

The Clan MacNab's Salute

There are settings of this tune in the following manuscripts:

- **Donald MacDonald's** MS, ff.1-9 (with the title 'The Elchies Salute');
- **Peter Reid's** MS, f.53;

and in the following published sources:

- **Angus MacKay's** *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.93-5;
- **Donald MacPhee's** *Collection of Piobaireachd*, ii, 43-5;
- **David Glen's** *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.54-6;
- **C. S. Thomason's** *Ceol Mor*, pp.51-3.

Donald MacDonald sets the tune as follows:

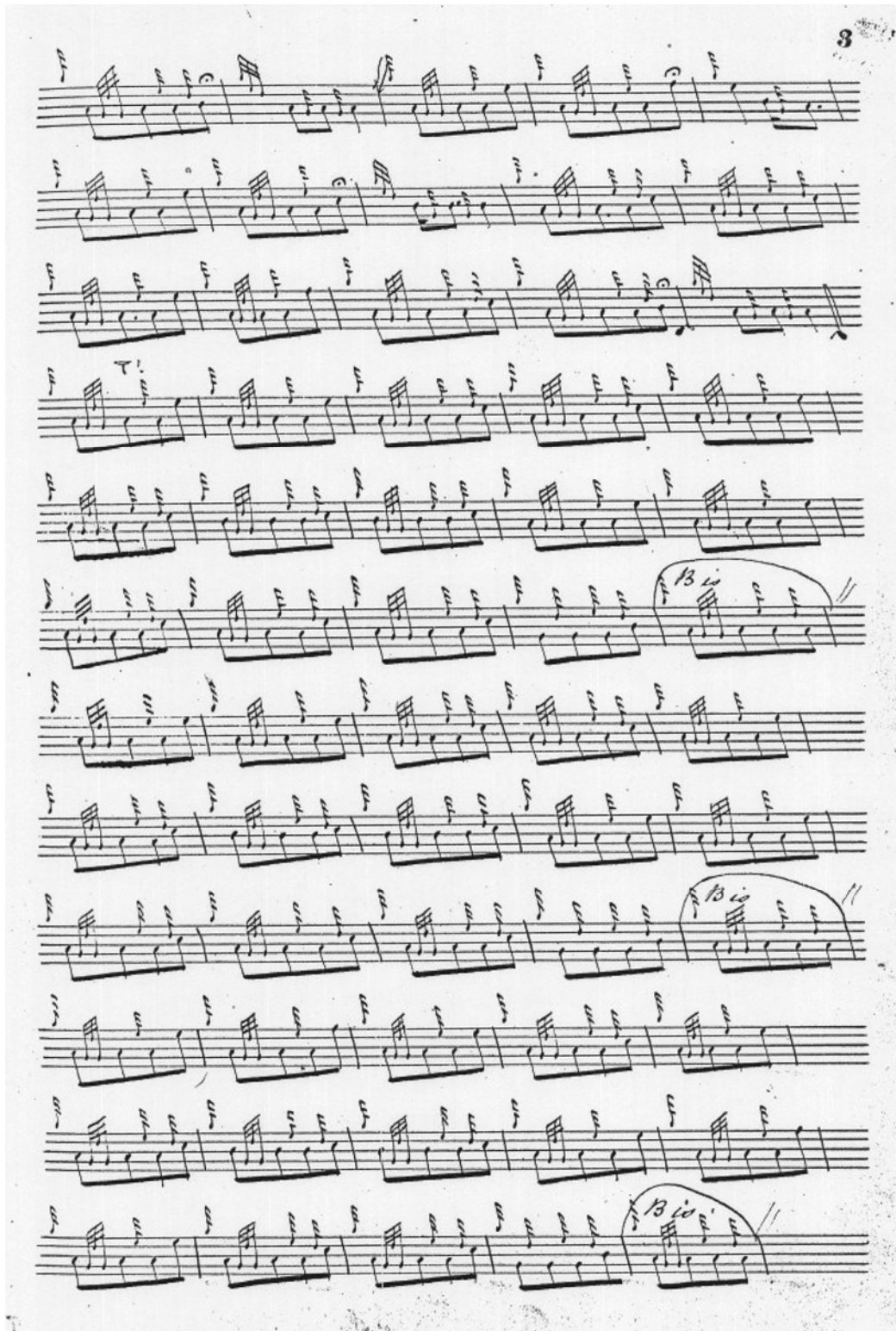
pipes | drums



pipes | drums



pipes | drums



pipes | drums

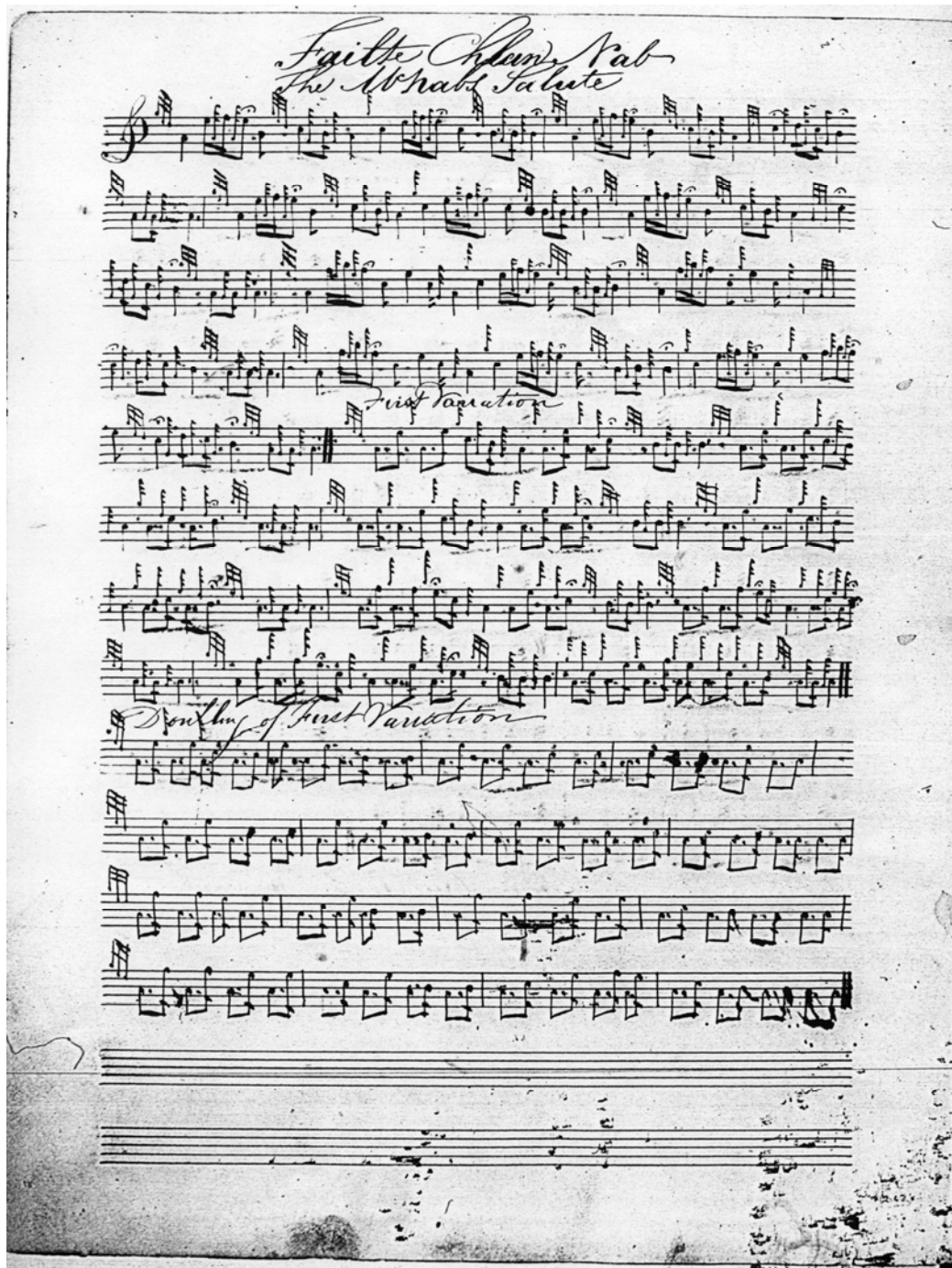




Donald MacDonald: this is the first tune in MacDonald's MS and named for the foremost of his gentlemen students who MacDonald may have identified as a possible patron either before or after the death of Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster in 1835. C. S. Thomason said that he

thought that this was one of Donald's own compositions, and the later hand which has added the title "James William Grant's Salute" may perhaps be Thomason's. The dedicatee, J. W. Grant, was Thomason's grandfather and laird of Elchies and Carron on Speyside. MacDonald's score is a very attractive one with a ground, siubhal singling and doubling ("down" pointed), taorluath foscailte singling and doubling and crunluath foscailte singling and doubling. There is no indication that the ground be repeated within or at the end of the tune. MacDonald's echo beats on A and B are "cut," i.e. the initial melody note is timed as a semi-quaver, although elsewhere he uses a variety of timings in such positions. In MacDonald's setting this is a high quality tune which goes very well on the pipes and deserves to be more widely known.

Peter Reid times the tune as follows:



Peter Reid's manuscript is the earliest source carrying the "MacNab" title. It is possible that Reid may actually have been a pupil of Donald MacDonald and so it is interesting that he should time his echo beats "the other way round," i.e. with the initial note as a dotted quaver. In the second and third lines of the ground the E cadence descends to low A via C rather than MacDonald's B. Reid's siubhal is pointed more consistently 'down' and his tone row is

slightly different from MacDonald's and perhaps rather less appealing. Reid's score ends with the siubhal doubling, and rather unusually bearing in mind his usual practice, there is no indication that other variations should follow.

Angus MacKay sets the tune as follows:

93

FÁILTE CHLANN AN ABBA.

The Mac Nab's Salute.

XXXIX.

Variation 1.

Doubling of Variation 1.

Variation 2.

pipes | drums

9.1

The musical score is written for two staves, likely representing the pipes and drums. It consists of three main sections, each with a variation and a doubling. The first section is labeled 'Doubling of Variation 2.' and the second is labeled 'Variation 3.' and 'Doubling of Variation 3.' The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Doubling of Variation 2.

Variation 3.

Doubling of Variation 3.

The musical score is written on ten staves. The first three staves are marked 'D.C. Thema.' and the last three staves are marked 'D.C. Thema.' again. The middle four staves are marked 'Crun-luath.' and 'Doubling of Crun-luath.'.

Angus MacKay's score has closer affinities with Reid than MacDonald, and his is the earliest source to develop the tune to a duinte taorluath and crunluath conclusion. Otherwise MacKay's score is similar in general outline to MacDonald and Reid, although it is perhaps surprising when one considers that this is probably a recent composition that it should already have diversified so significantly in transmission. MacKay cuts his siubhal doubling "up." His taorluath fosgailte seems rather awkwardly timed as written, and he follows this with a duinte

movement with typical MacKay expansiveness. We note, too, his varied timing of the eallach, where in one instance the E cadence note is timed as a quaver and receives the emphasis, and in the other the emphasis is on the first A of the group which takes the value of a crotchet. MacKay directs that the ground be repeated at the end of the taorluath duinte doubling and again after the doubling of the crunluath at the end. Some may think that his development, forsaking the opened fosgailte option unattractively thickens the texture and gives the tune a rather dull and predictable feel.

Donald MacPhee sets the tune as follows:

FAILTE CHLANN-AN-ABA.
THE MACNAB'S SALUTE.

Var. 1st Siubhal

Doubling of Var 1st

pipes | drums

Var. 2nd Tripling.

44 Doubling of Var. 2.

Var. 3rd Taorluath.

pipes | drums

Doubling of Var. 3rd

Crunluath.

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The first staff is titled 'Doubling of Var. 3rd' and contains a complex, fast-paced melody with many beamed sixteenth notes. The second staff is titled 'Crunluath.' and features a similar but slightly more varied melody, also with many beamed sixteenth notes. Both staves are written in a single system and use a treble clef.

45

The image displays a musical score for a pipe and drum piece. It consists of two main sections: 'Doubling of Crunluath' and 'Tripling of Crunluath'. Each section is written for two staves, likely representing the melody and the drum accompaniment. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The 'Doubling of Crunluath' section is the first of the two, and the 'Tripling of Crunluath' section follows it. The score is presented in a clear, legible format with a white background and black notation.

Donald MacPhee judiciously combines MacDonald and MacKay to produce quite an attractive setting with numerous little individual touches in the timing of the siubhal. He follows MacKay's general route through the tune to a duinte style crunluath conclusion, and

adds an a mach—the only one of the earlier scores to do this. MacPhee directs that the ground be repeated at the end of the tune but not within it:

David Glen's setting is very similar to MacPhee's—except that he drops MacPhee's crunluath a mach, ending the tune with the crunluath doubling and adds a repeat of the ground at the end of the duinte style taorluath doubling (and again at the end of the tune). His score is not reproduced here.

C. S. Thomason, has the tune under both the "Elchies Salute" and "MacNab's Salute" titles and gives Donald MacDonald's manuscript and Angus MacKay's published book as his sources, although it is clear that MacDonald is the major influence. The end result is very attractive setting, as Thomason's so often are. He sets the tune as follows:

THE ELCHIES SALUTE

1. 6. 8. 6.

2. VI

3. VI

47.

51.



Commentary:

There are basically two ways of doing this tune, one descending from Donald MacDonald which develops the piece to a crunluath fòsgailte conclusion, and one from Angus MacKay who develops the tune to final variations in duinte style. The Piobaireachd Society's decision to stipulate an a mach final variation for competition purposes is an interesting one in the light of this, particularly as the only one of the earlier scores to include such a feature is that of Donald MacPhee. The Society's editors, James Campbell and Archibald Kenneth, state that "the principle setting given derives from that of Angus MacKay in his published book" (*PS15*, pp.520-21) but there are a number of silent changes to the time values of MacKay's score apparently intended to make it square more fully with the "house style" developed by James Campbell's father, Archibald Campbell, in the *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (second series) vols 2-9, and in the *Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor*.

"The Gathering of the MacNabs" was set in 2005, and notes on the eccentric Francis MacNab of MacNab— who was a prominent judge at the early piping contests of the Highland Societies of London and Scotland and to whom the "MacNab" title may well have been intended as a compliment—may be consulted there.

* * *

Electronic text © Dr. William Donaldson, Aberdeen, Scotland, October 2007