

Lord Lovat's Lament

There are settings of this tune in one manuscript only:

– **Robert Meldrum's** MS;

and in the following published sources:

– **Angus MacKay**, pp.141-3;

– **C. S. Thomason**, p.198;

– **David Glen**, pp.35-6;

– **Piobaireachd Society Collection** (first series), iv, 8-9;

– **G. F. Ross**, *Some Piobaireachd Studies*, p.26;

– **B. J. MacLachlan Orme**, *The Piobaireachd of Simon Fraser with Canntaireachd* (privately printed, 1979), pp.250-3.

Angus MacKay develops the tune as follows

ground 8 10 4

doubling of ground 8 10 4

variation one 8 8 10

taorluath singling 8 8 8

taorluath doubling 8 8 8

ground

crunluath singling 8 8 8

crunluath doubling 8 8 8

ground.

MacKay's variations are regular as clockwork from the taorluath singling onwards, three lines of eight bars each, twenty four in all, while the ground and variation one range from 22 to 26 bars:

CUMHA MHIC SHIMIDH.
Lord Lovat's Lament.

1746.

LIV.

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The piece is marked 'LIV.' and consists of several measures of music. It includes a first ending (1st) and a second ending (2nd). A section labeled 'Doubling of the Ground' follows, which is a rhythmic variation of the main melody. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

pipes | drums

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Variation 1.

Musical notation for Variation 1, consisting of four staves of music. The notation is in treble clef and 6/8 time, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes.

Variation 2.

Musical notation for Variation 2, consisting of four staves of music. The notation is in treble clef and 6/8 time, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes.

Doubling of Variation 2.

Musical notation for Doubling of Variation 2, consisting of four staves of music. The notation is in treble clef and 6/8 time, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes.

The musical score is written on ten staves. The first staff is labeled 'D.C. Thema.' and the second staff is labeled 'Crun-luath.' The score consists of a series of rhythmic patterns, primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The 'Doubling of Crun-luath.' section begins on the seventh staff. The final staff is also labeled 'D.C. Thema.'

The subsequent editing of this tune shows various attempts to evolve a "regular" score on the basis of MacKay's. Three of these scores have their source in Simon Fraser.

The first of these was published in **David Glen's** *Ancient Piobaireachd*, where it was described as "Communicated by Mr Simon Fraser, Melbourne, Australia." It is structured as follows:

ground 8: 8 8
variation one 8: 8 8
variation two 8: 8 8
taorluath singling 8: 8 8
taorluath doubling 8: 8 8
ground
crunluath singling 8: 8 8
crunluath doubling 8: 8 8
ground

Glen's score treats the tune thus:

LORD LOVAT'S LAMENT.

CUMHA MHIC SHIMIDH.

Composed by DAVID FRASER.

14. *Urlar.*

The score consists of three variations of the tune 'Lord Lovat's Lament'. Each variation is written for pipes and drums. Variation 1 (Urular) is in 3/4 time and features a melody with grace notes and a drum accompaniment. Variation 2 (Var. 1st) is in 6/8 time and includes first and second endings. Variation 3 (Var. 2nd) is in 2/4 time. Variation 4 (Var. 3rd) is in 6/8 time and is labeled 'Toar-luath'. The notation includes treble clefs, key signatures of one sharp (F#), and various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

*1st time only.

Written  Played 

Communicated by MF Simon Fraser, Melbourne, Australia.

pipes | drums

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Dùblachadh an Taor-luath.

twice

Crùn-luath.

Repeat the Ùrlar.

Dùblachadh a' Chrùn-luath.

twice

Repeat the Ùrlar.

Comparing this with the setting published by Archibald Campbell in the ninth volume of the *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (second series, pp.248-9)– also stated to be by Simon Fraser– it is obvious, firstly, that the two versions are significantly different from each other and, secondly, that Glen's is musically the better of the two.

In B. J. MacLachlan Orme's edition of **Simon Fraser's** tunes, two settings of "Lord Lovat's Lament" are given; the first is Glen's but the second is different in a number of respects from that published by the Piobaireachd Society, so that altogether three different settings of this tune appear to have had their origins in Simon Fraser. There are grounds for treating Fraser's claims about his material with caution, and these are discussed in my book *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society* (pp.408-414). But hopefully players would feel able to select material on the basis of its musical appeal rather than any supposed "authenticity" or "authority."

C. S. Thomason had two goes at this, of which the first will probably strike most people as the better setting. It is based on MacKay but made up to an 8 8 8 pattern throughout and makes an attractive playing score:

The Piobaireachd Society (first series) follows MacKay, but the Music Committee, (then comprising Capt. Colin MacRae, John Bartholomew of Glenorchard and Stewart MacDougall of Lunga) took the unusual step of indicating "superfluous" bars in the variations which they suggested could be dropped to make them square with the ground:

pipes | drums

Gumha Mhic Shimidh

(Lament for Lord Kobat).

Urlar.



Dùblachadh.



Siubhal.



Taor-lunth.



Dùblachadh.



* The above is the recognised setting but as there are four more bars in the variations than in the ground and its doubling, it appears possible that extra bars have at some time been inserted by error. If so it is thought that the groups of bars marked with an asterisk are the intruding bars and these may be omitted.

pipes | drums

The image displays a musical score for pipes and drums, consisting of two variations: Crun-luath and Dùblachadh. Each variation is presented in a system of ten staves. The Crun-luath variation is marked with a 'C' and the Dùblachadh variation is marked with a 'D'. The score is written in a complex, rhythmic style characteristic of traditional Scottish pipe and drum music, featuring intricate patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes. The notation includes various musical symbols such as beams, slurs, and dynamic markings, all set against a background of a repeating rhythmic pattern.

Robert Meldrum follows Angus MacKay's published version in his ground, but his tone row is different in the taorluath and crunluath variations. He adds little to the stylistic possibilities of the tune, however, and his score is not reproduced here.

Following the Battle of Culloden Lord Lovat took refuge in various hiding places on his own estates and eventually with Macdonald of Morar. By now lame he was captured on an island in Loch Morar in June 1746 and taken in stages to London. He was executed on Tower Hill on 9th April 1747. Lovat is said to have looked forward to his internment in the family vault at Kirkhill with all the pipers from John o' Groats to Edinburgh playing at his funeral. But the government refused to release his body for burial in Scotland.

Lovat was, said Sir John Clerk, "a man of bold, nimbling kind of sense, very vain of his clan, the Fraziers, and ready to sacrifice everything to their interest."

His son was eventually allowed to buy back the family's forfeited estates as a reward for raising two regiments and other service for the government. (W. C. Mackenzie, *Lovat of the Forty-Five*, Edinburgh 1935, pp. 169-75).

The family was to maintain its military commitments. The 16th Lord Lovat played a key role in recruitment to the Scottish regiments for the First World War and was responsible for the strong links between the War Office and the Piobaireachd Society of which he was President from 1907 until his death in 1933.

The absence of the tune in the 18th and 19th century manuscripts suggests that this may not have been a widely diffused piece: it all seems to come down ultimately from Angus MacKay.

Thomason's approach to this tune sheds interesting light on his general editorial principles:

"Lord Lovat's Lament."..I have never heard this played, and my appeals to piper friends for correction met with no success; but a record of D.[onald] Cameron's correction of the first two lines, as given to me by D.[onald] MacKay, saved us. D. MacKay could not remember the correction for the third line and I had given up the air as lost. The corrections, as far as I had them, gave me a metre of 8, 12, 4, which left a deficiency of 4 bars in the last line to bring it into the 2, 3, 2 category. To discover the four missing bars I carefully studied the third lines of all the three line airs in my collection with the following results. Out of 189 pieces thus studied I found in 99 the first section of the third line the same as in the first line, in 38 more this was approximately the case, and in 44 the first and third lines did not conform at all. Under these circumstances I determined to supply my deficiency from the first line, and was not a little surprised when I began dealing with the Taorluath that A. MacKay had supplied half the deficiency, and from the same source. So I have every reason to be satisfied with that correction. (*Ceol Mor*, "Rhythm in Sections," p.3)

Despite the numerous attempts to revise the tune, Bob Nicol said that John MacDonald taught him Angus MacKay's version, and that he had never heard him play anything else.

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