

## Carmina Gadelica

The *Carmina Gadelica* is a collection of prayers, hymns, charms, incantations, blessings, runes, and other literary-folkloric poems and songs collected and translated by amateur folklorist Alexander Carmichael (1832–1912) in the Gaelic-speaking regions of Scotland between 1855 and 1910. The work was originally published in six volumes, with extensive footnotes containing further details as well as additional tales and folklore. Carmichael edited the first two volumes, published in 1900; volumes III and IV were edited by James Carmichael Watson (Alexander Carmichael's grandson) and published in 1940 and 1941; two final volumes, edited by Angus Matheson, were published in 1954 and 1971. A one-volume, English-language edition was published in 1992.

*Carmina Gadelica* is the most complete anthology of Celtic oral tradition ever assembled. During his travels, Alexander Carmichael spent hours with peasants in their huts in front of peat fires listening as they "intoned in a low, recitative manner" these poems and prayers. This unique collection of living spirituality drawn from the depths of Celtic Christianity, represents a hidden oral tradition of great power and beauty, handed down through countless generations of Hebridean peasants.

Initially highly praised as a monumental achievement in Scottish folklore, the *Carmina Gadelica* subsequently has received some criticism for Carmichael's interpretation and presentation of the material. Criticism has ranged from the opinion that Carmichael was excessive in his editing of the source material, to the accusation that some of his sources were fabricated.

These criticisms acknowledged, the *Carmina Gadelica* is still seen as essential to Scottish folklore studies. It is used as a source by respected folklorists such as F. Marian McNeill as well as contemporary students of Gaelic language and folklore.

TA mi lubadh mo ghluin  
An suil an Athar a chruthaich mi,  
An suil an Mhic a cheannaich mi,  
An suil an Spioraid a ghланаich mi,  
Le caird agus caoimh.

Tre t' Aon Unga fein a Dhe,  
Tabhair duinn tachar 'n ar teinn,

Gaol De,  
Gradh De,  
Gair De,  
Gais De,  
Gras De,  
Sgath De,  
Is toil De,

Dheanamh air talamh nan Tre,  
Mar to ainghlich is naoimhich  
A toighe air neamh.

Gach duar agus soillse,  
Gach la agus oidhche,  
Gach uair ann an caoimhe,  
Thoir duinn do ghne.



I AM bending my knee  
In the eye of the Father who created me,  
In the eye of the Son who purchased me,  
In the eye of the Spirit who cleansed me,  
In friendship and affection.

Through Thine own Anointed One, O God,  
Bestow upon us fullness in our need,

Love towards God,  
The affection of God,  
The smile of God,  
The wisdom of God,  
The grace of God,  
The fear of God,  
And the will of God

To do on the world of the Three,  
As angels and saints  
Do in heaven;

Each shade and light,  
Each day and night,  
Each time in kindness,  
Give Thou us Thy Spirit.