



Lord MacDonald's Lament

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

- **MacArthur/MacGregor** ff.49-52;
- **Angus MacKay**, i, 119-122 ;
- **Colin Cameron**, f.145;
- **Duncan Campbell of Foss**, ff.79-81;
- **Uilleam Ross**, ff.119-120;
- **D. S. MacDonald**, i, 135-8;
- **David Glen**, ff.20-22;

and in the following published sources:

- **Frans Buisman and Andrew Wright**, eds., *The MacArthur-MacGregor Manuscript of Piobaireachd* (1820), pp.144.
- **Ceol Mor** p.301.

It is difficult to see the justification for the version in the *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (second series) vol. 13 which gives as its sources the MacArthur/MacGregor and in Angus MacKay's manuscript, stating that "we have given it as it appears in the latter record," because the resulting score reproduces neither source accurately. As a general point, although this is quite a nice tune, the basic motif of the ground– successive rising fourths A-D and C-F have a slightly awkward feel they may perhaps never quite lose in playing.

The MacArthur/MacGregor manuscript times the tune as follows:







Angus MacKay develops the tune in a very similar manner to MacArthur which, indeed, he identifies as his source. Indeed all the settings of this tune seem to descend from a single ultimate written source and there is little stylistic variety amongst the scores, indicating either that it gave relatively little scope for creative elaboration, or that it was perhaps one of those pieces in the repertoire which was more admired than played. MacKay set the tune as follows:

Cumha Mhàir Mhàiri Dòmhnail. 119

Son the Donald's Lament
composed by
August MacArthur
1796

No. 16. In the H.S. of London's MSS.



Piper - Linnell / 21

The image displays two sections of handwritten musical notation on ten staves. The first section, titled 'Piper - Linnell', consists of eight staves of music. The second section, titled 'Doubling', consists of four staves of music. The notation is written in a cursive, handwritten style, featuring various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The paper appears aged and slightly stained.



Colin Cameron develops the tune very similarly to Angus MacKay, except that he does not stipulate a thumb variation; his score is not reproduced here.



Duncan Campbell of Foss also develops the tune very similarly to Angus MacKay, except that he does not have a crunluath a mach movement nor does he indicate that the ground be repeated following the taorluath and crunluath doublings.

Uilleam Ross's score is incomplete, ending at the third bar of the crunluath singling. Ross follows Colin Cameron more or less exactly and his score is not reproduced here.

D. S. MacDonald follows Angus MacKay closely in this instance and is not reproduced here.

David Glen's score also follows MacKay closely, but it is beamed so sensibly that it is reproduced here as a guide to phrasing. Glen ends at the crunluath doubling but adds in a note that a crunluath a mach should be played in this instance:

Lord Macdonald's Lament. Cumhaich Mhòraich Lehlann Dòmhnachail.
by Angus MacArthur 1786.

8. *Wm.*

Var. 1.

Var. 2.

Var. 3.

Var. 4.

Var. 5.

Var. 6.

Var. 7.

Var. 8.

Var. 9.

Var. 10.

Var. 11.

Var. 12.

Var. 13.

Var. 14.

Var. 15.

Var. 16.

Var. 17.

Var. 18.

Var. 19.

Var. 20.

Var. 21.

Var. 22.

Var. 23.

Var. 24.

Var. 25.

Var. 26.

Var. 27.

Var. 28.

Var. 29.

Var. 30.

Var. 31.

Var. 32.

Var. 33.

Var. 34.

Var. 35.

Var. 36.

Var. 37.

Var. 38.

Var. 39.

Var. 40.

Var. 41.

Var. 42.

Var. 43.

Var. 44.

Var. 45.

Var. 46.

Var. 47.

Var. 48.

Var. 49.

Var. 50.

Var. 51.

Var. 52.

Var. 53.

Var. 54.

Var. 55.

Var. 56.

Var. 57.

Var. 58.

Var. 59.

Var. 60.

Var. 61.

Var. 62.

Var. 63.

Var. 64.

Var. 65.

Var. 66.

Var. 67.

Var. 68.

Var. 69.

Var. 70.

Var. 71.

Var. 72.

Var. 73.

Var. 74.

Var. 75.

Var. 76.

Var. 77.

Var. 78.

Var. 79.

Var. 80.

Var. 81.

Var. 82.

Var. 83.

Var. 84.

Var. 85.

Var. 86.

Var. 87.

Var. 88.

Var. 89.

Var. 90.

Var. 91.

Var. 92.

Var. 93.

Var. 94.

Var. 95.

Var. 96.

Var. 97.

Var. 98.

Var. 99.

Var. 100.

continued

Doubling

Bis

Grain. Luth.

Bis

1st

1st continued

2nd

Doubling of Grain-Luth.

Continued

Al. Thema.



There are two settings in the published sources:

The **MacArthur/MacGregor** edition follows the manuscript score and is not reproduced here.

C. S. Thomason's score follows Angus MacKay, except that Thomason does not have a crunluath a mach movement. It is not reproduced here.

Commentary:

Of this man, Sir Alexander MacDonald the 9th baronet of Sleat, raised to the peerage as Lord MacDonald in 1776, Alexander Nicolson remarks in his *History of Skye* (Glasg. 1930) that "This chief had been educated at Eton and St. Andrews, and he was a cultured man...we have a Latin ode by him, written as a welcome to Dr. Johnson...He was also an accomplished musician, renowned alike for his taste and for his skill as a player of the violin. Two noteworthy compositions that will long remain among the prime favourites of fiddlers and pipers stand to his credit, namely "Lord MacDonald's Reel" and "Mrs. Mackinnon of Corry."

While one would not go so far as to agree with Dr. Johnson's observation that his education had unfitted him for the position of chief, yet it must be conceded that he was wholly devoid of sympathy either with the culture, or the manner of life, of his own people. In his dealings with them he stood purely in the role of landlord; and he had no scruples about increasing their burdens when occasion presented itself. The demand for wool, and the boom in kelp, had furnished him with ample pretexts for raising rents and he took the fullest advantage of the situation. Great resentment, therefore, prevailed against him, and several of his tacksmen actually united, pledging themselves to resist the payment of what they looked upon as unwarrantable impositions; while many were constrained to emigrate." (pp.285-7)



Boswell and Johnson were entertained by him on their tour of the Hebrides and neither appears to have been impressed. Boswell described him as an "English-bred chieftain," while Johnson scoffed, when somebody remarked that Lord MacDonald was a timid sailor, that "*He is frightened at sea; and his tenants are frightened when he comes to land.*" (R. W. Chapman, ed., *Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, Oxford, 1924, p.263)
Lord MacDonald died in September 1795.

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