

Hector MacLean's Warning

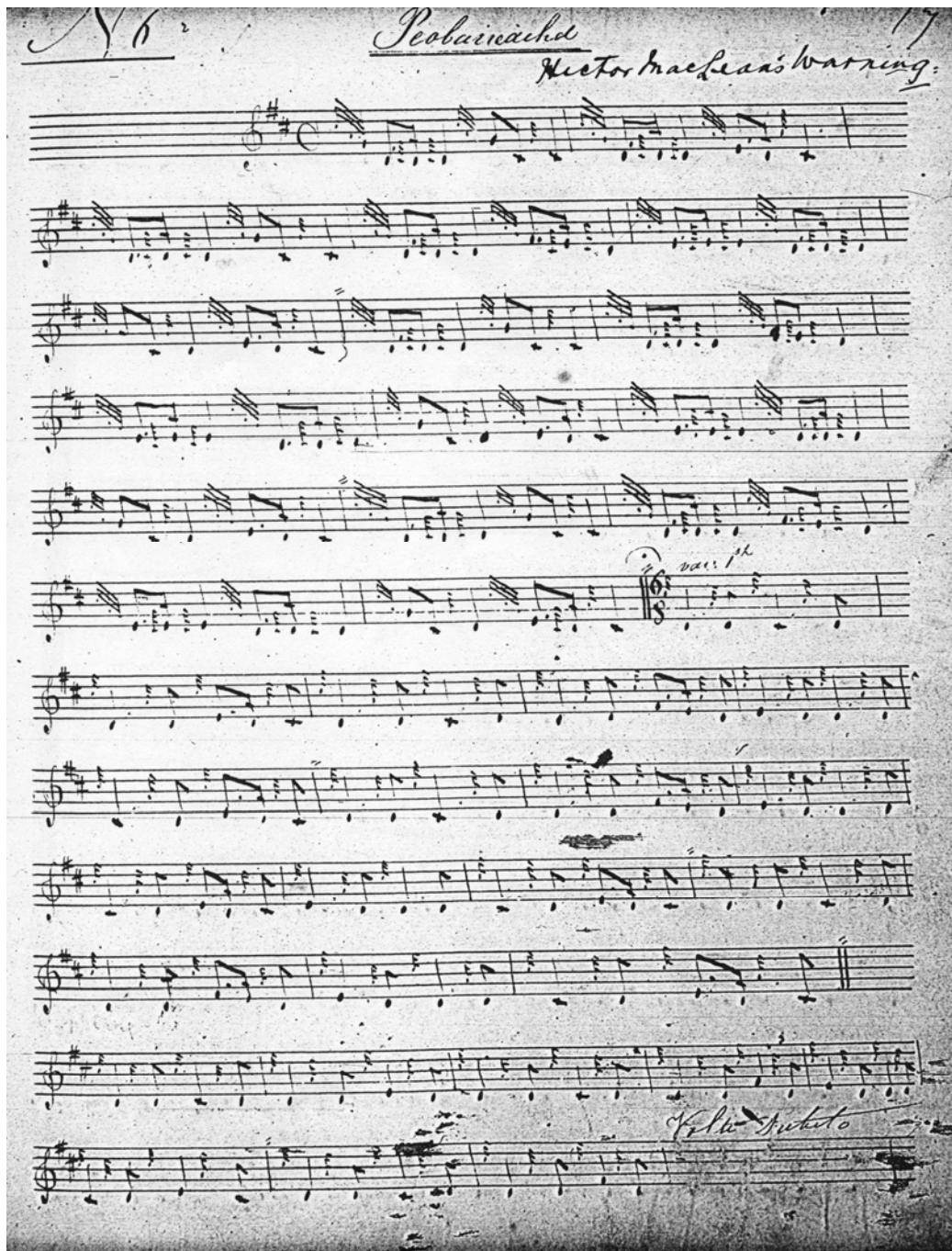
There are settings of this tune in the following manuscript sources:

- **MacArthur/MacGregor** MS, ff.19-22;
- **MacLennan Papers**, NLS Acc.11516/8, f.32 (with the title "Brather a'n Amhildaich" [which might suggest "Brother of the fool, or the evil one"]);

and in the following published sources:

- **Frans Buisman and Andrew Wright**, eds., *The MacArthur-MacGregor Manuscript*, p.134;
- **Angus MacKay's** *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.37-8;
- **C. S. Thomason's** *Ceol Mor*, p.151;
- **David Glen's** *Music of the Clan MacLean*, pp.12-13.

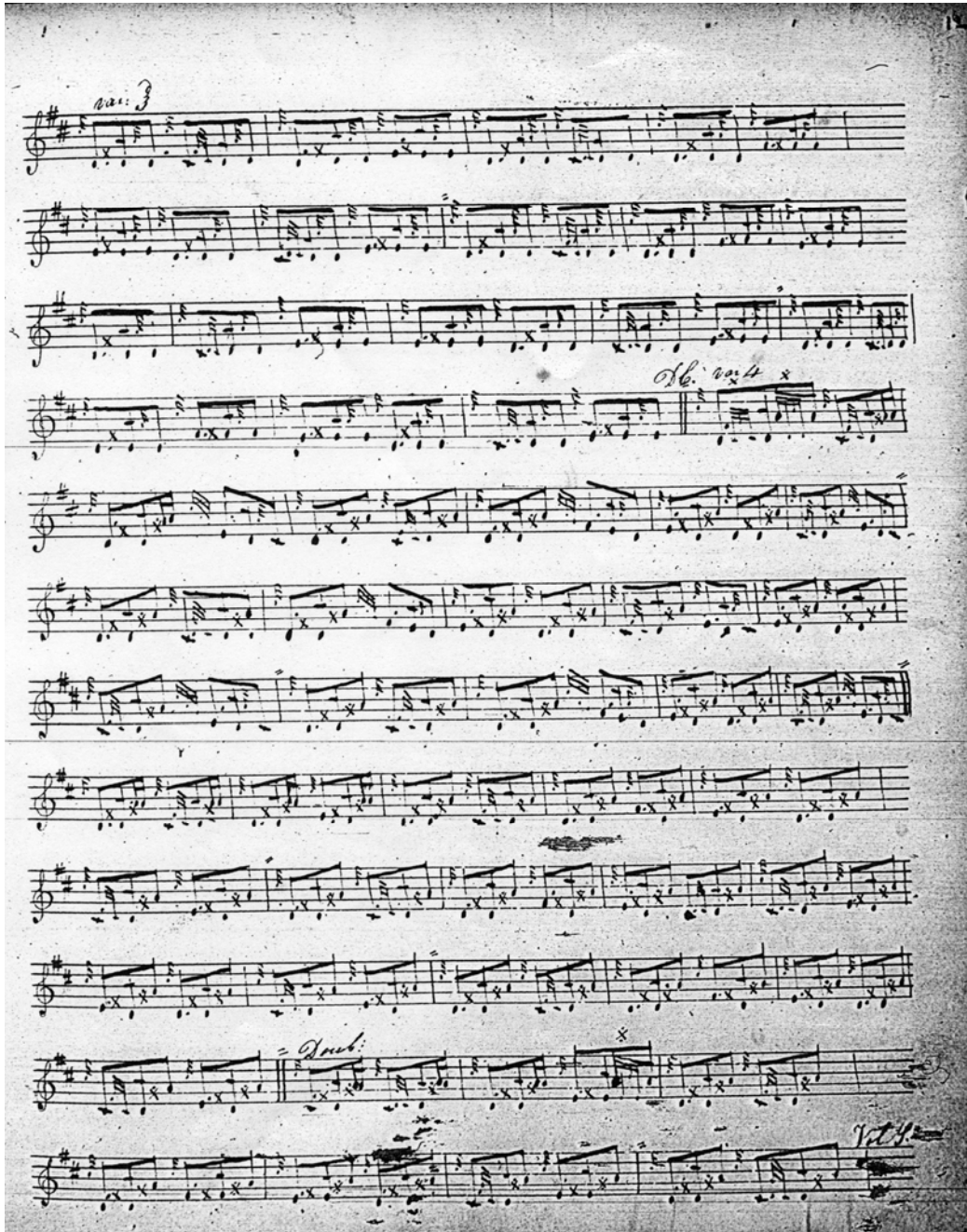
MacArthur and MacGregor treat the tune as follows:



pipes | drums



pipes | drums



pipes | drums



One interesting point about the MacArthur-MacGregor setting is the way the frequent double echo beats are timed, differently from the "modern" manner and arguably giving a nicer effect in a context like this. We note, too, the development of the tune: ground, three siubhals; three taorluaths, singling/doubling/and a mach; and three crunluath movements, singling/doubling/and a mach with an instruction to repeat the ground at the end of the taorluath and crunluath movements.

Angus MacKay treats the tune as follows:

CAISMEACHD EACHAINN MHIC AILEAN NA SOP.

Hector Mac Lean

(The Son of Allan na Sop)s

Warning.

XIV.

variation 1.

Bis

Doubling of Variation 1.

Bis

variation 2.

The musical score is written on ten staves. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Key annotations include:

- Bis**: Above the second staff.
- Doubling of Variation 2.**: Between the second and third staves.
- Crun-luath.**: Below the sixth staff.
- D.C. Thema.**: Below the sixth staff, towards the right.
- Bis**: Above the seventh staff.
- Doubling of Crun-luath.**: Between the eighth and ninth staves.
- Bis**: Above the tenth staff.
- Cadenza**: Above the final staff.
- D.C. Thema al Fine.**: Below the final staff.

MacKay's use of his standard timings for the double echo movements quite markedly alters the rhythmical pattern favoured by MacArthur and MacGregor in the ground. His development of the tune is also rather more laconic: siubhal singling/doubling; taorluath singling/doubling; crunluath singling/doubling. Like MacArthur and MacGregor, MacKay indicates that the ground should be played at the end of the taorluath and crunluath

movements. This score also includes, rather interestingly, an instruction that a "cadenza" be played at the end of the crunluath doubling. There was a discussion of what this may have meant in "The Menzies' Salute" in the Set Tunes 2001 series as follows: "MacKay [...] indicates that a 'Cadenza' be played at the end of the Crunluath Doubling, which also occurs in his setting of 'The MacLeans' March' (*Ancient Piobaireachd*, p. 55), at the end of both the taorluath and crunluath variations. So far as I am aware, it is the only reference of its kind in the literature of the pipe. A note in the 'List of Italian, Gaelic and Other Musical Terms' prefixed to the music text of *Ancient Piobaireachd* contains a not very helpful gloss, probably written by MacKay's textual editor, James Logan, stating: '*Cadenza*, imports a pause which gives the opportunity for the introduction of an extempore flourish, according to the taste and fancy of the performer. It has a peculiarly happy effect at the close of a variation, in serving to introduce the thema, or groundwork, *Urlar*, before *Da Capo*.' It is possible that Logan, a journalist whose knowledge of piping was rather superficial, may have misunderstood the flourishes executed by the player when occasionally pausing to re-tune, which was common in competition during the early part of the 19th century."

Returning to MacKay's setting of "Hector MacLean's Warning," the reader will observe the note error in the penultimate bar of the crunluath doubling (not present in the first edition of *Ancient Piobaireachd* published in 1838).

The setting in the **McLennan** papers is simply a rough sketch of the ground, and it is not reproduced here.

C. S. Thomason corrects MacKay's note error in the penultimate bar of the crunluath doubling (substituting a B for MacKay's C), but adds little to the expressive possibilities of the tune and his score is not reproduced here.

David Glen sets the tune as follows:

pipes | drums

HECTOR MACLEAN'S WARNING. (1579.)

CAISMEACHD EACHAINN MHIC AILEIN NAN SOP.

Urlar. Adagio.



Var. 1st Andante.



Doubling of Var. 1st A little quicker.



Var. 2nd (Taor-luath.) Andante.



* When played on any other Instrument than the Bagpipe, all the Semi-quavers E & D Grace Notes must be played to complete the Melody. The Demi-semiquaver Grace Note G, which precedes these notes being only a Bagpipe. "Accent Note" should be omitted, as also all the other "Pipe" Grace Notes. The E in Cadence may be at the performer's pleasure—played as if written with a pause over it and held out beyond its proper duration

Example



Doubling of Var. 2nd A little quicker.



Repeat the Urlar.

Var. 3rd (Crùn-luath.)



Doubling of Var. 3rd (Crùn-luath Dùbailt.)



Repeat the Urlar.

Glen develops the tune in a manner similar to Angus MacKay but one notices the little ritornello he introduces in the B phrase of the siubhal. This is not replicated in the later variations, although perhaps it might be, and with attractive effect.

Commentary:

Perhaps the 'warning' note is C: the initial pentatonic scale we see in the earliest of the scores, the MacArthur-MacGregor, low G-A-B-D-E, is typically gapped at C and in an "orthodox" composition this gap would be respected throughout the tune. Here, however, it is boldly filled—in appropriate positions—from the fourth bar of the ground onwards. So that anybody familiar with the characteristic tonality of ceòl mór would at once think "aha"!

James Logan's remarks in "Historical and Traditional Notes on the Piobaireachd" in MacKay's *Ancient Piobaireachd* are the earliest source to link this tune to Hector, son of Ailean nan Sop. Logan notes that

This Hector, the son of a noted marauder followed in the troublous footsteps of his father. He usurped the guardianship of the young Laird, and being suspected of having a design on his life, he was long imprisoned in Duart castle. However evil his designs might be, they could hardly justify his chief in beheading him without trial, 1579. (p.6)

Hector MacLean was the freebooting son of a freebooting father who was implicated in several of the more interesting skulduggeries in the southern Hebrides during the second half of the sixteenth century. His lands lay in Gigha, Mull and Kintyre and the cause of his downfall was as follows: in 1578, Lachlan Mór of Duart—one of the most formidable of the later Highland chieftains—became chief of the MacLeans. Since he was a minor, his tutor was the laird of Torloisk, the house of Torloisk being hereditary tutors of Duart. This was his kinsman Hector MacLean, whose father, Allan MacLean of Gigha and Torloisk, brother of the former MacLean of Duart, was the celebrated warrior *Ailein nan Sop*. Hector plotted to seize Duart and hence leadership of the clan *Gilleann* for himself by murdering young Lachlan; but the plot was discovered and Hector himself was seized and later executed in Coll.

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