

## John Garbh MacLeod of Raasay's Lament (2)

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

- **Donald MacDonald snr.**'s MS, ff.20-24;
- **Peter Reid**'s MS, f.29;
- **Donald MacDonald jnr.**'s MS, f.1;
- **David Glen**'s MS, f.139;
- **McLennan** papers, (NLS Acc.11516/8) f.31 (marked "copied");
- **Robert Meldrum**'s MS, ff.217-220;

and in the following published sources:

- **Angus MacKay**'s *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.23-5;
- **David Glen**'s *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.172-4;
- **C. S. Thomason**'s *Ceol Mor*, pp.61-2;
- **William Stewart**, *et al.*, eds., *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (first series), i, 4-7;
- **G. F. Ross**, *Some Piobaireachd Studies*, p.31; *Collection of MacCrimmon and other piobaireachd*, pp.42-3.

There are basically two routes through this tune, that of Donald MacDonald distinguished by a pleasant siubhal, and Angus MacKay who proceeds directly from the ground to taorluath and crunluath variations singling, doubling and trebling.

**Donald MacDonald** develops the tune as follows:

Ground
Siubhal singling doubling
Taorluath singling doubling
Crunluath singling doubling

No crunluath a mach is indicated

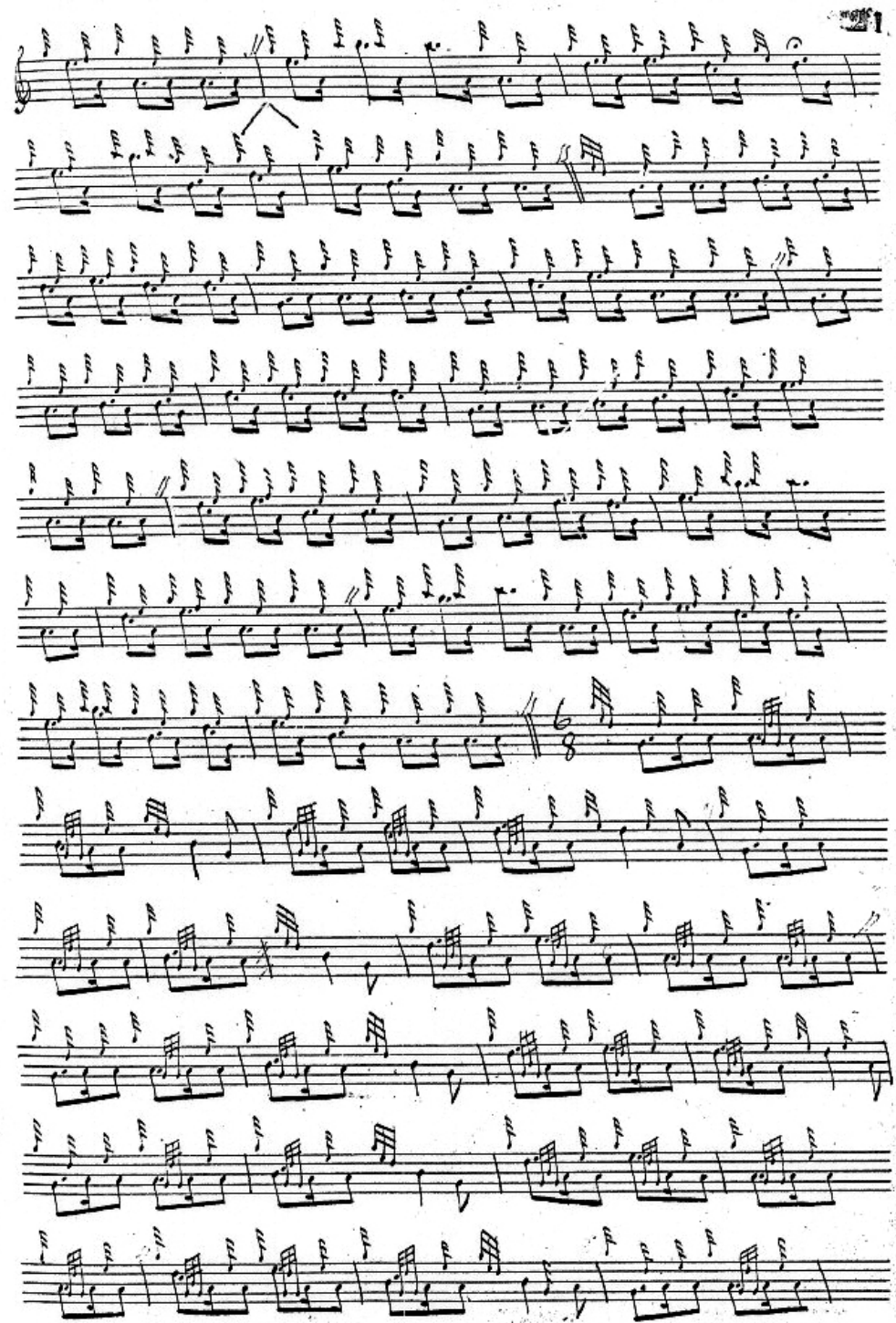
# pipes | drums

*John Garve MacLeod of Rasay's Lament* JOHN GARVE(?) MACLEOD OF RASAY'S LAMENT.

20

This image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "John Garve MacLeod of Rasay's Lament". The score is written on twelve staves of five-line music paper. It begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notation is dense, featuring many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, which are characteristic of traditional Scottish pipe and drum music. The handwriting is in ink and appears to be from the 19th or early 20th century. The number "20" is written in the top left corner of the first staff. The title is written in a cursive script above the first staff, and a printed version of the title is written in a smaller font to the right of the first staff.

# pipes | drums





# pipes | drums



# pipes | drums







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.

**Donald MacDonald jnr.**'s manuscript gives the ground, taorluath singling and the opening bars of the crunluath singling only. In addition the ground is timed largely as a succession of even crotchets and it is clear that the score is incomplete, an *aide memoire* probably at best. This score is not reproduced here.

**Peter Reid** sets the tune as follows:



In **Peter Reid**'s setting, the reader will note the interesting difference in pointing the echo beats from MacDonald's style. 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 19 bars in both singling and doubling. Since Reid's MS is heavily affected by print-through, a transcript is provided below:

# pipes | drums

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





# pipes | drums

'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.'

**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

**CUMHA IAIN GHAIROH MHIC GILLECHALLAM.**

John Garve Mac Leod of Rasay's Lament.

Composed by

Patrick Mor Mac Crummén.

Soon After

1648.

IX.

1st

2nd

Variation 1.

1st

2nd

# pipes | drums

21

**Doubling of Variation 1.**

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It consists of two main sections: 'Doubling of Variation 1' and 'Trebling of Variation 1'. The 'Doubling' section is marked with a '1st' repeat sign and a '2nd' ending bracket. The 'Trebling' section is also marked with a '1st' repeat sign and a '2nd' ending bracket. The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, with some notes beamed together. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The score is attributed to D. C. Thoma.

**Trebling of Variation 1.**

*Crun-luath.* *D. C. Thoma.*



Doubling of Crun-luath.

Trebling of Crun-luath.

D. C. Thema ul Fine.

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. MacKay's style is sometimes a little prolix. Here, for example, it is difficult to see the aesthetic point of the taorluath and crunluath treblings, and in this respect at least Donald MacDonald snr.'s seems the more balanced setting.

## pipes | drums

In his manuscript, **David Glen** has copied the ground from Donald MacDonald snr.'s MS, although he preserves his own characteristic timing of the double echo beats:



**Glen** adopts this timing in the ground of his published version of the tune in which he follows MacKay rather than MacDonald, developing the piece as follows: ground: MacDonald style siubhal singling/doubling, then MacKay style taorluath singling/doubling/trebling; and crunluath singling/doubling/trebling. Glen repeats the ground between the taorluath and crunluath variations and once again at the end of the tune.

**C. S. Thomason** prints both MacDonald's and MacKay's versions in *Ceol Mor*, In the first of these he directs that the ground be repeated after the taorluath doubling and again at the end of the tune which instructions are missing in Donald MacDonald snr.'s MS, but otherwise he follows his originals fairly closely. Since they add little to the stylistic possibilities of the tune, the repeats of the ground excepted, C. S. Thomason's scores are not reproduced here.

**McLennan Papers.** The score here is of the ground merely. It is set in the characteristic McLennan 3/2 metre, and has one or two interesting nuances of style which make it worth reproducing here:



**William Stewart's** score in *The Piobaireachd Society Collection* (first series) 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". There is no crunluath a mach. Stewart's score adds nothing significant to the musical interpretation of the tune and is not reproduced here.

**G. F. Ross** set the tune twice. In *Some Piobaireachd Studies* it appeared as follows:

<p>THERE seem to be only two slightly differing versions of this tune published—one Donald Macdonald's MS. version, given in Glen's Edinburgh Collection, and Angus MacKay's published version, as a representative one. The main difference is in the opening bar (and similar bars throughout the tune). MacKay opens with E and MacDonald with D. The D would appear to be the better note. There is also a slight difference in the 22nd and 26th bars. Macdonald has the double beat on E as given here, whereas MacKay has two E's of equal length separated by A, F, A grace notes. However, both versions are written in three-four time, and in rewriting, in common time, the Compiler has taken the opportunity to correct the accent in the last half of the 21st, 25th and 27th bars. If the accent in the last half of many of the other bars in the tune is correctly placed on the last note there is little doubt the accent in the case of these named bars is on the last note also. Indeed the rhythm of the tune would seem to demand it.</p> <p>The Variations are not in question and it is not therefore necessary to reproduce them here.</p>	<p><b>HISTORICAL NOTE.</b>—This tune is usually dated about 1648 and ascribed to Patrick Mor MacCrimmon.</p> <p>There would appear to be some doubt as to the date. John Garve was drowned. According to Mackenzie's "History of the MacLeods," John VI. of Raasay was served heir to his father on 22nd September, 1648, and met his death at the early age of twenty-one in 1688. In 1688 his sisters were served heirs of line through their father and grandfather, and it was not until 1692 that Alexander VII. of Raasay obtained resignation of their interests. According to the Wardlaw MS. the accident occurred "this April" and the earliest date could not be before 1649. As John Garve's father died before 1648 ("History of the MacLeods") the inference is, John was not served heir till his majority, and was drowned the following year, 1649. If the date 1688 is correct, then the tune must be credited to Patrick Og MacCrimmon, as it was too late for the father, Patrick Mor.</p>
<p>Macdonald's M.S. version.</p> 	
<p>Revision.</p> 	
<p>Macdonald's M.S. version.</p> 	
<p>Revision.</p> 	
<p>Macdonald's M.S. version.</p> 	
<p>Revision.</p> 	

As his notes indicate, Ross thought that the metre should be 4/4 rather than 3/4, and adjusted the time values of the ground to demonstrate this. Whether the result is altogether happy could be debated: some may feel it has a tendency to divide the melody into separate chunks and rather impedes the flow.

Ross's full score appeared in *A Collection of MacCrimmon and Other Piobaireachd*, where he set the tune as follows:



# pipes | drums

## LAMENT FOR JOHN GARVE OF RAASAY. (1671).

Bar Nos.	1 & 9 17 25	2 & 10 18 26	3 & 11 19 27	4 & 12 20 28	5 & 13 21 29	6 & 14 22 30	7 & 15 23 31	8 & 16 24 32
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(1) Ground.

(2) Siubhal.

(3) Doubling.

Patrick Og MacCrimmon.

Bar Nos.	1 & 9 17 25	2 & 10 18 26	3 & 11 19 27	4 & 12 20 28	5 & 13 21 29	6 & 14 22 30	7 & 15 23 31	8 & 16 24 32
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(4) Taobhludh.

(5) Doubling.

(6) Creanludh (Singling\*) (7) Doubling (as printed in skeleton without grace notes)

\* For Creanludh Singling substitute the corresponding Singling beats in Taobhludh Singling.  
 Note. A Trebling of Taobhludh and Creanludh is sometimes played but is not recommended. It follows the Doubling, but in place of the beats to low G (except the beat in bar 29 beats from low G are played).

Ross notes that "A Trebling of Taobhludh and Creanludh is sometimes played but is not recommended. It follows the Doubling, but in place of the beats *to* low G (except the beat in bar 31) beats *from* low G are played."

**Robert Meldrum's** score is dated 1932 and appears to have its source in the Piobaireachd Society (first series) text, except that Meldrum drops the crunluath trebling, developing the tune in the following manner: ground, siubhal singling/doubling; taorluath singling/doubling; crunluath singling/doubling. He does not indicate that the ground be repeated either between the taorluath and crunluath variations. Robert Meldrum's score adds nothing significant to the musical interpretation of the tune and is not reproduced here.

### *Commentary:*

William Stewart includes the following tale of the death by drowning of the young laird of Raasay in his "Notes on the Piobaireachd Tunes" included in *The Piobaireachd Society's Collection* (first series) i 8-9:

*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 MacGille-Chalum 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 Rarzey, to witness the christening; & after the treat and solemnity of the feast, Rarzey 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 Macleod in the Lewes the night before had voice warning him thrice not to goe at (all) with Rarzey, 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. Drunkeness did the (mischiefe)."' (f.107)

"Fionn" in his note to the tune in "Historic, Biographic, and Legendary Notes to the Tunes" in David Glen's *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd* adds

The famous bardess, *Màiri, nighean Alasdair Ruaidh*, composed a touching lament to his memory, beginning—

Mo bheud 's mo chràdh,  
Mar dh' éirich do'n  
'N fhear ghleusta ghràidh  
Bha treun a's an spàirn  
'S nach faicear gu bráth thu'n Rathasaidh.

'S e'n sgeul cràiteach  
Do'n mhnaoi a dh'fhàg thu,  
'S do t-aon bhràthair  
A shuidh 'n ad àite;  
Diluain Càisge  
Chaidh tonn bàit' ort,  
Craobh a b' àird' de'n abhal thu.

His sister also composed a Lament for John Garve beginning—

'S mi 'nam shuidh' air an fhadhlainn  
Gun fhaoilte gun fhan, &c.

which will be found in several collections of Gaelic song.

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