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The Gaelic Poet and the British Military Experience, 1756-1856

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M.A., MLitt

Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis examines Gaelic poetry and the military between 1756 and 1856. While previous studies have collated and analysed the poetry of two of the other major impacts on Gaelic society at this time, clearance and emigration, there has so far been no concerted attempt to examine and place in context the corpus of Gaelic military material of the period - despite this verse being widespread in the poetic record. This poetry has been largely neglected by scholars of Scottish history, and, though selected pieces have been examined by scholars of Celtic Studies, it has not received the fullness of attention that such a major concern in the poetic record deserves. This thesis therefore directly addresses this gap in previous scholarship.

The study first considers the historical and literary context for this corpus of poetry, in order to establish the background to Gaelic military verse in the post-Culloden period. A chronological approach is taken to consider this poetry over the course of five chapters. The first period explored is that between the outbreak of the Seven Years' War and the French Revolutionary War (1756-93). Two chapters cover the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815), focussing respectively on verse by soldiers and non-combatants. The next chapter has as its focus the period between the British Victory at Waterloo and the end of the Crimean War (1815-56). The last chapter takes a different chronological approach to those which preceded it, examining women's poetry and the military across the one-hundred year time period. Each of these chapters explore the background to, contemporary context for, and content of this corpus of Gaelic military verse from 1756 to 1856. A full database of the corpus of 178 poems is also included.

There is a focus throughout the thesis on the manner in which poets drew from and utilised their poetic tradition to contextualise the British military and its influence. Another major strand of the research is its examination of loyalty as expressed or revealed in the poetic record. The thesis contends that this corpus of poetry deserves a central place in the military historiography of the Highlands and Gaelic literary criticism.

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Finally, I want to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my mother, Ina Maciver, to whom I owe more than I can express, and who would have been extraordinarily proud to see its completion.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely the result of my own work. I have referenced sources from the work of others where necessary. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Introduction

The wars of the British Empire and the experience of soldiers who served in the Highland regiments constitute one of the major themes of Gaelic poetry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The post-Culloden period, leading into the age of clearance and emigration, was, in manifold respects, traumatic for Scottish Gaeldom; society in the Highlands experienced a series of fundamental shocks and disturbances during these years (as has been examined and elucidated in a number of studies, considered in more detail in the next chapter).¹ Despite this period of societal trauma, the poetic tradition in the Highlands stayed strong, indeed flourished for a time, and Gaelic poets continued in their role as spokespeople of their communities. And as the British military significantly extended its influence in the Gàidhealtachd from the mid eighteenth century onwards, poets turned to their literary tradition to make sense of this new military order.

While previous studies have collated and analysed the poetry of two of the other major impacts on Gaelic society at this time, clearance and emigration, there has so far been no concerted attempt to examine and place in context the corpus of Gaelic military material of the period - despite this verse being widespread in the poetic record.² While the literature review makes clear that there have been some important works dealing with selected Gaelic military poetry, including Wilson McLeod's recent article covering the period from the mid eighteenth to mid twentieth century, the subject has not received the fullness of attention that such a major concern in the poetic record deserves.³ This thesis therefore directly addresses this gap in previous scholarship.

Boundaries and Focus

The time period explored here is 1756 to 1856. This encompasses the century from the outbreak of the Seven Years' War (1756-63) to the conclusion of the Crimean War (1853-56), and also includes the American Revolutionary War (1775-83) and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815). The Seven Years' War was the first major conflict of the post-Culloden period.; it saw the creation of a

¹ See for instance: T. M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofter's War: the social transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester, 1994); A. I. MacInnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart* (East Linton, 1996); E. Richards, *The Highland Clearances: people, landlords and rural turmoil* (Edinburgh, 2008).

² See: M. MacDonell, *The Emigrant Experience: songs of Highland Emigrants in North America* (Toronto, 1982); D. E. Meek, *Tuath is Tighearna: an anthology of Gaelic poetry of social and political protest from the Clearances to the land agitation* (Edinburgh, 1995).

³ See: J. MacInnes, 'Gaelic Poetry in the Nineteenth Century', in D. Gifford (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature* vol. 3 (Aberdeen, 1988), pp. 377-95; W. McLeod, 'Gaelic poetry and the British military enterprise, 1756-1945', in C. Sassi and T. v Heijnsbergen (eds.), *Within and Without Empire: Scotland across the (post)colonial borderline* (Newcastle, 2013), pp. 61-76.

number of Highland regiments and the genesis of the popular identification of Highland soldiers with the British military (and vice versa). The end of the Crimean war in 1856 marked the last large-scale conflict in which the Highland regiments fought in the nineteenth century. By this point, the narrative of the Highlander as the archetypal British soldier was well-developed, and arguably reached its zenith in the response to the service of the Highland regiments under Sir Colin Campbell in the Crimea. The historical context of each of these conflicts, and of the period as a whole, is considered in more detail in chapter 2. I have chosen to focus on these years (1756-1856) as they span a period of massive extension of British military influence in the Highlands - a one-hundred year period during which the image of the Highlander as a soldier of Empire was forged, crystallised and consolidated.⁴ This period has also been chosen as the focus of this research as these years of widespread service and major global conflict produced a large and varied corpus of Gaelic verse. It will be shown throughout this thesis that periods of active conflict resulted in an increase in the creation of military-related verse; it will also be demonstrated that poetic production and British military influence - primarily through its officer class - were closely intertwined. Questions will therefore be considered about the extent to which military material was actively (or indirectly) instigated by figures from the military establishment.

It is a central aim here to provide access to, and analysis of, Gaelic military poetic material for scholars who have previously been unable to utilise this verse except in the limited texts available in translation. It has therefore been decided to write this thesis in English and to provide full translations of all referenced poetry. I have used translations by others where available, but all other translations are my own. Poets names are given once in Gaelic and the English form of the name is used from thereon.⁵ A full database of the corpus of military poetry has also been appended. This research therefore aims to provide a comprehensive and highly accessible guide to Gaelic military verse during the period under consideration, which can be utilised by scholars of Celtic studies and Highland and Scottish history more widely.

⁴ British military influence in the Highlands was also significant in the pre-Culloden period, as is considered in more detail in the 'Historical Context' here (pp. 29-30). Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart has recently looked at the experience of Highland soldiers in the Flanders' campaigns of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. D.U. Stiùbhart, 'Highlanders in the Low Countries', *Dutch Crossing*, 29:1 (2005), pp. 107-124.

⁵ This approach was chosen as it is in line with that taken in recent major collections of eighteenth and nineteenth century Gaelic poetry. Exceptions are made where poets are commonly known by their Gaelic patronymic, such as in the case of Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair; in such instances, the patronymic is used throughout. Some previously-cited poets' names are repeated in Gaelic for sections dealing specifically with their work. See: R. Black (ed.), *An Lasair: Anthology of 18th Century Gaelic Verse* (Edinburgh, 2001); D.E. Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail: Anthology of 19th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse* (Edinburgh, 2003).

Poets and Texts

The corpus explored here consists of 177 poems, which are listed in full in the appended database. The poetic texts which form the basis of the analysis come from a variety of sources. Published editions of poetry by individual poets and anthologies of Gaelic verse account for the bulk of the material. Poetry has also been collated from nineteenth and twentieth century periodicals, such as *An Gàidheal* and the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, and from the Gaelic column of John Murdoch's nineteenth-century newspaper *The Highlander*, and the Canadian Gaelic newspaper *Mac-talla*.

Where relevant, corresponding versions to textual material which can be found in *Tobar an Dualchais* have been highlighted. Two manuscript poems, from the McLagan and MacDiarmid collections, have also been drawn on, and one piece transcribed from the oral tradition has been included. In order to refine the focus of this thesis, the substantial body of verse contained in printed sources forms the primary basis of study; further research is required in order to fully collate and analyse military poetry in Gaelic manuscripts.⁶

Approach

There is a focus throughout here on the manner in which poets drew from and utilised their poetic tradition to contextualise the British military and its influence. The thesis questions the extent to which poets sought to create/recreate/reclaim a heroic society in their verse. It should be noted that the theory that responses to military service signified the creation of a 'new heroic age' in Gaelic culture was first put forward by Matthew Dziennik in his groundbreaking PhD research and subsequently developed in his *The Fatal Land* (as is considered in more depth in

⁶ There is at least one military poem in the McLagan MS and also one in the MacDiarmid MS. These pieces might be James McLagan's compositions; for more on this see footnote 253. I am thankful to Dr Aonghas MacCoinnich for recently drawing my attention to four military pieces, at least three of which appear to date from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, in Gaelic manuscripts recently discovered in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. Ulrike Hogg has also recently brought at least one military piece to light in her survey and analysis of the Rev. Dr Alexander Irvine's (1773-1824) papers. 'Brostuchadh Cogaidh do chlannuibh gaidheal 'sna bliannuibh 1797-8, 1803-4 nuair a thug na Francaich ionnsuidh air Breatuinn agus Eirinn' ('*An Incitement to War for the children of the Gaels in the years 1797-8, 1803-4, when the French invaded Britain and Ireland*') seems to be an 'invasion song' from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period. U. Hogg, 'The Life and Papers of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Irvine', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 28 (2011), pp. 149-50. Each of these unpublished texts still needs to be transcribed and edited. It is hoped that this work, as well as that of identifying more unpublished military material, will be carried out in research leading on from this thesis.

the literature review).⁷ But this research focusses more directly and comprehensively on the poetic tradition than studies which have preceded it; it also covers a period, beyond the 1790s and into the mid-nineteenth century, not dealt with in Dziennik's research. While this period has been covered in Wilson McLeod's important and foundational overview of Gaelic poetry and the military from 1756 to 1945 (again, considered in more detail in the literature review), this thesis takes a more complete approach, dealing with texts and poets that have so far not been the subject of any extensive research; and, in many cases, that have not been the subject of any research at all.⁸ Literary stylistics, such as analysis of metre, will not form part of this study, though there will be a focus throughout on how the panegyric code was adapted and developed by poets during the period.

Another major strand of this research is its examination of loyalty as expressed or revealed in the poetic record. The thesis draws on T.C. Smout's model of 'Concentric Loyalties' in Scottish identity, and also utilises Silke Stroh and Andrew Mackillop's recent work in this area.⁹ Smout argues that Scottish identity consists of a set of concentric loyalties, rising out through family, kin or clan, locality, nation, state, empire to supranational body, which are intersected by other social characteristic loyalties, such as language, religion and military tradition. The thesis asks: to whom were Gaelic poets loyal, and what does this tell us about their priorities and imperatives?

Throughout this study, poets and their work are placed in historical context. The impact of specific wars and time periods is considered in relation to the poetry created within their parameters. The manner in which Gaelic military poetry corresponded and co-existed with a tradition of military verse across Scotland and Britain is also explored. It will be shown that, while Gaelic poets operated within a distinctive tradition of heroic/warrior verse, with inbuilt martial language and imagery, their poetry also formed part of a wider, pan-British response to the demands of war and military service. Where relevant, examples will be cited from this poetry in English or Scots to demonstrate the interthematic nature of poetic production in Highland, Scottish and British society at this time. While connections will be shown to exist, stress will also be laid on the extent to which the Gaelic response was distinctive, and rooted in Gaelic tradition and the warrior-based society from which it sprung.

⁷ M.P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America, 1756-1783* (Edinburgh University, Ph.D., 2011); M.P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America* (New Haven, 2015).

⁸ W. McLeod, 'Gaelic poetry and the British military enterprise, 1756-1945', in C. Sassi and T. v Heijnsbergen (eds.), *Within and Without Empire: Scotland across the (post)colonial borderline* (Newcastle, 2013), pp. 61-76.

⁹ T. C. Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', *Scottish Affairs*, 6 (1994), pp. 101-113; A. Mackillop 'For King, Country and Regiment: Motive and Identity in Highland Soldiering, 1746-1815', in S. Murdoch and A. Mackillop (eds.), *Fighting for Identity: Scottish Military Experiences, 1550-1900* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 191-214; S. Stroh, *Uneasy Subjects* (Rodopi, 2011).

The term ‘poetry’ is used throughout in reference to this corpus, but it should be noted at the outset that this terminology includes Gaelic song. As can be seen from a glance at the appended database of poetry, a great many of the pieces here have the word ‘Òran’ in the title. Derick Thomson has spoken of the ‘central function of song in Scottish Gaelic society’, and it is clear that this formed a distinct tradition and served a particular utility in comparison to literate bardic verse.¹⁰ This was not ‘poetry’ in the sense of something to be read, but rather an oral tradition that was representative of and depended upon the poet’s community. The earliest surviving Gaelic songs appear to date to the fifteenth century, but the vast majority of extant songs date from the 1640s onwards. The distinction is by no means unimportant, and future research might focus, for example, on the use of metre and form in this body of song, and also consider the tunes which have survived. There has been a tendency in each of the recent major anthologies of Gaelic verse dealing with material from the seventeenth century onwards to use the words poem, poetry and poet, at least on occasion, as general terms to refer to the range of verse and those who composed it, and this thesis takes a similar approach.¹¹

Structure

The chapters that follow explore the background to, contemporary context for, and content of this corpus of Gaelic military verse from 1756 to 1856. The first chapter is a review of relevant literature. This places the thesis in the context of existing historiography and literary criticism, and outlines the key arguments and approaches scholars have taken in relation to the impact of the military in the Highlands. This literature review draws on contemporary scholarship and also earlier works, such as the regimental histories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide historical and literary contexts respectively for the poetry that will be studied here. The historical context covers the entire period of the thesis while also considering briefly the pre-Culloden period to determine the background to military expansion after 1745. The literary context looks back to the Gaelic classical tradition and to the vernacular poetry of the seventeenth and earlier eighteenth centuries to establish the literary inheritance which was utilised and adapted by Gaelic poets during the period under consideration here. This chapter considers the tradition as a whole but places particular emphasis on poets’ handling of military subject matter. Developments in publishing in the decades

¹⁰ D. S. Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry* (London, 1974), p. 57.

¹¹ C. Ó Baoill (ed.), *Gàir nan Clàrsach* (Edinburgh, 1994); Black, *An Lasair*; Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*; W. McLeod and M. Bateman (eds.), *Duanair na Sracaire* (Edinburgh, 2007).

after Culloden are also considered here. The literary context also includes a description of the language and conventions of the ubiquitous panegyric code in Gaelic poetry, which will be returned to throughout.¹² It will be shown that the key linguistic, stylistic and thematic customs and concerns of Gaelic poetry in the age of the clans form the basis for the response to the military from the mid eighteenth century.

A chronological approach has been adopted to explore the corpus examined in chapters 4 to 8. While themes are shared across time periods, this structure has been utilised as a comparative approach, which demonstrates the impact of particular wars and eras, and facilitates the identification of any difference or similarities between those. Chapter 4 examines the poetry composed between the outbreak of the Seven Years War (1756) and the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars (1793). North America is a major focus of this chapter, but it also includes poetry composed about military service in other locations, such as India, and verse addressing the military service of the Gaels generally during this period.

The focus of chapters 5 and 6 is the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, from 1793 to 1815. This period is covered over two chapters (on soldiers' and non-combatants' verse), due to the volume of poetry composed during these years. This approach, perhaps unsurprisingly, reveals some variation between the poetic response of those who fought during this conflict and those who remained at home in the Gàidhealtachd. While the poetry of earlier and later conflicts was predominantly composed by non-combatant poets, these chapters will show that the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period is one in which the voice of soldier poets came to the fore.

Chapter 7 concentrates on the period between the British victory at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 and the conclusion of hostilities in the Crimea in 1856. The decades after Waterloo show a significant decrease in the production (at least in what has survived in the poetic record) of military material, reflecting the absence of major conflict and the reduced scale of the British military and its influence in the Highlands during the period. However, the outbreak of the Crimean War sees an almost immediate return to literary arms for Gaelic poets, as they again turned to their poetic tradition to make sense of, and communicate their feelings about, contemporary military affairs.

The final chapter, chapter 8, takes a different chronological approach to those which precede it. This chapter looks at the response of women poets to the military across the entire time-frame of this research, from 1756 to 1856. The bulk

¹² See: J. Macinnes, "The Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry and its Historical Background", *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 50, (1976-78) , pp. 435-98

of this poetry was composed between the 1770s and the end of the Napoleonic period in 1815. This chapter examines women's responses to war and considers the manner in which this corresponds with or varies from the response of male poets. While the corpus of women's poetry is relatively small, it will be shown that women's response to the military provides an important and highly illuminating viewpoint of the perception of, and reaction to, military service in Highland communities.

Key points and questions will be returned to throughout this thesis. The military poetry of the Gaels will be placed in the context of the time in which it was composed, and similarities and differences between these will consistently be highlighted. It will be shown that the military and its widespread influence was one of the major concerns of Gaelic poetry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and that both Highland historiography and Gaelic literary criticism will be the richer for taking this fact into account. The thesis will therefore offer both a comprehensive and wide-ranging analysis of the extant corpus, and a foundation on which to build further research.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

As will be discussed in this chapter, the last two decades have seen significant developments in our understanding of the Highland regiments of the British Military and their impact on society in the Gàidhealtachd in the later eighteenth and nineteenth century, and through to the period leading up to the First World War (1914-18). Overdue recognition has been given to the significant and multifarious influence that mass militarisation exerted upon society in the Highlands during the second half of the eighteenth century, and to how closely recruitment policy was linked to the all-important question of land management. Acknowledgement has also been given to the extent to which changes in state and landlord recruitment policy after the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815) were instrumental in leading to the era of mass emigration and clearance, much as prior policy had played a part in delaying or preventing these historical phenomena from taking place. Questions surrounding identity and the extent to which the military was a means of assimilation and association for Gaels into a broader British identity, or, more simply, an opportunity to earn a wage in a role respected by Gaelic communities have also been explored, and recent works have taken a fresh approach and asked new questions in this complex field of enquiry. Such developments in scholarship point towards a re-positioning of recruitment and the military dimension more widely as key to our understanding of Highland history during the period, and to a historiography that is willing to question and challenge long-held assumptions about the region's relationship with the military.

Despite this progress towards a fuller understanding of the military dimension in Highland history, there remains a central imbalance in academic study of the subject, as indeed there does in the historiography of the Highlands as a whole. Few scholars have given proper weight to primary sources in Gaelic, leading to a historiography that has failed to deal with some of the key sources of its subject.¹³ Gaelic poetry assumes a substantial and primary role as source material in the history of the Gaelic-speaking people of Scotland. A developed tradition of Gaelic prose did not emerge until the early nineteenth century, and it took over a hundred years for discursive and fictional writing in Gaelic to approach the production levels of Gaelic verse. Poets were the spokespeople and record-takers of Gaelic society and their voices therefore offer a unique insight into the lives and minds of the Gaels; their poetic output must be handled with appropriate caution, but equally it must be treated with due respect. It is inconceivable that the historiography of ancient Greece would fail to access and take cognisance of the works of Homer or Euripides, and the same logic applies for the vital (although

¹³ There have been some notable exceptions to this trend. See, for example: A. I. Macinnes, *Clanship Commerce and the House of Stuart*, (Edinburgh, 1996); D. Stevenson: *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the civil wars* (Edinburgh, 1994); I. Grimble, *The World of Rob Donn* (Edinburgh, 1979).

widely neglected) relationship between Highland historiography and the Gaelic poetic tradition. An analysis will be given here of this historiography in general and its handling of the military experience of the Gaels in particular. Reference will be made throughout to the treatment of Gaelic source material and the inevitable historiographical imbalance which an approach so heavily weighted towards sources in English has led to and, arguably, encouraged.

Over the past fifty years a number of secondary texts have ploughed a broad furrow in early modern and modern Highland history, examining areas such as the decline of clanship, the region's increasing interaction with, and integration into, the wider British economy, and the events and outcomes of the period of land agitation in the later decades of the nineteenth century. The processes by which sociological and economic transformation came about and the impact of these changes on Highland society have been analysed in texts such as James Hunter's *The Making of the Crofting Community* (1976), Allan Macinnes's *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart* (1996), and Eric Richards's *The Highland Clearances* (2000). These works, along with others, have contributed significantly to our understanding of Highland history during the period and have laid the foundation for much of the critical debate that has taken place in recent years.

It is understandable that historians have concentrated their critical energies on the areas of commercialisation, clearance, emigration and land agitation, as each of these subjects looms large in the history of the Highlands from the eighteenth century onwards. However, until recently, there has been a curious tendency to underplay the military dimension, either by acknowledging, but failing to give due weight to, its influence, or by eschewing discussion of it altogether. With regards to the latter, Robert A. Dodgshon's study of economic and social processes within the clan system, *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c. 1493-1820* (1998), is a case in point. Given that one of the central strands in Dodgshon's book is an analysis of socio-political control exerted by clan gentry, it seems strange that his work makes no reference whatsoever to the extent to which landlords engaged with recruitment and the British fiscal military state in the second half of the eighteenth century. Less surprising, but no less noteworthy, is the fact that Dodgshon makes no attempt to use Gaelic sources.

T.M. Devine's *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (1994) recognises the importance of recruitment to the Highland economy but does not examine this in any depth: his analysis amounts to a single paragraph in a chapter on 'The Transformation of Gaeldom'.¹⁴ Devine devotes more space to the military in his chapter on 'Highlandism', where he examines the process by which Gaelic culture was deracinated, reimagined and idealised, before being appropriated by the British military as its most distinctive form of

¹⁴ Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War*, p.43.

iconography.¹⁵ While this is a salient and entirely relevant field of enquiry, it could be said that in emphasising its abstract rather than concrete influence, Devine diminishes the impact of the military on areas more closely related to the everyday lives of the Gaels. Devine seems more comfortable speaking about the Highland regiments in the non-figurative terms of Highlandism than in those of the tangible social, political and economic impact that recruitment had on Highland society. In his more recent book, *Scotland's Empire* (2003), Devine has again focussed on the Highland regiments in terms of their impact on Scottish identity and has emphasised the implications of this for Scotland's position in Britain and her Empire: '...the Highland soldier came to be defined as a proud symbol of Scotland's ancient nationhood and of her equal status with England in the creation of a British Empire'.¹⁶ In a section looking at the process by which Jacobitism and Highland tradition entered the national consciousness, Devine focuses exclusively on writers in Scots and English, including Robert Burns, James Hogg, Caroline Oliphant and Anne Grant. Given that one of the points he makes is that songs from the period 'expressed in popular form the transfer of loyalty from the Stuarts in the '45 to the Hanoverians in the later eighteenth century'¹⁷ it can be considered as a significant oversight that he does not at least mention the songs of Duncan Bàn Macintyre. The voice of the Gaels is effectively locked out of Devine's account of the making of Scotland's Empire, in direct contradiction to their contribution.

A more direct (and inclusive) approach to the impact of British militarism and recruitment on Gaelic society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be found in Alan I. Macinnes's *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788* (1996). Macinnes's work offers an in-depth analysis of clanship both in the later stages of its vitality and its gradual and subsequent rapid decline in the eighteenth century. His account is framed within the context of clans' connections with the House of Stuart and the increasing role that commercial interests played in that dynasty's disintegration as a socio-economic and political force. Macinnes's book recognises the connections between British military endeavour in the region and these historical processes, and as such he can be said to have set the ground for the work of later scholars who would look at these connections in more depth, such as Andrew Mackillop, who will be discussed in more detail below. Macinnes gives an account of the government's strategy in the years following the '45 to at first disarm and demoralise the population, before preparing and utilising them for service in the imperial war machine.¹⁸ In his concluding paragraph, Macinnes notes that, by 1788, 'the ultimate paradox of Highland history was unfolding. The supposed clannish emphasis on militarism and manpower...was being superseded by unprecedented imperial recruitment into the army and navy from the outbreak of

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-100.

¹⁶ T. M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire* (London, 2003), p. 356.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

¹⁸ Macinnes, *Clanship Commerce and the House of Stuart*, pp. 210-217.

the Seven Years' War'.¹⁹ As such, the military dimension in Highland history emerges from Macinnes's study as a pre-eminent influence on the lives of the Gaels in the later decades of the eighteenth century. Macinnes gives weight to Gaelic poetry as historical source, and as such his work goes some way towards redressing the lack of balance that resulted from previous works' failure to deal with Gaelic material. The Gaelic poet is identified in Macinnes's analysis as a key player in the world of the clans, with an influence that extended beyond that of a mere record-taker or conduit by which chiefs and warriors could be praised for their service in battle.

At the time of its publication, James Hunter's *The Making of the Crofting Community* (1976) was exceptional in attempting for the first time a comprehensive 'history-from-below' of the social, economic, cultural and political factors which led to the creation of the crofting community in the Highlands and Islands. Hunter's was arguably the first text to reclaim the history of the Gàidhealtachd in the early modern/modern period for the region's people as opposed to the various powers of the British state. Widely recognised as a key text in modern Highland historiography, *The Making of the Crofting Community* has nevertheless been criticised as having taken on a task that could not be achieved. In his otherwise complimentary review of the book, Eric Richards wrote that 'any writer attempting a history-from-below, for the people of the Highlands...is invariably impeded by the dearth of direct primary sources' before adding that 'The inescapable fact is that the poor, the powerless and the illiterate leave very little residue of their lives amongst which a historian may seek material for their reconstruction'.²⁰ In the preface to the new edition of the book, published in 2000, Hunter responds to Richards's criticism by pointing to various examples where such a history has been carried out successfully and making clear that, in the case of the crofting community, the historian is emphatically not impeded by a lack of primary sources:

In Gaelic song and poetry, in the testimony given by crofters to royal commissions and tribunals, in newspaper accounts of speeches made at crofters' meetings, in police reports dealing with the same meetings and in the letters with which crofters eventually began to bombard politicians and civil servants, there is, in fact, a wealth of evidence as to what crofters thought, said and did at various points in the nineteenth century.²¹

The point made by Richards is not entirely invalid as many Gaels did not leave written sources, but Hunter's response makes clear that, far from facing a scarcity, the Highland historian is confronted with a significant and varied corpus

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

²⁰ Reprinted in J. Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community, New Edition* (Edinburgh, 2000), p. 16.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

of sources from which to gain insight into the actions and motivations of the Highland community in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Hunter's work showed that a fresh perspective could be obtained by viewing Highland history from different viewpoints and, in more recent years, a similar approach has paid dividends with regards to the military history of the region. Recent work by Andrew Mackillop has shed new light on the origins, development and impact of British army recruiting in the Highlands between the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. His *'More Fruitful than the Soil': Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815* (2001) is, arguably, one the most important works of Highland history to have been published in the past twenty years, challenging many previously held assumptions about the impact of recruitment in the region.²² Mackillop draws from a wide range of sources in the book, noting that 'Highland history has traditionally been dogged by controversy over the extent to which reliance upon one particular source, be it estate records or Gaelic poetry, somehow invalidates the approach of those who use it.'²³ With regards to the latter, Mackillop could be challenged as to the extent to which an 'over-reliance' on Gaelic poetry has taken place at all, but his acknowledgment of the controversy surrounding the use of sources is pertinent.

Over the course of seven chapters, Mackillop offers a detailed consideration of the history of recruitment, examining the interaction of government, landlords and tenantry within the context of the rapid socio-economic change that was taking place in the Gàidhealtachd at the time. Proceeding from an assertion that the creation of a strong and sustainable military presence in the region between 1715 and 46 represented 'the most proactive and innovative area of government policy during the period',²⁴ Mackillop outlines the widespread and highly influential societal impact of recruitment in the region between the '45 and the conclusion of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. He points to the irony inherent in the fact that, despite its part in the sustained decline of clanship in the seventeenth century, and its seemingly ultimate defeat of clan society after Culloden, the British state continued to view clanship as an active social force, capable of providing a ready source of fighting men - and proceeded to ask for and reward regiments based on this understanding.²⁵

²² See also: A. Mackillop, 'Continuity, Coercion and Myth: The Recruitment of Highland Regiments in the Later Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Tradition*, 26 (2001), pp. 34-40; Mackillop 'For King, Country and Regiment', pp. 191-214; A. Mackillop, 'The Political Culture of the Scottish Highlands from Culloden to Waterloo', *The Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), pp. 511-532; A. Mackillop, 'The Outer Hebrides During the Wars of Empire and Revolution, 1750-1815', in J. Randall (ed.) *Island Heroes: The Military History of the Hebrides* (South Lochs, 2010), pp. 17-34; A. Mackillop, 'Military Scotland in the Age of Proto-Globalisation, c.1690-c.1815', in D. Forsyth and W. Ugolini (eds.), *A Global Force: War, Identities and Scotland's Diaspora* (Edinburgh, 2016), pp. 14-31.

²³ A. Mackillop, *More Fruitful Than the Soil*, (East Linton, 2001), p. 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

A central strand in Mackillop's analysis is his commentary on the role of land rights and ownership, which are recurring themes in the history of the Gàidhealtachd and the British military. Mackillop argues that during the first fifty years of mass militarisation in the region, land in return for service could act as a means for tenants to advance themselves socially.²⁶ The Highland tenantry - often portrayed as passive recipients to historical forces beyond their control - emerge from Mackillop's analysis as a group which could engage actively and confidently with the opportunities of service. It should be noted that Mackillop does not gloss over the extent to which coercion could also be a factor in leading to recruitment; indeed, this is something that he has examined in depth.²⁷

Further evidence of the Gaels' having interacted with the military in such a way as to secure advantage is evident in Mackillop's analysis of the popularity of volunteer and fencible battalions as opposed to regiments of the line. Mackillop draws here on the work of J.E. Cookson, who has noted that volunteering was 'genuinely a popular movement' whose 'rank and file...could derive significant material benefit from their service.'²⁸ The service of Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir (Duncan Bàn Macintyre, 1724-1812) is perhaps the most notable example in the Highland context, as will be considered in more detail later in this thesis. Having served on the Hanoverian side during the '45 (an engagement from which he distanced himself in his post-45 poetry) Macintyre, almost 50 years later, joined the Breadalbane Fencibles in 1794. During his time with the unit, Macintyre composed panegyrics which expressed gratitude for the economic advantages afforded by his service, and likewise lamented the loss of those advantages when the Fencibles were disbanded in 1799.

It would of course be wrong-headed to suggest that the tenant class of Gaels held any significant control in the hierarchical structure of the British army, and Mackillop has also pointed to the fact that genuine fear of enlistment existed, especially if a regiment was due for service abroad.²⁹ He makes it clear too that the promise of land in return for service was phased out following the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, and that significant government intervention related to recruitment in the region that could be seen as beneficial to the tenantry also ceased after Waterloo.³⁰

Mackillop has also looked specifically at the question of motive and identity in Highland soldiering.³¹ He questions the extent to which previous studies (focussing on the regiments as a means for Britain to accept the Highlands and for the Highlands to accept Britain) have grasped the nuances and full range of influences

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁷ Mackillop, 'Continuity, Coercion and Myth', pp. 34-40.

²⁸ J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997), p. 91.

²⁹ Mackillop, 'The Outer Hebrides During the Wars of Empire and Revolution', p. 25. See also: J. Prebble, *Mutiny: Highland Regiments in Revolt, 1743-1804* (London, 1975).

³⁰ Mackillop, *More Fruitful Than the Soil*, p. 244.

³¹ Mackillop, 'For King, Country and Regiment', pp. 191-214.

which led to the formation of identity in the context of the Highland regiments. Rather than focus exclusively on British or indeed Scottish imperatives, Mackillop has noted that ‘any meaningful understanding of the Highland soldier’s motives must include the local and even the parochial’.³² Mackillop again highlights the importance of the question of access to land in this context and questions the extent to which Gaels identified with and placed importance in their relationship with specific regiments (though he does acknowledge the significance of the Black Watch). Rather, Mackillop suggests that the more significant relationship was between soldiers and specific officers, as it was these officers that conducted and agreed terms of enlistment. He argues that Gaels took a ‘distinctively contractual attitude towards military service’ and that this fact has to be taken into account in analysis of Highland military identity in the post-Culloden period and into the nineteenth century.³³

Alongside MacKillop, the other ground-breaking recent contribution to academic study of the military dimension in Highland history has been in Matthew Dziennik’s work.³⁴ Dziennik has examined the manner in which Gaels used military service to further their own interests. His *The Fatal Land* (2015) has built on his doctoral research to provide a comprehensive account of the service of Highland soldiers in the Americas in the middle to late decades of the eighteenth century. Dziennik emphasises the agency of Highland soldiers, showing how they adapted to and engaged with the opportunities that were presented by military service. He has also stressed the economic advantages that being tied to the British state through extensive military service could bring to the Highlands. The Gàidhealtachd emerges from Dziennik’s work not as a subsumed and passive region, but as a centre of activity and agency, which at once engaged with and exploited the empire. He notes in his introduction to *The Fatal Land*:

[This book] assesses the reception of British colonialism in one locality - the Scottish Highlands - as a means of understanding the broader developments of colonialism and assimilation in the Atlantic world. De-emphasizing the fitful directing of such processes from the metropolitan center, it asserts that the empire did not, as countless historians of the region have suggested, enter the Highlands through the barrel of a musket and the brutality that accompanied the collapse of the last Jacobite rebellion in 1746. It entered through the state’s demands for manpower, and, crucially,

³² *Ibid.*, p. 191.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ See: M.P. Dziennik, ‘Through an Imperial Prism: Land, Liberty, and Highland Loyalism in the War of American Independence’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 50 (2012), pp. 332-58; M.P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, empire and the Highland soldier in British America* (New Haven, 2015); M.P. Dziennik, ‘Cutting Heads from Shoulders: The Conquest of Canada in Gaelic Thought, 1759-1791,’ in P.K. Buckner and J. Reid (eds.), *1759 Revisited: The Conquest of Canada*, (Toronto, 2011), 241-66; M.P. Dziennik, ‘Imperial Conflict and the Contractual Basis of Military Society in the Highland Regiments’, in C. Kennedy and M. McCormack (eds.), *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men at Arms*, (London, 2013), pp. 17-36.

the embracing of these needs by Gaels to advance local, but far from parochial, agendas.³⁵

As has been discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Dziennik has examined the concepts of loyalty and duty in relation to Highlanders' military service in the eighteenth century. His 2011 paper 'Through an Imperial Prism: Land, Liberty and Highland Loyalism in the War of American Independence' has looked specifically at loyalism in the Highland context during the 1776-83 period. Dziennik has noted that 'The disproportionate loyalty of the Highland emigrants to the empire reveals the ability of the imperial state to stimulate politically rational allegiances among its subjects.'³⁶ Dziennik's work places due weight on Gaelic poetry as a historical source, and accesses a number of lesser known (and therefore lesser accessed) texts. *The Fatal Land* includes a chapter on 'The Soldier and Highland Culture', where he notes:

Gaelic material pre-empted the Anglophone construction of the Highlands as a martial society. This means that Gaels took the lead in constructing the cultural imagery of the region. It suggests that, as problematic as the image of the Highland soldier is, it suited the interests of eighteenth-century Gaels to present him as a mythologized warrior.³⁷

Dziennik's work has therefore been pioneering in noting that Gaelic poets embraced and promoted the imagery of the Highland soldier as an exemplary warrior before (and separately from) ideological constructions from outwith Gaelic society.

Both Mackillop and Dziennik have pointed to the pervasive influence that the numerous regimental histories published from the early nineteenth century up until the present day have had in terms of shaping popular and, to some extent, critical understanding of the Highland regiments and the Gaels as British soldiers. The earliest, and arguably most influential of such texts, is David Stewart of Garth's *Sketches of the Character, Manner and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*, published in two volumes in 1822. Stewart of Garth's substantial thesis (which is considered in more detail in the historical context) is at times insightful but ultimately simplistic in idealising a pastoral and innocent Gaelic society. He sets the Gaels apart from soldiers recruited from other parts of the United Kingdom and asserts 'that the strongly marked difference between the manners and conduct of the mountain clans and those of the Lowlanders, and of every other known country, originated in the patriarchal form of government'.³⁸ Clanship emerges from the *Sketches* (and subsequent works written in a similar vein) as a distinct - and, crucially, extinct - society, whose warriors of feeling found a

³⁵ M.P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land* (New Haven, 2015), p. 3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 336.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

³⁸ D. Stewart, *Sketches of the Character, Manner and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1822), p. ix.

natural outlet for their abilities in the British army. Perhaps labouring under a dose of Ossianic romanticism, Garth's prose makes abundant use of adjectives such as heroic, loyal, martial and war-like to describe the Highland Soldier, and these are terms that are still to be found in more recent histories of the regiments.

Although Diana Henderson's *Highland Soldier* (1989) has been criticised for being similar in style and approach to the regimental histories, her work remains a fascinating and, specifically in terms of its level of detail about the day-to-day life of soldiers and officers, an indispensable account of the Highland regiments in the nineteenth century.³⁹ Henderson sometimes oversimplifies, and occasionally falls back on nineteenth-century stereotypes of the Gael as a noble, loyal soldier, characteristically disposed towards life in the British military. For instance, in her introduction she claims that 'The army provided a realistic outlet for the Highlander's natural fighting abilities' and goes on to claim that 'fighting under their own officers to whom many men had a personal relationship, the Highland Regiments formed an elite, proud of their service, second to none and would have greeted any suggestion of abuse with anger and disdain'.⁴⁰ That some - perhaps many - soldiers were proud of their service in the army seems beyond doubt, but to make sweeping statements about the Highland regiments as a whole is problematic. It might also be said that the Highlander's fighting ability was no more 'natural' than that of a soldier serving in the army of any of the great European superpowers, who had been at war for the most part of the previous two centuries.

The strength of *Highland Soldier* lies in the broader picture that emerges of the day-to-day life of soldiers in the Highland regiments. Henderson's book provides a wealth of detail on aspects such as soldiers' living conditions, wages, the role of officers, regimental music and the various duties that were to be carried out on a daily basis. Her book recreates the world of the nineteenth century Highland Soldier at a fundamental level, and allows us to consider matters which would have impacted on soldiers' lives far more immediately than the vagaries of government policy or the abstractions of Highlandism. Her account of the 93rd regiment's service in the West Indies is particularly enlightening, highlighting the very harsh conditions endured by soldiers. Such details help to balance Henderson's more sweeping statements elsewhere. *Highland Soldier* is at times too close to its subject matter and veers towards earlier regimental histories in both its terminology and tone, but Henderson's work can nonetheless be described as a formative text in the move toward the re-analysis of the Highland regiments that has taken place in recent years.

Edward M. Spiers has recently tackled the same period that Henderson addressed in *Highland Soldier*, looking specifically at how the reputation and image of the

³⁹ See Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil*, p. 2.

⁴⁰ D. M. Henderson, *Highland Soldier: A Social Study of the Highland Regiments, 1820-1920*, (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 5.

Scottish soldier evolved during the age of empire. In *The Scottish Soldier and Empire, 1854-1902* (2006) Spiers looks at a range of sources, including soldiers' correspondence and editorials from contemporary newspapers, in order to compare how soldiers' own accounts of their service compared with the reporting and depiction of it at home. By giving prominence to the soldiers' voices through their correspondence, Spiers goes some way towards democratising the process of constructing a historical narrative of their service. Through comparing and contrasting these accounts with the popular portrayal of military service by commentators such as journalists and artists, Spiers highlights an interesting and somewhat unexpected level of convergence between what the soldiers said about themselves and what others purported to say for them. Spiers points out that the Highlanders often played an active role in their own propaganda by co-operating with war-artists, photographers and correspondents, and also providing their own visual and written accounts of the campaigns in which they served.⁴¹ This raises interesting questions about the extent to which the Gaels contributed to the creation of their own military myth, and argues against any notion that they were merely non-thinking Imperial cannon fodder.

Gaelic poetry is mentioned once (in passing and unreferenced)⁴² in *The Scottish Soldier and Empire* but Spiers uses popular English-language poetry and song to back up his points, including 'Highland poetry' from the *Ross-shire Journal*, the 'popular patriotic songs' of the music-hall and verses by Queen Victoria's poet-laureate, Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904).⁴³ Given that his work places emphasis on the portrayal of the Scottish soldier in such diverse cultural forums as the theatre, the art gallery and the press, a discussion of popular Gaelic song and poetry would have contributed fruitfully to the otherwise diverse picture of the Imperial Scottish soldier that emerges from Spiers's work.

As has previously been alluded to, Spiers is in the majority rather than the minority when it comes to failing to give credence to Gaelic sources. The recently published collection of essays, *The Military History of Scotland* (2012), has no reference whatsoever to Gaelic sources in its chapters covering the period 1756-1914. Indeed, apart from an essay specifically looking at literary responses to war, only one essay in the volume, Martin MacGregor's 'Warfare in Gaelic Scotland in the Middle Ages', refers to Gaelic poetry.⁴⁴ Whether through editorial ignorance or indifference, this amounts to a serious failing in providing as full a picture as possible of the military history of Scotland, as it leads to manifold Gaelic voices across multiple generations being denied a place in the historical narrative. Despite this not inconsiderable weakness, *The Military History of Scotland* has added significantly to our understanding of the composition and effect of

⁴¹ E. M. Spiers, *The Scottish Soldier and Empire, 1854-1902* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 15.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 56,

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 112.

⁴⁴ M. MacGregor, 'Warfare in Gaelic Scotland in the Middle Ages', in E. M. Spiers, J. A. Crang and M. J. Strickland (eds.), *A Military History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2012), pp. 209-32.

recruitment and military service in Scotland during the period under consideration here. Stephen Brumwell's essay on 'The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83' posits that the process by which the Gael came to be seen as the exemplary British soldier was already well under way by the end of The Seven Years War, and that this reputation was cemented during the American Revolutionary War (1775-83).⁴⁵ Brumwell at least acknowledges the prevalence of Gaelic speakers in the Scottish regiments during both eighteenth-century conflicts on North American soil, despite not including the linguistic evidence to back this up.⁴⁶

An essay by Charles J. Esdaile looks at the contribution of, and reaction to, Scottish soldiers during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. With regards to recruitment, Esdaile makes the point that 'anyone who imagines throngs of sturdy Highlanders eagerly springing forth to fight for king, clan and country is sadly deluded', and, as previously noted by Cookson, acknowledges the popularity of fencible and volunteer units as opposed to service in the regular army.⁴⁷ Esdaile makes it clear that the contribution of Highlanders to the Scottish regiments, while significant in and of itself given the population of the region, could never reach the levels that were expected of it or have since been imagined to have occurred.⁴⁸ Esdaile does not go so far as to discount the idea of Highland regiments and their soldiers having performed with bravery during the wars against the French, but he does raise questions as to the extent to which their extraordinary and enduring reputation is deserved over other regiments in the British forces.⁴⁹ Esdaile's essay therefore serves to remind us of the danger of falling back on stereotypes of the Scottish soldier in general and the Highland soldier in particular, without in the first place scrutinising all the available evidence. That Esdaile chooses to close his essay with the figure of an individual Scottish soldier, as illustrated in one of the traditional folk songs that has come down to us from the wars against the French, 'The Ballad of Jamie Foyers', is fully illustrative of the role that song and poetry can have in informing our understanding of this period of history.⁵⁰

Other recently published works which have opened up new routes of enquiry in the subject area have included Stana Nenadic's 'The Impact of the Military Profession on Highland Gentry Families, c. 1730-1830'. Nenadic's essay analyses the scale of military employment amongst Highland gentry compared to other professions and explores the impact of this employment on family relations. She highlights the advantages of a career that required no education or training before being signed

⁴⁵ S. Brumwell, 'The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83', in *A Military History of Scotland*, p. 396.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

⁴⁷ C. J. Esdaile, 'The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', in *A Military History of Scotland*, p. 412.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 416.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 427.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

up and that offered ready opportunity for social and economic advancement. While other careers could yield greater and more consistent financial rewards, Nenadic makes it clear that this fact was compensated for by a military career that provided 'a status for life', while also offering the more immediate advantages of access to an elite social circle.⁵¹ But the social aspect of military life was also one of its pitfalls and Nenadic indicates that families could be put under serious financial strain as a result of the affairs of their military kin.⁵² Added to this was the fact that mass involvement in the military removed many young men from their families and the opportunities of taking part in business or land management, to the potential long-term detriment of gentry families and their estates.⁵³ The impact of familial separation as revealed in the Gaelic poetic record is considered in chapter eight.

Another recent essay by Heather Streets has looked specifically at the process of identity formation in the context of the Highland regiments in the later nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Like Spiers, Streets has sought to consider the ways in which Highland soldiers perceived their own identity as soldiers, which she does through accessing soldiers' diaries and letters. While Streets importantly reminds us that 'during the nineteenth century the gap between the Highland soldier of popular imagination and the regional and social origins of 'actual' Highland soldiers widened considerably'⁵⁵ (220), she also notes that these same soldiers 'repeatedly engaged with popular images of Highland soldiers, and in the process repeatedly performed both their approval and acceptance of such attractive imagery'.⁵⁶ Streets therefore makes clear the manner in which soldiers engaged and interacted with the various stereotypes which had come to define Highland soldiery, but suggests that the ultimate effect of this was 'conservative' and perhaps negated their facility to effectually protest their conditions of service.⁵⁷

While scholars such as Dziennik and Mackillop have argued that Gaels could exert their independence in the military system, it is indisputable that external manipulation - concrete and ideological - was also exerted. The manner in which the British military plundered and primed the culture of the Scottish Gael, before presenting Highland soldiers with tartans, kilts and bagpipes as a privilege of Imperial service has been well covered by historians. The initially disproportionate level of service by the Gaels, coupled with over one hundred years of romanticism

⁵¹ S. Nenadic, 'The Impact of the Military Profession on Highland Gentry Families, c. 1730-1830' *The Scottish Historical Review* 85 (2006), p. 86.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁵⁴ H. Streets, 'Identity in Highland Regiments in the Nineteenth Century: Soldier, Region, Nation', in *Fighting for Identity*, pp. 213-236. The same collection contains an essay on the formation of identity in the context of the Scots-Dutch Brigade: J. Miggelbrink, 'The End of the Scots-Dutch Brigade', in *Fighting for Identity*, pp. 83-104.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

- in which the succeeding triumvirate of James MacPherson (1736-1796), Walter Scott (1771-1832) and Queen Victoria (1819-1901) were key players - contributed to the politico-cultural phenomenon generally referred to as Highlandism. Highlandism was (and is) an abstract yet utterly potent force; it persists to the present day and still holds the power to distort popular perceptions of not only the Highland region's, but all of Scotland's, past. Through Highlandism, Gaelic culture was yoked to an imaginary and historically united Scottish nation and culture, in an act of ideological bridging constructed from mainly Highland materials. As Charles Withers has said: 'Perhaps more than any other region, the Highlands have played a crucial role in the manufacture of Scottish history and in the making of Scottish identity.'⁵⁸ Hugh Trevor-Roper - in a now thoroughly discredited essay - considered this to have been the result of almost all-out invention during the eighteenth century.⁵⁹ He went so far as to claim that '[before] the later years of the seventeenth century, the Highlanders of Scotland did not form a distinct people. They were merely the overflow of Ireland'.⁶⁰ While historians of Highlandism are in agreement about invention or creation having been central to its development, few have gone so far as to make such an extreme and challengeable claim.⁶¹ Withers provides a more detailed account of the reasons for the historical creation of the Highland region, and points to a range of cultural processes that were inherent in it, including notions linked to improvement, primitivism and the sublime and picturesque.⁶²

One of the key constituents in the development of Highlandism was the image of the Gael as a naturally gifted soldier who could be utilised in the defence of the Empire. As Peter Womack has said: 'The barbarians who once threatened the English domination of the state [were] now trained to maul its enemies'.⁶³ Womack also notes the extent to which Highland history was reimagined to bring it in line with the exaggerated martial attributes that were projected onto Gaels recruited for military service: '...the ideological corollary of the formation of the Highland regiments as heirs and replicas of the clans were retrospectively remade in the image of the regiments, as a social system wholly centred on fighting'.⁶⁴ Robert Clyde has looked specifically at the transformation in the popular image of the

⁵⁸ C. Withers, 'The Historical Creation of the Highlands', in I. Donnachie and C. Whatley (eds.), *The Manufacture of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 147.

⁵⁹ See for instance: M. Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland: The Stuart Myth and the Scottish Identity* (London, 1991); C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-1830* (Cambridge, 1993).

⁶⁰ H. Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge, 1983), p. 15.

⁶¹ In a recent review of his collected essays, William Fergusson has summarised that 'Trevor-Roper's interpretations of evidence are often dictated by his pre-conceptions, and his conclusions frequently depend upon either ignoring or manipulating sources'. W. Fergusson, 'The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 90:1 (2011), p. 166.

⁶² Withers, 'The Historical Creation of the Highlands', pp. 145-148.

⁶³ P. Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands*, (Macmillan: Hampshire, 1989), p. 32.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Gael from a scurrilous outlaw in the first half of the eighteenth century to the archetypal British soldier by the early-nineteenth century. In *From Rebel to Hero: The Image of the Highlander, 1745-1830* (1998) Clyde describes how Gaels were seen from a variety of perspectives by their Lowland neighbours and by specific groups and institutions which had interests in the region, and as such we see the Gàidhealtachd from the point of view of such diverse groups as improvers, educators, travellers and evangelicals. Clyde notes that 'the reputation of the Highland soldier as a loyal and courageous defender of British interests' achieved such widespread currency that 'even critics of the established order displayed pride in the glorious exploits of the Highland regiments'.⁶⁵

By the era of the Napoleonic wars, Clyde notes that the image of the Gaels had changed utterly and irrevocably: 'The belief that the Gaels were a disloyal, savage and warlike race at the disposal of foreign powers was banished forever. Replacing it was the belief that the Highland soldier was religious, sober and well behaved in peace, fierce and utterly fearless in battle, and loyal to the end'.⁶⁶ Clyde has a section on Gaelic poetry and British identity, where he mentions several poets but draws only on work by Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and John MacCodrum. To criticise Clyde's work for lacking the Gaelic perspective, however, would be to misunderstand his intent: that is to explain how the external image of the Gaels changed between Culloden and the early decades of the nineteenth century. It might be said, however, that historians of Highlandism in general have shown reluctance to access Gaelic material, and have as such been unable to fully analyse the extent to which Gaels responded and contributed to the creation of their own myths.

It remains to be considered then how Gaelic editors and scholars have dealt with the military dimension in early modern/modern Highland history, and how they have drawn upon and analysed the relevant poetic material. Published over twenty years after the Napoleonic Wars and during the period of major Imperial expansion, John MacKenzie's *Sar-obair nam Bard Gaelach* (1841) contains a number of pieces linked to the wars against the French and the regiments that had come to play such an influential role in Gaelic society. In the preface to the collection, MacKenzie demonstrates an awareness of the value of Gaelic poetry as historical source, noting that 'The Highland bards filled a most important station in society' and stating that he '[knows] of no better mirror than their works, to shadow forth the moral and intellectual picture of the community among whom they lived'.⁶⁷ That matters relating to the military had become a primary concern for poets by the early years of the nineteenth century can be discerned from the

⁶⁵ R. Clyde, *From Rebel to Hero: The Image of the Highlander, 1745-1830*, (East Lothian, Tuckwell Press, 1998), p. 157.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁶⁷ J. MacKenzie, *Sar-Obair Nam Bard Gaelach* (Edinburgh, 1841), p. vi.

editorial decisions made by MacKenzie: he includes eight military-related pieces from five of the eight poets chosen to represent the period.

Although MacKenzie is generally reserved in his analysis of more modern bards and their works, he is effusive in his praise of the Morar soldier-poet, Alexander MacKinnon (1770-1814). MacKenzie writes that ‘no-one could be more happy in his choice of subjects than McKinnon; and more assuredly, none could handle his materials better. He was an enthusiastic soldier: he saw and admired the British arms and commemorated their feats in strains which cannot die’.⁶⁸ Indeed, MacKenzie is willing to go so far as to say that the four pieces presented are of ‘prime quality’ and that they ‘admit of no comparison’.⁶⁹ MacKinnon was also held in high esteem by his poetic peers, which is evident in a panegyric written by John MacLean, Bàrd Thighearna Chola (1787-1848), for the Morar bard. But whereas MacLean’s renown has been constant in both popular and critical terms, MacKinnon became largely forgotten by the later decades of the twentieth century. So why should the former have been remembered while the latter slipped into relative obscurity? A conceivable answer may be that MacKinnon’s work, and the poetry of which it is representative, did not fit into the critical narrative of a decline in quality and a hopelessness in outlook from 1800 onwards, which was dominant in academic study of Gaelic poetry for much of the twentieth century.

Magnus Maclean in his *The Literature of the Highlands* (1903) deemed the poetry of the nineteenth century to have been ‘for the most part inferior to the brilliant galaxy that had gone before’.⁷⁰ However, it is interesting in this context to note that one of the poems Maclean chooses to illustrate the work of William Livingstone (1808-70), whom he considers to be one of the ‘two most notable poets’ of the century, is based on the campaign of Highland soldiers in the Crimea (as is considered in more detail in chapter seven).⁷¹ W.J. Watson, in his influential anthology of Gaelic poetry, *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig*, shared Maclean’s views on the rapid decline of Gaelic poetry after the eighteenth century and famously described the poetry of the nineteenth century as the ‘wail of a dejected and harassed people’.⁷² A preference for the poetry of the military experience can also be seen in Watson’s work however, as he names Alexander MacKinnon as one of two ‘exceptions’ whose work did not bear the ill-effects of increasing English influence, and the Morar bard’s ‘Air Mìos Deireannach an Fhoghair’ was selected as one of only five examples of Gaelic poetry post-1800. Sorley Maclean also highlighted a general decline in quality after 1800 and expressed the opinion that ‘Gaelic poetry in the Nineteenth century is naturally depressing and even hopeless

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

⁷⁰ M. Maclean, *The Literature of the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1903), p. 178.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁷² W.J. Watson, *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig* (Glasgow, 1918), p. xxxiii.

in tone.’⁷³ Apart from a passing reference to Livingston’s ‘Duan Geall’⁷⁴ and a brief mention of the trope of citing soldiers’ service as an argument against clearance,⁷⁵ MacLean makes no significant reference to the poetry of the military experience of the Gaels. Derick Thomson shared Watson’s distaste for the English influence in post-1800 Gaelic poetry, and lamented ‘the “new” Gaelic verse of the nineteenth century, which largely turns its back on its own relatively learned, aristocratic tradition, and grovels contentedly in its novel surroundings’.⁷⁶ Thomson does not, however, find place in his analysis for the ‘novel surroundings’ of the poems composed about the experience of the Gaels in the military in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it might be said that this poetry was in the process of being written out of Gaelic literary criticism by the time *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry* (1974) was published.

It was through John Macinnes’s 1989 essay ‘Gaelic Poetry in the Nineteenth Century’ that poetry of the military experience was once again given due weight alongside work related to other historical forces of the era. Macinnes shifts the emphasis away from a perceived decline in quality and increase in English influence, and notes that if we view the Gaelic poetry of the period ‘from within Gaelic society itself, we shall find it at least as rich and rewarding as that of any other period in Gaelic history’.⁷⁷ Macinnes points to the ‘realism of observation’ and the ‘strong and authentic voice’ of poems relating to the service of the Gaels, and notes that although ‘to a foreign reader they are probably on the whole tedious’, to a reader viewing them from within Gaelic society ‘they are charters that reflect and endorse a new security’.⁷⁸ There has also recently been a reappraisal of some of the eighteenth century military-related material in Michael Newton’s *We’re Indians Sure Enough* (2001). Newton has looked in-depth at the experience of the Gaels in North America during the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and the American Revolutionary War (1775-1883), and his work has been particularly valuable in examining many lesser-known texts from the poetic record.⁷⁹

The poetry of the military experience has also recently taken its place alongside that of other major historical phenomena in anthologies of eighteenth and nineteenth Gaelic century poetry. Alexander MacKinnon’s ‘Blàr na h-Òlaind’ was chosen by Ronald Black to conclude his anthology of eighteenth-century poetry *An*

⁷³ S. Maclean, ‘The Poetry of the Clearances’, in W. Gillies (ed.), *Ris a’ Bhruthaich: The Criticism and Prose Writings of Sorley Maclean* (Stornoway, 1985), p. 50.

⁷⁴ S. Maclean, ‘The Poetry of William Livingston’, in W. Gillies (ed.), *Ris a’ Bhruthaich: The Criticism and Prose Writings of Sorley Maclean* (Stornoway, 1985), p. 143.

⁷⁵ S. Maclean, ‘The Poetry of the Clearances’, p. 66.

⁷⁶ Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, p. 223.

⁷⁷ J. Macinnes, ‘Gaelic Poetry in the Nineteenth Century’ in D. Gifford (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature* vol. 3 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press), p. 359.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁷⁹ See also: M. Newton, ‘Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present’, in *e-Keltoi*, 5 (2003), https://www4.uwm.edu/celtic/ekeltoi/volumes/vol5/5_2/newton_5_2.pdf, [accessed 02 December, 2016].

Lasair (2001), a fitting choice given the role that the military played in the lives of Gaels by the end of that century. MacKinnon looked back for inspiration in language, style and structure, but in terms of subject matter, location and the scale of battle he describes his poetry was utterly new and faced towards the nineteenth century. It is therefore appropriate that his work is also included in Donald Meek's collection of nineteenth-century Gaelic poetry, *Caran an t-Saoghail* (2003). Meek devotes a section of the book to poetic responses to war, and poems referring to the service of Gaels are also found in other sections of his anthology. It is also worth noting that Meek chose as the front cover-design for his collection a portrait of a regiment at war, and the reader is met with a verse reflecting on military service on the book's back cover.

The re-establishment of the military dimension in Gaelic scholarship by MacInnes, Black, Newton and Meek has been contributed to over the past five years. This writer's 'A' Moladh na Rèiseamaid: Gaelic Poetry and the British Army, 1793-1815' (2009) has looked specifically at the manner in which the panegyric code was adapted and used by poets during the era of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars to make sense of the new military order. Military leaders took the place of Chieftains as predominant subjects of praise, Napoleon Bonaparte became the target of satire, and parallels were drawn between the Gaels as British soldiers and the renowned warriors of Gaelic legend. A subsequent important article by Wilson McLeod, as noted in the introduction, has taken a broader sweep, looking at the poetry of the Gaels and the British military from 1756-1945. McLeod has noted that, while military activity features prominently in earlier Gaelic verse, the poetry composed after 1756 can be seen to 'form a distinct political and literary chapter'.⁸⁰ Another article by Peter Mackay from the same collection in which McLeod's article appears, looks at some military verse in the context of 'Negotiations of Barbarity, Authenticity and Purity in Gaelic Literature'.⁸¹ Silke Stroh's ground-breaking work, *Uneasy Subjects: Postcolonialism and Scottish Gaelic Poetry* (2011), has looked at the poetry of the Gaels' military experience through the lens of postcolonial theory. Stroh argues that the tools of postcolonial scholarship can be usefully applied to the study of Gaelic literature, in order to analyse, for instance, issues of multiculturalism and multilingualism, and the construction and reconstruction of national identities.⁸² Stroh recognises the 'complication' that 'arises from the fact that many of Britain's "internal colonised" from the Gaidhealtachd and other parts of Scotland became overseas colonisers' and this has obvious implications for studying poetry of the military experience of the Gaels in a postcolonial context.⁸³ Stroh notes that through their

⁸⁰ W. Macleod, 'Gaelic Poetry and the British Military, 1756-1945', in C. Sassi and T. van Heijnsbergen (eds.), *Within and Without Empire: Scotland across the (post)colonial borderline* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 61.

⁸¹ P. Mackay, 'Negotiations of Barbarity, Authenticity and Purity in Gaelic Literature', in *Within and Without Empire*, pp. 30-45.

⁸² S. Stroh, *Uneasy Subjects: Postcolonialism and Scottish Gaelic Poetry* (New York, 2011), p. 33.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

military service, Gaels 'could now be rehabilitated, evolving from a despicable Other to either a praiseworthy Other or (again) a national same - not only of a pan-Scottish nation, but even of an imperial pan-British nation state'.⁸⁴

Stroh's contribution has been a timely one as it has helped to take the debate forward within the field of Celtic studies at a time when similar progress is being made in the study of the military dimension in Highland history more generally. However, until now there has been no comprehensive study of Gaelic poetry of the military experience in the early-modern/modern Highlands and as such there are many Gaelic voices which have yet to be given a place in the historical narrative. This Thesis aims to address this deficiency by analysing the work of poets who chronicled the response of the Gaels to the military during the age when their service came to define the British Imperial mission. The next chapter will consider the historical context of military poetry from 1756 to 1856.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Chapter 2: Historical Context

The British military played a significant and highly influential role in the Scottish Gàidhealtachd throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A distinctive regional military had emerged in the early decades of the eighteenth century, tasked initially with policing and maintaining order in the region, but latterly being assimilated into the wider British army. Political conditions in the Highlands were central to its militarisation. Jacobitism provided both a justification for, and the foundations of what Andrew Mackillop has called, ‘the ghettoization of the Highlands as an imperial-military reservoir’.⁸⁵ With the formation of the Highland regiments, the military came to play a more conspicuous role in Highland society and culture, at the same time as Highland soldiers became distinctive symbols of British military endeavour. Clan society was in terminal decline during the eighteenth century, but there remained a respect among Gaels for many of its most distinctive features, and this respect was exploited by the military in allowing for soldiers in the Highland regiments to bear arms and wear Highland dress, even when this had otherwise been outlawed by the Dress Act of 1746. Facing the post-Culloden reality of a society which was becoming increasingly bound with the demands of the British state, former clan chiefs found in the military a means to make the most of the political and economic opportunities which were being opened up to them. The stage had been set for a period during which the Highland region and its culture would increasingly come to be identified with military service.

During the twenty years prior to the ’45, Highland companies had been reconstituted and expanded in the Highlands, with the aim of undermining Jacobitism, exacting law and order and aiding the political and economic assimilation of the Highlands and Islands.⁸⁶ Six Highland companies were raised in 1725, under the command of General George Wade (1673-1748), in answer to concerns that the region had returned to a state of lawlessness following the poorly-executed Disarming Act of 1716, which was introduced in the wake of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715.⁸⁷ These companies were eventually amalgamated in

⁸⁵ Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil*, p. 40; S. Brumwell, ‘The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83’, in *A Military History of Scotland*, p. 386.

⁸⁶ The first Independent Highland Companies were raised by Government order from 1603 onwards as local *gendarmerie* forces. The Highland companies had been largely disbanded in 1717, following the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. P. Simpson, *The Independent Highland Companies* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. ix; Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil*, p. 14.

⁸⁷ Clans loyal to the king had given up their weapons but disloyal clans had retained theirs, leaving the former vulnerable to the latter and leading to a state of disorder in the region. Added to this was the fact that clans were financially rewarded for arms delivered up, meaning that Jacobite clans strengthened their financial positions by trading obsolete and broken arms for cash, while still retaining their main arms. Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, petitioned George I for change, pointing also to the ineffectualness of the small number of English troops left stationed in the region, but, suspicious of Lovat’s intentions, the King asked the opinions of General Wade. Wade’s report and recommendation that six companies be raised was accepted by the King, leading to the companies’ reformation. Simpson, *The Independent Highland Companies*, p. 105; B.P. Lenman, *The Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen, 1650-1784* (Dalkeith, 1984), pp. 95-6.

the formation of the 42nd Regiment, *Am Freiceadan Dubh*, or the Black Watch, in 1739. The formation of the Black Watch can be seen as instructive of the state's perception of the Highlands and its military potential in the years preceding the '45. As Mackillop has said: 'this alteration in official status confirms how the idea of fully integrating the region's military potential was already largely accepted within the thinking of political elites in Edinburgh and London'.⁸⁸ A military presence intended initially as a policing force was developing into a mainstream part of the army.⁸⁹ This was confirmed in 1745 with the formation of a second Highland unit, the 54th regiment, or Loudon Highlanders. While the regiment served during the '45, it was commissioned in direct response to Britain's heavy defeat at the Battle of Fontenoy (1745).⁹⁰

The immediate aftermath of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-46 was marked by brutality and repression meted out on clan society by government troops under the Duke of Cumberland. The Highlands in this period experienced what Allan Macinnes has called 'the final convulsion' in the shift from a traditional to a commercial society. Legislative measures were taken to disarm and emasculate the clans, including the abolition of heritable jurisdictions and the banning of Highland dress. These measures, combined with a lack of cohesion and enthusiasm among Jacobite leaders for another rebellion, effectively pacified the Highlands as a threat to Britain. But in the years following Culloden, a different type of militarism emerged in the Highlands, as recruitment became one of the central planks of British government policy in the region.⁹¹ The Highlands shifted in the eyes of the government from being a troublesome quarter which had to be suppressed, to being a hotbed of military potential which could be utilised - with suggestions that over 100,000 men were available to the army in the region.⁹² The manner in which the formerly rebellious Highlanders could (and would) be used to the military advantage of Britain is summed up in Lieutenant Colonel James Wolfe's famous comments from 1751:

I should imagine that two or three independent Highland companies might be of use; they are hardy, intrepid, accustomed to a rough country, and no

⁸⁸ Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil*, p. 24.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁹² The Reverend Dr Alexander Webster of the Tron Kirk in Edinburgh was commissioned by the British government in 1755 to enumerate the population of Scotland. From an estimated population of 550,000 for the Gaelic-speaking parts of the Highlands and islands, Webster estimated that one fifth of this population would be eligible for military service. While the precise rationale behind the commissioning of this enumeration is unclear, one explanation would be that it was carried out due to a desire to know the manpower potential of the region in the event of war. B.P. Lenman, *The Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen, 1650-1784*, p. 185.

great mischief if they fall. How can you better employ a secret enemy than by making his end conducive to the common good?⁹³

The outbreak of the Seven Years' War (1756-63) led to unprecedented demand for military manpower in Britain. The example of the recruiting potential of the Highlands during the Jacobite rebellions, allied with a perception within government circles of society in the region being ideally suited to military service, combined to make the Gàidhealtachd a particularly valuable military asset.⁹⁴ The benefits of military expansion in the region were also perceived by Highland gentry, who entered the army in growing numbers.⁹⁵ As the formation of a regiment in 1757 by Simon Fraser (1726-1782), Master of Lovat, demonstrates, The Seven Years' War provided an ideal opportunity for former rebels to redeem themselves, accessing the British military as a means of mending relationships with the state. The son of executed Jacobite Simon Fraser (1667-1747), he had himself - albeit apparently reluctantly - led his clan as part of the Jacobite army at the Battle of Falkirk in 1746. The reconciliatory political atmosphere in which the Fraser Highlanders came to be raised was commented on by David Stewart of Garth in 1822:

Mr Pitt, in the year 1757, recommended to his Majesty George II to attach the Highlanders to his person, by employing them in his service; and, in evidence of the disappearance of all jealousy on the part of the Crown, the Honourable Simon Fraser, who had himself been engaged in the rebellion, for which his father Lord Lovat, had been beheaded on Tower Hill, was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant of a battalion, to be raised on the forfeited estate of his own family [...] and of those of his kinsmen and class.⁹⁶

This quotation makes clear the advantage that those formerly associated with the Jacobite cause could gain from engaging in the British military, and military service likewise provided the opportunity for the British authorities to bring disaffected members of the Highland gentry into the fold. As Bruce Lenman has said: 'Common interests [...] proved the bridge across which enemies could move into the land of reconciliation'.⁹⁷ But the fiscal-military state did not just afford opportunities for former Jacobites: Highland proprietors of all persuasions were able to raise regiments and reap the associated financial rewards.⁹⁸ Poets were

⁹³ Wolfe to Rickson, Banff, 9 June 1751, in B. Willson, *The Life and Letters of James Wolfe* (New York, 1909), p. 141.

⁹⁴ Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, p. 169.

⁹⁵ Nenadic, 'The Impact of the Military on Highland Gentry Families, c. 1730-1830', p. 76.

⁹⁶ Stewart, *Sketches of the Character, Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*, vol. 2, p. 64.

⁹⁷ Lenman, *The Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen*, p. 184.

⁹⁸ The case of Hector Munro (1726-1805) provides an example of military patronage having secured an elevated position for a member of the Highland gentry. Having been bought a commission in one of Loudoun's regiments, Munro came to prominence during his service in India in the 1760s, and returned with the financial reserves to build up his estate and secure a position as a Member of

also aware of the redemptive possibilities inherent in military service, and it will be seen throughout this thesis that they were adept at drawing new military leaders and the regimental system into their own worldview - and contextualising these on their own terms.

Central to the political environment in which the Highlands could once again be militarised was a widely-held belief south of the region that clanship was still a dominant societal force. Mackillop has suggested that members of the Highland gentry actively characterised the Highlands as still being under the sway of the clans, as they realised the economic and political rewards that this perception could accrue.⁹⁹ It is ironic that during the years when the traditional clan system was in terminal decline, it retained an ideological potency in the minds of the government, which could be exploited by figures who had inherited places of authority from this fast-disappearing society.¹⁰⁰

The recruitment of thousands of Highland troops into the British army at this time becomes easier to understand when it is considered that there was already a strong tradition of military service in Highland aristocratic families, and that the Black Watch existed as an instructive example of what a Highland regiment could achieve.¹⁰¹ Having been stationed in Ireland between 1749 and 1756, the Black Watch was expanded after the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1756, leading to the formation of a second battalion. A further corps was raised in 1757 by Archibald Montgomery (1726-1796), who raised a regiment of 1,460 men around Stirling, originally known as the First Highland Battalion and latterly as the 77th Regiment or the Montgomery Highlanders, which was immediately shipped out for service to Halifax in Nova Scotia. A variety of recruiting methods were used to raise the men who fought in the Americas at this time, and these ranged from appealing to clan loyalty to applying coercion with the government's Recruiting Acts.¹⁰² Many, however, enlisted willingly: apart from providing Gaels with the opportunity to bear arms and wear Highland Dress, military service offered a way of earning money and - crucially - securing land at a time when there were few other ways in which they could do so.¹⁰³ Regiments raised at this time, and those raised over the next hundred years, entered into the historical consciousness of the Gaels and became major subjects of Gaelic poetry. The Black Watch alone, as will be shown, was the subject of no fewer than eight poems.

Parliament in 1768. See L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (New Haven & London, 1992), p. 127.

⁹⁹ Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil*, p. 65.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁰¹ Lenman, *The Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen*, p. 180.

¹⁰² Recruiting Acts were passed annually during the years 1703-11, 1743-44, 1756-57, 1778-79, and in 1783, while the British army was engaged in major wars. The Acts offered a financial bounty or reward to men who enlisted for limited periods - in 1757 the sum was £3. The acts also gave powers to magistrates to force unemployed but otherwise able-bodied men into service. See: S. Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 273.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

Highlanders saw service during the Seven Years' War in theatres of war as far afield as India and Germany, but it was for their service in North America and the West Indies that the Highland regiments achieved a reputation that would gain them a permanent and esteemed place in the British army. Service in North America during this conflict and the later American Revolutionary War was the subject of the bulk of Gaelic military poetry of the period, as will be considered in Chapter 4. From the outset of their service, the exploits of these distinctively dressed soldiers were reported in accounts sent home from America and the West Indies, many of which were reprinted in British newspapers.¹⁰⁴ In one such letter, Colonel Henry Bouquet (1719-1765), wrote that his victory over the Ohio Indians at Bushy Run in 1763 was due to the fighting abilities of the 42nd and 77th regiments. He wrote: 'The Highlanders are the bravest men I ever saw, and their behaviour in that obstinat (sic) affair does them the highest honour.'¹⁰⁵ The attention received by the Highlanders was a reflection both of their military performance and the numbers in which they served. Although data for the later years of the conflict is incomplete, monthly returns from September 1757 show that the three Highland regiments serving in North America amounted to 3,306 men, and by the following February there were 4,200 men in the Highland regiments, of a total of 24,000 British regulars serving in North America. By the end of the Seven Years' War there were eight Highland regiments of the line (including the two regiments raised by the time of the '45) and two Highland fencible battalions.¹⁰⁶

It had been demonstrated during the Seven Years' War that the Highlands could act as a reservoir for recruiting purposes and that Highland soldiers could fight effectively in foreign service as part of the British military, and the example that had been set during this conflict was followed during the American Revolutionary War (1775-83). The speed at which regiments could be raised added to the perception south of the Highland line of the area's fertility as a recruiting ground, as revealed in comments by Andrew Fletcher (1722-79), the Duke of Argyll's secretary, in 1757: 'The extraordinary success with which the two Highland corps have been recruited gives great satisfaction to all concerned, some of the John Bulls cannot believe that such a body of men could be raised in so short a space'.¹⁰⁷ This 'body of men' was tapped into again during the American Revolutionary War, when a further ten regiments of the line and three fencible battalions were raised. A total of eighteen regiments of the line and five fencible battalions had therefore been raised by the conclusion of the wars fought by

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 265

¹⁰⁵ Bouquet to Lieutenant James Macdonald, 28 August 1763, in Add. MSS 21, 649, fol. 316; reprinted in Brumwell, *Redcoats*, p. 266.

¹⁰⁶ Scotland at this time accounted for roughly 12% of the British population, but returns for units serving in North America in 1757 reveal that Scots made up some 27.5% of rank and file soldiers and 31.5% of officers in the British military. See: S. Brumwell, 'The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83', pp. 389-90.

¹⁰⁷ N.L.S., Fletcher of Saltoun Papers, Ms 16519, f. 71; reprinted in Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil*, p. 59.

Britain in North America in the eighteenth century, and the 21,000-24,000 Highlanders who fought in the army by this time equalled the estimated fighting potential of all the clans during the Jacobite risings.¹⁰⁸

Although there were well-documented cases of mutiny among the Highland regiments (particularly if they felt that they had been treated unfairly or lied to by their superiors), the service of the Gaels in North America and in other areas where they served was seen as presenting a model of military behaviour.¹⁰⁹ Matthew Dziennik has examined the motivations of Highlanders in serving and supporting the British state during the conflict, and has suggested that a distinctive form of loyalism based primarily on personal interest was displayed by Highland troops.¹¹⁰ Dziennik stresses that Highland loyalism was a 'sophisticated political action that reflected broadly positive views of the British Empire', and that it was 'forged in changing relationships' and a desire on the part of Highland soldiers to 'free themselves from the strictures of authoritarian landlordism'.¹¹¹ Crucially, Dziennik's research has stressed the need for a historiography that views Highlanders as key actors in the process of negotiation with empire in a military context.

In order to sustain the numbers that were by now serving in the military, it was necessary for tenantry to remain in the Gàidhealtachd, and military service came to have an impact on emigration and land management policies in the region. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1775, the fact that Highlanders with a record of rebellion were seen to be emigrating to a part of the British Empire that was looking increasingly likely to rebel militarily was a cause of significant concern in government circles.¹¹² The first major government intervention to block emigration was taken when war broke out in 1775 and Henry Dundas banned emigration from Scottish ports.¹¹³ Military considerations were also behind the passing of the more influential Passenger Vessels Act in 1803, and Mackillop has argued that Highland proprietors also utilised fencible and volunteer battalions during the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars as a means of keeping tenants on their estates.¹¹⁴ It should be borne in mind, however, that military service was also effectively a means of emigrating for many Gaels. There was a definite depopulating effect as a result of service and settlement policies at the end of the Seven Years' War, and the American Revolutionary War gave Gaels a means of remaining in North America after their service, establishing communities which could in turn attract further emigrants from the Highlands.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, p. 217.

¹⁰⁹ See: Prebble, *Mutiny: Highland Regiments in Revolt* (London, 1997).

¹¹⁰ Dziennik, 'Through an Imperial Prism', p. 357.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

¹¹² Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil*, p. 193.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

The next major conflict in which Britain fought would eclipse the Seven Years' War and the American Revolutionary War in length, scale, and geographic scope. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815) resulted in levels of recruitment which brought into existence a British army of unprecedented size.¹¹⁶ During these wars the reputation of the Highland regiments and Highland soldiers was cemented, and they became arguably the preeminent symbols of Scottish nationhood within the British Empire. It is important to note however that by this time the number of Lowlanders serving in the British army far outweighed the number of Highlanders, due to the fact that the numbers required for service far exceeded those that the Highland region could supply.¹¹⁷ Inspection returns from 1795 show that eleven fencible regiments whose names connected them with former clans or districts in the Highlands were constituted of around half Highlanders and half soldiers from other areas. And in 1794-1795, the 90th Regiment of Foot had twice as many men from Birmingham and Manchester as it did from Perthshire, the area with which it was associated.¹¹⁸ This is not, however, to diminish the impact that the military continued to exert in the Gàidhealtachd and is simply a reflection of the fact that the population base in the Lowlands was approximately three to four times larger than that of the Highlands.¹¹⁹ Levels of recruitment in the Highlands were still high, and one estimate has put the region's contribution during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars at 74,000 men from a population of some 300,000.¹²⁰ While more conservative estimates put their service at between 37,000 and 48,000, this still accounts for almost one in six of the region's population.¹²¹

Raising regiments at this time continued to be in the political interests of Highland gentry, and J.E Cookson has noted 'the avidity with which some magnates turned to military recruitment after 1793'.¹²² Six fencible and five line battalions were raised during the first two years of the conflict, by the Earl of Breadalbane, the Duke of Gordon, the chief of the MacKenzies and the Countess of Sutherland.¹²³ Such levels of engagement with the fiscal-military state reinforce the extent to which former clan leaders had by this time become bound to the demands of southern governance. As Cookson has said: 'Behind a facade of Highland loyalty and military enthusiasm, careerism and patronage were the driving forces and professional recruiting the recipe for success'.¹²⁴ Volunteering was a prevalent and preferred form of service in the Highlands during this period. One of the most important factors in accounting for this is that volunteer units offered material

¹¹⁶ Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, p. 127.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹²⁰ Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War*, p. 43.

¹²¹ Mackillop, *More Fruitful than the Soil*, p. 236.

¹²² Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, p. 131.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

benefits in a poor society, while also allowing soldiers to remain relatively close to home.¹²⁵ The counties of Perth, Argyll, Inverness, Ross, Cromarty, Sutherland and Caithness provided over a third of Scotland's volunteers towards the end of the Revolutionary war. Overall, the military units associated with the Highlands during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars amounted to eleven regiments of infantry, twenty-three regiments of fencibles and at least ten regiments of militia, as well as a considerable number of auxiliary units.¹²⁶

The British victory at Waterloo was followed by almost forty years of peace for the United Kingdom in Europe, during which the conflicts in which the British army did fight were on a significantly smaller scale to those in which they had been engaged in every decade since the 1750s. The British army decreased significantly in size following the battle of Waterloo to 225,000 in 1816, half of its size two years previously, and by 1820 further cuts had reduced the army's size to about 100,000.¹²⁷ While recruitment decreased, Scotland as a whole continued to provide a disproportionate number of men to the army in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Scottish recruits accounted for 13,800 non-commissioned officers and men, or 13.6% of the army, in 1830, at a time when Scotland contained ten per cent of the United Kingdom's population.¹²⁸ The Highland regiments maintained recruiting levels with greater success than other parts of Scotland; but the numbers of Highland recruits also continued to decline.¹²⁹

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Ireland became more prominent as a recruiting ground, taking the position the Highlands had held in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹³⁰ By 1878, Irish soldiers accounted for 26 per cent of the British army while Scottish soldiers constituted only 8.5 per cent. But despite Ireland taking the place of the Gàidhealtachd as a recruiting centre, the Highland regiments retained their symbolic and reputational hegemony. As Hanham has said: 'It is a striking fact that Irish regiments never attained the celebrity of their Scottish counterparts, or their sense of solidarity'.¹³¹ During a period when the numbers of Gaels serving in the British military decreased significantly, the reputation of the Highland regiments continued to grow.

Despite being reduced significantly in size, the British army remained militarily engaged on a global scale during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Scottish involvement in campaigns in India was minimal in the early decades of the century, with the significant exception of the 78th regiment, who served in India

¹²⁵ See: Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, pp. 300-302.

¹²⁶ Esdaile, 'The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', p. 416.

¹²⁷ S. Wood, *The Scottish Soldier* (Manchester, 1987), p. 52.

¹²⁸ E. Spiers, 'Scots and the Wars of Empire, 1815-1914', in *A Military History of Scotland*, p. 459.

¹²⁹ H. J. Hanham, 'Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army' in M.R.D. Foot (ed.), *War and Society* (1973), p. 166.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

between 1820 and 1856.¹³² But Highland troops played a major role in consolidating British rule at home and abroad, with Canada a focus of foreign service in the 1820s and 30s.¹³³ Gaels were also involved in suppressing slave revolts in the West Indies in the 1830s, and served in Africa, where they fought in the Sixth (1834-36), Seventh (1846-47) and Eighth (1850-53) Frontier Wars in Cape Colony.¹³⁴ Highland soldiers were also deployed in aid of the civil power across the United Kingdom, in Ireland, Scotland and England, during a period when political unrest regularly manifested itself in violence.¹³⁵ The service of Highland soldiers between Waterloo and the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 reflected the priorities of British foreign and domestic policy at the time; as Stephen Wood has said 'the British Army between 1815 and 1854 was essentially an army concentrating on its growing Imperial commitment.'¹³⁶ Queen Victoria's (1819-1901) regular presence in Scotland from 1842 onwards also brought the need to provide for her security, and the role assigned to the Highland regiments as protectors of the monarch further added to the popular renown of Highland soldiers.¹³⁷

Almost forty years of peace in Europe was brought to an end by the conflict with Russia in the Crimea between 1854 and 1856. Although the 93rd Regiment had seen action in Canada during the rebellion of 1839 and the 78th had served in India, none of the Highland battalions had been involved in a major battle between 1815 and 1854.¹³⁸ The Highland regiments were prominent in the action in the Crimea, where the 93rd were famously described by William Russell in *The Times* as 'a thin red streak tipped with a line of steel' at the battle of Balaclava in 1854.¹³⁹ The war brought soldiers' issues to the attention of people at home, with increased newspaper coverage reflecting huge public interest. The Crimean War brought to the fore both the service conditions of soldiers and the shortcomings of their commanding officers. Florence Nightingale became a national heroine, bringing the suffering of injured troops to the attention of the public. Knowledge of the conditions they had to endure, coupled with numerous reports of their heroism in battle, added to the admiration with which the Highland regiments were held at home.¹⁴⁰

The Indian Mutiny (1857) began less than fourteen months after the cessation of hostilities in the Crimea. During the mutiny, several Scottish regiments served in

¹³² 535 officers and men of the 78th were lost in India due to cholera. Henderson, *Highland Soldier*, p. 35.

¹³³ Spiers, 'Scots and the Wars of Empire', pp. 464-65.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 467.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 465.

¹³⁶ Wood, *The Scottish Soldier*, p. 54.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹³⁸ Henderson, *Highland Soldier*, p. 129.

¹³⁹ 'The war in the Crimea - from our special correspondent - Heights before Sebastopol', *The Times* 14 November 1854.

¹⁴⁰ Spiers, *The Scottish Soldier and Empire*, p. 5; Spiers, *Army and Society, 1815-1914* (London and New York, 1980), pp.116-117.

India, and Highland soldiers again emerged from the conflict as national heroes. One of the most enduring legends to emerge from the conflict was of the bagpipes of the 78th Highlanders sounding to reassure the garrison at Lucknow that help was on the way.¹⁴¹ The image of the Highland soldier as the epitome of Victorian soldiery was forged during these two conflicts in the Crimea and India. Highlanders became increasingly favoured in newspaper accounts and visual depictions of war. Some Highland soldiers contributed to this phenomenon by co-operating with war-artists, photographers, correspondents and battle painters.¹⁴² One hundred years after the outset of their defining period of service in the Seven Years War, the Gaels had become active participants in the construction of their own military myth.¹⁴³

Sketches, Accounts and Observations: Discerning the Military Impact in Primary Sources

The centrality of the military as an influence on Highland society is reflected in primary sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. David Stewart of Garth's (1768-1829) *Sketches of the character, manners, and present state of the Highlanders of Scotland* (1822) is perhaps the most valuable and comprehensive source with regards to the military service of the Gaels during the period. Consisting of two volumes, each more than five hundred pages long, Stewart's substantial thesis was immediately successful upon publication in 1822 and was read widely. Nothing similar had been published previously; popular books on the Highlands until this time had consisted mainly of travellers' accounts and works such as James Macpherson's *The Poems of Ossian* (1760-65) and Walter Scott's *Waverley* novels, the first of which was published in 1814. What distinguished the *Sketches* from earlier accounts was its broad scope; the work operated on an historical, sociological and discursive level. Stewart's aims in the work can be surmised as: to describe the character of the Highlander, past and present; to highlight detrimental influences on that character; and to provide a historical account of the Highlanders' role in the British army. As a highly decorated former officer of the Black Watch, who came from within the Gaelic community in Scotland, Stewart was well placed for this task and drew on his extensive knowledge and experience in compiling the *Sketches*.¹⁴⁴ Crucially, he was able to

¹⁴¹ Wood, *The Scottish Soldier*, p. 62.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁴³ Heather Streets has shown how Highland soldiers continued to engage with popular images of their service into the late nineteenth century. Streets, 'Identity in the Highland Regiments', p. 226.

¹⁴⁴ David Stewart of Garth was born in Kynachan, Perthshire in 1768. At seventeen years of age, he became an ensign in the 42nd regiment, The Black Watch. He served initially in Flanders with the Duke of York before travelling with an expeditionary force under Sir Ralph Abercromby to the West Indies in 1796. Having been awarded the rank of captain in 1800, he was sent as part of the expedition led by Abercromby to Egypt in 1801. Stewart was severely wounded at Alexandria which prevented him from taking an active role in the rest of this campaign. He was promoted to colonel in 1814 and was placed on half pay in 1815. He was involved in founding the Celtic Society of

draw on the accounts of former soldiers with long records of service, and as such was able to tap into direct regimental experience from years prior to his own with the Black Watch.

The Gàidhealtachd as presented in Stewart's work is distinctive and apart from other parts of Britain - a place once inhabited by a noble race, now in a state of decline, due, substantially, to its mismanagement by the state and landlords. Stewart sees the clan system as having produced a unique and independent people, whose moral conduct was formed by the structure of their society. He writes:

The division of the people into clans and tribes, under separate chiefs, whose influence remained undiminished till after the year 1748, constitutes the most remarkable circumstance in their political condition, and leads directly to the origin of many of their peculiar institutions, sentiments, and customs.¹⁴⁵

Stewart deals extensively with clan warfare and its effects in the opening chapters of the *Sketches*. He argues that Highland society and its inherent state of warfare produced a people particularly well-suited to military endeavour. While he points to the fact that warfare could perpetuate 'a system of hostility [which] encouraged the cultivation of the military at the expense of social virtues', he is clear in his admiration of a social system that led to obedience and order. He states that the 'manners and dispositions, both of the people and their superiors, furnish a ready explanation of the zeal with which the former followed their chiefs, protected their persons, and supported the honour of their country and name'.¹⁴⁶

Although Stewart sees continuity in military terms, he is fully aware of changes in social structure and land use in the Highlands (he was a landlord himself, albeit on a small scale and one who struggled financially) and writes passionately about their effects. His analysis of the Highland Clearances was highly controversial at the time of the *Sketches*' publication, as he clearly expressed his opposition to the policies of Highland proprietors. In the opening paragraphs of the second part of the *Sketches*, the present is contrasted unambiguously with the past:

A great, and in some respects a lamentable change has been produced; and the original of the picture which I have attempted to draw is suffering daily

Edinburgh in 1820 and assisted Walter Scott in George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822. Stewart was promoted to Major General in 1825, and four years later became Governor of St. Lucia. He died on 18 December 1829, probably as a result of malaria. E.M. Lloyd and R.T. Stearn, 'Stewart, David, of Garth (1772-1829)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26469?docPos=1> [accessed February 08, 2014]; J.I. Robertson, *The First Highlander: Major General David Stewart of Garth: 1768-1829* (East Lothian, 1998).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

obliterations, and is, in fact, rapidly disappearing. The romance and chivalry of the Highlanders are gone. The voice of the bard has long been silent, and poetry, tradition and song, are vanishing away.¹⁴⁷

One of the most radical features of Stewart's writing was that he highlighted the damage caused to the relationship between the people and their superiors, noting that 'a striking feature in the revolutionised Highland character is the comparative indifference of the people towards chiefs and landlords.'¹⁴⁸ More than just indicating this change in relationship, Stewart is explicit in assigning blame for it to landlords and their agents. He expresses doubt as to the benefits of improvement by Highland landlords and makes direct and damning reference to the actions and subsequent trial of Patrick Sellar in the Sutherland estate.¹⁴⁹ One of the main reasons for his opposition is that changes in society would have a knock-on effect on the capability and availability of the Gaels as soldiers, and he expresses his exasperation at the counter-productivity of measures to weaken the country's military strength: 'As if it could ever be for the well-being of any state to deteriorate the character of, or wholly to extirpate a brave loyal and moral people - its best support in war, and the most orderly, contented and economical in peace'.¹⁵⁰ As such, Stewart shared a belief widely held by Gaelic poets of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who often point to the fact that changes in land use were depriving the British state of a significant source of military power in the Gaels.

As previously mentioned, the one context in which Stewart sees continuity - as well as the opportunity for revival - between the Gaelic world of centuries past and that of the nineteenth century is in the regiments of the British army. Here there is an opportunity for Highlanders to behave in a manner befitting of their ancestry (so long as the right officers are in place):

A Highland regiment, to be orderly and well-disciplined, ought to be commanded by men who are capable of appreciating their character, directing their passions and prejudices, and acquiring their entire confidence and affection.¹⁵¹

He considers it of equal importance that Highlanders fight alongside one another, and there are numerous allusions to the negative effects that interaction with soldiers from other societies could have. Stewart's account of the Black Watch and other regiments' service is romantic and sentimental, yet it is also shot through with levels of detail that make it an indispensable account of Highland soldiers' service during the period.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 162. See also: Robertson, *The First Highlander*, pp. 129-133.

¹⁵⁰ Stewart, *Sketches*, vol. 1, p. 140.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

The prevalence and impact of the British military in the Gàidhealtachd in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries is also reflected in the ‘Old’ (1791-99) and ‘New’ (1834-45) Statistical Accounts of Scotland. The scope and depth of the Statistical Accounts provides an invaluable insight into the influence of the military across the geographic area of the Highlands. The accounts also illuminate the response to, and repercussions of, military service across the class divide in the Highlands during the period. The Old Statistical Account (OSA) was compiled between 1791 and 1799, and its records therefore take in the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars and the first six years of that conflict. As has been shown, this was a period when recruitment levels remained high in the Gàidhealtachd, with approximately a fifth of the entire population of the region serving in the military between 1793 and 1815.¹⁵² It is therefore unsurprising that military concerns feature prominently in the reports of the OSA with ministers often commenting on the suitability of their parishioners for military service. This is one of the most frequently-made observations in sections on ‘character’ in the OSA. Some accounts portray a people suited and willing to take part in military service, such as the following record from Wick in 1799:

This parish, and the county in general, is justly characterized for its martial spirit. It has proved an excellent nursery for soldiers and sailors. No where have recruiting officers been more successful. Want of manufactures and other means of employment, make young men, who are averse to labour in husbandry, and have no good way of livelihood, readily betake themselves to the army and navy, more especially when a Highland corps is to be raised.¹⁵³

It is perhaps telling, however, that readiness to take part in military service is noted in the context of a ‘want of manufactures and other means of employment’ and men who ‘have no good way of livelihood’. This highlights the fact that recruiters often had the luxury of appealing to a potential workforce for whom other opportunities were scant. Stewart of Garth had evinced a society in which the Gaels were both temperamentally suited and willing to take part in service, but a more nuanced picture emerges from the Statistical Accounts. The entry from Blair Atholl in 1799, for instance, makes a distinction between the inclination of Highland gentry and ‘common people’ to embark on military careers:

The gentlemen are tall and handsome, and fond of a military life; and, though the common people have learned to despise a soldier’s pay, and to hate a life of servitude, yet they have still a deal of the martial spirit remaining, and make very good soldiers, when once they undertake it; being firm, hardy, and brave, though not generally tall.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Mackillop, ‘Continuity, Coercion and Myth’, p. 34.

¹⁵³ J. Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland* (1799), vol. 10, Wick, p. 29. Hereafter: OSA

¹⁵⁴ OSA, vol. 2, p. 471.

This account clearly implies that some people in Blair Atholl in the 1790s were averse to military service, and that they resorted to a soldier's life rather than embraced it. The contrast is clear with regards to the Blair Atholl 'gentlemen', who are 'fond of a military life'. It is perhaps unsurprising to see this difference in reaction towards the military from different sections of Highland society, as for 'gentlemen' the army was often replete with opportunity. While military service was undoubtedly of importance to the Highland economy, which brought opportunities to some, for the 'common people' it could also be an arduous and poorly paid profession, which took them at long distances away from their homes and families.

In sharp contrast to Stewart of Garth's thesis in the *Sketches*, the *OSA* also contains references to communities displaying active aversion to military service between 1791 and 1799. A record from the village of Caputh, in Garth's own county of Perth, notes that 'the people here have an indifference, and even a dislike, both to a seafaring and a military life'¹⁵⁵, while a record for the nearby village of Moulin states that 'the people have no idea of a seafaring life, and are very averse to a military one'.¹⁵⁶ Similar accounts can be found across the Gàidhealtachd in the *OSA*, for instance in Ross and Cromarty, where the community in Uig, Lewis, is found to be 'very economical, and...not fond of a military life';¹⁵⁷ and Argyll, where the people of Kilmartin 'are little attached to a military life'.¹⁵⁸ It should be noted that accounts can also be quoted from areas throughout the Highlands that allude to a willingness to take part in military service. Nonetheless, it seems clear that by 1799 disillusion with and suspicion of the military as an employer was not uncommon in Highland communities.¹⁵⁹

As has been shown, recruitment levels were significantly lower in the decades following the Napoleonic Wars, and it is therefore unsurprising that neither enthusiasm for, nor active opposition to, military service feature heavily in the New Statistical Account (*NSA*) (1834-45). In sharp contrast to the earlier Statistical Account, the reports here contain no references to communities displaying an active aversion to military service. Published in 1845, thirty years after the Napoleonic Wars had come to an end and almost ten years before the British army

¹⁵⁵ *OSA*, vol. 2, p. 507.

¹⁵⁶ *OSA*, vol. 5, p. 67.

¹⁵⁷ *OSA*, vol. 19, p. 288.

¹⁵⁸ *OSA*, vol. 8, p. 106.

¹⁵⁹ Prebble has noted the extent to which breakdown in trust between soldiers and their commanding officers often led to mutiny in the Highland Regiments. For instance, when the 77th Regiment (Atholl Highlanders) returned from their service in North America in 1783, they were informed that they would be dispatched to India, when the original terms of service had been that they would return to Scotland after serving on the continent. The ring-leaders of the resulting mutiny were hanged and the rest of the regiment was marched back to Scotland. That such instances had a bearing on how military service was viewed in Highland communities is, of course, most likely. Prebble, *Mutiny*, pp. 211-259. For information about the 1793 'Cnoc a' Champ' mutiny in Uig, Lewis, in the 78th Regiment, see: D. MacDonald, *Lewis: A History of the Island* (Edinburgh, 1978), pp. 116-17.

would again be engaged in a conflict of comparable size in the Crimea, the *NSA* nonetheless provides a picture of a Highland society in which the military remained as an active and significant societal force. Although lower levels of recruitment meant that there was less occasion for ministers to comment on the military character of their parishioners, a passage from Moy and Dalrossie shows that the people of a particular area could still be assessed based on their military potential: 'The people are generally of a hardy constitution, and remarkably well-formed, - so that as handsome a company of soldiers could be got in this district as in any part of Scotland'.¹⁶⁰ But it is notable that military references in the *NSA* tend to focus on the service of Highland gentry rather than on the tenant class of Gaels. Highland gentry who had embarked on military careers during the Napoleonic Wars were in the prime of their careers by 1845, and the *NSA* was a perfect opportunity for ministers to record their achievements for posterity. The record for Kingussie, Inverness-shire, alludes to the numerous successful careers that members of the Highland gentry had carved out for themselves in the regiments of the British army: 'the natives of this parish, who have risen to high rank in the army, are so numerous, that it would be both tedious and useless to particularize them'.¹⁶¹ Similarly, the record for Ardchattan in Argyll notes:

The military profession appears to have for ages possessed powerful attractions for our young gentlemen; and it is a singular fact, that there were, a few years ago, three general officers, each having a regiment, who were connected with the parish.¹⁶²

The extent to which specific members of the Highland gentry had been able to rise to prominence in the army in the early decades of the nineteenth century is clearly reflected in an account from Strath, on the Isle of Skye:

Sir John Macdonald, the present Adjutant-General of Her Majesty's Forces, is son to the late Mr Macdonald, tacksman of Scalpay, an island belonging to this parish; as was also Colonel Archibald Macdonald, who held the same situation in India; and a third and no less distinguished member of the same family, Colonel Alexander Macdonald of the Horse Artillery, whose devotion to this profession, as well as his bravery at the taking of Monte Video, the Cape of Good Hope, the whole of the peninsular war, and the battle of Waterloo, repeatedly gained for him the approbation of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hill. Colonel Macdonald is now Governor of Honduras.¹⁶³

This record of three brothers serving and rising to such prominence in different branches of the British military (and in different parts of the world) reinforces the extent to which service offered significant and varied opportunity for advancement

¹⁶⁰ *The New Statistical Account for Scotland* (1845), vol. 14, Moy and Dalarossie, p. 107. Hereafter: *NSA*.

¹⁶¹ *NSA*, vol. 14, p. 70.

¹⁶² *NSA*, vol. 7, p. 491.

¹⁶³ *NSA*, vol. 14, p. 307.

for members of the Highland gentry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁶⁴ In contrast, an account from Durness in Sutherland alludes to a lack of military opportunity for young people from the tenant class of Gaels compared to earlier years:

It could not be expected that a people who had led a chiefly pastoral life were to be so soon reconciled to the change which placed them in crowded hamlets upon the shore. The manufacture of kelp, herring-fishing, road-making, and other occasional sources of industry during the summer and harvest, have, however, called out the latent industry of the young; but, as there has been, of late years, no encouragement to enter the army, and as they have no opportunity of learning trades at home, they are tempted to marry too young.¹⁶⁵

The impact of the military on population levels is also reflected in the Statistical Accounts. In the *OSA*, published in 1799, the record for Kiltarn in Ross and Cromarty outlines the massive impact the Seven Years War had on population in the area, due to hundreds of young people leaving to serve in the military:

That martial spirit which has been a distinguishing characteristic of the Munros, led persons of every rank and description in this parish to fly to arms as soon as the trumpet sounded the alarm of war. By this means the flower of the young men of Kiltarn were scattered abroad in all the countries that have been the seat of war during that period [...] It is no wonder, then, that a country which for a long time had been a nursery for the army, should, in a couple of years, decrease considerably in population.¹⁶⁶

This passage also makes clear the global scale of military service for Gaels, with young men from this community serving in Europe, the East and West Indies, and North America. The minister indicates that population numbers recovered at the conflict's end: 'at the peace 1763, such numbers, both of officers and private soldiers, flocked home to their native country, that the population is sensibly increased since that period.'¹⁶⁷ Records from the *NSA* reveal that population levels continued to fluctuate as a result of returning soldiers in Highland communities in the years after the Napoleonic Wars. An account from Inverness notes:

¹⁶⁴ Sir John Macdonald (d. 1850) was a prominent figure in the British army during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and the early decades of the nineteenth century. He was an aide to the Duke of Wellington and became Adjutant General of the British forces in 1830. Archibald Macdonald (d. 1827) was Adjutant General of the British Forces in India. The third brother, Alexander Macdonald, was a Lieutenant-general with the royal artillery, and died in 1854. The Macdonalds are reported to have had a family connection to Flora MacDonald. H.M. Chichester, 'Macdonald, John (d. 1850)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1990*, ed. L. Stephen and S. Lee (Oxford, 1885), vol. 35, pp. 42-3.

¹⁶⁵ *NSA*, vol. 15, p. 97.

¹⁶⁶ *OSA*, vol. 1, p. 271.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

The cause of increase of population at the last census was the return of pensioners, who were serving in the army, during the late war, and the continuance of young men in the country, on account of the difficulty of procuring employment elsewhere since the termination of the war.¹⁶⁸

These returning soldiers became a social class in themselves, and were in many cases awarded pensions, which set them aside from others in their communities. In assessing the 'character of the people' of Ardersier, near the location of Fort George, Inverness-shire, in the *NSA*, the minister divides the people into three classes: 'fishers', 'the peasantry and mechanics', and 'Chelsea pensioners'. Of the latter group, the minister states:

Next, the Chelsea Pensioners, many of whom are located in the parish, having married natives when stationed with their regiments in the Fort, and having been swayed by female influence in the choice of a local habitation. This class, though there are many honourable exceptions, is rather improvident and intemperate.¹⁶⁹

The minister also notes that 'from the example of military habits, instances of dissipation were not uncommon' among the other 'classes' of people.¹⁷⁰ The significant military influence resulting from close proximity to Fort George was evidently regarded in a negative light by the minister who compiled this report, and his account is a fascinating insight into the way in which former soldiers fitted into the social structure of Highland communities. The demographic impact of military service is further reflected in the entry from Inverness in the *NSA* which alludes to the gender imbalance caused by emigration and the military:

The average number of children in each family is about 4, and, from the emigration of males abroad in quest of occupations, and their fondness of a military life, there is and it is thought there always has been, a considerable excess of females resident in this parish.¹⁷¹

Taken as a whole, the evidence of the *OSA* and *NSA* reinforces the centrality of military service to the lives of Gaels during the period. While the military naturally exerted a greater influence in Gaelic society during the years of major conflicts such as the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, its influence remained significant in the relatively peaceful early decades of the nineteenth century.

Like the *Old Statistical Account*, Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk's (1771-1820), *Observations on the present state of the Highlands of Scotland, with a view of the causes and probable consequences of emigration* (1806) was published during the years of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. This treatise argues for

¹⁶⁸ It seems likely that the census referred to here is the census of 1841. *NSA*, vol. 14, Inverness, p. 90.

¹⁶⁹ *NSA*, vol 14, p. 474.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

¹⁷¹ *NSA*, vol 14, p. 18.

increased emigration from the Highlands, and, given the contemporary military context, is understandably cautious in dealing with the potential military impact of this emigration. In a section devoted specifically to the Highland regiments, Selkirk addresses this issue directly, stating that ‘among the effects of emigration there is none that has been more universally lamented than the loss of that valuable supply of soldiers, which the public service has hitherto derived from the Highlands’.¹⁷² Selkirk’s aim with the publication was to encourage emigration from the Gàidhealtachd, and while he is careful to acknowledge the importance of the Highland regiments and the potential impact that emigration could have on these, he nonetheless argues that improvement and the passage of time has broken the once direct link between the regiments and the martial society of the clans. He therefore argues against exceptionalism in the case of the Highland regiments:

The well-known military character of the Highlanders may thus be naturally accounted for: but the peculiarities that have been described may all be traced to the recent feudal state of the country: and in proportion as this has been supplanted by the progress of a commercial system, the Highland regiments have approached to a similarity with the other regiments in the service.¹⁷³

Selkirk suggests that a new approach is required that accommodates the current state of the Highlands:

If the military character of the Highlanders is to be preserved, it must be founded on principles different from those that have hitherto operated; and while the change in the state of the country goes on without interruption, no remedy can be expected from compulsory measures against emigration.¹⁷⁴

Selkirk later published a pamphlet that proposed a universal recruiting system, drawing equally on men from across the United Kingdom. He once again made the case that the Highlands should be treated as a military reserve in the same way that other parts of the United Kingdom were.¹⁷⁵

As an ardent supporter of emigration, Selkirk had a clear agenda in questioning the military reputation of the Highlands, and, taken alone, his comments on the changing nature of the military character of the Highlands appear opportunistic. However, given that ministers compiling the Statistical Account were reporting active aversion to military service during the 1790s, it can be seen that authority figures in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were beginning to question the supposed naturally martial character of the Highlanders. And it is

¹⁷² T. Douglas, *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands with a view of the causes and probable consequences of emigration* (Edinburgh, 1806), p. 63.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁷⁵ T. Douglas, *On the Necessity of a More Effectual System of National Defence and the Means of Establishing the Permanent Security of the Kingdom* (London, 1808).

notable that a contemporary of Selkirk's, James Macdonald, who published an account in 1811 of agriculture in the Western Isles that sought to retain population and increase recruitment levels, conceded that many in the region were actively opposed to military service. Of the tenantry in the Western Isles, Macdonald wrote:

They have no longer any predilection for the military life, on the contrary, their abhorrence of it is deep rooted and inveterate. This is the fact, whatever may be the cause of which we may impute it. The same antipathy exists against the naval service of their country: so that we need not look for any voluntary levies from these isles.¹⁷⁶

As has been shown, there was a tradition of resistance to military service during actual hostilities in Highland communities.¹⁷⁷ In 1848, the minister Robert Somers, though not himself a parish minister in the area, recounted from folk history the anti-recruitment sentiment in Blair Atholl at the time of the American Revolutionary War (1775-1883). He describes how John Murray, the Duke of Atholl's (1755-1830) promise of land in return for military service was rejected by the tenantry in the area:

Perpetual possession of their lands, at the then existing rents, was promised them, if they would only raise a contingent equal to a man from each family. Some consented, but the majority, with a praiseworthy resolution not to be dragged at the tail of a Chief into a war of which they knew neither the beginning nor the end, refused.¹⁷⁸

Somers goes on to detail the measures employed by the Duke to secure the military service of his people, and his treatment of them thereafter:

By impressment and violence the regiment was at length raised; and when peace was proclaimed, instead of restoring the soldiers to their friends and their homes, the Duke, as if he had been a trafficker in slaves, was only prevented from selling them to the East India Company by the rising mutiny of the regiment !¹⁷⁹

Military rebellion was not confined to mutinies within the regiments; it also existed in Highland communities, independent of the regimental system. While actively anti-authoritarian acts were by no means widespread, there are glimpses of the existence of an anti-authoritarian mood in Highland communities, such as in

¹⁷⁶ J. Macdonald, *A General View of the Agriculture of the Hebrides or Western Isles of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1811), p. 552.

¹⁷⁷ MacDonald, Lewis: *A History of the Island*, pp. 117-18; Prebble, *Mutiny*, 211-59.

¹⁷⁸ R., Somers, *Letters from the Highlands; or, the Famine of 1847* (Glasgow, 1848), pp. 22-3

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23

reports of handbills and posters of Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1791) circulating in Stornoway in 1793.¹⁸⁰

Another first-hand account of the impact of military service in a community in the Highlands can be found in the work of Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus (1797-1886). Grant spent large parts of her childhood in Rothiemurchus, Aviemore, where her father, John Grant (1774-1848) served as Lieutenant-Colonel of the Rothiemurchus Volunteers between 1797 until 1815. Her widely-read biography, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady* (1898), includes an account of the constitution of the Rothiemurchus Volunteers in the summer of 1809:

There was a Rothiemurchus company and an Invereschie company, and I think a Strathspey company [...] There were officers from all districts certainly [...] Most of the elders had served in the regular army, and had retired in middle life upon their half-pay to little Highland farms in Strathspey and Badenoch, by the names of which they were familiarly known as Sluggan, Tullochgorm, Ballintomb, Kinchurdy, Bhealiott.¹⁸¹

Grant's account further highlights the impact that the military exerted at a community level in the Gàidhealtachd. This was a period during which there was a high threat of invasion from Napoleon Bonaparte's France, and Grant portrays the mood (or at least her own perception of it) in a Highland community at the time of this invasion crisis, which is worth quoting in full:¹⁸²

I have heard my uncle Lewis and Mr Cameron say there was little trouble in drilling the men, they had their hearts in the work; and I have heard my father say that the habits of cleanliness, and habits of order, and the sort of waking up that accompanied it, had done more real good to the people than could have been achieved by many years of less exciting progress. So we owe Napoleon thanks. It was the terror of his expected invasion that roused this patriotic fever amongst our mountains, where, in spite of their distance from the coast, inaccessibility, and other advantages of a hilly position, the alarm was so great that every preparation was now in train for repelling the enemy.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ K. J. Logue, *Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815* (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 119.

¹⁸¹ E. Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady, Volume 1*, (Edinburgh, 1898), p. 88.

¹⁸² That there was perhaps another, more welcoming mood in Highland communities as regards potential invasion from the French can be discerned from isolated sources. See, for instance, Allan MacDougall's 'Òran do na Cìobaraibh Gallda' ('*Song to the Lowland Shepherds*'), where he hopes that the French will come over and behead the Lowlanders. Dùghallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhelach*, p. 30; Meek, *Tuath is Tighearna*, p. 48. See also: H. Cheape, 'Song on the Lowland Shepherds: Popular Reactions to the Highland Clearances', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 15 (1995), pp. 85-100.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 89-90.

Her description of the ‘alarm’ in Highland communities at the threat of invasion is also reflected in Gaelic poetry dealing with this subject, which will be considered later in this thesis.¹⁸⁴

Conclusion

That the military was a major influence on Highland society during the period covered in this thesis is clear. Through recruitment, active service, and the widespread influence of regiments and fencible units in the Gàidhealtachd, military service entered into and affected Highlanders’ lives in manifold ways. The recent situating of the military as a key area of Highland historiography is supported by the poetic record, and in order to consider this poetry in depth, it will first be necessary to explore the literary context of this verse in the Gaelic tradition, which is the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁸⁴ See: Chapter 6, pp. 172-181.

Chapter 3: Literary Context

The hundred years under consideration in this thesis, from 1756 to 1856, cover two periods generally considered to be distinct from one another in the Gaelic poetic tradition (with some qualification as regards poets who spanned the two periods): the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁵ Demarcation of periods in Gaelic literary history is - as demarcation of periods in literary history must always be - problematic, and it can be questioned what value any such demarcation has in a study concerned primarily with a specific subject area, as is the case here. Nevertheless, it will serve as useful context to provide a general outline of critical thinking on the period - or periods - covered in this thesis, and to examine associated developments, such as the growth and impact of Gaelic publishing in the post-Culloden period. While a broad assessment of the Gaelic poetic tradition is outwith the remit of this thesis, some general comments about its development up until the eighteenth century and an outline of the ubiquitous 'panegyric code' of praise will be provided as context for the following chapters. Reference will be made throughout to the presence and development of poetry on military themes in the Gaelic poetic tradition up until the period under consideration here.

From Classical to Vernacular

In his highly influential 1918 work, *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig*, W.J. Watson divided Gaelic poetry between 'classical poetry' on one side and 'modern poetry' on the other, positing that 'Gaelic poetry, both in Scotland and in Ireland, falls into two great divisions, the older, or classic, poetry, and the modern.'¹⁸⁶ Watson used the term 'classic' in reference to the professional verse of the learned class of poets who formed part of the ruling elite in Gaelic society from the Middle Ages until the Early Modern period. With regards to this poetry's dates, Watson states that 'the classic poetry, so far as it has come down to us, is more or less continuous from about A.D. 800 or earlier to about 1730'.¹⁸⁷ What Watson called 'modern poetry' is commonly referred to today as vernacular poetry, referring to poetry composed in the demotic language spoken by Scottish Gaels, as opposed to the classical tradition, which had been based on the highly literate, poetic language shared between Scotland and Ireland. With regards to the period of the vernacular poetry, Watson states:

Modern Gaelic poetry, as we know it, starts from about 1600; its most fruitful period is from 1640 to about 1830, a period truly remarkable for the number of composers and the quantity and excellence of their output.

¹⁸⁵ See for instance: Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*; D.S. Thomson (ed.), *Gaelic Poetry in the eighteenth century: a bilingual anthology* (Aberdeen, 1993); Black, *An Lasair*; Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*.

¹⁸⁶ Watson, *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig*, p. xvii.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

There was never, perhaps, a finer manifestation of national genius than was given by Gaelic Scotland in those two centuries.¹⁸⁸

Since Watson, there has been broad agreement about the dates of the classic and vernacular periods in Gaelic poetry, with the former seeing its high-age from c.1200 to c.1650, and the latter coming to the fore about 1600, and continuing into the work of the ‘traditional’ Gaelic poets of the twentieth century.¹⁸⁹ There was also an earlier vernacular tradition that had co-existed with the classical, in the same way that the two traditions continued to be concurrent with one another in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, until the death of the last practitioner of classical Gaelic poetry, Niall MacMhuirich, in 1726. There was a significant degree of overlap between the traditions in terms of poetic convention, particularly in the rhetoric of the ‘panegyric code’ of praise, which will be considered in more detail below. The warrior-based society of the clans was the foundation of both poetic traditions, and warfare was naturally a major theme in the poetry. Numerous pieces from the classical tradition can be cited as early examples of war poetry, such as ‘Dál Chabhlaigh ar Cháisteal Suibhne’ (*An Arranging of a Fleet against Castle Sween*) by Artúr Dall MacGúrcaigh from 1310 during the Wars of Independence; ‘Brostughadh-Catha Chlann Domhnaill, Là Chatha Gharbhaich’, *The Harlaw Brosnachadh*, by Lachlann MacMhuirich, dated to 1411; and the anonymous poem ‘Ar Sliochd Gaodhal ó Ghort Greág’ (*The Race of Gaels from the Land of Greece*), often seen as being related to the Battle of Flodden in 1513, though possibly dating from an earlier period in the sixteenth century.¹⁹⁰

The Vernacular Tradition: 1600-1745

With the decline of the classical tradition in the seventeenth century, vernacular poetry became the dominant form. The period c.1600 to c.1745 can be seen as the first of two ‘high-ages’ of the vernacular tradition in Gaelic poetry, and a substantial and varied corpus of verse is extant from this period. Derick Thomson has called the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries an age of ‘clan and politics’ in Gaelic poetry, and while there are many poems composed during the period not covered by these two words, they do broadly cover an extensive range of the verse. The major poets of the period included Iain Lom (John MacDonald, c.1624-c.1710), poet of the MacDonalds of Keppoch, Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh (Mary MacLeod, c.1615-c.1707) and Ruairidh Mac Mhuirich, An Clàrsair Dall

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

¹⁸⁹ See for example: Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*; D. S. Thomson, ‘The MacMhuirich bardic family’, in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 43 (1960-63), pp. 276-304; R. Black, ‘The Genius of Cathal Mac Mhuirich’, in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 50 (1976-78), pp. 327-366; W. Gillies, ‘Alexander Carmichael and Clann Mhuirich’, in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. 20 (2000), pp. 1-66; McLeod and Bateman, *Duanaire na Sracaire*.

¹⁹⁰ McLeod and Bateman, *Duanaire na Sracaire* p. 238.

(Roderick Morison, c.1656-c.1713), both associated with the Macleods of Dunvegan, and the MacLean poets Eachann Bacach (Hector MacLean, c.1650-?) and Mairearad Nighean Lachlainn (Margaret MacLean (?), c.1660-post 1751).¹⁹¹ Military campaigns feature prominently in the poetry of this period, such as in Iain Lom's 1645 poem, 'Là Inbhir Lochaidh' ('*The Battle of Inverlochy*'), from the period of the Scottish Civil War (1644-1645), and the Mull poet, Iain Mac Ailein's (John MacLean, c.1655-1741) account of the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689, 'Coille Chragaidh' ('*Killiecrankie*'), composed during the first Jacobite Rebellion (1689-92).¹⁹² Iain Lom is the prime exemplar of the poet as journalistic observer in the Gaelic poetic tradition - as Derick Thomson has said of his poem on the Battle of Inverlochy: 'The description is worthy of a skilled war-correspondent in our journalistic age, but it has a controlled venom, an unholy exultation, that would rarely be met with in our modern press.'¹⁹³ This role would be taken up by various poets in the period under consideration in this thesis, a notable example being the Morar poet, Alasdair MacFhionghain (Alexander MacKinnon, 1770-1814), who composed detailed and vivid poems about his service in the French Revolutionary Wars.

During the civil wars of the mid-seventeenth century, loyalty to the rightful king became a powerful and prevalent motif in Gaelic poetry, and this was most fully expressed in the Jacobite verse of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁹⁴ After the accession of William and Mary in 1688, pro-Jacobite verse became widespread and it is notable that very little anti-Jacobite material has survived from the period (reflecting the predilections of collectors and editors of verse).¹⁹⁵ That such verse existed, particularly in connection with the Campbells, seems most likely. Examples of early Jacobite material in reaction to William and Mary's accession include Iain Lom's 'Òran air Rìgh Uilleam agus Banrigh Màiri' ('*Song to King William and Queen Mary*'), and the same poet's 'Cath Raon Ruairidh' ('*The Battle of Killiecrankie*') and John MacLean's 'Coille Chragaidh' ('*Killiecrankie*'), both on the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689.¹⁹⁶ The Jacobite rebellion of 1715 was accompanied by an extensive range of propaganda poems, such as 'Òran nam Fineachan' ('*Song of the Clans*') by Iain Dubh Mac Iain Mhic Ailein (John Macdonald, c.1665-c.1725) and 'Do dh'Arm Rìgh Sheumais' ('*To King James's Army*') by Sìleas na Ceapaich (Sìleas MacDonald, c.1660-1729).¹⁹⁷ The

¹⁹¹ A.M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Òrain Iain Luim* (Edinburgh, 1964); C. Ó Baoill (ed.), *Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh: Song-maker of Skye and Berneray* (Glasgow, 2014); W. Matheson (ed.), *The Blind Harper: The songs of Roderick Morison and his music* (Edinburgh, 1970); C. Ó Baoill (ed.), *Eachann Bacach and Other Maclean Poets* (Edinburgh, 1979); C. Ó Baoill (ed.), *Mairghread nighean Lachlainn, song-maker of Mull* (Glasgow, 2009).

¹⁹² Ó Baoill (ed.), *Gàir nan Clàrsach*, pp. 106-12 & 184-89.

¹⁹³ D.S. Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, p. 120.

¹⁹⁴ A. Gunderloch, 'Scottish Gaelic Poetry to c. 1745' in T. Koch (ed.) *Celtic Culture* (Oxford, 2006), p. 1578.

¹⁹⁵ A. Gunderloch, 'Jacobite Poetry' in *Celtic Culture*, p. 1032.

¹⁹⁶ MacKenzie, *Òrain Iain Luim*, pp. 202-13, 190-97; Ó Baoill, *Gàir nan Clàrsach*, pp. 184-190.

¹⁹⁷ Black, *An Lasair*, pp. 38-47; C. Ó Baoill (ed.), *Bàrdachd Shilis na Ceapaich* (Edinburgh, 1972), pp. 44-49.

largest collection of Jacobite verse relates to the rebellion of 1745-46, although some of this was composed in retrospect. The dominant poetic voice of this rebellion is the Morar poet, Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (Alexander MacDonald, c.1698-c.1770), who played an active part in the rebellion as a captain in Charles Edward Stuart's Jacobite army.¹⁹⁸ Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair composed propagandist verse in anticipation of the rebellion; he satirised its opponents and praised its leaders, and composed a series of poems after Culloden that show he expected another rebellion to take place imminently. Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's well-attested influence on Gaelic poets who followed him was substantial in stylistic and thematic terms, but in this context it can be seen as equally significant that this towering figure in Gaelic poetry of the eighteenth century was an active participant in a large-scale military campaign.¹⁹⁹ Poems on specific battles feature prominently in the Jacobite material, such as the poems on Killiecrankie already mentioned; a sequence of three poems attributed to Sìleas na Ceapaich on the Battle of Sheriffmuir in 1715; Duncan Bàn Macintyre's 'Òran do Bhlàr na h-Eaglaise Brice' ('*A Song on the Battle of Falkirk*') about the Battle of Falkirk in 1746; and the Badenoch poet Iain Ruadh Stiùbhart's (John Roy Stewart's, 1700-1752) poems on the Battle of Culloden, 'Latha Chùil Lodair' ('*Culloden Day*') and 'Òran Eile air Latha Chùil Lodair' ('*Another Song on Culloden Day*').²⁰⁰

It is clear that poetry that supported and reported upon large-scale military campaigns had been an integral part of the Gaelic poetic tradition from its earliest period. Poetry related to large-scale, national conflict had been particularly prevalent in the hundred years between the Battle of Inverlochy in 1645 and the outbreak of the last Jacobite rebellion in 1745. At the beginning of the period under consideration in this thesis, figures such as Iain Lom and Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair stood as commanding recent exemplars of the poet's role in Gaelic society as commentator on military conflict. This well-established military tradition was naturally accessed and developed by poets from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, when the regiments replaced the clans as epicentres of military employment and various countries across the world replaced the Gàidhealtachd as potential fields of battle.

¹⁹⁸ For more on Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, see for instance: Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*; R. Black, *Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: the Ardnamurchan Years* (Isle of Coll, 1986); D.S. Thomson, *Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: his Political Poetry* (Inverness, 1990); D. S. Thomson (ed.), *Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: Selected Poems* (Edinburgh, 1996); C. Dressler and D.U. Stiùbhart, *Alexander MacDonald: Bard of the Gaelic Enlightenment, A Collection of Essays on his Life and Work* (Kershader, 2012); R. Black, 'Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and the New Gaelic Poetry', in I. Brown (ed.), *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire (1707-1918)* (Edinburgh, 2016), pp. 110-24.

¹⁹⁹ Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, pp. 165-68; Black, 'Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and the New Gaelic Poetry', p. 110.

²⁰⁰ Ò Baoill, *Bàrdachd Shilis na Ceapaich*, pp. 26-31, 32-37, 38-43; Macleod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. 6; Campbell, *Highland Songs of the '45*, p. 168-76, 177-86.

The Vernacular Tradition: Post-1745

Another ‘high-age’ of the vernacular tradition can be seen to have begun in the mid-eighteenth century with the publication of Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair’s *Ais-Eiridh na Sean Chánoin Albannaich* (1751). While some of his poetry, and a few of the works of other major poets of the later eighteenth century, pre-dated the publication of the *Ais-eirigh*, it can be said that this book marked a new departure for Gaelic literature, not least in that it was the first publication of secular Gaelic poetry. Due to the removal of direct lines of poetic allegiance to patrons, other networks such as print and the interchange between English and Scots writing and Gaelic poetry became increasingly significant, and Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair’s book embodies the new horizons that were opening up for Gaelic poets during the period.²⁰¹ Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair was one of a group of six major Gaelic poets in the second half of the eighteenth century whose work at once drew from the tradition and expanded it in new directions. As well as MacDonald, this group consisted of Duncan Bàn Macintyre, Rob Donn MacAoidh (Rob Donn Mackay, 1714-78), Uilleam Ros (William Ross, 1762-c.1791), Dùghall Bochanan (Dugald Buchanan, 1716-68), and Iain Mac Fhearchair (John MacCodrum, d. 1779).²⁰²

As has previously been mentioned in the literature review, the nineteenth century has been seen as an age of declining quality and a retreat into nostalgia and romanticism in the Gaelic poetic tradition.²⁰³ While this view is not entirely without foundation, it has led to the century being unfairly judged in comparison to that which preceded it. Judged on its own terms and seen from within Gaelic society, Gaelic poetry of the nineteenth century offers a rich and varied output and is testament to a society in which the role of poetry and the poet was still highly valued. Donald Meek’s ground-breaking work on the period over the last forty years has shone a light on this too-long neglected and maligned period in Gaelic literary history. The Clearances feature prominently in nineteenth century Gaelic poetry, and emigration is another major theme. Religious poetry features heavily, while military verse also continued as a major thematic component of the verse. Far from being a disconnected era in Gaelic poetry, the nineteenth century was, in many regards, a continuation of the tradition that had preceded it.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ T.O. Clancy ‘Gaelic Literature and Scottish Romanticism’ in M. Pittock (ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism* (Edinburgh, 2011), p. 51.

²⁰² A. Macleod (ed.), *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin* (Edinburgh, 1978); A. Gunn and M. MacFarlane (eds.), *Songs and Poems by Rob Donn Mackay* (Glasgow, 1899); D.E. Meek (ed.), *Laoidhean Spioradail Dhùghaill Bhochanain* (Glasgow, 2015); W. Matheson (ed.), *Òrain Iain Mhic Fhearchair* (Edinburgh, 1938).

²⁰³ See: W.J. Watson, *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig*; D. Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*; S. MacLean, *Ris a’ Bhruthaich: The Criticism and Prose Writings of Sorley MacLean* edited by W. Gilles (Stornoway, 1985).

²⁰⁴ Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. xxv.

Gaelic Publishing in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The mid-eighteenth century also marked a new departure for Gaelic literature in terms of publishing. Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's collection of 1751 was, as has been mentioned, the first book of secular poetry in Gaelic, and it marked the emergence of a secular Gaelic publishing sector, which would grow exponentially over the next hundred years. Tens of thousands of Gaelic speakers would settle in Lowland towns and cities due to the social changes that had begun to take place in the Gàidhealtachd in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and it was in these areas that the majority of Gaelic publishing of the period took place. Described by Ronald Black as 'the powerhouse of eighteenth-century Gaelic culture', the community cèilidh-house was a vital location for the transmission and dissemination of poetry throughout the period under consideration here.²⁰⁵ But the new media made possible by the power of the printing press came to play a comparably important role, and print would eventually supplant the cèilidh as the dominant medium for the propagation of Gaelic poetry.²⁰⁶

Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's collection was followed by publications by two of the other major poets of the period. The evangelical poet, Dugald Buchanan, published his collection of spiritual songs, *Laoidhe Spioradail*, in 1767. Arguably the most significant poet after Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, Duncan Bàn Macintyre, published a collection of twenty-six poems in 1768, which was reprinted in expanded form in 1790 and then again in 1804. Collections by lesser-known poets such as Donnchadh Lodainn (Duncan Lothian, 1730-1812), Aonghas Caimbeul (Angus Campbell, fl. 1785) and Maighread Chamshron (Margaret Cameron, fl. 1785), each published in 1785, also contributed to this emergent secular Gaelic publishing world in the second half of the eighteenth century. Two significant collections appeared in the 1790s: *Orain Ghaidhealach, agus Bearla air an Eadar-Theangacha le Coinneach Mac'Coinnich, ann an Caisteal-an-Lea'uir faisg air Inernis* (1792) from the Inverness-shire poet, Coinneach MacCoinnich (Kenneth MacKenzie, 1758-c.1837); and *Orain Ghaidealach: le Ailein Dughallach, fear ciuil ann an Ionbhar Lochaidh. Maille ri Co'-Chruinneachadh Oran is Dhan, le Ughdairibh Eile* (1798) by Ailean 'Dall' Dughallach (Allan MacDougall, c.1750-1828), originally from Glencoe and latterly based in Inverlochy and employed as a poet by Alexander Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry (1773-1828).²⁰⁷ 1798 also saw the publication in Cork of the Cowal soldier-poet, Donnchadh Caimbeul's (Duncan Campbell, fl. 1798) *Nuadh Orain Ghailach* (1798). In the context of this thesis it is significant to note that all individual editions of secular Gaelic poetry published during the eighteenth century contain at least one poem on a military theme, and on a number of occasions - such as is the case with both MacKenzie and MacDougall - a significant

²⁰⁵ Black, *An Lasair*, pp. xii-xv.

²⁰⁶ R. Dunbar, 'Vernacular Gaelic Tradition' in S. Dunnigan and S. Gilbert (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh, 2013), p. 51.

²⁰⁷ Another edition of MacDougall's poetry was published in 1829: A. Dughallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhelach* (Inbhir Nis, 1829).

number of military pieces.²⁰⁸ MacDougall's collection also included thirteen poems by the Lochaber poet, Eòghann MacLachlainn (Ewen MacLachlan, 1773-1822), and a number of other poets published collections with material by others during the period.²⁰⁹ Dòmhnall MacLeòid (Donald MacLeod, 1787-1873) of Glendale, Skye, published his collection *Orain Nuadh Ghaeleach* in 1811 and included work by other poets, including a poem by the soldier-poet Alexander MacKinnon. Iain MacIlleathain, Bàrd Thighearna Chola's (John MacLean, 1787-1848) collection of 1818, *Orain Nuadh Ghaedhlach*, also included poems by MacKinnon, as well as work by other poets.

The early nineteenth century saw the appearance of two landmark Gaelic publications. The first was a translation of the Old Testament in Gaelic in 1801, adding to the New Testament, which had first been published over thirty years previously in 1767. The full Scottish Gaelic Bible was finally published by the SSPCK in 1807. The second landmark publication also appeared in 1807, when the supposed Gaelic originals of MacPherson's *Ossian* were published by the Highland Society of London. The Gaelic Bible was a major stimulus in the drive to make Gaels literate in their own language, and its influence can be attested in the fact that some seventy-five per cent of Gaelic books published between 1800 and 1880 were religious in nature.²¹⁰ The early nineteenth century saw the publication of numerous collections of spiritual verse, which was to become the largest literary sector of the century. Dugald Buchanan was a major influence on this verse and his spiritual songs were frequently reprinted.²¹¹ Secular verse also continued to be published throughout the century, and, despite the overall dominance of religious literature, the works of the secular poets were among the bestsellers of the day.²¹²

The relationship between poets and their readers was not solely negotiated through the pages of published collections.²¹³ Subscription lists began to feature in published editions of individual Gaelic poets from 1790, with the second edition of Duncan Bàn Macintyre's poetry. Although several ministers took part in the recording and publication of his poetry (as far as is known, the poet could not read or write), Macintyre was clearly an active participant in the process,

²⁰⁸ Dugald Buchanan's collection of spiritual poems can also be seen to touch on military themes in his poem 'An Gaisgeach'. Meek, *Laoidhean Spioradail Dhùghaill Bhochanain*, pp. 222-243.

²⁰⁹ Dunbar, 'Vernacular Gaelic Tradition', p. 55.

²¹⁰ D.E. Meek, 'Gaelic Printing and Publishing', in B. Bell, S. Brown and W. McDougall (eds.) *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland, Volume 3: Ambition and Industry 1800-1880* (Edinburgh, 2010) p. 110.

²¹¹ Meek, 'Gaelic Printing and Publishing', p. 110.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²¹³ See for instance: M. Byrne and S. Kidd, "'Vintners" and "Criminal Officers": Fo-sgrìobhaichean leabhraichean bàrdachd ann am meadhan na 19mh linn, [Subscribers to mid-nineteenth century poetry collections]', in *Bile ós Crannaibh: A Festschrift for William Gillies*, ed. A. Burnyeat, T.O. Clancy, W. McLeod, R. Ó Maolalaigh and D.U. Stiùbhart, (Ceann Drochaid, 2010), pp. 29-44. A. Gunderloch, 'Wives and Mothers, Sisters and Daughters: Donnchadh Bàn Macintyre's women subscribers', in N. McGuire and C. Ó Baoill (eds.), *Proceedings of Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 6* (Aberdeen, 2013), pp. 161-75; R. Black, 'Gaelic Secular Publishing' in S.W. Brown and W. McDougall (eds.), *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2012), p. 602.

demonstrating the relationship between oral and print culture in Gaelic literature at the time.²¹⁴ Subscription lists are evidence both of the audience for the finished product and those whose support was in the first place relied upon to have the book published. Military servicemen featured prominently among subscribers: there are, for example, 104 named servicemen from 1,477 subscribers listed in Macintyre's edition of 1790, while Kenneth MacKenzie's *Orain Ghaidhealach, agus Bearla air an Eadar-Theangacha* (1792) includes 46 named servicemen in its subscription list of 993 names. As a soldier in the Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles, it is unsurprising to find a predominance of servicemen in Duncan Campbell's collection, *Nuadh Orain Ghailach* (1798). His book includes a list of 501 subscribers and all but seventeen of these were soldiers. The subscriptions appear to have been gathered in Cork, where the regiment was based at the time of publication; the list is organised by regiment, name, rank and number of copies taken up.²¹⁵ A level of dependence on military patronage can also be seen in nineteenth-century works, such as Alexander Mackay's *Orain agus Dàin, ann an Gaelic agus am Beurla* (1821), where military servicemen account for 33 of the 474 subscribers, including some of the officers panegyrised by MacKay in the book. The fiscal-military state clearly fed into the work of Gaelic poets at the level of publication and this raises interesting questions around their motivations in choosing military subject matter, which will be returned to later in this thesis.

Another significant development of the later eighteenth century was the publication for the first time of anthologies of vernacular Gaelic poetry. The first anthology of vernacular poetry was *Comh-chruinneachaidh Orannaigh Gaidhealach* (1776), otherwise known as the Eigg Collection, compiled and published by Randal MacDonald (c.1728-c.1808), son of Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and tacksman on the island of Eigg. In 1786 the Perthshire publisher, John Gillies, printed the largest collection of Gaelic poetry to date, *Sean Dain, agus Orain Ghaidhealach* (1786). This consisted of 114 items and included a broad range of material, including Ossianic pieces, pieces by the major Gaelic poets of the eighteenth century, moral and religious verse, and waulking songs.²¹⁶ In the early nineteenth century several important anthologies appeared. These include the North Uist collectors, Alexander and Donald Stewart's *Cochruinneacha Taoghta de Shaothair nam Bard Gaeleach* published in 1804; the 1806 collection, *Co-chruinneachadh Nuadh de dh'Orannibh Gaidhealach*, also known as the 'Inverness Collection'; the 1813 collection gathered by Patrick Turner *Comhchruinneacha do dh' Orain Taghta, Ghaidhealach*; Peter MacFarlane's *Co'-chruinneachadh de dh' orain agus de luinneagaibh thaghta Ghaelach* (1813); and the Rev. Duncan MacCallum's 1821 collection, *Co-chruinneacha Dhan, Orain, &c, &c*. The period under consideration

²¹⁴ T.O. Clancy 'Gaelic Literature and Scottish Romanticism', p. 56.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 179. For more information on Duncan Campbell in Cork, see: J. A. Flahive, 'Duncan Campbell: A Scottish-Gaelic bard in Eighteenth-century Cork', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 113 (2008), pp. 80-9.

²¹⁶ Dunbar, 'Vernacular Gaelic Tradition', p. 57.

here also includes the publication of arguably the most influential, and certainly one of the most widely-read and owned secular Gaelic books of the nineteenth century, John MacKenzie's *Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach: The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry and the Lives of the Highland Bards* (1841). MacKenzie's collection was regularly reprinted into the twentieth century and was a key text in the formation of the Gaelic canon.²¹⁷ As has been alluded to in the literature review with reference to *Sar-obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, military material also features prominently in anthologies. For example, in the second volume of Alexander and Donald Stewart's 1804 anthology there are six military-related pieces, while Turner's collection of 1813 also contains six poems on a military theme.

Another major development of the eighteenth century was the collection of vernacular material in manuscript form. Before the eighteenth century, little collection of vernacular material took place, with the notable exception of the 'Fernaig Manuscript', compiled between 1688 and 1693.²¹⁸ An early contribution to what was to become a developed manuscript tradition came from Alexander Pope, minister of Reay, Caithness, in a manuscript dated to about 1739, which contains a number of heroic ballads. In the 1750s Donald MacNicol (1735-1802), minister of Lismore, collected a number of items which have survived in manuscript form, and between about 1750 and 1756, the Lowland schoolmaster, Jerome Stone (1727-56) collected some heroic ballads and songs from the Dunkeld area in Perthshire. Two very significant collections of vernacular material were made by two ministers: Rev. Ewen MacDiarmid (d.1801) and Rev. James McLagan (1728-1805). MacDiarmid was from Perthshire and seems to have begun collecting his work about 1762, completing it about 1770.²¹⁹ McLagan was also from Perthshire and served as chaplain to the 42nd regiment, the Black Watch, with whom he served in America, Ireland and the Isle of Man.²²⁰ McLagan had numerous correspondents in both the church and the army, and his collection includes material from a broad geographical area.²²¹ His military connections are notable in this context, and it should be stated that the aforementioned Patrick Turner had been a soldier prior to gathering the material for his collection of Gaelic poetry, published in 1813. Two other important manuscript collections were made by Dr Hector Maclean (1704-83) of Grulin, Mull, and Alexander Irvine (1773-1824), minister of little Dunkeld, Perthshire.²²² Together with the collections of Gaelic poetry mentioned above, this manuscript material forms the basis of the Gaelic poetic canon.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²¹⁹ See: D.S. Thomson, *The MacDiarmid MS Anthology* (Edinburgh, 1992)

²²⁰ D. S. Thomson, 'The McLagan MSS in Glasgow University Library', in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 58 (1992-94), pp. 406-24.

²²¹ Dunbar, 'Vernacular Gaelic Tradition', p. 53.

²²² Hogg, 'The Life and Papers of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Irvine', pp. 97-174.

The Panegyric Code

In a seminal paper to the Gaelic Society of Inverness in 1978, John MacInnes delineated the nature and function of what he termed ‘the panegyric code’ in Gaelic poetry. Focussing on the praise poetry which forms a dominant part of the Gaelic poetic tradition from the classical period down to the vernacular poets of the early modern/modern period, MacInnes presents the panegyric code as an interlocking system of imagery and rhetoric, which was drawn upon by poets to extol the heroic and social virtues of a subject of praise, usually a clan chief or warrior. MacInnes relates this to the historical experience of the Gaelic nation in Scotland, arguing that panegyric ‘is a system which reflects the entire Gaelic experience in Scotland.’²²³

Although MacInnes’s work was ground-breaking in the context of contemporary scholarship, Ronald Black has noted that it ‘represents an act not of discovery but of recovery’ and that ‘although it had never previously been laid out in writing, the principles and *topoi* of the panegyric code were well-known to the poets, patrons and ceilidh-house audiences of the past’.²²⁴ The rhetoric of praise that makes up the panegyric code was the inheritance of Gaelic poets from the Medieval period through to the twentieth century, and also from the age of the clans to the emergent Gaelic societies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. MacInnes and critics who have followed him, such as Black, Colm Ó Baoill, Donald MacAulay, and M. Pía Coira, have shown panegyric to be a pervasive mode in the Gaelic poetic tradition, that bridges the work of the classical and vernacular poets.²²⁵

This is not the place to give a detailed description of the conventions of the panegyric code, although an outline of its major features will be useful as context for the chapters that follow. The main function of panegyric is the praise or elegy/lament of a chief or clansman through the application of a set of conventional images and forms of address, which are drawn upon to extol the heroic and social virtues of the subject of praise. A number of kennings are used to achieve this. The subject might be identified with, for example a battle-post or a bird of prey, so that he is an ‘ursann-chatha’ (‘battle-post’) or ‘an t-seabhag threun’ (‘the brave falcon’).²²⁶ The most commonly used kenning – and that invested with the most honour and symbolic potency – is the tree or forest, so that the subject might be called ‘a chraobh as àirde’ (‘the highest tree’) or ‘an darag dhìleas dharaich’ (‘the faithful tree of oaken wood’). The poet might also draw

²²³ MacInnes, ‘The Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry’, pp. 435–98.

²²⁴ R. Black, *An Lasair*, p. xix.

²²⁵ See: C. Ó Baoill (ed.), *Duanaire Colach* (Obar Dheathain, 1997); D. MacAulay, ‘Reconstructed Heroes? The Profile of the ‘Virtues’ in the Panegyric Verse of Rob Donn’, in S. Arbuthnot and K. Hollo (eds.), *Fil súil nglais: A Festschrift in Honour of Colm Ó Baoill* (Ceann Drochaid, 2007), pp. 73–82; M. Pía Coira, *By Poetic Authority: The Rhetoric of Panegyric in Gaelic Poetry of Scotland to c.1700* (Edinburgh, 2012).

²²⁶ MacInnes, ‘The Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry’, pp. 457–59.

attention to the subject's skill as a warrior; his generosity in hospitality; the allies who will fight with him in battle; and his revered ancestral line. Building on MacInnes's work, Black has listed ten major motifs of the panegyric code: the chief's background; personal endowments and social roles; household, relaxation and music; physical roles; personal beauty; death; kennings; other protagonists; and destiny.

The panegyric code both arose from and sought to reaffirm the central tenets of clan society. Its key function was to praise the clan chiefs and warriors on whom the security and survival of that society depended. The warrior's role was central to clan society and therefore central to panegyric poetry, as MacInnes has noted:

The role of the warrior, protector of fine and tuath, great in body, with immense physical strength, is both centre and apex. Through epithets, references to battles, ancestry, physical strength, weapons, loyalty and so on, and taking these in all their direct and oblique references, and in all possible permutations, the bards produce a glorification of the warrior that permeates these poems of a brief, late manifestation of an heroic age.²²⁷

MacInnes has highlighted the military as one of the major contexts in which panegyric achieved a contemporary resonance in the post-Culloden period. A hierarchical military system that appeared to offer continuity with the past was an ideal environment for panegyric poetry, and while MacInnes has noted the 'transference of loyalty from the context of the fine and the Gaelic nation to the British Army', it should be borne in mind that poets viewed their praise of the military as an act of continuity rather than transference.²²⁸

The type of eulogistic verse which is the staple of panegyric poetry could be used to praise warriors from outwith Gaelic society, facilitating their acceptance to a Gaelic audience. As MacInnes has said: 'non-Gaelic heroes are drawn into the native system of naming and celebrating: the process mediates between an alien, hostile world and an intelligible order, endowing their names with potency in its own terms.'²²⁹ Prior to the widespread use of the panegyric code to praise officers of the British army, the conventions of the panegyric code were used to praise 'foreign' military figures: for example, John Graham of Claverhouse, was addressed by Iain Lom as 'A shàr Chléibhears nan Each' ('*great Claverhouse of the horses*') and was also known as 'Iain Dubh na Cath' ('*Dark John of the Battle*'), while Charles Edward Stewart was called 'Prionnsa Tearlach nam baiteal' ('*Prince Charles of the Battles*') by an un-named Badenoch poet.²³⁰ The naming of allies was another major trope of the panegyric code which was adapted for use in a military context during the period under consideration here. This method of listing

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 454-55.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 490.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

the ideal allies who will fight with a subject in battle was used during the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and '45 by poets such as Sìleas na Ceapaich and Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, and its potency and appeal to poets of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is clear. Donald MacAulay has shown how Rob Donn MacKay modulated the vocabulary and conventions of the panegyric code to speak for and of his community in the mid-eighteenth century.²³¹ Other developments of the panegyric tradition in the eighteenth century included Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's inventive poem of love 'Moladh Mòraig' (*In Praise of Morag*) and Duncan Bàn Macintyre's panegyric to nature, 'Moladh Beinn Dòrainn' (*In Praise of Ben Dorain*). The work of the latter poet in particular demonstrates that a progressive approach to panegyric in certain pieces did not preclude a more conservative application of the code in others, as is evident in Macintyre's military poetry.

The clan society that had supported panegyric may have been in terminal decline by the mid-eighteenth century, but its conventions remained an integral part of Gaelic poetry and were applied widely in new contexts. As Ronald Black has said:

This code of rhetoric is the seventeenth century's legacy to the eighteenth. The achievement of the eighteenth century was to reshape the legacy by utilising the native dynamic of Gaelic verse and also by harnessing influences from outside it.²³²

It will be seen throughout this thesis that poets of the military experience in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries deeply mined and developed the tradition of Gaelic panegyric. The tools and tropes of the code were instantly applicable in a military context, and could be used to construct a comprehensible response to the demands of service and the regimental system. The key tenets of the code, as outlined by Macinnes, Ó Baoill and Black will be returned to throughout.

Conclusion

The mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth century was a period of flux in Gaelic society, and this is reflected in Gaelic verse. The corpus of poetry considered in this thesis was composed during one of the 'high ages' of vernacular poetry, and also during a period when the printing press revolutionised the way in which verse was circulated and patronised. The decades after Culloden also saw the panegyric code being used in new contexts and for new purposes. As will be seen in the following chapter, the initial response of poets to widespread recruitment and the resultant service of thousands of Gaels in the British military in the second half of the eighteenth century was one that relied heavily on the militarised tradition of Gaelic panegyric.

²³¹ MacAulay, 'Reconstructed Heroes', p. 82.

²³² Black, *An Lasair*, p. xxi.

Chapter 4: Seven Years' War to French Revolutionary War (1756-93)

The outbreak of the Seven Years War (1756-63) marked a new era in the military history of the Gaels. Between 1756 and the conclusion of hostilities between Britain and America during the later conflict of the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), North America became a major destination for Highland soldiers, and brought with it a new geographical horizon. While predominant, North America was not the only theatre of war in which Highlanders served during the 1756 to 1793 period. As has been noted in the historical context of this thesis, Gaels also served in other theatres of war, including mainland Europe, India, and the West Indies. The formerly suspected and derided inhabitants of the Highlands became symbols of British martial strength during these years. While coercion and mistreatment of Highland soldiers evidently took place, it is clear that many Highlanders took to their new roles as soldiers of empire with willingness and alacrity, as did the poets who praised them.²³³

Michael Newton has provided a wide-ranging analysis of poetry about the experience of Gaels in North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in *We're Indians Sure Enough* (2001). Newton places the poetic voice firmly at the centre and his book includes a wealth of detail and discussion with regards to the poetic record. While Newton's book examines the military poetry with relation to the North American experience of the Gaels, it is intended here to examine this verse in terms of the varied perspectives it provides on the impact of service on the Gaelic community as a whole. As previously noted, Matthew Dziennik has also recently analysed the experience of Highland soldiers in North America, including in his *The Fatal Land* (2015). Dziennik argues that the political and cultural identity of the Highlands was significantly redefined within the context of an expanding empire and that Gaels' experiences in North America were a crucial determining factor in this process.²³⁴ He has also posited that 'Highland identity was increasingly immersed in a broader imperial culture, which recognized support for the empire as the most rational approach to the pursuit of private and familial interest'.²³⁵ As has been made clear in the introduction, the question of loyalty, and particularly the concentric nature of loyalty as regards Gaels' experiences of the British military, forms a central strand of enquiry in this research and will be returned to throughout.

While Gaelic poets turned to and drew from an inherited literary tradition with inbuilt martial language and imagery, their work also formed part of - or at least co-existed with - a developing tradition of popular military poetry across Scotland

²³³ Mackillop, 'Continuity, Coercion and Myth'; Prebble, *Mutiny*.

²³⁴ Dziennik, *The Fatal Land*, p. 3.

²³⁵ Dziennik, 'Through an Imperial Prism', p. 335.

and Britain at the time.²³⁶ In their study of British culture during the Seven Years' War, Frances de Bruyn and Shaun Regan have stated that 'During these years, the perception of success or failure, heroism or disgrace could be as important as the actuality, and personal experiences could be as dependent upon an individual's status, gender or race as upon a sense of regional or national identity'.²³⁷ Perceptions of success and heroism were central to the way in which Gaelic poets responded to the military, and the impact of 'personal experiences' is also key to understanding Gaelic material. The Gaelic poetic response can be seen as distinctive in certain respects, however, and can be used to counter some broad analyses of the period. For example, John Richardson, in a study of how the Seven Years' War was imagined in literature, notes that despite British military success, the war did not lead to a 'sustained, confident tradition of heroic writing'.²³⁸ As will be shown, Gaelic poets not only drew from but sought to create/recreate their own heroic tradition with their military verse in the post-Culloden period.

The Seven Years' War (1756-1763)

The Seven Years' War involved all the great powers of Europe and took place on a global scale. France, Austria, Saxony, Sweden and Russia were aligned on one side of the conflict, against Prussia, Hanover, and Great Britain on the other. The initial causes of the conflict included attacks by Britain on French positions in North America in 1754-56, and the continuing struggle between Prussia and Austria for dominance of the Holy Roman Empire in the wake of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48). The war started with Frederick II of Prussia's invasion and defeat of Saxony (August-October 1756), but the main conflict did not commence until the following year. Major battles included the Battle of Bergen (13 April 1759), the Battle Of Quebec (15 September 1759), and the Battle of Wilhelmsthal (24 June 1762). The conflict came to an end with the Treaty of Paris (10 February 1763) between Great Britain, France and Spain, and the Treaty of Hubertusburg (15 February 1763) between Saxony, Austria and Prussia. The war effort was successful for Great Britain, allowing it to gain most of New France in North America, Spanish Florida, some individual Caribbean islands in the West Indies, the colony of Senegal on the West African Coast, and control of French trading posts on the Indian subcontinent.²³⁹

²³⁶ See: M.J. Cardwell, *Arts and Arms: Literature, Politics and Patriotism during the Seven Years' War* (Manchester, 2007); C. Watts, *The Cultural Work of Empire: The Seven Years' War and the Imagining of the Shandean State* (Edinburgh, 2007); J. Richardson, 'Imagining Military Conflict during the Seven Years' War', in *Studies in English Literature*, vol. 48 (2008), pp. 585-611.

²³⁷ F. De Bruyn and S. Regan, *The Culture of the Seven Years' War: Empire, Identity and the Arts in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Tornont, 2011), p. 17.

²³⁸ Richardson, 'Imagining Military Conflict during the Seven Years' War', p. 587.

²³⁹ See: T. Pocock, *Battle for Empire: The Very First World War, 1756-63* (London, 1998); M.H. Danley and P.J. Speelman, *The Seven Years' War: Global Views* (Leiden, Boston, 2002).

As has been noted in the historical context, the Seven Years' War marked a period of massive recruitment of Highland soldiers. By the end of the conflict, there were eight Highland regiments of the line and two fencible battalions in existence.²⁴⁰ Three Highland regiments served in North America during the 1756-63 period: the 42nd (Black Watch), 77th (Montgomerie's Highlanders), and 78th (Fraser Highlanders). While the conflict allowed clan leaders and landowners to exploit their powerbases for financial gain in the post-Culloden period, and erstwhile rebels such as Simon Fraser to redeem themselves in the eyes of the state, it should not be thought that these regiments consisted substantially of experienced Highland soldiers. Stephen Brumwell has noted that 'surviving evidence suggests...most rank-and-file Highlanders were too young to have fought during the 'Forty-Five''.²⁴¹ This study has identified six extant poems from printed sources from the period of the Seven Years' War, and these reflect the high level of service in North America²⁴²

- James McLagan's 'Oran a rinneadh d'an chath-bhuidhinn Rioghail Ghaoidheallach nuair a bha iad dol d'America San bhliadhna 1756' ('*A Song to the Royal Highland Regiment when it was departing for America in the Year 1756*') is one of two poems composed by the famous collector for the Black Watch;²⁴³
- 'Oran a Rinneadh an America' ('*A Song Made in America*') has been attributed to *Gobha Chlann 'ic Colla* of Inverlochy, and also to Iain Campbell from Rannoch. The poem is a first-hand account of a cattle raid against the French in 1758 by a soldier in the Fraser Highlanders;²⁴⁴
- 'An Deigh Quebec' ('*After Quebec*') is an anonymous Badenoch poem which praises the service of the Gaels in America after the Seven Years' War had come to an end;²⁴⁵
- John MacGregor's 'Oran do'n Fhreiceadan Dubh' ('*Song to the Black Watch*') praises the Black Watch's service in America at the time of the Seven Years' War;²⁴⁶
- Patrick Campbell from Keppoch's poem to the chief of the MacDonalds of Keppoch as an officer in America, 'Raonall Og MacDonald of Keppoch';²⁴⁷
- Duncan Bàn Macintyre's 'Cumha Ghill-easbuig Ach-chaladair' ('*Lament for Gillespie of Achallader*') is a lament for Major Archibald Campbell, killed at the battle of Fellinghausen in Germany in 1761.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁰ See: 'Historical Context', p. 34.

²⁴¹ Brumwell, 'The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83', p. 387.

²⁴² The anonymous poem, 'Am Breacan Dubh' ('The Black Plaid'), which appears to include a reference to Simon Fraser of Lovat as a colonel, might also be from the period of the Seven Years' War. D. Macpherson (ed.), *An Duanaire* (Edinburgh, 1868), pp. 67-68.

²⁴³ E. Gillies, (ed.) *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach* (Peairt, 1786), pp. 113-117.

²⁴⁴ D. MacCallum (ed.), *Co-chruinneacha dhàn, òrain, etc., etc.* (Inbhirnis, 1821), pp. 112-20.

²⁴⁵ T. Sinton (ed.), *The Poetry of Badenoch* (Inverness, 1906), pp. 213-15.

²⁴⁶ I. MacGhrigair, *Orain Ghaelach* (Edin-bruaich, 1801), pp. 35-41.

²⁴⁷ *Mac-talla* (1897), cited by Newton in *We're Indians Sure Enough*, pp. 129-30.

Service in America

The earliest extant piece related to the Seven Years' War was Seumas MacLathagain's (James McLagan, 1728-1805) 1756 song for the Black Watch, 'Oran a rinneadh d'an chath-bhuidhinn Rioghail Ghaidheallach nuair a bha iad dol d'America San bhliadhna 1756'. McLagan was born in 1728 at Ballechin in Strathtay, Perthshire. His military service began when he entered the army as the chaplain of the Black Watch, after the end of the Seven Years' War in 1764.²⁴⁹ He replaced the famous Perthshire-born philosopher Adam Ferguson (1723-1816), who served with the regiment as chaplain from 1745 to 1754.²⁵⁰ McLagan may have gone to America for the first time in 1764, possibly spending time with the Black Watch in Pennsylvania before its return to Dublin in 1767.²⁵¹ He returned to America with the regiment in 1776, during the period of the American Revolutionary War, and must have been back in Scotland by some point in 1781, when he became minister of Blair Atholl.²⁵²

'Oran a rinneadh d'an chath-bhuidhinn Rioghail Ghaidheallach nuair a bha iad dol d'America San bhliadhna 1756' appears, from its title, to have been composed by McLagan in 1756, before his period of service with the Black Watch commenced.²⁵³ The song seems to have been composed for the regiment as it prepared its

²⁴⁸ Macleod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, pp. 78-85.

²⁴⁹ McLagan was educated at St Andrews University and held his first ministry in the Presbytery of Dunkeld in 1760. McLagan gathered one of the most extensive collections of Gaelic poetry in the eighteenth century; he appears to have supplied James Macpherson with some of his Gaelic sources and was one of several figures at the time who was involved in the collection of Gaelic literary material in the Highlands. He wrote at length about the Ossianic controversy and was a strong proponent of the existence of Ossianic material in both oral and written form in the Highlands. He married the daughter of James Stuart of Killin, who had been enlisted to translate the New Testament from Greek into Gaelic by the SSPCK in 1767. For more on McLagan, see, for instance: Thomson 'The McLagan MSS in Glasgow University Library', pp. 106-24; D.S. Thomson, 'McLagan, James (1728-1805)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford), [accessed 01 July 2016]; Dziennik, *The Fatal Land*, pp. 208-11.

²⁵⁰ Ferguson was a near neighbour of McLagan's, from the village of Logierait about three miles away from Ballechin.

²⁵¹ Dziennik, *The Fatal Land*, p. 208.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ I have identified another two poems which might have been McLagan's compositions. One is from the McLagan manuscripts, entitled 'Chuireadh an Reiseamaid air a Casaibh'. The poem is dated 1784 and appears to be based on a mutiny which took place in the Atholl Highlanders in 1783. The second piece is in the MacDiarmid Manuscript. Newton mentions this poem as potentially being McLagan's composition in a footnote in *We're Indians Sure Enough*, but he had not had the opportunity to view the poem. The piece is entitled 'Dh'fhàg na Gaidheil Tìr Chalum' ('The Gaels left Columbus's Land'), and is attributed in the MS to 'Mr McLaggan'. The piece appears to be a *brosnachadh*, possibly a marching song, addressed to soldiers and is preceded by a note stating 'Ri dhannsadh agus ri sheinn fo armaibh' ('To be danced to and sung under arms'). A note to 'Tìr Chalum' states that 'America [was] first discovered by Columbus'. 'Tìr Chalum' seems then to translate as Columbus's land, or possibly Columbia. Could it have been that this piece was composed by McLagan while in, or after returning from, America with the Black Watch? Further research is required into both of these poems. University of Glasgow, MS Gen 1042/174; University of Glasgow, Celtic and Gaelic, MacDiarmid MS, p. 65.

departure for America, and is in the style of a *brosnachadh catha* ('battle incitement'), with the purpose of inciting and inspiring the Black Watch to heroic action across the Atlantic.²⁵⁴ Composed just a decade after Culloden, the piece bears strong resemblance to earlier Jacobite propaganda pieces, such as Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's 'Oran nam Fineachan Gàidhealach' ('Song of the Highland Clans').²⁵⁵ Culloden and its aftermath are crucial as background and context for this poem. In much the same way that McLagan's collecting could, as Derick Thomson has opined, have been a reaction to the failure of the Jacobite rising, we might also see this poem, on one level, as a response to the events of 1745-46 - as an attempt to reaffirm the inherent heroism, strength and military capability of Gaelic society, during a period when the clans had been emasculated and suspicion still hung over the inhabitants of the Highlands.²⁵⁶ It should also be noted that this poem was composed four years before James MacPherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760) appeared and therefore before Gaelic culture and tradition had begun to be popularly rehabilitated. In 1756 Gaelic society was poised between a ruined (and ruinous) Jacobite past, and the fresh opportunity that the military seemed to present for heroic endeavour, atoning for past misdemeanours, and sharing in the spoils of the empire. Seen in this context, it is of little surprise to find McLagan in full flight of praise in this poem.

From the outset, McLagan addresses these men as warriors in a historical tradition: not as soldiers of a relatively new regiment, going to fight in a new global conflict, but as successors to, and inheritors of, the martial tradition of clan society. He roots his appeal in Gaelic tradition immediately in the first stanza by depicting the regiment as conventionally attired and presented warriors - something that was of particular significance given the recent strictures placed on Highland dress with the Dress Act of 1746:²⁵⁷

Beir sorruidh uam le deagh-rùn buaidh,
 Dh'fhios ghaishgeach, stuamach gharbh-chrioch;
 Ogain uasla bhreacan uaine,
 Eibhle sguabaidh's ghear-chot;
 Lann dubh-ghorm chruaidh air Airm chrios ualach,
 'S deilg nan guailibh cear aca;

²⁵⁴ Having been stationed in Ireland from 1747 to 1756, the Black Watch was sent to America in 1756. The regiment lost over half its men in their first engagement at the first Battle of Ticonderoga. The regiment was also present at the Second Battle of Ticonderoga in 1759 and at the surrender of Montreal in 1760. They also saw action in the West Indies at Havana, Martinique and Guadeloupe. The regiment was in America until 1767, when it was sent to Cork. E. Linklater and A. Linklater, *The Black Watch: the history of the Royal Highland Regiment* (London, 1977), pp. 20-25.

²⁵⁵ For Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's Jacobite poetry, see: J. L. Campbell (ed.), *Highland Songs of the Forty-five* (Edinburgh, 1933), pp. 23-155.

²⁵⁶ Thomson, 'The McLagan MSS in Glasgow University Library', p. 407.

²⁵⁷ Poetry is cited as it appears in respective sources, without normalisation of orthography and punctuation.

Ur laoich chruadalach thug buaidh,
Ann laimhseach luath lann's thargaid.²⁵⁸

*Take my greetings with hope for victory
To the self-disciplined Highland heroes,
Noble youths of the green tartan,
Of the swinging kilts and waist-coats,
Of the shiny, hard blades on stately weapon-straps,
Watch pins in their left shoulders;
Crisp young warriors full of endurance
In the swift handling of blades and shields.*²⁵⁹

McLagan draws heavily on the language and conventions of the panegyric code in the piece, and is quick to identify that the French - recent allies to many Highland clans - have now become their enemies, along with native American 'forest-folk': 'O 's mighich d'Albanich dol a shealg, / Air Francaich chealgach 's Choilt mhigh' ('O, it is time for the Scots to go hunting / After treacherous Frenchmen and Forest-folk').²⁶⁰ It is notable that the poet asks the soldiers to be loyal to their arms and uniform rather than to the army or King George III: 'Leomh'naidh gharg, a fhuil Albnach / Lean re'r 'n airm 's re'r 'n eaidh' ('Fierce lions of Scottish blood, / Be loyal to your arms and to your uniform').²⁶¹ This focusing in on loyalty as a localised and Gaelo-centric concept is a feature of a number of Gaelic military pieces during the period, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis. Although the Highlanders are travelling to an unknown territory, McLagan reassures them that they leave fully equipped with the skills and experience required for this venture. That he does so using a panegyric language and style which would have been instantly intelligible to his intended audience adds the credence of authenticity to his appeal. Historical allusion and the invoking of clan tradition are vital components of effective panegyric, and the poet introduces these elements by praising the Scottish noble and soldier Lord John Murray (1711-1787) as the regiment's figurehead:²⁶²

Buidheann chriodheil Mhoir-fheir lan,
Flaidh dan fhineadh lamh-thrèun;
Ni naimhde dubhach's cairde suglach,
Deagh fhuil Mhuireach's ceannart;²⁶³

²⁵⁸ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 112.

²⁵⁹ Translations of this poem are by Michael Newton, with modifications by the current writer. Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 122.

²⁶⁰ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 113; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 122.

²⁶¹ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 113; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 122.

²⁶² Murray was half-brother of the Jacobite leader, Lord George Murray (1705-60).

²⁶³ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 113.

*The hardy band of Lord John,
A prince of the mighty-handed clan,
Who will make enemies mourn and allies rejoice
The goodly Murray blood in the leader;*²⁶⁴

McLagan goes on to imply a sense of manifest destiny for these Highland soldiers, going so far as to claim that the depths of the Atlantic Ocean have acquiesced before their journey:

*Ta'n cuan gu mìn ag tairgse sith dhuibh,
Choisg e sribh throm shiubhlach;
Ta thonna mion re plubraich bhinn,
Seinn iurram dhuibh is thùg air;*²⁶⁵

*The ocean is gently offering you peace,
It has subsided from heavy, bumpy, exertion,
Its calm waves are sweetly gurgling,
Singing a rowing song to you spiritedly.*²⁶⁶

McLagan promises that ‘oighe nan eadan ghradhach’ (‘*maidens of loving countenance*’) will await the soldiers on the mainland of America, ‘ag guidh’ an di dion o’n luchd mio-ruin’ (‘*praying for protection from their enemies*’).²⁶⁷ The instigators of ill-will referred to here are the French and Indians, and McLagan expresses contempt for both. These ‘òighean’ (‘*maidens*’) take voice in the poem, and impel the soldiers: ‘Bheir buaidh air Coilt-mich ’s Frainc na faill’ (‘*Be victorious over Forest-folk and deceitful France*’).²⁶⁸ McLagan’s piece is the earliest instance of ‘othering’ of foreign peoples in British military material by Gaelic poets in the post-Culloden period, and it will be shown in the following chapters that ‘othering’ was a device employed by poets throughout the period under consideration here.²⁶⁹ Having labeled the Indians as ‘Coilltich’, McLagan adopts a similarly dismissive idiom for the French, as the troops are commanded to rout each ‘Mùisi’ (‘*Monsieur*’) who attempts to cross the river Lawrence. The distinctive power and military prowess of the Gaels is stressed in expressly heroic terms, and McLagan draws on the soldiers’ formative experiences in the Highlands to elucidate this:

²⁶⁴ Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 122.

²⁶⁵ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 114.

²⁶⁶ Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 123.

²⁶⁷ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 114; Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 123.

²⁶⁸ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 114; Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 124.

²⁶⁹ For a discussion of othering in earlier Gaelic poetry, see: S. Stroh, *Uneasy Subjects: Postcolonialism and Scottish Gaelic Poetry* (Amsterdam, 2011), p. 43, 64, 79, 189, 321.

'S tearuint dochas chuir 'sna leomh'naibh,
 Chleachd thu o'n oige 'n cruadal;
 Bhith measradh crodha, air bheg lòin,
 Ag siubhal mointich's fh'uar-bheann;

...
 'S Cuimseach sealgaire nan Garbh-chrìoch,
 'N am am dararich theintich;
 Ni aid call le 'm peilear tairnich,
 Ge be ball re 'n caog iad.²⁷⁰

*It is safe to trust those lions
 You are used to hardship from youth,
 To being frugal and hardy, eating little,
 Travelling moorland and cold mountains,*

...
*The Highland hunters are unerring
 In times of explosive volleys
 They'll do damage with thunderbolts,
 Regardless of what eye marks the aim.²⁷¹*

The soldiers are therefore encouraged to engage with and draw from their cultural background as Highlanders and Gaels. The poet's fields of reference and his imagery are distinctly Highland/Gaelic in their import, and this would have again added to the poem's accessibility to and intelligibility for its audience. Having all but guaranteed their victory on the field of battle, McLagan turns to a more spiritual plane, adopting the universal imagery of the Tree of Life (here linked to peace) to claim that victory will also bring spiritual freedom to this land:

'N sin gabhaidh craobh na sith le freamh,
 Teann ghream do 'n doimhne thalmhainn,
 Is sinsidh geuga gu rig neamh,
 Gach aird le seasmh-mheas 's geal-bh[l]ath;
 Bithidh ceiler ebhinn eun na meaghlán,
 'S daoine le'n clainn ag sealbhachadh;
 Toradh is saoth'r an lamh gun mhaom,
 Faoi dhubhar caomh a sgailsin.²⁷²

*Then the roots of the Tree of Peace will
 Take a firm hold of the earth's depths
 And its branches will stretch to Heaven,*

²⁷⁰ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 115.

²⁷¹ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 124.

²⁷² Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 116.

*Delicate fruits and white blossoms in every direction.
There will be the merry music of birds in its branches,
Families taking residence,
The produce of their labour growing unhurried
In the soft dimness of its shade.*²⁷³

The idyllic pastoral scenes McLagan predicts will materialise in this New World are Eden-like in their perfection:

Gach gleann ni ebhnis's maoth-bhlath eirigh,
Air gach beinn bha sas-mhail;
Bithidh daoine is spreidh 's tuath iteach spèur,
Re mireig 's seirm luadh ghairich.²⁷⁴

*Every glen will rejoice and tender blossoms rise
One every mountain that was bare;
People and livestock and birds of the air
Will be making merry and singing triumphantly.*²⁷⁵

The vista is one that stands in direct contrast to the reality of the mid-eighteenth century Gàidhealtachd, a fact McLagan must have been aware of in composing the piece. Perhaps for this reason, he quickly moves on to the rewards that returning soldiers can expect after leaving 'sìth 's gach math thig dhi' ('*peace and all the goodness that comes with it*') with the people of North America.²⁷⁶ McLagan returns to more temporal territory as he informs the soldiers that their service will be rewarded and that they will have gained renown on their return to Scotland. Service is presented as a contract between the Gaels and the crown, with the latter rewarding the former for their martial endeavours. It will be seen that this is a recurring motif in Gaelic military poetry, thus supporting Andrew Mackillop's thesis of contractual militarism in Highland society during the period.²⁷⁷ This is reinforced in the penultimate stanza, where the poet suggests that, through their service, the Black Watch will have an influence on the king:

Ni 'r deagh ghiulan Deors a lubadh,
'S bheir e dhuinn ar 'n Eididh,
'N eididh shurdail bha o thus ann,

²⁷³ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 125.

²⁷⁴ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 116.

²⁷⁵ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 125.

²⁷⁶ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 116; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 126.

²⁷⁷ Mackillop notes 'Much of the Highlanders' attitude to military identity is understandable if it is accepted that they conceived of soldiering in much the same way a farm servant envisaged his terms of contract'. Mackillop, 'For King, Country and Regiment', p. 205.

O linn Adhamh 's Ebha;²⁷⁸

*Your excellent conduct will convince
King George to return our uniform,
The cheerful ancient uniform that always existed,
From the time of Adam and Eve;*²⁷⁹

The word 'lubadh' ('bending') implies agency on the part of the Gaels – that they can effectively exert pressure on the king in order to achieve a specific outcome (in this case the return of rights to wear Highland clothing and bear weapons). Despite this confidence – and it is a piece that is over-brimming with confidence – the closing stanza perhaps reveals an awareness of the suspicion in which Gaels were held in some quarters:

Bithidh Breatuinn 's Erinn's Eorp gu leir
Geur amhrac Ghaidhl Albnach;
Bhar tìr 's mi fèin mar mhathair, chaomh
Ag guidh neamh libh soirbheach;
Re ceol na caoidh, rèir mar thig dhuibh,
Chaidh cunnbaidh 'n cuimh bhar 'n Aithreachd.
Nios beannachd luibh, lan shonas's buaidh
Gu 'r Cluithsa luadh-ghair, chairdean.²⁸⁰

*Britain and Ireland and all of Europe
Will be scrutinising the Scottish Gaels;
Your land, and myself like a kindly mother,
Will pray to heaven that you will succeed
Rejoicing or lamenting according to your fortunes,
Always keep your ancestors in your minds.
Now, take blessings with you, full of happiness and
success,
Triumph to your name, friends.*²⁸¹

Throughout 'Oran a rinneadh d'an chath-bhuidhinn Rioghail Ghaidheallach', the poet emphasises the correlation between past and present for these Highland soldiers. He encourages them to connect with their ancestry and heritage, bridging the gap between a past and contemporary heroic age and society. McLagan's poem is a carefully crafted piece of *brosnachadh* and propaganda, which looks forward to

²⁷⁸ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidheallach*, pp. 116-17.

²⁷⁹ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 127.

²⁸⁰ Gillies, *Sean Dain agus Orain Ghaidheallach*, p. 117

²⁸¹ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 127.

a new military future for the Black Watch, while maintaining a tone and perspective which roots it in Gaelic culture and tradition.

‘Oran a Rinneadh an America’ offers an interesting contrast to McLagan’s piece, as an account composed by a soldier-poet with first-hand experience of fighting in America during the Seven Years’ War. Newton notes that there are two extant versions of this song, one published in Duncan MacCallum’s collection of 1822 and the other recorded from the oral tradition in 1891, attributed respectively to ‘Gobha Chlann ’ic Colla’ (*‘a smith of the MacColls’*) of Inverlochy and Iain Campbell from Rannoch.²⁸² Although uncertainty remains about the author of the piece, the fact that it was published and survived in the oral tradition implies that it was a popular song with wide currency.²⁸³ A first-hand account of a cattle raid against the French Canadians at Point Levis on 24 July 1759, the poem is an early progenitor of the numerous poetic accounts which would be composed by Highland soldiers over the next hundred years.²⁸⁴

The song’s popularity is understandable given that it is told in narrative form, containing the action, jeopardy, heightening of tension and level of detail that were central elements of the *sgeulachdan* of Gaelic tradition. The chorus is worded in such a way that might reflect a pre-battle *brosnachadh* (*‘incitement’*) by a military commander to his troops; alternatively it can be seen as the poet’s own internal thought process, preparing himself for the oncoming fray:

O ghilleann bibh ulla, le arma guineach,
Gu ladair, urranta, an onair an Rìgh;
Mu’n tig oirne fada, bithidh an rioghachd so againn,
A’s theid sinn dhachaidh do Bhreatun aris.²⁸⁵

*O lads, make ready, with death-dealing weapons,
Strong, intrepid, in honour of the King,
This country will be ours before too long,
And we will return to Britain again.*²⁸⁶

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

²⁸⁴ The Fraser Highlanders were raised by Simon Fraser of Lovat in 1757 to fight in the Seven Years’ War. The regiment saw action at the Battle of Louisbourg in 1758, the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, the Capture of Montreal in 1760 and the Battle of Signal Hill in 1762. At the end of the conflict in 1763 they were disbanded. Many soldiers remained in Quebec while others returned to Scotland. T. Maclauchlan, *A History of the Scottish Highlands, Highland Clans and Highland Regiments*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1885), pp. 458-459.

²⁸⁵ MacCallum, *Co-chruinneacha dhàn*, p. 112.

²⁸⁶ Translations of this poem are by Newton with modifications by the current writer. Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 131.

Newton has suggested that the reference to Britain rather than Scotland here shows that ‘the men had adopted the role as soldiers of the empire’.²⁸⁷ There is no reason to argue against this interpretation, but it should be noted that this reference to Britain does not preclude the existence of other concentric loyalties within this piece. Elsewhere Newton has claimed that songs of this type imply ‘that [poets] are making a concerted effort to regain pride and status in the eyes of the authorities’.²⁸⁸ It should again be stressed that poets’ motivations were often manifold in nature, and regaining pride and status in the eyes of their own communities could be of at least equal importance to gaining that of external authorities. Although Britain is cited in the chorus, at no point are the forces involved referred to as British, though the Gaels are mentioned twice. This is a piece that recognises Britain but identifies with Gaeldom.

After an opening stanza expressing appropriate praise and deference to Simon Fraser of Lovat (1726-82), the poet proceeds to a narrative account of the cattle raid, which forms the main body of the poem. In the closing stanzas, he recounts the subsequent British victory at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham on 13 September 1759. The poet, adopting the role of correspondent, reports the words spoken by a dying General James Wolfe (1727-59) at the battle:

Labhair esan mar b’àbhaist,
 “A Dhia dhùlaich dean grasan -
 Gabh m’ anam a dh’ Aros,
 A’s gheibh mi bàs ann an sioth.
 Theid an corp so do Shasun,
 A’s togar dhomh caibul,
 Mar chuimhneachan fada,
 Air gaisge, ’s mor ghnìomh.”²⁸⁹

*He spoke, as was his habit,
 “O God of the elements, grant me a favor
 Take my soul to Heaven
 And I will die peacefully.
 This corpse will go to England
 And a chapel will be built for me
 As a lasting memorial
 To heroism and great deeds.”*²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

²⁸⁸ Newton, ‘Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present’, p. 7.

²⁸⁹ MacCallum, *Co-chruinneacha dhàn*, p. 120.

²⁹⁰ Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, pp. 135-36.

‘Òran a Rinneadh an America’ reflects the manner in which poetry continued to be an essential component of the way in which Gaels communicated their military experiences in the post-Culloden period. The poet can be seen to have a broad conception of being involved in a national military campaign, but his focus in the piece is localised towards the Gaels as a distinctive grouping within the wider British military

Homecoming

A later song composed by an unknown Badenoch poet, ‘An Deigh Quebec’ (‘*After Quebec*’), also praises the service of the Fraser Highlanders at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Its opening stanza stands in poignant contrast to the active warfare reported in ‘Òran a Rinneadh an America’, or the type of pre-conflict *brosnachadh* set forth in the earlier stanzas of McLagan’s ‘Òran do’n Chath Bhuidhinn Rioghail’. The tone is one of silent reflection upon the return of peace:

’S a nis thainig somhchar air gunnachan mora,
Gun fuil bhi ’g a dortadh air muir no air tìr;
Tha brataichean-srol’ air am pasgadh an seomar,
’N ait caismeachd a’ chomhraig, tha orain na sith.²⁹¹

*The big guns have now fallen silent,
Blood is not spilt on land or on sea,
The war banners are folded away in a room,
Rather than marching songs, there are songs of peace.*²⁹²

The soldiers are praised for their service throughout this vast land; we hear of St Lawrence, Cape Breton, Louisbourg, Point Levis, Orleans, Montmorency, The Plains of Abraham, and Quebec. While his name, and particularly his comments about the Highlanders in 1751 looked at earlier, are now synonymous with a popularly held belief that the Gaels were mere cannon fodder for the British military, General Wolfe emerges from the poetry of the Seven Years War as a heroic figure, drawn into the Gaelic tradition and praised with its conventions.²⁹³ Wolfe’s death at the Battle of Quebec is lamented by the poet and his heroism remembered: ‘Ach mo lèir-chreach mar thachair! Ged bhuannaich e ’n latha / Bha Wolfe an deagh cheannard ’na laigh air an raon’ (‘*But I am devastated by what happened! Although he won the battle, / Wolfe, the excellent commander, was laid out in the field*’).²⁹⁴ But while the poet pays his respects to the General, Wolfe is not the

²⁹¹ Sinton, *The Poetry of Badenoch*, p. 213.

²⁹² Translations of this poem are by Newton with modifications by the current writer. Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 138.

²⁹³ Iain Lom had similarly drawn the Duke of Montrose into the praise sphere of Gaelic poetry in the seventeenth century.

²⁹⁴ Sinton, *The Poetry of Badenoch*, p. 213; Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 140.

main subject of this poem: it is primarily a panegyric for the Highland soldiers who served in the campaign. The poet predicts a triumphant homecoming:

Thar fairg' nan tonn du-ghlas chaidh 'n comhlan nach diultadh
-
Air na thuit anns an ruaig dhiubh bidh cuimhne gu brath,
'S na dilsich tha tilleadh le cliu as an iomairt
Gu 'n lion sinn gu cridheil cuach-dhibh' air an slainnt'.²⁹⁵

*Across the dark, shiny waves, went the war-band that would
not refuse an offer,
Those of them who fell in the rout will never be forgotten,
And those Loyalists who are returning with fame from the
endeavor,
We will drink heartily to their health from the quaich.*²⁹⁶

His description of the Gaels as 'dilsich' is open to different interpretations as regards the object(s) of their loyalism. One (relatively simplistic) interpretation would be that they are loyal simply to king and country, but there is little in the poem that would support this. At no point are these soldiers referred to as British; where identity is touched on, the poet states that they are of 'fion-fhuil Chlann Mhuirich' ('the wine-blood of the Macphersons').²⁹⁷ It might be said that the poet conceives of the soldiers as manifestations of a past, heroic Highland society, and that the soldiers are praised as loyal adherents to this society and its culture. This can further be adduced from the poet's focus on Highland dress and armoury as a fitting outfit for warriors:

Sud b' eididh nan diumhlach, feille-beag 's breacan-guaille,
Air an criosadh gu dumhail - bonaid du-ghorm 's cocad;
Bhur musgaidean croma 'cuir fhaileas le 'n loinneir, -
'S bu bhoidheach an sealladh 'n uair dh' eight' am parad.²⁹⁸

*This is the uniform of heroes: the kilt and the shoulder-plaid,
Folded thickly, a dark blue bonnet and a cockade,
Your angular muskets reflect light with their shininess
When the parade was assembled the sight was marvellous.*²⁹⁹

The 'dilsich' referred to could also be the soldiers themselves, who are loyal to each other. The poet does express direct allegiance to the king in the piece, but in

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

²⁹⁶ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 138.

²⁹⁷ Sinton, *The Poetry of Badenoch*, p. 213; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 138.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

²⁹⁹ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 139.

doing so he claims the monarch as a Gael descended from the ninth-century Gaelic king Kenneth MacAlpin (810-858):

'S gu 'n iarr sinn saoghal maireann do 'n Rìgh tha 's a'
chaithear,
'Shliochd rioghail Mhic Ailpein bha 'n Albainn o cheun;
Gur mor thug e fhabhar dha laochraidh nan Garbh-chrioch,
Air sgath na buaidh-larach air ar-fhaich Quebec.³⁰⁰

*We will wish the King who is on the Throne a long life,
He is of the royal stock of MacAlpine who were in Scotland of
old;
He has shown great favor to the Highland warriors
As a result of their victory on the fields of slaughter of
Quebec.*³⁰¹

As such, the poet draws the king into Highland culture and history, facilitating his acceptance by a Gaelic audience. The loyalty on display here is therefore one that first requires the king to conform to its own Gaelo-centric terms. The contract and *quid pro quo* relationship between the crown and the people is again implicit in the closing couplet here, as the King rewards the Highland warriors in return for their action on the battle-fields of Quebec.

Though probably composed after the American Revolutionary War, the Glen Lyon poet Iain MacGriogair (John MacGregor, fl. 1801) looks back to the post Seven Years War period in his 'Oran Do'n Fhreiceadan Dubh' ('*Song to the Black Watch*'). The poet praises the Black Watch's service in the conflict, celebrating that they have 'teachd dhachaidh d' an àros' ('*come home to their abode*') after winning 'ard-urruim 's na blàiribh' ('*great honour in the battles*').³⁰² The poem is reflective of the close relationship between Gaels and the Highland regiments, in particular the Black Watch, during the period. By the end of the Seven Years' War, the regiment had entered into the historical consciousness of the Gaels, and the praise and propaganda of Gaelic poets was an important factor in achieving this status. The poet does not simply laud the regiment for its military success, he also praises its conduct and behaviour, painting the soldiers as paragons of regimental virtue:

'S e 'ur n-aireamh a nise,
A dhà is dà fhichead;
'S gach àite do 'n tig sibh,
Lan graidh sibh is gliocais;

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 140-41.

³⁰² MacGriogair, *Orain Ghaelach*, p. 35.

Cha tràillean do 'n mhisg sibh,
 No geocaich gu itheadh,
 Ach ro-fhoghlumte, innealta,
 Oranach, fiosrach, grinn.³⁰³

*Your number is now,
 The forty-second;
 And in every place to which you go,
 You are full of love and wisdom;
 Your are no slaves to drunkenness,
 Or gluttons for eating,
 But well-educated, elegant,
 Well-versed in songs, knowledgeable, handsome.*

The regiment's pre-eminence is emphasised by its favourable comparison with barbaric opponents. The regiment's 'yellow' and 'black' adversaries (seemingly native Americans) are routed and treated – literally – as animals:

Bha fir Bhuidhe le 'n tuaghibh,
 'S fir Dhubha bha gruamach,
 Mar chaoirich ga 'n cuairteach',
 A coilltean 's a bruachibh,
 Ga 'n ceangal gun fhuasgladh,
 'S iad mar bhuar ann am buaile fo chis.³⁰⁴

*Yellow men with their axes,
 And black men with morose faces,
 Were surrounded like sheep,
 Coming from forests and embankments,
 Tied up without escape,
 Trapped like cattle inside a pen.*

While the bulk of military poetry composed during this period was in relation to service in America, Duncan Bàn Macintyre's 'Cumha Ghill-easbuig Ach-chaladair' ('*Lament for Gillespie of Achallader*') refers to the conflict on mainland Europe. The poem's subject, Major Archibald Campbell (?-1761), was the brother of John Campbell, 6th of Achallader (1715-1791). Having received a commission in Keith and Campbell's Highlanders, Campbell went to Germany with the regiment in 1760, and was killed at the Battle of Fellinghausen on 15 July 1761. This lament sees Duncan Bàn in his role as poet to the Breadalbane Campbells, to whom the

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37

poet was professionally loyal as a bard.³⁰⁵ As will be seen throughout this thesis, patrons in the Highland gentry (a social class often directly involved in the military) played an important part in encouraging and actively instigating the composition of Gaelic military poetry (and military figures feature prominently in the subscribers of Macintyre's edition of 1790). In the opening stanza, Macintyre states that Archibald Campbell was 'dhìth air an àireamh' ('missing from the roll') when other soldiers returned from their period of service with the Highland regiment:

Gur muladach thà sinn
 Mu Mhàidsear Ach-Chaladair,
 E bhith dhìth air an àireamh
 'N uair thàinig càch thairis oirnn;
 Chaidh gach duine g' an àite,
 'S an leth-pàighidh 'ga tharraing ac';
 'S ann tha esan air fhàgail
 Anns an àraich gun charachadh.³⁰⁶

*We are indeed mournful
 About the Major of Achallader,
 That he was missing from the roll
 When the rest came home to us;
 Each man went to his own place,
 And their half-pay is drawn by them,
 While he hath been left behind,
 Stock-still upon the battlefield.³⁰⁷*

Macintyre's passing reference here to the half-pay received by soldiers on returning home is indicative of the poet's interest in and appreciation of the economic rewards of soldiering, as will be considered in more detail later.³⁰⁸ For Macintyre, death at this battle has brought honour to Campbell: to die as a soldier was to be assured posterity (a posterity actively contributed to by the poet in his composition of this piece). Macintyre's partisanship towards the Campbells is clear when he decries those who might denigrate their service under King George:

Ged a theireadh luchd-faoineachd
 An taobh seo gu h-aineolach,
 Gun do thèarainn sliochd Dhiarmaid
 Gun riabhadh gun ghearradh ann:

³⁰⁵ Macleod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. xli.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³⁰⁸ See Chapter 5, pp. 106-07.

Nan sealladh iad dìreach
 'S gum b' i 'n fhìrinn a chanadh iad,
 'S mór ar call ri Rìgh Deòrsa
 On a thòisich a' charraid seo.³⁰⁹

*Though thoughtless folk in these parts
 Would allege in their ignorance,
 That in this affair Clan Diarmaid
 Had escaped without gash or cut,
 If they looked at it squarely,
 And only spake truthfully -
 Great is our loss through serving King George,
 Since ever this conflict began.*³¹⁰

The poet's key allegiance and loyalty towards a localised powerbase emerges from this piece. Loyalty to King George flows from loyalty towards the Campbells.

The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783)

Barely ten years after the silence of the 'gunnachan mòra' ('big guns') of the Seven Years' War, Britain was at war in North America again. The American Revolutionary War, also known as the American War of Independence, began as a conflict between Great Britain and its Thirteen Colonies in North America. The armed conflict began with skirmishes between British troops and colonial militiamen in Lexington and Concord in April 1775. The Continental Congress, which had been formed in 1774 to represent the Thirteen Colonies, voted for independence on the 2nd of July 1776, and issued its declaration on the 4th of July. France formally entered the conflict on the side of the Americans in 1778, and turned what had been essentially a civil war into a global conflict. Spain and the Netherlands entered the fighting as allies of France over the next two years. French involvement proved to be decisive, with their naval victory in the Chesapeake leading to the surrender of the British forces after the Siege of Yorktown (September 28 - October 19 1781). Peace negotiations were subsequently undertaken, leading to the Treaty of Paris (September 3 1783), which ended the American Revolutionary War.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³¹¹ See: S. Conway, *The War of American Independence, 1775-83* (London, 1995); S. Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford, 2000); R. Middleton, *The War of American Independence, 1775-83* (Harlow, Essex, 2012).

Highland soldiers continued to serve in large numbers during the period of the American Revolutionary War.³¹² This continuity in service is epitomised by the two regiments raised by Simon Fraser, Master of Lovat. The original Fraser's Highlanders, the 78th Regiment, was in North America from 1757-63, and was the largest battalion in Major-General Wolfe's army during the 1759 campaign in Quebec. The second unit raised by Fraser, the 71st Regiment, also played a highly significant role in the American Revolutionary War: it was in the continent from 1776-82 and took part in almost all major engagements during the conflict.³¹³ Matthew Dziennik has argued that, while Highland soldiers did sometimes attack colonial arguments for independence, they 'probably fought more for the economic and social benefits of service than anything else'.³¹⁴ Whatever their own motivations for fighting were, it has also been suggested that this period of service was instrumental in displacing the prevailing negative perception south of the border as Scots as 'plotting Jacobites or shock troops of despotism'.³¹⁵

Ten poems are extant from the period of the American Revolutionary War (the last three listed here will be considered in the chapter on women's poetry):³¹⁶

- Duncan Lothian's 'Iorram air America' ('*A Song about America*') looks to America as a land of opportunity, against an economically depressed Gàidhealtachd;³¹⁷
- In Duncan Kennedy's 'Oran air a Dheanamh do Eiridh a mach America' ('*Song to the American Revolution*') the poet castigates the American Revolutionaries for turning against Britain;³¹⁸
- Angus Campbell's 'Molaidh do Dhonnacha Mac-Dhiarmaid' ('*In Praise of Duncan MacDiarmid*') takes as its subject a young soldier who has been called to service in America;³¹⁹
- The anonymous 'Oran do na Gael a bha sa cuir do America, san bhliadhna 1778' ('*Song to the Gaels who were sent to America in the year 1778*') praises the Argyll Highlanders on their departure for America in 1778;³²⁰

³¹² See: 'Historical Context', p. 32.

³¹³ Brumwell, 'The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83), p. 395.

³¹⁴ M.P., Dziennik, 'Scotland and the American Revolution', in *Journal of the American Revolution* (2013), [accessed Nov 15 2017, <https://allthingsliberty.com/2013/10/scotland-american-revolution/>].

³¹⁵ Brumwell, 'The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83), p. 395.

³¹⁶ The Arisaig poet Ronald MacDonald's 'Oran do'n Chath Bhuidheann Dhonullaich' might also date from this period. R. Donullach, *Orain le Raoghall Donullach, an Ardnis, Arasaig, Siorruichd Inbhirnis* (Inbhirnis, 1821), p. 158.

³¹⁷ D. Loudin, *Comh-Chruinneachidh, Orannaigh Gaedhealach agus Bearla* (Aberrain, 1780), pp. 22-25.

³¹⁸ *An Gàidheal*, vol. 1 (1872), pp. 268-70 and 322-24.

³¹⁹ A. Caimbeul, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach* (Dun-Eidin, 1785), pp. 25-28.

³²⁰ A. Stewart and D. Stewart (eds.), *Cochruinneacha taoghta de shaothair nam bard Gaelach* (Duneidin, 1804), pp. 521-25.

- 'Tha mi sgìth dhe'n fhogar seo' (*I'm Weary of this Exile*) has been attributed to Iain Mac Mhurchaidh and has been thought to have been composed while this loyalist soldier was held captive in Philadelphia;³²¹
- 'Gur Muladach a tha mi' (*It is I who am sorrowful*) has also been attributed to Mac Mhurchaidh;³²²
- In his 'Oran do 'n Chath-Bhuidhinn Rioghail Gha'ileach air dhoibh teachd dhachaidh a America' (*Song to the Royal Highland Regiment on their return from America*), Kenneth MacKenzie praises the Black Watch on their return to Scotland after the American Revolutionary War;³²³
- Margaret Cameron's 'Moladh do Mhic Achaladair' (*Song to the Sons of Achalader*) is a praise poem to two young members of the gentry which refers to their military service in America;³²⁴
- Cameron's 'Cumhadh do Chloinn Iain Chaimbeil, air dhoibh falbh dh' America' (*Lament to the Children of Iain Campbell, after their leaving for America*), is a lament to her three foster sons on their being called to service in America.³²⁵
- Margaret MacGregor's 'Òran do bràithrean Iain is Dòmhnall bha an cogadh America' (*A Song to her Brothers Iain and Donald who were in the American war*) is a song to her brothers who are serving in the American Revolutionary War.³²⁶

Reactions

The Glen Lyon schoolmaster, Donnchadh Lodainn's (Duncan Lothian, 1730-1812), 'Iorram air America', '*A Rhythmic Song about America*,' is a sprawling, multi-dimensional account of the opportunities offered on the other side of the Atlantic during the era of the American Revolutionary War, which the poet presents in direct opposition to an oppressed and economically depressed Gàidhealtachd.³²⁷ The chorus makes clear that Lothian views America as a destination which offers an escape from poverty in the Gàidhealtachd:

³²¹ C. Chisholm, 'Old Gaelic Songs', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 12 (1885-86), pp. 152-53.

³²² *Ibid.*, pp. 148-50.

³²³ C. Mac'Coinnich, *Orain Ghaidhealach, agus Bearla air an Eadar-Theangacha le Coinneach Mac 'Coinnich ann an Caisteal-an-Lea'uir faisg air Irneis* (Dunedin, 1792), pp. 10-14.

³²⁴ M. Cham'ron, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach* (Dùn Èideann, 1785), pp. 17-19.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-48.

³²⁶ D. Macintoisich, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain thaghte Ghàeleach* (Edinburgh, 1831), pp. 3-7.

³²⁷ Lothian had been a pupil of the hymn-writer Dugald Buchanan. His collection was published in 1780. Ronald Black has noted: '[He] was a man of the people, and his collection is mostly by himself - five cheerful elegies and eulogies..., eight love songs, four comic songs about courting and the like, two songs about the other preoccupations of his day (emigration, tobacco and drink), one about a one-eared cat (a topic often met with in Gaelic verse, for some reason), seven translations of English and Scots songs, one macaronic, three hymns and (his speciality) three religious songs'. Black, 'Gaelic Secular Publishing', p. 604.

O thèid sinn do dh'America
 Mun teirig air ar stòras
 On dhaoraich iad am fearann oirnn
 'S nach urrainn neach bhith beò ann.³²⁸

*O, we will go to America
 Before our money runs out
 Since they have raised rents on us
 And no one can have a livelihood.*³²⁹

The first item on Lothian's agenda is economic and, it seems safe to assume, personal, as he complains about the price of tobacco in Scotland: 'Tha 'n tombàc cho daor / Agus nach feudar bhith 'ga fheòraich' (*Tobacco is so expensive / That one cannot ask for it*).³³⁰ Hard economic facts therefore set the tone here. Against this backdrop of uncertainty at home, America is immediately presented as a place synonymous with military success and achievement:

Tha 'n t eillean fad a chean agnn,
 'S New York, am baille mòr sin,
 'S chuaidh 'n teicheadh air na Reubaltaich,
 'S na cèudan air an leònadh.³³¹

*Long Island is already in our possession
 And that great city of New York,
 The Rebels were driven out
 And hundreds have been wounded.*³³²

Lothian castigates the rebels for thinking they could take on the might of Britain:

Chi sibh ann an ath-ghaoraid,
 Gu 'n raibh bhur barail gòrach,
 Gu 'n coisneadh sibh air Breatan
 Ge bu mhòr bhur neart, 's ùr stòras.³³³

*You will come to see shortly
 That your opinion was foolish*

³²⁸ Loudin, *Comh-Chruinneachidh*, p. 22.

³²⁹ Translations of this poem are by Newton with modifications by the current writer. Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 57.

³³⁰ Loudin, *Comh-Chruinneachidh*, p. 22; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 57.

³³¹ Loudin, *Comh-Chruinneachidh*, p. 23.

³³² Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, pp. 57-58.

³³³ Loudin, *Comh-Chruinneachidh*, p. 23.

*That you would ever triumph over Britain,
However wealthy and strong you may be.*³³⁴

The poet does not recognise the disconnect between the economically compromised society he has described in the Gàidhealtachd and his depiction of Britain as an all-powerful, resource-rich entity. However, while Lothian's acceptance of British power is simply expressed, it is based on an understanding that he and his fellow Gaels can gain from it - even if this requires displacement to another land. Loyalty is easily given by the poet when gain/profit is discernible.

The next layer added to his song is Gaelic in perspective and European in scope, as he delineates the prestigious military history of the Gaels on the continent, through the origin legend of Goídel Glas (Gathelus), the legendary creator of the Goidelic languages and eponymous ancestor of the Gaels.³³⁵ Having all but brushed over the current campaign, Lothian is careful to develop his theme here, and, in doing so, implies nobility of spirit and daringness in action to be inherent characteristics of the Gaels as a people. Stanzas such as the following, in which he describes Gathelus's arrival and subsequent triumph in Scotland, add the potency of Gaelic heroic legend to this present-day call for Gaels to take affirmative action:

A-rithis chaidh e dh'Albainn
Is thug e armailt mhòr leis;
'S bha iomadh latha cruaidh aca
Mun d' fhuadaich e o'n còir iad.³³⁶

*Later he went to Scotland
And he took a great army with him;
They had many a hard battle
Before the people were driven out from what was
rightfully theirs.*³³⁷

The following section can be seen as the crux of the poem, where Lothian expands upon the specific point raised in his opening stanza to outline the widespread economic hardship in the Gàidhealtachd at the time:

Ach tha Goill aig eibheach,
Gu 'n feum sinn dol air fògradh;
'S gur h iad na Caoirich cheann-riathach,

³³⁴ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 58.

³³⁵ J.T. Koch, 'Goídel Glas' in J.T. Koch (ed.) *Celtic Culture* (Oxford, 2006), p. 830.

³³⁶ Loudin, *Comh-Chruinneachidh*, p. 24.

³³⁷ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 59.

A thiondas as air coir sinn.

Mar tig an reachd as ùr oirn,
Tha mise an dùil 'san dochas,
Nach cluinier focal Gaelic,
Sa' bhaille 's airde a' m' eolas.³³⁸

*But English-speakers are crying out
That we have to be driven out
And that speckle-headed sheep
Will turn us out of our birthright.*

*Before we are overcome with grief again
I expect, and I hope,
That not a word of Gaelic will be heard
In the township I know best.*³³⁹

Such is the hardship therefore that Lothian actively hopes that Gaels and the Gaelic language will depart the Gàidhealtachd in search of a better, more profitable life in North America. His song finishes on the same note, with a call to those in the Gàidhealtachd to access and gain from this most promising of lands. His last words on the subject are blunt: 'On gheibh iad fearann saor ann / Chan fhan ach daoine gòrach' ('*Since they can get cheap land there / No one but fools will stay here*').³⁴⁰ As has been alluded to, Lothian makes no association between the current economic conditions in the Highlands and the governing of the British state. This inability to grasp the nature of the economic and political reality in the Highlands would be a feature of Gaelic poetry during the age of clearance.³⁴¹ But, despite this (understandable) level of ignorance, Lothian displays a keen awareness of the ways in which the contemporary context could be exploited and manipulated to himself and his countrymen's benefit.

For the Argyll schoolmaster Donnchadh Ceannadach (Duncan Kennedy, c.1758-1836), America is a location synonymous with dereliction of duty and reckless rebellion. Kennedy published a book of hymns in 1786 and also made an important collection of Ossianic poetry (c. 1774-83).³⁴² Possibly composed about 1781, his 'Oran air a Dheanamh do Eiridh a mach America' conceives of the rebellion through the analogy of a child rebelling and turning against its parent.³⁴³

³³⁸ Loudin, *Comh-Chruinneachidh*, p. 24

³³⁹ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 59.

³⁴⁰ Loudin, *Comh-Chruinneachidh*, p. 25; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 59.

³⁴¹ See: D. E. Meek (ed.), *Tuath is Tighearna* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 21, 34-36.

³⁴² A. Gunderloch, 'Duncan Kennedy: Poet and collector of heroic ballads', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 28 (2011), pp. 55-95.

³⁴³ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 149.

While the poem might, as Michael Newton has suggested, interpret the behaviour of the American Revolutionaries according to the mores of Highland society, it makes no direct reference to the Gaels; it is a work of propaganda composed primarily from a loyalist/British perspective.³⁴⁴ When the poet focusses in, he does so on England as a country:

Cha-n iochdadh na h-iochdrain ud cìsean no càin,
Ach bhitheadh iad neo-cheangailt' ri Sasunn 's ri 'gnàth,
A reachd no ceart-choir-sa cha deònaicht'gu brath,
A dhionadh 's a chòmhrag a' chòir ann an làimh.³⁴⁵

*Those ignoble folk would not render their taxes or tribute
But would be separated from England and her customs.
Neither her law or her proper justice would ever be granted
But the disputed rights had to be protected in combat.*³⁴⁶

The Americans have broken their contract with the crown, and Kennedy makes clear his belief that this will lead to their ultimate failure.³⁴⁷ Where McLagan claimed that British victory and government would lead to the Tree of Peace taking root in America, Kennedy asserts that the removal of British influence will have the inverse effect, and lead to death and decay.³⁴⁸ He states 'Chaidh toradh na coille an gainnead gu léir, / 'Us thoirleum gu làr ann an cràmhaig 's nan ceir' ('The produce of the forest has completely dried up / They have fallen to the ground like refuse').³⁴⁹ There is a strong and consistent biblical undertone to Kennedy's piece, including direct reference to the story of Absalom turning against his father, King David. For Kennedy, rebelling against Britain equates rebelling against Christianity itself.

Kennedy's poem is unashamedly partisan and pro-British in its argument, but also springs, in its focus on family values and Christian imagery and allusion, directly from late-eighteenth century Highland society.³⁵⁰ The poet's unforgiving indictment of the American Revolutionaries as ungrateful subjects, deserving of punishment, is indicative of a belief that the British state is owed loyalty by those who benefit from its governance. Might the strength of Kennedy's opposition to the revolution have reflected a discomfort with the recent history of the Gàidhealtachd? That the piece is completely lacking in references to the Gaels or

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ *An Gàidheal*, vol. 1, p. 269.

³⁴⁶ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 150

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *An Gàidheal*, vol. 1, p. 277; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 154.

³⁵⁰ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 150

the Gàidhealtachd, at a time when changes in land use were leading to tenants being cleared off estates, might demonstrate an act of wilful ignorance on the poet's part.³⁵¹

Departures

While much of the poetry of the period focusses on the other side of the Atlantic, the poetic record also gives us insight into the impact of service at home. The Breadalbane poet Aonghas Caimbeul's (Angus Campbell, fl. 1785) 'Molaidh do Dhonnacha Mac-Dhiarmaid' is a praise poem in name only: in tone, style, metre and content it is much closer to a lament. The piece sees Campbell in his role as spokesperson of his community, reflecting sadness and frustration about the departure of one of its sons for military service. We hear:

'Se bhith 'd chùirse a d' dhùthaich
Dh'fhàg do chàirdean neo-shunndach 'ad dhèidh,

...

Bhith gad fhògradh is gad stiùradh
Gu cogadh a-nunn air muir thrèin,
Cha bhiodh an trioblaid nas mùtha
Bhith gad chàramh 's an ùir leis an Eug.³⁵²

*It is your departure from your homeland
That has left your friends despondent behind you,*

...

*That you are exiled and sent away
To a foreign war across a mighty ocean.
their distress would be no greater
Were they laying you in the ground in Death.³⁵³*

Campbell's closing couplet here expresses in the starkest of terms how MacDiarmid's departure is viewed by the community: his loss to the military is comparable to his death and burial. Campbell's piece is altogether lacking in militaristic panegyric and is reflective of the sometimes ambiguous nature of military service and its perception in the Gàidhealtachd during the period. However, Campbell does make a somewhat resigned call for loyalty and obligation as he encourages MacDiarmid – now in a position where he has been made to leave – to fulfill his vows to the king:

³⁵¹ See for instance: Mainnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, pp. 210-46.

³⁵² Caimbeul, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhleach*, p. 26.

³⁵³ Translations of this poem are by Newton with modifications by the current writer. Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 113.

O 'n a chuaidh tu as t eólas
 'S gu 'n deachaidh do sheòl as an riogh'chd,
 Glac misneach an còmhnaidh,
 Agus coi-lion do bhòidean do 'n Ri,³⁵⁴

*Since you left your own country,
 And you were sailed out of the kingdom,
 Keep up your spirits,
 And fulfil your oaths to the King,*

The concluding stanza seems to make clear, however, that the poet views the war in America and its demands on the men of the Gàidhealtachd in a negative light:

Leam is deireasach, cràiteach,
 Mar a tha iad an dràsta ag inns',
 Gur e America 'n t àite,
 Ann 's am fèumail, do 'r cairdibh dol tir,³⁵⁵

*It is painful and harmful to me,
 What they are now saying,
 That America is the destination
 In which our relatives should land,³⁵⁶*

We see here a difference in perspective between Campbell and Duncan Lothian (two poets from the same area). Where Lothian viewed America as a positive location, which offered opportunity to escape, Campbell sees it as synonymous with loss and forced departure. And might there be some subtle castigation of the king and his army's methods of recruitment when Campbell goes on to state that it is an 'òrdamh ro-làidir o 'n Ri' ('*extremely forceful command from the king*') that has led to Campbell being taken away from his family and community 'air sàile' ('*across the ocean*').³⁵⁷ Campbell's central focus, allegiance and interest in this song is local; he views service from the perspective of his own community and the impact it will have on it.

Departure could also be viewed in a positive light by poets, as can be seen in the anonymous 'Oran do na Gael a bha sa cuir do America, san bhliadhna 1778'. Newton has said that this song is most likely addressed to the 74th regiment (Argyll Highlanders), and this ascription seems accurate.³⁵⁸ This regiment was raised in

³⁵⁴ Caimbeul, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, p. 27.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁵⁶ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 113.

³⁵⁷ Caimbeul, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, p. 27; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 113.

³⁵⁸ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 145.

December 1777 by Colonel John Campbell of Barbreck and served in America until the Treaty of Paris in 1783. The Highland regiments are depicted here as saviours of the United Kingdom, called upon by the king to take the place of English forces who had surrendered in America:

Thainig teachdair o'n Rìgh
 Gu'n robh cruas air a Rìoghachd,
 O'n rinn Saghsanaich strìochda' thar Fairge;
 Ach na'n eireadh na Gillean,
 Ga'm bu chliu bhi san iomairt,
 Gu'm pilleadh a ris an t-sealbh riu.³⁵⁹

*A message came from the King
 That his kingdom was in distress
 Since the English were surrendering across the ocean;
 But if the lads would rise
 Who are renowned for warfare
 They would return the colony to them.*³⁶⁰

Gaelic/Highland exceptionalism features strongly in this piece. The soldiers are told that, because they are from a kingdom ‘‘S gach treun fhear ’na dhithist’ (‘*In which every brave man is as good as two*’), that they must win fame and renown in this conflict.³⁶¹ The poet demands loyalty not towards king or country but towards the honour of ‘*our* ancestors’, with the possessive pronoun stressing the fact that he is addressing the Gaels/Highlanders/Argyllmen directly:

’S e mo ghuidhe le dùrachd,
 ’N’air bheir sibh ur cùl rinn,
 Gu’n cluinnear ur cliu a bhi ainmail;
 Gu’n seasamh sibh dilis dhuinn,
 Onair ar Sinsir,
 ’S gu’n coisin sibh sìochaidh le’r feara-ghleus.³⁶²

*It is my sincere prayer
 That when you depart from us
 That your fame will spread
 That you will defend for us with loyalty
 The honour of our ancestors*

³⁵⁹ Stewart and Stewart, *Cochruinneacha taoghta*, p. 521.

³⁶⁰ Translations of this poem are by Newton with modifications by the current writer. Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 146.

³⁶¹ Stewart and Stewart, *Cochruinneacha taoghta*, p. 523; Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 147.

³⁶² Stewart and Stewart, *Cochruinneacha taoghta*, p. 523-24.

*And that you will win peace with your manly deeds.*³⁶³

We can see again in this poem the tendency for Gaelic poets of the period to focus in on their own society and culture in attempting to make sense of the conflict in America. In the penultimate stanza the poet is conscious of a threat from France, Spain and Holland, but confidently predicts that their ‘latha fo’n aithreach’ (*‘day of regret’*) will come ‘Nuair thionailear bannal nan Garbh-Chrioch’ (*‘When the Highland company are assembled’*).³⁶⁴ The Highlanders therefore emerge from the piece as an hereditary and homogenous military corps, on whom the security of the United Kingdom is dependent.

Iain Mac Mhurchaidh: The Soldier’s Perspective

The bulk of the extant material of the American Revolutionary War was composed by non-combatant poets in the Gàidhealtachd, but insight into both the emigrant and the soldier’s experience can be gained from work until recently commonly attributed to the Kintail poet Iain Mac Mhurchaidh (John Macrae, fl. 1774-80).³⁶⁵ Mac Mhurchaidh arrived in North Carolina from Kintail in 1774. Responding to an appeal from Brigadier General Donald MacDonald in 1776 for all North Carolina Highlanders to join the Loyalist cause, Mac Mhurchaidh enlisted on the side of the British. He was taken prisoner by the Americans at the Battle of Moore’s Creek in February 1776, and was transported to Philadelphia, where he has been thought to have composed ‘Tha mi sgìth dhe’n fhogar seo’ (*‘I am Tired of this Exile’*).³⁶⁶ The exile referred to in the poem can be read in terms of his prison sentence and his experience in North America as a whole, which had not been a happy one. The poem is comparable in tone and indeed subject matter to John Roy Stewart’s ‘Urnuigh Iain Ruaidh’ (*‘John Roy’s Prayer’*), as the poet laments the unfairness of his punishment, despite having stood for what he believes to have been a just cause.³⁶⁷

Ged tha mi fo’n choille
Chan eil coire ri chòmhdach orm

Ach mi sheasamh gu dìleas

³⁶³ Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 148.

³⁶⁴ Stewart and Stewart, *Cochruinneacha taoghta*, p. 525; Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 148.

³⁶⁵ Michael Newton has raised questions about the authorship of the poems attributed to Mac Mhurchaidh. See: M. Newton, ‘In Their Own Words: Gaelic Literature in North Carolina’, *Scotia*, 25 (2001), pp.1-25; M. Newton, ‘Unsettling Iain mac Mhurchaidh’s slumber: The Carolina Lullaby, authorship, and the influence of print media on Gaelic oral tradition’, *Aiste*, 4 (2014), pp. 131-54.

³⁶⁶ Newton, *We’re Indians Sure Enough*, p. 143.

³⁶⁷ Campbell, *Highland Songs of the Forty-five*, p. 186.

Leis an Rìgh bhon bha 'choir aige.³⁶⁸

*Although I am an outlaw
There is no blame of which I can be accused.*

*Except that I stood loyally
For the King, because he was in the right.*³⁶⁹

The poet's loyalty to the king is therefore clearly and simply elucidated: as the king has the 'right', he has stood loyally with him. Although he has no misgivings about giving his loyalty to the king, there is a sense of regret in ever having come to America. The poet sets his sights on the other side of the Atlantic for solace: 'Thoir mo shoraidh thar linne / 'Dh ionnsaigh 'ghlinne 'm bu chòir dhomh bhith' ('Take my greetings across the ocean / To the glen where I ought to be').³⁷⁰ We see here the poet's yearning after his homeland, its culture, and the companionship he enjoyed there:

Thoir mo shòraidh 'Chinn-tàile
Far am bi mànnan is òranan.

An tric a bha mi mu 'n bhuideal
Mar ri cuideachd shòlasaich.

Cha b' e 'n dràm bha mi 'g iarraidh
Ach na b' fhiach an cuid stòraidhean.³⁷¹

*Take my greetings to Kintail
Where there are songs and warm talk.*

*Where I was often drinking
With a contented company of friends.*

*It was not the drink that I sought
But the value of their tales.*³⁷²

'Gur Muladach a tha mi' is also based on the poet's experience in the American Revolutionary War. He takes a similar approach to that in 'Tha mi sgìth dhe'n fhogar seo' of comparing his current circumstances with the contented life he had in the Gàidhealtachd. The poem appears to refer to the Battle of King's Mountain,

³⁶⁸ Chisholm, 'Old Gaelic Songs', p. 152.

³⁶⁹ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 144.

³⁷⁰ Chisholm, 'Old Gaelic Songs', p. 153; Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 143.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 143.

which was fought on the border between the Carolinas in October of 1780.³⁷³ According to tradition, Mac Mhurchaidh sang this song to the revolutionaries as he stepped into No Man's Land in an attempt to convert his fellow countrymen.³⁷⁴ In the opening stanza, the poet focusses on the life he left behind in Kintail:

Gur muladach a tha mi,
'S mi 'n diugh gun aobhar ghaire;
Cha b' ionnan 's mar a bha mi
'S an aite bha thall:
Far am faighinn manran
Mire, is ceol-gaire,³⁷⁵

*It is sorrowful that I am,
As I am today without cause to smile;
That it not how I was,
In the place yonder:
Where I would get entertainment,
Merriment, and the sound of laughter.*

This is in sharp contrast to the inhospitable and violent society the poet has encountered in America:

'S e th' againn anns an aite so,
Tarruing dhorn is lamh
Agus cleas nan con 'bhi sas
Anns gach aite le'n ceann.³⁷⁶

*What we have in this place,
Is the raising of fists and hands,
And, like dogs, going into
Every situation head first.*

King George is perceived of and appreciated in terms of the benefits which flow from loyalty towards him. George's rule is synonymous with the rule of law, reason and wealth, and any opposition to Britain will result in the loss of these things:

Sud an rud a dh' eireas,
Mur dean sibh uile geilleadh,
'Nuair 'thig a chuid as treine,

³⁷³ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 141.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³⁷⁵ Chisholm, 'Old Gaelic Songs', p. 148.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Dheth 'n treud a tha thall.
 Bithidh crochadh agus reubadh,
 Is creach air bhur cuid spreidhe,
 Cha'n fhaighear lagh no reusan
 Do reubaltach ann;³⁷⁷

*The following is what will happen
 If you do not surrender
 When the strongest forces arrive
 Of those men who are now yonder;
 There will be hanging and injury
 And your wealth will be plundered,
 No law or reason will be available
 To any rebels at all;*³⁷⁸

This poetry of the American Revolutionary War attributed to Iain Mac Mhurchaidh is from an explicitly loyalist perspective and leaves no space for debate about its political allegiances. But these poems also depict a poet still emotionally attached and culturally rooted to the Gàidhealtachd. His certainty of supporting a just cause and his desire for punishment of those who oppose it bear comparison with Jacobite poetry of the late seventeenth and earlier eighteenth centuries. He is therefore a highly traditional poet despite - and to some degree because of - the unfamiliarity of his surroundings.

While the poetry attributed to Mac Mhurchaidh alludes to rebel victories, there is little in the poetic record that acknowledges the overall defeat of the British military in the American Revolutionary War. The Inverness-shire poet Coinneach MacCoinnich's (Kenneth MacKenzie, 1758-1837) 'Oran do 'n Chath-Bhuidhinn Rioghail Gha'ileach air dhoibh teachd dhachaidh a America' goes so far as to laud the Black Watch's return from America as a triumphant homecoming.³⁷⁹ MacKenzie had been at sea during the years of the American Revolutionary War, and it is therefore likely that he would have witnessed the maritime conflict to some degree and been kept up to date with the progress of the war through his seafaring networks. John MacKenzie informs us that he composed most of his poetry at sea,

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

³⁷⁸ Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, p. 142.

³⁷⁹ Kenneth MacKenzie was born at Castle Leather near Inverness in 1758. At about seventeen years of age he became a sailor's apprentice. He returned from sailing in 1789, and at this time started taking subscriptions for his first book of poetry. *Òrain Ghaidhealach* was published in 1792. Shortly after the publication of this book, he gained the rank of an officer in the 78th Regiment ('Seaforth Highlanders'), and having left the army he accepted the position of a postmaster of an Irish provincial town. MacKenzie is understood to have been homosexual and John MacKenzie has said that while in Ireland he 'indulged in the genuine hospitality of his heart, always keeping an open door and spread table, and literally caressing such of his countrymen as chance or business led in his way'. MacKenzie, *Sar Obair nam Bard Gaelach*, p. 271; Black, *An Lasair*, pp. 499-500.

and, given that he returned to shore in 1789, it seems likely that this piece was composed on board ship.³⁸⁰

Defeat is far from the poet's mind as he toasts the regiment in the opening stanza: 'Deoch slaint na gilleam b'aite leam / D'a 'math thig bonaid bhreachd-bhallach' ('A toast to the lads I like / Who well suit the speckled bonnet').³⁸¹ He lists their victories, including earlier battles from the Seven Years' War: Ticonderoga, Guadalupe and Havana are counted among the scenes in which they have won battle honours. It is highly improbable that MacKenzie would not have been aware of the defeat of the British in America in 1783. His poetry contains numerous allusions to late-eighteenth century current affairs, such as his references to the Sultan of Mysore, Hyder Ali, at the time of the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84), as will be considered later in this chapter. How then are we to view his disinclination to mention the defeat? The answer may be that the poet did not see a defeat for Britain as equating to a defeat for Scotland, or, more precisely, the Highlands and the Gaels. MacKenzie's central focus in the poem is to portray the Black Watch as an accomplished and exemplary military force. He stresses the regiment's heroic credentials by comparing them with Caesar's legendary tenth Roman legion:

Cha b' aithne dhomh co dheireadh riu,
Na thairneadh stràbh roimh 'm feusagan,
'S nach beo an deicheamh *Legion*,
A bh' aig *Sesear* an sa 'n *Roimh*.³⁸²

*I do not know who would rise against them,
That could pull a straw out of their beards,
Now that the tenth legion is no longer around,
That Caesar had in Rome.*

For MacKenzie, these soldiers are the equals of élite Roman legionaries, playing a crucial part in the foreign wars of the British Empire, much as Caesar's legionaries did in the Roman General's Gallic campaigns. The juxtaposition of foreign place-names with the language and imagery of the panegyric code invests this alien environment with familiarity for a Gaelic audience. While the backdrop of Guadalupe is foreign, the soldiers conduct themselves in a hereditary manner:

Ann a *Gadalup* bu chruadalach,
Na fir thug dhachaidh 'n dualachas,
Gu beachdail, reachdail suaicheantach,

³⁸⁰ MacKenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 270.

³⁸¹ Mac'Coinnich, *Orain Ghaidhealach, agus Bearla*, p. 11.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

Gu dileas fìor-ghlan uaslach;³⁸³

*In Guadalupe, (they) were courageous,
The men who brought their birthright home,
Observant, lawful, armorial,
Loyal, pure and graceful.*

MacKenzie asserts that that due to this cultural rootedness, the Gaels are destined to succeed:

Tha'm freasdal buan mar thaice dhoibh,
Ga'n cumail suas gu sàstalach,
...
'S tha Ghàilig mar bu chleachda dhi,
Cuir feartan ann nam feoil.³⁸⁴

*Lasting providence is a support to them,
Maintaining them comfortably,
...
And Gaelic, as was always her manner,
Places virtues in their flesh.*

The poet therefore states that the Gaelic language itself is a factor in the regiment's military excellence. MacKenzie's praise appears to be based on his appreciation of the regiment as a manifestation of a traditional, heroic Gaelic society, and it is therefore unsurprising that he pays no attention to the outcome of the wider conflict. For the poet's purposes, the success or failure of the British military was secondary to the opportunity for the soldiers of the Black Watch to conduct themselves in a hereditary manner - and be praised accordingly.

Europe and India

While the bulk of the poetry composed in the period 1756 to 93 is related to conflict in America, other locations also feature in the poetry, as well as general allusions to the military service of the Gaels during the period.

- Duncan Bàn Macintyre's 'Òran do'n Rìgh' ('*Song to the King*') is thought to have been composed about 1760, during the period of the Seven Years' War, in honour of the coronation of King George III;³⁸⁵

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁸⁵ Macleod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, pp. 26-33.

- The same poet's 'Oran do 'n t-Seann Fhreiceadan Ghàidhealach' ('*Song to the Old Highland Watch*') might have been composed during or after the American Revolutionary War. In it, Macintyre focusses on the eponymous regiment;³⁸⁶
- Macintyre's 'Oran do Reisimeid Earra-Ghaidheal' ('*Song to the Argyll Regiment*') praises that regiment, raised in 1788;³⁸⁷
- Kenneth MacKenzie's 'Oran do Choirneal Donncha' Mac' Phearson Bhreachdachaidh ann am Bàideanach' ('*A Song to Colonel Duncan MacPherson of Breakachy in Badenoch*') praises a Highland officer for his service in India in the 1780s;³⁸⁸
- MacKenzie's 'Òran do MhicLeòid na hEaradh air dha tighinn dachuidh as na h-Innsean a'n Ear' ('*A Song to Macleod of Harris on his return from the East Indies*') praises an officer on his return from India;³⁸⁹
- A song thought to have been composed by Christopher Macrae, 'A' Cheud Latha na Mhàirt' ('*The First Day of March*'), relates to the return of Highland soldiers from India in 1784.³⁹⁰

The latter can be seen in Duncan Bàn Macintyre's poetry from his middle period as a poet, where he makes frequent references to Highlanders' military service. In 'Òran do'n Rìgh', thought to have been composed about 1760, Macintyre expresses his support for the Hanoverian George III. The piece is in sharp contrast to his earlier pro-Jacobite poetry, such as his complaint against the Dress Act of 1746, 'Òran don Bhriogais' ('*Song to the Breeches*'), where he had referred to the monarch as 'coigreach' ('*a stranger*').³⁹¹ Macintyre does not shy away from mentioning the past allegiance of many Gaels, as he says 'bhathas greis 'gan cur an duileachd / Mar nach buineadh iad do 'n phàirtidh' ('*for a time they were held suspect / As if they were alien to the nation*'),³⁹² but neither does he dwell on this at length in the poem. While the poem could be seen as an unquestioning and even naïve expression of support for the Hanoverian monarchy, such a one-sided reading would derogate the poet's own motives and motivations in composing the piece. It is clear that Macintyre views the King as a provider and a source of wealth and stability, apparent when he states:

An ceithir àirdean an t-saoghail
Tha fearann is daoine aig Deòrsa;
'S tha chinn-eaglais anns gach àite
Chum an sàbhaladh o dhòbheart;

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-63.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 264-69.

³⁸⁸ Mac'Coinnich, *Orain Ghaidhealach*, pp. 37-42.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-90.

³⁹⁰ W. MacKenzie, 'The Highland Regiments', *TGSI*, 10 (1884), pp. 174-76.

³⁹¹ Macleod, *Orain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. 8.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 30; 31.

Tha lagh is pàrlamaid aca
 Chumail ceartais riutha is còrach,
 'S tha mhèirl' an déidh a casgadh.
 Sguir na creachan is an tòrachd.³⁹³

*In the four quarters of the globe,
 George hath territory and subjects;
 And his prelates are in every place
 To save them from misdeamenour;
 They have laws and parliament
 To ensure them justice and equity;
 Thievery hath been arrested,
 Forays and feuds have ceased.*³⁹⁴

As will be seen with regards to Macintyre's military poetry as a corpus, the poet's appreciation of George and his loyalty towards him are contingent on the monarch offering (or representing) cultural, material, or societal reward. In a post-Culloden Gàidhealtachd where the pillars of clan society had been eradicated, it is understandable that an authority who commanded control of land, people, infrastructure and the rule of law could be conceived of as a symbol of stability. In 'Oran do 'n t-Seann Fhreiceadan Ghàidhealach', the poet makes clear that his loyalty is towards the regiment and its soldiers. His main focus in the poem is the Black Watch, whom he describes as 'Sliochd fineachan uasal / A ghin on na tuathaich' ('*Descendants of the noble clans, / Begotten of north men*'), but he also goes on to praise all of the 'English' forces later in the poem:

Tha mo dhùil r' an tighinn dachaigh
 Gun an ùin' a bhith fada,
 Le cùmhnanta ceartais
 Fir Shasann gu léir.³⁹⁵

*I look forward to their homecoming
 In the not distant future,
 All the English forces,
 Bringing covenants of justice.*³⁹⁶

It is clear that Macintyre's concentric loyalties allow him to associate with various groups and/or nationalities at one time. In 'Oran do Reisimeid Earra-Ghaidheal'

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

(*Song to the Argyll Regiment*) the subjects of Macintyre's praise wear the badge of Scotland:

Tha suaicheantas na h-Alb' agaibh,
 Is dh' fhalbh sibh leis gu sùndach,
 ...
 Is ceann na muice fiadhaiche
 A leag Diarmaid 'sa' choill ùdlaidh.³⁹⁷

*You wear the badge of Scotland,
 And you marched off with it gaily;
 ...
 And you wear the head of the wild boar
 That Diarmaid slew in the dark wood.*³⁹⁸

As can be seen in the closing lines here, Macintyre also draws attention to the Campbell insignia, so that these soldiers (and, by extension, the poet who praises them) demonstrate loyalty towards Scotland and Clan Campbell at the same time.³⁹⁹ Macintyre's military poetry from his middle period reveals a poet who was comfortable with the increasing influence of the Highland regiments in the Gàidhealtachd at the time. While the patronage of the Campbells specifically, and his subscribers more generally, was a motivating factor in his choice of military subjects, it seems that the poet approached this subject matter with alacrity. Macintyre's innovations in Gaelic poetry, such as his great nature poem 'Moladh Beinn Dòbrain', show that the poet was more than capable of expanding the parameters of panegyric; but his military poetry also reveals a poet who operated within more traditional boundaries.

India

The other major location which featured in the perspective of Gaelic poets during this period was India. British soldiers had been in India from the mid-seventeenth century, in connection with trade and the activities of the East India Company. British involvement in India during the eighteenth century can be split into two phases, with one coming to an end and the other beginning mid-century. During the first half of the 1700s, British influence was largely confined to being a trading presence at certain locations along the Indian coast. From the 1750s, however, the

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 266-68.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 267-69.

³⁹⁹ The Argyll Regiment was raised in 1788 to protect the homeland, which explains the focus on Scotland. The Campbell reference is also obvious because the regiment was raised by a son of the Duke of Argyll. As the regiment did not see action, Macintyre praises military potential rather than achievement here.

British began to wage war in eastern and south-eastern India, thereby gaining political power over areas such as Bengal. The Anglo-Mysore Wars were fought over the last three decades of the 18th century, between the Kingdom of Mysore and the British East India Company, while the Anglo-Maratha Wars, between the Maratha Empire and the East India Company, took place between 1775-82, 1803-05 and 1816-19 respectively.⁴⁰⁰ Some Highland regiments were raised specifically for service in India, such as the 74th and 75th regiments, which were raised by Archibald Campbell and the Duke of Gordon respectively.⁴⁰¹

In opening up the field beyond the traditional scholarly vista of North America, Sheila Kidd has pointed out that the experience of Gaels in India requires much more extensive research.⁴⁰² One of the earliest military pieces related to India was ‘Oran do Choirneal Donncha’ Mac’ Phearson Bhreachdachaidh ann am Bàideanach’ by Kenneth MacKenzie. The poem is a panegyric to Duncan Macpherson (1735-1810) of Breakachy, who was both a nephew and son-in-law of the renowned Jacobite, Cluny MacPherson. Duncan MacPherson went to India with the 89th regiment in 1760 and returned to Scotland in 1766. The fame and renown this Highland soldier has brought to his region and fellow Gaels is highlighted in the poet’s praise:

Don aird an ear chaidh è òg ann,
 ’S Ghàidheil ghasta gun lèonadh,
 Cliu don tìr se bu dèonach,
 Leis nà fir a bha sònruicht,⁴⁰³

*He went east when he was young,
 And his gallant Gaels unwounded,
 Ever eager to win renown for his country,
 With the men who were distinguished.*

The poem refers to the Sultan and leader of the Kingdom of Mysore, Hyder Ali (1721-82), who appears in several poems during the period. Hyder Ali was one of the first foreign adversaries to feature in Gaelic military poetry of the eighteenth century. As will be seen later in this thesis in Chapter 6, Napoleon Bonaparte too would come to feature prominently in poets’ perspectives as a subject for satire and denigration during the period 1793 to 1815. This highlighting of enemies of Britain can be seen as reflective of an identification of involvement in a national military endeavour – a further example of the extent to which military service was a defining feature in the collective experience of Gaels during the period, and the narrative they constructed to make sense of that experience.

⁴⁰⁰ See: A. Wild, *The East India Company: trade and conquest from 1600* (London, New Delhi, 1999).

⁴⁰¹ S. Kidd, ‘Fo ghrèin loisigich nan Innsean: Na h-Innseachan an Ear tro Shùilean Gàidhealach’, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 66 (2010), p. 143.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 141-73.

⁴⁰³ Mac’Coinnich, *Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 39.

Hyder Ali is referred to again by MacKenzie in his ‘Òran do MhicLeòid na hEaradh air dha tighinn dachuidh as na h-Innsean a’n Ear’. The piece is addressed to Norman MacLeod, the 23rd chief of the Macleods (1754-1831).⁴⁰⁴ MacKenzie expresses joy at news that the soldier has returned from the east to London:

Gur mis’ a tha gu sastalach,
 O fhuair mi dhachaidh ’n sgeul’,
 Mac’Leoid a thighinn do Lunnain,
 ’S gur mor air urras fhèin,
 Gu cliù’ar, trù’ar, onaireach,
 Lan sonas ann ’s gach ceum,
 ’S tha fios aig *Hyder Ally*,
 Nach eil mis’ a’ aithris bhreug.⁴⁰⁵

*It is I who am happy,
 Since the news came home to me,
 That Macleod has come to London,
 And great is his own prosperity,
 Famous, brave, honourable,
 Full of happiness in every step,
 And Hyder Ali knows,
 That I am not telling lies.*

While the bulk of the poetry composed about India was by poets in the Gàidhealtachd, there is also one extant soldier’s composition from this period. This piece, which is said to have been composed by sergeant Crisdean MacRàth (Christopher Macrae, fl.1784) of the Seaforth Highlanders, relates to the lack of assistance that was given to soldiers in travelling home from India after the conflict with Tipu Sultan had come to an end in 1784. The poet complains that the contract between the crown and the people has been broken:

’Nuair fhuair sinn an t-òrdugh
 Bho na *Chonsul*, cha d’ chòrd e ruinn fein,
 Nar *discharge* ’thoirt nar dòrn duinn,
 ’S cead an t-saoghail gun *phortion* thoirt duinn;
 ’S iad ag inns’ anns gach àite,
 Nach ’eil eathar, no bàt ann, no seòl,
 ’S mur a h-’eil na robh tuilleadh -

⁴⁰⁴ Macleod led the Black Watch against the army of Tipu Sultan (1750-1799), Hyder Ali’s eldest son, at Paniani in 1782. He returned to Scotland in 1789, three years before MacKenzie’s piece was published. Kidd, ‘Na h-Innseachan an Ear tro Shùilean Gàidhealach’, p. 143.

⁴⁰⁵ Mac’Coinnich, *Orain Ghaidhealach*, p. 186.

Thug mi thairis mo chuid na Roinn-Eorp.⁴⁰⁶

*When we got the order,
From the consul, it did not please us,
Our discharge placed in our hands,
And permission to travel without our portion;
And they are relating in each place,
That there is not a vessel, a boat, or a sailing,
And whether or not there are or were,
I handed over what I had to get to Europe.*

Again we see the implicit understanding of Gaelic poets that military service would be adequately rewarded by those in positions of authority within the British military.

Conclusion

Between 1756 and 1793, the British military became one of the pre-eminent institutions and influences in the lives of Gaels. The response of poets during this early period of service varies according to their circumstances and motivations, but it is clear that for the most part poets reacted positively to the military.

Poets' allegiances were often concentric, so that they could express their loyalty/loyalties to different groups at the same time. This can be seen most clearly in Duncan Bàn Macintyre's poetry, where he expresses allegiance to both clan and country, in poetry that remains deeply situated in the Gaelic tradition. There is a tendency for poets to focus in on their own culture and to concentrate on local agendas and imperatives, such as Angus Campbell's song of departure and separation, which is contained by the impact of this on his own community. Likewise, for Kenneth MacKenzie the overall defeat of the British forces pales into insignificance next to the triumphant homecoming of the Highland warriors of the Black Watch. Where direct allegiance to King and country is expressed, this is often conditional on a contract being met at a local level between the authorities and the people. The focus in much of the poetry can therefore be seen to be on the inner circles (family, kin, clan, locality) of the concentric loyalties model put forward by Smout, though this is not to say that identification with the outer circles (nation, state, empire) did not also exist.⁴⁰⁷ As will be shown throughout

⁴⁰⁶ MacKenzie, 'The Highland Regiments', pp. 175-76. A version of the song was earlier printed in John Murdoch's *The Highlander* on March 28 1879.

⁴⁰⁷ Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', p. 103.

this thesis, poets' loyalties were by no means fixed and varying allegiances could interact with each other.⁴⁰⁸

The period 1756 to 1793 was a formative one in the history of the Highland regiments and it was also the crucible in which the British military tradition in Gaelic poetry was formed. The following chapters will look at how that tradition developed between the French Revolutionary and Crimean Wars.

⁴⁰⁸ See Mackillop, 'For King, Country and Regiment', pp. 210-11.

Chapter 5: French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815): Soldiers

The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars began three years after the French Revolution broke out in 1789. Fighting began on the European continent in 1792, with Revolutionary France declaring war on Austria. Following the execution of Louis XVI, Britain, Spain and the Netherlands entered the war in 1793. The wars quickly became a global conflict, with France fighting against coalitions of European allies. Napoleon Bonaparte rose to prominence in the early years of the conflict, becoming First Consul of the Republic in 1799, and first Emperor of the French in 1804. After a brief period of peace following the Peace of Amiens in 1802, fighting between Britain and France resumed in 1803. Despite the French Emperor's early military successes on land, the French Republic lost supremacy of the seas to the Royal Navy. After disastrous campaigns in Spain and Russia, Napoleon's France was eventually defeated in 1814 and 1815.⁴⁰⁹

The wars of 1793-1815 coincided with, and were part of, a period of rapid socio-economic change in the Gàidhealtachd. The first phase of the Highland Clearances was underway; Gaels from across the social strata continued to emigrate to North America (often accessing military networks as a means of doing so), until the passing of the Passengers Vessel Act in 1803; and thousands of Highlanders remained active, or were recruited into, the army following the outbreak of hostilities with the French. Raising regiments at this time continued to be in the political interests of Highland gentry.⁴¹⁰ For instance, six fencible and five line battalions were raised in the 1790s by John Campbell, the Earl of Breadalbane (1762-1834), Alexander Gordon, the Duke of Gordon (1743-1827), Sir James Grant (1738-1811), Francis Humberston Mackenzie, the chief of the Mackenzies (1754-1815) and Elizabeth Sutherland Leveson-Gower, the Countess of Sutherland (1765-1839).⁴¹¹ Cookson has noted that service in local 'Volunteer Companies' was also a particularly prevalent and popular form of service in the Highlands during the years of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.⁴¹² One of the most important factors in accounting for this fact was that volunteer units, a form of part-time soldiering, offered material benefits in a poor society, while also

⁴⁰⁹ See: D.G. Chandler, *Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars* (London, 1993); C.J. Esdaile, *The Wars of Napoleon* (Harlow, Essex, 1995).

⁴¹⁰ Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, p. 131.

⁴¹¹ Elizabeth Sutherland raised the Sutherland Fencibles in 1793; John Campbell raised three battalions of the Breadalbane Fencibles in 1793-94; The Grant or Strathspey Fencibles were raised by James Grant in 1793; Alexander Gordon raised the Gordon Fencibles in 1793. James Grant also raised the 97th Regiment (Strathspey Regiment) in 1794; Alexander Gordon raised the 92nd Regiment (Gordon Highlanders) in 1794 and a second battlion in 1803; the 78th Regiment (Seaforth Highlanders) was raised by Francis Humberston Mackenzie in 1793; and the 93rd Regiment (Sutherland Highlanders) was raised on behalf of Elizabeth Sutherland in 1799.

⁴¹² Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, pp. 74-77.

allowing for soldiers to remain close to home.⁴¹³ Of ‘volunteering’ in the Outer Hebrides during this period, which should not be confused with the type of forced enlistment which also took place, Mackillop has said: ‘It was the perfect accommodation between the need for national defence and local concerns, and unlike the regular army and navy, social and economic disruption was kept to a minimum’.⁴¹⁴ The counties of Perth, Argyll, Inverness, Ross, Cromarty, Sutherland and Caithness provided over a third of Scotland’s volunteers towards the end of the Revolutionary war.⁴¹⁵ Overall, the military units associated with the Highlands during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars amounted to eleven regiments of infantry, twenty-three regiments of fencibles and at least ten regiments of militia, as well as a considerable number of auxiliary units.⁴¹⁶

This chapter will look at the response of soldier-poets to the wars of 1793 to 1815. A significant and varied corpus of 33 poems, by 11 different soldier-poets, has been identified from this period. Some of these, such as Duncan Campbell’s collection of 1798 and the military pieces in Duncan Bàn Macintyre’s 1804 edition, were published contemporaneously with the conflict, but the bulk of it was published after 1815. The geographical spread of the poetry is wide: five of the poets whose location of origin has so far been identified were from Inverness-shire, while the others were from Skye, Mull, Morar, Perthshire and Argyll. This poetry, while distinct in cultural and, of course, linguistic terms, formed part of a greater outpouring of verse across Scotland and Britain during the period. Betty T. Bennet has estimated that there were over 3,000 short poems on the war published in newspapers, periodicals, and magazines in Britain between 1793 and 1815.⁴¹⁷ It has also been shown that over 200 individual poetry volumes with titles that referred to the war were reviewed in periodicals between 1798 and 1820, and this count obviously does not include titles which were not reviewed and poems which appeared in collections with non-specific titles.⁴¹⁸ This preponderance of poetic output was reflective of the huge impact the wars against the French had across British society; as Simon Bainbridge has said: ‘The dominance of war as a poetic subject, and its popularity with both writers and readers, should come as no surprise given the extent to which the war defined Britain during the romantic period’.⁴¹⁹ Gaelic poets of the period were therefore operating within the wider

⁴¹³ Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, pp. 300-302.

⁴¹⁴ Mackillop ‘The Outer Hebrides During the Wars of Empire and Revolution, 1750-1815’, pp. 29-31. For more on forced enlistment in the same locale, during the same period, see: MacDonald, *Lewis: A History of the Island*, pp. 116-117.

⁴¹⁵ Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, p. 143.

⁴¹⁶ Esdaile, ‘The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815’, p. 416.

⁴¹⁷ B. T. Bennet, *British War Poetry in the Age of Romanticism, 1793-1815* (New York, 1976), p. ix.

⁴¹⁸ W. S. Ward, *Literary Reviews in British Periodicals, 1798-1820: A Bibliography, with a Supplementary List of General, Non-Review, Articles on Literary Subjects*, 2 vols. (New York, 1972); cited by S. Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* (Oxford, 2003), p. 4.

⁴¹⁹ Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, p. 5.

context of widespread British poetry addressing the war, but did so with the distinctive tools of a highly militarised literary tradition.

Duncan Bàn Macintyre

It has been seen previously in this thesis that the military featured prominently in Duncan Bàn Macintyre's output during his early and middle period as a poet. During the period under consideration in this chapter, which can be considered as Duncan Bàn's late period, the poet served in the British army with the Breadalbane Fencibles from 1794 to 1799.⁴²⁰ While his service in the Hanoverian army during the '45 is well known, this later period of service has received less acknowledgement, and, until recently, little scholarly attention.⁴²¹ A septuagenarian at the time of his recruitment, Macintyre's role within the fencibles would naturally have been limited, though it may be that he was enlisted specifically due to his role as a poet. He composed a number of characteristically vigorous works during his time with the unit, and five pieces are extant from this period:

- 'Rann Claidhimh' ('*Verses on a Sword*'), on the occasion of a sword being presented to him in Taymouth in 1793, in a presentation which is likely to have marked his enrolment into the first battalion of the Breadalbane Fencibles;⁴²²
- 'Òran do Iarla Bhràghaid-Albann' ('*Song to the Earl of Breadalbane*'), to John Campbell, 4th Earl of Breadalbane, praising him for raising the Fencibles;⁴²³
- 'Òran do Reisimeid Bhraghaid Albann' ('*Song to the Breadalbane Fencibles*'), describing a regimental outing to the races in Aberdeen c.1794.⁴²⁴
- 'Òran na Gasaid' ('*Song of the Gazette*'), on hearing about the regiment's disbandment in 1798;⁴²⁵
- 'Òran a' Chaimp, 1798' ('*Song of the Camp, 1798*'), in which he celebrates the opportunity for the regiment to serve in Ireland and makes clear his own desire to do so.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁰ The Breadalbane Fencibles were raised by John Campbell, 4th Earl of Breadalbane, between 1794 and 1798.

⁴²¹ For recent analyses see: Maciver, 'A' Moladh na Rèiseamaid', pp. 61-67; McLeod 'Gaelic Poetry and the British Military Enterprise, 1756-1945', pp. 61-71; K. Sanger, 'The Pipers Were Ready and the Drum was in Trim, A Poet in the Army', paper given at *Saoghal(an) Dhonnchaidh Bhàin* conference in Edinburgh in 2012.

http://www.academia.edu/8316341/The_pipers_were_ready_and_the_drum_was_in_trim_A_poet_in_the_army [accessed 17 May 2016].

⁴²² Macleod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. 362.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 366-73.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 374-77.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 378-81.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 382-85.

Macintyre's response to the Breadalbane Fencibles can be said to have been motivated by two key concerns: his appreciation and respect for the military in cultural terms, and the material and economic advantages afforded by military service. Both responses are evident in his panegyric for the military figurehead of the Breadalbane fencibles, 'Oran do Iarla Bhràghaid Albann'. John Campbell, 4th Earl of Breadalbane, is portrayed in a highly traditional manner in the piece, fulfilling his hereditary role as the leader of a fighting unit:⁴²⁷

'S e 'n t-àrmann suairce
 A ghluais a bealach leinn,
 'S na sàr dhaoin'-uaisle
 R' a ghualainn mar ris ann;
 On dh' éirich sluagh leat
 Gu feum 'sa chruadal,
 A réir do dhualachais
 Bidh buaidh a dh' aindeoin leat.⁴²⁸

*'Tis the gracious hero
 Did march from Taymouth with us.
 And with him, at his shoulder,
 Were real gentlemen;
 Since a host hath risen with thee
 To serve in danger,
 True to thy heritage,
 In spite of foes, thou wilt have victory.⁴²⁹*

The poet shifts his focus towards the soldiers and invokes the Fianna as heroic context:

'S tu thog na ciadan

⁴²⁷ Another poem on the Breadalbane fencibles was composed by the Perthshire poet, Robert Stewart, and he portrays Campbell in a similar manner:

'Se Iarla Bheallaich 's ceannard doibh,
 'S gur mòr a dhaimh ri thuath-cheathairneadh,
 Gach fear aig a bheil ionnsachadh
 Bheir e san rang ri ghualainn e.

*The Earl of Bealach is your leader,
 And great is his connection to his nothern heroes
 Each one who has learning,
 He will bring him into rank at his side.*

The Highlander, November 29, 1873.

⁴²⁸ Macleod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. 366.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

A shliochd nam Fianntan,
 'S an am a' ghnìomha
 Bu dian 'sa charraid iad.⁴³⁰

*'Tis thou did raise hundreds
 Of Fiann descendants,
 And, in time of action,
 Swift in the strife were they.*⁴³¹

The reference to the Fianna invests Macintyre's portrayal of the soldiers with the authenticity of indigenous Gaelic tradition – it increases the cultural currency of the piece – and this is added to by drawing attention to the heroic trappings of their military service. The poet delights in beholding these properly attired and armed warriors:

'N uair théid gach treunfhear
 'Na éideadh ceannardach,
 Le 'n armaibh gleusda,
 Cho geur 's bu mhath leinn iad⁴³²

*When each stalwart donneth
 His proud accoutrement,
 With their sharpened weapons
 Keen as we want them.*⁴³³

In reference to this piece, Silke Stroh has said:

(These) new Scottish (post-) Fenians are no longer fighting their own tribal wars. Nor do they, like the modern Irish Fenians of the nineteenth century, oppose the British government. Instead, the “Fenians” of Breadalbane fight in this government's service. Just as James Macpherson had brought Gaelic Fenian legends into the orbit of the Anglophone literary scene, Whig chieftains, post-Culloden policies and the Highland regiments had brought the Gaels into the fold of the British national community, instrumentalising Gaelic peculiarities and assets – literary or military – for the mainstream's purposes.⁴³⁴

While the poet indubitably makes his reference to the Fianna in a British military context, it is Macintyre himself who instrumentalises his literary assets here. He

⁴³⁰ Macleod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. 366.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, p. 368.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁴³⁴ Stroh, *Uneasy Subjects*, p. 167.

does so, it can be suggested, to bring familiarity to bear on this new military context - and because the songs and stories surrounding the Fianna were something which the soldiers themselves would have related to.

As previously noted, cultural requisites are found side by side with more tangible material needs as motivating factors in Macintyre's regimental verse. In the closing stanzas of 'Oran do Iarla Bhràghaid Albann', having dealt with the former, Macintyre moves on to the latter. Mackillop has noted that 'it is important not to underestimate just how attractive localised, part-time military activity could be in relatively underdeveloped rural areas with rising rents and limited, unreliable earning opportunities'.⁴³⁵ The appeal of this localised form of service is reflected in the stanzas which close the poem, as Macintyre makes clear his preference for the lifestyle afforded by the Breadalbane Fencibles:

'S e 'n togail inntinn
 Cho grinn 's a b' aithne dhomh
 Bhith 'n cùirt an rìgh,
 Gun bhith strìth ri sgalachachd;
 Cha dean sinn feòraich
 Air tuille stòrais,
 'S cha teirig lòn dhuinn
 R' ar beò air gearasdan.⁴³⁶

*'Tis exhilaration
 As fine as I know of,
 To be in the king's retinue,
 And not strive with drudgery;
 We do not ask for
 Increase of riches,
 Food will not fail us
 While we live in garrison.⁴³⁷*

The poet's appreciation of service is clearly underpinned by his conception of it offering material reward. King George is mentioned here, but it is questionable to what extent the poet's loyalty lies with the monarch: it is the opportunity that the King offers for both cultural and material profit that Macintyre appreciates and praises.

Macintyre's financial motivation is equally apparent in a piece he composed on hearing news of the regiment's disbandment, 'Òran na Gasaid'. The first and

⁴³⁵ Mackillop, *More Fruitful Than the Soil*, p. 231.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

second battalions of the Breadalbane fencibles had been raised for service in Scotland only, limiting their utility, and in 1798 it was decided to disband both battalions. As Macleod says, ‘the news of demobilisation was not welcome to him: he had enjoyed the comradeship and leisure of military service, and the prospect of a return to civil life did not appeal to him’.⁴³⁸ While it seems clear that his enjoyment of comradeship and leisure were two motivating factors in his response, it appears that financial concerns were at least of equal import. Macintyre specifically laments the loss of earnings which would result from the regiment’s disbandment:

’S muladach bhith fàgail Dheòrsa
On chuir e ’m mòid am pàigheadh.

’S muladach ma théid ar sgaoileadh,
’S gur e ar gaol bhith mar thà sinn.⁴³⁹

*’Tis mournful to be leaving George
Since he has increased the pay.*

*’Tis woeful if we are disbanded,
When ’tis our wish to be as we are.*⁴⁴⁰

Again, the poet’s apparent loyalty to George can be seen to correlate directly with self/community-interest, and his conception of the King as a provider who can contribute to his own and his comrades’ material security. Macintyre also laments the loss of status that would result from losing their military occupation:

Ma thèid sinn gu obair tuatha,
Cromaidh ar guaillean ri àiteach.

’S mòr as fheàrr bhith ’nar daoine’-uaisle,
Tarraing suas anns a’ bhatailleann.⁴⁴¹

*If we go to farm labour,
Our shoulders will be bent with delving.*

*Much better to be gentlemen,
Lining up in the battalion.*⁴⁴²

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 539

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 380.

It is interesting that Macintyre sets up this distinction between working on the land and military service, with the latter seen as the more high status form of employment. The implication is that service provides a means for social advancement - a way to circumvent the societal influences that would normally lead somebody of the poet and his comrades' background to work on the land.

Notions of Britishness are secondary in Macintyre's regimental poetry; he does not use the words 'Britain' or 'British' in any of the six songs, although he does refer to the King or King George specifically on six occasions. It might be suggested that the poet used the monarch as a code for talking about military service - one that was less ideologically charged than a reference to Britain. The song does reveal, however, some appreciation of the regiment being involved in a national effort and with a shared enemy in the French:

'S aighearach bhith 'n camp an rìgh
A' seasamh na rìoghachd gu làidir;

Cumail eagail air na Frangaich,
Fhad 's a bhios ceann air a phràbar.⁴⁴³

*'Tis gladsome to be in the king's camp,
Stoutly defending the kingdom.*

*And keeping the Frenchmen in terror,
While the mob has a leader.⁴⁴⁴*

There was an ongoing threat of invasion by the French from 1795 until 1805, and this was at a heightened point in 1798 when the poet composed this song.⁴⁴⁵ This invasion threat and the response to it by Gaelic poets will be considered in more detail in the next chapter. As has previously been noted, vituperation against enemies was a central tenet of Jacobite poetry and was an important aspect of asserting self-righteousness and Gaelic pre-eminence in the Gaelic tradition.⁴⁴⁶ This again shows continuity in the conventions employed by Gaelic poets when discussing political or military concerns between the Jacobite and post-1756 period. Despite lip service to the Kingdom, Macintyre's apprehension of being involved in a collective effort is one which places the Gaels to the fore as a distinctive grouping. In 'Òran do Reisimeid Bhràghaid Albann', we find:

'S mairg nàmhaid a thachradh

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁴⁴⁵ C. Emsley, 'The Impact of the French Revolution', in C. Crossley and I. Small (eds.) *The French Revolution and British Culture* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 31-62.

⁴⁴⁶ M. Newton, 'Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present', p. 36.

Air na lasgairean treun;
 Gleidhidh cruadal nan Gàidheal
 Buaidh-làrach dhaibh féin.⁴⁴⁷

*Pity the foe that encountered
 The valiant, gay lads;
 The fortitude of the Gaels
 Will ensure their victory.*⁴⁴⁸

And in ‘Òran a’ Chaimp, 1798’, he states:

’S ann againn tha na Gàidheil
 Théid dàn anns an ruaig,
 Na fir làidire dhàicheil
 A b’ àbhaist bhith cruaidh;⁴⁴⁹

*We have with us the Gaels
 Who are bold in pursuit,
 The strong, handsome heroes,
 Who were wont to be hardy;*⁴⁵⁰

Macintyre’s poetry of the Breadalbane Fencibles reveals a poet who found both cultural assurance and material security in the regimental system. His loyalty to the regiment can be seen as having been founded on his self/community-interest and his appreciation of the military as a site in which pre-existing Gaelic identity and tradition could find expression. It should be noted that another function of the Fencible songs may have been to create and maintain an *esprit de corps* among the regiment’s soldiers. Ellen Beard has recently suggested that during the Seven Years’ War Rob Donn Mackay was not employed as a proper fencible soldier but as a kind of regimental entertainer.⁴⁵¹ As has been noted earlier, it may be that Macintyre fulfilled a similar function.

Alexander MacKinnon

Where Macintyre provides us with the fullest picture of the Gaelic soldier-poet at home, we turn to the Morar poet Alasdair MacFhionghain (Alexander MacKinnon, 1770-1814) for the most thorough illumination of the soldier in service abroad.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁴⁵¹ E. Beard, ‘Rob Donn Mackay: Finding the Music in the Songs’ (Edinburgh University, Ph.D., 2015), p. 21.

MacKinnon was the son of a tacksman. His upbringing was towards the more advantaged end of the Highland social spectrum, and Alexander MacLean Sinclair tells us that he 'received a fair share of education' and could 'read and write both English and Gaelic'.⁴⁵² MacKinnon enlisted in the 92nd regiment (the Gordon Highlanders) when it was raised in 1794 and achieved the rank of Corporal, serving with Sir Ralph Abercromby in Holland and at Alexandria. He was badly wounded at the Battle of Alexandria in 1801, and his seemingly lifeless body would have been buried with corpses from the battle had a regimental comrade not realised he was still breathing. As MacKenzie informs us:

The Sergeant, applying his ear to the poet's breast, perceived that everlasting silence had not yet been imposed on his lyre; - his respirations were feeble and slow, but he lived; and his friend insisted on having him forthwith conveyed to one of the hospital ships.⁴⁵³

MacKinnon composed his two poems on the expedition to Alexandria, which are considered in more detail below, while on board this hospital ship. He was discharged with a pension on his return to Britain, but joined the 6th Veteran Battalion soon after. The poet married in the course of a few years and lived in Fort William until his death in 1814.⁴⁵⁴ He was buried with full military honours in the Craigs cemetery in Fort William, and his grave can be found near that of the Gaelic grammarian and song-writer James Munro.⁴⁵⁵

MacKinnon was held in high esteem by his peers, as is evident both from his publication history and opinions expressed by contemporaries and near-contemporaries about his work. In his highly influential *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach* (1841), John MacKenzie was effusive in his praise and gave MacKinnon's work a prominent place as one of seven poets whose work bridged the gap between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴⁵⁶ Another of MacKinnon's champions was Alexander Maclean Sinclair's grandfather, the Tiree and Nova Scotia poet, John MacLean, Bàrd Thighearna Chola (1787-1848). Maclean published seven of his fellow poet's pieces in his collection of 1818, having copied them from the Morar poet's manuscripts in 1816.⁴⁵⁷ He also composed a lament for

⁴⁵² A. M. Sinclair (ed.), *Dàin agus Òrain le Alasdair Mac-Fhionghain* (Charlottetown, 1902), p. 4.

⁴⁵³ MacKenzie, *Sar Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 339.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 349-41.

⁴⁵⁵ J. Mackay, 'Our Musical Page', in *The Celtic Monthly*, vol. 12 (1904), p. 189.

⁴⁵⁶ The others were Allan MacDougall (Ailean Dall), James Shaw (Bàrd Loch nan Eala), James Macgregor, Ewen MacLachlan, Donald MacDonald (Am Bàrd Conanach) and Donald Macleod (Am Bàrd Sgiathanach).

⁴⁵⁷ Sinclair, *Dàin agus Òrain*, p. 4.

MacKinnon, in which he predicted that his legacy would stand the testament of time among Gaels:⁴⁵⁸

‘S mòr an dileab a dh’fhàg thu
Na do dhéigh aig na Gàidheil
Dh’eug thu fhèin ach do dhàin mairidh beò.⁴⁵⁹

*Great is the legacy you left
Behind you for the Gaels,
You passed away but your poems will survive.*

Despite Bàrd Thighearna Chola’s prediction, MacKinnon’s fame faded over time. This was perhaps, in part, due to his work not fitting into a critical narrative of despair and hopelessness of outlook in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Gaelic poetry, as has been suggested with regards to the military tradition more widely in the ‘Literature Review’ of this thesis.⁴⁶⁰ As noted below, however, his ‘Blàr na h-Òlainn’ survived in the oral tradition into the 1960s, and it is clear therefore that Maclean’s prophecy of a significant legacy for the Morar poet was not wholly erroneous.

Nine poems are extant from MacKinnon’s output, all of which are collected in Alexander Maclean Sinclair’s *Dain agus Òrain le Alasdair Mac-Fhionghain* (1902):

- ‘Òran do Mhàidsear Sim Domhnallach, Triath Mhòrthir’ (‘Song to Major Simon MacDonald, the Laird of Morar’), a praise poem to Major Simon MacDonald of Morar (details below);⁴⁶¹
- ‘Cumha do Mhàidsear Sim Dòmhnallach, Triath Mhòrthir’ (‘Lament to Major Simon MacDonald, the Laird of Morar’), a lament to MacDonald on his death in 1800;⁴⁶²
- ‘Blàr na h-Òlainn’ (‘The Battle of Holland’), also known as ‘Air Mìos Deireannach an Fhoghair’ (‘In the Last Month of Autumn’), on the Battle of Alkmaar in Holland in 1799;⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁸ For more on this poem, see: R. Dunbar, ‘Bàrdachd Alasdair MhicFhionghain’: An Early Nineteenth Century Panegyric to a Poet’, in W. McLeod, A. Burnyeat et al. (eds), *Bile ós Chrannaibh* (Ceann Drochaid, 2010), pp. 103-18.

⁴⁵⁹ I. MacIlleain, *Orain Nuadh Ghaedhlach* (Duneudainn 1818), pp. 87-89.

⁴⁶⁰ Chapter 1, pp. 25-26. When looking for participants for a programme on Gaelic poetry for the BBC in 2010, the current writer struggled to find a contributor who had heard of the poet, let alone who could speak about their appreciation for his work, before eventually drawing on the piper and Gaelic song specialist, Allan MacDonald from Genuig.

⁴⁶¹ Sinclair, *Dain agus Òrain*, pp.3-4.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

- 'Mo Bhruadar Cinnteach an Raoir' ('*My Certain Dream Last Night*') (pp. 15-16), a love song which also combines regimental praise, seemingly composed on a ship off the coast of Africa in 1801;⁴⁶⁴
- 'Ceud Bhlàr na h-Eipheit' ('*The First Battle of Egypt*'), also known as 'Òran air don Bhàrd a Dhol air Tìr san Eipheit' ('*A Song by the Poet after Going Ashore in Egypt*'), on the Battle of Abukir in 1801;⁴⁶⁵
- 'Dara Blàr na h-Eipheit' ('*The Second Battle of Egypt*'), also known as 'Òran air Blàr na h-Èipheit' ('*A Song on the Battle of Egypt*'), on the Battle of Alexandria, which followed shortly after Aboukir in 1801;⁴⁶⁶
- 'Òran do Dhòmhnall Camaran,' ('*A Song to Donald Cameron*'), a panegyric to Donald Cameron, the factor of the Huntly and Gordon estates in Lochaber;⁴⁶⁷
- 'An Dubh-ghleannach' ('*The Dubh Ghleannanach*'), on the pleasure boat of Alexander MacDonald of Glenaladale (1786-1814);⁴⁶⁸
- 'Cumha do Thriathan Mhòrthir' ('*Lament to the Lairds of Morar*'), a lament for both Major Simon MacDonald and his son, James MacDonald, who died in 1811.⁴⁶⁹

Of these pieces, seven had been published, as noted previously, in Bàrd Thighearna Chola's first collection *Orain Nuadh Ghaelach* (1818) and four had appeared in John MacKenzie's *Sar Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach* (1841). 'Blàr na h-Òlaind'/'Air Mìos Deireannach an Fhoghair' also appeared in other nineteenth and twentieth century collections, as is considered in more detail below. John MacKenzie appears, by his own account, to have had access to MacKinnon's manuscripts, whereas Maclean Sinclair relied on the copies in John Maclean's manuscripts; and, as Michael Linkletter has recently noted, the Nova Scotian scholar often disregarded the authority of original sources in favour of his own improvements.⁴⁷⁰ For this reason, I take the quotations from 'Blàr na h-Òlaind', 'Òran air don Bhàrd a Dhol air Tìr san Èipheit' and 'Òran air Blàr na h-Èipheit' from *Sar Obair nam Bard Gaelach* (from which I also take the titles for these pieces). All additional quotations are from the collection edited by Maclean Sinclair.

MacKinnon is a highly traditional poet, who owes much to the pre-eminent clan poets of the seventeenth and earlier eighteenth centuries, such as Iain Lom and Sìleas na Ceapaich, as well as to the martial panegyric of Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-20.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-25.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-29.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-32.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-37.

⁴⁷⁰ Sinclair, *Dàin agus Òrain*, p. 4; M. Linkletter, 'Bhiodh e Maslach Mearachdan a Chur an Clò: A. Maclean Sinclair the Editor', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 28 (2011), p. 211.

Alasdair.⁴⁷¹ Specific poems in praise of a chief or leader were central to these poets' oeuvres, and we see MacKinnon composing a panegyric of this type in 'Oran Do Mhàidsear Sìm Dòmhnallach, triath Mhòrthir', addressed to the Morar soldier and land-owner, Major Simon MacDonald (?-1800).⁴⁷² Here the poet utilises the style and language of the panegyric code to praise his military superior. Including references to hospitality, MacDonald's title and *dùthchas*, his skill as a fighter, and a comparison between the officer and a tree of battle, this is a highly orthodox piece of panegyric:

An triath Mòrthireach fearail,
Am fìor Dhòmhnallach soilleir,
Sìol nan connspunn nach tilleadh
An am dòrtadh ri teine,
Craobh chòmhraig nach tiomaich gun diùbhail.⁴⁷³

*The manly lord of Morar,
The true and pure MacDonald,
Progeny of the heroes that would not turn,
When charging in the face of fire,
A tree of battle that will not soften, and lacking no
virtue.*

In highlighting MacDonald's role as protector of those under his charge (a key trope of panegyric), the poet draws on an occasion when, as MacLean Sinclair informs us, 'some busybodies had charged MacKinnon with embezzling some small sums of money belonging to the regiment'.⁴⁷⁴ Here MacKinnon uses his verse to express gratitude to MacDonald for refusing to believe his detractors:

An treun laoch fearail gun sgàth,
Nach èisdeadh sgainneal no tàir,
A leum mar dhealanach àrd,
Mar bheithir falais sa bhlàr:-
Rìgh nan aingeal 's nan gràs ga d' stiùradh.⁴⁷⁵

*The brave, manly warrior without fear,
Who would not listen to scandal or reproach,*

⁴⁷¹ See: MacKenzie, *Òrain Iain Luim*; Ó Baoill, *Poems and Songs by Sileas MacDonald*; Thomson, *Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: Selected Poems*.

⁴⁷² Simon MacDonald, 9th of Morar, was the son of John MacDonald, 8th of Morar. He gained the rank of Captain in the Gordon Highlanders in 1794 and the rank of Major in 1795. He died in 1800. 'Simon MacDonald, 9th of Morar', *The Peerage* <http://www.thepeerage.com/p50311.htm> [accessed 17 May 2016].

⁴⁷³ Sinclair, *Dàin agus Òrain*, p. 7.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

*Who leapt like lightning,
Like a thunderbolt in the battle;
The king of angels and graces directing you.*

His lament for Simon MacDonald upon hearing news of his death while based in England in 1800 is equally traditional, with the subject presented as a warrior in charge of a ship:

Bu tu'n sgiobair neo-chearbach,
Nuair a thigeadh sid ghailbheach,
'Mhùchadh trioblaid gach fairge fo bhòrd.

'Sa bhirlinn luath ri la gaillinn,
Air chuan uaibhreach na faillinn,
S tric a dh' fhuasgail thu 'darach le lòd.⁴⁷⁶

*You were the skipper without fault
When stormy weather would come.
Who'd suppress all turbulence under (his) board.*

*In the fast galley on a stormy day,
On the haughty ocean failing,
Often did you rescue her cargoed oak.*

MacDonald's death seems to have had a lasting impact on the poet, as can be seen in his later piece, 'Cumha do Thriathan Mhòr-thir', addressed to both Simon and his son James, after the latter's death in 1811.⁴⁷⁷ This is MacKinnon's last extant poem and in it he thinks back to the effect MacDonald's death in 1800 had on him when fighting in Egypt the following year:

Ged fhuair sinn buaidh ri uchd gleòis,
Bha m' inntinn luaineach fo bhron,
Gach uair a dh' fhuasgail ar strol, san Eipheit.

Cho tric 's a rosgadh mo shùil,
Bha mi gu beachdail an dùil,
Gum b'choir domh fhaicinn air thùs na streupa.⁴⁷⁸

Although we gained a victory in the breast of fire,

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁷⁷ This poem may also refer to James's brother, Simon, who was killed in 1812. While Simon is not named directly, as James is, the poet states in the plural 'thuit na h-ògain ghlan ùr'.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

*My restless mind was in sadness,
Each time our banner was unfurled in Egypt.*

*As often as I would look with my eyes,
I observed in expectation,
Of seeing you at the vanguard of battle.*

MacKinnon seems to have composed his one surviving love poem, ‘Mo Bhruadar Cinnteach an Raoir’ (*My Certain Dream Last Night*), when he was aboard ship prior to the landing at Aboukir Bay in 1801. He informs his beloved that he saw her in a dream the previous night and complains that ‘George’ has caused them to be separated:

Bhon a fhuair mi thu òg,
'S a bhuain mi 'n uaigneas an ròs,
'S gnothach cruaidh gun d'rinn Deors'
ar dealachadh.⁴⁷⁹

*Since I got you young,
And I plucked in solitude the rose,
It is a difficult matter that George separated us.*

The bulk of MacKinnon's surviving output is based on his experience of active warfare and it is in this poetry that we find his finest work; as MacLean Sinclair has said: ‘It really took a battle, or a storm, or something terrible, to call forth his poetic powers’.⁴⁸⁰ ‘Blàr na h-Òlaind’ is based on MacKinnon's service at the battle of Alkmaar in Holland, also known as the Second Battle of Bergren or the Battle of Egmond-aan-Zee, during the Anglo-Russian invasion of Holland in 1799. Here, an expeditionary force from Britain and her ally Russia, commanded by Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany, faced the forces of the French Republic and her ally, the Batavian Republic, under the command of Marshal Guillaume Marie Anne Brune (1763-1815). The battle resulted in an effective draw, although the Anglo-Russians finished the battle in a position which favoured them tactically.⁴⁸¹ A number of other poems on the Battle of Alkmaar survive: John MacGregor's, ‘Cumhadh do Dhuin’ Uasal Thuit 'S an Olaint, 's a Bhliadhna 1799’ and John MacLean, Bàrd Thighearna Chola's ‘Do Dhonnchadh MacAonghuis, a Tiriodh, a chaidh a Mharbhadh san Olaint’ will be considered in the next chapter, while the anonymous song ‘Dùthaich MhicLeoid’, also known as ‘Tha mo Dhùil’, is discussed later in this chapter; the anonymous ‘An Gille Donn’, considered below, also appears to belong to the same campaign. Clearly the war in Holland was one that

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁸¹ See: C. J. Esdaile, *The French Wars, 1792-1815* (London, 1999), p. 89.

resonated widely in the Gaelic community, reflecting a high level of Highland involvement.⁴⁸²

‘Blàr na h-Òlainn’ was first published during MacKinnon’s own lifetime in Donald MacLeod’s 1811 collection *Orain Nuadh Ghaelach*, and it also appeared in Patrick Turner’s 1813 collection, *Comhchruinneacha do Dh’Orain Taghta Ghaidhealach*. It was next printed in Ronald MacDonald’s *Orain Raoghall Donullach* (1821), before being published by John MacKenzie in *Sar-obair nam Bàrd Gaelach* (1841). Since the turn of the twentieth century, the poem has appeared, as previously noted, in Alexander MacLean Sinclair’s collection of MacKinnon’s work, *Dàin agus Òrain le Alasdair Mac-Fhionghain* (1902) and in W.J. Watson’s *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig* (1959), and more recently it was included in Ronald Black’s anthology of eighteenth century verse, *An Làsair* (2001). In addition to this, six recordings of the poem can be found on the *Tobar an Dualchais* website, gathered from contributors in Skye, South Uist, Barra, and MacKinnon’s native Morar.⁴⁸³ This was evidently a song with a wide currency in the Gaelic community - a major composition of both the written and oral tradition.

‘Òran air don Bhàrd a Dhol air Tir san Èiphit’ and ‘Òran air Blàr na h-Eiphit’ are based on MacKinnon’s service in Egypt, at the Battles of Aboukir (8 March 1801) and Alexandria (21 March 1801) respectively. The Gordon Highlanders formed part of the expeditionary force to Alexandria under the eminent Scottish soldier and commander-in-chief Sir Ralph Abercromby (1734-1801).⁴⁸⁴ The campaign proved to be a major tactical victory for Britain and was a precursor to the Peace of Amiens (1802), which brought an end to the French Revolutionary Wars.⁴⁸⁵ This was again a campaign that featured prominently in the perspective of Gaelic poets and another soldier’s account will be considered later in this chapter, William Gow’s ‘Cha Bhi mi ri Tuireadh’. The campaign was also covered by poets at home, including the Inverness poet Donald MacDonald in his ‘Oran do Bhonipart’; the renowned collector and chaplain to the Black Watch James McLagan in ‘Oran do’n Chath-bhuidhinn Rioghail Ghàidhealach’; and the Glencoe and Inverlochy poet Allan

⁴⁸² Some Highland soldiers had also until recently been in Dutch service, and will have known the country and followed developments there with interest. See: Miggelbrink, ‘The End of the Scots-Dutch Brigade’, pp. 83-104.

⁴⁸³ These are from Neil MacKinnon, Strath, Skye in 1953; Calum Nicolson, Portree, in 1960; Mary Anne Macinnes, Stilligarry, South Uist, in 1963; Kate Macdonald, Garryhallie, South Uist, in 1956 and 1964; Calum Johnston, Barra, in 1971; and Alexander MacDougall, Glenelg, Morar, in 1972 *Tobar an Dualchais*, <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/7103/1>; <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/104809/1>; <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/38447/1>; <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/107921/1>; <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/107921/1>; <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/56663/1> [accessed 16 May 2016].

⁴⁸⁴ H.M. Stephens, ‘Abercromby, Ralph’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1990*, ed. L. Stephen and S. Lee (Oxford, 1885), vol. 1., pp. 44-5.

⁴⁸⁵ Esdaile, *The French Wars, 1792-1815*, p. 93.

MacDougall in ‘Òran do’n Reisimeid Duibh’.⁴⁸⁶ Each of these poems will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.

The opening stanzas of ‘Blàr na h-Òlaind’ are representative of the style of MacKinnon’s three poems of active warfare. The poet establishes the time and place of the battle and provides some military context:

Air mios deireannach an fhoghair,
 An dara latha, ’s math mo chuimhne,
 Ghluais na Breatunnaich bho’n fhaiche,
 Dh’ionnsuidh tachairt ris na naimhdean;
 Thug *Abercrombaidh* taobh na mara
 Dhiu le’n canain, ’s mi ga ’n cluintinn;
 Bha fóirneadh aig *Múr* gu daingeann,
 Cumail aingil ris na Frángaich.⁴⁸⁷

*In the last month of Autumn,
 The second day, well I remember,
 The British marched from parade
 To engage the enemy.
 Abercromby took the coast from them
 With his cannon in my hearing.
 Moore had troops concentrating
 Close fire on the French.*⁴⁸⁸

All three poems are composed in a chronological narrative style, which bears resemblance to that employed by Iain Lom in his battle poems, such as ‘Là Inbhir Lòchaidh’ (*The Battle of Inverlochy*) and ‘Cath Raon Ruairidh’ (*The Battle of Killiecrankie*) (with the distinction that MacKinnon was an active participant, rather than an observer of the battles he composed about). Officers feature prominently in MacKinnon’s poetic accounts, and they are described using the conventions of the panegyric code. For instance, in ‘Blàr na h-Òlaind’ George Duncan Gordon, the Marquess of Huntly (1770-1836) is called ‘An t-óg smiorail, fearail, naimhdeil’ (*A young man who was tough, manly and combative*), and the famous Lochaber soldier Alan Cameron of Eracht (1753-1828) is ‘an leoghan colgarra gun ghealtachd’ (*The fierce lion without cowardice*) who is ‘mar ursainn chatha ’s na bláraibh’ (*like a doorpost in the battlefields*).⁴⁸⁹ The manner in which figures from outwith Gaelic society could be drawn into the praise-sphere of

⁴⁸⁶ MacKenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 341; P. MacPharlain (ed.), *Co-chruinneachadh de dh’Orain agus de Luinneagaibh Thaghta Ghae’lach* (Dun-Eudainn, 1813), p. 97; Dùghallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhelach*, p. 89.

⁴⁸⁷ MacKenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 344.

⁴⁸⁸ Black, *An Lasair*, p. 355.

⁴⁸⁹ MacKenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 345.

Gaelic panegyric is clear in the following stanza from ‘Òran air Don Bhàrd a Dhol air Tìr san Eipheit’, where Sir Ralph Abercromby is personified as an oak tree (the tree invested with the most symbolic potency in the Gaelic tradition):

An darag dhìleas dharaich ud,
Nach dh’fhag ’san linn so coimeas da,
An leòghann rioghail, coimeasgach,
An cliù ’s am fìrinn ceannasach,
Gu bheil do ghaol mar anam dhuinn,
Air teannachadh na ’r feòil.⁴⁹⁰

*That faithful tree of oaken wood,
Who has left no likeness in this generation,
The lion, royal and mischievous,
In name and truth authoritative;
Love for you is as life’s breath for us,
Rooted tightly in our flesh.*⁴⁹¹

In stressing the prowess of the Gaels, it was of the first importance to portray their leaders as figures of strength, and in ‘Òran air Blàr na h-Èipheit’ MacKinnon does this by comparing Abercromby to Fionn Mac Cumhaill rousing his fighters:

Bha ar ’n-ard cheann-feadhna toirteil
Ann san àm ga ’r propadh suas;
Bho dhream gu dream gu ’m brosnachadh,
Cha b’ ann le moit na ghruaidh;
Ghlacadh cuibhle ’n fhortain,
Ann san laimh nach tionndadh toisgeal i,
’S a dhùsgadh sunnt gu cosnadh dhuinn,
Mar Fhionn a mosgladh sluaigh.⁴⁹²

*Our strong commanding leader was
At the time supporting us;
From band to band encouraging them,
Not with sullenness in his face;
The wheel of fortune was caught,
In the hand that would not turn it back,
And that would arouse joy among us,
Like Fionn awakening an army.*

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

⁴⁹¹ Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 299.

⁴⁹² MacKenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 343; Black, *An Lasair*, p. 359.

Evoking the *fian* stresses continuity with the Gaelic heroic past, and the reference to ‘cuibhle ’n fhortain’ (*‘the wheel of fortune’*), a recurring trope in Jacobite poetry, adds to the poem’s evocativeness of past martial endeavour.⁴⁹³ Abercromby, as the almost deified leader of a body of fighting men, emerges as the personification of a late heroic age.

While the leaders of the Gaels are exalted, their enemies are excoriated (again, mirroring Jacobite verse and its vituperation of enemies). Though MacKinnon does express some respect (but perhaps with a degree of sarcasm) for the French as soldiers in ‘Blàr na h-Òlaind’, where he states ‘Tha na Frángaich math air teine, / Gus an teannar goirid uapa’ (*‘The French are good marksmen / Till you get close up to them’*), he immediately follows this by stressing the superiority of the Highland forces:⁴⁹⁴

Ach n’ uair dh’fhaod ar laoich gun tioma,
Dhol an áite buille bhualadh,
Bha roinn nan stailinne biorach,
Sáthadh guineideach mu’n tuairmse.⁴⁹⁵

*But when our brave heroes got forward
To where a blow could be struck
There were sharp points of steel
Thrusting woundingly towards them.*⁴⁹⁶

Time and again, the poet emphasises the fighting ability of the Gaels. He states ‘Bha gilleann lùghar, sgairteil ann, / Nach d’ aom le gealtachd riamh’ (*‘There were agile, energetic lads there / That never yielded with cowardice’*); and ‘Bha sinn làidir, guineideach, / Dàna, urranta ’san strì’ (*‘We were strong, ready to thrust / Bold, daring in the fight’*); and ‘Ghluais na gilleann lù-chleasach, / Air mhìre null do’n ghleann’ (*‘The agile lads moved / With quickness to the glen’*).⁴⁹⁷ The focus is on the Gaels, but this does not preclude mention of Scotland, demonstrating the interweaving of the poet’s concentric loyalties:

Dh’ earbaidh dìon ar n-anmannan
Rì Albannaich mo ruin,
Fir nach tàirnte cearbaich orra,

⁴⁹³ For more on the development of the specifically Jacobite imagery of the panegyric code, see: D. Ní Suaire, ‘Jacobite Rhetoric and Terminology in the Political Poems of the Fèrnaig MS (1688-1693)’, in *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 19 (1999), pp. 93-140.

⁴⁹⁴ MacKenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 345.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁶ Black, *An Lasair*, p. 359.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

'N àm tharruinn arm gu dlù;⁴⁹⁸

*The protection of our souls was entrusted
To my beloved Scots,
Men who would now draw misfortune towards them,
At the time of drawing arms at close quarters.*

The poems also contain references to Britain, such as in 'Blàr na h-Òlaind' where he states 'Ghluais na Breatunnaich bho 'n fhaiche , / Dh' ionnsuidh tachairt ris na naimhdean' ('*The British moved from the plain / Towards meeting their enemies*'), and it is therefore evident that MacKinnon had an awareness and concept of both Scottish and British identity.⁴⁹⁹ It is conjecturable however that he viewed himself as a Gael first and foremost, and the narrative he constructs of these battles is one in which the Gaels are at the centre.

MacKinnon makes few personal references in his war poems, but it is notable that he begins his two poems about the Egyptian campaign by informing us of his personal circumstances ('Ge fad' an dràst gun dùsgadh mi / Cha chadal seimh 'bu shùgradh dhomh', '*Though I am now late in wakening, / A smooth sleep was not what I enjoyed*') and completes the narrative of 'Blàr na h-Èipheit' in the same way.⁵⁰⁰

Nuair ràinig sinn an làrach sin
Ghrad dhealaich mi ri m' chàirdean ann;
Is ghiulaineadh gu bàta mi,
'S fuil bhlàth fo'm air an fhiar.⁵⁰¹

*When we reached that location
I suddenly departed from my friends;
And I was transported to a boat,
With warm blood below me on the grass.*

MacKinnon can be seen as a highly traditional Gaelic poet, but one who was also compelled by modern influences. His poetry draws deeply from tradition in an attempt to make intelligible to the poet and his audience the new imperial warfare and locations of the British Army during the period. MacKinnon describes military service as a heroic endeavour and utilises the poetic tools at his disposal to illustrate this in fulsomeness. His loyalties are undoubtedly concentric, and he

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁵⁰⁰ MacKenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 341.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

has no hesitation in referencing the Gaels, his regiment, Scotland and Britain - arguably in that order of importance - through the course of his work.⁵⁰²

Duncan Campbell

Donnchadh Caimbeul (Duncan Campbell, fl. 1798) provides further insight into the life of a soldier in a fencible Battalion during the French Revolutionary Wars.⁵⁰³ Campbell was from Stronchullin in Cowal, but his *Nuadh Orain Ghailach* (1798) was published in Cork, where he was based with the 2nd Battalion of the Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles between 1795 and 1802.⁵⁰⁴ Campbell's battalion was moved to Ireland soon after its formation, and garrisoned there when regular troops were redeployed to deal with a rebellion in the West Indies.⁵⁰⁵ Most of the regiment's service was spent at Bantry, in Munster, in the winter of 1796 and later in Cork City, where it remained through the 1798 rising. The regiment was disbanded in 1802 and nothing is known about Duncan Campbell's life after this point.⁵⁰⁶

Attention has been drawn previously in this thesis to the substantial subscribers' list appended to Campbell's collection.⁵⁰⁷ His book includes a list of 501 subscribers, and all but seventeen of these were soldiers.⁵⁰⁸ The subscriptions appear to have been gathered in Cork and the list is organised by regiment, name, rank and number of copies taken up.⁵⁰⁹ His subscribers list also includes thirteen 'Gentlemen Sailors from Scotland', and four 'Gentlemen of Cork'.⁵¹⁰ The patronage and readership of Campbell's book was clearly of a distinctly military character, and his subscriber list reflects that a healthy demand for Gaelic poetry existed within the regimental system. This was the network of support that allowed Campbell to publish his work; it reveals that the military could act as a stimulus to

⁵⁰² This fits with the concentric loyalties model put forward by Smout, which sees poets allegiances rising outwards towards the nation and union. Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', p. 103.

⁵⁰³ For more on Campbell see: J. Flahive 'Duncan Campbell: A Scottish-Gaelic Bard in eighteenth century Cork', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, vol. 113 (2008), pp. 80-89; Black, 'The Gaelic Book', p. 179; Black 'The Gaelic Secular Book', pp. 608-09.

⁵⁰⁴ The regiment was initially raised by the eminent improver and agriculturalist Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster (1754-1835) in 1794. Both the officers and men in the fencibles were principally from Caithness and the regiment was initially called the Caithness Fencibles, but the Prince of Wales granted that Rothesay, his chief title in Scotland, should be added, and the battalion was afterwards called the Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles. The first battalion was assembled at Inverness in October 1794 and a second battalion was embodied at Forfar in May 1795. Stewart, *Sketches*, vol. 2, pp. 368-74.

⁵⁰⁵ A summary of the military situation can be found in T. Bartlett, 'The Invasion that Never Was', in J. Murphy (ed), *The French are in the Bay* (Cork, 1997), pp. 48-72. Cited by Flahive, 'Duncan Campbell', p. 81.

⁵⁰⁶ Flahive, 'Duncan Campbell', p. 82.

⁵⁰⁷ See Chapter 3, pp. 53-57.

⁵⁰⁸ Black, 'The Gaelic Book', p. 179.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵¹⁰ D. Campbell, *Nuadh Orain Ghailach* (Cork, 1798), pp. 148-170.

production not only in terms of subject matter but in the more concrete realm of financial incentive and support.⁵¹¹ This underlines the link between military poets and their audience or patrons during the period.

Black has noted that Campbell's collection 'defies categorisation', and it is certainly the case that it encompasses various themes, including love poetry, homeland verse and three pieces that extol the virtues of the Gaelic language (for which the book can be seen as a manifesto, as is considered in more detail below).⁵¹² The book also includes panegyrics in praise of officers and the regiment, while other pieces offer more frank and personal reflections upon his barracks experience. As both Black and Flahive have previously noted, the book contains frequent typographical errors.⁵¹³

There are seven military pieces in Campbell's collection:

- 'Rann Molaidh air a Ghaelic 'S air Cheoil na Piob' ('*A Verse of Praise to Gaelic and the Music of the Pipes*') is primarily a praise poem to the Gaelic language, but also includes reference to military service;⁵¹⁴
- 'Oran Mollidh do Sir Join Sinclair, 'S do na Bhaintigherna aige' 'S cleu do n Reasmaid' ('*A Song of Praise to Sir John Sinclair, his Wife, and the Reputation of the Regiment*'), a panegyric to Sir John Sinclair;⁵¹⁵
- 'Oran Molaidh do Chornal Seamus Frisall' ('*A Song of Praise for Colonel James Fraser*'), another panegyric, to Colonel James Fraser;⁵¹⁶
- 'Oran don Mhusge Fhuaradh fo Chornal Frisall' ('*A Song to the Musket received from Colonel Fraser*'), a humorous song to a firearm;⁵¹⁷
- 'Oran Molaidh do Dhuin-usual airid' ('*A Song of Praise to a particular Nobleman*'), another panegyric, that refers to the threat of invasion by France;⁵¹⁸
- 'Duanag Chaidh dhianadh le fear bha gabhal fadail ann n Erin' ('*A Song Composed by someone who was Homesick in Ireland*'), a 'homeland' piece, where the poet expresses his desire to be in Cowal;⁵¹⁹
- 'A New song with permission Dedicated to the 2d Batallion of Rothsay and Caithness Fencible', a song in English to the Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles.⁵²⁰

⁵¹¹ Flahive has noted that 'in an era before written Scottish Gaelic and Irish had diverged so widely through subsequent reforms, Campbell likely had Irish readers, even if not subscribers', 'Duncan Campbell', p. 82.

⁵¹² Black, 'The Secular Gaelic Book', p. 608.

⁵¹³ Black, 'The Secular Book', p. 608; Flahive. 'Duncan Campbell', p. 83.

⁵¹⁴ Campbell, *Nuadh Orain Ghailach*, pp. 13-16.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-23.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-28.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-32.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-37.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-04.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-33.

Campbell's collection is prefaced by a dedication which demonstrates appropriate deference towards his commanding officer, James Fraser of Culduthel (1756-1816). Fraser purchased twelve copies of his book and appears to have been one of the poet's principal patrons (the third poem in the book is in Fraser's praise). This dedication reflects the changing nature of patronage during the period and provides further evidence of the recreation/reclamation of the conditions of Gaelic cultural production by Gaels in a military context. But Campbell can also be seen to give a subtle indication here that the central subject of praise in his collection will not be officers or the regiment, but his own linguistic heritage:

SIR,

DEPENDING upon your regard for your Country, and the encouragement you have always shewn to the attempts of those who have endeavoured to revive the ancient Gaelic Language, induces me to prefix your respected name to the following Gaelic Songs, assuring myself, that many will be stimulated to peruse that which meets your approbation.

I will not attempt to panegyriser your Character for the many virtues that are so conspicuous to me, and all who are so happy as to participate your friendship, well knowing that any thing I could say on that subject would come far short of the truth.

That your honour may live long an Ornament to your Country, and every real Highlander, the Friend of every Bard, who may endeavour to attract the notice of Men of Worth, by contributing his small portion towards the knowledge of the Gaelic Language, is the earnest prayer of

*SIR,
your most obedient separate
and humble Servant,*

DUNCAN CAMPBELL ⁵²¹

The only words left un-italicised in this passage are 'revive' and 'Gaelic songs' which can be seen as an indication of Campbell's intention to focus on his indigenous language and culture. Gaelic is clearly centred here as the main subject of attention and praise, and this point is further stressed in the book's preface:

The following Work is presented for Public perusal for two reasons. - 1st, The hopes the Author entertains, that the publication of those POEMS may be a means to bring Persons who are not expert in reading the Gaelic language, to the perfect knowledge of it. - 2d, For the amusement of those

⁵²¹ Campbell, *Nuadh Orain Ghailach*, pp. v-vii.

who are acquainted with the Language, and would wish to *revive* it for its fame in former times.⁵²²

Both of the ‘reasons’ put forward by the poet here are concerned with his language and culture, and the word ‘revive’ is again highlighted with distinct formatting. As Black has noted, Campbell also uses precisely the words used by Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair in his *Ais-eirigh* (a book which was also a manifesto for the primacy of the Gaelic language) when he states that his sole purpose is to ‘prove himself a lover of his country, and an inoffensive man’.⁵²³ Is this merely a reflection of Campbell’s own interests and priorities or does it reveal something about those of his subscribers or readers? Given Campbell’s reliance on the patronage of others to publish the book and his stated aim of using it as a means to increase support for the Gaelic language and literacy among its speakers, it seems likely that he would have chosen subject matter that would have been well received by his audience, perhaps supporting Matthew Dziennik’s thesis that Highland regiments were spaces of linguistic confidence rather than attrition.⁵²⁴ It seems that Campbell viewed his collection as an opportunity to promote and celebrate the Gaelic language; as a way to assert linguistic confidence in the context of the military. This was a context in which Gaels found themselves immersed in regimental communities composed substantially of Gaelic speakers, and this environment offered ideal opportunity for both poetic production and the promotion of linguistic and cultural mores.

The first song in a collection is often reflective of a poet’s priorities and Campbell begins his collection not with his panegyric for James Fraser but with a praise poem to the Gaelic language, ‘Rann Molaidh air a Ghaelic ’S air Cheoil na Pìob’. The influence of Macintyre’s six songs for the London Highland Society entitled ‘Rann do’n Ghàidhlig ’s d’on phiob-mhòir’ (*Verses to Gaelic and to Pipe Music*, 1781, 1782, 1783, 1784, 1785 and 1789), each published in his 1790 collection, is evident in the poem’s title and content, and, as will be shown, there is a significant degree of intertextuality evident throughout Campbell’s collection.⁵²⁵

The piece includes a trope common to eighteenth century songs about Gaelic, by citing the language’s contemporaneousness with the Garden of Eden:⁵²⁶

⁵²² *Ibid.*, p. x.

⁵²³ *Ibid.* See also: Black, ‘Gaelic Secular Publishing’, p. 609.

⁵²⁴ For a discussion of the use of Gaelic in the political context of the Highland regiments, and the expression of Gaelic confidence therein, see: Dziennik, *The Fatal Land*, pp. 206-7.

⁵²⁵ For more on Macintyre’s four songs on Gaelic, see: R. Black, ‘The Gaelic Academy: The Cultural Commitment of the Highland Society of Scotland’ in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1983-6), pp. 7-10.

⁵²⁶ For a full discussion of Gaelic as a subject in Gaelic poetry of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries see: W. McLeod, ‘Language Politics and Ethnolinguistic Consciousness in Scottish Gaelic Poetry’, in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. 21 (2003), pp. 91-146.

Fhuair a Ghaelìc leasr Cheansal,
 An aon bhar os cean gach Coradh,
 'Si Cho ionon aois ri Adhamh
 Chuidh cha' n fhas i liadh na loiente,
 'S gu be n Duibheal dhol ga Trualibh
 Sna Sar uaislen tha ga Conadh,
 Gur iad brithen na h Albadh,
 Roin a Dearbha le Ceart eolas.⁵²⁷

*Gaelic acquired with great authority,
 Superiority ahead of each language,
 She is the same age as Adam,
 She will never grow grey or be wounded,
 And whether the devil goes to pollute it,
 The nobles protect it
 And the judges of Scotland
 Validated it with proper knowledge.*

His respect for Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair is again apparent in his reprinting of the famous poet's 'Moladh an Ughdair don t-Seann Chànain Ghàidhlig' ('*The Author's Praise of the Old Gaelic Language*'), at the end of the book as 'Comh-dhunadh na Galic' ('*The Gaelic Conclusion*'). The compositions that appear in *Nuadh Orain Ghailach* are therefore book-ended by two pieces in praise of the Gaelic language; one, the poet's own composition, and the other by the most esteemed of eighteenth century Gaelic poets (which opened that poet's own collection of verse). Campbell's intention was clearly to showcase a Gaelic culture and language in robust health, and his interaction with the works of other poets is reflective of a poet drawing on his inherited literary repository to project cultural and linguistic strength. Where a poet such as Alexander MacKinnon saw in service and the regimental system an opportunity to recreate the heroic world of a warrior society in verse, Duncan Campbell sought to exploit the military community as a channel for his linguistic imperative.

The collection also contains two fairly conventional military panegyrics: 'Oran Mollidh do Sir Join Sinclair' and 'Oran Molaidh do Chornal Seamus Frisall', which are the second and third pieces in the book respectively. The first of these poems is addressed to Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster (1754-1835), the pioneering improver and compiler of the Statistical Account of Scotland (1791-99). As has previously been mentioned, Sinclair had raised the Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles in 1794. He is portrayed in Campbell's piece, in accordance with the protocols of the panegyric code, as the accomplished leader of a formidable fighting force, ready to take battle to the French:

⁵²⁷ Campbell, *Nuadh Orain Ghailach*, p. 16.

Sir Join ar Cornal sar mhadh,
 Ga bheil a Gharbh Bhratach Laider
 Chaidh aid cruin an thus's a Mhai,
 'S gu bi àr air Frangic.⁵²⁸

*Sir John our most excellent Colonel,
 Who has the strong banner,
 They gathered together at the beginning of May,
 In order to take battle to the French.*

Having given due diligence to praising his role as colonel, Campbell uses the second half of the poem to emphasise Sinclair's role as an improver who is directly concerned with the wellbeing of the lower classes of Highland society. He focusses on Sinclair's role as President of the Board of Agriculture, established in 1793 to promote agricultural improvement, and credits him with lowering the price of corn seed:

'S mor an onair a th' air ar cornal
 An 'sgach ceàrna do 'n Roin Oarpa,
 Thug thu reachd mach fo 'n bhord,
 S'cha bhi an lón robh ghann oirn.⁵²⁹

*Great is our colonel's honour
 In each corner of Europe,
 You took a decree out from the Board,
 And we will not want for food.*

Campbell's concerns and loyalties can be seen to lie with his own community in this piece. Even when directing praise at a figure from the upper echelons of Highland society, his motivation in doing so arises from his interest in and concern for those of his own social group.

'Oran Molaidh do Chornal Seamus Frisall' is a more straightforward panegyric to James Fraser of Culduthel, who was the commanding officer of the Rothesay and Caithness Fencibles in Cork. Here, Campbell depicts his officer as an estimable, chief-like figure:

'S tu Commandair air Arm

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

'S fearr an Alabin nan Sasgan,
 Gad tharntaid an ordabh,
 Eder Chornel is Chaipain,⁵³⁰

*You are the best army commander
 In Scotland or England,
 Even if both colonels and captains
 Were lined up in order,*

With regards to Campbell's own service in Ireland, however, a level of discomfort and displeasure can be detected. His 'Oran don Mhusge Fhuaradh fo Chornal Frisall' appears to borrow its title from Duncan Bàn Macintyre's 'Oran do'n Mhusg', but Campbell's address to the firearm is in sharp contrast to his contemporary's. Where Macintyre praised the musket for its construction and capability, Campbell's song subverts this praise and describes the weapon given to him by his Colonel - with a degree of humour - as 'a Mhusgad Glagach Miergadh, / Nach earmseadh cruach moina' (*The clumsy, rusty musket / That couldn't even target a peatstack*), and also states:

San agam fhein tha cuoladh,
 Gun bhuaidh air beg feuma,
 Cha las i fuder Cruoidh,
 Gun a cluas choir ri ealag,
 Cho trom ri caber Bualadh,
 Cha buolach feud sleibh i,
 Fon a leon i air mo ghualin
 Gun sload mi Cuart a m dheidh i.⁵³¹

*It is I who has the instrument,
 That is ineffective, of little use,
 It will not light hard powder,
 Without its flash pan ignited
 As heavy as a fold-stake,
 It is not accustomed to the hillside,
 Since it's injured my shoulder,
 Pulling it around after me.*

Campbell's song can also be seen to draw on Macintyre's poem on the Battle of Falkirk (1746) 'Òran do Bhlàr na h-Eaglaise Brice', which dismissed the weapon given to him as a decidedly unheroic weapon (in a piece where his period of

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

service in the Hanoverian army was negatively framed).⁵³² Macintyre's piece includes the following stanza:

Am ball-teirmeisg a bha meirgeach,
 Nach d' rinn seirbhis bha dleasnach;
 ...
 'N claidheamh dubh nach d'fhuair a sgùradh
 'S neul an t-sùithe air a leth-taobh;
 'S beag a b'fhiù e 's e air lùbadh,
 Gum b'e diùgha a' bhuill-deis' e.⁵³³

*Ill-omened weapon that was rusty,
 And performed not its due office;
 ...
 The black sword that had not been burnished,
 And was soot-discoloured on one side;
 Small its worth, for it had buckled -
 'Twas the most useless implement.*⁵³⁴

Macintyre's piece makes clear use of satire, and echoes of this can be heard in Campbell's third stanza:

Na faidhen spandach ur,
 Bhuidhena clue-ri am deachin,
 Ach stang nach loisge an fudar,
 Gun smudan ga feadabh,
 Cho du ri cabar suidhe,
 B' du i am feum i
 Fo Merga ans n' turr, fon bha
 Crun air Righ Seames,⁵³⁵

*If I was to get a new Spanish gun
 I would be renowned when tested,
 Instead of a pin that will not light the powder,
 Without smoke in its barrels,
 As black as a soot-covered rafter,
 Of absolutely no use,
 Rusting in the tomb,*

⁵³² For a detailed account of this poem see: A. Gunderloch, 'Donnchadh Bàn's Òran do Bhlàr na h-Eaglaise Brice - Literary Allusion and Political Comment', in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. 20 (2000), pp. 97-116.

⁵³³ MacLeod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. 6.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵³⁵ Campbell, *Nuadh Orain Ghailach*, p. 29.

Since the crown was on King James.

Can this reference to James VII and a weapon that has been rusting since a Stuart last sat on the throne be seen as an indicator of anti-Hanoverian thought in Campbell's song? Certainly, the poet's service in the Hanoverian King George III's army is presented in a negative light; the poet states that he has been mournful since adopting George's badge and donning a red coat:

Gur duimach mi o n uair,
Gu do ghabh mi suainas Dheorse,
Se choir an cota Ruoadh orm,
Gun do bhuaireadh e le or me,⁵³⁶

*Sorrowful I am since the hour,
I took the badge of George.
It was he who put the red coat on me,
And tempted me with gold.*

We see an example here of a poet complaining about being coerced into service, and this trope also occurs in the work of other poets during the period, as will be considered in more detail later in this chapter. Campbell's mind turns to Cowal and the life he has left behind there:

'S gad tha mi drast an Erinn,
Gu be mo beas bhi an Caomhal,
Bu mhainn leom a bhi n' Albin,
Air fearan Garbh namor bhean,⁵³⁷

*And though I am now in Ireland,
I would like to be in Cowal,
I would like to be in Scotland
On the rough land of the mountains,*

In 'Duanag Chaidh dhianadh le fear bha gabhal fadail ann n Erin' the poet similarly laments his forced migration from his home. He uses the motif of the gun as a 'daughter of George' to elucidate his desire to be at home with his beloved in Cowal:⁵³⁸

Soridbh uam do n Elan Bhodach,
San bu nois leom a bhi fuirach,

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵³⁸ Black, 'Secular Gaelic Publishing', p. 609.

B' anfhadh leom bhi an Chadridh morag
Na nighean Deorsa 's ceoil na Druma.⁵³⁹

*My blessings to the Isle of Bute,
Where I was wont to live,
I'd rather be in Morag's company
Than in that of George's daughter and the music of the
drums.*

Campbell's book is a fascinating historical document that reveals the complex and multi-faceted nature of Gaels' experiences in the military during the period. *Nuadh Orain Ghailach* is a product of the regimental environment, paid for by officers and soldiers, but in it the poet chooses to centre the Gaelic language and draw broadly on the work of his poetic predecessors. It is a book that resists wholehearted endorsement of the heroic narrative of military service found in MacKinnon and Macintyre's work, but that does so in an understated manner, refocussing its praise to local and linguistic concerns. While analyses of Highlandism have focussed on the appropriation and re-creation of Highland culture in the military by outside forces, Campbell's book is demonstrative of agency and active participation from within Gaelic culture to recreate/reclaim the conditions of traditional invention.⁵⁴⁰ Campbell achieves a delicate balancing act in his collection of showing enough loyalty towards his military patrons and superiors, while preserving and promoting his key allegiances towards his own linguistic heritage and indigenous community. Conformity with Smout's model of concentric loyalties emerges here, with the poet focussing in on those allegiances most closely related to his personal experience.⁵⁴¹ Some interaction between loyalties can also be detected though, as the poet moulds his allegiances to suit his audience and patrons.

Alasdair Mac Iain Bhàin

A parallel to Campbell's reluctance to endorse heroic narratives of service can be found in the work of the Glenmoriston poet Alasdair Mac Iain Bhàin (Alexander Grant, c.1772-c.1812). Seven poems by Mac Iain Bhàin are extant: six of these are in an article by William MacKenzie, 'The Songs and Poems of Alasdair Mac Iain Bhain', while 'Òran an t-Saighdeir', which was also published by MacKenzie in his earlier 'Leaves from my Celtic Portfolio' in *TGSI* (1877-78), had first appeared in

⁵³⁹ Campbell, *Nuadh Orain Ghailach*, p. 103.

⁵⁴⁰ See for instance: Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', p. 15; Womack, *Improvement and Romance*, p. 32; and Withers, 'The Historical Creation of the Highlands', pp. 145-148.

⁵⁴¹ Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', p. 103.

Donald MacPherson's *An Duanaire* (1868). Mac Iain Bhàin's pieces on military themes are as follows:

- 'Òran an t-Saighdeir' ('*The Soldier's Song*'), a retrospective of Mac Iain Bhàin's life as a soldier.⁵⁴²
- 'Is Cianail an Rathad 'S mi Gabhail a Chuain' ('*Sad is the journey, As I take to sea*'), based on the poet's experience of the attempted crossing of the Atlantic by Admiral Christian's fleet in 1795-96.⁵⁴³
- 'An Diugh 'S mi Fagail na Rioghachd' ('*Today as I leave the Kingdom*'), based on the same attempted crossing.⁵⁴⁴
- 'Oran air Gleann-na-Moireastuinn' ('*A Song on Glenmoriston*'), a homeland piece, in which he refers to the length of time he has spent as a soldier.⁵⁴⁵
- 'Theid mi le'm Dheoin a Dhuthaich Iain Oig' ('*I will go Readily to the Country of Young John*'), another homeland piece in which he refers to injuries he has received while serving in Spain.⁵⁴⁶
- 'Marbhrann do Thighearna Ghlinne-moireastuinn', ('*A Lament for the Laird of Glenmoriston*') a panegyric to Colonel John Grant of Glenmoriston.⁵⁴⁷

I take the quotations below for 'Òran an t-Saighdeir' from *An Duanaire* as this has a more coherent structure. Quotations for each of the other songs come from MacKenzie's article, 'The Songs and Poems of Alasdair Mac Iain Bhàin'.

MacKenzie (who was also from Glenmoriston and had ready access to local tradition) informs us that the poet was born around 1772 and that he was the youngest son of John Grant, a farmer from Achnagoneran.⁵⁴⁸ He joined the army as a young man and served in the West Indies, Denmark, Portugal, Spain and France. He was wounded while fighting in Spain and was subsequently allowed to return home, but died shortly before reaching his father's house in Achnagoneran. It is notable that Mac Iain Bhàin does not name the regiment in which he served or any officer or figure connected to it.⁵⁴⁹ In this regard, his work is in direct contrast to

⁵⁴² Macpherson, *An Duanaire*, pp. 63-68.

⁵⁴³ W. MacKenzie, 'The Songs and Poems of Alasdair Mac Iain Bhain', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 10 (1881-83), pp. 282-84.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-86.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 287-88.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-89.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 289-90.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁵⁴⁹ I have thus far been unable to ascertain which regiment Mac Iain Bhàin served in. While the service record of the 79th regiment (Cameron Highlanders) corresponds directly with the locations referenced by Mac Iain Bhàin in his poetry, it seems that the regiment did not form part of Admiral Christian's fleet to the West Indies in 1795-96, which the poet appears to have sailed in (as is considered later in this chapter). While soldiers from the Black Watch formed part of this fleet, the regiment's service history does not correspond directly with the locations named by Mac Iain Bhàin in his verse.

that of his contemporaries already looked at in this chapter, Duncan Bàn Macintyre, Alexander MacKinnon and Duncan Campbell, who frequently name their regiments and officers. It is possible that Mac Iain Bhàin's reticence is linked to the negative account of the soldier's life in his poetry, with his lack of clarity amounting to a level of self-censorship (and self-protection). Given the public nature of poetic consumption and transmission during the period, it is understandable that Mac Iain Bhàin might have sought to avoid making direct reference to a regiment which might have still been active and influential in his home region.

The negativity in Duncan Campbell's poetry is balanced by regimental poetry of a more laudatory nature (arguably by dint of necessity given his readership), but Mac Iain Bhàin's work contains little in the way of such counterbalances or sops to a military audience. William MacKenzie (no doubt conscious of his own audience) glosses over the negativity towards military experience in Mac Iain Bhàin's poetry, instead focussing on his poetic ability and the broad illumination that his poetry provides of a soldier's life:

the songs which have come down to us possess great merit, containing vivid glimpses of the life of the British soldier during the great events which followed the French revolution, and breathing burning affection to the scenes and companions of his happy childhood and youth.⁵⁵⁰

'Òran an t-Saighdeir' ('*The Soldier's Song*') appears to have had the widest currency of all Mac Iain Bhàin's songs; as has previously been noted, it appeared in *An Duanaire* in 1868, and *TGSI* in 1878, and was still extant in the oral tradition in the 1950s and 60s, when the School of Scottish Studies recorded two versions in Eigg and one version in South Uist.⁵⁵¹ The poem was not, as far as this writer is aware, published in any collection prior to its appearance in *An Duanaire*. Might this lack of contemporaneous publication have been due to its disparaging approach to its subject matter? It is perhaps notable that the bulk of material published contemporaneously with the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was positive about the military, as will be considered in more detail in the next chapter. That 'Òran an t-Saighdeir' is no panegyric of soldiering is clear from the song's outset, where the poet informs us:

Ged nach 'eil mi ach òg,

⁵⁵⁰ MacKenzie, 'The Songs and Poems of Alasdair Mac Iain Bhain', p. 279.

⁵⁵¹ 'Ged Nach Eil mi ach Òg 'S Beag M' Aighear ri Ceòl' was recorded from the recitation of Kate MacDonald, South Uist, in 1956; 'Òran an t-Saighdeir' was recorded from the recitation of Hugh MacKinnon, Eigg, in 1964; 'Òran an t-Saighdeir' was recorded from the recitation of Angus MacKinnon, Eigg, in 1965;. See: *Tobar an Dualchais*, <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/34581/1>; <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/44940/1>; <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/45729/1> [accessed 15 May 2016].

S' beag m' aire air ceòl;
 Rinn m' aighir 's mo phròis
 Mo thrèigsinn.
 Dol do 'n arm de m' cheart deòin,
 'S mi chaidh iomrall 's a' cheò;
 Sid am marg' nach do chord
 'Na dhéigh rium.⁵⁵²

*Although I am but young,
 Little is my interest in music;
 Joy and pride
 Have left me.
 Joining the army willingly,
 I went astray in the fog;
 That was the shilling that
 I did not come to enjoy.*

Despite stating that he is 'only young', the places he mentions include Portugal and Spain during the period of the Peninsular War (1807-1814), and, if MacKenzie was correct about his date of birth (1772), it can therefore be assumed that Mac Iain Bhàin was at least in his thirties when he composed this piece. The first episode of his career as a soldier that the poet places before us is his recruitment, where he describes his deception through the conviviality of a recruiting party. The closing lines of the second stanza indicate that a joyous atmosphere of drink, dance and music was the prelude to a military experience of an altogether different character:

Nuair a shuidh sinn ag òl,
 'S a ghlac mise an t-òr,
 Gu-n robh drèam mu na bhòrd
 'Gar n-éisdeachd.
 Bha danns' ann - bha ceòl,
 'Cur na bainnse gu dòigh;
 'S e mo chall-s' a bha mòr
 An déigh sid.⁵⁵³

*When we sat drinking,
 And I accepted the gold,
 There was a group around the table,
 Listening to us.
 There was dancing - there was music,*

⁵⁵² Macpherson, *An Duanaire*, p. 63.

⁵⁵³ Macpherson, *An Duanaire*, p. 63,

*Accompanying the wedding;
It was my loss that was great
Afterwards.*

This impression of having been tricked or forced into military service emerges in the work of other Gaelic poets during the period, as in the following anonymous fragment from *The Poetry of Badenoch*:⁵⁵⁴

Cha b' e an daorach no a' ghòraich,
A chuir mise dh'arm Rìgh Deòrsa,
Ach an tiocaid bhi 'n am phòcaid,
'S mi gun doigh air fuasgladh.⁵⁵⁵

*It was not drunkenness or folly
That sent me to the army of King George,
But the ticket being in my pocket,
And I without means of liberation.*⁵⁵⁶

Another anonymous Badenoch song (which is by far the more popular and well-known song in the Gaelic tradition today) with the same title as Mac Iain Bhàin's 'Oran an t-Saighdeir' also bears strong similarity with the Glenmoriston poet's piece in its portrayal of a recruiting party using alcohol and hospitality as a way to coerce potential recruits:

'S gu'n d' thug iad a 'n tigh-osda mi,
An t-òr gu'n d' ghlac mi fhèin ann.

Thug iad dhomh ri phòsadh
Nighean Dheors' mar chéile.⁵⁵⁷

*And it was they that took me to an inn,
And I took the gold there.*

*They gave me to marry
As wife King George's daughter.*⁵⁵⁸

The anonymous poet here also regrets his youthful naivety:

⁵⁵⁴ For more on coercive techniques that were used to recruit soldiers during this period, see: Mackillop, 'Continuity, Coercion and Myth', pp. 34-40.

⁵⁵⁵ Translations of this poem are by Sinton with modifications by the current writer. Sinton, *The Poetry of Badenoch*, p. 218.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 480.

⁵⁵⁷ Translations of this poem are by Sinton with modifications by the current writer. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

'S olc a chuir an òige rium,
'S a ghòraiche le chéile.

Chuir mi féile cuachadh orm,
'S an còta ruadh mar éididh.⁵⁵⁹

*Badly worked on me hath youth,
And foolishness together.*

*I put a pleated kilt on me,
And the red coat as uniform.⁵⁶⁰*

Returning to Mac Iain Bhàin's piece, the hospitality of the recruiting party sets up a sharp contrast to his life as a soldier, the reality of which is made clear from the third stanza:

'S iomad oiche fhliuch fhuar,
'Thug mi 'marcachd a' chuain.
Ona chinn an dath ruadh s'
Air m' éideadh.⁵⁶¹

*Many a cold, wet night,
I spent traversing the seas,
Since this red colour appeared
On my clothing.*

He states that there is scarcely a place in Europe where he has not been and notes the challenges he has faced:

Falbh feadh fhàsaichean feòir,
Agus àrd-bheanna ceò,
Ri uchd spàirn agus gleòis,
'S ratréuta.⁵⁶²

*Traversing empty grasslands,
And high misty mountains,
In the heat of struggle and action,
And retreat.*

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

⁵⁶¹ Macpherson, *An Duanaire*, p. 64.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

For each place mentioned, the poet outlines the particular hardships he had to endure; 'he states 'Bha mi 'm Portugal thall' (*'I was in Portugal yonder'*) and that 'cha b' e m' fhortan a bh' ann / 'N uair a nochd sinn cia 'n lann / 'Bu ghéire' (*'it was not good fortune / When we demonstrated whose blade / was the sharpest'*) and also that in Spain he was 'Measg sluaigh air bheag bàigh / Nach gabhadh truas ri fear-càis' (*'Among people with little kindness / Who would not take pity on someone in distress'*).⁵⁶³ The poet juxtaposes distinctly Highland pastoral imagery with the bleak reality of his service:

Fear le feadan thrì bann,
'Ga spreigeadh 's a' champ;
Bu Bheag dheth 's an àm
Mo chéutabh.
B' annse geum aig mart seang,
'Dol do'n bhuaile 'na deann,
'S bean 'ga leigeil 'am fang,
'S a Chéitean.⁵⁶⁴

*One with a three-banded chanter,
Stirring up the camp,
I had precious little satisfaction
Out of it at the time.
I prefer the bellow of a slender cow,
Going to the cattle fold in haste,
And a woman putting it in a fank,
In May.*

Mac Iain Bhàin finds no reassuring familiarity in service, as a 'home guard' poet such as Duncan Ban Macintyre did, but rather conceives of it as alien to his life at home in the Gàidhealtachd, against which the hardships of his service are amplified. He can be seen to subvert the tradition of heroic praise of the warrior in the Gaelic tradition; pride or pleasure in his role as a soldier are completely absent. And he develops upon his depiction of military hardship by specifying the physical impact his service has had on him:

Chuir e maille nam luas,
Agus gaiseadh nam ghruaig -
Chaill mi earrann de n' fhuair
Mi leursainn!⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 65.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 64.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

*It slowed my movement,
And withered my hair,
I lost part of what I had
Of sight.*

As such, Mac Iain Bhàin further subverts the tradition by highlighting the weakness and physical decay resulting from service, rather than focusing on strength and physical prowess. It is possible that his reference to losing a portion of his sight refers to the visual illness *ophthalmia*, from which many soldiers during the period suffered.⁵⁶⁶ The song as a whole can be seen as a missive of warning about service, and in its closing stanzas the poet hopes that those hearing it will not make the same mistake that he has in enlisting in the army:

*'Fhir a shiùbhlais mu thuath,
Thoir an t-soiridh so uam,
O nach d' fhàg mi fear m' fhuath
'Nam dhéigh ann.
'S thoir an aire gu luath,
'N uair a chluinneas tu 'n duan,
Ma is math leat 'bhi buan,
Gu-n éisd thu.⁵⁶⁷*

*He who travels to the north,
Take this greeting from me,
As I didn't leave anyone who disliked me,
Behind me,
And take heed with haste,
When you hear the song,
If you want to live long,
You'll listen.*

As such, the poet was clearly aware of the potential utility of his work - namely, that it could act as a deterrent to service for others - and while he avoided naming his regiment and sought a level of anonymity, he was evidently keen for his work to be circulated among his countrymen.⁵⁶⁸ The local and community priorities of Gaelic poets during the period once again emerge from the poetic record here.

⁵⁶⁶ MacDonald, *Lewis: A History of the Island*, p. 117.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁵⁶⁸ A comparison can be drawn with John Maclean, Bàrd Thighearna Chola's 'Òran do dh'Aimeraga' ('A Song to America'), otherwise known as 'A' Choille Ghruamach', which warned its listeners about the dangers of emigration. See: Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, pp. 64-72.

The earlier period of Mac Iain Bhàin's service in the West Indies is covered in two pieces: 'Is Cianail an Rathad 'S mi Gabhail a Chuain' and 'An Diugh 'S mi Fagail na Rioghachd'. Both songs appear to relate to, and have been composed during, the attempted crossings of the Atlantic by Admiral Hugh Cloberry Christian's (1747-98) fleet late in 1795 and early in 1796.⁵⁶⁹ Christian had been made commander-in-chief of the West Indies in 1795 and was assigned with transporting a large troop convoy across the Atlantic, numbering over 200 merchant ships and over 16,000 men. Christian attempted and was forced back from this crossing twice in November and December and January of 1795-96, before succeeding on the third attempt, in March 1796. Both of the failed crossings resulted in significant loss of life, with the latter attempt also leading to ships being wrecked or captured by the French.⁵⁷⁰

Both of these pieces seem to have been composed during the second attempted crossing, which left Portsmouth on 9 December, with nine warships and fifty merchant ships making it back on 29 January. 'Is Cianail an Rathad 's mi Gabhail a' Chuain' may have been composed towards the end of this period, as the poet refers to 'seachd seachdainean dubhlach' ('seven mournful weeks') of 'uine gle chruaidh' ('very hard time'), which is almost exactly the period of time that the fleet spent at sea.⁵⁷¹ It is also possible that this piece was composed during the third, successful crossing, which set off in March 1796, and that in it the poet refers back to the previous attempted crossing. 'An Diugh 'S mi Fàgail na Rioghachd' can be dated with more certainty, as the closing lines inform us "'S i bhliadhn' ur a' cheud mhaduinn thig oirnn' (*The new year is the first morning that will be upon us*'), which would appear to indicate that the piece was composed on new year's eve during the attempted crossing of December 1795 and January 1796.⁵⁷² Both pieces open with the poet's misgivings about facing the Atlantic crossing. 'Is Cianail an Rathad 's mi Gabhail a' Chuain' has:

Is cianail an rathad
'S mi gabhail a' chuain,
Sinn a' triall ri droch shìde
Na h-Innseachan shuas -
Na croinn oirnn a' lubadh,
'S na siuil ga 'n toirt uainn,
An long air a lethabh

⁵⁶⁹ Hugh Cloberry Christian was born in Hook Norton, England, in 1747, the son of Captain Thomas Christian and Anne Hughes. After a distinguished Naval career he gained the rank of Rear-Admiral in 1795. He had a peerage conferred on him in 1798, but died the same year at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. 'Admiral Sir Hugh Cloberry Christian', *The Peerage*, <http://www.thepeerage.com/p15543.htm#i155424> [accessed 16 May 2016].

⁵⁷⁰ For more on this attempted crossing, see: J. Campbell, *Naval History of Great Britain: Including the History and Lives of the British Admirals*, vol. 8 (London, 1818), pp. 245-50.

⁵⁷¹ MacKenzie, 'Songs by Alasdair Mac Iain Bhain', p. 283.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 286.

A' gleachd ris a' stuagh.⁵⁷³

*Sad is the journey,
As I take to sea,
We are travelling into bad weather,
To the West Indies -
The masts are bending on us,
And the sails being taken from us,
The ship on its side,
Fighting with the waves.*

While 'An Diugh 'S mi Fàgail na Rioghachd' has:

An diugh 's mi fàgail na Rioghachd
'S mor mo mhulad 's mo mhi-ghean nach gann,
'S mi bhi seòladh thar chuaintean
'Dol na h-Innseachan Shuas air an àm,
Cha robh 'n soirbheas ud buadhmhor,
Dh'eirich gailleann 'us fuathar ro theann,
'S nuair a thainig a' sguala
Thug i leatha 'bho ruadh o'n a' ghleann!⁵⁷⁴

*Today as I leave the Kingdom,
Great is my sorrow, and dissatisfaction not small,
As I am sailing across the ocean,
Heading up to the Indies,
That fair wind was not lasting,
Storm and coldness arose quickly,
And when the squall of wind came,
It took with it the brown cow from the glen!*

These pieces are of major interest as there are very few Gaelic songs which have a naval perspective on the period under consideration in this thesis.

Mac Iain Bhàin's poetry draws from tradition in imagery, metre and form but departs from much of the military tradition in Gaelic poetry by steadfastly refusing to praise the soldier's life. His only concession to military panegyric is in a lament for Colonel John Grant of Glenmoriston (c.1760-1801), where his passing reference to the subject's military career is perfunctory:

'S tu 's na h-innseachan Shios,

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

Fhuair thu 'n onair, 's tu b' fhiach,
 'S tu 'n comman air leth chiad;
 Bho 'n bha 'n t-Ard Rìgh dha d' dhion
 Gu'n do shabhail do bhian;
 'S thug e sabhailt' thu nios
 Gus an d' thainig a' chrìoch air d' thalamh ort.⁵⁷⁵

*When you were in the East Indies,
 You received honour, that you deserved,
 As you were in charge of fifty;
 Since the High King was protecting you
 Your hide was saved,
 And he took you up safe
 Until the end of your life on earth came.*

The bulk of the praise in Mac Iain Bhàin's poetry is reserved for his homeland. The landscape and native wildlife of his home are extolled in 'Òran air Gleann-na-Moireastuinn', as the poet's central desire to return home is elucidated. Another song of homeland, 'Theid mi le m' dheoin a Dhuthaich Iain Oig', appears to have been composed shortly before Mac Iain Bhàin returned to the Gàidhealtachd, probably after he was injured during the Peninsular War (1807-14). He refers to a year having passed since he was injured in Spain, and hopes that returning home will lead to an improvement in health:

Theid mi le m' dheoin a Dhuthaich Iain Oig,
 An luingeas fo sheol gluaisidh mi;
 Fàgaidh mi 'Spainnt, o'n dhiobair mo shlaint'
 Cha'n urrainn mi tamh suas innte.
 Tha bliadhn' agus corr o'n fhuair mi mo leon,
 'S tha 'n teas a' cur mor ghluasad orm,
 Ruigidh mi 'n t-ard, is fallain an t-ait,
 'Us gheibh mi ni's fearr, 's dualach dhomh.⁵⁷⁶

*I will go readily to the country of young John,
 In a ship under sail I will go;
 I will leave Spain, since my health failed,
 I can't rest up in here.
 There is a year and more since I was wounded,
 And the heat greatly afflicts me,
 I will reach the height, and healthy is the place,
 And I will get better, as is usual for me.*

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

It appears that the poet was acutely conscious of his closeness to death when he composed this piece, and in its closing stanza he states:

Tha saighead o 'n eug, mar is barail leam fhein,
Fo m' aisnean a'm pein dluth riutha
Ga m' sparradh cho geur, 's cho teotha ri *flame*,
Teachdair gu feum dusgadh dhomh.⁵⁷⁷

*There is an arrow from death, as I believe,
Under my ribs in pain, close to them,
Stabbing me so sharply, as hot as a flame,
A messenger to keep me awake.*

Mac Iain Bhàin emerges from these poems as a wholly reluctant soldier. Far from embracing and promoting the heroic ideals of military service, these are songs which would have been likely to dissuade any potential recruits (and indeed seem to have been composed with that purpose in mind). The hardship of service is a predominant theme in his poetry, and this is regularly contrasted with the contented life the poet left behind in the Gàidhealtachd. Concepts of loyalty or belonging to regiment, the wider imperial army or the British state do not feature in Mac Iain Bhàin's poetry; his only allegiance is towards his homeland and its community. Once more we see conformity with Smout's model in the poetic record.⁵⁷⁸

Homeland

Homeland is a recurring theme in the soldiers' poetry of this period. In this regard, the poetry of the military experience shares characteristics with emigrant verse of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and, as noted previously with regards to the work commonly attributed to the Kintail poet Iain Mac Mhurchaidh, the military and emigrant experience sometimes converged in the poetic record.⁵⁷⁹ Alasdair Mac Iain Bhàin used homeland as a foil to highlight the hardship of military life, and a similar technique can be seen in the Glen Avon, Inverness-shire, poet Gilleasbuig Stiùbhart's (Archibald Stewart, fl. 1794) 'Beir an t-Soraidh Uam Fhein' ('*Bear this Greeting from Me*'). Sinton provides us with some context:

Archibald Stewart, a native of Glen Avon, on the Duke of Gordon's property, had enlisted, and was abroad with his regiment - no doubt, the 92nd - when

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁵⁷⁸ Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', p. 103.

⁵⁷⁹ MacDonell, *The Emigrant Experience*, pp. 3-18.

he composed this ballad, which is so truly characteristic of its class. We have the stout and fearless soldier on his lonely guard in a distant land, musing upon the days of his youth, and upon the free and joyous life which he led with his early associates upon his native mountains.⁵⁸⁰

His 'early associates' are the deer, and in this piece Stewart compares their lives to his as a soldier, skilfully drawing on regimental language and imagery:

Sud a' bhuidheann a b' àilt',
'Dol a dh' ionnsuidh paràd,
'S cha 'n iarradh sibh màidsear oirbh.

Cha 'n iarradh sibh geard,
Ach na creagan a b' àird',
'S cha bu chladhaire 'thàladh oirbh.⁵⁸¹

*That was the most stately company,
Going to parade,
And you would not require a major over you.*

*You would not require a guard,
Save for the highest rocks,
And he were no coward who would cajole you.⁵⁸²*

The freedom of the deer is contrasted with his own lack of autonomy in the army. He complains that he cannot take a dram without being called away by the drum and that those who do partake of drink are whipped for drunkenness:

'S 'n àm dhomh 'suidhe 's taigh-òsd',
'Gabhail drama le dòigh,
Bi'dh 'n druma dhubh 'g ar n-òrduch' falbh.

'S ged gheibh sinn rùm agus beòir,
Is fion dearg ann ri h-òl,
'S beag mo thlachd de 'n phòit a bh' ann.

'S ma thàrlas 's an àm,
Gu 'n téid e 'n ar ceann,
Tri cheud diubh gun taing ar duais.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸⁰ Translations of this poem are by Sinton with modifications by the current writer. Sinton, *The Poetry of Badenoch*, p. 222.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 483

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

*And in the time of sitting in the inn
Taking a dram comfortably,
The black drum will be ordering us to go.*

*And though we'll get rum and beer
And red wine there to drink,
Little is my pleasure of the drinking going on.*

*And should it happen in the time,
That it go to our heads,
Three hundred of them (lashes) without thanks our
reward.⁵⁸⁴*

He also complains that despite being armed with a gun, there are no animals for him to hunt:

*'S ged tha mo ghunn' air dheagh ghleus,
Cha dean mi leath' feum,
'S fada mi bho na féidh 's an àm.*

*Cha 'n fhaigh sinn coileach no cearc,
No tarmachan breac,
Cha b' àros doibh "coast" na Fraing'.⁵⁸⁵*

*And though my gun is in good trim,
I won't make any use of it,
Far I am from the deer just now.*

*We'll not get cock or hen,
Or speckled ptarmigan,
The coast of France is no abode for them.⁵⁸⁶*

Stewart's military experience emerges as being wholly restrictive and in direct contrast to the life he left behind in the Gàidhealtachd. Far from expressing confidence and assurance, the tone of this poem is one of frustration and defiance. This is summed up in the poem's closing stanzas, as Stewart makes clear that if he was again at home 'fo stiopall nan càrn' ('under the steeple of the hills') he would not cede his autonomy to the army. His contempt for the military is clear:

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 483.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 483.

S na'm bithinn-s' mar bha,
Fo stiopall nan càrn,
Cha "mhuntaiginn" geard ri m' bheò.

Cha "mhuntaiginn" geard,
S cha sheasainn pàrad,
S cha 'n fhaicteadh gu bràth,
Fhad 's bu mhaireann mi slàn,
Còta màdair g' a charamh orm.⁵⁸⁷

*And if I would be as I was,
Under the steeple of the hills,
I would not mount guard during my life.*

*I would not mount guard,
And I would not stand parade,
And never would be seen,
As long as I live,
A madder coat being put on me.*⁵⁸⁸

The Badenoch poet Uilleam Ruighe 'n Uidhe (William Gow, fl. 1801) also cast his mind back to his homeland and its deer in his 'Cha Bhi mi ri Tuireadh'. This piece appears to have been composed when the poet was travelling to Egypt to take part in the expedition at Alexandria under Sir Ralph Abercromby in 1801. This was the same expedition that Alexander MacKinnon took part in with the Gordon Highlanders, and, given the likelihood of a Badenoch poet serving in the 92nd, it is not inconceivable that the poets were regimental comrades. Gow seems to be more accepting of his fate than Stewart, stating that he had been in the army in his youth and would now serve again voluntarily:

Thug mi tamull as m' òige
Greis an armait Rìgh Deòrsa,
'S théid mi rithist le m' dheòin ann gun eulain'.⁵⁸⁹

*I took a period of time from my youth,
A while in the army of King George,
And I will go into it again voluntarily without
infirmity.*⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 483-84.

⁵⁸⁹ Translations of this poem are by Sinton with modifications by the current writer. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 459

Memories of his homeland appear to offer a form of escapism for the poet:

'S ma tha 'n dan domh tighinn dachaidh,
Gu 'm bi luathas 'am chasan,
Bheir mi sgrìob le Nic-Ailpein 'g am feuchainn.

A Dhubh-ghleannan an aonaich!
Far an tric bha mi 'm aonar,
Far am biodh na daimh chraobh-dhearg 's iad céir-
gheal.⁵⁹¹

*And should it be fate for me to come home,
There will be swiftness in my feet,
I'll take a turn with the daughter of Alpine to try them.*

*Dark little Glen of the Moorland!
Where I was often alone,
Where would be the red-forked stags, with white
buttocks.*⁵⁹²

Homeland is also a theme in the anonymous songs, 'An Gille Donn' ('*The Brown-haired Lad*') , by an un-named Mull poet, and 'Dùthaich MhicLeòid' ('*The Land of Macleod*'), which appears to have been composed by a poet from Skye. Both of these songs refer to the Anglo-British campaign to Holland in 1799, discussed earlier in this chapter. These songs are similar in tone and perspective to Mac Iain Bhàin's and Stewart's poems. They are, at best, the songs of reluctant soldiers, and a thread of anti-authoritarianism can be detected in both. 'An Gille Donn' was published twice in the nineteenth century, in *An Duanaire* (1868) and *An t-Òranaiche* (1879). It may be that the later version in *An t-Òranaiche* was edited to portray the poet's military service in a more positive light: where the earlier version states 'Gur h-ann feasgar Di-sathurn, / 'Thug sinn 'n cath a bha dòineach' ('*It was on Saturday afternoon / That we engaged in the battle that was sorrowful*'),⁵⁹³ the version in *An t-Òranaiche* has 'Gur h-ann feasgar Di-sathurn, / Thug sinn 'n cath a bha deònach' ('*It was on Saturday afternoon / That we engaged in the battle that was willing*').⁵⁹⁴ Given that it may have been altered for *An t-Òranaiche*, I take the quotations below from the version in *An Duanaire*. The piece begins with the poet's complaint about having to bear arms, and his use of language stresses the soldier's lack of choice:

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 459.

⁵⁹³ Macpherson, *An Duanaire*, p. 69.

⁵⁹⁴ Alternatively, Sinclair might have collected a different variant of the song. G. Mac-na-Ceàrdadh (ed.), *An t-Òranaiche* (Glasgow, 1879) p. 456.

Gura mis 'tha fo mhulad,
'Giulan cular Rìgh Deòrsa.

Mi 'bhi giùlan a' ghunna,
Ann an cuideachd a' Chòirneil.⁵⁹⁵

[...]

Luchd nan còtaichean ruadha,
'Ga'n cur suas 'an deadh òrdugh.

Luchd nan còtaichean-gearra,
Ga'n cur thairis do 'n t-Olaind.⁵⁹⁶

*It is I who am sorrowful,
Carrying the banner of King George.*

*Carrying the gun,
In the company of the Colonel.*

[...]
*The men of the red coats,
Being put up into order.*

*The men of the short coats,
Being put over to Holland.*

The battle in which the poet took part is portrayed in no heroic terms but as a 'sorrowful' undertaking.⁵⁹⁷ He goes on to refer directly to the human cost of war:

B' ioma té 'bha gun chéile,
'N àm éirigh Di-Dòmhnuich!

Agus nighean fir fearainn,
'Bha 'na laidhe 'na h-ònrachd.

'An déis a céile 'thoirt uaipe,
'S nach fuasgaileadh òr e.

⁵⁹⁵ Macpherson, *An Duanaire*, p. 69.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

E 'na shìneadh 's an luachair,
'S 'fhuil mu 'ghuaillnean a' dòrtadh.⁵⁹⁸

*Many a girl that was without a partner,
By the time of waking on Sunday.*

*And girl of a land-owner,
Lying in solitude.*

*After her partner having been taken from her,
And that gold could not resolve it.*

*He lying in the rushes,
And blood pouring about his shoulders.*

It seems probable that our second anonymous song from the 1799 campaign, 'Dùthaich MhicLeòid' refers to the Battle of Alkmaar specifically.⁵⁹⁹ The British column under Sir Ralph Abercromby advanced along the beach and sea dike at Petten during this offensive, and the song makes direct reference to fighting on a beach ('Thug sinn baiteal air an tràigh' / 'We engaged in battle on the shore').⁶⁰⁰ The song also appears to refer to Prince Frederick (1763-1827), Duke of York and Albany who was in overall command of the offensive.⁶⁰¹ The poet notes:

Thàinig esan - mac an rìgh,
'S e mar aon anns a' chuideachd, -
"Mo cheist Gàidhil an Taoibh-tuath,
'Sibh 'bha uam, fhuair mi nis sibh."⁶⁰²

He came - the son of the King,

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁵⁹⁹ This piece remains popular to the present day and there are several variants in the *Tobar an Dualchais* archive. It should also be noted that the song crossed over into the English song tradition, as 'I will go, I will go, when the fighting is over'.

⁶⁰⁰ See: Esdaile, *The French Wars, 1792-1815*, p. 89.

⁶⁰¹ A dispatch from Prince Frederick to the prime minister Henry Dundas on the 4th of October 1799 following the battle noted:

The Points where this well fought Battle was principally contested, were from the Sea Shore in Front of Egmont, extending along the Sandy Desert or Hills to the Heights above Bergen, and it was sustained by the British Columns under the Command of those highly distinguished Officers General Sir Ralph Abercromby and Lieutenant-General Dundas whose Exertions, as well as the Gallantry of the brave Troops they led cannot have been surpassed by any former Instance of British Valour.

M. Mace and J. Grehan, *British Battles of the Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1806: Dispatched from the Front* (South Yorkshire, 2013), p. 137.

⁶⁰² Macpherson, *An Duanaire*, p. 71

*As one among the company, -
 "My beloved Gaels of the North,
 You who were away from me, I have now got you with
 me."*

The Highland companies which took part in this offensive were the 79th and 92nd Regiments and it is therefore likely that the poet served in one of these. The opening stanza relates how the soldiers received official orders 'o'n rìgh' ('*from the king*') to prepare for departure to France, 'a chur braing 's an fhear-mhillidh' ('to put a halter round the devil', Bonaparte).⁶⁰³ The impression of a soldier serving against his will, which we have seen in Mac Iain Bhàin's poetry, 'An Gille Donn' and Stewart's 'Beir an t-Soraidh Uam Fhein', is again evident in this piece. Discontent at being forced to serve can be detected in the third stanza:

*'N uair a thog iad rithe siùil,
 Rìgh! bu tùrsach 'bha sinne"
 'Bhi 'gar cur a nùll do'n Fhraing,
 Gus am Fràngach a thilleadh.*⁶⁰⁴

*When they raised their sails,
 Lord! We were sorrowful,
 Being sent over to France,
 To force back the French.*

The tone throughout the song is one of sadness and resignation; it contains no element of confidence, or concept of being involved in an heroic endeavour. The soldier's experience emerges from these two pieces as one in which loyalty is almost absent; the pieces are focussed on a basic sense of longing for homeland and family.

A similar tone can be found in another un-attributed piece, 'Tha Sinn a' Falbh' ('*We Are Going*'), one of the strongest anti-military songs of the period. Here the poet states:

*Tha sinn a' falbh, 's gum bi sinn a' falbh
 'S an t-Sealbh a bhith ghar còmhnaidh
 Nuair thig an t-sìth a null on Fhraing
 Gun taing gu faigh sinn fòrladh.*⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁶⁰⁵ Version from album by M. Stewart and A. MacDonald, *Colla mo Rùn* (Greentrax Recordings, Cockenzie, 2001).

*We are going, soon we'll be going,
Let good fortune be with us
When peace come from France
Without thanks, we'll get leave.*⁶⁰⁶

He refers to the human cost of war and the societal impact on young women left behind without male partners:

*'S tha na h-ighneagan fo mhulad,
'S tha iad uile brònach,
An liuthad saighdear bòidheach dearg
A dh'fhalbh a dh'arm Rìgh Seòras.*⁶⁰⁷

*The young girls are dejected
And they are all grieved,
The numerous handsome soldiers in red
Who went in the service of King George.*⁶⁰⁸

The poet expresses in cold terms his hatred for the un-named figure responsible for his recruitment to this regiment:

*'S fhir as coireach bhith ghar togail
'S bhith ghar cur an òrdugh
Nar fhada gum bi claidheamh cruadhach
Suas ri meall do sgòrnain.*⁶⁰⁹

*And you, the man responsible for recruiting us
And for placing us in order,
May it not be long till a hard sword of steel
Is up against your protruding gullet.*⁶¹⁰

Once again, we see a Gaelic soldier-poet of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period reject heroic narratives of service in place of stark realism.

Conclusion

The poetry of the British military experience of soldier poets of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars represents varied and contrasting viewpoints.

⁶⁰⁶ Stewart and Macdonald, *Colla mo Rùn*.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The poetry of perhaps the two best known and most published poets from the period, Duncan Bàn Macintyre and Alexander MacKinnon, endorses heroic narratives of service. The concentric loyalties on display in their verse favour the Gaels as a distinct grouping and prioritise local concerns, but this does not preclude identification and indeed celebration of national and imperial imperatives, thus supporting Mackillop's argument that Gaels 'conceptualised their British soldiering identity by squeezing it into their own cultural pre-conceptions'.⁶¹¹ It is notable however that similar adoption and promotion of heroic modes are almost entirely absent from the rest of the corpus, save in minor and isolated instances of panegyric elevation in Duncan Campbell's verse. An inability or lack of compulsion to extend beyond the inner circles of Smout's concentric loyalties model is apparent in some of this poetry.⁶¹² Poets' loyalties often centre around self and family or community interest, and the homeland features prominently in their perspectives. It is clear that much of this poetry was either expressly negative about service or - perhaps deliberately - ambiguous. Given their proximity to service and its attendant hardships, this response is understandable; the next chapter will consider how non-combatants, at distance from the wars of 1793-1815, responded in their verse.

⁶¹¹ Mackillop, 'For King, Country, and Regiment', p. 210.

⁶¹² Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', p. 103.

Chapter 6: French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815): Non-combatants

While soldiers' poetry accounts for a significant proportion of the poetic output of the period, the experience of Gaels who remained at home during the years of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars also forms a major part of the Gaelic poetic response. Twenty-two years of almost continuous war against the French exerted a massive influence on Highland society; this conflict and its impact constituted a major theme in Gaelic poetry of the period, reflecting the concerns of poets across Britain at the time.⁶¹³ It is unsurprising that the wars against the French were the subject of so much attention, given the extent to which they came to define society during the period. While Britain had experienced a series of wars in the eighteenth century, the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars took place on an unprecedented global scale and engaged most of Europe in conflict. These wars have been viewed as the first world wars, and their overarching influence on the home front is comparable to the major conflicts of the twentieth. Clive Emsley has commented on the overwhelming impact that the wars had on British society, noting that: 'if there was a common experience shared by all Britons in the last decade of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries, it is to be found less in the changes resulting from the industrial revolution and more in the demands of war'.⁶¹⁴ Known as the Great War up until 1914, the conflict of 1793-1815 was the defining shared experience of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century European, British, Scottish and Highland society.⁶¹⁵

The poems considered in this chapter are as follows:

- 'Òran do 'n aon Cheudna ; 's e sin ri ràdh - an Coirneal Domhnullach, do 'n Goirear "Tighearna Ghlinne Garradh"' (*"Song to the Same; that is to say - the Colonel MacDonald, styled "The Lord of Glengarry"*), by Allan MacDougall, in which he praises Alexander Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry as a colonel;⁶¹⁶
- 'Òran do 'n Aon Cheudna' (*'A Song to the Same'*), another song by MacDougall in praise of Glengarry;⁶¹⁷
- 'Òran do dh' AILEIN CAM'RON, an Earrachd, air dha bhi na Mhàidsear' (*'A Song to Alan Cameron of Erracht on his becoming a Major'*), is a panegyric for this famous soldier;⁶¹⁸

⁶¹³ Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, pp. 1-54.

⁶¹⁴ C. Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars, 1793-1815* (Basingstoke and London, 1979), p. 4.

⁶¹⁵ C. Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 2.

⁶¹⁶ Dùghallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhelach*, pp. 9-12.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-17.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-25.

- ‘Òran do dh’Ailein Cam’ron, na Earrachd, air dha bhi na Choirneal’ (*‘A Song to Alan Cameron of Erracht on his becoming a Colonel’*), another song by MacDougall for Cameron of Erracht;⁶¹⁹
- The same poet’s ‘Òran do’n Reisimeid Duibh’ (*‘Song to the Black Watch’*) praises the regiment for its service in the Battle of Alexandria;⁶²⁰
- ‘Òran do’n chuideachda ’thogadh am Mariburgh, gan goirear “Volunteers Lochaber”’ (*‘A Song to the company raised in Maryburgh, called “The Lochaber Volunteers”, ’sa bhliadhna 1795’*) is a poem by MacDougall to a volunteer company in Lochaber;⁶²¹
- ‘Cumha do Choirneal Iain Camshron, a Thuit ann am Blàr Bhatarlaidh’ (*‘Lament to Colonel John Cameron, who Fell at the Battle of Waterloo’*), is a lament for John Cameron of Fassiefern, who was killed during the Waterloo campaign of 1815;⁶²²
- Donald Cameron also composed a piece for Cameron, ‘Cumha Shir Iain Chamroin’ (*‘John Cameron’s Lament’*);⁶²³
- Cameron composed a further lament on another officer, Ewan Cameron’s, death in Portugal in 1810;⁶²⁴
- ‘Òran do Chornail Daibhidh Stiubhart, Triath Ghart’ (*‘Song to David Stewart of Garth’*) was composed by the Perthshire poet Alexander Forbes for David Stewart of Garth;⁶²⁵
- ‘Òran do Choirneal Aonghas Mac-an-Toisich’ (*‘A Song to Colonel Angus Mackintosh’*) is a panegyric for an officer in the Cameron Highlanders by the Inverness-shire poet Alexander MacKay;⁶²⁶
- ‘Òran do Dhuchd Wellington’ (*‘A Song to the Duke of Wellington’*) is a panegyric by MacKay to the British commander;⁶²⁷
- ‘Raon Cath Waterloo’ (*‘The Battle-field of Waterloo’*) is a short poem on the aftermath of the battle;⁶²⁸
- James McLagan’s ‘Òran do’n Chath-bhuidhinn Rioghail, Ghaelich, an deigh Cath na h-Eiphit ’sa bhliadhna 1803 (sic)’ (*‘A Song to the Royal Highland Regiment after the Battle of Egypt in 1803 (sic)’*) is a piece for the Black Watch after the Battle of Alexandria in 1801;⁶²⁹
- ‘Òran do Bhonipart’ (*‘Song to Bonaparte’*) by James Shaw is addressed to Napoleon Bonaparte after the Battle of Alexandria;⁶³⁰

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-29.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-96.

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-46.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, pp. 182-86.

⁶²³ Donullach, *Orain le Raoghall Donullach, an Ardnis, Arasaig, Siorruichd Inbhirnis*, pp. 176-82.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 183-87.

⁶²⁵ P. Cameron, ‘Perthshire Gaelic Songs’, in *TGSI*, 17 (1890-91), pp. 158-59.

⁶²⁶ A. MacAoidh, *Orain agus Dàin, ann an Gaelic agus am Beurla* (Inverness, 1821), pp. 92-95.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-32.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁶²⁹ MacPharlain, *Co-chruinneachadh de dh’Orain agus de Luinneagaibh Thaghta Ghae’lach*, pp. 103-07.

⁶³⁰ Mackenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, pp. 313-14.

- The Inverness-shire poet Donald MacDonald composed a poem of the same title, 'Oran do Bhonipart' ('*Song to Bonaparte*'), also after the Battle of Alexandria;⁶³¹
- Duncan Cunningham's 'Aoradh do Bhonnaparta' ('*Satire of Bonaparte*') was composed in 1805 and also satirises the French Emperor;⁶³²
- 'Òran Bhonaparte' ('*Bonaparte's Song*') was seemingly composed after the Battle of Waterloo by the Skye poet Angus Shaw;⁶³³
- John MacLean's 'Do Dhonnachadh MacAonghais, a Tiriodh, a chaidh a Mharbhadh anns an Olaint' ('*To Duncan MacInnes, from Tiree, who was Killed in Holland*'), laments this Tiree soldier's death abroad.⁶³⁴

Officers and Heroes

Foremost among the types of Gaelic military poetry composed during this period are panegyrics to officers. As has previously been noted in this thesis, in the decades following Culloden officers of the British military came to occupy positions of esteem in Highland society, which had once been the preserve of clan chiefs and warriors. As also noted, however, many of these officers were from gentry families, and while their praise is certainly related to their military position, it also represents direct continuity in the praise of figures from the clan gentry by Gaelic poets. The Glencoe-born poet Allan MacDougall (c.1750-1828), known in Gaelic as *Ailean Dall* (Blind Allan), was hired as an official bard to the Glengarry chief Alexander Ranaldson MacDonell (1771-1828) c.1798. MacDonell had raised the Glengarry Highlanders in 1794 and was elevated to the position of colonel in the British army. An inveterate self-publicist, Glengarry used his military position as a means of cultivating and promoting his romanticised persona as a warrior and clan chief.⁶³⁵ It therefore comes as no surprise that part of MacDougall's remit as official poet was to compose publicity pieces about Glengarry as an officer.⁶³⁶ In his 'Oran do 'n aon Cheudna ; 's e sin ri ràdh - an Coirneal Domhnullach, do 'n

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 348-50.

⁶³² D. Cinicnach, *Orainn Ghaeilich* (Glasgow, 1805), pp. 50-51.

⁶³³ N. Macleod, 'Beagan Dhuilleag bho Sheann Bhardachd Eilean a' Cheo', in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 21 (1896-97), pp. 182-85.

⁶³⁴ Cameron, *Na Bàird Thirisdeach*, pp. 64-66.

⁶³⁵ The tradition of hiring an official poet had all but died out in the second half of the eighteenth century, but having a bard was in line with the romantic image that Glengarry liked to convey. For Glengarry as a colonel see: B. D. Osborne, *The Last of the Chiefs: Alasdair Ranaldson Macdonell of Glengarry 1773-1828* (Glasgow, 2001), pp. 55-82.

⁶³⁶ The Glengarry Highlanders were active at Garrisons in Jersey and Guernsey until they were reduced in 1802. Many of those who had served in the regiment emigrated to Canada, where, along with other emigrants, they raised the 'Glengarry Fencibles' during the American War (1812-14). M. Brander, *The Scottish Highlanders and their Regiments*, (New York, 1971), p. 211; M. McLean, *The People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition, 1745-1820*, (Montreal, 1991), pp. 131-133 & 146-147.

Goirear “Tighearna Ghlinne Garradh” MacDougall draws deeply from the language of the panegyric code in his praise of Glengarry:

Lean do chruadal, 's do ghaisgeadh,
 S am fasan bu dual
 A bhi colgarra, cosanta
 M prosnuchadh sluaigh;
 Gu h-airmealteach, treubhach,
 Gu geur lannach cruaidh;
 'S tu shliochd nam fear treuna,
 Nach geilleadh 's an ruaig.⁶³⁷

*Your courage and heroism
 Followed in the expected manner,
 To be fierce and vigorous,
 Encouraging an army;
 Valorously, gallantly,
 Armed with a sharp sword and formidable
 You are the descendant of the brave men,
 Who would not yield in the fight.*

In his similarly-titled ‘Oran do ’n Aon Cheudna’, MacDougall remarks on the significance of Glengarry’s military appointment in terms of his status:

'S leat onoir a 'bhi 'd Choirneal,
 Do chomision a d' phòca,
 Leith ri ceangal do chorach:
 Gleann a Garradh a's Cnoideart fo d' chis.⁶³⁸

*It is an honour for you to be a Colonel,
 Your commission in your pocket,
 With the obligation of your birthright:
 Glengarry and Knoydart under your subjection.*

As such, Glengarry’s military role is depicted as being in line with his birthright, ‘ceangal do chorach’, and his position of power as a clan chief is strengthened by proving that Glengarry and Knoydart are under his subjection, with ‘Cnoideart fo d’ chis’. That Glengarry envisaged of himself and liked to be thought of as a clan chief in the traditional Highland style is well-known, and the fact that MacDougall was in his employ makes it difficult to view his military panegyric as amounting to

⁶³⁷ Dùghallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhelach*, p. 10. His poetry was also published in 1798.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15-16.

much more than the paid-for propaganda of a servant.⁶³⁹ Nevertheless, MacDougall's poetry on Glengarry exemplifies the manner in which the military had created a context to which an older framework of panegyric could be easily attached. It can therefore be said that MacDougall's response to Glengarry, while perhaps primarily motivated by patronage, could also have been sparked by an opportunity to draw from and utilise his poetic inheritance (and in particular its military rhetoric). His application of the panegyric code includes the key convention of listing allies, whom MacDougall says will come to Glengarry with 'dùthchas':⁶⁴⁰

Thig iad sid ort le dùchas
 Bho thùr na 'n clach réith
 Braithrean Domhnuil, Cloinn Dhùghaill,
 Marcaich shunntach nan stéud:
 Cloinn an t-Shaor bho thaobh Chruachainn,
 Bha riabh cruadalach tréun ;
 Ge do chaill iad a chòir a bh' aig
 An' seòrs ann an Sléibht'.⁶⁴¹

*They will come to you with hereditary right
 From the tower of the level stones,
 MacDonalds, MacDougalls,
 Joyful horsemen of the steeds;
 Macintyres from the district of Cruachan,
 That were ever courageous and brave;
 Although they lost the right,
 That their people had in Sleat.*

The rehearsal of allies is a common feature of poetry composed about military figures during the period. The new/renewed militarization of Highland society in the second half of the eighteenth century had given poets a fresh context in which this convention of panegyric poetry could be applied meaningfully. For example, in a poem to the Marquis of Huntly, the Inverness-shire poet Alexander MacKay lists the areas in the north of Scotland from which allies will be drawn to fight with him against Napoleon Bonaparte in France:

'S ann leat dh'eireadh na Gaidheal
 Th' eadar 'n Aird 'is Duthich 'ic Aoidh,
 Eadar Cata 's Bràidh-bharr, 's bithidh -
 Lochaber 's Baideanach cinnt,

⁶³⁹ Osborne, *The Last of the Chiefs*, pp. 55-82

⁶⁴⁰ Macinnes, 'The Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry', pp. 465-66.

⁶⁴¹ Dùghallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhelach*, p. 12.

Theid iad gu tric nam Battalion,
 Nunn do 'n Spainnt a's do 'n Fhraing;
 'S co bu treun na na Gaidheal,
 Gu Bonapart chuir a suim.⁶⁴²

*It is with you the Gaels would rise
 Who are between Aird and Mackay country
 Between Sutherland and Braemar
 And Lochaber and Badenoch.
 They will go frequently as a battalion,
 Over to Spain and to France;
 And who is braver than the Gaels,
 To make Bonaparte pay attention.*

While the clans belonging to the areas mentioned by MacKay had long since ceased to be active military units, specific districts retained their significance as sites for recruitment. Rehearsing allies in this context can be seen, on one level, as merely the application of a convention to complete the panegyric structure of the poem, but it is also conceivable that some poets saw in the regiments a genuine opportunity for old unities to be formed again. As such, poets can be said to have drawn on allies in the same way that their poetic predecessors had done: to intimate what John MacInnes has called 'the conceptual unity' of the Gaels of Scotland, and indeed to promote recruitment.⁶⁴³

Allan MacDougall also composed two panegyrics to Alan Cameron of Erracht (1753-1828), one of the most well-known and illustrious Highland soldiers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Both were composed on the occasion of Cameron of Erracht having been granted a promotion: 'Oran do dh' AILEIN CAM'RON, an Earrachd, air dha bhi na Mhàidsear' and 'Oran do dh'Ailein Cam'ron, na Earrachd, air dha bhi na Choirneal'.⁶⁴⁴ The dominant note in these compositions is one of ebullience and pride in this famous Highland soldier's successful military career, though it is again worth bearing in mind that MacDougall would have had a certain obligation to compose poetry of this kind. In the closing verse of 'Oran do dh' AILEIN CAM'RON, an Earrachd, air dha bhi na Mhàidsear', MacDougall declares:

⁶⁴² A. Mackay, *Òrain agus Dain, ann an Gaelic agus am Beurla* (Inbhir nis, 1821), p. 83.

⁶⁴³ MacInnes, 'Tha Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry', p. 290

⁶⁴⁴ Alan Cameron was born in Erracht, Lochaber, in 1753 and joined the army as a volunteer for service in North America. He was captured at Philadelphia during the American War of Independence, where he was imprisoned for two years. After the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars, Cameron raised the 79th Regiment (The Cameron Highlanders). He fought in Europe and was with the expeditionary force under Ralph Abercromby to Egypt in 1801. He was invalided during the Peninsular War and returned home in 1810, after being promoted to Major General. He died in 1828. L. Maclean, 'Cameron, Sir Alan, of Erracht', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4432 [accessed 12 October 2016].

Bidh ard uaislean a's luchd oighreachd
 'G òl do shlainte 'n càs na rinn thu;
 Gur deas-Ghàidheal, cha mhac Goill thu,
 Cam'ronach gun fhaillinn caoimhneis;⁶⁴⁵

*Nobles and landed people,
 Will be toasting your health for what you've achieved;
 That you are a proper Gael, not a son of the Lowlands,
 A Cameron with no failing of kindness.*

Cameron is pictured in his rightful place among 'ard uaislean', but MacDougall makes clear that he is a Gael rather than a Lowlander - firmly situating him in Highland culture, regardless of his proximity to exalted southern society. This is reinforced by an assertion that Cameron is a descendant of the Fianna: "'S ann do 'n Fheinn thu, 'Ghaigich threubhaich' ('You are of the Fianna, valourous warrior').⁶⁴⁶ MacDougall therefore goes to some length to accentuate Cameron's rootedness in Gaelic culture and history; he is presented as a bona fide warrior, who belongs to the Gàidhealtachd. His expressed pride in Cameron of Erracht reaches a more elevated tone - in line with the soldier's elevation in rank - in 'Oran do dh' Ailein Cam'ron na Earrachd, air dha bhi na Choirneal'. He describes here how news of Cameron's promotion has reached the Gàidhealtachd:

'S naidheachd e 's na rioghachd,
 Ga innseadh gu barantach,
 Gu bheil thu nis a d' Choirneal,
 'S do chòraichean ceangailte:⁶⁴⁷

*It is news in the realm,
 Related with certainty,
 That you are now a Colonel,
 With your birthrights secured.*

Cameron's promotion is seen in the context of his 'còraichean', an allusion to his birthright under the clan concept of dùthchas. Born less than a decade after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-46, MacDougall would have been aware that the Clan Cameron had played a leading role in the uprising on the Jacobite side. This gives added significance to his allusion to Cameron's hereditary rights, with the implication that his service has secured these.

⁶⁴⁵ Dùghallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhealach*, p. 25.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Given that MacDougall was aware that society in the Gàidhealtachd was changing to the detriment of the region's tenantry, as is elucidated in his stinging attack against the introduction of sheep-farming in the Highlands, 'Òran do na Cìobairibh Ghallda' ('*Song to the Lowland Shepherds*'), we might ascribe a level of naivety to his willingness to praise figures such as Glengarry, who was involved in some of the earliest Highland clearances.⁶⁴⁸ However, his poetry in praise of military figures can also be viewed as an attempt to express confidence and assert Gaelic cultural distinctiveness in a contemporary context that offered few other opportunities to do so. It should also be noted that MacDougall's key allegiance in these pieces is towards the Highland gentry rather than King or country, which feature only as distant and ill-defined concepts in his work.

Gaelic poets had no shortage of local heroes to praise during the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Major General David Stewart of Garth (1772-1829), author of the *Sketches* considered earlier in this thesis, emerged as one of the most esteemed Highland military figures of the Napoleonic period. Garth achieved fame nationally; he was a close friend of Sir Walter Scott and played a major part in the organisation of King George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822. He was an ethnic chauvinist and this fact has rightly been highlighted by modern historians, but any balanced account of his life and influence should take into account that he was also a fierce opponent of the Highland clearances and the resulting emigration.⁶⁴⁹ It is perhaps surprising that just one Gaelic poem about Stewart of Garth has so far been identified, but this piece is nonetheless illuminating in its wholehearted praise of its subject. The piece was first published in *The Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* in 1891, and subsequently appeared in *Mac-talla* in 1903 and Alexander Maclean Sinclair's *The Gaelic Bards from 1800-1825* (1904). The Perthshire author of the poem, Alasdair Forbais (Alasdair Forbes, fl. 1815), had been a sergeant in the Black Watch.⁶⁵⁰ The opening stanza refers to the Black Watch's capture of the standard of Napoleon Bonaparte's Invincible Legion at the Battle of Alexandria in 1801:

Am Brat sròl th' anns an Fhraing
Nach d' fhuair tamailt o thus,
Cuirte sìos e do 'n Eaphaid
A dh' fheuchainn a chliu;
Bha thusa 'us do reiseamaid
Fhein air do chul,

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-33. See: H. Cheape, 'A Song on the Lowland Shepherds: Popular Reaction to the Highland Clearances', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 15 (1995), pp. 85-100.

⁶⁴⁹ See for instance: Dziennik, *The Fatal Land*, p. 221.

⁶⁵⁰ John G. Gibson has recently uncovered another military piece almost certainly by the same Alasdair Forbes, a lament for a Highland Officer killed at the Battle of El Hamet in 1807. See: J.G. Gibson, 'A Blind Perthshire Sergeant's Lament for his Colonel who died at El Hamet in 1807', in *International Review of Scottish Studies*, 36 (2011), pp. 93-106.

An da-fhichead 'us a dha
 Sid luchd caramh gach cuis.
 Chuir sibh Frangaich nan smur
 Aig Alexandria nan tur,
 'S thug sibh uap an cular riomhach,
 Bha miaghail nan cùirt.⁶⁵¹

*The banner that was in France,
 That never saw disgrace,
 It was sent down to Egypt
 To test its reputation;
 You were there,
 With your regiment behind you,
 The Forty-second
 Who could always succeed.
 You reduced the French to dust
 At Alexandria of the towers,
 And you took from them the elegant banner,
 That was esteemed in their court.*

Forbes places emphasis on Garth's ancestry in this poem and highlights his place as a Stewart in the lineage of Scottish kings:

Tha thu de dh-fhuil nan righrean
 Bha miaghail nan là,
 Siol Bhanco do rireamh
 Nach diobradh do chàs;⁶⁵²

*You are of the bloodline of the Kings
 That were famous in their day,
 The progeny of true Banquo,
 Who would not quit in the time of hardship;*

Such is the poet's admiration for Garth that he would go so far as to place the crown on his head: "'S na faighinns' e gu 'm dhurachd / B' e 'n crun chuir mu d' cheann' ('And if I got my wish / It would be to place the crown on your head').⁶⁵³ For Forbes, then, Stewart of Garth embodies the Stuart Dynasty; he epitomises a sense of hereditary right and exceptionalism. While poems in praise of figures such as Cameron of Erracht and Stewart of Garth on one level simply demonstrate continuity with the hierarchical worldview of clan society, they can also be read as

⁶⁵¹ Cameron, 'Perthshire Gaelic Songs', p. 158.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 159

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*

affirmations of the continued importance of Gaelic culture and history in a military context.

Alexander MacKay

Alasdair MacAoidh (Alexander MacKay, 1775-1858) was a butler at Moy Hall, near the village of Moy south of Inverness, which had been the home of Clan Mackintosh chiefs since the fourteenth century.⁶⁵⁴ Like MacDougall, MacKay was therefore in close proximity to early nineteenth-century Highland gentry, and some prominent figures from Highland society are listed among the subscribers appended to his edition of poetry published in 1821. 473 subscribers are listed in MacKay's collection and these include: Alexander Gordon, fourth Duke of Gordon (1743-1827); George Duncan Gordon, fifth Duke of Gordon and Marquess of Huntly (1770-1836); Elizabeth Gordon, Duchess of Gordon (1794-1864); Janet Davidson, Lady Mackintosh; and Alexander Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry. The list also includes twenty-seven British military officers, including a Major General and a Royal Navy surgeon.⁶⁵⁵ While MacKay does not appear to have been officially in service as a poet, he clearly relied on the patronage of Highland gentry and military figures in order to have his poetry published. It is therefore likely that his choice of subject matter was to some extent, and perhaps considerably, influenced by that fact.⁶⁵⁶ An additional factor in leading to the publication of MacKay's collection appears to have been the aspiration of his patron, Alexander Gordon, to publish the work of 'an untutored Highlander'. In the dedication that prefaces the book, MacKay addresses Gordon and says:

it is the highest gratification to my feelings in publishing to the world, that your lordship has deigned to encourage these humble original trifles, less, I am aware, on account of their intrinsic merits, than (what stamps them of deeper value in your Lordship's estimation) their being the production of an untutored Highlander.⁶⁵⁷

The cult of Robert Burns was well underway by 1821, and this dedication might be a reflection of a patron actively seeking poetry in the mold of the 'heaven-taught plough-man' and indeed of a poet presenting himself as such. One of two poems that precedes MacKay's own work is in Scots and its anonymous author makes a comparison between Burns and Mackay, while MacKay chooses Scots for four of his

⁶⁵⁴ A. M. Shaw, *Historical Memoirs of the House and Clan of Mackintosh and of the Clan Chattan* (London, 1880), p. 89.

⁶⁵⁵ The other professions listed include ironmonger, cattle dealer, silversmith, factor, butcher and writer. MacAoidh, *Orain agus Dàin, ann an Gaelic agus am Beurla*, 'Subscribers Names', p. 9.

⁶⁵⁶ For more on MacKay's subscriber list, see: Byrne and Kidd, "'Vintners" and "Criminal Officers": Fosgriobhaichean leabhraichean bàrdachd ann am meadhan na 19mh linn, [Subscribers to mid-nineteenth century poetry collections]', p. 35.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. iii.

compositions. He draws on James Hogg's 'Caledonia' in his introduction and prefaces his poem 'Mary' with lines from Walter Scott's 'Rokeby'. MacKay was clearly a poet familiar, and keen to align himself with, the Scottish literary tradition more widely. The Preface is written in a Latinate style and, as well as his quotation of Hogg, includes an allusion to Cervantes's Don Quixote.⁶⁵⁸ Despite his willingness to engage with and present himself as belonging to Scottish, British and indeed European literary tradition, MacKay argues for the exceptional status of Gaelic poetry and the Gaelic poet in contemporary society:

In the Highlands of Scotland - where the light of learning, amongst certain classes, may be said to be only in its dawn, - a keener taste for poetry prevails than perhaps in any other portion of the Kingdom. There, every mind is in some degree influenced by the spirit of native song: scarce a family of any number exists, but boasts its household bard; whilst every valley is vocal and every mountain a Parnassus.⁶⁵⁹

MacKay's collection of 1821, *Orain agus Dàin, ann an Gaelic agus am Beurla*, contains five poems that touch on the service of Highland gentry in the British military during the years of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. In his 'Oran do Choirneal Aonghas Mac-an-Toisich' he praises this colonel of the Cameron Highlanders on his being called for service in Spain:⁶⁶⁰

Ceud soraidh slàn do 'n Choirneilear,
Cha 'n ordugh uainn do 'n Spàinnt,
'Se Aonghas Mac-an-Toisich,
Tha ainm ro mhòr 's gach àit';
Is onoir tric do 'n duthaich thu,
'N uair theid thu null thar sàil;
'S cuis eagal do na Frangaich thu,
'S a dheanadh annta bhearn.⁶⁶¹

*A hundred fond farewells to the Colonel,
Who has been ordered away to Spain,
It is Angus Mackintosh,
Whose name is known in each place;
You are frequently an honour to the country,
When you go overseas;
And you are a cause of fear to the French,*

⁶⁵⁸ 'With this spirit our fathers were inspired, in the peaceful vallies or on the green knolls, trimming the shepherd's crooks with wild-flowers, some fair or fickle dulcinea their sole care, save when a straying of a kid marred the symphony of their song' *Ibid.*, p. viii.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

⁶⁶⁰ I have thus far been unable to identify who this poem is addressed to.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

And would make a breach in them.

In the course of the poem, MacKay mentions Spain, France, Holland, Egypt and Portugal, demonstrating again the manner in which military service had created new horizons for Gaelic poets by this period. To an even greater extent than the earlier eighteenth century conflicts that had preceded them, the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were opening up new destinations in which poets could praise the martial exploits of their countrymen. Of Mackintosh's service in Portugal, MacKay states:

A'n uair a bha thu 'm Portugal
Ghabh thu 'n toisich ann thar cach,
'S thug Wellington an aire dhuit,
Co tapaidh 's chaidh thu 'n sàs,⁶⁶²

*When you were in Portugal,
You took the lead there over others,
And Wellington noticed you,
How bravely you got involved.*

Like MacDougall, MacKay focusses on Mackintosh's rank, arguing he should be elevated from the position of Colonel to General:

Ach ged tha thu nis do Choirneal,
Cha leoir leinn e ga luaidh,
'S ann bu choir dhuit bhi a' d' Sheanailear,
Ro aithnicht' measg na t-shluaigh;
A's tha mi fèin a saolsinneas,
Ma bhios do shaoghal buan,
Gun oighr' air Abercrombie thu,
Thug onoir dhuinn le buaidh.⁶⁶³

*And though you are now a Colonel,
It is not enough to us to say it,
What you should be is a General,
Very well known among the people;
And I am predicting,
If you live for long,
That you'll be the heir of Abercromby,
Who brought honour to us with victory.*

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

MacKay's references to Wellington and Abercromby again demonstrate the manner in which prominent figures from outwith Gaelic society featured in the perspective of Gaelic poets during this period.⁶⁶⁴ MacKay's collection also contains a panegyric addressed directly to Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington (1769-1852), who had become a national celebrity following the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Despite - or perhaps because of - its exceptional subject matter, 'Oran do Dhuchd Wellington' is a highly conventional piece of panegyric. The poet compares Wellington to a lion in battle:

Leomhan mòr an tòs a bhatail,
Fiamh no sgàth gu brath cha ghlachd se,
'Rusgadh lann le sannt a b' ait leis,
'S lamhach nan arm le garbh sgàirte.⁶⁶⁵

*Great lion at the head of the battle,
Fear or apprehension will never afflict him,
Drawing swords with ambition is his wont,
And dexterous in arms with great strength.*

MacKay refers specifically to the Duke of Wellington's Irish background, and in the poem's final stanza Scotland and Ireland are portrayed as united in this military endeavour:

Ceann a' ghliocais 's gibhtean dearbhte,
Suil na h-ìolair 'n ionad fearga,
Choisinn meas le sliochd na h-Alba,
'S fir na h-Eirinn treun fo 'n armachd.⁶⁶⁶

*Head of wisdom, and with proven gifts,
The eye of the eagle in the place of anger (?),
Who gained respect with the people of Scotland,
And the men of Ireland brave under armour.*

The piece is clearly demonstrative of the poet's conception of being involved in a pan-national military campaign, with a shared leader and a shared enemy in the French. MacKay's poetry again makes clear the manner in which the military and Gaelic poetic production were closely intertwined in the post-Culloden period. Whether this was primarily the result of encouragement and propagation by

⁶⁶⁴ For a discussion of the manner in which the application of panegyric praise was diversified in the nineteenth century, see Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*. P. xxvi. Meek has also discussed the manner in which other figures from outside of Gaelic society, such as pro-crofter MPS, were drawn into the praise-sphere of Gaelic verse: Meek, *Tuath is Tighearna*, pp. 38-39.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

military figures keen to promote service, or had more to do with the aspiration of poets to secure fitting subject matter for panegyric verse, is impossible to ascertain. Suffice it to say that both factors appear to have been instrumental in the genesis and creation of Gaelic military poetry.

The Black Watch

The Reverend James McLagan's 1756 poem to the Black Watch has been considered earlier in this thesis. McLagan also composed a poem for the Black Watch after the Battle of Alexandria in 1801, over twenty years after his period of service with the regiment as chaplain had come to an end. He was clearly familiar with the specifics of the battle: for instance, the British forces were attacked at night by the French during this offensive, and the poet refers to this in the poem's opening stanzas. In the fourth stanza, he proceeds to his main subject and intention with the poem: to praise and promote the martial ability of the Gaels. It has been seen previously in this thesis that allusions to the martial superiority of the Gaels are commonplace in Gaelic military material. These are often applied in a rhetorical, formulaic manner, but there appears to be another dimension to the well-worn trope of the Gael as warrior *par excellence* in this piece. The Scottish antiquarian and historian John Pinkerton (1758-1826) was a prominent figure in late-eighteenth century Scotland.⁶⁶⁷ Through his writings, Pinkerton sought to purge Scotland's history of all Celtic elements, and his work was instrumental in leading to the Gothic versus Celtic furore of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The relevance of this as regards McLagan's poem is that there are five stanzas in which the poet outlines the esteemed military history of the Gaels and Celts in Scotland, stating that they did not submit to Caesar and that even the Viking invasion had not succeeded in displacing them. This is followed by a stanza in which McLagan admonishes those 'Goths' currently denigrating the Gaels:

Ar gaisg do dhuisc dhuinn mi-run,
 Nan Gotach fiata, searbh,
 Seadh larmad Ghael, tha lionmhor,
 A' sath na'r bian an calg.
 Nis ni'm bheil Got a sgriobhas,
 Nach bheil le miosgain garg,
 Do nach sop-reic ar riabadh,
 Thoirt fiach d'a Fharuisg bhorb.⁶⁶⁸

Our heroism awakened the ill-will

⁶⁶⁷ For more on Pinkerton see: P. O' Flaherty, *Scotland's Pariah: The Life and Work of John Pinkerton* (Toronto, 2015).

⁶⁶⁸ MacPharlain, *Co-chruinneachadh de dh'Orain agus de Luinneagaibh Thaghta Ghae'lach*, p. 100.

*Of the wild, bitter Goths,
Indeed offspring of the Gaels, many are
The stabs in our hide with their spears.
Now there is not a Goth writing,
That is not bitter with malice,
Who would not make money out of our wounding,
To give value to their savage fakery.*

When McLagan says that there is not a Goth writing today who is not bitter and who will not try to make a living out of denigrating the Gaels, it seems that he is referring to Pinkerton's work, and possibly Dr Samuel Johnson before him.⁶⁶⁹ But he asserts that, through their military service, the Gaels have won the respect of some of those who previously derided them. This is possibly a reference back to the Culloden period, but also seems to address these contemporary debates:

*Ach choisin giulan laochmhor
Dhuibh meas cuid dhaoi' thug fuath;
D'ur tìr, gun fhios cia'n t-aobhar,
Mur e bhi daonnan cruaidh.
Is aithne d'ar deagh rìgh sibh,
'S d'a theaghlach rimheach suairc,
Dhuibh chaoidh cha'n easbhuidh inbhe,
'S sibh 'n tòir co dian air buaidh.⁶⁷⁰*

*But heroic actions gained
For you the respect of some of those who gave hate,
To your land, without knowing the reason,
Unless it was a case of always being narrow-minded,
And your good king knows you,
And his elegant, kind family,
To you there will never be a deficit of status,
With you pursuing victory so keenly.*

This poem provides a distinct example of the manner in which the contemporary service of the Gaels was viewed as being interwoven with questions of Gaelic identity during the period.

Another poem on the Battle of Alexandria, Allan MacDougall's 'Òran do'n Reisimeid Duibh', focusses on the Black Watch as its main subject of praise. The poem is

⁶⁶⁹ Alexander Maclean Sinclair states that 'the Goths referred to are Dr. Johnson and Pinkerton' in *The Gaelic Bards from 1715 to 1765* (Charlottetown, 1892), p. 242.

⁶⁷⁰ MacPharlain, *Co-chruinneachadh de dh'Orain agus de Luinneagaibh Thaghta Ghae'lach*, p. 100.

again reflective of the manner in which the Black Watch had entered into the shared historical consciousness of the Gaels by this period.⁶⁷¹ The regiment had become a key institution - a symbol of martial strength and continuity with an earlier heroic age in the Highlands. MacDougall's poem begins with a reference to the way in which news of the battle has come back to the Gàidhealtachd in written correspondence: "S leinn is èibhinn a phachdaid / thainig dhachaidh bho 'n Eipheid' (*'Our pleasure is the letter / Which came home from Egypt'*).⁶⁷² The matter of the letter is easily explained by the fact that Glengarry would have had an interest (and the connections) to be kept informed about developments in the war, and MacDougall, as the chief's official bard, would have access to such information too. In the next stanza, he mentions the *Gazette*, another important source of information about military matters and the progress of the war, so these two sources must have supplied him with his information. We see here then how information about a battle was communicated back to the Highlands, and the poem provides us with insight into the way in which this information was perceived and disseminated by a Gaelic poet to a wider audience.

Although MacDougall recognises that the Black Watch is part of the wider British army 'Ag seasamh ceartais Rìgh Deòrsa' (*'Standing the right of King George'*), he focusses on the specifically Gaelic identity of the regiment, affirming that they are: 'An dubh-réisemeid làidir / 'G an robh 'Ghaelich mar chòmhradh' (*'The strong black regiment / Who had Gaelic as their language'*).⁶⁷³ The cultural distinctiveness of the soldiers as Gaels is further highlighted by a comparison with the Fianna: 'Cait am facas an coltas / Bho linn Oisein 's na Feinne?' (*'Where has their like been seen / Since the time of Ossian and the Fianna'*).⁶⁷⁴ It was clearly of importance to the poet to lay emphasis on the regiment's Gaelic heritage; they are part of the Hanoverian George's army, but this does not prevent them from representing an historical tradition that stretches back to earlier centuries in the Gàidhealtachd.

As well as having access to information about the battle of Alexandria, MacDougall was clearly familiar with the history of the Black Watch: he goes on to say that they are 'an réisemeid àluinn, / 'G an d' rinn Phàrlamaid raoghainn, / An dà-fhichiod-'sa-dhà' (*'The lovely regiment / Which Parliament chose / The 42nd'*).⁶⁷⁵ He also explains how they came to be called the Black Watch: "S e dh' fhag dubh ann an ainm iad / Trusgan dorch airson éididh' (*'What left them black in name /*

⁶⁷¹ Yet another poem on the Black Watch's service during the conflict was composed by the Appin poet, Alexander MacGregor (fl. 1813), 'Oran do'n fhreiceadan dubh Ghaidhealach'. See: P. Mac-an-Tuairneir, *Comhchruinneacha do Dh'Orain Taghta Ghaidhealach* (Duneidionn, 1813), p. 199.

⁶⁷² Dùghallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhelach*, p. 89.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Was a dark kilt as uniform').⁶⁷⁶ The poem can therefore be seen to include elements of both reportage and regimental history, as MacDougall provides as full a picture as he is able to of the battle and its context. As a spokesperson of his community, he was educating his audience in its military heritage. While the regiment is praised as a group, its leaders are singled out for particular praise. The Marquis of Huntly, George Gordon (1770-1836), for example, is named as 'sàr-ghaisgeach 'sa chomh-stri' (*'a great warrior in the battle'*), and the panegyric convention of describing the warrior as a bird of prey is used to highlight his courage as a soldier:

Seobhag uasal, na h-ealtuinn,
Buadhail, reachdmhor, gu 'n còmhnadh:
An t-ian cruadlach, neartmhor,
A fhuair a chleachdadh ri comhrag.⁶⁷⁷

*The noble falcon of the flock
Superior, commanding, in no need of assistance:
The courageous, strong bird,
Who was schooled in warfare.*

MacDougall's attention and praise was not reserved for regiments who served in foreign campaigns. He composed a piece for the Lochaber Volunteers in 1795, 'Oran do'n chuideachda 'thogadh am Mariburgh, gan goirear "Volunteers Lochaber"'. The song's closing stanzas suggests that MacDougall's praise for the regiment was not simply founded in a sense of obligation: he clearly had an appreciation of the real economic benefits of voluntary service. In the penultimate stanza he states 'Cha bhi cuid na taing gar dith / Se 'n Rìgh a ni air paigheadh' (*'You will not be wanting for supplies or thanks / It is the King who will pay you'*),⁶⁷⁸ before going on to state that, before any enemy is faced, this unit will have benefitted financially:

Air chùnant fortain, cùl ri bochdainn,
Sochdair agus slàinte
'Bhi aig an treud a theid air chosnadh
Mu thig force an Namhaid.⁶⁷⁹

*On a contract worth a fortune, poverty dispelled,
Comfort and health,
Will be with the band of men who will be paid,*

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Before the force of the enemy arrives.

Similar allusions to the economic rewards that soldiers could secure are found in other pieces, such as Duncan Bàn Macintyre's poetry on the Glengarry Fencibles, considered in the previous chapter. The Perthshire poet Robert Stewart (fl.1802) composed a song to Alan Grant of the Glenmoriston Volunteers after hearing the officer's fingers had been lost in an accident with his gun.⁶⁸⁰ While lamenting the accident, Stewart notes that the officer will at least be eligible for a Chelsea pension:

Ach se sgeuladh is craitich,
Dhomh an trasa ri chòradh,
Do dhunna gun sgain e,
'S gun a ghearr sin na meoir dhìot,
Tha do leonadh ri fhaicsin,
'S mu ni 'n Caibtain da chònadh,
San sgeul chur a Shasun,
Gheibh thu Sealsi o Dheorsa.⁶⁸¹

*But it is the saddest tale,
For me to be relating just now,
That your gun was split apart,
And your fingers cut off,
Your wounding can be seen,
And if your captain will assist you,
And send news to England,
You will get a Chelsea from George.*

Invasion Threat

Much as Gaelic poets were willing to praise figures from outside of Gaeldom, they were also prepared to attack those who had come to pose a threat to their security. Throughout much of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and particularly in the years between 1797 and 1805, there was a continued threat of invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte's forces.⁶⁸² The invasion threat was a major subject in British poetry of the period, to the extent that a writer in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* commented in 1805 that '[i]n poetry or prose the universal object of patriotic Britons is, to pursue and expose the Invader of the rights of

⁶⁸⁰ I have thus far been unable to find biographical information about Grant.

⁶⁸¹ R. Stewart, *Orain Ghaelach agus Bheurla-Ghaelach*, p. 140.

⁶⁸² C. Emsley, 'The Impact of the French Revolution', in C. Crossley and I. Small (eds.) *The French Revolution and British Culture* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 31-62.

human kind.’⁶⁸³ Simon Bainbridge has pointed out that the *Gentlemen's Magazine* published over sixty invasion poems over just a six-month period from July to December 1803.⁶⁸⁴ One such poem, by the Scottish poet and joint-editor of the London periodical *The Star*, John Mayne (1759-1836), calls on 'English, Scots and Irishmen' to join forces in protecting Britain from the threat of French invasion:

ENGLISH, SCOTS and IRISHMEN,
All that are in VALOUR'S ken!
Shield your KING: and flock agen
Where his sacred Banners fly!
Now's the day, and now's the hour,
Frenchmen would the Land devour -
Will ye wait till they come o'er
To give ye Chains and Slavery?⁶⁸⁵

Perhaps the best known piece of poetry in Scotland during this period that dealt with the threat of invasion was Robert Burns's (1759-96) 'The Dumfries Volunteers', better known by its first line 'Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat?'.⁶⁸⁶ The song was written in 1795, when Burns served as part of a British military volunteer force in Dumfries. 'The Dumfries Volunteers' is a typical example of invasion poetry of the period, expressing patriotism in the face of attack and issuing a warning to the French about the forces that await them in Britain:

Does haughty Gaul Invasion threat?
Then let the loons beware, sir!
There's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, Sir!
The Nith shall run to Corsincon,
And Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!⁶⁸⁷

Another song from Lowland Scotland that achieved widespread popularity during the period was James Hogg's (1770-1835) 'Donald MacDonald'. The poem is particularly relevant in the context of this study as it is told from the perspective of a Gael, or 'Hielander', who gives his support to the king and issues warnings to the French. Written in 1803, when Hogg was on his second tour in the Gàidhealtachd and the invasion threat was at a height, the Highlands form the

⁶⁸³ *Gentlemen's Magazine* 75 (February, 1805), p. 145.

⁶⁸⁴ Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, p. 4.

⁶⁸⁵ *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, vol. lxxiii (September, 1803), p. 858.

⁶⁸⁶ G. Sprott, *Robert Burns: Pride and Passion*, (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 107.

⁶⁸⁷ R. Burns, *The Songs of Robert Burns*, edited by D. A. Low, (London, 1993), p. 703.

backdrop of this invasion song:⁶⁸⁸

Wad Bonaparte land at Fort William,
Auld Europe nae langer should grane;
I laugh when I think how we'd gall him,
Wi' bullet, wi' steel and wi' stane;⁶⁸⁹

A parallel can be drawn between Hogg's song and Gaelic poetry of the period: the Ettrick poet lists the Highland allies that will oppose Napoleon Bonaparte, naming the specific fighting qualities of each clan:⁶⁹⁰

For the Gordon is Good in a hurry,
An' Campbell is steel to the bane,
An Grant, an' MacKenzie, an' Murray,
An Cameron will hurkle to nane;
The Stuart is sturdy and loyal,
An sae is MacLeod an' MacKay,
An I', their gudebrither, MacDonald,
Shall ne'er be the last in the fray.⁶⁹¹

Hogg's interest in Gaelic culture is well known and a fuller examination of the potential relationship between his work and Gaelic poetry during this period would be worthwhile.⁶⁹²

Gaelic poets also responded to the threat of invasion from France. Seumas Seathach, 'Bàrd Loch nan Ealla', (James Shaw, 'The Lochnell Poet', c.1758-c.1828), composed an invasion poem addressed directly to Napoleon Bonaparte, 'Oran do Bhonipart'.⁶⁹³ The poem was first published in Turner's collection of 1813 and later appeared in John MacKenzie's *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach* (1841). While

⁶⁸⁸ See: P. Garside, 'The Origins and History of James Hogg's "Donald MacDonald"', in *Scottish Studies Review* (2006), pp. 24-36.

⁶⁸⁹ J. Hogg, *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd*, edited by K. McCue and J. Currie, (Edinburgh, 2014), p. 4.

⁶⁹⁰ Hogg's *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd* also contains a song titled 'The Gathering of the Clans', which can be seen as further evidence of his familiarity with Gaelic poetry, in particular 'Oran nam Fineachan' by the Morar poet, Iain Dubh Mac Iain mhic Ailein / John MacDonald. C. Ó Baoill (ed.) *Iain Dubh: Orain a rinn Iain Dubh mac Iain mhic Ailein (c1655-1725)*, (Aberdeen, 1994), pp. 23-27.

⁶⁹¹ Hogg, *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd*, p. 113.

⁶⁹² G. Hughes, *James Hogg: A Life* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 34-35.

⁶⁹³ James Shaw was born in Mull c.1758 and latterly lived in the parish of Ardchattan, Argyllshire. He appears to have been partly supported by General Duncan Campbell of Lochnell and Barbreck and his wife. Encouraged by the latter to publish his work, Shaw travelled to Glasgow with the intention of doing so, but died suddenly on his return aboard a steamboat to Oban c.1828. It is not known whether he succeeded in having his work published. Five of his pieces are published in Turner's collection and four in *SO*. Of his character, MacKenzie writes that 'He lived in a state of idleness and dissipation; praising those who paid him well for it, and composing satires on those who refused him money or liquor', *Sar-obair nam Bard Gaelach*, p. 311.

the exact date of composition is unknown, it is clear from the poem's internal evidence - which includes a reference to the Battle of Alexandria (1801) - that it was composed after 1801. The invasion crisis of 1803 can therefore be suggested as a possible date of provenance. John MacKenzie informs us that Shaw was 'partly supported by the late General Campbell and his lady', and it is highly probable that this refers to General Duncan Campbell of Lochnell and Barbreck (1763-1837) and his wife Eleanora Fraser (1766-c.1821).⁶⁹⁴ The precise circumstances of 'Oran do Bhonipart's' composition are unknown, but it is plausible that his military patron had some influence. The poem is in line with much of the Scottish and British invasion poetry of the period in expressing a broad patriotism and issuing warnings to the French about the military reception that awaits them should they land on the British mainland. In a stanza that is a clear reflection of 'Oran do Bhonipart's' contemporaneousness (and that mirrors the views of John Mayne looked at earlier), the poet expresses a pan-British solidarity, portraying Scotland and England as being shoulder to shoulder:

Gum beil Albainn agus Sasunn,
An guaillean a cheill San ceart-uair,
Tha iad aig fuaime an aon fhacal,
Mar shrad eadar clach a's òrd.⁶⁹⁵

*Scotland and England,
Are shoulder to shoulder at this time,
They are voicing the same word,
Like a spark between a stone and a hammer.*

The song has identifiable roots in the Gaelic tradition of *brosnachadh*, and while broad comparisons can be made with other contemporary poetry, credence should also be given to its context in the Gaelic literary tradition. Gaelic poets were in a unique position among Scottish and British poets who addressed the invasion threat, and indeed who composed any military poetry, in that they were able to draw from a poetic tradition rooted in a warrior society, which had still been active just half a century earlier.

The song contains a series of censures on Napoleon Bonaparte's character, a feature that is common to the Gaelic satires composed about him. For example, Shaw states 'Nuair chuir thu an Fhraing thair a chèile, / Dh'fhalbh thu mar

⁶⁹⁴ A version of the poem was also collected by Margaret Fay Shaw and published as 'O! Gum b'Aotram linn an t-Astar' in *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist* (1955), p. 92. That the song survived in the oral tradition is evidence of its popularity and parallels can be drawn between 'Oran do Bhonipart' and songs such as 'The Dumfries Volunteers' and 'Donald MacDonald', which also achieved wide currency, indicating that invasion poetry was popular across the linguistic divide in Scotland during the period, reflecting the very real fear that Napoleon would indeed invade

⁶⁹⁵ MacKenzie, *Sar-obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 313.

shlaoightear do 'n Eipheit' ('*When you tore France apart / You went as a rogue to Egypt*').⁶⁹⁶ The poet's opprobrium towards the French commander is expressed most strongly in the penultimate stanza, where he warns Bonaparte that, even if he makes it ashore in Scotland, there is sufficient manpower there to destroy him:

Ged thig thu air tìr an Albainn
'N dòchas losgaidh agus marbhaidh,
Tha againne suas de dh'harmailt,
Na shracas t-eanchainn agus t-fheoil.⁶⁹⁷

*Although you come ashore in Scotland,
Hoping to burn and kill,
We have sufficient manpower,
That will tear your brains and flesh.*

Although the poem responds to the threat from the French from both a Scottish and British perspective, Shaw, as his soubriquet suggests, was primarily a Lochnell and Argyll poet. His local priorities are apparent when his focus narrows in the final stanza not only to the Gàidhealtachd but to Argyll specifically:

Tha saighdearan Earraghàeil,
Fearachail, foghainteach, daicheil,
'S chuireadh iad eagal a bhàis,
Air h-uile nàmhaid a ta beò.⁶⁹⁸

*The soldiers of Argyll,
Are manly, valorous, proud,
And they would put the fear of death,
Into every living enemy.*

We see again here the tendency for Gaelic poets to focus on local imperatives - the inner circles of Smout's model - in their military material during the period.⁶⁹⁹ It should also be noted that Shaw had his precedents in portraying a larger conflict in terms of a battle between a specific group of Gaels and their enemy: the MacDonald poet, Iain Lom (c.1624-c.1710) had similarly portrayed the Battle of Inverlochy as a battle between the Campbells and the MacDonalds in his 'Là Inbhir Lochaidh' in 1645.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁹ Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', p. 103.

⁷⁰⁰ Ó Baoill, *Gàir nan Clàrsach*, p. 1.

A song with the same title as Shaw's, 'Oran do Bhonipart', was composed by Dòmhnall MacDhòmhnaill, 'Am Bàrd Conanach' (Donald MacDonald, 'The Strathconnon Bard', ?-1832), in Edinburgh following the Battle of Alexandria in 1801.⁷⁰¹ Two of his pieces are printed in *Sàr Obair nam Bard Gaelach*, and MacKenzie informs us that 'his poems were arranged and taken down in manuscript preparatory to their being printed' before their author 'was seized with Cholera in the year 1832, which terminated his mortal career'.⁷⁰² MacDonald's poetry does not appear to have been subsequently published. While MacKenzie states that MacDonald was a sawyer in Inverness, at the time of his death the *Inverness Courier* reported that he had been a surgeon in the town.⁷⁰³ Could it have been that he combined the two professions? It is unknown why MacDonald was in Edinburgh when he composed 'Oran do Bhonipart', though it may be that his work led him there. The British victory at Alexandria was a major public occasion, widely celebrated in the press, and the poet depicts the carnival-like atmosphere in Edinburgh as news of the victory is circulated:

'Nuair sheall mi air gach taobh dhìom,
Feadh na dùthcha fad 's bu léir domh,
Bha ceòl 'sna h-uile taigh a bh' ann,
'S tein-aighear air na sléibhtean,
On chualas anns na Gàsaidean
'S gach àite bhi ga leughadh;
Gun deach' an ruaig air Bonipart
S an onair aig a Ghréumach.⁷⁰⁴

*When I looked in each direction,
Around the country as far as I could see,
There was music in every house,
And bonfires on the hillsides,
Since it was heard in the Gazettes,
And was read in every place,
That Bonaparte was defeated,
And the honour was with Graham.⁷⁰⁵*

The tone in the opening verses is cheerful and confident, as MacDonald praises 'Na fir laidir, shunntadh, thogarrach, / Nach òb a dhol an òrdugh' ('*The strong, happy,*

⁷⁰¹ See: MacKenzie, *Sar-obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, pp. 347-348.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 349.

⁷⁰³ MacKenzie, *Sar-obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, pp. 347-348; *Inverness Courier* 26 Sept 1832.

⁷⁰⁴ MacKenzie, *Sar-obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 348.

⁷⁰⁵ General Thomas Graham of Balgovan and Lynedoch (1748-1843) was a Scottish aristocrat, politician and British Army officer, see: *The Royal Military Calendar, Or Army Service and Commission Book, Volume 2* (London, 1820), pp. 147-175.

willing men, / Who will not refuse to go in order').⁷⁰⁶ But when he moves on to concentrate on the central subject and target of his poem, Napoleon Bonaparte, the ebullient tone shifts to one of bitter satire. He says that Napoleon should be left to die of starvation on a tidal rock, before going on to propose a more savage death, drawing on the Old Testament to imagine a suitable punishment:

Ach 's beag leam sud mar phianadh ort -
 'S a mhiad sa rinn thu dh' eacòir,
 Ach lèir-sgrios nan deich plàighean,
 A bh' air Pharòh anns an Eipheid ;
 Gu'n laidh iad air do chraiceann,
 Gu do shracadh as a chèile,
 S gun cluinnt' air falbh deich mil' thu,
 A's mi fhìn a bhi ga t-èisteachd.⁷⁰⁷

*But little do I think of that as a punishment for you,
 Given the extent of your crimes,
 But rather the devastation of the ten plagues,
 That were on the Pharaoh in Egypt;
 That they would lie on your skin,
 Tearing you apart,
 And that you would be heard ten miles away,
 And that I would be there to hear it.*

The strength of the poet's feeling is clear as he wishes this Biblical death on Bonaparte and expresses his desire to be present to hear the suffering first-hand. This is followed by an extensive application, over twenty stanzas, of the panegyric convention of listing allies, naming the clans from across the Gàidhealtachd that will stand against and defeat Napoleon.⁷⁰⁸ The poem therefore provides a further example of the clan system being resurrected in poetry to express a distinctively Gaelic worldview, that conceptualises Gaelic unity in the face of an outside threat. It can also be seen as a form of propaganda from within Gaelic society, being used to instil confidence and provide the reassurance of a trusted past in the face of an uncertain present.

⁷⁰⁶ MacKenzie, *Sar-obair nam Bàrd Gaelach*, p. 348.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p., 348.

⁷⁰⁸ For another poem from the 1793-1815 period that similarly draws on the convention of listing allies to portray the Gaels as being ready to take battle to the French, see the Moulin poet Robert Stewart's (fl.1802), 'Oran na'm Fineachan Gaedhlach'. R. Stewart, *Orain Ghaelach agus Bheurla-Ghaelach, le Raibard Stiubhard* (Edinburgh, 1802), pp. 69-79. A poem with a similar title, 'Na Fineachan Gaelach', possibly composed by the Appin teacher Alexander MacGregor in 1803, also uses this convention in the context of threatened French invasion. See: C.M. Robertson, 'Gaelic Poems Collected in Braemar', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 33 (1932), pp. 35-43.

The influence of propaganda can also be detected in another satire about Napoleon Bonaparte, Donnchadh Coineaganach's (Duncan Cunningham, fl. 1805) 'Aoradh do Bhonnaparta'. This piece, published in 1805, demonstrates the same sort of contempt towards Napoleon as is apparent in both MacDonald's and Shaw's poems, though the tone is somewhat lighter. Napoleon's lack of morals is laid out in the poem's fifth stanza, with the poet stating that these have resulted in the French commander being infected with 'the clap':

'S machd thu do 'n t-suirstich,
Bhi an a cuirt baile mhairgidh;
'S tu iosain an numidh,
Nach do chuir an a' geamurichd;
Leis na bha an ud do phrattinn,
Gu do chart iad air falbh thu;
Siomma te hug a clap d' huit,
Le ascaonochd car-bhuil.⁷⁰⁹

*You are the son of a prostitute,
In the area of market towns,
You are the poisonous bird,
Who did not practice chastity;
With all that was in you of pranks,
They carted you away;
Many's a one who gave you the clap;
With brutality in return.*

Perhaps the strongest and most vehement satire on the French commander-in-chief was composed by Angus Shaw (fl.1815), from Lynedale, Skye. Shaw's 'Oran Bhonaparte' was published in a paper entitled 'Beagan Dhuilleag Bho Sheann Bhardachd bho Eilean a' Cheo' by the famous Skye poet Neil Macleod (1843-1913), which appeared in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* in 1897.⁷¹⁰ Shaw was a soldier and MacLeod tells us 'Dh'fhuiling e mòran amhghair agus Alaban, ann an iomadh ceàrn de 'n t-saoghal ann an seirbheis a rìgh 's a dhùthcha' ('He suffered much adversity and wandering, in many corners of the world, in the cause of the king and his country').⁷¹¹ It is unknown whether he was still active as a soldier at the time he composed this piece, which appears to date to the period after the Battle of Waterloo. In the opening stanza, the poet describes how 'naidheachd na sìthe' ('the news of peace') has now come 'Bho chrìochaibh na Fraing' ('from the borders of France').⁷¹² Shaw's identification with a national

⁷⁰⁹ Cinicnach, *Orainn Ghaeilich*, p. 51.

⁷¹⁰ Macleod, 'Beagan Dhuilleag bho Sheann Bhardachd Eilean a' Cheo', pp. 171-86.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁷¹² Macleod, 'Beagan Dhuilleag bho Sheann Bhardachd Eilean a' Cheo', p. 182.

military campaign against a shared enemy is clear in this piece as he states "S tha Breatainn làn riaraichte, / Tha na Frangaich air striochdadh / Le diobhail ar lann' ('Britain is fully satisfied / The French have capitulated / Under the destruction of our blades').⁷¹³ The poet goes on to describe how he would have personally hanged Bonaparte on his capture, detailing precisely what he would inscribe on his gravestone:

Sgriobhainn ainm a lic-san -
 Fear mharbhadh nam fichead,
 Ceann armailt a' bhristidh
 Ceann stuice gach ròg,
 Ard chealgair nam pìotal,
 Air an alachaig bu tric thu
 Chuir am fàrbhas 'na d' dhrip thu,
 'S chuir e sgiotadh 'na d' eòin;⁷¹⁴

*I would write as the name on his headstone -
 Murderer of scores,
 Head of the violating army,
 The leader of every rogue,
 Chief deceiver of the (?),
 You are frequently at the chopping board,
 Loathsomeness kept you busy,
 And dispersed your flock.*

Similar views on Bonaparte can be found in other British poetry of the period, although such vehement satire seems to be unique to the Gaelic material. Nevertheless, negative representations and expressions of disdain towards the French leader do abound in the poetic record. For instance, the anonymous poet 'G. C.' in 'To Buonaparte' proclaims: 'Perhaps you've a wish for our virgins and wives, / But if these we must sell we must sell with our lives',⁷¹⁵ and in the 1805 acrostic, 'The Inscrutable Ways of Providence'. 'I. H.' writes:

B y no exterior grac'd that marks a man,
 O rdain'd to execute th' Almighty's plan;
 N or yet by birth entitled to behold
 A t any distant time his name enroll'd
 P re-eminent 'mongst those in Royal State,
 A nd arbiter of trembling Europe's fate;
 R ejected from his own ill-fated Isle,

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

⁷¹⁵ *The European Magazine*, vol. XLV (February 1804), p. 143.

T he crown of France he wears - a tyrant vile,
E ncompass's on his throne by crimes and guile.⁷¹⁶

The Scottish and British tradition also contains radical poetry in praise of Napoleon Bonaparte, but there is no extant correlative to this in the Gaelic tradition. That radical material of other kinds was extant in the Gàidhealtachd during this period can be seen from the fact that posters and copies of *The Rights of Man* (1791) were said to have been circulating in Stornoway in 1793, but this strand of thinking does not emerge in the poetic record.⁷¹⁷ It is worth stressing that we are limited to what has survived in the poetic record, and, had poetry of a more radical nature existed, it is understandable that this might not have received as wide a currency or been deemed appropriate to publish.

What does emerge from the Gaelic material is that Napoleon Bonaparte took his place alongside the Lowland shepherds and landlords and factors of the nineteenth century as a figure of hate in Gaelic poetry of the period. That he aroused such strong feelings is unsurprising given that French invasion represented a threat to stability in the region, at a time when Gaelic society faced many other destabilising influences. It has also been shown that this material is representative of a degree of overlap between the Scottish and wider British poetic tradition and Gaelic material of the period. While continuity with an earlier heroic tradition is a distinguishing feature of Gaelic poetry, this corpus also co-existed with and was part of a wider contemporary poetic response, in which the shared experience of conflict was a major impetus.

Lament

Gaelic poetry of the period also touches upon the huge loss of life that was incurred during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Allan MacDougall's 'Cumha do Choirneal Iain Camshron, a Thuit ann am Blàr Bhatarlaidh' is a lament for John Cameron of Fassiefern (1771-1815). Cameron was descended from the Cameron chiefs and became a celebrated military commander in the Napoleonic period. He first enlisted in the 26th Cameronians in 1793 and was transferred to the 92nd regiment (Gordon Highlanders) in 1794 when that regiment was raised. He rose through the ranks to become Lieutenant Colonel and was badly wounded twice, at the Battle of Bergen in 1799 and the Battle of Alexandria in 1801. During the Waterloo campaign of June 1815, he commanded the regiment and was killed in a skirmish at the Battle of Quatre Bras on the 6th of June. His corpse had been buried on the battle-field but, at his family's behest, was afterwards disinterred and transported back to the Highlands on a man-of-war. His funeral was attended

⁷¹⁶ *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, vol. LXXV (March 1805), p. 256.

⁷¹⁷ See: Logue, *Popular Disturbances in Scotland*, p. 117.

by some 3,000 of his fellow Lochaber Highlanders. MacDougall refers in the poem to the witnessing of this man-of-war carrying Cameron's body back to Lochaber:

Chunnacas long anns a chaol,
 'S i 'seoladh le gaoth' bho 'n iar,
 Dol gu Fasadh nan craobh,
 'S ann leamsa nach b' fhaoin an sgial;
 'S corp àluinn an laoich
 Air a clàr, 's gun bu daor a thriall,
 'S dh'fhag sid bròn agus gaoir,
 Aig mnathan dà thaobh Loch-iall.⁷¹⁸

*A boat was seen in the Kyle,
 Sailing with a wind from the west,
 Heading for Fassifern of the trees,
 The tale is sorrowful to me;
 And the body of the elegant warrior,
 On its deck, and dear its journey,
 And it has caused sorrow and crying
 Among the women on both sides of Loch Eil.*

While Cameron is the main subject of this lament, the poet also alludes to the wider loss of life in the Highlands:

'S lionmhor caraid s fear daimh,
 Nach gearain a cheann bhi tinn,
 Chaidh a leagadh 's an Fhraing,
 'S a chuir Bonaparte thall d'ar dith;⁷¹⁹

*Many a friend and relation,
 Who will not complain as a result of being sick,
 That was laid down in France,
 And who Bonaparte deprived us of;*

MacDougall goes on to make an understated yet intensely powerful statement about the effect the wars have had on the population of the Gàidhealtachd: "'S leir ri fhaicinn ar call, / Dh' fhag na Gaidheal cho gann ri 'r linn' (*It is a distress to see our loss / That has left the Gaels so scarce in our time*).⁷²⁰ MacDougall was keenly aware of the cost of war and presents this as a tax paid by the clan. We see

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁷¹⁹ Dùghallach, *Orain, Marbhrannan agus Duanagan, Ghaidhelach*, p. 182.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*

military service again depicted as a contract here, but in this context it is the Gaels/Highlanders paying out to the crown through their lives:

An latha mor sin chaidh crìoch
 Air a chogadh, 's gach rioghachd thall,
 'S iomadh laoch bu mhor pris,
 A thuit leis an stri 's an Fhraing,
 Phaigh Cloinn Camshroin a chis,
 'S cha d' thig iad air tìr gun chall;
 'S ged a thàinig an t-shith,
 'S daor a h-èiric 's an diol a bh' ann.⁷²¹

*That great day that an end was brought
 To the war in each country yonder,
 Many a valuable hero,
 Fell in the fight in France,
 Clan Cameron paid the price,
 And they will not come ashore without loss;
 And although peace has come,
 Expensive in payment is the retribution that
 followed.*

John Cameron's death was also lamented by Dòmhnall Camshron (Donald Cameron, fl. 1815), one of the poets included in the Arisaig poet Ronald MacDonald's collection of 1821.⁷²² Cameron's piece includes an account of the battle of Quatre Bras, where he portrays Cameron as a courageous warrior:

Faic an Coirnealair cliuiteach,
 'S e na meadhon gu h-ionsuichte, seolt,
 A dioladh bàis le gheur chlaide,
 'S a toirt ordui'-an rathail do 'n t-slògh -
 Air each cruitheach, mear, srianach,
 'S tu gu 'n sealladh gu geur ort mu 'n cuairt,
 Mac samhail Fionn rìgh na Feinne,
 Chaidh ur naimhdean gu leir cuir gu ruaig.⁷²³

*See the renowned Colonel,
 In the centre, learned and skilful,
 Dealing death with his sharp sword,
 And giving astute orders to the army,*

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁷²² I have thus far not been able to find biographical information about Donald Cameron.

⁷²³ Donullach, *Orain le Raoghall Donullach, an Ardnis, Arasaig, Siorruichd Inbhirnis*, p.180.

*On a shod, frisky, bridled horse,
You would look keenly around you,
Like Fionn the king of the Fianna,
Your enemies were all routed.*

The reference to Fionn Mac Cumhaill here is another example of a Gaelic poet drawing on legendary heroic tradition in order to provide context for and give added credence to a contemporary military figure. The poem also contains a stanza that evinces the concentric nature of some Gaelic poets' loyalties during the period, as Cameron refers to Scotland as a country, Britain as a kingdom, and the Gaels as a distinct grouping within these national and unionist constructs:

*A Shir lain nam bratach,
'S cian 's is fada chaidh d' alla, 's do chliu;
'S iomadh àit am bheil ainm ort,
'S mor an onair do dh' Albainn so thu.
Mar sud a's do 'n rioghachd,
So Breatun 's a crìochaibh gu leir;
C'àit an robh e measg Ghael,
Aon cheannard thug barr ort fhein.⁷²⁴*

*Sir John of the banners,
Far and distant went your fame and renown;
In many places are you known,
Great is the honour you bring to Scotland.
And also to the kingdom,
Britain and all of its borders;
Where was he among the Gaels,
Any leader who exceeded you.*

Captain Ewen Cameron's (?-1810) death at the Combat of the Coa (24 July 1810) in Portugal was also the subject of a lament by Cameron.⁷²⁵ Cameron again portrays this soldier as courageous in the face of death on this foreign battlefield:⁷²⁶

*'S ann mu thimchioll Almeida,
Fhuair thu peilear 's an eudan,
A chuir saighead an aoig ann a d' fheoil.*

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷²⁵ The combat of the Coa was a skirmish that preceded the Siege of Almedia (25 July - 27 August 1810) during the Peninsular War. The skirmish took place in the valley of the Coa river and was the first significant battle for the French army under Marshal André Masséna as it prepared for its third invasion of Portugal.

⁷²⁶ Ewen Cameron was an officer in the 43rd Regiment of Foot.

'S tu na d' sheasa gu gaisgeil,
 Air ceann do chuideachd 's a bhaiteal,
 'N uair a dhruid riut a ghlas-luaith a d' leon.⁷²⁷

*It was around Almeida,
 That you got a bullet in the face,
 That put the arrow of death in your flesh.*

*And you standing heroically,
 At the head of your people in the battle,
 When the grey lead approached you to your injury.*

Cameron's elegies to these eminent military figures are revealing of the extent to which this key genre of lament for a warrior in the Gaelic poetic tradition remained relevant and applicable for Gaelic poets in the post-Culloden period.

Another post-Waterloo piece that touches on the loss of life is Alexander MacKay's 'Raon Cath Waterloo'. Amounting to just one four-line stanza, the poem is unusually short for a Gaelic poem of this period, but is the more effective and powerful for its brevity:

Raon na sgrios, slìos nan taibhse,
 Fuil 'g a dortadh, bron na maighdeann,
 Tubaist na mnaoi, claidh nan saighd'ear,
 Bu lionmhor mac nach fhac an oidhche.⁷²⁸

*Field of the destruction, slope of the ghosts,
 Blood being spilled, sorrow of the maidens,
 Misfortune of the wives, anguish of the soldiers,
 Many a son who did not see the night.*

The manner in which a soldier's death affected family members in the Gàidhealtachd is reflected in John MacLean, Bàrd Tighearna Chola's 'Do Dhonnachadh MacAonghais, a Tiriodh, a chaidh a Mharbhadh anns an Olaint'. The note that follows the poem in *Na Bàird Thirisdeach* informs us 'Duncan Macinnes was killed in battle in Holland. This lament is composed as if by the sorrowing father.'⁷²⁹ Although the date of the poem is not clear, it is at least possible that it refers to the campaign in Holland in 1799, which was considered in the previous chapter. The poem begins:

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁷²⁸ MacAoidh, *Orain agus Dàin, ann an Gaelic agus am Beurla*, p. 132.

⁷²⁹ Cameron, *Na Bàird Thirisdeach*, p. 64.

Gur h-e mis' a th' air mo leonadh;
 Fhuair mi naigheachd 's bu bhronach dhomh i,
 Mar a dh'eirich do'n oigear,
 Chuir i saighdean le doruinn oam chridh.⁷³⁰

*It is I who am wounded,
 I received news which was sorrowful to me,
 About what happened to the youth,
 It put arrows of pain in my heart.*

MacLean goes on to describe the circumstances of the soldier's death:

Mu'n do thoisich am batal
 'S tu gluasad air astar bho'n champ
 'Dhol a dh' ionnsuidh a' chaisteil,
 Cha robh smaointinnean gealtach a'd' cheann.
 Bha thu gluasad neo-sgathach,
 Mar a bhuineadh do Ghaidheal gun mheang,
 A cur naimhdean fo 'shailtean
 Gus na thuit thu 's a bhlàr 's na robh call.⁷³¹

*Before the battle started
 And you moving at speed from the camp
 Heading towards the castle,
 There were no thoughts of cowardice in your head.
 You were moving dauntlessly
 As was customary for a Gael without fault,
 Putting enemies under their heels
 Until you fell in the battle in which there was loss.*

This poem sees MacLean using his position as spokesperson of the community to speak directly as the grieving father, which can be seen as a natural development of the panegyric trope of alluding to the grief of family members in laments. As he concentrates on the soldier's courage in the face of death, he deflects from the tragedy of his loss and highlights his standing as a warrior and hero.⁷³²

Conclusion

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁷³² Another poem lamenting the death of a Highland soldier at this battle was composed by the Glen Lyon poet, John MacGregor: 'Cumhadh do Dhuin' Uasal Thuit 'S an Olaint, 's a Bhliadhna 1799', *Orain Ghaelach* (Edin-bruaich, 1801), p. 203.

Poetry composed by non-combatants during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars is generally more enthusiastic and positive than verse composed by soldier-poets. At a distance from the reality of active warfare, poets were more inclined towards praise than their militarily engaged counterparts; though it should be noted that some - such as Allan MacDougall and Alexander MacKay - had a certain obligation to compose pieces in praise of officers. A key theme emerging from the poetry is the unity of the Gaels in the face of an outside threat. For instance, poets frequently draw on allies to promulgate a sense of harmony in Gaelic society, and they look to the military as a place where their shared culture and traditions are perceived to have survived. The invasion poetry of the 1797 to 1805 period provides one of the clearest and most compelling examples of the extent to which poets were operating in a pan-British literary tradition, though doing so with their own unique and distinctive literary inheritance at their disposal. Poets mined the language of Gaelic panegyric in their response to the military during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, thus actively maintaining and developing that tradition for use in a contemporary context.

The primary and pre-eminent focus and allegiance of much of this verse remains a local one, so that even when expressing British unity, the distinctiveness of the Gaels is centred. This body of verse marked the last great outpouring of military material of the post-Culloden period, and, as will be seen in the next chapter, it would take the passage of almost forty years and the outbreak of another major conflict for the poets to rise in literary arms again.

Chapter 7: Waterloo to Crimea (1815-56)

1815-54

Britain's victory over Napoleonic France at Waterloo in 1815 was followed by almost forty years of peace in Europe, and the imperial conflicts in which the British army was engaged during that period were on a much smaller scale than had been the case over the previous two decades. Nevertheless, the military continued to be a highly visible and influential presence in Highland society, and this continued to be reflected in Gaelic poetry, albeit on a lesser scale than had been the case during the second half of the eighteenth century. As has been seen previously in this thesis, periods of major conflict resulted in an increase in the output of military-related poetry and the natural corollary of this was that an extended period of peace yielded significantly fewer pieces. The corpus of Gaelic military poetry for the period 1815 to 1854 identified to date is therefore relatively small, consisting of just fourteen poems. Nevertheless, it is demonstrative of a society that had grown accustomed to playing a high-profile part in the British military, and that felt an attachment to and sense of ownership over the ten Highland regiments that remained after 1815.

Military verse continued to be produced across Scotland and Britain more widely during the period, as the expansion of the empire was marked and celebrated in song and poetry. Although this poetry has received very little attention from scholars, it constitutes a significant and varied corpus of work.⁷³³ While the First World War has been seen as heralding a break between Victorian and modern conceptions of conflict in poetry, the earlier poetry was more diverse than such a proposition suggests.⁷³⁴ Concepts of 'war poetry' and the 'war poet' first started to emerge during the Crimean War, as will be considered in more detail below.⁷³⁵ The image of the Highland warrior-soldier was propagated in literary works in English during the period, notably in Walter Scott's *Waverley* (though published in 1814, Scott's Highland novel continued to be read widely in the post-Waterloo period). Arguably even more influential was David Stewart of Garth's widely-read romanticised historical account of the Highland regiments and the earlier martial history of the clans, *Sketches of the Character, Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*, published in two editions in 1822.

⁷³³ Matthew Bevis has noted that John Peck's 1998 survey of Victorian literature side-lines poetry on the grounds that 'so much of it seems little more than a string of patriotic slogans'. See: J. Peck, *War, the Army and Victorian Literature* (Basingstoke, 1998), p. xiii; M. Bevis, 'Fighting Talk: Victorian War Poetry', in T. Kendall (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry* (Oxford, 2009), p. 9.

⁷³⁴ See for example: J. Silkin, *Out of Battle: The Poetry of the Great War* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 26-7, and B. Bergonzi, *Heroes' Twilight: A Study of Literature of the Great War* (London, 1980), p. 16.

⁷³⁵ Bevis, 'Fighting Talk: Victorian War Poetry', p. 10.

Highland Officers: The Security of Hierarchy

Officers continue to feature prominently in Gaelic poetry as subjects of praise during the period. Diana Henderson has analysed the role that the ‘Regimental Family’ played in regimental life in the nineteenth century, noting the ‘unusual and complex system of discipline, interrelationship, obligation, social pressure and welfare’ which existed in Highland regiments.⁷³⁶ Officers were the patriarchal figureheads of this ‘regimental family’ and often developed close relationships with the soldiers for whom they were responsible.⁷³⁷ It is in this context that the anonymous ‘Cumha le fear de Shaighdearaibh an Fhreiseadain Duibh, air do’n Cheannard U[a]sal, Tighearna Chluainidh, Ceann-cinnidh Chlann-Chatain, an Reiseamaid fhàgail ann am Malt, ’s an luchar, 1832’ (*‘A Lament by a Soldier of the Black Watch for the Noble Leader, the Lord of Cluny, the Chief of Clan Chattan, on his leaving the Regiment in Malta, in July, 1832’*) can be best understood. This lament is addressed to Ewen MacPherson of Cluny (1804-84), grandson of the Ewen MacPherson of Cluny (1706-64), who fought on the Jacobite side during the rebellion of 1745-46. The younger Cluny was a captain in the 42nd regiment (The Black Watch) and this song reports his leaving the regiment in Malta, where it was at that time stationed, in July 1832.⁷³⁸ Cluny continued to serve with the Black Watch after 1832, and the departure referred to in this song was clearly a temporary one; he was married later that year, and it is conceivable that this necessitated his temporary departure from the regiment.⁷³⁹ Temporary or otherwise, the poet laments Cluny’s loss to the regiment in strong terms, using the type of language and tone that would normally be reserved for a real elegy:

Bi’dh beachd gu bràth air an latha chràiteach,
 A sgar an sàr-laoch o ’chàirdibh dlùth,
 Ar misneach shearg i o’n dh’fhàg e’n armailt,
 Ar sgiath ’s ar targaid b’e ’n t-armair ùr;
 Dh’fhalbh bun ’us bràighe a’ chroinn a b’airde,
 Ar fiùran sàr-mhaiseach tharr ’san ùir;
 Gach cridhe Gàidheil tha ’n diugh fo phramhan,
 ’S cha chridhe nàisionnach nach dean tùrs.⁷⁴⁰

There will forever be a memory of the miserable day,

⁷³⁶ D.M. Henderson, *Highland Soldier* (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 289. See also: G. Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (Trowbridge and Esher, 1977), pp. 12-58; E.M. Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914* (London, 1980), pp. 1-34.

⁷³⁷ A. Mackillop, ‘For King, Country and Regiment?’, p. 200.

⁷³⁸ D. Horsburgh, ‘MacPherson, Ewen, MacPherson of Cluny’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17724?docPos=2> [accessed 30 October 2015].

⁷³⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁴⁰ *Focail air Turus na Ban-rìgh do Bhaideanach, ’s a Bhliadhna 1847* (Inverness, 1850), p. 6.

*The great hero separated from his close friends,
 Our confidence has withered since he left the army,
 Our shield and targe was the new warrior,
 The top and bottom of the highest branch is gone,
 Our comely young youth gone to the grave (?)
 Every Gael's heart is today dejected,
 And there is no dutiful heart that will not lament.*

It has been shown previously in this thesis that military officers took the place of clan chiefs as figureheads of self-confidence and as a focus for Gaelic praise during the second half of the eighteenth century. This piece, published in 1850 and seemingly composed in 1832, demonstrates how the hierarchical worldview of clan society - both reflected in and reinforced by poetry - survived in a military context into the mid-nineteenth century.

The burgeoning military career of Sir Colin Campbell, Baron Clyde (1792-1863) provided ample material for Gaelic poets to exercise their panegyric credentials.⁷⁴¹ Campbell was born in Glasgow, the eldest son of John Macliver (d.1858), a carpenter in Glasgow, and his wife Agnes, *née* Campbell, daughter of Campbell of Ardnave in Islay.⁷⁴² He saw his first active service in the Peninsular War (1808-14) and also served in the West Indies (1820s), China (1841), India (1846), the Crimea (1854-56) and finally India again, during the Indian Mutiny (1857-59). He won particular distinction for his service in the Crimean War, where he commanded the Highland Brigade - consisting of the 42nd, 79th and 93rd regiments - at the Battle of the Alma (20 September 1854), the Battle of Balaclava (24 October 1854) and the Siege of Sevastopol (1854-55).

Campbell features in ten Gaelic poems surviving from the period and was clearly a well-respected figure in Gaelic society, as Sir Ralph Abercromby (1734-1801) had been before him. But, unlike Abercromby, Campbell had the added prestige of an esteemed surname and is likely to have been a Gaelic-speaker, and these were details emphasised by Gaelic poets. In a highly traditional address to subject, 'Sir C. Caimbeul, Morair Chluaidh' ('*Sir C. Campbell, Lord Clyde*'), A. MacAlastair⁷⁴³ portrays Campbell as a victorious clan chief, who has gained honour for his country through his service abroad:⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴¹ L. Shadwell, *The Life of Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde* (Edinburgh, 1881); A. Forbes, *Colin Campbell Lord Clyde* (London, 1895); T. Heathcoate, *The British Field Marshals, 1736-1997: A Biographical Dictionary* (West Yorkshire, 1999); A. Greenwood, *Victoria's Scottish Lion: The Life of Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde* (Edinburgh, 2015).

⁷⁴² H.M. Stephens, 'Campbell, Colin, Baron Clyde (1792-1863)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4489?docPos=13> [accessed 30 October 2015].

⁷⁴³ I have been unable to establish the identity of this poet thus far.

⁷⁴⁴ Kidd, 'Na h-Innseachan an Ear Tro Shùilean Gàidhealach', p. 151.

So deoch slàinte Shìr Cailean
 Thar fearaibh an t' saoghail;
 An Caimbeulach sgairteil
 Chaidh a mach 'n a Cheann-feadhna;
 Bho 'n a chaidh thu thar chuantan
 Dh'éirich buaidh air gach taobh leat,
 Rinn do naimhdean dhuit strìochdadh,
 'S rinn iad sìochaint a ghlaodhach.⁷⁴⁵

*This is the toast of Sir Colin,
 Over the men of the world;
 The energetic Campbell
 Who went out as a Chief;
 Since you crossed over oceans
 Victory was yours on each side,
 Your enemies submitted to you.
 And peace was proclaimed.*

The Battle of the Alma featured prominently in the perspective of Gaelic poets during the period of the Crimean War, as will be considered in more detail below. It is clearly of importance for Mac Alastair to claim Campbell as a Gael, and he castigates 'luchd-Bheurla' ('*English-speakers*') for trying to appropriate him merely because he was raised in 'Glascho nan stiùpull' ('*Glasgow of the Steeples*'). Mac Alasdair claims authority as he asserts that Campbell is a Gael of Islay descent:

Domhsa b' aithne do sheanachas
 Le dearbhadh, 's le firinn,
 Bha thu 'theaghlach ro chliùiteach
 Bha 'n Aird-na-h-ùadh 'an Ile.⁷⁴⁶

*I who knew your story
 With certainty and truth,
 You were of a highly renowned family
 That was in Ardnave in Islay.*

Following the conventions of the address to subject in Gaelic panegyric, Campbell's family history is outlined:

'S iomadh sruthan mear, uaibhreach,
 A' dìreadh suas ann a d' phòraibh;
 'S thu do'n fhine bha dìleas

⁷⁴⁵ *Filidh nam Beann* (Undated), p. 12.

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Air taobh an rìgh a's na còrach:
 Dream curranda, làidir,
 Bha 'n Earraghaidheal a chòmhnaidh;
 'S mairg nàmhaid 'g an tàrladh
 Teachd fo àrdan a' chòmhlain.⁷⁴⁷

*Many a joyful, proud streamlet
 Rising up in your pores;
 And you were loyal to the clan
 On the side of the king and the righteous:
 A brave, strong people
 Who lived in Argyll;
 Pity the foe meeting them
 Under the wrath of the company.*

Campbell is therefore praised not only for his own achievement and gallantry but for the accomplishments of his ancestors, and the use of the 'dìleas' motif stresses Hanoverian loyalty during the Jacobite period, therefore signifying an inversion of the traditional motif. Campbell's affinity with Gaelic culture is further emphasised as he is described as 'cùl-taice nan Gàidheal' (*'the supporter of the Gaels'*), and the poet alludes to the loyalty that this in turn inspires in his soldiers: 'S beag an t-iongnadh leam fhèin e / Ged thug iad spèis dhut cho làidir' (*'Little is the surprise to me / That they gave you such respect'*).⁷⁴⁸ One of the major functions of Gaelic panegyric was to project unity and strength, and Campbell is depicted in the piece as a leader who epitomises these qualities. We see again here the tendency for Gaelic poets dealing with the military experience to draw deeply from tradition in an attempt to recreate an intelligible heroic present, revealing again the resilience of panegyric diction.

Rights and Obligations

As Gaels came to identify with the Highland regiments and to perceive them as being rooted in the heroic tradition of the Gàidhealtachd - a perception that was reinforced by popular representations from outwith Gaelic society - they came to expect certain treatment and rights in a military context. In Gilleasbuig Caimbeul's (Archibald Campbell, 1804-83)⁷⁴⁹ 'Oran Do'n Eididh Ghaidheilich agus do dh'fhear a Rinn a Dhulan gu a Cur air Chul 's an Arm' (*'A Song to the Highland Dress and one who Tried to Remove it in the Military'*), published in his collection

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁸ *Filidh nam Beann*, p. 13.

⁷⁴⁹ Campbell was born in Fortingall, Perthshire, in March 1804, and died at Lochearnhead in January 1883. See: G. Caimbeul, *Orain le Gilleaspuig Caimbeul aig Ceann-Loch-Earn* (Dùn Èideann, 1851); D. Maclean, *Typographia Scoto-Gadelica* (1915), p. 55; Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 474

of 1851, the Perthshire poet expresses anger at proposals to abolish Highland dress in the military, or a specific regiment, in the mid-nineteenth century.⁷⁵⁰ Protest poetry related to Highland dress had long antecedents in the Gaelic poetic tradition, notably in pieces such as ‘Am Breacan Uallach’ (*The Proud Plaid*) by Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and ‘Oran do’n Bhriogais’ (*Song to the Breeches*) by Duncan Bàn Macintyre.⁷⁵¹ Campbell was therefore participating in what must have seemed to him an on-going debate and campaign to protect the rights of the Gaels to wear their traditional dress, and his line of argument and use of language appear to be directly influenced by earlier works. Campbell’s piece and Macintyre’s ‘Oran do’n Bhriogais’ share the same opening words: where Macintyre opens with a complaint about the treatment of the Young Pretender (‘’S olc an seòl duinn am Prionns’ òg / A bhith fo mhòran dhuilichinn’) (*Dire is our plight that the young Prince / Should be in great adversity*),⁷⁵² Campbell opens his piece with a complaint against English-speakers for their actions in trying to proscribe Highland dress:⁷⁵³

’S olc an seòl do luchd na Beurla,
Bhi toirt beum do dh’ fhir nam breacan;
’S daoine euchdach iad fo ’n éididh,
Tapaiddh, treubhach ri uchd gaisge;
Bha iad buadhar anns na blàraibh,
’S ri àm gabhaidh cha bu tàis iad;
’S minic bha ’n lannan stàilinn,
Dol troimh àirnean luchd nan casag.⁷⁵⁴

*Bad is the behaviour of the English speakers,
Striking a blow at the men of the tartan,
They are daring men in the attire,
Brave, heroic at the breast of valour;
They were victorious in the battles,
And at the time of danger they were not faint-hearted;*

⁷⁵⁰ I have thus far been unable to ascertain what specific incident this relates to.

⁷⁵¹ Thomson, *Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: Selected Poems*; A. MacLeod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, pp. 8-15.

⁷⁵² MacLeod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. 8.

⁷⁵³ Discord existed between Highland and non-Highland regiments in the British army during the period. Allan Carswell has noted that during the early decades of the nineteenth century ‘an undercurrent of resentment was [...] growing at what was seen as the disproportionate popular attention paid to Highland exploits in battle towards the Highland regiments’. A. Carswell, ‘Scottish Military Dress’, in E.M. Spiers, J.A. Crang and M.J. Strickland (eds.), *A Military History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2012). For Highland Dress in the British military in the nineteenth century, see also: C.C.P. Lawson, *A History of the Uniforms of the British Army*, 5 vols. (London, 1940-67), vol. 1, pp. 66-7; R.M. Barnes, *The Uniforms and History of the Scottish Regiments* (London, 1972); D.M. Henderson, *Highland Soldier: A Social Study of the Highland Regiments* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 121-22, 125; H. Cheape, *Tartan: The Highland Habit* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 25-6;

⁷⁵⁴ G. Caimbeul, *Orain le Gilleaspuig Caimbeul*, p. 64.

*Often were their steel blades,
Piercing the kidneys of the men of the cloaks.*

The target of Macintyre's song was King George II, whom the poet saw as responsible for forcing the Gaels to abandon their Highland dress; Campbell likewise targets the unidentified individual he sees as responsible for this attempt to have Highland dress removed in the army. The poet draws on the conventions of satire to attack this person, comparing his efforts to those of a mangy dog bellowing at the moon in an attempt to change its course:

'S tric bha madadh salach, ròmach,
'S fàile doit' dheth chòir na tealaich,
Comhartaich an lag an òtraich,
Oidhche reòta ris a' ghealaich,
Riamh cha d' atharraich i a cùrsa
Dh' aindeoin dùrdanaich a langain,
Mar sin cha d' thoir na Gàì'eil ùmhlachd,
Do 'n luchd-diombaidh agus falachd.⁷⁵⁵

*Often was a filthy, shaggy dog,
With a smell from it by the fireplace,
Howling in the hollow of the dunghill,
On a frozen night at the moon,
Never did she change her course,
Despite the grumbling of its bellow,
Therefore the Gaels will not submit,
To those of the ill-will and grudges.*

He goes on to accuse this individual of abusing his authority as a commanding officer. As such, he questions the legitimacy of this man as a 'màighstir-ghàsaid' ('commanding officer'); as somebody with a position of authority, who should look after the interests of his people. Instead, he is compared to a wounding barber or a reckless dentist, with these comparisons emphasising his dereliction of duty in a position of responsibility towards others:

Ged fhuair thu bhi 'n ad mhàighstir-gàsaid,
'S olc a ghnàthaich thu do dhleas' nas;
S cosmhuil thu ri barbair beumnach
An droch reusair, nach robh cneasda;
No ri spìocair neo-fhiachail
'S inchair iarunn ann 'n a dheas-làimh,
Cur nan cailleachan anns an t-sianail

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Tarruing fhiacallan á 'm peircill.⁷⁵⁶

*Although you became a commanding officer,
Poorly did you execute your responsibility;
You are comparable to a poor barber,
Of bad razor, that was not temperate;
Or to an unworthy miser,
With an iron implement in his right hand,
Causing the old women to scream
Pulling teeth from their jaws.*

As has previously been noted, in a military context Gaels often reacted strongly when they felt that their superiors had lied to them or treated them unfairly, and this poem is further evidence of this resistance to distrusted authority.⁷⁵⁷ For Campbell, the Highland dress represents strength and custom: it is a symbol of the *dùthchas* of the Gaels. He states ‘S e bhi sgaradh craibh o’ rùsga, / Bhi toirt dhiubh na h-earradh mheanbh-bhric’ (*‘It is severing the tree of its bark / To take from them the finely-dappled uniform’*).⁷⁵⁸ By employing the imagery of the tree - invested with symbolic potency in the Gaelic tradition - Campbell emphasises the impact that removing Highland dress could have for the Gaels. The poem is again indicative of the strength of feeling that the military could engender in Gaelic society, and the lengths to which Gaelic poets would go in order to defend their martial inheritance.

While Gaelic poets were ready to criticise those who threatened their military heritage, they could be equally demanding and critical of their own countrymen in a military context. In his ‘Sliochd nam Beannta’ (*‘The Tribe of the Hills’*), first published in 1836, the Lochfyneside poet Eòghann MacColla (Evan MacColl, 1808-98) calls on his fellow Gaels to prove their allegiance to the newly crowned King William IV (1765-1837).⁷⁵⁹ In a verse which alludes to, but does not dwell upon, the transference of loyalty from Jacobite to Hanoverian royalty, MacColl calls on those who are descended from the men who stood with Charles Edward Stuart to show the present monarch that Gaels could match the deeds of their ancestors:⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁷ Prebble, *Mutiny*, p. 232; Mackillop, *More Fruitful Than the Soil* (East Lothian, 2000), p. 9.

⁷⁵⁸ Caimbeul, *Orain le Gilleaspuig Caimbeul*, p. 65.

⁷⁵⁹ MacColl was born at Kenmore, Lochfyneside, and was originally a farmer and fisherman. He emigrated to Liverpool in 1838, where he was employed as a customs clerk. His family had emigrated to Canada in 1831 and he joined them there in 1850, settling in Kingston, Ontario. He composed a substantial body of verse in both Gaelic and English, and was heavily influenced by the work of Robert Burns. MacKenzie, *Sar-obair nam Bard Gaelach*, pp. 355-57; A. MacKenzie, ‘Evan MacColl - the Bard of Loch Fyne’, *The Celtic Magazine*, 6 (1881), p. 84. Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 477.

⁷⁶⁰ For an analysis of this transition of loyalty in the work of various Gaelic poets, see: M. Newton, ‘Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present’, in *e-keltoj*, vol. 5 (2003).

Sibhs' a ghineadh bho na h-àrmuinn
 Sheas gu duineil mar ri Teàrlach,
 Nochdaibh nis do dh'Uilleam àdhmhor'
 Gu 'm bheil Gà'eil 'san t-seann dòigh.⁷⁶¹

*You who are descended from the heroes
 Who stood manfully with Charlie,
 Now demonstrate to magnificent William
 That Gaels are in the old way.*

In a note preceding the poem, MacColl states that he composed the song and that which follows it, 'Na Deireasaich' ('*The Defectors*'), in 1829, in response to the raising of a militia force in Argyll.⁷⁶² The militia in Scotland was established in 1797 and was originally conceived of as an army of the people for the purposes of home defence and internal security, which would be raised by ballot on a county basis.⁷⁶³ It seems that MacColl is mistaken in assigning the composition of these poems to 1829, as the militia ballot was only effected twice in the period between 1815 and 1852, in 1830 and 1831, and it is much more likely that the poem was composed during one of these years.⁷⁶⁴

The note which prefaces 'Sliochd nam Beannta' and 'Na Deireasaich' states that the latter poem was composed in response to the number of local men who tried to avoid the ballot by claiming sickness:⁷⁶⁵

Rinneadh "Sliochd nam Beannta," ar leam, 'sa bhliadhna 1829, 'n uair thaing iomradh gu robh feachd-dùthcha, no *Militia*, Earraghàel gu bhi air a togail gun dàil, agus daoine, nan aineolas, a' saolsinn gur h-e b' aobhar dha sud gu'n robh sinn fein 's na Frangaich gu 'bhi aon uair eile ann am badabh a chéile. Chaidh "Na Deireasaich," an t-òran a leanas, a chur 'an òrdugh air do'n ùghdair, le fearg-thàmailt agus nàire, 'bhi 'faicinn a mheud 's a bha de dhaoine òg, luath, làidir, gu cladhach, ag oidheirpeachadh "faighinn dheth" (mar theireadh iad féin) le teisteanas lighichean, goirid romh àm cur nan crann - agus sin airson ciurraman agus eucailean air nach cualas a chuige sud riamh gearan no iomradh aca.⁷⁶⁶

The Tribe of the Hills was composed, I think, in 1829, when notice was received that a country force or Militia of Argyll was to be raised without

⁷⁶¹ E. McColl, *The Mountain Minstrel, Clàrsach nam Beann* (Glasgow, 1836), p. 158.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁷⁶³ H. Baker, *The Territorial Force* (London, 1909), pp. 38-39; D.M. Henderson, *Highland Soldier* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 30-31; Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, p. 305.

⁷⁶⁴ D.M. Henderson, *Highland Soldier*, p. 30.

⁷⁶⁵ The song is included without the note in MacColl's second edition of 1839, but is omitted from the posthumous edition of 1886.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

delay, and people, in their ignorance, thought that the reason for that was that we and the French were going to be at each other's throats once again. The following song, "The Defectors", was composed after the poet, with anger and shame, saw the number of young, nimble, strong people who were in a cowardly manner trying to "get out of it/off" (as they would say themselves) with testimony of doctors, shortly before the raising of the flag - and that for injuries and maladies of which they had never until now complained.

In a society that still placed much stock in heroic values, this type of behaviour was reprehensible, and 'Na Deireasaich' sees the poet draw on the conventions of satire to rebuke these men for trying to avoid military service:

'An àite nan treun 'rachadh 'n teugmhail le fonn,
Tha 'm mulcach, an crùbach, an giùmach, an cam;
Ar leam gu 'm b'e 'n eucoir am màrsadh do 'n Fhraing
'S fear no dhà 'cur an céill 'bhi mar tha gun ceann!⁷⁶⁷

*Instead of the heroes that would go into battle with
delight,
There are the shapeless, the lame, the sloven, the
cripple;
I think it would be a crime to march them to France
As one or two are already claiming to be without a
head!*

He goes on to issue a stinging indictment, questioning whether these men deserve to be called Gaels:

A dhaoine gun nàire! Ciod è their mi ribh?
An abair mi Gàeil ribh 's nach Gàeil idir sibh?
B' e samhachadh 'n fhleòdair ri stàilinn an nì,
'S b'fheàrr aon dhiubh 's an àr-fhaich na réiseamaid
dibhs'.⁷⁶⁸

*Men without shame, how should I address you?
Shall I call you Gaels when you are not Gaels at all?
It is like comparing pewter to steel,
And better one of you in the field of battle than two in
the regiment.*

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

MacColl seems to be asserting that military service is an essential component of Gaelic identity. He emphasises the fact that, due to their unwillingness to serve, these men are not Gaels and cannot be addressed as such, and he calls on those who are of the ‘pure, uncorrupted blood’, to show the strength that others lack:

Ach sibhs’ ’tha dhe ’n fhìon-fhuil a’s priseil’ na ’n t-òr,
 ’Fhìor ghineil na Féinne! Na géillibh ’s sibh beò; -
 ’S fearr gràinean de ’n t-sìol na de ’n mhol làn na cròig,
 ’S ma theid sinn thar chuan, bheir sinn buaidh mar bu
 nòs.⁷⁶⁹

*But you who are of the true, uncorrupted blood, more
 valuable than gold,
 The true progeny of the Fenians! Do not yield while you
 live; -
 Better the grains of the seed than a full hand of the
 chaff,
 And if we cross the sea, we will bring victory as
 customary.*

His comparison of these men with the Fianna emphasises their credentials as specifically Gaelic warriors, who are part of a deep-rooted heroic tradition. MacColl’s distinction between true Gaels and non-Gaels based on their readiness to serve in the military is demonstrative of a society in which military service remained, for some, a key benchmark of active and respected citizenship. The poem is also, of course, indicative of the aversion to military service which also existed in Highland communities during the period under consideration here, as evidenced in entries from the Statistical Accounts looked at earlier in this thesis. It is notable however that the former view predominates in poetry, and it might be said that the language, conventions and associated worldview of Gaelic poetry were inherently biased toward viewing military service as respectable and, to a certain degree, necessary. The warrior ideal clearly remained at the heart of bardic rhetoric on Gaelic identity, while the relationship between that and ordinary Highlanders is harder to discern.

Highland Soldiers and Queen Victoria

After the Highlandism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which included the highly influential *Waverley* novels of Sir Walter Scott and David Stewart of Garth’s hagiographic *Sketches* of the Highland soldier, Queen Victoria’s relationship with the Highlands became the next major contributor to the

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

romanticisation of Highland culture.⁷⁷⁰ Victoria took a close and active interest in the Highland regiments, which enhanced her popularity north of the border.⁷⁷¹ As has previously been noted in this thesis, praise of a rightful monarch had been a powerful and prevalent motif in Gaelic poetry from the mid-seventeenth century. During the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, the Stuart dynasty had received enthusiastic support from many Gaelic poets through adherence to the principle of 'loyalty' to a rightful line. The post-Culloden period saw a transference of support to the Hanoverians (and an accommodation with political reality). The language of Gaelic panegyric was invested with regal terminology and its hierarchical world-view provided a ready structure with which to praise members of the monarchy. This can be seen, for example, in Jacobite poems to Charles Edward Stuart, such as Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair's 'Òran do'n Phrionnsa' ('*Song to the Prince*') and Rob Donn MacKay's 'Òran do Phrionnsa Teàrlach' ('*Song to Prince Charles*'), and in Duncan Bàn Macintyre's mid-eighteenth century paean to the Hanoverian King George III, 'Òran do'n Rìgh' ('*Song to the King*').⁷⁷²

Queen Victoria was the first Hanoverian monarch to actively engage with Gaelic culture, by awarding prizes for poems in Gaelic during her visits to Scotland, while her husband, Prince Albert, made attempts at learning to speak the language, which were widely reported in the Scottish press.⁷⁷³ Victoria also later had her *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands from 1848 to 1861* (1868) translated into Gaelic. Victoria and Albert can therefore be seen to have actively facilitated their own acceptance by the Gaelic community.⁷⁷⁴ The Dowally schoolmaster Dòmhnall Fearghasan (Donald Fergusson, 1805-87) was twice the recipient of Victoria's prizes for Gaelic poetry, for pieces he composed on the Queen's visits to Blair Atholl in 1842 and 1844.⁷⁷⁵ During the latter visit, Victoria stayed for three weeks as a guest of the Duke of Atholl, George Murray (1814-64) at Blair Castle, and the Atholl Highlanders were assigned to provide her protection

⁷⁷⁰ Womack, *Improvement and Romance*, p. 177; Withers, 'The Historical Creation of the Highlands', pp. 152-54; Clyde, *From Rebel to Hero*, pp. 116-50.

⁷⁷¹ For Victoria's relationship with the Highlands, see: G.M. Campbell, 'The Late Queen Victoria and the Gaelic Language', *The Celtic Monthly*, 16 (1908), p. 35; D. Duff, (ed.) *Queen Victoria's Highland Journals* (Exeter, 1980).

⁷⁷² A. Gunn and M. MacFarlane (eds.), *Songs and Poems by Rob Donn Mackay* (Glasgow, 1899), p. 32; Macleod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, pp. 26-33; Campbell, *Highland Songs of the Forty-five*, pp. 48-51.

⁷⁷³ See for instance *The Caledonian Mercury*, 3 September 1849.

⁷⁷⁴ While Victoria was the first Hanoverian monarch to actively engage with the language, the ground had arguably been set by her predecessor, George IV, and his Scottish fixer, Sir Walter Scott, who arranged the King's tartan-clad trip to Scotland in 1822. See: J. Prebble, *The King's Jaunt: George IV in Scotland, August 1822: 'one and twenty daft days'* (London, 1988).

⁷⁷⁵ Donald (aka Daniel) Fergusson was born in Crieff, Perthshire in 1805. He was educated at St. Andrews University and held the position of schoolmaster in various towns in Scotland. He was also inspector of the Poor and Sessions clerk in the parish of Dowally. He is said to have composed poetry in Scots, English and Gaelic. He emigrated from Scotland in 1859 and arrived at Lyttleton, New Zealand in the same year. See: *Timaru Herald*, 22 April 1887, p. 2.

for the duration of her stay.⁷⁷⁶ In ‘A Bhan-righ aig Blàr an Adhall, am Mios Medhonach an Fhoghair 1844’ (*The Queen in Blair Atholl, in the Middle Month of Autumn 1844*) Fergusson revels in the Highlanders’ roles as warriors and protectors of the monarch:

A ghaigich mo dhùthcha, chuideachd euchdach sa’
chruaidh-chas,
A rìs tha ’ur Ban-righ fo thearmann ’ur sgéith;
Tha càrn-lith ’ur sinnsir mar leus-iùil ag éiridh,
Tha Ghàeltachd ag earbs’ ri bhur dìlseachd neo-chlì.⁷⁷⁷

*Warriors of my country, brave company in the hardship,
Again your Queen is under the protection of your wing;
The cairn of your ancestors is as a guiding flame rising,
The Highlands are trusting to your firm loyalty.*

For Fergusson, the monarch is a unifying force who brings cohesion to Gaelic society; he states ‘tha fir Adhall ag éiridh, gualainn ri gualainn, / ’s an aigne mar aon’ (*‘the men of Atholl are rising, shoulder to shoulder / and their spirit as one’*).⁷⁷⁸ He addresses directly the fact that the ancestors of his present-day Gaels fought against the Queen’s own ancestors, but reassures Victoria that the same force that was applied against the earlier Hanoverians would now be used in her defence:

An claidhe sin o chian sa’ Ghàeltachd chaidh thogail,
An aghaidh do shìnnis le sràd-thein’ na h-eud,
Tha e dearbhte sa’ chòmhraig, tha ’n gàirdean deas
ullamh,
Cò nis’ air a dhànachd a bheireadh dhut beum?⁷⁷⁹

*That sword which long since was raised in the Highlands
Against your ancestors with the blaze of zeal,
It is proven in conflict, the right hand is ready,
Who now in their boldness would give you a blow?*

⁷⁷⁶ The Atholl Highlanders, the 77th regiment, had originally been formed in 1777 and were disbanded in 1783, but the regiment was resurrected by the Duke of Atholl in 1839 as the Queen’s bodyguards. For Queen Victoria in the Highlands, see: D. Duff, *Queen Victoria’s Highland Journals*; I. Mitchell, *On the Trail of Queen Victoria in the Highlands* (Dundurn, 2000); J. Cannizzo, *Our Highland Home: Victoria and Albert in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2005); R.W. Clark, *Balmoral: Queen Victoria’s Highland Home* (London, 2012).

⁷⁷⁷ D. Ferguson, *A’ Bhan-righ aig Blar an Adhall* (Edinburgh, 1844), p. 4.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

He therefore sees no contradiction in linking those who fought at the Battle of Killiecrankie (1689) with the ‘true heroes’ now protecting and supporting Queen Victoria: ‘sliochd nam fìor ghaigeach shìl fuil air Raon-Ruari, / ’S iad nis’ do chùl-taice *Victoria* nam buadh (*‘the descendants of the true heroes who spilt blood at Killiecrankie, / And they are now a support to virtuous Victoria’*).⁷⁸⁰ In another prize-winning poem on an earlier visit by the Queen to Blair Atholl, ‘Comh-chruinneach Fir Adhall a Dhfhailteach ’na Ban-rìgh ann an Dun-chailinn sa Bhliadhna 1842’ (*‘Gathering of the Atholl Men to Welcome the Queen to Dunkeld in the Year 1842’*), the poet depicts the Queen’s Highland guards as traditional warriors under arms. He emphasises this by drawing on the panegyric convention of listing allies:

Fàilt’ air na laoiach - mìle fàilte is buaidh dhoibh,
Tha teachd le Gleann-Lìbhinn o gharbhlach nam beann,
Le targaid, a’s claidheamh, a’s cath-thuath Lochabar,
’S an snasadh mar eilid a frith-leum sa’ ghleann:
Tha gaisgich Shrath-Ghairidh, Shrath-Teimheil, ’s
Bhraidh-Adhall,
Shrath-ard-thall, Shrath-Tadh, Thulaich-mhaighte’s,
Dhail-chàrn,
Gu deas, uidheamaicht’, òrdail, ’glacadh geur air ’na
còdhail :-
’San t-ard-fhlath Dun-blathain, ’Clann-Fhionnlai’
Bhraidh-Bharr.⁷⁸¹

*Welcome to the warriors - a thousand welcomes and
success to them,
Coming along Glen Lyon from the rugged country of the
hills,
With targe, and sword, and Lochaber axe,
In appearance as a hind skipping in the glen,
The heroes of Strath Garry, Strath Tummel, and Blair
Atholl,
Strath Ardlie, Strathtay, Tullymet and Dail Carn
Ready, equipped, orderly, a sharp grasp on the
gathering: -
And the Chief of Dunblane, the Finlaysons of Braemar.*

This roll-call of place names would have resonated with Fergusson’s audience and with it the poet links the Queen to the Perthshire landscape. The monarch is praised in her own right but it can be argued that the most significant factor in her

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

appeal is the fact that she provides a context in which a united and heroic Gaelic society can be imagined. It has been shown previously that poets' responses to George III were linked to perceptions of the King as a figurehead who seemed to bolster Gaelic society and traditional Gaelic culture; likewise, Fergusson's response to Victoria can be read as a positive reaction to a monarch who seemed to offer the same cultural assurance.

Displacement-complaint motif

There is a recurring motif in poetry of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which makes a parallel between the adverse effects of clearance and/or emigration and the previous service or future availability of Highland soldiers to serve in the British military.⁷⁸² This displacement-complaint motif became particularly prevalent in the years under consideration in this chapter (1815-56) but had an earlier provenance in the Gaelic poetic tradition. Perhaps the earliest example can be found in John MacCodrum's (1693-1779) 'Oran do na Fògarraich' ('*Song to the Fugitives*'), a response to the emigration of men from the MacDonald estate in North Uist in the years which preceded the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War (1775-83).⁷⁸³ Concerned about the effect that the emigration of over two hundred people from North Uist would have on the area's defences, MacCodrum states:

Ma thig cogadh 'us creachadh,
Mar is minic a thachair,
'S ann a bhios sibh 'n 'ur starsaich,
Fo chasaibh bhur nàmhaid;
Tha sibh soirbh ri bhur casgairt
Gun neach ann gus a' bhacail,
Tha bhur guaillean gun tacsas,
'S na gaisgich 'g 'ur fàgail.⁷⁸⁴

*If war and plundering come,
As often has happened,
You will be a threshold
Under the feet of your foe;
You are easy to slaughter,
When there is none to hinder them,
Your shoulders are without support,
As the heroes are leaving you.*⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸² Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, p. 279; Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 456; D.E. Meek, *Tuath is Tighearna* (1995), pp. 26-27; MacInnes, 'Gaelic Poetry in the Nineteenth Century', p. 389; McLeod, 'Gaelic poetry and the British Military Enterprise, 1756-1945', pp. 61-76.

⁷⁸³ W. Matheson (ed.), *Òrain Iain Mhic Fhearchair* (Edinburgh, 1938), p. 314.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

MacCodrum's appeal here is addressed directly to Highland/clan gentry and is therefore still framed in regional terms, but we see the motif being applied in a wider British context towards the end of the eighteenth century. By the time the Inverness-shire poet Kenneth MacKenzie composed his displacement-complaint, 'Oran do na Caoraich Mhoire' ('*Song to the Big Sheep*'), published in his collection of 1792, the poet was able to draw on the recent service of the Gaels under King George III in the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), and in India during the 1770s and 80s, to highlight the injustice of a people who had diligently served the interests of the Crown now being replaced with sheep, and the weakening of defences that this would cause.⁷⁸⁶ MacKenzie contrasts the earlier Gàidhealtachd as a fertile recruiting ground with a land now devoid of military potential:

Ach nan eireadh oirn le ain-neart,
 Ar naimhdean a dh'iarrui' còir,
 San Taobh tuath bha daoine treubhach,
 Dheanadh èiridh le Rìgh Deors',
 Ach a nis chaidh iad a dhe'-laimh,
 'S chuir an èiginn iad o 'n seol,
 'S nuair a thig e dh'iarrui' daoine,
 Gheibh e caoraich ann gu leòr.⁷⁸⁷

*But if our enemies,
 Came at us with violence to seek a right,
 In the north there were heroic people,
 That would rise with King George,
 But now they have departed,
 And necessity placed them under sail,
 And when he comes to look for people,
 Plenty of sheep is what he'll find.*

While the song is invested with an air of helplessness, the very act of composing this type of poetry was an act of defiance of, and opposition to, societal change. MacKenzie may have been far removed from political power, but that does not prevent him from applying what leverage he has as a poet by stating how he would behave as a Duke:

Ach na bithinn na'm Diùce,
 Am cheanas am chùl air sluagh,

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁷⁸⁶ For more on Kenneth MacKenzie see: MacKenzie, *Sar Obair nam Bard Gaelach*, p. 270-71; Black, *An Lasair*, pp. 499-500.

⁷⁸⁷ Mac'Coinnich, *Orain Ghaidhealach agus Bearla air an Eadar-theangacha*, p. 91.

Am' cheann fine sa'n dùthaich.
 'S lann thana ri'm thaobh an truail,
 Fhad sa mhaireadh am faobhar,
 Cha leiginn le Caoraich buaigh,
 B' anns farum fir ghleusta,
 'Nam tarraing nan geur lann cruaidh.⁷⁸⁸

*But if I was a Duke,
 In command of a group of people,
 A clan chief in the country,
 And a thin blade by my side in the scabbard,
 As long as the edge would stay sharp,
 I wouldn't let sheep have advantage,
 I would prefer the clangour of keen men,
 At the time of drawing the hard, sharp blades.*

Poets reacted to the changes in land use in different ways. Allan MacDougall's visceral 'Oran do na Ciobairibh Gallda' from c.1798, makes a virtue of the lack of defence by hoping that the French will invade and kill the Lowland shepherds: 'B'fhearr leinn gun tigeadh na Frangaich / A thoirt nan ceann dheth na Gallaibh' ('We wish the French would come / To take the heads off the Lowlanders').⁷⁸⁹

The potency of this displacement-complaint motif was maintained during the years when there was no immediate threat of invasion. The Brora poet Dòmhnall MacLeòid (Donald MacLeod, fl. 1844)⁷⁹⁰ was an early contributor to the elegiac genre of nineteenth century Gaelic verse which reflects upon and laments the plight of the Gàidhealtachd.⁷⁹¹ In his 'Fasachadh na Gaeldachd' ('Depopulation of the Highlands'), published in 1844, MacLeod expresses his dismay at the current state of the region, with the heroes who had once lived there replaced by lowly shepherds:

O Alba! mo léir-chreach, do gharbh-chrìochan àluinn
 A dh'àraich na h-àrmuinn' bhi fàsachail, fuar;
 Na leòghain dheas anmant' nach dealaicheadh ri'n càirdean
 Am borb-chath 's an àraich bu ràn-sgreadach fuaim;
 Bu mharbh-bhuilleach, garg-ghuthach, calgant an éiridh,
 'Cuir dearg dhath air leargaibh a's balgan da'n reubadh,

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁷⁸⁹ Meek, *Tuath is Tighearna*, p. 48.

⁷⁹⁰ MacLeod was from Brora, Sutherlandshire. A series of his poems was published in the *Scottish Highlander* between 29 March 1888 and 13 September 1888. I am thankful to Dr. Sheila Kidd for bringing these to my attention.

⁷⁹¹ Meek, *Tuath is Tighearna*, pp. 26-27; Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, pp. 456-57.

Ach, O! mo sheachd thruaighean! Chaidh'm fuadach do chéin-
thìr,
'S cha dh'fhuair sinn' nan éirig ach cìobairean truagh.⁷⁹²

*O Scotland! My devastation, your beautiful rough bounds
That reared the heroes are desolate and cold;
The skilful, courageous lions that would not abandon their
friends
In the barbarous fight and most clamorous field of battle;
Of death-striking blows, fierce-voiced, and lively their rising,
Making the plains red and bellies being torn,
But, oh! My seven calamities! They were cleared to a foreign
land,
And all we got in exchange were pitiful shepherds.*

In a stanza reminiscent of Allan MacDougall's comments on the French in 'Òran do na Cìobairibh Gallda', MacLeod expresses a desire that Napoleon Bonaparte ('Boni') would return so that the laughable prospect of his being faced by a defence force of shepherds and sheep could be exposed:

O! struagh nach robh BONI a' cogadh 'san àm so,
'S e bagradh a phrancas chuir teann air an t-saogh'l,
Gu'm b' éibhinn am feachd dol a ghleachd air son bann-righ,
Cìobair a's fang-chù na'n dean, agus coar' [sic]!⁷⁹³

*Oh! It's a shame that BONI isn't fighting at this time
Threatening with his tricks to take control of the world,
It would be an odd force going to compete for the queen,
A shepherd and a fank-dog at speed, and sheep!*

The contrast between MacLeod's poem and the anti-Bonaparte pieces looked at earlier in this thesis is clear. Where a poet such as James Shaw (c.1758-c.1828) focussed on the martial strength of the Gaels and how this would repel any attempt at invasion, MacLeod focuses instead on the weakness that has resulted from emigration and clearance, and that has left Gaelic society open to attack. However, the poets can also be said to have shared similar concerns: ultimately, the survival of Gaelic society against the encroachment of outside influences. While Bonaparte represented a threat to the security of the region - ergo Gaelic society - he was satirised, but when poets perceived the threat to be coming from sheep, shepherds, and certain members of the Highland gentry, their anger was directed towards these seeming dangers. Poets showed misplaced anger in

⁷⁹² D.B. MacLeòid, *Da Oran: Fasachadh na Gaeldachd agus Cor na h-Eaglais* (Glasgow, 1844), p. 5.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

primarily targeting shepherds and sheep, as these were merely symptoms of change rather than causes, but their work nevertheless conveys a broad understanding of the root cause of instability in Highland society: a system of land-use that de-prioritised, disempowered and sought to replace many of the people who lived there. The injustice of a people called upon to be protectors of the realm but shown no protection within their own locales was keenly felt by poets.

This displacement-complaint motif gained the traction of contemporaneity again during the Crimean War (1853-56). Russian expansion prior to the outbreak of war had created fears in Britain that that country might advance towards India, or even to Scandinavia and Western Europe.⁷⁹⁴ The Mull poet Iain MacDhòmhnaill (John MacDonald, fl. 1853) did not, therefore, have to engage in the sort of fantasy that Donald MacLeod had done in order to make his point about the weakness of the defences in the Gàidhealtachd at the time of the Crimean War.⁷⁹⁵

Ma thig na Russianaich thairis,
Mar tha iad a' bagairt 's an àm,
Co a thilleas iad dhachaidh?
'S na gaisgich againn air chall.⁷⁹⁶

*If the Russians come over,
As they are currently threatening,
Who will send them home?
With our own heroes gone.*

For the Glasgow-based poet and printer, Iain MacIlllloisa (John Gillies, fl. 1854), originally from Skye, it was as if the invasion had already taken place.⁷⁹⁷ His 'Tuireadh' ('*Lament*'), published during the height of the conflict in the Crimea in 1854, is a vast and wide-ranging lament on the current state and military weakness of the Highlands, running to 139 stanzas and 556 lines. The preface to Gillies's self-published book makes clear his motivation for composing this substantial work of poetry:

The Author, moved by compassion for his oppressed countrymen, and grieved for the desolation which prevails everywhere in the Highlands of Scotland, composed, wrote, and with his own hands printed the following LAMENTATION, which he trusts will help to show our Rulers and their colleagues their blindness in sanctioning the expatriation of brave

⁷⁹⁴ A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe: 1848-1918* (Oxford, 1954) p. 61.

⁷⁹⁵ I have thus far been unable to find biographical information about this poet.

⁷⁹⁶ Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, *An t-Òranaiche*, p. 244.

⁷⁹⁷ John Gillies was originally from Skye and had a printing business at 303 Argyll Street, Glasgow. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1857 and while living in Otago sent some of his Gaelic elegiac poetry to Archibald Sinclair for publication. Meek, 'Gaelic Printing and Publishing', p. 109.

Highlanders - the bone and sinew of our country - at a period when their services are so much needed at home. There is every appearance that the Highland lairds will soon have cause to lament their own folly and cruelty in clearing their so called *estates* of the population, and thereby laying themselves bare to the attacks of foreign invaders.⁷⁹⁸

The poem's chorus makes clear that the poet's sympathies are firmly with displaced Gaels, while his ire is targeted at those in positions of authority:

Mo thruaighe leir! Mo thruaighe leir!
 Mo thruaighe leir na Gaidheil!!
 A bhi g'am fuadach mar na treudan,
 Le eucoir dhaoin' arda.⁷⁹⁹

My terrible distress! My terrible distress!
My terrible distress the Gaels!!
Being cleared like the flocks,
By the injustice of nobles.

The direct inspiration for Gillies's poem appears to have been his witnessing a group of destitute Gaels on the banks of the Clyde:

Latha dhomh air bruachaibh Chluaidh
 Gu'm, facas sluagh a' ranaich,
 'S gu'n ghluais iad m'innigh fein le truas
 Nam b'eol domh luaidh am bardachd.⁸⁰⁰

One day on the banks of the Clyde,
I saw a group of people crying,
And they moved my own mind with compassion
If I knew how to relate it in poetry.

Newspaper accounts from the mid-nineteenth century report that cleared families from areas such as South Uist and Barra could often be seen in Glasgow, such as the following from the *Glasgow Herald* in 1850:

Within the last few days, the city parochial authorities have had another detachment of Barra paupers landed on them. It is not quite such a numerous one as the last, consisting of only two women (widows), with five

⁷⁹⁸ I. Mac Gillios, *Tuireadh airson Cruaidh-chas nan Gàidheal agus airson Fasachadh Tir nam Beann, nan Gleann, 's nan Gaisgeach* (Glascho, 1854), p. 2.

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

children; making seven in all, but these are in a state of such extreme misery, that, on their arrival at the Town Hospital, Mr. Willow had to consign all their miserable articles of wearing apparel to the flames. From the statement of the poor creatures, who, like their predecessors, do not speak a word of English, they appear to have been driven from the island by absolute privation.⁸⁰¹

Gillies casts his net wide in apportioning blame for the state of the Highlands, targeting landlords, bailiffs, shepherds and ministers in equal measure:

Uachdarain gun tur gun chiall
Is Bailli' fiadhaich gabhail,
Ciobairean 's luchd-teagaisg bhreug
A sgap o cheil' na Gaidheil.

Fhuair an Ciobair aite a reiteach
D'a threud chaorach-bana,
'S lean a Ministear a cheum
Gun eagal Dhe 's gun naire.⁸⁰²

*Landlords without understanding or sense
And savage acquisitive factors
Shepherds and the teachers of lies
That separated the Gaels from one another.*

*The shepherd got his settlement
For his flock of white sheep,
And the minister followed his footsteps
Without fear of God or shame.*

The role of the clergy in the Highland clearances has been considered in a number of works, and it has been shown that many (though by no means all) ministers of the established church were complicit in, or failed to exert any meaningful opposition to, commercial landlordism.⁸⁰³ There are other references to the complicity of ministers in Gaelic poetry, such as Màiri Mhòr nan Òran's late-nineteenth century 'Fios gu Clach Àrd Uige' (*Message to the Stone of Upper Uig*), where she castigates ministers for their silence in the face of the clearances, but it

⁸⁰¹ *Glasgow Herald*, 27 December 1850.

⁸⁰² Mac Gillios, *Tuireadh airson Cruaidh-chas nan Gàidheal*, p. 8.

⁸⁰³ See for example: D. Paton, *The Clergy and the Clearances* (Edinburgh, 2006). J. Prebble, *The Highland Clearances* (London, 1969); A.B. Mearns, 'The Minister and the Bailiff: A Study of Presbyterian Clergy in the Northern Highlands During the Clearances', *RSCHS*, 24 (1990) pp. 53-75; A.W. MacColl, (2006) *Land, Faith and the Crofting Community: Christianity and Social Criticism in the Highlands of Scotland 1843-1893* (Edinburgh, 2010).

is unusual to see a direct reference such as this in a mid-nineteenth century piece.⁸⁰⁴

Gillies' poem is of further interest in its apportioning of responsibility as in one stanza he appears to lay blame at the door of both landlords and - in sharp contrast to the pro-monarchy poetry looked at earlier - the Queen, where there was a tendency amongst poets during the period to blame factors or shepherds:

'S e ni'n fhanaid anns an uairs'
Air uachdarain 's air Ban-righ,
A ruaig o'n tir na Gaidheil fhiachail
'Sa dhiarr iasad thraillean.⁸⁰⁵

*He will mock at that time
Landlords and the Queen,
Who drove from the land the worthy Gaels,
And sought the profit of slaves.*

And the poet is conscious that any motivation to serve in the military has been removed from the Gaels:

Cha dean maith bhi 'g earbs a cruadal
Sluagh dheth'n d'rinneadh traillean,
Nach caill cothrom; saors, no duthaich,
Cuid, no cliu, no cairdean.

Sia nithibh a chuireadh sluagh
Gu dubhlan cruaidh ri'n namhaid,
Ach bhuin ar n-Uacrain sud o shluagh
Cho lugha truas ri'n namhaid.⁸⁰⁶

*It is of no good expecting courage
From a people made into slaves,
Who will not lose opportunity, freedom, or country,
Possessions, renown or family.*

*Six things that would encourage a people
To strongly challenge their enemy,
But our landlords stripped that from the people,*

⁸⁰⁴ See: D.E. Meek, *Màiri Mhòr nan Òran: taghadh de a h-òrain le eachdraidh a beatha is notaichean* (Glaschu, 1977), pp. 168-70.

⁸⁰⁵ Mac Gillios, *Tuireadh airson Cruaidh-chas nan Gàidheal*, p. 16.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

With as little compassion as an enemy.

The use by the poet of the word ‘trailllean’ (‘slaves’) is interesting in the context of slavery and the nineteenth century abolition movement, and his use of it here further emphasises the inequality between displaced Gaels and their landlords.⁸⁰⁷ It is evident from these stanzas that Gillies was acutely aware of the motivations which lay behind recruitment: the six elements he names (opportunity, freedom, land, possession, status and family/friendship) can hardly be bettered as an outline of the pull factors that initially attracted Gaels to military service.

For Gillies, the end result of this has been to destabilise the security of the country; to allow Russia to expand its military in the knowledge that the Highlanders who had once protected the country had been forced out:

Ach dhuig an Ruiseanach o’n tuath
Le armait sluaigh ro laidir,
Is chuir e nis gu dubhlan cruaidh
Ar neart, ar n’uaill ’s ar n’ardan.

Tha fios aige gu’n dh’fhalbh an sluagh
A sheasadh fuachd is anradh,
'Sa leanadh e feadh sneachd is fuachd
Sa chuireadh ruaig a bhais air.⁸⁰⁸

*But the Russian awoke from the North
With a very powerful armed force,
And he has now sorely tested
Our might, our pride and our haughtiness.*

*He knows that the people have left
Who would withstand cold and hardship,
And would follow him through snow and cold
And would inflict the rout of death on him.*

Gillies’s ‘Tuireadh’ laments both the past treatment of the Gaels and the current state of the region, while anticipating the difficulties which might beset it in the future. Gillies himself emigrated to New Zealand in 1857, just three years after this piece was published.⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁷ There were few contemporary parallels drawn between the Highlands and slavery but for another example see see: S. Kidd, ‘Displacing Clearance? A nineteenth-century essay on slavery’, in G. Munro. And R.A.V. Cox (eds.) *Cànan & Cultar / Language & Culture. Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 4* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 55-66.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁰⁹ Meek, ‘Gaelic Printing and Publishing’, pp. 108-9.

The Crimean War (1853-56)

Almost forty years separated the British victory at Waterloo in 1815 and the outbreak of hostilities with Russia in the Crimea in 1854. The Crimean War (1853-56) was fought between an alliance of France, the United Kingdom, the Ottoman Empire and Sardinia against Russia. The primary causes of the conflict were linked to disagreement over the rights of Christian minorities in the Holy Land, but the longer-term causes included the decline of the Ottoman Empire and unwillingness on the part of the United Kingdom and France to allow Russia to expand and gain territory.⁸¹⁰ The war began in the Balkans with Russian troops occupying provinces in modern Romania in October 1853, leading to the beginning of a war between Turkey and Russia. Fearful of Russian expansion, the United Kingdom and France entered the war on 28 March 1854. The main theatres of war were the Crimean Peninsula and the Black Sea, and the conflict consisted of three main battles: The Battle of Alma on 20 September 1854, the Battle of Balaclava on 24 October, and a Russian attack at Inkerman on 5 November. After the battle of Alma, the city of Sevastopol was besieged by British and French troops, leading to brutal and protracted siege warfare. This siege became the focal point of the war and lasted for twelve months. In September 1855, the embattled Russian forces evacuated Sevastopol, and the war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on 30 March 1856.⁸¹¹

The Crimean war was one of the first conflicts in which modern technologies, such as explosive naval shells, railways and telegraphs were used, while trench warfare during the siege of Sevastopol prefigured the fighting conditions experienced by soldiers during World War I.⁸¹² It was also one of the first conflicts to be extensively documented in written reports and photographs in the burgeoning nineteenth-century press. Initial popular support gave way to disillusionment and outrage as the conditions at the front were made known to an audience at home by war correspondents operating in both print and visual mediums.⁸¹³

Highland regiments played a central role in the conflict in the Crimea, and their service was widely reported on by the war correspondent for *The Times*, William Howard Russell (1820-1907), who sent detailed accounts from the front.⁸¹⁴ Russell's reports and whether or not they should be banned were debated, in Gaelic, by the University of Glasgow *Comunn Oiseanach* (Ossianic Society) in 1855; the Society

⁸¹⁰ A. Lambert, *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy Against Russia, 1853-56*, Second Edition (Surrey, 2011), pp. 99-112.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 335-346.

⁸¹² S. Markovitz, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 1.

⁸¹³ A. Lambert and S. Badsey, *The Crimean War: The War Correspondents* (London, 1994); S. Markovitz, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination* (Cambridge, 2009).

⁸¹⁴ Markovitz, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, pp. 25-42.

decided that the reports should be allowed to continue.⁸¹⁵ The Highland Brigade consisted of the 42nd Regiment ('The Black Watch'), the 79th Regiment ('Cameron Highlanders') and the 93rd Regiment ('Sutherland Highlanders'). As has previously been mentioned, the Brigade was commanded by Sir Colin Campbell and served in all of the main battles of the Crimean War. During previous conflicts, people in the Highlands would have been largely dependent on reports reaching them in some form or another from the regiments, but Russell's widely read reports and other accounts from the numerous newspapers that were operating by the mid nineteenth century appear to have found their way into Highland communities.⁸¹⁶ That reports from the Crimea were read by Gaels can be attested in the following account of mid-nineteenth century Tìre by Iain MacIlleathain, published in *Mac Talla* in 1897:

[bha] an tigh cho làn 's a chumadh e o oisean gu oisean le daoine sean 'us òg, a thàinig a dh'eisdeachd ri Iain Dubh a' leughadh a' phaipeir-naigheachd, oir cha robh paipearan-naigheachd cho lionmhor aig an am ud anns a' Ghaidhealtachd 's a tha iad an diugh, agus cha robh ach fìor fhear ainneamh aig an robh an sgoil Bheurla a b' urrainn na paipearan a leughadh [...] Thòisich fear-an-taighe agus leugh e 'mach as a' phaipear sgialachd a' chogaidh o thoiseach gu deireadh, agus chluinneadh tu an drasd' 'us a-rithist, 'n uair a bhris na Ruisianaich a stigh air camp nam Breatannach, 's a bha iad a' sgapadh 's a' marbhadh air gach taobh, 'Och och! Mo chreach! Mo thruaighe'.⁸¹⁷

The house was as full as it would hold from corner to corner with old and young, who came to listen to Iain Dubh reading from the newspaper, as newspapers weren't as plentiful at that time as they are in the Highlands today, and there was only rarely someone who had such schooling in English that he could read the papers [...] The man of the house started and he read from the paper the story of the war from beginning to end, and you would hear now and then, when the Russians broke into the British camp, and they were scattering and murdering on each side, 'Oh, Och! Alas! Oh dear'.

Russell and other journalists' verbal pictures of the war were highly influential and contributed to the mythologising of the Highland Soldier as a marker of Gaelic and Scottish identity.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁵ GUL, Sp. Coll. MS Gen 1364/127-129. Dàrna imleabhar a' Chomuinn Oiseanaich, 1849-1856. Thanks to Dr Aonghas MacCoinnich for drawing my attention to this source.

⁸¹⁶ Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 457.

⁸¹⁷ *Mac-Talla*, 26 November 1897. I am thankful to Dr. Sheila Kidd for drawing my attention to this source.

⁸¹⁸ Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 447.

Corpus of Poetry from the Crimean War

As has been seen previously in this thesis, periods of major conflict led to an increased output of military-related poetry. A corpus of eleven poems is extant from the Crimean War:

- John Gillies's lengthy 'Tuireadh' was the only poem to be published contemporaneously with the conflict, as *Tuireadh airson cruaidh-chas nan Gàidheal agus airson fàsachadh tìr nam beann, nan gleann, 's nan gaisgeach* (1854);⁸¹⁹
- William Livingstone's prize-winning Ossianic offering 'Duan Geall' ('*Song of Prize*') was first published in his *Duain Ghaelìc* (1858);⁸²⁰
- John MacDougall's long narrative-account of the conflict appeared in his *Dain agus Orain le Iain MacDhughail* (1860);⁸²¹
- Angus MacDonald's 'Gaisgeadh nan Gàidheal' ('*The Heroism of the Gaels*') was first published in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* (1871-72);⁸²²
- Dugald MacPhail's 'Cath Alma' ('*The Battle of Alma*') was one of three Crimea poems published in *An t-Òranaiche* (1879);⁸²³
- John MacDonald's 'Oran le Iain Mac Dhomhnuill, Ann an Eilein Mhuile' ('*A Song by John MacDonald, in the Isle of Mull*') also appeared in *An t-Òranaiche*;⁸²⁴
- Colin Campbell's, 'Moladh nan Laoch Gàidhealach' ('*Praise of the Highland Heroes*') was the third Crimea poem in *An t-Òranaiche*;⁸²⁵
- A Mcl's 'Na Gàidheil aig Alma' ('*The Gaels at Alma*') is one of two soldiers' accounts and was published in *Filidh nam Beann* (undated);⁸²⁶
- Alexander MacMillan's 'An Cogadh Ruiseanach' ('*The Russian War*') is also a soldier's account, published twice in *Mac-Talla* (1892 and 1901);⁸²⁷
- James MacIsaac's 'Oran do'n Chogadh Ruiseanach' ('*Song to the Russian War*') also appeared in *Mac-Talla* (1902);⁸²⁸
- Alexander MacDonald's 'Cogadh a' Chrimea' ('*The Crimean War*') was published in *Na Bàird Thirisdeach* (1932).⁸²⁹

⁸¹⁹ Mac Gillios, *Tuireadh airson Cruaidh-chas nan Gàidheal*, pp. 3-16.

⁸²⁰ W. Livingstone, *Duain Ghaelìc* (Glasgow, 1858), pp. 53-57.

⁸²¹ I. MacDhughail, *Dain agus Orain le Iain MacDhughail* (Glascho, 1860), pp. 5-14.

⁸²² 'The First Annual Assembly', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 1 (1871-82), pp. 95-96.

⁸²³ Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, *An t-Òranaiche*, pp. 388-91.

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 244-46.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-98.

⁸²⁶ *Filidh nam Beann* (Undated), pp. 15-17.

⁸²⁷ *Mac-talla*, vol. 1, no. 15 (3 September 1892), p. 1; and vol. 10, no. 7 (16 August 1901), p. 56.

⁸²⁸ *Mac-talla*, vol. 10, no. 21 (3 January 1902), p. 160.

⁸²⁹ Cameron, *Na Bàird Thirisdeach*, 126-30.

Soldiers

This corpus consists mainly of poems composed by non-combatant poets, as is the case with the Gaelic poetry of all major conflicts after Culloden. Soldiers' perspectives are, however, provided in two poems: 'Na Gàidheil aig Alma' by the Lochaber poet 'A Mcl' in *Filidh nam Beann* (Undated) and 'An Cogadh Ruiseanach' by the Cape Breton poet, Alexander MacMillan, who served in the Crimea in his youth, and which was published twice in *Mac-talla* (1892 and 1901).⁸³⁰ 'Mcl's' 'Na Gàidheil aig Alma' consists of six stanzas and begins with a variation on the displacement-complaint motif looked at earlier in this chapter. As the poet describes his own forced emigration to the Lowlands, his message is a familiar one: if sheep were once again replaced with people, there would be a ready supply of soldiers to go to war:

Tha mise so, Abrach o Lòchaidh,
'S mi fada air fògradh feadh Ghall -
'S na' faighinn o'n Bhàn-Rìgh na dh'fhòghnadh
Cha bhiodh Fear-a-còghnaidh air chall -
Na'n cuirt' ann an àite nan caorach
Sliochd sgaipte nan laoch nach 'eil ann,
Bhiodh fàrdaichean fasgach aig faonndraich -
Bhiodh aiteas a's aoidh feadh nan Gleann.⁸³¹

*I am here a Lochaber man from Lochy,
Long in exile among Lowlanders -
And if I got enough to suffice from the Queen,
Her watchman would not be lost,
If instead of the sheep were placed
The dispersed descendants of past heroes,
Wanderers would have sheltered dwellings -
Ground would be worked and there would be joy
through the Glens.*

The poet goes on to describe his recruitment while living destitute on the streets of Edinburgh, and indicates a financial motivation for his enlistment:

'N uair 'bha mi air sràidean Dhun-éideann,
Gun airgiod, gun éideadh, a' triall -
Gun chònuidh, gun chosnadh, gun bheurla,

⁸³⁰ John Gibson notes that MacMillan served in the Crimean Campaign and composed 'An Cogadh Ruiseanach' to commemorate his experiences. J.G. Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945* (Montreal, London, 1998), p. 336.

⁸³¹ *Filidh nam Beann*, p. 15.

'S b'e 'n t-eagal gu'n tréigeadh mo chiall;
 'S ann chunnaic mi'n Reiseamaid sgiolta,
 'S gu'n d'éirich mo mhisneach a'm' chliabh,
 'S cha 'n fhiach leam gu bràth Milisi -
 B'i "Dhà-'s an-Dà-Fhichead" mo mhiann.⁸³²

*When I was on the streets of Edinburgh,
 Without money, without clothing, wandering -
 Without a dwelling, without income, without English,
 And my fear that I would lose my mind;
 I saw the nimble regiment,
 And my confidence rose in my chest,
 And I'll never like the Militia -
 It's the forty-second that would be my desire.*

We see again here the enduring appeal of the Black Watch in poetry, and the poet moves on to his memories of fighting with the regiment in the Crimea. Mcl's account of the battle of Alma emphasises the heroism of contemporary Highland soldiers in the Crimea, while also tapping into the mythology of earlier military endeavours by invoking the memory of the famed Alan Cameron of Erracht (1753-1828), who had been a hero of the peninsular war:

Air leam gu'n robh leòmhann nan gleachd leinn -
 An Gaisgeach o'n Earrachd mar bha,
 Le 'cheathairne chliùiteach a chleachd e,
 'S an Rengaire 'n tarraing gun sgàth⁸³³

*I think that the lion of endeavour was with us -
 The Hero from Erracht as was,
 With his renowned troops that he customarily had,
 And the Wrangler drawn without fear.*

Alasdair Mac a' Mhaoilein's (Alexander MacMillan, fl. 1853-56) 'An Cogadh Ruiseanach' is a more expansive, fourteen-stanza account of the Crimean conflict from the perspective of a soldier.⁸³⁴ Composed in retrospect, the opening stanza relates the events of a specific day during the siege of Sevastopol, and most likely refers to the battle of Inkerman on 5th November 1854:⁸³⁵

⁸³² *Ibid.*

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸³⁴ I have thus far been unable to find information about this poet.

⁸³⁵ The poet notes that the battle began on a Sunday and Inkerman was the only major battle of the siege to begin on a Sunday. Lambert, *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy Against Russia, 1853-56*, pp. 170-71.

'S an cuala sibhse mar a thachair
 Do na gaisgich anns a chruadal,
 Aig Sebastapol a chaisteil
 Sann a thachair la an uamhais;
 'S iomadh fear a rùisg a ghlas-lann,
 'S e ga tarruing bho smear chruaidhe;
 Is bu bheag an déidh do 'n lompair',
 'S do na miltean 'chuir e uaithe.⁸³⁶

*And did you hear as happened
 To the heroes in the hardship,
 At Sebastopol of the castle,
 Where the terrible day occurred;
 Many's the one who unsheathed his grey sword,
 As he pulled it from hard marrow
 And little was their liking for the Emperor
 And the thousands he sent.*

The poem has some of the immediacy of Alexander MacKinnon's poetry of the French Revolutionary Wars and employs a similarly chronological narrative structure to his poems on the Battles of Aboukir and Alexandria. Macmillan describes the events of the Sunday morning, as battle commenced:

Is ann 'sa mhaduinn Di-dòmhnaich
 'Shin a chòmhstri, 's gu'm bu chruaidh i:
 'S gur iomadh mìle chaidh a leònadh
 Nach d' thainig beo as an tuasaid;⁸³⁷

*It was in the morning on Sunday
 That the conflict began, and it was hard;
 And many thousands were wounded
 Who did not return alive from the fray.*

Comparisons can again be drawn with MacKinnon's work with regards to the level of detail about the battle:⁸³⁸

'S thainig na h-eich chruitheach ghlasa

⁸³⁶ *Mac-talla*, vol. 10, no. 7 (August 16, 1901), p. 56.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁸ MacKinnon's work had been published by John MacLean, 'Bard Thighearna Chola', along with his own work in 1818. It is probable that MacMillan was familiar with this publication by Maclean, a poet who came to play a defining role in Canadian Gaelic culture. MacIleathain, *Orain nuadh ghaedhlach*, pp. 126-154.

Thun a bhaiteil 'siad nan dean-ruth,
 Sa marcaichean sunntach laidir
 Nach gabhadh sgath bho 'n naimhdean;
 'S iad nan duin air aghaidh bheanntaibh
 'Sruthadh leis na gleanntaibh casa,
 'S cinnteach gun d' rinn iad bearna,
 'S rìoghachd Shàtain 'chur fo 'n casaibh.⁸³⁹

*And the grey shod horses came
 To the battle at a run,
 And their happy strong riders
 That would not take fright from their enemies;
 As fortresses on hill-faces
 Flowing through the steep glens,
 It is certain that they made a breach,
 And put Satan's kingdom under their feet.*

The religious argument introduced in this stanza - portraying Russia as 'rìoghachd Shàtain' - is further developed in the penultimate stanza, as the poet expresses a crusade-like hope that the doctrine of Christianity will spread across the empire:

Sgaoilidh fireantachd a Bhiobuill
 Anns na rìoghachdan mun cuairt dhuinn;
 'S cha bhi n Sultan mar a b-abhaist
 'S gheibh Mahomed bas an uair sin.

*The truth of the Bible will be spread
 In the kingdoms around us;
 And the Sultan will not be as he was,
 And Mohammed will die then.*

The poet appears to be confused in this religious reasoning for the conflict, as the Russians saw themselves as the protectors of Orthodox Christians from Ottoman rule, and the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire was part of the alliance with the United Kingdom and France against Russia. Similar confusion can be seen in the Tìree poet, Angus MacDonald's, 'Cogadh a' Chrimea', where he implies that the Russians are not proper Christians because they do not yield to the gospel:⁸⁴⁰

Buaidh le Breatann 's an Fhraing!
 Sgrios air Ruisia thall!

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁰ MacDonald was from Balephuill at the west end of the island of Tìree. Two of his poems are printed in Cameron, *Na Bàird Thirisdeach*, pp. 125-31; Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 446-48, 447.

Gun iadsan don t-soisgeul a' gèilleadh,
 Gun tèid an ratreut orr' on champ.⁸⁴¹

*Victory to Britain and France!
 Destruction on Russia Yonder!
 Since they do not yield to the Gospel,
 They will be made to retreat from the camp.*⁸⁴²

The evangelical tradition was well-established in Gaelic poetry by the mid-nineteenth century, and here it combines with the martial tradition to provide rationale and justification for imperial expansion. And we see again here examples of Gaelic poets 'othering' foreign cultures; Russia is presented as a barbaric and non-Christian nation, deserving of destruction by the righteous force of the British military, with the Gaels at its helm.⁸⁴³ It should be noted that Gaelic poets were again in line with trends in British poetry more widely in painting Russia and its leaders as barbarous and callous. For example, similar sentiments to those found in both Macmillan and Macdonald's pieces can be seen in the English poet Martin Farquhar Tupper's (1810-1889) 1854 poem 'Ambidextra, I':

And what if they fight? Can it matter to us
 That Russ worry Turk, and Turk worry Russ?
 That two fierce fanatics manage at length
 To weaken each others barbarian strength,
 And Sultan and Czar from their pinnacles hurl'd,
 Both bleed in the dust for the gain of the world?⁸⁴⁴

Non-combatants

The bulk of the poetry of the Crimean War was composed by poets who had not taken part in the conflict. In similar manner to previous campaigns, such as the expedition to Alexandria in 1801, the campaign in the Crimea captured the imaginations of Gaelic poets and stimulated output; the Gaelic tradition provided them with the tools to respond to conflict, and poets again adopted the mantle of military annalists and commentators. As had been the case during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, Gaelic poets of the Crimean War were reflecting contemporary trends across the United Kingdom.⁸⁴⁵ Sofie Markovitz has noted that the poetic response from British poets was made predominantly by

⁸⁴¹ Maclean, *Na Bàird Thirisdeach*, p. 125.

⁸⁴² Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 305.

⁸⁴³ See: Stroh, *Uneasy Subjects*, p. 43, 64, 79, 189, 321.

⁸⁴⁴ M.F. Tupper, *A Batch of War Ballads* (London, 1854), p. 30.

⁸⁴⁵ Markovitz, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, pp. 123-248; J. Peck, *War, The Army and Victorian Literature* (London, 1998), pp. 26-41.

poets who had no first-hand experience of the conflict. In a review of Crimean war poetry sent home from the front by E.B. Hamley, an English officer and author, the writer criticises the trend towards poetry not informed by first-hand knowledge of the military campaign:

Scenes of the campaign glow and expand in the pictures of an imaginative “own correspondent” writing up the requirements of an excited public. The poet, catching the enthusiasm, burns to sing of the war. Fancy and invention he need not call on for aid, as those elements of poetry have already done their utmost in the columns of the newspaper he subscribes to.⁸⁴⁶

Given the role of poets as spokespeople of Highland communities, who were expected to respond to events which impacted upon them, and who worked with a highly militarised literary tradition, it is difficult to imagine that similar criticism would have been directed at Gaelic poets of the period. It is demonstrably the case though that Gaelic poetry of the period shared this quality of having been composed primarily by “own correspondents” at home. One of these was the Islay and Glasgow poet Uilleam MacDhunlèibhe (William Livingston, 1808-1870). Livingston was infatuated with the military history of the Gaels and expended much of his energy as a poet recreating battles in verse. Events in the Crimea therefore had an obvious appeal.⁸⁴⁷ In ‘Duan Geall’ (‘Prizewinning Song’), based on the Crimean campaign and particularly the service of Highland soldiers during the conflict, the poet gives his unstinting praise to the British imperial mission. For a contemporary reader, there is a clear paradox in encountering Livingston’s praise of the British army alongside his own poems of protest about the invasion of ‘goill’ (‘Lowlanders’) to the Highlands. However, from the poet’s perspective the campaign in the Crimea must have seemed like an overdue and wholly welcome outlet for the restless martial qualities he so admired in the Gaels.⁸⁴⁸ As Donald Meek has said:

Like many others of his day, Livingston was largely blind to the ‘bigger picture’ which now seems so very, very clear to us – in retrospect and with

⁸⁴⁶ E.B. Hamley, ‘Poetry of the War: Reviewed Before Sebastopol’, in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 77 (May, 1855), p. 531. Reprinted in Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, p. 126.

⁸⁴⁷ For more on Livingston see: Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, pp. 233-37. S. MacLean, ‘The Poetry of William Livingston’, in *Ris a’ Bhruthaich: The Criticism and Prose Writings of Sorley MacLean* (Stornoway, 1985), pp. 134-55; S. MacLean, ‘Clach air a’ Chàrn - Uilleam Mac Dhùn-Léibhe’, in *Ris a’ Bhruthaich*, pp. 156-61; C. MacIlleBhàin, ‘Cruth is Pearsantachd am bàrdachd Uilleam MhicDhunlèibhe, in *Gairm*, vol. 139 (1987); C. Whyte, ‘William Livingston/Uilleam Macdhunleibhe (1808-70): A Survey of his Poetry and Prose’ (Glasgow University PhD Thesis, 1991); D.E. Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*; D.E. Meek, ‘The World of William Livingstone’ and ‘Making History: William Livingston and the Creation of ‘Blar Shunadail’, and C. Whyte, ‘William Livingston’s “Na Lochlannaich an Ìle”, all in J.D. McClure, J. Kirk and M. Storrie (eds.), *A Land that Lies Westward: Language and Culture in Islay and Argyll* (Edinburgh, 2009), pp. 123-48; 173-96; 149-72.

⁸⁴⁸ Meek, ‘The World of William Livingston’, p. 163.

the benefit of hindsight and due contrition. Of course we see that ‘bigger picture’ largely through the lens of anti-imperialism, decolonisation and post-colonialism, but that was not the view in Livingston’s day, and we must be extremely careful not to allow *our* context to blight our appreciation of Livingston [...] Warriors were still warriors then, and admired as such.⁸⁴⁹

The poem was evidently admired by its audience and won first prize in the Celtic Society of Glasgow’s competition of 1857, judged by leading lights of the mid-nineteenth century Gaelic literati.⁸⁵⁰ The influence of MacPherson’s *Ossian* is evident in ‘Duan Geall’ and Livingston was a staunch and vocal defender of the authenticity of MacPherson’s work (if not of MacPherson himself). Livingston imagines himself as an Ossian-like figure as he views the events of the battle. He has heard the terrible news of events in the Crimea and climbs Drumalban, the massive ridge of mountains between Argyll and Atholl that marked the south-western frontier of Pictland, to gain a perspective:

Chuala mi tuair’ sgeul oillteil,
A’s trom bhagradh
Dhirich mi’n de Druim Alb’
A dh’fhaotainn sealladh,
Chunnaic mì fo aon mheirgh’
An tuath thir Eorpach
'S miltean 'na'n airm ghaig'
Ag iarraidh córaig.⁸⁵¹

*I heard a terrible report,
And heavily threatening
Yesterday I ascended Drumalban
To gain a perspective,
I saw under one vista
The European continent
And thousands armed as warriors
Who wanted conflict.*

Livingston’s aim with the poem is to laud the military pre-eminence of Scotland in general and the Gaels in particular. Emphasising their rootedness in heroic tradition, the Gaels are portrayed as fenian warriors at the Battle of Alma, and Livingston employs imagery drawn from the Scottish landscape: ‘Tharruing sliochd nam Fiann an lannan, / Mar thuil Chluaidh chuisleach le gleann’ (*The tribe of the*

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁸⁵⁰ M. MacLean, *The Literature of the Highlands* (London, 1903), p. 182.

⁸⁵¹ Livingston, *Duain Ghaelic*, p. 53.

*Fenians drew their swords / As a flood of the blustering Clyde down the glen').*⁸⁵²
 At Balaclava, where the Highlanders were famously described by William Russell as a 'thin red line', Livingston employs his own distinctive imagery:

Clíu nach teirig do na gaisgich,
 Mar lasair dheirg a' àmhuinn loisgich,
 O fheadain ghorm nan cuilbheir cinnteach,
 Chunnaic mi na caoirean teinnteach,
 An gleann na bhuidealaich strianach,
 Mar bhruillein doireann 's an iarmailt,
 Na dealan-ghobhlach a' sputadh,
 A' bolg neoil na fillean dubhlaidh,
 Cuimhneachan buaidh a's gabhaidh,
 Air Albin ghaoil 's air clannaibh Ghaidheal.⁸⁵³

*Fame that will not be exhausted for the heroes,
 As a red flame from a burning oven
 From the blue barrels of the sure muskets,
 I saw the fiery embers,
 In the glen as a streaming fire,
 As the tumult of the storm in the sky,
 As a fork of lightning spouting,
 Bulging clouds in gloomy folds
 The memory of victory and danger
 Of beloved Scotland and the children of Gaels.*

The poem concludes with praise of Colin Campbell:

Fo ùil a cheannaird do-chiosaicht'
 Cailein Caimbeul mac an Ilich
 'S cian sgaoilteadh do chliu a nochd,
 A lamh dheas na' miltean feachd,
 Ghrios mi Fionn' le Mac an Lùin,
 A bhi r d' thaobh an gaoir nan guin,
 'Nuair bhuail thu'm builsgein a ghabhaidh.
 Sheas thu 'd cliu do t'ainm 's do d' Bhan-righ'n,
 Sheas thu 't-uamhas do d'namhaid
 Thug thu buaidh'us sguab thu 'n arach.⁸⁵⁴

Under the direction of the unconquerable leader

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

*Colin Campbell the son of the Islay man
Far and wide is spread your fame tonight,
At his right hand thousands of soldiers,
I beseeched Fionn with Mac an Luin,
To be by your side in the rumbling of the pain,
When you struck in the centre of the danger,
You upheld your fame, name and Queen,
You withstood the terror of your enemy
You achieved victory and you swept the field of battle.*

Fionn mac Cumhaill is invoked here as a heroic comparison with Campbell, and it is noteworthy that the poet praises the commanding officer for his steadfastness to both his ancestry and the Queen. His heroic envisioning of the battle therefore accommodates both past and present power in the Gàidhealtachd. Livingston uses the conflict in the Crimea to his own propagandist ends in order to promote the pre-eminence of Scotland and the Gaels. We see again here how a foreign conflict presented a context in which Gaelic poets could re-imagine an heroic age - and redeploy their store of heroic rhetoric.

The Mull poet Dùghall MacPhàil (Dugald MacPhail, 1818-87) also used the campaign of the Alma as an opportunity to praise the martial qualities of the Gaels.⁸⁵⁵ Again, figures from outwith Gaelic society are drawn into the praise-sphere of Gaelic poetry, as MacPhail mentions ‘Raglan a’s Canrobert - / Na fir chogaidh uasal’ (*‘Raglan and Canrobert, / These noble men of battle’*).⁸⁵⁶ Lord Fitzroy Somerset (1788-1855), Baron Raglan, became British commander of the Crimean campaign in 1854, while General Francois Certain de Canrobert (1809-1895) was second in command of the French forces.⁸⁵⁷ While the poet’s distance from the battle is evident and ‘Cath Alma’ lacks the immediacy of first-hand witness from a soldier-poet such as Alexander MacKinnon, the poem does have a journalistic quality, which is likely to be a reflection of MacPhail’s familiarity with the conflict through the numerous newspaper reports written about it.⁸⁵⁸ In the opening stanzas he demonstrates a broad grasp of the initial causes of the conflict, perceived from a British imperialist perspective:

*Nuair thuig an Russach ionnsaigh fhuilteach
Air an Tuirc le fòirneart
Gu toirt fo chis, ’s a luaisg e sìth*

⁸⁵⁵ MacPhail was born at Strathcaoil, in the parish of Torosay, Mull. He was a joiner to trade, but later trained as a draughtsman. He moved to Glasgow and then to Newcastle, and later to Shaftesbury in Dorset, where he was architect and clerk of works to the Duke of Westminster. After a spell in Edinburgh, he lived in Partick, Glasgow at the time of his death. See: Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, pp. 448-49, 482.

⁸⁵⁶ Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, *An t-Òranaiche*, p. 390; Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 313.

⁸⁵⁷ S.M. Harris, *British Military Intelligence in the Crimean War, 1854-56* (London, 1999), pp. 27-44.

⁸⁵⁸ Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 448.

Gach rìoghachd san Roinn Eòrpa,
 'N sin dh' èirich Breatann is an Fhraing
 Len cumhachd toinnte còmhla,
 Am banntaibh dlùth le Omar Pasha,
 'S iad mar lànain phòsda.⁸⁵⁹

*When the Russian made a bloody attack
 On the Turk with violence
 To subdue him, and disturbed the peace
 Of each realm in Europe,
 Britain and France then arose
 With their power joined together,
 In close bonds with Omar Pasha,
 Like a married couple.⁸⁶⁰*

As has previously been alluded to, the abundance of newspaper reports from the Crimean conflict had a transformative effect on British culture generally. Sofie Markovitz has commented that 'the pressure of the press changed the shape of novels, poems and paintings about the war, either through oppositional reaction to the dominant form, or by an attempt to accommodate its forces'.⁸⁶¹ The influence of the print media is perhaps most evident in Gaelic poetry of the period in a poem by the Ardgour poet Iain MacDhùghaill (John MacDougall, fl.1860). 'Cogadh a' Chrimea' is an impressively detailed account, published four years after the conflict in 1860. Running to thirty-three stanzas, MacDougall's poem employs a broad canvas, including specific details about the military campaign and the politics and personalities involved. The narrative of 'Cogadh a' Chrimea' has a dramatic quality, and includes a series of vignettes which bring the conflict to life. Rather than simply state the facts of the background to war, MacDougall brings us directly into the Houses of Parliament at the moment the government decided to go to war:

Ghlaodh na Turcaich air son còmhnaidh,
 'S mòran air am bàthadh dhiubh;
 'S gheall na Breatannaich o chian,
 'N àm bhi fo fhiamh am pàirt a ghabhail:
 Shuidh a' Phàrlamaid mu'n bhòrd,
 'S an còraichean nan làimh aca,
 Gus an d'aontaich a' chuid mhòr dhiubh

⁸⁵⁹ Mac-na-Ceàrdadh, *An t-Òranaiche*, p. 389. Omar Pasha was the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army. His real name was Michael Lotis and he was a renegade from the Austrian army, who had converted to Islam and had taken a Turkish name. Meek, *Caran an t-Saoghail*, p. 448.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

⁸⁶¹ S. Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination* (2009), p. 15.

Dol an òrdugh blàir leotha.⁸⁶²

*The Turks called for assistance,
And many of them were drowned;
And the British promised from afar,
At the time of trepidation, to play their part:
The Parliament sat around the table,
And their rights in their hands
Until most of them agreed
To go into the order of battle with them.*

MacDougall's assimilation of the narrative of the campaign as constructed through the newspapers and popular culture more generally is perhaps most apparent in his depiction of the 'Charge of the Light Brigade', made famous by Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem:

'S mòr 'g ar dìth a' chuid do'n arm
D'an ainm a' chuideachd-aotram,
Nach d' fhuair cothrom ri h-uchd nàmh,
'S gun chàch a bhi r'an taobh leotha:
Chaidh seachd ciad a sìos do'n bhlàr dhiubh,
Reachdmhor, làidir, faoghlumte,
A's cha do phill ach gann dà chiad,
'S bu chianail sud r'a smaointeachadh.⁸⁶³

*Great for us is the loss of part of the army
Whose name was the light brigade,
That didn't get the opportunity at the breast of battle,
And without others by their side:
Seven hundred of them went down to battle,
Robust, strong, disciplined,
And barely two hundred returned,
And that is sad to consider.*

While the poem might owe a debt to newspaper reports, its traditional models are also evident. A stanza that sets the scene of the battle and predicts its bloody outcome appears to be directly influenced by a stanza from Duncan Bàn Macintyre's 'Òran do Bhlàr na h-Eaglaise Brice' ('A Song on the Battle of Falkirk'):⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶² I. MacDhughail, *Dain agus Orain le Iain MacDhughail* (1860), p. 6.

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸⁶⁴ Macintyre's stanza opens 'Bha na h-eich gu crùidheach srianach / Girteach iallach fiamhach trupach' ('The horses well shod and bridled, / Girthed, belted, restive, troop on troop'). The rest of the stanza is also close to MacDougall's. MacLeod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, pp. 4-5.

Bha'n cuid each gu cruidheach, srianach,
 Làidir, ciallach, seòlt-charach,
 Bha'n cuid ghunnachan deagh-ghleusd',
 'S am bèigheidean an òrdugh leo;
 Bha'n cuid chlàidhea'n nan ro gheur,
 'S bu leur sud 'n uair a thòisich iad;
 Bha iomadh Ruiseineach gun cheann
 Le'm beum, 's chaidh meal a leònadh dhiubh.⁸⁶⁵

*Their horses were shod and bridled,
 Strong, sensible, insinulative,
 Their guns were well prepared,
 And their bayonets in order;
 Their swords were very sharp,
 And a sight to behold when they started;
 Many a Russian was beheaded
 By their blows, and a mass of them were wounded.*

MacDougall's attention to detail is again apparent in his description of Sir Colin Campbell. While other poets, keen to claim Campbell as their own, focussed primarily on his Islay connection and his surname as a Campbell, MacDougall emphasises his Gaelic credentials in a more immediate and, it might be said, convincing manner, by highlighting his communication with the soldiers in Gaelic:

Thug e òrdugh dhoibh sa' Ghàelic,
 'S ghabh iad blàths a's coimhneas ris,
 Ghabh iad suim do chainnt am màthar,
 'S i bu tràithe bhruidhneadh iad;
 Chuimhnich iad na suinn o'n d'thàinig,
 'S neartaich càil nan saighdearan,
 A's fhuair na Ruiseinich 's an Czar
 An sàth uainn mar a thoill iad oirnn.⁸⁶⁶

*He gave them an order in Gaelic,
 And they received it with warmth and kindness,
 They paid attention to the language of their mothers,
 The first language they spoke;
 They remembered the heroes from whom they came,
 And the disposition of the soldiers was strengthened,
 And the Russians and the Czar*

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Got the thrust from us they deserved.

Moving on to the other commanders, the poet appears to revel in the strangeness of their names:

*Codrington, an t-àrd chomann-dair
Thug e teann dhoibh òrduighean,
A's Pelsier, an t-àrd-cheannard
Air na Frangaich, còmhla ris;
Maidseir Welsford, 's Caipitín Grove,
Le'n àireamh mhòr a thòiseachadh
A chum Sebastopol a bhuannachd,
'S iad a ghluasad seòlta ris.⁸⁶⁷*

*Codrington, the great commander
Commenced with their orders,
And Pelsier, the overall leader
Of the French, was with him;⁸⁶⁸
Major Welsford, and Captain Grove,
With their great number that would start
To achieve victory at Sebastopol,
And to move them wisely with it.⁸⁶⁹*

In the closing stanzas, the poet returns to a broad, Europe-wide canvas:

*Fhuair sinn cliù ged chaill sinn mòran
Stòrais agus dhaoine ris;
Fhuair Sardinia na bhuin dhi,⁸⁷⁰
'S th' aig na Turcaich saors leinn;*

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸⁶⁸ General William John Codrington (1804-84) commanded the British troops during the last part of the Crimean War and later became the Governor of Gibraltar. Aimable Pélissier (1794-1864) succeeded Marshal Canrobert as commander-in-chief of the French forces before the Siege of Sevastopol. Lambert, *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy Against Russia*, 260, 243-45.

⁸⁶⁹ Major Augustus Frederick Welsford (1811-55) was a Nova Scotian Army officer who died at the Battle of the Great Redan during the Siege of Sevastopol in 1855, and was afterwards lauded as a war hero. C.W. Puslifer, 'Welsford, Augustus Frederick', in *Dictionary of Canadian National Biography*: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/welsford_augustus_frederick_8E.html [accessed 09 May 2018]. I have thus far been unable to ascertain Captain Grove's first name, though he appears to be the same Captain Grove who commanded the 90th Regiment of Foot (Perthshire Volunteers) and was badly wounded at the Battle of the Great Redan. C. Thomas, *Medals of the British Army, and How they Were Won* (London, 1861), p. 106.

⁸⁷⁰ Piedmont-Sardinia played only a relatively minor role in the Crimean War but emerged as one of the conflict's main beneficiaries. Participation in the conflict facilitated Piedmont-Sardinia later gaining the support of Napoleon III in its 1859 war with Austria, which helped to later bring about Italian unification in 1870. G. Arnold, *Historical Dictionary of the Crimean War* (Lanham, 2002), p. 148.

'S a nis cha'n fhaicear 's a' Mhuir Dhuibh,
 No 'stigh no'm muigh mu'n chaol aigce (sic),
 Aon long-chogaidh leis an t-Czar,
 No 'mhac a dh'fhàg 'n uair chaochail e.⁸⁷¹

*We achieved renown although we lost
 Many resources and people as a result;
 Sardinia got what belonged to her,
 And the Turks have freedom because of us;
 And now there will not be seen in the Black Sea,
 Or inside or outside of its channel,
 One war-ship of the Czar's,
 Or his son whom he left when he died.*⁸⁷²

MacDougall's wide-ranging poem can certainly be criticised on account of its length and contains its share of pedestrian and clichéd lines and stanzas, and the tone generally often tends towards the jingoistic. Nevertheless, the poem contains enough in the way of detail and shifts in perspective to hold the reader's attention, and it can be said that MacDougall rather than Livingston had the greatest success in composing a narrative poem about the conflict in the Crimea. The poem can be seen to follow in the tradition of McLagan's song to the Black Watch one hundred years previously, as an attempt to distill a large-scale military endeavour into a work of poetry. But, while arguably the primary audience for McLagan's work were the soldiers addressed in his song, it seems clear that MacDougall's piece is aimed at a wider, non-military audience.⁸⁷³ While the lines between correspondent and involved participant had often been blurred in the Gaelic poetry of earlier centuries, by the mid nineteenth century they were, perhaps, becoming more defined.

Conclusion

The poetry of the military experience of the Gaels between Waterloo and the Crimea is demonstrative of a society which continued to be heavily influenced by military service, and to self-identify with this service. Poets during this period continued to broadly celebrate the role of Highland soldiers, and viewed their successes as part of an unbroken tradition of Gaelic military pre-eminence that stretched back beyond the age of the clans to a legendary Fenian past. Poets

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁷² Tsar Nicholas I (1796-1855) was the Emperor of Russia from 1825 to 1855. He was succeeded by his son Alexander II (1818-81). See, for example, L.W. Bruce, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias* (London, 1978).

⁸⁷³ Although published in 1860, it is possible that the poem was composed soon after the battle, perhaps for an Ardgour taigh-cèilidh, and may have circulated in the locality prior to publication.

portrayed the military as a context in which a distinct heroic Gaelic society not only survived but thrived - where hierarchies were maintained and values of heroism and honour were to the fore. Poets' loyalties and allegiances can again be seen to have been focussed on local concerns and imperatives during the period, as evident, for example, in Archibald Campbell's vehement response to an attempt to have Highland dress removed in the military.

There is significant continuity with the earlier military poetry (a continuity actively promoted by poets), but the poetry of this period is also marked by some differentiation in showing an increased awareness of the social impact of clearance and emigration, and the implications that this could have in a military context. The centrality of military service to Gaels' conceptions of their relationship with power and authority is perhaps most clearly expressed in this poetry. The incomprehension of poets at the treatment of Highlanders by figures whom they believe should value their service, and their warnings at the potential consequences of this, are indicative of a perceived correlation between service and entitlement to protection in Gaelic communities. Explicit criticism of the army or of the British imperial mission is, however, non-existent.

The increased output and vitality of Gaelic military poetry during the Crimean war provides further evidence of the extent to which active military service acted as a stimulus to Gaelic poetic production. Evidence that the burgeoning nineteenth century press had an impact on the content of Gaelic poetry also shows how external influences continued to mesh with tradition during the period. It has been shown that the celebration and reproduction of an heroic age was a major motivation for Gaelic poets throughout the period under consideration in this thesis and, at its close, in 1856, Gaelic poets were as enthused and engaged by the martial endeavour of their countrymen as they had been a hundred years previously.

Chapter 8: Women's Poetry (1756-1856)

Numerous wars raged on foreign continents during the period under consideration in this thesis. Despite their distance from the region, the impact of these wars on society in the Gàidhealtachd was huge. Highland women were profoundly affected by the service of men during these years. While military service had long impacted on their lives in the warrior-based society of the clans, the nature of modern, global warfare brought a new dimension of geographical separation, often for long periods of time, into women's lives. This chapter will look at the corpus of military-related Gaelic poetry composed by women between 1756 and 1856. This corpus consists of twenty-three poems by nine different poets, seven of whom are named or otherwise identified and one of whom is anonymous. Before looking at this corpus in depth, it will be useful to provide a brief overview of women's poetry in the Gaelic tradition up to the period under consideration here. There is a large corpus of women's poetry extant from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, consisting of almost two hundred songs by over thirty named authors.⁸⁷⁴ This poetry is a vital source in examining the role of women in the Gàidhealtachd under clan society and has been analysed in a number of studies.⁸⁷⁵ Anne Frater has given the following summary of the often contradictory role of women in Gaelic Scotland in the period before the breakdown of clan society:

In many ways they were subjugated, treated as lesser humans or mere chattels, but in other ways they could hold positions of respect in a male-dominated society. Class was also an issue, with women of the lower classes to some extent enjoying greater personal freedom than their higher-born sisters. Formal education was denied them until a piece-meal introduction after the statutes of Iona in 1609 (which prescribed female schooling only for the eldest daughters of gentlemen with over 60 head of cattle and no sons), but this did not at all mean that they were ignorant or uneducated. Surrounded by the oral history and literature of their clan and culture, they absorbed information, stories and songs with which to stock their unwritten libraries.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷⁴ A. Frater, 'The Gaelic Tradition up to 1750' in D. Gifford and D. McMillan, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 1.

⁸⁷⁵ See for instance: A. Frater, 'Scottish Gaelic Women's Poetry up to 1750' (University of Glasgow, Ph.D., 1994); A. Bruford, 'Workers, Weepers and Witches: the Status of the Female Singer in Gaelic Society', in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. XVII (1996), pp. 61-70; A. Frater, 'The Gaelic Tradition up to 1750', in Gifford and McMillan, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, pp. 1-14; C. Ó Baoill, '"Neither out Nor in": Scottish Gaelic Women Poets, 1650-1750', in S. M. Dunnigan, C. M. Harker and E. S. Newlin (ed), *Woman and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 136-152; W. Gillies, 'Traditional Gaelic Women's Songs', in *Alba Literaria: A History of Scottish Literature* (Mestre, 2005), pp. 165-179; A. Frater and M. Byrne, 'Gaelic Poetry and Song', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh, 2012), pp. 22-34.

⁸⁷⁶ Frater and Byrne, 'Gaelic Poetry and Song', p. 22.

During this period, the clan system was in decline and with it the primacy of highly literate and regulated bardic poetry. The main body of poetry composed during this period is vernacular verse, created largely by women whose names have not survived in the historical record. This poetry provides insight into the way of life of women in Gaelic society under the clan-system, including their response to war. The role of the clan poet was also of central importance however, and it is notable that the women poets whose names have come down to us were from the upper echelons of clan society. Foremost among these are three women who were members of the Highland aristocracy: Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh (Mary Macleod, c.1615-c.1705), who was a poet to the MacLeods of Dunvegan and Harris; the MacLean poet, Mairearad nighean Lachlainn (Margaret MacLean, 1660?-1751?); and Sìleas na Ceapaich (Cecily/Giles MacDonald, c.1660-c.1729), who was the daughter of the chief of the MacDonalds of Keppoch.⁸⁷⁷ Their poetry occupied a significant place in the Gaelic poetic canon as established by collectors and editors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

While MacLeod and MacLean's poetry was, for the most part, thematically and stylistically equivalent to the verse of their male counterparts, their work helped to establish the female poet's role as a panegyrist and commentator by the period under consideration here. But Sìleas na Ceapaich was arguably the most significant figure in this regard.⁸⁷⁸ Sìleas composed fiercely partisan poetry in praise of the MacDonalds in the context of the Jacobite movement, but her poetry is also demonstrative of a more individualised poetic persona and frequently provides a specifically female perspective. Sìleas's work is also notable for its commentary on national politics, including a series of poems on the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715; and at least one of her sons was involved with the Jacobite army during that conflict. She was foremost among the women poets who composed Jacobite poetry, and is the only one of the women poets of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century whose songs show involvement with national as well as clan politics.⁸⁷⁹ Her work was prominent in both the oral and the emerging print tradition in Gaelic literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sìleas na Ceapaich's dual significance as a major female poet and as a poet of the pre-1756 military experience of the Gaels is noteworthy in the context of this chapter.

Military campaigns provided the motivation and subject matter for much of the poetry composed up to Culloden, including the Montrose Wars (1639-45) and the Jacobite risings of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (1689-92, 1715,

⁸⁷⁷ See: Ó Baoill, *Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh*; C. Ó Baoill (ed.), *Maighread nighean Lachlainn, song-maker of Mull: an edition and study of the extant corpus of her verse in praise of the Jacobite Maclean leaders of her time* (Edinburgh, 2009); Ó Baoill, *Bàrdachd Shìlis na Ceapaich*.

⁸⁷⁸ For more on Sìleas na Ceapaich, see: Ó Baoill, *Bàrdachd Shìlis na Ceapaich*; C. Ó Baoill, 'Sìleas na Ceapaich', in T. O. Clancy et al., *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 305-314; N. Sumner, 'Women's Conduct and the Poetry of Sìleas na Ceapaich', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 32 (2012), pp. 302-322.

⁸⁷⁹ Ó Baoill, "'Neither out Nor in", p. 141.

1719 & 1745-46). The period of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 to 46 produced an extensive body of verse, a small portion of which, based on what is extant, was composed by women poets. In this corpus, propaganda pieces in praise of Prince Charles, such as Nighean Aonghais Òig's 'Òran air Teachd Phrionnsa Tearlach' ('A Song on the Coming of Prince Charles') are found alongside laments for soldiers killed during the rebellion, such as Cairistiona NicFhearhais's (Christiana Fergusson, fl. 1745-46) 'Mo Rùn Geal Òg' ('My Fair Young Love') for her husband, William Chisholm. The aftermath of the rebellion and particularly the Disclothing Act of 1746 became one of the major subjects of eighteenth century Gaelic poetry, and possibly the first poem on this subject was Maighread Chaimbeul's (Margaret Campbell, ?-1775) 'An t-Èideadh Gàidhealach' ('The Highland Dress').⁸⁸⁰

As has previously been alluded to, the work of the major female Gaelic poets was prominent in both the oral tradition and the emerging print tradition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while the tradition of women's song continued to be disseminated widely. Although it was to take until the late nineteenth century, with the work of Màiri Mhòr nan Òran, for another female poet to reach similar prominence to the triumvirate of MacLeod, MacLean and MacDonald already mentioned, literary production by women continued as a major part of the Gaelic poetic tradition in the post-Culloden era. There was no radical change to the composition and style of women's poetry, although a significant new development came in 1785 with the publication of the first collection of poetry by a female poet, Margaret Cameron's *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, which is considered in more detail below. Love, loss, family and community - themes which had long been central to the Gaelic tradition - remained prominent, although women poets naturally adapted with and responded to the changing world of the post-Culloden Gàidhealtachd. And as the wars and regiments of the British army became an increasingly potent influence on their lives, female poets responded to this in their verse, revealing the extent to which their conception and understanding of military service corresponded with that of their male counterparts.

As has been seen in previous chapters, the response of Gaelic poets to war formed part of a wider poetic response to war across Scotland and Britain in the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. Jane Rendall has noted how British women responded to contemporary military events through poetry, whether in representations of loss and bereavement, expressions of patriotism, elegies for dead heroes, or depictions of battle. Rendall has stated that

⁸⁸⁰ Margaret Campbell was married to the Rev. James Stevenson, minister of Ardnamurchan and Islandfinnan from 1703 to 1732, and of Ardchattan and Muckairn from 1732 to 1751. For more on Campbell see: Black, *An Lasair*, p. 458 and A. Frater, 'Scottish Gaelic Women's Poetry up to 1750' (University of Glasgow, Ph.D., 1994), pp. 144-147.

familial concerns were often central to this poetry.⁸⁸¹ This poetry merged tradition with contemporary fashions, as Rendall has commented: 'Older models of writing about war coexisted with appealing new forms of chivalric and Romantic poetry. Poetic representations of the victims of conflict typically drew on familiar models: simple sentimental odes or sonnets, elegiac verse and ballads'.⁸⁸² These years saw another significant milestone in women's literature with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). It is clear that women's voices formed a major part of the poetic response to war in Scotland and Britain generally, and developments and advances in publishing had made this poetry more easily accessible and circulable.

Inherited Traditions

As has been alluded to, lament features as a predominant genre in the tradition of Gaelic women's poetry. It is therefore perhaps surprising that there are only two extant laments in Gaelic women's poetry of the military experience, but these two pieces both show significant continuity with the earlier tradition. Maighread Fhriseil, Baintighearna Ghiuthsachain (Mary Fraser née MacDonell, fl.1746), known in English as Mrs Fraser of Culbokie, composed a lament for her son who died in Germany while serving on commission in the Austrian army.⁸⁸³ Fraser was the daughter of John MacDonell, wadsetter of Ardnabie, and his wife Mary MacDonell, Ranald MacDonell of Glengarry's (?-1705) daughter.⁸⁸⁴ She married William Fraser of Guisachan and Culbokie (1723-1797), with whom she had a large family of nine sons and five daughters.⁸⁸⁵ Her poetic career therefore represents continuity in the tradition of poetry by women from the upper echelons of clan society.⁸⁸⁶

Fraser's eldest son, Simon Fraser (?-1779), held a commission in the Glengarry Fencibles and went to America around 1774. He fought as a Loyalist during the American Revolutionary War (1775-83) and was captured and died as a prisoner in Albany jail in 1779.⁸⁸⁷ Of her nine sons, a further five served in the military: John

⁸⁸¹ J. Rendall, 'Women Writing War and Empire: Gender, Poetry and Politics in Britain during the Napoleonic Wars', in K. Hagemann, G. Mettele and J. Rendall (eds.), *Gender, War and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775-1830* (Basingstoke, 2010), p. 276.

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 271.

⁸⁸³ A. MacKenzie, *History of the Frasers of Lovat* (Inverness, 1896), p. 620.

⁸⁸⁴ C. F. Mackintosh, 'The Frasers of Guisachan, Styled "MacHuistean"', in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. XVIII (1894), p. 319.

⁸⁸⁵ MacKenzie, *History of the Frasers of Lovat*, p. 620.

⁸⁸⁶ The Frasers of Guisachan and Culbokie were descended from William Fraser of Guisachan, who was the second son of Thomas Fraser Lord Lovat (1469-1524) by his first wife, Janet Gordon. William Fraser 9th of Culbokie, known as 'Younger Culbokie', served as a captain with the Frasers of Lovat at Culloden. He was pardoned in 1747 but Guisachan House had been burnt by government forces in 1746. Mackintosh, 'The Frasers of Guisachan', p. 317.

⁸⁸⁷ 'The Frasers of Guisachan', available at <http://www.clanfraser.ca/guisacha.htm> [accessed 15 December 2015].

held the rank of Captain under General Wolfe at Quebec in 1759; Alexander served in the West Indies during the Seven Years War; Roderick (born in 1746 and ‘in his cradle only a week old when, by the orders of the Duke of Cumberland, Guisachan House was set fire to and razed to the ground’)⁸⁸⁸ became a lieutenant in the Austrian army; Donald (the subject of the poem considered below), was also a lieutenant in the Austrian army; and Archibald was a lieutenant in the Fraser Highlanders during the Seven Years War and subsequently a major in the Glengarry Fencibles, serving in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798.⁸⁸⁹ The military service of her sons evidently had a major impact on the poet’s life and this knowledge adds to the emotional strength of her ‘Cumha Dhòmhnaill Fhriseil’ (*Lament for Donald Fraser*).

As previously mentioned, this is a lament for her son, Donald (fl. c.1794), who died in Germany while on commission with the Austrian army.⁸⁹⁰ The poem was first published in *An Gàidheal* in 1876, then in William Chisholm’s ‘Old Gaelic Songs’ in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* in 1886, and also appeared in Alexander Maclean Sinclair’s *The Gaelic Bards from 1715 to 1765* in 1892.⁸⁹¹ While Charles Fraser Mackintosh avers that Donald was born in 1746 and refers as evidence to a poem in which his mother mentions this, this appears to be a mistake as the poem referred to is addressed to her son ‘Ruairi’, who also served in the Austrian army.⁸⁹² While the date of Donald’s birth is unknown, William Chisholm notes that he was ‘the youngest but one of the family’ and if he was of a similar age to his brother born in 1746, for whom Fraser Mackintosh mistook him, then the most likely date for a battle in Germany would be the period of the French Revolutionary War (1793-1802).⁸⁹³ In addition to probably being too early as regards dates, the Austrian army and the British forces were opposing belligerents in the Seven Years’ War (1756-63) and it is highly unlikely that Mrs Fraser’s sons would have found themselves fighting for Austria against British forces during that conflict. It is possible that the battle in Germany refers to an offensive during the Flanders Campaign, which was conducted from 6 November 1792 to 7 June 1795. In this theatre, which was fought in Belgium, Northern France, the Netherlands and the Rhineland, a combined army of Anglo-Hanoverian, Dutch, Hessian, Imperial Austrian and Prussian troops fought against the armies of the French Republic.

The ‘Cumha’ opens with an account of how news of Fraser’s son’s death has reached her at the especially poignant time of Christmas:

⁸⁸⁸ MacKenzie, *History of the Frasers of Lovat*, p. 621.

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹¹ The opening verse is also in Keith Norman MacDonald’s *The MacDonald Bards from Mediaeval Times* (Edinburgh, 1900), p. 34.

⁸⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸⁹³ Chisholm, ‘Old Gaelic Songs’, p. 136.

Nollaig mhór do'n gnàs bhi fuar,
 Fhuair mi sgeula mo chruaidh-chàis;
 Dònull Donn-gheal mo rùn,
 Bhi 'n a shineadh an tiugh a bhlàir.⁸⁹⁴

*At Christmas which is usually cold,
 I received the tale of my hardship,
 Brown-haired Donald my love,
 Laid down in the thick of battle.*

Her pain is compounded by the fact that her son left to serve in this foreign army against her will, hinting that the poet's loyalties extend no further than the locus of her immediate family:

'S ann do Ghearmailt mhóir nam feachd,
 Chuir iad gun mo thoil mo mhac;
 'S ged nach cuala càch mo reachd,
 Air mo chridhe dh'fhàg e cnoc.⁸⁹⁵

*It was to vast Germany of the forces,
 They sent my son against my will;
 And though others did not hear my sorrow,
 On my heart it left a mountain of grief.*

Emotional laments by women for fallen warriors are commonplace in the Gaelic poetic tradition, such as Mòr MacFadyen's early-sixteenth century song 'Cumha do Niall Òg' and Christiana Fergusson's 'Mo Rùn Geal Òg' from the period of the '45.⁸⁹⁶ There is often a focus in poems of this type on funeral rites and the grave and this feature of panegyric poetry has been referred to under the heading of 'obsequies' by John MacInnes. MacInnes comments on the 'importance of the rites of death' and notes 'an enduring pagan concern with the body as almost a sentient thing' in the Gaelic tradition.⁸⁹⁷ Here, it pains the poet to think that the proper formalities are not being marked for her son in death. She laments the fact that he has no candle above his body, no woman to grieve him, and no casket, shroud or even graveyard to mark the place where he lies:

Thu gun choinnil os do chionn,
 No ban-charaid chaomh ri gal;
 Gun chistidh, gun anart, gun chill,

⁸⁹⁴ *An Gàidheal*, vol. 5 (February, 1876), p. 47.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸⁹⁶ Ó Baoill, *Gàir nan Clàrsach*, p. 74; Black, *An Lasair*, pp. 174-180.

⁸⁹⁷ J. MacInnes, 'The Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry', p. 284.

Thu 'd shineadh a laoigh air dail.⁸⁹⁸

*You without a candle above your head,
Or a kind female friend to cry;
Without casket, shroud or graveyard,
But lying, my love (my calfling), on a field.*

Similar concerns for a loved one's body in an alien setting at the time of death can be seen in the mid-eighteenth century song 'Ailein Duinn', by the Scalpay poet Anna Chaimbeul (Anna Campbell, fl. 1773), for her drowned fiancé:

'S truagh, a Rìgh! nach mi bha 'n làimh riut,
Ge bè bàgh no sgeir an tràigh thu,
Ge bè tiùrr am fàg an làn thu,
'S cùl do chinn air bhac mo làimhe,
Do chùl dualach, cuachach, fàinneach.⁸⁹⁹

*Alas, Oh King, I was not beside you,
Whatever bay or rock you'll land on,
Whatever beach the tide will cast you,
Your head lying in the crook of my elbow,
Your head of thick curling ringlets.⁹⁰⁰*

Both Fraser's 'Cumha' and Campbell's 'Ailein Duinn' drew from and were part of the same deep-rooted tradition, an abiding feature of which Bateman has noted to be 'the strong sense of the visual, especially in the slow-paced descriptions of burials'.⁹⁰¹ Helplessness felt by a woman with regards to a loved one serving in the military is apparent in this song and is a recurring theme in Gaelic women's poetry of the military experience during the period under consideration here. The song concludes with the poet's Christian blessing for those who might have buried her son's body in Germany:

Ach ma thiodhlac sibh mo mhac
'S gu'n d' fhalaich sibh le ùir a chorp;
Leigidh mise mo bheannachd le feachd,
Air an làimh chur dlighe bhàis ort.

Sguiridh mi de thuireadh dian,

⁸⁹⁸ *An Gàidheal*, vol. 5 (February, 1876), p. 47.

⁸⁹⁹ C. Kerrigan and M. Bateman (eds.), *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 48.

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁹⁰¹ M. Bateman, 'Women's Writing in Scottish Gaelic since 1750', in D. Gifford and D. McMillan, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 663.

Ged nach bi mi chaoidh gun bhròn;
 'S mi 'g ùrnuigh ri aona mhac Dhé,
 Gu'n robh d' anam a' seinn an glòir.⁹⁰²

*But if you buried my son,
 And hid his corpse with soil;
 I will give my blessing to the regiment
 And the hand that placed the rites of death on you.*

*I will stop my intense lamenting,
 Although I will never be without sadness;
 As I pray to the one son of God,
 That your soul may sing in glory.*

We see here the heroic tradition of lament for a warrior combining with the evangelical tradition which was coming to the fore in Gaelic poetry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We see also Mary Fraser prioritising the personal impact of her son's death, and eschewing military rhetoric.

The Atholl poet Giorsail NicLathagain's (Grace McLagan, fl.1794) lament 'Marbhrann do Chaptin Donull Stiuart, a bha 's an 78mh, Reiseamaid Mhic Choinnich: 's a Chaochail anns na h-Innsean an Ear' (*Lament for Captain Donald Stewart, who was in the 78th MacKenzie Regiment: and who died in the East Indies*) also carries a strong spiritual message. This poem was published in Rev. Dr. Stewart's 'Unpublished Gaelic Songs' in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* in 1886-87. The subject here is Donald Stewart, of the family of Shierglass, who was a captain the 78th regiment (Seaforth Highlanders). Stewart died of fever in India about 1794. This is a highly traditional lament and, while the poet alludes to her own feelings, it is a less personal account than Fraser's - perhaps a reflection of the fact that McLagan was not addressing the death of a family member. There is again reference to the distance between the place of death and this soldier's home, as she notes 'Anns na h-Innsean an Ear / Thuit an t-armunn b' fhearr gear' (*In the East Indies / Fell the most cheerful warrior*).⁹⁰³ It is a highly conventional lament: the poet refers to her own distress and to that of the community, before going on to outline the impact Stewart's death has had on his family:

Tha do bhraithrean fo luain,
 Gun chadal, gun suain,
 'S beag is ioghnadh, mo thruaigh', am bròn.

⁹⁰² *An Gàidheal*, vol. 5, p. 47.

⁹⁰³ Stewart, 'Unpublished Gaelic Poems', in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 13 (1886-7), p. 302.

'S beag is ioghnadh, &c.⁹⁰⁴

*Your brothers are under sadness,
Without sleep, without slumber,
Little wonder, my pity, their sadness.
Little wonder, &c,*

While it is perhaps surprising that there are not more laments for fallen soldiers in the extant poetic record, it will be seen later in this chapter that the conventions of this type of poetry were used by poets in addressing the separation from their loved ones caused by military service.

Margaret Cameron and Mairearad Ghriogarach

Over half of the corpus of women's poetry during these years was composed by two near contemporaries: Maighread Chamshron (Margaret Cameron, fl. 1785), from Argyll, and the Perthshire poet, Mairearad Ghriogarach (Margaret MacGregor, c.1750-c.1820). Cameron was born in Glen Orchy and married Angus Macintyre of Lochaber and later a Mr. Cameron of Fort William. She was the first female poet to publish a collection of Gaelic poetry and it is notable that she had this opportunity in the later eighteenth century, when the publication of secular Gaelic verse was still in its infancy.⁹⁰⁵ The publication clearly shows that verse composed by a woman was esteemed enough to merit publication and indeed re-publication, as her second edition came out in 1805. It should be noted, however, that her work, like much of women's poetry in the Gaelic tradition, is male-focussed, largely consisting of praise poems for the aristocracy and lesser gentry of Lochaber.⁹⁰⁶ Her poems touching on military subjects are as follows:

- 'Moladh do na Fineachaibh Gaidheileach a fhuair an Oighreachdan, ann Bliaghna 1784' (*'Praise of the Highland Clans that Regained their Estates in 1784'*), where she addresses the return of the forfeited estates and discusses the contemporary military service of the Gaels;⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁹⁰⁵ In addition to this collection, a volume of her *Laoidhean Spioradail* was published in 1810. For more on Cameron see: D. MacLean, *Typographia Scoto-Gadelica*, (Edinburgh, 1915), p. 54; N. MacNeill, *The Literature of the Highlanders* (Stirling, 1929); Black, 'Gaelic Secular Publishing', p. 605; R. Black 'Some Notes from my Glasgow Scrapbook, 1500-1800', in S. Kidd (ed.) *Glasgow: Baile Mòr nan Gàidheal / City of the Gaels* (Glasgow, 2007), pp. 47-48.

⁹⁰⁶ Black, 'Gaelic Secular Publishing', p. 605.

⁹⁰⁷ Cham'ron, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, pp. 1-6.

- 'Moladh do Chaiptin Dughal Cam'ron, Fear na Sroine ann Lochabar' ('*Praise of Captain Dougald Cameron, Laird of Sroine in Lochaber*'), a panegyric to a member of the gentry and military officer;⁹⁰⁸
- 'Moladh do Mhic Achaladair' ('*Song to the Sons of Achalader*'), a praise poem to two young members of the gentry which anticipates their military service in America;⁹⁰⁹
- 'Oran Molla do Chaiptin Alastair Mac-Phearsain' ('*A Song of Praise to Captain Alasdair MacPherson*'), a panegyric to a serving officer, which praises the success of his military career;⁹¹⁰ 'Oran Molaidh do Iarla Bhraid'-Alban' ('*A Song of Praise to the Earl of Breadalbane*'), a panegyric to the Earl of Breadalbane, John Campbell (1762-1834), including praise of Campbell as a soldier;⁹¹¹
- 'Cumhadh do Chloinn Iain Chaimbeil, air dhoibh falbh dh' America' ('*Song to the Children of Iain Campbell, after their leaving for America*'), a lament to Cameron's three foster sons on their being called to service in America.⁹¹²

The Perthshire poet, Margaret Gow née MacGregor (Mairearad Ghriogarach, c.1750-c. 1820) was, as previously mentioned, a near contemporary of Cameron's, though her work was not published until after her death, in 1831. Until recently, MacGregor's work had been given little attention by modern Gaelic scholars, despite the collection in which her songs were published, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain thaghte Ghàeleach* (1831), containing the largest number of songs composed by a female poet before Màiri Mhòr nan Òran's songs were published in 1891. Recent scholarship by Michel Byrne has analysed MacGregor's work and shown her to be a poet worthy of greater recognition than she has previously received; the author of a body of work that provides a unique insight into the late eighteenth-century Gàidhealtachd.⁹¹³

MacGregor was the fourth child of six of Para Mòr, fourth of Àrd Làraich. She married Donald Gow, a Perthshire farmer, in 1775, and they had six children.⁹¹⁴ Her collection was compiled and edited by her step grand-son, Duncan Mackintosh (1804-c.1846), and contains thirty-four of her own pieces on a range of themes, including clan/gentry panegyric, poems on family members and songs about her native Perthshire. The collection also includes eighteen poems by three other named poets (Donnchadh Griograch, Anna Ghobha and Donnchadh Gobha), as well

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-45.

⁹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 26-48.

⁹¹³ M. Byrne, 'Mairearad Ghriogarach: Sùil Thòiseachail air Bana-bhàrd air Dìochuimhne', in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. 23 (2007), pp. 85-122; M. Byrne, 'A Window on the Late Eighteenth-century Scottish Highlands: The Songs of Mairearad Ghriogarach', in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, vol. 30 (2010), pp. 39-60.

⁹¹⁴ Byrne, 'A Window on the Late Eighteenth-century Scottish Highlands', p. 45.

as twenty-two other pieces, all but three of which are unattributed.⁹¹⁵ Eight of MacGregor's poems touch on military themes:

- 'Song to Colonel Alexander Robertson of Strowan', a panegyric in English to this landowner and military officer;⁹¹⁶
- 'Òran do Chorneil Alastair Robastan Tighearna Shruthain is e gu tinn anns an fhiabhras' ('*Song to Colonel Alexander Robertson as he is sick with the fever*'), a poem to the same on the occasion of his being unwell;⁹¹⁷
- 'Òran do Chornail Alastair Robastan Tighearna Shruthain' ('*Song to Colonel Alexander Robertson of Strowan*'), a third poem to Robertson;⁹¹⁸
- 'Òran do bhratach Chlann Alpain (nuair chunnaic i pàirtidh do reismaid Chlann Alpain racruitig air fèill ceann Loch Raineach)' ('*Song to the banner of MacAlpine (when she saw a party of the MacAlpine regiment recruiting at the fair in Loch Rannoch)*'), a piece on a recruiting party in Loch Rannoch;⁹¹⁹
- 'Òran do bràithrean Iain is Dòmhnall bha an cogadh America' ('*A Song to her Brothers Iain and Donald who were in the American war*'), a song to her brothers who are serving in the American Revolutionary War;⁹²⁰
- 'Òran do bràithrean bha an cogadh America' ('*A Song to her brothers who were in the American war*'), another song to the same;⁹²¹
- 'Òran don chuideachd cheudna' ('*Song to the same group*'), a third song to her brothers;⁹²²
- 'Òran do dh'Anna Ghobha a nighean' ('*A Song to Anne Gow, her daughter*'), a piece in which she alludes to the dangers of military service and the undesirability of a military career;⁹²³
- 'Òran do dh'fhear a taighe, do mhac 's do bhràthair nuair chaidh iad a Dhùn Eudan dh'ionnsaigh nan caithirichean' ('*A Song to the man of the house, her son and her brother when they went to Edinburgh to the sedan chairs*'), in which she makes reference to the service of men in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.⁹²⁴

Praise of Officers

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁹¹⁶ Macintóisich, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain thaghte Ghàeleach*, pp. 1-3.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-12.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55.

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-7.

⁹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-15.

⁹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 16-20.

⁹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

⁹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-70.

Both Cameron and MacGregor composed military panegyrics to officers, and the former in particular specialised in this kind of poetry. The popularity of this kind of verse can be ascertained from the fact that Cameron's work was published twice (and, indeed, that it was published at all). While the circumstances of the books' publication are so far unknown, it is conjecturable that military patrons - perhaps those addressed in the book - provided support, as was the case with other publications by male poets looked at previously in this thesis. The following verses from 'Oran Molla do Chaiptin Alastair Mac-Phearsain' give the flavour of Cameron's military panegyrics.⁹²⁵ She praises Macpherson's conduct in the army and alludes to the joy his family will feel on his return from service:

Alastair oig Mhic a Phearsain,
Na'm piob is nam bratach,
Gur ceannard fear feachd thu,
Fhuair mi sgeul ort an ceart-uair
Chuir air do mhuinntir mor aiteas,
Thu bhi pilltin 'n nall da-thigh ri d' thir.

Ann deigh gach cun 'art 's gach gàbha,
A ghaoil as an d' thain' thu,
Air muir a's air sàile,
Cumbhail cogadh ri d' naimhdibh,
Thig thu dha-thigh gu 'n taing orr' a ris.⁹²⁶

*Young Alexander MacPherson,
Of the pipes and the banners,
You are the leader of a force,
I received news of you just now
That brought great joy to your people,
That you are coming back over to your country.*

*After each danger and each crisis,
My love through which you came,
On the sea and on land,
Engaging in war with your enemies,
You'll come back home without their thanks again.*

It can be imagined that poetry such as this played an important part in preparing the community for a soldier's return, in order that his deeds would be known and that he would be held in sufficient esteem. This type of poem was a form of positive publicity and is likely to have been composed as much for MacPherson's

⁹²⁵ I have so far not been able to identify the figure to whom this poem is addressed.

⁹²⁶ Cham'ron, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, p. 19.

family as for the subject himself. That this type of poetry was also popular with a wider audience is clear from the evident popularity Cameron's work enjoyed.

'Moladh do Mhic Achaladair' takes as its subject the children of John Campbell, 5th of Achalader (1715-91) and includes two verses to Gilleasbuig (c.1757-1825) and Alastair (c.1753-1824), which refer to their service in America during the American Revolutionary War. Cameron asks that they be returned home safe and victorious after their period of service:

Ach 'Illeaspuig oig Achaladair
Is Alastair ùir àluinn,
Mu chaidh sibh do dh' America
Thoirt teine air 'ur naimhdibh,
Ma thèid sibh 'm blàr na 'm batailte,
Gu'n teagaisg Rìgh na 'n gràs sibh
'S gu'n dean sùibh talamh bhuantachd,
Mar sin agus buaidh làrach.⁹²⁷

*But young Archibald of Achalader,
And handsome young Alasdair
If you went to America
To wreak fire on your enemy
If you go into the fight or the battle
May the King of grace teach you
And may you achieve a steady win
And, as a result, victory.*

These poems see Cameron engage in full-blooded military panegyric, in much the same vein as that composed by many of her male counterparts.

MacGregor's collection includes three songs of praise to Colonel Alexander Robertson of Strowan (?-1830),⁹²⁸ landlord of Glen Errachty, whose estate was confiscated after the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-46, but was bought back in 1784.⁹²⁹ We see again with MacGregor's poems to Robertson the tendency for Gaelic poets of the period to turn their attention towards the Highland gentry, who were frequently involved in the military. Did Robertson also provide MacGregor with some financial patronage in the same way that near-contemporary poets such as Duncan Campbell (fl.1798) and Alexander MacKay (1775-1858), looked at earlier in this thesis, were indebted to officer patrons? As will be seen below, MacGregor

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁹²⁸ For more on Robertson, see: A. B. Oliphant, "Alexander Robertson of Struan", in *Clan Donnchaidh Annual* (2006). [Page number here?](#)

⁹²⁹ Byrne, 'A Window on the Late Eighteenth-century Scottish Highlands', p. 49.

appears, based on the internal evidence of her poems, to have been a well-known figure in Robertson's household, and it is not inconceivable that he provided financial incentive other than simply being the poet's landlord. That MacGregor's English poem to Robertson 'To Colonel Alexander Robertson of Strowan' opens the 1831 collection could be indicative of a stipulation by the poet herself to give Robertson pride of place in any posthumous publication of her work. Alternatively, it might be a reflection of her editor's sense of the importance of the relationship between the poet and her landlord. Although composing in English, MacGregor draws on panegyric conventions and also often utilises a Gaelic pattern of internal rhyming in the piece.⁹³⁰ MacGregor also draws on tradition in her 'Òran do Chorneil Alastair Robastan Tighearna Shruthain is e gu tinn anns an fhiabhras'. This piece closely follows the conventions of Gaelic panegyric by praising Robertson's home and hospitality. For example, she praises Robertson's patronage of musicians:⁹³¹

Ann an uachdar a thighe,
 Stu bu fhlathail a suile ann,
 Le do chridh fial farsuin,
 Bheirte meas air luchd cuil leat,
 Fuaime na n teud nam cadail,
 Leat a bait ann ad rum e
 Piop ga speuchd be t fhasan,
 Anns mhadain nam dusga.⁹³²

In the upper part of the house,

⁹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁹³¹ Macinnes notes the centrality of poetry on a chief's household in the tradition of Gaelic panegyric. J. Macinnes, 'The Panegyric Code in Gaelic Poetry', pp. 282-83.

⁹³² Macintoisich, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain thaghte Ghàeleach*, p. 9. For comparison, Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh's poetry contains several examples of the poet portraying the hospitality in the MacLeod household of Dunvegan, including the following verse from 'Thèid mi lem Dheòin':

Thèid mise dham dheòin Dhùn Bheagain nan Còrn,
 Far am faighte ann an tòs Màighe mì,
 Gu talla nan clàir far am faramach fion
 'S gum beannaicheadh Dia an t-àras-sa.
 Bidh iomadaidh ceòl an cuideachd Mhic Leòid
 Le iomairt nam bòrd tàileasgach:
 Dheagh mhic athar mo rùin [*bha carthannach ciùin*],
 'S aighearach liom slàint' agad.

*I will gladly go to Dunvegan of the drinking-horns,
 Where I used to be found at the beginning of May;
 To the hall of the poet-bands where wine flows noisily,
 And may God bless this dwelling.
 There is a variety of music in MacLeod's company,
 Along with playing on the backgammon boards;
 Dear son of the father whom I loved, who was genial and gentle,
 It is a joy to me that you are well.*

Ó Baoill, *Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh*, pp. 150-51.

*You would be the most noble,
 With your generous large heart,
 Musicians would be respected by you,
 The sound of strings at the time of sleeping,
 You enjoyed it in your room,
 Pipes being played is your fashion,
 In the morning at the time of waking.*

It is clear that women poets, like their male counterparts, conceived of the officers' role as being commensurate with that of clan chiefs or other prominent figures in clan society. While on one level this is simply a reflection of continuity in praising Highland gentry, the fact that officers' ranks are often highlighted suggests that the chain of command in military ranking accorded well with Gaelic notions of hierarchy. These military figures are not simply praised because they are members of the gentry; they are lauded as manifestations of a structured and hierarchical military ideal in Highland society. Having the rank of officer therefore facilitates the portrayal of members of the gentry in traditional Highland terms by Gaelic poets. We see a further example of this in a poem to General George Duncan Robertson (1766-1842), composed by Anna Ghobha (Ann Gow), MacGregor's daughter and one of the other named poets to appear in the collection in which her poems were published. George Duncan Robertson of Strowan was Alexander Robertson's son; he fought in the Peninsular War (1808-14) and at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. In the second stanza of her 'Oran do Sheanlar Donnacha Dearsa Robastan Tighearna Shruthain' ('*A Song to General Duncan George Robertson, Lord of Strowan*'), Gow focusses on Robertson's rank and his ability to ascend the military hierarchy: 'Man robh thu ach gle og, / Bha thu a d chornail air sluagh' ('*Before you were but very young, / You were the colonel of a force*').⁹³³ In Gow's 'Oran le Anna Ghobh do chaiphtain Mac Coinnich ghrinnaird' ('*A Song by Anne Gow to Captain MacKenzie of Gruinard*') the poet delights in Captain William MacKenzie of Gruinard's (c.1776-?) position (MacKenzie was a captain in the 72nd Regiment, Seaforth Highlanders). The poem demonstrates again the concentric nature of many Gaelic poets' loyalties during the period, as Gow celebrates that MacKenzie is able to serve both King George and uphold the rights of 'fir Alba':

*S leat mo ruin fhad sa s beo mi,
 Shar chomhlain s maith dealbh,
 S be mo raoghain s cha storas,
 Thu bhi ad chornail air arm,
 Leomhan fuileachdeach seolt,
 Dh fhas gu connspaidach garg,
 Tha coisinn buaidh do righ Deorsa,*

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

S cumail coir ri fir Alba.⁹³⁴

*My love is with you all my life,
The great, well presented group,
And it would be my choice, and it's not abundance,
For you to be an army colonel,
Blood-drawing and artful lion,
Who grew tempestuous and fierce,
Winning victory for King George,
And maintaining the right of the Scots.*

But despite this willingness to associate him with Scottish national identity and the Hanoverian monarchy, Gow distinguishes MacKenzie as a Gael, praising his appearance in traditional Highland dress:

Dh aithnaite Cuma ghael ort,
O d bhraidh gu d bhonn,
Gur math thig dhut armachd,
Clogad is targaid bhiodh trom,
S claidh chinn airgid,
Se gun chearb an t shonn,
Pichd do n fhiur nach luba,
S plasg do n fhudar chruidh lom.⁹³⁵

*The appearance of the Gael could be recognised on you,
From your head to your toes,
Weaponry suits you well,
A helmet and a shield that would be heavy,
And a silver-headed sword,
Without flaw in its thrust,
A pike of yew that would not bend,
And a pack of hard cutting powder.*

This poetry clearly corresponds in many respects with the tradition of praise of officers in men's poetry so far considered in this thesis, demonstrating that strict demarcations between men and women's poetry in the Gaelic poetic tradition are impractical. However, it might be said that women poets were under an extra pressure and obligation to compose military panegyric in order for their work to be given credence and indeed to be published. That both Cameron and MacGregor's work give pride of place to military panegyric in their opening pages can be seen

⁹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

therefore to reflect both the visibility and the influence - what might even be termed the 'soft power' - of military figures in Highland society during this period.

Annexed Estates

Both MacGregor and Cameron refer to the return of the annexed estates in 1784. Cameron's 'Moladh do na Fineachaibh Gaidheileach a fhuair an Oighreachdan, ann Bliaghna 1784' opens her collection and refers to the return of the annexed estate of the Camerons of Lochiel. The estate had been annexed by the government following the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-46 and was returned to Donald Cameron of Lochiel, the 22nd chief, in 1784.⁹³⁶ Ronald Black has spoken of the 'palpable surge of confidence in the Gaelic-speaking community' at this time.⁹³⁷ Two years previously, in 1782, the Dress Act had been repealed; in 1784, the forfeited estates were returned; and that same year the Highland Society of Scotland was founded. And, as Black has also noted, three different Gaelic poets published their collected verse in 1785. This was therefore a period of renewal - or at least perceived renewal - in the Gaelic-speaking community, and among the other poets who commented on the return of the estates was Duncan Bàn Macintyre, in his 'Oran nam Fineachan a fhuair am fearann air ais' (*Song to the Clans that had their Lands Restored*).⁹³⁸ Female poets' work therefore echoed the concerns of their male counterparts.

The opening stanzas of Cameron's substantial, thirty-six stanza song make clear her joy at the return of the estates, but waste no time in addressing and expressing shame in the behaviour of her pro-Jacobite ancestors:

Chaill an sinnsir sud le'n gòraich,
'S cha chion aithne bh' orr na folum,
'Mhain nach gèille iad le 'Beo-shlaint,
Ach le Tearlach ann aghaidh Dheors.⁹³⁹

*Those ancestors lost with their foolishness,
And they weren't lacking in knowledge or education,
Merely that they wouldn't submit their livelihood,
But stood with Charles against George.*

⁹³⁶ The defeat of the Jacobites in 1746 was followed by the forfeiture of Jacobite estates as part of punishment for the uprising. The rents and profits of thirteen of those estates were taken under control of the Crown and managed by the Board of Annexed Estates. This board had the stated aim of improving the Highlands through the modernisation of agriculture and introduction of fisheries, the improvement of communications and the eradication of Roman Catholicism and sedition. A. Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the '45* (Edinburgh, 1982).

⁹³⁷ Black, 'Gaelic Secular Publishing', p. 605.

⁹³⁸ MacLeod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, pp. 244-253.

⁹³⁹ Cham'ron, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, p. 1.

She puts still further distance between herself and these ‘foolish ancestors’ by stating ‘Chaidh cuid do ’n Fhrainc, ’s cuid do’n Olaint, / Chaidh cuid san fhaire sios le doilinn’ (*‘Some went to France and some to Holland / Some went down in the sea with grief’*).⁹⁴⁰ And she emphasises the punishment meted out and the price already paid: ‘Chaidh cuid eile ’reuba beo dhiubh, / A leth a Phrionnsa dh fhalbh air fogra’ (*‘Some others were torn asunder, / Because of the Prince who left in exile’*).⁹⁴¹ Like Duncan Bàn Macintyre in his ‘Òran do’n Rìgh’, Cameron deals efficiently with the past Jacobite allegiance of some Gaels to enable her to fully express her support for the contemporary Hanoverian monarchy.⁹⁴² But Cameron’s loyalty is not given without condition: she asserts that the king is able to rely on the Gaels due to the fact that their land has been returned. Again we see loyalty presented as a contract between the crown and the people:

Nis o ’fhuair sibh an Rìgh co dìleas,
 ’S gu d’ thug o ’n Bhord dhuibh litir sgrìobhte,
 Air an fhearran bh’aig ur sinnsir,
 ’Chaoidh cho ’n fhàg sibh e gu dilinn.⁹⁴³

*Now because you have found the king so loyal,
 And a written letter has been given to you from the
 board,
 Assuring your ancestors’ land,
 You will never abandon him.*

The interrelationship between perceived rights to land and poets’ perceptions of military service has been considered earlier in this thesis, for example in analysis of ‘Iorram air America’ by Cameron’s contemporary, Duncan Lothian (1730-1812). Where Lothian saw service as a means to access ‘fearann saor’ (*‘free land’*) in America, Cameron asserts that a return of land rights in the Gàidhealtachd has earned the loyalty of the Gaels as soldiers. Cameron clearly views the return of the estates as an opportunity for renewal in Gaelic culture. The return of the land is one factor in this renewal; the return of rights to wear Highland dress is another. Cameron next turns her focus to this:

’S gu ma slan do Dhuic Mhontròs,⁹⁴⁴
 A thug an t-ac’ amach o’n Bhord,
 Do na Gaidheil air am breacain bhoidheach,
 Cead dol do’n Chlachan leo Di-domhnuich.

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴² See Chapter 4, pp. 82-83.

⁹⁴³ Cham’ron, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, p. 1.

⁹⁴⁴ Cameron refers here to James Graham, 3rd Duke of Montrose (1755-1836), who persuaded parliament to repeal the dress act in 1782. Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the ’45*, p. 45.

Bha cridh' nan Gaidheal air an smùradh,
 Le'n Còtaiche mor, 's le brigsean chluitnich,
 Nach dìreadh mona, beinn, na stuic leo;
 Gu 's an d' fhuair iad na breacain ùra.⁹⁴⁵

*And good health to the Duke of Montrose,
 Who took the act out from the Board,
 Permission for the Gaels to go to the church
 In the beautiful tartan on Sunday.*

*The hearts of the Gaels were smeared,
 With the long coats, and the woolen trousers,
 In which they could not climb a mountain, a hill, or the
 rocks,
 Until they got the new plaids.*

Towards the end of the poem Cameron turns to the military service of the Gaels in the post-Culloden period, reaffirming that the King will now be able to rely on the Highland estates for men to fight for him:

'S ann a nìse a chi Rìgh Deorsa,
 Na fiurain ghasa 'thig ga chomhnadh,
 Gach oighre fearrain fhuair a choir uaidh',
 Gu 'n d'thig le dhaoine cruinn na chomh'ail.⁹⁴⁶

*It is now that King George will see,
 The great warriors that will come to his aid,
 Each heir to an estate that received his right from him,
 Will come with his people gathered in his assembly.*

The praise in this song is ostensibly for the monarch but it is contingent on a bargain being fulfilled - on the hereditary estates being returned to the clans and the rights to wear Highland dress being restored. Cameron returns to the latter point in the penultimate stanza, stating "Si an èitidh ghàidhealach an deise mhaiseach" (*The Highland dress is the comely dress*) before commenting 'Cha 'n eil fear ceirde ann an Sasgann, / 'Chuireadh fios i na cìribh gasta' (*There is not a craftsman in England / That could match it in splendid combs*).⁹⁴⁷ The concluding stanza makes perfectly clear that though Cameron is willing to express her support for the Hanoverians, her priority is to maintain and promote the primacy of the

⁹⁴⁵ Cham'ron, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, p. 2.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Gaels. She mockingly alludes to the attitudes some of her southern neighbours (whom she repeatedly specifies to be the English, not Lowlanders) might feel at the restoration of the estates:

'S iomadh fear Aide Cloic' a's Curaichd,
Th'eadar Carlisle agus baile Lun'uinn,
Tha an cridh'chaibh làn do mhulad,
O 'fhuair na Gaidheil 'nis an t-urram.⁹⁴⁸

*Many of those of the hats, cloaks and caps,
That are between Carlisle and London town,
Their hearts are filled with sadness,
Because the Gaels have now been given the honour.*

Cameron therefore closes her poem by cocking a snook at the English and giving her respect to the Gaels. While one interpretation of this pro-Hanoverian poetry is that put forward by Michael Newton that Gaelic poets 'learned to love George', it can also be suggested that poets were primarily concerned with their own culture and that expressions in support of George were motivated by the opportunity the monarch appeared to present for renewal.⁹⁴⁹ If poets loved George, it was only for his seemingly traditional Gaelic credentials. Like Macintyre in 'Òran do'n Rìgh', Cameron conceives of the King as a provider; as a figure of stability who is able to provide access to the land and restore hereditary rights to the Gaels.

MacGregor also touches on the return of the Annexed estates in one of her songs to Alexander Robertson, 'Òran do Chornail Alastair Robastan Tighearna Shruthain' ('Song to Colonel Alexander Robertson, Landlord of Strowan'). MacGregor looks back to Culloden in the first part of this song, providing context for the restitution of the estates. As both Newton and Byrne have commented, these verses bear a resemblance - at the very least in subject matter - to John Roy Stewart's 'Là Chùil Lòdair' ('Culloden Day').⁹⁵⁰ As a poet born in c.1750 and who was part of the post-Culloden generation, it is unsurprising that MacGregor's worldview was significantly shaped by the traumatic events of this rebellion and its aftermath, which would have been first-hand experience to many of her family members and

⁹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁹ M. Newton, 'Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present', in *e-Keltoi* (2003), [accessed Nov. 27, 2015, www4.uwm.edu/celtic/ekeltoi/volumes/vol5/5_2/newton_5_2.pdf.]

⁹⁵⁰ Byrne, 'Mairearad Ghriogarach: Sùil Thòiseachail air Bana-bhàrd air Dìochuimhne', p. 94; Byrne, 'A Window on the Late Eighteenth-century Scottish Highlands', p. 50. Michael Newton has suggested that this might be the direct influence of John Roy Stewart: 'Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present' *e-Keltoi* (2003), [accessed Nov. 27, 2015, www4.uwm.edu/celtic/ekeltoi/volumes/vol5/5_2/newton_5_2.pdf.]

acquaintances.⁹⁵¹ The first four of the ten verses here are dedicated to the defeat at Culloden and outline the damaging aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion on Gaelic society, with families decimated and the Highland clans stripped of their power.⁹⁵² But the tone shifts from dejection to positivity in the fifth stanza as MacGregor asserts that the wheel of fortune - a key motif of Jacobite poetry, used to denote destiny shifting in the favour of the cause - has now turned in favour of the Gaels with the restoration of the annexed estates:

S eibhinn naidheachd ri chluinntin,
 Gun d fhuair gach oighre am fearann,
 Nis o thionnda a chuibhle,
 Sgu deach n aont ud thairis,
 Sar cheann fine bha cluiteach,
 A s fhioch a chuis ud a h aithris,
 Tighearn a shru-ain on ghuisich,
 Thighinn gun dachas a shean athar.⁹⁵³

*A pleasure it is to hear,
 That each heir got their land,
 Now since the wheel has turned,
 And that the agreement was made,
 The great chief who was renowned,
 It is worth relating the matter,
 The landlord of Strowan from the pine wood (?)
 Coming to the hereditary right of his grandfather.*

In both of these poems, the return of the estates is equated with a return of control, agency and confidence for the Gaels. Both pieces are acutely aware of what has gone before and the need there has been to atone for this; but, equally, they are confident in their assertion that the return of the annexed estates represents another opportunity for renewal - or reclamation - of traditional Gaelic culture.

Poetry of Separation

One of the major themes of Gaelic women's poetry of the British military experience was the separation caused between family members and couples by military service. This type of poetry is found in both Cameron and MacGregor's

⁹⁵¹ For more on the impact of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-46, see: Campbell, *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five*; Macinnes, *Clanship Commerce and the House of Stuart*; Youngson, *After the Forty-five*; Leneman, *The Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen*, pp. 177-220.

⁹⁵² Macintoisich, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain thaghte Ghàeleach*, p. 54.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

work in reference to family members serving in foreign campaigns. MacGregor composed three poems which deal with the service of her brothers in the American Revolutionary War: 'Òran do bràithrean Iain is Dòmhnall bha an cogadh America', 'Òran do bràithrean bha an cogadh America' and 'Òran don chuideachd cheudna'. These poems provide an insight into the manner in which foreign conflicts were perceived by a family member left at home in the Gàidhealtachd and the feelings that this separation engendered. She refers in the songs to her brothers, Iain and Donald, who both served in America, and her uncle, Duncan, who was also a soldier in America. In her 'Òran do Bràithrean bha an Cogadh America' she describes the emotional impact that the participation of her brothers in the war in America has had upon her as a woman in the Gàidhealtachd. In the opening stanza she says:

Ged tha sinne an so an drast,
 Gun trioblaid gun anra,
 Gun aisidh ach samhach
 Le pailteas bhi lamh ruinn,
 Do gach ni dheana sta dhuinn,
 Siad mo thruaigh na cairde,
 Tha gam buala sna blaraibh,
 Gun chaidribh gun bhaigh on na naimdhde.⁹⁵⁴

*Although we are here now,
 Without trouble, without hardship,
 Without strife, only silent,
 With plenty to hand,
 Of everything we would need,
 My pity are the relatives,
 That are struck in the battles,
 Without companionship, without kindness from their
 enemies.*

Despite her physical surroundings being 'gun trioblaid' and 'sàmhach', the emotional landscape of this song is one of sadness, worry, frustration and even anger. It is a poem in which we are able to glimpse a poet who was independent of thought, kept hidden in some of her other work.⁹⁵⁵ Her feelings about the separation between herself and her three family members are expressed in bare terms:

Se seo bhrosnaich mo chanail,
 Mheud s tha chuideachd mo ghraidh ann
 Brathair m athar s mo bhrathairean,

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹⁵⁵ Byrne., 'Mairearad Ghriogarach: Sùil Thòiseachail air Bana-bhàrd air Dìochuimhne', p. 97.

S iomad cairid ro a rid,
 N ainm cha n urr mi airamh,
 Ach tha mi duilich an caramh -
 Mo chreach s nach urra mi sta dheunamh dhaibhsan.⁹⁵⁶

*This is what inspired my saying,
 How many of my beloved are there,
 My uncle and my brothers,
 And many friends,
 Whose names I cannot count,
 But I am sorry for how they are -
 Alas and that I cannot do anything for them.*

The poem includes a stanza on the nature of war which was at that time perhaps unprecedented in the Gaelic poetic tradition (and indeed was untypical even in terms of the popular reaction to the American Revolutionary War throughout the United Kingdom).⁹⁵⁷ MacGregor expresses directly and, it might be said, quite radically - at least in terms of opinions in Gaelic poetry - the depersonalised nature of war:

Cha nann gu fabhar a dhuine
 Chaidh na blarabh a chumail,
 Ach bhi gu namhadach fuileach
 Chum sgu n cailta na h urrad;⁹⁵⁸

*It is not for the good of man,
 That wars are waged,
 But to be hostile and bloody
 So that many would be lost.*

Although there are frequent references in Gaelic military poetry to the human cost of war, it is by no means common to hear a reference such as this to the philosophical nature of war. It is possible that MacGregor was influenced by religious thinking and that she was echoing the opinions of a minister, but this stanza nonetheless strikes a remarkable, atypical note in the Gaelic poetic tradition. Perhaps even more conspicuous is MacGregor's seeming active defiance of the panegyric code of praise, as she addresses her brother upon his having been

⁹⁵⁶ Macintoisich, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain thaghte Ghàeleach*, p. 4.

⁹⁵⁷ Stephen Conway has said: 'The American War saw the first sustained and large-scale public criticism of the use of military force as an instrument of public policy. While the criticism was directed, for the most part, at the justice and wisdom of fighting fellow subjects, rather than a genuine expression of hostility to war as such, it prepared the ground for the more clearly anti-war campaigns in the struggle against revolutionary and Napoleonic France.' Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence*, p. 315.

⁹⁵⁸ Macintoisich, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain thaghte Ghàeleach*, p. 4.

made a captain: ‘Cha d theid mi radh ach n fhirinn / Cha n e do mholadha ni mi’ (*‘I will only tell the truth / I will not praise you’*).⁹⁵⁹ The poem is indicative of the massive impact that the military had upon the lives of Highland families in the second half of the eighteenth century. Despite the break-up of clan society, the social structure in the Gàidhealtachd in the post-Culloden era was firmly based around family and the loss of two brothers and an uncle for up to nine years would have presented serious practical difficulties, in addition to emotional ones.

In ‘Òran do bràithrean bha an cogadh America’, seemingly composed after her brothers had settled in Nova Scotia, we are again given access to the poet’s private thoughts about her separation from them. She says:

S mi bhi ri smuaintean gorach,
S mi m onar ann sa n uair so,
A cuimhneach na m fear og,
Chaidh air bòrd a muigh air chuaintenn,
Tha thamh Nova Scotia,
Se fàth mo bhròin ri luaidh e,
Se chaochail snuadh na h oig dhìom.⁹⁶⁰

*I am thinking foolish thoughts,
As I am alone at this time,
Remembering the young men,
That went aboard out on the seas,
Who are residing in Nova Scotia,
It is the cause of my sorrow to relate it,
It is what took the complexion of youth from me.*

The poem contains a fascinating expression of MacGregor’s awareness of her limitations as a woman in Gaelic society, again showing her to be a poet with a high degree of independence of thought, regardless of the practical and societal barriers she faced. She regrets not having ‘happened to be’ a man, which would have allowed her to travel to see her brothers:⁹⁶¹

Struagh nach mis thachair,
Bhi m dhuine tapi treubhach.
S gu m feuchinn pairt na chaireachd,
Tha m falach ann m chreubhaig,
[...]

⁹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁶⁰ Macintoisich, *Co-chruinneach dh’òrain thaghte Ghàeleach*, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁶¹ Byrne, ‘Mairearad Ghriogarach: Sùil Thòiseachail air Bana-bhàrd air Dìochuimhne’, p. 97; Byrne, ‘A Window on the Late Eighteenth-century Scottish Highlands’, p. 55.

On thachair dhomh bhi m bhoireanneach,
 Nach ura mi so dhianamh,
 S fheudar dhomh tre bhanalas,
 Bhi fanachd ann m righeachd.
 Mo thealeach bhi toirt aire orra,⁹⁶²

*It is a shame that I did not happen,
 To be a strong valorous man,
 And that I could try some of the cunning,
 Hidden in my small body,
 [...]*

*Since I happened to be a woman,
 I cannot do this,
 I am required through female behaviour,
 To stay in this kingdom,
 To look after my family,*

While it is axiomatic to state that Gaelic society in the eighteenth century was patriarchal,⁹⁶³ it is highly unusual to see a poet make direct reference to the social strictures that were placed upon women ‘tre bhanalas’ in this way.⁹⁶⁴ Her willingness to express independent opinions in song is also apparent in ‘Oran le Mairiread Ghrigarach do Anna a Nioghan’. Here she appears to take some solace in the knowledge that her deceased sons, Teàrlach and Alasdair, will not have to serve in the military. Of their deaths, she says ‘Cha bhi mi hein a gearain sud’ (*I will not lament that*) before going on to state:

Ged fhaicinn deise scarlaid orra,
 Chuire mòran dearla orra,
 Gu m b fhearr leam sibh bhi sabhailt,
 Na bhi fo phaidh Coirneil.

Cha neil ann san t shaoghal so,
 Ach truailieachd is caochlaiteachd,
 Gur mor an t aobhar greadhneachais,

⁹⁶² Macintoisich, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain thaghte Ghàeleach*, p. 14

⁹⁶³ See D. U. Stiùbhart, ‘Women and Gender in the Early Modern Western Gàidhealtachd’, in E. Ewan and M. M. Meikle (eds.), *Women in Scotland c.1100-c.1750* (East Linton, 1999), pp. 233-49.

⁹⁶⁴ Byrne has noted that the song is also of significance as a reference to her brother’s experience of proving his worth before King and Parliament in London, receiving support from the aristocracy and crossing the ocean several times. Each of these details corresponds to information contained in a MS MacGregor genealogy of the 1830s. See: Byrne, ‘A Window on the Late Eighteenth-century Scottish Highlands’, p. 57.

Do neach a chaochlais og ann.⁹⁶⁵

*Although I would see them in a scarlet uniform.
That would make them shine,
I would rather you were safe,
Than in the employ of a colonel.*

*There is nothing in this world,
But abjection and change,
Great is the cause of joy,
For any who die young in it.*

It seems clear, therefore, that MacGregor's reason for claiming to not lament her sons' deaths is that it has afforded them a level of protection from the hardships of military service. In this poem, as throughout MacGregor's verse on military topics, she places family to the centre. Her key allegiance is to those closest to her and reference to Britain, the King or a national military campaign are conspicuous by their absence.

It has been seen previously that Cameron was more willing to engage in straightforward panegyric and to offer her - albeit conditional - loyalty to the King. But another perspective on the negative impact that military service could have on the lives of families in the Gàidhealtachd might also emerge in her 'Cumhadh do Chloinn Iain Chaimbeil', air dhoibh falbh dh' America'. The song appears to have been composed for the eponymous Iain Campbell's three children, on the occasion of two of these children's departure for America. While it cannot be said with certainty that their departure was due to military service, it certainly seems a likely cause. The internal evidence of the song seems to imply that Cameron raised these boys, perhaps as a foster mother. In the third stanza, she refers to the impact their upbringing (and perhaps subsequent departure) has had on her. She says:

Fhuair mi sarùch is gleachd,
Ghaoil aig àrach do mhac,
'S gun duine dhiubh 'm bheachd na'm chòir.⁹⁶⁶

*I had distress and struggling,
My love at the raising of your sons,
And with none of them in my company.*

⁹⁶⁵ Macintoisich, *Co-chruinneach dh'òrain Thaghte Ghàeleach*, p. 27.

⁹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

We hear that the first to leave for America was ‘Domhnall’ whom Cameron describes as ‘Sàr ghobhann nan àrm’ (*‘Great blacksmith of the weapons/army’*).⁹⁶⁷ Donald appears therefore to have been a blacksmith and it is well-known that blacksmiths travelled with and formed part of the British army during the eighteenth century.⁹⁶⁸ Cameron’s sadness at Donald’s departure is explicit as she states that it ‘Dh’fhàg m’inntin gu léir fui’ bhròn’ (*‘Left my mind completely in sadness’*).⁹⁶⁹ The next to depart was Seumas and the poet again outlines her sadness at his departure:

O ’n taic so la ’n dè,
Tha mulad orm fein,
O dh’ fhalbh e ’uam Seumas òg.⁹⁷⁰

*Since yesterday,
I am in sadness,
Since young James left me.*

But the poet takes comfort in the fact that Calum has not so far left for America. She says:

Nis cha chluinnear mo bhròn,
'S cha'n fhaicear mo dheòir,
Fhad s' tha Calum am choir na'r deigh.⁹⁷¹

*Now my sadness will not be heard,
And my tears will not be seen,
While Calum is in my company after you.*

It seems that of the three children, Calum was the one for whom Cameron held out most hope due to his academic abilities. She states ‘B e sud sgoilleir mo ruin, / Anns ’s na chuir mi mòr dhuil’ (*‘He was my beloved pupil, / In whom I placed much expectation’*).⁹⁷² Her fears that Calum might also leave for America emerge though as she says:

B' é air miann a's air tlachd
Thu bhi d' Mhinist'ear gast,
Is nach rachadh tu 'mach air bord.⁹⁷³

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁹⁶⁸ See for instance: J. Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century: The Girl I left Behind Me* (April, 2014), p. 190.

⁹⁶⁹ Cham'ron, *Orain Nuadh Ghaidhealach*, p. 47.

⁹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷² *Ibid.*

⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*

*It was our hope and our pleasure,
That you would be an accomplished minister,
And that you would not go out on board.*

Further research is required into the impact of military service on Highland families across the social spectrum, although Stana Nenadic has made an important contribution in this field by examining the issue from the perspective of Highland gentry families (where she has found that service had a highly disruptive effect).⁹⁷⁴ Both MacGregor's poems on her brothers and this song by Cameron provide insight into the familial disruption caused by service, and suggest that this was a key concern for these two poets.

Separation of Couples

One of the major societal consequences of military service on Highland society was that it removed young men from the populace, leading to gender imbalance in some Highland communities. This impact is reflected in an entry from Inverness in the *New Statistical Account* (1845): 'from emigration of males abroad in quest of occupations, and their fondness for a military life, there is, and it is thought there always has been a considerable excess of females'.⁹⁷⁵ An early allusion to the impact of gender imbalance during the period under consideration here can be found in the Sutherland poet Rob Donn MacKay's (1714-78) 'Cumha nan Ighnean as Deigh an Leannan' ('*Lament of the Girls After their Sweethearts*').⁹⁷⁶ MacKay's poetry was rooted in and reflected the social life of his community and, while this piece was not composed by a woman, it is considered here as an account of the impact service had on women. Mackay was a soldier (at least in a temporary sense) and served with the Sutherland Fencibles, so he could have drawn on first-hand experience in this poem.⁹⁷⁷ The note that prefaces the poem in the 1829 edition of MacKay's work elaborates upon its subject, noting that the girls' lament was caused by the number of young men in the region who were serving in the Sutherland regiment:⁹⁷⁸

Agus Gillean na dùthcha uile air falbh anns a' cheud Reisimeid Chatach, ach aon dithis; fear faoin, leibideach, da 'm bu leas-ainm Ceann-òrdaig; agus

⁹⁷⁴ Nenadic, 'The Impact of the Military Profession on Highland Gentry Families', pp. 75-99.

⁹⁷⁵ *NSA*, vol. XIV, Inverness, p. 18.

⁹⁷⁶ Grimble, *The World of Rob Donn* (Edinburgh, 1979).

⁹⁷⁷ For Rob Donn's military service, see Grimble, *The World of Rob Donn*, pp. 155-166; Beard, 'Rob Donn Mackay: Finding the Music in the Songs', pp. 15-16.

⁹⁷⁸ The Sutherland Fencibles were raised in 1759 and this appears to be the 'regiment' referred to by Rob Donn here.

fear eile b' fhoghainteiche na sin, de mhuinntir Siorrachd Earraghaidheal, a bha 'n a fhear bàta, do 'm b' ainm Niall MacAoidh.⁹⁷⁹

And the boys of the country all away in the Sutherland Regiment, except for two; a weak, lazy fellow by the nickname Big-toe; and another more able than him, one of the people of Argyll, who was a boatman, called Neil Mackay.

MacKay describes in this piece the way in which young women were forced to wait for marital suitors to return home:

Cha tig aon duine dhiu air fòrlach,
'S tha chlann òga muladach;
'S ged a theàrnadh còrr fhear beò dhiu,
'S cruaidh air òighean fuireach riu.⁹⁸⁰

*Not one of them will come home on leave,
And the youngsters are dejected;
And though some of them escape alive,
It is hard on young girls to wait for them.*

He touches on the feelings of these young women about their lack of opportunity to marry, saying that: 'Cho liutha dhiubh 's a tha gun phòsadh, / Tha iad ro bhrònach, muladach' ('How many of them are unmarried, / They are very sad and dejected').⁹⁸¹ The beneficiaries of this situation are 'Ceann-òrdaig' and 'Niall MacAoidh', who have their pick of the young women in the area:

Faodaidh Niall a' chuid a 's bòidhche,
Thoir an tùs na culaidh dhiù,
'S a' chuid nach fhiach leis thoirt gu bòrd dhiù,
Nì ceann-òrdaig gurraidh riu.⁹⁸²

*Neil can take the prettiest,
Into the front of the boat,
And those that he does not like to take on board,
Big-toe will coorie at/with them.*

While the tone of MacKay's poem is humorous and satiric, it reveals a genuine and keenly felt repercussion of recruitment for young women in Highland communities

⁹⁷⁹ R. Mackay, *Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language* (Inverness, 1829), p. 49.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

in the eighteenth century. Military service is hardly denigrated here but the poem provides an interesting counterpoint to poems by male poets praising military service for its societal rewards, such as in Duncan Bàn Macintyre's work where he celebrates the employment and earning opportunities offered by soldiering.

Military service had implications both in terms of removing potential marital suitors from the population and also causing long periods of separation between couples already married or committed to marriage. Jennine Hurl-Eamon has commented on the significant impact that a husband's military service could have on his wife:

Together or apart, military couples always differed from their civilian counterparts in one important way: they were subject to the culture and policies of the British army. The army imposed an enormous amount of control over a soldier's location, health, schedule, clothing, diet, and income, all of which had a corresponding effect on his eighteenth century wife, whose circumstances were inextricably linked to those of her husband.⁹⁸³

Separation from a partner is lamented in a fragment by an anonymous female poet in Thomas Sinton's *The Poetry of Badenoch*. As Sinton's note informs us: 'When the Ninety-second Regiment - popularly known as *Reisimeid an Diùic*, or the Duke's Regiment - was raised, one at least of the recruits was sorely grugged to it'.⁹⁸⁴ The Gordon Highlanders were raised in 1794 and here the un-named female poet objects to the regiment for having taken her 'sweetheart' from her:

'S cha 'n eil reisimeid fo 'n chrùn,
Dhà nach dùraiginns' mo bheannachd thoirt,
Ach Reisimeid Dhiùic Gordan -
Bho 'n 's i thug òg mo leannan bhuam.⁹⁸⁵

*There is no regiment under the crown,
That I would not give my blessing to,
But the Regiment of the Duke of Gordon,
Because it took my sweetheart from me young.*

The poet is therefore torn between her natural inclination to support the regiments and the heartache caused by the Gordon Highlanders recruiting - and thereby removing - her beloved. A tension between an inner (family) and outer

⁹⁸³ J. Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century: 'The Girl I left Behind Me'* (Oxford, 2014), p. 3.

⁹⁸⁴ Sinton, *The Poetry of Badenoch*, p. 218.

⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*,

(regiment) circle of Smouts's concentric loyalty model can therefore be discerned here, which is resolved by giving priority to the former.⁹⁸⁶ A return to the mode of military praise can be found in another piece from *The Poetry of Badenoch*, Lilian Nic an Tòisich's (Lilian Mackintosh, fl. 1794) 'Ged a tha an Nollaig a' Tighinn' ('*Though Christmas is Coming*').⁹⁸⁷ Mackintosh was from the Mackintoshes of Borlum in Badenoch. In the opening stanza she emphasises the fact that it is Christmas time, giving added poignancy to the separation from her love. She mentions the various social occasions that will be taking place, but regrets that she will not be taking part this year as she is 'lamenting the fine young man' from whom she is parted:

Ged tha 'n Nollaig a' tighinn,
 Cha bhi mi cridheil gu ceòl,
 Cha 'n èisd mi ceòl fìdhle,
 'S cha 'n fhaighear mi' san tigh osd'.
 Cha 'n èisd mi ceòl fìdhle,
 No nì 's am bi spòrs,
 'S mi fo chumhadh an fhleasgaich
 So ghreas mi gu fhòd.⁹⁸⁸

*Although Christmas is coming,
 I will not be merry with music,
 I will not listen to fiddle music,
 And I will not be found in the inn.
 I will not listen to fiddle music,
 Or anything in which there is fun,
 As I am lamenting the young man,
 That has hastened me to the sod.*

But despite this expression of longing, her tone in the piece is largely celebratory. It is clear that she takes comfort during this period of separation from the fact that her companion has the esteemed status of a soldier. She praises his appearance in uniform and tells him that she will wait until he returns home to marry him, whatever rank he happens to have. The manner in which military service could bestow status in Highland society has been commented on by Stana Nenadic:

⁹⁸⁶ Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', p. 103.

⁹⁸⁷ Sinton's note states: 'The authoress was Lilian Mackintosh, whose family had sprung from the Borlums. She was described to me as, "Piuthair mathar dha Iain Ruadh an Clachair," i.e., "The sister of John Roy the mason's mother." Natives of Kingussie will remember the tall, handsome form, and gentlemanly bearing, of old John Roy.' *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

although membership of the military establishment did not necessarily provide an income for life, it did give a status for life, for even in retirement, officers were known by their military titles. In an age when the family basis of British status hierarchies were challenged by new occupations and new types of wealth, an officer in 'His Majesty's Army or Navy' had an easily recognised and valued position.⁹⁸⁹

Concluding her song, Mackintosh expresses sympathy for other women in her community who have no choice but to settle for partners of a lower social standing, again reflecting the bearing of service on marital options:

'S lìonar maighdean òg uasal,
Tha 's an uair so gun mhiadh,
'S mur pòs iad ri buachaillean,
Cha 'n 'eil daoine-uails' ann d' an trian,
'S ma 's a fiù leò bhi luaidh riu,
Balaich shuarach nach fhiach,
'S ann tha na fiùranan suairce,
'S an ruaig fo an Rìgh.⁹⁹⁰

*Many a noble young woman,
Who is at this time without esteem/status,
And if they do not marry cowherds,
There are not noble men for a third of them,
And if they even speak to them,
Paltry boys without value,
It is because the kind handsome youths,
Are in the pursuit under the King.*

Other expressions of the high social status of soldiering when compared to other occupations have been looked at previously in this thesis, such as in Duncan Bàn Macintyre's 'Òran na Gasaid' from 1799, where he bemoans physical labour and states, 'S mòr as fheàrr bhith 'nar daoine-uaisle, / Tarraing suas anns a' bhatailleann' ('*Much better to be gentlemen, / Lining up in the battalion*').⁹⁹¹ As such, similar perspectives on soldiering can be seen in both men and women's poetry from the period; it was seen as an esteemed and noble profession, in sharp contrast to other available employment in the Gàidhealtachd.

⁹⁸⁹ S. Nenadic, *Lairds and Luxury: The Highland Gentry in Eighteenth-century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2007), p. 100.

⁹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁹⁹¹ MacLeod, *Òrain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin*, p. 378.

‘An Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin’ (‘*Fair Calum’s Soldier*’) is another song of separation which provides insight into how military service impacted on, and was perceived by, a woman at home in the Gàidhealtachd. The subject of this poem appears to be Donald Matheson (c.1740-c.1831), son of Malcolm Matheson (Calum Bàn) of Valtos and Crowlista in Uig, Lewis. William Matheson refers to the poem in his ‘Genealogies of the Mathesons’, published in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* in 1972.⁹⁹² Matheson was born some time in the 1740s and joined the army during the Seven Years War (1756-63). He served at the siege of Louisbourg in 1758 and subsequently with the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders in India from 1781. The soldier returned to Uig and married Chirsty MacDonald, with whom he had a large family.⁹⁹³ He had a later period of service in Ireland from 1800 to 1802. William Matheson suggests that he married Chirsty MacDonald after leaving the army, but, as the Seaforth Highlanders were in Ireland after 1800 and his first child was born in 1794, it seems probable that Matheson married between his period of service in India and his service in Ireland. Therefore, it is highly probable that Chirsty was the author of ‘Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin’.

This powerful and well-crafted song contains a significant amount of detail about the emotional impact Matheson’s service has had on the poet’s life at home. It opens with a description of how he was sent to Ireland, with the poet focussing on his appearance in uniform:

Chuir iad thu air tìr an Eirinn
B’ aotrom bha do cheum air sràid,
Chuir iad umad deis’ an t-saighdeir
B’u tu an daoimean a-measg chàich.⁹⁹⁴

*They dispatched you on land in Ireland,
Light was your step on roads,
They dressed you in the uniform of a soldier,
You were the diamond among others.*

The poem is rich in emotion and gives the sense of being a cathartic expression of the poet’s feelings of insecurity. Derick Thomson has commented on songs of this type in the Gaelic tradition:

Song is woven into the texture of life [...] and is used both in celebration and as therapy. The personal keens are among the most dramatic of emotional

⁹⁹² W. Matheson, ‘Genealogies of the Mathesons’, in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 47 (1971-72), pp. 172-218.

⁹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁹⁹⁴ A version from Uig, Lewis, as communicated to Dr Finlay MacLeod. Another similar version can be found on the Comunn Eachdraidh Uig website: <http://www.ceuig.co.uk/an-saighdear-chaluim-bhain/>. These appear to be the only extant versions of the song.

songs, but many of the songs show a lack of inhibition which was perhaps characteristic of that 'heroic' society which lasted so late in Gaelic Scotland [...] Rarer, but clearly represented, is song of an introspective kind, which is not actively projected, but rather leaks into the general consciousness.⁹⁹⁵

'An Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin' is a deeply personal poem which can be cited as an example of this 'rarer' poetry 'of an introspective kind'. Introspection is evident in the poet's poignant description of the impact her separation from Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin has had on her home life. The routine actions of her domestic life take on an added poignancy as she relates how they remind her of her love:

O gur mise tha gu cianail
'S mi ri faicinn fiar a' fàs
E ri falach orm do lorgan
'S mi gu sgealbadh le do ghràdh.

Nuair a theid mi dhan a' mhòine
Bidh na deòir a ruigh gu làr,
Ach ged lionadh iad mo bhrògan
Cha leig mi mo bhròn ri càch.

Nuair a theid mi dhan an doras
'S a chì mi ghealach 's i na h-àird
Bidh mo smuaintean air an t-saighdear
Dh'fhalbh na fhèileadh dhan a' bhlàr.⁹⁹⁶

*It is I who am sad
As I watch the grass grow
Hiding from me your traces
And I am splintered by your love.*

*When I go to the peats,
The tears run to the ground,
And though they would fill my shoes,
I will not reveal my sadness to others.*

*When I go to the door
And see the moon at its height
My thoughts will be with the soldier,
Who left in uniform for the battle.*

⁹⁹⁵ Thomson, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry*, p. 58.

⁹⁹⁶ Version from Uig, Lewis, as communicated to Dr Finlay Macleod.

The daily chores and routines of her life are therefore invested with an added poignancy as they bring Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin to her mind. The sixth stanza draws skilfully on the imagery of the sea-tides to illustrate the distance between the poet and her beloved, while there is an allusion to sex in the seventh stanza as she informs Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin that even if three men visited her in the night she would not show them the same 'kindness' she showed to him:

Ged a thigeadh tràigh nach fhacas
 Riamh a leithid a's an àit',
 'S iomadh sruthan dhan a' chuan
 Tha eadar mi 's mo luaidh nach tràigh.

Ged a thigeadh triùir san oidhche
 'S mi nach tugadh dhaibh mo làmh,
 'S mi nach tugadh dhaibh an coimhneas
 Gheibheadh Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin.⁹⁹⁷

*Although a sea-tide would come,
 Such as never has been seen in this place,
 Many a streamlet of the ocean,
 That is between me and my love that will not ebb.*

*Although three would come in the night,
 I would not give them my hand,
 I would not show them the kindness
 That I showed to Fair Calum's Soldier.*

The eighth stanza invokes a powerful image of Donald as a warrior visiting the poet in her sleep, perhaps reflecting her anxiety of abandonment coming through in her dreams:

Chunnaic mis' thu às mo chadal
 Rì tighinn dhachaigh às a' bhlàr,
 Le do chlaidheamh caol a' lasadh
 'S cha b' ann dham iarraidh-sa a bha.⁹⁹⁸

*I saw you in my sleep
 Coming home from the battle,
 With your thin sword aflame,
 But you were not coming for me.*

⁹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

She concludes the song with a further declaration of love, that again focuses on the distance between the poet and her beloved. Again, we glimpse the poet's anxiety as she hopes that Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin will come back to her, but cannot be certain that he will:

Càit' a bheil thu, ghràidh an tig thu
 Bheil thu 'n dùil gun tig thu ghràidh,
 An tig thu shealltainn orm am bliadhna
 No 'n tig thu gu siorraidh bràth.⁹⁹⁹

*Where are you, will you come my love,
 Do you think that you will come,
 Will you come to see me this year,
 Or will you ever come at all.*

'Saighdear Chaluim Bhàin' is a personal, eloquent, multi-faceted poem that provides a valuable window into the impact of her husband's military service on Christy MacDonald. The poet's central concern and allegiance in this song is towards her relationship with her beloved; there is no conception of any obligation towards the wider army, military campaign or country.

Conclusion

The women's poetry of the British military experience of the Gaels between 1756 and 1856 bears many thematic and stylistic similarities with men's poetry, but there is enough in differentiation to mark it out as distinct in certain respects. The poetry corresponds with the women's tradition generally in its level of output (at least in what has survived) as there is significantly more military-related material composed by men than by women. There is also a tendency for named female poets to be from or connected to the higher social strata of clan society, as in the case of Mrs Fraser of Culbokie and Mairearad Ghriogarach. Women poets drew heavily on the heroic traditions of praise and lament, and while there are references to the negative impact that military service could have, there is also often a respect for, and pride in, the military profession. There is a particular focus however on the separation caused between family members and couples, which provides the impetus for much of the poetry. It is notable that the extant women's poetry is, on the whole, less jingoistic and less prone to the type of formulaic propaganda that is commonplace in the tradition of military poetry more widely. Family is a central concern and it might be said that this emerges as the key allegiance in the Gaelic women's poetry of the British military experience between 1756 and 1856. This corpus of verse poetry provides clear and illuminating

⁹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

evidence of the impact that the military had upon the wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of the Gàidhealtachd during the period.

Conclusion

Between the outbreak of the Seven Years' War and the conclusion of the Crimean War, Gaelic poets responded widely and comprehensively to the impact of the British military. They did so by drawing deeply on their highly militarised poetic tradition, which attained new legitimacy and purpose in the regiments of the British army. The activity of the British military and the service of Highland soldiers was perfectly suited to the type of warrior-focussed rhetoric which was inherent to the Gaelic poetic tradition. During a post-Culloden period when the world of the clans had been effectively eradicated, the military offered a site in which a pre-existing Gaelic warrior ideal - and its associated literature - could be resurrected and rejuvenated.

One of the key findings of this research has been to demonstrate the sheer magnitude of the response from poets. The 177 poems explored here constitute a major corpus of verse in the Gaelic poetic tradition. This deserves to be considered alongside the poetry of clearance and emigration as one of the most important bodies of verse related to the Gaelic experience in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The majority of these poems are found in published editions and anthologies of Gaelic verse. While these publications have, for the most part, previously been recognised, this is the first time that the military poetry within them has been comprehensively identified and collated. In the case of some published editions, such as John Gillies's *Tuireadh airson Cruaidh-chas nan Gàidheal agus airson Fasachadh Tir nam Beann, nan Gleann, 's nan Gaisgeach* (1854) and Donald Macleod's *Da Oran: Fasachadh na Gaeldachd agus Cor na h-Eaglais* (1844), this is the first time that the collections themselves have been brought to scholarly attention. Some of the poems are replicated in nineteenth century newspapers and periodicals, with selected pieces, such as Robert Stewart's 'Oran do Rèiseamaid Bhraghaid-Albainn' and Alexander Maclean's 'An Cogadh Ruiseanach' appearing only in these sources. Again, this is the first occasion on which some of these works which appear only in newspapers have been cited.

The response from poets extended across the geographic area of the Gàidhealtachd, and was not limited to specific areas. Nonetheless it should be noted that a significant proportion of the poetry came from Perthshire and Inverness-shire, and a number of poems also originated in Argyll, whereas relatively little extant verse has been collated from the Western Isles. A possible explanation for this is that Perthshire, Inverness-shire and Argyll were in closer proximity to urban centres and, therefore, printing presses. It should also be noted, however, that each of these areas were major recruiting grounds for some of the main Highland regiments, and proximity to these is also likely to have been a factor in the creation of military-related verse.

The presence of military verse is largely consistent across the one-hundred year time period, and there is a direct correspondence between the size and scale of the conflict and the amount of poetry composed about it. This is most evident in the poetic reaction to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. This was a

period of conflict that resonated widely across British society, and it has been shown that Gaelic poets' concerns and approaches sometimes mirrored those of their poetic counterparts south of the Highland line. This correspondence between the magnitude of military engagement and the response of poets to it can again be seen in the increased period of poetic activity during the years of the Crimean War. Once more, the influence of wider trends in poetry can be seen to impact on Gaelic verse in this period, as poets increasingly drew on newspaper accounts and the voice of the 'home correspondent' predominated.

The bulk of the poetry was composed by non-combatants - by poets at home whose role and responsibility it was to praise military figures and make the outcome of key battles known. It is clear, however, that there was also a consistent tradition of poetry by soldiers, originating with the variously attributed 'Oran a Rinneadh an America' from the Seven Years War and continuing through to the era of the Crimean War with Alexander Macmillan's 'An Cogadh Ruiseanach' and 'A. Mcl's' 'Na Gàidheil aig Alma'. This soldier's voice came to the fore in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period. Poets such as Alexander MacKinnon, Alasdair Mac Iain Bhàin and Duncan Campbell created their own bodies of work, which illuminate the impact of the military for those who saw active service during the period. These three poets' work also exemplifies the extent to which military service had become a global endeavour for the Gaels, taking in locations such as Ireland, the West Indies, Scandinavia, Egypt and France. Duncan Bàn Macintyre's poetry with the Breadalbane Fencibles, on the other hand, shows how the soldier's experience could meld with that of the 'home correspondent'.

There is a clear correlation between proximity to military activity and the composition of military poetry. This is most self-evidently the case in work by soldier-poets, but can also be seen in verse by Alexander MacKay and Allan MacDougall. Military figures were direct patrons for this verse; their (at least) passive role in its instigation seems indisputable. Sometimes the lines between active participants and detached observers are blurred. James McLagan's two published pieces, from 1756 and 1801, were composed respectively before and after his period of service with the Black Watch, but both demonstrate a poet at home in the world of the late-eighteenth century Highland military. McLagan's poetry is also demonstrative of the interweaving of a pre-existing, pre-Culloden military identity with one of contemporary relevance in the British military. When McLagan calls on Highland soldiers to be 'loyal to their arms and uniform', he asks them to cement an ideological bridge between a past and present heroic society.

This poetry did not operate in a vacuum: Gaelic poetry formed part of a wider response to the widespread and all-consuming demands of military service in British society during the period. While precise influence between the Gaelic tradition and writing in English and Scots is difficult to ascertain, broader similarities are clear. The overarching impact of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period resulted in poets across British society mirroring each other's subject matter. The French invasion threat proved a unifying experience for society and for poets across languages and cultures in Britain. While poetry about

Napoleon Bonaparte was widespread, the Gaelic response was particularly vituperative, drawing on the sharpened tradition of Gaelic satire. Bonaparte represented a major threat (at least to Highland elites), and was portrayed by poets accordingly. The impact of newspapers was another unifying factor. This is clear in the poetry of the Crimean period, as Gaelic tradition meshed with and drew from the copious coverage of the Crimean conflict in the press. The long and minutely detailed narrative account of the Crimean War composed by the 'home correspondent' poet, John MacDougall, would not have been possible during earlier periods.

Throughout this period, poets sought to reclaim and recreate the heroic society of the clans in their military poetry. Many poets viewed the military as a site in which a distinct and highly militarised Gaelic society survived, and in which the warrior ethos reigned supreme. During an age when many of the other pillars and authorities of Highland society had been eradicated or emasculated, the military appeared to offer a direct link with a strong and substantial warrior society. Authority figures often acted as focal points for poets, whether in the guise of military superiors or the Hanoverian monarchy. It might be said that the military itself acted as a key focal point of authority for the Gaels in the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. It can be argued that poets' focus on the military was motivated by the opportunity that the army and the Highland regiments seemed to present for heroic endeavour, featuring the associated warriors and heroes that the Gaelic literary tradition was inherently biased towards favouring. Given the poetic tradition of the Highlands, it might be seen as inevitable that the large-scale militarisation of the region in the post-Culloden era would result in an outpouring of verse.

The resilience of panegyric diction and its adaptability in new contexts comes across strongly in the poetic record. One of the main functions of panegyric poetry historically was to project strength and unity, and poets during this period used panegyric rhetoric in this manner. The distinction (and sometimes the divide) between bardic rhetoric and objective reality must always be borne in mind when studying the Gaelic poetic material. This is particularly the case when examining highly codified panegyric verse composed directly for (and at times in return for the payment of) military patrons. Allan MacDougall's poetry to his employer Glengarry is one such example, which provides little in the way of objective perspective, except in highlighting the easy application of the panegyric code in the post-Culloden period.

It seems clear, however, that some of the poetry considered here reflects social conditions and concerns in the Gàidhealtachd in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Throughout the period, poets viewed service as something that assured the rights of the Gaels as citizens. When this contract was perceived to have broken down with the enforced vagaries of clearance and emigration, poets reacted to this widely and, at times, vehemently. While some of the earlier poetry that lamented enforced displacement was vague in the apportioning of blame, later pieces, such as John Gillies's 'Tuireadh', provided a more focussed and

targeted critique (thus anticipating some of the poetry of the period of land agitation in the late nineteenth century). The same perceived correlation between service and the cultural and social rights of the Gaels can be seen in Archibald Campbell's response in the 1850s to an attempt to remove rights to wear Highland dress in a Highland regiment. In the same manner that Highlanders were liable to mutiny if they felt their military superiors had lied to them or treated them unfairly, Gaelic poets' signals of rebellion tended to take place in the context of a perceived breakdown in the contract between the Gaels and the crown.

For the most part, however, poets do not question or criticise the British military, and radical material is almost entirely absent from the Gaelic poetic record during the period. This is not to say that the response is always, or even normally, positive. Verse composed by soldier poets of the 1793 to 1815 period provides clear evidence of a dissatisfaction with military service, though this does not extend to criticism of the nature or motives of war during the period. As has been shown, there is one exception to this general rule: Margaret Macgregor's questioning of the nature of warfare during the period of the American Revolutionary War. It is perhaps notable that this is found in the work of a female poet, possibly less compelled or constricted by the inherent masculinity of the Gaelic poetic tradition.

The question of loyalty as expressed or revealed in the poetic record has formed a major strand of this research. One of the key findings has been to identify a propensity in much of the verse to focus on local concerns and imperatives. There is a tendency throughout the poetry to focus in on the central circles of the concentric loyalty model put forward by T.C. Smout: family, clan, kin, locality and, it might be added, Gaelic culture. Identification with the outer circles - nation, state, empire - though sometimes evident, seems more distant and superficial. Even in the verse of an explicitly Loyalist poet, such as in the work commonly attributed to Iain Mac Mhurchaidh, a yearning after homeland and culture forms a dominant theme. Poets often recognised Britain, but identified with Gaeldom.

It has been shown that poets' loyalties during the period were often concentric, so that they could express (or reveal) allegiance to different groups and identities at one time. This is arguably most evident in Duncan Bàn Macintyre's military verse, where the Regent(s), Clan Campbell, the Breadalbane Fencibles, and the Gaels all feature, to varying extents and at different times, as focal points of the poet's loyalty/loyalties. Regardless of this, Macintyre's work reveals a bias towards and allegiance with his own culture and community; and presents a poet for whom the more tangible financial concerns of himself and his regimental comrades were also key. Women's poetry on the whole shows some differences in approach and allegiance to that composed by male poets. This is best exemplified by Margaret MacGregor's work, which, in some respects, mirrors tradition and the work of her male counterparts, but also takes a distinctive and individualistic approach as regards the conception and portrayal of war and military influence. Where Alexander MacKinnon focussed on his fellow soldiers as principal points of

allegiance, Margaret MacGregor aimed her loyalty at the people who directly impacted on her life: her family.

Poets' concerns sometimes extend outside of the locus of their more immediate concerns of family and community. Military leaders from outside of Gaelic society are consistently drawn into the praise-sphere of Gaelic verse, so that Major General James Wolfe, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Raglan and Maréchal Canrobert are presented as heroes of the Gaels. More often than not, though, poets' concerns are directly related to the matters that impact most on their day-to-day lives - and are often inextricably bound with their personal circumstances. This is evident in work composed by soldier-poets exposed to front-line service during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, who often reject heroic narratives in place of starker realism. Warrior rhetoric failed as an effective conduit of lived experience in the face of modern global warfare. In this regard, their work foreshadowed the response of Gaelic soldier poets of the First and Second World Wars.

While the period after 1856 is beyond the remit of this thesis, an exploration of some of the key themes and questions explored here in later military verse would form a useful field of enquiry. Further research might investigate, for example, how loyalty was expressed or revealed in military poetry during later conflicts, such as the period of land agitation and the world wars of the twentieth century. The extent to which military verse of the 1756-1856 period might have acted as a conduit for the panegyric code's survival into the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could also be explored.

This thesis has demonstrated that military service and its impact was one of the pre-eminent concerns of Gaelic poets in the one-hundred year period between 1756 and 1856. The corpus of poetry explored here constitutes a rich and multi-faceted source that illuminates the response of these spokespeople of Gaelic society to a predominant societal force, and the manner in which they mined and developed their poetic inheritance in doing so. From James McLagan's exhortation to Highland soldiers on the eve of the Seven Years War, through Alasdair Mac Iain Bhàin's continent-spanning songs of service in the Napoleonic period, to John MacDougall's comprehensive re-telling of the Crimean War, the work of Gaelic poets provides a unique and vital perspective on the influence and perception of military service for Gaels in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This poetry should now take its place as a fundamental source in the military historiography of the Highlands and Gaelic literary criticism.

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