

The MacDonalds are Simple

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

- **Colin Mór Campbell's** "Nether Lorn Canntaireachd," ii, 42-5 (with the title "Clandonniel Sochaach");
- **Angus MacKay's** MS, ii, 103-4 (and in the so-called "Kintarbert MS," ff.45-6);
- **Colin Cameron's** MS, ff.136-7;
- **Duncan Campbell of Foss's** MS, ff.52-4;
- **Uilleam Ross's** MS, ff.128-9;
- **D. S. MacDonald's** MS, ii, 68-9;
- **John MacDougall Gillies's** MS, ff.13-14;
- **David Glen's** MS, ff.47-9;

and in the following published source:

- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, p.338.

This tune is widely diffused in the scribal record, but interestingly less so in the published one, although many Victorian master pipers seem to have thought it worthwhile to record this tune.

Colin Campbell sets the tune like this:

17. Called Clannonnell Sochaich

1. Hinotras hōdinbain hino dro din hōdin
 bain hinotras cheve cheento area hōdin
 bain himto dārea cheve hoe hinotras hino
 dro din hōdinbain

2. Hinotras cheve cheento area hōdinbain
 hino dro din hōdinbain hinotras hōdin
 bain hinotras kotradreho hino dro din
 hōdinbain

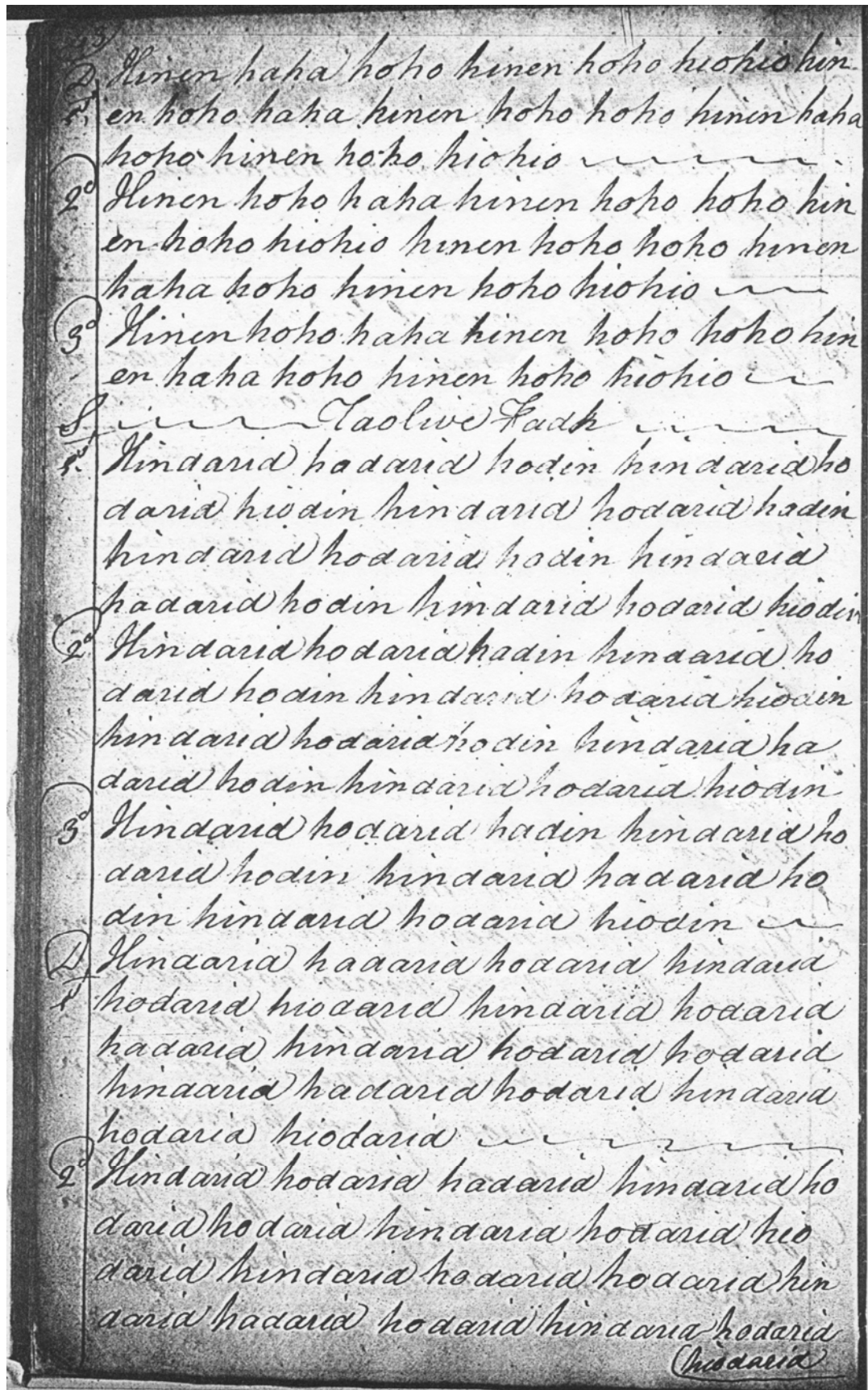
3. Hinotras cheve cheento area hōdinbain
 himto dārea cheve hoe hinotras hino
 dro din hōdinbain

First Motion

1. Hinen haen hoen hinen haen hoen
 hinen haen haen hinen hoen hoen
 en haen hoen hinen hoen hoen

2. Hinen haen haen hinen hoen hoen
 hinen hoen hoen hinen haen hoen
 hinen haen hoen hinen hoen hoen

3. Hinen hoen haen hinen hoen hoen
 hinen haen hoen hinen hoen hoen



3^d Hindaia hodaria hadaria hindaia ho
daria hodaria hindaia hadaria ho
daria hindaia hodaria hindaia

1st ~~~~~ Coullie Fadh ~~~~~

2^d Hinbandre habandre hodie hinbandre
hobandre hodie hinbandre hobandre
hodie hinbandre hobandre hodie hinban
dre habandre hodie hinbandre hobandre
hodie

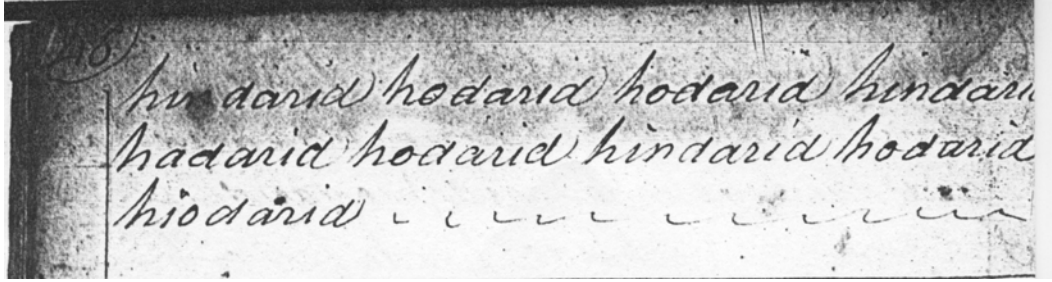
3^d Hinbandre hobandre hadin hinban
dre hobandre hodie hinbandre haban
dre hodie hinbandre hobandre hodie

2^d Hinbandre habandre hobandre hin
bandre hobandre hodie hinbandre
hobandre habandre hinbandre
hobandre hinbandre hobandre hodie

3^d Hinbandre hobandre habandre hinban
dre hobandre hobandre hinbandre ho
bandre hodie hinbandre hoban
dre hodie hinbandre habandre
hobandre hinbandre hobandre hodie

2^d Hinbandre hobandre habandre hinban
dre hobandre hobandre hinbandre ho
bandre hodie hinbandre hoban
dre hodie hinbandre habandre
hobandre hinbandre hobandre hodie

3^d Hinbandre hobandre habandre



The reader will note the seemingly redundant syllable "hinotrao" towards the end of the first line of the ground, and again in bar four of line three. The variations are extremely regular and do not reflect this expression, so this may be deliberate feature, a satirical indication of the gullible "socharach" qualities imputed to the MacDonalds. It may be worth noting too that in the third bar of line one the melodic line descends to low A rather than low G, and that the tune does not go down to low G at all in the variations. **Colin Campbell** develops the piece as follows:

ground;
 siubhal, singling and doubling;
 taorluath duinte, singling and doubling;
 crunluath duinte, singling and doubling.

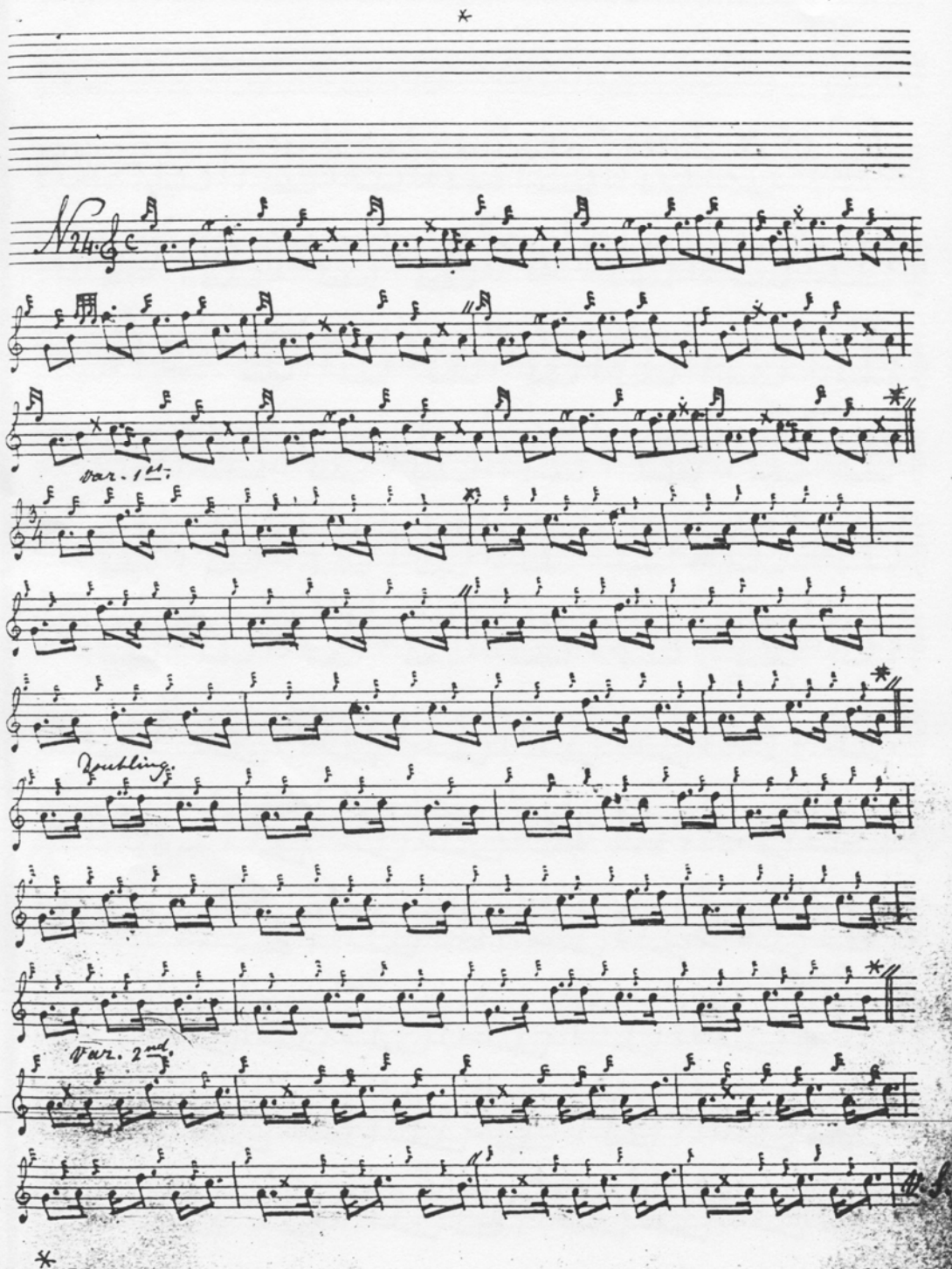
Colin Campbell's treatment of the cadences in the taorluath and crunluath variations have an appealing simplicity and well sustain the rocking forward momentum of what is evidently intended to be quite a fast tune.

In the final line of the crunluath doubling, the compiler has reverted to the taorluath (rather than crunluath) vocables when he moved to a new page.

Angus MacKay sets the tune like this:

The Mac Donalds are Simple.

103



104

Handwritten musical score for pipes and drums, featuring 14 staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. Key annotations include:

- var 3rd* (Variation 3rd)
- Conn. lutt.* (Connexion lutt.)
- Doubling*
- D. G. Thema.* (D. G. Thema.)
- D. G. Thema at 11. Time.* (D. G. Thema at 11. Time.)

MacKay seems to have missed the repeat mark for the third line of the ground (which should have been inserted at the beginning of bar three of the first line), but the intention is clear from the later parts of this most regular tune. MacKay's pleasing introduction of low G into his variations arguably gives him a more subtle tension than Colin Campbell's tonally "squarer" approach. In addition he includes a pendulum movement absent in the Campbell score, answered by the taorluath doubling movement which follows. MacKay concludes the tune with a crunluath and a mach. He stipulates that the ground be repeated at the end of the taorluath and crunluath, and he drops the "redundant" phrase we see in lines one and three of Colin Campbell's ground. Many may feel that of the two settings, MacKay's is musically the more interesting.

Colin Cameron's score is a rough transcript from Angus MacKay's, only partially graced. It seems to add little to the expressive possibilities of the tune and is not reproduced here; however a complete score is available from a Cameron pupil, John MacDougall Gillies, and it is reproduced below to show how the tune was handled in the tradition that came down through the Cameron family. **Uilleam Ross's** score, likewise seems a simple tidying-up of MacKay, and does not take a distinctive route through the tune: it is not reproduced here. **D. S. MacDonald's** score is roughed out in outline only and is not reproduced here.

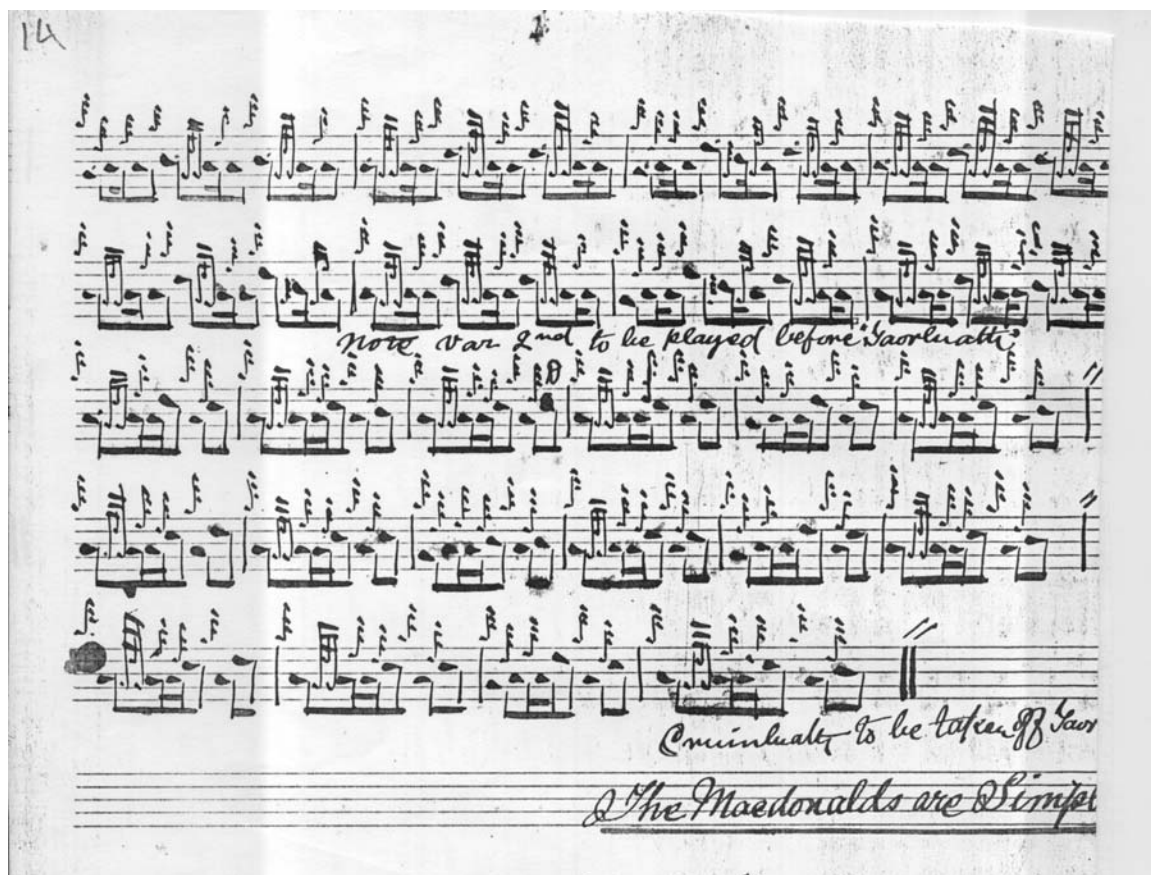
Duncan Campbell of Foss has one or two individual touches in the ground as follows:



and so on. **Duncan Campbell** follows MacKay rather closely, but we might note the way the opening motif ends on C (rather than A), attractive additional E cadence at the beginning of bar 4 of his ground, and the drop down to low G at the beginning of bar eleven.

John MacDougall Gillies sets the tune as follows. We might note his interesting even timing of the pendulum movement which is abruptly "up" cut in both MacKay and Colin Cameron:

A handwritten musical score for pipes and drums, consisting of 12 staves of music. The notation is dense, featuring many beamed notes and rests, characteristic of traditional Scottish pipe music. The score is divided into sections by handwritten annotations: "Var. 1st" appears between the fourth and fifth staves, "Doubling" between the sixth and seventh staves, and "Carroll" between the eighth and ninth staves. The handwriting is in ink on aged, slightly textured paper. The music is written in a single system, with each staff representing a different part or variation of the tune.



David Glen dots and cuts more meticulously and carefully, also supplying Angus MacKay's missing repeat marks; we note, too, how he highlights the F's in the end phrases of the variations, and his addition of a taorluath a mach to better balance the later variations:

The Macdonalds are Simple. The late Dr. Donaldson's Book

26. D.

Var. 1.

3rd strain play as in red according to Dr. Donaldson's

Doubling

26 in treble

3 Times

48

1st Redoubt
2nd Redoubt
3rd Redoubt
4th Redoubt
5th Redoubt
6th Redoubt
7th Redoubt
8th Redoubt
9th Redoubt
10th Redoubt

Note. No Doubling is given to Tair-luath in MSS. from which this was copied. One will be added by me on first page



Commentary:

Little is known of the historic background for this tune, but it has clear stylistic links with "The Blind Piper's Obstinacy," and recalls also the repeated down-cut figures in "The Hen's March o'er the Midden," another tune with satiric, or comic implications.

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