NOT FOR LOAN

THE ALTERNATIVE TRADITION IN SCOTTISH POETRY 1560 – 1720

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ABSTRACT

It has been a truism of Scottish literary criticism since the early nineteenth century that the vernacular poetry of eighteenth-century Scotland constituted a "revival" based on antiquarian interest in the middle Scots tradition and nationalistic or sentimental imitation of the folk tradition. This thesis questions that description by positing an alternative tradition of Scottish poetry, beginning around the time of the Reformation, which culminated during the seventeenth century in the emergence of a convention of vernacular poetry, differing from the Scots poetry of the makars and more sophisticated than the oral tradition. By examining in detail a large number of hitherto unconsidered poems, published and unpublished, and freshly examining some well known poems, this study reassesses Scottish literary history after the middle ages and challenges a number of established critical opinions regarding vernacular poetry and the nature of literary life in seventeenth-century Scotland.

As the struggle for religious reformation intensified in Scotland during the sixteenth century, poetry and song were increasingly employed for propaganda. Commonly, propagandist poets turned to popular verse forms, tunes and diction to convey protestant ideas to the widest possible audience. This was the beginning of an alternative to the courtly and oral traditions of poetry. Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century controversial poets developed styles of poetry which were plainspeaking and calculated to appeal to a popular audience. By the end of that century the two major poetic styles of the alternative tradition had been established — witty, anglicised plain style poetry and vernacular poetry drawing on the folk idiom and dwelling on popular concerns.

During the seventeenth century, following the intellectual changes wrought by the Reformation, the Renaissance and the departure of the court to England, the styles of the alternative tradition became more and more dominant in Scottish literary life, employed not only by controversialists and broadsheet poets, but by members of the gentry and professional classes for sophisticated satire and occasional entertainment. It was these poets who most actively included elements of the plain style, especially its satiric wit, in vernacular poetry. By the first years of the eighteenth century there was a flourishing tradition of vernacular poetry and the most familiar forms of eighteenth-century vernacular verse had been established.

The work of the poets who created a poetry for post-medieval Scotland forms the basis of this thesis: Lindsay and the Wedderburns, the broadsheet poets of the late sixteenth century, cultured poets who eschewed the art tradition, such as Hume and James Sempill, and numerous known and unknown poets of the seventeenth century. The courtly poets, their Anglo-Scots descendants and the oral tradition are considered but the emphasis throughout is on the poetry of the alternative tradition that anticipates the style and concerns of the eighteenth-century vernacular poets.

It is to be hoped that by demonstrating the existence of a living tradition of poetry apart from the Anglo-Scots and oral traditions in the seventeenth century this study will encourage a reconsideration of our understanding of the origins and nature of eighteenth-century Scottish vernacular poetry.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

ABSTRACT v

ABBREVIATIONS x

INTRODUCTION 1

PART I TOWARDS REFORMATION: LINDSAY AND THE WEDDERBURNS

Chapter 1 BETWEEN THE AGES: SIR DAVID LINDSAY 28

Lindsay and the Church 30
Lindsay and the State 42

Chapter 2 "FOR EVERIE MAN DOIS UTHER TEICHE": THE GUDE AND GODLIE BALLATIS 54

Hymns, "Spiritual Sangis" and Psalms 62
"Changeit" Songs 70
Satire 80

PART II REFORMATION BROADSHEET VERSE

Chapter 3 SATIRICAL POEMS OF THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION 96

Sources of Broadsheet Style 98
Religion and Politics 108
The Development of Styles: tradition and modernism 115

Chapter 4 THE FIRST ROBERT SEMPILL: PROFESSIONAL SATIRIST 133

Tavern and Town Life: The "Private" Poet 137
The Public Poet: Maddie Speaks Out 144
The Voice of the Godly Commons 148
Vernacular Poetry and Popular Irony 154
Bringing the strands together: "The Legend" 161

Chapter 5 JOHN DAVIDSON: THE PREACHER AS POET 170

Gude John Knox and Protestant Plainspeaking 171
Independence in Thought and Style 177

PART III THE NEW LEARNING

Chapter 6 COURTLY POETRY: THE WANING TRADITION 189

Chapter 7 SIR JAMES SEMPILL: *THE PACKMAN'S PATER NOSTER* 209

Chapter 8 FAITH, REASON AND PERSONALITY: ALEXANDER HUME 223

The New Learning 226
The right use of poetry 236
The Preacher and Psalmist 240
Personal Poetry 243
The Modern World: "Ane Epistle" 247

PART IV THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter 9 VARIETY, CONTINUITY AND NEW DIRECTIONS 265

Printed Sources 270
Manuscript Material 273
Court Song 280
Anglo-Scots Art Song 280
Folk Song 281
Popular Song 282
Convivial Song 283

Chapter 10 PLAIN STYLE POETRY: "MIDWAY BETWIXT THE VULGAR AND THE WISE" 288

The Middle Way 288
"The hurly-burly of Scotts business" 294
Ironic Detachment 300

Chapter 11 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VERNACULAR TRADITION 322

Poetry for the Times: the merging of art and popular 325
The interaction of plain style and vernacular poetry 327
"A Dreame" 333
Flytings 337
Mock Prophecies, Invocations, Proclamations and Litanies 340
Dialect Poems 346
Song 355
Verse Epistles and Occasional Addresses 364
Narrative poems, monologues and dialogues 375
Mock Elegies, Epitaphs and Dying Words 400

CONCLUSION 426

APPENDIX 436

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 510

ABBREVIATIONS

Adv. MSS	Advocates Manuscripts, National Library of Scotland
BM	British Museum
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
La. MSS	Laing Manuscripts, Edinburgh University Library
NLS	National Library of Scotland
SHR	*Scottish Historical Review*
SLJ	*Scottish Literary Journal*
SLN	*Scottish Literary News*
SRO	Scottish Record Office
SS	*Scottish Studies*
SSL	*Studies in Scottish Literature*
STS	Scottish Text Society Publications

INTRODUCTION

Whilst there are similarities between the work of the court poets of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scotland and the poetry of Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns in the eighteenth century, there are also profound differences in style, idiom, attitude and ideas between these two fertile periods of Scottish poetry. This study offers an explanation of the changes in Scottish poetry between 1560 and 1720, describing the development of an alternative tradition of poetry. Conceived in Reformation satire and propaganda, influenced by but separate from the courtly tradition and drawing on the oral tradition, the alternative tradition was the source of what we now call "eighteenth-century vernacular poetry".

In printed collections, in broadsheets and among the papers of Scottish families there is evidence of a rejection of ornate, courtly style poetry — Scots and English — in favour of plainer styles of poetry written in vernacular Scots, in English, or in an idiom which blended the two languages. The diction of the poems is relaxed and conversational, even colloquial, rather than aureate or formal. The vocabulary, stanza forms and tone of many of the poems show a strong association with the oral tradition, imitating folk idioms and folk attitudes to produce vernacular poetry. Other poems anticipate English Augustan verse, using fashionable jargon and ironic colloquialisms, often in witty couplets. I have called the latter poetry "Scottish plain style", although distinctions between it and vernacular poetry are not always easily made because poets frequently combined the two.

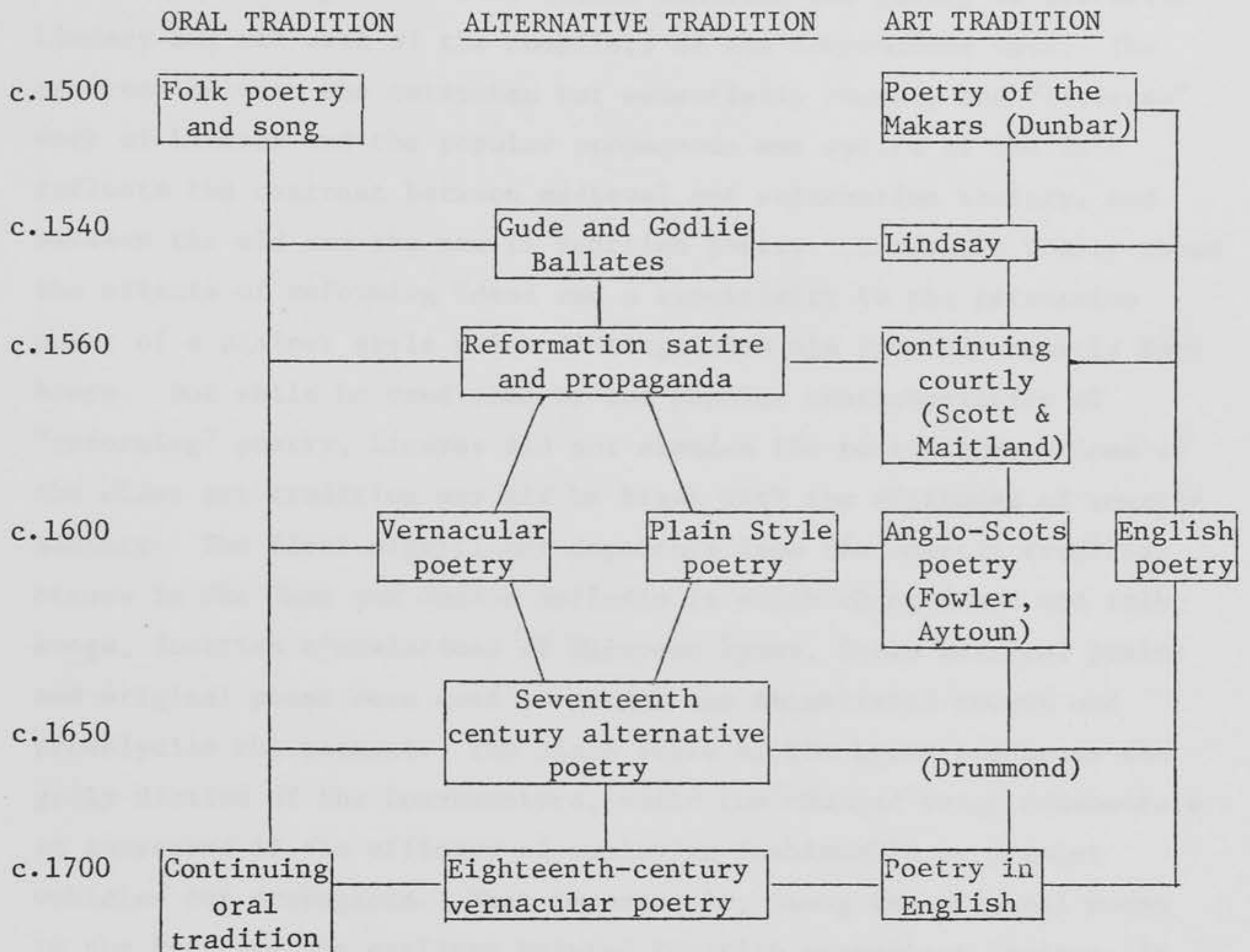
The development of an alternative to courtly poetry began before the Scottish Reformation. The spread of reforming ideas in Scotland in the first half of the sixteenth century marked the

beginning of ideological and social change unprecedented since the early middle ages. Philosophical and poetic conventions which had served medieval society and the court poets so well for so long were rendered inappropriate, indeed unacceptable, by the alterations in intellectual and political life consequent upon the struggle for and achievement of religious reformation. Furthermore, the evangelical nature of the Scottish Reformation generated a need for propaganda on a scale and of a type hitherto unknown. Since the reformers sought to win away from orthodox Catholicism enormous numbers of commoners, from farm labourers and artisans to rich burghers, forms of propaganda had to be fashioned which would appeal to and communicate with the whole society, literate and illiterate, sophisticated and unsophisticated. Yet this propaganda had, in addition, to be an effective vehicle for dialectic, for theological and political didacticism, for spiritual zeal and for satire.

In *Ane Compendious Buik of Godlie Psalms and Spirituall Sangis*, first published c.1542, reforming poets gave poetry the power of propaganda by simplifying form and diction, using tunes from the oral tradition and transforming courtly style so that it could carry ideas which were essentially anathema to the courtly world. Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century these techniques were refined and developed, and hence when the Scottish court moved to England in 1603 there was already an alternative to courtly poetry, other than the oral tradition. Broadsheet poets were cultivating plainer, more widely based forms of poetry than were conventional in the Scottish court. During the seventeenth century this alternative tradition of poetry came to be increasingly significant in Scottish literary life.

The alternative tradition resulted from a complex interaction between established literary and oral traditions and changing circumstances, ideas and attitudes. Given the exploratory nature of this study, it is not possible to describe fully the many links between the art, oral and alternative traditions. The most significant steps in the progress of Scottish poetry are examined but other relationships are only suggested. By reducing the histories of the three major traditions to their simplest elements and indicating the connections

between them, the following chart affords a comprehensive view of the development of Scottish poetry as it is outlined in this thesis. I have found such a chart a useful framework in analysing the relationships and differences between the three traditions and discovering the literary influences which shaped the alternative tradition.



It is clear from the chart that the oral tradition had historical continuity, largely independent of the other two traditions, while the art tradition underwent great change after the end of the sixteenth century. This representation of the course of Scottish literary history from the middle ages to the eighteenth century also illustrates how Scottish vernacular poetry grew from being one branch of broadsheet verse in the late sixteenth century to become a major force in Scottish literary life by the early eighteenth century. That

vernacular poetry was primarily the outcome of an alternative tradition is exemplified by the fact that its association with the oral and art traditions was a matter of influences while its development can be traced in a direct line from early protestant propaganda.

The first part of this thesis examines the poetry of Sir David Lindsay and the work of the compilers of *Ane Compendious Buik*. The contrast between the outspoken but essentially courtly and "literary" work of Lindsay and the popular propaganda and satire of the *Buik* reflects the contrast between medieval and reformation society, and between the old and the new in Scottish poetry. Lindsay's poetry shows the effects of reforming ideas and a sensitivity to the persuasive power of a plainer style which distinguishes him from his courtly forbears. But while he used some of the popular characteristics of "reforming" poetry, Lindsay did not abandon the poetic conventions of the older art tradition nor did he break with the attitudes of courtly society. The first significant departure from the courtly tradition occurs in *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis* in which changed art and folk songs, Scottish translations of European hymns, Scots metrical psalms and original poems were used to attack the established church and proselytize the commons. The plain style of the hymns precurses the godly diction of the Convenanters, while the changed songs demonstrate an awareness of the efficacy of employing fashionable or popular vehicles for propaganda. Most importantly, among the original poems in the *Buik* are the earliest printed Scottish protestant satires, in which the alternative tradition has its roots.

Techniques developed by the changers, translators and original poets in *Ane Compendious Buik* were taken up by other propagandists and satirists throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. Among the broadsheet satirists, whose work is discussed in Part II, there was a deliberate emphasis on plainer diction, simple stanza forms and a voice allying the poet with the "brethren", at that time synonymous with the modern "man in the street". The proliferation of broadsheet satire around 1560 led to the establishment of Scottish plain style and vernacular poetry as conventional means of expression for the "new"

poets of Scotland who worked outside the court and drew on the courtly tradition only when it was considered appropriate to their propagandist or satiric purposes. The body of work left by two poets, Robert Sempill (Chapter 4) and John Davidson (Chapter 5) illustrates that conscious choice rather than accidental variations in style between poets played an important part in shaping plain style and vernacular poetry. In the late sixteenth century a link was forged between those two styles of poetry and the attitudes they expressed. Through their religious radicalism Sempill, Davidson and other broadsheet satirists, in different ways and for different reasons, fashioned a relationship between popular poetry, popular concerns, political radicalism and individualism which continues to inform Scottish vernacular poetry to this day.

Courtly poetry, as is demonstrated in Part III, Chapter 6, was affected remarkably little by the changes which were creating a new poetry in the broadsheets. James VI's "Castalian band" of poets simplified their style and diction but the modifications arose more from literary than from political or sociological motives. When the court poets included in their work the political and religious issues of their time it was in a strangely abstract manner, rarely acknowledging the increasing involvement of the commons in the political life of the nation and largely ignoring the dramatic increase in literacy that had occurred since the Reformation. By the time the Scottish court went to England court poetry was distant from the preoccupations of the majority of Scots and already anachronistic. It is therefore not surprising that the Scottish courtly tradition was rapidly either overshadowed by English poetry which had, during Elizabeth's time, responded to the new learning sweeping into Britain from Europe, or transmuted into conventional English courtly verse.

The rich tradition of the makars did not, however, vanish completely. It was preserved for a century in some great houses and, more importantly, elements of the courtly tradition which were useful to the popular poets — lively stanza forms, poetic expression of the folk idiom, colourful description, flyting — were kept alive in the alternative tradition.

Not all poets from a courtly background remained aloof from the religious, political and intellectual changes of the late sixteenth century. Sir James Sempill of Beltrees was both a prominent courtier and an ardent Protestant whose long poem, *The Packman's Pater Noster*, discussed in Chapter 7, uses elements of style and voice much closer to broadsheet poetry than to the art tradition. Further, James Sempill brought to his satire a sophisticated understanding of the import of Protestantism and the northern Renaissance, apprehending not only that a new tradition of poetry was emerging in Scotland, but that the new poetry should reflect the concerns of a new society. Sempill's *Packman* is the first in a line of poems from sophisticated circles deliberately cultivating a popular alternative to art poetry to express ideas and opinions contrary to those of "the establishment". Scottish vernacular poetry became respectable, indeed fashionable, as a consequence of the work of James Sempill and others like him who despite high birth and extensive learning eschewed conventional art poetry. Alexander Hume, whose poetry is the subject of Chapter 8, shared Sempill's background in the court and commitment to Protestantism, if not his popular style. It is clear from Hume's work that Scottish art poetry, if used in a new way, could eloquently express the new learning. Hume's poetry provides a rare opportunity for close analysis of the intellectual bases of seventeenth-century Scottish culture since he consciously explored his faith and its effects on the individual and on society. As highly educated men familiar with the literary conventions and philosophical traditions of the court, James Sempill and Alexander Hume were aware of the implications of their faith for the intellectual life of the nation, and their poetry allows an insight into the effects of the Reformation on the outlooks, ideas and expectations of thinking people. Such considerations are present only fleetingly in most of the work of broadsheet poets who were urgently caught up in the events and controversies of the hour.

Part IV of this study demonstrates that the plain and vernacular styles of poetry begun in the sixteenth century came, during the seventeenth century, to represent Scottish poetry as a form distinct

from English poetry and that by the end of the seventeenth century the most familiar forms of vernacular poetry had been fashioned largely out of the two styles of the alternative tradition. Chapter 9 outlines the immense range of material available to Scottish poets in the seventeenth century, suggesting reasons for the use of particular types of poetry or song in the alternative tradition. Chapter 10 traces the development of plain style poetry throughout the seventeenth century, stressing the influence of plain style on vernacular poetry and the similarities between Scottish plain style poetry and English satiric poetry in the second half of the century. I argue that Scottish plain style poetry had strong affiliations with both Scots and English verse, enriching vernacular poetry but finally merging with English Augustan satire in the opening years of the eighteenth century. Chapter 11 closely examines vernacular poetry in the seventeenth century to determine the lines of association and descent which culminated in the vernacular poetry of the eighteenth century.

By the early seventeenth century the controversial poets had established a convention of popular poetry characterised by plain or vernacular diction, simple stanza forms, the use of reported narrative and realism, a tendency to dwell on detail and, above all, the presence in poetry of the personalities, opinions and attitudes of "ordinary" people. These aspects of the alternative tradition initially arose from the use of poetry as propaganda designed to appeal to the "masses", but the new style and voice were also a result of the protestant outlook articulated most fully in the poetry of Hume and James Sempill. The work of protestant satirists and propagandists of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is informed by a growing sense of egalitarianism because of the recently developed notion of a "congregation of believers", a distrust of secular authority, an insistence on the rights of individuals and a belief in the integrity of personal judgements — all attitudes incompatible with courtly poetry.

Elements of style and outlook developed by the broadsheet poets, James Sempill and Hume, were retained or modified by seventeenth-century poets who were not always zealous protestants, or who were concerned more with politics than with religion, although the two are

often difficult to separate. In addition, the popular style and voice were taken up by poets who wrote purely for the entertainment of their families and friends, thus becoming part of the public and private poetic life of Scotland.

There are few published sources of seventeenth-century Scottish poetry outside the art and folk traditions and consequently little attention has been paid to the plain style and vernacular poetry illustrating the continuation and development of the alternative tradition from the Reformation until the Union of Parliaments. Part IV therefore examines seventeenth-century poetry from published and unpublished sources in two general categories of plain style poetry and vernacular poetry to explain the development of each style as evidenced by a large number of surviving poems. Though the two styles are discussed separately, I stress the interaction between them which was of particular importance to vernacular poetry. Similarly, there is frequent reference to the relationships between each of the styles and the propaganda and satire of the sixteenth century, the art tradition, the oral tradition, English poetry and the vernacular poetry of the eighteenth century. From this emerges a complicated pattern of continuity, interaction and development which belies the notion that the seventeenth century was an unfruitful period for Scottish poetry and demonstrates that the range of material and continual modification of styles did not result simply from cultural confusion. Each type of poetry, each change of form and diction, can be explained by changes in outlook and purpose which, by the end of the seventeenth century, combined to the produce the major forms of vernacular poetry — the mock elegy, the verse epistle, the vernacular narrative — inherited by the eighteenth-century Scots poets.

This study, then, constitutes a reconsideration of Scottish literary history from 1560 to 1720, emphasising poetry that prefigures or may have contributed to the kind of poetry written by the eighteenth-century vernacular poets. Scottish court poetry, the Anglo-Scots art poetry that succeeded it, and the rich oral tradition are considered in determining the course taken by Scottish poetry from the time of the Reformation, but are discussed in detail only in relation to the way in which they were used by plain style and vernacular poets. The

principal concern of the thesis is to order and examine the large, often unpublished, frequently unpolished body of poetry and song that falls outside the courtly or Anglo-Scots art tradition and outside the genuine oral tradition yet represents the interests and tastes of many literate men and women from all classes of Scottish society. In these poems are the ideological and stylistic bases of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, and in them are revealed the reasons for the differences between the poetry of Ramsay in the eighteenth century and that of the court poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The inclusion of the alternative tradition in the study of Scottish literary history necessitates a reassessment of our understanding of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry. It is illusory to continue to define the vernacular poetry of the eighteenth century as largely unique to that century, formed by antiquarian and nationalistic revival of the middle Scots tradition and imitation of the oral tradition. Certainly vernacular poetry contains elements of courtly style, is strongly influenced by the oral tradition and was often written for nationalistic or antiquarian reasons, but eighteenth-century vernacular poetry grew out of a more continuous and more complex history than the notion of revival would suggest.

Because this thesis questions long accepted and widely held views of Scottish literary history and because my organisation and examination of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poetry offer little scope for critical argument *en route*, it would seem appropriate to take account of the most influential critical opinions in this Introduction. While this renders a lengthy introduction, it provides a critical background to the discussion in the body of the thesis and largely eliminates the need for critical diversions in what is in any event a complicated argument.

Serious study of Scottish poetry, particularly that of the eighteenth century, is a recent development. The last fifty years have seen an increasing number of specific studies and surveys of "the

Scottish literary tradition".[1] Renewed interest in the middle Scots tradition and timely closer study of eighteenth-century Scots poetry have generated a remarkable degree of discussion and controversy, especially regarding the decline of middle Scots poetry and the strengths or limitations of eighteenth-century poetry. Commonplaces have also emerged, two of which are challenged by this study of the alternative tradition. One is that the seventeenth century has little to offer scholars of Scottish "literary" poetry save one or two interesting vernacular poems by the Sempills of Beltrees and the work of the more accomplished of the Anglo-Scots poets in the first half of the century.[2] The other commonplace questioned here is that eighteenth-century vernacular poetry constituted a revival, this being variously interpreted as "rebirth", "recovery after a period of poor health", "Indian summer", or "period of nationalistic and anti-quarian self-consciousness". The two commonplaces are interdependent since, however it is used, "revival" infers that poetic activity, particularly of a kind precursing eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, either ceased or "dwindled away to a trickle"[3] for a considerable period before the eighteenth century. The notion of a "vernacular revival" is also linked to a view of the eighteenth century as a second golden age of Scottish poetry when the brilliant spirit of the makars was rekindled. Hence Angus-Butterworth, arguing that in the eighteenth

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1. Notably: L.M. Angus-Butterworth, *Robert Burns and the 18th-century revival in Scottish Vernacular Poetry* (Aberdeen, 1969); David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People* (London, 1961); David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture* (Oxford, 1964), and *Robert Burns* (rev. edn, London, 1966); R.D.S. Jack, *The Italian Influence on Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh, 1972); James Kinsley (ed.), *Scottish Poetry, A Critical Survey* (London, 1955); Helena Mennie Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry of the Court of Scotland under King James VI* (Cambridge, 1969); John Speirs, *The Scots Literary Tradition: An Essay in Criticism* (1940, 2nd edn, London, 1962); Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh and London, 1952); and H. Harvey Wood, *Scottish Literature* (London, 1952).

2. R.D.S. Jack and Helena Shire have both undertaken major studies of seventeenth-century art poetry and song. However, a more common attitude towards the importance of the written poetry of the seventeenth century is reflected in the fact that John Speirs devotes only three pages to the century in *The Scots Literary Tradition*.

3. Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p.160.

century Scottish poetry was "rediscovered at the root", includes, somewhat superfluously, the claim that "no revival would have been possible unless there had been something to revive".[4] Similarly, Angellier describes Burns as "the most glowing, the most succulent, and the last fruit on the highest branch of the old Scottish tree"[5].

Twentieth-century commentators have perpetuated a term and an idea strongly present in nineteenth-century criticism of Scottish poetry. T.F. Henderson's use of "revival" in 1898 demonstrates the dangers of oversimplification inherent in the notion: "... as for the literature of the revival, it was in a sense a mere exotic — largely an imitation of a literature that had been partly moribund for some centuries"[6]. More recently Kurt Wittig has attempted to deflate the connotations of "revival":

> Literary historians speak of a 'revival' of Scots poetry in the eighteenth century. If this is meant to imply a recovery after a period of poor health it is perfectly correct, for though the stream of Scots poetry had dwindled away to a mere trickle — of which here a song, and there a longer poem, or perhaps elsewhere a dance, are all that have come to the surface — yet it had never entirely ceased to flow.[7]

Nevertheless, Wittig conveys an impression that poetic activity was sparse indeed in seventeenth-century Scotland, which was not the case.

Some of the sources and consequences of a view of decline and revival are exemplified in David Daiches' description of the beginnings of the eighteenth-century "revival":

> The editorial line of collectors and improvers leads on the one hand to new appreciation of ballad and folk-song and on the other to curiosity about the older artistic tradition that flourished before first the Reformation and then the Union of Crowns altered or at least obscured the nature of Scottish culture. This appreciation and this curiosity helped to provide the cultural climate in which Fergusson wrote his Scots poems and Burns drew the lines together to produce the grand culmination of an Indian summer of Scottish poetry.[8]

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4. *Robert Burns*, p.2.

5. Quoted by Thomas Crawford, *Burns* (1960), p.xi.

6. *Scottish Vernacular Poetry: A Succinct History* (London, 1898), p.14.

7. *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p.160.

8. *Scottish Poetry, A Critical Survey*, ed. Kinsley, p.150.

That the Reformation and the Union of Crowns adversely affected Scottish culture is offered as a "truth" which explains the "decline". The representation of Burns as the "grand culmination of an Indian summer" — the last, in other words, of a line of "reviving poets" — is also offered as a "truth". When the alternative tradition of the seventeenth century is considered, both claims are open to serious doubt. Daiches' emphasis on "collectors and improvers" suggests that eighteenth-century vernacular poetry resulted largely from an antiquarian impulse, and that there was scarcely a living tradition of Scots poetry before the publication of collections which served as sources of middle Scots poetry for imitation. Again, this is not substantiated either by the literary history of the second half of the seventeenth century or by the contents of Watson's and Ramsay's collections, both of which contain material from the seventeenth century as well as middle Scots material.

Although Daiches, David Craig and Angus-Butterworth all subscribe to the idea of an eighteenth-century revival, their readings of the reasons for a revival, and of the poetry itself, vary considerably. Daiches argues that after the Union of Parliaments the Scots suffered from "injured pride", attempted to rediscover national traditions in poetry in order to compensate for political impotence and thereby produced "an astonishing galaxy of talent".[9] Craig gives an opposite view, maintaining that in the seventeenth century Scots expended their mental energy and talents on theology at the expense of poetry. In the eighteenth century, because of the stabilisation of church and state after the Union of Parliaments, these talents and energies were released for wider application, thereby increasing poetic activity. However, Craig asserts that there was "a dearth of imaginative literature" in eighteenth-century Scotland.[10] Angus-Butterworth, assuming a position somewhere between those of Daiches and Craig, argues that the Scots, denied the means of political expression after the Union of Parliaments, experienced a "powerful

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9. *Robert Burns*, p.17.

10. *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, pp.14-16.

instinctive urge for national feeling to find an outlet in other ways", and so revived poetry in Scots.[11] All of these arguments, by dwelling on explanations of decline and revival, give little attention to the poetic activity which did occur in the seventeenth century and therefore overlook the poetic tradition in existence at the end of the seventeenth century. It is in such ways that the commonplaces of Scottish literary criticism can confuse rather than clarify understanding of Scottish poetry.

The notions of decline and revival which substantially inform commentary on Scottish literary history have also resulted in misinterpretation of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry. Because critics, knowingly or unknowingly, do not take account of the full range of literary models and influences which shaped vernacular poetry, the poetry is frequently judged inadequately. The literary context of vernacular poetry — the sources of stylistic devices, tone and ideas — are misunderstood or disregarded and the poetry, therefore, interpreted in a poetic "vacuum". The notion of revival ignores the normal course of literary history in which what has gone before is of critical importance to the shape, and the interpretation, of what follows in a given period of literature. From this probably arises the air of tentativeness, defensiveness or over-fastidiousness which pervades much modern criticism of eighteenth-century Scottish poetry. Critics too often write without reference to a continuous tradition, and hence write about a poetry which appears to have no continuity beyond its own immediate social context and its own century and which must, finally, seem "a mere exotic".

Commonplaces regarding decline and revival are premised upon several explanations for a serious decline in poetic activity in seventeenth-century Scotland. Two are mentioned by Daiches in his comments on the importance of antiquarianism — the Reformation and the Union of Crowns. A further explanation combines these two events with other sources of English influence as causes of a linguistic

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11. *Robert Burns*, p.6. Cf. Daiches' description of "a kind of empty quiet" after the Union (*Robert Burns*, p.17).

split which had a detrimental effect on Scottish culture. All of these ideas deserve close attention. One explanation, the least convincing, should be at least mentioned. This holds that there are periods in national literatures when "genius" flourishes, and that the Scottish seventeenth century was not such a period:

> It may be said that the turmoil in which the nation lived, the constant preoccupation of men's minds with the burning questions of the hour, and the narrow view of life involved in the prevailing type of religion, may account for this failure of creative genius. But Scotsmen did not all accept the theology of Knox; and times of revolution have not invariably checked the production of works of imagination. For the century and a half that followed the death of Chaucer England failed to produce one literary genius of a high order; and a similar period of impotency and of equal duration was now to be in the destinies of Scotland.[12]

While little that can be called "great poetry" has survived from seventeenth-century Scotland, the "turmoil" and "the burning questions of the hour" did serve as catalysts for poetry and Scotland's time of "revolution" was a time of great change in Scottish poetry. There was not a "failure of creative genius" and to infer from an absence of outstanding "genius" an absence of literature is both simplistic and misleading.

The suggestion that the Reformation — the advent of Calvinism — "obscured the nature of Scottish culture" is worthy of more serious attention. T.F. Henderson believed that the Reformation had a devastating effect on Scottish literature because "the sudden, full and immediate contact of the rude intelligence of the masses with a book, every word of which was supposed to have been directly dictated by God, upset — as it was bound to do — the nation's mental and moral balance"[13]. Daiches echoes this view when he argues that the rich culture of medieval Scotland "succumbed to the cold theology of the reforming zealots"[14]. A.H. MacLaine is stronger still: "with the

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12. P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland to the Present Time* (Cambridge, 1911), vol. II, pp.220-1.

13. *Scottish Vernacular Poetry*, p.10.

14. *Robert Burns*, p.13.

triumph of Knoxian Calvinism there came a general stifling of poetic composition on a large scale, since poetry, along with dancing and other 'lewd' entertainments, was proscribed as conducive to idleness and sin"[15]. There is some substance to Henderson's remarks since there can be no question that the Bible, and the remarkable increase in literacy among ordinary Scots, did have a significant effect on the future of Scottish poetry. Similarly, Daiches' view is partly correct, in that medieval culture could not survive in post-Reformation society. But MacLaine's statement is historically inaccurate and gives a mistaken view of the development of Scottish poetry. There is no evidence of successful literary censorship or repression of the arts among the early reformers, and still less evidence that repression attempted during the seventeenth century seriously disrupted literary life. The early reformers, the Presbyterians and the Covenanters all used poetry to serve their religious and political purposes. Further, not all poets were Calvinists. The oral tradition of song and dance flourished during the seventeenth century, suggesting that Kirk proscriptions were ineffective even among those most open to intimidation by a strong Kirk. It is therefore not surprising that the Kirk did not deter highly literate, sophisticated people from writing poetry. From time to time church power suppressed printing in Scotland but it should not be assumed that because poetry was not printed it was not written.

Interpretations of the effects of Calvinism on Scottish poetry are not always negative. Kurt Wittig, for example, regards Presbyterianism as "partly an outcome of the dominant traditional characteristics of the Scottish nation" which was "bound in turn to modify them in certain ways"[16]. He traces to these changes in "national character" some of the elements of eighteenth-century poetry:

> ... even though some of the poets were at loggerheads with the Kirk, its influence is also apparent in eighteenth-century

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15. "The *Christis Kirk* Tradition. Its Evolution in Scots Poetry to Burns", *Studies in Scottish Literature*, II (1964), 117.

16. *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p.184.

> Scots poetry. The Protestant realism at least is there, with its insistence on fact and character, while much of the gusto and wild fancy, and the irresponsibility of the older period have disappeared.[17]

Certainly the Reformation wrought a change in outlook which affected poetry, and the development of poetry to reflect "Protestant realism" will be discussed at length in the course of this study. The altered nature of the poetry, however, can be explained by more solid evidence than "the tradition of the Covenanters" whose "sayings read like bleak, austere poetry" having "left its mark deep on the national character"[18]. It was with the poetry of the early reformers, the Presbyterians and the Covenanters that the development of vernacular poetry was intimately connected, as much as it reflected a change in ideas or "national character". Likewise, the strong satiric content of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, which Wittig sees as a response to Calvinist characteristics in eighteenth-century Scottish society that invited satire[19], equally resulted from a tradition of satire begun by the early protestant poets, in turn using some elements of courtly satire.

David Craig also disputes the "common view" of the effects of Calvinism on poetry, finding instead "the bringing out, by Calvinism, into full potency of a native trait which itself tended to thwart or curtail the imagination"[20]. The native trait defined by Craig is a "reductive idiom", a poetic technique whereby all subjects are reduced to the same popular level.[21] Craig rightly stresses that "to make Calvinism itself a simple scapegoat merely smooths the path of that kind of nationalism which lives by pure antipathies — concealing its own lack of positive ideas by raging at convenient bugbears, whether in England or at home"[22]. However, while Craig does not see Calvinism

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17. Ibid., p.185.
18. Ibid., p.184.
19. Ibid.
20. *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, p.75.
21. Craig's theory of a "reductive idiom" is discussed at length, and placed in the context of the alternative tradition, in Chapters 3 and 11.
22. *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, p.76.

as the destructive force it is sometimes assumed to have been, he nevertheless attributes to Calvinism the exaggeration of a negative effect. The "reductive idiom", the use of which he believes was encouraged by Calvinism, was, in Craig's analysis, more damaging to Scottish poetry than the assumed artistic insensitivity and repression of art which his argument denies. While appearing to refute the "common view", he actually reinforces an impression that Calvinism stifled the natural development of Scottish poetry. Craig does not explore fully the origins of the "reductive idiom", though he does refer to early propaganda poetry. In fact, the "reductive idiom" was not a "native trait", but a deliberate satiric device, with a long history in Scottish poetry. It became conventional among protestant satirists in the late sixteenth century and was developed with enthusiasm until the late eighteenth century. The technique, one of the strengths of eighteenth-century vernacular satire, stemmed from the same sense of "Protestant realism" apprehended by Wittig. It did not necessarily "thwart or curtail the imagination", being itself frequently used very imaginatively. Nor did it pervade all poetry written in Scots, being, essentially, a tool of satirists. The positive aspect of the "reductive idiom" was a sense of egalitarianism which allowed poets to turn their attention to subjects which might otherwise have been ignored such as ordinary people, the natural world and every-day events.

Wittig and Craig, then, have corrected critical balance by suggesting that Calvinism did not act purely as a repressive agent in Scottish poetry. Unfortunately neither critic explores deeply enough the origins of vernacular poetry nor takes sufficient account of the poetic sources equally responsible for the characteristics ascribed to Calvinism.

In the course of this discussion of the alternative tradition it will be demonstrated that the effects of the Reformation on Scottish poetry were far-reaching, complex and positive in the sense that Protestantism and protestant poets made a vital and substantial contribution to the development of many of the most vigorous and

characteristic elements of vernacular poetry. It is imprecise and misleading to portray "Calvinism" as a chimerical source of intellectual and social change, repressing art, altering "national characteristics" or bringing out "native traits". Calvinism was not, in fact, the dominant theology in the first Scottish protestant propaganda poetry. The compilers of the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* were most familiar with Lutheran theology yet it is in their work that the beginnings of "Protestant realism" and the "reductive idiom" can be found. Later propagandists and satirists, first "Knoxian Calvinists", then Presbyterians and Covenanters, but also Catholics and Episcopalians, used and developed techniques of plainspeaking diction, popular stanza forms and the device of "reducing" subjects to a popular level. These same propagandists and satirists, representing different kinds of Protestantism and occasionally Catholicism, began the emphasis on realistic detail and character which continued to typify vernacular poetry throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The protestant outlook did shape poetry in a number of ways. Firstly, protestant poets rejected courtly style as "Catholic", associating it with ideas and attitudes to which Protestants were opposed. Secondly, protestant ideas about the relationship between man and God, and the relationships which should exist between people, informed their poetry and the means they chose to express their ideas. Lastly, and most importantly, the style of poetry used for propaganda was determined extensively by purpose, by the desire to reach the widest possible audience. Poets who were not Calvinists but had a religious or political motivation for their poetry readily understood and used the effective "popular" styles pioneered by the Reforming poets.[23] Calvinism, in its several forms from the Reformation to the Revolution, played an important role in the development of vernacular poetry but a degree of caution is necessary in regard to terminology and in distinguishing theology from the more pragmatic considerations

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23. Similarly, English Cavalier propaganda was frequently couched in popular style, using broadside tunes and colloquial diction.

of propaganda and satire. It is perhaps more accurate to say that the ideas and attitudes of Protestantism, combined with the new purposes to which poetry was put during the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries in Scotland, substantially shaped Scottish vernacular poetry.

The Union of Crowns of 1603 and the consequent removal of the Scottish court to London have long been regarded as having seriously disrupted, even destroyed, Scottish poetry. Alexander Campbell's comments on the event, written in the late eighteenth century, illustrate the way in which the exodus of poets with the court has been used as the basis of a view that thereafter little poetic activity was possible in Scotland: "no sooner had James succeeded to the royal dignities of England, than the muses, as if fascinated by the splendour of a southern court, fled from Scotland, to encircle the throne of the pedantic monarch"[24]. In 1970 T.C. Smout wrote that the Union of Crowns caused "the first serious break in the Scottish poetic tradition"[25]. More frequently the Reformation and the court removal are claimed to have been jointly responsible for what MacLaine describes as "an enormous and almost fatal gap in the natural development of Scottish poetry"[26]. Daiches argues that the Reformation and the use of the English Bible weakened Scottish culture and with the court removal "the confusion in Scottish culture became worse confounded"[27].

Undoubtedly the court removal materially affected the composition of Scottish courtly poetry which declined rapidly after 1603. But the Union of Crowns did not put an end to poetry in Scotland, since before 1603 a tradition of non-courtly poetry had developed among broadsheet poets. The absence of a court as a focus for literary and musical activity, and as an arbiter of fashion in entertainment among the great families of Scotland, led to a change in taste among

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24. *An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland, from the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century down to the Present Time* (Edinburgh, 1798-9; Garland reprint, New York, 1972), p.81.

25. *A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830* (London, 1970), p.192.

26. "The *Christis Kirk* Tradition", *SSL*, II (1964), p.117.

27. *Robert Burns*, p.14.

sophisticated Scots. They became more interested in the oral tradition and in the developing plain style and vernacular poetry. Consequently, plain style and vernacular poetry, previously practised almost exclusively by controversial poets, came to be enjoyed and composed among the leisured classes. The styles begun in the broadsheets were used in the great houses and professional circles of Scotland for satire, as they had originally been used, but also for entertainment. In this way forms of poetry that were popular in style and origins gradually replaced courtly poetry in the literary life of Scotland.[28]

The increasing influence of plain style and vernacular poetry throughout the seventeenth century contradicts Kurt Wittig's argument that the court removal destroyed a close contact between courtly and popular poetry which had existed before 1603, and that "now that the vital connection between courtly and popular was severed, the sap went out of Scots literary poetry"[29]. Court poets before 1603 did draw on the oral tradition, but the considerable intellectual, social and stylistic differences between the two genres meant that courtly poetry and folk song remained separate traditions which occasionally interacted. Court poets imitated or parodied elements of the oral tradition but the results of such uses of folk life and folk literature were unmistakably products of the court, poems written for the amusement of a courtly audience. In no way did the court poets subscribe to the values of the folk as superior to the values of the court, nor did they abandon courtly conventions in favour of the style of folk song. Poets working in the alternative tradition frequently did so. Some elements of courtly life, especially reminiscences of medieval chivalry and "courtly love", entered some folk ballads but the oral tradition does not contain evidence of slavish imitation of courtly values and fashions, although in folk song there are satirical parodies of "fine amour". Despite economic and social ties between the court and "the folk" there was little scope either intellectually or politically for

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28. A long continuing interest in courtly poetry and song after the Union of Crowns has been demonstrated, particularly by Helena Shire and Kenneth Elliott.

29. *Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p.130.

a genuine "vital connection" between the two traditions of poetry and song.

After the Reformation, however, poets began to cultivate a much stronger connection between courtly and popular poetry, and in the alternative tradition the two frequently merged. When courtly poetry declined after 1603 it was not because poets had less contact with popular life and popular poetry, but because there was a great deal more contact with the oral tradition and with the developing plain style and vernacular poetry which were popular in voice and idiom. As the political life of the nation changed in the wake of the Reformation and as Protestants gave to the court less credence than it had previously commanded, Scottish society became increasingly "un-courtly". So, courtly poetry became less fashionable and more anachronistic while popular forms of poetry became the Scots tradition, an alternative to the Anglo-Scots poetry into which the Scottish art tradition had passed. The alternative tradition of plain style and vernacular poetry retained some elements of courtly style but stressed a connection with "ordinary" people and daily life, either by using the conversational diction of educated Scots or by imitating folk speech and folk song. It may be that the "sap went out of" Anglo-Scots art poetry but the other Scottish poetry which was written became the basis of a vigorous new "literary" poetry.

Of the several explanations for an apparent "gap" in Scottish poetry in the seventeenth century, the most complex holds that a form of "cultural schizophrenia"[30] developed, irreparably damaging literary life, particularly poetry. This theory combines two of the others — the Reformation and the Union of Crowns — as causes of a linguistic and cultural split. The Calvinist emphasis on the English Bible, the reading of English controversial literature, the exodus of Scottish poets to England and the imitation of English poetry in Scotland, and the ever-increasing influence of English culture in Scotland in the seventeenth century, culminating in the Union of Parliaments, are seen

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30. David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture*, passim. In this book the "linguistic split" theory is given its fullest development.

as having caused Scottish poets to cease writing in Scots. Hence, when the Scots poets wrote in English they did so badly because they were not familiar with the language, the theory maintains. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, it is argued, the Scots language had lost the capacity to express complex, abstract subject matter and vernacular poetry therefore limited itself to parochial subjects.

Full examination of Scottish poetry from the seventeenth century raises serious doubts concerning the idea that there was a cultural dissociation of sensibilities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland. It is true that after the Reformation and the court removal there was increasing use of English by Scottish poets, both among the Anglo-Scots art poets and in the plain style poetry of the alternative tradition. Courtly, aureate Scots ceased to be used in all but a very few isolated examples. However, the use of vernacular Scots increased significantly, initially in broadsheets imitating or echoing the oral tradition but later in many different forms of poetry. In a great deal of the poetry to be discussed vernacular Scots is used with considerable facility, or English is used comfortably and competently. Many of the poems combine the two "languages", which indicates that English and Scots in fact became registers within the one poetic language for poets in the alternative tradition. English and Scots are employed in the poems to varying extents in order to render different tones and effects.

When Scottish courtly poetry declined, some Scottish poets imitated the "high" English style of poetry producing eulogistic, decorative poems indistinguishable from the work of numerous minor English poets. The Anglo-Scots poetry of such as William Alexander was in a tradition of affected, courtly English verse which was itself lacking vitality and becoming outmoded by the end of the sixteenth century. The flaws in such poetry written in Scotland, or in England by Scottish poets, are due to the declining relevance of the

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31. This explanation for the decline of Scots poetry in the seventeenth century and the "limitations" of Scots poetry in the eighteenth century is used in different forms by Daiches, Craig, Wittig and Speirs.

English courtly poetic rather than to an inability on the part of Scots poets to manage the English language. Other Anglo-Scots poets imitated and cultivated the plainer style and newer poetic diction pioneered by Ben Jonson, Donne and Sidney. The "metaphysical" poetry of Aytoun and the Italianate sonnets of Drummond, for example, use English vocabulary and English style with ease, at times equalling some of the best contemporary English poets. Anglo-Scots poets who chose to write in the style of the more modern, less "courtly" English poets wrote good English poetry if they were good poets. The affected, pedantic style of "high art" poetry imitated by other Anglo-Scots poets was satirised as much in England as in Scotland, suggesting that no matter how good a Scottish poet's grasp of English was, he was unlikely to write poetry of lasting interest if it was in a style already considered unfashionable.

While some Scottish poets used English well in plainer style English poetry, others developed their own plain style based partly on Scots broadsheet satire and partly on English models. Their poetry, though it often had English vocabulary and orthography, was distinctly Scots in tone and outlook until the end of the seventeenth century, when it merged with English Augustan poetry. Finally, a number of Scottish poets discarded aureate Scots in favour of vernacular Scots in a style of poetry strongly influenced by broadsheet satire and the oral tradition. They combined elements of the Scots plain style with vernacular Scots, stanzas from folk song or courtly stanzas to develop Scottish vernacular poetry.

The plain style poets and vernacular poets of seventeenth-century Scotland rejected "high" English, "high" Anglo-Scots and aureate Scots poetic styles not because they suffered cultural schizophrenia, but because they considered all three styles anachronistic and inadequate for their purposes. The poetry they developed was more suited to reflect their society, their preoccupations and their aspirations. Art poetry, in English or Scots, could not fulfil the immediate, often urgent, function which the "alternative poets" saw for their work. Their purposes were better served by the flexible but simple forms and

diction of the plain and vernacular styles. Neither style was hampered by conventions of language usage, rhetoric or ideology. Plain style and vernacular poetry could therefore fulfil any function — from propaganda to farce — and reach any audience.

The degree of stylistic and linguistic flexibility and variety evident in seventeenth-century Scottish poetry in the alternative tradition is in no way symptomatic of cultural schizophrenia. On the contrary, Scottish poets became increasingly adept in using English and Scots style and vocabulary, modulating their work by various combinations of the two. Eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, the successor of the alternative tradition, did not appear as a result of one hundred years of cultural devastation, but developed over more than a century in response to a changed and changing society and culture.

Tom Crawford has written of literary criticism of eighteenth-century Scottish poetry:

> For far too long it has been customary to look only at the parts, to see them as in irreconcilable opposition to each other, as yet another illustration of a historical Myth — that the Scottish consciousness was disastrously split by the Union with England. A profound disharmony between reason and emotion, so the theory goes, was irrevocably linked to the linguistic split which had been developing since the Union of Crowns in 1603: henceforth the rule was — feel in Scots, think in English, and never the twain shall meet... .[32]

It is by looking "only at the parts" that the commonplaces and some of the controversies of Scottish literary history and criticism have been perpetuated: the notion of decline and revival; the belief that Calvinism "killed" poetry in Scots for a century; the theory of a linguistic split; and the suggestion that eighteenth-century poetry in Scotland was limited by any or all of these phenomena. A compartmentalised view of literary history does not allow consideration of the usual course of national literatures. It would be usual to examine, for example, all the poetry of seventeenth-century Scotland and determine how it contributed to the poetry of the eighteenth century,

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32. *Burns and the Popular Lyric*, used in ms during 1977.

and to consider at the same time the effects on literature and society of theological and political change. By so balancing literary history against history one arrives at an understanding of change and development in poetry, a critical history.

Whilst we continue to assume "an enormous and almost fatal gap" in seventeenth-century Scottish poetry, understanding of Scottish literary history will remain incomplete. In the following chapters the "gap" is filled and continuity in the "natural development" of Scottish poetry is established.

Between the Reformation and the Union of Crowns the styles and attitudes of the first protestant poets became the basis of the kind of poetry now associated with eighteenth-century Scotland. Plainer, "popular" diction, first used to appeal to the "brethren", became vernacular diction. Stanza forms borrowed from the art and folk traditions because they were suited to propaganda or satire became the stanzas commonly used by vernacular poets. The early protestant egalitarianism, distrust of princes and elevation of the individual were transformed into the "democratic" tone, political scepticism, independence of spirit and preoccupation with character typical of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry. My analysis of the development of plain style and vernacular poetry from the first protestant satires to the end of the seventeenth century shows why and how these alterations in style and attitude took place.

The "theory" and the "historical Myth" questioned by Crawford, and the other common explanations for decline and revival in Scottish poetry between 1560 and 1720 have formed the basis of a notion of Scottish literary history which has been arrived at largely by inference from an incomplete body of evidence, rather than by systematic study of the poetry and history of the period. The result has been a degree of misrepresentation of the nature of literary life in seventeenth-century Scotland and misunderstanding of the origins and nature of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry. By bringing to light the existence of an alternative tradition of poetry to the Anglo-Scots tradition and the oral tradition this thesis ~~may begin~~ attempts to redress the balance, making

possible a fuller understanding of seventeenth-century Scottish poetry which might, in turn, lead to fresh interpretations of the vernacular poetry of eighteenth-century Scotland.

PART I

TOWARDS REFORMATION: LINDSAY AND THE WEDDERBURNS

> The Common-weill mon vther wayis be styllit,
> Or be my faith the King wilbe begylit.
>
> Lindsay

Chapter 1

BETWEEN THE AGES: SIR DAVID LINDSAY

Sir David Lindsay's poetry reflects a transitional period in Scottish thought and poetic practice, carrying on many of the concerns and conventions of the makars but also containing the first indications of the profound change poetry would undergo in Scotland as a result of the Scottish Reformation and the European Renaissance.

To emphasise a change in Scottish poetry in the years around 1560, however, is not to imply stasis in the middle Scots tradition. A flourishing national literature, the poetry of Scotland had evolved continually since early times and indeed, from the mid-fifteenth century experienced what John MacQueen calls "a brilliant development"[1]. Nevertheless, certain constant features distinguish that poetry as "Middle Scots": its courtly origins and limited courtly audience; its aureate diction or its courtly eye when it used popular diction; its self-consciousness of being part of a Scottish and European tradition; and a vision of man, society, morality and religion which assumes a medieval, Catholic universe. The Makar had two major roles in courtly society, one of which was entertainment and the other criticism, especially of established institutions like the church, the state and the king. Satire was conducted from an ideological basis which shared the same moral, theological and political views as lay at the foundations of the social order. In this the middle Scots poets differed significantly from the poets of the Reformation.

While the makars criticised the church, they did not question the fundamentals and doctrine of their religion, and their satires are balanced by their devotional poetry, in which, as W.S. Ramson has observed:

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1. *A Choice of Scottish Verse 1470-1570*, ed. John and Winifred MacQueen (London, 1972), p.9.

> Instead of a sense of the poet as either simplifying teacher or inquiring philosopher, there is a sense of him as a community spokesman — at his most elevated a community orator — whose role is to affirm truths which are, in the nature of doctrinal truths, received, and to provoke a fresh recognition of essences, of the distilled wisdom which underlies these truths.[2]

Similarly, when the makars criticised the king it was usually in the context of a perceived need for general moral reform in the realm, in which the king should take a leading role. Concurrently, the poets reiterated ideas about the divine nature of kingship, and the belief that if the king obeyed the laws of God he would perforce rule justly and wisely. R.J. Lyall's analysis of Henryson's position in "The Scheip and the Doig" is pertinent in this regard:

> ... his real concerns are wider than the present political situation: like the author of *Piers Plowman* he sees that there are fundamental moral, even eschatological reasons for the miseries of this world, and he acknowledges that they are the consequences of man's sinful state, 'our grit offence' (1.169). It follows, of course, that although Henryson does not explicitly make the point, he did not see contemporary injustices primarily as the consequence of an individual's actions or of a particular set of circumstances. It is a part of the human condition.[3]

The European Renaissance was to make inroads into this unified perception of reality, and the Scottish Reformation was to virtually destroy it. When kings and kirkmen came to be held personally responsible, and accountable, for the state of the kirk and realm, when morality became an individual rather than a community responsibility, and when monarchs were in theological disagreement with their subjects, it was no longer possible to expect the example of kirkmen or kings to cause an improvement in the society. On the contrary, society could be forced to impose God's law on the monarch, failing which the monarch might be removed and replaced.

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2. *Poetry of the Stewart Court*, used in ms, ch.III, "Ballatis of Theoligie", p.5. Joan Hughes and W.S. Ramson (A.N.U. Press, forthcoming).

3. "Politics and Poetry in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Scotland", *Scottish Literary Journal*, 3 (1976), 6.

Lindsay, of all the Scots poets before the Reformation, made the most sustained and detailed attack upon church and state. He cannot be classified as a Protestant, but he had much to say which was in accord with protestant views, and although he followed in the tradition of the makars, there were times when he adopted a tone or style inconsistent with that tradition. He had strong opinions regarding the kirk, kirkmen, the king and the nature of kingship, and he wrote frequently of the need for "reformatioun" in all of these areas. An appreciation of Lindsay's place in the development of Scottish ideas and poetry can be most readily attained by examining what he proposed to reform and how he proposed to achieve his ends. The impact on his poetry of his understanding of "reformatioun" probably accounts for most of his differences from, and many of his similarities to, his literary forbears.

Lindsay and the Church

The marriage between the church and property was in Lindsay's opinion the root of evil in the church. The offspring of that union were Sensuality and Riches:[4]

> This royall Ryches and Lady Sensuall
> From that tyme furth tuke hole the governance
> Off the most part of the stait spirituall
> ...
> Soune thay forȝet to study, praye and preche;
> Thay grew so subiect to dame sensuall
> And thocht bot paine pure people for to teache.
> (*The Testament of the Papyngo*, ll.850-3; 857-9)[5]

Such attacks on material greed and sexual immorality among the clergy were more forthright and more inclusive of the highest to the lowest ranks of the clergy than any that had gone before him.

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4. Dante and Henryson consigned Constantine to Hell for the same reason. W.R. Barclay, in "The Role of Sir David Lindsay in the Scottish Reformation", gives a useful analysis of the prevailing views on the Donation of Constantine and Lindsay's use of the tradition (Unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Uni. of Wisconsin, 1956).

5. Quotations from Lindsay are from *The Works of David Lindsay*, ed. D. Hamer (STS, 4 vols, Edinburgh, 1930-6).

In the third book of *The Monarche*, contrasting the present church with that of the apostles, Lindsay levels serious criticism at the papal court. Rome, which had been "Lod sterre & Lumynare, / And the moste sapient Sors of Sanctytude", is now "Allace, bair of Beatytude":

> And horribyll vaill of everilk kynd of vyce,
> Ane laithlye Loch of stynkand Lychorye,
> And curssit Coue, corrupt with Couatyce,
> Bordourit aboute with pryde and Symonye,
> Sum sayis, ane systerne full of Sodomye,
> Quhose vyce in speciall, gyf I wald declair,
> It were aneuch for tyll perturbe the air.
> (ll.4946-52)

Lindsay's last poem, *The Monarche* comes closest to the protestant cause and to the poetic style of later protestant propagandists.

Early in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, when King Humanity protests that the vices are attempting to lead him into sensuality, Placebo argues that the King must be open to vice so that he "be nocht ane ȝoung sanct, / And syne ane auld devill". Wantonness supports the argument with an example:

> Believe ȝe Sir that Lecherie be sin?
> Na, trow nocht that: this is my ressoun quhy.
> First at the Romane Kirk will ȝe begin,
> Quhilk is the lemand lamp of lechery;
> Quhair Cardinals and Bischops generally
> To luif Ladies thay think ane pleasant sport,
> And out of Rome has baneist Chastity,
> Quha with our Prelats can get na resort.
> (ll.235-42)[6]

Charges of lechery among priests are not confined to distant Rome. Scottish prelates receive their full share of criticism throughout the play:

> For all the Prelats of this natioun,
> For the maist part,
> They think na schame to haue ane huir,
> And sum hes thrie under thair cuir.
> (ll.253-6)

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6. For *Ane Satyre* I have used throughout the 1554 text in the STS edition. Hamer dates the play at c.1540.

Pauper condemns bishops most vehemently, telling of those who:

> ... like rams rudlie in thair rage,
> Vnpysalt rinnis amang the sillie yowis,
> Sa lang as kynde of nature in them growis.
> (11.2674-6)

Nor are the regular clergy and various orders of monks and friars exempt — abbots, priors, prioresses, nuns, parsons, friars and pardoners are all satirised. Falsehood gives a general warning:

> Ȝe maryit men evin as ȝe luife ȝour lyfis,
> Let never preists be hamelie with ȝour wyfis.
> My wyfe with preists sho doith me greit onricht,
> And maid me nine tymes cuckald in ane nicht.
> (11.4236-9)

Whereas there is little new in this attitude towards clerical immorality, Lindsay departs from the earlier Scots poets in his suggestion that one of the effects on priests of the Donation of Constantine was that:

> Apperandlye, thay did expel thare Wyffis,
> That thay mycht leif at large, without thirlage,
> At libertie to lede thare lustie lyffis,
> Thynkand men thrall, that bene in mariage:
> For new faces provokis new corrage.
> Thus, Chaistytie thay turne in to delyte:
> Wantyng of Wyffis bene cause of appetyte.
> (*Papyngo*, 11.864-70)

The counterpart to such a suggestion must be a conviction that priests should marry and Lindsay is quite clear on this point as early as the *Papyngo*:

> Les skaith it war, with lycence of the Pape,
> That ilke Prelate one Wyfe had of his awin,
> Nor se thar bastardis ouirthort the cuntre blawin.
> (11.1055-7)

In *The Monarche* he relates his ideas on clerical marriage to doctrinal matters when Experience stresses that Christ blessed matrimony and chose married disciples, and that in the Scriptures "Ȝe sall nocht fynd, in no passage, / Quhare Christ forbiddeth mariage." Act 14 of the Parliament in *Ane Satyre* grants the clergy "licence and libertie"

> That thay may have fair Virgins to thair wyfis:
> And sa keip matrimoniall Chastitie,
> And nocht in huirdome for to leid thair lyfis.
> (11.3925-7)

This was witnessed by a large and diverse audience as early as 1540. It was a point on which Lindsay agreed with the Reformers but no doubt many orthodox Roman Catholics agreed with it too, as it was not until the Council of Trent, 1563, that the Church clarified the position once and for all by insisting that all priests remain celibate.[7]

Act 15 of the Parliament is a practical corollary to Lindsay's views about clerical marriage and "thar bastardis ouirthort the cuntre blawin":

> From this day furth our Barrouns Temporall
> Sall na mair mix thair nobil ancient blude
> With bastard bairns of Stait Spirituall:
> Ilk stait amang thir awin selfis marie sall.
> Gif Nobils marie with the Spiritualitie,
> From thyne subiect they sal be, and all
> Sal be degraithit of thair Nobilitie
> ...
> And sa sall marie the Spiritualitie.
> Bischops with bischops sall make affinitie,
> Abbots and Priors with the Priores.
> (11.3928-35; 3939-41)

Shocking as these last lines may have been to those who could not accept the concept of clerical marriage, their most important function is to raise the issue of the separation of church and state, indicating Lindsay's adherence to the prevailing class structure and to the traditional notion of separation between estates. There had been for many years before Lindsay concern about the interference of the Spiritual Estate in secular matters. A clear legal separation between the estates would prevent the church from gaining temporal power through marriage. Act 7 of the Parliament deals with the same problem from another practical perspective:

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7. Barclay, pp.167-76, deals with European and Scottish views on clerical marriage to 1563.

It is devysit in this Parliament,
From this day furth na matter Temporall,
Our new Prelats thairto hes done consent,
Cum before Iudges consistoriall,
Quhilk hes bene sa Prolixt and partiall,
To the great hurt of the communitie:
Let Temporall men seek Iudges Temporall;
And Spirituall men to Spiritualitie.
(11.3857-64)

Henryson had raised the issue of "this cursit Consistorie" in "The Scheip and the Doig", in which the Sheep, who "may present the figure / Of pure commounis, that daylie are opprest" is forced by a corrupt judgment to give up his fleece in the winter. Henryson calls upon God to judge the case:

Seis thow not (Lord) this warld overturnit is,
As quha wald change gude gold in leid or tyn;
The pure is peillit, the Lord may do na mis;
And Simonie is haldin for na syn.
(11.1307-10)[8]

The Moralitas ends without really resolving the predicament: "sen that we are opprest / In to this eirth, grant us in hevin gude rest". Lindsay proposed a practical solution to the situation in which the sheep found himself, at the same time further limiting the secular power of the church by banning it from civil jurisdiction.

Riches, the second offspring of the marriage between the church and property, receives as much attention throughout Lindsay's works as Sensuality. Covetice and Pride among the clergy manifest themselves in a whole range of abuses. In general descriptions of the clergy their love of luxury is highlighted. Pauper, in *Ane Satyre*, gives one of the many instances in the play of the luxurious lives of the upper ranks of the clergy:

Our bishops with thair lustie rokats quhyte,
They flow in riches royallie and delyte:
Lyke Paradice bene thair palices and places,
And wants no pleasour of the fairest faces.
(11.2751-4)

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8. *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson*, ed. H. Harvey Wood (1933; 2nd rev. edn,Edinburgh, 1958), pp.42-8).

Elsewhere a stage direction stresses the same point: "Heir sall they spuilȝe the Priores and scho sall have ane kirtill of silk undir hir habit". While the lower ranks of the clergy are not portrayed as living in worldly splendour, they are characterised as excessively greedy, a trait often signified by their acceptance of miserly payments rather than offering their services out of charity. There is an exchange in *Ane Satyre* between Pauper and Pardoner during which Pardoner is much more interested in lining his own pockets than in the welfare of Pauper's soul. Having ascertained that Pauper has no silver and is in fact down to his last groat, Pardoner says "Gif me that grot man, gif thou hest na mair". Lindsay extends the conventional criticism of the fraudulent and covetous dealings of pardoners and friars to all clergy. The assembly of clerical birds in *The Papyngo* represents several orders, and all indulge in the rapid partition of the parrot's corpse.

In Lindsay's work the covetousness of the clergy is directly linked to the ways it affected the lives of the people of Scotland. One way was through the "skaith" done to the poor, in particular, by the clergy's unrelenting enforcement of their rights to tiends, tithes and death duties. The most stark instance of these abuses is in *Ane Satyre* where the clergy, as their part in a nightmarish series of related tragedies, are almost singlehandedly responsible for the impoverishment of Pauper. In the Acts special attention is given to the abolition of death duties payable to either clergy or nobility. The other effect of the clergy on the people was the direct relationship Lindsay perceived between pluralities — the enrichment of Rome and the Scottish Church — and the impoverishment of the Scottish crown and nation. Act 10 in *Ane Satyre* abolishes pluralities with one notable exception:

> Till ony preist we think sufficience
> Ane benefice for to serve God withall.
> Twa prelacies sall na man have from thence,
> Without that he be of the blude Royall.
> (11.3893-6)

The exception shows Lindsay's respect for the established social hierarchy, but it is also linked to the battle between church and

state: if members of the royal family held several benefices they would be more likely to use the consequent wealth and temporal power to the advantage of the crown rather than to the impoverishment of the realm, providing a balance to the Spiritual Estate.

Like Dunbar and Douglas, Lindsay shows a great regard for learned men, or "counning clerkis of Universities" (*Papyngo*, 1.1022). His admiration for learning leads him to emphasise the importance of education for the clergy and the sons of the nobility (*Papyngo*, 11.1035-40), and as essential for the King (*Papyngo*, 11.306-7). However, he does not reach the conclusion of Calvin and Knox that universal education should be the backbone of the godly commonwealth. Rather, Lindsay maintains, if the administrators, spiritual and temporal, of the nation are educated to be fitted for their task, then the commons will receive good government and the realm will prosper. In *The Monarche* he uses the conventional head and body analogy to make this point and does not suggest that the lower limbs should be educated in anything other than the means of winning their daily bread.

Lindsay comes closer to the Reformers and departs from his predecessors in his response to clerical ignorance. He takes the issue further than Dunbar's occasional thrusts at ignorant priests, and Henryson's bumbling Wolf in Doctor's clothing. Not only do "ideot priests" receive continual satire from Lindsay, but he strongly advocates the use of the vernacular in church services and the availability of the English Bible. In what is probably his most successful debunking of an "ideot priest", the two issues of lack of education and lack of scriptural knowledge are considered as part of one and the same problem — in *Ane Satyre* Good Counsel hands Spirituality the Bible:

> Luik quhat Sanct Paul wryts vnto Timothie.
> Tak thair the Buik: let se gif ȝe can spell.
> *Spiritualitie*
> I never red that, thairfoir reid it ȝour sel.
> (11.2908-10)

The "Buik" is the Latin Vulgate Bible, with which a high ranking churchman might have been expected to have been familiar — Spirituality is proud of the fact that he is not:

Na sir, be him that our Lord Jesus sauld,
I red never the New Testament nor auld.
(11.2919-20)

At another point in *Ane Satyre* Lindsay expressed his support for the use of the English Bible. Flattery warns the "fatheris of the Spirituall stait" not to allow Dame Verity to lodge in the country, since she has arrived "beirand the New Testament". Later, Flattery and Verity meet:

FLATTRIE
Quhat buik is that harlot, into thy hand?
Out walloway, this is the New Test'ment,
In Englisch toung, and printit in England,
Herisie, herisie, fire, fire incontinent.

VERITY
Forsuith my friend ʒe have ane wrang iudgement,
For in this Buik thair is na heresie:
Bot our Christ's word, baith dulce and redolent,
Ane springing well of sinceir veritie.
(11.1144-51)

And Lindsay's advocacy of the use of the vernacular in churches is indicated by Correction's request to the Doctor:

Magister noster I ken how ʒe can teiche
Into the scuillis and that richt ornatlie:
I pray ʒow now that ʒe wald pleise to preiche.
In Englisch toung, land folk to edifie.
(11.3436-9)

His fullest exposition of this theme comes in *The Monarche*, in the "Exclamatioun to the Redar, Twycheyng the Wrytting of the Uulgare and Maternall Language". He employs a substantial amount of historical and theological argument, but finally his support for the use of the language of the people is based on common sense:

Prudent sanct Paull doith mak narratioun
Twycheing the divers leid of every land,
Sayand thare be more edificatioun
In fyue wordis that folk doith understand,
Nor to pronounce wordis ten thousand
In strange langage, syne wait not quhat it menis:
I think sic pattryng is not worth twa prenis.
(11.629-35)

Closely connected with Lindsay's advocacy of the use of the vernacular is his insistence on the role of the clergy as preachers. In *Ane*

Satyre when Spirituality cannot read the portion of Timothy proffered to him, the information he seeks is the answer to his own question, "Friend, quhair find ȝe that we suld prechours be?" (1.2907). In *A General Satyre* Dunbar had reminded priests of their function as preachers: "Sic pryd with prellatis, so few till preiche and pray"[9], but Lindsay offers more than a reminder, having the Parliament in *Ane Satyre* deal concurrently with clerical ignorance and the right practise of "Preistheid". Act 8 rules that all bishops should be men of "gude erudition", while the next Act ensures that these bishops appoint as "teichours" only those men "for preistheid qualifeit and cunning":

> Siclyke as ȝe se in the borrows toun
> Ane tailȝeour is nocht sufferit to remaine,
> Without he can mak doublet, coat and gown,
> He man gang till his prenteischip againe:
> Bischops sould nocht ressaue me think certaine
> Into the Kirk except ane cunning Clark.
> Ane ideot preist Esay compaireth plaine,
> Till ane dum dogge that can nocht byte nor bark.
> (11.3881-8)

Although Lindsay was more outspoken than his predecessors on the subjects of clerical behaviour and ecclesiastical power, he did not propose changes which would have altered the fundamental order of the church or the basics of worship. He was openly critical of the papal court and called loudly for its "reformatioun", but at no time did he suggest that the Scottish Church should divorce itself from Rome, indeed he stressed the need for "lycence of the Paip" for clerical marriage. He was quick to point out that pilgrimages and idolatry were questionable practices, but he did not therefore reject the position of the Virgin or the saints as intercessory powers in orthodox worship; he objected only to the worship of images or relics. When he recommends the abolition of "thir wantoun nuns" (*Ane Satyre*), there is some ambiguity as to whether he means to abolish all nuns or only those who are wanton. Certainly he does not recommend the abolition of the male regular orders, even though he satirises them. He sought only to "reform" them. He was loathe to suggest radical

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9. *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. W. Mackay Mackenzie (London, 1932), p.151.

action which would change the established order of things in the church, wanting rather to remove the more corrupt excrescences of the centuries, particularly those things which he held to affect the state adversely.

When Lindsay touches upon the doctrinal issues which split the Christian world of his time, such as Confession and the existence of Purgatory, he is cautious and even circumspect. He was not a theologian and his remarks on such matters have none of the authoritative resonance of Dunbar and Douglas. He prefers to refer his readers to "doctors" for clarification of theology.

In the matter of Confession, he clearly desired an end to abuses of the confessional and was concerned about the character of confessors, as Henryson had been in "The Fox and the Wolf". In "Kitteis Confession"[10] the narrator says that confession is "nocht ellis bot mennis law, / Maid mennis myndis for to knaw". Men should

> To the greit God Omnipotent
> Confes thy Syn and sore repent,
> And traist in Christ, as wrytis Paule,
> Quhilk shed his blude to saif thy Saule:
> For nane can the absolue bot he,
> Nor tak away thy syn from the.
> (11.109-14)

If, however, a person is in need of spiritual consolation,

> Than till ane preichour trew thow pas,
> And schaw thy Syn and thy trespas.
> Thow nedis nocht to schaw hym all,
> Nor tell thy Syn baith greit and small,
> Bot schaw the vice that troubillis the,
> And he sall of thy saule haue reuth,
> And the Instruct into the treuth,
> And with the word of verite
> Sall confort and sall counsall the,
> The Sacramentis schaw the at lenth,
> Thy lytle faith to stark and strenth,
> And how thow suld thame richtlie vse,
> And all Hypocrisie refuse.

10. There is debate as to whether this poem is Lindsay's. However, its stylistic similarities to his other work suggest no reason to doubt its attribution to him.

> Confessioun first wes ordanit fre,
> In this sort in the Kirk to be.
> Swa to confes, as I descryve,
> Wes in the gude Kirk Primityve.
>
> (11.121-38)

This is one of the very few statements on a doctrinal matter to be found in the Lindsay canon, and it illustrates the middle path Lindsay trod. Absolution, the poem argues, in accordance with Tyndale's, if not Luther's position, is outwith the power of the priest and in the hands of Christ alone.[11] And the practice of voluntary confession as a means of unburdening the spirit and obtaining guidance and sacramental instruction is not only condoned by the poet, it is encouraged. Lastly, we are once again referred to the uses of the "gude Kirk Primityve", as we are again and again by the early Scottish reforming poets. Other than in "Kitteis Confession", references to Confession in Lindsay's work are indirect, the one direct reference in *The Monarche* (11.4361-7) being concerned with the abuse of the confessional rather than with the doctrine itself.

There had long been criticism of the practices associated with Purgatory, such as the buying of pardons and indulgences, but it was not until Calvin that there was an actual denial of the existence of Purgatory. It is therefore not surprising that in Lindsay's poetry there is no overt questioning of the existence of Purgatory, although at one point in *The Monarche* there is an implication that Scripture does not support Purgatory: "For Peter, Androw, nor Iohn culde neuer gett / So profytable ane Fysche in to thare nett" (11.4790-1). These lines, which suggest through reference to the apostles that the "gude Kirk Primityve" had no Purgatory, occur during criticism of the covetousness of the clergy and the crippling effects of the Church's financial activities on individuals and nations. It is difficult, as with so many other doctrinal issues, to find an instance of Lindsay asserting Purgatory as a fact, unless it is in *The Dreme*, where it is visited briefly. His attention is continually fixed on abusive

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11. Luther objected to corrupt confessors, but insisted on the validity of orthodox confession. Tyndale rejected the power of priests to absolve sins, but supported voluntary confession.

practices which contribute to the temporal wealth and power of the Church.

Lindsay uses the conceptions of predestination and election in *The Monarche* but it is without radical departure from Catholic doctrine, and his discussion of justification by faith is not explicit.[12] When commentators and critics identify Lindsay as a "reformer" it is usually with Calvinism in mind. Alexander Campbell possibly began the misapprehension in 1798 when he said that Lindsay had "imbibed the principles of a reformer" and that while this "laid him under persecution from the church; the state, who secretly hated the overweening influence of the clergy, willingly gave countenance to him".[13] There is no evidence that Lindsay was ever persecuted by the church, though there is ample evidence that he was convinced that the church was in need of reform. His conception of reform, however, resembled that of Erasmus, and to some extent Luther. He envisaged a process of cleansing and purification of the established church, not a radical restructuring of the type being advocated in Scotland by the time he wrote *The Monarche*.

Campbell makes a more useful judgment when he remarks on the conflict between church and state, and the poet's place in that conflict. Agnes Mure Mackenzie observes that Lindsay's attitude is "less that of the political polemist than of the professionally outspoken person with the tail of an eye upon the muckle pierglass"[14]. In respect of the role of the court poet she is no doubt right — Lindsay followed in a long line of "professionally outspoken" poets — although her view of Lindsay's sincerity is a little cynical. John Speirs is closer to the mark when he suggests that Lindsay has been invested with a role which he may not in fact have sought:

> Lindsay's poems were popular less, it seems, because of their intrinsic merits than because politically they were on the winning popular side (and *because* of their moralizings and preachings, which included lengthy advice as to how the King should govern). In Lindsay's hands the traditional satire against Churchmen turned, whether intentional or not, political as much as moral.[15]

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12. See Barclay, pp.205-14, for a discussion of Lindsay's stance on predestination and justification.

13. *An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland*, p.57.

14. In *Scottish Poetry, A Critical Survey*, ed. James Kinsley, p.42.

15. *The Scots Literary Tradition*, p.77.

If Lindsay's stylistic use of popular models is added, such an explanation of his popularity after the Reformation is probably correct. Moreover, much of his "moralizing and preaching" is deliberately political, and not always in a "popular" direction. His satire is more often than not motivated by a recognition of the way in which a corrupt church weakens the state. Long and enthusiastic critical interest in Lindsay's protestant sympathies and popular appeal has tended to discourage analysis of his deep concern with the business of government and for the welfare of the state.

Lindsay and the State

Like the makars, Lindsay had much to say on the nature of kingship. He subscribed to the notion of the divine origin of kingship and proffered the conventional advice on virtue:

> ... God hes haill at his command
> The hartis of Prencis in his hand.
> (*Complaynt*, ll.489-90)

> ... be exampyll to thy peple all,
> Exersing verteous deidis honorabyll.
> (*Dreme*, ll.1074-5)

His emphasis on the duty of a king to emulate and to serve God is familiar from earlier poetry:

> Sir, gif ȝour hienes ȝearnis lang to ring,
> First dread ȝour God abuif all vther thing.
> For ȝe ar bot ane mortall instrument
> To that great God and King Omnipotent,
> Pre ordinat be his divine Maiestie,
> To reull his people intill vnitie.
> (*Ane Satyre*, ll.1876-81)

Lindsay brings a familiarity to his treatment of kingship which cannot be explained simply by his personal acquaintance with James V. In *Ane Satyre* Correction says:

> Quhat is ane King? nocht bot ane officiar,
> To cause his lieges liue in equitie:
> And under God to be ane punischer
> Of trespasseris against his Maiestie.
> (ll.1605-8)

Earlier poets had been familiar with their kings but they brought a grandeur and mystery to their definitions of kings and kingship, as

Dunbar did in "The Thrissil and the Rois". Lindsay's negative definition, "nocht bot ane officiar", implies that he was less awed by the majesty of the monarch than tradition would dictate he should be. In *The Testament of the Papyngo* the parrot tells her king to "Considder weill, thow bene bot officiare". Frequently Lindsay's advice to the King is supported by examples of monarchs who lost their thrones through failure to carry out their duties.

Lindsay reiterates the advice of the makars to their kings, to be virtuous, to rule with justice and mercy, to heed good counsel and to resist flatterers, to see that the law is administered equitably and to have regard to their commons. Further to this, however, he stresses that kingship is above all a job that must be tackled with skill and effort. In *The Dreme* the king is exhorted to "consider thy vocatioun", which implies more than a "calling", carrying too a sense of duty and responsibility. The Papyngo advises the king to devote half an hour every day to studying "The Regiment of princelie governing".[16] He must acquire the skills of the courtier and warrior in music, horsemanship and combat, but chivalry, gallantry and bravery are not enough:

> Amang the rest, schir, lerne to be ane kyng:
> Kyith, on that craft, thy pringant fresche ingyne,
> Grantit to the be Influence Divine.
> (11.287-9)

God has given the king considerable intelligence and an exalted position, but the use of those gifts to pursue his "craft" requires the same application and education as Lindsay noted for the tailors in comparison with ignorant priests. In short, Lindsay saw no value in an "ideot" king.

He apportions to kings much greater and more specific responsibility for the condition of the realm, secular and spiritual, than had been usual. He does not rest at suggesting that if the king makes "reformatioun" then the rest of the realm will follow suit, but

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16. This was probably meant to refer to one of the several medieval "textbooks" on the subject, such as *The Regiment of Princes*.

emphasises that the king has "gubernation" in a very practical way, illustrated in Dame Remembrance's explanation for the poverty of Scotland:

> ... I fynd the falt in to the heid;
> For thay in quhome dois ly our hole releif,
> I find thame rute and grund of all greif.
> For, quhen the heddis ar nocht delygent,
> The membris man, on neid, be necligent.
> So, I conclude, the causis principall
> Aff all the trubyll of this Natioun
> Are in to Prencis, in to speciall,
> The quhilkis hes the Gubernatioun,
> And of the peple Dominatioun.
>
> (*The Dreme*, 11.878-87)

Two things are notable about Lindsay's use of the traditional head and body analogy. Firstly, that he uses the plural, "thay", "heddis", which doubtless includes the Spiritual heads as well as the king and his advisors. The responsibility for the Spiritual heads, and the rest of the realm, however, lies with "Prencis" who have true control, "in to speciall". Secondly, it is significant that Lindsay did not choose to use in the analogy between the functions of the head and body, and the health of the realm a phrase such as "when the head is ill", or "when the head does not function well", but rather the active phrase "quhen the heddis are nocht delygent": that is, when they are not working hard.

Lindsay had a pragmatic view of government, seeing the state as a body which would function correctly only if all of the members not only maintained their proper stations and duties, but put considerable effort into the task, willingly taking their share of the business and responsibility. In this he was a man of the Renaissance, examining more closely the role of princes in political society. His king was not simply a godlike figure fulfilling a divinely determined place in the order of a stable society — he was a man holding a position of immense secular importance in an increasingly complex political and social organism. This is why, in *Ane Satyre*, Lindsay proposed political measures to ensure that ecclesiastical appointments were regulated and given only to men fitted for the task, and why he urged

his king to "lerne to be ane kyng". No longer could the failings of an ecclesiastical or political appointee be attributed to the sinful state of mankind having overridden the good judgement of the king. The king's judgement would be regulated by law and, if he appointed a corrupt bishop, governor or judge, then he would have failed to correctly administer the law.

Nothing more clearly exemplifies this change in political perspective than Lindsay's poetic treatment of the commons. When Johne the Common Weill remarks of Scotland in *The Dreme* that "Unthrift, sweirnes, falset, povertie and stryfe / Pat polacey in dainger of hir lyfe" (ll.965-6), he gives us the key to Lindsay's apprehension of the significance of the commons. In this, as in his attitude to kings, he was a pragmatist, realising, as others must have, and stating more directly than any poet before him, that poverty constituted a political threat to the realm. Lindsay was as politically conscious of the foundations of the society as he was of the "heddis". In religion, it was the commons who were affected most severely by corruption, and they who would form the basis of the reformed church.

As early in his poetry as *The Dreme* it is clear that for Lindsay "the Comoun-Weill" was more than an amorphous definition of one estate, and that he understood that the poor commons were the labouring masses, a "proletariat" whose labour generated the necessities of life for the whole society.[17] When he proposed reforms which would help the commons, he usually gave an explanation of how this would benefit the realm. From this practical perspective the poor became less a fact of life towards whom a Christian should exercise compassion and charity, and more a working class deserving fair treatment because, in effect, the society rode upon their backs. If the common-weill was exiled from the realm, then of necessity the realm would flounder, possibly collapse. Hence the primary position of Johne in *The Dreme* and *Ane Satyre*, where the poet argues that if the commons do not prosper, then the realm does not prosper: if the foundations of the

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17. It is important, too, that the Merchants, representing a middle class of commoners, are treated separately from Johne the Common-Weill.

society are allowed to decay, then the whole fabric will collapse.

High on Johne's list of things which contribute to the misery of the realm is a complaint against "idill men", be they beggars, jugglers or "fat Freiris". In both Latin and "Inglisch" he observes, and insists that his audience note, that "Quha labouris nocht he sall not eit". Johne is Lindsay's idea of the "delygent" commoner: hard-working, honest, dignified and intelligent, having a shrewd, common sense approach to the lives of individuals and institutions. With a peasant sense of economy, Johne finds the wastage of human and material resources in the church and the government intolerable, the more so since members of his own class are exploited and exposed to hardship in order to sustain grossly inefficient institutions.

Lindsay's Johne is not the first articulate and shrewd commoner in Scottish literature; he has among his ancestors Henryson's Lamb who so ably defended himself in the face of a corrupt establishment. But in "The Scheip and the Doig", despite his eloquent defence and his just cause, the Lamb loses his fleece, and in "The Wolf and the Lamb", without even recourse to a pretence of justice, the Lamb loses his life. In contrast, Johne the Common Weill is clothed "gorgeouslie" and "set ... doun amang them in the Parliament" (*Ane Satyre*, stage direction after 1.3772).

This placement of Johne in Parliament and Lindsay's skilful use of peasant attitudes and diction have led a number of commentators to regard the poet as a radical supporter of popular action. John Speirs' remarks, although offered somewhat cautiously, typify this school of thought:

> The nature of Lindsay's satire as compared with Dunbar's (Lindsay's is more related to the possibility of political action) itself suggests the extent to which the Reformation in Scotland was taking on the aspect of an uprising against ecclesiastical, legal and other forms of corrupt authority.[18]

An impression of the poet as popular religious revolutionary lies behind Agnes Mure Mackenzie's objection to "the self-righteous

18. *The Scots Literary Tradition*, p.77.

shrillness that grew on Lindsay"[19]; T.F. Henderson's opinion that in Lindsay's poetry "the strenuous moral aim is more manifest than the poetic inspiration"[20]; and Kurt Wittig's belief that Lindsay's "works were meant for 'rurall folk' (*Papyngo*, 66)", and that "Lyndsay is not a formal artist; to him, poetry serves a purpose – as it was to do under the Presbyterians"[21]. It is a seductive argument, especially in the context of this thesis.

Yet, if "none has so eloquently championed the common people as this influential courtier"[22], Lindsay was not above exploiting the commons for satirical or farcical entertainment of his courtly audience, in exactly the same way as they had been used by earlier poets, and Johne's democratic victory is not pursued to a radical conclusion.

Commoners are used to generate comedy in the interlude in *Ane Satyre* involving Sowtar, Taylour, their wives and Chastity. The poet indulges in conventional satire against nagging wives, and creates irony by having Chastity harboured by a Sowtar and a Taylour, both crafts having long been the butt of satire, sexual innuendo and sometimes vilification in the art and folk traditions. Pauper is another case in which eloquence and dignity are hardly appropriate descriptive terms. Lindsay presents Pauper as a character deserving of sympathy and as a bitter comment on social injustice, but he nevertheless does not resist the temptation to use Pauper to enrich the comic content of his play. Pauper functions as much as a dramatic device as he does as a social comment, and the stage directions for the encounter between him and Diligence illustrate this, with Pauper's leaps to and from the King's throne providing superb comedy. Pauper's comment on the play, "I will not gif for al ȝour play worth an sowis fart, / For thair is richt lytill play to my hungrie hart" (ll. 1956-7), powerfully recalls his serious satiric function and prevents

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19. *Scottish Poetry, A Critical Survey*, p.41.
20. *Scottish Vernacular Poetry: A Succinct History*, p.208.
21. *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, pp.91, 99.
22. Ibid., p.91.

him from becoming little more than comic relief during the "Interlude". Sowtar and his wife, in their encounter with Pardoner, are blatant objects of farce: if Lindsay was truly the spokesman for the commons in the sense suggested by Wittig then the poet might have been more willing to provide a courtier or a merchant to undergo the indignity of kissing his wife's backside on a public stage. The Sowtar is not, like Johne, an appealing person; he is a gullible and decidedly unpleasant character. So, to some degree, is Pauper and his behaviour, while serving a comic purpose, and while no doubt justified in the light of his realisation that he has been used and abused, is nevertheless bombastic and deliberately rude. In most of the stage directions, and by Diligence, he is called "the Carle", which carries a suggestion of ignorance and coarseness as much as it is a definition of position in the social hierarchy.[23]

It is questionable whether Lindsay was genuinely identifying with the commons or addressing himself to them on all of those occasions on which he protested that his poems were directed to "rurall folk", or consigned his words to the kitchen. The instance in *The Papyngo* to which Wittig refers, proposing that Lindsay "is not showing conventional modesty",[24] is entirely conventional. The poem has a court audience constantly in sight, and the stanza must be read in that light, especially in view of the opening section which lists great poets and protests Lindsay's own unworthiness to number with them. The style of the stanzas reveals an aspiration precisely in that direction. When, in the final stanza of the "Proloug", he insists that "To rurall folke myne dyting bene directit", it is not out of identification with the commons but "because myne matter bene so rude / Off sentence, and of Rethorike denude". The final lines leave no doubt that his protestations are "conventional modesty", by using

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23. *The Iusting betuix Iames Watsoun and Iohne Barbour* is a mock tournament between a "Medicinar" and a "Leche", neither of whom could be classified as "courtiers" and both of whom were probably commoners. Their mock tournament is in a tradition of farcical exploitation of commoners for the entertainment of the court, and their classification as "familiaris" of the King, "gentill Iames", "ane nobill Leche", is certainly ironic.

24. *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p.91.

the intention to entertain the commons as an excuse for any failure on his part to please the courtly audience:

> Then sall I sweir, I maid it bot in mowis,
> To landwart lassis quhilks kepith kye & ȝowis.
> (11.71-2)

A more complex but similar process is at work in *Ane Supplicatioun in Contemptioun of Syde Taillis* when at the end Lindsay justifies his use of "sic vyle and filthy wordis" (1.162) with "Because this mater is nocht fair, / Of Rethorick it man be bair" (11.159-60). The justification is stylistic — rude matter demands plain speech. Further, however, Lindsay carefully indicates the satiric purpose of his choice of diction:

> Bot wald thay clenge thare filthy taillis,
> Quhilk ouir the myris and middingis traillis,
> Than suld my wrytting clengit be.
> (11.163-5)

He couches a revelation of his stylistic wit in a pretended justification of his coarseness to those very women he finds coarse.

This is hardly indicative of a poet who is "not a formal artist". The stylistic justification involves an association between the language of the streets and the farms — the language of the peasantry — with coarseness and low subjects, but also shows Lindsay's awareness of the satiric power of plain speaking, of the comic richness of peasant speech.

Both of these instances, his "apology" and his justification, connote a degree of caution in our response to Lindsay's apparent identification with the commons in *The Monarche* and *Ane Satyre*. An acceptance of Lindsay's assignation of *The Monarche* "to Colȝearis, Cairtaris, & to Cukis, / To Iok and Thome" led Agnes Mure Mackenzie to make the rather damning comment: "Dead popular learning is very dead indeed, and to tackle the *Monarche* now needs firm resolution and strong black coffee"[25]. Yet the passage in which Lindsay makes this assignation to the commons is itself a justification to the "Gentyl

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25. *Scottish Poetry, A Critical Survey*, ed. Kinsley, p.43.

Redar" for his use of the "vulgair toung". The dialogue is between Experience and a Courtier: the court audience is apprehended and addressed from the outset of the poem. There is no evidence in this didactic poem of the kind of humorous exploitation of the commons present in Lindsay's earlier poems. But there is a degree of condescension in the "Exclamatioun to the Redar, Twycheing the Wrytting of Uulgare and Maternall Langage", which is basically a discourse to and for the educated, giving stylistic and moral support for the poem, and at the same time arguing persuasively and sincerely for a change in outlook on the part of the educated. Behind the whole poem is a practical reminder of the dangers inherent in ignoring the commons. I do not mean to undercut the importance of Lindsay's voice — he does stand with the commons in the latter part of the argument: "amang vs peple of the law estait" — but it is essential to bear in mind the "formal artist", to recognise the rhetorical function of this voice, and to balance analysis of it accordingly.

Johne the Common Weill, in *The Dreme* and *Ane Satyre*, is thematically and stylistically more significant than any of Lindsay's other commoners or pronouncements concerning the commons. Johne is addressed respectfully by King Humanity ("gude man", "Sir common weill") in *Ane Satyre*. He speaks intelligently, is listened to seriously and his suggestions are acted upon. Politically, however, it is notable that the laws based on Johne's suggestions and criticisms are framed by Temporality and the Merchants, and that having been given his seat in the Parliament Johne does not utter another word in the play. This is surely not accidental but a part of the same careful modulation of emphasis Lindsay brings to his treatment of the three estates. The Merchants are the first to reform and the first to demand change; they respond more readily than the other estates to Johne. Temporality require more persuasion, and more time on the stage, but having "made reformatioun" become associated with the Merchants in the decision-making process which ensues. Spirituality prove irredeemable: they must be replaced before full "reformatioun" can be achieved. The difference in the image projected by each estate, and by Johne, is convincing proof of Lindsay's political acumen. He

was conscious of the growing power and importance of the middle class in the political and economic life of the country and of the necessity for the nobility to come to terms with it. He also saw that the power of a corrupt church could be broken only by appointment of bishops more amenable to reform and more answerable to the crown. Above all, and it was a matter of practical politics rather than of popular revolution, he realised that:

> The Common-weill mon vther wayis be styllit,
> Or be my faith the King wilbe begyllit.
> (Gude-Counsall, *Ane Satyre*, ll.2565-6)

Speirs was right in his perception that Lindsay's satire is "more related to the possibility of political action" than Dunbar's. It seems more likely that Lindsay intended his work to forestall radical popular uprising than to foment it, but he certainly understood that such an uprising was probable in Scotland unless the government and church very soon "made reformatioun".

The careful control of political and religious matters in Lindsay's poetry is accompanied by an equally careful management of style. He had precursors among the makars for his use of, and justification for, a "low" style, and for his sometimes accomplished, sometimes deliberately melodramatic use of an aureate style. But his skilful utilization of peasant diction to heighten his satire and didacticism is of considerable import as a foretaste of later, protestant poetry.

Among the myriad instances throughout his work of use of peasant speech, the diction of Johne in *Ane Satyre* is the least open to suspicions of comic exploitation. Unlike Pauper, there is no doubt that Johne's manner of speech represents much more than the traditional makar's enjoyment of peasant diction. Johne is a central character, speaking deliberately and plainly of extremely serious matters. His speech, constructed of everyday words and phrases, spiced with proverbialism, is a model of simplicity and clarity. To an extent this is a function of his lack of pretension and stylistically connected with matters of appearance and reality: throughout *Ane Satyre* the more dangerously "false" a character is, the more affected and contorted

is his speech. In addition, however, in Johne's diction and in the substance of his remarks there is an implied equation between plain speech and common sense, the logical extension of which is an elevation of common sense as a virtue, above the machinations of secular and ecclesiastical government. Lindsay more closely anticipates the Reformers in this than in any other aspect of his work, though the protestant poets were to take this further. Lindsay applies common sense to language, politics and religion; the Reformers asserted the validity of individual judgment and individual responsibility, the exercise of individual common sense, in matters of religion and government. Lindsay leaves the decision making, in the end, to the abstracted estates of the Merchants and Temporality; the Common Weill, having acted as a catalyst, are not finally active in the formation of the reformed society, nor is there any suggestion that they will in future take an active part in decision making.

The rational, intelligent judgements and the plain speech of Johne the Common Weill and of Kitty anticipate Reformation satires, particularly such poems as *The Packman's Pater Noster*, but before moving from this to a classification of Lindsay as a Reformer and a poet of the "new" period, it is as well to consider the more traditional aspects of his style. *Bagsche* looks forward to eighteenth-century animal poems, but it looks back to *Cockelbie's Sow*, Henryson's *Fabillis* and medieval beast fables generally. Johne is a plain speaking commoner who attains some authority and is at least heard, but he has ancestors that presaged that authority, and he is after all a character in a Morality play. Elsewhere, Johne is an allegorical figure in a dream-vision. The Papyngo has some strikingly radical things to say, but she says them in the framework of a mock testament which owes much to both allegory and beast fable. *The Monarche* is allegory as much as it is dialogue, within a carefully wrought rhetorical form.

All of Lindsay's satire is distanced, by conventional means, and it is this distancing which separates him most obviously from the protestant satirists, those who were already writing by the time he died, and particularly those who wrote after 1560.

Lindsay was inspired by the same intellectual movement which produced the Calvinist Reformation. He learnt from the Renaissance the value of intelligent realism, and he applied this equally to his political and religious thinking, and in part to his poetry. However, like Luther and Erasmus, he did not quite abandon the hierarchical vision which his age had inherited from the Middle Ages. In Lindsay's poetry the sources of knowledge and understanding are somewhat distanced: the Court is always present, along with the King, the Bishops, Youth and Experience, Appearance and Reality, Singular Profit and the Common Weill.

The protestant poets evince a greater certainty of their own belief and knowledge. On the whole they are disinclined to distance themselves from their subjects, or their subjects from their satire, by fable, dream vision, or allegory. In this way the Reformation in Scotland acutely affected poetry. The personal and "common" experience is not simply incorporated into an allegorical framework as a useful and practical addition; it is endorsed and validated in terms of political and theological action, and in terms of a new voice and style in poetry. The vision of the later poets is direct; political, religious and stylistic intermediaries virtually disappear.

Despite Lindsay's achievements as a poet and social thinker, and despite the presence of an exciting and different voice in his poetry, he did not make that break with the old "truths" which the Scottish Reformation grew out of and accomplished.

Chapter 2

"FOR EVERIE MAN DOIS UTHER TEICHE": THE GUDE AND GODLIE BALLATIS

Scotsmen who became actively involved in the struggle for reformation were unable to continue to hold religious and political views compatible with the medieval, courtly universe of the makars. As a result of their beliefs and the radical nature of their confrontation with a powerfully established church and a state which found it had an interest in the continuation of that church, the Reformers' attitudes towards religion, politics and the relationship between church and state came to differ greatly from the attitudes of the "old order".

Lindsay had foreseen this alteration in outlook, as he had foreseen the increasingly prominent role of the "Merchants", or the middle class, in Scottish affairs, and the potential for action by the "Common-Weill", or working class. The kirk and the king, however, did not heed his timely advice, and failed to take adequate steps towards the kind of reform which would have avoided religious and civil unrest. Arguably, the established authorities could not have reformed enough to satisfy the Reformers without effectively destroying the very order of things upon which they believed the society to be based by divine example, and they were unwilling to put into train changes which might overturn their understanding of the world. Demands for change became more extreme, and more political in intent, the more the established authorities resisted reformation. The state which had a generation before resented the power of Rome in Scotland, found itself defending the Scottish Catholic Church and the Pope against growing numbers of its own subjects. The monarchs and their advisors realised that changes to the church would inevitably lead to changes in traditional ideas about the role of the king and the place of the various estates

in the social and political life of the country. The Reformers came to represent more than a wave of religious dissent: they represented a threat to the social and political order, an order held to be inviolate.

The Reformers did not see either the church or the state as unchangeable, nor did they regard either the Pope or kings as infallible. Increased persecution only quickened their adherence to a new set of principles which had revolutionary import for the future. The notion of "every man in his place" in a highly formal societal structure began to give way to a belief in the "rights" of individuals and groups within society. The beginnings of this change in perspective can be seen in the difference between Lindsay's understanding of political society and the understanding of the older poets. But whereas Lindsay had suggested that the kirk and state should consider the contribution of each class to the good of the realm in making policy changes, the Reformers began to demand their rights. They sought the right to religious observance and instruction in their own tongue; the right to read, interpret and discuss Scripture; the right to participate in church government and the appointment of preachers. Above all, they believed they had a right to a direct relationship with God, and that neither priest nor king had authority to interfere in that relationship.

The early leaders of the Reformation in Scotland were largely middle class — merchants, writers, professional men. In comparison with their contemporaries, those who adopted the principles of reform were more self-aware, more literate, more articulate and more demanding of attention as a group. Not only did these people have a greater sense of their own potential to effect religious and political change, they also understood the potential of the commons generally, the "masses". As a result of their religious radicalism and the nature of their education, they had a highly developed sense of the integrity of the individual. They were more willing than most of their contemporaries to express their own opinions and to be involved in decisions about matters which were not usually the concern of their class. They were willing, in fact, to actively pursue their beliefs, and to rebel against political authority rather than passively continue accepting the dictates of church and state as something beyond the control of individuals or members of the lesser estates.

As the move towards reform took hold of Scottish imaginations poetry began to show the effects of changing attitudes. Because their ideas were at odds with the church, the monarch and many among the court, poets who were Reformers increasingly found that the conventions of courtly poetry were unsuitable for expression of their beliefs and outlooks. More significantly, the need arose for effective propaganda in the hope of winning support for the cause of reformation. The printing press was ideal for this purpose. Propaganda demanded an approach to writing which could not be adequately served by conventional literature, so that in poetry and prose the Reformers sought other ways of expressing themselves. In poetry, the demands of propaganda, more than any other single factor, sparked off the evolution of an alternative tradition which eventually superseded courtly verse as the dominant style of Scottish poetry.

For successful dissemination of protestant ideas a poetry had to be fashioned which would appeal to a wide, diverse audience, giving people a sense of immediacy, of shared experience in concerns and events relevant to their common, and disparate, conditions or expectations. Propagandist poets concentrated on issues of interest to "all", regardless of position in society, increasingly relating the controversies of the time to the day to day lives of their audience and engendering in their readers or auditors a feeling of "importance". The first person entered more and more into poetry — "I" heightened realism and "we" involved the audience in the poem and the cause of the poet. Often poets adopted a tone which allied them with the widest possible audience. To facilitate communication and to increase immediacy, poets sought out the most popular forms of verse, and began to simplify versification and diction, looking more to the folk tradition for literary models. These poetic changes of emphasis, in subject, tone and style, became fundamental to the character of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry in Scotland.

The first evidence of the change in poetic concerns and style is in *Ane Compendious Buik of Godlie Psalms and Spirituall Sangis*, commonly known as *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis.*[1] *Ane Compendious Buik*

1. Also known as "The Dundee Psalms" and "Wedderburn's Psalms".

is believed to be largely the work of the brothers Wedderburn of Dundee, principally of John Wedderburn.[2] The collection first appeared, probably in a shorter form, between 1542 and 1546, although the earliest extant edition is from 1567.[3] The influence on later poetry, particularly in the broadsheets, of the style pioneered by the compilers of "The Gude and Godlie Ballatis" was no doubt partly due to their immense popularity:

> ... it is a measure of their popularity that they went on appearing long after the current of the Scottish Reformation had turned into another channel; the last of them was published in 1621. The *Ballatis* never received any kind of ecclesiastical sanction, nor were they sung in the public services of the Church. But Hill Burton is doubtless right in saying that the reason why old copies of the book are so rare is 'not because few copies were printed, but because the book was so popular and so extensively used that the copies of it were worn out'. The songs were 'long treasured in the hearts of the people and sung in their households'.[4]

And their popularity was in turn due to their satiric content; their style, designed to appeal to a wide audience; the inclusion of "changeit" versions of popular songs; and the presence of "twenty-two psalm versions which enabled the people for the first time to sing in their own homely tongue portions of the Psalter which had until then been doubly barred against their use"[5]. The success of the collection stemmed from the same source as the success of individual items in the collection: the compilers incorporated material which would strike a responsive note in

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2. James, an ardent Reformer, fled to France, became a merchant, and died there. Robert was vicar of Dundee. John went to Germany in 1539-40, heard Luther and Melanchthon at Wittenberg, and according to Calderwood "became verie fervent and zealous", translating "manie of Luther's dytements into Scotish meeter, and the Psalms of David. He turned manie bawdie songs and rymes in Godlie rymes". Millar Patrick, *Four Centuries of Scottish Paslmody* (Oxford, 1949), p.5.

3. The Lutheran content of the Catechism, Psalms and Hymns indicates a date of composition at least a decade before 1560 for most of the collection. For a detailed discussion of authorship and publishing history see the introduction to A.F. Mitchell (ed.), *A Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs* (STS 1897; Johnson Reprint,1966). All references are to Mitchell's edition of the "Ballatis", by page number.

4. Millar Patrick, *Four Centuries*, pp.5-6. Agnes Mure Mackenzie calls the collection "a huge success", *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.44.

5. Millar Patrick, p.6.

their audience, either because it was familiar or because it was newly accessible, and reflected contemporary concerns.

Ane Compendious Buik has been used as documentation for social history and has even been seen as positively instrumental in the achievement of the Scottish Reformation. It has seldom been regarded as having import in the literary history of Scotland, being studied more as a minor and peculiar manifestation of protestant zeal which contains some interesting evidence of an older song tradition:

> They possess an actuality and earnestness which belong to this period of stern religious conflict, but the main literary interest of the book now lies in its parodies of the old songs ....[6]

Kurt Wittig did find in the Hymns "some fine poetical accounts of the reckoning between the soul and its maker"[7]. Such a popular collection of poetry and song demands attention not simply for its historical interest, "changeit" songs or occasionally "fine" poems, but because it is the first poetic voice of a new period in Scottish literature and society, and because other poets read and were influenced by the manner in which the compilers, with varying degrees of success, moulded verse to the service of the "cause".

The contrast is a telling one between the tone of most of the poetry in *Ane Compendious Buik* and that of court poets around 1560. Sir Richard Maitland, not unaffected by the simplification of diction which Lindsay had practised, wrote a "Satire on the Age", the moderate and plaintive note of which reveals a man fearful of the radical change which was occurring and aware of being out of step with the times:

> Quhair is the blythnes that hes bein
> Baith in burgh and landwart sein,
> Amang lordis and laydis schein
> Daunsing, singing, game and play?
> Bot now I wait nocht quhat thai mein,
> All mirrines is worne away.
> ...
> For peax and justice lat us pray,
> In dreid sum strange new institution
> Cum and our custome put away.
> (11.1-6; 88-90)[8]

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6. T.F. Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Poetry*, p.271.
7. *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p.118.
8. *A Choice of Scottish Verse 1560-1660*, ed. R.D.S. Jack (London, 1978), pp.36-7.

Far more characteristic of the "Age", and of what was to happen to the style of Scottish poetry, is the urgency of Reforming verse:

> Tell me now, and in quhat wyse,
> How that I suld my lyfe forga,
> Baith day and nycht ane thousand syse
> Thir tyrannis waiknis me with wa.
>
> At midnycht myrk thay will vs tak,
> And in to presoun will vs fling:
> Thair mon we ly, quhill we forsaik
> The name of God, quhilk is our King.
>
> Than faggottis man we burne or beir,
> Or to the deide thay will vs bring;
> It dois thame gude to do vs deir,
> And to confusion vs downe thring.
>
> (*A Compendious Book*, p.141)

The immediacy, independence of spirit and sense of brotherhood in this poem are symptomatic of partisan verse among the Reformers. In fact, the poem reveals the main characteristics of the "new voice" present in the *Ballatis*: the use of the inclusive "we" and the realistic "I", the tone of shared commitment and mutual peril, and the use of concrete realism, drawn from personal experience. This voice is different to Maitland's, as indeed it differs from the anti-clerical satires of the middle Scots poets and the strong but essentially counselling voice of Lindsay. Maitland has been admired for his non-partisan attitudes:

> Old Lethington, who had witnessed the whole course of the revolution (and profited by it) and who castigated popery and Calvinism alike with poetic indifference, sensed a profound transformation in the national mentality .... The poem, in which he voices his misgivings, strikes a curiously authentic note amid the somewhat repellant theology and morality of the pamphleteers.[9]

Temperamentally Maitland was distanced from the new habits of mind. But the popular poets of Reformation Scotland were not in a position to stand aside with "poetic indifference" from ideas and events, and their verse reflects their close ideological and emotional involvement in the change their society was undergoing.

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9. Brother Kenneth, "The Popular Literature of the Scottish Reformation", *Essays on the Scottish Reformation 1513-1625*, ed. David McRoberts (Glasgow, 1962), p.183.

The "Prologve" to *Ane Compendious Buik* explains the purpose of the collection as spiritual enlightenment. Implicit in the insistence on the "trew word", the use of the "vulgar tongue" and the emphasis on scriptural authority, is the other purpose, the dissemination of reforming ideas:

> Paule writand to the Colloss. ... sayis, let the word of God dwel in zow plenteouslie in all wisdome, teiching and exhorting zour awin selfis with Psalmes, & hymnis, and spirituall sangis, quhilkis haue lufe to God & fauouris his word. We haue heir ane plane Text, that the word of God Incressis plenteouslie in vs, be singing of the Psalmes, and spiritual sangis and that speciallie amang zoung personis, and sic as are not exercisit in the Scriptures, for thay wil soner consaue the trew word, nor quhen thay heir it sung in Latine, the quhilks thay wait not quhat it is. Bot quhen thay heir it sung into thair vulgar toung or singis it thame selfis with sweit melodie, then sal thay lufe thair Lord God with hart and minde, and cause them to put away baudrie & unclene sangis. Prays God. Amen.
>
> (p.1)

The *Buik* contains more than "Psalmes, & hymnis, and spirituall sangis". The opening part includes an Almanack and a Catechism, and at the end of the collection are trenchant satires, some of which may have been added after the Reformation. The compilers were deliberate in their choice of material which would make a wide audience, especially "sic as are not exercisit in the Scriptures", "soner consaue the trew word". The inclusion of an Almanack, a perennial favourite, was likely to increase the market for the book. A Catechism was, of course, essential to the book's spiritual purpose, giving the faithful and potential converts, probably for the first time, access to the scriptural basis for liturgy. On the continent, hymns had proved invaluable in the cause of reform, and the Wedderburns no doubt understood their simple power — many of the Hymns are translations from Luther's own resonant works. Psalms arranged in an instantly popular metrical form, in Scots, could be and were committed to memory easily by the literate and illiterate, forming the heart of protestant worship and instilling the simple values of the new beliefs. At the same time, the Psalms of David, containing the record of oppression, the battle cry and the triumph of the Israelites, provided an ideal idiom for the Reforming cause. The changed courtly and folk songs were obviously intended to appeal to the widest possible spectrum of the community,

familiar tunes and residual phrases rendering them immediately singable. Further, the changed songs probably had some novelty value in popularising the *Buik*. The appetite for satire common among people who feel disaffected, or are fighting for a cause, was catered for both in the changed songs and in the satires at the end of the book.

Doctrinally, *Ane Compendious Buik* is not homogeneous, showing Lutheran influence in the Catechism, Hymns and Psalms, but strong Calvinism in the latter portion, the "changeit" songs and the satires. The prose Catechism gives the Articles of Faith, the Lord's Prayer, "Of our Baptisme", "The Lordis Supper, as it is written in the First Epistill to the Cor. 11 chap." and St. Matthew on "the true power of binding and lousing grantit to the true preichouris of Goddis word". All are taken from Scripture, or offered with strong scriptural support, which remained a feature of protestant prose and didactic poetry well into the seventeenth century. The substantial German influence[10] in the early part of the collection is clearest in the Metrical Catechism, which follows and repeats the contents of the prose. It has hymns on Baptism and The Lord's Supper which are translations from Luther. Brother Kenneth notes that "Belief in the real presence is explicit in the verse":

> And he, that we suld nocht forzit,
> Gaif vs his body for to eit
> In forme of breid, and gaif vs syne
> His blude to drink, in forme of wyne.[11]

He finds a "startling contrast to the traditional note" and "the crudest of jibes at this same belief in a ballad at the end of the collection":

> Gif God was maid of bittis of breid,
> Eit ze not oulklie sax or sevin?[12]

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10. See Mitchell's introduction for a full and invaluable discussion of sources for the translations and the ideas which inform them.

11. *Essays on the Scottish Reformation*, ed. McRoberts, p.175. I have replaced Brother Kenneth's quotation with Mitchell's text. Brother Kenneth appears to have used Laing's edition of the *Buik* which was based on a later copy than the STS edition. The differences are orthographic.

12. Ibid.

This contrast highlights the Lutheran nature of the Catechism, and shows why it is probable that some of the material towards the end of the book was added at a later date, possibly after 1559, giving the collection as a whole a history of translation and composition spanning most of the Reformation, c.1542-c.1565. In fact, the *Buik* shows a gradual increase in Calvinist content throughout, which culminates in the satires.

Hymns, "Spiritual Sangis" and Psalms

Many of the hymns and "spiritual sangis" are of European origin, translated into Scots for *Ane Compendious Buik*. A.F. Mitchell was perhaps a trifle over-enthusiastic when he described the translations as "in the main executed with spirit, freedom, and true poetic taste, into the purest Scottish dialect of the time"[13], but they are given the "native touch", and their language is "pure" in the sense that it is plain. The translators used a simple vocabulary, in keeping with their propagandist ends, even when they expanded their originals. There seems to have been no temptation to use "literary" Scots. "Sore I complain of sin", a confessional hymn translated from the Danish *Psalmebog* of 1536, is rendered in plain Scots presumably not only because its original was in plain Danish. The Scots translator expanded the fifth verse of the Danish hymn into the fifth and sixth of his own, of which this is the sixth:

> Thy servand Lord defend
> Quhome thow hes bocht sa deir,
> Trew Preichouris to me send
> Thy word to schaw me cleir.
> Lat me my lyfe amend,
> And thairin perseveir;
> Grant me ane blyssit end,
> Quhen I sall part from heir.
> (p.23)

A similar simplicity of idea and expression characterises all of the hymns. The singer speaks directly to God, and seeks direct instruction in Scripture. This personal note is taken further in "Ane Song of the

13. *A Compendious Book*, p.liv.

Croce and the Frute Thairof", from a German hymn. Christ, it stresses, speaks to "me":

> Cum heir, sayis Goddis Sone to me,
> Sinnaris that hevie ladin be,
> I will zour sillie Saule refresche,
> Cum zung and auld, baith man and wyfe,
> I will zow giue Eternall lyfe,
> Thocht trublit heir sore be zour flesche.
> (p.29)

The style and tone are intimate and "pastoral", so that the large audience addressed, "zung and auld, baith man and wyfe", are included in the hymn.

Perhaps because the theological schisms, and social and intellectual changes, created by the Reformation are still being played out in the modern world, there has been a propensity on the part of commentators to "take sides" in relation to the Hymns. Consequently, energies have been expended on analysing, defending and criticising the theological and moral content of the hymns, some of which might have been better spent on examining how that content is expressed. George Christie found the doctrine of *Ane Compendious Buik* "pure and unsectarian" and described Wedderburn as "Catholic though not Roman":

> The great evangelical verities are there, repeated again and again, as if the writer would miss no opportunity of relating the sinner's free salvation through the blood of Christ; but the sacramental teaching is 'high', particularly that on Baptism, and he loves to dwell on Christmas. The Virgin is also more highly placed in regard of Christian people than the Reformed Churches of today accord to her.[14]

Brother Kenneth, on the other hand, finds even the "pleasing Nativity hymns, old and new" marred by the reforming tone:

> But even these glad tidings are not announced without a sombre note on sin and the tedious repetition of justification by faith which is dragged into nearly every item in the collection, be it song, psalm or ballad.[15]

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14. *The Influence of Letters on the Scottish Reformation* (Edinburgh and London, 1908), p.142.

15. *Essays on the Scottish Reformation*, ed. McRoberts, p.175.

The "In Dulci Jubilo" of *Ane Compendious Buik* has not an echo of a "sombre note", contains nothing which was not present in the medieval carol, and is in fact one of the few items in the collection which makes extensive use of Latin. "To us is borne a barne of blis" is a celebratory carol on the Nativity and the Passion, the second verse of which Brother Kenneth sees as "singing of our poisoned nature". The carol does carry a reminder of man's fallen state, and that he cannot be saved by "gude deid" alone, but this is in order to stress the "good news" of salvation:

> Quhill God him self fand the remeid
> And gaif his onlie Sone to the deide
> To freith us from all paine.
>
> We suld love God and myrrie be
> And dryve away dispair.
>
> (p.52)

Preconceptions about the "tediousness" of Calvinism — a credo in any event not strongly present in many of these hymns — can lead to an inability, or unwillingness, to examine the hymns in their own context; to discover the elements which were important to the translators and authors, and to see how those elements affected style. Both George Christie and Brother Kenneth understand "evangelical verities" as central to the hymns, although one sees this as a virtue and the other sees it as a flaw. However, the element of significance to the style of the hymns, "repeated again and again" and connected to the transmission of "evangelical verities", is the experience of being enlightened. The last verse of "To us is borne a barne of blis" rings with the reforming voice, not sombre, but optimistic:

> Thus thank we him full hartfullie
> For his greit gentilnes:
> We pray him, for his greit mercy,
> Trew Preichouris till increis.
> Fals Pharesianis, and fenzeit lair,
> Quhome we haif followit lait and air,
> Baith thame and vs forgeue,
> God, Father, Sone and haly Spreit
> Instruct us in thy word sa sweit,
> And efter it to leue.
>
> (p.53)

In a manner unaffected by whether the author was Lutheran or Calvinist, this relishes the revelation of the "truth" through the hitherto inaccessible Scriptures, through the use of the mother tongue by "trew preichouris" for devotion and instruction, and through the hymns themselves. Behind the hymns lies shared faith and shared commitment to the principles of reform, for the hymns issued from a determination to spread the Word: "In Burgh & land, eist, west, north, south, / We gloir for to speik of Christ." (p.70)

The Reformers knew that enlightenment made them different to their forefathers and many of their contemporaries. Furthermore, they understood that enlightenment was both the source of their evangelism and the means by which, politically and theologically, their evangelism would achieve its ends. The coming of Reformation in Europe had revealed the relationship between social impotence and religious ignorance, and opened the way for the deliberate use of education, "revelation of the Truth", for evangelical and political ends. That the Scots Reformers appreciated this is clear in "Of the Greit and Louing Blyithnes of Goddis Word", a translation from a German hymn of 1527 with Scots additions. The Scots translator fitted his plain diction skilfully to the double rhyme pattern he adopted from his source, enhancing the exultant tone, hammering home the simple but all important message that the Word is the Light. Clearly the translator intended his audience to understand that the Word was a powerful new acquisition, giving to its possessors not only independence of spirit, but independence of mind:

> Lord God thy face, and word of Grace,
> Hes lang bene hid be craft of men,
> Quhill at the last, the nycht is past
> And we full weill thair falset ken:
> We knaw perfyte, the halie writ,
> Thairfoir be gloir and pryse to thé:
> Quhilk did vs geue, this tyme to leve,
> Thy word trew preichit for to se.
>
> Our bairnis now, weill knawis how
> To wirschip God with seruice trew,
> Quhilk mony zeir, our Fatheris deir,
> Allace! thairfoir, full far misknew,
> Zit God did feid his chosin indeid,
> As Noy, and Lot, and mony mo,
> And had respect to his elect,
> How euer the blind warld did go.
>
> (p.55)

The second verse, inserted by the Scots translator, shows the growing influence of Calvinism in the vocabulary — "chosin", "elect" — and in the triumphant note doubtless stemming from the Parliamentary sanction of vernacular Scriptures in 1543. What Knox says of this event goes far in elucidating the significance to the Reformers of scriptural revelation and the enlightenment of the masses, so often reiterated in the hymns:

> This was no small victorie of Christ Jesus, feghting against the conjured enemyes of his veritie; not small conforte to such as befoir war holdin in such bondage, that thei durst not have red the Lordis Prayer, the Ten Commandimentis, nor Articulis of thare fayth, in the Engliss toung, but thei should have bene accused of heresye.[16]

Some stretch of the imagination is necessary to see "Of the Greit and Louing Blyithnes of Goddis Word" as "pure and unsectarian" in doctrine. Calvinism is present in its tone, and it is expressed in the language and spirit of evangelical Protestantism of the kind which had, by the 1540s in Scotland, begun to represent a real threat to established religion and government:

> Thow Lord abone, man geue allone,
> Thir giftis for thy haly name:
> Quha will thair hart to Christ conuert,
> Na man can do thame skaith nor schame.
> Thocht Paip or King wald sa maling,
> To mak the word of God forlorne,
> Thair strenth sall faill, and not prevaill,
> Thocht thay the contrair all had sworne.
>
> Lord lat thy hand help in all land,
> That thy elect conuertit be,
> Thy word to leir, quhilk now dar sweir
> That thy word is bot Heresie.
> Thay geue thy word ane fals record,
> Quhilk neuer hard the veritie:
> Nor neuer it red, bot blindlingis led,
> With Doctouris of Idolatrie.
>
> (p.56)

The "we" of this hymn are aware that the struggle in which they are involved is "anti-establishment" and that victory is potentially theirs:

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16. John Knox, *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, ed. W.C. Dickinson (2 vols, London, 1949), vol. I, p.98.

> The tyme is now, but dout I trow,
> Quhilk Paull did Prophesie in writ,
> Thocht heuin and eird suld ga arreird,
> Thy word sall stand fast and perfite.
> (pp.56-7)

The form and diction of the hymn are as boldly plain as the message of faith in the power of the Word. If the "elect" were to be "conuertit", then it was essential that what they "hard" or "red" was expressed in an easily comprehended and easily learnt manner. In this way the spirit, purpose and poetry of reform were inseparably linked.

A few of the hymns have a less revolutionary air about them, particularly in their attitude to worldly government. The last verse of "The Principal Points of the Passioun, Schortlie Correctit", for instance, enjoins prayer for the Prince "in speciall":

> Thocht thay be Just or Tyranis strang
> Obey: for sa it aucht to be.
> In presoun for the veritie,
> Ane faithfull brother maid this sang.
> (p.46)

The "faithfull brother" was the German Heinrich Müller, and while there may be some irony in these lines, unquestioning obedience to princes was not to be the Scottish experience. Far more apposite to the Scottish climate, even before the Reformation and the return of Mary, and more typical of the tone of *Ane Compendious Buik*, is Luther's warning about worldly governors in his very popular "Ein danckleid für die höchsten wolthaten ...", here translated as "Ane Sang of the Evangell": "Be war of men, and thair command, / Quhilk me and my word do gainstand" (p.48). "Quha suld my melodie amend", almost certainly a Scottish composition[17], exemplifies the ideological basis for the Scots Protestant distrust of princes, presaging the attitude of many post-Reformation poets:

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17. Mitchell thought this hymn "may possibly be original", since he could find no continental source for it, and "at least several poems in that five-lined stanza are found in other Scottish poets of that time". Helena Shire has identified the original poem on which this is based. It is Scottish and courtly. See *Song, Dance and Poetry of the Court of Scotland Under King James VI* (Cambridge, 1969), p.28.

Give honour onlie to that King,
In quhome our hope allone depend,
And lufe him also ouer all thing.
...
Quha servis the warld, gais a mis,
And sall be far from heuinnis blis,
(For quhy) in Scripture is founding,
Na wicht can serue twa Lordis I wis;
Lufe God in heuin attour all thing.
(pp.82-3)

In time this change in attitude towards princes would turn to outright disavowal of earthly political powers, and later still to expression in satire of total distrust of princes and scepticism about all authority based on birth or, in a final ironic turn, ecclesiastical sanction of the Presbyterian Kirk.

Even when the vocabulary and form of the hymns retains much that is medieval or courtly, the voice of the Reformers is ever present. "The Conception of Christ" is a conventional carol which includes the words "Haill Marie full of Grace", but it nevertheless emphasises Scripture in the didactic manner typical of reforming verse: "Sanct Luc wrytis in his Gospel". "Rycht sore opprest I am with panis smart" has much in common, in tone and manner; with the middle Scots *memento mori* poems:

Rycht sore opprest I am with panis smart,
Baith nicht and day makand my woful mone,
To God, for my misdeid, quhilk hes my hart
Put in sa greit distres with wo begone,
But gif he send me sum remeid anone,
I list not lang my lyfe for till indure,
Bot to the deide bowne, cairfull creature.
(p.62)

Helena Shire has noted the courtly nature of the song's music and the original amorous words,[18] yet the author of the hymn stresses faith above works and, once again, the revelation of the Scriptures:

And cannot help my awin Saluatioun;
Thairfoir is my Justificatioun
Be Christ ...
...

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18. *Song, Dance and Poetry*, p.28. For the song see *Music of Scotland 1500-1700, Musica Brittanica* XV, ed. Elliot and Shire (2nd rev. edn, London, 1964), no.40.

O Lord sen thow thy word to me hes send,
Thou lat it neuer returne to the in vaine.
Bot lat me perseueir vnto the end:
To my auld sin lat me not turne againe;
For than be better in to plaine,
Nor till haif hard thy precept in scripture,
Than knawand it, die cairfull creature.
(p.63)

Little of the courtly original survives in the tone and vocabulary of this verse. The emphasis on the Word doubtless contributed to the simplification of the manner.

Dominating the hymns, original and translated, is an affirmation of faith and a determination to spread that faith, and such evangelism is the reason for the predominance of plain diction and simple stanza forms. Criticism of the old Church is rarely explicit and when it is the evangelical spirit is foremost, with an accompanying tone and manner of instruction, of enlightenment. "Ane Carrell Contrair Idolatrie" addresses "Ze sempill peple, vnperfyte" (p.72) in simple language with pastoral concern rather than satirical venom. Agnes Mure Mackenzie comments on the hymns that "quality varies, but most have dignity, and all show piety rather than polemic"[19] – and it is from their pious and preaching purpose that their form and diction sprang, however radical their political implications.

This didactic piety extends throughout the "Psalmes of David" which follow the hymns. Most of the psalms have a somewhat more ornate diction than the hymns, and not the spareness of expression which was to characterise later Scottish metrical psalmody. The stanzas are often "characteristic of courtly Scots poetry",[20] and stylistically the makars seem closer than in the Hymns. Nevertheless, the use of Scots, the choice of simple, chanting metres and the content of the Psalmes fall well within the pattern of ready communication which the hymns had set.

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19. *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.45.
20. Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry*, p.29.

"Uther new plesand ballatis"

Satire and polemic penetrate more and more in the "section best known to tradition"[21], the series of songs and poems which occupy the remainder of the *Buik*. Furthermore as the satiric purpose becomes more dominant in the pieces, the style changes accordingly, becoming plainer, often more vernacular and certainly more lively.

"Changeit" Songs

Many of the songs are "changeit out of prophane ballatis in godlie sangis for avoydance of sin and harlatrie". The practice of spiritualising secular songs had begun in the medieval church, but was much more extensively employed by the reforming parties throughout Europe and the Scottish editors had many examples upon which to model their collection.[22] The reason for changing secular songs is obvious: if the evangelical message and criticism of the established order were to gain wide acceptance then the use of familiar tunes and words would facilitate that acceptance.

The "changeit" songs and their sources, when known, have received more critical attention than the other material in *Ane Compendious Buik*. Sometimes, such as in the valuable, if selective, work of Helena Shire, the interest has been predominantly in the secular song, the godly versions being an additional aid in tracing the "life" of a given song or tune, usually courtly. For folklorists, of course, the collection provides important evidence of the currency of particular folk songs in the middle years of the sixteenth century. In both the courtly and folk genres, the *Buik* contains much to augment the gleanings about song currency which can be made from *The Complaynt of Scotland*.

Unfortunately, particularly in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century criticism, the aim of the compilers to replace "prophaine" songs with

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21. Mure Mackenzie, *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.45.
22. See Mitchell's introduction to the STS edition, pp.li-lii, lxi and passim.

"godlie" songs has been taken far too literally, with a consequent and largely unwarranted concentration on bawdy songs among the originals, to the exclusion of the courtly songs and to the detriment of the godly songs. Alexander Campbell relegated the *Buik* to a footnote:

> this whimsical serio-comic collection is a mere curiosity, and but marks the spirit of the times. ... It would seem, that the songs of the populace of Scotland had been licentious in a high degree ...[23]

Mitchell distorts his otherwise useful comments with a similarly undue emphasis on the ribald source material and the apparent "coarseness" of some of the ballads. On the one hand he defends the ballads against "a sort of mingled contempt and pity ... for those who could find pleasure in them or encourage the repeated publication of them" by pointing out that adaptation of secular songs "was made by the old Church in the previous two centuries, as well as by the new in the sixteenth"[24]. On the other hand:

> To those who take exception to the occasional coarseness of the ballads, it may perhaps be sufficient to reply that no-one ought to blame them too severely ... who does not know something of the polluting character of those they were intended to supersede, and which they did to a large extent succeed in superseding; and no-one who does know those others will fail to own that a great moral triumph was secured when they were superseded by others so much more free from what was debasing. The passage even from those to them which are not the production of Wedderburn but a somewhat later addition to his book is almost from darkness to light, from filth and ribaldry to comparitive modesty and refinement ....[25]

This misrepresents the degree of "coarseness" in the "changeit" songs, and in their sources. Many of the courtly originals were "amorous" verse, but those for which we have sources are certainly not "filth and ribaldry". Some of the original folk songs were certainly bawdy, but the extent to which they can be regarded as obscene by the modern reader is limited indeed. More worrying than this exaggeration of the "polluted"

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23. *Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland*, footnote to p.64.
24. *A Compendious Book*, p.lxi.
25. Ibid., p.lxiii.

nature of the source material and the extent to which it may have permeated the "godlie" versions, is the suggestion that the "godlie" songs largely superseded their originals. There is ample proof in printed and manuscript collections that the courtly songs upon which many of the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis" are based continued to be sung and played in Scotland well into the seventeenth century.[26] In folk song, much of what Mitchell would have preferred to think superseded was current in his own time, perhaps not in the sixteenth-century form, but neither in a spiritualised form.[27] "John come kiss me now" is still sung in its secular form, while the "godlie" version remains for the few who are familiar with it an academically interesting manifestation of the historical and literary times, and for those who might casually meet with it, what Campbell called a "curiosity". It is possible that the godly versions supplanted some secular songs, or at least for a time so eroded their influence as to cause their demise. This would be more likely when the godly songs had a strong propagandist note and were taken up enthusiastically for the moral sustenance of an embattled reformed kirk. However, it is clear that their lasting success among the folk was generally limited, as it was destined to be. Indeed, the godly versions may have aided in perpetuating certain folk and courtly songs by providing a reminder of them and the publication of the songs without music may have encouraged the continued compilation of complex part-writing for some of the courtly songs while "in the privacy of private collection the old 'prophaine' words did not go unrecorded"[28].

Nevertheless, it is true that *Ane Compendious Buik* was very popular for at least half a century, and that it had a considerable influence on the way in which other poets were to write propaganda and satire. The "changeit" songs are much more than "curiosities". They

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26. See for example Forbes *Cantus*, Mure and Rowallan's *Music Book*, Robert Edwards' *Commonplace Book*. Extracts can be found in *Song, Dance and Poetry* and *Music of Scotland*.

27. Herd and Motherwell collected some of the songs from oral tradition, in their secular forms. Notably, there is a version in Herd's *Ancient Scottish Songs and Heroic Ballads* (18th c.) of "John come kiss me now".

28. Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry*, p.33.

represent the first efforts of reforming propagandists to bring their message, both spiritual and satirical, into the streets and homes of Scotland by means other than hymns. The collection was not randomly assembled and the compilers had a very serious purpose which affected both the form of individual items and the form of the collection as a whole.

Helena Shire has made the interesting suggestion that

> Various though they are in origin, these 'Uther new plesand ballatis' are presented not as a miscellany but rather as an ordered progression. First after the formal psalm-group comes 'For lufe of one I mak my mone', then 'Quho is at my windo, quho' leading — by way of *Deus misereatur* — 'Thy face schaw us sa glorious' to 'In till ane myrthfull Maii morning', now a song of meditation in a May morning garden on Christ crucified and the angel of comfort he sent. ... Songs follow of the calling of the soul to Christ, who is Light, and his glorifying — a fine group of pieces. This is linked through 'With huntis up, with huntis up / it is now perfite day' to songs of the hunting of the soul by Christ, with fierce satire on false doctrine ... .[29]

Although Mrs. Shire has not offered more evidence than this in support of her suggestion, there seems good reason to agree that the collection shows a careful editorial arrangement of the songs for publication. It would seem unlikely that the Wedderburns, staunch and purposeful Reformers, would compile the material without considering the total effect of the collection. The *Buik* appears to be thoughtfully ordered throughout, and the positioning of the most trenchantly satirical material after the instructive, meditative and celebratory material is probably deliberate, satire being more successful when the "right" way is already known.[30]

A sense of progression in subject matter aside, the songs represent a wide and seemingly indiscriminately chosen range of sources. The intention to reach a wide audience, however, sheds some light on the choice of both courtly and folk sources for the songs. Some successfully imitate their originals, occasionally achieving considerable merit in

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29. *Song, Dance and Poetry*, p.29.

30. The possibility that some of the satirical pieces were composed after 1560 and added to the *Buik* for the 1567 edition should be borne in mind.

their own right. Others fail to sustain linguistic and metrical patterns consistent with their originals and impress the reader or singer as pastiche rather than as remodelling or parody.

Nearly all of the songs which are "changeit" from courtly songs fall within the first part of the "uther new plesand ballatis" and the changed versions are mostly concerned with Christ's love for man or the rejection of that love by the singer. While the preponderance of courtly sources in this part of the collection may be partially explained by the intention of the compilers to "turn the thoughts of the singers from the matter of amorous courtly song, to delete its sinful appeal and cancel its currency"[31] by replacing it with the changed songs, and by the intention to introduce Reforming ideas to courtly circles, it is equally plausible that these songs seemed to the compilers the most fit to be employed in describing the relationship between God and man — a relationship, after all, of love-service.

The songs show their origins through stanza forms based on courtly musical settings and a diction retaining many of the resonances of courtly address. "Allone I weip in greit distres", based on a song mentioned in *The Complaynt of Scotland*, is an extreme example of such retention, making repetitive use of "Uncourteslie" in direct imitation of the original, and of other courtly vocabulary. At the same time it includes reference to "Antichrist" and "Ignorance", more familiar from polemical poems. The result is a curious coalescence of effective description, in the medieval manner, of the exiled soul, and a reforming insistence that the exile is the fault of "Antichrist", who is not Satan but the established Roman church. "Allone I weip" departs markedly from the clarity of expression and form typical of the Hymns:

Allone I weip in greit distres,
We are exilit remediles,
And wait nocht quhy,
Fra Goddis word allace! allace!
    Uncourteslie.
Quhair that we suld glaidlie behauld
Our Sauiour, baith zung and auld,

31. Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry*, p.29.

Sa plesandlie,
Now ar we baneist mony fauld,
Uncourteslie,
Thay may our body fra thé bind,
Sa can thay not our hartis and mynde,
Fixit on thé;
Howbeit we be with dolour pynde
Maist cruellie.
O Antichrist, we may thé call,
From Goddis word wald gar us fall
Thy crueltie:
Wald baneis vs from plesouris all
Uncourteslie.
Indurit Ignorance hes slaine
Thy hart, and put vs to greit paine:
Quhat remedie?
Sen we are baneist from Christ allaine,
Uncourteslie.

(p.148)

The versification is capable but the "changeit" song lacks the persuasive power of the hymns and does not achieve the intricate emotional effect of what was originally a song on the sufferings of a neglected lover. The use of terms which would have been highly charged in the courtly context — "uncourteslie", "remediles", "cruellie" — is jarring rather than helpful in a description of a church denying its congregation access to the teachings of Christ. The changed song might have been more successful had it described the individual soul's relationship with Christ. But the retention of so much that is courtly in the song would possibly have made it even less acceptable to an audience more used to the courtly mode than the modern ear.

Even those of the songs based on courtly songs which adopt a simpler diction than "Allone I weip" tend to use rather than reject the idiom of love-service. "Go hart, vnto the lampe of lycht" succeeds as a godly song about the donation of the soul to Christ, having in its favour repetition and simplicity of form. Yet phrases such as "do service and honour", "thy onlie remeid", "but dissimulation", "as leill and trew serviture" suggest that the poet deliberately retained the courtly; that he was aware of his register and depending on some audience recognition of the parallels between his subject and that of the original song:

Go, hart, to thy onlie remeid
Descending from the heuenlie tour;
Thé to deliuer from pyne, and deide,
Go, hart, vnto thy Sauiour.
(pp.162-3)

"Go, hart", as well as achieving a happy congruence of idea, courtly with reforming, uses a simple, four line ballad stanza. Such an understanding of the possibilities for propaganda of register and form was a feature of Scottish poetry from non-court circles after the Reformation. The courtly idiom, however, would then be used for parody, or not used at all.

The largest audience for *Ane Compendious Book*, and the faithful brethren who would achieve reformation, were among the commons — the middle class and the "common weill". Their most familiar form of entertainment was folk song, which no doubt explains the inclusion of changed folk songs in the *Buik*.

"Quho is at my windo" is the second song after the Psalms, following a song of love-longing in the courtly style, "For lufe of one, I mak my mone". In a dialogue between "ane wratcheit mortall" and his god, "Quho is at my windo" places the man, as the suitor, outside the house and God inside. The song imaginatively exploits the door and window imagery of its somewhat bawdy original, but turns these images to its own purpose of exploring the nature of salvation. There is a faintly liturgical pattern to this exploration: the sinner asks for mercy, acknowledges his guilt, promises repentance, and seeks God's guidance for the means to salvation. Reforming ideas are never absent:

O Lord I haif offendit thé,
Excuse thairof thair can nane be,
I half followit thame that sa teichit me
...
Man I gaif thé nocht fre will,
That thow suld my Gospell spill
...
I haif spokin in my Scripture,
I will the deid of na creature:
Quha will ask mercy, sall be sure
And in at my dure for to go.
(pp.133-5)

The diction is not the vernacular of the folk, but it is plain in the same way as the Hymns: the vocabulary is simple and the word order almost conversational with little use of qualifying or descriptive phrases. The stanza, based on the original folk song, is also extremely simple. The poet is at his best when he is closest to the original song:

> I ask naething of thé thairfoir,
> But lufe for lufe to lay in stoir,
> Give me thy hart, I ask no moir,
> And in at my dure thow sall go.
> (p.136)

Here, the simple form, expressing a simple idea, succeeds as a godly song, retaining much of the original folk song. Courtly songs, in comparison, often break down into pastiche except when based on a relatively unadorned original. This suggests that the folk idiom, carried in plain diction and stanzas, was more appropriate for the expression of the simple message of the Reformers, a lesson which did not go unheeded by other propagandist poets in Scotland. However, in the changing of songs for *Ane Compendious Buik*, if incongruous ideas and vocabulary were imposed on a folk song the medium became as ineffective as poorly changed courtly song. Judicious choice of originals and skilful matching of tone and register were clearly the keys to changing any song for propagandist purposes.

The godly version of "Johne cum kis me now" has received more attention than the other "changeit" songs, and has probably been a major source of the view that the changed songs are mere curiosities. Agnes Mure Mackenzie describes "Quho is at my windo" as "gracious", but quotes the first two verses of "Johne cum kis me now" as "unintentionally comic"[32].

"Johne cum kis me now" fails as a spiritual song partly because the original song's refrain was retained, producing an unfortunate clash of sensual and devotional ideas. But it fails, too, because the folk stanza and folk associations cannot carry the burden of didacticism, unsuitable vocabulary and abstract ideas. Johne is universalised in the second verse: "Johne representit man / be grace celestial". The third verse reverts to portraying Johne and God as rather individual "folk", in the manner of medieval miracle plays:

32. *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.45.

For Johne Goddis grace it is,
(Quha list till expone the same);
Och, Johne, thow did amis,
Quhen that thow loste this name.
(p.158)

The expository tone and vocabulary of the bracketed "Quha list till expone the same" are quite out of place in such a context. The next few verses describe the creation, the fall and the crucifixion in an unaffected style consistent with the popular associations of the folk song, but then the choice of words becomes more "scholastic", the tone more didactic and shrill:

Bot the abhominatioun of desolatioun
Thow settis in the haly place,
Be Antichristis fals persuatioun
My Sonnis passioun to deface.
(p.159)

In the middle section of the song God takes on the aspect of an almost condescending, "cleverer" master, scolding Johne. One of the strengths of "Quho is at my windo" is that the folk idiom is ideally suited to the depiction of a gentle, pastoral relationship between God and man. For much of "Johne cum kis me now" such a relationship is lost to view so that towards the end of the song, when the poet re-establishes contact with the original song's refrain, his intention to dwell on the tender love of God for every individual is forced into a particularly inappropriate mould, inconsistent with the character of God as He has appeared in the body of the poem:

My Prophetis call, my Prechouris cry,
Johne cum kis me now,
Johne cum kis me by and by,
And mak na moir adow.
Ane Spreit I am incorporate,
Na mortal E can me se
Zit my word dois intimate
Johne, how thow moste kis me.
(p.160)

When the homely folk diction is taken up again in the last three verses the character of God remains unsympathetic:

Mak no delay, cum by and by,
Quhen that I thé call,

> Lest deith do stryke thé suddantlie,
> And sa cum not at all.
>   Gif thow cum not quhill thow hes space,
> Bot my Gospell dois contempne:
> I will tak from thé my grace,
> And my word will thé condampne.
>
> (p.161)

God is not the convincing father figure and shepherd of souls which the last verse would have him be:

>   Of all that cum I will none reiect,
> Na creature, greit nor small;
> For Christis saik, I will thame accept,
> And geue thame lyfe Eternall.
>
> (p.161)

The use of the secular refrain in parts of the poem clearly produces an "unintentionally comic" effect, especially for the modern ear, but the changing of "Johne cum kis me now" fails for more reason than this. Inconsistent vocabulary and tone contribute to an inconsistent characterisation of God and a degree of falseness about the song. It is likely that other propagandist poets learnt from these mistakes as much as they learnt from the successes of *Ane Compendious Buik*. Had the changer of "Johne cum kis me now" maintained contact with the plain diction and popular atmosphere of his original, perhaps developing the character of God as it is hinted at in verse three, and changing the word "kis" in the refrain, the song might have worked very effectively as popular propaganda. As it is, too much is forced into a limited and incongruous framework.

The rendering of "Our Gude Man" in the collection faced a similar potential for the ridiculous and clumsy, but like "Quho is at my windo", it succeeds. The picture it draws of God as "our gude man", a reliable father and pastoral guardian, is touching and appropriate.

> And our gude man, that euer was kynde,
> Requyris of vs ane faithfull mynde,
> Syne cheritabill be euerie clan,
> For lufe onlie of our gude man.
>
> chorus Till our gude man, till our gude man
> Keip faith and lufe, till our gude man.
>
> (p.199)

The "changeit" folk songs which have strength utilize the imagery of their originals, placing God and Man within an everyday context, comprehensible to a "sempill" audience and at the same time apposite to the reforming emphases on direct relationship between a man and his God and carrying of the Word into the daily lives of the people. Later poets drew on the folk idiom in the same way, but instead of changing folk songs, they composed in a style based on folk song, or on folk speech and folk habits of mind. The early efforts of the poets who changed songs provided examples of how to exploit the folk idiom, revealing what would succeed and what would not.

Satire

The items holding the most interest for the present discussion all fall towards the end of *Ane Compendious Buik*. A number have contents indicating composition after 1559, and they were probably added to the collection for the 1567 edition. These pieces are not only later chronologically, but a significant proportion of them have a modernity of voice and style which distinguishes them from the rest of the material. By "modernity" I mean "fitting for the times" and "not medieval". Some of the satires anticipate verse written in seventeenth-century Scotland rather than harking back to older poetry. The poets had not completely abandoned their poetic heritage but they seem to have been sufficiently optimistic about the new order to be able to break, altogether on occasions, with older conventions. It is as if the revolution in religion and society had made its mark on poetry in the form of a greater confidence of utterance and a more accomplished use of the simpler diction and "protestant" idiom the beginnings of which can be seen in the hymns and some of the changed songs.

Prefacing the satiric material is "O Christ, quhilk art the lycht of day", which continues the theme of enlightenment from the hymns and changed songs, with Christ's light being asked to shine into:

> This nycht I call Idolatrie,
> The clude ouerspred, Hypocresie,
> Send from the Prince of all vnrycht,
> O Christ, for till obscure thy lycht.
> (p.173)

While this cannot rightly be called a satire, it outlines those practices which were, or had been, "antichrist" and defines those persons who were the perpetrators of the darkness. Those who shun the light are "fulis", and those directly responsible for keeping the light from the people receive stronger criticism and more specific derision than at any point in the *Buik* thus far:

> Sum makis God of Freiris Caip,
> Thay Monstouris mot in gallous gaip,
> For thay have led vs lang astray
> Fra Christ, quhilk is the lycht of day.
>
> Sum mumlit Aueis, sum craknit Creidis,
> Sum makis Goddis of thair beidis,
> Quhilk wat nocht quhat thay sing nor say,
> Allace! this is ane wrangous way.
> (p.174)

Following this outline of abuses is the song "With huntis up", based on an English "merry ballade" of the reign of Henry VIII. The fox and sheep imagery had many ancestors in medieval anti-clerical poems, but the picture of Christ as the hunter was new, at least to Scots verse:

> With huntis up, with huntis up,
> It is now perfite day,
> Jesus, our King, is gaine in hunting,
> Quha lykis to speid thay may.
>
> Ane cursit Fox lay hid in Rox,
> This lang and mony ane day,
> Deuoring scheip, quhill he mycht creip,
> Nane mycht him schaip away.
>
> It did him gude to laip the blude
> Of zung and tender lambis,
> Nane culd he mis, for all was his,
> The zung anis with thair dammis.
>
> The hunter is Christ, that huntis in haist,
> The hundis ar Peter and Paull,
> The Paip is the Fox, Rome is the Rox,
> That rubbis vs on the gall.
> (pp.174-5)

This poem differs from its predecessors in the *Buik* in that the poet's chief object is satire. There is a fighting spirit, but no direct evangelism and no deliberate instruction in the faith, rather a tone

of preaching to the converted. The satire is handled with confidence and although some of the images are stock images already thoroughly familiar from Lindsay, they are employed with a lightness of touch and a "tongue in cheek" turn of phrase which looks forward to later satirists more than it looks back to Lindsay. An occasional awkward inversion results from the double rhyme in the first and third lines of each stanza, but the poet seems aware of the way in which rhyme can enhance satire. The Pope is the prime target and the poet does not equivocate:

He had to sell the Tantonie bell,
    And Pardonis thairin was,
Remissioun of sinnis, in auld scheip skinnis,
    Our saulis to bring from grace.
...
To sum, God wot, he gaif tot quot,
    And vther sum pluralitie.
(pp.175-6)

Interestingly, some of the references to the Pope's activities are in the past tense, from which it might be assumed that the song was composed after 1559. The last verse suggests that victory was not yet in the grasp of the Reformers, as does the use of allegory, albeit threadbare. Certainly, this song was composed much closer to 1560 than the hymns:

O blissit Peter, the Fox is ane lier,
    Thow knawis weill it is nocht sa,
Quhill at the last, he salbe downe cast,
    His peltrie, Pardonis, and all.
(pp.176-7)

This optimism, rather than actual victory, probably contributed to the confidence of the satire and enhanced the sure touch of the satirist.

"Baneist is Faith now euerie quhair", the next song, displays no such optimism, being a bitter lament on the plight of the reforming party:

Thay keip the key from vs, allace!
    Quhairby enter suld we,
Thay keip the key from vs, allace!
And puttis vs downe all mercyles,
We are ouerthrawin in euerie place,
    That blyith we can not be.
(p.177)

A careful arrangement of the collection is again indicated by the last verse of this song which calls on Christ, the hunter of the song before, to "Ryse up ... / And from thair crueltie,"

> Defend vs, according to thy word,
> Or we sall perische be fyre and sword,
> That schawis the veritie.
>
> (pp.177-8)

Those against whom Christ is to defend the Reformers are the subject of the song that follows, promising God's vengeance on false prophets. Examples from the Old Testament are used freely, a practice which became commonplace in later protestant verse. The refrain is hopeful and there is an explicit political threat:

> Musing greitlie in my mynde,
> The cruell Kirkmen in thair kynde,
> Quhilk bene indurit and sa blind,
> And trowis neuer to cum downe.
>
> Thocht thow be Paip or Cardinall,
> Sa heich in thy Pontificall,
> Resist thow God, that creat all,
> Than downe, thow sall cum downe.
> ...
> Thocht thow flow in Philosophie,
> Or graduate in Theologie,
> Zit and thow syle the veritie,
> Than downe, thow sall cum downe.
> ...
> Is thair na ma? quhy said I all?
> Zit mony thousand sall haif ane fall,
> Quhilk haldis Christin men in thrall,
> Princes sall put thame downe.
>
> (pp.178, 180)

Among the "changeit" songs there is one on the folly and mutability of mortal life with the same opening line as this song and the refrain "And downe sall cum, downe ay, downe ay". The four line stanzas of both songs, and the refrains, are reminiscent of folk song and popular balladry, particularly of the commonly used folk refrain "Down-a down, hey down-a down", or "with a down, derry, derry, derry, down, down". The opening words, "Musing greitlie in my mynde", are the same as an English sixteenth-century court song[33], and similar to an almost

33. The English song is in BM Add. MS 18752.

formulaic opening in Scots "philosophical" poems[34]. This song is therefore a mixture of courtly and popular influences. It departs much more freely from the "philosophical" framework of its originals in the courtly tradition than does the first "Musing greitlie" song in the collection, and it makes more attempt at satire.

In the light of this emphasis on bringing down established kirkmen, the next item has a singularly appropriate opening line: "The Bischop of Hely brak his neck". This is a warning to kirkmen to reform or be forced to do so:

> Of this we haif experience
> Of divers Natiounis roun about,
> For Inglis Prelatis, Duche, and Dence,
> For thair abuse ar rutit out.
>
> Reforme in tyme, leif zour tyrannie,
> First mend zour lyfe, syne leirne to preiche,
> Thocht wageour Freiris faine wald lie,
> The truth will furth, and will not leiche,
> For euerie man dois vther teiche,
> And comptis nocht zour crueltie,
> Except ze mend, I will nocht fleiche,
> Ze sall end all mischeuouslie.
>
> (p.182)

Here, boldly articulated, are the popular perspective and popular voice of a new age. "For euerie man dois vther teiche" is a deliberate statement of the connection between enlightenment and popular action, and would serve as a practical reminder that the power that came of knowledge was no longer the mysterious preserve of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. The new knowledge and aspirations among the people were the means by which the old order was to be changed.

In style, too, "The Bishop of Hely" strikes a new note. The last four lines of the stanza are used in a similar fashion to the way eighteenth-century poets used "Standart Habby" for satire, punching home the message with short, sharp phrases, distinguished in metre and intent from the rest of the stanza:

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34. See, for example, Dunbar's "Of Deming" which opens with "Musing allone this hinder nicht", and Bannatyne MS, STS, vol. II, p.173, "Moving in mind of mony divers thing".

The Leuites at thair awin hand,
Thay reft thair tiend, and mekle mair,
Expres aganis Goddis command,
Thair huredome haitit he rycht sair,
Thairfoir, God send thame sic cruell weir,
Thay tint the feild, the Ark was tane,
Hely fell downe, throw suddane feir,
And brak his neck, and coller bane.
(pp.180-1)

The diction of this poem is often close to what was later to be called "the language of the saints", typified by Old Testament imagery, strong words like "tyrannie" and "huredome", conjuring up a tone of righteous indignation which was used as a battle cry. Burns satirised this manner of expression among the "auld lichts" in his time, and in the seventeenth century others satirised its use by the Covenanters. "The Bishop of Hely" also makes use of the conversational diction which became characteristic of later Scots poetry, flowing easily, using colloquial phrases — "sic lyke justice", "and mekle mair", "evin befor zour eyis" — which at once identify the poet with an unpretentious audience and undermine the object of the satire by appearing to be unwilling to concede even the favour of "high sounding" words:

For zour abuse may be ane brother
To Tharis, als lyke in similitude,
As euer ane eg was lyke ane other.
(p.181)

Neither a changer nor an imitator, but an original poet of considerable talent, the author of "The Bishop of Hely" found a free hand to turn language and metre to his own purposes. The resultant poem is satirically and poetically more effective than most of the "changeit" songs.

The next few items in the *Buik* return to the more usual pattern of mixed influences. "I am wo for thir wolfis sa wylde" bewails the persecution of the Reformers in stilted five-line stanzas. As in "The Bishop of Hely", current events are the focus of the poem, and when temporal powers are called on for help we recall the earlier warning, "Princes sall put thame downe":

Thay brint, and heryit Christin men,
And flemit thame full far;
Thay said, thay did bot erre,
That spake of the Commandimentis ten,

Or red the words of Jesus Christ.
...
Nobill Lordis of greit renowne,
That favouris the treuth,
On zour saulis haif reuth,
And put the Antechristis downe,
Quhilk wald suppres the Word of Christ.
(p.183)

However clumsily expressed, the urgency of the situation was fully appreciated: "Scotland was never in harder case, / Sen Fergus first it wan" (p.184).

The time for warnings and good counsel was past, and the verse reflects a growing air of impatience. "Allace! vnkindlie, Christ we haif exilit" exploits and satirises the courtly style as it rails against conservative appeals to tradition, against unwillingness to change the church because it had always been there, and the establishment entrenched for so long: "And euer this was the blating of our queir, / Fatheris of haly Kirk, this xv. hunder zeir". This refrain ends each stanza as a monotonous chant, reinforcing the satire, until in the last stanza the poet bursts into a flyting:

O cankerit carrionis, o ze rottin stakis,
O stangand Edderis, and o ze poisound snakis,
Sen ze will not change zour indurit will,
Knawand zour fault, zit will continew still,
Sing on guk, guk, the blating of zour queir,
Fals Fatheris of haly Kirk, this xv. hunder zeir.
(p.186)

Others wrote bald, outspoken, almost self-righteous satire in the four-line, alternately rhyming stanza of popular balladry:

Of the fals fyre of Purgatorie,
Is not left ane sponk:
Thairfoir sayis Gedde, wayis me,
Gone is Preist, Freir and Monk.

The reik sa wounder deir thay solde,
For money, gold and landis:
Quhill half the ryches on the molde
In seasit in thair handis.
...
Zit sat thay heich in Parliament,
Lyke Lordis of greit Renowne:
Quhill now that the New Testament
Hes it and thame brocht downe.

And thocht thay fuffe at it, and blaw,
Ay quhill thair belleis ryve:
The mair thay blaw, full weill thay knaw,
The mair it dois misthryve.

(pp.186, 187)

The verse form, diction, word order and attitudes of this poem are calculated to appeal to an unlearned audience, to the lay people of burgh, village and countryside. Rather than seeking out songs belonging to the popular audience and changing them, using their popular elements but turning them to a largely didactic purpose, this poet deliberately adopted the popular style as a satiric positive. The sing-song stanza, the everyday vocabulary of domestic life among the middle and labouring classes and the "community" voice all represent "right", and indeed "might". A growing analogy can be perceived between plain speech and common sense, both of which were taken to be the province of the common man, who by this time was being urged to play a major role in the achievement and consolidation of reformation and was increasingly aware of his potential to affect political events. Lindsay had warned his King of the dangers of ignoring popular needs and popular opinion: "The Common-weill mon vther wayis be styllit / Or be my faith the King wilbe begyllit". The author of "Of the fals fyre of Purgatorie" realised that regardless of the monarch's actions, and the actions of "Spirituality", after 1559 the "common-weill" were "vther wayis ... styllit", and this is reflected in the popular style he chose to describe the way in which the New Testament, analogous with popular religious revolution, had "brocht downe" Parliament and the ecclesiastical establishment.

This is not to imply that some of the satires in *Ane Compendious Buik* were composed by peasant farmers or town labourers. They were undoubtedly the work of educated men, probably middle class, like many of the leading figures of the reforming party. But while some members of the nobility, and the middle class — merchants, lawyers, small landowners — were at the forefront of the reforming movement, they were conscious that the "masses" must be behind them. That the masses were behind them explains the style of "Of the fals fyre of Purgatorie".

The poet acknowledged the effectiveness of clarity of expression, was sensitive to the propaganda value of adopting a "low" style, and at the same time used a popular form to trumpet a popular success.

Beginning with some of the later poems in *Ane Compendious Buik*, and more and more frequently in the wider range of post-Reformation satiric verse, two styles predominate. When the poets addressed their own class they used a plain style, intelligent but not "scholastic", controlled but not complex, which was partly a result of their rejection of the courtly ethos on moral grounds, and partly a positive response to the Knoxian emphasis on plain speech and clear communication of ideas. This style reflects the influence of the English Bible and English controversial literature on Scottish literary diction. When poets wrote for the broadside audience, for the man in the street or on the farm, who may have been sufficiently literate to read the verse or may have learnt it from a neighbour's reading, the verse form and diction were fashioned to suit that audience without condescension. Neither the nobility nor the middle classes of Scotland were so far away from the general populace in speech or in habits of mind as to have lost the ability comfortably and unselfconsciously to use the language and milieu of the lower classes in their verse. Scots poets had long exploited the manners and speech of the peasants for comic and satiric effect, and not necessarily unsympathetically, as is evidenced by Dunbar's racy diction in some of his satires in comparison, for example, to his religious poems; the use of folk life and speech in *Christis Kirk* and *Peblis to the Play*; or Lindsay's masterful control of language registers and peasant attitudes in *Ane Satyre*. For the satirists of Reformation Scotland, however, the adoption of the "uncourtly" style was as much political as poetical in inspiration. Furthermore, the "uncourtly" mode, whether it was urbane satire for the well-educated reader, broadside propaganda in the "low" style, or a combination of the two, became the normal mode for satire and eventually for other types of verse.

This new satiric mode emerges with force in several poems at the very end of *Ane Compendious Buik*. The first of them is "Remember man,

Remember man", possibly based on an older carol,[35] but appearing to draw on a source only in the first stanza. The stanza of the carol is not at all similar to the stanza of the poem[36]. "Remember man" uses the same conversational diction as was used in "The Bishop of Hely", "Of the fals fyre of Purgatorie" and the several poems in four-line stanzas following it. A comparison of "Remember man" with Burns is telling:

> Thair half hag matines fast thay patter,
> Thay gif zow breid, and sellis zow watter,
> His cursingis on zow als thay clatter,
> Thocht thay can hurt zow not,
> Gif ze will geue thame Caip or Bell,
> The clink thairof thay will zow sell,
> Suppose the Saule suld ga to hell,
> Ze gat na thing unbocht.
>
> ("Remember man", pp.201-2)

> But I gae mad at their grimaces,
> Their sighan, cantan, grace-prood faces,
> Their three-mile prayers, and hauf-mile graces,
> Their raxan conscience,
> Whase greed, revenge, an' pride disgraces
> Waur nor their nonsense.
>
> ("To the Rev. John M'Math")

The cumulative rhymes and rapidly moving verse, the careful choice of words which allows for no extraneous "padding", and the appeal to common sense in the face of nonsense, in each poem shows the satirist's grasp of his medium. It is as if the demands of propaganda, and the example of the earlier "changeit" songs, forced a "coming of age" on satiric poetry in the years around 1560. Satire had come a long way in a short time from the somewhat halting, semi-allegorical "With huntis up" (probably a model for "Remember man", nevertheless), to the sophisticated management of content and form in "Remember man".

An increase in satiric versatility and control is even more obvious in "The Paip, that Pagane full of pryde", which Mitchell calls

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35. See Mitchell's notes for comments on this possibility and some stanzas of the older carol.

36. The stanza of "Remember man" is similar to that of Dunbar's "Inconstancy of Luve" except that the 4th and 8th lines are shorter in the Dunbar poem. Burns used the same stanza as "Remember man" in "Corn Riggs" and several other pieces, all of which are songs.

"probably the most trenchant, gleeful yet contemptuous, as well as the coarsest in the collection". He stresses that "with even greater certainty than of several of the previous bitter satirical ballads" we can be sure that this one cannot be attributed to the Wedderburns. Mitchell agrees with Laing that the "'the expressions used evidently refer to events when the Protestants, under the name of the Congregation, had taken matters into their own hands, or to the year 1559'".[37]

The refrain, "Hay trix, tryme go trix, vnder the grene wod tre", is surely based on a folk song, although a source has not been positively identified. Apart from functioning as a singer's guide to the tune, the refrain is a satiric contrivance. It is not unthinkingly "tacked on" to stanzas apparently unrelated in content — not an example of an "unintentionally comic" clash of genres. The frolicsome and rather frivolous associations of the refrain contrast with the poet's serious concern with religious corruption, and ironically underline his dismissal of the Pope as a tangible threat to the new church. Pardoners, cardinals, bishops, abbots, friars and nuns are similarly dismissed, the poet's derisive gestures animated by his conviction. The "Hay trix" refrain is a deliberate use of a genre reminiscent of the culture of the "masses", emphasising the poet's alliance with "ordinary" people, and bolstering their sense of justification and solidarity against an established institution. The audience, regardless of social position, could identify with and participate in the ridicule of the old Church and its hierarchy:

> The Paip, that Pagane full of pryde,
> He hes vs blindit lang,
> For quhair the blind the blind dois gyde,
> Na wounder baith ga wrang;
> Lyke Prince and King, he led the Regne,
> Of all Iniquitie:
>   Hay trix, tryme go trix, vnder the grene wod tre.
>   (p.204)

This exemplifies what became a widespread satiric style in Scotland. The diction is sprinkled with colloquialisms and proverbialisms and the

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37. *A Compendious Buik*, p.293.

stanza, with internal rhymes, is rhythmically sing-song. Much of the content was commonplace. There are strong echoes of the middle Scots poets and particularly of Lindsay, but there is a gusto and a sense of the widest community about this poem which is not common in satire before 1559:

> The blind Bischop, he culd nocht preiche,
> For playing with the lassis,
> The sillie Freir behulffit to fleiche,
> For almous that he assis,
> The Curat, his Creid he culd nocht reid,
> Schame fall the cumpanie.
> Hay trix, tryme go trix &c.
> (p.205)

Stock criticisms of the old Church are turned to this poet's advantage, tauntingly repeated, their very familiarity to the audience a powerful comment on the crumbling status of Rome in Scotland. Sexual innuendo and bawdry are consciously derivative of folk song,[38] and a popular perception of things is evoked in the "knowing" voice, an attitude of mixed astonishment and amusement at the antics of one's betters:

> Of lait I saw thir lymmaris stand,
> Lyke mad men at mischeif,
> Thinking to get the vpper hand,
> Thay luke efter releif,
> Bot all in vaine, go tell thame plaine,
> That day will neuer be.
> Hay trix, tryme go trix &c.
> (p.206)

The same voice is present to some degree in "Knaw ze not God omnipotent", but the poem is more ambitious. It is a satire on the Mass, opening with several stanzas outlining Christian belief and stating that the Mass, statues, altars and saints have nothing to do with such belief and even less to do with Man's final reckoning with God:

> Thair is na Sanct may saif zour saule,
> Fra ze transgres,
> Suppose Sanct Peter and Sanct Paule
> Had baith said Mes.
> ...
> And sen na Sanct zour Saule may saif,
> Perchance ze will speir at me than,

---

38. Mitchell has omitted 4 lines of the text as *trops libres*. The text is printed in full in Ramsay's *Evergreen*.

How may the Paip thir Pardounis haif,
With power baith of beist and man?
Throw na thing bot ane Fenzeit Faith
For halynes:
Inuentit wayis to get thame graith,
Lyke as the Mes.
(pp.209-10)

Interestingly, the stanza of this poem is very similar to the later favourite "Standart Habby", differing only in having two additional lines. The metre and rhyme patterns are identical. Commenting on the way in which a number of Burns' stanzas, including the Habbie stanza, are descended from Middle English, Helen Damico says of the Middle English lyric:

> To communicate as directly as possible, its creators ... avoided complex rhyme schemes, intricate imagery, and complicated structures, in favour of strong rhythms, self-evident images, and rigid organization.[39]

It is significant that the use of such stanzas increased with the coming of the Reformation, and the rekindling of the need for wide, popular communication. And just as Burns found that the Habbie stanza conveyed "a cause-and-effect tension between the main and tail end sections",[40] allowing irony to be generated, so the Reformation satirists sought out stanzas which would do the same. The language of this poem is as carefully calculated for effect as the choice of stanza. Because he has undertaken a theological argument the poet expresses himself clearly in the vernacular but exhibits his own learning and understanding, a "superior" understanding, by the imposition of scholarly vocabulary on the language of the streets. In effect, the poet ironically stresses that he can play the same game as the opposition; he knows the rules and the jargon, but in fact the truth is simple. The rhetoric of the Catholic theologians is adroitly shown to be part of the "inuentit wayis to get thame graith":

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39. "Sources of Stanza Forms Used by Burns", *SSL*, 12 (1975), 207.
40. Ibid., p.209.

Gif God was maid of bittis of breid,
Eit ze not oulklie sax or sevin,
As it had bene ane mortall feid,
Quhill ze had almaist heryit heuin;
Als mony Deuillis ze man deuoir,
      Quhill hell grow les;
Or doutles we dar not restoir
      Zow to zour Mes.

Gif God be transubstanciall
In breid, with *hoc est Corpus Meum*,
Quhy war ze sa vnnatural,
As tak him in zour teith, and sla him,
Tripartit and deuydit him,
      At zour dum dres?
Bot God knawis how ze gydit him,
      Mumling zour Mes.

(pp.210-11)

"Knaw ze not God Omnipotent" combines the common-sense plain-spokenness of the "low" style with a wit and intelligence in word play and tone which would appeal to a learned audience. Such a "mixed" style could be inclusive of both the popular and sophisticated audiences, entertaining both and patronising neither.

In *Ane Compendious Buik* there is evidence of conscious experimentation with various styles and genres — translations, plain style hymns, changed courtly songs, changed folk song, and, by the time the Reformation was clearly won, some of the poets were eagerly exploring the possibilities of satiric verse. Several of the later items in the *Buik* have a voice all their own: not an echo of the courtly or imitation of the folk, but a poetry for the circumstances, strident at times, often identifying itself with the lower orders of the society, more truly vernacular than any "educated" poetry before it, and at the same time capable of irony and intelligent satire.

The satirists of *Ane Compendious Buik* owed much to their forebears in the court, in the European protestant churches and among the folk, but the effective use of a simplified diction, less complex stanzas, and a popular voice for poetry was clearly a phenomenon closely related to the growing confidence of the Scottish Protestants. By the time the Word, and the propaganda, had done their work in overthrowing the old

Church, a new voice had come into Scots poetry, and the satirists and polemicists of the years between 1560 and 1603 were to take advantage of it.

PART II

REFORMATION BROADSHEET VERSE

> Till sum not plesand, ȝit sa plane
> That all the godly was content.
>
> John Davidson

Chapter 3

SATIRICAL POEMS OF THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

The Parliamentary sanction of the Scottish Reformation in 1560 did not mean a cessation of publication of controversial literature. On the contrary, the failure of the Roman Catholic Queen Mary to ratify the legislation on her return from France in 1561, and the consequent lack of political confidence concerning the Reformed Kirk, meant that while the end of the old church was felt to be assured, it was yet a lengthy process to codify the theological bases of the new church, to define its role in the society and to determine the future relationship between church and state. These matters were publicly worked through in the pamphlets and broadsheets which poured from the Scottish presses in even greater numbers than they had before the Reformation.

Although it was possible after 1560 to express freely protestant religious opinions, poets were still, at the least, ill-advised to air political opinions contrary to those of the court. Since the supporters of the Reformed Kirk and those of the Queen were very often in disagreement, many pamphleteers and poets found themselves in "opposition" despite the Reformation. So, while controversial literature after 1560 rings with a new confidence and a majority voice, much of it was published in anonymous or pseudonymous broadsheet.

The most readily accessible collection of such material is James Cranstoun's *Satirical Poems of the time of the Reformation*, an amply documented and carefully edited selection of forty eight poems from the broadsheets and manuscripts of the years 1565-1584.[1] "Satirical Poems" is possibly a misnomer in regard to many of the poems, since some are

1. *Satirical Poems of the time of the Reformation*, ed. James Cranstoun, 2 vols (STS, 1891; AMS reprint, 1974). Hereafter *Satirical Poems*.

elegies, some eulogies, and others purely propaganda or polemic, making little attempt at satire. Quite a few, however, are satires, and they are the poems which played a significant part in shaping the future of Scottish poetry.

Satirical Poems is notable for its diverse contents. In type, style and purpose, a remarkable range of poetry is represented. This diversity raises the question of influences, and, unavoidably, of the competence of the poets. It is possible that the poets were confused by the welter of examples available to them from courtly literature and wide-ranging sources like *Ane Compendious Buik*, blindly following whatever lead they fancied. Perhaps many failed to recognise the satiric success of some of the later items in the *Buik*, or were simply not good enough poets to determine for themselves a range of styles for various purposes. To some extent all of these possibilities could apply to a number of poems in the collection, but there is substantial evidence in others of continued experimentation with different forms of verse, registers of language and manners of expression. The experimentation is often closely related to the matter to be communicated and the purpose of the communication, particularly if that purpose was ridicule or satire. It is, in fact, the experimental nature of much of the material, more so than the stylistic indecision of some of the poets, which gives Dr. Cranstoun's collection such variety, and renders comparative discussion of the poems rather difficult, at least in the matter of finding adequate descriptive terms for the practice of the poets. Poems can be labelled according to type — elegy, eulogy, advice poem, squib, pasquil, invective — but their style often does not fall within the conventions for those types. There is not an established critical terminology for dealing with popular broadside verse of this type, no doubt because it is "minor" and because it has rarely been given serious critical attention that is analytical rather than descriptive. However, it is not useful to continue to define the styles according to what they are not — not courtly, not medieval, not like Lindsay, or not like folksong.

Conclusions about deliberate experimentation and about the conception of style for the popular poets can be reached by examining the

several modes which are not simply imitation of the courtly and asking what they attempt, why they attempted it, and how they achieve their ends. Four main categories of verse can be isolated. Firstly, those which are "blended", drawing on both the popular and courtly in a variety of ways. Secondly, those which reject the courtly and turn to an idiom reflective of psalmody and pulpit oratory, the "godly" diction. Thirdly, the style of some of the later "Gude and Godlie Ballatis", the new style that is popular, plainspeaking, freely drawing on the folk idiom and adopting what the poets saw as the voice of "the common man". This is the style which can first be called "vernacular poetry". Lastly, the style which can be called "plain": the diction is neither courtly nor vernacular, tending to be anglicised, witty in an eighteenth-century sense, educated and urbane. All of these styles of verse can broadly be classified as popular, and as a result of their popularity have a number of things in common. Virtually all were published or intended to be published as broadsheets or if they were kept in manuscript were intended to be disseminated in that form among persons of like opinions, usually the author's friends and party associates.

It was broadside verse, or partisan verse, with its concern for wide communication and popular impact which altered the direction of Scottish poetry, paving the way for the major poets of the future. The "literary" poets left an example of lasting importance, but the influence of the courtly poets has been over-emphasised, whilst the practice of the "satirical poets" of the "time of the Reformation" has been virtually ignored as a link between the middle Scots poets and the eighteenth-century "revival".

Sources of Broadsheet Styles

In *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, David Craig touches upon the relationship between the reformation satirists and the eighteenth-century vernacular poets but does not fully explore the implications of the question he raises. His retrospective glance at reformation satire is in support of a claim that there were "real deficiencies in the way of life which was ingrained in the vernacular" and in vernacular poetry.

The effect of "*reduction* or simplifying caricature" in vernacular poetry to him "seems dangerous to take as an unquestionable poetic strength, both because of the very quality of intrinsic feeling it embodies and because of the limitations of range it suggests in the tradition as a whole".[2] Taking as a criterion for his argument T.S. Eliot's "ideas of the subtle and the crude" (expressed in the essay on Marlowe), Craig tackles the effects of Calvinism on Scottish poetry by a rather circuitous route. His criticisms of widely held views of post-Reformation literature and society are incisive, but his response does little to enhance understanding of the links between eighteenth-century vernacular poetry and reformation poetry:

> Explanations of what has happened to Scottish life since the Reformation, or since the Unions, have too often treated the cultural tradition as though it were something which could be turned on and off, channelled this way or that, like a water-supply. For example, it is almost an axiom of Scottish Renaissance criticism ... that what the Scottish imagination mainly suffered from after the Reformation was some suppression of profane art and worldly feelings by a Calvinist Church. But if we read the literature, in the light of Eliot's ideas of the subtle and the crude, we find that what is happening is not so much censorship or suppression as the bringing out, by Calvinism, into full potency of a native trait which itself tended to thwart or curtail imagination.[3]

Craig pinpoints those characteristics of style which have been here outlined in relation to *Ane Compendious Buik* and which became firmly established between 1560 and 1603. The effect, for instance, "whereby making the subject concrete, bringing it to realisation, thereby reduces it to the common terms in which it can be felt to be absurd"; a style which "plainly draws on spoken, unliterary Scots"[4]; and a tone of "sceptical, ironic downrightness" which "came to be the standard idiom of Scottish poetry", a tone "always present, suggesting a norm of common sense ... even in the most abandoned of comic

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2. *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, p.74.

3. Ibid., pp.74-5. (See Introduction and ch.11 for further discussion of "reductive idiom".)

4. Ibid., p.76.

flights".[5] However, because his argument aims to demonstrate a severe limitation in the vernacular poetry of eighteenth-century Scotland, rather than being a direct analysis of the poetic practice of reformation satirists, Craig finds that the style he has described "can achieve seriousness"[6], but "usually this idiom expresses a downrightness, crude and summary, which seems to limit in the very act of affirming ..."[7]. As an example of "crude downrightness" he gives three lines, from Robert Sempill's "Legend of the Bischop of Sanct Androis Lyfe", which end with "Auld God is God, and will not be begylit":

> "Auld God is God" is a tone very different from anything in the religious poetry of, say, Henryson. It expresses a peculiarly Protestant sense of being face to face with God, a Protestant scorn of concocted rites. But, as expressed, this is emptied of any richness; the affirmed belief is barely felt at all.[8]

It is both unrealistic and unreasonable to expect to find deep religious feeling in what is not a devotional poem. Sempill's "Legend" is a satire in which the "affirmed belief" is assumed, not explored, and to see no more than "crude downrightness" in Sempill's style is to overlook the sublety and effectiveness of his technique. Far from aiming to describe religious experience, Sempill sets out to decry corrupt ecclesiastics, and this he does well. A phrase like "Auld God is God" is typical of Sempill's propagandist and satiric tactics, using the language and attitudes of the ordinary man as an assumed standard, thereby heightening the extravagant corruption of the Tulchan Bishops. The process of "simplifying caricature" at work in such poems as the "Legend" does not result from a lack of deep religious commitment, nor from lack of imagination, but is a component in a satiric style that

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5. Ibid., pp.75-6. The poems referred to are Scott's "New Yeire Gifte", "Remember man" from *Ane Compendious Buik*, and Robert Sempill's introduction to his "Legend of the Bischop of Sanct Androis Lyfe", in *Satirical Poems*.

6. As an example of "seriousness" Craig quotes the passage beginning "Gif God was maid of bittis of breid" from *Ane Compendious Buik*'s "Knaw ye not God Omnipotent", saying it is "on ostentatious communicants". The lines are in fact a cleverly ironic and humorous condemnation of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

7. Craig, p.76.

8. Ibid.

used the simplest expression in order to gain the most rapid response from its readers. The modern cartoon is a useful analogy, for often the propaganda and satire of the reformation years served the same function as the political cartoon, making a quick, effective point to the widest possible audience in a simple and obvious manner.

Calvinism did affect the national imagination and, as Craig argues, the national literature:

> ... it is through such processes in the sensibility rather than in any outward censorship, that 'Calvinism' mainly affected the deeper life of the country. ... What I suggest is that the peculiar Presbyterian frame of mind got an impulse from, and in turn singled out and reinforced, an existing national bent, and that it is this bent which we find expressed in most of the significant vernacular poetry.[9]

But the early, and significant, changes in style and idiom should not be attributed solely to intangible "processes in the sensibility" and "a peculiar Presbyterian frame of mind".[10] Evangelism and propaganda combined to produce the broadsheet style, and the characteristics of that style were largely a matter of expedience, of discovering how to write verse which would communicate effectively with a wide and varied public. That some Catholic propagandists used the same techniques as their protestant counterparts suggests that communication — successful propaganda — was a more significant factor in the development of a popular style than "an existing national bent".

No. XLIV in *Satirical Poems*, "Ane Admonitioun to the Antichristian Ministers of the Deformit Kirk of Scotland", 1581, is attributed to Nicol Burne, a convert to Catholicism from Calvinism.[11] It is one of the least successful pieces in the collection, with linguistic excesses and metrical confusion rivalling the poorest protestant

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9. Ibid., pp.76-7.

10. We cannot speak of Presbyterianism before the mid 1570s, at the earliest. Craig does here, and at p.201: "At the Reformation we find the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* which were Presbyterian propaganda". Not only was there no Presbyterianism in Scotland in 1560, but most of the *Ballatis* pre-date the sanction of the Reformation by as much as 20 years.

11. Cranstoun's introduction to *Satirical Poems*, I, pp.lii-liv.

examples. The invective and rhetoric are barely distinguishable from protestant verse of the same type. For the Protestants, Rome was the home of Antichrist and the whore of Babylon, for Burne Geneva was "That chyre of Antichrist and desolation, / That hure of Babylon, and Prince of Atheisme" (p.335, ll.41-2). After a long, tedious serving of charges, threats and curses, in which there is less "affirmed belief" than Craig could find in Sempill's poem, "Ane Admonitioun" ends with a prayer, again, scarcely differing from those of the Protestants:

> Restore thy glore, O Lord, I the beseik;
> Indeu vith treu intelligence thy flock;
> Thou seis the leyis thy ennemeis seik
> Thy name to blame, as thay haue thy Rock.
> Cum, Lord, accord, reneu thy ȝock,
> That teichers and preichers had in thy Kirk,
> Auail, preuail, destroy the block,
> That vurkis thir Turkis aganis the in mirk,
> That ve may sing thy Prayse benigne,
> To the condigne, Our Lord and King.
> AMEN
> (ll.361-71)

As a convert, and obviously a poor poet, Burne turned to what had become accepted propagandist invective in the flourishing broadside press. His poem evinces no imaginative quest for a mode more suitable to the Catholic cause and less identifiable with the new Kirk, though his use of a courtly rhyme scheme and metre may be an attempt to echo "Catholic" style. What his verse demonstrates is that bad propagandist poets, at least, did not necessarily distinguish between a Catholic and a Protestant idiom, but rather perceived a common broadsheet idiom.

More significant is another Catholic poem, no. XXIX, "A Lewd Ballet", from a manuscript "Taken w^{t} ye L. Seton's writings". A decade earlier than Burne's poem, this makes very effective use of stylistic devices used by protestant broadsheet poets to produce a competent satire on the Reformers' sins of the flesh. The poet has the endearing good grace to recognise the failings of Roman Catholic priests in the same regard. His poem is in a stanza that became common among satiric poets in the seventeenth century, its rapid, jingling rhythm evoking the popular and enhanced by the use of everyday phrases, proverbialisms and racy language. It is a short poem, gaining immediate

impact by concretising — introducing realism — in a way increasingly favoured by broadsheet poets, using details, names and days, and a first person, conversational diction, liberally sprinkled with puns in Scots and cant Latin ("Crescite, my dovis, et multiplicaminay"). Irony is generated by an extended metaphor on the suggestion that the world is out of joint, the poet drawing on medieval imagery as much as on the "modern" popular tone:

> First quhen the newis begouthe to ryse, gretly thai
>   maid me wondre,
> Quhow that so grett a gospellar so fellounly could fondre;
> Bott, seing quhow all erdly thingis wor subiect to
>   mutatioun,
> Than fand I it no grett mervall, albeit the congregatioun
> Wor no les than þe puir Papistis Inclynit to fornicatioun.
>
> Now is the cours Platonian completit haillely:
> the sone and Mone and sevin sterris reuoluit in þe sky,
> That mokis the worlde tourne top or taill, & will resson
>   to ryde,
> The plewche befoir the oxin go, the best the man to gyde,
> And all things to misrewlit be, owte of all tyme and tyde.
> (p.201, ll.1-10)

This is not a nostalgic reworking of an old theme and the use of the medieval "world out of joint", or "world upside down" theme is ironic. The poem's tone is predominantly popular, the metaphor being used only in relation to that tone. It is the contrast between the mock serious suggestion of a world "tourne top o[r] taill", and the actual hypocrisy of certain reformed clergy which gives the satire its strength. Such a combination of "serious" or "philosophical" matter with incisive popular observation of the real state of the world became a standard satiric ploy in the seventeenth century. In this poem the concrete detail exaggerates the irony of the Platonic and medieval references so that they become absurd:

> The Subiect now commandis the Prince, and Knox is
>   grown a king:
> Quhat he willis obeyit is, that maid the Bischop hing;
> The soutar is the grett precho[r]: the gray freir moks
>   þe shone;

Quhat mervell than thochte chaist forett, prouokit by
þe mone,
Hichit on þe hure so oppinly, sen all is owtte of tone?
(ll.11-15)[12]

The poet may well have learnt the popular style from protestant poets, indeed he seems to be playing it off against the medieval metaphor as part of the irony. He did not, however, require a "peculiar Presbyterian frame of mind" in order to use the popular style successfully and, in 1571, it is too early to be speaking of a well-established tradition in which he might have been unthinkingly working. "A Lewd Ballet" has much about it giving a foretaste of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry — as much as a number of equally sophisticated protestant poems in *Satirical Poems*.

An appreciation of the effects of Protestantism on Scottish thought is essential to an understanding of changes in Scottish poetry after the Reformation, but it is not in itself an adequate explanation of changes in poetic style, at least among the broadsheet poets. The aims of propagandist poets, Catholic as well as Protestant, led to the development of poetic modes different in many respects from the poetry of the makars. It is unlikely that the use of "reduction" in a popular style and voice was transformed from a somewhat vague "native trait" to "this bent we find expressed in most of the significant vernacular poetry" purely as a result of the change in religion. More realistically, the controversy, the need for clear communication with a wide audience and the demands of broadsheet publication — the popularizing of literature — led to the cultivation of popular poetry. The process was gradual, one of experimentation, of use or rejection of courtly conventions, of seeking modes other than the courtly which would nevertheless sustain a degree of seriousness when necessary.

The existence of a wide range of options for poets wishing to express political or religious opinion, or satirise opposing parties, is in itself a comment on the changing nature of literary life in

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12. A later poem which springs immediately to mind as similar to this one is Burns' Postscript to the "Epistle to William Simson", which plays on old lights and new lights, old moons and new moons, serious reference to the Enlightenment and the mock serious suggestion that bards should not concern themselves with "sic brulzie".

Scotland around the time of the Reformation and the deposition of Mary. Poets appear not to have felt tied to established conventions, even to the rich and varied tradition of Scottish courtly verse. Many consciously rejected the courtly as excessively mannered and representative of much that they abhorred in religion and society, but more than this there was an awareness of a new society and a desire to speak to that society, not solely to a closed circle of the literary and social élite. Out of this interchange, between expedience and social consciousness, between appreciation of the potential of new modes of poetry and radical changes in sensibility, came the poetry of seventeenth-century Scotland.

Brother Kenneth suggests that this was not the case, that there was no real change in outlook or choice of vehicles for ideas, when he says at the end of his survey of popular poetry in the Reformation period:

> ... as he turns the pages of the latest *Lamentation of Lady Scotland* and hears once again the complaint against the Three Estates in the same language, and often in the very phraseology of Lindsay, the reader may be excused who lays it down with the reflection — this is where we came in.[13]

For poetry in the courtly vein it is where we came in, but with this concluding observation Brother Kenneth dismisses or undervalues much of the poetry he has considered in his essay — much which, as he rightly points out, is patently uncourtly. His timely and quite detailed examination of this largely neglected body of verse seems not to have modified his conception of literary history, and the reason for this lies in his use of the poems as exemplars for the social history of the period:

> ... as the century moves on and the controversies cool a little, the picture of contemporary Scotland, as reflected in the writings of men like Nicol Burne, John Davidson or the anonymous versifiers, is still one of Scotland's 'lang dolour'.[14]

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13. *Essays on the Scottish Reformation*, ed. McRoberts, p.184.

14. Ibid.

With such a perspective it is easy to concentrate on those poems which appear to support a theory of continuity rather than change. In the body of his essay Brother Kenneth draws attention to poetic change more fully than most commentators, but does not enlarge upon his observations, falling back, in the end, on comparisons with older verse, rather than considering the implications for later verse of the developments he perceives.

If we are to appreciate the implications of Reformation poetry for the history of poetry in Scotland, then it is necessary to attend to those aspects of the verse which are peculiar to it, as much as seeking out elements reminiscent of older poetry. The alternative to bolstering a notion of an ongoing courtly culture in post-Reformation Scotland is to accept controversial poetry as an indication of something new, uncourtly, and largely popular in the literary life of the nation.

Whichever style and means of circulation the controversial poet chose, he shared with other popular poets the assumption of an audience much wider than that of the courtly poet. This is not to make an unqualified distinction between the courtly and broadsheet audiences, but rather to establish that the controversial poet conceived of his audience in another way to the courtly poet. A broadsheet poem may have been read in the court, but it may also have been read in the merchant's parlour, town council rooms, tradesman's shop, craftsmen's guild meeting, country pub, laird's house, or read to an illiterate audience in town or country. The audience for the popular poet was as mixed as the literary models and styles amongst which he ranged.

Broadsheet publications should not be overlooked as powerful moulders and indicators of popular opinion. They might also reflect popular taste in verse and serve as sources for imitation or inspiration. Perhaps the usually controversial or propagandist purpose of broadsheet poetry did not make the medium particularly amenable to sensitive poetic expression, but verse published in this way was widely read and did respond to its audience in such a way as to render it a useful example for other poets with similar intentions.

Whether the poet was an educated member of what Croft Dickinson calls the "middling classes", or a nobleman, he had to be conscious of the need to impress the broadest possible spectrum of readers and listeners. The use of popular forms was motivated in the same way and aimed at the same ends as the "Beggars Summonds", tacked on friary doors in January, 1559, and warning friars to yield up their premises and goods to the rightful owners, the poor, by "flitting Friday", 12th May:

> This notice of imminent revolution is one of the most remarkable features of the Reformation. We may be sure that whoever paid for and synchronised the posting of the 'Summonds', it was not the poor — just as it was not the poor who eventually took possession of the friaries. But the middle classes of the towns were prepared to sound a note of class war in order to rouse the urban mob to do their 'reforming' work for them. This is striking evidence of the strength of anticlerical feeling in the towns, where already the merchant oligarchies (who controlled the burgh church as well as the town council) were stopping the saying of mass and inaugurating kirk 'sessions', bodies 'sitting' to manage the burgh church.[15]

The audience for the popular poem was not necessarily assumed to be poetically discriminating: "these broadsheets and tavern songs were the equivalent, for the popular mind, of the film and *Express* type of news-sheet in our day, as the pulpits were of our broadcasting system."[16] Although the broadsheet poet probably conceived of such a readership, his poem was not going to have the impact he desired unless it was in some way designed to grip the popular imagination. This meant either a familiar tune, an easily memorable stanza and rhyme pattern, a diction which would strike a responsive note in the audience, or if it dealt with the serious matter of theology and political theory, it needed to be straightforward in argument and easily readable in form. Above all, the subject had to be one of current interest. In *Satirical Poems* there are some didactic or discursive poems which meander in an indecisive manner through complex, "dry" matter, but they are few in comparison to the number of poems which, whether or not they achieve it, seek

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15. W. Croft Dickinson, *Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603* (3rd rev. edn; ed. A.A.M. Duncan, Oxford, 1977), p.339.

16. Agnes Mure Mackenzie in *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.46.

brevity, clarity and interest in their subject and style. The medium of publication and the reason for composition encouraged a degree of stylistic deliberation by the poets.

Religion and Politics

In the process which produced alternatives to courtly verse and courtly diction, the pragmatic concern for audience and subject was supplemented and enriched by the interplay between that concern and the poet's experience of a changing society. As a result of the Reformation, a new way of seeing God and human society developed throughout Lowland Scotland, even among the illiterate poor. T.C. Smout describes the Scottish Reformation as "a great popular revolution backed by a large number of articulate men of every class discontented with the political and religious environment in which they lived"[17], and while the terms of this description are perhaps a little sweeping, those articulate, educated and thinking men devoted considerable energy to converting and using the poor and the discontented. Their success is testified to by the "Beggars Summonds" and by Knox's Perth sermon of 1559, which provoked what he then called the "brethren" and later called "the rascal multitude" to sack religious houses. The leaders of the reforming party, and the poets represented in *Ane Compendious Buik* and *Satirical Poems*, were sincere in their intention to "enlighten" every member of the Kirk, however they may have exploited the "mob" when it came to action. The *First Book of Discipline*'s dogged insistence on the rights of the impotent poor indicates a large measure of genuine concern. The emphasis on the value of universal education in the *First Book of Discipline* highlights one of the major differences between the new Church and the old, the protestant emphasis on the individual's responsibility to know, consider and teach within his family the Word of God. Theologically, the difference shows itself in the protestant conviction that each man

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17. *A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830* (2nd. edn, London, 1970), p.53.

is responsible for his own spiritual well-being and salvation. The intercessory power of pardoner, priest, bishop and saint having been removed, a protestant layman did stand "face to face" with his God. Politically, a distrust of the hierarchy of secular government is clear in the *Book of Discipline*'s careful definition of the roles of church and state in the Godly Commonwealth, in itself a projected theocracy. From the time reforming doctrine began to take root in Scotland, literary sources begin to express a growing disenchantment with prelates and princes. Such an attitude, personally, theologically and politically, is satirised in "A Lewd Ballet" when the Catholic author speaks of subjects commanding princes, Knox having "grown a king", the hanging of bishops and the preaching of "soutars".

After the Reformation the pondering and discussion of theological and political issues was markedly no longer solely the domain of the upper ranks of the church, the court and the universities. This change was to have a far greater effect on the literary life of the nation than political events or changes in protestant ideas about the nature of church government and godly discipline: "the religious revolution that had taken place in Scotland had not left men's minds as it had found them; and there now existed a force of intelligent opinion in the country such as was unknown in previous periods of the national history".[18] As the religious and political ideas of the period are interlaced with the pragmatic decisions of satiric poets in shaping the course of poetic development, the poetry shows a growing recognition of the individual's place in society, and of his responsibility for his own spiritual and intellectual life. This was a new way of thinking and writing, informed by events and ideas of what can only be called "modern" proportions.[19]

In 1558 Knox addressed the commonalty of Scotland:

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18. P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland to the Present Time*, vol.II, p.88.

19. Smout observes that "the doctrine of a laity equal to the clergy both in the sight of God and in ability to discover divine truth" appealed to "self-confident and literate burgesses" and that the town rabble were very useful to these same men, "a classic manoeuvre, much favoured by revolutionary writers in the twentieth century" p.60.

> Neither would I that ye esteem the reformation and care of religion lesse to appertain to you, because ye are no kinges, rulers, judges, nobils, nor in auctoritie. Beloved brethren, ye are Goddes creatures, created and formed to his own image and similitude, for whose redemption was shed the most pretious blood of the onlie beloved Sonne of God .... Albeit God hath put and ordened distinction and difference betwixt the King and subjects, betwixt the rulers and the commune people, in the regiment and administration of civile policies, yet in the hope of the life to come He hath made all equall.
>
> (Laing's *Knox*, iv, pp.526-7)

Such ideas, which "must have sounded dangerously democratic, even revolutionary"[20] to the established ecclesiastical and secular powers, lie behind the spirit which permeates the poetry of post-Reformation Scotland, even from time to time within the court, and it was to become more pronounced with the widespread acceptance of Presbyterian thought towards the end of the century.

Self-consciousness would seem to be the appropriate term for the response to such ideas by the individual. The wider consequence was an acknowledgement by Protestant and Catholic alike of the analogies between, and the inseparable nature of, politics and religion, not in the medieval sense of the parallels between heavenly and earthly government, but in the peculiarly Renaissance and post-Reformation sense of the individual's involvement in politics and religion and their effect on him. In Scotland this understanding was brought more rapidly to the national consciousness by the urgent political events which were so closely tied to the achievement of reformation, and threatened the consolidation thereof. Scotsmen were faced with a complicated series of events and loyalties: "... there was a general identification in the popular mind of ecclesiastical corruption with the hierarchy, of the hierarchy with the regent, of the regent with the resented satellite status of Scotland to France, of France with Catholicism and militant Papacy".[21] Of the motives which turned Protestants to the "English Cause" Smout says:

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20. D. Hay Fleming, "The Influence of the Reformation on Social and Cultural Life in Scotland", *Scottish Historical Review*, XV, 57 (1916), 4.

21. T.C. Smout, *History of the Scottish People*, p.59.

> The result was a popular equation very helpful to the Reformers. If you were a patriot you were anti-French and therefore pro-English and Protestant: if you were a Protestant and pro-English, you were therefore anti-French and a patriot.[22]

A broader view of the intertwining of religion and politics is provided by Croft Dickinson:

> And so, as a new faith formed the anti-clericalism of some men, in others there stirred xenophobia and fears of political repression. And from the marriage of these attitudes was born the Scottish Reformation.[23]

The alliance of religion and politics was brought strongly to the minds of controversial writers by the deposition of Mary. "Ane Declaration of the Lordis iust quarrell", a broadside of 1567, in a conventional "overheard dialogue" framework explores the reasons for and implications of opposition to the Queen. Philandrius, the supporter of the opposition Lords whose remarks occupy most of the poem, describes the events which led to the crisis. Here it is clear how religious affiliation affected political judgement. Darnley, not a character of whom, while he lived, the Protestant divines had a very high opinion, becomes a martyr in broadsheet verse:

> To se the King fyrst lychtlit schamefully,
>   And not chereist in chalmer nor in hall,
> Syne murdreist downe causeles and crewelly —
>   Of that tresoun na tryall taine at all;
> ...
> Quhat Lordis hart culd luik on this and lest?
> (p.58, ll.36-9, 42)

Bothwell is "ane monstuire, full of fylthynes" (l.43) and there is extreme disapproval of the Queen allowing herself to be seen in public "Reft lyke ane huire with ruffians shamefullie" (l.51). The statements and arguments of Philandrius are all given in answer to questions from Erideilus who, rather than being drawn as a staunch supporter of the Queen and her cause, seems puzzled by events which do not accord with his conservative notions of political society:

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22. Ibid., p.61.

23. *Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603*, p.329.

> ... "it dois merwell me
> Quhat causit hes the Lordis of Scotland
> Tak on ane enterpryse of sic folie
> Againe the Quene, and againis hir husband.
> Mycht thay not weill, ilk ane in his awin land,
> In quyetnes leifit in peace and rest,
> Guyding his awin as him had lykit best?"
> (11.15-21)

The dialogue between the conservative Erideilus and the forward thinking Philandrius is an example of the "blended" style. The courtly form of the dialogue and the classical names conform with the poet's avowed support for the Lords, and underline his case that the court is no longer fit for the habitation of "gentle" people: "The Nobill men durst not the Court cum neir" (1.68). The tone which prevails, however, is not courtly. Repeated reference to "Nobill men", and the objective of upholding the actions and integrity of the Lords, do not exclude the general populace from the poem. They are invited to make a judgement about the situation. Philandrius does not speak only for "gentle folk" when he says:

> "Quhat Nobill hart could langer this induire?
> Quhat commoun breist did not for sorrow burst?
> Quhat godly man of him self could be suire?
> Quhat stranger thocht bot this cuntrie was curst?
> Quhat preachour this repreif, I pray ȝow, durst?
> Quhat chaist woman wyssit not to be deid,
> To se sic vice set vp in vertewis steid?"
> (11.78-84)

The rhetorical questions generalise so that the whole community makes the judgement about Mary's court, her personal conduct, and her political folly in alienating a large number of her nobility. Not simply a justification for the actions of the Lords on the grounds of religion, morality and political justice, the dialogue climaxes in a statement of the new awareness of the relationship between individual responsibility, religion and political reality. The medieval king or queen owed to God an obligation to govern well and wisely, and it was to God that the judgement of their performance finally fell. "Ane Declaration" devotes fifteen stanzas to exposition on and examples of subjects deposing princes. The conventional reference to the "heid" is used, but the

"body" has considerably more power than it had previously, even in Lindsay. The body does not descend from the head and rely upon it, rather "May thay not put ane ordoure to the heid, / Quha in beginning did the heid up mak?" (11.155-6). Three main stanzas make a bald statement of radical political import, and draw attention to the conservatism of Erideilus, suggesting that such conservatism is outmoded and lacking in realism and common sense:

> "In priuat persounis", sayis Erideilus,
> "I vnderstand thy taill is trew in deid,
> Bot in Princes it is mair perrillous,
> And few examplis thairof can I reid.
> And in sic caice the subiectis all had neid
> Haill to concur with ane authoritie:
> Sic concurrence in Scotland nane I se."
>
> Philandrius sayis: "Brother, than considder
> How first began all dominatiounis
> Quhen ruid pepill assemblit thame togidder,
> And maid thair Kingis be creatiounis.
> In votis than war variatiounis.
> I trow rycht few was chosin be the haill,
> Bot he was King quhais partie did preuaill.
>
> "Rycht sa gif Princes sa thame self abuse,
> That of force subiectis man put to thair hand,
> Guid men sould not than to reforme refuse,
> Thocht all at ainis concur not on thair band;
> Naimly, gif Iustice on thair partie stand,
> And maist consent gif quha wald rackin rycht,
> Sen God has gein to thame baith strenth & mycht."
> (11.127-47)

Such a realisation of the justification of political action by those who believe their cause to be right, and of the practical application of party politics, was inspired by the example of the Reformers in religion.

Philandrius is portrayed as a thinking man whose political pragmatism is allied to moral rectitude and religious fortitude. A sympathetic character, despite his venemous descriptions of the Queen, Bothwell, and their followers, he is polite to Erideilus without being patronising, addressing him as "Brother" in the manner of a reforming orator, and crediting him with the wit and sense, behind his conservatism, to see the force of the argument. At all times Philandrius draws a favourable picture of the protestant nobles, yet without a sense of

"class" in the modern connotation. The members of the public are invited to identify with the Lords because they too are assumed, in the wake of the Reformation, to be "Guid men", "godly men" and capable of perceiving which cause is right. All of this is achieved with a careful choice of plain vocabulary, and the use of devices such as a rhetorical question to modulate tone. Often the stylistic control is quite subtle, for instance in the use of "King" in reference to Darnley and of "hir husband" in Erideilus' reference to Bothwell. Historical examples are not obscure, and the villains are conventional examples. Even so, the careers of all but the most well known are given. The diction is plain, although the courtly dialogue form would have invited aureate diction and scholastic jargon. The poet avoids both, but maintains dignity and clarity in conversation. Because he was communicating in broadsheet the purported conversation of "twa leirnit men", clearly it was important that they appeared to be such, but it was also necessary for their conversation to be comprehensible to the "common" reader.

After the Reformation there was a growing emphasis on the importance of learning and reason, and a different approach to both than had previously been usual. Whereas in earlier poetry a problem would be referred away to scholars, the solution being given as the accepted opinion of experts, in post-Reformation poetry the opinions of learned people are given considerable weight, but explored, translated into readily understood language and examples, and offered for examination by an audience credited with the capacity to judge for themselves. Even though the audience is strongly urged towards a conclusion, it is not treated as any less intelligent than the poet or the characters arguing out the issue in the poem. The audience is directly involved, rather than distanced and possibly condescended to by fable, allegory or the unexplored opinions of the "scholars".

The amount of space occupied by the argument of Philandrius in "Ane Declaration" indicates his as the right position. More importantly, it is Philandrius who includes the "common breist", "preachours", foreign opinion (an appeal to national pride), women and especially the "godly" in his summation of public opinion. While Philandrius is

still speaking at the end of the poem Erideilus "quyetlie away did stalk", seeming both rude and cowardly. However, he is shown to have seen the error of his ways: "he waxit reid for schame". The broadsheet audience is urged to participate in the enlightenment of this "leirnit" man, and is therefore to a large degree assumed to be on a par with Philandrius, another "leirnit" man. Certainly the reader is made to feel equality with the poet:

> ... I rais vp and come hame,
> And put in writ thair disputatioun,
> As ȝe haue hard be this narratioun.
> (11.236-8)

Agnes Mure Mackenzie's analogy of the broadsheet poem with the popular newspaper of today is appropriate in this case. The poet is a reporter, and one who purports to see the importance of this dispute to the general public. Such a device was widely used in the period, as it was later in broadside and chapbook material of a more blatantly entertaining and less elevated nature, such as the eighteenth-century industry in "dying speeches".

The Development of Styles: tradition and modernism

Whilst "Ane Declaration" uses a courtly convention altered to suit the poet's purpose, "Ane Tragedie, in forme of ane Dialog betwix Honour, Gude Fame, and the Author heirof in a Trance" (no. X in *Satirical Poems*) is an instance of protestant propaganda which does not depart from the courtly in any constructive manner. Indeed, the author seems not to have perceived that such a departure from tradition was either necessary or possible in a propaganda poem. Like some of the changed songs in *Ane Compendious Buik*, the result of this lack of stylistic consideration is an unsatisfying pastiche, and the reasons for its failure shed a great deal of light on the way other poets understood how to adapt, rather than imitate, courtly conventions.

Cranstoun describes "Ane Tragedie" as a "highly eulogistic piece, containing a minute account of the life and work of the Regent Murray"[24]. Printed in Black Letter with 8 leaves in 1570, and running

24. *Satirical Poems*, II, p.64.

to 422 lines, including an epitaph, "Ane Tragedie" is a dream-vision allegorical dialogue based on middle Scots models. Initially, the diction is "high", rich and literary, and the courtly style is managed well:

> In Januar the thre and twentie day,
> Befoir midnycht, in Lythquo as I lay,
> Tumbling sum tyme on bed abon the clais,
> Now heir, now thair, quhylis doun, quhylis up I rais;
> Till at the last, in tuinkling of ane Ee,
> Schir Morpheus the Mair assailʒeit me,
> With all his sluggische Suldarts out of number,
> Quhilk led me Captiue vnto Maister Slumber,
> Quha softly said: "Gar keip this pure Catiue,
> And tak from him his speiche and wittis fiue."
> Than come Dame Dreming, all clad in blak Sabill,
> With Sweyning Nymphis in culloris variabill;
> Amangis the quhilkis, befoir me thair appeiris
> Ane woundit man, of aucht and threttie ʒeiris,
> Paill of the face, baith blaiknit, blude and ble,
> Deid eyit, dram lyke, disfigurat was he;
> Nakit and bair, schot throw pudding and panche,
> Abone the Navil, and out abone the hanche.
> (p.82, 11.1-18)

There are a further seven lines of detailed description of the apparition before the dialogue begins. The essentially medieval model for "Ane Tragedie" is clear when this opening is compared with that of "Ane Declaration", which is restricted to one stanza. In that first stanza, the poet's role as reporter is established, and the first of a series of hints given that the audience can understand what the poet can understand. There are few adjectives, and the ABABBCC rhyme in a short stanza lends an air of immediacy:

> Not lang ago, as I allane did walk
> Intill ane place was plesand to behauld,
> Twa leirnit men in priuie hard I talk,
> And eich of thame his taill in ardoure tauld.
> I understuid thair sentence quhat they wald,
> And thocht it guid to put in memorie;
> Thair Names als as efter ʒe sall see.
> ("Ane Declaration", 11.1-7)

While "Ane Tragedie", in the manner of later satires, makes more use of concrete detail — place, time, circumstance — in its opening, it has not the directness of style and address of "Ane Declaration". "Ane Tragedie"

has no regular stanza divisions and while the line length is the same in both poems, the couplet, combined with the long lines, gives "Ane Tragedie" a more ponderous metre. The subject of "Ane Declaration" is "high", the serious matter of the validity of Divine Right and the possibility of changing the order of things through party political action, but the manner is simple. Each stanza is a question by one speaker or an answer by the other, and when Philandrius' answer extends over more than one stanza, each stanza contains a new point in his argument. "Ane Tragedie", on the other hand, begins capably in the manner of a medieval dream vision, but becomes tedious, not because the Regent Moray's life or his end are an unsuitable subject for poetry, but because the realities of the political situation in which Moray was involved render the subject unsuitable for allegorical treatment, especially for allegory within a dream-vision framework and in the language of a more literary and less disrupted way of thinking than that which prevailed in Scotland in 1570.

Because the events do not lend themselves to aureate, or heroic, terms, the poet's polished use of high diction in the opening section breaks down as the poem proceeds. The diction, which should have been plainer, flounders between high and flat, producing passages which are a halting mixture of historical narrative, literary commonplaces and awkward expression:

> Bot at the last ȝour Quene wes lattin furth,
> Conuoyit away be sum wes lyttil gude worth;
> And spedelie to Hamiltoun scho went,
> Quhair scho found men anew Incontinent,
> The quhilkis dispysit vs, Honour and Fame,
> Thairfoir all turnit to thair vtter schame.
> Our sone and we were than in Glasgow towne;
> To hald the airis in thay parts he was bowne:
> Than come scho fordwart, with hir strenth & fors,
> Ma than seuin thowsand, quhat on fute and hors;
> Ȝea, twa for ane, we think thay were agane vs ...
> (11.251-61)

There is nothing here of the skill of the opening section in the diction or the metre, and the allegory has become a hindrance to the narrative. In fact, allegory would have been suitable for the ideological debate

in "Ane Declaration" where it was apparently rejected, but for a detailed historical narrative like "Ane Tragedie" the allegorical framework becomes a literary gesture rather than a tool to facilitate structure and argument. The decorum of the occasion, the desire to eulogise the dead Moray, prompted the poet to choose a conventional "high" style, however, he did not confine himself to either the occasion or the convention in attempting to turn the eulogy to propagandist ends. The poem works neither as elegy, eulogy, propaganda nor epic because the poet did not understand that each purpose necessitated a different style: the courtly failed him and he found no adequate replacement for it.

One way of avoiding such a clash between convention and content was to turn to an idiom owing little to the courtly. "Ane Exhortatioun to the Lordis", a Black Letter broadsheet of 1567, artfully draws on the simplified diction of the hymns and psalms of which examples were readily available in *Ane Compendious Buik* and the English Psalms, and also draws on the tone of protestant pulpit oratory. The poem addresses a section of the nobility, but makes no concessions to a courtly audience in style, maintaining instead a lay, protestant and popular voice. The stanza and metre are based on psalmody, the diction a mixture of godly and plain.

"Ane Exhortatioun to the Lordis" deals with Mary's imprisonment, urging the protestant Lords to persevere with their just cause, while also engendering respect for the Lords in the broadsheet audience:

> My Lordis, now, gif ȝe be wyse,
> Knaw weil the grace y[t] God hes send ȝow;
> Gif to the leuing Lord all pryse;
> Pray that from dainger he defend ȝow,
> And na way lat ȝoure fais offend ȝow,
> Bot gif counsell and curage
> Bauldlie togidder all to bend ȝow,
> That ȝe do nouther swerue nor swage.
>
> (p.46, ll.1-8)

More than an exhortation to the Lords, the poem is a declaration of popular support for the faction representing protestant righteousness:

Think it is nouther strenth nor fors,
That hes set ȝow a fuite befoir:
Think weill that nouther men nor hors
Off sic ane act sould get the gloir:
Bot he that ringis euer moir
Hes luikit on ȝoure quarrell rycht:
Gif him all thankis now thairfoir,
And pryse his name with all ȝour micht.
(11.9-16)

As a justification of the action of the Lords, this poem succeeds by ingenious means. There is little narrative content and no open defence of the actions or motives of the Lords. Rather, the poet adopts the role of advisor to the Lords, impressing on them the need to do their work, which is God's work, with the utmost diligence and not to be swayed by personal gain or party loyalties. The existence of an opposition to Queen Mary, and the imprisonment of the Queen, are presented as *faits accomplis*, requiring consolidation, not defence. Central to the success of this positive approach to propaganda is the use of plain diction reminiscent of the Kirk rather than the court, a continual reminder that the Lords were doing God's work and would not have succeeded without God's help. Great care is taken to indicate confidence and logical argument, the tone of each stanza being governed by opening words like "I grant ...", "Think weil ...", "Sen ȝe it haue ...", "Proclaime that ..." and so on. The poet and the Lords emerge as purposeful, intelligent upholders of right and reason in the midst of the ungodly and politically corrupt. The final stanza shows once again the propagandist poet's understanding that the wider, less educated audience had to be convinced and that the most useful way to convince them was to involve them in the process of political and religious assessment:

And thus yow shortlie till exhort,
My Lordis all, I thocht it gude;
For men oftyme of ressoun rude,
Seing the cais and how it stude,
Hes geuin gude counsall to the wyse:
So wald I now, and to conclude,
God blis you in your interpryse.
(11.145-52)

By coupling this acknowledgement that the "meinest sort" could see "the cais and how it stude" with the rhetoric of the reformed pulpit — "The wark is greit ye haue on hand" (1.78), "Schaw first that ye the Lord do feir" (1.84), "as I in Scripture leir" (1.87) — and the metrical echoes of hymns and psalms,[25] the poet conjures up a voice which could be identified with the whole range of the godly commons.

Such a thoroughgoing adoption of the reforming idiom is unusual in Dr. Cranstoun's collection. "Ane Exhortatioun to the Lordis" has its descendants in the plain, godly style of some seventeenth-century devotional or "spiritual" verse. It comes in the same line, from the hymns and psalms of "The Gude and Godlie Ballatis", as Sir William Mure's *Psalms*, some of Alexander Hume's poetry and Elizabeth Melville's "Ane Godlie Dreme". At the same time, this "softly spoken" form of the godly idiom is closely related to the other simpler forms of expression developed after the Reformation, used with either the vernacular or the courtly by poets seeking to introduce the tone of the Reformed Kirk or the godly commons into their work, seriously or ironically.

"The Kingis Complaint" modifies the courtly style with reforming rhetoric, resonances from balladry and a liturgical refrain.[26] Published in 1570,[27] the poem laments the death of the Regent Moray, contrasting markedly with "Ane Tragedie" on the same subject. The two poems issued from the same press, "The Kingis Complaint" in two column broadsheet, "Ane Tragedie" in quarto and 8 leaves, the difference in presentation

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25. "Ane Exhortatioun" has octosyllabic lines in 8 line stanzas rhyming ABABBCBC. The same stanza occurs in the psalms in *Ane Compendious Buik*, for example in no.lxxxj. In *Ane Compendious Buik* regular octosyllabic 7 and 10 line stanzas are also used. The hymn, "My saule dois magnifie the Lord" (*Buik*, p.143) uses an identical stanza to "Ane Exhortatioun". Sir William Mure used this stanza in his *Psalms*, e.g. nos CV, LI, CXIX; sometimes he varied the rhyme to ABABCDCD. *The Works of Sir William Mure of Rowallan*, ed. William Tough (2 vols, STS, Edinburgh and London, 1898).

26. This is possibly a forerunner of a fashion for "liturgical" poems, particularly "Litanies", in seventeenth-century Scotland (see below, Ch.11). They were also common in England, e.g. Sidney, "A Litany". After 1570 the device was usually ironic.

27. Cranstoun, on good grounds, corrects an earlier editor's date of 1567 for the poem. *Satirical Poems*, II, p.82.

reflecting the difference in purpose and differences in style between the poems. The author of "Ane Tragedie" did not clearly determine his purpose, producing, consequently, a lengthy, disjointed and largely tedious poem. The author of "The Kingis Complaint" had no such difficulty. His choice of a four-line verse, frequent in balladry, as the basis of his stanza was probably determined as much by his intention to publish in broadsheet as by the chant-like effect to which the form contributes.

Drawing on several traditions and conventions, but not haphazardly, "The Kingis Complaint" begins:

> With hauie hart, on Snadoun hill,
> Ane ȝoung King I hard schoutand schill;
> With reuthfull rair he did record,
> Prayand, as I haif writ this bill,
> Judge and Reuenge my cause, O Lord.
> (p.117, ll.1-5)

The style is closely allied to the intertwining of religion and politics in the period. Patriotism is evoked by the ballad-lament associations of the verse, by the reference to "Snadoun" (the ancient name for Stirling), and by the dramatic presence of the young King James VI. The courtly tradition is introduced to the poem because it is the reported prayer of the King, but while the overheard monologue was a courtly convention, the reporting of events by a bystander was also common in the folk ballad tradition.[28] Ballad colour is added to the simple diction with alliterated description — "reuthfull rair" — but heavy alliteration is also a feature of courtly laments. It is as if the poet had considered the possibility of appealing to two audiences, the court and the common people. The audience foremost in his mind, however, which included the full range of readers and listeners, was the broadsheet audience — hence the adoption of the role of reporter and the reference to the poem as "this bill". Scottish reformed religion is present in the refrains that throughout the poem echo liturgy, psalmody and godly phrasing. The

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28. See, for example, "The Twa Corbies" and "Archie of Cafield", both of which open "As I was walking all alane / I heard ...".

poem, then, combines a liturgical chant with a ballad-lament and a courtly lament, overlaying these with occasional reminiscences of the courtly poets, courtly political jargon, and psalm or pulpit phraseology. Considering the apparent complexity of the undertaking, "The Kingis Complaint" is remarkably consistent and coherent.

Drawing easily on the various modes, the representation of character and circumstance approaches historical credibility while acquiring an aura of the popular heroic. The King, never named but unmistakable, appears to combine all the qualities which should endear him to his people and so, by analogy, does the cause in favour of which the poet wrote. The King is personalised, but remains a king, with a kingly concern for his subjects:

> For he is now gone to his graif,
> My commoun weill that maist decorde,
> Na merwell be it my hart claif
>   For sorrow of his deith, O Lord.
> (11.7-10)

He is historically aware and staunchly concerned for the welfare of his kingdom when he condemns "Bothwell, that bludy Bouchour bauld" (1.17), and he is loyal and grateful to Moray, expressing those sentiments with all the "gentilnes" which would be expected of a protestant king, and in language echoing the Psalms and the Old Testament generally:

> He was my buckler and my beild;
> He was my Targe, my speir, and scheild:
> My stait maist hie for to restorde
> He futtit euer mair the feild:
>   Judge and Reuenge his cause, O Lord.
> (11.31-35)

Moray emerges from the King's description as a noble and popular hero, his sacrifice tied to those of ballad and biblical heroes, and to historical events. But Moray is also personalised, in the manner of the ballads:

> For me he left Kyn, Freind, and wyfe;
> For me he sufferit daylie stryfe;
> For me he was haill Indeuorde;
> For me now he hes loist his lyfe:
>   Judge and Reuenge his cause, O Lord.
> (11.36-40)

Popularized as a ballad hero, the Good Regent Moray is also portrayed as a popular hero of the Kirk, Scotland's "Josias trew, / That first Idolatrie ouerthrew" (11.61-2). Other Old Testament references in the poem are few but apt. The words "Judge and revenge my cause, O Lord", which come from Psalm 43, were carried on a banner at Carberry Field, when the protestant Lords under the Earl of Morton stood for the infant James against his mother, and the motto had entered Protestant legend by the time "The Kingis Complaint" was published. Clearly the refrain would have struck a responsive chord in many a noble and common breast.

While the religious and political content of "The Kingis Complaint" is simply conceived, the means of conveying it are complex and subtle. Considerable skill is evident in the blending of the various idioms and conventions into an effective unity. The emphasis of the poem is on the realm, the Kirk, their stability and consolidation; the overall tone is both courtly and popular; and the appeal is to both audiences.

Blending of traditions and exploitation of the courtly to propagandist ends were common, but the methods are sometimes surprising. "The Exhortatioun to all plesand thingis quhairin man can haif delyte to withdraw thair plesure from mankynde, and to deploir the Cruell Murther of umquhile my Lord Regentis Grace"[29] opens in rich, courtly style, then shifts to a popular style halfway through. Like the author of "Ane Tragedie", this poet felt that the occasion demanded a "high" style, but there is an ironic rather than eulogistic purpose to his choice. Cranstoun says the "first half of this ballad breathes a plaintive tenderness found nowhere else in this collection", but plaintive tenderness turns rapidly to bitterness. The first nine stanzas call upon flowers, herbs, birds and beasts to mourn the death of Moray, and so the poem opens as a conventional emblematic elegy:

> ʒe Montaines, murne; ʒe valayis, vepe;
>   ʒe clouds and Firmament;
> ʒe fluids, dry vp; ʒe seyis so depe,
>   Deploir our lait Regent!

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29. No. XV, Black Letter broadside, 3 columns, 1570.

ʒe greinis, grow gray; ʒe gowanis, dune;
    ʒe hard rocks, ryue for sorrow;
ʒe Mariguildis, forbid the sune
    To oppin ʒow euerie morrow!
(p.122, ll.1-8)

In the stanzas which follow the flowers and herbs are used for their associations with weddings and funerals. The joyful ones are called upon to mourn:

Thou Lauand, lurk; thow time, be tint;
    Thow Margalene, swaif;
Thow Camomylde, ʒe balme and Mint,
    ʒour fragrant odouris laif!
ʒe Baselisk and Ionet flouris,
    ʒe Gerofleis so sweit,
And Violatis, hap ʒow with schouris
    Of hailstanes, snaw, and sleit!
(ll.9-16)

The rosemary must hide her blooms,[30] no green should show on broom or laurel, fruit trees should be barren and the Rose wither — all sweet flowers on Earth should "tak na rute, / But wallow altogidder". The mournful plants should dominate:

Cum, Nettillis, thornie breirs, & rew,
    With all foull filthie weid,
Now plant ʒow quhair thir sweit flouris grew,
    And place ʒow in thair steid!
ʒe plesand byrdis, lat be ʒour sang,
    ʒour mirth in murning turne,
And tak the Turtill ʒow amang
    To leirne ʒow how to murne!
(ll.25-32)

Birds emblematic of joy, mirth and love are dismissed. Even the Phoenix is to burn "Not to reuiue againe", and the Pelican, emblem of parental love and natural affection, should sharpen its beak to "peirs our breistis, that we may seik / How to reuenge this wrang!" There were antecedents to this poem in the ironic reversal of natural emblems to show a world plunged into mourning and chaos, and it is difficult to

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30. Surely there is deliberate, bitter irony throughout this opening section. Rosemary was emblematic of remembrance, and it would have been conventional to ask Rosemary to bloom. Similarly, the poet asks the Phoenix to disappear forever, whereas in conventional elegies for dead heroes the Phoenix is called upon to rise again.

ascribe to this use of the emblem tradition the description of "plaintive tenderness". The bitterness would seem to preclude tenderness, directing attention rather to "reuenge". As the poet proceeds to declare that virtually the whole natural order should be banished, the mood is exceptionally rancorous, with a harsh reminder that murder and not natural death is at issue:

> All birdis and beistis, all hillis and holtis,
>   All greinis and plesand treis,
> All Lambis & Kiddis, all Caluis & Colts,
>   Absent ȝow from mens eyis!
> ȝe gleds and howlets, rauins and rukis,
>   ȝe Crawis and Corbeis blak;
> Thair guttis mot be among ȝour cluikis,
>   That did this bludy fact!
>
> (11.49-56)

There can be no doubt of the deliberateness of the irony, nor of the poet's consciousness of the outrage he has committed upon conventional elegy. Music, the planets, the very days and seasons having been exhorted to turn themselves in opposition to their natural functions, the tone alters, mid-stanza, for an explanation of the poet's purpose:

> For why sum men dois trauell now
>   To turne all vpsyde downe,
> And als to seik the maner how
>   To reif the King his Crowne.
>
> (11.69-72)

The effect of the change of tone, diction and direction is startling. The poem continues in a plain style, with no reversion to the preceding richness, and no further reference to the emblems. This change from the emblematic, aureate, eight and one half stanzas to the plain style of personal and popular address intensifies the irony of the opening section. Further, the contrast with the courtly section highlights the straightforward, common-sense manner of the rest of the poem, which draws on the popular idiom, using proverbialisms, colloquialisms, and references to popular opinion.[31]

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31. The reference, for example, to the highly unpopular quack physician, Cardan.

Especially interesting is the way in which the alteration in diction and tone transforms the stanza from the slow dignity appropriate to the emblematic section into a sing-song stanza suited to popular concerns:

> We had ane Prince of gude Renoun
>   That Justice did desyre;
> Aganis quhome the Hammiltoun
>   Did traterously conspyre
> Quha schot him on the Bischoppis stair
>   In Lythgow thair Londoun,
> To bruik this byworde euer mair,
>   Fy, Tratour Hammiltoun!
>
> (11.73-80)

In contrast to the previous universality, attention is now focused immediately and personally ("we" has not been used until now) on the real issue, actual events, people, personalities, places and public opinion. The murder is not dwelt upon, however, nor is there further reference to mourning. In an intensification of the irony, the mourning and universal grief of the first half of the poem are dismissed in a call for swift action:

> Sen Christ hes tane him to his fader,
>   This is the best remeid,
> That ȝe trew Lordis togidder gadder
>   For to reuenge his deid.
> Sen thay haue wrocht sic thing agane vs,
>   Traist weill thay cair not neist
> To kill the King, for quhy Cardanus
>   The Feind pat in the preist.
>
> (11.81-8)

Disregarding elegaic decorum and the use of courtly language, this address to the Lords is pitched well outside the tradition of the opening stanzas of the poem. Now the emphasis is on common sense and practical action. There is a pragmatic reminder that France loomed ever ready to influence events in Scotland, "Thocht sum sies not ane styme", a colloquial expression perhaps best rendered as the English "Some can't see the noses in front of their faces".

In calling for unity among the feuding Lords, the poet's attitude approaches condescension. Common sense and popular opinion are

correlative when the Lords are told to "pull themselves together" in no uncertain terms:

> Now wald ȝe change and chaisson yat,
> And bring on deidly feidis,
> ȝe worke maist lyke ȝe wat not quhat
> With your Politick heidis.
> Now wyselie wirke, be not dissauid,
> For, and scho get hir will,
> Scho will Reuenge the deith of Dauid,
> Carberrie, and Langsyde hill.
> (11.113-20)

Popularization of the poem is complete in the last three stanzas, where the tone is an absolute reversal of that of the opening stanzas. The Queen's supporters are advised to return to their wives:

> For quhy it is ane wyfis quarrell
> Ye wald sa faine set furth,
> As now ye may heir Maddie tell,
> It is bot lytil gude worth.
> (11.133-6)

A character to be encountered more than once in reformation satire, Maddie is a personification of popular gossip, and therefore popular opinion. She is usually called "Maddie of the Cail Mercat" or "Maddie of the Fish Mercat", and various broadsheet poems purport to come from her pen, or her speech. By placing judgements about the welfare of religion and the realm, or common-sense advice on the conduct of affairs, in the mouth of a Kailwife the poet "brings the nobles down a peg or two", identifies himself with popular opinion, and stresses the importance and weight of popular opinion. The proverbial expressions in the second last stanza (the last is the conventional prayer) emphasise the good sense in what Maddie expresses, which is, in effect, what any thinking person ought to be able to perceive, if they are not blinded by having "Politick heidis":

> As ye haif browne, now drink ye that;
> Ye se how all is cum:
> For had I witten that I wait,
> Allace! is Scotts wisdume.
> Now best it war to leif sic thing,
> Lest strangers cum and wrang vs.
> Ane God, ane faith, ane Law, ane King,
> Let vs obserue amang vs.
> (11.137-44)

It is clear that the author of "The Exhortatioun to all plesand thingis"[32] considered and understood the satiric potential of combining the opening in a "high" style with the conclusion in a popular style. The deliberate exaggeration in the aureate portion, and the reversal of conventional imagery, are played off against the claim that some men are turning the world upside down. At the same time, the emblematic, elegaic style allowed the poet to bow to decorum, acknowledging the widespread grief over Moray's death and, especially, the nobility's right to feel grief and outrage if they had supported Moray. However, the abrupt change to the direct manner of the popular style stanzas suggests that neither indulgence in prolonged mourning nor sectional squabbles among the nobility will solve the urgent problems of the realm. The popular voice urges that a solution can be found through a pragmatic resolve to pull together against the enemies of the Kirk and State. While a clear distinction is maintained between the two styles, the ironic interplay of association, allusion, diction and tone makes both work to the advantage of the poem as satire and as propaganda.

In the move towards the establishment of vernacular poetry such awareness is crucial. Judgements of shallowness passed on poetry that adopts a popular stance and satirises subjects by reducing them to "common" terms, ignore poems such as "The Exhortatioun to all plesand thingis". It is this kind of poem that allows close examination of the operation of the poet's highly developed sense of satire and irony. In this, the poem serves as a salutary reminder that before choosing to use a popular mode, a poet concerned with politics, morality or religion, whether on a local or national scale, normally first considered the conventional means of committing such matters to verse. If, as in this case, the poet rejected or modified the conventional, finding that a popular mode enabled him to bring to bear on the subject a sharper sense of irony, then this is not indicative of what Craig calls "something limiting" artistically, but rather shows the exercise of

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32. Doubtless the author of the poem was Robert Sempill, whose work is considered in detail in the following chapter.

intelligent artistic discrimination. Such discrimination on the part of broadsheet poets in the late sixteenth century made an invaluable contribution to satiric poetry in Scotland.

In "The Exhortatioun to all plesand thingis" both of the styles are used competently, but the popular voice overshadows the courtly, which seems "old-fashioned" in comparison. It is possible that the ironic contrast between the two styles, and the confident tone of the second part of the poem, were also meant as a comment on the outmoded nature of the courtly style. In the eyes of the broadsheet poets who were experimenting with popular verse, courtly style was divorced from the realities of political life in a society undergoing changes of an order unlike anything in the nation's previous history, changes likely to produce political and social structures alien to the concerns and the manner of courtly literature.

The flyting, as a traditional mode of invective and denigration, was one courtly convention which constituted a particularly tempting choice for propaganda and polemic. The broadsheet poets, however, altered the focus of the flyting. The courtly flyting was a battle with words, conducted largely for the sake of the battle and the words, for the entertainment of a sophisticated audience, and not necessarily out of genuine enmity. Polwart and Montgomerie, for example, were not bitter personal enemies. The propagandist poets, on the other hand, were in deadly earnest in their hatred of their "enemies". Often they attempted to narrate events or conduct a doctrinal argument whilst hurling traditional imprecations, for propagandists did not see flyting as entertainment and did not conduct a flyting for its own sake. Consequently they rarely achieved the verbal and metrical dexterity so typical of a good courtly flyting. Partisan verse in the late sixteenth and seventeenth[33] centuries often had recourse to the flyting, but the verse seldom tumbles gleefully in the same way as it did in the hands of the courtly flyters.

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33. See Ch.11 for examples of seventeenth-century use of the flyting. The flyting appeared as an element in partisan verse until the early years of the eighteenth century.

More often the propagandist "flyting" is an amalgam of elements of the flyting with elements of the popular style, another form of blended verse which became a mode in its own right. Some seventeenth-century poems begin with a stanza of highly alliterated abuse based solidly on the flyting tradition and then proceed with an argument or statement in plainspeaking vernacular style, or even in the plain style. In the propagandist verse of the late sixteenth century there is commonly an effort to sustain the flyting for the whole poem, but even in these the change in style is apparent.

"Ane Ans^{r} maid to ye Sklanderis y^{t} blasphemis ye Regent and ye rest of ye Lordis"[34] is a laudable attempt at flyting, but it breaks down, even in the first stanza, through the necessity to explain and argue a case:

> Reingat rapfow! thocht þow raif,
> Skorner of poitis and sklanderus knaif!
> Quhat sayis thow bot we knaw o^{r} sell?
> In spyte of the and all þe laif
> The bastard bairne sall beir the bell.
> (p.65, ll.1-5)

This does not approach the artistry of the courtly flytings — the near contemporary Polwart, for example:

> Dispiteful Spider! poore of Spreite!
> Begines with babling me to blame?
> Gooke, wyte me not to garre and grete;
> Thy tratling, truiker, I shall tame.
> Where thow believes to win ane name,
> thow shall be banished of all beild,
> And syne receaue bothe skaithe and schame,
> And so be forced to leaue the field.[35]

Polwart's poem is sustained in tone and style because he is fighting with words, not fighting for an ideal or a party. The problem for propagandist poets was that there was always a third element involved in the flyting: the cause. So, the flyting became a public defence

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34. Manuscript poem from 1567.

35. *The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie*, *Supplementary Volume*, ed. George Stevenson (STS, Edinburgh and London, 1906-7), p.133.

against an opponent, rather than simply an attack on the opponent. In "Ane Answer maid to ye Sklanderis" the stanzas begin in rattling flyting style but end with a statement of the poet's position in relation to the cause, a defence of the cause, or a development in the argument. This explicatory and dialectical process is illustrated in the second stanza:

> Ouþer thow art ane papist loun,
> Hepburne, or Hoitbag Hamiltoun:
> Gif þai be þa thow callis þi prence,
> War ȝor richt reknit to þe croun
> It myt be laid with littil menss.
>
> (11.6-10)

To point to this difference between the propagandist and the courtly flyting is not to suggest that the propagandist was necessarily a poor poet. While he could not sustain the colourful invective of the traditional mode concurrently with an argument, he chose to adapt the courtly flyting, combining the arresting elements of it with the more straightforward diction of the business at hand:

> Maist lyke, sum myllare of ane myll
> Had maid þe mater of þe bill,
> Ouþer sum cuike or keching clerke:
> be doand, fule-face! flite þi fill!
> Men may nocht ding all dogge that barke.
>
> Palȝart! war nocht o[r] faith defendit,
> Oure cōmoun weill and knaifrie endit,
> Than þow myt writte in gennerall:
> All detours ar bot discommendit,
> That speike dispite in speciall.
>
> (11.41-50)

The poet rejects "dispite in speciall", an apt description of conventional flyting, claiming that it is ineffectual in the light of the general good which has come of Protestantism: the establishment of the Kirk, the defence of "our commoun weill" and the defeat of "knaifrie". The popular and communal dominate in the poem, "sklander" of individuals being dismissed with "all detours are bot discommendit". Recent proof of the power of popular action, and awareness of the wider audience, inform the poem. Hence the poem is arranged more as statement, address and argument than as a traditional flyting, and hence the poet's

confidence in mixing courtly and popular elements in such a way that the popular not only overshadows the conventional, but scoffs at it with proverbial glee "flite thy fille! / Men may nocht ding all dogge that barke."

The author works his name in acronym into the poem:

> Luik þe first letter of euerie werss,
> Hangman! gif þow can reherss,
> Mark weill my name & set ane day.
> (11.56-9)

The poet is "Robart Sempill", whose contribution to the consolidation of uncourtly vernacular style and plain style poetry will be examined in the next chapter. "Ane Answer" ends with:

> ffinis, quod Maddie, gar mak þe boun
> To all the papistis of þis toun.

Despatching his poem, via the popular figure of Maddie, to the streets, Sempill shows a full awareness of the power of the popular press.

Whilst "Ane Tragedie" used the courtly in a way which would have had doubtful appeal in the popular press, "Ane Exhortatioun to the Lordis" rejected the courtly altogether, adopting instead a "godly" style. In poems like "The Kingis Complaint", "Ane Declaration", "The Exhortatioun to all plesand thingis" and "Ane Answer maid to ye Sklanderis" courtly conventions were supplemented or adapted in various ways to produce poems with popular appeal as well as satiric strength. Without such experiments it is doubtful whether full-blooded popular verse, so familiar in Scotland in the centuries to come, would have emerged so quickly or so robustly in the late sixteenth century. Blending of traditions, or the ironic use of the courtly, were necessary steps in the establishment of styles appropriate to popular poetry, and to the more broadly based religious and political concerns of post-Reformation society.

Chapter 4

THE FIRST ROBERT SEMPILL: PROFESSIONAL SATIRIST

The best-known and most active Scottish controversial poet of the late sixteenth century, Robert Sempill was the author of the "Maddie" poems and a number of others in *Satirical Poems*[1]. It is illuminating and convenient to have a significant body of verse from the one poet since this allows consideration of stylistic experimentation and innovation without the nagging doubt that variations in idiom or style between poems might be due solely to incidental differences in background or manner between poets. The range of styles and the consciousness of an occasion and audience for each poem represented in Sempill's work can form a basis for understanding the poetic practice among the popular poets of his time.

Little is known of Sempill's life.[2] Tempting as it is to accommodate him with the Sempills of Beltrees, who made an invaluable contribution to Scottish poetry from the time of James VI until after the Civil War, there is no proof that this Robert Sempill had any close connection with that family. Nor is there any evidence connecting him with the family of the Lords Sempill who remained Catholic after the Reformation. Although Robert Sempill, broadside poet, must remain biographically obscure, his poetry reveals much about his outlook and character. From the variety of poetic modes with which he was familiar, and from the sharpness of his political understanding (even when he distorted

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1. Poems printed under his name, or pseudonym, or attributed to him by contemporaries. Many of the poems in Cranstoun's collection were also published in T.G. Stevenson's *The Sempill Ballates* (Edinburgh, 1872), but Stevenson's attributions are unreliable.

2. See Cranstoun's Biographical Notices, *Satirical Poems*, I, pp.xxv-xxxviii, for discussion of Sempill's possible identity.

the facts), it is clear that he was well educated, probably had been in the court, had an affinity for popular life and literature, was a town dweller and possibly a man of means reduced to supplementing his income through the broadside press. Whether he was an unpaid, dogmatically dedicated propagandist, or a professional poet, he was devoted to the Protestant cause.

Sempill was remarkably flexible artistically and, as a controversialist, particularly responsive to the demands of audience and subject, ranging freely and competently over available poetic models and developing new satiric styles with a discerning eye to purpose and effect. He blended courtly, popular and godly conventions, often with highly original results[3], continuing the work of earlier propagandists. Possibly inspired by the satires at the end of *Ane Compendious Buik*, he cultivated a rollicking vernacular style which strongly anticipates later vernacular poetry. Further, moulding together the results of his poetic experiments, combining vernacular pithiness and plain style wit, he produced a polished satiric mode that provides a foretaste of Scottish seventeenth-century satire, English Augustan satire, and the sophisticated satiric style of Fergusson and Burns. Sempill's permutations in style were not inadvertent, and he was deeply conscious of his role as poet, propagandist and satirist. His ingenuity was as much due to his self-awareness and apprehension of occasion as it was to his talent as a versifier.

Cranstoun claimed that Sempill

> ... would probably have been the last man to claim the name of poet. To speak to his fellows in the character of balladist was perhaps the height of his ambition.[4]

This distinction between the poet and the balladist is too inflexible. To regard himself as a popular poet with no pretensions to the ranks of courtly poets did not preclude Sempill from taking seriously the role of professional poet and satirist. Two hundred years later Burns cultivated

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3. Sempill wrote "The Exhortatioun to all Plesand Thingis" (see Ch.3).

4. I, p.xxxviii.

an image of himself as one of the "hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys", and portrayed his Muse as a "ramfeezled hizzie", but unquestionably took pride in the appellation "Poet". There is a strong similarity in Sempill's description of himself as poet in the last stanza of "The Spur to the Lordis" — in the ironic perception at work in:

> This Rakles Robert did report
> In raggit Ruffyis ryme;
> Sen Semple solace to this sort
> Auaillis maist in this tyme.
> With hardy hart Reuenge this cryme,
> I say na mair: Amen.
> Ga speik of Eger and Schir Gryme,
> And lat the Lordis alaine.
>
> (p.159, 11.105-12)

The "Rakles" and "Semple" image is intended to highlight popular opinion, identifying the poet with it, since it "Auaillis maist in this tyme". This is a statement of Sempill's understanding of the political and poetical contingency of appeals to the broadsheet audience. The advice to the Lords from the "Rakles" poet is serious advice. When he consigns himself away from controversy to writing of "Eger and Schir Gryme", he does not mean to underrate his skill as a poet, but rather to affirm that the writing of ballads belongs to the people. Such tales as "Eger and Schir Gryme" were also courtly favourites and by adopting the role of a balladist in two traditions Sempill could have a foot in both camps. Either he could be the voice of the people giving sound advice and then reverting to matters typical of the entertainment of the commons, or he could be seen as a romance poet, returning from a dalliance with controversy to the more remote and less urgent stuff of heroic legend. Both readings are valid and are not mutually exclusive. Sempill was well known as a popular satirist and there is irony in the suggestion that he would cease to comment on political events, concentrating on less topical material. In this way he drew attention to the value and inevitability of popular verse "in this tyme": the Lords may well have wished that Sempill and others of his ilk would "lat the Lordis alaine", but the popular poets would do no such thing. Sempill shows a consciousness of "the times", of the changes which had occurred in popular opinion and popular knowledge since the Reformation, in his

cultivation of the image of Rakles Robert Semple. Clearly he was far from simple and did not assume simplicity in his audience.

Sempill's poetic skill has been acknowledged by modern commentators. Agnes Mure Mackenzie refers to him briefly though flatteringly: "He combines swinging verse with a telling sense of phrase and a gift for the snigger ..."[5]. Brother Kenneth, who was tempted to the conclusion "this is where we came in" in relation to post-Reformation popular verse, observes about Sempill those very characteristics which distinguish him from the courtly poets and make him, along with his anonymous peers in the broadsheet industry, a forerunner of seventeeth- and eighteenth-century vernacular poets:

> ... writing under the real or assumed name of Robert Sempill, he speaks with no uncertain voice and in much the same political language as we are accustomed to hear today from self-styled representatives of the people working for a party. His style and themes are uncomplicated; Mary and the mass are an abomination: Moray and Elizabeth are the salvation of Scotland. It is, no doubt, Sempill who under the signature of Maddie of the Fish Mercat, or Maddie of the Cail Mercat, claims to be retailing the gossip of the day, but the fund of inside information on which he draws and his rooted prejudices mark him obviously as a party spokesman. And he is well equipped for the role of mouthpiece with his uncompromising views, journalistic flair for the sensational and talent for vituperative scorn.[6]

Sempill was not so uncomplicated a poet or political commentator as Brother Kenneth suggests, but the portrait of him as party spokesman, "self-styled representative of the people" is apposite. Sempill combined his "journalistic flair" with elements characteristic of Scottish poetry in the popular vein, with that "telling sense of phrase" and "gift for the snigger". Brother Kenneth observes precisely those aspects separating Sempill from the courtly poets: the popular, partisan and journalistic nature of his verse distinguishes it from most of what had been or was being written in courtly circles. Sempill is certainly not "where we came in". He did not simply adapt or continue older modes of

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5. *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.46.

6. *Essays on the Scottish Reformation*, ed. McRoberts, p.180.

verse, but exploited whichever conventions he needed, seriously or ironically, weaving them together with the reformed "godly" diction or racy vernacular, or abandoning them altogether in favour of newer styles — doing whatever seemed most effective to convey his views, or the party's, to the widest possible audience.

Commenting on Sempill's "versatility as a versifier, and his widely dissimilar styles", Cranstoun says that in style "Sempill is like a chameleon; and but for the guarantee of authorship given by his appended name, no critic would ever have dreamt of crediting him with several poems in this collection"[7]. It is this chameleon-like quality that makes it possible to find in Sempill's poetry evidence of wide exploration of possibilities, of a search for suitable styles for the new society in which he was writing, and of his recognition of a changing audience and changing purpose for poetry.

Tavern and Town Life: The "Private" Poet

Not all of Sempill's poetry was political and partisan. With a *bon vivant* akin to the relish of "low-life" among the later vernacular poets, Sempill wrote three poems described by Mure Mackenzie as "testimonials to the professional skill of various leading ladies of the pavement"[8], although the poems are more subtle than this. "The Ballat maid upoun Margret Fleming", "Jonet Reid, Ane Violet, and Ane Quhyt" and "The Defence of Crissell Sandelandis" were preserved in the Bannatyne MS, whence Ramsay took them for publication in his *Evergreen*, making them available to the Scots poets of his century. Since the Bannatyne MS was compiled in 1568, and the earliest broadsheet poem definitely known to be Sempill's is dated 1567, Cranstoun was probably right in deciding that "in this naughty triad we have the earliest extant compositions of Robert Sempill"[9].

7. II, pp.259-60.

8. *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.46.

9. II, p.259. Cranstoun discusses at some length the difficulty of accepting the poems as Sempill's due to "the great disparity between the two sets in character, tone and style", finding a conflict between the suggestion of "unusual wantonness and depravity" in these poems and the Reforming voice in the rest. He does, however, accept the poems as Sempill's, and there is no reason to doubt Bannatyne's attribution to a living poet.

The three poems were doubtless originally composed, in much the same way as Ramsay's mock elegies, for the amusement of a group of friends who were familiar with the ladies and their haunts, either from intimate acquaintance or because the women were town characters.

"The Ballat maid upoun Margret Fleming, callit the Flemyng bark in Edinbur^{t}" relies on an extended metaphor of the prostitute as a merchant ship, wittily sustained in the diction of the seafaring and mercantile worlds. The speaker is identified in the final lines not as a seaman or merchant, but as a craftsman: "Thus fair ȝe weill, sayis gud Johine Cok, / Ane nobill telȝeour in this toun" (p.393, ll.63-4). Sempill's choice of a tailor as narrator was one way of distancing himself from the subject, but also allowed him to exploit the renowned association of tailors with bawdry. Traditional and colloquial phrases and associations abound in the poem, such as Margret's refusal to sell her favours to men without the romantic character of mariners:

> Na pedderis pak scho will ressaif,
> Althocht hir travell scho sowld tyne;
> Na coukald Karle nor carlingis pet,
> That dois thair corne and caitell cryne;
> Bot, quhair scho findis a fallow fyne,
> He wilbe frawcht fre for a souss;
> Scho kareis nocht bot men and wyne,
> And bulȝeon to þe counȝe-houss.
> (ll.33-40)

For all its gusto, "The Flemyng Bark" is essentially ironic. Sempill establishes an ironic interplay between the tailor's admiration for the woman's sexual prowess, the hints that she would prefer a seafaring man, and the bald fact that she will take any man who meets her fee and needs. This irony is sharpened by the mercantile references: in the event, the most successful merchant in Edinburgh would seem to be Margret herself who, after all, receives both her fee and her merchandise:

> Ffor merchandmen I may haif mony,
> Bot nane sic as I wald desyre;
> And I am layth to mell w^{t} ony,
> To leis my mater in the myre.
> That man that wirkis best for his hyre,
> Syne he salbe my mariner:
> Bot nycht and day mon he nocht tyre,
> That sailis my bony ballinger.
> (ll.42-8)

Sempill obviously enjoys his low-life subject, satirises her and provides a comment on her profession. Such a threefold approach — subjective appreciation, objective awareness of hypocrisy or irony, and wider social comment — was to be common among later vernacular poets. Ramsay's mock elegies are often activated by a similar vision, which could partially explain his motivation for publishing these examples of Sempill's verse.

"The Ballat maid be Robert Semple of Jonet Reid, Ane Violet, and Ane Quhyt. Being slicht wemen of lyfe and conversatioun, and tavernaris", more simply called "The Claith Merchant"[10], is another thematic poem. It is a genial description which might have been written purely for the opportunity it offered for word-play and humour, although Sempill is jocularly appreciative of the three Janets, who were obviously well-known indentities.

The poem employs involved imagery of cloths, colours and dress, but the tone is popular, using the voice of a merchant who frequents the taverns and is closely involved in the social life of the town. On two occasions the merchant refers to "court men" as if they were a race apart, not entirely welcome in the resorts of men such as himself:

> 3our court-men heir hes maid my claith deir,
> And raised it twell-pen̄is of the ell;
> 3it is my claith seuver for sadillis to ceuver,
> Suppois the sessioun raid thamesell.
>
> (p.394, ll.57-60)

The merchant's class consciousness, his view of himself as a servant of courtiers and kirkmen but somehow superior to them, probably governs the style reminiscent of folk song, as much as the low-life subject. The colour imagery suggests popular associations, so, too, the references to the work of the weavers and the metaphor on the merchant's own trade. The popular is evoked in the jaunty, short-lined stanza with internal rhymes, a vernacular vocabulary which includes the common words for colours, cloths and articles of clothing, and a diction based on everyday

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10. This is Ramsay's addition to the title. See Cranstoun's note, II, p.266.

conversation among the people to whom the poem relates. The colour imagery might also have led Sempill into emblem poetry, with which he was familiar, but in this case his bawdy muse turns to the folk:

> Stanche my fyking, and stryd my lyking,
> Ar semely hewis for sommer play;
> Dundippit in ȝello ffor mony gud fallo,
> As Will of Quhit-hawch bad me say;
> I will not dennyit till nane þat will by it;
> For silver nane salbe said nay;
> Suppois ȝe weit it nycht and day.
> (11.9-16)

Bearing a close resemblance to Ramsay's and Burns' poems and songs on "loose" women who were admired and appreciated (not only for their sexual favours) by the men who knew them, "The Claith Merchant" makes no apology for its subject and no claim to be anything other than an occasional poem. The care Sempill lavished on the re-creation of the style of folk song, on the elaborate imagery and on the sympathetic delineation of the women and tavern life belies his casual dismissal of his efforts in the final stanza:

> This far to releif me, that na man repreif me,
> In Jedburgh, at the Justice air,[11]
> This sang of thre lassis was maid abone glassis,
> That tyme that they were tapstaris thair.
> The first wes any Quhyt, a lass of delyt;
> The Violett, baith gud and fair;
> Keip the Reid fra skaith, scho is worth thame baith:
> Sa, to be schort, I say no mair.
> (11.97-104)

This is a kind of verse which flourished in Scotland throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Courtly poets had introduced the manner of the folk to poems on low-life subjects, but frequently with a burlesque or satiric effect, and rarely with this kind of good-humoured affection for the subject. Even more rarely did the courtly poets involve themselves in the poetic action to the extent of becoming a natural part of the town or tavern life described. Personal involvement is a

11. This reference to Sempill being in Jedburgh "at the Justice air" could mean that Sempill was involved in the law, possibly an advocate or justice of the peace.

distinguishing feature of the work of Sempill and many of his successors in the composition of saucy, sprightly vernacular poetry of such an occasional nature.

If a source for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century occasional vernacular poetry and song is to be found anywhere outside the oral tradition, then it is among the same poets who pioneered the vernacular satiric mode, such as Sempill. He, and not the courtly lyricists, is the link between Dunbar's occasional forays into folk life and the rash of broadsheet songs which began to appear in the seventeenth century. The connection is clear in the style, the more "modern" Scots vocabulary, and particularly in an attitude towards subjects which combines compassion and fellow-feeling with appreciative relish. A slight distancing, allowed by the poet's eye, affords humour and irony, but essentially there is an identification with the subjects as fellow human beings, or animals, which prevents condescension.

More openly a social satire than "The Flemyng Bark", and more purposeful than "The Claith Merchant', "The Defence of Crissell Sandelandis" defends a prostitute against the magistrates of Edinburgh "ffor using hirself contrair the Ten Comandis; Being in Ward for playing of the loun with every ane list geif hir half a croun". The magistrates put Crissell "in ward" after she is discovered in the company of a member of the Protestant clergy. Sempill light-heartedly satirises Crissell, condemns the unfairness of the punishment of the woman for the sins of men, and much more seriously satirises the hypocrisy of the "godly".

Comparison with Burns' "Address to the Unco Guid" is appropriate since both poets suggest that the godly ought to be concerned with charity and counsel rather than with humiliation and self-righteous judgement of their fellows. Burns parodies the godly idiom when he addresses the Unco Guid:

> Hear me, ye venerable Core,
>   As counsel for poor mortals,
> That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
>   For glaikit Folly's portals;
> I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes

Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared
And shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard
What maks the mighty differ;
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (What's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.
("Address to the Unco Guid", 11.9-24)[12]

The tone of "Crissell Sandelandis" is remarkably similar, as is the diction, which is more colloquial and conversational than it is in "The Flemyng Bark". "Crissell Sandelandis" is more concerned with an actual event than Burns' poem, but even in the use of detail the style and tone are particularly close to the social and religious satires not only of Burns, but of Ramsay and Fergusson:

To Sandelandis ȝe wer our sair to schame hir,
Sen ȝe w^t counsale my^t quyetlie com̄and hir:
Havand na causs bot com̄oun voce and sklander;
Syne findand no man in the houss neir hand hir,
Except ane clerk of godly conversatioun.
Quhat gif besyde Iohine Dureis self ȝe fand hir,
Dar ȝe suspect the holy congregatioun?
(p.394, 11.9-12)

Such a tone of mock righteousness is adopted frequently in the poem, with the poet affecting a "sensible" defence of the accused. The irony of defending a prostitute with terms such as "virgynis" intensifies the charges of self-righteous bigotry and hypocrisy levelled at the magistrates — either they are rigidly extremist or ridiculously naive if they continue to oppress Crissell:

Ȝour fleslie conscience garris ȝow tak this feir:
Beleif ȝe virgynis wilbe win so sone?
Na, god forbid: Bot men may bourd als neir,
And wemen nocht the wor quhen it is done.
Had scho bene vndir, and he hobland abone,
That wer a perllous play for to suspect thame:
Bot laddis and lassis will meit eftirnone,
Quhair Dicke and Dvrie dow nocht baith correct thame.
(11.17-24)

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12. Burns possessed, and treasured, a copy of Ramsay's *Evergreen*, and would certainly have been familiar with the Sempill poem.

The argument used by Burns in "The Unco Guid" — that those without sin are few indeed — finds voice here. The "Defence" argues that the magistrates, baillies and ministers of Edinburgh ought to have more significant business than bringing petty prosecutions against people for indulging in something that, after all, everyone else indulges in, either in or out of wedlock. The inevitable conclusion is that the time of the authorities would be better spent on more serious sinners, or other types of sinners, unless they fear that some of their own number might fall among the latter:

> Sen drunkardis, gluttonis, and contentious men,
> Shedderis of blude, and subiectis gevin to greid,
> May not posses the hevinly gloir, ȝe ken,
> As in the bybill dalie do we reid;
> Lat thir be wit allyk till every leid,
> Syne fornicatioun plasit amangis the laif:
> Exempt ȝour self throw all the toun in deid,
> Than luke how mony ȝe onmerkit haif.
> (11.25-32)

Comedy and social criticism are thus achieved at the expense of notables. The stanza at 11.73-80 lists the possible judges for the case, appearing to be serious but surely ironic: "Ffor men of law I wat nocht quhome to luke", "Auld James Bānatyne wes anis a man of skill ..." It is not coincidence that the next stanza begins "Wuhat cūmer castis the formest stane, lat see".

Like Ramsay's mock elegies and Burns' religious satires the poem turns to a large extent on the reader's knowledge of the true nature of the subject — in this case that Crissell is a prostitute, and that all references to "virgynis" and the suggestion that the prosecution has prevented the marriage of two true lovers, are ludicrous.

Crissell's profession gave Sempill scope for comedy, wit and exaggeration to absurdity. Her prosecution, on the other hand, spurred him to serious satire. There is comedy in the situation in which the "clerk of godly conversatioun" finds himself, irony in the poet's adoption of the role of advocate for Crissell, and strong satire throughout the poem on the law enforcers and moral stalwarts of Edinburgh, and on self-appointed judges. All of these elements are brought together in the last stanza:

To pvneiss part is parcialitie;
To pvneiss all is hard to do in deid;
Bot send thame heir to our regalitie,
And we sall see gif we can serve thair neid.
This rurall ryme, quha sa lyke for to reid,
To Dict and Dury is directit plane:
Quhair I offend thame in my landwart leid,
I salbe reddy to reforme agane.
(11.105-12)

The first two lines represent the "moral of the story", emphasising the satire. The next two stress the poet's enjoyment of the subject, his willingness to stand by her and of course, his recognition of the true nature of her profession. The last four are in part conventional, owing much to Lindsay and like his apologies for "rurall ryme", not apology at all. Sempill clearly intended his matter to be as straightforward as it is, and intended his language to be as plain as it is. These last lines, however, are also an acknowledgement of the poet's role as town poet and public satirist.

Early in his career as this poem is, Sempill had already assumed the image he maintained throughout his work. He was not a courtier defending his use of plain language and "low" matter for satiric effect but a poet aware of his place as a public commentator in an urban, post-Reformation society. The "voice" which emerged among the broadsheet poets is characterised by such plain speech; a capacity to laugh at one's own side as well as that being satirised; a conversational tone; a delight in the life of the town, accompanied by an eye for a "character"; a familiar approach to authority and a willingness to criticise openly on behalf of the general public.

The Public Poet: Maddie Speaks Out

Of Sempill's Maddie poems, the two which reveal most about his poetic practice and his apprehension of a popular audience are "Maddeis Lamentatioun" and "Maddeis Proclamatioun", which were published in broadsheet in 1570. It is not known whether they were published simultaneously, but it is clear that they were meant to be read concurrently.

Like "The Exhortatioun to all plesand thingis", "Maddeis Lamentatioun" on the murder of Moray is a blended poem, making deliberate

gestures towards fulfilling its purported function of conventional lamentation: an astrological opening, a rhetorical tone, constant use of imperatives, and gravity of atmosphere as befits a lamentation. The opening stanza leaves the reader in no doubt of the poem's "high seriousness":

> Quhen bludy Mars, with his vndantit rage,
> With Saturne maid yis cruel cōspiratioun,
> And curst Juno, with girnand feirs curage,
> Amangis Planettis had greitest dominatioun,
> I hard ane voice, with drerie lamentatioun,
> Sayand: O Lord! help now with thy rycht hand!
> Gone is the Joy and gyde of this Natioun:
> I mene be James, Regent of Scotland.
> (p.144, ll.1-8)

After this initial flourish, combining literary Scots with an echo of the pulpit, the diction becomes similar to Lindsay's in *The Monarche*; dignified, rhetorical and yet not so elevated as to alienate the common reader or auditor.

As a call to lamentation the poem is sincere but no opportunity is missed to stress the political importance of Moray, and of what can be done now that he is gone. Strong links between Moray and the commons, politically and in terms of the Reformation, are suggested throughout the poem:

> His commoun weill he lufit ouer all thing;
> In trew Religioun na Prince mycht be his peir;
> Idolatrie but reuth he did down thring.
> (ll.33-5)

> ȝe vertuous men! lament his cairfull chance,
> Sen he is gone that suld ȝow fortifie;
> All ȝe that wald the trew Gospell auance.
> (ll.49-51)

> ȝe pure cōmounis, that lang hes bene opprest,
> And ȝe Burrowis, murne and Regrait his fall!
> (ll.57-8)

> This commoun weil he luifit sa tenderlie,
> Quhilk to mantene na thing maid him agast.
> (ll.65-6)

That these are all opening lines of stanzas is an indication of the prominence of the popular audience in Sempill's thoughts.

Like the audience, Maddie is treated with respect. She may be a kailwife, but she is intelligent and capable of fine feelings and political acumen:

> 3our cause is Just, gif 3e wald all persew,
> Bot quhair deuision lurkis it is ane pyne;
> Christ hes it sed, and doutles it is trew,
> That Kingdome sall come to greit ruyne
> Quhen that deuissioun hes his sait and tryne.
> Thairfoir be war, counsall is na command:
> For, gif 3e perische, 3our cause & freindis sall tyne:
> For now they want James, Regent of Scotlād.
> (11.97-104)

Her message is that God is on the side of the forces opposed to Queen Mary and her appeal is to the masses, especially in the towns, even though the advice is to the nobility. The final stanza moves with a martial beat yet rings, too, with the qualities of protestant hymns:

> O thow that art Omnipotent conding,
> Thre persounis Ringand in ane Trinitie!
> Help yis pure Realme & preserue our 3oung King
> Fra Schame, and deid, and feid of Enemie.
> Amangis our Nobillis plant peace & vnitie.
> Fra mercyles strangers saif vs with thy rycht hād:
> Our sinnis is greit, 3it mercy rests with the.
> Adew for ay! James, Regent of Scotland.

It is as if this were the poet's last word on mourning, and the opening stanza of "Maddeis Proclamatioun" confirms this. The ceremonial leave-taking is over and the time for action has come, asserted by an abrupt change in tone and form:

> In lofty veirs I did reheirs
> My drerie lamentatioun,
> And now, allace! maist cairfull cace,
> I mak my proclamatioun.
> Desyring all, baith greit and small,
> That heiris me be Narratioun,
> Not for to wyte my rude Indyte,
> Sen maid is Intimatioun.
> (p.149, 11.1-8)

The galloping stanza with internal rhymes is the very stuff of broadside balladry. The public nature of the proclamation is acknowledged in the line "That heiris me be Narratioun", which justifies the change in style by referring to purpose.

Realised as one of the "small", Maddie is portrayed as a hard-working commoner, a simple woman with the daily problems and concerns of others of her class:

> For I, a wyfe with sempill lyfe,
> Dois wyn my meit ilk day,
> For small auaill, ay selling caill,
> The best fassoun I may.
> Besyde the Throne I wait vpone[13]
> My mercat but delay;
> Gif men thair walk, I heir thair talk,
> And beiris it weill away.
>
> (11.17-24)

Unpretentious, her ordinariness stressed in her speech ("the best fassoun I may"), such a character — and not a caricature — is designed to appeal to the labouring and marketing commons. At the same time she fulfils a satiric purpose. This kailwife, who in the final stanza reminds us of her station by telling of the astonishment of the other "wyfis" "to se my awin hand wryte", gives sound advice to the established political powers, and in so doing, undercuts them by apparently being more sensible than her sophisticated governors.

Sempill, like other post-Reformation propagandists, perceived the effectiveness of reminding the establishment that mob action, which had been fomented before, could still be a threat. Whether the "common weill" could have expressed this is beside the point: broadsheet poets could articulate it for them, simultaneously manipulating the fears and loyalties of the commons, in the same way as modern political propagandists.

Gossip is conventionally associated with women, but Maddie does not represent idle gossip, rather common sense and clarity of vision. In metre and diction much of "Maddeis Proclamatioun" is fashioned as popular balladry and folk song. There is a close resemblance between the stanza and that of "The Pape that Pagane full of pryde" ("Hay Trix, Tryme go trix ...") in the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis", and the purpose is exactly the same. Maddie uses proverbialisms — "Not in Cat harrowis",

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13. The "Throne" was the Tron Cross, a traditional Edinburgh market-place. There may, of course, be a pun intended with "throne", reminding the government of the power of popular opinion.

"And countis ȝow not ane sous"; colloquialisms — "sen ȝe are hapnit hidder", "the best fassoun I may"; and even refers to a children's game[14]. Hence, as well as representing informed gossip and a popular threat to authority, she is a figure of folk wisdom.

At times Maddie's tone is that of a person who can see the answers to a set of problems and is frustrated by the inability of others to see them. She is sure of herself, yet not unaware that someone in her humble station must have a care to whom she dispenses advice. She covers herself cleverly:

> I do intend nane to offend
> That feiris God arycht,
> Thocht murtherars & blud scheddars
> Wald haif me out of sycht.
> Thair malice vane I do disdane,
> And curse thair subtell Slycht.
> My name is knawin, yair bruit is blawin
> Abroade baith day and nycht.
> (11.9-16)

In tone, diction and by association, the popular dominates the poem. The court is at a far remove while the reformers are ever present, identified with the godly commons. The familiar and gossipy speech of Maddie is coloured with godly diction. She speaks in the language of the streets, tinged as it would have been with the continual exposure of the Edinburgh commons to reforming oratory, with the "language of the saints", combined with a certain righteousness of tone achieved through the use of words out of tune with her "simple" image, like "perpetrate", "nominate", "insatiate" and "commaculate" in the twelfth stanza. The reforming idiom placed among vengeful, plain Scots vernacular reproduces a commoner's interpretation of pulpit rhetoric, and was transformed into a broadsheet idiom by poets like Sempill.

The Voice of the Godly Commons

Whereas Maddie is a personification of popular opinion, in other poems Sempill has the public speak for themselves in a communal voice.

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14. "Fyle not the scoir" (1.69) refers to a game similar to the English "tug of war".

"The Lamentatioun of the Comounis of Scotland", a two column broadsheet from 1572, is described by Cranstoun as "a bitter Lamentation by the Commons, on account of the miseries brought upon them by the action of Grange, whose tenure of the castle had paralysed their industries, and reduced their families to beggary and starvation". Clearly Sempill was sincerely concerned for the plight of the Edinburgh commons, but nothing could be more effective propaganda, nothing more likely to rouse the commons to action, than such a plea on their behalf. Nor could there be a more effective way of warning the lords, and Grange, that they should find a settlement, since Grange appeared to be holding the lords to ransom, and they appeared to be ineffectual.

The voice of the poem is a communal "we", not an allegorical "Lady Scotland" or an archetypal representative like Johne the Common Weill. The poem is not, as Brother Kenneth would have it, just another reiteration of a worn out theme. The first stanza employs a rhetorical note, as a call to attention, but makes no concessions to a courtly lamentation. In a mixture of vernacular Scots and reforming rhetoric the commons speak directly to the reader as the godly:

> Quhat thift, quhat reif, quhat murther & oppressiou̅,
> Quhat saikles slauchter, quhat mortall meserie,
> Quhat pouertie, quhat derth and Tribulation
> Dois Ring be Grange, all leidis on lyfe may se!
> The schame is thyne, thocht we the sorrow drie,
> Curst Nemrod, richt of Babilone the cheif!
> We Commounis all lowd vengeance cryis on the,
> Blaming thy tressoun, the caus of all our greif.
> (p.221, ll.1-8)

The stanza gives a broad and dramatic picture of suffering and needless death in Edinburgh, and the second stanza begins a listing of the effects of Grange's occupation of the castle on various trades and on people's everyday lives, with a realism and particularity which would appeal to the broadsheet audience more directly than a general lamentation in the conventional style. No doubt the "mirrines" of normal life for the labouring commons is exaggerated but the stanza is at least effective in drawing a picture of what life should be like and is not whilst Grange and his men can shoot or raid from the castle without warning:

> We, sillie puir anis, quhair we wer wont to gang
> With Coillis and Cokillis, with Fische, & siclyke wair,
> Upon our bakis, als mekill as we micht fang,
> With mirrie sang all tripping into pairis,
> To wyn our leuing in mercat at sic Fairis,
> Now we, allace! but reuth, are reft with theif;
> Haue we ane lyart, na baid bot all thairis:
> Blaming thy tressoun, the caus of all our reif.
> (11.9-16)

The description of disrupted trades and occupations is inclusive of the meanest. There is an echo of Lindsay in the reference to "Coilȝearis, Cadgearis, and Carteris" although this would seem to have been a common collective phrase for the men who carried and sold peat, coal and heather to Edinburgh. Even the chapmen cannot get out of the city to take requisites to "Landwart Megges". Each picture of the plight of a group of workers reflects on how life was before Grange's occupation, and draws attention to present sufferings. The traditional ironic or ribald digs at craftsmen are avoided, and though there is occasional sentimentalism it is without pastoral condescension.

Sempill's structuring of the poem is significant. The first stanza announces the lamentation, the second to seventh are the complaints of various groups — labourers, tradesmen, merchants. The eighth is a further lament from the whole commons but this time referring to particular grievances, "Our steidis are stowne, our cattell reft trewlie", and to the psychological and emotional effects of such chaos:

> With weiping, wallaway, nane may we wyte bot the,
> Thou Fiend Infernall! thou garris vs walk out so,
> Quhair we afoir did sleip richt quyetlie.
> (11.69-71)

After these more personal aspects of the general suffering, two stanzas, representing individual voices, describe private grief. Until now there had been some similarity between this poem and descriptions of the poor in older verse, despite the more modern homely diction and realistic, localised descriptions. But here the suffering of two people, named and located, probably real people, is thrust into the poem so that the reader cannot distance himself from the action without feeling particularly heartless[15]:

15. Even Lindsay's Pauper, though quite an individual, has no name, and serves a comic as well as a serious function.

Bot, sen with sith ʒe Cammounis do complene,
With sob full sair richt trewly sall I tell,
I, James Dalʒell, Indwellar in the Dene,
Be Grange, smaikis, I wait, send be himsell,
Hes schot my wyfe throw birsket, lyre, and fell;
Scho, greit with barne, syne gaif the gaist with plane:
Than cryit my bairnis with mony ʒout and ʒell,
Blaming thy tressoun that had thair Mother slane.

Thay reuthles Ruffeis but reuth with crueltie
Did slay my husband but caus into my sicht;
Downie Ros be name, ane Cuitlar of craft trewlie,
With Gūnis him gord but mercy on the nicht.
I and my bairnis sall craif Goddis plaigues ful richt
To fall the, Grange, thou cruell Cokadraill!
With fourtie ma nor did on Pharo licht:
Blaming thy tressoun that causis vs bewaill.
(11.73-88)

From this point the poem opens out again to a general condemnation of Grange (three stanzas) and two stanzas calling on the commons to unite against the foe.

The personal voices and circumstances of James Dalyell and Mrs Downie Ros intensify the sense of reality by focusing on individuals. No doubt the introduction of the personal accounts was motivated by the same end as motivates modern journalists in the daily tableaux to "spice up" stories about disasters and tragedies with an "eyewitness" account from a bystander or with the grief stricken responses of a relative. There is an undeniable ghoulishness about such journalism, but it does sell newspapers. Similarly, Sempill's journalistic tactics would have added considerable power to the poem as propaganda, popularizing the broadsheet, especially if, as one suspects, Dalyell and Ros were real people. Successful propaganda to this day highlights the effects of political events not only on the broad society, but on the trade union membership (in this case the guilds), on the market place (here the merchants) and on the individual or family.

Partly as a result of such techniques used by popular poets there was a growing propensity among Scottish poets after the Reformation to particularise, to draw the reader's attention from or to the wider theme of a poem with an individual instance or character. Poets seem to have felt less an obligation to deal with universals and archetypes, and

more to see a role for poetry in the daily life of the people and the nation. While their poetry could begin to appear parochial, at least in comparison with major English poetry in the same period, it is probable that such a focusing of vision — a capacity to devote poetic energies to the smallest as well as to large subjects — was one of the great strengths of Scottish poetry in its late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century development, contributing to the success of the Scots poets in satire, to Ramsay's work in the pastoral and to the widespread appeal of Scots song in the eighteenth century.

All the trades, crafts, occupations and individuals in "The Lamentatioun" speak in clear, unliterary Scots, with a colouring of godliness, reinforced by references to their good and honest lives. The homely communal diction is in no way intended to be either comic or quaint, nor is it. This is the commons speaking to the commons, and when an elevation of tone is required it is achieved through the introduction of godly, rather than courtly, diction. In the second last stanza the reformed commons are referred to as "Sanctis", a term which was to become increasingly commonplace. Furthermore, the echoes of the hymns and psalms are numerous, the whole stanza anticipating the idiom of the Covenanters, yet remaining in harmony with the rest of the poem, particularly with the homely Scots which is the prevalent diction. It is apparent that in poetry a point had been reached where the identification of plain Scots with common sense had become allied with the Kirk and the language of the Old Testament, so much a part of the pulpit style of reformed preachers. Sempill moved with ease from one register to another, as if there was no difference to be perceived; as if the use of godly diction was indeed normal for the commons when they dealt with religious subjects.

The same voice of the godly commons is present in "Ane Premonitioun to the barnis of Leith", a long poem though not as skilful as "The Lamentatioun of the Comounis". In almost bald diction, and a very simple stanza, "Ane Premonitioun" appeals to the renewed popular fear of Papacy in the wake of the massacre of the Huguenots and the news of the Council of Trent. However, the poem is neither hysterical nor defensive, instead

making serious declarations as to how the nation ought to be guided in the light of events in Europe, with a tone of assurance rather than paranoia.

At one point in "Ane Premonitioun" Sempill employs a Biblical reference more obscure than usual, and carefully directs his readers to ask their preachers for clarification of the reference:

> For thocht that Saul will Agag spair,
> 3it God will haue his will, but mair,
> Fulfillit or he sace:
> Gif this ȝe do not vnderstand,
> Speir at John Drurie or John Brād:
> Thay will expone the place.
>
> (p.219, 11.201-10)

Sempill appears to consider the congregation sufficiently literate to have their Scripture on hand, reading the section when the preachers had told them the "place". While the assumption extends only to those who could read the broadsheet, it nevertheless envisages a situation considerably different from that before the Reformation when the reformed faithful were few, the constant cry was for more preachers, and Bibles were rare, especially in private households. Sempill's attitude suggests that literacy had already increased considerably by the 1570s, and the effect of the English Bible and English controversial literature on Scottish speech is as clear in poetry as the effect of pulpit rhetoric.

Nevertheless, poets regularly favoured a homely diction, coloured by the godly but not immersed in it. The vernacular itself was changing as godly rhetoric and English Scriptures brought more and more English words into Scots. It will become obvious in the course of this study that Scots poets, as much as Scots lay people generally, continued to be able to discriminate between the "homely", the "godly", literary Scots, literary and spoken English, all of which became registers within the one language, drawn on at different times for different purposes. Such a modulation of language, rather than a process whereby one manner of expression was inexorably transmuted into another, is what can be seen at work in all of Sempill's poetry.

Vernacular Poetry and Popular Irony

The suitability of this new, more flexible Scots idiom for satire and irony is demonstrated in Sempill's "Ane new Ballet set out be ane fugitiue Scottisman that fled out of Paris at this lait Murther", a response to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Cranstoun thought that the title indicated Sempill's presence in Paris in August 1572 and while there is no other evidence of this, there is no reason to dispute it, for despite the bitterly ironic style and content of the poem, Sempill appears to have been genuinely horrified by the massacre. Certainly he was moved to write a particularly vicious counterblast to it.

Hatred of Catholicism and of the ecclesiastical and secular Roman Catholic leaders in Europe becomes implacably vehement in "Ane new Ballet" and Sempill's subsequent poetry. Portrayed in some protestant poetry as an almost comic anachronism, the Roman Catholic Church is drawn, in the face of the Counter-reformation, as a monstrous travesty of Christianity and a deadly threat to Protestantism.

By deft metrical and verbal techniques, Sempill conjures up a dance rhythm in "Ane new Ballet". The stanza has a sprightly metre with a song-like ABABCC rhyme, internal rhymes in the B lines, and recurrent use of words like "bridall", "dance" and "mask". The effect is an ironic comment on the wordliness of the Roman Church, its involvement in secular politics, and the chilling contrast between the elaborate pomp and ceremony of its rites and the gross inhumanity of the Paris massacre. The masquing imagery, in particular, evokes what Sempill sees as the conspiratorial hold of the Catholic Church over certain European governments and consequently over certain European Commons. Rome becomes, in the course of the poem, the epitome of falsehood. This is achieved through irony and imagery rather than by statement or accusation. Both the title of the poem, with its implications of a new and pleasant ditty and the use of a jig and reel rhythm establish a sense of irony from the outset.

In the manner of a journalistic commentator, Sempill begins with a highly condensed political narrative, assuming that his audience is

sufficiently aware of past and present events in Scotland and France to take his point:

> Now Katherine de Medicis hes maid sic a gyis,
> To tary in Paris the papistes ar tykit:
> At Bastianes brydell, howbeit scho denyis,
> Giue Mary slew Hary, it was not vnlykit:
> 3it a man is nane respectand this number;
> I dar not say wemen hes wyte of this cummer.
> (p.257, 11.1-6)

Gone is any concession to the noble and powerful in style or address, the diction reflecting the commons and the tone being ironically sceptical. It is as if the commons had once and for all been convinced by the events of St. Bartholomew's Day that any awe or reverence previously inspired by the Catholic nobility of France or Scotland was misdirected, as was any reverence subjects felt due to Princes regardless of religion, since Princes had proven untrustworthy:

> 3one mask the Quene Mother has maid thame in France,
> Was maikles and saikles and schamfully slane;
> Bot Mary conuoyit and come with ane dance,
> Quhill princes in sences was fyrit with ane trane;
> Baith tressonabill murtheris the ane and the vther:
> I go not in masking mair with the Quene Mother.[16]
> (11.7-12)

A later stanza makes an even more explicit comment on princes:

> For better is pure men nor princes periurit;
> Baith schameles and fameles, we find thame sa fals;
> With sangis lyke the seryne our lyfis thow allurit;
> Ouirsylit vs, begylit vs, with baitis in our hals;
> Or as the fals fowler, his fang for to get,
> Deuoiris the pure volatill he wylis to the net.
> (11.31-6)

Combining satiric references to upper class pastimes like masquing with a diction more suitable to the popular press than to the court, produces a tone allying the poet with the common people, and the common people with right and common sense in contrast to misguided tyranny.

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16. The repeated comparison of the massacre with Mary's one "murther" functions to remind the reader of the relevance of events in France to the political situation in Scotland.

Again employing the effective techniques of "The Lamentatioun of the Comounis", written in the same year, Sempill does not hesitate to be emotive in order to wring from his Scottish readers pity for the French Protestants. The events in Paris had ominous implications for a people who had a Catholic, French-educated queen still alive in their midst, and Sempill is not subtle in his appeal to the righteous sensibilities of the Scottish commons:

> Baith auld men, and wemen with babis on thair breist,
>   Not luking nor huking, to hurll thame in Sane!
> All beand murdreist downe, quhat do ȝe neist?
>   Procession, confession, and vp Mes agane:
> Proud King Antiochus was sum tyme als haly,
> And yet our God guschit out the guttis of his belly.
> (11.43-8)

It suited the propagandist to dwell on the sufferings of the meek, even though the historical facts of St. Batholomew's Day more than adequately support his claims. The violence of this stanza, in the description of the slaughter and in the reference to "King Antiochus", shows how the pastoral, rather gentle God of many of the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis" was becoming "our God" — the vengeful defender of the righteous "Sanctis" familiar in seventeenth-century controversial verse on the Covenanting side. The diction reveals the now more common mixture of the vernacular and the language of the Kirk, with frequent Old Testament analogies. Righteousness is strongly present, included in the poem as the natural tone of lay protestants perceiving a threat to their religious security:

> Our faith is not warldly, we feir not thy braulis,
>   Though hangmen ouirgang men, for gaddering our geir,
> ʒe kill bot the carcase, ȝe get not our saulis,
>   Not douting our shouting is hard in Goddis eir.
> The same God from Pharo defendit his pepill,
> And not ȝone round Robene that standis in ȝour stepill.
> (11.61-6)

The general theme of the poem is the threat France represents to the Scottish Reformation, with the last stanzas including a call to the "wyse Quene Elizabeth" to defend Scotland, for identification of the Protestant Cause with the English Cause had become unavoidable. When Sempill warns that in the event of a French invasion help must come

from England he takes the same care as in "Ane Premonitioun to the Barnis of Leith" not to appear hysterical, maintaining the tone of reasoned protestant calm and strength, but at the same time hinting strongly enough of the danger to inspire dread in his audience: "I cannot trow firmely that Frenchemen are cummen" (1.85). Here is the consummate propagandist at work. And when he turns to internal politics, to the fact that Mary's supporters were a constant threat to the security of the realm, Sempill chooses proverbialism as the appropriate tone, a deliberate reminder to the commons that they have a role to play in policy, if only as supporters and catalysts for the actions of the protestant Lords. Once more the folk idiom is allied with common sense:

> So weid the calf from the corn, calk me thair dures,
> And slay or be slane, gif sic thing occures.
> (11.95-6)
>
> Anis wod and ay the war, wit quhat ʒe do,
> And make thame fast in the ruit gif thay cum to.
> (11.101-2)

The final stanza, calling for prayer for the defence of the realm, the Queen of England and the King of Scotland, uses much less strident "spiritual" vocabulary than is used elsewhere in the poem. The poet puts himself on an equal footing with his audience, cultivating an air of shared Protestant assurance:

> God blis ʒow, my brether, and biddis ʒow gud nicht;
> Obey God, go say God, with prayer and fasting;
> Christ keip this pure ile of ouris in the auld richt,
> Defend vs, and send vs the life euerlasting:
> The Lord send vs quyetnes, and keip our ʒoung king,
> The Quene of Ingland's Maiestie, and lang mot thai ring!
> (11.103-8)

"Ane new Ballet" plays on the fears of the Scottish commons, and nobility, to gain support for the English party in the political tug-of-war then in progress. Dread of Catholicism and of the French, after the hand they had at Leith during the Reformation, was deeply rooted among reformed Scots. Dread of mob action was widespread among the nobility. Sempill's methods, however, were more subtle than his aims.

As an appeal to the masses the poem would no doubt have been very effective with its lively manner, and relentless condemnation of

Catholicism, the French and Mary's party at home. "Ane new Ballet" would also have reminded the Scottish "powers that be" that the commons understood the connection between events in France and the presence of a strongly supported Catholic queen in Scotland[17], and that they had both the political acumen and the ability to act if the Lords did not. Sempill achieved this dual effect not through a simple "flair" or "talent", but because he had the imaginative capacity and technical versatility to create irony and satire by incorporating imagery relating to courtly pastimes in a metrical framework with strong popular nuances. The idiom of the lay commons, sustained throughout the poem, is modulated at various points to create specific effects, sometimes parodying the courtly, at other times more or less stridently godly, or bringing popular wisdom and popular irony to bear through homely, vernacular Scots.

"The Cruikit leidis the blinde", a blackletter broadside of 1570, is robustly vernacular, abandoning altogether the courtly ethos and reforming rhetoric. Interestingly, its stanza is very close to "Standart Habby" — the shortening by two syllables of the fourth and sixth lines would make it identical — and Sempill enlivened the stanza with unusual, punning rhymes in the same way as later poets were to do.

The subject of the poem, the guidance of the realm by fools, lends itself utterly to the "common-man" voice artfully contrived by Sempill, leaving no doubt of the analogy between the common man and common sense. While the observer in the first stanza admits to a little confusion about the subtler machinations of power politics, he is not confused about how things have come to such a pass and who is responsible:

> This warld is waggis I wat not how,
> And no man may ane vther trow,
> And euerie man dois pluke and pow,
>   And that the pure may finde:
> Our Court it is decayit now:
>   The cruikit leidis the blinde.
>
> (p.128, 11.1-6)

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17. Mary had powerful supporters among the Scottish nobility as well as the French interest in her cause.

The proverbialism of the last line governs the whole poem, along with a tone of bemused but intelligent observation. In comparison to older poetry, the speaker's attitude could be likened to that of Piers Plowman rather than that of peasant participants in the knockabout comic poems of the middle Scots tradition. The intelligent comments from a lower class observer are not distanced in any way and no apologies are made for either the character or the style. The closest predecessors to this in older Scottish poetry are Lindsay's Johne and Pauper, but Johne is an allegorical spokesperson for his class and Pauper, though he speaks with gusto, speaks less with authority than with vengeful pique — and he too is to a large extent an archetype. Sempill's common man makes a personal observation, as if over an ale in the local tavern, though it is an observation with which the broadside audience is invited to agree.

For the first time the factional squabble between the lords is focused on the inadequate leadership of Maitland of Lethington, and the criticism of him is personal:

> Althocht the warldlie wise be cruikit,
> This commoun weill he hes miscuikit,
> Our Lordis ar blinde and dois ouerluik it:
> He gydes thame as he list.
> Tak thay not tent he will not huik it,
> To gyde thame in the mist.
> (11.7-12)

The poem creates an overall impression of simplicity, regardless of the difficult rhymes and clever expansion of proverbs into full stanzas. In a diction which is sharp and plainspeaking, the satirist does not waste words. Colloquialisms and proverbialisms abound: "Ane richt sa did hir Mother", "Quhen Doggs barkis on ye midding", "As Maddie dois me tell", "Than murderars may sing", "I wat ȝe saw neuer ane styme", "And wantit baith ressoun and ryme", "And maid his oddis euin", "be Sanct Bryde", "he sussis not thre strais", "May he bruik that he hais" and so on. Indeed, the poem is largely a dextrous compilation of familiar expressions, woven together with the poet's own connective phrases in the same idiom. Consciousness of the popular audience indisputably lies behind the style and the second last stanza is a splendid example of this appeal to the common weill:

All thir maters he dois bot mock;
He hes deuysit mony sic blok;
He can begyle ane Landwart Jock,
    Except he ken him weill;
Thay say he can baith quhissill and cloik,
    And his mouth full of meill.
(11.79-84)

The nobility are also in the poet's sights. To have an attack on Maitland couched in such phraseology further belittles the lord. The speaker represents plain sense addressing the dithering, "miscuikit", learned lords; common weill sense versus noble nonsense:

My Lordis, quhat is this that ȝe mene?
I thinke the holkis ouergang ȝour ene;
I wald sum man wald scheir ȝow clene,
    That ȝe micht se thir faultis,
And be not blinde as ȝe haif bene,
    Nor led with thame that haultis.
(11.85-90)

For the propagandist, the necessity to reach the broadsheet audience may have prompted the adoption of such a voice initially but the irony implicit in the resultant popular style did not escape him. The similarities to later vernacular satire are striking.

While the political content of "The Cruikit leidis the Blinde" is uncomplicated the work is poetically far more subtle than Brother Kenneth's description of Sempill would suggest. It is clearly a mistake in dealing with controversial verse to assume that because the content and purpose of a poem are elementary, even prosaic, the poetic vehicle is naively conceived. Sempill's poetry is the work of a skilled, thoughtful and responsive artist, not an unconscious versifier with an accidental "flair".

In later poetry, when Ramsay's Twa Books argue about mutual merit, Fergusson's Plainstanes and Causey observe town life and Burns' Twa Dogs satirise the idle rich — all in "gude braid Scots" — they adopt the same tone as Sempill's commoners. A degree of worldly cynicism and political pragmatism is involved in the cultivation of the idiom and tone of commoners viewing the behaviour of their "betters"; an arched eyebrow and a knowing nudge to one's peers, particularly as Sempill

uses the technique in "Ane New Ballet" and "The Cruikit leidis the Blinde", or Burns in the "Address to Beelzebub". Such an approach recognises that clarity of perception is often more possible for those not actively entangled in the changing loyalties and shifting interests of political life, so that the common-sense analogies, proverbialisms and pithy judgements of such as Maddie, and the spokespeople in "The Lamentatioun of the Comounis", "Ane New Ballet" and "The Cruikit leidis the Blinde" provide a balance to, and a comment upon, the complex world of Court, Kirk and government.

Poets perceived the satiric possibilities of the "vernacular voice" at the same time as they began to appreciate the potentiality in the changing Scottish language for quick character sketches and laconic wit, undercutting pretentiousness and inflating absurdity. A flexible medium in the hands of accomplished poets, the vernacular allowed changes in register: tone could be modulated, irony introduced, atmosphere created by switching from semi-English to broad Scots, sprinkling homely Scots with "the language of the saints", or colouring it with the pompous vocabulary of scholars, politicians or the socially fastidious. It became a favourite ploy to satirise grave matters in rich vernacular diction and a popular style, not because the Scots vernacular was inherently quaint or comic but because it was the unaffected idiom of ordinary people, contrasting vividly with the magniloquent manner of the people whose concerns were most frequently satirised. This use of contrast in diction to produce irony, the beginnings of which can be seen in the work of Sempill, became even more effective in the eighteenth century when English became the polite language among the doyens of Scottish fashionable society. Burns exploited the same capacity for ironic tension in the vernacular idiom and popular verse forms as Sempill had and very often for the same reasons.

Bringing the strands together: "The Legend"

The last, most extended and stylistically sophisticated of Sempill's poems is "The Legend of the Bischop of St. Androis Lyfe, callit Mr Patrik Adamsone, *alias* Cousteane", also called "The Legend of a Lymmaris

Lyfe". The poem was not, so far as we know, published in Sempill's lifetime, remaining in manuscript until 1801[18]. On the basis of content it would have been written in the 1580s. Adamson, who died in 1592, was still alive when Sempill left the poem, already lengthy at 1,117 lines, with the remark:

> Far ay the langare Lowrie leivis,
> As fassione is of feinyit theives,
> Thay wilbe daylie for doing ill.
> Ewin sa I will augment my bill,
> As I gett witt in mair and mair
> Of his proceidingis heir and thair.
> (p.390, ll.1098-103)

The 1580s saw the first severe schism between episcopalians and anti-episcopalians in the infant Kirk. The Melvilles had begun to preach Presbyterianism widely, and the Presbyterians distrusted episcopal appointments to the same degree as the government distrusted Presbyterianism. Bishops became symbolic of a struggle between Kirk and state.

Theological differences aside, the charge most often levelled at the "Tulchan Bishops" by Presbyterian writers was that the new appointees were concerned only with material and political advancement. Adamson gave the propagandists ample ammunition, abandoning the Presbyterian cause in defiance of the General Assembly and currying favour with the king in order to take up the Archbishopric of St. Andrews, an appointment he had previously been overlooked for, at which stage he had denounced episcopalianism in a fit of pique. The new archbishop's public and private behaviour clearly did little to redeem him in the eyes of his former brethren.

Sempill's poem opens with a 128 line "Preface" addressing the reader as one of the faithful. A sustained example of godly diction, this address to the brethren is designed to convince those among the reformed commons who are not yet certain about church government that bishops should be avoided at all costs. Commonplaces from earlier

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18. First published in *Scotish Poems of the Sixteenth Century*, collected by John Graham Dalyell (Edinburgh, 1801).

anti-clerical poetry work to the poet's advantage, allowing immediate audience response to familiar phrases and similes:

> All faytfull brether that on the Lord dependis,
> Mark weill this schedule that I have send you heir,
> Pestiferus prelatis that Papistrie pretendis,
> Sic dewils but dout sall in o^{r} dayis appeir;
> Yit God forwairns you, be the wiedis thay weir,
> To ken the lupus in a lamb skin lappit,
> Makand thair gods of warldlie gudis and geir,
> The flock new foundit, and they in furringis happit.
> (p.346, 11.1-8)

The "Preface" is liberally spiced with the stronger voice of Presbyterian rhetoric deriving from the prophetic tone of Old Testament righteousness — "... y^{t} God hes never anoynted / Lyk to our fay^{t}full pastoris befoir" (11.73-4) — and reinforced by constant reference to Old Testament heroes, villains and events. As in his other poems appealing to the commons, proverbs and aphorisms abound, some "literary" like "Veneriall pastoris, in vomiting thair fayt, / Lyk to ane tyke returnīg to it agane" (11.9-10), and others unmistakably the province of the folk: "Plucking the pellotis or ever the scheip be slane", "A scabbit scheip wald fane infect the lave". The animal imagery — tods, tykes, wolves and sheep — and some of the phrases, such as "Coverit with coule of clockit holines" and "Auld God is God, and will not be begylit", echo earlier, courtly anti-clericalism and the reforming verse of *Ane Compendious Buik*. The reference to Pluto rather than Satan in line 89, and the full stanza following it, seem to belong to a more "literary" genre, while the stanza beginning "I may compair thē to a painted fyre" (11.41-8) could easily have come from the court. After the courtly stanza is one bemoaning that there are more "Vntruethfull teachers" now than "in thir tymes bypast", so bringing past and present together.

Comparison to the past in terms of a belief that the Kirk had not been in more danger since the Reformation is plainly the reason for Sempill's range of literary references and models. The "Preface" is an effort to rekindle the fervour of the early Kirk in order to fight the present threat by combining appropriate resonances from the past with the newer, more strident voice of Presbyterianism in which the

members of the congregation have become the unqualified "sanctis of God" (1.56), "the elected" (1.116). The lay associations of the proverbs and the fraternal effect of such phrases as "I speik it to you plane" (1.15), "What dois our bischops now, may I not speir?" (1.39), "What have ye lost?" (1.67), and "planelie ye may espy" (1.87), indicate that the commons are to be seen as intimately involved in the Kirk and the political life of the nation; not a blind "flock" but an active congregation, called upon to take part in decision-making and the condemnation of bishops. The "Preface" serves as an invocation, its formal nature emphasised by the stylistic contrast with "The Legend" proper.

Between the "Preface" and "The Legend" is a "Lenvoye", suggesting that Sempill intended to publish the poem in broadsheet and restating his view of himself as a popular poet:

> Now, paper, pass; and gif thay speir who send the,
> Tell thame a true mā bay^{t} to King and Croun.
> Curious poyetis, I knawe, will vilipend the,
> Saying, thou fares but of ane saucie lowne.
> Yit, with the rascall people vp and downe,
> Finding our freindis, cōfess to be myne,
> From the New Castle cūing to this towne:
> Concluding this, we toome a tass of wyne.
> (11.129-36)

"The Legend or Discourss of the Lyfe and Cōversatione and Qualiteis of the Tulchene Bischope of Sanctandrois: Set furth by R.S." is an extended narrative which could easily have flagged. It is kept alive partly by the subject; there is something both comic and fascinating about an unadulterated hypocrite of Adamson's stamp, and whether the real Archbishop Adamson was quite so ridiculous and deceitful as the character in the poem, he certainly provided Sempill with enough material upon which to build a rollicking satiric narrative. Sempill sustains the narrative by similar means to those used in his shorter broadsheet poems in the "common man" vernacular style, but "The Legend" is even more innovative than those.

The style of the poem is markedly different from that of the "Preface", evidently a reflection of the distinction Sempill made between

a didactic address and narrative. The verse moves rapidly in octosyllabic couplets with no stanza divisions. The narrator's tone is ironic, demonstrating a consciousness of the comic possibilities of his subject, and perhaps providing another reason for the serious "Preface" as a balance to the humour of the narrative. The diction predominantly uses blunt, everyday language, calling from time to time on cant Latin or current biblical and classical commonplaces, but the overall directness of the style is varied to great effect by other conventions from courtly and folk literature. The opening lines, for example, exploit the inclusive address of the ballad singer as well as the manner of the flyting:

> To all and sundrie be it sene,
> Mark weill this mater quhat I meine,
> The Legend of a lymmeris lyfe,
> Our Metropolitane of Fyffe;
> And schismatyke, and gude swyne hogge,
> Come of the tryb of Gog Magoge;
> Ane elphe, ane elvasche incubus,
> Ane lewrand lawrie licherous,
> Ane fals, forloppen, fenyeit freir,
> Ane rāungard for greid of geir;
> Still daylie drinckand or he dyne,
> A wirriare of the gude sweit wyne;
> Ane baxters sone, ane beggar borne,
> That twyse his surname hes mensworne;
> To be called Cōstene is tho^t schame:
> He tuke vp Cōstantine to name.
>
> (pp.352-3, ll.1-16)

And in the section concerned with Adamson's dealings with witches Sempill brilliantly parodies the traditional cantraip rhyme:

> With sorcerie and incantationes,
> Reasing the devill with invocationes,
> With herbis, stanes, buikis and bellis,
> Mennis mēbers, and south rinnīg wellis;
> Palme croces, and knottis of strease,
> The paring of a preistis auld tees;
> And, *in principio*, sought out syne,
> That vnder an alter of stane had lyne,
> Sanct Johnes nett, and the fore levit claver,
> With taill and mayn of a baxter aver,
> Had careit hame heather to the oyne,
> Cutted off in the cruik of the moone;
> Halie water, and the lāber beidis,
> Flyntworthe, and fourtie vther wiedis:

Whairthrough the charmīg tuik sic force,
Thay laid it on his fatt whyte horse.
As all men saw, he sone deceissit:
Thair Saga slew ane saikles beast.
(11.295-312)

Adamson is portrayed as avaricious, merciless, superstitious, hypocritical, gluttonous, coarse and immoral. Occasionally Sempill gives voice to an almost Rabelaisian vein: Adamson goes to the English Court and is hit by a porter because "His pintle against the palice wall / Puld out to piss, and wald not spair" (11.698-9). He has to be advised on how to behave himself in the Queen's presence since "he had na mair grace to guyde hem / Nor it had bene ane hieland quow", and despite the advice:

Then his comissione being red,
Out of the palice he was sped,
Then to the wall agane gois he
To pisch — his part of honestie.
(11.717-20)

Called before the General Assembly to account for his hypocrisy in accepting a bishopric when he had sworn that he would not take one, Adamson's response is to vomit:

Ben owre the barr he gave a brocht,
And laid amang them sic a lochet,
With *eructavit cor meum*,
He hosted thair a hude full fra him;
For laik of rowme, that rubiature
Bespewit vp the moderator.
(11.143-8)

And at the end of the poem is an even more lurid description of a similar situation when Adamson, so drunk that he falls out of bed having dreamt "Some devill he had sene", is found by his servants:

... lyand lyke a swyne,
Baith bak and syde bespewit with wyne.
Seing it rid, thay waxt so red,
Beleiving it had bene blood he bled,
Cryand out, harmesay, he was stickit,
While ane pat doun his hand and lickit:
"This is not blude, tho^t it be hewit,
But Burdeous wyne that he hes spewit."
(11.1086-93)

Sempill's use of extravagant coarseness, more common in the folk than in the courtly tradition, is here at once comic and satiric — each episode has a comic twist or satiric comment ("His part of honestie") — and is not simply indulgence in scatological fancy. On the whole, however, the style of the poem is less deliberately coarse and the besmirching of the Bishop's character conducted in a more subtle, less outrageously scurrilous fashion.

Frequent use is made of dates, names and details so that the poem takes on the aspect of reported action, a quality reinforced, with Sempill's usual dramatic awareness, by references to injured parties or witnesses often in such a way as to involve the audience in the judgement upon Adamson, either through direct address or by association:

> Bot as he payit, ye may speir,
> Gif Gilbert Donaldsone were heir;
> Or Patrik Quhyt, he weill can tell,
> Sayand there is no devill in hell
> Could find sic falset to deceave him,
> As he, when ever he come to crave him.
>
> (11.832-7)

> To heir, when he gangis throw the gait,
> How everie wyfe on vther puttis,
> Bidding the bischop pay for his guttis,
> Ane cryes, "gar pay me for my eall,"
> Ane vther for candle, the thrid for caill;
> The fourt cryis out for knockid beir;
> "How dar this dastard had our geir?
> A vengeance fall his feinȝit fay[t],
> For poinding of the pure folkis graith!"
>
> (11.476-84)

Apparent asides like "As Maister Jhone Dowglass weill can tell" (1.908) would have been as effective in both denigrating Adamson and involving the audience as appeals to class (as with the women above), or even to national pride: "Alace! that Scotland had no schame, / To send sic howfing carles from hame!" (11.585-6). It is exactly the same technique as he employed in "The Lamentatioun of the Comounis", and other poems, both journalistic and actualising.

The long satiric narrative gave Sempill the flexibility to experiment with his style. The puns, irony, and cant Latin; the witty juxtaposition of the first and second lines of the couplets; and the ironic

opposition of the first four syllables to the second four syllables of lines all anticipate eighteenth-century verse, English and Scots.[19] Summing up his long description of Adamson's behaviour in London with the terse "He beggit buikis, he beggit bowis; / Tacking in earnest, asking in mowes" (ll.906-7), Sempill demonstrates the same *penchant* for witty condensation of preceding action that was so popular in later satire, especially in Scots.

The manner of the narrator of "The Legend" is that of a thinking commoner, not of a courtier being "common" for satiric or burlesque effect. His voice is modulated according to whether he is reporting dialogue, making asides of his own, describing action or enhancing his narrative through recourse to other conventions, but at all times he appears as an outraged common man who expects to be taken seriously. Identification of the narrator's voice with the "man in the street" does not preclude the use of sophisticated references and expressions, the broadsheet audience being credited with sufficient understanding to follow the author's drift, and the educated audience catered for. There is little in Scots poetry so close to Burns' tone and style in "The Holy Fair" as Sempill's description of Adamson preaching in England:

> With bischops he began to fleich,
> Desyring licence for to preich.
> Of his auld sermon he had perqueir,
> Bot thay had never hard thame heir.
> Of omnigatherine now his glose:
> He maid it lyk a Wealchmā hose:
> *Tempora mutantur* was his text
> The bischops vicar being vext,
> To ruse his maister, and set him out,
> Sayand to thame y^{t} stude about,
> "Gif ye his preiching could persave,
> My maister is a lerned knaif:"
> Placebois part, behind his bak,
> Vnto the people this he spak.
> The preiching done, the chapter red,
> They baith gaid fow aneuch to bed.
>
> (ll.732-47)

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19. Dunbar used the octosyllabic couplet for satire and burlesque, often in combinations like AABCCB etc., and left a model for later poets in, for example, "The Dregy of Dunbar" and "Complaint to the King" ("Complane I wald, wist I quhome till"). Sempill was doubtless familiar with Dunbar's work, though his use of the couplet differs.

It is unlikely that Burns ever saw any of Sempill's verse except the three poems Ramsay published in the *Evergreen*, but Sempill, and others like him, left an example of the utmost importance for the development of satiric poetry in the seventeenth century, so influencing the tradition of verse that Burns inherited. Particularly significant is Sempill's apprehension of a dual audience, in this poem and others. Even though "The Legend" remained in manuscript to be circulated among an educated few, its sophistication of style, thought and wit shows the way in which recognition of a dual audience — the common people and the highly educated — shaped the emerging modes, diction and tone of popular poetry, rendering it increasingly acceptable in literary circles as well as for public satire. The essentially expedient propagandist style was moulded into something much more complex and more consciously literary in the hands of poets like Sempill.

Chapter 5

JOHN DAVIDSON: THE PREACHER AS POET

John Davidson, a minister of the reformed Kirk, has been described by Cranstoun as "one of the most fearless and energetic of the early Reformers"[1]. As such, he wrote from a different perspective to Sempill, who was a controversialist and propagandist but not a minister of religion and not actively involved in the policy making of the young Kirk, nor in the political relationship between church and state.[2] For Sempill, the role of journalistic commentator and propagandist was apparently his sole "reforming" task. Davidson, on the other hand, was a minister of considerable standing who had a good deal of contact with the General Assembly, the court, and the king with whom he had far from amicable relations.[3] He was, too, a renowned preacher, called "the thunderer" in England. What we know of Davidson's life, and of his constant and somewhat foolhardy criticisms of the court, provides an impression of him as a less than even-tempered man and as an outspoken, rather extreme moralist and preacher. His poetry, however, tends to be controlled, with none of the declamatory air reputedly characterising his sermons, and cultivates instead a tone of rationality in the voice of a reasonable man. Davidson's poetry does not have the occasional ebullience of Sempill's, nor was he so prolific. In the three poems Cranstoun printed there is little evidence of a multitude of sources or of continual experimentation and development in style. This does not

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1. *Satirical Poems*, II, p.188. See I, pp.xlv-lii for biography.
2. His biography, however, is not certain enough. He may, like Defoe, have been involved in intelligence and liaison work, which would explain his presence in Paris, Newcastle and Jedburgh mentioned in various poems.
3. Cranstoun's biography of Davidson, passim.

make Davidson uninteresting or unimportant. That he drew on poetic practices at times very similar to Sempill's indicates that he was reproducing what were widespread stylistic developments. That he was more conservative in his expression and more concerned with controlled argument suggests that he was a forerunner of more serious protestant poets like Alexander Hume.

Gude John Knox and Protestant Plainspeaking

Davidson's two poems on the life and death of John Knox show his immense admiration for Knox, and Brother Kenneth is no doubt correct in suggesting that Davidson "modelled himself on the Master"[4]. These poems not only afford an insight into the characteristics which contributed to Knox's popularity and success, but also suggest that there was a close relationship between those characteristics and the way in which poetic expression developed in Scotland after 1559.

"Ane Breif Commendatioun of Uprichtness", issued from Robert Lekpreuik's press in St. Andrews in 1573[5], is an outline of the life of Knox classed by Cranstoun as a "juvenile effort" which "does not rise much above mediocrity"; but there is much about it of interest to the present discussion. In a long prose introduction to the poem, a dedication to Sir John Wischart of Pitarrow, Davidson gives his reason for writing the poem: that Knox's preservation despite all the dangers to which he was exposed was a token of God's favour for the upright and therefore, by implication, for members of the Reformed Kirk. At the same time Davidson outlines the reason for his style:

> Thairfoir that this sa notabil and euidēt ane documēt of the louing cair of our god towardis his seruāds svld not with him be buryit bot abyde recent in memorie till all the inhabitantis of this Realme in all ages to cum. I haue preissit schortly

4. *Essays on the Scottish Reformation*, ed. McRoberts, p.182.

5. Lekpreuik also published almost all of Sempill's work. His press operated first at Edinburgh and then in St. Andrews. From as early as 1561 he was closely associated with the Reformers, at times receiving financial assistance from the Kirk. Despite having published the often outrageous satires of Sempill, in defiance of government proclamations against such publications, his association with Davidson was to cost him more dearly.

> in this lytill paper to mak, as it wer, ane memoriall of the same, and yat in that lāguage quhilk is maist comoun to this haill Realme, to the intent that asweill vnleirnit as lernit may be partakeirs of the same. (p.276)

True to his word, not only does he use Scots rather than Latin or English but he uses plain Scots, largely ignoring aureate or scholastic vocabulary.

The didactic purpose and the steps in the argument are signified with explicatory terms, direct address and other rhetorical devices, the poem opening with "Sen" to indicate at once that the reader is expected to follow an argument:

	Sen that we se men till haue studyit ay
	Into this eirth sic strenthis to prepair,
Prover.10	As micht be saifgaird to thame nicht and day,
12.13.18	Quhen ony danger dang thame in dispair,
Ecclesi.9	Wald thow, gude Reider, haue ane strenth preclair,
Ps.25.27.	Maist strang and stark to rin to in distres,
91	This lytill schedull schortly sall declair
	How that the surest Towre is vprichtnes.
	(p.278, ll.1-8)

For much of the poem stanzas begin with "For", "Euin sa", "Think weill" and similar words,and variations on the final line are used throughout, so that as well as constituting a refrain, the last line of each stanza contains a unit of argument within that stanza. The marginal glosses are sometimes extensive and at other times sparse, usually depending on whether the content is didactic or narrative. The scriptural and classical references — the latter almost all to Quintus Curtius — are not mere pedantry but serve to heighten the rhetoric, acknowledge the importance of scriptural support to the doctrine of the Reformed Kirk, and indicate the poet's recognition of his readers' ability to pursue the matters raised. This is the same process of lay involvement in theological discussion and self-education which prompted Sempill's advice to his readers to ask their ministers to "expone the place".

The first stanza of "Ane Breif Commendatioun" is by far the most formal, and thereafter the diction relaxes into conversational Scots interlaced with godly vocabulary, Old Testament analogies and a certain amount of proverbialism, all of which characterise a manner of expression

that was clearly becoming conventional in protestant poetry. Even the use of analogy, as the last vestige of formal expression, is abandoned when the narrative portion of the poem begins:

> Bot ȝit, becaus exempills fetchit far
> Mufis not so muche as thay thingis quhilk we se,
> I purpois schortly now for to cum nar
> Vnto the but quhair chiefly I wald be:
> That is to schaw the prufe befoir ȝour ee
> Of thir premisses, as all mon confes
> That hes sene God wirking in this countrie,
> How ane hes bene preseruit in vprichtnes.
> (11.89-96)

Davidson is fully conscious of the need to reach his audience by the most effective means, and entirely aware that he should show reason rather than blind devotion as the basis for his argument. In understanding that "prufe befoir ȝour ee" would elicit more response from the "vnleirnit" broadside audience than "exempills fetchit far", Davidson perceives the same need for clear communication, establishment of common ground and realism as was perceived by Sempill. The plain style of the poem is closely connected to Davidson's desire to reach "asweill vnleirnit as lernit", which in turn is linked in the content of the poem to Knox's background and his methods:

> First he descended bot of linage small,
> As commounly God vsis for to call
> The sempill sort his summondis til expres.
> (11.108-10)
>
> For fra the time that God anis did him call,
> To bring thay joyfull newis vnto this land,
> Quhilk hes illuminat baith greit and small ...
> (11.121-3)
>
> And this is merwell gif we will considder,
> Ane sempill man but warldly force or aide,
> Aganis quhome Kings and Princes did confidder,
> How suld he fend from furie and thair fead,
> Syne leaue this lyfe with list for all thair plaid.
> (11.193-7)
>
> He wald not wane ane wy for na mānis will
> For to rebuke Erle, Barrone, or Burges,
> Quhen in thair wickit wayis thay walkit still.
> (11.317-19)

Such emphases, firstly on the fact that Knox was a "sempill" man, in class if not in learning; then on his preaching being directed to and

enlightening "baith greit and small", and finally on his staunch independence of spirit and defiance of secular authority, embodied the protestant spirit for Davidson, and no doubt for his readers. Just as his style was intended to be inclusive of learned and unlearned readers, so the characteristics of Knox upon which he dwelt were spiritually inclusive of the same audience, "greit and small".

Although it is here halting or overly wordy at times, in an attempt at rhetorical effect, Davidson chose a particular plainspeaking form of expression in deference to the dual audience he had in mind and because he wished to convey a certain image of Knox and himself as protestant preachers. The result exemplifies religious plainspeaking in Scottish poetry, with little fanaticism and, rather, calm reasoning presented with clarity and some dignity. This style would climax in the near future in the work of Alexander Hume.

It has been claimed that Davidson "eulogised" Knox in "Ane Breif Commendatioun"[6] but it is inappropriate so to describe the tone of the poem particularly in view of the nature of conventional eulogy in the same period.

Concerning itself even less with "eulogy", "Ane Schort Discours of the Estaitis quha hes cause to deploir the deith of this Excellent servand of God" is a lament for Knox but, as its title indicates, the poem argues a case rather than eulogising the man. Since he aspired to the same kind of life as he believed Knox had lived, the use of conventional elegaic and eulogistic terms, overt flattery, flowery encomiums or "high" diction in writing about Knox would have been anathema to Davidson. While it bows to decorum enough to call for mourning, "Ane Schort Discours", like the man it describes, is concerned with action and spiritual sustenance; the terms in which Knox is described and the reasons given for mourning are practical and spiritual, and praise of Knox is invariably in relation to how he helped the Kirk:

> Thow pure contempnit Kirk of God,
> In Scotland scatterit far abrod,
> Quhat leid may let the to lament,
> Sen baith the Tyger and the Tod

---

6. Brother Kenneth, *Essays on the Scottish Reformation*, ed. McRoberts, p.182.

Maist cruellie cummis the to rent?
Thow wants ane watcheman that tuke tent,
Baith nicht and day that nocht should noy the;
Allace! thow wants the Instrument
That was thy Lanterne to conuoy the.
(p.290, ll.1-9)

Throughout the poem there is a sense of the Kirk as a living organism of which the congregation, here addressed, are the sturdy members, wanting only in time of strife a pastor of Knox's calibre, not so much to lead them as to provide a spiritual rallying point for their energies. The Kirk is continually portrayed as remarkable in itself, and Knox rather as the jewel in its crown than its "head" — its advocate rather than its sole support:

They lemand Lamp that schew sic light
Was gude Johne Knox, ane man vpricht,
Quhais deith thow daylie may deploir.
His presence maid thy doings bricht,
And all thy doings did decoir:
He did him haillie indeuoir
Thy richteous actioun to mantene,
And libertie to the restoir,
Pleading thy caus with King and Quene.
(ll.10-18)

Davidson's addresses to various classes and congregations stress Knox's clarity of vision, his steadfast adherence to reformed doctrine and his fearlessness, and the advice given to the General Assembly is consistent with this description in matter and manner:

Giue strange opiniounis enteris in,
Tak tent quha sic thingis dois begin,
And with sic matteris mynts to mell;
For Sathan ceisis not fra sin.
The Kirk of Christ seiking to quell.
Sic foly faill not to refell,
For, quhen the reik beginnis to ryse,
The fyre will follow, as they tell,
Be it not quencheit be the wyse.
(ll.46-54)

Unruffled criticism of authority is equally present in this poem as in "Ane Breif Commendatioun", and it is significant that Davidson's address to the Lords contains the only spark of genuine humour in the poem:

3e Lords also, that dois frequent
The loft in Sanct Geills Kirk, lament
That Bogill thair that ȝe hard blaw,
With quhome quhyles ȝe wer small content,
For the schairp threitnings he did schaw:
3it thay maid ȝow sumquhat stand in aw,
Thocht not so much as neid requyrit.
This day in graue he lyis full law,
Quhilk langtyme was of him desyrit.
(11.91-9)

The main purpose of the poem, however, is neither to lament Knox nor to advise the estates and congregations but to reassure the godly that they have the strength to maintain the Kirk despite the death of Knox and present threats to the Kirk's stability. This, as much as his desire to avoid unacceptable adulation or glorification of Knox, motivated Davidson to refer repeatedly to the strong, living Kirk as a body separate from Knox.

The third last stanza of the poem contains ideas which typify Scots attitudes both to "gude John Knox" and to the expression of opinions. It is clear that Davidson perceived a relationship between protestant attitudes and poetic expression of them. Here the plain diction and bold tone undoubtedly stem from Davidson's admiration for Knox's methods. Like other poets, in addition to meeting the demands of propaganda with a style calculated to appeal to a wide audience, Davidson was concerned to reflect the unelaborate doctrine and practice of the Reformed Kirk, as well as the strong-mindedness of Knox, in his style:

Than, all this land, thow may lament
That thow lacks sic ane Instrument,
Till sum not plesand, ȝit sa plane
That all the godly was content.
Allace! his lyke he left not ane,
Nor, I feir, sall not se agane;
Bot ȝit let vs nawayis dispair,
For quhy our God dois ȝit remane,
Quha can and will for his prepair.
(11.145-53)

Whether poets were writing seriously, ironically or satirically, the lines "Till sum not plesand, ȝit sa plane / That all the godly was content" form a particularly apposite description of the manner of

protestant poets in Davidson's time. Though Davidson's lines refer to the manner of Knox, poetry was closely connected to that manner — to the manner of the godly, of those who believed that their Kirk spoke to and for all members of the society who considered themselves among the elect. As such, poetry had a primary concern with admonition and criticism, with propaganda and satire. Poets not only saw the advantage but felt the obligation to adopt a tone and style "Till sum not plesand", in a manner "sa plane" as to appeal to and reflect the opinions of "all the godly". A manner either too elaborate, or too condescending, would have excluded numerous potential readers from participation in the ideas or enjoyment of the satire. Knox did not adopt a "high" manner, as Davidson reminds us, even when his audience included princes and lords. Poets who wished to reach a wide audience, and be identified with the godly, had to make similar allowances in tone and manner as were made by good preachers.

Independence in Thought and Style

Of course, though a poem might be plain it need not always be godly and, in the same way as Sempill, Davidson varied his style according to his subject. In "Ane Dialog or Mutuall talking betuix a Clerk and ane Courteour concerning foure Parische Kirks till ane Minister, Collectit out of thair mouthis, and put into verse be a young man quha did forgather with thame on his Journey", the godly penetrates less, and the polished satiric style seen in Sempill's "Legend" is more apparent.

"Ane Dialog" expresses Davidson's opposition to a ruling that each pastor would henceforth have the care of four kirks, which was an attempt to solve a shortage of preachers but also meant an increase in Crown revenue. Probably rightly, Davidson saw the change as a further encroachment by the state on the independence of the Kirk, and while the poem purports to examine the effect of the new order on church administration, it is deeply involved with the struggle between church and state. Doubtless it was the latter concern of the poem which brought Davidson and Lekpreuik the printer into serious trouble with the government. Lekpreuik printed the poem, apparently without Davidson's consent, in

January 1574 (NS). Davidson was summoned but eventually released, although confined to his parish effectively for the remainder of his life. Lekpreuik was imprisoned and lost his licence for some time.

Davidson's "Dialog" opens almost casually but with considerable realism, involving both narrator and reader immediately in the action:

> Into Dundie as I maid way,
> Nocht lang afoir Sanctandrois day,
> At Kingorne ferrie passand ouir
> Into þe Boit wes thre or four
> Of gentillmen, as did appeir;
> I said, "Schirs, is thair ony heir
> Quhais Iornay lyes unto Dundie?"
> Twa of thame answerit courtaslie:
> "We purpose nocht for to ga thidder,
> Bot ȝit our gait will ly togidder,
> Quhil we be passit Kennewie."
> "Than I sall beir ȝow companie,"
> Said I, and with that we did land,
> Syne lap vpon our horse fra hand,
> And on our Iornay rudelie raid.
>
> (p.296, ll.1-16)

Saint Andrew's day is a patriotic celebration and Dundee the cradle of the Scottish Reformation, reminding the reader of the Cause, but the use of time and place names also enhances the realism of the poem. No distancing is undertaken and, unlike the narrators in conventional overheard dialogues, Davidson's narrator is not an anonymous listener hidden in a pleasant bower recording a measured debate or romantic interlude but an active auditor who has addressed his companions and is a fellow traveller. Travel, as Chaucer before Davidson, and later novelists, observed, is a great leveller of social and intellectual barriers.

In style "Ane Dialog" is both eloquent and plainspeaking. The octosyllabic couplet lends concision and liveliness, while the diction is skilfully modulated so as to be "low" enough for the entire audience and yet sufficiently dignified to give the impression that the Clerk, in particular, is a man who knows what he is talking about. At no time do the Clerk, the Courteour, or indeed the narrator become tedious, the dialogue and narration being continually enlivened by the conversational immediacy of the style. The argument proceeds much as a chance argument

among travellers could be expected to proceed. Initially the participants politely seek and exchange opinions, but gradually formality lapses in the face of their differences, resulting in animated exchanges:

> "Ma Preichouris suld haue chosin bene
> The Ministrie for till sustene,
> And beir the burding of the ȝok,
> To keip and feid the Lordis flok."
> The Courteour said, "quhair ar tha?
> Quhair will ȝe get me ony ma?"
> "Quhair socht thay ony?" quo þe Clerk.
> The vther said, "thay maid na werk
> To seek ony, becaus thay knew
> Thay wald be found bot nane or few."
> The Clerk said: "I culd find the way
> To get ȝow, within ȝeir or day,
> Ma Ministeris in this countrie,
> Besyde thame that ar presentlie,
> Nor ar thair number that is ellis."
> (11.227-41)

> Than loudlie leuch the Courteour;
> "Sufficient men!" said he, "blak hour!
> Thair is skarse twentie of thame all
> Sufficient men that I can call
> That ar alreddy in thay rowmis."
> The Clerk was like to byte his thowmis,
> And said, "in deid, Schir, now ȝe wrang þame."
> (11.261-7)

In journalistic fashion, the narrator quickens the reader's interest in the dialogue through his role as observer, his brief, descriptive, connecting phrases colouring the argument and alerting the reader as to the path it is taking. Aphoristic and colloquial expressions used by Clerk, Courteour and narrator intensify the impression of actual conversation rather than formal debate. Although the Clerk and the Courteour are learned men, neither their manners nor their arguments ever pass outwith the comprehension of a layman, here represented by the narrator.

Characterisation is central to the success of the poem as propaganda and satire. The Clerk is sketched as a superb example of the reformed clergy:

> The tane of thame appeirit to be
> Ane cunning Clerk of greit clergie,
> Of visage graue and maneris sage,
> His toung weill taucht, but all outrage

Men micht haue kend that he had bene
Quhair gude Instruction he had sene.
(11.17-22)

In comparison, the narrator's attitude towards the Courteour is somewhat ambivalent. He is credited with considerable worldly knowledge, but we learn little of his character, something which is perhaps true of many politicians:

The vther did appeir to me
Ane cumlie Courteour to be,
Quha wes perfyte and weill besene
In thingis that to this land pertene.
(11.23-6)

At first the Clerk is diplomatically wary while the Courteour is boldly pragmatic:

The Clerk said, "sir, the treuth to tell,
With princes maters for to mell
I think it lyis nocht in our gait:
Lat Courteouris of sic thingis trait."
The Courteour maid answering:
"ȝit men will speik, sir, of the King;
Bot this new ordour that is tane
Wes nocht maid be the Court allane;
The Kirkis Commissionars wes thair,
And did aggrie, to, les and mair.
ȝit men may speik as they haue feill,
Quhidder it lykis thame euill or weill."
(11.41-52)

As the poem develops, however, the Clerk is more and more open and reasonable, the Courteour increasingly conservative and self-deluding:

... "thocht ȝe wes skar,
Me think that now ȝe cum ouir nar;
I feill be the sauir of ȝour end
This ordour, than ȝe discommend,
Quhairof I meruell gretumlie
That sic ane leirnit man as ȝe
Sa lychtlie suld disdaine, and lak
Ane ordour that wyse men did mak."
(11.61-8)

"I think, my freind, ȝe haue said mair
Nor ȝe will preif to me this hour,"
Maist schairply said the Courteour;
"I meruell mekill quhat ȝe mene,

That dois sa raschely contrauene
The ordour that is thocht sa gude."
(11.126-31)

Like Erideilus in "Ane Declaration of the Lordis iust quarrell", Davidson's Courteour is an intelligent man who is blinded by political conservatism and social custom. His weakness of character is part of the general satire on the court.

The Clerk implies frequently that the new order is a ruse, an attempt to fool both the Kirk and the people:

"Gif thay that did this way Inuent
Dois all this of sa gude Intent,
As ȝe declair, of Cheritie,
Thair nedie brethren to supplie,
And to enlarge the word ouir all,
To sempill pepill greit and small;
Gif for the weill of Christis Kirk
Sa busilie, I say, thay wirk,
As presentlie thay do pretend,
Thay suld haue socht ane vther end
Till haue begun, as I tell ȝow,
Nor this they haue Inuentit now."
(11.215-26)

Disparaging words like "Inuent" and "pretend", and the Clerk's sceptical tone, in relation to the framers of the new regulation are linked with the exposure of the Courteour's self-deception:

The Clerk said, "ȝe ar versit, I se,
Richt weill in Court theologie;
Bot ȝit ȝe mon reid ouir agane,
And wey the Circumstances plane."
(11.567-70)

The Clerk said, "ȝe haue ressounis fell,
I see, for to begyle ȝour sell;
ȝe sall tak this a thing of me,
That quha feiris God unfenȝeitlie,
Of that sweit word will neuer Irk ..."
(11.771-5)

As in Sempill's verse, the unmasking of deception in "Ane Dialog" stresses the value of reason and common sense while continuing the protestant broadsheet tradition of distrust of secular authority. Davidson shows as little awe in respect to princes as Sempill had:

"Quhen ony Princes sall succeid
That lytill lufis the Kirk in deid,
Thay will be chappit on the cheik,
And it will be occasioun eik
To mak Princes Iniunctiounis geif
To speik nathing that may thame greif;
And gif that ony wald withstand
Vnto that vennemous command,
And to Iniunctiounis not consent,
Then thay wald bed him be content,
Or ellis he wald get nathing thair
Of his said Pensioun ony mair;
Sa suld not our Posteritie
Get trew preiching, bot flatterie."
(ll.829-42)

The Courteour's few practical remarks are all related to finance, in which regard he is very much a politician:

The Courteour, with wordis wyde,
Said, "I hear naithing bot prouyde,
And get now that, and get now this;
ȝour talk is all of Expensis;
Gif leuingis heir, and found sum thair;
ȝe big gay Castellis in the air.
Quhair is that geir for to be had,
That sic prouision may be maid?"
(ll.395-402)

The Clerk's response to this objection reveals him as a man of action, rather than a prattler of theories. He makes a bold statement of protestant priorities which illustrates the immense confidence of his party — and sheds light on the state's misgivings about radical Protestantism — while the Courteour's reaction to his statement justifies the Clerk's distrust of secular government:

The Clerk said, "Schir, luk ȝe and se
Gif that the teindis of this countrie
May not do all that we haue tauld,
And als the pure and Scuilis vphald;
Quhilk teindis dois Iustly appertene
To sic thingis as hes talkit bene."
"ȝe are far large of Leueray,"
Agane the Courteour can say;
"Apparendly ȝe wald gif all
The teindis of Scotland, greit and small,
Vnto the Kirk for till dispone,
And to the Court for till giue none;
Quhilk wald mak thame bot proud and hie,

As in the tyme of Papistrie.
Quhat wald ȝe than bestow on vs?"
    The Clerk said, "tak the superplus,
Quhen Kirk and pure ar weill prouydit;
And let the mater sa be gydit,
That thay of Kirk do not abuse it,
Bot be controllit how to vse it,
Becaus thay ar bot mortall men,
That na wayis thay thair selfis misken."
    The Courteour answerit fra hand,
"It will be countit on thair hand;
The teindis will not cum in thair neuis,
Sa lang as ony of vs leuis."

(11.403-28)

While the Courteour is willing to dismiss rashly and stubbornly the Clerk's suggestions, continually resorting to political clichés or evasive remarks such as "speik quhat I will, / Ane answer ȝe will find thair till" (11.471-2), the Clerk not only argues confidently from conviction, but illustrates his argument with practical examples from everyday life. Thus he gives a comparison between spiritual food and the feeding of a family's servants (11.687-704), and another between the maintenance of the present Kirk and a man manuring his land involving appropriate rural phraseology (11.720-44). As Davidson observed in "Ane Breif Commendatioun", "exempills fetchit far / Mufis not so muche as thay thingis quhilk we se". Likewise, in the manner of a good preacher, the Clerk uses cumulative summaries of his argument and concise repetition of his points.

Great stress is laid by the Clerk on the importance of education in the Reformed Kirk:

"For quhy the Scuillis suld Mother be,
To mak our Preichouris multiplie.
And quhen the Scuillis ar not prouydit,
How can the Kirk be bot misgydit?"

(11.391-4)

The question reveals clearly the Scottish protestant perception of the complete interdependence of religion and education. For the Clerk, the difference between Roman Catholic priests and protestant clergy lies, above all, in the protestant commitment to community involvement and enlightenment, so that "thay folkis sall be weill fed". Through

its clergy, the Kirk should be an active participant in community life, refusing to submit to secular influence, regarding its calling to enlighten "sempill pepill greit and small" as above such influence.

"Ane Dialog" embodies prevalent radical protestant attitudes towards secular authority, political society, education and the Kirk, and the manner of the poem reflects its concerns. The Clerk's use of practical examples, his summaries and repetitions, and his plain diction all serve to stress the singular importance of the Kirk in society. His description of the action taken by a Fife congregation in opposition to the new order is intended to remind the Courteour, and the court, that the Reformation has changed the expectations of ordinary people:

> "Trow ȝe that folks will be content
> To want thair Pastouris permanent?
> As schortly in Fyfe micht be sene,
> Quhat hubbilschow thair maist haue bene
> For the displacing of ane Pastour,
> According to this new maid Ordour;
> And how the pepil wald not grant
> Thair awin ald Pastour for till want,
> Quhais lyfe and doctrine weill thay knew,
> And him to be ane Pastour trew."
> (ll.751-60)

Like Sempill, Davidson warns that the common people would no longer submit to corrupt authority, be awed into silence by political jargon or deceived by a "court flattring Preichour" (l.946). Their capacity to create a "hubbilschow" had increased with their awareness of their potentiality as a political force.

The Courteour's eventual recognition that the Clerk is right in all he says completes the matter of the poem, the satire and the warning. In his about face, and especially in his recognition of the Clerk's intelligence, frankness and integrity, the Courteour acknowledges the corrupt motives of the court and "court flattring" preachers. Unlike Erideilus, he does not shamefacedly sneak away but returns to the fold of "gude John Knox" and protestant self-assurance:

> "I am assurit, has ilk Preichour
> Into the mater bene als frak
> As ȝe haue bene heir sen ȝe spak,

It had not cum to sic an heid
As this day we see it proceid:
Bot I can se few men amang thame,
Thocht all the warld suld clene ouirgang thame,
That has ane face to speik agane
Sic as the Kirk of Christ prophane.
Had gude Iohn Knox not ȝit bene deid,
It had not cum vnto this heid;
Had thay myntit till sic ane steir,
He had maid heuin and eirth to heir."
(11.958-70)

The Courteour alludes here not simply to Knox's leadership, but perceives that what is necessary is the fierce independence and outspokenness which "gude Iohn Knox" had already come to represent in the minds of the Scottish people. Demonstrated in the style and tone of "Ane Dialog", as much as in the content, are what Davidson saw as crucial factors for the survival of Protestantism: a willingness plainly to speak one's mind, even to defy the state, and a healthy scepticism born of radicalism.

Sempill understood that the kind of bold, "rude", often earthy verse he wrote "Availlis maist in this tyme", and the concluding section of "Ane Dialog" exemplifies that Davidson, too, saw that his style was contingent upon the times and had to be consistent with his ideas. Parting with his argumentative travelling companions, the narrator of "Ane Dialog" rides to Dundee, committing the conversation to memory and deliberating upon what he should do with it:

And with my self I said that tyde,
It wer ane pietie for till hyde
This ressoning, gif I culd wryte,
Or had Ingyne that culd indyte.
Allace! gif Poetis had bene heir,
That culd haue maid the mater cleir,
And set it furth in cunning verse,
The thingis that I hard thame reheirse!
Bot ȝit, or it suld be supprest,
My self to wryte I held it best,
Thocht of all Cunning I be quyte.
Perchance sum poet will delyte
To put it in mair plesand Ryme,
That I have blokit at this tyme;
For fault of vtheris that haue skill,
I culd not bot schaw my gude will.
Thairfoir, all Poetis pardoun me,
That wrait this of Necessitie,
And not to stane ȝour plesand style:

> Than I fell to, and did compyle
> This lytill colume, as ʒe se,
> How sone that I come to Dundie.
>
> (11.989-1010)

The poem begins with an active narrator and ends with a narrator who very deliberately takes upon himself the role of reporter. The narrator's fear that the matter would "be suppresț" reflects Davidson's understanding of the significance of the question to the whole populace. Given the fictional nature of the dialogue, there is no explanation for the elaborate "apology" other than that Davidson uses it to make a declaration, firstly about public participation in church government and policy discussion, and secondly about the style of his verse. The far from conventional apology allowed Davidson to emphasise that he "wrait this of Necessitie" because of the urgency of the matter, and his modest consigning of the conversation to more "cunning" poets is actually a positive comment on the efficacy of his own style.

Davidson was aware of the difference between his manner and that of his contemporary "plesand" poets but he also understood that the matters under discussion, of import to the whole community, required the kind of verse he wrote: a poetry that was clear, easily read, linguistically simple, ideologically straightforward and designed to reach the same audience he would reach as a preacher. This is not to suggest that Davidson rejected "plesand" poetry as somehow unwholesome, or too difficult for him to undertake, but rather that he recognised that for this occasion "plesand" poetry did not suit his purpose. His less "cunning" but more immediate poetry was appropriate to the matter it contained and the audience it envisaged.

Consideration of content and audience shaped the style of poetry written by Sempill and Davidson although their reasons for choosing a "sempill" style clearly differed. Sempill was primarily a propagandist but also a very good poet, and the nature of his audience and means of publication, along with the need to be as persuasive as possible within the large range of styles he cultivated, led him to be flexible and innovative to such a degree that he broke new poetic ground more than once. He certainly encouraged Scottish vernacular poetry on the path

which would lead to the eighteenth century, especially in style and voice. Davidson wrote from the point of view of a protestant preacher, and the manner of the pulpit and the parish affected the manner of his verse, in the same way as it was to affect Hume's. Davidson's poetic innovations arose from a connection between what he perceived as a preacher and what he sought to express as a poet. His contribution to the new poetry of Scotland lay, above all, in the way in which his work reflected the new spirit of the society, a spirit of uncompromising independence of mind, faith and opinion.

PART III

THE NEW LEARNING

For these few doubts I learn'd in divers places.

the Packman

I wonder at the wit of man, whome God hes made so wise.

Alexander Hume

Chapter 6

COURTLY POETRY: THE WANING TRADITION

Within the court, the late sixteenth century was a time of considerable literary activity, as James VI and members of his "Castalian Band" gave serious thought to the art of poetry. In the years between the Reformation and the removal of the court to England there was as much experimentation in court poetry as in popular poetry, but the new poetry of the court often took a different direction from that of the broadsheets and was motivated by more purely literary aspirations. Despite the changes that occurred in court poetry, its influence on the continuing poetry of Scotland largely consisted in the transmission of older conventions to a new generation of poets, a transmission which was also taking place in broadsheet verse. Comparative consideration of court poetry, however, furnishes some significant contrasts and similarities with popular poetry, further demonstrating the originality and vigour of the new poetry of the broadsheets, and indicating that the elements of court poetry which were preserved in later Scottish poetry were generally elements court poetry shared with popular poetry. This urges the conclusion that by the end of the sixteenth century the courtly was already a waning influence on national culture, soon to be replaced by an alternative tradition which had been shaped in controversy and had more immediate relevance to post-Reformation society in Scotland.

If the response of lesser court poets to James's *Reulis and Cautelis* was to produce "highsounding nothings"[1], more accomplished poets like Scott, Montgomerie, Stewart of Baldyneiss, Boyd and Maitland showed that "the Scots tradition was still capable of development"[2]. In the

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1. R.D.S. Jack (ed.), *A Choice of Scottish Verse 1560-1660* (London, 1978), p.13.

2. Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p.126.

climate of intellectual confidence engendered by awareness of the Italian Renaissance, increasing contact with English literature, and James's fostering of the arts, Scottish court poets continued to build upon the tradition of the makars and began to experiment with the sonnet, translations from Italian and French models and the development of the native lyric. In all of this the effects of the Reformation are frequently barely discernible.

Some years before James VI's encouragement of "poesie", and closer to the Reformation, Scott and Maitland had confronted the conflict of loyalties between their Protestantism and a Catholic queen. Both wrote poems for their queen in which the controversies of the age were raised or implied and both finally adopted a moderate and conciliatory tone, different indeed from the outspokenness of broadsheet poets.

In "Ane New Ȝeir Gifte to the Quene Mary, quhen scho come first Hame, 1562", Scott made an obvious effort to be impartial and frank, though his frankness concerns only "safe" topics. Clerical corruption is condemned but nobody, not even the queen, would have disputed the abysmal state of the pre-Reformation clergy and church hierarchy. Though "sophistrie" and "ceremonies vaine" are banished and the people are now "trewlie" taught, the new order has other problems: "Bot in sum hartis is gravit new agane / Ane image, callit cuvatyce of geir" (ll.117-18). Drunkenness, slander, greedy kirkmen and bad neighbours are described, as are hypocrisy and pretension. Scott's poem is predominantly a conventional satire on all the estates, but the "Estate Spiritual", old and new, occupies more of the poet's attention than was usual in such satires before Lindsay.

Scott is open about his Protestantism but is unwilling to discuss doctrine and practice:

> With mes nor matynes nowayis will I mell:
> To iuge þame iustlie passis my ingyne;
> Thai gyde nocht ill þat governis weill þame sell,
> And lelalie on lawtie layis þair lyne:
> Dowtis to discus for doctouris ar devyne,
> Cunnyng in clergie to declair þame cleir;
> To ordor this the office now is thyne:
> God gife þe grace aganis þis gude new Ȝeir.
> (ll.97-104)[3]

3. *The Poems of Alexander Scott*, ed. James Cranstoun (STS, 1894; Johnson Reprint, 1966).

In comparison with the protestant celebrations of success in broadsheets of the same year, Scott's is a negative and non-committal poem, and somewhat élitist, deploring the participation of lay commoners in religious debate:

> Att croce gar cry, be oppin proclamatioun,
> Vndir grit panis þat nothir he nor scho
> Off halye writ haif ony disputatioun,
> Bot letterit men, or learnit clerks þ^r^to;
> For lymmer lawdis and litle lassis lo
> Will argun bay^t^ w^t^ bischop, preist, and freir;
> To daunton þis thow hes aneuch to do:
> God gife þe grace aganis þis gude new ȝeir.
>
> (11.49-56)

In the broadsheets, the inclusion of "the brethren" in discussion of theology and controversy led to simplification of diction and style. However, because "Ane New Ȝeir Gifte" is an address to the queen from which the commons are consciously excluded, the poetic expression is overlaid with deliberate stylistic complexity. Thus, while the diction and tone of the body of the poem are plain in the manner of Lindsay rather than of "The Gude and Godlie Ballatis", the "L'envoy" and "Lectori" are extremely elaborate:

> Lectori
>
> Fresch, fulgent, flurist, fragrant flour formois,
> Lantern to lufe, of ladeis lamp and lot,
> Cherie maist chaist, cheif charbuncle and chois,
> Smaill sweit smaragde, smelling but smit of smot,
> Noblest nato^r^, nurice to nurtour, not
> This dull indyte, dulce, dowble dasy deir,
> Send be thy sempill servand Sanderris Scott,
> Greting grit God to grant thy Grace gude ȝeir.
>
> (11.217-24)

Scott was capable of a manner, if not a tone, of utter simplicity — indeed he cultivated such a style — but the occasion of this poem, his position as a courtier, his knowledge of poetic conventions and his desire not to be associated with the fervour outside the court caused him to modify his already cautious frankness, rendering his self-portrait, "thy sempill servand Sanderris Scott", not remotely like the poetic image of "Rakles Robert" Sempill.

Sir Richard Maitland's poem on the same subject, "Off the Quenis Arryvale in Scotland", is much shorter than Scott's and even more circumspect. Maitland does not mention the Kirk and all his advice to the queen is conventional, coming closest to frankness when he counsels an early and political marriage for Mary — but this, like his other advice, is given under the guise of his concern for the continuing stability of "Ane auld fre realme as it lang tyme hes bein" (1.12). We do well to remember, as Scott realised, that a sense of stability and order such as Maitland seeks to establish here was absurd under the circumstances. Nevertheless, though aging and conservative, Maitland was not a political fool. He was moved to adopt a tone of impartiality by the occasion and deference to the recipient of the address. Choosing not to walk a dangerous tightrope between opposing points of view, he decided to overlook current turmoil and direct attention to the continuation of traditional ties, loyalties and attitudes, such as the connection his own family had long had with the royal court:

> Madame I wes trew servand to thy mother
> And in hir favour stude ay thankfullie
> Off my estait als weill as ony vther
> Prayand thy grace I may ressauit be
> In siclyk favour with thy maiestie
> Inclynand ay to me thy gracious eiris
> And amang vther servandis think on me
> This last requeist I lernit at the freiris.
> (11.49-56)[4]

T.F. Henderson saw Maitland as "politically, religiously and poetically, very much a relic of the first half of the century"[5], a man whose feudal opinions and aloofness from party disputes ensured that he stayed in office no matter who was in power. However appealing his lack of shrillness may be, however much it places him "among the most likeable figures of the time"[6], Henderson's view of him is correct. Politically, especially for a man of his years and with the handicap of blindness, it was a sensible course, but poetically it was probably why he rarely

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4. *The Maitland Folio Manuscript*, ed. W.A. Craigie (2 vols, STS, 1927), vol. I, p.34.

5. *Scottish Vernacular Poetry*, p.262.

6. Agnes Mure Mackenzie in *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.46.

broke new ground. R.J. Lyall calls him "an anachronistic figure" who "repeats the political clichés of the earlier period"[7], and very often those clichés were repeated in forms and language as conventional as the ideas themselves.

Maitland did not compose decorative courtly verse, nor does his poetry reflect the changes courtly poetry underwent in his lifetime, despite his close acquaintance with the full range of contemporary poetry. As a satirist, like Dunbar, he could speak plainly and vigorously but always conservatively. Agnes Muir Mackenzie responds warmly to Maitland's "Horatian" attitude and in so doing highlights the difference between him and the broadsheet poets: "... though what he says has no picturesque extremes to catch the mob, its sound kind sense was as wholesome, and rare, in politics then as now"[8]. For Maitland the lack of a style to "catch the mob" was a conscious choice. Temperamentally he found extremism distasteful, and as a politician and poet he was aware of the power of the broadside press. As Scott made it clear that the court did not approve of discussion of theology by the commons, so Maitland stresses their disapproval of the practice of public slander or public debate in the broadsheets:

> Sum of þe poyetis and makaris þat ar now
> Off grit dispyte and malice ar sa fow
> Sa þat all lesingis þat can be Inventit
> Thai put in writt and garris þame be prentit
> To gar þe peple ewill opinioun taik
> Off þame quhome of þat þai þair ballatis maik
> ("Of the Malyce of Poyetis", I, p.325, ll.1-6)

It is not simply public criticism and controversy Maitland condemns, but also the use of poetry for such purposes:

> Thairfore na man mak ballatis nor Indyte
> Off detractioun ill sclandir nor dispyte
> Putt not in writt þat god or man may greif
> All vertew loue and all vyces repreif
> Or mak sum myrrie toy to gude purpose
> That may þe herar and redar baythe reiose

---

7. "Politics and Poetry", *SLJ*, III (1976), 24.

8. *Scottish Poetry*, ed. Kinsley, p.47.

Or sum frutfull and gude moralite
Or plesand thingis may stand with chirrite
Dispytfull poyettis sould not tholit be
In commoun weillis or godlie cwmpanie
That sort ar ay to saw seditioun
And put gude men in to suspitioun

(ll.31-42)

Maitland saw that a popular printed verse tradition was emerging in Scotland and it was not a phenomenon on which he looked gladly, feeling that it degraded the art of poetry and was politically dangerous. His is one of the few contemporary acknowledgements of the growth of popular poetry and the distrust which its obvious power, to "gar þe peple ewill opinioun taik" and "saw seditioun", engendered in the court. Clearly, court poets recognised the differences between their approach to poetry and that of the popular poets to the same extent that the popular poets knew they were departing from convention. Further, Maitland's injunctions about the proper use of poetry illustrate the degree to which the popular poets differed from their courtly contemporaries in their concerns and in the purposes for which they were willing to use poetry. Maitland's poem suggests that he not only feared the political and personal consequences of broadsheet satire, but also had misgivings about the effect such poetry was having on the tradition of the "makaris", a tradition he clearly valued highly.

Nevertheless, Maitland was not above using some of the techniques of the broadsheet poets himself for satire, as in "Aganis the Theivis of Liddisdaill". This poem leads John Speirs to see in Maitland an affinity with the popular mind and to suggest a partial identification of the old judge with the thieves,[9] but such a view in no way accords with Maitland's attitudes in the rest of his poetry, where he appears as a court man whose affinity with the common people goes no further than the feudal concern and familiarity evident in middle Scots poetry, and whose use of the language and verse forms of the commons is confined to parody or burlesque. He therefore enjoys the commons, but does not identify with them. "Aganis the Theivis of Liddisdaill" is serious

9. *The Scots Literary Tradition*, p.93.

satire. Maitland deplored the lawlessness and disregard of social and political authority he saw among the borderers and his use of the four-line stanza, the popular language and the flavour of balladry all form part of his satire, parodying the popular ballads which were already, no doubt, transforming men he saw as lawless ruffians into popular heroes:

> He is weill kend Iohne of þe syde
> a gritter theif did neuer ryd
> He neuer tyris, for to brek byris
> Ouir muir and myris, ouir gude a gyd
>
> Thair is ane callit clemmettis hob
> ffra ilk pure wiff revis þair wob
> and all þe laif, quhat ever þai haif
> The deill ressaif þairfoir his gob
>
> (I, p.302, 11.46-55)

But this is the closest Maitland comes to the broadsheet poets he so much disliked and there is nothing in the poem to support a suggestion of personal identification with the common people, still less any sympathy with the reivers. "Aganis the Theivis of Liddisdaill" would have provided an effective warning to the common people, had they ever heard it, that admiration for the "theivis" was misplaced. Primarily, however, the poem was a parody of the popular ballads written for the entertainment, through satire, of Maitland's own circle.

Scott has been justly admired as a pioneer in the new court style, in some poems breaking dramatically with the ornate, aureate manner of the past, and adopting simple forms and unadorned diction. M.J.W. Scott emphasises his "directness of expression", "reasonableness of tone" and the "predominance of statement rather than surface embellishment" in these poems, which would seem to indicate that the changes he made to Scots art poetry paralleled the changes which were occurring in poetry outside the court. However, the poetry he produced was "complex, intellectual and witty"[10], like "I wilbe plane":

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10. M.J.W. Scott, "Robert Aytoun: Scottish Metaphysical", *SLJ*, II (1975), 6.

I wilbe plane,
And lufe affane,
Ffor as I mene,
    So tak me;
Gif I refrane,
For wo or pane,
3or lufe certane,
    Forsaik me.

(Poems, p.38, ll.1-8)

Despite the contrived simplicity, the language and tone of the poem remain courtly and the manner formal, highly structured and cleverly conceived in the same school as Wyatt, Skelton and Surrey. "I wilbe plane", along with Scott's other occasional verse and some of his satires, is what Maitland called a "myrrie toy", which is not to suggest triviality. Scott frequently achieved a lyrical power and sensitivity unsurpassed in Scottish poetry in his century but he would not sacrifice subtlety to expedience, nor would he allow himself to lose sight of his courtly audience. That much of Scott's poetry was written as, or became, courtly song[11] illustrates the occasional nature of his work in the courtly setting. His work had a great influence on Fowler, Aytoun and others who took Scottish court poetry to England, but his influence on most of the poetry written in Scotland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was limited. Doubtless the extremely "plain" style he cultivated in some of his poems (we should not forget the elaborateness of others) facilitated acceptance of such a style in literary circles, paving the way for acceptance of the work of less courtly poets in succeeding years. In addition, Scott's use of the mock tournament tradition in "The Justing and Debait up at the Drum betuix Wā Adamsone and Johine Sym", and his use of what became the "Standart Habby" stanza, made a concrete contribution to future Scottish poetry.

"The Justing and Debait" is in the same stanza form as "Christis Kirk", a measure which became a favourite with the eighteenth-century vernacular poets. Scott's diction for the poem is a mixture of popular and "knightly". For the most part "The Justing" is a very successful imitation of "Christis Kirk" but even less sympathetic towards the

11. See Helena Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry*, pp.44-67.

participants in the action than is its original. Scott's attitude to his "ȝunkeris" is somewhat patronising and the poem's aim is not to involve a popular audience but to have fun at their expense. When Burns uses the same measure in "The Holy Fair", he satirises the preachers and laughs with and at the rustics, but he also involves himself as narrator in the action, sharing wholeheartedly in the fun. Scott assisted in the transmission of the stanza and the tradition of racy vernacular humour associated with it, but he does not use the form differently from his predecessors. Later poets, in the wake of the controversialists, rarely detach themselves as Scott does from the class of people described in their "Christis Kirk"-style poems.

The "Standart Habby" measure is used, with variations, in a number of Scott's poems. "On paciens in Lufe" uses it in a way which is at some remove from the humour and irony later associated with the stanza and with a diction which could not be described as vernacular:

> Grissel wes nevir so pacient
> As I am for my lady gent,
> For in my mind I so imprent
>   Hir excelenss,
> That of my deid I am content,
>   W^{t} paciens.
>   (p.53, ll.7-12)

This is a serious poem of love-longing, part of a tradition of suitor poems in the complicated game of courtly love, and the short lines function in the stanza as sighs, rather than the punches they were to become in later poetry. "Leif, Luve, and lat me leif allone", on the other hand, employs a similar stanza, with an added line between the short lines, for rather bitter, ironic purposes and its language is bold and straightforward despite the courtly setting and references ("staitly", "uncurtass", "curage"):

> Leif, Luve, and lat me leif allone
> At libertie, subiect to none,
> Ffor it may weill be sene vpone
>   My bludles blaiknit ble,
> The tormenting in tym bygon,
> That skerss hes left bot skin and bon,
>   Throw frēmitness of the.
>   (ll.1-7)

Like later Scots poets, Scott found his variation on the "Habbie" stanza particularly suitable for mocking irony and direct address, and there is a similarity between the tone Burns uses to address Satan and the familiar tone Scott uses to Cupid:

> Cupeid, thow kennis I burd to knau
> The langsum leving in thy law,
> Bot this is not þe first ourthraw
> That thow hes done to me;
> Bot of the now I stand not aw,
> Sa ressoun dois my bener blaw
> Aganis the feid of the.
> (11.29-35)

But Scott's most effective and most influential poem in the "Habbie" stanza is "A Complaint aganis Cupeid", which Ramsay published in his *Evergreen*. In this poem the stanza comes to life, used for satiric condemnation of the god of love. Scott takes advantage of the lively, flexible measure to change the style of his abuse from stanza to stanza, so that the illusion of an actual outburst of rage is heightened in the poem:

> Quhat is thy manrēt bot mischeif,
> Sturt, angir, grunching, yre and greif,
> Evill lyfe, and langour but releif
> Off wounds wan,
> Displesour, pane, and he repreif
> Off God and man.
>
> Thow loviss þame þat lowdest leis,
> And followis fastest on þame fleis;
> Thos lychtleis all trew properteis
> Off luve express,
> And markis quhair nevir styme thow seis,
> Bot hittis be gaiss.
>
> Blynd buk! bot at þe bound thow schutis,
> And þame forbeiris þat the rebutis;
> Thow ryvis þair hairtis ay fra the rutis,
> Quhilk ar thy awin,
> And cureis þame caris nocht thre cutis
> To be misknawn.
> (11.13-30)

Scott has been compared to Burns as a lyricist, yet while his lyric poems and songs are firmly in the courtly tradition, his use in this poem of what was later called the "Burns stanza" brings the measure very near

indeed to its eighteenth-century form, tone and commonly ironic purpose. As is the case among the popular poets, Scott's most marked use of plain-speaking, of the introduction of a colloquial diction and a "common man" voice, is in his poetry in a satiric or humorous vein. Wittingly or unwittingly, Scott intensified the growing association between this stanza and the popular stance in poetry, and between satire and vernacular diction. Again, it is interesting that Ramsay chose this particular poem for inclusion in the *Evergreen*, no doubt because he responded warmly to the familiar stanza and tone.

Similarly blending the popular and the courtly, Montgomerie incorporated elements of court song with echoes of the Italian Renaissance and a large measure of the Scottish folk tradition in *The Cherrie and the Slae*[12], one of the most consistently fashionable Scots poems in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, being reprinted in various versions over twenty times between 1597 and 1780[13]. Helena Shire has argued forcefully for the interpretation of *The Cherrie and the Slae* as an allegorical defence of Catholicism[14]. As such it would have a political intention and therefore might be expected to reveal some of the features which characterise popular propaganda. Indeed, it does appear that Montgomerie undertook conscious popularizing through the use of proverbs, popular references and "broad, pithy Scots"[15] and, like the broadsheet use of the courtly tradition, the allegorical structure of the poem is more a framework on which to build than it is true allegory. Neither of these things, however, can be seen as proof that Montgomerie's awareness of an audience extended beyond the court circle.

Probably more important in assessing the relationship between Montgomerie's poem and the times, literary and historical, is the sense

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12. *Poems of Alexander Montgomerie: Supplementary Volume*, ed. G. Stevenson (STS, 1910).

13. Harry G. Aldis, *A List of Books Printed in Scotland before 1700* (rev. edn, 1970).

14. *Song, Dance and Poetry*, pp.117-38.

15. Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p.122.

of occasion, of the fitness of certain modes to certain subjects, which he shared with his contemporaries both in the court and in the broadsheets. Critics have been perturbed by Montgomerie's range of styles. John Speirs found an "unsatisfactoriness" in Montgomerie's work which "seems to arise — in spite of Montgomerie's technical preoccupation and artistry — from some inner weakening and impoverishment"[16], and much earlier T.F. Henderson was worried by the way in which Montgomerie's skill as a metrist seemed sometimes to overshadow his poetry[17]. While Helena Shire's fresh interpretation of *The Cherrie and the Slae* sheds some light on the mixed responses of other critics by revealing some of the method behind Montgomerie's apparent confusion, it goes only part of the way towards explaining the frequently perceived conflict between elaborateness and simplicity in the poem. The remainder of the explanation is suggested by Henderson's observation that the metre of *The Cherrie and the Slae* does not suit consecutive narrative[18]. Perhaps Montgomerie responded to the trend in poetry towards incorporating popular elements in order to reach a wider audience, rather than for burlesque — which *The Cherrie and the Slae* clearly is not. However he did not abandon the rich metrical modes of the court at a time when metrical inventiveness was particularly admired, nor did he abandon the mythology and allegory familiar to the court audience, whether the mythology and allegory were medieval or "modern" in the Italian school. Broadsheet poets realised that for a lively narrative, a simple manner and matter were essential; that the more simple the vehicle, the more realistic and accessible was the narrative. *The Cherrie and the Slae* stanza proved extremely popular with later vernacular poets, but without allegory and rarely for extended narrative. Ramsay, who published *The Cherrie and the Slae* in *The Evergreen*, uses the stanza in "The Vision", a thinly disguised historical fake which is largely Jacobite propaganda, and the nearest the eighteenth-century poets come to Montgomerie's use

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16. *The Scots Literary Tradition*, p.94.
17. *Scottish Vernacular Poetry*, p.259.
18. Ibid.

of the stanza. Burns' major uses of it are in the first "Epistle to Davie" where it carries personal and philosophical observations and in some of the Recitativo portions of *Love and Liberty*, or "The Jolly Beggars", where it is humorous narrative but used only for three stanzas and not consecutively.[19] The later poets, responding to the popular elements in Montgomerie's poem, saw in its stanza a potential for humour, satire or occasional verse. Montgomerie's use of the stanza, though it employs popular language and associations, is not popular and any sense of confusion about the poem results from this inconsistency rather than from "some inner weakening or impoverishment".

The court poets experimented widely with genres and styles but in this experimentation, in "the creation of a new poetry in the Renaissance style for the Scottish tongue"[20], the motivation was literary, not pragmatic. Consequently, the incorporation of popular elements or the treatment of controversial subjects is always, in Montgomerie's verse and that of almost all other court poets, tempered by stylistic devices that reinforce the sense of being "of the court courtly" and pay some homage to the king's belief that "matters of the commonweal are to be avoided by poets as 'to grave ... for a Poet to mell in'"[21].

The difference between court poetry and broadsheet poetry at the end of the sixteenth century is not simply a matter of taste or quality: it is the difference between the "new" poetry of a literary coterie and the "new" poetry of public literature. The elements of *The Cherrie and the Slae* which made it a favourite for two centuries — its proverbialism, its witty use of the vernacular, its potentially rollicking stanza — are the elements which prevailed in the continuing Scots poetry and emerged as the distinguishing feature of eighteenth-century poetry in Scots,

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19. Burns also used the stanza, as a split stanza, in "The Answer to the Guidwife of Wauchope-House", an occasional reminiscence of the author's introduction to poetic inspiration through love, and in the epistle "To Mr. Gavin Hamiltoun, Mauchline", where three stanzas carried an ironic message of mutual concern.

20. Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry*, p.98.

21. Ibid., p.99.

and they are elements which *The Cherrie and the Slae* has in common with the poetry of the broadside press, particularly that of Robert Sempill. The medieval and Italianate elements — the allegory, the myth, the intricacy of image and thought — either faded with the middle Scots past or were absorbed into the anglicised school of poetry that developed around James in his English court.

It seems that, walking a fine line between being imaginative, responsive artists and being courtiers around a self-consciously literate monarch, the Scottish court poets reflected in their work the social and political inconsistencies of the last years of the sixteenth century. Their poetry shows them not blind to the upheavals of the time in Scotland, England and Europe, but preferring to underplay them. Nevertheless, literary change was fashionable and some of the results of their experiments with old and new verse forms found their way through the popular press, or through the great houses, into seventeenth-century verse. Yet any claim that the court poets were positively responsible for altering the future course of Scottish poetry is clearly questionable. Their effect on Scottish poets who came after them was largely through coincidences of style — the preservation of some techniques and stanzas which, happily, suited the needs or purposes of less courtly poets — and through their accustoming of sophisticated ears to a less elaborate style of verse. Normally in literary history a body of art poetry is taken up and developed by the next generation of poets but this was not an honour accorded by seventeenth-century Scottish poets to most of the poetry of the court of James VI.[22]

The demise of courtly verse in Scotland has been variously explained. One school of thought, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, holds that Calvinism "effectually strangled the national literature"[23]. But the Kirk did not begin to frown on secular

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22. No matter what the effect of the same poetry on English poetry, or poetry written in English by Scots — and it may have been considerable in both cases.

23. T.F. Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Poetry*, p.11. A view shared by Alexander Campbell in his *History of Poetry in Scotland* (1798) passim, and Hugh Walker in *Three Centuries of Scottish Literature* (1893), especially vol. I, pp.83, 128.

literature until the Covenanting period and, in any event, the court poets rarely seem to have been greatly influenced by the views of the Kirk on the conduct of their lives or their poetry. When Calvinism entered into court poetry it was treated with the kind of effort at impartiality obvious in Scott and Maitland, or with as much emphasis on the courtly tone as in secular love poems.

There were zealous Protestants in court circles but with very few exceptions their literary response to issues of importance rarely produced any modification in their poetic practice. In the Scottish Record Office is a copy of a poem by the king, with an accompanying answer by a courtier[24] who was almost certainly a supporter of the Ruthven Raiders. The poems are in a court hand. The king's poem, "Since thochtis ar frie", is in the Royal Manuscript as "Song, The first verses that ever the king made", and was written and circulated in the court in 1581. After the answer in the SRO manuscript are the words: "Thir maid in anno 1583 at ye duik of obiyinnies his puting out of Scotland", a reference to the expulsion of James's favourite, Esmé Stuart, Sire d'Aubigny and Duke of Lennox, after the Ruthven raid.[25] It is unlikely that anyone unconnected with the court could have obtained a copy of the king's then unpublished poem scarcely two years after its composition.

Since this is one of the few examples of what would seem to be protestant "propaganda" from within the court, the copy of the king's poem and the Answer merit careful consideration:

1. Since thochtis ar frie, think quhat thow will,
O trublet heart to ease thy paine
Thoghtis vnreveallit can doe no ill
Bot wordis past out comes nocht agane
Be cairfull ay for to invent
The way to get thy awin intent

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24. SRO MS RH 13/38/1. A single sheet boxed with a miscellaneous collection of poems from the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. No provenance, no acquisition record. The king's poem is more Scots in orthography and has some slight differences to the Royal Manuscript version which is reproduced in A.F. Wescott, *New Poems of James I of England* (New York, 1911), no. LIII.

25. The king was taken into captivity by the Ruthven Raiders in August 1582. Lennox left Dalkeith for England on Dec. 21 (NS), and was still in London on Jan. 14, leaving for Paris shortly thereafter (see *DNB*).

To play thy selff with thy conceat
And let none knaw quhat thow does meane
Hope ay at last thocht it be leat
To thy intent for to attene
Latt quhyles it brak furth in effect
Bot ay lett wit thy will correct

Since fuilhaist cūmes not grittest speid
I wald thow shuldest learne to knaw
How to mak vertew of a neid
Since that necessitie hes no law
With pacience than sie thow attend
In hoip to vanqueis in the end.

2. Ansr þairto

Since thoght is thrall to thy ill will
O thrallit heart gritt w[t] thy payne
Thoghtis vnreveillit may doe the ill
Bot wordis past cūmes weill agane
Be ever cairfull to Invent
To gett thy awin by gods intent

Play not thy selff with thy conceate
For God knawis all that thow dois meane
Hoip w[th]out faith will bring the lait
To thy intent for to atteane
And quhan it bythes furth in effect
Thy wylie will God will correct

Since of fulhaist cūmes never guid speid
Pray God to give the grace to knaw
That vertew only forcet by neid
Serves littil thankis to the be law
On God his will sie thow attend
Gif thow wald vanqueish in the end.

There are several possible explanations for the second poem. One is that the king in captivity had revised his thinking and wrote a bitter parody of his own poem, but there is nothing to support such a view, appealing as it may be. Another is that the Answer is a consolation to the king, in the same vein as Stewart of Baldyneiss's "To his Maiestie in Fasherie":

Liwe still heirfoir in esperance alway;
Maist plesour purchest is be pryce of paine.
Thois that induris the vinters scharp assay
Shall sie the seimlie symmer scheine againe.

Stewart's poem carries the message that with God's help the King would win through in the end, as does the same author's "To his maiestie the first of Ianvar 1582":

> Ground the on God quho suir is thy defence,
> And he but dout your harts desyre sall send,
> My lyf in pledge, or this yeir cum till end.

But the tone of the Answer to the king's poem does not suit such consolatory verse, particularly if the "ill will" in the first stanza and the "wylie will" in the second are the king's. A courtier wishing to console the king over his frustrating captivity in the hands of his own subjects, and the loss of his closest friend, Lennox, would surely not have adopted an admonitory tone, or so described James's character.

It is most likely that the poem was the work of a Presbyterian courtier, a supporter of the Ruthven Lords, in which case the parody would have been a loyal but timely reminder to James that he should place his faith in God and the Kirk, not in favourites like Lennox who had proved capable of duplicity in matters of state and religion. The author shares some of the attitude of broadsheet poets at the same time, almost crowing: "We placed our faith in God and triumphed; the king would do well to do the same". Yet in no other respect is this poem like those of the controversial poets. Its form is dictated by the poem it parodies, but its overall tone and language, nevertheless, fall squarely within the tradition of "Advice to the King" poems. There is no mention of the world outside the court, no emphasis on shared commitment and no attempt to give the poem popular appeal. Rather the Answer is the civilised, courteous response of a courtier to his king's predicament, perhaps a warning but also an affectionate admonition. James was no more than seventeen and could easily have been seen by the author as a young man with great potential who had been led astray and who should now learn to place faith in things other than his native cunning and his favourites. Placing his faith in God, of course, could well have been the most politic move for James in the light of the current dispute between him and the Presbyterians: appearing to be one of the faithful might have been enough to defuse the dangerous conflict of religious and political interests. Whether the poem was meant that cynically is doubtful, since it carries a genuine air of victory, especially about the expulsion of Lennox, though nothing as strong as the triumphant note sounded in the broadsheets about the same event.

Like Scott and Maitland, or Stewart to his king in "fascherie", this poem is essentially diplomatic, literary, and relies for its effect largely on the ingenuity of the parody. While the matter of Calvinism and, by implication, the events of the current struggle between Crown and Kirk, enter into the verse, its form, diction and courtly tone do not change as a result. Though it is parody, the Answer differs considerably from the work of Sempill, who parodied courtly forms and language with results that are neither in tone nor effect "courtly", and Davidson who deliberately gave his poetry a diction and tone reflecting "Gude John Knox", coming to grips with matters of kirk and state in a forthright, decidedly undiplomatic manner. In comparison with the popular poets, the effect of Calvinism on courtly verse can be seen as generally slight, affecting neither the style nor the tone of the poetry in any marked or lasting manner, even when the courtly poet was obviously a committed Calvinist.

Equally simplistic as an explanation for the decline in the writing of courtly poetry in Scotland is the fact of the court removal in 1603. It is clear that by the time a number of Scottish poets accompanied or followed the king to England poetry in the court had already been changed considerably from its middle Scots ancestors. The Italian Renaissance, increased access to contemporary English poetry and James's desire to create a modern but distinctive literary life in his court had more to do with the change in court poetry than the fact that a number of talented young poets ceased writing in Scots and began writing in English. In effect the poetics of court verse in England and Scotland were taking a similar direction: away from the elaborate expression of stable ideas in the medieval world and into the plainer expression of the more subtle vision of the Renaissance. Indeed, it is possible that had the Scottish court not gone to England, Scottish court poetry would nonetheless more and more have come to resemble that of England, and Scottish "uncourtly" poetry would have continued on the line of development it had already begun.

Too much critical time and energy has been expended on what, in the end, is the rather pointless task of seeking in the Kirk and the

court removal an explanation of the change in court poetry which appeared to be the key to understanding the course Scottish poetry took in the seventeenth century. What is necessary, in fact, is an understanding of why it was popular verse forms and attitudes and an "austere" or "vernacular" diction cultivated outside the court that became the influential tradition, rather than that of the court.

There was an expanding, uncourtly, but literate audience to whom courtly literature seems not to have appealed. Since a good deal of the literature of the court was in language and verse forms well within the capacities and understanding of the uncourtly audience, another explanation is necessary as to why court poetry did not receive, in most cases, wide popular interest. There appears to be little truth in the notion that the popular audience did not understand the courtly ethos, or could not identify with the poetry because of class divisions: contact between classes had long been close in Scotland, and many a popular ballad or song had a noble setting. Yet if the "new audience" was not alienated by "social distance", the court poets were and continued to hold themselves, if not their work, apart from the wider audience outside the court and from the preoccupations of that audience. Robin Fulton has said of Scott's comments on lay learning in "Ane New 3eir Gifte":

> His attitude on this point is in keeping with his acceptance of the view that every state in society has its own special vocation and that it is by adhering to these that harmony within the community will be maintained. He advises Mary to see to it that her subjects adhere to their proper places.[26]

Such conservatism, present also in the work of Maitland, Montgomerie, Stewart and even the anonymous answerer to the king's poem, was completely out of step with the change in social and religious outlooks which accompanied the Reformation.

Scott and other protestant poets in the court may well have shared the faith of their brethren outside the court, but they did not share

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26. R.W.M. Fulton, "Social Criticism in Scottish Literature 1480-1560" (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh University, 1972), p.159.

the Calvinist, and especially Presbyterian, commitment to egalitarianism in religion. Popular literature and popular attitudes entered into the poetry of the courts of Mary and James VI to the same extent as, possibly even less than, they had entered into the work of Henryson, Dunbar and Lindsay. Consequently, the poetry of the court entered into the lives of the commons no further than it had a century before and the expanding literate audience turned for edification, information, entertainment, example and inspiration to poets who reflected the attitudes, manners of expression and preoccupations of the commons.

The rejection, by readers and poets, of courtly conservatism in favour of popular radicalism in religion, politics and poetic expression is a fundamental reason for the eclipse of the courtly tradition and the rise of the alternative tradition in Scottish poetry. This explains why the two poets working out of the courtly tradition who did have a significant and lasting influence on seventeenth-century Scots poetry were Sir James Sempill and Alexander Hume, who shared and expressed the widespread allegiance to individual responsibility and egalitarianism in religion and learning.

Chapter 7

SIR JAMES SEMPILL: *THE PACKMAN'S PATER NOSTER*

Through *The Packman's Pater Noster* Sir James Sempill forged a link between learned society and popular verse by taking the style and attitudes of contemporary controversial poetry and making them part of an extended poem with far wider concerns than most contemporary broadsheet verse. That Sir James was a courtier and yet chose to use a style closely related to popular poetry was in itself a significant development. But that he was, furthermore, a highly educated, cultured man, raises, directly and indirectly, ideas and questions about the connections between the Scottish Reformation and the upsurge of learning in Europe, and Scottish efforts to confront the social and political implication of the changes in religion and knowledge. Accordingly, *The Packman* represents a turning point for Scottish poetry in that it was a public coming together of upper class sensibility with the ideas and attitudes which had sprung from the Reformation and Renaissance and the new popular, pragmatic and outspoken voice and style in poetry. After Sir James Sempill "popular" poetry, plain or vernacular, was more and more widely cultivated, ceasing to be exclusively the style of broadsheet verse and becoming an accepted, indeed a favourite, style of poetry in sophisticated circles.

Born in 1566, Sir James Sempill of Beltrees was godson to James VI and may have been educated with the king "who ever afterwards maintained the highest esteem for him"[1]. In his "Sacrilege Sacredly Handled" Sir James wrote of the king:

> Yea, behold what interest I have also in our sacred *David*: Even devoted to his service, by my parents, before I was; thereafter, named in, and after his Majesties owne name, before himselfe could know it; yet after knowledge, confirmed, and in his H. Court, almost ever since, both nursed and schooled. And so is our

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1. James Paterson (ed.), *Poems of the Sempills of Beltrees* (Edinburgh, 1849), p.xxviii.

> *David*, the King of my birth, the Master of my service; the father of my name; the framer of my nature; and the Gamaliel of my education; at whose feet (no, at whose elbow, and from whose mouth) I confesse I have suckt the best of whatsoever may bee thought good in me.[2]

In the course of his life at court[3] Sempill was ambassador to England and to France, and clearly a devoted friend and servant to the king. He did not, however, temper his religious commitment as a result of his high standing with the king and court. He became involved in the Melvillean controversy by showing to his friend, Andrew Melville, the king's *Basilicon Doron* which was intended to be kept from public view. Melville took some notes and informed some leading presbyteries, leading to "a ferment"[4]. After his imprisonment, Melville wrote to Sempill in 1610 requesting that he be able to have "an honest retreat from warfare, with the hope of burial with his ancestors" as it had been suggested that he would be sent to France if he was released. Melville's gratitude to Sir James for his efforts on behalf of a prisoner of conscience sheds a good deal of light on Sempill's character and Presbyterianism:

> Did my friend Sempill, the assertor of my liberty, visit you in passing? If he did, as he said he would, why have you not said a word about him? All my friends owe much to him on my account. He takes a warm interest in my studies, as well as in the welfare of my person; and, what is more, I am persuaded that he takes a warm interest in the cause. The Court does not contain a more religious man, one who unites greater modesty with greater genius, and a more matured judgement with more splendid accomplishments. In procuring for me a mitigation of my imprisonment, he has shown, both by words and deed, a constancy truly worthy of a Christian. If you meet with him on his return (for he means to return with your hero) thank him on my account; for he will not rest satisfied until he has effected my complete liberation.[5]

Among Sir James's "accomplishments" were a number of prose theological works, one of which Paterson described as "written with much ability, in a style of nervous reasoning, seasoned with satire, which is,

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2. Ibid., p.xxix.
3. Died 1625.
4. *Poems of the Sempills*, pp.xxxiv-xxxv.
5. Ibid., p.xxxvi.

upon the whole, less severe than the rudeness of the attack which it repels would have justified"[6]. It is obvious that satire and controversy appealed to this courtier who was at the same time a "zealous Presbyterian". In discussing Sempill's Presbyterianism, Paterson noted that this, together with his "literary reputation" and his position at court, "brought him into frequent communication with the public men of his time"[7]. His reputation for literature was probably largely due to his divided loyalties, to the king and court on the one hand and the Kirk on the other, in that the controversial nature of his work rendered it of public interest since it was written by a man of high position while the same controversy made him aware of the need for clarity and simplicity in his verse satire and prose. In this he differed from other court poets. *The Packman's Pater Noster*,[8] his one extended poem, is a satire sharing the tone, diction and style of broadsheet poetry as practised by Robert Sempill and John Davidson.

An anti-Catholic poem dwelling largely on the use of the mother-tongue for prayer, *The Packman* purports to be translated from Dutch but Sir James' authorship cannot be doubted. Of all the propagandist and controversial poems of post-Reformation Scotland, this most clearly demonstrates the early Presbyterian analogy between plain speech, plain sense and the individual's spiritual self-reliance, at the same time illustrating the transformation in sensibility and intellectual life which had occurred in Scotland.

The Packman's Pater Noster is in the form of "A Dialogue betwixt a Chapman and a Priest" and, like many of the broadsheet poets, Sempill sets his scene, theme and tone in the first few lines:

> A Pollands Pedler went vpon a day,
> Vnto his Parish Priest, to learne to pray.

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6. Ibid., p.xxxvii. Prose works listed and described pp.xxxvii-xxxviii.

7. Ibid., p.xxxviii.

8. The earliest available printed edition of the poem, from 1624, has been used throughout. The poem was later considerably enlarged and republished by Sir James's son, Robert Sempill of Beltrees whose version is in *Poems of the Sempills*.

> The Priest Sayd; Packe-man, thou must hant the Closter,
> To learne the *Ave*, and the *Pater noster*.
>
> Packe-man.
> Now, good Sir Priest, saide hee, what talke is that?
> I heare you speake; but GOD in Heaven knowes what.
>
> Priest.
> It is, sayde hee, that holie *Latine* Letter,
> That pleaseth god well, and our Ladie better.
>
> Packe-man.
> Alace, Sir Iohn, I'll never understand them:
> So I must leave your Prayers, as a fand them.

The Packman knows very little Latin but in the course of the poem he proves himself to be no fool. Like Robert Sempill's Maddie and other articulate commoners in the broadsheets, he is confident, intelligent, well versed in Scripture and capable of knowledgeable theological argument. Very early in the poem he states his common-sense view succinctly:

> And seeing I have head and heart to pray,
> Should not mine heart know what my tongue doth say?
> For when my tongue talks, if mine heart miscarrie.
> How quicklie may I marre your *Ave Marie*?
> And I (Sir) having manie things to seeke,
> How shall I speede, not knowing what I speake?

Sir John, the priest, shares the attitude evident in the work of Scott and Maitland that the commons ought not to discuss theology or take a hand in their own religious education and guidance:

> Well *(Packe-man)* fayth thou art too curious;
> Thy spur-blinde zeale; fervent, but furious.
> I rather teach a whole Coven of *Monkes*;
> Than such a *Packe-man*, with his *Puritane* Spunkes.
> This thou must know, that cannot bee denyed,
> *Rome* rang over all when Christ was crucifyed:
> *Rome* Ethnicke then: but afterwards converted,
> And grew so honest, and so holie hearted:
> That now her Emprour is turn'd in our *Pope*,
> His *Holinesse*; as you haue heard, I hope.
> Hee made a law, that all the world should pray,
> In *Latine* language to the Lord each day:
> Therefore of this thow mayst be sure and sickar,
> The *Pope* of *Rome* is now made Christs full *Vicar*.

James Sempill subjects intellectual and religious obscurantism and élitism to close scrutiny, developing the suggestion Robert Sempill and

Davidson had made that the Catholic church ruled by an intellectual and political conspiracy of Ignorance. As Robert Sempill's persona in "Ane new Ballet" balanced his common sense against the "masqued" nature of those he exposed, so the practical vision, logical habits of mind and plain speech of the Packman soon reduce Sir John's contorted arguments to absurdity, the satiric effect enhanced by the Packman's colloquial diction:

> Surely this purpose puts mee farre abacke,
> And hath moe *Poyntes* than *Pinnes* in all my Packe:
> What ever power you giue to your *Pope*,
> Hee may not make a man an Ape, I hope.
> And if hee bee full *Vicar* to our LORD,
> Should not his words and CHRISTS keepe one accord?
>
> ...
>
> And, on my Soule, Sir Iohn, if I but say,
> In my owne Mother-tongue, when I doe pray,
> Lord, helpe mee; Lord, increase my Packe and Pinnes?
> And euerie thing where-of I stand in neede:
> For this dependes upon *Our Daylie Bread*
> I hope in GOD, that hee shall as soone heare mee,
> As all the *Latine* Prayers you can leare mee.

During the lengthy argument, raised by Sir John, about the giving of tongues at Pentecost, a strong contrast is drawn between the Priest's crabbed, recondite thinking, his reliance on non-scriptural sources and the simple, scripturally based logic of the Packman. When the Priest claims that the Virgin, being in the same room with the others at Pentecost, could speak all languages, the Packman initially resorts to common sense to answer him. The holy ghost having come down, says the Priest:

> ... one tongue truelie lighted on our Ladie.
> And lest thou thinke I talk of ydle *Themes*,
> Consult the reverend *Iesuites* of *Rhemes*.
> And this I pray thee, Packe-man, earnestlie note.
>
> Packe-man.
> In fayth, Sir Iohn, it is not worth a Groate.
> Will I belieue't, thinke yee, because they say it?

However, when pressed, the Packman shows himself well-read in Scripture and confident in the interpretation of his reading, applying his lay vision to his argument yet, like Lindsay, stressing the Priest's ignorance of Scripture:

O, good Sir Iohn, yee count without your Host.
Now see I weill, your *Iesuiticall* tongues
Haue cloven the Text, even to the verie lungues.
That (All) which first was spoken of five score,
Is heere meant of the onelie twelve, no more.
For Marie is not named now, as then,
What neede wee then belieue it, Holie man?
On with your Spectacles (Sir Iohn) and reade,
And credite this, as a point of your *Creede.*
The Holie Ghost could fall vpon no more,
Than hee was promised vnto before.
Doutlesse hee tooke not a blinde-folded flight,
Like fyled Larkes, not knowing where to light.
Now, hee was promisde onelie to the twelve.
Looke on the Text (Sir Iohn) and judge your selue.
Speake man, and bee not silent: I am sorie,
To see you ignorant of such a Storie.

The ensuing theological argument from the Packman makes constant reference to Scripture supported, as in the broadsheets, with marginal glosses and appeals to common sense in interpretation. Regardless of the relative complexity of the subject, he continues in the same confident tone and bold, straightforward manner to show, eventually, that when the argument is conducted from Catholic premises, illogicality is the inevitable result:

And then, (Sir Iohn), what worship doe yee win
Unto our Ladie, when yee bring her in,
Jacke-fellow-lyke with other whole five score,
Who got the Holie Ghost, and shee no more?
And where the *Pope* hath made her *Queene of Heaven*,
Yee make her but lyke one of the eleven.
Surelie (Sir Iohn) this is an ill fav'rd fitching;
Yee thrust her from the *Hall* downe to the *Kitching*.

Impressed by the Packman's arguments, but true to his élitist outlook, the Priest cannot believe that this is a common pedlar:

Well Packe-man, tho thou beare about that Trunke,
I fear thou bee but some forlopen Monke,
Of *Luthers* lore, or crooked *Calvines* Crew;
And sent abroade, such businesse to brew:
Transformed in the person of some Pedler.

Particularly as the author was a man of the court, the Packman's reply to this doubt is, in content and expression, a radical statement of protestant individuality and of the perception Sempill had of the role

of each member of the protestant congregation, carrying important social and political implications:

> No, good Sir Iohn, in fayth I am no medler,
> Nor have I mynde nor meanes so high to mount:
> I can but reade a little, and lay a Count.
> And seeke my meate through manie an uncouth Maison:
> I know not what yee call your *Kyrie-laison.*
> So helpe mee God, Sir Iohn, I know no better,
> Nor in your *Latine* can I reade one letter.
> I but belieue in God: and sometyme say,
> Christ helpe mee, when I wander out the way.
> And so, what ever I haue, what ever I want,
> I neither pray to Hee, nor to Shee Sainct.
> And as for Tongues, I haue but one, no more[9]:
> And wit ye weil, albeit I had ten score,
> I would use all conforme to *Paules* commanding:
> Pray with my tongue, pray with mine understanding.
> Thinke ye those twelue, when they receiv'd these tongues,
> Did talke like Parrets, or like barrell bungues:
> Yeelding a sound, not knowing what they sayde?
> No, each of them knew well what hee did say:
> And why not wee, Sir Iohn, as well as they?
> For since all men haue one tongue at command,
> Should wee seeke tongues wee doe not vnderstand?
> Alas, Sir Iohn, had I beene trayn'd at Schoole,
> As I am but a simple ignorant foole,
> An hundreth Questions more I might haue moved,
> But heere I cease, fearing to bee reproved:
> For these few doubts I learn'd in divers places,
> Thinking, yee Clergie-men would cleare all cases.

The Packman's reticence in the last few lines is a sham. He knows he has won the argument and having been supremely confident throughout the dialogue he here makes a deferential, and ironic, gesture towards the Priest's supposed higher learning and greater power: the Packman is far from "ignorant" about Scripture, and far from being a "foole" about his faith and the practice of it. There is probably irony intended, too, in relation to the pedantic and anachronistic "learning" currently available

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9. Paterson remarked of the version he published that the Packman uses Latin himself. In the unrevised version the Packman uses Latin only when referring to others' use of it. It was Robert Sempill who added his own Latin witticisms to his interpolations, in the manner of the growing fashion for such wit in the first half of the seventeenth century.

to such as Sir John in "Schooles" whose purpose was to perpetuate accepted dogma, not to break new ground in human learning through asking "Questions". Those who were thinking, using their "understanding", were those from whom the Packman gleaned his "few doubts" — a masterful understatement in the context of this dialogue. The kind of school the Packman envisages, which would have moved him to ask more questions, is the kind Davidson had in mind in his "Dialogue". James Sempill was equally conscious of the connection between education and reformation, and between the continuing vitality of the Kirk and persistent questioning, argument and rational interpretation of Scripture.

Whether or not he detects the Packman's irony, the Priest is defeated, "Now, Packe-man, I confesse thou puts me to it", and since he has not the self-assurance to make his own decision he suggests that they both visit the Prior the next morning. Before they part the Packman takes advantage of the Priest's flagging certainty to embark on a full scale attack, spiced with humour and mock deference, asking the Priest for his opinion on such matters as:

> So if our Lord to mine owne tongue bee readie,
> What neede I then with *Latine* trouble our Ladie?
> Or if both in my prayers must bee in,
> I pray thee tell mee at whom to begin?
> And to pray joyntlie to them both as one,
> Your *Latine* prayers then are clearlie gone:
> For PATER NOSTER never will accord
> With her: nor AVE MARIE with our LORD.
> If I get him, what neede I seeke another?
> Or dare hee doe nothing without his Mother?

Like Davidson's Clerk, having demonstrated his theological and scriptural knowledge and having gained the upper hand in the debate, the Packman begins to give specific examples, one of which is an anecdote about the Doctors of Divinity who, unable to agree on whether to say the Pater Noster "to God, or to our Ladie", consulted the college cook. The question is ridiculous and the answer completes the absurdity:

> They sate so long, they cooled all their Kaile,
> Untill the Master Cooke heard of the Tale:
> Who lyke a mad man ranne amongst the Clergie,
> Crying with manie a *Domine me asperge*:

To giue the *Pater Noster* to the Father,
And to our Ladie giue the *Avies* rather.
And lyke a *Welsh*-man swore by great Sainct *Davies*,
Shee might content her well with *Creedes* and *Avies*.
And so the Clergie fearing more confusion,
Were all contented with the Cooke's Conclusion.

Another anecdote uses the journalistic technique common in the broadsheets — a Packman, after all, being a travelling salesman, has many an opportunity to observe chance encounters:

And herevpon yee shall heare what befell,
To certaine Clerkes, that *Latine* well could spell:
With whome by chance I lodged at an Inne;
Where an olde Wyfe vpon a Rocke did spinne.
And towardes evening shee fell to, and prayde:
But neither they, nor I, knew what shee sayde.
One sayde, the Carling counterfets the Canting.
Another sayde, It's but the Matrons manting.
Some call'd it *Gibbers*, others call't *Clavers*.
And still the Carling speakes, and spinnes, and slavers.
Now, good Sir Iohn; what thinke yee of this hussie?
Where was her heart, when her hands were so busie?
In ende, one saide, Dame, wot yee what yee say?
No, not, sayeth shee, but well I wot I pray.
Yee pray, sayd hee, and wots not what, I grant:
Alace, how can yee bee so ignorant?
The Matron musing little at the motion,
Sayde, Ignorance is Mother of Devotion
Then Dame, sayd hee, if Ignorance bee the Mother,
Darkness must bee the Daughter, and none other.
Prayed yee, sayde hee, when all the time yee span?
What recke of that? sayth she, God's a good Man,
And vnderstands all that I say in *Latine*:
And this I doe at *Even-song* and at *Matine*.
Alace, Sir Iohn, was not this Wyfe abused,
Whose soul and senses all were so confused?

The Packman, like Robert Sempill's and Davidson's "reporters", paints this scene with realism and conversational immediacy, so that the old woman, who evokes humour, irony and sympathy, is a personification of the conspiracy of Ignorance with which the Packman is doing battle.

The common-sense, witty vision of the Packman, already turned on priests, the Virgin, the Pope and Christ, is turned on God, and when he puts words into the mouth of God — a God like that of the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis" with a peasant's shrewd outlook and pithy idiom — the

Priest is most disturbed. Yet Sir John's unease does not result from outrage at the Packman paraphrasing God, from a fear of blasphemy, but from a genuine terror at the possibility that the Packman may be right:

(Packman)
Last: sinse wee say that God is good to speake to,
Who will both heare our Text, and heare our eeke to:
What if Hee answere mee in *Latine* tongue;
Where-in I pray, and where-in *Messe* is sung?
I must say, Lord, I wot not what Thou sayest;
And Hee'll say, Foole, thou wotst not what thou prayest.
Even, Lord, say I, as good Sir Iohn did teach mee.
Sir Iohn, sayth hee, a Priest vnmeete to preach Mee:
Or in your meshant mouthes once for to name Mee;
With different tongues & hearts. Such Iock such Iamie.[10]
For tho I know moe tongues than yee can tell,
False Knaves, should yee not vnderstand your sell?
Gaue I you not a tongue as well as heart,
That both to Mee should play an afolde part?
But lyke two double Devils yee haue dissembled.
At this Sir Iohn he quaked, and hee trembled,
And sayde, Good Packe-man, thou art to quicke witted,
Unto the Pryor all must bee remitted.

The Packman passes a restless night with visions of the evils of priests:

Some-tymes hee doubted, if the Monkes were men,
Or Monsters: for his lyfe hee could not ken.
He sayde, Sir Iohn was a faire fat fed Oxe.
Some-tyme he thought hee looked lyke *Iohn Knoxe*
But *Knoxe* was better verst into the *Byble*;
A studie that Sir Iohn helde verie ydle.

In the morning the Pryor, rather than helping to resolve the argument for either party, has a severe attitude towards not only the ideas being put by the Packman, but that either the Packman or the Priest should question anything at all: "Hee call'd them *Heretickes*, both, and vowd to hang them". The senior Catholic churchman proves himself fully in

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10. "Iocke" is Sir John, and a marginal note reveals that "Iamie" is the Packman: "So was the Packe-man named", drawing attention to the fact that Sir James Sempill shares the Packman's view. Sempill deliberately identifies himself, through his name, with the Packman and with all that the Packman says and the poem implies.

support of the old woman's thesis that "Ignorance is Mother of Devotion".

The action that ends the poem is not burlesque, but a shrewd introduction of realism, colouring the narrative for the popular audience and emphasising that the Packman is "everyman". This incident demonstrates that irrationality and violence, of the same origins as the massacre Robert Sempill described in "Ane new Ballet", are all that can be expected of a church whose authority is based on erroneous premises and upheld by men ignorant of Scripture and determined to keep their parishioners in the same state:

> With that the Packe-man hurled throw the Closter,
> And there hee met with an ill favourd Foster:
> Who quicklie twind him, and all on his backe:
> And then hee learned to pray, *Shame fall the packe*:
> For if they haue not fred mee of my sinne,
> Thay sende mee lighter out, than I came in.
> And still hee cryde, Shame fall both Monks and Frayers,
> For I haue lost my Packe, and learnd no Prayers.
> So farewell *Ave*, *Creed*, and *Pater Noster*:
> I'll pray 'n my Mother-tongue, and quyte the Closter.

In addition to presenting the Packman as a popular example, James Sempill provides a psychological exploration of the Priest whose personality gradually fragments in the course of the poem. Even when Sir John "sees the light" he is unable to accept responsibility for his own reason, and his reward for such personal and religious pusillanimity is to be branded a heretic by his own Prior. Had Sir John been less faint hearted, he would not have felt compelled to consult the Prior; had the Prior been less bigoted and more humanistic, he would have appreciated the intelligent questions of the Packman and the Priest. The reader is left with no other conclusion than that the Packman is right in his theology and in his assessment of priests.

But the poem is for Sempill much more than a vehicle for argument concerning which language ought to be used for prayer. Important as this issue was for the Reformation, and for Presbyterians, it was an issue already settled in Scotland by the time Sir James was born, at least for members of the Reformed Kirk, whose existence was assured when

the poem was written. The language debate is used to focus attention on errors in Catholic theology generally: the matter of prayers to the Virgin and saints; intercession in all senses; the powers of priests and the power of the papacy. As a reminder to his king and fellow courtiers, who may not have adopted the new Kirk as passionately as many of their countrymen, and as positive reinforcement to the brethren, Sir James emphasises that beneath the confident, patronising veneer of authority attaching to the old Church lie error, misconstruction, deliberate corruption of Scripture and liturgy, and a weakness of both faith and reason equivalent to the psychological state of Sir John. Concurrently, the references to the Jesuits, the Prior's cry of "Hereticke", and the constant recalling of the power of Rome evoke the horrors of European Counter-reformation. Ultimately, Sempill draws the reader towards a vision of Catholicism as a conspiracy to keep the commons in ignorance, and therefore in submission to clerics and the secular powers who patronised them: "Sir Iohn, I see your holie Catholike / Upon the Trueth hath put a pretty tricke".

The Packman's Pater Noster also represents a wide-ranging affirmation of Protestantism. Coming from the court, such a celebration of the participation of lay commoners in religious life and thought is of great significance. Sempill fulfils his satiric purpose by having a pedlar manoeuvre a priest into heresy, but the Packman is more than a satiric tool. Drawing on many of techniques of broadsheet verse — the picture of a rational common man bemusedly confronting corrupt authority, the plain speech and conversational diction, the use of practical examples and anecdotes, aphorisms and realistic narrative — the poem sets a precedent in the use of a popular style of verse by sophisticated poets. At the same time it establishes the Packman as a representative of the popular mind in the same mould as Robert Sempill's Maddie. The Packman's confidence, his success, even his humiliation at the end, represent the triumph of the common man over the conspiracy of corrupt spiritual authority.

With *The Packman* Sir James Sempill legitimised popular literature in Renaissance Scotland, achieving an intellectual shift that made it

acceptable for men of letters and members of "Society" to turn to the popular for inspiration and expression, thereby completing the process which Lindsay had begun. The Packman was not used purely for example or humour, nor was he intended to be merely an object of interest or a moral lesson. Sempill elevated the theological, political and poetic manner of the Packman above past ways of thinking, offering the temper of the Packman as an intellectual alternative to misguided traditional doctrine, cant and imposed, censored knowledge, and offering plain speech and a popular style as an alternative to courtly verse. This scorning of pretension and obscurantism was inherited by the vernacular poets of the eighteenth century, informing the poetry of the best of them with a love of common sense and reason such as Burns expressed in his first "Epistle to John Lapraik", where there is an inseparable conjunction between the basis of his satire and the style and voice of his poetry:

> What's a' the jargon o' your schools,
> Your Latin names for horns and stools;
> If honest nature made you *fools*
> What sairs your Grammars?
> Ye'd better taen up *spades* and *shools*
> Or *knappin-hammers*.
>
> A set o' dull, conceited Hashes,
> Confuse their brains in *Colledge-classes*!
> They *gang in* Stirks, and *come out* Asses,
> Plain truth to speak;
> An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
> By dint o' Greek!
>
> (11.61-72)

The influence of the Northern Renaissance in its Scottish development can be seen in the Packman, who has the attributes of the "new learning". While Sir John is threatened by "roaving wit, with great audacitie", believing that the Packman is "too curious", the Packman, sure only of his faith and Scriptural authority, has a mind that "roaves" free and his "few doubts" represent a whole new way of thinking. Sempill's formal education and familiarity with the philosophies of two ages allowed him to see that post-Reformation society would have its strength in questioning men and bold thinkers, not in the fettered, insecure minds of such as Sir John, nor in the intractable, beseiged consciousness of the old church as manifested in the Prior.

Sempill's understanding of the potency of the Protestant individual and congregation, reflected in his advocacy of popular involvement, and his recognition of the connection between the Reformation and the intellectual developments which were unshackling many European minds form the basis for *The Packman's Pater Noster*. As a result of his poem these matters became more than propaganda, entering into the world of the highly educated and socially influential so that the way was laid open for the creation of a cultural replacement for the courtly tradition. The tenor of *The Packman* became a dominant voice in Scottish poetry from the beginning of the seventeenth century largely because Sempill, and others, understood the relevance of that voice to the times.

Chapter 8

FAITH, REASON AND PERSONALITY: ALEXANDER HUME

A member of the noble family of the Humes of Polwarth[1], Alexander Hume tried a career in the law, but rejected it in favour of the royal court, which he in turn left in disgust to become minister of Logie[2]. Born in 1556 or 1557[3] of protestant parents, Hume grew up in a Calvinist household during the years when the Scottish Reformation was established and fought its earliest battles with the state. He was, therefore, a thoroughly protestant poet, highly educated and well acquainted with both courtly and popular literature.

Hume used his poetry to explore the same concerns as Sir James Sempill, but from a personal rather than a social perspective, expressing the Calvinism and changed intellectual timbre which were present by analogy in *The Packman*. To Hume the reformed faith, the new learning, the questioning of established values and the free exercise of reason were fundamental, apprehended as aspects of his own faith and intellect, the material out of which he fashioned his ideas and his poetry.

Like James Sempill, he had affinities with the popular poets, though less through stylistic similarities than through his preoccupations and his poetic voice. He shared with Davidson a view of the poet as having the same role as a preacher, a Knoxian emphasis on personal and individual experience and a concern for all the "godly", regardless of social position. Similarly, he echoed the distrust of secular authority frequently expressed in broadsheet poetry, and placed great importance

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1. The same family as Montgomerie's antagonist in the "Flyting".
2. Alexander Lawson (ed.), *The Poems of Alexander Hume* (STS, 1902), pp.ix-xliv.
3. Ibid., p.xiii.

on the individual's intelligent assessment of his own circumstances and the state of his society. The hymns and psalms coloured his poetry but, unlike James Sempill, he did not adopt a boldly popular style, developing instead a more delicately figured plain style. His poetry is more subtle, personal and "psychological" than that of the broadsheets, and less contrived, more direct and more reflective of post-Reformation ways of thinking than the poetry of the court. Hume's was the first deeply considered Scottish protestant art poetry, without the shrillness of propaganda or the radically evangelical tone of many broadsheet poems, but still seeking to affirm protestant values and explore protestant faith and habits of mind. While the learned and conservative elements of Hume's style — elements he retained from his familiarity with Scottish, English and French court poetry — did not prevail in the increasingly popular poetry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Scotland, the tone and outlook of his poetry remained a feature of Scottish verse. His work exemplified a new way of seeing the world and a new way of looking at poetry, and his personal voice, protestant individualism, intellectual vigour and rejection of pretensiousness in favour of rationality and genuine friendship, typify an attitude which appeared again and again in later Scottish poetry. Through Hume's sensitive expression of what was a modern, post-Reformation approach to life and literature, an understanding can be gained of the larger philosophical movements and the alteration in individual perception which lay behind the less profound but more popular and artistically influential poetry cultivated by many of his contemporaries and successors.

Arguing for a reconsideration of Hume's status as a poet of significance in Scottish literary history, Tom Scott touches upon one of the most significant features of Hume's work:

> The great universal vision of the Medieval Church was impersonal, catholic, communal, though Dunbar brought a new personal note ... into Scots poetry: but it is with Hume that the poetry of personality really begins in Scots.[4]

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4. "A Note on Alexander Hume", *Scottish Literary News*, II (1972), 48.

Greater awareness of personality and a readiness to accept the validity of personal experience were a natural consequence of Protestantism. It was a short step from a belief in direct relations between the individual and God, from a steadfast adherence to the rights of laymen in church government, to a deeper analysis of the meaning of one's own experience and a more confident extension of that experience into the community. In poetry, this meant an increasing intrusion of the poet's own voice and opinions into his work: a willingness, most obvious in broadsheet verse, to expose one's personality to public view and one's deeply held convictions and passing opinions to public debate. Politically, such an outlook encouraged a kind of primitive socialism based upon a consciousness of the "rights of man", an easier identification with the problems of others, and a well-developed sense of "us and them" which permeates Scottish poetry from Hume and his broadsheet fellows to Burns. Tom Scott sees Hume as a "Calvinist mystic" whose affinities are with "such Anglicans as Herbert and Vaughan"[5], but while there is much more mysticism in the poetry of Hume than in that of his Calvinist contemporaries, there is also a great deal of practical consideration of the implications of Calvinism. Like Davidson, Robert Sempill and James Sempill, Hume turned repeatedly to concrete examples and human situations — often personal — to explore and explain his faith. If comparisons are to be made with English poetry, perhaps Milton would furnish a more useful analogy than either Herbert or Vaughan.

To elaborate the idea of Hume as a man of a new age, Scott quotes from the least mystical of Hume's poems, the *Epistle to Maister Gilbert Mont-creif*, drawing some interesting conclusions:

> For when of strife and great mischance I heare,
> Of death, debate, they doo me little deare:
> For uthers harme me tuitches not at all,
> Swa I be free quhat rak I what befall?
>
> That is the voice of the new individualism, utterly incompatible with the Christian idea of community, of being members one of another. To Dunbar and Lyndsay "singular proffeit" was an evil, an offence against the common-weal, but here Hume elevates

5. Ibid., p.47.

> individualism to a virtue, the new virtue of capitalist freedom. The most significant statement of the age is the last couplet quoted above, sounding the note of the post-medieval world, that ominous word 'free' meaning freedom of the Christian communal membership, freedom to pursue individual profit (whether spiritual or material) at the expense of the community. It is the voice not of the Calvinist minister he was to become but of the old pagan Stoic, of the commercial empire of Rome.[6]

While recognition of Hume's individualism and its import for Scottish poetry is long overdue, this strongly worded placement of Hume as an early representative of the Calvinist work ethic is misleading, despite the qualification that "Hume's individualism is of the spiritual and not the material order". Hume did not mean to divorce himself from his fellows, materially or spiritually: his individualism lay in something more subtle than that. Elsewhere in his article, stressing the Renaissance elements in Hume's work, Scott approaches much more closely the source of the attitudes and personal voice that are so strikingly modern in comparison with his contemporaries in the Court:

> Hume comes at a time when that [medieval] theoretical order had been shattered and men were going to nature to find out just what kind of real order could be divined in it: the great turning-point from the medieval allegory to what I call polysemous veritism; a many-meaninged realism.[7]

The same "realism" and "going to nature" have been demonstrated as operating in the work of popular poets. In Hume, however, can be found the philosophical framework which informed the world to which the broadsheet poets were responding, often without the time, or perhaps the scholarly resources, to ponder the ideas and events in the way Hume did.

The New Learning

It was the Northern rather than the Southern Renaissance which was at the centre of Hume's outlook. Failing to see this, Lawson misinterprets Hume in his introduction to the *Poems*:

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6. Ibid., p.50.
7. Ibid., p.48.

> For the Hymnes, like all the literature of the time, show how largely or rather how narrowly medieval was the training of a Scottish student, and how meagre was the acquaintance with the new learning which was possible to him. Hume knows Virgil, and Ovid, and Horace, and bits of Cicero and Seneca. He has read Plutarch and some of the later Roman historians. But they do not form part of his intellectual stock. They light up his verse at rare points, but they do not vivify his thought or colour his imagination. They neither enrich nor modify his religious convictions.[8]

Hume did not ignore the Classics, nor did he reject them out of hand but he did not regard them as the fountain of human knowledge nor as an essential foundation for his intellectual life. Lawson mistakenly sees the "new learning" as embodied solely in the Italian reawakening of interest in the Classics. For a Scottish Calvinist the new learning derived as much from the work of Erasmus and the late sixteenth-century Northern European scholars generally as from the south. Moreover, in this context "learning" was an active process rather than a matter of discovery and assimilation of past knowledge. As Scott suggests, Calvinism freed Hume to look to his own experience and that of his contemporaries for inspiration and knowledge more than was possible for European Catholics.

The basis of the northern new learning lay in a new curiosity about the natural world, about the capacity of man to understand his physical environment and take some control of his own life. This did not disregard past learning but was selective, placing its emphasis on reason and imagination applied to the world of men in the present and future: a "man-centred" learning made possible by protestant belief in the spiritual independence of one man from another. Having come to terms with God, one was free to come to terms with this world. Intellectual freedom followed spiritual freedom, as James Sempill suggests, and it was a freedom not "at the expense of the community" but despite unsympathetic secular and ecclesiastical authorities who persevered in established systems of thought.

The new learning seen thus is at the heart of Hume's poetry which has a curious concurrence of a thirst for knowledge, a love of reason

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8. *Poems*, p.xlvi.

and a rejection of the values associated with the Southern Renaissance — a product of the northern realignment of learning with protestant faith. "Of God's Omnipotence", in a manner as simple as the Hymns in *Ane Compendious Buik*, lists the things in nature which God controls or which declare His glory, in order to convince man that he should obey God. The last stanzas of the poem reject renaissance classicism as it was used by the courtly poets who "pride your pens mens eares to pleis, / With fables and fictitious leis" (11.119-20):

> Your knowledge is bot ignorance,
> Your cunning curiositie:
> I find your facund eloquence,
> Replete with fekles fantasie:
> Ye neuer knew the lively Rod,
> Nor gospell of the sun of God.
>
> He is above Mercurius
> Above Neptunus on the sea,
> The winds they knaw not Eolus,
> There is na Iupiter but he,
> And all your Gods baith great and small,
> Are of na force for he is all.
>
> Bot sonnes of light ye knaw the trueth,
> Extoll the Lord with heart and mind,
> Remove all stayes and sluggish sleuth,
> Obey his voice for he is kinde:
> That heauen and earth may witness beare,
> Ye loue the God which bought you deare.
>
> (*Poems*, p.51, 11.121-38)

This is not simply mysticism, nor is it an example of Puritan philistinism. The "trueth" of the gospels and the search for true knowledge of the natural world are given as the goal of a godly man. "Facund eloquence", "fekles fantasie", and "cunning curiosity" as opposed to curiosity which seeks to enhance knowledge of God's works, are rejected as contrary to truth, not as an abrogation of learning but as a turning away from the old and decadent towards a new, more practical knowledge to be used for the good of all rather than for the entertainment of the few. To "remove all stayes and sluggish sleuth" from the spirit was to free the mind; the imagination, reason and intellect.

Hume wrote at a time when the Augustinian view was being replaced by a respect for the natural world and the lessons that could be learned

from it by an intelligent observer. Augustine had rejected this kind of curiosity: "Thus men proceed to investigate the phenomena of nature — the part of nature external to us — though the knowledge is of no value to them: for they wish to know purely for the sake of knowing"[9]. Aquinas and the Schoolmen took curiosity to absurd extremes, at times ignoring reason in the process, because they had not made the alignments the post-Reformation thinkers were able to make:

> Medieval life in its typical aspects resembles a compulsive ritual designed to provide protection against the all-pervading potato-blight of sin, guilt, and anguish; yet it was unable to provide it so long as God and Nature, Creator and Creation, Faith and Reason, were split apart. The symbolic prologue to the Middle Ages is Origen cutting off his private parts *ad gloriem dei*; and the epilogue is provided by the parched voices of the schoolmen: Did the first man have a navel? Why did Adam eat an apple and not a pear? What is the sex of the angels and how many can dance on the point of a pin? If a cannibal and all of his ancestors have lived on human flesh so that every part of his body belongs to somebody else and will be claimed by its owner on the day of resurrection, how can the cannibal be resurrected to face his judgement? This last problem was earnestly discussed by Aquinas.[10]

The Italian Renaissance made huge inroads into both outlooks typified here, but the kind of learning for which Lawson looked in Hume, and regretted not finding, was sometimes restrictive in its own way. Bertrand Russell defines the problem as one of "authority", noting that with few exceptions Renaissance Italians did not have the respect for science which characterised later innovators and that many of them "still had the reverence for authority that medieval philosphers had had, but they substituted the authority of the ancients for that of the church".[11] The Northern Renaissance sought more deliberately to reconcile the opposites Koestler mentions — God and Nature, Creator and Creation, Faith and Reason — without producing a situation where it was intellectually "every man for himself". Russell characterises this movement,

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9. *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. F.J. Sheed (London, 1944), p.197.

10. Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers: A History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe* (1959; Pelican edn, 1975), p.105.

11. *History of Western Philosophy* (2nd edn, 1961), p.483.

later and entangled as it was with the Reformation, as very different from the Italian Renaissance:

> It was not anarchic or amoral; on the contrary, it was associated with piety and public virtue. It was much interested in applying standards of scholarship to the Bible, and in obtaining a more accurate text than that of the Vulgate. It was less brilliant and more solid than its Italian progenitor, less concerned with personal display of learning and more anxious to spread learning as widely as possible.[12]

When Hume allowed his "free" spirit and reason to "roave", like the Packman, he ranged over the matter and outlooks of what we have come to call the Northern Renaissance, which must be seen as more than a revival of learning. It was a new system of thought encompassing new areas of knowledge and with a more scientific, more humanistic approach than either past learning or the Italian Renaissance. Proof of God's relationship to man was found in the natural world and God's greatest gift to man, reason, was used to the glory of God. In essence, the debt owed to God for his gifts was the use of those gifts to be "maist like a God on earth" ("Of God's Benefites", l.169).

Some of the mysticism perceived by Tom Scott is present in the opening to Hume's Hymn "Of Gods Benefites Bestowed Vpon Man", yet despite the poet's recognition that he cannot fully comprehend the works of God, he is determined to try. Even Hume's mysticism is rooted in reason and intelligent curiosity:

> My soul is reueist vp fra me, my reson is bereft,
> My sensis are astoneist all, my mind hir vse hes left,
> My memorie is quite confusde, transported is mine hart,
> My spreit is in ane extasie, as I were to depart:
> When as the gratious gifts of God profoundly I perpend,
> Beleifing ay to compas all, bot can not find ane end:
> I maruel mair the mair I muse, the mair I knawledge craue,
> Of hid and halie things, the mair my selfe I doo disceaue:
> Maist like a man quhilk dois behald, the face of Phoebus bright.
> And thinks throgh earnest luking lang, to perse it with his sight,
> His optik beims transpersis nocht, his vewing is in vaine,
> The fers reflex his dimmed sight responsis back againe:
> Sa when I cannot comprehend with weake & wauering thoght,
> Nor penetrat Gods mightie warks, sa weill & wisely wrought,
> I am compelled then to cry, O Lord, thy gifts are good,
> My dull capacitie they pas, I am but flesh and bloud.
> (*Poems*, p.17, ll.1-16)

12. Ibid., p.499.

Not satisfied to give a passing image referring to the comparison between seeking knowledge of God and looking into the sun, Hume provides a full, carefully observed description of the act and the effect on the eyes of the observer. "Of Gods Benefites" has some fine passages of description of "the giftes of the body", the natural world and spiritual life, all of which are based largely on concrete examples, catalogues of detail in which objects and experiences are scrutinised.

The impact of the new learning, the changed view of man and God and the new freedom of thought is particularly strong in the passage on "The Giftes of the Minde" where there is an exuberance about human reason and human knowledge which separates Hume from his Catholic contemporaries, establishing him as part of the modern world James Sempill suggests for the successors of the Packman:

> The mightie God he gaue to man, a swift and agile thought,
> Quhilk like a foull vp through the skies, from earth to
>   hevin hes sought,
> A strong imagination mixt, ilk figure to consaue,
> A quick revoluing reasone rype to rewle all the laue,
> A memorie for to conserue, quhilk like a thesaure deepe,
> All things conceaued in the heart, dois weill retaine and
>   keepe.
> I wonder at the wit of man, whome God hes made so wise,
> That all things speedeful for his vse, he promple can deuise,
> That can the present time obserue, and call to mind the past,
> Confer and prudently espy, the future cumming fast.
> (11.95-105)

The passage that follows, describing man's knowledge, is remarkable in its range of interests. The overriding suggestion is that things which previously awed the superstitious and ignorant are now explicable. The man who uses his reason will not be awed into superstition by such questions as "What makes the feareful flauches of fire, & lightnings in the sky (1.106). That he knows "why the silver drops of dew, down fall in wedder fair" (1.112) does not make the phenomenon any less beautiful, or the works of God any less wonderful. Man's knowledge of them enhances their magnificence, and he should be thankful to God for giving him the wherewithall to understand. God's gifts to man, and man's faith in God, make the faithful more fully men than those who remain ignorant, for the latter cannot wholly know their world and

so cannot wholly know God. This is the way in which Protestants understood knowledge, the "light" which could dispel the "darkness", the daughter of Ignorance referred to by the clerk in *The Packman*. Knowledge and faith were thus totally intertwined in the post-Reformation perception. References to tides, eclipses, comets and the paths of the planets suggest that Hume was familiar with the Copernican universe, but whether he knew of the most recent astronomical discoveries is less important than his obvious conviction that knowledge and the use of reason were an integral part of the religious experience which, in its turn, was an integral part of the human experience:

> He knawes the force of euerie flower, of euerie plant
> and gers,
> The vertue of all kinde of fruits, and euerie vegetal,
> The properties of precious stanes, and mettals mineral,
> He knaws the strange instinctions all, of everie brutall
> beast:
> Of fishes and of flichtring fouls, and reptils which are
> least,
> The rauenous and the raskall rout, wilde, venimous, & tame,
> The hideous monsters meruellous man knaws them be their name:
> And to be short, he knowes him selfe, and his originall,
> That he mon die, and after death the heauen inherit sall.
> (11.127-34)

A few lines later free will, reason, science and faith are linked in a way which highlights the contrast between Hume's way of thinking and that of Augustine and Aquinas; between the Protestant and Catholic universes, the new learning and the old:

> He Adame lent a libre will to follow what he list,
> And with his holy spirit, and grace his chosen dois assist:
> Man hes a fragrant fresh ingyne all science to invent,
> A faire and flowing facund tung, till vtter his intent,
> And all are giftes, and graces great which with the liuing
> Lord,
> But meriting a mortall man diuinely hes decord.
> (11.137-42)

A total departure from medieval asceticism and relish for earthly pleasures quite out of tune with conventional notions of Calvinistic Puritanism are evident in Hume's joy in "External benefites":

> With earthlie pleasures manifold, man compast is about,
> He pleased is in comming in, and glad in going out,

> Ilk beautiful and pleasant sight, he pleasure hes to see,
> In hearing hes he not delite all kinde of facetie,
> Ilk symphonie and seemely sound is pleasant to his eir,
> Trew sapience and science baith, his hart delits to leir,
> In smelling euerie savour sweete he pleasour hes perfite,
> In taisting euerie daintie dish, he dailie hes dilite,
> To reson he reioysing hes, to learne, to teache, and talke,
> His recreation takis to read, to run, to ride, and walke,
> By nicht to ly and softly sleepe, to rest and to repose,
> His helper to behauld and treit he suirly may reiose,
> And as the Lord hes institute to kiss hir pleasant face,
> And propagation for to make, in loue hir to imbrace.
> (11.153-66)

Yet despite such passages Lawson claims that Hume's religious poems (from which he wrongly exempts "The Day Estivall") and the "Epistle" "give but a faint echo of the intense love of nature and of the power of observation, at once broad and minute, of natural effects and living creatures which meet us throughout 'The Day Estivall'".[13] Lawson further argues that one of Hume's "great and manifest defects as a poet" is that "as a Puritan ... he has no song or even echo of a strain of love".[14] More recently K.N. Colvile has observed "little that is not of moral rather than poetic value" in Hume's work, awarding "The Day Estivall" the status of a "real poem" by virtue of its "secular" nature.[15] Wittig similarly regards "The Day Estivall" as remarkable because it is directed towards nature for its own sake, regretting that Hume "forsook poetry to pursue a higher course" and arguing that in Hume's *Hymnes* it is the course that matters and not the art.[16] To Hume, however, all of his published poetry was religious poetry, and "The Day Estivall" was placed immediately after "Of Gods Benefites" in *Hymnes and Sacred Songs*.

Hume's morality and Protestantism must be understood in the context of his stated attitudes to man, nature, God and reason, not through critical preconceptions about "Puritanism" and "religious poetry". Such preconceptions, and the generalisations about Hume's poetic based on them, divert attention both from the real merit of Hume's poetry and

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13. *Poems*, p.xlviii.
14. Ibid., p.lvii.
15. "Scottish Culture in the 17th Century, 1603-1660" (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh University, 1930), p.184.
16. *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, pp.124-7.

the place he fills in Scottish literary history. In this context, Tom Scott's call for a reappraisal of Hume is indeed timely. Failure to come to terms with the scope and significance of Hume's work is symptomatic of a larger problem of preconception and generalisation in literary criticism dealing with Scottish poetry from the time of the Reformation to the eighteenth century which has left a scarcity of thorough commentary on the period. Hume is not a good poet robbed of his potential by his own "puritanism" but an important poet whose work provides a valuable key to our understanding of how Calvinism altered Scottish thinking and Scottish poetry.

In "The Day Estivall" which is populated with human and animal figures pursuing their everyday lives, once more "to the Glory of God", Hume's philosophy is restated in a more compressed form. The simple stanza, direct language, attention to detail and lack of complex imagery, or rhetorical or didactic expansion, all help to put man in a landscape in a fitting companion piece to "Of Gods Benefites". Although some of the vocabulary of the poem is French-influenced, each time man is present the diction becomes more vernacular:

> The pastor quits the slouthfull sleepe,
> And passis forth with speede,
> His little camow-nosed sheepe,
> And rowtting kie to feede.
>
> The passenger from perrels sure,
> Gangs gladly foorth the way,
> Breife, everie liuing creature,
> Takes comfort of the day.
>
> (p.27, ll.45-52)

The poem has slight connections with the contemporary courtly ethos in some of its vocabulary and in a remarkable treatment of light and colour reminiscent of Montgomerie's *Cherrie and the Slae*. Its connections with broadsheet verse are equally slight though obvious: the simple stanza and straightforward diction, and the preoccupation with ordinary people and ordinary things. However, the poem has much in common with Ramsay's pastorals, Fergusson's "Farmer's Ingle", Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night", and above all Burns' songs, sharing with them an intense interest in the labouring man in his landscape, both of which are figured with

sympathy and lightness of touch. "Pastoral" retained its religious redolences in Hume's work: he saw himself as a pastor in his clerical role and as a psalmist in his poetic role, and his poetry tends to combine the two. Like the eighteenth-century vernacular poets, Hume's vision was practical, "in touch", and it seems not to have occurred to him that distancing of poet or audience from a subject was either necessary or feasible, any more than was separation of faith from everyday life:

> What pleasour were to walke and see,
> Endlang a riuer cleare,
> The perfite forme of euerie tree,
> Within the deepe appeare?
>
> The Salmon out of cruifs and creils
> Up hailed into skowts,
> The bels, and circles on the weills,
> Throw lowpping of the trouts.
>
> O: then it were a seemly thing,
> While all is still and calme,
> The praise of God to play and sing,
> With cornet and with shalme.
>
> Bot now the hirds with mony schout,
> Cals vther be their name,
> Ga, Billie, turne our gude about,
> Now time is to go hame.
>
> With bellie fow the beastes beliue,
> Are turned fra the corne,
> Quhilk soberly they hameward driue,
> With pipe and lilting horne.
>
> Throw all the land great is the gild,
> Of rustic folks that crie,
> Of bleiting sheepe fra they be fild,
> Of calues and rowting ky.
>
> All labourers drawes hame at even,
> And can till vther say,
> Thankes to the gracious God of heauen,
> Quhilk send this summer day.
>
> (11.205-32)

The coalescence of faith and reason gave Hume an almost devout interest in the natural world, so that the creatures of that world, including the most humble of human inhabitants, became central to his

poetry[17]. Thus he arrived at the same emphasis on the everyday life of ordinary people as had the broadsheet poets, but by a less pragmatic, more thoughtful route. As the perception of the world exemplified in Hume's work became increasingly widespread and unquestioned, poets found in popular verse a vehicle already fashioned to carry their more realistic, more immediately human themes and subjects. The conjunction during the seventeenth century between popular poetry, developed in the broadsheets largely through expedience to incorporate the commons as subjects and reflect their concerns, and the growing acceptance of such an intellectual framework as Hume's — a result of the new theology and the new learning — explains the similarity between "The Day Estivall" and the "rural people in their landscape" poems of eighteenth-century Scotland, even though Hume's work was not republished often and was not in Watson's and Ramsay's collections. Further, the conjunction links Hume's social and political attitudes and his intensely personal voice with later, more popular, often more jocular poetry which could claim little apparent direct descent from Hume in style.

The right use of poetry

That Hume deliberately cultivated a different kind of poetry to that which was popular in courtly circles is made clear by his Preface "To the Scottish Youth". It is advisable to exercise care in reading the Preface, for it would be mistaken to ignore the nature of his poetry and the attitudes it embodies, concluding that in the manner of a drab Puritan he indeed "forsook poetry" altogether. Hume believed that much of the poetry being written in his time was insubstantial and some of the extant minor verse of James's court indicates that his judgement was

17. David W. Lindsay, in "Of the Day Estivall: A Textual Note", *SSL*, IV (1966), 104, highlights the connection between Hume's faith and his poetic practice: "The emotional energy generated by Hume's Puritanical reaction against mythological fancies and aureate conventionality is permitted to operate on the realities of the poet's day to day experience because of his confident belief that description of nature is praise of God". While Lindsay's suggestion of an 8 line stanza (more like metrical psalmody) for the poem is interesting, I cannot accept his comments on the "inhibiting and repressive" effects of Presbyterianism on all but a few of the poems "of the period", not to mention the rest of Hume's work.

probably based on good grounds. "The Preface", together with "A Sonnet of Loue" and "His Recantation", are Hume's exposition of his reasons for adopting an alternative poetic. As such they are an important, and rare, contemporary exploration of the state of poetry in relation to current thought. In many respects Hume's reasons for rejecting the courtly for alternative means of poetic expression differed little from those of the makers and translators of "The Gude and Godlie Ballatis" and the Psalms, the broadside poets and Sir James Sempill.

The moral content of the Preface is strong: Hume disapproved of the use of poetic talent "to incense the burning lustes of licentious persons", but there was more than morality involved in his rejection of contemporary amorous verse. Much of it was imitative, unimaginative and shallow, and Hume deplored the waste of youthful creative energies on fashionable trifles: "such as ather haue the art or vaine poeticke, of force they must shew themselues cunning followers of the dissolute ethnike poets, both in phrase and substance, or else they shall be had in no reputation". Behind Hume's attitude to poetry lay religious, moral and intellectual motives, closely tied to the union of faith and reason evident in his work:

> Was it to this end that thy maker sent thee in the world, to be an instrument of wickedness? or hes he giuen thee such gifts, and viuacitie of spirit, to be exercised in vanitie, and prouoking others to vncleannes? knowes thou not that thou must render account of euerie idle word that proceeded out of thy mouth? And that thy vngodlie conversation banishes the Spirit of GOD from thee? suffocats thy gude giftes, rottis thy conscience, and makis thy GOD to become ane Enemie against thee. What count thinkes thou to giue vnto the iust and fearefull iudge of the world ... that hath employed thy time, and abused his good giftes after this manner?
>
> (*Poems*, pp.6-7)

Admitting that he wrote such verse, but turned away from it, Hume advises the Scottish youth to do the same. But beyond the morality, what is important is Hume's assessment that there were better things to occupy the minds of the creative and studious. His emphasis on the works of God should be read in the light of what he treats in his own poetry:

> For what seekes a man by that kinde of studie? nothing but a name, but a vaine praise, and an vndeserued commendation. Why suld thou not then (aspiring youth) rather bestowe thy gude gifts to the right vse, to wit, to the Glory of God, and to the weil of thy brethren?
>
> (p.7)

In stressing that poetry should be written "to the Glory of God, and to the weil of thy brethren" Hume is a man of the new era. He declares that the Old and New Testaments are full of inspiration for poets and that these, along with a "godly" view of one's world and experience, furnish more fit subjects "wherevpon the hole cunning and Eloquence of mans loftie Spirite should be employed nor vpon these trifles, & sensuall villanies". In the seventeenth century, in Scotland and England, poets found in politics and society subjects for poetry which they thought more fitting than "trifles", indeed, they satirised the "trifles" of others.

Hume's understanding of his work as it emerges in the Preface is as personal as the poetry itself: he describes his poems as the result of his "wraslings with the world, and the flesh":

> whereby thou may cleerely see what aboundance of good matter is offered, which the most parte of Poets foolishlie reiectes, and dedicates their hole studie to things moste vile and contemptible. Farther, I contemne not the moderate and trew commendation of the vertuous & noble actes of good men: nor yet the extolling of liberall sciences; But thou hast notable examples in the French Toong set foorth by *Salust* of *Bartas*. Onely thus much haue I written in rude Scottish and hask verses, to prouoke the more skillful in that art to flee higher, and to encourage the meaner sort to follow.
>
> (p.8)

His own poetry offers a range of subjects and styles, each tied to a sense of occasion. Sometimes he sees himself as a psalmist speaking for all in praise of God, or for himself in spiritual isolation, and on other occasions as a preacher and teacher. He is frequently intensely personal — introspective to a degree hitherto foreign to Scottish poetry — but he also writes as a public satirist. Articulating what James Sempill implied in *The Packman*, in the Preface Hume explains that poetry needed revivifying in the light of the changes in men's consciousnesses that had resulted from the Reformation and the Renaissance,

suggesting that such an enterprise must enhance poetry. He insists that contemplation of the works of God — that is the entire natural world, including man — need not be dull, and must be more interesting than imitative love poetry. Whatever the modern reaction to such a suggestion, effectively that religious poetry is more interesting than love poetry, it is of the utmost significance that Hume felt so strong a need to break with conventionality, that he recognised that the Reformation, rather than producing a society stagnating in fixed drabness, was potentially the emancipator of men's minds from the ritualised social and philosophical systems of the past. In this lies the reason for the sense of excitement, light, natural beauty, and apprehension of human capability and social change in his work.

His rejection of trifling courtly verse was a part of his rejection of the court and everything it represented. Hume saw the court as selfish, archaic, out of touch with the people and with the more important aspects of modern learning. "Ethnike" poets were not a sufficient basis for modern poetry, in Hume's opinion, any more than classical learning was a sufficient foundation for modern thought.

"A Sonnet of Loue", which is between the Preface and the Hymnes, shows that Hume did not intend the Preface as a denial of all things natural and merry, and indicates that he did not seek to deny youth its pleasures nor poetry its fancies. Hume's only extant sonnet is in the witty style of the court to appeal to the youth of the upper classes, countering the admonitory tone of the Preface. Alluding to popular examples of foolish classical lovers, Hume underlines the trivial nature of such knowledge, at the same time highlighting the practical good sense of his view that life is lived more intelligently and more easily when it is lived morally, and enjoyment is full when it is not accompanied by secretiveness, dishonesty and falsity:

> Not lawfull loue, bot lecherie I lacke:
> Not women wise, but witlesse I disdaine:
> Not constant trueth, bot tromperie I detract:
> Not innocence, but insolence prophaine:
> Not blessed bands, but secreite working vaine:
> As Pyramus and Thisbe tuike on hand,
> As Iason and Medea made their traine,

As Daemophon and foolish Phillis fand,
As Hercules at Iolees command,
Which like a wife for loue sat downe to spin.
And finally all follie I gainstand,
Which may allure the heart to shame or sin:
    Beware with vice, be not the cause of ill,
    Sine speak, & sport, look, laugh, & loue your fill.
(p.9)

Hume parodies courtly sonnets, rejects courtly love and, in the context of the times, offers a rational guide to lovemaking. There are clear correspondences between Hume's view of the "right vse" of poetry and that of the broadsheet poets. Robert Sempill, like Hume in the "Sonnet", parodied the courtly tradition in order to stress his distaste, and the distaste of the "brethren", for secrecy, falsehood, conspiracy and corruption. Davidson and others were constantly aware that they wrote to "the Glory of God" and for the "weill" of their brethren, rejecting courtly verse in favour of forms either closer to the hymns and Psalms or closer to the common people. Hume came to his position by more subtle consideration, and expressed his ideas in a more complex poetry, but his motives were very similar. He shared with the popular poets a commitment to clear-sightedness, honesty, reason and "godliness".

The Preacher and Psalmist

The connection between poetry, psalmody and preaching was an important one to Hume. Psalm 119 declares the same identification of knowledge with righteousness so often stressed by Scottish Protestants in Hume's time: "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" (v.130). Placed immediately before "Of Gods Benefites" at the beginning of *Hymnes and Sacred Songs*, "His Recantation" can be seen as Hume's formal declaration of his intention to emulate David and, along with the rest of the Hymnes, it should be read in the light of David's enjoinder:

1 Rejoice in the Lord, o ye righteous: for
Praise is comely for the upright.
2 Praise the Lord with Harp: sing unto him with
the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.
3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with
a loud noise.

4 For the word of the Lord is right; and all his
works are done in truth.

(Psalm 33)

Hume begins his "Recantation":

Alace, how lang haue I delayed,
To leaue the laits of youth?
Alace, how oft haue I essayed,
To daunt my lasciue mouth?[18]
And make my vaine polluted thought,
My pen, and speach prophaine,
Extoll the Lord, quhilk made of nocht,
The heauen, the earth and raine?

Skarse nature yet my face about,
His virile wob had spun,
Quhen als oft as Phoebea stout:
Was set agains the Sun:
3ea, als oft as the fierie flames,
Arise and shine abrod,
I minded was with sangs and Psalmes,
To glorify my God.

(11.1-16)

In a stanza which was popular with the metrical psalmists[19] "His Recantation" follows a pattern of confession, penitence, supplication and praise as does Psalm 19 which asks at v.9 "Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word", and at v.27 "Make me understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works". Psalm 9, "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works",[20] has the same theme. Hume similarly declares his intention to dedicate his muse to

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18. Cf. Psalm 39: "I said, I will take heed of my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me".

19. Lawson commented that Hume's Hymns "are quite unlike the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis", that there was not in his poems "a single trace of the famous volume". This ignores the hymns and psalms which make up the greater part of *Ane Compendious Buik*. If "minded" in 1.15 of "His Recantation" means reminded, then the reference could be to the "Sprituall Sangs and Psalms" in the *Buik*, as well as to the Geneva Bible.

20. See Psalm 8, "O Lord, how excellent is thy name", which has the same theme, and indeed some of the same content as "Of Gods Benefites".

the praise of God. For a protestant poet, having the familiarity with the Psalms which was central to the Scottish protestant experience, a "Recantation" such as this first hymn simply fulfilled the dictum of David.

The idea that knowledge of God is revealed in nature is also present in the Psalms: "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" (Psalm 19, v.2), as is the conviction that the righteous man has a duty to communicate the word of God to the world, using praise of God's works to move the ungodly: "I will wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord: / That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works" (Psalm 26, v.6-7).

All of the subjects treated in Hume's *Hymnes* have their equivalent in the Psalms, and all are alluded to in "His Recantation": sin, suffering, the possibilities of repentance, salvation and praise. Hume's intensely personal voice in "Thankes for Deliverance of the Sicke" and "To His Sorrowfull Saull, Consolation", echoes the voice of David, even in the detail of his suffering: "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with tears. / Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of mine enemies" (Psalm 6, v.6-7). To read "The Day Estivall" or any of the other *Hymnes* without reference to Hume's view of himself as a psalmist and preacher is to risk misunderstanding his poetic and the attitudes that inform it. Hume addresses his God:

> That gaue thy seruant Dauid king,
> A scepter for a staffe,
> Syne made him sacred Psalmes to sing,
> A hundreth and a halfe,
> And thine apostles preaching sweit,
> With vertue did inspire,
> And send them downe thy haly spreit,
> In clouen tungs of fire.
>
> Lift vp mine hart, my lips disclose,
> My tendered tung vntie,
> Then sall my singing soull reioyce,
> And flee above the skie:
> Blis thou my work, be my support,
> My teacher, and my guyde,

Then sall my mouth thy praise report,
Through all the world so wide.

Then sall my sacred pen delite,
Induring all my dayes,
Thy wondrous works in verse to write,
Fiue hundred diuers waies:
Euen on my iolie Lute, by night,
And trimling trible string,
I sall with all my minde and might,
Thy glorie gladlie sing.

Then they that sall thy puissance heir,
And tender clemencie,
Sall mooued be with luife and feare,
To praise and worship thee:
ȝee when my spirit is past away,
Among the godlie gostes,
Yet sall the reader sigh, and say,
Blist be the Lord of hostes.
("His Recantation", ll.121-52)

In Hume's exploration of the role of psalmist, it is possible to see the intimate connection between the content and expression of the Psalms and the ideas informing post-Reformation society in Scotland. The recurrent references to the Psalms and use of the rhythms of the metrical psalms in Hume's work and in the broadsheets were clearly motivated by more than the search for an alternative to the courtly, or the search for a simpler form of expression. For the society in which Hume and the popular poets wrote, psalmody carried redolences of the whole change which had taken place in religion, knowledge and attitudes towards one's fellows, one's social or political superiors, and oneself.

Personal Poetry

If one function of the godly man was to glorify his God, the other side of the protestant experience was to come to terms with one's own character and with one's fellows. Apart from the inspiration of David, Hume's self-concern, his descriptions of his "wrastlings with the warld and the flesh", stemmed from a conception of self-knowledge as part of Christian duty. By turning away from the court to Calvinism, Hume opened the way for the kind of personal introspection for which his poetry is remarkable.

"To His Sorrowfull Saull, Consolation", a description of faith arising from despair, opens on a personal note, referring to Hume's pastoral role and recognising that as a member of the congregation who has responsibility for the guidance of others towards self-knowledge and faith he must come to know his own soul:

> Immortal Spirit, my best, maist perfite part,
> Why dois thou thus thy selfe consume with caire?
> O noble cheiftain of my manly harte,
> Why art thou thus with thought ou'r-set sa saire?
> Why is thy greefe augmented mair and mair?
> Why art thou sad, and sorrie to the dead?
> Why art thou almaist drowned in deepe dispaire,
> And comfort nane can finde, nor na remeid:
> Heare in the flesh thou taistis the paines of hell,
> Thou vthers helps (my saull) now cure thy sell.
> (p.34, ll.1-10)

Though coloured with a degree of rhetoric, the diction is neither aureate nor colloquial but conversational as Hume addresses his soul, believing that the "dialogue" has import for others. The working out of his personal problem, facing pain, depression and fear of death, is a practical application of Christian belief to the individual, intended to offer personal comfort and universal enlightenment.

The actualising of his experience in the second stanza is employed for similar reasons to the use of concrete detail and "eyewitness" narrative in broadsheet verse, bringing the experience closer to the reader. Hume draws an extremely effective picture of what would now be diagnosed as severe depression induced by illness:

> My hart is faint, my flesh consumes away,
> Within my vaines the bloud is skant and cald,
> My bains thay bow, my stregth dois cleane decay,
> My haires are schyre and gray, yer I be ald,
> My march it melts, my febill limbs thay fauld,
> My skin is drie, my hide hes lost the hew,
> My force it faillis to do the thing I wald,
> My bewtie faids, my face is paill and blew,
> My sight is dim, forsunken ar my eies
> How is my head, and all throw thy diseis.
> (ll.11-20)

While here he believes the soul has made the body sick, a similar understanding, no doubt from experience, of the frame of mind of the invalid, is clear in "Thankes for Deliverance of the Sicke":

For all their force anone they faint, they are deiected law,
From all societie and game, themselues they do withdraw:
Maist like the Deare quhilk wonted is, with gun, or deadly dart,
Flies from the heard to sum desert, quhair he may lie apart:
Lust, luxurie, nor deintie fair, they raik not by a leik,
Na mirth nor earthlie vanitie, is pleasant to the seik.
(p.42, ll.23-8)

"To His Sorrowfull Saull" continues with an eschatology which is clear, simple and personal, having an awareness of a thinking readership which leads to considerable use of scriptural support. Convinced in his Calvinism, Hume shows no doubt of his election and salvation, and the result of his contemplation is a refreshingly unaffected treatment of the subject:

And in the end when deathe would thee devore,
Hir mortall stang sall nocht take halde on thee,
Bot be hir meanes she sall thee quite restore,
Unto thine awin eternall libertie,
With little paine thou sall dissolued be,
Furth of the bands of flesh where thou art bound,
Sine like a foull aloft sall swiftlie flie,
And leaue the bodie breathles on the ground:
With agile wings thou sall transcend the sky,
In sepulchree the corps sall sleiping ly.
(ll.51-60)

Judgement is described in a more resounding tone than death, but no more complicated, nor less directly scriptural. The poem widens to include the whole readership in the triumph of salvation Hume envisages for his soul:

Then thou my saull with great triumph and glore,
With saincts assembled on the vther side,
Sall take the corps quhair thou was first before,
Unto the high and holie cietie wide,
With melodie we sall all thither glide,
Sing and reioyce even as the Lord hes said,
Into that blis and lasting life to bide,
Prepaird for vs before the earth was laid:
So when the Sun hes finisht everie thing,
To God maist high he sall remit the ringe.
(ll.181-90)

The inclusive "we" reminds the readers that they are addressed as well as the poet's soul, and that they, too, should take consolation from the hope of salvation. The final stanza, however, returns to the personal voice, to the contemplation of his own frame of mind:

Bot now my hart within by bowdin breist
I feel revert and wondrously reveif,
My soul sicklike hir sorrowing hes ceist,
And of my sang a perfite Ioy can preif:
The life to come so firmely I beleeue,
That though all flesh to death were redy boun
I should be sure the Lord wald me releeue.
Though all the warld were turned vp-side downe:
Lord, hallowed be thy haly name diuine,
For power, praise, the reigne, and all is thine.
(11.191-200)

Though personal, the psychological victory is here shared with the brethren, thereby combining the protestant apprehension of the validity of individual experience and the importance of shared experience with the emphasis on faith and the Word that runs through all protestant verse in the period.

Although it seems a long way from such a treatment of death, judgement and salvation to the work of the popular poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "To His Sorrowfull Saull" marks an important shift in emphasis in Scottish art poetry. Just as "Of Gods Benefites" and "The Day Estivall" turn the attention away from superstition to observation of the works of God in the natural world, and hence towards the exercise of God-given reason, so "To His Sorrowfull Saull" suggests that the exercise of reason can allow one to come to terms with personal problems, without aid from external sources save faith, the Word and the mutual aid of the brethren. Here is a further step in the development of poetry using the experience and opinions of the individual to judge and comment upon the larger dealings of the world. The recognition that knowledge of self and personal capability to regain faith are possible — that no matter how "ordinary" a person is, he can cope — represents a fundamental change in Scottish society and Scottish poetry. Such a view elevates the individual above the mass, but at the same time emphasises shared experience, so that the outlook, while not selfish, is politically significant. Hume saw his own psychological battle, fought and won, as valuable to others if shared with them. In this way there is a process whereby experience moves from the individual to the community, rather than, as in medieval society, from the community to the individual. Modern Scottish poetry, in which

so often since the seventeenth century the poet has taken upon himself the character of an ordinary man speaking out of his personal experience to his fellows so that they may all cope more readily with the demands made upon them by life, or love, or political authority, had its origins in the change in perspective from communal to personal which can be seen in Hume's poetry and in a great deal of popular poetry written by his contemporaries.

The modern world: "Ane Epistle"

In the light of this radical adjustment to personal and poetic outlooks, it is not surprising that Hume produced *Ane Epistle to Maister Gilbert Montcreiff*, "the first Scots epistle in verse, the forerunner of a genre that was to flower in the superb epistles of Burns"[21]. Tom Scott considers Hume to be probably "the father of post-Reformation poetry" and notes that "by choosing the heroic couplet from contemporary English verse forms and using it in his *Epistle* ... he was instinctively opting for the measure of the future — the staple form of Dryden and the Augustans"[22]. The clearest evidence of kinship with later Scottish poetry, however, is neither in Hume's prosody nor in his language, but in the use to which he put the epistle and the attitudes it embodies. Lawson comments that *Ane Epistle* "is a spiritual autobiography rather than a record of events, and it is provokingly meagre in its account of Hume's early life".[23] But rather than scouring the poem for biographical detail, it ~~would be~~ is more useful to note that the verse epistle in Scots continued to be used as a "spiritual autobiography". In his epistles, Burns works through his responses and attitudes to religion, life, politics and poetry in much the same way as Hume and though Burns' work is usually more witty, even comic, and more condensed than Hume's, both employ the epistle to communicate strong personal views and feelings to a sympathetic friend, a "brother" in outlook. Belief in the value

21. Tom Scott, "A Note on Alexander Hume", p.48.
22. Ibid., p.50.
23. *Poems*, p.250.

of intelligent friendship was another outcome of the new way of understanding relations between people, undoubtedly closely linked to the post-Reformation commitment to freedom of thought and conversation as much as to the Calvinist conception of brotherhood.

Ane Epistle opens with an address to Hume's friend, Montcreif:

> My tender friend (Montcreif medicinar)
> To kings is kend thy knawledge singular
> Thou shawis thy selfe be practise evident:
> Of natures warks obseruer diligent,
> Thy quiet life and decent modestie,
> Declares thy cunning in philosophie:
> Sen first we were acquaint I fand thee kinde,
> Sum medicine assigne me for the mind,
> My sicknes be the symptome sall appeare,
> Unto my discourse, if thou list giue eare.
> 'O happie man is he (I haue hard say)
> A faithfull friend that hes, with whom he may
> Of eurie thing as with himselfe confer,'
> As I may do (disert mediciner).
> (p.68, ll.1-14)

Montcreif would seem to be for Hume an excellent example of "Northern Renaissance Man", whose "cunning in philosophie" is proved by his "practise" as well as his "knawledge singular", his "diligent" observation of "natures warks" as well as his "quiet life" and modesty. That Hume can confer with Montcreif "as with himself", and greatly value the relationship for that reason, stresses the connection between the kind of dialogue with his soul undertaken in "To His Sorrowfull Saull" and a deepening appreciation of personal interaction based on the same honesty applied to himself, his religion and his observation of the world.

Having described his youthful innocence and his blind faith in the goodness of men, Hume states his views on brotherhood:

> For this I oft reduced and brought to mind:
> How sall men be but vntill vther kinde?
> Lo, all the wichts that in this valley wuns,
> Are brethren all. Are they not Adam's suns?
> Quhy suld a friend his friend and brother greeue,
> Sen all are borne of a first mother Eue?
> Upon this earth as in a cietie wide,
> Like citizens we dwell and dois abide:
> And nature hes preferd vs to the beasts,
> By prenting reason deiplie in our breasts.
> (ll.49-58)

This brotherhood of reason includes high and low (hence the already almost archaic "common" phrase "all wichts that in this valley wuns"), barbarians, Persians, Indians, Syrians, Finns and Freisians, as well as "them quhilk dois the ciuill cities hant" — Greeks, Romans, Venetians and French. In plain diction, more colloquially Scots than in most of his other poetry, Hume proceeds to a statement of the protestant idea of community, once more echoing the Psalms: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133):

> Then with my self I reasond on this sort,
> If this be trew quhilk trulie I report,
> How mekill mair sall loue and lautie stand
> Amang the pepill natiue of a land,
> Quhilk dois imbrace, obey, and onely knaw,
> A kirk, a King, a language and a law:
> Or sick as in a citie dois remaine,
> Participant of pleasour and of paine:
> Or of a race hes lineallie discended
> And hes there time and life together spended.
> (11.69-78)

To his broad observations, Hume characteristically adds his internalised response, based on faith, reason and the Scriptures. Significantly, each of the passages describing his youthful idealism and naivety begin with a reference to the exercise of his reason, evoking his intelligence, dispelling interpretation of his comments as youthful fancies, and stressing that his later disillusionment with his fellow man does not invalidate his early observations concerning brotherhood and personal integrity:

> All this and mair I tossed in my thocht,
> And these effects to se I dowted nocht:
> As for my part I plainely did pretend,
> My life in peace, in ioy, and ease till end,
> Into the way to walk and happie rod,
> Prescriued be the law and word of God,
> To loue my friend and neighbour as my sell,
> With lips but lies the simple trueth to tell,
> Till euerie man to keep my promise dew.
> (11.79-87)

Experience, of course, teaches him otherwise, at least about his fellows, but though he becomes disillusioned, cynical about justice and political authority and perceived social inequities, it is clear throughout *Ane*

Epistle that he does not abandon his personal integrity or faith and continues to hope fervently that men will begin to value their innate brotherhood.

What he has learnt from experience is expressed pragmatically when the ugly nature of many human societies and personalities is described:

> Behald na realme, na cietie nor estait,
> Ar voide of strife, contention and debait,
> Ilk man his fo, like roaring Lions kein,
> Waitis to devore with rigor tygerrein:
> How few regards we daylie may espie,
> Their fallowes los, if they may gaine thereby:
> Sa hautie minds fulfilled with disdaine,
> Sa deepe deceat, sik glosing language vaine,
> Mens doubill tungs are not ashamed to lie,
> The mair they heght, the wors to trust they be,
> Particular gaine dois sa mans reason blind,
> That skars on earth ane vpright can I find,
> So poysoned breasts with malice and invy
> Sum deadlie haitis, and cannot shaw you why.
> (11.109-21)

Here "particular gaine" is synonymous with "singular proffeit", seen by Tom Scott as a major difference between Hume and Dunbar and Lindsay on the grounds that Hume elevated "individualism to a virtue". Yet obviously Hume regards "particular gaine" as an evil equally as much as had the earlier poets. To Dunbar and Lindsay, however, it was an evil because it militated against the basis of feudal society: if individuals "went it alone" in the medieval framework they would disturb the carefully structured and interrelated society, and thus their objection to "singular proffeit" was partly that it was immoral in a Christian community, and partly that it disrupted the political and social order. For Hume "particular gaine" was a moral and social evil, regardless of the economic structure of a community, but more importantly he saw it as militating against brotherhood and blinding men to reason. A man using his reason would soon conclude that living in amity is of benefit to the whole community, while a man driven by greed, envy and lust for power, would be blind to reason and therefore unable to perceive the evils of "particular gaine". So Hume apprehended the illogical but vicious circle between men's personality defects and their desire for

profit, material or political. As reason is considered the key to faith and personal well-being, so it becomes the key to social and political stability. The medieval view of a stable society in which the exercise of individualism would disrupt the system is here replaced by a more subtle post-Reformation, renaissance view that it is the responsibility of each individual within the society to use his reason for the good of the society, which indeed "elevates individualism to a virtue", but not "at the expense of the community". Hume understood that individual freedom is undermined by "particular gaine".

The dominant theme of the first portion of *Ane Epistle*, then, is that when men fail to exercise their reason, the portion of their being in which "nature has preferd vs to the beasts", they lose their capacity for brotherhood and therefore their social and personal well-being, becoming in fact more like beasts. Hume is disturbed by bestial behaviour, but more disturbed that such behaviour stems from a failure to think. In criticising human failings earlier satirists had, like Hume in ll.129-34 of *Ane Epistle*, recalled a mythical past when men behaved well, and had seen the cause of men's greed, cruelty or lack of "gentleness" as social, political or moral. When Reason was called to the aid of the erring human she was an allegorical figure, part of a moral and ethical system on which man should rely, paying more heed to the order of things in heaven and earth and so ceasing to turn the world upside down. To Hume, however, the failure of reason is the root cause of sin and unhappiness, from which issue all other ills, so that community happiness and prosperity stem totally from the individual, not simply from paying heed to a system, dogma or law. With such an outlook it is apparent that individuals in positions of authority can no longer be merely "foolish", "misguided", "ill advised" or "ignorant, weak men" if they fail to perform their duties correctly and to the good of the common weal. Rather they will have failed to think about their duty to society or to God, and should therefore be personally responsible for social ills or political catastrophes. Lindsay began this change in emphasis but was too much a courtier to complete it. It is fully developed in the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis" and the broadsheet satires, resulting

in the disrespect for corrupt governors and the political clear-sightedness which permeate popular poetry. Thus was formed an entirely new view of politicians and political society, of princes and judges, which Hume was able to express and explore in more depth than his broadsheet contemporaries.

The reasons Hume gives for entering the legal profession reveal a highly developed sense of personal responsibility typical of this man of the new age:

> I langd to learne, and curious was to knaw:
> The consuetude, the custome of the Law,
> Quhairby our natiue soil was guide aright,
> And iustice done till everie kind of wight.
> (ll.137-40)

What follows is a very personal account of an experience in the law courts which was unpleasant physically and mentally as well as morally:

> To that effect three yeares, or neare that space,
> I hanted maist our highest plaiding place,
> And senat quhair great causses reasoned were,
> My breast was brusd, with leaning on the bar,
> My buttons brist, I partely spitted bloud,
> My gown was trald and tramped where I stood,
> Mine eares were deifd with maissars cryes and din,
> Quhilk procutors and parties called in:
> I dayly learnd, bot could not pleased be,
> I saw sick things as pittie was to see.
> (ll.141-50)

The reporting of his time in the courts, his physical discomfort, the sense of chaos, noise and lack of decorum, and the fact that the knowledge he acquired was not the knowledge he sought, all actualise and personalise the poem, in the same way as was common in the broadsheets, investing with authority his criticisms of the practices he observed. The appeal here is not to a theory of what the law ought to be, though this is mentioned in the introductory lines, but to personal experience and judgement. The terrible inequities, the corruption and ineptitude he proceeds to describe are expected to be understood by any thinking, moral person without further elaboration in allegory or reference to divine and earthly justice as perfect alternatives. The reader is asked to use his reason in response to the personal account which is

presented and perceived to be of more significance, like Sempill's "eyewitness reports", than anything theoretical and less immediate. His criticism of the Court of Session takes the form of detailed description which in effect urges not "look how others are abused", but "look how we are all abused":

> Ane house ov'rlaid with proces sa misguided,
> That sum to late, sum neuer was decided,
> The pure abused ane hundreth diuers wayes,
> Pospond, differd with shifts, and meere delayes,
> Consumde in guds, ov'rset with greife and paine,
> 3our advocat man be refresht with gaine,
> Or else he faints to speake or to invent
> A gud defence or weightie argument,
> Ye spill your cause, ye truble him to sair,
> Unles his hand annointed be with mair.
> Not ill bestowed, he is consulted oft,
> 'A gude devise is worthie of the coft!'
> (11.151-62)

Significantly the emphasis is not on "The Law" or "The Courts", but on lawyers and clerks: "Quha them controls, or them offends, but dout, / Their process will be lang in seeking out" (11.167-8). Responsibility for abuse lies in the personal greed and corruption of the individual members of the profession and their staff, and those who can afford to bribe or to dispense favours:

> A Lord, ane Earle, or a wealthie man,
> A courtier that mekill may and can,
> Without delay will come to their intent,
> Howbeit there cause it be some deill on sklent:
> Bot simple sauls, vnskilful, moyenles,
> The pure quhome strang oppressors dois oppres,
> Few of their right or causses will take keepe,
> Their proces will sa lang lye ou'r and sleepe,
> Quhill often times (there is na vther bute)
> For pouertie they man leaue of persute.
> (11.199-208)

A vivid analogy between the courts and hell further personalises the poem, changing it from a "Satire on the Age" to one man's response to his society:

> Where euerie man almaist is miscontented,
> Quhair sillie sauls are greeuouslie tormented,
> Ay sorrie, sad, ay plung'd in paine and greife,
> Pensiue in heart and musing of mischeif,

Their bowells, entraills, with the robbed rowt
Of gredie Harpyes, they are rugged out.
(11.233-8)

Hume's decision to abandon the law as a career was motivated as much by personal revulsion as by considered application of his morality to the practices he witnessed, so that the audience, albeit never having been in a law court, could identify with his feelings:

To lead that kinde of life I wearied fast,
In better hope I left it at the last,
And to the court I shortlie me addrest
Beleeuing weill to chuse it for the best:
But from the rocks of Cyclades fra hand
I struck into Carybdis sinking sand.
(11.239-44)

His experience in the royal court was as disappointing and distressing as his experience of the law. He adopted a novel way of avoiding offending the king by undertaking not to slander but to "descriue", which carries an irony similar to that in the attitude of the broadsheet poets to princes. His description begins with a catalogue of vices and unhealthy behaviour patterns which operates like a generalised flyting, piling abuse upon abuse but avoiding slander by not specifically referring to any particular court:

For reuerence of Kings I will not striue
To slander courts, but them I may descriue,
As learned men hes them depaint before,
Or neare the suith, and I am wo therefore.
In courts (Montcreif) is pride, invie, contention,
Dissimulance, despite, disceat, dissention,
Feare, whisperings, reports, and new suspition,
Fraud, treasone, lies, dread, guile, sedition,
Great greedines, and prodigalitie,
Lusts sensual, and partialitie,
Impudencie, adulterie, drunkinnes,
Delicacie, and slouthful idilnes,
Backbiting, lacking, mocking, mutenie,
Disdainefulnes, and shameles flatterie,
Meere vanitie, and naughtie ignorance,
Inconstancie, and changing with mischance,
Contempt of all religion and devotion,
To godlie deeds na kinde of perfite motion.
(11.245-61)

His criticisms are not mitigated by any sense of loyalty or personal liability because, unlike earlier satirists in the art tradition, he is

no longer a courtier, and his protestant voice in the last couplet distinguishes him from his courtly predecessors. Compared to Dunbar, for instance, Hume does not restrict himself to criticism and a warning on the sinfulness and lack of piety in the court, but expresses contempt for the lack of active religion, of Calvinist determination to live constructive Christian lives, not only avoiding sin, but promoting godliness.

As he turns from general description to the Scottish court, Hume immediately appeals to Montcreif's experience to reinforce his own, and refers in some detail to recent problems in the government — problems which all readers would have been aware of, such as the succession of incompetent regents. Princes are called to account for their poor rule, barons for their greed and disruptive lust for power and, echoing Lindsay's "learn to be ane Prince", Hume bemoans the ignorance of many in authority:

> Thou knawes our Scottish court als weill as I:
> Our princes ay, as we haue heard and sein,
> Thir mony yeares infortunat hes bein,
> And if I sould not speik with flattring tung,
> The greater part bot sluggishly hes rung.
> Our Earles and Lords for their nobilitie.
> How ignorant and inexpert they be,
> Upon the priuie counsell mon be chused,
> Or else the King and concill ar abused,
> And if the Prince augment not ay their rents
> Quhat is their mair: they will be mal-contents.
> (11.266-76)

While Maitland, Scott and other art poets satirised some governors and some aspects of court life, the impression gleaned from most court poetry of the period is of political instability, but cultural enlightenment; of a group of learned men around a learned king in a sophisticated court. This may be a somewhat one-sided picture. Hume, certainly, gives a significantly different view of the degree of learning and culture in the court. The court poets tempered their criticisms with lighter matters in a lighter style. Their satires were thus effectively part of the courtly game, and that played doubtless for a small and élite group of fellow poets, including the king who preferred to think

his court as sophisticated as any in Europe. Hume stood, socially and poetically, outside the court, but had been in it and written its kind of poetry. Yet *Ane Epistle* presents a view of power struggles amongst ignorant, ambitious men with little sense of statesmanship and no pretensions to learning. The king and some of his courtiers may have been consciously cultivated and able to express sophisticated notions of government, but Hume suggests that finally it was a generally crude group of noblemen that controlled the king. Penetrating the illusion of culture, Hume saw in the realities of court life that true power lay, to a large extent, in the hands of the ignorant. If, however, it pleased the king, the regent or the faction of nobles in power to be "cultivated", then courtiers could appear to be cultivated, and if it pleased the same assembly of notables for courtiers to be less learned than themselves, then courtiers could oblige. True culture, a true regard for reason and learning, was, Hume believed, sadly lacking, and in its place he perceived a veneer:

> Sum officers we se of naughtie braine,
> Meere ignorants, proud, viscious, and vaine,
> Of learning, wit, and vertue all denude,
> Maist blockish men, rash, riotous, and rude:
> And flattering fallowis oft ar mair regarded:
> A lying slaue will rather be rewarded,
> Nor they that does with reasons rule conferre,
> . . .
> Quhilk haue the word of God before their eyes,
> And weill can serue but cannot Princes pleis:
> For sum with reason will not pleased be,
> But that quhilk with their humour dois agree.
> (11.285-300)

From this kind observation, as much as from his moral outrage, came Hume's advice to young poets. He clearly could not abide subjective stupidity:

> Hes thow not heard in oppin audience,
> The purpos vaine, the feckles conference,
> Th' informall reasons, the impertinent
> Of courtiers: quhilks in accoutrement
> War gorgious, maist glorious, yong and gay:
> Bot in effect compare them weill I may
> Till images, quhilks ar in temples set,
> Decorde without, and all with gold ou'rfret,

> With colors fine, and carued curiouslie,
> The place where they are set to beautifie
> Bot when they are remarked all and sum,
> They are bot stocks and stains, bos, deid, and dum.
> (11.301-12)

Like the broadside poets, Hume is aware he is treading on dangerous ground, politically and personally. Ironically dismissing the court — "Bot now the court I will not discommend, / I may it meane bot may not it amend" — like Davidson and Sempill's Maddie, he avows that truth cannot be slander or treason: "As for offence of speach I nathing feare it, / For vpright men thereby are nathing deirit" (11.313-16). As an erstwhile courtier and understanding the mentality involved in seeking favour, Hume defends himself against a possible charge of "sour grapes" by employing a very personal voice and, though his candour is somewhat ironic and owes not a little to Dunbar, it is nevertheless sincere. Whilst Dunbar could accept advancement in a system he knew could be petty and corrupt, Hume cannot and any debt to Dunbar disappears in the final couplet on his court experience:

> And if perhaps sum wald alleadge that I,
> Haue this inuaid on malice and inuie,
> As he whome in the court few did regarde,
> And got na gaine thereby nor na reward,
> I grant that may be trew, bot quhat of that?
> I little gaine deserued, and les I gat.
> (11.319-24)

From the court Hume turns to politics on a wider scale with an excellent example of the change that had occurred in political thought by calling on the people to use their own eyes, to observe inequalites and corruption for themselves and to form their own opinion. The implication is that the "common weill" are doing precisely that:

> Bot men behald his heines royall trine,
> His palaces, and their apparels fine,
> Behalde his house, behald his yearely rent,
> His seruants heir if they haue cause to plent,
> Obserue this realme throughout from east to west,
> From south to north, if any be opprest,
> Quhilk iustice lacks, behald the common weill,
> Then iudge if I be writer fals or leill.
> (11.325-32)

Whereas Lindsay warned his King of the dangers of ignoring the commons, here Hume upholds the commons' right to judge, leaving it to those in authority to suffer the consequences of that judgement: "Bot sic as sould it mend, let them lament, / I hanted court to lang, and I repent". Not only a personal rejection of the courtly ethos and court life, this is a public statement of alliance with the commons against the court.

As in his other poems, Hume's subjective response to his experiences, his inner reaction, is given a prominent place at the conclusion of *Ane Epistle*, so that the reader is left with an impression of personality, rather than of dogmatic observation and judgement. The poet's personal response, therefore, becomes a yardstick against which the reader can measure his own thoughts about what he has been offered in the rest of the poem.

Hume argues that the world has "infected" him, and involves some irony and subtle reasoning in his attempt to reconcile himself, and his faith, with his life and world. Initially he sees the times as "cursed" and himself infected by that: "How can I do bot as men doo to me?". But Hume was a committed Christian and this statement is utterly opposed to Christian ideals of turning the other cheek and adhering steadfastly to one's faith, of self-reliance despite the behaviour of the rest of the world. In fact, what he tries to resolve in the remainder of the poem is precisely this conflict between faith and the world, and how one can avoid becoming bitter and cynical about oneself and one's fellows in a world which is twisted and not appreciative of the finer aspects of the human spirit:

> O sentence suthe: I say for to conclude,
> 'Ill companie corrupteth maner gude'.
> Trew Damons part to play I wald me bind,
> Yet Pythias kinde yet can I neuer find:
> 'Loue mutual wald be, for all in vaine,
> I fauour show if nain I finde againe.'
> My heart is stane within, and yron without,
> With triple bras my breist is set about,
> For when of strife, and great mischance I heare,
> Of death, debate, they doo me littel deare:
> For vthers harme me tuitches not at all,
> Swa I be free, quhat rak I what befall?
> The line of loue almaist I haue forget it,
> For why, think I, to nain I am addettit.
> (11.345-58)

This is not the voice of "the old pagan Stoic" and there is little that is positive about it.

What Hume describes is the sickness for which he is seeking a cure from Montcreif, and his sickness is disillusionment with his fellow human beings who, as he has shown, are not free but tied to a corrupt system and unable to think for themselves. Hume declares himself able to think for himself — his lack of concern for the circle of favours, flattery, bribery and fraud he has described — but it is not a happy freedom. Saddened that he has very few colleagues in his liberation, he feels isolated and tempted to return to his old life. There is no positive declaration of supreme independence here; and whilst Hume has achieved some personal sense of victory, he is concerned that it does not include others. He has learned that in order to survive in a corrupt community one must harden oneself against pain and learn not to love since the object of that love is almost certain to disappoint. Yet if he had abandoned love or ceased to care for those not as "free" as himself, he would not regard his dubious freedom as a "sickness" nor would he ask Montcreif for "Sum medicine ... for the minde". Recognising his desire for a hardened heart as perverse in its utter incompatibility with his faith, the source of his true freedom, Hume seeks to avoid sinking further into Stoicism. He conveys a view that there is something unhealthy in failing to face the world when one has attained spiritual and intellectual freedom: "I feare the warld, I dread allurements sair, / And strang assaults corrupt me mair and mair". The "symptomes" Hume describes for Montcreif are those of a personal crisis of faith, in himself and in his ability to live according to his beliefs.

His faith in God, however, is not in question, and in that lies his comfort. His is not a faith which divorces him from the world nor one that makes escape from worldly concerns easy or desirable, rather it is a faith which allows him to discern the things upon which it ought to be worthwhile for a Christian to exercise his reason. The last lines of the poem negate the "heart is stane" passage and are the key to the "cure": when his heart is closed to the world, then he is

sick, but when he allows himself to be human, he is no less free and spiritually well again:

> My comfort lo, my haill felicitie,
> Consists in this, I may it shaw to thee;
> To serue the Lord, and on his Christ repose,
> To sing him praise, and in his heichts reiose,
> And ay to haue my mind lift vp on hie,
> Unto that place quhair all our ioy sall be:
> My life and time I knaw it is sa short,
> That heare to dwell I think it bot a sport:
> I haue delight in heart maist to behald,
> The pleasant works of God sa manifalde,
> And to my mind great pleasour is indeede,
> The nobill writs of learned men to reed:
> As Chremes had, I haue ane humaine heart,
> And takes of things humaine na little part,
> Be word and writ my minde to make it plaine,
> To fekfull friends, and they to me againe.
> (11.369-84)

These lines are not, as Lawson suggests, merely conventional compliment. Stressing that his desire to spend his time contemplating the glory of God through his works renders concern with things human both a duty and a joy, Hume defines a correlation between his study, his thought, and the communication of them to others. He shows a sense of "brother thinkers" akin to Burns' sense of "brother poets", and his use of the epistle is therefore apt. Such an assurance of likemindedness and kinship among intelligent friends was a security and defence in a corrupt or bigoted world. In Hume's modern, post-Reformation world, instead of flyting with, competing with, flattering or imitating fellow poets and thinkers — instead of being part of a complicated ritual centred around a monarch — there developed a perception of brotherhood against ignorance; in effect, a freemasonry of reason, for which the epistle proved an ideal mode.

This idea of a bond with other reasoning and rational people was an extension of the emphasis on self-reliance that had grown up in post-Reformation Scotland. Hume's poetry expresses his thoughts and feelings about the issues, problems and learning of his time, but he was also concerned to understand his own personality and poetic. Self exploration takes place particularly in "His Recantation" and *Ane Epistle*;

exploration of his religion and the human condition in "Thankes for Deliverance of the Sicke", "Of Gods Benefites", "Of Gods Omnipotencie" and "To His Sorrowfull Saull"; of the natural world in "The Day Estivall" and "Of Gods Benefites"; and of the workings of ecclesiastical and state polity in *Ane Epistle* and his prose, especially "Ane Afold Admonitioun". "The Day Estivall" and *Ane Epistle* also treat human society and his fellow man in relation to both himself and God. These subjects in fact summarise protestant and renaissance concerns: the individual is at the centre of consideration of humanity, nature, spirituality and politics. Supporting the individual, however, are the brethren, to give courage and mutual aid, intellectual and spiritual fellowship. In *Ane Epistle* Hume's sense of fellowship has worn thin in the face of disappointment and corruption, but we do well to remember that the poem deals with his first thirty years, especially with his rejection of the law and the court, and that at the end of the poem he stresses that he has "fekfull friends" with whom to share his faith and his reason.

Post-Reformation Scottish Protestants conceived of themselves as participating in a body of newly liberated believers, each with the individual responsibility to be a worthy member of that body; "Thou others helps (my saull) now cure thy sell". Hume portrays a sense of mutual assistance between the individual and the brethren which put simply means "you can rely on your friends for help". Finally, however, the matter of individual peace of mind is between each person, his soul, his reason and his God which, allowing for changes in religious commitment, is essentially a modern outlook, diametrically opposed to the Catholic and medieval view.

Hume's work is "the voice of the new individualism" in the sense that his is a new and individual voice, in the art tradition, in a changing society within which the values and responsibilities of the individual have attained a greater importance than ever before. But Hume was one individual among many concerned for the cooperation of all the individuals in producing a good society. Because his is a well known and articulate voice from that new society, his self-concern elucidates the effects of wider social and religious changes, mirrored

in a less contemplative manner in the broadsheets, on intellectual and emotional life in Scotland at the end of the sixteenth century.

It would be presumptuous to suggest that self-concern and community consciousness became a feature of Scottish poetry because of Hume's work. Like the broadsheet poets and Sir James Sempill, Hume was a product of his environment whose work though widely read in his own time, failed to remain fashionable. But as a serious poet with an upper class background his poetry further encouraged the acceptance of his attitudes and his concerns as worthwhile preoccupations for poets.

Hume's achievement was to change the whole perspective of Scottish art poetry by personalising poetry to a degree never before attempted and by making poetry a vehicle for personal observations rather than somewhat individualised community "truths". To recognise this is to appreciate fully the extent of the intellectual shift involved in the emergence of an alternative tradition of poetry and thought in post-Reformation Scotland, which argues against the commonplace notion of "triviality" in later vernacular poetry. In fashioning his own alternative to court poetry, Hume gave thoughtful expression to the ideas and attitudes which separated popular poetry from court poetry. The same ideas and attitudes so altered the thinking of many Scots that, by the first half of the seventeenth century, court poetry seemed to them anachronistic and popular poetry, in one or other of its forms, became their most usual means of expressing their ideas or responding to their world.

Seventeenth-century poets working in a much more popular vein than Hume, in a style with its antecedents in the broadsheets and folk literature, assumed an intellectual framework that Sir James Sempill and Alexander Hume had been obliged to explore because it was radically opposed to many established views. Whilst Sempill's *Packman* justified personal faith and the expression of personal opinions by using the manner of popular poetry, Hume used his poetry to express his own faith, opinions and personality, exploring the impact on the individual of the ideas which informed popular poetry. In so doing, he validated the intrusion of the personal into poetry which had also been developing in the broadsheets. During the seventeenth century there was an increase

in the use of poetry that reflected the commons, and more "going to nature" in poetry. So, too, there was a flourishing of forms which "elevated the individual above the mass", such as the mock elegy and verse epistle, and political poetry in which particular people or groups were satirised, not simply the "Age". This was because the plain and vernacular popular poetry which dominated that century and was to culminate in eighteenth-century vernacular poetry resulted from the convergence of two trends obvious in the work of Robert Sempill, John Davidson, James Sempill and Alexander Hume: the popularising of poetic style and voice, and the personal perspective in which the community was seen not as a body ruled by one head, but as an amalgam of individuals, each interesting, each with personal failings or personal integrity.

PART IV

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

... I judge it now the least of Crymes
To steir my course according to the times.

Anon.

And aw the fock said, Deil may care.

Francis Sempill

Chapter 9

VARIETY, CONTINUITY AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Intellectual life in Scotland was permanently altered by the ideas and attitudes embodied in the late sixteenth-century broadsheets and the work of James Sempill and Alexander Hume. It is clear that not only did the Reformation and Union of Crowns dramatically affect the way Scots worshipped and were governed, but many people, especially although not exclusively among the well educated, perceived politics and society in a very different way from their forbears, even those of a generation before. There were now among thinking Scots many who allowed more for the individual, and personal, in national or community life; who had a less fixed understanding of class structure, and economic and political interrelationships, giving more practical attention to the "commons" (which classification was in any event changing), and having less reverence for inherited authority. Such people saw individuals and institutions as accountable to God and to the nation for their actions and believed that enlightenment, education and information were rights, not privileges. The dramatic events of the seventeenth century — the Covenanting wars, Civil War, Restoration, Revolution and move towards the Union of Parliaments — further modified the outlooks of Scots, and urged Scottish poetry towards its eighteenth-century form.

Experiments and developments in poetry by the broadsheet poets, James Sempill, Hume and, to a lesser extent, the court poets, provided the new century with a wealth of directions. The seventeenth century saw the consolidation of two major strands of poetry, apart from the art poetry which looked to England and the court in London for example and patronage. One of the strands was plain style poetry, often anglicised but retaining a distinctly Scottish tone. A witty style, used predominantly for satire, the plain style developed from the more "formal"

plainspeaking poems of Robert Sempill and Davidson, and gained affinities with English satiric poetry as the century progressed. Poems in this style were usually sophisticated in tone but popular in that they were often intended to appeal to a wide audience, sharing the attitudes, concerns and sometimes the medium of the broadsheets. The other major mode of poetry, in the vernacular, continued the work of the broadsheet poets and absorbed some of the elements of plain style poetry and folk literature. Frequently composed in middle and upper class circles, it nevertheless remained popular in outlook and manner.

Plain style poetry built on the manner of poems such as Robert Sempill's *Legend*, Davidson's "Dialogue" and James Sempill's *Packman*, cultivating a blunt but not homely diction, a "learned commons" tone, and making extensive use of wit, irony, puns and modulation of language and vocabulary to appeal to sophisticated readers. Early in the seventeenth century the plain style was employed for satire on behalf of one cause or another but there was a growing air of cynicism to which the plain style was admirably suited and by the end of the century it was a favourite mode for expressing scorn for causes and extremism. The wit, irony and cynicism of the plain style were mirrored in vernacular poetry. In addition, poets writing in the vernacular built upon the diction and tone of such poems as Robert Sempill's "The Cruikit Leidis and Blinde", turning increasingly to the folk idiom to express ideas, opinions or observations as "the voice of the people". Vernacular poetry also proved an excellent vehicle for the growing interest in individuals, in characters, personal opinions and interaction between like-minded people or antagonists, and consequently the pioneering work in the most familiar forms of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry — the mock elegy, the verse epistle, the occasional address — took place during the seventeenth century.

The century was in effect a watershed in Scottish literary history and the path taken by poetry was often as varied as the political and social history. In attempting to discern the links between late sixteenth-century and eighteenth-century poetry a complex situation emerges. Lines of direct association from poem to poem can be pinpointed, but so too can apparently indiscriminate departures from earlier models. There is

evidence of conscious rejection of all things "gentle" in favour of folk culture or at least popular culture, but also of deliberate preservation of courtly material. Antiquarianism co-exists with witty modernism in poems and collections, and music, poetry and society clearly interacted, at times incongruously, throughout the century to produce a vast range of poetic forms. At the same time English poetry entered a period of brilliant change and offered itself increasingly as relevant to modern Scottish life. Nevertheless, by the last years of the seventeenth century, through a combination of conscious artistry and apparently coincidental confluence of various traditions, the Scots had lighted upon a poetry which proved its strength in the century to come.

Perhaps because little that can be construed as "great" poetry was published in Scotland in the years between the Union of Crowns and the publication of Watson's *Choice Collection* (1709-11), critical comment on the century has been infrequent and generally harsh. The seventeenth century has been regarded too often as a literary "dark ages", when Calvinist philistinism and violent upheavals in religion and politics made poetry little more than a crass tool for propaganda, flattery of the powerful, or imitation of English poets. Alexander Campbell in his *History of Poetry in Scotland* (1798) probably began the trend. While allowing some greatness in the work of Drummond of Hawthornden and giving some praise to others in the anglicised school of art poetry, Campbell lamented the "deplorable" state of poetry for much of the century:

> During the latter part of the seventeenth century, scarcely anything was relished in Scotland, unless it was larded plentifully with the 'marrow of divinity' — hence the meagreness of profaine productions, in the long lent of innocent hilarity. The muses were suffered to roam at large, unless any one of them thrumbed the harp of King David for the spiritual comfort of the pious covenanters.[1]

In 1898, T.F. Henderson was a little less extreme, but still found vernacular poetry at its "lowest ebb", and saw Drummond and Aytoun as the only two among the Anglo-Scots poets who rose above "verbose mediocrity"[2]. Another nineteenth-century critic, Hugh Walker, accused

1. *An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland*, p.110.
2. *Scottish Vernacular Poetry: A Succinct History*, pp.386-8.

even Drummond of "effeminacy" and concluded his coverage on a dismal note: "the period from the beginning of the Civil War to the Revolution was the most barren in the annals of Scottish literature"[3].

Twentieth-century commentary has been less colourful, but has nevertheless tended towards a negative view. David Daiches has described the seventeenth century as an era "during which Scottish literature all but perished"[4], and to David Craig the time of the religious troubles, in particular, was a blank period in Scottish poetry when a split developed between the popular and the cultivated elements[5]. Analysing the same split, John Speirs has touched briefly upon what this thesis outlines — "What little distinctively Scots poetry persisted in the seventeenth century was already, even when cultivated by aristocrats, 'popular' in character"[6] — and questioned simplistic assumptions about literary history: "The explanation that it was because of the distraction of civil war that poetry was not cultivated in Scots in the seventeenth century is not in itself adequate"[7]. In enlarging on these observations Speirs isolates certain aspects of seventeenth-century life and poetry which are crucial to the literary history of Scotland, yet rather than perceiving their positive effects employs them to argue that:

> It is more likely that the fanatical theological and political controversies of the seventeenth century ultimately restricted poetry in Scotland ... by in some way fragmenting the Scottish mind; they certainly produced an argumentative and partisan type of mind, a 'party-colour'd Mind'. But there is no immediate evidence of this in the poetry itself. There is only the fact, which may be simply coincidental, that the cultivation of poetry in Scotland as a 'literary' art rather abruptly ceased about the same time as these controversies. As far as the poetry which continues to be composed is concerned, whether that which was composed in English or the 'popular' poetry in Scots, there might almost have been no such thing as Calvinistic Presbyterianism. Puritanism is supposed to have been strongest among the people,

3. *Three Centuries of Scottish Literature* (Glasgow, 1893), vol. 1, p.161.
4. *Robert Burns*, p.18.
5. *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, p.127.
6. *The Scots Literary Tradition*, p.98.
7. Ibid., p.100.

> yet the 'popular' poetry is in itself quite unaffected by it. The poetry belongs essentially to the older medieval half-Catholic, half-pagan Scottish community which evidently, to some extent survived the radical changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Yet poetry in Scots since the seventeenth century remained confined to a few 'popular' models perhaps because of the narrowing of interests, together with the limiting conception of poetry in Scots as 'rhyming' and 'fun', consequent upon the blow which in the seventeenth century was struck at the roots of humane culture. But the fact that poetry in Scotland had become split up into two kinds in different languages, itself indicates already a rupture, a cleavage in the essential unity of the nation, and of its mind and culture.[8]

Speirs identifies a number of the elements which altered the course of Scottish poetry: the popular tone; the emergence of two main modes, "English" and Scots; the movement of poetry out of the realm of literary coterie into a much wider arena; and the cultivation of popular verse by upper class writers, but paints a gloomy picture of the fragmentation of a nation's artistic sensibilities. He offers no positive explanation of the causes of the change nor does he suggest any positive results. Such a conclusion is disappointing in view of the prefatory remarks in the 1961 edition of his book expressing his approval of the modern tendency to seek a poetry which reflects the national consciousness, rather than a poetry constructed or reconstructed from the past. The potential extension of this view to the relation between poetry and society in seventeenth-century Scotland remains largely untried by Speirs' analysis. In fact, the changes he describes were making seventeenth-century Scottish poetry more relevant to the society which produced it.

There was not in the seventeenth century some crisis in poetry due to a "cleavage in the essential unity of the nation". Indeed, there is little evidence of essential unity in middle Scots poetry, particularly between the popular and the cultivated, and little profit can be derived from exposing a lack of such unity in seventeenth-century poetry. The popular poetry of the seventeenth century was related only by descent to an "older medieval half-Catholic half-pagan Scottish community", and was much more immediately a product of the new,

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8. Ibid., pp.100-101.

post-Renaissance community, especially when it was cultivated by "aristocrats". Examination of the poetry of seventeenth-century Scotland, in all its variety and range of quality, suggests that as a consequence of their political and religious triumphs and "troubles", and of a dramatic shift in attitudes throughout much of the society, the Scots favoured modes of poetry which enabled the expression of all aspects of the "national consciousness" as it developed after the Reformation. Developing nationalism led to sentimental or political use of models from the folk tradition and to antiquarian revival of middle Scots poetic conventions in the latter part of the century. Encroaching English influence, a social and political reality for better or worse, on the one hand offered models of fine poetry from Donne to Dryden and on the other encouraged imitation of English fashions in verse which became the realm of much of the continuing "self-consciously literary" tradition, at least for the type of poetry which sought favour from patrons and was intended to appeal to a modish "British" audience. At the same time, nationalism and fear of English cultural dominance encouraged a healthy enthusiasm for native culture which led some talented poets to consciously seek out forms which would be both modern and Scottish. However, the most obvious manifestations of the Scots outlook in seventeenth-century poetry were acute political awareness which was often expressed in the witty plain style, and a protestant sense of the levelling of differences and the debunking of pretensions admirably expressed by vernacular poetry.

Printed Sources

The printed material and printing records of the seventeenth century provide one measure of the extent and variety of activity among Scottish writers in the period. Harry G. Aldis' *List of Books Printed in Scotland before 1700*[9] is a valuable source of such information. It shows considerable republishing of older poetry, notably the popular *Sevin Sages*, Henryson, Lindsay and Montgomerie, while the English poets, particularly Spenser, Sidney and Shakespeare, are well represented in the early part of the century. Perennial Scots favourites were reprinted frequently throughout the century: Blind Harry's *Wallace*, Barbour's *Brus*, *Thrie*

9. Edinburgh Bibliographical Society (1904); rev. edn, National Library of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1970).

Preistis of Peblis and *Ane Compendious Buik of Godlie and Spiritual Songs*. New literary publications were predominantly religious verse, psalms, controversial prose or occasional verse: epitaphs, encomiums and greetings. Also published were the Anglo-Scots poets, Sir William Alexander, Sir William Mure, Drummond, Fowler and Alexander Craig. Popular publications like almanacs, prognostications and proverbs, notably Fergusson's *Scottish Proverbs*, provided staple business throughout the century.

Literary activity in seventeenth-century Scotland was therefore constant, if not productive of a great deal of printed material of a truly substantial nature. It is clear that interest in literature persevered, for while the monopolies held by one or two printers on the *Wallace*, the *Brus* and some sixteenth-century art poetry provided one reason for frequent reprinting, simple economics would have limited reprints had no market existed.

Spiritual poetry, following in the path of Hume though not developing the same degree of grace and intellectual vigour, was printed in the century. The most well known example is Elizabeth Melville's "Ane Godlie Dreame" which draws on the dream vision convention of the middle ages to provide a most original expression of the Presbyterian spiritual experience without, however, being so mystical as to avoid controversy:

> Thy sillie sancts ar tossit to and fro,
> Awalk, O Lord, quhy sleipest thou sa lang?
> We have na strenth againis our cruell fo,
> In sichs and sobbis now changeit is our sang.
> The warld prevails, our enemies ar strang,
> The wickit rage, bot wee ar puir and waik:
> O shaw thy self, with speid revenge our wrang
> Mak short thir days, even for thy chosens saik.
> (11.33-40)[10]

Written in 1603, "Ane Godlie Dreame" is in a style which has little in common with courtly verse, despite its use of the dream vision convention. Its diction is plain, strongly Scots and clearly descended from the style of the Hymns in *Ane Compendious Buik*.

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10. Printed in STS *Poems of Alexander Hume*.

In polemical religious poetry, especially on the Covenanting side, the tone of violence, of blood and fire evangelism and intolerance, is disturbing and doubtless a major reason for the belief that the century was dominated by the sort of vicious philistinism displayed in this passage from Zachary Boyd's *The Battell of Newburn*:

> The Scottish Bals so dash'd them with disdain,
> That hips ov'r head, their skul did spew their brains
> Both legs and arms and heads, like dust, did flee
> Into the air, with fearful mutinie:
> The bals their legs, the legs their heads did break,
> The heads their arms, the arms did cleave their neck.
> Teeth tare the tongue, and teeth on teeth did gnash,
> Like paines in hell they did on other chatter,
> The bloody bals made all their bones to clatter,
> Mens ribs did rattle at this service hote,
> They riven, did cut the weasont of the throat.
> Their *foot*, their *thigh*, their breast did break their back,
> Such was the Reele-dance at the thunder crack.
> ...
> So GOD arose most swiftly us to help
> Against our foes, and brake their *hairie Scalp*.[11]

Boyd was widely printed and read, referred to frequently in other poems and pamphlets and, however distasteful the tone of this passage, the familiar features of broadsheet poetry are present: plain language, movement, detail and eye-witness reporting. Boyd also wrote in a more spiritual vein but those poems are tedious indeed compared with his lurid descriptive style.[12]

Amongst the varied range of printed material, there are two sources of lasting and obvious influence on later poetry. One can be found in the more popular aspects of the continually reprinted works of Lindsay and Montgomerie, particularly *The Cherrie and the Slae* and Polwarth and Montgomerie's *Flyting*. The other lies in the ephemeral

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11. David Laing (ed.), *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series (Edinburgh, 1853).

12. For an interesting discussion of Boyd's expression of his Calvinism see D.W. Atkinson, "Zachary Boyd and the *Ars Moriendi* Tradition", *SLJ*, 4 (1977), 5-16, in which Atkinson notes Boyd's use in *The Last Battell*, a prose work, of "the 'homely' image, designed for the edification of the most ordinary of men", his apprehension of a wide audience and his concern for moral freedom, in contrast to the Catholic tradition.

productions of the hour such as controversial verse and prose on both sides in the Covenanting and Civil wars, Restoration and Revolution, occasional verse and "mass consumption" publications like psalms, proverbs and prophecies which became part of the popular idiom in the same way as they had during the Reformation. The latter publications, especially broadsheet verse, were less likely to survive for inclusion in later surveys of printing history than any other form of literature, passed as they would have been from hand to hand and perhaps becoming dangerous possessions as political fortunes waxed and waned.

While the range of verse and prose printed was extensive, the success of the verse as poetry is often dubious and it is difficult to gain a sense of consistency from the printed material, a sense of why certain forms were favoured, or why a poet chose verse at all rather than prose. Hence, no doubt, the widespread belief that prime motives for writing poetry in the seventeenth century in Scotland were bigotry and oppression or flattery and self-aggrandizement, and that *ipso facto* such poetry is rarely of quality and rarely significant to literary history. As with Reformation poetry, however, the poetry is at times good, at least interesting and was certainly of importance in the development of new literary modes.

Manuscript Material

The political life of the century spurred many a poet into print but it inspired many more who never published their work, perhaps out of prudence, perhaps because they gave no thought to making their views public. Others wrote occasional verse for the entertainment of their families and friends, which did not reach print or if it did no record survives of publication.

Many such poems have been preserved in the manuscript collections of Scottish libraries. Some have been published in works such as Laing's *Fugitive Scotish Poetry of the Seventeenth Century* and Maidment's *Book of Scottish Pasquils*, but many more have never been printed and therefore have received scant critical attention. Another

upsurge of interest in balladry in recent years has led to the editing and publication of a number of manuscript versions of ballads but little attention has been given to political or occasional verse in the same manuscript collections.

The literary life of Scotland in the seventeenth century takes on a less confusing aspect when manuscript poems and manuscript records are taken into account. The manuscripts provide material which complements and balances what can be gleaned from printed sources and printing records, and what emerges in a record of considerable poetic activity. At all levels of society and on all sides in the political and religious controversies, people in Scotland used poetry and song actively and enthusiastically for purposes from propaganda and satire to instruction and entertainment. As in earlier poetry, purpose is reflected in style, and so is an acute awareness of audience, even if that audience comprised only the poet's immediate associates. Further, there is substantial evidence that poetry, in practice and appreciation, had become a common commodity. A great deal of seventeenth-century Scottish verse was popular in a way that chose to overlook or appear to overlook the distinctions of class and convention, crossing boundaries between language, usage and genre. Poets took elements from several native traditions of verse and song, and from English poetry, and blended them to their own needs, in the same way as the eighteenth-century vernacular poets were to do.

"Mixing" of poetic modes is most readily observable in verse from the great houses. Great families are represented disproportionately in preserved manuscripts because of more careful record keeping and it is therefore not possible to determine whether mixing of modes was more common in great houses than among other groups. There is, nevertheless, a particular value in the preservation of this large body of poetry from the great houses and professional circles in that such circles contained people with education and leisure enough to cultivate poetry from a background of familiarity with the range of older and contemporary verse. The work of such poets can be assumed to illustrate, if informally, the "state of the art".

Both the plain and vernacular styles of poetry are represented in the manuscripts and the same collections furnish important evidence of the composition of poetry and song closely anticipating eighteenth-century interests. Vernacular poetry, often mixed with plain style wit, clearly became not only acceptable but modish among the sophisticated, their models drawn from the popular poetry of the late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century broadsheets and the folk tradition. The taste for folk song grew throughout the century, composition of poetry and song in imitation of the oral tradition becoming common in great houses and in legal and medical circles. This fashion in entertainment was as influential as broadsheet verse in shaping the poetry which was taken up with such enthusiasm by Ramsay and his successors.

Several music and poetry collections illustrate the inclusion of popular or folk tunes and words in upper class entertainment. In the music books of the family of Sir William Mure of Rowallan, better known for his Anglo-Scots poetry, Helena Shire has found evidence of the coming together of courtly and popular, particularly in a lute book from 1615-17:

> It is an album of some fifty items, dances, tunes, and songs. There are no words. The contents range from 'Wolt' and 'Spynelet' through music in dance rhythms for his great-uncle's 'Whenas the Greeks', to tunes for the Scots native air, some of them names and airs in use to this very day for Scottish dances, 'Corne Yairds' or 'Katherine Bairdie', the 'Battel of Harlaw' that is both ballad and dance tune, 'O'er the dyke, Davie' and 'In an inch I warrand you' that come in other seventeenth century collections and 'Gypsyes Lilt'. 'For kissing for clepping for loving for proving' occurs twice, once with the note 'set to ye lute be Mr Mure'. The tunes that he played on the lute, then, span the same range as the music to which he wrote the words, from courtly dance-song to regional, indigenous airs and rhythms.[13]

In Mure's collections and original work there was both a continuity with the court, which had left Scotland only a decade before, and conscious cultivation of the more popular aspects of the Scottish tradition. Mure brought together both aspects of his culture in music, as Montgomerie had in poetry in *The Cherrie and the Slae*. Later in the century, as the

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13. *Song, Dance and Poetry*, p.213. Mure's "great-uncle" was Alexander Montgomerie. Mrs. Shire also emphasises Mure's blending of the popular and courtly in his original work.

courtly influence receded, the results of such blending were increasingly popular in tone, certainly more so than Montgomerie's or Mure's original work.

Robert Edwards' Commonplace Book, c.1633, is an invaluable source of information about the enjoyment of music and poetry in great houses.[14] Edwards was minister of Murroes parish and a frequent companion of Maule of Panmure, from whose collection of music books the manuscript comes. The diversity of the contents is indicated in the National Library of Scotland's catalogue description:

> The MS consists of songs, psalms, motets and instrumental items, several of which appear twice, scraps on the history of music, and poetical items alone. Many of the pieces are Scottish in origin but English and Continental composers appear, as well as pre- and post-Reformation music.[15]

On folio 45 of the manuscript is a list of song titles which is an excellent illustration of the range of material drawn upon for the entertainment of a fairly typical upper class household:

> the bussins
> put on your sarke on monenday
> Jhon come kisse me nowe
> Ouer the mountaines
> til I be lullid beyond the
> She rouid me in hir apron
> The Saraband
> hey the day dauis
> The tarrier
> The Ile of rea
> Amyntas on a sommers day
> bonie Jean Lyndsay
> Goe where thou uilt goe
> uilt thou be gone

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14. NLS MS 9450, from the Earl of Dalhousie's collection. For description of the contents of the MS see Shire, "Robert Edwards' Commonplace Book and Scots Literary Tradition", *Scottish Studies*, 5 (1961) 43-9, and Kenneth Elliott, "Robert Edwards' Commonplace Book and Scots Musical History", ibid., 50-6.

15. NLS unpubl. rev. catalogue of mss. Several of the art songs are also in the "Leyden Music Book", NLS Adv. MS 5.2.14, compiled c.1639, possibly by William Stirling with later additions. Further duplications occur in *Cantus, Songs and Fancies*, printed in 1662 by John Forbes of Aberdeen. Additional information on song and music collections can be found in the source list in *Music of Scotland*, ed. Elliott and Shire.

Come sueit loue
Joy to the persone of my loūe
The kings poesie
Sueit smyling Katie loues me
Come kisse and bid me ueilcome home
Lyk as the turtle doeth bemone
Tel me daphne uhere auay
I loue magie and magie loues me
O frend
Come kisse til ue be wearie
Jock and Thome
The Spanish laydie
Shoe loues indeid and yit sayes no
My loue sho uinnes not heire auay
Ouer late in the broume
Buckinghames brawe
Tis worse nor deathe to pairt withe the
The Laydie Louthians Lilte

doun in yon garden
The thunder his carrier
Omnia Vincit amor
tell me vhere thy gold lyes
ecce novum gaudium
She can not et c-
had eūer on such cause to mourne
the more diferent the weilcomer
billie
Jhon andersone
drink boyes rore boyes
sueit Villie
Mackay
it was a etc
gar send hir a letter she shall
neuer get me
The gaberlunzie man
So blythe as ūe haūe bein
The dentie shoe maker
Ouer bankes ouer brayes
The sojers miserie
Scotland sueit and true

This seemingly indiscriminate convergence of "high" and "low" — folk, popular and art — song reflects what happened in Scottish poetry generally in the seventeenth century. Use of popular and folk material for entertainment was not unprecedented among the gentry of Scotland; the Bannatyne Manuscript includes folk material and references to the court's enjoyment of folk ballads and song occur from early times. Court poets had used the language and irony of the folk to enrich their poetry

on many occasions. But in the seventeenth century, art poetry and song, without the focus of a royal court in Edinburgh or Stirling, relied increasingly on material preserved from earlier times, imported from the English court, or imitating other English and Continental fashions. This could not provide a lasting basis for entertainment nor could it continue indefinitely to strike a responsive chord in its audience. Accordingly, in an atmosphere of political turmoil, increasing nationalism, resentment of the king's absence and difficulty in relating to material from earlier times or other cultures, folk and popular songs began to play a much larger part in the entertainment of sophisticated people, and in their literary models. This transition from the courtly was facilitated by the incorporation of popular elements in some recent court poetry, particularly Montgomerie's, and by the firm establishment of new modes with a plain diction and popular style outside court circles.

A pattern of "types" can be discerned in Robert Edwards' list of song titles, types which continued to appear in lists and anthologies until the end of the eighteenth century. James Thomson's Music Book of 1702, for example, contains a list of pieces for solo recorder that is a mixture of parlour songs, classical pieces (which had by then replaced the courtly), folk and popular tunes:

Emperor's March
I love my love in Secret
Minevit
Richmond Ball
Come Sweet Lass
Saw you my loue Migey Linken Ower the Lee
Happy Groves
French Minuet
Geld him Lasses
Earisch Ayre
March
Trumpet Tune
Trumpet by Mr. Short
Trumpet
Trumpet
Shorts Trumpet minevit
What shall I doe to show[16]

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16. NLS MS 2833.

Similarly, the contents of Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems* (1709-11), Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany* (1724-27), Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads etc* (1776) and the work of Burns with Johnson and Thomson, all show a concurrence of art and popular song and poetry.[17] Of course, as literacy grew published song became accessible to the less leisured as well as the leisured classes, and Ramsay, who gauged his market well, published as much with tenant farmers and shopkeepers in mind as for the gentry. So, from the early seventeenth century until at least the end of the eighteenth century Scots retained a desire and capacity to enjoy a range of poetry and song without losing their ability to discriminate between "types", and without suffering a "fragmenting" of their minds or their "national consciousness". When coalescence of genres occurred, either in entertainment or in composition, it was frequently and obviously deliberate. The strands of verse and song in Robert Edwards' Book can be traced, developing and at times merging, throughout the seventeenth century. Song, because it is enjoyed in all circles, and because it is often repeated and learnt, can have a formative influence on literary taste and literary practice. In this, Robert Edwards' Book provides the literary historian not only with evidence of the range of song available to singers, players and song writers, but also with an important mirror of contemporary taste.

The Panmure household's obvious eclecticism allowed it to enjoy music and words from the full range of the national song culture and from abroad. There is no reason to believe that Robert Edwards and his friends were unusual in this, indeed, it is likely that the homes of their guests were much the same. It can be inferred that the tastes of these same well-educated people in poetry were as wide as their tastes in song, or at least as flexible. The following outline of the "types" of song represented in Robert Edwards' Book is intended to provide background for an appreciation of the variety of Scottish literary life, and to indicate

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17. NLS MS 5778, the Newbattle Abbey Music Book, c.1680, is damaged, making transcription difficult, but in "lessons for ye Violin" it is possible to distinguish Scots airs among the French and classical pieces, galliards, marches and minuets.

the similarities between certain kinds of song and the different kinds of poetry in the plain and vernacular modes as they developed in the century.

Court Song

"The Lady Louthians Lilte", a fine example of courtly song, is recorded not only by Edwards but also in William Sirling's Music Book (Adv. MS 5.2.14) of 1639 and is said to have been written by Lady Anne Ker,[18] probably after the court removal. "Hey the day dauis" is Montgomerie's courtly/popular song. "Doun in yon garden" is a moralising of an English courtly song.[19] "Lantran of Loue" is in the Bannatyne MS, as is "Support", and "Onlie to you in the vorld that I loved best" is Scott's. The MS contains several other poems, now known to be songs, by Montgomerie. Others in the list which were courtly in origin include "Joy to the persone of my loūe", "The kings poesie", "My loue sho uinnes not heire away" and "Tis worse nor deathe to pairt with the". While there is clear evidence of the continued enjoyment of court song and poetry well into the seventeenth century, the influence of the court tradition on the development of the main poetic modes of the century was slight, perhaps because its sentiments, vocabulary and milieu became outmoded, or were consciously rejected as they were in the broadsheets. In music, however, the influence of court song continued to be felt in the eighteenth century, as courtly tunes were adapted to plainer words and became part of the musical life of the nation.

Anglo-Scots Art Song

Much of the parlour song of eighteenth-century Scotland has its origins in Anglo-Scots art song which was largely sentimental imitation of English pastoral song. Representatives of this type in Robert Edwards' list are "Amyntas on a sommers day", "Lyk as the turtle doeth bemone" and "Tell me Daphne uhere away". Amyntas, Daphne, Chloe, turtle doves and myrtle shades became part of the stock of fashionable entertainment

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18. For text see *Music of Scotland*, Item 73.

19. Ibid. Item 62.

well before the eighteenth century.[20] Anglo-Scots art songs are frequently indistinguishable from their English counterparts but poets occasionally incorporated pastoral elements inherited from these songs into songs invested with enough Scottishness to give them lasting popularity. In the second half of the seventeenth century William Cleland used the art song tradition without producing sentimental pastoral in, for example, "O're Hills, o're Mountains" (or Fancy Free) as opposed to his conventional art song, "Hollow my Fancie".[21] And Burns' "Flow Gently Sweet Afton" is justly admired as Scottish song, yet although Daphne has become Mary and the vocabulary has a touch of Scots, the scenery is that of art song, not of the folk tradition. Pastoral and popular merged from time to time in poetry throughout the seventeenth century with some success and that merger bore fruit in Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*.

Folk Song

"Jhon cum kisse me nowe" was one of the folk songs "changeit" in the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis", although doubtless Robert Edwards knew it in its unchanged form. "John come kisse me now", "She rouid me in hir apron", "Ouer late in the broume", "John Anderson" and "The Gaberlunzie man" have continued in the folk tradition, while "The bussins" and "put on your sarke on moneday" were also folk songs. Robert Edwards' Book also contains the words to traditional ballads, notably "Little Musgrave" and "The Leesome Brand", indicating an interest among educated people in the oral ballads long before the work of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collectors. Colvile mentions that a seventeenth-century account book of the Earl of Mar "records within a few months gifts to 'a blind singer at dinner', 'a Highland singing woman', 'Blind Wat the piper' and 'ane woman harper'"[22], further testimony to the use

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20. Tom Crawford kindly lent me, through the auspices of Emily Lyle, the manuscript of his forthcoming book *Burns and the Popular Lyric*, in which he examines in detail the development of Anglo-Scots art song from the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century. I am indebted to him for his extremely useful guide to a complex subject.

21. Cleland's songs are Items 72 and 71 respectively in *Music of Scotland*.

22. "Scottish Culture in the 17th Century", p.28.

of traditional entertainment in great houses and suggesting the very opposite to a "split between the popular and the cultivated" in musical taste. The repertoire of these entertainers would certainly have included, or consisted solely of, folk ballad and song, and it was from such sources, as well as from family tradition and household staff, that families such as that at Panmure House would have gained a knowledge of the folk tradition. That knowledge, among educated and leisured people as much as among families like Burns', played a crucial part in the vernacular poetry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sometimes being used for imitation folk song, sometimes being drawn on to enliven popular poetry, occasional or satiric.

Popular Song

The broad category of popular song includes songs in the manner of folk songs composed by sophisticated authors, and songs purporting to be folk songs which were actually propaganda or satire. In general such song was composed, like its poetic equivalent, for broadsheet publication and consequently reflected aspects of contemporary popular style. Examples of popular song from Robert Edwards' list are "Suiet smyling katie loves me", "I loue magie and magie loves me", "Bonie Jean Lyndsay", Buckinghames brawe", "Jock and Thom", "The Spanish laydie" and "The sojers miserie". Throughout the seventeenth-century manuscripts and broadsheets, popular song is widely represented, often accompanying the vernacular poetry to which it contributed much distinctive character. The names in Robert Edwards' list are the stuff of Scots popular song — Katie, Maggie, Jean, Jock and Tom, the Spanish lady and the soldier. All appeared again and again, and were regarded as archetypes even in the early days of the English fashion for Scots song catered to by D'Urfey and others in the broadside press, songs composed for a specific broadsheet market which sold in Scotland as well as in England, many of them entering the Scottish oral tradition[23] or influencing the

23. My father's family, many of whom emigrated to Australia from Buckie, Banffshire, between 1900 and 1925, used to sing a song about "Jocky blyth and gay" who "kissed sweet Molly in the hay" which had a chorus we all sang out: "I canna canna winna winna manna buckle too". Nobody was ever quite sure what this meant. In 1977, reading for this thesis, I found that this song, a part of the oral tradition of my family for generations, was composed in England by Thomas D'Urfey.

composers of popular song in Scotland. Two outstanding and familiar seventeenth-century Scottish popular songs are "Maggie Lauder" and "Killiecrankie", which are part of a robust national tradition used for entertainment, satire and propaganda until at least the nineteenth century. The influence of such songs on the poetry of Scotland was deep and lasting, and few of the well known vernacular poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not also turn their hand to popular song.

Convivial Songs

Throughout Edwards' list, particularly in the latter half, are a number of ambiguous titles such as "She can not etc" and "it was a etc". The ellipses suggest bawdy concerns. Some versions of "John Anderson" are bawdy, John's wife bewailing her husband's loss of sexual powers and "The more diferent the weilcomer" was also probably bawdy.[24] Drinking songs, of course, have been perennially popular in Scotland. "Omnia Vincit Amor", an example of the preservation for centuries of a courtly song, has been used as a drinking song in the best of circles. Court drinking songs were sometimes more sophisticated than Robert Edwards' "drink boyes rore boyes": William Stirling's collection has one example, "Now lett us sing Christ keip our king".[25] The same song is included in Thomas Wode's part books, 1562-c.1592, providing a date of composition much earlier than Stirling's collection (c.1639). The song is also preserved in the Scottish Record Office, dated verso, in the same hand as the text, "20 Ocbr 1629".[26] Drinking songs from the court were clearly preserved as assiduously as courtly art song. "Now let us sing"

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24. Calvinism clearly did not affect the taste for bawdry in the seventeenth century. Scottish Record Office MS RH 13/40 includes a small notebook, in an almost illegible hand, definitely 17th century, which contains art song, psalms, hymns, and bawdy songs.

25. Adv. MS 5.2.14, f.6v.

26. SRO MS RH 13/40. I have used the SRO text as it differs from the other versions, seeming, oddly, closer to middle Scots orthgraphy, and having a more robust expression than the text in *Music of Scotland* (Item 48), based largely on Thomas Wode's version. Stirling's version is plainer still. See Appendix for full text of SRO MS RH 13/40.

plays on the parts in a male voice choir, each part having a special reason to drink in order to improve the voice:

> Now let us sing Chryst keip o^{r} king
> Christ keip o^{r} king sing altogether
> Christ keip o^{r} king and long to reigne
> That we may sing lyk faithfull brother
>
> Deame fill ane drink & we shall sing
> Lyk merrie men of music fyne
> Tak Bacchus blissing it to bring
> Sua it be wicht as any wyne
>
> Iff it be waik gar giff it ye trible
> Because he singis ye deirest pairt
> Small drink and butter makis him able
> Sic foode perteinis to his pairt
>
> The counter is ye pairt of all
> That dois requyre ane michtie voice
> Deame fill ane drink ay qn I call
> For I must drink at everie close
> ...
> This airt of musick is ryt dry
> Of all the sevin ye mirriest
> Deame ye ar sweir that lettis ane cry
> Once fill the can & so go rest

Witty drinking songs like this were part of the life of the court that continued to appeal to the gentry of the seventeenth century. Celebrations of drinking prowess in the vernacular style also became firmly entrenched amongst the sophisticated in the second half of the seventeenth century. Whilst drinking songs often had trifling concerns, they reflected the social lives of their composers and played an important part in accustoming fashionable ears, more used to "music fyne", to rollicking vernacular verse, and in disseminating the vernacular style of verse. Many convivial songs were in the "loud" manner of "drink boyes rore boyes", but some were in a quieter mood like "So blyth as we haue bein". Similarly, Burns wrote and collected songs celebrating masculine drinking and sexual exploits in the bawdy, bar-room vernacular tradition as one of the "Hairum, scairum, ram-stam boys", but also used the vernacular to recall nostalgically the delights of youthful days in the company of good friends, such as in his version of "Auld Lang Syne"[27]. Occasional

27. Watson printed a version of "Auld Lang Syne" as a love song in a plain, English style, attributed to Francis Sempill. It would be the only "parlour" song from Sempill if it is his. There is another version of the song sometimes said to be Aytoun's.

verse and verse epistles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries often used the vernacular in the same ways, to celebrate conviviality and to express reverence for good friends and good fellowship as essential to a happy and creative life. The tradition of convivial songs in the seventeenth century cannot be underrated for its part in entrenching the vernacular style of verse through the most influential of occasional use, and for its reflection of an outlook which valued "fekful friends", as Hume had done, though in a different social context.

The importance of taste as an arbiter of style cannot be disputed, and the poetry of the seventeenth century mirrors the same diversity of style and thematic preoccupations as are obvious in song. Indeed the more complex nature of poetic intention led to further combinations and variations on the available models, and the creation of new modes. As collectors and composers, families such as the one at Panmure House made an invaluable contribution to poetic life. The great houses and professional families of Scotland created some of the most well known vernacular pieces of the century — songs like "Maggie Lauder" and "She Rose and Loot me in", and poems like "Habbie Simson" and "Bonnie Heck". Among their family papers can be found the beginnings of some of the most important poetic forms of the century to come: the verse epistle, the mock elegy, the vernacular narrative and the vernacular occasional address used satirically. The same people took a lead in the development of the witty plain style, largely English in orthography but Scots in voice, which was the other dominant mode of the century and which gave much of its tone and wit to vernacular poetry.

The broadside press and popular verse of the period demonstrate that diversity of taste and style were not confined to the upper echelons of society. Popular poets imitated folk song and ballad, parodied art song, carried on the "austere" tradition of godly diction

and occasionally experimented with the plain style. Many of the sophisticated poets, too, published in broadsheet, bringing their plain style wit or vernacular songs and poems to the wider audience.

Folk ballad and song thrived in a century of heroes and battles. A number of new ballads appeared and some were printed, as were genuine folk songs for which there was a growing demand in upper class circles. Hence, folk poetry and song achieved a broader currency as there was a more rapid assimilation of folk ballad and song into the wider tradition than had previously been possible, and a mingling of the folk and broadsheet traditions which became largely inseparable in the popular market. Satire, of course, utilised all the modes from art song to folk ballad and became one of the most entrenched forms of poetry in seventeenth-century Scotland, part of the popular conception of the normal function of poetry.

The literary historian, then, confronts in the Scottish seventeenth century not a "dead" period but a complicated, lively plethora of poetry and song which consolidated, changed, separated and merged repeatedly. Space militates against examining the complete picture but bearing in mind the range of material in Edwards' Book as a background landscape an adequate beginning can be provided by tracing and analysing the most important forms of poetry within the two dominant modes to suggest how they may have emerged from the apparent chaos and to define their relevance to eighteenth century poetry. Such an analysis, conducted in the light of evidence available from Edwards' Book and similar collections, firmly indicates that an interest in vernacular song, older court poetry, folk balladry and folk song, and in the writing of poetry in the plain and vernacular styles was conventional before Watson published his *Choice Collection*, or Ramsay his *Evergreen* and *Tea Table Miscellany*. The inevitable conclusion is that the eighteenth-century "revival" in fact represents a flowering of forms of poetry that had been developing throughout the seventeenth century in a direct line from the late sixteenth century, not a

sudden reawakening of interest in poetry that had been languishing for a century. The seventeenth century is, thereby, far more important to the literary history of Scotland than has previously been thought.

Chapter 10

PLAIN STYLE POETRY: "MIDWAY BETWIXT THE VULGAR AND THE WISE"

Plain style poetry, especially popular for satire throughout the seventeenth century, had its origins among the late sixteenth-century Scottish satirists. Although such poetry used predominantly English vocabulary and was increasingly influenced by English satiric verse, it maintained an essentially Scottish flavour through the use of colloquialisms and tersely ironic humour. Moreover, the plain style poets shared the outlook of their protestant satirist predecessors and the vernacular poets in seeking to ignore class decorum and poetic convention in favour of witty and incisive comment, cultivating a "civilised" but not pompous tone. Despite its sophistication and usually learned origins, plain style poetry was popular in the broadest sense motivated by similar concerns to vernacular poetry, and envisaging a much less exclusive audience than that envisaged by the Anglo-Scots poets who continued "self-consciously literate" poetry after the court left Scotland.

The plain style did not develop immediately or effortlessly from its broadsheet forbears. For some time Scottish poets clearly perceived a need for a new mode, but some were unable to break with courtly conventions and others turned to a pedantic style heavy with classical references and anglicised vocabulary. Neither course proved suitable for the social purposes and new audience which poetry had to satisfy in the seventeenth century.

The Middle Way

In "Scotland's Teares" Alexander Craig consciously attempted to create a new kind of verse. A formal lament on James' departure from Scotland

to take up his English throne, it is in many respects an unsuccessful poem with a ponderous metre and forced formality bearing little relationship to the lively plain style:

> When fabling *Aesop* was at fatall *Delphos* tane,
> And there by doome condemn't to be precepitat and slane,
> He like a woman weep't, and tooke delight in teaires,
> Cause they alleuiat and made less the conscience of his caires.
> But *Solon* when he spi'd his deerest sonne wes dead,
> He weep'd the more, because his teaires to greif gave no remead.
> (ll.1-6)[1]

However, in "The Avthor to His Booke" which precedes the poem, Craig announces his search for a middle way in poetry:

> When *Dedal* taught his tender Sonne to flee,
> Out through the subtile watrie vaults of aire:
> Goe not too high, nor yet too low, sayd hee:
> Of Floodes beneath, of Fire aboue beware:
> So home-bred Rimes you *Icare*-like must rise,
> Midway betwixt the Vulgar and the Wise.
>
> For you shall be vnto the Vulgar sort
> No fit propine, because not vnderstood:
> And with the Wise you must have small resort,
> Since they can reape in reading you no good:
> Like *Dedalus* I then direct, thus flie,
> Goe neither low, nor yet I pray too hie.
>
> And though you be directed to a King,
> By any meanes approach not Court I pray,
> For some will say my precepts pricke and sting.
> And some shall scorne, some carpe, some cast away:
> But (as you must) if toward Court you goe,
> Since friends are few, I pray you breed no foe.

While the style of "Scotland's Teares", in failing to maintain the plain language of the preface, fails to achieve Craig's stated objective, it is clear that he possessed the same awareness of the changing audience, the same distrust of the court and the same concern for immediate communication as had Davidson, Robert Sempill, James Sempill and Hume. Yet Craig's efforts to steer between a "high" and a "low" style result only in a conglomerate poem which in places, particularly in the opening, relies heavily on the conventions of court poetry, and elsewhere approaches the plain style:

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1. David Laing (ed.), *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series. Volume has no consecutive pagination. Poem dated 1604.

Now riuall England brag, for now, and not till now
Thou has compeld vnconquered harts and sturdy necks to bow.
What neither wits, nor wars, nor force afore could frame,
Is now accomplisht by the death of thy Imperial Dame.
(11.15-18)

When Craig allows his native diction to penetrate, rather than keeping a "middle way" by vacillations between aureate or very anglicised verse, he produces a style which merges English and Scots, courtly and popular, without forced formality:

Rich neighbour Nation then, from thy complayning cease:
Not thou, but we should sigh, and so to our complaints giue place.
Our garland lacks the rose, our chatton tins the stone,
Our Volier want the *Philomel*, we left allace alone.
A Oligarchie desolate, with strayng and onkow face,
A maymed bodie now, but shaip some monstrous thing,
A reconfused chaos now, a countrey but a King.
(11.27-34)

Scottish reaction to the Union of Crowns is here expressed in a mixture of languages and references which mirrors the mixture of pride and fear many Scots felt at James' departure for England.

Craig adopted the title "Scoto-Britaine", but made no serious effort to "English" his poetry, rather taking what he wanted of English style and vocabulary and marrying it to Scots style and vocabulary. Although he feared that Scotland might lose her separate identity, Craig tried to see a positive side to the Union of Crowns, particularly in the idea of peace through unity actively promoted by the king:

And since the Gods decree (Great King) that so shall bee,
That Peace must florish in thy time, and Wars must cease and die,
But competition too, since thou hast England's Crowne,
Which was a *Heptarchie* of old, of vncontrould renowne,
Let Vs and *Al-bi-on*, that wee with one consent,
One God, one King, one Law, may be t'adore, serue, keepe, content.
(11.79-84)

In his poetry Craig saw the "middle way" as a union of traditions, neither too high nor too low and fitted to the new life of Great Britain, but his search for this middle way lacks confidence, just as his conventional political analysis lacks conviction. As an astute political observer he foresaw trouble from the Union of Crowns, and as a prominent

man of letters he was aware of the potential damage to Scottish culture inherent in yoking it to a more dominant culture. But whilst Craig was aware of the changes his society had undergone and would yet undergo, he was not a man of the new order and reveals a much closer poetic affinity with Sir Richard Maitland than with the succeeding Scottish seventeenth-century poets.

Craig's conservatism is obvious in "Satyra Volans" where, though his "middle way" is much more effectively controlled, his satire is in the traditional courtly mould, thematically akin to the "general satires" of Dunbar, Lindsay, Scott and Maitland. The poet despatches his muse to criticise corruption, weakness, dishonesty and selfishness in the various institutions and orders of society, Court, Church, Nobility, Rich Men, Merchants, Clerks and so on: "Goe, Swift-Wing'd SATYRE through all the States, but feare" (1.1). Contemporary society is not absent from the poem but Craig dwells on classes and abstracts: "Tell, Knowledge wanting Zeale, is nothing worth; / And Zeale but Knowledge, many Schisms brings foorth" (11.35-6). Occasionally there is a glimpse of the wit characteristic of later work in the plain style: "Pray judges have but two, not dowble Eares / Some say, their Hand, cheife Organe, sees, groapes, heares" (11.37-8). But he does not strike at individuals or specific examples in the incisive manner of Hume and, more characteristically, the broadsheet poets. Craig seeks solutions in the universal application of accepted ethical standards, and in the whole society working towards a single goal. Unlike Hume he does not hold the exercise of reason and individual responsibility above all else, and like Maitland he does not welcome broadside verse, although he shows awareness of the irony in his own satiric role:

> Bid some Satyricke find-fault Poet, take him
> To some more lucrous trade: His Vane will wracke him,
> He hath good Wits, and yet a Foole doth spende them.
> Fit to find faults, but most unfit to mend them.
> Thus having runne, and rayl'd till all admire Thee,
> Fall on thy Face, beg pardon, and retire thee.
> (11.63-8)[2]

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2. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

"Satyra Volans" is a polished and effective satire, but could easily be the product of a much earlier time. It lacks the pointed realism and biting irony which is a feature of seventeenth-century satire, motivated by specific events and characters, and constantly embroiled in the day to day political life of the nation. Craig rejected the court in part, but did not find a suitable voice, poetically or philosophically, in which to express that rejection, and continued to be aware of the court, its opinions and its literary conventions.

George Lauder's experiences during the same years were similar, but when he rejected the court he sought a replacement in soldiering:

Hence fond desires of Love, out of my brest,
I am not with such follies now possest
As earst, when waiting on a woman's will,
We thought it Heaven to stare at Beautie still,
And joy'd in errours maze (blinde foole) to wander
Slave to a peevish faemenine Commander.
My hours of Sleepe, are now no more mis-spent
In painful studie how to compliment,
Nor doe I doating sitt with down-cast eyes
To dreame on Sonnets or sad Elegies:
Which may vnfold my love, and loving paine
To a fierce Faire who doth my sute disdaine.
A better genius doth my thought direct
Than such soft fancies pleasure to affect.
Honour and fortunes love my heart enflame,
Through dangers, yea and death, at that I ayme:
The trumpet sounds more sweetlie in mine eare,
Than any Ladyes lute that I can heare,
And I doe thinke no daunce doth so become
As to keepe marching measure with the drum,
I find more sweet content in my vnrest,
Than when I seemed to love my follyes best.
And now I can sleepe as sound vpon the ground
As ere I did vpon the softest dovne.
("The Sovldiers Wishe", ll.1-24)[3]

Lauder's poetry, like Hume's, often possesses a strong personal note, but his poetic innovations are few in comparison with Hume. The sentiments he attaches to soldiering and their manner of expression differ little from the sentiments he had attached to the court and their

3. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series. Laing took the text from a transcript of the printed copy, Edinburgh, 1628.

expression by contemporary court poets. Hume explored a new system of values and consciously sought a new kind of poetry, and when the broad-sheet poets rejected the court because they saw its values and conventions as irrelevant to a more modern society, they either wrote in a popular style, whether plain or vernacular, or parodied the courtly. But Lauder underwent no revolution in outlook as a result of his break with the court, nor did he seek to modify his poetry in any way other than to echo contemporary English verse. He simply replaced one set of social and poetic rules with another, and failed thereby to convey any genuine sense of personal liberation or to subject established values to any rigorous moral or ethical questioning:

> For when I doe but thinke what I haue beene,
> How I have lived as the World hath seene;
> What fancies fittes, desires, despaires, hopes, feares
> My self haue felt alone; how many teares,
> Nights shads haue known me shed: what cloaths disguise
> The day hath seene me weare of sundrie dyes,
> What new-affected phrases I found out,
> What apish walkes and gestures, strange salute,
> I laugh for anger, and misdoubt almost,
> My self: If I bee hee was so neere lost.
> And wondring how I did escape my fall
> To which I ranne, not heeding Reason's call,
> I cannot thinke that I was borne, I vowe,
> Till I began the life which I lead now.
> All those delights which once I held so deare
> Compar'd with present pleasure, doe appeare
> Poore childish toyes: The sent of musk and amber,
> The wanton dalliance in a ladies chamber,
> Smell not so sweet into my nose as smoake
> Of match and powder when two squadrons shock
> And heaven is cleft while earth doth tremble under
> Mens weight, the sounds of stroakes, and canon thunder.
> Or when like rain in lightning musquets poure
> Balles from beseiged walles, in leaden showre.
> To see a bresh defended and assailde.
> A fort most bravelie forc'd, a city skailde,
> Such sport I love and long for, and to bee
> With honour killd; or crownd in victorie.
>
> (11.33-61)

No doubt Lauder's contempt for the idleness and affectation of court life was genuinely felt, but in effect his new life offered only another kind of affectation and another distortion of values. Consequently, although

his style and personal voice were in some ways similar to the developing plain style, he stopped short of developing the positive aspects of that style. His verse is more spiteful than witty, and irony is more often caused by his own pretentiousness than by an intention on his part to expose weakness and corruption. His diction and tone do not approach the popular, but nor do they have the sophistication of contemporary English verse. Lauder made little attempt to come to terms with changes in the intellectual climate, and certainly displays little awareness of the expanded audience for poetry, an audience more concerned with the effects of battles on individual lives and the political life of the nation than with one officer's personal preference for the "joys" of war over the dalliance of an absent court. Lauder really belongs to the tradition of presentation poetry represented by elegies on the death of Prince Henry, assorted welcomes and farewells to monarchs (which he also wrote), and encomiums for state heroes (which he hoped to be). He may have believed that he had left court life behind, but the conventions governing his poetry were thoroughly attuned to the patronage of the court.

"The hurly-burly of Scotts business"

More relevant to the social and political climate, and more representative of the kind of poetry in the plain style which was to influence future Scottish poetry, is "A Satyre Against the Prelats" (April 14, 1638):

> Doe all pens slumber still, dare they not try
> In tumbling tymes to let their Pasquils fly?
> Each houre a Satyre craveth to display
> The secrets of this Tragick-Comick Play.
> If Love should let me wreat, I think you'd see
> The Alps and Pyreneis come skip to me,
> And laugh themselves asunder, when I trace
> The hurly-burly of Scotts business,
> And to the World abused once but tell
> The legend of Ignatian Matchiavell;
> That old bold smoaking monster, and the pryde
> Of these usurping prelates, that dare ryde
> Upon authoritie, and look so gay

As if (good men!) they aucht forsooth to sway
Church, State, and all ...
(11.1-15)[4]

The poem is a call to arms, emphasising the need for other satirists to tell "the World", to expose to scrutiny the principal figures in the tragi-comedy, in the detailed manner of the broadsheets which the poet affects to eschew. The poem issues a threat to the prelates — "Nay pray you heavens once lend me but your thunder, / I'le crush and teare these sordid Slaves asunder" — but its most significant function is to assert the power of printed satire and popular opinion:

Had I but half the spyte of Galloway Tom,
That Roman snaky viper, I'd fall from
Discreeter lynes, and rub their itching eare
With Spanish Novells; but I will forbare,
because my softer and my amorous quill
Is not yet hard proud Pasquils to distill:
I doe intreat that droll Joann de Novell
To sting them with some Satyrs hatch'd in Hell;
Each dog chyde these tobacco-breath'd Devynes,
Each pen dart volumes of acutest lynes,
And print the shame of that black troup profane
In livid words, with a Tartarean straine,
Since I a Lover am, and knowes not how
To limb a Satyre in halffe hydeous hew,
Like to polypragmatick Matchiavell,
In pleasant flame, not stryfe, I love to dwell.
But now to Paris back I go to tell
Some news to plotting Richlieu. Fare yow well.
(11.53-70)

The poet's feigned detachment from the fray contributes to the irony, in the same way as Robert Sempill's "simple" stance. In fact, the poet's self is constantly present in the poem, and the irony arises from his pragmatism. While the machinations of the bishops, the Kirk, the politicians and the court might not have been affected by the opinions of the satirist, the opinion of the "World" — of the audience caught up,

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4. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series. Laing says the poem "is ascribed to Drummond of Hawthornden by Sir James Balfour". There is no proof for or against the ascription. The poem has the flair one might expect from Drummond, but there are no other satires from Drummond to compare it with. Not even *Polemo Middinia* can be considered as being in the same vein.

like the poet, in the wheelings and dealings of a few powerful men — would be. The author of "A Satyre on the Prelates" understood the relationship between popular opinion, printed satire and government, a fact which is reflected in his style and voice.

As this author anticipated, the Covenanting and Civil War periods encouraged a spate of satire and polemic on both sides. The use of the plain style became more common, to some degree because of the parallel increase in plain satiric verse among the English satirists. In Scotland, originality and increasingly sophisticated use of the style is evident, though the poems are rarely extended and clearly the products of the hour:

Upon a Pilate Bishop

A learned bishop of this land,
Thinking to make Religion stand
In equall poyse on every syde,
A mixture of them thus he made:
A pound of Protestants he singles,
And with two pound of the Papists mingles
A quarter of Arminianisme,
Befitting well that double schisme,
With one scruple of a Puritane,
And beat them all in his brain-pan;
But when he comes them to digest,
The scruple troubles all the rest:
But nought craves Bishops, so they have
Rome's keys againe, to damne and save.[5]

A pragmatic concern for contemporary issues remained central to Scottish satire from this time on. The poet, asserting that moderation and Toleration are impossible, that the one "scruple" represented by Puritanism was strong enough to disturb all attempts at compromise, implies that only Puritans have scruples, and therefore right on their sides. The clever combination of an everyday metaphor with political or religious comment is typical of the plain style, as is the octosyllabic couplet used here, the plain, rather anglicised diction retaining some Scots words, and Scots rhymes ("syde" with "made" for example).

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5. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

Also in the 1630s, R. Lightoune parodied some of the conventions of court poetry to create a satire which has all the wit we come to expect from verse in the plain style, and some of the grace of Augustan poetry. Lightoune wrote a squib on the Provost of Edinburgh, one Aikenhead, which turns on a Scot pun:

That which the name pretends is falsely said,
To wit, that of an Aike his Head is made;
For if that it had been composed so,
His fyrie nose had flamed it long ago.

It seems Aikenhead was not amused by this and demanded an apology. Lightoune's "Apology" adopts a "high" tone, as if in deference to the superior position of Aikenhead, but only to further satirise him and his pretensions:

Come, Muses all, help me to overcome
This thing which some ill-mynded Muse had done;
For sure the Furies, and no sacred Muse,
Has taught madde braines such patrones to abuse.
But since the fault committed is so great,
It is the greater honour to remitt;
For if great Jove should punish everie cryme,
His quiver emptie would become in tyme:
Therefore sometymes he fearfull thunder sends,
Some tymes sharpe arrows on offenders spends;
Some tymes again, he swan-lyke doth appeare,
Or in a showre of crystall waters cleare;
Fooles scornes Apollo for his glistering beames,
Lykwayes the Muses for their sacred streames:
But as they doe, so may you eike despyse
Your scorners. For why ? Eagles catch no flyes.
Fooles attribute to you a fyrie nose,
But fyre consumeth paper, I suppose;
Therefore your Lordship would seem void of fyre,
If that a paper doe dispell your eyre';
And if that this remeid doe stand in steide,
Then shall the laurell crowne your Aikenheid:
Now, since it's thus, your Lordship, if it please,
Accept ane triple cure for ane disease.[6]

Lightoune displays the wit and flair typical of English satire a little later in the century, and also a significant kinship with later Scots

6. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

satirists through his use of conversational diction interwoven with "high" literary references, and Scots interwoven with English in the vocabulary to produce irony.

Although early seventeenth-century satirists grasped the effectiveness of the plain style for short, clever pieces, it was some years before the style was adopted for longer poems. Two poems of the mid-century, "Scoticlassicum" and "Grampius Congratulations", are in plain language and simple metre, with clear stanza divisions, in the manner of earlier propagandists, but neither shows the sophistication of idea and control of the prosody evident in earlier, much shorter satires.

"Scoticlassicum", printed in 1650, is propaganda against Cromwell and the parliamentarians in defence of the Scots over the death of Charles I. It eulogises Charles II as the answer to Scottish prayers for the expulsion of Cromwell's troops. The first stanza welcomes the new king and the second immediately focuses on the object of most concern to most Scotsmen:

> The Heavens have heard our groans at length,
> Our Prayers have with God prevail'd,
> And all the damned plots are fail'd,
> Which Hell did hatch with skill and strength.
> Great *Charles* our Sunne (ecclypst almost)
> Shines fair on Caledonias coast,
> His beames the blackest clouds doe cleare,
> The Temples in loud thanks doe Sing,
> The Castles pales of Cannon ring,
> And Ioy doth ev'ry where appeare.
>
> See how those Helhounds Snarling stand,
> Those branded Currs that bark'd of late,
> Against the Country, Church and State,
> And curse afarre this happy land:
> Malicious Mastifs, shame of men,
> That durst so long a King detaine
> From those that su'd him even with teares;
> You'd rather see him beg his bread
> Then *Scotland's* Croune set on His head,
> Because you have no credit there.[7]

Both the diction and metre are somewhat reminiscent of godly poetry even though the righteous tone is employed in a condemnation of the Puritans.

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7. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

Polemic, not satire, dominates the poem which is largely narrative. Partisan ferocity produces some lively passages, but the poem falls well short of the fluency of shorter satiric pieces. Ironic lightness of touch is precluded by the poet's hatred of Cromwell and desire to please the king:

> Goe with your renting rascall rable
> Of Colonells coyn'd without cloakes,
> Stout men in talk, if words were stroakes,
> And valiant at a wel seru'd table:
> Wee hate that damning cursing crue,
> Whom there oune Country forth did spew,
> And who have drawn these Iudgements doune.
> There wicked lives, blasphemous toungs,
> Oppressions, Villainies, and Wroungs,
> Have to these fires the bellowes bloune.

The other extended poem, "Grampius Congratulations in plain Scots Language to His Majesties Thrise Happy Return", 1660, celebrates the Restoration. While the language of the poem appears to be more English than "plain Scots", it would doubtless have been intended to be pronounced as Scots. It is significant that the poet should have chosen to emphasise the plainness of his language. The poem originated from Aberdeen, famous in the period for Latin poetry, and the poet may simply have wished to distinguish his poem from a number of Latin poems on the same occasion. Nevertheless, the title demonstrates an awareness that plainness and Scottishness had become fashionable in poetry. The author chose the plain style as "Scots" because by 1660 such a style was valued in Scotland, contrasting not only with Latin poetry but with the "high" English style of eulogy employed by more conventional poets.

The conversational, sometimes casual, language in "Grampius Congratulation" is deliberately phrased to reflect the growing fashion for plain expression. Stanza divisions and a metre reminiscent of psalmody are used with more control than in "Scoticlassicum":

> Of twelve sad years, one tedious night
> We'ave had, and now the day grows light,
> Our Sun is up, awake my Muse,
> Thy drousinesse I'le not excuse.
> We have been dead, and now we live
> Again, and shall we no thanks give?

In our next life, if we give none
To God, Why Resurrection?[8]

Inspired by the restoration of monarchy, the poet reveals a strong belief in the potential for an artistic renaissance under the new order. And though poetry did not die between 1638 and 1660, the lack of a monarch or any other tangible focus for literary life, save the embattled Kirk during the Covenanting wars, or the "oppression of the nation" during those "twelve sad years" of Cromwell's occupation, clearly took a toll on those who would have turned to the "higher" pursuit of poetry. The polemicists and satirists, however, had thrived, and this poet, despite his preference for the role of inspired poet, longing for "lost" forms of poetry, and despite his lack of practice with satire, had absorbed enough of the satirist's craft to produce the occasional biting stanza and to echo the puns, wit and colloquial vocabulary which had been familiar to the satirists since the Reformation:

And with the truth if we may jump,
Our *Scots* house sometimes had its Rump,
And Likewise a fanatick blood
Made some heads think that ill was good.
But now that brain-sicknesse, (great odds)
Is turned doun to an Emerauds:
So if our Royal Doctor please,
To obviate the like desease,
Let us be purg'd, and Leeches set,
While th' ill is at our Postern gate,
Lest it break back again, and breed,
Some new distemper to the head.

Ironic Detachment

The most prolific period for the Scottish plain style occurred after the Restoration when, for a time, poets were less caught up in the momentum of events and were able to detach themselves sufficiently from political life to assess it with a more measured gaze.

The main elements of the style continued to be those which developed with the earlier simplification of diction in the second half of the

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8. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 1st Series.

sixteenth century: irony, use of concrete detail, personal references and humour. However, increasing mastery of English among the Scots poets, largely as a result of the greater spread of printing presses during the Civil War, meant that they incorporated some elements of English satire into their verse, particularly from the work of Butler and Dryden. The development of highly sophisticated satire in England, of course, was as much a response to contemporary events and growing political sophistication as was the development of plain style and vernacular poetry in Scotland. William Frost, in his Introduction to a selection of Dryden's works, observes:

> Though something of a scholar, translator, and admirer of old poets like Homer and Chaucer, Dryden was also an intensely interested observer of his own time and place: he loved the court, the theater, the London scene, the ferment of new ideas, and the clash of political opinions. These contrasting qualities of his personality result, in his best verse, in a kind of irony — he is involved in his own world, and at the same time is observing it from outside.[9]

The same ironic detachment developed among the Scots poets, probably for different reasons. No Scots poet equalled the achievement of *Absolom and Achitophel*, and some fell to the depths Dryden described for Shadwell in "MacFlecknoe" (although that name is of Irish descent), yet the best of them produced satires which compare favourably with the work of many of Dryden's less brilliant but accomplished contemporaries and imitators. The Scots poets, however, were not simply imitators of Dryden, or even Butler to whom they often bear a close resemblance. They brought into their poetry much which was derived from the Scots pioneers in plain style satire. Moreover, they shared with their contemporaries writing in the vernacular a concern with Scottish affairs, a knowledge of Scots popular verse forms, and a wry humour usually earthier than Dryden's and more personal than Butler's. Scots plain style satire is distinct from English satire not only in the occasional rhyme indicating Scots pronunciation, but in a diction which uses Scots colloquialisms as comfortably as it uses English scholarly jargon or English political puns, and a voice that is typically Scots.

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9. *John Dryden: Selected Works*, ed. William Frost (New York, 1971), p.xiv.

This voice is realistic, pragmatic and ironic, at times cynical, and doubtless a result of the Scots having experienced such intense confusion of political and religious loyalties, particularly between 1638 and 1660. Such confusion tended to encourage amongst the more thoughtful Scots poets a reticence to place their trust in any one politician or any one set of ideas, at least until after the Jacobite risings of the eighteenth century, by which time the tone of ironic pragmatism had become a feature of all but the most unoriginal Scots satire, and of most Scots poetry except love poetry and songs.

The protestant sense of self and self-reliance which had become part of the intellectual accoutrements of the Scots, both Presbyterian and Episcopalian, came into its own as an aid to social and political survival in the latter part of the seventeenth century. For many it was preferable to cultivate a satirical insouciance than to commit themselves to any of the numerous "causes" which continued to occupy their contemporaries. The monumental events of the last years of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth — the Revolution, Darien, the Union of Parliaments, the 1715 Rising — evoked some very cynical responses from sophisticated quarters. The "tongue in cheekness" which middle Scots court poets had applied to various subjects, from the king to the king's dog, and the plainspokenness of protestant writers were easily assimilated into the emerging forms of poetic expression. Serious though most of the satire continued to be, there is a certain underlying humour — a wry suggestion that the poets do not take the whole matter totally seriously — and a recognition that every event in Kirk, state, social life and one's own home has a comic, absurd or pathetic aspect.

The tone that developed from this attitude was one of "sceptical, ironic downrightness"[10]. In the plain style the result was a poetry which, on the one hand, echoes the facility and wit of sophisticated English verse and, on the other hand, even when written in English, has a Scottish parochialism and Scottish pragmatism from which it either

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10. David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, p.76.

universalises or narrows the focus for local satire.

Short, personal attacks on notable figures continued to be commonplace, a poetic habit which featured in the vernacular throughout the eighteenth century. Burns was a fine exponent of the practice in such poems as the "Address to Beelzebub" and "Holy Willie's Prayer". Typical of such satire in the seventeenth-century plain style is a poem preserved in the National Library of Scotland which is an attack on Charles Maitland during his joint "regency" of Scotland in 1674. It is a vicious poem, predominantly in English, but includes Scots words and phrases. A mingling of languages is not uncommon in the plain style and from the rhyme scheme the poem is clearly intended to be read with a full-bodied Scots accent.

"A Satyr on Charles Maitland and his Lady" is the work of a Presbyterian with a complete lack of respect for Maitland as a person and as a governor, and no concern for the effect his attack on the morality of Maitland and his wife might have. Apart from this total absence of scruples on the part of the poet, an attitude inherited from Reformation and Covenanting satirists, the most notable aspect of the poem in relation to older plain style verse and the continuing tradition is its conversational diction:

> Bliss me how comes it thus to pass
> That we are rul'd by ane Ass
> Yet Balaams beast spake in the way
> But this can nather sing nor say
> Save boast by nonsense he doth bable
> Little Antichrist at councell table
> What boldness hath that man to sit
> Who wants both sense & mother wit
> Me think that shame should dy his cheeks
> Or he for fear be-sheit his breeks.
> He as sole Hector doth command
> In such a Domineiring way
> That non his folly dare gain say
> But it grieves me most to hear
> That our sole palace (with out fear
> of God or man) should thus be spoilt
> By dull contrivance of a Dult
> Is this good service to your King
> Presumptuously for to bring
> Your stinking crows nest as you please

And spoile the rooms for there black ease
What hath she not no other place
To cockle you to your Disgrace
But she forsooth most be set in
The Kings choise house to stain't with sin
And sacraligiously she most
By feeding her thus in her lust
Break down the Church through Hellish greed
To build a kitchin throw the dead
And noble persons thus to raise
There brutish fancies for to please
I's't not a pity that the King
Should not be acquainted with the thing
Yet they're not fear'd but ere long
They'l be remitted by Pope John
Sure I am afraid you end your life
Like Achab & his painted wife
If we do not revenge the deed
And shoot this dull dog throw the head.
(Adv. MS 23.3.24)

This piece illustrates the way in which a distinctive Scots plain style developed through the amalgamation of stylistic elements from earlier protestant satire with an "English" style. It combines English and Scots vocabulary, conversational plain style diction and godly diction, and a tone of righteous indignation which is intended to be shared by the audience.

A similar disrespect for persons in authority, particularly government appointees, is clear in "On Baillie justice by the Advocats outed Ao 1672", another satiric poem in the same manuscript, which conveys a sense of outrage at power being taken out of the hands of the "public" and placed in the hands of government officials. While it is more witty and less strident than the poem on Maitland, it passionately expresses protestant individualism and the growing conviction that people should participate in their government and legal system. Once more the poem cultivates a conversational diction, and an evocation in its tone of likeminded people communicating in plain language about a matter of interest to all:

When laws are silenc'd & the noble gown
By Act of Session is forfeit to the crown
When barrs & pulpits groan with discontent
For what no art or Language could prevent
When Evangelick doctrines we know non

But the thrice weekly epistle of St. John
When parliaments in spite of Sandy Ross
Are denunc'd rebells at the Market cross
When men are all by the ears & non know how
Dancing to the tune of John cum kiss me now
Then are we harrass'd & whipped by all
That for justice we unjustice call
Justice who meant to draw (o brave design)
Fyve lawyers fies out of one Lawyers fyne
But being chok't be law he used his power
As void of Law as reason to this hour
Inviron'd with his rusty habbatiers
He looked on us like shipwrackt privatiers
Thus when we're frownd on by superiors pouers
The very Leckies kicks us out of doors
Withall respect to the Letter on Record
This is downright Injustice in a word
Justice is pictur'd blind & so was he
For drink some times doe hinder men to see
True justice hath no hands & his are gone
But justice has a heart & he has non
And for his tongue its only proper use
Is for his follies to demand excuse
And curse the Bishop who had too much care
To blow up justice in a justice air
But that we see the church makes sometimes bold
With images of clay as well as gold
Injurious wretch o may we not be free
To appeall at least from such a slave as the
No let us hold our peace and suffer all
Least he procure a letter from whithall
Forbear starting justice without heat
Since we with Cowper justice daily meet

(Adv. MS 23.3.24)

Written, no doubt, by a lawyer whose ironic use of the couplet produces a sense of argumentative reasoning, the poem conveys an incisive understanding of political realities. The old sentiment, familiar from late sixteenth-century satire, of refusing to be led a dance, or as this poet expressed it, "by the ears", here takes on a very positive aspect as attitudes expressed in earlier satires — distrust of the powerful, regard for reason, faith in individual judgement — come together in the clear-sighted pragmatism typical of plain style poetry. The last four lines, in particular, reveal a cynical perception of the political conundrum facing the Scots, with the poet suggesting that it is "better the devil you know" than the unknown "devil" of Whitehall. At the same time, action against Cowper, the devil they know, remains a possibility if the plans

are not discovered by the intended victim. The last lines do not express desperate frustration, but rather a calculated biding of time, whilst the hope that members of the legal profession and the Kirk might take matters into their own hands suggests a positive reward for patience. "Justice", in other words, can be achieved by the people if they exercise caution and reason, leaving rashness and unreason to those such as Cowper. The plain style, with its puns, wit, irony and capability to carry clever argument and hidden meaning is, of course, an ideal vehicle for the expression of the poet's ideas.

Dialogue in short stanzas proved popular with plain style satirists and was used in "A Dialoge betwixt Hamiltoune and Lauderdaill" to comment on the behaviour of nobles involved in the struggle for the control of Scotland in the 1670s. As later poets used the monologue or dialogue to allow characters to expose their own weaknesses, so this poet presents Hamilton and Lauderdale in conversation with each other about how they use, exploit, and mislead others. The irony is generated above all by the fact that the two men were bitter enemies:

Lauderdaill

Are yow the man that darr withstand
My pleasur, with a pettie band
   Off tiplers, that surround yow?
I'le lett yow know
That with one blow
   I'm able to confound yow.

Hamiltoune

Your blust'ring cannot doe us wrong,
Should yow wear out your buffleing tongue,
   So pray proceid no forder;
But lett's express
The practices
   By which we cheat each other.

Lauderdaill

Sometymes I catch a simple Lord,
Who, for small help he can affoord,
   'Mongst loyall men's inrolled;
I'le swear a King's
A sacred thing,
   And sould not be controlled.

Hamiltoune

I know a trick as good as that,
When I a Lord mynd to intrape,
The best way to secure him,
To make him myne,
Is to resigne
Ane old Love to assure him.

Lauderdaill

I have ane airt which never faills.
My Master's letter still prevaills,
Who does extreamlie trust me;
It's by that hap
I keep my cap,
For as ill as ye wish me.[11]

In an earlier time a satirist would no doubt have committed himself to one side or the other in a quarrel between two nobles, but in the 1670s the poet was committed to the Kirk and the people of Scotland in the struggle against corruption in government and loss of political autonomy. Like the author of "Baillie Justice", the poet was angered by the lack of power of the educated middle class — lawyers, clergy, lairds and merchants — while the political fate of the country was fought out by two men whose only claim to authority was birth and who were acting out of self interest and for the interests of their respective political masters "furth of the realm". The use of a popular form and plain style to dismiss the two men and express the growing cynicism of educated Scots was motivated in the same way as the use of popular stanzas and simplified diction by Reformation propagandists, Civil War satirists and contemporary vernacular poets. An exposé of corrupt government figures would have had little impact if written in the court style often characterised by extravagant eulogy and equally extravagant diction. Though it is in a plain rather than vernacular style, the ironic way in which Hamilton and Lauderdale reveal their own duplicity and selfish cunning through the dialogue anticipates poems like Burns' "Holy Willie's Prayer" and "Death and Dr. Hornbook".

A similar tone of ironic cynicism dominates the more sustained and more successful "Ane proper new ballad upon the redress of greivances

11. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

proclamed the 25 March 1674 for sound of trumpets cannons, bells etc. To the tune of Tunbridge new Doctors or puddingtones pond". Set to a broadside tune, albeit an English tune, the poem uses the plain style, combining Scots and English vocabulary, to reflect popular opinion and to denigrate the proclamation by trivialising it, commenting ironically on the efficacy of trumpets, cannons, bells, and processions in curing the manifest ills besetting Scottish government or putting to rest the discontent of the people. As an intelligent observer of Scottish affairs the poet is amazed and amused by the London government's attempt to hoodwink the Scots into believing that they are content, and suggests that the majority of people are not deceived:

> You Lords Barons Burgers and Some Earles rejoyce
> And leckies groumes Coachmen & trumpets make noyce
> For since Scotland was Scotland our heraulds avow
> They never had money for shoutting till now
>   Ffor from London towne
>   Is lately come downe
> Ane Soveraigne cure for diseases unknown
> All former indevours this plaster excells
> And cures us by trumpets robes Cannons & bells
> ...
> O Soveraigne cure for the sores of a nation
> To amuse boyes and girles with a grand proclamation
> To swear that we now from diseases are pure
> That our Quack and his men may be pay'd for ye cure
>   Whillest meantyme we lye
>   In our old maladye
> And for new sitting free parliaments cry
> O free us Good Heavens from such counterfeit Quacks
> That would make us believe that our noses are wax.
>   (NLS MS 6503)[12]

There is a strong similarity between this poet's use of a popular tune and stanza, his imagery of quack physicians and their cure-all remedies, expressing the familiar refusal to be hoodwinked, and Robert Sempill's popular tune and dance imagery in "Ane new Ballet" on the same broad theme: "we can see through their tricks to the real hold they have over our lives". Indeed, the pragmatism and cynicism in satire of the latter part of the seventeenth century developed in a direct line from the

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12. See Appendix for full text.

earliest sense of "enlightenment" expressed in some of the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis", through the broadside emphasis on self-education, self-reliance, and clear-sightedness. Nevertheless, commitment to a cause seen as the right and rational way to defeat conspiracy and corruption had, by the last years of the seventeenth century, been transmuted into a sense ironic detachment. Such a position, while it did not always eschew causes or the pursuit of justice for all, stressed individual liberty in a way which encouraged the exercise of strict scepticism concerning political events, so that commitment to a cause came only after objective analysis of the entire situation, and even the committed could be sceptical.

While Presbyterians and Episcopalians shared a certain degree of cynicism about the representatives of Whitehall, the Presbyterians were more vehemently opposed to the kind of government James VII & II had imposed on them. The Episcopalians frequently expressed great fear at the prospect of power being held by the Presbyterians, and this fear was translated into satire presenting the Presbyterians as headstrong and dangerous fools. In a poem preserved in the Scottish Record Office, one Episcopalian uses the wit of the plain style, well suited to portrayal of the Presbyterians as uncivilised dullards, and also turns their godly diction against them. Like the Presbyterian poem on Maitland and his wife, this poem is vicious propaganda and it demonstrates that both sides were convinced of the satiric strength of the plain style:

> did yee not sie how babels whore was mounted on a sow
> how these of all professions did to the idoll bow
> The devill he did usher her, a Bishop bore hir Taile
> a papist went on everie syde and did hir caice bewaile
> Then after came John presbiter as with his late address
> and whill hir tale was thus born up, he gravelie kist her arse
> kind hearted John your meanings good, she gave yow libertie
> butt who could think that yow would had a finger in the pye
> Mercy quoth John it was my mind by touching hir foundation
> On hir a protestant to gett by hir own toleration
> To ly wt babels whore for what? to gett a protestant
> Where find yow such ane article in all the Covenant
> ptut, Covenant its out of date lang since wee laid it by
> Its serv'd its tyme at first right well and so of late did I
> Remember John yor truest friends that live into the west
> who hate King James als much as yow the bishops and the test
> The Covenant they have reviv'd, for they stood in the gape

> yow think its dead, perhaps they gare it craw into your crap
> ptut, they know me, and I know them even all these westland Whigs
> what e're our differences be wee are the same Sow's pigs.
>
> (SRO RH 13/40)

It is clear that the poet was Episcopalian and a king's man, but he shows no respect for any faction in the religious wrangle. Interestingly, the technique employed to satirise religious fanatics is the same that all parties used to satirise government and governors. The Presbyterians appear as time-servers with more power than sense and more zeal than reason. As such they may have been objects of derision but they also represented a real threat to this poet's understanding of political stability, either through their internecine squabbles or, more seriously, through their tendency to ignore royal authority if it did not accord with their own ends. On the same page, in the same hand, is a poem anticipating the Revolution, addressed to King James. A similar conversational diction is used in addressing the king as was used in addressing John Presbyter; indeed, it is more, rather than less, familiar:

> hold fast they sword and Schepter James
> bad tymes are comeing on
> The murmuring of the Synod house
> smels rank of fourtie on
> When kings are cal'd to give accompt
> what their expenses be
> It aither seems we are all Kings
> or els no Kings must be.
>
> (SRO RH 13/40)[13]

It seems that the loyalists were not self-deceiving (though they had tried, rather naively, to defuse popular discontent on orders from London) for here is a Scottish voice employing the political pragmatism and common sense approach of Presbyterian satire to offer timely advice to the king without flattery and without softening the blow of political reality.

Although commitment to one side or another did not preclude a remarkable degree of pragmatism and cynicism, much more inspiration for effective use of the plain style apparently resulted from scepticism toward politicians and causes of every hue. After the Revolution, the

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13. See Appendix for full text.

king had been changed and a new set of politicians held the reins for the king in Scotland, but the disrespect for kings and politicians on the part of some satirists persevered. "The Order of Parliament Burlesque 1701" levels criticism at all the members, listing them and their faults in the manner of the broadsheet poets of a century before:

> Below the feet of Pat the Earle,
> Sitts a fyne, false, and foppish Carle,
> First Knighted for his changing sydes,
> Then Viscounted for counter-tydes,
> He acts both Preses and a spokes-man,
> Yea, every thing but a true Scotsman;
> He off-hand ansers all Objections,
> But very oft mistakes the Questions:
> His thoughts are dull, his hands are craveing,
> His soul's but mean, his nodle raveing,
> Yet he harangues before the Vote:
> For all his pains he's thought a sott,
> Saveing the art of turning coat.[14]

Considerably longer than similar poems from the decades before, this poem has an "eighteenth-century" ring to the satire, sustaining its wit and irony throughout in a mixture of Scots and English.[15] The origins of this style, much closer to vernacular poetry in diction and tone than earlier plain style poems, lie in the characteristics of seventeenth-century poems such as those traced in this chapter: the conversational diction, the ironic couplet, the careful combination of colloquial Scots, English jargon, and more sophisticated English and Scots vocabulary. Moreover, earlier poetry in the plain and vernacular styles provided the source for the tone of intelligent observation, lack of awe for authority, frustration with time-servers and irrational men, dislike of "foppish" court flatterers or political parasites, and ironic detachment from the scene described. "The Order of Parliament Burlesque", written in the first years of the eighteenth century, does not simply reflect English satire but draws on a well-established tradition of Scottish satire

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14. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series. There is a version with slight variations in SRO GD 26/15/16.

15. See also the contemporary "The Poor Clients Complaint", *Choice Collection*, Part I, p.17, which has a very similar style.

and shows how fluent that tradition had become, and how easily it would merge with the vernacular tradition.

Distrust of governments and governors increased with the negotiations for the Treaty of Union of 1707. Clearly many people in the late seventeenth century were of the opinion that most of those responsible for the government of Scotland were motivated by self-aggrandizement rather than by commitment to the nation or to good government,[16] and the Union apparently confirmed their belief. The general feeling of frustration and annoyance, expressed frequently in contemporary and later poetry and song, is summed up in "A Characteristick song applicable to the Union", written in the plain style:

> Foul fa my Een
> If ever I have seen
> Such a parcell of Rogues in a Nation
> The Campbell and the Grahame
> Are both equally to blame
> Seduc'd by a strong Infatuation
> The Squadrony and the Whig
> Stand uppish and look big
> Have a mind for to ride us at pleasure
> To lead us by the nose
> To what they do propose
> And enhance to themselves all our Treasure.
>
> (NLS MS 2935)[17]

Re-iterating the century old scorn for being led "by the nose", the poem itemises the misdeeds of nobles who worked for the achievement of Union, pragmatically recognising that Scots nobles, as well as the English, practised deception and corruption. After the Union one poet was delighted when the Scottish peers found that they had not benefitted as much as they had expected:

> Our Dukes were Devills, our Marquesses were Mad
> Our Earles were Evil of Earlly none more Sad
> Our Viscounts villains, Lords false villains be
> Foul fa them e're saw such a pack for me

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16. For further illustration of this attitude see "On the Earls of Broadalbin, Lithgow, Drumlanrig, Lord Tarbet etc" (EUL La. IV 29 and Adv. MS 23.3.24) in Appendix.

17. See Appendix for full text. There is another version in SRO GD 26/15/16, more generalised, and a reply.

They sold the church they sold the state and nation
they sold their honour, name, and reputation
they sold there birthright, peerages, and places
For which they now doo look at angry faces
But are not such rare merchants surely nick'd
Who ance were peers, and now the De'il be lick'd.
(SRO GD 26/15/3)

The tone of "sceptical, ironic downrightness" which permeates eighteenth-century Scottish poetry was obviously not born in the eighteenth century. It began during the Reformation with a distrust of secular authorities who were seen as opposed to the will of God and committed to oppression of the godly, and was expressed in the broadsides of the time in poetry which drew on common speech, either godly, plain or vernacular, and cultivated strong popular associations. The style and concerns of that poetry were inherited by the poets of the Covenanting and Civil War periods who variously satirised princes, prelates, politicians and zealots with an equal disregard for decorum and who continued to cultivate popular associations. By the opening years of the eighteenth century, in plain style and vernacular poems, the mocking of figures in authority had become a poetic commonplace which could manifest itself in vindictive scorn of the type obvious in "Foul fa my een" and "Our Dukes were Devills". The new century witnessed a coalescence of attitudes, of the robust independence of spirit and concern for the public good which was a legacy from the early Protestants, and the scepticism which had grown upon Scots poets during the seventeenth century.[18]

As a result of the Union, divisions in Scottish politics became even more confused, and whilst Scots poets did not stop taking sides, there is evidence in both plain style and vernacular poetry of a further elevation of personal preoccupations, of concern for the individual, family, friends and community, revealing an assumption that the most significant aspect of political life was the way it affected oneself and one's circle. Again,

18. Ironically, the eighteenth century saw a growing attachment to the exiled Stewart princes, especially among the vernacular poets. But to support or not to support Jacobitism was an individual's choice, not an allegiance blindly owed, and the cause of Stewart restoration, in any event, was inextricably confused with nationalism and anti-English sentiment after the Union of 1707.

there is a direct link between this outlook and the popular poetry of the preceding one hundred and fifty years. Presbyterian poets, in particular, had long expressed a fundamental concern for individual liberty and individual integrity, the Kirk providing a focus for that concern. While the Kirk relinquished its former predominance in the intellectual life of the country, Scottish fears — loss of personal or national freedom — remained the same and this continued to be articulated in poetry. What had changed by the end of the seventeenth century was the extent to which many were willing to sacrifice their personal preoccupations for a cause.

The Scots had experienced a violent and turbulent century during which, despite loyalty to one cause or another, many middle and working class people felt betrayed by factions and by the rich and powerful who had enhanced their own material and political positions at the expense of their supporters. It is a matter for historical research to uncover whether such experiences were isolated or common, and the extent to which the middle classes, especially, actually improved their wealth and political power considerably in the seventeenth century. From the literary record, however, it is clear that poets, like the author of "Our Dukes were Devills", and by extension their audiences, resented the power of the nobility and believed that they had been exploited, personally or nationally, by dukes, earls, and lords. It is a reasonable conjecture that resentment of the power of the nobility was motivated as much by a desire for political power on the part of the rest of society as it was by actual exploitation of the "commons" by the aristocracy; a desire for political power which grew out of the nature of Calvinism as well as out of the improved education and increasing wealth of the middle classes. Whatever the motive, a sense of resentment is kindled again and again in poetry of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

In the light of the upheavals of the years between the Reformation and the Union of Parliaments, and the mixed feelings of betrayal and ambition outlined above, it is little wonder that scepticism, or cynicism, replaced loyalty and zeal in Scottish poetry. The positive result of this was a further emphasis on self and self-concern which made the

everyday problems and joys of life significant material for poetry. So, poetry came to deal increasingly with the personal and practical rather than with the grand or abstract, and the resultant tone of close involvement of the poet with the subject is a major reason for the unusual gusto of Scottish poetry in the eighteenth century compared to most English poetry in the same period.

The evidently widespread mood of ironic detachment, of political scepticism and personal pragmatism, is demonstrated with force in "Conscience Resolved", a poem from the early years of the eighteenth century. There is no record of the poem having been published, but it occurs in at least three manuscripts and clearly circulated freely among likeminded people. There is an undated version, probably the earliest, in NLS MS 3807 entitled "Advice to Comist S----t". In NLS MS 2935 it is called "Conscience Resolved" and followed in the same hand by the description "The Common Opinion of the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland 1712", and in Adv. MS 23.3.24 it appears as "The Turncoat or Lynes of Advice anent takeing the Oaths", dated 1713.[19]

The poem deals with the problems Scotsmen faced in being legally required to swear oaths, such as the Confession of Faith of 1690 and the Oath of Allegiance (The Test) of 1701. During the previous century Scots had frequently been obliged with the tides of history to change allegiances, often against their consciences, or risk their social, political and indeed material security. The poet exhorts a friend to be willing to swear any oaths, arguing that rational men ought not to be expected to adhere to one party or another when changes in the power structure of the society are so frequent. In its message — that in the end one had nothing to lose but one's estate or one's skin — the poem conveys a refined sense of pragmatism.

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19. There are few variations between the versions. The 1712 version, NLS MS 2935, is in the Appendix and has been used here because it is the earliest of the dated copies. NLS MS 3807 is likely to be earlier still, because it is addressed to a single person in the manner of a verse epistle with which form the poem has strong affinities. Between the title and the poem in the 1712 copy, two explanatory lines have been deliberately obliterated. Only the last two words are legible, "his friend". There was probably mention of the names of the author and recipient.

"Conscience Resolved" reveals none of the bitterness and disgust conventionally reserved for traitors to a cause, nor is it a satire on turncoats. There is an air of sane practicality and ironic rationality and if judgement is passed on anything then it is on the state of the nation, a nation apparently more fickle than its citizens. Indeed, a citizen may well be left behind by a flood of political events beyond his control. The implication is that when a person cannot influence events, and is not consulted about them, his allegiances must be as uncontrollable as the events and his only option, finally, is to owe allegiance to himself as the one thing over which he has some control. The poem suggests that an oath counts for little when nobles have proved corrupt and self-serving; when kings wear two crowns and can be changed apparently at the whim of a foreign government; when the Kirk battles within its own ranks and kings seem incapable of determining what kind of Kirk they want. Also stressed is a concern that total loss of autonomy, and therefore total loss of control for ordinary Scotsmen, could result from the Union of Parliaments.

Pragmatism is taken to its logical extreme in "Conscience Resolved" which both offers advice and satirises the entire political and religious situation. The poem begins with a personal and direct appeal from the poet to his friend:

> What are yow mad are yow resolved to goe
> And beg ere yow subscrive a lyne or two
> Or swear alse many yow are voyd of sence
> If yow have such a squeaking Conscience.

For a society in which, traditionally, the keeping of one's word and faithful allegiance to one's friends, party or local nobility were among the basic tenets of civilised and patriotic behaviour, these lines would have considerable shock value. But, the poet continues, other and better men than his friend have sworn and broken oaths:

> Are yow more wise more learned than those men are
> I'm sure good friend you're not so rich by farr
> Consider Sir if yow refuse to swear
> Yow lose a place of nynty pounds a year
> Consider yow have neyr lands nor Rent
> And what yow can Command is quickly spent
> So yow must beg when from yowr place ye're gone
> Or feed on air like the Cameleon

Besydes you have a numerous family
Who if yow will not swear must beggars be.

The appeal, in the familiar tone and conversational diction of the plain style, is rational and warmly put. A truly loyal person, however, would not be swayed by it: he would be willing to sacrifice his income and even his family's well-being for a just cause.

The poet recognises this fact and consequently much of the poem is based upon the one argument which could prevail — an argument undermining the causes to which allegiance might be given. Thus, having chronicled the more absurd events of the previous century, the comings and goings of kirks and kings, the poet asks his friend whether, in the final analysis, the scenario should inspire a man to sacrifice his comfort, well-being and peace of mind. A prescription for the conscience is offered; a remedy for any scruples about the breaking of oaths, any misgivings about public loyalties:

Those who the Art of Oaths have wondrous skill
Have wt good success used this following peill
  Take of new coynd Distinctions ane once
  A pound of nyce quiddities of punch
  A simple of the greivance of the Nation
  Mixt wt some compleat mentall Reservation
  Of all weell mixt make two peills or one
  And gild them over wt Religion
  This peill will purge a scrupulous Conscience
  As I have learned by experience.

The "pill" is refined from the poet's perception of the political and religious opportunism of the preceding years, with the suggestion, in the "simple of the greivance of the Nation", that all the upheavals had achieved little in the way of improving everyday life for most Scots or providing them with genuine satisfaction. With this display of understanding about past events, the poet offers personal experience as a guarantee of the prescription's effect. Like Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* in which both sides in the Civil War are summarily dismissed with "men fell out they knew not why", this prescription, and the cynical approach throughout the poem, reduce to absurdity the great causes and events of the preceding century. In fact, *Hudibras* has more stylistic similarity to Scots poetry than any other major English poem of the seventeenth

century, and would have appealed in tone and diction to the growing band of Scots cynics, no doubt influencing their poetry. But the Scots had been quarrelling even longer than the English and were already cultivating a Hudibrastic attitude when *Hudibras* was published in 1662.[20] Common stylistic and attitudinal elements in Butler's work and that of the Scots poets were probably due more to similarities in motivation and perception than to imitation of Butler in Scotland. Moreover, if the Hudibrastic attitude is cultivated in isolation it leads to what C.V. Wedgewood finds in Butler: "In general Butler saw the world without compassion and without admiration, denying to humanity the slightest spark of nobility".[21] This was not the consequence of Scots cynicism. In the plain style and the vernacular there was a strong, and increasing, concern with "things humaine" and with the nobility to be found in even the most ordinary of people or occasions. "Conscience Resolved" was motivated by the poet's concern for, and desire to influence his friend, seeking to prevent him from taking a course of action which was not only foolish in the current political climate but could prove devastating. As such, and in the manner of much Scottish poetry after 1660, it combines scepticism with personal warmth.

The poet's prescription also reveals the practical message of "Conscience Resolved": that the ordinary office holder in a government, the ordinary landowner or lawyer, has power over little but is frequently victim to the broader ambitions of society and the nation. Throughout the poem this idea is present as the basic means of coming to terms with the conscience. The apolitical nature of modern western bureaucracies grew out of the same problem of allegiances confronted by the author of this poem, who was grappling with a concept which is taken for granted in many twentieth-century societies. If, however, an eighteenth-century Scotsman held an office or land under one government, for which he had fought and to which he owed allegiance, his office or land could be

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20. "Upon a Pilate Bishop", from the 1640s, uses the same metaphor as "Conscience Resolved", and has a similar ambivalence.

21. *Politics and Poetry under the Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1960), p.134.

threatened if he did not submit to the next government. The problem was intense for many educated Scots in the second half of the seventeenth century, and still at issue when this poem was written. All that such a person could reasonably do was adopt the stance of the modern civil servant, except that the only public he served was himself. The rationale was that if a person held a "place", then he was a salaried employee and ought not be disadvantaged by a change in the management. A modern but reasonable approach for an early eighteenth-century Scotsman, it came from the same roots as Adam Smith's economics, David Hume's scepticism and Robert Burns' poetry, holding the individual and ultimately the national good above party factions or bigotted orthodoxy. Such a position was clearly made more possible and more tenable by the tradition of spirited individualism and concern for public welfare established by the Scottish Protestants. However, earlier poets had often perceived the problem of corruption in government as soluble only through reformation of the system or the moral reformation of the politicians, and had little solace to offer the courtier or office holder save withdrawal from the battle (Hume's solution) or martyrdom in the cause of reformation. The author of "Conscience Resolved" offered a different solution which held out hope for the man who saw himself as an ordinary pawn in events. Effectively, it was the same solution which had always been available to the "mob", to Maddie and her peers. With the exception of soldiers, the "mob" remained anonymous after the event, their allegiance unknown and their martyrdom uncalled for in most circumstances, able to go on with their daily lives as best they could under the new régime.

The poet expresses his pragmatism in a style which was as much suited to contemporary life as his espoused survival code:

> It changed me so that I can now digest
> The new assurance Covenant and Test
> So that I judge it now the least of Crymes
> To steir my course according to the times.

Scottish poetry had long been steering its course according to the times, being shaped and re-shaped to reach a changing and expanding audience, to express the various and variable political and religious hues of the age, and to continue fulfilling its primary task of communication in a

changing society. In the account of his fluctuating allegiances which forms the remainder of the poem, the poet employs the jargon of seventeenth-century verse, the wit and irony of the plain style, and the plain speech and references to popular life which had become features of Scottish poetry since the Reformation:

I when it served to advance my gain
Jure Devino Bishops did maintain
Treated Jack Presbiter in Ridicule
Called him tub preacher puritan and fooll
And for to evidence I was no Whig
I swore & Drank & Danced the oyr Jigg
A litle after I did turn my Coat
And tuned my fiddle to anoyr note
I raxed my Conscience to the full extent
Cryed up the Pop subscrived the Acts of Trent
Maintained the Right of Popish princes and
Stood stoutly for the Absolute Command
But with the tymes I now am changed again
And learnt to chant it in anoyr strain
I call the Pop the beast in the Revelatne
A popish prince the greivance of the Nation
Bishops I call upholders of the whore
And helped for to vote them out of door
My only cry is now the Cause the Cause
Of sweet Religion liberties and Lawes
And that I may pass for a perfect saint
I cry alas the broken Covenant
Let oyrs boast of Ancient Tradition
I'm for religion of the last Edition.

Redolent with irony and sound, if somewhat unscrupulous, advice by example, the passage also conveys a strong, personal commitment to individual freedom:

I will not on my liberty incroach
I doe resolve to goe to heaven in Coach
He is a fooll who cannot temporize.

Frustration with bigotry and political caprice is as clear in the last lines of the poem as in the prescription, and the thoroughly self-centred tone of the last lines must be understood against the background of that frustration. None of the causes then fashionable, and none of the contemporary versions of religious narrow-mindedness seemed remotely to justify the loss of one's estate, with all the consequent loss of personal freedom, family security, comfort and future enjoyment:

I've sworn already (god be praised) the Test
The New Assurance also & the rest
Of these sweet oaths of wch this land hes plenty
And ere I lose my place I'll yet swear twenty
I'll sconse my conscience to receive all oaths
And change religion as I doe my Cloaths
In fine ere I should forfeit my estate
I'll swear alledgiance unto Mahomet.

Whereas the seventeenth century had begun with poetry being moulded into a new shape by the need to promote causes and express religious commitment, here the plain style, one result of that change in poetry, has become a vehicle for the disavowal of all causes and all public zeal.

The poetic energy which had over the years been expended in one cause or another had not been wasted. It left Scottish poets with a mode amply suited to express their modern pragmatism and their scorn of zealots of all kinds. "Conscience Resolved" belongs to the first years of the Age of Reason, and throughout the eighteenth century Scottish poets, writing in English, Scots or a mixture of both, continued to satirise hypocrisy, cant, political corruption and unreason, and to promote reason, common sense, "homely" values, and the importance of honest relationships between people. Scottish plain style poetry tended to merge with the growing fashion for English verse in eighteenth-century Scotland, but it made a crucial contribution to vernacular poetry. The two styles came together constantly in the seventeenth century, their mutual development intimately connected. This partly explains why vernacular poetry did not confine itself to folk themes and purely parochial concerns, nor to folk speech, and is also one of the reasons for the sparkling wit of some of the best vernacular poetry. Poets writing in the vernacular, who often also wrote in the plain style, and were certainly well acquainted with that style, drew on the conversational immediacy, the fluent use of a varied vocabulary from different languages and language registers, the political pragmatism and the intellectual sophistication of plain style poetry. The two styles of verse had many shared elements in tone, attitude, idea and language, but without the parallel tradition of plain style verse which was not simply imitating English poetry and was distinctively Scots, it is doubtful whether vernacular poetry would have been accepted in "polite" circles as readily as it was, or shaped into such a versatile vehicle for ideas and satire.

Chapter 11

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VERNACULAR TRADITION

Vernacular poetry was augmented in style and purpose during the seventeeth century, acquiring the tone and forms generally associated with eighteenth-century Scottish poetry. Broadly, vernacular poetry was influenced by the tradition of the makars, echoed or imitated folk song and poetry, built upon the foundations laid by Lindsay and the Reformation satirists, drew on the intellectual changes expressed by James Sempill and Alexander Hume, and was enlivened by the parallel development of the plain style. The enormous range of possibilities existing for seventeenth-century vernacular poets and the difficulties confronting the literary historian in unravelling such a complex series of literary and intellectual interrelationships are suggested by the survey of sources and analysis of plain style poetry in the foregoing chapters.

The developmental path followed by vernacular poetry in the seventeenth century was, in effect, predetermined by the work of the Reformation satirists and the changes in outlook exemplified in Hume's poetry. Poets further popularized their style, turning more than ever to folk models in diction and metre, but also using the popular elements from court poetry and the sophistication of the plain style. They continued to "report", to have an eye for detail and personality, to cultivate a familiar tone and an atmosphere of immediacy, and to involve themselves with a popular audience in voice, diction and preoccupations. Though they often employed older conventions to create new effects, most of these conventions either disappeared or were absorbed into newer forms of poetry during the seventeenth century.

Courtly conventions like the dream vision and flyting, although they did not continue in their own right after the seventeenth century,

made a substantial contribution to later poetry; the flyting, for example, encouraging throughout the century a lively use of language and metre which remained a feature of Scottish poetry. Other older and contemporary forms were parodied and in this way the descriptive colour, unusual diction and use of lists or catalogues common in prophecies, litanies, invocations and proclamations became part of the continuing tradition. Some of the most interesting new forms of the seventeenth century, such as dialect poems and lengthy vernacular satiric narratives, drew on the linguistic facility and catalogue techniques of flytings and mock elegies. Moreover, the truly characteristic vernacular poetry which later dominated the eighteenth century — verse epistles, mock elegies, satiric monologues, satiric addresses and "dying words" poems — originated in the seventeenth century. These carried on elements from the popular poetry of the broadsheets and the popularizing of art conventions, but they also broke new ground, shaping stylistic gleanings from a vast array of older sources into a vital and sophisticated literary tradition.

The new forms predominated at the end of the seventeenth century by which time vernacular poetry was established as a genre with its own conventions and traditions. Whereas it had been expedient for the Reformation satirists to popularize their poetry, by the middle of the seventeenth century popular poetry had become conventional, an alternative tradition in the literary life of the country. The contribution of vernacular poetry to that literary life was accepted in sophisticated circles as well as in the broadside press and was used for entertainment as often as it was used for satire. In a parallel development, vernacular song became fashionable throughout the social classes, enjoyed in literary society and proliferated in broadsheets. Thus, the typical forms of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry had their beginnings not in an early eighteenth-century revival of the middle Scots tradition and sentimental cultivation of folk song, but in the work of seventeenth-century poets who were, in their turn, building upon earlier poetry.

Scepticism and ironic detachment were as prevalent in vernacular poetry as they were in the plain style, often carried in a pithy, "peasant" idiom combined with the sardonic wit of the plain style. But the positive

aspects of the intellectual change which had taken place since the Reformation were developed more fully in vernacular poetry which proved an ideal vehicle for the new attitudes towards individuals and society. The forms of poetry which came to characterise vernacular poetry were those which reflected the human condition most forcefully, which stressed the personal or evoked a sense of independence and co-operation. The mock elegy, the "dying words" poem and the satiric monologue, for example, allowed the poet to dwell on character and community life, while the verse epistle and the occasional address gave scope for the expression of personal responses to other individuals, politics or society, and for expression of emotion. Since the elevation of the individual and personal was the most widely experienced and most elemental result of the changed outlook wrought by the Reformation and Renaissance, it is not surprising that it became the ethic governing poetic perception and poetic style. Such an outlook did not confine poets to limited themes, although their subjects were often parochial. Emphasis on the individual and personal meant that the poets' vision of man and society differed greatly, in the way Hume's differed, from that of the middle Scots poets. In the course of the seventeenth century, as the nation experienced a period of political and religious turmoil, and European intellectual life underwent an explosion of new discoveries and ideas, Scots poetic vision became increasingly modern, concerned with the small as well as the large, with the "psychological" and emotional as well as the moral aspects of human life, and with the individual and local as well as the archetypal and universal.

Some explanation for the unique character of vernacular poetry can be gained by examining the convergence, in the broadest sense, of popular and art poetry, and by exploring the influence of the plain style. Accordingly, these threads are the first to be traced in this chapter. Nevertheless, to achieve an understanding of how the many literary influences coalesced, and what contribution this made to the major forms of vernacular poetry, it is necessary to order the "fugitive" and familiar vernacular poetry of the seventeenth century in such a way as to reveal elements of continuity and of change. To this end the material has

been grouped into types of poetry and each type analysed to find how it relates to older poetry and how it anticipates eighteenth-century poetry. The grouping of seventeenth-century poetry and song under sub-headings, which is a critical apparatus and not intended to reflect stages in literary history, facilitates analysis of how attitudes, ideas and stylistic elements which re-occurred and developed throughout the century affected the major forms of vernacular poetry, and hence the poetry of eighteenth-century Scotland.

Poetry for the Times: the merging of art and popular

C.V. Wedgewood has described a "constant reaction"[1] between art poetry and popular poetry in seventeenth-century England and, while stressing the gulf between the two strands, perceived "... a temporary alliance, or at least a flowing together, a coalescence between sophisticated and unsophisticated verse at the time of the Civil War and the Commonwealth, especially among the Cavaliers".[2] The alliance of art and popular in England began with attempts to reach a wider audience and was strengthened when the defeat of the Cavaliers made the drinking song or ballad one of the few remaining ways safely to express opinions. It is significant that in England this crossing of the cultural boundaries occurred during and immediately after the Civil War "... when the rigid hierarchic social structure had been badly jarred by war and the opinions, both religious and political, of ordinary men were for the first time being freely and widely expressed"[3]. And it is equally significant that in England "this joining up of the two streams, the popular and sophisticated, did not last for long"[4].

In Scotland, the coalescence between popular and sophisticated poetry began much earlier, as a result of the controversies and disruption of a popular Reformation, and it was not a temporary alliance. There

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1. *Politics and Poetry*, p.191.
2. Ibid., p.192.
3. Ibid., pp.192-3.
4. Ibid.

were precedents among the foremost poets of the middle Scots tradition, if not in the sharing of popular opinion at least in the use of popular styles, and that alliance continued at least until the late eighteenth century, with elements of it surviving in the nineteenth-century novel and twentieth-century Scottish poetry. Outside the court, Scottish interest in popular forms began in the need which arose for wider communication of controversial ideas in the second half of the sixteenth century. Continued cultivation of popular poetry from then until the eighteenth century directly resulted from the social and political dislocation and change in the same period. Such changes, at that time in the histories of England and Scotland, were even more dramatic, and more permanently significant to the whole of Scottish society, than the impact of the Civil War and the Commonwealth on English life. The intellectual and social structure of Scottish life was never the same after the Reformation, the removal of the court and the advent of a highly educated middle class groomed in Presbyterianism or humanism.

In view of the complexity of the processes responsible for vernacular poetry, it would be misleading to seek its history only in those poems which are predominantly in the Scots "language". Clearly the Scots language was itself flexible in both its spoken and written forms, varying according to the social background, or literary purpose of the user. Nor should vernacular poetry be defined, for the purposes of literary history, as poetry containing more Scots than English vocabulary. What must be sought out are poems in a Scots voice more akin to the poetry of the Scots eighteenth century than to the poetry of the English seventeenth century. The plain style, often tinged with Scots and concerned with Scots affairs, nevertheless has many similarities to English satirical verse. Vernacular poetry was not necessarily separate from plain style verse, but continued the tradition of sixteenth-century vernacular poetry, drew on folk poetry and song, recalled stanza forms from the courtly tradition, and assimilated elements of the plain style. In this way it completed the union between popular and sophisticated forms. Poetry in the style we have come to call vernacular was Scottish poetry at its fullest expression in the second half of the seventeenth century, and had a decisive effect on the future of poetry in Scotland.

<u>The interaction of plain style and vernacular poetry</u>

Interaction between plain style and vernacular poetry played an important role in the formation of the distinctive style of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, partly accounting for its "modernism", its occasional affinities with Augustan poetry. Vernacular poetry developed concurrently with plain style poetry, the two interacting frequently just as they both made use of elements from older popular poetry and the folk tradition. Poets using the plain style, and predominantly English orthography and vocabulary, incorporated Scots words and phrases and "peasant" irony in their work, whilst those writing predominantly in Scots ranged freely between the styles, providing themselves with more scope. The separation between the English and Scots languages became less obvious in poetry by the end of the seventeenth century. Clearly, some plain style poets wrote verse indistinguishable from English poetry as the fashion for English poetry grew. But as a result of the strong feelings aroused by the Union, and by Jacobitism, the movement towards increasing use of Scots in poetry was accelerated.

In the early seventeenth century much of the poetry written by Scots in "textbook" English failed because it was written with an eye to court patronage and was out of touch with the rest of Scottish poetry and Scottish society. The robust and successful poetry of the time resulted from a more relaxed style, regardless of whether the vocabulary was predominantly English or predominantly Scots. Such distinctions can be extended to the eighteenth century when Scots poets writing in English exhibited significant weaknesses, not because of some national dissociation of sensibilities, nor because poets were unable to think in English, but because they were out of step with the mood of the nation and with the path Scottish poetry had taken. And similarly, the most successful poetry of the period made free use of either, or both, languages, and either, or both, modes of poetry. Its success should not be determined according to which language or cultural influence it uses, but by whether the poem effectively expressed its idea or mood in the contemporary world.

One poem from 1697, in which the poet expresses his opinion of an obviously pompous local politician, has a tone, metre and use of jargon similar to poems in the plain style, but the poet reinforces his conversational tone and air of common-sense outrage by introducing colloquial Scots. The poem is in Adv. MS 19.3.8, ff.50r-v and 51, and is accompanied by a background note in the same hand:

> Pasquill made in October 1697 at ye Electione of the Magistrats of Edinbrughe quhen James Steuart Master of the excisse braged boldly yat he behoved to Remove Achibald tode from being provost of Edinbrughe as he putt him in and for yat Causse moved Mr. Mungo Law to preach ane invective sermon against ye provost railling on him as a Malignant especially for giving his Vote for sparing of hartehills Lyffe.

The satire was motivated more by annoyance at the arrogance of Steuart than by a stated commitment to one side or the other in the quarrel:

> Tell me James Steuart is this toune yours
> Or boste ye from superior pouers
> Or have ye ane Electors woyce
> Or wold ye all our wottes in Grosse
> And all our Liberties inhance
> Forsuith James yats a prettey dance.
> Ye make such dirdum and such din
> Vith putting out and putting in
> That had ye throught it we'd bein sham'd
> Your Goodfather K. James Ne'r claimid
> The lyke: Nor his old Lyon's paw
> Threttinid as ye and your new Law.[5]

The combination of plain style wit and conversational diction, with Scots words and phrases ("such dirdum & such din", "Ne'r claimid / The lyke"), underlines the "ordinary man" persona of the poet and establishes a contrast to the proposed arrogance, corruption and hyprocrisy of Steuart. The description of the preacher's slandering of Todd strongly echoes the diction and tone of Robert Sempill's attack on hypocritical churchmen in "Crissell Sandelandis", and Burns' satire of canting preachers, particularly in "The Kirk's Alarm". The author of the James Steuart poem puns on the name "Todd" and its Scots meaning of fox:

> Was it ye sent forth yon man of God
> To mak sic hunting on ye Tod

5. See Appendix for full text.

From hole to Busse from Banck to brae
Too hote a thing no thing to slae.

The poem seeks to expose the preacher as a corrupt charlatan in the pay of a local official and to expose the local official as more malignant than those he slandered. In achieving this, the poet's method and tone of voice are essentially the same as those employed in the Sempill poem from much earlier and the Burns poem from much later. The use of conversational diction and colloquial Scots, with an occasional reminiscence of the "language of the saints", and the references to popular culture ("from Banck to Brae"),[6] introduce a note of pragmatic irony to the satire, suggesting that "any fool can see the realities of this situation". This, of course, is the same message conveyed by reformation satires such as "The Cruikit Leidis the Blinde", by many a plain style poem from the seventeenth century, and by many a vernacular poem from the late sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century.

A similar blending of direct address, conversational diction, plain style wit and vernacular wryness is used to great effect in Dr. Alexander Pennycuik's "Lintoun Address, to His Highness the Prince of Orange". The poem's prologue combines the manner of contemporary complimentary verse with the plain style, almost certainly ironically:

Victorious Sir, still faithful to thy Word,
Who conquers more by Kindness than by Sword:
As thy Ancestors brave, with Matchless Vigour,
Caus'd *Hogen*, *Mogen*, make so great a Figure;
So thou that art *Great Britain's* only *Moses*,
To guard our Martial *Thistle* with the *Roses*,
The discords of the *Harp* in Tune to bring,
And curb the Pride of *Lillies* in the *Spring*:
Permit, Great Sir, Poor us, among the Press
In humble Terms to make this blunt *Address*,

---

6. Reported conversation and references to popular culture are used in another poem from the same period in a mixture of plain style and vernacular, "On the Earls of Broadalbin, Lithgow, Drumlanrig, Lord Tarbet etc.". See Ch. 10, note 16 and Appendix. Of note is the line "Then doun the river David I'le follow you too", which echoes the old folk song "Doun the Burn Davie Lad", and conveys the same implication of the Scots nobility being led by the nose.

In Limping verse; for as Your Highness knows,
You have good store of Nonsence, else in Prose.
(Prologue, ll.1-12)[7]

For the "Address" proper there is an abrupt change of style, with the octosyllabic couplet, so common in the plain style, carrying a jaunty mixture of plain English and vernacular vocabulary. In a diction very similar to one which became a favourite among later vernacular poets, Pennycuik addresses the king bluntly, colloquially, and with a clear understanding of the ironic possibilities of a popular voice:

Sir, first of all, That it may please,
Your Highness, to give us an Ease
Of our Oppressions more or less,
Especially that Knave the Cess;
And Poverty for Pity cryes,
To Modifie our dear Excise:
If ye'll not trust us when we say't,
Faith! we're not able, Sir, to pay't;
Which makes us sigh when we should Sleep,
And Fast when we should go to Meat,
Yea scarce can get it for to borrow,
Yet drink we must to sloken Sorrow;
For this our grief, Sir, makes us now
Sleep seldom sound till we be Fow.
(ll.13-26)

This style is an excellent example of the coming together of influences from older poetry, the plain style and the vernacular. Like the late sixteenth-century broadside poets, Pennycuik adopts a personal voice, and repeatedly relates his larger "complaints" to entirely practical concerns, emphasising throughout the poem that government action and government policy directly affect ordinary people — a fact which, his irony suggests, may have escaped the king's notice.

Though Pennycuik ostensibly dwells on parochial concerns, his satire is given wider implications by the argument that evidence of good or bad government can be measured in local matters:

Sir, let no needless Forces stand,
To plague this poor, but Valiant Land.
And let no Rhetorick procure

---

7. *Choice Collection*, Pt I, p.17.

Pensions, but only to the Poor,
That Spend-thrift Courtiers get no share,
To make the King's Exchequer bare.
Then, Valiant Sir, we beg at Large,
You will free Quarters quite discharge:
We live upon the King's hye Street,
And scarce a day we miss some Cheat;
For Horse and Foot as they come by,
Sir, be they Hungry, Cold or Dry,
They Eat, and Drink, and burn our Peets,
With Fiend a Farthing in their Breeks,
Destroy our Hay, and press our Horse,
Whiles break our Heads, and what is worse,
Consume both Men and Horses meat,
And make both Wives and Bairns to Greet.
(11.27-44)

All the requests and complaints reveal a similar practicality: that the king should end the quarrel between the local ministers, so that the parishoners need pay only one stipend; that the king "move the Duke our Masters Grace" to "put a Knock upon our Steeple / To shew the Hours to Country People" and to "Pave our Street". The latter request is reinforced with masterful irony:

For if your Highness for some Reasons,
Should Honour *Lintoun* with your presence,
Your Milk-white Palfrey would turn Brown,
Ere ye Ride half out through the Town,
And that would put upon our Name,
A blot of everlasting Shame,
Who are reputed honest Fellows,
And stout as ever *William Wallace*.
(11.77-84)

The contrast between thoughtless royal extravagance and parochial concern for basic comforts is emphasised throughout the poem.

The last request is that the local nobles and lairds who attend the court be forced to perform diligently. Court posturing by such men should be paid for out of their own pockets, since the local community has better things to do with its money:

And that they go on no pretence
To put this place to great Expence,
Nor yet shall Contribute their Share,
To any that are going there,
To strive to be the greatest Minion,

> Or plead for this or that Opinion;
> If we have anything to spare
> Poor Widows they sould be our Care,
> The Fatherless, the Blind and Lame,
> Who starve, yet for to beg think shame.
> So Farewell, Sir, here is no Treason,
> But wealth of Ryme, and part of Reason:
> And for to save some needless cost,
> We send this our Address by Post.
> (11.95-108)

The final quip on saving "needless cost" is double edged. On the one hand, cost of personal delivery would be warranted if action on their request was forthcoming, but because the local representatives at court are not fulfilling their responsibilities and because the king is unlikely to care even if alerted to the difficulties of life in Lintoun, such a cost should not be ventured. And, on the other hand, the saving of money by the local community, after a reference to the socially underprivileged and disabled, contrasts with considerable effect to the court "Minions" referred to throughout, the king's "Milk-white Palfrey", the free-loading royal troops stationed in Scotland, and the excessive customs, excise and taxes burdening the Scots. This contrast makes a mockery of the glories of the king described in the Prologue: after all, soldiers quartered throughout the land at the expense of local communities and crippling taxes not being spent on local improvements do not accord with a king who "conquers more by Kindness than by Sword". The Epilogue is as eulogistic and high-sounding as the Prologue, possibly to avoid a charge of treason, but whether or not it is intended, Pennycuik's irony is reinforced by the juxtaposition of references to the king's European campaigns with the descriptions of local ills in the body of the poem.

Pennycuik's motivation for the poem was similar to that behind a modern ratepayers' or taxpayers' petition asking for some practical result to a change in government or higher taxes. His choice of a vernacular voice and popular diction combining vernacular Scots and colloquial English reflects this motivation, just as popular styles reflected the popular concerns of the Reformation satirists and popular styles would dominate eighteenth-century poetry in Scotland. In its combination of stylistic elements from the plain style and vernacular poetry "Lintoun

Address" retains the tone and attitudes common to both: a personal voice speaking on behalf of the community, a concern for individual and local affairs, political scepticism, a positive assertion of the practical values of charity and shared wealth, and a bountiful sense of irony. When the plain and vernacular styles of poetry were combined, which they frequently were, it was usually in order to express ideas similar to Pennycuik's. By the eighteenth century the two styles had largely merged as part of the vernacular tradition.

"A Dreame"

The practice begun by the Reformation satirists of exploiting courtly conventions for popular purposes was continued in the early seventeenth century, at times with striking results. In "A Dreame" (1611), James Melville drew on the dream-vision tradition but his satire is closely related to the work of Robert Sempill and Davidson, and anticipates that of the eighteenth-century poets. Using conversation, vernacular Scots, an intensely personal voice and descriptive detail including topography of Edinburgh, the poet suggests to the popular audience that the king is not to be trusted, but avoids express treason through the dream device.

The poem begins with a gesture towards courtly dream-vision conventions. The tokenism of this gesture is underlined by Melville's use of almost pedantic detail concerning the time of the dream, rather than the more traditional "Upon a time", "On a May evening" or "In a pleasant bower" opening:

> Ane thousand yeir Sax hundred and elevin,
> The Sune new entred into Aries;
> Which maks the dayes and nights to wex just evin,
> Twoll houres in each and neither more nor les.
>   Twixt three and four at morning I did dreme,
>   That which for Newes I now do send yow hame.
>   (stanza 1)[8]

The reader is not allowed to "drift" into the dream, waiting for the end to discover its significance. Like Sempill and Davidson, Melville

8. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

assumed the persona of reporter and although it is a dream he reports, it is actually a record of his psychological responses to the current deliberations concerning the future of Scotland and the Scottish Kirk:

> In Edinbrugh, I walkin up and down
> About that place whair now the Collage stands,
> Me thought there wes a meiting in the Towne,
> Whairat the King, and Lords, that all commands,
> Were set consulting on the Kirk affaires,
> And thereto many Ministers repaires.
> (stanza 2)

The next stanza admirably condenses the air of uncertainty and of helplessness for common people under the sway of those "that all commands" so prevalent in Scottish poetry throughout the seventeenth century:

> To ane whairof I said, Doe yow not know
> How all our maters are now lyke to go?
> Who said, Forsuith, sa far as I can show
> The mater is uncertain to and fro,
> Sum thinks that all at last will yet go weill,
> And some to worse, that are of better skeill.
> (stanza 3)

The conversation turns on the controversy about prelacy, the interference of the king in the Kirk's affairs, and the king's attitude towards the Kirk's concern with the business of the state. Melville's acquaintance claims that he has had assurances from Dunbar and others that to accept bishops is the best course, implying that compliance is the better part of valour:

> And namely Maister Nicolson, good man,
> Who newlings is come forth, I heard him say
> That for the Kirk doe meikle good he can
> If we could keip us quiet and obey:
> The King meanes to the Kirk no injurie
> But freith hir from contempt and povertie.
> (stanza 7)

Adding to the uncertainty of the Scots about their own affairs, Melville suggests duplicity and corruption in government by implying that "Maister Nicolson, good man" is not to be trusted, and is neither good nor honest. Stepping "A litle langs the gait", Melville sees and salutes Nicolson, but "he wald not look a wry / As seeming loth that I should him espy".

Melville is warned by a friend that he is in danger, and should take care, though no reason is given. This progression creates an atmosphere of suspicion and trepidation, further intensifying the suggestion that the Scots have no control over their own lives and are being deliberately misled.

As night falls Melville seeks shelter, finding himself "Be Pleasance to the head of Cannowgait". He thinks of entering a house, but decides that his friend, Balfour, might "flait" with him if he does not go to his house, which introduces the personal, and warmly secure, to contrast with the air of fear:

> So I maid haist, and in my way I find
> A hucksters stools, with oranjes and flowrs,
> Owr which I step'd: but soon wes strucken blind
> With fearfull fyre flaught and with dustie stours,
>   And opening vp my eyes immediatelie,
>   With horror danger maid me fast to cry.
>
> (stanza 12)

From the comforting contemplation of rest in a friend's house, and the familiarity of the everyday description of a huckster's wares, the reader is plunged into a turmoil of crying, running people alarmed by a "fearfull fyre" in the sky. Their belief that it is God's judgement is confirmed by a mysterious voice from the darkness.

The poet reacts in a most natural fashion, not falling to his knees in prayer, but running, describing the details of his flight and what passes through his mind in his confusion:

> Than downe throw Pleasance right I ran full fast
> And cried, My Christ haue cair and saue thyn owin;
> Now when thy wraith maks all the warld agast,
> On thy deare murners make thy mercy knawin.
>   These words ay doubling ran I throw the streit
>   Out of the Towne, and there me thinks I meit
>
> Twa coatches comming right into my way,
> And one on horsback mounted, hard besyde,
> The sight whairof a litle maid me stay,
> And marking them more narowly abyd:
>   So that I knew furthwith weill what they wer,
>   The King in quyet coming with Dunbar.
>
> (stanzas 15-16)

The king's entry, whirling through the night to upset the course of true religion, is like that of a devil. Nicolson, naturally, is with him. Melville introduces more detail in the description of the king's coach, the manner of its passing by, and his own reaction:

> I stept asyde: whair I saw manie sett
> Vpon a garding dyke, as me it seim'd,
> And looking langs whair I a rowme might get,
> Sir Alsher Hay, my friend as I esteim'd,
> Was coming ou'r the dyk at that same place,
> Wha marked me, and knew me by the face,
> (stanza 18)

Melville and Hay meet as old friends, Hay upbraiding Melville for not visiting sooner, Melville remarking to Hay on "yon fyre from heaven". To Melville's astonishment, Hay's response is that he is going, presumably to Stirling, to tell the king about the phenomenon:

> With that I wackned, all indeed amas'de:
> My heart did lowp, my flesch for feir did creip,
> I could not steir, I was so sore abas'de,
> I sigh't and gron'd, howbeit I could not weipe;
> And still I called vpon Christ his name,
> When I awouck as I did my Dreame.
> (stanza 20)

For Melville the horror is not so much the "fearfull fyre", but that the king's determination to impose prelacy has provoked God's wrath whilst even friends of Melville's cause, like Hay, continue to trust the king, Dunbar and Nicolson for help in the face of that wrath.

"A Dreame" follows the precedent set by Robert Sempill and Davidson in its style, which is plainspeaking, conversational, drawing on personal and public detail and, in its tone, adopting the role of reporter of "newes" and expressing defiance of the monarch and his lackeys. Distrust of princes and governors was voiced throughout the century in vernacular poetry as much as in the plain style, as was an awareness of attempts by corrupt governors to deceive honest Scotsmen. Further, "A Dreame" achieves the same kaleidoscopic effect in the creation of scene and atmosphere that Fergusson and Burns later became masters of. There are considerable similarities between Melville's poem and Burns' "Tam o' Shanter", for example. Partially Melville continued the tradition of

Christis Kirk and *Peblis to the Play*, but the use of the highly realistic technique for social and political comment of a more serious kind was a post-Reformation development. Melville drew on the work of the broadsheet poets as well as the makars to produce the remarkable atmosphere of his poem which convincingly evokes the sense of a dream while repeatedly suggesting that it is not a dream at all. Recalling Sempill's "Lamentatioun of the Commounis" and anticipating the eighteenth-century poets, the poem is full of action, movement, dialogue, colour, light and shade, objects and emotions, and blends a tight narrative line with detail about the objects surrounding the narrator, places in which he finds himself, the time of day, people he meets, their relationship to him, and so forth. As in an actual dream, there is a confusion of explicable and inexplicable events, real acquaintances and imaginary characters, small items from the reassuring world of everyday life and huge supernatural and political phenomena quite beyond the control of the dreamer. The resultant sense of confusion and fear convey the real message of the poem: if the people of Scotland allowed their Kirk, and choices about their religious and political lives, to be removed from their own hands, an equivalent state of chaos would result. "A Dreame" demonstrates the way in which older literary conventions were absorbed into the new poetry, the poet transferring the elements which suited his purposes and discarding other elements in favour of broadsheet techniques. In Melville's poem the dream-vision forms neither an allegorical framework nor a method of establishing a conventional milieu, but a tool to create psychological and emotional responses in the reader. Moreover, the colour and movement of the *Christis Kirk* tradition become more than entertainment, involving both narrator and audience in the action, merging with the realistic, popular and personal style of the broadsheets and anticipating the immediacy, and reliance on atmosphere and characterisation typical of the narrative style of the eighteenth-century vernacular poets.

Flytings

Repeated publication of Polwarth's and Montgomerie's *Flyting* doubtless helped to perpetuate the tradition, which was widely used, and altered, by

vernacular poets during the seventeenth century. Immediately before and during the Covenanting period, while some were exploring the terse satire of the plain style, and others continuing the vernacular satiric tradition of the broadsheets, a number of vernacular poets turned their hands to colourful pieces in Scots echoing the courtly flytings. Often the poems open with an alliterated line in the flyting manner, but like some uses of the tradition in the Reformation, quickly become plain satire:

Upon the Decaying Kirk

Ryse Rollocke, ryse, relate and Bruse return,
    Deplore the mischeifes of this uncouth change.
In the prime Kirk, which as a lamp did burne,
    Our Teachers hath set up a Worship strange:
    Strutheris spyc'd sermons now prove true indeid,
    It is become the tail that was the heid.[9]

Many of the pieces are polemic rather than flyting, but display a clear knowledge of the flyting tradition in their use of alliteration and cumulative abuse. Usually there is a thread of pun, or satire, to prevent the verse from degenerating into nonsense. Old Reformation themes, like the lamp, the "prime church" and the head becoming the tail alluded to in "Upon the Decaying Kirk", are re-worked, suggesting a familiarity with what had gone before and thus a continuity in satiric verse. In "Upon Bishop Lambe" sheep and lamb imagery reappears, carried through from middle Scots poetry via *Ane Compendious Buik* and Reformation satires, but here with a new twist. Bishop Lambe is not a wolf in sheep's clothing, but a ram in ewe's clothing:

Upon Bishop Lambe

In Leith there was a lisping Lambe
Brought ov'r from Brechin to be bred a Scheip,
And thence it grew a long-horn'd Galloway ramme,
With long sharp forked hornes his flock to keip:
This is the Twaddel toope, that was the type
And figure of that fortune long foretold:
    It seems the saints of God hath bein asleep,
    That suffered such a scheip to keip the fold.[10]

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9. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

10. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

Another poem dealing with changing allegiances is attributed by Laing to "Beltrees". If it is the work of a Sempill of Beltrees, then it is contemporary with Robert Sempill of Beltrees (the author of "Habbie Simson"). The piece certainly has Sempill's flair, and if it is his, then it is the only extant example of political satire by him:

Ane Mysterie most strange
Of Taileour Cowper his change

Ane Taileour once ane Cowper did begett
Two tikillous trades, and subject both to change;
Ye see the Taileours mynd is whollie sett
To chase the Court, and follow fashions strange:
He chalkes, he cutts, he chappis, he clippis short syde,
His neiddell can mend eache enormitie;
The Romish, Spanish, English must be tryed,
And everie cutt he calls Conformitie.
The Cowper, when he trimes his barrell bunges,
Sum clink lyk bells, and others drone lyk beeis,
As if they were indew'd with double toungs,
The one tells trew, the others tells bot leeis:
What wonder then that Cowper change his note,
He was ane Taileours son, and turn'd his coat.[11]

Throughout the century some writers used the flyting in its more traditional form for personal abuse. In SRO MS RH 13/40, which dates from c.1660-80, there is a flyting "On Mr. Wm Kellie" which fully exploits the colourful alliterative diction, and the vocabulary, of the old flytings:

Ruch rowtaild mastive monstrouslie mismade
False fikle faithless forger of al slight
Thy mother was Prince Plutoes dame some said
Who got the wt hir on alhallowes night
Wch maks the howlet lyke abhore the light ...[12]

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11. Ibid.

12. See Appendix for full text. See also in Appendix "Mr Samuell Colveill's Pasquill one Sr Alex: Gibson ... 1693", Adv. MS 19.3.8. In SRO MS GD 18/4392 there is a poem beginning "Sanct Androis is ane atheist & Glasgow is ane Gowke" which is from the first half of the seventeenth century and uses alliterated abuse throughout. The MS is extensively damaged and I cannot render a useful text.

And at the turn of the eighteenth century Robert Caddell produced a number of poems which retain more of the conventions of the flyting than many of the pieces from the century before:

> A Prophesie on the propagation of the Book of Common Prayer
> In spite of or a Satyr on the Whiggs by Mr R. Caddell
>
> Filthy leachers, false teachers, cursed preachers, never calme
> By hook or crook, ye will not bruik, the service book, in
>   this realme
> In spite of whigs, yr canting jigs, & Bothwell Bridge & all
>   yr worth
> The common prayer, shall mount upstair, both here & there
>   in south & north
> Raileing ranters, Covenanters, for all your banters I fortell
> The book shall spread, & shall be read, in spite of your dede
>   the Beel of hell.
>
> (Adv. MS 23.3.24)[13]

The flyting seems to have fallen out of favour with most satirists, possibly because it tended to break down when used for topical satire, and because satire increasingly incorporated dialogue and narrative. Abusive poetry without factual or narrative support, without the kind of detail and movement common in popular satire, ceased to have a place in the mainstream of Scottish poetry. But the lively vocabulary, the penchant for alliteration, and the tumbling metres of flyting were perpetuated by these poems from the seventeenth century[14], and so were available to poets, for other purposes, in later years. The eighteenth-century vernacular poets did not necessarily have to look back to the sixteenth century for examples of internal rhyme, extravagant alliteration and a tradition of personal satire.

<u>Mock Prophecies, Invocations, Proclamations and Litanies</u>

Prophecies and proclamations thrived in the popular press, and were imitated, parodied and exploited by more sophisticated writers. The

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13. See Appendix for full text, and from the same MS Caddell's "A Satyr on the Presbyterians" and "Ane Epitaph on Mark Maver".

14. Further examples in Appendix: NLS MS 2960, "Satirical verses on the Presbyterian Ministers", a printed flyting dated 10th June 1705, possibly Caddell's; and Adv. MS 23.3.24, "On the Lord Melvill, his wife, three sons" and "A Satyr on the family of Stairs".

poetry of some of these prophecies is as poor as their cousins in the almanacs, such as "Gildas his Prophesie", which is inadequate from the very beginning:

> Ye Brittaines give eare that wins in the Sea,
> To Gildas the great Prophet of Brittanie:
> For in his workes, who list for to see
> Of Great Britaines miserie ...[15]

At the other end of the spectrum, however, the genre was used for sophisticated satire at least as late as 1715, the date of "Imitation of the Prophecy of Nereus From Hor. L.1 Od 15", which is polished, witty and robust in its use of both the plain and vernacular styles:

> As Mar his Round one Morning took
> (Whom some call Earl, and some call Duke)
> And his new Brethren of the Blade
> Shiv'ring with Fear, and Frost survey'd
> On Perth's black Hills he chanc'd to spy
> An aged wizard six foot high
> With bristled Hair, and Visage blighted,
> Wall-eyed, bare haunched, and Second-sighted.
> The grizly Sage in Thought profound,
> Beheld the Chief with Back so round,
> Then roll'd his Eye-balls to and fro
> O'er his paternal Hills of Snow,
> And into these tremendous Speeches
> Broke forth the Prophet without Breeches.
> (NLS MS 2960)[16]

The poem predicts victory for the Hanoverians whilst satirising Mar and his Highlanders. The popular "prophecy" was used partly because it offered a fine opportunity for parody and satire, and partly, too, because prophecy and second-sightedness were part of highland folklore, associated in lowland minds with barbaric highland superstition. In the eighteenth century the traditions of highland and lowland "prophecy" poems continued to be employed both satiricially and sentimentally by

15. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series. There is a slightly different version in Adv. MS 23.3.24.

16. A cutting from a broadsheet, f.11v. See Appendix for full text. See also in Appendix NLS MS 2935, "The Sixth year of King Caesar's reign"; and Adv. MS 23.3.24, "In the first year of King Fergus reigne", which use the familiar "cow lap ower the moon" image to parody prophecy.

Scottish poets — notably by Ramsay, who drew on prophecy as well as dream vision in his "Vision", and by Burns in "The Vision".

A similar continuity in style and purpose can be discovered by comparing some mock invocations, litanies and proclamations with later poetry. A strong resemblance exists, for instance, between Burns' Holie Willie's blind hypocrisy in asking God for "grace and gear" despite his manifest failings as a man and as a minister, and the persona of the Pope in this seventeenth-century mock invocation:

If I wer out of deat as I find I fall doun
My Charit is rotton and shaks like my croun
Though I be imposter let this be my doum
Let my spiritual Market continue at room

Though my birthe be equivocall I like a bear
And my tribs they be cloathed with sackcloath and hair
with a hypocrite habit its fit to deceave
Let no man dissifer the pope for a knave.
(SRO MS RH 13/38/4)[17]

Clearly there was a connection between these forms of parody and the development of the satiric monologue which was to become so popular with the eighteenth-century vernacular poets.

Litanies proved an excellent vehicle for ironic monologue, and the most successful known Scottish mock litany of the seventeenth century was printed by Laing as "Brittane's Late Litanie". Laing dates it 1653-60.[18] The poem is a satire against all troublemakers by a Presbyterian author who, despite his scorn of Highlanders, shows an encyclopaedic knowledge of highland clans, place names, customs and superstitions. The litany is largely a long catalogue of the people and things, particularly highland people and things, from which the author and presumably his associates seek deliverance. Unlike earlier mock litanies, "Brittane's Late Litanie" has no stanza divisions and the

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17. See Appendix for full text. Note the strong similarity between the opening lines of this and those of "The Old Man's Wish", NLS MS 3807, see Appendix.

18. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd series. Also preserved with slight variations in Adv. MS 23.3.24 as "The British Litany", signed "G.R.".

invocation, "Good Lord Deliver Us", comes only at the very end of the poem, not repeated as a liturgical chant throughout the poem. This is another example of the gradual metamorphosis of an old, serious form, through direct parody, into a new, more flexible form of satire. The omission of the chant allows the satirist to create a greater sense of the overwhelming anarchy which he believes surrounds him. "Brittane's Late Litanie" is in a mixture of English, Scots and imitation Gaelic, the use of catalogues, place names and highland references enhancing the sense of chaos carefully conjured up in the diction and subject matter:

> From all the Mackyes quirkes and gilles,
> In glumie glens and mistie hills,
> With crost cloaks of orient hues,
> Catigore and truthles trues,
> Clanchatton, Clanchamron, and Clanich,
> And the Clan Greigor in a lish,
> Clan Donachie, and Farquharsone,
> The noble freinds of Clan Mahoune,
> Clan Donald's famous pedigrie,
> Derryved from Cain's familie,
> By name a bloudie Lamech's daughter,
> The Smith, her brother, pay'd her tocher
> With durks, dorlochs, and reping fyles,
> Syne sent her to the Hebreid Isles,
> To choose a Reid Shank for her mate,
> The following race to propagate:
> Surlie Buie, Donald Gorime,
> Donald Baine was long before him,
> Donald Shine and Donald Oge,
> And Donald make a gibet shoge,
> A-Cain, A Neill and Ogell Begg,
> And all these landed of Glenege,
> Irish hob-gobs, and fierie-ferries,
> Dansers of the old Kinairies.
>
> (11.1-24)

A convention persevered amongst the Whigs well into the nineteenth century of portraying, even believing, the Highlanders to be unruly, anarchic, superstitious and cunning, as well as less intelligent than the Lowlanders. This litany plays on such sentiments, and the highland custom of reciting lineage, by ascribing a "pedigrie" from Cain, or even Mahommed, to various clans, by linking the highland families very closely with the "foreign" Hebrideans and Irish who were feared as well

as ridiculed — "Skurvie, naked, lousie fellowes, / All infest in pitt and gallowes" (11.29-30), and by adding a large measure of superstition to the brew.

Highlanders, however, are not the only victims as the poet attacks all those whom he perceives as encouraging discontent and instability in the realm. Though the Highlanders are portrayed as the most insidious, the poet identifies many others, and the poem catalogues almost every faction that existed. Here, again, is frustration with the constant turmoil of the period, and the conviction that the trouble would cease if only the factions could be dealt with and the members of society made to live harmoniously. Some of the troublemakers are religious:

> The drums of Dee, the trumps of Don,
> The Catholick freinds of Petrie Con,
> Anti-pantie Covenanters ...
>
> (11.47-9)

Some are political malcontents:

> Faders feiders of debaite,
> With lawes and reformations laite;
> Closs undermynders, never known
> Till walls and works be all upblowen,
>
> (11.51-4)

and others are time-honoured social nuisances:

> Neb-such fiscals, swellne with wealth,
> by sucking out the bodies health,
> Catterpillars, grand taxt-masters,
> Cut-throat surgeons, fyrie plaisters,
> Medling, seiking bussie bodies,
> Charmeing hawkes and hobbie noddies.
>
> (11.55-60)

Parodying litanies and highland catalogues, and drawing on the vocabulary and alliteration of flyting to scourge Papists, outlaws, "Weather waggers" and "Sectaries that trouble us", the poet has clearly lost patience with schisms, factions and quarrels:

> From all the Locusts new crept out
> From Pluto's cell, who goes about
> From house to house, both laite and aire,
> Pussling the Kirk and Staite with caire.
>
> (11.65-8)

His frustration with sectarianism is understandable in view of the sects listed: "The Independent" ("Their lawles wings doe shroud the whole"), "The Antinomian", "The Anabaptists", "Enthusiasms, illuminations, / Utopian congregations", "Libertines", "Familists", "Socinians", "Questionists", "the strang and straying seck of seikers", "Episcopists", "Anti-Scripturists", "Perfytists", "Erastus with his State flatterie". By providing a detailed list of the factions at work in religion and politics the poem considerably illuminates the air of cynicism and frustration evident in so many of the other poems of the century.

In addition to the general catalogue, the poet identifies a number of individual troublemakers and enthusiasts, all of whom are construed as not true Presbyterians. Cromwell is portrayed as the worst of them all:

> The last wonder of Albion,
> The Knight both King, and Mair, and Loune,
> The Magna Carta, and both Houses
> Overaw'd, overtrode by base pick-louses.
> (11.109-12)

The list of individuals continues until at the end of the poem, in a superb example of the kind of ironic detachment typical of Scots poetry after the mid-seventeenth century, all are dismissed unceremoniously:

> All worthy of a Caithnes wisp,
> And from the rest of that bad Crue,
> Whether of old, or bred of new,
> Let all who would eschew Heaven's curse,
> Pray, GOOD LORD OF HEAVEN DELYVER US.

In his treatment of the numerous groups and individuals the poet reveals an obvious disgust with military dictatorship, political anarchy and the proliferation of schisms, sects and malcontents under the Commonwealth, and he expresses frustration with the times and with his fellows for taking seriously the whole range of fanatics and agitators.

"Brittane's Late Litanie" has much in common stylistically with older, contemporary and later poetry (Burns' "Kirk's Alarm", for example, employs the technique of listing his "foes" to absurd lengths). But the most striking features of "Brittane's Late Litanie", and the aspects it shares most with subsequent Scottish poetry, are scepticism, scorn

of zealots and a refusal to suffer fools gladly. When the poet entreats heaven to deliver him it is not simply from those who work "against the Covenant and the Scots" (1.116) that he seeks relief, but from unreason and blind zeal. In this he expresses a concern shared by many other Scots poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Dialect Poems

There seems to have been a growing interest in the use of dialects in Scots poetry during the seventeenth century, no doubt largely because of the obvious comic or satiric potential for belittling highland chiefs and their armies through parody of the Gaelic speaker's pronunciation of Lowland Scots or parody of the North Eastern Scots dialect. It is clear from the use made of other dialects, from the purposeful use poets made of the contrast between vernacular Scots and English, and from satiric use of "godly" diction, that Scots poets developed a fine appreciation of language, increasingly using available dialects, accents and registers in order to enliven or popularize their poems. Such highly conscious exploitation of Scottish dialects, English, and even European languages, was more common in satire than in other forms of verse, but it had a lasting effect on Scottish poetry in general.

"Ane Proclamation Sett out by Younge Donald, Prince of the Yles, and Chieftane of the Highlanders of Scotland", like "Brittane's Late Litany", provides a fascinating catalogue of highland clans, but in a mock-highland dialect representing monologue by a highland chief. Laing gives some background to the poem:

> This satirical production evidently refers to the Highland Insurrection in favour of Charles the Second, best known as the Earl of Glencairn's Expedition in 1653. The singular array of names, clans, persons, and places and the allusions to the dress and accountrements of the Highlanders is very curious. The person who issues this Royal command was Aeneas Macdonell of Glengarry, 'a chief of great gallantry and influence, steadily attached to the Royal cause, and the soul, it would seem, of the Highland confederacy. After the Restoration he was created a Peer by the title of Lord Macdonell and Aros' (Scott's note).[19]

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19. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series, p.xi.

From the first lines of the poem Young Donald's speech and attitude are parodied, his purported manner of speaking contrasting absurdly with his noble tone:

> Brave shentillmen, Wee cry a Hoyes,
> An-nent a twa, na tre, na four noyes,
> Me charge you in Young Donald's name,
> All betwixt sixtie and sixteine,
> The Shentillment in every Shyre,
> In Arran, Orkney, and Kyntire,
> In Sky, in Lew's ...[20]

About eighty lines of clan, place and individual names follow. It is an astonishing catalogue, even in a century when such lists were popular for satire. Indeed, the catalogue so impresses the reader with the poet's knowledge of highland and island geography, people and affairs, and conveys such an overwhelming sense of the extent of highland influence, that it seems to belie a satiric purpose. But the poem is satire, the catalogue intended as a warning of the reality of highland power, and to stress the divided loyalties and internecine strife so widespread in the highlands and so damaging to their struggle against the English forces.

The poem also uses contrast between languages to satiric effect. After the catalogue are about twenty lines in plain language:

> Huntly I also doe require,
> On highest paines, with Crosse of fire,
> To bring the Gordons of his Clan,
> And all his followers, every man,
> Mounted on horse, and armed weill,
> With backe and brest, and leme of steill,
> And that compleate, and cleanlie dight,
> To guard Younge Donell in the fight,
> And heere in Court receive his place
> As second person to our Grace.

There is ample satire here, and irony, but no parody of highland pronunciation, as if to emphasise the truth in the likeness between Young Donald and a king. The change back to parody is abrupt:

> And all the Clan's that's under Heaven,
> I charge you, in Young Donell's name,

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20. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

To come in all the haste you can,
Completely armed every man,
Mut him's bowe, him's dorloche, and him's durke,
Him's short-hose, and him's two cleane shirte,
Him's sword, him's targe, and him's shortgowne,
Him's kilted plaid, and him's powder-horne,
Him's black bonnett, and him's bullet bagge,
And him's twa good strea-garters about him's legges,
Him's bodomles breiks, and him's single shoone,
Open beneath, and close aboyne.

The effect of this is to concede some nobility to Young Donald, to Huntly and even to the clans in their rallying to the banner, yet to ridicule and trivialise the soldiers as a group. So, individual highlanders are seen as possessing some grace and elegance, but an army of highlanders as an ill-educated, ill-equipped rabble. Before the end of the poem the diction changes again to plain Scots, and back to mock-highland. In its use of language "Ane Proclamation" not only parodies the gaelic tradition of catalogues, spoken proclamations and calls to arms as well as highland speech, but also reminds the reader that it is parody by fluctuating between the two dictions.[21] The resulting satire would have encouraged the audience to remember that whatever the romantic or nationalistic appeal of the Highlanders, they represented a continuing threat to national stability. Such a threat is reinforced by Young Donald's kingly behaviour, suggesting that whatever king he may fight for, he would always remain aloof and always retain his ability to raise a large personal army.

"Ane Proclamation" is cruel satire, but shows a great facility with language, moving freely from parodied dialect to vernacular Scots and English, exploiting the characteristics of each, to ridicule the Highlanders or to draw the reader away from the humour of the parody towards a consideration of the more serious message. This variation of diction and dialect does not differ essentially from the way in which satirists used Covenanting diction and the use Burns made of godly diction in his

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21. In the same MS from which Laing took this poem, Adv. MS 19.3.4, there is another interesting use of highland pronunciation, but showing a Lowlander's curiosity rather than parody. See "Highland Diurnall" in Appendix.

religious satires. Such flexible usage of language represents one of the great strengths of vernacular poetry, freeing the poet from an otherwise constricting conformity with the general register required by the purpose of his poem. Different characters could speak in different ways within the one poem, and speech could be used to inflate, or deflate, the credibility of a character. There is clearly something distasteful to the modern reader in the suggestion that because they could not come to grips with "English" pronunciation — or chose not to — the Highlanders were foolish savages. Similarly, no doubt auld lichts in the Kirk found Burns' parodies of godly diction offensive, and some noblemen would not have been amused by the kailyard vernacular which eighteenth-century poets were wont to put into their mouths when satirising them, but variety of language registers certainly increased the effectiveness and widened the scope of vernacular satire.

Adv. MS 19.3.4 contains a number of poems illustrating an interest in dialect and language. Laing believed that the manuscript was compiled by an Englishman between 1653 and 1665, and its contents would indicate that it was probably compiled by someone of English origin posted in Scotland or residing in the Borders. The variety of material in 19.3.4 suggests that it passed through more than one hand, and there is a change of hand half way through the manuscript. It contains material ranging from such curiosities as Young Donald's "Proclamation" and "The Highland Diurnall" to English Cavalier sonnets, Scottish royalist satires and Scottish Presbyterian satires. Clearly the compiler(s) did not write most of the material, or there would be more consistency of style and subject matter.[22] Rather it is a collection of poetic pieces which interested the compiler(s), and the number of poems deliberately contrasting Scots and English, or parodying highland speech, shows a taste for this kind of material among such readers as much as among poets. The manuscript contains a "Medley" of poems, or songs, purporting to be

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22. There is a long prose entry, "The Character of Orknay" concluding "From my Cave Called the Otter's Hole in the third month of my banishment from Christendom. Sept 9th 1652" after the change of hand at f.33. Some of the "highland" material may have been collected on Orkney.

Scottish, Dutch, French, Spanish, Welsh, Irish and English, each adopting a different "accent", and characteristic references.[23] Scots/English rivalry is similarly exploited by contrasting the two languages in two poems on the marriage of Colonel William Lockhart to Robina Bewsler in 1654, "By H.P.". The first is in English and the second a Scots answer.[24] And in "Upon the Building of a Kirke on Gladesmore", a verse battle between an Englishman and a Scotsman, the two languages are again carefully contrasted, with the Englishman, interestingly enough, turning to mock-Scots for a stanza beginning "Oh, that I could speake Scotch, or such a Trang'em / I would rime out runges, and then I'de bange 'em".[25]

The taste for dialect poetry was carried to a very sophisticated extent in "John Highlandman's Remarks", a broadside poem from around 1700. The colourful, lively poem combines mock-highland dialect with a catalogue of John Highlandman's experiences in Edinburgh, with much more wit and more imaginatively than other poems using those conventions. John is portrayed as naive, rustic and somewhat ignorant, his comments calculated to give the impression that he is seeing the "modern" world for the first time:

> When her nain shell to Edinburgh went,
>   She saw pony tings;
> She many pony Lasses saw,
>   That fluttered a' wit wings,
> Tat town apout teire shouters hang,
>   As plack as ony slea,
> And rattle a' like onion skins,
>   An pha pe pra put tea;
> Wit pra high tapons on teir heads,
>   Shust like her lords coach mare,
> An pony tings some in teir lugs,
>   Hat hanging town se clear;
> An pony preakens on teir ners,
>   As pony as might pe,
> Wit tartles rount apout te taill,
>   Like a Colt's mane had she;
> Teir cowns behint teir ners did traill,
>   Tey pe sa pra an syd,

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23. ff.83v, 84r-v, 85r-v. See Appendix for text.

24. f.55r-v. See Appendix for text.

25. ff.92r-v, 93. Printed in *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

Not like her nain Coot-wife's at hame,
    Tat scarce her pottocks hide.

(11.1-20)[26]

The Highlandman is equally amazed by men's attire, especially high-heeled shoes:

    High clogs bene a' tere heel,
Shust like the upper muckle end
    Of her nain shell's snuff-mill.

(11.42-4)

Doubtless the poet enjoyed casting a critical eye over fashions as much as he enjoyed the creation of John Highlandman. But there is, too, a serious side to the portrayal of John. The poverty of his native hills is starkly brought to mind when he is astonished by stone houses "Insted a rushes", and glass windows "Her nain shell cout see trow". He is even more astonished by carriages:

    Tat on four wheels pe porn,
Shust like great muckle ambrie peds,
    Nailed like her powter horn,
Or Targe wit taintie nails se clear,
    Shust like a clear scoured pan,
An taintie Lassies sitting in't,
    An pra Shentle Man.

(11.58-64)

The evocation of John's "barbaric" social background, in contrast to the "civilised" life of the town, falls within the conventions of satire against highlanders which had been established for at least half a century, but there is also some sympathy and some irony in the contrast between Edinburgh wealth and highland poverty. However, this poet's real achievement, in comparison to others who had used mock-highland dialect, is to abstract himself from his own urban environment and, by imagining the Highlandman's responses, to view the "fashionable" world with an irony equal to that applied to John, whose remarkable similies at once satirise himself and wryly comment on the sights described.

The poet shows the same delight in action, movement, detail and colour as shown in earlier and later vernacular poetry, from Melville's

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26. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

"Dreame" to Burns' "Holy Fair". Likewise, he relishes the absurd aspects of everyday mishaps in the lives of ordinary people, showing a Chaplinesque sense of comic timing:

> Phile her sell saw sic taintie tings,
> She stand still to look,
> Pe tink her shell of no ill ting,
> But ere she wist, te nook
> Of a Coal-cather's krill took her
> Pe pon te pack a tunch;
> Mi turnt an said, Hum, phat Teil now,
> You filthy rustique clunch?
> Phat, are you plind you shyten rogue,
> You pe se undiscreet,
> That Shentlemen cannot pe stand
> Pe pon te King's hie street?
> While she pe flyt with tis Coal Man,
> In sic a rage besputter,
> A Slead came py behint her ners,
> And dang her in te gutter.
> Be she gat up, a four-wheel Cart
> Came hurling py pedeen,
> Te Man's lang whip tat sat perfor't
> Made crack apout her eyn,
> An hat her lugs wit sic a phisk,
> Till a' her eyn did water.
> She tought it was not time to stand
> To argument te matter,
> Put her shell run in at Closs head,
> To keep her shell frea skeit,
> She had not weel gone two ells tere,
> Till her nain shell tid get
> A tish of Water poured town
> Apout her nain shell's luggs.
> (11.73-102)

In generating comedy at the Highlander's expense, and satire on all Highlanders, the scene is created with a skill and gusto reminiscent of the middle Scots mock tournament poems, but anticipates many an eighteenth-century vernacular poem and song in the same "knockabout" genre.[27]

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27. *Polemo Middinia*, probably Drummond of Hawthornden's, is the other seventeenth-century poem clearly in the same vein as this. See *The Poetical Works of Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. L.E. Kastner (2 vols, STS, 1913) II, pp.321-6. It is interesting that Adv. MS 19.3.4, which contains so much dialect material, has a full copy of *Polemo Middinia* at f.70v. Is it possible that Drummond had something to do with the MS?

The other aspect of the continuing Scots tradition in the poem which was to play a significant part in eighteenth-century vernacular poetry is the crowd scene:

For lang Street as far as tween
  Glen Fudrich and Glenslouse,
An wide as 'tween Teg McCrae's yard
  And Tonald Tearloch's house,
Was all gane full of Shentle Foulk,
  As full as it coud croud;
Sum running up, some running town,
  An some tat stane styll stood.
Tere comes a range of four-wheel Carts
  Together in a string,
Some pe gaun up, some pe gaun town,
  An some of tem town ting
Te Kail Wives creels wit a teir trade,
  An paggage tey hat tere.
Next comes a trift of Coalmen's horse,
  Like Cows gaun to a Fair,
Or like a trift of Bord'ring Cows
  Sometimes her shel has seen
Prought of the Lowland Figs, ye she
  Has at such plunterings been.
An yonter comes tere two-wheel Carts,
  Pe tumbling all attens,
Some load wit parrels, some wit trees,
  And some wit dirt and stanes.
Tere comes a range of Oyster Wives,
  And some pe crying Sand,
Some crying Fish, some crying Coal,
  And some wit Salt in hand;
Wit twenty hunder tings beside,
  Her nain shell cannot mine.
(11.113-42)

The relish for the hustle and bustle of Edinburgh life anticipates the work of Ramsay and Fergusson. Clearly it also continues the work of Robert Sempill's Edinburgh social life and Maddie poems of the late sixteenth century, and Melville's "A Dreame" from the early seventeenth century, as well as many other vernacular poems of the seventeenth century. High and low life throng together in the colourful street almost as if the satire on Highlanders was an excuse for the poet to portray an Edinburgh crowd.

John Highlandman is not treated with the same satiric cruelty that the Papists, Cromwell, other political and religious figures and other

Highlanders had suffered. On the whole, the poem is light-hearted, essentially jovial, and at times sympathetic towards the Highlander. But the reference to reiving in the foregoing passage re-asserts the conventional distrust of Highlanders, and a further reminder occurs in the last lines of the poem:

> She tainty pony Lasses saw
>   Upon a parrow born,
> Tat hat upon teir snowts tid weir
>   A taintie Coblo-horn,
> Wit lang lugs hinging town each side,
>   All woven as a net;
> An in teir little ambrie pox
>   Full lordly are tey set.
> Her nain shell tought it great pity was
>   Tat sic pra Lass pe criple,
> Her shell could wish to ly wit such,
>   Tho she should get a riple!
> But phan her shell was gaun to Leith,
>   She saw pe pon a Tree
> Some Mans be hing, and wit te Wind
>   Te wagged wantonlie.
> She speart, For phat tes Mans hang tere?
>   Tey said for stealing Gear.
> Hum! phat? Her shell she tought is now
>   Pe tree tays too long here!

It would appear that the Highlanders had replaced craftsmen and tinkers as objects of scorn, distrust and sexual innuendo in popular poetry. In fact, as Highlanders became more active in the politics of seventeenth-century Scotland, they gained a dual reputation. One aspect of that reputation is present in Young Donald's "Proclamation" in which the coarseness, wildness, and potential for insurrection of the Highlanders is satirised. The other is revealed in the many songs celebrating the part played by Highlanders in royalist victories, various dukes or earls and their brave highland armies becoming stock figures in the broadside tradition before the end of the seventeenth century. "John Highlandman's Remarks" is a more ambivalent response to the Highlander, who is seen as uncivilised and amusing, as a thief and a scoundrel who would steal lowland gear and women, and yet, as John's parting comment suggests, retains his own staunch independence and a certain degree of primitive nobility.

The narrative style of the poem is inherited from a long line of vernacular poems influenced by the middle Scots tradition and the popular

poetry of the Reformation broadsheets. "John Highlandman's Remarks" also forms a link between the seventeenth-century vernacular poems and the work of Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns, especially in its preoccupation with character. Earlier satires on Highlanders enumerated their faults, their "uncouth" dress, their uncivilised way of life in "glumie glens and mistie hills". But this poem uses the character and perceptions of John to evoke irony and satire, not only in relation to John himself and highland life, but also in relation to life in Edinburgh. Above all, "John Highlandman's Remarks" demonstrates how sophisticated control of language had become among Scottish poets by 1700, showing part of the tradition which lay behind the subtlety and variety of diction in later vernacular poetry.

Song

Nowhere did the popular and art traditions merge more frequently than in song. Furthermore, Robert Edwards' Book and other collections provide ample evidence that cultivation of song in a popular style increased in the great houses and urban literary circles of Scotland.

NLS MS 1951, a large volume containing copies of several treatises on Scots law, 1613-1637, has on page 485 three poems in a different hand from the rest of the manuscript. The poems were probably interpolated at a later date, but in scribal style are from early in the second half of the seventeenth century.[28] The second and third are clearly pastoral art song, beginning "Blist in her eys, & possest of her charms / Sweetly I languish in Phillida's arms", and "Hail to ye Myrtle shades all hail to ye nymphes of ye feild".[29] The first, however, is in the manner of popular song and is of considerable interest both as an example of upper class song in the popular style and as an illustration of the romantic appeal of Highlanders:

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28. On f.1 are the signatures of John Maxwell of Carse and other owners of the MS. The handwriting and ink of John Maxwell are very similar to the poems, whereas the first signature resembles the style of the remainder of the MS. It seems likely that John Maxwell interpolated the three pieces to utilise the blank page.

29. See Appendix for full texts. There is a fourth poem on p.486 of the MS which combines plain style and pastoral influences. See appendix, "Since all ye wrld's quite distrakted ...".

I hate a lazy lawland loun, I love a lusty highlandman,
Yrs not a lass in all ye toun but she would dance a rile wt him,
So prittily he fits ye floor, & such a greacfull mean he has,
His motions are most quick sure, most vigorous and keen he is.

although ye Clergy wou'd forbid, yt ever I should dance wt him,
Yr Bablings shou'd ne're hinder me to make a brisk advance wt him
as ever knows his highland tune & has ye beast of heart in him
must stoup into ye floor right soon, & be right laith to part wt him

Yr is a lady in ys toun, yt dots upon a highland man,
if modestie & her could 'gree, she gladly wou'd be feling him
His motions she does so well please yt she can get no ease for him
But she'l get leave to rest her cheefe
Though 'er head were in ye belf wt him.[30]

While the litanies, monologues and satires examined thus far display elements that became part of the vernacular style at its fullest development, light-hearted pieces in the style of popular song like this more obviously precurse the work of the eighteenth-century vernacular poets.

Scattered through the manuscripts among the prose jottings, diaries, art poetry and plain style satires which constitute the private emphemera of the age, are short pieces like "I love a lusty Highlandman" which provide firm evidence of a widespread "cultured" interest in the popular and folk song of the nation, both in its native form and for imitation. Adv. MS 19.3.4, for example, which contains copious political comment, satirical verse and sophisticated English and Scots art poetry, also has at f.33 a brief entry:

A slee one, a slee one
I ne'er saw sike a slee one,
The first night that I with him lay,
Oh then hee got this wee one,

This wee one, This wee one,
This bonny winking wee one,
I'de bin a maide amongst the rest
Were nor I gott this wee one.

Whoever collected, or composed, this piece obviously had a taste for Scots song. Indeed, some of the finest Scots songs of the second half

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30. Helena Shire has suggested to me that this song fits perfectly to the tune of Cleland's "O're Hills, o're Mountains" ("Fancy Free"), in double time. If this is the right tune for the song, we have no way of knowing whether Cleland slowed down a popular tune for his song (the most likely situation) or his tune was used for this song.

of the seventeenth century were the work of cultivated authors — not folk songs in fact, but composed in the manner of folk songs. "The Blythesome Bridal", which has become part of the oral tradition, appears in Watson's *Choice Collection* attributed to Francis Sempill of Beltrees. Watson grouped it with *Christis Kirk* and Sempill's "Banishment of Poverty" as composed song. "The Blythesome Wedding" incorporates many of the devices familiar from other vernacular verse: the catalogue of names, colour and movement, the crowd scene, detail and robust diction. Both the stanza and refrain rollick along:

> Fy let us all to the Briddel
> for there will be Lilting there,
> For Jockie's to be married to Maggie,
> the lass with the Gauden-hair;
> And there will be Lang-kail and Pottage
> and bannocks of Barley-Meal,
> And there will be good Salt-herring
> to relish a Kog of good Ale
> Fy let us all to the Briddel,
> for there will be lilting there,
> For Jockie's to be married to Maggie
> the Lass with the Gauden hair.[31]

Jockie and Maggie were favourite names in the broadsheet fashion for Scots popular song, but this poet reveals a relish for all the names and for description of people — short character sketches of a type, again, which would be common in later vernacular poetry. Certainly the work of a highly educated author who enjoyed the culture and life-style of the folk, the poem shows a marvellous control of the vernacular in vocabulary, turn of phrase, use of commonplaces and humour:

> And Crampie that married Stainie
> and coft him Breeks to his Arse,
> And afterwards hanged for Stealing,
> great mercy it hapned no worse;
> And there will be fairntickl'd Hew,
> and Bess with the lillie white Leg,
> That gat to the South for Breeding
> and bang'd up her wamb in Mons-Meg.
>
> And there will be Geordie McCowrie,
> and blinking daft Barbra and Meg

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31. *Choice Collection*, Pt I, p.8.

And there will be blincht Gillie-whimple
    and peuter-fac't flitching Joug.
And there will be happer-ars'd Nansie
    and Fairie fac'd Jeanie be name,
Gleed Katie and fat Lugged Lissie
    the Lass with the gauden wamb.

There is little difference between the vernacular diction of this song from the second half of the seventeenth century and that of Burns in the late eighteenth century, and both were the product of sophisticated poets. Though "The Blythesome Wedding" has a hint of condescension, it displays more evidence of genuine sympathy with the folk and enjoyment of the subject for its own sake.

Around 1700 the vogue for Scottish song among the upper classes, which had been in progress for many years, filtered through to the broadside market. The results were seldom as successful as the more sophisticated uses of the popular style. Jockey loomed large:

Blyth Jockey young and gay
Is all my hearts delight
He's in my thoughts by day,
And in my dreams by night.
If from the lad I be,
Tis winter than with me.
But while he tarries here
'Tis summer all the Year.[32]

Preserved in a broadsheet in the Scottish Record Office, this is a familiar, sentimental type of "D'Urfey song", and there is another of the same ilk on the broadsheet, "I'll make thee fain to follow me".[33] "Parlour" Scots songs like this continued in fashion for more than a century, and were not, unfortunately, composed by artists of the calibre of Sempill, sharing his genuine affection for and understanding of the folk tradition they exploited. Nevertheless, the currency of these songs at the end of the seventeenth century shows their popularity among the rising middle classes. The vogue was well entrenched by the time of Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany*, which did not create a fashion but catered for one — a fashion previously

32. SRO MS RH 13/40. See Appendix for full text.

33. See Appendix for full text.

served largely by the broadside press. Ramsay was an astute businessman and willing occasionally to sacrifice his own taste to that of the buying public. But despite the involvement of Ramsay and some other well-known poets in the production of "parlour" Scots song, the style of such compositions had little effect on the rest of the work of sophisticated poets in eighteenth-century Scotland.

Most of the successful and influential songs of the eighteenth century were much closer in style to the vernacular tradition represented by "I love a lusty Highlandman", "A Slee One" and "The Blythesome Wedding". The eighteenth-century vernacular poets drew on a tradition of song writing established by such self-conscious artists as Francis Sempill who moulded together many of the conventions of the alternative tradition — lively dialogue, action, realism — with elements of folk song. So successfully did Sempill achieve this union of sophisticated and unsophisticated in "Maggie Lauder", for example, that the folk paid it the tribute of taking it into their own tradition. Yet "Maggie Lauder" is a carefully wrought composition of the type which strongly influenced the work of the eighteenth-century poets:

> Wha wadna be in love
>   Wi' bonnie Maggie Lauder?
> A piper met her gain to Fife,
>   And spier'd what was't they ca'd her:
> Richt scornfully she answered him,
>   Begone, you hallanshaker!
> Jog on your gate, you bladderskate!
>   My name is Maggie Lauder.

Like Burns long afterwards, Sempill was no doubt inspired to the writing of song by a relish for the language and tunes of the folk. Nevertheless, he consciously organised the dialogue and narrative of "Maggie Lauder" to exploit to the utmost the strengths of the vernacular. In this sense he and his successors in the writing of Scots song were truly vernacular poets, not merely sophisticated poets "dabbling" in another genre.

As in the Reformation, frequent use was made of song for satire and propaganda throughout the seventeenth century. The Cavaliers and Scottish Royalists particularly favoured popular song as a vehicle to

disseminate their opinions, but the Whigs and Scottish Presbyterians were not averse to its use. In 1685 a Presbyterian parodied the Cavalier habit of exploiting popular song in "A Ballad, to the Tune of Hey Boyes Up Go Wee":

> Now down with the confounded Whiggs
> Let Loyaltie take place:
> Let Hell possess their damn'd intrigues,
> And all that cursed Race:
> Let Oaths abound, and Cups go round,
> And Whores and Rogues go free,
> And Heaven itself stoop to the Crown,
> *For Hey Boyes up go wee.*
>
> Come, let us drink a Health about,
> Unto our Holy Father,
> His sacred maxims, without doubt,
> We will Embrace the rather
> Because they are fram'd with Wit and Sense,
> And favours *Monarchy*,
> And can with all our Sins dispense,
> *So Hey Boyes up go wee.*
>
> There we shall ramble at our ease,
> And still enjoy the best,
> And all our wild affections please
> In a Religious vest;
> And yet keep Heaven at our dispose,
> If such a thing there be;
> And drag the People by the nose,
> *So Hey Boyes up go wee.*[34]

The use of a popular tune and refrain for parody continues the tradition of the Reformation satires, like "The Pape that Pagan full of Pryde" with its refrain "Hey trix, tryme go trix, Under the Greenwood tree", and Robert Sempill's "The Cruikit Leidis the Blinde". Obviously based on a drinking song, "Hey boyes up go wee" turns the Cavalier diction and *joie de vivre* upon itself, the purported singers revealing themselves as self-seeking hypocrites, their raucous language and boisterous camaraderie serving only to intensify a sense of their arrogance. This is another example of the favourite ploy, which was later used to great effect in Ramsay's "Last Speech of a Wretched Miser" and Burns' "Holy Willie's Prayer", of allowing characters to satirise themselves or their beliefs through dramatic monologue. Moreover, eighteenth-century poets frequently used vernacular poetry or popular song to express a fierce individualism,

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34. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 1st Series.

and the link between the drive for political and personal independence and the choice of a popular voice and style is as clear in this song from 1685 as it was in the popular poetry and song of the Reformation.

The battles of the century inspired numerous songs, some originating among the "folk", others written by cultured authors. Many had a long life in the music of Scotland, regardless of their origins. One of the most popular was "Killiechrankie", the immediate success of which is testified to by its repeated appearance in contemporary broadsheets and manuscripts. Laing printed it from a broadsheet of 1689 "To be sung with its own tune". In this version the vocabulary is mostly vernacular with some imitation of highland pronunciation:

> Clavers and his Highland men
> came down upon a Raw, then,
> Who, being stout, gave mony a Clout,
> the Lads began to claw then,
> With swords and Targets in their Hands,
> Wherewith they were not slaw then,
> And Clinkim Clankim on their Crowns,
> The Lads began to claw then.
>
> O're brink and brank, o're ditch and stank,
> her strake among them a then,
> The *Butter-Box* gat many knocks
> their Riggans pay'd for a then;
> They gat their pakes, with sudden strakes,
> which to their greif they saw then,
> And double dunts upon their Rumps,
> the Lads began to fa then.
>
> Her skipt about, and lept about,
> her flang amang them a then;
> The *English* Blades, gat broken Heads,
> their Crowns her clave in twa then.[35]

There can be little doubt that the song was written by a sophisticated author. It satirises the "blood and fire" style of Zachary Boyd's *Battell of Newburn*, at the same time using highland phrases, a jaunty tune and the repeated "then" to lend "folk" authenticity to the song, as

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35. *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 1st Series. There are slightly different versions in Adv. MS 23.3.24 and NLS MS 2935. Laing also printed a Whig answer to "Killiechrankie" which, while not imitating highland speech to the same extent, shows equal facility in the recreation of Scots popular song.

if it was a genuine highland victory song:

Oh, on-or-rie, oh on-or-rie!
    Why should we lose King James then,
O rigen-die, o, rigen-die!
    her brake a hims Banes, then,
Fre-nish, but stay a while,
    to speak a word or twa, then,
And take a strake, upon him's neck,
    Before him gang awa, then.
...
Now shentlemen, and Cavaleers,
    come join with her nane-sell, then,
For to root out, the Dutch Recruit,
    And ding him down to Hell, then,
We'll shag off anes, for our *King James*
    and think it no great pain, then,
To set him on his Royal Throne,
    let each man have his ain, then.

The last line, and variations on it, became a catch cry for the Jacobites. It also provides a clue to the way in which vernacular poetry, largely pioneered by protestant satirists, and the Jacobite cause became linked. The drive for each man to "have his ain" — to have a choice rather than have a king foisted upon him from "above" — was, somewhat ironically, a legacy of the Reformation and Presbyterianism, and vernacular poetry grew out of an alternative tradition fashioned to express that urge towards independence. Such was the complex history behind a seemingly natural alliance between vernacular song and Jacobitism in the eighteenth century. "Killiechrankie", as Laing printed it with mock-highland pronunciation, may well have been itself intended as a satiric parody — but it has long been one of the most well-known of Jacobite songs. Its stanza remained popular throughout the eighteenth century, particularly for farce, reinforcing the possibility that parody may have been the actual intention of the original song.

The rebellion of 1715 inspired a number of ambiguous, ironic songs, such as "Up an' warn a' Willy",[36] which became popular in eighteenth-century broadsheets and part of the national song culture. While their wit may have popularized them in polite circles, like "Killiechrankie",

36. There is a version of this in SRO RH 13/38/2, see Appendix.

it was their folk tunes and rollicking vernacular language which endeared them to the people, regardless of the fact that often they parodied, or at least commented ironically upon, a serious event and a much loved cause.[37]

Similarly, song proved a useful vehicle for social comment and the expression of personal opinions. "A Song against presbyterie and the late Revolution, 1700" uses an older popular song to satirise Presbyterianism and the effects it and the Revolution had had on the life of a "Cavalier". Such occasional pieces perhaps gave rise to the common belief that life in Scotland was drab indeed after the Revolution firmly established the Presbyterian Kirk. "A Song against presbyterie", which makes an interesting contrast with the Whig view of raucous Cavaliers in "Hey Boyes up go Wee", is a charming evocation of the Jacobite, Episcopalian spirit, which intensified as the years passed:

To danton me to danton me
  I thought no thing could danton me
When I was wanton young & free
  I thought no thing could danton me
But eighty eight and eighty nine
  And all the weary years sinsyne
With sickness age & poverty
  Alas hath o're sore dantoned me
Sack was the drink in forty nine
  When prisbytrie had right divine
And now again the time has come
  When all our drink is sack and Mum
And so into the chair we see
  Is mounted Mis John Prisbytrie
Who banish'd hath all Christian Liquor
  With Bishops curat Dean & viccar
Claret is the only Liquor can
  Be said to chair the heart of man
And when a better set of stars
  Shall put a right end to our warrs
Then down shall go all sack & Mum
  And everything yt breeds humdrum
And with good claret we shall see
  Restor'd our prince and Prelacy.

(Adv. MS 23.3.24)

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37. For a range of battle songs see Michael Brander, *Scottish and Border Battles and Ballads* (London, 1975). Brander delineates the differences between composed song and folk ballads. There is more than a hint of irony in some versions of "Johnny Cope" and "Sherriffmuir".

Ramsay and others, particularly in the clubs of Edinburgh, often recalled the "good old days" in drinking songs and sentimental songs, equating a Stewart prince and prelates with "the good life", and the new king and Presbyterianism with dullness. "To danton me" does not indulge in fiery polemics. In its reminders of the comings and goings of kirks and kings, and in the lines "And when a better set of stars / Shall put a right end to our warrs", it shares with other poetry of the period a degree of trivialisation of the troubles of the seventeenth century. The author, though committed to the Jacobite and Episcopalian causes, is in the end mainly concerned with the fact that he cannot, at present, obtain enough claret, suggesting that under a different government he could. Like the battle songs of the same period, which tend to be much more jovial and ironic than zealous poems such as Zachary Boyd's, this song has a modern, personal tone. The author expresses concern about the effects of the change of government on his own life, noting that while personal comfort is something to which every man is entitled, personal inconvenience is an uncomfortable side effect of political instability. "To danton me" frames an appeal to other "ordinary" men, through its evocation of an older popular song, to recall better times.

Whether it was used for artistic allusion like this, for satire, or for direct imitation of popular culture, by the beginning of the eighteenth century popular song was conventional in the "best" of circles in Scotland. Poets like Francis Sempill, and the anonymous satirists of the broadsheets, produced some fine examples of vernacular song, and bequeathed to the eighteenth-century poets and song-writers a style and diction of great versatility and of obvious appeal to the growing audience for Scots song and poetry.

Verse Epistles and Occasional Addresses

One of the stock forms of eighteenth-century Scottish poetry, the verse epistle gained popularity in the seventeenth century. The practice of communication in verse, the beginnings of which can be seen in Hume's "Epistle", developed as a response to the new intellectual climate engendered by the Reformation and Renaissance, and as a response to the

idea that all men's opinions mattered. Though there is little humour in Hume's work, there are a number of seventeenth-century poems which indicate that the lighter vein of verse epistle, so dear to Ramsay and Burns, was finding favour. It was left to the later vernacular poets to refine the mode, however, and the seventeenth-century manuscripts simply provide evidence of a vogue for the verse epistle.

Often the epistles are of a very casual nature, such as the following exchange between two friends living on different floors in the same building:

To yow my Neighbour that's underneath
I wish all freedom from harm & skaith
I cannot think but yow were in jest
Thin drinking broth to call a feast
Yea tho yow add the good warm aile
I wold rather have good cabbage kaile
But what shall us say, wee'l need them all
To purge away the cough and caall ... rather cold
Yet there's as true Gossiprie in shytting
As in eating drinking without flytting
And if this dayes work will doe us good
To morrow, wee'l gett better food
Then Knoxes homiles and purgations
Which are but sober sustentations
Wee'l first eat, and then wee's drink
And never on past sorrows think
Untill wee are mirrie by our bicker
In spyte of Treasurie and Excheq[r]

That I did your bill receave
You'l know by the honour I it give.

The last couplet suggests that other exchanges had preceded this one. The reply is in another, and less sure, hand:

Thas lines I have, from he above
therefor I thank you for yowr love
lett yow and I compare our noets
I doe mean by leargest poets
in number I'm just nine and four
and yet I fear cannot give owre
its but feew minnots since I sheit
I render more than than all I geet
Since now our pud's is so weel washt
by Knox his drogs, and warm alle dash't
Leets eat good bread, with hard rost veall
and drink clean claret then its weall.

(SRO MS RH 26/15/16)

The exchanges which took place between Ramsay and Hamilton, and between Burns and his "brother poets" had their origins in such light-hearted exchanges between friends. Ramsay and Hamilton, however, wrote polished, extended poems as professional poets. These two friends were simply neighbours making use of what was apparently a conventional means of good humoured communication. Their concerns were nonetheless the same as the overriding concerns of later poets.

Verse epistles in Scots tended until the end of the eighteenth century to follow the basic pattern of normal correspondence — personal health, shared antagonism for someone or something, or mutual praise and good fellowship — onto which the more sophisticated themes of the epistles were grafted. In the manuscript poems, for example, there is shared antagonism towards a physician[38], and in Ramsay's and Hamilton's epistles the antagonism is frequently directed against critics of the vernacular style (also a pre-occupation of Burns). Good fellowship is a constant theme in verse epistles and just as the two manuscript correspondents arranged to eat and drink together, and enjoy good conversation, so did Hamilton and Ramsay:

> Now tho I should baith reel and rottle
> And be as light as Aristotole,
> At Ed'nbrugh we sall ha'e a Bottle,
> Of reaming claret,
> Gin that my haff-pay Siller Shottle
> Can safely spare it.
>
> (Hamilton, June 26, 1719)[39]

Hume had consoled himself at the end of his "Epistle" with the knowledge that he still had friends to share his ideas with, whose company he could enjoy. And the first manuscript poet suggests that companionship over a drink would banish past care and present troubles, while the second implies the same with "then its weall". Ramsay devoted his third answer to Hamilton to this theme of good fellowship as a panacea, indeed a

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38. If there is some very sophisticated punning in the poem, the antagonism could be towards a Sabbatarian minister. The more straightforward, and casual, interpretation seems more likely.

39. STS *Ramsay*, vol. 1, p.117.

necessity for a happy and well-adjusted life:

> Ne'er fash about your neist Year's State,
> Nor with superior Powers debate,
> Nor Cantrapes cast to ken your Fate;
>   There's Ills anew
> To cram our Days, which soon grow late;
>   Lets live just now.
> ...
> I think, my Friend, an Fowk can get
> A Doll of rost Beef pypin het,
> And wi' red wine their Wyson wet,
>   And Cleathing clean,
> And be nae sick, or drown'd in Debt,
>   They're no to mean.

It is clear from the manuscript poems that such an attitude, linked to the political pragmatism evident in satirical poetry in the late seventeenth century, existed well before Ramsay's time. Good fellowship, and the sharing of conversation with like-minded people, was a hedge against public and private cares. Extending this to intellectual fellowship, Ramsay and Burns, and their "brother poets", used the verse epistle to explore ideas and the nature of their poetry — its origins, its relevance and its place in the mainstream of British literature — just as Hume had used the epistle to explore his philosophy and experience in the context of his society. While the anonymous manuscript poets did not introduce the same range of concerns to their epistles, the sense of likemindedness and fellowship is the same.

Adv. MS 19.3.8 contains a satirical paraphrase of a letter. The poet clearly had little respect for the person whose correspondence he satirised, appending, in a similar manner to later poets' "Postscripts" to verse epistles, a rhyme drawing the larger satiric picture:

> This Ryme wes composed of a Letter sent be Maister Alexander Thomesone, one of the ministers of Edinburghe, to Sr. James Carmichell ... deputie at Courte. The letter was written after ye first tumult in Edinburghe anent ye Service booke miscarried and disntyed and turned in this ryme to Scoffe ye minister.
>
> To save a maid St. George a dragon slew
> A brave Exployt, If all yats sayed be trew
> Some think ther ar no dragons, nay its sayed
> There was no George: pray God ther be a maid.

If the service book referred to in this explanation was that of Charles I then the poem dates from the first half of the century. The "correspondent", Alexander Thomson, is portrayed as a time-server to the Episcopalian cause and it seems he had written a letter giving Carmichael his full loyalty. That a Scottish minister should fawn in this fashion to the king's servant evidently disgusted the author of the poem. "Thomson" begins with two stanzas of obsequious flattery:

> My lord your unexpected post
> To courte made me to misse
> The happiness quhilk I love most
> Your Lordships hands to kisse.[40]

Deviously denigrating himself, he directs Carmichael's attention to the problems the new Service Book has caused in Scotland:

> I neid not to impairt to you
> How our church stait does stand
> By this new Service Book which now
> So troubells all this Land.
>
> Nor darne I the small boats adventure
> Of my most shallow braine
> Upone these fearfull seas to enter
> In this tempestuous maine
>
> Unless yet by Authority
> I charged be to doe so
> Which may command and shelter me
> From shipwreck and from woe.

Self-interest, cowardice and a propensity to flatter through self-deprecation are all revealed in the mock letter, and in the hackneyed idiom adopted throughout. Warning that further trouble is inevitable, "Thomson" suggests that his master exploit the weaknesses of the Scots, rather than allowing them to be whipped up into the kind of violence at which they have experience:

> Better these flames should quenschit be
> Yat they have sett one fyre
> Bot wisdome and authority
> That matter doeth requyre
>
> Ane warrlyk Nation still wee are
> Which soone may flatrit be

40. See Appendix for full text.

Not forc't, bot broken quhen we are
Most loth then to agre.

Thomson was probably acting from reasonable motives, simply desiring to put an end to the trouble caused by the too hasty action of the king. But there would have been little respect for either his motives or methods, as the parody shows, at a time when Presbyterians were so bitterly, and vocally, opposed to the new liturgy. In displaying Thomson's "underhand" advice, the epistle is used to allow a character to reveal his "true colours", in the same way as the popular dramatic monologue. No doubt such parodies were partly responsible for the fact that irony and humour became increasingly conventional in the verse epistle.[41]

The epistle is used for petition, and address, in "To the Right Hon^{b}ell the Lord Praces and the Rest of the Members of the Castle Hill Club The Humble adres of the servants belonging to the forsaid club, 1691" (SRO MS GD 26/15/16), in which the servants request better conditions, in the form of additional food and drink. That the poem was actually written by the servants is doubtful. It is much more likely that they complained to a member, and that the member wrote the poem on their behalf. If this was the case, then the author skilfully approximated, in vocabulary and orthography, the kind of poem that might have been expected of the club's servants. The diction is halting, combining Scots and gradiose English. The spelling and handwriting are naive, and the sentiments of the servants expressed in a manner fitting to the way seventeenth-century servants might have addressed their masters in the relaxed atmosphere of a club. If the poem is the work of the servants, then it is equally interesting as an example of growing literacy and awareness of literary conventions among the most ordinary of people.

Regardless of authorship, it is significant that the poem emanated from a club. The proliferation of clubs and literary societies in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Edinburgh was a phenomenon closely related to the growing emphasis on companionship among likeminded people,

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41. See NLS MS 3807, "A Familiar Epistle to ye House of Comons", in Appendix.

whether intellectual, political, convivial or all three. Out of such companionship came a sense of shared opinions and of the value of others' opinions which is constantly reflected in poetry.[42]

The "Humble Adres" combines colloquial diction with the jargon of the club in a familiar, conversational manner:

Most noble Praces now in a Chair
Yower Clemencies all men admyre
And in yor Easiy Government
Masters are happie and Content
Yet wee poor Roguis most seigh and mourn
were still so Dry we fear wee burne
Our poor allowance is so small
There is no halfe up, but voill it all
A mutchine stealls so doune our throat
Wee scarce know iff wee be Drunk or not
For still our mouthes are lyke to geyzen
And such a Draught not weitts our wiezen
As all Judicious Drinkers know.[43]

The poem is an admirable piece of industrial bargaining. The petitioners remind the President of the justness of their plea, their loyal service, the honesty of their characters and precedents in larger drink rations. At the same time they flatter the members of the club by reminding them of their intellectual position and the place of servants in the scheme of things:

Weer vexed that want doth us ablidge
To grudge in this a golden aige
Necessite which hath no Law
This from us, gainst our will doth draw
Our drought is such wee Cannot longer
Forbear although wee dread your anger
Wee know yower Honourss Charitable
And all the worthies at the table
Therefore wee doe presume to hope
Yow'll not lett's sterve in a Coacks chope (cooks shop)[44]

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42. For detailed discussion of club life in Edinburgh see R. Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh* (1st edn, 1823; 1868 edn repr. Edinburgh, 1967); and D.D. McElroy, "The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth-Century Scotland" (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh University, 1952).

43. See Appendix for full text.

44. Scribal note.

There are a number of similarities between this and Pennycuik's "Lintoun Address", particularly in the ironic use of flattery. The verse epistle and the occasional address were closely related in their development and this becomes most obvious when the forms are used satirically.

Such ironic, occasional use of the epistle or address was a well established convention in Scotland by the end of the seventeenth century. Francis Sempill, for example, announced his arrival in Glasgow:

> To aw quham it concerns; neir the Tempill
> Thair is ane wons wi' auntie Sempill,
> His consort forbye, gif ye please;
> Thair's twa o's horse, and ane o's men,
> That's bidand doun wi' Allan Glen:
>
> Thir lynes I send to you for feir
> Of puining o auld auntie's gear;
> What neir ane befoir durst steir;
> It stinks for fustiness I daur sweir.[45]

The poem represents Sempill's submission to an order that all visitors to Glasgow during the occupation by Cromwell's troops should report on arrival to the commanding officer. Sempill took advantage of the opportunity to produce a light occasional poem emphasising his Scottishness and satirising the order.

Arguably the most important of the many occasional poems in the Scottish Record Office Clerk of Penicuik Muniments, SRO MS GD 18/4391 makes use of the developing verse epistle, or occasional address, in place of the formal address. It illustrates awareness in the late seventeenth century of the old courtly tradition and demonstrates the rise of antiquarianism among the cultured class of Scotland before the work of the eighteenth-century antiquarians. A contemporary note, verso, describes the poem:

> Mr. Ja Cunynghame his old Scotts verses presented to ye duek
> of York when he wes commissioner to a Scotts parliament

and a slightly later note reads:

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45. *Poems of the Sempills*, p.lx.

Old Scotch verses
Mr. James Cuningham
To
Ye Duke of York obait
anno 1680 qn he was
commissioner to our
Scots parliament.

The scribe used a deliberately archaic hand, imitating middle Scots courtly scribes, which indicates a familiarity with handwritten material from at least the sixteenth century. In vocabulary, too, the poet sought to imitate that of much earlier times, emphasising the connection in his *nom de plume* at the end of the poem:

Quad ye[r] G // obeysant,
Claiped
BARBER REDIVIVUS

The contrived archaism of expression, based largely on Barbour's *Brus*, is interspersed with a more conversational turn of phrase, so that the overall tone of the poem, despite the poet's efforts to formalise it, is more akin to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century verse epistles and occasional addresses than to middle Scots formal address poems. The voice is personal and familiar, although the poet mimics the manner of a "bard". The poem is a good-humoured welcome to the future king but also has the more serious purpose of emphasising that the duke would inherit the crown of Scotland as well as that of England. The intensely Scottish diction seeks to remind the duke that his family had its origins in Scotland and that Scotland accordingly deserves an important place in his heart, thought and policies. Essentially this is the same motive that lay behind the use of the vernacular by later Jacobite poets — an emphasis on Scottishness which was quite deliberate and not to be confused with mere sentimentality.

The opening lines of the poem recall the duke's Scottish ancestry:

Maist couthsumlie, withouten dreid,
Lat's halse ye een in eldrish Leeid.
For Certes why, frasyne I ween
To treit of Ancestree bedeen.
Of Kinrik Rial, & forbeirs
Of STEWARTS, now the land wha steirs,
Baith braid & wyde in Senzeorie;
With poustie gritsume halelie.

Tak ye na sturt, nor wax ye teen
Thocht yat our wirds fow hamelie been.
(11.1-10)[46]

This final couplet echoes the conventional disclaimer of the middle Scots poets, but there is here an important self-consciousness. Though phrased as an apology, it is in fact an acknowledgement of the validity of the Scots poetic tradition as a separate cultural entity. The visit of the English- and French-educated Stewart prince provided Cunningham with an ideal occasion to elevate the Scots tradition to a position equal to, if not greater than, that of the powerful literary traditions more familiar to the Duke of York.

Having given an "aureate" outline of past Scottish greatness "fra wryttis ald" (11.11-21), Cunningham adopts a more conversational diction and a more personal voice. There is another echo of the courtly, of the convention of affecting less knowledge than one actually had which Douglas used frequently, but the reason for the personal tone is more complex than this. The second half of the poem, in the manner of a familiar epistle, speaks one man to another, suggesting that such a degree of personal contact and honesty is the "Scots way". In effect, if the duke as king is to keep the loyalty and affection of the Scots then he should deal with them plainly and fairly, as the poet does with him:

But if my ingenie (SIR DUKE) with leive
Be thought weel hardie in offence,
To tummil with Clerks of Sapience,
As BOES heer, & udirs to:
And yat I make na smaa ado.
In kyttil things abuife my ken.
Our teuch a talk for yap young men.
For eldrin stories leel to mark,
Would had on hand a profound Clark,
Who coud tak keep, & hark to red
In this indite been nathing gleg.
Yet come na pleneying of my devoure,
For withoutten sik aventoure,
How sall we knaw who lived air,
And aa thair doughtie deeds preclair.
But as my saw was, DUKE, aforne
In quiet mind be your breist borne,

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46. See Appendix for full text.

And ne're in yre grunch stalwartlie,
For thir my wirrdis bauld & free:
Nor for my tale schent me sair,
Fra of this Leeid ye get na mair.
(11.22-42)

There is no indication of malice in the address. Any warning it carries, overtly or by implication, is offered in good faith by a loyal subject. However, there can be little doubt that recalling the past would do more than rekindle in the duke an attachment to Scotland. After all, the past revealed, and would surely bring to mind, the sometimes unhappy fortunes of the house of Stewart and the readiness of the Scots, demonstrated more than once, to take matters into their own hands when their king disappointed them.

From a purely literary viewpoint, the significance of this poem lies in its self-conscious evocation of the Scots literary tradition and the deliberate display of antiquarian knowledge. "Maist couthsumlie" clearly represents an effort to enhance the status of Scottish poetry in the eyes of Cunningham's sophisticated peers and the English visitors. More than a clever presentation piece, the poem proclaims the high esteem in which the poet held his native culture. The personal voice and modern Scots mingled with the "middle Scots" diction were intended to suggest that the Scottish poetic tradition was as valid for contemporary use as the English model. Cunningham obviously relished the Scots tongue, old and modern, aureate and vernacular, and made much of his debt to older poets. As a re-creation of the style of Barbour, the poem is not entirely successful, achieving the effect of pastiche rather than faithful imitation of its original, but as an exploration of the possibilities of the Scots language in poetry, and as a justification for the continuance of the Scots poetic tradition, it is a remarkable composition. "Maist couthsumlie" shows little evidence of any disintegration of Scots poetry under the weight of a vigorous neighbouring culture. In fact, it demonstrates a strong continuing interest in Scots poetry, at the same time revealing a consciousness that the writing of poetry in Scots was a living tradition. Cunningham not only realised that the roots of Scottish poetry of the 1680s lay in the middle Scots past, but also that it had undergone a

transformation which made it relevant to late seventeenth-century society. This realisation is present in the poem, expressed with the same quiet irony that touches the political reminders to the duke.

Behind the poem is an understanding of the threat posed by English culture, but this concern was not necessarily detrimental to Scots poetry. Indeed, "Maist couthsumlie" is an example of the invigorating effect of competition with English poetry, reflecting a process of cultural definition which persisted in the eighteenth century, being strongly present, for example, in Ramsay's "Vision". Never before had there been such a pressing need for Scottish poets to explore and avow their identity in the deliberate manner of "Maist couthsumlie". In the latter part of the seventeenth century, as English political interference in Scottish affairs became a fact of life and as English poetry through Milton and Dryden reached into the modern world, the cultural identity of Scottish poets was realigned, quickened and affirmed.

Occasional addresses and verse epistles were an ideal means for poets to express their individuality and opinions, exploring their society, politics and culture as well as their view of their own poetry. By the mid-eighteenth century verse epistles commonly combined these concerns, satirising Scots society but upholding Scots poetry against English poetry and the acknowledged genius of "Mr. Pope" and others. The use in verse epistles of the first person, the intention to communicate with another sympathetic person, or group of people, and the lack of a conventional prosody governing occasional poetry allowed the poet to "be himself", in the tradition of Hume and the seventeenth-century poets who had almost casually made irony and satire part of the genre.

Narrative poems, monologues and dialogues

The extended narrative, the dramatic monologue and the satiric dialogue offered great scope for the use of the vernacular and were developed with enthusiasm during the seventeenth century, contributing significantly to the narrative and satiric style which culminsted in such triumphs as Burns' "Tam o' Shanter" and "Holy Willie's Prayer". Monologues and

dialogues had, of course, been used for dialectic since the middle ages and for satire during the Reformation. Robert Sempill had used the narrative poem often, most successfully in "The Legend", and James Sempill combined narrative and dialogue in *The Packman's Pater Noster*. Seventeenth-century poets were clearly influenced by such lively models. Contemporary "serious" models were equally influential: if zealots like Zachary Boyd were to use monologue, dialogue and narrative poems to uphold the glory of a cause, or to have heroes and villains expound their views, then the satirists would use the same modes to expose the causes and characters to ridicule. In the course of the century poets increasingly refined such devices as the combination of narrative and dramatic monologue to create satire and comedy. The outcome of that refinement can be seen in the sophisticated techniques used in "Young Donald's Proclamation" and "John Highlandman's Remarks".

Narrative is used satirically in a very long holograph poem in the Clerk of Penicuik Muniments (SRO MS GD 18/4379). The poem is set out as a chapbook and its title page reads:

> The whigameirs road into Edinburgh — the 2 off November — 1648 — by twa famous rymers — thair names shall be told ane other tyme — iff ye be very Curious.
>
> The 2 off November
> 1648

Two signatures, "Robert Gray" and "Henry Clerk" appear on the title page.[47] "The Whigameirs Road" is a satire on the Whig forces that marched on Edinburgh and Stirling during the 1648 Covenanting war. It is in rich vernacular Scots, making extensive use of catalogues, which were clearly a satiric convention favoured by many seventeenth-century poets. There is little likelihood that the poem was composed on the same day as the event described. The use of the exact date on the title page is probably intended to emphasise the role of "reporter" so common in satiric verse from the Reformation on.

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47. There is nothing to suggest that the poem was not the original work of these two. Henry's signature appears several times, as if it were being practised, suggesting that the scribes were quite young. Henry's signature strongly resembles the scribal hand throughout. It is possible that two youths copied the poem from a chapbook, but alterations and marginal comments suggest original composition.

Purporting to praise the Covenanters, the poem actually portrays them as an undisciplined, ill-equipped, fanatical, hypocritical rabble, supported by the simple minded and gullible. Again, the poem reveals a marked dislike, indeed fear, of zeal and fanaticism. From the beginning it is clear that the authors had little respect for either side in the quarrel. The treachery of the Scottish nobility is emphasised as Edinburgh, abandoned by the government, awaits the arrival of Argyle, its Castle occupied by a rebellious captain and the city at the mercy of all comers:

now efter the great mcinzie
in England that was made to flie
there rose great strife in scotland
who then should have the best command
the lords of the committie house
did think the matter perrilous
and so for their securitie
they would have the artillerie
and all the magisson at armes
for why that might work them great hearmes
qhlk in the castel did remain
so they did charge the cheif captain
and bad him render now that fort
but he of that made but a sport
yet few of those toke that to heart
or had a mind that they sould smart
tho that a lord of great renown
did promise for to help this soon
but they oversaw the lat braveries
and keipit them with their knaveries
who playes as saids with both the hands
for saveing of their goods and lands
and for this cause they letters sent
to areguilye for to be present
as allso the good chancelour
that they might have ther full pouer
whilke as to rule and guide the reing
even to their best will and likeing
and then to colour their decites
they from the town did take their gaits
and in the night right wisely fled
as seeming to be heard bestead
to seik those men that they writ for
and hinder them to wadge the ware.[48]

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48. See Appendix for full text.

Using the rhyming couplet and simple vocabulary conventional in broadsheet narrative poems, the authors set the scene in a journalistic manner, providing a very brief "background" before the action begins. Little elaboration is made on the events leading up to the impasse in which Edinburgh found itself, nor are the chief characters described in detail, for it is assumed that the audience is already familiar with such matters. This, of course, is the first indication that the poem is a satire, as serious narrative would have demanded more than bald facts, especially in the light of the thoroughly detailed description of the Whigs which occupies the rest of the poem. In assuming the audience's knowledge of events and expectation of some embellishment, the authors indicate that the irony is intended and that the purpose is satiric rather than documentary. And the satiric intention of the interplay between the imparting of "news" and the audience's expectations is emphasised by the almost casual introduction of the Whig army:

> then in the mean time hinder came
> numerous troops of westland men
> for they ware near of men fightand
> foure thousand weill one horse rydand
> and thre one foot that could well fight
> all chiefly in their armour bright
> for man and mother sone came here
> not standing for the compt of weir
> of every rank and occupation
> for they had a iust vocation.

The descriptions are ironically culled from broadside clichés and the army is further undercut by "for they had a iust vocation", which mocks the Whigs in the same way as the nobles were mocked with "for saveing of their goods and lands". The long catalogue of the Whig soldiers' various occupations which follows is ostensibly calculated to impress on the reader the democratic nature of the "people's army", but serves effectively to denigrate the army:

> there came carles lords and knights
> clachen lairds and thundering lights
> Jackmen haghouse men and greives
> and cooks that allso likes and prives
> master housholds dispensators
> with many old furnicators
> bellmen that both jongs and knells

and flesheres that both knocks and fels
coblers that both cloutes and clampes
decayed shoes with leather samps
readers that raiseth up the tuns
and baxters that governes the ovens
Chamberlans that lifts and rests
and heirds that heries the bird nests
websters sowters tanners litsters
and women that help men in misters
all sorts of wrights that plaines and hewes
and men that whistels at the plows
tinklers that well clouts the pans
with folks that never swears no banes
candlemakers that greasie trade
with thimblemen abundance hade
hamermen of every sort
all to the meeting did resort
the miller and the millers knave
the knaveshapman and all the lave
but the chief of those was one stout smith
renowned for courage and for pith
for his doughty deeds were known
and in former roads were shown ...

There is little resemblance to a professional army in this motley assembly of amateurs and the irony is reinforced by the catalogue of the arms carried by the Whigs. Just as the description of the members of the army began with some impressive characters, only to end with the claim that the "chief of them" was a blacksmith, so the catalogue of arms begins by describing how each man had "by his syde a blaid / that would not with his scaberd shade", but continues:

except that he had shorn it down
his scaberd with his malison
the hundreth part of them had spears
and stafes that iokies often beares
others had loung shafted axes
apelstafs spruspur and turn oakes.

Such an army, in which only one hundredth of the men have spears or axes and the rest are armed with staves, would represent little threat to the enemy artillery. The arms become increasingly ridiculous as the extensive catalogue progresses. All manner of rural equipment is included, from parts of ploughs to half sheep shears, from pokers to rakes; even makeshift weapons:

crosboues made of girths and banes
and slings that can fell folks with stones
clubs full of flaies and nails
yea some of them had bones of whales.

Some conventional weapons are outmoded — two handed swords, hagbuts — and others, such as kitchen knives, farrier's tools, crooks, toasting irons and whips, are pathetically ineffectual given the contemporary advances in military technology; a barbarous collection, but affording little comfort against muskets and heavy artillery.

That the Whigs' weaponry is not to be taken seriously is indicated when the poets cast an eye over the "secret weapons":

and thes they had as heckle pins
poutch pistols darts and ban bodkins
and also they had bloody caskins
and needles that claws yockie skins
pyck tooths and long horned laces
and fiz bals that can burn mens faces
...
and crak nuts that can play some pranks
elf arrowes brotches spindles whorles
sharp pointed hooykes and small borrles
...
and pinchers that sets up mistaches
they also had sharp pointed knives
and whitles that takes barnes lives
guns that shots the roots of kaill
with many a good cook and paill.

The list descends to birds' beaks, charms, spells, "warwolf coats", "tame toads in boxes", reducing the "army" to a mob of superstitious yokels.

The amateurish nature of the army and the terrifying nature of its zeal are brought together as it approaches Edinburgh. Though the residents may have been alarmed by the angry, armed mob, a skilled soldier would have found the whole array laughable:

thus in a hideous way come here
these multitudes that all did fear
there countenance was grime and starne
enough to flie both wife and bairn
many there had lyered baireds
coarse tangled haires and tatterd heads
and these were aged and grown stife
yet came they heir with all their pith
as musterd with holy braces

raveing and distempered faces
the rest were young and rude and stout
and bede the bruit and bickering out
this heast was greivous for to sie
that did overswarme this whole countrie
seven thousand men they were of haill
that could there enemies assail
all weill acounted in there geir
as men apointed for the weir.

In addition to the humour of the description and narrative, the poets make it clear that they are parodying the style of narrative verse practised by Zachary Boyd:

so came they neir the brave city
of edinbrugh that stands on hie
and sought that they might enterance have
and in the town there men recieve
qlk soon wes done in that same way
as master zacheria boyd can say
into his battell of newburn
their speaking of newcastle town
Sayes that with tears unto there eyes
they gave into leslie they kyes
so came the people of this toun
when as they hard they were to come
made open ports and came all sone
with goullings gapeings wounderous sair
and fell upon their necks with tears.

As the narrative continues, the women of Edinburgh offered lodgings to the army, treating them very well indeed. Burns later made fun of the propensity of simple women to be taken in by zealots, and satirised the antics of the "righteous" in prayer, in the same way as this:

the wifes draw them in fives and sevens
into there houses and lodgeings
and into these costly tenements
gat meat and all abuliements
tho there chief want was shone and serkes
their got they all for all was clarkes
who prayed so mickle and so well
for men thought not on their taill
they raised their eyn like whyts of eggs
and sighed like tumbling doun of craigs
and gloured and gaped all at once
like dowgs that wories on sharp bones
sowching lyke to the skips of bees
or like a mighty swarm of flies
and their discourse misterous

> and in their sin presumptous
> thus lived they with their sisters dear
> full of zeal and void of all fear.

When opposition to the Westland Whigs arrives, the army is described without significant detail in four lines, as if to stress that any well ordered, properly equipped army could defeat the rabble:

> who marched up withouten fear
> of all these stoutly men of weir
> for they had pick musket and drum
> qlk was a right brave magasoim.

The Whigs delay until powder is available "and each his loadening on his shouldier". But the guns distress the Whigs — they do not know how to use them:

> but some getting a fyrie lock lome
> demanded fra whose hands they come
> and knowing not the saids none dare
> put hand into this peice of ware
> som were ignorant indeed
> but skillfull Christians did them lead.

In this way the very long poem proceeds, inflating the Whigs with great, absurd catalogues, and deflating them with examples of their ineptitude, cowardice and blind zeal. The satirists had a clear understanding of the phenomenon of fanaticism, being as aware of its dangers as of the comic potential inherent in its external manifestations and focusing on their subject with the kind of pragmatism and cynicism obvious in other plain style and vernacular poems of the same period.

"The Whigameirs Road" combines the catalogue device of middle Scots poetry, the blood and guts narrative style of Boyd, continually parodied, and the witty couplet debunking the subject in true seventeenth-century style. Irony is central to the satiric technique — both the irony created overtly in the narrative and the more subtle irony arising from a shared understanding of the real nature of the events on the part of authors and readers. Hence this is yet another instance of poets from an upper class background satirising a prevalent broadside form and simultaneously continuing the development of witty, vernacular satire of the kind which would predominate in the eighteenth century. Recognising that irony at

such length became diffuse and thereby lacking in impact, the eighteenth-century poets refined the style and sharpened the irony, but the major elements of later Scots satire are present in "The Whigameirs Road": vernacular diction, occasional quips in "plain" language, scorn of zealots and praise of common sense, colourful descriptive strokes and a fascination with personal idiosyncrasies. Though elements of older Scots poetry persist in the long narrative and the catalogues, the more modern style and tone are obvious in the diction, wit, irony, cynicism and the reporter's voice.

Progress towards a more concise narrative style was made by the author of "The Speech of a Fife Laird Newly Come from the Grave", published in Watson's *Choice Collection*[49] and apparently a product of the second half of the seventeenth century.

The Fife Laird, returning from the grave a century after his death, is astonished and appalled by the changes which have occurred in the way of life in Fife, and, by implication, in the rest of Scotland. Extravagance has replaced thrift, pretension has taken the place of honesty between men, and fashion has overtaken common sense. In the monologue the Laird appears to be attempting to understand and explain the changes, and the audience is privy to his "speech". Catalogues are employed, but in a more controlled manner than in "The Whigameir's Road", and the couplet is used much more effectively. In its diction, a mixture of vernacular and plain vocabulary, its use of the first person, and its conversational tone, this poem closely resembles the work of eighteenth-century vernacular poets. Further, it anticipates the themes of later Scots poetry, particularly in the description of absurd practices among the idle rich. Yet there are resonances of Lindsay in the Laird's disappointment that individual whim has destroyed all sense of the common weill, and other echoes of middle Scots poets in the Laird's nostalgic longing for a "golden age" of pastoral simplicity in the past. A rekindling of pastoral values, however, was also part of the new age and would manifest itself in English and Scottish poetry for some time to come. Moreover, the Laird's desire for more honesty between men, for a levelling of social barriers, and his disgust with pretension,

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49. *Choice Collection*, Pt I, p.25.

time-serving and hypocrisy, are all expressed with a post-Reformation sensibility, very much in accord with the tone of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, particularly that of Fergusson and Burns.

The Laird's surprise at finding himself returned from the grave, expressed as it is in no-nonsense diction, accurately captures a sense of a somewhat old-fashioned, but dignified, figure:

> What Accident, what strange Mishap
> Awakes me from my Heav'nly nap?
> What Sp'rit? What God-head by the lave,
> Hath rais'd my Body from the Grave?
> It is a Hundred Years almost,
> Since I was buri'd in the Dust,
> And now I think that I am living,
> Or else, but doubt, my Brains are raving:
> Yet I do feel (while as I study)
> The Faculties of all my Body:
> I Taste, I Smell, I Touch, I Hear,
> I find my sight exceeding clear:
> Then I'm alive, yea sure I am,
> I know it by my Corp'ral Frame.
> (11.1-14)

The effect is immediate, drawing the reader into the personal reactions of the Laird without preamble and encouraging identification with the Laird. He explains that he was "a great Fife Laird", living not far "from the Hall-yard" and, naturally, he muses about hose presently enjoying his "land and Pleugh", his castle, and his "Cole-heugh". Though he is unable to find the answers to his questions, he knows he is in the right shire:

> For so beneath me stands Kinghorn:
> And thereabout the Lowmand Hill
> Stands as it stood yet ever still.
> There is Bruntisland, Aberdore,
> I see Fife's Coast along the Shore.
> Yet I am right, and for my life,
> This is my Native Country Fife.
> (11.26-32)

The immediacy of the poem is intensified by the use of the topography of Fife and by the straightforward speech of the Laird which, as he examines his surroundings, reflects local and personal knowledge.

Much has altered about Fife, the region and the people: "I find great change in old Lairds Places / I know the Ground, but not the Faces".

All the lands have changed hands except one or two — "All is away that once was ours" — and faced with inexplicable change, the Laird is distressed:

> I'm full of wrath, I scorn to tarrie,
> I know them no more than the Fairie:
> But I admire and marvel strange,
> What is the cause of this great Change.
> (11.49-52)

While the "Speech" is a vehicle for satire, here the poet encourages a sympathetic response to the old laird's confusion and efforts to understand the cause of that confusion, thereby introducing a personal interest which was becoming increasingly common in the literature of Scotland.

In a device the poet borrowed from the broadsheets, the Laird refers to rumours concerning the changes he perceives:

> I hear a murmuring Report,
> Passing among the Common Sort:
> For some say this, and some say that,
> And others tell, I know not what.
> (11.53-6)

But such reasons fail to satisfy him, as does his own suggestion, Providence. A man of common sense, he seeks a practical explanation, finding it in the corruption of relations between people, and in an increase in materialism and fashion consciousness. Men have become irrational, he decides, ceasing to be responsible for the good management of their minds, their families and their estates — unlike his own time:

> When I was born at Middle-Yard weight,
> There was no word of Laird or Knight:
> The Greatest Stiles of Honour then,
> Was to be Titl'd the Good-man.
> But changing Time hath chang'd the Case,
> And puts a Laird in th' Good-man's place.
> For Why? my Gossip Good-man John,
> And honest James, whom I think on;
> When we did meet whiles at the Hawking,
> We used no Cringes but hands shaking.
> No bowing, Should'ring, Gambo-scraping,
> No French Whistling, or Dutch gaping.
> (11.86-98)

Another espousal of Scots honesty and plain dealing in preference to foreign influences, the Laird's opinion is based on the theory that when

men are mutually honest, treating each other with good-natured respect, then their dealings proceed with fairness and success. The Laird refers to an earlier time, but in fact his values are those which would be advocated by the eighteenth-century Scots poets. The social values, either of an older time or of the "gude man" and the folk, became inseparable from the expression of "Scottishness" in poetry. The emphasis in Hume's work on reason and friendship, the rejection of the artificiality of the courtly tradition in favour of the common tradition of the folk throughout the seventeenth century, the popularity of David Lindsay rather than Alexander Scott, the constant literary condemnation of hypocrisy and pretension, the favouring of plain speech and the spurning of foreign influences, were all a part of the new society foreseen by James Sempill, and part of the process of cultural redefinition evident in James Cunningham's presentation poem. The author of "The Speech of a Fife Laird" encompasses the period of change by using the Laird's return and reminiscences to remind his readers of the positive aspects of their past, particularly of the values of immediate post-Reformation Scotland. Foreign influence now seemed to be threatening a return to the hierarchical order and artificiality of pre-Reformation society. The poem warns against a possible loss of national identity, as well as asserting common national values.

The Fife Laird provides a standard catalogue of extravagances in dress, akin to both the older catalogue and the satiric traditions:

> We had no garments in our land,
> But what were spun by th' good-wifes hand:
> No Drap-de-berry, Cloaths of seal:
> No Stuffs ingrain'd in Cocheneel,
> No Plush, no Tissue, Cramosie;
> No China, Turky, Taffety.
> No proud Pyropus, Paragon,
> No Chakarally, there was none:
> No Figurata, or Water-chamblet:
> No Bishop-satine, or Silk-chamblet,
> No cloth of Gold, or Bever hats,
> We cared no more for, than the Cats:
> No windy flowrish'd flying Feathers,
> No sweet permusted shambo Leathers,
> No Hilt or Crampet richly hatched ...
> (11.99-113)

However, the next section, describing overseas travel and the behaviour of young men under foreign influence, has a sharper, more contemporary expression:

> But when the young Laird became vain,
> And went away to France and Spain,
> Rome-raking, wandring here and there:
> O' then became our bootless Care:
> Pride puft him up, because he was
> Far travel'd, and returned an Ass.
> Then must the Laird, the Good-man's Oye,
> Be knighted streight; and make convoy,
> Coach'd through the Streets with Horses four,
> Foot-grooms Pasmented o'er and o'er.
> Himself cut out and slasht so wide,
> Ev'n his whole shirt his skin doth hide.
> Gowpherd, Gratnizied, Cloaks rare pointed,
> Embroider'd lac'd, with Boots disjoyned,
> A Belt embost with Gold and Purle:
> False Hair made craftily to curle:
> Side breeks be buttoned o'er the Garters,
> Was ne'er the like seen in our Quarters.
> (11.125-42)

The Laird compares such behaviour to his own time when men were "True to our Prince to shed our Blood, / For Kirk, and for our Common Good" (11.119-20). His description of young men's clothing is similar to John Highlandman's "Remarks", and the combination of ironic comment and descriptive catalogue is used with equal effect by Burns in "The Twa Dogs". But the links with the eighteenth century transcend mere technique. Burns contrasts the dissipation of upper-class youth with the solid toil of the poor, expressing respect for the old lairds whose estates were ruined by their extravagant sons:

> At Operas an' Plays parading,
> Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading,
> Or maybe in a frolic daft,
> To HAGUE or CALAIS takes a waft,
> To make a tour an' take a whirl,
> To learn bon ton an' see the worl'.
>
> There at VIENNA or VERSAILLES,
> He rives his father's auld entails;
> Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
> To thrum guittares an' fecht wi' nowt;
> Or down Italian Vista startles,
> Whore-hunting among graves o' myrtles.

Fergusson, in "The Ghaists", similarly looks back to a better time when Scotland's lands and wealth were in the trust of honest men, bewailing the detrimental effect of English influence and English government on Scotland[50]. Thus a number of the recurrent themes of eighteenth-century Scottish poetry — that the rich get rich, the poor get poorer, the old values are corrupted and finally, foreigners and the English gain while the Scots lose — are raised in "The Speech of a Fife Laird".

Satire on fashion and extravagance had been common in Scottish poetry since the middle ages, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries comment on fashion, foreign influence and English government usually has its counterpoint in an adherence to the Scots "peasant" values of honest dealing and plainspeaking. Little difference can be discerned between the sentiments of the Fife Laird, Ramsay in "The Twa Books", Fergusson in "The Ghaists" and Burns in "The Twa Dogs" and "The Brigs of Ayr". Poetic observation of the assumed strengths in the national character can also be traced back, across the boundaries of the Reformation, to the middle ages. Yet those strengths that later poets believed would enable the Scots to continue having a degree of cultural and political autonomy are not found in the naive yokels of "Christis Kirk" and "Peblis to the Play", nor in Henryson's long-suffering Lamb, but in the canny, self-aware, solidly independent types descended from John the Common-Weill and the Packman. Whilst pastoral or heroic associations were used frequently to reinforce the "type", essentially this was a character that came into poetic prominence after the Reformation.

In commenting on the national character, the author of "The Speech of a Fife Laird", Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns, all suggest that the most important value to emerge from the preceding century or so is a sense of equality and individual worth, and that this is being sacrificed to personal gain, especially among the "upper class". This is the same egalitarianism, the same endorsement of the individual and national well-being above the whims of the powerful, that is present in the work of

50. Fergusson satirised country lairds who competed in fashion in "On Seeing a Butterfly in the Street".

Hume, Davidson, the Reformation satirists and James Sempill. Looking backward, pastoral associations, or identification with the poor, were all means to remind readers of gains in the nation's ethics which the poet believed were being crushed by short term material or political concerns. The adoption of a "vernacular" voice served as a similar reminder:

> This is the truth which I discover:
> I do not care for Feid or Favour;
> For what I was, yet still I am,
> An honest, plain, true dealing Man;
> And if these words of mine would mend them
> I care not by, though I offend them.
>
> ("Fife Laird", ll.179-84)

One of the most well known seventeenth-century Scots narrative poems was composed by a laird's son whose fortunes were greatly altered by the upheavals of the period. Francis Sempill of Beltrees, heir to a great house whose estates had been decimated during the religious wars, satirised the effects of poverty in "The Banishment of Poverty"[51]. In the first person, and employing the ballad stanza, he records his adventures accompanied by a personified Poverty, at the same time avowing his support for the Stewart cause. The poem was probably written in the 1670s, since according to James Paterson this was the period of Sempill's lowest financial ebb. Sempill apparently stood security for someone else, making further inroads into the family fortune, as this is the reason he gives for his poverty in the opening stanzas of the poem.

Like "The Speech of a Fife Laird", "The Banishment of Poverty" begins with the force and immediacy of a directly personal note:

> Pox fa that pultron Povertie,
> Wae worth the time that I him saw;

---

51. "The Banishment of Poverty by his Royal Highness J.D.A. [James Duke of Albany] to the tune of The Last Goodnight". I have used the text in *Poems of the Sempills*, p.51ff. Paterson's introduction gives an account of the family and its fortunes. The poem is also in Watson's *Choice Collection* and in Laing's *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*. There is a broadside version in SRO RH 13/40 with slight differences to Paterson's text. Sempill's family, especially his father Robert (of "Habbie Simson" fame) spent a fortune in the Royal Cause during the Civil War. Francis clearly remained loyal despite the fact that the Crown had not reimbursed the family.

Sen first he laid his fang on me,
Myself from him I dought ne'er draw.

His wink to me has been a law,
He haunts me like a penny-dog;
Of him I stand far greater aw
Than pupill does of pedagogue.

The first time that he met with me,
Was at a clackan in the west;
Its name I trow Kilbarchan be,
Where Habbies drones blew many a blast;

There we shook hands, cauld be his cast;
An ill dead may that custron die;
For there he gripped me full fast,
When first I fell in cautionrie.
(11.1-16)

The poem is vernacular, entirely plainspeaking and obviously in the tradition which led to the vernacular poetry of the eighteenth century. Its importance is reinforced by the particular use of narrative, personal tone and personal experience, and the imaginative use of personification. In the latter it anticipates Fergusson's "To the Tron Kirk Bell", "The Mutual Complaint of Plainstanes and Causey", "A Drink Eclogue" and "To my Auld Breeks"; Burns' "Address to the Deil", "Death and Doctor Hornbook", "The Twa Dogs" and "The Brigs of Ayr"; and closer to the seventeenth century, Ramsay's "Twa Books" and "The Clock and the Dial". Personification of objects and abstract notions was to play a significant role in the vernacular verse which followed Francis Sempill, and the "fashious" personality Sempill ascribes to his unwelcome companion would re-emerge in many similar poems in the century after him.

Wherever Francis goes, Poverty continually frustrates him:

But wishing that I might ride east,
To trot on foot I soon would tire;
My page allowed me not a beast,
I wanted gilt to pay the hire:

He and I lap o'er many a syre
I heuked him at Calder-cult,
But lang ere I wan to Snyps-myre,
The ragged rogue took me a whilt.

By Holand-bush and Brigg o' Bonny,
We bickered down towards Bankier;
We fear'd no reavers for our money,
No whilly-waes to grip our gear.

My tatter'd tutor took no fear,
(Though we did travel in the mirk;)
But thought it fit, when we drew near,
To filsh a forrage at Falkirk.

No man would open me the door,
Because my comrade stood me by;
They dread full ill I was right poor,
By my forcasten company.

(11.33-52)

Once again, topographical detail adds realism. In Edinburgh, Francis walks up and down the pavement in the hope that friends may recognise him and give him a meal, but to no avail:

I grein'd to gang on the plain-stanes,
To see if comrades wad me ken:
We twa gaid pacing there our laines,
The hungry hour 'twixt twelve and ane.

Then I kend no way how to fen,
My guts rumbled like a hurle-barrow;
I din'd with saints and noblemen,
Even sweet Saint Giles and Earl of Murray.

(11.81-8)

Sempill refers constantly to places and people: the trip to Edinburgh, his movements around Edinburgh, friends who prove otherwise and relatives who find him an embarrassment. Such a personal voice and use of detail had become conventional in Scottish narrative poetry. We follow Sempill through Edinburgh just as we had followed Melville in his "Dreme", and would later follow Fergusson in his Edinburgh poems.

After many a trial, snubbed by friends and relatives, continually dogged by Poverty, Sempill meets his friend, Sir William Sharpe, "Who never made his counsel nice":

Quoth he there grows hard by the dyal,
In Hatton's garden bright and sheen,
A soveraign herb called Penny-Royal,
Whilk all the year grows fresh and green.

Could ye but gather it fair and clean,
Your business would go the better,
But let account of it be seen,
To the Physicians of Exchequer.

(11.129-36)

Sempill, recognising the truth in this advice, hastens to Holyrood where he is smiled upon by the royal patron, James Duke of Albany and York and loses his companion Poverty: "There dwells distressed lairds enew, / In peace though they have little gear" (ll.159-60). Sight of the Duke puts Poverty to flight, although whether it replenished his purse Sempill does not specify. But Sempill's personal relief is not as important as the political message it contains: that the solution to the difficulties of the national and private purses of Scotland lies in stable royal government, and in an end to civil strife and personal greed. Private ills could be alleviated by less selfishness, less hypocritical betrayal of friends, more exercise of those same qualities of generosity, loyalty and honesty espoused by the Fife Laird.

Francis Sempill apparently identified the use of Scots for poetry with patriotic loyalty to the Crown and with the honest, plain values lacking in his fairweather friends and relatives in the poem. Before the Revolution and the rise of the Jacobite movement, long before the Union of Parliaments, both Whig and Royalist poets had drawn a connection between nationalism and Scots poetry, between national security and a consistent culture. The vernacular poets of the time of the Union thereby worked within a well-established convention.

For Sempill, in addition, a Scots form of poetry was an acknowledgement of the cultural ties with his father, Robert Sempill of Beltrees, and the other Sempills, related and unrelated, who had helped in the task of fashioning a poetry for "modern" Scotland. A well-educated member of a family of consequence, Presbyterian and Royalist, he, his father and his grandfather, Sir James Sempill, cultivated their Scottishness, using their wit and poetic skill in the vernacular to produce poetry which was at once popular and of great importance to Scottish literary history.

Francis Sempill's work displays an independence of spirit and a cultural awareness closely allied to the poetry of Hamilton of Gilbertfield, Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns. His tone is not hesitant nor is his style experimental and he is entirely at ease with the vernacular, suggesting that for him, at least, it was a conventional and natural

means of poetic expression. He was, too, fully conversant with the ironic potential of Scots poetry, its connections with the folk and its relevance to national aspirations.

David Laing transcribed a late seventeenth-century poem, "A plea betwixt a presbeterian Minister and a piper in Scotland" (EUL La. IV.29), satirising Whig attitudes and abuse of authority and espousing the values of the folk. The combination of lively narrative and dialogue, or argument, admirably suited satire, allowing the satirist to introduce his observations and the characters to reveal themselves. That the interplay between reported speech and narrative can generate irony and intensify satire was demonstrated clearly by Davidson in his "Dialogue" and James Sempill in *The Packman's Pater Noster*, and "A plea" shows that the art had not been lost by Scots poets in the course of the seventeenth century.

The poem is written in a mixture of the plain style, godly diction and the vernacular, cleverly intertwined to colour the action. The "folk", including Jam the piper who is the focus of the narrative, are portrayed as fun-loving and pragmatic. On the other hand, the minister is seen as a bigotted hypocrite who receives little respect from the narrator and the folk from the outset:

> A famous plea hapen'd of late,
> In a village called Hougate,
> Within the parish of Glencorse,
> Where were conveen'd foot & horse
> 'Bout eighteen score, to solemnize
> Willie his nuptials & Peggie's
> With rost and sodden bread & cheese.
> Nought mong the croud was remarkable,
> Till after dinner a droll squable
> Arose twixt the whig minister,
> And some poor folk & Iam ye piper.
> The minister hither came
> To say grace, and's gutts to cramm,
> To stop dancing, and hinder Jam
> To play a spring to Jack and Jannie,
> And oyr lads and lasses many.
>
> (11.1-16)[52]

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52. See Appendix for full text. See also in Appendix Adv. MS 23.3.24 (Item 45), "On the two bold brethren of Nonsense Hamilton & Cant, angells of the Church of Leith composed by Peter Ker Ao. 1673", which is very similar to "A plea" although it makes much more use of plain style diction and wit.

Several aspects of narrative style in Scots poetry which were by this time conventional can be discerned in these opening lines: the exact locating of the action; the use of "everyday" detail; the octosyllabic couplet; ironic juxtaposition ("To say grace, and's gutts to cram"); and the relaxed, conversational diction of the narrator.

The poet strongly anticipates Burns' Holy Willie in the satiric use of godly diction, the tone and attitudes of the minister, Mes John, who is clearly more "lascivious" than the parishioners he purports to protect from themselves:

> When he had given God the glore
> Eaten till he could eat no more
>
> Quoth he, "We've gone through thick & thin,
> Without the bagpips' noise & dinn
> Filled the best buk of oure skine.
> Had Iam been here I hade not eaten
> A bit of bread, or tasted mutton;
> His pipe wold my heart gall & rent
> O! it's a sinful instrument!
> Ane incentive to debaucherie,
> Of lustful thoughts a nursery!
> When the brisk lads are warmed with ale,
> And so the lasses wagg their tails,
> And mutually give bob for bob,
> Counterfeiting the carnall job,
> What mortalls can these postures see
> And of lascivious thoughts be free?
> For my part, tho God's given me grace
> To look upon a beauteous face,
> And not lust after it, — I cannot say,
> But when I view this baudie play,
> I find imprinted on my braine
> Some ideas I wil not name,
> And inflammation in each beine —
> If I receive such impressions
> From such lewd gestures & odd fashions,
> Which wt me pass not into acts
> May you betray to filthy facts. —"
>
> (11.17-44)

There is more to the poem, however, than ridicule of puritanical attitudes towards music and dancing or the hedonism typical of vernacular poetry. The minister is convinced of his superior position in the eyes of God and his fellow mortals. Like Holy Willie, he sees himself as the absolute

authority in his parish:

> "Since God has me wt ye care trusted
> Of souls thats here, let him be cursed,
> Who sacred laws shall violat,
> And my authoritie slight and hate.
> I, as guardian of this parish,
> Have discharged Iam to play at marriage.
> And lest he should here compear,
> I'll stay and have a glass of beer.
> Here's one quaft out, this is no sin, —
> We may doe this wt little dinn."
> (11.69-78)

The wedding guests, totally disregarding the minister's platitudes, warmed with drink and amorous thoughts, seek out Jam the piper to entertain them. Jam is treated sympathetically, as a person who has suffered because of Mes John's ban on his pipes, well-regarded by his neighbours and "likt much better" than the minister. When Jam is invited to play he is finishing a meal and cursing Mes John and the other guests join in a rousing "Amen" to his curse. Accepting the invitation, Jam gives a speech about the noble ancestry of his trade:

> On this Jam stroke up his mustaches,
> Took up his pipes, made some grimaces,
> And turning his pipes in the meantime,
> Quoth he, "this playing is no crime,
> Qt e're the presbeterian crew
> Say to the contrare, old or new.
> This is the trade that my forbears
> Have followed for some hundred years;
> And my father, whose sal praise God,
> Who was as just, I'm sure, and good
> As any Mes John in ye land,
> Taught me this trade to take in hand —
> Which I can swear he had not done
> If in ye employ there had been sin.
> That Yrs no sin in't I'll defend —
> Boy, pray fix here the merk's end,
> Iack, name your spring & kiss your sister."
> "play *'ye devil stick ye minister'*".
> (11.115-32)

Jam defiantly makes "his great dron play bum bum bum" and, as the dancing begins, the narrator indulges in some rich irony and imagery to describe the reaction of the minister who

> Came running out for fear yt Iam
> Should exorcise him from ye room —
> Or, take it as he did pretend
> As being for their souls concerned.
> With fiery zeal he was posest
> Qch made him make yt furious haste, —
> And mighty zeal may men excuse
> From imputation of abuse,
> In injuries and greatest wrongs
> When hearts are toucht with heavenly songs
> Qt e're be in it I'll not debate,
> But I am sure he rose in hate
> And ran in passion like a madman
> As he had just come new from bedlam;
> Or like a cow had been kept in
> For some moneths hade not seen ye sun
> When broken loose, comes to the air
> She seeks about, turns giddie there,
> Till her head comes to some consistence
> She brooks not weel the least resistance.
> Iust so Mes John in passion hurried,
> All chairs and furms before him carried,
> And snacht his Kane into his hand
> As having yr the sole command
> And wold break al heads of ye land.
> (11.148-72)

Distrust of zealots is as strong in this poem as in many others from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While the minister's antics are comic, his zeal is recognised as the dangerous companion to his authority in the community.

The minister threatens the piper, warily, and challenges Jam to an argument about the sinfulness of pipes. The progress of the argument resembles that of *The Packman's Pater Noster*.[53] The minister distorts Scripture and argues without sense, as does Sir John in *The Packman*, whilst the piper, in the tradition of the Packman, argues forcibly, pragmatically, and with a better grasp of Scripture. Mes John (Jack Presbiter) maintains that the pipes are literally the Devil's instrument:

> Mes John yn opened wide his mouth,
> After a humm a spit & cough,
> Did vomit out these following words

---

53. It is probable that the poet was familiar with the Packman, since Robert Sempill of Beltrees updated, enlarged and reprinted his father's poem in mid-century. It was published as late as 1669.

As men in illiack passion stirr'd.
"Ye know Iam," said he, "yt ye devil
Who is the author of al evel,
Was ye first player wt hand & lip,
And wantone Eve danced to his pipe. —
And after him, Eve played a spring
And Adie bobbed but & ben,
Qch was the cause of al our sin:
It cannot be but sinfull game
Has ye dill for its origine."
(11.199-211)

Jam is not impressed with this argument, and is amused by the Minister's misinterpretation of the imagery of Genesis:

Jam laught to see Mes Iohn make sport
And ridicule God's sacred word;
And tho' it deserved no oyr ansr
Yet to gratify Iack Presbyter,
He thus replyed — "Mes Iohn I fear
Your wresting Scripture grives our ear
And or we part 'twill cost you dear.
But first Mes Iohn solve me ye ridle
If Ada played on Eve's fidle,
In the garden of paradise
Before ye serpent her enticed?"
(11.212-22)

Jam's logic is simple but decisive: because Adam and Eve were put on Earth to procreate, and because they were married, they must have "played a spring" together before the temptation. And if a spring was played before the temptation of Eve, how was the Devil the first author of the spring — "Then no sin was before the play begun." The minister is left without scriptural support and his argument is shown to be logically inconsistent. Like the Packman, the piper also confounds the minister with his own argument:

"No sure, nothing like harp or pipe
The Dill made use of, but ye lip
And toung, qch he emplyed in teaching
Qch is the same thing ye cal preaching.
Is this the art he first used
Which is now so highly prised?
Is this the trade you gain your bread by
Which the Dill practised Eve to betray?
He from ye word wt her dispute
And falsifying her confute,
So, so, Mes Iohn, ye wrest ye scripture

> And do pervert both sense and letter.
> To play wt pipes I think no shame
> Play wt things sacred I condemne."
> (11.246-59)

The crowd cheers the piper, declaring his victory. The minister, however, who might have abandoned the argument "If's reason had been moyr sense", presses on. Each time the minister raises an objection, Jam dismisses it with scriptural knowledge, superior logic and common sense, increasingly quoting biblical support for the use of musical instruments and, inevitably, triumphing. Defeated on his own ground, the minister is humiliated before his own parishioners. He is revealed as an ignorant bigot, confirming the opinion of his flock. Like the Prior and his fellows at the end of *The Packman*, Mes John is predictably truculent. He assaults Jam with his cane, wounding him on the head and arm, but he then:

> ... ran away for fear and shame,
> Lest Jam should have resuit ye same.
> And in his way he meet wt beggars
> To whom he cry'd "ye catterpillers,
> Who wast ye product of ye ground,
> For qt or whither are ye bound?
> Ye are all banisht from ye toune
> As being a pack of idle louns.
> Had I of al parts ye command
> Ye should not tarrie in ye land,
> Wtin my charge ye shall not sleep,
> I'll drive you as so many sheep."
> (11.395-406)

Such a response contrasts markedly with Jam's regard for life and his fellow man. Despite his intimate knowledge of Scripture and regard for biblical truth, Jam is human, practical and believes in the maxim "live and let live". Indeed, it was the practical perception of life and Scripture in his interpretation of Ecclesiastes that finally carried the argument for him:

> "You will allow a time to eat in,
> Also another time to shite in,
> A time to weep, a time to laugh,
> A time to humm a time to cough,
> A time to express our social thoughts
> By voice, pipe, dance, or the like acts.
> These are ye mere results of nature
> Allowable in human creature.
> It's lawful yn to dance and play

And solemnize a wedding day.
This is the employ I live by,
And lads and lasses matches come by.
And what ye talk of bad impressions
Receaved from promiscuous dancings
Qr monopolized wtin your brain,
Prove you to be a carnal man.
For 40 years I have seen thes sports
And never felt the like efforts!"
(11.366-83)

Thus, while the minister has argued from blind zeal, using distortions of fact and Scripture, Jam appeals to common sense and rational living, and supports his argument with reference to the everyday world and his own experience.

The narrator has the last word, commenting on the corrupt and dangerous nature of the minister's authority, but suggesting that Jam and his peers will probably survive his ruthlessness because their own values form a solid foundation for their lives:

Thus Mes Iohn swayed his pastoral care
And exercised his discipline,
Call'd a la mode or puritane
Ore Iam ye piper and ye poor
As ye only sheep wtin his cure;-
Where hedge is lowest he laps ore.
(11.407-12)

"A plea" clearly has much in common with *The Packman's Pater Noster*: the ignorant, hypocritical, cowardly, weak-willed "Man of God"; the articulate, practical, intelligent, independent-minded "common man" hero; the violent finale in which bigotted religion seeks to harm the innocent. However, the poem also shows a strong affinity with eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, in style and subject, and particularly with Burns' religious satires. The themes of "A plea" — the dangers of zeal, the problems caused by hypocritical fanatics gaining authority and the belief that the basic human values of decency, honesty, common sense and love of life are to be found more often among the poor than among the powerful — were all central to later vernacular poetry.

Mock Elegies, Epitaphs and Dying Words

The mock elegy, and related forms, were employed widely by the eighteenth-century vernacular poets but again, much pioneering work establishing the genre occurred during the seventeenth century.

A mock elegy can be purely comic, or satiric, and may have political overtones. The accepted archetype for the genre, which served as a model for many of the successful mock elegies of the succeeding one hundred and fifty years, is "The Life and Death of Habbie Simson, Piper of Kilbarchan", composed by Robert Sempill of Beltrees. Father of Francis Sempill, Robert was the eldest son of Sir James Sempill, born, according to Paterson, about 1595. "Habbie Simson" was probably written in the 1640s.[54] Few poems from the seventeenth century have been so popular, and none has had such a lasting influence on Scottish poetry as "Habbie Simson".

One of the usual characteristics of the mock elegy is the adoption of a subject from "low life", human or animal, to be treated with humour and sympathy. Habbie Simson was a piper in Sempill's district, well known to the poet and, like Jam the Piper, a greatly loved and appreciated member of the community. "Habbie Simson" is neither literary "slumming" nor an exercise in writing in the "folk" genre, but a full-bodied celebration of a local character and local life, drawn with affection and a fine sense of dramatic detail. Present, too, are all the wit, irony, colour and movement which had become part of Scottish vernacular poetry as it developed in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. And whilst Robert Sempill was an upper class poet, his obvious understanding of the richness of the vernacular endows the poem with a fluency of diction that is both fitting to the subject and free of condescension.

Doubtless the poem was intended for the entertainment of readers who shared Sempill's sophisticated cultural background, but he makes no allowances for the prejudices of that audience. Rather, Habbie and his world are portrayed and enjoyed for their own sakes. Indeed, the rise of the mock elegy, with its elevation of "ordinary" life and espousal of

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54. Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Poetry*, p.391.

simple pleasures or satire of pretensions, was probably linked to a growing contempt, such as that expressed by the creator of the Fife Laird, for pretension, fastidiousness and extravagance among the upper classes. It is clear that a substantial number of educated Scotsmen found the increasing English and continental influence in cultivated circles distasteful and saw such influence as detrimental to the traditional cultural and social life of Scotland. Such views are obvious in verse epistles, occasional addresses and narrative poems of the seventeenth century, and it is likely that mock elegies, written by sophisticated poets about unsophisticated subjects, were a way of countering "foreign" influence, emphasising the poet's affiliation with the native culture. Likewise, concentration on parochial subjects in the mock elegy constituted a comment on the absurdity of the political climate: the pleasures of folk life and appreciation of the interests of "mundane" people, as Shakespeare demonstrated, served as a cure for political uncertainty and cynicism in the same way as did a glass of claret with one's friends.

Regardless of Sempill's motives for "Habbie Simson", its publication irrevocably altered the direction of Scots poetry. Its stanza, diction, and social preoccupations immediately became part of the literary conventions of the nation. Ramsay called the stanza "Standart Habby", although it has since been called "the Burns stanza" because of his frequent use of it. Sempill did not invent the stanza; it had been used by sixteenth-century poets, notably Scott, though its origins were even earlier[55]. However, it was Sempill who first used the stanza for mock elegy and because of the widespread circulation of "Habbie Simson" in broadsheet during the second half of the seventeenth century,[56] Sempill must be credited with significantly influencing the development of the close association of the stanza with vernacular mock elegy and satire, an

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55. See Ch.6, pp.197-9 for discussion of Alexander Scott's use of the stanza. Useful histories of the stanza can be found in Helen Damico, "Sources of Stanza Forms used by Burns", *SSL*, XIII (1975), 207-19; Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, pp.116-17; and James Kinsley (ed.), *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, vol. III, pp.1018-19, note 25.

56. Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, p.111; and Henderson, *Scottish Vernacular Poetry*, pp.390-2.

association which endured for a century and a half after his death.

"Habbie Simson" has connections with *Christis Kirk* and other older poems about folk life in its colourful, lively description of a local community's entertainment. It also anticipates eighteenth-century poetry in the use of a central figure, Habbie the Piper, rather than a particular event, as the focus for that description. The central figure has an integrity which transcends the action. Habbie's death is portrayed as a genuine loss, as if a light has gone out in the community, and despite the fun the poet has at the expense of Habbie and his neighbours, he shares in the grief at Habbie's passing. That the poet's own feelings become involved can no doubt be traced to personal familiarity with Habbie, since the Sempills, like the Earl of Mar,[57] probably employed the local piper for family entertainment and festive occasions involving the laird with the community.

Sempill's familiarity with the continuation of the middle Scots folk and courtly traditions is revealed in his opening references to song and dance:

> The Epitaph of Habbie Simson,
> Who on his drone bore mony flags;
> He made his cheeks as red as crimson,
> And babbed when he blew his bags.
>
> Kilbarchan now may say alas!
> For she has lost game and grace,
> Both Trixie and the Maiden Trace:
> But what remead?
> For no man can supply his place,
> Hab Simson's dead.
>
> Now who shall play, the Day it Daws?
> Or Hunts Up, when the Cock he Craws?
> Or who can for our Kirk-town-cause,
> Stand us in stead?
> On bagpipes (now) no body blaws,
> Sen Habbie's dead.
>
> (11.1-16)[58]

Similarly, the poet appreciated the close ties between traditional music and the day to day lives of the local people:

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57. See Ch. 9, p.281.

58. *Poems of the Sempills.*

Or who will cause our shearers shear?
Who will bend up the brags of weir,
Bring in the bells, or good play meir,
  In time of need?
Hab Simson cou'd, what needs you spear?
  But now he's dead.

(11.17-22)

"Habbie Simson" is crowded with references to the everyday life, feast days, communal occasions and occupations of the people. These provide important evidence that the ordinary lives of both the folk and the gentry in Kilbarchan, and probably elsewhere in Scotland, continued much as they had for generations, despite the troubles of the century, despite Calvinism, and despite the massive changes in political and intellectual life. Such evidence further suggests that it is simplistic to regard the Reformation and the court removal as a natural and inevitable end to an era. There was continuity among the ordinary people, just as there was preservation of the court culture in great houses. The seventeenth century was a period of cross-currents; of the mingling of old and new to produce a unique cultural foundation for the eighteenth century.

Courtly elements in poetry and song continued to mingle with folk elements, just as the various classes in society shared activities. Whilst there were points of separation between classes — the horse races of lines 41-6 of "Habbie Simson" were held for the benefit of the lairds who owned the horses though the folk joined in as spectators, and the football games mentioned in the next stanza were doubtless the pastime of ordinary villagers — music and numerous other social pursuits recognised no barriers. "With Huntis Up", for example, was of courtly origins[59], and "Hey the Day Dawis" was Montgomerie's, yet the tunes are played by a village piper. Sempill acknowledged the lack of divisions by including in his poems activities and references belonging to the whole community, rendering a rounded picture of a small community, intertwined and interrelated in its activities and preoccupations. There is, furthermore, no hint of condescension or evidence of cultural dislocation in the way the social events and Habbie's place in them are described. It should

59. It will be recalled that "With Huntis Up" was "changeit" in *Ane Compendious Buik*.

not be assumed from this that class distinction was absent from the community, but Sempill's attitude towards his community reflects his understanding of the interdependence of the classes as much as it reflects cultural exchange.

The most significant aspect of "Habbie Simson", however, is the treatment of Habbie himself. Habbie is the focus throughout, and in the last three stanzas his character is sensitively portrayed, individualised, embellished with detail and imbued with warmth and colour. Just as the Fife Laird's responses on his rude awakening are endowed with a credible naturalism and the poets of the epistles correspond about their everyday lives, so Sempill presents Habbie Simson with an emphasis on the reality of the man, not on any abstract concept he may represent. Portrayed as a slightly eccentric character, whose foibles and attractions will be missed by the community, Habbie is a person who participates in the lives of his neighbours:

> And whan he play'd, the lasses leugh,
> To see him teethless, auld and teugh.
> He wan his pipes beside Barcleugh,
>   Withouten dread:
> Which after wan him gear enough,
>   But now he's dead.
>
> And when he play'd, the gaitlings gedder'd,
> And when he spake, the carl bledder'd:
> On Sabbath days his cap was fedder'd,
>   A seimly weid.
> In the kirk-yeard, his mare stood tedder'd,
>   Where he lies dead.
>
> Alas for him my heart is sair,
> For of his springs I gat a skair,
> At every play, race, feast and fair,
>   But guile or greed.
> We need not look for pyping mair,
>   Sen Habbie's dead.
>
> (11.71-88)

This personal perspective, defined by the poet's closeness to his subject and his elevation of the individual character above other concerns, was Robert Sempill's legacy from his father. On a wider scale, it was a perspective seventeenth-century Scottish poets inherited from the Reformation poets, and passed on, refined and enriched to the eighteenth-century poets. No subject or person was too "low" for the Scottish

vernacular poets — value could be found in every individual's experience, and there was a lesson in even the smallest aspects of life and nature.

Robert Sempill's other mock elegy, "Epitaph on Sanny Briggs, Nephew to Habbie Simson, and Butler to the Laird of Kilbarchan", is written with the same gusto and personal attachment to the subject. Sanny, however, is seen more in relation to the life of the laird and the laird's family than in relation to the wider community, although the latter is not overlooked:

He was as stout as was his steel,
And gen ye'll trow he cou'd fu' well,
At Wapenshaws and younkers dreill,
    And brav'ly lead,
Baith to the field and frae the field,
    But now he's dead.
(11.43-8)[60]

The Wapenshaw involved the laird with the community and gave Sanny an opportunity to be important in the eyes of his peers.

Sanny is treated with some irony, his faults being relished as much as his loyal service. He is remembered as having a liking for liquor and as a blustering sort of fellow who "was a deadly fae to water". But the laird acknowledges his own faults, too, fondly recalling how Sanny aided and abetted his master's indulgence in drink and cheered him in his moroser moments:

Wha'll set me dribbling be the tapp;
While winking I begin to Napp,
Then lay me down and well me happ,
    And binn my head?
I need na think to get ae drap,
    Since Sanny's dead.
(11.25-30)

...
It very muckle did me please,
To see him howk the Holland cheese:
I kend the clinking o' his kies
    In time of need.
Alake a day! though kind to me,
    Yet now he's dead.
(11.37-42)

60. *Poems of the Sempills.*

Exaggerated description of grief, part of the peasant tradition, especially in areas where wakes were held, is particularly evident in "Sanny Briggs". In the last two stanzas Sempill indicates that the exaggeration is conventional and, at the same time, deliberately cultivates peasant fatalism and peasant good humour:

When first I heard the woeful knell,
And dool-ding o's passing bell,
It made me yelp, and yeul, and yell,
    And skirl and skreed.
To pantrie-men I bed farewell,
    Sin Sanny's dead.

Fast is he bunn, baith head and feet,
And wrapped in a winnen sheet:
Now cou'd I sit me down and greet,
    But what's the need?
Shou'd I like a bell'd-wedder bleet,
    Since Sanny's dead?

(11.49-60)

A tone of light-hearted acceptance of the world and its drama is one of the most common manifestations of the new independence of spirit among the vernacular poets. The ability of the folk to accept a tragedy, or a turn in fortunes, and to continue with their lives partly accounts for the appeal of the folk model to the sophisticated. For a nation in which the political and material fortunes of the gentry and nobility were constantly subject to change, such a phlegmatic acceptance of death and mischance — the axiomatic "life must go on" — in conjunction with peasant proverbialism and irony, provided an alternative manner of expressing the sort of resigned cynicism and pragmatic scepticism apparent in "The Turncoat". The folk had long known that they were mere pawns in the hands of Providence, kings and masters. More sophisticated people were now learning the same lesson, and it is hardly surprising that the folk idiom and folk literature struck in them a responsive chord.

When twentieth century European minds turned to existentialism it was for similar reasons. If the rules have proved false, and social structures have broken down, then one solution for a sensible existence would seem to be the adoption of a flexible philosophy. For an educated Scot in the seventeenth century the solution often lay in a realignment

of reason and an adjustment to a new perspective. Consequently, the dividing line between monumental human events and the day to day thoughts and activities of individuals became elastic, and no conflict was perceived in applying "folk" values to the affairs of the great or drawing philosophical and moral conclusions from the humblest of human or animal situations.

Such an outlook was attractive to the vernacular poets, indeed contributed much to the development of their style of poetry. For example, an "elastic" view of the world shaped and informed Burns' "Elegy on the Year 1788", a poem which brings together some of the most striking stylistic and conceptual elements of Scottish vernacular poetry. David Craig, arguing that subjugation and reduction are symptomatic of most eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, concludes that Burns' "trick" of "popularising, bringing down into the streets the affairs of the great"[61] is the strength of his satire. However, Craig also regards this "reductive idiom" as a weakness in vernacular poetry generally, questioning the "validity of such an idiom for a whole literature".[62] Comparing "Elegy on the Year 1788" with Pope's *Dunciad*, Craig claims that "Burns's dealings with the wider world are, in contrast, rather too prone to the too-obvious plain man's sarcasm ...".[63] But poems using a "reductive idiom" did not constitute a "whole literature", for, as in the seventeenth century, a whole range of literary activities was pursued in eighteenth-century Scotland. One of these was a particularly effective form of satiric verse which reduced its subjects all to the same level: a form of satire which had its origins among the Reformation poets and seventeenth-century satirists. There is nothing inherently shallow about this type of satire, especially in view of its literary and social roots in periods when "reduction" performed a role in maintaining community spirits, just as it had long done for the folk. That at the end of the eighteenth century Burns found the idiom useful for satire hardly suggests any limitation in

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61. *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, p.77.

62. Ibid., p.78.

63. Ibid., p.79.

his powers of observation and analysis concerning the problems of human society and government. It does demonstrate that little had actually changed since the seventeenth century in the relationships between men and governments, at least in terms of theories of structured societies. Burns' Scotland was no longer an independent nation, but neither had she been in any real sense autonomous for most of the seventeenth century. Moreover, politicians and kirkmen still bickered and, internationally, governments still warred and conspired. Because kings, governments, politicians and kirkmen had not changed, particularly in their attitudes towards those over whom they had authority, they continued to warrant the contempt of poets. Burns was well aware that a tradition of poetic scorn preceded his "Elegy on the Year 1788":

> For Lords or kings I dinna mourn,
> E'en let them die — for that they're born!
> But oh! prodigious to reflect,
> A *Towmont* Sirs, is gane to wreck!
> O *Eighty-eight*, in thy sma space
> What dire events have taken place!
> Of what enjoyments thou has reft us!
> In what a pickle thou has left us!
>
> The Spanish Empire's tint a head,
> An' my auld Teethless Bawtie's dead;
> The toolzie's teuch 'tween Pitt and Fox,
> An' our gudewife's wee birdie cocks ...
>
> ("Elegy on the Year 1788", ll.1-12)

Yet Burns owes more to his predecessors than the satiric device of reduction. Read in the light, for example, of the irreverent attitude towards established authority among the Reformation satirists, the staunch self-reliance of the Packman and the Piper, the irony of Pennycuik's "Lintoun Address" to the Prince of Orange, the cynicism expressed in "The Turncoat", and the tradition of vernacular mock elegies which began in the seventeenth century, "Elegy on the Year 1788" takes its place in a line of Scots poetry which posits values other than those of "polite" society as more fitting to a rational, humane way of life.

In Robert Sempill's "Sanny Briggs" the process of exaggeration and subjugation can again be seen. Sorry to have lost a faithful butler who propped him up against a barrel, who came running in a family crisis,

and who provided amusement by virtue of his idiosyncrasies, Sempill finally rejects mourning as spurious, accepts the inevitability of death in a manner deliberately akin to that of peasant society — to Sanny's world — and draws attention to his own outlandish exaggeration. The postscript further reduces the extravagant grief: far from there never being another pantry man, as he had roundly declared in the poem, there has been a replacement for Sanny, although he is not the same:

> The chiel came in his room, is bauld;
> Sare be his shins, and's kail ay cauld;
> Which gars us ay pray for the auld,
>   With book and beid.
> Now Lord hae mercy on his saul,
>   For now he's dead.

Change may be inevitable, but it is seldom welcome. In the need of the Beltrees household to "pray for the auld" there is much in common with the Fife Laird. The affection for Sanny, and Habbie, for the community to which they belonged, and for the way of life which they represented is the positive offering of Sempill's mock elegies, just as the everyday world which permeates Burns' "Elegy on the Year 1788" balances the cynicism of that poem.

"Elegy on the Great and Famous Blew Stone", from the end of the seventeenth century, illustrates more strongly the ancestry of Burns' political elegy, expressing a similarly flippant view of society, but with the same serious irony in the twist which brings political reality into the poem. The Blew Stone is personified and elevated to the status of a national monument of great significance, and its removal is portrayed as a national disaster. In fact, the mock elegy is a comment on the troubles of the preceding century and their implications for the people:

> Our Old Blew-stone, that's dead and gone,
> His marrow cannot be
> Large twenty foot of length he was,
>   His bulk none e'er did ken;
> Dour and deaf, and riven with grief,
>   When he preserved men.
> Behind his back a Battrie was,
>   Contrived with packs of Woo;
> Let's now think on, since he is gone,
>   We're in the Castle's view.
>
> (11.15-24)[64]

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64. *Fugutive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

After the publication of "Habbie Simson" mock elegies became a familiar part of Scottish poetry. Some were rollicking, good-humoured celebrations of character like "Habbie Simson" and "Sanny Briggs", and others had serious political content like "The Blew Stone". Others again satirised personalities with some venom. All, however, shared an attitude of "devil-may-care" fatalism and, even when their subjects were not part of the "folk" or working class, an identification in style and attitude with the lower orders of society.

Roughly contemporary with "Habbie Simson", and therefore of considerable interest, is a mock elegy preserved in the Spottiswoode papers, "ane tragicomicall epitaph on Tho: Newell, a ordainari cadger who all his tym drove salte and other commodities from edinburgh & ye pannes to Jedburgh, he died in his calling at lauder sudenlie, die 1647".[65] This is a humorous, short poem, using peasant references and expressions:

> THOM NEWEL'S gone now in ane uncouth kynd
> his horse and cariage all thus left behind
> Sure he's bein send for by the starrie traine
> to be a driver to the charle waine
> Bot her I wonder why he left his whippe
> and als forget to take his dryving cape
> for ned bootes who hath kept that place
> fyve thousand yeares knowes weill ther slugish pace
> and sure in winter when the weathers ill
> the wind blows sharper nor on soutra hill
> So I doe think he's not gone to remaine
> Bot on conditione to come back againe.

Occasional, good-humoured and witty, the poem was probably written for light entertainment by a sophisticated author whose background is betrayed in the clever astronomical references: the Charlie Wain is Ursa Major, and Ned Bootes is Arctophilax. The common names for the constellations enrich the comic image of Tom driving among the stars. The irreverent attitude to death was another element of the folk tradition which appealed to cultivated authors and appears often in later vernacular poetry.

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65. NLS MS 2935, f.69. My thanks to Dr. Chris Eade and Dr. Les Downer for assistance with the transcription and interpretation of this page of the MS.

In the same hand on the same folio is an addendum to the mock elegy which renders unmistakable the educated background of the poet, and reveals his genuine affection for the character of Tom Newell:

aliud

On thom newell who never travined ovr
Soutra hill w^t^out a sheapherd in his companie.
obiit sol in capite arietis.

When phebus on the ram our earth had blest[66]
and on its bodie maid a sweatning feaste
when hearbes and weads gan pleasantli to spread
he cald thom newell up to try the heade.

Through the pastoral associations the author draws attention to the "pastoral" character of Tom, but in addition, and in contrast to the wit and humour of the elegy itself, he clearly seeks to emphasise Tom's good nature and the regard in which he was justly held. Soutra Hill outside Edinburgh is renowned for its steepness and cold winds, and the fact that Tom always gave a lift to shepherds, plodding pedestrians, is a more significant comment than it may at first appear. Here, as in other mock elegies, it is the human touch that predominates: the poet's deliberate revelation of personal affection for the cadger. The type of solid, hard working, kindly person represented by Tom Newell was esteemed by the poet, as John the Common Weill manifested many of the human traits valued by Lindsay, and Habbie and Sanny were remembered with affection by Robert Sempill.

The association between a person and his trade or occupation is frequently stressed in mock elegies. In "Thom Newell", and in Robert Sempill's mock elegies, this is related to a belief that members of communities are inextricably intertwined, and that a person's role in society is a contribution to the community and to himself. Such a view demonstrates once again appreciation for the worth of the individual.

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66. Dr. Eade suggests that the line should read "When phebus *in* the ram ...", although there can be no doubt of the word "on" in the text, despite the very poor hand. "Phebus in the ram", however, would be the vernal equinox and is probably what was intended by the author. See "The Banner of Piety", Bannatyne MS, "When Phebus fra the ram ...".

"Thom Newell", which has elements of the plain and vernacular styles, is evidence of a convention of mock elegy outside the model set by Sempill. The astronomical references and the classical puns in the addendum indicate that the poet wrote for an audience as sophisticated as himself. The only motivation for the poems apart from entertainment would seem to be that they function as a fond memorial to a man who would otherwise have lived and died in obscurity. And while sophisticated poets were clearly involved in a fashion for seeking inspiration in folk life, interest in the lives of "ordainari" people was also a result of the levelling effect of the protestant outlook. During the Reformation the use of ordinary people as central figures in poetry and song served an important propagandist function, but by the middle of the seventeenth century the practice had become entrenched and has continued to be central to Scots poetry and the Scots novel to this day. English poets, after the middle ages, did not reach out into the ordinary community in this direct, unaffected fashion, seeking to represent "folk" faithfully in their own idiom, until long after the Scots: Coleridge and Wordsworth acknowledged their debt to Burns.

Mock elegies and mock epitaphs were not always sympathetic, however, and the vernacular offered as much scope for denigration as it did for praise. Francis Sempill enjoyed writing epitaphs, and among those attributed to him, the derogatory poems all, interestingly, have gentry as their subjects:

Heir lyis the corpse of Laird Macnair
Who left his geir to Hewie Blair,
He livit a gock and deit a beist,
And we's cum here to his last feist
Och! Och! hon![67]

Heir lyis the corpse of auld Carscard;
He was a neibour unco bad;
He dyit in Northbar wi' a fou bellie,
Whan he was courtand Ladie Kellie;
He dyit nine nichts afore the fair,
And aw the fock said, Deil may care.[68]

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67. *Poems of the Sempills*, p.lix.

68. Ibid.

Again, the "reductive idiom" is unmistakable. But Sempill had even less sympathy for oppressors and exploiters than he had for a bad neighbour, if we judge from his epitaph for Lady Schaw of Greenock:

> Heir lyis interrit, forbye a witch,
> Ane oppressor baith of puir and rich:
> How scho fends, and how scho fares,
> Naebodie kens, and as few cares.[69]

Obviously Sempill believed that good neighbourliness, fair dealing and regard for ordinary people were essential qualities, as he was quick and vitriolic in his criticism, expressed in the "voice" of the common people, of those of his peers who did not display such qualities. Sempill adhered to a certain code of behaviour towards "the fock", partly as a result of the levelling effect referred to previously, but also because of the way in which the Sempill family understood their role as lairds, which extended for Francis and his father beyond their poetic interest in the folk tradition. The attitude that permeated Scottish poetry from the end of the sixteenth century stressed that ordinary people are as deserving of concern, literary celebration, or ennobling in song, as the great. In fact, for the "middle class" poets, like Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns, they often seemed more deserving of attention than "great folk".

That mock elegies in the Habbie stanza had already become thoroughly conventional by the later years of the seventeenth century is demonstrated by a vogue at that time for the use of the form to satirise members of the poet's own circle. When used in this way the mock elegy took on the air of a literary game.

Archibald Pitcairne's friends, for example, composed a mock elegy on him before his death. The poem is reputed to have been written by one Dr. Izet, but the range in quality of the individual stanzas — from flair to flatness — suggests that it resulted from a co-operative effort. "Ane Epitaph on Dr. Archibald Pitcairne made before his death by Dr. Izet as is alledged" is in Adv. MS 23.3.24 and probably dates from the 1690s (Pitcairne wrote *The Assembly* in 1692). The mock elegy dwells mainly

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69. Ibid.

on Pitcairne's drinking prowess and the usefulness of his medical skills in curing the results of his friends' debaucheries. Good-humoured satire is combined with celebration of the good fellowship of a group of friends in the Habbie stanza, with complete lines "borrowed" from "Habbie Simson" and "Sanny Briggs". In the usual way, the poem shows affection for the subject and places him in his social and occupational milieu, albeit with a good deal of irony:

> With Clerkie he was often drunk
> Both night & day then down he sank
> With tipsie he left nere a spunk
>   Of wit in's head
> Now death hath ceas'd his heavy trunk
>   Ther's no remead
>
> We never shall find such a prize
> Who from the time that he did rise
> Help't us to pay the King's excise
>   Till he did bed
> In triumph now with Crown of Bays
>   Death has him led
>
> Who shall now Intertain our flories
> with merry knaks and wanton stories
> Tell pleasant news unto the torries
>   In time of need
> Since poor Philarches now no more is
>   Alas he's dead
> ...
> Since Archies gone who now rehearses
> McGregorys praise in saphic verses
> And tames the tiger that so fierce is
>   Withouten dread
> But now poor Archies rapelhorse is
>   Since now he's dead
>
> Or who shall now discharge his function
> In tooming botles & every punchion
> Or who shall give the extream unction
>   But fear or dreat
> Of soul & body ther's no conjunction
>   Since Archie's dead
>
> Who shall attend now all our claps
> Gouts gravels & sore cancer'd paps
> And all our grivous sad mishaps
>   from foot to head
> Which he did once with his Guncracks
>   Oh Archie's dead.
>
> (stanzas 5-7, 9-11)[70]

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70. See Appendix for full text.

It was in such occasional poems that the wit and jargon of plain style satire frequently came together with the vernacular associations of the mock elegy. The authors were thoroughly familiar with the "standard" manner of the mock elegy: description of a subject involved in his daily life (in this case, drinking); location of the subject in his "community" (here a circle of hard-drinking lettered men); and emphasis on the role of the subject in his circle (for Pitcairne, the role of "bard" and physician). There is even a final rejection of mourning, in the manner of "Sanny Briggs":

> But why should we in greif thus sink
> Come let us round his Drodgie drink
> All bottles weel and glasses clink
>   Withouten dread
> And let us top een till we stink
>   Since Archie's dead
>
> But whether he's gone to heaven or hell
> I shall not venture now to tell
> But I'd not run the risque myself
>   Without great dread
> Lest to the Devil's share I fell
>   Without remead.
>
> (stanzas 15-16)

Nevertheless, the purpose of this mock elegy — communication and entertainment among educated men — makes it more akin to the verse epistles than to the Sempill model on which it is based. When the subject of the mock elegy was a member of the same sophisticated circle as the poet and the audience, the distinction between mock elegy and epistle became blurred. This may be one explanation for the growing use of the Habbie stanza for verse epistles from early in the eighteenth century. The other reason can be found simply in the popularity and flexibility of the stanza itself.

In Watson's *Choice Collection* there is another mock elegy on an Edinburgh figure of the second half of the seventeenth century. "William Lithgow, Writer in Edinburgh, His Epitaph" is very similar to the Pitcairne poem, although it would appear that Lithgow was actually dead. "William Lithgow" follows the same pattern as other mock elegies, presenting Will with humour and irony:

Edinburgh may say, Ohon,
And so may Leith and Sand-hutton,
Melros-land and Dolphingstoun
    But what Remeed,
All they can do is to bemoan
    Will Lithgow's Dead.
...
Galtoun-side and Darnick Town
Was never free of Thief and Lown
Where Willie did his Sorrows drown
    In time of Need:
Had they him yet, they would him Crown,
    But Oh he's Dead.
...
So prettilie as he did Dance,
And how the Lasses he did Launce,
At ev'ry Step he mocked *France*,
    That broken Reed:
But now poor Will, lies in a Trance,
    For he is Dead.

(11.1-6, 13-18, 37-42)[71]

One addition to the pattern is the introduction of Will's wife who is satirised harshly:

At length his wife fell to her tricks,
She haunted Limmers and great Licks,
She drank with them and priev'd their (pricks)
    But any dread,
He valued her as rotten Sticks
    Which was his Dead.

(11.66-72)

Lithgow also receives somewhat harsher treatment than the subjects of other mock elegies in the Habbie stanza, but his virtues are emphasised as well as his faults:

Good-fellows they took great Delight
To see him bark but never bite,
He blethred so as he did flyte,
    Shaiking his Head,
At every Word he gave a Steyt,
    But now he's dead,

Will. Keir and Jamie Clerk him knew,
And sua did all that drunken Crew,
He would not rich be as a Jew,
    He wanted Greed,
For he was alwaise just and true,
    But now hes Dead.

(11.55-66)

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71. *Choice Collection*, Pt II, p.67.

Like the Pitcairne poem, this is largely jovial satire, which though a warning that "Gentlemen that given be / To Bacchus and sweet Lecherie" can expect to suffer Lithgow's fate, makes the point that "he was ay an honest Lad". Convivial poems such as these obviously became popular in Edinburgh literary circles in the late seventeenth century. Ramsay thus did not begin the fad for alehouse elegies, but refined an existing convention.

Of course, Ramsay's work is more self-consciously artistic than these occasional products of club and pub circles and shows a more sophisticated use of the Habbie stanza and a more subtle poetic perception. His "Maggie Johnson" and "Lucky Wood" are partly in the convivial tradition of the Pitcairne and Lithgow poems, but are also truer to the "Habbie Simson" model in the use of "low-life" subjects who are drawn with sympathy, warmth and comic gusto. On the other hand, the "Elegy on John Cowper Kirk-Treasurer's Man anno 1714" is more complex in purpose than either of the previous types. A satire on the prudish pursuit of vice by the Kirk, it bears a significant resemblance to Robert Sempill's (I) "Crissell Sandelandis", which attacked the Kirk's watchdogs of morality. Ramsay enjoyed his theme as much as had Sempill, siding with the drunks and bawds in a spirit of fellowship but judging severely the guardians of morality. Like the author of "A plea betwixt a presbeterian minister and a piper" before him, and Burns after him, he emphasised the hypocrisy of the Kirk-treasurer's man and the gentry:

> But ne'er a ane of them he spar'd,
> E'en tho there was a drunken Laird
> To draw his Sword, and make a Faird
> In their Defence,
> John quietly put them in the Guard
> To learn mair Sense.
>
> There maun they ly till sober grown,
> The lad neist Day his Fault maun own;
> And to keep a' Things hush and low'n
> He minds the Poor,
> Syne after a' his Ready's flown,
> He damns the Whore.
>
> And she, poor Jade, withoutten Din,
> Is sent to Leith-Wynd Fit to spin,
> With heavy Heart and Cleathing thin,
> And hungry Wame,

And ilky month a well paid Skin,
To mak her tame.

(11.43-60)[72]

As starkly outlined as in "Crissell Sandelandis", the whore is shown to be exploited, vilified and oppressed, and whilst she is punished, the men who enjoyed her services go free. Ramsay also continues the irreverent attitude towards death which occurs in the earliest mock elegies, but extends the scorn further by personifying Death and attacking it: "Shame faw ye'r Chandler Chafts, O Death; / For stapping of John Cowper's breath". The outrage, of course, is ironic, echoing Francis Sempill's attitude to his companion Poverty, and anticipating Burns' blustering at Death and the Devil.

Ramsay, then, inherited several models and many attributes of the mock elegy: the humanity, sympathy and colour of "Habbie Simson"; the convivial element first introduced in "Sanny Briggs" together with the more obvious intrusion of its poet's personality; the boldly convivial, bawdy form in "Dr. Archibald Picairne" and "William Lithgow"; the pastoral element of "Thom Newell"; and the long treasured convention of satiric epitaphs on public figures so capably practised in the vernacular by Francis Sempill. Drawing on all these, and other aspects of the vernacular and plain styles, Ramsay moulded the mock elegy into a satiric *tour de force*, deservedly admired and imitated by Burns much later.

It is clear that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century vernacular poets, particularly between the Reformation and the Union, generated contextual irony through the contrast between their mock elegies and the highly embellished elegies and eulogies of poets seeking court or political patronage. Such poems, satirised so brilliantly in the English tradition by Pope, appeared constantly in response to the deaths of members of noble families and politicians, the births of future nobles and politicians, and the marriages, birthdays, arrivals and departures of innumerable patrons. Direct parody of serious elegies is obvious in the mock elegies: in the "lament" openings, the frequent use of place and family

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72. STS *Ramsay*, vol. I, p.16.

names, the "listing" of the subject's accomplishments and in the rejection of grief, which in the serious elegies usually took the form of a claim by the poet that the patron's noble name and works would live on. The social and political implications of vernacular mock elegies are therefore more fully appreciated when we recall their counterparts in "establishment" circles and the gulf in intellectual outlook and political aspirations separating the vernacular poets from conventional elegists and eulogists. This is not to suggest that the vernacular poets did not seek patronage or indulge in flattery, but those figures to whom "panegyrick" elegists addressed their poems were frequently the same who were scorned in vernacular poetry: the figures described by Pope as "vain, braggart, puft Nobility".[73]

Closely related to the mock elegy and likewise parodying a widespread convention, in this case a convention of the popular press, were "Dying Words" poems. In the broadsheets and chapbooks the "last speeches" of convicted criminals or politically martyred nobles who faced execution enjoyed great popularity. There was considerable public interest in the sentiments of men and women facing the gallows or the axe, although many of the last speeches, poems and "autobiographies" were largely figments of the imaginations of broadsheet writers who exploited a lucrative market. Vernacular poets soon recognised the satiric potential of "Dying Words" poems which could be used for social comment, for farce, or for satiric monologue in the same way as occasional addresses and epistles.

The most well known poem of this type before Ramsay and since *The Testament of the Papyngo*, was "The Last Dying Words of Bonny Heck, a Famous Grey-hound in the Shire of Fife", by William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, probably written in the 1690s and published in Watson's *Choice Collection* in 1706. Hamilton, born in 1670, was a friend of Ramsay, with whom he exchanged vernacular verse epistles.

"Bonny Heck" can be seen as a more deliberate revival of a middle Scots genre than any of the mock elegies or prophecies and proclamations, displaying obvious connections with Lindsay's *Bagsche* and *Papyngo*, among

73. *Dunciad Variorum*, Book II, Note 205.

others in the long line of Scottish animal poems. Hamilton had a strong interest in middle Scots poetry and his paraphrase into modern "Scots" of Blind Harry's *Wallace* was an instantaneous commercial success, though the work "has received scant praise at the hands of the critics, and in the matter of literary style it probably does not deserve much."[74] "Bonny Heck", however, is neither antiquarian nor undeserving of praise and is very much a product of the late seventeenth century in form and diction, using the Habbie stanza and the vernacular with all its contemporary refinements. The poem, too, had a profound influence on eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, serving as inspiration for Burns' "Maisie", Skinner's "Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn" and many other animal poems, and inspiring satires like Ramsay's "Lucky Spence's Last Advice" and "The Last Speech of a Wretched Miser", which are also closely related to the mock elegy and occasional address.

Bonny Heck, who is to be put down because he can no longer race, bewails his fate and defends himself in terms which are strikingly similar to those of the usual form of the mock elegy, beginning with a "lament" and progressing to a description of his life and achievements. Heck praises his own loyalty, intelligence, cunning, and the esteem in which he was held both by his owner and those who followed his career:

Alas, alas, quo' bonnie Heck,
On former Days when I reflect!
I was a Dog in much Respect
    For doughty Deed:
But now I must hing by the Neck
    Without Remeed.

O fy, Sirs, for black burning Shame,
Ye'll bring a Blunder on your Name!
Pray tell me wherein I'm to blame?
    Is't in Effect,
Because I'm Criple, Auld and Lame?
    Quo' bony Heck.

What great feats I have done my Sell
Within Clink of Kilrenny Bell,
When I was Souple, Young and Fell
    But Fear or Dread:

74. George Eyre-Todd (ed.), *Scottish Poetry of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. I, p.30.

John Ness and Paterson can tell,
    Whose Hearts may bleid.

They'll witness that I was the Vier
Of all the Dogs within the Shire,
I'd run all Day, and never tyre:
    But now my Neck
It must be stretched for my Hyre,
    quo' Bonny Heck.

(11.1-24)[75]

The poem expresses sympathy for the dog, and other animals threatened by a similar fate,but there can be little doubt that Hamilton is also concerned for the "down and outs" of the human world, for the overlooked or oppressed and exploited members of society, a concern evident in vernacular poetry from Robert Sempill (I) on.

"Bonny Heck" is endowed with a sense of realism through the naming of places, people and other dogs — a "reality" which is stressed in the dog's entreaty to eye-witnesses to support his claims — and throughout employs irony and an abundance of lively detail with references to every-day life, in the way which had become conventional in vernacular poetry. Moreover, though Heck is outraged at his expected fate, he accepts it with the resignation common in the mock elegies and, having made his point about his potential executioners with gleeful irony, he notes that life goes on in his offspring:

But now, good Sirs, this day is lost,
The best Dog in the East-Nook Coast:
For never ane Durst Brag nor Boast
    me, for their Neck.
But now I must yeild up the Ghost,
    quo' bonny Heck.

And put a period to my Talking,
For I'm unto my Exit making:
Sirs, ye may a' gae to the Hawking,
    and there Reflect,
Ye'l ne'er get sick a Dog for Makin
    as Bonny Heck.

But if my Puppies ance were ready,
Which I gat on a bonny Lady:
They'l be baith Cliver, Keen, and Beddy,
    and ne'er Neglect,

75. *Choice Collection*, Pt I, p.68.

To Clink it like their ancient Deddy
the famous Heck.
(11.67-84)

Hamilton combines sympathy, humour, satire and serious social criticism in a style that draws on models from middle Scots, the folk tradition, the Reformation satirists, Robert Sempill and Francis Sempill. Such a diversity of purpose and influence, particularly evident in the highly inventive mock elegy and dying words modes, characterises Scottish vernacular poetry.

However deliberate or coincidental the coalescence of ideas and styles in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century vernacular poetry, there is a unifying element that forms either an ideological framework or a satiric positive in the poetry. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of Burns, "What a gust of sympathy there is in him, flowing out in byways hitherto unused, upon mice, and flowers, and the devil himself ...",[76] while Matthew Arnold found in Burns "... an overwhelming sense of the pathos of things; — of the pathos of human nature, the pathos also of non-human nature".[77] These qualities were not unique to Burns, but appear continually in the work of vernacular poets from the Reformation onwards. The manner of thinking which levelled society in the eyes of educated people, which opened the minds, and hearts, of the sophisticated to the lives of ordinary people, allowed poets like the first Robert Sempill to perceive the hypocrisy and injustices in their society, and to elevate the outlook and values of ordinary people into a social and poetic philosophy. Robert Sempill of Beltrees entered into the lives of his neighbours, regardless of their social position, and rendered their way of life, their idiom, and their perception of life with affection. Francis Sempill also allied himself more than once with the "fock", reflecting in his poetry a view of society different to that which might be presumed from his social position. Ramsay, Burns, and the other vernacular poets of the eighteenth century inherited a well-established vision of a world in which " a man's a man, for a' that".

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76. "Some Aspects of Robert Burns", *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (London, 1895), p.87.

77. *Essays in Criticism* (London, 1964), p.258.

The foregoing discussion of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century vernacular poetry has examined a large number of poems of various kinds, from a range of sources, with known and unknown authors, and from differing social and geographical backgrounds. It has, necessarily, taken on the character of a survey, however, *en route* consistent elements of style and theme have emerged, and connections between such poetry and its predecessors and descendents have been described.

Each of the forms examined contributed, to a greater or lesser degree, to the establishment of the tradition of vernacular verse familiar in eighteenth-century Scotland. The flytings and dialect poems, although neither played a prominent part in later Scottish poetry, accelerated the process by which poets honed vernacular diction; the flytings echoing the linguistic richness of the makars, and the dialect poems demonstrating and developing the capacity to use a variety of registers in order to convey nuances of meaning and atmosphere. In addition to preserving and passing on the techniques of parody and satiric catalogue, the prophecies, proclamations, invocations and litanies were significant to the development of satiric monologue. Song was influential in many ways, but especially in establishing the vogue for popular song in sophisticated circles, thereby disseminating the styles of vernacular verse and hastening acceptance of the vernacular by the "cultivated".

Most importantly, the forms of poetry practised frequently by the eighteenth-century Scots poets were fashioned in the seventeenth century, some only embryonically, others becoming conventional by 1700. From time to time a single poem, like "Habbie Simson", struck a new and permanent note in Scottish verse, exploding into the poetic life of the country to be admired and imitated for more than a century. More often, as in the traditions of vernacular narrative verse, satiric monologue, and the verse epistle, what continued into the eighteenth century were the products of an evolutionary process in which no one poet or poem can be isolated as a certain model, and in which the distinctions between types blurred; the epistle and address serving similar functions, the mock elegy and epistle having many common features, and the development of the monologue being affected by mock proclamations, mock elegies, dialogue and narrative poems.

It has been convenient to separate vernacular and plain style poetry for the purpose of critical analysis, but in terms of Scottish literary history, such a separation is artificial. There was constant interaction between the two styles of verse and they were frequently practised by the same poets, in combination or as different styles for different purposes. Obviously, altered social and political conditions, and altered intellectual outlooks, changed Scottish poetry after 1560, encouraging the growth of both styles of poetry. These changes aside, however, the parallel existence of plain style poetry was a crucial element in forging the vernacular tradition. The vernacular poets of the seventeenth century drew on their poetic forbears, courtly and popular, and drew on the oral folk tradition with enthusiasm, but much of the distinctive character of their poetry is directly attributable to contemporary plain style verse, Scots and English. It was the influence of the wit and sophisticated modernism of the plain style, absorbed into vernacular poetry, which stylistically distinguished the vernacular tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from the tradition of the makars, on the one hand, and the oral tradition on the other.

Finally, the several types of vernacular poetry — the verse epistle, the satiric monologue, the narrative poem, the mock elegy, and the "dying words" poem — which became the stock-in-trade of eighteenth-century poetry in Scots, whether they came of the gradual moulding together of modes, or of the inspired efforts of individuals, were made possible by the work of the poets of Reformation Scotland. From the broadsheet poets, Hume and James Sempill the vernacular poets gleaned "plain spokenness", immediacy, conversational diction, and many other elements of style. Further, the Reformation and its poets were the source of the attitudes and ideas which inform Scottish vernacular poetry until the end of the eighteenth century. The attitudes and ideas, towards God, man, political society and nature, were refined by the new knowledge and events of the seventeenth century, but while they were altered in their application, sometimes turned on the very Calvinists who propagated them initially, they were not altered in substance. After the Reformation, the Scottish vernacular tradition became a vehicle for ideas which made the ordinary man central, so allowing the development of a tradition of poetry which turned its gaze on

characters, on "mice, and flowers, and the devil himself", not in order to "reduce" the vision, but to allow the intellect to shed the shell of conventional knowledge, "establishment" values, and hierarchical notions of the universe. By addressing the king as if he were in the kailyard, as Pennycuik did, the aura of distant majesty could be shattered, and the attention turned to urgent needs in the community and moral questioning of the society. Burns' "popularising" had too serious a poetic purpose to be called a "trick", and too long and fruitful a life in the poetry of Scotland.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have delineated some of the intricate processes of literary history that produced an alternative tradition of Scottish poetry culminating in the vernacular poetry of the eighteenth century, and have questioned many accepted explanations for the nature of Scottish vernacular poetry. It has been necessary to support the argument with extensive reference to hitherto unknown or unexamined material and has therefore not been possible within the limits of this study to draw all the lines of connection and descent between the alternative tradition and the other major traditions of Lowland Scottish poetry, the oral and art traditions. I have not dealt in depth with popular song, nor have I touched upon possible parallel developments in Scottish Gaelic poetry. Unexplored avenues opened and unanswered questions raised in the course of my description of the alternative tradition may suggest directions for further study, while the literary history I have explored and the questions I have answered may encourage a reappraisal of both the poetry and the critical commonplaces outlined in the Introduction. By placing my argument in the context of the full range of poetic activity between the Reformation and the opening years of the eighteenth century this Conclusion is intended not only to evoke the scope and variety of the national poetry of which the alternative tradition was one part, but also to emphasise that the study of Scottish poetry must take account of that scope and variety.

Of the three traditions of Scottish poetry, the oral tradition had the strongest historical continuity. It was, however, affected by many of the same forces which changed the rest of Scottish literature between 1560 and 1720 — the folk ballads and songs of that period commemorate political events and social change. Just as vernacular poetry owed much

to the oral tradition, folk song was influenced by the popular song of the broadsheets and the "folk style" songs, like "Maggie Lauder", composed by vernacular poets. Nevertheless, despite massive social and intellectual changes and despite the parallel existence in print of popular song, vernacular poetry, composed "folk" song, plain style poetry, art poetry and English poetry, many folk songs and ballads from before the Reformation survived at least until the eighteenth century, relatively unchanged, and the style of the Scottish oral tradition continued much as it had always been.

In contrast, art poetry underwent dramatic alteration. The coming of the Reformation and Renaissance, and the loss of the Scottish court to England, spelt the end of the art tradition of the makars because their poetry was in many respects, particularly in theme and intricacy of expression, unsuited to the new Scottish society. After Lindsay, Scott and Montgomerie, the art tradition in Scotland became increasingly anglicised, having its focus on an English court, imitating and cultivating English poetic style. In this way Scottish art poets in the seventeenth century played an important part in bringing English poetry to the attention of Scottish readers and authors, both through their own work in English style and by disseminating the work of English poets. As a result the vernacular poets and plain style poets working in the alternative tradition had ample access to English poetry. When these poets admired English poetry they borrowed various elements to enrich their own poetry, and when they scorned the sycophantic tone and overly decorative style of some of the verse, they parodied it. Both responses brought English stanza forms, English vocabulary, and English ideas into the alternative tradition.

By the early years of the eighteenth century, because of the remarkable success of Dryden and Pope, Scottish plain style poetry merged with the growing number of imitations of the great English satirists, so becoming part of the art tradition of Scoto-English verse which continued throughout the eighteenth century. Before it joined the art tradition, plain style poetry had served as an additional bridge between art poetry and vernacular poetry, and between English poetry and vernacular poetry.

After the seventeenth century, vernacular poets became the sole representatives of the alternative tradition and continued, more directly than before, to admire and imitate, or scorn and parody, the English poets and their Scottish counterparts.

While the influence of the poetry of the makars on art poetry largely disappeared by the early years of the seventeenth century, "Scottis Poesie" was preserved, in part, in the alternative tradition among the vernacular poets. The verbal richness of the flytings continued to be admired; middle Scots and late sixteenth-century stanza forms continued to be used; the tradition of "knockabout" comedy and colourful crowd scenes was never lost — the vernacular poets constantly returned to courtly models from much earlier times throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed, it was in the work of vernacular poets such as Cunningham, who wrote "Maist couthsumlie", Hamilton of Gilbertfield and Allan Ramsay that antiquarian preservation and rediscovery of the old, Scots art tradition was most assiduously pursued. Similarly, the work of Lindsay, Scott and Montgomerie, lost to the Anglo-Scots art tradition of the seventeenth century, had a significant effect on the work of the Reformation satirists and propagandists, and through them on future vernacular poetry.

Both the oral and art traditions had existed, and developed, for centuries before the Reformation and both had been used, from time to time, to serve and promote religious and political causes, though most often it was in support of the Catholic church and in support of Scottish kings. But the main reasons for the existence of both traditions were the preservation and promulgation of common values and a common history and the entertainment of a community who had common tastes, whether that community was the village in the case of folk ballad and song, or the court in the case of the art tradition. The folk and art traditions had, in different ways, conventions — carrying their history with them — so that they were self-motivating and self-justifying as long as the people they served continued to think and live much as they had for centuries. In the first half of the sixteenth century, while the court was rich and the folk were poor, they shared common national goals, a common religion

and a common belief in the divine order of things. The courtiers however, read, wrote, argued and had a literary art of great complexity to reflect the sophistication of their world. The folk shared an oral tradition which either reflected on the doings of the great, or reflected their own working lives and community entertainments, emphasising the common human problems and joys involved in death, war, sexual relations, marriage, the family and daily life. The solid continuity of the oral tradition was largely due to the fact that despite the Reformation and the turmoil of the seventeenth century, the common values and daily lives of the folk did not alter dramatically, at least not until the nineteenth century. Many may have changed their religion, but the problems and joys of everyday life remained the same. Scottish courtly poetry, on the other hand, could not survive in the same form after the court left Scotland and the Reformation changed the intellectual climate, suddenly and inexorably.

Unlike both the oral tradition and the art tradition, the alternative tradition came into being in the sixteenth century, as a direct result of protestant activity and solely in the service of the cause of reformation. It was a new poetry for a new purpose.

Beginning with *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*, the protestant propagandists drew on the oral and art traditions, but added to them, either through translation of European hymns, or in their own compositions, the voice and style of Protestantism. Their poetry had little in common with the attitudes and ideas embodied in most Scottish courtly poetry but a great deal in common with the outlook and tone of many folk songs. It was practical in outlook, involved a sense of community support against the vicissitudes of life, and emphasised character, the individual, rather than "place in society". Protestants, like the folk, were concerned as much with this world as with the divine and universal. They sought to communicate, plainly and urgently, with each other and with God, without allegory and without a hierarchy of intermediaries. It was therefore natural that the alternative tradition of poetry begun by the protestant propagandists should become increasingly plainspeaking and that the most vital part of that tradition, vernacular poetry, should draw heavily on folk literature and folk values for the rest of its history.

Bearing in mind the complex interrelationships between art poetry, plain style poetry and vernacular poetry, it is clear that the character of eighteenth-century vernacular poetry cannot be attributed solely to the protestant poets of the second half of the sixteenth century, nor even to Protestantism itself. Vernacular poetry was equally affected in its development by the literary and historical movements of the seventeenth century. During that century, vernacular poetry continued a close association with the oral tradition, adopted some of the tone and style of the plain style, and English poetry, looked back again and again to the makars and served many causes, not all of them protestant. By the eighteenth century, the vernacular poets had transmuted protestant zeal into a pragmatic scepticism which distrusted all causes. Protestant individualism had become, simply, individualism, often unrelated to theology. And the protestant sense of community had been replaced for many poets by a sense of intellectual brotherhood and political egalitarianism.

Although vernacular poetry stemmed from a diversity of literary sources and had experienced a number of changes in social conditions and political and religious opinions, by the opening years of the eighteenth century it was a poetry with its own character, its own conventions, uniquely Scots, formed and informed by an outlook pioneered in the Reformation and moulded by the political and intellectual ferment of the years from 1560 to 1707.

A view of Scottish literary history which is fragmentary, which looks, in Crawford's words, "only at the parts", might afford some insight into the art tradition or the oral tradition. Each had a degree of continuity, and each can be studied in isolation from the other traditions with some useful, if limited, results. But such a view cannot form a sensible basis for analysis of the roots of vernacular poetry, or of the sources for its themes, since vernacular poetry arose from the whole range of Scottish poetic style and thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Vernacular poetry became the alternative tradition not because it was completely separate, but because it combined old and new, hence becoming a poetry "for the times", popular among the poets and readers of eighteenth-century Scotland in that it expressed so capably and so

vigorously their preoccupations, nationalist feelings and way of life.

One aim of this thesis has been to reveal the need for a more holistic approach to Scottish literary history. The other aim has been, by tracing the literary, intellectual and social influences on the development of vernacular poetry, to encourage the appreciation and study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scottish vernacular poetry in the context of its own literary roots and the society which produced it, rather than in relation to what it is not. It is of crucial importance to understand vernacular poetry in terms of its own tradition, the alternative tradition, and not to interpret or define it variously as a form of Scottish poetry which was not courtly, not folk, not English, or not a "whole national literature", merely a sentimentally inspired "revival", short-lived and essentially artificial.

I do not mean to elevate "the alternative tradition" to a position in Scottish literature unwarranted by the quality or significance of individual poems. However, vernacular poetry, the most lively and lasting product of that tradition, has, commonly with the exception of Burns' poetry, too often been undervalued, misinterpreted or analysed as if it were simply a branch of the oral tradition. There has been what amounts to a convention among commentators, discussed in the introduction to this thesis, according to which vernacular poetry was seen in "irreconcilable opposition" to English poetry and therefore having, of necessity, what Craig calls "limitations" — out of touch with the wider British society, a revival of the middle Scots tradition, a brief and nostalgic rekindling of the spirit of the makars. It is probable that this view arose because little continuity was perceived between vernacular poetry and the path that Scottish art poetry took after the Union of Crowns.

Vernacular poetry drew on the art and oral traditions, but was neither dominated by them nor secondary to them. Further, vernacular poetry had a unique source of style and ideas in the popular verse of reformation Scotland. The fashioning of vernacular poetry took place largely in the seventeenth century and it is clearly mistaken to regard eighteenth-century poetry in Scots simply as a "revival" of middle Scots poetry, or as an interesting aberration in British poetry which

was the result of antiquarianism and sentimental Scottish nationalism. It is also mistaken to seek in vernacular poetry a potential for a "whole national literature" which failed to fulfil its promise because of an inherent weakness in its style or motivation.

Vernacular poetry was at no time a whole national literature, nor could it be, but it did present Scottish poets with a highly effective means of expressing a particular set of ideas, values, insights and interests during a particular period of Scottish history. In the course of the seventeenth century "Scottishness" had come to connote, for many, much more than "not English" or "living in Scotland". It had come to mean independence of mind and spirit, an outlook which sought to penetrate beyond social rules and political privilege to the real nature of people and events, a refusal to be "led by the nose" and a belief that basic values, "folk" values, should inform the lives of all Scots. Vernacular poetry was a particularly appropriate vehicle for such an outlook.

I have traced the changes Scottish poetry underwent in the years from the Reformation to Ramsay, demonstrating that what occurred in those years to produce vernacular poetry was neither a weakening in the national poetry, nor an inability to come to terms with English influence, change and the modern world but, on the contrary, a dramatic alteration in perception. There was a conscious choice on the part of a significant number of poets to regard the whole society in the same light and to see all aspects of political life, social life, human nature and the natural world — even the lives of dogs and the personification of objects — as valid material for poetry. With such a wide field of material and such a "levelling" outlook poets could generate comedy at the expense of brothel keepers and drunken bawds but also understand and enunciate the social and economic reasons for the existence of those people, urging compassion rather than righteous indignation. A poet might, if he thought a king, politician or pillar of the kirk and community, unjust or intolerant, viciously satirise that person as if he were no more than a drunken bawd.

This was not a parochial, "head in the sand" disregard for the great issues of the time, but a widening of the experiential bounds of poetry to include the whole national life, the whole range of human characters and the full variety of poetic influences. The vernacular poets set out to introduce more realism to poetry, to give more balance to the way in which poetry reflected life. They did this by insisting that the concerns of poetry be fashioned by the concerns of people, thereby increasing the accessibility of poetry to the whole community and producing variety and colour in the national literature.

To a far greater extent than any poets before them, Scottish vernacular poets apprehended that the kailyard or city street had as much to offer as an arena of human experience, human learning and human endeavour, as the court or the battlefield. The plain style poets shared this understanding but pursued it to different poetic ends. Far from lagging behind their English and European counterparts in seeking out imaginative modes of poetic expression for the contemporary world, the Scots poets in fact broke new ground, anticipating the direction taken by other European poetry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Over two centuries, from the Reformation to the end of the eighteenth century, Scottish poets cultivated an alternative poetry which looked into the lives of individuals, and at nature, to interpret and illuminate the whole society. If this poetry was often written without reference to grand abstract notions and external forces it was because both were seen as essentially uncontrollable. Individual lives could be appreciated, analysed and described to give at least some firm understanding of the "universe". The defined and comprehensible universe of the middle ages, in which order prevailed and change led to disharmony, had been shattered by the Reformation and Renaissance. The universe of the seventeenth century was undefined, continually questioned and largely man-centred. For many Scots, the ultimate lesson of their century of turmoil and change was that "The best laid plans of Mice and Men" *do* "gang aft agley". The vernacular poets created a mode of expression which could reflect that lesson, positing an alternative to despair through a commitment to individual integrity, individual well-being, and to the values of the folk — solid, honest Scots values as they understood them.

The lesson of the literary history of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for interpreters and critics of Scottish poetry is that while middle Scots poetry had been changed and added to for more than a century, it had not been lost completely. What happened at the beginning of the eighteenth century was not a rediscovery of an older poetry, simply an antiquarian revival, but a continuation of an alternative tradition which had been developing for the previous one hundred and fifty years as a coalescence of traditions and new ideas. During the seventeenth century, impelled by events and caught up in the crosscurrents of old and new Scottish and English verse, Scottish poetry set off on a number of fresh paths. In the early eighteenth century poets began to sift and evaluate what had emerged from the seventeenth century. In vernacular poetry, their examples included such forms as the mock elegy, the verse epistle, Scots song, satiric monologue and extended narrative. The poetry of the seventeenth century which most interested the early eighteenth-century poets embodied such ideas and attitudes as the elevation of the individual, appreciation of honesty, friendship and common sense, and a pragmatic, sceptical approach towards politics and religion. And the eighteenth-century poets also inherited from their predecessors a choice of idioms — English, folk, urbane wit, or permutations of all three.

At a time when English poetry had entered a period of great power and consummate "Englishness", and English culture and government had thoroughly impinged on the lives of the Scots, the antiquarians, publishers and poets of the early eighteenth-century gathered the harvest of old and new Scottish poetry and employed it in their artistic and critical reappraisal of the "state of the art" of poetry in Scotland. Ramsay and his successors found it convenient to use Scots for Jacobite verse because it aroused Scottish patriotism, to use Scots for pastoral poems because it sounded more authentically "peasant", and to combine Scots with the wit and flair of the plain style, as their predecessors had done, to create a poetic language with a remarkable capacity for idiomatic irony. However, the eighteenth-century Scottish poets who explored and refined "Scottishness" so that their culture might survive in the modern world took their examples, in the normal manner of literary progress, partly

from the revered poetry of the makars, and partly from the poetry of the generations immediately preceding their own time. In their self-conscious continuation and development of the alternative tradition, in their desire to define a contemporary Scottish poetry from the work of their predecessors, the eighteenth-century vernacular poets did intend a revival — not in the sense of a rebirth, as if poetry had lapsed for a century or more, but rather an inspiriting of national culture. The same motivation was at work for James Cunningham in 1680, and before him, Francis, Robert and James Sempill, Alexander Hume, John Davidson, the first Robert Sempill, and countless anonymous broadsheet writers and poets. All eschewed the art tradition as anachronistic, and sought to build an alternative to it, through plain style and vernacular poetry, which could express, reflect and comment upon the society they knew.

APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTS OF POEMS AND SONGS FROM MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

This appendix contains transcripts of items referred to in part or by name in the thesis. If a text has been given in full in the thesis it is not included here.

Because authorial and scribal habits can be useful aids in determining chronology, region and possibly occupation, the texts have been transcribed without significant alteration. The original orthography, contractions and abbreviations have been retained in all but a few isolated cases where the meaning would be very obscure. "Yok" has been rendered as "y" and the common contraction for "th" which replaced "thorn" has been rendered as "th". Punctuation has not been altered or added.

Items are arranged according to consecutive appearance in each MS, by folio, page or item number.

Order of MSS	Page
Adv. MS 19.3.4	438
Adv. MS 19.3.8	443
Adv. MS 23.3.24	447
NLS MS 1951	457
NLS MS 2935	459
NLS MS 2960	465
NLS MS 3807	468
NLS MS 6503	470
SRO MS RH 13/38/2	472
SRO MS RH 13/38/4	474
SRO MS RH 13/40	476
SRO MS GD 18/4379	481
SRO MS GD 18/4391	497
SRO MS GD 26/15/16/8	498
EUL MS La. IV. 29	500

ADV. MS 19.3.4

Description: A collection of miscellaneous poems mainly written before the Restoration. Holograph in two different hands. Most of the poems are apparently unpublished but ff.3, 87v, 91v-93 and 94 are in Laing, *Fugitive Scotish Poetry*, 2nd Series.

On flyleaf are the words "Incept. March 23 1652/3".

f.7v

The 19th of Aprill 1656

I have wr^d this day the Highlanders Diurnall wch I hope better Judgem^te then mine own interpreted the same

Te coven welt, tat gramagh Teng,
G brak hem's word, gar de hem's Keng
Gar pay hem's sesse, or take hem's clase
vel no de cat del comer de leers
vel bid a file amang te Crowes
vel sur te swad, & wilke te bowes
& for her nen sel se le re
ic del may car fu Gamaghee

Interpreted by Mr Jemesson

The Comonwealth that filthy thing
Makes breake his worde, makes die his king,
Makes pay his sesse or take his Clothes
Were he nott doe that dee'le take the livry,
We'l hide a while among the crowes
We'l scour the sword, & bend our bowes
and send our owne self for y^r king
the de'l may care for the filthy thinge.

f.55

On the marriage day 1654 of the Noble Col
Wm Lockhart to his Highnesse Neece
Robina Bewsler By H.P.

All that's rare twixt this & China
Waite on William & Robina.
And let nothing enterpose
Till the South & North doe close.
Tell our freinds on both sides Tweede,
That the nations are agreed
Bewsler, Lockhart, Tie the Knott

Twix't the English & the Scott,
France & Spaine may now goe whistle
Since the Rose can kisse the Thistle
That which James strove to do
And his Baby Charles Too,
Spending time, & strength & skill
Done by, I doe take thee Will.
Yet Robina onely stay,
Let's our Northern Brethren Pray,
Bring noe flattery, keep back pride,
Now yee come o' the sunny side
Highland, Lowland, prove true Blue
Least a Divorce the English sue,
From yor Covenant doe not start
Now Lockhands & now Lockhart.

f.55v.

(a different hand to f.55r.)

The Scott's paraphrase uppon H.P.'s verses on the marriage of Will: & Robina

What Will! Have yee tooke Robina!
Never such a match in China,
Nor can there be L enterpose,
As well the South & North may close,
Your friends that are on both sides Tweede,
Doe mourne that you have thus agreed,
For you have tied such a Knott,
May bride the English, nott ye Scott
France and Spaine, admire & whistle
That our Rose should kisse a Thistle
That which Jamee strove to doe
And his younge sonne Charles too
Yo^{r} in spent time sans strength or skill
Hath marr'd by, I doe take thee will.

You might have lett Robina staid
Untill the northern people prayed
Deliver us from Deceipt & pride
Then wee had got the sunny side.
Highlands, Lowlands, may change their blue
And a divorce the English sue
From the Covenant all may start,
By locking hands, unlocking heart.

ff.83v-85v.

Medley

I am a Bonny Scott Sir
My name is mickle John,
Tis I was in the plott Sir
when the warre begun.

I left the Court one thousand 6 hundred forty on
but since the fight
at Worcesters Hight
wee are anue undon
I joined my lord and master
when as hee Ligg'd at home
untill by gad disaster
hes revivd his doome
Then wee did shrinke
for now I thinke
The Deile gott in his roome
hee noe man spares
but stamps and stares
at all Christendom

I have travild mickell ground
Since I came from worcester pound
I have gang'd the galland round
of the neibour nations
and what their oppinions are
of the Scotch and English warr
in good faith I shall declaire
and their opprobations
Jocky swares hee hath his Load,
Feeles the Rod,
Have a Clog,
And complaines tis very odde.
Since the siege at Worcester,
wee were wounded, lagge and cragge
Foote and legge,
Wiembe & cragge
Harke I heare the Dutchman bragge,
And begin to bluster.

Dutch

Gods fairament shall Hogan, Mogan shake,
Strick downe daise top-sayle to puny powers,
Ten Hundred Tun of Devills, damne the fates,
Iff all der skipp & goods were nott ours,
since dat bloud & wounds doe delight 'um,
    Tara rara Trumpetts sound,
Lett van Trump goe forth & fight 'um,

Eldest States shall first bee crown'd
English shellums fight nott on Gods side,
  out alas de Flemyngs beate,
Day have g'n us such a broadside
Dat wee shall bee forct to Retreate,
Sie the Frenchman comes in Compleate

French

Begar Mounsier tis much in vaine,
For Dutchland, France, or Spaine,
To Crosse te English Maine,
De Nation now is growne soe stronge,
De Devill ere itt bee longe
Must learne de English Tongue,
Tis better don wee should combine,
To sell dem wine,
And trash to make der Lady fine,
weele shew them how to trippe & mince,
To kick and wince,
For by the sworde wee never shall convince,
Since every Brewer there can beate a prince.

Spanish

what de English Tignarrell soe prone,
That they cannott now of late lett their neighbours alone,
And shall the Grave and de Catholique King,
Lett his scepter bee controlld by a sword & a slinge,
Shall both de Indies bee left with de sway,
To dee punity of such as doe plunder & pray,
Ere Austria suffer such affronts to bee
wee will tumble downe the power as you shall Seignious see

Welch

Taffee was once a Celt a mitie in Wales,
putt our Cosen O C was Greater
Hee came in our country ids splutter a nailes,
Hee tooke his Welch Hooke, and hee peate her
Hee ate up her shese,
Her Turkey & Geese,
Her pig & her capon did ly fa't,
Ap Richard, ap Evans,
Ap Morgan, ap stevens,
Ap Shinkin, ap powell did fly for't.

Irish

Oh hone, oh Hone poore Teague a shone,
   May Howle & cry,
St. Patrick thy countryman
   or faite & trot wee dye.
Dee English steale our Hound of usquebaugh,
Day putt us to de sword in Droghedagh,
Helpe S.Patrick wee have noe saint but die,
Lett us noe longer cry a hone, a Crom, a Cree.

English

A Crowne, a Crowne, Make roome,
The English Man doth come,
   whose valour
   Is Taller
Then all Christendome
Though the Spanish, French, & Dutch,
Scotch, Welch & Irish grutch
   wee care nott,
   wee feare nott
wee can deale with such,
   yee thought when,
   wee did begin
In a Civill warre to wast
   that our tillage,
   your pillage,
Should command att last.
   For when wee,
   Could nott agree.
you'de thinke to share our fall,
   youle find it worser,
   never stir sir,
wee shall nose you all.

ADV. MS 19.3.8

Description: Satirical poems collected by James Balfour 1693-7.
Holograph in same hand throughout.

f.3

1

My Lord your unexpected post
To courte: made me to misse
The happiness quhilk I love most
Your Lordships hands to kisse

2

Bot tho with speed ye did depairt
So fast ye shall not flee
As to untay my Loving harte
Wich your convoy shall be

3

I neid not to impairt to you
How our church stait does stand
By this new Service booke wich now
So troubells all this Land

4

Nor darne I the small boats adventure
Of my most shallow braine
Upone these fearfull seas to enter
In this tempestous maine

5

Unless yet by Authority
I charged be to doe so
wich may command and shelter me
from shipwreck and from woe.

6

Therfor to God its to disposse
This causse I will commend
For woefully it is by thosse
Abussed quho should it tend.

7

Ane Lyte it is to bring grate ill
Since it in bushell wes
To thosse have nather strength nor skill
To bring such things to pas

8

Better thesse flames should quenschit be
Yat they have sett one fyre
Bot wisdome and authority
That matter doeth requyre

9

Ane warrlyk Nation still wee are
Wich soune may flatrit be
Not forcet bot broken quhen wee are
Most Loth then to aggre

10

So I commend you to ye Lord
And shall be glaid if I
My Countrey service can afford
My Love to you to tray

11

And houseoever I remaine
Your lordschips quhill I die
And for your Save Returne againe
Your Beidman I shall be.

f.45

Mr Samuell Colveill's Pasquill one Sr Alex: Gibsone Younger of Dunne Clercke Register 1693

At first a puritane Commander
Now a forsuorne Seditione bander
Quhill ther twas houped for brybes and budding
Ye courted God for Caicke & pudding
To show Vill Murray your contritione
Ye doe Mow ye Cross petitione
Yet for his Rolles I dar be bound
He made you pay ten thousand pound
O drunken sottes good Causse spiller
   Thou hast sauld Christ & given thy thy silver
Thy Eivell contrived one desperat matters
   Makes the fische in Drumley watters
Or forseeing some tragicall closse
   Thou leaves Argyle to find Montrose
Then with thy frind the Gray Goose feder
   Thou 'ill its trew, bot up ye ledder
Nor this: No furder can thou flie
   Bot with Jobs wyffe cursse God & die
Quhen thou shall suffer all this ewill
   Thou shall be pitied of ye Devill
Perhaps he will take you to's sell
   For to keepe his Rolles in Hell
To Registrat into his papers

The actes of all Religiouse schetters
for thy good service quhen he seies
Thou's gett hes ouen place quhen he dies.

f.50r&v, 51

Pasquill made in October
1697 at ye Electione of the
Magistrats of Edinbrughe quhen James
Stewart Master of the excise braged
boldly yat he behoved to Remove Archibald
tode from being provost of Edinbrughe
as he putt him in and for yat Causse
moved Mr Mungo Law to preache
ane invective sermon against ye provost
railling one him as a Malignant especially
for giving his Vote for sparing of
hartehills Lyffe

To James Elector of Edinbrughe

Jacobus Steuartus

Anag:
Vrbis tua Custos.

Tell me James Steuart is this toune yours
Or boste ye from superior pouers
Or have ye ane Electors woyce,
Or wold ye all our wottes in Grosse,
and all our Liberties inhance
Forsuith James yats a prettey dance.
Ye make such dirdum & such din.
Vith putting out and putting in
That had ye throught it we'd bein sham'd
Your Goodfather K. James Ne'r claimid
The lyke: Nor his old Lyon's paw
Threttinid as ye and your new Law
Was 'it ye sent fourth yon Man of God
To make sick hunting one ye Tod
from hole to Busse from Banck to brae
Too hote a chaisse No thing to slae.
Bot quhen the Tod he could not kill
He rane the back trade one Hartehill
And e'r he left him quher he stood
He drench't his beard all in his blood
from suche a place to heir such storey
Suche Law, such Gospell, Directorey
Might make ye pope a Jubelie call
And Burne ye Controversies all
Goe James with Moyses Law adwysse,

Bring in ye Armey hold upe the excisse
And lett poore Scotland Ne'r be free
Till No Scots man Malignant be
So may you'r Ryme by forged feares
Hoodwinke as yet a thousand yeaires
Till Gods worke be compleitly wroght
Bot meane tyme serve him not for noght
Thrive or thrive not 3d heire
A Roche Coate's better nor a beare

ADV. MS 23.3.24

Description: Genealogies of the Family of Gordon ("By W.S. an. 1691"), the Family of Perth (by Drummond of Hawthornden) and the Earls of Panmure. Also "A Choice Collection of severall Scotts miscellanie modern poems". Several of the poems are in Maidment, *A Book of Scottish Pasquils.* Volume is in the hand of Robert Mylne with a few additions by his father. Dates given are 15 Sept. 1712 (f.2), 10 April 1713 (f.76) and 13 November 1712 (f.80).

Poems relate to the years c.1670-1713.

Item 2

on some persons in the present Government. 1707

In the first year of King Fergūs reigne
  The cow lap over the moon
In the second of Queen Ann
  Far greater things were done
The great Collossus of the Merse
  Leapt over the sun at noon
The little boy did laugh to see
  His mikle Lordship offer
'Cess' unto her Majestie
  out of ane empty coffer
In comes comely Aberdeen
  The regent philosopher
Found out the stone whereby the Queen
  Might well exclude her brother
The Lyon to the Lattor swears
  Ramping for Toleration
Whig clerks did craw about his ears
  He sank in his foundation
Nixt modest Wigton for that act
  Throws up with all his force
No man gan blame him for the fact
  He tolerate a worse.

Finis

Item 10

'Ane answer to lines made by the Whigs'

All Christian nations doe adore
But only one God & abhore
All other idols but the West
Abhore small kaile wt groats well drest

This is there God whose flatus naturo
Ingenders in there heads a creaturo
That when the spring is over past
Then all those beast begin to cast
As that prodigious Hyve so big
Was lately seen at Bothwell brig
And now when peace is with the turk
These beasts again begins to work
Ther's one thing strange I doe confess
Which savours sure of sottishness
These little creatures with the sting
Have still among them there own King
Yet this poor silly western drone
Will not admit of anyone
Whatever they talk of Hereticks
They make right good use of ther p---ks
With holy sisters in a nouck
And underneath the bible book
It's a maxime the doe hold
That its farr better to be bold
With any sister on a Ley
Than for to swear by yea & nay
All kings and monarchs they cry down
And Lovills the crosier wt the crown
What though our king be gone to france
It's ten to one he'll make them dance
Altho they both look proud and bigg
With a new well tun'd Geneva jigg
Pray let allone the silly meire
Or else succeid old Major Weir
Let hoods & heads & all lye still
Least that the kail you alldoe spill
For its well known Mr* David can *wmson
Withe the ladys daur prove a man
And at a Moss or ane killside
You all doe others each bestryde
Since you'r resolv'd to Lay foundation
Tho lady dyed in English nation
But Dr. Gilbert* at a touch *Burnet
He's bought ane other from the dutch
Which can bring furth as all men ken
A Hogg a sow a sourbrikon
Goe throne, dethrone & put down our kings
Goe murder our Bishops & doe other things
But mind your Kings comeing have a care for a fall
Your Lawyn's great & you'l pay for it all.

Item 18

On the Lord Melvill his wife three sons.

Three sheepskins the wrong side outmost
Three sheepskins the wrong side outmost

He is a theife & she's a whore that calls my wife a Drunkard
She's not a drunkard but she's a pretty dancer
She's not a drunkard byt she's a pretty dancer
She lyes all Day & eats all night & gives nobody answer
Three long chins as all men may see sir etc
Ther's huffie chin & muffie chin & chin of gravity sir
If that your chin be not in mode
Then borrow one from me sir
Ther's three brave sons & and all of them statesmen etc
My wicked son, my crook'd son, my 3d son a peatsman
If that you bring a heavy purse that ends all debates then
Ther's three brave Laws if they be well keeped etc
The Assurance Law, perjurance Law & all your chimnies sweeped
There was a duke so high in pride
That not might him come near a
There came a monky out of fife
And dang him Tapsetiria
And if we had another drink
we's all be blyth & mirria

Item 25

A Satyr on the presbyterians by Mr. Robt Caddell Ao. 1706

The Horrid Devil did invent
The Presbyterian Government
They all hate & abhore Indeed
Lord's prayer, Doxology & Creed
'Gainst which there heatred's so much shown
That to the world it is well known
Against whom doe they fas & pray
'Gainst King & Crown & who but they
This stuborn wicked cursed crew
Give nather God nor man there due
But that wch we call prelace
From scriptures hath its pedegree
Fore prelates & the curates all
did keep religion from a fall
But everything that is not right
The whiggs mantaine wt all there might
This in short is my confession
Both in heart, mind, & profession.

Item 26

A prophesie on the propagation of the Book of Common Prayer In Spite of
or a satyr on the Whigss by Mr. R. Caddell.

Filthy leachers, false teachers, cursed preachers, never calme
By hook or crook, ye will not bruik, the service book, in this realm

In spite of whigs, yr canting jigs, & Bothwell Bridge & all yr
worth
The common prayer, shall mount upstair, both here & yr I south
& north.
Raileing ranters, Covenanters, for all your banters I fortell
The book shall spread, & shall be read, in spite of your dede
The Beel of hell.

Item 27

Ane Epitaph on Mark Maver
By Mr. Robert Caddel

In this tomb Lyes Mark Maver
Who was a Toad and Paddock gnaver
His stomack plenisht was with lice
Oyle, Bubles Rates & mice
And what thee midding did Afford
Such as a filthy rotten turd
He could eat the things were bitter
Worsome, rotten fish & skitter
In all the world was not his like
For eating turds about the dyke

Item 41 (also in EUL La.IV)

On the Earls of Broadalbin, Lithgow, Drumlanrig, Lord Tarbet etc.

Quoth honest Broadalbin to ye son of George Blair
Since the gear is a goeing Let's ev'n take our share
Should the scarcrows of Loyalty heaven & hell
Make a man sik a fool as forget his nansell
Nae be God qoe the duike we'll be no Longer sham'd
I'de rather see all the kings of Christendom damn'd
Let Tories or Whigs, knaves or Aithests us call
My estate is my God my King & my all
Syes Lithgow you know my fathers old way
Shall we be trampl'd by dogs is all I can say
Then doun the river David I'le follow you too
And forget all the Bishops of old long agoe
Drumlanrig persues with ane thats abledging
His uncles true honour & his fathers religion
Let the King storm Namure or be mock'd by his foes
I'd rather be here with my Lady Montrose
But yn George Lord Tarbet thin plain honest man
Never plots nor works mischief Let say it q̄ō can
Cares as much for age as for Mahomet's pigeon
Yet can talk like old wives of the French and religion
Silly Crawfurd was nothing to you mighty men
He slew but his thousands you hero's slew ten
Why should torries life free from death & Damnation
More than the first peers & wise men of the nation

Item 45

On the two bold brethren of Nonsense Hamilton & Cant angells of the Church of Leith composed by Peter Ker Ao.1673

Sure Madam nonsense never did bring furth
Two twins of more unparalelled worth
Then thir two chifteans of the Church of Leith
Who still gainstand each other to the teeth
As that which Meinzies preach'd at Aberdeen
Old cant recanted in the afternoon
So these two word-smiths strive with one anoyr
Who shall wind words to over reach his brother
It's nather fought for Kingdome nor with swords
Logo Machiatis with & for words
Each words a ball & there swords are tongues
And there Artyllarie Lyes in yr lunges
The Elder sayes that he for his defense
The younger sunk in seas of Eloquence
Be rather damn'd than have a paralell
What mans genius did Inspir'd his grace
Two contradictions in Leith to place
Two gospel scarcrows here are joined in one
To compendize the kirks confusion
His wisdome sure hath chain'd them both together
To be a Barrace each unto another
In Leith that strangers there to come
May have a sermon in there mother tongue
For they doe in such languages abound
As God at Babell never did confound
Unless that they there church will babell call
And they themselves brik layers on the wall
What name can fit these two Antagonists
I'le nominate ym divine Alchimists
For all there word works which they hammer out
Brought to the test they prove Adulterate
When they ascend there pulpit or there stage
They stamp the stair like lyons in a rage
And look as if Jehova they would boast
And with there hands haile down the holy Ghost
Then Ajax like there passion thus they vent
As if they would storme heaven with complement
Most mighty Monarch Matchless Majestie
Grant goodness grace great God & glorifie
Most miserable miscreant below
What sons of the thunder Gospel or the Law
What Captain of the Church militia
Can exercize & rank a regement better
When every fyle begines with ane letter
Advance them then into some higher place
There fitter for his excelencie then grace

This he said to Mr. McQueen

When nonsense wraisted have much more
Jehovah, then did Jacob them befor
The prayers done the text read & then
They fall afresh to there nonsense again
Like builders who the fabrick consums
In passages & leaves no place for Crowns
And or Merchands who doe all the time uptake
Of selling wares in opeing of there pack
Even so doe those before the sermon come
Spend all the glass in a proaemium
Not long ago I Hamilton heard preach
But all his sermon was above my reach
Each word he spake was unto me at least
A ridle like the number of the beast
Each sentence was composed of no Less
Than seven several tongues & languages
His intellects requir'd as being young
A Dictionar unto his cloven tongue
Some curious cuts of complements he brought
Such never was by Christs Apostles wrought
Where with he stir'd so hard with a rage
On brother Cant to gain the weather gage
That e're he knew he ran himself a shour
On Blasphemie & had not one word more
But hearers I think this points Doigmatick
Yet could maintain tho it wer promatick
I've spoken more to it then our time will allow
My mind reply'd & more than God will too
With this he swel'd and in a lofty straine
And backward ran unto his text again
He spake enough but nather he nor I
Know what he would been at except we lye
Now sure quoth I by thine own foolish pranks
Thou'rt sunk in nonsense shunning gaudiebanks
And then he Laugh't and seal'd it with a nuna
A thousand miles beyond materia prima
He ran until no furder he could rin
But that the zodiack did hold him in
He past the spheres pure nothing was to trace
And look the barrs of the Antipods
He clame the Pole until he brak his crown
As Done Diego did upon the moon
I thought this angel surely should fly up
In a chymora to the heavenly top
The septone finding yt he did present
The cold poorman of his last dayes preachment
Wink'd on the reader noding lie did say
Fy turn the glass & make no more delay
Which done he stopt as soon as he did see it
And spake no more but sigh't and said so be it.
But brother Cant into the afternoon
For heast to turn the chase on Hamilton
His text he did but in one word divid

And brevi manu give him a broad side
I thought at first he had been speaking Irsh
Or else was telling Magick or in verse
Had chais'd the language of the Bottomless pit
Or else some high lo germans like to it
His nouns he verbed he proach'd Antinomanists
Each sentence might have been ane exercisme
He spake as when in storm the Dutches shout
Unto each other & turned saile about
Then with a sumpt amongest other prety things
Some doctrines of Damnation thus begins
The greatest part of you God hath past by
For to be Damn'd to all Eternity
This he decreed befor the world began
Without respect to the works of any man
This miracle he wrought before mine eyes
He thus rationus weall made by lies
Then he his monster call'd God to be comones
And said for proofs read the ninth of the Romans
In reconceilling scriptures he's so vext
That he undoes the uses of the text
He div'd so deep as Hamilton befor
He braines himself on blasphemie much more
But starting back he said there needs most be
The divine contradictions to agree
A new day chois'd for they are mighty tallents
Your (thought I) the first of the Greek callenes
And then I know be what he first intended
The magazine of his memorie was ended
Then Hamilton smilled on his younger brother
Cause his sand ended long befor the other
But Cant began as if he would no loss
Then snatch up all the arts & sciences
He soar'd so high in his Astronomie
That he did to the Heaven of Heavens fly
But geting little access there he fell
With Lucifer for to Discourse of Hell
But then the glass was run and he did say
He would reserve the rest till the nixt day
Yet well I know there was not one word more
Because I heard him borrow twice before
Now such a stage play I saw never one
Where no man acted but the fool alone
I pay'd my pence which I thought mispent
Since I heard nothing but a complement
Where of the greatest part was horrid lies
Coin'd in his mint house of a Nacentries
Thrice happy Leith that doth enjoy such honor
That both fight preach, pray & play at once

Item 57

Ane Epitaph on Dr. Archibald Pitcairne made before his death by Dr. Izet as is alleadged.

The good town now may say alace
For she hath Lost her gear and grace
She sees no more an honest face
   But what remeid
Most miserable is her case
   Since Archie's dead

The want of him the Taverns feele
Both Arthur Reid & Peter Steel
For there he made the glasses reel
   And shook his head
When he did like the Liquor weel
   But now he's dead

Hays, Grapie, & the madree cell
For him did give a hydeous yell
But when they heard the passing bell
   Hang down yr head
And cry'd alas we'l nevr doe well
   Since Archies dead

He was a toper Leil and true
Went to his bed ay farting fue
And how he stagger'd you can't true
   For his light head
To his poor feet give much adoe
   But now he's dead

With Clerkie he was often drunk
Both night and day then down he sank
With tipsie he left nere a spunk
   Of wit in's head
Now death hath ceas'd his heavy trunk
   There's no remead

We never shall find such a prize
who from the time he did rise
Help't us to pay the Kings excise
   Till he did bed
In triumph now with Crown of Bays
   Death has him led

Who shall now Intertain our flories
With merry knaks & wanton stories
Tell pleasant news unto the torries
   In time of need
Since poor Philarches now no more is
   Alas he's deed

Frontinea florence & good claret
When he meet we't he ne're did spear it
Most chearfully with all he shared
   All men freely fared
And with him both whit and reid claret
   But now he's dead

Since Archies gone who now rehearses
McGregory's praise in saphic verses
And tames the tiger that so ferce is
   Withūten dread
But now poor Archie's raplehorsis
   Since now he's dead

Or who shall now discharge his function
In tooming bottles & every punchion
Or who shall give the extream unction
   But fear or dreat
Of soul & body ther's no conjunction
   Since Archie's dead

Who shall attend now all our claps
Gouts gravels & sore cancer'd paps
And all our grivous sad mishaps
   From foot to head
Which he did once with his Guncracks
   Oh Archies dead

O how he made the gossips gauff
When he began to girn & laugh
He lik't no drink that came from draffe
   To Barm his head
Yet some times he did need a staff
   But now he's dead

Of hood & bells he won ye prize
From all contenders more than thrice
The Doctors he did much dispise
   And bore there fead
Death now alas hath clos'd his eyes
   Poor Archies dead

To them he did full mickle skaith
By help of packs, Fife & Menteith
He Doctor was & surgen buith
   In time of need
Ill wine at last has stopt his breath
   Poor Archie's dead

But why should we in greif thus sink
Come let us round his Drodgie drink
All botles weel & glasses clink
   Withouten dread

And let us top een till we stink
   Since Archies dead

But whether he's gone to heaven or hell
I shall not venture how to tell
But I'd not run his risque myself
   Without great dread
Lest to the Devil's share I fell
   Without remead.

Item 65

A Satyr on the family of Stairs

Stairs neck, mind, wife, sons, grandson & ye rest
Are wry, false, witch, pets, paracide possest
Curst be ye cause of Scotland's constant wae
That hinders justice in even paiths to gae
That slipperie stairs gose unstraight steps & high
Doe like his neck turn his whole course a'wrie
That trappe for publick place yt jacobs ladder.

NLS MS 1951

Description: "A Law Compendium". Volume contains several treatises on Scots law relating to the years 1613-1637. Also, on pp.485-6 poems in a seventeenth-century hand. The MS is holograph throughout. The poems are in a different hand and ink to the rest of the MS. On f.i are the signatures of John Maxwell of Carse and other owners.

p.485

Blist in her eyes & possesst of her charms,
Sweatly I languish in phillida's arms,
our love like twins together did grow,
Neither envy nor jealousie know,
our joys, & wishes all being one,
we thought ye world had been made for us alone.

The gods did envy our happy state to trouble ye proud fair hermine create
hermine q^os beautie no rival allows,
hermine q^o taught me to break my first vows,
hermine q^o qoly possest of my soull
& q^os charms it's in vain to controll

Hail to ye myrtle shades all hail to ye nymphes of ye feild,
Kings might not here intrude, thought nigh of all freedom yeilds,
Beautie here opens her arms to soften ye languishing mind
& phillis unlocks her charms ach phillis too fair & unkind

phillis ye font of love, ye joy of ye neibouring swains
phillis yt crounes ye groves and does guild ye flowring plains
phillis yt never had skill to patch nor to paint nor look fine
phillis q^o's eys can kill q^o nature hath made divine.

p.486

Since all ye wrld's quite distrakted w^t wars
& all mankind in confusion,
& nature itself seems to blush at our jarrs
& no man yet can guess & no man yet can guess ye conclusion
he y^t is great & rich would have more
q^s abounding desires have no measure
q^l under pretence of religions power
Confounds and destroys, Confounds and destroys all our pleasure

Since y^t is ye state of ye world at y^s time
fairwell all mine hops of ambitione
take riches & pour let Caelia be mine
w^t no mortall I will change my condition

grasp'd in her arms dissolving in bliss
my soul is w^t pleasure expiring
y^r lives ne're a monarch can be happier y^n y^s
for I have all y^t e're, for I have all y^t e're was worth desiring

NLS MS 2935

Description: The "Spottiswoode Papers". Miscellaneous elegies and political verse from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from f.63-120. Two different hands. Change of hand at f.74 from difficult seventeenth-century hand to a more modern, flowing and probably eighteenth-century hand.

f.74 (dated 1707) A Characteristic song applicable to the Union

1.

Foul fa my Een
If ever I have seen
Such a parcell of Rogues in a Nation
The Campbell and the Grahame
Are both equally to blame
Seduc'd by strong Infatuation
The Squadrony and the Whig
Stand uppish and look big
Have a mind for to ride us at pleasure
To lead us by the Nose
To what they do propose
And enhance to themselves all our Treasure.

2.

The Dalrymples come in play
Who have sold us all away
And bravely betray'd this poor Nation
On their virtue lay no stress
This poor Nation they'll opress
Having no sort of Commiseration
A Sett of Men so bad
That fed on their Vitalls like Vultures
Bargenny and Glencoe
And the Union do show
To their country and Crown they are Traitors

3.

Lord Annandale must Rule
Tho he's a very Tooll
He's deceiv'd every man that did trust him
To promise will not stick
To break will be as quick
Give him money and you cannot disquite him
Tho' it was upon a day
As the Cavaliers do say
He drank to the health in a Brimmer
Tho he has chang'd his Note
And again has turn'd his Coat
And acted the part of a Trimmer

4.

Little Rothess now may huff
    And all the Cadies cuff
Couly Black must resolve to knock under
    Belhaven hath of late
Found his father was a Cheat
    And his speech in the Union a blunder
There's Haddington that saint
    He may Rave and Roar and Rant
He's a prop to the Kirk in his station
    And Ormiston will hang
All the Tories in a bang
    Every man thats against the formation

5.

Mr. Baillie with his Sense
    And Roxburghs Eloquence
Must find out a New Association
    If their plots are well laid
Mr Johnston will them aid
    He's expert in that nice occupation
Tho David Baillie's dead
    Honest Kerslands in his stead
His grace can make use of such Creatures
    He'll teach them how to steer
Against whom and what to swear
    And prove whom he wou'd to be Traitors

6.

Can any find a flaw
    In Sir James Steuarts skill in Law
Or doubt of his deep penetration
    His charming Eloquence
Is as obvious as his Sense
    His knowledge comes by Generation
    Tho some presume to say
That he's but a lump of Clay
Yet these are Malignants and Tories
    Who to tell you are not shay
That he's much inclin'd to lye
    And famous for coining of stories

7.

Mr. Cockburn with his Aires
    Most glorious appears
Dispising his poor fellow creatures
    And who would not admire
A youth of so much fire
    So much sense and such beautiful features
Lord Polworth need not grudge
    The confinement of a Judge
But give way to his lust and his passion

Burn his Linnen every day
And his creditors ne'er pay
And practice every vice thats in fashion

8.

Lord Sutherland may Roar
And drink as heretofore
For he's the Bravo of the partie
He's ready to command
A chosen trusty Band
In concert with the Bloody McArtny
Had not Lothian the mishap
To have got a swinging C--p
He had been of great use in his station
Tho he's decay'd in Grace
His son fills up his place
He's a youth of great Consideration.

9.

Zealous Harrie Cunninghame
Has acquir'd a lasting fame
For his services done to the Godly
A Regiment of Horse
Has been bestowed on worse
Then on him who has serv'd them so boldly
In makeing of this Sett
By no means we should forget
A Man of Renown Captain Monroe
Tho he does look asquint
His heads as hard as flint
And he well may be reckoned a Heroe

10.

The Ladys Lauderdale
And Forfars mighty zeal
Brought their sons very soon into favour
With Grace they did abound
The Sweets of which they found
When they for their offspring did labour
There's Tweedale and his Club
They have given many Rub
To their Honour, their Prince and their Nation
Nixt to that Jintle Drone
Why there's honest Shipness John
Claims a valuable consideration

11.

Lord Ross's daily food
Was a Martyr's flesh and Blood
Tho he did disturb much devotion
And altho he did design

To o'er turn King Willie's reign
   Yet he must not want due Promotion
Like a saint sincere and True
   He discovered all he knew
When for more there was no occasion
   And since that Holy turn
His heart with zeal did burn
   For the Kirk and the Reformation

12.

In makeing of this List
Lord Islay should be first
He's a man of an upright Spirit
Sincere in all he says
A Double part ne'er plays
He'll ne'er break his word you may swear it.
   Drummond, Warrander and Smith
   Have wrote with all pith
Claim a valuable Consideration
   Give Hindford his Dragoons
   He'll Chastise the Torie Loons
   And reform every part of the Nation

Finis

f.77r&v (dated 1712)

Conscience Resolved

(Two lines of handwriting obliterated)

What are yow mad are yow resolved to goe
And beg ere yow subscrive a lyne or two
Or swear alse many yow are voyd of sence
If yow have such a squeaking Conscience
But I have sworn already yow may say
To be a member of ane other way
What then, and so have many more yow see
Men both of eminent and low deggree
Who to their former oath have bid adieu
And purged it out by takeing of a new
Are yow more wise more learned than those men are
I'm sure good freind you're not so rich by farr
Consider Sir if yow refuse to swear
Yow lose a place of nynty pounds a year
Consider yow have neyr lands nor Rent
And what yor can Command is quickly spent
So yow must beg when from yowr place ye're gone
Or feed on air like the Cameleon
Besydes yow have a numerous family
Who if yow will not swear must beggars be
This is an Argument wch hath prevailed

With many men when oyr Topicks failled
But to remove the fountain of all Ill
Those who the Art of Oaths have woundrous skill
Have wt good successe used this following peill

Take of new coyned Distinctions ane once
A pound of the nyce quiddities of punch
A simple of the greivance of the Nation
Mixt wt some compleat mentall Reservatne
Of all weell mixt make two peills or one
And gild them over wt Religion
This peill will purge a scrupulous Conscience
As I have learned by experience
It changed me so that I can now digest
The new assurance Covenant & Test
So that I judge it now the least of Crymes
To steir my Course according to the times
I when it served to advance my gain
Jure devino Bishops did mantain
Treated Jack presbiter in Ridicule
Called him tub preacher puritan & fooll
And for to evidence I was no Whig
I swore & Drank & Danced the oyr Jigg
A little after I did turn my Coat
And tuned my fiddle to anoyr note
I raxed my Conscience to the full extent
Cryed up the Pop subscrived the Acts of Trent
Maintained the Right of Popish princes and
Stood stoutly for the Absolute Command
But wt the tymes I now am changed again
And learned to Chant it in anoyr strain
I call the Pop the beast in the Revelatne
A popish prince the greivance of the Nation
Bishops I call upholders of the whore
And helped for to vote them out of door
My only cry is now the cause the Cause
Of sweet Religion liberties & Lawes
And that I may pass for a perfect saint
I cry alas the broken Covenant
Let oyrs boast of Ancient Tradition
I'm for Religion of the last Edition
I never examine if it be the best
But if it may advance my Interest
I'll make no scruples on't let oyrs stray
On the strait passage of the Thorny way
I will not on my liberty incroach
I doe resolve to goe to heaven in Coach
He is a fooll who cannot temporize
Freind I would have your heart for to be wise
May he be worried on a dish of Broath
Who hath no Conscience to digest ane oath
I've sworn already (god be praised) the Test
The New assurance also & the rest

Of these sweet oaths of wch this land hes plenty
And e're I lose my place I'll yet swear twenty
I'll sconse my Conscience to receive all oaths
And Change Religion as I doe my Cloaths
In fine ere I should forfeit my estate
I'll swear Alledgiance unto Mahomet

MS note in same hand:

The Common Opinion of
the Generall Assembly of the
Kirk of Scotland 1712

f.99

The Sixth year of King Caesar's reign
The Cow lap oe'r the Moon
The Little dog did Laugh to see
the dish loup o'er the spoon
But in the second of Queen Ann
far greater fates are down
The Great Colossus of the Merse
Lap o'er the Son at Noon
He saw King James had lost his crown
And Ross no mitre had
And therefore left the Silly dogs
There service was too bad

NLS MS 2960

Description: Volume entitled "Jacobite Relics". Some holograph but largely press cuttings or broadsheet cuttings of poems relating to Jacobite concerns from 1688 to the early nineteenth century.

f.7 (dated 10th June 1705)

Satirical Verses on the Presbyterian Ministers

Sweet Lammies,
Court Cammies,
Fool Tammies,
  Lyk a theiffe

Ill winners,
Subtle ginners,
First beginners
  Of Mischeiffe

Belials sons,
Who with you tones
And your groans
  Cheat the people

And lyk a mouse,
Still the pouse
Of every house
  That hes a steeple.

Damned sprites,
Lyk hypocrites,
On the streets
  Disappointed.

For the Lord's prayer
Ye don't care,
Nor doe ye spare
  The Lord's anointed.

Ill wishers,
Stipend fishers,
Kirk pishers
  At the wall.

Whig beasties,
Sathanes questies,
From your nesties
  Soon be your fall

Back byters,
Pulpit flyters
Kirk shyters
  At the altar

The deil send you,
But God mend you,
Or else end you
  In a halter

f.11v. (Cut from broadsheet with holograph addition "Jan 7, 1715")

Imitation of the Prophecy of Nereus
From Hor. L. 1. Od. 15.

As Mar his Round one Morning took
(Whom some call Earl, and some call Duke)
And his new Brethren of the Blade
Shiv'ring with Fear, and Frost Survey'd
On Perths black Hills he chanc'd to spy
An aged Wizard six foot high

With bristled Hair, and Visage blighted,
Wall-ey'd, Bare-haunch'd, and Second-sighted.
    The grizly Sage in Thought profound,
Beheld the Chief with Back so round,
Then roll'd his Eye-balls to and fro
O'er his paternal Hills of Snow,
And into these tremendous Speeches
Broke forth the Prophet without Breeches.
    Into what Ills betray'd, by thee
This ancient Kingdom do I see!
Her Realms unpeopled and forlorn!
Woe's me! that ever thou wert born!
Proud *English* Loons (our clans o'er come)
On *Scottish* Pads shall amble Home;
I see them dres'd in Bonnets blew,
(The spoils of thy rebellious Crew)
I see the Target cast away,
And chequer'd Plaid become their Prey,
The chequer'd Plaid to make a Gown
For many a Lass in *London* Town.
    In vain thy hungry Mountaineers
Come forth in all their worlike Geers,
The Shield, the Pistol, Durk and Dagger,
In which they daily wont to swagger,
And oft they sallied out to pillage
The Hen Roosts of some peaceful Village;
Or, while their Neighbours were asleep,
Have carried off a Lowland sheep.
    What boots thy high-born Host of Beggars,
Macleans, Mackenzies, and *Macgrigors*,
With Popish Cut-throats, perjur'd Ruffians,
And *Forster's* Troop of Raggamuffians?
    In vain thy Lads around thee bandy
Inflam'd with Bag-pipe and with Brandy.
Doth not bold *Sutherland* the Trusty
With Heart so true, and Voice so rusty,
(A Loyal Soul) thy troops affright,
While hoarsely he demands the fight.
Dost thou not gen'rous Ilay dread
The bravest Hand, the wisest Head?
Undaunted do'st thou hear th' Alarms
Of Hoary *Athol* sheath'd in *Arms*?
    Douglas who draws his Lineage down
From Thanes and Peers of high Renown,
Fiery and young, and uncontroul'd,
With Knights and Squires, and Barons bold
(His noble Houshold Band) advances,
And on his milk-white Courser prances.
Thee *Forfar* to the Combat dares,
Grown swarthy in Iberian Wars
And *Monro* kindled into Rage

Sourly defies thee to engage;
He'll rout thy Foot, tho ne'er so many
And Horse to boot if thou hadst any.
    But see *Argyll* with watchful Eyes
Lodg'd in his deep Intrenchment lyes,
Couch'd like a Lion in thy Way
He waits to spring upon his Prey;
While like a Herd of tim'rous Deer,
Thy Army shakes and pants with Fear,
Led by their doughty Gen'ral's Skill
From Firth to Firth, from Hill to Hill.
    Is thus thy haughty Promise pay'd
That to the *Chevalier* was made,
When thou didst Oaths and Duty barter
For Dukedom, Gen'ralship, and Garter?
Three moons thy *Jemmy* shall command,
With Highland scepter in his Hand,
Too good for his pretended Birth;
Then down shall fall the King of Perth.
    'Tis so decreed: for GEORGE shall Reign
And traitors be forsworn in Vain.
Heav'n shall for ever on Him smile,
And bless him still with an *Argyll*.
While thou, pursued by vengeful Foes,
Condemn'd to barren Rocks and Snows,
And hindred passing *Inverlocky*
Shall burn thy Clan, and curse poor *Jockie*.

FINIS

NLS MS 3807

Description: Volume has on spine "Poems. MS. 1684" and inside cover a plate, "William Saunders Hys Booke". Holograph throughout. Volume has an index. Many of the poems were published by Maidment. Archibald Pitcairne's name appears on p.264. There is a change of hand at p.259.

p.80

"A familiar Epistle to ye House of Comons 1694"

When soe affronted scorn'd defy'd
in having thus your Bills deny'd
bryb'd, pension'd pultron parliament
Yet still soe humbly ye present
and pay to him respect soe great
who like yr footman doth you heat
he is forsooth your K. god save him
but yet ye Crown he wears you gave him
Why then is soe much worship pay'd
Unto ye Idoll you have made
true stock yet like ane of those logs
Jove for yr K. gave to ye frogs
Why such debate, such ado
to bow to him should stoope to you
he's bound by oath to pass your Laws
not sham you wt sic bisness
nor foole you wt a paper speech
wt wch presumes he's weep'd by breech
Oliver speeches made as good
but what they meant none understood
So yt noe difference we see
between P.O. and O.C.
The metall'd men in fourty one
wold oyr ways to werk have gone
They still adjurn'd or still sat mute
till yr bills past wt royall sute
remonstrat yn, grow loud & bolder
& it might humble ye statholder
Is his ance solemn declaration
Come to insulting ou'r ye nation
& after all his promises
will pass noe Law but what he pleases
present him wt a money bill
yet graciously he swallows pill
but tho it doth to millions mount
its scarce worth thanks in his account
Ingratefull perpir'd proud person

do you three kingdoms think won
and make a freeborn people slaves
by pensioning two hundred knaves
imprudent knaves yt every day
by millions give our wealth away
Indolent knaves keept in Court pay
Kingship and preistship worse plagues are
Yn famine pestilence or war
where lying preists and perjur'd princes reigne.

p.268

The old Man's wish

If I live to grow old, as I find I grow doūn
let this be my fate in a Country toūn
May I have a warme house with a ston at my Gate
And a Cleanly younge Girle to rub my bald pate
May I governe my passion with ane absolute sway
Grow wiser & better as my strength wears away
Without gout or Ston by a Gentile decay
In a Country toun by a murmuring brook
With the ocean at distance on which I may look
with a spacious plain without Hedge or Stile
And an Easy pad=nage to ryde out a myle

May I Governe etc.

With a pudding on Sunday and stout humming Liquor
And Remnants of Latin to purle the vicar
With a Hidden Reserve of Burgundy Wyne
To drink the Kings health as oft as we dyne

May I Governe etc.

With a Courage undaunted may I face my last day
And when I ame dead may the better sort say
In the morneing when sober in the evening when mellow
He's gone and han't left behind him his fellow

for he governe'd his passions etc.

NLS MS 6503

Description: "Pitfirrane". Miscellaneous collection of poems with dates from 1558-1719 and later in the eighteenth century. Prominent names in the MS are Halket and Wedderburn. Interestingly there is a version of "Hardyknut" at ff.14-15 in an eighteenth-century hand and dated 1719 in a later hand.

f.9v

Ane proper new ballad upon the redresse of greivances proclamed the 25 March 1674 for sound of trumpets cannons bells etc. To the tune of Tunbridge new Doctors or puddingtonnes pond.

You Lords Barons Burgers and Some Earles rejoyce
And Leckies groumes Coachmen & trumpets make noyce
For since Scotland was Scotland our heraulds avow
they never had money for shoutting till now
 ffor from London Towne
 Is lately come downe
Ane Soveraigne cure for diseases unknown
All former indevours this plaster excells
And cures us by trumpets robes Cannons & bells

Then about with our parliaments wee, hate noe moe
Nor force our hott members to travell in snow
to cure all our Sores and then only to hear
A grace and a speech and then — as you were
 Our peers did looke blew
 And our commons pale too
to see themselves cozined and noe man know how
And so the phisitians turned all to ye doore
the patients were left in their wounds as before

These members its said did brougle too much
And ere they gave physick the wound they would tutch
bot our Dukes privie members more warrie than these
for fear of a clap would not handle the place
 Physitians most rare!
 Your drugs ye may spare
And wype not our bumes for our wounds are not there
Its not of such trifles as these we complaine
Noe sholting or shoutting will ease us of paine.

Bot or what some hundreds could not have done
by the dash of a quill is performed by one
Our grievances all are cured this day
And our pounds are restored when theres little to pay
 O happie man you
 Whose annuities are dew

The devell a sixpence you need to pay now
Bot you that have payed them Lament houle and murne
For unto your pockets theyll never returne

O Soveraigne cure for the sores of a nation
to amuse boyes and girles wt a grand proclamation
to swear that we now from diseases are pure
That our Quack and his men may be pay'd for ye cure
Whillest meantyme we lye
in our old maladye
And for new sitting free parliaments cry
O free us Good Heavens from such counterfeit Quacks
That would make us beleive that our noses are wax

Then you who are cured why doe ye not rejoyce
And thank your good fortune with heart & with voice
Your burdens & taxes are all now cryed downe
And our members may play them at thrissle & crowne
And thus ye see how
Yor greivances now
Are all hudled up and there's noe more adoe
Bot of our good Doctors whatever is said
We'll have his pynt in or ye reckoning be payed.

SRO MS RH 13/38/2

Description: Single sheet, holograph, in a collection of miscellaneous verses and elegies sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

Up an warn a Willy warn warn a' Willy
    Hear my canty highland sang relate the thing I saw Willy
When I gae'd to the brae of Marr Unto the Wappinshaw Willy
With the intent to serve my King an' banish George awa' Willy
Up an' warn a' Willy up an warn a' Willy
Lords and Lairds came there bedeen
    And wow an' they were braa Willy

2

But when the standard was set up
    Right feirce the wind did blaw Willy
The Royall knap upon the tap
    Down to the ground did faa Willy
Up and warn aa willy warn warn a' Willy
    Second sighted Sanny said
    Wee'l do no guid a'va Willy

3

But when our army join'd at Perth
    The brawest ere I saw Willy
Wee did not doubt the Rogues to rout
    Restore our King an' a' Willy
Up an' warn a' Willy warn warn a' Willy
    Pipers plaid frae right to left
    A furee Whiggs away Willy

4

But when wee came to Sherrif Muir
    And there the Rebels saw Willy
Where brave Argyle attack'd our left
    And right and front and a' Willy
Up and warn a' Willy warn warn a' Willy
    Traitour Huntly soon ga'e way
    Seaforth an George an' a' Willy

5

But brave Glengary on our right
    The Rebels left did claw Willy
and there the greatest slaughter made

That ever Donald saw Willy
Up an warn a' Willy warn warn a' Willy
Whethan fyl'd his breeks for fear
And ran fow fast awa' Willy

6

Tho hee had ca'd us highland mobb
And swore hee'd slea us a' Willy
Wee chas'd him back to Stirling bridge
Dragoons and foot and a' Willy
Up an' warn a' Willy warn warn a' Willy
Wee then did rally on a hill
And brav'ly up did draw Willy

7

And when Argyle did view our right
And them in order saw Willy
Hee straight march'd to Dumblain again
And back his foot did ca' Willy
Up an' warn a' Willy warn warn a' Willy
Wee then to Auchterarder came
To wait a better faa Willy

8

Now an' you spier wha won the day
I'll tell you what I saw Willy
Wee baith did fight wee baith did beat
And baith did run awa' Willy
Up an' warn a' Willy warn warn a' Willy
You've heard my canty highland sang
Relate the thing I saw Willy

SRO MS RH 13/38/4

Description: Single sheet, holograph, late seventeenth-century hand, in same collection as RH 13/38/2.

The

If I were out of deat as I find I fall doun
My Charit is rotton and shaks Like my croun
Thoughe I be imposter let this be my doum
Lt my spirituell Market continue at room

2

Thoughe my birthe be equivocall I like a bear
And my tribs they be cloathed with sackcloath and hair
With a hypocrits habit it fit to deceave
Let no man dissifer the pope for a knave

3

thoughe my actions wicked my principles ill
may I be reputed his holines still
With the kees on my arm to Clink a bell
And Counger a soull for gold out of hell

4

May I be adored by better or worse
Let kings kis my toe and Make wet myn arse
My pardons gives peice and indulgence gives seall
Let every oposer be turned unto hell

5

May the spirituell padler (the prist) tell a story
Of Limbus infantum and now purgatory
to quench out sedition and blow up contention
And work my miracles by aprehention

6

May the Church men nor clergy neer mary nor wed
but hug the old harlot thats cast in a bed
Let the fryers with the nuns comit furnication
the Sin is but veniall and sueet recreation

7

May the prist at confesion mak a wirgin to fall
And when she gets up gives pardon for all
Let bauds heave ther trad and hours heave ther plesure
to fill with ther fleshly my spirituell treasure

8

O what e're I doe or what e're befall me
he is a spirituell trater that hourmonger call mee
by bell book and candle I'l signe him from glory
and send him to hell or at least purgatory

9

May the saints of dervotion make prayers for the dead
At least they must recken count all by a bead
with picters in churches that people may pray
to idols composed of ston wood and clay

10

with a fire everlasting that burneth forever
of the poor widows oill which provedence gave her
with saint antones fart that he let in a frolick
it smells like a rose and it runs the wind collick

11

May the people be cheated a wafer to take
And call it a god thoughe backed in a cake
Let them play ther devotion in church on a fiddle
but neer be so wise as find out my ridle

SRO MS RH 13/40

Description: Volume with late binding and spine title "Miscellaneous Verse". No foliation. Item numbers are mine. Most items are holograph in various hands but some are broadsheets.

Item 1

(Holograph. Dated verso "20 ocb^{r} 1629")

Now let us sing Chryst keip o^{r} king
Chryst keip o^{r} king sing altogether
Chryst keip o^{r} king and long to reigne
That we may sing lyk faithfull brother

Deame fill ane drink & we sall sing
Lyk mirrie men of music fyne
Tak Bachus blissing it to bring
Sua it be wicht as any wyne

Iff it be waik gar giff it ye trible
Because he singis ye deirest pairt
Small drink & butter makis him able
Sic foode perteinis to his pairt

The counter is ye pairt off all
That does requyre ane michtie voice
Deame fill ane drink ay q^{n} I call
For I must drink at everie cloise

The tennor is o^{r} prime bot doubt
Fill me ane drink & I shall sing siker
I shall keip tyme to drink it out
Thairfor I pray you fill the bikker

I blow the bais with mekle paine
For fault of drink to wash my throt
Deame full ane drink q^{t} aill or wyne
And I shall blow the lowest not

This airt of musick is ryt dry
Of all the sevin ye mirriest
Deame ye ar sweir that lettis ane cry
Once fill the can & so go rest

Item 2 (Holograph. MS note "1660-80")

On Mr Wm Kellie

Ruch rowtaild mastive monstrouslie mismade
False fikle faithless forger of al slight
Thy mother was Prince Plutoes dame some said
Who got the wt hir on alhallowes night
Wch maks the howlet lyke abhore the light
And through thy tirleis tairterouslie attend
On some distressed debtor in thy sight
Who lateys anuell wt his bomileth send
Thy conteorized conscience is well kend
Thy gymps thy gamplies thy gouks thy guile thy greed
Wch showes that thou doeth divellishlie discend
Of that accursed satanick fersorous seid
For at thy birth thy sister Beall can tell
The divells they daunc'd & rang ther common bells

Upon the same persone about fourtein lyns
some few lyns of theme

Hairy horned are say what she will in jest
She Ownes in earnest he is ane horned beist

The author having written some verses upon
Mr Wm Kellie bot concealing his name yrto
these lynes as his style

Quest at his name his style I will receit
A swinger skybald of the swinger seik
A purspyck and a pykshank parasite
A drumedarie by the Divell derect
A retrospitrane voyde of all respect
A fikle faithles traithles trotting tyke
His phiszome foull his friend it doeth detect
A Lim̄er lowne as he is limmer lyke
Dumbare Belheaven eister and wester barnes
Doeth daylie pray the Divill ding out his harnes

Item 4 (c.1688. Possibly written by Montrose)

hold fast thy sword and Schepter James
bad tymes are comeing on
The murmuring of the Synod house
smels rank of fourtie on
When Kings are cal'd to give accompt
what their expenses be
It aither seems wee are all Kings
or els noe Kings must be

2

Give way bott to their wills a while
and you shall sie als great
a will in them to act a new
from on to fourtie eight
hold cruell England hold thy hand
in thy rebellious tymes
Considder bott thy infamie
That Kild the best of Kings

3

If thow should ever attempt again
the monarchie to bring
To ruine as in former tymes
when thow beheadst the King
The world against thee would exclaime
Thy Crueltie abhore
that thus delights in killing kings
and making cruell warr

Item 5 (Broadsheet c.1700)

I'll make thee be fain to follow me.

A NEW SONG

To its own proper Tune.

Of late a Dispute
did happen to pass,
Twixt a lusty Souldier
and a young Lass:
My Honey and Life
I love thee (quoth he)
I'll make thee be fain
to follow me.

To follow thee
that's a Souldier Lad,
All persons that know me
would think me mad,
No Battel I ever
did covet to see,
So cannot be fain
to follow thee.

My Dear never fear
the hazard of War,

What if I'm prefer'd
by an Officers fall,
O then you're call'd *Madam*
by great and small:
Such things has happened
oft times we do see,
I'll make thee fain
to follow me.

I fear then you'll lead
a prodigal life,
Not value you're wedded
and slight your poor wife,
And probably love
some other than me,
I'll never be fain
to follow thee.

No, no, my Dearest
I'll ever prove true,

I of my dear Jewel
  will take special care,
And from all the dangers
  I'll set thee free,
If thou wilt consent
  to follow me.

I cannot endure
  your pitiful Pay,
We'l never live well
  on six pence a day.
By Nature we're taught
  to shun povertie
I'll never be fain
  to follow thee.

My love I will keep
  intirely for you.
A kind loving Husband
  I vow I will be;
Now therefore consent
  to follow me.

Since this you do swear
  I'll deny you no more:
Your faith and your honour
  lies on this score;
Upon these conditions
  thy Wife I will be
And now I am bound
  to follow thee.

FINIS

Jockey Blyth and Gay

A new Song much in Request

To its own proper Tune.

Blyth *Jockey* young and gay
Is all my hearts delight,
He's in my thoughts by day,
And in my dreams by night.
If from the Lad I be,
'Tis Winter then with me,
But while he tarries here
'Tis Summer all the Year.

I'm blyth when *Jockey* comes,
Sad when he gangs away;
'Tis night when *Jockey* glooms,
But when he smiles 'tis day.
When our eyes meet I pant,
I Colour, Sigh, and Fant;
What Lass that would be kind
Can better tell her mind.

Yet *Jockey's* gone away
Which breeds me meikle wo,
I sigh and cry all day
Since he away did go.
Oh! now my mind's perplext,
My Spirit crush'd and vext
With grief that I have felt,
'Cause I swell under Belt.

What will become of me,
Six months near expired are,
There is no room in me,
My Belly's stretch'd so far.
Jockey return in time,
I want three Months of nine
Oh *Jockey* sweet and mild,
Thou'rt Father of the Child.

Oh! now the time is near,
And *Jockey* not return'd;
Death's snatch'd his Life, I hear,
Would I with him were Urn'd.
Come Death strike Child & me,
Take me my Dear to see;
Let none my *Jockey* blame,
With a false Lovers Name.

FINIS

SRO MS GD 18/4379

Description: Clerk of Penicuik Muniments. Two signatures, "Robert Gray" and "Henry Clerk" appear on the title page. Holograph set out in the form of a chapbook or small volume. Pagination is mine.

p.1

The whigameirs road into Edinburgh — The 2 off November — 1648 — By twa Famous rymers — thair names shall be told ane other tyme — iff ye be very Curious

The 2 off November 1648

p.3

The whigameirs road into edinburgh 2 November 1648

now efter the great mcinzie
in england that was made to flie
there rose a great strife in scotland
who then should have the best command
the lords of the committie house
did think the matter perrilous
and so for their securitie
they would have the artillerie
and all the magisson at armes
for why that might work them great hearmes
qhlk in the castel did remain
so they did charge the cheif captain
and bad him render now that fort
but he of that made but a sport
yet few of those toke that to heart
or had a minde that they should smart
tho that a lord of great renown
did promise for to help this soon
but they oversaw the lat braveries
and keipit them with their knaveries
who played as saids with both the hands
for saveing of their goods and lands
and for this cause they letters sent
to areguilye for to be present
as allso the good chancelour
that they might have their full pouer
whilke as to rule and guide the reing
even to their best will and likeing

p.4 and then to colour their decites
they from the town did take their gaits
and in the night right wisely fled
as seeming to be heard bestead
to seik those men that they writ for
and hinder them to wadge the ware
then in the mean time hinder came
numerous troups of westland men
for they ware near of men fightand
foure thousand weill one horse rydand
and thre one foot that could well fight
all chiefly in thier armour bright
for man and mother sone came here
not standing for the compt of weir
of every rank and occupation
for they had a iust vocation
there came carles lords and knights
clachen lairds and thundering lights
Jackmen haghouse men and greives
and cooks that allso likes and prives
master houshoulds dispensators
with many old furnicatiours
bellmen that both jongs and knells
and flesheres that both knoks and fels
coblers that both cloutes and clampes
decayed shoes with leather samps
readers that raiseth up the tuns

p.5 and baxters that governes the ovens
Chamberlans that lifts the rests
and heirds that heries the bird nests
websters sowters tanners litsters
and women to help men in misters
all sorts of wrights that plaines and hewes
and men that whistels at the plows
tinklers that well clouts the pans
with folks that nevers swears no banes
candlemakers that greasie trade
with thimblemen abundance hade
hamermen of every sort
all to the meeting did resort
the miller and the millers knave
the knaveshapman and all the lave
but chief of those was one stout smith
renowned for cowrage and for pith
for his doughty deeds were known
and in former roads were shown
he was stalwart stout and stroung
and wrought ay wonders in the throung
who in effeiring to his call
the greatest marvell did of all

this came they all with speid and their
to have some holds at ther desire
and were all armed wonderously

p.6 as shall be told by this story
ilk man had by his syd a blaid
that would not with his scaberd shade
except that he had shorn it down
his scaberd with his malison
the hundereth part of them had spears
and stafes that iokies often beares
others had loung shafted axes
apelstafs spruspur and turn oakes
sithe upon stiks gaudlocks and stings
and souples that the corn dings
others javellings allso had
and partizons that rome can red
chimmes carreks clubs and wands
and gads that well the plows commands
others had the half of the sheires
that clips the coats that ther sheep weirs
poring irons that helps the fires
and grapes that mocks the stares and bires
croseboues made of girths and banes
and slings that can fell folks with stones
clubes full of flaies and nails
yea some of them had bones of whales
twohanded swords they allso had
and hagbuts of the sound indeed
bedsafs plufs sneding knifes
hand rocks that hindereth thriftie wifes
bloters that pairs the horses hooffes

p.7 and stiks that raxes out the goves
sawes well mounted on gnards
and watch dogs that can keep the yards
battons made of loung bull rasches
and sticks that pelts upon swashes
teathers and berren trames
and croks that well can take the lambs
tosting irons sholes and peils
and whips that slad horse often feels
the temples that hes ironpricks
and leisters that the salmond stiks
heddilles lyes and coupers knives
and picks that hews the craigs and braies
beams criple stilts and nebbet staves
and many mae that noe man knowes
for they had allso secreet armes
fit and provided to wrok mens hearmes
and thes were very perilous
and wronging men on awares

and thes they had as heckle pins
poutch pistols darts and ban bodkins
and also they had blooudy caskins
and needles that claws yockie skins
pyck tooths and long horned laces
and fiz bals that can burn mens faces
gemblets that hes perceing vices
and gullies that doe stik the geyres
lances and purkises and spiels
and tawes that belts barns at schooles
[1 line almost illegible]

p.8 and cutpurs that men beguyles
plucks tackets and fine ranttering needls
dibbles shissells and bulls pissels
weirs that wews the worset shanks
and crak nuts that can play suome pranks
elf arrowes brotches spindles whorles
sharp pointed hooykes and small borrels
revels that both geigs and gimgels
and elshings that makes roome for lingels
palmes that the loof both skults and clashes
and pinchers that sets up mistaches
they allso had sharp pointed knives
and whitles that takes barns lifes
guns that shots the roots of kaill
with many a good cook and paill
they had the nebs of skarts and blooters
and snyps that lives in mires and gutters
woodcooks herrons dotterls whaps
sharp puding pricks and beicks of hauks
tongues of spurs and edder stangs
and many mae that might do wrangs
for they had mair attour these armes
strange devices plots and charmes
for warwolf coats they with them had
in night to make their foes run mad
and each likwise to make a round
about a man so to confound
his wits and senses so that hee
should stand their still at his mercy
they allso made them weirricowes

p.9 wraths bogles guests qlk is not mowes
and raised upon the hill a smoack
to make themselves seem fairrie folk
tame toads in boxes there they had
to spout venom on these they wade
and as a traster beguyles
a hundereth moe with tricks and wyles
so could their men with counterfeet
themselves to be of each estate

and could men lead so and intiyse
that they to them were made a prise
musles maskes and false faces
gaping glourings with loung graces
qlk feared anew them to draw near
for of these things they stood in fear
hocus pocus takes and paxes
with suple thumbs and past perjaxes
and round about their heads whit sheets
qlk made for fear some fyll there breiks
some could cry behind ones back
which made them flied fart or start
yea put their heads in their meal pocks
cam plantering out like ponicooks
and had ram horns of jericho
so to raill up the corimocho
to save them from ingagers thralls
nothing they wanted all they had
that there could be devised or made
but now to speak of our horse men

p.10 they were fierce valiant and ken
and though they had but sods and branks
yet could the wheel and keep the ranks
there jacks wer of well faldit cloaks
qlk did resist indimous knoks
thumb roopes they had instead of boots
wind round about their legs and coots
nor did they want there blew head pieces
stopit weill with good wedder fleices
but some of them were better horsed
that on sturdie steids were tursed
and those were lapsterian like
them for to sie was great delyt
great sadles they did sit upon
with louping irons and helpers one
both joosting strings and had against
and these had our good champions
yea good actoins and habergeons
who of captains had but few
yet their skill and wisdom shew
for they went ay in foures and thres
and did devide there companies
and what was needfull to be done
wes well by them perfited sone
thus in a hideous way come here
these multitudes that all did fear
there countenance was grime and starne

p.11 enough to flie both wife and barne
many there had lyered baireds
corse tangled haires and tatterd heads

and these were aged and grown stife
yet cam they heir with all there pith
as mustered with holy braces
raveing and distempered faces
the rest were young and rude and stout
and bede the bruit and bickering out
this heast was greivous for to sie
that did overswarme this whole contrie
seven thousand men they were of haill
that could their enemies assaill
all weill acounted in there geir
as men apointed for the weir
and so came neir the brave city
of edinbrugh that stands one hie
and sought that they might enterance have
and in the town there men receive
qlk soon wes done in that same way
as master zacheria boyd can say
into his battell of newburn
their speaking of newcastle town
Sayes that with tears unto there eyes
they gave into leslie the kyes
so cam the people of this toun
when as they hard they were to come
made open ports and came all sone
with goullings gapeings wounderous sair

p.12 and fell upon their necks with tears
and said that now the world admires
there heat there fervour and there zeall
that had so soon obeyed this call
then cam the wifes and barins out
and there went up a ioyfull shout
and their arose a hideous noise
provocking all for to reioyce
flocking to them in troupes and bands
with fire and lightenings in there hands
who had indeed all sorts of lights
to sie the consorts and delights
some might be seen with crosie weeks
and bowets mounted on loung sticks
others had good mosie fire
and junip that burns with bire
some had a ring stafe or spear
smeird over with roset pick and tar
lantornes torches burning flaxes
and Candles that the senting waxes
croosies ruffies tackie candles
that the folks both stripes and handles
rathie lights with lamps and tapers
that usualli is brunt at vapers
brimston sticks with barkes of bircks

to shew them light for it was mirke
it was about eghte houres at even

p.13 when hither came these troups of men
heir for to lodge and get supplie
of vitualls and of armorie
the wifes draw them in fives and sevens
into there houses and lodgeings
and into these costly tenements
gat meat and all abuliements
tho their chief want was shone and serkes
their got they all for all was clarkes
who prayed so mickle and so well
for men that thought not on their taill
they raised their eyn like whyts of eges
and sighed like tumbling down of craigs
and gloured and gaped all at once
lik dowgs that wories on sharp bones
sowching lyk to the skips of bees
or like a mighty swarm of flies
and their discourse misterous
and in their sin presumptous
this lived they with their sisters dear
full of zeal and void of all fear
for in all hazards and alairmes
they were ay ready in their armes
now in the mean time came a rout
that presed to gainstand the stout
and those were caled undergoers
and they were called whigamiers

p.14 who marched up withouten fear
of all these stoutly men of weir
for they had pick musket and drum
qlk was a right brave magasoim
but therefore to prevent mischief
the westland men stayd for relief
till ilk had gotten powther
and each his loadneing on his shouldier
but some getting a fyrie lock lome
demanded fra whose hands they come
and knowing not the saids none dare
put hand into this peice of ware
som were ignorant indeed
but skillfull Christans did them lead
qlk made the powers right teribile
and every heart with fear did faill
new was the lait unlawful men
about this time near to cookpen
all armed in warlicke [manner?]
reddi with displayed banner
with trumpet sound and clarrion

pyp tabert swash and kettle drum
and sent them word and hath them height
that they were minded for to fight
and therefore did desire to sie
them furth with their artillarie

p.15 of that they sent they were content
and on their wayes away they hint
to there quarters where they did tell
that their must be a great battaill
so every man took that in hand
the just defence of faire scotland
the lord marched out of the town
and to the craig they made them boun
where they stayed a pyettie space
expecting ay that fattall chaise
moe to goerg minroe was sent out
with awhattie [?] of men so stout
he skirmished so manfully
till he was forced at last to flie
yit killed the captain of some men
and then in peace retired home
who told them of ther strngthes and forces
and of their great gichoes [?] and horsses
and of there forces and their strums
that ready were to work all hearmes
qlk when they had they were amazed
and one another strangly gassed
yet still resolved so to fight
as alwayes sure that they were right
few of these June and July ridders
wer fugitives or backsliders

p.16 but steadfastly stayed on the hills
and selldome got of meat their fulls
albeit the wifes came forthe with mandes
and skulls that made of plaited wands
fow of brown bread and baickes
thre quarter bornnocks and carcakes
angles craklings cakes and wastels
and semmalls heaped up like castels
buckets bickers cuddies cakes
few of milk and bread and saps
twosem coages few of lablollies
pandidills and som knottie tamies
craple maple and drape thike
and pottage that to folk will sticke
fyftie wats and croudie moudie
brog brochen and powsoddie
ageist brose and hackit lordies
setleing growells and jack lowries
waller wallies and skip dyckes

sodden salmond ling and pyckes
dull schaik heaver and sea tangles
that the stocks and stones corslangles
mussels lampets wilkes and clames
and fish that hath right bawdie names
carlin brabell charrell haggs
to put into there kyts and bags
darts were kild for their provision

p.17 and of these made a division
of back sayes rumrosts and of spanlls
puddings tryps and harrigalls
lungs and livers feets and heads
bodkins tailies and nine heids
arkrosts backribs and birskets
heughes sticking pieces and fillets
this they made a separation
for there homely sustentation
tubs and leggons fow of brose
and of jerusalem artichoes
tron creills fow of loung tailled neips
readcoattes sybowes carrets lieks
garlik unions and good arnots
qlk afterwards wer seithed in pots
and to there belts hat tethered cutties
for to sup these wheittie whatties
with great troughes few of hageises
yok of the wats and whyt hases
so had they allso good craknaills
and swarciock make of the juce of snailes
snwnts and melts belkes and roannes
wherwith the fire both breinds and burns
and stifs their stomacks with good keill
the qlk was made of watter and meill
sending likwise one conches and bladoche
sewings self sewing bene and dramoche

p.18 and to conclude they had clag sowst
there drink to wash away they rust
qlk was gowger burn and essok
wangres setling sweats and plotok
tuting hornes fow of snufe
of every thing they had enough
this meat was for the common sorte
but for the people did exhort
the women these most zealous fools
browght sparrowes sitting upon stooles
backen in paistes and other dishes
of wyld meat and of shell fisheis
rams and stones of foules and beastes
and hams that northern folk weill reists
cadded new laid eges and meichie

qlk made them quick and never eiche
since these to them wes no constriks
they grew fow soon great wanton likes
and so blew up there heat and zeall
that they the same did ken them till
now when they had stayed thre dayes here
and saw no enemy appear
they lifted bag and baggage thene
and one there wayes they have them tane
for they had fleid anew way
and durst not longer near them stay

p.19 then followed they right eagerly
till they at last did them overhie
and on corstorphin hills remaind
ay ready fo to win and gained
yet there such myres were them between
as never was that man so keen
that could his courage their advance
wheras there was such hinderance
let non then say the westland gentles
went out to bide in craigs and heightes
as zealous of there strenthes and forces
and of their great giehoes and horses
but rather these that ran and fled
to the hills and craigs of braid
and did not still their chief captains
to win their freindship take great pains
with this came forth a leviathan
who spoke into a mighty man
who was indeed the curches daiettie
as sheephirds makes there dog battie
hee cryed prayed and did roar
and bad him now these men devoure
who said to him they were not stroung
nor had such powers to doe them wroung
but he could say doe yea not stand
for these are given in your hand
who are enemies of his
so this doe yea as god you blese

p.20 who answert hee his seen
in some place where hee his been
five hundereth that did never know
a god almighty nor his law
that would us every one defeat
therefore leave of us this to threat
so ended they there conference
and not without great deference
for that presumer was sore grived
that hee in that was not belived
but let us tell out our story

and sie the lolie gets the victory
then heir was called a treatie
to sie if they could now agree
which in the midst was broken of
even by some trifle or
most cunningly by som its said
who had conveyed ther wanguard
near to the town called stirling
in mean time that they were treating
and so deceaved these simple men
that nothing of this thing did keen
so could they men out hie
who was resolved for to be
at stirling town there to posses
that huge and staitly fortres
where they ramcounters ane captain
what had with him seven hunder men
and minded wer to keep the town

p.21 againts thir men that were ther boun
but they must bravely did advance
and on thir men did worke vengance
who at the first shot shoures of lead
and dang of them straight twenty dead
and syn with brands they one them rushed
and many to the ground they dushed
many into that stour was foylled
and many under shot was spolyed
many mangled cut and tane
and many that were left forlorn
so could they not abide the fight
but all betook them to the flight
as did the chieftan of their men
who the sam hath home tane
but followed was right egearly
yit to no purpose since that hee
wes so well horsed that they could raill
but not lay salt upon his taill
then he him bound for the ferri
withouten makeing stop or tarie
and syn a bierling or a boat
right suddenly was put affloat
qlk suddenly did him convoy
to that for wished land of ioy
then rested not till that hee came
to the former host of men

p.22 where he complains of his mischance
qlk was not by misgovernence
but by fortune of battell
qlk so some must be fattall
o then the men of sterling town

triumphantly road up and down
whylst that the other host near by
did all their powers and boast defy
and afterwards came back again
for victuals and supply of men
qlk put the contrie in a fear
that they would make the corne dear
great was there stomacks and their zeal
but littel was their helping sail
now when they had returned again
with no small toylfull means and pain
they fand the castle at command
and so the town did beck and stand
to that man of many ridums
who with his filshings feards and diddums
was chiefly he that did bracier
and held him allwayes in great fear
who said the provost he did keen
a great malignat to have been
as allso many of them all

p.23 whilk held the town allwayes in great thrall
qhuilk hee he held in remembrance
and said that he should die perchance
and in the mean time bade them have
these men sweth soon that hee did crave
who troting at his horses feet
bare headed as it was right meet
did shew that they were full bent
in this to be obedent
they allso charged Jhon langlands
who had the former states commands
and every man to take a hoy
that might their forces quite anoy
some did refusse and wotheres went
at this so iust commandement
and did heir board with littell dine
and affterwards did bring herein
and in the castle did them cary
withouten makeing stope or tary
yet some said it was not reason
yea some called it plainly treason
that they should take even from their prince
these armes send for his iust defence

p.24 but they could say let any man
who his a good report and name
bot give to us our prievat band
that hee will make them furth comand
to this our league and covenant
then shall wee giue our full consent
to him to use them all at his pouer

for the defence of his honnour
conform to their securitie
that doth expres our loyaltie
but many thought that registrat
for the ill payment of the debt
in the records of heaven that they
might pay for their defaults one day
except in time that they would rue
and doe not contrair to their vou
or else destroy the thing they made
which his so many souls mislead
cloaked with som good pretences
qlk hes full dear expences
let them say they repent of all
and doe not us now more in thrall
as covered with leauges and bands
for the defence of goods and lands
of king of truth of righteousnesse

p.25 but ay alace in great distres
so we haue learned be that band
that when the people of a land
doth bund themselves in amitie
without the kings authoritie
the holyer that the leaug is called
the greater treason is fortald
but I will to my purpose goe
and leave this matter resting so
the lards of fyf with good balcleugh
and burly in the cause most teugh
as allso the great clan of cassells
had with them many dum wassles
who with a dirdum and a feard
even wholy to their men repaird
& the sweatest puir puritans came hail
frying in the frying pan of zeal
and so oprest that they brake out
like withe that bowles in a stop
the sam lists if they be one
com not without some griuef and moan
for to leave their convocatacions
and their prevat consultaciounes
where they recit in great abundance
and desire with great hinderance
hence their union and coniunction

p.26 beane quickening sort of function
Love indeed without dispaire
wes alwayes sur they will not pair
there meetings are unto the night
when darknes overcomes the light
begining at six houres at even

and some time lasts till it be nine
of men and wifes & boyes and lases
who their is all unhiden faces
first in a chamber straight they come
whithouten makeing mint or moan
and sits unto the chair with peace
till they begin their exercise
their comes many lightit candles
and their the scriptur tightly handles
each hes their vers as fals ther toure
and lasts so loung as they have pouer
the women hath the greatest dron
and can the scriptur best expon
who wrestles with the hardest places
presuming one there sprits and graces
heir they receave the furnicatours
by the truthes turn dispensatours
and all can sensure as they pleas
the man that wants the sprits mease
for to interpret and expon
as affterwards themselves goes on
now when they most all separate
with no small griuef of mind and heart

p.27 then tell they of another meeting
and sie who gets the victorie
from edinbrugh comes worthie wights
both merchants crafts and gentile knights
fine batchelours and zealous boyes
and dominies that ladyes toyes
came all well mounted in their gear
desiring nothing more then weir
some men did neglect their trade
as being with blind zeal mislead
and crafts left of to work that they
might gain for that another day
knights their corns did neglect
to wait upon the westland seck
batchelours left their delits
and said that new the sprit indites
them to a iust conformity
of will quilk was to giue supply
to those men who wer now fightand
wither truth or guyle should stand
the zealous boyes left scholes and learning
and sudenly obeyed this warneing
the dominies left their firesides
and strik atendance that abides
them in the houses where they dwell
for so they like this wondrous well
this all this left and hath them tane

p.28 to be helpers of the westland men
so greive ther power right terrible
and every heart with fear did faile
and to be short the westland cadgeirs
disheartned so the late ingadgeirs
that they sent their commisioners
to have agreement of these jares
and for this cause a counsell sate
where their was great strife and debate
whither that they should wew agrie
or fight it out right manfully
some great lords cryed out for peace
and said its time the ware should ceaic
others said let us mantain
that qulk we haue professed to been
that so our honesty be kend
qhen we shall ay the truth defend
and many pithie arguments
they ust for hindering the agreements
yet all wes nought sinse they would have
ane union of these armies baith
quilk was drawen up in articlles
subscrived be some lords and carles
tho some indeed would not consent
to underwrit the agreement
that did consent that they should treat
and not agree to what they did

p.29 its thought by some right wisely done
that they be not cald one of them
now this agreement was well tald
and published by ane herauld
at edinbrugh out over the croce
and every brough that royall was
that so none might be ignorant
of this so good concordment
the westland men when they this know
to leith went not very few
who had not then their pockes for saill
there pockes for meal their pockes for malt
their hanch wallets long craiges and drones
wherin ware many cakes and scones
hipp scrip and skelp and losine wev
with cangglister and froken ferv
had the gaits with peeks farms
and pockes for every thing that comes
pigs and pottles few of blase
and of such harrow graith and trash
Jags and rags such brates of claes
acompanied with louse and flaes
that would haue made a man admire
the filth and bladeri that was their

p.30 yea charged their muskets wery well
even to the heads with creping meall
and fed upon the hydeous noyse
till they came home and did reioyce
and told them their of all the road
and all the hassaerd and blood shed
and strange adventures did they tell
quilk in the rad did them befell
the undergoers did disperse
for men as the agreement was
and what the others were minded for
I leave it now and say no more
but they were masters of the play
with their consent away away

finis

2 november 1648

SRO MS GD 18/4391

Description: Clerk of Penicuik Muniments. Single large parchment sheet, holograph in deliberately archaic hand.

Maist couthsumlie, withouten dreid, 1
Lat's halse ye een in eldrish Leeid.
For Certes why, frasyne I ween
To treit of Ancestree bedeen.
Of Kinrik Rial, & forbeirs 5
Of STEWARTS, now the land wha steirs,
Baith braid & wyde in Senzeorie;
With poustie gritsume halelie.
Tak ye na sturt, nor wax ye teen
Thocht yat our wirds fow hamelie been. 10
But tak heere in benevolence
And read ye with guid complaisance,
My gadderings fra wryttis ald,
Of BARCHOS race: as I ye tald.
Whaise suithfast weird fow sickerly, 15
Came ay to passe deliverly,
As ROBERT the ROY, & many ma
Fulfil'd of Chevalrie alswa,
Our nawin LEIDGE LORD now gouvernant,
Of laud & glore maist puisshant, 20
Right suithfastlie perfay can prieve.
But if my ingenie (SIR DUKE) with leive
Be thought weel hardie in offence,
To tummil with Clerks of Sapience,
As BOES heer, & udirs to: 25
And yat I mak na smaa ado,
In kyttil things abuife my ken.
Our teuch a talk for yap young men.
For eldrin stories leele to mark,
Would had on hand a profound Clark, 30
Wha coud tak keep, & hark to red
In his indite been nathing gleg.
Yet come na pleneying of my devoure,
For withoutten sik aventoure,
How sall we knaw wha lived air, 35
And aa thair doughtie deeds preclair.
But as my saw was, DUKE, aforne
In quiet mind be your breist borne,
And ne're in yre grunch stalwartlie,
For thir my wirddis bauld & free: 40
Nor for my tale schent ye me sair,
Fra of this Leeid ye get na mair.

Quad ye^{r} G // obeysant,

Claiped
BARBER REDIVIVUS

SRO MS GD 26/15/16/8

Description: Single sheet, r-v, holograph, 1691.

To The Right Hon[b]ell The Lord Praces
and the Rest of the Members of the Castle hill Club:

The Humble adres of the servants belonging
To the forsaid club.

Most noble Praces now in a Chair
Yower Clemencies all men admyre
And in yor Easiy Government
Masters are happie and Content
Yet wee poor Roguis most seigh and mourn
were still so Dry wee fear wee burne
Our poor allowance Is so small
Thereis no halfe up, but voill it all
A mutchine Stealls so doune our Throat
Wee scarce know Iff wee be Drunk or not
For still our mouthes are lyke to geyzen
And such a Draught not weitts our weizen
as all Judicious Drinkers Know

Therefore wee Humbly mean and show
With deference to yow my Lord
And all the Members Round the board
That since our griveance Is so great
Litle to Drink and Nought to eat
Yow'll after this our Cause Considder
And Call upon the maid and bide her
Give each on more then now wee gett
That wee may have no ground to frett
Weer vexed that want doth use oblidge
to Grudge in this a golden aige
Necessitie which hath no Law
This from us, gainst our will doth draw
Our drougth is such wee Cannot Longer
Forbear although wee dread yor anger
Wee Know yower Honnourss Charitable
And all the worthies att the table
Therefore wee doe presume to hope
Yow'll not lett's sterve in a Coacks chope
Since Beggars most Not Carve nor Cutt
weell name nought to yower Honours But
Iff yowell be pleased to Remember
Jully August and September
And grant als much as wee had then
Weell rest content and not Repine

Then were wee mirrie brisk and glad
And drove each night and sutle trade
Yet verry sober never epreeding
For all of us have Right good breeding
Wee are no Ruffions swearing Louns
Though some of us have served Dragouns
Doctor and Apothocarie
Wryter merchant Comissarie
Captain of artilirie
and uther officers yet wee
are honest and will so die

Iff this be too much wee referr
To the first Lawes Established were
What was the practiss then ye Know
Iff ye have forgott, wee shall yow't show
In hopes yowill mynd us for the better
And pardone this our too long Letter
Still whyll wee drink weell for you pray
With all our might and main and say
May all the Noble Club be weell
From Croune of head unto the Heele
May they Never [want?] what the us give
In wealth and plentie Lett them Leave
In peace and Union Lett them dwell
And Claret drink instead of aile

EUL MS LA. IV.29

Description: "Transcript of Verses, Some Unknown". Laing's transcriptions of a number of poems and songs dating from 1688-1710. No foliation. Item numbers are mine.

Item 5 (also in Adv. MS 23.3.24)

1

Quoth honest Broadalbin
To the sone of George Blair,
'If the gear be a going
Let's take our own share,
Should the scarr-crowes of loyaltie, heaven or hell,
Make a man such a feile as forgett his nain sell?'

2

'Nay indeed' quoth Duke Queensberrie,
'We'l be no longer shamed,
I had rather see all things in Christendome dam'd
Lett Torries or Whiggs knaves or rascals us call,
My Esteat is my God, my King and my all'

3

Quoth Lithgow, 'ye know my father's old way'
Shall we be trampled with Dogs is all I cann say?
Then descend the river David, I'll follow you two,
And forgett all the tyes of old Long agoe.'

4

Drumlanrig pursues with ane air that's oblidging
His uncle's true honour, his fathers religion
'Let the King save Namure & be mock'd by his foes,
He had rather be her with my Ladie Montrose'.

5

Now thou good George Lord Tarbat, thou plain honest man,
Nere plotts nor works mischief lett them say what they cann,
Cares as much for ane God as Mahomets pigeon
Yet can talk like ane old wife of the French and their religion.

6

Sillie Crawford wes nothing to you mightie men,
He slew but his thousands, you Heros slew tenn,
Why should torries be free from Disgrace and Damnation,
Mor than our great men and first peers of our Nation.

Item 9

A plea betwixt a presbeterian Min^{r} and a piper in Scotland

1 A famous plea hapen'd of late,
In a village called Hougate,
Within the parish of Glencorse,
Where were conveen'd foot & horse
'Bout eighteen score, to solemnize
Willie his nuptials & Peggie's
With rost and sodden bread & cheese.
Nought mong the croud was remarkable,
Till after dinner a droll squable
10 Arose twixt the whig minister,
And some poor folk & Iam ye piper.
The minister hither came
To say the grace, and's gutts to cramm,
To stop dancing, and hinder Jam
To play a spring to Jack and Jannie,
And oyr lads and lasses many.
When he had given God the glore
Eaten till he could eat no more
Quoth he, 'We've gone through thick & thin,
20 Without the bagpips' noise & dinn
ffilled the best buk of oure skine.
Had Iam been here I hade not eaten
A bitt of bread, or tasted mutton;
His pipe wold my heart gall & rent
O! it's a sinfull instrument!
Ane incentive to debaucherie,
Of lustful thoughts a nursery!
When the brisk lads are warmed with ale,
And so the lasses wagg their tails,
30 And mutually give bob for bob,
Counterfeiting the carnall job,
What mortals can these postures see
And of lascivious thoughts be free?
For my part, tho God's given me grace
To look upon a beauteous face,
And not lust after it, — I cannot say,
But when I view this baudie play,
I find imprinted in my braine
Some ideas I wil not name,
40 And inflammation in each beine -
If I receive such impressions
ffrom such lewd gestures & odd fasions,
Which wt me pass not into acts
May you betray to filthy facts. -
Ye are not only not to sin,
But what occasions't ye're to shun,
Not only from the flesh restrain'd,
But wt the flesh the garments stain'd.

Besides I wil prove from God's word,
50 (qch doth all saveing truth affoord)
And by no less than demonstration,
Against al pipers in the nation,
Al instrumental musick's sin -
The reasons for't not worth a pinn.
The musick art, tho' large and wide,
Into two parts we may divide.-
In one that's manages wt the hand,
Or foot, ye other with voice tun'd.
James doth restrict us to the latter,
60 qch is the same thing on the matter,
As if he hade forbid the oyr;
Tho' this be daughter, qt the moyr,
James in those words holds out the same.
'Let him that's merry sing a Game'
And conform to this sacred writte,
Our Kirk of Scotland doth indite
That it's a sin to play on fidles,
Harp, or bagpipe, at any bridles.
Since God has me wt ye care trusted
70 Of souls thats here, let him be cursed,
Who sacred laws shall violat,
And my authoritie slight and hate.
I, as guardian of this parish,
Have discharged Iam to play at marriage.
And lest he should here compear,
I'll stay and have a glass of beer.
Here's one quaft out, this is no sin, -
We may doe this wt little dinn.'
While Mr Iohn was thus harranging,
80 The sparks did feel their hearts were warming,-
What through the strength of ale and brandie
Or formal trysts wt Kate and Nannie: -
For they, who never kist before,
Expect at such times to get store.
They slypt away by twoes & threes,
Attract the girles wt their eyes.-
They went in quest of Iam ye piper,
(That they might kiss & woo ye better)
Who hade himself this while absconded,
90 Lest he Mes John should have offended.
Where he was found was no great matter,
Whether it was in barne or byer -
Where e're he was he was not idle
Tho' he toucht neither pipe nor fidle,
And had not gained one plack for play,
Tho' it was his great holy day,
When he used to winn as much gear
As might procure his bread & beer
To's next festival in ye year.
100 Gille cramed him, I don't mistake him,

As sus as stoup or cop could make him;
He was as weel - I do not flatter -
As Master John, and likt much better.
He just had wypt his greasie mouth,
Tane the last drink to quench his drought; -
He hade not time to say more grace
Than Gods curse on Mes Iohns his face,
When lads and lasses him espied,
And thrice Amen to his grace cryed.
110 'Up Iam', they said, 'play us a spring
For qch weel give thee any thing'.
And Jack offers to lead ye runs
To some choise girles from ye toune,
And promised a doubiadoun.
On this Jam stroke up his mustaches,
Took up his pipes, made some grimaces,
And turning his pipes in the meantime,
Quoth he, 'this playing is no crime,
qt e're the presbeterian crew
120 Say to the contrare, old or new.
This is the trade that my forbears
Have follwed for some hundred years;
And my father, whose sal praise God,
Who was as just, I'm sure, and good
As any Mes Iohn in ye land,
Taught me this trade to take in hand -
Qch I can swear he hade not done
If in ye employ there had been sin.
That Yrs no sin in't I'll defend -
130 Boy, pray fix here the merk's end,
Iack, name your spring & kiss your sister.'
'Play '*ye devil stick ye minister*',
Quoth Iack, 'ye hade this for your grace,
Methinks none's fitter for this place -
Pray, play it to Mes Iohn's disgrace;
And let us walk out to the green
Qr we may have more elbow roome.'
On this Iam, louder then a drum,
Made his great dron play bum bum bum.

140 The Minr, upon ye noise,
To know if it was a real voice
Or only but a clap of thunder,
Came running out to see ye wonder;
Or mȳr being like saul's sprit,
Whose nature twas to sigh and greet,
But could no pleasing aris endure,
Cause contrast to his temprature,
Cam running out for fear yt Iam
Should exorcise him from ye room -
150 Or, take it as he did pretend
As being for their souls concerned.

Wt fiery zeal he was posest
Qch made him make yt furious haste,-
And mighty zeal may men excuse
ffrom imputation of abuse,
In injuries and greatest wrongs,
When hearts are toucht with heavenly songs
Qt e're be in it I'll not debate,
But I am sure he rose in hate
160 And ran in passion like a madman
As he had just new come from bedlam;
Or like a cow had been kept in
ffor som moneths hade not seen ye sun
When broken loose, comes to the air
She seeks about, turns giddie there,
Till her head comes to some consistence
She brooks not weel the least resistance.
Iust so Mes Iohn in passion hurried,
Al chairs and furms before him carried,
170 And snatcht his Kane into his hand
As having yr the sole command
And wold break al heads of ye land.
He ran to the door in this furie
As if he wold the piper worrie,
But when he had surveyed ye ground
And noticed ye rout and round
That but the piper were assembled
He lower'd his Kane & his legs trembled.
180 But being asham'd to retreat,
He wisely did capitulate
In such like words:- 'If I don't prove
The dancing and the bagpipe both
Ar sinful things, yn Jam can tarry
Wt yis assembly to make merry:-
But if I prove them diabolick
Condemn'd by our Kirk Apostolick,
Then ye wil Jam discharge wt me,
Of sinful dancing mak us free.'
190 Mes Iohn his challenge Iam did hear;
His pipes fell low as he came near
Either through anger or through fear.
Quoth he, 'Mes John though there be here
Some scolars that outstep me far
This on my perril I vow, the bookt high
Defend the trade I win my bread by;-
If ye prove piping is a sin,
I'll noe hereafter play one spring.'
Mes Iohn yr opened wide his mouth
200 After a humm a spit & cough,
Did vomit out these following words
As men in iliack passion stirr'd.
'Ye know Iam,' said he, 'yt ye devil
Who is the author of al evel,

Was ye first player wt hand & lip,
And wantone Eve danced to his pipe.-
And after him, Eve played a spring
And Adie bobbed but & ben,
Qch was the cause of al our sin:
210 It cannot be but sinfull game
Has ye dill for its origine.'

Jam laught to see Mes Iohn make sport
And ridicule God's sacred word;
And tho' it deserved no oyr ansr
Yet to gratify Iack Presbyter,
He thus replyed - 'Mes Iohn I fear
Your wresting Scripture grives our ear
And or we part 'twill cost you dear.
But first Mes Iohn solve me ye ridle
220 If Ada played on Eve's fidle,
In the garden of paradise
Before ye serpent her enticed?
Ye know he married was to Eve;
And that's the debt of nuptial love
That for this end God them two joined
That they might procreat mankind.
Besides I'll prove from sacred writ,
Make it as notour as day light,
That they together played a spring,
230 Call't this or that, or any thing.
Moses, he makes it wondrous plain;
Naked they were and ffelt no shame.
Now Mes Iohn, if a spring was played
Before the woman wes betrayed,
How was ye devil the first author
Of the spring played before he tempt her,
And tempting was before the sin?
Then no sin was before play begun.
But pray, Mes Iohn, what was ye nature
240 Of ye play ye devil taught her?
Was it a spring on harp or fidle,
On oaten reed, hoboyes, or whistle,
Or on bagpipes, my occupation?
Wer these as old as the creation
qch I thought were of late invention?
No sure, nothing like harp or pipe
The Dill made use of, but ye lip
And toung, qch he employed in teaching
qch is the same thing ye cal preaching.
250 Is this the art he first used
Which is now so highly prised?
Is this ye trade you gain your bread by
Which the Dill practised Eve to betray?
He from ye word wt her dispute
And falsefieing her confute,

So, so, Mes Iohn, ye wrest ye scripture
And do pervert both sense and letter.
To play wt pipes I think no shame
Play wt things sacred I condemne.'
260 On this arose a noise and clatter;
'Ha, ha, ye piper hath ye better,'
Which might have spoil'd Jack's confidence
If's reason had been moyr sense.
However it stopp'd him in's career
Of pulling in by head and ear,
Qt'er concern'd Jam's occupation,
From Genesis to Revelation.
He knew if he were foil'd again,
Iam wold yet play anoyr spring
270 And Will & Megg dance in ye ring;
And therefore he hade his recourse
To the text in his forsd discourse,
Qch he to Jam did here resume,
'Let him that's merry sing a psalme'.
Iam wt a gaucie gravity,
But frowning brow, mad this reply.-
'Mes Iohn, what Sams ar we to sing?
Sure those of David who was King.-
And we cannt answer yr invent
280 Wtout some musick instrument.
They command us to praise ye Lord
On pipe & harp and dekavord;-
How can we praise on pipe and flute,
And yet al instiments exclude?
Ye see then, to the worlds' wonder,
What God has joined ye put asunder.
Ye see, how contrare to command
You banish pipes from Kirk & land,
Yet the precept unrepeated doth stand!
290 Just so was ye liturgie,
And venerable prelacy,
And glorie to ye trinity
And pater noster and ye Creed:-
As Roman & outlandish weeds,
(To think on which my heart doth bleed)
And practice in the Jesuit state
The precept doth corroborate.
Of musick vocal, instrumentall,
The precept was so universall
300 In divin worship, ye cannot deny
Unless your ignorance you betray;
ffor David danced before ye ark,
Qr played cimballs pip & harp,
Qr Nerian, Asaph and Ethan
And Chenania play'd & sang.
Al yt saw this zeal for the Lord
Did join wt them (in) one accord.
Michal disposed him in hir heart

And him, fool called him for hir part
310 For his brisk dancing and his playing,
Qch I think as good as your praying.
He makes apologie for ye same,
So was no fool but a wise man;
And he mor foolish wold appear
When holy zeal did him inspire.
Let al who pipes and playes controll
Let me, if these seraphick souls
Who penned the sams ye doe now sing,
And to them did prescribe each spring,
320 Wer behind you in any thing,
ffor wisdom or zeal or for religion
Or highest stretches of devotion.
That playing is no hindrance
To devotion, but doth advance,
I need not use anoyr reasone
That the old prophetick fashion:-
When 'twas yr mind to prophesie
They straight call'd one to play,
To ye end they might elevate
330 Ye affections to such estate
As might dispose them to conception
Of prophetic inspiration.
And Saul, when posest of a devil,
By playing eas'd was of the evil.
What was in ye old law institut
And what was never abrogat,
Qt was decreed on moral grounds
Not on typpick judicial sounds,
I ever thought it did obleidge us
340 As it hade been given directly to us.
Accordingly the Christian Kirk
Play'd on organs pipe & harp;
Qch custome was transmitt to us
Till Prisbeterians quite undoe us.

Mes Iohn, I plead not for a station
In any Kirk wtin this nation;
For there the bagpipe, I do fear
Wold but griv some nauseous ear.-
I only speak this to prevent
350 Ye invidious act of banishment.
(It was) right to come as far ben
In the Kirk as Mes Iohn & his men
And (yet) are banisht from ye Kirk
Let this put end to penall work,
I'm content ne'er to play one spring,
Within the Church's verge or sing,
Only permitt for to play
At brydle on our holy day.
Ye reasonable and just demand,

360 If you have sense, you cannt gainstand.
A time yr is sayes ye wise man
To every thing below ye sun,
Godly exercise is ye main
Should take us up ye greatest time,-
If ye be not one of ye sweet singers,
Weel spend al time in Sams & prayers,
You wil allow a time to eat in,
Also anoyr time to shite in,
A time to weep, a time to laugh,
A time to humm a time to cough,
370 A time to express our social thoughts
By voice, pipe, dance, or the like acts.
These are ye mere results of nature
Allowable in human creature.
It's lawful yn to dance & play
And solemnize a wedding day.
This is the employ I doe live by,
And lads and lasses matches come by.
And what ye talk of bad impressions
Receaved from promiscuous dancings
380 Qr monopolized wtin your brain,
Prove you to be a carnal man.
For 40 years I have seen thes sports
And never felt the like efforts!

On this arose a hideous cry,
'Weel have anoyr dance & play
For Mr Iohn has lost the day.'
Mr Iohn hearing the applause
'Cause ye piper had won ye cause,
Turn'd mad but especialy
390 At the exclamations hugely,
And being in this frantick vein,
Did furiously let drive his Kane
At honest Jam, did him this harm,
He broke his head, and bled his arm,
Then ran away for fear & shame,
Lest Jam should have resuit ye same.
And in his way he meet wt beggars
To whom he cry'd 'ye catterpillers,
Who wast ye product of ye ground,
400 For qt or whither are ye bound?
Ye are all banisht from ye toune
As being a pack of idle louns.
Had I of al parts ye command
Ye should not tarrie in ye land,
Wtin my charge ye shall not sleep,
I'll drive you as so many sheep.'

Thus Mes Iohn swayed his pastoral care
And exercised his discipline,
Call'd a la mode or puritane

410 Ore Iam ye piper and ye poor
As ye only sheep wtin his cure:-
Where hedge is lowest he laps ore.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography has been compiled with a view to ease of reference. It has been subdivided as follows:

1. Primary Sources: Manuscript

   (a) Poems and Songs. A first line index to texts cited giving the MS source of the text and the location in the thesis or Appendix of my full transcript. The considerable body of poetry and song transcribed in the course of my research but not cited equally illustrates the stylistic developments I have described.

   (b) Manuscripts used for purposes other than literary texts. Major MSS cited or consulted as evidence of diversity of poetic and musical taste.

2. Primary Sources: Printed

   Editions and collections cited or consulted extensively. Works of major poets are entered under their own name, anthologies and collections are entered under editor. Numerous minor seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editions of poetry, chapbooks and broadsheets read but not cited have been omitted. The holdings of the Edinburgh University Library, the Nicol Smith Collection in the National Library of Australia and the Lauriston Castle Chapbook collection in the National Library of Scotland were particularly useful in regard to minor poetry and popular poetry.

3. Secondary Sources

   Works cited or works which particularly influenced the train of thought which led me to posit an alternative tradition of Scottish poetry.

1. PRIMARY SOURCES: MANUSCRIPT

(a) Poems and Songs (First line, source of text; location of transcript)

A famous plea hapen'd of late, EUL MS La. IV. 29, Item 9; App. p.501.

A slee one, a slee one, Adv. MS 19.3.4, f.33; p.356.

All Christian nations doe adore, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 10; App. p.447.

All that's rare twixt this & China, Adv. MS 19.3.4, f.55; App. p.438.

As Mar his round one Morning took, NLS MS 2960, f.11v; App. p.465.

At first a puritane Commander, Adv. MS 19.3.8, f.45; App. p.444.

Bliss me how comes it thus to pass, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 15; p.303.

Blist in her eye & possesst of her charms, NLS MS 1951, p.485; App. p.457.

Blyth Jockey young and gay, SRO MS RH 13/40, Item 5; App. p.479.

Did ye not sie how babels whore was mounted on a sow, SRO MS RH 13/40, Item 3; pp.309.

Filthy leachers, false teachers, cursed preachers, never calme, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 26; App. p.449.

Foul fa my Een, NLS MS 2935, f.74; p.459.

Hail to ye murtle shades all hail to ye nymphes of ye feild, NLS MS 1951, p.485; App. p.457.

Hold fast thy sword and schepter James, SRO MS RH 13/40, Item 4; App. p.477.

I am a Bonny Scott Sir, Adv. MS 19.3.4, f.83v; App. p.440.

I hate a lazy lawland loun, I love a lusty highlandman, NLS MS 1941; p.485; p.356.

If I live to grow old, as I find I grow doun, NLS MS 3807, p.286; App. p.469.

If I wer out of deat as I find I fall doun, SRO MS RH 13/38/4; App. p.474.

In the first year of King Fergus reigne, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 2; App. p.447.

In this tomb lyes Mark Maver, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 27; App. p.450

Maist Coutsumlie, withouten dreid, SRO MS GD 18/4391; App. p.497.

Most noble Praces now in a Chair, SRO MS GD 26/15/16/8; App. p.498.

My Lord your unexpected post, Adv. MS 18.3.8, f.3; App. p.443.

Now efter the great mcinzie, SRO MS GD 17/4379; App. p.481.

Now let us sing Chryst keip o[r] king, SRO MS RH 13/40, Item 1; App. p.476.

Of late a dispute, SRO MS RH 13/40, Item 5; App. p.478.

Our dukes were Devills, our Marquesses were Mad, SRO MS GD 15/16/3; p.312.

Quoth honest Broadalbin to ye son of George Blair, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 41; App. p.450; and EUL MS La. IV. 29; App. p.500.

Ruch Rowtaild mastive monstrouslie mismade, SRO MS RH 13/40, Item 2; App. p.477.

Since all ye wrld's quite distrakted wt wars, NLS MS 1951, p.486; App. p.457.

Since thochtis ar frie, think quhat thow will, SRO MS RH 13/38/1; p.203.

Since thoght is thrall to thy ill will, SRO MS RH 13/38/1; p.204.

Stairs neck, mind, wife, sons, grandson & ye rest, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 65; App. p.456.

Sure Madam nonsense never did bring furth, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 45; App. p.451.

Sweet lammies, NLS MS 2960, f.7; App. p.465.

Te coven welt, tat gramagh Teng, Adv. MS 19.3.4, f.7v; App. p.438.

Tell me James Steuart is this toune yours, Adv. MS 19.3.8, f.50; App. p.445.

The Commonwealth that filthy thing, Adv. MS 19.3.4, f.7v; App. p.438.

The good town now may say alace, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 57; App. p.454.

The horrid Devil did invent, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 25; App. p.449.

The Sixth year of King Caesar's reign, NLS MS 2935, f.99; App. p.464.

Thom Newell's gone now in ane uncouth kynd, NLS MS 2935, f.69; p.410.

To danton me, to danton me, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 8; p.363.

Yo you my Nighbour that underneath, SRO MS GD 26/15/16/4; p.365.

Three sheepskins the wrong side outmost, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 18; App. p.448.

Up an' warn a' Willy warn warn a' Willy, SRO MS RH 13/38/2; App. p.472.

What are you mad are you resolved to goe, NLS MS 2935, f.77; App. p.462; also in NLS MS 3807, p.254 and Adv. MS 23.3.24, f.104.

What Will! Have ye tooke Robina, Adv. MS 19.3.4, f.55v; App. p.439.

When laws are silenc'd & the noble gown, Adv. MS 23.3.24, Item 46; p.304.

When soe affronted scorn'd defyd, NLS MS 3807, p.80; App. p.468.

You Lords Barons Burgers & some Earls rejoyce, NLS MS 6503, f.9v; App. p.470.

(b) MSS used for purposes other than literary texts

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