

RANN DO 'N GHÀIDHLIG 'S DO 'N PHIOB-MHOIR  
'SA' BHLIADHNA 1784

Innsidh mi sgeul àraid dhuibh  
Air cànan is air ceòl,  
Rogha na deas Ghàidhlig  
'S i as fheàrr gu innseadh sgeòil; 4175  
A' chainnt as lionmhor pàirtean,  
'S as mìlse mànràn beòil,  
Gu freagarrach deas-labhrach,  
'S i ardchuisseach gu leòr.

'S i chainnt a bh' aig na rìghribh 4180  
'Gan robh 'n rìoghachd seo 'nan còir;  
'S i bruidheann dhiùc is iarlachan,  
'S i dh' iarradh iad mu 'm bòrd;  
'S i bh' aig na daoìn'-uaisele,  
'S a gheibht' aig an tuath chòir; 4185  
'S i bhà, 's a thà, aig buachaillean  
A' cuartachadh nam bó.

'N uair a sgaoil na cainntean  
Aig tùr aimhreachd mór,  
Fhuair a' Ghàidhlig maighstireachd 4190  
'San am sin thar gach seòrs'—  
Gur i as fheàrr gu teangaireachd  
Tha 'n ceann aon neach tha beò,  
Geur soilleir fonnmhor òranach  
An seòmraichean an òil. 4195

'S lionmhor urram làidir  
Fhuair a' Ghàidhlig air gach seòl:  
'S i rinn a' cheud Sàcramaid  
Do 'n Phàp a bha 'san Ròimh;

ODE TO GAELIC AND THE GREAT PIPE  
IN THE YEAR 1784

I will give you a special discourse  
on language and on music:  
purest, graphic Gaelic  
is best for narrative; 4175  
'tis the speech that is full versatile  
and has the sweetest croon;  
'tis appropriate and eloquent,  
and high-toned to a degree.

'Twas the language of the kings 4180  
who held this realm by right;  
'tis the speech of dukes and earls,  
which they would wish for table talk;  
it is used by the gentlefolk  
and by the honest peasantry; 4185  
it was, and is, used by herdsmen,  
as they round up the kine.

When the languages diverged  
at the great tower of babel,  
then Gaelic won supremacy; 4190  
over every kind of speech:  
'tis the best for rhetoric  
any man alive commands;  
'tis witty, clear, cheery, songful  
in the chambers of wassail. 4195

Many a striking tribute  
Gaelic gained, in all respects;  
it provided the first sacrament  
for the Pope that was in Rome;

- 'S i th' aig cléir an àite seo, 4200  
 Gach là toirt comhairl' òirnn;  
 Gaol filidh is luchd-dàna  
 Chainnt nàdurra gun ghò.
- 'S i fhuair sinn o na pàranta 4205  
 A rinn ar n-àrach òg;  
 'S i bu mhath leinn fhàgail  
 Aig an àl tha teachd òirnn;  
 Tha h-uile càr a dh' innsinn oirr'  
 A' cur a pris am mòid,  
 Gur i cainnt as brioghmhoire, 4210  
 'S i phìob as fheàrr gu ceòl.
- A' phìob ùr seo thàinig do 'n bhaile  
 A dh' fhaotainn urram,  
 'S i ceann inneal-ciùil an fhearainn,  
 'S na dùthch' uile; 4215  
 Le meòir lùthmhor air a crannaibh,  
 'S le dlùth bhuillean,  
 'S àrd a chluinnt' i, 's binn a langan,  
 'S grinn a cumachd.
- Tha dosan le òbhraidh ballach, 4220  
 Cochull de 'n t-sìoda m' a muineal;  
 'S osgarra dìonach a callan  
 Air thoiseach mhiltean air thurus;  
 Brosnachadh rioghail na carraid  
 An cabhaig, an strìth no 'n cumasg; 4225  
 Cha bhi sproc 'san tìr am fan i,  
 'S fortanach an tì dh' am buin i.
- 'S deò-gréine leis an luchd-ealaidh  
 Tha 'n Albainn gu léir 's an Lunnainn,  
 A' phìob as math gleus is gearradh, 4230  
 Làidir fallain eutrom ullamh;  
 'S mór an t-éibhneas i dh' a leannan  
 Bhith aige 'na sgéith 'ga cumail:  
 Fonn-cheòl réidh a cré na h-ainnir,  
 Beusan glana na treun chulaidh. 4235

- 'tis used by the clergy of these parts, 4200  
 who daily counsel us;  
 darling of poets and minstrels  
 is the natural, guileless speech.
- 'Tis it we learned from the parents  
 who nurtured us in youth; 4205  
 'tis it we would fain leave to  
 the rising generation;  
 each detail I might tell of it  
 would add to its prestige;  
 'tis the most expressive language— 4210  
 and for music the pipe is best.
- This new pipe that came to town  
 to receive homage,  
 is the chief musical instrument of the region,  
 and of the whole country; 4215  
 with sinewy fingers on her drones  
 in rapid impact,  
 loud would she sound, sweet is her belling,  
 and neat her design.
- Her drones are inlaid with ivory, 4220  
 a sheath of silk surrounds her neck;  
 bold, continuous is her skirling  
 in front of thousands in procession—  
 imperious incitement to the combat,  
 in crisis, strife or contention; 4225  
 no gloom will be in the land where she stays,  
 fortunate is the one that owns her.
- A sunbeam in the estimation of musicians,  
 in all Scotland and in London,  
 is the pipe of truest key and shake, 4230  
 strong and sound, lightsome, lively;  
 'tis a great delight to her lover  
 to have her enclasped in his arms;  
 from the damsel's frame come flowing harmonies,  
 pure melodies of the mighty instrument. 4235

ORAIN DHONNCHAI DH BHAIN

- 'S e cheud cheòl a bh' air an talamh  
 A' phìob-mhòr as bòidhche guileag;  
 'S i bh' aig Fionn, aig Goll 's aig Garadh,  
 Ann an talla nan laoch fuileach;  
 'S mairg a chitheadh air seòl calla 4240  
 Caismeachd chaithriseach nan curaidh;  
 Mhosgladh i le séid dh' a h-anail,  
 Gu feum ealamh, an Fhéinn uile.
- Mu ghibht phrìseil gun a ceannach,  
 Tha 'n coimh-theanal seo air chumail; 4245  
 Breitheachan dileas 'gan tarraing,  
 A nì ceart an fhirinn uile;  
 Gheibh gach fear a réir na h-ealaidh  
 Anns am bi e fhéin 'na urrainn;  
 'S tha e saor aig math-an-airidh 4250  
 A' phìob fhaotainn thar gach duine.

SONGS OF DUNCAN BAN MACINTYRE

- The first music that was on the earth  
 is the great pipe of loveliest warble;  
 she was Fionn's and Goll's and Garadh's  
 in the blood-shedding heroes' hall;  
 'twere pity if one witnessed the decline 4240  
 of the warriors' stirring tunes;  
 with a blow of her breath she could waken  
 all the Fiann to speedy exploit.
- This gathering is held about  
 a valuable prize, not purchased; 4245  
 equitable verdicts are pronounced  
 that will express the whole truth fairly:  
 each will receive the award assigned  
 to the art in which he is a champion;  
 and 'tis freely open to merit 4250  
 to win the pipe against all comers.

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