

Making Song Travel: Crosscurrents of Language and Landscape in Welsh and Scottish Song Collections, 1804–1818.

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“[C]onversant in both Lingos”: language and place in national song

From the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, song collections gave dramatic presence to the scenery of the nations and regions of Britain and Ireland. Many songs evoke distinctive landscapes – Welsh castles, the Scottish Highlands – or narrate separate but often fashionable cultural histories or traditions, such as bardic set pieces; others announce their ties to different linguistic inheritances via place-names, quotations and paratexts: “translated from the Welsh”, or “imitated from the Gaelic”. As Ian Newman and Gillian Russell have recently pointed out in this journal, such songs at once define national boundaries and defy them, as “forms of expression that refuse to be confined” to specific places, instead created, adapted and circulated through performance and collection cultures.¹ As a result “national airs” (the term so often used to market national melodies and songs during this period) are changeable and unstable, moving unpredictably across physical and textual spaces and different languages.² Song also shifts along class lines in this period, since the nature of the national melody genre increasingly became that of polite parlour music, expanding in its domestic market and audience but nevertheless primarily aimed at the “richer, leisured middle classes” and above.³ As Philip Ross Bullock and Laura Tunbridge have recently suggested, because song was “a form of cultural practice that was extensively cultivated in

¹ Ian Newman and Gillian Russell, “Metropolitan Songs and Songsters: Ephemerality in the World City,” *Studies in Romanticism* 58, 4 (2019): 429–49, at 435–6.

² This was one of the findings of the Romantic National Song Network 2017–19: see <https://rnsn.glasgow.ac.uk/britain/>.

³ David Rowland, “Composers, Publishers and the Market in Late Georgian Britain,” in *Music Publishing and Composers (1750–1850)*, ed. Massimiliano Sala, *Speculum Musicae* 37 (2020): 85–112, at 87.

middle-class homes ... it was well placed to enact nationalist discourses in the domestic realm, especially during its heyday in the 19th and early 20th centuries.”⁴

In this essay, after a preamble discussing some of the musical, linguistic and cultural features of national song in the Romantic period, we employ three case studies to explore the tensions outlined above in collections of Welsh and Scottish song created between 1804 and 1818. First, we examine a Welsh perspective on national song in *A Selection of Welsh Melodies With Appropriate English Words* (1809) by the north Wales and London-based composer John Parry (1776–1851), before moving to a study of the Edinburgh music editor and civil servant George Thomson (1757–1851), who published *A Select Collection of Original Welsh Airs* between 1809 and 1817 as a complement to his ongoing work on Scottish song in *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* (six volumes, 1793–1841). We conclude with an account of the two-volume *Albyn’s Anthology or A Select Collection of the Melodies & Vocal Poetry Peculiar to Scotland & The Isles* (1816–18) by Alexander Campbell (1764–1824), poet, travel writer and music teacher to the young Walter Scott, which was the first major collection of this kind to feature Scottish songs with both music and Gaelic text. These collections, in content and construction, are woven through with themes of language and translation from Welsh and Gaelic, which, as we will see, at times revealed editors and contributors to be at cross-purposes. As groundwork for what follows, we begin with a specific moment in the making of *Welsh Airs* that magnifies crosscurrents of language and place in national melody collections.

Around 1804, Thomson began a correspondence with the Anglesey poet Richard Llwyd, “the Bard of Snowdon” (1752–1835). Their writerly relationship, which Thomson cultivated as part of his project of commissioning lyrics for *Welsh Airs*, would last until at least July 1817, when Thomson sent Llwyd the recently-published third and final volume. This was common practice for Thomson, who was already well known as an editor of the songs of Robert Burns, and drew on a wide range of writers – English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish – as lyricists

⁴ Philip Ross Bullock and Laura Tunbridge, “Introduction: ‘L’invitation au voyage’,” in *Song Beyond the Nation: Translation, Transnationalism and Performance*, ed. Bullock and Tunbridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 1–10, at 3.

for this and other national melody collections.⁵ His efforts to secure words for *Welsh Airs* are illustrated in detail in three volumes of letterbooks, now held at the British Library. To judge by the surviving correspondence, of which we have more of Thomson's side than of replies, most of his contributors were content to provide exactly what Thomson required: usually simple, narrative texts, or vignette-like moments or scenes, written to specific rhythms fitting the melody line, and referencing local places, names and/or landscape features of the national setting.

In a chain of exchanges involving Llwyd around 1804, however, Thomson's project and method came in for a rare moment of criticism. Having agreed to contribute lyrics for *Welsh Airs*, Llwyd also offered Thomson lyrics for the Welsh tune "Mentra Gwen" [Gwen Ventures] by his gentry friend and patron Margaret Owen, Lady Stanley, of the Penrhôs estate near Holyhead.⁶ But Thomson found the lyrics unsuitable for *Welsh Airs*:

The Lady's translation of Mentra Gwen which you sent me, may convey the sense of the original, but I cannot help suspecting with great deference, that it wants the spirit and the ease of the Welsh, the rhymes are quite incorrect, & such still phraseology as "I'll come none, I'll come none" is not allowable even in translation. It will not suit my work, tho' I should not like you to say so to the fair translator. (f. 73r)

Although we don't have Llwyd's side of the correspondence with Thomson, Llwyd's letter to Owen inviting her to submit the "Mentra Gwen" text does survive. It is a piece that opens up the entangled perspectives of place, language and identity underlying the creation of national song collections in this period:

I am now – on behalf of my country – going to ask a [sic] of your Ladyship a favor – and I know of no one that has more of the Gwlad gariad [patriotism] than Lady S – I inclose a letter – that will explain in some degree – that the boon I ask – is your

⁵ Burns, *Robert Burns's Songs for George Thomson*, The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, IV, ed. Kirsteen McCue (Oxford University Press, 2021).

⁶ George Thomson to Richard Llwyd, n.d. August 1804: "Let me remind you of your promise to send me ... the colloquial amatory song written to Mentra Given [sic] by a lady of whose accomplishments you speak highly" (British Library Add. MS 35266, f. 45v). Further references to Thomson's letters are to this volume, given by folio number within the text.

translation of *Mentra Gwen* – Mr. Thomson the writer – is the person so often mentioned in Dr Currie’s 2 Vol of the life of Burns – am pleas’d with his transplanting our delightfull though plaintive airs beyond the Tweed – but he is in a great mistake in asking for native English songs – on this side of the Dee ... but between us and Scotland – that is – the lowlands – there is no similarity – but with the highlands – When the Erse only is spoken – the Cases are parallel – to this challenge – to this tunefull Bonaparte – I have repli’d at length – and in this warfare – am perhaps the only one that will defend – good Mother Cymry – I do not know whether your Ladyship knows the beautiful song *Morwynion Glan Merionydd* [The Fair Maids of Merionydd] – by the late Mr. Lewis Morris – but the poetick Idea’s [sic] that pervade it – I have endeavour’d to give him in saesneg [English] – how I have succeeded – those conversant in both Lingos – must determine –⁷

As a non-Welsh speaker – or not “conversant in both Lingos” – Thomson was not well placed to assess the strength or otherwise of Owen’s translation, though he could of course determine its suitability for his song collection. Translation is always a creative act, but both Thomson’s response to Owen and Llwyd’s comments here gesture towards its limits, in national song at least, as we will elaborate in the next section.

“[T]ransplanting ... airs”: contexts for Welsh and Scottish songs

As Newman and Russell explain, the publication in 1765 of Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, an antiquarian collection of ballads, songs and other pieces, was a key moment for approaches to national song. In response to Percy, “writers in geographical regions outside London ... seized on the opportunity to record alternative histories of nation ... that celebrated the glories of a past that was under threat or had indeed been eradicated by colonial projects”.⁸ This process only accelerated in the years around 1800, with multiple collections appearing in short spaces of time, coterminous with the peak years of the domestic tour which is the focus of this special issue. Indeed, tunes and lyrics from

⁷ Richard Llwyd to Margaret Owen, Lady Stanley, n.d., PEN/6/99, Penrhos Estate Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections, Bangor University.

⁸ Newman and Russell, 433.

such collections can occasionally be seen to provide a “sound-track” to certain aspects of the tourist experience, as well as motivating the journeys of collectors.

Llwyd’s letter to Margaret Owen affords us some insight into what was at stake in making national song at a moment when the genre was quickly expanding into new zones of practice and reception. David Rowland has recently noted, for example, the “huge burgeoning of genteel music making in the early nineteenth century”.⁹ In this period, church, military, dance and orchestral music all gained in popularity, but the growth in domestic music was most evident, with song representing a significant proportion of the available repertoire: the 1823 sale catalogue of the London music publishing firm Clementi “contains titles of an astonishing c2500 songs with piano accompaniment, showing just how popular the genre had become”.¹⁰ Increasingly then, whether in the home or in public recital settings, song was a key channel through which people encountered Britain’s constituent nations and regions during a period of dramatic political and social change. At times, this phenomenon clearly plays out within the context of the domestic tour, as illustrated by the 1828 travel diary of John Orlando Parry, son of John Parry. In September 1828 the Parrys visited Denbigh for the Welsh cultural gathering the Eisteddfod, where, joined by the famous tenor John Braham, they performed a concert of fashionable songs featuring (among others) “Ye Banks and Braes”, “Ar Hyd Yr Nos” [All Through the Night] and “Scots Wha Hae”.¹¹ Later John Orlando Parry would tour Scotland and Ireland with Franz Liszt.¹² Yet the substantial overlaps between song and travel – actual or virtual – in our period have been little researched.

Travel matters in national song in several ways. Some editors toured Wales or Scotland specifically in search of their material, taking down melodies in fieldwork on the ground, as Thomson did in Wales, and Campbell did in the Highlands of Scotland.¹³ Other connections

⁹ Rowland, “Composers, Publishers and the Market,” 86.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ See John Orlando Parry, “A Journal of a tour in the Northern part of Wales, made in September, 1828,” National Library of Wales, Minor Deposit 293.

¹² John Orlando Parry, “Journal of a concert tour with Franz Liszt” (1840–1), National Library of Wales MS 17717A–17718A.

¹³ No account of Thomson’s Welsh tour survives, but he had certainly visited Wales by 20 May 1807, when he recalls notating the air “Sweet Richard” at Caernarfon in a letter to Richard Fenton. See f. 112v.

between travel and song are more diffuse, as is perhaps the case in Robert Burns's tour of the Highlands in 1787 – a somewhat disappointing travel text but one that provided a great deal of material for Burns's song collecting and editing with James Johnson.¹⁴ At times, travel and song are thoroughly intertwined in cultural, creative and commercial terms, as in William Bingley's *Tour round North Wales* (1800) and its companion volume *Sixty of the most admired Welsh Airs* (1803). Along with the novel, the theatre and visual culture, song was therefore a major route for conveying the distinctive and separate spaces of Britain and Ireland. Although he never designed an English collection, George Thomson's project offered an implicitly contributionist British purview, featuring as he did Scottish, Welsh and Irish airs. He seems acutely conscious throughout the correspondence associated with the *Welsh Airs* project of being the first (though he wasn't quite the first) to set English words to Welsh melody, and in so doing, making Welsh song communicable beyond Welsh-speaking Wales; making song travel.¹⁵ Apart from his Welsh tour, which came late in the song project, but enabled him to notate harp music, Thomson carried out most of his work remotely, studying landmark earlier song collections such as Edward Jones's *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* (1784), a work that forms part of late eighteenth-century Welsh cultural and bardic revivals, and which began to create a canon of Welsh national music;¹⁶ and newer rivals, such as Bingley's *Sixty ... Welsh Airs*. Thomson researched Wales via his reading – he was clearly familiar with Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Wales* (1784) – and his correspondence, striving to understand matters of context and meaning: how to pronounce Welsh place-names, or translate melody names.

Richard Llwyd was a key participant in this process. For example, in September 1805 Thomson asked Llwyd to clarify the pronunciation of the county name of “Clwyd”: “Pray tell me is Clwyd (the vale of Clwyd) always pronounced as a Monosyllable – Or, is it by some

¹⁴ See Burns, *The Scots Musical Museum*, The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, II–III, ed. Murray Pittock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). For Burns's tour, see *Robert Burns's Commonplace Books, Tour Journals and Miscellaneous Prose*, The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, I, ed. Nigel Leask (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ See for example Edward Smith Biggs, *Six Welch Airs* (London: Robert Birchall, 1796). With lyrics by Amelia Opie, this was (like its sequel, *A Second Sett of Welch Airs*) a short songbook with nothing like the scope and ambition of Thomson's work.

¹⁶ Joan Rimmer, “Edward Jones's *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards*, 1784: A Re-Assessment,” *The Galpin Society* 39 (1986): 77–96.

call'd Clw-yd? This I wish to know particularly" (f. 73v). He repeated the question in January 1806, revealing that texts already commissioned for *Welsh Airs* had assumed two syllables: "pray tell me particularly whether I may retain Clwyd as a word of two syllables, it has been so written for several of my Songs by english Poets, and to ^{alter} it would not be easy" (f. 87r). Two months later, Llwyd has suggested rendering Clwyd in Latin – "I am obliged to you for the hint about Latinizing Clwyd, which I will profit by, if I cannot manage it otherways" (f. 89r) – but by June 1806, the matter is still not quite settled, as Thomson contemplates a new three-syllable option for his lyrics:

When you send me the correct copy of the songs, tell me if you please how you translate the words Hob y dere danno? – also ~~if~~ ^{whether} you think I might render your Clwyd into Clwytha, in order to make it decidedly two syllables in length? Were I to make it Clwyda, people would be apt to read it as a word of three syllables. (f. 96r)¹⁷

The debate over "Clwyd" illustrates the constraints that Thomson was under when commissioning lyrics from non-Welsh writers – the "english Poets" mentioned above, who were in reality a diverse and distinguished set of literary contributors, including Walter Scott, Joanna Baillie, Amelia Opie, Matthew Lewis, William Roscoe, Anne Hunter and Anne Grant (discussed elsewhere in this special issue by Pam Perkins); *Welsh Airs* even included some lyrics by Robert Burns, whose status as a fellow labouring-class poet had proved inspirational to Richard Llwyd.¹⁸ Thomson's sense of being the first to combine English words and Welsh melodies meant that he was both aware of an opportunity and of editorial responsibility for accuracy. But his long-running frustration with some of his attempts to manoeuvre Welsh words into an English-language setting reveal limitations in the capacity of one language to accommodate another. As noted above, Richard Llwyd's correspondence with Margaret Owen at an early point in his involvement with *Welsh Airs* reveals that he clearly recognised such tensions from the outset.

By the first decade of the nineteenth century, national song could increasingly be viewed within wider patterns of identity formation, commercialisation and tourism, a point distilled

¹⁷ Thomson is referring to the Welsh air "Hob y Deri Dando" ["Away my herd to the Oaken Grove"].

¹⁸ See *Robert Burns's Songs for George Thomson*, ed. McCue. For Llwyd and Burns, see Elizabeth Edwards, ed., *Richard Llwyd: Beaumaris Bay and Other Poems* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2016).

in Llwyd's invocation of patriotism – “Gwlad gariad” – in his address to Margaret Owen. Llwyd and Owen's potential role in Thomson's song project is therefore double-sided: on the one hand, their translations uniquely add and celebrate Welsh national tradition; on the other, their involvement seeks to control the narrative. Throughout his letter to Owen quoted in the previous section, Llwyd's understanding of melody as an important cultural export across British cultures and beyond – “transplanting...airs” – is unmistakable. So too is his understanding of language issues on the ground in Wales and Scotland, not least the power of multilingualism in Britain to create connections across places, as in the examples of Welsh in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland: “between us and ... [w]hen the Erse only is spoken – the Cases are parallel”. Although Llwyd's letter sounds theatrical, perhaps playing up to his patron, it is not surprising that he took on a defiant pose relative to Thomson, the “tunefull Bonaparte”, whose broader British-national uses for Welsh song might well require a defence of “good Mother Cymru”. Similar tensions between language and identity are further explored in the three short case studies which make up the remainder of our essay.

Case Study 1: John Parry's Welsh Melodies (1809)

Llwyd's portrayal of Thomson, even in jest, as a Bonaparte-like figure in his pursuit of song is a sharp reminder of Britain's situation during a prolonged war and sustained invasion crisis. At a period when the figure of Napoleon himself could be, as Oskar Cox Jensen shows, “employed actively to construct and contest identity and opinion, by writers, publishers, singers, and buyers”¹⁹, song collections which evoked national identities also related “individual and affective narratives that, if they were to succeed, had to resonate with the existing conditions of daily life”.²⁰ Daily life in this period meant wartime, a fact that shaped artistic careers, including musical ones, as in the case of the Welsh composer John Parry.

Born in Denbigh, the son of a stonemason, Parry became a musician in the 1790s, when he first joined and then conducted the band of the Denbighshire Volunteers.²¹ Music was a

¹⁹ Oskar Cox Jensen, *Napoleon and British Song, 1797–1822* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

²¹ Griffith, R. D. “Parry, John (‘Bardd Alaw’; 1776–1851), musician,” *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (1959). [Retrieved 16 Nov 2023, from <https://biography.wales/article/s-PARR-JOH-1776>].

significant but often forgotten feature of the period of almost continual war between 1793 and 1815, which saw “an unprecedented level of national mobilization in which music and song played a crucial, but this far little discussed, role”.²² As Mark Philp notes,

by the time of the invasion threat of 1803–4, loyalist songs are being produced and distributed in huge numbers, complemented with a steady stream of songs celebrating various British naval battles, many of which are the products of popular composers ... rather than being ballads beginning life in an oral tradition.²³

This is a good description of Parry’s career, which combined traditional and antiquarian Welsh melody with topical new songs. His musical experience was clearly formed by his involvement with the Denbighshire Volunteers: his first known collection was *The Ancient Britons’ Martial Music* in 1804, a now-lost work published in London as an arrangement of Welsh airs for military bands. Then, in 1807, he published a new collection of melodies adapted for piano, *A Collection of WELCH AIRS*. This instrumental work features brief footnotes on the melodies – for example, “This March should be play’d slow and Staccato, it is a fine one on a Military Band”²⁴ – but is perhaps most notable as preparatory work for Parry’s next and much more ambitious collection, *A Selection of Welsh Melodies With Appropriate English Words* (1809).

The twenty-four songs (and six instrumental pieces) in *Welsh Melodies* repurposed many of the tunes from the 1807 collection – among them “Ar Hyd y Nos” [All Through the Night], “Codiad yr Hedydd” [The Rising of the Lark], and “Llwyn Onn” [Ash Grove] – but this is an altogether differently scaled production. Most importantly, the “airs” of 1804 and 1807 have now become songs, featuring English lyrics “by several eminent Literary Characters”.²⁵ As George Thomson discovered, and as Parry notes in his introductory “Observations on the

²² Mark Philp, Roz Southey, Caroline Jackson-Houlston and Susan Wollenberg, “Music and Politics, 1793–1815,” in *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797–1815*, ed. Mark Philp (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 173–204, at 173.

²³ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁴ This is Parry’s comment on the air “Gorhoffedd Gwyr Harlech – March of the Men of Harlech”. See his *A Collection of Welsh Airs, Arranged on a Plan never before attempted, forming Six Divertimentos* (London: Goulding & Co., 1807), 5.

²⁵ *Chester Chronicle*, 30 March 1810.

Present State of Music and Poetry in Wales”, commissioning English-language lyrics was the key challenge in making *Welsh Melodies*; unlike Thomson, Parry gives us no further details of the process. His stated aim was “to give publicity to ... Cambrian Music”, in a work intended “as an humble associate to Jones’ Relics [sic] of the Welsh Bards”. Parry’s introduction thus supplements Edward Jones’s account of ancient Welsh bards with an account of more contemporary poets and harpers. He profiles a range of familiar (Richard Llwyd, Edward Williams/“Iolo Morganwg”) and lesser-known figures, adding in three short verses, or *englynion*, by eminent Welsh writers – Thomas Edwards (“Twm o’r Nant”), David Thomas (“Dafydd Ddu Eryri”), and John Jones (“Jac Glan y Gors”) – written specifically in praise of *Welsh Melodies*. These verses, all written in Welsh, are presented without translations, perhaps a puzzling editorial decision in a work that surely aimed at an audience beyond Wales. Such difficulties also chime with Thomson’s failure to find suitable English verses for a project of “songs of all nations” which he began working on in 1815.²⁶

By 1809 Parry was based in London, composing music for the stage and other forms of popular entertainment. His work was therefore commercial, at times written to order, but he maintained a strong sense of the creative and imaginative power of music. Between 1819 and 1822, he wrote a series of articles on song for the Welsh periodical the *Cambro-Briton*, noting features, uses and performances of Welsh songs. His second article in this series, in which he claimed that “[i]t is much easier to describe a picture or a poem than a musical composition”, recorded a conversation in which his interlocutor described the effects of hearing the Welsh air “Of Noble Race was Shenkin”:

“Whenever,” said he, in a conversation I had with him on the beauties of the Welsh airs, “I hear that masterly composition, ‘Of a noble Race was Shenkin,’ my soul takes a flight among the rocky wilds of Cambria, where,

‘With lays of romantic story
The halls of our Sire resounded;
At the call of love or glory,

²⁶ Thomson first mentions this project in a letter to one of his key lyricists, William Smyth (12 December 1815, British Library MS 35267/165). Beethoven arranged 24 airs as a planned appendix to the fifth volume of *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* in 1818, but these remained unpublished until the twentieth century.

O'er their native hills they bounded.”²⁷

Parry's frontispiece for *Welsh Melodies*, an engraving featuring bards and dolmens backed by a mountainous landscape, equally invokes song set in the “rocky wilds of Cambria”. The works that follow illustrate this landscape in a range of often overlapping temporalities – pastoral, bardic, and of contemporary wartime.

Songs offering pastoral scenes include “Codiad yr Hedydd”, “Nos Galan” [New Year's Eve] and “Hob y Deri Dando” [Away my herd to the Oaken Grove]. Images of bards as respectively lost and dying in the landscape appear in “Rhyfelgyrch Cadpen Morgan” [Captain Morgan's Campaign] and “Dafydd y Garreg Wen” [David of the White Rock], while “Dowch i'r Frwydr” [Come to Battle] and “Toriad y Dydd” [Daybreak] articulate Wales at war, battling for liberty. This position is often historical, but contemporary connections abound. For example, the headnote to “Dowch i'r Frwydr” references the power of music within the military via the contemporary professional role of the Denbighshire Militia's harper: “The Officers keep a Harper (who daily plays at the Mess) & they Sing their National Airs after Dinner in Mirthful Measure”.²⁸ These are perhaps predictable narratives, given Parry's background and the immediate political and international context of his songbook. It is difficult to read much into the lyrics, given that they are the creations of an apparently collective, unsigned set of contributors. But to a deeper extent than the other collections discussed in this essay, Parry's musical work needs to be seen in the context of wartime. In June 1812, the *Chester Chronicle* printed the lyrics for a new song by Parry, “Arthur the Brave”. Written in praise of Lord Wellington, it was also published that summer as a standalone piece. Echoing the war songs of *Welsh Melodies*, “Arthur the Brave” is patriotic (even jingoistic) and triumphal, celebrating “The mighty, mighty deeds of Arthur [read: Wellington] bold and brave”.²⁹ In the wake of the Battle of Salamanca the following month, the song seems to have taken on a life of its own. By August, an additional verse was

²⁷ “John Parry, ‘Welsh Music No. I’ and ‘Welsh Music No. II,’” in *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Vol. IV*, ed. Rosemary Goulding (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 135-7.

²⁸ John Parry, *A Selection of Welsh Melodies With Appropriate English Words* (London: Bland & Wellers, 1809), 46.

²⁹ *Chester Chronicle*, 26 June 1812.

circulating,³⁰ and by September 1812, *The Sun* could report that the song had been reprinted, and that copies had been sent to the battlegrounds of the Peninsular War:

Bards used to accompany the armies of the Ancient Britons to battle, who, with their songs, inspired the soldiers, and filled them with ardour; it was the duty, too, of the Bards to recount the gallant deeds of heroes; also “in plaintive strains” to mourn the fall of the radiant defenders of their country. This in a great measure accounts for that mixture of grandeur and plaintiveness which we observe in the Welsh Melodies. Mr. PARRY, in his beautiful song of “*Arthur the Brave*,” written in honour of the gallant WELLINGTON, has closely imitated his forefathers; the melody is energetic, yet sweet, and truly national. We are happy to hear that a second edition of this patriotic song is already published, and that a number of copies have been sent out to Spain and Portugal.³¹

Case Study 2: George Thomson’s Welsh Airs (1809–17)

The commentator for *The Sun* in September 1812 traces a direct line from Parry’s *Welsh Melodies* to his topical and commemorative songwriting. Twice, however, this writer turns to a language of plaint (“plaintive strains”, “plaintiveness”) in describing Welsh song, invoking bardic and battle scenes in which songs urge soldiers to war as well as recounting and lamenting their loss. In the *Sun* report, Parry’s song channels the cultural experiences and resources of the Welsh – overcome in medieval conquest but long defiant – into a new Napoleonic rallying chorus. “Plaintive” is a term closely associated with national song in this period. Edward Jones identifies “plaintive” as a main subcategory of Welsh melody in the introduction to *Relicks* (the others are “grave”, “martial”, and “pastoral”).³² As we saw above,

³⁰ *The Star*, 21 August 1812.

³¹ *The Sun*, 17 September 1812. The first part of this quotation may be adapted or misquoted from the headnote to Parry’s “Dowch i’r Frwydr,” which begins as follows: “A Bard used to accompany the Army in former days when it marched against an Enemy & when they were preparing for Battle”. See *A Selection of Welsh Melodies*, 46. This is reminiscent of the importance of the Highland pipers who led their regiments into battle during the French wars: see William Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society 1750–1950* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008), 81.

³² Edward Jones, *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* (London: for the author, 1784), 29.

it was Llwyd's chosen term in his letter to Margaret Owen, where he describes Thomson "transplanting our delightfull though plaintive airs beyond the Tweed". The term also colours William Wordsworth's well-known depiction of Gaelic song in "The Solitary Reaper", fruit of his 1805 Scottish tour:

Will no one tell me what she sings?
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
 From old unhappy far-off things,
 And battles long ago...

(lines 16-19)³³

At first glance, Wordsworth's account of an encounter with a Gaelic singer seems to articulate both a moment of frustration – the song is and remains unintelligible – and a sublime or unwritable moment of connection with Scottish culture. But as Nigel Leask has recently pointed out, the diction of the poem also suggests "the kind of light drawing-room verse inspired by *Ossian*, often composed for pianoforte, that motivated visitors on the *petit tour* ... to visit Fingalian sites."³⁴ For Parry and Llwyd, too, a sense of "plaint" might therefore be a relatively recently-invented tradition, a facet of Welsh cultural revivalism, shaped and circulated via forms including song.

Leask further notes that Wordsworth's questions in his poem "expose a tourist's cultural preconceptions about the potential 'themes' of Gaelic song", ranging from historical grievances – especially far-off Ossianic battles – to ordinary everyday matters.³⁵ As we have seen, when George Thomson began to work on *Welsh Airs*, one of his major challenges was the question of English-language lyrics. At first, perhaps not understanding the linguistic situation in Wales, where some 90% of the population spoke Welsh, 70% as monolingual speakers, he expected to find English words for Welsh tunes already extant – an idea that

³³ William Wordsworth, "The Solitary Reaper", in *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807*, ed. Jared Curtis (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 185.

³⁴ Nigel Leask, *Stepping Westward: Writing the Highland Tour c.1720–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 215.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

correspondence with Llwyd and others quickly dispelled.³⁶ Commissioning and to a lesser extent translating lyrics was therefore at the heart of the project and occupied more time and effort for Thomson than the musical side.³⁷ As we shall see, he chose not to ask the same questions about Highland or Gaelic vocal poetry when it came to securing suitable texts for his Scottish collection.

Thomson's approach to the lyrics for *Welsh Airs* developed over time. Early on, his letters reveal just how closely he was engaging with Jones's *Relicks* as a vital source and guide. In October 1803, he reflected with some frustration on the lack of English words for songs in *Relicks*, and with particular disappointment at his failure to verify Jones's claim that lyrics for the air "Of Noble Race was Shenkin" existed not just in English but in multiple languages:

Jones has produced nothing of the sort [English-language lyrics] worth mentioning, but whether he or the poetical genius of the Country be at fault, I know not tho' I am willing to believe it is the former. He seems to have much more of the dry antiquary than of the man of taste; and even as an antiquary he is unsatisfactory. He tells us for instance in a note concerning the song Shenkin, that it was once such a favourite as to be Written in English, Welsh, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and yet he does not gratify our curiosity either, at least he might have given us the English version of a song once so celebrated. (ff. 13v-14r)

Thomson's comments here set his project in wider contexts of tradition and reception, a point that he seems to have approached with increasingly sensitivity as *Welsh Airs* took shape. Setting words to "Shenkin" – the air singled out by Parry in 1819 for its capacity for imaginative "flight" – caused Thomson some anxiety between 1803 and 1807. Believing that this particular air was considered "one of their very best" by the Welsh, he commissioned several texts for it, apparently undecided on the tone he wished to bring to his version: "I procured the one song in a comic and the other in a heroic style, but perhaps the first may be

³⁶ See for example George Thomson to Dr Bevan, 5 October 1803: "I wish to know whether the Welsh have many good Songs amatory or humorous, in English suited to their native Airts?" (f. 13r).

³⁷ For an account of the musical development of *Welsh Airts*, see Marjorie Rycroft, "Haydn's Welsh songs: George Thomson's musical and literary sources," *Welsh Music History* 7 (2008): 92–160. Thomson makes a similar comment about the poetry taking up a "vastly more extensive correspondence" than he anticipated: see "On Scottish Music and Song" in later volumes of his Scottish Collection of 1831.

thought rather low, and the latter somewhat too stiff” (f. 106r). Writing to Lady Cunliffe, a gentry friend near Wrexham who had previously been liaising with Welsh poets on his behalf, Thomson reveals that he is keen to see how “a native Poet” will render the song:

Being anxious to please the Welsh in matching this most favourite Air, I would wish to see what a native Poet will do for it, and I hope you will send it to the most celebrated Bard of your acquaintance, who for the honour of Shenkin will talk his Muse to her highest effort. (f. 106r)

In July 1807, towards the end of his project, Thomson sounded a note of regret to Lady Cunliffe that more of his lyricists were not Welsh, as though they might have done a better job with the commission: “There seems to be much of the divine Awen [poetic inspiration] in your neighbourhood; I wish I had got among the Poets within the sphere of your attraction, before my port folio was so very nearly fill’d” (f. 119r). Thomson’s confidence with Welsh material and especially the language seems to have grown over the course of the project, as his use of the word “Awen” suggests here. His concern for correctly representing the Welsh titles to the airs surfaces in a letter to Richard Llwyd in April 1807 – “Will you take the trouble to glance at the Welsh names of the airs, & correct any misspelling or wrong translations” (f. 112r). The same letter asks “What is the Welsh word for Air? I mean a musical Air, the single word placed thus Air, Castell Towyn [Towyn Castle]”. While it sounds as though Thomson is preparing material to accompany the bilingual song titles or other paratexts in his collection, the answer – “alaw” – does not appear within *Welsh Airs*.

In the published text of *Welsh Airs*, “Of Noble Race was Shenkin” appeared in Volume Two (1811) with a choice of song texts, the first in dialogue/duet form by the Scottish poet Alexander Boswell, and the second a solo by Thomson’s brother David. Thomson’s footnotes to the solo version describe the brothers’ visit to Conwy Castle, transporting readers and singers to the Welsh tour not just through the nature of the lyrics (a tourist’s view of the castle at sunset) but through their first-hand experience. A third representation of Conwy Castle follows via a long quotation from Pennant’s *Tour*, describing one of the castle’s precariously ruined towers, plundered by locals for stone: “Mr Pennant ... gives the following account of

the baseless tower” (a Gothic object of “wonder and dread” for Thomson).³⁸ Thomson’s “Shenkin” adaptations therefore travel in several ways and at several levels, as actual eyewitness experience, antiquarian written tour, and via the virtual spaces of song text(s). Although Thomson was unsure how he should approach this air, the finished work is a good example of song as not just reflecting the rise of national sentiment but also as “the product of an ‘age of musical translation’ – one, moreover, that extends beyond the *völkisch* and the *völkstümlich*, the folksong and the folksong stylisation, to incorporate a good deal of the art-song repertoire more generally.”³⁹

Thomson’s collections, and the processes behind them laid bare in his letters, illustrate the role of music “in conveying literature written in one language into a different cultural and linguistic space”.⁴⁰ Creating *Welsh Airs* was as we have seen a lengthy and fraught process, but it was frequently eased by considerations of place and landscape, which provided Thomson’s contributors with structuring principles for their lyrics and, perhaps, a common language across Welsh environments and English words. Thomson was inspired by the idea of making place “vocal” via his songs, as in a letter to Anne Hunter of August 1805: “Let me beg of you to cast a glance as formerly at the scenery of Wales, and thus make the hills & valleys vocal by your songs” (f. 65v). To Thomas Griffith in June 1807, he phrased the task similarly: “Let us ... have all the new songs, as much Welsh as possible, by taking all the localities from Wales and rendering all its mountains and valleys vocal” (f. 117r). Although use of what might be termed local colour in these songs may seem calculating or disingenuous, Thomson’s *Airs* are also – particularly in performance – examples of what Daniel Grimley has called “landscape’s significance as a site of musical being-in-place, and of music’s role, singing landscape-into-being”.⁴¹

Case Study 3: Alexander Campbell’s Albyn’s Anthology (1816–18)

³⁸ Thomson’s third Welsh volume includes a striking image of “Conway Castle” by David Thomson (engraved by Robert Scott).

³⁹ Bullock and Tunbridge, “Introduction: ‘L’invitation au voyage’,” 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Daniel Grimley, “Hearing Landscape Critically: Prospects and Reflections,” *Studien zur Wertungsforschung* (2019): 89–101, at 91.

Thomson chose not to travel while preparing his other national song collections, relying instead on printed accounts and song volumes. Linguistic challenges, however, remained in dealing with his largest collection of *Original Scottish Airs*. Here he included a pioneering “Glossary on the Scottish Words” and offered some alternative English-language songs for those in written predominately in Scots.⁴² In his letter to Lady Owen, Llwyd had noted a clear “parallel” between the Welsh bards and their Highland or Gaelic counterparts, yet Thomson was certainly not “conversant” in the Gaelic “lingo”. Most Scots song editors of the period held Highland melodies or airs in high regard, insisting on including them, but few were Gaelic speakers or were willing to take the bold step of printing texts in Gaelic and/or attempting to make them accessible to a non-Gaelic speaking audience. This was not the case, however, for the Gaelic-speaking Alexander Campbell, who travelled extensively in the *Gàidhealtachd* collecting song material.

In his “Preface” to the first of his two-volume collection *Albyn’s Anthology or A Select Collection of the Melodies & Vocal Poetry Peculiar to Scotland and the Isles Hitherto Unpublished*, Campbell, in addition to presenting a conventional “history” of Scottish music, also, unusually, incorporated the titles and descriptions of numerous sources of Gaelic song or vocal poetry. He referred to printed collections from 1751 to 1816, both with and without music;⁴³ among these, two of the best known and most often-cited sources were Patrick MacDonald’s *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* of 1784 and Captain Simon Fraser’s *Airs & Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles*, published at the same time as Campbell’s first volume in 1816. The popularity of these latter collections amongst non-Gaelic speakers is explained by the fact that neither included Gaelic lyrical texts.

⁴² First published as an appendix in volume IV of his *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* (London: T. Preston, 1805).

⁴³ Alexander Campbell, *Albyn’s Anthology*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1816–1818), I: vi–viii. These included: Alexander Macdonald’s *Ais-eiridh na sean chanan Albannaich* of 1751; Duncan MacIntyre’s *Oran Ghalhadhach* of 1768; Dugald Buchanan’s *Gaelic Vocal Poetry*, 1770; Ranald Macdonald’s *Gaelic songs, and other lyric specimens of Celtic poetry, together with a few translations* of 1776; and Margaret Cameron’s small volume of Gaelic songs of 1785. See Ellen L. Beard, “Gaelic Tune Sources in *The Scots Musical Museum*,” *Burns Chronicle*, 130, 1 (2021): 71–95. See also Beard’s blog, “Scottish Gaelic Song Collectors Patrick and Joseph MacDonald” (2021), <https://msn.glasgow.ac.uk/scottish-gaelic-song-collectors-patrick-and-joseph-macdonald-by-ellen-beard/>.

Nonetheless, MacDonald's title highlighted that the melodies he was presenting were "Vocal Airs", thus emphasising the importance of song to Highland musical culture. The term "Vocal Poetry", as opposed to songs or lyrics, surely nodded to the bardic foundations of this repertoire, perhaps gesturing towards Leask's idea of Fingalian or Ossianic branding: as a travelling collector, Campbell was certainly keen to "traverse the scenes where 'Fingal lived, & Ossian sang'",⁴⁴ and he made a point of visiting the grave of Murdoch Macdonald, the Laird of Coll's harper, who was "the last of the ancient minstrels of the Gaël".⁴⁵ Like Campbell, in *Highland Vocal Airs*, Patrick MacDonald was keen to note that these airs were previously inaccessible – "hitherto unpublished" – unless one had the chance to experience them in performance, thus drawing attention to the importance of orality, of songs and musical airs that were still very much part of a living tradition. Simon Fraser, like Campbell, uses the term "peculiar" to distinguish this repertoire, giving these melodies a sense of exoticism akin to that so often seen in Romantic-period representations of the landscapes, peoples and customs of the Highlands and Islands. This musical distinctiveness was characteristic of other small nations: Campbell categorises his songs as those of the "Scoto-Gael" rather than the "Scoto-Saxons", reflecting on the similarities of these airs with those of "our neighbours the Irish and the Welsh" and widening this to Scandinavia.⁴⁶ At the same time both Fraser and Campbell arguably down-played this distinctiveness by adapting or transplanting the airs into something more mainstream and "familiar", published as much for domestic realisation as for antiquarian interest, thus resonating nicely with Parry's agenda.

Although he spent much of his adult life as a practising musician in Edinburgh, Campbell was born in Tombea, near Loch Lubnaig in Perth, part of Gaelic-speaking Scotland: an Episcopalian with strong Jacobite sympathies, his second wife, Sarah Cargill, was the widow of Ranald Macdonald of Keppoch. A travel account of his *Journey from Edinburgh through Parts of North Britain* had appeared in 1802 and led to his long poem *The Grampians Desolate* (1804) in which he presented a powerful picture of the Highland Clearances, revealing his sympathy for the evicted Gael. Campbell's response here (as with his later song collecting), captures what Daniel Grimley refers to as "landscape as a composed and

⁴⁴ Campbell, "Slight Sketch," La. III. 577, f. 7v, Laing Collection, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh Library.

⁴⁵ See *Albyn's Anthology*, II: 87.

⁴⁶ Campbell, in the preface to *Albyn's Anthology*, I: ii.

performed space” where the musical landscape contains the “historical legacies of trauma and violence that many sites have hidden or concealed”.⁴⁷

Campbell’s “Preface” to *Albyn’s Anthology* recounts that his project, supported by the gentlemen of the Royal Highland Society of Scotland, was to tour the Highlands and the Western Islands, “in pursuit” of songs and airs previously unknown.⁴⁸ He claimed to have traversed some “eleven and twelve hundred miles” and to have “collected one hundred and ninety-one specimens of melodies and Gaelic vocal poetry”.⁴⁹ His final published collection included 36 songs in volume one (22 of which were set to clearly labelled Highland or Gaelic-titled airs) and 55 songs in volume two (with 28 obviously Highland or Gaelic airs). For those so labelled, texts in the Gaelic language appeared in full or in part, with some translation (“Mac Grigair o Ruadh-shruth” in volume 1 (pp. 18–19) is “translated loosely”), or imitation in English or Scots-English, many of which were labelled as being the Editor’s own translations. Campbell’s willingness to render the songs performable in both “lingos” is illustrated by the fact that he underlaid the English or Scots-English text to the melody on the printed score and on several occasions superimposed the Gaelic text above the top musical stave.

The narrative of Campbell’s journey north, funded in the autumn of 1815, never appeared in print, but the manuscript of “A Slight Sketch” of his journey through “parts of The Highland Hebrides”⁵⁰ maps the trip and recounts observations, conversations and opportunities to gather songs not just from local performance but from manuscript collections made available to him while he was visiting.⁵¹ His “Preface” noted that he was well acquainted with the

⁴⁷ Grimley, “Hearing Landscape Critically,” 90.

⁴⁸ Connections with the Highland Society of London’s commissioning of James Hogg’s *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland*, published in 1819 and 1821, is noteworthy. But Hogg’s “collecting” is not nearly as well evidenced as Campbell’s, and his handling of Gaelic text not nearly as genuine or sympathetic.

⁴⁹ Campbell, “Slight Sketch”: La. III. 577, f. 69r.

⁵⁰ “Slight Sketch”: La. III. 577. See also Campbell’s manuscript of “Notes” from the Border tours made between the 1790s and 1816: La. II. 378, Laing Collection, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh Library.

⁵¹ Karen McAulay notes that Campbell visited Mull at a time when the notable Gaelic music collectors the Maclean Clephane sisters (who also acted as Walter Scott’s Gaelic informants) were absent at a family wedding, but he had access to their songs via manuscripts: see “The Accomplished Ladies of Torloisk,” *International*

Perthshire contributors to Gillies's highly influential 1786 anthology *Sean Dain, agus Orain Ghaidhealach, do reir ordu' Dhaoin Uaisil aroid an Galetachd Alba, &c. &c.*, or *A Collection of Ancient and Modern Gaelic Poems and Songs transmitted from the Gentlemen of the Highlands of Scotland to the Editor*.⁵² By the time he returned from his tour, this Gaelic circle had significantly widened and he was keen not just to name contributors in the indices to his volumes, but to annotate particular texts with accounts of his capture of these songs.⁵³

A fine example of this is found in “A Hirst, or St Kilda Song” in volume 1 of *Albyn's Anthology*. Campbell gives an unattributed Gaelic text beginning “Gur a thall ann a Sòa” side by side with his own translation “I was over in yon Soa”. He annotates “Soa”, explaining that it is “one of the islets of St Kilda”. The song, prefaced by a brief headnote in both Gaelic and English, is the lament of a “married Woman on the death of her Husband who was killed in falling over the rocks of Soa while in the act of searching for eggs”.⁵⁴ Several of the songs in his collection are laments or dirges, and, as we have seen with Thomson and Wordsworth, Campbell notes the emotional impact of these “plaintive” airs. Campbell footnotes another Gaelic word used in both texts, “lon” (a particular kind of rope used by the natives of St Kilda when they are searching for eggs and feathers “in the fact of the rocks which overhang the Atlantic ocean”). He is thus painting a detailed picture of the wild and treacherous coastline alongside his account of local customs. He also acknowledges the source of “[t]his beautiful specimen” of St Kildan song as being from “the mouth of MARGARET MACDONALD, one of the domestics of DONALD MACDONALD, Esq. of Bal-Ronald, North Uist” in September 1815.⁵⁵ Similar attributions are found throughout the volumes and,

Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music 44, 1 (2013): 57–78. See also Kathryn Sutherland, “Walter Scott's Highland Minstrelsy and his Correspondence with the Maclean Clephane Family,” *Scottish Literary Journal* 9, 1 (1982): 48–66 (at 55–60); and Kate Louise Mathis and Eleanor Thomson, “‘Our poetry never lacks clearness if read in Gaelic’: Demystifying Gaelic and Anglo-Highland women's writing in the Celtic Revival,” *Scottish Literary Review* 14, 1 (2022), 1–41 (at 10–13).

⁵² See Charles Coventry, “A Reconsideration of the Gillies Collection of Gaelic Poetry,” *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 26, 1 (1991), 199–206 (<https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol26/iss1/15>).

⁵³ Named contributors include Walter Scott, Thomas Pringle, James Hogg, Anne Grant and Alexander Boswell alongside the Rev. R. C. Maturin, the Rev. James MacLagan and the Rev. T. Grierson.

⁵⁴ *Albyn's Anthology*, I: 28–9.

⁵⁵ Campbell recounts this part of his journey, where he also heard the grandson of John McCodrum, the “Celebrated Bard of North-Uist” sing for him: “Slight Sketch”, f. 36. He references noting down his “St Kilda songs” on 14 September (f. 38).

as Karen McAulay has noted, many contributors were women.⁵⁶ For another short love song, or “Oran Gaoil” (II, pp. 76–7), Campbell acknowledges the singing of Mary Macquharie, “wife to one of Staffa’s small tenants”. He explains that she possessed many traditional tales “which she partly recites and partly sings” and that “the tunes to which they are chaunted”⁵⁷ change with the “incidents of the story” and she “*croons* in a style peculiar to herself”. Remembering Wordsworth’s account of the Solitary Reaper, it is notable that Campbell makes a bold attempt to render these Gaelic songs intelligible.

The language of hunting, seeking out, and “capturing” specimens of song sits nicely alongside the work of naturalists like Martin Martin or Thomas Pennant, who collected native species of flora and fauna, but, as we have already noted, the fluidity of song across print and in performance means that these specimens were not easily confined or pinned down. Perhaps inspired by Campbell’s publication, Thomson’s fifth Scottish volume, which appeared in 1818, included many more Highland songs (e.g. James Hogg’s “The Highland Watch”, beginning “Old Scotia, wake thy mountain strain” and his “Bonny Laddie, Highland Laddie” alongside Burns’s “Lovely Lass of Inverness”). Several of these were published with evocative musical settings by Ludwig van Beethoven, giving this volume an altogether new, more “romantic” and Ossianic disposition. But Thomson included no lyrics in Gaelic, even if some, including Scott’s lyric for “The Maid of Isla”, were labelled “imitations”.

Our three case studies have traced the capacity of national songs to travel around and within the four nations, but they also travelled further afield, to Europe, and the colonial world. For example, “Arthur the Brave”, the aforementioned song by John Parry sent to Portugal and Spain in September 1812, continued to travel. That same month, it was published as far afield

⁵⁶ See Karen E. McAulay, *Our Ancient National Airs: Scottish Song Collecting from the Enlightenment to the Romantic Era* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). Chapter 3 focuses on Campbell’s tour journals and *Albyn’s Anthology*. See also McAulay’s blog “Revisiting the Achievements of Song-Collector Alexander Campbell” (2020) (<https://msn.glasgow.ac.uk/song-collector-alexander-campbell/>).

⁵⁷ “Chaunt” can simply mean “chant”, in terms of singing, but in the nineteenth century it can mean to “speak in a pert manner” or to speak with “a twang or strange accent”: *Dictionaries of the Scots Language*: <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/chant>.

as Barbados, with the note “sung with great applause at the Lyceum Theatre, London”.⁵⁸ This is not an isolated example: James Hogg’s first song, “Donald M’Donald”, was composed around 1803 and panegyricised an imagined Highland resistance to Bonaparte, were he to land at Fort William. It was widely performed in theatrical circles and at dinners and entertainments well beyond these islands, with documented performances in Bombay and Calcutta as late as the 1820s and 30s.⁵⁹ The reception of George Thomson’s collections, indeed, can be traced in India, and America⁶⁰ – his volumes began to appear in Philadelphia in the late 1810s, and surviving correspondence between 1812 and 1823 discusses his sales in Philadelphia, New York and Calcutta.⁶¹

What ultimately emerges from these narratives of song is a layered and often uneven sense of place, movement and language. Editors undertake excursions to collect melodies or lyrics; in the making of editions, melodies and written lyrics shuttle between people, and countries, and across lines of class. Finished songs make unpredictable journeys through print, and travel onwards into mainstream national traditions, such as those subsequently set for large-scale orchestral music.⁶² Increasingly, early nineteenth-century musical practitioners and audiences might have found no real need to travel within these islands to experience songs in their local settings, discovering instead Welsh and Scottish landscapes and Celtic languages portrayed and represented at home or in metropolitan concert halls. And yet song collections, besides shaping an evolving sense of Scottish, Welsh, and British identity, also contributed to a “touristic” sense of place. Daniel Grimley has contextualised Fredrick Delius’s musical accounts of Norwegian landscapes, “with [their] sensitivity to the local topography and notes on local customs and traditions”, as evidence of “the country’s growing international

⁵⁸ *Barbados Mercury and Bridge-town Gazette*, 22 September 1812.

⁵⁹ See James Hogg, *Songs by the Ettrick Shepherd*, ed. Kirsteen McCue (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 145. Also McCue, “Napoleon and Me”: “The Essay,” BBC Radio 3, December 2012 (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01p2sjs>).

⁶⁰ Kirsteen McCue, “George Thomson (1757–1851): his Collections of National Airs in their Scottish Cultural Context” (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 1993), 56–60.

⁶¹ See Thomson to Archibald Constable (Philadelphia), September 1822, British Library Add. MS 35268, f.10; Thomson to Samuel Campbell (New York), 1812, B.L. Add. MS 35267, ff.39–40; Thomson to McIntosh & Co. (Calcutta), January 1823, B.L. Add. MS 35268, ff.120–1.

⁶² See Kirsteen McCue, “Orchestral Manoeuvres: Burns on the Concert Platform, 1879–1959,” in *Performing Robert Burns: Enactments and Representations of the “National Bard”*, ed. Ian Brown and Gerard Carruthers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 148–63.

significance as a tourist destination”.⁶³ As tourism continued to develop within these islands, what Thomson described to Anne Grant as “the never ending business of Songs” (f. 20r) continued to shape the cultural and political imagination of the Celtic-speaking countries.

⁶³ Daniel Grimley, “Music, Landscape, and the Sound of Place: On Hearing Delius’s Sound of the High Hills,” *The Journal of Musicology* 33, 1 (2016): 11–44, at 16.

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