



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

The poems of Ossian

in two volumes ; to which are prefixed dissertations on the æra and
poems of Ossian

Macpherson, James

London, 1807

Colna-Dona

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-63313](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-63313)

OLIVIERO

COLNA-DONA:

A

POEM.

ARGUMENT.

FINGAL dispatches Ossian, and Toscar, the son of Conloch, and father of Malvina, to raise a stone on the banks of the stream of Crona, to perpetuate the memory of a victory, which he had obtained in that place. When they were employed in that work, Car-ul, a neighbouring chief, invited them to a feast. They went: and Toscar fell desperately in love with Colna-dona, the daughter of Car-ul. Colna-dona became no less enamoured of Toscar, an incident, at a hunting party, brings their loves to a happy issue.

Colna-dona signifies the love of heroes. Col-ul, was the residence of Car-ul, and Col-ul, was in the neighbourhood of Crona's well, towards the south. Car-ul seems to have been of the race of those heroes who are distinguished by the name of heroes by the writers of home. Malvina is derived from two Celtic words, Mal, a plain, and Avra, inhabitants; so that the situation of Malvina is the inhabitants of the plain country; a name given to the Britons, who were settled in the Lowlands, in continuation to the Celts, i. e. Car-ul, the name of the hills, who were possessed of the more mountainous division of North-Britain.

COLNA-DONA:

A POEM.

COL-AMON^f of troubled streams, dark wanderer of distant vales, I behold thy course between trees, near Car-ul's echoing halls! There dwelt bright Colna-dona, the daughter of the king. Her eyes were rolling stars; her arms were white as the foam of streams. Her breast rose slowly to sight, like ocean's heaving wave. Her soul was a stream of light. Who, among the maids, was like the love of heroes?

^f Colna-dona signifies *the love of heroes*. Col-amon, *narrow river*. Car-ul, *dark eyed*. Col-amon, the residence of Car-ul, was in the neighbourhood of Agricola's wall, towards the south. Car-ul seems to have been of the race of those Britons, who are distinguished by the name of Maiatæ, by the writers of Rome. Maiatæ is derived from two Galic words, *Moi*, a plain, and *AITICH*, inhabitants; so that the signification of Maiatæ is, *the inhabitants of the plain country*; a name given to the Britons, who were settled in the Lowlands, in contradistinction to the Caledonians, i. e. CAEL-DON, *the Gauls of the hills*, who were possessed of the more mountainous division of North-Britain.

Beneath the voice of the king, we moved to Crona[§] of the streams, Toscar of grassy Lutha, and Ossian, young in fields. Three bards attended with songs. Three bossy shields were borne before us: for we were to rear the stone in memory of the past. By Crona's mossy course, Fingal had scattered his foes: he had rolled away the strangers, like a troubled sea. We came to the place of renown: from the mountains descended night. I tore an oak from its hill, and raised a flame on high. I bade my fathers to look down, from the clouds of their hall; for, at the fame of their race, they brighten in the wind.

I took a stone from the stream, amidst the song of bards. The blood of Fingal's foes hung curdled in its ooze. Beneath, I placed, at intervals, three bosses from the shields of foes, as

§ Crona, *murmuring*, was the name of a small stream, which discharged itself in the river Carron. It is often mentioned by Ossian, and the scenes of many of his poems are on its banks. The enemies whom Fingal defeated here, are not mentioned. They were, probably, the provincial Britons. That tract of country between the Friths of Forth and Clyde, has been, through all antiquity, famous for battles and encounters between the different nations who were possessed of North and South Britain. Stirling, a town situated there, derives its name from that very circumstance. It is a corruption of the Galic name, STRILA, i. e. *the hill, or rock of contention*.

rose or fell the sound of Ullin's nightly song.
Toscar laid a dagger in earth, a mail of sound-
ing steel. We raised the mould around the
stone, and bade it speak to other years.

Oozy daughter of streams, that now art
reared on high, speak to the feeble, O stone!
after Selma's race have failed! Prone, from the
stormy night, the traveller shall lay him, by
thy side: thy whistling moss shall sound in his
dreams; the years that were past shall return.
Battles rise before him, blue-shielded kings de-
scend to war: the darkened moon looks from
heaven on the troubled field. He shall burst,
with morning, from dreams, and see the tombs
of warriors round. He shall ask about the
stone, and the aged shall reply, "This grey
stone was raised by Ossian, a chief of other
years!"

From ^h Col-amon came a bard, from Car-ul,

^h The manners of the Britons and Caledonians were so similar in the days of Ossian, that there can be no doubt, that they were originally the same people, and descended from those Gauls who first possessed themselves of South Britain, and gradually migrated to the North. This hypothesis is more rational than the idle fables of ill-formed senachies, who bring the Caledonians from distant countries. The bare opinion of Tacitus (which, by-the-by, was only founded on a similarity of the personal figure of the Caledonians to the Germans of his own time), though it has staggered some learned men, is not sufficient to make us believe, that the ancient inhabitants

the friend of strangers. He bade us to the feast of kings, to the dwelling of bright Colna-dona. We went to the hall of harps. There Car-ul brightened between his aged locks, when he beheld the sons of his friends, like two young branches before him.

“Sons of the mighty,” he said, “ye bring back the days of old, when first I descended from waves, on Selma’s streamy vale! I pursued Duthmocarglos, dweller of ocean’s wind. Our fathers had been foes; we met by Clutha’s winding waters. He fled, along the sea, and my sails were spread behind him. Night deceived me, on the deep. I came to the dwelling of kings, to Selma of high-bosomed maids. Fingal came forth with his bards, and Conloch, arm of death. I feasted three days in the hall, and saw the blue eyes of Erin, Roscrana, daughter of heroes, light of Cormac’s race. Nor forgot did my steps depart: the kings gave their shields to Car-ul: they hang, on high, in Col-amon, in memory of the past. Sons of the daring kings, ye bring back the days of old!”

of North Britain were a German colony. A discussion of a point like this might be curious, but could never be satisfactory. Periods so distant are so involved in obscurity, that nothing certain can be now advanced concerning them. The light which the Roman writers hold forth is too feeble to guide us to the truth, through the darkness which has surrounded it.

Car-ul kindled the oak of feasts. He took two bosses from our shields. He laid them in earth, beneath a stone, to speak to the hero's race. "When battle," said the king, "shall roar, and our sons are to meet in wrath. My race shall look, perhaps, on this stone, when they prepare the spear. Have not our fathers met in peace, they will say, and lay aside the shield?"

Night came down. In her long locks moved the daughter of Car-ul. Mixed with the harp arose the voice of white-armed Colna-dona. Toscar darkened in his place, before the love of heroes. She came on his troubled soul, like a beam to the dark-heaving ocean: when it bursts from a cloud, and brightens the foamy side of a wave.¹

* * * * *

With morning we awaked the woods; and hung forward on the path of the roes. They fell by their wonted streams. We returned through Crona's vale. From the wood a youth came forward, with a shield and pointless spear. "Whence," said Toscar of Lutha, "is the flying

¹ Here an episode is entirely lost; or, at least, handed is down so imperfectly, that it does not deserve a place in the poem.

beam? Dwells there peace at Col-amon, round bright Colna-dona of harps?"

"By Col-amon of streams," said the youth, "bright Colna-dona dwelt. She dwelt; but her course is now in deserts, with the son of the king; he that seized with love her soul as it wandered through the hall." "Stranger of tales," said Toscar, "hast thou marked the warrior's course? He must fall; give thou that bossy shield." In wrath he took the shield. Fair behind it rose the breasts of a maid, white as the bosom of a swan, rising graceful on swift-rolling waves. It was Colna-dona of harps, the daughter of the king! Her blue eyes had rolled on Toscar, and her love arose!