

John Garbh MacLeod of Raasay's Lament amongst the older MS sources, there are settings of this tune by Donald MacDonald (ff.20-24) and Peter Reid, (f.29). Pre-Great War published sources include settings by Angus MacKay (*Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.23-5), C. S. Thomason (*Ceol Mor*, pp.61-2), and William Stewart (*Piobaireachd Society Collection*, first series, i, 4-7). Angus MacKay develops the tune as follows:

Ground
Taorluath singling doubling trebling [with a slight alteration of the tone row in the latter in both taorluath and crunluath variations]
Ground
Crunluath singling doubling trebling
Ground

The ground is set in 3/4 time, the variations in 6/8. There is no crunluath a mach. The reader will note the timing of MacKay's concluding gesture on A at the end of lines one, two and three of the ground:

'John Garve MacLeod of Rasay's Lament', ground, line1, Angus MacKay, *Ancient Piobaireachd*, (pp.23-5)



Donald MacDonald takes the following route through the tune:

Ground
Siubhal singling doubling
Taorluath singling doubling
Crunluath singling doubling

No crunluath a mach is indicated
Just as in the third edition of MacKay's *Ancient Piobaireachd* used above, MacDonald indicates that line one of the ground should be repeated, and likewise throughout the later variations. One interesting feature of MacDonald's ground is his timing of the echo beats, which follow a uniform semiquaver/semiquaver/quaver pattern throughout, including the introductory/concluding gesture on A:

'John Garve MacLeod of Rasay's Lament', ground, Donald MacDonald's MS, (ff.20-24)

The musical score is presented on eight staves. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The music is a complex ground pattern, characteristic of Piobaireachd. It features a repeating sequence of notes and rests, with a consistent semiquaver/semiquaver/quaver pattern for the echo beats. The score includes various musical notations such as beams, slurs, and repeat signs, indicating the structure and timing of the ground.

'John Garve MacLeod of Rasay's Lament', siubhal singling, MacDonald's MS, (ff. 20-24)

'John Garve MacLeod of Rasay's Lament', siubhal doubling lines 1-2, MacDonald's MS (ff. 20-24)

Each variation (singling and doubling) begins, as usual in MacDonald, with a GED introductory movement. MacDonald sets the ground and siubhal in common time, moving to 6/8 for the taorluath and crunluath variations.

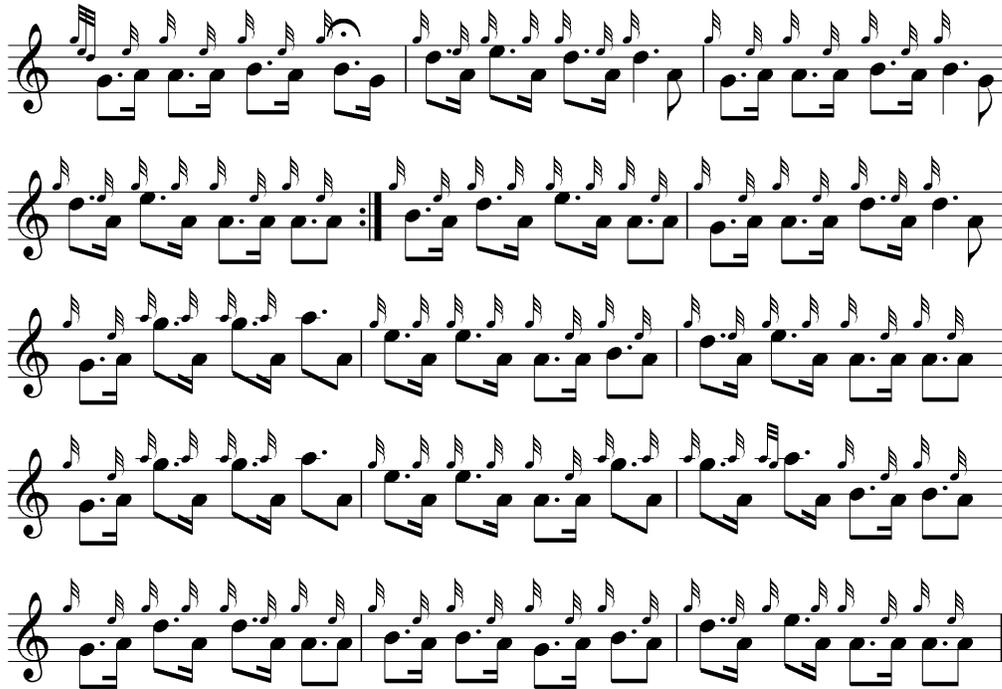
In Peter Reid's setting, the reader will note the interesting difference in pointing the echo beats from MacDonald's style:

'MacLeod of Rasays Lament', ground, Peter Reid's MS (f.29)



Reid also develops the ground (which he marks 'slow') interestingly differently from MacKay and MacDonald, in a siubhal possessing a number of attractive features, but which would nowadays at least be considered irregular, having 27 bars in both singling and doubling:

'MacLeod of Rasays Lament', siubhal, Peter Reid's MS (f.29)



Reid's score stops at the end of the siubhal with the words 'Here follow the Taorluidh & Cruinluidh &c.'

Amongst the pre-Great War published settings, General C. S. Thomason prints both MacDonald's and MacKay's versions, following the third edition of *Ancient Piobaireachd* by directing that line 1 be repeated in the ground and each of the subsequent variations (*Ceol Mor*, pp.61-2). William Stewart's score in the *Piobaireachd Society Collection*, first series, (i, 4-7), follows MacKay in the ground, but includes Donald MacDonald's siubhal, reverting to MacKay in the taorluath and crunluath variations, but dropping MacKay's taorluath trebling as 'superfluous'. He has no crunluath a mach. Stewart's folkloristic notes to the tune are typical of his rather florid style:

'Cumha Iain Ghairbh MhicGilleChalum Rarsai. (Lament for John Garve MacLeod of Rasay.) This pathetic Lament was composed by Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, and mourns the death of Great John MacLeod, seventeenth Chief of Siol Thorquil, and sixth of Rasay. He was drowned off the North Coast of the Isle of Skye, his galley and all on board being lost near the spot where, a century before, another of his family, Torquil Òg, was drowned with 200 of his Lewismen.

John Garbh was noted as the most powerful and handsome man of his time, and, as MacKenzie, the Highland historian, says, "the gallantry of his personal exploits was a household word among his contemporaries." Tales of his deeds and strength are still related. Near the castle of Duntulm, at which ancient stronghold of the MacDonalds he was a frequent guest, his "clach-ulltaich", or "lift," estimated to weigh a ton, is still pointed out. Once lifted, it remained as a monument to the lifter and a challenge to all comers. John Garve's monument has stood for 250 years, and is likely to remain as a challenge till the end of time.

The date of John Garve's death is given as 1648, and the great Harris Bardess in her Elegy records the day as "Di-luain Caisg". From the towering cliffs that guard the northern coasts of "The Winged Island" people looked down on the stormy Minch and the tragic end of MacGilleChalum and his gallant crew. Tradition ascribes his death to the evil powers of a noted witch, whose daughter he was believed to have slighted by his marriage, a few months before, to Janet, daughter of Sir Rory Macleod of Dunvegan. The methods by which the witch accomplished his drowning (she had no power over him on land!) have been related with much circumstantial detail by people who firmly believed them. An eggshell holding a mouse and floating in a cauldron typified John Garve and his galley. As the witch moved round the cauldron with the "car-tual" of the Druids and repeated her incantations, she stirred the contents with her distaff into mimic waves, and presently a storm of unprecedented fury swept the ocean. "The waves rose as high as the Cuchullins," and the huge boulders of Mol-a-Stabhain were on that day torn from the bed of the ocean and hurled on dry land, where the sceptical can see them to this day. As the fury of the incantation and the stirring increased, so did the storm, and as it fared with the eggshell so fared it with the galley of John Garve; and at the moment the eggshell filled and sank, the watchers on the cliffs saw the birlinn of MacGilleChalum disappear beneath the waves. His death was mourned, and his prowess and many virtues extolled in many songs of the time, still to be heard in Skye and Rasay.' (i, 8-9)

The truth of the matter is a good deal more prosaic. Among several tales relating to the tune in 'Ceol Mor Legends', General Thomason includes this:

'Extract from Chronicles of the Frasers:- The Wardlaw M.S.S. by Master James Fraser, minister of the parish of Wardlaw (now Kirkhill) near Inverness.

"This April (1672) the Earle of Seaforth dwelling in the Lewes, a dreadful accident happened. His lady being brought to bed there, the Earle sent for John Garve M'kleud the Laird of Rarzay, to witness the christening; & after the treat and solemnity of the feast, Rarzay takes leave to goe home, and, after a rant of drinking uppon the shoare went aboard his birling and sailed away with a strong north gale off wind; and whither by giveing too much saile & no ballast, or that they could not mannage the strong Dut(ch) canvas saile, the boat whelmed, & all the men dround in view of the cost. The Laird and 16 of his kinsmen, the prime, perished: non of them ever found; a grewhound or two cast ashoare dead; and pieces of the birling. One Alexander Machleod in the Lewes the night before had voice warning him thrice not to goe at (all) with Rarsey, for all would drown in there return; yet he went with him, being infatuat, and drowned (with) the rest. This account I had from Alexander, his brother the summer after. Drunkness did the (mischiefe).'" (f.107)

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