóir na h-ealadhan,

a ghéig tarla fá thoradh,

⁶⁵ I am grateful to Martin MacGregor for his explanation of the history of Barmullocht to me.

do mhéd th'anma is adhmholadh.

[Restore to me my father's heritage in honour of mine art, thou branch laden with fruit, according to the greatness of thy name and of thy praises.] (A:69, emphasis my own)

It is crucial to understand MacEwen's petition within the context of the whole poem, too. The first seven stanzas are panegyric praise which, as mentioned above, idealises Campbell as warrior and protector using a blend of Gaelic and Classical heroes. He is portrayed here as '*fear cabhra Gaoidheal is Gall*' ('he who helps Gael and Lowlander'); as '*Eachtair an fhuinn Albanuigh*' ('Hector of the land of Scotland') but also one who endures the wounds of war '*mar Choin ccédfadhuigh cCulainn*' ('like the intrepid Cú Chulainn') (Watson 1931: 152-3, §5).⁶⁶ The tone of the poem shifts from stanza 8 onwards; while most subsequent quatrains still contain at least one line of panegyric flattery for MacCailein – the traditional Gaelic style for the chief of the Campbells – the poet begins his direct address to the chieftain: '*do bhéir tré chomrádh ccunnail / aimsir eile ar th'agalluimh*' ('I will with talk discreet take further time for addressing thee') (Watson 1931: 154-5, §8). In stanzas 9-11, the poet refers to an event in Gaelic mythology which he expected Campbell to be familiar with ('*Ní chreidim nach cuala sibh...*'), when a group of *filidh* were banished from Ireland 'eastwards over the sea' by 'the sons of Míl' (Watson 1931: *ibid*, §9) for a serious social transgression ('*a h-ucht a n-ainbhreithe féin as do h-ionnarbadh iadséin*', §10). In stanza 11, MacEwen distances himself from said group of banished *filidh* ('unlike their case is mine'), implying perhaps that in this case it is the Earl who has committed the transgression, though he also acknowledges the precarity of his position as a poet petitioning his patron. In stanzas 12-14, the poet revisits the comparison of MacCailein to Cú Chulainn: Cú Chulainn is lauded as a generous patron of the bardic order, and in stanza 14 Campbell is portrayed as superior even to 'the warlike Hound' in name, style, position, patrimony, learning, and princely rule.

This would all appear to be a preamble to the second half of the poem, the petition itself. Stanza 15 opens with MacEwen addressing Campbell in the vocative: '*A Mhic MhicCailín, éisdidh inn; déna dhamsa bhur ndichioll, bi ar mo shon ag labhra libh...*' ('Thou son of MacCailín, hearken to me; do thou thy best in my behalf, be favourable to me when thou dost speak...'), and stanza 16 is almost a repetition of the above in different words. In stanza 17, as we have seen, the poet uses the imperative '*léigidh dhamh*' when asking for the restoration of his father's *dùthchas*, in honour of MacEwen's poetic art; the demand is made '*do mhéd th'ainma is adhmholadh*' ('according to the greatness of thy name and of thy praises'). Coira has interpreted the seemingly excessive flattery

⁶⁶ These portrayals of Gilleasbuig as a mighty warrior and paternalistic protector were not to last, as the clan chief's cowardly conduct in 1645 inspired scathing criticism from his own people – see Stewart 1992: 174.

endemic in panegyric poetry, such as MacEwen's '*Rug Eadrain Ar lath nAlban*', as not an 'actual representation' of a chieftain, 'but rather the model towards which the ruler should strive' (Coira 2012: 27). The emotive power of the first third of the poem, dedicated to praising MacCailein, appears to be thus harnessed by the poet's petition: if MacCailein is superior in rank even to Cú Chulainn, that legendary patron of poets, then he will surely fulfil his part of the social contract and respond favourably to the appeal of his loyal *filidh*. This is a pattern noted by scholars of Irish bardic poetry, whose hyperbolic descriptions of a patron's liberality towards poets aimed to 'shame [them] into living up to an inflated reputation' (Bradshaw 1978: 72).

Stanzas 18-22 appear to elaborate on the mutual obligations and responsibilities of the social contract between poet and chieftain. MacCailein is '*sgeallán na sgol, 's a réлта eoil na n-ollamh, ó's tú is coimhdhe dod chinneadh*' ('darling of the schools, and guiding star of poets... it is thou art lord for thy kin', §18). It is therefore utterly unnatural for him to do wrong to the MacEwens ('*nach dú oirne th' aindligheadh*', §18), who are both his subjects and *filidh*. Juxtaposition and words from the *dùth*-language family are used here for poetic effect, setting that which is natural – the MacEwens' *dùthchas* and their continued possession of it – against that which is unnatural – MacCailein's '*aindligheadh*' ('injustice') '*nach dú*'. As such, the petitioning phrase *léigidh dhamh dùthchas m' athar* is likely utilising the semantic breadth of the term *dùthchas* to the poet's advantage – it is as much about land being returned to its native inhabitants and possessors as it is about the MacEwens' multigenerational status as poets being secured, since the two were intertwined. Likewise, the poem's appeals to MacCailein's ancestral responsibilities and *dùthchas*, which if he failed to fulfil would set him at odds with his ancestors and violate the social contract between poet and patron. While there are no extant contemporary sources which explicitly state the Campbells no longer saw value in the MacEwens' poetry, Gaelic was in an advanced stage of decline within *MacCailein Mòr*'s own household, with Gilleasbuig's son struggling to pick up the language (Stewart 1992: 167-8). As far as the MacEwens go, some of the other roles traditionally performed by the *filidh*, such as 'the education of the lord's children', was in the case of the Glenorchy Campbells being performed by a William Bowie who was also 'commissioned to author the official family history' (MacGregor 2012a: 139), rather than the task being performed by the poet-as-*seanchaidh*. MacGregor has noted that the extinction of the MacEwens as a 'learned lineage' chronologically coincides, and may well be linked with, the 'production of... Campbell proto-genealogical histories' (MacGregor 2002: 220; c.f. MacGregor 2008: 359-361). Since their charter gave the MacEwens land on basis of their being 'rymouris' (Innes 1855: 408) and they found themselves increasingly squeezed out of their other customary offices, this may have been used by the Campbells as a reason to terminate their holdings.

In the poet's eyes, these changes were against the natural order, causing Niall to utilise the strongest linguistic arsenal at his disposal, the *dù*- semantic family.

MacEwen offers Campbell the 'tribute' his forefathers customarily paid their chiefs (§19): not the usual rent-payments of gold, treasure, or cattle, but '*rogha ar ndána dheacruigh*' ('the choicest of our hard-wrought poems', §20). MacEwen announces that every one of MacCailein's good deeds towards the poet shall be noted in the '*sein-leabhruibh suadh*' ('ancient books of the learned', §21), and clearly understands the power of the written record, of words which would 'endure' ('*mairidh*') – and endure they did. The poet's rhetoric is intergenerational: he refers to his own father when speaking of his *dùthchas* in stanza 17 and his poet ancestors in stanza 19, demonstrating how on his end, he had fulfilled the 'social contract' and ancestral expectations. In stanza 22, he refers to MacCailein's father as a man whose conduct never deserved reproach '*ó fhior ealadhan*' ('from men of art'), implicitly suggesting that MacCailein's conduct does. This bolsters his cause by appealing to paternal honour and ancestral customs. The final four stanzas consist mostly of further praise for MacCailein, although two lines stand out from the rest: '*mo chúis ar do chomairce*' ('I lay my case on thy protection', §24) and the assertive '*ná sir ar th'ollamh éadail*' ('seek not to make spoil of thy poet', §25). Perhaps both can be true at once: on the one hand the direct addresses to the Campbell chieftain had to be nestled among flattering epithets in order for MacEwen's petition not to be seen as transgressing social norms, while on the other hand the poet can also be seen as using panegyric praise to set the bar for MacCailein's behaviour precisely as high as he wants it to be, as well as showing the Campbell chief the praise and status he was set to lose by failing to uphold the contract between poet and patron.⁶⁷

A:69 is not the only example of classical poets using the conceptual framework of *dùthchas* to describe the intergenerational connection between bards and chiefly patrons. Cathal MacMhuirich's poem '*Cóir fáilte re fer do sgéil*' is addressed to a MacDonald patron and ends with the words '*Sin riamh re duthus ag dréim / do nim as do dúracht dóigh / mo nert ni cheilim ód chim / tribh do gheibhim ceart is cóir*', which translates to 'by hereditary descent [*dùthchas*] we have been with his people / we have done our best endeavours through hope; / I deny not that my strength is from thine ancestry / through thee I obtain right and justice' (Cameron 1894: 244). Loyalty to the chief, MacDonald, is warranted by *dùthchas* – and through the person of the chief, both justice and land rights are upheld ('*tribh do gheibhim ceart is cóir*'). Although further examination from scholars of classical Gaelic is needed, this strongly suggests that *dùthchas* on the part of both poets and

⁶⁷ For an example of burying the pith of the argument in multiple layers of flattery, see A:68, '*Mór mo mholadh ar mhac Cholla*', examined below.

patrons was intertwined in the process of legitimising the chiefs' authority, and gives a possible explanation for why poetry, rather than charters, may have historically been the traditional medium through which *dùthchas* was expressed.

A:69 is not the only poem in which a poet makes an outright mention of being dispossessed of their land.⁶⁸ It is also not the only poem in which a poet makes a direct petition of some kind⁶⁹ – in one instance a MacGregor chief is asked to replace the bow which the poet lost on the battlefield (Watson 1978: 144). As poems examined in the next chapter attest, MacEwen's poem is one of many examples of a poet dispensing advice – at times strongly-worded – to a chief or lord through their poetry. Although the *filidh*, such as the MacEwens, were gradually fading from existence by the eighteenth century, vernacular poets continued practising their craft and making cutting satires or verbally castigating powerful contemporary political figures. In Iain Lom's case these included kings, queens, and the same Earl of Argyll addressed in A:69, allegedly castigated to his face despite Gilleasbuig having put a price on Iain Lom's life (MacInnes 1999: 349). Indeed, the differential treatment of Niall's carefully-worded – though ultimately unsuccessful – petition and his dispossessed family, and, in contrast, the generous hospitality enjoyed by Iain Lom at Inveraray despite his making a mockery of the Campbells in *Là Inbhir Lòchaidh* in 1645 (ibid) seems crucial. The main difference between the two is that the MacEwens had lived rent-free on Campbell lands; Bannerman has noted that some MacLachlan kindreds who had for centuries been hereditary professionals continued to thrive as custodians of Gaelic culture through the seventeenth century because they were able to transition from being a 'professional to [a] territorial kindred' (Bannerman 2016b: 444-5), and it appears Niall was unwilling or unable to ensure the same for the MacEwens. If oral tradition is right and Iain Lom came to Inveraray Castle of his own will, the preferential treatment he received from Gilleasbuig despite insulting the Campbells could also be seen as a form of 'diplomatic immunity' granted to the spokesperson of Argyll's enemies. As we have already seen in this chapter, the bards were not only composers of literature or song, but also engaged 'in the education of their patrons' sons', witnessed their charters, and acted as their 'advisers and ambassadors' (Coira 2012: 2). An explicit example of this diplomatic dimension of the bards is the poem '*Dual ollamh triall le toisg*' ('It is fitting for an ollamh to journey on an embassy'), composed ca.

⁶⁸ In A3, '*An Sìth do Rogha, a Rìgh Fionnghall?*', the anonymous poet addresses an Islay MacDonald with the words *sibh do bhein mo dhùthchas díom*, 'you have deprived me of my ancestral place', with the caveat that this poem dates to 1614 and is likely composed by a poet from Ulster, therefore falling outwith the remit of this chapter.

⁶⁹ According to the online Bardic Poetry Database, beside A:69 there are 66 other bardic poems in which a petition is made; 6 of these – like A:69 – contain the term *dùthchas*, although A:69 is apparently the only one in which the term *dùthchas* is precisely what is being petitioned for; most of these 6 poems appear to use *dùthchas* to refer to either the lineage of their patron or their own, remarking on the naturalness of the relationship of the poet's and patron's families.

1595 and addressed to Gilleasbuig Gruamach – the 7th Earl of Argyll and father of the Gilleasbuig addressed in A:69 – in which an Irish bard approaches Campbell on a diplomatic mission, requesting military support in Ireland (MacGregor 2012a: 124; McLeod 2000: 99). Closer to home still is the poem A:67 (*‘Saoth liom do chor, a Cholla’*) composed by Cathal MacMhuirich in 1615,⁷⁰ in which the bard issues Colla Ciotach with a warning in the form of a proverb (*‘senfhocal’*). *‘Cothuigh go dían fad dhúthchas... ‘s na h-iarr cogadh coillidheadh’*, advises the MacMhuirich *filidh*, encouraging Colla to protect his *dúthchas* on the one hand, but to avoid actively seeking out the ‘war of outlaws’ on the other (Black 1973: 206). MacMhuirich appears to be invoking a moral contrast of actions which are legitimate (*‘cothuigh go dían fad dhúthchas’*, steadfastly sustaining and preserving one’s *dúthchas*) with those which are not (seeking out *‘cogadh coillidheadh’*, destructive or law-violating warfare); history attests that Colla Ciotach did not heed Cathal’s advice, at least not in the long term.

Mór mo mholadh ar mhac Cholla

The only other strictly ‘classical’ poem which fits within this chapter’s chronological remit is A:68, *‘Mór mo mholadh ar mhac Cholla’*, a praise poem addressed to Alasdair, son of the aforementioned Colla Ciotach, composed after the Battle of Kilsyth on 15 August 1645 and sometime before Alasdair mac Colla’s execution on 13 November 1647. It is anonymous, meaning we cannot contextualise the poetry with the poet’s background as we could with A:69. The poetic positionality of A:68 is evidently one of a MacDonald propagandist, though, and MacGregor tentatively suggests the author may have been Cathal MacMhuirich (MacGregor 2024b: 17). We have briefly mentioned A:67 above, where Cathal MacMhuirich issued cautionary advice to Colla Ciotach, discouraging him from open warfare while acknowledging Colla’s difficult position – three of his sons, including Alasdair to whom A:68 is addressed, were at the time held as hostages in the Lowlands. There was therefore no hope for Colla to have his claims to land legally recognised (*‘cóir uatha ní fhaghann sibh’*) by his ‘enemies’ and cultural ‘aliens’, forcing him to uphold the claims by sword-right or *‘cairt-chloidhimh’* (Black 1973: 195).⁷¹ In A:68 the bard takes a very different stance, fully celebrating Alasdair’s military exploits; circumstances had changed in the decade or two since Cathal’s warning to Colla Ciotach in A:67, however, and the victories at Inverlochy and Kilsyth would have put wind in the MacDonalds’ sails. Indeed, this bard’s hyperbole and incitement of conquest may have in part

⁷⁰ For a discussion on why 1615 is a more plausible dating than Ronald Black’s 1623-4, see footnote 42 in MacGregor 2024b.

⁷¹ My reading of these lines differs to the one given by Black, who understands them as meaning ‘You get no justice from them [your enemies] without submitting to the charter of the sword’.

been motivated by the prospect of greater rewards from Alasdair mac Colla, should he indeed have exacted tribute from the ‘greater half of Scotland’.

The style of this piece is *croisantacht*, meaning the lyrical parts of the poem are ‘interspersed with humorous or satirical prose’ (Watson 1927: 75). In this case, the satirical prose has the bard reducing the MacDonalds’ opponents to a cowering band of mice, unable to take on the cat – Alasdair, acting in this regard as a symbol of Gaelic resistance – despite coming up with a cunning plan to tie a bell around the cat’s neck, thus removing its hunting prowess (Watson 1927: 78-83). The second piece of satirical prose compares the opponents’ efforts to that of a spider, whose confidently woven web may catch some weak flies but will ultimately be destroyed in a moment by a strong gust of wind (ibid: 86-9). Cathal MacMhuirich used ethnic terms freely in A:67, synonymising the term ‘*Gaoidheal*’ with the MacDonalds, the Red Branch, the race of Conn and Eochaidh and Somhairle, while juxtaposing them with the ‘*namhaid*’, ‘*echtrann*’, and ‘*Gall*’. The anonymous author of A:68 is even more explicit, pitting the Gaels against ‘*fir Alban*’ (l. 9, 25, 35), interchangeably with ‘*Gall*’ or ‘*Goill*’ (l. 39, 43, 60, 72, 99, 104), with stanzas 14 and 15 using ‘*sgela ar sgoile is ughdar eólach*’ (‘the accounts of the bardic schools and learned writers’) as proof of how distinct *Gall* and *Gàidheal* are, and what is ‘*cóir*’ for each of the ethnic groups to do. Therefore, the poem is in equal parts a boast for the ‘*Goidheal*’ as it is a satire on Alasdair mac Colla’s routed opponents.

The term appears in stanzas 4 and 5; it appears twice because of repetition of the final line of the previous quatrain in the first line of every new stanza. The fourth stanza begins with a description of the destruction left in the wake of Alasdair mac Colla’s campaigns: ‘many a court is waste and empty throughout each territory’ (c.f. Macinnes 1996: 106-7). The poet then goes on to say:

Dúthchus do shìol Airt an fhoghuil

cairt an chloidhimh.

[The birthright of Art’s seed is spoiling, the broadsword’s charter.]

And, in the next stanza,

Cairt an chloidhimh dhoibh as **dúthchus**

don droing dhána...

[The broadsword’s charter is the birthright of that bold people...] (A:68, emphasis my own)

The word order in the line with the first instance of *dùthchas* effectively confirms that in this case, the bard is not referring to lands which are customarily held by Alasdair mac Colla or even the MacDonalds in general – at least not explicitly. *Dùthchas* is used here in the copula form, as it

commonly is in the Irish corpus⁷² – in the sense of *'foghail'*, meaning 'hostile incursions' (foghail, Etymological Dictionary of the Irish Language, online) being native or natural to (*'dúthchus do'*) the seed of Art (*'síol Airt'*), meaning the MacDonalds. The bard is describing an ancestral attribute of Alasdair mac Colla's bloodline, tracing it back to legendary ancestors to boast Colla's pedigree, and thereby granting legitimacy to the MacDonalds' actions.⁷³ Because there had been so many conquerors among Alasdair mac Colla's ancestors, conquest is natural to them (*dúthchas do*), but acquisition by conquest and sword-right are also the means through which they establish *dùthchas* (*cairt an chloidhimh dhoibh as dúthchas*). The assertion is that historically, *síol Airt* held land by 'sword-right' (*cairt an chloidhimh*) and extracted '*cìos is cána ar úrleith Alban*' ('tax and tribute over Alba's greater half', l. 21) without charters to support their claim or the Crown's sanction (*'minic chuirid sìos gan séla'*, 'often without seal's impression', l. 19), and thus it is perfectly legitimate for a descendant claiming such *dùthchas* to rise up to claim such tribute again. MacGregor notes that the right to 'extensive swordland', or land taken by conquest, is written deep into the family lore of the MacDonalds as part of *sochar síol gColla*, 'the privileges of Síol Cholla', stretching as far back as the origin myths of the three Collas (MacGregor 2024b: 8-9). Further examination is also needed of the MacDonald claim to '*úrleith Alban*', a claim to Gaelic control or even sovereignty over half of Alba. The poet may be referring back to the 1462 Treaty of Westminster-Ardtornish between Edward IV of England and John of Islay, Lord of the Isles, seeing it as the basis for Clan Donald to claim much of Scotland north of the Firth of Forth. References to this claim to half of Scotland lived on in the *bàrdachd* of Iain Lom and John MacCodrum (MacInnes 2006d: 23), and it is not easily reconciled with a sense of *ríoghalachd* or Scottish Gaeldom's loyalty to the monarchy particularly visible in vernacular poetry of later centuries (ibid: 11; MacGregor 2024b: 10-13).⁷⁴

It is therefore all the more interesting that this anonymous poet – perhaps Cathal MacMhuirich – used the legitimising concept of *dùthchas* in this poem, with all of its associations with that which is native and natural, when describing the warpath of the MacDonalds in the 1640s and their claim to *úrleith Alban*. Indeed, in this poem, contesting sources of legitimacy are raised and contrasted with

⁷² See McQuillan 2004

⁷³ The MacDonalds' ancestry was frequently traced back to Conn of the Hundred Battles by the bards – c.f. Thomson 1991b: 9 or McLeod and Bateman 2019: 228-233

⁷⁴ The Gaels' *ríoghalachd* is certainly more visible in the vernacular poetry from the eighteenth century onwards than in the seventeenth, as the earlier centuries' Hebridean poetry seems to perceive both local lordship and the Scottish crown as valid sources of *ríoghal* power. For example, in A:6 (*'An Crònán'*) Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh uses *ríoghail* as a descriptive for Tormod MacLeod in context of his Norse descent, describes him as *càirdeach* ('a kinsman') to all the *Gàidheil* when listing multiple allied clans, and uses *Gall* as the term for MacLeod's enemies. The (female) narrator of a song addressed to a MacDonald wounded in the 1601 *Blàr Chàirinis* lists 'MacDonald's noble connections, with the King of Lewis (i.e. the MacLeod chief)' (Thomson 2000: 100).

one another throughout stanzas 4 to 7: *dùthchas* and *cairt an chloidhimh*, the Crown and its ‘seal’s impression’, mac Colla’s wars being waged ‘*a leith an cheirt is na córa*’ (‘on behalf of right and justice’, l. 27), and the ‘*dlighe*’ or right (l. 23) to ‘tax and tribute’ over the greater half of Scotland – the alternative to which was the ‘*roinn roimhe*’ or ‘old division’ (l. 24) which Watson explains as meaning ‘absolute possession [of the *úrleith Alban*], according to the old claims’ (Watson 1927: 77). The term *cairt a’ chlaindeimh* – more commonly *còir a’ chlaindeimh* – or ‘sword-right’ has received very little scholarly attention,⁷⁵ but appears in a handful of sources, including Donald Monro’s description of Raasay in 1549, when MacGilleChaluim was said to hold the island ‘be the sword’ though it belonged to the ‘Bischope of the Iles in heritage’ (Monro in Munro and Withers 1999: 322). The term was also used by nineteenth century antiquarian Duncan Campbell in his historical sketch of how possession of Glenlyon changed hands throughout history (Campbell, D. 1984: 9 and 24). Newton points out that ‘the right to land won by conquest occurs in all warrior societies’ and that early Irish law tracts ‘acknowledge [*còir a’ chlaindeimh*] as a legitimate means of acquiring territory’ (Newton 2019: 142). On the other hand, the Early Irish prose text *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, examined in the ‘Earliest Usage’ chapter, posits that a people’s claim to their *dùthchas* or *dùthaich* (in the sense of ‘native land’) is ‘more just’ than their claim to ‘territory taken by conquest and by the sword’ (‘*ferand forgabala ocus claidim*’, Todd 1867: 68-70; c.f. McQuillan 2004: 24-5). *Dùthchas* and *còir a’ chlaindeimh* need not be mutually exclusive, however. If we accept that *dùthchas* is built up by multiple generations of a kindred inhabiting a place, *còir a’ chlaindeimh* may be the way in which the land is first gained. To a contemporary observer of conquest, however, the conquered party is deprived of their *dùthchas* while the conqueror claims *còir a’ chlaindeimh*. Such a relationship between sword-land and *dùthchas* was examined by McQuillan in relation to Tadhg Dall’s poem *Fearann Cloidhimh críoch Bhanbha* (‘Ireland’s borders are sword-land’) composed in the 1570s. Tadhg Dall, the poet, was trying to compel his patron to ‘raise up [his] spear’ to protect his *dùthchas*, and he states that military action is the only ‘charter’ that can protect them (McQuillan 2004: 28, 72-4, 77-8; c.f. Newton 2019: 142). Likewise, the MacDonald propagandist who composed A:68 suggests that the sword is the only charter which would secure Alasdair mac Colla’s ‘right’ to the lands he conquered, but also seems to grant legitimacy to mac Colla’s conquests because of his *dùthchas* and the many conquests of his MacDonald ancestors. The poetry examined in the following chapters will show that conquest was not the only context where the cultural force behind *dùthchas* was used to grant legitimacy to the poetry’s subjects.

⁷⁵ See MacGregor 1989: 135-199 for a study on the MacGregors’ sword-right to Rannoch becoming legal rights in the sixteenth century.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have followed the use of the term *dùthchas* in the poetic output of the classical poets of the 1640s. These *filidh* saw themselves and their craft as performing the function of legitimating ‘an individual’s right to rule over his people’ (Coira 2012: 28), and the previous chapter has already demonstrated that the connection between *dùthchas* and legitimate authority can be traced back to the ninth century in Ireland (Fomin 2013: 158-9). Across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, the ‘traditional political and cultural links between Scottish and Irish Gaeldom were weakened and broken’ (McLeod 2004: 194) and in this chapter we saw the Campbells sever ties with their hereditary MacEwen poets, suggesting that *MacCailein Mòr* no longer looked to the *filidh* for the legitimization of his authority, even if the poets continued to believe they possessed this power. Patronage of poetry did not die out in the *Gàidhealtachd*, even as the classical poets faded out from history in the first half of the eighteenth century; as the following four chapters will attest, the works of the vernacular poets suggest that they continued to see their compositions as regulating legitimacy of power. At the same time, it would appear that Campbell’s treatment of Niall MacEwen in A:69 is emblematic of the shift away from Gaelic and towards Anglophone modes of conduct or *beusan* which would, over the course of the next two centuries, continue occurring among the vast majority of Gaeldom’s clan gentry. Although further study is required, there does appear to be a link between this shift in *beusan* and the education of future clan chiefs no longer being provided by fellow Gaels within the *Gàidhealtachd* but in Lowland Scottish and English schools, which may have become more common among the Hebridean clan gentry after 1609.

Another recurring theme in this chapter was the linguistic collocation of martial capabilities and inclinations among Gaels – whether named individuals or as an ethnic group – with *dùthchas*. This trope was not novel in the 1640s, nor did it fade out along with the classical poets. Indeed, this trope will feature in every chapter of this thesis, though the context naturally shifted over time, and may still be seen in the work of some twentieth century bards, such as Dòmhnall Iain Dhonnchaidh or Dòmhnall Aonghais Bhàin. This semantic and conceptual connection between *dùthchas* and militarism has its roots in the *Gàidhealtachd* as a warrior society, where kindreds had the pragmatic need for military strength to defend and uphold the clan’s *dùthchas*, and military service may well have formed the very basis to landholding (MacGregor 2012b: 216-7). This may also explain the linguistic and semantic connection between different iterations of *còir* or ‘right’, such as *còir a’ chlàidheimh* or ‘sword-right’ with *dùthchas*, another concept relating to legitimacy. *Còir* will also

feature in every subsequent chapter of this thesis, though it appears to have been used most plentifully when there was a need for reassertion of rights, whether these were rights of poets, tenants, clan chiefs, or even monarchs.

6. *Dùthchas* and the semi-classical and vernacular ‘clan poets’ of 1649 – 1704

The poetic output which we have examined in the chapter above was that of the ‘classical poets’ who used Classical Gaelic, a literary language used by both Scottish and Irish poets from the thirteenth to the early eighteenth century (McLeod and Bateman 2019: xxxiv; Thomson 1991a: 155), characterised by complex metrical rules which were taught in bardic schools, hence the term *filidheacht na scol* or ‘poetry of the schools’, ‘poetry of the learned’ (McLeod and Bateman 2019: xxxiv). We saw that this classical poetic tradition was in decline by the 1640s, and scholars have noted that the shift away from ‘Classical Gaelic’ was accompanied by an ‘increasing prominence of poets employing more vernacular styles and metres’ (Stiùbhart 2021a: 27). In this chapter, we are going to examine poetry which was composed 1649 – c. 1704 and is considered the work of either ‘semi-classical’ or ‘vernacular poets’. We will first delve into what these terms mean, and how vernacular poetry came to dominate the corpus of surviving poetry from around this period onward. We will then explore why the composers of these pieces – some of the most prominent poetic voices of this half-century – have been called ‘clan poets’ and what role they played in maintaining social order and cohesion in Gaelic society. This will allow us to first study the ways in which these poets employed the term *dùthchas* to instruct and influence the behaviour of their chiefly patrons, and then scrutinise the connection between *dùthchas* and crisis in poetry.

The previous chapter mentioned contemporary poetic evidence of the progressing ‘dereliction of the schools of poetry’ in Ireland (Black 1976: 199; c.f. Thomson 1991a: 159-160). Even when the bardic schools were abandoned and the commonplace keeping of hereditary *filidh* by clan chiefs ceased, the knowledge and skill of the bardic order – or the classical poets themselves – did not disappear overnight. The line between classical and vernacular poetry is blurred by the existence of what has variously been termed ‘semi-bardic’, ‘sub-bardic’, ‘sub-syllabic’, and ‘semi-classical’ poetry (McLeod and Bateman 2019: xli-xlii; Coira 2012: 43; Thomson 2000: 95-6) composed by individuals who may have received a partial or full poetic schooling – such as poets ‘who ranked somewhere below the *file*, [or] amateurs from the nobility’ (Coira 2012: 42). Both the substance and style of classical Gaelic poetry remained highly influential and had a ‘lingering influence’ on the vernacular poets (Thomson 1991a: 156-7; c.f. Thomson 2000: 96), as this chapter attests. For purposes of classification, and because the constraints of classical ‘syllabic *dán díreach*’ were so narrow, scholars more readily group the ‘semi-bardic’ with the vernacular (Coira 2012: 43), and this is the approach which I will take here, too.

The earliest surviving vernacular Scottish Gaelic poetry dates back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, though ‘early Gaelic manuscripts carry very little evidence of non-classical verse’, and much of the surviving vernacular poetry – including much of the material analysed in this chapter – is found in ‘relatively late collections from oral sources’ (Thomson 2000: 97; c.f. Thomson 1991a: 157-8). However, it is crucial to note that poetry composed in a non-Classical, vernacular Scottish Gaelic has likely existed for as long as Gaelic has been spoken in Scotland. This is to say that the composition of vernacular Gaelic poetry does not *begin* as a novel art form in the face of the classical poetry’s gradual decline, but rather that the sociopolitical conditions causing the classical poetry’s decline encouraged innovation among the vernacular poets, and later collections of Gaelic poetry contain this vernacular output which may be dated back to the period in question (Stiùbhart 2021a: 27). Indeed, the stylistic and thematic breadth of the earlier surviving instances of vernacular poetry strongly suggests that these represent an already established tradition which would become the Scottish Gaelic literary tradition’s dominant poetic form in subsequent centuries (Thomson 1991a: 157-8). The surviving vernacular poetic material became ‘much more plentiful... from the 1640s onwards’ (McLeod and Bateman 2019: xlii) – a statement which is also true of Scottish Gaelic poetry in general.

Coira notes a twofold implication behind the term ‘vernacular poet’: firstly, linguistically speaking, their *bàrdachd* was composed in ‘everyday language as opposed to the standard literary language, or Classical Gaelic’ (Coira 2012: 42), and in a stressed rather than syllabic metre. Secondly, while women did compose within the classical tradition, the professional ranks of the *filidh* were restricted to formally educated male members of hereditary bardic families. The vernacular poets, on the other hand, came from a much broader cross-section of Gaelic society, including ‘amateur poets from the nobility and the folk poets or songsters’ (Coira 2012: 42-3), and, in stark contrast to the classical poets, ‘a considerable number of female poets’ (ibid: 43; McLeod and Bateman 2019: xxxiv, 494-6; Thomson 1991a: 158). Nonetheless, despite terms like ‘vernacular poets’ or ‘folk poets’ being applied to them, virtually all of the poets whose work is analysed in this chapter were *daoine uaisle* or members of the clan gentry, or were close to them by virtue of descent or occupation. Only in the eighth and ninth chapters covering the poetry of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century shall we see examples of *bàrdachd* composed by members of the ‘ordinary’ tenantry or *tuath*.

The demise of the ‘classical tradition’ (Bannerman 1986: 120-133) in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century itself indicated a *Gàidhealtachd* in flux: the shift away from Classical Gaelic symbolising, in a sense, the fraying of Scottish Gaeldom’s close ties with Ireland (McLeod 2004: 194-219). Derick Thomson notes that as the term *filidh* went out of use, a new term appeared in the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd* – *aos-dána*, ‘the “lay” successor of the professional bard’ (Thomson

1991a: 160). There is textual evidence that in the latter half of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, there were composers of praise poems and elegies for the MacDonalds of Sleat, the MacLeans of Duart, the Campbells of Argyll, and the Mackenzies of Seaforth being referred to as *aos-dána*. In the previous chapter, we have seen that the trained *filidh* had traditionally performed a number of other roles for their chiefly employers. With increasing frequency, matters of law, commerce, legitimation, and succession were being planned and conducted with the Anglophone world (MacInnes 1996: 76) – a world in which the qualifications of the *filidh* beyond the field of Gaelic poetry were unlikely to be recognised. Though the *Gàidhealtachd* may have been in flux, the poetry which was produced – and commissioned – within it bears an uncanny resemblance to the poetry of previous centuries. Thomson states that Gaelic poetry of the seventeenth century is most strongly characterised by ‘the work of poets closely associated with particular chiefs and clans’ (Thomson 1991a: 159), giving the example of Iain Lom, whose work will be analysed below. The close association of a poet with one chief or *rí* – alternatively, an entire bardic dynasty with a line of chiefs or kings – is a well-documented and ancient tradition in Ireland, embodied in the title *ollamh flatha* or *ollamh ríogh* (Breatnach 1983: 37). Likewise, the thematic range of:

celebrating the virtues and victories of a chief, or mourning his death, occasionally counselling or criticising a leader, sometimes straying into more personal interests and enthusiasms (Thomson 1991a: 159)

virtually mirrors the themes we have seen in the classical poets’ work above, as well as some of the *bàrdachd* from previous centuries mentioned in the previous chapter. Stylistically, the vernacular poetry also uses the ‘panegyric code’ (McLeod and Bateman 2019: xxxvii; c.f. Coira 2012: 27-8 and MacInnes 2006a) and employs ‘heroic age’ imagery increasingly archaic in later centuries (Thomson 1991b: 5). Coira and Thomson both suggest that the major innovation in vernacular poetry is the poets’ own and direct commentary on contemporary events having a stronger presence in the work (Thomson 1991a: 161; Coira 2012: 44), and there is certainly a strong voice apparent in some of the poetry analysed below.

The ‘semi-bardic’ and vernacular poets to whom we now turn have been called ‘clan poets’ (Thomson 2000: 96 and 102; Gunderloch in Koch 2006: 1579-1580) because of their poetry’s intense focus on their chief and clan. Coira has argued that within Gaelic society the *filidh* exclusively held ‘the official role of legitimator of political leadership’, although the vernacular poets were also ‘significant’ and held much sway (Coira 2012: 44-45). Coira does not make it clear why only *filidh* could legitimise political leadership; it is possibly inferred from the elite status of the *filidh* and their classical poetry and influenced by the chronological scope of Coira’s study (up to 1700) which focusses on classical material. Coira’s argument begs the question of who, if anyone, legitimised the

authority of Gaeldom's political leaders once the leaders themselves ceased to maintain the *filidh*. The poetry analysed below displays strong continuity with the classical tradition's function of legitimising leadership – but how did this poetry respond to the changing identities of chiefs and social structure of the *Gàidhealtachd*, and what part did *dùthchas* play in this?

The 'clan poets'

The works of eight vernacular poets – twelve pieces of *bàrdachd* in total – will comprise the poetic material analysed in this chapter. Almost all of these poets have been described as 'clan poets' by scholars of Gaelic poetry. Another crucial commonality which aids in them being grouped together here is their chronology, as all twelve pieces were composed between 1649 and 1704, if the dating is accurate.

Poet's name	Title	Date of composition	Appendix code
Eachann Bacach	A' Chnò Shamhna	1649	A:18
Iain Lom	Cumha Morair Hunndaidh	1649	A:13
Iain Lom	Murt na Ceapaich	1663	A:14
Iain Lom	Iorram do Shìol Dùghaill	1665	A:15
Catrìona NicGilleathain	Do Lachainn MacGilleathain, Triath Chola	1687	A:41
Iain Lom	Òran air Rìgh Uilleam agus Banrìgh Màiri	1692	A:16
An Clàrsair Dall (Ruaidhri MacMhuirich)	Creach na Ciadaoin	1693	A:17
Catrìona NicGilleathain	Òran do Dhòmhnall MacGilleathain, Tighearna Chola	1695	A:42
Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh (NicLeòid)	An Crònan	1699	A:6
Lachlann MacKinnon	Latha Siubhal Sléibhe Dhomh	1700	A:21
Maighstir Seathan (MacIlleathain)	Ge Grianach An Latha	1701	A:20
Mairghread nighean Lachlainn	Òran	1704	A:4

Table 1: Poems by the 'clan poets', 1649 – 1704

A third of these twelve poems were composed by Iain Lom, and the only other poet with more than one composition ascribed to them is Catrìona NicGilleathain who composed two – although Ó Baoill notes some uncertainty about the poems' attribution to her, and there were other women named Catrìona among the MacLeans of Coll (Ó Baoill 1997: xvi, 62, 69-70). There are other extant poems by the nine poets who composed this *bàrdachd* – indeed, many of their repertoires represent some of the best survival of vernacular poetry of their time with an extraordinary 41

surviving poems ascribed to Iain Lom (MacKenzie 1964), at least eleven to Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh (Ó Baoill 2014) and seven to An Clàrsair Dall (Matheson 1970). As the Methodology chapter stated, edited collections of these repertoires were searched for the term *dùthchas*, and the twelve poems are those in which the term is to be found; occasionally, other work by these poets will be referenced but it will be made clear if they do not appear in Appendix A.

Another third of these 12 poems were composed by women; this number supports Derick Thomson's remark on the 'prominence of female authorship' in 'seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Gaelic [song]' (Thomson 2000: 98). While it is not an even split, the prevalence of female poets in this time period is striking, especially in contrast with the exclusively male world of the learned *filidh*. It is all the more interesting to see female poets discussing *dùthchas* in their compositions, something they were unable to have, at least proverbially.⁷⁶

The strongest point of thematic overlap in the work of the clan poets is the clan chief himself. Nine of the twelve poems⁷⁷ directly address a clan chief in a way which indicates a high degree of familiarity between chief and poet, and many of these clan poets are known to have been 'close friends [of] chiefs' (ibid: 96) or their nurse, as in the case of Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh (Thomson 1991a: 158; Ó Baoill 2014: 1 and 6-7), and many were related to them in varying degrees of kinship – such as Mairghread nighean Lachlainn, whom oral tradition places as a member of the family of MacLean of Torloisk (Ó Baoill 2009: 13-14). Thomson has described the status of many of these poets as 'quasi-professional' (Thomson 2000: 98). *An Clàrsair Dall* – Ruaidhri MacMhuirich, anglicised as Roderick Morison – is one example of a 'quasi-professional' poet with many conflicting accounts of his life. Oral history states that he was 'minstrel to Iain Breac M'Leod... from whom, according to the usual tenure, he received the farm of Tota-mòr in Glen Elg' (Morison quoted in Matheson 1970: xxxvii-xxxviii), holding it rent-free until Iain Breac's death. The historical record, however, presents 'Rorie Morisone' as a rent-paying tacksman over a large tenancy in Claggan, about three miles north of Dunvegan, in a rental of 1683 (Matheson 1970: xlvi), and Matheson notes that, by comparison, MacLean of Duart's harper appears in a rental of 1674 as holding 'his lands rent-free in virtue of his office' (ibid: xlviii). This leads Matheson to conclude that while *An Clàrsair Dall* spent 'much of his time in MacLeod's household', he 'had no official status at Dunvegan, either as bard or musician', and because his 'position [as harper] resulted from a purely personal arrangement between himself and Iain Breac... he had no claim upon Iain Breac's son and successor, for all that he

⁷⁶ See the discussion of the proverb '*cha bhi dùthchas aig mnaoi no aig sagart*' ('women and priests have no birth-tie') in the context of Mairearad Ghriogarach's poetry in chapter eight, and in the context of Màiri Mhòr's poetry in chapter nine below.

⁷⁷ A:18, A:14, A:41, A:17, A:42, A:6, A:21, A:20, A:4

himself seems to have thought he had' (ibid: xlix). Even during Iain Breac's lifetime Ruaidhri's outspoken political views or troubled relationship with Iain Breac's son were the likely reason for him being 'exiled' from the vicinity of Dunvegan to the peripheries of MacLeod's estate in Glen Elg (ibid: lv-lviii). Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh – who had 'close links' with *An Clàrsair Dall* (Ó Baoill 2014: 9) – is said to have been temporarily exiled to the Southern Hebrides by her clan chief, MacLeod, and there are accounts in the oral tradition that the chief may not have always appreciated her compositions (Ó Baoill 2014: 7-9; Frater 2008: 39-41). Iain Lom was also temporarily '*air m' fhògradh à m' dhùthaich*' ('banished from my country'), although not by his own chief as in Ruaidhri and Màiri's cases, but by the perpetrators of the Keppoch Murders – Sìol Dùghaill, who had murdered Iain Lom's young clan chief and seized control over the area before being brought to justice (A:15, '*Iorram do Shìol Dùghaill*'; c.f. MacKenzie 1964: xxxix and 114-121). Whether by virtue of their relationship to their respective chiefs, their 'quasi-professional' status as poets (Thomson 2000: 97-8), or a 'relatively high caste' social standing by virtue of their descent (MacInnes quoted in Ó Baoill 2014: 2), the clan poets most likely held an expectation that their futures were secure due to their fulfilment of the social contract between poet and leader. As the lives of the three poets mentioned above attest, even with the customary force of *dùthchas* on their side, they were not fully immune to the whims of their leaders.

This point leads us to John MacInnes' interpretation of the function of

clan panegyric, where the stress is on survival of the group of aristocratic warrior hunters at the top of society. The diction is codified in sets of conventional images, most densely concentrated in the heroic elegy composed at the point of crisis brought about by the death of a leader – in other words, when it is most necessary to reaffirm the traditional values of the community (MacInnes 2006e: 169).

This interpretation is broadly supported by Coira's (2012) comprehensive survey of the pre-1700 corpus of panegyric poetry. Of the nine poems mentioned above which are addressed to, or concerning, clan chiefs; four mark the death of a chief;⁷⁸ one idealises multiple dead chiefs and laments the changing customs of those who still live;⁷⁹ and four are addressed to living chiefs, none of whom are physically present in their lands⁸⁰ (at least two of whom are in exile).⁸¹ There is a strong correlation between the artistic invocation of *dùthchas* and the chief's physical absence from their ancestral seat, whatever the reason for the absence. There is evidently more to this than the practical issue caused by the absence of a leader – the absence of the physical body within the

⁷⁸ A:18, A:14, A:41, A:17

⁷⁹ A:21

⁸⁰ A:42, A:6, A:20, A:4

⁸¹ A:20, A:4, A: 42, and possibly A:6

ancestral *dùthchas*, particularly in death, appears to pose a significant cosmological problem to the Gaels (A:43; c.f. Ó Baoill 2009: 72-85 at §4, 8, 22, 23; Black 2019: 70, l. 192-200; Newton 2009: 108).⁸² Likewise, the prevalence of *dùthchas* in poetry ‘composed at the point of crisis’ – whether or not that crisis is caused by death – strongly suggests that *dùthchas* is not only one of the ‘traditional values of the community’ which needed to be reaffirmed at these key points, but perhaps one of the epistemological cornerstones upon which all other facets of Gaelic society and culture were built.

Indeed, the poets’ main preoccupation in these poems addressed to chiefs is the social contract between the chief and his people, especially articulations of the expectations the people had of their leader. Seven of these poems contain descriptions – often extensive – of the chief’s military prowess,⁸³ perhaps predictably within this panegyric genre. Clearly, to many of this period’s poets this was not merely an anachronistic poetic device from the heroic age, but a genuinely desired set of characteristics. A chief who was ‘*smachdail rianail reachdmhor*’ (‘authoritative, consistent and forceful’ in A:17, ‘*Creach na Ciadaoin*’, Matheson 1970: 56), around whose banner thousands would gather (‘*bhitheadh mìltean mud’ bhrataich*’ in A:18, ‘*A’ Chnò Shamhna*’, Ó Baoill 1979: 16), was most capable of protecting (‘*dìon*’ in A:17, Matheson 1970: 56) his *dùthchas*, land and people. The words of two MacLean poets – Maighstir Seathan and Mairghread nighean Lachlainn – confirm this belief, as it is at odds with their worldview that Sir Iain [Sir John MacLean, 4th Baronet] should have lost ‘*do dhaoine ’s do dhùthaich*’ (‘his people and his native territory’), not by the sword or strong hand (‘*cha b’ e ’n lann na ’n làmh làidir*’) – the threat of which was apparently an accepted matter of fact in Gaelic society – but through the repercussions of siding with James VII and through Campbell expansionism (A:20, ‘*Ge Grianach An Latha*’; Ó Baoill 1979: 94-6; A:4, ‘*Òran*’, Ó Baoill 2009: 50).

Passive and active instruction to the chief

Perhaps it is not surprising that another aspect of the social contract to recur in these poems is the expectation of a chief to be liberal towards poets and musicians, embodied in the image of clan chief as patron of the arts, which appears in six of them.⁸⁴ The image of the chief as patron of the arts was sometimes used for poetic effect. Iain Lom conjured images of the chief’s dwelling or *àros* where all were once wont to receive a lavish welcome (*fàilt’ agus cosd*) to the accompaniment of

⁸² For another poem which mentions burial outwith a person’s *dùthchas*, see discussion of A:56 (‘*Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach air an Àirigh*’) in chapter eight below.

⁸³ A:18, A:41, A:17, A:42, A:6, A:20, A:4

⁸⁴ A:18, A:14, A:41, A:17, A:6, A:21

harp-music (*ceòl clàrsaiche*), only to juxtapose it with its current state, after the Keppoch Murders: the hall is cold with no lit fire (*gun aon smùid ann no ceò*), the wail of mourners (*gàirich nam bochd*) is the only music, and the dead chief's lands lie exposed to his enemies like the *tàilìsg* board and its scattered pieces (*mar thàilìsg air faondradh tha t'fhearann sgaoilte*) (A:14, 'Murt na Ceapaich'; MacKenzie 1964: 82-4). In fact, the imagery of Alexander MacDonald as sponsor of high culture plays a central part in Iain Lom's subsequent dispraise of Sìol Dùghaill, to which we shall return later. In four of these poems, however, the image of chief as generous patron is used in either a 'passively instructive' or 'actively instructive' manner to try and exact a certain set of expected behaviours from the chief. For example, in a poem of the 1670s or 1680s, the bloodline of Lachlann mac Eachainn Ruaidh, Laird of Coll, is traced within the context of its support of poets; his predecessor was '*ceann nan cliaran*' (head of the poet-bands), and Lachlann himself is described as follows:

Gum bu cheann aos ealain thu

Is gum b'athrail dhut do ghnàth,

Bu **dùthchas** dhut bho d' sheanair,

A lùb allail a bheir bàrr.

[For you are the leader of those learned in the arts, and so fatherlike in your ways. It is your ancestral way which you got from your grandfather, o noble branch which bears fruits.] (A:41, translation and emphasis my own)

The chiefly ideal was leadership in matters of warfare, but also leadership in matters of the arts and culture. Similarly to Niall MacEòghain's words in A:69, the subject's *dùthchas* is invoked in the context of their relationship with their poets and how well the subject is able to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors – unlike the 8th Earl of Argyll, Lachlann MacLean appears to have satisfied the poet with his conduct ('*gum b'athrail dhut do ghnàth*') and, as a result, receives the poet's blessing ('*a lùb allail a bheir bàrr*'). This could be seen as an example of the poet using a 'passively instructive' voice to encourage certain behaviour – generosity – and criticise examples of unchiefly conduct, such as meanness. This voice was also employed extensively by Lachlann MacKinnon in A:21 ('*Latha Siubhal Sléibhe Dhomh*'), where multiple clan chiefs are addressed not by Lachlann himself but by proxy, using personification to give a voice to the virtues Mercy, Love, and Generosity (*lochd is Gràdh is Fiùghantas*). Chiefs who had treated Lachlann well, such as Tormod MacLeod of Berneray and Iain Breac MacLeod of Dunvegan, are placed upon the pedestal of perfection. Tormod is praised for his manliness and generosity ('*bha gu fearail fiùghantach*'), for not growing mean over coins ('*nach d'fhàs mun chùinneadh cruaidh*'), and for being the one who took Mercy, Love, and Generosity under his wing after the death of Iain Breac ('*sann ort a bha ar tathaich on thugadh Iain*

uainn'). Fulfilling all of these expectations earns Tormod the highest possible praise from the poet: his conduct means he kept up the MacLeod *dùthchas* ('*Tormod... a chum an dùthchas suas*'). Lachlann contrasts this with the current state of affairs: the virtues Mercy, Love, and Generosity are three orphans, weeping on the open moor or *sliabh*, having been left without paternalistic protection – they do not envy the state of the needy ever since the death knells have sounded for the generous chiefs who are no more ('*s beag m' fharmaid ris na feumaich / on a bheum na cluig gu truagh*') (A:21; Black 2019: 30).

Three other poets employ an 'actively-instructive' voice in their work to encourage the kind of behaviour they wish to see from their chief – and they do not merely focus on the benefit to themselves, even if patronage of the arts is mentioned. A:18, *A' Chnò Shamhna*, is one such poem; it was composed by Eachann Bacach, who, according to traditional accounts, was the last 'retained' poet of the MacLeans of Mull (Morison MS quoted in Ó Baoill 1979: xlv). The poem is Eachann Bacach's extensive elegy for Sir Lachlann MacLean of Duart, who died in 1649, which provides us with the dating of this poem. While 21 of its 22 stanzas eulogise Sir Lachlann, the final stanza addresses his son and heir, Hector, directly. Eachann Bacach sets the scene in the preceding stanzas, constructing an extended nautical metaphor of the MacLean chiefship as a ship with Sir Lachlann at the helm (Ó Baoill 1979: 186; c.f. MacInnes 2006a: 284-5). The deceased chief is praised for holding a steady course for his son (*chum thu dìreach dod' mhac e*), keeping the sail flawless and untorn (*bréid dhionach gun sracadh*), and not abandoning the yard of the ship (*cha do dhiobair ceann slait' thu*) despite the many downpours along the voyage (*ge bu lìonmhor ort frasachd*). All of this was only made possible by God's blessing: Christ had been Lachlann's tackle-master, and it was He that granted the chief the sheet-rope (*on 's e Crìosd a b'fhear beairt dhuit / sin an Tì a leig leat an taod sgòid*). The poet's attention then shifts to the heir in the last stanza:

A mhic, ma ghlacas tu 'n stiùir seo

Cha bu fhathas gun **dùthchas**

Dhuit bhith grathann air th'ùrnaigh;

Cuir ga caitheamh an Triùir seo:

Cuir an t-Athair air thùs ann,

Biodh am Mac 'na fhear iùil oirr',

An Spiorad Naomha g'a stiùireadh gu nòs.

[Young man, if you take over this helm, it were inherited leadership for you to turn betimes to prayer; let these three direct it: put the Father in first place there, let the Son be its helmsman, the Holy Ghost to guide it to harbour.] (A:18, emphasis my own)

Hector is being addressed in the vocative (*a mhic*), and the poet uses the ‘actively-instructive’ voice to tell the young heir what the conditions are for him to take over at the ship’s helm. The second and third line most likely form a double negative, as Ó Baoill has argued, meaning that piety and prayer are a prerequisite for Hector to claim the dominion which is his ancestral right; Eachann Bacach may also have been playing with the double meaning of ‘*flathas*’, often meaning the Christian Heaven, and that it was natural for Hector (*dùthchas dhuit*) to pray in order to enter Paradise. The context is strongly religious in any case, as is made clear by the invocation of the Trinity which follows, as well as the mention of Christ in the preceding stanza. What is interesting is the form of the prayer in the last four lines: Derick Thomson noted its similarity to the opening stanza of *Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair’s ‘Birlinn Chlann Raghnaill’*, and suggested that Alasdair and Eachann Bacach were both echoing an earlier ‘*Beannachadh Luinge*’, a blessing for ships included in Carswell’s writings (Thomson 1970: 110-11; Thomson 1996: 135). All three belong to a broader corpus of Gaelic nautical blessings, some of which were collected by Carmichael ‘in the second half of the nineteenth century’ (ibid).

At face value, Eachann Bacach’s instructions to Hector MacLean appear purely religious, but they must be considered within the context of the whole poem. Although the ‘actively-instructive’ voice only appears at the end, and the analogy of the ship as ‘the MacLean inheritance’ (Ó Baoill 1979: 186) is only introduced in the last two stanzas, the other twenty stanzas of A:18 are where the poet illustrates the essence of what the MacLean ship is really made of. An ancient family, rooted in Scotland, whose indigeneity can be proven by the poets (§1 – 2); at its head a chief, a well-armed warrior respected in the Hebrides and Montrose’s camp (§4 – 8), a keen participant in contemporary politics who stood up for King Charles’ *còir* or right and refused to submit to the Campbells (§11 – 13), a noble hunter (§14 – 15), a lavish entertainer, generous with drink, player of games, patron of harp-music (§16 – 19), a hero (*treun-fhear*) of most excellent behaviour (*beusan*), pious, comely, beloved by all (§20). Eachann Bacach is ready to bestow his own *beannachadh luinge* or ‘boat-blessing’ upon the MacLean ship to which he is so devoted as poet, but he must first describe the *dùthchas* which he is instructing the son, Hector, to rise up to the helm of. If traditional accounts of Eachann Bacach are true, his family’s devotion to the MacLeans of Duart was such that all fourteen of his brothers fell at the Battle of Inverkeithing protecting the life of Hector MacLean, and Eachann Bacach, the sole survivor, was crippled and henceforth referred to as *bacach* (Morison MS quoted in Ó Baoill 1979: xliv).

The second poet to employ an ‘actively instructive’ voice is Ruaidhri MacMhuirich, *An Clàrsair Dall* (the Blind Harper), in the poem *Creach na Ciadaoin*, A:17 (Matheson 1970: 46-57). Matheson states that ‘the occasion of this lament was the death of John MacLeod [Iain Breac] of Dunvegan, which took place in 1693’ (Matheson 1970: 125). It is 23 stanzas long, and the first 17 stanzas are devoted to mourning Iain Breac. While this prolonged expression of grief is typical of the Gaelic panegyric elegy, unlike A:18 above this poem does not describe the deceased chief in extensive detail. Instead, the first 13 stanzas focus almost solely on the poet’s own suffering at Iain Breac’s death, frequent allusions are made to the poet being ill with no cure (§3, §13, §14), and the poet is depicted as a ‘*uan gun mhàthair san treud*’ (motherless lamb in the flock, §5). If Ruaidhri was indeed an independent tacksman, it is somewhat surprising to see his belief that Iain Breac’s death would bring a change in his own material circumstances. Nonetheless, he claimed that Iain Breac, his support (‘*mo thaice*’), being buried in Harris (§7) had caused him to lose ‘the key to riches... without hope of its ever being found’ (‘*chaill mi iuchair na feudail... gun bhrath faighinn gu bràth oirr*’, §12), and he felt that although everyone who survived the late chief would ‘be given something in place of what they had’ (‘*gheibh gach neach de na dh’fhàg thu / rud an àite na bh’ aca*’, §14), there was nothing whatsoever awaiting himself and Màiri, the late chief’s sister. The poet’s choice to place his own grief on par with the chief’s sister is curious, and invites speculation: was it done for poetic effect, to highlight An Clàrsair Dall’s closeness to his chief, with whom he so often engaged in conversation (§4), or was Ruaidhri alluding to impending changes at Dunvegan? Although the evidence is not completely concordant, the Blind Harper may have fallen out of Iain Breac’s favour while the latter was still alive (Matheson 1970: lvii; *ibid*: 32-45, esp. at 34, l. 445-8; *ibid*: 48, l. 643-4; c. f. Coira 2012: 177-8). Still, An Clàrsair Dall clearly had some cause for concern regarding Iain Breac’s successor: the dead chief is described as ‘*friamhach na fialachd*’ (the essence of liberality, §9), and immediately afterwards his death is called ‘the journey’s end of men of song, as also the wealth of men of ancient lore, and the treasury of learned poets’ (*ceann-uidhe luchd ealaidh / mar ri earras luchd seanchais, / agus ulaidh aos-dàna*’, §10). Where in A:18 Eachann Bacach uses the image of the dead chief as patron of the arts as a navigational point for Hector MacLean to aim for, An Clàrsair Dall is already anticipating trouble – Iain Breac’s death has set all the traditional artists ‘in disarray’ (*gu h-aimcheist*, §10), and Ruaidhri acknowledges not only he will be affected: ‘*cha mhi ’n aon neach as misd’ e*’ (I am not the only one who is the worse for it, §12). This supports Matheson’s proposal that Ruaidhri may have had a troubled relationship with Iain Breac’s son (Matheson 1970: lv-lviii) and that his status among the MacLeods was based on a purely verbal agreement that a successor had no obligation to honour (*ibid*: xlix).

The way in which the poem begins only potentiates its final six stanzas in which An Clàrsair Dall turns to Iain Breac's son and heir, Ruaidhri Òg, 19th chief of MacLeod. The poet opens with a general remark on what is required of the heir in order for him to overcome the 'visitation of death [which had] come upon the country' (*thàinig àr air an dùthaich*, §17) – he must find a suitable wife and thus come into the wealth, happiness, and honour which is his inheritance – '*làn saidhbhris is sonais anns an onair bu dual dhuit*' (l. 741-744, §18). The following four lines employ the 'actively-instructive' voice and use direct command forms of verbs:

Lean cùis 's na bi leanbail,
is na bi 'm marbhghean air t'uaislean;
cum an coimeas riut féin iad,
is na toir beum dha t'ainm Ruaidhri.

[Be persevering in business, do not behave childishly, and do not show indifference to the gentlefolk of your clan – maintain them on the same footing as yourself, and do not slight the name Roderick which is yours, A:17, §18, l. 745-748]

This statement is complemented by stanzas 19 and 20, where An Clàrsair Dall elaborates on the expectations for a MacLeod chief as embodied by the 'social contract' and lists three of Ruaidhri Òg MacLeod's renowned ancestors whose names were also Ruaidhri. These are *Ruaidhri Mór*, Sir Roderick MacLeod of Dunvegan who died in 1626 and was the young chief's great-grandfather (*do shin-seanair on tàinig*, 'your great-grandfather from whom you are sprung, §19); *Ruaidhri Mór's* second son, Sir Roderick MacLeod of Talisker who died in 1675; and *Ruaidhri Mór's* grandson, Roderick MacLeod of Dunvegan, the young chief's uncle (Matheson 1970: 130). These ancestors are described with various attributes which are obviously also expected of the young chief, such as '*reachdmhor rùn-mheanmnach tartrach tairbeartach teannta*' (forceful and resolute, bustling, open-handed and acute', l. 749), staunch against enemies (l. 752), liberal and champion-like (l. 756, l. 759-760). The poet states openly that if the young chief is to be counted as 'the fourth Roderick' (*masa tusa rinn suas an ceathramh Ruaidhri*', l. 761-762) he must follow the ancestral traditions of his race and not disgrace his name (*'lean ri sinnsearachd t'aitim, is na toir masladh dh'an ainm sin*', l. 763-764). Stanza 21 continues this theme, further telling the young chief how to act (*'bi gu fiùghantach smachdail / rianail reachdmhor*', l. 769-770) and how not to (*'na toir masladh dh'an ainm sin... na bi faoin ann am barail... na faic frìde 'n sùil brìdein*', l. 765, 767, 771), emphasising again that the chief – around 19 years old at the death of his father – should not act childishly (l. 766, 768).

Dùthchas appears at the end of the poem, and similarly to A:18 it is both an emotive underscore to the poet's appeal, as well as a conceptual conclusion to a minute breakdown of what *dùthchas* actually entailed across multiple stanzas. The term appears in stanza 22 and 23, both of which use tree imagery, a common type of 'kenning for the warrior' within the panegyric code (MacInnes 2006a: 284). The two instances of *dùthchas* appear as part of a direct command for the young chief:

Lean an **dùthchas** bu chòir dhuit,
is biodh mórchuis 'nad aignibh...

[Follow the tradition which was your birthright, and let there be lordliness in your spirit, l. 775-6]

Lean an **dùthchas** bu chathair,
a mhic an athar a chràidh sinn...

[Follow the tradition that was a birthright, son of the father who left me grief-stricken, l. 785-6]
(Emphasis my own in both instances above)

This echoes line 763 which instructed Ruaidhri Òg MacLeod to act as his ancestors, 'the previous Rodericks', had: following the ancestral traditions of his race and not disgracing the people he had been named after ('*lean ri sinnsearachd t'aitim, is na toir masladh dh'an ainm sin*', §20). In the poet's view, the young chief has a clear choice: on one hand, following the *dùthchas* of his ancestors, which would see him become 'a shoot that grew to be a fruitful branch, decked with foliage both honourable and beautiful, in the garden where were the trees that won renown', gaining 'the admiration of hundreds everywhere' (l. 781-784, §23); or, alternatively, giving up the ancestral way ('*leig[eil] tù dhìot e*', l. 777, §22), resulting in him growing to be a 'withered stock without foliage' ('*ad chrìonaich gun duilleach*', l. 787 in §23 and l. 779-780 in §22) replacing his father, 'the shrewd man of action' ('*an àit a' ghnìomharraich bheachdail*'). In essence, An Clàrsair Dall is placing Ruaidhri MacLeod, 'the individual' 'in a... network of relationships: family, ancestors, and allies' (MacInnes 2006a: 277), and like many of the poets whose work we have looked at in this chapter, he uses this network of kinship as a guide for his addressee. Matheson argues that the Blind Harper had 'conceived an antipathy [towards Ruaidhri Òg MacLeod] which is barely concealed in these verses' (Matheson 1970: 130; Grant 1959: 173, 330), but perhaps the poet was right to have reservations about Ruaidhri's conduct. In *Òran do Mhac Leòid Dhùn Bheagain*, composed sometime during Ruaidhri Òg's chieftaincy, An Clàrsair Dall suggests the youth came to be the epitome of the absentee

laird, spending his time among the *Goill* or ‘southrons’, imposing harsh levies upon his tenantry in order to support his lavish lifestyle, taste for fashion, gambling addiction and growing debts – all the while Dunvegan was left without warmth, mirth or music (Matheson 1970: 58-73 and 133-5); on the other hand, Coira notes that the MacLeods continued their patronage of the *Ui Muirgheasáin filidh* for several years after Iain Breac’s death and points to sources which suggest that Ruaidhri Òg MacLeod was remembered as a chief who had been ‘generous to poorer clansmen and pipers as well as to poets’ (Coira 2012: 176-7). Nonetheless, just over a decade after An Clàrsair Dall’s attempt at steering young MacLeod back onto a more traditional pathway, another poet – Lachlann MacKinnon – mourned the changed customs of the Skye elite (A:21; c.f. Coira 2012: 177-80).

The third poet to employ the ‘actively instructive’ voice when addressing their chief is Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh – sometimes anglicised as Mary MacLeod – in her poem *An Crònán*, A:6. The subject is evidently a Tormod MacLeod, but there is contradictory evidence as to which man of this name is being referred to. It may be Tormod, son of Iain Breac of Dunvegan and brother of Ruaidhri Òg, or it may be Sir Tormod MacLeod of Berneray (Ó Baoill 2014: 135-6; c. f. Coira 2012: 172). The main difference in the two readings would be its plausible dating: 1699 if referring to Tormod MacLeod of Dunvegan, and 1651 if referring to Sir Tormod MacLeod of Berneray. There are phrases in stanzas 5 – 8 which are more evocative of Dunvegan than any building in Berneray,⁸⁵ though Màiri may well have been describing Dunvegan here in the sense of it being the dwelling of Sir Tormod’s ancestors; my preference is to read it as addressing Tormod, son of Iain Breac, but I shall focus on the poet’s use of *dùthchas* in *An Crònán* and remain open to the alternative reading. The background to *An Crònán* is that there had been cause for the poet to believe Tormod MacLeod was deceased, but the news had reached her that MacLeod was, in fact, alive. In the first five stanzas Màiri celebrates this fact on behalf of ‘the whole clan’ (*‘don chinneadh gu lèir’*, l. 462), raises a toast to Tormod’s safe return *‘gud chàirdean ’s gud thìr’* (‘to your friends and your land’, l. 457), and looks forward to Tormod imminently taking possession of *‘an grunn d farsaing nan sealg ’s an caisteal nan arm’* (‘the hunt’s wide ground and the castle of arms’, l. 468-9). The sixth stanza introduces *dùthchas*. Màiri places her hope in God that Tormod will be able to return to his ancestral seat (l. 471-2):

Gu dùn ud nan cliar

Far ’m bu **dùthchas** dom thriath

⁸⁵ *‘caisteal nan arm’* (‘the castle of arms’, l. 469), *‘dùn ud nan cliar’* (‘yon fortress of the poet bands’, l. 474), *‘dùn turaideach àrd – b’ e sud innis nam bard ’s nam filidh ri dàn’* (‘a tall battlemented tower, the resting-place of bards and learned poets, l. 476-8), *‘àras nach crìon’* (‘a dwelling which is not niggardly, l. 481-5) (Ó Baoill 2014: 124-7)

Bhiodh gu fiùghantach fial foirmeil...

[To yon fortress of the poet bands where my lord used to dwell, he who was generous, free-handed and stately, §6, l. 473-5] (Emphasis my own)

The polysemic associations of *dùthchas* are used by the poet to weave several aspects together – that it is natural for MacLeod to be present in his native lands, contrasting with his current absence; that it is natural for MacLeod to rule over these lands⁸⁶; and that there are certain ancestral behaviours expected of MacLeod as lord (*triath*), such as generosity. Indeed, stanzas 7 – 15 appear to be an epistemological and semantic extension of stanza 6, making it yet another poem to contemplate this concept in depth, like A:17 and A:18. MacLeod's castle is again described as a warm, inviting place to poets and *filidh* alike (§7, l. 477-80), filled with music of pipes and harps (*clàrsaich*) and overflowing gold goblets of wine (§8). Panegyric tree-kennings are then used for the young chief, as in A:17 above – although unlike Ruaidhri Òg, Tormod apparently rises to the challenge and embodies '*an neart Leòdach*' ('MacLeod power', §9, l. 492). Màiri uses the *dù*- semantic family to depict Tormod as

Uasal an t-slat

Dhan **dual** a bhith ceart

Cruadalach pailt,

Duaismhor am beachd...

['The noble scion whose nature is to be just, hardy, open-handed and bounteous of spirit...', §9, l. 488-91] (Emphasis my own)

The poet then uses the copula form '*s dùth dhuit* to say that it is natural for this 'sapling' to grow in fame and prowess ('*fiùran na cluain... 's dùth dhuit dol suas 'n cliù is ann am buaidh*', §10, l. 493-6 – emphasis my own), and follows this by repeating that it is her chief's *dùthchas* to be '*fiùghantach*' (generous), courtly, and surrounded by sweet music ('*'s dùthchas dom luaidh bhith gu fiùghantach suairc ceòlbhinn*', §10, l. 497-8 – emphasis my own). In stanza 11, Màiri continues on this literal description of the ancestral MacLeod code of ethics, calling it the '*fasan bu dual / fantalach buan*' ('an inherited practice, long-lived and abiding', l. 499-500) 'to be gentle towards tenantry, lavish to a visitor, skilled and hardy in exhorting a host, awaking in the hour of violence' (l. 501-5). Amidst these and further descriptions of behaviours expected of MacLeod in order to fulfil his share

⁸⁶ c. f. Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh's poem *Cumha do Mhac Leòid* in Ó Baoill 2014: 110, l. 379-94; Coira 2012: 173-4

of the ‘social contract’, Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh employs the ‘actively instructive’ voice and advises Tormod:

Lean-sa is na trèig

Cleachdadh is beus

T’aitim gu lèir...

[‘Follow and do not forsake the use and practice of all your kindred...’ §12, l. 506-8]

The three stanzas which follow delve into Tormod MacLeod’s ancestry – the conduct and achievements of his warrior predecessors, ‘the descendants of Olghar of the sword-blades’ (§13, l. 513) and ‘*sliochd Ruairidh Mhòir fhèil*’ (‘the race of great Ruairidh the generous’, §15, l. 529), encouraging Tormod in the ‘actively-instructive’ voice: ‘*Tog colg ort, a ghaoil! Bi ro chalma is gum faod*’ (‘Let your wrath be seen, my dear one; be exceedingly mighty, for mighty you can be’, §14, l. 520-1). In stanzas 16 – 22, Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh lists MacLeod’s allies, stating that ‘*tha na Gàidheil gu lèir / cho càirdeach dhuit fèin*’ (‘All the Gaels are kinsmen to you’ §16, l. 531-2) – a political statement which MacInnes viewed as ‘propagandist appeals, not a direct reflection of political and military realities’, appealing to ‘an ideal unity of the Gaels’ (MacInnes 2006a: 276-7). Finally, echoing Eachann Bacach in A:18, Màiri finishes the poem with a *beannachadh*, a blessing-prayer for the success and health of the *oighre* or heir (§23-24).

This section has explored the ways in which *dùthchas* was used by ‘clan poets’ to document or influence their clan chief’s behaviour. This was often done passively: poets would harness the power of appealing to paternal honour when addressing their clan chief, enumerating a wide range of desirable, customary Gaelic behaviours embodied by the clan chief’s ancestor or ancestors and then stating that these behaviours are the chief’s *dùthchas* – the proper manner in which the chief was expected to conduct himself, and an inalienable part of his inheritance, like his physical holdings.⁸⁷ What appears to be a unique feature of the work of the ‘clan poets’ within the context of my corpus is their use of the ‘actively instructive’ voice when addressing their clan chief in conjunction with an appeal to *dùthchas*, as in A:6, A:17 and A:18. Many decades before most of these clan poets’ compositions, Niall MacEwen’s plea in A:69 also arguably used the ‘actively instructive’ voice, using the grammatical command form ‘*léigidh dhamh dùthchas m’ athar*’ (‘restore to me my father’s heritage’) to instruct the chief to act in a certain way after having appealed to MacCailein’s ancestral honour in respect of his Campbell ancestors’ treatment of the MacEwen poets. It is therefore interesting to see the ‘actively instructive’ voice being employed by Eachann

⁸⁷ See A:41 and A:21. We shall also see poets use *dùthchas* in a similar fashion in the eighth chapter.

Bacach, Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, and An Clàrsair Dall, all three schooling their respective chiefs in customary conduct, all three making mention – at times extensive – of the chief’s responsibilities as regards patronage of the arts. Modern critics evaluating these poems in terms of their artistic innovation would likely perceive them as highly repetitive and ‘unoriginal’ (Gillies 1986: 108; Coira 2012: 27). Artistic innovation was not their function, however. The form of these poems, with their extended descriptions and repetition of what constituted the chiefly ideal, suggests that they are statements on Gaelic society’s ‘social contract’, and should be seen as vernacular expressions of contemporary Gaelic society’s values, treatises delineating the prevailing indigenous epistemology or ‘intellectual system’ (McLeod 2004: 114) of their culture. The prevalence of *dùthchas* and phrases beginning with *lean* evoke the format of proverbs or maxims – such as *lean gu dlùth ri cliù do shinnsre*, ‘follow closely the renown of your ancestors’ – and hearken back to middle Irish texts like *Tecosca Cormaic*. While the epistemological connection between *dùthchas* and conduct would evidently have been obvious to Gaels in the seventeenth century; the closest trans-epistemic translation for a modern, English-speaking reader is that the poets are appealing to the chiefs to cultivate a *rootedness* and *groundedness*: to continue their long-standing family connection to *dùthchas*-as-place by embodying *dùthchas*-as-ancestral-traits, as one enables the other to continue from generation to generation, and vice versa. This also evokes Glen Coulthard’s concept of ‘grounded normativity’ as an ‘ethical framework’ informed by ‘place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge’ (Coulthard 2014: 60 *et passim*).

This active voice, at least in conjunction with *dùthchas*, appears not to have been used past 1700 (c. f. Appendix A), which poses some questions. Coira suggests that around this time, ‘conditions were declining for the poets in general (in Gaelic Scotland as in Ireland)’ (Coira 2012: 177). Could it be that these four seventeenth century poets were benefitting from a vestigial respect for their social caste – a respect which applied to the vernacular as well as the classical poets – which still held them on an equal enough footing with the chiefs to enable them to speak to them in command form (Ó Baoill 2014: 2-3; MacInnes 2006d: 27)? Does their declining condition explain the need for reassertion of their chiefs’ *dùthchas* in relation to their patronage of the arts? What all four of the poets have in common is a close connection and personal familiarity with their local Gaelic aristocracy: in MacEwen’s case this was on the basis of him being *filidh* for the Campbells, though we know he most likely did not act as tutor to the Campbell children. Of Eachann Bacach’s life little is known, but his family’s devotion to the MacLeans of Duart is legendary and as a ‘retained’ poet he may have had a place in the MacLeans’ ‘court’. Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh and An Clàrsair Dall – despite the ups and downs in their relationships with MacLeod of Berneray and MacLeod of Dunvegan, respectively – enjoyed a great physical and emotional proximity to the MacLeod chiefs

through much of their lives, whether as artists or, in Màiri's case, as artist and *muime* or nurse to future chiefs (Thomson 1991a: 158). This could suggest that poets in later centuries were less likely to have such a close personal relationship with their clan chief, meaning less frankness was permissible in the way they addressed their chief, though the tradition of critiquing elite behaviour certainly continues into later centuries, as the nineteenth-century poetry analysed in chapter nine will demonstrate.

Finally, although this section has mostly looked at examples of the poets using *dùthchas* to compel or instruct chiefs, particularly young men who were just coming into their chieftaincy, it seems significant that the expectation of generosity extended to the rest of the tenantry or *tuath*. Indeed, four out of the twelve poems by 'clan poets' mention this⁸⁸ – in comparison with six poems which mention patronage of the arts. We have seen Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh repeat twice in A:6 that it is her beloved Tormod's *dùthchas* to be *fiùghantach* or generous. However, in the stanza which enumerates the '*fasan bu dual / fantalach buan*' ('the inherited practice, long-lived and abiding', §11, l. 499-500) of the MacLeods, Màiri says this *fasan bu dual* is to be '*socrach ri tuath*', 'gentle towards tenantry' (l. 501), as well as being lavish to guests and able to exhort a host during times of violence (l. 502-5). We have also seen in A:21 above how Lachlann MacKinnon praised Tormod MacLeod of Berneray as an upholder of customary relationships and behaviours and as a generous man ('*Tormod... bha gu fearail fiùghantach 's a chum an dùthchas suas*', l. 33-6, Black 2019: 30), and that one of the three virtues personified as an orphaned child is *Fiùghantas* or Generosity – a virtue now abandoned by the Hebridean elite, according to MacKinnon. The poet also refers to another Skye chief's *dùthchas*, namely, to MacKinnon of Strath ('*an t-Ailpeineach dubh ffrinneach / 'gan dùthchas cian an Srath*' = honest blackhaired Alpin man [MacKinnon] / whose ancient inheritance is Strath, A:21; Black 2019: 34) who had passed away shortly before A:21 was composed. MacKinnon of Strath was the poet's relative – possibly even his uncle (ibid: 367-8); the poet acknowledges the impropriety of singing the praises of his own kinsman 'for fear others say that it's flattery' (*mus can càch gur masgall e* – ibid: 36). Instead, the chief is praised by proxy, with the voice of the three virtues – Mercy, Love, and Generosity – who say MacKinnon was without fault, and that the three were always present at rent-collection time ('*n àm togail màl do dhùthchannan*), that no cows were ever lifted as rent at either Samhainn or Bealltainn, nor did they make any tenant groan (*cha mhó thug oich air tuathanach*) because the chief would take pity when faced with their need (*bu mhó do thruas ri'm feum*) (ibid: 34-6). The poet, Lachlann MacKinnon, had likely held land from MacKinnon of Strath (ibid: 367-8) – A:21 strongly suggests there had been a change in customs after

⁸⁸ A:18, A:42, A:6, A:21

his passing which caused the poet to fall into hardship (ibid: 375-6; MacKenzie 1877: 82). Eachann Bacach also makes much of the late Sir Lachlann MacLean of Duart's conduct towards the tenantry in A:18, when he says '*Cha b' e fuath mhic a' mhàile / fear do shnuaidh thighinn 'na fhàrdaich*' ('It caused no resentment to the tenant that a man of your countenance should enter his house', §7, l. 170-1 in Ò Baoill 1979: 16-7). Catriona NicGilleathain makes a similar remark about Dòmhnall MacGilleathain, the Laird of Coll, in A:42, praising the chief in the eighth stanza for being '*an t-uachdaran cliùiteach*' ('the renowned landlord', l. 506), for not being a plunderer of the *tuath* ('*cha b'fhear spùinnidh air tuath thu*', l. 507), for being patient and merciful ('*tha thu faidhidneach iochdmhor*', l. 508), for being kind to the clan gentry ('*tha thu miosail aig uaislean*', l. 509), and being a hospitable landlord to refugees and destitute people, giving them provisions for free ('*s tu ceann-uidhe nan deòraidhn, thoirt an lòn air bheag duais doibh*', l. 510-1). Because the poem opens with a description of the Campbell takeover of MacLean lands, there is a juxtaposition of the suffering and injustice being caused by the Campbells and Dòmhnall's kindly, traditional treatment of the many people who were presumably displaced in this process.

It is likely that the clan chiefs described by the composers of A:18, A:42, A:6, and A:21 were not as faultless in the way they dealt with their tenantry as the poets would make them seem. Nonetheless, the explicit mentions of chiefly kindness, generosity, and mercy towards the tenantry as an ideal sanctioned by custom and kinship – by *dùthchas* – appear to be an important feature of the clan poets' 'rhetoric of panegyric', as Coira calls it. Coira stipulates that the job of the 'rhetoric of panegyric' was not necessarily to 'faithfully represent actual fact', but to 'articulate the sanction, by those who had the necessary authority, of an individual's right to rule over his people' (Coira 2012: 28). The geographic spread of these four poems – Mull, Coll, Skye and Berneray – suggests that a convivial relationship of chiefs and tenantry was strongly sanctioned by custom in the late sixteenth-century Hebrides. This is further supported by Derick Thomson's study of 29 poems composed by three classical MacMhuirich poets – Niall Mór, Cathal, and Niall – in which there were '22 references to... the chief's duties to his followers or tenants' (Thomson 1977: 224). On the other hand, the need for rhetorical reassertion of these relationships hints at the weakening of adherence to the 'social contract', even in places which had not experienced a complete revolution in ownership and shuffle of their social structure as the lands of the MacLeans of Duart had in the late seventeenth century (A:42).

Dùthchas as response to crisis

This section will look at the ways in which the ‘clan poets’ used *dùthchas* in poems composed as direct responses to crisis. We have already seen some examples above of poets using *dùthchas* in their poetic responses to succession of power from a recently deceased clan chief to his heir, a situation which John MacInnes identified as a ‘point of crisis... when it is most necessary to reaffirm the traditional values of the community’ (MacInnes 2006b: 169), such as Eachann Bacach’s *A’ Chnò Shamhna* (A:18) or An Clàrsair Dall’s *Creach na Ciadaoin* (A:17). Not all social crises would have been caused by the death of a chief, however – four of the twelve compositions by the ‘clan poets’ are addressed to living chiefs.⁸⁹ In this section, then, we will focus on five poems which address a specific crisis, and invoke *dùthchas* in arguably innovative ways. We shall first examine two poems by Iain Lom, *Murt na Ceapaich* (A:14) and *Iorram do Shìol Dùghaill* (A:15), both of which deal with the immediate aftermath of the Keppoch murders. We will then move onto poems by three MacLean contemporaries: *Òran do Dhòmhnall MacGilleathain, Tighearna Chola* (A:42), composed by Catriona NicGilleathain and briefly alluded to in the conclusion of the previous section; *Ge Grianach An Latha* (A:20), composed by Maighstir Seathan, a MacLean minister; and an *Òran* (A:4) composed by Mairghread nighean Lachlainn, presumably a member of MacLean clan gentry. Since the ‘panegyric code’ of Gaelic poetry has been called ‘resiliently conservative’ (Coira 2012: 3), instances in which it shows adaptation, particularly when concerning concepts of great epistemological antiquity – such as *dùthchas* – require thorough examination (ibid: 344).

Chronologically, Iain Lom’s poems are the earliest of these five, with A:14 composed shortly after 25 September, 1663 – the date of *Murt na Ceapaich* or the Keppoch Murders (MacKenzie 1964: 271) – and A:15 composed some two years later (ibid: 114). This event saw Alexander, 12th chief of the MacDonalds of Keppoch, and his brother Ranald, murdered by ‘two of the sons of Alasdair Buidhe [former Tutor of Keppoch], and seven of the MacDonalds of Inverlair’, a rival MacDonald sept with which the young chief of Keppoch had been feuding for some years prior to the Murders (ibid: 269-71). There is a Lochaber tradition which presents the Keppoch Murders ‘as a just act of retribution’, though it contains some historical inaccuracies (ibid) – there is evidence of Alexander MacDonald of Keppoch using force against the MacDonalds of Inverlair (ibid: 269), and the young chief was likely not without blame. Still, even at the midpoint of *Linn nan Creach*, in the heart of Lochaber – a part of the *Gàidhealtachd* which had long been associated with feuding, that

⁸⁹ There is also another poem by Mairghread nighean Lachlainn (A:5) which does not appear in this chapter, in which she laments the fact that a local MacLean nobleman, Ailean MacGilleathain, the Tutor of Bròlas, was absent from his '*fearann dùthchasaich*'.

‘legitimised form of violence promoted by kinship bonds and a culture of revenge’ (Brown 1986: 33; c. f. Abrams 2017: 84-5; MacGregor 2012b) – there was something about the Keppoch Murders that ‘caused considerable consternation throughout the country’ (MacKenzie 1964: 269). Perhaps it was the fact that Alasdair Buidhe was the 12th chief’s paternal uncle, meaning that the alleged masterminds behind the Murders, Alasdair Buidhe’s sons, were the 12th chief’s first cousins, making it an internecine and fratricidal incident. Perhaps Iain Lom’s coverage of the events also played a part in the way the Murders became embroiled in western Gaeldom’s collective consciousness.

In *Murt na Ceapaich* (A:14), Iain Lom’s primary poetic focus is describing the situation in Keppoch as utterly unnatural and unmeet. The first twenty of the poem’s 25 stanzas are virtually dedicated to this; even the lamentation and grief for the Murders’ victims which are expressed in a more traditionally elegiac fashion focus on what an aberration the Murders were. Iain Lom says the soil of Inverlair is ‘*air a stràcadh le sìol*’ (‘sowed and harrowed’, §1, l. 977) while Keppoch lies a ‘*fàsach, gun aon àird oirre ’s fiach*’ (‘a wilderness, with no preparation there worth while’, l. 978-9), using the motif of the *baile*’s or township’s farmland lying uncultivated as a symbol of the perversion of the natural order (c.f. Bateman 2009: 143).⁹⁰ Though it is Michaelmas, a time after cattle had been fattened over the summer and used to pay rent, Iain Lom says that ‘it was not of cattle that our land was bereft’ (§2, l. 982-985); worse yet, the entire clan’s honour has been tainted, as the disunity between the MacDonalds of Keppoch and Inverlair has made them ‘laughing-stocks at every cross-roads’, since they are unable to assemble in times of need (§2, l. 986-9). The young chief’s house is closed, empty, devoid of chimney-smoke, music, or mirth – the opposite of what it was when Alexander was alive (§4-5). The young chief of Keppoch is described as a faultless ruler (§10-11, l. 1046-1061), with Iain Lom using the phrase ‘*cha robh fàillinn ’san Tànaist*’ (‘there was no flaw in the heir apparent’, l. 1056). This is an important instance of Iain Lom using a ‘common motif of classical panegyric, drawn from venerable legal tradition, that the “right ruler” must be without blemish, physical or otherwise’ (Coira 2012: 45; c. f. Thomson 1991a: 160). In A:14, this serves two purposes: it is the MacDonald poet’s rhetorical sanction of young Keppoch’s legitimacy as ruler, which is in turn juxtaposed with the illegitimacy of murdering him. Indeed, for every stanza praising MacDonald of Keppoch, there are four stanzas dispraising the murderers and the *Sìol Dùghaill* branch which they originate from: they are in league with the Devil (§6, l. 1019), the spoilers of breasts (§7, l. 1027), a pack of ruthless Turks (§8, l. 1034), a sept which knows nothing of higher culture (§15, l. 1086-93), whose practices were reiving and stealing (§17, l. 1106-9). Iain Lom attempts to fit the Keppoch

⁹⁰ The image of a once-populated landscape which had become a *fàsach* would become a stock image of the poetry of the Highland Clearances – see chapter nine, particularly the ‘romantic’ poetry of the nineteenth century, which often used the image of the ‘desolate glen’ and ‘chimneys without smoke’.

Murders into his Christian worldview, and invokes God's judgement upon *Sìol Dùghaill* several times (§12, 13, 19, 20), concluding that vengeance upon them is ordained by '*lagh Dhia agus dhaoine, ag òrdach' sgriosadh gun ghrab air marbhaich' an uachdrain, rìgh, ceann teaghlaich no treab*' ('human and divine law, [which] demands unconditional annihilation of one who murders a superior, a king, the head of a household or clan', §23, l. 1154-7). In stanza 18, the poet uses his poetic authority to thus apply this 'human law' or *lagh dhaoine* to *Sìol Dùghaill*:

Is maìrg stoc às an d'fhàs e

Dh'am bu **dùthchas** an t-olc,

'N tì bha 'na ùghdar do'n ghnìomh so,

Bha roimhe beum thoirt dh'a stoc...

[Woe to that stock from which he is sprung whose hereditary ways were evil. He who was the contriver of this deed was determined to deal a blow to his kin... §18, l. 1110-3] (Emphasis my own)

For the crime of plotting and committing the murder of their own cousins, *Sìol Dùghaill* are cursed and pronounced henceforth as a kin-group whose *dùthchas* is evil. As far as I have been able to ascertain, this is an entirely novel use of *dùthchas*, at least in the Scottish Gaelic context, as when it was used in relation to ancestral attributes, the concept had hitherto been reserved for positive attributes associated with *cliù* or renown. This type of usage of *dùthchas* does not appear common in the Irish corpus, either, with a few instances of the term *andùthchas* or *andúchas* appearing in sources from the 16th century in an obvious ideological response to the Tudor re-conquest of Ireland.⁹¹ Although the corpus of Scottish Gaelic poetry prior to the seventeenth century is very limited, it appears that as far as the evidence allows making such conclusions, Iain Lom was the first to use *dùthchas* in proclamations of dispraise or satires.⁹² This was evidently influential, as poets such as Donnchadh Bàn MacIntyre (A:28) and Dòmhnall Bàillidh (A:38) used *dùthchas* in satires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Furthermore, the second volume of *Reliquiae Celticae* from 1892 contains a Gaelic proverb collected by Dr Alexander Cameron, '*thèid an t-olc ri dùchas*', which could loosely be translated as 'evil is hereditary' (Cameron 1892: 506) – this could either suggest Iain

⁹¹ See, for example, the entries for AD 1560 and 1602 in the Annals of the Four Masters (O' Donovan 1856: 1578, 2298) and O'Kelleher and Shoenberger 1918: 38-9.

⁹² The trope itself of poets saying that evil attributes are natural to the addressee of satires does pre-date Iain Lom, even if *dùthchas* was not used therein. See, for example, Fionnlagh am Bàrd Ruadh's poem '*Theast Aon Diabhal na nGaoidheal*' (ca. 1503) where Ailean mac Ruairidh is extensively satirised due to his many heinous transgressions, and described as having 'always had the way of the coward, which follows on naturally from your origins' ('*is tú as gealtach nós a mach / lé leantar fós do thosach*' – see McLeod and Bateman 2019: 250-7 at 254). I am grateful to Meg Bateman for bringing this to my attention.

Lom was inspired by a proverb of even greater antiquity, or that a proverb entered circulation alongside the poet's compositions about the Keppoch Murders.

Dùthchas is used in a similar fashion – as a cutting insult on the bloodline of *Sìol Dùghaill* and the customary practices of this MacDonald sept – in Iain Lom's *Iorram do Shìol Dùghaill* (A:15):

Sìol lùdais gun fheartaibh,

Chuir an cùl ri deagh bheartaibh,

D'am bu **dùthchas** bhith creachadh nan crò.

[Seed of Judas devoid of all worth, who have forsaken good deeds, whose hereditary bent is for plundering sheepfolds. §7, l. 1468-70] (Emphasis my own)

That *dùthchas* would be used in a similar way is somewhat unsurprising, considering some time – possibly over a year – had passed since the Murders but the perpetrators had not yet been brought to justice. In fact, it was not until 29 July 1665 that a 'commission of fire and sword was granted by the Privy Council to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat against [them]' (MacKenzie 1964: 272-2).⁹³ In A:14 Iain Lom had expressed his concern about the fact that the chief of Keppoch had been 'placed in the vault while the rabble remain in the country quite unconcerned' (§9, l. 1044-5), emphasising the impropriety and insult of unpunished criminals and enemies occupying the native Keppoch territory or *dùthaich* (l. 1045). The emotive imagery was then combined with direct calls for help in the final stanzas of *Murt na Ceapaich* addressed to both Lord MacDonnell of Glengarry and Sir James MacDonald of Sleat, appealing to their sense of clan unity (A:14 §23 and 25) and even shaming them into taking action against the perpetrators ('*a Mhorair Chlann Dòmhnail, 's buan do chòmhnaidh measg Ghall*' = 'Lord MacDonnell, long is your sojourn among strangers' §21, l. 1134-5; '*nam biodh Iarla Rois agus Ìle anns a' chàramh so dhà, bhiodh murt oighreachd na Ceapaich air a dhioladh glé thràth*' = 'if the Earl of Ross and Islay were so placed in relation to it, the murder committed on the estate of Keppoch would be avenged betimes' §24, l. 1162-5). In A:15 Iain Lom renews his complaint that MacDonnell of Glengarry has long been absent from home and takes no action against the murderers (§22), as well as renewing his plea to Sir James MacDonald, stating that his journey home 'to see the anguish of your kin in this land' has been delayed for far too long already (§21). The poet's own situation has worsened since the events of A:14, as he is being actively hunted '*mar gheàrr eadar chonaibh gun chead teàrnadh gu loinidh measg feòir*' ('as a hare among

⁹³ A statue was erected by the 15th chief of Glengarry in 1812 to commemorate *Tobar nan Ceann*, the place where the perpetrators' decapitated heads were washed, and today it stands on the side of the A82.

hounds without a chance to descend to the grassy meadow land', A:15 §3, l. 1457-8). His belongings have been scattered (l. 1456), and he has been sent to Crachaig, an uncultivated piece of land '*gun mhànas no aitreabh*' ('without steadings or dwelling-house', §4, l. 1459-60). Yet again, Iain Lom uses a strong appeal to a native Gaelic sense of justice: he has been treated unfairly, '*gam chur à m' fhearann gun adhbhar*' ('I am ejected from my land without reason', §5, l. 1462); banished from his native place, '*air m' fhògradh à m' dhùthaich*' (§6, l. 1465). Meanwhile, it is the oppressors themselves who 'are still in possession of their land' ('*s fhearann fòs aig Sìol Dùghaill*', l. 1466) and to add insult to injury, the Inverlair MacDonalds plan to 'draw up a new deed of right' ('*s iad am barail gun ùraich iad còir*', l. 1467) independent of the MacDonalds of Keppoch (MacKenzie 1964: 269), even though by rights they should be rent-paying tenants to Keppoch (§10, l. 1477-9). Just as the previous poem used the desolation of Keppoch as an illustration of how justice has been perverted and the proper state of affairs turned upside down, so Iain Lom plays with the conceptual framework of *còir* in A:15, juxtaposing himself – innocent, a seeker of justice, yet *unjustly* ejected from his *dùthaich* – with *Sìol Dùghaill*, the 'Seed of Judas devoid of all worth', plunderers, infidels, thieves, murderers, '*luchd bristeadh na còrach*' ('those who break the law' §20, l. 1508). The idea that *Sìol Dùghaill* would be able to renew their rights to land in these circumstances defies Iain Lom's native sense of justice, and so he reaches for the ultimate weapon in his poetic arsenal, the same kind of condemnation of the *dùthchas* of *Sìol Dùghaill* which he used in A:14.

The final three poems we shall examine in this section are grouped together because they respond to an extended crisis in one geographical locality, namely, the Campbell takeover of the lands of the MacLeans of Duart in Mull. Two of them, A:4 ('*Òran*') and A:20 ('*Ge Grianach an Latha*'), are addressed to Sir John MacLean, 4th Baronet, and composed in 1701 and 1704. The other one, A:42 ('*Òran do Dhòmhnall MacGilleathain*'), is addressed to Donald MacLean of Coll or *Dòmhnall MacGilleathain, Tighearna Chola*, and composed around 1695. The MacLeans of Coll and MacLeans of Duart were all closely related. Notably, two of these poems – A:4 and A:42 – are composed by women.

Although these poems are composed at the turn of the seventeenth century into the eighteenth, the Campbell feud with the MacLeans began earlier. Sir Lachlann MacLean of Duart – whom we have encountered in this chapter already as the subject of Eachann Bacach's poetry – may have been an exemplary chief towards his people but had racked up 'public and private debts in excess of £31,015 on his estates by 1647' (MacInnes 1996: 106). Gillesbuig (Archibald) Campbell, the 8th Earl of Argyll, intended to use his position as hereditary justiciar of Argyll and the Isles to deal with MacLean's debts and had in fact used them as leverage to seize Jura from the MacLeans as early as 1637 (ibid: 39). Tides had turned politically against the 8th Earl of Argyll in the 1650s, culminating

with his execution in 1651, but the House of Argyll resumed its expansion into MacLean lands in the 1670s. At this point the MacLean headship was in the hands of a young Sir John MacLean, 4th Baronet of Duart. The 9th Earl of Argyll targeted MacLean of Duart as well as the MacLean clan gentry in Tiree, Mull and Morvern, again using MacLean's debts as leverage for their expulsion. Argyll used Scots law to the Campbell's advantage, painting the MacLeans' 'armed opposition [to] their eviction in 1674... as rebellion against the Crown', since 'Argyll's court was a public court' (ibid: 135). Sir John MacLean was on the Jacobite side in the 1689 Rising and fought at Killiecrankie, which eventually resulted in his being banished to France in the reign of William of Orange. His pardon by the Act of Indemnity 1703 allowed for his return to Scotland, and A:4 is roughly contemporary with his reappearance.

This political turmoil is the background against which Catrìona NicGilleathain composed A:42, her *Òran do Dhòmhnall MacGilleathain*, sometime around 1695 (Ó Baoill 1997: 70). Ó Baoill notes that very little biographical information can be gleaned about Catrìona, aside from her patronymic *nighean Eòghainn mhic Lachlainn*, the fact that she was evidently one of the MacLean *daoine uaisle*, and that she married a Seumas MacGilleathain for whom she composed an elegy (Ó Baoill 1997: xl). The MS containing this poem states that it was composed when Dòmhnall MacGilleathain was going to Edinburgh and the Campbells settling MacLean lands (ibid: 70). While A:42 praises Dòmhnall MacGilleathain, the praise is interwoven into a lament for the poet's people: the MacLeans' whole world – Catrìona NicGilleathain's world – has been turned upside down ('*chaidh an saoghal far chuibhlean bun os cionn mar a thà e'*, l. 534-5)⁹⁴. The news that reaches her in her native place ('*sgeula thàinig don dùthaich'*, §1, l. 450) is that there are new landlords keeping court in Mull, obtaining property by yelling out bids at an auction (l. 452-455), while the legitimate occupiers ('*na fir dhligheach'*, l. 456) have been expelled, stripped of their inalienable '*còir*' or right of occupation ('*'s iad gun chòir, gun chead fuireach'* (l. 457). The juxtaposition of the exiled *fir dhligheach* who had a '*còir*' to the land and the violent noise and commotion of an auction evidences that in Catrìona's view, there is nothing lawful about the way land was being obtained by the new occupiers. Though the Campbells' takeover of MacLean lands may have been sanctioned by Scots law, this is not the law the poet appeals to in her warning to the Campbells:

Chan e **dùthchas** ur athar

Tha sibh a' labhairt san àm air

No oighreachd ur seanar

⁹⁴ Other MacLean poets also use the metaphor of the 'wheel of fortune' having been turned against the MacLeans' favour – see A:20, l. 1127-1144.

Tha sibh a' ceangal mu Chaingis...

[It is not the ancestral lands of your fathers that you are discussing at this time, nor the estate of your grandfathers that you are allocating at Whitsun... §2, l. 458-461] (Emphasis my own)

It is noteworthy that the poet's words suggest that while the '*oighreachd*' or 'estate' is something material that could be 'connected' or 'linked together', by contrast '*dùthchas*' is ideological, conceptual, and seemingly oral in nature as something to be 'proclaimed *upon* the land' ('*a' labhairt... air*'), presumably to legitimise the rightful dwellers. Such a public and oral dimension of *dùthchas* certainly resonates with various antiquarian descriptions of the inauguration ceremonies of kings or clan chiefs, where the poet's role was reciting the ruler's genealogy and the honourable deeds of their ancestors which 'installed [him] by right in his possessions' (Newton 2019: 132-4). Catriona goes on to state that current affairs are caused by the '*staid Mhic Gilleathainn*' ('the condition of the MacLeans'), and the ultimate reason for the lands having been 'lost to them for some time' (§2, l. 462-3) is the MacLeans' loyalty to the (Jacobite) Crown, for which they have greatly suffered and which forced them to yield against their will ('*strìochd sinn dhar n-antoil*', l. 465). The poet's commentary reveals two further injustices which are incompatible with her worldview: that a kindred should be punished for their loyalty to the Crown, and that the law would force a kindred into yielding their native lands against their will, without the opportunity for armed resistance. Indeed, later stanzas of A:42 juxtapose these injustices with that which still *is* right: that Dòmhnall MacGilleathain still has possession over Coll and Cuibhnis (§5, l. 484-5) and that he is an exemplary chieftain. MacLean of Coll is said to have earned honour, as was his birthright ('*fhuair thu an onair-s' bu dual duit*' §7, l. 499), followed in the footsteps of his ancestors ('*tha thu shliochd nam fear gasda*', l. 500), was uncontrollable by the MacLeans' enemies, as he could neither be bought or intimidated into giving up his heritage ('*cha tug òr ort no eagal / gun seasamh ri d' dhualchas... nach eil smachd aig luchd fuath ort*' l. 502-5), and was kind to the tenantry, gentry, and the displaced (§8, l. 506-11). Although the Campbell takeover of MacLean lands was well underway by 1695, we may posit that the absence of Dòmhnall MacGilleathain from his *dùthchas* and being summoned to Edinburgh was perceived as another potential crisis by his people, and a reason to reassert the MacLeans' customary rights and ways of conduct.

Maighstir Seathan MacGilleathain is one of two other MacLean poets composing just a few years after Catriona NicGilleathain, around 1701. His poem, *Ge Grianach An Latha* (A:20), is a lament for the state of the MacLeans as a kindred, though it directly addresses Sir John MacLean of Duart – similarly to the way Catriona NicGilleathain's address to the Laird of Coll also laments the plight of her people. Maighstir Seathan was born 'about 1680' in Treshnish, Mull, as 'the illegitimate eldest son of Ewen MacLean, 9th of Treshnish' (Ó Baoill 1979: lxii), and likely composed this poem while he

studied theology at Glasgow University (ibid: lxiii), before his return to Mull as minister of Kilninian and Kilmore. The physical distance separating him from Mull appears not to have tempered his torment at the standing of his people (§1 – 4), and he compares a ‘clan without its rights and without a chief, no homeland or territory or power’ (*‘mo thruaighe-se ’n fhine / tha gun chòir gun cheann chinnidh / gun àite gun ionad gun treòir’* §5) to a sinking ship (§6 – 7) and a withered apple-tree (§8). He fears that the *dualchas* (‘heritage’) of *‘sliochd Ghill-Eathain na Tuaighe’* (‘the [progeny] of Gill-Eathain of the Battle-axe’ §9, l. 1070-2) will no longer be remembered, nor will their hereditary propensity for victory, the *‘beus bu dual duibh’* (‘morals and conduct which are native to them’ §10, l. 1073). Maighstir Seathan also perceives the MacLeans’ situation as one of *truaighe* and *leatrom* – ‘wretchedness’ and ‘injustice’ (§12), a helplessness which enables Argyll to achieve what he had long been scheming to do (§13).

The MacLean poet uses *dùthchas* to illustrate the unjust treatment which he believes his chief, Sir John MacLean of Duart, had been subjected to:

Ò Shir Iain mo thruaighe...

‘S goirt a’ bhuille seo fhuair thu gu h-òg;

A chaill do dhaoine ’s do dhùthaich

Chionn bhith seasamh led’ [**dhùthchas**];

‘S e bhith rìoghail seo chiùrr thu gu borb.

[O Sir Iain, alas... bitter is this blow you have suffered in your youth; you who have lost your people and your land because of standing firm by your heritage: being regal has injured you grievously. §24-5, l. 1115-1120] (Emphasis my own)

There is a powerful conjunction of semantically-related terms in this argument presented by Maighstir Seathan: the pain of a chief losing his people (*daoine*) and his territories (*dùthaich*) *because of* standing by his *dùthchas* is all the greater. In this case, the *dùthchas* is both the physical territories of the MacLeans, which Sir John attempted to defend (*seasamh le d’ dhùthchas*), but also the hereditary bond of loyalty to the king – being *rìoghail* or loyal to him was the MacLeans’ collective *dùthchas*. Because Sir John was in exile at the time and had not yet been pardoned, this use of *dùthchas* also expresses the unmeetness of the *ceann cinnidh* not being physically present within the *dùthaich-as-dùthchas* of which he had been deprived.

Maighstir Seathan takes a direct political stance on these matters in a critique of the monarchy reminiscent of Iain Lom; the MacLean poet says that William from Holland’s claim to the crown is a weak one: *‘s olc a’ chòir a th’ aig Uilleam o Holland’* (§18, l. 1097), and he has an even

weaker claim to support from the MacLeans (*'air còmhnaidh le duine d'ar seòrs'*, l. 1099) since the kindred had supported the ancestors of *'nan rìghrean-sa dh'fholbh'* ('the family of these kings who are gone', §20, l. 1105). In Maighstir Seathan's view, Scotland's king should be a Stuart due to their Gaelic heritage: 'one of the race of Fearghas of the drinking-horns', 'of the race of Sìoman from Ireland or of Gàidheal Glas' (§21 – 22; Ó Baoill 1979: 258).⁹⁵ The final stanzas of the poem turn to religious rumination in a way that suggests that in Maighstir Seathan's world, when the highest worldly authority – the *àrd-rìgh* or monarch of Scotland – failed to dispense justice, one had to turn to the *'Rìgh tha 'sna nèamhaibh'* ('the King who is in Heaven', §29, l. 1130). Maighstir Seathan prays that the luck of the MacLeans' may turn yet (§34 – 37), hopeful that 'many a tree [which] has been cut just as close to the ground has produced a shoot and twigs' (§35). Catriona NicGilleathain expresses a similar hope in A:42, saying that she wishes to see but one thing before she dies: the return of her people (*'mo mhuinntir a thilleadh'*, §12, l. 540) and the rout of their enemies (*'gun toir sibh ruaig mhaidneadh far an ainid le càch e'*, l. 544-5).

The final MacLean poet to whom we now turn our attention is Mairghread nighean Lachlainn, composer of A:4 – *Òran* – sometime around 1704 when a recently-pardoned Sir John MacLean of Duart was able to return to Scotland. Ó Baoill says Mairghread nighean Lachlainn's 'life, her place or date of birth or death, her ancestry or relatives' are obscure (Ó Baoill 2009: 13), but her compositions may be tentatively dated to a long stretch between c. 1660 – 1751. She may readily be classified as a MacLean 'clan poet', as her work 'contains an unusually large number of allusions to the poet and her kinsfolk' (ibid) and Ó Baoill suggests her focus on the MacLeans surpasses even Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh's focus on the MacLeods or Iain Lom's on the MacDonalds (ibid: 15). There are other similarities between Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh and Mairghread within oral tradition; both 'are traditionally represented as having functioned as nurses to their respective clan chiefs' families' and both women 'are said to have been buried face down' (ibid: 20). This resembles a burial custom reserved for witches, and Frater notes some similarities between the two female poets and traditional descriptions of *bean-fiosaiche* or wise-women who engaged in divination (Frater 2008: 42), though other scholars suggested the burials were a form of punishment for having composed poetry outwith the thematic range considered appropriate for women (ibid: 41).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ The ancestry of the House of Stuart was traced back to Cináed mac Ailpin, the first king of Alba, and thus through the kings of Dál Riada all the way back to figures like Gaidheal Glas and Míl Espáine, the mytho-historical progenitors of all the Gaels (see Newton 2019: 55-8). The House of Stuart was also connected to the MacDonald Lords of the Isles through a fourteenth-century marriage (ibid: 24). As the poetry examined in the next chapter will show, Jacobite poets frequently used the Stuart kings' Gaelic heritage to inspire popular support for their cause.

⁹⁶ See also the discussion of the broad thematic range of Mairearad Ghriogarach's poetry in chapter eight.

The context in which Mairghread nighean Lachlainn uses the term *dùthchas* is similar to Mairghstir Seathan in A:20. Mairghread receives news which, if it is true, would be sweeter to her than the music of harps (*'gur binne leam na clàrsaichean'* §1, l. 240): that Sir John MacLean was *sàbhailte* ('safe') and had been accepted at court by Queen Anne (l. 243). Mairghread verbalises the plight of Sir John: that he had been banished as a baby (*'dh'fhògradh ann ad leanabh thu'* §2, l. 245), that in a sad manner his land had been taken from him *without any right* (*'gur brònach thugadh t'fhearann bhua / 's nach b' ann le còir a rinneadh e'*, l. 246-7), and that Sir John had not committed any crime since all he had been doing was 'following your hereditary king' (*'nach robh cron ri aithris ort / ach leantail do rìgh dùthchais'*, l. 248-9). Mairghread believes that if Queen Anne knew Sir John's story and all that had befallen him, she would look more kindly upon MacLean. Indeed, to Mairghread the sheer fact that the MacLeans' story is not being recounted is part of their oppression: *seanchas* and *òrain* are what could return the MacLeans to their former glory. In Mairghread's worldview, if she could get an audience with Queen Anne and speak the same language as her – *'Beurla Shasannach, Dutch cruaidh no Laideann'* §3, l. 252-3 – she 'would recount without omission how [Sir John] was expelled' (l. 254-5). Evidencing this belief, Mairghread begins her *seanchas*; even if it may not be heard or understood by Queen Anne, to tell of the *'fine mhòr phrìosal'* (l. 256), their historical deeds and their proud ways (§6 – 10) is the only way to keep her people's spirit or *inntinn* alive in face of their law-enforced capitulation (*'gur teann an lagh thug strìocadh ast''* §4, l. 259). There is a clear epistemological overlap in the poetry of all three MacLean poets examined directly above which emphasises the way the ethics of their traditional Gaelic worldview were at odds with Scots law, the lack of transgression on MacLean of Duart's part, and brings attention to the Campbells' lack of *còir* or right to dispossess Sir John – and, thereby, all of the MacLeans.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined twelve poems composed between 1649 and 1704. Though the style and language of this poetry differs to the 'classical Gaelic' compositions we examined in the previous chapter, the contexts in which the poets of this period used the term *dùthchas* strongly suggest that they saw their role as legitimators of chiefly authority, and that in this respect they were acting in the same capacity as their 'classical' predecessors, even if some among them had their privileges curtailed by less congenial clan chiefs. Although women did compose in 'classical Gaelic', the poets of the previous chapter were exclusively male. The fact that women composed a third of all

the poems containing the term *dùthchas* dating from between 1649 – 1704 suggests that issues of legitimacy and land rights were far from taboo for women.⁹⁷ A:42, for example, was composed by Catrìona NicGilleathain, and contains a discursive stanza on *dùthchas* and *oighreachd* which explicitly denounces the idea that a people's physical *dùthchas* could be sold at an auction in the way cattle might. The poem also refers to *dùthchas* as something which was proclaimed publicly when determining the rightful possessors of land, which provides us with a plausible link between *dùthchas* and Gaelic chiefly inauguration ceremonies, evoking Martin Martin's description of one such instance which almost certainly refers to *dùthchas*: 'the chief [orator] stood close to the [clan chief], and pronounced a rhetorical panegyric, setting forth the ancient pedigree, valour, and liberality of the family as incentives to the young chieftain, and fit for his imitation' (Martin 1999: 72). Through these examples, we come to understand how *dùthchas* could simultaneously be a personal attribute ('valour'), a feature of social relationships ('liberality'), ancestry ('ancient pedigree'), and the physical place to which this person belonged. We also see how *dùthchas* had been used by the poet as a tool for dispensing 'active' or 'passive' instruction to the chiefs. The fact that a third of the poems featuring the term *dùthchas* mention generosity of the chief to the tenantry or *tuath*, and half mention patronage of the arts, suggests that poets – male or female – may have been perceived as instrumental in ensuring the continuation of material redistribution in Gaelic society, using their role as legitimators of power to pressure chiefs in a way which prevented them from accumulating excess wealth. By this half-century, however, we see the chiefs engaging in a new type of conspicuous consumption which the poets criticised but were ultimately unable to prevent (c.f. Devine 1994: 15).

This leads me to propose that *dùthchas* was an epistemological cornerstone of Gaelic culture which regulated – by the force of custom – social order, political allegiances, territorial belonging, possession of land, distribution of wealth, behavioural norms, personal attributes, and possibly even personal relationship to God. The last of these appears in some of the poems of this period, particularly that of the MacLeans, who believed they had been treated unjustly by the Scottish Crown, and in their desperation turned to the *Àrd-rìgh* or 'High-king' who ruled over all other sovereigns, God himself. This link between *dùthchas* and spirituality will reappear in the next chapter, in the messianic imagery surrounding prince Charles Edward Stuart's return to Scotland, as well as in the chapter on the poetry of the nineteenth century, when the Highland Clearances made many Gaelic poets compare the plight of their people to that of the Israelites in Egypt. Another motif we have seen repeatedly in this chapter was the connection between *dùthchas* and the monarchy. A:20 and A:4 evidence that generational loyalty to a certain bloodline of monarchs, in this case the

⁹⁷ This question will be revisited in the discussions of Mairead Ghriogarach's poetry in chapter eight and Màiri Mhòr's poetry in chapter nine.

Stuarts, was considered to also be an expression of *dùthchas*; hence the rightful king was one's *rìgh dùthchais*, and changing one's allegiance a transgression of said *dùthchas* (A:4, §5). Iain Lom also used the term *dùthchas* to sanction Charles II ('*a' chrùin [a] bha de dhùthchas aig t' aiteam*', 'the crown which hereditarily belonged to your race' in A:13, '*Cumha Morair Hunndaidh*', l. 1110-1111) and to 'rebuke [him] for his tardiness in coming to claim his kingdom' (MacKenzie 1964: 254). The idea that *dùthchas* and monarchy are tightly interwoven appears to be ancient, as it echoes the medieval text *Tecosca Cormaic* which links the right to rule over others to *dùthchas*, as shown in the fourth chapter. The poetry of the following chapter will examine this link in further detail, as we explore the way that *dùthchas* was harnessed by Jacobite propagandists to legitimate the Stuarts and illegitimate the House of Hanover.

7. *Dùthchas* in the poetry of the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite Risings

This chapter will examine seven poems which relate to the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite Risings and feature the term *dùthchas*. A further eighth poem (A:24), composed sometime during the reign of George III, will be analysed alongside them to see how an extended period of Hanoverian rule may have influenced the rhetoric of *dùthchas* and Royalism. We will begin with an introduction to Jacobitism, particularly in relation to Gaeldom. Afterwards, we shall move onto examining the role of *dùthchas* in four Jacobite incitement poems or *brosnachaidhean*. We will then finish with a section which compares the use of *dùthchas* by other contemporary Jacobite and Hanoverian voices through one praise poem and one lament which use many of the motifs seen in the poetry of the ‘clan poets’ discussed in the previous chapter, and two compositions by Donnchadh Bàn, at least one of which was composed some time after the events of the ‘45 and illustrates how attitudes present in Gaelic Jacobite poetry evolved with the passage of time.

Poet's name	Title	Date of composition	Appendix code
Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein	Òran nam Fineachan	1715	A:22
Nighean Aonghais Òig (MacDonald)	Òran air Teachd Phrionnsa Teàrlach	1745	A:8
Angus MacDonald	Òran Brosnachaidh do na Gàidheil	1745	A:7
Donnchadh Bàn	[Òran Eile air] Blàr na h-Eaglaise Brice	1746 (or thereafter)	A:10
Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair	Brosnachadh Eile do na Gàidheil	1746	A:9
Alasdair Camshron	Òran do Dhòmhnull Bàn MacDhòmhnuill Dhuibh, Tighearna Loch Iall	1746	A:11
Iain Camshron	Òran do'n Doctair Chamshron	1753	A:12
Donnchadh Bàn	Òran do'n Rìgh	1760 – 1801 (<i>circa</i>)	A:24

Table 2: Poems by the Jacobite poets

As the previous chapter indicated, after the Wars of the Three Kingdoms there appears to be an emergent linguistic collocation of *dùthchas* and terms related to the monarchy in vernacular poetry which comments upon contemporary political issues. This could be seen as the poets responding to concerns regarding the monarchy's legitimacy while operating within a Gaelic conceptual matrix, with *dùthchas* being the obvious link between leadership and legitimacy. Iain Lom used *dùthchas* twice in direct appeals to monarchs: the first of these is from a poem composed in 1649, where Iain Lom legitimises the Stuarts' right to the crown as the rightful bloodline of kings ('[*an crùn a*] *bha de dhùthchas aig t' aiteam*' = the crown which hereditarily belonged to your [folk], A:13) while rebuking Charles II for the 'hardships which his loyal subjects [suffered] at the hands of the Covenanters' (MacKenzie 1964: 254). The second usage is in the poet's critique of William and Mary, composed around 1692, particularly Mary's 'unfilial behaviour' towards her grandfather Charles I whom she denounced as a traitor (MacKenzie 1964: 210 and 320; Ní Suaird 2003: 96) which makes Iain Lom conclude that 'evil is the heredity which has adhered to her' ('*s olc an dùthchas a lean rithe*', A:16, '*Òran air Rìgh Uilleam agus Banrìgh Màiri*') and no son of hers shall inherit her

oighreachd or estate (A:16). Two further collocations of *dùthchas* and the monarchy were uttered by MacLean poets (A:4, A:20) in laments over the plight of Sir John MacLean, 4th Baronet, who had been dispossessed and banished for upholding a hereditary loyalty to his hereditary king, his '*righ dùthchais*' (A:4). Damhnait Ní Suaird has said that the Gaelic political poetry contained within the Fernaig MS – compiled by Donnchadh Mac Rath of Inverinate, Kintail, between 1688 and 1693 – demonstrates an acute preoccupation with Jacobite politics as well as a degree of awareness of contemporary English-language Jacobite political rhetoric among 'Donnchadh Mac Rath and other Gaelic noblemen... at a time when they felt their social order was under threat' (Ní Suaird 2003: 93). Although Hugh Cheape has argued that the doctrines of Jacobitism, such as 'the divine right of kings and an unchallengeable hereditary succession were not by [1745] commonly held sentiments and indeed were irrelevant for most Highlanders' (Cheape in Findlay 2002: 243), it is evident that the Jacobite movement was popular among the 'common people' of the *Gàidhealtachd*, perhaps in large part owing to the successes of Gaelic Jacobite propagandists such as the ones we will examine below (c.f. Gillies 1991: 21; Stiùbhart 2021a: 35-6).

Stiùbhart has pointed out the Wars of the Three Kingdoms as a watershed which saw Gaelic poets '[adopt] regional and national perspectives looking beyond individual clans' (Stiùbhart 2021a: 27). However, Stiùbhart does not explore further what a 'national perspective' would mean at this point in time, particularly to the people involved in the conflict or its intellectual backdrop, such as the poets of that period, or how 'looking beyond individual clans' was a novel poetic feature. In chapter five, we saw a seventeenth-century MacDonald propagandist invoke that clan's claim to '*úrleith Alban*', or control over 'half of Alba', a concept which MacGregor connects to the concept of '*ceannas nan Gàidheal*' or 'headship of the Gael', (MacGregor 2024b: 10-13; c.f. MacInnes 2006d: 23). Neither of these concepts are novel; in fact, the conceptual framework within which they operate connects the kindreds which make these claims – the MacDonalds and the Campbells – to their mythological progenitors' rule over all of Ireland or all of Alba, the source of the legitimacy of their claims (MacGregor 2024b: 19-23). While examining the way in which the Jacobite poets harnessed the ideological framework of *dùthchas* in this chapter, we shall bear in mind these alleged 'national perspectives' of the Gaelic bards in an attempt to better understand what this may have meant at the time.

Murray Pittock sees a 'strong link to nationalism' at the core of Jacobitism, and connects the rise of national sentiment – a belief in 'the native dynasty and the unified nation' – in early eighteenth-century Scotland to the 1707 Union (Pittock 2009: 57). Indeed, Pittock and others have noted that alongside the 'national', 'Jacobitism was – and always remained – an international movement' (Pittock 2009: 44; c. f. Monod, Pittock and Szechi 2010). David Findlay suggests that

‘Gaelic participation in the British imperialistic ambitions is usually dated to the post-Culloden period, but should perhaps be backdated to the 1640s and the Gaels’ first important participation in a “British” civil war’ (Findlay 2002: 246) – this is supported by Iain Lom’s legitimization of the Stuarts’ hereditary right to the crown around 1649 (A:13; c.f. Findlay 2002: 249-50). On the other hand, the main ideological points of contention between Jacobite and Hanoverian supporters – the *Four Main Propositions* of contemporary writers (Whiteford quoted in Ní Suaird 2003: 93) – appear to fit quite comfortably with the belief systems of contemporary Gaeldom’s social elite, considering these would have still been at least vestigially influenced by the ‘genuinely binding intellectual system’ of the Gaelic *filidh* (McLeod 2004: 114), while being increasingly influenced by contemporary Anglophone intellectual traditions (Ní Suaird 2003: 93; Stiùbhart 2021a: 30; Stevenson in Findlay 2002: 248). Ní Suaird has observed, for example, that the Gaelic term *còir* was ‘used frequently throughout the Fernaig MS’, both as a noun referring ‘to the actual title/charter’ or ‘to the rightful, hereditary claim to the throne’ or even ‘lands legally held through charter/hereditary right’; as well as being used ‘as an adjective, meaning proper/fitting/ rightful’ (Ní Suaird 2003: 123-6; c.f. Gillies 1991: 25). There is a strong semantic overlap between such usages of *còir* and the term *dùthchas*; furthermore, the terms *dual* and *dualchas* are used in the Fernaig MS ‘with reference to James’s hereditary right’ (*b’ fheàrr an tì bu dual na thàinig* = better the one who was king through hereditary right, than the one who came; *gun chus againn fuaight riu an dualchas no ’n dàimh* = with us having little in common with [the Dutch] in hereditary nature nor in kinship) (ibid: 122). This all suggests that terms relating to ‘right’, ‘heritage’ and ‘legitimacy’ were in common use in Gaelic Jacobite poetry long before 1715, while this thesis has already demonstrated that the term *dùthchas* had been used in relation to these concepts in Gaelic poetry more generally since the poetry began being recorded.

Poetry of incitement – *na brosnachaidhean*

The first of the poets whose work we shall examine in this section is Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein or John MacDonald, who lived c. 1665 – c. 1725, ‘belonged to the Morar branch of the Clanranald MacDonalds’, held ‘a tack of Grulin in Eigg’ and ‘may have moved c. 1700 to Ormiclate in South Uist as *aos-dàna* or resident poet to Clanranald’ (Black 2019: 379). His composition *Òran nam Fineachan* (A:22) was composed in 1715 ‘when the clans were gathering for the Jacobite rising’ (ibid). The poem’s opening stanzas already indicate that there has been a shift in polarity of allegiance between the poetry of the Clan Donald-affiliated classical poets during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and the Jacobite poetry of Iain Dubh. In A:68, the *filidh* propagandist of Clan Donald

explicitly pitted the Gaels against ‘the men of Scotland’ (*‘fir Alban’*),⁹⁸ and Niall MacMhuirich, the author of the *Clanranald History* ‘speaks of the army of the Estates as *morshluagh na h-Alban* [‘the great host of Scotland’] as opposed to Montrose’s army, which appears as *beagshluagh riogh Breatan agus Ghaoidheal* [the small host of the king of Britain and the Gael]’ (McCaughey 1989: 102-3). In contrast, the opening stanzas of Iain Dubh’s poetry appeal to *‘uaislean nan Gàidheal’* (‘the nobles of the Gael’) and *‘uaislean na Galldachd’* (‘the nobles of the Lowlands’) to ‘boldly enter the cause’ together as *‘fir Alba... le rùn feirge agus gairge gu seirbheis a’ Chrùin’* (‘men of Scotland... full of passion and ferocity in the service of the Crown’) (Black 2019: 38-9). Their enemy are the *‘Sassunaich’* (translated as ‘Englishmen’), also called the *‘Dùbhghall’* in the final stanza (ibid: 40-1, l. 21; 46-7 l. 159). This is a rather marked change to have occurred in 70 years among poets aligned with Clan Donald, considering the conservative nature of Gaelic poetry. Evidently, to the Gaelic Jacobite poet, the legitimacy of the Stuart line and their claim to the throne were paramount, and required both Gaels and Lowlanders to muster in unity as ‘men of *Alba*’. What is not easily discernible but would have to be studied to understand any kind of nascent national sentiment in Gaelic poetry of this period, is what expectations these conservative poets had of a successful Jacobite campaign – particularly, what role did they envisage Gaels to take within ‘*Alba*’ alongside the ‘*Gall*’ or ‘Lowlanders’ when the rightful monarch had been restored? Murray Pittock notes that ten times as many men rose for the Jacobite cause in 1715 than in 1689 and concludes that the political event which ‘surely’ made the difference was the 1707 Act of Union which fuelled Scottish national sentiment within Jacobite rhetoric (Pittock 2009: 57), ideologically turning it into a ‘pan-Scottish struggle’ (Black 2019: 382). Half of the poems examined in this chapter refer to ‘England’ or ‘Englishmen’,⁹⁹ always as the ‘enemy’; half of them refer to ‘Scotland’ in the context of the Jacobite cause;¹⁰⁰ and half again refer to ‘the Gaels’,¹⁰¹ suggesting that the invocation of *Gàidheal* ethnicity was a powerful tool for achieving widespread political mobilisation, even if the cause was not unique to the Gaels.

Although A:22 opens by petitioning both the Gaelic and Lowland nobility, its zeal is derived from its appeal to the fulfilment of a prophecy allegedly made by the thirteenth-century prophet Thomas the Rhymer, ‘that the Gael would win back Scotland at a great battle to be fought on the River Clyde’ (Black 2019: 379-80; c.f. Ní Suard 2003: 121-2). Since a large army would be required to win such a battle, Iain Dubh begins a ‘roll call’ of the *fineachan* or kindreds who must gather in order to ‘prove true’ (*‘dearbhaich’*) the Rhymer’s prophecy. The rest of the poem save for its last stanza –

⁹⁸ See the analysis of *‘Mór mo mholadh ar mhac Cholla’* (A:68) in chapter five above.

⁹⁹ ‘Sasainn’, ‘Sasuinn’, or ‘Sasunnach’ appear in A:7 (l. 116), A:8 (l. 16), A:10 (l. 109), and A:22 (l. 21)

¹⁰⁰ ‘Alba’ appears in A:8 (l. 100), A:9 (l. 43), A:10 (l. 66, 76), and A:22 (l. 3)

¹⁰¹ ‘Gàidheal’ or ‘Gàidheil’ appear in A:7 (l. 1, 82, 110), A:9 (l. 4, 70-1), A:10 (l. 66, 105), and A:22 (l. 9)

§4 to 20 – introduces one or more kindred per stanza, naming it and describing it with a mixture of clan-specific symbolism (the ‘Red Hand’ of the MacDonalds in l. 30), loci (the ‘uplands of the Spey’ and the Grants in l. 89-90), and a wide selection of stock panegyric epithets relating to martial prowess, tenacity of character, and loyalty. The poet’s chosen method of delivery and diction are staunchly conservative, and it is all the more interesting to see this kin-specific imagery used in a poem which ultimately tries to unite the ethnic groups of *Gall* and *Gàidheal* for the Jacobite cause. Iain Dubh lists all of the major Gaelic kindreds, using the panegyric staple of ‘lists of allies’ used by the likes of Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh (A:6), a convention which made no distinction ‘between relatives and allies’ and weaves the audience into ‘the network through which the bards constantly present an ideal unity of the Gaels’ as a propaganda device (MacInnes 2006a: 276-7; c.f. Coira 2012: xi-xii). Much like Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, Iain Dubh includes not only Clan Donald, their traditional allies, and kindreds which were likely to join the campaign in 1715, but also clans who already had an established relationship with the Hanoverians, such as the Campbells (Black 2019: 44-7, l. 121-8; c.f. Campbell, J. 1984: 72-85; Gillies 1991: 28-9). In fact, it is in the context of the MacKays – who had stood against the Jacobites in 1689 – that the poet uses the term *dùthchas*:

Thig sluagh dùmhail, gun chunntas,

o dhùthchas MhicAoidh.

[A vast, densely-packed host comes from the land of MacKay, §10, l. 79-80]

Iain Dubh is acting here as a Clan Donald political messenger, representing the ‘royalist, Catholic (or at least non-Presbyterian), and culturally traditionalist’ political axis of the *Gàidhealtachd* (Gillies 1991: 20), and composing a conventional panegyric poem to encourage all Gaels to unite around their traditional values, appealing to their ‘native sensibility [through] *dùthchas*’, to paraphrase John MacInnes (MacInnes 2006a: 279). The propaganda is effective because it appeals to the kindreds’ martial heritage (*‘gur h-e ‘n cruadal bu dual duibh’* = ‘your tradition was toughness’, said of the MacLeods in l. 63), their descent (*‘sann bho Dhiarmad a shìolaich pòr lionmhor nach gann (...) dh’ am bu dual bhith san Fhraing’* = ‘from Diarmad are descended the large numerous clan (...) hereditarily in France’, said of the Campbells in l. 126-8), and their territorial, kin-based affiliations, embodied by phrases like *dùthchas MhicAoidh*. The assumption may have been that these connections are deeper and more enduring than political alliances forged in the seventeenth century. The phrasing also posits the question of why the more common socio-geographical term *dùthaich MhicAoidh*, which survives in common use to this day, was not used by Iain Dubh instead: was the choice political, to harness the zeal of *dùthchas* into the poet’s words, or could the common name for ‘MacKay country’ once have been *dùthchas MhicAoidh*?

The next poem of incitement is *Òran air Teachd Phrionnsa Teàrlach* (A:8), presumably composed shortly after the arrival of Charles Edward Stuart on the mainland in August 1745. The poet is Nighean Aonghais Òig, a MacDonald from Achnacoichean in Keppoch, about whom very little is known, not even her Christian name (Campbell, J. 1984: 21). She is the only female poet under examination in this chapter, although she was not the only female Jacobite voice: Sìleas na Ceapaich was another staunchly Jacobite Keppoch MacDonald, prolific in her political poetry, although she did not use the term *dùthchas* in her work.¹⁰²

The Scottish national sentiment evident in Iain Dubh's poetry is shared by Nighean Aonghais Òig: the enemies are the 'Sasunnaich' (Campbell, J. 1984: 22-3, l. 16), Charles Edward is 'the light [who] has arrived [to] raise Scotland's honour' ('*thàinig an solus thogas onoir na h-Alba*', l. 99-100), and there is a polarised sense of 'us and them' as the MacDonald poet says that '*gach traoitear*' (every traitor) will be trampled (l. 8). Nighean Aonghais Òig's optimism for the campaign is visible from the first stanza, which demonstrates the belief that now that the Prince – 'our priceless lost treasure' (l. 1), 'the jewel of virtues set around by the graces' (l. 3-4) – has returned, the wheel of fortune has turned in favour of her people ('*nis o'n thionndaidh a' chuibhle*'); this is the same metaphor of the turns of the *cuibhle an fhortain* or wheel of fortune which we have witnessed the MacLean poets using to describe their loss of land and leadership in the seventeenth century (see A:20 in previous chapter; c. f. Gillies 1991: 25, 27 and 40 for the wheel 'turning back' after Culloden). In A:22, Iain Dubh does not make his MacDonald positionality as obvious as Nighean Aonghais Òig does in A:8 – the daughter of Aonghas Òg's poetry is clearly more clan-oriented. Iain Dubh's 'roll call' of *fineachan* includes geographically-distant kindreds, such as the MacKays, but also eastern clans like the Munros, Gordons, Grahams and Farquharsons, reflecting the importance of these during the 1715 Rising (c.f. Pittock 2009: 54-7). While Nighean Aonghais Òig also lists several clans by name, these are mostly confined to the west coast and areas adjacent to the Keppoch MacDonalds' territories (§3, 4), such as the Camerons of Bun Arkaig (§5), MacDonalds of Glengarry and Knoydart (§6), MacDonalds of Sleat (§7, 8) the MacGregors (§9),¹⁰³ and the Stewarts of Appin (§10). On one hand, this could have a circumstantial explanation: with Charles Edward raising the standard at Glenfinnan, the kindreds whose territories were nearest would naturally have been the first to answer the call. On the other hand, we have already seen that focusing on one's kindred and its allies was a common feature in the poetry of this period,¹⁰⁴ and it seems that gender potentiated the poets' clan focus since all the female poets of this time were 'clan poets' to a larger degree than their

¹⁰² See also 'Methodology' chapter above.

¹⁰³ The MacGregors were a widely-dispersed kindred, though Rannoch could still be considered their locus.

¹⁰⁴ See also the work of the 'clan poets' in the previous chapter.

male counterparts (c.f. Ó Baoill 2009: 15 on Mairghread nighean Lachlainn and Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh). Arguably, Nighean Aonghais Òig's local focus allows her 'roll call' to be more pragmatic than either Iain Dubh's or Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's (Campbell, J. 1984: 72-85); the two male poets are unrealistically optimistic about the Frasers' (A:22, l. 113-20; Campbell, J. 1984: 82-3, l. 137-144), Grants' (A:22, l. 89-96; Campbell, J. 1984: 82-3, l. 129-36), and particularly the Campbells' (A:22, l. 121-8; Campbell, J. 1984: 76-7, l. 65-72) willingness to join the Jacobite cause (Dziennik 2021: 186), though this lack of realism is in itself a literary device and feature of the incitement genre. Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair said the Campbells would 'surely bring strength into [the Prince's] camp' (*'gun neartaich iad do champa na Caimbeulaich gu dearbh'*, *ibid*) under the personal leadership of the Duke of Argyll; Nighean Aonghais Òig does not anticipate the Campbells will join the cause, but believes it would not be a huge loss (A:8, l. 79-80) as she does not count the Campbells among the kindreds *'do'm b' àbhaist bhith a ghnàth leis a' cheartas'* ('whose wont is to always support the *right* cause', l. 77-8; c.f. l. 68). William Gillies echoes MacInnes in the belief that the literary motif of a 'roll call' of kindreds in Gaelic poetry presents an idealised version of reality and should not be seen 'as misjudgement, over-optimism or wishful thinking' (Gillies 1991: 28-9; c.f. MacInnes 2006a: 276-7; Coira 2012: 46-7). To Gillies, these words

[invoke] the classic bardic carrot and stick of fame / and shame, [saying] to the Highland gentry, 'Here are the deserved accolades your fathers have won; this is your opportunity to join their Hall of Fame' (Gillies 1991: 28-9).

We have seen this 'carrot and stick' operating in the early 1640s in A:69 and later in the same century.¹⁰⁵ Nighean Aonghais Òig leaves the Campbells with the choice of returning to the 'right side of history' (*'leis a' cheartas'*) – otherwise, they will be 'trampled' by the reinvigorated MacGregors (A:8, l. 72).

Indeed, it is in the context of the MacGregors that Nighean Aonghais Òig employs the term *dùthchas*. Historians in later centuries would also use the term *dùthchas* when discussing the MacGregors due to the clan's history of dispossession and the Campbells holding charters to lands which the MacGregors held by custom and sword (MacInnes 1996: 39; Campbell, D. 1984: iii-iv, 322-4).¹⁰⁶ The MacDonald poet opens the ninth stanza with a vocative address to 'valiant Clan Gregor' (*'a Chlann-Ghriogair a' chruadail'*, l. 65) and uses the copula formulation *bu dual dhuibh* to state that the MacGregors' heritage is to be *tapaidh* – 'manly' and 'active' – despite the 'condemnation' and

¹⁰⁵ See chapter six, particularly the section on 'Passive and active instruction to the chief'

¹⁰⁶ The reality of the MacGregors' situation was a more complex picture, as the chief's estate of Glen Strae had been held by charter since the fifteenth century – see MacGregor 1989: 38-42

‘dispossession’ (*‘chaidh ur dìteadh ’s ur ruagadh’*, l. 67) they had suffered at the hands of their ‘hateful foes with no justice’ (*‘luchd-fuatha gun cheartas’*, l. 68). The stanza then continues with

Seo an t-àm dhuibh bhith dùsgadh
‘Thoirt ur **dùthchais** fhéin dhachaigh,
‘S ged is fad’ o’n tha ‘chuing oirbh
Thèid na Duibhnichean fo’r casaibh.

[Now’s the time to awaken, your own to recover; though long their yoke’s on you, on the Campbells you’ll trample. A:8, l. 69-72] (Emphasis my own)

Here, the Keppoch poet is inciting an awakening among the MacGregors and presenting the Jacobite cause to them as a way to throw off the Campbell *cuing* or yoke under which they have suffered for a long time. The precise meaning of the line in which *dùthchas* appears is obscure, although John Lorne Campbell’s translation of ‘your own to recover’ captures the pith of Nighean Aonghais Òig’s argument. In the poet’s words *dùthchas* seems to be something mobile which can be taken *dhachaigh* or home-wards – *dùthchas* could therefore mean the MacGregors’ hardy spirit which is *dual* to them (l. 65-6) that they must rekindle through their Jacobite political awakening and then ‘take home’ to re-conquer their ancestral territories from the Campbells. It could also mean their very name, which had been proscribed. In any case, the poet vindicates Clan Gregor by associating them with their *dùthchas* – their ancestral qualities and territories – and contrasts this with the injustices inflicted by *‘luchd-fuatha gun cheartas’* (‘their haters acting unrightfully’). We have already seen juxtaposition used by Gaelic poets to contrast injustice with that which is right.¹⁰⁷ Iain Dubh also expresses his solidarity with the MacGregors in A:22, expressing his belief that it was an *eucoir* or ‘wrong-doing’ when Clan Gregor had been ‘put to the horn’ (A:22, l. 143-4). We must remember that Iain Dubh and Nighean Aonghais Òig are both MacDonalds and therefore prejudiced against the Campbells; nonetheless, there may be something in the way the Campbells used the commission of fire and sword against the MacGregors which was fundamentally at odds with the Gaelic worldview to which *dùthchas* was so essential.

Another incitement poem composed at some early stage of the ‘45 Rising is *Òran Brosnachaidh do na Gàidheil* (A:7), a poem by Aonghas mac Alasdair Ruaidh or Angus MacDonald. Identifying information pieced together by Campbell shows that Angus ‘joined Prince Charles’, served as ‘an officer’ for him despite being 80 years of age in 1745, and died that year at the Battle of Prestonpans (Campbell, J. 1984: 8-9). As a son of the eleventh chief of the MacDonalds of Glencoe, Angus was a member of the clan’s gentry or *daoine uaisle*; his Jacobite sympathies likely ran deep, as

¹⁰⁷ See both chapter five and six above.

we know of at least two formative experiences he had in his twenties which would have affected his political outlook – the Battle of Killiecrankie and the 1692 Massacre of Glencoe (ibid). Similarly to Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's *Òran nam Fineachan Gàidhealach* (Campbell, J. 1984: 72-85), A:7 opens with a vocative address to all Gaels ('*a chlannaibh nan Gàidheal*', l. 1), particularly those 'who ever were loyal' ('*dh'am b'àbhaist bhith rìoghail*', l. 2; c.f. Campbell, J. 1984: 72, l. 1) – and in the poem's final lines, the enemy is specified as '*fir Shasuinn*' or the English (l. 116). Angus MacDonald encourages the Gaels to make ready, bid farewell to their relatives, and anticipate victory in all their military engagements (§2). They should draw courage (l. 46) from the fact that they are '*dlighe na còrach*' (l. 47) – a line not easily translated, as it compounds two concepts relating to lawfulness and legitimacy: *dlighe* and *còir*. The latter has been mentioned above as one of the most commonly used nouns and adjectives in the rhetoric of Jacobite poetry (Ní Suaird 2003: 94-5, 123-6; c.f. Gillies 1991: 21, 25) and we have often seen it appear in poems which feature *dùthchas*, since they are closely semantically-related terms. The former is also entrenched in the rhetoric of lawfulness and legitimacy in the Gaelic poetry of both Scotland and Ireland (Ní Suaird 2003: 123; Coira 2012: 110) and has a strong semantic relationship with *dùthchas* (McQuillan 2004: 138-45). Subsequent lines see the Glencoe poet use juxtaposition to contrast the Jacobites – their conscience at peace ('*cha bhi ur coguis 'gur n-agairt*') since their cause is supported by *ceartas* (l. 49-50; c.f. A:8 above) – with their enemies, of whom the same cannot be said (l. 52) since their conscience 'will plague them' ('*bidh an coguis 'gan dìteadh*', l. 54) for standing with King George (l. 55).

Dùthchas appears in the stanza which immediately follows this discourse, in a series of verses which elucidate 'the material gains the Highlanders may expect to win if their venture succeeds', apparently the only example of such rhetoric in a Jacobite poem (Campbell, J. 1984: 9; c.f. Gillies 1991: 33-4; Stiùbhart 2021a: 35-6).

Ma chinneas leibh gnothach,
'S gun cothaich sibh rìoghachd...
Gheibh sibh pailteas gach dùthcha,
Cha n-è ur **dùthchas** as nì leibh,
Agus ragha gach fearainn
Gun gheàrradh gun chis air...

[If you are successful and conquer the kingdom... of each land you'll gain plenty, more than you'd inherit, and the choice of each holding without tribute or taxes... **A:7**, l. 61-2 and 67-70] (Emphasis my own)

Angus MacDonald is unambiguous in his view that should the Jacobite Gaels' *gnothach* or endeavour be successful and the entire *rìoghachd* or kingdom be conquered by them, they will

receive choice lands (*'ragha gach fearainn'*) in every *dùthaich* or part of this kingdom, not only their respective *dùthchas*-lands to which they are customarily entitled, and which we have seen other poets dangle as carrots. Since Angus was a Glencoe MacDonald, his words may well be suggesting that the crowning of Charles Edward *'ann an dùthaich a shinnsear'* ('in the land of his forebears', l. 77) would have enabled Clan Donald's return to their glory days; we have seen MacDonald poets' claims to *'úrleith Alban'* – a claim to Gaelic, specifically MacDonald, possession of or even sovereignty over half of Alba – in A:68, and we know these lived on in the work of eighteenth-century Clan Donald poet John MacCodrum (MacInnes 2006d: 23), making its resurgence in Jacobite propaganda unsurprising. Although the poet opened the song of incitement with an address to *clannaibh nan Gàidheal*, it is worth noting that Angus' perception of the social benefit of this campaign's success appears to trickle *down* the rungs of society: the coronation of the rightful king (l. 76-7) would result in the Gaelic *maithean* or nobility being restored according to their wishes (l. 82-3), causing harmony between *'na h-ìlsean 's na h-uailsean'* ('the lowly and high-born', l. 84-6). This seems to echo the rhetoric of divine right and accords with Findlay's suggestion that the traditional Gaelic understanding of the clan chief's and nobility's position within their society may have, 'from the beginning of the seventeenth century... been influenced strongly by the Stewart kings and Lowland north-east Royalist culture' (Findlay 2002: 247-8). Simultaneously, the Gaelic Jacobite poets make the conscious decision to use ancient – if not archaic – literary motifs and diction in their works, a decision Gillies believes was 'worthwhile... given that many of the Highland nobility of the time were not yet wholly purged of a Gaelic consciousness' (Gillies 1991: 29). The poets themselves likely saw their work legitimating Charles Edward and placing 'blemish' upon William, Anne, and the Georges as a genuine expression of Gaelic society's 'social contract' between poet and ruler (Gillies 1991: 21-3; c.f. Thomson 1991: 160; Coira 2012: 45), and their audience at all levels of said society would have recognised the rhetoric of the 'traditional idea of the chief or king being wedded to the land' and ensuring the prosperity of said land through his behaviour (Ní Suaird 2003: 97-100) from popular panegyric poetry for their local chiefs.

The final poem of incitement is A:9, *Brosnachadh Eile do na Gàidheil* composed by Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair or Alexander MacDonald, as he was known in English. This poet has been described as 'dominating Jacobite poetry, and eighteenth-century Gaelic culture as a whole' (Stiùbhart 2021a: 37); compared to many of the poets we have examined in this chapter there is a considerable amount of known biographical detail about him (Thomson 1996: 1-17), in no small part due to his frequent contact with Anglophone Scotland. His father was a university-educated minister and Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair also attained an education at the University of Glasgow (Stiùbhart 2021a: 37), which allowed him to work as a 'teacher and catechist' with the Society in

Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (often abbreviated as the SSPCK) (Thomson 1996: 7). That the poet had an appreciation for the power of the written word and the need for cross-cultural understanding between English- and Gaelic-speakers is evident from his pioneering work as a Gaelic lexicographer. The SSPCK funded his effort to publish a first-ever Gaelic-English proto-dictionary in 1741 (ibid: 17-9) which includes among its 194 pages of thematically, rather than alphabetically-arranged words, the term *dùthchasach*. It is defined in English as ‘a native’ (MacDomhnuill 1741: 40), among a grouping of words relating to the ‘conditions’ of people: ‘magistrates’, ‘subjects’, ‘clergymen’, ‘laymen’, ‘freemen’, ‘slaves’, ‘nobles’, ‘beggars’, ‘strangers or foreigners’ and the aforementioned ‘natives’ (ibid). Though this book and its inclusion of *dùthchasach* are significant in their own right, this section will focus solely on one of *Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair*’s Jacobite poems, A:9.

Brosnachadh Eile do na Gàidheil is significant for a number of reasons: in the context of this thesis, it stands out as the poet’s only piece which contains the term *dùthchas*, despite his productive career as a Gaelic Jacobite propagandist – there are fifteen poems by Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair included in John Lorne Campbell’s *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five*, with no more than three poems by any other one poet to be found in the collection. Furthermore, these are only the poet’s Jacobite compositions, with a remarkably comprehensive repertoire of surviving poetry on a variety of other subjects extant, a fact doubtless aided by the poet’s literacy and ability to publish within his own lifetime. Another significant feature of A:9 which sets it apart from the other three *òrain brosnachaidh* which we have examined already is that it was composed after the defeat at Culloden, as well as the Dress Act and Act of Proscription passed in August that year (A:9, l. 25-36, 47). We have seen that Jacobite poems written before Culloden abounded in promises of restoring the Gaels to an idealised, rightful state – or at least returning their ancestral lands to them (A:7, A:8); Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair’s call to arms in A:9 instead summons ‘*diùbhaltas cogail*’ (‘warlike revenge’, l. 21) in order to ‘recover all the things that you lost in Culloden’s defeat’ (l. 45-7). Gillies talks about the symbolic importance of Culloden as a watershed moment – ‘the symbol of something like the end of independent Gaelic action’ (Gillies 1991: 40) – and the ways in which poets addressed the collective trauma of both defeat and loss of life (ibid: 40-6). At the same time, Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and other poets were tasked with creating songs which ‘resuscitat[ed] the numbed psyches of the living by analysing and rationalising the defeat, and preparing men to come out and fight the next round’ (ibid: 40). It is precisely in this context that the MacDonald poet composed the words:

O! ’s mise gu mol’

Sibh a mhosgladh le toil,

'S às ur cadaltachd shomalta dhùsgadh;

Gun fhardal, le for,

Sibh a dh'éireadh le goil,

Gu dìon ur sean-sonais 's ur **dùthchais**...

[O, surely I'll praise you who'll readily wake, and stir from your negligent slumber. Undelaying, with zeal, arising with rage to protect your old joy and your country... A:9, l. 37-42] (Emphasis my own)

In the poet's eyes, the battle may have been lost, but the war was not over. The punitive measures being exacted upon the Gaels – particularly the Disarming and Dress Acts, but also the Forfeited Estates Act of 1747 – must be met with a reaction, says Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, or '*nìtear tràilleagan uile d'ar dùthaich*' ('every man of our country [shall be] enslaved', l. 30). The dejection and collective trauma are a '*cadaltachd shomalta*' ('negligent slumber', l. 39) from which the Gaels must awaken, and reignite the *for* or zeal that would have them rise, boiling over with rage ('*dh'éireadh le goil*') to protect their *sean-sonais* and their *dùthchas*. The former may refer to the people's optimism and zest in 1745, roused as it had been by the 'vitality and *joie de vivre*' which Sorley MacLean saw in Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's poetry (MacLean 1985: 253). The use of '*sean*' could imply a much earlier state, however, particularly when we consider the Gaelic poets' propensity for invoking the distant past – this could be referring to *Linn an Àigh* or the 'Gaelic Golden Age' (Newton 2017: 9). The latter, on the other hand, is a semantic umbrella which includes land and territory that had been ravaged or seized from its traditional chieftains; the tangible elements of Gaelic culture now affected by political repression, such as plaid and weaponry – the latter being of crucial importance for hunting as a means of subsistence; as well as intangible culture, the performance and transmission of which would have doubtless been impacted by the aftermath of Culloden. It is also worth considering *dùthchas* as relating to a sense of nationality or ethnic belonging in A:9, particularly in light of Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's 1741 'proto-dictionary' and its conceptualisation of *dùthchasach* as both an adjective and noun that relates to a person's belonging '*do thalamh, no [do] dhùthaich*' ('to the soil, or to the country', MacDomhnuill 1741: 40).

Matthew Dziennik has demonstrated that the Gaels were not an unanimously Jacobite bloc during the 1745 Jacobite Rising (Dziennik 2021: 179-80 *et passim*). At the same time, popular support for the cause was considerable within Gaeldom (Gillies 1991: 20-1) indicating how successful the various compositions of Jacobite propagandists, including the *brosnachadh*-type songs examined in this sub-section, were. Pittock has shown that in terms of sheer manpower, the '45 was sustained in almost equal parts by Lowlanders and Highlanders (Pittock 2009: 77-8), and we have seen some of the Gaelic Jacobite poets reflect the multi-ethnic composition of the Jacobite forces in their poetry,

speaking of an army comprised of ‘all the proud Gaels... and the Jacobites from the Lowlands and other countries’ (A:9, l. 70-2). The poetry is at the height of its epistemological strength and zeal when inciting Gaelic unity with diction directly derived from the tradition of panegyric poetry, however, and *dùthchas* evidently plays an important role in this. One of the poems examined in the next sub-section attempts to rationalise the Jacobite defeat as a result of the lack of unity among the Gaelic kindreds. There would certainly have also been an element of confusion among those of the tenantry and gentry who recognised the *còir* and *ceartas* in the Jacobite cause, heard their kindred and *ceann-cinnidh* called to arms, and then fail to deliver – or, indeed, support the Hanoverian regime. Nighean Aonghais Òig knew in 1745 that the success of the cause depended on the Jacobite-supporting kindreds’ ability and willingness to unite, transcending any local discord, and standing ‘*an guaillibh a chéile*’ (‘shoulder to shoulder’ and ‘elbow to elbow’, A:8, l. 40, 59). The Keppoch poet’s incitement may have been successful at a local level in 1745, though the political cause was ultimately unsuccessful; however, as the nineteenth-century poetry analysed in chapter nine will demonstrate, the epistemological strength and zeal of Gaelic Jacobite poetry made its grand return some 140 years later during the Gaelic revival of the late nineteenth century, and the words ‘*ri guaillibh a chéile*’ once again echoed from the lips of the people or *tuath* through a political movement which arguably birthed a long and slow revolution of landholding in Scotland.

Other ‘Jacobite’ voices: adaptation and conservative continuity

The section above focused on four examples of *brosnachadh* or incitement-type Jacobite poetry. The *brosnachadh* genre was not an eighteenth-century invention and can be traced at least as far back to 1411 in Scotland, but the Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745 inspired a remarkable output of these poems of ‘military incitement’ (Gillies 2018: 1-2). Indeed, much of this chapter has examined the innovative ways in which poets used the traditional, and possibly archaic at point of composition, conventions of panegyric poetry to bolster popular support for Jacobitism in the *Gàidhealtachd*. The last poem reviewed in that section was A:9, composed by Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair after the defeat at Culloden, the main aim of which was maintaining political momentum through poetry, ‘one of the fires that kept the pot from going off the boil’ (Gillies 1991: 49). The first two poems which we shall look to now were composed by Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre – though the authorship of one of them has been disputed – and both are concerned with the political aftermath of the failure of the ‘45 Rising. Subsequently, we shall turn to two praise poems or

molaidhean by Cameron poets addressed to their clan chief and his immediate family in the context of the '45 Rising; one of these was composed in 1746 and the other in 1753. In the previous section, we observed *dùthchas* being used in ways that transcended the local and encouraged unity of Gaelic kindreds, at times encouraging unity of *Gall* and *Gàidheal* for a common cause, and it is hoped that an analysis of these *molaidhean* will allow us to see whether this broader outlook also made its way into the staunchly conservative medium of the panegyric *moladh*, while an analysis of Donnchadh Bàn's retrospective view of the '45 Rising will show us how one of Gaelic Scotland's most prominent poets came to terms with a post-Jacobite political reality.

As more of Donnchadh Bàn's poetry will be analysed in the following chapter, only a few biographical details about the poet shall be mentioned here. Donnchadh Bàn or 'Fair' Duncan Macintyre was born in 1724 at Druimliaghart in Glenorchy, Argyll-shire; his parents are probably erroneously called 'crofters' by John Lorne Campbell (Campbell, J. 1984: 193) due to the time in which they lived, but were indeed members of the local tenantry and, due to the nearest school being 'fifteen miles away from [their] home', their son Donnchadh Bàn never acquired a formal education (ibid). Unlike all of the poets examined thus far who played an active role in the '45, Macintyre 'fought upon the Hanoverian side', having been hired as a substitute for Archibald Fletcher of Crannach in the Argyll regiment of militia under Campbell command (ibid; Dziennik 2021: 177-8). After the '45, Donnchadh Bàn 'became forester to [the Earl of] Breadalbane' (Campbell, J. 1984: 193) and the Campbells remained his primary poetic patrons (MacLeod 1952: 550-1). Despite this, Donnchadh Bàn was clearly a man of conflicting loyalties – as the two poems analysed below show, Macintyre resonated with the sentiments of *còir*, *ceartas* and the ethnic Gaelic identity expressed in Jacobite poetry (Campbell, J. 1984: 194), but also attempted to reconcile these views with his loyalties towards the Campbells and a belief in the monarch's right to reign, even if he was a Hanoverian.

The first of Donnchadh Bàn's poems under consideration in this section is A:10, titled *Òran Eile air Blàr na h-Eaglaise Brice* in Angus MacLeod's edition of Donnchadh Bàn's poetry as it is apparently one of the poet's two compositions on the Battle of Falkirk (MacLeod 1952: 408-17 and Campbell, J. 1984: 206-17).¹⁰⁸ Despite the title, only the first six stanzas relate to the Battle of Falkirk, especially the rout of '*taobh Rìgh Deòrsa*' ('King George's side', l. 15) by the men of Clan Cameron and Clan Donald, which Donnchadh Bàn compared to '*là Inbhir-Lòchaidh*' (l. 40), a battle fought in 1645 and immortalised in the collective Gaelic consciousness as a spectacular victory of Clan Donald

¹⁰⁸ NB: the references to lines of the poem A:10 follow the numbering in Campbell, J. 1984, that is lines of this individual poem, rather than the line numbers given in MacLeod 1952: 408-17; the footnote below is an exception.

over the Campbells through Iain Lom's propagandist song commemorating the day (MacKenzie 1964: 20-5). Indeed, this mention of Inverlochy, the poet's proclamation '*cha tèid mi tuilleadh gu dìlinn / chuideachadh le Rìgh na Cuigse*' ('never again shall I go forward to the Whiggish King's assistance', Campbell, J. 1984: 198-9, l. 31-2), and the fact that the poem appears to be a retrospective, pro-Jacobite analysis of the events of the '45 – composed some, or even many, years after the Rising – was enough for Angus MacLeod to suggest that Donnchadh Bàn was not its author, since he enjoyed Campbell patronage for so much of his life (MacLeod 1952: 550-1). However, multiple factors seem to point to the contrary. Firstly, MacLeod has no doubts as to the other *Òran do Bhlàr na h-Eaglaise Brice* (MacLeod 1952: 2-7) having been composed by Donnchadh Bàn. In this poem Macintyre recounts his service in the 'force [of] the Whigs' ('*na bha dh' armailt aig a' Chuigse*', l. 2), details the military prowess of Clan Donald (l. 29-32), and finally makes a thorough satire of Gillesbuig of Crannach – a Campbell – and his sword, in retribution for the latter's refusal to pay Donnchadh Bàn for fighting in the Argyll militia in his stead (§7–13). Secondly, a preliminary intertextual comparison of *Òran do Bhlàr na h-Eaglaise Brice* and A:10 shows a linguistic and narrative overlap which also supports Donnchadh Bàn's authorship of both.¹⁰⁹ Lastly, Donnchadh Bàn criticised the 1746 Dress Act on more than one occasion, a theme which features prominently in A:10 and has been called the poet's outpouring of 'bitter disillusionment' with the fact that 'the Highlanders who had come to the aid of the Government [were] in the end treated no better than those who had rebelled against it' by John Lorne Campbell (Campbell, J. 1984: 195). I believe it is therefore entirely plausible that Donnchadh Bàn composed A:10.

There are certainly elements in A:10 which are very similar to the *brosnachadh* poems examined above – all of which were composed by MacDonalds. The non-Gaels or '*luchd Beurla*' who had been on the battlefield with Donnchadh Bàn are said to have retreated '*roimh Chlann Domhnuill*' ('before Clan Donald', l. 45-6); the MacDonalds are described as 'mighty heroes' ('*nam fear móra*', l. 48) but also as the '[progeny]... who had come to win the kingdom for their King and for the right cause' ('*a' phòr ud, thàin' a chomhsachadh na rìoghachd as leth an Rìgh us na còrach*', l. 50-2, emphasis my own). It is understandable how this vocal admission of Clan Donald superiority and the seemingly sudden subscription to Jacobite ideology (c.f. Ní Suaird 2003: 94-5, 123-6; c.f. Gillies 1991: 21, 25), most likely some time after the failure of the '45, would have caused MacLeod to doubt

¹⁰⁹ Both poems refer to the Jacobite forces as 'the rebels' ('*na reubail*' in MacLeod 1952, l. 3 and l. 5859); to the action taking part at the top of the Muir ('*bhàrr at t-Slèibhe*', l. 37 and '*an àird dh'ionnsaigh an t-Slèibhe*', l. 5857); to the British Army being set back by 'not receiving commands' ('*cha d' fhuair sinn facal command*', l. 45 and '*gun robh dìth commanda oirne*', l. 5865); and perhaps most tellingly of all, to 'the English-speakers' as being the first to 'retreat' ('*bha ratreut air luchd na Beurla*', l. 67 and '*ghabh na bh' againn de luchd-Beurla an ratreut roimh Chlann Dhòmhnaill*', l. 5876-7, emphasis my own).

Macintyre's authorship of the poem. Under closer scrutiny, it is not necessarily Clan Donald's military success which the poet finds most worthy of praise in this particular poem, but the ideological and ethnic Gaelic unity represented by the stand of the 'many unflinching hero[es from] between Kintail and Strathloch [who] had put shoulder close to shoulder' (l. 53-6), with the phrase '*an gailleann r'a chéile*' (l. 55) again coming to the fore. This sentiment climaxes in the ninth stanza, with the poet expressing his belief that King George's downfall would have been achieved by the '*Gàidheil ann an Alba*' ('Highlanders in Scotland', l. 66) had the Jacobite army been given its '*cothrom na Féinne*' or 'equal chance in combat' (l. 61) and, most importantly, had the Gaels all been of one mind in the cause. It is in this stanza that Donnchadh Bàn uses the term *dùthchas*, too:

Nam biodh iad uile mar a bhà iad

A' bhliadhna thàinig an armailt;

Nam biodh iad uile r'a chéile,

Gum biodh iad na treun-fhir chalma

Dh'am bu **dùthchas** a bhith cròdha,

Bha chomhnuidh am measg nan Garbh-chrìoch.

[If they had been all of one mind in the year when came the rising; if they had all been together, they, the mighty valiant heroes, who were wonted to be hardy, and were dwelling 'midst the Highlands, A:10, l. 67-72] (Emphasis my own)

The poet appears to be rationalising the failure of the '45 as a result of the lack of complete unity among the kindreds, as well as idealising the results that such unity could bring – that there would not be any might in all of Europe capable of preventing the Gaels from succeeding (l. 61-4, c.f. Gillies 1991: 40-6). The veracity of such sentiment is less pertinent in propagandist poetry; these lines appear rather to attempt the (re)formulation of the identity of '*Gàidheil ann an Alba*' – characterised by their shared masculine, warrior spirit (perhaps the very thing which had been broken post-Culloden) and their territorially- and ethnically-defined habitus as the people who dwell '*am measg nan Garbh-chrìoch*', 'amidst the Highlands'. This appears to be one example of the gradual process of conceptually defining the *Gàidhealtachd* as being located within the *Garbh-chrìochan*, the 'geographical Highlands', by the Gaels themselves, a process which Michael Newton observes taking place in the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries (Newton 2019: 51-2). Since the poem's next five stanzas turn to the various effects of Culloden – the chiefs' loss of lands (l. 77), the disarming of the tenantry (l. 78), the banning of tartan (l. 79-91), the loss of renown (*cliù*), life, and possessions (l. 92-4), loss of joy and spirit (l. 95-6), loss of sovereignty to England (l. 109), loss of

direction and leadership caused by Charles Edward's exile (l. 105-8) – the message seems to be that a unified muster of the Gaels is the only way to prevent these outcomes from becoming the new reality for the *Gàidhealtachd*.

It is impossible to tell with certainty how long after April 1746 A:10 was composed by Macintyre, considering its retrospective tone, but this was clearly some time before Charles Edward Stuart's death in 1788 (§15). Donnchadh Bàn expresses the opinion that many of the '*Clanna Ghàidheil*' (l. 105) remained faithful and ready for the Prince's return, predominantly the kindreds closest to Donnchadh Bàn's Perthshire-Breadalbane *dùthchas*, such as the MacDonalds, Camerons, MacNabs, MacGregors, and the Macintyres themselves. All of this seems quite at odds with the views presented by the poet in A:24, *Òran Do'n Rìgh*, which is Donnchadh Bàn's toast to King George III, and a complete political U-turn compared to the petition for King George to 'go home to Hanover' ('*dhol dhachaidh do Hanòbhar*') in A:10 (l. 111-2). In A:24, Donnchadh Bàn portrays King George as the '*Rìgh as àill leinn*' ('the King we wish for', l. 333) and legitimises him as the rightful ruler over all of Britain with much of the same polemic and rhetoric which had been used by himself in A:10 and other Gaelic Jacobite poets examined above, but for Stuart monarchs:

'S mór an sonas th' anns an rìoghachd

On a chaidh an rìgh seo chrùnadh

Anns an àit a bh' aig a shìnnseachd,

An d' fhuair a shìnnseanair **còir dhùthchais**;

Albainn is Sasainn is Eirinn

Nis a' géilleachdainn do 'n aoinfhear,

Mar nach fhacas iad riamh roimhe

On a chothaicheadh air thùs iad.

[Great is the happiness prevailing in the kingdom, since this king was crowned in the place held by his forebears, where his great-grandsire obtained dynastic rights; Scotland, England and Ireland now to the same man do yield homage, as never before were they seen doing, since first brought into subjection. A:24, l. 341-8] (Emphasis my own)

Gillies believes that A:24 was 'composed in the early 1760s' (Gillies 1991: 51), although the mention of one king ruling Scotland, England and Ireland suggests it may have been composed after the union of the Parliament of Great Britain and the Parliament of Ireland in January 1801, much later on in George III's reign. If the latter is true about A:24, and A:10 was composed only a few years

after the '45, then the stark difference in the poems' outlooks could be explained by A:10 having been composed in Donnchadh Bàn's more idealistic youth, when the poet was influenced by the zeal of Jacobite rhetoric (MacLeod 1952: xxiii). By contrast, A:24 may reflect on the poet's ability to be 'progressive' in his political opinions (Gillies 1991: 51) and showcase the worldview of an older Donnchadh Bàn, who had by that point served in the Breadalbane Fencibles and in the Edinburgh city guard (MacLeod 1952: xvi-xvii), and accepted the Gaels' role within the British Empire's army with pride (l. 357-380). Indeed, there are numerous references to Britain's imperial exploits throughout the poem, and these appear to be praised as the means by which 'law and parliament' are able to deliver 'justice and equity' (*'ceartais... is còrach'*, l. 426) to the 'four quarters of the globe' (l. 421-8) where George has 'territory and subjects' (l. 422). Donnchadh Bàn appears to have taken to supporting George III as the monarch who returned order to the chaotic, divided, post-'45 *Gàidhealtachd*. This support is demonstrated through his use of traditional panegyric diction to legitimise his leadership: George III ensures the top echelons of Scottish society – each duke, earl, *mormhair* and *tighearna* (l. 429-31) – receive '*a h-uile dligheadh as còir dhaibh*' ('all privileges due to them', l. 432). This then trickles down to the '*daoin'-uaisle 's tuath an fhearainn*' ('gentlemen and farming tenants', l. 433) '*luchd-ciùird*' ('craftsmen') and '*duine bochd*' ('poor m[e]n', l. 435-6), a utopia which we have already seen presented in remarkably similar terms in Angus MacDonald's poem examined above (A:7). There is an ancient motif in Gaelic poetry of portraying the soil and waters as extraordinarily fertile when the land is ruled by the rightful, legitimate ruler; this image is used by Donnchadh Bàn for George III in A:24 (l. 437-44), just as it had been by Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair for Charles Edward (Ní Suaird 2003: 98-9; Campbell, J. 1984: 7 and 94-6, l. 21-30). The King has built bridges, roads, and schools in the *Gàidhealtachd* – connecting the Highlands to the rest of the Empire – and has returned '*airm is aodach Gàidhealach*' ('arms and Highland garb') to the people, righting the wrongs of the post-'45 retributions (l. 445-52). Perhaps this was enough for Donnchadh Bàn to accept George III as the rightful ruler. Perhaps it was another precedent altogether – as we have seen above, the king's grandfather, George I, is said to have acquired the *còir dhùthchais* to rule over the three kingdoms (l. 344); since there is a tendency in Gaelic panegyric to collocate *dùthchas* and the subject's grandfather,¹¹⁰ it is not out of the question that the three continuous Hanoverian kings had, in Donnchadh Bàn's view, established a *dùthchas* to the crown. The fact that George III was the first of the Hanoverian monarchs to be physically born in Britain may have further bolstered his legitimacy in the poet's eyes. If nothing else, A:24 and A:10 demonstrate how *dùthchas* and panegyric poetry more generally were used within one poet's lifetime to construct two very different Gaelic identities. One was Jacobite, nationalist, with a socio-geographical locus in the *Garbh-*

¹¹⁰ See chapter six as well as the comments on this collocation in chapter 10, the Conclusion.

chrìochan; the other was Hanoverian, imperial, with a locus that stretched from Scotland, England and Ireland to the ‘four corners of the world’.

The final two poems which we shall examine in this section are both composed by Camerons from Dochanassie in Lochaber – John and Alexander – who were probably related to one another (Campbell, J. 1984: 272). Alexander Cameron’s poem is a *moladh* or praise-poem most likely composed in 1746, *Òran do Dhòmhnull Bàn mac Dhòmhnuill Dhuibh, Tighearna Loch lall* (A:11), and the eponymous ‘fair Donald son of Donald the black’ is the clan chief of the Camerons of Lochiel himself. John Cameron’s poem is *Òran do’n Doctair Chamshron* (A:12), with the eponymous ‘Doctor’ being Dr Archibald Cameron, brother of the very same clan chief addressed in A:11, and it is a lament composed in 1753 after the doctor had been captured by government forces, with the frequent use of the past tense suggesting it may have been composed after his execution on 7 June 1753 (Campbell, J. 1984: 273). The two subjects are, therefore, closely related, but the two points in time at which the poems were composed inspire very different poetic rhetoric.

Alexander Cameron’s A:11 opens with a toast to Lochiel, affectionately referred to by the poet as ‘*mo ghaisgeach*’ (‘my hero’), and the second stanza raises another toast to all the ‘Rebels’ (l. 16). The rebels’ enemies are named as general Hawley (l. 65) but typically only referred to as ‘*na nàimhdean*’ (‘the enemies’, l. 67, 82) or ‘*luchd Beurla*’ (‘English-speakers’, l. 88). From the third stanza onward begins the traditional panegyric *moladh*, listing the chief’s masculine qualities (l. 19-20), his noble and royal blood (l. 21-4), his renowned and valiant ancestors (l. 25-32), his numerous Gaelic kinfolk-*cum*-allies (l. 33-48; c.f. A:6 and A:22 above; MacInnes 2006a: 276-7; c.f. Coira 2012: xi-xii), and his loyal and combative clansmen (l. 49-56). The chief’s military successes at Prestonpans and Falkirk are described in detail and presented as a confirmation of both his legitimacy as leader of the Camerons, and of his *dùthchas*, his ability to match the leadership quality of his famous grandfather, Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel (Campbell, J. 1984: 260-1):

‘S dearbhadh air sin Sliabh a’ Chlamhain

Gun d’ fhuair sibh barrachd an cruadal,

Thug thu an **dùthchas** o d’ sheanair,

B’àrd-cheannard air sluagh é...

[It was shown at [Prestonpans] that though excelledst in valour, thy spirit tookst from thy grandsire who of hosts was commander... A:11, l. 57-60] (emphasis my own)

This ability to inherit one's ancestral qualities as if they were a nearly tangible thing which may be seized and embodied or disregarded is also suggested in the next stanza in the words '*dhuìt cha b'iomrall an cruadal, ghlac thu an dualchas bu chubhaidh*' ('you do not flinch from danger for you have seized your ancestral *dualchas*', l. 69-70). In this context of panegyric praise, *dualchas* and *dùthchas* seem to be almost interchangeable concepts.

John Cameron's A:12 opens with a dream sequence, a motif in Gaelic poetry where the desired state of affairs – the physical presence and reassertion of Dr Archibald Cameron's leadership in his native lands, '*gun robh thus', a Ghill'Easbuig, air tighinn a sheasamh do dhùthcha*' (l. 3-4) – is revealed to be a dream, and is contrasted with the lamentable truth of the poet's waking world: a world in which Archibald is far, far away from his native soil ('*b'fhada, b'fhada o t' ùir thù*', l. 7-8). Like A:11, the poem contains a long, descriptive passage on the subject which uses conventional panegyric images, describing Archibald as an 'unbending apple tree' (l. 15), bold warrior (l. 16-20), descendant of noble ancestors (l. 25-8), handsome youth (l. 33-6), and one who inherited the masculine characteristics of his famed ancestor, Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel ('*seasamh gu fearail mar bu dual dhuìt o d' sheanair*', l. 45-6, c.f. A:11 above). Because Archibald had been arrested on account of committing high treason, the poet seems to be attempting to vindicate him by describing Archibald as favoured by the non-Williamite kings (l. 37-40), loyal to Charles Edward, and guileless (l. 41-4), not unlike the MacLean poets' attempts at vindicating Sir John MacLean (c.f. A:4 and A:20 above).

There is a much stronger focus on locality in A:12 than in A:11. Just after the poet's dream sequence in A:12 where Dr Cameron is described as being 'far, far away from his native soil' ('*b'fhada, b'fhada o t' ùir thù*'), John Cameron states '*b'è do dhùchas Cill-Mhàilidh*' – 'your ancestral home was Kilmallie' (l. 10). We have already seen in the previous chapter that the exile of a clan leader from their territory was contrary to Gaelic cosmology,¹¹¹ and Dr Cameron had escaped to France after Culloden (Campbell, J. 1984: 272), returning to Scotland only twice, the second time in 1753 being when he was captured (ibid: 273). If the brother of Cameron of Lochiel had been executed by the point that A:12 was composed, the impropriety of his physical body being absent from his *dùthchas* and its ancestral burial ground would only have been heightened.¹¹² Perhaps for this exact reason the poem focuses much more on *dùthchas* as Archibald's ancestral place of belonging, rather than the qualities he inherited from his ancestors, even if these are also

¹¹¹ See, for example, A:43; Ó Baoill 2009: 72-85 at §4, 8, 22, 23; Black 2019: 70, l. 192-200.

¹¹² Indeed, Kilmallie has been a traditional burial ground of the Camerons of Lochiel for some time, possibly even the final resting place of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel (c.f. Watson 2019), meaning Archibald would not rest among his most illustrious ancestors.

enumerated (l. 45-6). His lineage is traced not to a legendary progenitor (A:11, l. 27) but to the Braes of Lochaber (A:12, l. 28), and the Camerons' lands are triangulated with place-names: '*o Ghiuthsach nam badan 'us o Lòchaidh nam bradan, o Ghleann-Laoigh 's o Loch Airceig, 's Torra-Chaisteil b'è t'àit' è*' ('from Kingussie of the thickets and Lochy of the salmon, from Glen Loy and Loch Arkaig, Torcastle was thy dwelling', l. 29-32). As in the MacLeans' case,¹¹³ the poet draws attention to the impropriety of the Cameron lands laying plundered and desolate ('*tha do dhùthaich 'na fàsaich*', l. 50) and the people 'oppressed by Mungo [Campbell]', a nephew of Colin Campbell of Glenure who had been made 'factor for the forfeited estates of Ardsheil, Callart, and the part of Lochiel's estates held of the Duke of Gordon' (Campbell, J. 1984: 276). All hope of the Jacobite cause's success, still strong in A:11, has been abandoned by John Cameron; his only remaining wish is for the '*biastan*' ('beasts') who captured Dr Cameron to 'meet destruction' (l. 55) and for Lochiel – in this case John Cameron of Lochiel, a living heir to the chieftaincy – to return from exile '*gu 'àite*', his rightful place.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen *dùthchas* used by Jacobite poets in *brosnachaidhean* or incitement poems, either in reference to kindreds' innate martial capabilities – using 'the classic bardic carrot and stick of fame and shame' (Gillies 1991: 28-9) to recruit support for the Jacobite cause – or when referring to land which could be conquered or re-conquered by the clans who would rise for the Prince. There is an element of duality at play whereby the poets' rhetoric is ethnocentric, invoking Gaelic kindreds in collocation with their traditional lands and progenitors (A:8, A:22) as well as framing the reason of their cause within an ancient conceptual framework of *dùthchas* and *còir* (Ní Suaird 2003: 123 *et passim*); but the same poems simultaneously refer to unity between Gaels and Lowlanders against a common, English enemy, and court a sort of Scottish national sentiment in their references to '*Alba*'. We have seen that the poets' focus on politics of a national scale during the Jacobite Risings did not disrupt the tradition of the panegyric praise-poem or lament, with two Cameron poets using *dùthchas* to either emphasise the legitimacy of a living Lochiel clan chief or to emphasise the illegitimacy of forcing Dr Archibald Cameron into exile from his ancestral home due to his Jacobite leanings, and preventing his burial in this same place, evidently a cosmological transgression. Finally, we have seen how *dùthchas* was used by different poets after the failure of the '45 Rising in attempts to keep the Jacobite spark alive, or, alternatively, as a means of accepting the

¹¹³ See section on '*Dùthchas* as response to crisis' in previous chapter.

Hanoverian monarchs and the Gaels' place in a new, increasingly imperial context (c.f. Findlay 2002: 246).

8. *Dùthchas* c. 1750 – c. 1800. Donnchadh Bàn and Mairearad Ghriogarach: two case studies

This chapter will examine the usage of *dùthchas* in poetry composed in the final fifty years of the eighteenth century, 1750 – 1800. Searching the relevant source texts, as outlined in the Methodology chapter, yielded instances of *dùthchas* in 26 poems dating to this time period; two of these have already been examined in the previous chapter¹¹⁴. While these 26 poems are composed by nine different poets, two of them come to the fore as using the term far more frequently than their contemporaries – these are Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir or ‘Fair’ Duncan Macintyre, and Mairearad Ghriogarach. As the material examined thus far has shown, where a Gaelic poet’s work has benefitted from a decent survival rate and inclusion in early printed collections, it is not unusual to see *dùthchas* appearing in at least one of such a poet’s surviving repertoire – as in the case of Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, to give an example (A:9). We see six poets use the term only once in these fifty years. In Donnchadh Bàn’s case, the term *dùthchas* appears in seven of Macintyre’s poems edited by Angus MacLeod (MacLeod 1952), while Mairearad Ghriogarach used *dùthchas* in twelve of her compositions, making up close to half of this period’s instances. Of the printed Gaelic material catalogued by DASG, I have discerned only one other poet as using the term *dùthchas* more frequently than Mairearad – Iain MacGhriogair, who was also a MacGregor, as well as Mairearad’s contemporary (MacGhriogair 1801).¹¹⁵ The reasons why Mairearad’s work was selected for examination in this thesis and Iain’s was not are detailed in the Methodology chapter; the most pertinent reasons are the innovative nature of Mairearad’s poetry and the need for a more balanced representation of female voices in the heavily male-dominated field of published Gaelic poetry. The exceptional prevalence of *dùthchas* in Donnchadh Bàn and Mairearad Ghriogarach’s poetry means that this chapter will look at these two poets’ works in depth, treating them as contemporary testimony of how *dùthchas* was being used by Gaelic poets in novel ways.

The first part of this chapter will discuss the impact of contextually relevant developments in Gaelic society on Scottish Gaelic poetry during this half-century. Though not all of these will be discussed in detail, these included the growing field of Gaelic publishing (particularly of poetry anthologies), the intellectual impact of the Scottish Enlightenment, the formation of the Highland

¹¹⁴ See A:12 and A:24 in the section on ‘Other Jacobite voices’ in the previous chapter.

¹¹⁵ Fourteen uses of *dùthchas* by MacGhriogair are preserved in this publication.

Societies in London and Edinburgh (1778 and 1784, respectively), the repealing of the post-Culloden ban on wearing Highland dress and the restoration of the Forfeited Estates (1782 and 1784, respectively), and – perhaps most impactful of all – the exponential increase in Gaels involved in the British military, both in terms of the sons of the *daoine uaisle* among the officers, and *tuath* joining the rank and file (Stiùbhart 2021b: 159-60). The second part will give a brief biographical sketch of the two poets’ lives before moving onto the third part which will examine the use of *dùthchas* in their poetry.

The period 1750 – 1800, especially its latter decades, can be described as a literary renaissance of sorts for Scottish Gaelic poetry due to publishing becoming increasingly widespread. Stiùbhart notes Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair’s strong influence on this literary renaissance, both through his lexicographical work – mentioned in the Literature Review and the chapter on the ‘Jacobite poets’ alike – and through the publication of thirty of his poems in the 1751 tome *Ais-Éiridh na Sean Chánoin Albannaich* (‘The Resurrection of the Old Scottish [Gaelic] Language’), a work which intended to ‘rally support in the expectation of a new Jacobite rising’ (Stiùbhart 2021b: 149-50). Other publications of this period which were influential in Gaeldom include James MacPherson’s Ossianic poetry, published between 1760 and 1765; the Scottish Gaelic New Testament published in 1767, translated by the Rev. James Stuart of Killin; and the first publication of Donnchadh Bàn’s work, *Orain Ghaidhealach le Donchadh Mac-an-t-saoir* in 1768 (ibid: 151-4; c.f. Meek 2004). Just over a decade later, in 1780, the Rev. William Shaw’s *Galic and English Dictionary* makes history as the first ‘true’ dictionary of Scottish Gaelic – a work which defines *dùthchas* as ‘the place of one’s birth, an hereditary right’, and also contains definitions of a number of other words in the *dù* family, including ones that do not appear elsewhere (Shaw 1780).¹¹⁶ Stiùbhart suggests that this is emblematic of the ‘emergence of an increasingly assertive cohort of young Gaelic intellectuals intent on re-creating a specifically Scottish Gaelic language and affirming its fundamental place in Scottish national history’ (ibid: 150-1). Perhaps nowhere is it more evident that these assertive Gaelic intellectuals were grappling with the creation of a literary canon which suited an evolving Gaelic identity than in the anthologies of Gaelic poetry which were published from 1776 onwards. Raghannall, son of Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, published *Comh-Chruinneachidh Orannaigh Gaidhealach* (MacDomhnuill 1776), also known as the Eigg collection, where one can find eleven instances of the term *dùthchas*, mostly in poems which we have already examined in the sixth chapter above.¹¹⁷ The material in these

¹¹⁶ The pages in this book are not numbered, hence this format of reference. The *dù*- words which do not appear elsewhere include ‘du’, defined as ‘a land, country’; ‘dual’ as ‘a duty, law’, ‘dualgas’ as ‘hire, wages, duty’, and ‘duthan’ as ‘a nation’.

¹¹⁷ These include A:4, A:6, A:18 and A:21, among others. NB: the term is spelled ‘*dùchas*’ in this publication.

literary collections is predominantly ‘high-status poetry’ – unsurprisingly, considering these anthologies ‘were generally dedicated to a wealthy patron and paid for by gentry subscribers’ (Stiùbhart 2021b: 160). When viewing these poetry collections as ‘vindications of [the *Gàidhealtachd*’s] history and culture’ (Stroh 2017: 22) it is interesting to note the editors’ conscious choice to include so much panegyric poetry – with its strong focus on the ancient history of kindreds, their leaders, and their territories – at a time when the prevailing notion was the ‘integration’ of Gaels into Britain and Empire (ibid: 113), especially if seen as a continuation of the nascent phases of building a proto-national identity which we noted in some of the Jacobite poetry analysed in the previous chapter. Stiùbhart posits that this ‘high-status poetry’ was rapidly losing its relevance in the *Gàidhealtachd* of the latter half of the eighteenth century, with ‘clanship... in terminal decay’ and ‘the notion of reciprocal obligations assumed by chief and tenantry... becoming increasingly obsolete’ (Stiùbhart 2021b: 162; Macinnes 1996: 210-34). Many tacksmen left the *Gàidhealtachd* for North America (Stiùbhart 2021b: 165, 168; Ommer 1986; Chaimbeul 2020: 32-45)¹¹⁸ while the tenantry who stayed behind became ‘an increasingly proletarianized workforce’, with ‘many island estates... being reorganised into extractive plantation economies based on harvesting kelp’ (Stiùbhart 2021b: 165) and the first instances of major, ‘wholesale’ clearances taking place in the *Gàidhealtachd* in this half-century.¹¹⁹

It was not easy for Gaelic poets to take a stand against the authorities instigating these harmful changes upon Gaelic society, since ‘Gaelic poets remained dependent on the forbearance of those possessing real power’ (ibid: 166) and their deeply indoctrinated sense of loyalty to their chiefs challenged their comprehension of contemporary issues. This has meant that poetic critiques which looked past the ‘lowland shepherds and estate factors’ to the ‘landlords enabling them’ (ibid: 166) are relatively rare, though Sorley MacLean suggested that survival bias was also a major issue, stating that ‘so much poetry of [the period of the Clearances] ha[d] been lost’ or was deliberately ‘kept out of collections dedicated to aristocratic patrons’ (MacLean 1985: 51). This led MacLean to believe ‘that one cannot know the reaction of poets between 1750 and 1880’ (ibid), but subsequent work by Meek has uncovered a broad Clearance-era corpus of poetry which refutes this (Meek 1995; Meek 2019). Still, there does appear to be a period of relative dearth of material in the first half of the nineteenth century (MacGregor forthcoming: 2-3), a period which we shall examine in the next chapter. Although the poetic reaction to this early phase of Clearance was not politically cohesive or

¹¹⁸ Badenoch appears to be one region where the tacksman class survived into the eighteenth century, though even there they eventually emigrated or became ‘gentlemen farmers’ – see Taylor 2015: 308-10.

¹¹⁹ One of the earliest poems documenting tenantry being cleared to make room for sheep farms is ‘*A Loch Laomainn nan Lùb*’, composed only a few years after the ‘45 when Walter MacFarlane began clearing the tenantry on his estates – see Newton 1999: 250-3, discussed below.

radical, an indigenous reaction to rapid depopulation and growing inequality may in fact be seen in the poetry of 1750 to 1800. Sìon Innes has pointed out that ‘manuscript 210 [in] the McLagan collection’ contains ‘four poems [which provide] comment on the impact of social, cultural, and economic change on the eighteenth-century Highlands’ (Innes 2021: 234-5). The grouping of these four poems was certainly a conscious decision on Reverend James McLagan’s part: two of these poems mention the *Gàidhealtachd* becoming depopulated (‘*dì-shluagaich[te]*’, Newton 2001: 45) or a desert (‘*fàsach*’, Newton 1999: 246);¹²⁰ two mention a ‘change’ (‘*caochladh*’, *ibid.*, l. 2; ‘*mùthadh*’, *ibid.*: 250, l. 3) coming over the land; they directly verbalise a resistance to the ideology of ‘improvement’ (*ibid.*, l. 7-18)¹²¹ and precociously note the ecological impact of large-scale sheep farms (*ibid.*: 248, l. 17-24); and all four of them point out the greed of the gentry (*ibid.*: 246, l. 7-8 and 25-34; *ibid.*: 250, l. 19-36; *ibid.*: 256, l. 5-12; Newton 2001: 46) as the root cause of these problems. This change in the gentry’s demeanour is identified as the encroachment of ‘*beusa Sagson*’ (‘Saxon customs’, Newton 2001: 46), and one poet states that the *daoine uaisle*’s affluence will cause the ‘bonds of affection hereditarily owed to [their] men’ (‘*an gràdh laiste is dùth dod fhir*’, Newton 1999: 252, l. 33; emphasis my own) to wither, while the *triath* or laird’s spending will take away his family estate (‘*oighreachd do theaghlaich*’, l. 36). Innes has drawn attention to the fact that ‘the nature and impact of luxury was a crucial Scottish Enlightenment debate’ (Innes 2021: 243), and he argues that the university-educated McLagan was not only aware of this debate but actively participated in it, too (*ibid.*: 244). It is natural that political and cultural currents in the *Galldachd* influenced the literary output of the *Gàidhealtachd*,¹²² and that critiques of the Highland gentry’s conspicuous opulence would have been moulded by Enlightenment ideology or by Evangelical moral norms which were not unique to the *Gàidhealtachd*. I would suggest, however, that the poem ‘*Air Fàsachadh na Gàidhealtachd Albannaich*’ (Newton 2001: 41-7) evidences the formation of an epistemological resistance to both Improvement and clearance among some of this period’s poets which worked in tandem with a reconstituted Scottish Gaelic identity. The poem, possibly composed by McLagan himself (Innes 2021: 238), is composed from the vantage point of Ben Nevis, perhaps partially from the perspective of an eagle soaring over the western *Gàidhealtachd*’s toponyms and ecosystems, reminiscent of the sixteenth-century place-poem *Òran na Comhachaig* (Menzies 2012: 38-41).¹²³ This ‘tour of Highland sites known for martial and poetic history’ (Innes 2021: 235) connects kindreds

¹²⁰ Compare this with the title of the poem in Newton 2001, ‘*Air Fàsachadh na Gàidhealtachd Albannaich*’.

¹²¹ An emerging intellectual vein of critiquing the failure of ‘progress’ and ‘modernity’ to better the condition of all of mankind develops during the Enlightenment, and can be seen reaching the *Gàidhealtachd* here and elsewhere. See MacGregor forthcoming: 45; Tully 1993: pp 262-77; Gow 2011: 22-8 *et passim*.

¹²² See, for example, Meek 2009.

¹²³ The idea that *Òran na Comhachaig* embodied *dùthchas* was suggested by Riach (Riach 2020). For an article on the conceptual embodiment of *dùthchas* by ‘vantage point’ poems, see Newton 2009.

with their territories, culture, and ancient progenitors to highlight their indigeneity: '*dùthchas Chlann Domhnaill an ear*' ('the heritage of Clan Donald east') is defined by territory (Keppoch, Glengarry; waterfalls, foliage, red deer) and culture (music, poets, heroes, warriors), all encompassed within their *dùthchas* (Newton 2001: 44; c.f. Stiùbhart 2021b: 158). It is also noteworthy that the poet does not vest this *dùthchas* in an individual chief or progenitor – though these are named in later stanzas – but within the clan as a whole, a step away from the norm of chiefly panegyric poetry. Its most forthright political statement, however, is the line '*dhìthich beusa Sagson sinn*' = 'Saxon ways have destroyed us' (Newton 2001: 46), an answer to the questions asked earlier, '*cò a dhìthich Clann Ghàidheal?*' ('who has destroyed the Gaelic people?'), who has 'silenced the harp and pipe', removed the herdsmen, warriors, and *tuath* (ibid)? The existence of '*beusa Sagson*' – English morals, conducts or demeanours – tautologically suggests the existence of another axiom, '*beusa Ghàidhealach*', a set of behavioural norms and expectation informed by a Gaelic epistemology which, according to the poet, is incompatible with the gentry's profit-driven removal of its own working tenantry. It could be argued that blaming the state of the *Gàidhealtachd* on '*beusa Sagson*' is a deflection of responsibility, but the poet makes it clear in the subsequent line that it is the gentry adopting the '*beusa Sagson*' which is the problem ('*lean gach triath a struidheas mòr*' = 'every chieftain has pursued his own great opulence', ibid). Innes posits that the poet's critique of '*beusa Sagson*' is unlikely to be 'post-Union anti-Englishness', with which I agree, since poets had been invoking customary Gaelic *beusan* in their poetic instructions to chiefs since at least the seventeenth century.¹²⁴ Instead, Innes suggests this discourse on *beusan* may 'reflect anxiety over the impact and cost of an education in England pursued by many sons of Highland nobles'. Stana Nenadic has examined letters from 1759 which voice concerns over the young Sir James MacDonald of Sleat, 8th Baronet, acquiring an education at Eton and Oxford which would cause him to become a 'stranger in his younger days to his own country and countrymen' (Nenadic 2007: 53).¹²⁵ Indeed, I believe there is a strong case for reviewing the effect which culturally and linguistically alienating education had on the *Gàidhealtachd*'s future clan chiefs through a decolonial lens, considering the full effect the detonation of this 'cultural bomb' among the clan chiefs would have had on all of Gaeldom, to paraphrase Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in his pioneering work on colonisation and education (Thiong'o 1986: 3 and 16-20). A decolonial reading of this group of four poems would also be pertinent, considering McLagan's editorial involvement – perhaps even authorship – as this Perthshire clergyman's poetry

¹²⁴ See use of '*beus*' in the poetry of the 'clan poets' in chapter six, especially A:6, A:18 and A:20. The *beusan* expected of chiefs often included a lax approach to *màl* or rent (e.g. A:21, A:42) and kindness towards the tenantry (A:6).

¹²⁵ See also Stewart 1992: 167-8 for similar concerns regarding the young Earl of Argyll in the sixteenth century, mentioned previously in this chapter.

has previously been examined against Homi Bhabha's theory of colonial mimicry (Dziennik and Newton 2018: 16, 18, 24-8).

Nenadic has also written about other contexts in which the *daoine uaisle* acquired a taste for 'conspicuous consumption', namely the gentry's service as officers within the British Army (Nenadic 2006: 78-9, 86, 89-90; c.f. MacIver 2018: 24-5). Indeed, growing military recruitment both in terms of officers and rank-and-file infantry, is one of the defining – and relatively novel – phenomena shaping the socioeconomical landscape of the *Gàidhealtachd* between 1750 and 1800. During this period, Britain was involved in a number of conflicts, such as the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), as well as the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815); many scholars have written on the role of military recruitment among Gaels during this period (MacKillop 2001; MacKillop 2002; Dziennik 2015; McLeod 2013; Smout 1994; Stroh 2017: 134-140; MacIver 2018). The relationship of Gaelic militarism and *dùthchas* during this period is twofold. On one hand, there is the pre-existing, indigenous martial ethos – a central tenet of panegyric poetry, as demonstrated in this thesis already – and the way it was co-opted by agents of the British Empire and the Gaels themselves in creating 'the image of the Highland soldier', an image which Dziennik argues often 'suited the interests of eighteenth-century Gaels' (Dziennik 2015: 218). Indeed, Gaelic poets drew 'on traditional motifs of the warrior hero to sustain a narrative of Gaelic martial triumph and smooth the transition to the celebration of imperial campaigns' (Dziennik and Newton 2018: 13); simultaneously, proponents of Empire entangled indigenous concepts like *dùthchas* with military service, as seen in Gaelic-language recruitment propaganda from the period 1775 – 1783 (Leneman 1982: 171-2).¹²⁶ On the other hand, there is 'the role of land rights and ownership' in relation to Gaels' service in the British military (MacIver 2018: 19), both in terms of land in return for service (MacGregor 2012b: 216-7) as the means by which tenants advanced themselves socially (MacKillop 2001: 158) and in terms of a resurgence of recruitment by coercion which followed 'a feudal pattern' (Stroh 2017: 138-9). That the military was central to the Gaelic experience of this period is evident from the lives and works of the poets we shall be examining. Donnchadh Bàn served in the Breadalbane Fencibles and 'composed panegyrics which expressed gratitude for the economic advantages afforded by his service' (MacIver 2018: 19; c.f. A:26), while Mairearad Ghriogarach's brothers fought in the American Revolutionary War (Byrne 2010: 46; A:55) and she composed a praise song 'to a regimental recruiting party of McAlpines' in her native

¹²⁶ The 'recruitment proclamation' discovered by Leah Leneman appeals to all 'brave' men who wish to 'win honour and renown for the land of their *dùthchas*' ('*onoir is Cliuth a choisneadh do Thir bhar Duchchais*'). This may be one of the earliest instances in the Scottish corpus of *dùthchas* as an attributive noun collocated with the word '*tìr*' and a possessive pronoun – see chapters nine and ten.

Rannoch (Byrne 2010: 49; A:61). We will look at how these – and other – experiences caused the poets to invoke *dùthchas*, but first provide a brief biographical sketch of the two poets' lives in order to contextualise their poetry.

There are both similarities and differences in what we know of Donnchadh Bàn and Mairearad Ghriogarach's lives. Macintyre was born in 1724 'at Druimliaghart in Glenorchy, Argyllshire' (Campbell, J. 1984: 193; MacLeod 1952: xvi). Campbell adds that he had a humble upbringing, and that Macintyre did not obtain an institutional education because his family lived fifteen miles away from the nearest school (Campbell, J. 1984: 193). It is not known what year Mairearad Ghriogarach was born in, but she was married in 1775 (Byrne 2010: 46) and Ruairidh MacIver estimates she was therefore born around 1750 (MacIver 2018: 248-9). Donnchadh Bàn took part in the '45 Rising, both as a combatant on the Hanoverian side at the Battle of Falkirk, as well as intellectually, through his contemporary poetry.¹²⁷ Mairearad was born a generation later than Donnchadh Bàn, probably after the '45, but MacIver calls her 'part of the post-Culloden generation' whose 'worldview was significantly shaped by the traumatic events of this rebellion and its aftermath' (MacIver 2018: 248-9). As a woman, Mairearad was unable to have an active role in any combat during her lifetime; uniquely for a Gaelic poet of her time, she makes 'explicit reflection[s] on her gender' in some of her poems, to which we shall return later on (Byrne 2010: 55-6). The MacGregor poet was the fourth of six children of Para Mòr, 4th of Àrd Làraich, Loch Rannoch-side; Para Mòr died in Mairearad's youth and her mother re-married a Eòghann MacGregor (ibid: 46). It would seem that both her father and step-father belonged to the lesser clan gentry – tacksmen, perhaps – which may have played a part in Mairearad's ability to 'attend school in Perth', though her poems show that in the latter decades of the eighteenth century her step-father Eòghann had been left '*falamh*' or destitute in a brutal wave of clearances affecting the poet's family's *dùthchas* at *Slios Mìn* or the north side of Loch Rannoch (ibid: 46, 51-2). During the poet's stay in Perth she also worked as a domestic servant to a MacGregor family before returning to the *Gàidhealtachd* to be married (ibid: 46). She married Dòmhnall Ruadh Gobha (Red Donald Smith) who was a tenant farmer at Auchenree, just over a mile south-west of Struan, a township which today sits across the A9 from House of Bruar; they had six children, at least two of whom died very young (ibid). It appears that the social and economic status of Mairearad's household fluctuated over the years; her poetry 'boasts of the personal relationship [she] enjoyed with [Colonel Alastair Robertson of Strowan]', at least once taking a seat at his table (ibid: 49), but we also know her husband and step-son Pàdraig 'were periodically driven by falling cattle prices to work in the Lowlands as sedan chair carriers' (ibid:

¹²⁷ See the discussion of A:10 in the previous chapter.

47). This connection with the Lowlands necessitated by contemporary economic conditions also characterises Donnchadh Bàn's life. Though he spent the two decades following Culloden working as a gamekeeper – first for the Earl of Breadalbane and then John MacDonald of Dalness (Campbell, J. 1984: 193) – sheep farms severely impacted his career's viability. 'The duty of providing for [his] wife [Mary] and [their] young family... hastened his departure' from the *Gàidhealtachd*, and in 1767 Macintyre moved to Edinburgh (MacLeod 1952: xxvii). Breadalbane, the poet's former employer, helped Donnchadh Bàn secure a job in the Edinburgh City Guard, which he may have held for the next 26 years (ibid: xxviii), and regardless of his economic standing his work shows an enduring poet-patron relationship with the Campbell gentry of the Breadalbane area. The poet had another spell in the army later on in his life when he served in the Breadalbane Fencibles from 1793 to 1799 (ibid: xxxiv). Though Donnchadh Bàn is known to have been non-literate, his poems were collected and first published during the poet's lifetime, in 1768; even if Mairearad Ghriogarach was literate, her poems were only edited and printed by Duncan (Gow) Macintosh – her step-grandson – in 1831, around a decade after her death.

Differences of gender, geographic origin, and family background aside, our two poets' works reflect the many similarities of their circumstances. There is a continuity of the ancient bardic tradition of maintaining a poet-patron relationship through the composition of praise poems for members of their respective local gentry – unsurprisingly, this is the context in which they use the term *dùthchas* most often, as had been the case for Gaelic poets for centuries. Another prompt for the poets' use of *dùthchas*, as we shall see, is the military. This reflects both the way the Gaels' self-perceived military *dùthchas* was co-opted by the British Army, and many Gaels' wilful participation in this. Finally, there is the concept of exile, which we have seen evolve over the past four chapters, from the thirteenth-century writings of Giolla Brighde Albanach, to the clan poets' concern over their chiefs' voluntary and involuntary exile, to the Jacobite poets' portrayal of Charles Edward's return from exile in 1745, to the period in question which sees some of the earlier examples of poets and their kinsfolk being 'exiled' by Clearance or economic circumstances. Indeed, both Mairearad and Donnchadh Bàn were forced – in different ways – to live away from their native place. Later in this chapter, we shall see how the former poet used *dùthchas* to verbalise this separation, both in a personal capacity and when commenting on the early waves of clearance affecting kinsfolk in her ancestral homeland.

Dùthchas in the poetry of Donnchadh Bàn

In the seventh chapter's second section on 'other Jacobite voices', we touched upon the great identity shift in Donnchadh Bàn's poetry, from the Jacobite sympathies expressed in A:10 to the overt praise of George III and recognition of the monarch's ancestral *còir dùthchais* to the British throne in A:24. This is not the only apparent contradiction in Donnchadh Bàn's poetry and identity; many of Macintyre's works, most notably *Moladh Beinn Dòbhrain*, have been lauded for their 'environmentalism' and for representing 'an indigenous Scottish green consciousness' (Bateman 2009; Hunter 1995: 1-3; Smout 2012: 7-8; MacKenzie 2019; MacLean 1985: 33-4). However, the poet was also deeply intellectually embedded within Empire, with Stiùbhart calling Macintyre's 'allegiance to the established order... incontrovertible', as evidenced by his praise poetry which sided with the Hanoverian militia; Colin Campbell of Glenure, government-appointed factor on the Stewarts' forfeited lands in Appin; and the Hanoverian monarchs (Stiùbhart 2021b: 155; c.f. A:24, A:25, A:77 and A:28). On the other hand, Stiùbhart concedes that Donnchadh Bàn's poetry also displays 'a growing anxiety about the future of the people of the Gàidhealtachd under a new commercial dispensation' (Stiùbhart 2021b: 155). Bateman has highlighted the way in which Donnchadh Bàn's poetry portrays 'man and nature [as] one and the same' (Bateman 2009: 124). Gillies has suggested that Macintyre's nature poetry portrays 'flora and fauna, and especially the deer and the men who hunt the deer... [as] part of a continuum – an ecological system – sustained by and on the mountain' (Gillies 1977: 45), and that this is a subtle critique of the Gàidhealtachd being cleared of its people. Similarly to the poetic works gathered by McLagan in his MS 210, in '*Òran nam Balgairean*' Donnchadh Bàn notices the un-natural '*caochladh*' or 'change' of all the 'prevailing customs' of the Gàidhealtachd (MacLeod 1952: 346, l. 5035-6), the landscape now devoid of people and filled with sheep (ibid, l. 5023-34; c.f. Bateman 2009: 127).¹²⁸ The word '*caochladh*' is also found in the poet's final farewell to his beloved *Beinn Dòbhrain* in '*Cead Deireannach nam Beann*', where an aged Donnchadh Bàn re-visits the haunts of his youth and finds the mountain which he believed was immutable changed: its ecosystem has been destroyed, the people are gone, and the hill is '*fo chaoraibh*', a desolate sheep-run (ibid: 390, l. 5576-92). There is ample evidence of Macintyre having an acute sense of his own *dùthchas*: 'he speaks of Gleann Urchaidh as the place where he belongs and should be buried... [and] sees it as wrong that a man has to leave the place inhabited by his forebears' (Bateman and Purser 2020: 421; MacLeod 1952: 160, l. 2214-21), not to mention his acute awareness of the disturbed ecological balance on *Beinn Dòbhrain*. He is unable to verbalise this in his

¹²⁸ See the poems commenting on early Clearance and agricultural 'improvement' in the first section of this chapter.

poetry, however: unlike his contemporary Mairearad Ghriogarach, Donnchadh Bàn does not use personal possessive pronouns when talking about *dùthchas* – instead, the term is abstracted and externalised, and often used in conjunction with imperial rhetoric.

Title	Date of composition	Appendix code
[Òran Eile air] Blàr na h-Eaglaise Brice	1746 (<i>ca.</i>)	A:10
Òran do Mhormhair Ghlinn Urchaidh	1746 – 1752 (<i>ca.</i>)	A:25
Òran do Iain Caimbeul a’ Bhanca	1761 – 1768 (<i>ca.</i>)	A:77
Òran Iain Faochag	1768	A:28
Òran do Reisimeid Earra-Ghàidheal	1778 – 1783	A:26
Rann do’n Ghàidhlig ’s do’n Phìob-Mhòir, ’sa Bhliadhna 1781	1781	A:27
Òran do’n Rìgh	1760 – 1801 (<i>circa</i>)	A:24

Table 3: Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre’s poems containing instances of *dùthchas*

The most explicit example of colonial rhetoric in Donnchadh Bàn’s poetry is in A:24, which addresses King George III’s ‘territory and subjects’ in all ‘four quarters of the globe’ (MacLeod 1952: 30, l. 421-8).¹²⁹ However, there are arguably also examples of ‘colonial mimicry’ in two of Donnchadh Bàn’s praise-poems addressed to members of his local Campbell gentry and composed before he emigrated to Edinburgh. What is meant by ‘colonial mimicry’ is the way Donnchadh Bàn portrays these Campbells as playing the role of what Homi Bhabha called ‘mimic men’, a class of colonial subjects which, paraphrasing Bhabha, is ‘[Gaelic] in blood... but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect’ and was raised through ‘English schools’ (Bhabha 1997: 154). The first of these, *Òran do Mhormhair Ghlinn Urchaidh* (A:25), was composed in or before 1752 and is addressed to John Campbell (1696–1782), ‘the Lord Glenorchy who became the third Earl of Breadalbane’ who, at that time, resided at Taymouth (ibid: 436). The poem is replete with conventional panegyric praise and calls Campbell ‘*cruadalach fearail*’ (‘intrepid and manly’) in times of conflict, a trait inherited from his grandfather (‘*mar bu dual duit o d’ sheanair*’), John Campbell (d. 1717) who engaged the Sinclairs in the Battle of Altìmarlach in a bid to win the Earldom of Caithness (ibid: 34, l. 486-91). Multiple stanzas celebrate the addressee’s excellence as a military leader and ability to gather a

¹²⁹ See also the discussion of A:24 in the ‘Other Jacobite voices’ section of the previous chapter.

strong Campbell host, should the need arise (l. 509-16), and his renown as a politician and public figure (l. 557-72), with the word *dùthchas* appearing in the phrase

Bu rìomhach do dhiùtaidh,

Bhith càradh a' chrùin

Air an rìgh 'g a bheil **dùthchas** an àite...

[Thine was the magnificent office of placing the crown on the king, who had right of inheritance there... A:25, l. 561-4] (Emphasis my own)

The poet does not even celebrate Campbell's *dùthchas* directly – Campbell's prestige is derived from his association with the king who has a *dùthchas* or hereditary right to his holdings. Donnchadh Bàn only sees the positive aspects of the honours bestowed upon John Campbell, and seems unconcerned about the fact that Lord Glenorchy 'amply displays Lowland style' (*'fasan Gallda gu leòr ort'*, l. 537) or that the 'courtier' had been educated in England (*'fhuair iùl ann an Sasainn'*, l. 567) – in fact, he celebrates these as positive attributes. On one hand, studying at Christ's College, Oxford from the age of fourteen would almost certainly have alienated John Campbell from his tenantry (ibid: 435); on the other hand, during John Campbell's time at Oxford the future Earl of Breadalbane apparently made a conscious effort to keep up his Gaelic language skills by speaking it with a fellow student who was a MacDonald 'Gentleman' (MacGregor forthcoming: 23),¹³⁰ which likely would have made it easier for Macintyre to relate to Campbell. Gaelic-speaking ability aside, the trajectory which John Campbell and other members of the Gaelic gentry were on is clear: an increasingly deep embeddedness in empire, combined with a simultaneous shift away from the 'grounded normativity' of their *dùthchas*, understood as both their native place and the expectations held of men of his status within the indigenous social structure of that place.

Indeed, in both A:25 and A:77 – *Òran do Iain Caimbeul a' Bhanca*, another praise poem to a different member of the Glenorchy Campbell gentry – there is a glaring lack of references to patronage of the arts or paternalistic kindness towards the tenantry, two of the most common expressions of Gaeldom's 'social contract' between chief and poet which the latter could use to influence the behaviour of the local landowners, as demonstrated in the analysis of the 'clan poets' poetry in chapter six. It is worth noting that in the decade between 1751 and 1761, Donnchadh Bàn did compose three songs addressed to Campbell *daoine uaisle* which praise their selfless and charitable treatment of the tenantry but make no reference to *dùthchas*.¹³¹ By way of comparison,

¹³⁰ See also Graham-Campbell 1978: 9.

¹³¹ C.f. MacLeod 1952: 62, l. 909-16; ibid: 74-6, l. 1109-24; ibid: 82, l. 1221-36.

Mairearad Ghriogarach composed at least three poems that invoke the *dùthchas* of her local *daoine uaisle*, each of which also contains a stanza about the positive behaviour expected of the *daoine uaisle* towards their tenantry.¹³² In the 1760s, the Kintail poet Iain mac Mhurchaidh (anglicised as John MacRae) also composed a *moladh* for his local landlord and erstwhile friend, Roderick MacKenzie of Fairburn, which praises MacKenzie as having a hereditary inclination toward the gentlemanly pastime of hunting (*'bu dùthchas dhut bhod shinnsireachd / bhith siubhal bheann is fhrìtheannan'*, A:70) but also emphasises the behaviour expected of Fairburn towards his *tuatha* – not forsaking (*'na tràig'*) the renown (*'cliù'*) of his father in this regard (Chaimbeul 2020: 156-8, l. 365-72 and 381-4), the exact same phrasing we have seen used by poets dispensing 'active instruction' to their chief.¹³³ By the 1770s, when rents were being racked up and relationships between the *daoine uaisle* and the *tuatha* soured in Kintail, Iain mac Mhurchaidh had no qualms about naming the landlords or *'uachdaranan'* as the source of the peoples' problems.¹³⁴ Mairearad Ghriogarach's work seems less explicit on this subject, though her emotive reaction to hearing the news of clearance and unrest in her native *Slios Mìn*, north Loch Rannoch-side, does point the finger at the *'tighearn' òig* or 'young laird' as causing her kinspeople's oppression (MacIntoisich 1831: 20; Byrne 2010: 51-2). A major difference between Donnchadh Bàn on the one hand, and Iain mac Mhurchaidh and Mairearad Ghriogarach on the other, is Donnchadh Bàn's social standing: the latter two were born into tacksmen's families and enjoyed a degree of familiarity with the local *daoine uaisle* which Macintyre probably never did. I propose that an even more pertinent factor influencing Donnchadh Bàn's poetry in this respect was a fundamental confusion caused by the unravelling of his own 'grounded normativity' across Macintyre's lifespan. This confusion is evident in the two poems we examined in the previous chapter where ancient concepts relating to legitimacy like *dùthchas* and *còir* are applied to both a Jacobite and Whig king (A:10 and A:24); in the 'colonial mimicry' of his *molaidhean* for the Campbell gentry (A:25 and A:77); in his composition of poetry 'for the London Highland Society... about those objects by which Lowland culture defined Gaelic culture – the pipes, whisky, Highland dress' (Bateman 2009: 123-4; A:27 discussed below); and in his nature poetry which documents the adverse social and environmental changes in his native place, yet is unable to point to the root cause of the change or *caochladh*. Speaking on the experience of colonised peoples, John Mohawk has stated that 'colonialism is the process by which we are systematically confused' (Mohawk 1991: 48). With this in mind, it appears that the changes Macintyre witnessed in his life – the commercialisation of social relationships in eighteenth-century Breadalbane leading to early Clearance, the turmoil of the '45 Rising and its consequences, and the long process of his own

¹³² See A:52, A:58 and A:63.

¹³³ See, for example, the discussion of Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh's A:6 above.

¹³⁴ See Chaimbeul 2020: 214, l. 711-18; *ibid*: 218-20, l. 733-52; *ibid*: 224, l. 775-82; *ibid*: 230, l. 805-12.

assimilation into Lowland society in the second half of his life – all systematically confused Donnchadh Bàn. His MacRae and MacGregor contemporaries openly bequeathed *dùthchas* upon themselves or the tenantry, and used the term as leverage with their local gentry, but Donnchadh Bàn was unable to do so.

It is evident that Donnchadh Bàn saw *dùthchas* as connected to one's social standing; one of the poet's most scathing satires, *Òran Iain Faochag* (A:28), likely composed soon after Macintyre had moved to Edinburgh, viciously attacks John Wilkes, a radical English journalist and politician. It is unclear what Donnchadh Bàn found *most* contemptible about 'Iain Faochag' – his critiques of the 3rd Earl of Bute and George III in *The Northern Briton*, his raucous poetry, or his running for Parliament while being outlawed – but Macintyre's satire of Wilkes strongly focuses on the radical journalist's heritage. A radical, after all, posed a threat to the natural order of society, which clashed with Donnchadh Bàn's highly conservative personality and worldview. Macintyre used *dùthchas* when speaking of Wilkes' negative attributes, much as Iain Lom had when attacking the orchestrators of the Keppoch Murders (A:14, A:15). Thus Donnchadh Bàn is unsurprised by Wilkes' dirty nature, since he 'cleaved to the habits of the strumpets from whom he came' ('*on a lean thu ris an dùthchas / bh'aig na sgiùrsairean o'n tàin' thu*, A:28), his family origins were 'penury and poverty' ('*air a' chrìne 's air a' bhochdainn*', *ibid*), and the poet wishes he would have stuck to his father's profession, 'as a brewer boiling cauldrons' ('*s bochd nach d' fhan thu aig do dhùthchas / ad bhriùthair a' bruith nam poitean*', *ibid*). Donnchadh Bàn states that nobody should believe Wilkes' rhetoric, since he is a 'man without land or patrimony, without property, title, money or morals' ('*duine gun fhearann gun oighreachd / gun nì stoidhle gun airgead, gun bheus...*', *ibid*); Macintyre's image of a destitute Wilkes is surprising, considering the politician was 'the son of a wealthy brewer who owned much property [and] received a good education privately and in the University of Leyden' (MacLeod 1952: 546). MacLeod believes that Donnchadh Bàn would have witnessed effigies of John Wilkes being burnt in Edinburgh at 'the annual festival of drinking the King's health', that is the King's Birthday celebrations, as the 'City Guard were on duty [at this occasion] and suffered much indignity at the hands of the rabble' (*ibid*). Macintyre's convictions regarding the monarchy, law and order appear to be strengthened upon the poet's removal from the *Gàidhealtachd* and the confusion caused by the *caochladh* in the places he once believed to be immutable, like Coire a' Cheathaich and Beinn Dóbhrein.¹³⁵ This, in turn, may be linked to the affection the poet appears to have had for the Army.

Indeed, the final two of Donnchadh's poems in which *dùthchas* appears are *Òran do Reisimeid Earra-Ghàidheal* ('A Song to the Argyll Regiment', A:26) and *Rann do'n Ghàidhlig 's do'n*

¹³⁵ C.f. MacLeod 1952: 164, l. 2300-1; *ibid*: 174-83; *ibid*: 390, l. 5576-91.

Phìob-Mhòir, 'sa Bhliadhna 1781 ('Ode to Gaelic and the Great Pipe in the Year 1781', A:27). Both instances are steeped in the martial imagery of 'the Highland soldier', clearly to the poet's own liking (c.f. Dziennik 2015: 218). A:26 is the earlier of the two, composed in 1778 or shortly thereafter (certainly before 1783), when the 'Argyle or Western Fencible Regiment' had been raised by Lord Frederick Campbell, son of the Duke of Argyll (MacLeod 1952: 511). The poet appears to address the Regiment which has been gathered by Campbell in Edinburgh and praises them in a variety of ways across nine stanzas. He states of these men, whom he knew well because they were recruited from his native area ('*on a b' aithne dhomh o thùs sibh*'), that 'however hard a [position upon the battlefield they] chance to hold, 'tis not [their] nature to retreat a step' ('*air chruas an àit an tachair sibh, cha cheum air ais ur dùthchas*', A:26). Although the link of common geographic origin and descent is present in the poet's words, *dùthchas* ultimately only relates to their innate capacity as warriors. Indeed, there is a sense in much of the poetry composed in the second half of Donnchadh Bàn's life that one of the only ways that Gaelic culture may be expressed is through military service:¹³⁶ even his near-annual composition in praise of 'Gaelic and the Great Pipe', of which A:27 is an example, proclaims that the military encampment with its marching, virile men is the natural setting of the bagpipe ('the pipe... that would win honour in the camp, leading on virile warriors... the charming, lively, martial tune had its natural setting there' = '*[a' phìob] a bhuidhneadh cliù 'sa' champ, air thoiseach nan laoch ùra... a' chaismeachd ghasda shùnnnach, bu dùthchas di bhith ann*', A:27). It is possible that these lines appealed to Macintyre's patrons in the London Highland Society for different reasons than they did to the poet; Donnchadh Bàn may have seen the Gaels' increasing prominence in the British Army as part of the long process of shaking off 'those tight fetters' placed upon them through all the restrictive Acts passed after Culloden, and the Gaels finally 'raising up their heads' once these were repealed (ibid: 238-42, esp. l. 3556-63). In any case, there is ample evidence that Donnchadh Bàn believed that the aspect of *dùthchas* relating to hereditary right to land was vested in the *daoine uaisle*; his verses on the Restoration of the Forfeited Estates exemplify the belief that once the heirs regained 'the lands of which they were dispossessed', 'no farmer would be in distress' ('*cha bhi tuathanach 'na éigin*'),¹³⁷ a belief also championed by the Jacobite poet Angus MacDonald some forty years prior.¹³⁸

It appears that Donnchadh Bàn yearned to be in the *Gàidhealtachd* while he lived in Edinburgh – his '*Òran Dùthcha*' is an exemplary 'song of exile',¹³⁹ a genre which, as we shall see, gained traction in Gaelic poetry composed from the late eighteenth century onwards, reflecting the

¹³⁶ C.f. MacLeod 1952: 238-42; ibid: 254-63; ibid: 282-4; ibid: 292-4; ibid: 296-8; ibid: 374-6; ibid: 382-4.

¹³⁷ C.f. MacLeod 1952: 244-52 and 294, l. 4292-4299.

¹³⁸ See the discussion of A:7 in the section on 'Poetry of incitement' in chapter seven above.

¹³⁹ C.f. MacLeod 1952: 230-2.

experience of so many other Gaels at the time. It is true that Macintyre composed some of the finest nature poetry in Gaelic, and it is possible that, as Gillies has argued, the poet covertly counted humans among ‘the creatures... of every kind indigenous [to Coire Cheathaich]’ (*‘n h-uile seòrsa bu chòir bhith ann’* (ibid: 170, l. 2382-3; c.f. Gillies 1977). Unfortunately, Donnchadh Bàn’s belief that the return of ‘one of Patrick’s line’ to Coire Cheathaich would restore its human and more-than-human ecological balance (ibid: 180, l. 2550-61) is proved to be naive, as outwith the confines of the Army where aspects of the old Gaelic martial ethos may have endured, the customary *beusan* which had kept gamekeepers like him in employment were rapidly being replaced by the purely economic relationships described in Iain mac Mhurchaidh’s poetry after 1770.¹⁴⁰ Bateman believes that Donnchadh Bàn’s ‘move... from a kin-based to a money-based society’ had the poet witness ‘a greater contrast than most of us’ within his lifetime (Bateman and Purser 2020: 421). This contrast may have generated a deep confusion regarding the root cause of the unwelcome *caochladh* in his native place: when the Hanoverian monarch had been widely accepted, the wearing of the plaid no longer outlawed, the Forfeited Estates returned to their rightful heirs, and Gaels no longer perceived as rebels, the wheel of fortune was supposed to turn in his people’s favour (*‘tha gach car tha tighinn mun cuairt dhaibh*, MacLeod 1952: 294, l. 4292). The poet’s compositions were unable to answer the question as to why these expectations never materialised, especially for the *Gàidhealtachd*’s tenantry.

¹⁴⁰ See Chaimbeul 2020: 214, l. 711-18; ibid: 218-20, l. 733-52; ibid: 224, l. 775-82; ibid: 230, l. 805-12

Dùthchas in the poetry of Mairearad Ghriogarach

In the introduction to this chapter on *dùthchas* in poetry composed between 1750 – 1800 we briefly examined the impact that the nascent field of publishing Gaelic poetry anthologies had on the language and the lives of poets themselves. To an extent, this fledgling literary canon welcomed the contributions of certain female poets – especially ‘gifted female members of the clan élite’ (Byrne 2010: 41) like Mairghread nighean Lachlainn or Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh, whose work we have examined in chapter six.¹⁴¹ The first published collection of Gaelic poems composed solely by a female poet, Maraiead Chamshron of Glenorchy’s *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach* (1785), is made up almost solely of panegyric poems, particularly eulogies, for the *daoine uaisle*. It would seem that, at least in terms of the material which was seen as appropriate for publication, female Gaelic poets were thematically constrained to mainly composing about prominent male clan members and religion in this period.¹⁴² However, even the esteemed clan poets who happened to be female had a ‘paradoxical “threshold” status’ in Gaelic society, as Colm Ó Baoill has put it, always occupying a liminal space which was ‘neither out nor in’, constantly teetering between being respectfully revered and scornfully stigmatised (Ó Baoill 2004: 136-8; Byrne 2010: 41). Although Mairearad Ghriogarach’s poetry was published some 45 years after Chamshron’s literary debut, the barriers faced by female poets seem to have been largely unchanged – the book containing Mairearad’s poetry, *Co-chruinneach de dh’Òrain Thaghte Ghaealach nach robh riamh ann an clo-buala* (1831), rather untruthfully states its author as ‘Donncha MacIntoisich’, Mairearead’s step-grandson. The book contains 74 poems, 34 of which were composed by Mairearad Ghriogarach, ‘by far the largest individual contribution to [Donncha’s] collection, and the most prolific surviving corpus by a woman poet before Mairi Mhòr’s collected songs, first published in 1891’ (Byrne 2010: 43). Perhaps because Mairearad’s poetry was published posthumously, or because the editor was her relative who had access to her original manuscripts written at different stages of Mairearad’s life, or because time had moved on and it became more acceptable for women’s printed poetry to reflect their full thematic range and oeuvre, the corpus of her poetry is highly varied. It contains several affectionate personal compositions about the poet’s family,¹⁴³ her experience as a schoolgirl and her first love, domestic animals, nostalgia for the shieling of her youth, as well as traditional panegyric for the local *daoine uaisle*. The thematic breadth of this corpus means that the range of contexts in which Mairearad Ghriogarach used the term *dùthchas* is also broader than her contemporaries: out of 12 poems in

¹⁴¹ This includes the Eigg Collection, i.e. MacDomhnuill 1776.

¹⁴² For more information on the latter, see MacLeod Hill 2016.

¹⁴³ This includes her stepfather, brothers, husband, step-son, sister, daughter, sister-in-law, grandfather, and foster-daughter – see Byrne 2010: 53

which the term is used, half address the local gentry and half address Mairearad's family, their ancestral lands, or their traditional shieling site. Unlike Donnchadh Bàn, the poet often uses personal possessive pronouns in conjunction with *dùthchas*. Also unlike Donnchadh Bàn, Mairearad appears to have remained rooted in her native culture's 'grounded normativity' despite also experiencing the 'confusion of colonialism' and witnessing the start of the Clearances in her ancestral home.

Title	Date of composition	Appendix code
Òran a Rinn Mairearad Ghriogarach Nuair a Phòs i	1775	A:60
Òran [eile] le Mairearad Ghriogarach do a Bràthairean	1775 – 1783 (during American Revolutionary War)	A:55
Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Mhisreachan Mhic Ghlaisain ann an Srath Ghruaidh	1775 (<i>post</i>)	A:58
Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Chòirneil Alasdair Robastan, Tighearna Shruain, is e gu tinn anns an fhiabhras	1782	A:52
Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Chòrnail Alastair Robastan, Tighearna Shruthain	1784	A:59
Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Leanabh Altrum a bha aice	1785 (<i>ca.</i>)	A:57
Òran do'n Àirigh	1790 (<i>ca.</i> , could be as early as 1775)	A:54
Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach air an Àirigh	1790 (<i>ca.</i>)	A:56
Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Thuath an t-Shlios Mhìn	1790 – 1800 (<i>ca.</i>)	A:53
Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach Nuair a Chunnaic i Pairtidh do Reiseamaid Chlann Ailpinn 'Recruiteadh air Fèill Ceann Loch Rainneach	1795	A:61
Òran le Mairearadh Ghriogarach do Chaluim Stiùbhart am Blàr dhan co-ainm Calum Athalach	1800?	A:63
Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do na Chnuimh Fhiacail 's do dh'Iain Òg Mac-an-Eildear	1800 – 1810? (<i>ca.</i>)	A:62

Table 4: Mairearad Ghriogarach's poems containing instances of *dùthchas*

Around half of the poems in which Mairearad Ghriogarach used the term *dùthchas* are addressed to *daoine uaisle*, which is not unusual for a Gaelic poet of the eighteenth century. What is more unusual is that only one of these addresses to clan gentry sees *dùthchas* explicitly referring to that individual's hereditary qualities (*Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Chòrnail Alastair Robastan, Tighearna Shruthain*, A:59; it was Colonel Alasdair Robertson's *dùthchas* and *dualchas* to be lustrous), while five refer to the physical place associated with the person's kindred or their hereditary right to it. Indeed, whether by virtue of her MacGregor identity,¹⁴⁴ the possibly uncertain footing her own family had in relation to their rights to Àrd Làraich, or the social turmoil caused by the Act of Forfeiture which the poet witnessed in her youth, the poet seems to have been particularly sensitive and perceptive to others' relationship with their physical *dùthchas*. Colonel Alasdair Robertson was the local landowner of Glen Errachty where Mairearad dwelt after marriage; Robertson's *dùthchas* included *Slios Garbh*, south Loch Rannoch-side, part of the 'Strowan estate' which had been annexed after the '45 (Leslie 1756). While it was annexed, Strowan appears to have been a hotbed of resistance, both at the level of tenants (Desportes 2023: 164, 171, 199) and proprietors (ibid: 78). In two poems composed both before and after the Restoration of Forfeited Estates, Mairearad refers to Alasdair Robertson's ancestral *dùthchas* in *Carie* (A:52; A:59), and perceives the lands restored to their heirs in 1784 as a return to the natural order of things and a 'turn of the wheel' of fate (*'...fhuair gach oighre am fearann / nis o thionndaidh a chuibhle'*, A:59). Other *daoine uaisle* are also referred to in relation to their *dùthchas*: Sir John MacGregor Murray, 1st Baronet, and his grandfather Iain Òg MacGregor's *dùthchas* at Lochearnhead (A:61); Iain Òg mac-an-Eildeir and his family's *dùthchas* in the 'lag' or hollow of Struan (A:62); and Calum 'Athallach' Stiùbhart, who Mairearad says had been denied the vast *dùthchas* of his two grandfathers due to their support of the Prince during the '45 (A:63).¹⁴⁵ Where the MacGregor poet's contemporaries – Donnchadh Bàn, Iain mac Mhurchaidh, John MacCodrum¹⁴⁶ or Uilleam Ros¹⁴⁷ – use *dùthchas* to refer to the clan gentry's hereditary qualities, she primarily uses the term to connect the *daoine uaisle* to place, even if the claim was by customary, hereditary connection rather than legal right.¹⁴⁸ This may well reflect the reality of late eighteenth century Perthshire and Badenoch, where many *daoine*

¹⁴⁴ See the latter eight stanzas of A:58 for Mairearad recounting the history of the MacGregors' historical lands of which they had been dispossessed at different points in time, as well as their hereditary allies.

¹⁴⁵ Because Mairearad Ghriogarach's work has received very limited editorial attention it has not been possible to identify all of the persons addressed in her poetry. It is hoped that Michel Byrne's forthcoming new edition of Mairearad's poetry will assist this process in the future.

¹⁴⁶ See A:65.

¹⁴⁷ See A:50.

¹⁴⁸ See the interplay between *dùthchas* and *tighearnas* in the 1560 Treaty confirmation between Argyll and O'Donnell, as well as other mentions of *dùthchas* as a claim to land in the chapter on the 'Earliest Usage' of *dùthchas* above.

uaisle had become alienated from their ancestral patrimonies (Taylor 2015: 26): another of Mairearad's contemporaries, Lachlann MacPherson, in an elegy to his late chief Eòghann 'Cluny' MacPherson, states '*am fear a dh'fhàg an dùthaich seo... bu dùthchasach air Cluainidh e*' ('the man who left this country... had hereditary right to Cluny'), a proclamation which both recapitulates MacPherson's right to estates which had been seized from him due to his support for the Jacobite cause, and implicitly grieves his death abroad, far from his people's burial ground (A:23).¹⁴⁹

The other half of poems in which Mairearad Ghriogarach uses the term *dùthchas* are personal to an exceptional degree, especially when compared with her contemporaries. While several personal songs composed by Donnchadh Bàn do survive,¹⁵⁰ these do not contain the term in question. The MacGregor poet, by contrast, appears compelled to invoke her own *dùthchas* in her compositions in a way which seems to transcend many societal norms, particularly the belief that women and clergymen have no *dùthchas* – the Gaelic proverb '*cha bhi dùthchas aig mnaoi no aig sagart*' was first circulated in print during Mairearad Ghriogarach's lifetime by a fellow Gael from Perthshire, Donald Macintosh (Macintosh 1785: 15; c.f. Dziadowiec 2022a). The concept that 'women and priests are natives no where', as Donald had himself translated it into English, would have no doubt been familiar to Mairearad: despite the evident depth of feeling she had for her ancestral lands in the *Slios Mìn*, contemporary societal expectations necessitated her removal to Aucheenree, the farm tenanted by her husband, Dòmhnall Ruadh Gobha. The poet's three explicit references to lands in and around *Slios Mìn* as '*mo dhùthchas*'¹⁵¹ are, therefore, acts of resistance just by being uttered; their utterance in the form of poetry is an even starker act of resistance, since in A:60 Mairearad declares that her gift of poesy is an inheritance she got from her grandfather ('*thug mi an dùthchas 'ud à m' sheanair, on s' ann rium a lean e*').¹⁵² As far as my research has been able to discern, the next surviving instance of a female Gaelic poet uttering the phrase *mo dhùthchas* is Màiri Mhòr in the poem '*Òran do Dhail na Cluaidh*',¹⁵³ about a century later. As Byrne noted, Mairearad Ghriogarach was also open in her poetry about the way her gender constrained her ability to sail across the ocean to see her brothers Iain and Dòmhnall who were in America, fighting 'for King George' in the Revolutionary War ('*On thachair dhomh bhith 'm bhoireannach, chan urra mi seo a dhèanamh, 's fheudar dhomh tre bhanalas bhith fanachd ann am rìoghachd*', Byrne 2010: 55-7;

¹⁴⁹ See the discussion of A:12 in the section on 'Other Jacobite voices' in the previous chapter; the poem expresses the same sentiment for the late Dr. Archibald Cameron, also a staunch Jacobite supporter.

¹⁵⁰ These include several love poems and a song to his foster-daughter, as well as his less formal satires, waulking songs, hunting songs, and drinking songs, see MacLeod 1952: 86-159 and 300-25.

¹⁵¹ These appear in A:53, A:54 and A:56.

¹⁵² Michel Byrne suggests this may have been Mairearad's maternal grandfather, Dòmhnall Mac Iain Mhic Mhaol-Chaluim or 'Donald MacGregor', some of whose poems were collected by Rev. James McLagan. See Byrne 2010: 53.

¹⁵³ See the discussion of A:31 in the next chapter.

MacIntoisich 1831: 14). This separation was obviously painful to Mairearad, who expressed her desire to be reunited with her siblings ‘in the *dùthchas* of our grandfather / in Slios Mìn by Loch Rannoch / my darling land’ (*‘ann an dùthchas nar seanathar / an Slios Mìn Loch Rainneach, / am fearann-sa m’ eudail’*, A:55). Considering her brothers were abroad at war, it is possible the MacGregor poet was concerned by the possibility of her brothers dying there, and therefore being buried outwith their family’s customary burial place. Indeed, this seems to have been a matter of concern for Mairearad personally, as she lived miles away from the *dùthchas* where she may have wished to be interred, but as a mother felt she had to be buried in Struan where some of her children had died young and been buried (*‘ged tha mi à m’ dhùthchas, teann air Struain / fad o’n dùthaich ‘sa bheil mi eòlach / cuim nach dùiriginn dhol ‘san ùir ann, / ‘s gu bheil mo rùin-sa ann fo na bòrdaibh’* = ‘though I am away from my *dùthchas*, down near Struan, far away from my native place which I know so well, the reason [*uime?*] that I cannot wish to be buried there is that my love is [in Struan] under the boards of a coffin’, A:56). It is possible that due to the force of custom manifest in the aforementioned proverb, for some female Gaels, death marked a point at which they were finally able to return to their family *dùthchas* regardless of where they had been required to live through marriage. This is corroborated by the words of Catrìona NicGilleathain in an elegy to a MacLean *bean-uasal* of the same name, possibly composed in 1770, in which the poet notes that Catrìona is buried at Innis, in her native burial ground as she should be, though she still grieves her death (*‘thu bhith ‘d laighe anns an Innis / ged bu dùthchasach t’ionad / chuir mo shùilean a shileadh nan deòr’*, A:43), as well as by anecdotal evidence from the late nineteenth century,¹⁵⁴ and is a subject which deserves further study. It would certainly suggest that the connection to soil inherent in *dùthchas* is a cycle which is ‘completed’, in a sense, by returning to the very same soil at the point of burial and joining all of one’s kinsfolk there.

¹⁵⁴ The mother of Hamish Dhu, renowned illicit whisky stiller of Strathfarrar, had ‘lived all her married days at Pait [by Loch Monar], but as a native of Kintail her remains were to be carried back to the parish that saw her birth’ – see Thomson 2007: 141-2.



Figure 1: Gate to the modern-day Achadh-an-Ruidhe (Auchenree) farmstead. Mairearad lived here from 1775 until the end of her life. Author's photo, October 2022.

All three of the poems in which Mairearad uses the phrase '*mo dhùthchas*' relate to the poet's kinfolk's traditional lands by Loch Rannoch; interestingly, two of these instances appear in Mairearad's songs on shielings (A:54¹⁵⁵ and A:56). Both songs are replete with toponyms which I have been able to triangulate along an eight kilometre stretch of ground between Sròn a' Chlaonaidh and Beinn Udlamain,¹⁵⁶ evidently the traditional transhumance area of the people of Àrd Làraich. That both the home *baile* and adjacent shieling grounds should be included in the mental image of one's *dùthchas* is significant, as it evidently relates to an area much larger than the enclosed, croft-sized patrimony it seems to have more readily been recognised as in the nineteenth century (Napier Report 1883: 8). The fact that the shieling was a domain of women may be another reason why Mairearad's perception of her *dùthchas* seems centred on the family shieling. Furthermore, there is a note of finality and nostalgia in the poet's shieling songs, which I initially read as a married woman's

¹⁵⁵ It is worth mentioning that A:54 is one of two of Ghriogarach's poems which appear in Sinton's 1906 *The Poetry of Badenoch*. Mairearad's shielings are situated in hills which border with Badenoch, and the place-names mentioned in them would have been familiar to a southern Badenoch audience.

¹⁵⁶ Sròn a' Chlaonaidh is around NN 51000 65348; other toponyms which appear in A:54 and A:56 include Coire Bhachidh, Aonach Mòr (appears in Stob an Aonaich Mhòir), An Sgùlan, Beinn Udlamain, and the poet's *dùthchas* in 'Lùban Bàna' which are evidently related to Allt an Lùib Bhàin. Unsurprisingly, the area is littered with old shielings which are marked on both the modern and nineteenth-century OS maps.

longing for the carefree summers of her youth and an expression of the pain at being separated from her ancestral lands. However, in A:54 the poet sends her blessing to the old shieling (*'beir uam sòraidh dh' ionnsaidh an t-sheann ruigh'*), naming a few toponyms before referring to her *dùthchas* in the *'Lùban Bàna'*.¹⁵⁷ The place-name element *'seann'* often indicates a site no longer in use,¹⁵⁸ and in her other shieling song Mairearad evidences the replacement of *giomanaich* or master-hunters with shepherds and their *òthaisgean* or gimmers (A:56).¹⁵⁹ This could suggest that transhumance went out of practice in *Slios Mìn* in Mairearad's lifetime, and the poet was consciously using the term *dùthchas* in relation to these shieling sites to reinforce her people's hereditary right to these hill grazings which they were likely being denied. The testimony in Mairearad's *'Òran do Thuath an t-Shlios Mhìn'* (A:53), composed when news of brutal clearances in the poet's *dùthchas* had reached her, certainly makes this a credible proposition. The defence of her people's right to be in *Slios Mìn* is based on their repute (*'s iad cliùiteach gach uair'*), their kindness – no doubt spanning the semantic spectrum of the word *còir*, from 'affability' to 'possessing the right of habitation' – and their indigeneity in this place (*'na fìor dhaoine còir, bha an seòrsa ann riamh'* = 'the true, kindly people, whose kind has always dwelled there', A:53). The poem's opening lines see the poet standing at a vantage point, looking down at the place which will forever be her *dùthchas* (*'s mi air sliabh ... a' sealltainn na dùthcha anns a bheil mo dhùthchas gu buan'*, A:53), again fortifying Mairearad's hereditary right to *Slios Mìn*, a right which transcends space (since she was no longer resident there) and time (because it would endure forever, *'gu buan'*, regardless of time spent away). I have not been able to ascertain when exactly the clearances at *Slios Mìn* took place, or who the *'tighearna òig'* who instigated them was, though Richards demonstrates that there were Clearances taking place in Blair Atholl in the 1770s (Richards 2007: 46). Mairearad seems to suggest her stepfather Eòghann could seek refuge on the lands of a Stewart of Innerhadden, a kindly landlord who would keep his promises (*'nach truailleadh am facal / 's gum b' fhasan a bhith còir'*), contrasting Innerhadden's *còir* behaviour with that of the unidentified *'tighearna òig'* responsible for the clearance. What is certain is that the brutality of these clearances was not only shocking to Mairearad, whose immediate family were being affected, but also to other contemporary witnesses, such as the poet Iain MacGregor,¹⁶⁰ who mentions Camuserocht Mòr and Baile nan Tom¹⁶¹ becoming a *'fàsach'* and a contented populace

¹⁵⁷ See previous footnote for a suggestion of the location of the *'Lùban Bàna'*.

¹⁵⁸ As *'Seanval'*, i.e. *'seann-bhaile'*, would refer to a deserted township site, so *'seann-ruighe'* may refer to an abandoned shieling site. My thanks to Gemma Smith for many in-situ conversations about *seann* toponyms.

¹⁵⁹ Gimmer is the term used for a ewe sheep at the age between her first and second shearing, usually between one and two years old.

¹⁶⁰ See *'Tuireadh airson Slios Mìn Ràinneach'* in MacGhriogair 1801: 130-4. MacGhriogair's poetry is said to have been 'chiefly composed' around 1785; the clearances most likely took place in the 1780s or 1790s, certainly before Iain MacGhriogair's poems were published in 1801.

¹⁶¹ These appear to be neighbouring settlements, directly west of Àrd Làraich on the first 1-inch OS map.

being forced to emigrate or becoming so reduced in their circumstances that their diet changes from dairy (*'im is càise'*) to emaciated yearlings and potatoes (*'blianach is bunntatadh'*, MacGhrìogair 1801: 133), which would explain why Mairearad's well-off stepfather Eòghann became *'falamh'* (A:53). Both the 'privatisation' of the transhumance landscape and the *en masse* reduction of the local tenantry's circumstances are also corroborated by the 1792 entry in the Old Statistical Account for the parishes of Blair Atholl and Strowan (McLagan 1792: 462-3 and 467).¹⁶² While all of this evidences the strength of Mairearad's conviction in her and her people's *dùthchas*, in the final stanzas of A:53 her rhetoric becomes markedly Evangelical. As a comfort to the *Tuath Slios Mìn* she invokes the Israelites' plight in Egypt, and states that the injustices suffered by her people will be rewarded in the afterlife (*'gheibh sibh còir air an rìoghachd mairidh sìth ann san uaigh, sòlas gun chrìoch ann an sìorruidheachd bith-bhuan'*, MacIntoisich 1831: 22-4); such rhetoric would become increasingly common across the nineteenth century (Meek 1987). By the time Mairearad's poetry was being printed in 1831, Àrd Làraich was only 'tenanted by three farmers', presumably shepherds, and the township was totally deserted by the 1880s (MacKenzie 1883: 242-3). Through her poetry, Mairearad took a stand on behalf of herself and her people in an often openly defiant way, but her own – possibly vestigial – standing among the *daoine uaisle* of Rannoch likely prevented her from composing open critiques of the local landowning gentry whose *beusan* were harmful to the *tuath*, although she did try to use the poetic tools available to her to influence their behaviour.¹⁶³

Conclusion

In previous chapters, we have seen members of the Campbell clan gentry,¹⁶⁴ followed by other Gaelic chiefs,¹⁶⁵ fail to fulfil the 'social contract' which bound them to their poets and their tenantry. Patronage of poetry did not die out entirely in the *Gàidhealtachd*, as works discussed in this chapter attest; in fact, as the vogue of 'Highlandism' spread among the British elite towards the end of this period, such patronage may have become fashionable again. In this half-century, we have seen poetry continue to serve the purpose of exalting an individual's or a kindred's *cliù* or renown,

¹⁶² Rev. James McLagan's work has also been referenced in the introduction to this chapter.

¹⁶³ See, for example, Mairearad's praise for those *beusan* of the *daoine uaisle* which Mairearad evidently ranked among the most important ones to exhibit, such as benevolence, trustworthiness, dependability, generosity and hospitality, as seen in the words *'fhuair mi gealladh air a chàirdse, / nì nach meal mi am bharail, / tha do chainnt dhomh cho cinnteach, / 's ged a sgrìobhte le peann e'* in A:52; *'Gun rìoghail i mar uachdaran / tha i fialaidh ris gach truaghan / 's cha bhuannachd leatha an cìs'* in A:58; and *'Sàr uachdaran bàigheil, / nach dèan tuathchearn sgolt le màl'* in A:63.

¹⁶⁴ A:69

¹⁶⁵ A:21

and the poets themselves may have been attempting to use the power vested in the conceptual framework of *dùthchas* to influence the behaviour of the *daoine uaisle* or clan gentry, just as they had in previous centuries, such as in the time of the ‘clan poets’ analysed in chapter six (c.f. Coira 2012: 45). By the late eighteenth century, the poets no longer employed the ‘actively-instructive’ voice when addressing their local clan gentry, and aspects of ‘colonial mimicry’ can be seen in the way the *daoine uaisle* were praised, particularly in Donnchadh Bàn’s verse. ‘Highlandism’ may have been in vogue, but by this point in time the clan gentry in much of the *Gàidhealtachd* had become disconnected from the ‘grounded normativity’ of Gaelic culture and their own tenantry, as evidenced by the *daoine uaisle* orchestrating or enabling an early phase of Clearance which affected both Donnchadh Bàn and Mairearad Ghriogarach’s native areas. Though some of the poets whose work was examined in the introduction to this period took a stand against the gentry’s greed, this did little to guide them back to the customary *beusan* of their people.

As all of this study’s chapters thus far have shown, it appears that throughout most of history Gaelic poets predominantly collocated and correlated *dùthchas* with the *daoine uaisle*. This was clearly linked to the poet’s role as legitimator of authority, a role which Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe vehemently defended *ca.* 1260, claiming that without the bards’ genealogical and historical knowledge, the children of the nobility and the children of their dog-keepers would be ‘*comhdhaor comhshaor*’, ‘equally noble and equally servile’ (Knott 1974: 78-80). Legitimate authority and *dùthchas*, in turn, were inextricably linked as far back in time as the ninth century.¹⁶⁶ The foundation of this social structure, at least in theory, was a benevolent, paternalistic clan elite maintaining their tacksmen and tenantry in equilibrium. In the previous chapter, we saw how this belief was harnessed by Jacobite propagandists: the restoration of the rightful monarch would see the restoration of the gentry, which would, in turn, restore the tenantry.¹⁶⁷ This belief was given another lease of life with the Restoration of Forfeited Estates – Donnchadh Bàn and Mairearad Ghriogarach believed the tenantry would no longer be oppressed when the rightful heirs received their patrimonies,¹⁶⁸ and they were certainly not alone – Black has spoken of a ‘palpable surge of confidence in the Gaelic-speaking community’ after 1784 (Black 2012: 602). The changes expected by the tenantry did not materialise, however, causing widespread disaffection. This has been captured by contemporary travel writers, such as Samuel Johnson’s remark about the Gaels’ ‘reverence for their chiefs’ having been ‘abated’ between the 1740s and 1770s (Johnson 1791: 127-8). In 1805 the Earl of Selkirk noted the ‘spirit of discontent and irritation... among the peasantry of the Highlands’ caused by the

¹⁶⁶ See discussion of *Tecosca Cormaic* in chapter four.

¹⁶⁷ See discussion of A:7 in chapter seven.

¹⁶⁸ MacLeod 1952: 244-52 and 294, l. 4292-4299; A:59.

‘frequent removal of the an[c]ient possessors of the land’. Selkirk’s comment about the tenantry considering ‘the permanent possession... of their paternal farms... as their just right’ evidently refers to *dùthchas*, and his observation about the tenantry being unable to ‘see [any] difference between the title of the chief and their own’ (Selkirk 1805: 119-20) paints the picture of a people who had upheld their end of Gaelic society’s ‘social contract’ through loyal military service under their tacksmen and chiefs, and could not understand why the *daoine uaisle* were not honouring their end of this contract by protecting their tenants’ ‘just right’ to land. A very similar picture is presented by Welsh travel-writer Thomas Pennant’s observations on *dùthchas* during his 1772 trip to the Hebrides, where he stated that *dùthchas* was a ‘tenure [which], in the feudal times, was esteemed sacred and inviolable’, implicitly suggesting that these ‘feudal times’ were over and *dùthchas* no longer deemed inviolable, at least by the *daoine uaisle* (Pennant 1774: 423).

The poets were therefore faced with the need to reassert *dùthchas* as a right vested in every kinsperson, not only the *daoine uaisle*. It can hardly be a coincidence that in the same poems which tell of Rannoch being cleared of Mairearad’s MacGregor kinsfolk and them being stripped of the rights to their customary shieling grounds, Mairearad Ghriogarach asserts that she has a perennial and inalienable right to these lands.¹⁶⁹ To my knowledge, no contemporary poetry about the collectivised protest against sheep farms in 1792 – remembered in the *Gàidhealtachd* as ‘*Bliadhna nan Caorach*’ – which would also refer to *dùthchas* survives.¹⁷⁰ However, some six years later Ailean ‘Dall’ Dùghallach composed ‘*Òran do na Ciobaraibh Gallda*’ (A:37), his protest piece against ‘Lowland shepherds’ and the clearance of townships to make way for sheep farms in general. This Glencoe-based poet lived at the same time as Mairearad Ghriogarach (ca. 1750 – 1828), and though he enjoyed a problematic poet-patron relationship with MacDonnell of Glengarry,¹⁷¹ he evidently saw the need to recapitulate the *dùthchas* of the most vulnerable members of society. He describes the elderly and infants as ‘flung to the fringe of privilege, away from the patrimony of their grandfathers’ (*‘thilgeadh iad gu iomall cùirte / bhon dùthchas a bh’ aig an seanair*’, A:37) – an evident adaptation necessitated by the unravelling of the kinship bonds which once formed the basis of the *Gàidhealtachd*’s social fabric. As the Clearances intensify and spread across the Hebrides – the area from which most poetry survived across the entire period from 1640 to 1900 – we shall see further evidence of *dùthchas* being vested in the *tuath* rather than the *tighearna* (‘laird’), to paraphrase the slogan of the late-nineteenth century Highland Land League Reform Association.

¹⁶⁹ See A:53, A:54, and A:56.

¹⁷⁰ Contemporary, Inverness-shire-based poetic commentary on the arrival of ‘the big sheep’ does appear in Coinneach MacCoinnich’s poetry collection – see MacCoinnich 1792: 77-8 and 88-92.

¹⁷¹ The relationship was ‘problematic’ due to the MacDonnells’ active role in bringing sheep farms to their estates from 1784 onwards; c.f. MacLean 1985: 53 and Stiùbhart 2021b: 166.

9. *Dùthchas* from 1800 to ca. 1900

In this chapter, we will examine the way that use of *dùthchas* evolved in the nineteenth century. I will first introduce this time period, briefly discussing the major social and economic factors which were likely to have an influence on the poets' understanding of this concept, before introducing the relevant source material, including three instances of *dùthchas* which may be found in the 1807 Gaelic-language Bible. I will then give an overview of what is known about the nineteenth century's poets' lived experience, how this differed to that of the poets in previous centuries, and how it ties in with this century's social and economic factors. This will lead me to discuss how *dùthchas* came to predominantly appear in a novel linguistic form in this century, how this linguistic innovation could be related to social change, and what purpose this may have served in a linguistic and cosmological system which expresses a social reality. The century's poetry will then be examined in two sections: one focusing on poetry from 1800 – 1870, before the Land Agitations, and one focusing on poetry from 1870 – 1900, encompassing the run-up to, duration of, and immediate aftermath of the Land Agitations in the *Gàidhealtachd*.

Introduction to the period and its source material

In the previous chapter we saw a number of Gaelic poets expressing their resistance to the encroachment of the Scottish Enlightenment's ideology of 'Improvement' into the *Gàidhealtachd*; proponents of 'Improvement' wrote off any indigenous economic activity in the Highlands, electing to perceive the region as being at the 'barbarous stage' of hunters and herdsman in Adam Smith's popular 'stadial theory' of civilisation (Innes 2021: 240-1). The Gaels' alleged backwardness and lack of productivity – which made some contemporary writers compare them to North American Indians (ibid) – meant that the large-scale reorganisation of estates which started in the eighteenth and continued apace into the nineteenth century, was perceived as a positive and morally-justified development which would 'improve' the productivity of both the land and the Gaels who lived on it (Hunter 2018: 49-50). This reorganisation generally entailed the creation of large sheep farms, usually on the estates' most fertile land, and the removal of the local populace by the means of Clearance (ibid: 49), either to the estates' poorest land and coasts on newly-created 'crofts' – individual plots of a few acres each, affording only partial subsistence to its inhabitants so as to

compel their participation in other industries like fishing – or out of the *Gàidhealtachd* to meet the labour demands of burgeoning industry in Lowland cities or overseas colonies (ibid: 53-71; 125-6).

Thus, in popular memory of the *Gàidhealtachd*, the nineteenth century is a century of much suffering. It was when most of the Clearances in the Hebrides took place (Richards 2007: 47), as well as many mainland Clearances, including the infamous *Bliadhna na Losgaidh* ('The Year of the Burning') in the Strath of Kildonan (1819-20) (Hunter 2018: 63). It saw widespread famine in the late 1840s (Hunter 2018: 91-117; Devine 1994: 146-76), contemporary with the Great Famine in Ireland; it saw much of the tenantry sinking into even deeper poverty, battling against the economically 'recessionary aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars during the 1820s' (Macinnes 1988: 71) as crofters in a market economy (Hunter 2018: 72-90); and it marked the beginning of the decline of Gaelic in many – particularly mainland – *Gàidhealtachd* communities, with many Gaels benefitting from the Education Act of 1872 while simultaneously being punished for speaking their native language in school (Devine 1994: 110-1).¹⁷²

Although Gaelic society was undeniably increasingly fractured by the devastating effects of commercial landlordism, the nineteenth century also saw positive developments for Gaels and Gaelic. The nascent field of Gaelic-language publishing – which we briefly discussed in the previous chapter – truly comes into its own in this century. Some of the poetry discussed in previous chapters, like the works of the 'Clan Poets', was first published or re-printed in this century's influential poetry collections, including John MacKenzie's *Sar-Obair Nam Bard Gaelach* (1841). 1879 saw the publication of *An t-Òranaiche*, a poetry collection edited by Gilleasbuig Mac-na-Ceàrdach under the patronage of John Francis Campbell of Islay, the latter of whom pioneered the field of Gaelic folklore collection in the second half of the nineteenth century. Another literary and spiritual milestone was 'the translation of the Old Testament' into Gaelic in 1801, and publishing of 'a revised text of the entire Gaelic Bible by 1807' (Meek 2007: 255), a milestone of considerable relevance to this thesis due to the term *dùthchas* appearing in three separate chapters of the Old Testament, which we will return to in just a few paragraphs. The burgeoning field of Gaelic-language periodicals, as well as English-language newspapers published in the Highlands – the *Oban Times* and the *Inverness Courier*, among others – allowed for much faster dissemination of news. Indeed, Kidd states that newspapers played a 'central role... in the Highland Land Agitation[s]' of the 1870s and 1880s, whether they were supportive or not of the crofters' cause (Kidd 2008: 286).

¹⁷² For a more personal recollection of a Badenoch native's grandfather's experience of being beaten in school for speaking Gaelic, see MacPherson 1994.

The Land Agitations¹⁷³ were a positive development for Gaels, too, though they were born out of conditions of extreme economic hardship in the 1870s and 1880s, ‘reminiscent of... the famine of the 1840s’ (Hunter 2018: 187-8) and resulted in people in multiple localities being arrested¹⁷⁴ or seriously injured during clashes with police and enforcing officers.¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the Land Agitations simultaneously resulted in a surge of direct political action and protest, the creation of the Highland Land Law Reform Association (later simply called the Highland Land League) and the Crofters’ Party, a renewal of confidence and solidarity among many Gaels, including those living outwith the *Gàidhealtachd*, and a renaissance of Gaelic identity (MacKinnon 2019) – or, Withers, Hunter and others have argued, a milestone in the development of a class consciousness among crofters (Withers 1988: 409-10, Hunter 2018: 136-40 *et passim*). The Agitations resulted in an official government inquiry being made in 1883 into the conditions of crofters and cottars in the Highlands, Hebrides, and Northern Isles, based on the people’s oral testimonies – this Royal Commission of Inquiry is usually referred to as the Napier Commission after its chairman, Lord Francis Napier. The Napier Commission’s published Report makes a tantalising reference to what is evidently *dùthchas* when summarising the belief of ‘the small tenantry of the Highlands’ in their ‘inherited inalienable title to security of tenure in their possessions, while rent and service are duly rendered’, an ‘impression indigenous to the country’ in the Commissioners’ view, ‘though it has never been sanctioned by legal recognition’ (Napier 1883: 8; c.f. Withers 1988: 369-70, 389-90). The Napier Commission did not directly cause the passing of the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act in 1886, though it was certainly influential in its drafting. This piece of legislation created the Crofters’ Commission, which was able to review and adjust previously unregulated croft rents and assist in fixing them at a ‘fair’ level, it granted security of tenure to crofters, and gave crofters the explicit right to bequeath their tenure to a descendant. It is probable that some contemporary scholars who were either members of the Napier Commission, such as Professor Donald MacKinnon, or contributed to the Commission by way of testimony or research on agrarian customs, as John Stuart Blackie and Alexander Carmichael did, recognised that there was a need to give legal protection to aspects of customary Gaelic tenure rooted in *dùthchas*. However, the Crofters’ Act of 1886 did not achieve this. Most dictionary definitions of the term from the eighteenth century onwards mention its association with an ‘hereditary right’,¹⁷⁶ but its inherent ambiguity and dependence upon unwritten, reciprocal,

¹⁷³ This movement, at its peak in the 1870s and 1880s, is referred to in Gaelic as *Strì an Fhearainn*, but has many names in English, such as the Crofters’ War (c.f. Devine 1994), the ‘Highland Land Wars’, or the ‘Land Agitations’.

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, the story of the ‘Glendale martyrs’ in 1883 in Hunter 2018: 200.

¹⁷⁵ Those most severely injured were often women – see Henderson 1985. A forthcoming PhD thesis by Grace Wright at the University of Glasgow is expected to further contribute to our understanding of ‘women’s involvement in nineteenth-century land agitation in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland’.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, ‘*dùthchas*’ in Shaw 1780 or in *Dictionarium Scoto-Celticum* 1828.

kin-based social structures which had effectively been obliterated by this point, as far as the landowners were concerned, meant that giving legal recognition to *dùthchas* would have required a complete restructuring of landed relationships in the *Gàidhealtachd*. The matter was complicated further by the fact that crofting was also practiced in areas such as Orkney and Shetland which have their own historical tenurial customs derived from Norse law (Linklater 2002). The late nineteenth-century Parliament's decision was to establish a legislative framework which standardised and protected crofting tenure. As Hunter points out, the 1886 Act therefore 'did nothing to restore cleared lands' and did 'absolutely nothing for north-west Scotland's large landless population' (Hunter 2018: 246-7).¹⁷⁷

The source material

Looking to the poetic source material of the nineteenth century, there are some marked differences when compared with the poetry of the previous four chapters, composed between 1640 and 1800. The most immediately evident difference in my corpus is that I found 21 poems containing the term in the nineteenth century – considerably fewer than the 48 linked to the other 160 years of this study's time scope, 1640 – 1800, even when the proportional difference in the length of time between these two is considered, since the previous period is sixty years longer than this single century. The second difference is crucial, as it relates to the way that *dùthchas* was being used. Between 1640 and 1800, *dùthchas* was usually used as a standalone noun – we saw, for example, Niall MacEwen petition Argyll with the words '*léigidh dhamh dùthchas m' athar*',¹⁷⁸ with *dùthchas* signifying the tangible MacEwen lands, held by virtue of being poets to the Campbells, as well as the MacEwens' intergenerational connections to said lands and to the Campbells as poets. 20 out of 48 of this period's instances of *dùthchas* were articulated in copula form, most commonly *bu dùthchas do X*, or that something 'is native to X', like Iain mac Mhurchaidh's mid-eighteenth-century praise poem to Roderick MacKenzie of Fairburn, which states that 'roaming the hills as a hunter was native to Roderick through his ancestry' ('*bu dùthchas dhut bhod shinnsireachd / bhith siubhal bheann...*').¹⁷⁹ Even in such copula form, however, the noun stands alone as signifier, imbuing whatever characteristic was being lauded by the panegyric poet with symbolic meaning, linking the individual to place and an intergenerational cultural continuum. Only in two poems from 1640 –

¹⁷⁷ See also the contemporary reaction of the Crofters' Party MPs to the 'Crofters Bill' of 1886 as 'a sham and a delusion' in Hunter 2018: 226.

¹⁷⁸ A:69

¹⁷⁹ A:70

1800 do we see *dùthchas* in the genitive form *dùthchais* being used ‘in an attributive or associative function’ (McQuillan 2004: 40): these are A:4, an apologia for Sir Iain MacLean’s support of ‘*do rìgh dùthchais*’ or the Stuart monarchy his ancestors had supported, composed in 1704, and A:24, Donnchadh Bàn’s late-eighteenth-century poem of support for George III, whose ancestors he believed had established a ‘*còir dhùthchais*’ or hereditary right to the British throne. This is truly a minute share at 2/48 or about 4% of all uses.¹⁸⁰ In stark contrast to this, 14/21 – or 66% – of the nineteenth-century poems containing the term *dùthchas* use it in this attributive genitive form. Although there is variety here, these uses generally follow the formula of a word for a physical designation of ‘land’, most commonly ‘*tìr*’, being coupled with a personal possessive pronoun, such as ‘*mo*’, ‘*do*’, ‘*ar*’ or ‘*an*’, and *dùthchas* in its attributive genitive: thus forming, for example, ‘*tìr mo dhùthchais*’, meaning ‘the land of my *dùthchas*’ or ‘my native land’.¹⁸¹ Just under half of these instances are datable to 1860 or earlier, meaning this syntactic construction is not uniquely associated with the period of Land Agitations. As the period between 1800 and 1860 is characterised by a general dearth of surviving poetry (MacGregor forthcoming: 2-3), the prevalence of this novel syntactic construction in the poetry which does date to this period is striking, and evidently reflects a sociocultural development in the nineteenth century *Gàidhealtachd*. Interpreting the poets’ novel formulation of *dùthchas* through the theory of linguistic relativity, which is underpinned by the belief that ‘language embodies an interpretation of reality and language can influence thought about that reality’ (Lucy 1997: 294), would suggest that the changed nature of *reality* in the nineteenth century *Gàidhealtachd* required adaptation within the language used when describing it.

Dùthchas and the Gaelic Bible

As I alluded to above, in 1807 the revised complete edition of the Scottish Gaelic Bible was published in what was a major development for Gaelic publishing and spirituality alike (Meek 2007: 255). Though its role may be seen in many different lights, scholars agree that ‘the Evangelical Movement’ and later the Free Church played a considerable part in the land politics of the nineteenth-century *Gàidhealtachd* and in contemporary Gaels’ lives in general (Ansdell 1998: 140-58; Meek 1987; MacInnes 2006f: 384-5; Hunter 2018: 145, 150-7, 216-7). Indeed, some ministers were

¹⁸⁰ Angus MacLeod, editor of *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, believes A:24 was composed in the 1760s, but my dating is 1801, which would technically reduce this already miniscule share of *dùthchas* used in an attributive genitive prior to 1800 to a mere 1/48.

¹⁸¹ ‘*Tìr mo dhùthchais*’ in A:31, A:36, A:47, but see other variants in A:29, A:32, A:35, A:49, A:34, A:30, A:44, A:39, A:48, A:76, and A:45.

crucial catalysers of the crofters' cause and spoke at meetings of the Highland Land Law Reform Association, like the Reverend Donald MacCallum who – according to the *Oban Times* in 1884 – had been 'stirring up the people of Morvern' at large open-air meetings (Gaskell 1980: 98). Though the precise words of these ministers are seldom preserved, it is certainly noteworthy that the term *dùthchas* appears four times in the Old Testament of the Bible – in Jeremiah 22:10 and 46:16, as well as Ezekiel 16:3-4.

Jeremiah 22:10 sees the Hebrew prophet deliver a sermon to the king of Judah: the sermon instructs the people of Judah to act righteously under threat of the total destruction of Jerusalem – their kingdom's capital – by God, should they act wrongfully. The sermon then turns to death and the afterlife as Josiah, a king of Judah, had died, while his son Jehoahaz had been deposed and taken as prisoner to Egypt – thus Jeremiah says, in the Gaelic, '*na guilibh air son a' mhairbh, ni mo ni sibh caoidh air a shon: guilibh gu goirt air a shon-san a dh'imich air falbh: oir cha phill e ni's mò, agus chan fhaic e tuille tìr a dhùchais*' ('weep not for him who is dead, nor grieve for him, but weep bitterly for him who goes away, for he shall return no more to see his native land', Jeremiah 22:10 in English Standard Version 2016 and First Gaelic Edition 1807; emphasis my own).¹⁸² Jeremiah 46:16, on the other hand, is part of Jeremiah's prophecy about how Egypt would be struck by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that the Lord would 'thrust down' and rout the Egyptians, until 'they said one to another, "Arise, and let us go back to our own people and to the land of our birth, because of the sword of the oppressor"' ('*Thigibh, agus pilleamaid gu'r sluagh féin, agus gu tìr ar dùchais, o chladheamh a' mhillteir*', Jeremiah 46:16 in English Standard Version 2016 and First Gaelic Edition 1807; emphasis my own). Ezekiel 16:3-4, on the other hand, is God's message for Jerusalem, an explanation for the destruction he would bring to the city because of its sins – Jerusalem is personified as a woman, and her descent is described in Gaelic thus: '*...tha do bhreth agus do dhùchas o thìr Chanaain, b' Amorach d' athair, agus bu bhan-Hiteach do mhàthair. / Agus air son do dhùchais, anns an là san d' rugadh thu, cha do ghearradh d' imleag, ni mò bha thu air do nigheadh ann an uisge...*' ('...your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. / And as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you...' Ezekiel 16:3-4 in English Standard Version 2016 and First Gaelic Edition 1807; emphasis my own). Here, *dùthchas* seems to predominantly signify one's ancestry, with ancestry simultaneously acting as a determinant of various cultural customs, such as birthing customs in this particular case.

¹⁸² It is worth comparing this phrasing with the conversation between Naoise and Fergus in the Deirdre story as copied into the Glenmasan MS around 1500, where material worth is described as meaningless to the person who cannot see their *dùthchas* – for the fragment in question, see Newton 2019: 307.

I have not examined whether there is any evidence of these verses being used in contemporary sermons, but the ones in Jeremiah may well have been sermonised in the nineteenth century. The dispossession of the Gaels during the Clearances was frequently compared to the plight of the Israelites in Egypt. Thus the verses in Jeremiah 46 describing a prophecy in which the Egyptians are the ones being routed back to the ‘land of their *dùthchas*’ may well have struck a chord with parishioners in the *Gàidhealtachd*. Even more so, the verses in Jeremiah 22 which state that the fate of an exile who would never again see the ‘land of their *dùthchas*’ is worse than that of the dead would have doubtless resonated with a people to whom exile and emigration became a regular fact of life. We must also remember that the Bible would have been the most readily available item of Gaelic literature in many parishes across the *Gàidhealtachd*, making it a broad source of vocabulary upon which many literate nineteenth- and twentieth-century poets would have drawn upon. Indeed, the phrases ‘*tìr a dhùchais*’ and ‘*tìr ar dùchais*’ in the 1807 Bible may be some of the earliest printed instances of *dùthchas* in an attributive form, and may have contributed to the popularisation of this syntactical formulation in this century. On the other hand, the regular noun form of *dùthchas* is also attested in Ezekiel 16:3-4, meaning that there was more than one linguistic blueprint to be found in Scripture.

Dùthchas, emigration and disconnection

To understand why a novel linguistic formulation of *dùthchas* as an attributive genitive noun came to be the most common form of this term in the nineteenth century, we must examine the lived experience of this century’s poets themselves. The 21 instances of *dùthchas* in this century occur in the work of fourteen poets, two of whom we only know by name and the place they are associated with.¹⁸³ The ratio of Hebridean to mainland poets is fairly even at 8:6, but – with the exception of one Sutherland poet – all are geographically associated with the western *Gàidhealtachd*. Out of the twelve poets about whose lives we know any detail, nine had personally emigrated out of the *Gàidhealtachd* – whether to the Lowlands or overseas – and only four of these are known to have returned to the Highlands and Islands. The three poets who did not emigrate themselves were all witnesses of emigration in their native communities – often commemorating these in their poetry¹⁸⁴ – or had acute experiences of clearance in their recent family history, as in

¹⁸³ These are Dòmhnall Bàillidh (A:38) and Iain MacDhòmhnuill (A:48).

¹⁸⁴ See A:35 and A:39.

Peadar MacGhrìogair's case.¹⁸⁵ The compositions of the two poets of whose lives nothing is known directly refer to either clearance or emigration. All of this century's poets within my corpus therefore had the shared experience of a native populace being disconnected from the land of their forefathers to which the said populace had established a hereditary right, a reciprocal relationship, a *dùthchas*. Literary critics have frequently accused this century's Gaelic poetry of 'sentimentality', 'weakness' and 'romanticism' (Watson 1959: xxxiii; MacLean 1985: 48-74 at 49; Meek 2019: xiii-xvii) due to its tendency to focus on themes of exile, grief for what has been lost, and 'an uncritical idealisation of the pre-Clearance period' (MacLean 1985: 59). However, we have seen that *dùthchas* has been used in Gaelic poems about exile since the thirteenth century,¹⁸⁶ and across centuries of highly-idealised panegyric praise-poems and grief-centric panegyric elegies,¹⁸⁷ suggesting that profoundly emotive human experiences have always inspired Gaels to not only psychologically process these through the medium of orally performed poetry, but also to often process these in relation to *dùthchas*, reflecting the importance of this concept in Gaelic epistemology and what Coulthard calls 'grounded normativity', meaning an 'ethical framework' which is informed by 'place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge' (Coulthard 2014: 60 *et passim*).

Withers notes that emigration from the *Gàidhealtachd* to the Lowlands grew exponentially in this century, especially after 1815 when the end of the Napoleonic wars caused a collapse in the kelp and wool industries which had been at the forefront of the economic reorganisation of estates in the *Gàidhealtachd* (Withers 1998: 234). Emigration was thus necessitated by economic conditions and facilitated by improved 'transport links with the Lowland south' (Meek 2007: 254). This was followed by the growth of 'émigré' Gaelic communities, evidenced by the increasing numbers of both Gaelic chapels (Withers 1998: 160) and various 'Highland' and Gaelic societies based in Lowland Scotland's towns and cities. Some of these societies were formed in the previous century,¹⁸⁸ but the nineteenth century saw the establishment of 29 such societies in Glasgow alone (*ibid*: 186). These societies hosted popular social gatherings at which two of this period's most prolific poets, Màiri Mhòr nan Òran and Niall MacLeòid, made frequent appearances. While the 'cèilidh halls of Glasgow and Edinburgh' have been criticised for popularising 'romantically-inclined' poetry, Meek notes that there appears to have been a similar, contemporary surge in 'the composition of sentimental verse portraying an idyllic rural society in the homeland' in Wales, another part of Britain experiencing

¹⁸⁵ See A:46 and A:47; both Peadar's mother and father had experienced clearance, and his father Dugald gave evidence of this to the Napier Commission.

¹⁸⁶ See discussions of A:71 and A:72 in the fourth chapter.

¹⁸⁷ See also the work of the 'clan poets' analysed in the sixth chapter.

¹⁸⁸ These include, among others, the Buchanan Society (1725), the Glasgow Highland Society (1727), the Highland Society of London (1778), the Gaelic Chapel Society of Glasgow (1778) and the Gaelic Club of Gentlemen (1780).

mass emigration to industrial centres (Meek 2019: xvi; c.f. Bateman 2014: xviii). In the ‘exiled Gaels’ case, this sentimental poetry appears to have fulfilled a social and psychological need: maintaining a link with the land of the exiles’ *dùthchas* through poetry. It is unfair to label all of the ‘émigré’ poetry as ‘sentimental’. Later on in this chapter we will see how Niall MacLeòid, who Meek considered the ‘lead offender’ of nineteenth-century Gaelic romanticism (Meek 2019: xv; c.f. MacLean 1985: 46) actually composed an anthem of the Land Agitations thoroughly imbued with a ‘militant ardour’ which Sorley MacLean considered him ‘incapable of expressing’ (ibid: 68).

Retriangulating *dùthchas*

The poetic output of previous centuries demonstrates that when Gaelic society was facing a crisis, poets would appeal to the *dùthchas* of their chief so that they would uphold the cultural norms of society’s ‘social contract’. The poets continued to do this despite the clan chiefs’ gradual abandonment of Gaelic society’s ‘grounded normativity’ or cultural norms which had arguably formed the very basis of ‘clanship’. The poet Lachlann MacKinnon was expelled from court at Dunvegan around 1700 – in itself an example of ‘grounded normativity’ being discontinued – and composed a poem which contrasted the lack of kindness he experienced there with the exemplary behaviour of Tormod MacLeod of Berneray and Lachlann Mór MacKinnon of Strath, both of whom had ‘kept up the *dùthchas*’ (*‘chùm an dùthchas suas*’, A:21), in this case ‘upheld cultural norms’. The Perthshire poet Mairearad Ghriogarach believed the wheel of fortune was about to turn for the tenantry when Alasdair Robertson of Strowan’s estate was being restored to him in 1784, enabling his return to ‘the possession of his grandfather’s *dùthchas*’ (*‘thighinn dhan dùthchas a sheanathar*’, A:59), conceptually restoring natural order on the estate. Even those nineteenth century poets associated with radical politics, like Màiri Mhòr nan Òran, do not entirely cease the tradition of praising or addressing the *Gàidhealtachd*’s landowning gentry.¹⁸⁹ However, unlike their predecessors, they virtually never do this in conjunction with *dùthchas*.¹⁹⁰ I believe this shows that by the nineteenth century, the poets had become disillusioned with the idea that the *daoine uaisle* would protect the *dùthchas* of the *tuath*, or that the rights of the latter were vested in their chief – this sentiment was observed among the Highland tenantry by Lord Selkirk in 1805, as I mentioned in the previous chapter (Selkirk 1805: 119-20). The concept remained in use in the nineteenth century, meaning it was clearly still relevant to Gaels, but the framework it was used in by poets had to be

¹⁸⁹ See, for example, Meek 1998: 91-4 and MacLean 1985: 70.

¹⁹⁰ Two of Màiri Mhòr’s poems, A:44 and A:45, do so indirectly and will be discussed below separately.

retriangulated to reflect the new reality of Gaelic social structure in relation to land – a ‘grounded normativity’ more independent of the *daoine uaisle*.

This new reality reflects the major changes which had started taking place across the eighteenth century and were firmly established by the nineteenth. These changes may be summarised as a ‘drastic reorganisation of estates’ which had dissolved the traditional social order and communal or partially communal tenurial system of the *baile*. This entailed the gradual removal of tacksmen as a social class, de-emphasising the reciprocal welfare-and-warfare kin-based relations between the tenantry and clan chiefs, and introducing crofting as the tenantry’s default tenurial arrangement (Hunter 2018: 49-71, esp. 53-7; Macinnes 1996: 1-24; Devine 1994: 16-7 and 45-9). Virtually all of the nineteenth century’s poets had been born during or after this ‘drastic reorganisation’. Prominent poetic voices among the *tuath* had already been captured in the latter half of the eighteenth century in the verse of Donnchadh Bàn or Uilleam Ros,¹⁹¹ and by the nineteenth century the tenantry seems by far the best-represented social class in the surviving poetic corpus, reflecting the widespread proletarianisation of the *tuath* of the *Gàidhealtachd*. As far as I have been able to discern, all of our twelve identifiable nineteenth-century poets were descendants of crofters, craftsmen or ‘small farmers’. The bards themselves included a shoemaker,¹⁹² tailor,¹⁹³ joiner,¹⁹⁴ while those who acquired more comfortable jobs as a merchant,¹⁹⁵ doctor¹⁹⁶ or schoolmaster¹⁹⁷ had either temporarily or permanently left the *Gàidhealtachd*. Their socioeconomic standing – as well as their relationship with the customary tenurial arrangements implicit in *dùthchas* – would have obviously been different to that of the many eighteenth-century poets like Mairearad Ghriogarach or Iain mac Mhurchaidh who were descendants of tacksmen and enjoyed at least some vestigial privileges of that social class.

¹⁹¹ The latter had however received a formal education and attained the effectively middle-class status of schoolmaster before his untimely death.

¹⁹² Iain MacIlleathain, ‘Bàrd Thighearna Cholla’ (1787 – 1848)

¹⁹³ Uilleam MacDhunlèibhe (1808 – 1878)

¹⁹⁴ Dùghail MacPhàil (1818 – 1887)

¹⁹⁵ Niall MacLeòid (1843 – 1913)

¹⁹⁶ Iain MacLachlainn, ‘An Dotair Ruadh’ (1804 – 1874)

¹⁹⁷ Iain MacDhùghaill (ca. 1800 – ?)

Syntactical evolution in face of disconnection

As we have seen above, the nineteenth-century poets used the term *dùthchas* differently to their predecessors. Possessive pronouns were used to reassert the *tuath's* innate claim of an hereditary right to place independently of – indeed, *in spite of* – the *daoine uaisle*. This retriangulation may be seen as early as 1820 in phrases like '*m' fhearann dùthchais*' ('my native soil', A:29), and gaining a collective dimension later in the century, where we see phrases like '*tìr ar dùthchais*' ('land of our *dùthchas*', A:76) and '*eilean an dùthchais*' ('the island of their [the Tìree people's] *dùthchas*', A:39) appearing. The popularisation of this novel syntactical construction in nineteenth-century Scottish Gaelic poetry is significant. In his linguistic-historical study of the term *dúchas* in Ireland, McQuillan notes that

'from the early seventeenth century on we find the use of *dúchas* to denote the physical entity of the land itself being replaced by a noun phrase in which the head or governing noun is itself denotative of the land, with the genitive of *dúchas* (*dúchais*) used in an attributive or associative function... [as in] the phrase *tír dhúchais* 'native land'.' (McQuillan 2004: 40)

McQuillan's assertion is that this linguistic evolution towards *dúchas* in an attributive genitive function mirrors the cultural and historic reality of the Irish people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In his view, the growing dominance of this type of grammatical construction across this period reflects the Irish speakers' belief that 'the land as a physical and material entity may well be taken from [them], but the ideology of the native land and [their] identification with it (*dúchas*) cannot' (McQuillan 2004: 44). McQuillan does not argue that this syntactical construction is a novel creation of these two centuries, as it is attested in the Irish corpus 'from the fifteenth century at least'; rather, McQuillan argues that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this attributive usage of *dúchas* acquires 'added salience after the sweeping socio-economic and cultural changes of this period' (ibid: 44). Although my corpus demonstrates that *dùthchas* was used in Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd* in this attributive genitive form as early as 1704,¹⁹⁸ that instance appears to be an outlier. It relates to the Stuart monarchy ('*rìgh dùthchais*') and is not joined by any concrete noun meaning 'land'. Thus, far more dramatically than in Ireland, the nineteenth century appears to abruptly usher in the use of *dùthchas* in an attributive form. This form linguistically abstracts the term from its tangible, material semantic attributes, while preserving its emotive, spiritual and hereditary attributes. It follows that this linguistic development coincides with the very same century that saw 'the land as a physical and material entity' be 'taken from the Scottish Gaels', to paraphrase

¹⁹⁸ A:4

McQuillan. It also follows that this linguistic development took two centuries longer to become the dominant form of *dùthchas* in Scottish as opposed to Irish Gaelic. In Ireland, the Tudor conquest and Flight of the Earls in 1607 effectively removed the native Irish leadership from the country's political landscape, while much of Scotland's Gaelic aristocracy preserved its position of power and was evidently expected by the tenantry to adhere to their traditional social roles. Their failure to do so became obvious at different points in time in different localities but was probably universally palpable by the 'late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries... [in] the bitter years of the Clearances when the chaos that the break-up of any traditional society produces was intensified beyond endurance in the bewilderment of a people attacked by its own natural leaders' (MacInnes 2006f: 384-5).

I believe that this linguistic construction emphasising *dùthchas* as either a personal or collective inalienable right – a right which transcends the reality of dispossession – is an indigenous intellectual and political response to the dispossession of the Clearances. There are notable instances of this novel linguistic construction appearing in incitement-type poetry of the Land Agitations.¹⁹⁹ However, the majority of nineteenth century poems containing *dùthchas*, including compositions containing this novel formula, are imbued with a spirit of dejection and focus on the poet's and people's feelings and emotions (Meek 2019: xxvii). This seems to reflect the Gaels' 'bewilderment' at the betrayal instituted by their 'own natural leaders'. However, the presence of this 'abstracted', attributive form of *dùthchas* in these poems allows us to view this period's 'sentimental poetry', which has often been portrayed as failing to form a robust response to the Clearances, as an implicit retriangulation of the tenantry's rights decades before the Land Agitations (c.f. Devine 1994: 210).

¹⁹⁹ A:44, A:76

1800 – 1870: before the Land Agitations

We are now going to turn to the corpus and examine the usage of *dùthchas* in the nineteenth century before 1870, the decade in which the Land Agitations began. This is to ascertain the meaning which the word carried in this period: what remained constant when compared with previous centuries, and what could be considered innovation. The term's uses will be divided into three sections: *dùthchas* as an attributive noun, *dùthchas* as an attribute of nouns relating to land, and all other uses of *dùthchas*.

Poet's name	Title	Date of composition	Appendix code
Dòmhnall nan Òran (MacLeod)	Òran Molaidh a' Bhuntàta	1811	A:73
Dòmhnall Bàillidh	Aoir air Pàdraig Sellar	1816	A:38
Iain MacLachlainn (An Dotair Ruadh)	Och! Och! Mar tha mi	1820 (or later)	A:29
Iain MacIlleathain (Bàrd Thighearna Cholla)	Òran don 'Chuirtear'	1842	A:32
Gilleasbaig Caimbeul	Òran air Cor na Gàidhealtachd	1850 (?)	A:35
Dùghall MacPhàil	An t-Eilean Muileach	1850 (?)	A:36
Dùghall MacPhàil	Cath Alma	1854	A:33
Iain MacDhughail (John MacDougall)	An Sgrìob a Thug mi'n Mharbhairne	1860 (pre- publication of 'Dàin agus Òrain' le Iain MacDhughail)	A:49
Uilleam MacDhunlèibhe	Blàr Thràigh Ghruinneard	1850 – 1860 (?)	A:34

Table 5: The term *dùthchas* in poetry composed ca. 1800 – 1870

Dùthchas: native ways and inherited characteristics

The ‘other’, non-attributive uses of *dùthchas* are what we shall turn to first. The three poems of the 1800 – 1870 period which do not contain *dùthchas* in an attributive genitive form all see the term relate semantically to the native ways of either people or a plant. The earliest of these is *Òran Molaidh a’ Bhuntàta* (A:73), a praise-poem addressed to the potato composed in 1811 by Dòmhnall nan Òran, a MacLeod native of Glendale in the Isle of Skye, and father of Niall MacLeòid whose poetry features prominently in the section on the poetry of the Land Agitations below. The potato plant is praised for its resilience, for even when it is soaked by rain, ‘complaining is not in its nature’ – ‘chan e ’n gearan do dhùthchas’. Thus *dùthchas* signifies the plant’s innate quality of hardiness, a quality which so quickly turned potatoes into the *Gàidhealtachd*’s tenantry staple crop, as reflected in Dòmhnall nan Òran’s statement that the potato is ‘*siùbhlach dhan fhalamh*’ – ‘handy for the destitute’ (Bateman 2014: 291). Anthropomorphism is a relatively common feature of Gaelic poetry, but A:73 is one of two poems in my entire corpus where the *dùthchas* of a non-human is directly referred to.²⁰⁰ The poem is also remarkable as a contemporary observation of the Skye tenantry’s changing diet, as well as its ‘prophetic’ remarks about healthy potato harvests being able to ‘keep famine at bay’ (ibid: 238) – harvests which, as we know, failed later in the century, particularly in the 1840s, causing devastating famine.

The second of these poems is *Aoir air Pàdraig Sellar* (A:38), a satire composed in 1816 on Patrick Sellar, the infamous proponent of Improvement ideology and perpetrator of violent Clearance on the Sutherland estate (Hunter 2018: 63). It was composed by Dòmhnall Bàillidh, possibly the son of Adam Baillie, a ‘farmer living in Culmally... at the time that this farm’s tenancy was taken over by Sellar and Young who... would run the Sutherland estate’ (Kidd 2023: 113). Sheila Kidd suggests ‘the poet’s family may... have been among those evicted by Sellar as part of his plan of “improvements”’ on the farm, since the poem in fact refers to Sellar being in Culmally ‘with, perhaps, an underlying sense that he is there while the original tenants are not’ (ibid). A:38 opens with the poet’s description of a dream he enjoyed having, in which Sellar and fellow ‘Improvers’ Roy and Young are burnt or imprisoned for their fiendish transgressions (Meek 1995: 54, l. 3-10), and details how Sellar might be punished before and after death (ibid: 54-5, l. 23-30 and 35-42). Bàillidh later turns to curse a man named Alexander Simpson, who Meek believed to be the captain of ‘the packet service’ which had ‘conveyed both Young and Sellar to Sutherland [in 1809], apparently for the first time’ (ibid: 56), in a sense cursing the day Sellar and proponents of his ideology came to Sutherland. The poet states

²⁰⁰ The other example of this is Donnchadh Bàn’s *Rann do’n Ghàidhlig ’s do’n Phìob-Mhòir* (A:27), composed in 1781, where the poet refers to the *dùthchas* of the bagpipe.

‘bha ‘n Simpsonach ‘na chù / mar bu dùthchasach don mharaich” (translated by Meek as ‘the Simpson man behaved like a dog, as befitted the nature of a seaman’), using the adjective *dùthchasach* in the copula form (*bu dùthchasach do*) which we have seen used frequently in previous centuries. The phrase implies that rapacity, or perhaps a lack of morals, are the native way of sailors – at least those who collaborate with the tarnished Sellar; the association of negative attributes with one’s *dùthchas* was attested in the poetry of Donnchadh Bàn (A:28) and Iain Lom (A:14, A:15, A:16). An alternative version of A:38 published in the *Oban Times* on 9 December 1882 was located and analysed by Kidd. This gives the lines in question as *‘Simpson aca an cù ann / bu dùthchas dha bhi na Mhuireach’* (‘their dog Simpson was there, whose *dùthchas* was being a Moray-man’ in Kidd 2023: 119). Kidd identifies Alexander Simpson as ‘a Moray carpenter brought into Helmsdale as a fish merchant who also held sizeable tenancies at Midgarty and Gartymore’ (ibid: 123), and the copula form of the term *dùthchas* in the version of the poem given by Kidd emphasises Simpson’s ancestral connection to Moray rather than his being a sailor, ‘an understandable variation in the context of oral transmission [of poetry]’ (ibid). Indeed, the version given by Kidd emphasises Simpson, Sellar and Young’s origins, customs, and ‘Improvement’ ideology as being foreign more strongly than the version of A:38 given by Meek.²⁰¹

Finally, we have *Cath Alma* (A:33), composed by the Mull-born Dùghall MacPhàil shortly after the Battle of the Alma (20 September 1854), part of the Crimean War. MacPhàil’s description of the battle is highly detailed, although he was not a soldier; his narration was informed by newspaper reports of the battle (Meek 2019: 448). The poet depicts the Gaels’ charge and the Russians’ retreat, with the Highland Brigade describes as the ‘the vigorous, fair heroes, the pure brigade of proud plaids who had victory in their nature’ (*‘na fir gheala lùthmhor / buidheann ghlan nam breacan uallach / dan robh bhuaidh mar dhùthchas’*). The poet’s motive seems to be praising ‘the martial qualities of the Gaels’ (MacIver 2018: 222), and doing this by adjoining said martial qualities with *dùthchas* is traditional in Gaelic poetry, particularly in the conservative panegyric genre. We have seen examples of this in the poetry of the ‘classical’ poets,²⁰² the ‘Clan Poets’,²⁰³ as well as the Jacobite poets,²⁰⁴ and this martial panegyric was given a new lease of life in Gaelic poems depicting the ‘Highland soldier’ – Donnchadh Bàn being but one later eighteenth-century poet to begin exploring this theme.²⁰⁵ The diction used by MacPhàil in A:33 draws on this rich tradition while also

²⁰¹ See stanza 6 in the version given by Kidd for the description of a new ‘fashion’ coming into Sutherland from Moray which entailed pecuniary treatment of woodland and withholding the land’s produce from the people – Kidd 2023: 118, 121-4.

²⁰² e.g. A:68.

²⁰³ e.g. A:6.

²⁰⁴ e.g. A:22.

²⁰⁵ A:26 and A:27

espousing a 'British imperialist perspective' when describing the Crimean War's causes (ibid). Meek believes that this conflict resulted in 'the image of the Highland imperial soldier [becoming] indelibly embedded in Gaelic and Scottish self-perception', because 'the Highland Brigade performed with distinction in all of [its] main battles' (Meek 2019: 447; MacIver 2018: 211-28). MacPhàil subscribed to the idea that Gaels in the military could 'preserve the renown of the land they had left' ('*dhion sibh cliù na tìr a dh'fhàg sibh*', A:33), and thus this poem's main concern was the soldiers' honourable deeds vindicating the Gaels as subjects of the Empire, though we will return to a different composition of Dùghall's shortly.

Dùthchas: an attribute of other nouns

We will now examine six poems of the 1800 – 1870 period which contain *dùthchas* in an attributive genitive form. Half of these bestow the attribute of something being 'native' or 'customary' upon nouns which are not directly related to land, while the other half appear within clauses relating to 'land', whether '*fearann*' or '*tìr*'. We will first turn to the former.

The earliest of these is *Òran don 'Chuirtear* (A:32), composed in 1842 by the Tiree-born Iain MacIlleathain who had emigrated to Nova Scotia in 1819. Prior to emigration, he had been the honorary 'bard' of the Laird of Coll, earning him the sobriquet *Bàrd Thighearna Cholla*. Meek has described the poet as 'straddl[ing] the old world of chiefs and tacksmen, and the emerging "new order" of crofting' (Meek 2019: 479). This may partially explain why MacIlleathain's celebration of a new Gaelic periodical, the eponymous *Cuirtear nan Gleann*, is an anthropomorphic portrayal of the *Cuirtear* as a handsome, travelling tradition-bearer coming across the ocean to the Nova Scotian Gaels while wearing the '*èideadh dùthchais*' or 'traditional outfit', complete with 'shoulder-plaid', 'blue bonnet' and 'garters'. By then this outfit was an anachronism, but may have been worn by the Laird of Coll himself when MacIlleathain was younger; likewise, this image may be an example of nostalgia for the 'old ways' creeping into poetry primarily aimed at the emigrant community. The poem ends with two stanzas asking the *Cuirtear* to print this poem and thus carry MacIlleathain's news to his relatives in the poet's home township of Caolas (ibid: 204-5).

The next poem to use *dùthchas* in this manner is *An Sgrìob a Thug mi'n Mharbhairne* (A:49) composed by Iain MacDhùghaill in, or slightly before, 1860. Here, the poet is describing the noble descent of his new spouse, who was descended from the MacKinnons of Barr. The term *dùthchas* appears in a phrase referring to the poet and his wife agreeing to a betrothal according to the

customary rites of the clergy (*'nuair a dh'aontaich sinn gum pòsamaid / le òrdagh dùthchais clèir'* = '...when we agreed to get married with the customary authorisation of the clergy'). We see *dùthchas* bestowing the meaning of something which is *customary* here; however, the term's proximity to a section praising the wife's descent suggests the mental semantic connection between custom and descent inherent in *dùthchas* continued into the nineteenth century.

Finally, we have *Blàr Thràigh Ghruinneard* (A:34), a mid-century composition of Uilleam MacDhùnleibhe,²⁰⁶ a poet born at Gartmain, Islay, who left the *Gàidhealtachd* and spent most of his adult life working as a tailor in Glasgow (Meek 2019: 478). The poem is an epic retelling of the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneard, one of Islay's most notorious clan battles, fought in 1598 between the MacLeans and MacDonalds and ending with a decisive MacDonald victory. Meek notes MacDhùnleibhe's 'deep antiquarian interest in Scottish history' and that the poet was 'largely self-taught' (ibid). The poem, Homeric in style, seems informed by the Islay-man's traditional knowledge, centred around place-names associated with the conflict,²⁰⁷ with the addition of monologues by the battle's leaders. The MacDonalds' monologues emphasise the kindred's *còir* over the Islay lands,²⁰⁸ and the poet's overall aim seems to be a celebration of Gaelic history and martial heritage, though not within the confines of the British Empire, as in A:33, but in a period pre-dating 'Anglo-Saxon imperialism' (MacLean 1985: 60). This is a reflection of MacDhùnleibhe's 'Gaelic nationalism [which made] him see the tragedies of Ireland and Scotland as one' (ibid). While A:34 may not deal with contemporary politics, it certainly emphasises Clan Donald's historical Irish connection in a way seldom seen in nineteenth-century poetry. The term *dùthchas* appears in a description of the MacDonalds overcome by the might of the MacLean assailants, before the tide turned against the MacLeans: Clan Donald is portrayed as standing dejected 'on their native heather' or '*air fraoch an dùthchais*'. Heather is the clan 'badge' of the MacDonalds – hence the description of the 'heather banner' or '*bratach an fhraoich*' (ibid: 326) being deprived of its splendour a few lines prior. MacDhùnleibhe seems to be playing with the semantics of *dùthchas* here: we simultaneously see heather as a symbol of Clan Donald and their *dùthchas* in the sense of heritage, history, and descent, but a more literal reading of the line is possible where '*fraoch an dùthchais*' means the 'heather of their native place', with the MacDonalds coming to terms with what seems like an imminent loss of

²⁰⁶ MacDhùnleibhe used the term *dùthchas* prolifically in his poetry in both noun and attributive form, but the only poem of this kind to appear in an edited anthology is A:34, hence the limited discussion here. For more of MacDhùnleibhe's poetry, see MacDhùnleibhe 1882.

²⁰⁷ For a traditional re-telling of the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneard, complete with the aforementioned place-names, see Black and Dracup 2024: 80-101.

²⁰⁸ See, for example, '*a dhion ar daoine 's ar dùthcha*', l. 48, or '*thìr ar còrach*', l. 53

their *dùthchas* in Islay. In a sense, then, MacDhùnlàibhe's use of *dùthchas* in its attributive form does relate to land, albeit more indirectly than the uses we shall now turn our attention to.

Dùthchas: an attribute of nouns relating to land

The earliest poem of the nineteenth century where we see an attributive use of *dùthchas* alongside a noun referring to land is *Och! Och! Mar tha mi* (A:29), composed around 1820 by Iain MacLachlainn, a native of Rahoy, Morvern. MacLachlainn was also known as '*An Dotair Ruadh*' – after studying medicine at the University of Glasgow, he returned to practise medicine in Morvern, Mull and Ardnamurchan. The poem deals with Clearance and the great changes in the doctor's native district, where 'every old custom [had] been sent packing' (Meek 2019: 51) – the Gaelic-speaking populace has been replaced with Lowland shepherds and their flocks, and the Gaelic 'nobles have withered, with low-born laddies occupying their living-quarters' (ibid). All of these undesirable changes, causing MacLachlainn's solitude in the land which he once 'knew closely', ultimately stem from land ownership: the doctor states he 'cannot get a plot in [his] native country' even if he paid dearly 'for a mere shoe-breadth' ('*s nach fhaigh mi àit' ann am fhearann dùthchais / ged phàighinn crùn airson leud mo bhròige*', A:29). The problem is not the price of land being inflated, although this is implied as being the case to the point where even a doctor would struggle to afford it; rather, the very purpose of what the land is there for has changed, with sheep farming taking over the '*fhearann àigh san robh Fionn a chòmhnaidh*' ('the lovely country which was once Fionn [mac Cumhaill's] homeland'). Meek notes the similarities between A:29 and *Òran do na Cìobaraibh Gallda* (A:37), noting that MacLachlainn appears to 'understand... that the presence of the shepherds is related to wider social and economic changes, including the decay of the old-style chiefs' (ibid: 403).

We see another example of *dùthchas* being used in an attributive form in *Òran air Cor na Gàidhealtachd* (A:35), a poem by Gilleasbaig Caimbeul. This is the only nineteenth-century poem with a Perthshire provenance in my corpus: Caimbeul was born in Fortingall and died in Lochearnhead (ibid: 474), and seems to be one of relatively few nineteenth-century poets who did not at least temporarily leave the *Gàidhealtachd*, making him well qualified to compose a response to what he saw as 'the many adverse changes within our land' ('*a liuthad caochladh 's a tha nar tìr*', l. 57-8). The Gaels who had been faithful servants of the 'kingdom' had now been 'banished from their native country by the law of fools who are blind to right' ('*chaidh nis am fògradh à tìr an dùthchais /*

le reachd nan ùmpaidh nach lèir a' chòir'). *Dùthchas* is evidently acting as an attribute of this '*tìr*', signifying the hereditary right the banished Gaels had to it, a right or *còir* not recognised by the 'fools' clearing them, or the 'law' they follow. Caimbeul's poem is a stark political statement which identifies who these 'fools' ultimately responsible for the '*cor na Gàidhealtachd*' or 'state of the Highlands' are – the very 'earthly landlords who ought to shield [the tenantry]' ('*ar n-uachdarain shaoghalt' bu chòir ar dìonadh*') are the ones 'causing [them] pain', putting them into the 'yoke of bondage' rather than showing them 'hospitality' (l. 9-16) and 'plunder[ing] them fully of wealth and property' (l. 33-40). Caimbeul's poem is noteworthy as it recapitulates the inalienable right to land of those being forced to emigrate, and juxtaposes the people's *dùthchas* and *còir* – unrecognised by Scots law – with '*reachd nan ùmpaidh*' ('the law of fools', where *reachd* means 'law' or 'statute'). It also suggests that, at least as far as the poet was concerned, the *daoine uaisle* were still actively expected to fulfil their part of the 'social contract' and protect their tenantry in mid-nineteenth-century Perthshire, though the poet avoids mentioning names of those landlords who failed to meet the poet's expectations (l. 41-8). It is possible that the poet's shock at the *daoine uaisle*'s failure to perform their traditional roles is performative; the focus of A:35 as a whole seems to be a vindication of the Gaels (l. 17-32, 49-72), a rally of the 'remnant' Gaels who stayed behind to 'bear witness', or perhaps even 'engage in direct action' ('*togail fianais*', l. 81-88), and ending on a hopeful note that 'the Queen will stand on the side of the Gaels / as kindly Esther did to support the Jews' (l. 89-96).

Finally, we have another mid-nineteenth-century poem, *An t-Eilean Muileach* (A:36), composed by Dùghall MacPhàil, the same poet who composed *Cath Alma* (A:33). It is a piece characterised by an emigrant's nostalgia for their home – in this case, Dùghall's nostalgia for his native Mull when he himself was in Newcastle (ibid: 382). The poem praises the island's idyllic beauty and contains many features which were typical of the 'romantic' poetry popular among Gaels who had been displaced to urban centres. MacPhàil describes going on a mental journey which takes him back to his 'native land', despite the physical distance separating him from 'lovely Mull of the mountains' ('*Ged tha mi 'm fhògarrach cian air m' aineol... bidh tìr mo dhùthchais a' tighinn fa-near dhomh, an t-Eilean Muileach bu lurach beannaibh*' = 'though far from home I am now a ranger, in grim Newcastle a doleful stranger, the thought of thee stirs my heart's emotion, and deeper fixes its fond devotion', transl. by Malcolm MacFarlane in Meek 2019: 383, A:36). In this poem, *dùthchas* performs the attributive role in relation to '*tìr*', making it clear that this land, Mull, is native to MacPhàil, and that there is an element of physical separation involved, since MacPhàil is in Newcastle. Although the formula – *tìr mo dhùthchais* – is similar to A:35, the outlook and purpose of the poems is totally different. A:36 paints Mull as an idyllic place where youths may try their hand at fishing in picturesque scenery, as Dùghall presumably had (l. 9-20); but the image 'bursts like a

bubble’ and MacPhàil may only send his ‘farewell to the island’ (l. 25-8). MacPhàil does not detail what had caused him to become separated from ‘*tìr mo dhùthchais*’, or that this is in any way part of a broader social issue (MacLean 1985: 64); Gilleasbaig Caimbeul, on the other hand, is explicit in identifying the root cause of the issue, and encouraging fellow Gaels to ‘bear witness’ to the grave injustice which had caused them to become physically and psychologically separated from the land of their *dùthchas*, as the ‘grounded normativity’ which had held Gaelic society together had been abandoned by that society’s elites.

In conclusion, between 1800 and 1870, we see continuity in the way that *dùthchas* is used to signify the innate characteristics of humans and non-humans alike. Simultaneously, we see innovation with *dùthchas* being increasingly commonly used in an attributive form, bestowing the quality of something being ‘native’ or ‘customary’ upon another noun. This is done in conjunction with words signifying ‘land’, such as *fearann* or *tìr*, and two-thirds of these instances (A:29 and A:35) are in explicitly political poems commenting – indeed, lamenting – on the ‘state’ of the poets’ native localities, and the negative changes which had taken place there. It is noteworthy that A:35 in particular does not paint a pre-Clearance idyll (unlike A:36) but rather states that rebuilding a Gaelic population, encouraging them to bear evidence of the injustice they suffer, and securing support from the monarchy, are all necessary steps to reverse the decline of the ‘state of the *Gàidhealtachd*’.

1870 – 1900: the Land Agitations and their aftermath

In this section, we are going to examine the usage of *dùthchas* in the nineteenth century during the period of the Land Agitation and its aftermath, *ca.* 1870 – 1900. We will follow the general mould of the previous section in how we will divide the analysis of the uses of *dùthchas*: *dùthchas* as an attributive noun, and all other uses of *dùthchas*. Unlike the period 1800 – 1870, *all* of the instances of *dùthchas* as an attributive noun from 1870 – 1900 relate to land, which is why we will only divide these instances into two categories as opposed to the three in the section above. The poets' intense focus on land politics during the Land Agitations would appear to be the most obvious reason why *dùthchas* does not appear as an attribute of other nouns in this period. This also seems to be a reflection of the broader 'change of temper' to a fierier one in the latter decades of the nineteenth century (MacLean 1985: 67). As before, we will first turn to the *other* uses of *dùthchas*, and secondly examine instances of *dùthchas* as an attribute of the land.

Poet's name	Title	Date of composition	Appendix code
Niall MacLeòid	Fàilte Do 'n Bhliadhn'- Ùir	1870 - 1880 (?)	A:74
Eòghann MacCòrcadail	Òran le Seann Ìleach	1877 (January 2nd)	A:30
Màiri Nic a' Phearsain (Màiri Mhòr nan Òran)	Fios gu Clach Àrd Ùige	1877 (post)	A:44
Iain MacIlleathain (Bàrd Bhaile Mhàrtainn)	Manitoba	1878	A:39
Iain MacDhòmhnuill (?)	Òran do Dhonnchadh Mac a' Phearsain...	1881	A:48
Niall MacLeòid	Clann Leòid	1882	A:75
Niall MacLeòid	Òran nan Croitearan	1882	A:76
Màiri Nic a' Phearsain (Màiri Mhòr nan Òran)	Nuair Chaidh na Ceithir Ùr Oirre	1883	A:45
Iain MacIlleathain (Bàrd Bhaile Mhàrtainn)	Slàinte Dhòmhnaill 'IcPhàrlain	1886	A:40
Màiri Nic a' Phearsain (Màiri Mhòr nan Òran)	Òran do <i>Dhail na Cluaidh</i>	1888	A:31
Peadar MacGhrìogair (Peter MacGregor)	Na Frithean Gàidhealach	1892	A:47
Peadar MacGhrìogair (Peter MacGregor)	Teann a-nall is Éisd na Facail	1892 (post) – 1895 (pre)	A:46

Table 6: The term *dùthchas* in poetry composed ca. 1870 - 1900

Dùthchas: 'native place' resurrected, 'customary ways' continued

There are four instances of *dùthchas* in a non-attributive form dating to the period of the Land Agitations. Two of these occur in poems composed by Niall MacLeòid (anglicised as Neil MacLeod), and we shall examine these first. Niall was born in 1843 in Glendale, Skye, and was the eldest son of Dòmhnall nan Òran, the poet whose *Òran Molaidh a' Bhuntàta* we have analysed above. Though he grew up in Glendale, Niall would spend virtually all of his adult life away from Skye, as he 'came to Edinburgh in the 1860s', 'joined the tea firm of his cousin Roderick MacLeod'

(Bateman 2014: xliii), and eventually died there, though A:74 suggests this was not necessarily his wish. In the 1890s, Niall was considered ‘the best known and most popular poet living’ (MacDiarmid in Bateman 2014: xvii), and this popularity continued after his death in 1913. His poems were first printed in *Clàrsach an Doire*, a book initially published in 1883 but re-printed five times between then and 1975, and Niall was a frequent guest of the ‘cèilidh halls of Glasgow and Edinburgh’ (Meek 2019: xvi). As has been mentioned above, much of Niall’s poetic output was romantic, causing Gaelic scholars of the later twentieth century to ‘consider him facile and superficial’ (Bateman 2014: xvii; c.f. Meek 2019: xv; MacLean 1985: 46), although Sorley MacLean himself noted this view was biased by the fact that MacLeòid’s poetry ‘of the Land League period’ was far less known, at least among later critics (MacLean 1985: 68). The first of Niall’s poems in my corpus is *Fàilte Do 'n Bhliadhn'-Ùir* (A:74) – it was certainly composed after the poet had been living in Edinburgh for some time, although I have been unable to determine more precisely whether this was in the late 1860s or early 1870s. It is evidently a composition intended for performance at a New Year celebration of one of the Gaelic societies in the Lowlands, as it is essentially an extended toast welcoming the new year and sending blessings to the Gaels ‘back home’, beyond the physical reach of the urban Gaels (MacLeòid 1975: 26). The poem is in the romantic vein: it acknowledges the Clearances (*‘s iomadh fàrdach tha gun smùid’*) but does not recommend taking any action other than ‘praising the Highlands to give the Gaels’ spirit the warmth they crave’ (*‘bidh an aigne blàth gach uair / nì iad luaidh air Tìr nam Beann’*). The poem celebrates the way bonds of kinship transcend space and time (*‘bidh ar càirdeas buan ‘s gach àm’*) and ends each stanza with a toast to the ‘Land of Mountains’ (*‘Tìr nam Beann’*); a somewhat romantic image of the *Gàidhealtachd* is created by the poet listing things which are absent in Edinburgh, such as deer upon hillsides, salmon-rich streams, the sound of pipes, and boys performing traditional Hogmanay rites (§2). Indeed, it is in this stanza that the poet uses the term *dùthchas*: MacLeòid states that ‘it is not natural for [Gaels] to be dwelling in the big city of high towers’ (*‘tàmh am baile-mór nan tùr / cha bu dùthchas dhuinn bhi ann’*, A:74). *Dùthchas* appears in the copula form here (*‘cha bu dùthchas dhuinn’*),²⁰⁹ a form very rare in the nineteenth century, though it formed almost half of all instances of *dùthchas* between 1640 – 1800. Indeed, MacLeòid is the *only* nineteenth-century poet in my corpus to use *dùthchas* in the copula form.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ This form can be seen in A:43, discussed in the previous section.

²¹⁰ It is worth reiterating here that the corpus aims to be representative, not totally comprehensive. The alternative version of A:38 given by Kidd has *‘bu dùthchas’* rather than *‘bu dùthchasach’* and reflects the natural variation of poetry in a living tradition of oral transmission. The first edition of Màiri Mhòr nan Òran’s poetry also features two poems containing *dùthchas* in the copula form, one praising the hereditary mettle of the MacRaes of Kintail, the other in a toast to an unidentified association of ‘emigré’ Gaels whose native place is the *Gàidhealtachd*, there given as ‘the North’ (MacPherson 1891: 69 and 232). However, these do not appear in edited anthologies and will not be discussed in detail in this thesis.

We will now turn to *Clann Leòid* (A:75), Niall's other poem containing the term *dùthchas* in copula form. I have dated this poem to 1882 or early 1883 – certainly before the first printing of *Clàrsach an Doire*, but the repeated mentions of Niall's 'kindred having awoken' ('*tha mo chinneadh air éirigh*') suggest it was composed after the Battle of the Braes and likely referred to the lead up to the Glendale crofters' rising, since Glendale was the territory of Neil's MacLeod '*cinneadh*' or kindred.²¹¹ The poem is an incitement poem for the MacLeods, and it is evidently an intentional resurrection of the style and form of the compositions of the 'clan poets'. A:75 is set to a traditional MacLeod tune, celebrates the unblemished renown of Clan Leod ('*tha bhur n-eachdraidh gun truailleadh*' = 'your history is undefiled'), their descent ('*bho Rìgh Lochlainn nan cuantan*' = 'from the Scandinavian King of the great seas'), their clan emblem and flag ('*bratach shithe nam buadhan*' = 'the Fairy Flag of virtues'), their culture in the persons of Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh and the piper Pàdruig Mór MacCriomainn, and their traditional clan seat at Dunvegan, '*an Dùn*'. It is in the context of Dunvegan that the term *dùthchas* makes an appearance: MacLeòid says his people have awoken and have unveiled their banners ('*tha 'n cuid bhrataichean rùisgte*') 'upon the battlements of Dunvegan, to which Clan MacLeod belong by ancestry' ('*mach air baideil an Dùine / dha 'm bu dùthchas Clann Leòid*'). The phrase's construction is such that that 'Clan Leod' is the object which is *dùthchas* to the subject, 'the Dùn'; the result is a more collectivist version of a phrase commonly used by the 'clan poets', where rather than a chief being *native to* their ancestral seat, all MacLeods are proclaimed to have this inalienable connection to place.²¹² This would certainly corroborate the thesis that nineteenth-century poets were actively 'retriangulating' *dùthchas* as a right of the tenantry, independent of the landowning classes. In the final two stanzas, Niall uses the imperative voice – frequently employed by the 'Jacobite poets' in their incitement-poetry – to encourage the Clan Leod to 'stand fast and strong', do deeds 'worth of esteem', and 'earn honour for their native land and renown for Clann Leod' ('*s coisnibh onair d' ar dùthaich / agus cliù do Chlann Leòid*'). On one hand, this seems to be encouragement for the north Skye Gaels to stand up for their rights, whether at Braes or elsewhere; on the other hand, there is a sense that Niall is encouraging temperance – MacLeòid has been called a 'cautious middle-aged man' (Bateman 2014: xliv) and seems to have been somewhat ideologically conflicted regarding direct action and the use of force. Despite this cautious note, A:75 attempts to foster a communal spirit, rekindle kin-based affiliations,

²¹¹ *Blàr a' Chumhang* or the Battle of the Braes was a violent confrontation between the people living in Gedintailor, Balmeanach and Peinchorran – three crofting townships in Braes, Skye – and around 50 policemen sent to assist the process of the people's eviction. For a more detailed account of this event, see Hunter 2018: 190-9.

²¹² One example of the phrase where a chief is *dùthchas* to a place – or a place is *dùthchas* to a chief – is Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh's *An Cròn nan* (A:6), mentioned by Niall MacLeòid in A:75. Other similar examples include A:21, A:12, A:77 and A:52, among others.

and the MacLeods' pride in their heritage, all while recapitulating the tenantry's hereditary right and affiliation with Dunvegan independent of a chief.

The other two uses of *dùthchas* we will examine in this section are actually 'attributive', but rather than *dùthchas* acting as an attributive noun, it appears in an adjective form, *dùthchasach*, which we have seen used a few times in the eighteenth century, and once in the early nineteenth.²¹³ The first of these is the Tiree poet Iain MacIlleathain's toast to Donald Horne Macfarlane, *Slàinte Dhòmhnaill 'IcPhàrlain* (A:40). The poem must have been composed after the General Election in July 1886, when Macfarlane – standing as an MP for the Crofters' Party in Argyllshire, which includes Tiree – was defeated by the Unionist John Wingfield Malcolm. The poet is effectively endorsing Macfarlane, raising a toast which the people of Tiree 'will drink with enthusiasm, in the land of heather in our native fashion' ('òlaidh sinn le dùrachd i / an tìr an fhraoich gu dùthchasach'), since Macfarlane's representation of the crofters' cause was 'a great honour to [their] country' ('on as urram mòr dar dùthaich e / thu dhol do chùirt nan Sasannach' = 'since it was a great honour to our country that you were sent to the English court'). The term *dùthchasach* bestows the attribute of a rite being customary, while attaching it to two phrases relating to the Gaels' land: 'tìr an fhraoich' and '[ar] dùthaich'.

The other use of the term *dùthchasach* in this period appears in a similar context. The Morvern poet Peadar MacGhriogair composed *Teann a-nall is Éisd na Facail* ('Come hither and listen to these words', A:46) sometime between 1892 and 1895; the term *dùthchasach* appears in a stanza praising the Gaelic author and songwriter Henry "Fionn" Whyte, who was a native of Easdale, an island some 13 miles south of Morvern (Thorner 1985: 39). Whyte is described as 'greatly renowned among the Gaels in every land' ('tha mòr-chliù ort / aig na Gàidheil anns gach dùthaich') because of his efforts at 'keeping awake the tongue which was native to our kind' ('cumaidh tu chànan 'na dùsgadh / a bha dùthchasach d'ar seòrsa'). In this case, the term *dùthchasach* signifies the Gaelic language as native to Gaels. The past tense is used here – 'the language which was native to our kind' – which could signify the fact that Gaelic *has always been, and always will be* native to Gaels, though it could also reflect the reality of language shift in late-nineteenth-century Argyllshire. Between the 1881 and 1891 census, the percentage of Gaelic speakers in Morvern had fallen from 86.2 to 78.5%, a change which would doubtless have concerned MacGhriogair (Duwe 2024: 9). The fact that both a place and a language may be considered a people's *dùthchas* (or as being *dùthchasach* to these people) may imply that the nineteenth-century poets were attempting to

²¹³ It appears in A:5, A:23, and A:43, and was certainly used as a noun as well as an adjective – see MacDhòmhnuill 1741: 40; the nineteenth century use is in A:38.

recapitulate the idea that the indigenous population had a right to dwell in the *Gàidhealtachd* which was as inalienable to them as their mother tongue or customs.

Dùthchas: an attribute of nouns relating to land

In this final section, we will examine the eight poems of the 1870 – 1900 period which contain *dùthchas* in an attributive genitive form. As has been stated above, all instances of *dùthchas* as an attributive noun from this period form clauses with nouns which relate to land, a marked difference to the poetry of the century's earlier two-thirds. *Dùthchas* is most often seen performing an attributive role in conjunction with 'tìr' at five instances; other nouns – such as 'glinn', 'eilean' or the 'còir' over Strome – appear only once.

Dùthchas and separation

Half of these instances may be grouped together as expressing the sentiment of separation from native place. This is because all four of these poems contain the verb *fàgail* ('to leave'), typically in the past-tense form *dh'fhàg*, in conjunction with the phrase containing the term *dùthchas*. These refer either to the poet's own separation from their native place, or to that of their subject. The Islay-born Eòghann MacCòrcadail left his native island, spending some time in the Lowlands before emigrating to Canada in the 1850s. His poem *Òran le Seann Ìleach* (A:30), composed in January 1877, tells of how it has been 'over twenty years since he left his native valleys' ('*tha còrr is fichead bliadhna thim / bhon dh'fhàg mi glinn mo dhùthchais*'), and that attempting to stay in Islay would have been 'pointless', since 'employment was scarce in the country' ('*bu nì gun fheum bhith fuireach ann / bha cosnadh gann san dùthaich*'). A:30 is effectively a pro-emigration poem, listing all of the benefits to be had in Canada which are unavailable to those who remain in the *Gàidhealtachd*, due to widespread Clearance (Meek 2019: 82-4, l.57-88). Though MacCòrcadail does not seem to wish he was still in Islay, the phrase '*glinn mo dhùthchais*' signifies a place with which he had a generational bond, but from which he was permanently separated by circumstance.

The difference in tone is palpable in the work of those who stayed behind, such as Iain MacIlleathain, the ‘Bard of Balemartin’ in Tìree,²¹⁴ or Iain MacDhòmhnuill of Morvern.²¹⁵ The former composed an emigration poem, *Manitoba* (A:39), in 1878, ‘when a group of MacLeans emigrated from Balephuill, Tìree, to Manitoba’ (Meek 1995: 81) which laments the ongoing Clearances on Tìree through ‘*daorachadh an fhearainn*’ (‘making the land expensive’, *ibid.*, l. 39), caused by the greed of ‘freeholders’ (*ibid.*: 80, l. 21-4), apparently blind to the great achievements of the Gaels during the Crimean war (*ibid.*: 81, l. 40).²¹⁶ The poet reminisces on the innocence of youth, before ‘worries and rent increases’ (‘*gun chùram... gun teannachadh màil*’), when ‘*Baile nam Bàrd*’ or the ‘Township of the Bards’ was a hub of social and cultural activity (l. 7-8). This is contrasted with the present day, with the poet ‘lamenting the spirited fellows who were kind and highly esteemed, who left their native island, forsaking it forever’ (‘*caoidh nam fear sunndach bha ceanalta, cliùiteach / dh’fhàg eilean an dùthchais ’s an cùl ris gu bràth*’).²¹⁷ *Dùthchas* bestows upon ‘the island’ the attribute of the indigenous habitation of the people who have been pushed to permanently leave it for ‘a place that’s unhealthy’ (‘*gu dùthaich mhì-fhallain*’, l. 35).

This may be compared with Iain MacDhòmhnuill’s similar poem composed three years later, in 1881, *Òran do Dhonnchadh Mac a’ Phearsain...* (A:48). The poem’s full title reveals that it is addressed to a MacPherson who sailed for New Zealand in September of that year, and the text reveals that the emigrant was a locally eminent poet.²¹⁸ MacDhòmhnuill praises MacPherson, stating that he shall be missed by many ‘now that you’ve left your native country’ (‘*on a dh’fhàg thu tìr do dhùthchais*’) – indeed, MacDhòmhnuill says ‘Morvern of the glens’ was sad herself, since the ‘*bàrd* who would sing her praises’ departed (‘*bha a’ Mhorbhairne ghleannach tùrsach: dh’ fhalbh am bàrd a sheinneadh cliù dhi*’). The deep, reciprocal relationship between poet and place-praised-by-poet has been severed – symbolising an ecosystem and world order thrown critically off-balance – and is portrayed through the sorrow of the land itself. This might be seen as an iteration of the animistic belief system linking the marriage of a rightful ruler to the land with fecundity and equilibrium – though here the people are gone, the land weeps, and the equilibrium has been destroyed.²¹⁹ It is also worth considering this poem in the context of the decline of spoken Gaelic in Morvern which we

²¹⁴ We have examined MacIlleathain’s poem *Slàinte Dhòmhnaill ‘IcPhàrlain* (A:40) in the section examining ‘other’ grammatical formulations in the 1870 – 1900 period above.

²¹⁵ Iain Thornber’s identification of this poem’s author as Iain MacDhòmhnuill is tentative (Thornber 1985: 70).

²¹⁶ Compare with the use of *dùthchas* to celebrate the Gaels’ martial heritage after the Battle of Alma in A:33.

²¹⁷ Compare the diction here with the diction of the Gaelic language translation of Jeremiah 22:10 analysed earlier in this chapter, particularly the exile leaving ‘*tìr a dhùchais*’ only to never see it again.

²¹⁸ For an example of MacPherson’s poetry, see Thornber 1985: 52-4.

²¹⁹ We have seen this concept used by poets in the eighteenth century when portraying either George III or Charles Edward Stuart as the rightful king (c.f. Ní Suaird 2003: 97-100; Campbell, J. 1984: 7 and 94-6, l. 21-30; A:24; Bateman and Purser 2020: 276-9 and 849; Bateman 2009: 143-4; Newton 2019: 130, 154, 227-42).

have noted above when discussing A:46. We can see that in this poem *dùthchas* also signifies the subject's indigenous place which circumstances had forced him to leave, illustrating the reality of so many Gaels in the nineteenth century, while emphasising their belonging to this place which transcends the fact of their physical separation from it.

Màiri Mhòr nan Òran ('Great Màiri of the Songs') is the '*far-ainm*' or nickname given to *Màiri nighean Iain Bhàin*, one of the most prolific Gaelic poets of the nineteenth century (Meek 1998: 32). Màiri was a *Sgitheanach* or Skye-woman born in 1821; her mother came from Uig and her father was a crofter from Skeabost in Skye. As per the Gaelic proverb, marriage took her away from her family *dùthchas* to Inverness, though she remained emotionally and physically connected with Skye and her family croft throughout her life (ibid: 212-5).²²⁰ Her husband Isaac died in 1871 and Màiri began employment as a domestic servant to support their six children; she was falsely accused of theft and imprisoned in 1872 which is what initially brought her to composing poetry (ibid: 60-82; c.f. MacLean 1985: 70). She began composing poetry about the Land Agitations, starting with the 'Bernera Riot' of 1874 in *Beàrnaraigh Mòr* in Lewis (Buchanan 1996: 25-38), and devoted herself to this cause so fully that she was considered '*par excellence* the poet of the [Highland] Land League' (MacLean 1985: 70). We will turn to her 'Land League' poetry shortly, but first, we will examine *Òran do Dhail na Cluaidh* (A:31), a poem she composed in 1888 in which she used the phrase '*tìr mo dhùthchais*'. The piece commemorates the fact that the eponymous steamship *Clydesdale* would no longer serve Skye; the ship had sailed from Stromeferry to Portree from 1886-1888 and between Glasgow and Stornoway for many years before then (Meek 2019: 418). Màiri Mhòr lived in Glasgow and Greenock between 1872-1882 (Meek 1998: 27-30), meaning the *Clydesdale* is probably the ship which had taken her from 'Glasgow of gables high, to head north to my home country' ('*fàgail Ghlaschu mòr nan stuagh / mu thuath gu tìr mo dhùthchais*').²²¹ This is the only instance I have found of Màiri Mhòr using the phrase '*tìr mo dhùthchais*', despite so many of her poems focusing on her native Skye. Màiri is the only female poet except Mairearad Ghriogarach whom I have seen use the phrase *mo dhùthchas* or *tìr mo dhùthchais* before the year 1900. It is possible that such assertions were rare because they had social ramifications, due to the customary force of proverbial sayings such as '*cha bhi dùthchas aig mnaoi no aig sagart*', which we have examined in relation to Mairearad Ghriogarach's poetry and Màiri Mhòr's own life. There is a bitter, sexist irony in the idea that *dùthchas* would be socially proscribed from women, when women had a front-line role in the Land Agitations, particularly in the

²²⁰ See also MacLean 1985: 71. What is more unusual is that although Màiri spent the last years of her life in Skye, she asked to be buried in Chapel Yard in Inverness, next to her 'beloved husband', rather than in her native island (Meek 1998: 30) – the custom in Màiri's time was certainly still to be buried with one's ancestors, as is evidenced by at least two of her poems (Meek 1998: 81, l. 57-60; ibid: 155, l. 49-52).

²²¹ See also Màiri's poem '*Ath-Ùrachadh m' eòlais*' in Meek 1998: 122-6.

crucial direct confrontations with ground officers and police (Henderson 1985; Robertson 1997; Devine 1999: 426; Wright forthcoming).²²² In terms of Màiri Mhòr's poetry, land rights play a central role in much of her work, though most often in the form of the word *còir*.²²³ The poet makes it evident that the *tuath* has inherent rights to land, yet these are sold by the landlords to deer hunters²²⁴ against the people's will,²²⁵ while the authorities use gunboats and armed forces to enforce the 'law of the land' ('*lagh an fhearainn*') which is at odds with the people's *còir*.²²⁶ Her use of *tìr mo dhùthchais* in A:31 therefore appears not to refer to her right over her father Iain Bàn's croft. Instead, in the context of all the time she had spent away from the island and sailing back to it, it evokes the poet's deep physical and psychological connection to north Skye (Scott 2017), the idea of 'her native land [being] in her blood' (MacLean 1985: 71) and being the *tobar* or well from which Màiri drew her 'grounded normativity', to paraphrase Coulthard.²²⁷

Dùthchas: an attributive noun in relation to the Land Agitations

In this second section, I have grouped together four poems which contain the term *dùthchas* in the attributive noun form, and as an attributive noun used in direct relation to the Land Agitations. The first of these is Màiri Mhòr nan Òran's poem *Fios gu Clach Àrd Ùige* (A:44), most likely composed when news had reached Màiri – who was living in Greenock at the time – about the cruel raising of rents on the Kilmuir estate (Meek 1998: 169; Hunter 2018: 183, 189-90). The poem is constructed as a message which Màiri wishes to be carried 'to her native country' ('*gu mo dhùthaich*') and conveyed to Clach Àrd Ùige, a prominent stone in Kilmuir (Meek 1998: 169).²²⁸ Bestowing anthropomorphic qualities upon rocks and mountains is a tradition in Gaelic poetry which goes back at least as far as Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn's *Creag Ghuanach* (Menzies 2012; c.f. Newton 2009: 99-105). It may well reflect the survival of certain animistic aspects of Gaelic cosmology – a type of synecdoche where a prominence, such as a boulder or mountain, represents all of the land around it or underneath it.²²⁹ It is also evocative of the Gaelic proverb '*thèid dùthchas an aghaidh nan creag*',

²²² I am deeply grateful to Grace Wright for her help with these sources.

²²³ See, for example, Meek 1998: 88, l. 57; 96, l. 30-2; 108, l. 105-6; 191, l. 11-2

²²⁴ Meek 1998: 96, l. 30-2

²²⁵ Ibid: 191, l. 17-20

²²⁶ Ibid, l. 16, 23-4, 25-8; c.f. Withers 1988: 364-5, 369-70 and 389-390

²²⁷ For a discussion of Màiri Mhòr's relationship with the *tobar* of her father in relation to *dùthchas*, see Newton 2009: 91.

²²⁸ Clach Àrd Ùige was also connected with a prophecy made by Coinneach Odhar or the Brahan Seer – see School of Scottish Studies 1956.

²²⁹ See Bateman and Purser 2020: 435-9 on 'totem stones' of certain kindreds and the various 'inauguration stones' of Gaelic kings, such as Lia Fáil, the Stone of Destiny, or the inauguration stone at Dunadd.

literally ‘*dùthchas* shall endure through stone’, though typically translated as conveying the sentiment of ‘blood being thicker than water’ and hereditary inclinations being difficult to shake.²³⁰ Màiri describes her ‘sorrow’ and ‘laments’ her ‘native country’ being ravaged by ‘plunderers’ (*‘chaoidh mo dhùthcha o luchd-reubainn’*, l. 2), and encourages the Kilmuir people to take a stand, supported by the Gaels in Greenock and Glasgow (l. 6-7, 44-7). Words of warning are issued against the proprietor, Captain Fraser, who purchased the Kilmuir estate in 1855,²³¹ and against Alasdair Ruadh Dòmhnallach, who was the baillie on this estate (Meek 1998: 169). The latter is singled out because Alasdair was the grandson of Alasdair MacLeòid, also known as *An Dotair Bàn* – although ‘a factor on a Highland estate has not usually been a popular personage... the *Doctor Bàn* was probably the most popular man who ever acted in that capacity in the Highlands’ (MacKenzie 2002: 11). MacLeòid came from the *daoine uaisle* of north Skye, North Uist and Raasay (ibid: 9) and is remembered as a polymath who applied his faculties – whether his knowledge of medicine or engineering – for the benefit of the Gaels (ibid: 9-14). Correspondence received by Alasdair Ruadh Dòmhnallach, the grandson, states that ‘no man knew the people better than your grandfather. He understood their powers, and better still their weaknesses’ (MacKenzie 2002: 11), and several of Màiri Mhòr’s poems show the great esteem in which she held *An Dotair Bàn*.²³² Her impression of the grandson was very different, especially upon hearing about the oppression suffered by the Kilmuir tenantry under Alasdair Ruadh’s direct orders; it is in her address to Alasdair Ruadh that we see the term *dùthchas*:

Ach cuimhnich thusa nis, a dhiùlnaich,

Tìr do sheanar is do dhùthchais,

’S feuch gun cùm thu suas an cliù,

’S nach caog thu ’n t-sùil air taobh na h-eucoir.

[But remember now, o champion, the land of your grandfather and your *dùthchas*; strive to keep up their honour, and don’t turn a blind eye to injustice.] (Emphasis my own)

We see Màiri Mhòr employing the ‘active-instructive’ voice in a similar way to the ‘clan poets’ of the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. She addresses this man in a position of power, descended from Skye’s *daoine uaisle*, and rebukes him for tarnishing his grandfather’s name

²³⁰ See Dziadowiec 2022b.

²³¹ Màiri’s primary concern was most likely the fact that Fraser did not belong to the traditional Skye landowning families. It may also be of interest that Fraser’s grandfather, William Fraser of Culbokie, was a major slavery beneficiary – see MacKinnon and MacKillop 2020: 19.

²³² Màiri composed verses stating: ‘since the fair doctor departed / we will never again expect / anyone to fill his place / but his words are good medicine for us’ – see MacKenzie 2002: 15.

and *cliù*.²³³ This is reminiscent of the poets' direct appeals to their subject's ancestral honour in earlier centuries,²³⁴ and supports MacLean's view that Màiri Mhòr's 'verse has more kinship with older Gaelic poetry than the verse of Niall MacLeòid and [most other poets of the Clearances]' (MacLean 1985: 70).

Màiri Mhòr instructs Alasdair Ruadh to 'remember' (*'cuimhnich'*) the land itself – then adds two attributes to this *'tìr'* or land, creating the phrase *'tìr do sheanar is do dhùthchais'*. The code of conduct Màiri is admonishing Alasdair Ruadh to follow is implicit in these three interlinked concepts: land (*tìr*), ancestry (*seanair* – in this case, a particularly robust role model), and a sense of belonging which links it all together (*dùthchas*). A failure to cease oppression of the Kilmuir tenantry would have real consequences: Màiri encourages the people to stand up for their rights, just as the tenants of Great Bernera had (l. 32-5, 40-3). As history and Màiri's later poetry shows us, Alasdair Dòmhnallach did not heed her advice and was reprimanded again for 'fighting against the great men of the Braes' (*'sabaid ri fir mhòr a' Bhràighe'*, MacPherson 1891: 278), while the Kilmuir people began their counter-attack with a rent-strike in 1881 (Hunter 2018: 189).

We will now move onto another of Màiri Mhòr's compositions. Sometime between 1883 and 1885, the poet composed *Nuair Chaidh na Ceithir Ùr Oirre* ('When the four new faces took a boat-trip', A:45).²³⁵ It is a rather light-hearted poem commemorating a time when a *'sgioba neònach'* or 'unusual crew' took a small oaken ferry boat out of Strome together. This *'sgioba neònach'* included Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, Inverness-born lawyer and politician who likely attempted to defend Màiri Mhòr in court when she had been wrongly accused of theft, and later championed the crofters' cause in his political career; Coinneach 'Beag' MacDonald, town clerk of Inverness, assistant to Fraser-Mackintosh, and lawyer who defended crofters at the time of the Land Agitations, including the people of Braes in Skye; Alexander 'Clach na Cùdainn' Mackenzie, a Gairloch crofter's son who became a cloth merchant in Inverness and later a founding member of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, editor and publisher of the periodicals *Celtic Magazine* and *Scottish Highlander*, as well as a prolific writer of clan histories and the influential 1883 book *The History of the Highland Clearances*; Mackenzie's son Eachann 'Òg' Mackenzie; and Màiri Mhòr herself. A squabble begins between 'Clach na Cùdainn' and Màiri Mhòr, with Mackenzie claiming that Màiri, a woman of considerable stature, would sink the boat if she got on board, but Màiri ignores these remarks; the crew rows the boat across to North Strome safely and with loud merry singing heard on either side of

²³³ See Meek 1998: 168, l. 12-5.

²³⁴ See, for example, discussions of A:69 and A:17 above.

²³⁵ I take this to mean that the four men travelling with Màiri were *'ùr'* or 'new' to Skye (and Lochalsh), as opposed to Màiri, who belonged to the island.

Strome (Meek 1998: 187, l. 44-7). The party receives a warm welcome from the family of the recently-deceased Farquhar MacRae, innkeeper of the North Strome Hotel – his wife, Proby Mary MacKenzie, and their daughter, Bella (ibid: 188-9; Macpherson 2010).²³⁶ It is in relation to Proby Mary MacKenzie that we see Màiri Mhòr use the term *dùthchas*: the poet states that the ‘unusual crew’ was crossing the ferry at Strome to visit the ‘*mnaoi-uasail chòir*’, or ‘kindly noblewoman’, possibly as part of a canvassing campaign on behalf of the crofters’ cause. Proby was thus described because of her ancestry – she was descended from the MacKenzies of Applecross, the ‘native aristocracy’ of Kishorn, Applecross, and parts of Lochalsh (Meek 1998: 188). These MacKenzies had sold their estates in 1857 (Mackenzie 1894: 603), meaning Proby Mary would have witnessed the family’s circumstances being much reduced when compared with that of her predecessors. Nonetheless, Màiri Mhòr says of MacKenzie ‘*bha còir aice thaobh dùthchais air*’ (‘she had a right to it [Strome] through *dùthchas*’).

I believe that this phrase is stating that Proby Mary had a *còir* or legally-recognised right to at least part of Strome, even if much of her family no longer had possession of much of their former estate; furthermore, Màiri Mhòr is effectively legitimating Proby Mary’s right thereto as not only sanctioned by title deeds but also by her *dùthchas*, that is, her family’s multigenerational connection to it as part of the native aristocracy. This may have been Màiri Mhòr’s way of implicitly stating that because of their *dùthchas*, the connection which the MacKenzies of Applecross had to these lands was *more* legitimate than the one which any of the ‘new’ local proprietors with no traditional links to the area had.²³⁷ If this reading is correct, it would make this instance an outlier in the context of this entire century, where – as we have seen – the poets’ tendency has been to retriangulate *dùthchas* as the tenantry’s inalienable right, rather than acting in the traditional capacity of ‘legitimator of chiefly power’ seen in previous chapters. Màiri Mhòr certainly appears to have been one of the poets to whom discarding the loyalties customarily due to the *Gàidhealtachd*’s native aristocracy did not come easily.²³⁸ She may have also earnestly, if naively, believed that the *daoine uaisle* could be convinced to support the tenantry’s cause since they were ultimately kin.

Furthermore, we know that Proby Mary’s husband Farquhar MacRae had died in 1883, some two years before the Strome ferry crossing described in this poem; it is plausible Màiri Mhòr would

²³⁶ Màiri Mhòr refers to a poem addressed to Bella composed by Niall MacLeòid (l. 60-3), giving a good idea of how familiar Màiri was with Niall’s compositions, and indicating Niall may have had an equivalent knowledge of Màiri’s compositions, as well as that of their contemporaries.

²³⁷ This lack of local, traditional connection to place on part of Captain Fraser, proprietor of the Kilmuir estate from 1855, certainly seems to be part of the issue which Màiri Mhòr took with him – see discussion of A:44 above.

²³⁸ See, for example, Màiri’s praise-poem for the Duke of Sutherland (1828 – 1892), grandson of George Granville Leveson-Gower, infamous for his part in the Sutherland Clearances (Meek 1998: 91-4).

have felt compelled to legitimate Proby Mary's *còir* – through *dùthchas*, no less – because the MacKenzie woman's rights to her possessions as a widow were under scrutiny. A:45 is one of only three instances in my entire corpus where a female poet refers to the *dùthchas* of another woman, with the other two instances dating back to the eighteenth century and referring to the subject's hereditary characteristics rather than her rights to land with *dùthchas* as the force by which these are legitimate.²³⁹ As we have seen in the previous chapter, there was a Gaelic proverb apparently proscribing women from having *dùthchas*, meaning all three of these instances were effectively acts of resistance. In the central Highlands in the late eighteenth century, widowhood appears to have been one of few ways through which a woman was able to become a landholder, though typically this entailed 'maintaining the family *dùthchas* until a son could take over' (Taylor 2015: 33). Proby Mary and Farquhar's son Malcolm was 34 when Farquhar died, but his place of death is given as Salen in Mull (Macpherson 2010). Perhaps there were voices inside or outside the local community who believed that a widow with an adult son unable or unwilling to take over his father's hotel business and land was not a suitable proprietor, but Màiri Mhòr used some of the most semantically powerful terms in her poetic arsenal to defend the MacKenzie woman's right to North Strome.

The third poem we will examine in this section is *Òran nan Croitearan* (A:76), composed by Niall MacLeòid sometime between 1881 – 1883, presumably towards the start of this period as it seems to precede the height of the Land Agitations. MacLean asserts that by the later twentieth century, many of MacLeod's compositions 'of the Land League period' – such as A:76 – had fallen into obscurity when compared with his perennially popular romantic compositions like '*An gleann san robh mi òg*' (MacLean 1985: 68). Nonetheless, there is much contemporary evidence of Niall's unrivalled popularity (MacDiarmid in Bateman 2014: xvii)²⁴⁰, and it is plausible that *Òran nan Croitearan* was commonly known and sung among the crofters of the *Gàidhealtachd*. Its potential of having been a 'crofters' anthem' is heightened by the fact that it is composed in the form of a waulking song, which traditionally had one leading 'caller' singing individual verses and a refrain sung by all present at the waulking. The tune it is set to is '*Agus hó Mhórag*', one of Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's popular Jacobite compositions in which 'a nobleman' addresses 'his sweetheart Mòrag' who has 'crossed the sea' – with 'Mòrag' being a code-name for Prince Charles Edward

²³⁹ The two poems in question are Catriona NicGilleathain's poem to a MacLean woman of the same name, posthumously praising her feminine qualities and humility while celebrating the fact she was buried according to custom in her people's traditional burial grounds (A:43), and Mairead Ghriogarach's praise-poem to her foster-daughter, praising her heartiness and cheerfulness which she inherited by way of *dùthchas* from her MacGregor grandfathers (A:57).

²⁴⁰ See also discussion of Màiri Mhòr's A:45 above.

Stuart (MacDonald 1851: 64-70). The significance of Niall MacLeòid's poem being set to a Jacobite tune will be examined below.

The refrain of A:76 mirrors the refrain of Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's original, save for one line, which instead states '*na hó-ro ach gheibh sinn fearann*', three vocables followed by the phrase 'but we shall get land'. This refrain would have been repeated 22 times throughout the course of the poem, which is composed of 21 verses, and would have been a powerful affirmation of the Gaelic tenantry's intent and goal.²⁴¹ The majority of the verses in the song are constructed in the definitive future tense, with verbs like '*gheibh*' or '*thèid*' or '*togaidh*' prophetically signifying things which shall come to pass. These include '*gheibh sinn raointean glas ar sinnsear*' ('we shall get the green fields of our ancestors'), '*gheibh sinn fuasgladh bho'n luchd-fòirneirt*' ('we shall receive liberation from the oppressors'), '*thèid gach cuing a bh' òirnn a ghearradh*' ('every yoke which has been upon us shall be cut loose'), or '*togaidh sinn ar cinn gu dàna, dh' aindeoin bàillidh...*' ('we shall lift up our heads boldly, despite the bailiff...'; MacLeòid 1975: 39-40). One of these definitive statements is:

Gheibh sinn còir air **tìr ar dùthchais**,

Chaidh a spùinneadh bhuainn le ceannairc.

Agus hó Mhórag,

Na hó-ro ach gheibh sinn fearann...

[We shall get the right to the lands of our ancestors which were plundered from us by way of terrorism. And hó, Mòrag, we shall get the land... (A:76, emphasis my own)]

First and foremost, Niall's composition states 'we shall get the right' – it is noteworthy that the title of this composition is *Òran nan Croitearan*, the 'Song of the Crofters', yet Niall uses the term '*sinn*' meaning 'we' throughout the poem.²⁴² By 1882 MacLeòid had lived a merchant's life in Edinburgh for around twenty years, which would make the class-oriented identification with '*croitearan*' somewhat superficial. However, MacLeòid's poem repeatedly refers to '*na Gàidheil*' ('the Gaels') and '*tìr nam beann*' – one of Niall's preferred expressions for the *Gàidhealtachd* – while refraining from any mentions of 'crofters' beyond the title. This supports MacKinnon's assertion that

²⁴¹ Niall's *Òran nan Croitearan* is a considerably 'abridged' take on mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's 47-verse long original.

²⁴² This appears to be a characteristic feature of the poetry of the 1880s when compared with earlier nineteenth-century poetry – see MacGregor forthcoming, footnotes 10 and 11.

in the late nineteenth century, Gaels involved in the Land Agitations were operating within the confines of an ethnic or national Gaelic identity, rather than a class-based crofters' one (MacKinnon 2019); thus Niall MacLeòid's use of '*sinn*' refers to 'Gaels', evidently the core of Niall's identity, apparently unchanged by his increased affluence or time spent in the city which 'was not his *dùthchas*' (A:74), an identity central to the Land Agitations in general. Not unlike Màiri Mhòr's A:45 and Gilleasbaig Caimbeul's A:35, Niall's poem draws attention to the close relationship between *dùthchas* and *còir*. However, while A:35 identifies *reachd* as the legal and statutory recognition of the people's rights, Niall appears to use *còir* in this capacity a few decades later: *tìr ar dùthchais*, the 'land of our *dùthchas*', is a bond to place independent of legal proprietorship, and the Gaels are campaigning to get the *còir* or legal recognition of their customary tenure sanctioned by ancestral connection.

We will now return to the importance of Niall's 'crofters' anthem' being set to a Jacobite tune. MacLean has written of 'the resurgence' and 'change of temper' to be seen in Gaelic poetry of the Land Agitations, particularly when compared to the dejection of the poetry 'of the Clearance period' earlier in the century (MacLean 1985: 67-8). The 'extraordinary vitality and natural *joie de vivre*' which MacLean saw in the work of the 'great' eighteenth-century Gaelic poets like Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair were not only matched but surpassed, in his opinion, by the *joie de vivre* of Màiri Mhòr (ibid: 253). Indeed, when taking the poetry as a face-value source, the Gaels' seemingly universal support for the crofters' cause mirrors the poetry's portrayal of universal support for the Jacobite cause, as discussed in the seventh chapter. The Jacobite poets used the existing genre of '*brosnachadh*' or incitement-poetry to redirect martial clan sentiment towards an effectively nationalist cause. The key to achieving this was unity – and a lack of unity would doom the cause. A young Donnchadh Bàn believed that had all of the kindreds or '*fineachan*' 'been of one mind in the year when came the rising' ('*nam biodh iad uile r'a chéile*'), then there would not have been any army in all of Europe capable of stopping the Jacobites (A:10, l. 67-72). Likewise, Niall MacLeòid believed that if 'all our Gaelic kindreds were united' ('*ma bhios ar fineachan aontach*'), they would get the 'freedom they desire' ('*gheibh sinn saorsa mar bu mhaith leinn*', MacLeòid 1975: 41).

Appeals to such unity sparked linguistic and stylistic innovation in Jacobite poetry – one of these was the phrase '*an guallibh a chéile*' which means standing together in unity, shoulder to shoulder. Thus in the eighteenth century we saw the Keppoch poet Nighean Aonghais Òig's appeal to the Camerons of Bun Arkaig and the MacDonalds of Keppoch to 'combine their endowments', for their 'strength is [standing] shoulder to shoulder' ('*ur neart an guallibh a chéile*', A:8). The Jacobite poet Angus MacDonald's 1745 composition *Òran Brosnachaidh do na Gàidheil* introduced, or popularised, the use of the plural vocative '*A chlannaibh nan Gàidheal*' ('o clans of the Gael', A:7), a

phrase frequently used in the late nineteenth-century ‘Gaelic revival’. Peadar MacGhrìogair uses the vocative ‘*a chlann nan Gàidheal*’ in A:46 (Thornber 1985: 38), while Niall MacLeòid’s Land Agitation era composition *Clann nan Gàidheal* opens with ‘*a chlann nan Gàidheal*’ before encouraging the Gaels to ‘stand as is our native way / to protect our land and our people’ (‘*feumaidh sinn seasamh mar bu dual / a dhìon ar tìr ’s a dhìon ar sluaigh*’, MacLeòid 1975: 162-3).²⁴³ MacLeòid employs similar diction in his composition ‘*S e nis an t-Àm*’ (‘Now is the Time’), encouraging the ‘*clann nan Gàidheal*’ to ‘stand up loyally / together as is our native way’ (‘*seasaibh-se gu dìleas suas / an taic a chèile mar bu dual*’ (MacLeòid 1975: 151). Indeed, the phrase ‘*Clanna nan Gàidheal ri Guaillibh a Chèile*’ may be seen as the Highland Land League’s ‘auxiliary slogan’, as the words appeared wrapped on a banner on the left-hand side of each Highland Land League membership card, below the more central and well-known slogan ‘*IS TREISE TUATH NA TIGHEARNA*’ (‘the people are mightier than the laird’).²⁴⁴ The urgency inherent in phrases like ‘*s e nis an t-àm*’ was also present in much Jacobite rhetoric, such as Nighean Aonghais Òig’s address to Clan Gregor, where she postulated that the ‘45 Rising was their time to wake up and recover their *dùthchas*, though the Campbells yoke had long been upon them (‘*a Chlann Ghriogair a’ chruadail... so an t-àm dhuibh bhith dùsgadh, thoirt ur dùthchas fhèin dhachaigh, ’s ged is fad o’n tha ’chuing oirbh, thèid na Duibhnich fo’r casaibh*’ = ‘o valiant Clan Gregor, since you ever were manful... now’s the time to awaken, your own to recover, though long their yoke’s on you, on the Campbells you’ll trample’, A:8). Finally, one of Niall MacLeòid’s apparent poetic innovations is the use of the plural possessive pronoun ‘*ar*’ when speaking about *dùthchas*: Niall stipulates that ‘we shall get’ (‘*gheibh sinn*’) the right to the ‘land of our *dùthchas*’ (‘*tìr ar dùthchais*’).²⁴⁵ This could be seen as taking the innovation of the Jacobite poets one step further: the poets of the ‘15 and ‘45 appealed to a communal *dùthchas* which was to be protected (‘*dìon ur sean-sonais ’s ur dùthchas*’ A:9), re-claimed (‘*seo an t-àm dhuibh bhith dùsgadh / thoirt ur dùthchais fhèin dhachaidh*’ A:8) or won back by conquest (‘*gheibh sibh pailteas gach dùthcha, cha n-è ur dùthchas as nì leibh*’ A:7), though always remained a step removed from their addressees, using the second person plural pronoun ‘your’ (‘*ur*’) rather than the first person plural ‘our’ (‘*ar*’).

²⁴³ Another late nineteenth-century instance is Donnchadh mac Ille Ruaidh’s ‘*Ri Guaillibh a Chèile*’ (Mac Ille Ruaidh 2015). Late eighteenth-century instances may in turn be found in Donnchadh Bàn’s poetry, such as *Òran nam Fineachan a fhuair am fearann air ais* and the 1785 *Rann do ’n Ghàidhlig ’s do ’n Phìob-Mhòir*, see MacLeod 1952: 244, l. 3581-2 and *ibid*: 294, l. 4284-7.

²⁴⁴ See copy of Highland Land Law Reform Association’s membership certificate in the opening pages of Meek 1995.

²⁴⁵ An instance of this grammatic formulation had appeared in the 1807 Gaelic Bible – see Jeremiah 46:16 discussed at the beginning of this chapter – though its use in poetry appears to be MacLeòid’s innovation.

The implications of these similarities between the diction employed by Niall MacLeòid and some of his late nineteenth-century contemporaries, and that of the Jacobite poets, are twofold. Firstly, we have seen that Jacobite poetry was characterised by an ardent militarism, the use of the term *dùthchas* as a motivator, and calls for unity which transcended clan loyalties – features which made the propaganda of the mid-1740s effective at garnering popular support, despite the ultimate failure of the '45 Rising. This would have made Jacobite poetry the obvious choice for poetic inspiration among those poets of the Land Agitations who were looking to raise popular support for the movement represented by the Highland Land Law Reform Association and Crofters' Party, since the movement aimed to transcend locality – not only within the *Gàidhealtachd*, but also among the large Lowland emigrant communities and the Gaelic diaspora abroad. Secondly, it is no accident that both the Jacobite poetry and the poetry of the Land Agitations see a proliferation in use of the ethnonym '*Gàidheal*', particularly in the vocative '*a chlanna nan Gàidheal*'. Gaelic poets appear to have played a major role in building feelings of peoplehood or even nationhood among the Gaels for as long as they have practised their craft. Unsurprisingly, the effort to foster peoplehood was doubled when the poets believed they could use it to secure a better future for Gaels within a Stuart-ruled Britain, much like they did some 140 years later in an effort to secure the tenantry's *còir* to the 'land of their *dùthchas*'.

Finally, we will look at Peadar MacGhrìogair's poem *Na Frithean Gàidhealach* (A:47). We have seen this poet use the term *dùthchasach* when referring to the Gaelic language, already in decline in his native Morvern in the 1880s and 1890s.²⁴⁶ In *Na Frithean Gàidhealach*, MacGhrìogair critiques the proliferation of deer forests in the *Gàidhealtachd*, but the newspaper clipping where Thornber located this poem was undated (Thornber 1985: 43). The poem's references to a 'noble company' who had gone north to represent the people's cause ('*a chomuinn uasail dh'fhalbh mu thuath uainn*', Thornber 1985: 41) suggests it may have been composed around 1892 – 1895, when another Royal Commission of Inquiry had been set up to look into land which had been used for sport shooting as 'deer forests' and whether parts of these could be 'advantageously occupied by crofters of other small tenants' (Cameron 1992: 84; c.f. Hunter 2018: 249-51). The background to this situation is described by MacGhrìogair as a 'great decaying change in all respects which has come over my native land' ('*nach mór am mùthadh air gach cùis dhi, an tìr mo dhùthchais 's m' eòlais*'). This change over the land of Peadar's *dùthchas* seems to have occurred 'since we [the people] received a message from the court that caused us a sad awakening' ('*on fhuair sinn teachdaireachd o'n chùirt, thug dhuinn an dùsgadh brònach*') – 'every delightful home should be without smoke,

²⁴⁶ See the discussion of A:46 above.

every field and corner under moss, the deer has put us in disarray and banished us to a distant land' (*'gach fàrdach chùbhraidh bhith gun smùid, gach réidhlean 's lùb fo chóinnich, chuir mac-an-fhéidh sinn troimh a chéile, do dhùthaich chéin air fògairt'*, A:47). I have not been successful in determining what this 'message from the court' received by the people of Morvern may have been. The stock images of clearance and desolation, such as empty houses or untilled arable land, could have been used by a poet at any point in the nineteenth century, but the disarray being caused by deer or '*mac-an-fhéidh*' is an innovation of the final decades of this century, when the 'Lowland shepherd' and 'great sheep' were no longer the main cause of dispossession. Ewen Cameron notes that in 1893, George Malcolm, the representative of the Highland Property Association – a landlords' pressure group which opposed the efforts of the 'Deer Forest Commission' and the Land League's activists operative within it – was actively corresponding with Walter Elliot, the factor on Ardtornish Estate in Morvern (Cameron 1992: 98). If MacGhrìogair was referring to news reaching the Morvern tenantry about a land settlement falling through, this would not explain him wishing good fortune and success (*'guidheam buaidh bhith 'n dàn duibh'*) to the '*comunn uasal*' heading north to presumably represent the people. The '*teachdaireachd o'n chùirt*' could be referring retrospectively to eviction notices served to the people during the Lochaline Estate eviction of 1866 (Gaskell 1980: 95, 215-7), although it does not seem to sit comfortably with the lines referring to the imminent repurposing of the deer forests with '*crann is cliath mar b' àbhaist*' ('with plough and harrow as of old', Thornber 1985: 43).

If we accept that the poem was composed in the mid-1890s, we may see A:47 as an example of the failure of the crofting legislation of the 1880s to abate the mainland and island Gaels' land hunger. The phrase '*tìr mo dhùthchais 's m' eòlais*' is yet another instance of the semantic distinction between land, '*tìr*', and belonging to it, '*dùthchas*', establishing itself in nineteenth-century Scottish Gaelic in response to the Gaels' lived experience of dispossession. The poem also evidences incitement to direct action in the latter years of the Land Agitations' period. MacGhrìogair incites the people to 'wake up' and not 'yield to the deceivers', and says that the tenantry will obtain freedom and 'written title to land and sea' though a 'hard struggle' was yet in store all around Scotland before the 'debts' incurred by their oppressors 'were settled' (*'Dùisgibh suas... is do luchd-ceilg na strìochdaibh... saors' air tìr is sìth air fairge, 's gheibh sibh sealbh air sgrìobhte, ach bidh cruaidh strì mu chrìochaibh Albainn mum bi fiachan air an dìoladh'*, Thornber 1985: 43). This incendiary rhetoric – evocative of A:76 and Jacobite poetry – shows us that a '*fuasgladh*' or resolution (MacLeòid 1975: 40) to the Land Question had not yet been achieved in the *Gàidhealtachd* of the 1890s. MacGhrìogair was trying to keep the fires stoked and placed his hopes in the '*comunn*' representing the voice of the tenantry, though the Morvern branch of the Highland Land Law Reform Association 'finally died, split by faction, in 1892' (Gaskell 1980: 100). The sad historical reality is that although

17,477 acres of land across Morvern were recommended for ‘conversion into new and extended crofters’ holdings’ by the Deer Forest Commission, ‘the report [was] never acted upon’ in this area (ibid).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the use of *dùthchas* in the poetry of the nineteenth-century Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*. It started by examining the changed social and economic circumstances of the nineteenth-century poets when compared to poets of previous centuries, and by pointing out how widespread personal experience of dislocation and dispossession was for this century’s Gaelic poets. It then noted an innovative linguistic and semantic feature which became common in nineteenth-century poetry despite being very obscure before this point in time – the use of *dùthchas* as a noun in the genitive case, but ‘in an attributive or associative function’, usually in combination with another noun referring to land such as ‘tìr’. McQuillan has observed a similar development in the use of the term *dúchas* in Irish, although a century or two earlier (McQuillan 2004: 40-44). He believes this linguistic development mirrors the ‘sweeping socio-economic and cultural changes of this period’ in Ireland, particularly the Tudor conquest and an abrupt end to the remaining Gaelic aristocracy in 1607. Although the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*’s kin-based society began breaking down around the same time (Bannerman 1986: 120), most of the native aristocracy kept possession of their landed estates until the nineteenth century, even if their social role within them diverged a long way from being a ‘clan chief’. Thus, I posited that the fact that a parallel linguistic development emerges in Scottish Gaelic poetry around 1800 suggests that it was the chaos of the Clearances which forced the poets to reformulate the notion that *dùthchas* was an inalienable right inherent in the tenantry independent of the clan gentry, and to accept society’s ‘new order’ in order to be able to critique it.

One noticeable feature of the way in which the poets were using *dùthchas* in the final decades of the nineteenth century is their concern with fostering a sense of connection, continuity, and even peoplehood at a time characterised by widespread separation and disconnection. The way in which Jacobite rhetoric was re-purposed for the ‘crofters’ cause’ deserves further study, as does the interplay between use of *dùthchas* and Gaelic ethnonyms in poetry.

10. Conclusion

The first aim of this thesis which I laid out in the Introduction was to collate as many instances of *dùthchas* as possible in order to create a solid foundation from which to conduct my analysis. I believe I achieved this aim to the best of my ability within the time constraints of this project, since I managed to gather 69 unique poems dating to the period between 1640 and 1900 in the Appendix below, as well as a further eight instances which pre-date 1640. Although these do not appear in the Appendix, the fourth chapter also examined a further group of instances of *dùthchas* from Irish prose sources. The earliest of these was compiled in the twelfth century, but the term was most likely known in ninth-century Ireland and plausibly even earlier than that. I have discussed the various limiting factors and how I tried to mitigate them in the Methodology chapter, explaining, for example, what influenced me when making the difficult choice to include some poets' work at the price of excluding others'. Nonetheless, I believe the corpus of instances in the Appendix is both representative and comprehensive enough to have enabled me to successfully achieve the second aim of this project.

The second aim was to analyse the way *dùthchas* was used between 1640 and 1900 synchronically and diachronically in order to better understand what the term meant. Across the past five chapters, I have analysed the contexts within which the respective poets decided to use the term *dùthchas*, attempting to understand the meaning the word carried in relation to a particular context – the novel way Iain Lom used *dùthchas* in combination with negative attributes to shame the *Sìol Dùghaill* perpetrators of the 1663 Keppoch Murders, for example – as well as the overarching ways in which the term evolved over time, drawing attention to the most common grammatical form the term was used in across the different chapters, for example. Although my approach was mostly explorative, I remained mindful of the research questions I asked myself at the start of the project: whether *dùthchas* was a term invoked at points of crisis, and why; and whether it formed part of the intellectual and philosophical framework which underpinned the late nineteenth-century Land Agitations?

In the Introduction I also acknowledged the potential vulnerability of any of my findings regarding *dùthchas* as a cosmological and epistemological concept to 'accusations of essentialism' and referred to Kockel's proposed differentiation between 'shallow' and 'deep essentialisms' (Kockel 2015: 29-30). Kockel suggests that a "deep essentialism" seeks to establish, rather than assert, the relationships and processes through which people engage with places and vice versa' (ibid), and 'places' have been paramount to the processes of recovering the meanings conveyed by each

instance of *dùthchas* in the poetic sources, and attempting to understand these through ‘the focal web of belief and kinship’ (Caimbeul 2006: xi) which the Gaels who had uttered them understood them through. I have discovered that *dùthchas* was used in texts which described the Gaels’ relationship to place for over a thousand years; this concept’s remarkable antiquity and resilience lends itself to making ‘deep essentialisms’ about its nature.

My analysis of sources in the fourth chapter demonstrated that for as long as the historical record allows us to see, *dùthchas* has been inseparable from Gaelic identity. In *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, composed in the first decade of the twelfth century, we saw *dùthchas* and semantically-related terms from the *dù-* family used in a passage which dictates what it meant to be one of the Dál Cais and what it meant to be a Gael, building an ‘in-group’ identity which differentiated them from the Scandinavian ‘foreigners’. This identity was based on characteristics which either were or were not ‘native and natural’ to them (Todd 1867: 68), on their shared and ancient connection to a revered locus, in this case Cashel (ibid: 70), on perceiving said locus as their birthright (ibid), and on the emotional and moral imperative which makes protecting this locus by force legitimate (ibid; c.f. McQuillan 2004: 69-70). The *Cogad* also tells us that there was a depth of connection felt towards *dùthchas* which was not felt towards ‘*fearand forgabala ocus claidim*’ (‘conquest-land and sword-land’), presumably because the people did not possess a birthright or ancestral connection to the latter two (ibid). *Betha Colaim Chille*, a hagiography of St. Columba composed over four centuries later during the Tudor conquest of Ireland, demonstrated that there was continuity in the association of *dùthchas* and one’s native place, vividly describing the emotional bond between a person and their *dùthchas*, and the pain associated with leaving it and being apart from it (O’ Kelleher & Shoeppele 1918: 52-3, 194-5). *Betha Colaim Chille* is not the earliest instance of *dùthchas* being used in the context of being away from one’s native place – Giolla Brighde Albanach, a thirteenth-century poet, used the term to express his longing and love for Scotland while being in Ireland (A:71).²⁴⁷ In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, we saw several examples of *dùthchas* being used in the context of a clan chief being physically absent from his seat of power, with the poets evidently seeing this as going against the natural order (e.g. A:42, A:6, A:20, A:4). The stronger sense of ‘self’ and personal dimension of Mairearad Ghriogarach’s poetry provided us with examples of *dùthchas* being conceived of as an ancestral home from which the poet and her family were painfully separated in the late eighteenth century (e.g. A:53, 54, 55, 56). The term *dùthchas* was also

²⁴⁷ There are other instances where *dùthchas* was used by either Irish or Scottish Gaels to express their connection to their respective *dùthchas* while being away from it; for two examples, see A:2 or the dialogue between Naoise and Fergus in the traditional story about Deirdre and the Sons of Uisneach in Newton 2019: 307. For a comparative paper on notions of exile in Gaelic Ireland and Scotland which mentions *dùthchas* see Murphy 2009.

frequently used in nineteenth-century ‘emigrant poetry’ when describing the poet’s or addressee’s physical absence from their family’s ‘native place’ (e.g. A:29, A:35, A:74). Although the reasons for the nineteenth-century Gaels’ *cianalas* or ‘homesickness’ were very different to Giolla Brighde Albanach’s experience in the thirteenth century, it seems that physical absence from their *dùthchas* prompted Gaels to ponder and vocalise their relationship to it. If so, absence from one’s *dùthchas* was but one type of ‘crisis’ which prompted Gaels to invoke this term, with its connotations of the natural and right order of things.

Another context in which we saw *dùthchas* being used in the earliest Irish sources was the legitimacy of rulers. Though copied into a twelfth-century manuscript, the teachings of King Cormac Mac Airt or *Tecosca Cormaic* likely date back to the ninth century. This Old Irish gnomic text states that the ideal ruler must be characterised by excellence in all of his attributes, including ‘excellence of *dùthchas*’ (Fomin 2013: 158-9); this all-around excellence and lack of any blemish were crucial for a ruler to be considered legitimate (Coira 2012: 45). Panegyric poetry was still being used by Scottish Gaelic poets to bestow legitimacy upon clan chiefs nine centuries later, with *dùthchas* being invoked to both actively and passively influence the chiefs’ behaviour.²⁴⁸ The term played a crucial role in the poets’ ‘bardic carrot and stick of fame and shame’ (Gillies 1991: 28-9): *dùthchas* acted as a social and hereditary ‘determinant of behaviour’ (Macinnes 1996: 3) when a chief’s genealogy was traced and the honourable deeds and behaviours of their ancestors listed, delineating the poet’s and the kin-group’s expectations of the chief. Failure to fulfil these expectations was a blot on the chief’s personal and ancestral honour – a blemish which could render their rule illegitimate. The most forthright threat issued by a poet whose chiefly patron’s behaviour had strayed from the expected norm is A:69, Neil MacEwen’s petition to Argyll for the restoration of Neil’s father’s *dùthchas* composed in the early 1640s. We have also seen a continuity in the poets’ use of *dùthchas* to comment on the legitimacy of a monarch’s claim to the throne, or the lack thereof, particularly in the poems of Iain Lom and Donnchadh Bàn (e.g. A:13, A:16, A:24), and the legitimacy of the monarchy was a major theme in the Jacobite poetry analysed in chapter seven.

We have frequently seen another term being used by the poets alongside *dùthchas* when discussing notions of legitimacy – *còir*. Its salience in Jacobite rhetoric has been noted by scholars (Ní Suard 2003). However, as time progresses and the corpus of surviving poetry is less constrained to panegyric addressed to kings, chiefs, and the gentry, it becomes evident that neither *dùthchas* nor *còir* were semantically or epistemologically limited to conceptualising the legitimacy of rulers. Especially in the copula form *bu dùthchas do X Y* (‘Y was *dùthchas* to X’, in the sense of something

²⁴⁸ See chapter six, especially the analysis of A:41, A:21, A:18, A:17, and A:6.

being ‘native’ or ‘natural’ to someone, a form we have also often seen the closely semantically-related term *dual* used in) or *bu chòir do X Y* (‘Y was right to X’, in the sense of something being ‘right’ or ‘fitting’ for someone), there is a strong sense of the terms *dùthchas*, *dual*, and *còir* being associated with the regulation of systems of reciprocal rights and responsibilities of all kinds. *Dùthchas* and *còir* were part of Iain Lom’s epistemological framework when the poet judged the wrongs of the Keppoch Murders are proclaimed the perpetrators illegitimate on the land (A:14 and A:15); they formed the basis of Catrìona NicGilleathain’s epistemological refutation of the Campbell takeover of land in Mull (A:42); they were used by Mairearad Ghriogarach to defend the MacGregors as a kindred which had the right of habitation by way of their indigeneity to the *Slios Mìn* of Rannoch (A:53); they were used by Gilleasbaig Caimbeul in his critique of the ‘law of fools’ which did not recognise the *còir* of the people who were being banished from *tìr an dùthchais* or ‘the land of their *dùthchas*’ (A:35); and were synergistically invoked in the refrain of Niall MacLeòid’s rousing waulking song at the time of the Land Agitations, in the emphatic line ‘*gheibh sinn còir air tìr ar dùthchais*’ (‘we shall get the right to the land of our *dùthchas*’, A:76). The semantic connection of ‘that which is just or right’ with ‘land’ pervades each of the aforementioned examples where *dùthchas* and *còir* are collocated, even though the earliest and latest of these instances were composed some 220 years apart. It is unsurprising that during the Clearances some poets used *dùthchas* and *còir* in order to emphasise the legitimacy of the people dwelling upon the land, and the illegitimacy of those who evicted them or the unnaturalness of the circumstances which forced their emigration (A:35, A:37, A:39).

It would appear that precisely because *dùthchas* and *còir* were so bound up with Gaelic society’s morals, behavioural norms, and notions of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, the poets invoked the terms at points of social crisis in the *Gàidhealtachd*. The terms were invoked not only because social crises in the *Gàidhealtachd* tended to be connected to land, but because the land itself was the source of this moral and ethical compass. The idea that traditional Gaelic society had an ‘ethical framework’ which was informed by ‘place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge’ suggests the existence of what could be called a type of ‘grounded normativity’ in the *Gàidhealtachd* (Coulthard 2014: 13, 60 *et passim*). To paraphrase Kockel, the land, as ‘Place’, is what ultimately brought the Gaels together and ‘enable[d] relationships, and the activities they engender, to “take place”’ (Kockel 2015: 30). Place was what united the clan or kindred – it was the fundamental thing shared, in a sense, by the chief and all of his followers. Linguistic features of the Goidelic languages likely augmented the epistemological interweaving of ‘people’ with ‘place’, and vice versa. We have seen that *dùthchas* and *duine* share an etymological root (Matasović 2009: 155-6; McQuillan 2004: 25), while the word *tuath* – which we have predominantly seen signifying the ‘people’ or ‘tenantry’ of a

kindred in this thesis – also carries the meaning of ‘country’ or ‘territory’, with the territory and its people being tantamount to one another (eDIL: túath, online). The tightly-knit relationships through which a clan or extended kin-group formed its identity as ‘us’ were engendered in place, and *dùthchas* has played a part in this identity-building since at least the time of the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*. It also seems to have played a part in regulating the redistribution of wealth, with poets frequently invoking *dùthchas*, generosity towards the tenantry, and patronage of the arts together. Hence, for example, Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh recapitulates the necessity for the long-absent Tormod MacLeod to be present in his *dùthchas*, the ‘*dùn ud nan cliar*’ (‘fortress of the poet-bands’), as physical proximity with his people will encourage him to ‘follow and not forsake the customs and morals of all your folk’ (*‘lean-sa is na trèig / cleachdadh is beus / t’aitim qu lèir*’, A:6, emphasis and translation my own). The worry may have been that his time away from *dùthaich MhicLeòid* or ‘MacLeod country’ could make him adopt different *beusan* or morals, such as the ‘*beusa Sagson*’ or ‘Saxon ways’ which we have seen another poet critiquing as the source of the ‘destruction’ of the *Gàidhealtachd* in the eighteenth century.²⁴⁹

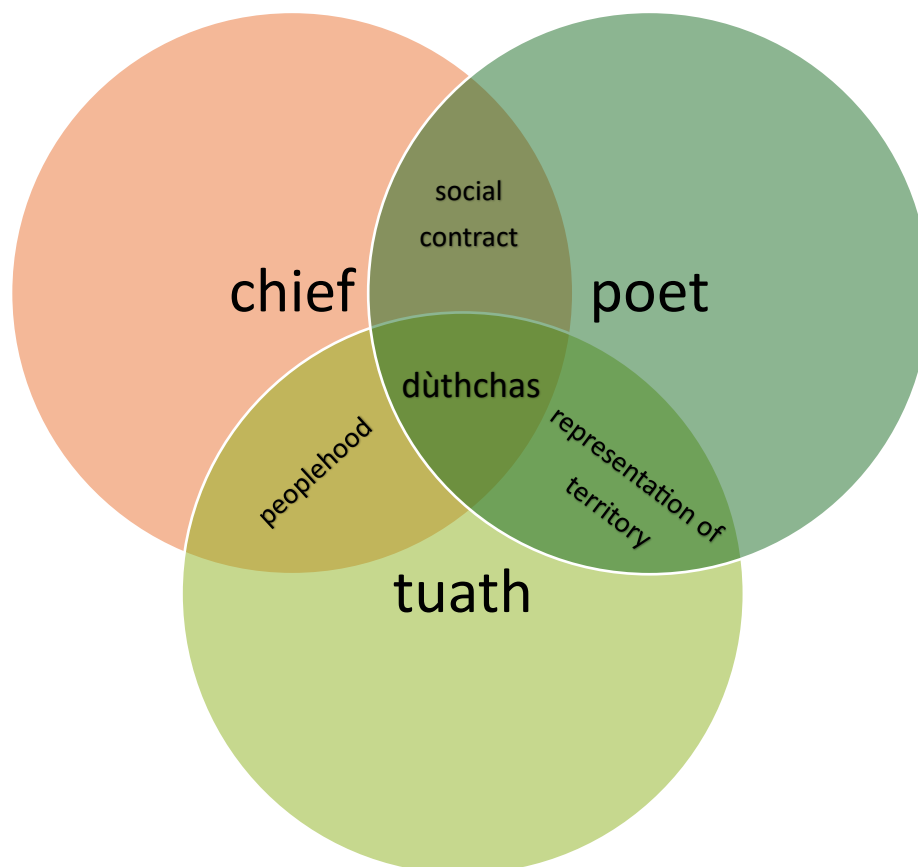


Figure 2: author’s simplified illustration of the way that *dùthchas* functions as a central point of overlap of six major social forces acting on one another within traditional Gaelic society

²⁴⁹ See ‘*beusa Sagson*’ in the fourth paragraph of chapter eight.

In terms of change rather than continuity, we have seen how certain historical events appear to have inspired poets to invoke *dùthchas* in novel ways. Iain Lom's poems on the Keppoch Murders, for example, saw the first-ever use of *dùthchas* alongside negative attributes, at least in the Scottish corpus. This suggests that the profundity of the perpetrators' fratricidal transgression against the 'natural order' and accepted *beusan* or morals was unprecedented in Keppoch. Hence the ferocity of Iain Lom's response, cursing the wrong-doers, their ancestors, and their progeny (called *Sìol Iùdais* or 'the seed of Judas' in A:15) by reducing the culpable *Sìol Dùghaill* to outlaws and petty criminals ('*d'am bu dùthchas bhith creachadh nan crò*' or 'whose heritage is cattle-reiving', A:15), and stating that their very nature is evil ('*dh'am bu dùthchas an t-olc*', A:14). The Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745 seem to also have served as a catalyst which inspired poets to use the term *dùthchas*, and to do so innovatively: the term appears in seven of the 32 poems in Campbell's anthology of Jacobite poetry (Campbell, J. 1984). At least three Jacobite poets issued an appeal to a communal *dùthchas* which would either be protected ('*dìon ur sean-sonais 's ur dùthchas*' = 'protect your old joy and your country', A:9), re-claimed ('*seo an t-àm dhuibh bhith dùsgadh / thoirt ur dùthchais fhèin dhachaidh*' = 'now's the time to awaken, your own to recover', A:8) or won back by conquest ('*gheibh sibh pailteas gach dùthcha, cha n-è ur dùthchas as nì leibh*' = 'of each land you'll gain plenty, more than you'd inherit', A:7). The 'communal' nature of this appeal to *dùthchas* was achieved through the use of the second-person plural possessive pronoun *ur*, as in *ur dùthchas*, 'your [plural] *dùthchas*', in all three of the examples above. As far as I have been able to discern, the phrase *ur dùthchas* first appears in the Scottish corpus in the Jacobite poetry and is a linguistic innovation of this time period. The aim was the mass mobilisation of Gaels united for a common political cause which transcended the territorial boundaries of any one kindred. At the end of the ninth chapter, I drew attention to the similarities of style and diction between the Jacobite poetry and the poetry of the Land Agitations, and to the fact that the poets of the 1870s and 1880s also aimed to inspire a mass mobilisation of Gaels who were united for a common political cause. It is no coincidence that Niall MacLeòid set his incendiary '*Òran nan Croitearan*' (A:76) to the tune of Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's Jacobite waulking song, or that the Gaels were communally called upon through the vocative form '*a chlannaibh nan Gàidheal*' ('o clans of the Gael') to stand 'shoulder to shoulder in unity', '*an guailibh a chèile*', in Jacobite poetry and late nineteenth-century poetry alike.²⁵⁰ The proliferation of the use of the ethnonym '*Gàidheal*' and plural references to the clans in the Jacobite poetry as well as the 'ceilidh hall' compositions of Niall MacLeòid and Màiri Mhòr suggests that the poets were consciously fostering feelings of peoplehood or even nationhood among the Gaels at these watershed points in Gaelic history. In

²⁵⁰ See A:7, A:8, A:46; MacLeòid 1975: 151 and 162-3; and the membership certificate of the Highland Land Law Reform Association in the opening pages of Meek 1995.

relation to identity, *dùthchas* has often been associated with local – perhaps even ‘hyper-local’ – contexts: a sense of place and belonging to a township or even a single house (Gow 2011: 37), but I believe it would be more appropriate to think of *dùthchas* in terms of concentric circles. The central circle could indeed be a home, enveloped in a township, parish, strath or island, expanding gradually to the ethnic or national level – like the *fiodhbhuidhe áille Alban* (‘lovely yellow woods of Alba’) which were Giolla Brighde Albanach’s *dùthchas* (A:71) – yet all connected. Likewise, the length of time spanned by *dùthchas* could also be visualised as concentric circles, starting with a single generation, like Neil MacEwen’s ‘*dùthchas m’ athar*’ (A:69) or Catrìona NicGilleathain’s ‘*dùthchas ur athar*’ (A:42), and stretching all the way to ancient progenitors, like Alasdair mac Colla’s *dùthchas* being traced back to his second-century ancestor Art mac Cuinn (A:68).

One of the most noticeable changes in the way *dùthchas* was used between 1640 and 1900 has doubtless been the sudden nineteenth-century emergence of *dùthchas* as a noun in the genitive case ‘in an attributive or associative function’, usually in combination with another noun referring to land such as ‘*tìr*’. This strongly resembles a similar development in the use of the term *dúchas* in Irish observed by McQuillan a century or two earlier (McQuillan 2004: 40-44). McQuillan argues that this development reflected the cultural and historical reality of the Tudor conquest of Ireland, which caused the Irish Gaels to reassert the belief that ‘the land as a physical and material entity may well be taken from [them], but the ideology of the native land and [their] identification with it (*dúchas*) cannot’ (ibid: 44). I have argued that the sudden emergence of this attributive grammatical form of *dùthchas*, which was virtually unknown in the Scottish corpus prior to 1800, reflects the main difference between the fate of Gaelic Ireland and Gaelic Scotland: the leadership of the former was removed abruptly by the 1607 Flight of the Earls, while the leadership of the latter had not been subjected to violent conquest in the same way, enabling it to remain in its positions of power. The tenantry therefore continued to expect the clan chiefs and *daoine uaisle* to adhere to their traditional social roles. However, a number of factors culminating with the Clearances had made it apparent by the ‘late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries’ that the ‘people [were being] attacked by its own natural leaders’ (MacInnes 2006f: 384-5). The poets were therefore faced with the task of ‘retriangulating’ *dùthchas*, using this linguistic form which abstracts the term from its tangible, material attributes while retaining its emotive, spiritual and hereditary attributes. Two-thirds of *all* nineteenth-century instances of *dùthchas* are in the attributive genitive form. Poets used this novel formulation to reassert the *tuath*’s innate claim of an hereditary right to place independently of and in spite of the clan gentry, while also processing the loss of the ‘physical’ dimension of *dùthchas* caused by Clearance and emigration.

My Literature Review critiqued the existing historical literature for its assertion that *dùthchas* was a customary right which was established after three generations had continuously inhabited a particular piece of land (e.g. Hunter 2018: 218; Macinnes 1996: 16; Devine 1994: 11; MacPherson 1966; McKerral 1948: 12, 134-5). I have argued that the evidence which is cited to substantiate this claim is unconvincing. However, the poetry which I have analysed in the course of this study suggests that there may in fact be a special connection between *dùthchas* and ‘three generations’. Of the 69 instances of *dùthchas* dating from between 1640 and 1900 which I have collated, 12 mention the addressee’s grandfather or *seanair* in the same clause that *dùthchas* is used in.²⁵¹ For example, in his poem ‘*Òran do na Cìobaraibh Gallda*’, Ailean Dall criticises the effect the Clearances have had on the native population, as they had been ‘flung to the fringe of privilege, away from the patrimony of their grandfathers’ (*‘thilgeadh gu iomall cùirte bhon dùthchas a bh’ aig an seanair*’, A:37, emphasis my own). By way of comparison, *athair* or ‘father’ is used in this way in two poems in my corpus,²⁵² and ‘*sinnseanair*’ or ‘great-grandfather’ appears once.²⁵³ Although the Gaelic equivalent of an ‘ancestor’ is ‘*sinnsear*’, a term quite similar to ‘*seanair*’ (‘grandfather’), they are distinct. Thus, it would appear that there is support for the historians’ ‘three generations’ thesis in the Gaelic sources. However, out of these 12 collocations of *dùthchas* and *seanair*, around half refer to characteristics or talents being the *dùthchas* inherited from one’s grandfather rather than land.²⁵⁴ This demonstrates that focusing solely on one aspect of *dùthchas* – its association as a sort of customary tack or tenancy, for example – prevents scholars from engaging with the concept’s inherent plurality and polysemy.

Although the corpus of poetry I was able to analyse as part of this project was extensive, it was not exhaustive, as analysing every single Gaelic poem composed between 1640 and 1900 would have been an impossibility. In the future, when all Gaelic poetry collections free of copyright are digitalised by DASG, the task of undertaking a nearly comprehensive analysis of any given term will be much easier. Even now, I hope that the corpus which I have created will be something that future scholarship can refer to. Regrettably, I was unable to include twentieth-century poetry in the scope of my study, even though I initially intended to have my time scope stretch until at least 1945, so that the poetry associated with the land raids of the century’s first few decades and the two World Wars could be included in my analysis. The prevalence of *dùthchas* in the twentieth-century poetry which I preliminarily examined, such as the works of Sorley MacLean, South Uist’s Dòmhnall Iain

²⁵¹ See A:42, A:44, A:63, A:16, A:37, A:55, A:57, A:59, A:60, A:11, A:25, and A:41.

²⁵² A:69 and A:42.

²⁵³ A:24.

²⁵⁴ The *dùthchas* inherited by Mairearad Ghriogarach from her grandfather is the gift of poesy, for example – see A:60.

Dhonnchaidh, Dòmhnall Aonghais Bhàin, or ‘the Paisley Bard’ Donald Macintyre, made it clear that scarcity of material was not going to be a limiting factor. The scarcity of my own time did, however, prevent me from including this material in my analysis. Its relevance for tracing the evolution of *dùthchas* over time, seeing how the poets adapted it to reflect the reality of a changing *Gàidhealtachd*, as well as this period being the ‘missing puzzle piece’ between the late nineteenth-century Land Agitations and the twenty-first-century community landownership revolution, makes me believe that an examination of *dùthchas* in the twentieth century is necessary. Future scholarship could also head back in time and build upon my overview of the term’s usage prior to 1640 by examining the 100 instances of *dùthchas* in the predominantly Irish, ‘classical’ Gaelic poems repositied in the online Bardic Poetry Database, or in other Irish sources. Indeed, while the early medieval Irish sources that I examined in the fourth chapter were an exception to this rule, the provenance of sources analysed in this thesis was geographically confined to Scotland. This has meant that I was unable to examine the use of *dùthchas* by Gaels who settled in British colonies, particularly in North America. My preliminary observations suggest a complex duality where to some, only the *seann-dhùthaich* or ‘old country’ could be conceptualised as their *dùthchas*,²⁵⁵ while to others – perhaps second or third-generation settlers – the kin-group’s new locus was their *dùthchas*, like Alasdair Dòmhnallach’s emphatic statement ‘*s ann à Mabou tha mo dhùchas*’ (‘my *dùthchas* comes from Mabou’) in the praise-poem *Moladh Mhàbu* (Dòmhnallach 2015). Closer scrutiny of the way *dùthchas* was used by Gaelic poets in these settler-colonial settings, especially in comparison to use within the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd*, will improve understanding of the way Gaels themselves conceptualised their role in the British Empire and their relationships with Indigenous peoples. I believe this is pertinent not least because the methodology and theoretical framework of this thesis were strongly influenced by Indigenous scholars, and I hope this line of inquiry becomes more commonplace in Gaelic studies.

When my primary supervisor Iain MacKinnon and I initially discussed the structure of this project, it was my intention for it to be comprised of an historical study as well as an ethnographic component where Gaelic-speaking writers, musicians, creative practitioners, and tradition-bearers would be interviewed and asked what *dùthchas* means to them today. Unfortunately, my PhD began in September 2020, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic conducting face-to-face interviews was deemed too high a risk. Of necessity, my focus shifted to the historical study and as my research progressed it became apparent that at least as far as the scholarship is concerned, *dùthchas* did not appear to be very well understood. I decided that my time was best spent laying the foundations

²⁵⁵ See also Newton 2009: 85.

with an in-depth analysis of the term's meaning. However, I believe that such an ethnographic study is as pertinent today as it was in 2020, and I hope that the existence of these foundations will enable it to take place. As community landownership in Scotland grows in the *Gàidhealtachd* and beyond, I believe the findings of this thesis could also inform future research on the plurality of how belonging to place and 'sense of place' are conceptualised in contemporary Scotland, since there seem to be certain epistemological continuities between the rights and responsibilities engendered in *dùthchas* as evidenced by the poetry I analysed and communities entering a reciprocal relationship of rights and responsibilities with their land.

I believe that the findings of this thesis showcase the importance of *dùthchas* within a Gaelic epistemology and cosmology. *Dùthchas* and our ability to understand what it has meant over time are not only relevant to Gaelic studies, but to many other research fields including intellectual history and Indigenous studies. This is because *dùthchas* testifies to the epistemological resilience of concepts from ethnically minoritised or indigenous languages and cultures in spite of the often-violent pressure to conform to the dominant culture, a pressure applied from the outside and from within. This study also testifies to the necessity of studying these concepts from the point of view of the minority or indigenous language – understanding it through Anglophone sources, as most scholars have tried to date, is simply impossible. This is because, as Native American philosopher Viola Cordova put it, 'a society that has power over another is not in a position to understand the [worldview] matrix of the society over which it exercises power' (Cordova 2007: 63). The study of Gaelic epistemological or cosmological concepts should therefore use Gaelic primary sources and attempt to reconstruct what the concept meant to the author of the source at the point of composition. My findings also suggest that a Gaelic epistemology and cosmology were and are comprised of multiple strands, and that *dùthchas* is merely one of them, albeit an important one. I hope that this study encourages the exploration of these other epistemological and cosmological strands, so that one day these could be examined *mar bu dual dhaibh* – in a way which is natural and fitting for them – as an interconnected 'focal web of belief and kinship', to quote Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul yet again.

The Literature Review highlighted that thus far, the tendency has been to study Gaelic concepts through predominantly Anglophone sources. However, I believe another productive avenue for future research would be the reassessment of Anglophone sources which are, at their core, Gaelic sources in translation. Some of the testimonies gathered by the Napier Commission are such a source: the grievances, opinions, and comments of a native Gaelic speaker or a community of native Gaelic speakers which were recorded in English, translated either by the speaker themselves or by the Commission's translator. A Gaelic word like *dùthchas* is unlikely to appear in these Anglophone

testimonies. However, when native Gaelic speaker Donald MacDonald of Uig testified that ‘the rights of our fathers and grandfathers should be restored to us’ (Napier Commission 1883: Q. 2361), or when Roderick MacMillan of Portree testified that security of tenure would only be ‘restoring to Highlanders the rights which anciently belonged to their forefathers’ (Napier Commission 1883: Q. 9398), what did they mean by the term ‘right’, and why was this collocated with mentions of their ‘forefathers’? I am not the first to propose such a line of inquiry,²⁵⁶ but I believe this type of reassessment could provide insights into the way Gaels articulated concepts like *dùthchas* into English-language contexts when the need to do so arose.²⁵⁷

We started this thesis by pointing out that *dùthchas* has been receiving a lot of attention in the past two decades, especially in the last four years or so. Unusually, this attention has not come from historians of Highland Scotland or Gaelic speakers, but from a variety of public bodies and members of the general public. Because many of these recent Anglophone invocations of *dùthchas* define it as the ‘deep connection between people and nature’ or suchlike, I believe they may be traced back to an article written in 2020 by Alan Riach, Professor of Scottish Literature at Glasgow University. This article, which I also mentioned in the Introduction, refers extensively to *Òran na Comhachaig* (‘Song of the Owl’), a late sixteenth-century poem composed by Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn, and states that the poem is ‘a haunting expression of the idea of unity existing between land, people, all living creatures, nature and culture’, before adding that ‘the Gaelic word for this is “*dùthchas*”’ (Riach 2020). We have not examined *Òran na Comhachaig* in this study because the term *dùthchas* does not appear in it, but the entire poem arguably embodies the term’s conceptual framework. In 1562 Mary Queen of Scots confirmed a 1447 charter which granted the lands of Keppoch, Glen Spean and Glen Roy to the Macintoshes, though the lands had been inhabited by the MacDonalds of Keppoch since at least the fourteenth century (Menzies 2012: 3). *Òran na Comhachaig* was composed only a few decades after the Queen’s confirmation, at a time when ‘the MacDonalds [were maintaining] their right of hereditary possession and [keeping] the lands by main force’, which they continued to do until the end of the seventeenth century (ibid; c.f. MacLean 1939: 231-4). This is significant since the poem is composed as a dialogue between the narrator and an ancient owl which relates the history of Keppoch, naming ‘the chiefs of Keppoch’ and

²⁵⁶ See, for example, the study of an English-language petition written in 1756 on behalf of Gaelic-speaking subtenants in Achiltibuie, Coigach in Desportes 2023: 166-7.

²⁵⁷ See, for example, the letter dated 5 November 1884 written by the crofters of Grimsay, North Uist, to their proprietor Capt. MacDonald Waternish, where the crofters warn MacDonald of their intention to take ‘possession of the land of Kallin & Rona, these places which were inhabited and cultivated also being the dwellings of our forefathers and were taken from them in a disorderly and silky way’ (emphasis my own), forcing the native population to ‘leave their native country to foreign and strange lands’. The letter is now in the possession of the Skye and Lochalsh Archives, Waternish Estate SL/D266. I am hugely grateful to Catherine MacPhee for showing me this document.

‘the landscape of which they were part’ (Menzies 2012: 38-9). It invokes Alasdair Carrach – who was a son of John, Lord of the Isles, and appears in the historical record in 1394 as Lord of Lochaber – and portrays him as a hunter (ibid: 76), part of an unbroken lineage of MacDonalds who inhabited the area and were the *dalta* or fosterlings of the landscape itself (ibid: 88), nourished by its feminine attributes, drinking from its *fuaran* or springs, and living among its other, more-than-human inhabitants (ibid: 78 *et passim*). The poem, although not written in the ‘classical’ Gaelic of the *filidh*, confirms the legitimacy of the MacDonalds of Keppoch by using some of the same tropes used by the classical poets, such as portraying the MacDonalds chiefs as ‘*gun mhearachd*’ or ‘without blemish’ (ibid: 88-9, c.f. Coira 2012: 45), and through its emphatic portrayal of a localised intimacy between a people and a place. The bard’s words imply a deep-set belief in the validity of the Keppoch MacDonalds’ *dùthchas*; a right not enshrined in law like the charter possessed by the Macintoshes, but no less powerful for it, since it is enshrined in the reality of being sustained by the land itself, moving daily through its features both rough and smooth, and knowing their respective place-names. The richness of these historical attestations of the *dùthchas* of the MacDonalds of Keppoch makes it all the more regrettable that none of this was mentioned in Ranald Alasdair MacDonald’s 2009 public petition PE1297 which aimed to recognise his clan’s *dùthchas*, and recognise *dùthchas* as a valid form of landholding.

This brings us to an issue that I have observed in many of the recent invocations of *dùthchas* which have related the term to contemporary political issues. Riach’s conclusion that *dùthchas* functions as the lynchpin of a conceptual framework linking land, people, nature, and culture rings true in the context of Dòmhnall mac Fhionnlaigh nan Dàn’s poetry – it certainly resonates with many of the conclusions I have made above. However, extracting *dùthchas* from this context and placing it, for example, in the mission statement of a project which aims to foster deeper connections between ‘people and nature’, as the Cairngorms 2030 project has done, risks imposing an Anglophone and colonial understanding of concepts like ‘people’ and ‘nature’ upon a Gaelic cosmological concept, eviscerating it in the process. This is not to say that *dùthchas* does not belong in today’s day and age or that it should not be used in the context of contemporary political issues. Indeed, I believe the opposite is true, and that Gaels must be at the heart of this political resurgence. As the climate crisis becomes graver, as land banking and second home ownership furthers depopulation in rural communities, and the Gaelic language continues to decline in its heartlands, there are aspects of this matrix of ethics and reciprocal responsibilities stemming from the land itself which have the capacity

to vastly improve the *Gàidhealtachd* and all of Scotland.²⁵⁸ The contemporary interest in *dùthchas* reflects this. However, this Gaelic concept cannot be extracted from the Gaelic worldview to which it belongs. An ancient network of ideas which help answer questions like ‘who are we?’, ‘why are we here?’ and ‘why do we do the things we do?’ cannot be reduced to a shallow buzzword.

²⁵⁸ See Dziadowiec 2022c for my proposal that the recovery of a Gaelic epistemology or ‘*lèirsinn Ghàidhealach*’ could and would assist in the tackling of contemporary social, linguistic, and environmental issues affecting the Highlands and Islands in a culturally sensitive way.

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12. Appendix

No.	Poet's name	Name of piece or first line	Date of composition	Geographical origin or affiliation of the poet	The excerpt	The context	The source

1	Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh	Éistidh Riomsa, a Mhuire Mhór	1200-1220?	Sligo, Ireland; poet was originally from <i>Alba</i> , as his name suggests	<p>Do nimh thánaig, a thaobh geal, a láraig, saor mar an sriobh. Cá beag liom do dhùthchas damh, a chúlchas ghlan fhionn, ót Fhior?</p> <p>[From heaven His white side came, / and thigh, noble like the burn. / How can I deem our shared inheritance small, / o bright pure hair, through your Spouse?]</p>	<p>The bard exults Mary mother of God in this composition, addressing her directly. The editors of <i>Duanaire</i> say, “The depiction of her beauty, especially the emphasis on her hair, and long, slow limbs, accords entirely with the standards of beauty of native Gaelic love poetry, but here the love is different because it cannot lead to sin. The whole has much of the rhetoric of the secular panegyric. The topos of a poet praising his chief in return for hospitality is clearly paralleled in the poet’s expectation that Mary will pay him for his poem with entry into her drinking hall. He does not want gold, but Heaven.” (<i>DnS</i>, p. 21)</p> <p>Muireachadh went on the Fifth Crusade, allegedly as a pilgrim, along fellow poet Giolla Brighde Albanach. [see Bannerman 1989, “The King’s Poet” p. 143, for mention of this Giolla Brighde using the term <i>dùthchas</i>].</p>	<i>Duanaire na Sracaire</i> , p. 24, lines 57-60
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2	Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn	Fada Cóir Fhódla ar Albain	1590 (or <i>ante</i> , this is the date of Somhairle Buidhe MacDhomhnaill's death, who is the subject of this piece)	Ireland; the piece is an apologism for Hebridean MacDhòmhnaill presence in Ulster	Créad fa tiobhradh clann Cholla, ar son ar fhás eatorra, tar magh mbarrúrchas mBanbha tal d'andúthchas allmhardha? [Why should Colla's sons, / owing to whatever rose between them, / give support to a strange foreign land / before the rippling cropped plains of Banbha?]	The piece invokes genealogies strongly suggesting MacDhòmhnaill's legitimacy in Ireland via being part of Colla and Conn's lines; it also invokes the shared lineage and cultural heritage of Ireland and Scotland, speaking of tributes being lifted from Scotland by the Irish Gaels for a long time.	<i>Duanaire na Sracaire</i> , p. 130, lines 41-44
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3	Anonymous / gun urra	An Síth do Rogha, a Rígh Fionnghall?	1614 (or <i>ante</i> , this is the date of Aonghas mac Sheumais nan Ruaigh MacDhòmhnaill's death, who is the subject of this piece)	Ulster (?); the subject was a MacDonald of Dunyveg, Islay	Rugais an Rút le ruaig éanlaoi d'fhuil Uí Bhilin gerb fhuil ríogh, 's ní reacainn sin ret chéibh ccúlchais – sibh do bhein mo dhúthchas díom. [You won the Route with a single day's offensive / from the Mac Uilíns, despite their royal blood / and I would not mention this to your curly ringlets: that you have deprived me of my native place .]	If the poet is indeed from Ulster, the context of this particular use of dúthchas would appear to be the bard's allusion to the MacDonald-led conquest of Ulster. Aonghas mac Sheumais nan Ruaigh was the nephew of Somhairle Buidhe, to whom 'Fada Cóir Fhódla ar Albain' was directed. In <i>DnS</i> on p. 155 we read, "The poet addresses Aonghas as <i>rí</i> <i>Fionnghall</i> , 'king of the fair foreigners'... The term <i>Fionnghall</i> is very common in bardic poetry of the seventeenth century, and is seemingly extended to mean the territory inhabited by Scottish Gaeldom rather than simply the Gaels themselves."	<i>Duanaire na</i> <i>Sracaire</i> , p. 158, lines 53-56
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4	Mairghread nighean Lachlainn	Òran	1704	Mull (primarily) and other MacLean territories	<p>Nam b' fhiosrach bànrighinn Anna Mar a dh'fhògradh ann ad leanabh thu, Is gur brònach thugadh t'fhearann bhuat 'S nach b' ann le còir a rinneadh e, Is nach robh cron ri aithris ort Ach leantail do rìgh dùthchais.</p> <p>[If queen Anne knew how you were banished as a baby, how sadly your land was taken from you without any right, and that no crime was ever imputed to you except following your hereditary king.]</p>	After Sir Iain had to flee to the continent in 1692, <i>MnL</i> , p. 132: "he was able to move from the continent to London in November 1703, following an indemnity granted by Queen Anne. The queen also gave him a pension of £500 per year, which was paid till her death in 1714."	<i>Mairghread Nighean Lachlainn</i> , p. 50, lines 244-249
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5	Mairghread nighean Lachlainn	Òran do dh'Ailein MacGilleathain, Taoiteir Bhròlais	1725 - 1749 ?	Mull (primarily) and other MacLean territories	<p>Mo rùn an t-Ailein, Marcaich allail Nan steud meara Is nan lann tana. Is cian 's is tamall Thu air prannadh Gun tighinn fairis Dh'fhios ur fearainn dhùthchasaich.</p> <p>[My beloved is this Ailein, illustrious rider of swift steeds, wielder of slim blades: for a long time you have been under attack and have not come over to visit your family land.]</p>	<p>This song is possibly dedicated to Ailean, fourth MacLean of Brolas, born about 1710 and succeeded his father Dòmhnall in Brolas in 1725 and succeeded Sir Eachann as chief of Duart in 1751, becoming a lieutenant-colonel in the army. (<i>MnL</i>, p. 183) The traditional panegyric laments the fact that Ailean has been under attack and unable to be in – or, perhaps significantly – even visit his <i>fearainn dhùthchasaich</i>.</p>	<i>Mairghread Nighean Lachlainn</i> , p. 96, lines 871-878
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6	Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh	An Crònan	1699 or 1651	Pabbay, Harris, Berneray, and the wider lands of MacLeod of Dunvegan	<p>Tha mo dhùil-sa ann an Dia Gur mùirneach do thrìall Gu dùn ud nan clìar Far 'm bu dùthchas dom thriath Bhiodh gu fiughantach fial foirmeil...</p> <p>[My hope is in God that you will have a happy journey to yon fortress of the poet bands where my lord used to dwell, he who was generous, free-handed and stately...]</p> <p>Fiùran na cluain Dhùisg san deagh uair, 'S dùth dhuit dol suas 'N cliù is ann am buaidh: 'S dùthchas dom luaidh Bhith gu fiùghantach suairc ceòlbhinn.</p> <p>[Sapling of the meadow, who has awakened at a fortunate time, it is characteristic for you to grow in fame and</p>	<p><i>MNAR</i>, p. 137: "One [oral] tradition held that she was sent into exile by Tormod of Berneray and forced to promise to compose no more <i>òrain</i>: in response 'she called all her subsequent compositions not <i>òrain</i> or songs, but <i>crònain</i> or croons'. This tradition might be considered a significant link between Tormod of Berneray and the present song... This song was composed on hearing that her Chief was not really dead..."</p>	<p><i>Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh</i>, p. 126, lines 471-475 and 493-498</p>
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					<p>prowess: it is my dear one's natural disposition to be generous and courtly, surrounded by sweet music.]</p>		
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7	Angus MacDonald (Aonghas MacDhòmhnaill)	Òran Brosnachaidh do na Gàidheil	1745 (circa)	Achatriachadan, Glencoe; wider Glencoe MacDonald territories	<p>Ma chinneas leibh gnòthach, 'S gun cothaich sibh rìoghachd... Gheibh sibh pailteas gach dùthcha, Cha n-è ur dùthchas as nì leibh, Agus gach ragha gach fearainn Gun ghearradh gun chis air...</p> <p>[If you are successful and conquer the kingdom... of each land you'll gain plenty, more than you'd inherit, and the choice of each holding without tribute or taxes...]</p>	<p><i>HSotFF</i>, p. 8-9: Angus MacDonald, c. 1665-1745. "His best known composition is his 'La Raonruairidh', an elaborate piece giving a graphic description // of a battle in which the bard himself must have taken part. Another of his compositions is a spirited eulogy on Coll MacDonald of Keppoch. Among his other compositions are his elegy on Iain Luim... Angus MacDonald, then, was the second son of Alasdair Ruadh, eleventh chief of Glencoe, and brother to the Alexander MacDonald of Glencoe whose deliberate procrastination in taking the Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary was the cause of the so-called 'Massacre of Glencoe'.... Angus... apparently lived down to the time of the Forty-Five. His poem is a moving and comprehensive appeal to his fellow-Highlanders, interesting in the fervent Episcopalianism which it shows and the archaic type of language in which it is couched..."</p>	<i>Highland Songs of the Forty-Five</i> , p. 14, lines 61-62 and 67-70
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8	Nighean Aonghais Òig (MacDonald)	Òran air Teachd Phrionnsa Teàrlach	1745 (circa)	Achnacoichean, Keppoch; wider MacDonald of Keppoch territories, Lochaber	<p>A Chlann Ghriogair a' chruadail, O'n bu dual dhuibh bhith tapaidh, Chaidh ur dìteadh 's ur ruagadh Le luchd fuatha gun cheartas; So an t-àm dhuibh bhith dùsgadh Thoir ur dùthchais fhèin dhachaidh, 'S ged is fad o'n tha 'chuing oirbh Thèid na Duibhnich fo'r casaibh.</p> <p>[O valiant Clan Gregor, since you ever were manful, you've been condemned and harassed by your foes without justice; now's the time to awaken, your own to recover, though long their yoke's on you On the Campbells you'll trample.]</p>	<p><i>HSotFF</i>, p. 21: "this lady, nighean Aonghais Òig, was the only daughter and fourth child of Angus MacDonald of Achnacoichean, who himself was a grandson of the tenth chief of Keppoch... according to the same authority she married Angus MacDonald a grandson of Angus Mòr MacDonald of Bohuntin... nothing more is known of her, not even her Christian name..."</p>	<i>Highland Songs of the Forty-Five</i> , p. 26, lines 65-72
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9	Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (Alexander MacDonald)	Brosnachadh Eile do na Gàidheil	1745 - 1746 (circa)	Ardnamurchan; Benbecula (wider Clanranald territories), beyond	<p>O! 'S mise gu mol' Sibh a mhosgladh le toil, 'S às ur cadaltachd shomalta dhùsgadh; Gun fhardal, le for, Sibh a dh'èireadh le goil, Gu dion ur sean-sonais 's ur dùthchais...</p> <p>[O, surely I'll praise you who'll readily wake, and stir from your negligent slumber, undelaying, with zeal, arising with rage to protect your old joy and your country.]</p>	<p><i>HSotFF</i>, p. 33: "Alexander MacDonald [c. 1700-1770], great-grandson of Ranald MacDonald of Benbecula, a first cousin of the famous Flora MacDonald, and a member of the Clanranald branch of the Clan Donald, traditionally the backbone of Gaelic culture and Jacobitism in the Highlands... He was the son of a non-jurant clergyman in Ardnamurchan, known to his parishioners as 'Maighstir Alasdair'... It is known that he went to Glasgow University, which he appears to have left prematurely, and that he married young... [In 1729] he entered the employment of the SPCK as a schoolmaster and catechist at Island Finnan in Ardnamurchan, at a salary of £16 a year... Later he taught at Kilchoan and Corryvullin, where he composed [Allt an t-Siucair]. In 1741, he compiled a Gaelic-English vocabulary at the request [of the Society]..."</p> <p>p. 35: "[MacDonald's] name appears upon a 'Roll of Men upon Clanranald's Mainland Estates, with their arms, made up in 1745'"</p> <p>p. 36: "He was also... appointed to teach Gaelic to the Prince..."</p> <p>p. 38: his son was Ranald MacDonald, who published a collection of Gaelic verse in 1776 – the first Gaelic anthology ever printed in Scotland.</p> <p>p. 39: "About [1749], MacDonald appears to have become Bailie of Canna, though Forbes only refers to his taking up residence there. It is difficult to account for this appointment, as Canna was part of the Clanranald estates, which were forfeited..."</p> <p>p. 40: "The publication of Ais-Èiridh marks the close of MacDonald's Jacobite activities. He published no more poetry. During the last twenty years of his live he lived in Glenuig, Knoydart, Morar, and Arisaig, never staying long in any one</p>	<i>Highland Songs of the Forty-Five</i> , p. 140, lines 37-42
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						<p>place; his temperament must have made him a difficult neighbour and an unruly tenant. He is known to have frequently visited South Uist, where his brother Lauchlan was a tacksman, and to have been a personal friend of the poet, John MacCodrum. He died about the year 1770 in Sandaig, and is buried at Kilmore in Arisaig.”</p> <p>p. 41: “[of his contemporaries and successors], he alone possessed both the classical Gaelic learning and an English education.”</p>	
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10	Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir (Duncan Ban Macintyre) [alleged, considered unlikely by Angus MacLeod]	[Òran Eile air] Blàr na h-Eaglaise Brice	1746 (17th January or shortly thereafter) [Angus MacLeod claims <i>post-Culloden</i> , 16th April; if it was composed by D. B. it was likely composed later in his life]	Druimliaghart, Glen Orchy by birth; Coire Cheathaich, Ben Dorain and Glen Etive as a stalker – this song composed in Glen Etive; wider Campbell of Glenorchy territories; finally, Edinburgh	Nam biodh iad uile r’a chéile, Gum biodh iad na treun-fhir chalma Dh’am bu dùthchas a bhith cròdha , Bha còmhnuidh am measg nan Garbh-chrìoch. [If they had all been together, they, the mighty valiant heroes, who were wanted to be hardy , and were dwelling ‘midst the Mountains.]	<i>HSotFF</i> , p. 193: “Duncan Ban Macintyre [1724-1812], ‘Donnchadh Bàn nan Òran’, was born at Druimliaghart in Glenorchy, Argyllshire. His parents, of whom little is known, were crofters. Like Rob Donn and John MacCodrum, Macintyre grew up uneducated. The nearest school was fifteen miles away from his home, and attendance was impossible, but, as it turned out later, illiteracy was to prove no trammel upon a keen and observant mind. Macintyre holds a unique position amongst the poets whose works are included in this anthology, for he actually fought upon the Hanoverian side... At Falkirk the [Argyllshire] Militia formed part of Hawley’s army, and in the rout Macintyre fled with the rest, leaving the sword [Archibald Fletcher of Crannach had lent him – when he returned home in September 1746, Fletcher refused to pay him because he had lost this sword]. Macintyre retaliated by composing his ‘Song on the Battle of Falkirk’, first poem, in which he described the rout and abuses his useless weapon. Later, the Earl of Breadalbane intervened to enforce payment of the sum owing to him. Shortly after this, Macintyre became forester to Breadalbane in Coire a’ Cheathaich and Beinn Dorainn, on which he composed his two finest and best-known poems. While in this employment he married Mary Macintyre... Later he became forester to John MacDonald of Dalness in Buachaille Èite.” p. 194: “In 1768, Macintyre had the first edition of his poems printed in Edinburgh, having not long before obtained a position in the Edinburgh City Guard by the help of the Earl of Breadalbane. He continued as a member of the Guard for the next twenty-five years. He composed the prize poems on ‘Gaelic and the Bagpipes’ for the Highland Society of London in the years 1781-1785 and	<i>Highland Songs of the Forty-Five</i> , p. 210, lines 69-72 ; also appears in <i>Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin</i> , p. 410-412, lines 5896-5903
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					<p>1789... Although he fought for the Hanoverians, it is clear enough from his two songs upon the Battle of Falkirk that his heart was not in King George's cause. The Disclothing Act brought home to him how little the loyal Highlanders had gained for their service, and his out-spoken 'Song to the Breeches' involved him in trouble with the authorities and had to be omitted from the second edition of his poems published in 1790".</p> <p>— Angus MacLeod in <i>ÒDB</i>: <i>ÒDB</i>, p. 550: This poem was added to a 5th edition of D.B.'s poetry, with an explanatory footnote: 'This song was excluded by the Author from three editions of his work printed for himself, because it was a Jacobite piece and offensive to the Campbells who always were his best patrons...'</p> <p>p. 550-1: "It is not an impressive production, and there is no apparent reason why Macintyre should have composed it, nor is it easy to specify a period when he could have done so. He had already described the rout of the Hanoverians at Falkirk with a full meed of praise for Clan Donald, and he had discussed wittily and // forcefully the Act for the Pacification of the Highlands."</p>	
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11	Alasdair Camshron (Alexander Cameron)	Òran do Dhòmhnull Bàn MacDhòmhnuill Dhuibh, Tighearna Loch lall	1746 (17th January or shortly thereafter)	Dochanassie, Lochaber; the piece is addressed to Dòmhnall Òg Lochiel (whose father had been exiled for his part in the Rising of 1715, and who had made over the estates to Lochiel himself in 1706, was still alive at this time; Lochiel became chief on his grandfather's death in 1719)	<p>'S dearbhadh air sin Sliabh a' Chlamhain Gun d' fhuair sibh barrachd an cruadal, Thug thu an dùthchas o d' sheanair, B'àrd-cheannard air sluagh è...</p> <p>[It was shown at Gladsmuir, i.e. Prestonpans where the Camerons gained great distinction for the valour of their charge, thou excelledst in valour, thy spirit tookst from thy grandsire who of hosts was commander...]</p>	<p><i>HSotFF</i>, p. 254: "Alexander Cameron was one of the Camerons from Dochannassie in Lochaber. Very little is known of him, beyond the fact that he was appointed bard to the Highland and Agricultural Society in 1787, and died in the following year... [the subject of this poem] Donald Cameron, Younger of Lochiel... was born about the year 1695, and became chief of the clan in 1719 on the death of his grandfather Sir Ewen Cameron, his father John Cameron being in exile for the part he played in the Rising of 1715. When the Prince came to Scotland, Lochiel, like the other chiefs, was unwilling to rise, but he was won over by the Prince's personality and by his own loyalty, although before joining him he obtained a promise that, should the Rising fail, the full value of his estates would be restored to him..."</p> <p>p. 255: "He [Donald Cameron the younger] was wounded at Falkirk and again at Culloden, where he was shot through both ankles... after the disaster he hid first in Lochaber and later with MacPherson of Cluny, his cousin, on Ben Alder..."</p>	<i>Highland Songs of the Forty-Five</i> , p. 260, lines 57-60
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12	Iain Camshron (John Cameron)	Òran do'n Doctair Chamshron	1753 (around Dr Cameron's execution)	Dochanassie, Lochaber; potentially was bard to Alexander MacDonald of Keppoch; this song is addressed to Dr Cameron, fourth son of John Cameron of Lochiel and thus also pertains to the wider Cameron of Lochiel lands	B' fhada, b' fhada o t' ùir thù, B' e do dhùchas Cill- Mhàilidh... [Thou wast far from thy country, thy home was Kilmallie...]	<i>HSotFF</i> , p. 272: "John Cameron, known as An Tàilleir Mac Alasdair, lived at Dochanassie in Lochaber. He was a tailor by trade. It is said that he was bard to Alexander MacDonald of Keppoch [seventeenth of Keppoch, who was killed at Culloden]. Some of his descendants came to Cape Breton... He may have been, and very possibly was, related to Alexander Cameron from Dochanassie... Doctor Archibald Cameron, the subject of this song, was the 4th son of John Cameron of Lochiel and brother of Donald Cameron, the Lochiel of the Forty-Five. He was born in 1707, and was originally educated for the Bar; but he abandoned law for medicine, and after studying in Edinburgh, he settled and practiced among the people of Lochaber. When the Rising broke out he joined the Prince to please his brother, and in his capacity of physician did a great deal of good work... After Culloden he escaped to France with the other chiefs..." p. 273: "He returned to Scotland in 1749 and in 1753, either to receive part of the money collected by the Prince's friends to support his exiled adherents, or to recover some of the French gold that had been buried near Loch Arkaig... [In 1753] he was taken prisoner at Glenbucket... he was taken to Edinburgh, and thence to London... and sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered [on the 7th of June 1753]. Dr Cameron was the last person to be put to death for participating in the Rising..."	<i>Highland Songs of the Forty- Five</i> , p. 274, lines 9-10
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13	Iain Lom	Cumha Morair Hunndaidh	1649 (22 March or shortly thereafter, before 12 April 1650)	Keppoch, Lochaber; wider MacDonald of Keppoch territories; Huntly was executed in Edinburgh	<p>Nach truagh leat do dhìlsean, Gach cill sgìr am bheil clachan, Bhith air 'n dùbladh 'sna cainbibh 'N déis an tionndadh aig Sasann, Bhith aig ursainn na cléireadh 'N riochd nan reubal gun bhaisteadh, Mu sheasamh a' chrùin duit Bha de dhùthchas aig t' aiteam.</p> <p>[Does it not grieve you that your loyal subjects, in every parish church and kirktown, are trussed up in hempen ropes to which they are consigned by the English, that they are kept at the doors of the clergy as if they were unbaptised outcasts, for having stood up for you as heir to the crown which hereditarily belonged to your race.]</p>	<p>Iain Lom (c. 1624 or <i>ante</i> – 1707 ?), <i>OIL</i>, p. 254: “The poet rebukes Charles II for his tardiness in coming to claim his kingdom, and reminds him of the hardships which his loyal subjects now suffer at the hands of the Covenanters.”</p> <p>p. 256: “A reference to the exclusion or near- exclusion of the Royalists by the Covenanting clergy from ecclesiastical privileges as though they were unbaptised.”</p>	<i>Òrain Iain Luim</i> , p. 50-51, lines 595-602
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14	Iain Lom	Murt na Ceapaich	1663 (25th September or shortly thereafter; however, tradition holds that the Murder of Keppoch happened in 1665)	Keppoch, Lochaber; wider MacDonald of Keppoch territories	<p>Is maireg stoc as an d'fhàs e Dh'am bu dùthchas an t-olc, 'N tì bha 'na ùghdar do'n ghnìomh so, Bha roimhe beum thoirt dh'a stoc; / Am fìor thoiseach fhoghlaim Cha robh na b' fheàrr ann, ar leam, Fhuair e togail as òige Ann an òrdugh Dùn-tuilm.</p> <p>[Woe to the stock from which he is sprung whose hereditary ways were evil. He who was the contriver of this deed was determined to deal a blow to his kin. In regard to the / first principles of his education there was not in my estimation a worthier person; he was nurtured from his youth in the ways of Duntulm.]</p>	<p>Iain Lom (c. 1624 or <i>ante</i> – 1707 ?), <i>OIL</i>, p. 268-9: "Shortly after the Restoration Alexander MacDonald, Chief of Keppoch, and his brother Ranald were murdered – an event // which caused considerably consternation throughout the country."</p> <p>p. 269: "According to tradition the cause of the quarrel was that during the Chief's minority, MacDonald [tacksman of Inverlair] accepted from the Marquis of Huntly a tack of the lands of Fersit and Inverlair independent of Keppoch. The young Chief strongly resented this, and refused to acknowledge any titular rights on their part to these lands..."</p> <p>p. 270: "According to a Lochaber tradition the murder was committed to avenge atrocities committed by Keppoch upon the MacDonalds of Glen Roy – Sliochd Iain Duibh – who were descended from an illegitimate son of a former Keppoch chief. It is thus represented as a just act of retribution..."</p> <p>p. 271: "The young chief... made himself very unpopular as a result of rules and regulations which he drew up for the guidance of his people... [Iain Lom] was horrified not only by the murder, but by the indifference of his kinsmen... [He plead] Glengarry and Sir James MacDonald of Sleat... On 29th July 1665 a commission of fire and sword was granted by the Privy Council to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat. [He had the seven murderers beheaded – Tobar nan Ceann!]</p>	Òrain Iain Luim, p. 88, lines 1110-1111
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15	Iain Lom	Iorram do Shìol Dùghaill	1663 (shortly after the Keppoch murder)	Keppoch, Lochaber; wider MacDonald of Keppoch territories	<p>Sìol Iùdais gun fheartaibh, Chuir an cùl ri deagh bheartaibh, D'am bu dùthchas bhith creachadh nan crò; Rag mhèirlich gun bhaiste, Nan caorach 's nan craiceann, Luchd shlaodadh nan capall gu fròig.</p> <p>[Seed of Judas devoid of all worth, who have forsaken good deeds, whose hereditary bent is for plundering sheepfolds. Infidels are they, and arrant thieves of sheep and hides, men who drag mares into hiding-holes.]</p>	<p><i>OIL</i>, p. 282: "The poet describes his expulsion from Lochaber, the dispersal of his possessions on the hill-side while he himself is hunted as a hare is by dogs, and this because he stands aloof from the murderers. He expresses regret that Sir James MacDonald of Sleat has not yet taken any steps to avenge the dastardly crime, but anticipates with joyful eagerness the approach of his fleet with this end in view. Glengarry's absence from home is also a source of deep disappointment, and the poem ends with a brief commentary on the corrupt state of Parliament and its disloyalty to the King."</p> <p>p. 283: "Crachaig: the farm in Gleneilchaig which was given over to the poet by the Earl of Seaforth."</p>	<i>Òrain Iain Luim</i> , p. 114, lines 1468-1473
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16	Iain Lom	Òran air Rìgh Uilleam agus Banrigh Màiri	1692 (circa)	Keppoch, Lochaber; wider MacDonald of Keppoch territories; this song tackling themes of 'national' politics	<p>Sgeul buan e do'n mhearcaid-s' Nach tog a mac a cuid oighreachd, 'S ion di cùram a ghabhail Mun dùinear cathair na soills' oirr'; Thoill i mallachd a h-athar, On ghabh an t-aibhisteir graoim dhith; 'S olc an dùthchas a lean rith', Chunnt i seanair 'na throidhtear.</p> <p>[It is a true tale for this wanton that her son will not inherit her estate; she ought to take care lest the city of light is closed against her. She has deserved the curse of her father since the Adversary has caught her in his grip; evil is the heredity which has adhered to her, she counted her grandfather a traitor.]</p>	<i>OIL</i> , p. 320: "In this poem, which was composed c. 1692, there is clearly reflected the strong aversion which was felt throughout the Highlands towards William of Orange and the Revolution Government, and the keen anticipation with which the return of the exiled monarch was awaited. The Highland clans were firm believers in the divine right of kings. To them King James was their hereditary king and therefore they owed him implicit loyalty, and any attempt to resist the sovereignty, however much abused, appeared to them highly treasonable. Furthermore, they considered it a treacherous act on the part of a daughter and son-in-law to deprive a father and father-in-law of his rightful inheritance, and on this point the poet is particularly bitter..."	<i>Òrain Iain Luim</i> , p. 210, lines 2696-2703
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17	An Clàrsair Dall (Ruairidh MacMhuirich)	Creach na Ciadaoin	1693 (Wednesday of Easter Week)	Bragar, Lewis (by birth); Glenelg; MacLeods of Dunvegan and their wider territories	<p>Masa tusa rinn suas an ceathramh Ruaidhri, na dearmaid, lean ri sinnsearachd t' aitim, is na toir masladh dh'an ainm sin...</p> <p>...</p> <p>Cha chùis dìon do Mhac Leòid a bhith dòlum 's rud aige; lean an dùthchas bu chòir dhuit, is miodh mòrchuis 'nad aignibh: ach ma leigeas tu dhìot e, bidh na ciadan 'gad agairt, 'g ràdh gur crannshlatag chrìon thu an àit a' ghnìomharraich bheachdail. Maide dh' fhàs 'na chraoibh thoraidh fo bhlàth onarach àlainn ann an lios nan crann euchdach-bha tlachd nan ceud anns gach àit air: lean an dùthchas bu chathair, a mhic an athar a</p>	<p>ACD, p. 125: "The occasion of this lament was the death of John MacLeod (Iain Breac) of Dunvegan, which took place in 1693..."</p> <p>p. 130: "Iain Breac's eldest son was apparently called Norman, and for him the Harper had the highest regard. But he died before his father (c.f. <i>Òran do Iain Breac MacLeòid</i>, 'Tormod'). The next son Roderick was his father's heir, and for him the Harper seems to have conceived an antipathy which is barely concealed in these verses." The Ruaidhri mentioned is the young MacLeod's [who is being addressed] great-grandfather Ruaidhri Mòr MacLeod who died in 1626, c.f. line 751.</p>	<i>An Clàrsair Dall</i> , p. 56, lines 761-764 and 773-788
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					<p>chràidh sinn; na bi ad chrìonaich gun duilleach anns an ionad 'n do thàmh thu.</p> <p>[If you have added a fourth Roderick, do not fail, follow the ancestral traditions of that race, and do not bring infamy on that name...</p> <p>...It is no means of protection for MacLeod to be niggardly when he has provision. Follow the tradition which was your birthright, and let there be lordliness in your spirit. But if you give it (the tradition) up, hundreds will blame you, saying that you are but a mean, withered wand in place of the shrewd man of action. A shoot that grew to be a fruitful branch, decked with foliage both honourable and beautiful, in the garden where were the trees that won renown – the</p>	
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					admiration of hundreds everywhere was bestowed on him: follow the tradition that was a birthright , son of the father who left me grief-stricken. Do not be a withered stock without foliage in the place where you have gone to dwell.]		
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18	Eachann Bacach	A' Chnò Shamhna	1649	Duart, Mull; wider MacLean of Duart territories	<p>A mhic, ma ghlacas tu 'n stiùir seo Cha bu fhilathas gun dùthchas Dhuit bhith grathann air th'ùrnaigh; Cuir ga caitheamh an Triùir seo: Cuir an t-Athair air thùs ann, Biodh am Mac 'na fhear iùil oirr', An Spiorad Naomha g'a stiùireadh gu nòs.</p> <p>[Young man, if you take over this helm, it were inherited leadership for you to turn betimes to prayer; let these three direct it: put the Father in first place there, let the Son be its helmsman, the Holy Ghost to guide it to harbour.]</p>	<p><i>EBM</i>, p. 167: "The poem can... be dated to 1649", the year of Sir Lachlan MacLean of Duart's death. <i>EBM</i>, p. 185: "Sir Lachlann's wife was Mary, daughter of Ruaidhri Mór, MacLeod of Dunvegan". p. 186: "[This stanza] is on the analogy of a ship... and we must take it that e [or i in other versions] here refers to the ship, i.e. the MacLean inheritance."</p>	<i>Eachann Bacach and other MacLean Poets</i> , p. 24, lines 269-275
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19	Eachann Bacach	Òran do Lachann	1630 (if about Lachlann MacLean; c. 1649 if about Lachlann Mór Mackinnon)	Duart, Mull; wider MacLean of Duart territories	<p>'S e ceannard Chlann Ghill-Eathain A dh'fhàs flathasach le cruadal; Sgaoil e feadh gach tighearnais Gun d' ghléidh thu dligheil t'uaisle; Ach 's iomadh neach bu shùgradh leis Crùbadh ann an truailleachd, Ach rinn thu beirt bu chliùitiche Air an dùthchas mar bu dual dhuit.</p> <p>[The chief of the MacLeans has grown splendid through bravery: word has spread over every lordship that you have maintained your honour properly; yet many would delight in stooping to base conduct, but you have taken a more honoured course, as would be expected of you from your heritage.]</p>	<p><i>EBM</i>, p. 186: "Lachlann Mór... died at the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneard in Islay in 1598... The subject is therefore a [Lachlann MacLean, and most likely Sir Lachlann, 16th chief]."</p> <p>p. 187: Another possible interpretation is that it is addressed to Lachlann Mór Mackinnon, "born about 1628, became effective leader of his family in 1649 and died about 1690", as the Mackinnons had been a Mull family before obtaining Strath in Skye around 1400.</p>	<i>Eachann Bacach and other MacLean Poets</i> , p. 26, lines 292-299
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20	Maighstir Seathan (MacLean)	Ge Grianach an Latha	1701 (<i>post</i> September 16th, and before March 8th 1702)	Treshnish, Mull (by birth); Kilninian and Kilmore, Mull (as minister); wider MacLean of Duart territories	<p>Ò Shir Iain mo thruaighe, 'S tu tha orm-sa mar chruaidh-chàs: 'S goirt a' bhuille seo fhuair thu gu h-òg; A chaill do dhaoine 's do dhùthaich Chionn bhith seasamh led' [dhùthchas]; 'S e bhith rioghail seo chiùrr thu gu borb.</p> <p>[O Sir Iain, alas, you are a hardship to me: bitter is this blow you have suffered in your youth; you who have lost your people and your land because of standing firm by your heritage: being regal has injured you grievously.]</p>	<p><i>EBM</i>, p. lxii: "Reverend John Maclean [or] Maighstir Seothain... was born about 1680 [and died about 1756?], the illegitimate eldest son of Ewen Maclean, 9th of Treshnish." p. lxiii: "He was probably... registered as a student of theology at Glasgow University on April 2nd 1700." In 1702 he took on the parish of Kilninian and Kilmore in Mull, his spiritual predecessor there being Rev. John Beaton (c. 1640-1715) of the hereditary Beaton physicians to the Macleans of Duart and a seannachie (p. lxiii-lxiv). p. lxix: "The poet may also have developed a reputation as an authority on Gaelic traditions, just as his predecessor in the parish had." p. lxx: In 1716 the SSPCK agreed to his petition to open a school on Mull but it was closed 10 years later, despite having an attendance of 38 in 1719, including seven girls. p. lxxiv: "From 1730 Maighstir Seathan was the Duke of Argyll's tacksman in Treshnish, which had formerly been his father's tack... [showing that he probably had] given up the somewhat less than hearty Jacobitism he declares in 1701..." p. 256: "Sir Iain, the chief, was the principal victim concerned. He was in exile at the time [1701], having gone to France in 1692 or 1693 to join James VII in exile, and he seems not to have returned before 1704."</p>	<i>Eachann Bacach and other MacLean Poets</i> , p. 94, lines 1115-1120
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21	Lachlann MacKinnon	Latha Siubhal Sléibhe Dhomh	1700-1705 (<i>post-March 3rd?</i> Certainly after the death of Iain Breac in 1693 and probably after the death of Sir Lachlan Mòr Mackinnon in 1700; could be shortly before or after the death of Sir Norman MacLeod of Berneray)	Scalpay, Skye (by birth); Breakish, Pabbay; Strath and wider MacKinnon of Strath territories	<p>Tormod fial an t-sùgraidh Nach d'fhàs mun chùinneadh cruaidh, Bha gu fearail fiùghantach 'S a chum an dùthchas suas, Sann ort a bha ar tathaich On thugadh Iain uainn- S beag m' fharmaid ris na feumaich On a bheum na cluig gu truagh.</p> <p>[Generous flirtatious Norman who never grew mean over coins, who was manly and generous, and kept up ancestral ways, You're the one we frequented / when John was taken from us – little do I envy the needy, since the bells sadly tolled.]</p> <p>An t-Ailpeineach dubh firinneach 'Gan dùthchas cian an Srath, Do'n tig na h-airm gu sgiamhach Ge bu riabhach leinn do dhath,</p>	<p>AL, P. 367-8: "Lachlan MacKinnon (Lachlann mac Theàrlaich Òig, 1665-1734) was born in Scalpay, Skye. His father, Teàrlach Òg (second son of a MacKinnon chief), was tacksman of Scalpay, and his mother was Marion MacLeod of Drynoch. He spent three years at school in Nairn, where he learned to write both prose and verse in English, and is said to have made a song to the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne'. From MacKinnon he obtained a tack of Breakish and the isle of Pabay... About 1688, he married Flora, daughter of Campbell of Strond in Harris, who died within a year after giving birth to a daughter. Grief-stricken, he went to live in Kintail... [then] fled across Loch Duich to an uncle in Knoydart, pursued by Kintail men whom he and his uncle defeated in pitched battle at Inverie... Coming home to Skye, he got his old farm back from MacKinnon. William Matheson [<i>The Blind Harper</i> editor] describes him as a member of... the 'Talisker circle'... [who spent the 1690s gathering under the hospitable roof of John MacLeod of Talisker, alongside] / Roderick Morrison (the Blind Harper, c. 1656-1714), John MacKay (the Blind Piper, see poem 23), and John MacLean (<i>Iain mac Ailein</i>, see poems 19 and 21)... Lachlan seems to have enjoyed a privileged [bard's] life... That this life of privilege came to an end well before his death is suggested by [this poem]."</p> <p>AL, p. 375-6: ..this song was composed when Mackinnon fell into hard times (financially & through the death of some of his relatives)" and MacLeod of Dunvegan "snubbed him [and] threw him out of Dunvegan's Christmas feast, hence his feverish walk back to Strath across the sléibh.</p>	<i>An Lasair</i> , p. 30, lines 33-40 ; p. 34, lines 97-104
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					<p>Bu làmh a dhèanadh fiadhach thu, Gun dàil bu bhiadhtach math – Do bhàs a chràidh am-bliadhna mi: Mo bhriathar, b’ fhiach mo sgath.</p> <p>[Honest blackhaired MacKinnon whose ancient inheritance is Strath, whom weapons suit most handsomely though we felt your face was too tanned, you were a hand that hunted, a good and fast food- provider – what has pained me this year is your death: my word, what a debt was my wound.]</p>		
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22	Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein [John MacDonald]	Òran nam Fineachan	1715 (gathering of the clans for the '15 Rising)	Moidart and Clanranald of Morar; held a tack at Grulin, Eigg; Ormiclate in South Uist; wider Clanranald MacDonald territories	<p>MacCoinnich o thuath leat, Luchd fuasglaidh gach cis, Fir chruadalach, luath-làmhach An uaisle san t-srì; ... Thig sluagh dùmhail, gun chunntas, O dhùthchas MhicAoidh.</p> <p>[From the north come the MacKenzies, redeemers of all tribute, hardy, quick-handed men distinguished in battle; ... A vast, densely-packed host comes from the land of MacKay.]</p>	AL, p. 379: Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein (c. 1665 – c. 1725). “He may have moved c. 1700 to Ormiclate in South Uist as <i>aos-dàna</i> or resident poet to Clanranald. He seems to have died in Benbecula... The song is discussed by Dr John MacInnes in his paper ‘The Panegyric Code...’	<i>An Lasair</i> , p. 42, lines 73-80
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23	Lachlann Mac a' Phearsain	Cumha do Thighearna Chluainidh	1764 (upon the death of Eòghainn Ruadh MacPherson)	Strathmashie; Badenoch; wider MacPherson of Cluny lands	<p>Am fear a dh'fhàg an dùthaich seo, Cha bu tais air chùl na cruadhach e, 'S bu dùthchasach air Cluainidh e; B'é 'n crannchur croiseil diùbhalach A dhruid a-null thar chuaintean e Thug teistias fir thar cheudaibh leis – A-chaidh nach meud a bhuadhaicheas.</p> <p>[The man who left this country was not soft behind a sword of steel, he was the vigorous famous Gael who had hereditary right to Cluny; It was perverse disastrous fate that drove him out across the seas with motto of man surpassing hundreds – that might is never what prevails.]</p>	<p>AL, p. 475: "Lachlan MacPherson (c. 1723-67), younger of Strathmashie, was of a family which enjoyed considerable holdings in Badenoch from MacPherson of Cluny, and acted as wardens on the MacPhersons' western march. His father's mother was a daughter of MacDonald of Keppoch, and his own mother was a daughter of the Macintosh chief. He and his father played a full part in the '45 as officers in the Prince's army... In his father's old age he appears to have become <i>de facto</i> tacksman of Strathmashie, and he was therefore remembered as <i>Fear Srath Mhathaisidh</i>... [he] was a gentleman and a scholar, a man who enjoyed both comfort and influence."</p> <p>AL, p. 488, Eòghainn 'Cluny' MacPherson (1706-1764) "inherited the Cluny estate and chiefship in 1722. On his marriage in 1742 to Janet Fraser, eldest daughter of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, Ewan took over the management of the estate and proceeded to carry out a series of economic developments which were highly beneficial to his people." After the '45, MacPherson of Cluny spent nine years hiding in caves etc. and in May 1755 went to France at Prince Charles' request, dying in Dunkirk in 1764.</p>	An Lasair, p. 258, lines 17-24
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24	Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir (Duncan Ban Macintyre)	Òran do'n Rìgh	1760 – 1820 (certainly during the reign of George III; possibly shortly before 1801, that being the year of the union of Ireland with Great Britain and the year that George stopped pretence to kingship of France, see line 457)	Druimliaghart, Glen Orchy by birth; Coire Cheathaich, Ben Dorain and Glen Etive as a stalker; wider Campbell of Glenorchy territories; finally, Edinburgh; this poem about George III, national dimension	<p>'S mór an sonas th' anns an rìoghachd On a chaidh an rìgh seo chrùnadh Anns an àit' a bh' aig a shìnsreachd, An d' fhuair a shìnnseanair còir dhùthchais; Albainn is Sasainn is Eirinn Nis a' géilleachdainn do' n aoinfhear, Mar nach fhacas iad riamh roimhe On a chothaicheadh air thùs iad.</p> <p>[Great is the happiness prevailing in the kingdom, since the king was crowned in the place held by his forbears, where his great-grandsire obtained dynastic rights; Scotland, England and Ireland now to the same man do yield homage, as never before were they seen doing, since first brought into subjection.]</p>	<p>In this praise poem for King George III, Donnchadh mentions contemporary political figures such as the Queen of Hungary, showing an awareness of international politics; he lists all the good things George had done for the Gael (lines 437-452) and notes how bravely Gaels have fought for this king (lines 365-372).</p> <p>Donnchadh Bàn served on the Hanoverian side in the '45, although expressed mixed feelings about his involvement afterwards, leaning towards sympathising with the Prince (ÒDB, p. xxiii); nonetheless, this poem is clearly pro-Hanoverian, or at the very least, pro-George.</p>	<i>Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin</i> , p. 26, lines 341-348
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25	Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir	Òran do Mhormhair Ghlinn Urchaidh	1746-1752	Druimliaghart, Glen Orchy by birth; Coire Cheathaich, Ben Dorain and Glen Etive as a stalker – this song composed in Glen Etive; wider Campbell of Glenorchy territories; finally, Edinburgh	<p>S an àm gluasaid no carraid Bha thu cruadalach fearail, Mar bu dual duit o d' sheanair, Choisinn buaidh ann an Gallaibh, 'N uair a bhuannaich e 'm fearann... Fhuair thu urram gach cùise On a b' urrainn thu ghiùlan: An àm suidhe na cùirte Far 'm bu lìonmhora diùcan, Bu rìomhach do dhiùtaidh, Bhith càradh a' chrùin Air an rìgh 'g a bheil dùthchas an àite [x2]</p> <p>[In time of disturbance or conflict, thou wast intrepid and manly - a trait thou didst derive from thy grandsire, who won victory in Caithness at the time he acquired the estate... In every affair thou hast won distinction, for thou wast fit to sustain it; what time the Court</p>	<p>ÒDB, p. 436: “The subject of this poem is [John Campbell, 1696 –1782], the Lord Glenorchy who became the third Earl of Breadalbane... the poem was written between 1746 and 1752, while he was still Lord Glenorchy, heir to the Breadalbane peerage and in residence at Taymouth.” p. 435: “[John Campbell] entered Christ’s College, Oxford, in 1710... and in 1718 he was appointed Master of the Horse to the Princess Royal... from 1727-1741 he was Member of Parliament for Saltash... he married Amabel Gray, daughter of the Duke of Kent [in 1718]”</p>	<p>Òrain <i>Dhonnchaidh Bhàin</i>, p. 34-41, lines 485-489 and 557-564</p>
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					held a session, at which numerous dukes were present, thine was the magnificent office of placing the crown on the king, who had right of inheritance there...		
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26	Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir	Òran do Reisimeid Earra- Ghàidheal	1778 (<i>post</i>) – 1783 (<i>pre</i> -; this is when the Argyll Regiment was disbanded)	Druimliaghart, Glen Orchy by birth; Coire Cheathaich, Ben Dorain and Glen Etive as a stalker – this song composed in Glen Etive; wider Campbell of Glenorchy territories; finally, Edinburgh	Is innsidh mi le barantas, On a b' aithne dhomh o thùs sibh, Air chruas an àit an tachair sibh, Cha cheum air ais ' ur dùthchas : Slìochd nan curaidh calma Bh' anns na h- armailtean bha cliùiteach, Ri 'n goireadh càch na h-Earra-Ghàidh'laich, 'S am fearg cha bu chùis shùgraidh. [And I aver with certitude, for I knew you from the outset, however hard a post you chance to hold, 'tis not your nature to retreat a step: descendants of stalwart warriors who served in armies that were famous, to whom others gave the name Argylls, and their wrath was no matter for jesting.]	ÒDB, p. 511: "The 'Argyle or Western Fencible Regiment' was raised in 1778 by Lord Frederick Campbell, son of the Duke of Argyll. About the same time the Earl of Eglinton also applied for permission to raise a regiment of Fencible Highlanders, but it was feared that recruiting for the regiments of the line would be affected if two Fencible regiments were raised in the Western Highlands. It was, therefore, resolved that one regiment would be raised, partly in the Glasgow district and partly in Argyll and other Highland counties. Lord Frederick Campbell was appointed Colonel. Though raised for home defence, the regiment volunteered for service anywhere. It was disbanded in Glasgow in 1783."	Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin, p. 264, lines 3892-3899
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27	Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir	Rann do'n Ghàidhlig 's do'n Phìob-Mhòir, 'sa Bhliadhna 1781	1781	Druimliaghart, Glen Orchy by birth; Coire Cheathaich, Ben Dorain and Glen Etive as a stalker; wider Campbell of Glenorchy territories; finally, Edinburgh	<p>'S i pìob nam feadan siùbhlach A bhuidhneadh cliù 'sa champ, Air thoiseach nan laoch ùra, 'S meòir lùthmhor dlùth 'nan deann; A' chaismeachd ghasda shùnnnach, Bu dùthchas di bhith ann; 'S pàilt a-nis as ùr i, Ged bha i aonair gann. Le spionnadh chàirdean Gàidhealach Tha Lunainn làn a nis, Ag àrdachadh na Gàidhlig A h-uile là mar thig...</p> <p>['Tis the pipe of fluent chanters would win honour in the camp, leading on virile warriors, while lithe fingers steadily race; the charming, lively, martial tune had its natural setting there; 'tis now quite common once again, though at one time it was rare. London is full at present of the activity</p>	<p>ÒDB, p. 512: "These six poems [in praise of Gaelic and bagpipes] might nowadays be regarded as Mòd prize poems. In 1781 the London Highland Society arranged a piping competition to be held at the Falkirk Tryst. Prizes were offered for the best performance in each section of the syllabus: salute, march, gathering, lament, <i>glasmheur</i>..." Macintyre appears to have composed all of them on the same subject. "Even Macintyre, with all his resources of vocabulary and metrical variations, finds it difficult to produce new ideas on the same topic, year after year."</p> <p>p. 514: "There is no mention of a bard or Gaelic poem [at the competition organised by the London Highland Society] after 1783."</p>	Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin, p. 272, lines 4004-4015
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					of Highland friends, who are exalting Gaelic, each day as it comes around...]		
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28	Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir	Òran Iain Faochag	1766 (<i>post-</i> ; presumably composed after Donnchadh Bàn moved to Edinburgh and joined the city guard – perhaps ca. 10 May 1768 when Wilkes was imprisoned, see l. 5672-5679)	Druimliaghart, Glen Orchy by birth; Coire Cheathaich, Ben Dorain and Glen Etive as a stalker; wider Campbell of Glenorchy territories; finally, Edinburgh	<p>Chan iongnadh leam thu bhith 'd bhalach Is bhith salach ann ad nàdur, On a lean thu ris an dùthchas Bh' aig na sgiùrsairean o 'n tàin' thu; 'S tu 'n t-isean a fhuair an t-ùmaidh Ris an t-siùrsaich air na sràidean...</p> <p>[I am not surprised thou art a boor and impure in thy nature, since thou hast cleaved to the habits of the pests from whom thou camest; thou art the brat that the bully got by the strumpet in the streets...]</p> <p>———</p> <p>Thòisich thu 'n toiseach gu h-ìosal Air a' chrìne 's air a' bhochdainn; 'S e 'n donas thug dhuit a bhith spòrsail, 'S ann bu chòir dhuit bhith 'gad chosnadh; 'S bochd nach d' fhan thu aig do</p>	<p>ÒDB, p. 546: "John Wilkes was born in London in 1727. The son of a wealthy brewer who owned much property, he received a good education privately and in the University of Leyden. He was elected M.P. for Aylesburgh in 1759, and proved to be a formidable and unscrupulous opponent of Grenville and the Earl of Bute. After being expelled in 1764 from the House of Commons for seditious libel, he fled to France and was outlawed. In 1768 Wilkes was returned as Member of Parliament for Middlesex, but was expelled and imprisoned for the libel uttered in 1763 in his paper, <i>North Briton</i>. He was re-elected three times but was refused permission to take his seat in the Commons... [He] became Lord Mayor of London in 1772. John Wilkes received great popular support, and much money was subscribed to defend the cause of 'Wilkes and Liberty'. He became the champion of the right of free representation, by British constituencies, as well as of the freedom of the press; but he was a man of vicious character, and this is the only side that Macintyre describes. The life and character of John Wilkes afforded so much material for satire... the poet would have seen the burning of the effigies of unpopular public men, including that of John Wilkes, on the occasion of the annual festival of drinking the King's health, when judges, magistrates and leading citizens gathered in the Parliament Hall for a public repast. The city guard were on duty at the Hall and suffered much indignity at the hands of the rabble."</p>	<p>Òrain <i>Dhonnchaidh Bhàin</i>, p. 398, lines 5720-5725 ; p. 400, lines 5728-5735 and 5752-5756</p>
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					<p>dhùthchas, Ad bhriùthair a’ bruith nam poitean, A’ cumail dibhe ris gach grùdair ’N uair a dhrùidheadh iad na botail...</p> <p>Duine gun fhearann gun oighreachd, Gun nì stoidhle gun airgead, Gun bheus gun chreideamh gun chreideas, Gun ghin a chreideas a sheanchas, Duine misgeach bristeach breugach...</p> <p>[Humbly didst thou start at first in penury and poverty; twas devilry induced thee to be a gallant, indeed thou shouldst have been in service; pity thou didst not abide by thy heritage, as a brewer boiling cauldrons, supplying liquor to all tipplers, as they kept on draining bottles... He is a man without land or patrimony, without property, title or money, without morals, faith</p>	
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					or credit, and there is none that believeth his statements; he is a drunken, bankrupt, untruthful man...]		
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29	Iain MacLachlainn, an Lighiche [An Dotair Ruadh; he is mentioned in the song Òran don Mhorbhairne a.k.a. <i>A Ho Rò Mo Rùn am Fearann</i> by Duncan MacPherson who was born in Rahoy in 1835 and in 'An Dotair MacLachlainn' by S. MacLean]	Och! Och! Mar tha mi	1820 (<i>post-</i>)	Rahoy, Morvern; family originally from Dunadd in mid-Argyll; studied medicine at Glasgow University; practiced as doctor in Morvern, Mull and Ardnamurchan	<p>Och! Och! Mar tha mi, 's mi seo nam ònar A' dol tron choill' far an robh mi eòlach, 'S nach fhaigh mi àit' ann am fhearann dùthchais, Ged phàighinn crùn airson leud mo bhròige.</p> <p>[Alas for my plight here, as I am so lonely, going through the wood which I once knew closely, when I cannot get a plot in my native country though I'd pay a crown for a mere shoe-breadth.]</p>	<p><i>CatS</i>, p. 481: "MacLachlan (1804-1874) was born on the farm of Rahoy, Morvern... [he] trained as a doctor at Glasgow University [and] returned to practise in his native area. Despite his well-to-do connections, he had great sympathy for the plight of the ordinary people of his district, and his self-sacrificing spirit became legendary..."</p> <p>p. 403: "MacLachlan's song would pass for a summary of Ailean Dall's ['Òran do na Ciobairibh Gallda'], but its chief concerns are more subtly and deftly expressed... MacLachlan understands (as MacDougall does not, or does not want to) that the presence of the shepherds is related to wider social and economic changes, including the decay of the old-style chiefs and the arrival of a new class of landlords in the Highlands (ll. 23-24)</p>	<i>Caran an t-Saoghail</i> , p. 50, lines 1-4
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30	Eòghann MacCòrcadail	Òran le Seann Ìleach	1877 (January 2nd)	Islay (perhaps Cluanach near Mulindry); later the Lowlands; Canada from the 1850s (Ontario)	<p>Tha còrr is fichead bliadhna thìm Bhon dh' fhàg mi glinn mo dhùthchais; Bu nì gun fheum bhith fuireach ann – Bha cosnadh gann san dùthaich; Thug mi sgrìob gu tìr nan Gall, 'S mi 'n geall air beagan ciùinidh; Cha do chòrd iad idir rium Is cha robh call sna cùisean.</p> <p>[More than twenty years have passed since I left my native valleys; it was pointless for me to be living there, employment was scarce in the country; I took a trip to the Lowlanders' land, to make a little saving; they did not agree with me at all, but I lost nothing in these arrangements.]</p>	<p><i>CatS</i>, p. 477: “MacCòrcadail was obviously from Islay, and may have hailed from [Cluanach near Mulindry, like] Iain Òg MacCòrcadail. He was probably born around 1800-1810, as he refers to himself as <i>seann ìleach</i>... He spent some time in the Lowlands before emigrating to Canada, evidently in the 1850s...”</p> <p><i>CatS</i>, p. 408: the poet lived in Sullivan, Ontario. “The poet evidently left Islay in the mid 1850s when the tide of emigration was flowing strongly, following the bankruptcy of Walter Frederick Campbell... His positive picture of the conditions of Highland emigrants, and particularly those from Islay, in Upper Canada accord closely with the impressions of John Ramsay of Kildalton, who visited the area in 1870...” MacCòrcadail shows both the good and the bad sides of emigration.</p>	<i>Caran an t-Saoghail</i> , p. 80, lines 1-8 ; 65-72 and 81-88
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31	Màiri Nic a' Phearsain (Màiri Mhòr nan Òran)	Òran do <i>Dhail na Cluaidh</i>	1888	Skeabost, Skye (by birth and on her father's side; her mother was from Uig); this song composed after she had returned to live in Skye and presumably regularly took the steamer between Oban and the Islands	<p>Beannachd leat, a <i>Dhail na Cluaidh</i>, Gur iomadh bliadhn' a threabh thu 'n cuan, Fàgail Ghlaschu mòr nan stuagh Mu thuath gu tìr mo dhùthchais.</p> <p>[Farewell to you, o Dale of the Clyde, many a year you've ploughed the brine, leaving great Glasgow of gables high, to head north to my home country.]</p>	<p><i>CatS</i>, p. 484: "Màiri Mhòr nan Òran (1821-1898) was a native of Skye, but moved to Inverness c. 1845. She left Inverness after the death of her husband and her 'humiliation' in 1872, when she was imprisoned for stealing clothes from her mistress' chest. This was almost certainly unjust. She worked in Glasgow in later life, retiring to Skye in 1882. Her verse combined her personal sorrow with the suffering of her fellow Gaels, set against a realistic and hauntingly attractive portrayal of Skye."</p> <p>p. 418: "The steamship Clydesdale was built in 1862 for David Hutcheson and Co., and became part of the fleet of David MacBrayne in 1879. She sailed between Glasgow and Stornoway until 1886, when she was shifted to the Strome Ferry to Portree service. About 1888 she appears to have been transferred to the Inner Isles service, and was based at Oban... Mary MacPherson probably composed this song c. 1888, when the Clydesdale was moved to Oban. She laments not her withdrawal from the service, but her removal from the route which included Skye."</p>	<i>Caran an t-Saoghail</i> , p. 142, lines 1-4 ; <i>Màiri Mhòr nan Òran, Taghadh de a h-Òrain</i> , p. 158, lines 1-4
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32	Iain MacIlleathain (Bàrd Thighearna Cholla)	Òran don 'Chuaiartear'	1842	Caolas, Tìree; bard to the Laird of Coll; Nova Scotia after 1819	<p>Bidh bonaid ghorm agus gearra-chot ùr air, Bidh osain dhealbhach mu chalpaibh dùmhail, Bidh gartain stiallach thar fiar-bhrèid cùil air, 'S a bhrògan èille, 's b' e 'n t-èideadh dùthchais.</p> <p>[He will wear a blue bonnet and new short-coat, he will have comely hose about his thick calves, and striped garters crossing a slanted back-cloth, and his shoes of thongs – the traditional outfit.]</p>	<p>CatS, p. 479: "Bàrd Tighearna Cholla (1787-1848), a native of Caolas, Tìree, MacIlleathain was a shoemaker to trade. He became honorary poet to the Laird of the neighbouring island of Coll. Much of his verse from that period consists of traditional eulogy in praise of the Laird, but there is much too in the township genre. His perspectives straddle the old world of chiefs and tacksmen, and the emerging 'new order' of crofting... Emigrating in 1819 to Nova Scotia [west of Antigonish]... in 1830 he moved six miles east to a place subsequently known as Glenbard. He reacted badly to the initial rigours of emigrant life, but within a decade he found himself in congenial circumstances, and his outlook became much more positive."</p> <p>CatS, p. 432: "The <i>Cuaiartear</i> is the Gaelic journal <i>Cuaiartear nan Gleann</i>, which was established by the Rev. Dr Norman MacLeod (1783-1862) in 1840 and survived until 1843. It followed an earlier periodical also founded by MacLeod, namely <i>An Teachdaire Gaelach</i> (1829-31). MacLeod was known to Highlanders as Caraid nan Gàidheal because of his efforts to relieve poverty at the time of the Potato Famine, and his commitment to education, through schools and Gaelic literacy, in the Highlands... While his main interest lay in educating 'ordinary' Gaels, he enjoyed a close relationship with the upper echelons of Gaelic society, and encouraged John Francis Campbell of Islay to gather Gaelic folklore. <i>Cuaiartear nan Gleann</i> showed a strong interest in emigration and in overseas communities of Gaels, as is demonstrated by its range of articles actually promoting emigration. At the same time, as MacLean's song shows, it provided a significant link between exiled Gaels and their homeland."</p>	<i>Caran an t-Saoghail</i> , p. 202, lines 25-28
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33	Dùghall MacPhàil	Cath Alma	1854 (after the Battle of the Alma, 20 September)	Strathcaoil in Torosay, Mull; ancestral connections to Glenforsa; later migrating to Glasgow, Newcastle, Dorset, Edinburgh, and finally dying in Partick	<p>Nuair a chunnacas air a’ bhearradh Na fir gheala lùthmhor, Buidheann ghlan nam breacan uallach Dan robh bhuaidh mar dhùthchas, Mun gann a fhuair iad buille tharraing Leis na lannan geura, Ghabh na Ruiseanaich an ruaig Is bhuail iad an ratreuta...</p> <p>Dhìon sibh cliù na tìr a dh’ fhàg sibh, Anns gach spàirn is cruaidh-chas.</p> <p>[When they saw upon the precipice the vigorous, fair heroes, the pure brigade of proud plaids who had victory in their nature, before they scarce had struck a blow with the sharpest lances, the Russians took to flight, and their retreat was sounded... you preserved the fame of the land you left, in every strife and hardship.]</p>	<p><i>Cat</i>5: Crimean War.</p> <p>p. 482: Dùghall MacPhàil was born at Strathcaoil, Torosay, Mull; he was a joiner by trade and lived 1818-1887.</p> <p>P. 447: “The Highland Brigade performed with distinction in all of the main battles [of the Crimean War] and, as a result, the image of the Highland imperial soldier was indelibly embedded in Gaelic and Scottish self-perception. The Brigade consisted of the 42nd Regiment (the Black Watch), the 79th Regiment (Cameron Highlanders), and the 93rd Regiment (Sutherland Highlanders), under the overall command of Sir Colin Campbell.”</p>	<i>Caran an t-Saoghail</i> , p. 314, lines 65-72 and 87-88
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34	Uilleam MacDhunlèibhe	Blàr Thràigh Ghruinneard	1850 (<i>post-</i> ; likely only composed some years later in 1860s)	Gartmain, Islay; later Glasgow and Greenock	<p>Nuair a bhrosnaich na h-Ilich ris an nàmhaid, A bu treise bhuail san linn ud no bha làthair dhiubh, A-nis air fraoch an dùthchais an eu-dòchas, Cor nach cualas roimhe riamh an sgeul Chlann Dòmhnail...</p> <p>...Togar do chumha le Muile, 's le Ile, 's le Ile; Le urram a dh'innsear Do chòir, do chòir, Le urram a dh'innsear Do chòir.</p> <p>[When the Islaymen went hard against the enemy, who were the strongest to strike in that generation or any other, they were now in dejection on their native heather – a plight never heard before in the tale of Clan Donald...</p> <p>...Your lament will be raised by Mull and by</p>	<p>CatS, p. 478: "He became a tailor and worked mainly in Glasgow... largely self-taught, he had a deep antiquarian interest in Scottish history... An ardent propagandist for the Gaelic/Celtic cause..." For further biographical details on Uilleam MacDhunlèibhe (1808-1870), see Whyte 1991.</p> <p>CatS, p. 450: "Livingston's poem reflects the creative high point of the epic legend [of the actual Blàr Thràigh Ghruinneard], which was reached by the middle of the nineteenth century. His interest in the theme was such that he also wrote a prose account of the battle in his sprawling volume, <i>Vindication of the Celtic Character</i> (1850: 442-5)."</p> <p>p. 452: "A prose account [of the battle] was also written by Dr Norman MacLeod, <i>Caraid nan Gàidheal</i>, before 1850. MacLeod's account is much more favourable to Lachlann of Duart... Livingston's poem evidently owes little, if anything, to MacLeod's text, and follows broadly the Islay understanding of events... In the poem, however, Livingston elaborates the story considerably beyond his 1850 prose version, and his concern appears to be to demonstrate that the battle was fought nobly on both sides according to the rules of honour and engagement of the late Middle Ages... There is a strong emotional pulse in the poem, particularly in its portrayal of the MacDonalds' respect for the dead Lachlann." The inspirations seem Ossianic, Homeric, and Biblical.</p>	<i>Caran an t-Saoghail</i> , p. 326 and 336, lines 135-138 and 321-326
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					Islay, by Islay; with honour will be proclaimed your right, your right, with honour will be proclaimed your right.]		
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35	Gilleasbaig Caimbeul	Òran air Cor na Gàidhealtachd	1850 (<i>pre-?</i>)	Fortingall, Perthshire; Lochearnhead	<p>'S beag an t-ioghnadh ged tha sinn tùirseach, 'S iad gar sgiùrsadh le buillean trom; Ar n-uachdarain shaoghalt' bu chòir ar dìonadh, Tha iad gar pianadh 's gar cur fom bonn...</p> <p>Cha bheag an cianalas dhomh bhith smaoineachadh A liuthad caochladh 's a tha nar tìr...</p> <p>Chaidh nis am fògradh à tìr an dùthchais Le reachd nan ùmpaidh nach lèir a' chòir...</p> <p>[It is little wonder though we are mournful, when they are scourging us with heavy blows; our earthly landlords who ought to shield us cause us our pain and stamp us down...</p> <p>I become very nostalgic when I consider the many adverse changes</p>	<p><i>CatS</i>, p. 474: "Campbell was born in the parish of Fortingall, Perthshire in March 1804 and died at Lochearnhead on 4 January 1883. His output includes some songs in the style of the township bard, but he also composed more ornately eulogistic pieces, especially love songs, which echo the work of...William Ross."</p> <p>p. 457: the poem's significance lies in its evidence of "reaction to landlord policies by c. 1850, in the immediate aftermath of the Potato Famine, when enforced emigration was continuing. It also predates the radicalism generated by the Crimean War. The poet's Perthshire perspective is noteworthy... [he was] influenced by John MacLean's '<i>Òran do dh'Ameireaga</i>', an interesting indication of the appeal of MacLean's song far beyond his native Tìree. The two pieces share the same metre [and probably tune]."</p>	<i>Caran an t-Saoghail</i> , p. 342, 344, 346; lines 9-12, 57-58, 73-74
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					<p>within our land...</p> <p>They have now been banished from their native country by the law of fools who are blind to right....]</p>		
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36	Dùghall MacPhàil	An t-Eilean Muileach	1850s?	Strathcaoil in Torosay, Mull; ancestral connections to Glenforsa; later migrating to Glasgow, Newcastle, Dorset, Edinburgh, and finally dying in Partick	<p>Ged tha mi 'm fhògarrach cian air m' aineol Sa Chaisteal Nuadh, san taobh tuath de Shasainn, Bidh tìr mo dhùthchais a' tighinn fa-near dhomh, An t-Eilean Muileach bu lurach beannaibh.</p> <p>[Though far from home I am now a ranger, in grim Newcastle a doleful stranger, the thought of thee stirs my heart's emotion, and deeper fixes its fond devotion.]</p>	<p>For a biographical note on Dùghall MacPhàil (1818-1887), see no. 33 in the database above.</p> <p>Translation by Malcolm MacFarlane.</p> <p>The piece is emigrant nostalgia for the poet's native Mull.</p>	<i>Caran an t-Saoghail</i> , p. 383, lines 5-8
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37	Ailean Dùghallach (Ailean Dall)	Òran do na Cìobairibh Gallda	1794 (<i>post-</i>) - 1800	Glencoe (by birth); Inverlochy; Glengarry; wider MacDonell of Glengarry territories	<p>Mar gun tuiteadh iad fon chraoibh Cnothan caoch dol aog sa bharrach; 'S ann mar siud a tha seann daoine, 'S clann bheag a h-aogais bainne; Thilgeadh iad gu iomall cùirte Bhon dùthchas a bh' aig an seanair; B' fheàrr leinn gun tigeadh na Frangaich A thoirt nan ceann de na Gallaibh.</p> <p>[As if they had fallen from the tree, blasted nuts are dying in the brushwood; that too is how old folk are, and little children for lack of milk; they have been flung to the fringe of privilege, away from the patrimony of their grandfathers; we would love the French to come to chop the heads off the Lowlanders.]</p>	<p><i>TiT</i>, p. 51: "Ailean Dùghallach [ca. 1750-1828] was Glengarry's bard from c. 1798, and his close relationship to the Glengarry family is evidently responsible for his tribute to the chief in lines 117-20. This compliment sits uneasily with the MacDonells' role in the introduction of sheep-farming to their lands; Alexander's father, Duncan, brought sheep-farmers to his estates in 1782 when he leased Glen Quoich to Thomas Gillespie and Henry Gibson, and removals from Glen Quoich began in 1784... The poet's view of Glengarry suggests that he is the victim of external intrusion which he wishes to resist. Of course, the poet must have known that sheep farmers could not have appeared without the consent of the MacDonell chiefs, and his compliment to Glengarry... must imply that the chief had no liking for the [Lowland flockmasters]."</p> <p>p. 52: "Gaelic society was unaccustomed to the hard-nosed economic determinism which underpinned the shepherds' attitudes, propelled them into an alien culture, and ignored the threat that they posed to distinctively Gaelic cultural values... [Ailean] hits out against the symptoms rather than the cause."</p>	<i>Tuath is Tighearna</i> , p. 48, lines 33-40 (translation on p. 187)
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38	Dòmhnall Bàillidh	Aoir air Pàdraig Sellar	1816 (presumably shortly after the trial on 23rd April 1816 in Inverness at which Patrick Sellar was acquitted)	Sutherland	<p>Bha 'n Simpsonach 'na chù Mar bu dùthchasach don mharaich', Seacaid ghorm à bùth air, 'S triùbhsair de dh' aodach tana.</p> <p>[The Simpson man behaved like a dog as befitted the nature of a seaman, wearing a blue jacket from a shop and trousers of thin cloth.]</p>	<p><i>TiT</i>, p. 314: "Nothing is known of this poet, except that he was connected with the county of Sutherland, and was alive in the second decade of the nineteenth c."</p> <p>p. 55: "[Arson of houses] was the first of the crimes of which Patrick Sellar, assistant factor to the Countess of Sutherland, was accused by the prosecution at his trial in Inverness on 23rd April 1816. It seems likely, as Grimble argues, that the poem was composed soon after the trial..."</p> <p>p. 56: "The <i>Simpsonach</i> was evidently a sailor [but Meek has not identified him]. It is possible that he was the master of the packet described in lines 47-48... a packet service which William Young [Sellar's co-worker and co-ordinator of the Sutherland clearances] helped to establish between Burghead and Sutherland in July 1809. The first sailing conveyed both Young and Sellar to Sutherland, apparently for the first time."</p> <p>See Kidd 2023 for an alternative version and reading of this poem.</p>	<i>Tuath is Tighearna</i> , p. 55, lines 43-46 (translation on p. 191)
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39	Iain MacIlleathain, Bàrd Bhaile Mhàrtainn	Manitoba	1878	Balemartin and Balephuill, Tiree; Manitoba, Canada	<p>Mi 'm shuidhe gu h-uaigneach air tulaichean uaine, Tha nithean gam bhuaireadh nach cualas le càch, Mi caoidh nam fear sunndach bha ceanalta, cliùiteach, Dh'fhàg eilean an dùthchais 's an cùl ris gu bràth.</p> <p>[I now sit in isolation on these green hillocks, being disturbed by matters which others have not heard; I am lamenting the spirited fellows who were kind and highly esteemed, who left their native island, forsaking it forever.]</p>	<p><i>TiT</i>, p. 315-316: "Born in Tiree, he lived (1827-1898) in Balemartin in the south-west of the island, and was known as Bàrd Bhaile Mhàrtainn. He composed several songs on themes // connected with the local land agitation, and was in effect the poet of the local branch of the Highland Land Law Reform Association."</p> <p>p. 81: "The poem was composed when a group of MacLeans emigrated from Balephuill, Tiree, to Manitoba in 1878."</p>	<i>Tuath is Tighearna</i> , p. 80, lines 9-12 (translation on p. 205)
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40	Iain MacIlleathain, Bàrd Bhaile Mhàrtainn	Slàinte Dhòmhnaill 'IcPhàrlain	1886 (shortly after 15th July)	Balemartin, Tiree; this poem concerned with 'national' politics and Donald MacFarlane's failure to be re-elected as M.P. for Argyll	<p>Is òlaidh sinn le dùrachd l An tìr an fhraoich gu dùthchasach; On as urram mòr dar dùthaich e Thu dhol do chùirt nan Sasannach.</p> <p>[We will drink it with enthusiasm in the land of heather in our native fashion, since it was a great honour to our country that you were sent to the English court.]</p>	<p><i>TiT</i>, p. 315-316: "Born in Tiree, he lived (1827-1898) in Balemartin in the south-west of the island, and was known as Bàrd Bhaile Mhàrtainn. He composed several songs on themes // connected with the local land agitation, and was in effect the poet of the local branch of the Highland Land Law Reform Association."</p> <p>p. 148: It is possible "that MacFarlane remained active on the [Tiree] crofters' behalf even after his defeat. [In lines 13-24] MacIlleathain thought that a 'dirty tricks' campaign had been orchestrated against MacFarlane by MacKinnon of Balnakill and Malcolm of Poltalloch. The allusion to his integrity (line 14) rebuts allegations of the kind made in poem 32, to the effect that MacFarlane was an unprincipled opportunist, disingenuous and even dishonest in his dealings with his constituents. MacIlleathain prefers to believe that the other two contenders packed the county with lackeys who spread smears about MacFarlane. It is, however, noticeable that MacIlleathain makes no mention of MacFarlane's adherence to Roman Catholicism or to the critical issue of his commitment to Irish Home Rule."</p>	<i>Tuath is Tighearna</i> , p. 147, lines 9-12 (translation on p. 252)
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41	Catriona NicGilleathain (unlikely?)	Do Lachainn MacGilleathain, Triath Chola	1670 - 1687 (during chiefdom of Lachlann mac Eachainn Ruaidh)	Coll	<p>'S muldach 's gur fiabhrasach A' bhliadhna-sa de ghnàth O dh'fhàg ceann nan cliaran sinn Gus an triall bàird: Gum bu cheann aos ealain thu Is gum b'athrail dhut do ghnàth, Bu dùthchas dhut bho d' sheanair, A lùb allail a bheir bàrr.</p> <p>[My translation: Oh melancholy and feverish has been this year of late, for the leader of poets has left us until the bards shall depart: For you are the leader of those learned in the arts, and so fatherlike in your ways. It is your ancestral way which you got from your grandfather, o noble branch which bears fruits.]</p>	<p><i>DC</i>, p. 62: Colm O' Baoill believes that the piece is dedicated to Lachlann mac Eachainn Ruaidh, the Laird of Coll who drowned in 1687 and was laird for about 17 from the death of his father.</p> <p>There were a few Catrionas in the Coll 'dynasty' as well as the Mull MacLeans, such as Catriona NicGilleathain who died in 1770 and was the daughter of Fear Bhròlas who died in 1725 (<i>DC</i>, p. xvi and 83). This song was composed some 30 years or more before this Catriona's birth, however. The attribution to Catriona comes from Alexander MacLean Sinclair and other compilers of poetry anthologies but no evidence or further information is ever given.</p>	<i>Duanaire Colach, 1537- 1757</i> , p. 9, lines 175-182
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42	Catriona NicGilleathain	Òran do Dhòmhnaill MacGilleathain, Tighearna Chola	1695 (<i>circa</i>)	Coll	<p>Sgeula thàinig don dùthaich A dh' ùraich dhomh mulad, Gu robh uachdarain ùra Cumail cùirte ann am Muile 'S iad ri ròpinn 's ri èigheach Cò as gleusda nì buingin, 'S na fir dhligheach air fògar 'S iad gun chòir, gun chead fuireach. Chan e dùthchas ur athar Tha sibh a' labhairt san àm air No oighreachd ur seanar Tha sibh a' ceangal mu Chaignis, Ach staid Mhic Gilleathain Seo tha grathann air chall bhuainn...</p> <p>[My translation: A tale has reached the land which has reignited my sorrow, that there were new lairds keeping court in Mull; they are plundering and yelling about who is</p>	<p><i>DC</i>, p. 69-70: Colm O' Baoill believed that Iain MacGilleathain made a mistake in the manuscript in which he preserved this song as he originally has the song dedicated to Eachunn MacIlleathain, but chronologically – especially if Catriona NicGilleathain is the author – Dòmhnall mac Eachainn Ruaidh is the more probable Laird this poem is addressed to.</p> <p>p. xl: O' Baoill was unable to find much information about Catriona NicIlleathain other than the fact that she was Catriona nighean Eòghainn mhic Lachlainn, that she composed probably circa 1695-1730, that she was married to Seumas MacGilleathain to whom she wrote an elegy (X in <i>DC</i>), and that her grandfather was foster-father to Eachann Ruadh, the son of Iain Garbh who led the MacLeans of Coll when the Battle of Inverlochy was taking place in 1645.</p> <p>The context of this poem is rooted in the way the Campbells utilised government support and legal domination to oust the MacLeans from Mull, starting in 1674. The Campbells got Coll in 1679.</p>	<i>Duanaire Colach, 1537- 1757, p. 19, lines 450-463</i>
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					<p>best prepared to <?> while the lawful tenants have been banished and no longer have right nor permission to live there.</p> <p>It isn't the hereditary right of your fathers that you are now proclaiming over it, nor the estates of your grandfathers that you are connecting about Whitsuntide, but the state of MacLeans which has been lost by us for a while...]</p>		
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43	Catriona NicGilleathain	Òran do Chatriona NicGilleathain	1770 ? (in May or shortly after the death of Catriona, daughter of Fear Bhròlais; O'Baoill suggests an earlier date around 1730)	Coll; wider MacLean of Mull territories	<p>Beul mìn-dearg 'm bheil fosadh Fon inntinn tha socrach; Cha bu dùthchas duit brosgal no bòsd... ...Thu bhith 'd laighe anns an Innis, Ged bu dùthchasach t'ionad Chuir mo shùilean a shileadh nan deòr.</p> <p>[My translation: Reddest of lips within which respite dwells, in a mind that is tranquil; it was not your hereditary nature to be a flatterer or to boast... ...You lying now in Innis, though it be your ancestral grounds, has caused tears to stream from my eyes.]</p>	<p>The bard is the same Catriona NicGilleathain as in no. 42 above.</p> <p>p. xl: O' Baoill was unable to find much information about Catriona NicGilleathain other than the fact that she was Catriona nighean Eòghainn mhic Lachlainn, that she composed probably circa 1695-1730, that she was married to Seumas MacGilleathain to whom she wrote an elegy (X in <i>DC</i>), and that her grandfather was foster-father to Eachann Ruadh, the son of Iain Garbh who led the MacLeans of Coll when the Battle of Inverlochy was taking place in 1645.</p> <p>The subject is the homonymous Catriona NicGilleathain, daughter of Dòmhnall, laird of Bròlas on Mull (d. 1725). She was likely married to Lachlann mac Mhic Iain (born circa 1703) who composed at least one moladh, and with whom she had a few children who all died young (<i>DC</i>, p. 83).</p>	<i>Duanaire Colach</i> , 1537-1757, p. 36, lines 888-890 and 894-896
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44	Màiri Nic a' Phearsain (Màiri Mhòr nan Òran)	Fios gu Clach Àrd Ùige	1877 (<i>post</i>)	Skeabost, Skye (by birth and on her father's side; her mother was from Uig); this song addressed to the people of Kilmuir and Uig in Skye	<p>Ach cuimhnich thusa nis, a dhiùlnaich, Tir do sheanar is do dhùthchais, 'S feuch gun cum thu suas an cliù, 'S nach caog thu 'n t-sùil air taobh na h-eucoir.</p> <p>[My translation: But you better remember now, o champion, about the land of your grandfather and your ancestral birthright, and strive to keep up their honour, and don't turn a blind eye to injustice.]</p>	<p><i>MMnÒ</i>, p. 169-170: Meek says that the poem is likely a direct response to the news published in <i>The Highlander</i> 7.4.1877, about the 'Raising of Rents on the Kilmuir Estate'. The rents were being raised by Captain Fraser (MacUisdein) who bought the estate from Lord MacDonald in 1855 (<i>cf. The Making of the Crofting Community</i>, p. 133)</p> <p>The Captain is mentioned on line 25, while 'Ogh' an Dotair Bhàin', Alasdair Ruadh an Dòmhnallaich and baillie on the Kilmuir estate, is mentioned in line 14.</p>	<i>Màiri Mhòr nan Òran, Taghadh de a h-Òrain</i> , p. 168, lines 20-23
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45	Màiri Nic a' Phearsain (Màiri Mhòr nan Òran)	Nuair Chaidh na Ceithir Ùr Oirre	post 1883 – pre 1885	Skeabost, Skye (by birth and on her father's side; her mother was from Uig); this song is set in Stromeferry	<p>Siud far an robh an sgioba neònach Ghabh an t-aiseag aig an t-Sròma, A shealltainn air mnaoi-uasail chòir Bha còir aice thaobh dùthchais air.</p> <p>[My translation: That's where the strange crew amassed, who took the ferry at Strome, seen by the dear noble lady – she had a right to it by ancestral claim.]</p>	<p><i>MMnÒ</i>, p. 188-89: Meek identifies this poem as a conversation between Màiri Mhòr and 'Clach na Cùdainn', i.e. Alasdair MacCoinnich (1838-1898) – a man known in all parts of the Gàidhealtachd at the time – a renaissance man, a native of Gairloch, a founding member of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, editor and publisher of the Celtic Magazine and the Scottish Highlander, and author of multiple books, including <i>The Highland Clearances</i> (1883). A' Chlach and Màiri took the ferry sometime between 1883 – 1885. The 'mnaoi-uasail' from lines 6-7 is the wife of Fearchair MhicRath, owner of the North Strome Hotel. She was of the clan MacKenzie of Applecross and died in 1897.</p>	<i>Màiri Mhòr nan Òran, Taghadh de a h-Òrain</i> , p. 186, lines 4-7
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46	Peadar MacGhrìogair (Peter MacGregor)	Teann a-nall is Éisd na Facail	1892 (<i>post</i>) – 1895 (<i>pre</i>)	Achafors, Morvern (by birth, although his father Dugald MacGregor was from Tobermory and his mother, Margaret MacMaster, was from Lismore), later Knock; this poem is about the struggle of the Gael	<p>Mhic 'Ille Bhàin, tha mór-chliù ort Aig na Gàidheil anns gach dùthaich, Cumaidh tu chànain 'na dùsgadh A bha dùthchasach d'ar seòrsa.</p> <p>[Mr Whyte, great is your renown among the Gaels, in every land. You will keep awake the tongue that was the birthright of our race.]</p>	<p><i>TGBoM</i>, p. 16-17: “Peter MacGregor was born in Morvern in 1848. His father first came to Ardtornish in 1843 where he had the lease of a croft and was employed as a weaver by John Gregorson the estate proprietor. A year later the estate was sold to Patrick Sellar, prior to which Dugald was evicted. He moved to the neighbouring Lochaline Estate and took up residence at Achafors where his son Peter was born. Following the loss of their house by fire the family moved to Knock overlooking the Sound of Mull. Peter never forgot that his father had been evicted, indeed Dugald had given evidence to the Napier Commission which sat at Lochaline in 1883, and this underlying bitterness can be found in much of his songs... Peter never married. He died in 1898 aged fifty-five and was buried at Kiel, Morvern, along with his family.”</p> <p><i>TGBoM</i>, p. 39: This poem refers to Mac'Ille Bhàin, i.e. “Henry Whyte (Fionn), a native of Easdale, Gaelic author and songwriter. He published numerous books including ‘The Celtic Garland’ and <i>Leabhar na Cèilidh</i>. His younger brother John (Iain Bàn Òg) was also a well-known writer”</p>	<i>The Gaelic Bards of Morvern</i> , p. 39, lines 45-48
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47	Peadar MacGhriogair (Peter MacGregor)	Na Frithean Gàidhealach	1892 (<i>Deer Forest Commission</i> era?)	Achafors, Morvern (by birth, although his father Dugald MacGregor was from Tobermory and his mother, Margaret MacMaster, was from Lismore), later Knock; this poem is about all Highland deer forests	<p>Nach mór am mùthadh air gach cùis dhi</p> <p>An tìr mo dhùthchais 's m' eòlais,</p> <p>On fhuair sinn teachdaireachd o'n chùirt</p> <p>Thug dhuinn an dùsgadh brònach:</p> <p>Gach fàrdach chùbhraidh bhith gun smùid,</p> <p>Gach réidhlean 's lùb fo chóinnich,</p> <p>Chuir mac-an-fhéidh sinn troimh a chéile</p> <p>Do dhùthaich chéin air fògairt.</p> <p>[Is it not a great change in every respect that has come over our native land, since we received a message from the court that caused us a sad awakening: that every delightful home should be without smoke, every field and corner under moss since the son of the deer has put us in disarray and banished us to a distant land.]</p>	For biographical note on Peter MacGregor, see A:46 above.	<i>The Gaelic Bards of Morvern</i> , p. 42, lines 41-48
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48	Iain MacDhòmhnuill (John MacDonald) (?)	Òran do Dhonnchadh Mac a' Phearsain a sheòl do New Zealand air an Ochdamh Là Fichead de'n Mhìos a chaidh	1881 (<i>pre-</i> 20th October when this was published in the <i>Oban Times</i>)	Drimnin, Morvern (if it was indeed John MacDonald of Drimnin); the poem is about Duncan MacPherson of Rahoy, Morvern (who moved to Glasgow in 1871 and New Zealand in 1880/1881)	<p>'S iomadh aon a bhios ad ionndrainn On a dh'fhàg thu tìr do dhùthchais; Bha a' Mhorbhairne ghleannach tùrsach: Dh'fhalbh am bàrd a sheinneadh cliù dhi.</p> <p>[Many a one will miss you now that you've left your native country. Morvern of the glens was sorrowful: the bard who would sing her praise shad gone.]</p>	<p><i>TGBoM</i>, p. 52: "Duncan MacPherson was born at Rahoy in Morvern in the early 1830s. He was the eldest son of John and Sarah MacPherson who had come to Morvern from Ardnamurchan. Following the death of his father which occurred sometime before 1871, Duncan moved south to Glasgow... however he did not find the city life to his liking and about 1880 emigrated to New Zealand to join three of his uncles who had gone out to South Island from Ardnamurchan in 1864. Duncan married and lived in Otago where he was engaged in running a sheep and cattle station... his wife was drowned fording the great Matukituki River [in 1919]... on the 22nd January 1931, Duncan, now a very old man and going deaf, lost his life in a tragic train accident. According to his descendants Duncan maintained a lively interest in the Gaelic language which is evident from the number of songs he continued to write in New Zealand, many of which he had published in the 'Oban Times' and elsewhere."</p> <p><i>TGBoM</i>, p. 70: "MacDhòmhnaill has not been positively identified. He may have been John MacDonald of Drimnin who took such an active part in the Land League Agitation movement in Morvern in the early 1880s. See Gaskell, <i>Morvern Transformed</i> (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 93-100. He used the pen-name MacDhòmhnuill when writing to various newspapers."</p>	<i>The Gaelic Bards of Morvern</i> , p. 68-70, lines 9-12
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49	Iain MacDhughaill (John MacDougall)	An Sgrìob a Thug mi'n Mharbhairne	1860 (<i>pre</i> -publication of 'Dàin agus Òrain' le Iain MacDhughaill)	Ardgour (by birth); Glasgow (briefly); Morvern; finally, Oban	<p>Gun d' fhiosraich mi mu dìlsean dhith 'S gun d' innis i dhomh le stuaim Gur anns a' Bhàrr bha sinnsireachd, Clann Fhionghainn rìoghail shuairc Bha càirdeach do na Camshronaich... 'S nuair a dh'aontaich sinn gum pòsamaid Le òrdagh dùthchais clèir, Cha deachaidh fois no tàmh oirnn Gus an d' fhuair sinn làmh a chèil'...</p> <p>[I asked her about her people, and she modestly told me that her ancestors had been in Barr, the royal comely MacKinnons who were related to the Camerons... And when we agreed to get married with the customary authorisation of the clergy, we took no rest until we had each other by the hand.]</p>	<p><i>TGBoM</i>, p. 71: "John MacDougall was born near Ardgour in the earlier part of [the 1800s]... Following a good primary education in Ardgour, MacDougall went down to Glasgow where he joined the Police Force. He did not enjoy that way of life and before long returned to the Highlands as an itinerant schoolmaster... MacDougall married a Margaret MacKinnon of the MacKinnons of Barr in Morvern who had been evicted from the Mishnish Estate near Tobermory."</p>	<i>The Gaelic Bards of Morvern</i> , p. 72-73, lines 25-29 and 33-36
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50	Uilleam Ros (William Ross)	Òran do Shir Eachunn Gheàrr-Loch	1785 – 1791 (approximate – Sir Eachunn was only 32 when Ros died)	Strath, Skye (by birth and from his father's side); Gairloch, Ross- shire (mother's side for multiple generations – Ros' maternal grandfather was John MacKay, the blind poet, who was piper to the family of Gairloch; Uilleam moved to Clachan of Gairloch at the age of 24 where he was a schoolmaster until his death).	Shir Eachuinn Ruaidh nan curaidhean, Bu fhraochail guineach colg, Nam piob, nam pìc, 's nam brataichean, 'S nan dùth-lann , sgaiteach, gorm; Dha'n dualchas mòr euchd- ghaisgeantachd, Le tapadh air chul- airm; 'S nì'm b' ioghna' leinn an dùchas sin Bhi leantainn dlùth an ainm. [Sir Hector Roy of the warriors, fierce, terrible in mien - of the pipes, the pikes, the banners, the ancestral arms , blue, keen; Whose native trait was valorous feats, with the weapon's master- claim, we marvel not such heritage should follow close their name.]	<i>GSbWR</i> , p. 180-1: "Sir Hector MacKenzie, eldest son of the tenth laird, who died in 1770, became the eleventh laird and fourth baronet of Gairloch. He was known among his people as An Tighearna Stòrach or the buck-toothed laird. He succeeded to the estates when a minor only twelve years of age. During the minority some of the debts were paid off, and in 1789 Sir Hector sold several properties (not in Gairloch) to pay off the balance of the debts. He lived at home and managed his estates by himself; and though he kept open house throughout the year at // Conan and Flowerdale he was able to leave or pay a considerably fortune to each of his sons. In 1815 he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ross-shire. He visited London only once in his life, and appears to have divided his time nearly equally between Flowerdale House and Conan, which he enlarged. He was adored by his people to whom he acted as father and friend. His character was distinguished by kindness, urbanity and frankness, and he was considered the most sagacious and intelligent man in the country. Though not tall, he was very strong, almost rivalling in this respect his famous ancestor Hector Roy." "Sir Hector was a great angler. He also gave a great impetus to the Gairloch cod-fishing, which he continued to encourage as long as he lived." "Christian Lady MacKenzie, Sir Hector's wife, who was called in Gairloch A' Bhan-Tighearna Ruadh, seems to have been as much beloved as her husband." "Sir Hector died on 26th April 1826, aged sixty- nine and was buried in Beaulieu Priory."	<i>Gaelic Songs by</i> <i>William Ross</i> , p. 10, lines 25-32
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51	Uilleam Ros (William Ross)	Òran Gaoil	1777 (<i>post-</i> , after Ros had met Mòr Ros for the first time, presumably after he was 15 years of age or so; pre-1782 when she married)	Strath, Skye (by birth and from his father's side); Gairloch, Ross-shire (mother's side for multiple generations – Ros' maternal grandfather was John MacKay, the blind poet, who was piper to the family of Gairloch; Uilleam moved to Clachan of Gairloch at the age of 24 where he was a schoolmaster until his death). He met Mòr Ros in Stornoway.	<p>'S glan an fhion-fhuil as na fhriamhaich Thu, gun fhiaradh, mhiar, no mheang; Cinneadh mòrdhalach, bu chròdha, Tional cò'ladh chò-stri lann, Bhuinneadh cùis a bhàrr nan Dùbh-Ghall, Sgiùrsadh iad gu'n dùthchas thall, Leanadh ruaig air Cataich fhuara, 'S a' toirt buaidh orr' anns gach ball.</p> <p>[Pure the blue blood whence the stream flowed thou, without mood, twist or band; Kin valiant and magnificent embodiment for strife of brand; They'd win the case on Dubh-Gall race and them would chase to their haunts afar; Their pursuit rolled on Cataich cold and them controlled in every war.]</p>	Commentary by MacKenzie, the collector of Ros's bàrdachd, in Gaelic, <i>GSbWR</i> , p. 58: "[Òran] a rinn am bàrd da leannan, Mòr Ros, maighdean òg urramach a thug barrachd air mòran ann an sgèimh, agus an deagh ghiùlan, a bha ro thaitneach r'a amharc oirre. Is ann di thug am Bàrd a cheud ghaol, air dha a faicinn aig co'-thional dannsaidh, a b' àbhaist do dhaoine uaisl' eugsamhuil a chumail air amaibh sònraichte, ann am Baile Steòrnabhaidh ann an Leòdhas. Is ann air maise, màldachd, agus air buaidhean ion-mholta na ribhinne seo, a rinn am Bàrd a chuid as motha dheth a chuid òran."	<i>Gaelic Songs by William Ross</i> , p. 62, lines 57-64
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52	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Chòirneil Alasdair Robastan, Tighearna Shruain, is e gu tinn anns an fhiabhras	1782 (<i>post</i> -death of 14th chief of Clan Donnchaidh of Struan) – 1783, September 3rd (before the end of the American Revolutionary War)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage); this song about Alasdair Robertson the XV chief of Clan Donnchaidh, laird of Struan, Blair Atholl	<p>Cha robh siud ach an cleachd, Bh' aig 'n aiteam on d' fhàs thu, Ri àm cruadal is gaisg', Dheire leats' buaidh làrach, Tha thu nad oighre air Ghiuthsaich, Dha bu dùthchas bhith ann an Cairidh Bu mhaith do stoidhle air chùl sin, Na 'n cunntinn an àird e.</p> <p>[My translation: That was just the way of the tribe from which you grew out of, during times of hardship it was your heroism which would give you victory in the end, You, the heir of Giùthsach, to whom it is hereditary to be at Carie, Great is the style behind this, and I shall recount it.]</p>	<p>Byrne 2010, p. 45-46: “[Mairearad Ghriogarach] was the daughter of Para Mòr MacGregor who was in Camuserocht-mor in Rannoch Brae. She married Donald Roy Gow [on 18 July 1775] and they had four children who survived to adulthood. Mairearad died about 1820. ...Donald Gow was a farmer in Auchenree... [Mairearad's] father died when she was young, and her mother was married (to another MacGregor); she left Rannoch in her youth, attended school in Perth and was in service to a MacGregor family there. Two of her brothers, Iain and Dòmhnall Dubh, and an uncle (Donnchadh) emigrated to North America, the elder brother Iain setting up in New York and becoming embroiled in the Revolution... on the Royalist side, before resettling in Nova Scotia... two of her brothers [remained] in the Highlands, Donnchadh Bròcair ‘foxhunter’, and Alasdair. At least two of Mairearad's children died young.” She had a stepson called Pàdruig.</p> <p>This Colonel Alexander Robertson was the chief of the MacDonnachie's i.e. Robertsons of Struan at the time of the return of the forfeited estates – perhaps one reason for Mairearad to be singing about his dùthchas, as well as the family's allegiance and close ties with the Robertson's of Struan due to Struan's geographical proximity to Auchinrie.</p>	<p><i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i>, p. 11, lines 105-112</p>
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53	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Thuath an t-Shlios Mhìn	1790 – 1800 (<i>circa</i> ; Iain MacGrìogar also wrote a poem about the early clearances around the Slios Mìn prior to the printing of his poetry collection in 1801)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage); this song about the tenantry of the Slios Mìn, the north slope of Loch Rannoch	<p>‘S mi air sliabh Clach a’ Bhui-ain ‘S mo dhùil ri dhol suas, A shealltainn na dùthcha, Am bheil mo dhùthchas gu buan, Far ’m bu lionmhor mo mhuinntir, ‘S iad cliùiteach gach uair, Le ùrach a’ gluasad.</p> <p>[My translation: When I was on the hillside of Clach a’ Bhui-ain, with the intention to go up, to look at the country for which I will forever have a birth-right, where my people were numerous, and always renowned, they have now awoken due to the newness of being moved.]</p> <p>Na fìor dhaoine còir, Bha an seòrsa ann riamh, A shìol nam fear mòr, B’ fheàrr còir air an tìre,</p>	<p>For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.</p> <p>Byrne 2010, p. 51-52: “Under the management of the Forfeited Estates Commissioners, evictions had already been carried out on the Strowan estate from the mid- 1750s; disruption on Menzies territory occurs some decades... But intimations of the growing unrest accompanying the steady advance of sheep farming and of the growing precariousness of cattle-rearing tenantry can be heard in some of Mairearad' s work. Her song to the tenantry of the Slios Mìn 'smooth slope' (the north side of Loch Rannoch, owned by the Menzies family) bemoans the news of events under the "young laird" - "people being moved, with such aggression that I am unable to express my opinion properly", including difficulties faced by her step-father Ewen, who has been left penniless ("falamh") and is now in Innerhadden (east of Loch Rannoch), among the Stewarts.”</p>	<p><i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh’Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i>, p. 20-21, lines 9-24</p>
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					<p>'S olc thig riutha an Sròn, Bhith ga còmhlaich-le srion, A-nis a bhith ga 'n sanrach, Air porson cho chrìon.</p> <p>[The true, kindly people, Whose kind has always dwelled there, The descendants of the great man, who'd better have right to the land, Through wickedness did they get Sròn, and hold the reins over it, and have now confined <my people> to a portion so shrunken.]</p>		
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54	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach Don Àirigh	1775 (<i>post-</i> ; inferred from the fact that the author is likely looking back on the days of her youth at some point after moving away from Rannoch)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage); this song about her family shieling somewhere in Rannoch	<p>Beir uam sòraidh dh' ionnsaidh an t-sheann ruigh', Càrnan an Fhùdair is an Scalain, An t-Aonach Mòr tha am Bràigh na h-Àirigh, 'S gum bann do' m dhùthchas na lùban bàna.</p> <p>[My translation: Carry my farewell towards the old shieling, Càrnan an Fhùdair and Scalain, An t-Aonach Mòr, which lies in Bràigh na h-Àirigh, and to my ancestral homeland of the fair, meandering slopes.]</p>	<p>For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.</p> <p>The dating has been inferred as a song of nostalgia, looking back on her ancestral dùthchas and her family's shieling.</p> <p>Consider the poetic use of 'Bheir uam sòraidh' in the final stanza of this poem, as well as ending the song with a mention of 'mo dhùthchas na lùban bàna'.</p>	<i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i> , p. 34, lines 17-20
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55	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran [eile] le Mairearad Ghriogarach do a Bràthairean	1775 (<i>post-</i> April 19th) – 1783, September 3rd, i.e. during the American Revolutionary War	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage); this song about her brothers in America	<p>Ged bhiodh sibh nur còirneil, Ann an armailt Rìgh Deòrsa, No nur seanalair mara, Cuir òrdugh air cheudan, 'S mair gum b' anns sibh aig baile, Ann an dùthchas nar seanathar, An Slios Mìn Loch Rainneach, Am fearann-sa m' eudail.</p> <p>[My translation: Though you'd become a colonel in King George's army, or a general at sea, giving commands to hundreds, Better that you'd be in the village in the ancestral homeland of our grandfathers, the Slios Mìn of Loch Rannoch, the land which I love.]</p>	For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.	<i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i> , p. 36, lines 45-52
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56	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach air an Àirigh	1775 (<i>post-</i> , after Mairearad's marriage to Donald Ruadh and her moving to Struan)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage); this song about her family shieling in Loch Rannoch-side	<p>Chaidh na giùmanaich uile air dìochuimhne, Theich am fiadh, chaidh e cian à eòlas, Cha chluinn mi iargain mu nì sna crìochan, Ach fir gan cìosnaich ag iarraidh òthaisgean.</p> <p>[My translation: The master hunters have all been forgotten, the deer has escaped, it has gone from these lands, I won't hear any laments in the marches, only tiresome men wanting gimmers.]</p> <p>..Ged tha mi à m' dhùthchas teann air Sruain, Fad o 'n dùthaich 'sa bheil mi eòlach, Cuim nach dùraiginn dhol 'san ùire ann, 'S gu bheil mo rùin-s' ann fo na bòrdaibh.</p> <p>[My translation: Though I am away from my ancestral</p>	For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.	<i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i> , p. 37, lines 19-22 and 35-38
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					<p>homeland, down near Struan, far away from my native place which I know so well, Remember (?) that it is not my wish to be buried there, that my love is there under the boards of a coffin.]</p>		
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57	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Leanabh Altrum a bha aice	1775 (<i>post-</i> , after Mairearad's marriage to Donald Ruadh and her moving to Struan)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage)	<p>Mo leanabh rùnach dh'fhàs chridheil sunndach, 'S ann dhut bu dùthchas siud o do sheanairuibh, O chloinn a Ghriogair, na fir bha cliùteach, 'S ann dhut nach b' iongnadh 's tu o thaigh Learagan, Nuair a thig an oidhche agus àm na coille, Bu lìonar faighneachd air Iain mac Calum, Ni t' athar-sa oighre air le fheathas 's rinn e, An tachd sa coibhneas 'n aoidh 's ceanaltas.</p> <p>[My translation: My beloved (foster)child has grown up hearty and cheerful, as is your hereditary wont from your grandfathers, from the clan MacGregor, those renown men, 'tis no wonder that is the case, you being from the house at Learagan, When night falls and it's</p>	<p>For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 (esp p. 53) or A:52 above.</p> <p>The song is a praise-poem for Siùsaidh Nic Calum, Mairearad's foster-daughter, when Mairearad got news that Siùsaidh would have to leave their household.</p>	<p><i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i>, p. 38-9, lines 25-32</p>
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					time to be in the woods, many would ask after Iain son of Calum, Your father would make him heir prudently, with kindness and courtesy and mildness.]		
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58	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Mhisreachan Mhic Ghlaisain ann an Srath Ghruaidh	1775 (<i>post-</i> , after Mairearad moved to Auchinree)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage); this song for the McGlashans of Strathgroy, Blair Atholl	<p>Dhaibh bu dùthchas on aiteam, Bhith dlùth ann ar taic, Fir ur Chloinn a Phearsain, Na gaisgich nach tìm (?), Nuair thogte leibh bratach, Sròl uain’ air a bhasadh (?), Crainn a’ Ghiuthais dheagh-shnaighte, Le caismeachd na pìob.</p> <p>[My translation: To those to whom it is an ancestral heritage from their people, to be close-by in support of us, the young men of Clan MacPherson, warriors who are not soft (?), green banner in their palms (?), well-hewn Pine Mast, with the pipe-led procession.]</p>	<p>For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.</p> <p>Byrne 2010, p. 49: one of Mairearad’s clan praise poetry songs is this song, for “three McGlashin sisters which turns into an apologia for the Clan Gregor”.</p> <p>It is crucial that the latter – the history of the MacGregors – inspires Mairearad to use the term <i>dùthchas</i> in this poem as in many others; this particular instance appearing in the final stanza of this song-poem.</p>	<p><i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh’Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i>, p. 49, lines 133-140</p>
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59	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do Chòrnail Alastair Robastan, Tighearna Shruthain	1784 (<i>post-</i> , written shortly after the Disannexation of the Forfeited Estates)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage); this song for the Laird of Struan [Strowan]	<p>‘S èibhinn naidheachd ri chluinntinn, Gun d’ fhuair gach oighre am fearann, Nis o thionndaidh a chuibhle, ‘S gun deach ‘n aont’ a ud thairis, ‘S ar cheann-fine bha cliùiteach, A ‘s fhiach a chùis ‘ud a h-aithris, Tighearna Shruain on Ghiùthsach, Thighinn dhan dùthchas a sheanathar.</p> <p>[My translation: It is delightful to hear the news that every heir has received his land, now that the wheel of fortune has turned, and the agreement has gone through. Our clan chief was renown and it is well-worth proclaiming the matter, the Laird of Strowan from Giùthsach is returning to the ancestral lands of his grandfather.]</p>	<p>For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.</p> <p>Byrne 2010, p. 49: Mairearad composed “three songs to Colonel Alastair Robertson of Strowan, landlord of Glen Errachty, whose dùthchas - bought back in 1784, after its post-Culloden confiscation - also included the Slios Garbh 'rough slope', the south side of Loch Rannoch, and Bun Raineach to the east. One song boasts of the personal relationship enjoyed with the Robertson chief (whose family was known for its musical interests and who may have cultivated an image of old-fashioned patronage... The other two songs to Strowan celebrate the return of the forfeited estate to its traditional owners; one of them, in English, opens the collection and gives clear expression to the dual identity of the Highland military aristocracy, as British army elite and as perceived in traditional Highland [terms].”</p> <p>Colonel Alasdair Robertson was chief of Clan Donnachaidh from 1782 until his death in 1822; he saw the restoration of the family estate in 1784.</p>	<p><i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh’Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i>, p. 54, lines 33-40 ; p. 55, lines 57-78</p>
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					<p>Ann an loingean nan coit, 'n àm a bhith 'crosg na fairge, B' fheàrr càch air an cùl thu, Nuair a dhùisg a trom annradh, Bhiodh an caiptein gun chùram, 'S Tighearna Shruain bhith làmh ris, Làmh dh'iomairt nan cruinntean, 'S ann dhut bu dùthchas bhith sionnsail Lean siud riut thaobh dualchas, 's leat Clach bhuadh na Bratach, Aig a meud 's tha do bhuaidh oirre tha do-luaite 'n aithris; Cha drùidh claidheamh no luaidh ort 's i buan air thasgaidh, 'S mòr an sonas a fhuair thu nar thàn i an uachdar an-toiseach. 'S lìonmhor bantighearn rìomhach ga bheil mìltean air bhanna,</p>	
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					<p>A b' ait a bhith riut pòst' an còirichean daingeann, Cheannaicheadh le òr thu nam biodh seòl air ghabhail Ach ma nithear leat còrdadh dhaibh 's brònach an dealachadh.</p> <p>[My translation: In the war fleet of boats at the time of crossing the sea, the others preferred you to be at the rear, when the strong storm awoke the captain would have no worry with the Laird of Strowan by his side, the hand that campaigned through the realms, it is your native way to be lustrous. This followed you from the side of your ancestral disposition, and you have the blessing of Clach Bhuadh na Bratach, the measure of your victories is impossible to recount, and no sword nor lead shall</p>	
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					<p>penetrate you, since she is preserved forever, and great is the joy you got when she [the Clach] was first taken up-country. Many a beautiful lady who has thousands in bond would love to be married to you with confirmed rights, you would buy with gold if a sail could be gotten but if they grow to like you, painful will the parting be.]</p>		
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60	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran a Rinn Mairearad Ghriogarach Nuair a Phòs i	1775 (18 July or shortly thereafter – this is the registered date of her marriage)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage)	<p>On thòisich mi ri ealaidh, Thug mi riamh an aire, Nach dèanainn le m' theanga, Farran chuir air càch, Thug mi an dùthchas 'ud à m' sheanair, On s' ann rium a lean e, Am fad a bhios mi maireann, Cha mhath leam leag ma lan.</p> <p>[My translation: Since I began to make songs, I have always been aware not to create with my tongue vexation upon others, This is an ancestral disposition I received from my grandfather and closely have I followed it, and as long as I shall endure in this world I would not wish to let it down.]</p>	<p>For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.</p> <p>Byrne 2010, p. 53: “Her grandfather (probably maternal) is evoked specifically in reference to her poetic gift and her concern not to cause offence or harm.”</p> <p>Byrne then notes that this would have been “Donald MacGregor (Dòmhnall Mac Iain Mhic Mhaol-Chaluim), Fear Fad a' Choin Uidhir (McGregor, "Journal," 293), some of whose work was collected by the Rev. James McLagan, minister at Blair Atholl in the latter part of the eighteenth century (see, for example, Glasgow University Library MSS Gen. 1042/140).”</p>	Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach, p. 72, lines 1-8
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61	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach Nuair a Chunnaic i Pairtidh do Reiseamaid Chlann Ailpinn 'Recruiteadh air Fèill Ceann Loch Rainneach	1795 – 1798 (1798 is when the Alpine Fencibles were created by Sir John MacGregor Murray, 1st Baronet – who in turn became baronet of Lanrick and Balquhiddy on 3 July 1795)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage); this song about the Clan Alpine Fencibles recruiting in her native area of Loch Rannoch)	Tost Shir Iain tighearna Lanraig, Ceann-cinnidh nam fear fallain, Gum bu 'n dùthchas dhut a d' shean-athair, A bhith an carbh ceann Loch Eire. [My translation: A toast to Sir Iain, laird of Lanrick, chieftain of the healthy men, It is your hereditary right from your grandfather's side to be in a war-vessel at Lochearnhead.]	For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above. The Clan-Alpine Fencibles were created in 1798 by Sir John MacGregor Murray, 1st Baronet	<i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i> , p. 87, lines 21-24
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62	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearad Ghriogarach do na Chnuimh Fhiacail 's do dh'Iain Òg Mac-an-Eildear	1800 (<i>circa</i> ; estimated entirely from Mairearad's age)	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage)	<p>'S ann an lag sgìre Shruthain tha dùthchas an Eildeir, Gum maireann dha d' theaghlach, cridheil greadhnach gun èisleàn, Sunndach suilbhear, aiteam deagh phàilt 'n sàr-bheusan, Chan eil do leithid ach tearc ri fhaicinn measg cheudan.</p> <p>[My translation: It is in the hollows of the parish of Struan that the Elder's ancestral lands are, Long may your family endure, heartily, splendid, free of sorrows, Joyful, cheerful, plentiful tribe, exceeding in their abundance of virtues, it is rare to find your like among the masses.]</p>	<p>For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.</p> <p>Byrne 2010, p. 58: mention of the dentist "Iain og Mac an Eildeir" and suggestion that there may have been a personal relationship (perhaps even blood relations) between Mairearad's husband and the Elders in Edinburgh, who had originally been from around Struan</p>	<p><i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i>, p. 89, lines 46-50</p>
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63	Mairearad Ghriogarach	Òran le Mairearadh Ghriogarach do Chaluim Stiùbhart am Blàr dhan co-ainm Calum Athalach	1800 [DATING UNCERTAIN]	Camuserocht Mòr, Rannoch Brae (by birth – her father called Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich); Auchinrie, Blair Atholl (by marriage)	<p>'S beag 'n t-iongna thu, a Chaluim, A bhith uasal do bharail 's do chainnt, Bu tu ogha an dà sheanar, dham bu dùthchas am fearann nach gann, 'S e dh' fhàg thusa às aonais, lad a dh' èiridh an aobhar a' Phrionnsa, Tha thu fèin 'toirt 'n aire, Nach eil spèis do dh' fhear falamh gun cheaird.</p> <p>[My translation: It is little wonder for you, o Calum, to be noble in your opinions and your speech, You are the grandson of two grandfathers who had birth-rights to vast lands, and what has deprived you of them was your grandfathers' rising for the Prince's cause, and you yourself are noticing that no respect is given to a landless man with no trade.]</p>	For a biographical note on Mairearad Ghriogarach, see Byrne 2010 or A:52 above.	<i>Co-Chruinneachadh de dh'Òrain Thaghte Ghàidhealach</i> , p. 169, lines 17-24
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64	Gun urra / anonymous	Ciallach Duine Fíoruasal	1520 (<i>ca. pre-</i>)	According to this poem, the poet's dùthchas is in 'Iarlaidh' – possibly Airlie, Angus?	<p>Tá mo dhúthchas i nIarlaidh, iarua mé do Chloinn Domhnaill; ionnua mé Chloinn Ghill-Eathain, bheireadh na catha comhraig.</p> <p>[My ancestral country is in Airlie, I am a great-grandson of Clan Donald; I am a descendant of Clan MacLean, who waged many a battle.]</p>	<i>Bàrdachd Albannach</i> , p. 303: "This poem, though syllabic, was not composed in the literary dialect, and there is no reason to remove vernacular features, even if that were possible in every case; these features include the omission of <i>a</i> , the degraded form of <i>do</i> ... The metre is irregular and the rough workmanship of the poem naturally leaves something to guesswork."	<i>Bàrdachd Albannach: Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore, p. 236, lines 2311-2314</i>
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65	Iain mac Fhearchair (John MacCodrum)	Tàladh Iain Mhùideartach	1763 – 1766	<p>Cladh Chomhghain, Àird an Runnair, North Uist [by birth]; Cachaileith na Rèibhill, North Uist [for a time]; Paible, North Uist [for a time]; Langass; Àirigh a' Phuill, Eaval [until his death].</p>	<p>'S iomadh rìoghachd agus nàisean 'S an do mheudaich sibh ur càirdean, Mar rinn sibh ri Prionnsa Teàrlach 'N uair bha gràisg a' bagairt a mhurt. Lean an dùthchas cliùiteach ud riut, Dol an cunnart t'anma 's do churp- 'S iomadh cliù a choisinn siod dhuit. Nan tigeadh ort càs no éiginn 'S càirdeach dhuit an t-àrmunn Slèiteach Aig am biodh na laochraidh threun Bu chliùiteach beum 's an teugmhail a muigh; Na fir ùra 'n dùsal an truid, Leis a' chrùn bu dùthchas dhaibh cur, Thaobh an cùil tionndadh iad stuth.</p> <p>[In many a kingdom and nation have you added to the number of your friends, (because of) how you did to Prince Charlie, when the rabble was threatening to</p>	<p><i>TSoJM</i>, p. xvii: MacCodrum was born in 1693.</p> <p>p. xxxli: He died at the age of 86 “after a short illness, in his home at Àirigh a' Phuill on Wednesday, 14th April 1779.”</p> <p>p. xx: “If MacCodrum took any part in the Rising[s] there is a strange silence on the [matter].”</p> <p>p. xxi: “Having been reared in Aird an Runnair, MacCodrum took up residence at Cachailleith na Rèibhill, which is situated on the high ground between Hougharry and Tigharry... his visitors included Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and a bard from Skye called Mac-a-Leòir. After leaving Hougharry MacCodrum lived for some time in Paible, where he composed <i>Smeòrach Chlann Dòmhnail</i>.”</p> <p>p. xxii: “After Paible, MacCodrum’s next place of abode was Langash, where the walls of his house are still to be seen. He seems to have been living there as early as 1758.”</p> <p>p. xxiv: “MacCodrum’s predecessor as bard to the MacDonalds of Sleat was Duncan MacRuari who held the lands of Achadh nam Bàrd in Trotternish in virtue of his office... Sir James [MacDonald] was a keen upholder of old traditions... He met MacCodrum in 1763... His appointment of MacCodrum to the office of bard on landing in North Uist (probably at Lochmaddy) was therefore one of his first acts as overlord of the island and chief of the clan... in return for his services MacCodrum received a croft rent free for life.”</p> <p>p. xxv: “Having acquired a bard, Sir James began immediately to make use of him for the purpose of extending his knowledge of Gaelic and of the</p>	<p><i>The Songs of John MacCodrum</i>, p. 118, lines 1715-1728</p>
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					<p>murder him. That laudable tradition has cleaved to thee, going into danger of soul and body – much renown has that won for thee.</p> <p>If danger or stress befell thee, (closely) related to thee is the chief of Sleat, who was wont to have the stout warriors of namely battle-stroke when the contest was on the field; the men noble in dust or strife, 'twas the habit of their race to fight for the crown, backwards they would not turn an inch.]</p>	<p>ancient Gaelic poetry which was the centre of such great interest at the time.”</p> <p>p. xxvii: “After becoming a professional bard, MacCodrum, though now evidently seventy years of age, began to take his art more seriously than ever, and to the next few years belong most of his songs in praise of the MacDonald clan...”</p> <p>p. xxviii: MacCodrum was illiterate and never went to school but “had a lively interest in what was happening in the outside world... of European politics.”</p> <p>In 1766, MacCodrum’s patron, Sir James MacDonald, died at a young age.</p> <p>p. xxix: “Alexander [MacDonald] was a man of entirely different outlook... however, to [his] credit, he continued to the bard the allowance granted by his predecessor.”</p> <p>p. xxxi: “Sir Alexander MacDonald carried out extensive reorganisation on his estates in 1769 [and] Eaval was divided into a number of small holdings in pursuance of his policy of increasing the numbers of the small tenantry.”</p> <p>p. xlv-xlv, MacCodrum had only one daughter, Mary (Robertson); she was living at Cachaileith na Rèibhill c. 1820 but emigrated to Cape Breton in her old age.</p>	
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66	Cathal mac Mhuirich	Foraois éigeas Innse Gall	1593 – 1618 (during the chiefship of Dòmhnall mac Ailein Clanranald, perhaps 1610s)	Clanranald territories (mainland, e.g. Caisteal Tioram, as well as island, i.e. Clanranald of Benbecula and Caisteal Bhuirgh)	<p>Sgéith donna lé ndlúthaid gliaidh ar dhùthchas ó Colla is cóir; a ghairm ós na tíribh thuaidh - fuair a línibh a n-airm óir.</p> <p>[Colla's descendants have a hereditary right to the noble shields with which they join battle. Be it proclaimed over the northern lands – he seized their golden weapons in ranks.]</p>	<p><i>TGS</i> vol. 50, p. 332: upon “Ragnall mac Ailein's death, the court to which Cathal appears to have turned - not for the first time - was the one with which we must principally associate him, that of Domhnall Gorm Òg of Sleat.”</p> <p>p. 343: “His originality operated within the [bardic] system, expanding it, testing it; he was contemptuous, as we have seen, of those who avoided it.”</p> <p>p. 352: “Did Domhnall mac Ailein merit this kind of praise? The answer, I am afraid, is no. His behaviour at the battle of Amhainn Roaig in Uist, at which his brother Aonghas, the previous chief, was killed, smacks of cowardice or connivance. He plundered MacLeans and MacKenzies in his youth, but... [was ingloriously captured by Lachlann Mor MacLean of Duart when sailing for Ireland in 1595]. Thirteen years later he became the King's prisoner at Aros in the events leading up to the Statutes of Iona, and thus began a career of diplomatic negotiation at which he appears to have excelled, culminating in 1617 in a knighthood.”</p> <p>p. 357: “I think we can see in Cathal the development out of bardic poetry of an artistic consciousness... To conclude, Cathal came near to bringing about a renaissance of bardic poetry in Scotland, while the art was dying in Ireland. What were the sources of his inspiration? In the first place, the learned orders remained strong in numbers. The Hebrides, as he said before 1618, were “a forest of learned men “...”</p>	<i>Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness</i> , vol. 50, p. 348, lines 129-132
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67	Cathal mac Mhuirich	Saoth liom do chor, a Cholla	1623/24 (<i>post-</i>) – 1636 (<i>pre-</i>)	Territories named are part of Colla Ciotach's campaign, especially Kintyre, Islay, Colonsay, Rathlin, Clanranald lands in the Isles	<p>An senfhocal, a chúl cas: "cothuigh go dían fad dhúthchas," a thobar fial na bhfileadh, "s na h-iarr cogadh coillidheadh".</p> <p>[The maxim, curly-haired one: "take good care of your inheritance," generous fountain of poets, "and do not seek the warfare of outlaws."</p>	<p>Ronald Black, 'A Manuscript of Cathal Mac Muireadhaigh', <i>Celtica</i>, vol. x (1973), p. 202: "The poem is in strict <i>deibhidhe</i>. It is a cautionary message to the free-booting Colla Ciotach following the capture of his sons Giolla Easbuig, Alasdair and Aonghas, who were then held hostage in the Lowlands. The tone is pessimistic politically, but shows some confidence about the sons' safety... This reflects the order in the Isles following the accession in 1609 of a dozen Island chiefs to the reforming Statutes of Iona. The poet's own chief, Domhnall mac Ailín of Clanranald, had signed the Statutes, and first Domhnall, then his successor, had dutifully presented themselves before the Privy Council each year thereafter; criticism of the submission (stanza 13) is therefore necessarily muted... Evidence for the precise occasion of the poem's composition is contradictory... 15th March 1636 [is] certainly a <i>terminus ad quem</i>..."</p> <p>p. 204: "...the capture of the [three sons of Colla Ciotach] took place between 27th June 1623, when Giolla Easbuig was still at large, and 17th October 1624. If this is correct, it remains to be explained why Cathal should have taken twelve years to dispatch the poem..."</p>	<i>Celtica</i> , vol. 10 (1973), p. 199, lines 85-88
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68	Gun urra / anonymous	Mór mo mholadh ar mhac Cholla	1645 (<i>post-August 15th and Battle of Kilsyth</i>) – 1647 (<i>pre-</i>)	Clan Donald of Dunnyveg territories; Kilsyth mentioned; outlook more 'national'	<p>lomdh(a) cúirte fása foilbhe fedh gach n-oirir; dúthchus do shíol Airt an fhoghuil cairt an chloidhimh.</p> <p>Cairt an chloidhimh dhóibh as dúthchus don droing dhána; minic chuirid síos gan séla cíos is cána.</p> <p>[Many a court is waste and empty throughout each territory; the birthright of Art's seed is spoiling, the broadsword's charter. The broadsword's charter is the birthright of that bold people; often without seal's impression do they impose tax and tribute.]</p>	<p>Watson, WJ, 'Unpublished Gaelic Poetry - III', <i>Scottish Gaelic Studies</i> 2 (1927), p. 75: "The following composition in honour of Alasdair mac Colla is from MS. H3.18.791, Trinity College, Dublin... an account of the heroic Alasdair is given in <i>Clan Donald</i> vol. iii, p. 596-609. His father was Colla Ciotach, son of Gilleasbuig, son of Colla, third son of Alexander MacDonald of Dun Naomhaig in Islay and the Glens of Antrim. He was born in Colonsay about 1600, and was killed at Knocknanos, Co. Cork, in 1647. Our composition has reference to his distinguished services in Scotland during the campaigns of Montrose in 1644-45, culminating in the victory of Kilsyth in August 1645, and must have been written not long after that battle... the 'young lord of the stock of Raghnall' was Donald, son of Eòin Muideartach, who led the Clan Ranald men, and through Alasdair mac Colla was assigned the task of collecting supplies for the army [...] raising great spoils from Angus and the Mearns... The tale of Belling the Cat, which appears earlier in Scottish history in connection with... Lauder Bridge in 1482... and Domhnall Gorm of Sleat... this form of composition, consisting of poetry interspersed with humorous or satirical prose, is styled a <i>croisantacht</i>. The metre of the poetical parts is Snedbairdne. The... remainder of the MS is missing."</p>	<i>Scottish Gaelic Studies</i> vol. 2 (1927), p. 76, lines 13-20
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69	Gun urra (anonymous) [Neil MacEwen]	Rug Eadrain Ar lath nAlban	1641 (and no later than 1645)	<p>Campbell lands in Argyll; MacEwen's ancestral lands were along Loch Fyne and Cowal, and this particular bard's <i>dùthchas</i> was Kilchoan on Loch Melfort</p>	<p>Léigidh dhamh dùthchas m' athar, a n-onóir na h-ealadhan, a ghég tarla fá thoradh, do mhéd th'anma is adhmholadh.</p> <p>Tuig féin, a sgeallán na sgol, 's a réлта eoil na n-ollamh, ó's tú is coimhdhe dod chinneadh, nach dú oirne th' aindligheadh.</p> <p>[Restore to me my father's heritage in honour of mine art, thou branch laden with fruit, according to the greatness of thy name and of thy praises. Wot thou, darling of the schools, and guiding star of poets, since it is thou art lord for thy kin, that wrong from thee to me is unmeet.]</p> <p>A Chonaill Chearnaigh ar ghoil, a fhoghlaim Arasdotuil,</p>	<p>W. J. Watson in <i>Scottish Gaelic Studies</i> 3, p. 139: 'The poems that follow are good specimens of the court poetry which was so much in vogue for many centuries... [it is] addressed to MacCailin... Both poems are from Edin. MS. XXXVI. and are addressed to Gille-easbuig Gruamach. The career of this nobleman is well known. He succeeded his father in 1638, was created Marquess in 1641, and took an active though not a distinguished part on the Covenanting side in the Civil Wars of the period. He was unfortunate in being opposed to the Marquess of Montrose in the disastrous battle of Inverlochy and elsewhere. After the Restoration of Charles II, he was beheaded in 1661. The author or authors in all probability belonged to the bardic family of MacEwen, attached to the court of Mac Cailin.'</p> <p>p. 141: 'This poem was composed after 1641, the year in which MacCailin was made Marquess, and unless the poet is quite shameless in his laudation of his patron's military prowess, not very long after that date. It could hardly have been written after February of 145, the date of Inverlochy. The occasion is the threatened or actual deprivation of some part of the poet's patrimony, which was situated at Kilchoan, on Loch Melfort... The metre is Deibhidhe of sound technique. Both poems give evidence of thorough training in the art.'</p>	'Unpublished Gaelic Poetry IV, V', <i>Scottish Gaelic Studies</i> 3, p. 156 and 158, lines 65-72 and 101-4
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					<p>ó do chneasghuin ní dú dradh, a chnú chleasruidh an chomhruig.</p> <p>[Thou who art as Conall Cearnach for valour, thou who hast the learning of Aristotle, trouble from wound at thy hand were unbefitting, thou without peer in feats of battle.]</p>		
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70	Iain mac Mhurchaidh (MacRae)	Ho ro guma b' èibhinn leam	1750 – 1760? (pre- death of Roderick MacKenzie in 1774)	Lianag a' Chùl-Doire between Lianassie and Dorasduain (by birth); Achadh Gharg [Little Achyark] in Glen Lichd; Coille Rìgh / Craig of Delick in Glen Elchaig; North Carolina from 1776	<p>Bu dùthchas dhut bhod shìnnisireachd Bhith siubhal bheann is fhritheannan Le cuilbheir fada dìreach A nì damh a chinn a leònadh.</p> <p>..’S tu an uachdaran as urramaich’ Chuala mi na chunna mi; Tha tuath a’ toirt an urraim dhut Gu cumail riutha an còrach.</p> <p>Gur iomadh bochd is dìlleachdan Thug beannachd air do shìnnisireachd; Gur maireannach an dìleab e, ‘S gur cinntiche na ‘n t-òr e.</p> <p>...Bi aoigheil ris a’ cheathairne, Na tràig na daoine mathasach, Bhon ‘s iomadh cliù gun chleith a choisinn d’ athair leis an dòigh sin.</p> <p>[You inherited from your ancestors the</p>	<p><i>ImM:tLaWoJM</i>, p. 19: “It is clear that Iain was surrounded by a large and well-established family, who would have offered him and his mother and siblings support and consolation at the time of his father’s unfortunate death in April 1746. While he was still a young man, Iain mac Mhurchaidh was chosen by [MacKenzie of] Seaforth to be his gamekeeper, stalker and forester, an important role. His father had been an under-factor for Seaforth in Kintail.”</p> <p>p. 20: “By all accounts, Iain mac Mhurchaidh was a well known and popular figure in the area, because of his sociable nature, witty conversation and his talent for composing songs, often in an impromptu manner.”</p> <p>p. 21: “Drinking features largely in several songs..” [c.f. Iain MacCodrum, Donnchadh Bàn, and Uilleam Ros].</p> <p>p. 22: “He seems to have been liked by all, rich and poor... Accounts of courtship and marriages being arranged or discussed appear in Songs 9, 10 and 17... Iain mac Mhurchaidh would be consulted if there was a dispute in the area.”</p> <p>p. 24-25: he was married to Seònaid (Winifred) MacKenzie of Davochmaluag, whose mother was a daughter of MacKenzie of Fairburn.</p> <p>p. 27: “we can place Iain mac Mhurchaidh’s marriage c. 1762, which may suggest he was born early in the 1730s.”</p> <p>p. 35: “The loyal, brave people who had lived on the land for generations must have felt betrayed that [moneyed ‘outsiders’] were being chosen</p>	<i>Iain mac Mhurchaidh: the Life and Work of John MacRae</i> , p. 156-8, lines 357-360, 365-372, 381-384
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					<p>right to traverse mountains and deer forests with a long, straight gun, which will wound a stag with certainty. ...You are the most honourable landlord I have heard or seen; the common people give you respect to keep their rights safe. Many's the poor man and orphan who blessed your ancestors; it is a legacy that lasts, and it is more certain than gold. ...Be hospitable to the yeomanry, don't desert the benevolent people, for many's the obvious honour your father earned in that manner.]</p>	<p>instead of them [as tenants in the 'new order' in the Gàidhealtachd – see song 24]"</p> <p>p. 37: "Three of the biggest landlords in Ross-shire met to try to change [Iain's] mind, showing their great respect and affection for him. They invited him to meet them, and offered him any farm on their estates if he would stay in his own country."</p> <p>p. 40: "Local tradition affirms the year [of their emigration] as 1774... other sources, including those in America [suggest] 1772."</p> <p>p. 51-2: Iain and his wife Seònaid likely had slaves in North Carolina.</p> <p>p. 61: Iain was captured during the War of Independence, around 10th March 1776. He died in September 1780.</p> <p>On the song itself, p. 160: "A wee song by Iain son of Murchadh son of Fearchaird when he and the two or three who were with him on a trip came across a bottle of whisky which Fairburn had put in a cairn for them beside the road. It is when they sat on the cairn to drink a toast to Fairburn... that the bard sang the following song of praise."</p> <p>p. 27-9: "In his early years, Iain mac Mhurchaidh seems to have enjoyed a life of comparative leisure because of his position with Seaforth, and also because his relations were well off and highly regarded in the area, by landlords, tacksmen and cottars alike. One of these / landlords, Roderick MacKenzie of Fairburn, was a particularly close friend. Iain often called on him..." Fairburn would never let Iain mac Mhurchaidh leave his home</p>	
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						without a send-off of provisions and whisky, which lain would (at first) decline out of politeness.	
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71	Giolla Brighde Albanach	Tabhraidh chugam cruit mo ríogh	1221 - 1242	Unknown; Irishman living in Scotland or Scot composing for Irish patrons? Patron is Donnchad Cairprech Ó Briain of Thomond (western Ireland)	<p>Ionmhoin lem-sa—duthchas damh—fiodhbhuidhe áille Alban; giodh ionmhain as annsa leam an crann-sa d’fhiodhaidh Èireann.</p> <p>[Dear to me (my heritage) Scotland’s lovely yellow woods; though still more dear to me yet is this tree of Irish wood.]</p>	<p>This poem was composed in <i>deibhidhe</i>, a complex type of rhymed syllabic poetry, by Giolla Brighde Albannach for Donnchad Cairprech Ó Briain (d. 1242), king of Thomond, one of the nine sons of Domnall Mór Ua Briain and Orlaith, daughter of Diarmait Mac Murchada (ibid). Frustratingly little is known about Giolla Brighde, other than that there are eight surviving poems attributed to him, and ‘that he journeyed to the eastern Mediterranean on the Fifth Crusade in 1218, apparently in the company of Muireadhach Albanach’ (McLeod 2000: 87)</p>	<i>Bardic Poetry Database:</i> 1759; Clancy 1999, p. 257, lines 49-52
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72	Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh	Tomhais cia mise, a Mhurchaidh	1200 - 1220?	Unknown; Irishman living in Scotland or Scot composing for Irish patrons? Patron is Donnchad Cairprech Ó Briain of Thomond (western Ireland)	<p>Tomhais cia mise, a Mhurchaidh; maith do dhúthchas deaghurchair; do chinn t'athair ar aithne ar na cathaibh córaighthe.</p> <p>[Guess who I am, O Murchadh; thou art born to good casting; thy father surpassed in discernment the marshalled battalions.]</p>	<p>This poem was composed in <i>deibhidhe</i>, a complex type of rhymed syllabic poetry, by Muireadhach 'Albanach' Ó Dálaigh for Murchadh mac Briain.</p> <p>Muireadhach's family, the Ó Dálaighs, traced its pedigree back to Fearghal mac Maoile Duin, 'an Irish king of the eighth century' and 'appears to have become established as a literary family in the twelfth century', evidenced by annals for 1139 reporting the death of Cú Chonnacht na Scoile, an Ó Dálaigh of the 12th century who had likely been 'in charge of a bardic school or secular academy' (Thomson 1963: 277). Muireadhach himself appears in an entry for 1213 in the Annals of the Four Masters, where he is described as the 'ollamh (poet of the highest rank) to Domhnall Ó Domhnail' – a king of Fermanagh and Tirconnell who died in 1241. In 1213 Muireadhach killed Ó Domhnail's tax collector with an axe, causing the king to banish his ollamh to Scotland (McLeod 2000: 85-6; Thomson 1963: 277-8)</p>	<i>Bardic Poetry Database</i> : 1839, lines 1-4; translation from <i>Irish Bardic Poetry</i> [Bergin], p. 261
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73	Dòmhnall nan Òran (MacLeod)	Òran Molaidh a' Bhuntàta	1811	Glendale, Skye (by birth); travelled broadly through Skye as a road-tax collector; lived in America for 15 years but came back, married and settled back in Glendale	<p>Ged a gheibh thu do phlùiteadh, Cha bhi mùig air do mhalaidh: Chan e 'n gearan do dhùthchas - Tha thu siùbhlach dhan fhalamh...</p> <p>[Though you get a soaking, you don't get sulky: to complain isn't your nature - you are handy for the empty...]</p>	<p><i>TGB</i>, p. 238: "The poem was composed when the potato already formed a substantial part of the Highlanders' diet and before the disastrous potato blight of the mid-nineteenth century. It is personified and praised for its ability to feed both rich and poor, clean the ground, not to need chewing and to be a good missile to throw at a thief. Verse 10 is prophetic in saying it will keep famine at bay as long as the shaws appear."</p>	<i>The Glendale Bards</i> , p. 291, lines 33-36
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74	Niall MacLeòid	Fàilte Do 'n Bhliadhn'-Ùir	1870 - 1880 (ca.)	Glendale, Skye (by birth); lived in Edinburgh from 1860s until his death in 1913	<p>Tàmh am baile-mór nan tùr, Cha bu dùthchas dhuinn bhi ann; Far nach fhaic sinn fiadh air stùc, No bradan ùr 'g a thoirt a allt...</p> <p>[My translation: Living in the big city of high towers, it is not natural for us to be there where we shall not see deer upon pinnacles or take a fresh salmon out of the stream...]</p>	<p><i>TGB</i>, p. xliii - xliv: "Neil MacLeod was born in Glendale, Skye, c. 1843, the eldest son of Dòmhnall nan Òran. He came to Edinburgh in the 1860s and joined the tea firm of his cousin Roderick MacLeod... Neil achieved early popularity as a poet, with poems and songs which expressed a city-Gael's romantic and idealised view of the homeland. In 1883 the first edition of his work, <i>Clàrsach an Doire</i> was published.... // Neil seems to have been very different from his father and his brother John... [who] both had a strong streak of nonconformity; Neil, on the other hand, was essentially a conformist, or rather, he became one. [His] early poem 'Còmhradh eadar Òganach agus Oisean', composed when Neil was 25, demonstrates a forcefulness and anger at the fate of the Gaels to a degree rarely seen in his later work. The angry young man became a rather more cautious middle-aged man..."</p>	<i>Clàrsach an Doire</i> [Gairm, 1975], p. 27, lines 9-12
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75	Niall MacLeòid	Clann Leòid	1882	<p>Glendale, Skye (by birth); lived in Edinburgh from 1860s until his death in 1913</p>	<p>Tha mo chinneadh air dùsgadh, Tha 'n cuid bhrataichean rùisgte, Mach air baideil an Dùine, Dha 'm bu dùthchas Clann Leòid.</p> <p>[My translation: My people have awoken, their banners are unveiled upon the battlement of the Dùn, to which Clan MacLeod belong by ancestry.]</p>	<p><i>TGB</i>, p. xliii - xliv: "Neil MacLeod was born in Glendale, Skye, c. 1843, the eldest son of Dòmhnall nan Òran. He came to Edinburgh in the 1860s and joined the tea firm of his cousin Roderick MacLeod... Neil achieved early popularity as a poet, with poems and songs which expressed a city-Gael's romantic and idealised view of the homeland. In 1883 the first edition of his work, <i>Clàrsach an Doire</i> was published.... // Neil seems to have been very different from his father and his brother John... [who] both had a strong streak of nonconformity; Neil, on the other hand, was essentially a conformist, or rather, he became one. [His] early poem 'Còmhraidh eadar Òganach agus Oisean', composed when Neil was 25, demonstrates a forcefulness and anger at the fate of the Gaels to a degree rarely seen in his later work. The angry young man became a rather more cautious middle-aged man..."</p>	<p><i>Clàrsach an Doire</i> [Gairm, 1975], p. 34, lines 5-8</p>
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76	Niall MacLeòid	Òran nan Croitearan	1882 - 1884	Glendale, Skye (by birth); lived in Edinburgh from 1860s until his death in 1913	<p>Gheibh sinn còir air tìr ar dùthchais, Chaidh a spùinneadh bhuainn le ceannairc. Agus hó Mhórag, Na hó-ro ach gheibh sinn fearann, Agus hó Mhòrag.</p> <p>[My translation: We shall get the rights to the lands of our ancestors which were plundered from us by way of terrorism. And hó, Mòrag, we shall get the land!]</p>	<p><i>TGB</i>, p. xliii - xliv: "Neil MacLeod was born in Glendale, Skye, c. 1843, the eldest son of Dòmhnall nan Òran. He came to Edinburgh in the 1860s and joined the tea firm of his cousin Roderick MacLeod... Neil achieved early popularity as a poet, with poems and songs which expressed a city-Gael's romantic and idealised view of the homeland. In 1883 the first edition of his work, <i>Clàrsach an Doire</i> was published.... // Neil seems to have been very different from his father and his brother John... [who] both had a strong streak of nonconformity; Neil, on the other hand, was essentially a conformist, or rather, he became one. [His] early poem 'Còmhradh eadar Òganach agus Oisean', composed when Neil was 25, demonstrates a forcefulness and anger at the fate of the Gaels to a degree rarely seen in his later work. The angry young man became a rather more cautious middle-aged man..."</p>	<i>Clàrsach an Doire</i> [Gairm, 1975], p. 41, lines 34-36
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77	Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir	Òran do Iain Caimbeul a' Bhanca	1761 - 1768	<p>Druimliaghart, Glen Orchy by birth; Coire Cheathaich, Ben Dorain and Glen Etive as a stalker; wider Campbell of Glenorchy territories; finally, Edinburgh</p>	<p>'S iomadh àit a bheil do charaid Ad fharraid mun cuairt, An deas is an tuath, Cho dleasnach 's bu chòir: Diùc Earra- Ghàidhealach ainmeil, Ceann armailt nam buadh Leis 'n a dhearbhadh làmh chruaidh, 'S ris an d-earbadh gu leòr; An t-iarla cliùiteach dh' an dùthchas Bhith 'n Tùr Bhealaich, A chuir an ruaig le chuid sluaigh Air na fuar Ghallaich...</p> <p>[There's many a place where thou hast a friend, enquiring for thee on all sides, in the south and the north, showing all respect due: the famed Duke of Argyll, victorious army commander of proven firm hand, to whom much was entrusted; the</p>	<p>ÒDB, p. 440: "The subject of this poem, John Campbell, was, according to tradition, the son of Colin of Ardmaddie, son of the first Earl of Breadalbane by his second marriage. Colin's mother was a daughter of the ninth Earl of Argyll, so that he was connected with the two great Campbell families... the future banker was brought up at Finlarig Castle, near Killin, received a good education, and in due course became a writer in Edinburgh. He was appointed assistant secretary to the Royal Bank in 1732... and principal cashier in 1745... John Campbell "of the bank" was an important personage in his day, a man of ability and culture... he died in 1777."</p>	<p>Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin, p. 54, lines 813-828</p>
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