

## The Earl of Ross's March

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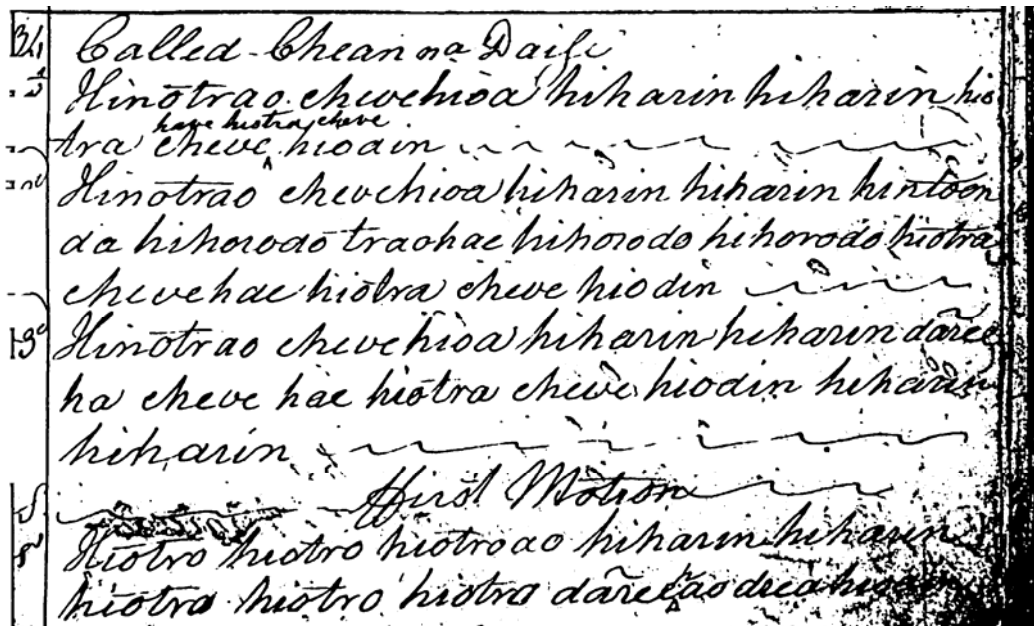
There are settings of this tune in the following MS sources:

- Colin Mór Campbell's** Nether Lorn Canntaireachd, ii, 82-5 (with the title "Chean na Daise")
- Donald MacDonald's** MS, ff.6-9
- Peter Reid's** MS, ff.17-18
- David Glen's** MS, ff.130-135

And in the following published sources:

- Niel MacLeod of Gesto**, *Pibereach or pipe tunes* (1828), pp. 16-19 (with the title "Kiaunidize")
- Angus MacKay**, *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.122-4 ("Composed by Donald Mor MacCrummen. About the Year 1600." according to MacKay/Logan)
- C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, pp. 201-2

Colin Campbell's setting begins like this:



2<sup>nd</sup> Hiotro hiotro hiotroao hihararin hihararin hio  
todrea hihoroao hao dreā hihoroao hih  
oroao hiotro hiotro hiotro daree hao dreā  
hiodin ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

3<sup>rd</sup> Hiotro hiotro hiotroao hihararin hihare  
darecha chetro dare hao dreā hiodin  
hihararin four times ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

1<sup>st</sup> Chetro chetro chetroao hihararin hihararin  
chetro chetro chetro darecha dreā hiharin  
2<sup>nd</sup> Chetro chetro chetroao hihararin hiharin  
hinto dreā hihoroao hao dreā hihoroao  
hihoroao chetro chetro chetro darecha  
o dreā hiodin ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

3<sup>rd</sup> Chetro chetro chetroao hihararin hih  
arin darecha chetro daree hao dreā hio  
din hihararin hihararin ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Second ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

1<sup>st</sup> Hinda hinto hinto hinda hihararin hihararin  
hinto hinto hinda hinda hinto hinda  
hiodin ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

2<sup>nd</sup> Hinda hinto hinto hinda hihararin hih  
arin hinto hinda hihoroao hinda hinda  
hihoroao hihoroao hinda four times  
hinto hinda hiodin ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

3<sup>rd</sup> Hinda hinto hinto hinda hihararin hih  
arin hinto hinto hinda hinda hinto hinda  
hinda hinto hihararin four times ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

4<sup>th</sup> Hinda hinto hinda hinto hinda hinda  
hinto ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

And so on.

None of the settings seems "regular" in the modern acceptance of the term. There are differences in line lengths, apparently "redundant" beats, and a tone row which, in Colin Campbell's case at any rate, changes between the various movements:

Earl of Ross, tone row, Colin Campbell, ground



Earl of Ross, Colin Campbell, tone row, first variation singling



One problem for the interpreter in many of the "Earl of Ross" scores lies in the timing of variation one. Colin Mór's version could imply something along the following lines:

Earl of Ross's March, Nether Lorn, possible rhythmical pattern for variation 1.





which would suggest perhaps:



or



It is difficult at some points to get the Nether Lorn score to scan rhythmically. Also there seems to be an "extra" double echo on B in line 2; nor is Colin Mór consistent in the number of eallachs at the end of each part. He begins at 4, 6, 6 in the ground (if you add the extra hiharin); but his doublings are short and oddly constructed like everybody else's in this tune.

**Donald MacDonald** plays his eallachs "down." His ground, like Colin Mór's, is a little erratic. He points his siubhal predominantly "down," while Angus MacKay plays his "up." MacDonald's doublings seem strangely truncated throughout:











**Peter Reid** has his usual nice little reflexive gracenotes. He is different from MacDonald and turns the ground rather more nicely; plus he has a thumb variation which nobody else has got and it works well with this tune, but he still seems "out" in his variations:



*Pòlannachd Anna Ròis* { *Appassionato*  
*The Earl of Ross's Pibroch* { *Surf. W. H. K. H.*  
*of the Royal Sea*

*slow*

*Variation*

*2nd Variation* *Pointed*

*3rd Variation* *Revised*

**David Glen** gives both MacKay's and MacDonald's grounds, following MacKay from var.1 onwards, commenting "McD being far wrong." Both are marked as "edited." Gives as an alternative title, "Hears of Corn. Ears of Corn," presumably following Gesto. Glen corrects the missing bar in MacKay's crunluath doubling as well. Both settings are given below as offering an interesting insight into the editorial process:

130. The heart of Ross's March or Pibroch. Heads of Ross's March

Unlabeled (from mid 19th c. ms.) Edited

For Ross's March  
to the  
Pibroch  
see  
133-134

in 2010  
9th Dec

added from the original

Unlabeled from Mackay's book. Edited.

Mackay's bar. 1st (Edited) from a 19th c. manuscript (which was a copy of Mackay's book) but not a copy of Mackay's book. No. 20 being far wrong



Var 2<sup>nd</sup> (Play 3 times from beginning of bar)

1<sup>st</sup> time

2<sup>nd</sup> time

3<sup>rd</sup> time

Doubling. Play 3 times

1<sup>st</sup> time

2<sup>nd</sup> time

3<sup>rd</sup> time

Var 3<sup>rd</sup> (Triple bar)

1<sup>st</sup> time

2<sup>nd</sup> time

3<sup>rd</sup> time

Doubling

1<sup>st</sup> time

2<sup>nd</sup> time

3<sup>rd</sup> time

The image shows a handwritten musical score on aged paper. It consists of two main sections, each with three staves of music. The first section is labeled 'Var 2<sup>nd</sup> (Play 3 times from beginning of bar)' and the second is 'Var 3<sup>rd</sup> (Triple bar)'. Each section includes a 'Doubling' instruction and is marked with '1<sup>st</sup> time', '2<sup>nd</sup> time', and '3<sup>rd</sup> time' to indicate repeated playing. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines, all written in ink.

132

Grim-math. *Play 3 times*

*Play 3 times*

1<sup>st</sup> time

2<sup>nd</sup> time

3<sup>rd</sup> time

Doubling

*Play 3 times*

1<sup>st</sup> time

2<sup>nd</sup> time

3<sup>rd</sup> time

McDonald gives you a shake or termination of the Grim-math



Macdonalds Vars. (Very much edited).

133

Handwritten musical score for Macdonalds Vars. (Very much edited). The score is written on ten staves. The first staff is marked with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. There are several handwritten annotations and corrections throughout the score.

Annotations and corrections include:

- 6/6* (written above the first staff)
- 1st* (written below the first staff)
- Doubleing from 1st* (written below the third staff)
- Doubleing (added by self. M's all wrong & nearly all wanting.)* (written below the sixth staff)
- single* (written below the seventh staff)
- (last combi. 15 Bars. Over the 1st see below page 130)* (written to the right of the third staff)



**Angus MacKay's** published setting is if anything even more irregular than MacDonald's. His ground is 4, 6, 6; Var 1=6, 8, 8; Var 2 singling 4, 7, [misplaced 'bis' sign] 6; doubling is 4, 6, 6; taorluath foscailte singling is 7, 11, 9; doubling is 7, and then a long line of 20 bars. Angus then repeats the ground. Crunluath singling is 7, 11, 8; doubling 7, long line of 20 bars, probably dividing 11, 9. MacKay is followed by the Piobaireachd Society editors with minor

changes to time signatures and the silent omission of his instructions to repeat the ground after the taorluath and crunluath doublings:

122

# **SPADSEARACHD IARLA ROIS.** **The Earl of Ross's March.**

Composed by

**Donald Mor Mac Crummen.**

About the Year 1000.

XLVIII.



Variation 1.

Variation 2.

Doubling of Variation 2. 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup>

Variation 3. 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup>

Doubling of Variation 3. 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Bis

D.C. Thema.



124

*Crun-luath.*

The musical score consists of two main sections. The first section, titled 'Crun-luath.', spans the first six staves. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written in a single line with various note values including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The second section, titled 'Doubling of Crun-luath.', spans the remaining six staves. It continues the melody from the first section, with some variations in note values and rests. The score is written in a single line on each staff, with no bass line or other accompaniment shown.

*D. C. Thema.*





Niel MacLeod of Gesto begins as follows:

No. VII.

*Played at a time when the Scotts were at War in  
England, and obliged to feed on the Ears of  
Corn for want of Provision, commonly called  
KIAUNIDIZE.*

I him botrao, hievio va,  
hierin, hierin,  
ho dra, hievi, havie,  
ho dra, hievi, hiodin,  
him bodrao, hievio va,  
hiererin, hiererin,  
hindo, hinda, hierero,  
hao, havi, hierero,  
hierero, ho dra, hievi, havi,  
ho dra, hievi, hiodin,  
him bodrao, hievio va,  
hiererin hierin,  
betrio, ha hievi, havi,  
hodra, hievi, hiodin,  
hiererine, hiererine,  
hiererine, hiererine.

1st Var. I hiedro, hiedro, hiedro, vao,  
hiererine, hiererine,  
hiedro, hiedro, hiedro, hiedro bitrio, vao,  
bietria, hiodine,  
hiedro, hiedro, hiedro, vao,  
hiererine, hiererine.

hindo, bitrica, hierero,  
vao bietria, hierero,  
hierero, hiedro, hiedro, hiedro,  
bietrio, vao, bietria, hiodin,  
hiedro, hiedro, hiedro vao,  
hiererine, hiererine,  
bietrio, va hiedro, bietrio, vao,  
botria, hiodine,  
hiererine, hiererine,  
hiererine, hiererine.

2d Var. I hinda, hindo, hindo, hinda,  
hiererine, hiererine,  
hindo, hindo, hinda, hinda,  
hindo, hinda, hi odine,  
hinda, hindo, hindo, hinda,  
hiererine, hiererine,  
hindo, hinda, hierero, hierero,  
hinda, hinda, hierero, hierero,  
hinda, hinda, hinda, hinda,  
hindo, hinda, hio dine,  
hinda, hindo, hindo, hinda,  
hiererine, hiererine,  
hindo, hindo, hinda, hinda,  
hindo, hinda, hinda, hindo,  
hiererine, hiererine,  
hiererine, hiererine.

Double. I hinda hindo, hinda hinda,  
hindo hindo, hinda hinda,  
hindo hinda, hindo hinda,  
hindo hindo, hinda hinda,  
hinda hindo, hindo hinda,  
hindo hindo, hinda hinda,  
hindo hinda, hindo hindo,  
hinda hinda, hindo hindo,  
hinda hinda, hinda hinda,  
hindo hinda, hindo hindo,  
hinda hindo, hinda hinda,  
hindo hinda, hindo hindo.

and so on.

Thomason bases his score on MacKay and is unable therefore to resolve the timing difficulties which I, at least, think attach to MacKay's first variation. I do not see how to time this section in any way pleasingly.

### *Commentary:*

The disputed succession to the fertile and strategically important Earldom of Ross long kept the north in ferment. Donald, Lord of the Isles, having been deprived of the Earldom through various kinds of feudal skulduggery, marched upon Aberdeen, and was defeated on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1411 at a place called Harlaw in the uplands of the Garioch by a force of North-East gentry and the citizens of Aberdeen. It was a brutal, drawn encounter, known locally as "the reid Harlaw," and is celebrated in a ballad sung to this day, "The Battle of Harlaw," notable alike for the energy of its language and an historical inaccuracy more or less complete. The tune goes somewhat thus:



The words begin:

As I cam' in by Dunideer,  
 An' doon by Netherha',  
 There was fifty thoosan' Hielandmen  
 A' marchin' tae Harlaw.  
*Wi' my dirrum doo,*  
*My fal de dal,*  
*My diddie and a day.*

[...]The first straik that Lord Forbes strack ["Forbes" *pron.* as an evenly stressed  
 He gar't MacDonald reel; disyllable: "For-biss"]  
 The neist straik that Lord Forbes strack  
 The great MacDonald fell.  
*Wi' my dirrum doo, [etc.]*

An' siccan a pileerichie  
 The like ye never saw;  
 As was amang the Hielandmen  
 When they saw MacDonald fa'.  
*Wi' my dirrum doo, [etc]*

(Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection, song 112)



And so on. (The curious will find it sung in stirring style by Andy Hunter in his album, *King Fareweel*, Lismor Folk, LIFL 7002).

This was more than a raid. If MacDonald had taken Aberdeen he would have cut the country in two, effectively controlling most of the north and poised, not just to defy the King of Scots but to replace him.

After a good many further contretemps, the Earldom of Ross was detached from the Lordship of the Isles and annexed to the crown in 1476.

\* \* \*

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