

THE CAMERON STYLE (cont'd)

by Jay Close

PART THREE: Discussion and Commentary

What follows is a series of statements and observations about the Cameron style of *ceol mor* as I got it from my teachers and correspondents. I have arranged them with the broadest assumptions and attitudes first and more specific and detailed features later. Many will refer to the previous Overview section, but in other cases the discussion in the Overview is deemed sufficient. Be advised: even among my informants there were diverse interpretations of individual tunes and variety in how motifs were approached. I address not a monolithic style but a broad aesthetic. And, inevitably, comments are colored by my own instruction from William Connell.

The staff music provided below is, with occasional exception, of my contrivance. I have adapted many of the conventions I employed in re-setting the music of Connell's instructional book and added an additional few. In each case, the goal has been to cast the music close to how it would be played and in such a way as to indicate the small units that make up the melody line. Diverse approaches are taken but the goal is consistent.

ASSUMPTIONS/ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. The lines of *pibaireachd* descent from the MacCrimmons, MacArthurs, Rankins *et al.* produced very similar music that differed only in detail. While there were differences in interpretation, setting and technique among pipers of the old school, at core the music was the same.
2. The goal of the piper is to make flowing, pulsing, liquid - like music.
3. From a music composed of parts, the *pibaireachd* player must create an integrated whole.
4. The piper serves the melody. The melody contains its own rhythm and flow. Interpreting a tune is a process of guided discovery working by analogy with other tunes in the canon.
5. The piper leads the audience through the maze of a tune so that nothing appears out of place, nothing is abrupt or startling and significant sign posts are noted along the journey.

6. The melody stands on its own. The key to playing a tune is found within the tune itself. Reference to tune histories, folklore, mythology etc. are distractions.

ANALYSIS

7. Expressing a tune demands recognition of small units into which the melody line can be divided. These small units must be identified and understood before an informed musical interpretation can be contemplated. Robert Reid, for example, distinguished two sorts of these smaller units.

The first Reid called **passages**. These are, for the most part, the familiar and stereotyped motifs that occur over and over in *ceol mor*, for example: the double echo movements, the *hiharin*, or the rhythmic couplets that make up the *suibhal* and *dithis* variations.

A passage is short, incomplete in itself and, to quote Reid, "...requires elaboration" (from recorded lecture on *ceol mor*; cf. Proceedings Piobaireachd Society Conference 1979, page 2).

The second category of small melodic unit Reid called **phrases**. He used the term in a distinct way. He was not concerned with the phrase structure of a tune. He did not look to bars or measures as his guide to interpretation. Staff notation and its trappings were a modern contrivance little known to the old master players and composers.

For Reid, a phrase is a musical idea, complete in itself, with a beginning, a middle and an end. Recognizing these units is critical: the performer must, in a sense, get out of their way and allow them to exist and be expressed in their elemental form.

As I interpret this, the passages require involvement of the performer to integrate them into the whole. The phrase is a whole. The performer best not inject needless elaboration into its fundamental integrity.

Reid used "MacGregors' Gathering" to illustrate the distinction between the passage and the phrase.

Below is the ground of the tune in staff notation to suggest the way Reid described it in "passage and phrase form".

Line One begins with two passages and concludes with two phrases.

MacGregors' Gathering

Line One:



The second line brackets two passages between phrases which begin and end the line.

Line Two:



And line Three is one long phrase.

Line Three:



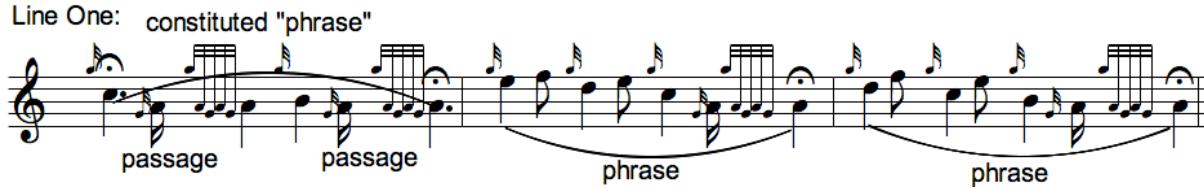
Indicating the passages and phrases of a tune and integrating them in to the melody line is the piper's challenge. And the only tool at his disposal is relative note duration.

From a practical interpretive point of view, a phrase needs a resolution to set it off from the surrounding melody ---NO NOTE WITHIN A PHRASE CAN BE HELD LONGER THAN THE LAST NOTE. Otherwise, the extended note defines the end of its own phrase. Once the phrases are identified the piper knows where to insert a major pause, i.e. at their conclusion. This is a baseline understanding modified with intent (see below).

The short passages, on the other hand, have less of a transparent beginning, middle and end. They demand, according to Reid, 'elaboration', i.e. further thought or attention from the performer. One of the interpretive "tricks" Connell taught was to treat such small, repetitive groups as if they were one larger phrase.

In the tune "MacGregors' Gathering", the piper might construct or constitute a phrase from the first two passages. For example, accent the beginning of this constituted unit with a broadly held, initial C melody note. The end of the passage, the low A after the first birl, should not be dwelt upon but elided or blended into the next passage. The second passage would be played through to the last note which is lengthened to match the initial C of the line.

Connell would likely refer to this as an "umbrella phrase" made up of two "mini-phrases". I refer to it here as a "constituted phrase" to imply that it is a product of musician's interpretation rather than something with an inherent beginning, middle and end.



While Reid talked formally of playing a tune in “passage and phrase form”, he was not an overtly analytical teacher. Connell said Reid expected a student to pick up the subtleties of a tune from sung and practice chanter demonstration.

However, Reid also often employed staff music written by his mentor, John MacDougall Gillies. According to Connell, these were mostly bits of a tune presented motif by motif without regard to the bars or building blocks of the tune. Each motif, whether passage or phrase, was written as it was to be played using relative note duration as a guide rather than strict time signature. Implicit in those manuscripts is an analytical approach. An approach that divided the melody in its basic components and saw those components as independent of bar line or time signature.

Connell, himself, did not use the concept of a ‘passage’ as opposed to a ‘phrase’ when he taught. He did, however, talk of “phrases” and “umbrella phrases”. Sometimes he used the term “mini-phrase”. Many of Connell’s phrases were the motifs Reid would have classified as a passage. No matter. The approach was largely the same although Connell tended to increased division. On occasion he treated a single note as a phrase. By this he meant that its melodic importance was especially significant.

Connell conceded that two equally skilled pipers might conceive of a melody line in different ways, both with very similar results. The results are important, but so too is the process of analysis and thought that goes into those results.

Much like Connell’s experience with Reid, James Barrie, taught by his father and surrounded by his father’s music, was expected to pick up the needed interpretation from his father’s performance. Yet, the singing of William Barrie on his commercial recordings of *canntaireachd* are usually phrased exactly as Connell would break down and analyze a melody line. I think this is significant. (see “Ancient Piobaireachd, Vol. IV”)

Articulated or not, Cameron style pipers share a notion of breaking down the tune into smaller components independent of what gets written as a bar of music. They search for small units of melody, not organizational principles.

8. The phrase structure of a tune (primary, secondary, tertiary etc.) may have guided the composer. Knowledge of it may be a boon to memorization. But passages and phrases, Connell’s notion of phrase and umbrella phrase or the sung motifs of William Barrie exist independent of the phrase structure or “bars” of a tune. Sometimes a phrase may match a “bar”; sometimes they do not. Often a bar will break down into two or three components, but there is no necessary relationship.

The performer's task is to make the best music possible regardless of the tunes organizational principles and regardless of the conventions of time signature and bar lines.

Melodic understanding begins by (1) analyzing the melody line in terms of smaller melodic units (motifs, passages, phrases, mini - phrases, umbrella phrases, etc); (2) artistic decisions are then made about how these units relate to each other; finally (3), the parts are integrated to best musical effect. Many of the small passages or motifs have a stereotyped interpretation that is carried over from one tune to another. Reid remarked that there were only 22 to 24 different passage or phrases from which all *ceol mor* is built.

While I find Reid's distinction between passages and phrases useful on occasion, I tend to follow Connell's direction and call all the small units of melodic analysis a "phrase", or "mini-phrase". Sometimes I use the term "motif" if the phrase is stereotypical.

9. The skilled interpreter of *ceol mor* finds his or her own organization around the demands of the melody line. This is a creative process, a process of discovery guided by first principles and analogy to other tunes in the canon. Once interpretive decisions are made in one part of a tune, the Cameron love of consistency will then motivate the application of that decision to other parallel contexts.

FLUIDITY

10. Fluidity of expression is desirable in a *ceol mor* performance. This sense of flow is achieved several ways:

a. Severely clipped notes are relatively rare, even in the rhythmic variations. For example, the low A's in *dithis* variations are given more body than is commonly heard in the performance of pipers of other training.

b. Dramatic changes in tempo between variations are discouraged.

c. The second strike in the double echo movements are relatively broad, much more so than the students of John MacDonald (Inverness) or the students of those students etc. Campbell addressed this shorter second echo and found it a fault in MacDonald's playing that was becoming increasingly accepted (1984, page 11 and 1948 page 18).

d. The last note of each phrase or passage is given approximately the same duration and that note is typically the longest of the phrase. There is a sense that the performer plays through each motif to an anticipated pause at the end, each pause balancing those around it. This technique of playing through to the end of a phrase is also the source of much of the rhythm and pulse in a Cameron style performance.

e. Quite often small passages of a repetitive nature occurring sequentially are merged into a larger, encompassing passage or umbrella phrase. The last note of each

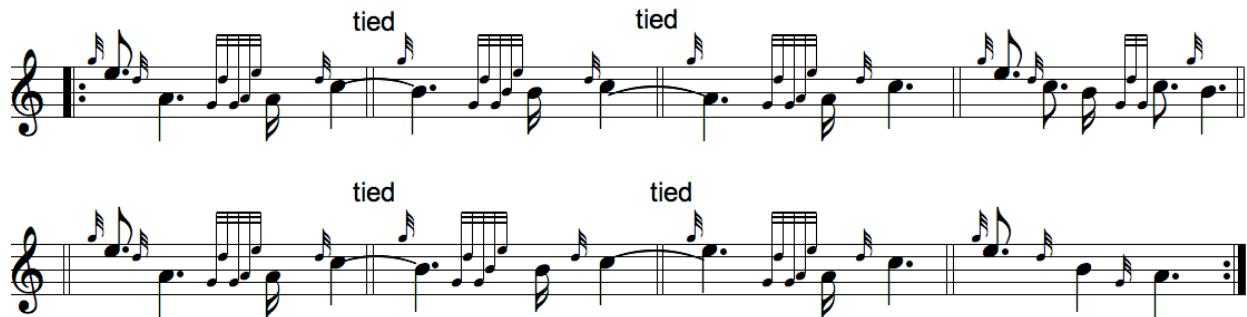
constituent passage is not fully resolved, the final resolution being reserved for the last note of the concluding passage. Andrew MacNeill talked of “pressurizing” certain parts of a tune. This pressurization or elision of one phrase into another is one of the keys ways that fluidity of expression is achieved.

Moreover, these pressurized sections stand in contrast to those parts of a tune that are more conventionally treated, and therein lies a significant source of interest and what Connell called “spice” in a tune.

An example of tying repetitive motifs into a longer phrase is found in “MacFarlanes’ Gathering” as presented in Connell’s instructional book and tape:

MACFARLANE’S GATHERING: ground

LINE ONE:



The notes between double bars are “mini-phrases”. These have their emphasis shifted from the last note to the first note of the motif. This has the effect of pushing the music into the following phrase until a resolution is effected on the last C of the grouping. That resolution is followed by a mini-phrase that functions as a cadence marking the halfway point of the line. Then, the pattern repeats in the second half of the line.

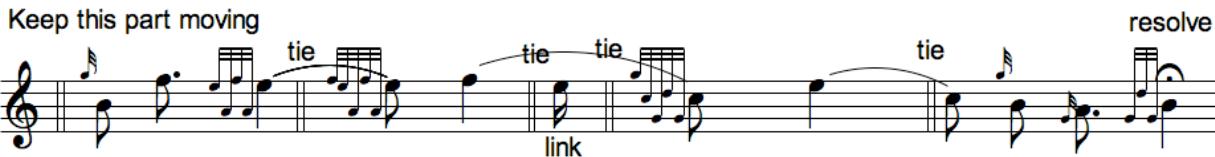
This blending and elision of one part into another can be over done. It is very much a matter of making haste without hurrying.

While Connell often employed the technique when encountering repetitive rhythms or motifs it was not limited to those occasions. Occasionally I was directed to “pressurize” the concluding motifs often in the ground of a tune even if they were not of a particularly repetitive nature.

From Connells’ presentation of “The Wee Spree” comes an example of this. Here, the last four “mini-phrases” (written between double bar lines) constitute a larger “umbrella phrase” with a significant pause on the last note, B. None of the quarter notes (crotchets) that conclude the mini-phrases are a full resolution except the concluding B.

The Wee Spree: ground

LINE THREE:



The last line of the ground of “Lament for the Earl of Antrim” is treated in the same way. Here are further examples of short motifs, passages or mini-phrases that are pressurized:

MASSACRE OF GLENCOE: ground doubling

LINE THREE:



LAMENT FOR MARY MACLEOD: ground

LINE THREE:



THE BELLS OF PERTH: ground

LINE ONE:



f. Another interpretive “trick” that the Cameron stylist uses to enhance the fluidity of an interpretation and add interest to the music involves the double echo. These are stereotyped motifs that occur quite often in the ground work of a tune. Each has a fundamental rhythm that can be manipulated to musical effect. For practical purposes their timings fall into two categories. Thomason, in fact, discusses these approaches as well (1975).

The first of these is “fully resolved”. The last note of the motif is held as a phrase ending to a sense of completeness. A “full stop”. This would be the normal or baseline approach to the movements. The second treatment is “blended” or “tied”. Both treatments are found in the second line of the ground of “Lament for Donald of Laggan”.

The double echoes on D occur as melodic anchors at the beginning, the middle and the end of the line. In each case, fully resolved. On the other hand when a double echo ends on the same note the subsequent motif begins on, the double echo is blended into the following phrase. Not only does this improve the flow of the melody by keeping it from feeling strung together from isolated pieces, but the contrast between resolved and blended double echo movements adds interest and appeal to the interpretation.

LAMENT FOR DONAL OF LAGGAN: ground

LINE TWO:

The musical notation illustrates the 'double echo' technique. It features two staves of music in G clef and common time. The first staff shows three instances where a melodic pattern ends on a note (D) and the next pattern begins on the same note, labeled 'resolve' under each. The second staff shows a 'link' between the end of a double echo and the start of the next motif, labeled 'blend' above the link, followed by three more 'resolve' points.

Another instance of blending a double echo comes from the second line of the ground of the “Massacre of Glencoe”, a line that also includes double echos that are fully resolved.

MASSACRE OF GLENCOE: ground

LINE TWO: ground



Keep this last half of Line Two moving!



g. A final way that a Cameron trained piper enhances fluidity of expression is simply through interpretive consistency. A passage or phrase that is played one way early in a tune will be played the same way whenever it reappears. The reappearance of familiar bits of the melody eases the listener through the tune. The familiar become welcome points of rest in the ebb and flow of an often complex melody.

TONAL SENSITIVITY

11. Nothing in a Cameron style performance should seem shocking. Every effort should be made to negotiate the intricacies of a melody line in a sympathetic way. Partly this is achieved through tonal sensitivity. Many features of an interpretation are designed to respond to the unique volume and timbre of each of the notes of the chanter and the aural effect of moving from notes of one character to notes of another:

a. High G and especially high A must be treated “sympathetically” because they are the quietest notes on the chanter. In the ground of a tune, high G and high A are rarely shortened; often they are slightly prolonged. The rhythm of a variation may demand a shorter high A (e.g. Variation Two of the “Desperate Battle”) but even here one must avoid the tendency to clip the upper note.

b. Transitioning from a lower, louder note to a high A often demands a slight dwell on the lower note to ease the transition, to keep it from seeming too abrupt by simple aural contrast. Even an F or E before a high A is slightly prolonged.

The result is a “gravitational effect” in the interpretation. When moving up the chanter scale from a note of lower pitch to higher, soften the transition, broaden the notes. (You are, after all, working against gravity; slow down) When moving down the scale, from a

higher and thinner note to a lower and louder one, you may be more aggressive as long as you avoid a clipped or staccato effect. (Gravity is helping you; let it, but keep control).

c. In *suibhal* variations and in *taorluath breabach* variations, the Cameron piper will tend to play those variations “up the way”. There are a number of exceptions to this (see Campbell 1984 page 13 and Campbell 1948, page 19 for Archibald Campbell’s list) but the trend is clear.

Connell expressed to me that the melody lies in the varied upper notes not the drumming low A’s or low G’s. These lower notes are the loudest of the scale and can be used to good interpretive ends, but used in a repetitive way they become percussive and robbed of their special effect. Percussiveness is to be minimized. Give the lower notes good weight but move to where the melody and flow lies.

Following this “rule” can result in rhythmic contrast between variations, a contrast that is embraced amongst so much other consistency and repetition.

For example the first variation of “Corrienessan’s Salute” has repetitively accented or held low A’s. In the *taorluath breabach* variations, on the other hand, the analogous low A’s are shortened to throw emphasis to the second note of the *breabach* “kick”.

The staff examples below are from the Connell instructional material:

CORRIENESSAN’S SALUTE: stressed low A’s in First Variation

FIRST VARIATION DOUBLING (Variation 2): Line One



CORRIENESSAN’S SALUTE: unstressed low A’s in Taorluath Variation

TAORLUATH DOUBLING (Variation 4): Line One



Musical interpretation is based on two contradictory principles: repetition and variety. Repetition creates unity, familiarity and a sense of expectation, but a performance that is too repetitive becomes boring. Variety adds spice and interest, but a too varied performance seems erratic and unsettled. Often the balance of repetition and variety is where the taste and style of a performance lies.

SONORITY

12. Cameron style playing exhibits preferences for certain notes and their sonority *vis a vis* the drone accompaniment.

a. The notes of the chanter may be viewed as falling into three groupings: (1)the notes of consonance, (2) the notes of dissonance and (3) the “singing” notes.

The **notes of consonance** are the A's, E and C. These are the fundamentals and notes that make simple, pleasant harmony with the drones. These notes take care of themselves. I do not recall ever being advised to extend a C or E because they make such a fine harmony with the drones. The A's are the fundamental and the low A is a note of repose and resolution. These should not be severely cut.

Then, there are the B and the G's. These are **notes of dissonance**. I do recall being advised by Connell never to be afraid of the low G and never to “snatch at” high G. A well tuned low G, in particular, is a rich and resonant note that ought to be appreciated.

Of a character all of their own are the notes F and D. These two notes have the least harmonic support from the overtones of the drones and they tend to sing out in an insistent way. Connell often noted how Reid would prolong an F at the expense of the note before. I call these the **singing notes**.

Cameron stylists relish the dissonant notes (B and G) as well as the singing notes (F and D). They love to hold those notes delighting in their richness against the drone accompaniment. High G might also be called a singing note, but its song is rather more of a wail. It too should be embraced, especially as it lacks volume

(Please note that this classification of the notes of the chanter is purely mine for didactic purposes)

b. The idea of tonal sensitivity extends to gracenotes. The initial low G gracenote of the D throw is given good weight. Reid taught the first low G on the *darodo* movement with a similar and balancing low G. This was particularly a feature of Reid's interpretation of “The Bells of Perth” where the D throw and *darodo* were meant to echo each other.

c. The low G is the loudest note on the chanter, so a note accented by a low G gracenote must be of particular melodic importance. For example, it is the role of a cadence phrase to be a pause that reinforces in the listener the organizational structure of the tune. It is a **musical sign post** (see below).

A common cadence phrase (what Reid called a “cast off”) begins with an introductory E then moves to a graced middle note and concludes with a low G gracenote to low A. It comes to rest on the fundamental, the low A. Below shows these cadences as conventionally presented and approximately as played by the Cameron influenced piper. The length of the introductory E varies; sometimes it nears the duration of the other two notes of the motif. The convention of using that low A as a bridging note and thereby shortening it would be anathema to a Cameron stylist as it defies the logic of the notes sonority and the strength of its low G accent.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled "written" and the bottom staff is labeled "played". Both staves begin with a grace note (E), followed by a main note (G), another grace note (E), and finally a main note (A). In the "written" staff, the notes are separated by vertical stems. In the "played" staff, the notes are connected by horizontal beams, and the final note (A) is significantly longer than the others, representing the fundamental note of the scale.

Campbell commented on this effect in the opening motifs of “Lament for Donald of Laggan” and the danger of shortening the low G graced low A. (See Campbell 1984, page 12). Another conspicuous example can be found in the tune “Kinlochmoidart’s Lament” as interpreted by Andrew MacNeill and noted in the previous Overview section.

KINLOCHMOIDART'S LAMENT No. 1 with broad low A:

The image shows two staves of musical notation for "Kinlochmoidart's Lament No. 1". The notation uses a treble clef and a common time signature. The first staff begins with a note labeled "note long low A", followed by a measure labeled "long low A". The second staff begins with a measure labeled "long low A", followed by another measure labeled "long low A". The notation uses vertical stems for the notes.

d. The love of the Cameron style for these dissonant and singing notes of the chanter scale extends to their use as phrase endings. Pipers of the Cameron style have no compunction ending a passage or phrase on a prolonged D, B or even a low G.

While examples are many, two tunes will suffice. The first is Robert Reid’s interpretation of “I Got a Kiss of the King’s Hand” available on the College of Piping CD “Classics from the College, Volume One”. The following staff notation is the first line using conventions I employed in revisions to Connell’s instructional book.

I GOT A KISS OF THE KING'S HAND: ground

Line one:

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a piece titled "I GOT A KISS OF THE KING'S HAND". The notation is in common time with a treble clef. The first staff begins with a sixteenth note followed by eighth notes and sixteenth note pairs. The second staff continues with similar patterns. The third staff starts with a sixteenth note followed by a fermata over a pair of eighth notes. A double bar line with a "link" marking follows. The notation consists of vertical stems with horizontal dashes indicating pitch and duration.

In the above score, the B's with the fermatas that conclude the first doubled bar line unit is a good example of dwelling on a note others would treat as a link.

A second example of this trend is "The Prince's Salute" shown below. This approximates the timing of William Barrie from the recording "Ancient Piobaireachd, Volume IV".

THE PRINCE'S SALUTE: ground

Line One:

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a piece titled "THE PRINCE'S SALUTE". The notation is in common time with a treble clef. The first staff begins with a sixteenth note followed by eighth notes and sixteenth note pairs. The second staff continues with similar patterns. There are asterisks (*) placed above certain notes, likely indicating dissonant or phrase-ending notes. The notation consists of vertical stems with horizontal dashes indicating pitch and duration.

The phrase ending D's marked with an asterisk are often interpreted as link notes, but playing them as phrase endings is a perfectly Cameron touch.

13. The use of these dissonant notes and singing notes as phrase endings leads to one of the most recognizable characteristics of the Cameron style interpretation: **fewer link notes**.

The Cameron trained performer has no interest in confining a given number of pulses or beats within each structural phrase or bar. The phrase can end where it seems to

make the most artistic impact. This creates interpretive possibilities. Many notes that others may treat as bridges or links, a Cameron stylist draws out and makes into a phrase ending. “The Princes Salute” case is a good example of this. Often the notes chosen to close a passage or phrase are ones of dissonance or one of the singing notes

The distinct interpretations that Cameron pipers offer are often the result of a different understanding of what constitutes a musical phrase, combined with a delight in the character of each note of the chanter scale. The result is a music that maximizes the unique tonal qualities of the Great Highland Bagpipe.

INTRODUCTORY E'S AND CADENCES

14. The Cameron stylist looks at the introductory E in a manner seemingly at odds with contemporary understandings.

Connell impressed on me that these E's are introductions. While often erroneously called “cadences” or “cadential E's” or “E cadences” a cadence is something quite different. See below.

In modern printed scores these E's are usually portrayed as a gracenote size of eighth note duration (quaver). This is represented below in the first line of the ground “Praise of Marion” set to suggest the presentation in the “Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor”:

IN PRAISE OF MARION:

LINE ONE: ground

The actual duration of these introductory E's can vary based on context and convention, but their essential nature as an embellishment is usually correctly conveyed by the published texts, with one exception. That one exception is the E of the *hiharin* movement as conventionally written in the Piobaireachd Society books and the Kilberry book.

The fifth phrase that begins the second line shown above depicts the E as a melody note. Properly speaking it is an introductory E like all the others in the line, technically not part of the tune's “tone row”. That motif would be more properly rendered with the E

gracenote size with its stem pointed up as in the first edition of Volume One of the Pio-baireachd Society collection that is shown here:

In my experience, the even timing of E and low A as suggested by the Kilberry book was not desirable. In keeping with its embellishment status, in this motif the emphasis was usually, if subtly, on the low A.

Though these E introductions were perhaps at one time discretionary, practice through the 19th century has firmly established where they need occur. They have become a standardized feature of accepted settings of all tunes. We may not know why the collective wisdom of several generations has settled on introductory E's where they exist, but as performers we must reckon with them.

The introductory E's function two ways within a tune.

1. On one level they act simply as **bridges** or link notes between musical ideas. The very existence of that bridge however implies that there is something distinct or important about the two sections that are being linked.
2. More importantly, every introductory E marks the **beginning** of some melodic unit that is worthy of having attention drawn to it or is distinct enough to warrant a bridge. The introduction marks a beginning of something of musical importance; it also adds its own aural weight to the following bit of melody.

If the introductory E marks a beginning, there are three options for what comes before it:

1. silence (if the introductory E begins a tune)
2. the note before an introductory E may be the last note of the previous phrase or passage. If that is the case, then that note as a phrase ending must be lengthened or resolved. Without that resolution there would be no need for the bridging effect of the introductory E and no need to aurally prepare for the upcoming phrase.

3. sometimes the note before an introductory E is itself a bridge or linking note. This note ties a previous phrase into the introduction of the subsequent one. A rhythmic double linkage is created. The note before the linking note needs a resolution.

The first case needs no comment. The second and third are important. They are useful guides to phrasing a tune in the way Reid and Connell (and perhaps Gillies) did:

When confronting an unfamiliar melody, look for introductory E's. These mark the beginnings of important melodic units and by implication they also help define the endings of what came before. Often this will go a long way to suggest where the pauses and full stops in a tune should lie. Look, too, to identify the purely linking or bridging notes of the melody. With those identified you have the beginnings of your interpretation.

15. The introductory E marking a beginning and at the same time imply the conclusion of something before it. This accounts for a commonly recognized feature of Cameron style playing: what James Campbell termed the “**pre-cadential pause**”. As discussed in the Overview section, this pause before some cadences in *crunluath* variations has become almost diagnostic of the Cameron influenced performance.

Here are a collection of definitions of the cadence from sources ready to hand:

.....5. in *music*, the harmonic ending, final trill, etc. of a phrase or movement. (Webster's New World Dictionary, World Publishing, NY 1960, page 104)

.....1. Literally “a fall”, hence, the subsidence of a melody or harmony to a point of rest; thence, any concluding strain rising or falling. (Music Lovers' Encyclopedia, Double Day, NY 1950, page 564.)

..... point at which a phrase or complete tonal melody comes to rest. (Music: Ways of Listening, Holt Rhinhart Winston, NY 1981, page 515)

....A harmonic or melodic formula that occurs at the end of a phrase, section or composition that conveys a momentary or permanent conclusion; in other words, a musical punctuation mark (Robert Greenberg, How to Listen to Great Music, Penguin Book, London, page 515)

In each of these definitions the cadence accents the end of some part of music. It is a conclusion not a beginning. In *piobaireachd* these cadences are best thought of as sign posts marking the ends of significant portions of the tune and reinforcing in the listener the tune's organization.

Below is the first *crunluath* variation from “Glengarry’s Lament” with the cadences marked. These cadence motifs fall at the end of the structural blocks of the tune, here shown as a “bar”.

GLENGARRY'S LAMENT: crunluath singling

Line One:



In this instance each cadence is introduced with a gracenote E, i.e. an introductory E. This is not mandatory. The simplest cadence in *taorluath* and *crunluath* variations takes the form of two descending melody notes without an introductory E,

Sometimes, both simple cadences and introduced cadences appear in the same line of a variation. “Lament for the Earl of Antrim” is such a tune. Here is the first line of the *crunluath* variation with the cadences noted, and a “Cameronesque” interpretation suggested. The simple cadence is treated differently than that with an introduction.

LAMENT FOR THE EARL OF ANTRIM : ground

Line One:



A simple cadence that lacks an introductory E has no pre-cadence pause. The first note of the cadence comes quickly after the last note of the *cruinluath* movement.

A cadence with an introductory E necessitates the pause as indicated by the fermatta on the E, the last note of the *cruanluath* movement.

The presence of the introductory E both **implies and provides** greater aural weight or melodic importance to the motif it graces. The extra aural weight or melodic importance given to a cadence by an introductory E also implies that the note before is either a link note or the end of a prior phrase, and that requires a resolution.

In *crunluath* variations, the Cameron style piper treats the note before the introductory E as a phrase ending. Hence, the piper will extend the last E of the *crunluath* movement. This yields, the “pre-cadential pause” ---- which has little to do with the cadence and everything to do with the presence of the introductory E.

Exactly how long that *crunluath* E is prolonged, how thoroughly the melody is brought to a resolution varies among pipers (see Campbell 1984 page 13). In my experience the two Barries, William and James, bring the melody to a full stop, a complete resolution before the introductory E. James Campbell makes just the merest hang on the E before proceeding. William Connell is in the middle.

While a simple two note cadence is typically played evenly and in time with the pulse of the variation as shown in the above example, it is hard to generalize confidently about the timing of the three notes involved in an introduced cadence.

In order to achieve rhythmic balance after the pre-cadence pause, Connell often directed the E of the introductory E be slightly shortened, perhaps in recognition of its gracenote status. William and James Barrie seem to agree with Connell on this. Reid tended to play the three notes evenly and in time with the flow of the variation. Archibald Campbell, while he admits of some subtlety, suggests that timing the introduced two note cadence as three even notes will be close to the mark (1984, page 15). Rarely, if ever, is the last of the three shortened or used as a mere bridging note.

16. The Cameron aesthetic also recognizes different essential natures of the *crunluaths* and *taorluaths* as embellishments. Consequently, the cadences are treated differently in each.

Connell explained that *crunluath* variations are upwardly rippling and flowing. Conversely, the *taorluath* variations are in their nature, staccato, drumming, percussive. As much as possible the piper should ameliorate this percussive effect and emphasize a smooth, even flow.

In an effort to smooth the flow of an inherently percussive *taorluath* variation, two note cadences **and** cadences with introductory E's were all played roughly in time. That is, without pre-cadence pause. This is the way I hear Reid and usually Connell present these introduced cadences. (see Campbell 1984, page 11). There is diversity among Cameron style players, however.

James Barrie handles introduced cadences in *taorluath* variations in a musically attractive style. He slightly extends the melody note before an introduced cadence and slightly broadens the low A at the end of the *taorluath* to balance it, making in essence a *retard* before the cadence. Then, the introductory E is shorten and the two notes of the cadence proper correspondingly stretched to approximate equal length.

This approach keeps the flow of the variation relatively smooth and it preserves the status of introductory E as a gracing, not allowing it full equal time as the other notes of the cadence proper. It also preserves the notion of the introductory E signifying the end of the prior phrase which needs a resolution or pause of its own. That pause is provided by a broadening of the last *taorluath* couplet before the E.

Here I tread on dangerous ground: the use of a full pre-cadence pause in *taorluath* variations. William Connell taught this in limited circumstances. It was something that

John MacDonald (Inverness) also did on occasion. (See Campbell 1984, page 13). Archibald Campbell condemned the practice as did Andrew MacNeill. However, to paraphrase Campbell from another controversy, some people do not agree with this pre-cadence pause in the *taorluath*, but their dissent does not alter the fact that the writer was taught to do it.

The context as far as Connell is concerned is as follows:

Connell's normal timing of the introduced cadence in a *taorluath* variation is three even notes --- long/long/long --- timed to maintain the pulse of the variation. On the other hand, in the ground of a tune a similar cadence phrase would have a different timing --- roughly, short/long/long.

Occasionally an introduced cadence in a *taorluath* variation is a repetition of, an exact duplicate of one that exists in the ground of a tune in structurally exactly the same place. The Cameron penchant for consistency (or Connell's) demands, then, that the cadence in the *taorluath* be a duplicate of the one in the ground. The trick is to make it work rhythmically within the *taorluath* variation in a way that does not accentuate the already percussive and staccato nature of the variation.

In Connell's approach, to make that work rhythmically within a *taorluath* variation demands a broad resolution of the the phrase before the introduced cadence. Therefore, a resolution is provided by lengthening the low A after the *taorluath* movement. In this way, according to Connell, the somewhat broken rhythm can be accommodated in a manner that does not add to the already staccato feel of the variation. The rhythmic solution is a pre-cadence pause on the low A of the *taorluath* motif before the introductory E. That is how it was explained to me.

In one other instance William Connell sometimes taught a pre-cadence pause in the *taorluath* variation, and that was in tunes with a strong bottom hand emphasis to the melody. For a tune that is thumping along on the low A, low G and B and then to jump to an introductory E was too much of a contrast for Connell's aesthetic. The pause on the low A of the *taorluath* before an introductory E was a effort to minimize the aural "shock". This was a matter of taste.

Connell was aware that the pre-cadence pause was usually tolerated by the judging community in *crunluath* variations, but it was usually condemned out of hand when applied to *taorluath* variations. In lessons he would present his views and his approach then allow a student to choose to risk the approach in competition or not.

One final comment about cadences. **Any phrase or motif that serves the cadence role as a structural signpost is still a cadence.** Below, for example is the first line of the *taorluath breabach* variation of "Lament for Donald of Laggan" as included in Connell's instructional material. There are a number of four note motifs that break the melody and provide a pause, but they fall away in the doubling of the variation. These are cadences that do not fit the standard form but they still are cadences because they function as such.

LAMENT FOR DONALD OF LAGGAN:

TAORLUATH SINGLING (Variation 1): Line One

The musical notation consists of two staves of music. The first staff ends with a vertical bar and the word "cadence*". The second staff ends with a vertical bar, followed by a bracket spanning two measures labeled "1 cadence || 2 cadence". The music is in common time with a treble clef.

A second example comes from Connell's rendition of "Lament for the Little Supper". In this tune, double echo motifs serve as cadences in the singlings of the variations.

LAMENT FOR THE LITTLE SUPPER:

TAORLUATH SINGLING (Variation 1): Line One

The musical notation consists of two staves of music. The first staff ends with a vertical bar and the word "cadence". The second staff ends with a vertical bar and the word "cadence". The music is in common time with a treble clef.

A cadence is as a cadence does.

RHYTHMIC DIVERSITY

Pipers of a Cameron stripe value consistency, yet often they introduce rhythmic diversity both within a variation and between variations.

17. For example, *suibhal* variations are normally played "up the way". Where four melody notes lie in each structural block of the tune, the Cameron stylist may, as an option, group these notes into clusters of four with a pause on the fourth.

The *suibhal* variation of "The Little Spree" is an example from Connell's teaching that was highlighted in the previous Overview section. Below is that variation written to suggest its timing. Think of the variation as written in 6/4 time.

THE WEE SPREE: first line of *suibhal* variation with notes grouped in fours

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G clef. The first staff consists of eight measures, each containing four eighth notes grouped together by vertical bar lines. The second staff also consists of eight measures, with the same grouping pattern. The notes are black on a white background with blue stems.

Another example would be the *suibhal* variation of “Lament for MacSwan of Roiag” sung by William Barrie. Reid plays it “straight” but Barrie groups the variation in fours like Connell in “The Wee Spree”.

LAMENT FOR MACSWAN OF ROAIG:

LINE ONE: *suibhal*

The image shows a single staff of musical notation in G clef. It consists of four measures, each containing four eighth notes grouped together by vertical bar lines. The notes are black on a white background with blue stems. The staff ends with a red vertical line followed by the letters "ETC.".

An extension of this idea is recorded by Iain MacLeod (Jersey) in which the tone row notes of the the “Little Spree” are subtly grouped in eights rather than fours (personal recording archive from Iain MacLeod).

18. Another example of rhythmic diversity in these “pendulum” variations occur where there is a mix of *taorluath breabach* movements and *suibhal* rhythms. This hybrid variation was also discussed in the Overview section where the tune, “MarFarlanes’ Gathering” was used as an example. It is presented below as it appears in Connell’s instructional material. Each of the *taorluath breabach* segments is played with an upward emphasis on the last note of the motif. In the *suibhal* segments, the notes are grouped by fours.

THE MACFARLANES GATHERING: line one of ground doubling

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G clef. Both staves consist of four measures. The first measure of each staff has a single eighth note. The second measure has two eighth notes. The third measure has three eighth notes. The fourth measure has four eighth notes. The notes are black on a white background with blue stems. The staves end with a double bar line and repeat dots.

“The Bells of Perth” may have been Connell’s favorite tune. He said it included everything an accomplished piper needed to master -- technique, interpretive variety, and duration. The variation in question is a doubling of a standard *taorluath breabach* played “up the way” as expected. But the doubling adds another flavor that might be rendered as I have below. Again, think of this as written in 6/4 time.

THE BELLS OF PERTH:

LINE ONE: taorluath doubling (hybrid variation)

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a pipe tune. Each staff begins with a G clef and consists of six measures. The first measure contains a single eighth note followed by a sixteenth-note group (two eighth notes) and a single eighth note. The second measure contains a single eighth note followed by a sixteenth-note group (three eighth notes) and a single eighth note. The third measure contains a single eighth note followed by a sixteenth-note group (two eighth notes) and a single eighth note. The fourth measure contains a single eighth note followed by a sixteenth-note group (three eighth notes) and a single eighth note. The notation uses vertical stems for all notes and includes bar lines and repeat signs.

There is little to add here except to emphasize that these groupings of notes are options within the style, not mandates. They can be employed or not based on the tune and the taste of the performer. Connell seemed to use this idea frequently, William Barrie also. Reid, perhaps, less so.

From the Overview section comes the following list of tunes that include hybrid variations that a Cameron trained piper might treat in a similar way:

“*The MacFarlanes Gathering*”

“*The Bells of Perth*”

“*Lament for MacSwan of Roaig*”

“*Beloved Scotland*”

“*The Battle of Auldearn*”

“*The Lament for the Earl of Antrim*”

“*The Prince s Salute*”

19. I noted earlier that the Cameron style player tended to play both *suibhal* and *taorluath breabach* variations “up the way”. A handful of tunes with *breabach* variations have a very musical variation of the form found in “Corrienessan’s Salute” and others shown below.

CORRIENESSANS’ SALUTE:

Line One: variation one doubling



SIR JAMES MACDONALD OF THE ISLES LAMENT:

Line One: variation one



KINLOCHMOIDARTS LAMENT No. 1:

Line One: variation one doubling



Other tunes with this form of variation include, “Lament for the Harp Tree” and “Lachlan ManNeill of Kintarbert’s Fancy”.

In each case, the variation establishes a pattern of low A emphasis. On the other hand, the common Cameron approach reverses that emphasis in the *taorluath breabach*. The change was embraced as adding interest to the tune, shifting the balance point of the diversity-variety continuum.

James Campbell, it should be noted, as a matter of personal taste opted to create rhythmic consistency variation to variation. In a tune such as “Corrienessan’s Salute” he took his cue from the earlier variations and play the *taorluath breabach* “down the way”.

As a point of interest, Andrew MacNeill commented that Reid never got the tune “Sir James MacDonald of the Isles’ Lament” from Gillies. When it was a set tune for the Gold Medal competitions in the 1930’s Reid taught the tune with the *breabach* expressed down. And Connell taught the tune with both the *taorluath* and *cruinluath breabach* with a downward emphasis. So, at least these adherent of the Cameron style were anything but hide bound on the point of upward or downward emphasis.

There were, finally, a handful of *taorluath breabach* tunes that the Cameron scions Alexander Cameron (the younger) and Gillies taught with other than an upward emphasis. These are recounted in the Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor (Campbell 1948 page 19) and reiterated in the Sidelights..... book (page 13).

Alexander Cameron taught the *taorluath* of “Lament for Donald of Laggan” pointed “down the way.” This approach seems universal for the tune. He timed the *taorluath* of “Earl of Seaforths’ March” and “Struan Robertson’s Salute” with the notes of the *taorluath breabach* “kick” played evenly.

Gillies, on the other hand, advised only one exception to the upward emphasis and that tune was “Lament for Donald of Laggan”. According to Campbell he played all other *taorluath breabachs* in the “normal” Cameron way with a stressed last, upper note of the “kick”.

When I went through the tune “Struan Robertson’s Salute” with Connell, he preferred the *taorluath* played “down the way”. The opposite emphasis produced a string of held D’s which he found unattractive. Thomason’s Ceol Mor records the tune (page 169) and notes Keith Cameron as one of its editorial contributors. The ground was written as I got it from Connell, but the *taorluath and the crunluath* were expressed “up the way” --- no fear of D’s there. Clearly, even within the Cameron camp there is diversity of opinion and expressive license.

INTRODUCTORY E’S AGAIN

The introductory E is an embellishment. It acts as a bridge between melodic units and serves to both foreshadow something of musical importance and give extra aural “weight” to the following bit of melody. Historically, they may have been discretionary and applied extemporaneously. While some remarkable efforts have been made to research and revive period playing style and practice, pipers still debate how these introductory elements may have been played in the *ceol mor* “Golden Age”. Readers are directed to the work of Barnaby Brown and Allan MacDonald for “cutting edge” if debated approaches to reconstructing an older playing style.

By the end of the 19th c., however, the picture seems clearer. By that time the introductory E was beginning to loose its status as an embellishment and in some contexts took on melody note length to the point of dominating the melody. Cameron style players participated in this evolution but perhaps to a lesser degree than others. Alexander Cameron, with one exception, kept these introductory E’s relative short even in contrast to others of a Cameron stripe. I suspect if one were to keep all of these introductions relatively short, subordinate to what follows, the presentation would be largely in keeping with Cameron practice.

Below is a bit of the tune “Tullach Ard” as taught by Connell. Note the regular and short introductory E’s. I have used tie marks to indicate the “mini-phrases” as Connell thought of them. I dare say, this use of the introductory E would have please Alexander Cameron.

TULLOCH ARD

LINE ONE: ground



Never the less, others with a Cameron background, look at repetitive introductory E's and see them as ripe for diversification. James Campbell provides such diversification by adapting a convention attributed to Alexander Cameron (the younger). When the introductory E falls on a B which is then followed by a throw to a higher note (usually C or D), the E is lengthened, the B shortened to retain the balance and the motif resolves on the final note of the three. (See Campbell 1984, page 34). Below, the third mini-phrase is James' adaptation with the middle note shifted down to low A.

"Tulloch Ard" as James Campbell might play it:

LINE ONE: ground held intro' E



Another example of a Cameron stylist diversifying the approach to introductory E's is found in "The Big Spree" as interpreted by William Barrie. If the introductory E precedes a low A, it is prolonged and the subsequent low A shortened to achieve balance. This seems very much a Gillies approach and typical of Reid's playing, too. The rhythm pattern of the motif changes from short-long-long to long-short-long. This staff music attempts to capture the approach. Structural blocks are noted by double bars and mini-phrases by ties.

THE BIG SPREE:

LINE ONE: ground

Two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The top staff shows a sequence of measures with labels: "long intro' E", "short intro' E", "long intro' E", "short intro' E", "short intro' E", and "short intro' E". The bottom staff continues the sequence of measures, with the first four labeled as "short intro' E". The notation uses various note heads (black, white, orange) and rests, with some notes connected by ties.

Finally, contrast the interpretation of "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart" as suggested by Campbell based on Alexander Cameron's playing with the manuscript Gillies wrote to

record his approach to the tune. The first example is from the Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor.

Mac Crimmon's Sweetheart

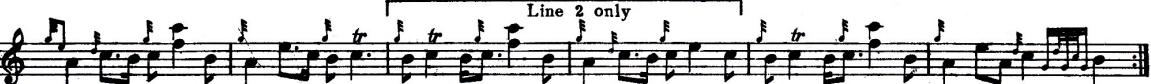
No. 26.

6, 6, 4.

I GROUND, II THUMB VAR. substituting high A for F where shown.

Lines

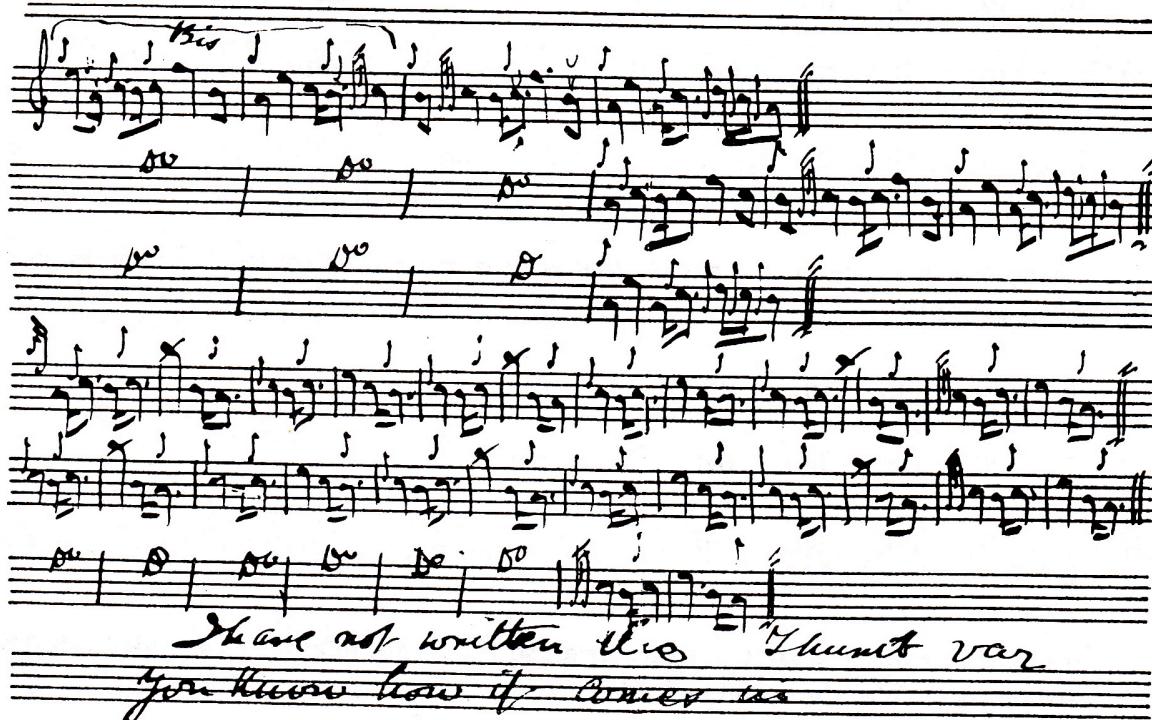
1. 

2. 3. 

The introductory E's are written gracenote size with their stems pointing up. Each is timed as an eighth note (quaver) and the following melody note is a quarter note low A. Campbell records in the Sidelights..... book (1984 page 26) that Alexander Cameron kept the low A long, perhaps the longest note of the "bar".

On the other hand, Gillies wrote the following bit of staff about 1900 to record how he played the tune. Note the lengthened introductory E and the shortened low A that follows. This is reproduced from Campbell (1984, page 27):

MACCRIMMON'S SWEETHEART (*Maol Donn*)



My intent is not to suggest that Gillies deviated from Cameron's teaching, but only that they differed. Preferences existed, but in other contexts Cameron was just as happy to extend an introductory E. This willingness to explore the possibilities within traditionally defined parameters seems a Cameron trait. Archibald Campbell states the case well when he writes concerning the relative duration of an introductory E followed by a low A or low G: *This is a matter in which the player can introduce taste and expression and there is no reason why he should not indulge his own taste. So long as he does not clip either note short* (1985, page 69).

As a final example I reproduce from Further Sidelights on the Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor (1985, page 69) Gillies' timing of the introductory E's of "Clan Chattan's Gathering" as recorded by Campbell. It is a mix of long and short introductory E's. Note, however, that the mini-phrases that begin with the extended E are treated exactly the same way in the concluding phrase of "MacCrimmon's Sweetheart". This is a good example of interpreting by analogy and developing consistency between tunes that leads to variety within a tune. It is also a good example of how the distinction between the E as a melody note versus an embellishment was eroding in the late 19th c.

Here is the tune as in Further Sidelights.....(page 69). All E's are written as melody notes, but watch the shifting pause marks or fermatas:

CLAN CHATTANS' GATHERING: ground

Line One:



The same tune as it appears in the Kilberry Book (page 92) follows. Compare the shifting fermatas on the quarter notes (crotchets) with what Campbell wrote above. Also note that the E's have now been written as embellishments. Those that are lengthened are indicated by the pause mark on the *middle* note of the phrase. Those that are kept short are indicated by the pause on the *first* note of the phrase. This is just one of the conventions Campbell employed in his book that lead Andrew MacNeill to declare it was only understandable when read along side his Sidelights.... notes.

Line One:

I. GROUND.



Finally, using conventions from Connell's instructional book here is the line as it might be played:

CONCLUSIONS

Many years ago, Andrew MacNeill sent me a tape he had recorded for his friend, John Burgess. On that tape, Andrew summarized the features of Robert Reid's playing as it contrasted with much of what Andrew heard as he went around the games as audience or adjudicator. It was his opinion that what Burgess had been taught by William Ross had little difference from what Reid taught. He felt William Ross was at heart a Cameron style player who had grown up in "Cameron country" surrounded by *piobaireachd* in the Cameron style as a living tradition. When the heavily pointed approach came into vogue, Andrew explained, Burgess adopted it to help assure his name in the prize list. In retirement from competition, however, Andrew said that Burgess had gone back to teaching the style he had from Ross, a style that Andrew felt was much like he got from Reid.

Connell dismissed this idea. For him, “playing in the Cameron style” was much about self identification, commitment to a cause in opposition to a current hegemony, and it was about pedigree. By all accounts, Ross, learned his music organically absorbing it from the music around him without a “big name” mentor. Winner of eight Clasps to the Gold Medal, he must have been an apt pupil. But lacking connection with Gillies or one of the Cameron brothers excluded him from the fraternity in Connell’s mind.

I take a less partisan view. I do not think that what I have identified as features of the Cameron style are exclusive to it. I rather think they are part of the collective culture of the music. Yes, some features have fallen into disfavor or disuse, but as long as open minded musicians are willing to play for the music not only for the prize the increasing availability of recorded material makes it unlikely that the style will be lost. Its greatest enemy is ignorance, ignorance on the part of adjudicators and instructors who insist on characterizing approaches that are over a century long as "wrong" rather than "different".

So, in my mind the Cameron player.....

plays smoothly with good length to the bottom hand notes, embellishments and graces.

is aware of the unique characteristic of each note of the scale and devises music that is sympathetic to those characteristics.

employs fewer link notes and will often resolve a phrase on a low hand note and revels in those notes.

values consistency within a tune and uses consistency between tunes to develop interpretations based on analogy.

recognizes the introductory E as indicating the beginning of a musical idea; recognizes a cadence as marking the end of a section of music.

uses pre-cadence pauses to resolve prior musical ideas before introductory E's in *cruinnluath* variations.

normally plays *suibhal* and *taorluath breabach* variation "up the way".

often employs flexible timing in and between rhythmic variations.

frequently elides double echo movements into subsequent phrases that begin on the same chanter note as the double echo.

will push or pressurize certain passages to keep the melody flowing and to add contrast.

varies the length of introductory E's, lengthening them in prescribed contexts.

may play the redundant A movements.

There is nothing radical here, nothing that should threaten or undermine the foundations of the music, nothing that should be rejected out of hand. Some of this is unfashionable, much definitely old-fashioned.....but I always thought that was the point of *piorbaireachd*. It is gloriously old fashioned music.

References cited in Part Three:

Campbell, Archibald. 1948. The Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor. John Smith and Son, Ltd. Glasgow, Scotland.

Campbell, James (ed.) 1984. Sidelights on the Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor. The Piorbaireachd Society, publisher.

Campbell, James (ed.) 1985. Further Sidelights on the Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor. The Piobaireachd Society, publisher.

Thomason, C. S. 1975 (original circa 1890). Ceol Mor. E. P. Publishing, Ltd. East Ardsley, England.

Recordings (cited and useful):

There are only a handful of currently (2013) available commercial recordings that have an unambiguous Cameron stamp. Those that I can recommend without comment follow....

William Barrie, *Ancient Piobaireachd Volume III*.

William Barrie, *Ancient Piobaireachd Volume IV*.

Iain MacLeod, *Some Piobaireachd As Taught by John MacDougall Gillies Between 1896 and 1906*.

Robert Reid, *Classics from the College Volume I, P/M Robert Reid*.

To the above I would add *Donald MacPherson, A Living Legend* (2004) and any of the earlier MacPherson recordings that might still be available as CD or cassette. He was taught exclusively by his father, Iain MacPherson, who had been a Gillies student and briefly a student of Robert Reid. MacPherson plays much in the modern vein while still retaining the broad Cameron aesthetic.....and he is master of the instrument.

Archives (non-commercial collections):

There is increasing availability of recorded material in institutional collections and on line. Here are three I know about....

www.willieconnell.net: These is a wealth of material available including downloadable files of the instructional tapes Connell made. In total, I count 57 tunes that are archived here.

The College of Piping archives are massive including tunes by William Connell, James Campbell, Robert Reid and others. Unfortunately, while available for serious study the recordings are not digitalized or available on line.

The most exciting recent development is the digitalization of the archives of the **Piobaireachd Society**. This includes recently acquired recordings of Robert Reid that had once been at the College of Piping and that now will be available to members of the Society.

