



## Lament for Donald of Laggan

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This tune is to be found in the following published collections:

- C. S. Thomason's** *Ceol Mor*, p. 231;
- Piobaireachd Society's Collection* (first series), v, 1;
- G. F. Ross**, *Some Piobaireachd Studies*, p. 25;
- A Collection of MacCrimmon and other Piobaireachd*, pp.34-5;

and in the following manuscript sources:

- Colin Campbell's** "Nether Lorn" canntaireachd, i, 54-6 (marked "One of the Cragich");
- Angus MacKay's** MS, ii, 94 [and also in the so-called "Kintarbert" MS];
- Colin Cameron's** MS, f.29 (with the title "Donald MacDonell of Laggan's Lament");
- Duncan Campbell of Foss's** MS, ff.135-136;
- Uilleam Ross's** MS, ff.137-138;
- Donald MacKay's** "Ballindalloch" MS, and the related MS of C. S. Thomason, f.27;
- D. S. MacDonald's** MS, i, 70-71;
- John MacDougall Gillies's** MS, f.107 [Gillies's score is incomplete and rather sketchy, and is not reproduced here];
- David Glen's** MS, f.81;
- Robert Meldrum's** MS, ff.155-156.

As with all breabach tunes, the possibility arises here of playing the taorluath and crunluath movements "up" or "down." The major staff notation scores time these as follows:

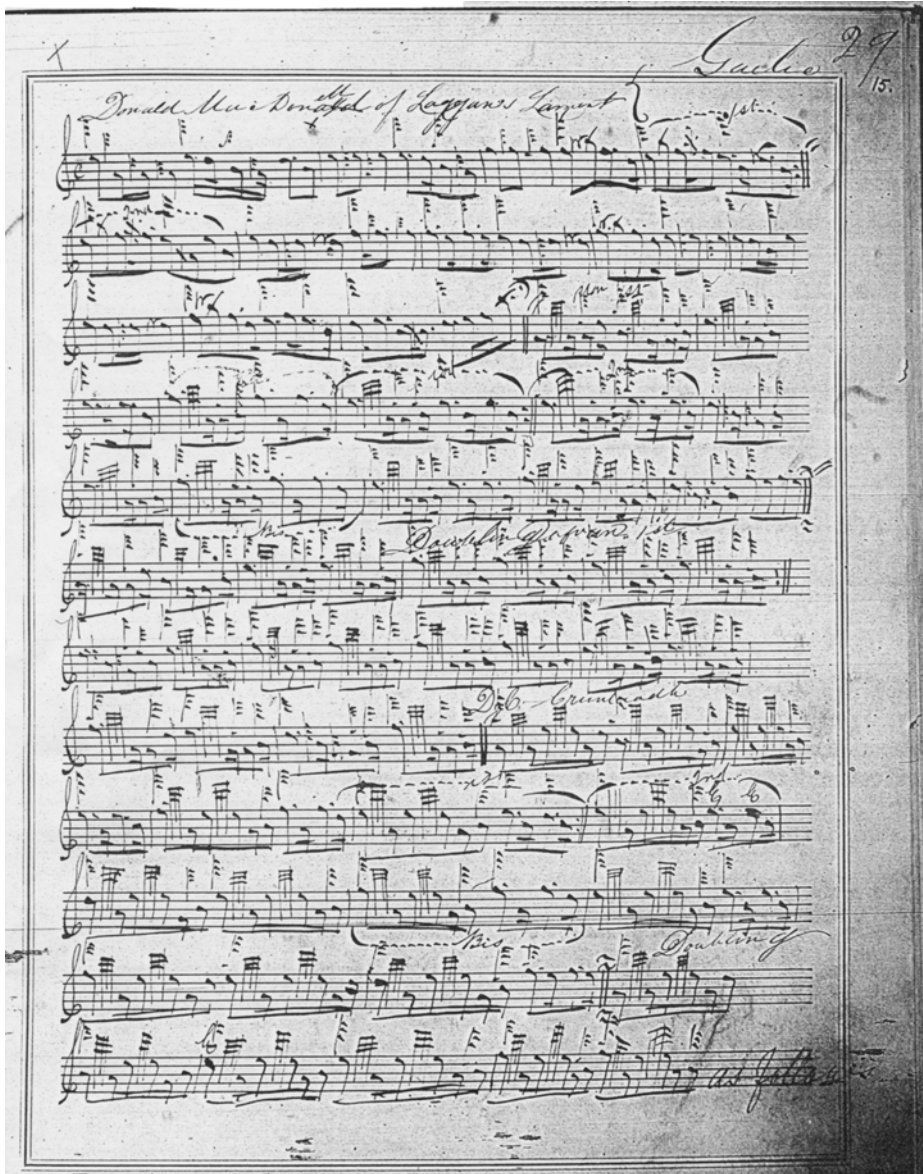
	<b>MacKay</b>	<b>Cameron</b>	<b>Campbell of Foss</b>	<b>Glen</b>	<b>Thomason Ceol Mor</b>	<b>G. F. Ross</b>
Taorluath breabach	even quavers	"down"	even quavers	even quavers	"down"	"down"
Crunluath breabach	"up"	"up"	"up"	"up"	"down"	"down"

The taorluaths set as even quavers all have an implied "up" timing, but obviously not jerkily so: all these things should be timed fairly "round" and smooth.

Angus MacKay sets the tune as follows:



MacKay, as he often does in his manuscript, uses strings of even quavers, which has the effect of leaving final decisions about pointing up to the player. More guidance is given in this respect by other important Victorian sources including **Colin Cameron** who sets the piece like this:





**David Glen**'s marginal notes show a typical attempt to amend this "irregular" tune: he notes "1<sup>st</sup> strain 4 bars, 2<sup>nd</sup> 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> 4—could be rendered perfect by repeating 1<sup>st</sup> 2 bars in 1<sup>st</sup> strain."

Donald MacDonald of Glasgow in First Long 8/1  
Cumha Dhonnchaidh an Lagair. Donald M. Donnell of Laggans Lament.

41. 1<sup>st</sup> strain 4 bars  
2<sup>nd</sup> 6.  
3<sup>rd</sup> 4.  
could be rendered perfect by repeating 1<sup>st</sup> 2 bars in 1<sup>st</sup> strain.

6th. through the middle more compact

Doubling

brim-luth

Doubling

42.

The most dramatic attempt at emendation came from **G. F. Ross**. In his book *Some Piobaireachd Studies* (Glasg., 1926), he brought the ground up to 16 bars by transposing bars 3 and 4 of the first line to the initial position. Ross was heavily influenced by Simon Fraser, and it seems likely that this “correction” had Fraser as its ultimate source:

**LAMENT FOR DONALD OF LAGAN.** Patrick Mor Mac Crimmon.

Key to Abbreviations.

Taorluth Breabach.

Crunluth Breabach.

(1) Ground.

(2) Taorluth Breabach (4) Crunluth Breabach.

(3) (5) Doubling.



### Commentary:

Donald of Laggan was *Domhnall MacAonghais mhic Alastair*, 8<sup>th</sup> laird of Glengarry, who lived in the later 16<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. His turbulent father, Angus Og, bequeathed him a series of long-running feuds with the Grants and the MacKenzies. The Glengarry lands in the north marched with MacKenzie territory in Lochalsh and Loch Carron, producing almost constant friction. Hostilities took place by land and sea, culminating in the burning of the church of Cillechrìosd and the capture and destruction of Glengarry's stronghold, Strome castle, at the mouth of Lochcarron. This latter provided the subject of another lovely, and too much neglected, tune, known variously as “Castle Strome” and “The Battle of Lochcarron Point.” (*Ceol Mor*, pp.63, 240, 355). Donald of Laggan died aged more than a hundred, on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1645, the day of the second battle of Inverlochy. Further information will be found in Alexander MacKenzie's *The MacDonalds of Glengarry* (Inverness, 1881), and the same writer's *History of the Clan MacKenzie* (Inverness, 1879).

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