The Gathering of the MacNabs

This tune is found in the following manuscript sources:
--Colin Campbell's Nether Lorn MS, i, 17-19
--Peter Reid's MS, f.54
--John MacDougall Gillies's MS, f.112
--Robert Meldrum's MS, ff.187-189

The tune appears to have been unpublished before its appearance in the Piobaireachd Society Collection (second series), v, 149-50, which cites the Nether Lorn Canntaireachd as its main source.

Colin Campbell treats the tune as follows:

7th Called McNabs Gathering

1st Hiharinodin hiharinndro hihorodo hodin hihorododro hihodoredro hihodoredro hihorododro hindrodarodo hiharin'[en] this part to be playd ['twice] Over
2d Hintrodro hihorodo hodin hihorododro hindro darodo hintrodro hiodrodro hiodrodre hihorodintro hiharin
3rd Hiodrodro hiodrodro hihodoredro hintrodro hiodrodro hiodrodro hihodoredro hindrodarodo hiharin

Taolive

1st Hindarid hiodarid hindarid hodarid hioao hodarid hodarid chedarid hioao hodarid hodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid To be playd Twice Over
2d Hioaoeo hodarid Twice Over himdarid hiodarid hiodarid hodarid chedarid hioaoeo hodarid hodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid
3d Hodarid chedarid hodarid hioaoeo hodarid Twice Over hodarid chedarid hioaoeo hodarid hodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid
D 1st Hindarid hiodarid hindarid hodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid Two Times
2d Hodarid hiodarid Twice Over himdarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid
3d Hodarid chedarid hodarid hiodarid hiodarid Twice Over hodarid chedarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid hiodarid

Crulive

1st Hinbandre hiobandre hinbandre hioaodre hobandre Twice Over hobandre chebandre hioaodre hobandre hobandre hiobandre hinbandre hinbandre Two times
2d Hioaodre hobandre Twice Over himbandre hiobandre hinbandre hobandre hobandre chebandre hioaodre hobandre hiobandre hinbandre hinbandre hinbandre
In the Taolive above, *hioao* and *hioaoeo* seem clearly equivalent. Colin Campbell develops the tune as follows: ground; taorluath singling, doubling; crunluath singling, doubling; crunluath a mach.

This is a surging, tuneful piece, whose ground, as Peter Reid would also seem to indicate below, should be timed somewhat thus:

![Music notation](image)

**Peter Reid** develops the tune as follows: ground, taorluath singling. There is no indication of further variations:
--John MacDougall Gillies's score is a mere outline sketch and is not reproduced here.

--Robert Meldrum's score does not add to existing interpretations and is not reproduced here.

**Commentary:**

"MacNabs' Gathering is one of a group of cognate pieces which share very similar opening gestures:"
Nether Lorn, Vol.1, '1st Called Kepper Eaggareich [The Unjust Incarceration]
Hiharin hioen, hodrooen, himen hoen, hiotroenem...

Nether Lorn, Vol.1, '6th Called Spaddrich Bharoch [The Pride of Barra]
Hiharinodin hiharindo, hiodrorodin hiham bantro...

Nether Lorn, Vol.1, '9th Called Bhrachich Bhan' [MacKay's White Banner]
Hiharinodin hihodaro,do, hiharinodin hihodaro,do, himhinhodin hiodrodin tro...

Nameless (based on Angus Mackay's MSS)
'Hiharinodin hiharindro, hiharinodin hiharindro, hiemdanodin hiharindro...'

"A thread of pride and self esteem..."
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The tune may well be a compliment to Francis MacNab of MacNab, the last of the MacNab lairds, who was a prominent judge at the early piping contests of the Highland Societies of London and Scotland. He was a most eccentric character by all accounts and there are many stories told of him. "The last Laird of Macnab, before the clan finally broke up and emigrated to Canada, was a well-known character in the country, and being poor, used to ride about on a most wretched horse, which gave occasion to many jibes at his expense. The laird was in the constant habit of riding up from the country to attend the Musselburgh Races. A young wit, by way of playing him off on the racecourse, asked him, in a contemptuous tone, 'Is that the same horse you had last year, laird?' 'Na,' said the laird, brandishing his whip in the interrogator's face in so emphatic a manner as to preclude further questioning—'na; but it's the same whup.'" (Dean Ramsay, Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character, 1912, p.226).

The diarist, Henry Cockburn, touring in the Killin district remarked "The burial-place of the Macnabs is more singular, and liker the final resting-place of a race of savage chiefs. It looks as if they had expected to be obliged to stand a siege even in the grave." (Circuit Journeys, 1888, p.302). The novelist, Sir Walter Scott, who was always fond of a good story was one morning at breakfast regaling his wife with anecdotes about The MacNab: "'who, poor fellow,' he remarked, 'is dead and gone.' 'Why, Mr. Scott,' she interrupted him, 'Macnab's not dead, is he?' 'Faith, my dear,' Scott responded gravely, 'if he's not dead they've done him a great injustice—for they've buried him.'" (Edgar Johnson, Sir Walter Scott The Great Unknown, 1970, i, 581).

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