

Aiseirigh na Seann Chanain Albannaich
Moladh an Ughdair do'n t-seann Chanain
Ghaidhelach
(MacDonald & MacDonald, p2-9)

Gur e 's crìoch àraidh
Do gach cainnt fo'n ghrèin
Ar smuaintean fàsmhor
A phàirteachadh ri chèil;
Ar n-inntinnean a rùsgadh
Agus rùn ar crìdh
Le 'r gnìomh 's le 'r giùlan,
Sùrd chur air ar dìth,
'S gu laoigh ar beòil
Iobradh do Dhia nan dùl;
'S e h-àrd chrìoch mhòr
A bhi toirt dhàsan cliù.
'S e 'n duine fèin
'S aon chreutair reusant' ann,
Gu'n d' thug toil Dè dha,
Gibht le bheul bhi cainnt;
Gu'n d' chum e seo
Bho 'n uile bhrùid gu lèir,
O, ghibht mhòr phriseil
Dheilbh 'na iomhaigh fèin!
Na 'm beirteadh balbh e,
'S a theanga marbh 'na cheann
B' i 'n iargain shearbh i,
B' fhearr bhi marbh na ann.

'S de iomadh cànan
Bho linn Bhàbel fhuair
An slochd sin Adhaimh
'S i Ghàidhlig a thug buaidh.
Do'n labhradh dhàicheil,
An turam àrd gun tuairms',
Gun mheang gun fhàillinn
Is urrainn càch a luaidh.
Bha a' Ghàidhlig ullamh
'Na glòir fìor ghuineach, cruaidh
Air feadh a' chruinne
Mu 'n thuilich an Tuil-ruadh;
Mhair i fòs,
'S cha tèid a glòir air chall,
Dh'aindeoin gò
Is mì-run mòr nan Gall.
'S i labhair Alba,
'S Gall-bhodacha fèin,
Ar flaith 's ar prionnsan
'S ar diùcanna gun èis.

The Resurrection of the Ancient Scottish
Language
The Author's Praise of the old Gaelic Language
(Translation GC Barr)

Isn't it a special aim for every language under
the sun to share with one another our valuable
thoughts - to strip open our minds and the
actions of our hearts, to put cheerfulness into the
losses from our action and behaviour and to
sacrifice the calf of our life to the God of
Creation. It is her (Gaelic's) big high aim to give
Him glory.

Mankind itself is the one sensible creature to
which God's will gave the gift of talking a
language. He kept this away from every single
beast. Oh great precious gift of its own shape. If
a young man carried it and his tongue was dead
in his head, she (Gaelic) was in bitter sorrow and
it was better to be dead than this way.

Among the many languages which Adam got
since the time of Babel, it was Gaelic which
won. Everyone can praise majestic loudness,
speaking in high respect without guessing,
without failing and without fault.

Before the Red-flood overflowed, Gaelic was in
form, a truly fierce and firm tongue throughout
the earth. She still continued. Her glory will not
be lost despite the deceit and the great malice of
the Lowlanders. It is what Scotland spoke,
including to the end the Lowlanders, our nobles,
our princes and our dukes.

An tigh-comhairl' an rìgh,
 'Nuair shuidheadh air binn a chùirt,
 'S i Ghàidhlig liobhaidh
 Dh' fhuasgladh snaoim gach cùis'.
 'S i labhair Calum
 Allail a' chinn mhòir;
 Gach mith is maith
 Bha 'n Alba, beag is mòr.
 'S i labhair Gaill is Gàidheil,
 Neo-chlèirich is clèir,
 Gach fear is bean,
 A ghluaisheadh teanga 'm beul.
 'S i labhair Adhamh
 Ann am Pàrras fèin,
 'S bu shiùbhlach Gàilig
 Bho bheul àluinn Eubh!
 Och ! tha bhuil ann,
 'S uireasbhach gann fo dhìth,
 Glòir gach teanga
 A labhras cainnt seach i.
 Tha 'n Laidionn coimhliont',
 Torach, teann na's leòir;
 Ach 's sgalach thràilleil
 I do'n Ghàilig chòir.
 'S an Aithne mhòir,
 Bha ghreugais còrr 'na tìm,
 Ach b' ion dh' i h-òrdag
 Chur fo h-òr-chrios grinn;
 'S ge min, sliom, bòidheach,
 Cùirteil rò-bhog, liobh',
 An Fhraingis lòghmhor,
 Am pàilis mòr gach rìgh;
 Ma thogras càch oirr',
 Pàirt de'n ainfhiach fèin,
 'S ro bheag a dh'fhàgas
 Iad de dh' àgh 'na crè.

Is i 'n aon chànan
 Am beul nam bàrd 's nan èisg,
 Is fearr gu càineadh,
 Bho linn bhàbeil fèin,
 'S i 's fearr gu moladh,
 'S is torrunnaiche gleus,
 Gu rann no luaidh,
 A tharruing gaoith troimh bheul;
 'S i 's fearr gu comhairl',
 'S gu gnothuch chur gu feum,
 Na aon teang' Eorpach,
 Dh' aindeoin bòsd nan Greug,

In the meeting house of the king, when they had met for judgement, it was polished Gaelic which released the knots on everything. She was spoken by Calum, the celebrated king of the big head, and by every peasant and every noble who was in Scotland.

She was spoken by Gaels and Lowlanders, by clergy and non-clergy and every man or woman who could move their tongue in their mouth. She was spoken by Adam in Paradise itself and it was fluent Gaelic which came from the beautiful mouth of Eve.

Well, there is a result. There is scarcely any need to avoid the glory of every tongue which speaks a language apart from her (Gaelic).

Latin is accomplished, fruitful and more significantly tight, but it is a servile flunky for worthy Gaelic.

In mighty Athens, Greek was excellent in its time and it was fitting for it to put its thumb under Gaelic's elegant gold belt.

Majestic French, in the big palace of every king, is glossy, smooth, beautiful and so softly courteous and shining. If others covet her, as part of their own necessity, there is very little heart joy which they will leave her.

Since the very time of Babel, she is the only language in the mouth of bards and fish and is the best at scolding. She is the best at praising and is thunderous in tuning up verse or praise and drags a gale through the mouth. To advise and to put action into use she is better than any other language of Europe, despite the boast of the Greeks.

'S i 's feàrr gu rosg
 'S air casaibh a chur duain;
 'S ri cruaidh uchd cosgair,
 Bhrosnachadh an t-sluaigh.
 Mu choinneamh bar
 'S i 's tàbhachdaich' bheir buaidh;
 Gu toirt a' bhàis
 Do'n eucoir dhàicheil chruaidh.
 Cainnt làidir, ruithteach,
 Is neo-liotach fuaim;
 'S i seadhail sliochdmhor
 Briosg-ghlòireach, mall, luath:
 Cha 'n fheum i iasad,
 'S cha mhò dh' iarras bhuap';
 O 'n t-seann mhathair chiatach,
 Làn de cheuda buaidh !
 Tha i fèin daonnan
 Saoibhir, maoineach, slàn;
 A tighean-taisge,
 Dh' fhoclaibh gasda làn.
 A chànain sgapach,
 Thapaidh, blasda, ghrinn !
 Thig le tartar
 Neartmhor a beul cinn.
 An labhairt shiolmhor,
 Lìonmhor 's mìle buaidh
 Shultmhor, bhrìghmhor,
 Fhìorghlan, chaoidh nach truaill !
 Bi 'n teanga mhillis
 Bhinn-fhaclach 's an dàn;
 Gu spreigeil, tioram,
 Ioraltach 's i làn:
 A' chànain cheòlmhor,
 Shoghmhor 's glòrmhor blàs,
 A labhair mòr-shliochd
 Scota, 's Ghàidheil-ghlais.
 'S a rèir Mhic Comb,
 An t-ùghdar mòr ri luaidh,
 'S i 's freumhach òir
 'S ceud ghràmar glòir gach sluaigh.

She is the best for prose and for putting poetry on its feet and for drawing people to the hard bosom of slaughter.

At a meeting of the legal bar it is she who brings the heaviest victory and brings to death hard and haughty crime.

She is a strong, ruddy and unflinching sound. She is sensible, prolific, glory-leaping, tardy and fast. She doesn't need loans nor are they demanded away from her. Oh. You are the old attractive mother, full of hundreds of talents.

She herself is always full of wealth and riches and healthy. The treasure house expresses itself finely and fully. Its language is spreading, smart, tasty and elegant.

The mouth of her head comes out powerfully with clamour. Her speech is fertile, filled with a thousand qualities, plump, juicy, pure and mournful without abuse.

Her sweet tongue will be musically active in poems, reproving, dry and fully distinct. It is a musical and magnificent language spoken by the great majority of Scots and the Lowlanders.

According to Mac Comb, the great praising author, she is a root of gold and the top grammar glory of every race.

Allt an t-Siùcair (The Sugar Burn)

Poems of Alexander MacDonald (1924) , p44.

Gesto Collection of Highland Music, Keith Norman MacDonald, (1895/1997), section 2, page 31. Tune p 31.

William Matheson, Gaelic Bards and Minstrels, Scottish Tradition 16, Casette 2, side B, 4.

Calum Mac Pharlain, Binneas nam Bard (1908), pp87-94. Tune p87.

Translation by Gordon Barr. Allt an t-Siùcair is in Ardnamurchan between Ben Hiant and Kilchoan.

A' dol thar Allt an t-Siùcair
air madainn chùbhraidh Chèit,
is paidirean geal, dlùth-chneap
den drùchd ghorm air an fheur;
bha Richard 's Robin brùdhearg
ri seinn 's fear dhiubh na bheus,
's goic mhoit air cuthaig chùl-ghuirm,
's gug-gùg aic' air a' ghèig.

Bha smèorach cur na smùid dhi
air bacan cùil leath' fhèin;
an dreathan-donn gu sùrdail
's a rifeid-chiùil na bheul;
am breacean-beithe 's lùb air,
's e gleusadh lùth a theud,
an coileach-dubh ri dùrdan
's a' chearc ri tùchan rèidh.

Na bric a' gearradh shùrdag,
ri plubraich dhlùth le chèil',
taobh leumnaich mear le lùth-chleas,
a bùrn le mùirn ri grèin;
ri ceapadh chuileag siùbhlach,
le'm bristeadh lùthmhor fhèin:
druim lann-ghorm, 's ball-bhreac giùran,
's an lannair-chùil mar lèig.

Mil-dheoghladh sheilleann srianach
le crònan 's fiata srann,
'nan dìthean baglach, riabhach
mu d' bhlàithean grianach chrann;
straibh-dhriùchdain dhonna, thiachdaidh
fo shìnean cìochan t' fheòir,
gun theachd-an-tìr no bhiadh ac',
ach fàileadh ciatach ròs.

Gur milis, brisg-ghéal, bùrn-ghlan
meall-chùirneineach 's binn fuaim,
bras-shruthain Allt-an-t-Siùcair
ri torman siùbhlach, luath;
gach biolair 's luibh le 'n ùr ròis
a' cinntinn dlùth mu bhruaich,
's e toirt dhaibh bhuadhan sùghmhor
g' an sùgh-bheathchadh mu'n cuairt.

Going over Allt an t-Siùcair (Sugar Burn) on a
fragrant morning in May there were white bracelets
and tiny buttons of blue dew on the grass. Richard
and Robin the red robins were singing, one of them
in the bass. A taunt of pride was on a cuckoo with a
blue back and she was clucking on the branch.

A thrush was putting out a stream of sound on her
own on the banks of a nook. The wren was singing
eagerly with a pipe reed in her mouth. The
chaffinch was bent over as he tuned the strength of
his strings. The black-cock was into humming and
the hen into level cooing.

The trouts were busy jumping and ploping close to
one another, because of leaping merrily around with
agile effect and roaring with joy to the sun. They
intercepted speedy flies and caught them very
agilely. They had blue-scaled backs and spotted
gills and their glittering niches were like jewels.

Brindled bees are sucking honey with humming and
fierce snoring on the flowers which are wild and
which are spotted around the sunny blossoms of
trees. Strings of rich brown dewdrops are on the
breast tips of grass. They are without any drink or
food except for the pleasant smell of the roses.

How sweet, actively white and clear-watered is the
rushing current and sweet sound of Allt an t-Siùcair
and what ringlets are there and how sweet-sounding
is its fast-travelling droning sound. Every water-
cress and herb is growing with new roses close to
the bank and it (the burn) distributes juicy
properties and nourishment around it.

Bùrn tana, glan gun ruadhan,
gun deathach ruaim no ceò
bheir anam-fàs is gluasad
da chluanagan mu a bhòrd;
gaoir-bheachainn bhuidhe 's ruadha
ri diogladh chluaran òir
's cìr-mheala da chuir suas leò
'n cèir-chuachagan 'nan stòr.

Gur sòlas an ceòl cluaise
àrd-bhàirich bhuar mu ad chrò,
laoigh cheannfhion bhreaca ghunach
ri freagradh, 's nuallan bhò;
a' bhanarach le buaraich
's am buachaill' dol nan còir,
gu blaoghan a' chruidh ghuailfhinn
air cuaich a thogas cròic.

Bidh lòchrain-mheala lùbadh
nan sràbh, 's brùth air gach gèig
de mheasan milis, cùbhraidh
nan ùbhlán is nam peur;
na duilleagan a' liùgadh,
is fallus-cùil diubh fèin,
is clann a' gabhail tùchaidh
'gan imlich dlùth le'm beul.

B'e 'n crònan t'easan srùlach
an dùrdail mhùirneach Mhàigh;
's do bhoircean daite sgùm-gheal
tiugh flùireanach, dlùth, tlàth;
le d' mhantal de dhealt ùr-mhìn
mar dhùbhradh cùil mu d' bhlàth;
's air calg gach feòrein t'ùr-fheòir
gorm neamhainn dhriùchd a' fas.

Do bhrat làn shradag daoinein;
do bhraon ni soills' air làr;
An *carpet* 's gasda foidh-neul,
gun cho *fine* an *Whitehall*;
mu d' bhearradh gorm-bhreac, coillteach,
an cinn an loinn le àl;
na sòbhraichean mar choinnlean
'nan coinnlean a'd sgàth.

Bidh guileag eala tùchan
's eòin bhùchuinn am bàrr thonn
aig ionmbhar Allt an t-Siùcair
snàmh lùth-chleasach le fonn,
ri seinn gu moiteil, cùirteil,
le muineil-chiùil 's iad crom,
mar mhàla pìoba 's lùb air,
ceòl aoifidh ciùin nach trom.

The burn is shallow, clean and without sediments,
fumes, scum or smoke and it gives a spirit of
growth and movement to the little meadows at its
side. The hum of yellow and red bees tickle the
gold thistles and with them they set up honey
combs and wax cups as a store.

What a joy is the music sound and the intense
bellowing of a herd of your cattle. White-headed
and speckled calves are sharp in replying and there
is roaring of cows. The milk-maid has a cow leg-
shackle and the cow-herd beside her is responding
dutifully to the cries of the white-shouldered cow
and she has a goblet which will throw up foam.

Honey lanterns will be bending down straws and
will press on each branch of sweet fragrant fruits
and of apples and pears. The leaves bend down with
sweet niches for themselves, and children become
smothered and lick them closely with their mouths.

The buzzing of your flowing waterfalls becomes a
cheerful cooing sound in May. Your coloured banks
are foam-white, thick with flowers, dense and
gentle. Your mantle of new-soft dew was like the
darkness of a nook around your blossoms. Dew is
growing on the bristle of every grassy and green
blade.

Your cloak is full of glittering diamonds. Your
droplets light up the ground. The carpet has a finest
gleam. Whitehall has nothing so fine. At your blue-
spotted and woody height, their heads are in grace
with offspring. The primroses are like candles in
fear in a candlestick.

The singing of a swan is cooing and melodious and
birds will be on top at the mouth of Allt an t-
Siùcair, the swimming fast-footed burn. With a tune
and busy singing, proudly and courtly they will
bend necks like a bagpipe wind bag with a twist in
it and with cheerful calm music which is not heavy.

'S grinn an obair ghràbhail
rinn nàdur air do bhruaich;
le d' lurachain creamhach, fàsmhor,
's am buicean bàn orra shuas;
gach saimir, neòinean 's màsag
mìn bhreac air làr do chluain,
mar reultan reòt' an deàrrsaidh
'na spangan àluinn, nuadh.

Bidh croinn 's am bàrr mar sgàrlaid,
de chaoraibh àluinn ann;
is cnothan bachlach, àrbhuidh
a' faoisgneadh àrd mu d' cheann;
bidh dearcas 's suibhean sùghmhor
trom-lùbadh an luis fhein,
caoin, seacaidh, blàsda, cùbhraidh,
ag call an drùis ri grèin.

'S co làn mo lios ri Pàrras
de gach cnuas is feàrr an coill';
'na rèidhlich arbhar fàsaidh
bheir piseach àrd is sgoinn;
pòr reachdmhor, minear, fàsmhor
nach cinn gu fàs 'na laoim,
cho reamhar, luchdmhor càileachd
's gu'n sgàin a' ghràn o dhruim.

Do thacar mara 's tìre,
bu teachd-an-tìr leis fèin;
'nan treudan, fèidh ad fhrithean,
's ad chladach 's mìlteach èisg;
'nad thràigh tha maorach lìonmhor,
's air t-uisge 's fìor-bhras leus
aig òganacha rìomhach
le morghath fìor-chruaidh geur.

Gur h-ùrail, slìochdmhor, cuanta
greigh each air d' fhuarain ghorm,
le 'n lotadh taruinn suas riut,
le cluintinn nuall do thoirm;
bidh buicean binneach 's ruadhag
's mìn mheanbh-bhreac, chluas-dearg, òg
ri h-ionaltradh gu h-uaigneach,
's ri ruideis luath mu d' lòn.

Gur damhach, aghach, laoghach,
mangach, maoiseach, d' fhonn;
do ghlinn le seilg air laomadh,
do gharbhach-chraobh 's do lom;
gur h-àluinn barr-fhionn, braonach
do chanach caoin-gheal thom,
'na mhaibheanan caoin maoth-mhìn
'nad mhòintich sgaoth chearc donn.

Elegant is the engraving work that nature has made
on your banks. You have abundant and thriving
garlic plants and the white roe up on top of them.
Every clover, daisy and red berry is smooth and
speckled on the ground of your meadow, like frosty
stars shining as beautiful, new and glittering
material.

Their heads and their tops are like the scarlet of
beautiful rowan berries. Curled and auburn nuts are
unhusking high above your head. Berries and fruits
will be juicy, heavily bending the plant itself,
gentle, withered, warm, fragrant and losing their
lust to the sun.

My garden is as perfect as paradise and is the best
collection of woodland. In the meadow of growing
corn, good fortune will give height and strength.
There is a strong crop, mealy and thriving which
does not over-multiply but is so fat and full of sap
that its grain bursts out from its back.

The produce of your sea and land is on its own.
Deer are in flocks in your deer-forest and there are
very many fish on your shore. On your beach the
shellfish are plentiful. On your water there are
really flattering rays of light which look like a
splendid young man carrying a really hard and
sharp spear.

How flourishing, prolific and robust is the troop of
horses at your blue pool, with thirst rising up on
you and with you hearing the lowing noise. Light
roes, and young deer and kids, mini-speckled, red-
eared and young, will be grazing secretly or just
leaping quickly around your pool.

Your land is full of stags, heifers, fawns and does.
Your glens have overflowed with hunting in rugged
trees and plains. How beautiful, fair-headed, dewy
is your bog-cotton, white and soft on hillocks. The
moorland brown grouse swarm around in gentle,
white and soft clusters.

B’e siud an sealladh èibhinn,
do bhruachan glè-dhearg ròs,
’s iad daite le gath grèine
mar bhiosgnich leug-bhuidhe òir;
b’e siud an geiltreadh glè-ghrinn,
cinn dhèideag am measg feòir,
de bharran luibhean ceutach,
’s fuaim bhinn aig teud gach eòin.

O, lilidh, rìgh nam flùran!
thug bàrr-mais air ùr-ròs gheug,
’na bhabaidean cruinn, plùr-mhìn
’s a chrùn geal, ùr mar ghrèin;
don uisg ud, Allt an t-Siùcair,
is cùbhrainn da bho bheud
’na rionnagan m’a lùbaibh
mar reultan-iùil nan speur.

Do shealbhag ghlan ’s do luachair
a’ bòrcadh suas mu d’ chòir;
do dhìthein lurach, luaineach
mar thuairneagan den òr;
do phris làn neda cuachach,
cruinn, cuarsgagach aig d’ eòin;
bàrr-braonain ’s an t-sàil-chuachaig
’nan dos an uachdar d’ fheòir.

B’e siud an leigheas lèirsinn
do loingeas brèid-gheal, luath
’nan sguadrona seòl bhrèid-chrom,
a’ bòrdadh geur ri d’ chluais,
’nan giùthsaidhean beò-ghleusta
’s an cainb gu lèir riu shuas,
’s Caol Muile fuar ’ga reubadh
le anail-speur bho thuath.

Is cruaidh a bhàirlinn fhuair mi
bho’n fhuaran ’s blasda glòir;
an caochan is mò buadhan
a tha fo thuath ’san Eòrp;
lìon ach am bòla suas deth,
’s de bhrandaidh fhuair na ’s leòir,
am puinse milis, guanach
a thàirneas sluagh gu ceòl.

Muim-altruim gach pòir uasail
nach meath le fuachd nan speur;
tha sgiath o’n àirde tuath oirre
dh’ fhàg math a buar ’s a feur;
fonn deiseireach, fìor uaibhreach,
’na speuclair buan do’n ghrèin;
le sprèidh thèid duine suas ann
cho luath ri each ’na leum.

It was there that there was amazing viewing of
banks of very red roses. They were dyed with the
sun rays like gleaming yellow jewels of gold. There
was very neat ordering of tops of pebbles among
grass, and of some tops of elegant plants and the
sweet sound of every bird in tune.

O lily, king of flowers. It beats the beautifully fresh
rose branches with its round bunches as fine as
flour and beats its crown which is white and new
like the sun. To that burn, Allt an t-Siùcair, it has
given protection against harm as it bends around. It
shines just like pole-stars of the heavens move
around.

Your sorrel is clean and your rushes are sprouting
up around your duty. Your flowers are pretty and
very like small drinking cups of gold. Your bushes
are full of curled-up, round and curved nests for
your birds. Tormentils and dog-violets are
in-bushes on the top of your grasses.

That was the cure for insight – your white-sailed
ship, fast-sailing squadrons of white and curved
sails tacking sharply to your ear, in the well-
prepared pine forests. Their hems were completely
running up and the cold Sound of Mull was being
torn up with a blasting breath from the north.

It was hard summoning and a taste of glory that I
got from the spring. The streamlet has the greatest
quality of any below the north of Europe. It fills up
the whole bowl with cold and very decent brandy, a
sweet giddy punch, which will turn people to music.

There is a foster-mother of every race of aristocrats
who does not soften up with the coldness of the
stars. There is a wing from her north high point
which makes good her herd and her hay. A sunny
land, very proud, a long lasting spectacle to the sun.
A man will go up with livestock as fast as a horse
busy jumping.

Is aol is grunn d'a dhailean
dh'fhàg Nàdar tarbhach iadh;
air ma meinn gun toir iad arbhar,
s' tiugh starbhanach ni fàs;
bidh dearrasanaich shearr-fhiaclach
'ga lannadh sìos am boinn
le luinneagan binn nìghneag,
an ceòl is mìlse rainn.

An coire 's feàrr 'san dùthaich,
an coire 's sùghmhor fonn;
'se coirean Allt an t-Siùcair
an coirean rùnach, lom;
's ge lom, gur molach, ùrail,
bog-mhìodar dlùth a thom,
am bheil mìl is bainne brùchdadh
's uisg' ruith air siùcar pronn.

An coire searrachach, uanach,
meannach, uaigneach àidh;
an coire gleannach, uaine,
bliochdach, luath gu dàir;
an coire coillteach, luachrach
an goir a' chuach 'sa Mhàrt;
an coire 'm faigh duin' uasal
biast dhubh is ruadh 'na chàrn.

An coire brocach, taobh-ghorm
torcach, faoilidh, blàth;
an coire lonach, naosgach,
cearcach, craobhach, gràidh;
gu bainneach, bailceach, braonach,
breacach, laoghach, blàr,
an sultmhor mart is caora,
's is torach laoimsgir bàrr.

An coire 'm bi na caoraich
'nan caogada le 'n àl;
le'n reamhrad gabhail faoisgneadh
an craicinn mhaoth-gheal, thlàth;
b'e sud am biadh 's an t-aodach
'nad fhaoine-ghleann is a'd àird;
an coire luideach, gaolach,
's e làn de mhaoine gràis.

An coire lachach, dràcach
am bi guilblich, 's tràigh-gheòidh òg;
an coire coileachach, làn-damhach,
is moch 's is anmoch spòrs;
's tìmh dhomh sgur 'g an àireamh –
an coire 's fàsmhor pòr
gu h-innseach, doireach, blàrach,
's imeach, càiseach bò.

There is lime and soil on its meadows that Nature's
adventurous zeal has left. Behind in their
temperament, how they produce corn, and a stout
fellow will grow up. Sharp-toothed gurgling will be
running down in strips with sweet ditties from the
girls, their music of sweetest verse.

The corrie is the best in the land, the corrie of the
juiciest earth. The little Allt an t-Siùcair corrie is
mysterious and bare. Although it is bare, how
shaggy and flourishing are its soft meadows and
hillocks in which honey and milk belch out and
water runs over sugar crystals.

The corrie is full of foals and lambs and a solitary
heifer. The corrie is green and like a glen and is
milky and fast for breeding. The woodie rushy
corrie has a cry of the cuckoo in May. The corrie is
where a gentleman can find a red and black animal
on the hill top.

The green-sided corrie has badgers and boars and is
hospitable and warm. The marshy corrie has snipes,
hens, trees and has benevolence. It is milky,
showery, dewy, full of trouts, calves and white-
spotted cows, plump beasts and sheep which are
fruitful and extremely prodigious.

The corrie is where the sheep are in their fifties with
their offspring. Their fatness grows up and their
skin is light-white and mellow. That was their food
and clothing in your lonely glen and on your high-
point. The corrie is ragged, lovely and full of
gracious assets.

The corrie is full of wild ducks and drakes, curlews
and young shore-geese. The corrie abounds in cocks
and full stags, great fun, both very early and very
late. It's time for me to stop at this number – the
corrie and its thriving crops are full of good pasture,
woodland, mosses and full of cows who give butter
and cheese.

Oran an t-Samhraidh

Poems of Alexander MacDonald (1924). pp20-27. Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach, p110
William Matheson, Gaelic Bards and Minstrels, Scottish Tradition 16, Casette 2, side A, 6.
Translation by Gordon C Barr.

Moch 's mi ag èirigh sa mhadainn 's dealt air a' choill,
ann am madainn ro shoilleir, ann an lagann beag doilleir,
gun cualas am feadan gu leadarra seinn
's Mac-talla nan creagan ga fhreagairt gu binn.

Bi am beithe deagh bholtrach 'urail, dosrach nan carn,
ri maoth-bhlas driùchd cèitein, mar ri caoin-dhearsach grèine,
brùchdadh barraich troimh gheugan, am mìos ceutach a' Mhàigh:
am mìos breac-laoghach, buailteach, bainneach, buadhach gu dàir.

Bidh gach doire dlùth dh'uaigheas 's trusgan uain' uimpe fàs,
bidh an snodhach a' dìreadh às gach freumhaich as ìsle
tro na cuisleannan sniomhain gu miadachadh blàth,
cuach is smeòrach san fheasgar seinn an leadain 'nam bàrr.

Am mìos breac-ughach braonach creamhach maothròsach àigh
chuireas sgeadas neo-thruaillidh air gach àite de dhuaichneas,
dh'fhògras sneachd le chuid fuachd mach air bruaich nam beann àrd,
's aig meud eagil ro Phoebus thèid na speuran 'nan smàl.

Am mìos lusanach mealach feurach failleanach tlàth,
's e gu gugacach duilleach luachrach ditheanach lurach
beachach seilleanach dearcach ciurach dealtach trom blàth,
's i mar chùirneanan daoimein, bhratach bhoillsgeil air làr.

'S moch bhios Phoebus ag òradh air bàrr nam mòrchruach 's nam beann;
's bidh san uair sin le sòlas gach eun binnfhaclach bòidheach
ceumadh mhear-bhuilleann ceòlmhor feadh phreas ògan is ghleann,
choireal chùirteach gun sgreadan aig pòr as beadarraich cainnt.

'San am tighinn don fheasgar, co-reasgradh nan am,
ni iad co-sheirm shèamh, fhallain, gu bileach, binn-ghobach, allail,
a'seinn gu lùth-chleasach, daingean, am measg ùr-mheangain nan crann;
's iad fein a' beiceil gu foirmeil, le toirm nan organ gun mheang.

Bi gach creutair d'a laigead, dol le suigear don choill;
bi an dreathan gu bailceant', foirmeil, tailcearra, bagant'
sior chur failt' air a mhaduinn, le rifeid mhaisich bhuig bhinn,
agus Robin 'ga beusadh air a' ghèig os a chinn.

Gur glan gall-fheadan Richard a'seinn nan cuisleannan grinn,
am barr nam bileachan blàthmhor 's an dos nan lom-dharag àrda
bhios 's na glacagan fàsaich is cùbhraidh fàileadh na 'm fion;
le phuirt thrileanta shiùbhlach, phronmhor, lùthmhor le dion.

I rose early in the morning, with dew on the trees, on a very
bright morning and in a dark little hollow, the plover chanter
was heard singing melodiously with Echo responding sweetly
from the rocks.

The birch is very scented, flourishing and luxuriant in the hills,
producing a tender taste of spring dew together with
glitterings from the sun, bursting out new branches above the
old ones in the wonderful month of May, the month of spotted
calves and of shielings, milky, and ready for breeding.

Each woodland is thick with secrecy and green suits of
clothing are growing over it. The sap is rising from the deepest
roots through the winding veins to grow blossoms. Cuckoo
and thrush sing their melodies in the evening on the tops of
them.

The month is full of speckled eggs, dews, garlic and delicate
good fortune and it puts uncorrupting decoration on every
place of deformity and it chases away snow with its coldness
on to the braes of the high hills and, to the extent of fear for
Phoebus, the stars go in a snuff.

The month has herbs, honey, grass and tender buds. It is
sprouting, leafy, rushy, flowery and neat, full of wasps, bees,
berries, showers and heavy warm dew like diamond droplets
forming a dazzling banner on the ground.

It's early on that Phoebus turns to gold on the top of the
mountains and the bens. Then with joy every beautiful sweet-
tongued bird turns out tuneful and merry notes among hedges,
shoots and glens and she is like diamond droplets and is
without screeches as part of her very flattering language.

At the time of evening arriving and of time-periods climbing
together, they make a choir which is peaceful and sound, with
a melodious bill, a sweet beak, noble, singing powerfully and
solidly among the new branches of the trees. They themselves
are courtseying formally and forming the sound of organs and
without a fault.

Every creature with a degree of weakness will go with
cheerfulness to the wood. The wren will be boastful, defying,
dogged, warlike, and always welcoming the morning with a
beautiful sweet, small reed and a robin joining him on the
branch above his head.

How grand is Richard's chanter singing the neat flutes on top
of the flowery leaves and the drone of bare high oak wood.
The little glens will be fuller and more fragrant than the smell
of wine. There will be tunes which are thrilling, speedy,
mashed and powerful variants for protection.

Siud na puirt is glan gearradh 's is ro ealanta roinn;
chuireadh m'intinn gu beadrach, clia-lù d'fheadain mun eadrach
'n am don chrodh bhi 'g an leigeil, an innis bheiteir 's a' choill;
's tu d' lèig air baideal ri cionthar, an grianan aon-chasach croinn.

Bidh bradan seang-mhear an fhìor-uisg', gu brisg, slinn-leumach, luath;
na buidhnean tàrr-ghealach, lannach; gu h-iteach, dearg-bhallach, earrach;
le soillsean airgid d'a earradh 's mion bhreac, lannireach tuar;
's e fein gu crom-ghobach ullamh, ceapadh chuileag le cluain.

Bhealltainn bhog-bhailceach ghrianach lònach lianach mo ghràidh,
bhainneadh fhionnmheagach uachdrach omhnach loinideach chuachach
ghruthach shlamanach mheasrach mhiodrach mheasganach làn,
uanach mheannanach mhaoiseach bhocach mhoineach làn àil.

O! 's fìor-eibhinn ri chluinntinn, fann-gheum laoi gh anns a' chrò;
gu h-ùrail mion-bhallach àluinn, druimfhionn, gearr-fhionnach fàilidh,
ceannfhionn, colg-rosgach, cluas-dearg, tàrr-gheal, guaineiseach, òg;
gu mogach, bog-ladhrach fàsmhor, 's e leum ri bàirich nam bò.

Sheòbhrach ghealbhuidd nam bruachag, gur fanngheal snuadh-mhor do
ghnùis
chinneas badanach dualach maothghal baganta luaineach:
gur tu ròs as fearr cruadal a nì gluasad à ùir –
bidh tu 'd èideadh san Earrach 's càch ri falach an sùl.

'S cùbhraidh fàileadh do mhuineil a chrìos-Chuchullainn nan carn,
'n ad chruinn bhabaidean rìomhach, loinneach, fhad-luirgneach, sgiamhach,
'n ad thuim ghiobagach, dhreach-mhìn, bhàrr-bhuiddh', chasurlach, àrd;
timchioll thulmanan diamhair mum bi 'm biadh-ianain a' fàs.

Siud na fraoinisean boillsgeil, a thilgeas foidhneul na's leòir,
air gach lùth-ghort de neòinein, 's de bharran sheamragan lòghmhor;
mar sin is liosaichean soilleir, de dh' fheada-coille nan còs,
timchioll bhoganan loinneil, is tric an eilid 'nan còir.

Nis trèigidh 'n coileach a' ghucag, 's caitean brùchdach nan craobh;
's thèid gu mullach nan sliabh-chnoc, le chirc ghearr-ghobaich riabhaich,
b' e siud an suirdhiche cùirteil, am pillean cùlghorma fraoich;
's ise freagradh le tùchan, pi-hu-hù, tha thu faoin.

A choilich chraobhaich nan gearr-sgiath, 's na falluinne duibh;
tha dubh is geal air am measgadh gu ro oirdheirc ad itich,
muineal loinnireach, sgibidh, uaine slios-mhìn, 's tric crom;
gob nam ponganan milis, nach faicte sìleadh nan ronnn.

Siud an turraraich ghlan loinneil, is binne coileag air tòim;
's iad ri burruas seàmh ceutach, ann am feasgar ciùin cèitein:
am bannal mogant, uchd-ruadh, mala ruiteach, chaol, chròm;
's iad gu h-uchd-ardach, èarr-gheal, grian-dheàrrsgnaidh, druim-dhòn.

These are the songs which have grand variants and such artistic parts. My mind would be put to flirting your chanter's crun-luath before the milking, at the time when cows leave them, the tidy meadowland and the woods. It is you who put the battle into tune, the sunny spot of the one-footed tree/saltire.

Playful salmon of spring water are crisp, brisk, vigorously jumping and fast. The groups are white-tailed and covered with scales. Their fins are red-spotted and long-tailed. It has silver glitters on its clothing and it is a young trout of glittering look. He himself is ready for bent prattling and catching flies with deceit.

May Day is soft-rained, full of sun, foods, meadows of my love, full of milk, white whey, cream, froth, churn-staff, a goblet, curds, curdled milk and fruity, butter-crooks. Full of the fertile progeny of lambs, kids and bucks.

It is really amusing to hear the feeble bellowing of calves in the pen, flourishing, mini-spotted and beautiful, white-backed, short-haired, gentle, white-headed, fierce-looking, red-eared, white-bellied, brisk and young; with clumsy hands, wet-hoofed, thriving as one jumped to the bellowing of the cows.

O, light-yellow primrose of the little banks, how pale white and comely is your complexion. It grows clustered, inherent, soft-white, tidy and fluttering. You are the hardiest rose which grows out from the soil. You are in springtime in your garb while the others are still hiding their eyes.

The smell from your neck is sweet, meadow-sweet of the cairn. You are round, tufty, beautiful, fabulous, long-legged and graceful. You are a ragged hillock, beautifully smooth, yellow-tipped, curly, tall. You are around secret knolls before the wood-sorrel grows.

There are dazzling tassels which throw out little images more than sufficiently and on each meadow there are daisies and crops of majestic shamrocks. In this way there are clear gardens with wood-sorrels of the hollows and around elegant quagmires frequently there are hinds up to their rights.

Now the cock abandons the buds and the belching bark of the trees and goes to the top of the hill with his short-beaked and beautiful hen. That was where there was polite courting – on the cushions of nearly blue heather. She replied by cooing “pi-hu-hu, you are silly.”

O woody cock of the short wings and the black robe, black and white are mixed together so wonderfully on your plumage. You have a neck which is shining, neat, green on the smooth side and often curved and you have a beak with sweet notes that is seen to be not dropping slavers.

That's the twittering which is fine and elegant, a beautiful cockling on a hillock. They are busy warbling peacefully and pleasantly on a quiet evening of May. The group is red-breasted, ruddy-browed, slender and curved. They are high-bred, white-tailed, shining like the sun, and brown-backed.

Imrich Alasdair à Eigneig

Poems of Alexander MacDonald (1924).
pp270-275. D.S. Thomson. Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir
Alasdair p166. SGTS 1996.

Dh' fhalbh mi à nathrachan creagach,
Làn conaisg 's de phreasan sgrogach,
Bioran droighinn ann 'gam briogadh,
Roimh m' chliabh gu neimhneach 'gam bhrodadh.

Fonn craintidh, tioram nach lagach,
Gun mhìn-fheur, gun lòn, gun bhoglaich,
Cho tioram ri spuing gu sradadh,
Ghabhas fadadh 's lasadh tograch.

Gun neòinean, gun sòbhraich, gun seamraig,
Air dol na theine le tiormachd,
Siud am fearann nach iomlan,
Fo speuran nan siantan iomluath.

Liath-reothadh gun deàrsadh grèine,
Feadh srath a' ghlinne 's a shlèibhtean;
Crann-sneachd a'spionadh a speuran
Froiseadh mu m'chluasan 's mu m'eudann.

Am fonn sgraingeil, griomach, tomach,
Chinn de gach ni solta, lomach;
Baile caol gun sult nach bronnach
Lom-lan de bhratagan croma.

Gart an Fhaoilich gach aon ial air,
'S e daonnan an caithreim fiabhruis,
Gun iuchar gun chèitein grianach,
Ach fadadh cruaidh 's an àird an iar air.

'Se buain froise de chloich-mheallain,
A dheanadh ar cluasan a sgioladh,
Cha dèanadh ar barail ar mealladh,
Sin an fhras is doirbhe sileadh.

Am maor thug dhòmhsa bhàirlinn spreigeil,
An crom-shrònach 's a smig ga spagadh,
Ghairm e rium mar ghlaistig sgreadaidh
M'imrich a thogail an gradaig.

Ghabh mi còmhnaidh 'n Ionbhar-Aoidhe,
Baile ionmholta, solta gaolach,
'Se gu solach, torach, maoiniach,
Mùirneach, so-ghradhach, feurach faoilidh.

Alasdair's Flitting from Eigneig

Translation by Gordon C Barr

*I have left from the rocky place of snakes which is
covered with whins and shrivelled shrubs. Thorns and
brambles pricked me, maliciously goading in front of
my chest.*

*It is a shrivelled region, dry and with no hollows, no
soft grass, no meadow, no marsh. It's dry enough for
sponge to sparkle and for kindling and keen blazing to
take off.*

*Without daisies, primroses and shamrocks it goes
on fire with its dryness. That's the land which is
not complete. It's under stars of giddy storms.*

*Gray frost without any sunshine is throughout the
glen valley and its hills; a snow-tree is forming
from the heavens and scattering about my ears
and my face.*

*The mood is gloomy, surly and tufty, above
everything, harmless and bleak. A narrow
township without plumpness and bellies,
completely full of crooked caterpillars.*

*The gloom of January stays there every single
moment. There is always a feverish noise and no
sunny July or August. Instead there is hard fire-
kindling going on to the west.*

*It is a group of shower hailstones which caused
our ears to be unhusked. Our thoughts could not
change our concept that the most dreadful shower
was pouring.*

*The bailiff gave me his imperial summons, the bent
nose and chin distorting him. He shouted at me
like a shrieking hag and told me to take on
removal at once.*

*I took to living in Inverey (Knoydart) a praiseworthy,
tender and loving township. It is jolly, fruitful, fertile,
productive, cheerful, affectionate, grassy and
generous.*

Baile gun ghlaistig, gun bhòcan,
'S coisrigte gach crann is fòid deth,
Gun deanntag, gun charran, gun fhòtus,
Lom-lan chluaran, lilidh, 's ròsan.

A mhaghan a' bòrcadh le neòinean
Stràcte le deagh mheasan òirdheirc,
Cha chinn lus bhios searbh am fòid dheth;
Barrach, bainneach, mealach, sòbhrach.

Fiabh a' ghàir air srath 's air mòr-bheinn,
Am maduinn Mhàigh is grian 'g an òradh;
Cur anma-fàis le blàths 'nam phòraibh,
H-uile là toirt bàrr air bhòichead.

Baile blàth, 's math fàs gach seòrs' ann,
Dealt an àigh air bàrr gach feòrnein,
Beò chluig-chiuil an dos gach mòr-chroinn,
Tilgeil cheileir gràidh bho 'n sgornain.

B' oirfeid èibhinn geum na còisridh
Am bàrr nan geug a' seinn an òran,
Leadain theud-bhinn, ainglidh, ghlòrmhor,
'S laoidhean grèidhte, ceud-fathach, ceòlmhor.

'S fortan leam gun d' fhag mi Eigneig,
Ionad cruaidh nan dris bu ghèire,
Am fonn sporach, sgorach beurra,
Dh' fheannadh m' fheòil mar chruic 'dhroch-reusair.

Fàilte ort fhèin, a Phàrrais fhaoilidh,
Ionbhar-Aoidh am baile tlachdmhor;
Bidh m' anam 's mo chorp gu naomha
Bho'n fhuair mi sgaoilte as na glasan.

Chuidhtich mi taghadh na piocaid,
Am fear a bha riochdail 'na chaisein,
Dhèanadh ascaoin-eaglais chruaidh orm
Mun cluinneadh a chluas tri chasaid.

Chuidhtich mi asgairt is teine,
'S gach ni bhiodh 'na bhoile gu lasadh;
Chuidhtich mi seangan nan crioman,
'S gach ni biorach bhiodh 'gam speachadh.

Chuidhtich mi spuir a' chait fhiadhaich,
'S dòbhran iargalta na braclainn
An neach sin a chàineadh gu daor mi
'S a bheum gun aobhar a chlag rium.

Gun do theich mi bho' n fhraoch-sgriachain,
A loisg m' fheusag dhiom le shradan;
Chur bhramannan dearga tein' as
'S gun tholl e gu deireas mo chraicinn.

*The township lacks both hags and goblins and all
the trees and turf are consecrated. There are no
nettles or weeds or refuse and it's full of thistles,
lilies and roses.*

*Its meadows are blossoming with daisies and are
heaped up with good, magnificent fruits. No plants that
are bitter to the turf will multiply. There are crops,
milk, honey and primrose.*

*There is look of laughter on the valley and on the
mountain and on a May morning the sun is gilding
them, putting growing life with warmth in my pores
and every day putting a cap on top of beauty.*

*A warm town. Every species grows well there. There is
a dew of joy on the top of every grass blade. There are
living musical bells in the bush of each large tree
throwing out love warbles from their throats.*

*The singing of the choir was an amusing melody as
they sang their song at the tops of the branches, sweet-
stringed litanies, angelic, full of glory, organised
hymns which are first principle and tuneful.*

*It's great luck for me that I have left Eigneig, a
dreadful place of the sharpest of briers. The clawie,
sharp-cutting area flayed my flesh like a poorly-
cutting butcher's knife.*

*Welcome to you, O Generous Paradise, Inverie the
hospitable township. My body and my mind will go to
holiness since I got away from the padlocks.*

*I quitted choosing an axe. The man that was pushy on
his feet put a harsh excommunication on me before his
ear could listen to three complaints.*

*In a rage I quitted the muzzle and fire and everything
that could go alight. I abandoned the ant of the
splinters and every single sharp thing that was biting
me.*

*I quitted the fierce cat's spurs and the surly otters of
the badger's den, that person who used to criticise me
fiercely and who rang his bell at me without reason.*

*So that I fled from the burning heather which burned
my beard from me with its sparks. The red farts blew
fire out until it bored injury into my skin.*

Gun chuibhtich mi rìgh nan searbhag,
Domblas, eanghlas, is tombaca;
'S gach biastag a bha 'gam itheadh,
Consbeach, creathlagan, is beachan.

Ach bho'n thainig mi dh' Ionbhar-Aoidhe,
Thionndaidh riumsa caoin gach ascaoin;
Is gach rud bha cur orm trioblaid,
Rinn Dia gu sgiobalta 'n casg dhiom.

*So that I quit from the king of acids, from bile, gruel
and tobacco and from each beast that was eating me,
wasps, clegs and wasps.*

*But when I reached Inverie, each wrong thing turned to
right for me; and God neatly put an end to everything
that was causing me trouble.*

Moladh air Piob-mhòr Mhic Cruimein

(In Praise of MacCrimmon's Pipe called the idiot)

Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair. MacDonald & MacDonald pp56-67. W.J. Watson, Bardachd Gàidhlig, (1959, 3rd edition) p104. CD Clìar, Macmeanmna, SKYE CD14, cassette 2, side B, track 2. Translation by Gordon Barr.

A' Phìob

'S iomadh baintighearn' bha spèiseil mu an chèile bh' aig Mòraig;
gun àirmhear mi fhèin diubh 's gach tè tha de m' sheòrsa;
mhol e phìob, anns gach grid, b' fheàrr a pris cheòlmhor,
'na buadhannan mòra, 'na gaisge ri còmhrag;
O, fhad's bhios biog na aon dìorr no gnè chli 'm chòmhradh,
's gun an fhorc a bhith 'm mheòirean, gu mol mi ri m'bheò thu.

Am Bard

Leam as mùirneach 'n àm èirigh cruaidhsgal èibhinn do sgòrnain-
anail-beatha do chreubhaig ga sèideadh troimh d' phòraibh;
cinnidh às port nach tais làn de thlachd sòghrach,
's e fonnmhor mear bòidheach, gu h-inntinneach lòghmhor.
ceart is blas, caismeachd bhras, ùrlar cas còmhnard,
gun reasgaich gun chrònan gun slaodaireachd mheòirean.

'N àm don ghrèin dol da h-èideadh, 's tric leat èirigh o d' sheòmar,
gu trusganach ceutach 's ribein glè ghrinn den t-sròl ort;
d' àrd-ghlaodh suas, sgairteil fuaim, madainn fhuar reòthta
dol san ruaig-chòmhraig, bheirte sluagh beò leat;
gur spreòdadh cruaidh d'alarm-sa luath, neach is tuar gleòis air –
gun toir mi fhìn bòidean gu mol ri m' bheò thu.

Corp min-chraicneach, glè ghlan, làn de shèideagan-cruadail;
do cheud sgairt neartmhor, eutrom, mosglaidh ceudan bho 'm
fuar-ghreann;
le mòr sgairt, thèid gu grad, an airm 's am brat-buailte,
le foirmealachd uallaich, 's craobh-fheirge 'n an gruaidhean,
spàinteach glas cùil nan clais, siar gach bachd-cruachain,
grad, ullamh gu tuasaid, le sgàl sionnsair 'g am buaireadh.

'S mòr tha 'mhaise 's de mhisnich 's de dheagh ghibhtean 'nad
ùrlainn,
pròiseil, stuirteil, fìor-sgiobaidh, 's gur neo-mheata cur giùig ort;
goic nam buadh 's àghmhor gruaim a dh' fhàgas sluagh creuchdach,
gu marbhadh 's gu reubadh, le caithream nan geur-lann,
piob 's i suas 's dionach nuall, meur-chruinn luath leumnach,
toirm thrileanta bhlada, 's fìor bhasdalach beucail.

Nuair a nochdar a' bhratach, b' ait leam basgar do shionnsair
le d'bhras shiùbhlaichean cnapach, teachd le cneatraich bho d'
chrùnluath;
caismeachd dhlùth 's pronn-mhin lùth, teachd le rùn reubaidh,
gearradh smùis agus fhèithean, le d' sgàl ghaoir ag èigheach;
cò den t-sluagh nach cinn luath fo d'spor cruaidh gleusda –
chan eil anam an creubhaig, làn de mhisnich nach sèid thu.

The Pipe

Many ladies were fond of the spouse that Morag had, not to mention
myself among them, and every one who is like myself. He praised the
pipe for its great quality. Its musical value was better than its great
virtues and its heroism in combat. So, so long as there will be a cheep
or one spark of life left, or while there is any strength of talking and
no cramp in my fingers, I will praise you throughout my life.

The Bard

Most cheerful for me at the time of getting up is the amusing skirling
of your windpipes – the breath of life of your little body is blowing
through your pores. A tune grows out which is not soft and is full of
joyful pleasure, tuneful, merry and interestingly excellent. It is correct,
well-tuned and briskly marching and has a ground which is fast-
flowing and even with no harshness, no dull notes and no
awkwardness for the fingers.

At the time that the sun is going down into his garb, you frequently
leave from your room, well-clothed and with a very neat ribbon of silk
on you. Your high call and a brisk sound rise up on a cold frosty
morning as you go into combat and pursuit. People become alive to
you. What a hard incitement is your fast alarm, a person who has a
trim appearance. I myself must promise to praise you while I am alive.

The body is smooth-skinned, very clean, full of breezes of courage.
Your first yell is powerful and light and awakens hundreds from their
grim surly coldness. With great vigour, their arms and their struck-up
flag move sharply with the formality of pressure and a tree of passion
on their cheeks as well as a grey Spanish Toledo sword at the corner
of the trenches west of every stacked peat bank, sudden and ready to
tussle and luring them with the yell of the chanter.

There is great beauty, encouragement and good gifts in your ground
part. Proud, steady, really tidy and how full-heartedly you make
people's heads drop. Head-tossing of the talented ones and joyfully
scowling makes people inflict wounds, kill and rip with the
joyousness of sharp swords. The pipe gives out a secure rumble, neat
fingers give fast, springing and a thrilling tasty sound which is really
showy and roaring.

When the banner appears, I would like to applaud your chanter with
your sharp pointed variations coming out and with stuttering from
your *crunluath*. A close war-cry and smoothly ground vigour comes
out with the intension of mangling, cutting bone marrows and sinews,
while you call out your yell of thrill. Who of the people will not grow
nimble under your hard, skilled sput? There is no part of the body soul
which you do not stir up full of courage.

Chuireadh cnapraich do bhras-mheur, gach aon aigne gu cruadal;
do thorman dionach le lasgar, ard, binn, caismeachd an fhuathais,
lùths is spìd, luaths le clith, 's mòr-neart fìor chuanta,
gu sàthadh, 's gu bualadh, 's gu cuirp chur an uaignean,
beuc na pìob 's i cur dhith, sìor-sgrìos ghnìomh-luaineach;
riamh ri uchd-bualaidh, 's crann àghmhor 's an ruaig thu.

Molam ceòl agus caismeachd; crann-taitneach mo rùin-s' thu
chuireadh t' iolach fo d' bhrat-bhrèid, ruinn-cholg gaisge ar sùilean;
rìgh nan ceol, 'n àm na slòigh bhi 'n am mòr-èideadh,
gu stròicheadh 's gu reubadh, chur chorp as a chèile.
Ri uchd-ghleois 's bras do mheòir, le d' anfhadh glòir-ghleusta.
Dol air aghart gu sgairteil 's leantuinn bhras 's an ratreuta.

Rinn thu òinid den chlàrsaich, searbh mar ràcadail fìdhle –
ciùil bhochd, mhosgaideach, phràmhail, airson sheann daoine is
nìonag;
ri uchd goil, b' fheàrr aon sgail bho d' thuill mhear fhinealt
gam brosnadh 's gan grìosadh ann an caithream thoirt grìosaich,
toirm do tholl pronnadh phong cruinnchruaidh lom dìonach.
B' fheàrr san àm sin do bhrothlainn na uil' orfhaid na Crìosdachd.

Torman siubhlach dhos fàinneach, 's milis gàirich is crònan;
bùirean cuilce 's binn àrd-ghaoir, teachd bho fhàslaichean ceòl-chaol;
sionnsar donn 's fòirmeil fonn, 's sgiamhach bonn rò-ghrinn;
gun ghaise gun fhòtus, 's rifeid gheur chòmhnard;
brat min, trom plapraich crom, sìoda lom, crò-dhearg,
mar shuaicheantas còmhraig' , 's e srannraich ri mòr-ghaoith.

B' ait bhi 'g amharc ad eudann 'n am bhi sèideadh do shròine;
tha Mars gaisgeil 'n a èideadh, ri sìor-shèitrich fo d' chòtan.
'N uair chuirear suas do ghlaodh cruaidh, roimh 'n bhras-shluagh
chòmh-stritheach,
cinnidh daoine 'n an leòghanna fuileachdach, beòtha.
Bidh bras ruaim ghuineach, ruadh, anns gach gruaidh fheòlmhoir;
's le mòr lasgar do bhras-phort, cha 'n ath iad bhi deònach.

B'e sud an gothadh fìor labhach a' dol air aghart 's a' mhàrsail;
ann ad chorp cumail stadhaidh a' dol am fradharc do nàmhaid;
's iomadh fear bheir fo-near d' fhacail mhear, ghràs-mhor,
'g an spreòdadh 's na blàraibh, le mear-ghaoith do mhàla;
's rabhadh trom, gach aon phonc, thig bho d' chom gàireach;
sìor bhrosnachadh teine, 's tarruing sgoinneil air chlàidhean.

Chuireadh tusa le d' bhuidhean, gaoir dhearg chruadail 's gach
inntinn;
shiubhladh tu le d' thoirm uallaich, gach ball uasal 's cha dibir,
dhannsadh bras, ar thoirt as le fìor-bheachd mì-chuis;
gach crìdh' a bhios rioghail, 'n an comaibh gun dìbleachd;
thèid air ghleus gach aon chrè le misg-chath' ghèir, dhìleas;
's le brosdadh do bhras-phort, gun'n casgradh iad mìltean.

Your quick fingering would pile up, each part courageously spirited.
Your sound is secure with a noise which is hard and sweet. There is a
march tune of vigour and malice, of the strength of a shoal and like
the real high energy of the ocean. You cause stabbing and hitting and
turning bodies into eggs. The roar of the pipe is causing continuous
destruction and restless action. You are always in the front of battle
and you are a joyful saltire during routing.

Let me praise your music and march songs. You are the pleasing
saltire of my love who would put your cheer-shout under a covering
handkerchief with sword-blade verses of bravery in our eyes. Oh,
King of music, at the time of people being in their high-uniform, you
are ready to tear apart and mangle and to take bodies apart. In
adoptive tuning and the boldness of your fingers and with your rage of
tuned glory, you go ahead energetically and follow intrepidly in the
retreat.

You made a fool of the clarsach and of the fiddle which is as sour as a
racket. Poor, dull, sad tunes for old folk and young lassies. At the
time of boiling up, one outburst from your merry, fine finger holes
would be the best, encouraging them and grilling them with a joyful
noise to make them burning. The noise of your holes break up
crunluaidh with bare and secure notes. At that time your efforts are
better than every melody of Christendom.

A continuous sound from adjusted drones is sweet, joyful and
murmering. The sound of reeds and of sweet high murmering stands
out from gaps of slender music. There is a brown chanter, a lively tune
and a loud very elegant base. Without a flaw or corruption there is a
sharp, even reed, a smooth covering, a heavy and twisting sound, and
bare and crimson-red silk, like an emblem of conflict. And he snores
into the high wind.

It is cheerful to be looking at your face when you are blowing your
pipe nose. Mars is heroic in his uniform, continuously blowing under
your little coat. When your hard shout is put up before the intrepid
group of fellow-fighters, the bloody vigorous lions will multiply.
There will be flushes of anger which are bold and keen in every fleshy
cheek and with a great blast of your bold tune they will not hesitate to
be prepared.

That was a really fine step as you went ahead in the march. In your
body there is a lurching keep as you go in sight of your enemy. Many
a man will give welcome to your merry, gracious words, inciting them
in the battles with the lively wind of your bag. A heavy alarm, every
single note, will come out from your roaring chest as a really inspiring
fire and making swords draw out wonderfully.

With your influence you would put out red calls of courage to every
mind. With your noise of pressure, you would stir every noble limb
and they would not desert, intrepidly dancing and taking us away
from the real thoughts of misfortune. Each heart will be royal in their
bosoms and will not be abject. Every single body will be in form with
battle drunkenness, sharpness and loyalty, and with the stirring up of
your rushing tune, how they would butcher thousands.

Gur susbaint fìor thorach corp so-ghràdhach na pìoba;
lòim-làn loinne mu broilleach, sìos gu coileir a fìdeig’;
buill do chuirp sheinneas puirt le ceòl-stuirt bìogail,
troimh d’ ochd uinneagan finealt’ thig arm-chaismeachd nam mìlidh;
’s toirm do bhruit ri sìor-chluith am bàrr do dhuis riomhaich,
seòid a mhosgladh nan gaisgeach, le foirm bhras-phort ’g an griosadh.

’S co tiugh gach òrraichean sèitreach, mu d’ghnùis cheutaich
a’bòrcadh,
ri meanbh-chuileagan cèitein mu bhoc a’ rèiceil air lònan;
gràdh do chom choisneas bonn, le d’shreath tholl òrdail,
teachd ’n a thailmrich bhinn bhòidhich, troimh ochd dhorsan do
sheòmair.

Muineal crom, phronnas pronn puirt le fonn còmhraig;
cliath is tartarach taghal, breabraich, stadhadh, is *motion*.

Suas ’n uair nìtear do spalpadh ann an achlais do chèile;
roimh d’ chaol-ghaothaire snasmhor, gaath ’nad phearsa ’ga
sèideadh,
meòirean a ruith air bhall-chrith, ’s iad ri frith-leumraich,
air sìonnsair donn, gleusta, ’s binn goileam a’ chlàibh sin;
dearrasan bruit, gaoirich duis, gun tuisleadh ’ga bheusadh;
air slinnein borb an fhir-bhrataich, gathan gasd’ agus brèid ris.

An crann mu ’n cruinnich na ceudan, ’n àm cruaidh gheur thoirt a
truaillean;
làn airm agus èididh, ghunnach, ghleusta gu cruaidh-chùis;
crith gu feum air gach treun, làn de shèid-ghruamaich,
le d’ lasgan buadhach, sparradh ascaoin ’s na sluagha.
Mars ’na leum anns an speur, air each dearg ceum-luaineach;
’n a laimh a chlàidheamh ’ga chrathadh, ’s misg-chatha ’na ghluasad.

Mhoire, ’s ionmhuinn leam fhein thu seach an cèile bh’ aig Deòrsa;
a’ Bhan-Chruimeineach bheusach, mhaiseach, bhrèid-ghlan, gun
fhòtus;
bean gun bheud, ’s i gun eud, làn de shèid-shòlais,
an geal ghlacan d’ fhir-phòsta, ’gad chniadach ’s ’gad phògadh;
O ! ’s fortan cruaidh nach eil d’ fhuaim am chluais feadh ’s bu bheò
mi.
Ceòl is caismeachd mo chridhe bhan-Sgiathanach ghlòrmhor!

What a truly fruitful loveable material is the pipe, a completely full
bosom line down to the collar of the chanter. Parts of your body will
sing songs with lively pride music. Through your eight windows there
will come army march tunes for the champions. The noise of your
cloke plays continuously on top of your splendid drones. Your jewels
waken people up as champions and, with a display of rushing tunes,
grill them.

How thick are each of the hissing notes springing around from your
face, like biting midges of May make goats on the meadows roar.
Your bosom-love will form a foundation with a run of ordered holes
and will come up with sweet beautiful notes through the eight doors of
your room. Bent necks will be mashed apart with the tunes of conflict.
The piping is clamorous and calling, jumping, lurching and motional.

When your strutting is carried out, you are in the armpit of your
spouse. In front of your neat little pipe-reed your wind blows it
personally, your fingers running with trembling and they freely jump
on a brown, tuned chanter with tuneful tattling from the chest. A
flapping, stimulating noise cries of reward, with no stumbling of the
base parts. On wild shoulders of the flagman there were fine strings
and a kershief added to him.

The saltire, around which hundreds meet during the hard time, makes
them lift up their sheaths. They are full of arms and uniforms and are
prepared for emergencies. Tremor is useful for every brave man filled
up from the pipe thrusting up the people. Mars is leaping in the stars
on a red horse jumping restlessly. He is shaking his sword in his hand
and the drunkenness of battle is moving him.

Mary, I myself love you more than George’s spouse. O wife of
MacCrimmon, you are virtuous and beautiful with the white kerchief
and without blemish. You are a woman without shame and without
jealousy, full of swelling comfort and full of puffs of joy. The white
of the hollows of married men fondles you and kisses you. Oh. It’s
unfortunate that your noise is not in my ears all the time I am alive.
Songs and rousing music are for my heart, glorious Skye woman.

Clò Mhic Ghille Mhicheil
Carmichael's tweed
Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair

See "Songs of Gaelic Scotland", Anne Lorne Gilles, Birlinn (2005) pp179-184, which shows the tune for the song and where to find recorded versions e.g. CD Ciar, Macmeanmna, SKYE CD14, channel 1. Mac Illle Mhicheil/ Carmichael is the pseudonym used for Bonnie Prince Charlie. Translation by Gordon Barr.

Hug air clò Mhic Ille Mhicheil,
horo thugaibh hug dha-rìribh,
hug air clò Mhic Ille Mhicheil.

Ho, to Carmichael's tweed
Horo, understand it properly
Ho, to Carmichael's tweed

Òganaich ùir a' chùil teudaich,
's oil leam eudach a bhith dhìth ort.

Handsome young man with the curly hair, I am
unhappy that you are short of clothing.

Chuir 'n Roinn-Eòrpa clò am beairt dhut,
's gun tig e às cha bhi sìth ann.

Europe has put cloth on to a loom for you and
until it comes off, there will be no peace.

Bidh i fichte, cùmte, luaidhte,
mus tig buain na Fèill mhicheil.

It will be weaved, well-shaped and waulked
until the harvestings of Michaelmas come.

Bheir Alba cuideachadh luadhadh
ma tha gruagaichean san rìoghachd.

Scotland will help with the waulking if there are
any maidens in the country.

Gum bi do chlò ruadh-sa luaidhte
le gaoir, fuil is fual ga shliobadh.

Your red cloth will be waulked with cries of
pain, blood and urine stroking it.

Nì mi fhèin dhut sgioba clèithe
den phòr as gleust' tha sa Chrìosdachd.

I mysel will make for you a waulking group of
the most expert progeny in Christendom.

Gun tig bannal oirnn à Slèite,
's air do chlàith-s' gun dèan iad dicheall.

A troop will come to us from Sleat and they will
work diligently on your waulking board.

Gun tig gruagaichean Chlann Ràghnaill,
còmhlaigh dhàicheil nach dèan dìobradh.

The young women of Clan Ranald will come, a
handsome group who will not fail you.

Thig sgiob' eil' à Gleanna Garadh
luaidheas gu faramch dìonach.

Another team will come from Glen Garry who
will talk loudly and effectively.

Gun tig nìghneagan on Cheapaich
a bheir caithris air mun sgìthich.

Young women will come from Keppoch who
will keep awake all night without tiring.

'S buidheann mhaighdeann à Gleann Comhann,
fùcadair coimheach, rìoghail.

A group of maidens will come from Glen Coe,
exceedingly regal waulkers.

'S gheibh sinn sgioba eil' à Eirinn,
o Iarl' Anntaim nan steud rìomhach.

We will get another team from Ireland, from the
Earl of Antrim of the beautiful steeds.

Gun tig Leòdaich oirnn lem bannal,
's luaidhidh iad gu daingeann, lìomhaidh.

The MacLeods will help us with their band and
they will waulk firmly and polished.

Dhaibhsan caileagan Chlann Ghriogair,
's nuair a thig iad, nì iad sior-luadh.

Dèanaibh an luadh-làmh gu guineach,
's thugaibh fuil air mac na striopaich!

Na b' ionnan seo 's an luadh dosgach
bha 'n Cùil Lodair nuair a phill sinn.

Cuireamaid na èideadh Teàrlach,
sracamaid an àird ar dìchill.

Mìle marbhphaisg air na brùidibh
nach do rinn fùcadh na thiom dhut.

Dh' fhaodadh e bhith 'n dràsta umad
na thrusgan urramach riobhail.

In addition there are girls of Clan MacGregor
and when they come they will do continuous
waulking.

Do hand-waulking with venom and draw the
blood of the son of the prostitute.

Don't identify this with the calamitous waulking
which was in Culloden when we turned back.

Let us put Charles in his uniform and let us rip
up our effort to some height.

A thousand curses on the brutes who would not
do waulking when they were sorry for you.

It would now be on top for you to have the
honourable, royal clothing.

Mile Marbhaig air an t-Saoghail. Oran Araid.
(A Thoudand Curses on the World. A particular Song)

Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair. Highland Songs of the Forty-Five, edited John Lorne Campbell, Edinburgh 1982, pp86-93. Music Highland Songs of the Forty-Five, p299. CD Cliar, Macmeanmna, SKYE CD14, cassette 2, side A, track2. Translation by Gordon Barr.

Am Prionnsa

Mile marbhphaig air an t-saoghal,
's carach baoghlach a dhàil,
cuibhl' an fhortain air caochladh,
cha do chleachd sinn maoim roimh chàch;
tha sinn a-nis air ar sgaoileadh
air feadh ghleann is fraoch-bheann àrd,
ach tionalaiddh sinn fòs ar daoine
nuair a dh'fhaodas sinn gu blàr.

Misneachd mhath, a mhuinntir ghaolach,
's gabhaidh Dia dhuinn daonnan càs-
cuiribh dòchas daingeann faoilteach
anns an aon Tì nì dhuinn stàth,
's buannaichibh gu rìoghail adhrach
traisgeach ùirneach caoineach blàth,
's bithibh dileas chàch-a-chèile
's dùinear suas ur creuchdan bàis.

Ach 's fheudar dhòmh-sa nis bhith falbh bhuaibh,
Ghàidhealaibh calma mo ghràidh;
bu mhòr m'earbsa às ur fòghnadh
ged a dh'fhòghnadh dhuinn san àr-
's iomadh anacothrom a choinnich
sinn sa choinneamh bha gun àgh,
ach gabhaidh mise nis mo chead dhibh
ùine bheag, ach thig mi tràth.

Leasaichidh mi fòs ur call-se,
churaidhean gun fheall gun sgàth,
a dhilse dhligheach rìoghail threuna
dhèanadh euchd ri uchd nam blàr,
's cinn is colainn chur a chèile,
sinn 's sibh fèin a sgaradh fàs-
ach togaibh suas ur misneachd ghleusda
's cuiream fèin ri 'r creuchdan plàst.

The Prince

A thousand curses are on the world. Crafty and
perilous is its future. The wheel of fortune has
changed and we were not ready to be alarmed in
front of others. We are now scattered throughout
the glens and the high heather hills, but we will
still turn round our men when they can get into
battle.

Good courage, o loved people. God will always
take up our cause. Put out strong, clear hope for the
one God who will make a good purpose for us and
who will royally win devotion from fasting,
praying, weeping and warming. Be faithful to one
another and your death wounds will be closed up.

But I will have to leave you now, oh sturdy Gaels
of my love. My trust in your service was great,
although we were finished off in the slaughter.
Many were the accidents we met with in the
meeting which lacked good fortune. I will take my
leave from you for a short time, but I will come
back again soon.

I will sort out, moreover, your loss, the heros who
had no treason or fear. You are the faithful,
rightful, royal and strong people who made
achievements at the front of the battles. Heads and
bodies were taken apart and we and you yourselves
became separated. But lift up your skilled bravery
and I myself will sort out your wounded plasters.

Na Gaidheil

A Mhoire, 's sinne t' air ar ceusadh,
air dhith cèille, 's sinn gun chàil!
Tearlach Stiùbhart, mac Rìgh Seumas,
a bhith 'na èiginn anns gach càs!
gur h-e sin a rinn ar lèireadh,
gura feudar dhà gum fàg
sinn 'na dhèidh gun airm, gun èideadh-
falbh 'n ainm Dhè; ach thig, a ghràidh.

Ar mìle beannachd 'nad dhèidh,
's Dia do d' ghleidheadh anns gach àit';
muir us tìr a bhith cho rèidh dhuit,
m' urnuigh gheur leat fhèin os aird;
's ge do sgar mì-fhortan deurach
sinn a chèile 's ceum roimh 'n bhàs,
ach soraidd leat, a mhic Rìgh Seumas,
shùgh mo chèille, thig gun chàird.

Chaill sinn ar stiùir 's ar buill-bheairte,
dh'fhalbh uainn ar n-acair-bàis,
chaill sinn ar compass us ar cairtean,
ar reul-iùil, 's ar beachd gach là;
tha ar cuirp gun chinn, gun chasan,
's sinn mar charcaisibh gun stàth,
ach gabh thus', a ghràidh, do d'astar,
dean gleus tapaidh, 's thig gun dàil.

Am Prionnsa

Beannachd gu lèir le Clann Dòmhnail,
sibh a dh'fhòirinn orm 'nam chàs –
eadar eileanan is mhòrthir,
lean sibh deònach rium gach tràth;
's iomadh beinn is muir is mòinteach
shiubhail sinn air chòrsa bàis,
ach theasaig Dia sinn air fuar-fhòirneart
nan con sròin-bhaath bha ri'r sàil.

Sibh a rinn fo làimh na Trianaid
mise dhion o mhiorun chàich,
mo dhearg nàimhdean neartmhor, lionmhor
chuir an lion feadh ghleann is àrd;
mheud 's a thaisbean sibh dur dilseachd,
's còir nach dìochuimhnich gu brath,
a bhàrr gur sibh as luaith' a shin rium
toic air tìr 's an talamh àrd.

The Gaels

Oh Mary, it's us who have been crucified for
lacking good sense and being without a single
thing. Charles Stewart, son of King James, is in
difficulty and predicament and that is what caused
us to be tormented, because he has to leave us
behind without arms or uniform. Go off in God's
name, but come back, my love.

Our thousand blessings for you and may God look
after you everywhere. May sea and land be very
clear for you. My earnest prayer for you is high
up. Although tearful misfortune split us up from
one another, there is only one step before death.
Farewell to you, son of King James, sap of my
mind, come back without delay.

We lost our rudder and our rigging and our anchor
left us. We lost our compass and our maps, our
pole-star and our day-plans. Our bodies are without
heads and feet and we are like carcasses with no
purpose. However, love, take up your speed, make
a sturdy speed and return without delay.

The Prince

Full blessings for Clan Donald, it's you who
helped me in my difficulty. Between islands and
mainland you willingly followed me all the time.
It's many a hill, sea and moorland on which we
travelled while on the coast of death. But God
rescued us from the cold violence of the
bloodhounds who were at our heels.

It was you who, under the hand of Trinity,
protected me from the hatred of the rest, my bloody
enemies, powerful and numerous, who put their
netting out on glens and heights. How much you
displayed of your loyalty ought never to be
forgotten, and, in addition, it was you who were the
fastest to stretch out support for me on the land and
on the hills.

Na Gaidheil

Ochan! ochan! 's cruaidh an dearmad
bhith 'gar tearbadh uat gun bhàs,
b'i 'n fhìor-èibhinneachd 's am beartas
bhith gat fhaicinn gach aon là;
bidh ar ruisg làn tim a' frasadh,
ar cridhe lag-chùiseach gun chàil,
gum pill thus' a rìs air n-ais oirnn,
beannachd leat le neart ar gràidh.

Am Prionnsa

O! tiormaichibh suas ur sùilean,
chomuinn rùnach fhuair ur cràdh,
bidh sibh tathast maoineach, mùirneach,
'nur geard dùbailt' mu Whitehall;
'n uair a bhios na Reubail lùbach
ri bog-chrùban feadh nan càrn,
gum bi sibhs' an caithream cùirte,
lasdail, lùth-chleasach, làn àigh.

The Gaels

Alas, alas. It is a difficult omission to be cutting us
away from you without us dieing. It was a really
amusing and wealthy thing to be seeing you every
single day. Our eyelids will be dripping all the time
and our hearts will be dejected and have no
strength until you turn back to us again. Farewell to
you with the strength of our love.

The Prince

Oh, dry up your eyes, beloved group who have
become anguished. You will still be wealthy and
joyful and you will be a guard around Whitehall.
When the bendy Rebels are crouched among the
cairns, you will be in the applause of the court and
lordly, agile and full of joy.

Smeòrach Chlann Raghnaill

The Poems of Alexander MacDonald (1926) p180, and Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach p121.
Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair. Derick S Thomson pp112-122 (1996).

Hoile bho hì riag hò roll il ò
Hoile bho hì riag hò rò ì
Hoile bho hì riag hò roll il ò
Smeòrach do Chlann Raghnuill mi.

Gura mise 'n smeòrach chreagach,
An dèis leum bhàrr cuaich mo nidein;
Sholar bìdh do m' eunaibh beaga:
Seinneam ceòl air bàrr gach bidein.

Smèorach mise do Chlann Dòmhnuaill,
Dream a dhithheadh 's a leònadh,
'S chaidh mo chur an riochd na smeòraich,
Gu bhith seinn 's a' cuir ri ceòl daibh.

Sa' Chreig Ghuirm a thogadh mise
An sgìreachd Chaisteil Duibh nan cliar,
Tir a tha daonnan cur thairis
Le tuil bhainne, mil is fion.

Do shliochd nan eun on Chaisteil Thioram,
'S o Eilean Fhionain nan gallan,
Moch, is feasgar togbhar m'iolach,
Seinn gu bileach, milis, mealach.

Tha mi den ghur rioghail, luachach,
'S math eun fhaotainn à nead uasal,
Ghineadh mi gun chol, gun truailleadh,
Fo sgiathaibh Ailein Mhic Ruairidh.

Cinneadh glan, gun smùd, gun smodan,
Gun smal, gun luathrnadh, gun ghrodan,
'S iad gun ghìomh, gun fheall, gun sodan,
'S treun am buill 'n tiugh nan trodan.

Cinneadh rioghail th'air am buaireadh
Mar mhire mheara na cruadhach,
'S daoimein iad gun spàrr, gun truailleadh,
Nach gabh stùr, gnè smal no ruadh-mheirg.

Cinneadh mòr gun bhòsd gun spaglan,
Suairce, sìobhalta, gun rapal,
Coibhneal, cinneadail ri càirdibh,
Fuilteach, faobharach, ri nàmhaid.

The Song Thrush of Clanranald

Translation by Gordon C Barr

I am the song thrush for Clan Ranald.

I am the song thrush of the cliffs and after jumping
down from the hollow of my nest gathering food
for my young birds, let me sing music from the top
of every pinnacle.

I am the song thrush of Clan Ranald, a people who
have been condemned and wounded, and I have
been turned into the form of a thrush to sing of
them in music.

It was at Creag Gorm that I was brought up in the
district of Castle Tioram of the poets. It is a region
which is always brimming over with floods of
milk, honey and wine.

I belong to the flock of birds from Castle Tioram
and from Eilean Fhionain of the heroes. Morning
and evening my exultation is raised while I sing as
sweetly as honey and with my bill wide open.

I am of royal and valuable brood and it's good to
find a bird from an aristocratic nest. I was begot
without sin or contamination, under the wings of
Alan Mac Ruairidh *.

It's a genealogy without dust or spot or ashes or
rottenness or stains or red ashes or rots; and they
are without fault or deceit or sods. They are strong
in their blows and tough in their skirmishes.

It is a royal race which is in turmoil when upset
and acts like the lively sport of steel blades. They
are diamonds without any stress mark or flaw and
they will not take on any dust, any kind of spot or
any red rust mark.

It's a great tribe without boast or ostentation,
affable and civil and not given to nattering rubbish.
They are kind and staunch to their friends, bloody
and ready with their blades to their enemies.

Raghnallaich nan òr-chrios tagach,
Nan lùireach, nan sgiath, 's nan clogad,
Thèid a-sios gu gunnach, dagach,
Na fir bhagant, shùndach, chogach.

Siud na h-aon daoine' tha air m'aire,
Nach dèanadh air plùndrainn cromadh,
Dhèanadh anns an àraich gearradh -
Cinn gan sgaradh, cuirp gam pronnadh.

Ach mur tig mo Rìgh-sa dhachaidh
Triallfaidh mi do dh' uamhaidh shlocaich
'S bidh mi 'n sin a' caoidh 's a' basraich
Gus am faigh mi bàs le osnaich.

Ach ma thig mo Phrionnsa thairis,
Cuirear mis' an cliabhan lurach,
Bidh mi canntaireachd gu baileach
'S ann 'na phailis nì mi fuireach.

Madainn Chèitein am bàrr badain
Sgaoileadh ciùil à gloic mo ghuibein,
'S àlainn mo thururaich 's mo ghlagan,
Stailceadh mo dhà bhuinn air stuibein.

Gura mise cruit nan cnocan,
Seinn mo leadain air gach bacan,
'S mo chearc fèin dam bheus air stocan,
'S glan ar glocan air gach stacan.

Crith-chiùil air m' ugan ga bogadh,
'S mo chompar uile làn beadraidh,
Tein-èibhinn am uchd air fadadh
'S mi air fad air dannsa 'leigeil.

Nuair chuirinn geoic air mo ghogan
'S a thogainn mo shailm air creagan
'S ann orm fèin a bhiodh an sogan,
Ceòl ga thogail, bròn ga leagail.

Eòin bhuchallach bhreac na coille
Le'n òrganaibh òrdail mar ruinn,
'S feadag ghlan am beul gach coilich,
'S binn fead-choill air gheugaibh barraich.

'S mis' an t-eunan beag le m' fheadan,
Madainn dhriùchd am bàrr gach badain,
Sheinneadh na puirt ghrinn gun sgreadan,
'S ionmhainn m'fheadan feadh gach lagain.

Clanranald of the studded gold belts, the chain
mail, the shields and the helmets will fly down
with guns and daggers. They are disciplined, eager
and warlike.

Those same people I am thinking about would not
stop from plundering and they would cut men into
pieces on a battlefield, chopping off heads and
mashing bodies.

But if my king does not come home, I'll go off to a
deep cave and I'll stay there weeping and wringing
my hands until I die there sighing.

But if my Prince comes over, I will be put in a
beautiful wicker cage and I'll warble away feeling
at home and like I am living in a palace.

On a May morning on the top of a thicket, I would
broadcast music from the throat of my little beak.
My warbling and trilling would be beautiful and I
would stamp my two feet on a little stick.

I am the harp of the hills as I sing my litany in
every little hollow, while, on a tree stump, my own
hen bird sings base notes on a tree-stump and
grand is our clucking on every little hillock.

The grace notes in my throat soften the tune. My
whole body is in flirting mood, there is a bonfire
alight in my chest and I am completely given over
to dancing.

When I would put a twist to my cackling and take
up a psalm on rocks, delight would reach me,
music lifting it and sadness throwing it out.

There are melodious and spotted woodland birds
and there is a sweet whistle in the mouth of every
cock and a melodious wood-whistle on high-
topped branches.

With my whistles I am the little bird on a dew
morning on the top of each thicket. Elegant tunes
would be sung without a screech and my whistle is
excellent throughout every little hollow.

Siud oirbh deoch-slàint' na h-armailt
Dh' èirich le Teàrlach on gharbhlach,
Na fir ghasda dhèanadh searra-bhuain
Air feòil 's air cnàmhan nan Dearg-chòt.

Olmaid fliuchadh ar slugain
'S cuirfeamaid mun cuairt làn nogain,
Slàinte Sheumais suas le suigeart,
Tosta Theàrlaich sìos le sogan.

Slàint' an teaghlaich rìoghail inbhich
Olamaid gu sùndach geanail,
'S nigheamaid ar sgòrnan gionach
Le dràm milis, bruidhneach, glainneach.

Cuirfeamaid sìos feadh ar mionaich
Tosda nan curaidhnean clannach,
Nan colg sgaiteach, gasda, biorach,
'S ro-mhòr sgil air còmhrag lannach.

On tha mi tionndadh gu h-eirthir
Ullaichim m' acair gu cala:
Tosta Mhùideirt, ceann nan Seileach,
Slàinte eile, Triath nan Garrach.

Lìonaibh suas is òlaibh bras i,
Slàinte Raghnaill Oig o 's deas i,
Sguir da h-amharc, thugaibh às i,
Siabaibh leibh i, às a teas i.

Lìon a suas a' ghlainne cheudna,
Cuimhnichimid slàint' an t-Slèibhtich,
Ridir òg gasda nach euradh
Dol le sgairt a shracadh reubail.

Slàint' Iarl' Antrum, tosa priseil,
'S na tha 'n Eirinn Chlannaibh Milidh;
Tha mo sheile 'bàthadh m' iotaidh
Chionn gu bheil mo bheul làn mìsleinn.

Lìon a suas duinn glainn' an Deasaich,
Learganach nan gorm-lann claiseach,
Anns an ruaig nuair ghabhadh teas iad
Le lùth-chleasan bualadh Shasann.

Co'n nàmhaid sin riu a sheasadh
'S cruaidh rùisgte 'nan dùirn gu slaiseadh,
Laochraidh sgathadh cheann is leasraidh,
Na suinn sheasmhach, shùndach, mhaiseach.

There for you is the health-drink for the army that
rose with Charles from the Rough Bounds. The
fine men who would do reaping and cutting of
meat off of the bones of the Red Coats.

Let's lift up a health-drink to the army and let's put
around a full wooden cup. A health up to Seumas
with joy. A toast down to Charles with delight.

Health to the eminent Royal Family. Let's drink
happily and cheerfully. Let's wash our greedy
throats with a dram which is sweet, talkative and
glassy.

Lets put down through our stomachs a toast to the
clan heros and to their cutting, fine and sharp
swords and their exceedingly great skill in combats
involving blades.

Since I am turning in to the coast, let me prepare
my anchor for the harbour: a toast to Moidart, head
of the Sheil men. Another toast to John Macdonald
of Glengarry.

Fill it up and drink it quickly. Good health to
Young Ronald seeing that she is accomplished.
Stop looking and give it away. Take it out of its
heat, be done with it.

Fill up the same glass and let's remember the
health of the Slate people. A fine young knight
who would not refuse to go with enthusiasm to rip
up a rebel.

Health to the Earl of Antrim. A valuable toast. And
the Clann Milidh of Ireland; my saliva is drowning
with thirst because my mouth is full of sweetness.

Fill up for us a glass for the South Highlander, the
MacDonald of Largie (Kintyre) of the fluted, blue
blades. When heat got to them during their chasing,
England was hit with athletic efforts.

Which of that enemy would stand against them
with bared steel slashing in their fists. Heros
lopping off heads and loins. Steadfast, happy and
handsome heros.

Greasam gu finid gu stopadh,
Ach cha mhiann leam a bhith bacach:
Puirt-chiùil na smeòraiche dosaich,
Tosdam fìor sheabhag na Ceapaich.

Togamaid slàinte nan Gleannach
O Chomhann nam bradan earrach
Bheireadh air bòcanaibh pilleadh;
Cha b' ghioragach iad air bealach.

Diolamaid an tosta seo bharrachd
Deoch-slàinte nam fiùran glana
Bho Chruacha Beann an trom-ghaillinn
'S bho Gleann Nodha nan sonn fearail.

Diolamaid gu foirmeil, frasach
Slàinte Bhaghasdail mun stad sinn,
Laogh treun a dh' èireadh sgairteil
Chur ratreut air bèistean Shasainn.

Cuimhnicheam Iain Ciar à Lathairn'
Aig nach robh an stoidhle cumhang;
Gheibh thu mùirn is onoir fhathast
Air sgàth do ghràis mar as cubhaidh.

Cuirfeamaid mun cuairt gu toileach
Slàinte Mhic Dhùghaill bhon Bharrach,
Cridhe rìoghail, reamhar, solais
Tha 'na bhrollach shìos am falach.

Ciod am fàth dhaibh bhith gar tagradh
'S nach urrainn iad chur ruinn cluigean;
Sguiribh d' ur bòilich 's d' ur spaglainn,
An rud a th' againn 's e Dia thug dhuinn.

Is ioma nàmhaid a tha bagr' oirnn,
Is luchd farmaid air am beag sinn,
Chan e mìorun bochd a lag sinn
Sinn bhith rag san chòir a leag sinn.

*Alan Mac Ruairidh. 4th Chief of Clanranald, died
about 1505)

Let me hurry up to end and to stop, as I don't wish
to be halting. Music tunes of the tufted songthrush,
let me toast the real hawk of the Keppoch people.

Let us lift up a health to the MacDonalds of
Glencoe of the long-tailed salmon who would
make spectres turn back. They would not be timid
on the hill pass.

Let us fill up this great toast, a health drink for the
great warriors from Ben Cruachan of the serious
storms, and from Glen Coe of the manly heroes.

Before we stop let us hand out lively and pouring
health to MacDonald of Boisdale, strong warriors
who would rise up enthusiastically to put a retreat
on the beasts of England.

Lets remember Iain Ciar of Lorn who did not have
a narrow style. You will still get affection and
honour because of your most fitting graciousness.

Let's happily cast around health to MacDougal
from Morar. A royal, fat heart of joy which is in
his chest in hiding.

What is their reason for prosecuting us and
couldn't they put little bells on us. Stop your
blustering and your bombasting of things that we
have; it is God that gave us them.

There is many an enemy who is threatening us. To
a small extent it is a group of envy that we are. It is
not poor malice which weakened us, us to be
stubborn in duties which knocked us down.