

## Lament for MacLeod of Colbecks (2)

---

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

- **D. S. MacDonald's** MS, ii, 112;
- **David Glen's** MS, ff.373-376;

and in the following published sources:

- **Angus MacKay**, *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.149-52;
- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, pp.163-4;
- **William Stewart**, *et al.*, eds., *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (first series), v, 15-18.

The single earlier source for this tune is Angus MacKay's *Ancient Piobaireachd*, where the piece— a composition of his father, John MacKay— was published for the first time, as follows:

CUMHA MHIC LEIOD CHOLBIC.  
Mac Leod of Colbeck's Lament.

149

Composed by  
John Mackay.

LVII.

Variation 1.

Doubling of Variation 1.



Variation 2.



Doubling of Variation 2.



The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The first section, labeled "Variation 3.", consists of 12 measures of music. This is followed by a section labeled "Doubling of Variation 3.", which repeats the same 12 measures. The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, with some notes beamed together. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

D.C. Thema.

*Crun - luath.*

*Doubling of Crun - luath.*

*D. C. Thema.*

The image displays a musical score for a pipe and drum tune. It consists of two main sections. The first section, titled 'Crun - luath.', is written on ten staves of music. The second section, titled 'Doubling of Crun - luath.', is written on ten staves of music. The notation includes various musical symbols such as treble clefs, time signatures, and note values. The score is presented in a clear, legible format, with the title 'Crun - luath.' appearing above the first staff and 'Doubling of Crun - luath.' appearing above the first staff of the second section. The signature 'D. C. Thema.' is located at the bottom right of the page.

Careless proofing led to inaccuracies in many of the tunes in this book and suggest that MacKay may not have been involved personally in the later stages of editing. There was a note error in the ground. The D semiquaver which begins bar 10 clearly should be B on analogy from other parts, and from the fact that the tune is constructed on a scale gapped at D. General C. S. Thomason opted for a C here, and elsewhere where the figure appears in the ground. Likewise, later editors from Thomason onwards have thought it desirable to

substitute a dotted B quaver for MacKay's dotted C quaver as the second last note of the ground, and to correct a further note error which had crept into the crunluath doubling.

Another interesting feature of Angus MacKay's score is his characteristic setting of the Taorluath fogsailte as even quaver triplets in 4/4 time, as follows:



Later editors tended to rearrange these as semi-or demisemiquaver runs in 2/4 time, which was the preferred approach to such a movement by the later 19th century as we see in C. S. Thomason, and in David Glen's MS:

'Lament for MacLeod of Colbeck', taorluath fogsailte doubling, line1, C. S. Thomason, Ceol Mor, (p.163)



**David Glen** and **C. S. Thomason's** settings are very similar and the latter will not be reproduced here. David Glen set the tune as follows:

# pipes | drums

*MacLeod of Colbeck's Lament. John MacKay.*

*Ular.*

3

*1st variation*

*1st only*



374.

*Doubling.*

The musical score is written on ten staves. The first staff is marked 'Doubling.'. The second staff is marked '1st only'. The third staff is marked '2nd version'. The fourth staff is marked '1st only'. The fifth staff is marked 'Doubling.'. The sixth staff is marked '1st only'. The seventh staff is marked 'Last month'. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, time signatures, and complex rhythmic patterns.



Handwritten musical score for "Lost Pibroch". The score consists of ten staves of music, primarily in treble clef. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, typical of pibroch. Annotations include "1st time only" above the second staff, "Doubling." above the fourth staff, "1st only" above the sixth staff, and "rim-lute." written vertically to the left of the seventh staff. The final staff is also marked "1st only".

376



**D. S. MacDonald's** setting is incomplete only going as far as the first line of the taorluath singling, and appears to have been transcribed from Angus MacKay's published book. Since it adds nothing of consequence to the stylistic possibilities of the tune it is not reproduced here.

The tune was published in *The Piobaireachd Society Collection*, first series, (v, 15-18) with the title "Lament for MacLeod of Colbecks" and it was in this setting that the ground of the tune achieved its stable modern form:

# Cumha Mhic Ìeoid Chalbèrs

(Lament for MacLeod of Colbeck).

Ùrlar.



Siubhal.



Dùblachadh.





# pipes | drums

10

## An Dara Siubhal.



## Dùblachadh.



# pipes | drums

## Taor-luath.



## Dùblachadh.





Crùn-luath.

Dùblachadh.

The image displays two sections of musical notation for a pipe and drum piece. The first section, titled 'Crùn-luath.', consists of six staves of music. The second section, titled 'Dùblachadh.', consists of eight staves of music. Both sections are written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests, indicating a complex and fast-paced melody. The 'Dùblachadh' section appears to be a variation or a more complex arrangement of the 'Crùn-luath' section.

### Commentary:

John MacLeod, 1<sup>st</sup>. of Colbecks, son of Donald MacLeod of Lewis, registered arms as the representative of the MacLeods of Lewis on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1762. He had made his money in the



West Indies as a planter, with an estate at Colbecks in Jamaica. His first wife was Janet MacLeod, daughter of Malcolm MacLeod of Raasay and widow of Iain Dubh MacKinnon. The dedicatee of the tune was probably Colbecks's eldest son, also named John, who became Colonel of the MacLeod Fencibles, and married, in 1782, his first cousin Jane, or Jean, daughter of John MacLeod of Raasay. Col. John died, in London, in 1823, hence, presumably, the occasion of the lament: see Alick Morrison, *The MacLeods—the Genealogy of a Clan, section four The MacLeods of Lewis with several Septs including The MacLeods of Raasay* (Edinr., n.d.), pp. 15-16.

This tune has a close family resemblance to another John MacKay composition, "King George the Third's Lament" which is dated 1820 and published in Angus McKay's *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.102-105.

\* \* \*

Electronic text © Dr William Donaldson, Aberdeen, Scotland, March 2009