The Battle of Auldearn (setting no 2)

There are settings of this tune in the following manuscript sources:
– **Colin Campbell**'s "Nether Lorn Canntaireachd," i, 56-8;
– Angus MacKay's MS., i, 49-51;
– John MacKay's MS, ff 73-5;
– Colin Cameron's MS., ff.62-63;
– Uilleam Ross's MS., ff.92-94;
– C. S. Thomason's MS., f.35;
– John MacDougall Gillies's MS., f.104;
– Robert Meldrum's MS., ff.22-24; 126-128;

and in the following published sources:
– Uilleam Ross, *Ross's Collection of Pipe Music*, pp.50-52;
– C. S. Thomason, *Ceol Mor*, p.203;
– David Glen, *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.236-7;
– William Stewart, *et. al., Piobaireachd Society Collection* (first series), v, 4-6.

There are a number of routes through this tune, the main differences being whether a pendulum movement is included and whether a taorluath and crunluath a mach are played:

Angus MacKay	**John MacKay**	**Colin Cameron**	**Uilleam Ross**	**David Glen**	**William Stewart**
Ground	Ground	Ground	Ground	Ground	Ground
Doubling of ground	Doubling of ground	Doubling of ground	Doubling of ground	Doubling of ground	Doubling of ground
Siubhal singling	Siubhal singling	Siubhal singling	Siubhal singling	Siubhal singling	Siubhal singling
Siubhal doubling	Siubhal doubling	Siubhal doubling	Siubhal doubling	Siubhal doubling	Siubhal doubling
		Pendulum movement singling			Pendulum movement singling
		Pendulum movement doubling			Pendulum movement doubling

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Taorluath singling	Taorluath singling	Taorluath singling	Taorluath singling	Taorluath singling	Taorluath singling
Taorluath doubling	Taorluath doubling	Taorluath doubling	Taorluath doubling	Taorluath doubling	Taorluath doubling
	Taorluath a mach				
Ground		Ground	Ground	Ground	
Crunluath singling	Crunluath singling	Crunluath singling?	Crunluath singling	Crunluath singling	Crunluath singling
Crunluath doubling		Crunluath doubling?	Crunluath doubling	Crunluath doubling	Crunluath doubling
Crunluath a mach					
Ground			Ground	Ground	

Colin Campbell's setting is an interesting cognate version of the tune which was printed in the *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (second series) ii, 45, as "The Battle of Auldearn" Setting No.1" and will be treated in public competition as a separate tune. It is therefore not reproduced here.

Angus MacKay sets the tune as follows:

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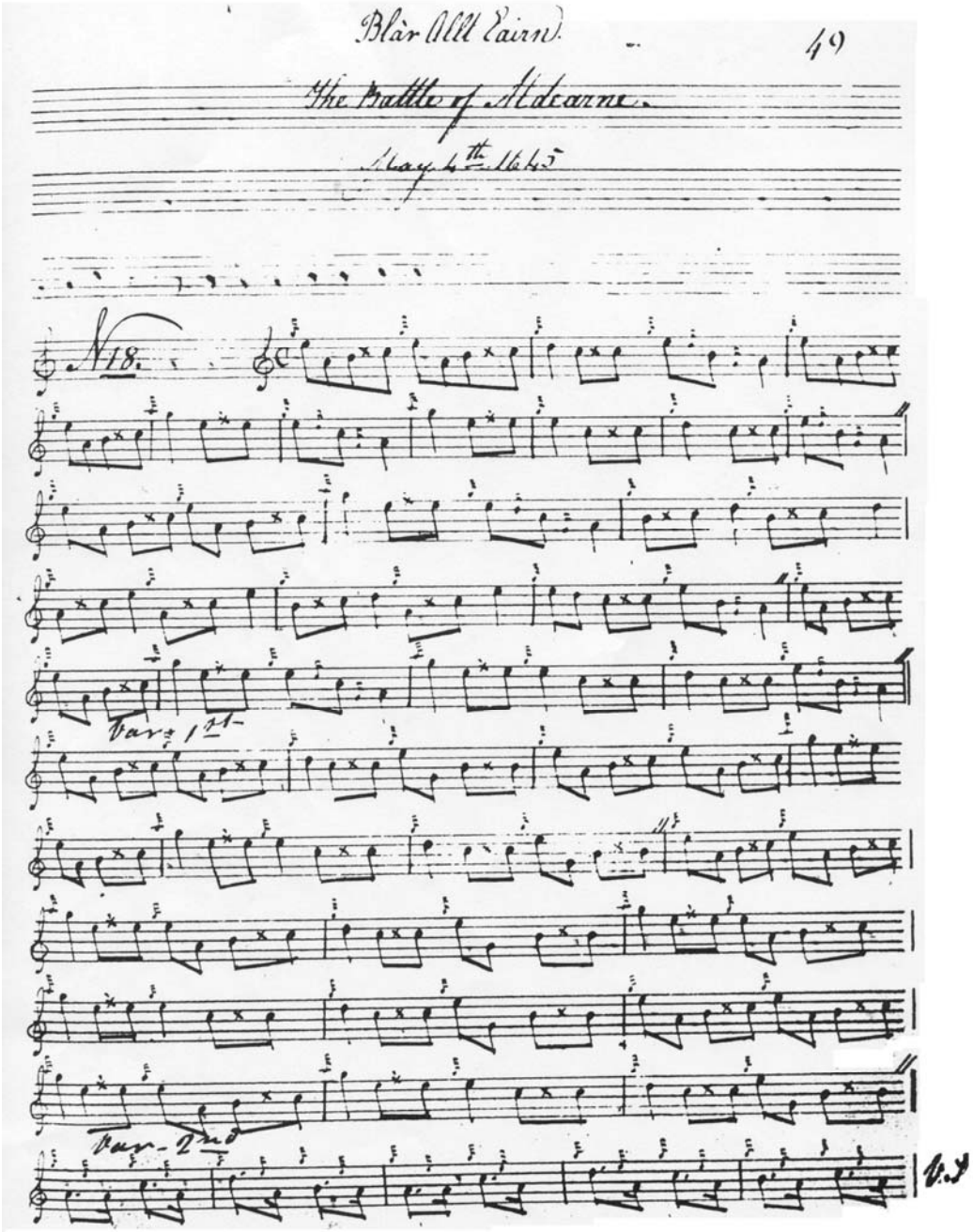

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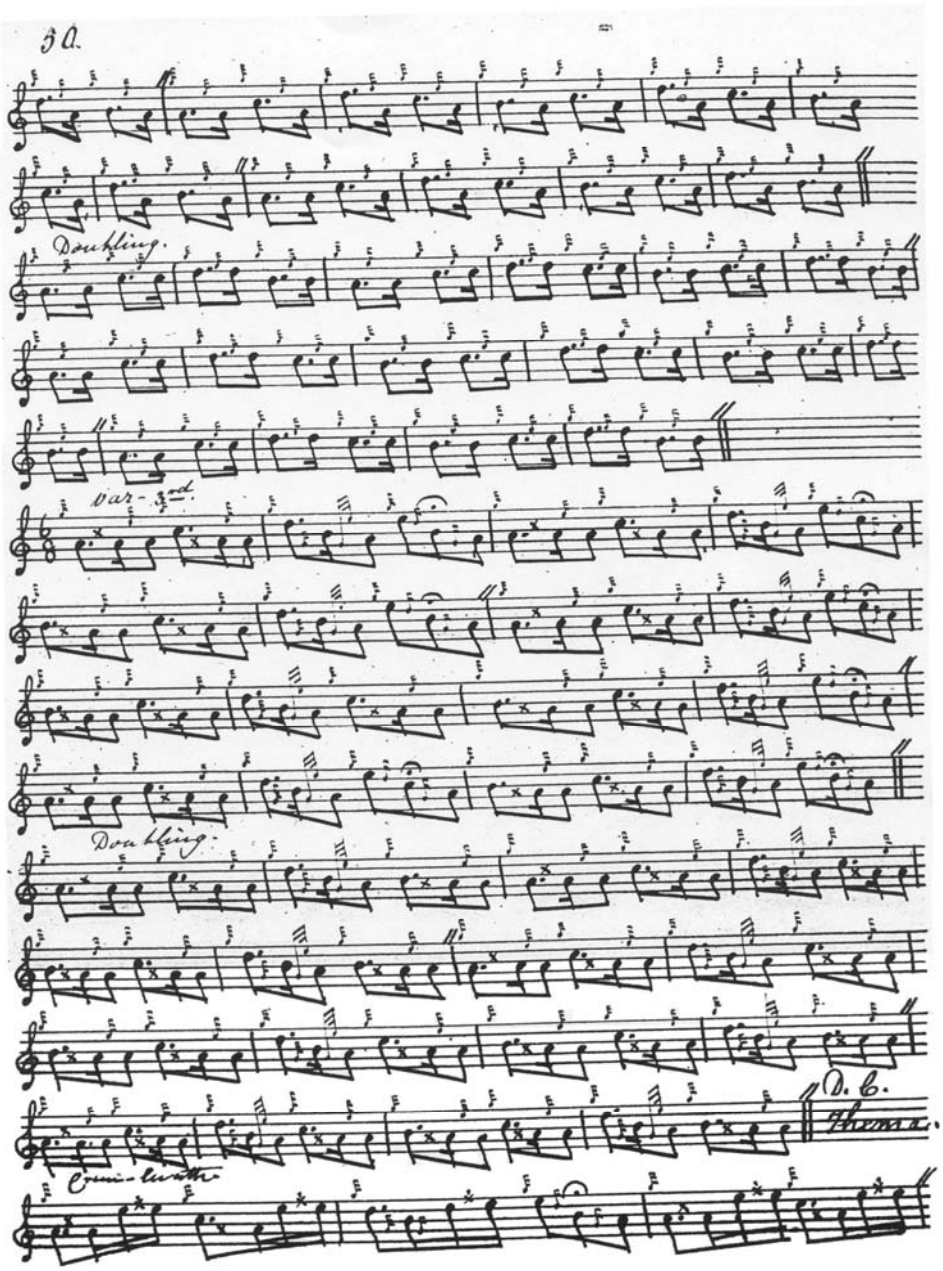

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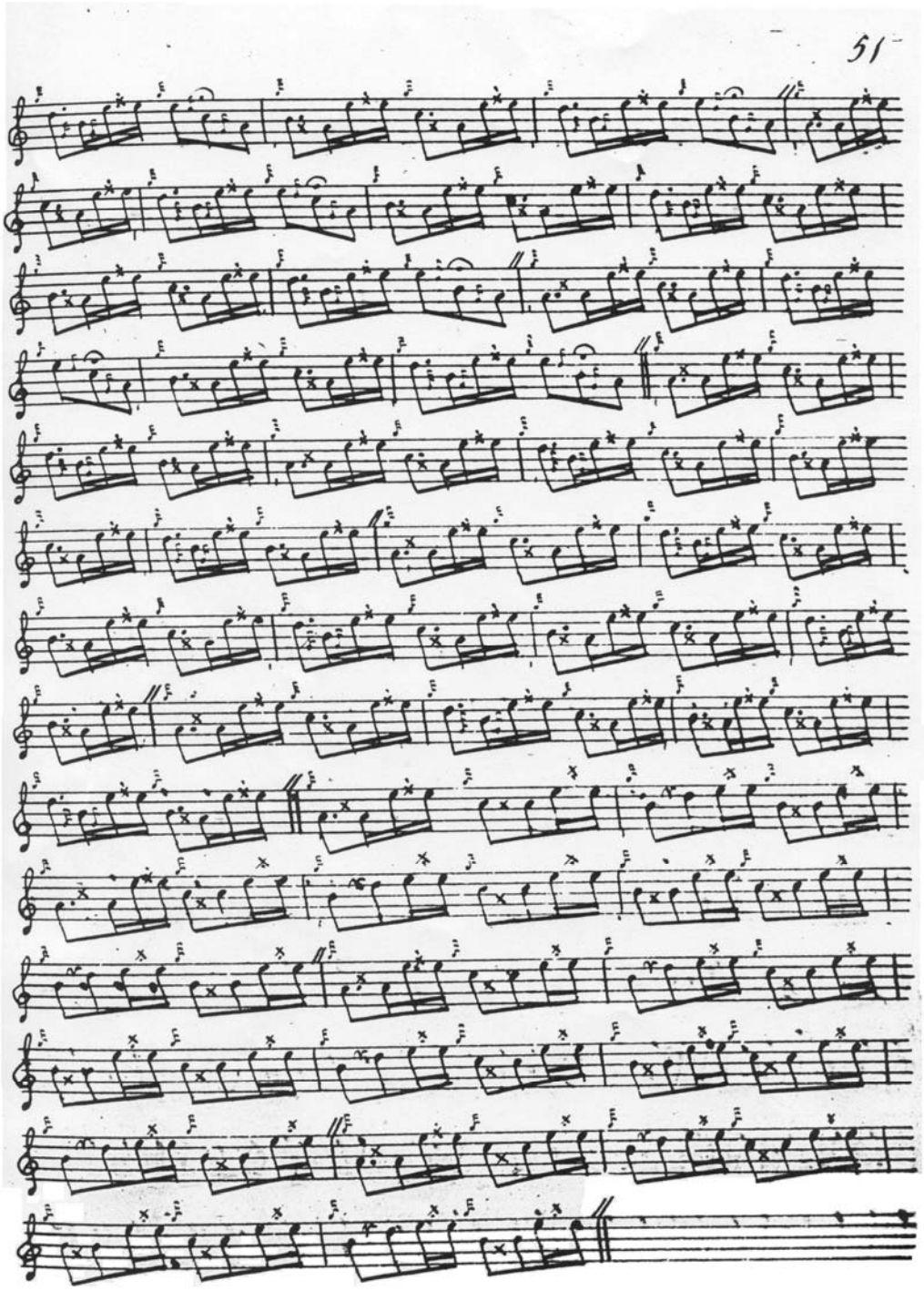

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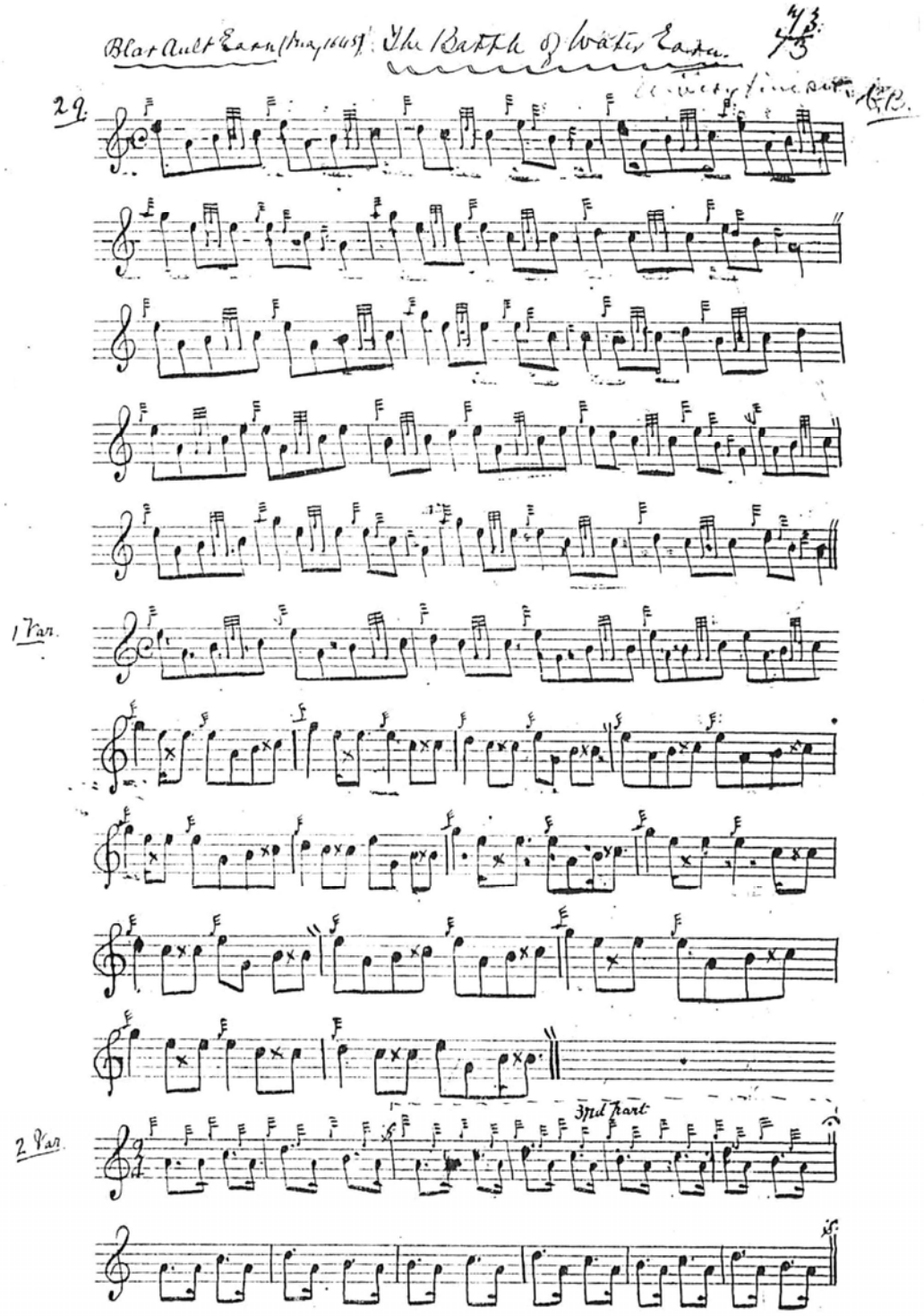
There are minor differences between **Angus MacKay and John MacKay**. For example the latter cadences the ground a little more heavily, thus:



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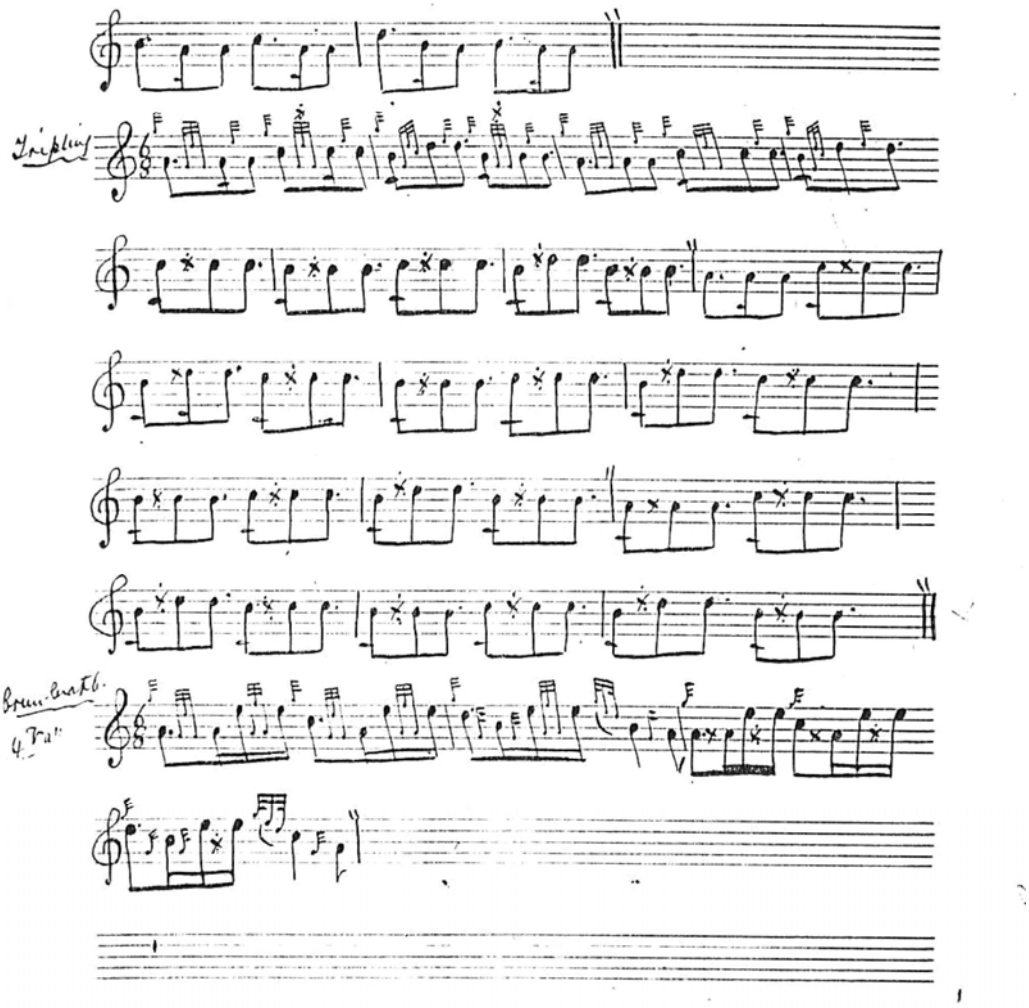
In addition **John MacKay** includes a taorluath a mach variation not present in Angus MacKay's score, thus:



John MacKay's score has nothing beyond the first line of the Crunluath singling. He does not indicate that the ground be repeated at the end of the taorluath variations or at the end of the tune.

Colin Cameron's score develops the ground and siubhal in a manner similar to the MacKays, but includes a pendulum movement singling and doubling as follows:

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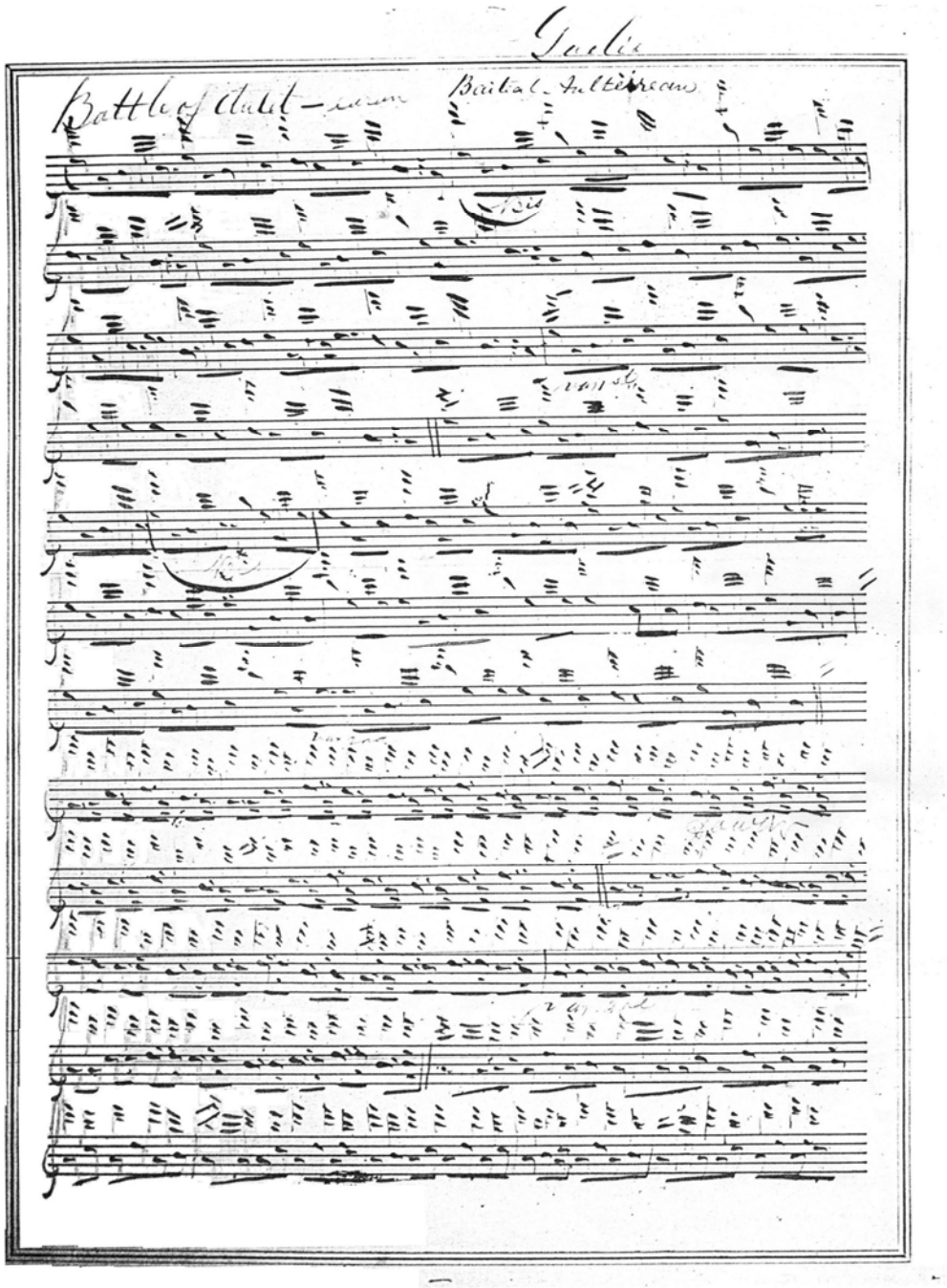

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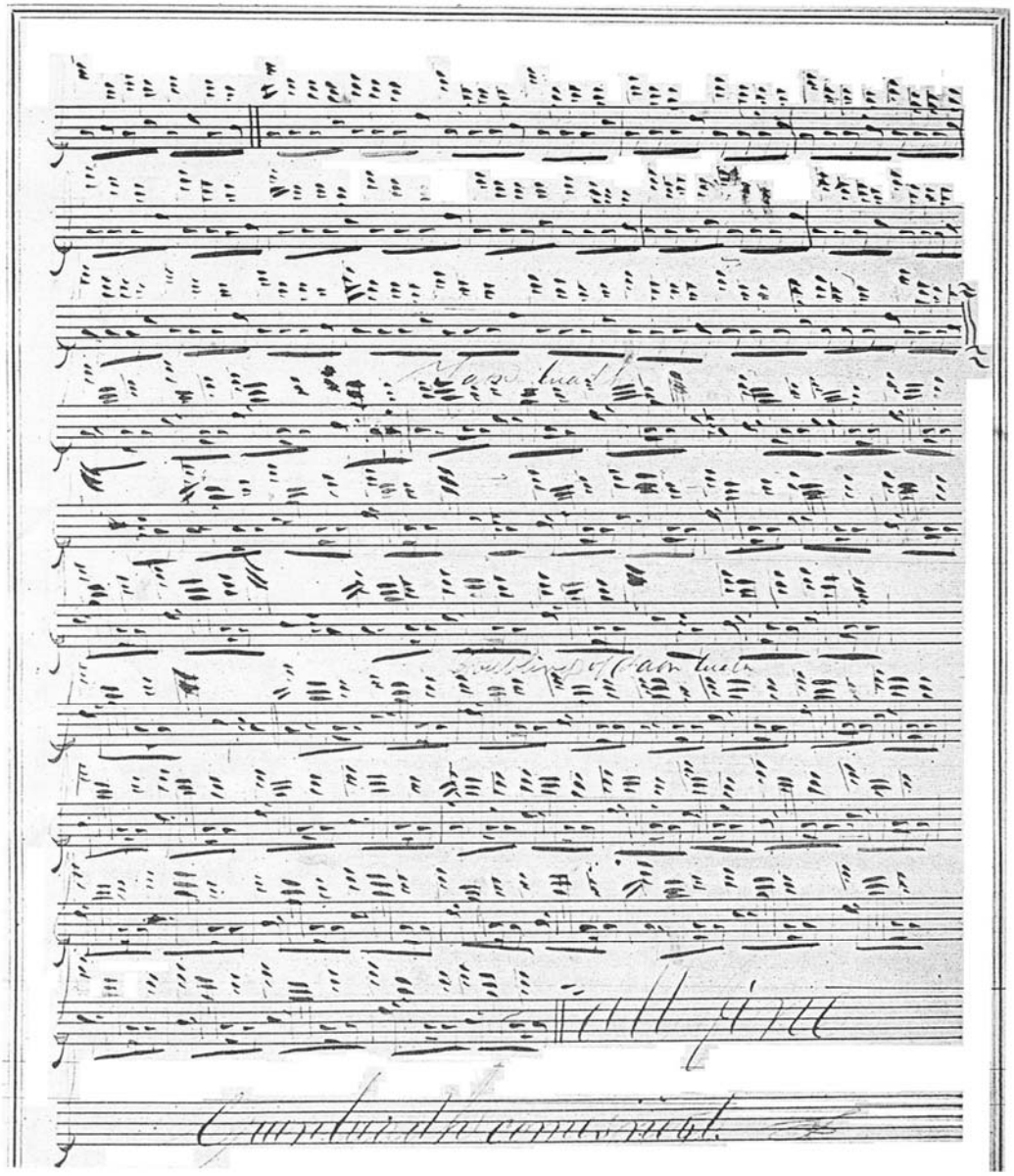

The score ends with a note that the crunluath variations should follow, presumably on the pattern of the taorluath, namely a singling and doubling only.

Uilleam Ross has the pendulum movement in his MS setting, but not in his published version of the tune. The latter is more lightly cadenced than either of the MacKays and opens as follows:

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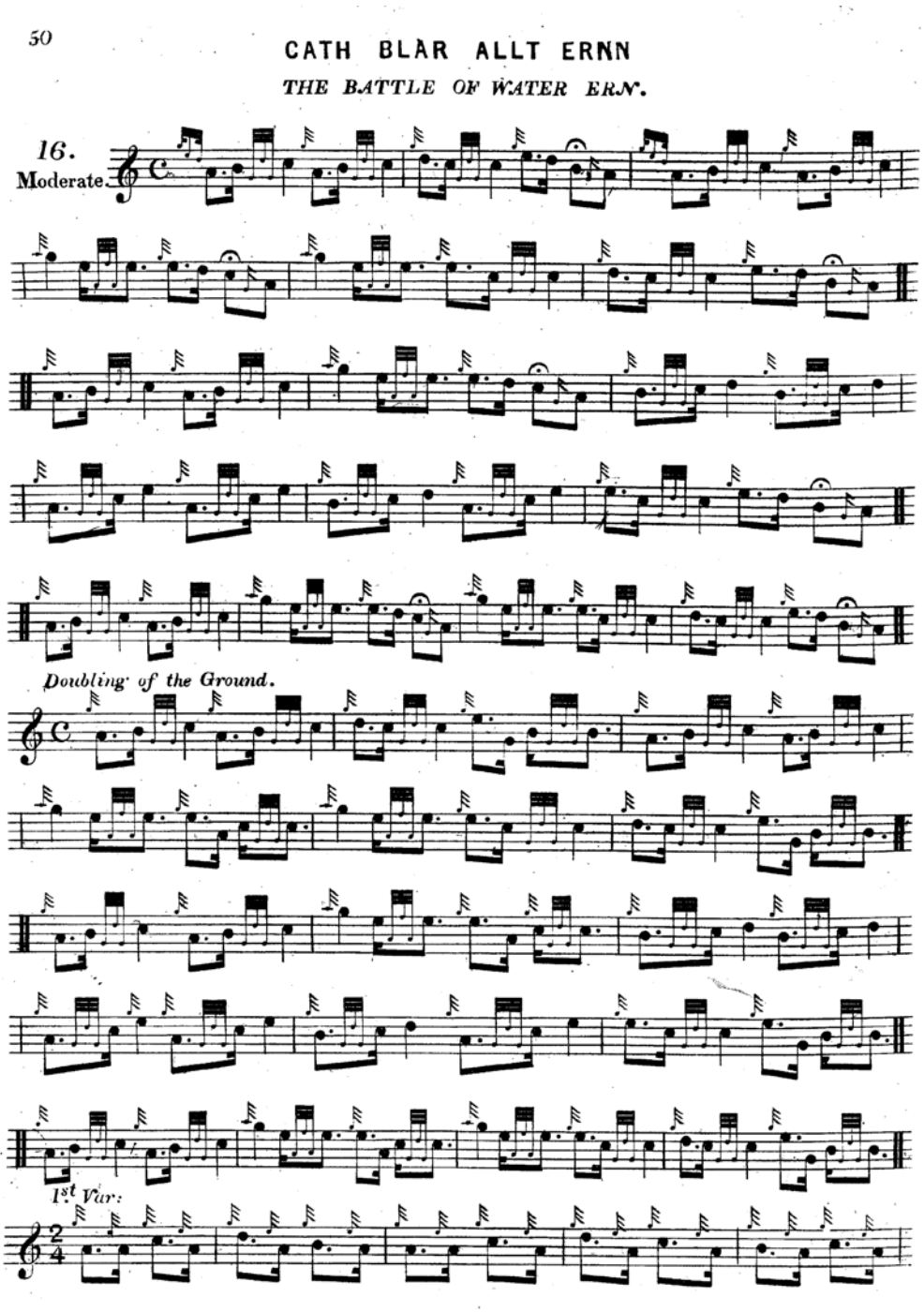

and so on.

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John MacDougall Gillies's score is a partial one, merely recording in outline the pendulum movement singling and doubling, and is not reproduced here.

In *Ceol Mor,* **C. S. Thomason** gives the Ballendalloch MS of Donald MacKay and Uilleam Ross's published book as his sources. Thomason's score does not add to the stylistic possibilities of the tune and is not reproduced here.

David Glen develops the tune in a similar way to Angus MacKay and Uilleam Ross. He repeats the ground at the end of the taorluath doubling and at the end of the tune; he does not have a crunluath a mach. Glen's score does not add to the stylistic possibilities of the tune and is not reproduced here.

The editorial team which produced the scores for the ***Piobaireachd Society Collection*** (first series) following the death of William Stewart set the tune as follows:

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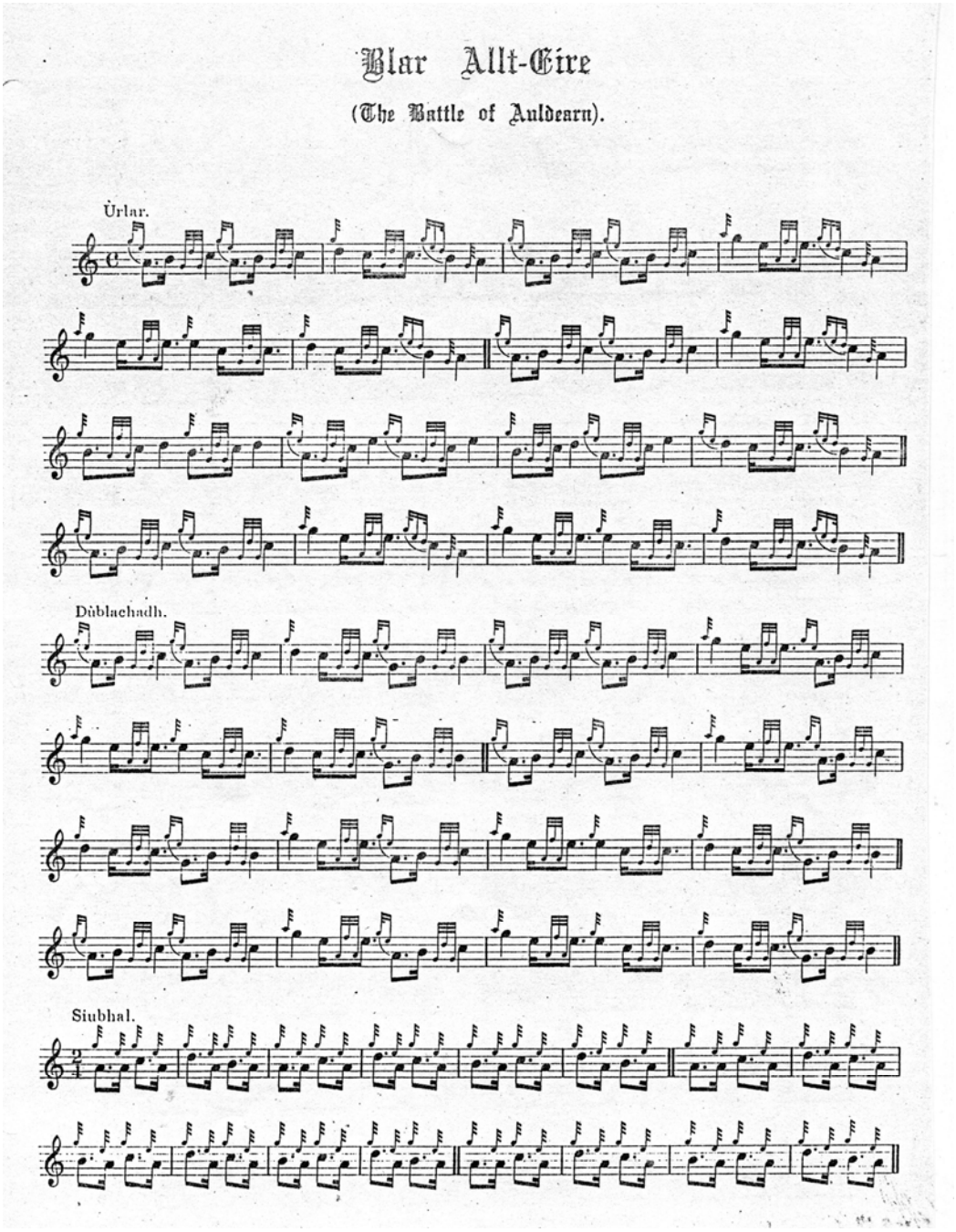

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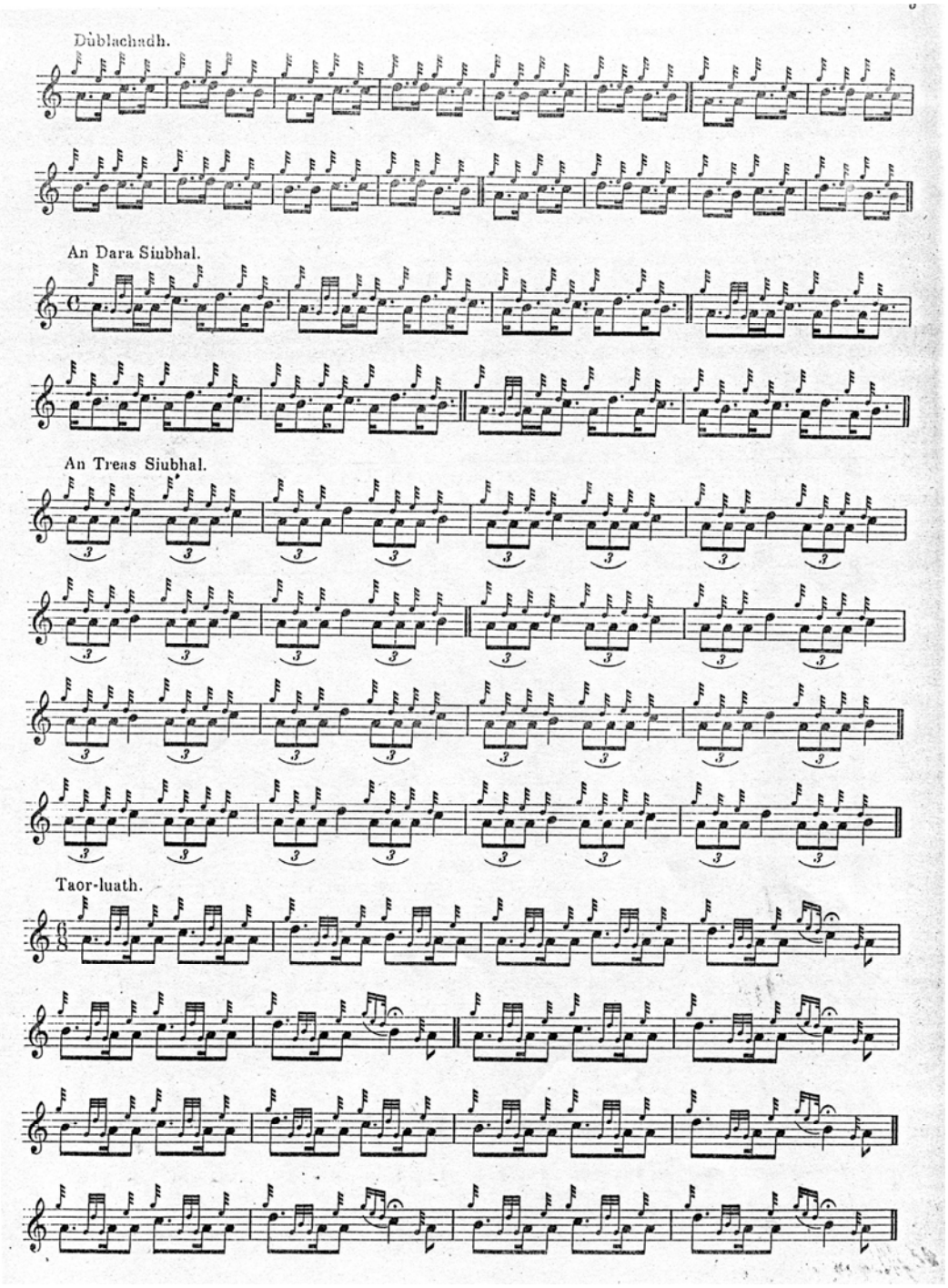

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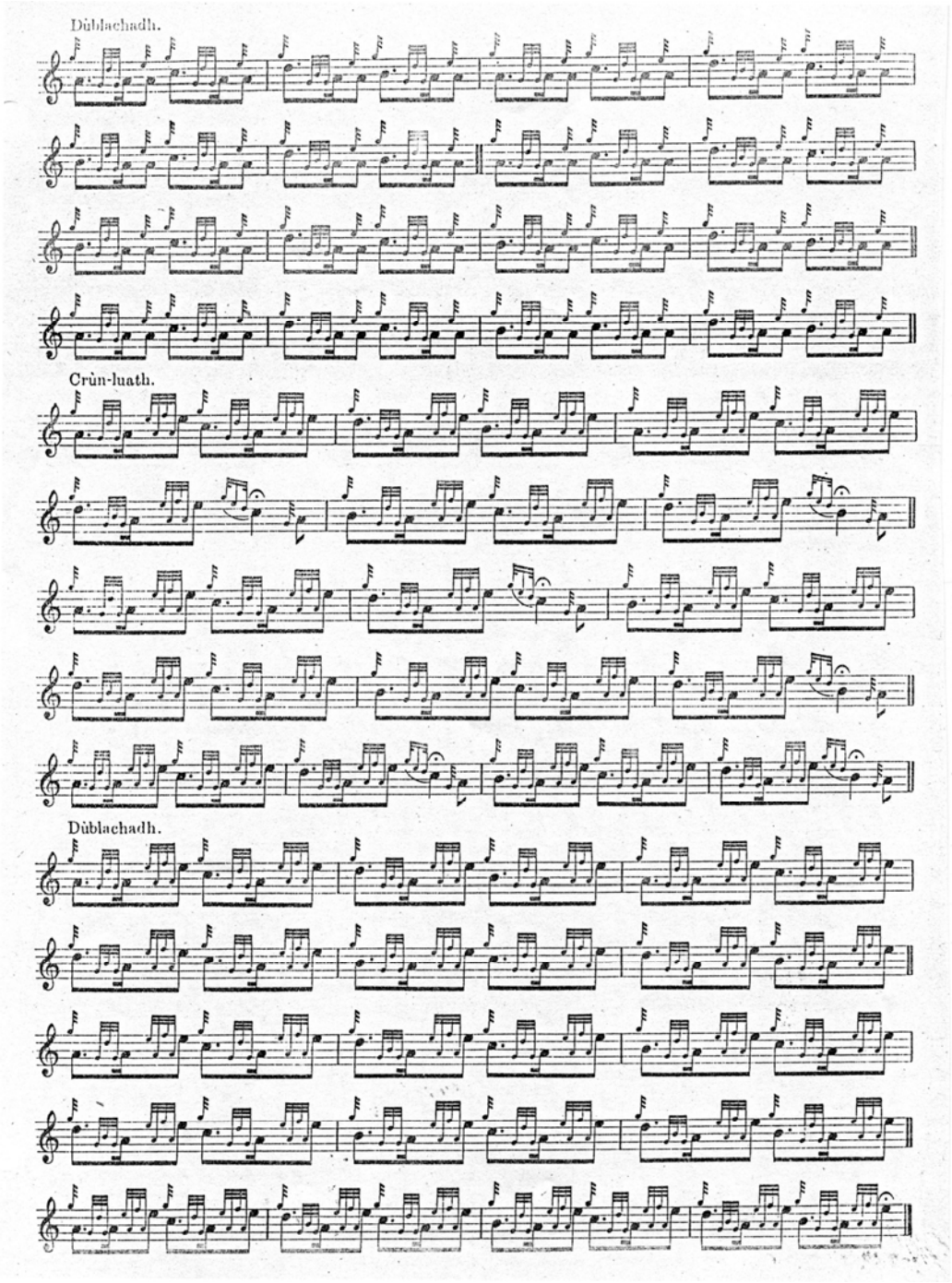

Robert Meldrum has both settings of the tune (i.e. No 1, and No 2). Each is derived from the *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (second series) ii, 45-7 and neither, therefore, is reproduced here.

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Commentary:

The battle of Auldearn was fought during the civil wars of the mid seventeenth century in May 1645 between a Covenanting army and the royalists under the famous Marquis of Montrose. Auldearn lies about seventeen miles east of Inverness. Robert Chambers gives a good account in his *History of the Rebellions in Scotland under the Marquis of Montrose and others from 1638 till 1660* (2 vols., Edinr., 1828), ii, 51ff.

Reinforced by fresh troops in Inverness, the Covenanting general Hurry decided to offer battle. Chambers continues:

> He marched back the very next day to Nairn, designing with his whole host to attack Montrose, who, he learned, had set himself down at a village three or four miles to the eastward, called Auldearn. Montrose would now have willingly avoided battle ; but […] seeing that he would soon have two armies instead of one to encounter, he was obliged to brace his nerves to a meeting with Hurry, for the purpose of suppressing him in the first place, and thereby reducing the aggregate of enemies which threatened, otherwise, soon to overwhelm him. He therefore retained his position at Auldearn. It was on the 4th of May, or, according to various authorities, the 9th, (1645,) that the two armies came in sight of each other.
>
> He seems to have calculated for success, in this battle, almost entirely on generalship and artifice. In the first place, he chose a peculiarly excellent position, and made an exquisitely skilful arrangement of his troops. The ground he selected was a sort of hollow behind or to the east of the ridge on which stands the village of Auldearn, and behind various other heights, which stretch northward from that village towards the house of Boath. He arranged his army in two wings or divisions. One, consisting of the Gordons and the horse, he placed on the left, to the south of the village; the other, comprehending the Irish and Highlanders, he arranged on the right, amidst the gardens and enclosed fields to the north of Auldearn. The former he commanded in person, with Lord Gordon under him; the latter was given to the charge of Alaster MacCol. [Alasdair MacColla] The entire village, intervening betwixt the two bodies, was only occupied by a few foot, who, however, displayed a number of banners, and passed off for a main body. He gave the charge of the royal standard a large yellow banner to MacCol, in the expectation that it would induce the enemy to attack him with their best regiments; in which case, as they were sure to be difficulted in charging, by the nature of the ground on which MacCol was placed, he calculated upon deciding the day by attacking their flank obliquely with his left wing at the moment of distress, when the whole were almost sure of being thrown into irremediable confusion.

The battle turned out almost exactly as he had calculated. Hurry, on approaching, found it totally impossible to comprehend the arrangements of an enemy who had taken up so mysterious a position, but was induced by the sight of the royal standard on the right wing, to direct his strength chiefly upon that point. His men not only met there with a warm reception from MacCol, but presently became confused by reason of the enclosures and ditches through which they had to make their charge. When Montrose saw them in that condition, he brought forward the left wing, which, by an arrangement similar to that of Epaminondas at Leuctra, was much the strongest, and made a furious flank attack upon the great mass of the Covenanting enemy. This, being chiefly composed of raw Highland foot, probably averse to the cause, was quite unable to withstand the charge […] Hurry saw the advantage his opponent had gained, and endeavoured to neutralize it by ordering his whole horse to the support of the wavering lines on his right. But the commanding officer a Captain Drummond either through treachery or stupidity, .misapprehended the order, and, wheeling to the left instead of the right, only threw the disciplined regiments who were contending with MacCol into greater confusion. […]

It was just at this moment that Montrose made his vigorous charge upon the opposite extremity and flank of the Covenanting army. MacCol no sooner observed, or was informed of the motion, than, […] he rushed with all his forces, and with the royal banner displayed […] and charging home upon the regiments opposed to him, now
disordered by Captain Drummond's untoward mistake, and by Montrose's attack, contributed materially to the victory, which then began to declare for the royalists. […] There were killed altogether, in the battle and flight, three thousand of the Covenanters, chiefly of the foot, and particularly of Lawers's regiment, which, it would appear, behaved with most bravery on this dreadful day. Out of all the volunteers, the Frasers and MacKenzies suffered most severely: "Of the former clan," says an old family chronicle, "besides what fell unmarried, there were eighty-seven widows in the lordship of Lovat."

Montrose, on his part, lost only twenty-four men in all, none of whom were of any note. He took from the enemy sixteen standards, and fell into possession of their whole baggage and provisions.

* * *

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