Lament for MacSwan of Roaig

This tune is found in the following manuscript sources:
– **Nether Lorn Canntaireachd**, ii, 157-8 (with the title "Roaig's Lament");
– **Donald MacDonell**, ff.83-87;
– **Angus MacKay**, ii, 53-55;
– **D. S. MacDonell**, i, 57-9;
– **John MacDougall Gillies**, f.101;
– **David Glen**, ff.144-146;
– **Robert Meldrum**, ff.129-131;

and in the following published source:

– **Colin Mór Campbell** treats the tune like this:

\[\begin{align*}
S & \quad \text{ffirst Motion} \\
1^{\text{st}} & \text{Himto hinda hioendam hintoemda hiharin himde hindi cheotro himda hinde hihorodo himde hindi hioendam hintoemda hiharin} \\
2^{\text{nd}} & \text{Hinde hinde harodin hienza hioa hihorodo himde hindi cheotro himda hinde hihorodo himde hindi hioendam hintoemda hiharin} \\
3^{\text{rd}} & \text{Himde hindi cheotro himda hinde haoترو himde hindi haoترو himde hindi hiharin}
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
D & \quad \text{ffirst Motion} \\
1^{\text{st}} & \text{Himto hinda hioendam hintoemda hiharin himde hindi cheotro himda hinde hihorodo himde hindi hioendam hintoemda hiharin} \\
2^{\text{nd}} & \text{Hinde hinde harodin hienza hioa hihorodo himde hindi cheotro himda hinde hihorodo himde hindi hioendam hintoemda hiharin} \\
3^{\text{rd}} & \text{Himde hindi cheotro himda hinde haoترو himde hindi haoترو himde hindi hiharin}
\end{align*}\]

And there the score ends. Colin Campbell does not develop the tune beyond the doubling of the ffirst Motion, which is a pity because his pleasing alternation of low Gs and low As may strike many as more pleasing than anything offered by the later scores.

**Donald MacDonell** times the tune as follows:
One notes the varied timing of the double echo beats in the ground, and the nice little cadence high G on the double echo on E in bar three balancing those which follow later in the line. MacDonald points the siubhal "down" MacKay "up" (although there are signs of several obvious changes of mind by MacKay about the timing, especially in the siubhal singling) both imply an "up" timing in the taorluath and crunluath variations, otherwise their settings are similar.

**Angus MacKay** times the tune like this:
Those attracted by David Glen's characteristic style might like to consider the following setting which Glen describes as an "edited" version based on the one in Donald MacDonald's manuscript:
C. S. Thomason's score combines features of both MacDonald and MacKay's manuscript settings. He plays his taorluath singling and doubling "down" and his crunluath variations "up." Those drawn to this combination may find the arrangement attractive:
D. S. MacDonald adds nothing to his source, Angus MacKay, and is not reproduced here. John MacDougall Gillies's setting is an outline sketch only and is not reproduced here. Robert Meldrum's score adds nothing to the stylistic possibilities of the tune and is not reproduced here.

Commentary

Archibald Campbell wrote of this tune that "I had no hand in choosing the original text as I was in India but only had to do the Editorial notes afterwards." (Letter to R. U. Brown, 27/12/1955). Yet his editorial papers show him writing to J. P. Grant the main nominal editor of the Piobaireachd Society Collection (second series) volume one, with detailed advice about how the tune should be set, which Grant appears to have duly followed (National Library of Scotland MS22103, f.109).

A note in Alexander Nicolson's History of Skye (Glasg. 1930) suggests that the dedicatee should be "MacSween of Roag" rather than MacSwan (p.65).

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