

Birlinn Chlann Raghnaill. (Clan Ranald's Galley)

Alasdair Mac Mhaistear Alasdair, Alexander MacDonald.

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1

*Beannachadh Luinge*

*Maille ri brosnachadh fairge, a rinneadh do sgioba is do bhirlinn tighearna Chlann Raghnaill.*

Gum beannaicheadh Dia long Chlann Raghnaill  
A' cheud là do chaidh air sàile,  
E fèin 's a thrèin-fhir da caitheamh,  
Trèin a chuaidh thar maitheas chàich.

Gum beannaich an Coimh-dhia naomh  
An iùnnrais, anal nan speur,  
Gun sguabte garbhach na mara,  
G' ar tarraing gu cala rèidh.

Athair, a chruthaich an fhairge  
'S gach gaoth a shèideas às gach àird,  
Beannaich ar caol-bhàirc 's ar gaisgich,  
'S cum i fhèin 's a gasraidh slàn.

A Mhic, beannaich fèin ar n-acair,  
Ar siùil, ar beartean, 's ar stiùir,  
'S gach droineap tha crochte ri 'r crannaibh,  
'S thoir gu caladh sinn le d' iùl.

Beannaich ar racain 's ar slata,  
Ar crainn 's ar teudaibh gu lèir  
Ar stagh 's ar tarraing cùm fallain  
'S na leig-s' ann ar cara beud.

An Spiorad Naomh biodh air stiùir,  
Seòlaidh e 'n t-iùl a bhios ceart;  
'S eòl da gach longphort fon ghrèin,  
Tilgeamaid sinn fèin fo 'bheachd.

2

*Beannachadh nan Airm*

Gum beannaicheadh Dia ar claidhean  
'S ar lannan Spàinteach geur, glas,  
Ar lùirichean troma, màillich  
Nach gearrte le faobhar tais;

1

*Blessing of the Ship*

*Including encouragement of the ocean which was made for the crew and ship of the Lord of Clan Ranald.*

May God bless Clan Ranald's ship the first day it went to sea, itself and the strong men driving it, warriors who went beyond the excellence of the rest.

May the sacred Lord bless the storm, the breath of the stars, and may the stony river bed of the sea not be hit and may he pull us to a smooth harbour.

O Father, you who formed the ocean and every wind that blows from every direction, bless our narrow bark and our champion heros and keep herself and her crew in good health.

O Son, bless even our anchor, our sails, our mast roap-rings, our rudder and all the rigging which is bound to our mast and take us to a harbour with your guidance.

Bless our mast rings, our yard-arms, our masts and all our mooring roaps, and keep safe our stays and our halyards and don't allow any messing up of our direction.

Let the Holy Spirit be at the helm and he will sail a route which will be correct; let him have discernment about every boat-harbour under the sun and let us move ourselves with care.

2

*Blessings of the Arms.*

Let God bless our swords and our sharp, grey, Spanish blades and our coats of heavy mail and let it not be turned into an untempered cutting edge.

Ar làmhannan cruadhach 's ar gòrsaid,  
'S ar sgiathan eun-dealbhach, dualach;  
Beannaich gach armachd gu h-iomlan  
Th' air ar n-iomchar 's ar crios-guaille;

Ar boghannan foinealach iubhair  
Ghabhadh luthadh ri uchd tuasaid,  
'S na saighdean beithe nach spealgadh,  
Ann am balgan a' bhrùic ghruamaich.

Beannaich ar biodag 's ar daga  
'S ar n-èile gasd' ann an cuaichean  
'S gach treallaich catha is còmhraig  
Tha 'm bàirc Mhìc Dhòmhnaill san uair seo.

Na biodh simpleachd oirbh, no taise,  
Gu dol air ghaisge le cruadal,  
Fhad 's a mhaireas ceithir bùird dhith  
No bhios càraid shùdh dhith fuaighte;

Fhad 's a shnàmhais í fo ur casaibh  
No dh' fhuir' eas cnag dhith an uachdar,  
Dh' aindeoin aon fhuathais gam faic sibh  
Na meataicheadh gart a' chuain sibh.

Ma nì sibh cothachadh ceart  
'S nach mothaich an fhairg' sibh diblidh  
Gun ìslich a h-àrdan 's a beachd  
'S d' ur cosnadh sgairteil gun strìochd i.

Do chèile-còmhraig air tìr,  
Mur faic e thu cinntinn tais,  
'S dòich' e bhogachadh san strì  
Na cinntinn idir nas brais'.

Is amhail sin ata 'mhuir mhòr -  
Coisinn í le colg 's le sùrd  
'S gun ùmhlaich í dhuit fa-dheòidh  
Mar a dh'òrdaich Rìgh nan Dùl.

### 3

*Brosnachadh iomraidh gu ionaid seolaidh.*

Gun cuirt an iùbhraich dhubh dhealbhach  
An àite seòlaidh:  
Sàthaibh a-mach cleathan rìghne,  
Liagh-lom, còmhnaidh;

Ràmhann mìn-lunnacha, dealbhach,  
Socair, aotram,  
A nì 'n t-iomradh toirteil, calma  
Bos-luath, caoir-gheal;

Bless our steel gauntlets, our throat-armour and our  
bird-decorated and stranded shields. Bless firmly all  
the armour which we carry and our shoulder belts.

Bless our glittering bows of yew-wood, which would  
bend the chest of any squabbles, and bless the birch  
arrows which would not be split up with the quivers  
of a surly badger.

Bless our dagger, our pistol, our fine kilt in pleats and  
all the paraphanelia for battle and conflict which is on  
MacDonald's boat just now.

May you not have meekness or reluctance to go with  
courage on a warpath, as long as four of her planks  
remain, or a pair of her seam-boards are joined  
together.

So long as she swims under your feet or her thole-pins  
stay up, may the surly look of the sea not frighten  
you, despite any horror that you see.

If you make a real struggle and the sea does not view  
you as being weak, how her excessive pride and care  
will go down and she will yield to your own vigorous  
effort.

If your battle-partner on land does not see you  
growing timid, it is more likely that he would soften  
in the struggle than grow harder in boldness.

That is what the big sea is like – she will walk with  
fierceness and eagerness, and she will finally become  
humble to you, as the King of Creation ordered.

### 3

*Encouragement for moving to a sailing place.*

Let the black, shapely galley be moved out to the  
sailing area and let it thrust out very tough oar poles  
with polished oar-blades;

They are smooth-handled and shapely oars, well-  
balanced and light, which will carry out effective  
rowing with palms of hands moving swiftly and white  
with foam.

Chuireas an fhairge 'na sradaibh  
Suas sna speuraibh,  
'Na teine-sionnachain a' lasadh  
Mar fhras èibhlean.

The ocean will change into sparks up to the stars, a  
phosphorescent fire lighting up like a shower of  
embers.

Le buillean gailleacha tarbhach  
Nan cleath troma,  
A bheir air bhòc-thuinn thonn-anfaich  
Lot le 'n cromadh;

There will be stormy and adventurous strokes of  
heavy blades, which will make overflowing waves  
from swelling up waves, a wound as they fall down.

Le sginean nan ràmh geal tana  
Bualadh chollainn  
Air mhullach nan gorm-chnoc gleannach,  
Gharbhlach, thomach.

With the blades of the white, thin oars, sharp blows  
would strike and hit on the top of the glen-like,  
rugged and lumpy blue-lumps.

O, sìnibh, tàirnibh is lùbaibh  
Anns na bacaibh  
Na gallain bhas-leathann ghiùthsaidh  
Le lùths ghlac-gheal:

Oh, in the space between the gunnel-pins, oars stretch,  
drag and bend, with bright-white strength, oars which  
are really broad and made of pine wood.

Na fuirbidhnean troma treuna  
A' luigh suas orr'  
Le 'n gàirdeanan dòideach, fèitheach,  
Gaoisneach, cnuacach,

Let the heavy, strong and powerful men line up on her  
with their strong, sinewy, hairy and muscular arms.

Thogas 's a leagas le chèile,  
Fo aon ghluasad,  
An gathan liagh-leabhar rèidhe  
Fo bhàrr stuaghan;

Let her long, smooth and graceful oar-shafts be lifted  
and lowered together in one movement below the top  
of waves.

Iorghaileach, garbh an tùs clèithe  
Ag èigheach shuas orr'  
Iorram a dhùisgeas an spèirid  
Anns na guaillean,

Let a tough champion in the oar-group on her shout  
out a boat song, which will open up strength in their  
shoulders,

Sparras a' bhirlinn le sèitrich  
Roimh gach fuar-ghleann,  
Sgoltadh na bòc-thuinne beucaich  
Le saidh chruaidh chruim,  
Dh' iomaineas beanntaineann bèisteil  
Roimh 'dà ghualainn.

which will drive the birlinn with snorting through  
every cold sea-glen, cleaving the roaring swelling  
waves with a hard and very bent prow and driving  
beastly rollers in front of the two bows.

Hùgan le cuan, nuallan gàireach,  
Heig air chnagaibh,  
Faram le bras-ghaoir na bàirlinn  
Ris na maidibh,

There were whackings and laughing roars and  
swishings on its thole-pins, a loud noise with sudden  
throbbing cries of the billows surging against the  
timbers.

Ràimh gam pianadh 's balgain fhal' air  
Bois gach fuirbidh,  
Na suinn làidir, gharbha, thoirteil  
'S coip-gheal iomradh,

Oars were torturing them and there were blisters of  
blood on the palms of every strong man, the strong,  
rough and fruitful heros of the foam-white rowing.

Chreathnaicheas gach bòrd dhe 'darach,  
Bith is iarunn;  
'S lannan dan tilgeil le staplainn  
Chnap r'a sliasaid.

Fòirne fearail a bheir tulgadh  
Durrgha, dàicheil,  
Sparras a' chaol-bhàirc le giùthsaich  
An aodann àibheis;

Nach pillear le frith nan tonn dubh-ghorm,  
Le lùths ghàirdean:  
Siud an sgioba neartmhor, sùrdail  
Air chùl àlaich,

Phronnas na cuartagan cùl-ghlas  
Le rinn ràmhachd,  
Gun sgìos, gun airtneal gan lùbadh  
Ri uchd gàbhaidh.

4  
*Iorram*

*An sin, an dèidh do sia feara deuga suidhe air na  
ràimhaibh, chum a h-ìomradh fon ghaoith gu ionad-  
seòlaidh, do ghlaodh Calum Garbh mac Raghnaill  
nan Cuan iorram oirre, 's e air ràmh-bràghad, agus  
is i seo i :-*

A nis, on rinneadh bhur taghadh,  
'S gur coltach dhuibh bhith nur roghainn,  
Thugaibh tulgadh neo-chladharra dàicheil.

Thugaibh tulgadh neo-cheurbach,  
Gun airtneal, gun dearmad,  
Gu freasdal na gailbhinne sàil-ghlais.

Tulgadh danarra treun-ghlac  
A righeas cnàmhan is fèithean,  
Dh'fhàgas soilleir o cheumannan àlaich.

Sgobadh fonmhor gun èislean  
Ri garbh-phrosnachadh 'chèile  
'S iorram gleusd' ann am beul fìr a bràghad.

Cogall ràmh air na bacaibh,  
Leòis is rùsgadh air bhasaibh,  
'S ràimh da snìomh ann an achlaisean àrd-thonn.

Biodh bhur gruaidhean air lasadh  
'S biodh bhur bois gun leòb chraicinn  
Fallas mala bras-chnapadh gu làr dhibh.

Stirred up is every board of oak, tar and iron. Nail  
washers are cast off and there is a crashing noise of  
lumps of water at its side.

There is a manly crew which will spring along grimly  
and severely and will drive the narrow boat with pine  
oars in the face of the ocean.

Because of the strength of their arms, let them not be  
turned back by the rage of the blue-black waves: it is  
a crew which is powerful and spirited at the back of  
the bank of oars.

Gray-backed whirlpools will be smashed up without  
weariness by their first-class rowing and without  
pushing them on towards a danger point.

4  
*Rowing*

*Then after the sixteen men had sat at the oars to go  
towards the sailing point, Rough Calum, son of  
Ranald of the Ocean, asked them for a rowing song,  
and this is it :-*

Now that you have been chosen and that you are  
likely to be the best selection, start rolling proudly  
and without cowardise.

Give accurate movements without weariness, without  
neglect and without failure to attend to the grey  
sea-storm.

Let there be steady jolting with strong clasping which  
will stretch out bones and muscles and will leave a  
clear sea behind the steps of the bank of oars.

Let there be cheerful tugging with no sorrow which  
will encourage one another strongly and also excellent  
rowing songs from the mouths of the men at her bow.

There is rubbing noise from the oars on the oar-rests  
and there are blisters and peelings on palms and in  
high waves its oars are twisting like angle-pieces.

Your cheeks would be lit up and your palms would be  
without a shred of skin and the sweat from the  
eyebrows would be quickly dropping to the floor.

Sinibh, tàirnibh is luthaibh  
Na gallain liagh-leabhar ghiuthais,  
'S dèanaibh uidhe roimh shruthaibh an t-sàile.

Cliath ràmh air gach taobh dhith  
Masgadh fairge le saothair,  
Dol 'na still ann an aodann na bàirlinn.

Iomraibh còmh-luath, glan, gleusda  
Sgoltadh bòc-thuinne beucaich,  
Obair shùntach, gun èislein, gun fhàrdal.

Buailibh cothramach, treun i ,  
Sealltainn tric air a chèile,  
'S dùisgibh spiorad nur fèithean 's nur gàird'nibh.

Biodh a darach a' collainn  
Ris na fiadh-ghleannaibh bronnach  
'S a dà shliasaid a' pronnadh gach bàirlinn.

Biodh an fhairge ghlas thonnach  
Ag at 'na garbh-mothar lonnach,  
'S na h-àrd uisgeachan bronnach a' bàirich.

A' ghlas-fhairge sìor chopadh  
Steach mu dà ghualainn thoisich,  
Sruth ag osnaich o shloistreadh a h-eàrrlainn.

Sinibh, tàirnibh is lùbaibh  
Na gathan mhìn-lunnach chùl-dearg  
Le iomarcaidh smùis air garbh-ghàirdean.

Cuiribh fuidhibh an rudh' ud,  
Le fallas-mhailghean a' sruthadh  
'S togaibh seòl rith' o Uibhist nan cràdh-ghèadh.

5

*Dh'iomair iad an sin i gu ionad-seòlaidh*

'S an sin nuair thàrr iad an t-seòlaid  
Gu fìor ghasda  
Shaor iad na sia ràimh dheuga  
Steach roimh 'm bacaibh;  
Sgathadh grad iad shìos r'a sliasaid  
Sheachnadh bhac-bhrèid;

Dh'òrdaich Clann Raghnaid d'a uaislean  
Sàr sgiobaire-cuain bhith aca  
Nach gabhadh eagal roimh fhuathas  
No gnè thuarapaidh a thachradh.

Stretch, pull and bend the long-bladed pine branches  
and make a journey in front of the currents of the sea.

Let a bank of oars on each side of her mash the sea  
with hard effect, going in the face of the surging  
waves.

Pull together cleanly and expertly to split up the  
roaring, swelling waves – a merry job with no sorrow  
and no hold-back.

Hit her decently and strongly, and frequently watch  
one another. Waken up spirit in your muscles and  
your hands.

Her oak would be thumping against a big-bellied wild  
glen and her two sides would smash against every  
surging billow.

The grey surging ocean would swell up with rough,  
surging snorting while the high swollen waters were  
bellowing.

The grey sea continually froths into two front  
shoulders and a flow sighs after dashing against the  
bilge.

Stretch, pull and bend the smooth-handled, red-  
backed little oars with an abundance of strength on  
strong arms.

Pass that headland with sweat running from the  
eyebrows and lift up sails for her away from Uist of  
the shelldrake birds.

5

*They rowed her then into the sailing area.*

That is when they changed really well into sailing.  
They freed up the sixteen oars into the oar-rests. They  
leaped off down towards the stern and they avoided  
the belaying pins.

Clanranald ordered his gentry to have for themselves  
good skippers who would not have fear before any  
apparition or before any sort of mishap which might  
arise.

*Dh' òrdaicheadh, an dèidh an taghadh, a h-uile duine a dhol an seilbh a ghrama àraidh fèin, 's 'na cho-lorg sin, ghlaodhadh ris an stiùireamach suidhe air an stiùir anns na briathran seo :-*

Suidheadh air stiùir trom-laoch leathann,  
Nearthmhor, fuasgailt  
Nach tilg bun no bàrr na sumaid  
Fairge uaithe;

Clàranach taiceil, làn spionnaidh,  
Plocach, màsach,  
Min-bheumanach, faicleach  
Furachail, làn nàistinn;

Bùnnsaidh, cudthromach, garbh, socair,  
Solta, lùthmhor,  
Eirmseach, foighidneach, gun ghriobhaig  
Ri uchd tùilinn;

Nuair a chluinn e an fhairge ghiobach  
Teachd le bùirein,  
Chumas a ceann caol gu sgibidh  
Ris na sùghaibh,

Chumas gu socrach a gabhail  
Gun dad luasgain,  
Sgòd is cluas ga rian le amharc,  
Sùil air fuaradh;

Nach caill aon òirleach na h-òrdaig  
D' a cheart chùrsa  
Dh' aindeoin bàrr sumaidean mara  
Teachd le sùrdaig;

Thèid air fuaradh leath' cho daingean,  
Masa h-èiginn,  
Nach biodh lann no reang d'a darach  
Nach toir eubh asd';

Nach taisich 's nach tèid 'na bhreislich  
Dh' aindeoin fuathais;  
Ged a dh' atadh a' mhuir cheann-ghlas  
Suas gu chluasaibh,  
'S ged a bhristeadh e 'na dheannaibh  
Steach mu ghuaillibh;  
Nach b' urrainn am fuirbidh chriothnachadh  
No ghluasad

O ionad a shuidhe, 's e treunant,  
'S ailm 'na asgaill,  
Gu freasdal na seana-mhara ceanna-ghlais

*After being chosen, every person was ordered to get in possession of his own particular section and because of that, the helmsman was called to sit at the rudder with these words :-*

At the steering let there be a stout, serious, powerful and unconstrained warrior, who will not toss up and down on the surge of the ocean;

a boatman who is supportive, full of energy, sturdy, wide-hipped, truly destructive, careful, watchful and full of awareness;

steady, serious, rugged, sturdy, lusty, vigorous, expert, impatient, with no timidity to the breast of a stormy sea.

When he sees the rough ocean arriving with roars, her narrow head will deal neatly with the billows.

Her route will be kept at ease with no kind of uneasy movement, the sail sheet and tack guiding them with vision, their eyes on a windward tack.

Let her not lose a thumb inch of the correct route, despite the bunch of sea surges coming with leaps.

On a windward tack she will manage as steadfastly as is needed and won't there be blades or masts of oak which will not give out shouts

and which will not soften and which will not move in confusion despite the horror. Although the grey-headed sea would swell up to the ears and although it was broken up to the shoulders at great speed, the strong man could not tremble or move

from the place where he sat. He was guarded, valorous with the tiller in his arm-pit, aggressive and responsive to attend to the old grey-headed sea

'S gleanna-gharbh ascaoin;  
Nach criothnich le fuaradh cluaise  
An taod-aoire,  
Leigeas leatha ruith is gabhail  
'S làn 'na h-aodach,

Cheanglas a gabhail cho daingean  
'M bàrr gach tuinne,  
Falbh dìreach 'na still gu cala  
'M bàrr gach buinne.

7

*Dh' òrdaicheadh a-mach far-beairte.*

Suidheadh toirteal-laoch garbh-dhòideach  
An gloic beairte,  
A bhios staideil, làn de chùram,  
Graimpidh, glac-mhor;

Leigeas cudthrom air ceann slaite  
Ri h-àm cruadhaich,  
Dh' fhaothaicheas air crann 's air acfhainn,  
Bheir dhaibh fuasgladh,

Thuigeas a' ghaoth mar a thig i  
A-rèir seòlaidh,  
Fhreagras mìn, le fearas-bheairte,  
Beum an sgòid-fhir;

Sìor chuideachadh leis an acfhainn  
Mar a dh' fhaodas,  
Mura fàillnich buille-bheairte  
Reamhar ghaoisid.

8

*Chuireadh air leth fear-sgòid.*

Suidheadh fear-sgòid air an tobhtainn,  
Gàirdean làidir  
Nan ruigheannan gaoisneach, fèitheach,  
Reamhar, cnàmhach;

Cràgan tiugha, leathann, cliathnach,  
Meur-gharbh, cròcach,  
Mach 's a-steach an sgòid a leigeas  
Le garbh-sgròbadh;

An àm cruadhaich a bheir chuig' e,  
Gaoth ma shèideas,  
'S nuair a nì an oiteag lagadh  
Leigeas beum leis.

and its harsh rough valleys. It is he who will not let  
the sail corner shake with fluffing and who will allow  
her to run and continue on, full in her clothing.

It is he who will control her route so accurately on the  
crest of every wave and go straight and swiftly to a  
harbour on the top of every surge.

7

*An equipment man was appointed.*

Let a bulky, very muscular hero be in charge of the  
tackle, a man who is steady, full of responsibility,  
unyielding and persistent;

who will let down the weight of the sail-yard at hard  
times and who will loosen the mast and the rigging to  
give them relief;

who will understand how the wind comes in relation  
to the sailing and who will steadily answer the furling  
of the sheet-man by working with the tackle;

who will constantly help with the tackle, as he can, if  
the tackle rope of fat horse-hair does not fail.

8

*A man was set aside as the sail-sheet man.*

Let a sheet-man sit on the thwart, a man with strong  
hands and with hairy, sinewy, thick and bony  
forearms;

with thick fists which are broad, of wide span, hard-  
fingered, spread out, and with hard clawing of the  
sheet-man inside and outside of the sail sheet corners;

at a time of hardship which hits him and when the  
wind blows, he will pull it to him, but when the  
breeze weakens, furling will be allowed.

*Dh' òrdaicheadh air leth fear-cluaise.*

Suidheadh fear cnaparra, taiceil,  
Gasda, cuanda,  
Làimhsicheas a' chluas neo-lapach  
Air a fuaradh,

Bheir imrich a-sìos 's a-suas di  
Chum gach urracaig,  
A-rèir 's mar a thig an soirbheas  
No bàrr urchoid,

'S ma chì e an aonrais ag èirigh,  
Teachd le osnaich  
Lomadh e gu gramail, treunmhor  
Sìos gu stoc i.

## 10

*Dh' òrdaicheadh don toiseach fear-eòlais.*

Eireadh màirnealach 'na sheasamh  
Suas don toiseach  
'S dèanadh e dhuinn eòlas seasmhach  
Cala a choisneas,

Sealladh e an ceithir àirdean  
Cian an adhair,  
'S innseadh e do dh' fhear na stiùireadh  
'S math a gabhail,

Glacadh e comharra-tìre  
Le sàr shùil-bheachd,  
On 's esan as dia gach sìde  
Is reul-iùil duinn.

## 11

*Chuireadh air leth fear air calpa na tàirne.*

Suidheadh air calpa na tàirne  
Fear gun soistinn,  
Snaomanach fuasgailteach, sgairteil,  
Foinnidh, solta;

Duine cùramach gun ghriobhag,  
Ealamh, guamach,  
A bheir uaipe 's dhi mar dh' fheumas,  
Gleusda, luaineach,

Laigheas le spadhannan troma,  
Treun air tarraing,  
Air cudthrom a dhòid a' cromadh  
Dh' ionnsaigh daraich;

*A fore-sheet tack man was set aside.*

Let a sturdy, supportive, fine and capable man sit in  
and handle the fore-sheet tack unfalteringly on the  
windward tack,

a man who will move it up and down into each thole-  
pin, depending either on how the fair wind comes or  
on the extent of any calamity,

and if he sees the tempest arising and arriving with a  
sighing noise, he would reduce it securely and  
powerfully down to the gunwale.

## 10

*A look-out is ordered to the front.*

Let a mariner rise up at the front and let him set up for  
us reliable information about reaching a harbour.

Let him look at the four directions far away in the sky  
and let him tell the steering man to keep progressing  
well.

Let him catch land marks with real visual observation,  
because he is a full weather-god for us and a guiding  
star.

## 11

*A man for the lower section of the halyard was set  
apart.*

Let a man who has no tranquility sit in charge of the  
lower halyard, a robust fellow, nimble, energetic,  
active and kindly;

a person who is careful, without confusion, quick and  
accurate and who, as is needed, will take from her and  
give to her with good trim and restlessly,

and who will put full weight on heavy jerks, pulling  
strongly on the halyard after bending the weight of  
his grasp on the oak timbers,



Nach ceangail le sparraig mun urracaig  
An ròb frithir  
Ach gabhail uime daingeann, seòlta  
Le lùb-ruithe,

Air eagal ’, nuair a sgarar an t-abhsadh,  
I chur stad air,  
Los i ruith ’na still le crònan  
Bhàrr na cnaige.

12

*Chuireadh air leth fear-innse-nan-uisgeachan agus  
an fhairge air cinntinn tuilleadh is molach, agus ’s  
thuirt an Stiùireamaich ris:-*

Suidheadh fear-innse gach uisge  
Làimh ri m’ chluais-sa,  
’S cumadh e shùil gu biorach  
An cridhe an fhuaraidh.

Tagham an duine leth-eagalach,  
Fiamhach, sicir,  
’S cha mhath leam e bhith air fad  
’Na ghealtair riochdail.

Biodh e furachair nuair chì e  
Fuaradh froise,  
Cia dhiùbh bhios an soirbheas ’na deireadh  
No ’na toiseach;

Gun cuireadh e mise am fhaicill  
Suas gam mhosgladh;  
Ma nì e gnè chunnairt fhaicinn  
Nach bi tosdach;

’S ma chì e coltas muir-bhàite  
Teachd le nuallan  
Sgairteas cruaidh ceann-caol a fiodha  
Chumail luath ris;

Biodh e àrd-labhrach, cèillidh,  
’G èigheach bàirlinn,  
’S na ceileadh e air fear na stiùireadh  
Ma chì gàbhadh.

Na biodh fear-innse-nan-uisgean  
Ann ach esan:  
Cuiridh griobhag, briot is gusgul  
Neach ’na bhreislich.

He will not tie up a rivet around the thole-pin, but will  
perform around it firmly and artfully with a running  
knot,

fearing that she could be stopped, when the down-hall  
of the sail would be split up and in order for her to run  
quickly with bellowing noises coming from the pegs.

12

*A man was appointed to tell about the seas and the  
ocean which had become more than just rough, and  
the helmsman said to him :-*

Let a man, who reports about all the water, sit near to  
my ear and let him keep his eye sharp and his heart  
windward.

Let’s choose the man who is half-frightened, fearful  
and prudent; for me it would not be good for him to  
be a positive coward.

Let him be alert when he sees a squall before a  
shower, no matter whether the sea-wind is ahead of  
him or behind him.

Let him caution me and waken me up if he manages  
to see any sort of danger and let him not be silent.

If he sees the appearance of any drowning sea coming  
with roarings, he will shout out very loudly to keep  
the prow sharply towards it.

Let him be loud-voiced and prudent shouting out  
“bàirlinn” (a roaring wave) and let him not hide from  
the rudder-man if he sees danger.

Let there not be any man but himself reporting on the  
waters . Confusion, chattering and babbling will put  
any person in confusion.

*Dh' òrduicheadh a mach fear-taomaidh, 's an fhairge  
a' bàrcadh air am muin, rompa is 'nan dèidh.*

Freasdladh air leaba na taoma  
Garbh laoch fuasgailt  
Nach fannaich gu bràth 's nach tiomaich  
Le gàir chuaintean;

Nach lapaich 's nach meataich fuachd sàile  
Na clach-mheallain  
Laomadh mu bhroilleach 's mu mhuineal  
'Nam fuar-steallaibh,

Le crumpa mòr cruinn garbh fiodha  
'Na chiar dhòidibh,  
Sìor-thilgeadh a-mach na fairge  
Steach a dhòirteas;

Nach dìrich a chaoidh a dhruim lùthmhor  
Le rag-eàrlaid,  
Gus nach fàg e siola an grùnd  
No 'n làr a h-èarlainn,

'S ged chinneadh a bùird cho tolltach  
Ris an ruidil,  
Chumas cho tioram gach cnag dhith  
Ri clàr buideil.

*Dh' òrduicheadh dithis làidir ghramail gu draghadh  
nam ball chùl-aodaich is coltas oirre gun tugte na  
siùil uatha le ro-ghairbhid na sìde.*

Cuiribh càraid làidir, chnàmh-reamhar,  
Ghairbhneach, ghaoisneach,  
Gu freasdladh iad tàirneant, treunant  
Buill chùl-aodaich,

Le smùis is le meud lùiths  
An ruighean treuna  
'N àm cruadhaich a bheir orra steach  
No leigeas beum leis,

Chumas gu sgiobalta a-stigh e  
'Na teis-meadhon,  
Dh' fhòghnadh Donncha MacCarraig  
'S Iain mac Iain,  
Dithis starbhanach theòma, ladarn,  
Dh' fhearaibh Chanaidh.

*A bailer was ordered up as the sea was bursting over  
them from the front and the back.*

Let a warrior be liberated to deal with a bed of water  
coming into the vessel, a hero who will not ever feel  
weakened and will not become frightened by the roar  
of the oceans,

a person that the coldness of the salt sea-water and the  
hailstones will not weaken him as they fall around his  
chest and throat with cold gushing,

a man with a big, neat, rough, wooden bailing-vessel  
in his dark hands continually throwing out the sea  
which pours in,

a man who will never straighten his muscular back  
with stubborn confidence so that he does not leave a  
gill on the base or floor of the bilge.

Although her boards might grow as full of holes as a  
riddle, each plank of her anchor-board would be kept  
as dry as the plank of a cask.

*Two men were ordered to drag the back-stays, for it  
appeared that the sails could be taken off by the  
roughness of the weather.*

Set up a strong couple, fat-boned, rugged and hairy,  
so that they can securely and valorously handle parts  
of the rear sails,

with vigour and a good bit of speed in their strong  
forearms which, at a hard time, will take the sails in or  
let the sails furl.

It will be kept skillfully inside. Duncan MacCormick  
and Iain son of Iain would be fine, two sturdy,  
dexterous and bold men of the people of Canna.

15

*Thaghadh seisear gu fearas-ùrlair, an earalas gu  
fàilnicheadh aonfhear de na thuirt mi, no gu  
sgriobadh anfadh na fairge mach thar bòrd e, is gu  
suidheadh fear dhiubh seo 'na àite.*

Eireadh seisear ealamh, ghleusda  
Làmhach, bheòtha  
Shiùbhlas 's a dh' fhalbhas 's a leumas  
Feadh gach bòrd dith  
Mar gheàrr-fhiadh am mullach slèibhe  
'S coin da còpadh;

Streapas ri cruaidh-bhallaibh rèidhe  
Den chaol-chòrcaich  
Co-ghrad ri feòragan Cèitein  
Ri crann rò-choill;

Bhios ullamh, ealamh, treubhach,  
Falbhach, eòlach,  
Gu toirt dhi 's gu toirt an abhsadh  
'S clabhsail òrdan:  
Chaitheas gun airtneal, gun èislein  
Long Mhic Dhòmhnaill.

16

*Bha h-uile goireas a bhuineadh do 'n t-seòladh a nis air a chur  
ann an deagh riaghailt, agus theann a h-uile laoch tapaidh, gun  
taise, gun fhiamh, gun sgàthachas, thun a' cheart ionaid an d'  
òrduicheadh dha dol; is thog iad na siùil ann an èirigh na  
grèine, La Fhèill Brìghde, a' trogbhail a-mach bho bhun Loch  
Aoineart an Uibhist a' Chinn-a-deas.*

'Ghrian a' faoisgheadh gu h-òr-bhuidh  
As a mogul,  
Chinn an speur gu dùldaidh, dòite,  
Làn de dh' oglachd,

Dh' fhàs i tonn-ghorm, tiugh, tàrr-lachdann  
Odhar, iargalt;  
Chinn gach dath bhiodh ann am breacan,  
Air an iarmailt.

Fadadh-cruaidh 's an àird-an-iar oirr',  
Stoirm 'na coltas,  
'S neòil shiùbhlach aig gaoith gan riasladh,  
Fuaradh-frois' oirr'.

Thog iad na siùil bhreaca,  
Bhaidealacha, dhìonach,  
Shin iad na coilpeinean raga,  
Teanna, rìghne  
Ri fiodhannan arda, fada  
Nan colg bìth-dhearg;

15

*Six people were chosen for basic manhood, in case  
one of those I have mentioned should fail or the blast  
of the sea grabbed him off from the boarding and  
another one of them had to sit in his place.*

Let six men arise who are quick, prepared, masterly  
and spirited and who will go off and travel and jump  
around each of the boat jobs, like a hare on the top of  
a mountain with dogs chasing her;

men who will climb on the ropes, which are hard,  
smooth and made of narrow hemp, as quickly as May  
squirrels on the trees of a dense woodland;

men who will be prepared, nimble, valorous, gallant  
and expert at serving her and lowering a sail with  
methodical dignity. They are the men who will deal  
with MacDonald's ship without weariness and  
without grief.

16

*Every amenity connected to the voyage has now been put in good  
order and every fine hero proceeded without weakness, or fear,  
or timidity to the first place to which they had been ordered to  
go. They lifted the sails at sunrise on St. Bridget's Day (1<sup>st</sup>  
February) setting out from the end of Loch Eynort in South Uist.*

The sun was emerging golden-yellow from a mesh of  
clouds. The sky changed to being gloomy, burnt and  
full of gloom.

She became blue-splashed, thick, tawny-bellied, dun-  
coloured and fierce. Each colour in the sky appeared  
and looked as if in a plaid.

There was a dog's tooth rainbow to the west of her,  
appearing like a storm, and the wind had speedy  
clouds tossing over it like a windward shower.

They lifted the spotted, sheeted and secure sails and  
they stretched the stiff, solid, durable, tough ropes to  
the high, hard woods of the resin-red tapering points.

Cheangladh iad gu gramail, snaompach,

Gu neo-chearbach  
Roimh shùilean nan cromag iarunn  
'S nan cruinn fhailbheag;

Cheartaich iad gach ball den acfhainn  
Ealamh, dòigheil;  
'S shuidh gach fear gu freasdal tapaidh  
'Bhuill bu chòir dha.

'Sin dh' fhosgail uinneagan an adhair  
Ballach, liath-ghorm  
Gu sèideadh na gaoithe greannaich  
'S bannail, iargail';

Tharraing an cuan a bhrat dùbhghlas  
Air gu h-uile,  
Mhantal garbh, caiteanach, ciar-dhubh,  
'S sgreadaidh buinne;

Dh' at e 'na bheanntaibh 's 'na ghleanntaibh,  
Molach, robach,  
Gun do bhòc an fhairge cheigeach  
Suas 'na cnocaibh.

Dh' fhosgail a'mhuir ghorm 'na craosaibh  
Farsaing, cràcach,  
An glaicibh a chèile ri taosdadh,  
'S caonnag blàsmhor;

Gum b' fhear-ghnìomh bhi 'g amharc an aodann  
Nam màin toinnte,  
Lasraichean sradanach sionnachain  
Air gach beinn diubh,

Na beulanaich àrda, liath-ghorm  
Ri searbh bheucail,  
Na cùlanaich 's an cladh dùldaidh  
Ri garbh gheumnaich;

Nuair a dh' èireamaid gu h-allail  
'M bàrr nan sonn sin  
B' èiginn an t-abhsadh a bhearradh  
Gu grad-phongail;

'Nuair theàrnaid le ion-sluaidh  
Sios sna gleanntaibh  
Bheirte gach seòl a bhiodh aice  
'M bàrr nan crann dith;

Na ciasanaich àrda chroma  
Teachd sa' bhàirich,  
Mus tigeadh iad idir nar gaire  
Chluinnt an gàirich,

They were joined securely, knotted and without fault,  
in front of the eyes of the iron hooks and the rounds  
of bolt-rings.

They corrected quickly and systematically every unit  
of the equipment and each man sat down to take on  
any active precautions for the ropes that were needed.

Then the windows of the sky, speckled and grey-blue,  
opened up to the blowing of the surly, fierce and  
vigorous wind.

The sea heaved its dark grey coat completely over  
her, a mantle which was coarse, shaggy, intensely  
black and a screeching cataract.

It swelled up into bens and glens which were shaggy  
and rough and the lumpy ocean bloated up into hills.

The blue sea opened up as a gaping mouth, wide and  
horned, wrestling at grips with each other and in a  
deadly fight.

Let a workman look at the face of the huge fiery  
lumps that have sparking and phosphorescent flames  
on each of their mountainous sea tops.

The high, grey-blue front waves are busy roaring  
bitterly and the back waves and the gloomy ditches  
are busy making a lowing sound.

When we would arise excellently on the top of those  
waves, it was essential to shorten the slackening of  
sails quickly and accurately.

When we would fall down with a possibility of being  
swallowed into the hollows, each sail that she had  
would be brought forth at the top of her masts.

The high, curving and broad-bottomed waves would  
come with roaring and, before they would come even  
near to us, their roaring would be heard.

Iad ri sguabadh nan tonn beaga  
Lom, dan sgiùrsadh,  
Chinneadh i 'na h-aon mhuir bhàsmhor ,  
'S càs a stiùireadh;

Nuair a thuiteamaid fo bhàrr  
Nan àrd-thonn giobach  
Gur beag nach dochainneadh a sàil  
An t-aigèal sligheach.

An fhairge 'ga maistreadh 's ga sluistneadh  
Roimh a chèile;  
Gun robh ròin is mialan-mòra  
'M barrachd èiginn;

Anfhadh is confadh na mara  
'S falbh na luinge  
Sradadh an eanchainnean geala  
Feadh gach tuinne,

Iad ri nuallanaich àrd, uaimhinneach,  
Searbh-thùrsach,  
Ag èigheach gur ìochdarain sinne  
Dragh chum bùird sinn.

Gach mion-iasg a bha san fhairge  
Tàrr-gheal, tionndaidht',  
Le gluasad confadh na gailbhinn  
Marbh gun chùinntas;

Clachan is maorach an aigèil  
Teachd an uachdar,  
Air am buain a-nìos le slacraich  
A' chuain uaibhrich;

An fhaig' uile 's i 'na brochan  
Strioplach, ruaimeach,  
Le fuil 's le gaorr nam biast lorcach  
'S droch dhath ruadh oirr',

Na biastan adharach, iongnach,  
Pliutach, lorcach,  
Làn cheann, 's iad 'nam beòil gu 'n gialaibh,  
'S an craos fosgailt.

An aibheis uile làn bhòcan  
Air an cràgradh,  
Le spògan 's le earbail mhòr-bhiast  
Air a màgradh.

Bu sgreamhail an ròmhan sgriachaidh  
Bhith da èisdeachd,  
Thogbhadh iad air caogad mìlidh  
Aotrom cèille:

They were brushing over the small, bare waves which  
were scattering them and it would turn into one sea,  
deadly and difficult to deal with.

When we would fall below the tops of the ragged high  
waves, how seldom her keel would not hit the shelly  
ocean base.

The ocean was churning and mixing up with one  
another. Seals and whales were in even more trouble.

The rage and fury of the sea and the momentum of the  
boat and the sparkling white brains belonging to each  
wave

were busy at hard howling with bitter and mournful  
terror and shouting out "we are underlings, pull us on  
board."

Every small fish which was in the sea turned upside  
down, white-bellied with the raging movement of the  
tempest and dead without expecting it.

Stones and shellfish of the deep sea-bed were  
reaching the top, knocked upwards by the thrashing of  
the arrogant sea.

The whole sea was like porridge, foul and muddy,  
containing the blood and filth of crawling beasts and  
with a bad red colour in it.

The horned, clumsy and lame beasts who have claws  
and many heads, yelled in their mouths with their  
jaws open.

The whole ocean was full of hobgoblins who were  
busy pawing and had the tails of a big monster busy  
crawling.

Their raving groaning was disgusting to listen to.  
They could pick up fifty warriors with their giddy  
frenzy of reasoning.

Chaill an sgioba càil an claisneachd  
Ri bhi ag èisdeachd  
Ceilearadh sgreadach nan deamhan  
'S mothar bhèistean.

The crew lost their sense of hearing and listening to  
the screaming din of the demons and the roar of  
beasts.

Foghar na fairge, 's a slachdraich  
Gleachd r' a darach,  
Fosghair a toisich a' sloistreadh  
Mhuca-mara.

The sound of the ocean, as it battered and struggled  
against the oak, was like the clamour of her bow  
dashing against a whale.

Ghath ag ùrachadh a fuaraidh  
As an iar àird,  
Bha sinn leis gach seòrsa buairidh  
Air ar pianadh;

With the wind renewing its cold blasting from the  
west, we were tortured by every sort of trouble.

Sinn dallte le cathadh fairge  
Sìor dhol tharainn,  
Tàirneanach aibheiseach rè oidhche,  
Is teine-dealain;

We were blinded by the spindrift continually going  
over us and by incredible thunder and lightning  
throughout the night.

Peileirean beithrich a' losgadh  
Ar cuid acfhuinn,  
Fàileadh is deathach na riofa  
'Gar glan-thachdadh;

Fire-balls were burning our part of the tackle . The  
smell and smoke of the reef completely smothered us.

Na dùilean uachdrach is ìochdrach,  
Rinn a cogadh:  
Talamh, teine, uisge is sian-ghath  
Ruinn air togail.

The upper and lower elements made its war, and  
earth, fire, water and stormy wind were raised against  
us.

Ach 'nuair dh' fhairtlich air an fhairge  
Toirt òirnn strìochdadh,  
Ghabh i truas le fàite-gàire,  
Is rinn i sìth ruinn.

But when the ocean failed making us surrender, she  
took pity with a smile and she made up peace for us.

Ged rinn, cha robh crann gun lùbadh,  
Seòl gun reubadh,  
Slat gun sgaragh, rac gun fhàilinn,  
Ràmh gun èislean;

Although she did that, not a mast was without a rip, a  
rod without a split or an oar without any affliction.

Cha robh stagh ann gun stuadh-leumnadh,  
Beart gun ghaise,  
Tarruing no cupladh gun bhristeadh,  
Fise, faise !

There was no rigging rope unbroken or any tackle  
without flaw and no nail or coupling not broken.  
Snap. Crack.

Cha robh tobhta no beul-mòr ann  
Nach tug aideach',  
Bha h-uile cranngail is goireas  
Air an lagadh;

There was no seat or gunwale which was not affected.  
Every timber hulk and amenity was debilitated.

Cha robh achlasan no aisean dhith  
Gun fhuasgladh;  
A slat-bheòil 's a sguitichean-asgaill  
Air an tuairgneadh.

There were no thwart knee-pieces or ribs on her that  
were not loosened. The boat gunwale and the foot-  
boards were smashed.

Cha robh falmadair gun sgoltadh,  
Stiùir gun chreuchdadh;  
Cnead is dìosgan aig gach maide  
Is iad air dèasgadh.

Cha robh crann-tarrunn gun tarruing,  
Bòrd gun obadh;  
H-uile lann bha air am barradh,  
Ghabh iad togail.

Cha robh tarrang ann gun tràladh,  
Cha robh calpa ann gun lùbadh:  
Cha robh aon bhall a bhuineadh dhì-se  
Nach robh na's miosa na thùbhradh.

Ghairm an fhairge sìoth-shaimh ruinne  
Air crois Chaol Ile;  
Gun d' fhuair a' gharbh-ghaoth shearbh-ghlòireach  
Ordugh sìnidh.

Thog i uainn do ionadaibh uachdrach  
An athair,  
'S chinn i dhuinn 'na clàr rèidh mìn-gheal,  
An dèidh a tabhuinn.

Thug sin buidheachas do'n Ard-rìgh  
Chum na dùilean,  
Deagh Chlann Raghnaill a bhi sàbhailt  
O bhàs brùideil.

An sin bheum sinn na siùil thana  
Bhallach, thùilinn;  
'S leag sinn a croinn mhìn-dhearg ghasd'  
Air fad a h-ùrlair.

Chuir sinn a mach ràimh chaola bhaigean't  
Dhaithe mhìne,  
De'n ghiuthas a bhuainn Mac Bharrais  
An Eilean Fhìonain.

Rinn sinn an t-iomramh rèidh tulganach,  
Gun dearmad:  
'S ghabh sinn deagh longphort aig barraibh  
Charraig Fhearghuis.

Thilg sinn acraichean gu socair  
Anns an ròd sin;  
Ghabh sinn biadh is deoch gun airceas,  
'S rinn sinn còmhnuidh.

There was no tiller that was not split and no rudder  
that was without damage, and there was groaning and  
creaking on each piece of timber which had been  
split.

The wooden pegs were not without giving up, a piece  
of wood with no function. Every blade which had  
been sheared managed to be lifted off.

There was no nail which was not ripped, no bolt  
which was not bent, not one item belonging to her  
which was not worse than has been said.

The ocean called out peace to us at the cross of the  
Sound of Isla. How the hard and bitter-tongued wind  
got an order to calm down !

Away from us, it set off to the higher parts of the sky  
and after its barking, it changed for us into a flat, soft  
and fair surface.

That produced gratitude to the High-King who  
organised the creatures of the good Clan Ranald to be  
saved from brutal death.

Then we lowered the thin, spotted canvas sails and we  
laid down the fine smooth-red masts along the length  
of the floor.

Then we put out the oars which were melodious,  
colourful, smooth and made of firs which the  
MacVarishes harvested on Eilean Finnan.

We carried out even and rhythmic rowing without any  
neglect and we reached the good boat-haven at the  
point of Carrickfergus.

We threw out anchors calmly at that patch of land.  
Without stint we took food and drink and we made  
our dwelling there.