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John MacQueen

The Scottish Literary Renaissance and Late Medieval Scottish Poetry

"Not Burns—Dunbar!"¹ is the war-cry attributed to Hugh MacDiarmid, founding-father of the twentieth-century Scottish Literary Renaissance. A close reading of his poetry will show, I think, that his concern was more to attack what he saw as the corrupting influence of Burns than to commit himself to Dunbar, whom he seldom even mentions.² In "From the Scots Anthology,"³ for instance, the joint names are little more than a pretext for a jest:

. . . Dunbar's debt to Catholic liturgy
That gars me read him, and syne Burns, and feel
As if I'd waukened up in Heaven to find
That efter a' the Plymouth Brethren were richt.

Dunbar's Catholicism is certain; the relationship between Burns and the Plymouth Brethren is more obscure. MacDiarmid regards Burns as the energetic voice of an imperfectly enlightened minority in the eighteenth century Pres-

¹I have not been able to identify a source for this phrase.

²See *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, ed. K. Buthlay (Edinburgh, 1987), II, 727, 2283; "Homage to Dunbar," *Hugh MacDiarmid Complete Poems 1920-1976*, ed. M. Grieve and W. R. Aitken, 2 vols. (London, 1978), II, 1265-6; hereafter *Poems*.

³*Poems*, I, 212.

byterian kirk, closer therefore to Holy Willie than to Christ or St. Francis, closest of all, it may be, to the Plymouth Brethren. This is not serious criticism, and suggests a corresponding lack of seriousness in the reference to Dunbar.

MacDiarmid was personally attracted by the liturgy and other aspects of the Catholic church, but "The Scarlet Woman," a poem on that church, is more intent on turning apocalyptic Protestant imagery on its head than in proclaiming an indebtedness to Dunbar:

Black-burnin' shame is your garb, quo' they,
 And syne gin you turn your face,
 It lowes wi' a reid and laithly flame
 That springs frae the evil place.

But noo I ha'e met you and seen for mysel
 Your face is the rare reid dawn,
 And velvets o' night are the gouns you wear
 To win the hert o' a man.

And a flame that springs frae the evil place,
 And a flame that springs frae heaven,
 Are but as the thocht o' a man maun mak'
 As his hert is richt or riven.

And glad I am that your face to me
 Is the dawn, and no' dreadour,
 Nor black affront but the bien nicht haps
 Your bonny form attour.

O burnin' rose o' the love o' God,
 Pitch-darkness o' his will,
 to Day and to Night, To Life and to Daith,
 I gi'e me and fear nae ill.⁴

(*Sangschaw*, 1925)

This is a Hegelian (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) rather than a medieval approach to Catholicism, one too which begins with a Protestant thesis; contrast the absolutism of Dunbar.⁵

⁴*Poems*, I, 27-8.

⁵Lines 66-8; J. Kinsley, ed., *The Poems of William Dunbar* (Oxford, 1979), p. 183; hereafter *Dunbar*.

Quhat help is thair in lordschips sevin,
 quhone na hous is bot hell and hevin,
 palice of lycht or pit obscure?
 ("None may assure in this World")

MacDiarmid makes few other direct references to Dunbar, while Burns is virtually everywhere in his earlier poetry, and almost always subject to attack. It is significant in a way which I hope will become clear that the title poem of *To Circumjack Cencrastus* contrasts Burns, not with Dunbar, but with the remoter, if more recent, figure of W. B. Yeats. Yeats MacDiarmid equates with Odysseus, who had the power to withstand the enchantments of Circe; himself and Scots generally with Odysseus' crew, transformed by the enchantress Circe into swine. How he does not say—perhaps by commercial greed, product of the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions, perhaps by the Reformation, perhaps by the loss for most Scots of the Gaelic tongue:

I blink at Yeats as micht a man whom some
 Foul sorcery had changed into a pig,
 At Yeats, my kingly cousin, and mind hoo
 He prophesied that Eire 'ud hae nae Burns
 (Tho it has tried to mair than aince) but haud
 Its genius heich and lanely—and think o' Burns,
 That Langfellow in a' but leid, and hoo
 Scots since has tint his maikles vir but hains
 His cheap emotions, puir ideas, and
 Imperfect sense o' beauty, till my race
 Lack ev'n the foetus' luck o' Smith or Broon
 (A Hobson's choice to burst nae pigskin owre)
 Bein' a' Jock Tamson's bairns.⁶

The equation of Burns with Longfellow, the New England poet of hum-drum Victorian values, implies in both men a similar set of emotions, ideas, a similar sense of beauty. Both are willing victims of a debasing Circe. Note too, however, that at least one of the points of contrast rises from the debt proclaimed by Yeats to what he saw as the ancient aristocratic tradition of Gaelic poetry (it is this that makes him "kingly") and the supposed lack in Burns (or Longfellow) of any similar quality to control emotion and expression. In terms of the title, they have failed to circumjack Cencrastus. MacDiarmid might have stressed the debt of Burns to the almost equally aristocratic Middle Scots literary tradition, but fails to do so for a number of interesting reasons to which I shall eventually briefly return.

⁶*Poems*, I, 185.

To be honest, there is not much evidence that MacDiarmid's poetry was greatly influenced by the literature of the late Middle Ages in Lowland Scotland. Dunbar's debt to Catholic liturgy includes some elements in his aureate diction, and it is conceivable that this may have influenced MacDiarmid in the creation of his Plastic Scots and English. Diction, vocabulary, rather than style or literary form, was his chief concern. Interestingly he comments⁷ on "the difficulties of vocabulary which have increasingly beset all recent creative writers of any consequence in English" and the fact that "younger English poets" (of the thirties, that is to say) "travel back some six centuries to take lessons from Langland, and find in his homely Anglo-Saxon verse a suitable form for their address to the plowman's modern counterpart. Not that the English laborer would understand the idiom of Lewis or Auden, but the vigorous rhythm and marked alliteration of *Piers Plowman* appeals to these poets for its summoning qualities." Vocabulary, rhythm, alliteration and "summoning qualities" are what matter, as in the significantly named "Gairmscoile" ("School-call," a bardic term; the reference is to the summoning of the schools or assemblies of Gaelic bards), which involves all four:

And there's forgotten shibboleths o' the Scots
 Ha'e keys to senses lockit to us yet
 — Coorse words that shamle thro' oor minds like stots,
 Syne turn on's muckle een wi' doonsin' emerauds lit.⁸

The four lines are about the summoning qualities of individual words, qualities epitomized by the Spenserian change of rhythm and association in the fourth line quoted, a change which transforms the "coorse words" of line three, linked to lines one and two by a pattern of alliteration on "s" and "sh"—"shibboleths," "Scots," "senses," "shamble" and "stots." MacDiarmid refers to *Piers Plowman*, and his own long poems, the development of which depends so much on sometimes arbitrary associations of ideas, may owe more to *Piers Plowman* than to Dunbar. Alliteration, however, and coorse as well as aureate vocabulary, are as important in Middle Scots as in Middle English.

⁷Hugh MacDiarmid, ed., *The Golden Treasury of Scottish Poetry* (London, 1940), "Introduction," pp. xvi-xvii.

⁸*Poems*, I, 74. See also D. Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland* (Dublin and Melbourne, 1967; first published Dublin, 1924), p. 102; hereafter *The Hidden Ireland*.

The medieval tradition, exemplified by "The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie,"⁹ was certainly important to MacDiarmid. Many will recollect prose-bouts in the correspondence columns of *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald*; I particularly recollect an extended exchange with Hamish Henderson and others,¹⁰ but this was by no means unique. In verse contestants were lacking, but MacDiarmid's own contributions survive, as in "Your Immortal Memory, Burns":

Thought may demit
Its functions fit
While still to thee, O Burns,
The punctual stomach of thy people turns.

Most folks agree
That poetry
Is of no earthly use
Save thine—which yields at least this Annual excuse!

Other cults die;
But who'll deny
That you your mob in thrall
Will keep, O Poet Intestinal?

From wame to wame
Wags on your fame
Once more through all the world
On fronts of proud abdomina unfurled.¹¹
(*Penny Wheep*, 1926)

And so on. The contest is not, of course, between the poets, but between MacDiarmid and the Burns Clubs. Incidentally, here we have a rare verbal reminiscence of Dunbar—the last stanza echoes the description of Gluttony's followers in "The Dance of the Sevin Deidly Synnis" or "Fasternis Evin in Hell".¹²

⁹*Dunbar*, pp. 76-95.

¹⁰See *Scotsman* correspondence column, March/April, 1964.

¹¹*Poems*, I, 77.

¹²*Dunbar*, p. 153, ll. 97-9.

Full mony a waistles wallydrag,
 With wamis unweildable, did furth wag,
 In creische that did increas.

Interestingly, there is also a reminiscence of an early seventeenth-century Irish poem, by Mathghamhain Ó hIfearnáin, "Ceist! cia do cheinneóchadh dán?", "Who will buy a poem?":

Such an art as this is no profit to me, though it is a misfortune that it should fall to the ground: it were more honourable to become a maker of combs—what use is it to anyone to profess poetry?

MacDiarmid's source, here as elsewhere, is Daniel Corkery's *The Hidden Ireland*, published in 1924.¹³

Middle Scots generally made at best but a small contribution to MacDiarmid's vocabulary and working technique, made up for the most part of twentieth-century metrics and Burnsian or post-Burnsian lexical items. Formally (and paradoxically, in view of his Catholic inclinations) he is a little more indebted to the literature of immediately post-Reformation Scotland. His acquaintance with *The Gude and Godly Ballatis*¹⁴ (1568), for instance, may help to explain the combination of the lyrical, the devotional and the satirical in much of his early verse. In *Sangschaw*, his poem on the infant Christ, "O Jesu Parvule," combines the immanent supernatural with the domestic detail of nursing a lively infant. It begins by quoting the words prefixed to the sixteenth-century Scots version ("I come from heuin to tell") of Luther's children's hymn for Christmas Eve, composed in 1535 for his son Hans, then five years old. The quotation suggests the qualities subliminally present in the Scots version, more strongly in MacDiarmid's poem: "Followis ane sang of the birth of Christ, with the tune of Baw lu la law":

His mither sings to the bairnie Christ
 Wi' the tune of *Baw lu la law*.
 The bonnie wee craturie lauchs in His crib,
 An a' the starnies an' he are sib.
Baw, baw, my loonikie, baw, balloo.

¹³*The Hidden Ireland*, p. 86. The first line of Ó hIfearnáin's poem, together with that of Eochaidh Ó Heóghusa's satirical "On a Change in Literary Fashion," is mistranscribed in "From the Scots Anthology" (*Poems*, I, 213).

¹⁴*A Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs Commonly Known as 'The Gude and Godlie Ballatis'*, ed. A. F. Mitchell, STS, 39 (1897). The quotation will be found on p. 49.

'Fa' owre, ma hinny, fa' owre, fa' owre,
 A'body's sleepin' binna oorsels.'
 She's drawn Him in tae the bool o' her breist
 But the byspale's nae thocht o' sleep i' the least.
*Balloo, wee mannie, balloo, balloo.*¹⁵

Other poems related to this tradition are "I Heard Christ Sing," "Ballad of the Five Senses," perhaps "The Last Trump" and "Crowdieknowe."

Another literary form which came to maturity during the half-century following the Reformation is the Scottish sonnet. As in England, more or less Petrarchan love-sonnets and sequences were the norm, but poets were not confined to conventional treatment of this single theme. Some examples will illustrate. The earliest, "Ane anser to ane Inglis railar praising his awin genalogy" ("Ye, Inglische hurstone sumtyme will avant"), may well be older than the Reformation; it is preserved in the Bannatyne MS¹⁶ (1568) and combines the flying tradition with Anglophobia in a way to have satisfied even MacDiarmid. Second is a poem of exile, Montgomerie's to Hudson on his temporary exclusion from James VI's Castalian band,¹⁷ a poem whose interest lies partly at least in the literary and biographical problems which it raises but does not solve. More important is the deliberate vernacular vigor of the language, a vigor sometimes exerted to the point of obscurity. Note too the masterly use of a rhyme-scheme which, as Professor Lyall has already indicated,¹⁸ is usually associated with Spenser's *Amoretti*, published in 1593, perhaps later than Montgomerie's poem. It is quite probable that Montgomerie's use of the rhyme-scheme is independent; the effect certainly is anything but Spenserian. The "silly smiddy" of line 2 is the court as the source of poetry:

My best belouit brother of the band,
 I grein to sie the sillie smiddy smeik.
 This is no lyfe that I live vpaland
 On rau rid herring reistit in the reik,

¹⁵*Poems*, I, 31.

¹⁶*The Bannatyne Manuscript Writtin in Tyme of Pest 1568*, ed. W. Tod Ritchie, STS, 2nd Series, 23 (1928), 85-6.

¹⁷*The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie*, ed. J. Cranstoun, STS, 19 (1887), 101. For Montgomerie and the Renaissance Scottish sonnet see especially chapter IV of R. D. S. Jack's *Alexander Montgomerie* (Edinburgh, 1985).

¹⁸See above, Lyall, pp. 1-18.

Syn I am subject somtyme to be seik,
 And daylie deing of my auld diseis.
 Eit bread, ill aill, and all things are ane eik;
 This barme and blaidry buists up all my bees.
 Ye knau ill guyding genders mony gees,
 And specially in poets. For example,
 Ye can pen out tua cuple and ye pleis;
 Yourself and I, old Scott and Robert Semple.
 Quhen we ar dead, that all our dayis bot daffis,
 Let Christan Lyndesay wryt our epitaphis.

Two unusual love-poems, one of exile, one of madness, are Fowler's "In Orknay"¹⁹ ("Upon the utmost corners of the world") and Mark Alexander Boyd's "Sonet"²⁰ ("Fra banc to banc, fra wod to wod, I rin"). Fowler adopts Montgomerie's rhyme scheme. One might also mention Sir Robert Aytoun's "Upon Tabacco"²¹ ("Forsaken of all comforts but these two"). The Renaissance Scottish sonnet, it is fairly obvious, was a form capable of many variations, the range and verbal effect of which differs significantly from that of its English counterpart.

The sonnet as a literary form was reasonably popular with nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Scottish writers—David Gray, Andrew Lang, Roger Quin, Robert Crawford, Alexander Mair, to name no other.²² Their sonnets however belong firmly to the English tradition; they are Miltonic, Wordsworthian, Keatsian, even Rossetian, but not Scots. MacDiarmid too is an occasional practitioner,²³ clumsy, but with some individuality; with him too the effect is English. By his time however, his older friend, Lewis

¹⁹*The Works of William Fowler, Secretary to Queen Anne, Wife of James VI*, ed. H. W. Meikle, STS, 2nd Series, 6 (1914), 221.

²⁰NLS, Adv. MS 15.1.7. For a printed text see J. MacQueen and T. Scott, eds., *The Oxford Book of Scottish Verse* (Oxford, 1966), p. 253.

²¹*The English and Latin Poems of Sir Robert Ayton*, ed. C. B. Gullans, STS, 4th Series, 1 (1963), 174. The sonnet is a translation from the French of Marc-Antoine de Gérard, Sieur de Saint-Amant (1594-1661); see Gullan's note, p. 288.

²²For specimens see D. Young, ed., *Scottish Verse 1851-1951* (London and Edinburgh, 1952), pp. 65-6, 69-70, 88-9, 156-7; hereafter *Scottish Verse*. Stevenson also was an occasional practitioner; see *Robert Louis Stevenson: Collected Poems*, ed. J. A. Smith, 2nd edn. (London, 1971), pp. 77-8.

²³MacDiarmid wrote at least one sonnet in Scots; see *Poems*, II, 1238. For sonnets in English see *Poems*, I, 76, 687-8; II, 1205-12, 1215-7, 1218-9, 1224, 1226-7, 1231-2, 1362.

Spence, had already written sonnets in a full canon of Scots. Here is "The Queen's Bath-House, Holyrood":

Time that has dinged doun castels and hie toures,
And cast great crouns like tinsel in the fire,
That holds his hand for palace nor for byre,
Stands sweir at this, the oe of Venus' boures.
Not Time himself can dwell withouten floures,
Though aiks maun fa' the rose sall bide entire;
So sall this diamant of a queen's desire
Outflourish all the stanes that Time devours.

Mony a strength his turret-heid sall tine
Ere this sall fa' whare a queen lay in wine,
Whose lamp was her ain lily flesh and star.
The walls of luvè the mair triumphant are
Gif luvè were waesome habiting that place;
Luvè has maist years that has a murning face.²⁴

This, you will perhaps agree, is effective, but smacks a little of the hothouse. Douglas Young in "The Shepherd's Daughter" returns to the caller air, perhaps with just a suggestion of the Kailyard:

Lay her and lea her here i the gantan grund,
the blythest, bonniest lass o the countryside,
crined in a timber sark, hapt wi the pride
o hothous flouers, the dearest that could be fund.
Her faither and brithers stand, as suddentlie stunned
wi the wecht of dule; douce neebours side by side
wriest and fidge, sclent-luikan, sweirt tae bide
while the Minister's duin and his threep gane wi the wind.

The murners skail, thankfu tae lea thon place
whar the blythest, bonniest lass liggs i the moul,
Lent lilies lowp and cypresses stand stieve,
Time tae gae back to the darg, machines and tools
and beasts and seeds, the things men uis tae live,²⁵
and lea the puir lass there in her state o Grace.

This funereal note, but with fewer overtones of the Kailyard, recurs in two of the best among the sonnets of the chief modern practitioner, Robert

²⁴Scottish Verse, p. 149.

²⁵C. Young and D. Murison, eds., *A Clear Voice: Douglas Young Poet and Polymath* (Loanhead, nd), p. 71.

Garioch (R. G. Sutherland), "At Robert Fergusson's Grave, October 1962"²⁶ and "Elegy." The last in particular is funereal with a difference; for many years Garioch had been a school-master.²⁷

They are lang deid, folk that I used to ken,
 their firm-set lips aa mowdert and agley,
 sherp-tempert een rusty among the cley:
 they are baith deid, thae wycelike, bienlie men,
 heidmaisters, that had been in pouer for ten
 or twenty year afore fate's taiglit wey
 brocht me, a young, weill-harnit, blate and fey
 new-cleckit dominie, intill their den.

Ane tellt me it was time I learnt to write—
 round-haund, he meant—and saw about my hair:
 I mind of him, beld-heidit, wi a kyte.
 Ane sneerit quarterly—I cuidna square
 my savings bank—and sniftert in his spite.
 Weill, gin they arena deid, it's time they were.²⁸

This is as perfectly shaped and bitterly satirical as any of Dunbar's complaints. The sonnet form doubles the balance and bite.

Garioch was the most proficient of the moderns at revitalizing, not only the sonnet, but other early forms. I would remind you particularly of "Embroid to the Ploy," the poem on the Edinburgh Festival, which makes memorable use of the stanza-form found in the late-medieval "Peblis to the Play" rather than the simpler, more generally familiar version used by Fergusson and Burns. The Festival is satirized by equating it with the rural popular merrymaking of the older poem. The correspondence is detailed: compare the opening stanzas:

At Beltane quhen ilk bodie bownis
 To Peblis to the play,
 To heir the singin and the soundis,
 The solace suth to say,
 Be firth and forrest furth thay found,
 They graythit thame full gay.
 God wait quhat wald thai do that stound,

²⁶*Robert Garioch: Complete Poetical Works*, ed. R. Fulton (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 86; hereafter *Works*.

²⁷Most of Garioch's teaching experience was in the London area.

²⁸Garioch, *Works*, p. 87.

For it wes thair feist day,
 Thay said,
Of Peblis to the play.²⁹

and:

In simmer, whan aa sorts forgether
in Embro to the ploy,
folk seek out friens to hae a blether,
or faes they'd fain annoy;
smorit wi British Railway's reek
frae Glesca or Glenroy
or Wick, they come to hae a week
of cultivatit joy,
 or three,
in Embro to the ploy.³⁰

It is characteristic of Garioch satire that he uses his metrics to set one period of time in sharp parallel and contrast to another. Compare again how he uses aureate diction and the seven-line rhyme royal stanza to translate a passage (Fragment 122) from Pindar:

In Corinth glittering wi gowd and gules,
ye hartsome servants of Persuasioun,
guid-willie lasses, liefsome hierodules,
are nou arrayit as oblatioun
til Aphrodit' in dedicatioun;
ane hunder vicars al of that Godess
lykerus her to sair in lustiness.

Your daywerk is the amber tears to brenn
of frankincense in reikie sacrifie
and aftentimes ye ettle, fidgan-fain
to birl in tourbillions of ecstasie
abuin the beryall firmament on hie
whaur luvè consecrat bleizes til a sterne
and preclair Aphrodite reigns superne.

Thirlit thus-gait by favour of your Queen
in thralldom's obeisance til her pouers,
supine in homage, gentill and amene,

²⁹*The Maitland Folio Manuscript Containing Poems by Sir Richard Maitland, Dunbar, Douglas, Henryson and Others*, ed. W. A. Craigie, STS, 2nd Series, 7 (1919), 176-83.

³⁰Garioch, *Works*, pp. 14-7.

maist leman-like ye preive luve's saftest hours,
 Corinthian Aphrodite's sacrate hures;
 Whan luve's consecrat serf dois her devoir
 nane sall find faut wi her, nor think the waur.³¹

Xenophon of Corinth, for whom the Greek original was written, won the short footrace and the pentathlon in the Olympic Games of 464 BC, an event celebrated in Pindar's Thirteenth Olympian ode. He had previously vowed that, if he won, "he would devote a hundred courtesans to the service of Aphrodite . . . On the occasion of the fulfilment of his vow," the work translated by Garioch "was sung in the temple of the goddess, while the hundred women danced to the words of the song."³² Even by Ancient Greek standards, the occasion was sportive, and Garioch has quiet fun rendering it in terms of the courtly verse and courtly love of fifteenth-century Scotland. *The Kingis Quair*, *The Testament of Criseyde* and *The Marriage of the Thistle and the Rose* are perhaps the poems that came most readily into his mind. By his use of stanza-form and vocabulary, Garioch comments on them, and allows them to comment on the Pindaric he is translating. Intertextuality could scarcely go farther.

Garioch is closest of all the moderns to the makars of the later Middle ages and the Renaissance. But finally I return to MacDiarmid, who sought roots, as I hinted earlier, not so much there as in the sometimes suspect soil of his "Gaelic idea." Parts of this are genuine enough—his translations from the eighteenth-century Scottish Gaelic poets, MacMhaighstir Alastair and Donnchaidh Ban,³³ his references to seventeenth-century Irish Gaelic poetry—*Gile na gile*, for instance, the best-known among the songs of Egan O'Rahilly (c. 1670-c. 1726):

Aodhagán Ó Rathaille sang this sang
 That I maun sing again;
 For I've met the Brightness o' Brightness
 Like him in a lanely glen,
 And seen the hair that's plaited
 Like the generations o' men.
 ("From the Scots Anthology")³⁴

³¹"The Hierodules," *Works*, p. 95.

³²Sir John Sandys, ed., *The Odes of Pindar Including the Principal Fragments* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1946), pp. 580-1.

³³*Poems*, I, 513-32, 587-600.

³⁴*Poems*, I, 224.

This is another part of the considerable debt which he owed to Daniel Corkery's *The Hidden Ireland*.³⁵

Unfortunately, this is not all; MacDiarmid was also attracted by James Macpherson's *Ossian*, by the *Chronicles of Eri*,³⁶ published in 1822 by the half-crazed Irishman Roger O'Connor, and subtitled *The History of the Gaal Scot Iber: or, The Irish People; translated from the Original Manuscripts in the Phoenician Dialect of the Scythian Language*, and by a rather similar work with an even longer title, *The British Edda. The Great Epic Poem of the Ancient Britons on the Exploits of King Thor, Arthur or Adam and his Knights in Establishing Civilization, Reforming Eden & Capturing the Holy Grail about 3380-3350 BC, Reconstructed for the First Time from the Medieval MSS. by Babylonian, Hittite, Egyptian, Trojan & Gothic Keys and Done Literally into English by L. A. Waddell LL.D, CB, CIE with 30 Plates & 162 Text Illustrations of Scenes from Sumerian, British & Other Ancient Monuments, Maps, Foreword, Introduction, Notes & Glossary*, a book published in London by Chapman and Hall in 1930. Dr. Waddell (1854-1938) was a Glasgow medical graduate, who served with distinction in the Indian Civil Service, and who made himself something of an authority on aspects of Buddhism, particularly in Tibet³⁷—something also important to MacDiarmid. *The British Edda* marks the completion of the work Dr. Waddell attempted when after retirement he returned to Scotland; MacDiarmid like many others gave it more credit than it deserved. Fortunately for these present tonight, the full story of MacDiarmid and the Gaelic idea requires not merely another paper but an entire monograph. There is no time now to take it further.

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³⁵*The Hidden Ireland*, pp. 174-7. MacDiarmid reuses part of the quotation "(Plaited Like the Generations of Men") as the title of the sixth section of *In Memoriam James Joyce* (*Poems*, II, 871-89). A variant will be found on p. 872.

³⁶2 vols. (London, 1822). MacDiarmid used the version in *Six Thousand Years of Gaelic Glory Unearthed. The Most Ancient and Truthful Chronicles of the Gael*, ed. L. Albert (London, 1936), vol. I.

³⁷See especially *The Buddhism of Tibet* (London, 1895).