

CASE STUDY 3

**ALBA BHEADARACH**  
(BATTLE OF SHERIFFMUIR)

SOURCES and TITLESPibroch

- Donald MacDonald Ms. [DMcD] c1805-1826 (no7: 103.)  
 'Cheerful Scotland'. (Alba Bheadarach)<sup>1</sup>
- Angus MacKay Ms. [AMcK Ms.]<sup>2</sup> c1826-1840 Vol 2: 105 no.25  
 'Blàr Sliabh an t-siorraidh The Battle of Sherriffmoor'. .
- Angus MacKay Coll. [AMcK Coll.] 1838: 63  
 'Blar sliabh an t-Shirra The Battle of Sheriffmuir composed by Finlay  
 Dubh MacRae 1715'

Melody no.2

Angus MacArthur Ms.

c1820

'Albain Bheadarach'<sup>3</sup>

?  
 Alternative versions in Robertson's  
 loose papers. Gaelic version of song  
 + trans into English

Scotish Record Office GD 38/1/1244/87-89 trans.  
 Gaelic song ver. 38/1/1245/42

Variant pibroch.

<sup>1</sup> This is not to be confused with another completely different tune by a similar name found in Angus MacArthur MS., the Piobaireachd Society Series and Kilberry collections called Beloved Scotland. Subsequent sources of the tune under consideration here call it The Battle of Sheriffmuir. eg. see Piobaireachd Society (Book 15: 500)

<sup>2</sup> The Ms differs in that it is short of the last two phrases, although an asterisk appears at the end of the sixth phrase which MacKay may have inserted after realising it was a mistake. Neither has the Ms. a thumb variation as in his collection.

<sup>3</sup> This title has been inserted above the tune in ink. The other titles in the book have been inserted in the same manner in what looks like the handwriting of Dr. Bannatyne. This title does not seem, however, to be in Bannatyne's hand.

Donald MacDonald Bk. [DMCD] BK 1820: 102

'Bodaich na' m Brigis Lord Breadalbane's March.'

### Song Recording

Charles Cameron, [CC] Spean Bridge, Lochaber (SA/1969/175 B6+B7)

### Song Text with Music.

A Chòisir-Chiùil [ChCh.] p. 90.

### Variant song text.

Frances Tolmie 1911: 171 no. 17

'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne so.'

## DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT.

This is an eight phrase pibroch in 3/4 time having a song melody which is sung to its close variant, Bodaich nam Briogais. The melody of the song <sup>version of</sup> Alba Bheadarach has been mixed up with the second half of the melody of Bodaich nam Briogais. <sup>As seen discussed in CS2, another song text</sup> ~~with which the song beginning 'Mhnàthan a' Ghlinne is associated.~~ <sup>also</sup> ~~As only the first half of the latter has been used as a basis for the pibroch Alba Bheadarach, the sung words starting 'Alba Bheadarach' are considered as, at least, the rhythmic basis of its ùrlar.~~ It is useful to consider ~~the manner in which the composer adapted one tune and used it to form the basis for another pibroch.~~ Because of the shared song text, it is possible to ascertain what the ùrlar's performance style is likely to have been like around the time of its composition.

## ANALYSIS. <sup>(linked to the pibroch)</sup> 1 (Bodaich nam Briogais) <sup>the song</sup>

In one of the recorded versions made of 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne, the singer, CC<sub>m</sub> melodically varied each verse of the song. Although he seemed quite sure of the song, he nevertheless sang into another, completely different, topical theme which is not recorded elsewhere. He himself stated the subject matter of the song to have links with the Glencoe theme of a later version of 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne, <sup>It is clear, however,</sup> ~~although it appears that there are at~~ <sup>which Neil MacLeod created in the late 19th.</sup>



least two different themes brought together because of their melodic similarity.<sup>4</sup> His words are:

Albainn bheadarach, bheadarach, bheadarach,  
Albainn bheadarach,'s math dhuinn 'ga h-fhàgail.  
(Beloved Scotland/We'd better leave her)

'Si mhuir tha 'cur eagal,'Si 'mhuir tha 'cur eagal  
'Si 'mhuir tha 'cur eagal, Air clanna nan Gàidheal.  
(It's the sea that is frightening/the children of the Gael [ie. the clansmen])

The reason for the confusion with a different subject theme becomes clearer when the melodic line of the two pibroch versions Bodaich nam Briogais and Alba Bheadarach are compared. The first phrase of a version of each will show the similarities:

Ex. 1.

Ch.Ch.

Ex.1.

Bodaich

Mhàthar

DMcD.

Alba.

Very sig.

The metre of the tune<sup>5</sup> is simple, with eight phrases occurring as follows

- A, A, B.
- A, B\*, B.
- A, B2.

and these phrases can be identified in the DMcD in the following manner:

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix on the history of the song.  
<sup>5</sup> As defined by A.Campbell, Kilberry (1948)

## Ex.2.

Ex. 2

DMcD

Phrase A

Phrase B

Phrase B\*

Phrase B2

The phrase B\*, which is the fifth in the tune, contains melodic motifs common to both phrases A and B<sup>6</sup>. The very last phrase, B2, differs slightly as it opens with a full E melodic note instead of the demi-semiquaver cadence run. In this particular instance the E represents the beginning of a melodic motif comprising the notes E B D F. Variants of this melodic motif can be found in some Gaelic songs and pibroch.<sup>7</sup>

In AMcK however, all of the cadences in Alba Bheadarach, and his cadences in general, are represented on the melody line as full notes E, which means that the first musical stress lies on the E rather than on the low A as in DMcD. This can be seen in the following example of the first phrase, A, as notated by AMcK and DMcD.

chan eil seo ceart  
dù chan eil 'bar'ann.

## Ex.3.

DMcD

3/4

Ala-bathn bheadarach bheadarach bheadarach

AMcK

3/4

Ala-bathn bheadarach bheadarach bheadarach

include?

There are a number of styles of interpretation, several of which could be described as follows;

- either the stress occurs on the first A (DMcD)

<sup>6</sup> The fifth phrase of pibroch is a crucial one in the procedure of the tune. It frequently reasserts a melodic/rhythmic motif by its repetition, or it changes a motif in order to break monotony and in the process opens up the melodic scope of the tune. (see page 216 footnote)

<sup>7</sup> For instance this E B D F motif is found in the song version of Colla mo Rùn as sung by Mary Morrison of Barra (cf. CS 5)



- or the EA figure (AMcK) is played as shown with two quavers giving a crotchet stress

Each of the above styles has subsequent stressed two-and three-note figures, giving the impression of 3/4 time. This arises from playing the score fairly literally - which is what one has to assume is intended with this type of notation - ~~and~~ <sup>where</sup> each bar has three stressed positions. <sup>once again, 'literal' or objective interpretation of score -</sup>

The problem with the second style, that of AMcK, is that it ~~does not make musical sense~~ because the notation gives equal prominence to the E and the first low A, weakening any rhythmical ambiguity between 3/4 and 6/8 and placing the tune more firmly in 3/4 rhythm. The aural effect is such that one has a succession of crotchet units which sound at odds with the pibroch and song traditions.

A third style involves stressing the first low A and the *edre* on the F, in AMcK as well as in DMcD, which places the dotted quaver A in an unstressed position to give an approximate 6/8 rhythm.

The rhythm intended is probably between the literal interpretation and the other possibilities. These ambiguities becomes clearer once one is aware of the song words for the melody. When these are overlaid, the rhythm tends towards 6/8 time with two rather than three stresses per bar.

### THE SONG.

On one occasion, CG-sings the 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne' couplet stanza beginning 'Tha'n crodh air an togail' to the melody of its refrain; that is, on the notes AAA FED etc. of Bodaich nam Briogais. His next stanza 'Albainn bheadarach' etc. therefore comes in on the melody of the verse of Bodaich nam Briogais<sup>8</sup> (or the second half of its *ùrlar*). See Ex. 4.

*This is an intriguing scenario.*

<sup>8</sup> Vaughan Williams stated that when singers grew old they often "sing only the second half of a tune". This has also been testified by Bayard in article 'Notation and Classification: Prolegomena to a study of the principal melodic families of British - American folksong.' in Readings in Ethnomusicology by David McAllester, (1971: 65-109).

Ex.4.

So Al - (a) - bairn bhea - dar - ach, bhea - dar - ach bhea - dar - ach

Al - (a) - bairn bhea - dar - ach, 's math dhuinn 'ga h - fhàg - ail

Charles Cameron. SA/1969/175/B6

However, the pibroch Alba Bheadarach does not have a distinguishable second half of an ùrlar as in Bodaich nam Briogais equivalent to the refrain-verse form as in 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne. The melody which CC uses is therefore not represented in the pibroch version of Alba Bheadarach because the whole of the eight phrases of pibroch consist of reworkings of the phrases A and B as shown earlier.

If the words beginning *Alba Bheadarach* were not mixed up with the 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne song, then it would be reasonable to suppose that the start of the song would be the same as the beginning of the melody line of the pibroch Alba Bheadarach in DMcD. In light of this, the words of the song fragment have been set out below the music of the first part of the tune. What is most important is the identification of a common rhythm around a melodic shape which connects them both, even though the melodies may now appear to differ greatly. <sup>once again,</sup> The important feature is the rhythm and not what has happened to the melody line.

A +  
cut

The words can be placed below the notated pibroch setting as follows:

Ex.5

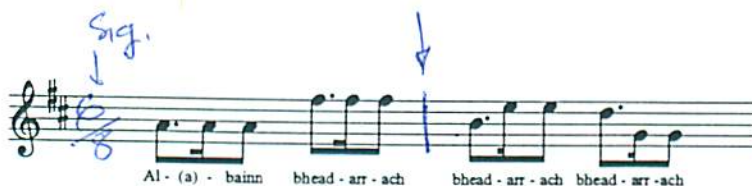
Al -(a)-b- ainnn bheadarach bhead - arach bhead- arach Al - (a) - bairn bheadarach 's math dhuinn gad' fhàg-ail.

So what does the existence of song words tell us about what the pibroch performance style may have been like? When the words are compared to the notation as in the example above, it is possible to see a relationship between words and notes. The stress positions of the words allow one to see where the stresses should occur in the pibroch. These occur at the first



lowA, at F, B, and D in the first phrase. It is not necessary, however, to overlay the words on the music to realise that the language rhythm itself suggests 6/8 time as follows:

Ex.6



although it appears in MacDonald and subsequent sources in 3/4 time.

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The rhythmical connection between the words and the notation <sup>pibroch? MacDonald?</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>appears to be</sup> fairly tenuous. There are areas, however, where the notation does not appear to be so inappropriate as in others. For example, if one attempts to sing the words to the pibroch as notated, two of the three stresses in the first bar of the pibroch are sung to the first word *Albainn*. This is followed by a two syllable word on a one beat *dare*, {NL.} at least according to present day pibroch performance. If the tempo of the tune is slowed down to the tempo one might hear today, of approximately one and a quarter minutes for the ùrlar, and stressed in 3/4 time, normal language stresses as a performance guide become irrelevant. <sup>is a</sup> However, <sup>also</sup> since there would seem to be a range of compromises between the song words and the melodic line of the pibroch notation, there will be a range of acceptable rhythmic styles of singing or playing a musical phrase. These rhythms can range between what might be considered to be closer to the vernacular language stresses <sup>scansion or normal speech stress</sup> and the more measured style of the competition platform. It is this hiatus between the apparent 3/4 rhythm of the notated pibroch and the 6/8 of the language which needs to be reconciled.

As Alba Bheadarach appears to be a variant of Bodaich nam Briogais I suggest that a traditional singer would naturally sing through from the end of the first bar of DMcD at *dare* down to the B of the next bar rather than sing *bheadarach* on the one tone. This rhythmic scansion does not only apply to the singer. The musician, in identifying the music in the form of phrases, <sup>should</sup> ~~would tend to~~ play through the phrase rather than <sup>rest on?</sup> stress *dare*. In this situation the short cadences would be part of the rhythmic continuum of the melodic line of the tune. One might be just as informative to a reader by notating the music with the cadence on the melodic line; the note values may be no different although in this case the



E is being shortened to represent the *-arach* of *bheadarach*. The effect is very much the same as suggested by DMcD and earlier notators who used cadence runs. They <sup>or cadences</sup> lie between the positions where melodic stress coincides with accented metre. A performance might be notated as follows:

Ex. 7



should this be  
kept without  
time sig. without  
sig it says little.

This example highlights the problem which notators like DMcD had when faced with the question of measured time and the desire to preserve a *legato* effect throughout the tune as the pibroch player and singer might perform it. The choice of time signature which DMcD made when notating this tune may have had much to do with the choice of whether to place notes above the line as unstressed cadences or include them as part of the melodic theme. The points of stress are clear in the song but are not identifiable in the same manner in the pibroch score.

DMcD possibly had to make a choice between two rhythms, 3/4 and 6/8, between which the song melody ranges. Neither of these rhythms is applicable for notating the full melody, especially when pibroch cadences have to be included. Theoretically the decision on a choice of time signatures should be independent of the presence or absence of cadences. It should be possible to regard the themal notes of the tune as separate entities from the cadences which in pre-MacKay texts, appear to act as flourishes to the themal notes. In reality, the time taken to play these cadence runs and their effect in placing additional stress on the following themal note may have some bearing on the choice of time signature. In DMcD, an introductory cadence at the very beginning of the tune would emphasise the low A as the first of a series of stressed motifs. This is stated with the reservation that the cadence has the tendency, if not played effectively, of isolating each melodic motif as a series of units, which conceals the melodic line of the tune. Under the circumstances, DMcD probably decided that 3/4 would be the most representative rhythm for the

Cut



tune and notated it <sup>in this manner</sup> most probably using the standard movements which already existed in the piping tradition of his time.

If the song words are now compared with his notated melody, (see p.4) the motif on F at the end of bar one which Donald MacDonald has notated with three musical pulses, coincides with the trisyllabic *bheadarach*. If the pibroch setting of this tune is slowed down and the language rhythm is ignored, then it might be notated in common time with four beats to the bar such as in the PS Series.<sup>9</sup> The true rhythm, it is argued here, is that which has the closest associations with the language, and alternates between 3/4 and 6/8 when sung vocally or played on the pipes.

It may be argued that the three language syllables of *bheadarach* have been imitated on the pipes and have been represented in the Campbell Canntaireachd by the word *dare*. These appear with three notes in the DMcD score but the aural effect is sometimes ambiguous and may sound like two syllables. These *dares* are clearly instrumental conventions developed on the pipes, but they may have technically evolved into two pulses from a shortening of the three-pulse echo beats. These echo beats are in turn imitative of the trisyllabic rhythmic motifs which are very common throughout all Gaelic song.

In the same way, the similar movement on E as a throw or doubling<sup>10</sup> has a bisyllabic word although the *edre* has a svarabhakti vowel giving the impression of <sup>an extra</sup> another syllable. There may be a two way influence here between song and pibroch where the rhythmical characteristic of three musical pulses or language syllables on the same tone exist. This may be a feature which suggests a song has a pibroch equivalent, especially if the melody is within the range of the bagpipe scale.

The vocables *dare* and *edre* represented frequently in the Campbell Canntaireachd and represented in the pibroch scores by short ornaments onto a one-stress but ambiguous number of pulses, may have been partly influenced by the syllabic-based singing style which would have been more

<sup>9</sup> First series part 1-5 published from 1904-1913. Second series parts 1-5 republished from 1925-1934 followed by parts 6-15 published from 1936-1990.

<sup>10</sup> See notes on Campbell or Nether Lorn Canntaireachd in PS Series.



prevalent during the period in which Donald MacDonald lived<sup>11</sup>. They may be shortened more technically developed forms of the three pulse *crahinin*.

It is only natural that tonal and rhythmical features, which may at one time have been common both to the song and its pibroch equivalent, change in the oral tradition simply because of the limitations or choices made in the idiom in which it is performed. For instance, the singer might consider it quite unimportant to imitate the instrumental idiom and vice versa. The singer would be likely to lower or raise the pitch at *bheadarach* in the first phrase just as in the performance of the song 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne' rather than sing on the one pitch as shown. In this case then, the cadences which have been left out of the transcription here would now represent part of the melody line of the song, especially if the song had been adapted to an already existing pibroch melody. The point is that in the performance style of the time, the singer in an oral tradition is likely to have heard the cadences as an inseparable part of the melodic line. The cadences would be unstressed and possibly more subject to melodic variation than the stressed notes. For example, in the context of the rhythm implied by the song words, there is no reason to expect that the following *edre* (E) could not be considered in the same manner as a cadence might be and might as effectively be represented by a highGFE cadence run. This might be represented as follows and is not unlike Ex. 7. shown as follows at the beginning of the second bar:

Ex. 8



<sup>11</sup> This characteristic of singing was common in the old syllabic order of poetry as well as to the keening songs as is suggested in MacIntosh's Lament. It has also survived to some extent in the performance style of some of the older singers of stressed metre who were recorded by the School of Scottish Studies. This apparent contradiction is because those singers eg. the late Domhnall Chaluim Bàin Sinclair, Tiree, move between regular stressing and chant like performance as it suits them. This makes the poetic term 'stressed metre' in song performance more a term of convenience than an exact specification.



The cadences included here now form part of the melodic line of the song with the *-darach* of the word *bheadarach* being sung to the cadence notes. In this way the words fit the music more naturally and the cadence is still behaving as an anacrusis on the upbeat with the stress falling on the following B, coincident with the *-bhea* of *bheadarach*.

However, in order to be more representative of a sung performance the three-note cadence may just as effectively be represented in demisemiquaver, quaver, quaver form as above. These details however verge on the pedantic for the instrumental musician in this context at least, will always tend to approximate - especially without the Gaelic words as a guide. Alternatively, one might reinterpret the tune in view of the rhythmic style which is imparted by the song words to give a performance like the following:

AUDIO - reinterpretation.

*(cf. other audio inserts re title/reference.)*

Ex. 9



The difference between what one reads from the cadence run above the line and what is interpreted and played when the the same notes are read from the melodic line, as in Exs. 7 and 8 may be very slight. The notation itself can only be a rough guide and the same musical effectiveness can be achieved by all three, depending on interpretation. There is probably always some preconceptions about the score such that if presented to a person in the three different examples as shown, that person will in reality interpret the three scores in almost exactly the same manner. Because this is notated without bars and therefore in unmeasured time,

one does not need to force it into an arithmetical relationship in the form of measured time. What is clear at any rate, in performance, is that the cadence run should not take any longer than, say, a dotted quaver value as is the case in modern pibroch performance.

Once again, this example highlights one of the problems the earliest notators of pibroch had in attempting to notate accurately. Donald MacDonald probably knew the tune from both the song and the pibroch tradition having been brought up in a rich Gaelic oral tradition and notated it in what he considered was an acceptable pibroch performance style.

It would seem, according to the extant fragment of the song text of Alba Bheadarach and the melodic evidence from its pibroch variant, that this song air consisted of two phrases in a poetic couplet, which, like 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne, consisted of couplet stanzas as shown earlier in this study.

The pibroch, however, has a different melodic form from the song so that, although the first phrase A can be identified with the first line of the song couplet, its repetition in the pibroch would leave the song unresolved on an open ended phrase on the themal note low G. The song, though, has a final melodic cadence on the tonic A. Unusually, the pibroch never seems to resolve but always ends on the low G throughout and never on the tonic A. This is in contrast to the song melody to which it is related, Bodaich nam Briogais/'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne seo, which as a pibroch is so much more easily identifiable as a song because it has retained the more familiar ABCD song metre.

The use of time signatures in both the song and the pibroch tradition are to some extent arbitrary. A good example of this can be seen in Frances Tolmie's notation of 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne in 3/4 time and DMcD's notation of Alba Bheadarach also in 3/4 time. Tolmie's song version represents a 6/8 rhythm divided into two bars and does not suggest three stresses per bar.

Ex. 10





The words themselves, just as in Alba Bheadarach suggest 6/8 time but when slowed down can indicate a different <sup>repeated</sup> rhythmical sense. That a singer should move between one and the other freely supports the contention that these two time signatures, at least in the Gaelic song and pibroch traditions, are very ambiguous. This is because the rhythms of Gaelic song do not fit into the European rhythmic scheme.<sup>12</sup> It is the speech rhythm of the words which dictates the musical rhythm of the melody and which partly explains how the two characteristics of tune and text are so interdependent. DMcD, by writing it in 3/4, seems to have chosen the time signature which he considered would best represent the style of performance when cadences are included. However, just as in MacIntosh's Lament, Alba Bheadarach represents a rhythm with more flexibility than what the written score might imply. The problem is that the words of the song suggest two stressed beats per bar which makes the tune more appropriate for notation in approximate 6/8 time. So why is it notated in 3/4 time, which implies three stresses per bar when neither the song words nor <sup>even</sup> the modern way of playing it suggests it has three stresses per measure?

It is possible that the earlier notators were not so much concerned with the use of time signatures in the conventional sense, where the first beat is strong followed by two weaker beats, but in terms of an underlying stress. For example, the singer may want to sing close to the vernacular, stressing the first syllable of *Alba* and the first syllable of *bheadarach* to suggest a 6/8 rhythm. revised

The other most obvious alternative is 3/4 time as in DMcD. One can understand how the the bar might be considered in three stresses as notated by DMcD, when played slowly. The 3/4 time can partly be explained by the slowing of tempo from the vernacular 6/8 rhythm, where the words would tend to be sung in a slightly different manner. At an even slower pace one might be convinced that an approximate 4/4 rhythm might be appropriate. What is most important is the musical phrase which has four stresses - the positioning of which can be identified at the beginning of each song word: *Albann bheadarach, bheadarach, bheadarach*. The notation for the end of the second phrase, B, is more clearly 3/4 time.

<sup>12</sup> See Introduction for further discussion of this argument.



This is clearly a break away from the song rhythm and suggests a separate piece of music from the song.

If DMcD had wished to notate according to the speech rhythm of these song words in approximate 6/8 time, the cadences might have had to be included on the main melodic line of the score as demonstrated earlier. Although he notated it in 3/4 time, the same melodic effect might be achieved by a performer aware of the song /pibroch idiom. The main point is that there is not a great difference between the recommended notation and DMcD's; the greatest differences are decided by the interpretation of the music score. *~*

This feature of changing rhythm which may arise from a change in function or simply a performer's prerogative, creates opportunities for the emergence of more variant forms of a tune. Just as a change in rhythm in MacIntosh's Lament disguises the melodic nature of the tune and goes some way towards creating another, this could also be the case in 'Tha'n Cuan a cuir eagal air Clann nan Gàidheal',<sup>13</sup> This appears in Gesto (1895: 113) as a four part 6/8 tune without words. Its title can be recognised in the words which CC mixes in with the 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne' song version. The first two phrases are shown below. It is not difficult to detect the relationship when one compares the melodic shape and rhythm of these two pieces. The third and fourth parts of this source are usually associated with another well known tune which has a different title 'Kenmure's up and awa' the Gaelic original being Bha Biodag bheag bhiorach air Alasdair Gorm.<sup>14</sup>

Ex.11.



<sup>13</sup> This is 'The ocean is frightening the children of Gaeldom.' However, it is translated in Gesto as 'The Highlanders March going to America.' Charles Cameron explains to John MacInnes, the collector, that the words which he sang referred to this fear of emigration across the sea.

<sup>14</sup> This might be considered as a variant of the tune Bha mi air banais am Baile Inbhir Aora. (or The Campbells are coming.)



There is another tune called Albain Bheadarach which first appears in Angus MacArthur's Ms. (no.13.)<sup>15</sup> Although no song recordings exist of this it is obvious from the pibroch notation that the words heard from CC fit easily. Furthermore, the tune is notated in the same 6/8 rhythm as the language suggests. If the words of the first couplet are placed below the MacArthur score the rhythm becomes very clear.:

Ex.12.

AMcK Ms.

1 Al - (a) - bairn bhea - dar - ach, Al - (a) - bairn bhea - dar - ach 's math dhuinn 'ga fhà - gail  
2 Al - (a) - bairn bhea - dar - ach, Al - (a) - bairn bhea - dar - ach 's mi - se ga'd fhà - gail dubh.

Words at 1 from Charles Cameron's version, words at 2 from AMcK's Vol 1 no.6 taken from AMcA Ms.

AMcK has this tune with a fuller title, copied from the AMcA Ms. The extra word *dubh* in MacKay suits the pibroch notation more closely. The dotted D at the end of the tune in MacArthur coincides with the stressed *à* in *fhàgail*. All sources<sup>16</sup> for this tune agree rhythmically. It is interesting, however, to observe that the problem of deciding what should be represented as a cadence or as a themal note appears again. In all the early sources, the E and low G which pertain to CC's '*s math dhuinn* or MacKay's '*s mis-e* [the latter word ranging between the two notes E and low G] are given as themal notes as above. However, in the PS series (Book 6: 178) the E is represented as a cadence. The following example shows the AMcA notation on the left and present day PS notation on the right.

Ex.13.

Ex. 13

<sup>15</sup> Angus MacKay's Ms. Vol 1. no. 6, p.15 names the tune 'Albain Bheadarach 's mise ga'd fhàgail dubh' which underneath he has translated as 'Beloved Scotland, I leave thee gloomy'. He refers to its source as no. 15 in the H.S. of London Mss. (ie. the Angus MacArthur Ms.)

<sup>16</sup> These are Glen, p. 146. CM p. 221. PS, Book 6, p. 178 K. no.9, BB. 4-2, Glen (Edinburgh Coll.) p. 28.

Abbreviations.

Appendix to  
show  
Abbreviations.

This is one example where the modern notation represents a shorter E than the earliest sources although what is actually played is usually much longer and closer to the AMcA full E. The implication is that present day performance should subsequently be less rounded owing to the implied long low G and the following cut B. Sadly, no more song words are available to work on and one can only surmise on how far the song proceeded if sung to this melody. Since the words coincide only with the first two phrases of the *ùrlar*, it is more than likely that they went as far as the end of the fourth phrase as the song seems melodically unresolved at the end of the second phrase.

The word fragments which exist could be regarded as a quatrain stanza of the poetic line AAAB where the words '*Albainn Bheadarach*' represent the short phrase A and the whole stanza forming the refrain. Or alternatively, when the melodic form is overlaid on this line with its AABC shape, it could be treated as a couplet rather than a quatrain.<sup>17</sup> Whichever stanza structure is considered, it is represented by the first four bars of the pibroch with a song phrase to each bar of pibroch. However, if this is the case, then one might expect the following two phrases of the *ùrlar* to represent the song verse. These are, melodically, more like a continuation of the first two phrases of the song rather than the beginning of a song verse.. Neither are they a rhythmic fit for the following verse sung by CC beginning '*Tha'n cuan a'cur eagal*' since the first stress would come in at the second word *cuan* reversing the note values of the beginning of the pibroch to relative values of quaver-crotchet.

Shute

An important feature is that the rhythm of the words of the first stanza is represented throughout the whole of the *ùrlar*. It may be for this reason

<sup>17</sup> This touches on a very important area which has been ignored for the most part by compilations of Gaelic Poetry of the nineteenth century especially: the analysis of verse metre without taking account of the song metre. This has not been confined to Gaelic scholarship; Hendren (1966) in his foreword states: 'The development of the ballad text in the form of song ...a fact of central importance to the understanding of its structure...has been, in the main, neglected.'



that pipers are <sup>only</sup> given the words of the first stanza (alone). For example, in AMcK's Ms., the existence of the words may have been an effective reminder to the pibroch player before performance, what the rhythmical characteristics of the tune were which could then be applied to the rest of the tune.

The song words which CC sang to the Bodaich nam Briogais melody which were in turn compared to its variant Alba Bheadarach seem to be rhythmically more closely associated with the other pibroch known today as Alba Bheadarach. It is quite usual for song words to be adapted to a number of different melodies in the oral song tradition and this is no less the case in the pibroch/song tradition. It could be that the words were sung to both the Bodaich nam Briogais melody and the AMcA version recognised as Alba Bheadarach (played today). The pibroch melody which has been analysed in depth here would seem to be a new pibroch based on the 6/8 Bodaich nam Briogais melody. In the process, the composer/adaptor has changed the rhythmic and melodic scansion, which, once subject to further treatment at the hands of the pibroch notators has become fairly disguised from its probable provenance and has become recognised as a separate tune.

### CONCLUSIONS.

This analysis identified the tune Alba Bheadarach as having melodic and rhythmic features in common with Bodaich nam Briogais. Because the rhythmic characteristics of the song version of Bodaich nam Briogais (as 'Mhnàthan a'Ghlinne ') and Alba Bheadarach are similar, the performance style of the pibroch version of Alba Bheadarach known today as 'The Battle of Sheriffmuir' can best be understood by considering it as a melodic variant of Bodaich nam Briogais with a similar rhythm. Although the earliest pibroch sources have this tune notated in 3/4 time, the evidence from the song shows that the rhythm does not fit into the conventional metric scheme and can best be regarded as having elements of simple and compound time, 3/4, 4/4 and 6/8. Even without the supporting evidence of the song text, one is best to regard the tune as progressing according to two stresses per bar, (or four stresses per phrase,) rather than three stresses.