

The Storyteller, the Scribe, and a Missing Man: Hidden Influences from Printed Sources in the Gaelic Tales of Duncan and Neil MacDonald

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1 Introduction

The Scottish Gaelic tradition bearer Duncan MacDonald¹ (1883-1954) was one of the most remarkable storytellers of twentieth-century Europe.² He piqued the interest of a host of ethnologists in the later years of his life because of his considerable repertoire of traditional knowledge. They were especially interested in his ability to tell certain tales of his—particularly those with ties to older literary versions in manuscripts³—in a virtually identical fashion from recitation to recitation. During a period when scholars were admitting that the conservatism of Gaelic oral tradition had been perhaps exaggerated at times (see Ó Duilearga 1945), Duncan MacDonald’s abilities were seen as an acquittal of the *seanchaidh*.⁴ It became clear that it was possible in certain cases for the surface forms of language, not just plot, to survive down through the ages in an almost unaltered form. MacDonald’s genealogy (see Matheson 1977), with its ties to the hereditary poets and historians of *Clann Dòmhnail* of Sleat, suggested that he was an approximation of the kind of professional Gaelic storyteller that would have been an institution in earlier times.

¹ Originally from Snishaval (*Snaoiseabhal*), South Uist. He was better known as *Dunnchadh Clachair*—“Duncan the Stone-mason”—or by his patronymic *Dunnchadh ’ac Dhòmhnail ’ac Dhunnchaidh*.

² For biographies, see MacGillEathain 1954 and Matheson 1977.

³ The classic study of this genre of formal storytelling is Bruford 1966. The Gaelic romances were hero tales that were composed in medieval and early modern times evidently to entertain the nobility of the day. They circulated in manuscript form, on both sides of the Sea of Moyle, and were written in a largely grapholectic, formal form of the language known as Classical Gaelic. Although Classical Gaelic would have seemed rather antiquated to many of the Scottish—and Irish—Gael who listened to the stories and songs composed in it, it is clear that they comprehended much and that some Scottish bards and storytellers were fluent in it (see J. L. Campbell and Thomson 1963).

⁴ *Seanchaidh* is generally translated as “storyteller” or “tradition bearer,” but it has a wider semantic range than that; *seanchaidhean* would normally be expert genealogists and local historians as well. They were the professors of oral tradition, as it were, for each area.

Maartje Draak (1957) was the first scholar to comment upon the verbal consistency of Duncan’s narratives. She compared two versions of a story well known as *Fear na h-Eabaid*⁵ (“The Man of the Habit”). The first was taken down by K. C. Craig in 1944 and published in *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* (MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950), and the second was recorded on wire in 1950 by John Lorne Campbell.⁶ Campbell’s recording was transcribed for a folklore conference that Draak attended (Du. MacDonald 1953).⁷ Draak says that his narration at the conference—where he had been invited to give a demonstration—was “nearly word perfect” (1957:47) when compared to the transcription of Campbell’s 1950 recording; however, when compared to Craig’s 1944 transcription, there were instances of imperfections and “story decay” (*ibid.*:53). Most of these changes seem negligible⁸ when considering the length and complexity of the story as well as the crucial fact that Craig’s version was more temporally removed than Campbell’s.⁹ Additionally, Draak’s equating him to a *literatus* at one point (1957:54) is an indication of the standard that was being employed.

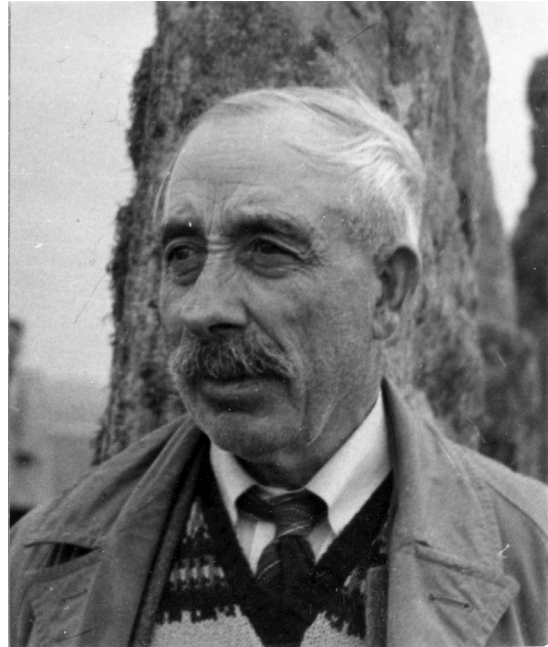


Image 1: Duncan MacDonald. Photographic archive of the School of Scottish Studies.

Bruford¹⁰ (1979) extended Draak’s analysis with the inclusion of another four versions, totaling six altogether. Importantly, Bruford included a text from Duncan’s brother Neil, also a storyteller of note. This text was taken from the manuscript collection of Donald John MacDonald (1919-1986), Duncan’s son (see §3.1.2 below). The various versions of *Fear na h-Eabaid* are listed below for ease of reference and are in diachronic order. The abbreviations are as per the original, and the word counts are from the present study:

⁵ For a history of this tale, originally a medieval literary romance, see Bruford 1968.

⁶ See <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/24358/1> for this recording.

⁷ The “International Conference on Celtic Folklore,” held in Stornoway and Oban in 1953.

⁸ Such as substituting the word *subhachas* (“gladness”) for the word *dubhachas* (“sadness”), and occasional character confluences.

⁹ This is a key point: two narratives that were collected from an individual around the same time period are likely to share more in common with one another than are two that are relatively more temporally removed from each other.

¹⁰ Dr. Allan Bruford (1937-1995) was a Senior Lecturer and Archivist at the School of Scottish Studies.

D1 (1936): Peggy McClements,¹¹ from dictation, 5171 words.

D2 (1944): K. C. Craig, from dictation, and published in MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950,¹² 6571 words.

D3 (1947): Calum Maclean, transcribed from an Ediphone recording made for the Irish Folklore Commission (IFC MS 1031:152-85), 6771 words.

D4 (1950): John Lorne Campbell, recorded on wire and transcribed by Matheson and Thomson (Du. MacDonald 1953), 7492 words.

D5 (1953): Calum Maclean, recorded on tape for the School of Scottish Studies and transcribed by Donald Archie MacDonald (SA 1953/34 A4-35 A1), 7381 words.

N (1955): Donald John MacDonald, from the dictation of Neil MacDonald, for the School of Scottish Studies (DJM MS 3524-83), 6109 words.¹³

Bruford's paper bolsters Draak's findings and conclusions for the most part, providing a running account of the different types of variation found among the texts. Unlike Draak, however, he does not cast discrepancies in negative terms, and he highlights the impressive similarity between the renditions (Bruford 1979:33-34):

I have not produced examples of the most remarkable feature, that for the most part all six texts are *almost identical in wording*—it is easier to study the differences because they are only a small part of the whole. . . . Brief comparisons of the different versions of other tales of this type which Duncan told—the other four printed by Craig (1944) in fact¹⁴—suggest *equal if not greater consistency in wording*. [emphasis added]

Bruford thought that this level of consistency was unusual in his experience of contemporary Gaelic storytelling, in Uist and elsewhere. He offered two possible explanations for it. One was that Duncan had remembered the stories verbatim as told by his father, from whom the vast majority of them had come. The other was that he had stabilized his versions as an adult by way of repetition, preserving the plot and some of the formal language that he had heard from his

¹¹ Peggy McClements (née Lowe) collected the tale while she was an undergraduate in Celtic at the University of Edinburgh. She worked at the School of Scottish Studies for many years and produced a wealth of transcriptions of Gaelic traditional narrative.

¹² All of the bibliographic databases that I have encountered have *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* as being published in 1944, but Calum Maclean (MacGillEathain 1954) indicates that it was published in the Autumn of 1950. The confusion may relate to the fact that the only date listed in its front matter is the year in which the stories were *collected* (quote as in original): “Seann sgialachdan air an gabhail le Dunnchaidh [sic] mac Dhomhnail ac Dhunnchaidh, Uibhist a Deas, mar a chual e aig athair fhein iad, 1944” (“Old stories told by Duncan MacDonald son of Duncan, South Uist, as he heard them from his own father, 1944”). Additionally, in the biography collected from Duncan in 1950 and published in *Tocher* (Matheson 1977:8), he mentions that the book had yet to be published, but that it was expected soon.

¹³ Bruford notes that this version was taken down “probably on tape” (1996:190).

¹⁴ See note 12 above.

father. Bruford initially favored the latter explanation, but he revised his position when he discovered that Neil's versions of the hero tales were virtually the same, word for word (Bruford 1979: 34):

. . . it seems clearly disproved by the texts from Neil MacDonald, which are for the most part *as close to his brother's texts as one of those is to another*. . . . It seems clear that both brothers had learned some of the their father's tales virtually word for word. [emphasis added]

This remarkable observation, that two members of a storytelling family had stories learned from oral transmission that were almost identical—not simply in terms of motif structure, but in the actual language used as well—raised the bar considerably regarding the potential for linguistic conservatism in traditional Gaelic narrative. Subsequent publications have commented on the importance of this conservatism (Bruford 1981:103, 1996:177-78; Bruford and MacDonald 2003:453; Zall 1998:12-13, 2007-10:210), and perhaps Draak styling Duncan as a *litteratus* was not actually very far from the mark; it was as if the two brothers had acted as faithful amanuenses for their father's recitations. Bruford's observation (1979:35-37) that Duncan's versions of less formal storytelling genres, such as *Märchen* and local legend, tended to show significantly more variation implied that the family had made a distinction in their repertoire—albeit a subconscious one—between tales with more formal, literary origins and those with a more purely oral, informal background. Accordingly, an almost literate aesthetic—the concept of an ideally immutable, lexically “correct” version—had perhaps become attached to certain of their tales.¹⁵

While I was writing a theoretical paper on the oralization and mnemonic retention of the literate Gaelic romances, I decided to investigate quantitatively the extent to which Neil and Duncan MacDonald's tales shared the same language. The data that Bruford provided, and a cursory examination of the raw evidence, seemed to fit well with the emerging hypotheses. However, as I discovered, all of the textual evidence that we have of Neil's storytelling comes from one source: the manuscript collection of Uist oral tradition made by Donald John MacDonald, Duncan's son (see §3.1.1 below for further information). In every case, the language of Neil's stories is almost identical to Duncan's when examining two sources: the tales published by K. C. Craig (1947; MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950) and those attributed to Duncan himself in Donald John's collection. However, their proximity diminishes when other sources are considered, such as the transcriptions and recordings made of Duncan by Peggy McClements (1936), John Lorne Campbell (early 1950s), and Calum Iain Maclean (1947-53). In other words, the stories contributed by Donald John from Duncan and Neil are more similar to those of Craig—and to each other—than to versions taken down by other collectors.

¹⁵ During the preparation of this essay, I believed that neither brother could apparently read Gaelic (Innes 2011); however, it has since come to light that both Duncan and Neil were indeed probably literate. According to Donald John's stepson, Donald MacNeil—who had worked closely with Neil as an apprentice—the brothers could read and write in Gaelic and English (MacNeil 2011). Dr. Andrew Wiseman, a colleague who worked on the Calum Maclean Project (available with registration at <http://www.calum-maclean.celtscot.ed.ac.uk/calumac>), points out to me that in Duncan's autobiography, which was collected by MacLean, he states that he is literate.

This finding is anomalous since Donald John’s texts are the most temporally distant from Craig’s transcriptions of any of the extant versions. One would expect the language of storytellers to evolve over time. For a person to revert back suddenly to how he or she told a tale ten years previously would be highly unusual. Furthermore, it is understood that Neil is a separate individual from Duncan. These two variables—temporal distance and the involvement of a separate narrator—would be expected to be associated with more, rather than less, variation. A close textual examination of the texts, such as the ones Bruford himself conducted, provides hints of the underlying relationship between Donald John’s texts and those of Craig. However, once a quantitative analysis is carried out, the level of intersection between them is so extensive, and their divergence from the texts of other collectors so marked, as to suggest only one conclusion: Donald John’s texts of Neil and Duncan are not independent from Craig’s published texts of Duncan. In fact, there is strong evidence (see §3.1.3 below) to suggest that Donald John visually copied Craig’s work into his manuscripts, word for word in some places, and slightly altered in others. This is a surprising finding, and it raises a number of interesting questions and implications that will be explored in the current paper.

In the analyses that follow, I employ the following abbreviations:

Cat	<i>Am Fear a Thug Cait dhan Tuirc</i>
CG	<i>Conall Gulban</i>
CIM	Calum Iain Maclean
DJM	Donald John MacDonald
DJM-D	Duncan MacDonald’s texts in the Donald John MacDonald manuscript collection
DJM-N	Neil MacDonald’s texts in the Donald John MacDonald manuscript collection
EM	<i>Eachdraidh Mhànuis</i>
GS	<i>Gruagach nan Sealg</i>
IFC	Irish Folklore Commission
IO	<i>Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge</i>
JLC	John Lorne Campbell
<i>MWHT</i>	<i>More West Highland Tales</i>
NP	Noun phrase
Old MS	“Old manuscript”
REFL	Reflexive
TM	<i>Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir</i>

2 Methodology

2.1 Data

All of the tales that Duncan and Neil MacDonald had in common were collated using the database in the Tale Archive of the School of Scottish Studies. Those tales that were also in a

publication of Craig’s were prioritized and considered for analysis. A further two sets of texts were included in the dataset to investigate potential relationships with tales in *More West Highland Tales* (J. F. Campbell 1940). Table 1 below summarizes the data:

Table 1: A selection of Duncan and Neil’s tales in the D. J. MacDonald manuscripts¹⁶

Tale name	DJM manuscripts		Printed source	Alternative versions (mostly from Duncan MacDonald)	
	Duncan (DJM-D)	Neil (DJM-N)		A	B
<i>Am Fear a Thug am Boireannach às an Tuirc</i> (ATU 506)	9/9/53 390-438	--	Craig 1949:134-44	CIM: 31/01/49 IFC MS 1156: 202-37 (as <i>Eilean an Òir</i>)	JLC: 07/12/50 Tape ID: CW0083
* <i>Am Fear a Thug Cait dhan Tuirc/An Dà Sgiobair</i> (ATU 1651/506)	--	22/11/54 2634-60	J. F. Campbell 1940:372-92	DJM MSS: Mary Ann MacInnes 20/05/57 6248-75	
<i>An Ceatharnach Caol Riabhach</i>	--	6/11/53 596-605	unknown	CIM: 7/1/49 IFC MS 1180: 105-07	--
* <i>An Tuairisgeul Mòr</i>	8/2/54 948-1002	12/2/55 3079-148	MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950:59-72	CIM: 12/01/47 IFC MS 1031: 103-51	JLC: 14/02/50 Tape ID: CW0056
* <i>Conall Gulban</i>	2/2/54 881-932	22/12/54 2847-910	MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950:45-58	CIM: 26/1/48 IFC MS 1054 1-57	JLC: 17/02/50 Tape ID: CW0066
* <i>Eachdraidh Mhànuis</i>	5/1/53 779-825	--	MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950:1-16	CIM: 08/01/49 IFC MS 1179: 207-66	JLC: 16/02/50 Tape ID: CW0063
* <i>Fear na h-Eabaid</i>	--	14/5/55 3524-83	MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950:17-29	<i>See above for a list of alternate versions.</i>	
* <i>Gruagach nan Sealg/Mar a Cheileadh an t-Sealg air an Fhinn</i>	1/10/53 481-96	22/12/54 2774-92	Craig 1947:245-50	CIM: 11/01/49 IFC MS 1171: 393-406	--
* <i>Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge</i>	5/4/54 1250-300	12/11/54 2493-553	J. F. Campbell 1940:Chapt. 17	DJM MSS: from “an old manuscript”: 6278-322	--

¹⁶ The information supplied for the Donald John MacDonald collection is the date that each tale was collected (as noted on the accession sheet) and its page numbers. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are analyzed within the current essay. Within this chart and the following discussion “ATU” is an abbreviation for “Aarne-Thompson-Uther” and refers to a tale-type number, as represented in *The Types of International Folktales* (Uther 2011). Similarly, “CW” is an abbreviation for “Canna Wire,” referring to the older material collected by John Lorne Campbell; the associated links are to the *Tobar an Dualchais* / “Kist o Riches” website, a portal that allows access to ethnographic audio recordings from the School of Scottish Studies, the BBC, and the Canna archive.

<i>Mac an Ridire Albannaich</i> (ATU 517)	6/8/53 289-328	8/12/54 2680-734	Craig 1947:231-45	CIM: 11/01/49 IFC MS 1171: 472-526 (as <i>Alasdair Mòr mac Rìgh na h-Èiphit</i>)	--
<i>Na Tri Comhairlichean</i> (ATU 910B)	19/5/54 1544-57	--	J. F. Campbell 1940: Chapt. 6	--	--
<i>Sgeulachd Mhic Rìgh Lochlainn</i>	14/1/54 830-80	15/1/55 2952-3016	MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950:30-44	CIM: 10/01/48 IFC MS 1053: 408-60	JLC: 15/02/50 Tape ID: CW0056

To ensure that the texts utilized the same orthographical system—crucial when conducting this type of analysis—they were laid out in columns to facilitate visual comparison (see examples in §3.3) and standardized. This standardization was done roughly in concordance with the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions (SQA 2009). Where words could not be found in the dictionary, the spelling in *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* (MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950) or J. F. Campbell 1994 was employed. Incidents of ellipsis were expanded to minimize false negatives—for example, *a th' ann > a tha ann*—acute accents were made grave, and punctuation was excluded during the analysis.

The data for each tale included all available sources. Where sound recordings existed but no transcriptions were available, the transcribing was undertaken by the current author. The *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts were utilized in full, but for the other analyses samples of approximately 250-350 words were used. This methodology was found to be sufficient for detecting differences across the texts. The word counts for each sample varied (see Table 2 and Table 3), as they were defined on the basis of parallel motif structure and language, and were arranged so that each sample of a text was as semantically equivalent as possible. Unless otherwise stated, each sample was taken from the beginning of the text. Where taken from the end of a text, the sample ran back from the last word for as many words as are reported below. In three cases, samples were taken from the middle of a tale. The page numbers for these tales will be detailed in the relevant sections below.

Table 2: Word counts for *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts

Craig	DJM-N	McClements	CIM53	CIM47	JLC	Mean	Total
6571	6109	5171	7381	6771	7492	6583	39495

Table 3: Word counts for all sampled texts

Sample	Published text	DJM-N	DJM-D	CIM	JLC	Old MS	Mean	Totals
TM beg	258	277	256	258	318		273	1367
TM end	323	334	357	347	391		350	1752
CG	246	257	253	290	271		263	1317
EM	244		262	420	436		341	1362
GS	447	462	455	517			470	1881
Cat beg	353	537					445	890
Cat mid	410	483					447	893
Cat end	269	282					276	551
IO beg	325	425	366			389	376	1505
IO mid	237	238	265			215	239	955
IO end	217	241	237			446	285	1141
Mean	303	354	306	366	354	350		
Totals	3329	3536	2451	1832	1416	1050		13614

2.2 Statistical and computational techniques

To gauge the intersection between the different versions of the texts, a calculation that is commonly employed in plagiarism detection was used, the *Dice similarity coefficient* (Alzahrani et al. 2012); it was implemented with WordSmith Tools (Scott 2011), a widely available software package. The measure describes the overlap between two texts on the basis of shared tokens (words, in this case), using the following formula:

$$D(x,y) = \frac{2 |x \cap y|}{|x| + |y|}$$

In essence, the coefficient is twice the total number of shared words in documents x and y , divided by the total number of words found in document x along with the total number of words in document y . The results range from 0 to 1, much like a typical correlation. A return of null would indicate that the texts are completely unrelated to one another¹⁷ and a return of 1 that they are exactly the same. Although the measure is unable to detect syntactic relationships,¹⁸ it is a good indication of lexical similarity. The next section will describe the results from the analyses.

¹⁷ This result would be highly unlikely due to the effect of common, co-occurring lexemes.

¹⁸ It is currently not possible to automate syntactical analysis in Gaelic, but there are initiatives afoot that would hopefully make such analysis a reality at some point in the future (Bauer et al. 2009).

3 Results

The first part of this section will focus on the *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts, which have received the most attention in the literature. The quantitative results will be presented and discussed (§3.1.1), followed by background information on Donald John MacDonald and his collection (§3.1.2). Then, the evidence suggesting that Donald John was engaged in visual copying will be provided (§3.1.3), followed by an examination of the linguistic differences in evidence between the texts of K. C. Craig and Donald John (§3.1.4). This methodology will thus lay the groundwork for a series of subsequent analyses (§3.2-3.3) with the aim of extending the scope of the investigation and answering the following questions:

1. To what extent were Donald John's submissions dependent upon Craig's publications?
2. Can we detect a distinction between the texts attributed to Duncan and Neil?
3. Is there evidence that Donald John utilized published sources other than Craig's publications?

3.1 *The Fear na h-Eabaid Texts*

3.1.1 Quantitative Results and Discussion

As mentioned above, the six texts that are included in the present analysis of *Fear na h-Eabaid* are the same ones that were investigated by Bruford (1979). To provide a control, an unrelated text from *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* was included as well, a hero tale known as *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir* ("The Story of the Big 'Made Up Tale'," 7675 words). This text was processed so that it was orthographically equivalent to the others (see §2.1 above for details). Full texts were used throughout, with a total word count of 47,170. Table 4 presents the results:

Table 4: Dice coefficient results for the *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts and *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir*¹⁹

Text 1	Text 2	Relation
Craig	DJM-N	0.87
Craig	CIM53	0.82
CIM53	JLC	0.82
Craig	JLC	0.81
CIM47	Craig	0.81
CIM47	CIM53	0.80
CIM47	JLC	0.79
DJM-N	CIM53	0.78
Craig	McClements	0.77
DJM-N	JLC	0.77
CIM47	DJM-N	0.77
CIM47	McClements	0.76
DJM-N	McClements	0.76
CIM53	McClements	0.75
JLC	McClements	0.75
Craig	TM	0.45
JLC	TM	0.44
McClements	TM	0.44
CIM53	TM	0.43
CIM47	TM	0.43
DJM-N	TM	0.42

The data in Table 4 is ranked in accordance with the relation value in the third column. As can be seen by looking at the bottom of the table, all of the *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts correlated comparatively weakly with *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir*: there was a difference of 0.30 between the most concordant instance in this case (Craig and *Sg TM*: 0.45) and the two least concordant *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts (JLC and McClements: 0.75). In fact, the *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts are remarkably similar to one another across the range, indicating the consistency with which Duncan MacDonald told some of his tales. However, the most striking result here is that the two most concordant *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts are Craig, collected from Duncan in 1944, and DJM-N, written down by Donald John MacDonald in 1955, ostensibly from Neil's recitation. This result seems illogical. Not only is DJM-N the most recent text by two years, and therefore the most diachronically distant from Craig (eleven years of difference versus eight years for Clement's text), but it was also taken down from a separate individual, thereby distinguishing it from all of the other texts. No two of Duncan's own texts are as close to one another as Neil's version is to the one of his in *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh*. This is the case despite the fact that Neil's version contains a lacuna of approximately 730 words, omitting two episodes common to

¹⁹ Here and throughout §3.1.1, "Craig" is used to refer to the 1944 version of *Fear na h-Eabaid* published in MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950.

all of the other versions (discussed further in §3.1.3). One can assume that, had these episodes not been omitted, the relation value might have been higher still.

In order to provide corroboration for this result, another test commonly employed to detect plagiarism was performed on the *Fear na h-Eabaid* data: *the cosine coefficient* (see Table 5).²⁰ It is interpreted in the same way as the Dice coefficient. The preparation of the texts was as above, although a stop list was employed, removing the fifty most common words.²¹

Table 5: Cosine coefficient results for the *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts

	Craig	McClements	DJM-N	CIM53	CIM47	JLC
JLC	0.891	0.847	0.873	0.896	0.872	1
CIM47	0.855	0.861	0.846	0.867	1	0.872
CIM53	0.875	0.844	0.865	1	0.867	0.896
DJM-N	0.912	0.866	1	0.865	0.846	0.873
McClements	0.863	1	0.866	0.844	0.861	0.847
Craig	1	0.863	0.921	0.875	0.855	0.891

These results confirm the previous finding: the two texts most similar to one another are Donald John MacDonald's transcription of Neil (DJM-N) and Duncan's version in *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* (Craig). Despite the temporal distance between the two versions, the aforementioned episodic gap, and the fact that they came from different individuals, their similarity to each other is greater than any two of Duncan's own renditions of this story. It is highly unlikely that Neil, a recognized storyteller in his own right,²² memorized his version more or less word for word from K. C. Craig's book. Rather, it appears that Donald John took Duncan's version of *Fear na h-Eabaid* almost directly from *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* but changed words and phrases in places, and wrote it down in his own particular orthographical style (see §3.1.3-3.1.4 below). Figure 1 provides a scan of the label filled out by him for this particular tale.

²⁰ My thanks to Dr. Michael P. Oakes for his help and advice, and for running the texts through his cosine coefficient application. See Oakes 1998 and 2012 as well as Maurer et al. 2006 for more information on this analysis.

²¹ A stop list removes a pre-determined set of words from the analysis before it commences. In language studies, it is often used to filter out the most common words of a language in order to increase the likelihood that the analysis will be based upon lexemes with potentially more semantic interest.

²² Bill Innes, in his introduction to *Chi Mi* (MacDhòmhnail and Innes 1998:viii) says "Neil's knowledge of Gaelic folklore may have been even richer than his brother's," although, as an introvert, he did not attract the same level of attention as the more extroverted Duncan.

Figure 1: Accession sheet label submitted by Donald John MacDonald for Neil MacDonald's recitation of *Fear na h-Eabaid*

3524

Name of writer Donald J. MacDonald

Address Pennerie South Dist.

The information below refers to the district of _____

County _____ Parish _____

It was recorded by me on (date) 14th May 1955

from Neil MacDonald Age 70

occupation croft who lives in the township of Pennerie

and who is a native of Pennerie

He (she) heard this 50 years ago from his father

aged then 20 who lived then at Strichale, South Dist.

Also in K. G. Craig's "Sgialachdan Dhonnachaidh" p. 17

An euda sibhe an latha

This accession sheet dates the recording session as 14 May 1955 and states that Neil had learned the tale from his father fifty years previously, thus clearly implying that the text has come from an oral source, recorded from a particular individual on a particular date.

Given that the relationship with Craig's book is so close, it is interesting to note that previous scholars—Bruford, in particular—did not detect this relationship. When one revisits Bruford's 1979 publication, it is notable that he often found the texts to be more in parallel than the other four versions. He even interprets the presence of the relationship between N (Neil) and D2 (Craig) in one case—the third quote below—as indicating that the brothers were likely to have heard the story from their father in a particular way:

D2 (and N) '... duine ... a bhite fiachainn ri eallach a thogail dhà' ('... a person ... for whom one was trying to lift something') (30).

N has much the same words as D2, though the order within clauses is different. ... (30)

On the other hand N has the same order as D2, and I suspect that this is how Duncan learned it (31-32).

... in D1 he simply leaves in pursuit without comment, and in D2 and N he gets ready ... before leaving (33).

Although he regards Neil's texts as authentic,²³ Bruford has this to say about the collection: "[It] has been unduly neglected hitherto because of some fault found with later volumes, but the early volumes in particular contain much of great interest" (Bruford 1979:40). This "fault" does not appear to have been mentioned again in any of Bruford's subsequent publications, but it must have been of a relatively serious nature for the collection to have been "neglected."²⁴ Bruford and MacDonald (2003) were clearly unaware of any derivative relationship between Neil's text of *Fear na h-Eabaid* and Craig's: "[it is] fairly certain that both brothers learned the story virtually word for word by heart from their father" (453). Additionally, the manuscripts of Duncan and Neil's stories in the DJM collection generally show annotation in the form of motif numbers (see Figure 5 below), having been inserted probably by either Bruford or Donald Archie MacDonald. Such annotation is thus further evidence that the stories were considered authentic. However, if Bruford did have any suspicion concerning the origin of the items in Donald John's manuscripts, the issue was more extensive than he had suspected: the results from the current analyses (see §3.2-3.3 below) suggest that Donald John was drawing from Craig's publications within the first 10% of his work. Furthermore, it can be demonstrated that he utilized printed work not only in what he claimed were transcriptions from his uncle, but in those he submitted in his father's name. Support for these assertions, as well as evidence for visual copying, will be provided in the sections below.

The data available from Duncan for a "thick corpus" approach—as advocated by Honko, who described it as "worth its weight in gold" (2000:21)—is thus greatly limited. Some of the stories attributed to him were collected only by Craig and Donald John. One also wonders whether any of Neil's narratives were taken down from him verbatim. Without these stories, we cannot investigate the variation in evidence between him and Duncan, a crucial source of information for reconstructing how they may have heard their stories in the first place.

However, before considering these topics further and providing additional evidence of the link between Donald John's manuscripts and printed sources, it will be useful to consider more fully the collector and his collection.

3.1.2 Donald John MacDonald and His Collection

Donald John MacDonald is described as having been a "harum-scarum, truant-playing teenager impatient to leave school at fourteen, having shown precious little sign of any academic bent" (MacDhòmhnaill and Innes 1998:vii). Despite his lack of obvious scholarly inclinations, he

²³ In footnote 13 of *Scottish Traditional Tales*, Bruford says (1979:41): "Neil's text [of *An Ceatharnach Caol Riabhach*] . . . was most regrettably overlooked when we published Donald Alasdair Johnson's version of this tale [in MacDonald and Bruford 1970]."

²⁴ Another interpretation of this "fault" is that the later volumes of Donald John's work have as few as two or three words per line and are double spaced, contrasting sharply with his earlier writing style. It is a curious feature of his collection, and it could perhaps be explained by the way in which he was paid. A short piece in the first volume of *Scottish Studies* (Anonymous 1957) mentions that Donald John was "engaged on a voluntary, part-time basis" (14). If he had the same arrangement as other part-time collectors at the time, he would have received £5 per notebook of 96 pages (Sanderson 1953). He submitted 69 notebooks and, therefore, would have been paid—in today's currency (see <http://www.measuringworth.com>)—around £18,000 in total, or roughly £3,500 per year of engagement.

published two books during his lifetime (MacDhòmhnaill 1974 and 1981), a number of articles and songs in the Gaelic periodical *Gairm*, and a short piece in *Scottish Studies* (Do. MacDonald 1957). He was also one of the most celebrated Gaelic poets of the twentieth century. His song *Moladh Uibhist* won him the Mod's Bardic Crown in 1948 (MacDhòmhnaill and Innes 1998:20-30), and he wrote a number of other celebrated songs in the language. He suffered as a German prisoner of war during WWII—details of which are published in his book *Fo Sgàil a' Swastika* (“Under the Shadow of the Swastika,” MacDhòmhnaill 1974)—and afterwards returned to the croft of his youth in Peninerine, South Uist.

He was engaged on a casual basis by the School of Scottish Studies²⁵ during the years 1953 and 1958, when he would have been in his mid-thirties. Calum Maclean encouraged him to record everything that his father said on “tape” (MacGillEathain 1954). Evidently, then, he had a tape recorder at some point,²⁶ although there is only one trace of recordings made by him in the School's database.²⁷ His manuscript collection is in 26 bound volumes in the Upper Library of the school, organized into 69 books. A large number of the pieces that he submitted were attributed to his father and uncle; there were over 1500 pages from Duncan alone (Hillers 2007; MacGillEathain 1954).

Bill Innes (MacDhòmhnaill and Innes 1998:viii) relates that Donald John and his sister Ann had essentially been raised by Neil, and had been closer to him than their father: Duncan was often away from home, apparently, due to the demands of the croft, his work as a mason, and his popularity as a storyteller. Donald John's use of Craig's work in the items ostensibly taken from Neil is thus perplexing.

Is it possible that Donald John did not fully understand the remit before him? His accession sheets—labels that he would have pasted into his notebooks before writing down the contributions of an informant²⁸—detail the date on which he collected each text and the particular individual from whom it came (see Figure 1 above). Additionally, he had a long association with the School of Scottish Studies (over five years), and such a remit would have presumably become evident during this time. Although it is not currently possible to locate any correspondence between Donald John and the School, the briefs given to other part-time and casual collectors around the same period make explicit the imperative to collect from oral sources, as well as for transcriptions to be a true reflection of recitations or recordings. Here is an excerpt from one of these briefs, a letter written by Professor Kenneth Jackson to a potential collector in Barra (Jackson 1951):

²⁵ The school was founded in 1951 at the University of Edinburgh.

²⁶ Allan Bruford himself was under this impression. (See note 13 above.)

²⁷ SA1956.167, relating to songs collected from Kate and Annie MacDonald in South Uist.

²⁸ A letter from Stewart Sanderson, Secretary-Archivist of the School, to a potential part-time collector of the same period says: “I expect Mr. Maclean [that is, Calum Maclean] has explained the system: a new label should be used for every new person from whom you collect information” (Sanderson 1953).

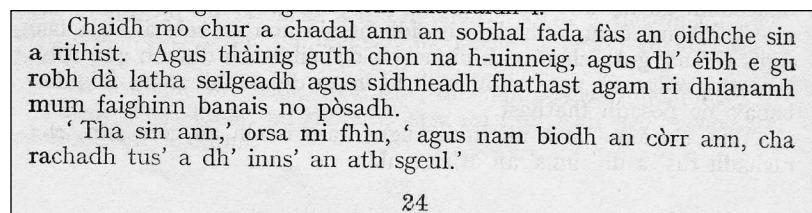
Mr. Calum Maclean of the School of Scottish Studies tells me that you would like to do some part time work collecting Gaelic oral traditions for us, [and] that he has explained what sort of thing we want. . . . We use a standard notebook of 96 pages, into which the collector transcribes his collections, either from Ediphone records or directly from the recital of the teller; and we pay £5 per notebook. If you are willing to undertake some work for us this summer, would you kindly let me know by return? Then I will send a couple of notebooks and some labels.

It is hard to imagine how Donald John would have not been aware that the School was interested in orally garnered material rather than that taken from published sources, even if they were from his father originally. The labels that he was given seem to make this awareness clear. However, at the moment, as there is no trace of correspondence with him, any assumptions about what he was or was not told, and what he took from it, belong to the realm of conjecture.

3.1.3 Evidence for Visual Copying in *Fear na h-Eabaid*: Weddings, Fires, and Textual Lacunae

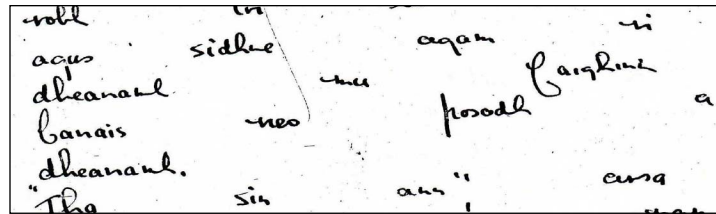
At first glance, the connection between Craig’s published texts and Donald John’s manuscripts is obscured by the difference in the two writers’ orthographical habits. Craig was a careful and consistent editor, presenting his texts in an orthographically conventional fashion for the most part, but also trying to convey the dialectal flavor of South Uist Gaelic. Donald John’s orthographical practice—particularly his use of accents and punctuation—is irregular, but he does tend to be fairly even in his spelling, as unconventional as it is at times. Despite Craig’s proficiency in written Gaelic, he was working in the days before word processors, and occasional irregularities are to be found. One of these inconsistencies involves the word *banais* (“wedding”), which occurs six times in Craig’s version of *Fear na h-Eabaid*²⁹: twice as *banais* (on pages 23 and 24) and four times as *bainis* (on pages 26, 27, and twice on 29). Curiously, Donald John makes the identical switch in the same places. The first two figures below show the parallel use of *banais*:³⁰

Figure 2: MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950:24, *banais* (line 4, word 3)

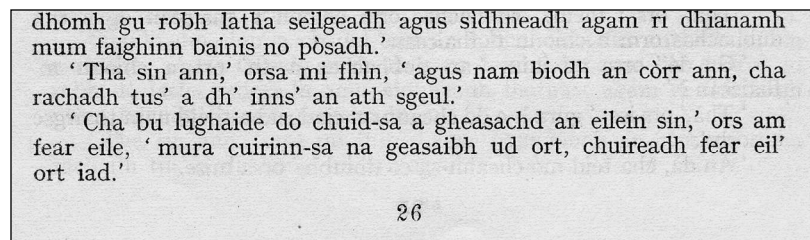
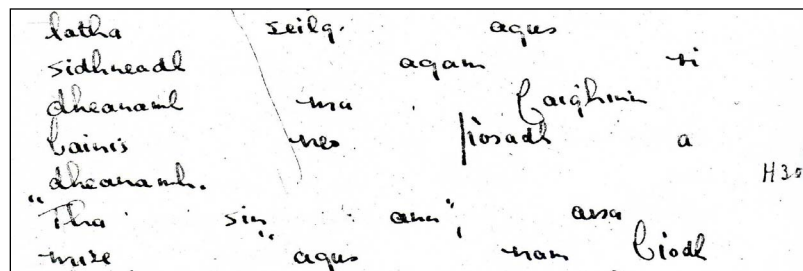


²⁹ MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950:17-29. For ease of reference, within §3.1.3-3.1.4 this work will often be denoted as “Craig” or “Craig’s version.”

³⁰ Cf. MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950:23 and DJM-N:3553.

Figure 3: DJM:3557, *banais* (line 4, word 1)

The difference in the syntax and vocabulary here is curious³¹ and seems to indicate conscious modification (see §3.1.4 below for discussion and further examples). The next two figures show the parallel use of the misspelling *bainis*:³²

Figure 4: MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950:26, *bainis* (line 2, word 3)Figure 5: DJM-N:3557, *bainis* (line 4, word 1) with motif annotation on right

Spelling fluctuation in a handwritten document is not unusual, especially for a language that has undergone a number of orthographical iterations over the years. However, it is difficult to envisage how chance alone could account for Donald John's spelling of this word fluctuating in parallel with Craig in the six places that it occurs in the text. It is important to emphasize that

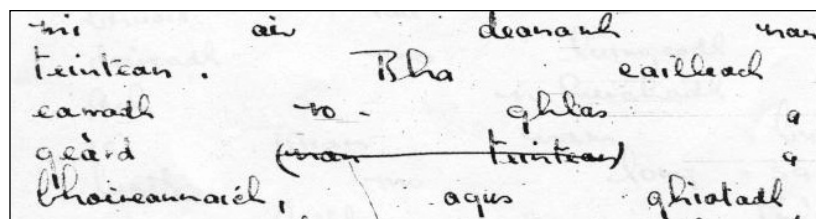
³¹ Donald John's reads (original formatting): "Chaidh mo chur a chadal an oidhche sin a rithist ann a sabhal fada thàinig an guth a dh' ionnsaigh na h' uinneig, agus dh' eubh e gun robh trì latha seilge agus sidhne agam ri dhèanamh mu faighinn banais neo pòsadh a dhèanamh. 'Tha sin ann,' arsa mi fhìn, 'agus nam biodh an còrr ann cha rachadh tusa a dh' innse an ath-sgeoil.'"

³² This may be an Irishism, but *bainis* is also given as an alternative form in Dwelly's dictionary (2001 [1911]:60; my appreciation to Dr. Wilson McLeod for this information). Two further parallel examples are found at MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950:27, 29 and DJM-N:3573, 3582.

K. C. Craig published *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* a number of years before Donald John began work on his manuscripts. This fluctuation is plain evidence of visual copying. While this is one instance of parallel inconsistency, the next example is a common artifact of transcriptive practice.

Any person who has done a significant amount of transcription from a printed source will be familiar with the phenomenon of unconsciously moving up or down to a neighboring line of text and copying the wrong words. Donald John seems to have experienced this on at least one occasion, as can be seen in the following example:

Figure 6: Donald John MacDonald transcribing the wrong line of text from Craig (from DJM: 3564)



The following is a printed version of the excerpt (original formatting):

. . . mi air deanamh nan teintean. Bha cailleach earradh ro-ghlas a' gearrd (nan teintean) a bhoireannaich, agus ghiotadh. . .

If we look in the original, we see that the words he has crossed out—*nan teintean*³³ (“of the fires”)—are immediately above those that he had intended to write down:

Figure 7: Example (MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950:26) showing *nan teintean* immediately above *a' bhoireannaich*

Dh' fhalbh mi mach agus thòisich mi air dianamh nan teintean. Bha cailleach earradh ro ghlas a' gearrd a' bhoireannaich; agus ghiotadh i mach, agus dhianadh i dà theine ma 'n aon fhear riumsa.

This is additional evidence of Donald John actively copying from *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh*.

As a third and final example of visual copying, Donald John omits two episodes of the tale that are in the other versions taken from Duncan. These episodes pertain to the second and third times that the wife of Fear na h-Eabaid is abducted and subsequently rescued, and they run from page 22, paragraph 6, to page 23, paragraph 11, in Craig's version. The wording in each

³³ This word is also indicative of a derivative relationship between the texts, as it can be spelled with one or two *n*'s. *Teintean* is the spelling in Craig's version and in DJM-N, as well as in the version of McClements, which predates them and is unpublished. CIM47, JLC, and CIM53, on the other hand, all have *teinntean*. Judging by the Dice coefficient results (Table 4) that find McClements' text to be the most dissimilar to the others, it is unlikely that either Craig's version or DJM-N were derived from or influenced by it in any way.

episode is quite similar, and occasionally formulaic, explaining how such a lacuna could have easily occurred. The following quote is from MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950 (page 22) and the text that is crossed out shows the beginning of the gap in DJM-N (original formatting preserved):

. . . agus sheòl mi mo shleagh fhìn airsan, agus bhuail mi ann an àird a chlàibh e, agus thuit e. Greas mi ga ionnsaigh, agus mharbh mi e. Agus thug mi liom am boireannach air ais dhachaidh dha 'n Tiobard; agus ma bha biadh no deoch aca ri ghabhail, bha iad air an gabhail mun do ràini' ~~mise.~~

. . . and I sailed my own spear at him, and I struck him in the top of his ribcage, and he fell. I hurried toward him, and I killed him. And I took the woman with me back home to the Fountain; and if there was food or drink to have, that they had consumed it before I arrived.

This lacuna lasts for approximately a page and three paragraphs, omitting 730 words of Craig's text. The similarity of the language on either side of the gap is shown by the following, which is taken from Craig at the point that Donald John's text resumes (MacDhòmhnaill and Craig 1950:23):

Agus thug mi am boireannach liom dhachaidh.

Ach thuir mi rium fhìn, cho math 's gun robh an Tiobard, gum fòghnadh siod dhomhsa dhith; agus dh' fhalbh mi fhìn agus an nighean agus Gruagach an Fhèidh. . . .

~~And I took the woman home with me.~~

But I said to myself, as good as the Fountain is, that I've had enough; and I myself left [with] the girl and the Woman of the Deer. . . .

This is how the text appears in DJM-N (3552), with * indicating the 730-word lacuna:

. . . agus sheòl mi mo shleagh fhìn airsan, agus bhuail mi ann an àird a chlàibh e, agus leag mi e. Ghreas mi ga ionnsaigh agus mharbh mi e. Agus thug mi am boireannach leam dhachaidh. * Ach thuir mi rium fhìn, cho math 's ga robh an Tiobard, gum fòghnadh sud dhòmhsa dhi, agus dh' fhalbh mi fhèin agus a nighean agus Gruagach an fhèidh. . . .

. . . and I directed my own spear at him, and I struck him in the top of his ribcage, and I felled him. I hurried towards him and I killed him. And I took the woman home with me. * But I said to myself, as good as the Fountain is, that I've had enough, and I myself left [with] the girl and the Woman of the Deer. . . .

The gap did not escape Bruford (1979:34), but he rationalized it by saying that it might have been a reflection of the way in which their father had originally told the tale; Duncan

himself was in error by triplicating the episode.³⁴ To bolster his interpretation, Bruford observes that the other orally collected versions of the story have only one “stealing” episode. However, there appears to be sufficient evidence to reject, or at least temper, this interpretation now on the grounds that Craig’s published tale formed the basis of Neil’s text. Perhaps Donald John himself omitted these episodes because Neil had indicated that they were superfluous. This explanation is possible, but it would mean that Neil was complicit in the copying, which seems unlikely. A more straightforward explanation is that Donald John lost his place in the book, or that he regarded the episodes as redundant and decided to omit them.

In this section, I have not yet provided the strongest evidence of a derivative relationship between the two texts: the proliferation of long, identical passages that are shared between them (but see §3.2 and 3.3 below). There is little chance that such similarities, or any of the textual features delineated above, could have occurred without Donald John MacDonald visually scanning the tale of *Fear na h-Eabaid* published in *Sgialachdan Dhunichaidh*. Furthermore, as Neil’s version (DJM-N) has more lexical crossover than any of the others with Craig’s version (see Table 4 and Table 5) and they are, in fact, the two most concordant texts, there are very firm grounds for concluding that Donald John took Neil’s text from Craig’s work. Having established this likely source, it remains to be seen how Donald John transformed that source and then convinced several scholars that the texts he provided from Neil and Duncan were taken down from their recitation and were independent from other versions.

3.1.4 Tweaking the Text: Differences between Craig’s and DJM’s Versions of *Fear na h-Eabaid*

This section will detail the most significant ways in which Donald John’s text of *Fear na h-Eabaid* differs from Craig’s. As the evidence indicates that visual copying took place, it follows that the differences described here are a product of conscious modification. An examination of the texts reveals two broad types of change: lexical and syntactic.

3.1.4.1 Lexical Change

The lexical changes can be categorized into augmentation, omission, synonymic replacement, the expansion of pronominal referents, and the alteration of pronominal emphasis. *Augmentation* is being used here to refer to the insertion of extra words into a phrase. In DJM-N, these insertions usually take the form of filler words carrying little or no extra semantic information. This is one of the ways in which DJM-N differs from the variants that are independent from Craig’s version. Extra words in the independent variants often feature additional or different information, while those in DJM-N generally do not: a parasitic version is limited by the semantic borders of the original. At its simplest, augmentation in DJM-N takes the form of the insertion of *agus* (“and”):

³⁴ Of course, the convention for triads runs deep in folklore around the world (see Lease 1919).

Example 1: Lexical change (augmentation using *agus* [“and”])

Craig (17)	DJM-N (3527)
Cò [am] fear thusa . . .	Agus cò am fear thusa . . .
Who are you . . .	And who are you . . .

In addition to *agus*, Donald John’s version in Example 1 also includes the determiner *am* (“the”), which was elided in Craig’s version, presumably to reflect spoken Gaelic. In speech, elision such as this is phonologically motivated and definiteness would be understood. Another common augmentation in DJM-N is the use of *dh’fhalbh* NP *agus* (“NP went and . . .”):

Example 2: Lexical change (augmentation using *dh’fhalbh* [“went”])

Craig (20)	DJM-N (3543)
. . . agus ghabh mi an coinneamh na gruagaich a bha tighinn.	. . . agus dh’fhalbh mi agus ghabh mi an coinneamh na gruagaich a bha tighinn.
. . . and I squared off with the hairy giant that was coming.	and I went and I squared off with the hairy giant that was coming.

The only difference between Craig’s version and DJM-N in Example 2 is the insertion of the phrase *dh’fhalbh mi agus*; this strategy occurs another five times in the text.

Other common filler words in DJM-N include discourse particles and conjunctions such as *ach* (“but”), *an-dà* (“well”), *a-nis* (“now”), *an-sin*, (“there/then”), *an-seo* (“here/now”), *ge-tà* (“however”), *ma-tà* (“then” [that is, “if it is the case”]), *an uair sin* (“then” [temporal]), and intensifiers such as *glè* (“very”) and *gu math* (“well/very”).

Omission is rare, and may be unintentional, such as in the case of the lacuna mentioned in §3.1.3 above and in the following example, which is at the end of the tale and results in a nonsensical proposition in DJM-N:

Example 3: Lexical change (omission)

Craig (29)	DJM-N (3582)
Cha robh sìon a chruinnich Macan Òg na Grèige airson na bainnse aige fhèin nach do dheònaich e nis a chosg ri bainis a dhèanamh dhomhsa.	Cha robh [omission] Macan òg na Greige airson na bainnse aige fhèin nach do dheònaich e a chosg a nis airson bainis a dheanamh dhomhsa.
There wasn’t anything that the Young Son of Greece gathered for his wedding that he wasn’t now willing to spend in order to make a wedding for me [EMPH].	* The Young Son of Greece wasn’t for his wedding that he wasn’t now willing to spend in order to make a wedding for me [EMPH].

As can be seen, the omission in DJM's text renders the sentence unintelligible. It may be simply an unconscious by-product of visual copying.³⁵

There are also numerous cases of *synonymic replacement* and the deployment of semantically equivalent phrases, three examples of which can be discussed here.

Example 4: Lexical change (synonymic replacement)

Craig (29)	DJM-N (3583)
Nuair a bha e treis a' feitheamh, . . .	Nuair a bha e greis a' feitheamh, . . .
When he had been waiting a while , . . .	When he had been waiting a short while , . . .

Example 4 is the simplest of the three, with *treis* (“a while”) being replaced by the closely related word *greis* (“a short while”). Example 5 is slightly more complicated, as the usage of the closely related phrase *timcheall* (“around”) for *mun cuairt* (“about”) also involves a change in syntax. The subject of the second clause in DJM-N is oblique, encoded by the prepositional pronoun *agam* (“at me”). As discussed further below, this modification is probably an example of Donald John being forced to use marked³⁶ syntax to avoid the wording of the original, which is more natural by far.

Example 5: Lexical change (replacement using semantically equivalent phrase)

Craig (25)	DJM-N (3560)
Nuair a ràinig mi, cha robh mi faicinn duine mun cuairt .	Nuair a ràinig mi cha robh aon duine ri fhaicinn agam timcheall an àite .
When I arrived, I wasn't seeing a person [anybody] around .	When I arrived, I couldn't see one person around the place . [Lit. “When I arrived, not one person was to be seen by me around the place .”]

Finally, in Example 6 we come to the most verbose instance of this type of modification in *Fear na h-Eabaid*. All of the other versions of the story (JLC, CIM47, CIM53, and McClements) resemble the straightforward simplicity of Craig here, but Donald John's rendering borders on the pleonastic:

³⁵ This passage also contains the third incidence of the misspelling of *banais*, a phenomenon that was mentioned above.

³⁶ Trask defines a marked form as “less central or less natural than a competing one on any of various grounds, such as lower frequency, more limited distribution, more overt morphological marking, greater semantic specificity or greater rarity in languages generally” (1995:167).

Example 6: Lexical change (replacement using semantically equivalent phrase)

Craig (28)	DJM-N (3575)
Dh'atharraich sinn aodaichean.	Chuir esan dheth a chuid aodaich fhèin agus chuir mise dhìom m' aodach fhìn agus dh'atharraich sinn ar cuid aodaich mar sin.
We switched clothes.	He put off his own clothes and I put off my own clothes and we switched our clothes like that.

The next type of modification is the *expansion of pronominal referents*, seen in the following examples. Such expansion involves the use of a full noun phrase in the place of a pronoun. Essentially, these are cases of augmentation, as the expansion adds no additional information to the text.

Example 7: Lexical change (expansion of pronominal referents)

Craig (28)	DJM-N (3576)
. . . rinn i lasgan mòr gàire.	. . . rinn a' chailleach lasgan mòr gàire.
. . . she made a big laugh.	. . . the old woman made a big laugh.

As seen in Example 7 above, *i* (“she”) is replaced with *a' chailleach* (“the old woman”). The rest of DJM-N is identical to Craig’s version. Example 8 is similar, with *e* (“he”) being replaced by *Fear na h-Eabaid* (“the Man of the Habit”):

Example 8: Lexical change (expansion of pronominal referents)

Craig (18)	DJM-N (3529)
Agus thòisich e air dèanamh an eallaich.	Agus thòisich Fear na h-Eabaid air dèanamh an eallaich.
And he began to make the load.	And the Man of the Habit began to make the load.

These examples all involve marked language being used in the place of the more natural options that are already in the source text (Olsson 2009:31-32):

The copyist cannot use the same lexicon as the source, but has to adapt words and phrases found in the original. . . . [He or she] has to avoid the very words which come most naturally and which, probably, are already in the text being copied. . . . The result, very often, is that [his or her] vocabulary choices are to a greater or lesser extent, less than ideal.

From the examples in §3.1.4.2 below (and Example 5 above), it appears that copyists also occasionally resort to marked syntax. This probably occurs for a similar reason: it is an attempt to avoid the simple modes of expression already present in the original.

To conclude this section, the way in which a *pronoun receives emphasis* is also seen to differ between Craig’s version and DJM-N. In English, we generally emphasize pronouns and other words through pitch, or loudness, or both. In Gaelic, this emphasis is normally achieved through suffixation (*e* [“he/him”] > *esan* [“he/him”]: *e* + *san* [emphatic suffix]), or by making the NP reflexive (for example, *mi* (“I/ me”) > *mi fhìn* (“myself”). Where Craig’s version has one form of emphasis, DJM-N often uses the other:

Example 9: Lexical change (alteration of pronominal emphasis)

Craig (26)	DJM-N (3568)
“Tha sin ann,” arsa mi fhìn. . . .	“Tha sin ann”, arsa mise. . . .
“That is the case,” I myself said. . . . [Lit. “That is in it. . . .”]	“That is the case,” I (EMPH) said. . . . [Lit. “That is in it. . . .”]

In Example 9, the only difference is that Craig’s text has *mi fhìn* while DJM-N has *mise*; Craig uses reflexive emphasis while DJM-N uses emphatic suffixation.

The vast majority of lexical change to be seen in Donald John’s version of *Fear na h-Eabaid* involves some kind of augmentation. As mentioned above, these additions provide little or no additional information to the text; they merely make it appear to be distinct from the original. The next section will explore another type of modification, that involving changes in word order.

3.1.4.2 Syntactic Change

Most of the syntactic changes evident in DJM-N consist of preposing adverbials and other elements that are relatively unconstrained in Scottish Gaelic syntax. In general, this type of change is not overly abundant in the text compared to instances of lexical change, particularly augmentation. In Example 10 the only change to be seen is the shifting of the adverbial *an seo* (“here”) to occur before the main verb *chuala* (“heard”):

Example 10: Syntactic change (position of adverbial)

Craig (26)	DJM-N (3566-67)
Ach chuala sinn an seo a’ chailleach earradh ro ghlas ag èigheach dha na fuamhairean. . . .	Ach an seo chuala sinn a’ chailleach earradh ro ghlas ag èigheach dha na famhairean. . . .
But we heard here the hag with the very grey mantle yelling to the giants. . . .	But here we heard the hag with the very grey mantle yelling to the giants. . . .

The rest of the clause is identical in the two sources. Example 11 works similarly, in that the clause headed by the narrative verb *arsa* (“quoth/said”) is shifted to a new position. As with adverbials, this type of clause is fairly moveable in Gaelic syntax:

Example 11: Syntactic change (position of narrative verbal clause)

Craig (26)	DJM-N (3568)
“Ach co dhiubh,” arsa Fear na h-Eabaid , “fhuair sinn dhachaidh. . . .”	“Ach co-dhiubh, fhuair sinn dhachaidh,” arsa Fear na h-Eabaid
“But anyway,” said the Man of the Habit , “we got home. . . .”	“But anyway, we got home,” said the Man of the Habit

The narrative clause *arsa Fear na h-Eabaid* has been postposed in DJM and does not break up the reported speech as it does in Craig’s version. As in many of the previous examples, the rest of the utterance is the same.

Occasionally, cases of paraphrasing can be found that involve a change in syntax, depending on the particular idiom employed:

Example 12: Syntactic change (paraphrasing)

Craig (29)	DJM-N (3580)
“Leigeadh a staigh mi. . . .”	“Chaidh mi fhìn a leigeil a staigh. . . .”
“I was let in. . . .”	“I myself was let in. . . .” [Lit. “My-REFL letting in went. . . .”]

There are various ways of decreasing valence in Scottish Gaelic (see Lamb 2008:242-44), resulting in passive and impersonal expressions. While Craig uses a morphological passive, with the main verb incorporating a passive suffix, DJM-N has a periphrastic equivalent. The place adverbial *a-staigh* (“in”) is shifted to the end of the utterance in DJM-N, and the main verb is in a medial position through its coupling to the auxiliary *chaidh* (“went”), which needs to be clause-initial. Finally, the pronoun is reflexive, whereas it is unmarked in Craig’s version.

The last example (Example 13) shows an instance of clause order shift:

Example 13: Syntactic change (clause order modification)

Craig (19)	DJM-N (3536)
Agus chaidh Murchadh mac Brian, nuair a rug e air , na dheagh fhaireachadh. . . .	Ach nuair a rug Murchadh mac Brian air chaidh e na dheagh fhaireachadh. . . .
And Murdo son of Brian went, when he grabbed it , into a good feeling. . . . [fragmented]	But when Murdo son of Brian grabbed it , he went into a good feeling. . . . [integrated]

In Craig's text, the temporal clause *nuair a rug e air* ("when he grabbed it") is nested medially within the larger clause *agus chaidh Murchadh mac Brian na dheagh fhaireachadh* ("and Murdo son of Brian went into a good feeling"). This type of fragmentation is natural in spontaneous speech and follows from the logic of information structure (see Chafe 1982; Miller and Weinert 1998). The DJM-N text, on the other hand, preposes the temporal clause and resembles the integrated syntax of typical written language.

To summarize, there are a number of ways in which Donald John modified his text of *Fear na h-Eabaid*. The most frequent type of modification by far is lexical augmentation, characterized here by the insertion of words with little additional semantic sense. Ultimately, the options for altering the source text are limited by the semantic boundaries of the original and the lexicon employed therein. Syntactic adjustments are in evidence, but are less frequent. By and large, these modifications involve shifting the placement of adverbials and other syntagms that have relatively few syntactic constraints in the Gaelic language.

Having established that visual copying is the only explanation for Donald John MacDonald's text of Neil being closer to Craig's text of Duncan than are any of Duncan's other versions themselves, it remains to be seen how many other texts show the same signs of dependence. A further four tales published by Craig will now be explored using the Dice coefficient and textual analysis in order to determine whether or not *Fear na h-Eabaid* is an isolated case. As we shall see, the evidence strongly suggests that Donald John made extensive use of Craig's work, both in texts he submitted as recitations of his uncle Neil and in those attributed to his father.

3.2 *An Analysis of Four Other Texts Submitted by Donald John MacDonald and Their Relationship to the Work of K. C. Craig*

3.2.1 *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir*

Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir ("The Story of the Big 'Made Up Tale'") was a popular hero tale much in the same vein as *Fear na h-Eabaid*, with which it shares an abundance of antiquated, formulaic language. Unlike *Fear na h-Eabaid*, however, there are no old manuscript versions of it in evidence, indicating that it was probably not a literary romance *per se*. All five available sources were involved in the present analysis (see Table 1 above). The transcription of John Lorne Campbell's 1950 recording was done by the current author. Samples were gathered from both the very beginning and end of the tale.³⁷ Unlike the *Fear na h-Eabaid* analysis, there is a version attributed to Duncan in Donald John's manuscripts (DJM-D), but there is only one from Maclean and none from McClements:

³⁷ Samples from the beginning and end are by definition naturally selected due to the presence of predetermined boundaries, thus minimizing the possibility of researcher bias. (Of course, one boundary is still determined by the researcher, but in this case it has been defined by word-count limits.) Additionally, as will be argued below, if a copyist of a long manuscript is trying to avoid detection, the beginnings and ends will probably be attended to in a more rigorous manner than the middle section. Therefore, if the level of intersection between two texts at the beginning and end is markedly high, it is even more likely that visual copying occurred.

Table 6: Dice values for the beginning of *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir*³⁸

File 1	File 2	Relation
Craig	DJM-D	0.90
DJM-D	DJM-N	0.89
Craig	DJM-N	0.86
Craig	JLC	0.72
CIM	DJM-D	0.72
DJM-D	JLC	0.72
JLC	DJM-N	0.71
CIM	DJM-N	0.70
CIM	Craig	0.69
CIM	JLC	0.68

The relation values clearly show that there is a close intertextual relationship between Craig, DJM-N, and DJM-D. While the other texts have some crossover, none of them evinces the same degree of similarity. The following examples³⁹ illustrate these tendencies:

Craig: Dh' fhalbh Mac Rìgh Èireann dhachaidh, e fhèin 's am boireannach. Agus cha robh moit ann ach a' mhoit a bha air athair nuair a ràinig a mhac le a leithid sin do bhoireannach ciatach.

The son of the King of Ireland went home, himself and the woman. And there was no pride but the pride that was on a father when his son arrived with such a beautiful woman.

DJM-N: Thill mac Rìgh Èireann dhachaidh, e fhèin agus am boireannach, agus cha robh moit ann ach a' mhoit a bha air Rìgh Èireann nuair a ràinig a mhac dhachaidh le a leithid seo do bhoireannach brèagha.

The son of the King of Ireland returned home, himself and the woman, and there was no pride but the pride that was on the King of Ireland when his son arrived home with such a lovely woman.

DJM-D: Dh' fhalbh mac Rìgh Èireann dhachaidh, e fhèin agus am boireannach, agus cha robh moit ann ach a' mhoit a bha air athair nuair a ràinig a mhac dhachaidh le a leithid seo do bhoireannach ciatach.

The son of the King of Ireland went home, himself and the woman, and there was no pride but the pride that is on a father when his son came home with such a beautiful woman.

CIM: Agus dh' fhalbh Mac Rìgh Èireann dhachaidh, agus am boireannach aige, agus 's ann a bha moit mòr air athair, 'n uair a ràinig a mhac dhachaidh agus a leithid seo a bhoireannach mòr, ciatach, brèagha còmhla ris. . . .

And the son of the King of Ireland went home, and the women with him, and it was that there was great pride on his father, when his son came home with such a lovely, beautiful, big woman along with him. . . .

JLC: Dh' fhalbh Mac Rìgh Èireann dhachaidh agus am boireannach eireachdail a bha ann an seo aige agus cha robh moit ann ach a' mhoit a bhiodh air athair nuair a chunnaic e a mhac a' tighinn dhachaidh le a leithid seo a bhoireannach mòr ciatach.

The son of the King of Ireland went home and this handsome woman here with him and there was no pride but the pride that would be on a father when he saw his son coming home with such a large, beautiful woman.

³⁸ Within §3.2.1 “Craig” is used to refer to MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950:59-72.

³⁹ These and the following examples are given in their standardized orthography, unless otherwise stated. No attempt was made for the examples to conform exactly to GOC, but rather for them to be in line with each other, using GOC as a reference point. All English translations provided are by the current author.

The language is remarkably consistent across the versions, but the first three texts depart from CIM and JLC in specific ways. Craig, DJM-N, and DJM-D all have a variant of a motion verb + *mac Rìgh dhachaidh* (e. g., “the king went home”), and then a right detached phrase—*e fhèin agus am boireannach* (“he himself and the woman”)—while CIM and JLC use the co-subordinate *agus* (see Lamb 2008:263-64). In the second sentence⁴⁰ of Craig, both CIM and JLC are more verbose in describing the *boireannach* (“woman”), while Craig, DJM-N, and DJM-D use a single adjective—either *ciatach* or *brèagha*, both meaning “beautiful.”

If we examine the Dice values for the end of the text, the same patterns obtain:

Table 7: Dice values for the end of *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir*

File 1	File 2	Relation
Craig	DJM-N	0.88
Craig	DJM-D	0.88
DJM-D	DJM-N	0.86
CIM	JLC	0.69
Craig	JLC	0.69
JLC	DJM-N	0.68
CIM	Craig	0.66
CIM	DJM-N	0.66
DJM-D	JLC	0.65
CIM	DJM-D	0.65

Again, Craig, DJM-N, and DJM-D form a triad, with a marked gap between their collective Dice values and those of the other texts. One would expect that Neil’s text would be the most dissimilar to the others, as those texts all derive from Duncan, a separate individual, but instead it is actually at the top of the table. Additionally, as mentioned before in relation to the *Fear na h-Eabaid* texts, DJM’s texts are more temporally distant from Craig than CIM or JLC. One would expect the latter two to be more similar to Craig due to their relative contemporaneousness. Here are some textual examples, followed by a table (Table 8) summarizing some of the different features present:

⁴⁰ One might argue with the applicability of the notion of “sentence” to an oral text (see Halliday 1989:66; Miller and Weinert 1998:32-71). However, as Neil and Duncan’s texts are assumed to be based upon Craig—a publication evincing punctuation—it seems felicitous to deploy it in this context.

Craig: Dh’ fhalbh e dhan bheinn sheilg agus, nuair a ràinig e an cnocan far na dh’ fhàg e an duine fo na geasaibh, cha robh ann ach torradan chnàmh agus fòlach air fàs mun timcheall.

He went to the hunting hill and when he arrived at the hillock where he left the man under spells, there was only a heap of bones with manured grass growing around them.

DJM-D: Dh’ fhalbh Mac Rìgh Èireann dhan bheinn sheilg agus nuair a ràinig e taobh a’ chnuic far na dh’ fhàg e an duine fo na geasaibh cha robh ri fhaicinn ann ach torradan beag chnàmh agus fòlach air fàs timcheall orra.

The son of the king of Ireland went to the hunting hill and when he arrived at the hill where he left the man under spells, all that could be seen was a heap of bones with manured grass growing around them.

DJM-N: Dh’ fhalbh Mac Rìgh Èireann agus chaidh e a mach dhan bheinn sheilg. Nuair a ràinig e air cnocan far na dh’ fhàg e an duine fo na geasaibh, cha robh ann ach torradan chnàmh agus fòlach a’ fàs mun timcheall.

The son of the King of Ireland left and he went out to the hunting hill. When he arrived on a hillock where he left the man under spells, there was only a heap of bones with manured grass growing around them.

CIM: Dh’ fhalbh Mac Rìgh Èireann agus an fhàlairidh, agus ràinig e an dearbh chnocan, air a robh e fhèin, agus an Tuairisgeul Òg a’ cluichd air an tàileasg, agus cha robh ann an sin ach cnàmhan geala agus fòghlach gorm a’ fàs mun timcheall.

The son of the King of Ireland and the palfrey left and they arrived at the exact hillock, on which he himself and the Young *Tuairisgeul* had played chess, and all there was there was white bones and green manured grass growing around them.

JLC: Leum e ann an glac na diollaid agus mharcraich e dhan a’ cheart sgroban air an robh e uaireigin an t-saoghal ag iomairt air an tàileasg. Agus cha robh sion ann an sin ach tòrr fòlaich agus cnàmhan geala thall ’s a bhos air fheadh, far na dh’ fhàg e an duine.

He leapt into the catch of the saddle and he rode to the exact mound on which he once upon a time had played chess. And there was nothing there but a lot of manured grass and white bones here and there throughout, where he had left the man.

Table 8: Feature list for the end of *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir*

Features	Craig	DJM-D	DJM-N	CIM	JLC
<i>falbh . . . dhan bheinn sheilg</i>	✓	✓	✓		
<i>fàlairidh</i>				✓	✓ (implied)
<i>duine fo na geasaibh</i>	✓	✓	✓		
<i>cnoc(an)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>sgroban</i>
<i>tàileasg</i>				✓	✓
<i>torradan chnàmh</i>	✓	✓	✓		
<i>cnàmhan geala</i>				✓	✓

As shown in Table 8, Craig, DJM-D, and DJM-N parallel each other in ways that the other two do not. All three share the phrase *dh’ falbh* (“went”) + subject (*e* [“he”] or *mac Rìgh Èireann* [“son of the King of Ireland”]) + *dhan bheinn sheilg* (“to the hunting hill”). DJM-N has the intermittent phrase *agus chaidh e a mach* (“and he went out”), but this is a form of augmentation, as discussed in §3.1.4.1 above. Additionally, these three versions also have the phrases *duine fo na geasaibh* (“man under spells”), *cnoc(an)*⁴¹ (“hill[ock]”)—shared with CIM—and *torradan chnàmha* (“heap of bones”). On the other hand, CIM and JLC go together in

⁴¹ *Cnuic* is the genitive singular form of *cnoc* and *-an* is a diminutive masculine ending, thus *cnocan* (“little hill”).

mentioning the *fàlairidh* (“palfrey”) (implied in JLC via *mharcraich* [“ride”] and *diollaid* [“saddle”]), *tàileasg* (“chess”), and *cnàmhan geala* (“white bones”). Considering the dates of their collection, we would expect DJM-D and DJM-N to evince at least as close a textual relationship with CIM and JLC as the one they have with Craig, but this is not the case. The textual evidence and relation values indicate a parasitic relationship between Donald John MacDonald’s texts and Craig’s published version.

3.2.2 Conall Gulban

Eachtra Chonaill Gulban (“The Adventure of Conal Gulban”) was perhaps the most popular of the Gaelic romances. No fewer than 54 versions have been found in the Gaelic manuscripts of Scotland and Ireland (Bruford 1963-65:4). The same five sources were available for this tale as for *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir*. As the Dice coefficient results for the end of *Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir* were consistent with the beginning, it seemed reasonable to analyze only the beginning of *Conall Gulban*. The following table presents the Dice coefficient results for this data:

Table 9: Dice coefficient results for the beginning of *Conall Gulban*⁴²

File 1	File 2	Relation
Craig	DJM-D	0.93
DJM-D	DJM-N	0.90
Craig	DJM-N	0.88
CIM	Craig	0.70
DJM-D	JLC	0.70
CIM	JLC	0.69
CIM	DJM-D	0.69
JLC	DJM-N	0.68
Craig	JLC	0.67
CIM	DJM-N	0.66

Once again, the texts of Craig and Donald John MacDonald (DJM-N and DJM-D) form a group. There is a clear gap between the relation values of these texts and those of CIM and JLC. It is interesting to note that CIM and JLC, which were collected a mere three years apart from one another and were both transcribed from recordings, have a relation value of 0.70. As will be discussed in §3.4 below, this is the relation value that tends to obtain from two independent versions of Duncan’s tales. But Neil’s text (DJM-N), when compared to Craig’s transcription of Duncan (referred to here as “Craig”), has a relation value 0.18 higher and is thus aberrant; it was from a separate individual and recorded eleven years later. Some textual examples of these relationships appear below, followed by an analysis:

⁴² Within §3.2.2 “Craig” is used to refer to MacDhòmhnaiill and Craig 1950:45-58.

Craig: Gu dè ach a ghabh an Rìgh ceum sìos rathad glinne bha taobh shìos dhe. Chunnaic e brugh beag do thaigh ann an sin. Agus bha e cho eòlach air a' ghleann 's a bha e air a leth làimh 's air a leth chois, agus ar leis nach fhaca e taigh riamh ann.

What [happened] but that the king took a walk down the glen road that was below him. He saw a wee mound of a house there. And he was as knowledgeable of the glen as he was of the back [lit. "one half"] of his hand and foot, and he was certain he had never seen a house there before.

DJM-D: Agus gu dè ach a ghabh an Rìgh ceum sìos rathad glinne a bha an taobh shìos dhe, agus chunnaic a brugh beag do thaigh ann an sin. Agus bha e cho eòlach air a' ghleann 's a bha e air a leth-làimh, 's air a leth-chois, agus ar leis nach fhaca e taigh riamh roimhe ann.

And what [happened] but that the king took a walk down the glen road that was below him, and he saw a wee mound of a house there. And he was as knowledgeable of the glen as he was of the back [lit. "one half"] of his hand and foot, and he was certain he had never seen a house there ever before.

DJM-N: Agus gu dè ach a ghabh an Rìgh ceum sìos rathad glinne a bha ri taobh shìos dhe, agus chunnaic e brugh beag do thaigh ann an sin. Agus bha e cho eòlach air a' ghleann agus a bha e air a leth-làimh agus air a leth-chois agus ar leis nach fhaca e taigh riamh ann.

And what [happened] but that the King took a walk down the glen road that was below him, and he saw a wee mound of a house there. And he was as knowledgeable of the glen as he was of the back [lit. "one half"] of his hand and foot, and he was certain that he had never seen a house there.

JLC: Agus ghabh e sìos cuairt gu ò bha glinn a bha an taobh shìos dhe agus gu dè a chunnaic e ach bothan beag ann an sin shìos air ùrlar a' ghlinne. Agus bha e smaoineachadh gu robh e cho eòlach air an àite 's a bha [e] air a leth-làimh is air a leth-chois agus chan fhaca e taigh riamh ann.

And he took a walk down to, oh, there were glens that were below him, and what did he see but a wee hut there down on the floor of the glen. And he was thinking that he was as knowledgeable of the place as [he] was of the back [lit. "one half"] of his hand and feet and he had never seen a house there.

CIM: Agus ghabh Rìgh Èireann sìos cuairt air leathad cnoic a bha e eòlach gu leòr air, agus gu dè a chunnaic e ach brugh beag de thaigh shìos air ùrlar a' ghlinne. Agus ar leis gu robh e cho eòlach anns a' cheart àite 's a bha e air a leth làimh agus air a leth chois agus cha dug e an aire do thaigh riamh ann.

And the King of Ireland took a walk down the declivity of a hill that he was plenty knowledgeable about, and what did he see but a wee mound of a house there down on the floor of the glen. And he was certain that he was so knowledgeable in ["of"] that very place as he was of the back [lit. "one half"] of his hand and foot and he had never noticed a house there before.

Table 10: Feature list for the end of *Conall Gulban*

Features	Craig	DJM-D	DJM-N	CIM	JLC
<i>gu dè ach a ghabh an Rìgh ceum sìos rathad glinne</i>	✓	✓	✓	<i>cuairt</i>	<i>cuairt</i>
<i>glinn(e)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>leathad cnoic</i>
<i>gu dè a chunnaic e</i>				✓	✓
<i>brugh beag (de thaigh)</i>	✓	✓	✓	<i>bothan</i>	✓
<i>ùrlar a' ghlinne</i>				✓	✓
<i>ar leis nach fhaca e taigh</i>	✓	✓	✓		
<i>agus bha e cho eòlach air a' ghleann</i>	✓	✓	✓		

In this section—the third paragraph of the story in Craig—the previously noticed patterns re-occur. The first clause is all but identical in Craig, DJM-D, and DJM-N, using the emphatic,

clefted opening *gu dè ach a ghabh an Rìgh ceum sìos* (“what but that the King took a step [walk] down”). On the other hand, the other two texts have the more straightforward *ghabh NP sìos cuairt* (“the NP took a walk down”). The word *glinn(e)* (“of a glen”/“glens”) is used in the first four texts, but *leathad cnoic* (“a hill declivity”) is used in CIM. JLC goes with Craig, DJM-D, and DJM-N in describing the house as a *brugh beag* (“wee mound”), but, furthermore, CIM and JLC both use the phrase *ùrlar a’ ghlinne* (“floor of the glen”). This phrase presents information that does not occur in Craig, contrasting to the semantically empty augmentation that usually occurs in DJM-N and DJM-D. Finally, the last sentence in Craig is almost identical in DJM-D and DJM-N, but it reads slightly differently in the other two texts. Once again, although CIM and JLC sometimes join with DJM-N, DJM-D, and Craig in certain features, they display rich semantic and lexical divergences from them in other ways. Such divergence is the hallmark of independent texts.

3.2.3 *Eachdraidh Mhànuis*

The story of *Eachdraidh Mhànuis* (“The Adventures of Manus”) was another extremely popular tale in earlier times, judging by the oral and manuscript evidence in Ireland and Scotland (Bruford 1966). The story was apparently not submitted by Donald John under Neil’s name (see Table 1 above). As for the previous tale, only the beginning was analyzed, with the results that Craig⁴³ and DJM-D once again show a solid and aberrant relation to one another:

Table 11: Dice coefficient results for the beginning of *Eachdraidh Mhànuis*

File 1	File 2	Relation
Craig	DJM-D	0.90
JLC	CIM	0.66
Craig	JLC	0.64
Craig	CIM	0.62
DJM-D	JLC	0.61
DJM-D	CIM	0.59

The data here is consistent with that from the previous analyses: Craig and DJM-D show a relation value that is considerably higher (by a margin of 0.24) than the next highest value (that between JLC and CIM), thus providing further evidence of a derivative relationship between Donald John MacDonald’s texts and those of Craig. Some examples follow:⁴⁴

⁴³ Within §3.2.3 “Craig” is used to refer to MacDhòmhnaiill and Craig 1950:1-16.

⁴⁴ The examples that follow are taken from the fourth sentence of MacDhòmhnaiill and Craig 1950:1 and from its parallels within the other sources.

Craig: Thàinig an seo bochdainn air Rìgh Lochlann, agus dh'eug e agus ghabh dà stàta dheug uallach na rìoghachd gan ionnsaigh fhèin gus an tigeadh an t-oighre gu ìre a gabhail. (30 words)

There now came an illness on the King of Norway, and he died, and twelve statesmen took control of the kingdom for themselves until the heir would be at the point to assume it.

DJM-D: Thàinig an seo bochdainn air Rìgh Lochlann, agus bhàsaich e, agus ghabh dà stàta dheug uallach na rìoghachd gan ionnsaigh fhèin, gus an tigeadh an t-oighre gu ìre a gabhail. (30 words)

There now came an illness on the King of Norway, and he died, and twelve statesmen took control of the kingdom for themselves until the heir would be at the point to assume it.

CIM: Agus dh'fhàs an seo Rìgh Lochlann bochd agus bha e ùine mhòr air leabaidh agus a dh'aindeoin agus na b' urrainn lighichean a dhèanamh ris dh'eug e air a' cheann mu dheireadh. Agus cha robh an t-oighre ach fuathasach òg ach 's e a' rud a chaidh a dhèanamh chaidh an dà stàta dheug bu luaithe teist ann a Lochlann maideachadh orra airson bòidean na Rìoghachd a gabhail gan ionnsaigh fhèin gus an tigeadh an t-oighre gu ìre an gabhail. (83 words)

And the King of Norway now grew ill and he was a long time on his bed, and despite all that the doctors could do for him he died in the end. And the heir was only very young, and the thing that was done was that the twelve most reputable statesmen resolved to take oaths to take the kingdom for themselves until the heir would be at the point to assume it.

JLC: . . . agus dh'fhàs an seo Rìgh Lochlann bochd. Chaidh e gu laighe leapa agus a dh'aindeoin innleachdan is ionnsachadh dhotairean, bha a h-uile coltas air nach biodh e fada beò agus 's e a thachair gun do dh'eug Rìgh Lochlann. Agus cha robh dad an uair sin ach an dà stàta dheug bu luaithe [?] ann an Lochlann fhaighinn agus gun gabhadh iad bòidean na rìoghachd gan ionnsaigh fhèin gus an tigeadh an t-oighre gu ìre a gabhail. (80 words)

. . . and the King of Norway now grew ill. He went to lie on his bed and despite the efforts and learning of doctors, there was every indication that he would not be alive long, and what happened is that the King of Norway passed away. And there was nothing to do then but to find the most reputable statesmen in Norway so that they would take oaths to take the kingdom for themselves until the heir would be at the point to assume it.

It is interesting to note that CIM and JLC are much longer and descriptive than the passage in Craig and DJM-D; there is a difference of roughly 50 words between the former and latter pairs. The only difference between Craig and DJM-D here is the use of the word *bhàsaich* in DJM-D instead of *dh'eug* in Craig. This is a case of synonymic replacement, as described in §3.1.4.1 above: both mean “died.” In both CIM and JLC, the sickness leading up to the death is described in some detail, with physicians being brought in, but to no avail. The last several clauses in CIM and JLC are again similar, and overall these texts provide greater detail, departing from the more clipped account in Craig and DJM-D.

The quantitative results and textual analysis for *Eachdraidh Mhànais* further bolster the position that Donald John's texts of the above tales are dependent upon those in *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh*. The next section will provide evidence that Donald John also utilized another source that one would not imagine to have been so readily available to a house in the Outer Hebrides in the 1950s—the Irish folklore journal *Béaloides*, where Craig published several of Duncan's other tales.

3.2.4 *Gruagach nan Sealg*

Gruagach nan Sealg (“The Lady of the Hunts”) is a Fenian tale and therefore of a slightly different nature than the others considered so far. Stories about Fionn MacCumhaill and his tribe

of hero-warriors have been part and parcel of both oral and literate Gaelic tradition for well over a thousand years (Ó hÓgáin 1988:4). To present a slightly different picture of this text, and to anticipate the analyses of the coming section (§3.3), a sample from the middle of the tale was used. Although the example chosen was of direct speech (comprising most of the story), it was monologic and descriptive in nature rather than dialogic. Dialogue has been shown previously to be more likely to fossilize and remain constant over repeated tellings (Bruford 1966:60, 1979:31; Dòmhnallach 1989:218 n. 31; Zall 1998:49-50, 2007-10:7). Each example corresponds to the middle of paragraph five in Craig’s text (1947:248).

Table 12: Dice coefficient results for a middle section of *Gruagach nan Sealg*

File 1	File 2	Relation
Craig	DJM-D	0.91
DJM-D	DJM-N	0.90
Craig	DJM-N	0.90
DJM-D	CIM	0.56
CIM	DJM-N	0.56
Craig	CIM	0.55

For this tale there were only four texts available for comparison, as John Lorne Campbell apparently did not record it from Duncan, or if he did, I am unable to find a record of it. However, it is evident that the same pattern is found here as in the previous results: Craig, DJM-D, and DJM-N co-occur in their lexicon but are substantially divergent from the other versions collected around the same time. Additionally, Donald John’s text of Neil is once again more similar to Craig than to texts collected from Duncan by other ethnologists, in this case CIM. Some examples follow as an illustration of the textual relationships:

Craig: Chì thu an uair sin coltas froise a’ cruinneachadh anns an àird an iar thuath, agus nuair a shileas i, cumaidh tu t-aghaidh innte, agus cha toir thu snaoidheadh a null no a nall air do cheann ach a’ coimhead dìreach air meadhan na froise gus an tèid i seachad, agus ann an deireadh na froise chì thu boireannach a’ tighinn agus fàlairidh agus seud agus seabhag aice. Foighneachdaidh i dhìot c’ àit a bheil [am] fear [a] thug glaodh air an fhìdeig. . . .

You will see then the appearance of a shower forming in the high northwest, and when it pours, keep your face in her, and don’t turn your head back or forth but keep looking straight ahead on [“at”] the middle of the shower until it goes past, and then at the end of the shower you will see a woman coming, with a palfrey and a jewel and a hawk. She will ask you where is [the] one who made a call on the whistle. . . .

DJM-D: Chì thu an uair sin coltas froise a’ cruinneachadh anns an àird an iar-thuath, agus nuair a shileas i cumaidh tu t-aghaidh innte, agus cha toir thu snaoidheadh a null no nall air do cheann ach a’ coimhead dìreach ann am meadhain na froise gus an tèid i seachad agus ann an deireadh na froise chì thu boireannach a’ tighinn agus fàlairidh agus seud agus seabhag aice. Foighneachdaidh i dhìot c’ àit am bheil am fear a thug glaodh air an fhìdeag. . . .

You will see then the appearance of a shower forming in the high northwest, and when it pours, keep your face in her, and don’t turn your head back or forth but keep looking straight ahead in the middle of the shower until it goes past, and then at the end of the shower you will see a woman coming, with a palfrey and a jewel and a hawk. She will ask you where is the one who made a call on the whistle. . . .

DJM-N: Chì thu an uair sin coltas froise a’ cruinneachadh anns an àirde an iar thuath, agus nuair a shileas i, cumaidh tu t’ aghaidh innte, agus cha toir thu snaoidheadh a null no nall air do cheann ach a’ coimhead dìreach ann am meadhain na froise gus an tèid i seachad, agus ann an deireadh na froise chì thu boireannach a’ tighinn agus fàlairidh agus seud agus seabhag aice. Foighneachdaidh i dhiot càit am bheil am fear a thug glaodh air an fhìdeig. . . .

Same as DJM-D above.

CIM: . . . chì thu cruinneachadh meall ann an sin agus thig am meall na chlathan-meallain san iar-thuath ann ad aghaidh agus air na chunna tu riamh na tionndaidh t’ aghaidh-sa null na a-nall ach ag amharc dìreach ann an cridhe a’ mhill agus ann an deireadh na froise thig marcraiche fàlairidh guirme agus e le sèin agus seabhag air foidhneachdaidh e dhiotsa cò sheinn an fhìdeag. . . .

. . . you will see the forming of a shower there and the shower will arrive as hailstones in the northwest in your face, and for all you’ve ever seen [that is, for the love of your life] do not turn your head back or forth but keep gazing straight in the heart of the shower, and in the end of the shower a rider of a blue palfrey will come with an amulet and a hawk on him and he will ask you who sounded the whistle. . . .

The first three examples are almost identical. The only differences to be seen are that while Craig has *air meadhan na froise* (“on the middle of the shower”), both DJM-D and DJM-N have *ann am meadhan na froise* (“in the middle . . .”), and that the word *fear* (“man”) is definite in both of DJM’s texts, while it is (perhaps less idiomatically, or probably as a mistake) indefinite in Craig’s. On the other hand, there are some significant differences between these three texts and CIM:

- *Meall* (“shower”) is used in the place of its synonym *fras* (genitive singular *froise*).
- *Cridhe a’ mhill* (“heart of the shower”) is used in CIM in the place of *meadhan na froise* (“middle of the shower”).
- Hailstones (*clathan-meallain*) are mentioned.
- *Àird* (“high”) is not present as a modifier of *iar-thuath* (“northwest”) in CIM.
- The phrase *air na chunna tu riamh* (“for the love of your life” [lit. “for all you have ever seen”]) is employed as an intensifier in CIM.
- The wording of the penultimate clause is significantly different, and *sèin* (or the alternate spelling *seun*, “amulet”) is used in CIM as opposed to *seud* (“jewel”).⁴⁵
- CIM adds the detail that the palfrey is “blue,” which is extra information and unlike the empty augmentation common to DJM-N and DJM-D.
- In the last clause, the rider of the palfrey is a woman in Craig and DJM’s texts, but a man in CIM’s.

Overall, given that CIM’s text was taken down in 1949, two years after Craig’s was published, one would expect it to be more lexically similar to Craig than are the other two, which were taken down in 1953 and 1954, yet this is not the case. It appears that the texts in *Sgialachdan Dhunnchaidh* are not the only ones on which Donald John’s are dependent: he must

⁴⁵ This could have been a misapprehension in one of the transcriptions, although the words are semantically close enough to be interchangeable in the context of a traditional narrative.

have also had access to this particular issue of *Béaloideas*⁴⁶ or at least an offprint of it. Donald John submitted Duncan's version of *Gruagach nan Sealg* within the first 10% of his work for the School of Scottish Studies, indicating that he had begun to use printed sources quite early on in his collection.

3.3 Comparison of Donald John MacDonald's Manuscripts with More West Highland Tales

From the examples above we know that Donald John submitted nearly identical texts on multiple occasions; clearly, those dealt with above that are attributed to Duncan and Neil ultimately derive from Craig. He utilized at least two of Craig's publications in the stories that he contributed, and it is reasonable to inquire to what extent he employed other printed sources. At least two of the tales that he wrote for the School, one under the name of Neil and the other under both Neil and Duncan's names, had been previously published in *More West Highland Tales* (J. F. Campbell 1940): *Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge* ("Young Iain Son of the King of France") and *An Dà Sgiobair* ("The Two Skippers"), which he submitted as *Am Fear a Thug Cait dhan Tuirc* ("The Man Who Took Cats to Turkey"). In the case of the first tale, Donald John submitted a form of it at least three times: under Neil's name, under Duncan's name, and as a copy from "an old manuscript" (see Table 1 above for the dates on which he took these down). In the case of the latter tale—a version of ATU 1561/506—he took it down twice: once under Neil's name, and once from Mary Ann MacInnes (in 1957), a version that does not seem to be related to the other two. Interestingly, neither John Lorne Campbell nor Calum Maclean collected these stories from Duncan, at least in the form that Donald John offered them, which raises the question of whether or not they were in their repertoire in the first place, and if not—or, perhaps, even if they were—whether Donald John utilized a printed source when he wrote them down.

3.3.1 *Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge*

Iain Òg is one of the long, meandering hero tales that were popular with Gaelic speakers up until the beginning of the twentieth century. To my knowledge, apart from Donald John's manuscripts it only appears in one place: *More West Highland Tales* (J. F. Campbell 1940). Campbell has this to say about it: "One of the regular Highland stories which have nothing earthly to do with books of any kinds that I ever read—quite peculiar" (275). A casual look at the versions submitted by Donald John reveals that they have a number of similarities with the one in *MWHT* in terms of wording and motif structure, but that these are less transparent than in the cases above. The following analyses were conducted to determine a possible relationship between Donald John's versions and the text published in *MWHT*.

One of the central tenets of the study of human memory is termed the *serial position effect* (see Ebbinghaus 1913; Robinson and Brown 1926). Essentially, items in a series of data are recalled in varying degrees depending on their location within that series. Research has generally confirmed that items occurring near the beginning or end of a series are recalled best,

⁴⁶ Donald John submitted another tale—of the *Märchen* variety—that had previously appeared in a different issue of *Béaloideas* (Craig 1949): *Am Fear a Thug am Boireannach às an Tuirc* (see Table 1). It appears to be independent from Craig; see Lamb forthcoming.

while those in the middle present difficulties for us. The *primacy effect* is the name given to the enhanced recall for items at the beginning of a series, and the *recency effect* refers to the relatively easier recall of terminal data. The primacy effect is explained by the fact that items at the beginning of a series are more available for repetition and practice. On the other hand, the recency effect occurs because items at the end of a data series are the last ones processed by working memory; it is assumed that they pass into long-term memory more readily due to the brain's relatively less fettered state at that time.⁴⁷

If the versions of this tale as taken down by Donald John MacDonald and attributed to Neil and Duncan show a high level of correlation with *MWHT*, and a marked difference in their relation values for samples taken at the beginning, middle, and end, then it will help to distinguish between various competing hypotheses. First, if the relation values are reasonably high and it seems that there is a connection between Neil's and Duncan's versions and *MWHT*, we can assume that they either learned the tales from the book, had a strong connection through oral tradition to the person who originally narrated it,⁴⁸ or that Donald John consulted the published source. If the relation values are V-shaped across the different sections, showing a dip in the middle section, then this result is the one we would expect if the tales had been learned in either of the first two ways, due to serial position effects. If, on the other hand, the relation values peak in the middle section, giving us an "inverted V" pattern, this finding would be consistent with Donald John having consulted *MWHT* when he wrote down his versions. If a copyist were trying to avoid detection, it is likely that he or she would be more attentive to the beginning and end of a piece than to the middle section, which would be less noticeable to potential scrutinizers.

The following tables provide the relation values, separated into beginning, middle, and end sections.

Table 13: Dice coefficient results for the beginning of *Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge*

File 1	File 2	Relation
DJM-D	DJM-N	0.65
<i>MWHT</i>	DJM-N	0.65
DJM-D	Manuscript	0.56
DJM-D	<i>MWHT</i>	0.55
Manuscript	DJM-N	0.51
Manuscript	<i>MWHT</i>	0.43

⁴⁷ See Rubin 1995 for coverage of the mnemonic aspects of oral traditions from the perspective of cognitive psychology.

⁴⁸ That is, Roderick MacNeill from Glen, Barra, *circa* 1860; again, the time and distance involved make this scenario unlikely as well.

Table 14: Dice coefficient results for the middle section of *Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge*

File 1	File 2	Relation
DJM-D	DJM-N	0.76
DJM-D	<i>MWHT</i>	0.75
<i>MWHT</i>	DJM-N	0.72
Manuscript	DJM-N	0.69
DJM-D	Manuscript	0.68
Manuscript	<i>MWHT</i>	0.67

Table 15: Dice coefficient results for the end of *Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge*

File 1	File 2	Relation
DJM-D	DJM-N	0.74
DJM-D	<i>MWHT</i>	0.63
<i>MWHT</i>	DJM-N	0.62
DJM-D	Manuscript	0.48
Manuscript	DJM-N	0.44
Manuscript	<i>MWHT</i>	0.43

Compared to the earlier results, these tales show a less clearly defined link between the hypothesized printed source and Donald John's texts. However, we have a basis of comparison to help disambiguate these results: the relation values previously obtained between Maclean, JLC, and Craig, which are fairly certain to be independent from one another. These values are as follows:

Table 16: Dice coefficient values between Maclean and Craig

Story	Relation
<i>Fear na h-Eabaid</i>	0.82
<i>Conall Gulban</i>	0.70
<i>Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir</i> (beg)	0.69
<i>Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir</i> (end)	0.66
<i>Eachdraidh Mhànuis</i>	0.62
<i>Gruagach nan Sealg</i>	0.55
	<i>Mean</i> 0.67

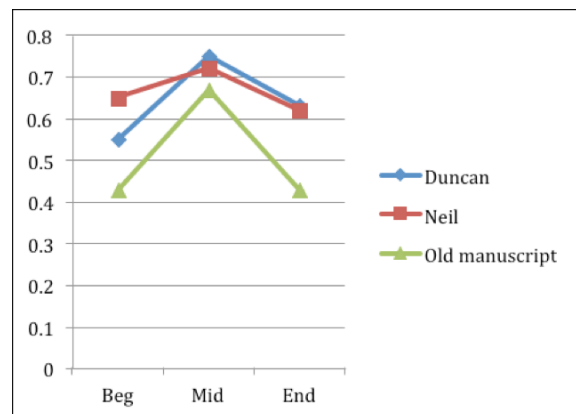
Table 17: Dice coefficient values between JLC and Craig

Story	Relation
<i>Fear na h-Eabaid</i>	0.81
<i>Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir</i> (beg)	0.72
<i>Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir</i> (end)	0.69
<i>Conall Gulban</i>	0.67
<i>Eachdraidh Mhànuis</i>	0.64
<i>Gruagach nan Sealg</i>	N/A
	Mean 0.71

Table 18: Dice coefficient values between JLC and Maclean

Story	Relation
<i>Fear na h-Eabaid</i>	0.79
<i>Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir</i> (end)	0.69
<i>Conall Gulban</i>	0.69
<i>Sgeulachd an Tuairisgeil Mhòir</i> (beg)	0.68
<i>Eachdraidh Mhànuis</i>	0.66
	Mean 0.70

The mean relation values obtained at the bottom of the tables indicate the general amount of crossover that we might expect from Duncan MacDonald among his different versions of a *single* tale. Thus, we would anticipate, from tale to tale, that a relation value in the region of 0.70 would obtain. So far, we have no reason to expect that Neil's tales, as given by Donald John MacDonald, are independent from the tales of Duncan in Craig's publications. One might as well substitute the name "Neil" with "Duncan" in every case up until now. What do we make of the *Iain Òg* data? First, the relation values in the middle section are higher than either the beginning or the end, which gives us reason to think that neither Duncan nor Neil memorized the story from *MWHT*. The relation value of 0.75 in the middle section for DJM-D and *MWHT* is higher than what we would expect, given that the narrators are different people, from a different island, and that there is a span of nearly one hundred years between the versions. If our assumptions are correct about Donald John being less concerned with the middle section having a clear resemblance to the printed source, then our data is consistent with this scenario. The following graph illustrates the relation values between the three sources (DJM-D, DJM-N, and "manuscript") and the story as presented in *MWHT*, over the three different sections:

Graph 1: Dice coefficient values with *MWHT* over three sections of *Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge* from the manuscripts of Donald John MacDonald

As is clearly visible, each version's relation value peaks in the middle, whereas the beginning and end sections are relatively similar, forming an inverted "V." Some examples from the beginning and middle section will be useful for gauging the level of semblance:

Beginning section of *Iain Òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge*

<i>MWHT</i>	MacD-D	MacD-N	Old Manuscript
Bha Rìgh anns an Fhraing agus phòs e, agus bha gaol mòr aige air a' Bhan Rìghinn, agus bha iad a' cur ann am mòr thoil-intinn le chèile.	Chuala mise siud a bha ann Rìgh na Frainge, agus mar a bha Rìgh na Frainge ann, phòs e, agus ann an ceann ùine rugadh mac dha. Agus 's e Iain a thugadh mar ainm air a ghille, agus 's e Iain òg Mac Rìgh na Frainge a chainte ris.	Chuala mise siud a bha ann Rìgh na Frainge, agus mar a bha Rìgh na Frainge ann, phòs e, agus bha gaol mòr eadar e fhèin agus a bhàn-Rìgh, agus bha iad uamhasach toilichte còmhla. Ann an ceann ùine an so, dh' fhàs a' bhan Rìgh trom, agus aig an àm rug i leanabh mic. Chaidh a leanabh a bhaisteadh agus Iain a thoirt mar ainm air. Bha iad a dol air aghaidh glè mhath còmhla, an sin, iad fhèin agus an leanabh.	Ma tà, bha siud ann uaireigin Rìgh anns a Fhraing, agus bha aon mhac aige. Cha robh a mac ach na phàisde gu math òg nuair a bhàsaich a' bhan Rìghinn. Bha an Rìgh a nis air fhàgail leis fhèin. . . .
Dh'fhàs a' Bhan Rìghinn trom, agus aig ceann a h-ùine, rug i leanabh mic. Bhaist iad an leanabh, agus is e Iain Òg, Mac Rìgh na Frainge, a thug iad air a' ghille.			
Thug i cìoch is glùn an seo dha gus an robh e bliadhna a dh' aois.	Thug a bhàn Rìghinn cìoch is glùn dhan leanabh fad bliadhna, agus nuair a bha ceann na bliadhna suas, dh'fhàs i tinn agus ann an ùine gu math goirid bhàsaich i, agus dh' fhàg i Iain agus an Rìgh leotha fhèin.	Thug a bhan Rìgh cìoch agus glùn dha fad bliadhna. Ach ann an ceann na bliadhna, dh' fhàs a' bhan Rìgh tinn, agus a dh' aindeoin gach luchd-sgil a thug an Rìgh ga h-ionnsaigh, cha do rinn e feum sam bith, agus ann an ùine ghoirid fhuair a bhan Rìgh am bàs.	
An ceann bliadhna, dh'fhàs i fhìn, tinn, bochd. An ùine ghoirid, fhuair i bàs,			
agus bha an Rìgh fo leann-dubh is fo mhulad mòr, a' caoidh na Ban Rìghinn. . . .	Bha an Rìgh fo mhulad mòr ag ionndrainn na bàn Rìghinn. . . .	Bha an Rìgh an uair-sin fo bhròn mòr ag ionndrainn na bàn-Rìgh. . . .	

There was a king in France and he married, and he had much love on the queen, and they were extremely happy together.

The queen grew pregnant, and after some time, she bore a baby boy. They baptized the boy, and it is Young Iain, the son of the King of France that they named the boy.

She gave breast and knee to him until he was one year old.

At the end of the year, she grew sickly, ill. In a short while she died,

and the king was under a misery and great sadness, grieving over the queen. . . .

I heard there that there was a king of France and as there was a king of France, he married, and in a while a son was borne to him. And they named him Iain, and it was Iain son of the King of France that he was called.

The queen gave him breast and knee until he was one year old, and at the end of the year, she grew ill and in short time died and she left Iain and the King on their own.

The king was under great sadness grieving over the queen. . . .

I heard there that there was a king of France, and as there was a king of France, he married, and there was much love between him himself and the queen, and they were extremely happy together.

In a while, then, the queen grew pregnant, and in time, she bore a baby boy.

The boy was baptized and they called him Iain. They were getting on very well together, then, themselves and the baby.

The queen gave breast and knee to him for a year. But after the year, the queen grew sickly, and despite every skilled person that the king brought to her, it didn't do any good, and in a short while she died.

The king was then under great sadness grieving over the queen. . . .

Then, that was there once upon a time a king in France, and he had one son. His son was only a baby when the queen died.

The king was then left by himself. . . .

These passages could easily be from four different narrators, despite sharing certain phrases, such as *ciòch is glùin* (“breast and knee” [MWHT, MacD-D, MacD-N]) and *fo mhulad mòr* (“under great sadness” [MWHT, MacD-D]). However, although the versions are different on the surface, it is still possible that they could be derivative; there is very little in the non-MWHT versions that could not have been semantically extrapolated from it. Looking at the middle section, which had the highest relation score, this position becomes more tenable.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The paragraph breaks in the right three texts are altered to facilitate comparison; MWHT is as per the original in this sense, beginning on page 258 of J. F. Campbell 1994. All punctuation is presented as it appears in each individual text.

<i>MWHT</i>	MacD-D	MacD-N	Old Manuscript
Thug iad a nuas an t-sail. Chuir esan a cheann ann an eig, is chuir iadsan an cinn ann an eagannan mu a choinneamh, agus spion e na cinn às na h-amhaichean aig a h-uile gin aca, is thug e fhèin a cheann às sàbhailte. Cha robh an seo gin aca beò ach am bodach.	Thug iad a nuas an t-sail. Chuir Iain a cheann ann an eig agus chuir iadsan an cinn anns na h-eagan mu esan na cinn às na h-amhaichean aig a h-uile fear aca, agus thug e fhèin a cheann às sàbhailte. Cha robh a nis gin aca beò ach am bodach.	Dh' fhalbh iad agus thàinig fear aca leis an t-sail. Chuir esan a cheann anns an eag, agus chuir iadsan an cinn anns na h-eagannan mu—choinneamh, agus spion e na cinn às na h-amhaichean às a h-uile gin aca, agus thug e fhèin a cheann às sàbhailte. Cha robh an uair sin beò ach am bodach.	Thug iad a nuas an t-sail dharaich, agus dh' iarr Iain oirre-san an cinn a chuir anns na h'eagan. Chuir e fhèin a cheann anns an eag mun coinneamh. Spion e an uair sin na cinn às a h-uile gin aca, agus thug e fhèin a cheann às sàbhailte. Cha robh gin dhiubh air fhàgail an uair sin ach am bodach.
Rug e an sin air a' Bhodach, is chuir e glùn air an amhaich aige. Thuirt e ris, 'Tha am bàs os do chionn : gu dè t-èirig ?'	Rug Iain an uair sin air a' bhodach, agus chuir e a ghlùn air a sgòran aige. "Am bàs os do chionn", arsa esan, "gu dè t-èirig".	Rug e an uair sin air a' bhodach, agus chuir e ghlùn air an amhaich aige. "Am bàs os do chionn", arsa esan ris a bhodach, "gu dè t-èirig".	Ghabh e chun a bhodach, agus leig e air an ùrlar e. "Am bàs os do chionn", arsa esan, "gu de t-èirig".
'Ma tà, is mòr sin,' arsa am Bodach; 'is iomadh èirig duine bho chd agus duine beairtich a tha fon fhàrdaich a tha an so.'	"An dà", arsa am bodach, "'s mòr sin. 'S iomadh èirig duine bho chd is bheairteach a tha anns an fhàrdaich a tha seo".	"An dà 's mòr sin", arsa am bodach. "'S iomadh èirig duine bho chd agus bheairtich a tha fon fhàrdaich so".	"An dà 's mòr sin", arsa am bodach, "'S iomadh èirig duine bho chd agus bheairteach a tha fon fhàrdaich a tha seo".
'Tha sin agamsa, agus am bàs os do chionn-sa; ge dè t-èirig?'	"Bidh sin agam agus do cheann", arsa Iain, "gu dè t-èirig".	"Tha sin agam agus do bhàs", arsa Iain, "gu dè t-èirig".	"Bidh sin agam sa agus do bhàs", arsa Iain. ["Gu dè t-èirig".]
'Och ! chan eil tuilleadh èirig agam, ach innsidh mi dhuibh mar a bheir sibh beò sia comhdhaltan deug Rìgh Èireann, ma leigeas sibh leam mo bheatha.'	"Ò, chan eil an còrr èirig agam", arsa am bodach, "ach innseadh [sic] mi dhuibh mar a bheir sibh beò sia comhdhalta deug Rìgh Èireann mu leigeas sibh mo bheatha leam",	"Ò chan eil tuilleadh èirig agam", arsa am bodach, "ach innse [sic] mi dhut ciamar a bheir thu beò sia comhdhalta deug Rìgh Èireann mu leigeas tu mo bheò leam".	"Ò chan eil an còrr èirig agam-sa" arsa am bodach, "ach innsidh mi dhut mar a bheir thu beò sia comhdhaltan deug Rìgh Èireann".
'Dè mar a bheir sinn beò iad?' arsa Iain	"Dè mar a bheir sinn beò iad", arsa Iain.	"Agus", arsa Iain, "gu dè mar a bheir sinn beò iad".	"Dè mar a bheir sinn beò iad", arsa Iain.

They brought forth the beam. He put his head in a notch, and they put their heads into the notches opposite, and he pulled the heads out of every one of their necks, and he himself took his head out safely. There was now none amongst them living apart from the old man.

He then grabbed the old man, and he put his knee on his neck. He said to him, “The death is above you: what is your ransom?”

“Well then, it is large,” said the old man, “many is the ransom of a poor man and a rich man that is beneath this roof.”

“That is mine, and your death is above you; what is your ransom?”

“Och, I have no further ransom, but I will tell you how you can resuscitate sixteen of the King of Ireland’s foster-brothers, if you allow me to keep my life.”

“How may we bring them alive?” said Iain.

They brought forth the beam. Iain put his head in a notch and they put their heads in the notches opposite, and he pulled the heads out of the necks of every one of them, and he himself took his head out safely. There was then none amongst them living apart from the old man.

Iain then grabbed the old man, and he put his knee on his throat. “The death above you,” he said, “what is your ransom?”

“Well,” said the old man, “it is large. Many is the ransom of a poor man and a rich man beneath this roof [slight difference in wording here].”

“That will be mine and your head,” said Iain, “what is your ransom?”

“Oh, I have no further ransom,” said the old man, “but I will tell you how you can resuscitate sixteen of the King of Ireland’s foster-brothers, if you allow me to keep my life with me.”

“How may we bring them alive?” said Iain.

They went and one of them came with the beam. He put his head in a notch, and they put their heads in the notches opposite, and he pulled the heads out of the necks of every one of them, and he himself took his head out safely. There was at that time none alive apart from the old man.

He then grabbed the old man, and he put his knee on his neck. “The death above you,” he said to the old man, “what is your ransom?”

“Well it is large then,” said the old man. “Many is the ransom of a poor man and a rich man that is beneath this roof.”

“That is mine and your death,” said Iain, “what is your ransom?”

“Oh, I haven’t any other ransom,” said the old man, “but I’ll tell you how you can resuscitate sixteen of the King of Ireland’s foster-brothers, if you allow me to have my life.”

“And,” said Iain, “how may we bring them alive?”

They brought forth the oak beam and Iain asked them to put their heads in the gaps. He put his own head in the gap opposite them. The then pulled the heads out of every one of them, and he took his own head out safely. There was not any of them alive then apart from the old man.

He took to the old man, and he felled him to the floor. “The death above you,” he said, “what is your ransom?”

“Well, it is large,” said the old man, “many is the ransom of a poor man and a rich man beneath this roof.”

“That will be mine and your death,” said Iain.

“Oh I haven’t any further ransom,” said the old man, “but I will tell you how you can resuscitate sixteen foster-brothers of the King of Ireland.”

“How may we bring them alive?” said Iain.

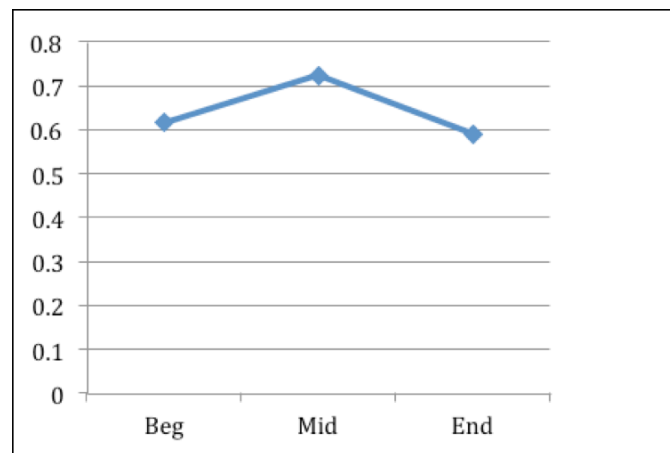
In practical terms these four excerpts are all but identical. There are slight differences, such as in tense (*bidh sin agam* [“that will be mine”] versus *tha sin agam* [“that is mine”]), close synonyms (for example, *an còrr* versus *tuilleadh* [“any more”]), placement of the narrative verb (*arsa* [“said”]), and the varying use of emphatic suffixes. However, there is strikingly little that is different, and these features were discussed in §3.1.4 as being among the possible consequences of textual modification. Is it possible that four independent sources of a tale would have sections in them that progress in a virtually identical, word-for-word fashion?

Carol Zall discusses what she terms “Type 3” language: “dialogue and other phrasing which does not seem to be identifiably archaic, rhythmic, or otherwise ‘special,’ but which nevertheless recurs from story to story in a highly similar form” (2007-10:7). By this definition, the above excerpt would fit. But interestingly, the examples that she provides of Type 3 language—from Gaelic storyteller Brian Stewart⁵⁰—do not exhibit the same unity of word and phrase that we see in the middle section of *Iain Òg*. The examples that she provides in another article (Zall 2006-07) are closer, but they are still not as close as the ones above. Although the results for *Iain Òg* are suggestive rather than conclusive, they fit in with the trends discussed elsewhere in this paper.

3.4 *An Dà Sgiobair/Am Fear a Thug Cait dhan Tuirc*

As a final analysis, I investigated whether or not the same “inverted V” pattern held with another tale from MacDonald’s collection, *An Dà Sgiobair/Am Fear a Thug Cait dhan Tuirc* (“The Two Skippers”/“The Man Who Took Cats to Turkey”). This tale was collected around 1860 by one of J. F. Campbell’s collectors⁵¹ from Alexander MacNeill of Ken Tangval (*Ceann Tangabhal*), Barra. It is an international tale of the “Whittington’s Cat” type (ATU 1651), but in this rendition it is conflated with ATU 506, “The Rescued Princess.” Although the tale was not overly common in Uist, it was collected there at least four other times.⁵² Neither JLC nor CIM took it down from Duncan, raising the same questions as in the previous case. The following graph details the relation values between the versions from *MWHT* and DJM’s collection:

Graph 2: Dice coefficient values over three sections of ATU 1651/506 in DJM-N and *MWHT*



⁵⁰ The nephew of the famous traveler-storyteller Ailidh Dall.

⁵¹ In J. F. Campbell 1940 (390), it is noted that it was probably Hector MacLean.

⁵² According to the School of Scottish Studies Tale Archive, it was collected once in North Uist, twice in Benbecula, and another time in South Uist (in DJM’s manuscripts, from a separate individual, noted as partial).

Here, the same pattern emerges that was seen in the case of *Iain Òg*, suggesting that Donald John may have used tales from *MWHT* but actively transformed them, paying more attention to the beginning and end than the middle section.

The table below presents the relation values obtained from the analysis:

Table 19: Dice coefficient results from ATU1650/509
(DJM-N versus *MWHT*)

Beg	Mid	End
0.62	0.73	0.60

For the same reasons of temporal and geographical remoteness as discussed above in §3.3.1, a middle-section⁵³ value of 0.73 is greater than what we would expect. Relatively long sequences of word-for-word text occur, and despite the differences, the same basic paragraph structure obtains, along with the possibility of synonymic replacement and augmentation. The following are some samples from this middle section:

<i>MWHT</i>	MacD-N	<i>MWHT</i> (trans.)	MacD-N (trans.)
An uair a ràinig e taigh duine uasail, bha làmhnan sgaoilte aice roimhe.	Nuair a ràinig esan, neo-ar-thaing nach robh basan sgaoilte roimhe ann an sin.	When he arrived at the gentleman's house, her hands were spread before him.	When he arrived, indeed, palms were spread before him there.
'An làirne mhàireach', arsa ise, 'thèid mise agus m' athair a ghabhail sràide far am bi thu a' cur a mach an luchd.'	"Nis", arsa an nighean ris, "a-màireach, thèid mi fhìn agus m' athair a mach a ghabhail cuairt far am bi thu a' cur an luchd a mach às an t-soitheach".	"On the morrow," she said, "My father and I will go and walk to where you will be putting out the load."	"Now," said she to him, "tomorrow, I myself and my father will go out and have a walk to where you will be putting the load out of the vessel."
Shuidh iad air na poc-aichean, agus thug am bodach fa-near gun robh iad làn òir.	Shuidh iad air na pocannan, agus cha b' fhada gun an tug am bodach fa-near gur e òr a bha anns na pocannan.	They sat on the sacks, and the old man noticed that they were full of gold.	They sat on the sacks, and it wasn't long until the old man noticed that it was gold that was in the sacks.
'M' athair', arsa ise, 'nach iarr sibh air an fhear seo mise a phòsadh?'	"Ach athair", arsa an nighean, an ceann greis, "nach iarr sibh air an duine tha seo mise a phòsadh".	"My father," said she, "won't you ask this man to marry me?"	"But father," said the girl after a while, "won't you ask this man to marry me?"

⁵³ The section is taken from J. F. Campbell 1940:388.

‘Cha phòsadh am fear ud nighean an rìgh is feàrr a bha riagh air an t-saoghal, agus na tha an seo de òr aige’	“Cha phòsadh am fear ud nighean an rìgh is fheàrr a bha riagh air an t-saoghal, agus na tha seo do dh’ òr aige”.	“Yon man wouldn’t marry the daughter of the best king that ever was, even if he had all of this gold.”	“Yon man wouldn’t marry the daughter of the best king that ever was, even if he had all of this gold.”
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Where there are differences between these excerpts, they are slight. Any of the phrases in DJM-N here could have been derived from the text in *MWHT*; none add any substantive information, and the tendency is for them to evince slightly more unusual words, a feature that correlates with a text that has been copied from another source.

As mentioned above, in addition to using a more unusual vocabulary, copyists may resort to using a more marked morphosyntax, for similar reasons. Both of these traits can be seen in the differences between the first two examples above. In MacD-N, an emphatic suffix is added, and the slightly marked phrase *neo-ar-thaing* (“indeed”), an amplifier, is present. Additionally, *basan* (“palms”) is used rather than the more pedestrian *làmhnan* (“hands”), and there is a bit of deictic filler applied to the end: *ann an sin* (“there”). The same tendency is seen in the third paragraph, where *thug am bodach fa-near* (“the old man noticed”) is present in *MWHT* but the fronted adverbial phrase *cha b’ fhada gus an tug am bodach fa-near* (“**it was not long** until the old man noticed”) is in MacD-N. Where *MWHT* has a pronoun, MacD-N often deploys full referents: *ise* (“her,” emphatic) in the fourth paragraph versus *an nighean* (“the girl”). All of these differences could be seen as an avoidance of the original text.

As in the case of *Iain Òg*, one wonders if this is Donald John, the storyteller apparent, modeling his language according to his knowledge of the traditional narrative register as acquired from his uncle and father. He was indubitably a gifted Gaelic speaker and writer, judging by his poetry (MacDhòmhnaill and Innes 1998), and it would have easily been within his capacities. However, the quantitative results are not without ambiguity, and we would be ill-advised to discount entirely the possibility that these two stories are survivals from oral tradition, as unlikely as it seems in the present context. A more thorough analysis than is possible here would hopefully reveal further answers. If the evidence points towards the stories being authentic, it will raise an entirely new set of questions, with intriguing consequences for the study of human memory and the limits of retention from oral tradition.

4 Conclusions

The almost word-for-word correspondence between the tales of brothers Neil and Duncan MacDonald has been taken in the past as a given, based upon observations supplied by Bruford (1979) and others. It was viewed as a manifestation of the verbally conservative aesthetic inherent to this particular family, who are descendants of an important line of once, perhaps, professional storytellers. However, the present study has scrutinized the evidence for the assumption that the brothers’ tales were identical and found it in all likelihood to be specious. Neil and Duncan were believed to have had the same versions of their tales because they actually *were* the same versions: Donald John MacDonald copied the texts that he attributed to them from

published collections of Duncan's stories (Craig 1947; MacDhòmhnail and Craig 1950). The statistical results, the signs of visual copying, and their abnormally close lexical and phrasal correspondence make this the only plausible conclusion. Where a text of Duncan's was published by K. C. Craig and known to Donald John MacDonald, it was used in his manuscripts as the basis of the stories attributed to his father and uncle.

These results also give us grounds for questioning the authenticity of another two stories in the collection that may have ties to a separate published source, namely *More West Highland Tales* (J. F. Campbell 1940). Consequently, we are now left with a considerably more limited range of material from this important storytelling family than we previously thought. Where we believed we had four independent versions, we now have two, and where we thought we had three, we have one. In the case of *Iain Òg*, we have reason for doubting the authenticity of both of the extant versions. There are thus significant implications for the study of variation in Gaelic traditional narrative, particularly regarding the oral versions of the literate Gaelic romances, for which there is already only scant and precious evidence.

In many ways, the present study—through demonstrating the degree of similarity between his independent versions of *Fear na h-Eabaid* by means of quantitative evidence—has confirmed the position that Duncan MacDonald was a conservative and consistent storyteller. On the other hand, in the case of Neil, since Donald John is the only source we have for his tales, he has become the proverbial “missing man.” One prospect for future research would be to determine whether any of the texts attributed to Neil were actually taken down from him verbatim. It may be possible to make this determination through investigating the tales that he did not have in common with Duncan, particularly those that could not have been taken from a published source. Such an undertaking would need to borrow techniques from the area of forensic linguistics, and unfortunately it will perforce exclude any of the larger hero tales. Apart from *An Ceatharnach Caol Riabhach*,⁵⁴ these tales all appear to have been taken from Craig's work, which leaves only the shorter anecdotes and historical narratives, but they may be sufficient for determining what Neil's storytelling style was like in a general sense.

This study is the first time that a statistical measure of lexical consistency has been applied to questions of variation and authorship in traditional Gaelic narrative, and I am not aware of any other language's “oral” tradition being investigated in this manner. Using similar techniques, it might be possible to begin to better understand the relationship between orally collected versions of the Gaelic romances and the ones in manuscript form. The oral-literate debate has plagued Gaelic scholarship for many years in the past with no real resolution (see, for example, Ó Coileáin 1977), and an extension of the approach here could potentially help to break down the barriers that have thwarted progress. More immediately, it would be a relatively simple matter to evaluate Bruford's claim (1979:35) that Duncan MacDonald made a distinction in his repertoire between the originally literate hero tales and the primarily oral *Märchen*, with the former being more consistent from recitation to recitation. If this claim could be confirmed, it would have interesting implications for the study of storytelling registers and raise the question

⁵⁴ This tale is a curious case because it was not actually taken down from Duncan in any detail. He said that his father, from whom he heard it, had remembered only a fragment of it (which can be found with registration in the Calum Maclean corpus: <http://www.calum-maclean.celtscot.ed.ac.uk/calmac>).

of whether or not a type of literate aesthetic could have come down in oral tradition bundled with these hero tales.⁵⁵

It remains to be seen what connection there is between Donald John's manuscripts and *More West Highland Tales*, as well as other published sources. The approach taken here will be a useful aid for bringing this under-utilized collection into the light and disentangling its connections to oral and literate sources. In a broad sense, with the increasing number of valuable resources coming online in a digital format,⁵⁶ the deployment of computational techniques to support investigations in Gaelic ethnology should be a fruitful *modus operandi* in the time to come.

Of course, the present findings raise a number of important and, to varying extents, charged lines of inquiry. It is almost impossible, for example, not to speculate on what might have motivated Donald John MacDonald to utilize these published sources in the way that he did. However, when pursuing such inquiries, it is important to be cognizant of the fact that both professional and lay ethnologists have adopted a range of collection practices throughout history. These practices have themselves been framed by a range of philosophies regarding best practices—when such conscious directives can even be said to have been evident in the first place—and, crucially, the best way for representing oral traditions. The work of past luminaries such as Alexander Carmichael, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, and James Macpherson immediately comes to mind; scholars have both panned and praised their efforts ever since.⁵⁷

I would like to stress, in closing, that it is not the purpose of this essay to bring either Donald John MacDonald or his manuscript collection into disrepute. I have tried to steer away from value judgments and debates of the above nature, as they are beyond my present purpose. It is necessary to acknowledge the elephant in the room, but it will need to be dealt with elsewhere. To conclude on a positive note, my impression is that there is much within the manuscripts that is taken from first-hand sources, although it will require time to evaluate them properly *in toto*.

Like so many other linguistic cultures in the world, Gaelic speakers in the twentieth century gradually grew to spend more time immersed in mass-media-based entertainment than in sharing their traditional songs and stories. What makes Gaelic ethnology so compelling, particularly for those who were not raised within such a rich oral tradition, is that it represents a type of cultural inheritance that was once common to us all.

⁵⁵ Since writing the initial version of this essay, I have had the opportunity to conduct an initial investigation into this matter (Lamb forthcoming) and can report that no statistically significant difference obtained between Duncan's *Märchen* and hero tales in terms of verbal consistency. Some of Bruford's (1979) conclusions can now be understood as artifacts of the underlying, and previously undiscovered, relationship between Craig's and DJM's texts.

⁵⁶ To name three, *Tobar an Dualchais* ("Kist o Riches") (<http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/>), The Calum Maclean Project (<http://www.calum-maclean.celtscot.ed.ac.uk/calmac>), and more recently the Carmichael Watson Project (<http://www.carmichaelwatson.lib.ed.ac.uk>).

⁵⁷ The work of Alexander Carmichael has gained rejuvenated prominence since the launch of the website mentioned in the preceding note and through the seminal work being conducted by those associated with it. For surveys of some of the issues involved with assessing his collection, see Robertson 1976, J. L. Campbell 1978, and Patton 1988.

With every storm surge, the sea around Uist has for millennia taken as its bounty what we would now consider treasures, removed from the dunes.⁵⁸ The treasures of oral culture have no less value than their archaeological counterparts, but the storms are more subtle and are, some would say, even a necessary precursor to progress. Although a strong oral tradition persisted in Uist longer than in most other places in Europe, it is now not possible to collect Gaelic stories and songs in the way it was only sixty years ago. Because of this, Donald John MacDonald's collection is invaluable, even if a proportion of it is dependent upon other sources, and the time required to understand it will be well spent. We have him, and many others, to thank for giving at least some treasures shelter from the storm.

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⁵⁸ See the fine work being done by Shorewatch on documenting the archeological remains of coastal Scotland: <http://shorewatch.co.uk/html/accessarch.html>.

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