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The End of the Great Bridge

There are settings of this tune in the following manuscript sources:
– **The Hannay/MacAuslan** MS, ff.9-12;
– Angus MacKay's MS, i, 186-8;
– Colin Cameron's MS, ff.34-5;
– Donald MacKay's "Ballindalloch MS," ff.1-2;
– John MacDougall Gillies's MS, ff.10-11;
– D. S. MacDonald's MS, ii, 108-109;

and in the following published sources:
– Donald MacDonald's *Ancient Martial Music*, pp.111-115;
– C. S. Thomason's *Ceol Mor*, pp.49-50;
– David Glen's *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.127-9.

The **Hannay/MacAuslan** MS may be the earliest of the scores historically and has many similarities in melodic line and ornamentation to Donald MacDonald's published version:

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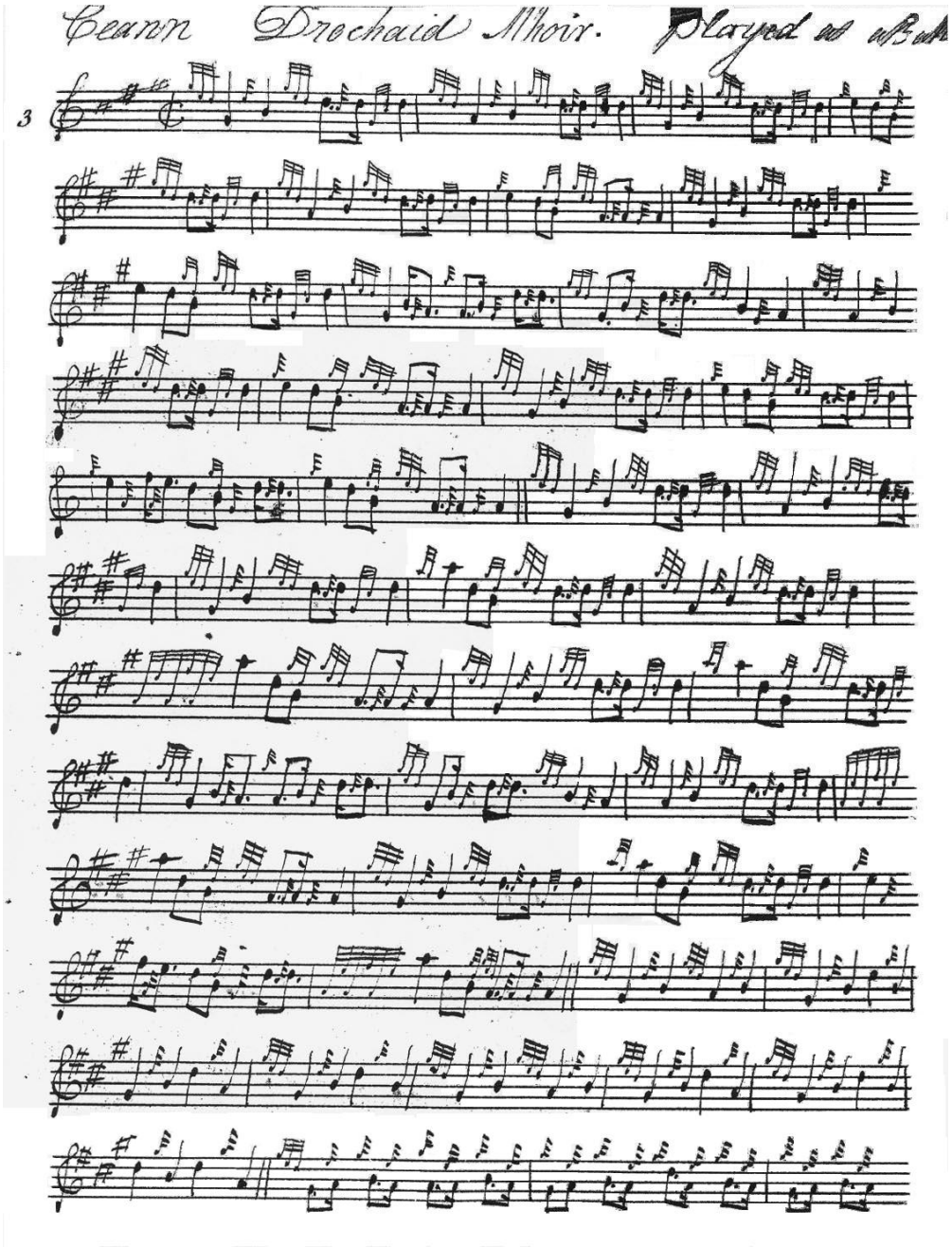

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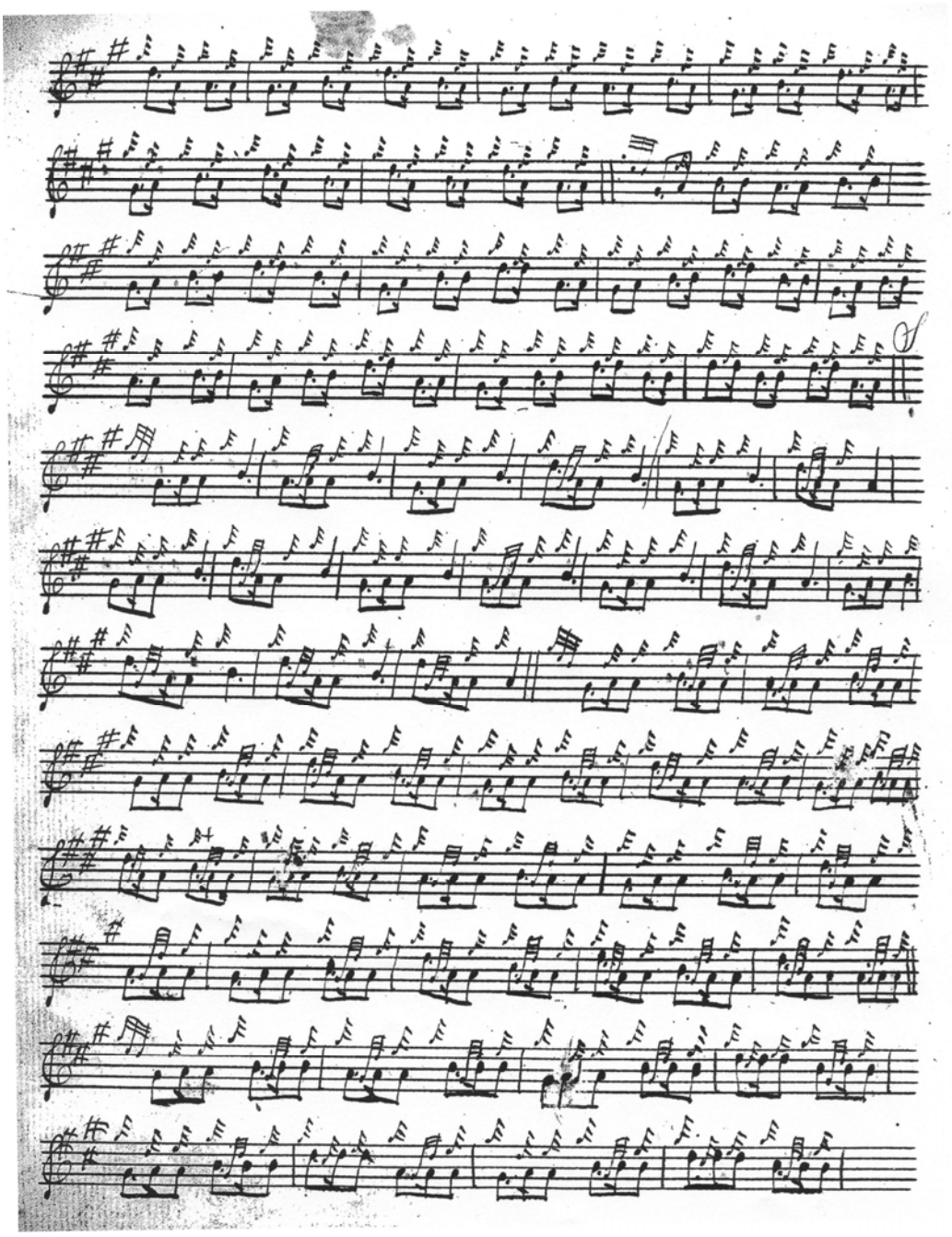

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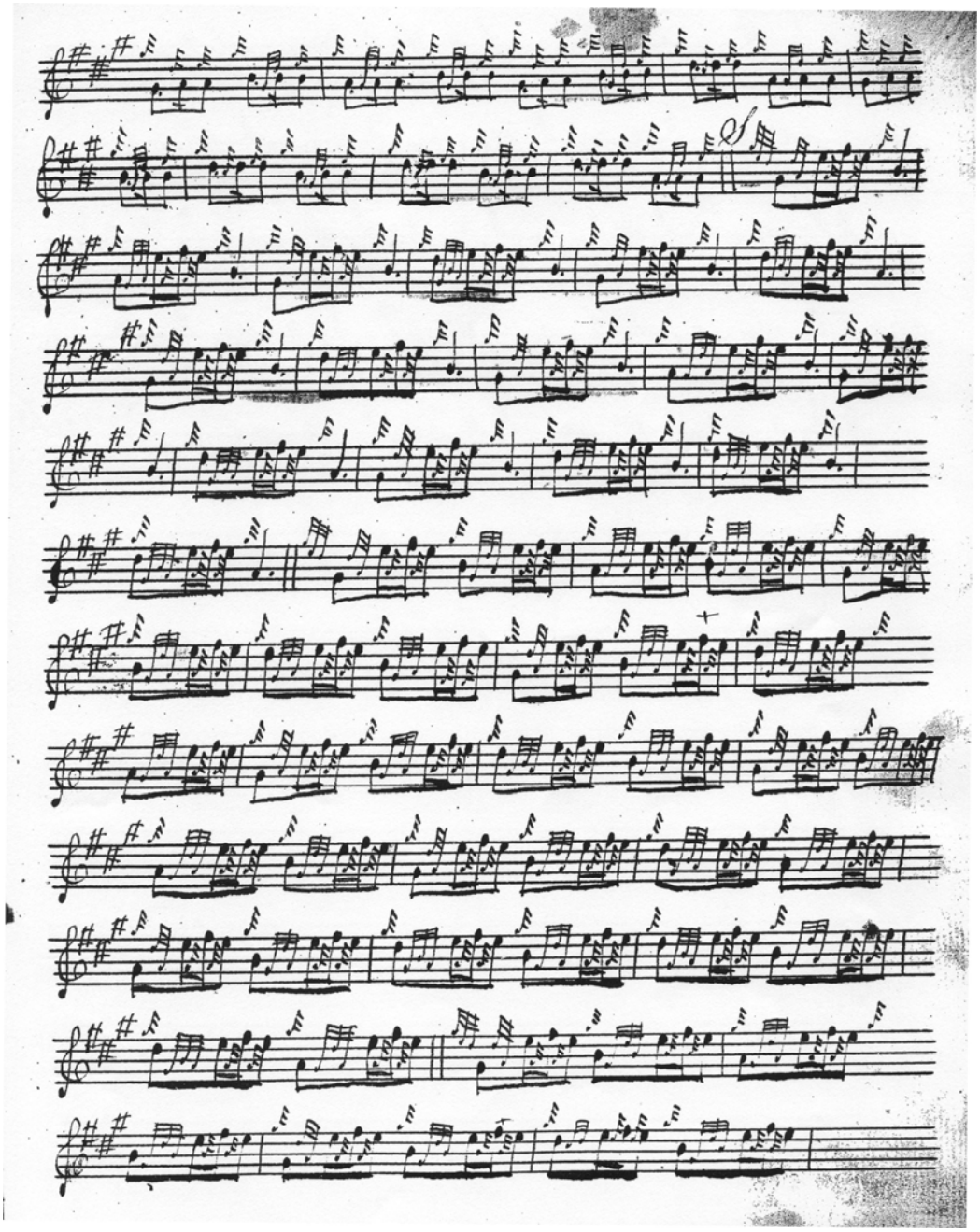
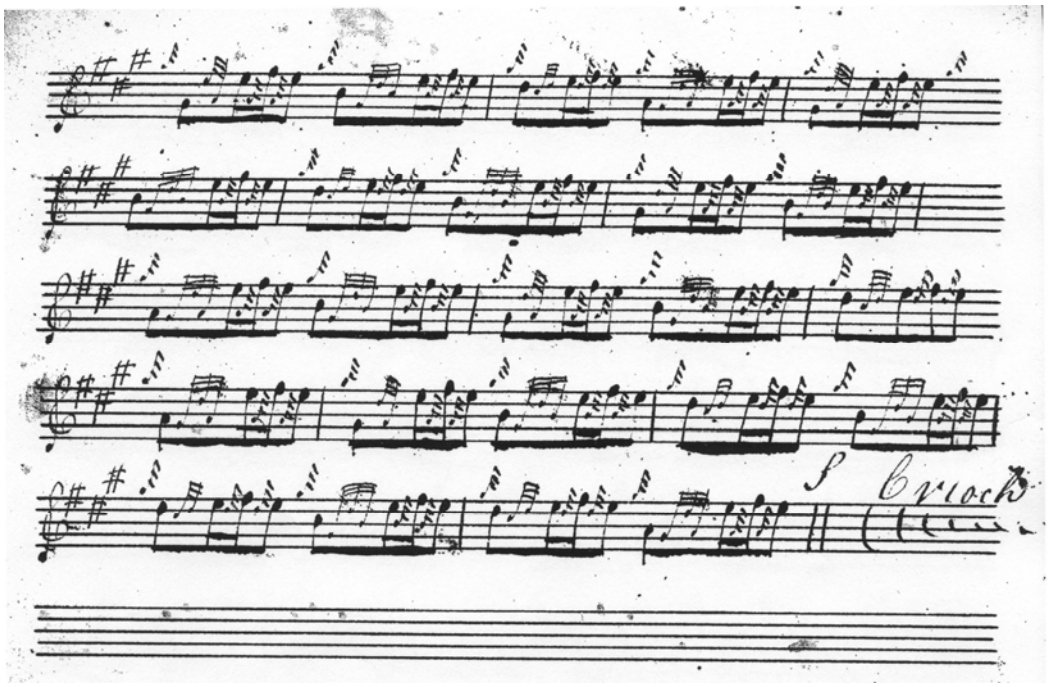




It is interesting that the pointing is clearly played on to expressed low G, low A and B crotchets; this seems the plain intention. The Hannay/MacAuslan manuscript has been ascribed to Donald MacDonald but there are a number of differences between this MS and Donald's usual style. For example The finger chart in "Instructions for the Great Highland Bagpipe" in Donald MacDonald's *Ancient Martial Music* shows the C being played "open," while in the comparable section of the Hannay/MacAuslan it is shown as "closed." Similarly, the Hannay/MacAuslan shows the taorluath movement in a form close to its modern style, while MacDonald's score shows the "redundant" A. It has been argued, however, that the Hannay/MacAuslan was one of the sources for Donald MacDonald's published book. See Frans Buisman "An Anonymous Manuscript and its position in the history of piobaireachd playing," *Piping Times*, 38: 3/ 4 (Dec. 1985, pp.23-27; Jan 1986, pp.30-34); and Roderick D. Cannon and Keith Sanger, eds., *Donald MacDonald's Collection of Piobaireachd*, Piobaireachd Society, 2006, pp.11-14, 121) .

Donald MacDonald sets the tune as follows:

CEANN NA DROCHAID MHORIDH

THE END OF THE GREAT BRIDGE

Composed on the

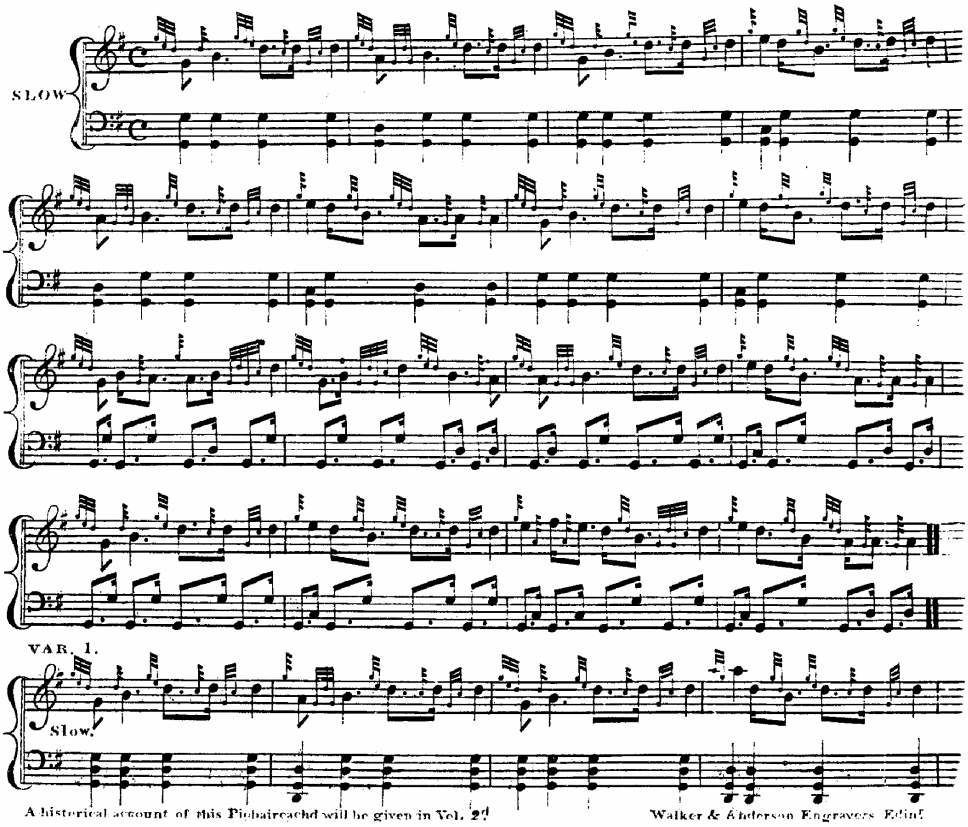
MIDST

of the

Battle at Inberlochy

1427

Where in Donald Balloch, of the Isles, was Victorious over the Royal Forces.



A historical account of this Piobaireachd will be given in Vol. 2d

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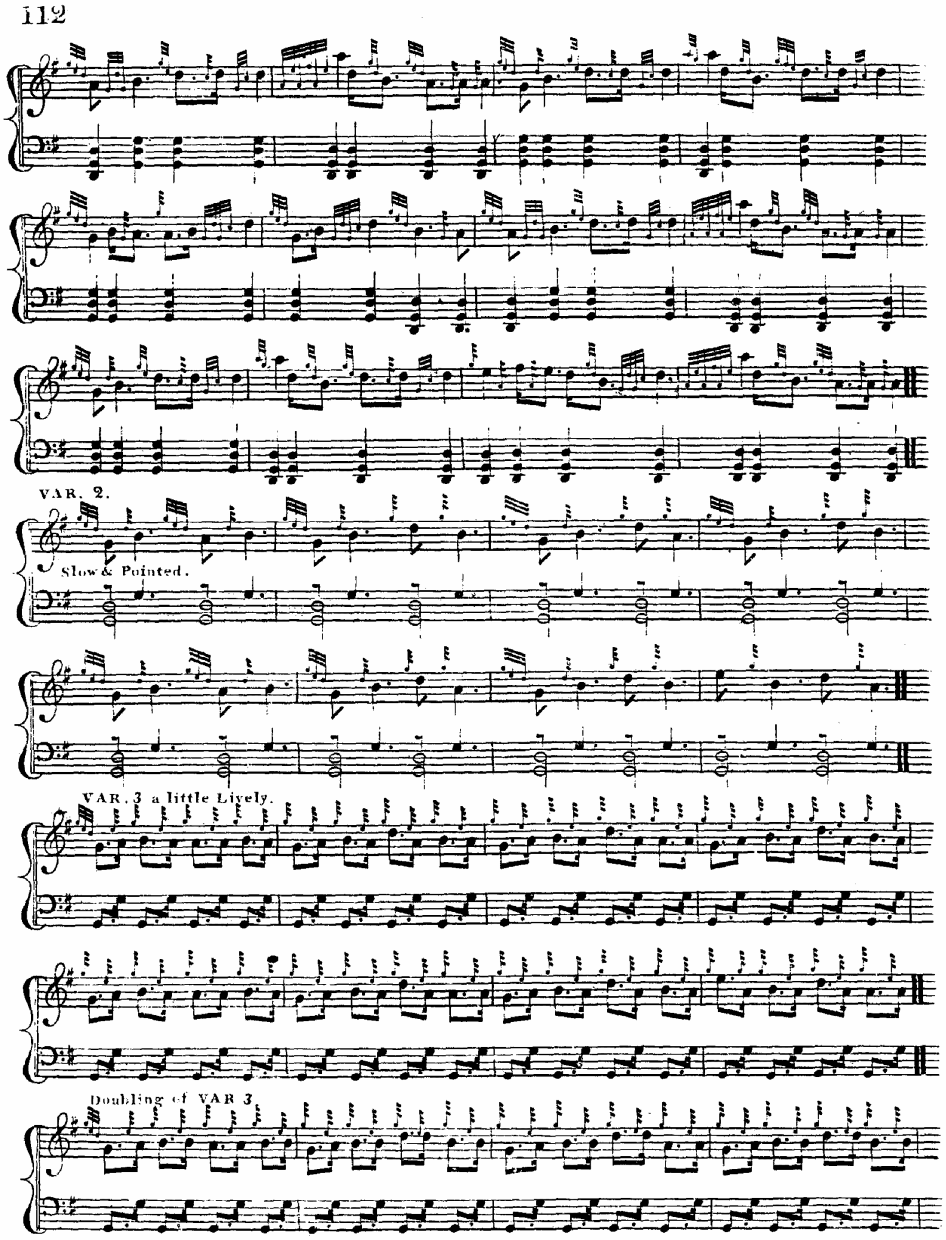

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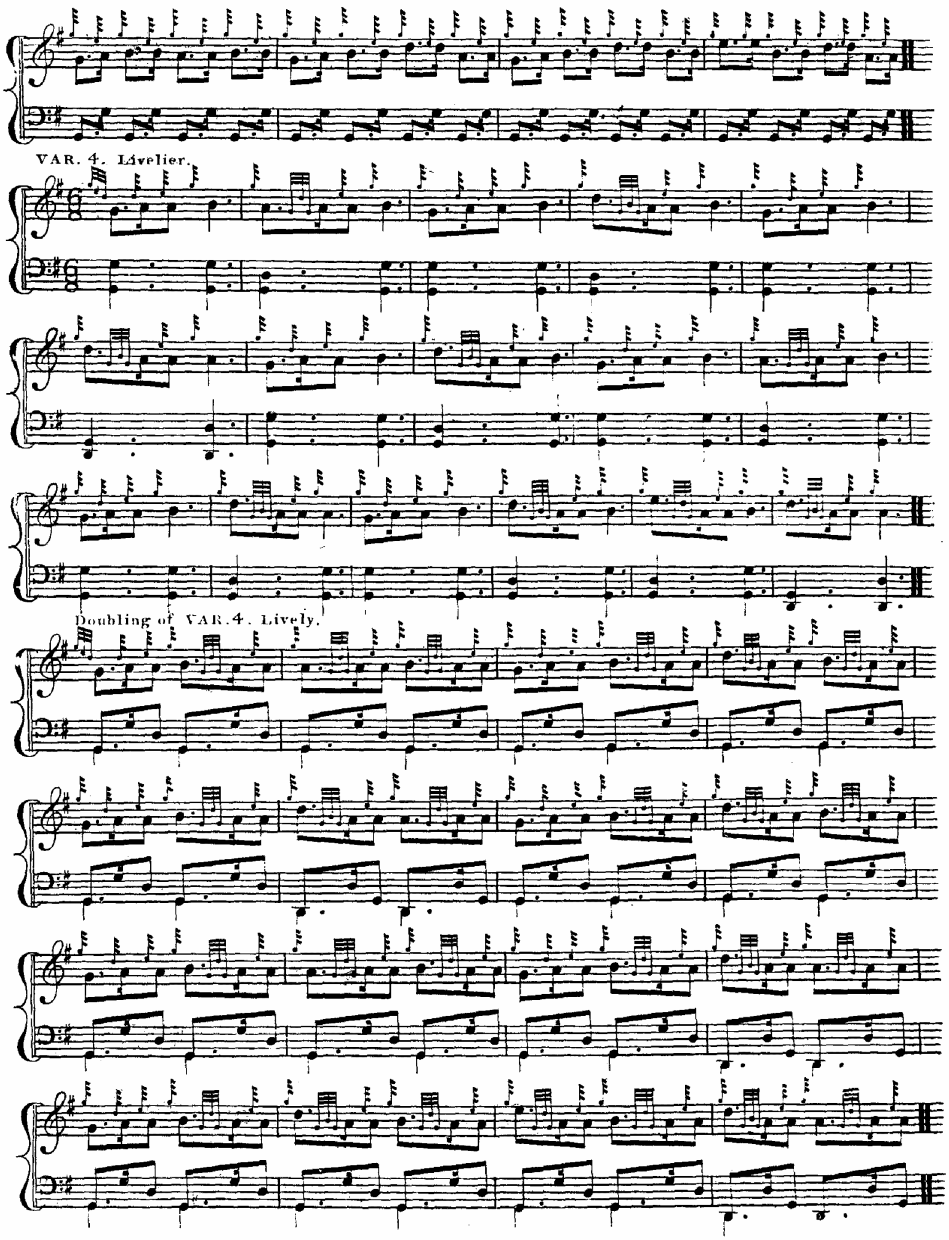

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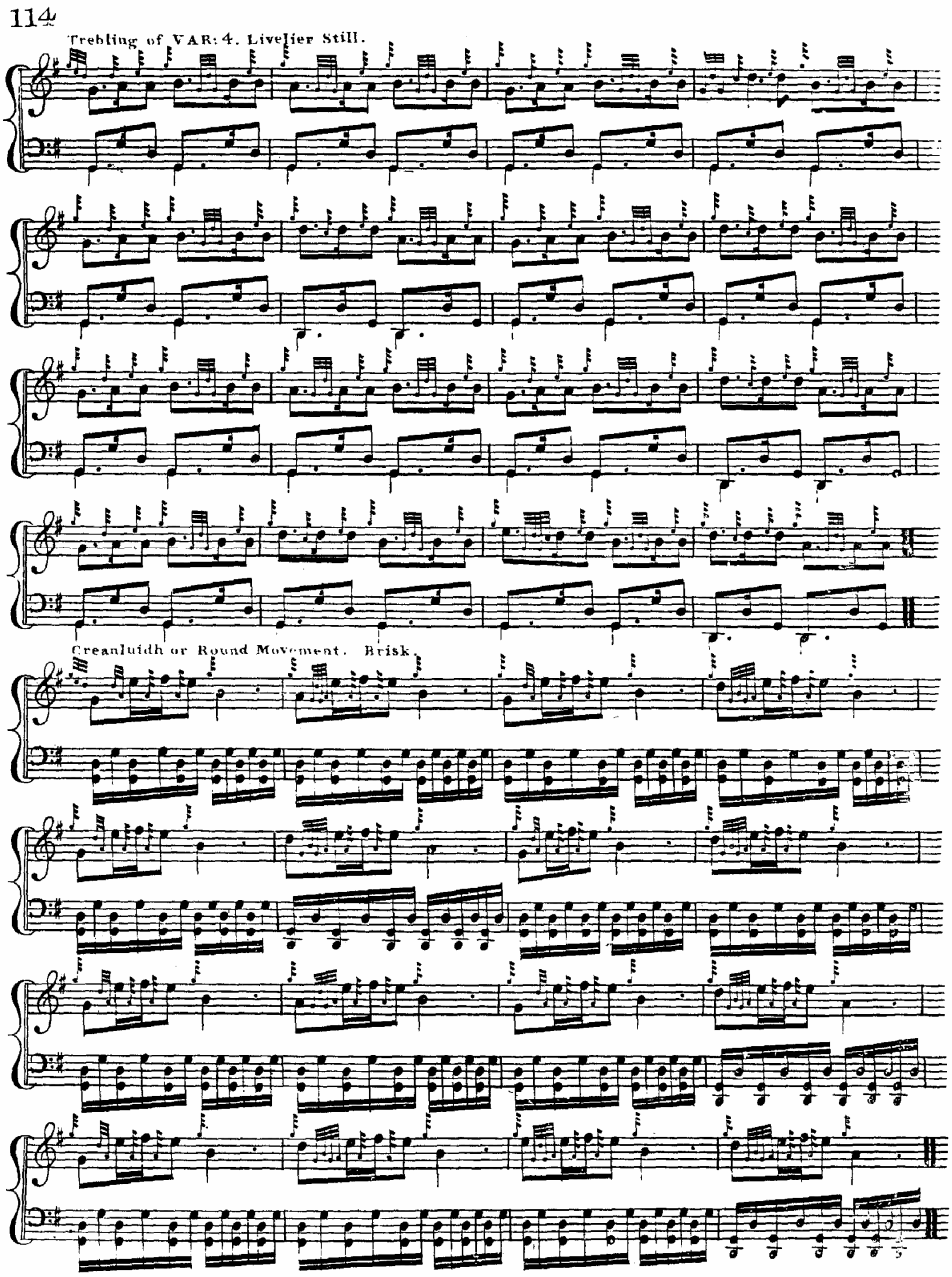

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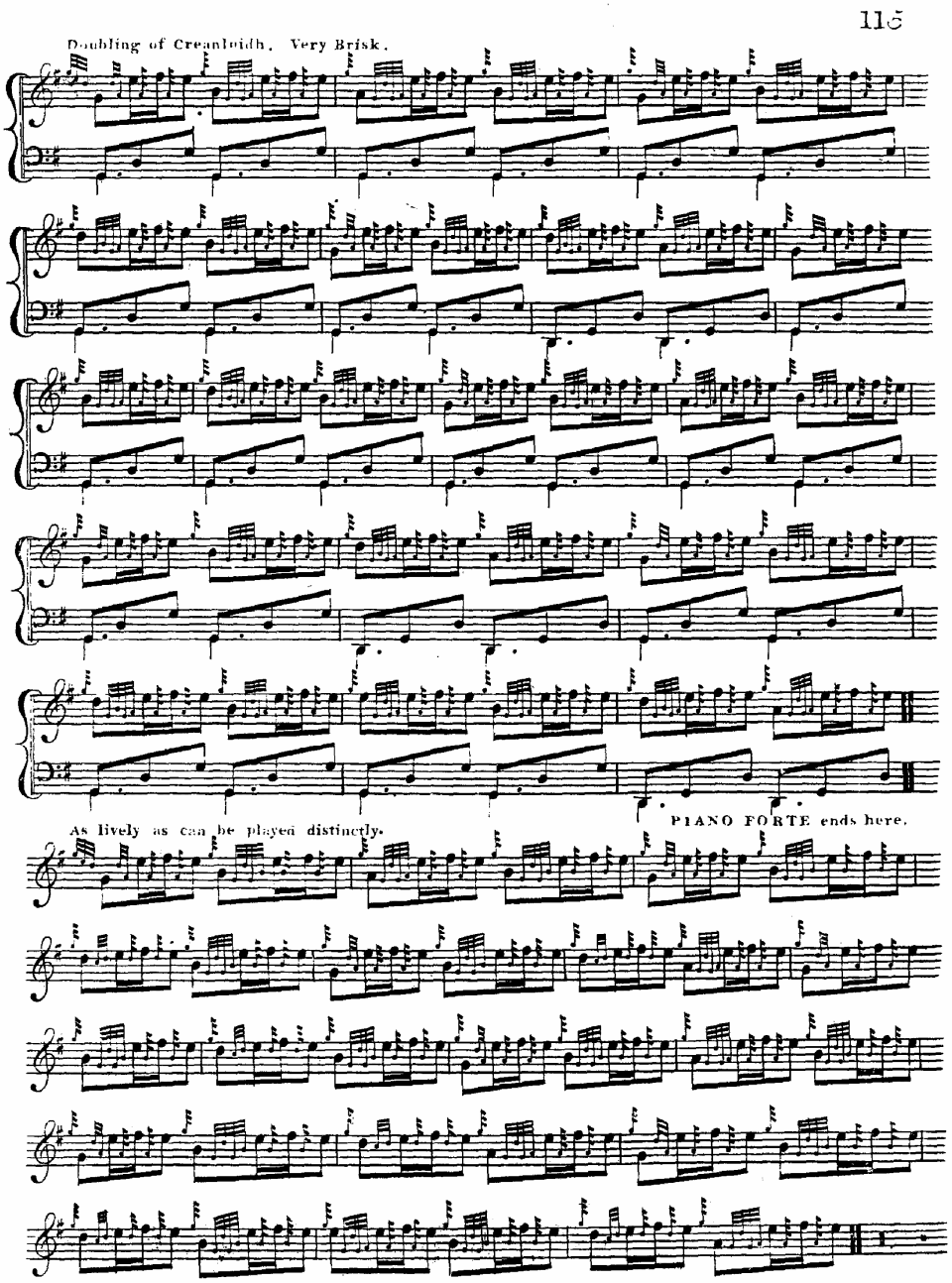

In the first bar of the ground, the introductory group on D is not repeated elsewhere in comparable positions in the tune. We note too the variety of approaches to the throw on D depending on whether it occurs in a strongly or weakly stressed position, and the use of two different concluding gestures on A. Further points of interest include MacDonald's use of a throw up to high A in the thumb variation reminiscent of the movement used by General C. S. Thomason in the dramatic opening phrase of "Hail to my Country" which was such a favourite with John MacDonald of Inverness and his pupils R. U. Brown and R. B. Nicol.

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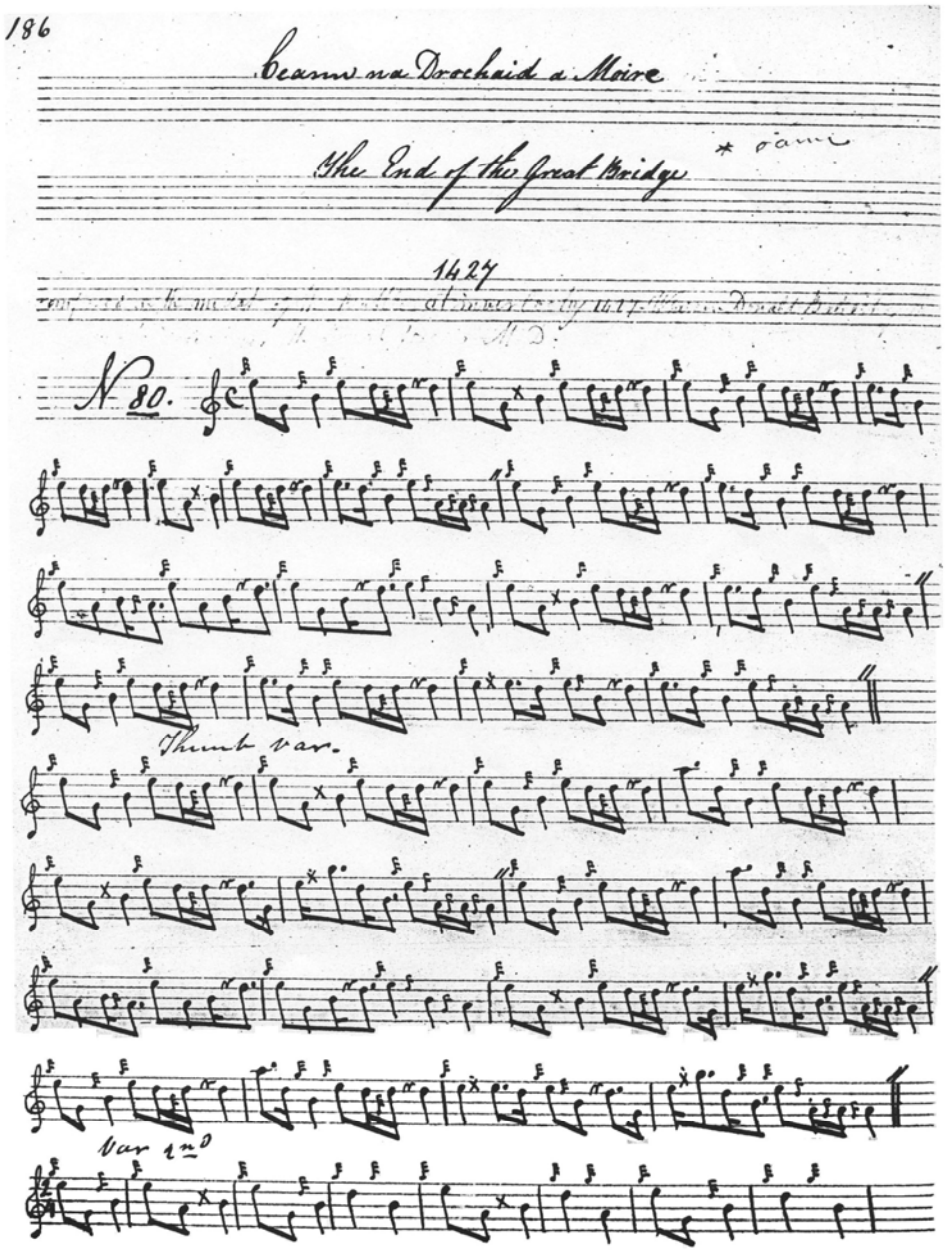
One might also note Donald MacDonald's varied treatment of taorluath a mach movements on D in the trebling movement above, and the emphasis on the opening note in the taorluath and crunluath a mach movements on B and D. This tune also provides an interesting example of the way in which the rhythmical context supplies probable time-values for MacDonald's compound appoggiaturas (for a discussion of which with specific reference to this tune, see *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, pp.109-112).

Angus MacKay sets the tune as follows:



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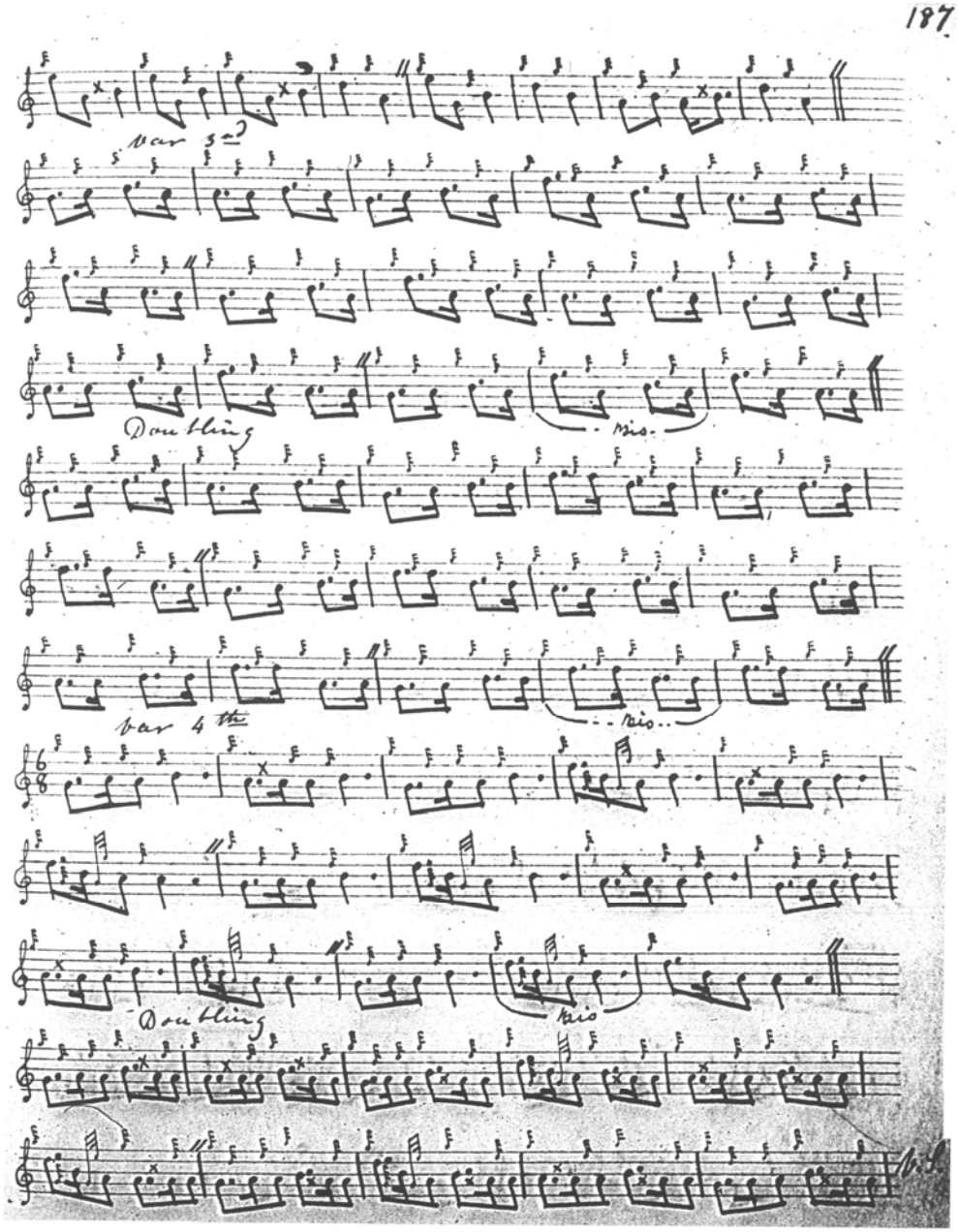

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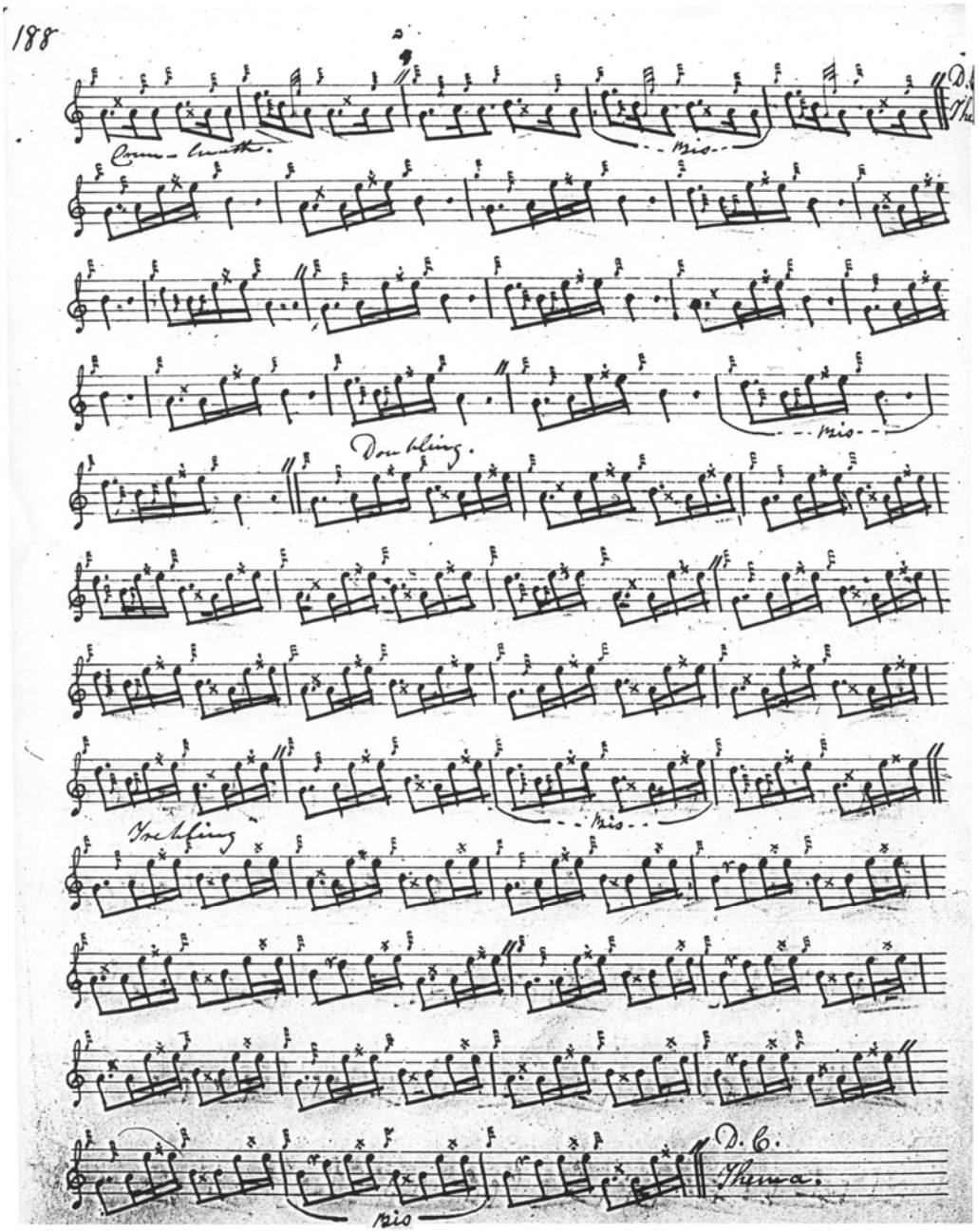
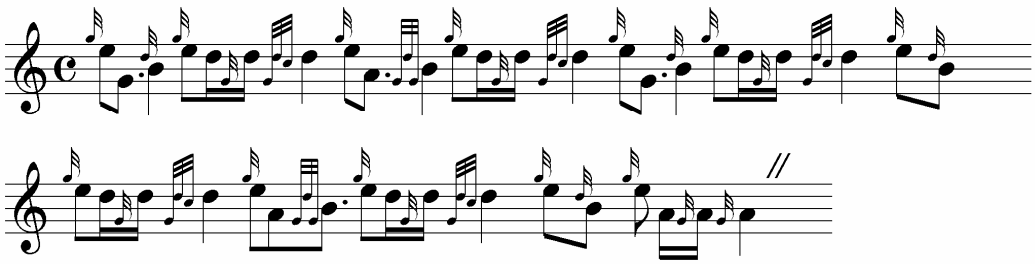


Colin Cameron's setting is broadly similar to that of Angus MacKay. He rationalises the metre of MacKay's 2nd variation reducing MacKay's D, B and A crotchets to quaver figures in the modern manner and his setting is more explicit in its pointing, The tune is developed in a manner similar to Angus McKay, but the E/low G, E/low A quaver figures in the ground have a suggested 'down' pointing, as follows:

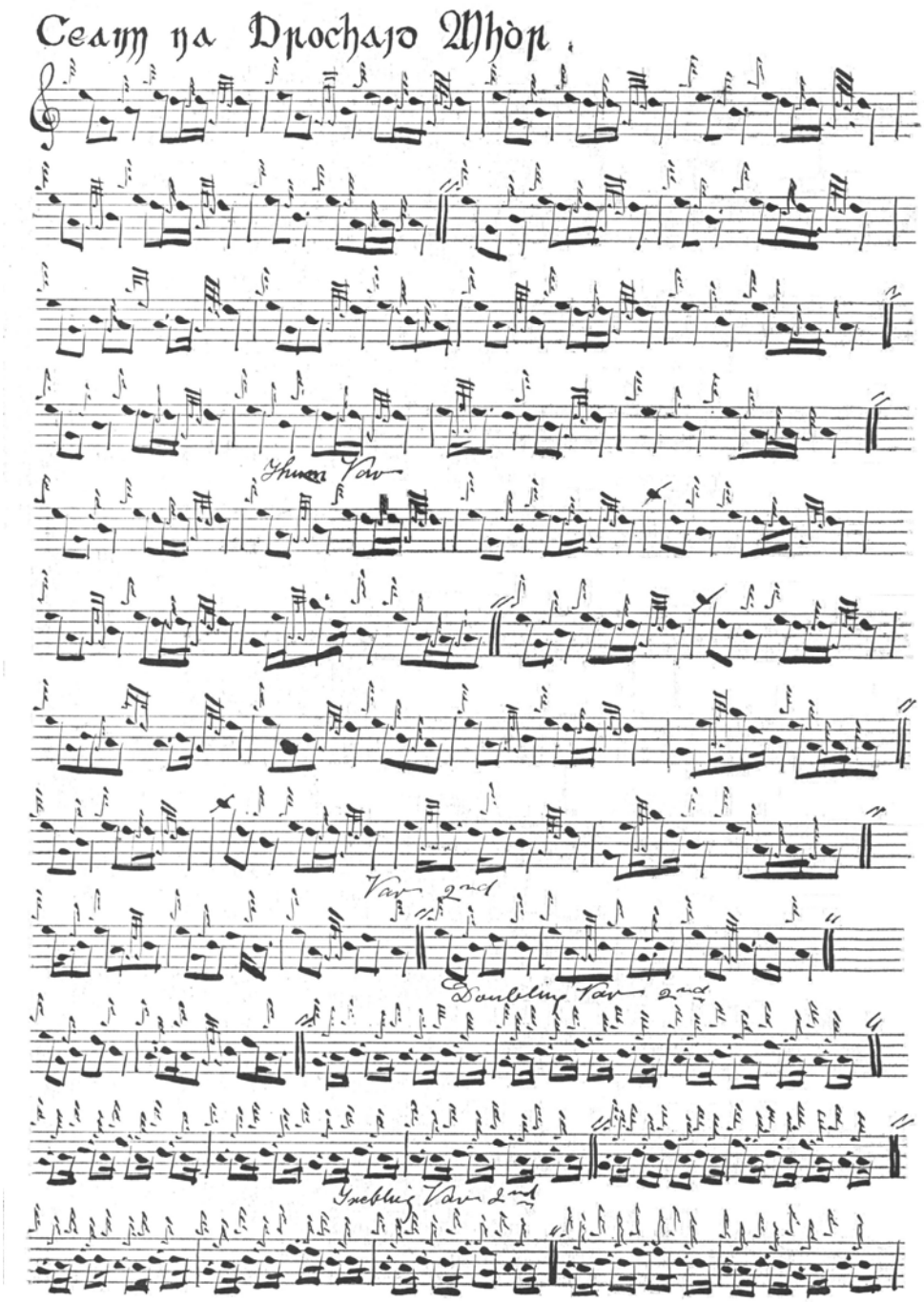
'The End of the Great Bridge', ground line1, Colin Cameron's MS, (ff.34-5)



Cameron's score ends with the taorluath a mach and the direction that "Cruinluadh to be taken off Taorluath." The reader will note his timing of bar 4 (treated similarly in bar 6), where MacKay's expressed D in the descending figure between E and B is reduced to a D cutting. Gillies adopts similar approach to this phrase.

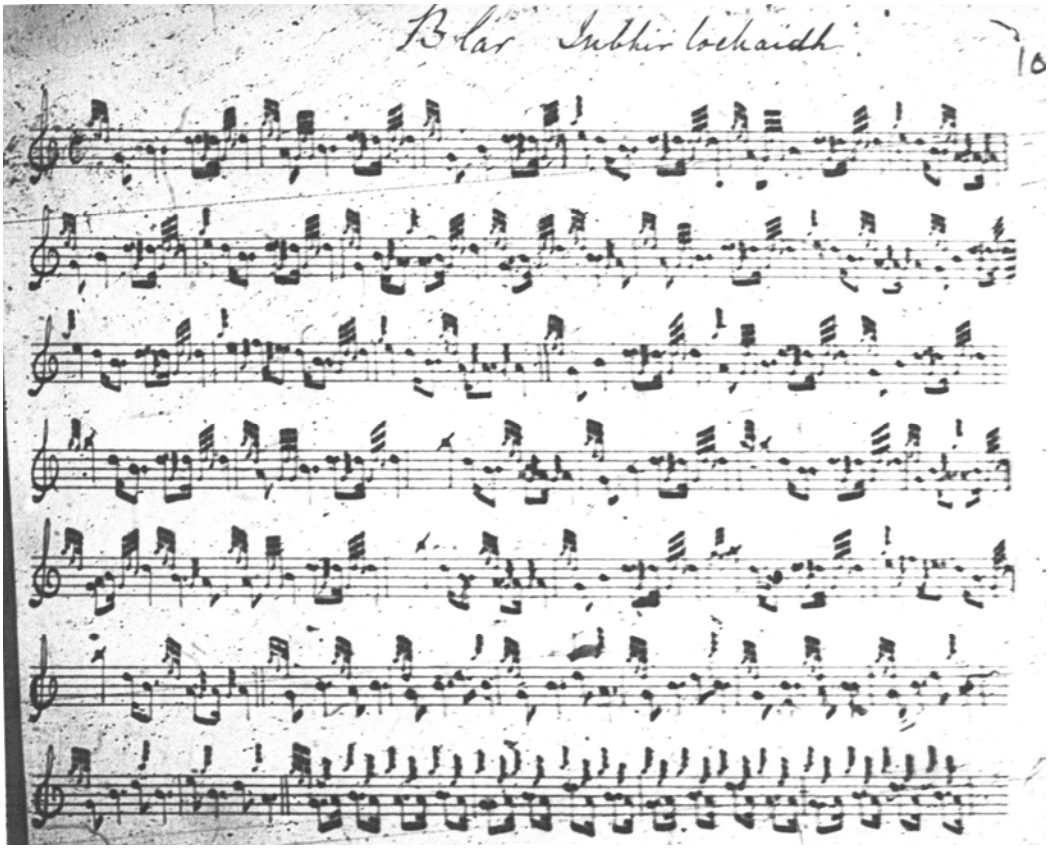
Donald MacKay's score in the Ballindalloch manuscript is very similar to Colin Cameron's. Indeed it may derive directly from Colin Cameron's MS and in any case both will have had the same ultimate source, namely Colin's father, Donald Cameron. It does not add significantly to the expressive possibilities of the tune and is not reproduced here.

The style of this particular branch of the tradition is well illustrated by the setting in **John MacDougall Gillies**'s manuscript book marked '"The End of the Great Bridge' composed by one of the Maccrimmons in the midst of the Battle of Inverlochy. 1427. J. McD.G. Dec 26th 1879":



and so on.

D. S. MacDonald has an interesting style here, dropping the cadence note on the D double echo beats and timing his eallach in two different ways:



and so on.

C. S. Thomason gives Donald MacDonald's *Ancient Martial Music*, the Ballindalloch manuscript, and the teaching of Donald Cameron (transmitted by the latter's pupil, Donald MacKay) as his sources. His setting is a pleasing one, but since it adds nothing significant to the stylistic possibilities of the tune it is not reproduced here.

David Glen also represents the Cameron style, giving as his source the playing of Colin Cameron. From a typographical point of view this is probably the best of the playing scores:

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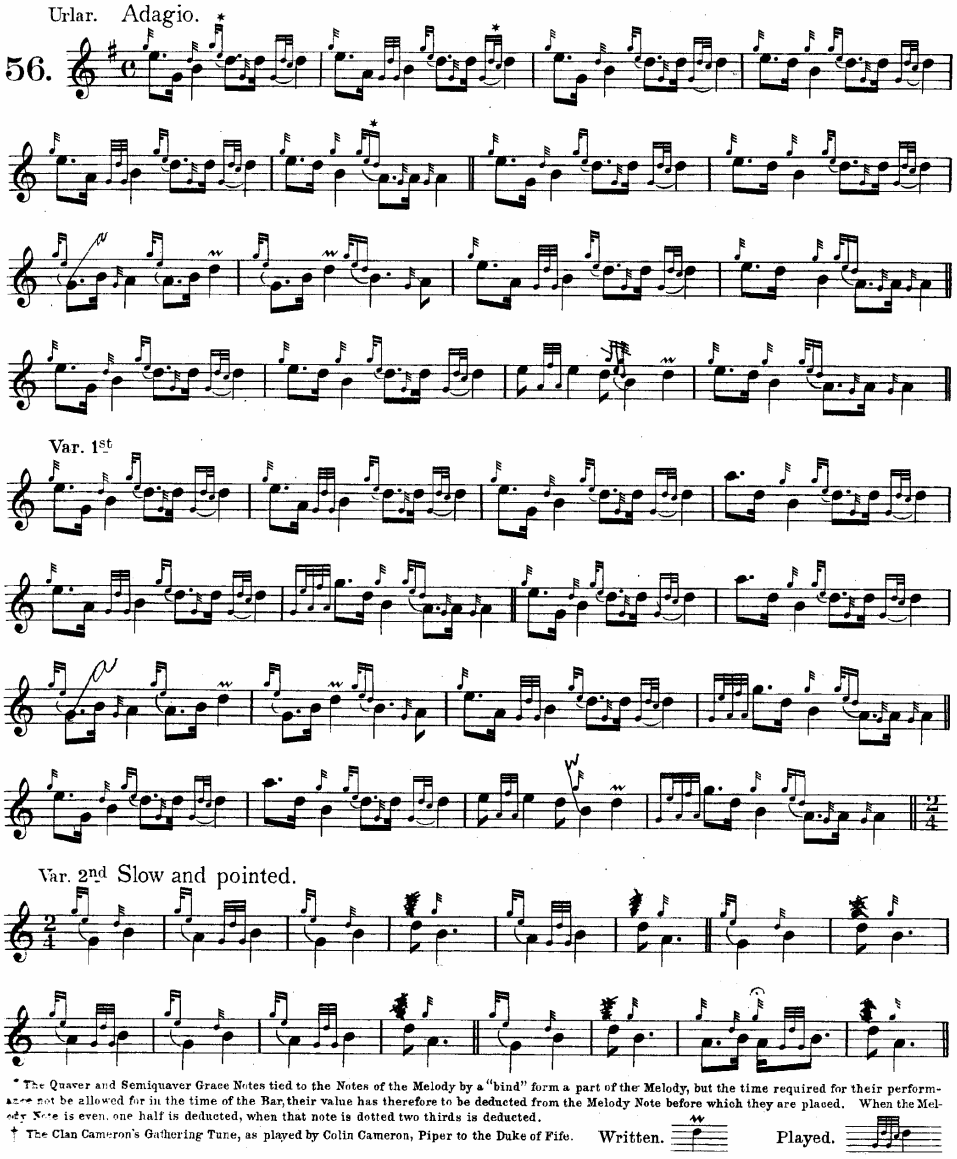
THE END OF THE HIGH BRIDGE† (1427)

CEANN NA DROCHAIDE MÓIRE.



* The Quaver and Semiquaver Grace Notes tied to the Notes of the Melody by a "bind" form a part of the Melody, but the time required for their performance not be allowed for in the time of the Bar, their value has therefore to be deducted from the Melody Note before which they are placed. When the Melody Note is even, one half is deducted, when that note is dotted two thirds is deducted.

† The Clan Cameron's Gathering Tune, as played by Colin Cameron, Piper to the Duke of Fife. Written. Played.

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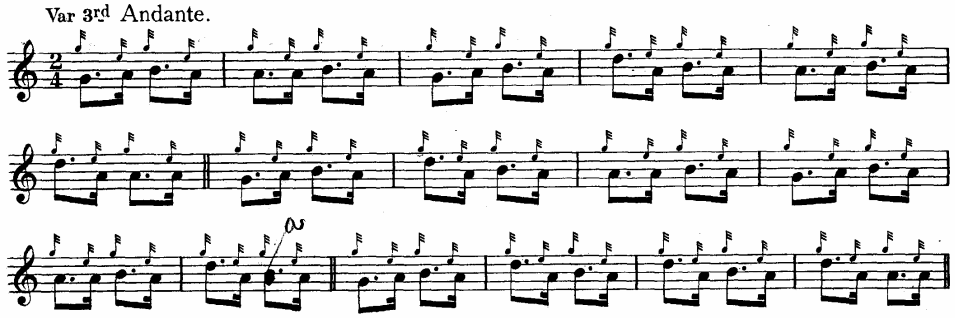
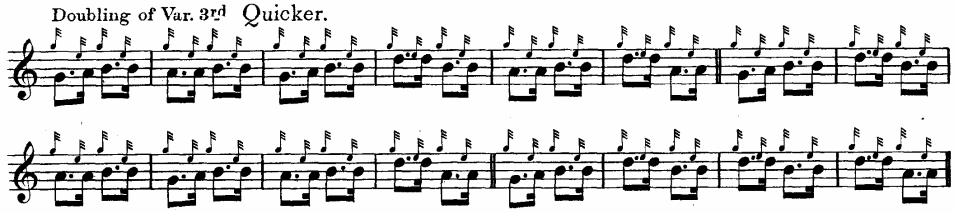
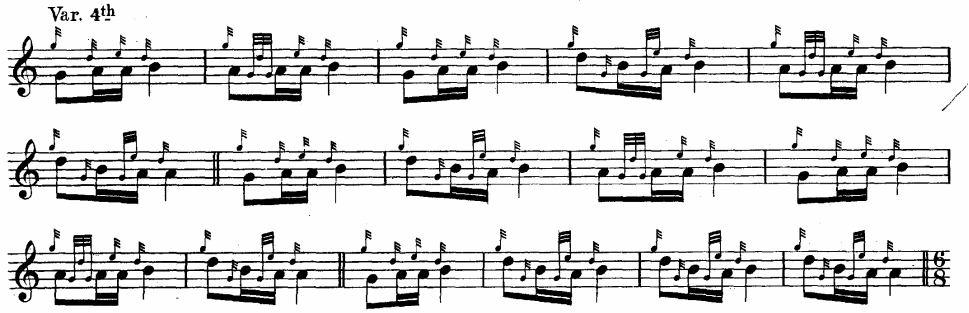
Var 3rd Andante.



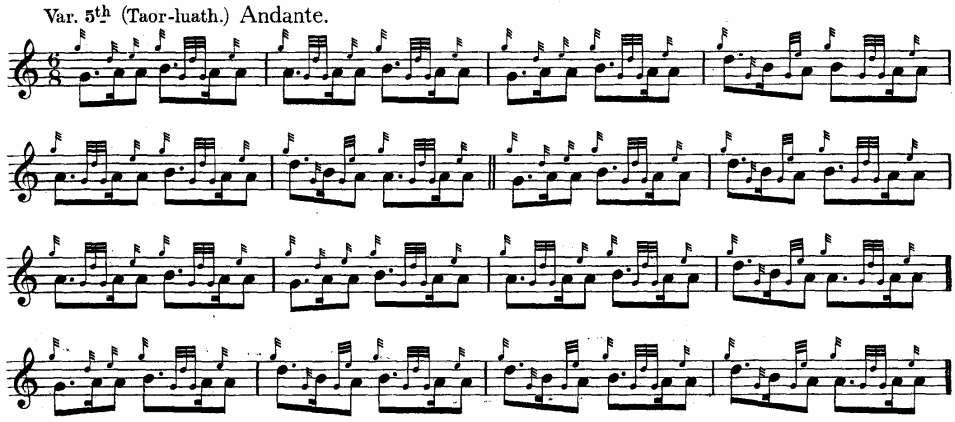
Doubling of Var. 3rd Quicker.



Var. 4th



Var. 5th (Taor-luath.) Andante.



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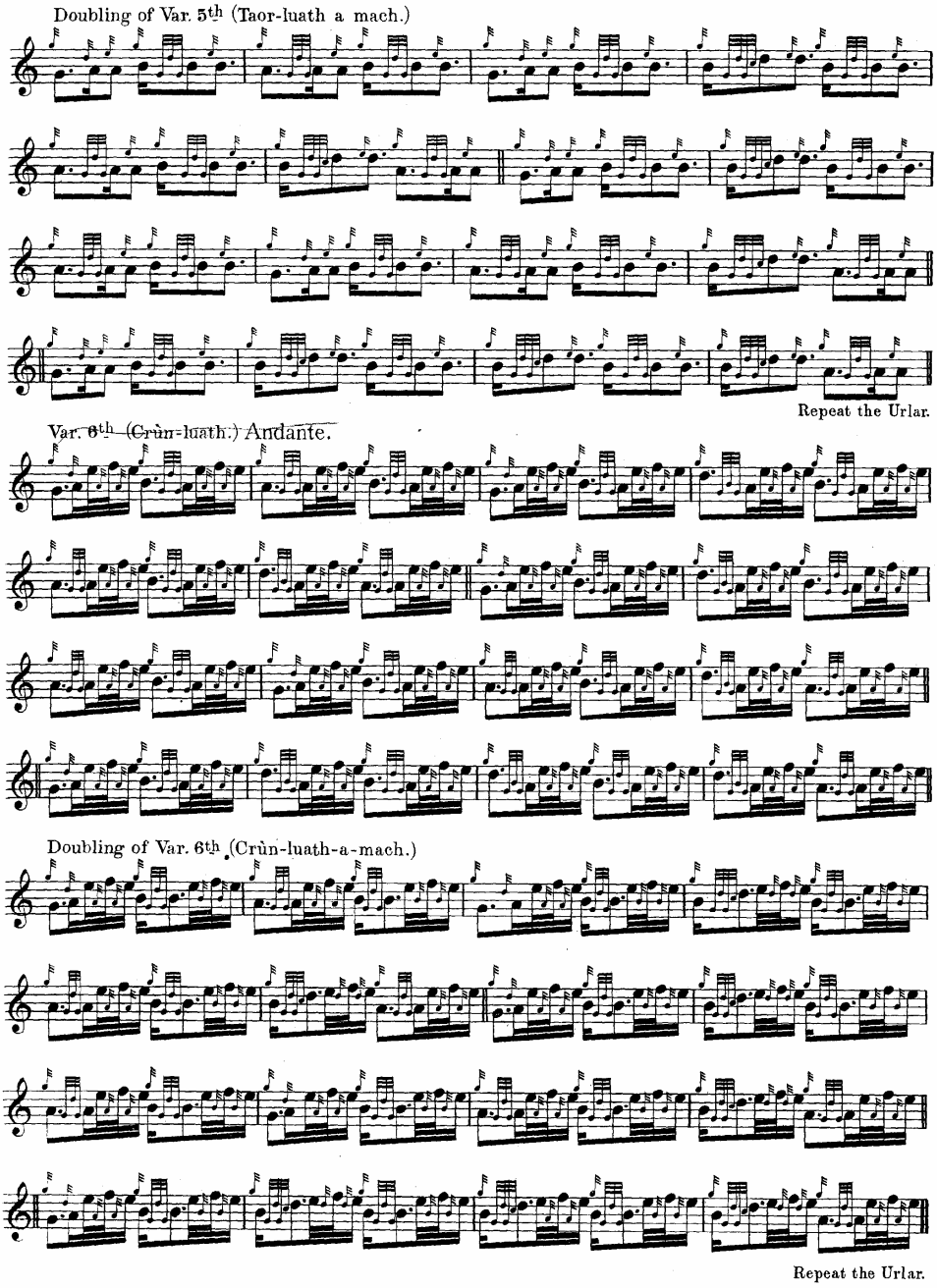

Commentary:

There are basically two ways of doing the tune, the MacArthur style we see in Donald MacDonald and the Hannay/MacAuslan manuscript, and the MacKay style, committed to paper about the middle of the 19th century by Angus MacKay and passed on to the next generation by Donald Cameron and his family.

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In a sensible note in his "Historic, Biographic and Legendary Notes" appended to David Glen's *Ancient Piobaireachd*, the writer, translator and historian "Fionn" (Henry Whyte, 1852-1913) remarks:

> According to certain authorities, this tune was composed to commemorate the Battle of Inverlochy. While it is quite likely that the tune was composed years subsequently to commemorate this battle, it is very doubtful if the *pìob mhór* was present at Inverlochy, for the bagpipes were not common in the Highlands for about a century after that famous battle. The late Mary Mackellar, *nee* Cameron, [Gaelic writer, 1836-90] says the High Bridge referred to in the Cameron tune is the High Bridge a few miles below Spean Bridge, which was built by General. Wade. At this bridge, in 1745, the Highlanders had the first skirmish with the red-coats. The prisoners taken were marched to Glenfinnan on the day of the raising of the Standard of Prince Charles.' ("Historic, Biographic and Legendary Notes" p.15)

The kind of thing that "Fionn" had in mind can be seen in General Thomason's note on the tune in his "Ceol Mor Legends":

> The End of the Great Bridge (Inverlochy 1427)
>
> In this battle the Govt. forces under the Earl of Mar were severely defeated by the Isles men and Lochaber men under Black Donald of the Isles. (Vide note on N. XXXVI) The piobaireachd was composed during the battle.
> Alasdair Carrach (Alastair Charich) fought here on Donald's side, and for his participation in this rebellion, he was, in 1431, deprived of the lordship of Lochaber, which he had received from his father, in accordance with a deed of settlement agreed upon between the latter and his father-in-law King Robert 11, about 1379. Alastair Carrach was the 3rd son of Lady Margaret Stewart, daughter of Robert, High Steward of Scotland afterwards Robert 11, who was the second wife of John the first Lord of the Isles who admitted the superiority of the Scottish Crown (vide Hist. & Notes on Nos. XIV & XXXIV) f.82.

* * *

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