

Salute on the Birth of Rory Mor

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

- **Colin Mór Campbell**, Nether Lorn Canntaireachd, ii, 107 (with the title "McLeods Dog Short Tail");
- **Angus MacKay's** MS, i, 74 (with the title "*N ann air Mhire tha Sibh*");
- **D. S. MacDonald's** MS, ii, 87;
- **David Glen's** MS, ff.184-185;

and in the following published sources:

- **Donald MacDonald**, *Ancient Martial Music*, pp.92-3 (with the title "*N ann air mhire tha sibh* Composed by McCruimen at the birth of Roderick More Macleod in Dunvegan Castle Isle of Skye, in 1715");
- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, p.36 (with the title "Salute at the Birth of Roderick More MacLeod");
- **David Glen**, *Ancient Piobaireachd*, p.188-9;
- **G. F. Ross**, *Some Piobaireachd Studies*, pp.40-41;
- **Roderick D. Cannon** and **Keith Sanger**, eds., *Donald MacDonald's Collection of Piobaireachd Volume 1 (1820)*, pp.104-5.

pipes | drums

Colin Campbell sets the tune like this:

Called M'Leods Dog Short Tail Salute to the
birth of King Mat

17th 1st Hihorods hoo herere he chedãre de hee de he he
ore chodroo herere he

2^o Chedãre de hee de he he de dre viko chedãre dili
he de viko chedãre

3^o Chedãre de hee de he he de dre viko cheve che
ve dili

4^o Hihorods hootro herere he ho chedãre de de
he de he che two times

5^o He de he ho dro chedãre dili hee de he ho dro
che de che ho

6^o Chedãre de de hee de he che de de he ho dro
chedãre dili ho

7^o First Motion

8^o Hootroeo hoo dãre de he ho dreve ho dili
dãre de ho en

9^o Hootroeo hoo dãre de he ho dreve ho dili
dãre de he che dãre de he ho dreve ho che ho

10^o Dreve ho dili dãre de he ho dreve he ho dreve
ho dili ho

11^o Hootroeo hoo hoo dãre de dãre he ho dreve
ho dre de dãre de hoo hoo din

12^o Hootroeo hoo hoo dãre de dãre he ho dreve ho dre
de dãre de dãre de dãre de dãre he ho dreve ho dre de he ho

13^o Dreve ho dre de dãre he ho dre de dãre he ho
dreve ho dre dili ho

pipes | drums

Angus MacKay takes a similar route through the tune:

74 *N amon air Mhire tha Sibh. **
Are you Mirimaking.

N 29

Var 1st

Var 2nd

Dabbling

pipes | drums

Two settings by **David Glen** have come down to us, the first in his manuscript:

184
Now Published
Set 4
Vol 6

Is it sporting you are? (Or) Is it jesting you are?
A Salute to the Birth of Roderick Mor MacIain 1715. Pat. M. M. Guinness

var 2-2

See Foot of next page

Contin.

Doubling.

Added by
Self.

Yours Luath

The manuscript consists of ten staves of handwritten musical notation. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is written in a style characteristic of 19th-century manuscript notation. There are several annotations in the left margin, including '184', 'Now Published', 'Set 4', and 'Vol 6'. The title of the piece is written in the top right, and there are several other notes and markings throughout the manuscript, such as 'var 2-2', 'See Foot of next page', 'Contin.', 'Doubling.', and 'Added by Self.'. The manuscript is written in ink on aged paper.

pipes | drums

185.³³

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for pipes and drums. It consists of ten staves of music. The notation is dense, with many notes and rests. There are several annotations in the manuscript: 'Doubling' is written above the third staff, 'Crunluath' is written above the fifth staff, and 'Doub.' is written above the seventh staff. At the bottom of the page, there are two lines of text: '2nd part of 2nd strain from 2nd from Dr. Bann. M.S.' and '2nd part of 2nd strain from doubling of 2nd from Dr. Bann. M.S.'. The page number '185.³³' is written in the top right corner.

Glen's manuscript setting is very close to the ground and first and second variations which appear in his published volume. It is included here to show the taorluath and crunluath added by

pipes | drums

Glen and to show the variant version furnished by Dr. Charles Bannatyne a leading scholar of ceol mor in the early years of the 20th century and one of the group of authorities consistently critical of the Piobaireachd Society and its wayward handling of the music during those years.

Donald MacDonald is responsible for the earliest published score. He sets the tune like this:

92

Composed by
MR. CRUMMEN
AT THE BIRTH OF
Roderick More Macleod
IN DUNVEGAN CASTLE
ISLE OF SKYE, IN
1715.

VERY SLOW

A short-hand account of this Piobaireachd will be given in Vol: 22

Walker & Anderson Engravers Edinb

pipes | drums

95

VARI 2.

Doubling VARI 2.

MacDonald's timing of the double echo beats differs from the **MacKay** style employed almost universally today, in emphasizing the opening note of the group. Many may think his approach more stylish than MacKay's, also, with more subtle and pleasing decoration of the line.

C. S. Thomason's score seems a simple transcript of Donald MacDonald's, which he gives as his sole source. It is not reproduced here.

David Glen sets the tune like this in his published edition:

185

RODERICK MÒR MAC LEOD'S SALUTE.
FÀILTE RUARAI DH MHOIR.
(IS IT MIRTHFUL YOU ARE?) ('N ann air mhìre tha Sibh?)

Composed by
Pat. Mòr Mac Crimmon.

Ùrlar.

79.

Var. 1st

Var. 2nd

Doubling of Var. 2nd

Written. Played.

The musical score is presented in a single system with multiple staves. It begins with the title 'RODERICK MÒR MAC LEOD'S SALUTE.' and its Gaelic equivalent 'FÀILTE RUARAI DH MHOIR.' followed by the English translation '(IS IT MIRTHFUL YOU ARE?) ('N ann air mhìre tha Sibh?)'. The composer is identified as Pat. Mòr Mac Crimmon. The score is marked '79.' and 'Ùrlar.' (Ur-lar). It consists of a main melody and three variations: 'Var. 1st', 'Var. 2nd', and 'Doubling of Var. 2nd'. Each variation is shown with both written notation and a 'Played' notation. The 'Written' notation uses standard musical symbols, while the 'Played' notation uses simplified symbols for pipes and drums. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Glen is clearly following Donald MacDonald here, although we note that he prefers a 3/4 time signature to MacDonald's 4/4 in the ground, moving to 6/8 in the first variation before returning to 4/4 again in the second and its doubling.

G. F. Ross sets the tune like this:

40

IS IT MIRTHFUL YOU ARE. (N ann air mhire tha sibh?)

DONALD MACDONALD appears to be the only authority for this tune. He gives 16 bars in his Ground, 16 in his Doubling, 12 in the Variation and 12 in its Doubling. The tune seems clearly a two-lined one of eight bars per line, in spite of the second four bars of the first line being practically a repetition of the first four, for it will be noticed there is a change in the rhythm in the 5th bar of the second line, the third quarter of a part, just where it could be looked for. This would seem to be sufficient to justify classification of the tune as one of 8.8. metre, and not 4:4.4 or 4.4.4.4.

In endeavouring to find the rhythmic swing of the tune from MacDonald's version one is immediately brought up by some irregularity in his 4th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 13th and 14th Ground bars. Comparison with the corresponding bars of the Doubling is of great assistance. The Doubling is a safe guide to the correction of the Ground. It seems clear, beyond question, there is an extra E in bars 4, 8, 11 and 14, or else the E is a grace or passing note of the very shortest duration. It is also clear the last notes of his 10th and 13th bars really belong to the next. His 16th Ground bar is clearly a mutilated version of a similar bar to his 20th and 13th and the Doubling, here also, points to a simple correction. So much for the Ground and its Doubling.

The Variation, and its Doubling, of 12 bars is more difficult to deal with. The only difference between his first four and second four bars is in the last half of the last bar. It will be noticed by students of "Cool Mor" that General Thomson repeats MacDonald's first four to make the first line, using his remaining eight bars to complete the tune. This arrangement does not seem the best. Although

MacDonald's first eight Variation Bars might be said to follow the Ground and its Doubling fairly faithfully, it seems clear, as in the case of some other MacCrimmon tunes, the others do not continue to follow the Ground, but become a play upon those of the First Part. The Compiler has completed the Variations by repeating MacDonald's 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th bars, but making the last half of the 16th the same as the last half of his 8th. Some doubt may exist regarding the last halves of the 4th, 8th, 12th and 16th bars. In themselves they may be satisfactory enough, but it is doubtful if a Taorluath built upon them would be satisfying. A Taorluath built upon the doubling of the Ground would probably be much better.

It may at least be said that retiming the Ground, etc., and supplying the missing bars leaves us with a complete tune of four parts—Ground, its Doubling, Variation and its Doubling, at least not inferior to what MacDonald has given us.

HISTORICAL NOTE.—MacDonald says—"Composed by M'Cruimain at the birth of Robert More MacLeod in Dunvegan Castle, Isle of Skye, in 1715." As the celebrated "Rory Mor" (XIII MacLeod) died in 1626 it cannot have been composed on his birth. It seems to be clearly a Patrick Mac MacCrimmon tune and perhaps was composed on the birth of Rory (the Witty) XV, MacLeod of Dunvegan, who was a minor in 1651, when his uncle, Sir Norman, commanded the MacLeods at the battle of Worcester. It might, of course, have been composed on the birth of Rory (XVII, MacLeod) son of John "Breac" (XVI), for it is probable Patrick Mor was still active about this time, although this Rory was probably not in direct succession at the time of his birth.

First Part—Macdonald.

Revision.

Second Part—Macdonald.

Revision.

IS IT MIRTHFUL YOU ARE?

Bar Nos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ground.								
Doubling.								
Variation.								
Doubling.								
Bar Nos.	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Ground.								
Doubling.								
Variation.								
Doubling.								

G. F. R. 6/2.

Ross's emendations to MacDonald's score are closely reasoned, and fully consistent with his views on regularity in piobaireachd. These are discussed in *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society* pp. 350-1. We immediately note his substitution of MacKay-style cut double echo beats for MacDonald's which tend to emphasize the initial note of the group, and the not-unpleasing redistribution of accent. Ross's source for the doubling of the ground is unknown, but he is known to have been in correspondence with Simon Fraser in Australia, source of a good many fanciful notions. Altogether it seems perfectly possible to applaud the ingenuity of the approach and the command of textual detail here, but still prefer to play MacDonald.

Commentary:

This is one of an interesting group of tunes whose initial gesture opens on B rather than A or G. The Nether Lorn Canntaireachd is organized on this principle, grouping tunes whose initial notes begin in the lower tonal range of the chanter, and then proceeding systematically upwards pitch by pitch. The tonal family to which "Salute on the Birth of Rory Mor" belongs begins with the tune Colin Campbell called "Brian O duffs Lament" (vol ii, ff 94-7 elsewhere known as "The Frenzy of Meeting"), and continuing through "The Brother's Lament"; three nameless pieces; then "A Glass," "Aird's Lament," and what Colin Campbell calls "Glass Mhoir" (which is

pipes | drums

nowadays known as "The Finger Lock"), "One of the Cragich" ("Hiotrotra hinbainbain") and "McNeil is tighearna ann" (ff.110-11).

The historical context of this tune, and in particular its dedicatee, has prompted some discussion. A. J. Haddow in *History and Structure of Ceol Mor* (pp.72-3) discusses possible candidates. More interestingly, we find in Cannon and Sanger's editorial notes to MacDonald's *Ancient Martial Music* an ingenious explanation of Colin Campbell's bizarre title, namely that it represents a loss in translation between Gaelic and English: "it makes sense if we assume that 'dog' stands for Gaelic *cù*... a misunderstanding of *cumah*. The epithet 'short tail' may stand for an adjective implying that this is a short Tune. An expression *Cumha geàrr MhicLeòid* would be good Gaelic, meaning 'MacLeod's Short Lament'... or even more literally *Cumha cutach MhicLeòid*, if the writer felt that the tune was incomplete. *Cù cutach* is a normal expression for a short-tailed dog." p.104.

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