

## Lament for King George III

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

– **David Glen**'s MS, ff.362-364;

and in the following published sources:

– **Angus MacKay**'s *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.102-5 (with a note "Composed by John MacKay. 1820");

– **Donald MacPhee**'s *Collection of Piobaireachd*, ii, 35-8;

– **C. S. Thomason**'s *Ceol Mor*, p.117.

This was a composition of **Angus MacKay**'s father, John MacKay, and in *Ancient Piobaireachd* Angus set it as follows:

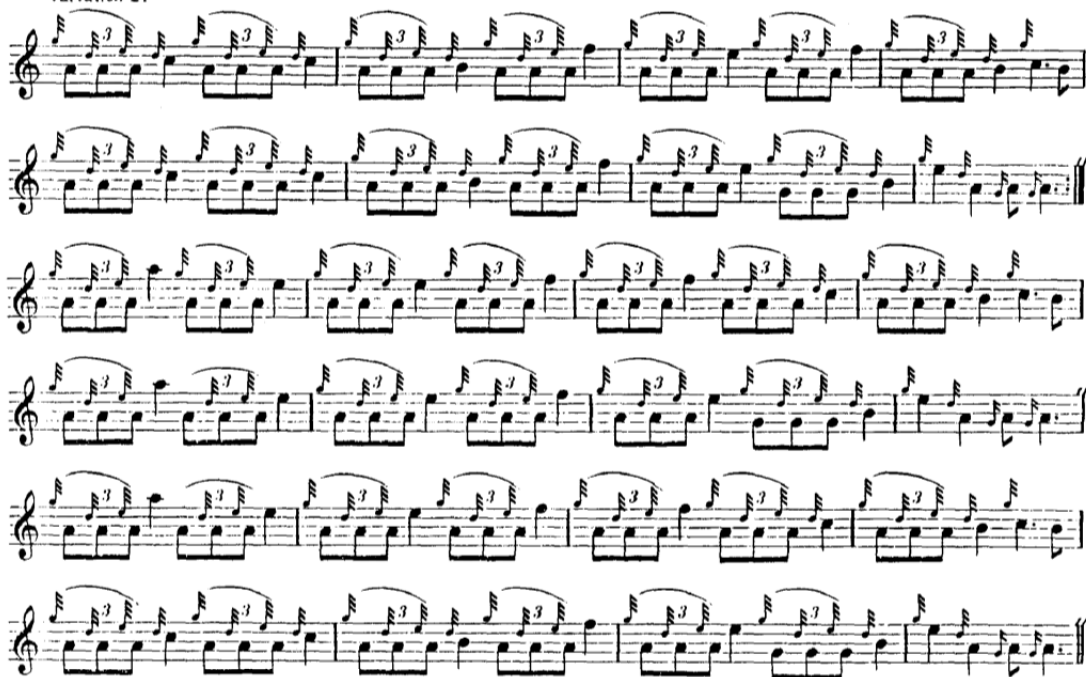
**CUMHA RIGH SEORUS A TRI.**  
King George the Third's Lament.

Composed by  
John Mackay.  
1820.

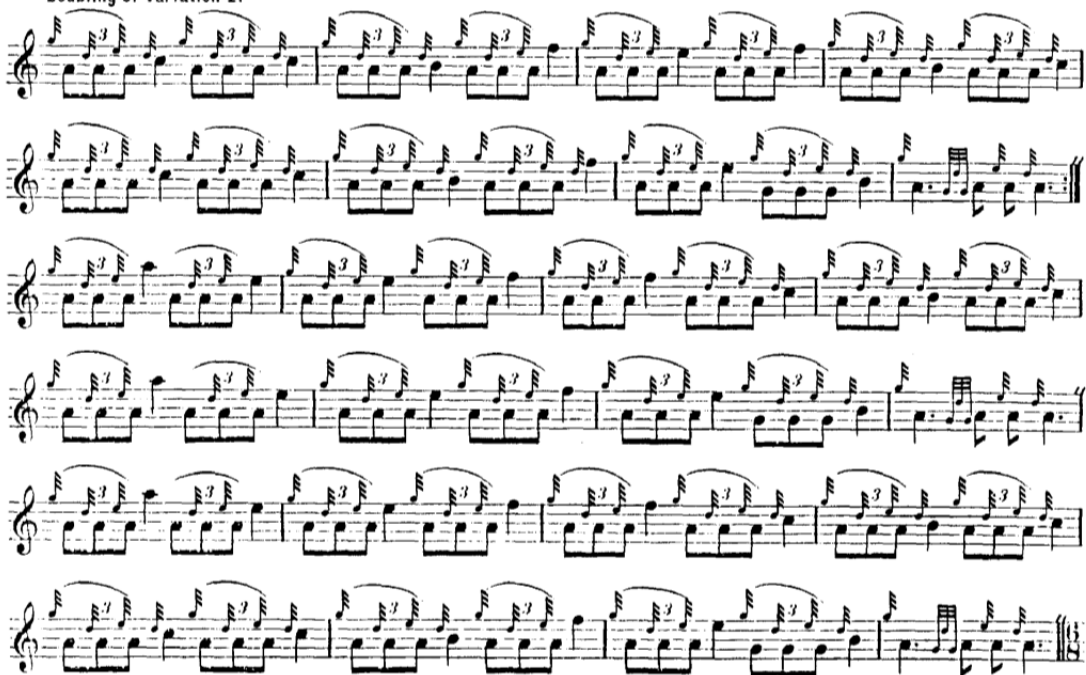
XLII.

The musical notation is presented in three systems, each with three staves. The first system is labeled 'XLII.' and the second 'Variation 1.' The third system is labeled 'Doubling of Variation 1.' The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system consists of three staves of music. The second system, 'Variation 1.', also consists of three staves. The third system, 'Doubling of Variation 1.', consists of three staves. The notation is a complex pipe and drum tune, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and is written in a style typical of 19th-century musical publications.

Variation 2.



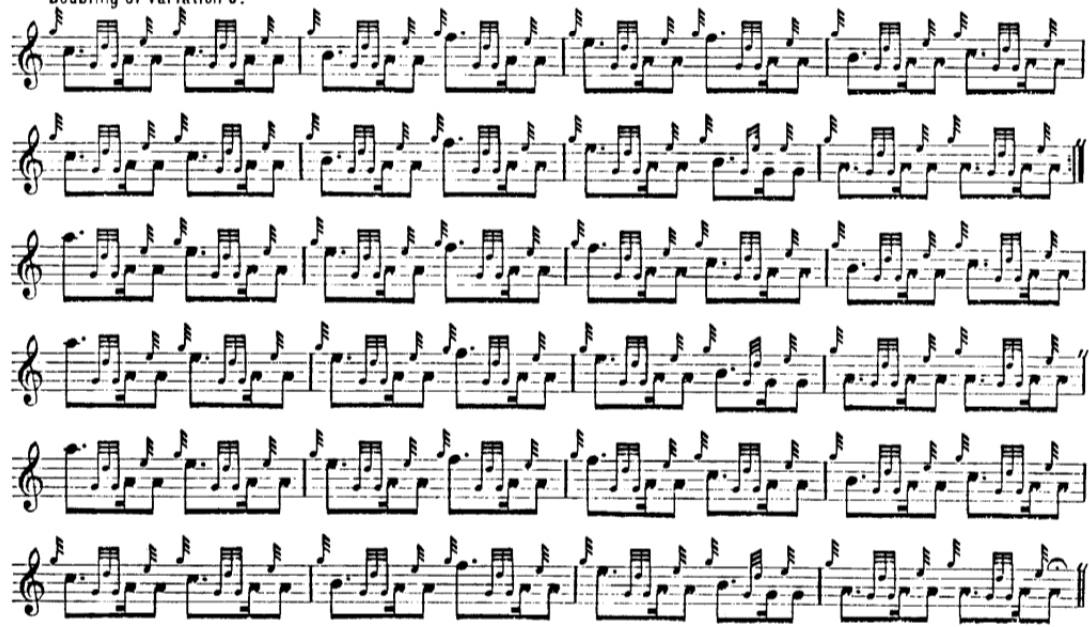
Doubling of Variation 2.



Variation 3.



Doubling of Variation 3.



Crun - luath.



*D. G. Thema.*



Doubling of Crun-luath.

*D.C. Thema.*

Donald MacPhee sets the tune like this:

# CUMHA RICH SEORAIS III.

35

## KING GEORGE THE THIRD'S LAMENT.

John Mackay 1820.

Var. 1<sup>st</sup> Siubhal.

Var. 1<sup>st</sup> Doubling.

And so on. MacPhee points all his eallachs "down" in contrast to MacKay's alternating timings, and corrects the extraneous D gracenote in bar six of the taorluath fosgailte doubling in MacKay's score, but otherwise sets the tune as MacKay did.

**C. S. Thomason's** setting adds little to the expressive possibilities of the tune and is not reproduced here.

**David Glen** sets the tune like this:



362

Doubbling

Air

King George the Third's Lament: by John Mackay.

1st Var

2nd

2. better if not other way same as Collected H by same Composer



363

*Doubling.*

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a Piobaireachd (bagpipe tune). The score is written on ten staves, each consisting of a treble and bass line. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The score is divided into sections by the word "Doubling." written above the staves. The first section is labeled "1st time" and the second section is labeled "2nd time". The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The paper is aged and slightly discolored. The number "363" is written in the top right corner. The word "Doubling." is written above the first and fifth staves. The words "1st time" and "2nd time" are written above the third and seventh staves respectively. The signature "C. MacRae" is written in the bottom right corner.

*1st time*

*2nd time*

*Doubling.*

*1st*

*2nd*

*Two. with.*

*1st*

*2nd*

*Doubling.*

*C. MacRae*

It is interesting to see Glen speculate about the pointing of the siubhal and make links with another John MacKay compositions even if in the end he leaves the tune substantially alone from an editorial point of view, his setting being practically identical with that of Donald MacPhee.

*Commentary:*

As Glen points out there are echoes here of "The Lament for MacLeod of Colbecks" (another John MacKay composition), but there are also strong links with "The Highland Society of London's Salute," by the same composer, although the line, at 16 bars, is shorter. There are echoes of a number of other tunes too, including "The Lament for the Earl of Antrim" and "The Lament for Donald Duaghal MacKay," perhaps prompting unflattering comparisons with those very much greater compositions. This may be an example of "duty" writing, a conventional tribute to the leading public figure of the day. Several of the royal dukes occupied prominent positions in the Highland Societies of London and Scotland and one of them, the Duke of Suffolk, employed John MacKay's son, John, Angus's elder brother. It was to such people that the the MacKay family might reasonably look for preferment. George III died in January 1820, so this piece may be an early expression of musical ideas which John MacKay was to put to better use later in his career.

In his "Historical, and Traditional Notes on the Piobaireachds" attached to Angus MacKay's published volume of 1838, the journalist and antiquary James Logan remarks that

This piece was composed by John MacKay, Piper to James MacLeod, Esq. of Rasay, in 1802. [note the wrong date, another of the typographical errors with which this edition was strewn]

The Highlanders have long forgotten their hostility to the house of Brunswick; and in firm loyalty to the illustrious dynasty which sways the British scepter, they yield to none. It was in the reign of George III. that the importance of the Highland race was acknowledged, and their warlike ardour found of the utmost service to the national honour. Their willing services were sought by an enlightened ministry, – their native garb, absurdly made illegal, was restored, – Highland Societies were, under the auspices of Royalty, established for the encouragement of those antique remains of ages of rude independence, and the preservation of customs, the observance of which is dear to the people and harmless to the state. All these favours, and the proud station to which the

Highland Bag-Pipe was restored, render the consecration of this lament for the departed monarch, an appropriate tribute from a Gaëlic bard. ("Historical and Traditional Notes," pp.10-11)

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