

John MacKay's MS

John MacKay (1814 - 1848) was the youngest of four sons of John MacKay of Raasay and of Drummond Castle. The others were Donald, Roderick, and the famous Angus. John junior was piper to Sir Rob<sup>t</sup> Gordon of Balmoral, to Admiral MacDougall of Dunollie and to P. C. Leslie, Invergarry. He won 4th prize in Edinburgh in 1835, and was narrowly defeated for 3rd prize in 1844. He was a noted exponent of the Gille Callum sword dance.

How Angus MacKay came into possession of this MS is told by him at the head of the index also written by him. How Dr. Bannatyne obtained it is related in his note at the end of the index. Twenty one years after 1904 I talked to Mrs. MacLardy, Michael MacCarfrae's daughter, about the transaction, and she expressed some resentment against Dr. Bannatyne for the manner in which he had concealed the valuable character of this and other MSS "procured" by him from her. After Dr. Bannatyne's death the MS was bought from his estate by the Piobaireachd Society, together with Angus MacArthur's Highland Society of London's MS, now deposited on loan in the National Library, Edinburgh.

In spite of what Dr. Bannatyne says in his letter of 1st May 1920 to Col. Grant of Rothiemurchus, there is not the slightest doubt that the tampering with the MS was done by him, and his denial of the fact is barefaced, & could be called shameless. He was kind enough to lend me the book in 1910, and the ink of the interpolations was then quite fresh. Much other piobaireachd music written by Dr. Bannatyne is in our hands, and there is not the slightest doubt that all the "binds", many of the grace-notes, and some of the bar strokes have been put in by him. That he has inserted names at the headings of tunes, is beyond doubt, and, having stooped to this vandalism, it was easy for him to go further, mutilate the music, and render the MS almost valueless. For this reason the MS has not been put in the National Library, since it might mislead the unwary. Dr.

Bannatyne was no player, and, though keen on piobaireachd, his knowledge of the music did not go very deep. As his letter to Col. Grant will show, he confined himself mainly to the relatively unimportant problem of how to describe piobaireachd music by staff notation.

---

1. Finlay's Lament. Name in ink by Bannatyne. Grace notes and most bar strokes original. All "binds" and "tails" and some bar strokes by Bannatyne. Other written headings original.
- 2 & 3. Duncan MacRae and Lord Kental's Lament. Binds tails and double bar strokes by Bannatyne. Ornamental lettering by someone else
- 4 & 5. Lament for Great Supper and Cuilliegag (sic) Morag. Binds tails & double bar strokes by Bannatyne. Also names in ink and 1st Var etc by him
6. Rout of the English Captain. Ditto. The thin shaky binds are also found in other tunes undoubtedly written by Bannatyne. To suggest the cause would be mere speculation. The 7 lines on p 16 are palpably forged by Bannatyne. The "bis" which occurs 6 times was evidently there before. Whatever were there before in the form of notes have been inked over and obliterated. The pointing of the doubling of Var 2 on p 15 has been done by Bannatyne and displays his ignorance of piobaireachd technique. Some of the thin binds may have been there before, but some of those on p 14 have been inked over by Bannatyne.
7. Cronan na Cailleach. Some at any rate of the thin binds and probably all the semiquaver marks are by Bannatyne. Certainly the double bar strokes. Perhaps some of the notes in the last 4 lines have been inked over by him.
8. Donald of Laggan. Name, double bar strokes, binds & tails all by Bannatyne. The Taorluath has been timed by him in a way not played by anyone. Evidently evolved by analogy
9. B. P. O. Binds & tails by Bannatyne. P 23 shows what the MS was like originally, except double bar strokes & time signatures which are by Bannatyne
10. The Frasers Lament. Name, binds, tails, double bar strokes and several bar strokes by Bannatyne. The timing of the Ground shows that it is the work of an ignoramus.
11. Little Finger Tune. Binds, tails, "1st Var.", "2nd Var" all by Bannatyne

12. Parading of the MacDonalds. ditto. Also the "ties" on the E cadences in the Ground. Much of the 3rd Var on p 31 has been forged. I say forged because a futile attempt to write the notes like the original is manifest.
13. Bodach Dubh na Shligain. Name, tails, binds, bar strokes by Bannatyne. See here and elsewhere the marks that have come through the pages.
14. Daughters Lament & Hector MacLean. Ditto. The pointing of Hector MacLean Ground is grotesque.
15. Blar Ballach nam Broig. Ditto. Pointing of Ground grotesque. No MacKay could have perpetrated this.
16. MacLeod of Tallisker. Names and binds on p 42 by Bannatyne. p 43 "Crunluath" by another hand. Whatever notes there were below have been inked over by Bannatyne.
17. Battle of Glenshiel. All ink names (except perhaps 1st and 2nd times) by Bannatyne. All binds. 3rd Var extensively forged
18. Dastirim gun Seinim. All binds by Bannatyne.
19. The Conversation. Ditto. Also names.
20. The MacDonalds are Simple. This tune is left in the original form.
21. Lord MacDonald's Lament. "By Angus MacArthur" may be by MacCarfrae & perhaps some of the thin binds. But if so, there has been some inking over by Bannatyne.
- No. 22, 24, 25, 27. All binds and ink names by Bannatyne.
- No. 26. Also the grace notes on p. 65
28. Battle of Athole. Shows original state of MS
29. Battle of Auldearn. Extensively forged by Bannatyne
30. Pride of Barra. ditto
31. MacIntyres Salute. There has been inking over of thin binds by Bannatyne, & this may indicate that the thin binds may have been made by a previous interpolator. Bannatyne has also interfered with the notes.
32. Inverness Piobd. Extensively forged by Bannatyne & here the thin binds look like his work. The forgery on p. 85 is particularly bad.
33. Desp. Battle. The note at the top is perhaps by MacCarfrae & the descriptions of the variations. Perhaps the thin binds are his too, but whoever they were Bannatyne has worked over several of them.

34. Kinlochmuidart. Bannatyne's ignorance is well shown by his pointing of this Ground. Who erased B and wrote F in Bar 1 ? The grace note on E in bar 3 is evidently written by Bannatyne

Pages 89 to 97 all in original form.

37. Only Son. Much forgery by Bannatyne

38. Old Sword. ditto

No. 39 untampered with

Nos 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 (Ground), 45. Forged as others previously. See the way the ink has come through the pages.

No. 46. Big Spree. No. 47. Little Spree. Someone other than Bannatyne has been at work on them, but Bannatyne has had his whack at them.

Nos. 48 & 49. Extensive forgery by Bannatyne. Their original form was that of Nos. 50 & 51

52. MacCrimmon's Sweetheart. Here we have the work of the unknown interpolator's thin lines (? MacCarfrae), but there is much blatant forgery by Bannatyne here as & in Nos 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, & 59.

60. John Garve of Coll is as in original but pp 168 & 169 of No. 61 are forged as before

It is not known whether any piper but MacCarfrae had access to this MS between the death of Angus MacKay and its acquisition by Dr. Bannatyne

A. Campbell

11/3/50