



Warriors of the Word: The World of the Scottish Highlanders

Michael Newton

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Words have always held great power in the Gaelic traditions of the Scottish Highlands: bardic poems bought immortality for their subjects; satires threatened to ruin reputations and cause physical injury; clan sagas recounted family origins and struggles for power; incantations invoked blessings and curses. Even in the present, Gaels strive to counteract centuries of misrepresentation of the Highlands as a backwater of barbarism without a valid story of its own to tell. *Warriors of the Word* offers a broad overview of Scottish Highland culture and history, bringing together rare and previously untranslated primary texts from scattered and obscure sources. Poetry, songs, tales, and proverbs, supplemented by the accounts of insiders and travelers, illuminate traditional ways of life, exploring such topics as folklore, music, dance, literature, social organization, supernatural beliefs, human ecology, ethnic identity, and the role of language. This range of materials allows Scottish Gaeldom to be described on its own terms and to demonstrate its vitality and wealth of renewable cultural resources. This is an essential compendium for scholars, students, and all enthusiasts of Scottish culture.

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