The Rout of the MacPhees

There are settings of this tune in the following manuscript sources:
- Colin Campbell's "Nether Lorn Canntaireachd", ii, 24-7 (with the title "Vuirlin Corrich Chaoil");
- Angus MacKay's MS, ii, ff.89-90;
- D. S. MacDonald's MS, i, 118-20;
- David Glen's MS, ff.241-243;

and in the following published source:
- C. S. Thomason's Ceol Mor, p. 331.

There are basically two ways of doing this tune: that preserved by Colin Campbell in the Nether Lorn Canntaireachd, and the shorter version of Angus MacKay. Of the two, the Nether Lorn is by some distance the more interesting. Colin Campbell sets the tune as follows:

Called Vuirlin Corrich Chaoil

1st Hintradre hadre hodin Two Times hotradre hodreodin
2nd Hintradre hadre hodin hiotradre hodrodre hiotradre hodreodin
3rd Hintradre hadre hodin hiodareche hodreodin

D

1st Hintra dili hadre hodin two times hiotradili hodreodin
2nd Hintradili hadre hodin hiotradili hodrodre hiotradili hodreodin
3rd Hintradili hadre hodin hiodiliche hodreodin

S  ffirst Motion

1st Hintrache hache hodin Two times hiotrache hocheodin
2nd Hintrache hache hodin hiotrache hodroche hiotrache hocheodin
3rd Hintrache hache hodin hiodareche hocheodin

D

1st Hintrache hacheho two times hiotrache hochehio
2nd Hintrache hacheho hiotrache hochoche hiotrache hoche hio
3rd Hintrache hache ho hiodareche hochehio

S  Second Motion

1st Hinen haen cheen haen cheen hoen Two times hioen haen cheen hoen cheen hioen
2nd Hinen haen cheen haen cheen hoen haen cheen hoen cheen hoen haen cheen cheen hioen
3rd Hinen haen cheen haen cheen hoen heen cheen hoen cheen hioen

D

1st Hinen haha cheche haha cheche hoho Two times hiohio haha cheche hoho cheche hiohio
"What are the neighbours up to?"

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The intended timing presents interesting possibilities here. Presumably the ground is meant to have a similar rhythmical pattern to the sister-tune, "Lament for MacDonald's Tutor", in which case the timing of the first motion must take a different path, perhaps along the lines suggested in the staff notated example below:

Colin Campbell’s is the fullest development of the tune we have, with a ground and thumb variation, his "ffirst motion" singling and doubling, a siubhal singling and doubling, a pendulum movement, and duinte taorluath and crunluath movements singling and doubling.

Angus MacKay sets the tune on more economical lines, omitting Colin Campbell's first motion, and pendulum movement as follows:
MacKay directs that the ground be repeated at the end of the taorluath and crunluath doublings in his normal fashion.

D. S. MacDonald's score follows his main source, Angus MacKay's manuscript, closely. It adds nothing to the stylistic possibilities of the tune and it is not reproduced here.

David Glen's score is marked "from Ceol Mor". It adds nothing to the stylistic possibilities of the tune and it is not reproduced here.

C. S. Thomason gives Angus MacKay's manuscript as his source and follows it closely. Since his score does not add to the stylistic possibilities of the tune it is not reproduced here.

Commentary:

In the second edition of William F. Skene's The Highlanders of Scotland, edited by Alexander MacBain (Stirling 1902) it is stated that

The Macduffies or Macphees are the most ancient inhabitants of Colonsay […] Of their early history nothing is known […] The Macduffies certainly remained in possession of Colonsay as late as the middle of the seventeenth century, for we find them mentioned on several occasions during the troubles of that period; but they appear at that time to have been nearly exterminated, as we find in the criminal records for 1623, Coil Mac Gillespic Macdonald, in Colonsay (afterwards the celebrated Collkitto), was 'delaitit [i.e. accused or denounced] of airt and pairt of the felonie and cruell slaughter of Umqhuill [i.e. deceased] Malcolm Macphie of Colonsay,' with others of his clan. From this period their estate seems to have gone into the possession of the Macdonalds, and afterwards of the Macneills […] while the clan gradually sunk until they were only to be found, as at present, forming a small part of the inhabitants of Colonsay.' p.344.

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