

## Lament for the Little Supper

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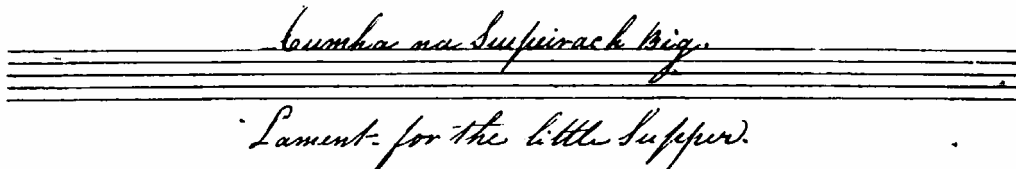
This is a widely diffused tune and is found in the following manuscript sources:

- Angus MacKay**, ii, 16-17
- Colin Cameron**, f.52
- Duncan Campbell of Foss**, ff.34-36
- Uilleam Ross**, ff.237-238
- C. S. Thomason**, f.33
- D. S. MacDonald**, i, 6-7
- John MacDougall Gillies**, f.54
- David Glen**, ff.38-39
- The McLennan Papers**, NLS. Acc. 11516/8, f.24
- Robert Meldrum**, f.216.

And in the following published sources:

- C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, p.229

**Angus MacKay** sets the tune as follows:





The image displays a handwritten musical score for a drum solo, consisting of ten staves of notation. The notation is dense and rhythmic, featuring numerous eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The score includes several annotations: "Doubling" appears on the second and eighth staves; "Drum-sluath" is written on the fifth staff; and "D. 6." is written at the end of the fourth staff. The notation is written in black ink on a white background, with some ink bleed-through visible at the bottom of the page.

The score is set, as **Angus MacKay's** frequently are, as even quavers, giving the interpreter considerable scope for variations of timing. His structure in the ground is irregular. "The



Lament for the Little Supper" seems intended to be an even lined tune of four lines, but MacKay comes out at 8, 8, 8, 6, in the ground, although his variations are regular. He develops the tune in the following manner: ground; taorluath breabach singling and doubling; ground; crunluath breabach singling, doubling; ground. Both breabach variations, taorluath and crunluath, are played "up."

--**Colin Cameron** sets the tune as follows:

*In the year of the...*

# The Little Snapper.

*See...*

*Colin Cameron*

*The Little Snapper*

Colin Cameron's setting is dotted and cut, giving a more precise view of the intended timing, but is "short" both in the third and fourth line of the ground.

Duncan Campbell of Foss, times the tune as follows:

*Gunka na Subirach Big*

*Lament for the Little Supper*

The image shows handwritten musical notation for two tunes. The first tune, 'Gunka na Subirach Big', is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The second tune, 'Lament for the Little Supper', is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. Below the titles, there are four staves of musical notation, each containing a single line of music. The notation consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and accidentals. The first two staves appear to be the first two lines of the first tune, and the last two staves appear to be the first two lines of the second tune.

*Variation 1<sup>st</sup>*

*Doubling of Variation 1<sup>st</sup>*

*Crucial breath*

*Doubling of Crucial breath*

Once again, **Duncan Campbell's** score is neatly dotted and cut, and is interesting in showing his intended timings; but it, too, is short in the last line of the ground, while the variations follow an even 4: 4, 4 pattern as in the other scores.

**Uilleam Ross's** setting is very similar to Duncan Campbell's and shows the same structural peculiarity in the ground. It is not reproduced here.

**D. S. MacDonald,** follows MacKay and is also "short" in the ground. This score is not reproduced here.

**John MacDougall Gillies,** is "short" in line 3 as well as line 4, and is not reproduced here.

**C. S. Thomason** presents the tune as follows:



**Thomason** brings line four in the ground up to the "correct" proportions rather pleasingly, many might think, avoiding the weak repetition of phrase material which marks Archibald Campbell's emendation in the *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (second series) viii, 237-8.

For myself, I might go further, and time line four like so:

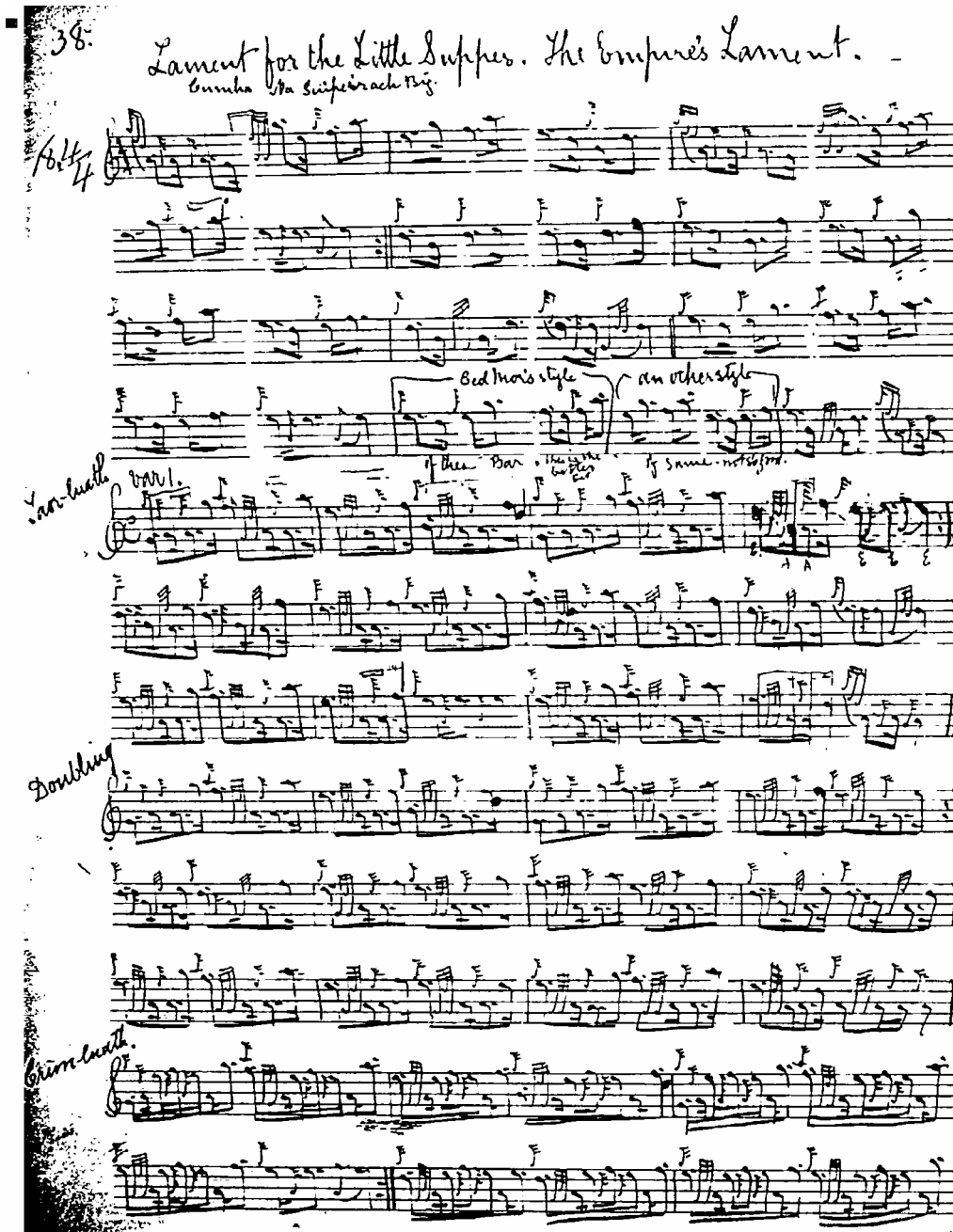


Thomason times his taorluath breabach "down" and his crunluath breabach "up."



David Glen, records Thomason's "fix" for line four of the ground, and offers an alternative route not dissimilar to *PS8*:

38. Lament for the Little Supper. The Empire's Lament. -  
*Gumha na Suidheach naig.*




The image shows a handwritten musical score on ten staves. The title is "Lament for the Little Supper. The Empire's Lament." with the Gaelic subtitle "Gumha na Suidheach naig." below it. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The first staff is marked with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. The second staff has a treble clef. The third staff has a treble clef and includes the handwritten note "var. taorluath" on the left. The fourth staff has a bass clef and includes the handwritten note "Bar." above it. The fifth staff has a treble clef and includes the handwritten note "Doubling" on the left. The sixth staff has a treble clef. The seventh staff has a treble clef and includes the handwritten note "Crunluath." on the left. The eighth staff has a treble clef. The ninth staff has a treble clef. The tenth staff has a treble clef. There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and bar lines throughout the score. Some notes are circled or have other markings. The handwriting is fluid and expressive.

And so on.

Glen times his eallachs "down" in his usual style. Like Thomason he points his taorluath breabach "down" and his crunluath breabach "up."

McLennan's setting is roughed out merely. It shows his characteristic 4/2 timing with eallachs played "down"; but this score leaves the structural imbalance of the ground intact and is not reproduced here.

Robert Meldrum, sets the tune as follows:



The image shows a handwritten musical score for a Pibroch, consisting of eight staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals. There are handwritten annotations in the left margin: "1st Var" on the third staff, "2nd Var" on the fourth staff, and "Crunluath Breabach" on the sixth staff. The score is written in a clear, legible hand.

Rather interestingly, Meldrum returns to low A at the end of line three. Like several other of the idiomatic scores he times his taorluath breabach "down" and his crunluath breabach "up."

### *Commentary*

There are interesting echoes of this tune in "The Lament for the Great Supper" the opening of whose ground is very similar; but thereafter the tunes develop in a different manner.

In his "Ceol Mor Legends" General Thomason gives the story of "Lament for the Little Supper" as follows:

In 1872 when Donald MacKay was teaching me this Pibroch, I asked him if he could give me the story of it. He told me apparently the identical story which follows here, but could not tell me the name of the Clans concerned nor of the locality. He thought however that the locality was bordering on the Moray Firth. At one time I thought I had run it to earth in Speyside, but further inquiries in Elgin did not prove satisfactory. I have only lately come across the story in



the 'Seven Gardens and a Palace' by E. V. B--page 156. published by John Lane 1900. I think the identification of the story is clear[...]

Haunted by its terrible tradition the scene once seen long ago looms gloomily afar. The Castle of Rait, near the town of Nairn, is founded upon a rock, yet it has not stood. Three roofless shattered walls forlornly pierced by empty windows & their broken transoms are all that remain of it; and the sky looks down upon a dismal hollow place of heaps and wildering thorns. Wintry winds mourn through & through with a sound of bitter wailing. Late Autumn suns glow with lurid light upon the walls & Summer's belated flowers bloom sweetly at their foot between the rocks and tumbled boulders. Not alone has stress of time and tempest rent and ruined the ancient stronghold. A curse is there, that 'says us plain, no whisper in the ear, the place is haunted'. The story of Raid Castle lives but in dim traditions of the countryside. They tell of the Chief of the Cummings' fatal feast, and how his guests of the Clan Chattan were to be treacherously slaughtered. All is ready as the Mackintoshes troop up the hill. Courteously they are welcomed & the banquet is begun and loud the revelry wore on into the night. Suddenly, the skirl of bagpipes shrills through the din of song and laughter resounding on the stair,--and one enters bearing a ghastly dish--a black bull's head. Then the silent toast is given "The Memory of the Dead," and at the signal the clan rise up to draw their swords each man upon his guest at his side. But Cumming's daughter had secretly forewarned young Mackintosh her lover; and every Mackintosh had his dirk ready, hid under his plaid. Out flashed the blades as with a yell of derision the Mackintoshes flung themselves on the traitors, and plunged their daggers into their hearts. None but the Cummings' chief escaped alive; and he, mad with rage, sprang up to the turret where his daughter had taken refuge, and as she flew to the window, trying to leap out and escape from her maddened father, with his broadsword he struck off both her hands. ...From that night of horror, ever after Rait has been desolate. Centuries have rolled away, the cruel tragedy is forgot,--only the blood-stained ruin on the hill stands in solitary, silent witness." ff.370-372.

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