

## Ewin of the Battles

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There are settings of this tune in the following manuscript sources:

- **Angus MacKay's** MS, ii, 41-2 (and in the so-called "Kintarbert MS" ff.19-20);
- **Duncan Campbell of Foss's** MS, ff.143-145;
- **Uilleam Ross's** MS, ff.139-141;
- **D. S. MacDonald's** MS, 1, 4-5;
- **David Glen's** MS, ff.82-83;

and in the following published source:

- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, p. 224.

In his main manuscript **Angus MacKay** sets the tune like this:

pipes | drums

41

*Eagham's Balthack.*

*Ruin of the Balthack.*

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a set of tunes. At the top right, the page number '41' is written. The title 'Eagham's Balthack.' is written in cursive above the first staff. Below it, the subtitle 'Ruin of the Balthack.' is also written in cursive. The notation consists of several staves. The first staff contains a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a series of notes. Below this, there are several more staves of notation, including a section labeled 'Var. 1st' and another labeled 'Doubting'. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'. The handwriting is in ink on aged paper.

pipes | drums

42

*var. 2nd.*

*Doubling.*

*Bis*

*D. G. Thomas.*

*Bis*

*Over math.*

*Doubling.*

*Bis*

*2nd*

*D. G. Thomas All. fine.*

**MacKay** seems to be the earliest source for this slight but appealing piece. The version in the so called "Kintarbert MS" seems simply a lightly-graced copy of the piece given more fully in the main manuscript. It adds little to the musical interpretation of the tune and is not reproduced here. **Duncan Campbell of Foss** does not direct that the ground be repeated between the taorluath and crunluath movements but otherwise he does not differ significantly from MacKay. The same is true of **Uilleam Ross's** score and that of **D. S. MacDonald** and their scores are likewise not reproduced here.

**David Glen** sets the tune like this:



## pipes | drums



**Glen's** is probably the best of the non-MacKay scores. We note his interesting accentuation of the triplet figure which concludes each part. Glen also, sensibly, drops the repeat of the ground between the taorluath and crunluath variations. Players drawn to this tune may find that this is the more playable of the available scores.

**C.S. Thomason's** treatment of the tune in *Ceol Mor* is similar to Glen's. Here is how Thomason handles the ground:



and so on.

*Commentary:*

This is a spare little tune throwing much emphasis on high G, perhaps to evoke what Bob Brown would have called "a note of high-pitched keening," much of whose appeal lies in the elegant descending figures of line two of the ground. History gives little clarity on who the dedicatee may have been. Thomason's note on the subject in his "Ceol Mor Legends" manuscript appears to confuse Ewin with Red Hector of the Battles the famous MacLean chief who fell at Harlaw in 1411:

EWEN of the BATTLES. Eoghan nan cath. (Ed) This Ewen was a MacLean, and in an account of the family of MacLean given in Macfarlan's genealogical collection (M.S. Advocates Library Jac.V.4.16 Vol.1.p.180) it appears that Lachlan Lubanich had by MacDonald's daughter Hector Rufus Bellicosus, who commanded at the battle of Harlaw, when he and Irving of Drum, seeking out one another by their armorial bearings on their shields, met and killed each other. This Hector—or Eachin—was married to a daughter of the Earl of Douglas. (f.367)

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