A’ faighneachd *Mhic-Talla* [Asking the *Echo*]: A corpus-based approach to vernacular classification of Gaelic songs

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Information

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
April 2025

Dalhousie University is located in Mi’kma’ki, the
ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq.
We are all Treaty people.

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Abstract

Ged a tha òrain glè chudromach ann an cultar na Gàidhlig, cha deach sgrùdadh siostamataigeach a dhèanamh air na seòrsachaidhean dùthchasach dhiubh. Mar thoradh air a' bheàrn sin, faodaidh tasglannan didseatach briathrachas cèin a chleachdadh mar mheata-dàta tuairisgeulach gus òrain Ghàidhlig a sheòrsachadh. Bheir na leubailean sin buaidh air mar a bhios Gàidheil agus daoine nach eil nan Gàidheil a' mìneachadh agus a' tuigsinn cultar na Gàidhlig. Faodaidh riochdachaidhean neo-chruinn sin ann an tasglannan lagachadh a chur air cultar na Gàidhlig. Tha an rannsachadh seo a' dèiligeadh ris a' bheàrn sin le bhith a' cleachdadh dhòighean cànanachas corpais gus sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air structaran buadhaireach agus ginideach co-cheangailte ris an fhacal as cumanta airson òran no dàn—*òran*—agus *amhran*, cruth dual-chainnteach dheth. Aig an aon àm, thathar a' toirt aire do na gnèithean dùthchasach a nochdas ann an co-chòrdalachd de dh'òran agus dh'amhran, agus do fheartan de sheòrsachaidhean nas fharsainge bho sheanchas nan Gàidheal fhèin anns a' phàipear-naidheachd, fior-Ghàidhealach, as fhaide a mhair, *Mac-Talla* (1892–1904). Chaidh dà fhichead 's a naoi gnèithean dùthchasach aithneachadh, a bharrachd air grunn sheòrsachaidhean nas fharsainge, leithid càileachd ciùil, aois, blas, agus bàrd. Le bhith a' toirt aire do dh'eòlas dùthchasach nan Gàidheal, tha an rannsachadh seo ag amas air cur ri còmhradh agus ri cruthachadh mheata-dàta, a tha mothachail air cultar na Gàidhlig, airson òrain Ghàidhlig a sheòrsachadh ann an tasglannan didseatach.

Bien que les chansons gaéliques constituent une facette essentielle du patrimoine culturel gaélique, aucune étude à ce jour n'a examiné de manière systématique les classifications vernaculaires des ces chansons. En raison de cette omission, les archives numériques peuvent recourir à des terminologies étrangères comme métadonnées descriptives pour les classer. Ces étiquettes influencent la manière dont les Gaëls et les non-Gaëls interprètent et comprennent la culture gaélique. Des représentations potentiellement inadéquates dans les archives peuvent ainsi entraîner une dilution de cette culture. Cette étude comble cette lacune en utilisant des méthodes de linguistique de corpus pour analyser les constructions adjectivales et génitives du mot gaélique le plus courant pour désigner un poème-chanson, *òran*, ainsi que d'une variante dialectale, *amhran*. Elle observe également les catégories vernaculaires à partir des concordances de òran et amhran, ainsi que les caractéristiques de classifications plus larges issues des récits des Gaëls eux-mêmes dans le plus ancien journal entièrement gaélique, *Mac-Talla* (1892–1904). Quarante-neuf catégories vernaculaires ont été identifiées, en plus de diverses classifications plus générales telles que la qualité mélodique, l'âge, le goût ou le statut de barde. En mobilisant les savoirs vernaculaires gaéliques, cette recherche vise à contribuer au discours et à l'élaboration de métadonnées culturellement sensibles pour les chansons gaéliques dans les archives numériques.

Although Gaelic songs are an important facet to Gaelic cultural heritage, no study to date has systematically examined vernacular classifications of Gaelic songs. Due to this omission, digital archives may utilise foreign terminologies as descriptive metadata to classify Gaelic songs. These labels will influence how Gaels and non-Gaels interpret and understand Gaelic culture. Potential misrepresentations in archives can lead to a dilution of Gaelic culture. This study addresses this gap by utilising corpus linguistic methods to analyse adjectival and genitive constructions of the most common Gaelic word for song-poem, *òran*, and a dialectal variation *amhran*, while also observing vernacular categories in concordance of òran and amhran and traits of broader classification from the Gaels' own narratives in the longest-running, all-Gaelic newspaper *Mac-Talla* (1892–1904). Forty-nine vernacular categories were observed along with various broader classifications such as melodic quality, age, taste, and bard. By engaging with Gaelic vernacular knowledge, this research aims to contribute to the discourse and development of culturally sensitive metadata for Gaelic songs in digital archives.

List of Abbreviations Used

DASG	Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable
gen.	genitive
KWIC	keyword-in-context
LIS	Library and Information Science
lit.	literally
nom.	nominative
pl.	plural
RDM	Research Data Management
sg.	singular
tf	term frequency
the Mòd	the Royal National Mòd

Glossary

amhran	song-poem
aoir (pl. aoirean)	satire
bàrdachd	poetry
blasta	tasty/flavourful
cumha	lament/particular metre
dàn (pl. dàin)	poem/syllabic verse
duain Challainn	Hogmanay songs
duan	lay/rhymed composition/ditty/recitation
duanag	little song/ditty/small parochial/love song
fili (pl. filid) (Old Irish)	professional class of poet
iorram	strophic metre/rowing song
laoidh (pl. laoidhean)	hymn/lay/didactic verse
luinneag	work song/ditty/panegyric
marbhrann (pl. marbhrannan)	elegy (lit. death song)
òrain basaidh	clapping songs
òrain bhleoghainn	milking songs
òrain botail (sg. òran botail)	drinking songs (lit. songs of a bottle)
òrain dhìomhain	vain songs (lit. idle songs)
òrain eutrom	(lit. light songs) light/witty/less serious songs
òran fògarraich	an exile's song
òrain ghaoil	love songs
òrain luaidh	waulking/milling songs
òrain mhagaidh	(lit. songs of mocking)
òrain mhatha (sg. òran math)	pious songs (lit. good songs)
òrain mholaidh	praise songs
òrain mhòra (sg. òran mòr)	great/big songs
òrain shìdhe	fairy songs
òran (pl. òrain)	song-poem
port (pl. puirt)	tune
puirt-à-beul	instrumental tunes from mouth
rann	rhyme/small song/lay
seann	old/ancient
taigh-cèilidh (pl. taighean-cèilidh)	ceilidh house
tàmailt	complaint

Acknowledgements

I am first and foremost indebted to my committee: To Philippe, *am fear aig an stiùir*, for your sophistication with research and for providing the right environment for me to engage with an aspect of my heritage. To Shamus, *an seanchasair grinn*, for your sensitivity, your humour, and your heart-centered understandings of a shared culture. To Louise, *an tè amasach, chiatach*, for your precision and practical insights in research data management. To Heather, *a' bhan-sgoilear chomasach*, for your onset enthusiasm of this research when it was just an idea and support in its conclusion. I see each and everyone of you in this document, and I am grateful to you all for guiding me along this twisty-windy, forest-thicketed path that is research.

A special thanks to the generosity and reliability of Dr. Sandra Toze who stepped in as a reviewer on my committee in the final hour of need; and to Brian James MacLeod, MA, honorary committee member, for our regular conversations on *aoirean, na filidhean, bàrdachd, is gach àbhachdas is gòrachas na lùib*.

Mac-Talla, the corpus of this study, was accessible due to the following institutions, their staff, and researchers: DASG (Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic); Leabharlann Sabhal Mòr Ostaig; Fr. Charles Brewer Celtic Collection, Angus L. Macdonald Library, St. Francis Xavier University; Susan Cameron, MLIS; Dr. Michael Linkletter; and Steven Stamatopoulos. Thanks are also in order to Dalhousie University Libraries, Novanet, their staff; Creighton Barrett, MLIS; and Julie Marcoux, MLIS; and also to the Writing Center, especially Dr. Vanessa Lent; Dr. Sharon Kubik; and Derek Andrews, MA.

I am further indebted to the generosity of *na daoine còire seo*: Dr. Laurie Stanley-Blackwell; Dr. Siùsaidh Nic a' Mhaoilein Kains; Oighrig NicRaing, MA; Dr. Ùisdean Cheape; Màiri Britton, MA; and Dr. Iain Seathach—and for the care and support from the MacPherson, Kingston, Chisholm-Ryder, and Anderson families.

Lastly, to the Gaels of *Mac-Talla*, who shared their voices, and to Jonathan G. MacKinnon, whose efforts inadvertently preserved them—*gun cùm clachan an cur air ur cùirn*.

Any mistakes are my own.

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Dedication

Harold MacMillan

seanchaidh Lochiall (tradition-bearer of Lochiel)

1. Introduction

Although Gaelic songs hold immense cultural and historical significance in Gaelic society, the terms employed by the Gaels to classify their own songs remains neglected in scholarship. This oversight presents a potential risk for misrepresentation in digital archives, specifically with descriptive metadata that serves as a kind of interface—mediating meaning between the item and the information seeker. This thesis seeks to address this omission in Gaelic song scholarship.

Gaelic is the traditional language of the Gaels of the Highland and Island regions of Scotland, diverging from Old Irish approximately 900 CE. Gaelic songs are the most prolific and enduring oral tradition of the Gaels (J. L. Campbell, 1990, pp. 21–22), with origins that may be traced to Celtic bardic traditions of pre-Christian mainland Europe (Dillon & Chadwick, 1972, p. 215; P. Kennedy, 1975, p. 131) and the bardic orders of medieval Ireland (Ó Baoill & Bateman, 1994, p. 2). In Gaeldom, song and poetry are intertwined, particularly after the period of classical verse when poems were probably chanted (Matheson, 1970, p. 152) and prior to modern trends with some poetry devoid of its sung musicality (McKean, 1992, pp. 14, 21, 23). Despite this nuance, poetry and song "remain inseparably linked in the consciousness of contemporary Gaels" (J. Shaw, 2007, p. 2).

Gaelic songs have been praised by MacGill-Eain (1985) as "the chief artistic glory of the Scots, and of all people of Celtic speech, and one of the greatest artistic glories of Europe" (p. 106). Similarly, Thomson (1991) believed that if the Gaelic language was to vanish, its "main impact on human experience" would be its poetry (p. 5). From the Fenian lays that detail 3rd-century legendary exploits of Fionn mac Cumhail and his roving band of Irish warriors (Collinson, 1966, p. 38), to the lament composed by Christina Ferguson outlining the last stand and death of her husband, William Chisholm, at the Battle of Culloden (1746) (MacKenzie, 1841, pp. 409–410), to Goiridh Dòmhnallach's recent reflections on the impermanence of a Gaelic milieu through the perspective of *Beinn Ghorm* (the Blue Mountain) (Cranford, 2011, p. 94); Gaelic songs are the medium in which the Gaels chronicle their lives, love, history, grief, dearly departed, and worldview in their own language. They are "exceptionally important

witnesses to the various outlooks, perspectives and mentalities" present diachronically in Gaelic society (Stiùbhart, 2007, p. 128).

Descriptive metadata serves the function of discovery and retrieval in information systems such as digital archive databases. Metadata has been described as a "narrative device" that can build identity and assert "the social contexts and genealogies of our knowledge" (Shi & Ii, 2024, p. 71). Misrepresentation in archives can affect cultural identity and perpetuate stereotypes (Caswell et al., 2017). There is growing awareness of this potential, which manifests in numerous archival policies that address the ethics of representing cultural heritage (Archives & Records Association [UK and Ireland], 2024; Association of Canadian Archivists, 2017; Museums Galleries Scotland et al., 2021). The Association of Canadian Archivists (2017), as stated in their *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*, "draw guidance for gathering, maintaining and communicating records' context" from "the communities from which the records originate, or that they represent" (p. 2). Vernacular categories are considered to "constitute a community's heritage" (Arom et al., 2019, p. 204). Accurate representation and metadata consultation with communities has been linked to a collection's sustainability (Somerville & EchoHawk, 2011). If metadata is inaccurate, not only are the songs themselves susceptible to misrepresentation, but the Gaels' own identity.

Once affixed to songs, metadata becomes a part of the transmission process. Oral transmission, although historically paramount in Gaelic society, is also informed by print and, more recently, recordings (Sparling, 2007, p. 20). For centuries, transmission has been intimately caretaken within the Gaelic community from generation to generation. There are several accounts detailing the intricacy, precision, and skill to this process (Sheridan et al., 2011). Many traditional singers transmitted these songs verbatim (J. Shaw et al., 2000, p. 37) even down to the precise replication of vocables[1] (J. L. Campbell, 1969, p. 228). Notable feats include the talents of Nan Eachainn Fhionnlaigh of Vatersay, Scotland, who was recorded singing over 460 Gaelic songs by memory (Collinson, 1962, p. 87; Ross, 1961, p. 18). These "performing gifts" have been rationalized by some Gaels as "a part of the shared cultural store, rather than the exclusive property of gifted individuals" (J. Shaw & MacNeil, 1987, p. xxii). They are

[1] Non-semantic syllables typically found in refrains of waulking songs.

expressions in a shared continuum of Gaelic culture. The imposition of etic labels as descriptive metadata that fails to respect the Gaels' cultural and linguistic identity risks disrupting this communal continuity by effecting how these songs are interpreted and accessed by the Gaelic community.

Compounded by a declining native speaker population in both Scotland and Nova Scotia (M. Kennedy, 2002; Ó Giollagáin et al., 2020), the Gaelic community's reliance on material from digital collections may only increase as more and more Gaelic learners seek out recordings to hear the voices of native speakers. This phenomenon has already been noted with Cape Breton Gaels' use of audio recordings (Sparling, 2007, p. 21). Gaelic song collections can also be linked to language acquisition as within Gaelic culture, language learning is "thoroughly tied to learning songs" (Sparling, 2005, p. 108) while archival recordings are considered "a vital aid to the learner of Gaelic songs" (Conn, 2012, p. 363). These sound recordings provide the Gaelic community with a means to not only learn the language but to also maintain the living song tradition (Sparling, 2007, pp. 21–22). They are an important tool to the acquisition and perpetuity of the Gaelic language and song culture.

Engaging with vernacular classification of Gaelic songs is in alignment with decolonization frameworks of flattening knowledge hierarchies. The Gaels have experienced centuries of cultural appropriation, anglicization, and systemic oppression, with some adapting to these hardships, often at the cost of their own cultural heritage through assimilation (M. Newton, 2015, p. 3). As early as the 1300s, there was an othering of Gaelic speaking Highlanders to the more Anglo-Norman, Scots-speaking Lowlanders (McLeod, 2019, p. 143). From the Union of the Crowns in 1603, to the Statutes of Iona in 1609, the Union of Parliaments in 1707, the outlawing of weapons and Highland dress after the Battle of Culloden, the 18th to 19th–century Highland Clearances, the Crofters' War, and the 20th–century Highland land reforms, the Gaels were repeatedly cast as primitive or barbaric neighbors (McKean, 1992, pp. 5–6; Thomson, 1958, p. 172). This process of marginalization and stereotyping continued in Canada (M. Kennedy, 2002). Meanwhile, the sophistication of Gaelic oral traditions was long misunderstood due to maligned views on orality and non-anglophone cultures (P. Kennedy, 1975, pp. 19–20). Vernacular classifications would respect the autonomy of the Gaels' own

knowledge systems which have been historically devalued. There are also Gaelic cultural understandings that validate this approach through the concept of *dùthchas* that includes the Gaels' affinity and familial right to their own traditions (MacInnes, 1976, p. 452).

Previous studies in this area have sought to organize Gaelic songs through systematic observations of a Gaelic song collection. To my knowledge, this research is limited to two main studies: 1) Ross (1957) and 2) Blankenhorn (2018). These studies collectively highlighted the complexity and plethora of Gaelic song categories along with the songs' various themes, uses, and functions. Both studies utilised a textual analysis to analyse a sample of Gaelic songs and developed a classification in an inductive and iterative process based on the demands of the sampled material. Many of the terms implemented were English and non-traditional.

In contrast, this study's objective is to analyse linguistic data to observe vernacular Gaelic song categories and potential broader indicators of classification utilised by the Gaelic community in the longest-running, all-Gaelic newspaper, *Mac-Talla* (1892-1904). *Mac-Talla* is a cherished newspaper among the Gaels that has been addressed in poetry thusly: "Tha thu eolach s gach aite / N robh clannabh nan Gaidheal / Mu n cleachdadh s ma n abhaist / Fo sgath na m beam fuar" (Alasdair, 1893, p. 6) (You are knowledgeable of each place / Where the children of the Gaels were / About custom and habit / Under the shade of the cold mountains).

For this study, I will analyse adjectival and genitive constructions of *òran*, the most common word in the Gaelic language for song-poem, and a dialectical variation *amhran* (Ross, 1957, p. 113) while also analysing song categories that appear in 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran. Fielding the query of vernacular song classification to the Gaels of *Mac-Talla*, the following objectives and research questions will be addressed:

Objective 1: Determine any vernacular terms that are used to classify songs.

Q1. What adjectival and genitive constructions occur with òran and amhran? What are their frequencies?

Q2. What categories appear in 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran? What are their frequencies? What are their adjectival and genitive constructions?

Objective 2: Determine any features of a classification system.

Q3. What semantic domains are present in adjectival constructions of òran and amhran?

Q4. What traits can be derived from genitive constructions of òran and amhran?

Q5. What descriptions in the Gaels' narrative can be used to derive a classification structure?

This study adopts a mixed methods approach and utilises corpus linguistic techniques. It contributes to the advancement of knowledge by analysing linguistic data on vernacular classifications of Gaelic song. This research demonstrates how corpus linguistic methods can be used to facilitate term discovery for the purpose of vernacular representation and has practical implications for advancing metadata description of Gaelic songs in digital archives.

In the following chapters, I provide a review of the relevant literature, detail the study's methodology, present and discuss the results, and conclude with implications and future directions for Gaelic song classification research.

2. Literature Review

Chapter overview

This chapter will establish key terminologies, provide an overview of classification practices in the broader Anglo-American folksong discipline, followed by more detailed discussions on Gaelic song categories, the organisation of songs in Gaelic songbooks, and two scholarly Gaelic song classifications. It will also introduce the chosen methodology, corpus, and theoretical framework.

2.1. Classification of folksongs

2.1.1. Definitions

Before proceeding, it is important to define common vocabulary as terms can vary from discipline to discipline and, at times, be used inconsistently among scholars. Key terms, relevant to this study, associated with classification in folksong, ethnomusicology, and library and information science (LIS) disciplines will be discussed briefly here. Key Gaelic terms will be discussed in § 2.2.1.

Classification, described as "the most fundamental activity of the human mind," is broadly understood across disciplines as a process of organising knowledge into classes, from general to specific terms, based on shared characteristics and relatedness (Chan & Salaba, 2016, p. 583). A *classification system*, or *schema*, is the product of this classification process. In folksong research, a classification schema is usually just referred to as a classification—giving two meanings to the word. In LIS, a classification system incorporates a theory, or set of principles, explaining how knowledge will be divided and subdivided, with the ultimate objective of connecting the information seeker to the desired information (A. G. Taylor, 2006, p. 391).

Although traditionally used to bring order to library shelves, classifications are commonly used today in online environments, such as digital archives, to provide "hierarchical means for browsing for relevant resources" (A. G. Taylor, 2006, p. 391). In information systems, classification enhances efficiency by facilitating retrieval, partitioning, and limiting the domain of a database query, essentially acting as an "information filter" (Chan & Salaba, 2016, p. 584). In digital song archives, the terms for song categories—the partitions of a classification—function as *descriptive metadata*,

describing an item or artifact, and facilitating information discovery or retrieval by filtering the song catalogue based on the search parameters of the information seeker.

A feature of classification systems is the *index*, which supplements the classification by providing alphabetical ordering of the material (A. G. Taylor, 2006, p. 394). Indexes have been used extensively in folksong research alongside *lists*. Lists can resemble and function as classifications; however they are simpler, as they tabulate material of a shared subject matter, such as song titles, under a single genre (A. Taylor, 1968, pp. 1, 20). In further minutia, when discussing the components used to describe music, Ross (1957) and other folksong scholars used "formal requirements" (p. 95), though "formal features" is commonly used in ethnomusicology (Martín-Vivaldi, 2018, p. 59).

Category, a term used by both Martín-Vivaldi (2018) and Arom et al. (2019), was preferred in this study for its precision and simplicity. While *genre* is sometimes used instead of category in Gaelic song scholarship (Meek, 1995; Sparling, 2008), this study adopts an LIS perspective, interpreting genre as a macro-level term, containing the assumption of subgenres. Martín-Vivaldi (2018) made the further distinctions of using *foreign category*, a term for a foreign word category used by researchers or those from outside of the community, and *vernacular category* the term used to define the "partitions into which a community divides its musical corpus" specified by "the local language" (p. 78). Others have used "emic category" (Blankenhorn, 2018, p. 130). This study will predominantly use vernacular category when referring to accepted Gaelic categories and foreign category when referring to non-Gaelic and non-traditional terminology. I use *term* when category seems too presumptuous.

Classification itself can be divided into institutional and vernacular approaches. Vernacular classification, also known as folk or Indigenous classification, contrasts with LIS, scholarly, or scientific classification as it is performed by ordinary people (Hjørland & Gnoli, 2021). Vernacular classification embodies vernacular knowledge—the counterpart to institutional knowledge. It does not aim for unity or cohesion, and can be "inconsistent, controversial and fragmentary" (Valk & Bowman, 2022, p. 9). In studying the intangible performance culture of the Gaels, Falzett (2010) stated that "local perceptions of these traditions" are "capable of revealing their function, meaning and

context within the communities that have intergenerationally maintained them" (p. 59). Vernacular knowledge allows communities to define their own knowledge systems and sustain their cultural autonomy.

2.1.2. Brief historical overview

To provide context for Gaelic song classifications, this section will lay the peripheral groundwork by overviewing practices from early Anglo-American folksong scholarship to developments in modern ethnomusicology, networking Gaelic song classification to broader practices through shared information and interaction.

To begin, the definition of *folksong* was itself nuanced and debated among folksong scholars, from (but not limited to) its method of transmission, its presence in the public domain, and its age (Davis, 1949, p. xi). Sharp (1907) carefully defined it as "THE SONG CREATED BY THE COMMON PEOPLE" (p. 3). Most American-folksong scholars held a liberal definition, as folksongs could meet varying components of the above mentioned criteria (Davis, 1949, p. xi).

Some of the earliest folksong collecting took place in Scotland and England during the mid-to-late half of the 18th century. These early collectors were harvesting popular ballads (P. Kennedy, 1975, p. 6). Between 1882–1898, Child published his seminal volumes, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads.* At this time, it was common to only collect the texts of the poetry and not the melodies (P. Kennedy, 1975, p. 7). Many of the early collectors were linguists (Bohlman, 1988, p. 35). Child's classification schema for the ballad collection was based entirely on a textual analysis. This method of folksong classification would become entrenched in Anglo-American ballad classification (Bohlman, 1988, p. 35). A textual analysis was the method used by both Ross (1957) and Blankenhorn (2018) in their Gaelic song classifications.

Some of the earliest folksong classifications served to stimulate collecting, facilitated distributional or origin studies, supported cross-cultural analyses, and offered accessibility for large collections (Bohlman, 1988, p. 36; A. Taylor, 1968, pp. 2–3). Nineteenth-century folklorists predominantly organised their collected material on "literary themes (e.g., idylls, romances and religious songs), motor functions (e.g., lullabies, songs for dancing or walking), links with choreography (e.g., to dance the *bourrée* or the *branle*), etc." (Olivier & Rivière, 2001, p. 480) In the late 19th century,

German folksong scholars incorporated social functions, alongside existing literary and contemporary classification criteria. The inclusion of categories like “songs of departure and wandering” and “historical-political songs” indicated new considerations as to how songs functioned within society beyond their literary or genre-specific features (Bohlman, 1988, p. 35). Melodic classification came later when scholars began studying melodic relatedness, where genetic-relatedness is the underlying classification principle (Bohlman, 1988, p. 36). Comparative ballad research began to slow down in the 1930s (Vargyas, 1967, p. 7). By the late 20th century, the broader political and social contexts of songs were seen as valuable and collected thanks to emerging theoretical perspectives in folklore (J. Shaw, 2010, p. 21).

Twentieth-century ethnomusicologists paid greater attention to “native classificatory discourse” (Olivier & Rivière, 2001, p. 480). More recent endeavours showcase ethnomusicologists creating classifications with vernacular categories to document musical heritage. Two prominent examples of these ethnographic studies were performed by Martín-Vivaldi (2018) and Arom et al. (2019) with Central African communities. Both studies used vernacular categories obtained from community members, as the outer circular framework of the classification—a contrast to flattened hierarchical models. Arom et al. (2019) described their method as beginning with “the organization of the repertoires as experienced by the members of the community, and as revealed in vernacular vocabulary” (p. 244). Observable traits such as performance, function, or instrumentation made various subdivisions. More important features were placed closer to the center with music, the object of study, at the core.

Although these studies respectfully implemented vernacular categories, they ultimately prioritised music—the subject of study—as the central element in the classification. However, this emphasis on sound may not align with how the community conceptualises its musical or song heritage. As Nettl (2005) elucidated, “there is no interculturally valid conceptualization or definition of music” and therefore, different cultures “may instead have taxonomies whose borders cut across the universe of humanly organized sound in totally different ways from those of Western societies” (p. 17). Would the Gaels centralise music in a classification of song when music (*ceòl*) and song (*òran*)

are two very distinct concepts in Gaelic? One is instrumental, the other entwined to poetry.

2.2. Classification of Gaelic songs

2.2.1. Scholarly communications on categories

There are 32 hits pertaining to song types in Edward Dwelly's authoritative dictionary of Gaelic that appear in *Am Faclair Beag*, the online version, when searching for the term *song*. This list is not extensive as it omits terms such as *puirt-à-beul* (mouth tunes) or *aoir* (satire). Although many of the terms are archaisms, this example serves to illustrate the potential complexity and scope of vernacular categories of Gaelic songs. The following paragraphs provide a discussion on key terms that have been discussed in scholarly communications. It is not exhaustive.

Before discussing song categories, it is important to note two styles of poetry as explanations on song categories rely on these distinctions. Watson (1932) divided them into classical poetry, from about 800 CE to 1730, and modern poetry, from about 1600 to 1830 (pp. xvii, xix). Classical verse, sometimes referred to as bardic verse or *dàn* in Gaelic[2] (Matheson, 1970, p. 152), was composed in Classical Gaelic, a "highly prescribed *grapholect* (literary dialect)," which developed near the end of the early medieval period (c. 5th–12th century) and was approximately in use until the 17th century in Ireland and Scotland (Lamb, 2024, p. 9). Classical poetry was a form of medieval syllabic verse composed by a hereditary class of literate, professional poets known as *filid*[3] who held patronages to nobility (Coira, 2012, p. 2; Collinson, 1966, p. 39; Ó Baoill & Bateman, 1994, p. 18). Syllabic verse was measured by syllables and had irregular stresses natural to the patterns of the words (Collinson, 1966, p. 39) and was probably chanted not sung (Matheson, 1970, p. 152). There were 300 known varieties of metres in which they composed, each dictating precise requirements for syllable count, alliteration, assonance, elision, and rhyme (Ó Baoill & Bateman, 1994, p. 20; W. J. Watson, 1932, p. xvii). Classical poetry consisted of panegyrics, satires, history, genealogy, heroic tales, secular content, and on the vary rare occasion, personal expressions of love (Thomson,

[2] *Dán* in Old Irish.
[3] Old Irish. *Filidhean* in Gaelic.

1974, pp. 11–12). The filid maintained their own "standard literary dialect" for approximately five centuries (Coira, 2012, p. 9) which must have become increasingly difficult for those only speaking the vernacular to comprehend (W. J. Watson, 1932, p. xxii).

In Scotland, although some chiefs maintained a *fili* (sg. of filid), it was more common in Gaelic aristocratic households to only patronise a bard (Matheson, 1970, p. 150). Clan bards composed in the vernacular, were usually non-literate, and shared kinship ties with Gaelic aristocratic households to which they were attached (Ó Baoill & Bateman, 1994, p. 2). These poets "were born; not made" (W. J. Watson, 1932, p. xix) compared to the professional filid. There was a belief that vernacular, or modern poetry originated with bard Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh (c. 1615–c. 1707) (D. MacKinnon, 1877, p. 36), although Watson (1932) wagered that "[t]his view will not stand the test of historical enquiry" (p. xxxiii). Some poetic features remained important such as assonance and internal rhyme (Alburger, 2003, p. 321); albeit, vernacular poetry's defining feature was its stressed metre which allowed for regular beats that could be sung (MacLeod, 1996, p. 124; Ó Baoill & Bateman, 1994, p. 19). The early vernacular song canon consisted of panegyrics for clan nobility, but the themes widened with Iain Lom's (c. 1624–c. 1710) poetry on Gaelic nationalism, and Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (c. 1698–1770) who introduced "fresh subjects" with poetry on seasons, nature, and poetic renditions of *pìobaireachd* (classical pipe-music) (W. J. Watson, 1932, pp. xxiii–xxiv). Compositions from the earlier professional poets would have also become vernacularized as they entered the oral tradition whereby "[v]ernacular words are substituted for older, archaic and obscure words or phrases" (McCaughey, 1984, p. 54). The collapse of chiefly patronage around the Jacobite Uprising of 1715, left the vernacular style of poetry "supreme" (Black, 2001, p. xi). The *taigh-cèilidh* (ceilidh house) then became the "power-house" of Gaelic culture rather than the courts of chieftains (Black, 2001, p. xii). [4]

Terms used in previous centuries were still in use by *Mac-Talla's* time, although their meanings may have altered, as demonstrated with òran and amhran. They are the most common words for song-poem today, albeit historically they had more precise

[4] *Taighean-cèilidh* (pl. of taigh-cèilidh) facilitated as a place for local learning where oral traditions were shared and practiced and has been likened to the concept of a university (MacIntyre, 1952, p. xxii).

meanings. Matheson (1970) outlined that at the time of bard Ruairidh MacMhuirich (c. 1646–c. 1713) An Clàrsair Dall (the Blind Harper), òran or amhran was a technical term for sung verse in a stressed metre: usually four line stanzas, yet often written as eight-line verse, had international origins, and dealt with common themes of life such as love (p. 152). MacInnes (1976) differentiated the òran metre from dàn and strophic verse (p. 462). MacLeod (1996) stated that amhran was a metre in which harpers would compose (p. 124). Watson (1965) presented amhran as a metre of one-line verse with four stresses, internal rhyme on the second and third stresses, and end rhyme on the ultimate stresses of each line (p. 144).

Dàn, *duan*, *laoidh*, and occasionally *rann* were terms used for a heroic lay (MacInnes, 1986, p. 103). These are mainly Ossianic or Fenian ballads that detail the Gaels' conflicts with Norsemen and can contain supernatural elements (Collinson, 1966, pp. 38–39). Fenian ballads are usually four-line stanzas in syllabic metre (Collinson, 1966, p. 39). They were the most prestigious material shared in the taigh-cèilidh (Stiùbhart, 2013, p. 32) and their recitation was considered a "task of specialists" (J. Shaw & MacNeil, 1987, p. xxviii). McCaughey (1984) detailed that by the 18th century, the terms duan and laoidh had lost their technical precision (p. 56). MacInnes (1986) elucidated that in more modern times the presence of the terms dàn, duan, and laoidh in song titles were how singers and listeners identify a ballad, e.g., Duan na Ceardaich ("The Lay of the Smithy") or Laoidh Fhraoich ("The Lay of Fraoch") (p. 103). Shaw (2007) detailed that *duain* (pl. of duan) are chanted syllabic metres with airs that differ from any other genres of Gaelic poetry (p. 5).

To segue briefly here on the challenges of applying foreign categories to define Gaelic concepts, the term *ballad* offers a particularly apt example. Alburger (2003) asserted that Gaelic songs are not typically included in ballad studies due to their differences in form and function (p. 320). Ross (1957) elucidated that by Anglo-American folksong definitions of ballad, Gaelic songs do not equate to the same concept (p. 127). He provided an excerpt from Gerould (1932) who defined the Anglo-American ballad as a folksong that "tells a story with stress on the crucial situation, tells it by letting the action unfold itself in event and speech, and tells it objectively with little comment or intrusion of personal bias" (p. 11). Ross (1957) stated that Gaelic songs that could meet

these requirements are “very rare,” providing only one example “*A’ Bhean Eudach*” (“The Jealous Wife”) (p. 127). MacInnes (1986) knew of only two non-Fenian ballads: “Laoidh Fhraoich” (“The Lay of Fraoch”) and “Am Bròn Binn” (“The Melodious Sorrow”). Ross (1957) further stated that Ossianic narrative poetry is in contrast “largely limited to the glorification of Fionn and his warriors” and contains “obvious bias of the poet, who is frequently a participant in the events described, and the overall lack of human interest so prominent in the ballads, completes the dissimilarity” (p. 128).

Panegyric (elegies and eulogies) and satire are long-standing staples of the Gaelic bardic tradition (Meek, 1995, p. 16). Panegyrics had special rhetorics of praise that MacInnes (1976) coined as the panegyric code, the essential elements being: “A subject is eulogised: he is addressed by traditional title and patronymic; his generosity and the magnificence of his household are praised; his prowess as a warrior and hunter celebrated” (p. 446). In classical Gaelic poetry, panegyric was used to sanction “an individual’s right to rule over his people” (Coira, 2012, p. 28). The code was utilised to “maintain an identity” whereby “the warrior’s role is the apex,” celebrating and reiterating the values “that were necessary for the survival of the nation” (MacInnes, 1976, p. 495). It is important to note, that panegyric is not exclusive to elegies and eulogies, as a “strain of praise and celebration runs through all Gaelic poetry” (MacInnes, 2007, p. 415).

Aoir, *òrain-chòmstri* (flyting), and *tàmailt* (complaint) are forms that deal with condemnation. In medieval Ireland, aoir was an instrument of social correction, as codified and governed by Early Irish legal tracts (Kelly, 1988, pp. 137–139). It exists throughout the centuries of Gaelic verse with evolving recipients of the invective. Meek (1995) noted a potential subgenre of aoir denouncing bad factors and landlords in the 19th century (p. 18–19), the copious *aoirean* (pl. of aoir) directed to rats in more recent centuries displays its modern versatility. Òrain-chòmstri, a flyting, is an “altercation in verse between two protagonists” (Ross, 1957, p. 119). Shaw et al. (2000) defined flytings as “bardic contests,” emphasising the bard’s skill for impromptu verse (p. 14). A tàmailt is a complaint usually on the subject of “seduction, subsequent pregnancy, and abandonment,” although it can be generalised to other subjects of complaint such as dispossession of land or military service (Ross, 1957, p. 109).

Marbhrann (elegy, lit. a death song), *cumha* (lament), and *caoineadh* or *tuireadh* (keening) deal with the subject of death. Ross (1957) described marbhrann as a "Gaelic literary type of considerable antiquity" (p. 116). Further stating that its function had remained constant: "to construct an obituary in verse as a memorial to a dead person" (p. 116). Cumha may be another word that has lost its technical precision. Watson (1965) described cumha as having a metre consisting of quatrains with four stresses, rhyme on the second and third stressed words, as well as rhyme on the final stressed word (p. 144). Rankin (2020) detailed its modern definition and nuance with marbhrann:

> [I]n earlier times, marbhrann essentially denoted the work of an established poet while cumha was applied to a less formal work. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, such distinctions had diminished in both Scotland and Nova Scotia, and some immigrant poets tended to use the term cumha more often in their poetic titles. (p. 1)

Cumha are also said to be a genre cultivated by women (Frater & Byrne, 2012, pp. 30–31), and the loss expressed has a "greater personal nature" (Ross, 1957, p. 117). Caoineadh or tuireadh are translated as keening by Stiùbhart (2019b, p. 128). MacDonald (2020) described keening as a "centuries-old custom in which women used stock poetic elements to improvise a vocal lament for the dead" (p. 11).

Laoidh, *salm* (psalm), and *òran math* (lit. a good song) are terms for religious songs. As discussed above, laoidh can mean a Gaelic narrative song; but also hymn. MacKinnon (1876) explained that laoidh is probably cognate with English *lay*; however, "'s e ciall cumanta an fhocail *Laoidh*, 'n ar latha-ne, Dàn Spioradail a tha air a chumadh ri fonn, 's a tha freagarrach gu bhi air a sheinn a chum cliù Dhè" (p. 3) (the common meaning of the word *Laoidh*, in our day, is Religious Poetry that is affixed to a tune, and is appropriate to sing for the glory of God). Salm are psalms sung in traditional psalm singing or precenting, where a precentor chants a line, and the congregation sings it back. Òran math was described by Ross (1957) as a "pious song" sung at private gatherings by Presbyterians when secular songs and instrumental music where not in favour (p. 122).

Òran bhleoghain (milking song), *tàladh* (lullaby), *òran maistridh* (churning song), *òran brathann* (quern song), and *òran buana* (harvest song) are work songs that are meant to accompany the rhythms of labour and were passed down through the oral

tradition (MacLeod, 1996, p. 126; W. J. Watson, 1932, p. xxv). None are as prolific as *òrain luaidh* (waulking/milling songs), sung communally to the fulling of cloth: a lead singer sings the verses and others join in the refrain. In Scotland, the apex of òrain luaidh was the 17th century with subjects of great men, chiefs and their hospitality, hunting, or love and death based in the Outer Hebrides, the Isle of Skye, and western seaboard (J. L. Campbell, 1969, pp. 17, 18; MacInnes, 2007, p. 413). Shaw (2007) was of the opinion that òrain luaidh contained "some of the most intense and powerful poetry produced by women in Scotland" (p. 19). It has been noted that some Gaelic ballads and rowing songs (sg. *iorram*) were repurposed and adapted into òrain luaidh (J. L. Campbell, 1969, p. 19; MacInnes, 2007, p. 415). In Scotland, òrain luaidh were historically performed only by women (MacInnes, 1976, p. 482). In Nova Scotia, they were performed by both men and women, while more songs were adapted as òrain luaidh (Sparling, 2019, pp. 125–126), such as four-line verse structures (e.g., "An t-Each Ruadh aig Roland Steele" [Roland Steele's Chestnut Horse]).

Iorram (rowing song/strophic verse) has nuanced meanings amoung scholars and between classical and vernacular verse. MacInnes (2007) described iorram as a song for men to keep time with the rowing of oars; although in classical bardic verse it would have had a metrical meaning (p. 415). Watson (1932) acknowledged its association with strophic metre (p. xlvi, l). He also translated iorram as *oar-chant* and noted its likeness to laments, detailing that "the noble dead were usually conveyed to their last rest—often in Iona—by sea" (p. 45). Ó Baoill and Bateman (1994) stated that as a work song, iorram went out of use around the mid–19th century (p. 26).

Puirt-à-beul (mouth music) are not unanimously considered as *òrain* (pl. of òran) but as *puirt* (tunes). Blankenhorn (2018) provided the example of Mary Ann Kennedy, who was firm in the belief that puirt-à-beul were first and foremost dance-tunes (p. 87). Ross (1961) stated that they were a "special case" and "not easy to identify satisfactorily" (p. 20). He elucidated on the word *port* (sg. of puirt) being more accurately translated to "a melody played on an instrument," further mentioning that the only adequate translation for them could be "instrumental tune from mouth" (p. 20). They are considered as simple songs and appear as reels, strathspeys, and jigs (Lamb, 2012, p. 17). Lamb (2012) noted that "[p]erhaps their lower prestige actually permits the expression of

certain aspects of human experience that would be infelicitous in glossier packaging" (p. 17). Ross (1961) illuminated on their "humorous and satirical tendencies," offering the example of a woman's composition for "an article of her underwear which ha[d] disappeared from a clothes line" (p. 21).

Òrain mhòra (great songs) and *òrain eutrom* (lit. light songs) are umbrella categories. Arom et al, (2019) explained that "an umbrella category forms when members of the society distinguish other categories within it" and thus there is "an inclusion relationship" (p. 218). Watson (1932) described òrain mhòra as "serious dignified compositions" replete with "feelings of *cruadal*, hardihood, *gaisge*, valour" and "*nàire*"—which he believed English had no accurate equivalent and likened it to the word αἰδώς in Greek (p. xxv).[5] Broadwood (1911) described òrain mhòra as consisting of "grand elegies and laments, songs of praise, rhapsodies descriptive of the beauties of nature and the like" (p. vi). Sparling (2005) noted that òrain mhòra is not a term habitual to Cape Breton, but rather "eight-line songs"—an explicit description of their metrical structure with connotations of their poetical depth (p. 343). Watson (1932) contrasted òrain mhòra to òrain eutrom which he described were "less serious productions" and contained "wit and, less often, humour" (p. xxv).

Luinneag and rann have multiple meanings associated with song. Broadwood (1911) defined luinneag as work songs distinct from laoidh, Fenian lays, òrain mhòra, and *duanag*, which she added were "a small lyric usually dealing with rural things and love" (p. vi). MacInnes (2007) had one of the most comprehensive accounts of luinneag. He elucidated on its wide semantic range especially from the 19th century onwards, defining it as a "'light song', usually fairly short – a 'ditty'" that is "sometimes used as the equivalent of 'lyric' in English;" however in the 18th century it was a form of panegyric poetry "celebrating great men in life and death" (p. 415). MacInnes (1976) also defined luinneag as an "older generic name" for a choral song, such as waulking songs, and distinguished it from dàn and òran metres (p. 481). Luinneag can also mean *chorus* (Dwelly, 1973, p. 609). Two meanings associated with rann are *quatrain* or *stanza*

[5] Dwelly (1973) defined nàire as "[s]hame, disgrace, ignominy. 2 The feeling of shame. 3 Bashfulness, modesty" (p. 684). Αἰδώς is referred to as a virtue of a superior person, by skill or wealth, who can make themselves discrete in the company of less endowed people to prevent feelings of jealousy or overwhelm (Abarim Publications Theological Dictionary (New Testament Greek), n.d.).

(Dwelly, 1973, p. 748). MacInnes (1986) stated that rann was sometimes used to refer to a composition that was "fairly short and not sung" (p. 103). Stiùbhart (2013) referred to rann as a rhyme (p. 61). McKean (1992) stated that many words in Gaelic for *verse*, such as luinneag and rann have "implications of melody" (p. 4).

Lastly, it is important to note that Gaelic song categories change throughout the centuries as their meanings evolve or new subcategories are created. In discussing oral-derived Gaelic prose, Stiùbhart (2007) remarked that "[g]enre forms and functions may remain relatively stable, but their subject matter certainly does not" (p. 128). The same may be said for Gaelic songs where new subjects emerge as the Gaels use poetry to negotiate new realities. Meek (1995) noted themes in elegies that dealt with changes due to a "loss of population" during periods of out-migration or forced eviction (p. 20), and a potential subgenre of aoir denouncing bad factors and landlords (p. 18–19). Ross (1957) also noted that homeland songs for the most part came about during the population movements of the 18th and 19th century (p. 111). There is Gaelic poetry for the Jacobite Uprisings and World War I (J. L. Campbell, 1933; Thomson, 1991, p. 22). As expressed by Sparling (2008), Gaelic genres are fluid and can change over time.

2.2.2. Categories and organisation in songbooks

The organisation of Gaelic songs in songbooks is not a subject of much scholarly attention. To my knowledge, there is no systematic study to draw upon to discuss the methods employed in them. Insights within the introductions of the songbooks themselves are also limited. As such, I will outline the organisational features of a select few songbooks that were contemporary to *Mac-Talla*, along with a select few legacy songbooks from both Scotland and Nova Scotia. This list does not contain full representation of the entire Gaelic songbook corpus, nor does it address manuscript collections.

There were 17 songbooks detected in advertisements in *Mac-Talla* during the deduplication phase of this research (see Appendix A). Of those 17 songbooks, 11 were collections dedicated to the work of one bard, and six were anthologies of various bards. Kennedy (1975) noted that in the early 19th century publications "were limited to the well-established type of literary poem"; however later in the century a "more liberal view" for publishing material was adapted (p. 19–20). Ross (1953) explained that *literary*

"can be used of the poetry of the trained bards, and of the poetry of e.g. Mary MacLeod, Iain Lom, Duncan Ban MacIntyre, Rob Donn, Alasdair MacDonald and numerous others…despite the 'illiteracy' (in the generally understood sense) of many of these Scottish poets and despite the fact that we owe the survival of much of their poetry to the strength of the oral tradition" (p. 218). Most Gaelic folksongs, such as òrain luaidh, were not published until the 20th century. Kennedy (1975) rationalised the exclusion of folksongs and the prioritisation of literary poems in the early 19th century as a push back to "parry the fierce attacks made by Dr Johnson on the literacy of the Scottish Gael" (p. 19).

One of the most prolific publishers of Gaelic songbooks advertised in *Mac-Talla*, was Rev. Alexander MacLean Sinclair (1840–1924), the grandson of Bard John MacLean (1787–1848). He published *Clàrsach na Coille* (1881), parts 1 to 3 of *Comhchruinneachadh Ghlinn-a'-bhaird: The Glenbard Collection* (1888, 1890a, 1890b), *The Gaelic Bards from 1411 to 1715* (1890), *The Gaelic bards: From 1715 to 1765* (1892), *Mactalla nan Tùr* (1901), and *The Gaelic Bards from 1825 to 1875* (1904). *Clàrsach na Coille* was mainly organised by manuscript sources and eras of the poetry of his grandfather, Bard John MacLean, albeit one song category was used: *òrain ghaoil* (love songs). Linkletter (2006) described the organisation of the *Glenbard Collection* as "somewhat haphazard" mainly because Sinclair was using typeset versions of the songs which had appeared in previous newspapers to save on printing costs (p. 278). The song-poems were organised by bard with a smaller section of presumably unknown authorship. Linkletter (2006) noted that Sinclair's later collections seemed to "bring order to the chaos of the *Glenbard Collection*" (p. 281). Sinclair's series of books titled *Gaelic Bards* organised song-poems by bards and distinct eras. *Mactalla nan Tùr* (1901) only contained a list of song titles.

Two songbooks common in Cape Breton Gaelic households, that were extant during *Mac-Talla*'s time, were *Sàr-Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach* (The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry) (MacKenzie, 1841) and *An t-Òranaiche* (the Gaelic songster) (A. Sinclair, 1879) (Sparling, 2005, p. 121). Black (2001) stated that MacKenzie's (1841) anthology "emerged straight from the world of the ceilidh-house, and went through seven editions between 1841 and 1904" (p. xv). MacKenzie (1841) organised the songs in his anthology

by bard, from earliest to most recent. Sinclair (1879) organised songs into three alphabetical indexes: song title, first-line, and bard. Other songbooks important to this timeframe were *Leabhar na Feinne* (J. F. Campbell, 1872) and *An Duanaire* (MacPherson, 1868) (A. M. Sinclair, 1881, p. vii). Campbell (1872) organised the heroic Gaelic ballads in *Leabhar na Feinne* by chronology of the stories. He paid great attention to the sources of the material such as manuscripts or oral recitations. Campbell had trained in Scandinavia and Germany (Bennett, 1997, p. 128) and was known for wanting "traditions recorded as precisely as possible" (Stiùbhart, 2007, p. 125). The organisation in MacPherson's (1868) *An Duanaire* was a simple list of song titles. MacPherson (1868) published a wide range of songs from: laoidh, tuireadh, cumha, tàmailt, *et cetera*—many of which appeared in song titles. Some compositions were described as an òran (MacPherson, 1868, pp. 19, 119, 191) others as a duanag in the songs' introductions (MacPherson, 1868, pp. 136, 174, 190).

Three prominent songbooks from the 20th and 21st–century were: the three volumes of *Hebridean Folksongs* (J. L. Campbell, 1969, 1977, 1979), *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist* (M. F. Shaw, 1955), and *Brìgh an Òrain: A Story in Every Song* (J. Shaw et al., 2000). These songbooks contain many folksongs that would have been sung during *Mac-Talla*'s timeframe yet were not collected until later decades.

Hebridean Folksongs I mainly contains a collection of òrain luaidh from Donald MacCormick's manuscript. The songs are organised by an index of first lines (J. L. Campbell, 1969, pp. 41–42). *Hebridean Folksongs II* also has an index of first lines, however, the songs are divided into three partitions within the songbook: "1. Songs probably not originally composed as waulking songs"; "2. Songs of single-line 'verses' of the metrical form 8^2 or 8^1"; "3. Songs of single-line 'verses' of four syllables each (8^2 divided)" (J. L. Campbell, 1977, p. ix). The first partition displayed an awareness of òrain luaidh consisting of songs that have migrated from other genres, such as Fenian lays or iorram, as discussed in § 2.2.1. The second and third partitions reflect precise metrical definitions. The final volume of the series, *Hebridean Folksongs III*, also had an index of first lines with material that Campbell (1979) divided into the following partitions: "4. Songs of single-line 'verses' of less than eight syllables" (p. 38); "5. Couplets without Internal Rhyme" (p. 79); "6. Couplets with internal rhyme, even lines rhyming" (p. 91);

"Clapping or Paring-off Songs" (p. 188). Again, these partitions display a sophisticated awareness of Gaelic song metre. Clapping (*port nam bas* or *òrain basaidh*) and pairing-off songs are a category of work songs that were sung after the waulking of the cloth while it was being patted and rolled onto a *coinneal* (wooden stick). Campbell (1979) described them as "light humorous songs in quick tempo" (p. 188). Òrain basaidh were the only other category present in these volumes of òrain luaidh.

In *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist*, Shaw (1955) organised folksongs by a list, which was supplemented by an index of first lines of songs. The 16 categories and translations that she used were: *moladh Uibhist* (in praise of Uist), *òrain seòlaidh* (sailing songs), *òrain cogaidh* (songs of war), *òran fògarraich* (an exile's song), *cumhaichean* (laments), *òrain seilge* (songs about hunting), *òrain gaoil* (songs of love), *òrain na féille* (songs of the fair), *òrain bheaga* (little songs), *tàlaidhean* (lullabies), *òrain bhleoghainn* (milking songs), *òrain shìdhe* (fairy songs), *puirt a bial* (vocal dance music), *òrain snìomhaidh* (spinning songs), *òrain luadhaidh* (waulking songs), *òrain basaidh* (clapping songs) (M. F. Shaw, 1955, pp. viii–ix). She separated ballads from songs—all of which had duan in their title (M. F. Shaw, 1955, p. vii). Unlike Ross (1957), she did not distinguish *duain Challainn* (Hogmanay songs) from duan that are a lay. Many of the categories are well-established categories in the Gaelic community. A few stand out as being specific to her song sample: moladh Uibhist, òran fògarraich, and òrain na féille. One of the songs in the òrain bheaga category is a pibroch (Indigenous classical bagpipe music), a point which she acknowledged (M. F. Shaw, 1955, p. 131).

In *Brìgh an Òrain: A Story in Every Song,* Shaw et al. (2000) organised songs sung by tradition bearer Lauchie MacLellan (1910–1991) into categories. They used seven: *òrain gaoil* (love songs), *òrain seòlaidh* (sailing songs), *òrain luaidh* (waulking songs), *òrain ionadail* (local songs), *òrain cogaidh* (war songs), *òrain sìdh* (fairy songs), and *òrain botuil* (drinking songs).[6] MacLeod (2007) stated that the songs in *Brìgh an Òrain*, were "categorised according to theme" (p. 445). Many of the categories are well-established, however I have only encounter òrain botail here.[7]

[6] Lit. songs of a bottle.
[7] According to Dr. John Shaw (personal communication, April 9, 2025), òrain botail is a term he acquired from an t-Oll. Iain MacAonghuis (Dr. John MacInnes) (1930–2019).

Within this sample, different approaches have been used to classify and arrange songs. Earlier songbooks primarily organised materials by bard, with some providing simple lists of song titles or indexes by first line. Song categories were rarely used as an explicit organising principle, though they occasionally appeared in song titles. Collections such as *Clàrsach na Coille* included limited categorisation (e.g., òrain ghaoil). In contrast, two of the three 20th and 21st–century publications examined here demonstrated a shift towards organisation by category. *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist* and *Brìgh an Òrain* grouped songs into categories. Meanwhile, *Hebridean Folksongs*, which focused on òrain luaidh, organised songs primarily by song metre.

2.2.3. Scholarly classifications

To my knowledge, only two scholars have endeavored to create comprehensive Gaelic song classifications complete with related theory and principles of their application: Ross (1957) and Blankenhorn (2018). Their work will be discussed here in more detail as it is the most relevant scholarship to this study.

Ross was a native Gaelic speaker who grew up in a Gaelic-speaking community. His seminal work was innovative for being the first, and for the longest time, the only comprehensive classification of Gaelic song. This research gap was in part why he endeavoured to create the classification; that, and the practical aim for it to be the "basis of a song archive" (Ross, 1957, p. 146).[8] At the time of his writing, the School of Scottish Studies had some 2000 recordings in need of classification (A. Taylor, 1968, p. 11). His contemporary, Taylor (1968) stated that his classification had been "most carefully made" (p. 12). Sparling (1999) praised it as "the most detailed and comprehensive" (p. 355), and Blankenhorn (2018) recognized its value as a foundation of Gaelic song scholarship, despite its limitations (p. 80). Gillis (2005) explicitly acknowledged Ross's classification as influencing her organizational principles (p. xx).

Ross (1957) described his approach as systematic, outlining four main criteria of: theme, structure, folk aetiology, and function (p. 96). Although he did not disclose precisely, it can be inferred that these criteria were obtained in a deductive manner with the subcategories created in an inductive fashion depending on the needs of the song

[8] A detail overlooked in Blankenhorn's (2018) assessment of his work (p. 80).

sample, which he observed through a textual analysis. Taylor (1968) noted Ross's lack of transparency in how he arranged the songs into subcategories (p. 12). Ross may have been drawing extensively from his experience growing up in a Gaelic-speaking community or from his ethnographic work—knowledge that was likely implicit to him and therefore left unstated. The 2000 recordings from the School of Scottish Studies made up the basis of his song sample. Ross's (1957) scope were song-poems from the oral tradition not literary tradition (p. 95). He admonished that "a systematic count of the various types might be misleading" as songs were still being collected in the field and examined (p. 146). This was in part why the classification was considered incomplete; and its elaboration was outlined as a recommendation for future research. Despite being incomplete, his classification is incredibly thorough covering a wide variety of different song types (see Figure 1). However, it is sparse in Gaelic terminology, and it is uncertain whether the Gaelic community would agree with the four main categories, despite the logic in the sub-subcategories.

Figure 1

Ross's (1957) Classification of Gaelic Folksongs

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1. Song Theme
    - 1.1 Songs with an inter-sexual aspect
        - 1.1.1 Love songs (general)
        - 1.1.2 Matchmaking songs
        - 1.1.3 Night visit songs
        - 1.1.4 Pregnancy songs
        - 1.1.5 Rejection songs
        - 1.1.6 Tàmailt (complaints)
    - 1.2 Songs relating to the physical environment
        - 1.2.1 Hunting songs
        - 1.2.2 Homeland songs
        - 1.2.3 Topographical songs
    - 1.3 Panegyric
        - 1.3.1 Eulogy
        - 1.3.2 Elegy
        - 1.3.3 Lament
    - 1.4 Satire
        - 1.4.1 Aoir

1.4.2 Flyting

1.5 Songs of miscellaneous themes
1.5.1 Religious songs
1.5.2 Bacchanalia
1.5.3 Jacobite songs
1.5.4 Merry songs

2. Song Structure
2.1 Ballads
2.1.1 Heroic Ballads
2.1.2 Sailors' Ballads (place-name songs)
2.1.3 Soldiers' Ballads

2.2 Macaronics

2.3 Pibroch songs

2.4 Puirt-a-beul

3. Folk Aetiology
3.1 Fairy Songs

4. Song Function
4.1 Songs associated with ritual
4.1.1 Duain Challuinn (Hogmanay Songs)
4.1.2 Eòlais (Charms and Incantations)

4.2 Occupational Songs
4.2.1 Cradle Songs
4.2.2 Milking Songs
4.2.3 Orain Basaidh (Palming or Clapping Songs)
4.2.4 Rowing Songs
4.2.5 Spinning Songs

Note. (Ross, 1957, pp. 96–98).

It is probable that Ross (1957) rejected the applicability of cross-cultural song analysis due to songs' plurality of formal requirements, such as the ones he detailed: theme, structure, folk aetiology, and function, or even metrical form. He contrasted the challenges of classifying songs to the systematic progress made in folk-tale studies, comparing the work of Aarne and Thompson, stating that story plots had "no formal requirements other than those of the arrangement of narrative elements" and thereby

simpler to classify (p. 95). The four main criteria in his classification, reflected the plurality he saw in folksongs. It is perhaps in lieu of Ross's (1957) view on the impracticality of a song classification's "international application" (p. 95), that he created a classification specifically tailored to Gaelic folksongs—a point which Taylor (1968) commented favourably on even though it would have limited applicability to folksongs in other languages (p. 12)—the contemporary disciplinary focus. His approach was more inline with later scholarship such as Bohlman (1988) who stated that classification is often a "culture-specific or repertory-specific endeavor" (p. 33).

In further analysis of his work, Taylor (1968) mentioned that Ross's (1957) classification "should be compared to the classification of Irish songs" by Ó Súilleabháin (1942) (see Figure 2). The similarities between Ross's and Ó Súilleabháin's classifications highlight mutual engagement with the linguistic and cultural context of Gaelic and Irish songs, featured in tailored classifications. Ross (1957) referenced Ó Súilleabháin's classification (1942), while stating that "it has not been possible to use a previous classificatory system as a model" (p. 95). Ó Súilleabháin's (1942) classification was designed to stimulate folksong collection, specifically for the Irish Folklore Commission. Both classifications utilised some vernacular terms in Gaelic and Irish respectively. Ross (1957) included five Gaelic terms which he explained were more precise than English ones: *tàmailt* (complaints), *aoir* (satire), *duain Challuinn* (Hogmanay songs), *eòlais* (charms and incantations),[9] and *òrain basaidh* (palming or clapping songs) (p. 98). Ó Súilleabháin (1942) included three: *aislingí* (a song which appears in a dream), *deilíni* (a beggarmen's petition), and *burdúin* (a song composed in an impromptu manner) (p. 657–658). Both classifications displayed an awareness of how these songs function within the community.

[9] Stiùbhart (2013) translated eòlas as "a knowledge" (p. 29). However, he also explained: "the putative boundaries separating charms proper from prayers, blessings, curses, hymns and indeed work songs are ill-defined and distinctly porous" (p. 30).

Figure 2

Ó Súilleabháin's (1942) List of Irish Songs

(*a*) Religious songs. (*b*) Songs about the Church and the Faith. (*c*) Love songs and *aislingí*. (*d*) Songs about marriage. (*e*) Children's songs and lullabies. (*f*) Songs of lamentation (on the death of somebody, or on the occasion of some other loss or tragedy). (*g*) Historical songs, or verses composed about local events. (*h*) Patriotic songs and ballads. (*i*) Songs of praise (of people, places, brave deeds *etc*.). (*j*) Songs of complaint (made by prisoners, people in distress *etc*.). (*k*) Songs about animals (race-horses, bulls, cows, sheep, *etc*.). (*l*) Songs of search and travel (mentioning places visited). (*m*) Trade and occupation songs. (*n*) Boat-songs (boats, boat-races, *etc*.). (*o*) Drinking songs and toasts. (*p*) Songs about tobacco *etc*. (*q*) Humorous song. (*r*) Hunting songs. (*s*) Disputative songs (in which two or more people have a controversy). (*t*) Satires and maledictive songs. (*u*) Occasional songs (descriptive of some happening *etc*. of the moment). (*v*) Impromptu songs and verses (made on the spur of the moment); *búrdúin*. (*w*) Random verses or fragments of songs. (*x*) Beggarmen's petitions (*deilíni*). (*y*) "Permits" (poetical) and "Warrants" (usually of a humourous or bombastic nature). (*z*) Songs of other kinds.

Verses and songs used by children or adults at play should be recorded. Examples of these are given on pp. 674-678

Note. (Ó Súilleabháin, 1942, pp. 657–658).

Although Taylor (1968) praised Ross's classification, he also admitted that his ignorance to Gaelic prevented him from commenting beyond generalisations (p. 12). Later scholars familiar with the language and culture would question some of Ross's principles. One repeated critique was his exclusion of the category for òrain luaidh. Both Blankenhorn (2018) and Sparling (2008) questioned his motives for omitting this quintessential category. Ross's (1957) explanation reflected his pluralistic view on the various components of folksongs, rationalising that despite the prominence of òrain luaidh in the Gaelic song tradition, they were not given status in his classification due to their "wide variety of themes and structures" (p. 98). His decision to divide òrain luaidh between classes revealed an influence from Anglo-American folksong classification practices which had been classifying by theme, structure, and function. Ross's (1957) classification would have discombobulated òrain luaidh across different categories making accessibility and retrieval difficult. More importantly, by omitting òrain luaidh, Ross overlooked a widely recognised vernacular category.

Another critique of Ross's (1957) work was the integration of theme, structure, folk aetiology, and function into a single framework. While this approach reflected an understanding of the multifaceted nature of folksongs, it also drew criticism for the inevitable overlap it created between categories. Blankenhorn (2018) argued that this plurality was "misleading" (p. 79) as the parameters were "insufficiently clear," particularly when songs could fit multiple categories simultaneously (p. 80). Overlap within a classification system is common in LIS (A. G. Taylor, 2006, pp. 394, 399) and typical in vernacular classifications (Martín-Vivaldi, 2018, pp. 75–76). Ross (1957) was aware of the overlap, admonishing that some subclasses in the structural class could fit into the thematic class; however, the distinction being that they would be classified by their structural component, only if those elements were more significant than the thematic ones (p. 127–126). This logic, however, could present problems for classifiers and information seekers as it is subjective. This issue could have been resolved by incorporating a faceted classification system, allowing multiple formal requirements to be recorded simultaneously rather than forcing songs into a single category.

Despite these shortcomings, Ross demonstrated an attempt to capture the diverse dimensions of folksongs, incorporated various varieties of Gaelic songs, albeit with only a small element of the Gaelic language. Even though he utilised an Anglo-American folksong classification framework, his classification was specific to Gaelic folksongs. For the scholarship of his time, that was probably significant, as even Taylor (1968) noted the uniqueness of this aspect. Although he did not incorporate many vernacular terms and neglected the quintessential category, òrain luaidh, he left a legacy through the detailed descriptions he provided of song categories within his article—which were informed by him being a native-speaker.[10]

Diverging from Ross's earlier archival focus, Blankenhorn's (2018) classification was more inline with ethnomusicological trends. It served as a tool to "understand the social and emotional role of songs in a traditional Gaelic-speaking community" for both singers and listeners (Blankenhorn, 2018, p. 96). Her classification divided songs into two overarching categories: introverted (personal or reflective) and extroverted (communal or outward-facing) (see Figure 3). Blankenhorn's (2018) classification sought

[10] Ross's (1957) article was used extensively in this study to identify vernacular categories (see Table 6).

to comprehend the lived experiences and functions of Gaelic songs (p. 81). Her work added to Sparling's (2008) previous sentiment on the fluidity of Gaelic genres, by highlighting how songs are repurposed within the Gaelic community (e.g., a cumha being sung as an òran luaidh).

Figure 3

Blankenhorn's (2018) Classification of Gaelic Songs

SONGS OF INTROVERSION

1. Songs to express subjective emotion
    - 1.1 Love songs
    - 1.2 Songs of loss
        - 1.2.1 Laments
        - 1.2.2 Songs of exile and nostalgia
    - 1.3 Worship
        - 1.3.1 Psalms
        - 1.3.2 Religious songs

SONGS OF EXTROVERSION

2. Songs to Accompany Domestic Life
    - 2.1 Lullabies
    - 2.2 Songs of occupation
        - 2.1.1 Milking songs
        - 2.1.2 Spinning songs
        - 2.1.3 Quern songs

3. Songs to Facilitate Group Labor
    - 3.1 Waulking / Milling songs
        - 3.1.2 Clapping songs
    - 3.2 Rowing songs

4. Songs to Lift the Spirits
    - 4.1 Children's songs
    - 4.2 Hogmanay ritual songs
    - 4.3 Puirt-à-beul
        - 4.3.1 Dance-songs
        - 4.3.2 Tongue-twisters
        - 4.3.3 Pseudo-canntaireachd
        - 4.3.4 Diddling
    - 4.4 Drinking songs
        - 4.5 Humorous songs

5. Songs to Inform / Teach
    - 5.1 Narrative songs
        - 5.1.1 Ballads
        - 5.1.2 Religious narratives
        - 5.1.3 Historical narratives
    - 5.2 Cante fable
        - 5.2.1 Songs of the supernatural
        - 5.2.2 Pibroch songs
    - 5.3 Didactic songs
        - 5.3.1 Canntaireachd
        - 5.3.2 Religious songs

6. Songs to Affirm Identity
    - 6.1 Clan panegyric, satire, and complaint
    - 6.2 Homeland and nature panegyric
    - 6.3 Political panegyric, satire and complaint
    - 6.4 Panegyric, satire and complaint about local events, characters
    - 6.5 Religious panegyric and evangelism (hymns)

Note. (Blankenhorn, 2018, pp. 91–92).

Similar to Ross's study, Blankenhorn (2018) examined song recordings through a textual analysis, yet she also included an historical analysis to determine the songs' functions. She did not explicitly state her song sample, but mentioned recordings from the School of Scottish Studies Archive, Edinburgh University; the Gaelic Folklore Collection, St. Francis Xavier University; and BBC Sound Archive (p. 82). Blankenhorn (2018) was careful to clarify that her scope was "broadly synchronic," reflecting the period between 1850 and 1960 approximately (p. 81). She importantly acknowledged that different eras would result in different terminologies—that there was a fluid nature to these classifications even across time (Blankenhorn, 2018, p. 81).

Blankenhorn's (2018) emphasis on the social and performative aspects of music drew on Merriam's (1964) theory, which posited that music's defining feature lies in its *uses* and *function*. Merriam (1964) defined *use* as "the ways in which music is employed in human society," whether in isolation or alongside other tasks or activities; and function as the broader purpose to which music serves (p. 210). The application of Meriam's (1964) theory prioritised the concepts of use and function which may not reflect Gaelic worldview. Furthermore, dividing songs into two overarching categories based on performance (introversion and extroversion), although useful for the research aims, could

be seen as a foreign choice for classification for a culture that heralds bards, has a long history of documenting metres, and judges a good song by *brìgh an òrain* "a song's subject matter" (J. Shaw et al., 2000, p. 24). In contrast to this method Arom et al. (2019) considered that "[l]anguage is the basis for confirming the often indissoluble link between music and the occasion of its performance" (p. 206). Both Arom et al. (2019) and Martín-Vivaldi (2018) created the frameworks of their classifications of musical heritage by using vernacular categories, prioritising the cultural autonomy of the community.

Although Blankenhorn (2018) acknowledged the importance of "emic terminology," knowledge gaps limited their application, explaining that "[u]nfortunately, we have found ourselves unable to rely upon a native taxonomy, perhaps because so few Gaels have seen fit to give thought to such a matter, while those who have done so have themselves been influenced by foreign models" (p. 76). She integrated only two Gaelic terms: puirt-à-beul and *canntaireachd* (vocal mimicry of bagpipe notation).

Both Ross's (1957) and Blankenhorn's (2018) frameworks risked imposing an external structure that may not have fully aligned with the Gaelic community's own knowledge organisation, thereby privileging the researcher's interpretive framework. This could unintentionally marginalise how the Gaels define and organise their own song tradition. Both classifications used minimal Gaelic terms. Had they used vernacular categories their methods would have aligned more with Arom et al. (2019) and Martín-Vivaldi (2018) whose foundational step in constructing a classification was to acquire terminologies from the community.

2.3. Corpus-based analysis

2.3.1. Corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics is a methodology that originated in the discipline of linguistics (Bowker, 2018, p. 3). It predominantly provides quantitative methods, supplemented by qualitative, to analyse language patterns in their original context. Unlike text-linguistics that reads texts whole and horizontally, corpus linguistics observes a collection of texts and reads them fragmented on the vertical to detect patterning in context of the keyword (O'Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010, p. 19). Corpus linguistics has been described as an

“empirical approach that involves studying authentic examples of what people have actually written or said” (Bowker, 2018, p. 4), making it an ideal methodology to study vernacular classifications of Gaelic songs.

Two of the simplest corpus processing techniques are term frequency (tf) and the concordance (Bowker, 2018, p. 6). Raw tf is the number of times a word occurs in a corpus. Tf is correlated to engrained language use of a speaker community (Gries, 2017, p. 13). The concordance is a tool for viewing a word-form or keyword within its surrounding contexts. In the days of biblical and Shakespearian scholars, these lines were created manually (O’Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010, p. 4). Today concordance lines are computer generated by concordancers and are referred to as keyword-in-context (KWIC). Concordance analysis is a qualitative method of analysing patterns in the concordance, displaying how neighbouring words interact with the keyword.

Over time, concordance analysis has been adapted to various research settings. As stated previously, they were originally utilised by biblical and literary scholars. In the 1960s, KWIC were used by Chemical Abstracts and the Institute of Scientific Information to create indexes for their publications (Chan & Salaba, 2016, p. 7). In the 1970s, the concordance garnered great interest from LIS scholars who began to use it for cataloguing and subject analysis (Hines et al., 1970, pp. 161–162; O’Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010, p. 4). More recently, Bowker (2018) argued for its broader use in LIS and digital humanities (p. 7).

In contrast to the methods discussed in § 2.2.3., corpus linguistics enables observations of natural and authentic language use and targeted analyses of linguistic features, such as observing adjectival or genitive constructions of òran and amhran. It provides the means to observe patterns of how song categories are discussed in a written corpus by a Gaelic community. It has been stated that “Gaelic songs are difficult, if not impossible, to categorize scientifically” (Alburger, 2003, p. 329). Corpus linguistics provides methods to observe and measure language features systematically in their authentic context, offering the means to explore vernacular classification of Gaelic songs scientifically.

2.3.2. Mac-Talla (1892–1904)

Mac-Talla (1892–1904), the longest-running all-Gaelic newspaper in the world, was selected as the corpus for this study due to its cultural and linguistic significance. Published in Sydney, Nova Scotia, *Mac-Talla*, meaning *echo*, was a bold venture by young editor Johnathan G. MacKinnon (1869–1944) that served to reverberate Gaelic values back to the Gaels. At a time when the dominant English narrative—that posited Gaelic was a "backward" language (M. Kennedy, 2002, p. 49)—was a waxing internal sentiment, "the paper elevated" Gaelic in the eyes of the Gaels "to a position of prestige" (Dunn, 1968, p. 87). Its slogan *An nì nach cluinn mi an-diugh, chan aithris mi màireach* (The thing that I do not hear today, I cannot relate tomorrow) alluded to the importance of transmission and communication in Gaelic culture. *Mac-Talla* was a means for the Gaels to look to the past and remember the people from whom they came, communally celebrate them, while simultaneously gazing at the future *gualann ri gualainn* (shoulder to shoulder) and assert their position in a modern world. Dunn (1968) attested that "the paper was highly respected and loved" by the Gaelic community (p. 87). Dunbar (2019) heralded *Mac-Talla* as "[u]nquestionably the most important Gaelic periodical from the Eastern Canadian Gàidhealtachd – and perhaps the most important Gaelic periodical of all" (p. 113). Songs were a main feature in its pages. Of the approximate 6000 songs indexed in the Nova Scotia Gaelic Song Index, 1343 come from *Mac-Talla* (*Language in Lyrics*, n.d.). *Mac-Talla* was an unparalleled resource for the vernacular Gaelic of the late 19th and early 20th century—a time of greater linguistic density—with consistent song content, making it an ideal corpus for this study.

A general criterion in corpus creation has been representativeness, ensuring the language reflects the speaker community in a natural, non-synthetically produced format (Gries, 2017, p. 8; O'Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010, p. 31). *Mac-Talla* fulfilled this criterion through its diverse subscribers, contributors, and content. The newspaper captured the voices and experiences of the Gaelic-speaking global community with contributors and subscribers hailing from Scotland and across the Scottish diaspora, such as Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. This diversity was also reflected in contributors' gender (both male and female), religion (Protestant and Roman Catholic), and occupations—ranging from scholars, clergy, government officials, farmers,

bards, to schoolteachers and students (J. MacDonald, 2022, pp. 42–43, 94–96). Its varied content covered the ordinary, formal, and traditional aspects of Gaelic life through the inclusion of songs, academic articles, letters, stories, current events, translated book chapters, proverbs, riddles, and advertisements. In his assessment of Gaelic periodicals, Dunn (1968) stated that "perhaps none has contained such varied material or appealed to a public so widespread" (p. 86).

To avoid biases toward "the idiolect of one particular informant," it is essential that a corpus includes contributions from a diverse range of contributors (O'Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010, p. 22). Although MacKinnon was quoted stating "I wrote much of it myself" (as cited in J. L. Campbell, 1990, p. 39), this has not been quantified. It is probable MacKinnon wrote editorials; current events; newspaper communications; birth, death, and marriage notices; and a story or two (MacLennan, 2013, p. 299). However, it is known that there was a plurality of contributors. Some articles were reprinted from periodicals such as *The Highland News*, *An Gàidheal* (The Gael), *Cuairtear nan Gleann* (Traveller of the Glens), and *The Celtic Monthly*. Many renowned scholars such as Rev. Duncan B. Blair, Rev. Alexander MacLean Sinclair, Rev. John MacRury, and Professor Donald MacKinnon provided articles on the Gaels' history, accomplishments, and traditions (J. L. Campbell, 1990, p. 39; Laing, 2013; Linkletter et al., 2013; L. MacKinnon, 1956, p. xx). Many subscribers wrote in with any notion they wished to express, sometimes providing a song with accompanying provenance. This communication channel has been likened to a form of social media (J. MacDonald, 2022), with intellectual and kinship networks (Dunbar, 2019, pp. 108, 123).

Mac-Talla, furthermore, served as a medium by which language—shared patterns of meaning—could be expressed by active and passive networks of participation. Its web of influence reached beyond its list of subscribers by how it was engaged with in the community. Its contents were shared in communal readings in taighean-cèilidh (Dunbar, 2019, p. 116; Dunn, 1968, p. 87). These literate Gaels "acted as a conduit to their communities" (Stiùbhart, 2007, p. 127), enabling *Mac-Talla*'s network to include non-literate Gaels, or those who may have struggled with reading such as the young or elderly. Similarly, with its regular inclusion of song content, *Mac-Talla* also facilitated print transmission of songs (J. Shaw et al., 2000, p. 35; Sparling, 2007, pp. 18–19).

Gaelic songs featured in periodicals may have made transatlantic transmission possible (Dunbar, 2019, p. 116). Through these communal interactions, *Mac-Talla* likely captured, to some degree, the experiences and voices of listeners, passive participants, manifesting in the pages of *Mac-Talla* through the writings of active contributors.

A final consideration for a corpus is its token size, a token being an individual instance of a word or character in a text. Sinclair (1991) was of the notion that a corpus should contain "many millions of words" (p. 19) and "should be as large as possible" (p. 18). The logic for this is due to the fact that many words have uneven distribution and occur only once within a corpus (O'Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010, p. 55). For targeted pedagogical purposes, corpora can be much smaller. Ma (1993) provided the examples of pedagogical corpora from approximately 7000 words to one million words in size (p. 16–17). For lexicographical purposes, O'Keeffe and McCarthy (2010) recommended a corpus size of over one million tokens (p. 56), further defining a small written corpus as being below five million words, although many small corpora are only approximately 250,000 words (p. 67). For a targeted analysis of song language, *Mac-Talla* satisfied this requirement being just over 5.5 million tokens in size.

In addition to the above corpus considerations, it is important to address any biases within *Mac-Talla* as these may have influenced which songs were published, omitted, or discussed within the newspaper. There have been a few mentions to biases within scholarly communications. Campbell (1990) stated that "[i]n politics it was imperialist and a firm supporter of the temperance movement" (p. 39). MacLennan (2013) observed that *Mac-Talla* had a propensity to publish some stories that reflected moralistic tropes common in Victorian-era literature (p. 300). Linkletter (2020) noted the paper's reputation for having a "certain liberal bias" (p. 328). MacLean (1994) interpreted *Mac-Talla* as "moreover, politically neutral" (p. 62). Rob Ruadh (1898), an informed contributor, was impressed by MacKinnon's skill at neutrality in his own editorial content and noted the presence of opposing political views within the newspaper (p. 102). MacKinnon (1893) himself stated that *Mac-Talla* did not "gabhail taobh seach taobh ann am 'Politics'" (p. 7) (take one side over the other in "Politics"). Further asserting that "[t]ha e fagail gach gliocas us goriche dhe'n t-seorsa sin aig na paipearan eile" (p. 7) (it leaves each wisdom and folly of that nature to other newspapers). *Mac-Talla* may have

been apolitical in Canadian politics. However, any biases regarding the temperance movement may have affected songs involving carousing; Victorian evangelical influences may have increased songs with religious content; and imperialist leanings may have increased songs in favour of the British monarchy. Nonetheless, *Mac-Talla* remains a valuable corpus for observing vernacular Gaelic song classifications due to its wide demographic of contributors, diverse content, large corpus size, and unparalleled cultural significance.

2.3.3. Theoretical perspective

In the pursuit of observing an internal perspective of Gaelic song classification, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential differences between Anglo-centric perspectives and other ways of knowing. Toelken (1975) illustrated this difference providing an example with the Anglo-American linear concept of time compared to the Indigenous circular concept of time, where time inhabits what an Anglo-American would conceptualise as space (p. 274). From an organisational perspective, categories have been described as a "key part of our cultural inheritance" (Gelman & Roberts, 2017, p. 7901). Linguistic relativity also proposes that languages influence classification by shaping how speakers organise their perceptions of the world, through confines of grammatical structures or unique cultural insights (Glushko, 2020, pp. 622–623). With respect to Gaelic song classifications, the lack of an emic classification, as stated previously in § 2.2.3., may not imply a lack of organisation. Instead, it may reveal a different mode of understanding or worldview—the sum of what "a society reproduces, through patterning on *all* levels of expression" (Toelken, 1975, p. 266).

Since songs hold a dominant place in Gaelic culture, it would be natural for the Gaels to have a unique understanding of them. As Shaw admitted, "in trying to find Gaelic terms for various kinds of songs from singers, my own efforts did not take me all that far" (as cited in Blankenhorn, 2018, p. 76). Blankenhorn (2018) suggested that this gap might have existed because few Gaels had considered the matter, further noting that those who had considered it were likely influenced by foreign classifications (p. 76). However, when Shaw (2010) had asked his informants why they sang, their polite perplexity revealed a deeply ingrained cultural understanding towards songs. Most informants did not register it as a question. Dan Allan Gillis provided the one and only

coherent answer, replying: “Singing songs? Well, I don’t know. People have been singing songs since the world began” (as cited in J. Shaw, 2010, p. 22). This statement encapsulates a worldview in which singing was seen as fundamental and intrinsic—a natural part of life. It did not require further explanation in the worldview of the Gaelic informants (J. Shaw, 2010, p. 22).

This perspective resonates with Toelken’s (1975) observation that certain elements of a culture can become so deeply embedded in its worldview that they are “likely never to question their validity or to study them objectively” (p. 270). For the Gaels, particularly in previous generations, “singing was constantly present” (J. Shaw et al., 2000, p. 13). They sang for entertainment, during work (J. Shaw et al., 2000), to keen and honour their dead (Stiùbhart, 2019b), in the taigh-cèilidh, at weddings, around kitchen tables, working in hayfields, or logging camps. They sang psalms in church, to conclude an academic speech, to dance, or to while away the time while “reaping, rowing, hauling in fishing nets” or waulking cloth (MacLeod, 1996, p. 127). As a writer in *Mac-Talla* phrased it: “Bha oran deas aig a’ Ghaidheal airson gach suidheachadh agus gach am” (Anonymous, 1897a, p. 1) (There was a song ready at the Gael for each time and each occasion). This suggests that Gaelic song classification, while not overtly articulated, is, similar to singing in Gaelic society, deeply embedded in the Gaels’ worldview—omnipresent, beneath the surface of explicit thought.

Contemporary perceptions of worldview increasingly connect it to an inescapable aspect of our communication. Cashman (2016) defines worldview as “something much more modest, a label—faulty as all labels are—for the frames of mind and interpretive vehicles that we all develop over a lifetime of living as an individual in a group and that we make explicit, concrete, and localized in interaction and communication, not least through folklore” (p. 23). This definition underscores the idea that worldview is pervasive and reflected in the rhetorics of an individual’s narrative. Simultaneously, language has often been described as the vessel of a culture’s worldview (Gelman & Roberts, 2017). Meanwhile, corpus linguistics facilitates the capturing and identification of patterns within language. Through the application of tf or the concordance; corpus linguistics has allowed researchers to uncover rhetorics embedded in corpora, providing the means to

capture worldview from static and written communication (Gontier et al., 2022; Jiménez-Pazos, 2022).

In the minutia of how to interpret meaning from linguistic data, tf is largely accepted in usage-based linguistics as being correlated to "productivity and cognitive entrenchment" within the observed language community (Gries, 2017, p. 13). Furthermore, from an ethnographic perspective, "repeated narrations" serve as guides to understanding an informant on their own terms (Cashman, 2016, p. 42). Therefore, terms that have higher frequency in *Mac-Talla* may be interpreted as being more widely accepted within the Gaelic community represented within the newspaper. Albeit, in the ethos of respecting marginalised voices, low tf in this context may not indicate insignificance, but more accurately signal terminology that is only used regionally or song types that are sung infrequently.

Shaw's (2010) perception of singing being exceedingly embedded in the Gaels' worldview combined with Toelken's (1975) explanation that the elements closest to a culture often went unexamined, provides a framework of understanding that Gaelic song classifications may be embedded within the Gaels' worldview rather than existing in explicit classifications. Furthermore, the concept of worldview being contained in an individual's communication or a culture's language combined with the ability of corpus linguistics to identify and analyse language patterns, provides a framework for deriving the Gaels' worldview from narratives within *Mac-Talla*. Since song is so deeply embedded in Gaelic culture, its classification is likely to emerge not as an explicit system but as an implicit structure, embedded in linguistic patterns. The task of the researcher will be to analyse these rhetorics while understanding that these patterns may not reflect Anglo-centric ideas of classification.

Chapter summary

This chapter has established the definitions for this study, presented an overview of folksong classification, examined scholarly discourse on Gaelic song categories, reviewed organisational practices in a select few Gaelic songbooks, and analysed two Gaelic song classifications. It has also outlined the rationale for the methodology and corpus selection while defining the theoretical framework. The next chapter will detail the methods of this study.

3. Methodology

Chapter overview

In this chapter, I detail the methods utilised to answer the research questions reprinted below:

Objective 1: Determine any vernacular terms that are used to classify songs.

Q1. What adjectival and genitive constructions occur with òran and amhran? What are their frequencies?

Q2. What categories appear in 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran? What are their frequencies? What are their adjectival and genitive constructions?

Objective 2: Determine any features of a classification system.

Q3. What semantic domains are present in adjectival constructions of òran and amhran?

Q4. What traits can be derived from genitive constructions of òran and amhran?

Q5. What descriptions in the Gaels' narrative can be used to derive a classification structure?

This chapter begins with a reflexivity statement, followed by explanations on the general methodological approach, the sourcing and processing of the corpus and concordance, the analysis, followed by the means employed to ensure research quality.

3.1. Reflexivity

To express my positionality to this research I will begin with my *sloinneadh* (patronymic):

> 'S mise Tealsaidh, nighean Thòmais 'ic Ùisdein 'ic Dhonnchaidh Uilleim 'ic Eòghainn 'ic Dhonnchaidh 'ic Alasdair 'ic Uilleim.
>
> I am Chelsey, daughter of Thomas son of Hugh son of Duncan William son of Ewen son of Duncan son of Alexander son of William.

I am a descendant of Gaels from Glen Pean, Glenelg, and Kingsmills, Scotland, who settled in Glengarry County, Ontario, on Algonquin lands, in the 1790s and 1830s. I grew up on an ancestral farm which neighboured many ancestral farms of Highland families—

some who emigrated together from the same glen in Scotland. The last native Gaelic speaker of Glengarry County, Alexander MacDonald, died in 2001. I began learning Gaelic through songs. In order to hear the voices of native speakers, I listened to archival recordings, mainly through *Tobar an Dualchais*. I eventually attended St. Francis Xavier University and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. I began work as a research assistant on the Nova Scotia Gaelic Song Index.

One task was classifying songs—affixing descriptive metadata that would be used for information retrieval in an online database. I began evaluating the suitability of certain terms when classifying the song "O, Siud an Taobh a Ghabhainn" ("That is the Road I Would Take") by Anna NicGilliosa (MacDonell, 1982, pp. 132–135). The song detailed the leaving of Scotland to Upper Canada. It was the cataloguing practice at the time to classify songs about emigration under *exile*. However, NicGilliosa emigrated from Knoydart to Glengarry County in 1786 as part of a group of people who had the means—and, crucially, the agency—to *decide* to leave. They were responding to growing land tenure insecurities, a recent famine, increased rents, and the lure of kinship ties overseas, among other complex factors (McLean, 2014, pp. 108–116). The song in tone and content is one of triumph.[11] It reflects a conscious departure—not a forced removal. Yet by categorising it as exile, the label distorts its cultural, emotional, and historical meaning. In later cataloguing attempts I would use the label *praise*. But the question remained: what would the people have used? After living in a rural area of Northwest British Columbia, and witnessing the safeguarding of Gitxsan, Nisga'a, and Wet'suwet'en culture, and once attending the Master of Information program at Dalhousie University and learning of the conscious handling of Indigenous materials, I began to wonder if similar considerations and care could be afforded to the Gaels.

My heritage and upbringing have instilled in me a deep reverence for the material I study. This connection has shaped my perceptions of how historical contexts and lived experiences of Gaels can be oversimplified or misrepresented in archival practices. As a Gaelic learner and not a native speaker, I am aware of my positionality as an *outsider* to the linguistic heritage of native Gaelic speakers. As such, I recognised the importance of

[11] To listen to a recording of the song see "O sud an taobh a'gabhainn," Alexander Beaton (1972), Beaton Institute Sound and Moving Image Collection, T-326, side 2, 00:24:23, https://beatoninstitute.com/t-326.

engaging with native Gaelic speakers' scholarly communications. At the same time, I am aware of my positionality as an *insider* through my ancestry and cultural upbringing in Glengarry County, and note that I have access to conceptual and cultural pathways made possible through learning the language. My past experiences cataloguing Gaelic songs prompted the purpose behind this research. This study was guided by a commitment to reflexive practice, actively questioning how my own positionality influenced my research questions and design, selection of sources and corpora, and interpretation of the results. I was supported in these reflections by my committee which contained perspectives from both the Gaelic and non-Gaelic speaking-community.

3.2. General methodological approach

This study utilised a convergent mixed methods design to address the research questions. A convergent mixed methods design collects both quantitative and qualitative data with the intent of comparing and integrating the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2023, p. 235). Combining quantitative and qualitative methods in digital humanities has been promoted as producing more holistic understandings (Gelfgren, 2016, p. 107). As recommended by Bowker (2018), an initial examination of tf was conducted followed by a qualitative analysis on significant language features as observed in the concordance line (p. 15).

The study's design drew from established tools and principles of corpus linguistics, such as observing language in its context in the KWIC. The theoretical framework served as a guiding principle for methodological decisions. It was always deemed appropriate to incorporate as much context in the linguistic data as feasible, and to prioritise the Gaels of *Mac-Talla*'s narrative as much as possible.

3.3. Data collection

3.3.1. Corpus creation

The corpus for this study was sourced from two institutions: DASG (Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic) and the Angus L. Macdonald Library at St. Francis Xavier University. The DASG corpus was a secondary source already transcribed into electronic format. It may primarily be considered a raw corpus (i.e. unaltered text) with minimal annotations such as a brief header detailing volume, issue, and page number, and body

annotations <*gai*> and <*eng*> to indicate foreign words. The DASG corpus did not have complete representation of *Mac-Talla*, and so the remaining 27 issues were sourced from the Angus L. Macdonald Library which provided access to primary sources of the remaining issues. In terms of copyright, *Mac-Talla* is a work that is in the public domain in Canada. The texts from DASG were available for downloading and research purposes under section 1.4 Intellectual Property and Copyright (Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic, n.d.).

The 27 issues not in electronic format were photographed in RAW file format to prevent compression and data loss. Photocopies of issues made and saved in previous years were also scanned in PDF format.[12] The photographs of the original pages of *Mac-Talla*, supplemented by the scans, were converted to an electronic format by keyboarding. Adobe ocular character recognition (OCR) software was trialed as a means to automate this process but proved inefficient. During transcription, DASG's page annotations were replicated, but foreign word markers were omitted. Transcription accuracy was ensured through two levels of quality checks: one micro (word-level) and one macro (paragraph and document-level). Although it is common practice to have more than two quality checks and for one to be performed by another individual, this was not feasible. As noted by O'Keeffe and McCarthy (2010), balancing "academic integrity with practical realities, accuracy with expediency and size with efficiency" is necessary when constructing a written corpus, particularly when working alone (pp. 63–64). Data collected during the project was deposited with Leabharlann Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and DASG as per research data management (RDM) practices, to ensure its safe storage and preservation, and to allow for reuse. The practice of data deposit is in alignment with the FAIR Principles for Scientific Data Management (Wilkinson et al., 2016) and good data management practices generally.

The Angus L. Macdonald Library transcriptions were merged into the individual volumes from DASG using VS Code, a text editor software, selected for its transparency and UTF-8 encoding. The UTF-8 encoding supports multilingual characters such as the acute and grave accents in Gaelic. The complete set of texts for this study's corpus,

[12] This was an oversight: TIFF and PNG files are recommended for long-term preservation of images (Fortin, 2023).

encompassing all twelve volumes of *Mac-Talla*, was comprised of 5,678,453 word tokens.

By corpus typology definitions, this study's corpus may be defined as static, diachronic, and written. It may also be classified as a special corpus since it contains near full representation of *Mac-Talla* due to the additional issues sourced from the Angus L. Macdonald Library. However, two pages were missing from the Angus L. Macdonald collection: October 8, 1892, volume 1, number 20, pp. 3-4. It may also be considered as an historical corpus due to the texts' age.

R version 4.4.3., statistical software, was selected to perform concordancing due to its transparency compared to ready-made concordance tools (Gries, 2017, pp. 3–4). The web-based corpus analysis system, CQPweb, available through Lancaster University, that hosts Corpus na Gàidhlig (which contains DASG's corpus of *Mac-Talla*), was considered, but ultimately rejected as it was not able to integrate the issues from the Angus L. Macdonald Library. R, furthermore, supported the importing and exporting of XLSX files between the Excel workspace while also supporting UTF-8 encoding.

3.3.2. Concordance creation

The concordance, the lines to visualise KWIC, was created from the keywords òran and a dialectical variation amhran. This scope was manageable and facilitated a targeted analysis on song-poem language. The concordance was generated using quanteda, an R package that facilitates text analysis (Benoit et al., 2018). The R code was sourced and adapted from the Language Technology and Data Analysis Laboratory (Schweinberger, 2024). Search patterns were iteratively refined from broad to narrow. To remove unrelated terms, regular expressions (RegEx), special characters, were employed to specify the precise search criteria. A total of 3059 occurrences of òran and amhran were identified. The concordance was exported into an XLSX document to be imported into the Excel workspace.

To enhance the quality of analysis, duplicate observations from advertisements were identified and removed. A trial analysis revealed that duplicates from songbook advertisements disproportionately influenced results by overpopulating the data with terms such as *òrain Albannach* (songs of Scotland) or *òrain Iain Luim* (songs of Iain Lom). Since these advertisements represented a facet of the Gaelic community, it was

deemed appropriate to leave one representative of each advertisement within the data. Duplicates caused by reprints were left within the concordance as these reflected conscious editorial decisions to reprint the material. Duplicates caused by continuations of a song being printed on a following page within the same issue were also left in the data as these concordance lines were considered too dissimilar. Deduplication was completed manually in Excel using filtering and sorting functions. Similarity or distinct functions in Excel and R could have been used to deduplicate the data, but these would not have registered nuances with typographical errors. In the end, approximately 765 duplicates from songbook advertisements were removed from the data.

3.4. Data analysis

3.4.1. Term frequency procedure

For the raw tf analysis, the concordance was imported into Excel. To clean the data, the clauses consisting of the keyword and adjectival or genitive constructions were copied into a new cell, edited for typographical errors, and then standardised to Gaelic Orthographic Conventions (GOC). Original spellings of words not featured in *Am Faclair Beag* or the *LearnGaelic Dictionary* were retained (e.g., *òran-sèisd* [lit. a chorus song]). All letters were lowercased except for proper nouns. Personal names were regularised to accepted contemporary spellings of the individual. Dative clauses were trimmed, and only the genitive and adjectival constructions were preserved. For example, *Oran Luaidh a rinneadh an Grianaig* (A Waulking Song that was made in Greenock) was reduced to *luaidh* (gen. sg. of *luadh* [waulking]). Adjectives and genitive lexemes were then split into distinct rows allowing one observation per cell. Since Gaelic is a morphological language, and since the genitive case can resemble the nominative case, the lexemes were regularised by case and number in accordance with whichever was more prolific, to minimise manipulation of the Gaels' narrative. Dialectical variations were also standardised to the most prolific version in the corpus, such as *luadhaidh* (of waulking) to luaidh. These steps of regularising the text were necessary to obtain more comprehensive tf measures. Terms that have an older metrical meaning such as cumha (lament/particular metre) (J. C. Watson, 1965, p. 144) where not regularised to *òran cumhaidh* (lit. a lament song).

To make the data machine readable and to improve its reusability in alignment with FAIR Principles, care was taken in the handling of special characters. Special characters have specific meanings in computer languages that can affect certain procedures such as tokenisation. Commas were removed. Spaces between genitive lexemes, such as the spaces in personal names, were replaced with two underscores. Hyphens from prefixation and compounding words were replaced with underscores. If a hyphen was in a compound word with òran, the underscore was preceded by the letter *q*. Apostrophes that denoted a genitive construction were replaced with the letter *x* (see Table 1). The letters *q* and *x* were selected as they are not a part of the Gaelic alphabet. Apostrophes that denoted an elision were removed and the elided letter reinstated (e.g., "An Latha 'n-diugh" to "an__latha__an__diugh").

Table 1

Handling of Special Characters

Special Character	Changed to	Example
' apostrophe	x__	ax__Bhàird__MhicGilleEathain
- hyphen	q_	q_sèisd

Note. Special Character = the special character that conflicts with computer languages; *Changed to* = the character that the special character was changed to make the data machine readable; *Example* = an example of a special character changed in the dataset.

Adjectival and genitive constructions of òran and amhran were identified and coded. The genitive case was defined as a "dependent relationship between two [noun phrases]," such as possession (Lamb, 2024, p. 52). The adjective was defined as a word that "modifies a noun or states that it has a certain property" (Lamb, 2024, p. 90). Both preposing and postposing adjectives were coded. Postposing adjectives had to have an attributive relationship with òran and amhran, not a predicative relationship. Adjectives in the semantic domain of position (e.g., *ath* [next] or *deas* [near]), similarity (e.g., *aon* [same] or *coltach* [similar]), and quantification (e.g., *corra* [a few]) (Lamb, 2024, p. 91) were eschewed as this data was not deemed meaningful for obtaining vernacular categories. Comparative and superlative constructions were also eschewed (e.g., *an t-òran as fheàrr* [the best song]) as well as verbal adjectives (e.g., *thaghta* [selected]).

Adjectival constructions were further coded into semantic domains based on Lamb's (2024, p. 91) model (see Table 2) which was based on Dixon's (2023, pp. 73–75) model.

Table 2

Adjectival Semantic Domains

Semantic Domain	Example
dimension	*beag* (small), *mòr* (great/big)
age	*seann* (old), *ùr* (new)
value	*brèagha* (beautiful), *bòidheach* (beautiful)
physical property	*aotrom* (light)
human propensity	*sunndach* (happy), *tiamhaidh* (poignant)
colour	*dubh* (black), *geal* (white)
difficulty	*doirbh* (difficult), *simplidh* (simple)
speed	*luath* (fast), *slaodach* (slow)
qualification	*coltach* (similar), *àbhaisteach* (ordinary)

Note. Semantic Domain = the adjectival semantic domain; *Example* = an example of an adjective in the semantic domain.

Genitive constructions were coded into traits. These traits were developed in an inductive manner depending on the features that emerged from the data through three rounds of coding (see Table 3). The semantic domains and noun traits were used to determine how the Gaels discussed songs, and which features were more prolific in their narrative. Term frequency analysis was conducted in R, and the code sourced and adapted from Mongeon (2022).

Table 3

Genitive Noun Traits

Trait	Definition
song title	the title of a song
subject	the subject of the song
language	the language of the song

Trait	Definition
bard	a bard's personal name or the word *bàrd* (bard)
theme	the theme of a song
verbal noun	a verbal noun construction
function	a song that has a function
place	placename, country, location
people	a person or ethnic group to whom the song belongs
singer	a person, animal (e.g., bird), natural element (e.g., stream), or thing that is producing the song
miscellaneous	miscellanea that could not fit into another category

Note. Trait = the genitive noun trait; *Definition* = the definition of the genitive noun trait used in this study.

3.4.2. Identifying categories and hierarchical structures

To identify song categories the adjectival and genitive constructions were further coded into three types: cross-referenced, ambiguous, or rejected terms. Cross-referenced categories (e.g., òrain luaidh and òrain ghaoil) were defined as categories that were described in scholarly communications or present in Gaelic songbooks. Ambiguous categories were those that could not be cross-referenced with scholarly communications or songbooks but were speculated to be vernacular categories. Rejected terms could not be cross-referenced nor were they believed to represent song types or vernacular categories. Categories featured on the 20-word span that are non-ngrams[13] of òran and amhran were also extracted (e.g., marbhrann and cumha). In this extraction processes, homonyms were eschewed when their meanings did not pertain to a song category (e.g., luinneag when it meant *chorus* or rann when it meant *stanza*).

To determine term meanings, any descriptions and explanations appearing in the 20-word span concordance lines were coded. Additionally, qualitative descriptions of classification structures present on the 20-word span, such as hierarchical or flat

[13] An *ngram* is defined as a sequence of n words, such as a bigram which is two words in a sequence (e.g., òrain luaidh) (Jurafsky, 2009, p. 83). In this study, I use *non-ngram* to define the terms extracted on the concordance line that were not adjectival or genitive constructions of òran and amhran.

structures, were coded. This concordance line sample was restricted to lines containing a category or an adjectival or genitive construction. This reduced the dataset from the original 3052 (prior to deduplication) to 904 lines. The qualitative data was then compared with the quantitative results.

3.5. Research quality

To ensure reliability, coding decisions were guided by a clearly defined codebook. This codebook was verified by members of my committee. I performed a minimum of one round of quality checks to ensure that I had consistently coded the material according to the definitions outlined in the codebook. Incorporating an ambiguous category in the coding procedure to extract vernacular categories further mitigated assumptions and knowledge limitations.

To enhance objectivity, biases were minimised by implementing predetermined codes from Lamb's (2024) model of adjectival semantic domains. However, no predetermined codes existed for the traits in the genitive constructions. As such, these traits were developed in an inductive manner, where patterns were refined across multiple rounds of coding, although they are in part subjective. Further biases were managed through discussions with my committee members as outlined in § 3.1.

It is also important to note that the study is synchronic, and any analysis is not meant to be generalizable beyond *Mac-Talla*'s timeframe (1892–1904), as Gaelic song categories change throughout the centuries: words can take on different meanings and new song categories introduced over time. Despite this, Gaelic songs are a tradition with strong continuity and, as such, many terms have remained consistent throughout the centuries despite semantic or cultural shifts.

Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the mixed methods approach used in this study, detailing corpus creation, data collection, and analysis. It also described the tf and coding procedure used to examine Gaelic song categories and classification structures in *Mac-Talla*, while addressing research quality and methodological limitations. The next chapter presents the results.

4. Results

Chapter overview

This chapter is divided into two main sections. § 4.1. focuses on the vernacular terms and categories present in the 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran. It addresses objective 1 and answers research questions Q1 and Q2. § 4.2. focuses on broader indicators of a vernacular classification system. It addresses objective 2 and answers research questions Q3, Q4, and Q5. Each section begins with a reminder of the objectives and research questions. As this chapter is dense with Gaelic terms that appear infrequently, terminology will predominately be accompanied with English translation in contrast to other chapters. The terms in the figures are in their machine-readable format (see Table 1).

4.1. Vernacular terms and categories

In this section, I present the adjectival and genitive constructions of òran and amhran along with the song categories that were extracted from the 20-word span concordance lines. Below is a reminder of the objectives and research questions this analysis seeks to address:

Objective 1: Determine any vernacular terms that are used to classify songs.

Q1. What adjectival and genitive constructions occur with òran and amhran? What are their frequencies?

Q2. What categories appear in 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran? What are their frequencies? What are their adjectival and genitive constructions?

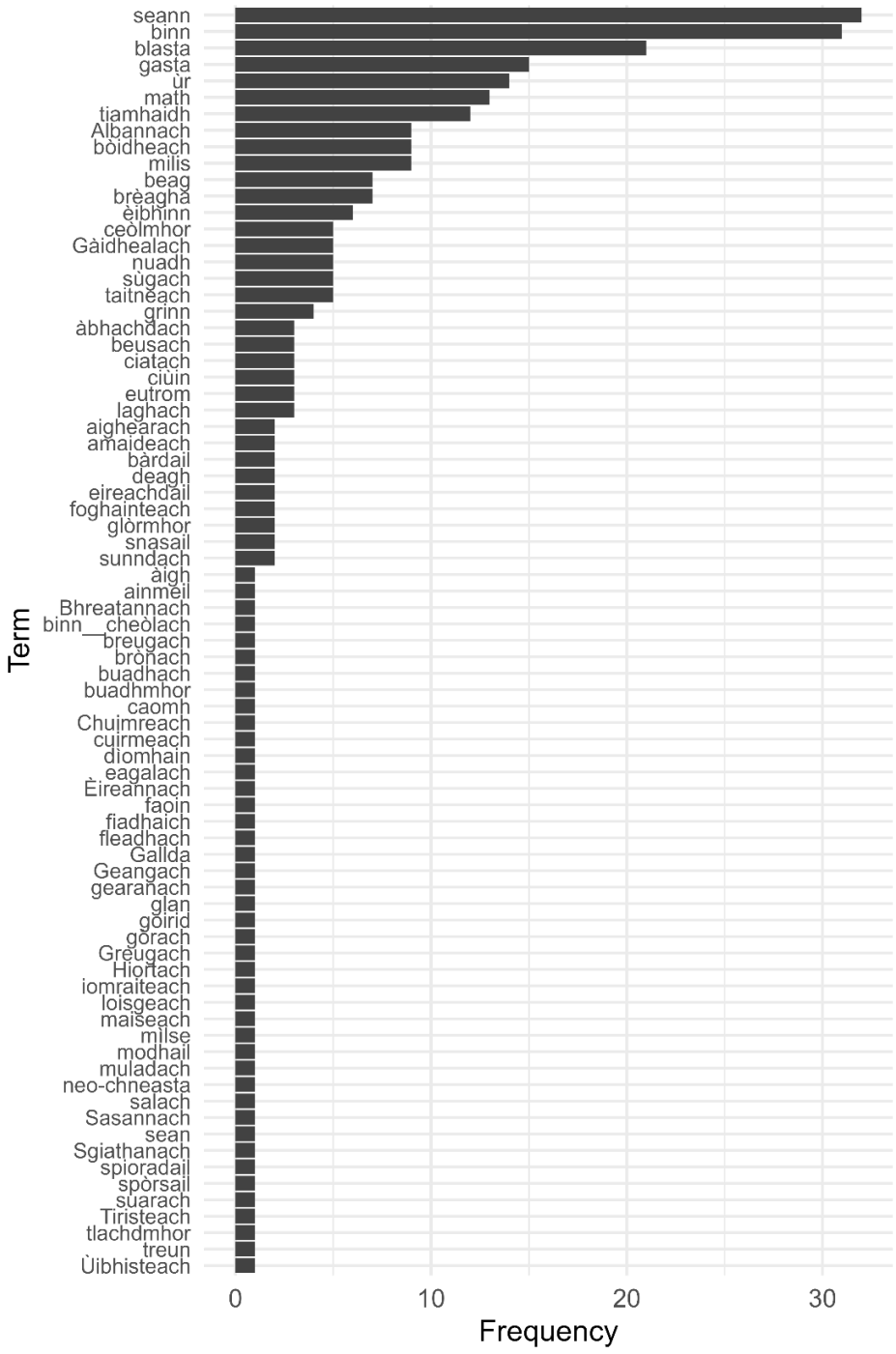
4.1.1. Adjectival constructions

To investigate vernacular classification of Gaelic songs in *Mac-Talla*, adjectival constructions of òran and amhran were extracted from concordance data as vernacular categories can be constructed with adjectives. To determine their prevalence within the corpus and thereby their potential prevalence through the Gaelic-speaking community represented in *Mac-Talla*, tf measures were calculated.

Figure 4 presents all of the observed adjectival constructions totaling 293 adjectives and 78 types (i.e. unique words). Both preposing and postposing adjectives were extracted.

Figure 4

Adjectival Constructions of Òran and Amhran



The term with the highest tf was *seann* (old/ancient), followed by *binn* (melodious), and *blasta* (tasty). Table 4 displays the top ten adjectives by percentage. Together these adjectives consisted of 28.7% of the total adjectival constructions. A large proportion of the adjectives, 56.4%, occurred only once. Notable omissions from the corpus were *òran mòr* (great/big song), *òran sìdh* (fairy song), *òran fògarraich* (an exile's song), and *òran botail* (bottle song), which may indicate the use of other terminologies or regional, temporal, or editorial decisions. Tabel 4 presents the top ten adjectival constructions by relative frequency.

Table 4

Top Ten Adjectival Constructions by Relative Frequency

Term	Translation	Relative Frequency
seann	old	10.9
binn	melodious/harmonious	10.6
blasta	tasty/savoury	7.2
gasta	excellent	5.1
ùr	new	4.8
math	good	4.4
tiamhaidh	poignant/sad	4.1
Albannach	Scottish	3.1
bòidheach	beautiful	3.1
milis	sweet	3.1

Note. Term = the adjective; *Translation* = an English translation of the term; *Relative Frequency* = the percentage of each adjective's occurrence out of the total number of adjectival constructions of òran and amhran.

These terms describe songs by age, melodic quality, taste, human emotions, and national or cultural identity. Adjectives were limited to attributive relationships with òran and amhran.

4.1.2. Genitive constructions

To further interpret vernacular classification of Gaelic songs in *Mac-Talla*, genitive constructions of òran and amhran were isolated from concordance data as

vernacular categories are also constructed with the genitive noun. To determine their prevalence, tf measures were calculated.

There were 489 occurrences of genitive constructions of òran and amhran. Of this total, 173 were unique types. Figure 5 presents the 65 constructions that occurred more than once.

Figure 5

Genitive Constructions that Occurred More than Once

Gàidhlig (Gaelic) and *gaoil* (of love) had significantly higher term frequencies. Together these terms consisted of 26.3% of the total genitive constructions. Table 5 displays the top ten genitives by relative frequency.

Table 5

Top Ten Genitive Constructions by Relative Frequency

Term	Translation	Relative Frequency
Gàidhlig	Gaelic	14.7
gaoil	love	11.6
Beurla	English	4.7
molaidh	praise	4.1
luaidh	waulking	2.7
Roib Dhuinn	Rob Donn	2.2
Iain Luim	Iain Lom	2.0
na Spàinntich	the Spaniard	1.8
cumhaidh	lament	1.6
a'mhathain	the bear	1.4

Note. Term = the genitive noun; *Translation* = an English translation of the term; *Relative Frequency* = the percentage of each genitive noun's occurrence out of the total number of genitive constructions of òran and amhran.

These terms consist of languages, song categories, bards, and song titles. Figure 6 presents the 107 genitive constructions of òran and amhran that occurred only once.

Figure 6

Genitive Constructions that Occurred Only Once

Alasdair, Annie__Laurie, Beurla__Albannach, Bhonaparte, Bhurns, Chlainn__Leòid, Chois__ax__Bhile, Dhonnchaidh__Bhàin__Mhic__an__t__Saoir, Dhonnchaidh__Fhionnlastain, Dhòmhnaill__Mhòir, Dhùn__Èideann, Dotair__MhicLachlainn, Ghilleasbaig__Dhòmhnallaich, Ghilleasbaig__na__Ciotaig, Ghlinn__Smeoil, Gàidhlig__Èireannaich, Iain, Mhaois__agus__an__Uain, MhicCodruim, MhicColla, MhicFhionghain, Mhàiri__nighean__Alasdair__Ruaidh, Morair__Ghlinne__Garraidh, Màiri__nighean__Iain__Bhàin, Mòraig, Nèill, Phabaigh, Seisidh, Sheumais__Chaimbeul, Shomhairle, Shomhairle__Camshroin, Thearlaich, Uilleim__Rois, a__dhaoine, a__dùthcha, allt__an__t__siùcair, an__acrais, an__leinibh, an__loin__duibh, an__ridire, an__t__saighdeir, an__uain, ar__sinnsir, ax__Ghobha, ax__Phainter Mhòir, ax__Phìobaire, ax__Valley, ax__bhaidealair, ax__bhaloon, ax__bhonn__a__sia, ax__bhrocair, ax__bhàird__ainmeil, ax__bhàird__Ìlich, ax__bhàird__Ùigich, ax__bhàthaidh, ax__chianalais, ax__gheamhraidh, ax__ghlaisein, ax__ghlinn__bhòidhich__na__sprèidh, ax__mhaorach, ax__mhàgain, ax__mhòid, bliadhna__ùire, brosnachaidh, buaidh, buana, comainn, connsachaidh, càinidh, dhaoine__dubha, dì__molaidh, fùcaidh, gràidh__clann__bheag__nam__preas, leannanachd, luchd__imrich, muilinn, na__Gàidhealtachd, na__caillich, na__h__ainnir, na__h__òige, na__maighdinn__mara, na__pìoba__thombaca, na__seana__mhaighdinn, na__seann__dùthcha, na__seilge, nam__Bàbilonach, nam__Frangach, nam__boireannach__dubha, nam__briogaisean, nam__buanaichean, nam__fineachan__Gàidhealach, nam_briogaisean, nan__Sasannach, nan__aingealan, nan__coileach, nan__cìobairean, nan__naomh, nan__sruthan, nan__uiseag__bòidheach, pòsaidh, q_seinn, q_sèisd, samhraidh, seachran__seilge, sàimh, sùgraidh, tìm__bròin, tìm__sùgraidh, àigh, àr__cinnidh

There is a variety of terms in this list from bards, song titles, song categories, languages, people or ethnic groups, verbal nouns, animals, etc. Any dative constructions of these terms were excluded from analysis.

4.1.3. Categories

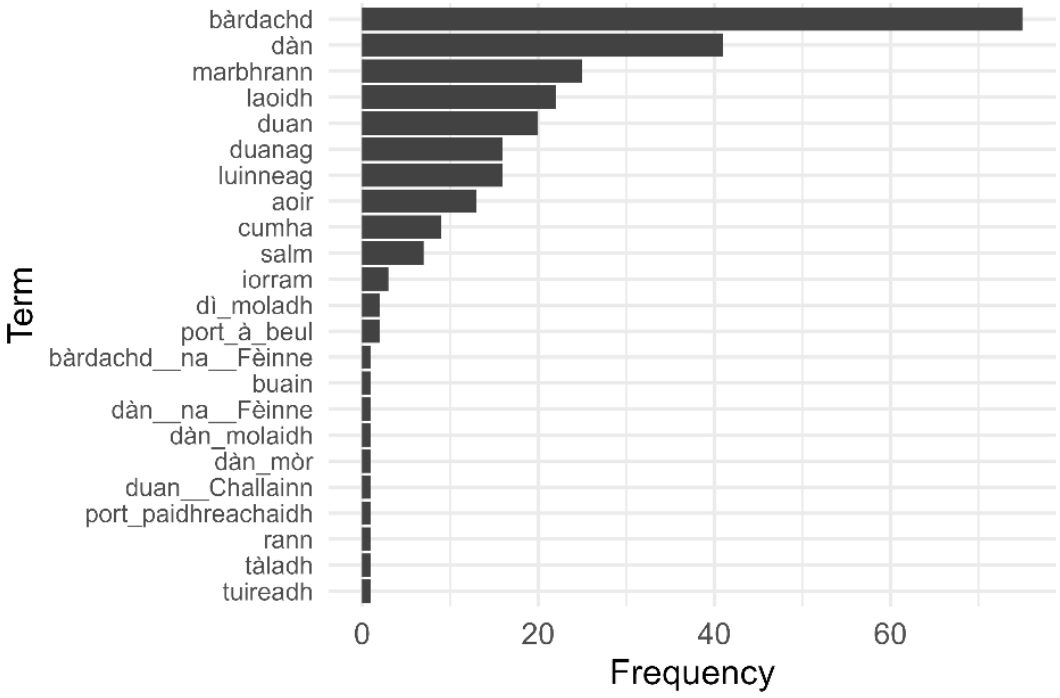
To investigate vernacular categories of Gaelic songs in *Mac-Talla*, song categories within the 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran were extracted. To determine their prevalence within the corpus, tf measures were calculated. Homonyms, such as *dàn* (poem/syllabic verse), *luinneag* (work song/ditty/panegyric), and *rann* (rhyme/small song/lay)—that can also mean *destiny*, *chorus*, or *stanza*, respectively—

were excluded from the data when their meaning was clearly not a song-poem type or metre.

There were 261 observations of categories in concordance with òran and amhran. Of this total, 23 were unique types. Figure 7 presents the extracted categories.

Figure 7

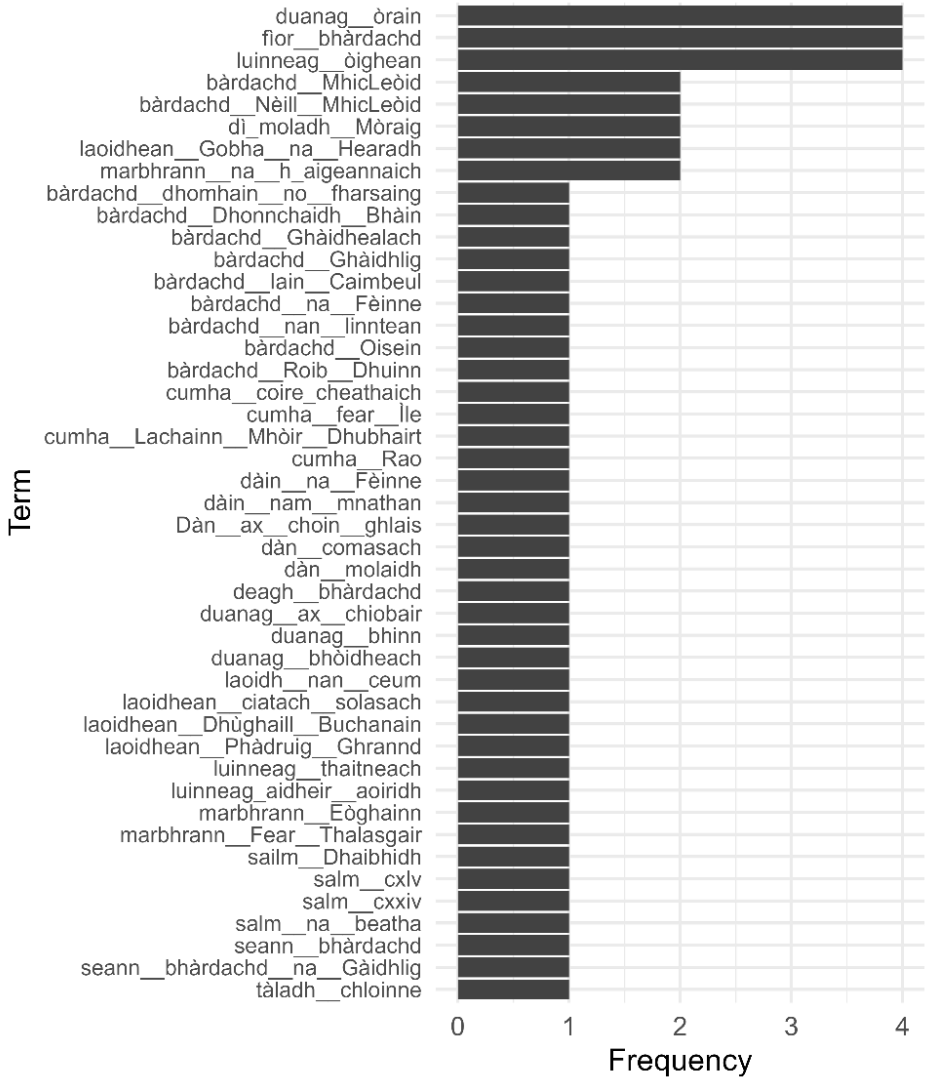
Categories in Concordance with Òran and Amhran



Many of the high tf terms function as broad umbrella categories (*bàrdachd* [poetry], *duanag* [small parochial/love song]), and *luinneag* [work song/ditty/panegyric]) or have metrical meanings (*dàn* [poem/syllabic verse], *duan* [lay/rhymed composition /ditty/recitation]). Other top occurring terms are long-standing staples in the literary tradition (*marbhrann* [elegy], *laoidh* [hymn/lay/didactic verse], *aoir* [satire]). The top occurring song categories were: *marbhrann*, *laoidh*, *aoir*, and *cumha* (lament/particular metre). Fenian content is represented by two terms: *bàrdachd na Fèinne* (poetry of the Fenians) and *dàn na Fèinne* (poem/syllabic verse of the Fenians). Many of the low tf terms are from the non-literary tradition such as *port-à-beul* (instrumental tune from mouth), *buain* (harvest song [lit. of harvest]) and *tàladh* (lullaby). Figure 8 presents the adjectival and genitive constructions of these terms.

Figure 8

Adjectival and Genitive Constructions of Categories



The majority of the terms occurred once. Of the terms that occurred four times (the highest tf in this data set), *luinneag oighean* (ditty/work song of the maidens) is a part of a song lyric from "Fios Chun a' Bhàird" ("Tidings to the Bard") by Uilleam MacDhunShleibhe (Whyte, 1920, p. 76). The song was published twice, and the lyric quoted an additional two times. *Fìor bhàrdachd* (true poetry) signals a scale and spectrum associated with poetry. Of the terms that occurred twice, three of them indicate the poetry of a bard: *bàrdachd MhicLeòid* (poetry of MacLeod), *bàrdachd Nèill MhicLeòid* (poetry of Niall MacLeod) and *laoidhean Godha na Hearadh* (hymns of John

Morison [lit. hymns of the Blacksmith of Harris]). The remaining two terms are satires by Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: *dì-mòladh Mòraig* (dispraise of Morag) and *marbhrann na h-aigeannaich* (elegy of the unrestrained woman) (Black, 2010, p. 12). The term *bàrdachd* co-occurred with renowned bards, the Gaelic language, the Highlands, descriptors of age (*seann bhàrdachd* [old/ancient poetry], *seann bhàrdachd na Gàidhlig* [old/ancient Gaelic poetry], and *bàrdachd nan linntean* [poetry of the ages]) or descriptions of dimension (*bàrdachd dhomhainn no fharsaing* [deep or broad poetry]). In contrast *duanag* (small parochial/love song) is featured with terms of more melodic description (duanag òrain [of a song], *duanag bhinn* [melodious], and *duanag bhòidheach* [beautiful]).

To facilitate a discussion on vernacular categories, terms were cross-referenced with scholarly communications or Gaelic songbooks. A total of 49 variations of song types, metres, or umbrella categories were coded as a cross-referenced category as these distinctions are porous between terminologies.

Table 6

Cross-referenced Vernacular Categories

Term	TF	Translation	Cross-reference
bàrdachd	75	poetry	(Thomson, 1974)
òran gaoil	57	love song	(Ross, 1957, pp. 99–102)
dàn	42	poem/syllabic verse	(McCaughey, 1984)
marbhrann	25	elegy (lit. death song)	(Ross, 1957, pp. 116–117)
laoidh	22	hymn/lay/didactic verse	(MacInnes, 1986, p. 150; D. MacKinnon, 1876)
duan	20	lay/rhymed composition /ditty/recitation	(MacInnes, 1986, pp. 103, 104, 120; J. Shaw, 2007, p. 5)
òran molaidh	20	praise song	(MacInnes, 1976; Ross, 1957, pp. 114–116)
luinneag	19	work song/choral song/ditty/panegyric	(Broadwood, 1911, p. vi; MacInnes, 1976, p. 471, 2007, p. 415)
duanag	16	little song/ditty/small parochial/love song	(Broadwood, 1911, p. vi)

Term	TF	Translation	Cross-reference
aoir	13	satire	(Ross, 1957, p. 119)
òrain luaidh	12	waulking/milling songs	(MacInnes, 2007)
cumha	7	lament/particular metre	(J. C. Watson, 1965, p. 144; W. J. Watson, 1932, p. liii, lvi–lix)
salm	7	psalm	(MacBean, 1887)
òran èibhinn	6	humorous song	(Fergusson, 1977, p. 233)
òran cumhaidh	5	lament	(Ross, 1957, pp. 117–119)
òran iomraidh	5	rowing song	(MacInnes, 2007, p. 415)
iorram	4	strophic metre/rowing song	(MacInnes, 2007, p. 415)
òran magaidh	4	lit. mocking song	(Ross, 1957, p. 125)
òran cumha	3	lament/particular metre(?)	(Ross, 1957, pp. 117–119; J. C. Watson, 1965, p. 144; W. J. Watson, 1932, p. liii, lvi–lix)
òran dì-molaidh	3	song of dispraise	(Meek, 1995, p. 31)
òran seilge	3	hunting song	(M. F. Shaw, 1955, pp. 106–108)
òran buana	2	harvest song	(MacInnes, 2007, p. 414)
òran cogaidh	2	war song	(M. F. Shaw, 1955, pp. 92–95)
òrain shùgach no àbhachdach	2	merry or humorous songs	(Ross, 1957, p. 125)
port-à-beul	2	instrumental tune from mouth	(Ross, 1957, p. 133)
bàrdachd na Fèinne	1	poetry of the Fenians	(J. F. Campbell, 1872)
òrain-cumhaidh agus bròin	1	songs of lament and of grief	(Ross, 1957, pp. 117–119; J. C. Watson, 1965, p. 144; W. J. Watson, 1932, p. liii, lvi–lix)
dàin na Fèinne	1	poems/syllabic verse of the Fenians	(J. F. Campbell, 1872)
dàn molaidh	1	praise poem (lit. poem/syllabic verse of praise)	(MacInnes, 1976; Ross, 1957, pp. 114–116)
dàn-mòr	1	an epic poem (lit. poem/syllabic verse-great/big)	(Bauer & MacDhonnchaidh, n.d.)

Term	TF	Translation	Cross-reference
duain Challainn	1	Hogmanay songs	(Ross, 1957, pp. 137–138)
luinneig-aidheir aoiridh no òrain-càinidh	1	light ditty of a satire or song of denouncing	(Ross, 1957, p. 119)
òrain eotrom, shùgach, aighearach	1	light, merry, humorous songs	(Ross, 1957, p. 125)
òrain eutrom agus spòrsail	1	light and fun songs	(W. J. Watson, 1932, p. xxv)
òran eutrom ceòlmhor	1	light, musical song	(W. J. Watson, 1932, p. xxv)
òran cnàideil	1	song of deriding	(Ross, 1957, pp. 109, 119)
òran connsachaidh	1	disputing/squabbling song (conversational element)	(Ross, 1957, pp. 119–121)
òran dìomhain	1	vain song	(Ross, 1957, p. 122)
òran fleadhach no cuirmeach	1	song of carousing or feasting	(Ross, 1957, pp. 122–124)
òran gearanach no cnàideil	1	song of complaining or deriding	(Ross, 1957, p. 109)
òran luaidh no fùcaidh	1	waulking or milling song	(MacInnes, 2007)
òran muilinn	1	mill song	(MacInnes, 2007, pp. 419–420)
òrain shùgach	1	merry songs	(Ross, 1957, p. 125)
òrain shùgach, àbhachdach	1	merry, humorous songs	(Ross, 1957, p. 125)
port paidhreachaidh	1	pairing-off song (lit. pairing tune)	(J. L. Campbell, 1979, p. 188)
rann	1	rhyme/small song/lay	(MacInnes, 1986, p. 103; Stiùbhart, 2013, p. 61)
tàladh	1	lullaby	(Ross, 1957, pp. 140–143)
tuireadh	1	keening	(Stiùbhart, 2019b)

Note. This table presents the vernacular categories that were cross-referenced with scholarly communications and Gaelic songbooks. *Term* = the vernacular category; *TF* = the number of times the term occurred in *Mac-Talla* (if it was a construction of òran or amhran) or within the 20-word span (for non-ngrams of òran or amhran); *Translation* = an English translation of the vernacular category (terms with multiple meanings are

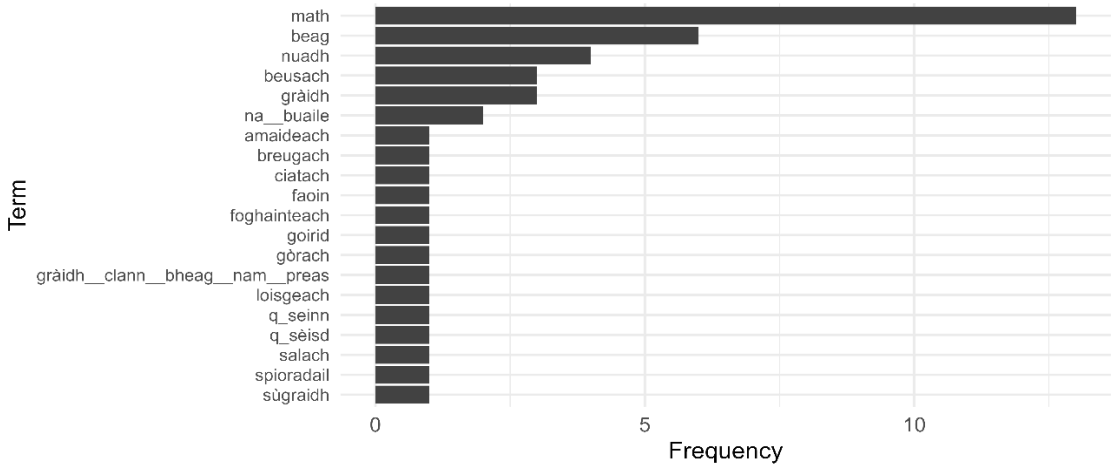
separated by a backward slash); *Cross-reference* = a citation of scholarly communication or Gaelic songbook that references or alludes to the term.

With the inclusion of song categories from the adjectival and genitive constructions of òran and amhran, the highest tf terms are still umbrella categories, have metrical meanings, or are associated with the literary tradition. The highest tf category from the non-literary tradition is still *òrain luaidh* (waulking songs). Some terms feature multiple descriptors to describe a song type, such as *òran fleadhach no cuirmeach* (a song of carousing or feasting). Four terminologies describe merry and humorous songs: *òrain shùgach* (merry song); *òrain shùgach no àbhachdach* (merry or humorous songs); *òrain aotrom, shùgach, aighearach* (light, merry, humorous songs); and *òrain shùgach, àbhachdach* (merry, humorous songs). Some categories have overlap: *òran gearanach no cnàideil* (song of complaining or deriding) and *òran cnàideil* (deriding song). Certain categories also appear in variant formats, which may reflect distinctions in song metre or dialect as seen in the range of terms for laments (*cumha* [lament/particular metre], *òran cumha* [lament/particular metre(?)], *òran cumhaidh* [lit. song of a lament], *òran cumhaidh agus bròin* [lit. song of lament and grief]) or rowing songs (*iorram* [strophic metre/a rowing song] and *òran iomhraidh* [rowing song]).

Ambiguous categories were isolated from cross-referenced categories. 590 terms were rejected as neither cross-referenced nor ambiguous categories (see Appendix B). Figure 9 presents the ambiguous categories.

Figure 9

Ambiguous Terms



The highest tf for an ambiguous term was *math* (good). Òran math is known as a pious song, however in these occurrences, I was not able to determine from context on the 20-word span whether math referred to a religious song type or simply *good*. The term *gràidh* (of love) could possibly be a substitute for *gaol* (love), although its use was nuanced—it was only featured in poetry, and its tf (4) was significantly lower than *gaoil* (57). *Nuadh* (lit. new/modern) may carry religious connotations as all of its occurrences appear within religious contexts. *Spioradail* (spiritual) may be an umbrella category for songs of a religious nature. Other descriptors such as *beag* (small) and *faoin* (silly) may be used to describe òrain eutrom (lit. light songs) an umbrella category for witty, less serious compositions. However, these distinctions were difficult to ascertain.

4.2. Indicators of broader classification

In this section, I present the indicators of broader classification which were extracted to determine classification features beyond song categories. Below is a reminder of the objectives and research questions this analysis seeks to address:

Objective 2: Determine any features of a classification system.

Q3. What semantic domains are present in adjectival constructions of òran and amhran?

Q4. What traits can be derived from genitive constructions of òran and amhran?

Q5. What descriptions in the Gaels' narrative can be used to derive a classification structure?

4.2.1. Adjectival semantic domains

To analyse patterns in the adjectives used by the Gaels to describe songs, they were coded into Lamb's (2024) semantic domains of dimension, age, value, colour, physical property, human propensity, speed, difficulty, and qualification. Adjectives in the semantic domains of position, similarity, and quantification were not observed in this study. Table 7 presents the relative frequency of each semantic domain.

Table 7

Adjectival Semantic Domains by Relative Frequency

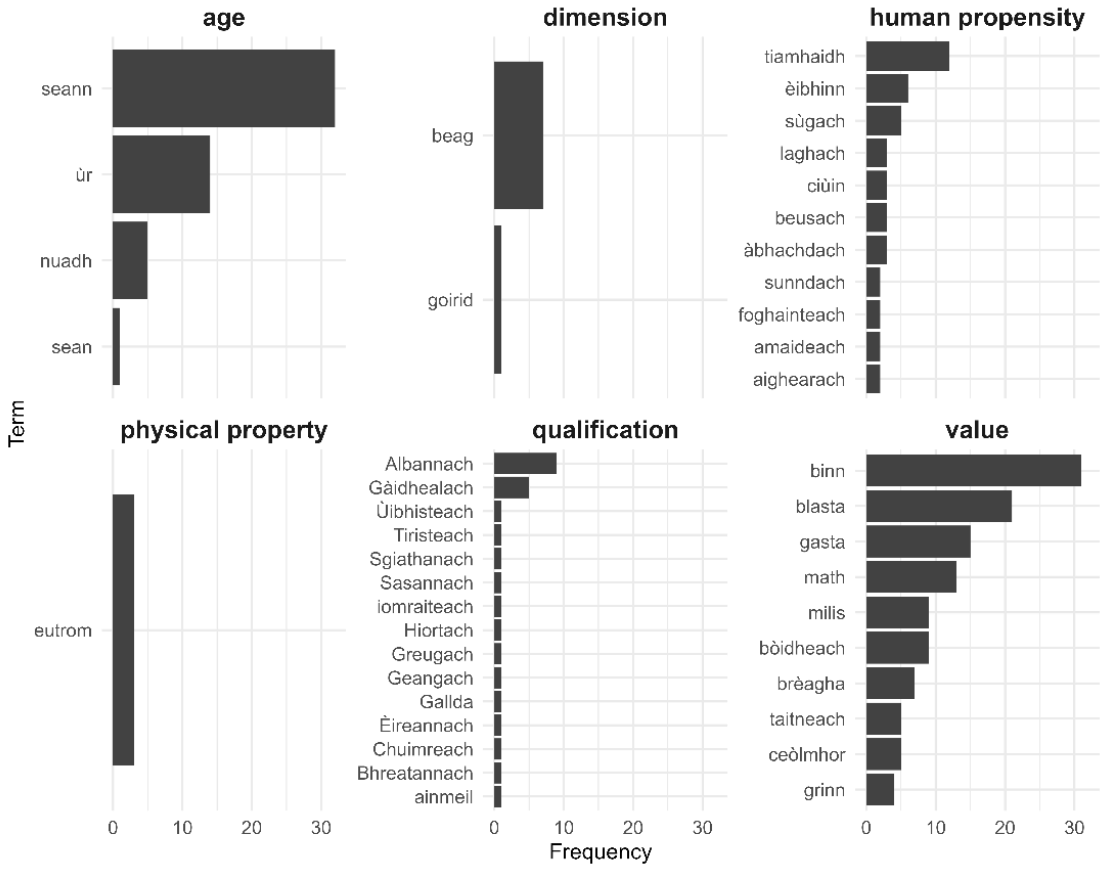
Semantic Domain	Example	Relative Frequency
value	*brèagha* (beautiful)	46.4
human propensity	*sunndach* (happy)	22.9
age	*seann* (old/ancient)	17.7
qualification	*àbhaisteach* (ordinary)	9.2
dimension	*beag* (small)	2.7
physical property	*aotrom* (light)	1.0
colour	*geal* (white/fine)	0
difficulty	*simplidh* (simple)	0
speed	*luath* (fast)	0

Note. Semantic Domain = semantic domains of adjectival constructions of òran and amhran; *Example* = an example of an adjective within that semantic domain; *Relative Frequency* = the percentage of each semantic domain's occurrence out of the total number of adjectival constructions of òran and amhran.

Value was the most prolific semantic domain, followed by human propensity, and age. Descriptors of age were previously noted to describe bàrdachd in § 4.1.3. There were no occurrences of adjectives in the semantic domains of colour, difficulty, and speed. Figure 10 presents the top ten terms for each semantic domain.

Figure 10

Top Ten Adjectives per Semantic Domain



The semantic domains of age, dimension, and physical property had fewer than 10 observances. As noted in § 4.1.1., *mòr* (great/big) was not featured in the data. Only dimensions of *beag* (small) and *goirid* (short) were present. Human propensity and qualification have more than 10 observances in the figure due to the final terms having the same tf value. The highest tf term in human propensity was *tiamhaidh* (sad/poignant) followed by *èibhinn* (funny), *sùgach* (merry), and *laghach* (kind). The only term observed in physical property was *eutrom* (light). The highest tf terms in qualification were *Albannach* (Scottish) followed by *Gàidhealach* (Highland). The remaining terms described different peoples from Scotland but also *Sasannach* (English), *Greugach* (Greek), *Geangach* (Yankee), *Gallda* (Lowlander/foreigner), *Èireannach* (Irish), *Chuimhreach*[14] (Welsh), and *Bhreatannach* (British). The only term that did not relate to

[14] The original spelling was *Welshach*.

people was *ainmeil* (famous). The terms for value featured descriptions of sound (*binn* [melodious], *ceòlmhor* [musical]), taste (*blasta* [tasty] and *milis* [sweet]), quality (*gasta* [great] and *math* [good]), and beauty (*bòidheach* [beautiful], *brèagha* (beautiful), and *grinn* [elegant]).

4.2.2. Genitive noun traits

To analyse patterns in the genitive constructions used by the Gaels to describe songs, the genitive nouns were coded into traits. These traits were developed in an inductive manner from three rounds of coding. Reflecting on this study's theoretical framework (see § 2.3.3.), no trait was eschewed despite some not equating to the same conceptual concept: The trait *song title*, for example, is distinct. While most traits qualify òran or amhran, *song title* captures the role the genitive plays in titling. Many of these song titles simultaneously contain other traits such as subject, theme, or function. Table 8 presents the relative frequency of each trait.

Table 8

Noun Traits by Relative Frequency

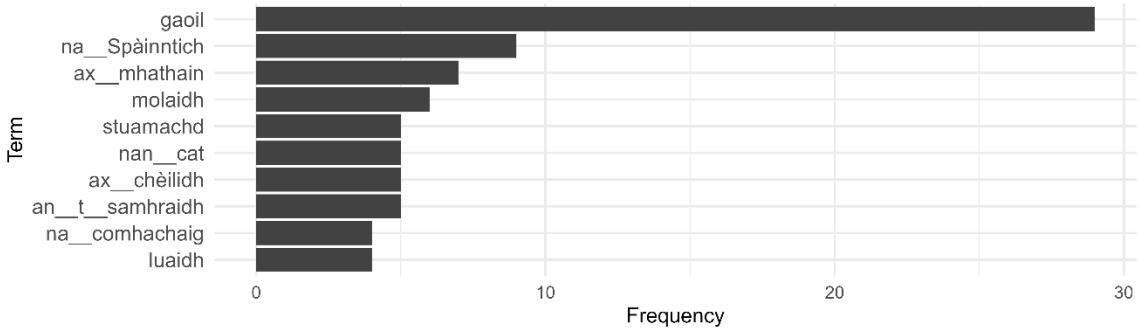
Trait	Definition	Relative Frequency
song title	the title of a song	26.3
subject	the subject of the song	18.1
language	the language of the song	12.6
bard	a bard's personal name or the word *bàrd* (bard)	10.5
theme	the theme of a song	10.2
verbal noun	a verbal noun construction	9.2
function	a song that has a function	7.6
place	placename, country, location	2.3
people	a person or ethnic group to whom the song belongs	1.9
singer	a person, animal (e.g., bird), natural element (e.g., stream), or thing that is producing the song	1.0
miscellaneous	miscellanea that could not fit into another category	0.1

Note. Trait = noun traits of genitive constructions of òran and amhran; *Definition* = the definition of the trait used in this study; *Relative Frequency* = the percentage of each trait's occurrence out of the total number of genitive constructions of òran and amhran.

As stated above, there was overlap in these traits as subjects featured in song titles, and people could be featured in the same construction with a place (e.g., Morair Ghlinne Gharraidh [Lord of Glengarry]). It is also important to note that bards were coded separately from people. These percentages also, in part, reflect grammatical structures. For example, bards are usually denoted in the genitive case as it conveys possession. However, a singer, especially as a person, would typically be the subject in the sentence (the one who is completing the action) and come before the genitive noun in Gaelic's verb-subject-object (VSO) word order. The gap between song title (26.3%) and subject (18.1%) is due to some song titles being constructed with adjectives (e.g, "Seann Òran" ["An Old/Ancient Song"] or "Òran Ùr" ["A New Song"]). Language had the third highest tf (12.6%). Recalling from § 4.1.2., *Gàidhlig* (Gaelic) had the highest tf value for total genitive constructions and contributes most of the values to the language trait. Bards had lower tf than language and place had lower tf than bards. Figure 11 presents the top ten terms in song titles.

Figure 11

Top Ten Terms for Song Title

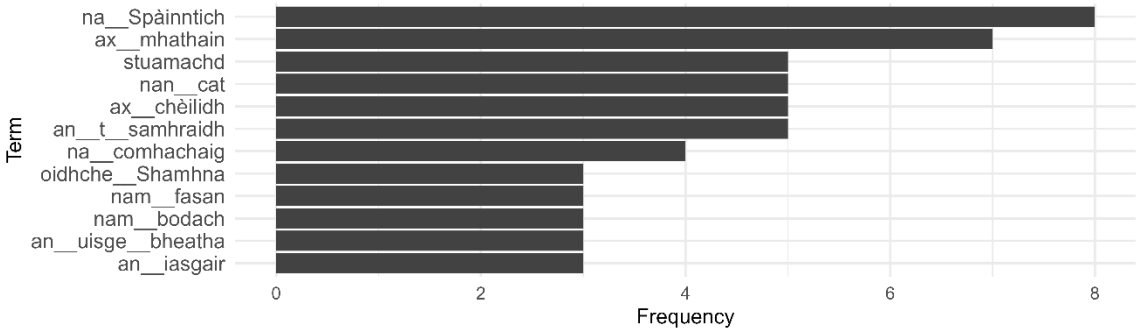


These terms all appear in song titles. Two terms are used to describe specific song types (*gaoil* [of love] and *luaidh* [of waulking]). Some titles are reprints of the same song, while others refer to distinct compositions. This data does not indicate the frequency to which these song titles were used to describe unique song types—information that would help reveal when a recurring subject in a song title becomes a

theme-based category as *òran cogaidh* (a war song), *òran seilge* (a hunting song), or *òran gaol* (a love song).[15] Figure 12 presents the top ten terms for subjects.

Figure 12

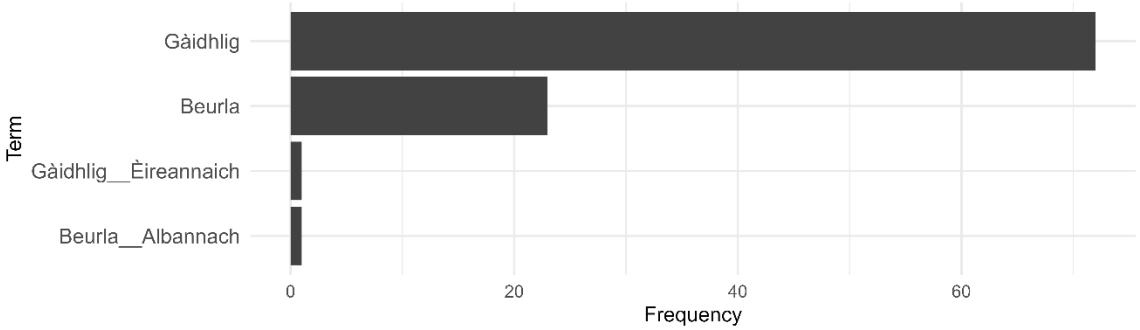
Top Ten Terms for Subject



All subjects were a part of song titles except one term (*a' ghlinn bhòidhich na sprèidh* [of the beautiful glen of the cattle]). *An uisge bheatha* (of the whisky) is evidence that *Mac-Talla* did print songs related to drink despite having a temperance leaning; albeit its tf is less than *stuamachd* (temperance). This study did not focus on observing distinct songs from republished songs to comprehend the relationship between song title, subject, and theme. Figure 13 presents the top ten terms for Languages.

Figure 13

Top Terms for Language

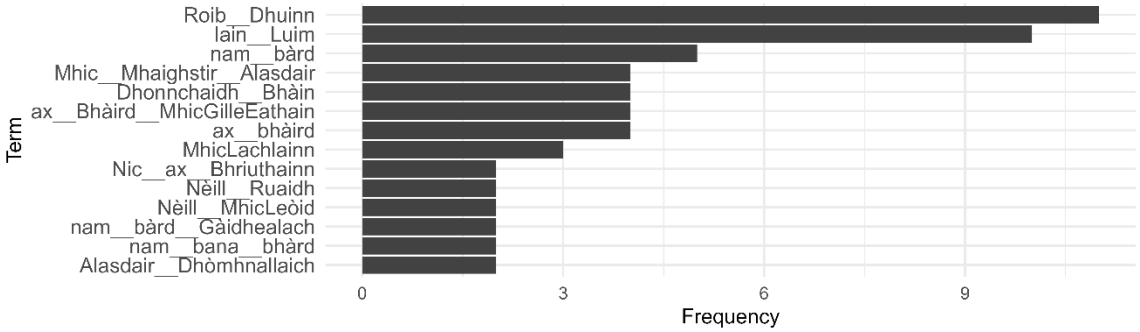


[15] It is important to acknowledge that some Gaelic song scholars have questioned the authenticity of song titles within the Gaelic song tradition. To my knowledge, no study has systematically examined the use of song titles within the tradition. Newton (2015) has stated that "[i]t is only very recently that Gaelic song-poems have been given titles as a regular practice, and these were usually assigned for convenience by editors rather than authors" (p. 29). Campbell and Collinson (1969) highlighted that "waulking songs usually have no titles" (p. 227–228). As stated in § 2.2.1., MacInnes (1986) noted that in more recent times, the terms dàn, duan, and laoidh have often been used in song titles as a way for singers and listeners to identify a ballad. Rankin (2020) had also stated that "some immigrant poets tended to use the term cumha more often in their poetic titles" (p. 1).

Only four languages were observed in the genitive constructions. All of them are geographically connected to Scotland by land or sea (*Gàidhlig* [Gaelic], *Beurla* [English], *Gàidhlig Èireannaich* [Irish Gaelic], *Beurla Albannach* (Scots [lit. Scottish English]). Figure 14 presents the top ten terms for bards.

Figure 14

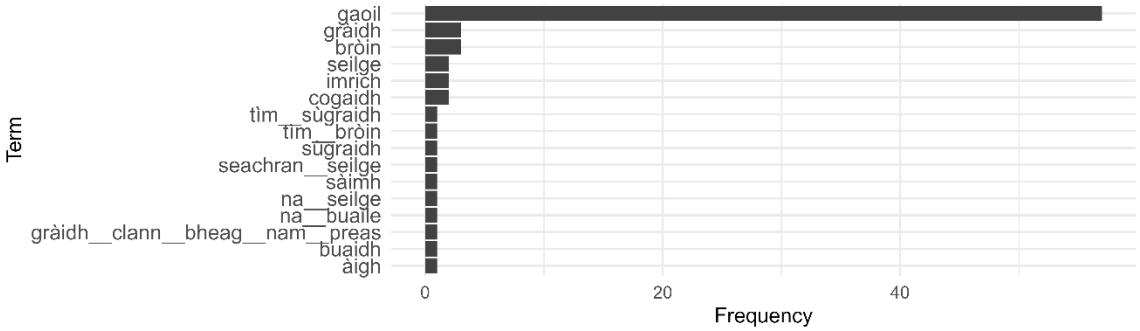
Top Ten Terms for Bard



Both generic references to *bard* and personal names of renowned bards were included in the count. Generic bard terms were: *nam bàrd* (of the bards), *a' bhàird* (of the bard), and *nam bard Gàidhealach* (of the Highland bards). The highest tf personal names were Rob Dhuinn (Rob Donn), Iain Luim (Iain Lom), Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (Alexander MacDonald), Donnchadh Bàn (Duncan Ban MacIntyre) and Bàrd MacGilleEathain (Bard MacLean). The majority of the high tf bards are from Scotland and flourished throughout the late 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries. Figure 15 presents the top ten terms for theme.

Figure 15

Top Ten Terms for Theme

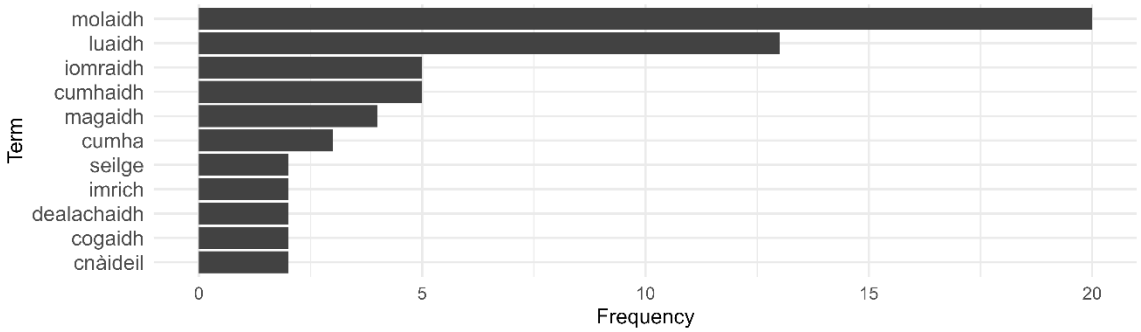


Gaoil (of love) was the most prominent theme throughout the corpus which may reflect period tastes. Its tf was significantly higher compared to other terms. The

remaining terms reflected a range of emotions (*gràidh* [of love], *bròin* [of grief], *tìm sùgraidh* [time of mirth], *tìm bròin* [time of grief], *sàimh* [peace/quiet], *gràidh clann bheag nam preas* [of the love of the small children of the cupboard], and *àigh* [of bliss]. The remaining terms are more event-based (*imrich* [immigration], *seachran seilge* [hunting wandering], *na seilge* [of the hunt], and *na buaile* [of the cattle fold]. Figure 16 presents the top ten terms for verbal nouns.

Figure 16

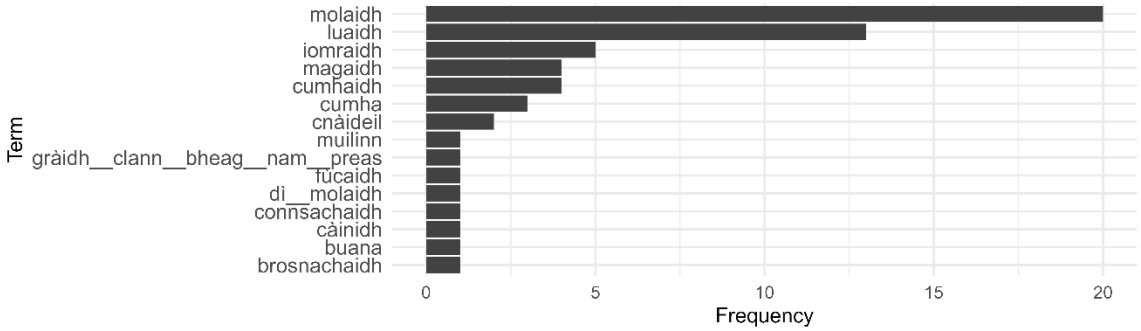
Top Ten Terms for Verbal Nouns



Of these terms only two were not cross-referenced as a song category (*imrich* [of immigrating] and *dealachaidh* [of disrupting]). *Seilge* (of hunting) is typically categorised thematically. The remaining terms are associated to particular functions (*molaidh* [of praise], *luaidh* [of waulking], *cumhaidh* [of lamenting], *iomraidh* [of rowing], *magaidh* [of mocking], *cnàideil* [of denouncing]). Figure 17 presents the top ten terms for function.

Figure 17

Top Ten Terms for Function

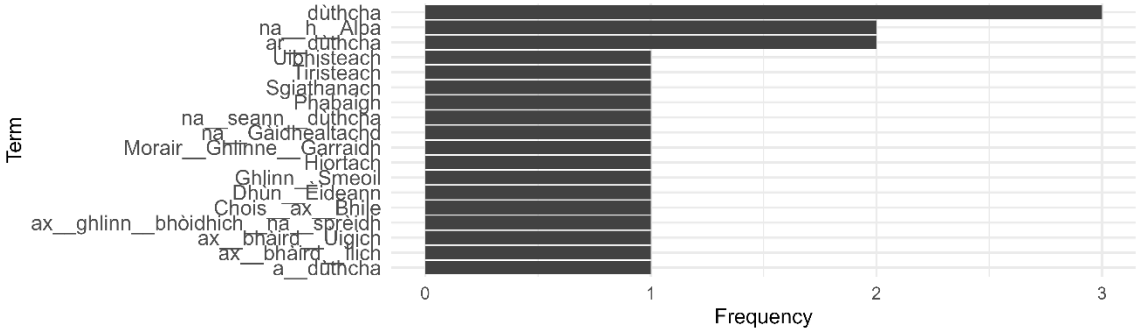


The majority of these terms function as panegyrics (*molaidh* [of praise], *cumhaidh* [of lamenting], *brosnachaidh* [of inciting]), its inversion *dì-molaidh* (of dispraise);

accompany labour (luaidh [of waulking], *iomraidh* [of rowing], *muilinn* [of a mill], *fùcaidh* [of milling], *buana* [of harvesting]); or are a form of satire (*magaidh* [of mocking] and *cnàideil* [of denouncing]). Figure 18 presents the top ten terms for place.

Figure 18

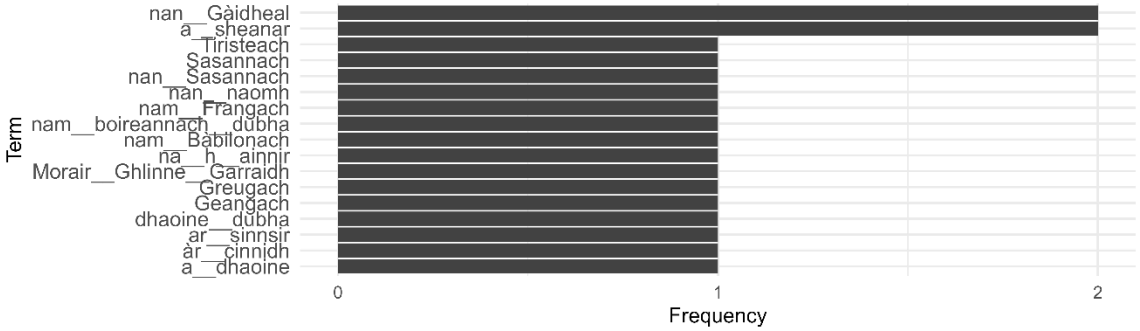
Top Ten Terms for Place



As some names included an element of place, they are featured in the terms. Most terms only occurred once. They represent a range of places in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. More generic terms refer to *dùthcha* (of country), *ar dùthcha* (of our country), *na seann dùthcha* (of the old country [in reference to Scotland]), *na Gàidhealtachd* (of the Highlands), *a' ghlinn bhòidhich na sprèidh* (of the beautiful glen of the cattle). Bards are mentioned in association with placenames (*a' bhàird Ùigich* [of the bard of Uig] and *a' bhàird Ìllich* [of the bard of Islay]), as are subjects (*Morair Ghlinne Garraidh* [of the Lord of Glengarry]). Figure 19 presents the top ten terms for people.

Figure 19

Top Ten Terms for People



The terms that denote the Gaels' own identity were described thusly: *nan Gàidheal* (of the Gaels), *a sheanar* (of his grandfather), *ar sinnsir* (of our ancestors), *ar cinnidh* (of our clan). The terms that denoted other groups of people were *nan Sasunnach* (of the English), *nam Frangach* (of the French), *nam boirionnach dubh* (of the Black women), *nam Babilonach* (of the Babylonians), Gheangach (of the Yankees), and Greugaich (of the Greeks).

There were eight terms in the singer category—all of which only occurred once. A singer referred to a person, animal, or thing that produced the song. The terms reflect a person (*Thearlaich* [of Charlie]), tropes in nature poetry (*nan uiseag bòidheach* [of the beautiful larks], *nan sruthan* [of the streams], *an loin duibh* [of the blackbird]), religion (*nan ainglean* [of the angels]), work songs (*nam buanaichean* [of the harvesters] and *na h-ainnir* [of the maidens]), and folk beliefs (*na maighdinn mara* [of the mermaid]).

The only term in the miscellaneous category was *òran-sèisd*, which may literally translate to *a chorus song*. The term was used to describe song types such as *òrain luaidh* (waulking songs) which are sung with refrains. This was the only term not featured in *Am Faclair Beag* or the *LearnGaelic Dictionary* and therefore the letters in its original orthography were preserved.

4.2.3. Descriptions of classification structures

To determine any hierarchical structures between song categories, explicit mentions of a classification hierarchy in the 20-word span concordance lines of the òran and amhran adjectival and genitive dataset were coded. Table 9 presents the four observed occurrences.

Table 9

Descriptions of Classification Structures

Term	Vol.	Concordance Data
gnè	2	agus laoidh a rinneadh leis na bardaibh aig na fineachaibh fa leth ; orain de gach gne agus cumadh , orain-gaoil , orain-molaidh , orain-cogaidh , orain-cumhaidh agus broin , orain-luaidhe agus iomraidh , agus buain , marbhranna , agus an
meur	5	bhi sealtainn thairis air meur ' s am bith d ' ar bardachd , mar tha na laoidhean—na marbhrannan—na h-aoirean—na h-orain-ghaoil—agus gach buidheann eile d ' am faighteadh ainm freagarrach , cha ' n ' eil mi meas gu ' m
meur	6	, tha mi meas gu mor an call mur cuirear i gun dail ann an clo . Cha'n ' eil orain shùgach no abhachdach ach tearc anns a ' Ghaidhlig , ach gheibhear air uairean a ' mheur so de'n aoir
gnè	6	' eil moran aoirean de'n ghne abhachdaich so nach do chuireadh ann an clò . Chuala mi uair agus uair oran Tiristeach d'am b'ainm " Calum Beag MacCimein " ' g a sheinn , ach cha'n fhaca mi ann an clò

Note. Term = the language used to describe the structure; *Vol.* = the volume of *Mac-Talla* that featured the data; *Concordance data* = the explicit description of a hierarchical structure from the 20-word span concordance data that was coded. This data contains spaces around special characters, due to the term extraction process in R, that are not present in the originals.

There were two descriptions of structure with the term *gnè* (genre) and two with the term *meur* (branch). As this data is more qualitative in nature it will be revisited in the discussion chapter in section § 5.4.

Chapter summary

§ 4.1. of this chapter presented the adjectival and genitive constructions of òran and amhran as well as the vernacular categories that were extracted from the 20-word span concordance lines, addressing objective 1 and research questions Q1 and Q2. It was established that the highest tf among adjectives was *seann* (old/ancient) at 10.9%, and among genitives was *Gàidhlig* (Gaelic) at 14.7%. It was also observed that the Gaels used

both well-established, long-standing terms to describe categories as well as more descriptive terminologies. Results displayed that these terms consisted of umbrella categories, homonyms with both song-poem type and metrical meanings, or potential dialectical variations.

§ 4.2. of this chapter presented features of broader classification structures, addressing objective 2 and research questions Q3, Q4, and Q5. It was established that high tf semantic domains were value, human propensity, and age, and that genitive constructions may be grouped into a wide range of traits including song title, subject, language, bard, function, and place. It was also observed that classification structures existed, as evidenced by the four explicit references to hierarchy using *gnè* (genre) and *meur* (branch).

5. Discussion

Chapter overview

In this chapter, I discuss the interpretation of the results, focusing on cross-referenced categories, categories not featured in *Mac-Talla*, classification structures and metres, and features of broader classification. The chapter concludes with the research limitations.

5.1. Entering the taigh-cèilidh

Before stepping into the metaphorical taigh-cèilidh of *Mac-Talla* and interpreting deeper meaning, I present the humble, Highland words of Stiùbhart (2007) who advises: "To recover deeper functions and meanings, we must try to be alert to the implied associations of words, phrases, motifs, and genres, constantly aware that in the badinage of the ceilidh house we are but gauche, obtuse intruders" (p. 126). As discussed in § 2.3.3., language often serves as the vessel through which these cultural concepts are conveyed. To address this point from a language perspective, I present the words of MacDonell (1982) who, reflecting on the nature of her translations in the Gaelic song anthology, *The Emigrant Experience*, describes the limitations languages have on meanings and understandings:

> There are, of course, passages which simply do not translate, as any native Gaelic speaker knows. In almost all cases the rhythm, imagery, and restraint of the original suffer in translation. Some selections included here are, in fact, far more colourful both in language and in content than the renderings would suggest. For example, in the last stanza of *O, siud an taobh a ghabhainn* (*That is the road I would take*), the redundant ''s cha dean sinn fuireach' ('and we shall not remain') enhances the intensity of the first line; in translation it is just bland repetition. Numerous other examples will be obvious to those who will be irked by them. Indeed an exercise such as this makes one thing painfully clear: if language be 'the pedigree of a people,' the decline of spoken Gaelic can only result in the dilution of our heritage as we become more and more dependent on translations and farther removed from the humour, imagery, and subtlety of the old tongue. (p. 18)

These words serve as a reminder to the limitations of translations which will be encountered in the following sections. Both excerpts strongly strengthen the case for attending closely to the Gaelic vernacular. They also return me to a point in my reflexivity, that I am not a native speaker. I tread carefully, and the reader will notice hedging language. What follows is a descriptive rather than prescriptive discussion. An appropriate approach, as this is the first scholarly examination of vernacular classifications of Gaelic songs—and I am but a *gauche, obtuse* intruder.

5.2. Cross-referenced categories

There were 49 cross-referenced categories observed in this study (see Table 6). It is important to preface this discussion with a reminder that non-ngrams of òran and amhran were not observed in their entirety, and so their term frequencies will represent an unknown percentage of their entirety throughout the corpus. Categories with the highest term frequencies—such as òrain mholaidh, aoirean, and marbhrannan—aligns with previous scholarship on the deep historical presence these song types have had in the Gaelic song tradition (Meek, 1995, p. 16) or with a song's popularity, such as òrain ghaoil (A. L. Gillies, 2005, p. 317). Their presence in *Mac-Talla* reinforces the idea that Gaelic speakers used fixed and widely recognised terms to describe certain song types. Many of the terms that have high tf, such as marbhrann or laoidh, existed within the literary tradition compared to the lower tf measures of songs from the non-literary tradition, like work songs. This aligns with period accounts on publishing trends of non-literary poetry where it is stated "the savants of Gaelic literature…almost entirely ignored it" save for a few exceptions (Ross, 1953, p. 218).

Some terms included in the cross-referenced list do not relate to a specific song type but rather group broader material or have specific meanings associated with metre. Bàrdachd, the most frequently occurring category on the 20-word span with 76 occurrences will be discussed in § 5.4.1. as a broader umbrella category. Dàn, which again had relatively high tf on the 20-word span, can have a variety of meanings from *poem* and *song* (Dwelly, 1973, p. 310) to more precise meanings of classical bardic and syllabic verse (Matheson, 1970, p. 152) with even a vernacular counterpart (MacInnes, 1976, p. 471). When paired with a descriptor, such as the example from the corpus, *dàn-molaidh* (lit. a praise poem) translated by Bauer and MacDhonnchaidh (n.d.) as *eulogy*,

the term can take on the meaning of a specific song type—in this case, a panegyric. In the Gaelic language, it has a distinction from *òran molaidh* (lit. a praise song) (MacInnes, 1976, pp. 470–471). Duan, which also featured prominently in the 20-word span with 21 occurrences, also has a variety of meanings. MacInnes (1986) defined its wide semantic range from: "'song, rhymed composition, ditty' to 'recitation,'" detailing its specific use in "Christmas carols, Hogmanay rhymes, and other miscellaneous poems, recited not sung" (p. 104). These terms that reference a metre, have a wide semantic range, function as an umbrella category, or become more specific when paired with a descriptor; enhance the complexity of vernacular Gaelic song classification. This aligns with Sparling's (2008) understanding of genre as a fluid and socially constructed concept—one that is shaped by discourse, context, and historical periodization.

The most prolific vernacular category that is an ngram of oran and amhran was òrain ghaoil, occurring 57 times within the corpus. Twenty-nine of these occurrences were featured in song titles, which still leaves its raw tf significantly higher than any other vernacular category that is an ngram of òran and amhran. As stated in § 2.2.1., love poetry was not as common during the classical bardic period (Thomson, 1974, pp. 11–12). Gillies (2005) explains that "[i]n the eighteenth century Gaelic vernacular poetry burgeoned – producing a positive explosion" of love songs (p. 317). As Moireastan (1898), a contributor to *Mac-Talla* phrased it: "Tha òrain ghaoil a deanamh suas a chuid mhor de litricheas na Gàidhealtachd" (p. 287) (Love songs make up the greater portion of the literature of the Gaelic-speaking region). As noted in § 2.2.2., the only category featured in the sample of 19th–century songbooks was òrain ghaoil in *Clàrsach na Coille* (A. M. Sinclair, 1881, p. xi). The high tf of òrain ghaoil within *Mac-Talla* corroborates with historical accounts of the popularity of this song type in Gaelic society during this timeframe. The high tf of òrain ghaoil may also reflect entrenched naming conventions, of pairing a metre with a descriptor, as this term had the highest tf in song titles (see Figure 11). As MacInnes (1976) noted when discussing the òran metre: "the Oran tradition as a whole certainly includes a very large proportion of love-songs, extending in time from our pioneer collections to the present day" (p. 462).

Laoidh had a high tf with 22 occurrences despite only being observed in the 20-word span. During *Mac-Talla*'s timeframe, the most common meaning for laoidh was a

religious hymn (D. MacKinnon, 1876, p. 3). The prevalence of laoidh in *Mac-Talla* may suggest a distinct editorial focus within the newspaper or reflect the popularity these religious songs had in the lives of the Gaels at this time. As MacLennan (2013) noted, many Gaels sought solace in religion after the Clearances (p. 300). It may also reflect the phenomena Falzett (2020) described with the blurring of "secular forms of Scottish Gaelic vernacular cultural expression and the emergent evangelical approaches to worship throughout the nineteenth-century revivalism" (p. 345).

Fenian content was described in a variety of formats such as: *bàrdachd na Feinne* (poetry of the Fenians), *dàin na Feinne* (poems/syllabic verse of the Fenians), and *bàrdachd Oisein* (poetry of Oisean). As these words are non-ngrams of òran and amhran, no absolutes may be said of them, save that these three versions were present in the 20-word span. It is certain more versions exist in *Mac-Talla*. The use of bàrdachd elevates and situates Fenian content with the work of the bards, which corroborates with historical accounts of the composers (D. MacKinnon, 1877, p. 36) and the reverence placed on Fenian content (MacInnes, 1986, p. 105). The term dàn periodizes Fenian content to an older time period, when this term was more in use and meant syllabic verse—which was marked by irregularly occurring stresses—a quality of Fenian lays (Collinson, 1966, p. 39; MacInnes, 1986, p. 104; Matheson, 1970, p. 149). The use of the term bàrdachd Oisein again adds more cultural context as Fenian poetry is often attributed to Oisean (nom. of Oisein) as evidenced in the nine compositions that are accredited to him in *The Book of the Dean of Lismore*, a 16th century Gaelic manuscript (MacLauchlan, 1862, p. xlvii). These terms provide greater precision and add historical contexts to the material compared to their English counterparts: *ballad*, *lay*, or *hymn*.

Duan Challainn occurred once within the 20-word span. Duan Challainn was featured in Ross's (1957) classification as one of the five Gaelic words that he employed. Ross (1957) stated that duan Challainn "not only labels a song from the aspect of its function but also indicates a thematic content which is indicative of that function" (p. 97). Blankenhorn (2018) referred to this song type as *Hogmanay ritual songs* under the category *songs to lift the spirits* within the framework of *songs of extroversion* (p. 112). Blankenhorn (2018) stated that "their texts are borrowed directly from Ossianic balladry" (p. 107). Shaw (1955, p. 23) and Blankenhorn (2018, p. 107) agreed that many Ossianic

ballads survived as duain Challainn. This is countered by MacInnes (1986, p. 108) who stated that the only heroic lay, to his knowledge, in the duain Challainn category was "Duan na Ceardaich" ("The Lay of the Smithy") (p. 108). He defined duain Challainn as "the Hogmanay Rhymes recited by bands of guisers during their circuit of the township" (p. 108). Young men would recite a rhyme to gain entry into a house during New Year's Eve. In corroboration with MacInnes's (1986) precise definition, the one instance of duan Challainn in *Mac-Talla* was in reference to an original composition by Donnchadh Ruadh who lived on Cnoc Cuithein outside of Sydney, Nova Scotia (Bodach Cùl na Beinne, 1904, p. 118).

Òrain mhagaidh (lit. songs of mocking) appeared in the corpus four times, two of which occurred in song titles: "Òran Magaidh air Fear Fearna" ("A Mocking Song on the Factor of Fearn") (c. 1715) (MacLennan, 1893, p. 2) and "Òran Magaidh air Creachadairean Àraidh" ("A Mocking Song on Certain Raiders")[16] (MacCoinnich, 1900, p. 8). Another example was featured in a note of praise towards bard Lachainn MacMhuirich, stating "[c]ha mhor de na baird a dheanadh oran magidh na b' fhearr na e" (Anonymous, 1894b, p. 8) (Not many bards could make a mocking song better than him). The final example was featured in a letter by Mac Uisdein (1901) who briefly detailed the custom of mock weddings (sg. *banais-mhagaidh*) in the Western Isles of Scotland.[17] Mac Uisdein (1901) alluded to òrain mhagaidh as follows: "Ach cha 'n fhoghnadh leis na seana Ghàidheil banais-mhagaidh a dheanamh, ach dh' fheumadh iad òrain mhagaidh a dheanamh mar an ceudna" (p. 137) (But it would not be enough for the old Gaels to perform a mock wedding; they would also have to compose mocking songs as well). He provided an example of one entitled "*A bhanais a bha 'n Iollaraidh*" ("The wedding that was in Illeray"), which he remarked was set to a pre-existing puirt-à-beul tune (p. 137). Mac Uisdein (1901) also described the song as "am port-magaidh" (p. 137) (lit. the mocking tune), which may again distance the song from bàrdachd.

Mac Uisdein's òrain mhagaidh fits the description of Ross's (1957) category *merry songs* which were placed in his *theme* category under the subcategory *songs of*

[16] Àraidh may be a different spelling of *àirigh* (sheiling) which would change the translation to "A Mocking Song on Sheiling Raiders." The song details cattle raiders.
[17] This custom is discussed in more detail in the article "A' bhanais mhagaidh" by Iain in *Mac-Talla* (1901), volume 9, number 41, pp. 314–315.

miscellaneous themes. Ross (1957) described merry songs as humorous songs that "tend to be of a parochial nature" and have a variety of themes (p. 125). Ross (1957) further described *merry songs*, elucidating that:

> A common subject for a humorous song was a wedding. These songs are sometimes more like humorous satires and may have been inspired by the lack of good fare at certain weddings, or even by the lack of an invitation. Poor hospitality is criticized in an extreme way. (p. 125)

By Ross's (1957) description, there is a social function associated with these songs—a form of social condemnation typically present in satires. In this instance, the identification of poor hospitality serves as an inversion of the panegyric code, highlighting a lack of generosity—an undesirable and socially dishonourable trait in Gaelic society (MacInnes, 1976, pp. 456 & 460). It is probable that òrain mhagaidh are equivalent to Ross's (1957) *merry songs* or, at the least, they intersect. "Òran Magaidh air Fear Fearna" also resembles Meek's (1995) description of a subset of satire reserved for bad factors (p. 18–19). The idea that satire is on a spectrum is discussed more in § 5.4.1. A quality of vernacular classifications is that they do not have to be exclusive—they can coexist and intersect (Martín-Vivaldi, 2018, p. 62).

Port paidhreachaidh (lit. a pairing tune) also only occurred once within the 20-word span. It was featured in an article entitled "Calanas" ("Wool-work") by K. W. G. (1901). K. W. G. is possibly Katherine Whyte Grant (1845–1928), an early 20th–century Gaelic fiction writer. Scott (2014) stated that Katherine Whyte Grant won first place in a Royal National Mòd (the Mòd) competition in 1900 for an article on "a collection of Gaelic terms," which contained "the 'technical terms' connected with 'calanas' or wool-work" (p. 186). It is probable that the article that was submitted to the Mòd competition is this same article featured in *Mac-Talla*. In the article, K. W. G. provided three songs in connection with wool-work, stating "[f]aodar rann a Port-nam-bas—aon de na puirt phaidhreachaidh-a thoirt mar eisimpleir o mheasg an trì sin" (p. 51) (A verse from a clapping song—one of the pairing songs—may be given as an example amongst those three). I have not encountered this terminology in Gaelic before, although it has been described in English. Campbell (1979) defined "Pairing-off Songs," as songs sung after

the waulking of the cloth when it was being patted and rolled onto a stick (p. 188).[18] Young people who had attended the waulking would be paired up for fun within the impromptu lyrics (M. F. Shaw, 1955, p. 268).[19] In Ross's (1957) classification, he described these songs as *matchmaking songs*, stating that "they can be regarded as a thematic sub-class of [òrain basaidh]" (clapping songs) (p. 102). The use of port instead of òran is also noteworthy as it may reflect, similar to puirt-à-beul, a distancing from bàrdachd—for songs of lesser poetical depth and greater emphasis on rhythm. K. W. G. illustrated that "[c]hluinnte fuaim am bas air a'chlò os-ceann guth na té 'bu treise pong a bhiodh 's a chuideachd" (p. 51) (The sound of their palms on the cloth would be heard above the voice of the woman whose note would be the strongest in the group). There is greater emphasis on the song's social function than the song's poetry.

Òrain dhìomhain (lit. idle songs) was another term that only appeared once within the corpus. Dwelly (1973) defined dìomhain as "[i]dle, lazy. 2 Frivolous, vain, trifling, unavailing, nugatory, useless, to no purpose" (p. 339). In the corpus, the song type was described by McLeòid (1897) thusly: "Bha moran coire aig cuid do mhinistirean na Gaidhealtachd ann a bhi cur bachdadh air, mar a their iad, orain dhiomhain" (p. 1) (Some of the Highland ministers were at a great deal of fault for prohibiting, as they would call them, idle songs). McLeòid (1897) continued and contrasted this statement with the benefits of singing *duanag ghaoil* (a love ditty)—a song type that clergy would have considered unacceptable to sing. Mac a' Phearsain (2011) discussed the usage of òrain dhìomhain during the time of the Disruption (1843), with the formation of the Free Church, when secular songs were frowned upon but *laoidhean* (pl. of laoidh) were acceptable to sing (p. 36–7). Ross (1957) translated òran dìomhain (sg. of òrain dhìomhain) as a "vain song," and provided their counterpart: òran math, a "pious song" (p. 122). He further explained that *òrain mhatha* (pl. of òran math) as a living tradition were "largely confined to Lewis and Harris" (p. 122). The low frequency of òrain

[18] Shaw (1955) noted that in Glendale, Scotland, the term used was *òrain choilich* (lit. songs of the cockerel) due to the manner of calling out a name e.g., "A Mhàiri, bheir thusa dhaibh an coileach" (O Mary, you will give them the cockerel) (p. 268).
[19] A prominent example of this type is "An Long Èireannach" ("The Irish Galley") (MacPherson, 1868, p. 121).

dhìomhain within the corpus is perhaps due to this term being current to the era of the Disruption and its regional use.

Òran brosnachaidh (incitement song), although not discussed in § 2.2.1., is a song category often exemplified by "Brosnachadh-Catha Chlann Domnhaill" ("The Battle Incitement of Clan Donald") by Lachainn Mòr MacMhuirich who composed an incitement at the Battle of Flodden (1513) between Scotland and England (A. M. Sinclair, 1890c, pp. 1–2). MacKinnon (1956) provided a description of the filid on the battlefield: "An còmhnaidh an cuideachd an airm, bu duine am bard, a réir a latha 'a chunnaic móran dhaoine is móran bhailtean'" (p. 139) (Always in the company of the army, the bard was a person, according to his day, 'who saw many men and many battles'). Coira (2012) detailed their function as "encouragements either to defend Scotland against the English, or to support the rightful royal line against foreign usurpers" (p. 341). The one occurrence of an òran brosnachaidh occurred in the song titled: "Òran Brosnachaidh don Chomann Ghàidhealach an Southland, New Zealand" ("An Incitement Song for the Highland Society in Southland, New Zealand") (MacRath, 1904, p. 180). This song, that encourages the perseverance of the Highland Society of Southland, New Zealand, demonstrates that the Gaels adopted this older song type to a modern purpose and subject and that the term has continuity throughout centuries.

5.3. Terms not featured in Mac-Talla

It is important to preface this discussion with a reminder that there are two pages of *Mac-Talla* that were not included in this corpus, as noted in § 3.3.1., and that the scope was limited to adjectival and genitive constructions of òran and amhran and categories (such as marbhrann, aoir, or tàladh) on the 20-word span concordance lines. Terms that are non-ngrams of òran or amhran cannot be discussed here as that data was not observed in its entirety. It is also worth noting that, as Sinclair (1991) states, "a description of a language which aims to be comprehensive will have to scan hundreds of millions of words" (p. 45). This study drew on a corpus of approximately 5.5 million words; accordingly, the absence of a term or category in *Mac-Talla* cannot be taken as evidence of its nonexistence within the Gaelic song tradition. Albeit it is still a worthy endeavour to discuss the terms omitted in *Mac-Talla* on the basis that they were not selected for use

by the Gaels of *Mac-Talla*. Notable terms that were not present in the corpus include: òran mòr, òran sìdh, òran fògarraich, and òran botail.

The most notable omission was òran mòr, as *mòr* (great/big) is a common adjective and òran mòr, as discussed in § 2.2.1., is a well-established umbrella category today in Scotland for songs of greater poetical depth. I am uncertain how to interpret this omission. The song by An Clàrsair Dall (c. 1646-1713) widely known today by the title "Òran Mòr MhicLeòid" ("The Great Song of MacLeod") (Comunn Gàidhealch Leódhais, 1982, pp. 8–9; A. L. Gillies, 2005, pp. 155–158) is a good starting place for this discussion. In his anthology of An Clàrsair Dall's poetry, Matheson (1970) published the song under the title "Oran do Mhac Leòid Dhùn Bheagain" ("A Song to MacLeod of Dunvegan") (p. 58–73). Matheson (1970) listed seven sources for the song (p. 131), one of which was *Mac-Talla* which published the song as "Oran do Mhac-Leoid Dhunbheagain" ("A Song for MacLeod of Dunvegan") (An Clàrsair Dall, 1894a, p. 8, 1894b, p. 8, 1900, p. 8), another was *Sàr-Obair nam Bàrd Gaedhlach*, which used the title "ORAN MOR MHIC-LEOID" ("THE GREAT SONG OF MACLEOD" (MacKenzie, 1841, p. 92). Matheson (1970) illuminated on the title's possible editorial origins:

> The name *Oran Mór Mhic Leòid* seems to have been first used by the editor of [*Sàr-Obair nam Bàrd Gaedhlach*], and is rather misleading, both because the genitive case, on one interpretation, might mean that MacLeod was, not the subject, but the author of the song, and also because it may have led to a belief that *òran mór* was a technical term for a certain class of song, which is not the case—*òran* was, but not *òran mór*. (p. 131)

Did MacKenzie's (1841) editorial choice contribute to the emergence of òrain mhòra as a recognisable song category in the literary tradition—later described in Watson's (1932) terms, as a song of greater poetical depth with more serious subject matter (p. xxv)? Was the term then popularised by the Mòd which shares its inception year with *Mac-Talla* (1892)? The Mòd features a prestigious gold medal competition that includes the performance of òrain mhòra (Sparling, 2008, pp. 411–412), although I am uncertain what year that specific part of the competition was instated.

However, there are additional complexities to this term as regional and oral variations existed. MacInnes (1986) provided one account of òran mòr being used in the oral tradition in the mid–19th century in Scotland to title a Fenian ballad: "Òran-mór na Féinne" (p. 104). MacInnes (1986) also stated the following:

> The term '*òran-mór*', where it exists in genuine oral tradition, does not seem to denote any particular verse structure – in contrast to *ceòl-mór* and *port-mór* in piping. Of the examples I know, two are choral refrain compositions (of the waulking-song type). The phrase is qualitative, with an aura of dignity, even grandness. (p. 104)

Sparling (2008) noted that "the term 'òrain mhòra' does not seem to be used in Cape Breton" (p. 412). Shaw et al. (2000) detailed that waulking songs had apparently "superseded the òrain mhóra (big songs) brought over from Scotland" as the new favourite in the North Shore, Cape Breton (p. 371). Falzett (2020) provided descriptions of Prince Edward Island Gaels who used the term òrain mhòra for choral hymns dated to the era of the Disruption (1843) (p. 346). In contrast to Ross's (1957) òrain mhatha (pious songs), which were religious songs, popular in the late 19th–century in Scotland, and were sung at Presbyterian household gatherings (p. 122); the òrain mhòra—choral hymns—of the Prince Edward Island Gaels were sung communally in public MacDonaldite congregations[20] (Falzett, 2020, p. 346). Singing the refrains of òrain mhòra in church were likened to the communal experience of singing refrains in waulking songs (Falzett, 2020, p. 346). This social function is in stark contrast to the òrain mhòra popular today in Scotland that are typically sung solo without refrains.

The mid–19th century oral account of "Òran-mór na Féinne" and the Prince Edward Island Gaels' òrain mhòra—the secular and sacred—share a connection that reveals itself readily in Gaelic worldview. Òran mòr in this context is functioning semantically similar to laoidh—which was a form of dàn, had a musical aspect, was traditionally accompanied by the harp, sometimes had a didactic function, and was used to describe both heroic lays and religious hymns (D. MacKinnon, 1876, p. 3;

[20] The MacDonaldites were a sect of the Church of Scotland's Prince Edward Island Presbytery, rooted in the teachings of Rev. Donald MacDonald (1783–1867), and were known for their "expressive aesthetics of evangelical worship" (Falzett, 2020, pp. 343–344).

McCaughey, 1984, pp. 40, 41, 43). One of MacInnes's informants, Dòmhnull Chaluim Bàn, Donald Sinclair of Tiree, was quoted stating "our easy acceptance in Gaelic of the use of *laoidh* in sacred and secular contexts alike is surely striking" (as cited in MacInnes, 1986, p. 105). MacInnes (1986) immediately preceded this excerpt with an anecdotal explanation on the "religious veneration" associated with the Fenians:

> It is told traditionally that one of the nineteenth-century collectors, Rev. Dr. John MacDonald of Fertinosh, a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, once asked an old man in Kintail whether he believed in the historical existence of the *Féinn*. The man apparently was shocked that the minister should even ask such a question and retorted: 'Do I believe in Christ!' (p. 105)

The semantic connections between òran mòr and laoidh exist in the Gaelic language and would be absent from English terminologies.

The omission of òrain mhòra in *Mac-Talla* is singular and is possibly due to several factors. There appears to be a wide spectrum to its meaning—if it is the same term across regions and eras: the òrain mhòra that defines Fenian lays and hymns, as evidenced by the Prince Edward Island Gaels and one mid–19th century oral account from Scotland on one end of the spectrum—and the òrain mhòra, from Watson's (1932) description, that resembles the modern use of the term in Scotland on the other end of the spectrum. It also defines both choral and solo sung compositions. MacInnes's (1986) description of òrain mhòra can bridge these above meanings. As stated previously, his description of the term being "qualitative, with an aura of dignity, even grandness" (p. 104) echoes Watson's (1932) description. Yet MacInnes (1986) also stated that the two examples of òrain mhòra that he was aware of were "choral refrain compositions (of the waulking-song type)" (p. 104). McCaughey (1984) provided the insight that "a number of laoithe[21] were drawn into the corpus of waulking song, undergoing considerable metrical/rhythmical change in the process" (p. 49). To account for its omission in *Mac-Talla*, one theory would be that it is perhaps due to the term originating in the oral tradition, it may have entered the literary tradition with MacKenzie (1841) but was only popularised by the Mòd after *Mac-Talla*, whereas in Prince Edward Island the term may have been limited to the oral tradition and laoidh was instead used to define the choral

[21] *Laoithe* is an alternative spelling of laoidh.

hymns in the literary tradition. It was noted that laoidh had a relatively high tf in the 20-word span. Watson (1932) also had provided the counterpart to òrain mhòra as òrain eutrom, light witty songs (p. xxv) which are song types that were more prominent in the non-literary tradition. However, this theory is speculative.

Another noteworthy omission is òrain shìdhe (fairy songs). Òrain shìdhe were described by Ross (1957) as songs sung by a fairy that then is sung in the oral tradition and is accompanied by an item of folklore detailing its supernatural origins (hence its placement in the *folk aetiology category* in his classification) (p. 134). Collinson (1966) explained that "most have for their theme the bewailing of a tragic love-affair between a fairy and mortal" (p. 104). Ross (1957) noted the prominence of laments in this song type, and elucidated that òrain shìdhe were often "found as cradle songs" (p. 135). There was one occurrence of tàladh (lullaby) in *Mac-Talla* in the 20-word span:

> Tha na ciadan fathast air feadh na dùthcha do dh' òrain luaidh, òrain seilg, agus iomaraidh, agus moran do thaladh chloinne, air a bheil ceòl anabarrach ciatach, nach robh riamh an clò, agus mar a teid an tional, a bhios an ùine ghearr far a bheil iadsan a chuir ri, cheile iad, ann an tir na di-chuimhn. (McLeoid, 1897, p. 1)

> There are still hundreds throughout the country of waulking songs, hunting songs, and rowing songs, and many children's lullabies, that are affixed with exceedingly pleasant music, that were never published, and if a change does not happen, in a short time if they are not compiled together, will be in the land of the forgotten.

The passage echoes the sentiment by Kennedy (1975) that these types of songs were not collected until later interest from ethnographers in the 21st century (p. 20). Perhaps the term òrain shìdhe became more common in later decades when these types of songs were being collected. The Gaels of *Mac-Talla* could have been using tàladh to describe òrain shìdhe.

There was also no direct equivalent to *exile* in the song corpus data. In § 2.2.2., it was noted that Shaw (1955) used òran fògarraich (an exile's song) in her songbook list to categorise one song on the subject of exile. However, òran fògarraich was not featured in *Mac-Talla*. The closest terminologies relating to the subject of exile appeared in song titles: "Òran Imrich" ("A Song of Immigration") and "Òran Luchd-imrich" ("A Song of

Immigrants"). "Òran Imrich" by Calum Bàn MacMhanainn (1895, p. 79, 1902, p. 328) detailed the leaving of Portree, Isle of Skye, to Orwell, Prince Edward Island in 1803 as part of Lord Selkirk's resettlement program for disposed Highlanders. "Òran Luchd-imrich" by Anna NicGilliosa (1903) detailed the leaving of Morar for Glengarry County, Ontario (p. 152). As Calloway observed, "[t]he mythology that all Highlanders were driven from their homelands to make way for sheep and took to their new homes with deep longing for their old appears to be more prominent in narratives written in English than in memories preserved in Gaelic" (p. 265). Although the subject of exile is associated with the history chronicled in these songs, the language in the song titles, *luchd-imrich* and *imrich*,[22] frames the event through an act of agency rather than one of victimhood—a distinct departure from the connotations carried by the term *exile*.

A final noteworthy omission from the corpus was the term òrain botail (lit. songs of a bottle), translated by Shaw et al. (2000) as *drinking songs* and used to categorise songs centered on themes of toasting or drinking. Ross's (1957) equivalent to this song type in his classification was *bacchanalia* (p. 122). Ross (1957) further clarified that bacchanalian references were common in heroic song literature, and could be classified into two kinds of praise: "the subject's capacity for imbibing liquor" and "his generosity in distributing it to others" (p. 123). This echoes MacInnes's (1976) description of the panegyric code for "the topic of the Household" whereby "the chief's or leader's generosity and hospitality at the table" were focal points of praise (p. 456). MacInnes (1976) also observed that such poetic imagery was typically "kept for the carousal of the warriors" with "scenes of conviviality" (p. 456). While Ross's (1957) definition of bacchanalia overlaps with this panegyric imagery, he was careful to define it as a distinct song type "which devotes itself to the joys of drink and the conviviality it engenders" (p. 123). He also noted that this song type is rare in the Gaelic tradition, but its common form is a song in praise of whiskey (p. 123).

It was noted in § 2.3.2., that *Mac-Talla* had a potential bias towards the temperance movement which may have influenced the publishing of songs about

[22] Dwelly (1973) defined *imrich* as a noun as "Removal, changing of residence. 2 Effects or furniture so removed. 3** Emigration" and as a verb as "Carry, bear. 2* March, walk in ranks or processions. 3 Procession. 4 Remove furniture, "flit." 5 Change, alter" (p. 541).

carousing; albeit "Òran an Uisge-Bheatha" ("Song of the Whiskey" [lit. song of the water of life]) by Raonall Dòmhnallach (1894, p. 8; 1901, p. 216) (*fl*. 1811), Isle of Skye, was published twice in *Mac-Talla*, and fits Ross's (1957) description of bacchanalia.[23] The omission of òrain botail in *Mac-Talla* may suggest that the term was a later coinage or limited regionally. Alternatively, òrain botail may have been excluded due to *Mac-Talla*'s temperance bias—although bacchanalia, by Ross's (1957) description, were published in the newspaper. The term featured in *Mac-Talla* to describe songs of this nature was delivered in a speech by Moireastan (1898) for Comunn Uidhist agus Bharraidh (Society of Uist and Barra), and had connotations to the Gaelic custom of hospitality while also illuminating insight on the term òrain botail:

> Tha an òrain fleadhach no cuirmeach gu bitheanta a gabhail taobh blàth ri "Mac-na-Braiche," cha'n ann a' chionn gu bheil iad tartmhor; ach do bhrìgh agus gu bheil e maith, agus gun dean e cairdeas ni's diongmhalta. Tha 'n greadhnachas cridhail; oir cha bhi mulad far am bi 'm botul. (p. 286)
>
> The carousing or feasting song often takes a liking to the "Son-of-the-Malt,"[24] not because they are thirsty; but for the reason that it is good, and that it makes friendships stronger. Conviviality is hearty; for there is no sorrow where the bottle is.[25]

This terminology accurately reflects the Gaelic worldview, in which carousing was not simply hedonistic but linked to the custom of hospitality.

5.4. Classification structures

5.4.1. Hierarchical structures

There were four occurrences of explicit mentions of hierarchical structures in the 20-word span of òran and amhran. The Gaelic term used to describe a category was *gnè*. This occurred twice within the 20-word span. MacBain (1911) defined gnè as "nature,

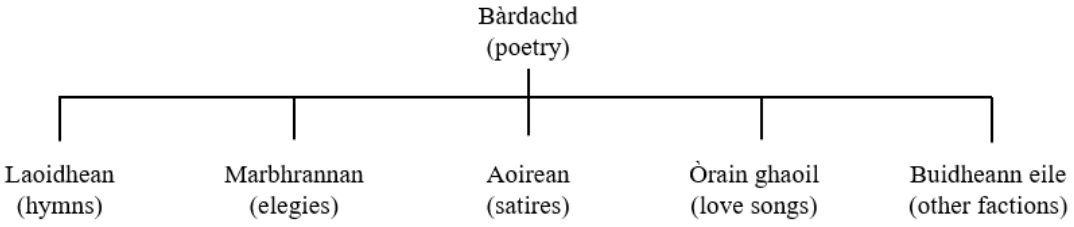
[23] In contrast, there were three distinct "Òran Stuamachd" ("A Temperance Song") published in *Mac-Talla* (Anonymous, 1897b, p. 192, 1900, p. 136, 1904, p. 183).
[24] Whiskey.
[25] I have translated "an òrain fleadhach no cuirmeach" as singular, although the *i* in òran typically signifies the plural, the article and adjectives are in the singular.

kind" and connected it etymologically to Latin *genus* (p. 199). The term used to describe a subcategory was *meur*. Dwelly (1973) defined meur as a "Finger. 2 Toe. 3 Branch, bough. 4 Branch of a family, kindred, clan. 5 Branch of a river. 6 Prong. 7* Knot in wood. 8 Slight degree" (p. 648).

An instance of an hierarchal structure, that placed bàrdachd over particular song categories, was featured in the article "Na Marbhrannan" (The Elegies) by Donald MacKinnon (1897a), first professor and Chair of Celtic Languages, Literature, History, and Antiquities at Edinburgh University, who provided the following excerpted passage: "Ann a bhi sealtainn thairis air meur 's am bith d' ar bardachd, mar tha na laoidhean—na marbhrannan—na h-aoirean—na h-orain-ghaoil—agus gach buidheann eile d' am faighteadh ainm freagarrach…" (p. 254) (In looking over any of the branches of our poetry, such as the hymns—the elegies—the satires—the love songs and each other faction to which an appropriate term could be procured…).[26] His words can be represented in the following diagram (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

MacKinnon's (1897) Bàrdachd Hierarchical Structure



The song categories that MacKinnon lists have strong permeance throughout the periods of classical and vernacular poetry, especially laoidhean, marbhrannan, and aoirean (MacInnes, 1986, p. 105; Meek, 1995, p. 16). Òrain ghaoil were not as popular in the classical bardic period as they were in 18th–century vernacular poetry (A. L. Gillies, 2005, p. 317; Thomson, 1974, pp. 11–12). Òrain ghaoil also had the second highest tf in the genitive constructions (see Figure 5).

[26] This article was originally published in the Gaelic monthly, *An Gaidheal*, 1877, volume 5, number 62, pp. 33-39.

The factions that MacKinnon (1897a) does not list are equally intriguing, prompting a reflection on which other song categories he would have further classified as bàrdachd in *buidhean eile*. MacInnes (1976) expressed that "it may be sufficient to translate *bardachd* as 'poetry'; but it does not take a great deal of enquiry to realise that something more specific is intended" (p. 434). He specified that "the songs devoted to the praise of an individual were central to the concept of *bardachd*" (p. 435). MacInnes (2007) also remarked that a "strain of praise and celebration runs through all Gaelic poetry"; however, he also acknowledged a spectrum in the formality of praise with the "high-class, bardic praise-poems" being more formulaic, "more detached," compared to his example of òrain luaidh, which are more intimate and erotic in nature (p. 415). Would MacKinnon (1897a) have considered various work songs such as òrain luaidh or òrain bhleoghainn as bàrdachd? It is certain that puirt-à-beul would not feature as a subcategory of bàrdachd, as they "were recognized as a distinct genre of such a low register as not to be classified as bàrdachd 'poetry' at all, but as a kind of playful doggerel which remains separate from older song types" (M. S. Newton, 2013, p. 67).

Another hierarchical structure observed was a subcategory of aoir. MacInnes (1968) detailed a spectrum present in Gaelic satirical poetry: "At one end of the scale there are flights of passionate invective; at the other one finds the true satiric humour" (p. 42). This spectrum was defined twice as a subcategory of aoir in *Mac-Talla* within the 20-word span. The two accounts were featured in the article "Na h-aoirean" ("The satires") by MacKinnon (1897b) who first stated: "[c]ha'n 'eil orain shùgach no abhachdach ach tearc anns a' Ghaidhlig, ach gheibhear air uairean a' mheur so de'n aoir" (p. 43) (Merry and humorous songs are rare in Gaelic, but this branch is found sometimes in satire). This description echoes Ross's (1957) description of *merry songs* (that were likened to òrain mhagaidh in § 5.3.) that he detailed were also rare in the Gaelic song corpus, "sometimes more like humorous satires," yet commonly featured the subject of weddings (p. 125). MacKinnon (1897b) further elaborated that "[c]ha'n 'eil teagamh nach 'eil moran aoirean de'n ghne abhachdaich so nach do chuireadh ann an clò" (p. 43) (There is no doubt that many satires of this humorous genre were never put into print). There appears to be subcategories to aoir, or at the least, it is on a spectrum with merry and humorous songs.

Another occurrence of a potential hierarchy, that was however not described in explicit language of gnè and meur, but corroborates with previous scholarship, involved *òran buana* (a harvest song) and was described thusly: "Nach fonnmhor an t-òran buana, an luinneag thaitneach!" (MacLeòid, 1900, p. 219)[27] (Is it not melodious the harvest song, the pleasant luinneag!). If luinneag in this instance refers to the meaning of a *work song*, then òran buana would be considered here as a subcategory of a luinneag. This would corroborate with the definitions of luinneag discussed by Broadwood (1911, p. vi) and MacInnes (2007, p. 415). K. W. G. (1901), an informant from *Mac-Talla*, demonstrated its wide semantic range while detailing its utility for accompanying labour:

> Tha e coltach gu 'm b' e òran-séisd a bh' anns an luinneag so, a ghabh òighean Chrom-I. Tha'n seòrs' òrain so anabarrach sean, agus tha e fathast air a chleachda gu bitheanta 's a' Ghàidhealtachd. Bha co-chòrdadh eadar tomhas nan sreith agus iomairt nan ràmh, no nan corran, aig a' bhuain, no iomairt an aodaich aig an luathadh, etc. (p. 51)
>
> It appears that this luinneag is a chorus song, that maidens of Chrom-I sang. This type of song is exceptionally old, and it is still commonly used in the Gaelic-speaking area. There was a coordination between the length of the lines and the rowing of the oars, or the sickles during the harvest, or working the cloth at the waulking, etc.

In the article, K. W. G. had stated that they quoted this material from Rev. Iain Smith's book *Sean Dàna* (*Ancient Poems*) (1787). The excerpt printed in *Sean Dàna* was in English, was slightly different, and is as follows: "chorus-song, a species of composition very ancient, and still much used in the Highlands. The time of these pieces is adapted to the various exercises of rowing, reaping, fulling, &c." (Smith, 1787, p. 167). K. W. G.'s Gaelic translation was not a direct translation—they had added the piece about the song type being a luinneag, while also embellishing details of the maidens' location. That editorial decision displays agency, and the definition provided associates luinneag as an umbrella category for labour songs which again corroborates with Broadwood (1911, p.

[27] This was originally published in *Caraid nan Gàidheal* (*Friend of the Gael*) (Macleod, 1868, p. 625).

vi) and MacInnes (2007, p. 415). Although, due to luinneag's wide semantic range, these examples are speculative.

5.4.2. Flat structures and metres

The following example of a flat structure was quoted by C. C., Strathalba, Prince Edward Island, from a speech given by Alasdair MacGriogair at Comunn Gàidhealach Inbhirnis (Gaelic Society of Inverness). It was originally published in *An Gaidheal* (MacGriogair, 1873, p. 289):[28]

> Is lionmhor oran, iorram, dan, duan, rann, agus laoidh a rinneadh leis na bardaibh aig na fineachaibh fa leth; orain de gach gne agus cumadh, orain-gaoil, orain-molaidh, orain-cogaidh, orain-cumhaidh agus broin, orain-luaidhe agus iomraidh, agus buain, marbhranna, agus an leithidibh sin. (MacGriogair as cited in C. C., 1893, p. 7)

> Is plentiful the *òran*, *iorram*, *dàn*, *duan*, *rann*, and *laoidh* that were composed by the bards of the individual clans; songs of each genre and form, love songs, praise songs, war songs, songs of lament and sorrow, waulking and rowing, and harvest, and elegy, and the like.

In the earlier version printed in *An Gaidheal*, there were four additional song genres mentioned; however, these did not make it into *Mac-Talla*: "orain-buaidhe, orain-treubhantais, orain sgaiteach agus éisgeil, orain-cànaidh agus caoidh" (victory songs, heroic songs, cutting and satirical songs, chanting and lamenting songs) (MacGriogair, 1873, p. 289). It is uncertain whether these song categories were omitted in an editorial decision or whether it was a happenchance mistake in transcription by C. C. or the typesetter. The way some of them are phrased (using two words to describe one genre) corroborates with Ambrazevičius's (2021) sentiment on vernacular categories not being denoted with specific succinct descriptors (p. 112). There are a plethora of vernacular categories from MacGriogair's (1873) narration. All of them have equivalents or

[28] The excerpt was featured in the article "Oraid Ghailig" ("A Gaelic Speech") by Alasdair MacGriogair in *An Gaidheal* (1873), volume 1, number 2, pp. 289-293. The article was abridged with commentary, presumably by the editor, Angus Nicolson.

counterparts within the corpus and there is no explicitly stated hierarchy between the vernacular categories.

MacGriogair's (1873) passage reveals an additional complexity. The reader will note that I did not translate certain words into English: *òran*, *iorram*, *dàn*, *duan*, *rann*, and *laoidh*—although these could be rendered as *song*, *rowing song*, *poem*, *narrative song*, *rhyme*, and *hymn*. In addition to identifying song types, these are all words that associate closely with metrical meanings or syllabic verse (MacInnes, 1986; Maolalaigh, 2002; Matheson, 1970, p. 152; McCaughey, 1984). Those meanings are absent from their English counterparts. Matheson (1955) noted that although "many of the rules governing assonance, alliteration, etc., were discarded in the post-classical period…metre and music survived" (p. 79). It is noteworthy that MacGriogair (1873) lists these terms separately from song types that may be thematically categorised (orain-gaoil and orain-cogaidh), are long standing staples in panegyric verse (orain-molaidh, orain-cumhaidh agus broin, and marbhrannn), or working songs (orain-luaidhe agus iomraidh, and buain). This grouping suggests an awareness of older meanings from the classical bardic or early vernacular periods where "metre and subject matter conformed to its disciplines" (P. Kennedy, 1975, p. 20).

Using iorram as a case study, it was previously noted in § 2.2.1. that it is associated with strophic verse and can denote a rowing song. Recent scholarship on iorram suggests it was derived from an older word associated with metre known as *airthrom* (Maolalaigh, 2002). In *Mac-Talla*, both iorram and *òrain iomhraidh* (lit. songs of rowing) occurred. In Gaelic, a distinction can be made between iorram, as a strophic verse and rowing song, and òrain iomhraidh, which refers more narrowly to a rowing song. Maolalaigh (2002) also commented on the "conservative nature of the Scottish Gaelic lexicon and tradition, and, in particular, the tenacity of the song tradition" within which iorram was preserved (p. 275). In English, the translations *strophic verse* or *rowing song* do not fully capture the semantic nuances or the historical evolution and context of these terms within the Gaelic-speaking community.

5.5. Features of broader classification

This section will examine traits that emerged from the adjectival and genitive constructions. It has been noted that "the divisions into which certain societies

compartmentalise their heritage are not always defined by the musical pieces they contain, but rather, and above all, by a number of features" (Martín-Vivaldi, 2018, p. 77).

The majority of adjectives, 56.4%, only occurred once. This may reflect the intrinsic nature of the Gaelic language and its poetry which is "descriptive and lyrical" (Blankenhorn, 2018, p. 53). In describing poetry after the collapse of clan patronage, Thomson (1991) noted "[t]he pull of the tradition continues to show in admiration of the heroic, occasionally in the piling up of adjectival description, and in a love of assonantal music" (p. 18). This piling up of adjectival description was observed in the descriptions of òran and amhran. The longest descriptions consisted of three words (e.g., *seann òrain bhlasda, binn* (old, tasty, sweet songs).

The highest tf for the semantic domain, *value*, contains terms that describe beauty and melodic content and the term *blasta* (tasty). *Value*'s high tf may in part be due to the descriptive nature of the Gaelic language and the poetic nature of the song content. Blasta's high tf corroborates with the scholarship of Falzett (2012) who notes the use of blasta in Cape Breton and the Outer Hebrides to describe song and piping. Blasta's noun form, *blas* (taste/accent) not only carries the literal connotation of taste, it also reflects the broader conceptual metaphor that "MUSIC AND SPEECH ARE FOOD" (Falzett, 2012, p. 336). Blas has also been indicated as a marker of "both a quality in music and the linguistic and technical correctness within a performance" (Falzett, 2012, p. 329). The nouns and adjectives that co-occurred with blasta demonstrate this logic (see Appendix C). Co-occurring adjectives reflected the quality of music, while also indicating emotional states, taste, and dimensions: *binn* (harmonious), *bhòidheach* (beautiful), *ceòlmhor* (musical), *shunndach* (cheerful), mhilis (sweet), *thaitneach* (pleasant), and *beag* (small). Whereas all of the co-occurring nouns pertained to Gaelic identity: *nam bard Gaidhealach* (of the Highland bards), *Ghailig* (of Gaelic), *nan Gàidheal* (of the Gaels), *ar sinnsir* (our ancestors). The *correctness* of the linguistic and technical performance may be linked to representation of core Gaelic identity. Blasta's high tf, as an adjectival construction of òran, in *Mac-Talla* provides further justification that it functioned as an aesthetic term and indicator of correctness in vernacular classification.

The second highest tf of the semantic domains, *human propensity*, contains descriptions of emotional states. The plethora of terms that described emotions points to

the scale of utility Gaelic songs have at chronicling these feelings. Verse and song have been defined as the Gaels' "natural form of self-expression" (Broadwood, 1911, p. vii). There is also an emotional function from song performance (Blankenhorn, 2018, p. 90). As McLeoid (1897) phrased it: "Cha 'n e mhàin gaol agus cumha, ach cha 'n eil suidheachadh inntinn am biodh an Gaidheal, co dhiubh 's e aighear no bròn, soirbheachadh no doirbheachadh, nach e duanag orain am plàsta chuireadh e ris an leòn aige." (p. 1) (It is not only love and mourning, but there is no mental state that the Gael would be in, whether joy or sorrow, success or hardship, for which a duanag of a song would not be the balm to which he placed against his wound).

The high tf of seann is not surprising for a people who would happily pass the time conversing "mu bheatha 's mu chliù nan daoine o'n d' thàinig iad" (Anonymous, 1894a, p. 7) (on the lives and repute of the people they came from). It reflects the reverence for ancestry and tradition. This was demonstrated in the traits associated with people which, of the ones pertaining to Gaelic identity, mainly featured descriptions of ancestry (see Figure 19). Seann and *nan linntean* (of the centuries) were also observed in descriptors of bàrdachd (see Figure 8), referencing the age of the songs and of the tradition. At a time when "folklore was a body of material set squarely in the past" (Bronner, 1986, p. 2), the frequent appearance of seann may also reflect both a convergence with broader ideologies of the period and an effort to assert the longevity of the Gaelic song tradition in the face of external pressures that framed it as trivial (P. Kennedy, 1975, p. 19).

In contrast to the scholarly Gaelic song classifications discussed in § 2.2.3., which were limited to the Gaels' song repertoire, the corpus data reveals an outward perspective rather than an isolated perspective narrowed to the Gaels' song repertoire. This was evidenced in descriptions of other people and groups (e.g., *nam Frangach* [of the French] or *nam nam Babilonach* [of the Babylonians]) and different languages (e.g., *Gàidhlig Èireannaich* [Irish Gaelic] and *Beurla Albannach* [Scots (lit. Scottish English)]). These aspects were not featured in the scholarly classifications reviewed in this study.

The high tf of bard corroborates with the high importance bards had in Gaelic society. As Thomson (1991) noted "[t]here can be no doubt that in earlier Gaelic society the poet was accorded high status" (p. 6–7). Wilkie (2023) confirmed bards' status in

more recent centuries, stating that "[c]lan bards held an important place in the political hierarchy, and vernacular song-makers were held in high esteem" (p. 133). In the oral tradition, naming the composer was also "often the practice" prefacing song performance (J. Shaw et al., 2000, p. 14). Shaw (2010) describes this act of naming the bard, or the inclusion of an anecdote, before song performance as another performance genre known as *song narratives* which "links song with storytelling" (p. 24). Gaelic oral traditions do not exist in isolation but are instead interconnected.

Vernacular classification of Gaelic songs may be described similarly to how Martín-Vivaldi (2018) described Kãa musical heritage: "follows a logic of its own underpinned by multiple criteria" (p. 78). The high tf semantic domains and genitive traits corroborate with the Gaels' identity and history, emphasising the age, taste, beauty and melodic quality of Gaelic song.

5.6. Limitations

5.6.1. Corpus

As stated in § 3.3.1., the corpus did not have complete representation of *Mac-Talla* due to the absence of two pages that could not be sourced out of 4336 total pages. Consequently, potential occurrences of òran and amhran from these missing pages were not observed.

Moreover, *Mac-Talla* being a written corpus, intended for public consumption, and the biases discussed in § 2.3.2., introduced further limitations. Certain categories known in oral tradition (e.g., *òran drabastachd* [a bawdy song]) were not observed. These omissions may be attributed to editorial biases, favoring evangelical Victorian values, or in some cases, public propriety. The timeframe of *Mac-Talla* (1892–1904), also limited the study to observations of then contemporary terminologies and did not account for vernacular categories that emerged in later centuries. It is also appropriate to reiterate that a corpus of this size is not an absolute (J. Sinclair, 1991, pp. 44–45). *Mac-Talla* does not encompass the full breadth of Gaelic songs. There are a multitude of songs with precise functions from healing incantations to rituals connected to horse racing or awakening a newly betrothed couple (Ross, 1961, p. 19). Gaelic has a rich song tradition that will surely resist being captured in one corpus.

5.6.2. Research design

Some limitations are specific to the study's design. The scope of this study was constrained by the parameters of the 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran. This decision resulted in the likely omission of other vernacular categories present within the corpus that extend beyond this 20-word span. A more comprehensive approach would have been to observe concordances of multiple keywords, such as marbhrann, cumha, duan, aoir, etc. Additionally, the scope was further limited to only observing adjectival and genitive constructions of òran as these terms are descriptors. This, however, eschewed any insights from other grammatical constructions like dative constructions, such as *le* (by/with) or *do* (to/for) which are also used to connect subjects and bards to songs (e.g., *Òran luaidh le Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir* [A waulking song by Duncan Ban MacIntyre]). It is also important to iterate that adjectives in the semantic domains of position, (e.g., *ath* [next]), similarity (e.g., *coltach* [similar]), and quantification (e.g., *iomadh* [many]) (Lamb, 2024, p. 91) were eschewed from this study as that data was not considered meaningful to obtain vernacular categories.

Another limitation concerns the search pattern, which only accounted for typographical errors with accents, but not letter-based errors (e.g., òrau for òran). If òran and amhran were ever misspelled within the newspaper, they would not have been captured, leading to gaps in the dataset.

Additionally, the process of standardising the orthography, while necessary to obtain a more comprehensive tf measure, rejected any insights on dialectical variations. For example, amhran was regularised to òran, however, as stated in § 2.2.1., some scholars noted that it had a distinct metrical meaning especially in earlier centuries (MacLeod, 1996). Similarly, dialects were regularised without capturing potential semantic variations between them (e.g., luaidh and luadhaidh or *luathaidh* [of waulking]). This process resulted in the potential loss of more nuanced distinctions in meanings.

Although it resulted in a loss of contextual details, the decision to maintain a narrow systematic approach was necessary for practicalities.

Chapter summary

This chapter examined vernacular categories used by the Gaels of *Mac-Talla*, revealing that the Gaels employed fixed terms to describe song types, despite regional and temporal variations. Terms not featured in the corpus suggest possible shifts in usage, regional variations, or periodization. Classification structures included both hierarchical and flat levels, many terms appear to have a spectrum of inclusion, and metre emerged as an important component of Gaelic song classification. Broader features of classification showed that descriptors were often tied to emotion, melodic content, and bardic attribution. These findings highlight the cultural specificity and semantic richness of Gaelic song classification.

6. Conclusion

Chapter overview

In this chapter, I summarise the research findings, detail the implications of the study, and provide suggestions for future research.

6.1. Summary of findings

This study adopted a corpus-based approach and identified 49 cross-referenced vernacular Gaelic song categories from 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran from the all-Gaelic newspaper, *Mac-Talla* (1892–1904). Vernacular categories of Gaelic songs are *iomadh-fhillte* (many faceted). Terms may contain multiple meanings, function as an umbrella category or on a spectrum, take on different meanings when paired with another descriptor, or denote metre. Widely used terms for categories exist alongside more descriptive counterparts. Simultaneously as the tradition spans across the centuries, linguistic relics still surface: their semantics either shifted, conflated, or stable from their form hundreds of years previous. New themes emerge as new realities are encountered by the Gaels. All of these factors make for a rich and dynamic categorisation of Gaelic songs during *Mac-Talla*'s timeframe.

This study also examined features of broader classifications of Gaelic songs by analysing adjectival semantic domains and traits of the genitive constructions. The semantic domains with the highest percentage were value, human propensity, and age, reflecting emphasis on melodic quality, beauty, the range of human emotions, and reverence for age. The genitive traits with the highest percentages were song title, subject, language, and bard. These broader classification features connect the songs to the spheres of people, traditions, and history to which Gaelic songs are contextualised.

It was also iterated that these meanings are interwoven with the Gaelic language and Gaelic worldview. To borrow and reiterate some of the words of MacDonell (1982) featured in § 5.1., one thing becomes *painfully clear*: Gaelic terminologies contain the connections between songs, metres, tradition, history, and people that the English translations fail to capture. The use of English terms to structure Gaelic songs could only lead to a *dilution of our heritage*—to lose hold of the rich, centuries-long, interconnected meanings present in the Gaelic language.

6.2. Implications of this study

This study has both methodological and practical implications. Methodologically, the study demonstrates that corpus linguistic methods are well-suited for systematically analysing vernacular Gaelic song classifications and for discovering vernacular terminology.

The main practical implication of this study is that the vernacular categories may be implemented in digital archives to organise Gaelic songs. Gillies (2002) called for greater accuracy in Gaelic literature studies "to provide a richer, firmer, more three-dimensional base for understanding" of the bards' work and message (p. 26). Classifications that are centered in the Gaelic vernacular will be able to anchor the songs to the people, traditions, and history. Gaelic databases in Scotland that are to be collated with demographic databases "offering scholars an opportunity to investigate how Gaelic culture, even at the level of specific performance items, circulated within individual communities and indeed within individual families over one and a half centuries" (Stiùbhart, 2019a, p. 12) could implement vernacular categories as descriptive metadata. This would be fitting as the databases are predicted to be "an online indigenous ethnoscape" (Stiùbhart, 2019a, p. 12).

Gillies (2002) stated that "it is a debt we owe to the poets themselves" and importantly "it is a debt we owe ourselves" to interpret and represent this material accurately (p. 26). Matheson (1955) similarly stated that the "tenacity of the tradition of Gaelic folk-song on its own ground is wholly admirable, and those who value it should try to preserve it in authentic form every way they can" (p. 82). As Gaelic communities continue to engage with their cultural heritage, the accurate and authentic preservation of these categories and classifications remains critical for ensuring the vitality of this tradition for future generations.

6.3. Future research

There are many avenues for future research through the exploration of alternative word-forms, corpora, methods, and methodologies. As this study was limited to the parameters of the 20-word span concordance lines of òran and amhran, it has only explored a narrow section of *Mac-Talla*. Utilising other terms as keywords to generate

concordance lines, such as dàn, duan, duanag, bàrdachd, marbhrann, or cumha, would provide valuable insights into how those terms function and how they compare to òran and amhran. Additionally, the exploration of other grammatical constructions surrounding òran, particularly dative clauses constructed with *do* (to/for) and *le* (by/with), could reveal significant insights into how Gaelic songs are conceptually organised as these words connect songs to composers and subjects. Further research could examine if there are any patterns in these constructions within song titles.

Another venture would be to analyse a different corpus, such as the various corpora available through DASG. A different corpus may offer new or contradictory insights into vernacular Gaelic song classification. Selecting a corpus outside of *Mac-Talla's* timeframe (1892-1904) would also yield new insights, especially as the meanings of terms are subject to semantic-drift while the subjects and themes of song-poems change throughout the centuries.

Alternatively, given that Gaelic was predominantly an oral culture, a spoken corpora could be utilised. Although the probability of encountering rich information on song classifications within these recordings may be low, as many of the recordings were made during a time when, due to technological limitations with recording equipment, content was prioritised over context (Stiùbhart, 2019a, pp. 12–13). With advancements in Gaelic speech recognition technology (Evans, 2021; Wells et al., 2023), these endeavors may become more feasible in the future when older recordings and more Gaelic dialects may be transcribed computationally.

More advanced methods in computational linguistic research could include a collocation analysis to determine close associations between words. Gaelic packages could also be made for R to better facilitate stop word removal or part-of-speech tagging. Efforts to create a corpus with *Mac-Talla* where typographical errors are in part corrected or searchable, is part-of-speech tagged, or has homonyms tagged would be an important resource to Gaelic scholars.

Another valuable approach would involve ethnographic methods, such as interviewing native Gaelic speakers for their knowledge on Gaelic song classifications. Although, Shaw's correspondence to Blankenhorn indicated there was not much material on that subject in the field during his own ethnographic research (as cited in

Blankenhorn, 2018, p. 76) which he conducted predominantly in the 1970s and 1980s, during a more linguistically dense period. However, there may still be valuable insights within the living tradition. As MacInnes (2004) expressed in regard to ethnographic work in Gaelic-speaking communities, “the smallest snippet of that lore can sometimes fill a vacant space in our picture of the culture of our nation” (p. 418). Ethnographic fieldwork could be conducted in Nova Scotia and Scotland.

Finally, linguists and historians may continue to unravel the precise meanings of the various metres that are abundant in the bardic tradition. This will help in understanding terms like cumha, dàn, duan, iorram, and laoidh. In doing so, we honour the complexity and intergenerational semantic connections that have produced and shaped this rich and enduring tradition which is beloved and treasured by many.

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Appendix A: Songbooks Featured in Mac-Talla

This list contains 17 songbooks that were identified in *Mac-Talla* during the deduplication phase in data cleaning. The list is divided into two sections. Section 1 contains songbooks for which full bibliographic details could not be confirmed. Section 2 includes songbooks for which full bibliographic details were not obtained. All titles are left verbatim as they appeared in the dataset and references are placed in square brackets.

Section 1

Beatha 's Laoidhean Dhughaill Buchanain

DAIN AGUS ORAIN, le Alasdair MacFhionghain. Air an deasachadh le A. Mac-Gilleain Sinclair.

Orain Alasdair Dhomhnullaich (Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair)

Orain a Bhaird Mhic-Gilleain, maille ri cunntas taghte de dh'orain eile, a bharrachd air orain is eadar-theangachaidhnean le Mr. Sinclair fhein.

Orain Dhonnachaidh Bhain Mhic-an t-Saoir, le eadar-theangachadh Beurla do Choire Cheathaich agus Beinn Dorain

Orain Dotair Mhic Lachuinn, Rathuaidhe

Laoidhean Gobha na Hearradh

Laoidhean Phadruig Ghrannd

Orain Roib Dhuinn MhicAoidh

Orain Thaghta Albannach

Orain Uilleim Rois

Section 2

A' Choisir Chiuil—Orain Ghailig. [Ferguson, A. (with Glasgow St. Columba Gaelic Choir). (1900). *A' choisir-chiuil: The St. Columba collection of Gaelic songs, arranged for part-singing*. J. and R. Parlane.]

Clarsach an Doire, le Niall MacLeoid [MacLeòid, N. (1902). *Clarsach an doire: Gaelic poems, songs, and tales* (3rd ed.). N. MacLeod.]

FILIDH NA COILLE, leis an Urr. A. Mac-Gilleain Sinclair. [Sinclair, A. M. (1901). *Filidh na coille: Dain agus orain leis a bhard MacGhilleain agus le feadhainn eile*. Examiner Pub. Co.]

MACTALLA NAN TUR, leis an Urr. A. Mac-Gilleain Sinclair. [Sinclair, A. M. (1901). *Mactalla nan tur*. Mac-Talla Publishing Co., Ltd.]

'Na Baird Ghaidhealach, bho 1775 gu 1825, Leis an Urr. A Mac G. Sinclair [Sinclair, A. M. (Ed.). (1892). *The Gaelic bards: From 1715 to 1765*. Haszard & Moore.]

ORAIN, le Iain Lom Mac-Dhomhnaill. Air an deasachadh leis an Urr. A. Mac-Gilleain Sinclair. [MacDonald, J. (1895). *Orain le Iain Lom Mac-Dhomhnaill | Poems by John Lom MacDonald* (A. M. Sinclair, Ed.).]

Appendix B: Rejected Terms with TF

Gàidhlig (72), seann (32), binn (31), Beurla (23), blasta (21), gasta (15), ùr (14), Roib__Dhuinn (11), tiamhaidh (11), Iain__Luim (10), Albannach (9), bòidheach (9), milis (9), na__Spàinntich (9), ax__mhathain (7), brèagha (7), Gàidhealach (5), an__t__samhraidh (5), ax__chèilidh (5), nam__bàrd (5), nan__cat (5), stuamachd (5), taitneach (5), Dhonnchaidh__Bhàin (4), Mhic__Mhaighstir__Alasdair (4), ax__Bhàird__MhicGilleEathain (4), ax__bhàird (4), ceòlmhor (4), grinn (4), na__comhachaig (4), MhicLachlainn (3), an__iasgair (3), an__uisge__bheatha (3), ciùin (3), dùthcha (3), laghach (3), nam__bodach (3), nam__fasan (3), nam__fineachan (3), oidhche__Shamhna (3), Alasdair__Dhòmhnallaich (2), Nic__ax__Bhriuthainn (2), Nèill__MhicLeòid (2), Nèill__Ruaidh (2), Nèill__agus__Iain (2), a__sheanar (2), an__amadain__bhòidhich (2), an__eich__dealanaich (2), an__latha__an__diugh (2), an__ridire__mhòir (2), an__rodain (2), an__tombaca (2), an__uillt__mhòir (2), ar__dùthcha (2), ax__Chuairteir (2), ax__choilich (2), ax__ghunna (2), ax__phrionnsa (2), bàrdail (2), ciatach (2), deagh (2), dealachaidh (2), eireachdail (2), glòrmhor (2), imrich (2), na__bainnse (2), na__h__Alba (2), na__misge (2), nam__balgairean (2), nam__bana__bhàrd (2), nam__bàrd__Gàidhealach (2), nan__Gàidheal (2), nan__cìobairean__gallda (2), nan__suirghichean (2), snasail (2), sunndach (2), àigh (2), Alasdair (1), Annie__Laurie (1), Beurla__Albannach (1), Bhonaparte (1), Bhreatannach (1), Bhurns (1), Chlainn__Leòid (1), Chois__ax__Bhile (1), Chuimreach (1), Dhonnchaidh__Bhàin__Mhic__an__t__Saoir (1), Dhonnchaidh__Fhionnlastain (1), Dhòmhnaill__Mhòir (1), Dhùn__Èideann (1), Dotair__MhicLachlainn (1), Gallda (1), Geangach (1), Ghilleasbaig__Dhòmhnallaich (1), Ghilleasbaig__na__Ciotaig (1), Ghlinn__Smeoil (1), Greugach (1), Gàidhlig__Èireannaich (1), Hiortach (1), Iain (1), Mhaois__agus__an__Uain (1), MhicCodruim (1), MhicColla (1), MhicFhionghain (1), Mhàiri__nighean__Alasdair__Ruaidh (1), Morair__Ghlinne__Garraidh (1), Màiri__nighean__Iain__Bhàin (1), Mòraig (1), Nèill (1), Phabaigh (1), Sasannach (1), Seisidh (1), Sgiathanach (1), Sheumais__Chaimbeul (1), Shomhairle (1), Shomhairle__Camshroin (1), Thearlaich (1), Tiristeach (1), Uilleim__Rois (1), a__dhaoine (1), a__dùthcha (1), aighearach (1), ainmeil (1), allt__an__t__siùcair (1), amaideach (1), an__acrais (1), an__leinibh (1), an__loin__duibh (1), an__ridire (1), an__t__saighdeir (1), an__uain (1), ar__sinnsir (1), ax__Ghobha (1), ax__Phainter Mhòir (1), ax__Phìobaire (1), ax__Valley (1), ax__bhaidealair (1), ax__bhaloon (1), ax__bhonn__a__sia (1), ax__bhrocair (1), ax__bhàird__ainmeil (1), ax__bhàird__Ìlich (1), ax__bhàird__Ùigich (1), ax__bhàthaidh (1), ax__chianalais (1), ax__gheamhraidh (1), ax__ghlaisein (1), ax__ghlinn__bhòidhich__na__sprèidh (1), ax__mhaorach (1), ax__mhàgain (1), ax__mhòid (1), beag (1), binn__cheòlach (1), bliadhna__ùire (1), brònach (1), buadhach (1), buadhmhor (1), buaidh (1), caomh (1), comainn (1), dhaoine__dubha (1), eagalach (1), fiadhaich (1), foghainteach (1), glan (1), iomraiteach (1), leannanachd (1), luchd__imrich (1), maiseach (1), modhail (1), muladach (1), mìlse (1), na__Gàidhealtachd (1), na__caillich (1), na__h__ainnir (1), na__h__òige (1), na__maighdinn__mara (1), na__pìoba__thombaca (1), na__seana__mhaighdinn (1), na__seann__dùthcha (1), na__seilge (1), nam__Bàbilonach (1), nam__Frangach (1), nam__boireannach__dubha (1), nam__briogaisean (1), nam__buanaichean (1), nam__fineachan__Gàidhealach (1), nam_briogaisean (1), nan__Sasannach (1), nan__aingealan (1), nan__coileach (1), nan__cìobairean (1), nan__naomh (1),

nan__sruthan (1), nan__uiseag__bòidheach (1), neo-chneasta (1), nuadh (1), pòsaidh (1), samhraidh (1), seachran__seilge (1), sean (1), suarach (1), sàimh (1), tlachdmhor (1), treun (1), tìm__bròin (1), tìm__sùgraidh (1), Èireannach (1), Ùibhisteach (1),

Appendix C: Constructions with Blasta

This list contains all of the occurrences of blasta in adjectival and genitive constructions of òran and amhran. The terms are presented verbatim, as they appeared in the dataset prior to being separated into individual cells to obtain tf measures.

oran blasda
oran binn , blasda
orain bhinn , bhlasda nam bard Gaidhealach
orain bhlasda Ghailig
òrain bhlasda , bhòidheach
òrain bhinn , bhlasda nan Gàidheal
òran blasda ceòlmhor
òrain shunndach , bhlasda
orain mhilis , bhlasda
òrain thaitneach , bhlasda
òrain bhinn bhlasda , mhilis
oran binn us-blasda
oran blasda
òran beag blasda
òrain bhlasda
òrain bhlasda
òrain bhlasda , bhinn
òrain , bhlasda ar sinnsir
orain bhlasda
seann òrain bhlasda , binn
oran blasda

Gleanna Garradh gu bràth

Glengarry forever