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The Impact of Latin Culture on Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing


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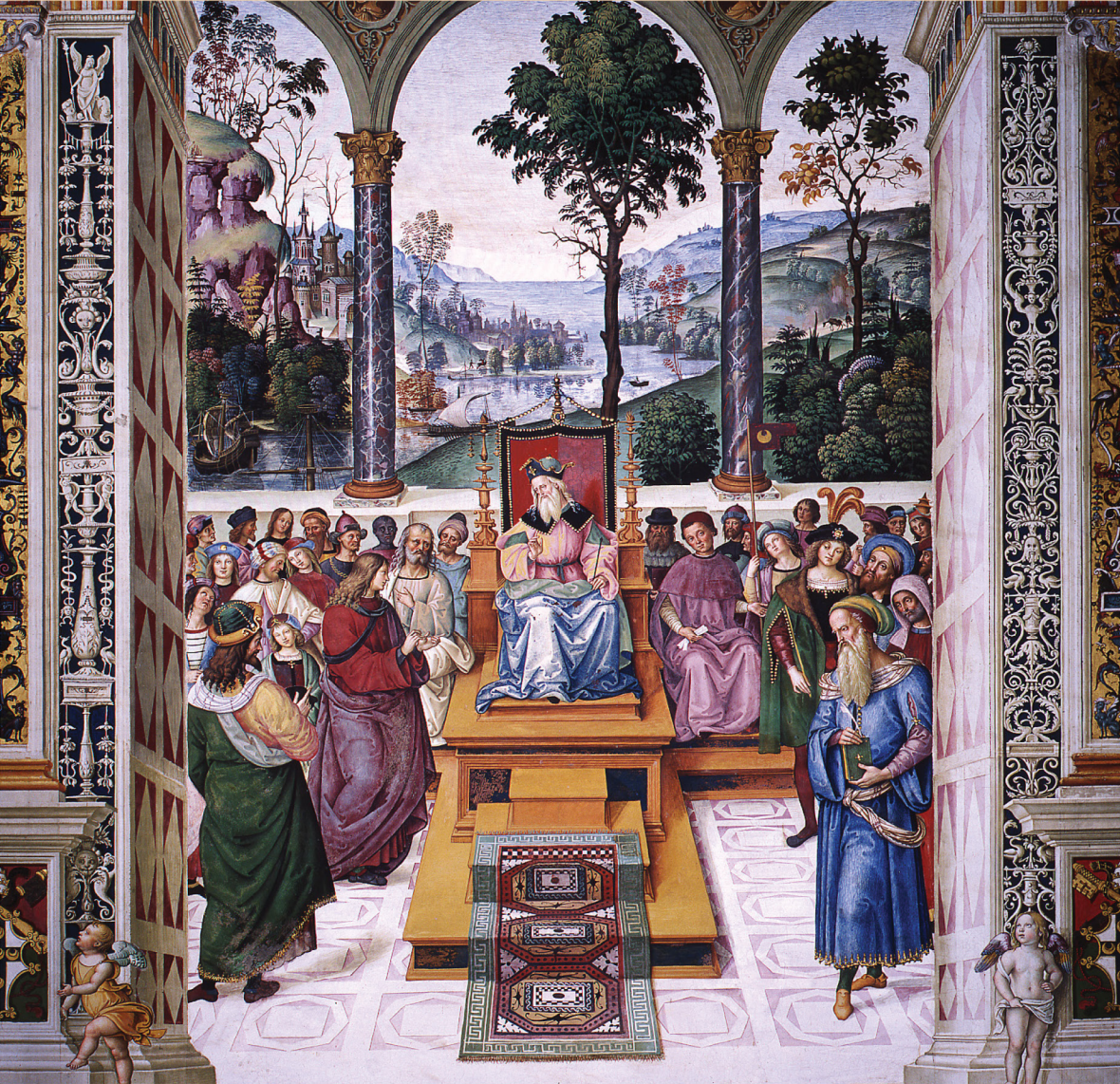
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The Impact of Latin Culture on Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing

Edited by
Alessandra Petrina and Ian Johnson



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STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN CULTURE

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List of Abbreviations

DOST	<i>Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue</i> , Edinburgh: Scottish Language Dictionaries, www.dsl.ac.uk
DSL	<i>Dictionary of the Scots Language</i> , Edinburgh: Scottish Language Dictionaries, www.dsl.ac.uk
EEBO-TCP	Early English Books Online: Text Creation Partnership, Ann Arbor: ProQuest, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/
MED	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i> , Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , online edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, www.odnb.com
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , online edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, www.oed.com
SND	<i>Scottish National Dictionary</i> , Edinburgh: Scottish Language Dictionaries, www.dsl.ac.uk

Introduction: Scottish *Latinitas*

Ian Johnson and Alessandra Petrina

Lawd, honour, praysyngis, thankis infynyte
To the and thy dulce ornat fresch endyte,
Maist reverend Virgill, of Latyn poetis prynce:
Gem of engyne and flude of eloquens.

(*Eneados*, I, Prologue, ll. 1–4)

THUS GAVIN DOUGLAS OPENS the Prologue to Book 1 of his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, first published in London in 1553, but probably already completed in 1513. Douglas's version of the Latin poem is doubly representative of a distinctive phase in Scottish literature: his completion of the work coincided with the most glorious moment of James IV's reign, seemingly promising the dawn of a glorious Scottish Renaissance. In the same year, however, this promise was disastrously curtailed by the Scottish defeat at Flodden, where the King lost his life and Scotland lost its cultural momentum. Just as Douglas represents a poet *in limine* between a medieval, courtly mode and new humanist interests, so too the Battle of Flodden Field marked the end of a period of great hope for social and intellectual renewal in Scotland. (Only as recently as 1507 had the King supported Chepman and Myllar's project to set up a printing press in Edinburgh.) In the event, however, things did not turn out so grimly. The apparent setback gave way to a remarkable new literary surge. Indeed, the ninety years between Flodden and the Union of the Crowns (1603) have been hailed as "an impossible, or improbable, first Scottish Renaissance."¹ This stunning but unlikely Renaissance, and the literary efforts of the preceding centuries that built towards it, provide the setting for the present volume, which investigates the crucial role played by Latin culture in the self-identification, affirmation and flowering of Scottish literature.

Douglas's role in the construction of a Scottish literary canon is, as noted above, doubly significant because of his choice of Virgil as a literary model. The translation of the *Aeneid*, contained in both extant versions (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.3.12 and the 1553 printed edition) with the layout and presentation strategy of a critical edition, complete with marginalia or glosses, with rubrics dividing the translation into vari-

ous sections, and with explanatory prologues for each book, testifies to a somewhat didactic intent on the poet's part: it is to be read not simply as a Scottish rendering of the supreme model of Latin epic poetry, but also as a way to discover the continuity between Latin culture and its Scottish counterpart. In choosing the prince of Latin poets and its epic masterpiece, a text that survived the transition from medieval to Renaissance in the estimation of its readers, Douglas was also providing a significant addition to Scottish literature — significant in its implications as well as in its literary merits.

The Prologue from which our opening lines are quoted develops at some length the praise of Virgil. After praising his eloquence and “dulce ... endyte,” the Scottish poet establishes Virgil as “palm, lawrer and glory” of poetry (l. 6); the use of the word *lawrer* shows an awareness of the image of poetic laurels first codified by Petrarch, then imitated by English poets such as John Lydgate, and by this stage about to be established in English (and Scottish) literary tradition. A few lines later, Virgil will be called “myrroure and A per se” (l. 8), in a conscious allusion to a Chaucerian image (*Troilus and Criseyde*, I.171–72) developed by the Scottish poets immediately preceding Douglas, such as Robert Henryson (who describes Cresseid as “flour and A per se” in *The Testament of Cresseid*, l. 78); and finally, as “maister of masteris” (l. 9), reiterating his status as the poets’ poet. The rhetorical construction is extremely careful and deliberate.

We could read the whole passage as a manifesto of Scottish literature in this delicate phase. Although conscious of both the English and the medieval literary inheritance in Scottish writing as shown by the glances at Petrarch, Chaucer, and Henryson, Douglas was clearly highlighting for his readers’ attention a different set of literary models, not only in the figure of Virgil, but also in the humanistic, quasi-philological approach he was bringing to this text. This is also evident in the polemic he inserted in the same Prologue, harshly criticizing the efforts of the English translator of the *Aeneid* who was closest to him in time, that is, William Caxton. Publishing his *Eneydos* in 1490, Caxton had made no mystery of the fact that he was working with a French intermediary text, thus allowing himself ample freedom in the rendering of the poem: a fact that Douglas treats with righteous indignation, highlighting Caxton’s misunderstandings of the original Latin and underlining his own determination “Virgillis versys to follow and no thing feyn” (l. 266). At the same time, he noted that his own work would be “Writtin in the langage of Scottis natioun” (l. 103). The Scottish poet was highly aware of the role his translation might have

played, both in Scottish culture and in a confrontation with Scotland's awkward neighbor.²

It seems especially appropriate to focus on Gavin Douglas's project at the beginning of a book investigating and re-evaluating the impact of Latin culture in crucial areas of late medieval and early modern Scottish literature, and the role it played in the development of Scottish writing. In the later Middle Ages and the early modern period it was Latin, and not any vernacular tongue, that was the *lingua franca* of Europe. But while Latin remained firmly at the commanding heights of learning and literate culture, native tongues and traditions, including those of Scotland, increasingly cohabited and competed with *latinitas* in various fascinating and inventive ways, and, as the example of Douglas shows, renegotiated their relations with the language and texts of classical tradition. Somewhat surprisingly, the rich and vital relations between Scottish and European Latin culture have not yet been accorded sufficient consideration on the part of the modern scholarly community.³ The relations between Italian and Scottish literary culture have, by contrast, enjoyed frequent and authoritative academic attention, going back to R.D.S. Jack's seminal *The Italian Influence on Scottish Literature* (1972). Over the last few decades this monograph has continued to set the agenda for a number of articles and studies, including Jack's own *Scottish Literature's Debt to Italy*, now in its second edition. This book too has influenced recent histories of Scottish literature setting the Scottish contribution to European writing more firmly within an international context.⁴

The present volume also addresses a European context, but it does so more broadly, with a distinctively Latin perspective. Scottish Latinity, in its development from the medieval to the early modern period, was prolific, inventive and had its own distinctive stamp, most intriguingly so in its effects upon the Scots literary vernacular and on themes of national identity. This book and the issues it takes on are timely and given extra edge by the recent upsurge in public discussion about Scottish national identity and consciousness within the wider debate on the nature and identity of post-modern Europe. It might seem surprising to invoke the construction of national identity as pertinent to a book on late medieval and early modern Scoto-Latin relations: these relations, however, were repeatedly and variously redefined (both explicitly and implicitly) in medieval and early modern times by the development of a range of ideas of nationhood accompanying and shaping Scottish readers' and writers' attitudes to the production and consumption of texts.

This issue was also complicated by the robust multilingualism — Scots, Gaelic and Latin — that characterized Scottish literatures at this time, and that complicated the issue of the definition of a national identity. Despite the Crown's policy of rejecting Gaelic literary production as alien to the Royal Court (a policy holding particular sway during and after the reign of James VI and I), the Gaelic nobility nevertheless supported and produced a wealth of Gaelic poetry, while the Court sponsored the development of a literary tradition in Scots.⁵ However, a far from minor role was played by another language, Latin. As in the rest of Europe, Latin was, throughout the medieval and early modern period, the international language of intellectual life and cultural authority, the medium of science, philosophy and education. Major Scottish writers, such as George Buchanan, wrote exclusively in Latin; Scottish history has come down to us almost solely in Latin writings, as shown in a number of chapters in the present volume. Moreover, James VI, possibly the most intellectually aware of the Stuart kings, famously claimed that Latin was the first language that he was able to master in his infancy.

Given this linguistically complex situation, the literary tradition imported from Italy presented Scotland with a challenging parallel and no little food for thought, for in Italy there was a cultural bilingualism that could be profitably compared with Scotland's own situation. In the medieval and early modern literary cultures of both countries, Latin and the vernacular coexisted routinely, if at times uneasily, and those who produced texts in the native tongue were in constant negotiation with their Latin inheritance, be it sacred or profane, classical or medieval. The rise of Italy as a leading European cultural model therefore presented Scottish writers with rich and suggestive opportunities for assessing the developmental merits and needs of their own national tradition, which could now be read against a contemporary living canon.

In both Scotland and Italy the business of canon-making had living Latin at its heart. This volume therefore gauges medieval and early modern Scottish literature against the supremely important cultural context of *latinitas*, doing so in an array of studies that individually and collectively investigate how Scottish writing adapted and evolved its own models of *latinitas*. Our contributors focus on Scottish *latinitas* in its various manifestations across a formidable range of early modern, medieval, and adapted classical texts. By analyzing Scottish writers' negotiations of these models, the broad-ranging "conspectus" essays that open this collection augment and change the current academic understanding of the charac-

ter and dynamics of Scottish literary culture. Subsequent chapters, somewhat differently, being case studies of focus and particularity, say something new and specific: they show how textual inflections belonging to a common European internationality animated telling cases where Scottish latinity and vernacular textuality meshed together. These two were more often in complement than in competition with each other. Both of them, furthermore, were profoundly mediated by their historical and social contexts, and these contexts are illuminated throughout this book.

This volume pays special attention to symptomatic textual details that attest to the vibrant mutuality of Scots and Latin. This mutuality has, in Scottish literary studies, sometimes been sidelined by scholars self-limitingly preoccupied with endeavoring to differentiate Scottish from English literary texts and culture, as if such difference were an *a priori* concern of the texts themselves. This volume, however, shows time and time again how, when viewed through the prism of its own latinity, late medieval and early modern Scottish textuality was indeed distinctive and fecund. It shows too how the flowering of Scottish writing was born of a subtle combination of literary praxis, the ideal of *eloquentia*, and ideological deftness. This combination enabled writers not only to service a burgeoning national literary tradition through a repertoire of national themes, but also to transcend the subject matter of nation through fruitful and energetic treatment of issues of universal appeal and high seriousness.

In contributing to an intellectual map of the role of Latin culture in late medieval and early modern Scotland, the collection also addresses a problem generated by conventional historical chronology. The traditional division between medieval and early modern literature in European countries spawns much debate, since it presupposes a hiatus belonging to modern scholarship rather than to early history. This is particularly problematic and interesting when we consider the case of Scotland.⁶ In the fifteenth century, Scotland, unlike its English neighbor, progressed distinctively towards a climax of literary creativity, culminating in the magnificent flourishing of a vibrant poetic culture peopled with a gallery of brilliant poets. This high point of literary achievement, however, was cut brutally short by historical events, and Scottish literature re-emerged with a claim for international eminence only when the first phase of the European “Renaissance” had already come and gone, and the cultural and literary context in Scotland (and indeed, in the British Isles) had drastically changed. The new Scottish Renaissance deliberately sought contemporary continental literary models, rightly identifying in the study of modern

classics the key to a radical renewal of its own literary tradition through a process Derrick McClure calls “transcreation.”⁷ Re-viewing this development through the lens of *latinitas* offers a new and original perspective on the array of texts analyzed by the contributors in this collection.

The first section of the book, “Re-Writing the Classical and Medieval Legacy,” concentrates on the classical and medieval Latin heritage and its influence on Scottish literature, focusing on key Latin texts and genres. Its chapters offer, through widely varying case studies, an analysis of influence as well as an interrogation of the meaning and significance of translation in late medieval and early modern Scottish culture, working respectively on classical and late medieval Latin culture and on very different literary genres. The section opens with Steven J. Reid’s revealing study of the role and influence exercised by a pivotal but often forgotten genre in classical Latin literature, erotic poetry, on Renaissance Scottish writers such as Thomas Maitland. The wide range of Reid’s investigation allows us to take into account not only the better-known instances of elegiac poetry (Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid), but also more explicitly erotic or satirical poetry (Catullus, Martial) and the poetry of the late empire, and to assess their role in early modern Scotland. Significantly, Reid’s study finds that classical poetry played a bigger role in sixteenth-century Scotland than in previous centuries, which had shown a greater interest in later Latin writing. In the other contribution to this section, Kate Ash-Irisarri looks at Jacobus de Cessolis’s *Ludus scaccorum* and its Scottish offspring, *The Buke of the Chess*. Here again, we find ourselves looking at a thirteenth-century original and its fifteenth-century Scottish translation, but Ash-Irisarri draws a wider trajectory, seeing the *Ludus scaccorum* as the end result of a classical and Christian philosophical and ethical tradition, and identifying in this version of the *Ludus* a developed awareness of the techniques of the *ars memorativa* to instruct its readers in the art of the good governance of self and society. This chapter also makes significant use of the diagrammatic memory locations of the chessboard and the ethical utility of *memoria* as a mode of instruction. Its author explores the relationship of the *Buke* to its Latin source, examining how it responds to, and modifies, the earlier text in order to comment on social and political circumstances in Renaissance Scotland. At the same time her investigation sets the book both in the context of the miscellany into which it is inserted and in its contemporary literary context, comparing its structure to other early Scots moral poems, such as Robert Henryson’s “The Sheep and the Dog.” Vernacular versions of the *Ludus*, including the translation analyzed

here, thus help locate vernacular traditions as the natural continuation of the Latin, and indeed of the classical philosophical tradition.

The second part of the volume, “Writing the Scottish Nation” constitutes the main body of the book, and in many ways offers its ideological core, as shown by Nicola Royan in the Afterword to the volume. Here the focus is on the roles latinity played in the shaping of Scottish identity, and on the influence of Latin culture in the construction of ideas of the Scottish nation. In this section a group of historians and literary scholars has worked together on Latin(ate) texts, either written in Scotland or looking at Scotland from outside, that drew on classical heritage to help construct a sense of *Natio Scota* across the centuries. Tommaso Leso opens Part II with a study of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* and its treatment of the Picts, the early inhabitants of “Northern Britain” — in a sense, Scotland before Scotland existed. The anthropological interest shown by Bede is put into perspective against what is known today of this community. Intriguingly, the venerable eighth-century monk is echoed in a work composed eight hundred years later, Petruccio Ubaldini’s *Descrittione del Regno di Scotia* (a translation from Boece’s *Chronicle of Scotland*), which is the subject of Alessandra Petrina’s closing chapter to this section. What, for Bede, was subject matter fit for an ethnographer’s curiosity becomes, for Ubaldini, a topic charged with ideological meaning.

The writing of history was, of course, employed on both sides of the border to explore and advance issues of national identity. Whereas Ubaldini used Boece’s blueprint to propose an outsider’s view of Scotland, John Mair, a Scottish insider writing in the early sixteenth century, developed a concept of history informed not only by his philosophical training but also by his own distinctive mentality. John Leeds analyses Mair’s use of Latin philosophical terms and ideas in his political discourse, and assesses the ways in which he drew on his philosophical expertise to elaborate an ideal model of the modern state. Hector Boece is again at the forefront in Elizabeth Hanna’s essay, which examines the Scottish historian’s reading of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* and in particular his use of Arthurian material taken from Geoffrey. In the same century, as John Cramsie writes in his contribution, John Lesley’s *Historie of Scotland* was rather more aggressive than Mair’s writings in exploiting topography and ethnography in order to fuel the debate then raging between the religious factions of Scotland: this is especially so when it comes to issues of national identity. For Lesley, *latinitas* is no longer merely something to do with accessing or using Latin materials; rather, it becomes an idiom

and an intellectual attitude in its own right, a robust, politically portable repertoire, drawn from current science, and offering Scottish writers prestigiously literate (and literary) weapons for an ideological war fought on the battlefield of language.

The third section of the volume, “The Vagaries of Languages and Texts,” offers three unique case studies. In the first, Ian Johnson reconsiders one of the high points of Scotland’s “improbable Renaissance,” Robert Henryson’s *Orpheus and Eurydice*, reading it through the lens of medieval spiritual and critical directives available to the schooled reader of Henryson’s time, and thereby enriching our sense of the later Middle Ages in Scotland as a pivotal moment on which the whole *vexata quaestio* of Scottish *latinitas* hinges. Nick Havely pursues the European travels and findings of Scots scholar and Latin poet John Seget, and in particular his approach to Italian tradition, especially Dante’s *Commedia* and contemporary scientific writing. For both Mair and Seget, Latin is at one and the same time the language of the classics and of contemporary international intellectual exchange. Here, Havely offers us the Scottish intellectual as international traveler and wandering scholar, studying with Justus Lipsius and conversing with Galileo. Jeremy Smith presents a linguistic analysis of the “baroque prose” and extraordinary Latinate vocabulary of Sir Thomas Urquhart. Scrutiny of vocabulary allows Smith to survey Urquhart’s participation in a contemporary vogue for a linguistic renovation of the Scottish language that had its roots not in the vernacular but in a Latin tradition. Finally, Nicola Royan’s Afterword sets the various contributions against the context of contemporary critical debate, giving special consideration to the question of Scotland’s response to that most difficult and most important of cultural phenomena, humanism.

The image chosen for the cover of this book belongs to the cycle painted between 1502 and 1508 by Bernardino Pinturicchio for the Libreria Piccolomini in Siena Cathedral. This cycle, known as *Scenes from the Life of Pius II*, includes ten frescoes celebrating the life of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1464). Each fresco, enclosed in an arch, forms part of an extremely complex decorative program. Before becoming Pope in 1458, Piccolomini studied at the University of Siena and was not only a prominent early-fifteenth-century humanist but also a friend of Francesco Filelfo, Leonardo Bruni, and Poggio Bracciolini. He was, moreover, a notable diplomat; in 1435 he was sent on a secret mission to King James I of Scotland. During this journey he had the opportunity of visiting England, undergoing dangers and various vicissitudes which he recounts

in his *Commentarii*. The fresco reproduced here, showing Piccolomini making a speech before King James, is a peerlessly precious document of how a leading and representative Italian Renaissance painter imagined this early encounter with Scottish culture. Neither the luscious Mediterranean background nor the venerable image of the King may be said to correspond with Piccolomini's actual experience; what Pinturicchio appears to be doing here is to eschew any realistic reference, and to evoke Scotland as a place of the imagination, as shown by the bizarre, Mooresque castle on the left, by the tiny men leading horses or rowing boats on the right, and by the craggy rocks and elegant ships that dominate the background behind the court scene. In the very same years in which Scotland was opening up to cultural influences from Southern Europe, Italian humanism was beginning to turn its attention northward. Piccolomini's Scotland—"wild, bare and never visited by the sun," (to put it in his own words)—becomes, in Pinturicchio's imagination, the stage for a spectacular and magical meeting of cultures.

NOTES

¹ Dunnigan, "Reformation and Renaissance," 41.

² On this point see Petrina, "Challenging the Author."

³ One notable exception, dedicated in particular to the relationship between Scotland and European Humanism, is MacQueen, *Humanism in Renaissance Scotland*. See also Parkinson, *James VI and I*.

⁴ See Gifford, Dunnigan, and MacGillivray, *Scottish Literature*; and Brown, *Scottish Literature*. More attentive to the relations with the Italian literary tradition is Fazzini, *Alba Literaria*.

⁵ Innes and Petrina, "The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries."

⁶ This point is discussed, in connection with the wider issue of a Scottish literary canon, in Lyall, "A New Maid Channoun?" See also MacDonald, "Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations."

⁷ McClure, "Translation and Transcreation."

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Part I

Re-Writing the Classical
and Medieval Legacy

Classical Reception and Erotic Latin Poetry in Sixteenth-Century Scotland: The Case of Thomas Maitland (ca. 1548–1572)

Steven J. Reid

OF THE THREE SONS of Richard Maitland of Lethington (1496–1586) who survived into adulthood, the youngest — Thomas — is the most mysterious. While his father and his two older brothers, William (1528?–1573) and John (1543–1595), were highly pragmatic in their approach to religion and politics,¹ Thomas appears, even after his family had sided with the King's Party, to have stayed loyal to Mary Queen of Scots until his sudden and early death, *en route* to Rome, in 1572. Thomas shared the same passion for literature that gripped his father, a poet and the compiler of the Maitland Folio, one of the most important collections of Scottish vernacular verse from the period to survive. Yet again, Thomas differed from his family by virtue of the language in which he chose predominantly to express himself. While his father's chief pastime was as a writer in Scots, all of Thomas's poetry exists in Latin. Not only did Maitland have an extensive knowledge of classical verse; he was also an adherent of the most famous Scottish humanist and Neo-Latinist of the age, George Buchanan.

Maitland wrote in a range of verse forms, but his use of elegy and hendecasyllable for erotic purposes comes closer than any of his other Scottish contemporaries to the spirit of classical examples. What follows begins by briefly surveying Thomas's life and then explores the use of the elegiac couplet by European and Scottish Neo-Latinists before 1603. By necessity, the latter also involves an examination of the extent and nature of erotic and obscene poetry written by Scots in the same period, and of the relationship between eroticism and elegy, which is not always straightforward. It then explores Maitland's love poetry in detail, particularly the debt that he owes to the works of the epigrammatist Marcus Valerius Martialis (Martial, 38×41AD–102×104AD), the "neoteric" poet Gaius Valerius Catullus (ca. 84–54BC), and the "canon" of Roman love elegists that flourished in the decades on either side of Christ's birth — Sextus Propertius (50×45BC–after 15BC), Albius Tibullus (ca. 55BC–19BC),

and Publius Ovidius Naso (43BC–17/18AD). Maitland's love poems are not only one of the most important and unique examples of classical reception in early modern Scotland; they are also an important "missing link" between earlier erotic works by Buchanan and later ones by (among others) David Hume, Arthur Johnston, and John Leech.

Thomas Maitland

Thomas was born around 1545, assuming that he was fourteen when he matriculated in St. Mary's College St. Andrews in 1559.² A safe conduct to allow him to go to Paris to continue his studies on the completion of his MA was sought by Mary from Elizabeth I in September 1563, and Thomas left in the following month. Two of his poems — his "Inauguratio" on the abdication of Mary Queen of Scots and accession of James VI, which describes the events of the Battle of Carberry Hill (June 15, 1567) in detail, and another on the surrender of one of Bothwell's main strongholds, Dunbar Castle, between October and December of the same year — strongly suggest that he was back in Scotland by 1567. In May 1570 he was active as a courier of letters from the Earl of Suffolk to his brother William, and in May of the following year he was arrested carrying letters back to Suffolk and held first at Leith and then in Stirling Castle. He was released in late June and went straight to Aberdeen; there he joined a mission led by Lord Seton, which sailed on August 23, in a bid to secure finances and troops from the Duke of Alva with the intention of bolstering the Marian-held castles of Dumbarton and Edinburgh.

Robert Melville, who had been a witness to the planning of the Aberdeen expedition in July 1570, believed Maitland had taken the trip with Seton because he was "sickly" and had a desire to see France.³ There may be some truth in this, as a poem dedicated to Louis Duret (1527–1586), physician to Charles IX, rather poignantly suggests that Maitland was ill with a quartan fever before he undertook his final fatal journey to Rome. Maitland writes in the poem of a vision of a "goddess" (presumably either Febris or Bona Dea) advising him to seek out Duret's assistance in Paris, and offering him gifts of wealth from his family and poetic tributes if Duret can heal him.⁴ Spottiswoode records that towards the end of 1571 Maitland undertook a journey to Italy for an unknown reason, travelling with Thomas Smeaton, at that stage a Jesuit but who would convert to Protestantism and become both an able polemicist and principal of the University of Glasgow. Maitland died at some point on

the trail between Genoa and Rome, and while Spottiswoode suggests he contracted the sickness on the way, there is a suggestion that he was unwell long before this. It is probable that he died in early 1572.⁵

Maitland is most famous as a literary persona, as George Buchanan made him the interlocutor in his radical tract on the rights and obligations of the Scottish monarch to his people, *De Iure Regni Apud Scotos* ("The Law of Kingship among the Scots," published in Edinburgh, 1579). Maitland may have met George Buchanan during the latter's brief trip to France in 1566, and had obviously become known to Buchanan by the time he had drafted this text, which internal evidence suggests was completed in time for the meeting of the parliament in December 1567 that ratified Queen Mary's deposition.⁶ According to Father Thomas Innes, Maitland had written to Queen Mary on 1 December 1570 to protest that "his being brought as interlocutor into that dialogue to say whatever Buchanan thought proper to his purpose, was wholly Buchanan's own invention, and that he, Thomas Maitland, had not the least hand in it."⁷ However, in 1567 Maitland and his brothers had firmly backed the revolution against Mary, and refused to countenance her restoration unless her husband the Earl of Bothwell was removed from the political picture. By 1570, the family position had changed to one of support for Mary, which would explain the letter by Thomas denying his involvement in strenuous terms.⁸

Maitland also achieved notoriety as the suspected author of a pasquinade, a satirical sketch of a purported conference held between the Regent Moray and six of his leading supporters (including John Knox) where each of the notable mannerisms of the men were savagely lampooned as they advised the regent on how best to seize the crown for himself.⁹ Yet the core of Maitland's literary output was in Latin, and includes a "Letter" (Epistola) to Queen Elizabeth of around 12,000 words in length which discusses Mary's situation, and which survives in manuscript in the Drummond Collection at the University of Edinburgh.¹⁰ Maitland's poems were only printed (as far as is known) in the *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum*, the huge anthology of Scottish Neo-Latin verse produced by John Scot of Scotstarvit and Arthur Johnston, which appeared from the press of Johannes Blaeu in Amsterdam in 1637.¹¹ Maitland's collection is surprisingly versatile, comprising seven elegies, four *sylvae* (or "occasional poems") in hexameter, and twenty-eight short poems and epigrams, ranging in length from two to thirty lines in a variety of meters. T. D. Robb and Leicester Bradner are the only two authors ever to have commented in print on Maitland's Latin poems. Two points stand out in

Robb's assessment of Maitland: the first that he was a poet of outstanding skill, described as one of four men (along with Andrew Melville, Arthur Johnston, and John Barclay) exhibiting "proofs of genius" in the quality of their verse; and the second that his first *sylva*, which celebrates the "accession" (*inauguratio*) of James VI to the throne of Scotland in 1567 following the forced abdication of his mother Queen Mary, contains "the plainest utterance of that democratic spirit to which George Buchanan gave expression in his *De Jure Regni*,"¹² as can be seen clearly in the following excerpt:

Sed fama volat, subitoque tumultu
accensi heroes virtusque armata popelli
sceptra rapit, mox dejectum de sede tyrannum
nunc morte horrida, saevo nunc carcere fraenat.¹³

[but instead rumour flies, and with sudden uproar the armed strength of the outraged rabble heroically seizes the power of rule, and shortly after bridles the tyrant thrown from his seat, now with a horrible death and now with a harsh prison.]

However, Maitland's range of subject matter was much wider than mere politics. His third *sylva*, "Domus Ledintona" ("Lethington House"), is a celebration of his family seat as he returns to it after his studies abroad, and is a rare Neo-Latin example of the "country house" genre of poetry that was popular in the vernacular in the seventeenth century.¹⁴ His twelve short epigrams either praise great men from classical antiquity, including Plato, Cato, and Aristotle, or make a play on Greek words and phrases. He also wrote a short ode in praise of George Buchanan's psalm paraphrases, whose opening lines ("En lector lepidi tibi libello / docto Iupiter et brevi libello") are an intertextual play on the opening of Catullus's *Carmina* (1.1, "Cui dono lepidum novo libellum"). Most importantly for our purposes, Bradner rightly noted that Maitland and Mark Alexander Boyd (1563–1601), author of *Quindecim Epistolae* (1590) and *Heroides et Hymni* (1592) were early adopters of the elegiac couplet for the purposes of love poetry, but his characterization of them as "imitators of Ovid" is reductionist and does not do justice to the wide range of classical material beyond the Ovidian corpus that both men drew on.¹⁵

Elegy, Amatory and Otherwise — A Brief Outline

Before discussing Maitland's love poetry in depth, some context on the relationship between elegy and eroticism as it stood in the late sixteenth century is necessary.¹⁶ The elegiac couplet is a two-line verse unit comprised of a six-foot hexameter line and a pentameter line made up of two *hemiepes*, each of two-and-a-half feet. It has been memorably described by Holt N. Parker as the "workhorse of the Renaissance and Baroque," and was used ubiquitously by Neo-Latinists to produce epigrams and short poems "for thanking one's patron, congratulating one's friends, [and] contributing to volumes, prefaces, birthdays, triumphs and tombstones."¹⁷ However, Neo-Latin elegy, as Susanna De Beer and many others have noted, built specifically on the generic tradition established by Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, and continued by the late-antique poets Ausonius and Claudian. The earliest identifiable collections of Neo-Latin elegy that followed classical models appeared in Italy in the fifteenth century, and then north of the Alps in the following century in the works of poets including the Hungarian Janus Pannonius, the German Conrad Celtis, the Dutchmen Johannes Secundus and Daniel Heinsius, the Frenchmen Joachim Du Bellay and Jean Salmonius Macrinus, and George Buchanan. Elegy is often just a small part of their corpus, but the focus on a single mistress (*puella* or *domina*) and the standard themes of "unconditional love of the *poeta/amator*, the difficulties of winning over the *puella*, and the importance of poetry in love and life" are all in evidence.¹⁸

In addition to the "earnest" descriptions of love seen in Roman elegy, Neo-Latinists also enjoyed the poetry of Catullus, Martial, and the *Priapea*, a compilation of poems dedicated to the Greek god of fertility and male genitalia, Priapus, but mistakenly attributed to Virgil in the early modern period. Many of the early humanistic elegiac works were highly sexualized, and featured heterosexual and homosexual content, adultery, prostitution, and incest. As Karl A. E. Enenkel notes:

The erotic and sexual literature developed by humanists should primarily be seen in the framework of the *imitatio et aemulatio veterum*; it was part of humanism's intellectual program and pertained to an intellectual elite of scholars and writers. Instead of being about sexual gratification for a mass audience ... this literature was primarily about the self-definition and self-presentation of humanist scholars in contemporary society.

He describes this phenomenon as “hardcore humanism,” where cultural (particularly sexual) mores that seemed repugnant to early modern Christian minds were embraced as “a most important source for the authentic culture of antiquity.”¹⁹ Even by today’s standards, the highly explicit works by Italian authors such as Antonio Beccadelli (*Hermaphroditus*, 1425/6, featuring many pederastic poems), Pacifico Massimo (*Hecatelegium*, printed 1489, a highly obscene mix of poems discussing gay and straight sex) or Poggio Bracciolini (*Facetiae*, essentially a collection of dirty stories, composed 1438–1452) are graphic and shocking.²⁰ However, no sooner had this tradition begun to develop than a parallel one emerged that more closely imitated Roman precursors of love elegy, particularly in terms of focus on a single *puella* and romantic love and passion. The earliest example of this was the short collection dedicated to Angelina Piccolomini known as the *Angelinetum* (“Angelina’s Garden,” 1429) by Giovanni Marrasio,²¹ soon followed by Enea Silvio Piccolomini’s *Cinthia*, whose eponymous object of affection paid direct homage to the name of Propertius’ *puella*.²² Cristoforo Landino’s *Xandra*, published in its final form in 1458, also mirrored Propertius, this time in thematic terms, by adding a book of Florentine “political” poetry to the collection alongside the love poetry dedicated to Xandra (Sandra) in the same way that Propertius added to his works a fourth book of elegies celebrating Augustan Rome.²³

Innovation was also in evidence in these less “hardcore” Neo-Latin responses to the genre, particularly in the celebration of marital, familial and religious love. The most famous poet in this regard was Giovanni Pontano, whose *De Amore Coniugali* (“On Married Love,” 1480–1484) celebrated the love he felt for his wife Adrianna Sassone and included twelve *neniae* (“lullabies”) using Catullan diminutives for his children.²⁴ Meanwhile, Ovid’s *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, the poetic letters he wrote in exile at Tomi between c. 8 and 17 AD, and the *Heroides*, a series of letters from heroines in Greek and Roman mythology to their lovers, were yet another sub-set of elegiac models taken up by Neo-Latinists, as was the more generalized usage of the elegiac couplet for autobiography, for accounts of journeys (known collectively as *hodoeporica*), for expressions of religious faith, and for marking out the other important occasions as listed by Parker.²⁵

Thus, by the early sixteenth century, a strong and varied tradition of usage of the elegiac couplet had been established across Renaissance Europe, and from the moment that Scots began to engage seriously with

Neo-Latin they too used it for a wide range of purposes.²⁶ In the corpus of over 300 pages of the *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum* translated for the “Bridging the Continental Divide” project, it was the most-encountered verse form in the text: this mirrors a trend recorded in Neo-Latin literature in general.²⁷ James Foulis’s first publication, the *Calamitose pestis elega deploratio* (Paris, 1510) features as its central poem 500 lines of elegiac couplets and focuses on a plague that had devastated Edinburgh in the 1490s.²⁸ The theme of *desiderium patriae*, seen at its most expansive in Ovid’s works when in exile, is also mirrored in a *carmen elegum* produced by Foulis at Orléans in 1512 praising Scotland.²⁹ An anonymous and undated *strena* to King James V (r. 1513–1542), “containing over four pages of continuous elegiacs on the advent of James’s rule as Heaven’s (or rather Olympus’s) remedy for the vile state of Scotland,” is probably also by Foulis.³⁰ In the second quarter of the sixteenth century several Scottish students contributed elegiac verses and epigrams to works by their friends or dedicated them to patrons in Paris and elsewhere, and the bishop of the Isles, Roderick Maclean, used elegiacs in his polymetric *Ionis*, a versified account of the first two books of the life of St. Columba.³¹ After the Protestant Reformation of 1560, an array of poets — Patrick Adamson, Andrew Melville, Hercules Rollock, and John Johnston, to name the most famous — used the elegiac couplet for religious, occasional, and celebratory purposes, particularly to mark the major events of James VI’s early reign and to herald his impending succession to the English throne. However, none of these poets wrote verse of an erotic or obscene nature.³²

Buchanan’s recorded corpus features just nine elegies, with the earliest, “quam misera sit conditio docentium literas humaniores,” dating from his earliest period of teaching at Paris.³³ Five of these focus on the traditional themes found in Roman love elegy: “Apologia pro Lena” is, as it sounds, a defense of the “bawd” (*lena*) or procuress, one is addressed to Alisa “paling from illness” (*e morbo pallidam*), two to Leonora, “daughter of the bawd Pieris,” and one to Neaera. These latter two characters — the wicked and degenerate prostitute Leonora, and the proud and unattainable Neaera — each formed the basis of a cycle of erotic poetry in varying lengths written in hendecasyllables (five — all addressed to Neaera), iambs (four — all to Leonora), and as epigrams (ten to Leonora and another for her mother, and three to Neaera), the bulk of which were completed during Buchanan’s time in Coimbra (1548–1551). Buchanan’s Leonora cycle is unusual both for the sustained focus on a prostitute as the object of affection, but also for the wide range of imagery Buchanan conjures

up to condemn her as his infatuation with her rapidly cools, memorably described by Ford as “a virtuoso of denigration.”³⁴ The Neaera cycle conforms more closely to the traditional themes of Roman erotic poetry in focusing on a single object of affection, yet it is more Catullan in style and form than the poems addressed to Leonora, and more artificial and less full of raw feeling than the earlier cycle.

Mark Alexander Boyd (1563–1601), the nephew of James Boyd of Trochrig, archbishop of Glasgow from 1573 to 1581, studied at Glasgow (presumably in the late 1570s) and was in France between 1581 and 1595, “variously studying and soldiering.” He died in Scotland a few years after his return.³⁵ Boyd wrote several letters and treatises on poetic theory in his short career, and in one of these (a dedicatory letter to James VI in his *Heroides*) he showed not only a critical awareness of a wide variety of elegies written by contemporaries, but a detailed knowledge and appreciation of the Roman elegists, who he felt were clearly superior to “modern” practitioners of the genre:

Verumenimvero in tanto poetarum prouentu, cum in omni genere nonnulli claruerunt, elegiam qui tersam, tenuem, latinam, concinnam saeculo daret, fuit nemo. Inuentum certe Secundi, tenue Bembi probari possunt, sed de parte solliciti, de toto desperasse videntur. quid enim facere(n)t? cum Romuli nepotes, & Augusti clientes id idem vix potuere. Cultior Propertius, & tutior, concinnior Tibullus; his tenuitatem, & natium impetum adiecit Naso priorum primus.

[Now in such a profusion of [contemporary] poets, when some have been distinguished in every genre, there has been none to give this century an elegy that is terse, fine, Latin, melodious. The invention of [Jean] Second, the fineness of [Pietro] Bembo can certainly be praised, but in their care for the part they appear to have despaired of the whole. What could they do? When the descendants of Romulus and clients of Augustus could scarcely do that. Propertius is more cultivated and safer, Tibullus more melodious; to these Ovid the first among the foremost added fineness and natural force.]³⁶

Boyd was also the only other Scot in the sixteenth century to publish elegiac verse that engaged fully with the “erotic” aspects of the meter. His aforementioned *Epistolae Quindecim* (Bourges, 1590) is a series of fifteen replies to the “epistles” of the heroines in Ovid’s *Heroides* by their male addressees, which see the men on the whole defend their often-callous treatment of their lovers and wives.³⁷ Boyd’s own *Heroides et Hymni* (La

Rochelle, 1592) is a “continuation” or imitation of Ovid’s work, with fifteen letters by other famous female figures from Greco-Roman mythology (including Atalanta, Antigone, Sophonisba, and the goddess Venus) and actual women from Greco-Roman history (the poet Sappho, Emperor Augustus’s daughter Julia, and his sister Octavia), alongside a series of shorter poems and “hymns” named after flowers and which delineate their etymology.³⁸ Boyd’s *Heroides* has been read by Edward Paleit as a subversive critique of the moral double-standards applied to early-modern sexuality, with several of the heroines decrying the hypocrisy of having to constrain their sex lives within the bounds of marriage while their partners are free to roam as they please.³⁹ Boyd also dabbles in the more explicitly sexual and pornographic elements of Neo-Latin elegy, with his epistles from Hercules to Deianeira in the *Epistolae Quindecim* and from Lamia to Demeter in the *Heroides* featuring explicit descriptions of sex.⁴⁰

Maitland’s Elegies

Thus Scots, like all other Neo-Latinists, used elegiacs for a range of purposes, whether laudatory, occasional, consolatory, or “journalistic.” Yet only Maitland, Buchanan, and Boyd fully explore the “erotic” aspects of the genre, and Maitland’s use of both the elegiac and hendecasyllabic meters for this purpose makes him an important link in the evolution of erotic Latin poetry in Scotland between Buchanan and the works of Arthur Johnston and other seventeenth-century elegists. Maitland’s erotic corpus comprises four elegies (elegies 1, 2, 4, and 5 of the seven in the *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum*), three poems in hendecasyllables, and five epigrams.⁴¹ Conforming to the tropes of Roman love elegy, his poems address a series of *puellae*. Glycinna is the subject of elegy 1, 2, 5, and one of the hendecasyllabic poems; Cynthia is the subject of elegy 4; Gilla is the subject of a hendecasyllabic poem and two epigrams; and Phyllis and “Barbara Black” (Barbara Fusca) are the subject of a short epigram each. In addition, although not strictly an erotic poem, there is a single obscene poem dealing with the cuckoldry of Gallus (“Cock”) in hendecasyllables.

With the exception of Barbara Black and possibly Phyllis, it seems highly unlikely that the characters in these poems were based on real people. The name Glycinna, based on a Greek diminutive, translates roughly as “pretty little thing” and seems more likely to be a literary construct than the basis of a Scottish or French name; Cynthia is clearly an homage to the central object of affection in the first three books of Propertius’s ele-

gies; the hard-edged sound of Gilla fits well with the sexually voracious and abrasive persona sketched by Maitland in his poems about her; and besides the obvious comedic value of Gallus's name in a poem discussing a cuckold, a "Gallus" persona features in the work of several Roman elegists, most notably in Catullus 78, where he is attacked for procuring incestuous relations between the wife of one of his brothers and the son of another, and in eight of Propertius's poems, often in an explicit sexual context.⁴² Thus, what we appear to have are figures crafted to emulate the stock characters and themes of Roman love elegy and (in the case of the hendecasyllabics and epigrams) the works of Catullus and Martial, and who are used as vehicles by Maitland to demonstrate his knowledge of these genre types in specifically erotic and obscene contexts. As we will see, his work directly engages with a wealth of classical texts, but in the same way that Maitland's political poetry is heavily influenced by Buchanan's ideas on elective kingship and tyranny, so too his erotic poetry clearly owes at least a small debt of influence to the elder humanist.

In Roman elegy, the *puella* is the object of desire that consumes the poet-narrator, and who is often unattainable (either by virtue of her own proud disposition, or due to her liminal social standing as a courtesan or similar), unfaithful (as in the case of Catullus's Lesbia), and who generates feelings in the poet of intense love, passion, and hate in equal measure (see for example the famous opening line to Catullus 85, "odi et amo" ("I hate and I love"), which reduces this conflict to its most intense expression).⁴³ In Propertius and Tibullus in particular, the narrator is so completely devoted to his beloved that the obsession becomes almost a form of quasi-slavery (termed boldly by Propertius as *nequitia*), although in Ovid's case he often appears highly dismissive of his *puella* Corinna.⁴⁴ Maitland does not use the term *nequitia*, and in the collection of poets translated for the "Bridging the Continental Divide" project the term is only found once (in a poem by Hercules Rollock, and not in an erotic context).⁴⁵ However, all these aspects of the *puella* are evident in Maitland's poetry, although they seem to be separated so that each woman is representative of a single characteristic.

Glycinna embodies all-consuming passion, and the central theme that runs through elegy 1, which recounts the poet directing a painter to capture her likeness, and an epigram which is a direct corollary to it, is the intense love the poet feels for her beauty, which cannot be replicated on something as two-dimensional as a canvas.

Pictor ades, pictor nitidas animare tabellas
 Praxiteleae artis Mentoreaeque potens.⁴⁶
 Se iubet in tabula pingi formosa Glycinna,
 formanda est digitis forma superba tuis.
 Aemula forma Deis, nec terris digna morari;
 dignior aetherei scandere regna Iovis.
 Ergo age, si menti Veneris quae insedit imago,
 oscula Bistonio quo tulit ore Deo;⁴⁷
 vel cum censa fuit nemorosae in vallibus Idae,⁴⁸
 inter tres Phrygio iudice prima Deas;
 hanc memor ingenio limaue imitare sequaci;
 si modo quae Venerem lima referre queat.
 Principio undantes auro radiante capillos
 pinge, sed ut circum lactea colla fluant.
 oraque designa nitidis magis alba ligustris,⁴⁹
 frons micet Alpina candidiorque nive.⁵⁰
 Finge supercilii sinuato fervida ab arcu
 spicula, vulneribus nobilitata meis.⁵¹
 Exprime, si potis es, ignitos pictor ocellos,
 Phoebaeis flammis, sideribusque pares.
 Lumina conde manu, furit infra flamma medullas,
 eho age, quid cessas? Lumina conde manu.⁵²
 Rideat ut blandum diductis illa labellis;
 et molles Tyrio tinge rubore genas.⁵³

[Painter, o painter, master of the Praxitelean and Mentorean art,⁵⁴
 be at hand to breathe life onto pristine boards. Shapely Glycinna
 commands that she be painted in a picture, her proud shape to be
 shaped by your fingers. Her form rivals the gods, nor is it fit to tarry
 on earth, but more fit to rise up to the kingdoms of heavenly Jupiter.
 So come now, if the likeness of Venus which has settled upon your
 mind is that where she bore kisses from her mouth to the Bistonian
 God, or when she had first been assessed by the Phrygian judge in
 the valleys of well-wooded Ida among three goddesses, be mindful
 to imitate this in a similar character with your artistic polish, if there
 is a form of polish which can truly convey Venus. To start, paint her
 locks, wavy with shining gold, so that they flow around her milk-
 white neck. Depict her mouth, whiter than pristine privet, and let
 her brow gleam more brightly than Alpine snow. Fashion with a
 curved arc the fierce barbs of her brows, ennobled by my wounding.
 Pick out, painter, if you can, those eyes ablaze, equal to solar fires,
 and to the stars. Capture those eyes with your hand, the flame that
 rages within her marrow—ho, come now, why are you stopping?
 Capture those eyes with your hand. So that she laughs with parted
 lips at flattery, touch up her soft cheeks with Tyrian blush.]⁵⁵

The first elegy draws heavily on a range of authors, opening with a reference to the arts of Praxiteles and Mentor that is a direct echo of Martial IV.39 (where they are discussed alongside a range of other artists), and IX.59.16, where a silver goblet examined by Mamurra is *Mentore ... nobilitata manu*, echoed in the description at line 18 of Glycinna's brow, made noble by his love-wounds. The poet's exhortation to the painter to begin his work continues to line 12, and he asks if an image of Venus has settled upon his mind like that which "bore kisses from her mouth to the Bistonian God" (a reference to her adulterous affair with Mars, god of the people of Thrace, or Bistonia) or as she appeared for judgment before Paris in a contest of beauty with Juno and Minerva on Mount Ida, episodes directly drawn from *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*. In comparing her beauty to other fine objects, Maitland describes her as "whiter than pristine privet" (Martial I.115.3), "purer than Alpine snow" (*Eclogues* 10.47), and as having a foot whiter in appearance than Parian marble (Horace I.19.6), and commands that her cheeks be painted "with Tyrian blush," a direct borrowing of a stock phrase found in Tibullus, Ovid, and Virgil. The double refrain of *lumina conde manu* at lines 21–22 is also directly sourced from Ovid, this time from *Ars Amatoria* 3.742, but is cleverly subverted from its original context. In Ovid's account the term is used by Procris, who has been mistakenly shot by her husband Cephalus after spying on him in the woods, to beseech Cephalus to close her eyes as she dies. Here *conde* is used not to close, but to capture, the eyes of Maitland's beloved on the canvas.

Maitland also engages directly with Catullus 5 in his hendecasyllabic poem to Glycinna. In the original poem, Catullus insists on alternating three groups of a thousand kisses with three groups of a hundred until he and Lesbia lose count:

Da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
Dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,
Deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum
Dein, cum milia multa fecerimus,
Conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
Aut nequis malus invidere possit,
Cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.⁵⁶

[Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred, then another thousand, then a second hundred, then yet another thousand, then a hundred. Then, when we have made up many thousands, we will confuse our counting, that we may not know the reckoning, nor any malicious

person blight them with evil eye, when he knows that our kisses are so many.]⁵⁷

Maitland instead suggests that Glycinna should withhold her kisses from him until the built-up longing causes him to become wholly enslaved to her; then, he will repay her thirty thousand kisses with three hundred thousand “without interruption” and without a “single day of relaxation from payment”:

Ignitos oculos, faces perennes,
si me vis oculos tibi Glycinna
debere, atque animam, parumper abde:
ne dum basia centies trecenta
porrectis mihi porrigis labellis,
exurant jecur impotente flamma.
Tum si poeniteat, jubesque reddi,
auctum foenore mutuū rependam:
et qui basia centies trecenta
cepi, basia millies trecenta
reddam continuo, diem neque unum
proferri cupiam solutionis.
Tum dando, et repetendo quod dedisti,
aeque te perhibebo liberalem.⁵⁸

[For a moment, Glycinna, conceal your eyes aflame, perpetual torches, if you want me to owe my eyes and soul to you. For as long as you do not offer me a hundred times three hundred kisses from your outstretched lips, they consume my liver with a feeble flame. Then, if it causes you regret and you command that they be given, I will repay them in turn, with added interest: and I who received a hundred times three hundred kisses will give back without interruption a thousand times three hundred kisses, nor would I desire that a single day of relaxation from payment be allowed. Then giving, and getting back again what I gave, I will grant you freedom in like measure.]

The influence of the Roman elegists is seen clearly in textual echoes in the other elegies to Glycinna, where whole lines and verses from Ovid, Tibullus, and Propertius are appropriated. *Sylva* 2, “To Morpheus,” specifically addresses itself to Morpheus, god of sleep, who can take any form and create any vision of his choosing, and who is described in depth in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (XI.585ff.). The poem opens with the poet cursing Morpheus for allowing him to sleep through the night and miss an arranged liaison with Glycinna:

Di tibi cum spectris tristissima mortis imago,⁵⁹
 exitium Morpheu desidiose ferant.
 Qui me praeterita licet ultro nocte vocatum,
 ad dominam non es passus abire meam.
 Cernimus obstruso sensus titubare meatu,
 qua patet ex cerebro corpus in omne via.
 Cernimus, ut jaceant cineres sine luce sepulti,
 et nigro clausos carcere foedifragos.⁶⁰
 Sic ego compositus somno cum nocte jacerem,
 sustinui dominae perdere delitias.⁶¹

[Sleep-causing Morpheus, most baleful image of death, may the gods bring destruction upon you and your apparitions. For it was you who called me, although the night was far past, and did not allow me to go to my mistress. I see my senses falter, their motion suppressed, and from there the way lies open, from my brain, into my whole body. I see that the ashes [in the hearth] lie half-buried without light, and the oath-breakers lie closed up in a black prison. And so, because I lay through the night after settling down for sleep, I have suffered losing out on the delights of my mistress.]

The poem then switches to the perspective of Glycinna, whom Maitland already suspects of having replaced him, drawing in a range of mythological comparisons — Paris and Oenone, Jason and Medea, Theseus and Ariadne — to underscore the level of betrayal that his lack of care has caused:

Et quisquam posthac promissis ducere amantes⁶²
 formosis vitio vertat ut, alter erit?
 Et morem ulla geret posthac, cum credula sensit
 non sibi servatam pulchra Glycinna fidem?
 Mitior Oenones Nymphae sylvestris amorem
 spreuit, Tyndaridos captus amore Paris:
 non magis indignè Colchis, quam duxit Iason;
 a superinducta pellice laesa fuit:
 non mage crudelis Theseus, qui Gnosside spreta,
 sustinuit saevis pandere vela Notis:
 quam cujus sterili promisso falsa Glycinna,
 versabat vacuo frigida membra thoro.⁶³

[And will there ever be another man such as may denounce as a vice the leading on of lovers to fair promises, when he treats them with contempt? And will any woman oblige him, when credulous beautiful Glycinna has realized that the promise to her has not been kept? Paris was gentler when, seized by his love of the daughter of

Tyndareus, he spurned the love of the woodland nymph Oenone;⁶⁴
no more unworthy was the Colchean woman, whom Jason
married;⁶⁵ she was wounded by a mistress set in place over her;
no more cruel was Theseus who, having abandoned the daughter
of Cnossos, undertook to unfurl the sails against the cruel south
wind;⁶⁶ [none was worse than he] whose empty promise and lies left
Glycinna turning her ice-cold limbs in an empty bed.]

The final part of the poem gives a vivid account of the arrangement of their liaison and evokes the setting of drink and partying among friends that would usually frame a *paraclausithyron* (poem addressed to the lover outside their door).⁶⁷ The *paraclausithyron* has its origin in literary treatments of the Greek symposium, where young men would come from the revels of the assembly and attempt to gain access to their lover, usually with garlands and song, and would often spend the night in their lover's doorway. Both Catullus and the Roman elegists took this stock theme and reworked it in novel ways, with Catullus 67 and Propertius I.16 making the narrators of their poem the door,⁶⁸ while Ovid's version (*Amores* I.6) addresses the doorkeeper (*lena*) who blocks his way. Tibullus's contribution to this theme (I.2) has generated considerable debate as the narrator appears to be away from the door, either at home or in a tavern, being served wine after failing to secure entrance:

Adde merum vinoque novos compesce Dolores,
Occupet ut fessi lumina victa sopor;
Neu quisquam multo percussum tempora baccho
Excitet, infelix dum requiescit amor.
Nam posita est nostrae custodia saeva puellae,
Clauditur et dura ianua firma sera.⁶⁹

[More wine; let the liquor master these unwonted pains, that on my wearied eyes may fall triumphant sleep; and when the wine god's copious fumes have mounted to my brain, let none awake me from unhappy love's repose. For a cruel watch has been set upon my girl, and the door is shut and bolted hard against me.]⁷⁰

Maitland pays closest homage to the situation narrated by Tibullus, but further inverts the idea of the trope by making his narrator so drunk that he falls asleep after agreeing to his liaison, and fails even to attend the door of his *puella*:

Quippe ubi mi argutis noctem promisit ocellis,⁷¹
praestituit certis tempus et illa notis:⁷²

“non,” ait, “ante veni, vertat quam plaustra Bootes,⁷³
 et tota strepitus cesset in urbe pedum.”
 Ergo ubi subducta mensa, sociisque remotis,
 in thalamum solus praecipitanter eo:
 dumque horam operior, quae optatae gaudia noctis
 ferret, non toto commemoranda die:
 arctior invitos somnus contraxit ocellos,
 et domina ex animo nox ceciditque meo. (ll. 47–56)

[Because when she promised me a night of shining kisses, and when she fixed the time in advance with definite signs, she said: “do not come earlier than when Bootes turns the constellation, and the din of feet has ceased throughout the whole town.” So when the table had been cleared, and friends had departed, I went hastily to bed, and while I was waiting for the hour, which would bring the joys of the longed-for night, and which should never be thought on during the day, deeper sleep drew together my unwilling eyes, and night and my mistress fell from my mind.]

The punchline of the poem is that it was “liquid excess” (*plurimus humor*, l. 69) which caused his failure to keep his promise. Even though Venus was on his side, he was unable to stand up to the twin force of Bacchus and Dionysus, who urged him on. Such overwhelming force leaves him blameless: “There can be no wonder, nor crime, nor great glory in this, when a mere man is conquered by two gods” (“Nec mirum, nec crimen inest, nec gloria magna, / mortalis gemino numine victus homo est,” ll. 91–92).

Elegy 5 opens with a direct quotation from the opening line of Propertius II.1.1 and III.13.1 (*quaeritis unde/mihi*), and the connection to this latter poem is deepened by the usage of *plumae versicoloris avem* (III.13.32). Propertius II.1 celebrates Augustus’s cultural minister Maecenas as patron and avows that he would celebrate both his and Augustus’s deeds if he could write epic (but alas he cannot), but the real link here is to III.13, which condemns the corrupt morals of Rome and the fact that women now expect lavish treatment (“avidis nox sit pretiosa puellis”), while in the rustic past they would have been happy with bucolic treats such as quinces, violets, and lilies, “and to carry grapes clothed in their own leaves and some speckled bird of rainbow plumage” (“et portare suis vestitas frondibus uvas / aut variam plumae versicoloris avem,” ll. 31–32).⁷⁴ The first half of the poem references this theme, but instead of greedy girls seeking gold, pearls, dyed cloth, and spices, the perspective is inverted to focus on Maitland, spending money on garish and tri-colored

clothing (white, yellow and red) to impress Glycinna, making a fool of himself in the process.⁷⁵ The poet is completely unrepentant about this, and notes in stark terms the abject slavery to Glycinna's beauty, in which he finds himself wearing such outlandish clothes as a form of homage:

Non ego mi populum regemve ascisco patronum,
in nos imperium sola puella tenet.⁷⁶
Utque solent pueros dominorum ornare colores,
quos varius servos arguit esse nitor:
sic quos alma dedit dominae natura colores,
non alios prae se tegmina nostra ferunt.
Quod bene compositis flavis nitet illa capillis,⁷⁷
quos optat capiti flava Minerva suo:
candida quod cutis est, et eburnea brachia splendent,⁷⁸
collaque Sithonia sint magis alba nive:
labraque quod roseo rubeant suffusa pudore,
purpurat leves flamma pudica genas:
non ego propterea quovis fero tincta colore
pallia, delegi candida, flava, rubra.
Quam bene conveniunt cum flavis alba rubrisque?
Simplicior fuerit vestis inempta mihi.⁷⁹

[I do not take up the people or the king as my patron: the girl alone holds dominion over me. As colors are used to mark out the slaves of great men, whose varied splendor makes it clear that they are slaves, so our clothes do not bear other colors beyond those which dear nature gave to my mistress. Because she shines so brightly with her blonde hair arrayed, which blonde Minerva desires for her own head: because her skin is clear, and her ivory arms shine, and her neck is whiter than the snow of Thrace; because her lips, flushed with rosy blush, redden, and a bashful glow makes her soft cheeks crimson; for these reasons I do not bear cloaks stained with whatever color: I love whites, yellows, reds. How well do white garments go with yellow and red? I would have a plainer, natural garment.]

The second half of the poem is an extended paraphrase and play on Tibullus I.1.69–74, which beseeches the reader to pursue life and love while he is young:

Interea, dum fata sinunt, iungamus amores:
Iam veniet tenebris Mors adoperta caput;
Iam subrepet iners aetas, nec amare decebit,
Dicere nec cano blanditias capite.

Nunc levis est tractanda venus, dum frangere postes
Non pudet et rixas inseruisse iuvat.⁸⁰

[Meantime, while Fate allows, let us be one in love. Soon will Death be here with his head cowed in dark. Soon will steal on us the inactive age, nor will it be seemly to play the lover or utter soft speeches when my head is hoar. Now let gay love be my pursuit while it is no shame to break a door down and a joy to have plunged into a brawl.]⁸¹

Continuing his clothing metaphor, Maitland notes that the time will come soon enough in life to be serious, but for now gaudy and outlandish clothing and the pursuit of love are sufficient ends in themselves for a young man:

At levis est, levitas teneros non dedecet annos:
Qui leve contemnunt, hos grave vexat onus.
Vita senes ornat posita levitate severa,
Est aetas teneris haec tribuenda jocis.
Post mea cum sparsis albescent tempora canis,
Venerit et tardo curva senecta pede:
Tunc mihi stet rigidos imitari cura Catones,⁸²
Arguet et vitam nigra lacerna gravem.
Interea liceat molles agitemus amores,
Ventilat accensas dum Venus alma faces.⁸³

[For levity, which is light, is not unbecoming to tender years: those who scorn lightly a heavy burden curses. A harsh life, with levity set aside, adorns old men, and this age should be given up to tender sport. Later, when my temples grow white with scattered gray hairs, and bent old age comes with heavy gait, then will it be my concern to copy the unbending Catos, and a black cloak will prove my serious way of life. Meanwhile, let us chase soft love while we are allowed, while dear Venus fans our kindled torches.]

There are numerous textual parallels (*interea, iungamus/agitemus amores, Venus dum/dum Venus*) as well as thematic ones (the image of old age accompanied by white and thinning hair, the pursuit of love) between the two passages, and Maitland's reference to adopting the more sober style of the "unbending" (*rigidos*) Catos draws on Martial XI.2.1, where he praises Nerva for restoring the Saturnalia:

Triste supercilium durique severa Catonis
Frons et aratoris filia Fabricia

Et personati fastus et regula morum,
 Quidquid et in tenebris non sumus, ite foras.
 Clamant ecce mei "Io Saturnalia" versus:
 Et licet et sub te praeside, Nerva, libet.⁸⁴

[Gloomy brow and stern countenance of unbending Cato and Fabricia, the plowman's daughter, and pride in its mask, and moral code, and everything that in the dark we are not: out you go. Look, my verses shout "Hurrah for the Saturnalia!" Under your rule, Nerva, it's allowed, and it's our pleasure.]⁸⁵

The final part of the poem returns to the stock theme of the harsh *puella*, whom Maitland again describes in terms of a slave obeying his mistress ("Not enough that I have suffered in her service to be subject to the threatening sight and the haughty commands of my wrath-filled mistress," "non satis iratae vultum subiisse minacem / et dominae in famulum jura superbia pati," ll. 37–38), but it ends with a biting *pointe* (a recurring feature in Maitland's poems, and again a general linkage to Martial) where he reminds the reader that while he might look stupid, he still gives the mob something to gawp at, and even the reader himself is chastised for his prurient interest in the written record of Maitland's foolishness:

Cui videor fatuus, poterit non picta videre
 Tegmina, ni videas, invidus esse nequis.
 Haec quoque ni placeant levibus mandata tabellis
 Carmina, te nemo cogit ut illa legas.⁸⁶

[The man to whom I seem stupid cannot see my painted clothes; unless you look, you cannot be envious. And if these songs given over to trifling compositions do not please, no one is forcing you to read them.]

A central feature of elegy is extensive reference to mythology (particularly in Propertius) and the comparison of the lover to mythical examples of beauty and wealth.⁸⁷ In addition to the references in elegies 1 and 2, the only noteworthy feature of the fourth elegy to Cynthia (apart from the obvious homage to Propertius's *puella*) is the extensive listing of often-legendary riches that he flatly denies desiring, instead only hoping that she would grant his desire for a night with her:

non ego divitias, vanissima gaudia Craesi,
 non ego Migdonii quas tenuere rates:
 non Arabum gemmas,⁸⁸ nec quas Pactolus arenas,⁸⁹

nec peto, quod dives India mittit ebur.⁹⁰
 Nec mihi Caesarei prosunt monumenta triumphī,⁹¹
 solis ab occasu Solis ad usque facem.
 Qua Cereris flavae, et generosi munera Bacchi,⁹²
 consita odoriferis floribus arva ferunt.⁹³
 Nec mihi Sydonio vitiatae murice vestes,⁹⁴
 vasaque quae Delus, quaeque Corinthus habet:
 non honor, aut celebris celsissima regia montis,
 non quae luxuries thura Sabaea colit:⁹⁵
 excutere afflicto vigiles de pectore curas,
 aut animum possunt restituere meum.
 Una mihi potior cunctis est Cynthia rebus,
 Cynthia pars animi charior illa mei.⁹⁶

[I do not seek the completely useless riches of Croesus,⁹⁷ nor the ships which the Trojans had,⁹⁸ nor Arab gemstones, nor the sands which are borne by the Pactolus,⁹⁹ nor the rich ivory that India sends forth; nor are the obelisks of Caesar's triumph, from the setting of the sun to the rising of the sun, any use to me, or the places where the fields sown with sweet-smelling flowers bring forth the gifts of golden Ceres and generous Bacchus; nor for me garments stained by Sidonian shell,¹⁰⁰ and the pottery which Delos and Corinth have; neither the highest palace of the fabled mount, nor the opulence which values Sabeian incense: none of these things can cast out the anxious cares from my troubled breast, or restore my mind. Cynthia is the one dearer to me than everything, Cynthia, that more cherished part of my soul.]

While the content of the poem is admittedly rather generic, it is remarkable for the range of intertextual quotation and allusions that it derives from classical sources to provide comparators of wealth. It also reveals just how immersed Maitland's mind was in the literature of antiquity, and, by the same token, how immersed his readership was expected to be to appreciate this fully.

Maitland and Catullus

Neo-Latin poets emulating Catullus utilized a well-established set of poetic techniques and word-choices to make their poetry sound authentic, including the use of diminutives, adverbs (particularly those with an *-im* ending), indefinite constructions, repetition, abstract nouns, the employment of a familiar and jocular tone, and of course the use of hendeca-

syllables, a major Catullan meter.¹⁰¹ As Philip Ford noted in his seminal study of classical influences on the profane poetry of George Buchanan,¹⁰² Buchanan followed all these techniques in the hendecasyllables and iam-bics directed against Beleago and to Neaera, and Maitland too clearly followed these forms and conceits in the more obscene hendecasyllables and epigrams directed to Gilla and Gallus. The first poem against Gilla opens with a conversational account of a summer party, where “matrons, youths and little girls” (the diminutive *puellulaeque*) seek amusement (*lascivarum ... facetiarum*) and shade from the midday sun in an orchard:

Nuper pomiferae arboris sub umbra,
matronae, juvenes, puellulaeque
lascivarum avidi facetiarum,
atque aerae cupidi serenioris,
vitabant rapidos Canis furentis
ardores: variis simul jocisque
laeti labile tempus eximebant.¹⁰³

[A little while ago, beneath the shade of a fruit-bearing arbor, women, youths and little girls, eager for fun and frolics and hungry for a fairer wind, were keeping out of the blazing heat of the raging Dogstar: and at the same time, with a variety of jests the happy folks were wasting fleeting time.]

The central part of the poem continues this conversational tone, reporting a supposed dialogue that the narrator is clearly sceptical of (indicated by “ut sit” in parentheses) between a suitor and his “sweetheart” (*malum*) Gilla, as to why she loves Thraso when she has so much attention elsewhere. From this point the poem lists a humorous catalogue of Thraso’s defects, which build in scale and intensity (he is clearly Scottish, as two of these are apparently his ruddy complexion and ginger hair):

Delitias viro suas ut
tantis criminibus daret notato?
Thrasoni sine viribus superbo,
loquaci cuculo loquatiori,
qui terris oneri, virisque probro est:
qui Dis est odio, et Deum ministris,
in quo nil quod ames referre posses:
rubro sanguine rubriore vultu,
laesus lumine, rufulo capillo,
et claudus pede, mente diminuta.¹⁰⁴

[So that she gives her treasures to a man marked out by such great faults? To Thraso, proud without justification, chattier than a chatty cuckoo, who is a disgraceful burden upon the earth and men, who is a source of hatred for the gods, and the servants of the gods, in whom you can find nothing which is worth loving, with his red blood and redder face, who is vexed by daylight thanks to his red-tinged hair, and who is lame-footed, with a diminished mind.]

Her reply is described in similarly conversational terms (“as it were,” *ut erat*, l. 24), and she stridently announces that love cares nothing for “looks, appearance, behavior or a full head of hair” (“non spectat Veneris ... os, vultus, habitum, aut comam virile,” ll. 26–27). The filthy *pointe* of the poem is revealed in the last four lines:

Sunt haec ludicra, parva sunt, nec ista
curat Gilla, quid ergo? Nempe mentem
Illam deperit illa diminutam,
uno nomine mentulam vocamus.¹⁰⁵

[These are trifling things, these are petty, and Gilla cares nothing for them. Then what? Namely she loves to death that diminished mind, that we give the unique name of “little mind.”]

The use of the obscene term *mentula* (also translatable using any slang word for the penis) indicates a strong acquaintance on Maitland’s part with Catullus, Martial, and the *Priapaea*, as does the hendecasyllable against Gallus, where we see the term used twice in the poem: it is once modified with *exfutita* to create an arresting image, and once in conjunction with another obscene term, *glubere* (used in both Catullus 58.5 and Ausonius, *Epigrammata* 79.7) which follows an offensive clause describing the affairs of Gallus’s wife with menial servants:

Conjux dicitur impudica Galli, et
cocis improba mulionibusque
substerni, ac juvenum fovere natos,
quorum glubere mentulas solebat.¹⁰⁶

[Gallus’s wife is said to be wanton and wicked, and to spread herself beneath cooks and mule-drivers, and to raise the sons of the young men whose tools she was accustomed to strip raw.]

The poem goes on to recount Gallus’s obstinate ignorance regarding his wife’s extra-marital activities, and, like the poem against Gilla, builds up to a suitable punchline after examining the possible reasons for his continued

support of his adulterously conceived offspring and his misguided belief that her children are also his:

Nec Gallum tamen haec movere possunt.
 Rumores graviter negat ferendos.
 Se, ni viderit, assis aestimare.
 Et cum viderit, assis aestimare.
 Et, mirabile quod magis videtur,
 uxoris pueros adulterinos
 partus legitimos cupit putari;
 passim filiolos suos venustos,
 Laudat, filiolos suos vocatque:
 quod formam referant bonae parentis.
 Non quod conjugis impudica vita
 possit tam vigilem virum latere,
 aut quod se sobolis putet parentem,
 sicco corpore mentula exfuita:
 sed quod quos sibi copulata conjux
 enixa est, pueros putet mariti.
 Nec deceptus alius colonus arva
 vertat, contuleritque semen alter,
 debetur Domino quod inde crescit.¹⁰⁷

[Yet these tales cannot upset Gallus. He says that the rumors are not to be taken seriously. Unless he has seen them himself, he reckons they are worth a penny. And when he has seen them for himself, he still reckons they are worth a penny. And, what is more incredible, he seeks that the children born from his wife's adultery be recognized as legitimate offspring; wherever he goes he praises his little boys, and calls his little boys charming because they bring to mind again their mother's beauty. It is not because the wife's lewd living can be hidden from so observant a man, or because he thinks himself the father of children despite a dried-up body and a clapped-out cock; but because he thinks that those to whom his wife gave birth after sex with him are her husband's sons. Nor is he deluded by a false notion; for however many other tillers plough the field, and have enriched it with different seed, what grows from there is owed to the Lord.]

The neo-Catullan style is again clearly in evidence in the use of repetition (*se ... aestimare, et cum ... aestimare*), indefinite *clausuli* (*mirabile quod magis videtur*) and the diminutives used to describe Gallus's bastard sons (*adulterinos, filiolos, venustos*, also all specifically Catullan terms).

Quite aside from the stylistic parallels, the subject-matter which Maitland chooses to explore — sex-hungry women, impotent old men, and adultery — is also much more in keeping with the works of Catullus and the “hardcore humanism” of the early Italian neo-Latin writers than it is with the works of his contemporaries in Scotland.

Maitland and Buchanan

We noted at the start of this chapter that Maitland was an adherent of Buchanan, though beyond his role in the *De Iure Regni* it is hard to quantify further what that relationship was. Before concluding, it is worth noting some of the thematic and intellectual linkages to Buchanan’s works immediately apparent in Maitland’s erotic poetry, though a much more sustained and in-depth examination of Maitland’s corpus in this respect is needed.¹⁰⁸

Generally, there is clear thematic overlap between Buchanan’s “Catullan” poems and those of Maitland, all of which utilize the same technical elements and which also feature, as Philip Ford notes, the same “limited number of recurring themes, like the ‘odi et amo,’ the ‘basium,’ and the ‘vivamus atque amemus’ motifs.”¹⁰⁹ More specifically, Buchanan uses the term *deglubere* in relation to *ofellas* in one of his short elegies directed against Leonora, but with the same specialized masturbatory sense that Maitland does. It is used in close affinity with *coquus* (cook), as Leonora has affairs with a succession of them:

Sicine de nostra numquam egrediare culina,
 Pinguibus et fies semper amica coquis?
 Utque coquum coquus expellit, fit protinus heres
 Successorque tuo fit nova praeda toro.
 Iamque etiam hesternas deglubere coepat ofellas,
 Crescit et in mores filia parva tuos ...¹¹⁰

[So, will you never get out of our kitchen, and will you always become the girlfriend of fat cooks? As cook drives out cook, there is an immediate heir, and the successor becomes fresh booty for your bed. And now, your little daughter is beginning to suck(?) yesterday’s titbits, and she is growing up into your habits.]¹¹¹

Moreover, while Maitland’s Gilla has affairs with muledrivers, Leonora has them with sutlers, monks, and a black lesbian:

Vive male, monachique tui lixaeque coquique,
Mater edax, illex filia, nigra tribas.¹¹²

[Fare you ill, along with your monks and sutlers and cooks, voracious mother, seductress daughter, and black lesbian.]¹¹³

The use of the motif of painted canvases by Maitland may perhaps reference Buchanan's descriptions of paint and cosmetics in his discussions of Leonora, though in Buchanan's case Leonora's expert mastery of make-up and jewelry makes her a liar both on the outside and inside. While Maitland professes that the arts of Praxiteles and Mentor could not capture the beauty of Glycinna in elegy 1, Buchanan poisonously quips of Leonora that in terms of deceit "Apelles would have been unable to paint better than you, or Myron to work more skillfully in melted bronze."¹¹⁴

The subversive engagement in elegy 2 with the core themes and ideas of the *paraclausithyron* may also have potentially found inspiration in Buchanan's "Apologia pro Lena." In this poem Buchanan appears to follow the model of a well-known *paraclausithyron*, in this case *Amores* I.6, by directly addressing the procuress who controls access to his mistress. Unlike Ovid, however, Buchanan's aim (according to Charles Platter) is not to demonstrate love for his *puella* or to show her exerting the "autonomous sexuality" which the mistresses of Roman love elegy use to control their paramours. Instead, Buchanan focuses on the figure of the procuress, and while he describes her using the language and stylings of Roman elegy, he presents her not as the controller of access to his illicit lover but as someone who provides a much-needed sexual *officium* (service or duty) to men, and is thus under male control:

As a result, the real Renaissance procuress, about whom much was written by contemporary authors, is almost wholly obscured by a conversation among male poets, separated by a millennium and a half. The case of Buchanan's *lena* shows this process clearly: richly textured by Buchanan's profuse borrowings from the Latin literary tradition, she is never allowed to figure in the poem or to figure independently herself.¹¹⁵

Finally, Maitland's repeated use of obscene comedic climaxes finds a parallel in Buchanan's "In Rusticum," where a firewood-chopping peasant puts his skills to use in the bedroom:

rusticus "hem" cunctos cum congeminaret ad ictus,
hiberno properans findere ligna foco,

syllaba quid toties iuvet "hem" geminata "laborem"
 quaerenti uxori rettulit ille "iuvat;
 nempe simul toto contentis corpore nervis
 in rimam cuneum fortius ictus agit."
 illa memor, Veneris media inter gaudia, telum
 ut penetret magis, "hem" congeminare iubet.
 "nil opus est" inquit "nunc hoc conamine, coniunx;
 findere te sane nolo, forare volo."¹¹⁶

[When a peasant was repeating "hem" at each blow as he was hurrying to split logs for the winter fire, and his wife asked why he liked to repeat the syllable "hem" all the time, he replied to her: "It helps the work. For once my muscles are strained throughout my body, the blow drives the wedge into the crack more powerfully." She remembers this in the midst of the joys of love and tells him to repeat "hem" so that his weapon will go in further. "There is no need," he says, "for such effort, dear wife. I don't want to split you, just pierce you."]¹¹⁷

The coarsely comic exploration of the ideas of wood-chopping, wedges, and cracks is not far removed from Maitland's obscene agrarian metaphors in his hendecasyllabic poem on Gallus, and the punning play on words that ends each poem adds a further layer of connection between the two. While all these elements might just as easily stem from a shared appreciation of Catullus between the two men, the cumulative nature of these parallels suggests that a more direct influence may be at work, and it is tempting, if far from conclusive, to infer that Maitland was at least aware of Buchanan's "miscellaneous" verses when he wrote his own erotic poetry.

Conclusion

Maitland's erotic poems comprise just one small sub-set of his corpus, and his poetry in turn is one of the smaller extant collections of material by the Scottish Neo-Latin poets of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Yet the wealth of insights that can be generated from this small amount of material — on the reception of Roman literature in early-modern Europe, on discussions of sex and sexuality in post-Reformation Scotland, and on intellectual culture and circles among the Scottish intelligentsia — shows how valuable and necessary it is that scholars engage with the work of "Scottish Latinitas." A relatively unknown and minor figure in discussions of vernacular Scottish literature, Maitland reveals

in his erotic Latin poetry that, with the exception of his friend and mentor George Buchanan and his near-contemporary Mark Alexander Boyd, he was the only poet in the sixteenth century to engage with the more explicit aspects of Roman love literature. His deep knowledge of the canon of Roman elegists, so clearly demonstrated in his frequent quotation and paraphrasing of them, shows how misleading it is to think of figures like Maitland as Scottish “Ovidians,” simply because they used the elegiac couplet. In reality, the corpus of Tibullus and Propertius was arguably more influential upon Maitland’s work than that of Ovid, and the epigrams of Martial provided another substantive influence. Yet Maitland is an exception among Scots in having such an intimate knowledge of love poetry, particularly of Propertius; and in his creation of hendecasyllabic poems that so closely emulate the obscene language and “neoteric” style of Catullus he was unique. What his purposes were in doing so remain unclear: were these simply the exercises of a young man exploring one of the more titillating aspects of ancient poetry, as Theodore Beza professed was the case in his own *Juvenilia* (Paris, 1548)?¹¹⁸ Did he have a particular appetite for sexual poetry? Or was he commenting on the lives and situations of actual people in his social circle? Without further biographical information, it is impossible to know. What we do learn from his poetry, his own denials aside, is that his relationship with George Buchanan was a formative one for him intellectually. This relationship manifested itself in the proud statement of defiance of tyranny, following the principles of *De Iure Regni*, in his poem on the coronation of James VI. It also saw him follow in the footsteps of the “Prince of Poets” to produce love poetry as part of his corpora of elegiac poetry, one of the more unusual and varied in early-modern Scotland.

NOTES

¹ William and John served as royal secretaries to Queen Mary and James VI respectively. On the Maitlands, see ODNB; Lee, *John Maitland*; Loughlin, "The Career."

² McKechnie, "Thomas Maitland," bases this on the fact that Andrew Melville matriculated at fourteen, which he sees as a "usual time" (257) for entering university, but the average age of entrants was actually slightly younger.

³ McKechnie, "Thomas Maitland," 286. *Calendar of State Papers (Scotland)*, vol. 4, 620–21.

⁴ Reid, "France."

⁵ McKechnie, "Thomas Maitland," 293; Spottiswoode, *History*, vol. 2, 320.

⁶ McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 392–96; Mason and Smith, *A Dialogue*, xxvii–xxix.

⁷ Innes, *A Critical Essay*, 208.

⁸ Mason and Smith, *A Dialogue*, xxix.

⁹ Bannatyne, *Memorials*, 5–13; Calderwood, *History*, vol. 2, 515–25; *Bannatyne Miscellany*, vol. 1, 37–50.

¹⁰ "Thomae Metelani Ad Serenissimam principem Elizabetham Anglorum Reginam Epistola," Edinburgh University Library MS De.4.22.

¹¹ McKechnie's biography of Maitland does list his Latin works, but only comments on the "pasquil" of ca. 1571, written in the vernacular.

¹² Robb, "*Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum*," 105; Maitland, "Inauguratio."

¹³ "Sylvia I: Iacobi VI, Scotorum Regis Inauguratio," ll. 338–41.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Professor Alasdair A. MacDonald for making me aware of this genre. Spiller, "The Country House Poem in Scotland."

¹⁵ Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, 148–50.

¹⁶ The most succinct overview of Neo-Latin elegy can be found in Ijsewijn and Sacre, *Companion*, 80–85, but see the subsequent notes for literature on specific sub-aspects of the genre.

¹⁷ Parker, "Renaissance Latin Elegy;" see also Nisbet, "Epigrams;" Money, "Epigram," and the essays in De Beer, Enenkel and Rijser (eds.), *The Neo-Latin Epigram*.

¹⁸ De Beer, "Elegiac Poetry," 388–90, but see also Moul, "Lyric Poetry;" Braden, "Classical Love Elegy;" Parker, "Renaissance Latin Elegy;" and Houghton, "Renaissance Latin" for similar surveys. See also Ludwig, "Petrus Lotichius Secundus."

¹⁹ Enenkel, "Neo-Latin Erotic," 490–91.

²⁰ See the essays in Ford and De Smet (eds.), *Eros et Priapus*. On Beccadelli, see Parker, "Renaissance Latin Elegy," 477–78; Coppini, "The Comic,;" Parker, *The Hermaphrodite*; O'Connor *Hermaphroditus*. On Massimi, see Pacifico Massimo, *Les Cent élégies*; on Bracciolini, see Bracciolini, *The Facetiae*.

²¹ Marrasio, *Angelinetum and Other Poems*; De Beer, "Elegiac Poetry," 389.

²² Moul, "Lyric Poetry;" Charlet, "Éros et érotisme."

²³ De Beer, "Elegiac Poetry," 389; Pieper, *Elegos*; Pieper, "Cristoforo Landino's *Xandra*."

²⁴ Parker, "Renaissance Latin Elegy," 479–80. This trend was also imitated by Jean Salmon Macrin: see Ford, "Jean Salmon Macrin."

²⁵ De Beer, "Elegiac Poetry," 390–97; Raphael Lyne, "Writing Back to Ovid."

²⁶ For surveys of these varied usages, see Thomson, "Neo-Latin Epigram;" Reid, "France."

²⁷ www.dps.gla.ac.uk/delitiae; Moul, "Lyric Poetry;" Parker, "Renaissance Latin Elegy."

²⁸ Ijsewijn and Thomson, "The Latin poems;" James Foulis, *Calamitose*.

²⁹ *Carmen elegum*; transcribed in Kirkpatrick, "The Scottish Nation," 83.

³⁰ Thomson, "Neo-Latin Epigram," 64; *Ad serenissimum Scotorum Regem*, undated.

³¹ Thomson, "Neo-Latin Epigram," 65; MacLean, *De intuitu prophetico*; Sharpe, "Roderick MacLean."

³² Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, 151–57; Reid, "Andrew Melville;" Reid, "Melville's Anti-Episcopal Poetry."

³³ On Buchanan's love poetry, see Ford, *George Buchanan*, and MacFarlane, *Buchanan*, 24–5, 38, 43, 88, 100–1, 111–15, 155, 165, 183–85, 187–88, 287–88, 290–2, 310, 314.

³⁴ Ford, *George Buchanan*, 90.

³⁵ On Boyd, see ODNB; Cunningham, "Marcus Alexander Bodius, Scotus;" Paleit, "Sexual and Political Liberty."

³⁶ Cunningham, "Marcus Alexander Bodius, Scotus," 167–68.

³⁷ *Marci Alexandri Bodii Scoti Epistolae Quindecim, quibus totidem Ouidij respondet. Accedunt eiusdem elegiae, epigrammata illustriumque mulierum Elogia* (Bourges, 1590). This exists in a single copy in the Bibliothèque de la Ville, Bordeaux.

³⁸ *M. Alexandri Bodii Epistolae Heroides, et Hymni Ad Iacobum Sextum. Addita est ejusdem literularum prima curia* (La Rochelle ["Antverpia"], 1592). The poetry from this text is reprinted in *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum*, i, 142–207. Both books derived from MS copies of Boyd's work, which passed into the hands of his descendant, the antiquarian Sir Robert Sibbald, the first from NLS MS 20759 (a selection), the second from Advocates MS 15.1.7 (though the latter is only half printed in the 1592 text). For full details of the variants between the MS and printed versions, and a detailed overview of Boyd's extant works, see Cunningham, "Marcus Alexander Bodius, Scotus," 162–65.

³⁹ His argument that the epistle by Julia represents a "provocative comparison" of James VI to a "tyrannical Augustus" is less convincing, as is the glossing over of Boyd's later life in Scotland to frame his writing more firmly as "exile" poetry. Paleit, "Sexual and Political Liberty," 365.

⁴⁰ Paleit, "Sexual and Political Liberty," 359–60.

⁴¹ *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum*, ii, 143–79.

⁴² It occurs in I.5, I.10, I.13, I.20, I.21. I.22, IV.1, II.34. Three of these were historical figures, including C. Cornelius Gallus, the first prefect of Egypt and

forerunner of the other Augustan elegists, who was forced to commit suicide by Augustus and whose memory appears to have been obliterated (for the others, see Goold (ed.), *Elegies*, s.v. "Gallus"). Maitland is most likely thinking of the Gallus of I.10, whom Propertius thanks for allowing him to spend a night watching Gallus and his girlfriend making love. See Pasco-Pranger, "Sustaining Desire." There is no Gallus figure in Tibullus.

⁴³ The literature on the core themes of Roman elegy is vast, but useful introductions are Miller, "What's Love got to do with it?"; Booth and Lee, *Catullus to Ovid*; and the various articles in Gold, *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, which also provides short articles on each of the major elegists.

⁴⁴ For further detail on the approach of each poet to the genre, see Cairns, *Sextus Propertius*; Debroun, *Roman Propertius*; Heyworth, *Cynthia*; Ball, *Tibullus the Elegist*; Maltby, *Tibullus*; Harrison, "Ovid and Genre"; Booth, "The *Amores*."

⁴⁵ Hercules Rollock, *Sylva VII: paraenetica de Procerum Scotticorum reditu ab exilio ad Kal. Novemb. anno 1585*, ("Sylva VII: a paraenetic on the return of the Scottish Nobles from exile, 1st November 1585"). The term occurs at lines 165–66, in a passage where Rollock advises the coalition of nobility who have ousted Captain James Stewart, the earl of Arran, from court that they should now ensure that the king does not spend extravagantly and become a tyrant by overtaxing his people: "Qua pronam sistet habena / nequitiae rabiem, sceptro qui paupere sordet?" ("How would he resist the headlong fury of wickedness, when he is poor with a meagre sceptre?").

⁴⁶ Martial, *Epigrams* IV.39.2, 5. Most of the references to classical texts in the poetic excerpts which follow were found using The Packard Humanities Institute "Classical Latin Texts" search software, now available online: <http://latin.packhum.org/index>.

⁴⁷ Ovid, *Heroides* XVI.346 ("Bistonis ora").

⁴⁸ Ovid, *Heroides* XVII.115.

⁴⁹ Martial, *Epigrams* I.115.3.

⁵⁰ Virgil, *Eclogues* X.47.

⁵¹ Martial, *Epigrams* IX.59.16.

⁵² Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* III.742.

⁵³ Tibullus, *Elegies* II.4.28, 30; Virgil, *Georgics* III.307; Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* III.170; *Metamorphoses* VI.222; ("Elegia I: Ad Pictorem," ll. 1–24).

⁵⁴ Praxiteles: mid-fourth century BC sculptor, who produced a statue of Aphrodite which now exists only in Roman copies. Mentor: Greek silversmith of the early fourth century BC.

⁵⁵ The murex, a shellfish native to Phoenician Sidon, was used to produce the pigment for a purple dye which grew stronger with exposure to sunlight (rather than fading as most ancient dyes did). It was so rare and expensive that it ultimately became associated with royalty.

⁵⁶ Catullus 5, ll. 7–1.

⁵⁷ Trans. Cornish.

⁵⁸ "Ad Glycinnam."

⁵⁹ Ovid, *Tristia* I.3, 1; Virgil, *Aeneid* II.368–69.

⁶⁰ "foedifragos" (rare), Cicero, *De Officiis* I.38.12; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* XIX.7.5.1.

⁶¹ "Elegia 2: Ad Morpheum," ll. 1–10.

⁶² Propertius, *Elegies* II.17, 1.

⁶³ Tibullus, *Elegies* I.8.30; ll. 31–42.

⁶⁴ Oenone was a nymph on Mount Ida, who was Paris's wife before he met Helen (the daughter of Tyndareus). When Paris was wounded by Philoctetes with one of Heracles's poisoned arrows towards the end of the Trojan War, she refused to help him. Soon after she repented, but Paris had already died. In her grief she hanged herself.

⁶⁵ Medea, whom Jason married after using her to help him steal the golden fleece from her father, King Aeëtes, and then abandoned for the daughter of King Creon of Corinth. In the later version of the story, made famous by Euripides, Medea murders her sons to gain revenge on their father.

⁶⁶ Cruel because they blew Theseus north to Athens, from the island of Naxos, where he had left the sleeping Ariadne. My thanks to Professor Roger Green for this observation.

⁶⁷ For general surveys of the *paraclausithyron*, see Canter, "The Paraclausithyron," and Copley, *Exclusus amator*. See also Yardley, "Propertius."

⁶⁸ Catullus's highly cryptic poem is not a *paraclausithyron* proper, but the door recounts the incestuous and lewd behavior of its owner Caecilius's new wife with his father; in Propertius I.16, the door is witness to the tortured longing of the *exclusus amator* at its threshold. Richardson, "Catullus 67;" Nappa, "Elegy on the Threshold."

⁶⁹ Tibullus I.2, ll. –6.

⁷⁰ Trans. Postgate; for a review of approaches to the poem, see Maltby, "Tibullus 1.2."

⁷¹ Ovid, *Amores* III.2.83.

⁷² Ovid, *Amores* II.5.20.

⁷³ Propertius, *Elegies* III.5.35.

⁷⁴ Trans. Goold.

⁷⁵ The description of Glycinna herself in this poem paraphrases Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.7.8.

⁷⁶ *sola puella*: Propertius, *Elegies* III.3.20; Tibullus, *Elegies* II.1.76.

⁷⁷ Manilius, *Astronomicon* IV.58: "cum bene compositis victor civilibus armis."

⁷⁸ This line and next: Ovid, *Amores* III.7.8.

⁷⁹ "Elegia V," ll. 9–24.

⁸⁰ Tibullus I.1.69–74.

⁸¹ Trans. Postgate.

⁸² Martial, *Epigrammata*, XI.2.1.

⁸³ ll. 25–34.

⁸⁴ Martial XI.2.1–6.

⁸⁵ Trans. Shackleton Bailey.

⁸⁶ ll. 43–46.

⁸⁷ See (for example) Harmon, “Myth and Fantasy;” Gaisser, “Mythological Exempla;” Harrison, “Drink, Suspicion.”

⁸⁸ Echoes Ovid, *Heroides* XV.74, 76.

⁸⁹ Virgil, *Aeneid* X.142.

⁹⁰ Virgil, *Georgics* I.57.

⁹¹ Intertextual reference to Catullus 9.10: “Caesaris visens monumenta magni.”

⁹² Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IV.765.

⁹³ *odoriferis ... floribus*: Silius Italicus, *Punica* XVI.309.

⁹⁴ *Sidonio murice*: *Carmina Tibulliana* III.3.18.

⁹⁵ *Sabaeo ture* (again as a marker of wealth): Virgil, *Aeneid* I.416.

⁹⁶ Generally evocative of addresses to Cynthia by Propertius; see (for example) I.11.23, “tu mihi sola domus, tu Cynthia, sola parentes, / omnia tu nostrae tempora laetitiae”; “Elegia IV,” ll. 5–20.

⁹⁷ Last king of Lydia in Asia Minor (r.ca. 560–546BC), renowned for his wealth.

⁹⁸ The idea of owning a large numbers of ships here being used as a marker of prosperity, not warfare.

⁹⁹ A river near the Turkish Aegean coast, famed in antiquity for large sedimentary deposits of gold.

¹⁰⁰ See note 54 above.

¹⁰¹ The definitive discussion is Gaisser, *Catullus*; see also Gaisser, “Receiving Catullus I.”

¹⁰² Ford, *George Buchanan*, 95–100.

¹⁰³ “In Gillam,” ll. 1–7.

¹⁰⁴ ll. 14–21.

¹⁰⁵ ll. 28–31.

¹⁰⁶ “glubit”: Catullus 58.5; “mentula” used frequently by Catullus (eg 29.3, 94.1) and *Carmina Priapea* (eg 2.1, 8.5); l.1–4.

¹⁰⁷ ll. 5–24.

¹⁰⁸ Particularly in relation to his “Inauguratio” mentioned above, and to the MS “Epistola” at EUL.

¹⁰⁹ Ford, *George Buchanan*, 95.

¹¹⁰ “In Leonoram,” ll. 1–6.

¹¹¹ Ford, *George Buchanan*, 158–61.

¹¹² “Ad eandem,” ll. 1–2.

¹¹³ Ford, *George Buchanan*, 160–1.

¹¹⁴ Ford, *George Buchanan*, 146–47.

¹¹⁵ Platter, “The Artificial Whore.”

¹¹⁶ “In Rusticum.”

¹¹⁷ Ford, *George Buchanan*, 174–75.

¹¹⁸ Lake Prescott, “English Writers and Beza’s Latin Epigrams.”

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Mnemonic Frameworks in *The Buke of the Chess*

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SOMETIME BETWEEN 1515 AND 1525, Edinburgh burgess and notary public, John Asloan (active 1490s–c. 1530), assembled a collection of texts with a strongly advisory focus.¹ This compilation is now known as the Asloan Manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 16500).² Among this miscellany is the only extant copy of *The Buke of the Chess* (fols. 41–76v), a Scots translation into pentameter couplets of one of the most popular works of the Middle Ages: Jacobus de Cessolis's late thirteenth-century *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium ac popularium super ludo scachorum* (*The Book of the Morals of Men and the Duties of Nobles and Commoners, on the Game of Chess*), commonly known as the *Ludus scaccorum*.³ *The Buke of the Chess* is a fairly faithful translation of the *Ludus scaccorum*, though the author has considerably shortened the prose Latin original to a poem of 2130 lines. As the only copy of *The Buke of the Chess* survives in Asloan's sixteenth-century manuscript, dating the composition of the text is difficult. Through stylistic analysis, Catherine van Buuren proposes a date of c. 1475, which would place it in the reign of James III.⁴ A late fifteenth-century date corresponds with the appearance of William Caxton's English translation, *The Game and Playe of Chesse*, which was first printed in 1475, and reprinted in 1483. Along with *The Buke of the Chess*, Caxton's translation forms the only extant version of the *Ludus* in British vernaculars. From analysis of names and the presence of material not found in the English version, however, Craigie concludes that the Older Scots translation is not derived from Caxton, whose translation is based on two fourteenth-century French versions by Jehan de Ferron and Jehan de Vignay, entitled *Le Jeu des eschaz moralisé*.⁵ None of the extant French versions in the British Isles appears to offer a model for *The Buke of the Chess* and scholarly opinion suggests that the Scots translator had access to an, as yet, unidentified Latin exemplar.⁶ More significantly for the Scottishness of the *Buke*, perhaps, the translator has chosen to render the Latin original into verse, whereas the majority of versions of the *Ludus*

scaccorum are in prose.⁷ Rhiannon Purdie has noted in relation to Scottish medieval romance that there appears to be a preference for re-versifying prose sources when English romancers were “leaning heavily towards prose” as the “favoured medium for new romances.”⁸ Furthermore, the dominant form in the surviving corpus of Scottish romances is the rhyming couplet. Rhyming couplets are employed by the Scots translator of *The Buke of the Chess*, which suggests an attempt to replicate the preferred Scottish forms of the later Middle Ages.

As a game, chess had most likely originated in India, travelling to Western Europe via Persia and the Arab countries. Following its arrival by AD 1000, medieval European culture changed the game to reflect its own social structures, for example, by replacing the counselor with a queen, the horse with a knight, and the elephant with a bishop. Playing chess became an expression of courtly culture and, along with riding and hunting, became a standard component of a courtly education. Indeed, the translator of *The Buke of the Chess* refers to it as a “rial” sport.⁹ With the desire to see medieval European society within the game, allegorists saw an opportunity to push the similarities between the chessboard and life “beyond the simple resemblance of social roles.” Literary representations thus used chess as a way to “model political order” and “imagine ... civic identities.”¹⁰

Jacobus de Cessolis’s *Ludus scaccorum* is a prose treatise in which moral instruction is provided through the allegorical interpretation of the chess pieces, which represent this image of political order and individual civic identities. Jacobus’s text is divided into four parts (*tractatus*), and is related briefly here. Part One begins with Jacobus’s own story of how the game of chess came to be invented. Merodach (Euclmoradrag in *Buke*), a tyrannical king of Babylon, comes to power by killing his father, Nebuchadnezzar. Merodach has his father’s body cut into three hundred pieces, which he then feeds to vultures. A philosopher, Philometor (Perses in *Buke*; more commonly Xerxes, which is more plausible)¹¹ is so troubled by Merodach’s violence that he agrees to the request to instruct the king and correct his behavior. He creates the game of chess initially to instruct the king’s nobles but, when Merodach sees them playing, Philometor tells the king that the game will teach him how to live virtuously. Part Two describes the form and function of the chessmen that represent those who comprise a well-ordered kingdom. Beginning with the descriptions of the king and queen in terms of their physical and moral attributes, De Cessolis then proceeds to establish the form and function of the chess pieces: the bishops (*alphino*); the knights (*milite*),

whose section forms the largest part of the text, and the rooks (*rowke*). Part Three focuses on the eight commoners (pawns): farmers (*teilman*); blacksmiths (*fabro*); notaries; merchants; physicians; taverners; guardians of the town (*custodibus ciuitatis*); ribalds. For each piece discussed in Parts Two and Three, Jacobus illustrates the moral precepts they represent by numerous *exempla*. Part Four is concerned with explaining the layout of the chessboard and the permitted moves of all the pieces.¹² *The Buke of the Chess* presents a significantly shortened version of de Cessolis's text though, until a Latin source text can be identified, we have no way of knowing whether this is the result of copying a previously shortened work, or the decision of the Scots translator. *The Buke of the Chess* does not deviate from de Cessolis's overall structure, but omits *exempla* and repetitions to present a less prolix work. After the prologue, Part One (ll. 61–222) narrates how the game of chess was “[d]evysit, maid and first begunnyng” during the “time of Euelmoradrag” (ll. 70–71), who led a “vicious crowell” life (l. 74). Whereas Merodach in de Cessolis's text is characterized as “lascivi, iniusti, crudelis” (lascivious, unjust, cruel), the emphasis in *The Buke of the Chess* is on the king being “[w]antoun,” “prowde” and living “halely in sensualitie” (ll. 77–78). These are not criticisms completely different from those in the original text, but the emphasis in the translation is specifically on moral qualities that relate to self-governance. As with the *Ludus scaccorum*, it is as a result of hearing of the king's tyranny that “Perses” [Xerxes], who was the “luffer of mesour and justis” (l. 98), tasks himself with finding a way to “correk this king” (l. 110). The product is the “sport of ches in figour” (l. 144), designed as an allegory of moral life. As the game is played Perses instructs the king in the virtues and vices of each piece; Part Two (ll. 223–1309) begins with the king, followed by the “maner of nobillis” (l. 48), and Part Three (ll. 1310–2009) examines the “aucht popularis” (l. 1311) of the *polis*. Part Four (ll. 2020–191) is concerned with the structure of the “checker” and the “proper moving / Of euery man in ordour to his king” (ll. 2011–13).

Within the *Ludus scaccorum*, the rules of chess are used as a means by which to imagine how to reform the self — each piece has its own identity, virtue, and way of behaving (moving) — but the text also extends the analogy between chess and society to function as a reminder of social hierarchies as civic society is reimagined/replayed in the microcosm of the playing board. As Adams argues, chess as a civic metaphor fundamentally shifted the ways in which people in the Middle Ages conceived of themselves and their role within the community, presenting an alternative

to the prevalent state-as-body model of society in which its constituent members were seen as physiologically related parts of a biological organism. The chess allegory, she argues, understands a society's subjects to be "independent bodies in the form of pieces bound to the state by rules;" they form part of a "social matrix" that asserts "psychological as opposed to physical control" over a state's subjects, at the same time that it allows movement free from direct control by the monarch.¹³ As an advisory text, the *Ludus scaccorum* exploits the power of the mental image (the figure of the chessboard imagined by both author and reader) and the possibility for allegorical reading as a way of educating its reader within this social matrix. The text simultaneously presents the reader with a literal chessboard and an allegorical mode of reading: each chess piece, understood to represent a member of traditional estates literature, is invested with moral qualities and Jacobus provides biblical and classical *exempla* to support the advice that is given. In order to do this, however, the onus is placed on the ability of the reader to make the mental effort of creating the link between the actual and the allegorical. This work requires a focus not on what V. A. Kolve has called the "passing metaphor or simile," but on the larger narrative action which the reader has to "imagine and hold in mind" as "he experience[s] the poem, and which later serve[s] as memorial centers around which [he is] able to reconstruct the story and think appropriately about its meaning."¹⁴ Contemplation and learning, then, required creativity, and in the Middle Ages the concept of creativity was understood primarily to be memorial; for, without memory, it was impossible to interpret the information one had read.¹⁵ Reading and remembering, like the game of chess itself, become a game of skill.

Jacobus de Cessolis was a Dominican, part of the order that translated the ancient arts of memory in the thirteenth century, and was therefore likely to have been familiar with these texts that dealt with cultivating the memory.¹⁶ The Dominicans also tended to separate memory training from its traditional association with rhetoric and relocate it as a necessary characteristic of prudence, one of the four cardinal virtues. Thus, the memorial emphasis in the *Ludus scaccorum*, and the heightened focus on prudence in the prologue to *The Buke of the Chess*, constitute a moral rather than a rhetorical educational program. This is consistent with Jacobus's repeated references to prudence (pp. 19, 20, 27, 34, 51, 67, 76), and his comment in Part Two that, just as the king should wear the regalia of monarchy, so too should his virtues reflect his office:

Rex sic formam accepit a principio: Nam in solio positus fuit purpura [sic] indutus, quae est vestis regalis, in capite coronam, in manu dextra habens sceptrum, in sinistra habens pilam rotundam ... Sicut enim corpus pulchris vestibus decoratur, sic et interior mens et anima moralibus virtutibus tanquam quibusdam vestitur habitus.¹⁷

[The form of the king, from the beginning: He is placed on a high/purple throne, dressed in royal robes: a crown on his head, with a scepter in his right hand and in his left hand an orb ... For as the body is adorned with beautiful clothes, so also is the interior mind and soul clothed with the habits of moral virtue.]¹⁸

A King suld sit on hicht in this maner:
 In rob riall in purpour colour cleir,
 In his richt hand to beir a sceptour wand
 And a round ball in-till his tother hand,
 And on his hed a precious crowne suld be,
 In honour of his riall dignité ...
 This purpour ryall rob suld signifye,
 As he tharwirth is westit riallye,
 Richt sa suld the saull of his excellens
 Be cled with morall wertheu and sciens.
 (ll. 227–32; 239–42)

The *Buke's* author renders the Latin faithfully, though it appears to draw more attention to the advisory nature of the chess allegory. While de Cessolis's text talks about what the king is — the body adorned *pulchris vestibus* reflects the virtuous man — the Scots translator makes specific reference to the conditions associated with royal regalia: the “purpour” robe signifies that the man clothed *should* be “westit riallye.” Similarly, the sceptre “suld” be “[s]tabilit and groundit with iustice,” and in the king “suld mercye and gentilnes / Appeir” as a result (ll. 250–2). While the king's clothes were intended to be a reflection of his inner qualities, the Scots translation presents the image of this outward appearance as conditional. The repeated use of the modal auxiliary “suld” indicates that, while the correlation between appearance and behavior is desirable or expected, these virtues need to be trained and practiced. Moreover, the translator of the *Buke* makes the additional qualification at line 242 that the king's soul should be clothed with knowledge as well as virtue, making explicit the link between sapience and morality that is emphasized throughout the Scots translation. This link can also be seen in relation to the Queen, who “suld be richt werraye sapient” (l. 479) and whose “sapient ... Nocht

anerly in hir maner suld bene / Bot in hir tong" (ll. 483–85).¹⁹ Similarly, "[w]ys and expert suld be a noble knyght," since "[e]xperiens in-to a prudent knyght / Dois mor in battall be all resoun richt / Than of a 3oungar inexpert" (ll. 858; 862–64).²⁰ These virtues are then reinforced through positive and negative examples of behavior by kings and nobles. For example, the first fable related to the figure of the king narrates how, in response to a plea from a woman whose daughter has been kissed by a knight, the king asks: "Suld we thaim sla or put thaim in-to pane / That luffis ws? Than wald I wit agane / Quhat suld I do to thaim at luffis ws nocht?" (ll. 291–93).²¹ The emphasis here is not only on qualities of kingly conduct, but on the ability to see the consequences of one's actions.

The *exempla* in *Ludus scaccorum* are examples of the moral virtue of prudence and they act as *aide mémoire* for a reader who is expected to be able to recall the vices and virtues illustrated in the text at will after learning the game. Moreover, prudence is concerned with governing the will or appetite rather than perfecting intellectual pursuits. The aim of the *Ludus scaccorum* is therefore to prompt action as a result of reading rather than seeing reading as an end in itself. It is to the quality of prudence, and the channeling of knowledge into behavior that the translator of *The Buke of the Chess* draws his reader's attention throughout the poem; he makes this explicit in the prologue, and returns to it in the final lines of the poem: "frome wycis suld [y]e set [y]our thocht / And of wertew the well it suld be socht" (ll. 2183–84).

The virtue of prudence was defined in the first century BC by Cicero as the knowledge of what was good, bad or neither. He hypothesized that prudence was made up of three parts: memory, intelligence and foresight. He states:

Memoria est per quam animus repetit illa quae fuerunt; intelligentia, per quem ea perspicit quae sunt; prouidentia, per quam futurum aliquid uidetur ante quam factum est.²²

[Memory is the faculty by which the mind recalls what has happened. Intelligence is the faculty by which it ascertains what is. Foresight is the faculty by which it is seen that something is going to occur before it occurs.]²³

In order to structure memories for effective and useful recollection, ancient and medieval theorists often referred to architectural schemata as a way of compartmentalizing and structuring memory and knowledge.²⁴ This followed the supposed invention of the *ars memoriae* by Simonides,

as narrated in Cicero's *De oratore*, in which recollection was made possible through locating objects in specific places in a mental picture.²⁵ St. Augustine, for example, saw memory as a storehouse, and the metaphor was variously adapted throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to include chests, treasuries, and buildings. The emphasis was placed on order; in the twelfth century, for example, Hugh of St. Victor advised that "each single thing" to be remembered should be "[d]ispose[d] and separate[d]" into "its own place ... so that you may know what has been placed here and what there," for "[c]onfusion is the mother of ignorance and forgetfulness, but orderly arrangement illuminates the intelligence and secures memory."²⁶ In such ways, memory places were designed primarily to be visual, and the chessboard described in the *Ludus scaccorum*, and translated in *The Buke of the Chess*, makes use of diagrammatic memory locations in order to facilitate recollection. Like the structure of the text itself, the chessboard is divided into various sections; the Latin describes how

[d]e scacherio locuturi sciendum, quod ipsum repraesentat civitatem illam Babylonicam, ... quod secundum dictum beati Hieronymi civitas Babylonia fuit amplissima et quadrata. (p. 64)

[We should say that the chessboard represents the city of Babylon ... for according to the blessed Jerome, the city of Babylon was very extensive and was divided into squares.]

The author of the *Buke* describes the chessboard thus:

The checker suld ws represent anone
 The gret cité and tovene of Babulone,
 And as the chekker in four squar is met
 And ilk squar with iiij poyntis is set,
 The quhilk poyntis be aucht to multiply
 Thre scor and iiij it makis verily. (ll. 2014–19)

With its gridded structure, explained in detail in the final section of the *Ludus*, the chessboard forms the foundation and location for storing the moral instruction set out in the previous sections of the text: the board provides the spatial framework onto which each of the pieces of the game can be placed. Obeying the precepts of the *ars memoriae*, the grid allows each piece (or *imago*) to occupy its own distinctive and easily visualized position and, at the beginning of the game, this mnemonic space presents an image of order, an area where "euery man has place" (l. 2032), recall-

ing Hugh of St. Victor's insistence on orderly arrangement. The chessboard works as a mnemonic device by staging an educational situation to emphasize didactic intention. The checkered structure of the board enables Jacobus to remember the sequence of various *exempla*; each anecdote is linked to a piece and its related virtue. The squares of the board can be mentally surveyed to remember the edifying stories for each piece. As such, the chessboard is a mnemonic technique as concerns instruction (the teacher memorizes what to teach), but the allegorical use of chess in the text means that the game is also a mnemonic technique as concerns reception (the audience is instructed to remember the layout of the pieces on the board and the corresponding *exempla*). Just as the structure of the chessboard that Jacobus describes provides the memorial framework onto which moral instruction can be placed, so the text's descriptions and *exempla* provide the images (*imagines*) to be processed and stored so that they can be recalled and utilized by the reader once the book has been read.²⁷

While not an innovative translation *The Buke of the Chess* does, however, significantly abbreviate its source, particularly in Parts Three and Four; these seem to hold less interest for the *Buke's* author, who seems more interested in the roles of the king and the nobility, and, at times, provides different exempla or includes material that changes the emphasis of Jacobus's moral instruction. As with Caxton's *Game and Playe of Chesse*, the most substantial changes are made in the chapter dealing with the figure of the king, but the *Buke's* author also highlights the role of justice within society through the authority of the monarch and his representatives. These changes comprise omissions, changes of order, and additions to the text. A comprehensive list of these differences is included in Catherine van Buuren's Scottish Text Society edition and I will not rehearse all of them here.²⁸ What is clear is that the author of the *Buke* is concerned with the matter of his source text — the moral instruction within a framework of allegorical explanation of the game of chess — but seeks to present a shorter work with fewer (possibly more easily remembered) *exempla*. One of the most significant examples is the addition at lines 810–27 (in the section concerning the bishops), in which the author comments on the consequences of unjust laws that oppress “pepill that war pur” as the “falt of thaim that beris the cur / Of iustice and of lawis regiment” (ll. 814–16), seemingly echoing the sentiments of Henryson's “The Sheep and the Dog,” in which the narrator of the *moralitas* explains how the sheep “may present the figure / Of pure commounis that daylie ar opprest / Be tirrane men,” and where the sheep laments that because “few or nane will

execute justice, / In falt of quhome the pure man is overthraw.”²⁹ The bishops are not the only figures charged with the dispensation of justice, however. Aside from the king, who should “aye schynand be / Iustice with law and werraye equité” (385–86), other noble characters on the chessboard are also responsible for behaving justly; the Knight is expected to defend the people and the law, and the Rook (a knight with the powers of a king’s lieutenant) is supposed to embody “meiknes, iustice, and peté” (1124), drawing the reader’s attention not only to the administration of justice but also to the way it was administered.³⁰ Much of this insistence on justice and the responsibilities of those who are charged with maintaining the peace of the kingdom occurs elsewhere in late medieval Scottish literature and this focus perhaps provides a context for the translation of the *Buke* at a time when there was clearly a feeling among the lords of parliament that the execution of justice within Scotland was a matter of pressing concern. James III’s notorious “laxness in maintaining justice” and his “tendency to divert the ends of justice to his own purpose”³¹ prompted the parliament of 1473 to

tak part of labour apone his persone and travel throw his realme
and put sic justice and polycy in his awne realme, ... that he mycht
optene the name of sa just a prince and sa vertewsis and sa wele reu-
land his awne realme in justice, policy and peax.³²

The concern with justice is perhaps also why the *Buke* appealed to Asloan, whose manuscript collects several texts on this theme, including the *Thre Prestis of Peblis*, the *Buke of the Howlat*, and the fourth virtue discussed in the *Porteous of Noblenes*. What possibly interested Asloan more was that the Scots translator clearly saw the *Buke*’s target audience as magnates rather than royalty, and this can be seen most clearly in the Scots prologue to the translation, which is the most striking addition made by the Scots translator to Jacobus’s text.

The forty lines that comprise *The Buke of the Chess*’s prologue frame the *Buke* in such a way as to emphasize the connection between learning, memory and morality — a link made implicitly in the *Ludus scaccorum*. The narrator comments that the reader who “prentis well in mynd” the “riall sporting of the ches,” the “circumstance, the figure and the kynd,” “sall of wertu be” (ll. 32–35). From the outset, *The Buke of the Chess* makes central the concern with perfecting the self, and intimates a concern with morality and virtue that is to be located in learning and, crucially, in the remembrance of that learning. Knowledge, understanding and memory,

therefore, reflect the hermeneutics of the Latin original that seeks not only to “correk the king” (l. 110), as expected in the advice to princes tradition, but to outline the expected behavior of myriad others in society, particularly the knightly class. The *Buke* suggests that by reading and remembering the advice found in the treatise, the noble reader might come to a process of morally fashioning the self, and this process is specifically linked to the quality of prudence (l. 12). In doing so, the author of *The Buke of the Chess* makes explicit the memorial quality of the chessboard as a mode of instruction and draws attention to the *ars memoriae* that underpins Jacobus’s text.

In what has been characterized by van Buuren as an “awkward high-style introduction,”³³ the Older Scots prologue begins with a description of how “efter the tyme that ald Saturnus / He regnit had and woidit of his hous” (ll. 1–2), there occurred a “coniunctioun” of “schrewit” Saturn and Jupiter, the “planet most benyng” (ll. 3, 4, 6). This astronomical event, in which two astrologically opposed planets are seen at the same degree in the same astrological sign, initiates a “pestilens” of the “grevous passioun malancoly” that deadens “all gentill hertis” (ll. 8, 10–11). In focusing on “gentill hertis,” the prologue clearly directs itself at a noble reader and this corresponds with the fact that the longest part of both the *Ludus scaccorum* and the *Buke* is the examination of the knight. But the focus on melancholy here is particularly important. Melancholy was not merely a psychological concept in the Middle Ages; it was understood as a physical ailment manifested in sloth. The translator of the *Buke* characterizes melancholia as a feeling that brings about sloth — the “idleness” which the *Ludus scaccorum* criticizes. Where sloth had been imagined as a spiritual illness (*Acedia*) in the early Middle Ages, by the fifteenth century it was viewed more as a sin of the flesh — it denoted laziness in general — and by the Renaissance it had evolved into the intellectual condition of melancholy. In *The Buke of the Chess*, the author seems to reverse this trajectory, seeing melancholy evolving into sloth. As a sin, sloth had also supplanted covetousness as the most reprehensible vice in the later Middle Ages.³⁴ Significantly for the prologue to *The Buke of the Chess*, sloth could be understood as depriving the soul of two gifts of the Holy Spirit: fortitude (the active life) and sapience (the contemplative life).

If sloth was a particularly reprehensible vice, then overcoming it was of the utmost importance. Where the *Ludus scaccorum* states that the second reason for which chess was invented was to avoid idleness (*Secunda huius inventionis causa fuit otia evitare*, p. 5), the translator of the *Buke* prioritizes this idea in the prologue, seeing the medieval game as a con-

tinued way of counteracting sloth. While in the *Buke* itself the reason for the game's invention is directly translated — “The second caus was of this forsaid ches / For till eschew the wyce of ydilnes” (ll. 175–76) — in the prologue the author shows that the game still acts as a way of occupying the mind and countering the lethargy of idleness. While the consequence of untreated melancholy is “[t]hat bene all gentill hertis werray deid” (l. 11), “men of prudens fynd ... remeid” (ll. 12–27):

Sen comfort and pleasance be the enemy
Off this dedlie passioun malancoly
And most of strength this passioun till oppress;
And till eschew the wyce of ydilnes
Thai go to sport to caus thaim comforting. (ll. 13–17)

Taking the phrase “till eschew the wyce of ydilnes” from the translation and placing it in the prologue (l. 16) not only creates a narrative repetition within the text (an *aide mémoire*); it also privileges this vice as one that has a detrimental effect on learning and knowledge because it results in boredom and listlessness. Notably, here, for the author of the *Buke*, both comfort — understood as consolation — and pleasure (enjoyment) are seen as remedies for the idleness that is the physical result of melancholy.

The key term the author uses in thinking about those who are able to stem the onset of melancholy is “prudens;” prudent men are those who have the foresight to see how melancholy will manifest as idleness and seek prevention rather than cure. It is odd, however, that prudent men — those who have the ability to govern themselves by the use of reason — then choose to distract themselves in a variety of often undesirable ways. The prologue lists these:

Sum lykis wele to rewele and to syng;
Sum gois to dyse thar lewdness for to schaw
Quhilk bene a sport forbodyn in the law,
For quhy the wynnyng be the dycis chance
As thift or reif it askis restorans.
Quhar thai tharto for wynnyng gois suthly
As than it bene a sport of harlotry.
Sume in-till hunting has thar hale delyt
And vthersum ane nother appetite
That gladlie gois and in-to romanis reidis
Of halynes and of armes the deidis.
Sume lykis wele to heir of menstraly
And sum the talk of honest company. (ll. 18–30)

The distractions that men find for their melancholy are, for the most part, framed in the context of noble pursuits, and particularly those that give men “plesance.” The exception here is, of course, dicing, which as a “for-bodyn” sport of “harlotry” is particularly to be despised.³⁵ What then of “comfort,” that peculiarly moral remedy? The final image of countering melancholy provides the answer; where some men resort to the pleasurable pursuits listed above,

vthersum thar langing for to les
Gois to the riall sporting of the ches,
Of the quhilk quha prentis wele in mynd
The circumstance, the figur and the kynd,
And followis it, he sall of wertu be. (ll. 31–35)

Recalling Proverbs 15:14 (“The heart of the wise seeketh instruction”), the sense here is that comfort concentrates on excelling in the contemplative life and this, for the *Buke’s* author, is the path to virtue. The truly prudent men opt for the contemplative (intellectual) pursuit of chess. The chess-board is thus imagined as a spatial methodology, a point of contemplation for memory work that ultimately provides the moral instruction that leads to virtue. Such is the instruction that the *Buke of the Chess* provides in its translation of the *Ludus scaccorum*.

While the Older Scots translation of the *Ludus scaccorum* retains a concern with the figure of the king as the focus of good governance to which all of the other chessmen are bound, the addition of the prologue shifts the emphasis to one of self-governance as a way to moral perfection for all those who consider themselves to be prudent and noble men. Moreover, the focus on virtue refers specifically to the moral benefit of understanding the game of chess; as such, the reader’s attention is drawn back to a consideration of “ydilnes” as a spiritual as well as an intellectual vice, and this is framed in terms of the importance of developing a good memory. Particularly striking here is the sense that the images of the game of chess created throughout the *Buke* can be printed in the mind. The idea of imprinting on the mind recalls the many texts theorizing the *ars memoria* throughout the Middle Ages. These texts had their origins in the classical idea that, in order to be recalled, knowledge first had to be copied and stored in the individual’s memory. Plato, for example, conceived of the memory as a wax tablet in which impressions were made, indicating that memories and experiences physically altered the body in some way. Similarly, in *De memoria*, Aristotle had suggested that memory was a men-

tal picture (a phantasm, or *imago*) inscribed in a physical way upon the part of the brain which constituted memory.³⁶ In suggesting that whoever “prentis wele” what the *Buke* has to teach, the poem’s author draws specific attention to the *ars memoriae* as a way of retaining the knowledge of the text. Nevertheless, neither the model of the memory as a wax tablet, nor the description of turning sense perceptions into memories, provides the structures of memory enabling the clarity of knowledge and ease of recall which texts such as the *Ludus scaccorum* suggest are fundamental to virtuous living. The key to using memory to live virtuously, according to the prologue, is not merely about storing (printing) the instruction provided in the *Buke*; more importantly, the reader must “follow” it. The exhortation at the end of the prologue, then, is to action — to do something with the advice contained in the text that will be read. As such, sloth (idleness) is replaced by action, and action that has its basis in knowledge. The chessboard that is described throughout the *Buke*, as in the *Ludus scaccorum*, provides an architecture of knowledge which situates the *Buke* in a tradition of sapiential thinking. This architectural framework, however, is not the final point in the process of learning, and the direction to follow the text, to extract the meaning from the allegory and to enact this meaning in the world through the governance of one’s own behavior, points to the ways in which the mind (and its memories) have to be extended into the external world.

This memorial focus also occurs at the end of Part One of the *Buke*. The author omits Jacobus’s *exemplum* of Anthony the hermit and focuses on the recapitulation of Perses’s own reasons for inventing the game of chess:

Ob hoc ergo huius solatii inventor mortis anxietate pressus ac extra corpus effectus, sensibilibus et rerum palpabilibus factus obliviosus ad mentem se contulit; ludum variorum et innumerabilium rationum plenum invenit; propter multitudinem rationum et variorum similitudinum ac ingenia bellorum in eo decertantibus famosus fuit. (p. 6)

[Therefore, the inventor of this comfort, though pressed by the fear of death, forgot all sensory perceptions and physical reality and collected himself in his mind. He invented a game full of ability and countless combinations, becoming famous because of the many logical possibilities of the game, and of the image of war he offered to players.]

And so this Perseis for the gret desyryng
 Off the richt subtell ressonnis fynding
 And the engynes in batall mor and les
 Contenit in the figour of the ches,
 He had no mynd of erdlye thing outward,
 Bot comprehendit onelye in his hert
 The sport of ches in-to rememberans
 To king and prince of lordlye governans. (ll. 215–22)

Once again, the author draws the link between sapience and virtue as mediated through remembrance of what the game of chess teaches allegorically. For the *Buke's* readers, recognition of the allegorical nature of the chess game and of the memorative possibilities the text provides is fundamental to understanding what the text has to teach. In remembering the “figour” of chess (as both the facts of the game and the allegorical meaning of the pieces), the reader comes to greater knowledge of the “maner” of law, of kings and nobles, and the “craftis” (ll. 36–38) as these can be applied outside of the text.

At the same time, the game represented in the *Buke*, as with the *Ludus*, is not one to be played as such. While the latter part of the poem tells the reader *how* the pieces move around the board, no movement occurs in the text itself and we are not told what happens when the pieces move from their original squares to the “gret ... space / Wnoccupijt” (ll. 2030–31). This insistence on textual stasis marks the game of chess in the poem as ideal (and instructional); the fixed images are to be remembered — they occupy a fixed space on the chessboard — for their potential, not for their activity. It is the responsibility of the reader to remember the rules of the game once the book itself has been put away and then to create (imagine) the almost infinite number of possibilities of action that the game presents. If we think about this in relation to the virtue of prudence that is the focus of the *Buke's* prologue, reading and contemplation must give way to foresight, in which the reader is urged to see the consequences of particular moves on the board. In short, the description of the moves of each piece are learning opportunities for the readers, but opportunities that require them to think for themselves.

Sally Mapstone posits that “within the advice to princes canon in Scotland” *The Buke of the Chess* is “rather like a control experiment against which one can compare other results.”³⁷ Its lack of innovation in translating its Latin source is perhaps one of the reasons that the text has received little scholarly consideration. Yet, it is a translation that seeks to situate

Jacobus's text within a Scottish cultural milieu that was concerned with justice, governance, and noble morality. What I hope to have demonstrated is that, even though the author seems to have striven for generality rather than specificity in his translation, as a significantly condensed version of its source text, *The Buke of the Chess* draws out the instructional impetus of the *Ludus scaccorum* to focus on advising the educated lay readers of Scotland's knightly society, incorporating and expecting the *Buke's* readers to follow its particular manner of memory. The *Buke's* original prologue serves to emphasize the virtue of prudence as a way of counteracting the secularized vice of idleness through an architecture of knowledge. The learning opportunities that the *Buke* provides are situated within a framework of memory that simultaneously structures the text as an aid to memory in the advice that it gives and it accordingly becomes a memorial repository for the allegorical interpretations of the game of chess. *The Buke of the Chess*, as is true of its source text, must be understood as both allegory and mnemonic; the reader must develop the skill to apply the text's teaching to life outside the text.

NOTES

¹ I am particularly grateful to Nicola Royan, Daisy Black, and Georgina Longley, as well as Alessandra Petrina and Ian Johnson, for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this chapter.

² Asloan's miscellany is varied in its material; however, the contents can be categorized roughly as follows: thirteen advisory pieces, five informative, six moralizing, nine fables, and eight devotional works. With the exception of *The Buke of the Chess*, the first half of the manuscript comprises prose texts, while the second half of the manuscript is made up entirely of verse.

³ Jacobus de Cessolis's text was translated into most European languages during the later Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, including English, French, Italian, Catalan, Swedish and Czech. Estimates of the number of extant manuscripts of the *Ludus* and its renderings vary considerably. Burt suggests somewhere between two and three hundred MSS survive. Collet more conservatively talks of eighty MSS, whereas van der Linde lists eighty Latin MSS. See Burt, "Complete Latin Text of Jacobus de Cessolis"; Collet, *Jacques de Cessoles*; van der Linde, *Geschichte und Literatur des Schachspiels*.

⁴ van Buuren, *The Buke of the Chess*, lxii–lxxii. I make no attempt to challenge the date of composition. This is the edition I use for all quotations from *Buke*.

⁵ Craigie, *Asloan Manuscript*, I.v–vi.

⁶ Craigie, *Asloan Manuscript*, I. v–vi; Mapstone, "Advice to Princes Tradition," 247; van Buuren, *Buke*, cxv.

⁷ Two further verse versions are known: a German version by Konrad von Ammenhausen and a now lost French version, mentioned by Antonius van der Linde. See Vetter, *Das Schachzalbuch*; van der Linde, *Geschichte und Literatur*.

⁸ Purdie, "Medieval Romance in Scotland," 169.

⁹ Eales, "The Game of Chess," 12–34. See also Murray, *A History of Chess*, esp. 432–36.

¹⁰ Adams, *Power Play*, 19.

¹¹ See van Buuren, *Buke*, 82, n. 95. See also Craigie, *Asloan Manuscript*, 1. 332, n. 84.

¹² Hedegård, *Jacobus de Cessolis: De ludo scachorum*. This is the edition I use for all quotations from the *Ludus*.

¹³ Adams, *Power Play*, 19.

¹⁴ Kolve, *Chaucer*, 2.

¹⁵ Mary Carruthers argues that "in order to create, in order to think at all, human beings require some mental tool or machine, and that machine lives in the intricate networks of their own memories": Carruthers, "How to Make a Composition," 16.

¹⁶ The Dominican order "was responsible for developing many of the most useful tools for the study of written texts during the thirteenth century" and "was simultaneously the most active single proponent and popularizer of memory as an art, and especially of the principles of Tullius." Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 193.

¹⁷ Burt, "Complete Latin Text of Jacobus," p. 6.

¹⁸ All translations of *De ludo scachorum* are my own.

¹⁹ See the slightly different emphasis in *De ludo scachorum*: "Sapientia vero eius apparet non solum in gestibus sed etiam in verbis et maxime, quando contra naturam mulier secreta secreta in corde conservat [conferens in corde] et aliis denegat aperire." (10).

²⁰ See *De ludo Scachorum*: "Sapiens enim esse debet et expertus nobilis miles ... Plus enim in bello operatur ars et experientia prudentis militis quam fortitudo et audacia inexperti." (19).

²¹ The story is recounted in *De ludo scachorum*, 7.

²² Cicéron, *De L'Invention*, II.53.160.

²³ Cicero, *De inventione*, II.53.160.

²⁴ Frances Yates and Mary Carruthers discuss architectural models as one amongst several mnemonic devices broached by classical rhetoricians and revitalized by mnemonic theorists of the thirteenth century. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, esp. 114–34; Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, esp. 89–98.

²⁵ Cicero, *De oratore*, II.86.351–54.

²⁶ Hugh of St. Victor, cited in Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 339.

²⁷ We might compare this sense of repeated action as *aide mémoire* to the sentiment in *Ratis raving* that "Think thow art growin of hyme memor / as he of his fathir before, / And thinke at thai are neuir ded / quhill gud memore Is in thare stede." Girvan, *Ratis Raving*, ll. 5–8.

²⁸ van Buuren, *Buke*, cxxii–cxxvii and 210–34.

²⁹ Henryson, “The Sheep and the Dog,” ll. 1258–60; 1302–3.

³⁰ See *De ludo scachorum*, “In his debet esse iustitia, pietas, humilitas, patientia, voluntaria paupertas et liberalitas,” 26.

³¹ Kindrick, “Politics and Poetry,” 46.

³² Brown, *Records*, 1473/7/9.

³³ van Buuren, *Buke*, lxxxix.

³⁴ Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*, esp. 164–87; Watkins, “The Allegorical Theatre,” 779.

³⁵ Olivia Remie Constable notes that “there were moral, social and gender distinctions between games of chance [e.g. dice], which were frowned on because of their associations with gambling, and games of skill, such as chess. In general, games of skill were considered much more suitable for elite players, both male and female, than games of chance ... which were seen as disreputable and potentially dangerous pastimes.” “Chess and Courtly Culture,” 316.

³⁶ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 99–100; Aristotle, *De anima*, III, 7.431a.14–17.

³⁷ Mapstone, “Advice to Princes Tradition,” 271.

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Part II

Writing the Scottish Nation

Defining Scottish Identity in the Early Middle Ages: Bede and the Picts

Tommaso Leso

THE PURPOSE OF THIS chapter is to describe the way in which it was possible to “write the history of Scotland”¹ during the Early Middle Ages. In order to do so, it focuses on how Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*² deals with the most important early medieval people of Northern Britain, the Picts, and especially with their origin, ethnic identity, and religious history.

To speak of “Scottish identity” and the “history of Scotland” in a chapter devoted to the Early Middle Ages would be, however, misleading: this chapter will therefore, consistently with most recent scholarship,³ refer to either Northern Britain or Pictland — according to the definitions given below — rather than Scotland. It is impossible to apply modern, national identities to the past: medieval historians have long shown that early medieval ethnic identities and political communities were social, political, and cultural constructions, continuously redefined through fluid and complex processes of distinction and inclusion.⁴ Historical and archaeological research on the British Isles, and on Northern Britain in particular, has been slower to acknowledge these developments, due to the remoteness of the subject and its detachment from the mainstream of early medieval studies on the one hand, and to the entanglement of the subject with modern religious and political issues on the other: over the last two decades, however, several studies have brought it back within the broader economic, political, social, and cultural context of early medieval Europe.⁵ Thus, one cannot speak of a political entity called Scotland or of a Scottish people during the Early Middle Ages: neither of them really existed. Both the kingdom and the people (or, at least, their Scottishness) were later creations, which took shape over the course of the eleventh century.⁶ Indeed, it must be stressed that before the eleventh century, *Scottia* (or *Scotia*) was consistently used by Latin authors to refer to Ireland, “the land of the Irish/Gaels” (*Scotti* or *Scoti*). This is also the meaning of the word in Bede, as already noted by the editors.⁷ Bede’s categorization of the people liv-

ing in Britain was mainly linguistic in perspective:⁸ therefore, *Scotti* were all those people who spoke Gaelic, regardless of their residence, and in Bede's mind there was no clear ethnic distinction between the Gaels living in Ireland and those living in Britain: hence the need to use periphrases like "the Irish who live among the English"⁹ or "the Irish who are settled in Britain"¹⁰ to identify unequivocally the Gaelic-speaking inhabitants of Northern Britain (the Scots of modern historical narratives).

Northern Britain is a neutral geographical expression I use here to indicate the territories north of the Forth-Clyde isthmus, where the Antonine Wall had been erected by the Romans. It reflects an important political divide of the Iron Age and the Early Middle Ages while at the same time bearing no connections to the ethnic identities of the peoples living there. Pictland, on the other hand, refers to the area(s) perceived by contemporary sources to have been subject to the authority of the kings of the Picts, regardless of the extent to which these territories formed part of a single political unity. By the time Bede was writing the *Ecclesiastical History*, however, the Pictish kingdom(s) had clearly become the most important political force in Northern Britain.¹¹

But who were the Picts? Archaeological, historical, and linguistic research over the last thirty years has led to the abandonment of the old paradigm of the Picts as a mysterious people whose traits had no parallels in other European societies of the first millennium AD: the Latin ethnonym *Picti*, which emerged in Roman sources at the very end of the third century AD, was nothing more than a collective name for all the barbarians in northern Britain.¹² It was coined, most probably, to identify the "free Britons," living north of Hadrian's Wall and therefore beyond the edge of the Empire, as opposed to the "Roman Britons," living south of the wall; at the same time, the word *Brittones* — until then used as a general term for all the native tribes of Britain — was subjected to a shrinking of meaning and came to identify the British Roman provincials. These concepts saw the same kind of shift, although in the opposite direction, in the native languages of the British Isles: in both Old Irish and Old Welsh the word used to identify the Picts (respectively *Chruitni* and *Prydyn* or *Prydein*) had originally been used to indicate, more generally, all the inhabitants of Britain. When those words were restricted to the inhabitants of Northern Britain, both languages needed to coin new words to refer to the southern Britons: they ended up borrowing from the Latin *Brittones*, giving birth to *Breatain* and *Brython* respectively.¹³ The very idea of Pictishness was therefore a late antique creation of Roman imperial ideology, placed upon

the people living in Northern Britain from the outside: it was probably promoted to distinguish the Roman British provincials from those British barbarians living outside the empire. However, as had often been the case in other parts of late antique and early medieval Europe,¹⁴ domestic developments and foreign interactions boosted the ethnic self-awareness of the people living in Northern Britain and led to the appropriation of the concept of Pictishness by natives. Either through a process of amalgamation of earlier groups and tribes, or through the emergence of new power structures and political units after the collapse of traditional societies under pressure,¹⁵ Pictishness became the focus of the construction of new ethnic identities and political communities.¹⁶ These processes, as we shall see, reached a climax in the early eighth century, when they were witnessed by Bede and captured in his *Ecclesiastical History*.

In order to reassess the Pictish material of the *Ecclesiastical History*, it is necessary to take into consideration its historical and geographical context, as well as its intellectual and literary landscape. The *Ecclesiastical History*'s late antique and early medieval models, as well as the ecclesiastical and political situation of Northern Britain during its compilation, played a fundamental role in determining how Bede chose to structure his work, what contents he chose to include and what to exclude, and how he presented it. My aim is to show the ways in which Bede's understanding of the *genre* of history and the use he made of his models in the *Ecclesiastical History* influenced, among other things, his treatment of the Pictish material: seen against the background of the political context in which Bede lived and wrote, these considerations increase our understanding of how Bede handled the Picts in the *Ecclesiastical History*, and why. In turn, an appreciation of how Bede dealt with his Pictish material can shed some light on his own historical method, his use of the sources and literary models, and his purposes.

Of course, the *Ecclesiastical History* is one of the more widely debated texts in medieval historiography,¹⁷ and its ability to absorb many diverging and even radically opposing interpretations, on a number of different themes, is impressive: Bede has been described both as a detached and disinterested scholar,¹⁸ and as a clever political schemer;¹⁹ both as a radical partisan of the Roman Church in Britain who demonized the Irish, and as a spokesman for the apostolic nature of Irish Christianity and its importance in Northumbria;²⁰ among his purposes have been identified both the push for ecclesiastical reform²¹ and the celebration of mission and conversion;²² the *Ecclesiastical History* has been interpreted both as a

fragment of the universal Christian narrative and as a national saga of the *gens Anglorum*.²³ Moreover, all these broad considerations present several different nuances, and the single themes have been extensively examined in detail. All these problems cannot be analyzed here: however, Bede's writings present several features which are relevant to this chapter's purpose, and therefore need to be briefly assessed.

Firstly, when approaching the *Ecclesiastical History* as a source, one has to be aware of the relations it bears to Bede's other writings. On the one hand, it must be acknowledged that the immediate roots of Bede's historical interests lay in his chronological and hagiographical writings.²⁴ Moreover, he was not only, or even primarily, a historian:²⁵ first and foremost, he was an exegete. Although his modern fame, especially among the general public, derives mostly from the *Ecclesiastical History*, over the last thirty years scholars have become increasingly aware of the importance of his biblical commentaries.²⁶ They constitute the largest part of Bede's extant writings and the embodiment of his avowed lifework (*HE*, V.24), and represented the cornerstone of his immense medieval fame, which started during his own lifetime and continued for several centuries thereafter; they shed light on all of his writings, and an understanding of them is crucial to the comprehension of all he wrote, not least the *Ecclesiastical History*.²⁷

Secondly, questions relating to the concept of *genre* need to be asked: what kind of work was Bede writing when he composed the *Ecclesiastical History*, and what were his models? It is quite clear that Bede's most important model was the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea, which he knew in the Latin translation of Rufinus of Aquileia:²⁸ Bede's work was primarily a history of the universal Church based on a Christian understanding of time (intended both chronologically, as the expression of the advancement of God's providential plan, and geographically, through the diffusion of Christianity to the edges of the world). However, one cannot place Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* exclusively in the Eusebian tradition. First of all, Bede's extensive use of miracle stories and his focus on extraordinary personalities does not feature in Eusebius, and places the *Ecclesiastical History* on the borderline of history and hagiography — a difference that he himself probably did not consider relevant.²⁹ On the other hand, while deliberately placing his work inside this tradition through its title, Bede repeatedly narrowed its focus through the use of subtitles and specifications: the most complete denomination of his work is found in the last chapter, where he refers to it as "Ecclesiastical history of Britain, and most of all of the English people" (*Historia ecclesiastica Britanniarum*,

et maxime gentis Anglorum) and as “Ecclesiastical history of our island and people” (*Historia ecclesiastica nostrae insulae ac gentis*; *HE*, V.24): Bede placed his particular concerns inside the global perspective (on both the spatial and the temporal levels) of ecclesiastical history.³⁰ By staging universal Christian themes on a narrower stage, therefore, Bede produced an original synthesis, which escapes categorization and cannot be easily classified as either *historia ecclesiastica* or *origo gentis*.³¹ The *Ecclesiastical History* is therefore a multi-faceted and multi-layered work, whose only overarching theme is the struggle towards the expansion of Christianity and the unity of the Church.

Both elements had important consequences for Bede’s interpretation of history, which was ultimately based on his understanding of the universal value of sacred history, as expressed in, and understood from, the Bible. Therefore, as a “Christian historian”³² Bede was not primarily concerned with what the modern historian would consider historical accuracy: on the contrary, he saw the writing of history as a means to explore the world’s connection to the divine plan, stretching from the Incarnation to the Final Judgment. His own interpretation of the “true law of history” (*vera lex historiae*)³³ meant that he considered history to have a moral purpose: it was a means by which to convey deep universal truths, be they spiritual or political, lying beneath the surface of the narrative, which were expected to shed light on the present and to inform people’s behavior accordingly. Indeed, Bede himself states that his immediate purpose in writing the *Ecclesiastical History* is to offer moral guidance to its readers or hearers, through examples of good behavior to be followed and bad behavior to be rejected (*HE*, Preface): examples whose value was absolute, even if they were set in a specific time and place, because of their participation in the universal history of Christianity, which encompasses all times and places. Current scenarios, with their relationships to biblical episodes and characters, could thus be set in imaginary past settings (at the same time historicizing and universalizing the present): it is therefore important to bear in mind that the *Ecclesiastical History* reveals a lot more about Bede’s own perception of divine history and about the time in which it was written (c. 731),³⁴ than about the period it describes.

Pictish material in the *Ecclesiastical History* has received inconsistent treatment, being extensively read and analyzed by historians interested in the history of Northern Britain while at the same time being comparatively neglected by those concentrating on Bede. In his recent study on Bede’s idea of the nation, Georges Tugène states that “the Picts,

while not completely absent from the *Ecclesiastical History*, figure in it in a sober manner and their presence is associated with a somewhat indifferent tone”:³⁵ this is untrue, and while the Pictish material is not overly abundant in the *Ecclesiastical History*, it clearly shows that Bede was genuinely interested in the Picts, and the information we can draw from it is relatively abundant.³⁶ That Bede was interested in Northern Britain and the Picts was certainly due, on a historical level, to the proximity between Bede’s own kingdom of Northumbria and the Pictish kingdom(s) to the north, and to the growing power of the latter since the end of the seventh century, when it started to exercise various degrees of political influence over the neighboring kingdoms.³⁷ There is, however, another reason that required Bede to take the Picts into consideration in the *Ecclesiastical History*, and this reason derives naturally from the very nature of his work as outlined above. While the primary setting of the *Ecclesiastical History* was Bede’s own kingdom of Northumbria and the Northumbrian elites were its immediate audience,³⁸ its intended subject was the whole of Britain. The “island of the Ocean” (*Oceani insula*, *HE*, I.1) was one of the fundamental categories of Bede’s world-view, and it enjoyed an essential unity. In his mind there was a strong connection between *Brittannia* and the *gens Anglorum*: “our land and people” (*HE*, V.24) were inseparable, and a history of the latter was impossible without a history of the former, especially from Bede’s Christian perspective. The importance of Britain, as a whole, is moreover underlined by Bede’s geographical introduction.³⁹ It is in line with this general principle that Bede dealt with the Picts in the *Ecclesiastical History*: as we shall see, the way he presented them served to justify the current political situation in Pictland on the one hand, and to stress the importance of ecclesiastical orthodoxy and unity throughout Britain on the other.

The Picts are introduced in the *Ecclesiastical History* immediately after the description of Britain, as one of the four peoples⁴⁰ whose languages are spoken in Bede’s day:

Haec in praesenti iuxta numerum librorum, quibus lex diuina scripta est, quinque gentium linguis unam eandemque summae ueritatis et uerae sublimitatis scientiam scrutatur et confitetur, Anglorum uidelicet Brettonum Scottorum Pictorum et Latinorum, quae meditatione scripturarum ceteris omnibus est facta communis.⁴¹

[At the present time, one and the same knowledge of supreme truth and true sublimity is looked for and confessed in five languages of peoples, just like the number of the books in which the divine law is

written, namely the languages of the English, the Britons, the Gaels, the Picts, and the Latin language that, through the study of the scripture, has been made common to all the others.]

It is clear that Bede is presenting the Picts as a well-defined ethnic group, coherent and separate from the other *gentes* living in Britain, with its own history and language. This impression is reinforced by the Pictish origin myth which follows:

contigit gentem Pictorum de Scythia, ut perhibent, longis nauibus non multis Oceanum ingressam, circumagente flatu uentorum, extra fines omnes Britanniae Hiberniam peruenisse, eiusque septentrionales oras intrasse atque, inuenta ibi gente Scottorum, sibi quoque in partibus illius sedes petisse, nec inpetrare potuisse. ... Respondebant Scotti, quia non ambos eos caperet insula, "sed possumus," inquit, "salubre uobis dare consilium, quid agere ualeatis. Nouimus insulam aliam esse non procul a nostra contra ortum solis, quam saepe lucidioribus diebus de longe aspicere solemus. Hanc adire si uultis, habitabilem uobis facere ualeatis; uel, si qui restiterit, nobis auxiliariis utimini." Itaque petentes Britanniam Picti habitare per septentrionales insulae partes coeperunt; nam austrina Brettones occupauerant. Cumque uxores Picti non habentes peterent a Scottis, ea solum condicione dare consenserunt, ut ubi res ueniret in dubium, magis de feminea regum prosapia quam de masculina regem sibi eligerent; quod usque hodie apud Pictos constat esse seruatum. Procedente autem tempore Britannia post Brettones et Pictos tertiam Scottorum nationem in Pictorum parte recepit, qui duce Reuda de Hibernia progressi, uel amicitia uel ferro sibimet inter eos sedes, quas hactenus habent, uindicarunt.⁴²

[It happened that the Picts, as they say, having sailed out from Scythia into the Ocean in a few long ships, carried by the blowing of the winds beyond the borders of Britain, reached Ireland and entered its northern shores, and having found the Gaels there, they asked to have a place too in their territories, but they could not obtain it ... The Gaels answered that the island could not keep them both but, they said, "We can give you sound advice on what you can do. We know that there is another island, not far from ours to the East, which we often see from a distance on clear days. If you go there, you can make a settlement for yourselves; should anyone resist you, be trustful that we will help you." And so the Picts went to Britain and started to live in the northern regions of the island, as the Britons had occupied the southern ones. Having no wives, the Picts asked them from the Gaels, who agreed to give them only

on condition that, in case the matter came into doubt, they should elect their kings according to the female ancestry rather than the male one; and it is known that this custom has been kept among the Picts up to this day. Over the course of time, after the Britons and the Picts Britain received a third people, the Gaels, into the Pictish part: with Reuda as their leader, they came from Ireland and, through friendship and iron, took from them (i.e. the Picts) the lands they still have today.]

Bede worked within an established tradition of classical ethnography, employing a whole range of well-established *topoi*: he gave the Picts a distant homeland in Scythia,⁴³ he described their long and winding voyage by sea in small numbers which led to their eventual settlement in Britain, and he explained the perceived idiosyncrasies in their socio-political institutions (particularly royal succession)⁴⁴ by having them receive their wives from another people, the Gaels.

What information can be gathered from these passages? First of all, Bede's explicit assertion that he received his information on the origin of the Picts from a Pictish source needs to be stressed: this is implied by the position of *ut perhibent* in the text, and makes it clear that what Bede is reporting here is the version of the story that circulated among the Pictish elites in the early eighth century. Apart from the identification of the Picts as a single, well-defined people, there are two other elements of Bede's narration on which I would like to concentrate here, both of which were informed by the political situation in Northern Britain at the time of the *Ecclesiastical History's* composition.

The first is the way in which Bede stages the relations between the Picts and the Gaels. The Picts and the Gaels are shown to have been originally allied, as implied by the Gaels' offer to help the Picts should they encounter any resistance against their settlement in Britain.⁴⁵ More important still is Bede's assertion that all the Picts ultimately came from a mixed Gaelo-Pictish ancestry, on account of the Gaelic wives of the Pictish settlers (although it has to be stressed that there were ethnographic precedents for the *topos* of the foreign wives in classical origin myths):⁴⁶ this mixed ancestry, moreover, is employed to highlight the importance of the maternal kin in strengthening claims to kingship during periods of political turmoil.

The second important element in the origin myth is Bede's presentation of the Picts as the first settlers of Northern Britain: when they "started living in the northern part of the island," nobody was there, as "the Britons occupied the southern one." There is no conflict, and the whole

of Britain north of the Forth-Clyde isthmus is therefore presented as an inherently Pictish land. The description of the settlement of the Gaels in Britain conveys the same message, and demonstrates once more that Bede intended to introduce the Picts in the *Ecclesiastical History* as the original inhabitants of Northern Britain: the Gaels are said to have arrived “over the course of time into the Pictish part” of the island, and the land they occupied is said to have been already populated, so that they had to win it “through friendship and iron.”⁴⁷

Moreover, there are other hints elsewhere in the *Ecclesiastical History* showing that Bede — or at least the Pictish source he chose to give voice to — considered Northern Britain, as a whole, to be part of the Pictish territory. One is the way in which Bede describes the aftermath of the crushing defeat of the Northumbrian king Egfrith by a Pictish army at the battle of Dún Nechtain:⁴⁸ thanks to their victory and their expansion in the area around the river Tay, the Picts are said to have “recovered their own land” (*terram possessionis suae*, *HE*, IV.26). The other is Bede’s claim that Columba received the land on which to build his monastery from the Pictish king Bridei son of Mailcon, thus implying that Pictish territory extended in the south-west as far as the island of Iona:

Quae uidelicet insula ad ius quidem Britanniae pertinet, non magno ab ea freto discreta, sed donatione Pictorum, qui illas Britanniae plagas incolunt, iamdudum monachis Scottorum tradita, eo quod illis praedicantibus fidem Christi perceperint.⁴⁹

[The island itself [i.e. Iona] surely pertains to the law of Britain, from which it is separated by a narrow strait, but was given a long time ago to the monks of the Gaels through a donation of the Picts, because they had received the faith of Christ through their preaching.]

Venit autem Britanniam Columba, regnante Pictis Bridio filio Meilochon rege potentissimo, nono anno regni eius, gentemque illam uerbo et exemplo ad fidem Christi conuertit; unde et praefatam insulam ab eis in possessionem monasterii faciendi accepit.⁵⁰

[Columba came to Britain in the ninth year of the reign of Bridei son of Mailcon, most powerful king, over the Picts, and converted that people through his word and example; thus he received the aforementioned island [i.e. Iona] in possession from them, so that he could build a monastery.]

The context of this information (which is not supported by any other source and, as we shall see, reflects the political developments of Bede's time) is the account of the conversion of the Picts: according to Bede, who once again declares the Pictish provenance of his information, Columba came to Britain in 565 specifically with the purpose of spreading Christianity among the Picts. It was only the northern Picts who were evangelized by Columba; however, the southern Picts, "as they relate" (*ut perhibent*), were already Christian: they had been converted "a long time before" (*multo ante tempore*) through the preaching of the British bishop Ninian, who "had been regularly instructed in Rome in the faith and the mysteries of the truth" (*Romae regulariter fidem et mysteria ueritatis edoctus*, *HE*, III.4). It is neither possible, nor particularly useful for the purpose of this chapter, to go into the details of the actual process of Christianization of the Picts from the fifth to the seventh century,⁵¹ thus approaching the vast and controversial fields of Ninianic and Columban studies.⁵² As far as the scope of this study goes, what matters is Bede's attitude towards the Church and the Christianity of the Picts: the interest of the conversion tale of the Picts depends mainly on its connection with the Pictish ecclesiastical reform which took place in Bede's own day and is the subject of the last reference to the Picts in the *Ecclesiastical History*:

Eo tempore Naiton rex Pictorum, qui septentrionales Britanniae plagas inhabitant, admonitus ecclesiasticarum frequenti meditatione scripturarum abrenuntiauit errori, quo eatenus in obseruatione paschae cum sua gente tenebatur, et se suosque omnes ad catholicum dominicae resurrectionis tempus celebrandum perduxit ... "Vnde palam profiteor uobisque, qui adsidetis, praesentibus protestor, quia hoc obseruare tempus paschae cum uniuersa mea gente perpetuo uolo; hanc accipere debere tonsuram, quam plenam esse rationis audimus, omnes qui in meo regno sunt clericos decerno." Nec mora, quae dixerat regia auctoritate perfectit.⁵³

[At that time Naiton, king of the Picts who live in the northern parts of Britain, enlightened by his assiduous study of ecclesiastical writings, abandoned the error on the observance of Easter which he had kept together with his people until then, and brought himself and all of his people to the catholic celebration of the time of the Lord's resurrection ... "Hence I publicly declare and I bear witness to the presence of you who are sitting here, that I will forever observe this time of Easter with all my people; and I decree that all the clerics who are in my kingdom must receive this tonsure, which

we heard to be full of reason." And without delay he enforced with royal authority what he had said.]

The Pictish reform, a matter of which Bede had first-hand knowledge, occupies the longest chapter of the entire *Ecclesiastical History*, and it takes the form of a long letter sent in 713/716 by Ceolfrith, Bede's own abbot at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, to the Pictish king Naiton (who, significantly, was still the ruling king of the Picts when Bede completed the *Ecclesiastical History* in 731).⁵⁴ Its context is the long-standing clash, revolving essentially around the question of the dating of Easter, between churchmen representing a Roman standpoint and those in Britain and Ireland who wanted to maintain their own tradition, which had been an issue for Insular Christianity for more than a hundred years:⁵⁵ Naiton's *correctio* made the use of the Roman tables for the calculation of Easter compulsory throughout the Pictish kingdom.⁵⁶ His decision had important consequences in Northern Britain: in the following chapter, Bede relates the abandonment of the Celtic method for the calculation of Easter by the monastery of Iona:

Nec multo post illi quoque, qui insulam Hii incolebant, monachi Scotticae nationis, cum his quae sibi erant subdita monasteriis, ad ritum paschae ac tonsurae canonicum Domino procurante perducti sunt.⁵⁷

[Not long afterwards, also those monks of the Gaels who lived in the island of Iona and the monasteries which were subject to them, were through the Lord's guidance brought to the canonical rites regarding Easter and the tonsure.]

Bede does not actually attribute this change in Iona to the reform in Pictland, just as he did not include in the *Ecclesiastical History* the expulsion of the "family of Iona" from Pictland recorded by the Irish annals in 716/717:⁵⁸ it has been argued that this may have depended on his wish to give more emphasis to the missionary work in Iona of the Northumbrian monk Ecgbert.⁵⁹ The connection between the two events, however, is suspicious: it is quite probable that the Columbian monks in Iona finally changed their Easter reckoning as a direct consequence of Naiton's ecclesiastical reform. Both the claim that the southern Picts had been converted from Rome and the suggestion that the monastery of Iona "kept the primacy over all the Pictish monasteries for no short time" (*omnium Pictorum monasteriis non paruo tempore arcem tenebat*, *HE*, III.3) become

much clearer in this context: by stressing the primitive orthodoxy of southern Pictish Christianity and its subsequent loss of conformity over the course of time because of the growing influence of Iona, Bede could highlight the importance of Naiton's correction, which had rectified Pictish Christianity by bringing it back to its original communion with Rome.

These events were clearly a matter of great importance to Bede: they represented a decisive step towards the overcoming of the religious divisions in Britain, as the Britons were alone in persisting in error at the time Bede finished his work.⁶⁰ Moreover, they opened the door to the achievement of that religious unity in orthodoxy (i.e. under the aegis of Rome); its promotion is one of the most important themes of the *Ecclesiastical History*. Bede's treatment of the Pictish material confirms that the expansion of the universal Church, with special reference to Britain, was so crucial to him that he deserves the label of "Catholic historian."

On a more markedly political level, the contemporary situation of Northern Britain helps to shed light on Bede's approach to the Picts. In the first place, it must be stressed that from the 670s onwards the Pictish kingdom had steadily expanded its influence from its north-eastern heartland of *Fortriu* towards the south and south-west.⁶¹ By the time of Naiton's reign, Pictish kings had been involved in the political and ecclesiastical life of the Gaelic-speaking areas of Northern Britain collectively known as Dál Riata (including Iona) for a generation: Bede's view that the Gaels had taken Dál Riata away from the Picts, as well as his choice to present the whole of Northern Britain as inherently Pictish, are a reflection of this recent political development and an acknowledgement of the Pictish claim to overlordship over Northern Britain. Moreover, both Naiton and his predecessor Bridei were of mixed Gaelo-Pictish ancestry (their mother Derilei was Pictish, whereas their father Dargart was a Gael), and their claim to the Pictish throne lay in their mother's lineage:⁶² Bede's myth of origin, which gave mixed ancestry to all the Picts and stressed the importance of the kings' maternal descent, was perfectly designed to support the ruling dynasty of the Pictish kingdom by legitimizing their rule and celebrating their Gaelic heritage and interests. Lastly, while Bede and his Pictish source were aware of the local divisions within Pictland,⁶³ the factionalized nature of the Pictish kingdom is downplayed in the *Ecclesiastical History*: in general terms, the Picts are consistently described as a single people (*gens*) subjected to the authority of a single king of the Picts (*rex Pictorum*); more specifically, there is no trace in the *Ecclesiastical History* of the political turmoil registered by the Irish annals for the late 720s.⁶⁴

Northern Britain experienced profound transformations between the late seventh and the early eighth centuries, as a result of which a coherent Pictish identity emerged and grew in the context of new ecclesiastical and political structures. From Bede's perspective, and especially from the perspective of his Pictish source, Northern Britain belonged to the Picts. As I hope to have shown, their treatment in the *Ecclesiastical History* reflects this perception.

NOTES

¹ I would like to thank Alessandra Petrina for giving me the opportunity to present the paper on which this article is based at "Natio Scota. The Thirteenth International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature." I would also like to thank Alessandra Petrina and Ian Johnson for having made the publication of this article possible.

² Hereafter cited as *HE*. The standard edition remains Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, to be looked at in conjunction with the commentary in Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*. A new edition has recently appeared: Bede, *Storia degli Inglesi*, but the passages quoted here do not present differences of note; all translations from the Latin text in this contribution are my own.

³ See, for instance, the General Editor's Preface in the *New Edinburgh History of Scotland*; Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, xi; Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba*, ix. The name-spelling used here is also based on these books.

⁴ Ethnicity has been at the core of the interests of early medieval historians for the last forty years. For a recent survey on the problem and the debate, see Gillet, "Ethnogenesis: A Contested Model," and Halsall, *Barbarian Migration*, 35–45.

⁵ Fraser, *Caledonia*, 30–61, and Halsall, "Northern Britain."

⁶ On the coming into being and early development of the medieval "Kingdom of the Scots" see Broun, *Scottish Independence*, with particular attention to the transformation of early medieval identities and communities at 48–87.

⁷ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 16, n.1.

⁸ This connection between language (*lingua*) and people (*gens* or *natio*) is present throughout the text. It is generalized and made explicit on two separate occasions, when Bede enumerates the four peoples living in Britain (Britons, Picts, Gaels, and English), each speaking their own language: *HE*, I.1; III.6. On the importance of this language/people relationship in Bede's works see Hall, "Interlinguistic Communication."

⁹ *HE*, III.26 (*Scottorum, quem gesserunt in prouincia Anglorum*); III.28 (*Scotti omnes, qui inter Anglos morabantur*).

¹⁰ *HE*, I.34 (*Scottorum, qui Britanniam inhabitant*); II.5 (*Scottorum gentes, quae septentrionales Britanniae fines tenent*); IV.26 (*Scotti, qui erant in Britannia*); V.23 (*Scotti, qui Britanniam incolunt*).

¹¹ Pictland maintained a factionalized nature well into the early medieval period — hence my use of “kingdom(s)”: the most important political divide appears to have run along the Grampians, with a North-South divide, possibly derived from the Iron Age ethnic distinction between *Verturiones* and *Dicalydones*. For two centuries before the middle of the eighth century, these lesser political units were under the authority of a single Pictish high-king whose power base was the kingdom of *Fortriu*, to the point that often “king of *Fortriu*” (*rex Fortrenn*) and “king of the Picts” (*rex Pictorum*) were used interchangeably. Alex Woolf has irrefutably relocated *Fortriu* north of the Mounth, a fact that has enormous consequences for the understanding of the early medieval history of Northern Britain: Woolf, “Dún Nechtain,” especially at 188–200.

¹² One of the first full-length studies strongly opposing the old view and opening the way to a new understanding of Pictish history has been Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men*, especially at 36–83. See also Alcock, “Pictish Studies,” and most recently Crawford, “F. T. Wainwright and the Problem.”

¹³ Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 47–49. See also Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 79–83, for a slightly different but not incompatible account of these linguistic developments.

¹⁴ Miller, “Frontier Societies;” Pohl, “Introduction.”

¹⁵ Foster, *Picts, Gaels and Scots*, 11–12; Hunter, *Beyond the Edge*, 49–50.

¹⁶ For a slightly different interpretation see Halsall, “Northern Britain,” 9–10, 13–17.

¹⁷ For a fairly recent overview of previous scholarship and a fresh analysis of several of these problems see Higham, *Re-Reading Bede*.

¹⁸ Following Charles Plummer, this has been almost universally accepted until the 1980s: see, among others, Hunter-Blair, “The Historical Writings of Bede;” Wormald, “Bede and Benedict Biscop.”

¹⁹ Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, 235–328; Goffart, “The *Historia Ecclesiastica*.”

²⁰ Pepperdene, “Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*” (Bede as anti-Irish) and Thacker, “Bede and the Irish” (Bede as pro-Irish). See also Stancliffe, “Bede, Wilfrid and the Irish.”

²¹ Thacker, “Bede’s Ideal of Reform.”

²² Rollason, “Bede and Germany,” 14–15; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 42–43.

²³ See respectively Davidse, “The Sense of the Past,” and Tugène, “L’Histoire.” Who these *Angli* were has also been discussed: contrast Richter, “Bede’s *Angli*” (in which the *gens Anglorum* is equated with a broad English people) with Harris, “Bede, Social Practice, and the Problem” (which argues for a narrower identification of the *gens Anglorum* with the Angles, as distinct from the Saxons). On this see also Brooks, “Bede and the English,” and Tugène, *L’idée de nation*.

²⁴ Levison, “Bede as Historian,” 112.

²⁵ Campbell, *Bede I*, 1.

²⁶ One of the first to underline how Bede’s exegetical work influenced his

world-view and his perception of history was Roger Ray, in "Bede, the Exegete, as Historian." A series of important studies have since then approached various aspects in Bede's writing from this perspective: see in particular the articles in DeGregorio, *Innovation and Tradition*.

²⁷ Ray, "What Do We Know;" DeGregorio, "Bede and the Old Testament."

²⁸ Markus, "Bede and the Tradition;" Barnard, "Bede and Eusebius."

²⁹ For a traditional assessment of Bede's miracle stories, see Colgrave, "Bede's Miracle Stories." See also the comprehensive study of McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede*.

³⁰ Merrills, *History and Geography*, 234–39.

³¹ See Tugène, *L'idée*, 49–118, even if its sharp distinction between *historiae* and *origines* is at least in part the product of contemporary categorization into different *genres* and needs therefore to be treated with some caution. See also Gunn, *Bede's Historiae*.

³² Davide, "Bede as a Christian Historian."

³³ *HE*, Preface. On the meaning of this expression see the contrasting opinions in: Jones, *Saints' Lives*, 80–93; Ray, "Bede's Vera Lex Historiae;" Goffart, "Bede's *uera lex historiae* Explained." For a recent assessment of the question, which is followed here, see Higham, *Re-reading Bede*, 79–82.

³⁴ I here accept the traditional dating of the *Ecclesiastical History*. Kirby, "Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*," 2–3 has argued for a later date of completion, up to 734.

³⁵ Tugène, *L'idée*, 21 (my translation).

³⁶ Hughes, "Early Christianity in Pictland," 1; Kirby, "Bede and the Pictish Church," 25.

³⁷ Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 246–63.

³⁸ Higham, *Re-reading Bede*, 115–21.

³⁹ Merrills, *History and Geography*, 249–60.

⁴⁰ On the problem of Bede's description of Latin as a *lingua gentium* among the others, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 7–8, and Hall, "Inter-linguistic Communication," 47, 61–2.

⁴¹ *HE*, I.1.

⁴² *HE*, I.1.

⁴³ Bede's identification of Scythia as the Pictish homeland has puzzled historians: Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae*, II:8, suggested that Bede was confusing Scythia with *Scandia*, an interpretation followed with some caution by Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 17, n. 1, and Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 8. Duncan, "Bede, Iona and the Picts," 4, understood it as the result of a mistaken link between *Scotti* and Scythia, and a subsequent confusion of *Scotti* and *Picti*. Merrills, *History and Geography*, 284–85, has recently shown that there is no need to imply confusion on Bede's part, and argued that he was indeed following an established ethnographic *topos*. Fraser, "From Ancient Scythia," has convincingly defended that the Scythian origin myth came to Bede

from an internal Pictish source, and that it was created in order to strengthen Pictish self-identification as non-Roman.

⁴⁴ Bede's passage has been thoroughly examined by scholars looking for evidence on royal succession among the Picts. Until the 1980s, there was general agreement that Pictish succession was matrilineal, but this view has been challenged in recent years. See Evans, "Royal Succession and Kingship," 1–2, nn. 1, 3. I here follow the interpretation of Woolf, "Pictish Matriliney."

⁴⁵ Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 144–49, 238–41, underlines the 'Picto-centric' elements in Bede's ethnographic introduction.

⁴⁶ Merrills, *History and Geography*, 283, n. 209.

⁴⁷ Both the uncontested nature of the Pictish settlement in Northern Britain and its priority over the settlement of the Gaels run contrary to the tradition established by Gildas in the 540s: according to his *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae* (chapter 19) the Picts and the Gaels had occupied Northern Britain at the same time, wresting it away from its British inhabitants after the collapse of Roman rule.

⁴⁸ On the political context of the battle and its consequences see Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 214–16.

⁴⁹ *HE*, III.3.

⁵⁰ *HE*, III.4.

⁵¹ On which see Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 68–115.

⁵² For a recent assessment of the Ninianic debate, see Wooding, "Archaeology and the Dossier." The best survey of the sources and the problems related to Columba is still Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, especially 9–35 and 134–50.

⁵³ *HE*, V.21.

⁵⁴ This is implied by the rendering of *hostem* as "enemy," convincingly put forward in Woolf, "AU 729.2." For the historical context see Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 269–81 and 285–93.

⁵⁵ On the so-called Easter controversy see Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*.

⁵⁶ For a detailed analysis of the letter and its context see Grigg, "Paschal Dating."

⁵⁷ *HE*, V.22.

⁵⁸ *The Annals of Ulster*, 717.4. On the actual meaning of this expulsion see Grigg, "Expulsion of the *Familia Iae*."

⁵⁹ Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 270–71. Ecgbert's preaching "to those among whom he lived in exile, the Gaels and the Picts" (*illis, in quibus exulabat, nationibus Scottorum siue Pictorum*) had been described by Bede in *HE*, IV.27. His actual role in the ecclesiastical developments at Iona and at the Pictish court has been debated: for a recent assessment see Clancy, "Philosopher-king," 126–27 and nn. 6, 7, 9, and Evans, "The Calculation of Columba's Arrival," 203–5.

⁶⁰ *HE*, V.23. On Bede's attitude towards the Britons see Stancliffe, "Bede and the Britons."

⁶¹ Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 203–8, 213–16, 224–28, 237–42, 246–49, 253–60, 262–63.

⁶² Clancy, "Philosopher-king," especially 127–33.

⁶³ As signaled by Bede's distinction between southern and northern Picts in *HE*, III.4, and by his use of the expression "all the kingdoms of the Picts" (*universae Pictorum prouinciae*) in *HE*, V.21.

⁶⁴ See the list of annalistic entries in Clancy, "Philosopher-king," 143–44, and the historical discussion in Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 285–93.

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Universals, Particulars, and Political Discourse in John Mair's *Historia Maioris Britanniae*

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IN A KEY PASSAGE of the *Poetics*, Aristotle observes that poetry is both more philosophical and more valuable than history, since “poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular.” Unlike history, he writes, poetic narrative proceeds “according to the law of probability or necessity.” More precisely, the poet shows us “how a person of a certain type will on occasion speak or act, according to the law of probability or necessity; and it is this universality at which poetry aims.”¹ As a result, poetry can achieve a much higher degree of narrative unity than history. Whereas the poet seeks to construct a unified plot, the historian must choose a period of time and report “all that happened within that period ... little connected together as the events may be.” And in any series of historical events, Aristotle adds, “one thing sometimes follows another, and yet no single result is thereby produced.”² Thus historians and poets “differ in this respect, that the former tell us what things have happened, while the latter show us what kinds of things would happen.”³ The raw data of history, it seems, lack the internal order necessary to support general notions.

How then, does a committed Aristotelian go about writing history? We can approach this question quite directly in the work of an eminent Scot and prolific Latinist, John Mair. Born at Gleghornie in 1467, Mair was educated first at Haddington, then (but briefly) at Cambridge, and last at Paris, where he took his MA in 1494.⁴ While teaching the arts course (primarily logic) at the Collège de Montaigu, Mair earned his doctorate in theology (1506), which he then taught at both the Collège de Navarre and the Sorbonne. During his long career at Paris, Mair became one of the most distinguished teachers and scholars at the university, publishing dozens of books and inspiring a reverential devotion among his students.⁵ In addition to commentaries on the gospels and on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Mair's numerous works on logic made him (to cite the judgment of one modern historian) “the most eminent Scholastic theologian at Paris in the early years of the sixteenth century.”⁶ Although he remained

faithful to the scholastic curriculum and to the Roman church, Mair was still forward-thinking enough to welcome the humanist emphasis on Greek and to urge the reform of various ecclesiastical abuses.⁷ In 1518, he returned to Scotland to teach for five years at the fledgling university of Glasgow. From 1523 until his death in 1550 (except for a second residence in Paris from 1526 to 1531), he taught theology at St. Andrews, counting Buchanan and Knox among his pupils.

As to the substance of his many logical treatises, Mair was a practitioner of the “terminist logic” and as such a nominalist, a representative of the dominant philosophical school of the late Middle Ages.⁸ For present purposes, nominalism can be defined with respect to a central problem in medieval philosophy, the relation between particulars and universals: the very terms used by Aristotle to clarify the difference between history and poetry, as for so much else. Universals are categories, *bird* for example, that comprise many discrete particulars. For a philosophical realist, such categories exist independently of the mind; there exists a real essence of bird, one that inheres in every member of the category. For a nominalist like John Mair, on the other hand, these categories have no reality outside the mind. Universals are strictly mental constructs based on similarities between particulars, and thus *bird* is merely a term, one that signifies nothing real apart from certain feathered individuals. To put this somewhat differently, a nominalist grants universals only logical status, as terms of discourse (whence the phrase “terminist logic”), whereas a realist accords them ontological status, as existing in their own right.⁹ Mair honors, as the decisive figure in nominalist thought, the early fourteenth-century philosopher William of Ockham, who insisted that “no universal is a substance existing outside the mind” (“nullum universale sit aliqua substantia extra animam existens”), since “everything outside the mind is singular” (“omnis res extra animam est singularis”), that is, a unique individual.¹⁰ For the nominalist, reality consists entirely of discrete particulars, while category-designations exist only in the mind and function only in discourse. Mair’s own engagement with this question was true not only to his academic environment but to his nation as well. Alexander Broadie, our leading expert on philosophy among the Scots, has ventured to say that the Scottish philosophical tradition as a whole has been “marked by a continuing dispute between nominalists and realists.”¹¹

The work I address here, Mair’s *Historia Maioris Britanniae* (History of Greater Britain) stands a league apart from his many logical and theological writings; still, or so I will argue, it deserves a central place in

the intellectual history of the west. Published at Paris in 1521, it is, as the title suggests, a chronicle of both Scottish and English history, though the bulk of it is devoted, quite naturally, to Mair's native Scotland. The book has often been noted for Mair's open, and perhaps unprecedented, advocacy of union between Scotland and England.¹² Early in this work, in fact, Mair states that all native inhabitants of the island of Britain should be regarded as members of a single category, Britons ("dico ergo omnes in Britannia natos Britannos").¹³ He acknowledges, of course, the existence of linguistically diverse peoples (Welsh, English, Highland Scots) whose relations have, at times in the past, been hostile. But Mair can find no adequate reason for using these terms to designate separate nations. He remarks here (and twice more in the chronicle) that the island of Britain is geographically undivided; you can travel between Scotland, England, and Wales without getting your feet wet (*pede sicco*). Therefore, as Mair sees it, the only ontologically sound basis for classifying the people of Britain is a discrete and unitary thing: *insula*, the island itself. If this were not so, Mair argues, Britons could not be distinguished as a group from other peoples ("ab aliis omnibus Britanni segregati non essent"), for example, the French (*Gallos*). The conceptual underpinnings of this passage could hardly be more Aristotelian. Having located no firm foundation in reality for the categories Welsh, Pictish, Scottish, and English, Mair subsumes these species, and every individual in them, under the genus British. Every particular native of Britain belongs to the category British, and for this category, in truly nominalist fashion, Mair finds a sound ontological basis in a discrete object, the island. Finally, he then treats the genus British, in contrast to Gallic, as itself a species within a still broader generic category: European, it would appear, though Mair does not use that word. Here, as elsewhere in his chronicle, Mair contends at once with a philosophical question, the status of universals, and with a political one, the basis of national identity.

In his introductory statement to the *Historia*, Mair anticipates various imputations against him, including that of having meddled outside his area of expertise, theology. In response to this charge, Mair argues that only a theologian, well-grounded in questions of morality, can tell the reader "not just what was done, but also how it ought to have been done" ("non solum quid gestum sit, sed etiam quomodo gerendum sit").¹⁴ Showing himself mindful of the Aristotelian strictures against history, Mair does not assert that historical events possess their own internal order. But he does assert the right to judge particular events according to certain

ethical standards that a theologian is best equipped to apply. Mair does not need to add that such ethical standards are necessarily universal, since any standard confined to some particular event would not be a standard at all. An injunction against theft, for example, pertains to acts of theft generally, not just to one such act. In effect, Mair proposes to rescue the general significance of past events on the grounds of ethical judgment; his narrative will align historical particulars with the ethical universals they exemplify.

A striking instance of such judgment appears early on, in Mair's narrative of the eleventh-century king Malcolm Canmore. After retaking the throne from Macbeth, Mair tells us, Malcolm discovered a plot against his life led by an unnamed knight. The king invited this man to go hunting with him, and, when the two were alone in the countryside, challenged the knight to a duel. The knight declined, begged for mercy, and revealed the partners of his plot. Mair severely condemns Malcolm's action, arguing that his decision to handle the plot by private combat endangered the entire realm. This particular knight, Mair says, lacked stomach for a fight, but it might have been otherwise. Had the knight been bolder ("si temerarius animosusque fuisset"), Malcolm might not have survived, and in needlessly confronting a particular threat, Malcolm ignored what surely would have resulted from his own demise, a disastrous civil war ("ruina Regis fuisset in reipublicae maximam perniciem," 43v–44r). Thus the particularity and contingency that pertained to this anonymous knight did not apply to the king, whose death would have had certain necessary consequences. One's sense that the narrative has ascended from particulars to universals is confirmed when Mair concludes by saying that "since the king is a public person, he is not able to expose himself to war without consent of the people" ("rex cum sit persona publica non potest se bello exponere sine populi consensus"). Clearly, Mair is no longer concerned at this point with Malcolm alone but with kings in general, a generality underscored by his shift from past to present tense. When *any* man becomes king, Mair implies, he ceases to be a Malcolm or a Robert or a James; he becomes a generic person whose life belongs to the republic and thus is no longer his own to hazard, a rule that covers all contingencies. Not only does Mair advance in this episode from particulars to universals, but his concern for ethical standards here takes on a distinctly political aspect. Every king must observe general rules because, as the phrase *persona publica* suggests, to become king is to have embraced universal rather than particular interests.

This conception of kingship will be much elaborated in the lengthy set-piece at the heart of Mair's chronicle, his defense of Robert Bruce's

claim to the Scottish throne. Mair structures this part of his *History* as a full-blown *quaestio*, a scholastic disputation, advancing the proposition that Bruce was rightful inheritor of the throne, defending this proposition on a number of grounds, presenting several objections to the proposition, and answering these objections. As it turns out, Mair's defense of Bruce is more an argument in despite of John Baliol, the other chief claimant. The key point in this argument is that Baliol, in pursuing his claim, sought the support of Edward II of England by promising to rule Scotland as his feudal vassal. In doing so, Mair holds, Baliol rendered himself unfit to take the throne ("ius suum omne Eduardo Anglo tribuens fuit regno inidoneus," 76v). In his view, Baliol's readiness to surrender Scottish sovereignty violated a fundamental rule of kingship, namely, that kingdoms do not belong to kings as private property and therefore cannot be alienated in this manner. "A king," he explains, "does not have such a flawless and free title to the kingdom as a private owner has to his own property" ("non ita pulcrum & liberum dominium in regno Rex habet sicut in suo dominio particularis dominus," 78v). It follows from this principle that "kings cannot transfer to someone else the rights of their kingdom at their own will" ("Reges enim non possunt regni sui iura secundum sua arbitria alteri conferre," 77v). Again, Mair's argument rises to the universal, applying not just to one king but to kings in general. Moreover, it relies on a sharp contrast between the public or general interest of kings and the particular interests of private citizens; the phrase I have just translated "private owner" is, in Mair's Latin, *particularis dominus*. "The king is a public person," Mair writes again, and as such "governs the realm for the common good and its increase" ("Rex enim est persona publica & ... regno ob utilitatem communem & eius incrementum praeest," 79r). On the other hand, "anyone else is director and disposer in his own particular interest" ("In re vero sua particulari quilibet est moderator & arbiter"). Because Baliol treated Scotland as private property, to be alienated at his own discretion, he proved himself a man of private interest, one who would govern *in re sua particulari* rather than *pro re publica*; thus he was unworthy to become *persona publica*, that generic man, a king.

Because Mair uses it here and elsewhere as the antonym of *particularis*, the word *publica* clearly bears a near relation to such logical signifiers as *generalis* and *universalis*, "general" and "universal." But what, exactly, is the *respublica* (to apply Mair's word)? What is this universal for which a king must sacrifice his own interests? In the course of this same argument, Mair asserts that the Scottish nobility, and indeed Baliol himself, should

have preferred that Bruce be king, because “they ought to have desired that by which the mystical body of which they were parts should remain unscathed” (“debebant velle illud quo corpus mysticum cuius erant partes maneret incolume,” 77r). Here we encounter for the first time in this work the phrase “mystical body” (*corpus mysticum*), and with it we meet a different sort of universal. Originally used with reference to the Eucharist, this phrase was then extended, in ecclesiastical usage, to the church itself, conceived as a corporate unity. By further extension to juridical discourse at large, *corpus mysticum* could, by the middle of the thirteenth century, be employed as a term for “body politic,” for any secular corporation.¹⁵ As such it signifies a universal, that is, a collection of individuals, but this universal differs from the kind that I discussed above. To use my earlier example, *king* is a categorical universal, derived by abstraction from similarities between its constituent particulars, individual kings. On the basis of certain features that they share, we classify certain men as members of this special category, and thus every king will exemplify the category. But a corporate universal, like “the republic,” cannot be derived by abstraction from its particular members, since the abstract result derived from the individual citizens of a republic would not be “the republic” but “the citizen” instead. Indeed, “the citizen” and “the republic” are virtual opposites, in that the former designates a kind of individual, the latter a kind of community. Thus no human individual can ever exemplify a corporate universal, which denotes something of a completely different order than the members it comprises.

Still, the same question that was asked about categorical universals can be applied to corporate universals as well: the question of their ontological status. What are we to make of terms like “the people” (*populus*), from whom, Mair frequently insists, the king receives his power? “A king holds the right of the realm from a free people,” he says, “nor can he concede that right to anyone against the will of the people” (“Ius regni a populo libero Rex habet, nec contra populi voluntatem illud ius alicui concedere potest,” 56r). But do terms like *populus* and *respublica* signify anything real, anything that is not reducible to the individuals comprised, or are they merely terms of discursive convenience? Does something else take shape *among* people, some reality other than the aggregate of their discrete existence?¹⁶ In short, do corporate universals have reality outside the mind? The usual reply to such questions during the Middle Ages was, in a word, no. The corporate universal, *corpus mysticum*, was generally regarded as “a fiction of jurisprudence,” a term of convenience signifying

the individuals involved and nothing more.¹⁷ This, of course, is the nominalist reply, and William of Ockham, that patron of nominalism, had rejected with contempt any suggestion that "the people" might designate something other than a collection of individuals.¹⁸ Likewise Mair, as soon as he uses the term *corpus mysticum*, hastens to add that this is merely a figure of speech and not to be strictly construed; any parallel between the human body and a "mystical body," he says, is only an argument by analogy (*a simili*), and such an argument typically limps (*claudicat*) rather than walking upright (79r).

The remainder of Mair's *History* will confirm this view, as every corporate body in which he has invested authority or hope disintegrates into its unruly constituents. The very notion of British universality, from which the *History of Greater Britain* has its title, cannot withstand the forces of historical particularity. As I said earlier, it has often been remarked that Mair was perhaps the first real advocate of union between the Scottish and English crowns. That is true enough, but this remark alone gives a somewhat misleading impression of his chronicle, where the tendency toward Scottish particularism is stronger by far than the tendency toward union. In fact, most of Mair's *History* fits in quite nicely with the patriotism of the Scottish chronicle tradition as a whole. We know how sharply he censures John Baliol for pledging feudal fealty to England; far from being an isolated judgment, this position will be reiterated in one context after another. Mair is at pains to refute, again and again, in a running battle with William Caxton's *Chronicles of England*, the claim that English kings enjoy feudal sovereignty over Scotland. Where Caxton says that Malcolm Canmore made himself vassal to William the Conqueror, Mair insists that "it is quite unheard of, and wholly incredible to the Scots, that a Scottish king at peace in his own realm would recognize an English king or anyone else as his temporal superior" ("Inauditum est unquam & apud Scotos prorsus inopinabile, quod Scotus in suo regno pacificus Anglum vel quemcumque alium in temporalibus superiorem recognosceret," 45r). Where Caxton expresses outrage at Scottish resistance to Edward II, Mair responds flatly that "the Scots have never recognized the English king as their superior" ("Anglum Scotis superiorem Scoti nunquam cognovere," 81v). And Mair celebrates the exploits of William Wallace, the champion and martyr of Scottish independence, in terms as stirring as any a vernacular poet might have invented.

As for the internal polity of Scotland, the later stages of Mair's *History* record an abrupt dissolution of authority. Having carefully estab-

lished “the whole people” (*totus populus*) as the source of political power, Mair then explains that this power should be wielded not by the people directly but by “the three estates who represent the republic” (“tres status qui rempublicam ... repraesentant,” 87r), that is, in session of parliament.¹⁹ Any momentous decision must be made by the whole realm, to be sure, but “especially by the lords and nobles who act for the common people” (“potissimum primoribus & nobilibus qui plebis vices gerunt,” 77r). In practice, as we discover, this means the barons, since Mair shows little interest in the church, *qua* estate, and still less in the burgesses. This noble “estate” (*status*), in turn, will prove to be nothing more than a nominal tag for a bunch of self-serving and lawless individuals, during the reigns of Bruce’s hapless successors. As Roger Mason writes, Mair here becomes “the first in a long line of historians to interpret late medieval Scottish history in terms of a continuous (and largely unsuccessful) struggle on the part of the crown to impose its will on over-mighty and irresponsible magnates.”²⁰ The lords of the borders and the highlands are frequent objects of Mair’s concern. About the latter, he writes that some “were regarded as princes in their own particular lands” (“in locis suis particularibus tanquam principes habiti sunt,” 132r). For Mair, this is an error that portends only trouble for the commonweal: men devoted to their own particular interests have usurped the function of *persona publica*, of the king. About the border lords he says that “there is nothing more dangerous than to raise great houses so high, and above all if they have their forces on the borders of the kingdom” (“nil periculosius esse quam domus magnas in altum extollere, & potissimum si in regni terminis suas vires habeant,” 142r). Thus, with reference to Robert III’s grant of Galloway to Archibald Douglas, Mair again warns that “to exalt great men in power past measure does great harm to the republic” (“Magnos enim viros in dominio nimis extollere reipublicae plurimum officit,” 123v).

The Douglas clan, of course, has a disproportionate part in this narrative of over-mighty magnates. I offer just one short passage in order to convey the flavor of the post-Bruce stages of Mair’s chronicle:

Anno domini Millesimo trecentesimo quinquagesimotertio David Barclay auratus eques Abardoniae mediis Guillemi Douglassi tunc captivi in Anglia occisus est: propter Ioannis Douglassi de Dalketh interitum, cui dictus David interfuit. Erat enim iste Ioannes de Dalket frater Davidis. Praeterea anno domini quinquagesimo tertio super millesimum trecentesium Guillelmus Douglassius de Nyddisdale occisus est, in sylva de Ethrik: apud Galvort: cum venatum

exiret per Guillelmum Douglassum filium suum spiritualement dominum de Douglass: & postea comitem: propter odium quod in eum conceperat ob Alexandri Ramsay mortem, vel propter ambitionem. Uterque enim erat animosus & terras vicinas habuerunt.

[In the year of our lord 1353, David Barclay, a knight of Aberdeen, was killed by agents of William Douglas, then captive in England, on account of the killing of John Douglas of Dalkeith, at which the said David had been present, because this John of Dalkeith was the brother of David. Also in 1353, William Douglas of Nithsdale was killed, as he went hunting in the forest of Ettrick at Galvort, by his godson William Douglas, lord of Douglas and afterward earl, either on account of the hatred he had conceived against him over the death of Alexander Ramsay, or on account of ambition. For both men were proud, and they held neighboring lands.] (107v–108r)

This is a very short passage, but even so one loses track; indeed Mair himself loses track. He surely means that John Douglas of Dalkeith was the brother of William Douglas, not of David Barclay; it was the murder of John, his brother, that provided William with the motivation to have Barclay killed. The last two books of Mair's chronicle consist of this passage writ large. Teeming with proper names, lacking in narrative coherence, almost devoid of the more theoretical concerns that marked the earlier stages of the work, these chapters seem written as if to confirm Aristotle's poor opinion of the historian's art. This is no less true of the chapters devoted to England, especially those that address the Wars of the Roses. At every point in the later stages of Mair's chronicle, in his turbid accounts of both Scotland and England, the aspiration toward universals has been shattered by the violent energy of historical particulars.

Things fall apart. And indeed they often do, but my point is that on nominalist grounds things *must* fall apart, the corporate universal *must* dissolve into its constituent particulars, because it never had reality in the first place. I am myself, by philosophical conviction, a realist, one who sees history not as an assortment of unique particulars but as the concrete working through of ideas. From this point of view I cannot believe it an accident that the heyday of scholastic nominalism, roughly from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth century, should be an era of political dissolution in Scotland, England, and France as well. But against this hunger for chaos, and in specific opposition to it, there arose the modern state, that thoroughly realist invention. The state is, precisely, political sovereignty understood as a reality independent of and irreducible to

the individuals who may exercise it. Out of the sheer vicissitudes of the Wars of the Roses and the Hundred Years' War, there emerged, in France and in England, an idea of power that would prove immune to political chance. In Quentin Skinner's words, the state came into being when conceived "as a locus of power which can be institutionalized in a variety of ways, and which remains distinct from and superior to both its citizens and their magistrates." The king, in a polity so conceived, will serve rather than constitute his government, because "there is an independent political apparatus, that of the State, which the ruler may be said to have a duty to maintain."²¹

As we have seen, no one insists more warmly on the duty of king to commonweal than John Mair. Even so, Mair cannot be said to have understood the state in the way just defined, in proof of which I offer his advocacy of union between England and Scotland. Despite his desire for a unified realm, Mair provides us (as Mason has rightly argued) "no hint of how — or even if — he saw it functioning as a single constitutional entity with a single parliament and a single body of law."²² What Ewart Lewis has said about John of Salisbury is just as apt to John Mair: "Although he occasionally called the commonwealth a corporation ... he was unable to conceive of its personality as located anywhere except in the king."²³ Since for Mair the state still inhered in the persons of royalty, his proposed union of the crowns was to be just that, a union of individuals to be effected by wedlock. "It would be of the greatest advantage," he says, "to both realms that they should be under one king, who would be called king of Britain, provided that this should be by just and honorable title; nor do I see any means to this other than marriage" ("*Utilissimum utrique regno foret, quod ambo essent sub uno principe qui Britanniae vocaretur rex, dummodo illud iusto & honesto titulo fieret: nec aliud medium nisi matrimonium invenio*," 78r).

Leaving aside its lack of constitutional detail, the validity of a realm united in this way would be contingent upon the sacramental authority of the one institution that did not blush to claim universal status: the church. Indeed, universality was so indispensable to Catholic ecclesiastical doctrine as to provide its very name. Mair addresses this claim, if somewhat obliquely, in that section of his chronicle where he recounts the investiture dispute between King John of England and Pope Innocent III. With respect to the church revenues expropriated by John over the several years of this crisis, Mair says that "since the dispute was between the king and the Anglican church, about the goods taken away from her ... the

king should have made restitution to that particular church" ("Cum inter Regem & ecclesiam Anglicanam contendebatur de bonis ab ea ablatis ... rex debebat ecclesiae particulari restitutionem facere," 56r). Likewise, since John later made amends to the papacy but did not repay the wealth he had drained from the church at home, Mair concludes that "this restitution does not suffice, to give one quota to the Roman church for the many taken from another particular church" ("Non sufficit illa restitutio dare unam quotam ecclesiae Romanae pro multis ablatis ab alia particulari ecclesia," 56r). And, as for the king's final capitulation, which involved an agreement to hold England from the papacy in exchange for the payment of feudal dues, Mair treats this as a clear violation of royal duty and English sovereignty, laying down the dictum I quoted above, that "a King holds the right of the realm from a free people, nor can he concede that right to anyone against the will of the people" ("Ius regni a populo libero Rex habet, nec contra populi voluntatem illud ius alicui concedere potest," 56r). This should hardly surprise us now, given the line we have seen Mair take against John Baliol. But the analogy Mair invokes to illustrate this principle brings us up short: "If an English or a French king should grant the right of his realm to the Turk, or to another not his true heir, that right is unusable to that person" ("Si ius regni sui Turco vel alteri non vero haeredi Anglus vel Francus daret: alteri illud ius est inutile," 56r). This parallel only applies to King John's case if Innocent III corresponds to the Turkish sultan. Although Mair is of course articulating what he regards as a universal principle governing any such case, the comparison is hardly a flattering or necessary one. Our author, it would appear, has gone out of his way to make a point.

Perhaps neither this, nor the phrase "Anglican church" (*ecclesiam Anglicanam*), in a text published in 1521, should surprise us as much as they do at first glance. Mair's jab at Innocent III, once the very embodiment of papal absolutist pretensions, sorts well with his adherence to conciliarism, the doctrine that a general council of the church possesses authority superior to that of the pope. As a member of the Collège de Navarre, Mair was a spiritual grandson to Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson, leading theorists of the conciliar movement and luminaries at its moment of greatest influence, the Council of Constance (1414–18).²⁴ Acknowledging the adherence of his university, and indeed of all France, to conciliar doctrine, Mair wrote important restatements of the conciliar position, published as parts of his commentaries on the fourth book of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (1516) and on the gospel of Matthew (1518).²⁵

The political context of these restatements, however, betrays the absorption of the conciliar cause by a related but rather different one, that of the Gallican church. This “silver age of conciliar theory” began with a struggle between Pope Julius II and Louis XII of France, an episode sparked by Louis’s conquest of Venice and Milan in 1509.²⁶ In response to this aggression, Julius abrogated the alliance he had recently formed with France; in retaliation, Louis then arranged the meeting of a general church council at Pisa in 1511, with the aim of overruling the pope. It was an age when learned opinion still mattered: Julius commissioned a treatise impugning the authority of general councils, written by Tommaso de Vio (the future Cardinal Cajetan), whereupon Louis turned to the university of Paris for a rebuttal, which was duly supplied by Jacques Almain, a student of John Mair. Mair’s own statements were thus a belated contribution to what was at root a territorial rather than constitutional conflict. The treatises by Mair and Almain, Francis Oakley concludes, bespeak “the essentially Gallican context in which their conciliar thinking had been formed” and also the degree to which conciliarism itself “was being reduced in stature, from a strategic weapon of supranational range to a merely tactical device, lodged in the armory of Gallican pretensions.”²⁷ As a system of Catholic church government, conciliarism had been dead by 1450, with the failure of the Council of Basel. Two generations later, however, its theoretical terms could still be invoked by loyalists to an effectively national church, *ecclesia Gallicana*, with its capital at Paris.

As for the *ecclesia Romana*, conciliarists had, like canon lawyers before them, used this designation in two very different ways. In Brian Tierney’s words, “the phrase could be used in some contexts to designate the Universal Church, the whole *universitas fidelium*, while in others it was taken to mean a local church like the *ecclesia Anglicana* or *ecclesia Gallicana*, though indeed superior to the others in dignity and power.”²⁸ Mair plainly uses it in the latter sense when he says that John of England sent just one sum to the Roman church (*ecclesiae Romanae*) in restitution “for the many taken from another particular church” (“pro multis ablatis ab alia particulari ecclesia,” 56r). In paying off Rome, Mair implies, John reimbursed one local branch of the church, and the wrong one at that, satisfying neither the branch that had suffered these losses nor the church as a whole. In the context of his chronicle, Mair feels quite comfortable employing *ecclesia Romana* at the species level, as comparable to *ecclesia Gallicana* or *ecclesia Anglicana*, rather than at the genus level, as equivalent to *ecclesia universalis*. For Mair, a Catholic universality sharply limited

by national particularities was just a fact, and no unwelcome fact, of life. And well it might be so, since the movement toward national autonomy in ecclesiastical affairs had been a prominent feature of the fifteenth century. In Mair's adopted France, the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges (itself a direct result of the conciliar movement) had in 1438 confirmed the rights of the Gallican church and curtailed the powers of Rome in matters of ecclesiastical preferment, the collection of annates, and appeals to the Roman curia. Over the next fifty years, similar agreements were negotiated in the Empire and in Spain.²⁹ "In all these agreements," as John Morrall writes, "the secular sovereigns take up an almost independent position *vis-à-vis* the Papacy. The Concordats give the impression of being negotiations between equal sovereign powers rather than arrangements between the head of the Church and his spiritual sons."³⁰ In this respect, as in much else, modern scholarship has amply demonstrated that all the intellectual and political underpinnings of the Reformation were well established in the late medieval period.

Broadie has expressed the belief that the science of logic, as practiced by Mair and his contemporaries, was itself "a casualty of the Reformation." His reasoning appears to be mainly institutional. Before the Reformation, he writes, "philosophy was practically the exclusive preserve of Catholic priests," and thus the rise of Protestantism "led in many cases to a rejection of the philosophy of the old order."³¹ As part of this rejection, the question of universals and particulars, central to western philosophy since the time of Boethius, lost its allure. Here I would argue that institutional and conceptual factors went hand in hand: when the church, which had long fostered the pursuit of this question, itself ceased to be universal, that pursuit in turn faded from view. Or, more concisely, when the Catholic church lost its status as a universal, universality itself became more difficult to conceive. Even so, though philosophy may have largely (but not entirely) abandoned the problem of universals and particulars, we continue to confront that problem under different, and very frequently political, forms. First, we often encounter tension between genus and species, that is, between more inclusive and less inclusive political units. Not a week passed during the composition of this chapter without headlines portending fracture of the European Union, a prospect recently confirmed by the departure of Mair's "Greater Britain" from that body. I daresay this development troubles American intellectuals, for whom Europe, generically conceived, is still something like a spiritual ideal, more deeply than it does their European counterparts; this is most acutely true for those of us

devoted to Latinity, who are, *ipso facto*, universalists. And why should this not be the case? For, to turn the matter around (I admit the analogy is a loose one), what do Iowa and Oregon mean to the native of Europe, when compared to a generic America, as flawed as it may be? And yet the component fifty states of the United States are of the greatest importance for the history, and present politics, of that nation: the writing of this chapter has also seen efforts by several of these states to wrest control of immigration from the federal government, its constitutionally mandated home.

With the fragmentation of the universal church, the sovereign nation-states have, for better or worse, inherited the mantle of universality. In the modern era, for theoretical and practical purposes alike, each sovereign nation assumes the status of a highest-order universal.³² As a result of this development, the problem of corporate universals takes a particularly stark and unmediated form in our own day: the relation between the state and the individuals it comprises. The doctrine of individual rights, as defined in relation (or opposition) to the power of the state, has so completely prevailed that we seem at a loss to approach political questions in any other way. This is certainly true in my native land, where every issue of individual right (the right to bear arms, to worship, to marry, to shelter capital, to terminate pregnancy, to receive health care, and so on) incites heated and irreconcilable debate. On one day the state will be urged to establish in law the rights its citizens possess “by nature,” and on the next it will be accused of encroaching upon those rights established by law. Likewise, depending on the claims being asserted, the state will either be defended as a reality that transcends particular interests or be reviled as a delusive obstacle to the self-fulfillment of individuals, who are the only reality. Unnoticed in these various disputes, a logical contradiction besets the doctrine of individual rights. “The individual” is a problematic category to begin with, so highly inclusive as to comprise every person but at the same time founded on the uniqueness, or the putative uniqueness, of its members. Thus we assert the unmediated inherence of generic rights in the very individuals whose incomparable identities we wish to preserve. In my view, the increasing attention of academic discourse to distinctions of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, is an attempt to forestall this problem halfway, to mediate the direct relation between individuals and the highest-order universal by interposing categories at, logically speaking, the species level.

In short, our political challenges are at the same time logical ones, our historical concerns philosophical. Indeed one might argue that within

our own most stubborn and specific political disputes there lies, unacknowledged, a generic problem: the reality of universals at every level, from the family to the community of nations. John Mair knew this. If he was not the first to recognize it, he was, so far as I know, the first to address it in the form of historical narrative. In keeping with the nominalist emphasis on discrete particulars, his is an early attempt by philosophy to come to grips with the apparent chaos of historical data; if there was a prior such effort, or a better, it has escaped me. I am not sure that the audacity of Mair's *Historia Maioris Britanniae* in this respect has been fully appreciated. Because he was undeterred by the Aristotelian strictures against history, Mair was able to usher the problem of universals and particulars into its new home, political discourse. Not by accident was Mair a unionist, perhaps the first; he was a unionist by combination of hard historical knowledge and rigorous philosophical training. He was a unionist by virtue of a mind that habitually tested the adequacy of the categories it encountered and sought to establish the relations between those categories. I, for one, would very much like to know what John Mair might say about the current state of the European Union or, for that matter, the on-going campaign for Scottish independence.³³ And I cannot believe that the quality of our political discourse would fail to benefit from a heightened degree of philosophical awareness. As we have seen, Mair's chronicle shows a strong aspiration to political universals, undercut by the fractious energy of historical particulars. But even this failure of universals shows how close Mair came to a momentous discovery, that the structures of thought and of historical process move in tandem, and that, as the greatest of nineteenth-century Aristotelians would one day write, "the genuine truth is the prodigious transfer of the inner into the outer, the building of reason into the real world, and this has been the task of the world during the whole course of its history."³⁴

NOTES

¹ Aristotle, *Aristotle's Theory*, 35.

² Aristotle, *Aristotle's Theory*, 89.

³ In this case the translation is mine. The Greek text is in Aristotle, *Aristotle's Theory*, 34.

⁴ The most thorough biography of Mair (or Major) is still Mackay's "Life." See also Burns, "New Light on John Major."

⁵ For lists of Mair's numerous publications, see Durkan, "John Major," and Farge, *Biographical Register*, 308–11.

⁶ Oakley, "Almain and Major," 681.

⁷ For Mair's attitude toward humanist learning, see Moss, *Renaissance Truth*, 77–82.

⁸ The terminist logic of Mair and his contemporaries is expounded at length in Broadie, *The Circle of John Mair*. For a brief introduction to the subject, see De Rijk, "Origins."

⁹ A lucid and concise introduction to the medieval dispute between realists and nominalists can be found in Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy*, 32–41. For book-length treatment, see Carré, *Realists and Nominalists*.

¹⁰ Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, 35, 28. I have slightly altered Boehner's translation on p. 35.

¹¹ Broadie, *The Shadow of Scotus*, 4. See also Broadie, *Tradition of Scottish Philosophy*, 1–11.

¹² For Mair's unionist stance see Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness*, 97–102, and Mason, *Kingship and the Commonweal*, 36–77.

¹³ Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, 5v–6r. This is the edition I use throughout.

¹⁴ This passage appears in the unpaginated *Praefatio*. Translations from Mair are mine throughout.

¹⁵ For the origins and development of the concept *corpus mysticum*, see Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 193–218, and Tierney, *Foundations*, 132–41.

¹⁶ This question is addressed most explicitly in our own culture by athletes in team sports. So long as they function as individuals, they say, they lose. But when their individuality yields to a new reality, "the team," the team wins. *Team* is thus a term signifying something real, something not reducible to the roster of its members. When athletes speak in this way, as they often do, they function as philosophical realists.

¹⁷ Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 209. See also Tierney, *Foundations*, 96–105, and Lewis, *Medieval Political Ideas*, 193–215.

¹⁸ Except for signs in discourse, "nothing is universal, unless perhaps you abuse that word by saying that the people is a universal, because it is not one but many; but that would be childish" ("nihil est universale, nisi forte abuteris isto vocabulo dicendo populum esse unum universale, quia non est unum sed multa; sed illud puerile esset"). Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, 33.

¹⁹ For a thorough examination of Mair's political theory see Burns, "*Politia Regalis*." See also Burns, *The True Law of Kingship*.

²⁰ Mason, *Kingship and the Commonweal*, 56.

²¹ Skinner, *Foundations*, 356, 353.

²² Mason, *Kingship and the Commonweal*, 52.

²³ Lewis, *Medieval Political Ideas*, 198.

²⁴ For a general account of the conciliar movement see Ozment, *The Age of Reform*, 135–81. For conciliarism in Scotland, see Burns, "Conciliarist Tradition," 89–104.

²⁵ For the publication history and interpretation of these treatises consult Skinner, *Foundations*, 42–47, and Oakley, "Almain and Major," 681–90. Broader treatment will be found in Oakley, "On the Road from Constance."

²⁶ Oakley, "Almain and Major," 683. For the political circumstances see also Skinner, *Foundations*, 42–43.

²⁷ Oakley, "Almain and Major," 688, 690. See also Oakley, *Political Thought*, 211–16.

²⁸ Tierney, 241.

²⁹ For the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges and other such concordats, see Skinner, 59–60, and Ozment, *The Age of Reform*, 173–74, 186–90. See also MacKinnon, *Origins*, 252–53, 279–81.

³⁰ Morrall, *Political Thought*, 133.

³¹ Broadie, *Tradition of Scottish Philosophy*, 127. See also Broadie, *Introduction*, 191–206.

³² On this point see Skinner, *Foundations*, 85–89, for the assertion by Protestant rulers of an "imperial" authority within their several realms, to the exclusion of papal prerogative. Today we speak of "human rights," but we have not, in fact, established humanity as our highest-order universal. The citizens of various nations have exactly the rights that those nations choose to recognize and protect.

³³ Mair was by no means averse to commenting on practical issues of contemporary significance. For his judgment on some novel forms of lending at interest, see Keenan, "Casuistry."

³⁴ Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 167.

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A “Scottish Monmouth”? Hector Boece’s Arthurian Revisions

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GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH’S *HISTORIA Regum Britanniae* (ca. 1136) has long been regarded as the fundamental text in the presentation of King Arthur as a historical figure. Unlike his role in earlier annals, Arthur became fully formed in Geoffrey’s work. *Historia Regum Britanniae* provoked immediate comment from contemporary historians intent on discovering the roots of Geoffrey’s impressive knowledge of British history, especially that of Arthur, and continued both to influence centuries of English historiography and to draw comment from external histories.¹ Recent developments in Scottish history have turned up evidence for the possible existence of a Scottish version of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* circulating in thirteenth-century Scotland. Dauvit Broun, especially, has argued for the existence of this text and has suggested that it was probably written by Veremundus — the much maligned source named within Hector Boece’s *Scotorum Historia* of 1527.² Since Veremundus’s history is lost to us, it can never be known what form this early attempt to recast *Historia Regum Britanniae* with a Scottish bias took. This chapter considers the creation of a Scottish version of *Historia Regum Britanniae* four centuries later in Hector Boece’s *Scotorum Historia*.

Scottish historians had been attempting to define Arthur’s relationship to Scotland since the Wars of Independence. Though not a key figure of Scottish history, Arthur required some delicate handling by those chroniclers wishing to present the history of an ancient independent Scotland. In 1301, as part of a larger military campaign in Scotland, Edward I petitioned Pope Boniface VIII for confirmation of the English crown’s rights to Scotland. The initial Scottish response in Baldred Bisset’s *Processus* denied Edward I’s claims on Scotland through Arthurian history in *Historia Regum Britanniae* by characterizing Arthur as illegitimate and denying his rights of conquest.³ Scottish historiography of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries sought to limit Arthur’s possible relation-

ship to Scotland. In his *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* of the late fourteenth century, John of Fordun incorporated the charge of Arthur's illegitimacy and directed his focus on Arthur to a question of his rights to the British succession.⁴ Following Fordun, Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* of the 1440s also explored the question of Arthur's birth and succession. The other major Scottish historian of this period, Andrew of Wyntoun, appeared to have a different aim for his history and thus crafted an Arthurian narrative that complied with Geoffrey of Monmouth's vision.⁵ Yet the Scottish account was limited and defensive, intent on exploiting ambiguities in Geoffrey's depiction but not in advancing a true alternative vision of Arthur's relationship to Scotland. While there was no new historical narrative of Arthur in Scotland after Bower in the fifteenth century, outside of Scotland material on Britain's most famous king remained popular and *Historia Regum Britanniae* maintained its influence.

By the sixteenth century the Scottish engagement with Arthur had yet to offer any explicit challenge to *Historia Regum Britanniae*. Even Boece's most immediate predecessor, John Mair, failed to present an account of Arthur's relationship to the Scots that could invalidate England's claims.⁶ It seemed that, lacking alternative information about Arthur from Scottish sources, Mair could not reconcile the historiographical traditions in Scotland's favor on Arthur as he had done on other issues.⁷ The sixteenth century presented an interesting paradox because while belief in Arthur as a historical king was fading in some intellectual circles, demand for *Historia Regum Britanniae* and its compelling narrative of British domination remained high even on a European scale.⁸ Unlike his predecessors, Boece crafted a new narrative of Arthur's relationship to the Scots — an account that deflated the Galfredian Arthur while bringing the Scots and Picts into equal prominence in the British Isles. At least some of this plan was influenced by Mair's account of Scottish history and its suggestion that Scotland's independence from England, while a crucial element of the past, was not a necessary element of its future.⁹ Scholars have noted, however, that Boece's real historiographical rival for *Scotorum Historia* was Geoffrey of Monmouth, not Mair.¹⁰ Moreover, *Scotorum Historia* has generally been shown to display increased hostility toward Arthur.¹¹ Thus this chapter does not discuss Boece's depiction of Arthur as a legendary figure, but will examine how Boece adapted the established narrative from *Historia Regum Britanniae*. The three major areas under consideration are the circumstances surrounding Arthur's conception, the role of the Scots and Picts in the overall narrative, and Arthur's final battle with Mordred.

Scotorum Historia was the final stage in the development of the medieval Scottish Arthurian narrative.¹² It also became Boece's most lasting legacy, aided by two Scots vernacular translations commissioned by James V and a second Latin edition printed in Paris in 1575 that included a continuation by Giovanni Ferrerio.¹³ Uncertainty about *Scotorum Historia*'s value as a veritable historical account of Scotland's past brought Boece's methods — particularly his use of Veremundus — under scrutiny for some time.¹⁴ More recently scholars have explored the possibility of Veremundus's existence, resulting in some rehabilitation of Boece's reputation.¹⁵ Though his Arthurian narrative wandered far from the previous Scottish histories, Boece still employed Fordun's framework as the skeleton of his account. The greatest difference between Boece and his predecessors was narrative space. Whereas Fordun relegated Arthur's life to a short episode in between Scottish affairs, Boece devoted the second half of Book VIII and the first half of Book IX to the Arthurian narrative, making his by far the longest Scottish depiction of Arthur. By elaborating on Arthur's narrative, however, Boece meant to do more than simply compete with Geoffrey of Monmouth. He created space in the existing framework for the Scots and Picts — greatly disparaged and subordinated in Geoffrey's narrative. While some of Boece's additions expanded Arthur's individual depiction, the real focus of the Arthurian section of *Scotorum Historia* was on the increased integration of the Scots and Picts into the established British narrative. In order to achieve this Boece added new events to his revision of those already available in *Historia Regum Britanniae*. What resulted was a reshaping of the Scottish Arthurian narrative, with a shift in the focus of the action north of the Humber River and a diminishment of the grandiose Galfridian Arthur.

The first major changes Boece made to the Arthurian narrative were in the presentation of Arthur's conception. Though he maintained the clear emphasis on Arthur's illegitimacy established in previous Scottish histories, Boece heightened the shame of Arthur's conception. The vehicle for this change was the addition of Uther's supreme commander, Nathaliodus. While Nathaliodus was not important to the history for his actions, he was Boece's chief method of explaining Uther's underlying tension with Gorlois, earl of Cornwall, and husband of Arthur's mother. Described as a man of "obscure birth" (*homini obscurae originis*), Nathaliodus achieved his place through his friendship with Uther rather than his "martial virtue" (*virtute pellectus*, *SH IX*: 7). Boece did not invent Nathaliodus out of thin air, however, but rather appropriated him from

earlier English chronicles. He appeared in the *Peterborough Chronicle* (also known as the E-version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) as a king of the Britons who died in a battle against the Saxons Cerdic and Cynric in 508.¹⁶ Henry of Huntingdon also discussed this battle and described Nathaliodus as a “king of high renown and exalted rank.”¹⁷ The etymology of the name has continued to puzzle scholars, but given the variations present in English chronicles as one of Uther’s lords or lieutenants, it seemed likely that Boece simply appropriated a convenient name from existing chronicles.¹⁸ Another promising explanation is that *Natanleod* is a title rather than a proper name and thus its appearance in early sources indicated the prince, *leod*, of a place, *nata*.¹⁹ By including Nathaliodus Boece created tension between Uther and his nobility that had not existed in any explicit form in *Historia Regum Britanniae*:

fore rati ut pacem nactus, sopitis bellis ... gentis primatibus infirmi generis viros in dignatatum et honorum additione praelaturus sit.²⁰

[if he [Uther] achieved peace and ended his wars ... when it came to distributing honors and dignities, he would continue to prefer base-born men to the nobles of his nation.]

Thus in Uther’s first major battle against the Saxons, Gorlois abandoned the field with his men “in disregard of Nathaliodus’s command.”²¹ The mutiny placed the remainder of the British army in peril, leading to the flight of the Britons into Wales and a treaty of surrender that allowed the earliest formation of the Saxon kingdom.²² It seemed that Gorlois’s main reason for this retreat was his implicit dislike for Nathaliodus’s authority. He eventually faced execution for his actions, but not before Uther conceived Arthur with Gorlois’s wife — a significant alteration to the sequence of events in earlier historiography.²³

Nathaliodus’s function in *Scotorum Historia* also obscured Boece’s own feelings about the role of the nobility in Scotland’s government. Though not as critical of the nobility as Mair, Boece maintained a healthy skepticism about their value in government, particularly in their function as counselors to the king and in their ability to depose an inadequate king.²⁴ The noble anxiety surrounding Nathaliodus’s role probably drew from concern within Scotland about the growing power in government of men outside of the nobility.²⁵ Boece’s inclusion of Nathaliodus could also have been a warning for the young James V about the expectations his nobility would harbor about their role in the government. The long succession of minorities had led to a preoccupation in Scotland about the

necessity of preparing a young king for proper exercise of royal authority, evident throughout *Scotorum Historia*.²⁶

Despite nods towards contemporary concerns, Nathaliodus's chief purpose was to clarify Arthur's illegitimacy. *Historia Regum Britanniae* had provided no elaborate backstory on Uther's conflict with Gorlois. Angered by the king's sudden attention to his wife, Gorlois left court without permission, giving Uther cause to pursue him and the opportunity to trick Igerna through Merlin's enchantment.²⁷ Yet tension existed between Uther and Gorlois in *Scotorum Historia* before Igerna became a factor. In both texts, however, Uther exerted great effort in attempting to woo Igerna with gifts and his attentions prompted Gorlois to flee the court with her. The similarities between *Scotorum Historia* and *Historia Regum Britanniae* ended there for this episode. Boece abandoned any version of Arthur's conception as reported by Geoffrey or previous Scottish histories. He reported that although Igerna was "very averse to the king's embraces" ("ipsa plurimum regis aversabatur amplexus"), Uther

sublatis pudore ac probitate ... interceptam foeminam (fugerat Gothlois ut regis iram vitaret in arcem omnium quae in Coroneia erant munitissimam) cupide compressam, praegnantem haud multo post reddidit.²⁸

[abandoning all sense of shame and probity, raped the woman (for Gothlois had fled to Cornwall's strongest fortification to avoid the royal wrath), and soon made her pregnant.]

This was Boece's most striking departure from established Arthurian narratives. Both Bellenden and Stewart refused to confirm the rape in their translations, suggesting that Boece had gone too far in altering the existing Arthurian narrative.²⁹ Boece's translators did not reject all of the changes in this episode, however, for they seemed to understand that by removing Merlin as a key actor in the episode, Boece found a new way to emphasize Arthur's illegitimacy.

Incorporating Nathaliodus also allowed Boece to alter the timeline of Gorlois's death. Crucially, Gorlois was alive at the point of Arthur's conception in *Scotorum Historia* since Boece reported that he faced execution later for his actions in the battle against the Saxons. According to this timeline, Arthur was simply the product of adultery. By snipping Geoffrey's gossamer thread of legitimacy, which hinged on Gorlois's death as simultaneous with Arthur's conception, Boece sharpened the Scottish argument about Arthur's illegitimacy. This fresh clarity appealed to his translators. Regardless of their

disparate portrayals of Arthur's conception, Bellenden and Stewart followed Boece in including Nathaliodus as a means of enhancing this crucial aspect of the Scottish Arthurian narrative. In addition, Boece also claimed that all British and Scottish histories agreed on this point: "All our national historians and those of the Britons agree that King Uther fathered Arthur on another man's wife" ("aut res nostra aut Britannicas scriptis mandarunt Uterum regem ex aliena coniuge suscepisse Arthurum").³⁰ Ignoring attempts to correct Geoffrey's ambiguity on this point, Boece neglected to name the British chroniclers he claimed in support of Arthur's illegitimacy.³¹ In doing so Boece wished to highlight the simple fact that the episode began because Uther coveted another man's wife. Not even the English chronicles in their efforts to clarify Geoffrey of Monmouth's ambiguity could deny the adulterous origin of Uther's relationship to Igera.

Having provided greater proof of Arthur's illegitimacy, Boece foregrounded the question of Arthur's succession to the British throne. While he followed Bower's preference for Anna (Mordred and Gawain's mother) as Aurelius's and Uther's sister, Boece altered the established historiography by making Loth king of the Picts.³² This separated him from Arthur's retinue and gave his sons equal status to Arthur — increasing their eligibility to inherit the British throne. With the Picts' later absorption into the Scottish kingdom, Loth and Mordred's connections to the British throne became part of the Scottish legacy. Moreover, the circumstances of Arthur's election as heir further confirmed his illegitimacy:

eundemque posteaquam adolevisset, quod nullos ex iusta coniuge haberet liberos, vocatis Britanniae proceribus ad concionem, ostendisse post se regem salutandum, omnesque ... Christi evangelia contingentes ultimis adegisse execrationibus ut ne quem alium praeter Arthurum secundum se in Britannia regnare permitterent.³³

[since he had no legitimate sons, after the boy had grown to maturity, he summoned the British nobles to a parliament and instructed them that Arthur was to be proclaimed king after his death, and compelled them all to lay hands on Christ's Gospels and swear a solemn oath not to allow anyone but Arthur to reign in Britain after himself.]

This passage illustrated the wide acceptance of Arthur as a bastard by the Britons in *Scotorum Historia*. Uther's concern to have the nobles swear to guarantee Arthur's succession showed that his father understood that as a bastard Arthur had no hereditary right to the throne. Though there was

also a sense of coercion in Uther's actions, the Britons' later refusal to confirm Mordred's rights to succession suggested that they willingly deprived the rightful Pictish heirs in favor of the illegitimate, but British, Arthur. Following Uther's death, Loth tried again to have himself and his sons reinstated into their proper place in the succession, only to be rebuffed by the Britons as "men of foreign blood and therefore unsuitable to govern the Britons."³⁴ This issue of race would resurface as a primary factor in the final conflict between Arthur and Mordred.

The idea of ethnic separation between the Britons and the Picts and Scots underscored Boece's second major change to the Arthurian narrative. Whereas in *Historia Regum Britanniae* Arthur conquered the Scots early in his career, forcing them to "willing bear the yoke of slavery forever" ("perpetuae seruitutis iugum ultro gestaturos"),³⁵ Boece's Arthur had a different relationship with his northern neighbors. In *Scotorum Historia* Arthur was not the conqueror of the British Isles, let alone of continental Europe. Instead, he failed to secure Britain against the Saxons without help from the island's other major ethnic groups. While the Scots remained in long-term alliance with the Britons until Arthur's final battle, the Picts were confederated with the Saxons against the Britons — or at least this arrangement persisted following Uther's decision to advance the bastard Arthur's rights over Loth's legitimate sons.

Overall, the Picts emerged as the martially dominant group in the British Isles. Even with the help of the Scots, the Britons' attempts to expel the Saxons remained unsuccessful until Arthur forged an alliance with Loth. Once the Picts joined the Britons, the Saxons were defeated in a single battle and either fled Britain or converted to Christianity.³⁶ This successful result came at a high price for Arthur, as he was obliged to restore Loth's sons to the succession:

Arthurus ad vitae exitum in Britannia regnaret; eo vito functo, Mordredo eiusque inde liberis (si qui homini nascerentur) Britanniae regnum deferretur. Picti cum Britannis adversus Saxones acciti facerent commilitium. Cum Scotis in veteri perstarent foedere. Quantum agrorum trans Humbrum Saxonibus bello adimeretur, tantum Pictis cederet. Mordredus Gawolani viri secundum regem inter Britannos nobilissimi filiae copularetur matrimonio, qui ex eo conubio nascerentur liberi in Britannia avi cura educarentur et tutela.³⁷

[Arthur would rule in Britain until the end of his life; after his death, the throne of Britain would devolve upon Mordredus and then upon his issue, should any such exist. When summoned the

Picts would join the Britons in fighting the Saxons. They would continue in their ancient pact with the Scots. As much land beyond the Humber [that] could be won from the Saxons would be given to the Picts. Mordredus would marry the daughter of Gwalanus, the most noble man among the Britons next to the king, and whatever children might be born from that marriage would be raised by the care and supervision of their grandfather.]

The agreement supplied a tidy solution to many problems. Most importantly, it allowed Boece to set up the final battle between Arthur and Mordred by creating a formal agreement that Arthur later violated. This advanced Fordun's subtle hint that Mordred had legitimate cause to take up arms against Arthur. It also deepened the sense of racial separation between the Britons and Picts, while highlighting the closeness of the Picts and Scots.

Boece used the Picts to provide a formal place for Loth and Mordred within the Arthurian narrative. Previously, Anna's husband and sons were merely part of Arthur's retinue and of unequal status to their kinsman. By crafting a Pictish narrative alongside the extant Scottish one, Boece reinforced his vision of the ancient Scots as a major player in Britain. Accordingly, the narrative's focus shifted northward. It was already clear that Arthur's ability to defeat the Saxons in southern Britain had little effect on his need to establish peace throughout the kingdom. Victory in the north was a crucial element of securing Britain and required an accord with the Picts. By granting the land north of the Humber to the Picts in exchange for an alliance, Boece reversed traditional methods of Arthurian acquisition. Instead of conquering Scotland, Arthur gave the Picts (and thus the Scots) part of England. This territory was, moreover, the Scots' traditional raiding zone, offering some justification for continued contemporary border conflict with England since the Scots were simply raiding territory given to them by Arthur.

In addition, Boece emphasized the total separation of the Britons from the Scots and the Picts in his Arthurian section. Unlike Mair, Boece showed no interest in glorifying the southern Scots for their similarities to the English. In fact, he expressed the exact opposite opinion from Mair — that the Highland Scots were the most virtuous group in the kingdom. Above all, Boece linked the Highland and Lowland Scots together by highlighting their ancient devotion to freedom and the defense of their kingdom's independence and discussing, at length, the customs of the ancient inhabitants of Scotland at the beginning of his history: "In peace and war our ancestors cultivated all other virtues, and especially temper-

ance the mother of them all."³⁸ It was the corrupting influence of English manners introduced with Queen Margaret's marriage to Malcolm III that had created the decline of contemporary Scottish culture.³⁹ Arthur's Britons had already shown that they had become corrupted by their lavish lifestyle when they were unable to defeat the Saxons without assistance from the Picts and Scots. Boece's comments about Arthur's court as the origin of excessive celebration at Christmastime confirmed that he viewed English habits as degenerate.⁴⁰ By comparison, Mordred emerged as the champion of the kind of military lifestyle Boece wished to glorify. For example, during a successful campaign against the Saxons, Boece described how Mordred kept his army outside the city in tents so that they would not indulge in the kind of comfortable living that made the Britons unable to defend their kingdom alone.⁴¹ He was also more likely than Arthur to be found leading an army against the Saxons.⁴²

Arthur became the mouthpiece for expressing the irreconcilable differences between the different peoples of Britain. In doing so, Boece responded to Mair's assertion of the similarities between the English and the southern Scots. Arthur insisted that Loth's death voided the agreement, but also claimed:

difficile [*sic*] siquidem esse duas gentes, quae inter se per tam multa secula depopulationibus, caedibus, atque id genus iniuriis aliis desaveissent, sub alterius gentis principe in unum concordemque populum coalescere, quandoquidem consuevissent principes originis suae gentem caeteris mortalibus praeferre. Pictis ergo suis terminis, sisaperent (ut saperent potius) contentis non esse aliena expetenda regna.⁴³

[It would be difficult for two nations, which for so many centuries had savaged each other with plundering, murder, and suchlike wrongdoings, to unite as a single people under a ruler belonging to either nationality, inasmuch as they had been habituated to prefer a sovereign of their own nation to all other mortals. Therefore, if they were well advised (or rather, because they were well advised), they should rest content with their own borders and not chase after foreign kingdoms.]

Given Mair's efforts to demonstrate the similarities of the English and the Scots, this speech challenged the vision of peaceful dynastic union outlined in *Historia Maioris Britanniae*. Boece highlighted the differences between the two kingdoms, foregrounding centuries of border hostilities and declaring that dynastic union could not simply wash away the

memory of past conflict. Instead, Boece maintained that past differences were, and always would be, an impediment to union. By having Arthur make this revelation, Boece used Britain's most famous king and a figure with great potential for unionist propaganda as a reminder of Scotland's ancient independence.

The decision of the Scots king, Eugenius, to join Mordred and the Saxons against the Britons confirmed the depth of Arthur's treachery. As noted above, in previous conflicts between the Picts and the Britons, the Scots had remained neutral at best, but generally joined in on the British side as a result of their longstanding treaty of peace.⁴⁴ Eugenius decided to break this peace, partially because of Arthur's betrayal of Mordred, but also because the Britons had aided Scottish renegades:

Eugenium Scotorum regem, iam tum Britannis infensum quia Scoticæ nationis quosdam exilio damnatos hospitaliter receperissent et equis pecuniaeque ad incursus faciendos in Scotos Britanniae proximos iuissent ... Petitis eo libentius Eugenius, quia Arthurus regnum Britannicum Scotorum reipublicae hostibus statuisset ... certissimum esse receptaculum.⁴⁵

[Eugenius was already annoyed at the Britons because they [had] given a hospitable reception to certain Scotsmen condemned to exile, and helped themselves to horses and money by making raids against their Scottish neighbors ... And he agreed all the more readily because ... Arthur had made the British kingdom a very secure asylum for enemies of the Scottish commonwealth.]

Boece added this detail without a historiographical precedent, but with ample contemporary examples. Eugenius's complaint served as another reminder of the entrenched differences between England and Scotland. One obvious parallel for the fugitive Scots was the Disinherited — a group of Scottish nobles forfeited by Robert I for collusion with the English and who were thereafter forced into exile.⁴⁶ England remained a haven for anyone out of favor with the Scottish government throughout the Middle Ages. During the 1520s England sheltered various Scottish rebels, notably David Home of Wedderburn and his brother, George, who were responsible for the assassination of Governor Albany's lieutenant in the Borders and keeper of Dunbar Castle, Antoine D'Arces, Seigneur de la Bastie in September 1517.⁴⁷ The Home brothers' actions were prompted by the forfeiture and execution of their kinsman, Lord Home, in 1516.⁴⁸ David Home of Wedderburn continued to play a large role in the border disputes until

the resumption of active war with England in April 1524. Throughout this period the English sheltered Home and his accomplices and furnished his raids on border lords who supported the Scottish government.

Other notable fugitives included various members of the Douglas family, particularly the earl of Angus and Gavin Douglas. The extended Douglas family had long-standing English connections, evident from the flight of the Black Douglasses to England after James II reached his majority.⁴⁹ After marrying Margaret Tudor, Archibald Douglas, sixth earl of Angus, engaged in repeated attempts to gain control of James V's minority government — often with the assistance of his brother-in-law Henry VIII.⁵⁰ Angus received an official pension from the English king from 1521 until 1544, when he abandoned the English side.⁵¹ Gavin Douglas, bishop of Dunkeld, became entangled in his kinsmen's plans, traveling to the English court on Angus's behalf in 1521, and was forced to remain in London where he died in 1522.⁵² Although contemporary examples of England's willingness to aid Scottish rebels were plentiful, Boece's introduction of the Scottish fugitives was primarily a means of justifying the Scots' break from their British allies.

Boece also altered Arthur's final battle as reported in *Historia Regum Britanniae*. First, he moved the site of the battle from Camlann in southern England to the Humber River in the north.⁵³ In addition, the final battle was one of the only episodes in which Boece directly contradicted English Arthurian historiography:

Nec me praeterit Galfredum Monumetensem Britannicae rei scriptorem certamen inter Modredum et Arthurum non ad Humbri fluminis ripam sed in Guintoniae civitatis vicinia ... ideoque ab iis quae de eo bello scribimus haud parum discerpere. Sed Veremundum, Tergotum, probatosque alios nostrarum rerum scriptores ... in his ut in aliis sequimur.⁵⁴

[It does not escape me that the British historian Geoffrey of Monmouth does not locate the battle between Mordredus and Arthur along the bankside of the Humber, but rather in the vicinity of the city of Camlann ... and so greatly deviates from what I am writing about this war. But regarding these things, and others as well, I follow Vairement [Veremundus], Tergotus, and other reliable writers of our national history.]⁵⁵

Geoffrey had reported that Mordred was in southern Britain as Arthur's regent during the Roman war when he decided to usurp the throne. Since

Boece denied the existence of the Roman war, Mordred would not have been in the south of Britain as regent — hence the shift of the battle to the north.⁵⁶ This alteration allowed Boece to depict the conflict as the justifiable action of a king deprived of his rights and removed the possibility of Guinevere's adultery with Mordred. *Historia Regum Britanniae* noted that Mordred took up with his uncle's wife while serving as regent for him during the Roman War, but by not including the war, Boece eliminated all of Arthur's justification for conflict with Mordred.⁵⁷ Amelioration of Mordred's negative portrayal in English sources was imperative for Boece's depiction of Mordred as the rightful heir to the British throne and an able commander devoid of British excess. Instead, Boece made the British nobility's dislike for a half-Pictish king and Arthur's refusal to uphold his treaty with Loth the prime catalyst for the final battle.

In addition, Boece highlighted Mordred's restraint and Arthur's weakness in the opening of the final battle. When the bishops of all three kingdoms attempted to prevent the battle, Mordred and Eugenius were willing to forgo war as long as the Britons would uphold their treaty with Loth. The kinsmen of Constantine, Arthur's new British heir, goaded Arthur into continuing the war, however, for "unless their ever-invincible king undertook this war, who could be the defender and champion of British glory?"⁵⁸ Since the conflict arose from the British nobility's refusal to serve a Pictish king, Arthur's nobles rebuffed any offer of peace that would maintain the treaty with Loth. Boece was careful to present Arthur as culpable as well, for although he noted that Arthur's "mind was now inclining toward peace" ("inclinato iam regis animo ad pacem"), in the end Arthur took no decisive action to prevent battle and during his deliberation fighting broke out.⁵⁹ This juxtaposed Mordred and Eugenius as just rulers unwilling to go to war while there was a chance of peace with Arthur as a weak king unable to control his bloodthirsty and arrogant nobles.

Unlike his predecessors, Boece emphasized the total defeat of the Britons in the final battle. English histories never presented the battle as a British loss, but rather as a kind of civil war wherein no winner emerged. Scottish accounts also provided little indication of the outcome other than that both Arthur and Mordred died. On the other hand, Boece removed any sense of civil war since Mordred was a king in his own right and not Arthur's vassal. He asserted a clear victory for the Scots and Picts even with their large losses and Mordred's death. In addition, the Britons seemed at a disadvantage from the beginning:

Obfuit Britannis, tametsi ferocissime pugnabant, loci iniquitas, quorum non pauci paludosis locis haerentes nec praeliaribus pro corporis robore, nec solita virtute rite utentes in hostes pugnare coguntur. Extractum praelium in plures horas tantam vim hominum absumpsit ut Humber fluvius ... multo cruore infectus aquas sanguine tinctas mixtis cadaveris ex ea planitie in mare secum detulerit.⁶⁰

[Though they fought most fiercely, the Britons were hampered by the nature of the terrain. No few of them were prevented by the marshy ground from wielding their axes with their full physical strength, and they were compelled to fight their enemies with less than their usual martial virtue. The battle dragged on for several hours, and consumed such a number of men that the river Humber ... ran red with blood and carried many bodies along with itself as it flowed into the sea.]

Boece highlighted the desperation of the Britons further by noting that they fled the field after hearing of Arthur's death. In Boece's battle, the Britons were fully routed. This defeat foreshadowed the Saxon resurgence and the Britons' flight into Wales under King Constantine, for whose rights of succession they had chosen to fight against the Scots and Picts.⁶¹

Another interesting change to the aftermath of the battle was the fate of Arthur's wife. Of the Scottish chroniclers, only Mair had mentioned Arthur's wife in any context. Thus Boece's decision to discuss Guinevere's fate after Arthur's death proved a serious departure from previous historiography of both Scotland and England. Though little space had been devoted to Guinevere in the histories, it was established in various sources that she went to live in a nunnery after Arthur's death.⁶² Boece, however, supplied a more extreme answer to Guinevere's fate post-battle:

Pictis Guanora regina, foeminae ac viri illustres cum caetera praeda. Hi ducti in Horestiam Pictorum regionem Duwmbarre munitissima tum arce ... detenti reliquum viitae suae miserrima servitute egerunt. Extant in rei fidem complura ibidem loci (ut cuique est videre) captivorum Britonum monumenta in agro Migill ... mortuorum sepulturae sacrae haud incelibria. Ornatisimum horum maxime celebratum Guanorae reginae, uti admonet titulus.⁶³

[Queen Guanora, illustrious men and women, and the rest fell to the Picts. These were led to the Pictish district of Horestia, to Dunbar, which was then a very stoutly fortified stronghold ... There they were detained and spent the rest of their lived in wretched servitude. As proof of this account, there remain plenty of traces of those captives, as anybody can see. At Meigle ... are some tombs of

the dead, not without their fame. The most ornate of these is that of Queen Guanora, as we are advised by its inscription.]

While evidently another element in Boece's strategy of shifting the focus of the Arthurian narrative northward, it was also a nod to local Scottish folklore.⁶⁴ It seems he drew on at least two different legends, since he noted that Guinevere was taken to Dunbar but buried at Meikle. Local legend suggested that a standing stone at Meikle, known as the Vanora Stone, was erected following Guinevere's adultery with Mordred.⁶⁵ Of course, Boece chose not to include Guinevere's adultery in his narrative, so it seems unlikely that he would refer to the stone in Meikle in this context. If nothing else, by repeating local Arthurian legends, Boece provided a reminder that Arthur's appeal was not exclusive to the English. Overall, Guanora's fate confirmed the total destruction of the Britons and allowed Boece to infuse existing narratives with material from Scottish sources.

Although Boece rearranged and adapted existing Arthurian narratives with greater abandon than previous Scottish historiographers, *Scotorum Historia* presented a more polished account of a Scottish Arthur. Leaning upon Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, he expanded the Arthurian storyline on the whole, offering more space to Arthur but also creating a formal place for the Scots and Picts in his narrative. The most conspicuous change came in Boece's assertion that Uther raped Arthur's mother and that Gorlois, Igera's husband, was alive at the point of Arthur's conception. With these alterations, Boece advanced the Scottish position on Arthur's illegitimacy, offering a clearer timeline for Uther's adultery than had his predecessors. Boece's main strategy in adapting *Historia Regum Britanniae* was to integrate the Scots and Picts into existing episodes wherever he could, thus emphasizing the interrelatedness of the kingdoms. Whereas *Historia Regum Britanniae* depicted the Scots and Picts as tangential to the more important and successful affairs of the British kingdom, *Scotorum Historia* provided all three with equal attention. In addition, Boece inverted the cause of Arthur's death. Instead of being dragged into battle because his Scottish nephew stole his throne and his wife, in *Scotorum Historia* Arthur died because he failed to keep promises to his allies. Mordred's treachery — so long a key element of English and even some Scottish Arthurian narratives — was no more. Arthur no longer held the moral edge on his Scottish kin. *Scotorum Historia*, aided by its vernacular translations, provided a new narrative about Arthur's relationship with the Scots that set aside English historiography's claims and left no aspect of this troublesome relationship unexplained.

NOTES

¹ William of Newburgh (*The History of English Affairs*, 28–37) and William of Malmesbury (*Gesta Regum Anglorum*) were harshest in their skepticism of Geoffrey of Monmouth's treatment of Arthur. See also Putter, "Latin Historiography."

² Broun, *Irish Identity*, 235–68. For centuries, scholars believed that Boece either fabricated Veremundus's history or was fooled by a fake document purporting to be an older history. In recent years, Nicola Royan has provided persuasive arguments that Veremundus's history did exist; see Royan, "Hector Boece."

³ For Bisset's refutation of Arthur's claims to Scotland as presented by Edward I, see Bower, *Scotichronicon*, 184.

⁴ For more on the response of earlier Scottish chronicles to *Historia Regum Britanniae* see Royan, "The Fine Art," and Terrell, "Subversive Histories."

⁵ Andrew of Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*.

⁶ John Mair, *Historia Maioris Britanniae* (Paris, 1521).

⁷ Elsewhere I have argued that when presented with a convincing Scottish historical precedent at a point of intersection between English and Scottish history, Mair always chose to foreground the Scottish narrative. See Hanna, "A Mass of Incoherencies."

⁸ For example, Polydore Vergil depicted Arthur with great scepticism in his *Anglica Historia* (Basel, 1534). Arthur is given one short paragraph in Book III, Chapter 13. This cynicism about Arthur was not always well received in England; see Carley, "Polydore Vergil." Despite this scepticism Badius Ascensius printed *Historia Regum Britanniae* twice in the first decades of the sixteenth century, once in 1508 and again in 1517.

⁹ See Mason, "Kingship, Nobility."

¹⁰ Mason, "Scotching the Brut," and Royan, "*Scotorum Historia*," 30.

¹¹ Alexander, "Late Medieval Scottish Attitudes," and Royan, "NaLes Vailycant."

¹² Hector Boece, *Scotorum Historiae A Prima Gentis Origine* (Paris, 1527). For continuity all references and English quotations, with book and chapter number, are from Giovanni Ferrerio's reworked 1575 version, the source text of the only extant modern English translation (henceforth *SH*). The fullest account of Boece's life is in ODNB. See also Simpson "Hector Boece."

¹³ Three vernacular translations exist. The two complete versions are by John Bellenden and William Stewart. The third, known as the Mar Lodge Translation, is incomplete and anonymous. Bellenden's translation survives in both manuscript and print, both of which have a modern edition (see Bellenden, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, and Bellenden, *The History and Chronicles of Scotland*). See also Royan, "Relationship." There are two full-length studies of Bellenden's translation: Harikae, "John Bellenden's Chronicles of Scotland," and Sheppard, "Studies in the Language of Bellenden's Boece." See also Harikae, "Kingship." Stewart's verse translation is accessible in Stewart, *The Buik of the Cronickis of Scotland*. See also

MacDonald, "William Stewart." The third translation is *The Mar Lodge Translation of the History of Scotland*. See also Lyall, "Vernacular Prose."

¹⁴ The first criticism of Boece's sources came from Thomas Innes in the eighteenth century: Innes, *A Critical Essay*, especially 133–48 and 294–350. For more on Innes, see Kidd, "Antiquarianism." For a long time scholars confirmed Innes's conclusions: see Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, 218 and 220; Black, "Boece's *Scotorum Historia*;" Duncan, "Hector Boece and the Medieval Tradition;" and Farrow, "Substance and Style."

¹⁵ Nicola Royan challenged the established criticism, arguing that Boece was too clever and careful a historian to use a fake source, either knowingly or not, and that Veremundus's history had probably existed at some point. See Royan, "The *Scotorum Historia*," 197–215 and "Hector Boece." See also Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 252–63.

¹⁶ See *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Vol. 7*, 18: "In 508 AD: Here Certic and Cinric killed a British king that was called Nazaleod and five thousand men with him; and after that the land was called Nazanleog or Certisford" (translation mine).

¹⁷ See Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 95.

¹⁸ He was included in various chronicles as "Natanleod," "Nathanliot," "Nazaleod;" see Fletcher, *Arthurian Material in the Chronicles*, 22, 70, 185, 246. Fletcher took some pains to reconcile Natanleod with Lot; see Fletcher, 70–71. Given the separate roles of both Nathaliodus and Lot in *Scotorum Historia*, this did not hold for Boece.

¹⁹ See Guest, *Origines Celticae*, I, 181–84.

²⁰ *SH IX*: 7.

²¹ *Nathaliodi aspernatus imperium*, *SH IX*: 8.

²² *SH IX*: 8.

²³ *SH IX*: 11.

²⁴ Royan, "*Scotorum Historia*," 71–79.

²⁵ James III's reign was particularly prone to this criticism. At least, this was the consensus on James III in the sixteenth century. In his *Testament of the Papynge*, David Lyndsay cemented this criticism by devoting four of the six stanzas concerning James III to the crimes of his lowborn familiars; see *Selected Poems*, 73–74. Norman MacDougall pointed out that though this portrait was maintained by the later sixteenth-century chroniclers, their claims that the king's lowly counsellors caused the death of his younger brother, the Earl of Mar, and the self-imposed exile of his other brother, Alexander Stewart, Duke of Albany, were perhaps exaggerated; see MacDougall, *James III*, 145–55. Nevertheless, once he assumed royal authority in 1469 James III's style of government caused tensions between himself and the nobility, resulting in two major magnate coups, the second of which produced James III's death at the battle of Sauchieburn in 1488.

²⁶ For more on this theme in Scotland during the period, see Mapstone, "The Advice to Princes Tradition."

²⁷ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, VIII: 450–516.

²⁸ *SH IX*: 10.

²⁹ Bellenden, *Chronicles*, 359–60, and Stewart, *The Buik of the Croniclis of Scotland*, 202–3.

³⁰ *SH IX*: 11.

³¹ Even *Historia Regum Britanniae*'s most immediate translators noticed the potential hazards of Geoffrey's loose timeline, for Wace added the detail that Uther and Igera were married. See Wace, *Roman De Brut*, ll. 8813–14.

³² Boece also invented a second sister, who married Conranus, king of Scots, giving Aurelius's line a further connection with Scotland, though Ada died before providing an additional claimant to the British throne (*SH VIII*: 77).

³³ *SH IX*: 11.

³⁴ "peregrini sanguinis homines et per id inidoneos qui Britannicarum rerum potirentur," *SH IX*: 23.

³⁵ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, IX: 172–73.

³⁶ *SH IX*: 27–29.

³⁷ *SH IX*: 27.

³⁸ "ex igitur domi bellicque maiores nostri cum reliquis virtutes tum earum omnem matrem in primis colure temperantia," *SH Exhortation*: 1.

³⁹ Mason, "Civil Society and the Celts;" Allan, "Manners and Mustard" — a thorough overview, though Allan only considers Bellenden's translation. For a more linguistic focus, see Morét, "Historians and Languages."

⁴⁰ *SH IX*: 26.

⁴¹ *SH IX*: 30.

⁴² *SH IX*: 30–32.

⁴³ *SH IX*: 38.

⁴⁴ The Scots king Congallus renewed the alliance with the Aurelius against the Saxons (*SH VIII*: 73).

⁴⁵ *SH IX*: 39.

⁴⁶ The Disinherited were forfeited after Bannockburn, see *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, 6 November, Cambuskenneth Parliament, 1314/1.

⁴⁷ Emond, "The Minority of James V," 172–76. David Home of Wedderburn was forfeited by Parliament in February 1518; see *Acts of the Lords of Council in Public Affairs, 1501–1554*, 108. His many exploits following the assassination of de la Bastie included the capture of the French ambassador Poilliot in summer 1519 and the murder of Robert Blackadder in October 1519. For a detailed account of Home's activities during this period, see Emond, "The Minority of James V," 191–233.

⁴⁸ Emond, "The Minority of James V," 96–125.

⁴⁹ Brown, *The Black Douglasses*, 351–52.

⁵⁰ For Angus's control of James V's minority government, see Emond, "The Minority of James V," 453–573.

⁵¹ Blakeway, *Regency in Sixteenth-Century Scotland*, 225.

⁵² Royan, "The Scottish Identity of Gavin Douglas."

⁵³ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, XI: 44–47.

⁵⁴ *SH IX*: 42.

⁵⁵ In this passage, Tergotus is probably Turgot of Durham, bishop of St. Andrews who wrote a life of St. Margaret. See Turgot, *St. Margaret*.

⁵⁶ Part of Boece's overall campaign to minimize Arthur's exceptionality was his dismissal of Arthur's European conquests, including his conflict with the Roman Empire (*SH IX*: 36).

⁵⁷ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, X: 481–84.

⁵⁸ "Indictum ne capessat bellum rex semper invictus, quis Britannici decoris assertor, autor esse possit?" *SH IX*: 40.

⁵⁹ *SH IX*: 40–41.

⁶⁰ *SH IX*: 41.

⁶¹ *SH IX*: 44.

⁶² Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, XI: 33–35.

⁶³ *SH IX*: 42.

⁶⁴ Royan highlights Boece's willingness to use local sources and believes this particular knowledge was due to his familiarity with Dunbar. See Royan, "The *Scotorum Historia*," 231.

⁶⁵ McHardy, *Tales of Scottish Landmarks*.

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Topography, Ethnography, and the Catholic Scots in the Religious Culture Wars: From Hector Boece's *Scotorum Historia* to John Lesley's *Historie of Scotland*

John Cramsie

WHEN ROBERT SIBBALD BECAME the king's geographer in Scotland in 1682, Charles II charged him to publish the "Description of the *Scotia Antiqua & Scotia Moderna*, and the Natural History of the Products of His Ancient Kingdom." Sibbald collected maps and manuscripts for decades and assembled the reports of local informants who responded to the detailed questionnaires he circulated around the country for this "Scottish Atlas."¹ He made himself the natural choice for Bishop Edmund Gibson's commission to revise the Scottish chapters for a new edition of William Camden's *Britannia* (1695). Gibson required Sibbald to identify additional books and manuscripts for interested readers. Sibbald listed a clutch of local descriptions, some tracts on specialized topics like minerals or the seats of the nobility, and just three descriptions of Scotland as a whole. His own *Scotia Illustrata* joined Petruccio Ubaldini's description of Scotland lifted from Hector Boece's *Scotorum Historia* and John Lesley's description of the Scots from his *De origine, moribus & rebus gestis Scotorum*.

Sibbald's list betrays a scarcity of titles after almost two centuries of travel and discovery across Britain. Perhaps Scottish topography and language communities (with a multitude of local dialects) presented unique challenges, especially for a traveler who journeyed into the uplands and the Gaedhealtacht or those who sought to traverse the cultural boundaries and prejudices of Lowland Scotland.² Intellectual traditions played an important role. The examples of John of Fordun and Walter Bower cemented the connection between descriptions of Scotland's peoples and writing the country's history. Further, two kingdoms shared Britain despite the best efforts of Norman and then English conquerors. They also waged what James Goldstein termed a "war of historiography" with Scots determined to control the history (and ethnography) of their country.³ Like its island neighbors, Scotland too owed its foundation to multiple migrations and long, complex cultural interactions. Ancient Britons,

Picts, Scots, Norse, and Anglo-Normans all laid claim to it. Medieval and Renaissance Scottish writers constantly grappled with this history of migration in accounting for the origins of the Scots and the settlement of the kingdom.⁴ To write the history of Scotland, especially one that established its ancient independence, necessitated writing a multicultural history. Topographic and ethnographic descriptions became essential introductions to a realm brought together — at times retrospectively — through a common history and the ambitions of Stewart kings to cement the identification of “Scotland” with the dynasty itself.⁵

Travel, discovery, and ethnography converged in the sixteenth century to propel British scholar-travelers into a new discovery of home that impacted the writing of Scotland. Many individuals lived and died near their birthplaces, but the roads and byways of medieval Britain were already home to an eclectic and surprisingly large collection of travelers.⁶ Some of them, like Gerald of Wales or John of Fordun, took to the roads with descriptions of their countries and fellow inhabitants very much in mind. The Atlantic voyages that began in the fifteenth century did not so much create a European fascination with discovery and humanity as give new encouragement to the existing interests of travelers at home and abroad. Ethnography — the study of humanity itself — occupied the interest of travelers and regimes as much as commercial gain, religious fervor, or dreams of empire. Indeed, ethnography had a pedigree as old as Herodotus, a favorite among Renaissance humanist readers.

John Lesley, the Marian bishop of Ross, made a significant contribution to the “discovery” and writing of Scotland in this tradition, as Sibbald recognized by including Lesley’s history in his booklist. Yet in the 1570s Lesley wrote in a very different context from predecessors among Scottish traveler-scholars like John Mair (1521) or Hector Boece (1527). Lesley turned topography and ethnography into critical weapons in the religious battles that divided Scotland between supporters of a Presbyterian kirk and the Catholic Church. Lesley wanted his *Historie* to lead the Scottish people to an understanding of themselves within the Catholic tradition. In it, he confronted them with a spiritual landscape and noble ancestors designed to spur them into rejecting the Presbyterian incursion into Scotland’s cultural life. Lesley’s is an important — if, ultimately, failed — response to Protestant writings of the nation and definitions of civility-barbarity by writers like George Buchanan. Lesley’s *Historie* has much to teach us about the ethno-religious dimensions of early-modern Britain’s “culture wars” and this essay explores these themes.⁷

We begin, though, on the other side of those religious and political cleavages with Hector Boece. Boece's *Scotorum Historia*, the Scots translation published by John Bellenden (1540), and the English reworking of both by William Harrison for Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577) provide an essential introduction to the politicization of Scotland's religious history and first-hand encounters with it by traveler-scholars. Especially in the engagement of the evangelical Harrison with Boece/Bellenden we begin to appreciate how a "common" past was subject to rewriting, re-interpretation, and crude manipulation in the service of confessional identities and ethnic or religious bigotry. This prelude will help us understand Lesley's *Historie* as both a reaction to and continuation of this religious culture war over the discovery and writing of Scotland.

* * *

Returning from his studies at the University of Paris sometime around 1497, having become fast friends with the great humanist Erasmus, Hector Boece became one of Bishop William Elphinstone's first teachers in the newly founded King's College of Aberdeen. Firmly settled as the college's principal by 1505, Boece set to work on his history of Scotland. Published in 1527 in Paris, Boece's *Scotorum Historia* recast the familiar narrative in the style of Livy, firmly anchored in the "mirror for princes" genre and dressed in "Sunday-best Latin."⁸ It evidently delighted James V, who commissioned a Scots language edition from John Bellenden (probably presented to the king in 1533) and made Boece's original the centerpiece of a French account of Scotland for his short-lived queen Madeleine de Valois.⁹

Boece's history became the starting point for numerous readers and scholar-travelers. In the 1540s John Leland and John Bale railed against Boece's attack on the mythic pasts of Brutus and Arthur and English claims to suzerainty over Scotland. The Italian Petruccio Ubaldini composed a "free" translation of Boece's history in 1550 and dedicated the manuscript to the earl of Arundel before seeing it through the press in 1588.¹⁰ William Harrison carefully read and studied Boece's *Historia* and Bellenden's translation. Having done so, he contributed his English translation, "the Description of Scotlande," to the 1577 edition of Holinshed. Lesley and George Buchanan followed in Boece's topographic and literary footsteps with their own histories of Scotland in 1578 and 1582 respectively.

The decades separating Harrison, Lesley, and Buchanan from Boece's original could have felt like centuries given the scale of religious

changes in Britain. In England and Wales, the 1530s ushered in Henry VIII's break from Rome while the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I laid the groundwork for a Protestant church despite Mary I's renewal of Catholicism in the years separating them. In 1559–1560, Scottish lords, fired by religious passion and nationalist zeal, deposed the regent Marie of Guise, who governed Scotland on behalf of Queen Mary and her husband, the French king Francis II. Mary lost both her mother and husband in tragic succession; Marie died in June 1560 and Francis succumbed to a probable brain tumor in December. Shunted aside by her mother-in-law Catherine de Medici, the young widow returned to Scotland in 1561 to assume the throne. The Scotland Mary returned to rule was governed by her half-brother James Stewart and the Lords of the Congregation, the beneficiaries of English military intervention that tipped the scales against the regent's French-backed forces in 1560. The triumphant Lords summoned a parliament in the name of their absent queen and renounced the authority of the pope, prohibited Catholic worship, and instituted a Calvinist confession of faith. The religious revolution was confirmed by the deposition and exile of Mary herself in 1567, leaving the country in the infant hands of James VI and his regents.¹¹ James would eventually become both the nursing father and antagonist of the Calvinist kirk that grew alongside him.

Boece's descriptions of the Scots became bound up with these religious changes when Harrison, Lesley, and Buchanan read and engaged with his history. Harrison's English translation can tell us much on the Protestant writing of Britain against which Lesley struggled. Harrison explained his editorial method in the preface to his description: "I translated Hectors description of Scotland out of the Scottish into the English toung, being not alitle ayded therein by the Latine, fro[m] whence sometime the translator [Bellenden] swarueth not a litle, as I haue done also fro[m] him [Bellenden], now and then, following the Latine, and now and then gathering such sence out of both as most did stande with my purposed breuity."¹² By his own account, over the course of three or four days Harrison turned Bellenden's translation into English out of Scots — "a tongue verie like vnto ours" (DS sig. *b.ii*r). Moving between these texts reveals how Harrison translated and characterized Scotland and its people through the lens of Holinshed's England and angry assumptions about English supremacy within an emergent Protestant Britain.¹³ Harrison's own project to publish a universal "Chronology" that attempted to explain the providential march of history toward Protestantism encour-

aged him to frame the Scottish religious past by superstition and the call to redemption.¹⁴

Harrison repeatedly rewrote Boece/Bellenden's ethno-topographic descriptions to recast the imprints of faith and devotion as superstition.¹⁵ In the town of Tain in Ross the "blissit banis of sanct Dutho [Duthac] restis in great ueneratioun of peple" (DS 5). Far away lay a valley with two round houses shaped like bells. He seems to have inserted himself in the text at this point alongside Boece/Bellenden, writing:

In this region moreover is ye towne called Thane, where the bones of Dutho [Duthac] an holy man (as they say) do reste, & are had in greater estimation among the superstitious sorte as sometime over the whole Iland, than the holy Gospel of God and merites of his Sonne, wherby we are onely saued. Two ancient houses are likewise maintained in one vale of Ross, whose formes resemble so many, but to what ende as yet I do not find.¹⁶

Harrison labored at his rewriting given that Boece's account of the "faithfulness of the Scots is directed towards the orthodoxy of Christian belief," and seems animated by "disquiet about heresy and other threats to the fundamental theology of Christianity."¹⁷ According to Boece these heresies arose outwith Scotland and arrived from other realms like England. Indeed, proximity to the Saxons caused the Scottish Borderers to give "up all the ancient customs" now preserved in Scotland's uplands.¹⁸ Lesley would be receptive to this story of faithful Highland Scots who resisted foreign heresy and manners.

Harrison was not above simply removing the evidence of the pre-reformation church from the landscape. He labored to airbrush out the religious orders and houses in Angus, the great abbey at Dunfermline, the abbot and monks of Iona, and the island abbey of the Augustinians in the Forth.¹⁹ Not far from Holyrood Palace was "a certayne oyle spring ... and the people are perswaded hereof, that it is uery medicinable agaynst all Cankers and skalles."²⁰ Harrison refused to retell Bellenden's account of the spring that constantly replenished itself:

This fountaine rais throw ane drop of sanct Katryn's oule, quhilk wes brocht out of mont Synay fra hir sepulture to sanct Margaret the blissit quene of Scotland. Als sone as sanct Margaret saw the oulie spring Ithandle [continuously] be [by] diuine miracle in the said place, sche gart [caused or gave instructions for] big ane chapell thair in the honour of sanct Katherine.²¹

Neither the humble canons in Angus nor Queen Margaret, the great patron saint of Scotland, were fit material for an evangelical reading of Boece's travels.

The establishment of a Presbyterian kirk in Scotland did not intrude on the evangelicalism that colored Harrison's writing of the Scots. In the Forth, "uncouth and wondrous full fische" often appeared and were thought to portend the "mortalitie of men and beistis quhare yai ar sene."²² Harrison turned this local omen into a national character trait: "wherefore their onely sight doth breede great terrour vnto the Scottishe nation, who are very great obseruers of vncouth signes and tokens."²³ Worse was to be found in Buchan:

In this regioun is ane carnell [cairn] of stanis [stones] liand togidder in maner of ane croun. And ryngis (quhen thay ar doun [struck]) as ane bell. Ane temple wes biggit [constructed] (as sum men belieuis) in the said place, quhare mony auld ritis and superstitionis wer mad to euill spretis [spirits].²⁴

This reading of the landscape was not scathing enough for Harrison: "Some are of the opinion, that one Idoll Temple or other stode heretofore in that place whylest the Scottishe nation was addicted to the worshippyng of Diuels."²⁵

Boece apparently intended to plunge into his history of Scotland after the topographic overview, but delayed because "sindry [sundry] nobill men hes desyrit me to schaw ye auld maneris of Scottis (quhilkis ar skatterit in sindry partis of yis buke) under ane co[m]pendius [tract], that it may be knawin how far we in this present dayis ar different."²⁶ Either Boece or his unspecified noble friends felt it vital to provide a summary of Scottish manners. Their intent was clear. The older Scots would be held up as a distinctly unflattering mirror to their fallen descendants, with hopes that those Scots not wholly corrupted would lead the rest to renewal.

The older Scots bore a striking resemblance to the Scots in John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*. Temperate people in both conversation and behavior, these Scots broke their fast simply, then refrained until dinner, "throw quhilk thair stomok was nevir surfetly chargit to empesche [hinder] thaym of vthir besines"²⁷ or, as Harrison put it somewhat more directly, "whereby it came to passe, yt[that] their stomackes were neuer overcharged, nor their bones desirous of rest thorow the fulnesse of their bellies."²⁸ The Scottish army marched on stomachs filled with hearthcakes, eating meat only if it was captured from the enemy, and half raw at that.

Reserve rations consisted of “ane gret vessell brocht full of butter, cheis, mele [meal], milk, & vinacre [vinegar] temperit togidder.”²⁹

Continual exercise, including hill running and wrestling, made these Scots ever fit for war. Scottish parents toughened their children by dipping them into chill water and exposing them to the extremity of the elements in summer and winter, especially by making them run barefoot. Like their purported Spanish cousins, the Scots sported shaved heads save for one little tuft on the forehead and went about uncovered except when sick. Their hose were made of finer linen or wool and they alternated between winter and summer mantles. They slept on bunks of straw, teaching their children from their earliest years to, in Harrison’s words, “eschew ease & practice the like hardnesse.”³⁰ Defeated in battle, the army melted into the countryside and hills to take the field another day. When battle was joined, the best of the nobility sought the front ranks. “The wemen war of lytle les vassalage and strenth,” wrote Bellenden, “than was the men. For al rank madynnis and wyfis (gif thay war nocht with child) gein/zein [go] als weill to battall, as the men.”³¹ With great solemnity and ritual, soldiers dipped in their swords to taste the blood of the first creature slain in battle that they found. The Scots’ own wounds only provoked greater ardor in combat. No Scot sought victory in battle by underhand means and they went to war at their own cost, and this included providing for their own lances, bows, swords, and heavier armor as warfare evolved.³²

The Scots were not simply a warrior race though. Boece noted that God had provided no region so barren and unfruitful by distance from the sun with “all maner of necessaryis to ye sustentatioun of man” as Scotland, “gif thair war sic pepyll that cuid laubour it effering [appropriate] to the nature thair of.”³³ This backhanded slight was offered in the context of praising Scottish excellence in medicine, especially the expert use of medicinal herbs. Language among the early Scots was unique: “Thay usit the rytis and maneris of Egiptianis fra quhome thay tuk thair first begynnyng,” using a hieroglyphic language in their secret correspondence.³⁴ The hieroglyphic form of the ancient language perished, but the fine cadences of the spoken original and its ordinary written counterpart were preserved among Highlanders and their poets and bards. Sounding a note of almost Romantic attachment to the Highlanders who preserved the nation’s ancient culture, both Bellenden and Harrison remarked on the traditional carroch still used in salmon fishing. By contrast, the Scots met their English neighbors for trade and warfare in the Lowland marches and borders: the Saxon tongue and cultural degeneration followed.³⁵

Scottish decline mimicked the corruption of the Roman republic, a staple topic for humanists like Boece steeped in Livy and Tacitus.³⁶ From that viewpoint, Boece contended “I beleif nane hes sic eloquence, nor fouth [abundance] of language, that can sufficiently declare how far we in thic present dayis ar different fra the virtew & temperance of our eldaris.”³⁷ Eloquent or not, neither Boece nor Bellenden was lost for vivid descriptions of their fallen countrymen: “dronkyness,” “schamefull and immoderyt voracitie,” “the hungry appetit of gluttonis,” “auarice,” and “all maner of droggis [drugs] ... (that may nuris [nourish] the lust and insolence of pepyl) ar brocht into Scotland with maist sumptuous price to na les damage than perdition of the pepyll.”³⁸ The effects were clear to see, a strong, hardy people wasted and sickened by “uoluptuous leuying and intemperance,” incapable of repeating the martial exploits of their ancestors, and guilty of producing one enfeebled generation after another.³⁹ Harrison expanded the details of Bellenden’s version with evangelical zeal, calling the Scots to account “as men not walking in ye right pathe” while offering his fellow Englishmen, with their own problems of indolence and high living, a stern warning.⁴⁰

As we might expect, Boece/Bellenden held out hope for the restoration of virtue, for “in syndry partis of this realme, remanis zet ye futsteppis of mony auld virtewis usit sum tyme amang our eldaris. Bot als risis euery day new feruent deuotioun to the ornament of christin faith.”⁴¹ The rebirth of the Scots rested on the recovery of old values and new devotions to Christ. There “was neuir pepyl mair sicker [secure] inye cristin faith, nor zit mair constant in thair faithful promis, than the scottis hes bene ay sen thair first beginning.” The Scots could be led to their ancient virtue by understanding that they lacked “na maner of uirtew yt yair eldaris had, except the temperance of thair bodyis.”⁴² This very humanist form of counsel encouraged James V to govern his subjects by embracing the virtues of the ancient, noble Scot and Christian prince. There was nothing unorthodox or evangelical in this description, counsel, and critique. The religious upheavals in Britain that followed Boece’s *Historia* and Bellenden’s *Croniklis* inevitably changed that. From Harrison’s standpoint in the 1570s, the Scots still waited for their redemption. Lesley would warm to Boece’s themes of Scottish renewal and Christian virtue and give them a Catholic twist.

Harrison would have found Lesley an appalling example of the unredeemed Scots. Lesley spent 1568 and 1569 in York, intriguing with Queen Mary's supporters in their scheme to marry the exiled queen of Scots to the English Duke of Norfolk. Lesley occupied his Christmas and New Year in penning a treatise that countered trumped-up allegations that Mary played the role of *femme fatale* in the murder of her husband, Henry Darnley. The treatise also defended Mary's claim to the English throne as the great-granddaughter of Henry VII. Lesley might have done better to accommodate himself to the new regime in Scotland and his hosts in England. A spell of imprisonment between February and April 1569 did not deter him from intriguing. The imprisonment of Norfolk and the failed rising of the Catholic northern earls of Northumberland and Westmorland led once more to Lesley's own confinement, this time in the Bishop of London's house. Released in May 1570, worse was to come in 1571 thanks to his involvement in the Ridolfi Plot, a second abortive attempt to bring together Mary and Norfolk. Two days caged in the Tower, under the watchful eyes of William Cecil's agents, brought the songbird in Lesley to a pretty tune, providing Burghley with full details of the plot. Norfolk went to the scaffold and Lesley spent another eighteen months in confinement before finally sailing into exile in France in January 1574.⁴³

Lesley did not occupy his time in England entirely with intrigue. He spent part of 1568 reading the histories of Polydore Vergil and Bede, the chronicles of Froissart, Fabyan, and Edward Hall, and summaries by John Stow. He found — apparently to his surprise — “mony and sundry thingis sett forth ... far contrar to our annales, registeris, and trew proceedingis collected in Scotland.” While he felt that “the trew histories of our country be largely, truly, and eloquently treated and wreattin be that cuning and eloquente historiographe Hector Boecius,” he decided to bring that story up to date, filling in the period between James I's death in 1436 and Mary's reign. House arrest in London allowed Lesley the opportunity to do just that. The history he finished in 1570 remained in Scots and in manuscript until its publication in 1830 for the Bannatyne Club.⁴⁴

Continental exile prompted a second look at this manuscript history.⁴⁵ What began as a continuation of Boece evolved into a new, distinct work: Lesley created a full-blown account of “Of the origin, manners, and history of the Scots.”⁴⁶ In its address to “the nobility and people of Scotland,” Lesley explained:

Many persons, both in our own and foreign countries, pressed me not only to publish this in the Latin language, but also to add a

compendium of the previous history already written, correctly, though inelegantly, by John Major, and elegantly enough, by Hector Boece, but, as many complained, with too much diffuseness and prolixity. I proceeded therefore to compress and epitomise this portion; while to the former, which in its Scottish dress could interest Scotsmen only, I have, with some trouble, given the power to speak to all through the medium of Latin. In writing this work, I have not only confronted previous histories with the annals kept in our public archives, and with the oldest codices religiously preserved at Paisley, Scone, and our other monasteries, but I have consulted Tacitus, Suetonius, Ammianus, Marcellinus, Eutropius, Herodianus, and other writers of neighbouring nations.⁴⁷

Lesley completed this *Historie of Scotland* when he moved to the papal court as Mary's representative. The edition published in Rome in 1578 boasted a dedication to Pope Gregory XIII. Lesley explained that when "I realised that the same benefit which I received from these studies (of Scottish history) might be enjoyed by my fellow-countrymen, I set myself to arrange, or rather rewrite, the history of the Scots, which I had roughly put together when in prison, and brought with me to Italy as my plank of safety from shipwreck."⁴⁸

Lesley's feeling for Scottish Catholicism seems to have become more heartfelt in exile. Learning of the *Schottenklöster*, the once vibrant Scottish — actually, Irish — monasteries and abbeys in Germany, Lesley proposed transforming these into the training colleges for a new generation of Scottish missionaries.⁴⁹ Encouraged by the Linlithgow priest Ninian Winzet, Lesley's *Historie* and his plans for the *Schottenklöster* opened a new front against the Presbyterian regime in Scotland and his queen's English jailers.⁵⁰ Lesley had persuaded Pope Gregory to install Winzet at Ratisbon so he could spearhead the *Schottenklöster* project.⁵¹ Lesley hoped that, just as the Catholic Scots would go forth from the *Schottenklöster* and nurse their brethren, the Scots of his *Historie* would rise from its pages and embolden their modern counterparts to summon the virtues of their forebears, return to the ancient faith, and embrace a Counter-Reformation destiny.

Following Herodotus, Xenophon, Livy, Caesar, and Tacitus, who put travel and first-hand encounters at the center of their histories, Lesley conformed "to the exemple of the aunciant writeris, [to] descriue the quarteris and boundes of Scotland with the Iles."⁵² Like Fordun, Mair, and Boece, Lesley opened with a description of Scotland (topography) and

its peoples (ethnography). Livy offered a model for the history of a chosen people that could be adapted by either Catholics or Protestants while Boece provided Lesley with a good deal of the raw material needed to write an idealized Catholic history of Scotland and the Scots.⁵³ Alongside past events, topography and ethnography played critical roles in how Lesley fashioned the Catholic Scots who populated his *Historie*. This description, even more than the prefaces that greeted them, framed the history of Scotland for Lesley's readers.

Lesley's encounters with the peoples of Scotland owed their beginnings to his birth in Kingussie, nestled alongside the Spey as it follows its course to the Moray Firth. Here Lesley probably crossed paths with many Scots whose customs and manners belied neat categories like Highlander and Lowlander. As a student and, later, cleric in the diocese, Lesley journeyed into Aberdeenshire.⁵⁴ In the aftermath of the revolution of 1559–1560, he accompanied a delegation of Catholics summoned to Edinburgh to defend the mass against the likes of John Knox. Lesley found himself, along with his Aberdeen colleagues, detained for a time and subjected to sermons by the reformers. Mary's return from France in 1561 improved his fortunes. He was appointed professor of canon law at King's College Aberdeen, made a judge in the Court of Session and privy councilor, and promoted to the abbey of Lindores and bishopric of Ross. He finally made his way north to Ross just as Mary's rule collapsed. He backtracked too late to rejoin her after the escape from Lochleven, but traveled through the borders to reach York and eventually, Burton-on-Trent and London.⁵⁵ Only the most remote parts and peoples of Scotland would have been wholly undiscovered country for Lesley the traveler.

Reading Lesley's description of Scotland, it is clear why Sibbald referred his readers to it. Lesley's was the most thorough ethno-topographic description of Scotland available. He aligned his *Historie* with Mair and Boece, but his ethnography had a distinct purpose:

That I, afore the eyne [eye] baith of our Nobilitie, and of the lai people, in quhatsaeuir state or degrie, mycht sett down as in ane bredd or table, a certaine ernist or hett affectione of the catholik religione, and a vehement constance in defending thair of.⁵⁶

Like Boece, Lesley described "mony vthiris worthie and notable vertues, in quhilkes our Elderis, sumtyme florisched, and war mekle [greatly] renowned."⁵⁷ The qualities of these ancient Scots would now call to their modern brethren who had fallen from the Catholic faith: "the radier walde thay

ryse frome thair darke errouris in quhilkes thay ar incloset, and returneng sinceirlie to the catholik concorde, now at last mychte begin to follow the sway of true vertue sa deip imprented with the fustepis of thair foirbears.”⁵⁸ Here was an account set to confront the Scottish revolution and Presbyterian kirk with a very different claim on Scotland, its past, and its peoples.

Lesley’s topography wrote the religious orders back into the spiritual life of the nation and rebuilt the church’s foundations on its monasteries and abbeys. Through them Lesley celebrated Catholic spirituality and the perseverance of his co-religionists and attacked the violence directed toward them by his heretical opponents and their self-serving political allies. The border counties contained the “riche monasteries” of Melrose, Jedburgh, Kelso, and Coldingham with the houses “of haly nunis” in Coldstream and Eccles. Lesley made special mention of these monasteries because their yearly revenues had not been “violated by any law of the kingdom” until the “the furie of thir wod [mad] men through the hail Realme haue castne doune.”⁵⁹ Galloway “lykewyse afor the haeresie began, [was] decored with a famous and fair monasterie” (St. Ninians) and Lesley praised the “wisdome and autoritie of certane illustir and nobill men” through whose intervention another Galloway monastery “stadis 3it hail [undamaged].”⁶⁰ Glasgow “Afor the haeresie” boasted an academy well respected for philosophy, grammar, and political instruction. Of even more note was the monastery at Paisley: the “bewtie of the biging [building] and ecclesiastical vestments, an decore of the 3ardes, may esilie contend with mony kirkes, quhilkes this day ar halden maist ornat in vthir cuntreyes.”⁶¹ The “beautiful and excellent” foundations at Arbroath, St. Andrews, Dunfermline, Holyrood, and Melrose stood as Catholic monuments. So did Lindores, Culross, Pittenweem, and Balmerino and the nunnery at Aberdour.⁶² Perth offered an instructive contrast. In all things it was fair, beautiful and well-disposed “excepte the destructione of religious places,” among which was once “a noble clostre and largre of the Cartusians, quhilke the heides of the tounne Caluinists ouirthrew first of al in thir furie, first, I say afor ony vthir.”⁶³ As British Catholics later worked to revitalize “spaces and sites that had been venerated by their medieval predecessors,” Lesley’s *History* pointed them to the “hallowed places that had been vandalized or abandoned” which could become the scenes of “covert devotion.”⁶⁴

Lesley rediscovered the world of pious devotion in the shadow of Holyrood, at the oily spring in Liberton: “Is said that quhen it first sprang to have beine spilte out of S. Catharines oyle, quhen thair the pig [earthen

pitcher] quhairin it was, negligentlie was brokne, quhen frome the Mounte Sinay it was brocht to S. Margaret: Bot it is gude (as we vnderstand) to kure and to remeid diuers dolouris [blemishes] of the skin.”⁶⁵ This was a fair reworking of Boece/Bellenden’s account, but how the spring fared in later descriptions gives us some sense of what Lesley was up against in attempting a Catholic topography. For Harrison it belonged to that time when the Scots venerated devils and proved themselves to be “very great obseruers of vncouth signes and tokens.”⁶⁶ George Buchanan had nothing to say on the matter, but his relative David Buchanan wrote a new account for the Scottish volume of Joan Blaeu’s great *Atlas Novus* in 1654. He described a “spring from whose outflow oil bubbles up along with water or a fatty, dense balsam, floating on the water. The local people collect this on fixed days and preserve it for several months, and they use it as an excellent remedy against distortions and pains in the limbs and against agria, a type of scabies.”⁶⁷ Blaeu printed Buchanan’s account four years after Cromwell and New Model Army soldiers defaced the shrine.⁶⁸ Decades later Sibbald obtained a report of the well — reading very much like Buchanan’s — as he gathered first-hand accounts from local informants for his Scottish atlas: “To the south of Libertoun Kirk there is a Wellspring which sends up with the Water an Oyl or rather a Balsam reasonable thick and fat ... a soveraign cure for wrests, Akings, &c.”⁶⁹ But when Sibbald revised *Britannia* for Gibson, he dropped the matter. The mystical passed from the superstitious to the medicinal to the forgettable.

The topography of Catholic Scotland came alive in Lesley’s hands. For the scholar-travelers writing in early-modern Britain, topography inevitably shaded into ethnography. It was difficult to separate the qualities of a country’s peoples from the features of its landscapes. In Scotland people left unique marks on the country while the land in turn defined their lives. The land both divided and mixed them. Highland, Lowland, and complex regional dynamics defined the land as much as the people. Civility gave way to barbarity depending upon whom one traveled among.⁷⁰ We see all of these themes at work in Lesley’s description.

Among their customs, manners, and cultural markers, steadfast devotion to Catholicism defined the Scots. Lesley began with the peopling of Britain:

In alde tyme thrie peples onlie war in Britannie, the Britanis, the Scots, and the Peychtis [Picts] ... [The Isle] be violence, force, and compulsione occupied be strangeris, hes oft bene changet, as the Inglishe historiographouris beiris at large, for to the Britanis gyueng

place succedid the Romanes; quhen the Romanis war expelit, the psychtis and the Scottis tuke possessione: The Britanis now callis the Saxonis to dryue out the Scottis and psychtis, quha neist succedid to thay rouses [domains]; quhen the Saxounis war dantouned [subdued] succedid the Danes of Denmark: quhen the Danes ar dung [forced] out, the Nortmans establishes that forme of ane Impire, in quhilke we this day sie the dignitie of the Inglish name perseueiring.⁷¹

This history of migration, encounter, and settlement played a crucial role in a Catholic reading of Scotland and its people.

The “Britains of Cambrie or Wallis,” besieged by Caesar and now “vnder the kingdome and Impire of Ingland,” kept “incorrupite baith thair language and maneris.”⁷² The Welsh welcomed the benevolent union wrought by Henry VII’s accession and the acts of incorporation that followed under his son, especially becoming “ane people vnder ane law, aequal maneris and conditiones [with] the Inglesmen.”⁷³ Perhaps Lesley imbibed too much Tudor propaganda. Still, the Welsh offered a fine example of a people “in the Catholik religione verie constant” despite the break from Rome and the re-establishment of a Protestant Church under Elizabeth.⁷⁴ Indeed, seventy years later the godly warriors of the New Model Army would scarcely credit the Welsh with being Christian, let alone good Protestants and Roger Williams, the future founder of Providence, would report on the (pagan) “Indians” of Wales, Ireland, and Cornwall.⁷⁵ These descendants of the ancient Britons who held fast to their culture and faith had something to teach their Scottish cousins. God favored Scotland too:

[It] hes ben maist ancient, and to God and man hes bene bathe grate and acceptable, testifies thair daylye habitatione in the land quhilke presentlie thay inhabite, thair sure and constante libertie from age til age, thair lawfull successionne of kingis sa mony hundir geirs; thair quick receiuing of the christne religione, and evin vnto this age sa constantlie in it perseueiring ... in this mirk and mistie tyme, this warlde now sa neir ane end, and weirand [worn] sa fast away.⁷⁶

If they were not descended from some mythic or godly founder, they were certainly the children of “sum stout and excellent persounis baith in virtue and nobilitie.”⁷⁷

The imprint of ancient virtue and nobility could be found, naturally, in the Scots’ manners and customs.⁷⁸ Lesley cribbed Boece shamelessly. The Scots did not spend their lives in idle show or eating dainty

dishes. They preferred water, whole-wheat hearth cakes, stewed meat, and a nutritious fatty meat broth, consumed on a schedule that included only breakfast and a late supper. Illness passed them by. Men and women kept to plain, decent clothing without jewelry: a short wool coat, simple breeches for men “mair to hyd thair memberis than for ony pompe or pryd,” linen shirts colored with saffron, and mantles (cloaks), though the nobility preferred larger and more colorful ones than the commoners.⁷⁹ They slept rough wrapped in their mantles. As a warrior people the Scots were swift in pursuit and clever in retreat, their nobility sought the front ranks, and they went into battle provisioned with those great crocks of butter, milk, and cheese, wearing leather coats, and armed with the short, long, and broad swords. They exercised their bodies in peacetime and brought “vp thair bairnes first to exercise thame in schoteng arrowis, neist in casting dartes, thaireftir in feiding [feeding] horses, and prouoking thame to rinn; and last in handling of waiponis.”⁸⁰ All this martial vigor unfortunately encouraged feuds. Yet no people “war les diligate [delicate] than thay, les leicherous, and mair abhorred voluptuous plesour.”⁸¹

The Scots who most closely resembled their noble ancestors were those living in the Gaedhealtacht.⁸² This was certainly Boece’s contention and Lesley made the connection the centerpiece of his description: “for quha this day ar, haue hithrito keipet the institutionis of thair elderis sa constantlie, that nocht onlie mair than 2 thowsand yeirs thay haue keipet the tounge vncorrupte: bot lykwyse the maner of cleithing and leiueng, that ald forme thay vnchanget aluterlie haue keipet.”⁸³ Like their Welsh cousins, the Highland Scots preserved their faith along with their culture and tongue: “Thair constancie quhilke this day thay haue keipet is not worthie of sobir [mean] and slicht prais, chieflie that in the catholik religione far les thay defecte, and far fewar than vthiris of the mair politick sorte amang vs.”⁸⁴ Not quite a covenanted people, but Lesley deliberately tied the ancient virtue of the Scots to their fidelity to God and Catholicism.

Lesley was attuned to the cultural complexity among Scotland’s peoples, especially in a century increasingly dominated by religious prejudice and a too-neat Highland/Lowland identification with barbarity and civility. In this he harked back to medieval writers, who demonstrated a good deal more sensitivity in handling the shifting cultural complexities that eventually became a superficial conflation of the topographic terms Highland and Lowland with ethnographic markers and classical concepts of civility and barbarity.⁸⁵ Indeed, Lesley had little time for crude ethno-phobia and he defended his focus on cultural complexity:

I have spent rather much time to describe these things exactly, because great is the insolence of certain people to disparage maliciously what is to our praise. Because when they read that the ancient Scots (whose image is still retained by those from the most remote part of Scotland) were not endowed with the same elegance of customs which they mostly applaud in themselves, these polished and delicate men immediately try to brand all Scots with some mark of barbarity; they do not realise that even in these, there is much that ought to be praised to an extraordinary degree.⁸⁶

Critics would also do well to recognize natural cultural exchanges even within differences. Lesley pointed to linguistic exchanges between Scots and English as well as dress and eating habits that looked at least a little like those in France or Flanders.⁸⁷

Lesley thus understood the significance of cultural exchanges and middle grounds where peoples and cultures met and interacted. Hailing from Kingussie and with time spent in Aberdeen, he naturally counted the Grampian foothills as one of the “midcuntries” between Highland and Lowland.⁸⁸ There was another cultural middle ground in Scotland: “as sum of thame quha inhabites the borders of Scotland toward Ingland, haue maneris from the rest far different, sa in this place sum of thame I purpose to reherse.”⁸⁹ The religious foundations in the Anglo-Scottish border counties escaped the mad zeal of evangelicals, but they still existed in a region of “baulde men of Weir [war],” especially among those “quha ar not diuydet frome the Inglesmen be sum kynd of way, be a wattir or hill.”⁹⁰ Very different Scots populated this march, stretching from Berwick along the North Sea to Lothian. Though some cultivated justice and studied politics, “verie unlyke ar thay to all the rest of the bordirmen round about, quha nathir in peace or weire can be stainchet [checked] from taking the pray.”⁹¹

Lesley’s was not a flattering rehearsal of the borderers’ customs and manners. These Scots flaunted the authority of the king and his agents, rejoiced in taking the “grettest libertie and licence” without consequence, and would sooner steal than live from the fruits of their own labor. No wonder they subsisted on meat and dairy products from herds with a bit of barley beer — having “verie lytle vse of breid,” good beer, or wine — and treated their “scheiphouses and luges [lodge]” like “castelis and palices.” Among the king’s subjects, the borderers pursued the most deadly, unrelenting blood feuds. Yet once pledged, the borderers kept faith and they delighted in music and singing. What most redeemed them for Lesley was that they had not “vanelie fallin frome the faith of the Catholik Kirk, as mony vthiris haue done.”⁹²

Here then were Scots who must be understood for the full scope of their virtues and vices, and in all their cultural complexity. But this was not the age of Walter Scott or Romantic travelers who set off for the Highlands intent upon recovering Scotland's heroic past or catching sight of Britannia's noble savages. Lesley did not write uncritically of the upland Scots, ancient or modern, but he complicated a simplistic reading of them. So intent was Lesley on this point that he digressed to refute other canards toward the Scots of old. Some writers — Mair and Boece among them — claimed the ancient Scots “war wonte to eit the fleshe of the captiues” and others that their “women war wonte to slay their men with thair awne handes quhen from the field thay war cum hame ouircum be thair enemies.”⁹³ For Lesley, “the alde crueltie of fewe sulde noch be ascriuet to the hail Scottis natione” while necessity might explain many unusual actions and events in a people's past.⁹⁴ Lesley admitted that their masters too easily led them to sedition and strife, but he laid the blame squarely on those chiefs and warned against stereotyping either a group or an entire people by such features: “quhen as thay write sik wordes, thay accuse the hail scottis men, not considering that gif ane thing was not praisworthie in thame, or in ane sorte; mony things that thay haue by worthie of singular prais.”⁹⁵ Still, Lesley's was a difficult argument to make, even to his translator. In a marginal note for readers, Dalrymple understood Lesley's point that the “wyldnes of Scottis bot sum, sulde not be ascriuet to al the natioune,” but lost the complexity with a reductive marginal note that highlighted the “deidlie feides in Scotland betuene clan and clan.”⁹⁶

Linguistic contests in Britain provided an opening to challenge stereotypes further. The Saxons' tongue, English, had come to dominate Britain, borrowing from, pushing to the margins, or seeing off entirely the languages of the Britons, Picts, Danes, and Irish. This was true among the so-called “politick Scottis” who now spoke a form of English.⁹⁷ For the rest,

the Scottish quhome we halde as outlawis and wylde peple, (Because the institutions of thair elderis, and that alde and simple manr of cleithing and leiueng thay hald git, and wil not forsaik thair opinionne); we, I say, because the mair horrible places of the Realme thay occupie, cal thame quha dwel in the mountanis or the mountane people, thay vse thair alde Irishe tounge.⁹⁸

The turn into Scots makes this a bit tortured, but the meaning comes through. Lowland-dwelling Scots “constructed” their mountain-dwelling Highland brethren as outlaws and wild people on the basis of their cul-

tural differences, because they held to the customs, manners, and folkways of their ancestors. But Lesley's confession to being among those Lowland Scots challenged — and recanted — the stereotype.

Outsiders created the wild Highland Scots; chiefs fundamentally bore the blame for real instances of outlaw behavior, and no group or people should be defined by singular practices or customs. Above all, Scotland and the Scots were a good deal more complicated than the notions of Highland and Lowland allowed. Lesley worried that "perchance our orisone [oration] hes been langre of thir twa people than of sum hes bene desyret," but he had spared the time because those Scots differed so significantly from their neighbors "qhua ar moaist politick and decent in maniris."⁹⁹ What followed was less a comparable ethnographic analysis than potted histories or summaries of the nobility, commons, and ecclesiastical orders.¹⁰⁰ The nobility came in for criticism for deviating from the pattern of their noble ancestors and, implicitly, from their Highland neighbors, especially in duels and material excess. Perhaps with the would-be missionaries of the *Schottenklöster* in mind, Lesley remarked on the Scottish Diaspora, the younger sons "put to sum honest schift" abroad in place of a landed inheritance at home.¹⁰¹ Lesley praised the pastoral diligence and piety of the clergy. He defended them, especially his episcopal brethren, against claims by heretics that they were vicious hypocrites who neglected to preach the word of God or wandered the country as ragged, begging priests. If anything harmed the stature of the clerical estate, it was the bishops' involvement in affairs of state and the corruption of the bench by noblemen's sons, leaving them open to the "sklander and bakbyte" of "mischieuous persounes."¹⁰² All of this reads as though Lesley anticipated the vituperative associations of Gaeldom, Catholicism, disloyalty, and backwardness to come.

* * *

John Lesley had two purposes in re-narrating Scottish topography and ethnography in his *Historie*. He confronted an ethno-cultural history that no one could hide and used it to marginalize his Calvinist opponents. Lesley's description called all but the most stubborn or self-serving of his brethren back to the true faith and their true nature and framed how they should engage with the *Historie*. When he wrote that "haeresie occupies al baith in lenth and bredthe," he rejected stirring up "the displeisour and auld rancour of the furious haeretiks against the Catholiks, for it lyes not in the prayer of man bot in the power of God is put a certane secreit and

sure maner of medicine to be applied to this Ill, quhilke we hope he sal adhibite [seal] or it be lang [before long], cheiflie quhen this day ar verie mony of Scotland decored [with] al vertues and inflamed [with] the pure and sincere luue of the rycht Religione, quha through thair exile, quhilke for the luue of Christe thay willinglie haue accepted.”¹⁰³

Lesley wrote of his fellow religious exiles here, but his ethnographic descriptions made them the visible representatives of the many unseen Scots who still kept faith with their ancestors’ nobility and Catholicism and those who might be called back to them. Spiritual devotion animated both religious sites and folkways. The religious orders and dedicated parish clergy peopled the spiritual landscape. Monasteries and abbeys celebrated religious fidelity while their destruction indicted Protestant fanaticism. For Lesley, Scotland’s least “civilized” peoples in the Highlands and border counties would call their modern brethren back from religious schism. They preserved the necessary noble qualities of the ancient Scots, including constancy, demonstrated by their continued fidelity to the Catholic faith. Indeed, Lesley argued that the barbarity attributed to those peoples revealed less about reality than it did about the constructs fashioned by Lowland politicians and writers. If a barbaric madness or violence afflicted anyone, it afflicted the Calvinist zealots and their political allies — the “wod” (mad or forest) men who constituted a rupture with the Scottish past and Scottishness itself.

Buchanan and his followers nonetheless seized the Scottish past for the Protestant cause and did a better job of setting the terms of debate for the future.¹⁰⁴ Not entirely, though. Lesley hoped his Catholic Scots would encourage European support for Mary’s cause in the 1570s, when there still seemed — and indeed was — so much to play for religiously and dynastically in Britain.¹⁰⁵ A nation of Catholic Scots keeping their heads down in the country’s uplands, Anglo-Scottish borders, and elsewhere offered a more attractive international cause than a country lost to a Presbyterian kirk. They almost seemed designed to answer the evangelical spin given to Boece’s history in Harrison’s translation for Holinshed. Perhaps the publication of Lesley’s *Historie* in 1578 and the dangerous affinity shown by the young James VI for his Catholic cousin Esmé Stewart — an *agent-provocateur* planted at the court in 1579 thanks to Lesley’s efforts — even spurred on Buchanan to complete his *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* and see it through the press just months before his death in 1582.¹⁰⁶ We would do well to remember the loathing for Buchanan’s history that moved James to push through a parliamentary ban on the book in 1584, and also to take

note that Margaret Beckett in her recent analysis of Lesley's career finds resonances — at least common ground — between James's political philosophy and Lesley's discussion of kingship in the *Historie*.¹⁰⁷ Neither the English nor the Scots underestimated the threat of Catholics like Lesley: the work of Stephen Alford and Beckett's study offer timely reminders that the supposed inevitable triumph of Protestantism that long colored accounts of the period was anything but inevitable to Lesley's contemporaries.¹⁰⁸

With his *Historie*, Lesley made a spirited effort to lead the Scottish people to an understanding of themselves within the Catholic tradition and to confront them with their ancestors' fidelity as a spur to rejecting the kirk. Lesley directed his vision of Scottish unity to all but the most stubborn and self-serving of his opponents. The Catholic vision extended to the cultural mosaic of Britain itself. The 1584 edition of Lesley's treatise defending the claims of Mary and James VI to the English throne included a challenge to the rhetoric of a Protestant British *imperium*. He called for a Catholic Britain realized by renewed devotion to the universal Church, symbolized by the English and Scottish soldiers who joined hands "in peace and faith" in the title page woodcut.¹⁰⁹ If Lesley could imagine unity that crossed the Tweed, it may be because he already overcame the mental boundary between Highland and Lowland in finding — or at least imagining — the Catholic Scots.

NOTES

¹ Sibbald, *Advertisement*; Withers, *Geography, Science and National Identity*, 69–84.

² Fox and Woolf, *Spoken Word*, 25; Morét, "Gaelic History," 14–22 and generally.

³ Goldstein, *Matter of Scotland*, 23–103; Mason, "From Chronicle to History," 53–63.

⁴ Broun, "Picts' Place," 11–28; Boardman, "Late Medieval Scotland," 47–72. Mason, "Civil Society," 95–119; Kidd, *British Identities*, 123–45.

⁵ Royan, "*Scotorum Historia*," 282–84.

⁶ Whyte, *Migration and Society*, 22–28, 63–64.

⁷ Cramsie, *British Travelers*, 101–37.

⁸ Boece in ODNB.

⁹ Boece in ODNB; Morét, "Gaelic History," 51–78.

¹⁰ See Petrina's contribution in the present volume.

¹¹ Guy, *My Heart is My Own*, 118–20; Dawson, *Scotland Re-Formed*, 200–63.

¹² Harrison, "Description of Scotlande," 21 (hereafter DS).

¹³ Mason, "Scotland," 656–60.

¹⁴ Parry, *Protestant Vision*, 141–97.

¹⁵ Caution is required when reconciling the substance of Boece's *Historia* within Bellenden's *Croniklis*. Bellenden demonstrated an identifiable Lowland sensibility by comparison to Boece in addressing Scotland's cultural complexity. Bellenden had little time for the Gaelic heritage of the Scots and he muted Boece's interest in linguistic exchange and integration. Chronologically, however, they stood on the same side of the religious-political divide that opened in 1559–60. Comparisons with Harrison's religious attitudes still hold even when juggling Boece and Bellenden's imprint in the *Croniklis*. See Royan, "*Scotorum Historia*," 136–38, 147–48; Cramsie, *British Travelers*, 113–25.

¹⁶ DS 5.

¹⁷ Royan, "*Scotorum Historia*," 83–85.

¹⁸ Morét, "Gaelic History," 62.

¹⁹ DS 7, 12.

²⁰ DS 8.

²¹ Bellenden, *Croniklis of Scotland*, sig. C.ir (hereafter CS; quotations are from the Preface).

²² CS sig. B.viv.

²³ DS 8.

²⁴ CS sig. C.iv.

²⁵ DS 9.

²⁶ CS sig. C vir–v; DS 16–17.

²⁷ CS sig. D.ir.

²⁸ DS 18.

²⁹ CS sig. D.ir.

³⁰ DS 18.

³¹ CS sig. D.iv.

³² CS sig. D.iv; DS 18–19.

³³ CS sig. D.iir; DS 19.

³⁴ CS sig. D.iir; DS 19.

³⁵ See Morét, "Gaelic History," 74–78; CS sig. D.iir–v; DS 19–20.

³⁶ Royan, "*Scotorum Historia*," 3, 98, 297.

³⁷ CS sig. D.iir–v; DS 19–20.

³⁸ CS sig. D.iiv–D.iiir.

³⁹ CS sig. D.iiir.

⁴⁰ DS 20–21.

⁴¹ CS sig. D.iiir.

⁴² CS sig. D.iiir.

⁴³ Lesley in ODNB; Alford, *Burghley*, 168–81; Beckett, "John Lesley," 5–10.

⁴⁴ Leslie, *Historie*, I, xi–xxii.

⁴⁵ Leslie, *Historie*, I, xviii–xix.

⁴⁶ Leslie, *Historie*, I, xxi–xxii.

⁴⁷ Leslie, *Historie*, I, xx–xxi.

⁴⁸ Leslie, *Historie*, I, xx.

⁴⁹ Lesley in ODNB.

⁵⁰ Beckett, “John Lesley,” 221. As if to confirm the relationship, Father James Dalrymple of Ratisbon abbey turned the Latin *Historie* back into Scots in 1596, forming the basis for the edition published by the Scottish Text Society. It derives from Dalrymple’s Scots manuscript version of the 1578 edition, edited alongside a 1675 reprint of the Latin edition and incorporating a Latin manuscript in the Vatican archives. Leslie, *Historie*, I, xi–xxii.

⁵¹ See Lesley and Winzet in ODNB; Burns, “George Buchanan,” 139–40.

⁵² Leslie, *Historie*, I: 2 (henceforth HS).

⁵³ Beckett, “John Lesley,” 201–3 and 217–20 for a detailed discussion of influences and sources.

⁵⁴ Morét, “Gaelic History,” 88–91.

⁵⁵ Lesley in ODNB; Beckett, “John Lesley,” 25.

⁵⁶ HS I: 1.

⁵⁷ HS I: 1.

⁵⁸ HS I: 1.

⁵⁹ HS I: 11 and 11n†.

⁶⁰ HS I: 11–13.

⁶¹ HS I: 16.

⁶² HS: I: 16, 37.

⁶³ HS I: 33–34.

⁶⁴ Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape*, 155 and 166, though Lesley’s contribution to this movement does not figure in Walsham’s analysis.

⁶⁵ HS I: 23–24.

⁶⁶ DS 8–9.

⁶⁷ *Blaeu Atlas of Scotland*, 62.

⁶⁸ Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape*, 422.

⁶⁹ MacFarlane, *Geographical Collections*, III, 122–23.

⁷⁰ Cramsie, *British Travellers*, 101–52, 243–83, 395–426.

⁷¹ HS I: 82.

⁷² HS I: 84.

⁷³ HS I: 84.

⁷⁴ HS I: 84.

⁷⁵ Stoye, *Soldiers and Strangers*, 150; Cramsie, *British Travelers*, 1–2.

⁷⁶ HS I: 70.

⁷⁷ HS I: 70.

⁷⁸ HS I: 89–95.

⁷⁹ HS I: 93.

⁸⁰ HS I: 92.

⁸¹ HS I: 94.

⁸² Mason, "Civil Society," 100–3.

⁸³ HS I: 95.

⁸⁴ HS I: 96.

⁸⁵ Mason, "Civil Society," 95–106; Kidd, *British Identities*, 123–27; Broun, "Attitudes of Gall to Gaedhel," 49–82; MacGregor, "Gaelic Barbarity and Scottish Identity," 7–48.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Morét, "Gaelic History," 92; here I prefer Morét's translation of the Latin to Leslie, *Historie*, I, 96–97 as better emphasizing Lesley's criticism of a crude Highland-Lowland mindset among his contemporaries.

⁸⁷ HS I: 97.

⁸⁸ HS I: 52.

⁸⁹ HS I: 97.

⁹⁰ HS I: 10.

⁹¹ HS I: 10.

⁹² HS I: 97–102.

⁹³ HS I: 99.

⁹⁴ HS I: 99.

⁹⁵ HS I: 96.

⁹⁶ HS I: 99, 101.

⁹⁷ HS I: 106–9.

⁹⁸ HS I: 85–86.

⁹⁹ HS I: 103.

¹⁰⁰ HS I: 103–6, 111–18.

¹⁰¹ HS I: 116.

¹⁰² HS I: 109.

¹⁰³ HS I: 10–11.

¹⁰⁴ Mason, "Civil Society," 104–19; Kidd, *Ethnic Identities*, 123.

¹⁰⁵ The religious politics of Leslie's *Historie* are examined in Beckett, "John Lesley," 217–24.

¹⁰⁶ Buchanan in ODNB. *A Dialogue on the Law of Kingship*, xliii–xlv.

¹⁰⁷ Beckett, "John Lesley," 235–36 and 250–57.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Alford reveals the "reality" of the Catholic threat in the psychology of those running the Elizabethan regime in his *The Watchers*. See also Beckett, "John Lesley," 250–57.

¹⁰⁹ Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation*, 105–6 and chapter 4 generally; also Beckett, "John Lesley," 237–43 and 252 on Lesley's view of Anglo-Scottish amity, union, and finding a common ground culturally between the Scots and English.

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A View from Afar:
Petruccio Ubaldini's
Descrittione del Regno di Scotia

Alessandra Petrina

IN HIS *CENA DE LE CENERI*, published in London in 1584 and referring to his time in England, Giordano Bruno, never one to mince matters, writes: "Due sono le false ed honorate reliquie di Firenze in questa patria: i denti di Sassetto, et la barba di Pietruccia" ("There are two fake and honored Florentine relics in this nation: Sassetto's teeth, and Pietruccia's beard").¹ The two "relics" were in fact two Florentine adventurers and mercenary soldiers, Tommaso di Vincenzio Sassetto and Petruccio Ubaldini, who had come to England to seek their fortunes first in war and then at court. Very little is known of Sassetto; but in the case of Ubaldini at least, Bruno's evaluation, with its tone of envious irritation and its rather poor joke,² may be tempered with a better informed approach on Ubaldini and his works.

Petruccio Ubaldini, who was born around 1524 (probably in Florence) and died in 1599, was a member of the small but consequential Italian community in London, a community composed of merchants and bankers but also of writers, painters, musicians, would-be diplomats and spies, intellectuals, and religious refugees who gravitated around Sir Francis Walsingham in the hope of obtaining preferment at court, or sought patronage with Sir Philip Sidney or the great Dudley household. The obscurity surrounding him suggests he was illegitimate, and it has proved impossible to connect him to the great Florentine family of the Ubaldini del Cervo. He arrived in London in 1545 carrying letters from Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, to Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel and to William Paget, two Catholics at the English court.³ He was a mercenary soldier for Henry VIII between 1545 and 1547, then for Edward VI. These were the occasions of his first brushes with Scotland: already in 1545 he was on the Scottish borders, serving under Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, while in 1549, during the reign of Edward VI, he took part in a military expedition against Scotland, in the garrison of Haddington Castle. Then he seems to have gone back to Italy, spending some time in Venice in the

early 1560s; in 1562 or 1563 he was once again in England, attempting a career as a diplomat and courtier, and honing his skills as a miniaturist, a poet, and a writer. In his diplomatic capacity he may have visited Ireland (1579), the French court (1580), and the Low Countries (1586).

Following his active service at the English court, and possibly as a consequence of his failure to gain a role in English politics, he turned his energies and his limited talent to writing, hoping to obtain the favor of Queen Elizabeth. As Giovanni Iamartino has noted, the Queen would nearly always turn a deaf ear to Ubaldini's offers to serve her as an informer and an advisor, and that is why Ubaldini became a true polymath: he would copy and illuminate manuscripts, edit Italian books, teach the Italian language and — what is most interesting in the present context — write books, mainly historical essays. These works were all compiled for two different, but related reasons: either as New Year's gifts to the Queen or as repeated but doomed attempts to show the Queen and her courtiers his goodwill to serve her and his expertise in historical and political matters.⁴ In fact the large majority of his works appear to have been composed in England, as shown by the following list:

- 1550 *Un libro d'esemplari scritto l'anno 1550* (now London, British Library, MS Royal 14.A.I)
- 1552 *Relatione delle cose del Regno d'Inghilterra* (now Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 880; revised in 1576, in a manuscript now in Lucca, Biblioteca Statale, MS 308)
- 1564 *La uera forma e regola dell'eleggere e coronare in Imperadori* (now London, British Library, MS Royal 14.A.VIII, fols 1r–19r)
- 1577 *Le Vite, et i Fatti di sei Donne Illustri. cio è di. Zenobia Regina de i Palmireni. Crotilde Regina di Francia. Suanhuita Regina di Suetia. Jutha Figliuola d'Ottone ij. Imperadore. Zarina Regina de i Saci. Venda Regina di Pollonia* (presented to the Queen; now London, British Library, MS Royal 14.A.XIX)
- 1580? *Descrittione del successo dal principio sino alla fine dell'Impresa che Papa Gregorio XIII face in Irlanda contro la Maestà della Regina d'Inghilterra* (now London, British Library, MS Additional 48082, fols 87r–121v; the manuscript contains other writings in Ubaldini's hand)

- 1581 *La Vita di Carlo Magno Imperadore, Scritta in lingua italiana da Petruccio Ubaldino Cittadin Fiorentino* (London: Wolfe; then reprinted in a revised version by John Field in 1599)
- 1581? *Un libro della forma et regola dell'eleggere et coronare gl'imperadori* (now London, British Library, MS Royal 14.S.viii)
- 1588 *Descrittione del Regno di Scotia, et delle isole sue adjacenti di Petruccio Vbaldini Cittadin Fiorentino* (Anversa: no publisher [London: Wolfe]. A manuscript of the same work, dated 1576, was dedicated to the Earl of Arundel; now London, British Library, MS Royal 13.A.viii, known as *Totius Regni Scotia Nova et diligentissima Descriptio*)
- 1588 *Commentario del successo dell'Armata Spagnola nell'assalir l'Inghilterra l'anno 1588* (now London, British Library, MS Royal 14.A.X)⁵
- 1589? *Discorso della genealogia, et discendenza della Casa dei Medici; et dell'attioni degli huomini illustri di quella, di Petruccio Ubaldino cittadin fiorentino* (now Florence, Archivio di Stato, Miscellanea Medicea, filza 145)
- 1589 *Commentario della impresa fatta contro il Regno d'Inghilterra dal Re Catholico l'anno 1588* (now London, British Library, MS Royal 14.A.XI)
- 1590 *A Discourse concerning the Spanishe fleete inuadinge Englande in the yeare 1588* (London: Hatfield)
- 1591 *Le Vite delle Donne Illustri del Regno d'Inghilterra, & del Regno di Scotia, & di quelle, che d'altri paesi ne i due detti Regni sono state maritate* (London: Wolfe; a manuscript of this work, now lost, had been presented to Elizabeth I in 1576)
- 1592 *Parte prima delle brevi dimostrazioni, et precetti vtilissimi ne i quali si trattano diuersi propositi Morali, Politici, & Iconomici, & che conuengono ancora ad ogni nobil Matrona* [London: Field]
- 1594 *Memoriale di Petruccio Vbaldino Cittadin Fiorentino alla Ser.ma Elisabetta feliciss.a Regina d'Inghilterra. Considerationi*

intorno alle quattro cose proposte a S.M.tà con lo effetto da riuscirne (now London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 98, item 22, fols 1r–6v)

- 1594 *Lo stato delle tre corti ... nelli Stati della Corte Romana, nel Regno di Napoli, & nelli Stati del Gran Duca di Thoscana*, n.p. [London: Field]
- 1595 *Scelta di alcune attioni, et di varii accidenti occorsi tra alcune nationi differenti del mondo*, n.p. [London: Field]
- 1596 *Rime di Petruccio Vbaldino, Cittadin Fiorentino*, n.p. [London: Field]
- 1597 *Militia del Gran Duca di Thoscana*, n.p. [London: Field]⁶

Contemporary scholarship is unanimous in not attributing to Ubaldini a great value as a writer, though he appears to have been a reasonably good chronicler and popularizer. However, his closeness to English political affairs gives him a privileged perspective, and his literary activity deserves to be further investigated. Though not a protagonist of contemporary politics, he was part of a milieu including writers, printers, and spies, all moving between England and Italy, and he was in contact with the great; occasionally Queen Elizabeth would use him to pen some of her Italian correspondence. He also collaborated with John Wolfe, the enterprising English printer who had arrived in London in 1579 after an apprenticeship in Florence.⁷ Wolfe showed a distinct interest in Italian works, surreptitiously publishing, in Italian, Pietro Aretino's erotic compositions, or Niccolò Machiavelli's political works, whose circulation was stopped in Catholic countries by the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. In fact, Wolfe may have started his career as a printer of Italian books with Ubaldini's *Vita di Carlo Magno Imperadore*, published in 1581,⁸ and some scholars have hypothesized that the latter assisted Wolfe in his publication of Machiavelli's most controversial works.⁹ Publishing Italian works in England could be seen as a fairly lucrative activity, and certainly helped to secure admission to well-informed political circles; Ubaldini's works, as has been observed, "while rather superficial and in terms of their historical content more poetry than truth, were interesting, easy to read, and topical."¹⁰

As can be seen from the list of his works, Ubaldini dedicated many of his literary efforts to contemporary English history. His interest in Scotland appears to have been limited, as highlighted by his *Vite delle*

Donne Illustri, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth (who received the manuscript in 1576); though purporting in the frontispiece to discuss illustrious women in the two kingdoms of England and Scotland, this book is almost solely dedicated to English women, avoiding references to contemporary Scottish politics and only inserting mythical characters such as Scota Egitia, wife of Gathelus, or women belonging to a rather remote history such as Margaret, wife of King Malcolm. However, his *Descrittione del Regno di Scotia* proudly announces in the *Proemio* both the writer's first-hand knowledge of the land and his acquaintance with existing literature on the subject:

ho deliberato di dar fuori vna minuta, diligente, & Chiara descrittione della Scotia Regno antico, & per molte cagioni ricordato nelle historie. Percioche auendone io veduta vna buona parte, & del resto hauendone hauuta sincera informatione da homini per ciuità di costume, & per honor di sangue, & per ornate lettere degni d'ogni lode.¹¹

[I decided to issue a detailed, diligent and clear description of Scotland, an ancient kingdom, and remembered in our histories for various reasons, having seen a good part of it, and for the rest having heard from trustworthy men, honorable in habits and blood and letters.]

His insistence on accuracy and detail is contradicted by the slipshod nature of the *Proemio* itself. On the other hand, the fact that in his *Vite delle Donne Illustri* he refers to his own *Descrittione* as an authoritative source shows the importance he attributed to this work, at least within his literary project. Ubaldini used his literary talents as a means to acquire a position within the English court, without forgetting his Tuscan connections. The section of his works devoted to Scotland supports this assumption, offering an interesting perspective on his activity as a writer in the service of two states.

Ubaldini may have seen the *Descrittione* as a counterpart to his far more important *Relatione d'Inghilterra*, written in 1552 and subsequently revised.¹² As in the case of the *Descrittione*, the *Relatione* opens with a geographical survey, which then moves on into contemporary English history. However, in the latter work Ubaldini had the advantage of being a first-person witness of contemporary events, and of bringing "Italian eyes" to the political and social situation. In this he proposed himself, at least in the early versions of this work, as a counselor for young Edward VI, criticizing his English advisors and especially the regents, and inserting a vig-

orous religious polemic.¹³ Subsequent versions show the writer adapting to the changed times, and to his own changed position at the English court.¹⁴ As a result, the *Relatione* has been praised as “the most original description of England written by an Italian during the sixteenth century,”¹⁵ and shows the writer circumnavigating with ability perilous subjects such as Henry VIII’s relations with the Catholic Church, or the King’s family life.

From the *Relatione*, and from the tone of other works of Ubaldini, it seems evident that the Florentine adventurer aspired to enter the web of informers between England and Italy; and it appears from his letters that he wanted to be an informer for both the English secret service and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. A letter written to Francesco, Grand Duke of Tuscany (and son of Cosimo de’ Medici) in December 1575 talks about Ubaldini’s “wish to become an informer on things English for him;”¹⁶ his persistent and sometimes desperate negotiations with the Grand Duke show the purpose of his writing activity, which was to get some sort of remuneration as an informer (not a spy, as he clearly stated his allegiance to Elizabeth).¹⁷ It is less clear why and for whom the *Descrittione del Regno di Scotia* was originally conceived, as the dating of this work is fairly uncertain: in 1588 Francesco received a copy from Ubaldini, and wrote back thanking him,¹⁸ but the actual composition must have been much earlier; Cecil Clough (ODNB) dates it to 1550, and, as noted above, a manuscript of this work was presented to Arundel in 1576.

His knowledge of Scottish affairs can also be gauged through other sources. The Archivio di Stato in Florence has preserved a number of letters Ubaldini wrote to Lorenzo Guicciardini between 1579 and Ubaldini’s own death in 1594, in which he informed the Florentine merchant (distantly related to him, and more closely to Niccolò Machiavelli) of contemporary events in northern Europe, with particular reference to the war in Flanders. These letters contain periodical reports on English affairs, and touch upon events in neighboring countries; Ubaldini does not appear to have any special or secret information on Scottish affairs, and has a rather imaginative grasp of the spelling of Scottish nouns, but presents the view of a man who discussed foreign affairs in London and was well-informed on current topics, especially as concerns the contrasts between throne and nobility. Thus in a letter dated 30 July 1579, he mentions conversations he has had with agents of Scottish merchants, Adam Fullerton and James Murray (the latter Master of the Wardrobe to the Scottish King) in which they discussed the ongoing negotiations for the wedding between James VI and “una figliuola di due che n’ha il re di Danemarche” (“one of the

two daughters of the King of Denmark").¹⁹ Such negotiations became official only in 1585, and the marriage between James and Anne of Denmark took place in 1589. In a letter dated 1 April 1592 he appears equally well informed on the tensions between the King and the Earl of Bothwell. Particularly interesting is a letter dated 8 April 1592, in which he writes:

In Scotia le discordie, già cominciate et sopite, pare che ripiglino forza et si crede poi, che gran parte dei nobili, cioè titolari, sono apertamente nemici del Gran Cancelliere, il Re sarà costretto a levarli l'autorità; et non è ciò gran meraviglia in quel regno, dove si usa haver non pur invidia, ma di portar odio grande verso di qualunque si sia dal re straordinariamente favorito ... Havendo anche figliuoli, come quelli cominciano a mostrarsi ancor fanciulli al popolo si vengono i re a perder non poco della dovuta benevolenza et ubbidienza ancora dei loro sudditi.²⁰

[In Scotland riots, already repressed, have started once more, and we think that many of the nobles are open enemies of the Chancellor, so that the King will have to dismiss him; no wonder in that kingdom, where they envy, even hate those who are favored by the King ... As Kings have children, as soon as those children begin to show themselves to the people, the Kings begin to lose the due benevolence and obedience of their subjects.]

He sees the Scottish people as incapable of remaining faithful to a ruler; thus on 13 May 1592, commenting on riots, he notes:

ci sono state alcune sollevationi, come fu scritto, nelle quali il Re alcuna volta è stato inferiore et alcun'altra superiore, come hora si trova. Et sempre in quell regno avvenuto è questo, et avverrà secondo la natura loro, et come le poche forze della Corona pare che così faccino ancora riuscire poco ubbidienti quei nobili, che vi sono sempre discontenti dello stato delle cose presenti.²¹

[There have been riots, as I wrote, in which the King found himself sometimes winning, as now, and sometimes losing. So it happens there, and so is the nature of that country; the meager forces of the Crown do little to make those noblemen obedient, who are forever discontent with the present state of things.]

He identifies the leader of the rebel faction with the Earl of Bothwell ("il conte Boduello capo dei ribelli," 12 August 1592),²² but at the same time sees in the lack of children on the part of James VI a possible reason for his limited popularity ("quel Re, non ha ancora figliuoli, onde poco può per-

ciò esserne stimato;" "that King has as yet no children, thus he cannot be deemed worthy," 12 August 1592).²³ On 24 February 1593 he notes that the tumults in Scotland have made it necessary for the English Parliament to meet, given not only that the great families of Angus and Bothwell have risen, but also that some of them seem to be moved or prompted by Spain.²⁴ References to religious controversies are few, and discussed only in so far as they impinge upon social stability: on 27 April 1594 he notes that in England there is a general belief that the Scottish King shall have to acquiesce in the people's desire to maintain "la loro di già introdotta religion di Calvino" ("Calvin's religion, already introduced here"), if he wants to reign unchallenged.²⁵ Religion for Ubaldini was simply an instrument of good government — or perhaps, as will be noted below, he was conscious that, as an Italian writing in England and wishing to serve an English mistress and an Italian master, he was treading a very fine line. His greatest love is for harmless gossip: he appears well informed on the baptism of Prince Henry and on the celebrations organized upon that occasion, as well as on the representative of the English Queen sent to Scotland upon this occasion.²⁶ While discussing these and other events, his tone remains eminently non-judgmental.

Given this awareness on Ubaldini's part of contemporary events, and his youthful visits to Scotland, one would expect his *Descrittione del Regno di Scotia* to complement this disjointed information with a more systematic overview of the Scottish kingdom. Moreover, in the opening pages the writer himself makes a number of vague allusions to classical and modern authors who have described Scotland (or the whole island) before him, and insists on his own observations during his visits there. Of course, beside the classical sources, there were antecedents, in very recent times, for an Italian writer who wanted to describe Scotland, from Paolo Giovio's *Descriptio Britanniae, Scotiae, Hyberniae, et Orchadum* (Venice, 1548) to the various ambassadors' reports, and this, coupled with Ubaldini's own observations, might have given real novelty to the treatise. However, his main source was in fact Scottish.

There is no systematic study of this work, but since the nineteenth century, when the Bannatyne Club published a reproduction of the 1588 printed text, scholars have been aware that this work was heavily indebted to Hector Boece. A search for Ubaldini's *Descrittione* in Early English Books Online gives Boece as the author, describing the work as "a free translation by Ubaldini of: Boece, Hector. Scotorum historiae." Giuliano Pellegrini, Ubaldini's twentieth-century biographer, also speaks of a free

interpretation of the *Historia Scotorum*.²⁷ The editor of the Bannatyne Club edition was more accurate, writing in the short Notice prefacing the work, that “it may be, as stated in the *Proemio* to this work, that the author drew his information partly from his own personal observations, and partly from other sources of unquestionable authenticity; yet it is obvious he has borrowed so largely from Hector Boece, that his book is little more than an enlarged paraphrase of that historian’s *Scotorum Regni Descriptio*, a transcript of which by Ubaldini, dated 1576, is now in the British Museum.”²⁸

There is actually very little ancient history, and no contemporary history in the *Descrittione* — its intent seems that of offering a geographical survey of the country, insisting on its more extraordinary or fantastic aspects, on magic fountains, unexplored gold mines, and peculiarly behaving animals. In spite of the writer’s allusions to ancient writers and classical authorities, his constant source is indeed the preliminary section of Boece’s *Historia*, which had already been translated into Scots by John Bellenden,²⁹ and had served as the basis of the section of Holinshed’s work dedicated to Scotland, though the English writer had freely modified the original to suit his own ideological discourse.³⁰ The Florentine writer follows the Latin original, often reproducing episodes and descriptions faithfully. At the same time, some of the instances in which he diverges from the original may offer matter for reflection.

Boece’s purpose in writing the *Historia Scotorum* was a celebration of national identity, and a vindication of the antiquity and nobility of the kingdom of Scotland, “the oldest nation in Europe,” which, unlike England, “had never suffered Roman conquest.”³¹ Within this project, his geographical introduction was meant to help the reader towards a more complete understanding of the history of Scotland, a didactic purpose according well with Boece’s own role as Principal of the recently founded University of Aberdeen.³² John Bellenden’s translation into Scots, possibly commissioned by James V, would give new strength to the project: “Boece’s claim for Scottish autonomy rested fundamentally on the notion of an unbroken line of sovereign, non-British and non-homage-paying Scottish Kings.”³³ Ubaldini saw the present King of Scotland as of a monarch forced into constant negotiations in order to preserve the very fragile foundation of his throne — it should be remembered that a few years after Boece’s conscious effort to establish Scottish identity by means of geography and toponymy, Ubaldini would in fact be on the Scottish border, trying to uphold Henry VIII’s claims by serving in his army. Though his

version of Boece is limited to the geographical section, it is interesting to see how he uses Boece's discourse to suggest a rather different vision of the northern kingdom.

In the didactic opening of the *Descriptio*, Boece highlights the value of geography in order to understand history. His opening paragraphs are a lesson in mutability: not only does history record the sometimes apocalyptic changes in the order of the world, describing the fall of cities and the change of kingdoms; geography, too, describes "universa quae mundo hoc comprehenduntur morti internecionique obnoxia sunt" ("things contained in this world ... liable to death and destruction" (HS 1)).³⁴ From here he passes to a bird's-eye view of the island, "stretched for a lengthy expanse from the southwest towards the northeast."³⁵ His geographical description is a necessary corollary and introduction to the historical section that follows, positing, as it also does, the myth of origin of the country, and identifying in its geological and botanical features the very uniqueness that also characterizes its history.

Ubaladini dispenses with the praise of geography, and presents other changes, suggesting a shift in the ideological axis of the work:

L'Isola di Brettagna è hoggi diuisa in due Regni, & come da gli scrittori Greci, & Latini ell'è stata molto celebrata, cosi da noi poi è stata più largamente conosciuta. Ell'è in gran parte volta verso la Francia, & verso i paesi bassi di Fiandra; & è tutta all'intorno cinta dall'Oceano; in tal modo, che da Leuante si dice Germanico; da Mezo Giorno Gallico, & Britannico; da Ponente Hibernico, ò Vergiuio; & da Tramontana Deucallidonico.³⁶

[The island of Britain is *today* divided into two kingdoms; celebrated by Greek and Roman writers, and now even better known. It turns *largely towards France and Flanders*; and is surrounded by the ocean: to the east by the German Sea, to the south-by the Gallic or British Sea; to the west by the Hibernian or Vergivian Sea), and to the north by the Deucaledonian Sea]. [italics mine]

Ubaladini obviously makes no acknowledgement of his source; the opening sentence suggests an allusion to the celebrated opening of Julius Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*: "tota Gallia est divisa in partes tres," the first of his rather vague hints at classical authorities (Boece is much more precise in mentioning ancient writers, from Pliny to Strabo to Pomponius Mela; whenever Ubaladini mentions a specific Latin writer, as in the case of Tacitus on p. 4, he is simply translating Boece's own reference). What

is more interesting, the geographical model proposed here, and reiterated in the following paragraphs, indicates Scotland as an indissoluble part of a whole island, only *today* (*hoggi*) divided into two kingdoms, and orientated in such a way (*turned to France and Flanders*) that its northern half becomes almost a far-away appendix. This is Scotland seen from the south: Ubaldini will in fact mention England, *Inghilterra*, which he familiarly calls *questa parte*, “this side,” before making it clear to the reader that his intention is to describe the other side.

His neat move away from Boece’s ideological perspective is made even more evident in his explanation of the name chosen to describe the whole island. Boece had deliberately used *Albion*, explaining the origin both of this name and of *Britannia*. The former name, in Boece’s explanation, is linked to the very geological characteristics of the island, since it derives *ab albis rupibus*, from the white cliffs seen by those who sail there from France.³⁷ The historian offers also an alternative explanation connecting the name to the first inhabitants of the island, the mythical giants. As Nicola Royan has emphasized, the choice is significant: “‘Albion’ was a name used by earlier Scottish historiographers to combat the myth of origin presented by Geoffrey of Monmouth, amongst others: Brutus, according to that version of the mythic history of these islands, became the eponymous king of Britain, and because he was a king from the southern half of the mainland, it was important for the Scots to restrict his influence to that area, thus denying the English claim of supremacy. As a result, in the eyes of the Scots, ‘Albion’ was the name of the mainland, not ‘Britannia.’”³⁸ Ubaldini, on the other hand, follows Boece’s explanation faithfully, but adds a comment: when he comes to the Scots, the descendants of Gathelus and Scota, he notes that they arrived on the island, as Boece had written, in the year 4617 from the creation of the world, that is, he adds, “590 anni doppo la venuta di Bruto.”³⁹ *Britannia* thus maintains its supremacy, and as in the case of the geographical conformation of the island, Scotland acquires second place.

It may be worth comparing these lines with the geographical introduction in Ubaldini’s *Relatione delle cose del Regno d’Inghilterra*:

Inghilterra, già detta Britannia, et prima Albion ... è divisa in due Regni: uno, che d’Inghilterra per la maggior parte, et miglior del paese, et di costume più umani, si ha indicato il nome, essendo per la salubrità dell’Aria, et bontà di terreno quasi Angelica, havendosi tolto il nome dalli popoli Angli ... L’altra parte rozza, et incolta nelli fatti, et nella Provincia, Scota si chiama.⁴⁰

[England, once called Britain, and before that Albion ... is divided into two Kingdoms: one, England, has the greatest and best part of the country, and more civilized habits, indicates in its name the purity of the air, and the excellent, almost Angelic, quality of the soil, taking its name from the Angles ... The other part is uncouth and uncultivated, and called Scotland.]

The Anglophile tone of this passage is straightforward and understandable in its context; the slight shifting of the previous passage requires rather more adroitness, but it appears, more subtly, to serve the same purpose.

Throughout his translation of Boece's *Descriptio*, otherwise remarkably faithful, Ubaldini inserts tiny adjustments or additions whenever his subject matter is likely to prove controversial in the eyes of his intended readers. Particularly interesting is his aside on religion, slightly emending this passage from Boece, at the conclusion of his description of Druidism:

Tum initio statim nullaue reluctatione veram religionem suscipientes maxima eam retinentes synceritate, neque haereses invenerunt, neque unquam assuere inventas.

[And then, having adopted the True Religion at the outset without any reluctance, they clung to it with great sincerity, manufacturing no heresies, nor cleaving to those invented elsewhere.]⁴¹

Ubaldini translates this sentence by adjusting it and almost assuming an apologetic tone:

Riceuerono la vera, et sacrosanta Religione Christiana, la quale hanno di poi mantenuta lunghi secoli senz'alterazione alcuna; la quale alteratione forse gia mai non sarebbe accaduta, se la non fusse stata quasi, che procurata dalla corruttion de i tempi, i quali sdruciolano, & precipitano ... parendo, che ciò sia stato vn certo vniuersale influxo delle stelle per trauagliare, & metter sottosopra con interne discordie, & guerre ciuili tutte le genti della terra.⁴²

[They received the true, holy Christian Religion, which they maintained for many centuries without any alteration; and no alteration would have taken place, if it had not been for the corruption of the times, now running and even sliding to destruction ... apparently because of the contrary stars, combining to trouble and overturn with discords and civil wars all the people on earth.]

The passage is particularly interesting as it highlights Ubaldini's uneasiness with this particular theme. If the *Descrittione* was first composed during

the reign of Edward VI, then its author would have been mindful of the delicate position in which he found himself, wishing to please both his prospective Tudor patrons and his Tuscan protectors. In his *Discorso della genealogia, et discendenza della Casa dei Medici*, probably written in or around 1589 and originally meant for Caterina de Medici, Ubaldini would discuss the Henrician schism in greater depth. The long section devoted to the schism, recently re-published by Anna Maria Crinò,⁴³ is a masterpiece of tactful evasion: blame is given to “il nemico dell’humana generatione” (“the enemy of mankind”) and “l’Angelo delle tenebre” (“the Angel of darkness”),⁴⁴ aided and abetted by Cardinal Wolsey, who misleads Henry, “benemerito grandemente della Chiesa et dei pontefici” (“greatly deserving from the Church and the pontiffs”),⁴⁵ into believing his marriage with Catherine of Aragon invalid. In his 1551 *Relatione* Ubaldini is even more careful, labeling the institutions of the Anglican Church simply as “aliene da quelle della Romana Chiesa” (“alien from those of the Roman Church”), and carefully distinguishing between the English schism and the Lutheran heresy.⁴⁶ In her 1994 analysis of Ubaldini’s *Relatione*, Francesca Bugliani, comparing various versions of the text, highlighted the changes in his treatment of religious matters, changes that might depend on the different addressees of the various versions.⁴⁷ As for the passage devoted to religion in Scotland in the *Descrittione*, quoted above, it presents the same careful ambiguity: any outspoken criticism might reflect unpleasantly on the state of things in England, so the stars are conveniently blamed for vague discord and trouble, and the matter is briefly concluded in a few lines.

The diplomatic attitude present throughout the *Descrittione* is obviously meant for English rather than Scottish readers, and for this reason the various dedicatees of the work need special attention. Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, dedicatee of the 1576 manuscript, had been at one point a possible candidate for marriage to Princess Elizabeth, though by this time his star was very much on the wane. In its 1588 printed version, the work was dedicated to three of the most powerful men of the realm: Sir Christopher Hatton, then Lord Chancellor, who was also known as a friend and patron of poets such as Edmund Spenser; Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester; and Sir Francis Walsingham, then Secretary of State.⁴⁸ In the dedication of the printed version Ubaldini notes that this work is not recently composed, but was written “sino dal tempo del buon Re Eduardo Sesto, da me (seruendo S.M. in Scotia) messa insieme, & sino ad hora tenuta in mano” (“since the time of good King Edward VI, put together by myself as I was serving His Majesty in Scotland, and held until now”).

Underlining the continuity between his past service to Edward VI and his present service to Elizabeth, Ubaldini was also highlighting his double role as soldier and writer: in both cases, a good servant of the English crown and the Protestant cause. All dedicatees, closely connected with the throne at one stage or another, could be therefore involved in foreign relations, and especially in the relations between the English crown and its northern neighbor. Thus Ubaldini was underlining his *prima manu* experience of Scotland, together with his status as a foreigner in England (and conveniently forgetting his debt to Boece), in order to highlight the impartiality and reliability of his description.

The other interesting point is that, though in fact printed by John Wolfe, the *Descrittione* shows in its frontispiece Antwerp as the place of publication. This is by no means a unique occurrence: inserting a misleading place-name, and, sometimes, a false publisher, was a ruse often practiced by English printers in the sixteenth century, and Wolfe in particular appears to have done it quite often. His 1584 editions of Niccolò Machiavelli's *Principe* and *Discorsi*, for which he may have been assisted by Ubaldini, list in the frontispiece a fictitious place of publication (Palermo) and a fictitious publisher (Antoniello degli Antonielli); but in this case his choice might have been explained by the need to be circumspect when printing a writer who was already notorious.⁴⁹ In this case, Ubaldini (and Wolfe) might simply have been prompted by a desire to avoid the control (and the fees) of the Stationers' Register, or by the belief that a foreign place-name (and a place such as Antwerp, associated with heterodox publication) might help lend interest to the books he printed, and distance him from a link with an English publisher that would have made evident the propagandistic nature of the work, and from his nearest rival, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, published only the previous year.

The importance of maintaining a distance from both England and Scotland, when offering a supposedly true account, was felt and explicitly advertised also in other, analogous writings. In the same years in which Ubaldini was fighting against Scotland under Edward VI, James Henrisoun, a Scottish protégé of Edward's Protector, Lord Somerset, could show in his *Exhortacion to the Scottes* the same distortion of the myth of origin:

I wil use for the more parte the testimonies either of Scottish chronicles, or forein writers, and little of the Englishe, unlesse where bothe Scottishe and Englishe do agre ... The opinion of moste writers, and specially of Latins (at whom, aswell for auncientie,

as indifferencie, I take my ground) is, that this islande of Britayn, which containeth bothe realmes of Englande and Scotland ... was at the firste called Albion, that is to say the white lande ... this island was inhabited from the beginnyng, by those that were borne in the same, & afterward as the world multiplied, grewe unto a greate people, and from a people unto a kyngdome, and gouerned by kynges, as by stories is to bee seen, of whom the firste that wee finde, was one Brutus, whiche, whether he came out of Italy or not, is not much materiall, but certain it is, that suche a one reigned, and was firste kyng of the whole islande; whiche beginnyng of the people, dooth make much more with the honor and glory of this islande, then to deduce a pedegree, either from an outlaw of Italy, or a tirauntes sister out of Egipt, as Welshe and Scottishe Poetes, haue phantastically fayned.⁵⁰

The declared use of sources, especially classical ones, thus becomes a guarantee of the impartiality of the author, or of the side on which he positions himself and his writings.

In his *On the Use and Abuse of History*, Friedrich Nietzsche writes, “history is definitely in danger of becoming something altered, reinterpreted into something more beautiful, and thus coming close to free poeticizing. Indeed, there are times which [*sic*] one cannot distinguish at all between a monumental history and a mythic fiction, because from a single world one of these impulses can be derived as easily as the other.”⁵¹ In spite of the (possibly inflated) reputation that has been growing around Elizabethan England and its web of informers and secret services, propaganda and disinformation have a long history. As in the case of Ubaldini, previous national and even nationalistic texts were used to produce a myth of origin by way of the myth of the impartial Italian look at Scotland, paradoxically using Boece to espouse the English cause. Rather than seeing a foreign country with Italian eyes, Ubaldini saw Scotland through his reading of a Scottish work, seen with English eyes and for English readers, and using his Italian-ness as a convenient smokescreen. He was, in fact, putting his erudition at the service of his own attempt to survive in what he described at the end of the *Descrittione* as “questo nostro secolo inquieto, nel quale poco lume si scorge, che non abbia allo incontro graui, & oscure nubi piene di procella” (p. 54; “This restless century we live in, in which we see no light, unless it is fought by heavy and dark stormy clouds”) — possibly a rare moment of insight in a work in which propaganda often strives to obscure and misinterpret meaning.

NOTES

¹ Bruno, *La cena*, 339. On the identification of *Pietruccia* with Petruccio Ubaldini, see Spampanato, "Postille." Translations are mine unless otherwise referenced.

² Anna Maria Crinò hypothesizes that William Shakespeare might have thought of Ubaldini when choosing the name Petruccio for the male protagonist of *The Taming of the Shrew*, but this may be no more than wishful thinking. See "Avvisi," 467.

³ Pellegrini, *Un fiorentino*, 10–30; ODNB. See also Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, 73–74.

⁴ Iamartino, "Under Italian Eyes," 195. I would like to thank Giovanni for his help and advice.

⁵ This is a translation of the *Proceedings of Events*, an account of the 1588 defeat of the Spanish Armada, written under the supervision of Admiral Charles Howard, and now British Library, MS Cotton Julius F.X. See Rizzi, "English News."

⁶ The present list draws upon and updates Ubaldini's bibliography in Iamartino, "Under Italian Eyes," 207–8.

⁷ See Bertolo, "John Wolfe."

⁸ Pellegrini, *Un fiorentino*, 32.

⁹ Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing*, 104. Ubaldini might be the *Barbagrigia* signing the Introductions to some of Machiavelli's works published by Wolfe, which would explain Bruno's rather feeble pun on his name.

¹⁰ Ubaldini in ODNB.

¹¹ Quotations are taken from the original edition (1588, henceforth *Descrittione*). Here sig. B.

¹² On the *Relatione* see Pellegrini, *Un fiorentino*, and Crinò, "Relatione;" the two scholars edit and print two of the extant versions of this work. See also Bugliani, "La questione."

¹³ Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, 74–84.

¹⁴ Bugliani, "Ubaldini e la 'conformity'."

¹⁵ Bugliani, "Ubaldini's *Accounts*," 179.

¹⁶ Iamartino, "Under Italian Eyes," 200.

¹⁷ On his writing to the Grand Duke see Crinò, "Avvisi," 461–581.

¹⁸ The letter, dated 21 July 1588, is now in Florence, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Fondo Mediceo del Principato, 273, c. 138v; transcribed in Crinò, "Come Petruccio," 230.

¹⁹ Crinò, "Avvisi," 484–85.

²⁰ Crinò, "Avvisi," 505–6.

²¹ Crinò, "Avvisi," 511.

²² Crinò, "Avvisi," 516.

²³ Crinò, "Avvisi," 516.

²⁴ Crinò, "Avvisi," 527.

²⁵ Crinò, "Avvisi," 552.

²⁶ Crinò, "Avvisi," 563–77.

²⁷ Pellegrini, *Un fiorentino*, 35. The critic notes Ubaldini's pleasure in describing elements of magic or of the fantastic, almost transforming his geographical survey in a catalogue of wonders (37).

²⁸ Ubaldini, *Descrittione* (1829), vi–vii.

²⁹ As well as being used by John Lesley, as seen in John Cramsie's chapter in the present volume, and by George Buchanan in his 1582 *Rerum Scotticarum Historia*.

³⁰ Norbrook, "Macbeth," 81.

³¹ McEachern, "Literature," 314.

³² On Boece's work in the context of northern humanism, see Leeds, "Sleeping Beauty."

³³ McEachern, "Literature," 315.

³⁴ For both text and modern translation, the edition used is Boethius, *Scotorum Historia*, henceforth HS.

³⁵ "Porrecto vero longo tractu ab Euro austro in Circium" (HS 3).

³⁶ *Descrittione*, p. 1.

³⁷ HS 3.

³⁸ Royan, "Relationship," 144. Of course the English claim was not univocally supported: already in 1534 Polydore Vergil had challenged Brutus's existence, and the Tudors may not have excessively emphasized the Brutus/Britannia connection (Anglo, "British History"). I would like to thank Sara Trevisan for her very useful comments on this point.

³⁹ "590 years after Brutus's coming." *Descrittione*, p. 3.

⁴⁰ I am quoting from the Bodleian Library manuscript version, as edited in Pellegrini, *Un fiorentino*, 59–152; this quotation p. 62.

⁴¹ HS 8.

⁴² *Descrittione*, pp. 7–8.

⁴³ Crinò, "Come Petruccio," 230–36.

⁴⁴ Crinò, "Come Petruccio," 231–32.

⁴⁵ Crinò, "Come Petruccio," 232.

⁴⁶ Bugliani, "Ubaldini e la 'conformity,'" 68.

⁴⁷ Bugliani, "Ubaldini's *Accounts*," 187–88.

⁴⁸ Ubaldini also dedicated to Sir Christopher Hatton his *Commentario del successo dell'armada spagnola nell'assalir l'Inghilterra l'anno 1588*.

⁴⁹ For a discussion on this instance of surreptitious printing (to use Denis Woodfield's category), see Petrina, *Machiavelli*, 25–30.

⁵⁰ Harrison, *An exhortacion*, n.p.

⁵¹ Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 9.

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Part III

The Vagaries of Languages and Texts

Reading Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*: Sentence and Sensibility

Ian Johnson

THIS ESSAY LOOKS AT how Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* offers intriguingly subtle interconnections amongst *narratio* and *moralitas*, vernacular text and Latin gloss. It does so in the light of how a taught sensibility of reading and re-reading may conceivably have combined critical intelligence with exegetical and experiential tact for the purposes of managing moral, spiritual, and emotional life and interiority.

Much critical energy has been expended on the alleged gaps, inconsistencies, and discontinuities between *narratio* and *moralitas* in Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*. On one hand, the *narratio* is a humanely sentimental, romance-inflected tragedy, but on the other, the *moralitas* is a didactic, scholastic, moralizing allegoresis drawn from Nicholas Trevet's Latin commentary, and often (but not always) at counter-intuitive odds with the affective purchase, thematic grain, and narrative trajectory of what it purports to interpret. Incommensurabilities between *narratio* and *moralitas* — of character, genre, tone, sources, emotion, point-of-view, and "message" — are commonly treated by modern criticism and scholarship with an eye to the business of textual production, in other words Henryson's choices in the mechanics of how he made this bipartite work.¹ The modern preoccupation with the challengingly hybrid genetics of *Orpheus and Eurydice* and with the shadowy motives and actions of its progenitor has perhaps led to an overlooking of the tradition of hermeneutic tact available to competent contemporary readers of precisely the kind of text that *Orpheus and Eurydice* is.

Henryson, it should not be forgotten, was probably a teacher of reading, a serious life skill that combined self-aware linguistic precision, textual moralization, allegoresis, and the appreciation of the pragmatics of rhetorical performance.² Part and parcel of the education of the civilized Christian *habitus* involved the reconciling, by recourse to the Latin textual authorities of the syllabus, of the rational and affective aspects of human personality. This entailed no less than the redirecting and (re)forming of

intuition and the *affeccions* into conformity with right reason, authority, morality, and the ways of the *summum bonum*, God. The action of *Orpheus and Eurydice* is therefore to be read as an exemplary fable, taking place in mythic time, yet also set within the human soul, where its characters, actants, events, and topographies represent aspects of the psyche and the challenges that fallen humanity faces. The ultimate locus of Henryson's work, then, is the very self of the reader, and each actant and event, when interpreted with the requisite academic and emotional intelligence, becomes something *for* and *of* the reader, for whom the boundaries and life of the text become the boundaries and life of their own interiority.

The reader and the reading experience of this work are at once Scottish and Latin. For its constituent parts, *Orpheus and Eurydice* draws on vernacular tradition, most notably romance, and Latin tradition, especially Latin commentary on *De consolacione philosophiae*. But there is more to *Orpheus and Eurydice* than the sum total of its sources. What it means is governed by how it can be read. Its readerly pragmatics and re-performances of sources depend on how informed, nimble, and inventive readers — or, rather, re-readers — are in reworking and adding to what they understand from vernacular and Latin traditions of Orpheus and Boethius. This is a matter of “metacomprehension,” which is not simply a reader's understanding of a particular content, but what a reader understands he or she understands of that content.”³ This chapter therefore discusses how Henryson's intended readers would and could have read *Orpheus and Eurydice* adeptly, thereby meeting the cognitive, emotional, rational, moral, and spiritual challenges of differentiating and combining the various and at-times mutually alien discourses to be found in both *narratio* and *moralitas*. For a reader to be able to do this with discretion would be the sign of a healthily educated interiority. What might such reading look like?

The basics of the allegory, in this most Boethian of Henryson's poems, are quite straightforward, although Henryson elaborates them suggestively throughout *narratio* and *moralitas*. The reason, Orpheus, is “the pairte intellective / Of manis saule and understanding.”⁴ The reason is sundered from the affective part of the soul, Euridices, when the latter flees from virtue to deadly sin, and sinks down into the hellish pit of sin and uncontrolled desire, from which Orpheus rescues it. Instead, however, of keeping his gaze fixed on the Upper Day (i.e. God) as he leads his wife out into the light, Orpheus looks back down into the worldly hell of “worldly lust and vane prosperite,”⁵ into which the rescued *affectus*, Euridices, “oure effectioun / Be fantesye oft movit up and/ down,”⁶ is sunk, and “gois bak-

wart to the syn agane."⁷ All true good and happiness are thus lost. Reason, bereft of its partnering *affectus*, is now a "widow."⁸

Henryson's chief source was the most important commentary on *De consolacione philosophiae* of the Middle Ages, that of the Dominican Nicholas Trevet (ca. 1300).⁹ He drew profoundly on Trevet's exposition of the *sententia* of Book III Meter 12, commonly called in modern times the "Orpheus meter." For Trevet, this meter centered on the desire for, and the contemplation of, the true beatitude, God:

Postquam ostendit Philosophya que sit uera beatitudo et in quo situ quia in Deo, hoc exortatur ad perseuerandum in contemplatione et desiderio istius beatitudinis.¹⁰

[After Philosophy shows what true happiness is and in what place other than in God, she then exhorts him to persevere in the contemplation and desire of this happiness.]¹¹

According to Trevet, Lady Philosophy, "Philosophya," teaches her forgetful pupil to persevere in beholding the *summum bonum*, and to beware of those worldly distractions that impede contemplation of the Almighty: "ostendit quod istam contemplacionem impedit quia affectus terrenorum" ("she shows what impedes this contemplation, in other words worldly affections").¹² For Boethius, a Christian *auctor*, and also for his Christian interpreters and readers, including Trevet and Henryson, the representation of the problems and perils of the soul, struggling with sin and endeavoring to keep its eye on the *summum bonum*, was inescapably theological.¹³ Trevet's commentary casts a thoroughgoing yet subtle influence on everything Henryson does. Likewise, Trevet's direct influence on how readers read *Orpheus and Eurydice* cannot be ruled out either. Nevertheless, it would also be possible for educated and alert readers of both *narratio* and *moralitas* to appreciate a measure of the allegory and to extrapolate moral or spiritual *sentence* without having direct access to, or memory of, Trevet's glosses.

An appreciation of Henryson's high-order pedantic poetics needs to be accompanied by an appreciation of how late medieval readers might have deployed a sensibility of association and dissociation in being able to read, recall, feel, and think the *narratio* and the *moralitas* on their own individual terms, while also re-feeling and re-thinking each on the other's terms without detriment to the humane, affective complexity of the former or the compelling and transcendent moral *sentence* of the latter. But before getting to the pragmatics of reading Henryson's text, it is first necessary to look at the principles of fabular reading, as understood by Henryson and the broader educational and literary culture of the time.¹⁴

Reading “ane uther thing”

For Henryson’s time, “feinyeit fabils of ald poetre,”¹⁵ though fun, taught lessons. They were always moral, addressing not just the practical ethics of the everyday world, but also one’s own personal shortcomings and fallen condition; they did this “be figure of ane uther thing,” by allegory:

... the caus quhy that thay first began
Wes to repreif thee of thi misleving,
O man, be figure of ane uther thing.¹⁶

The skilled reader, then, is expected and challenged to see how a moral grows out of a subtle verse narrative:

Sa springis thar a morall sweit sentence
Oute of the subtell dyte of poetry
To gude purpois, quha culd it weill apply.¹⁷

The qualifier “quha culd it weill apply” is a challenge not only to the commentator on fabular *integumenta* sacred or profane or to their readers, but also to the rewriter of moral fables and to anyone adapting an authoritative work with allegorical content, like Virgil’s *Aeneid*,¹⁸ Boethius’s *De consolacione philosophiae*, or even the books of the Old Testament. More pertinently, the same challenge that faced the educated readers of Henryson’s *Moral Fables* doubtless extended to readers of his *Orpheus and Eurydice*, who knew that, whilst they were reading the *narratio*, they were also reading “ane uther thing,” the *moralitas* — and vice versa. Edward Wheatley has shown in recent years how the medieval Aesopic commentary tradition encouraged students to rethink and internalize individual fables according to different types of allegorical interpretation — be it “simple allegory,” “allegory with social roles,” “allegory with religious roles,” “spiritual allegory,” “natural allegory,” or “exegetical allegory.”¹⁹ Indeed, “two or more forms of reading in a comment upon a single fable indicate that commentators, perhaps of all ages, were free to experiment with multiple views of texts,” and “any fable could be interpreted according to any allegorical form, at the whim of the reader, or perhaps at the behest of a teacher. The set of allegorical patterns [...] became as manipulable and interchangeable as fables themselves.”²⁰ Wheatley, moreover, proceeds to show how, in his *Moral Fables*, Henryson selected from different types of commentatorial approach.²¹ The same flexible repertoire, as we shall see, applies to the composition and to the right reading of his *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

Thickets of Interpretation

The morals of fables were frequently expressed in the first-person plural and present tense of classroom and pulpit. No exception to this is the way in which Henryson interprets Euridices's flight across a meadow from a would-be rapist. He likens this to our soul's flight from virtue, resulting in the snakebite of deadly sin:

Bot quhen we fle outthrow the medow grene
Fra vertew till this warldis vane plesans,
Myngit with cair and full of variance,
The serpent stangis that is the deidly sin.²²

This shockingly counter-intuitive allegory equates straightforwardly enough with Trevet's gloss that tells us that Aristeus, who represents virtue, pursued Eurydice/the *affectus* "dum fugit per prata, id est amena presentis uite" ("when she flees through the meadows, that is, the pleasant places of this life").²³ The Euridices of the Scottish *narratio*, however, has more than a meadow to contend with in her landscape, which also consists of a wood, bushes, and thickets. Arresteus is "in a schaw nearby," lying "undir a bus," where he keeps beasts:

I say this be Erudices the quene
Quhilk walkit furth into a May mornyng
Bot with a madyn in a medow grene
To tak the dewe and se the flouris spring,
Quhair in a schaw neirby this lady ying
A busteous hird callit Arresteus
Kepand his beistis lay undir a bus.²⁴

Henryson's Arresteus is neither civilized nor virtuous, but "busteous," crude, and violent — precisely the kind of man whose reasonless brutishness may be assuaged by Orpheus and converted to right reason. According to Trevet, the eloquence of Orpheus moved such brutal humans, savages, and wild men of the woods to right reason:

Iste autem Orpheus per suauitatem cythare, id est elloquentie, homines brutales et siluestres reduxit ad normam rationis. Propter quod dictus est bruta et siluas mouere sicut infra exponetur.²⁵

[Moreover, this Orpheus, by the sweetness of his lyre, that is, of its eloquence, led brutish and savage men back to right reason. On account of this, he is said to move brutes and the woods, as is expounded below.]

So when, departing from both Boethius and from the narrative relayed by Trevet, Henryson sends his Euridices not just across “a meadow grene” but into “a bus” (a thicket), he signals subtly that she — or rather what she represents — is heading into a place of physical *and moral* danger. Neither the literal nor the allegorical Orpheus is present to protect his spouse in this scenery. The hermeneutically sensitized imagery of human desire and the soul imperiled by thickets, thorns, and woods — which the *moralitas* sees as tethered on “thir warldis breris, / Quhyle on the flesch, quhyle on this warldis wrak”²⁶ — has a role not only in this scene, but it is also developed elsewhere in the work. For example, when Orpheus, lorn of Euridices, is down in the Underworld, he crosses a wild moor, which is a morass of razor-sharp thorns and thickets that would otherwise do for him, but his faithful, allegorically potent, harp saves him:

Syne our a mure with thornis thik and scherp
 Wepand allone a wilsum way he went
 And had nocht bene throw suffrage of his harp
 With fell pikis he had bene schorne and schent.²⁷

On this occasion, the marvelous harp, causing the sharp greenery to move aside, saves our hero, or, as the *moralitas* puts it:

Bot quhen ressoun and perfyte sapience
 Playis upone the herp of eloquens
 And persuadis our fleschly appetyte
 To leif the thocht of this warldly delyte,
 Than seisis of our hert the wicket will.²⁸

The thicket Euridices flees into befits the worst of “fleschly appetite,” literally male sexual brutality towards her as a woman, but, allegorically, her fleeing puts not her but the human soul in the way of the culpable fleshly sin that anyone may commit:²⁹

And quhen he saw this lady solitar
 Bairfut with shankis quhyter than the snaw,
 Preckit with lust he thocht withoutin mair
 Hir till oppres and till hir can he draw.
 Dreidand for scaith, sche fled quhen scho him saw
 And as scho ran all bairfute in a bus
 Scho strampit on a serpent vennemus.³⁰

Henryson’s re-reader would be able not only to see, but also to see through, the implications of Euridices running in terror, barefoot and snow-white-

legged, into the tell-tale *bus*. On the literal level, she is a victim — innocent, horrifically vulnerable, unprotected, desirably revealed in fleshliness. Yet “be figure of ane uther thing,”³¹ representing the culpable human soul, as the oft-repeated “we” of the *moralitas*, she heads misguidedly towards the commission of deadly sin, represented here not just by the “bus” but by something worse — the mortal animal sting of the sin that takes the soul to hell. In the educated reader’s mind, the affective impact of this scene — its horror, brutality, and tragic unfairness — will color its allegorical analogue without impairing its moral or spiritual logic. Here, as elsewhere in various examples discussed in this essay, individual readers could well have captured an allegorical message regarding thickets or harps or whatever even without Trevet’s direct help, but as part of their wider intellectual background and education.

It is ironic that Orpheus shelters with “busteous bes” in bushes: “My bed salbe with bever, brok, and bair / In buskis bene with mony busteous bes.”³² Like Arreustus, Orpheus keeps company with beasts (human *affeciouns*) in a sylvan space connoting worldly distractions. Whereas Arreustus controls beasts *literaliter* but is a beast in his behavior, Orpheus and his harp likewise control beasts *literaliter*, but they also control the human emotions that those beasts represent allegorically.

Neither we nor Orpheus are out of the woods yet, however. When our hero looks for his wife (allegorically, the sunken *affectus* attached to the temporal cares and distractions of this world), where does he go but across gloomy groves?

Bot I will tell how Orpheus tuk the way
To seik his wyfe attour the gravis gray,
Hungry and cauld our mony wilsum wone
Withouttin gyd, he and his harp alone.³³

These gloomy woods of lost, sad, sunken, irrational, and savage human *affeciouns* make for, or lead to, many wild and lonely dwelling places — “mony wilsum wone.” They are no homely place to dwell, however. Neither is a *wone*, as such, a *way*. Orpheus nevertheless traverses “our mony wilsum wone,” searching *literaliter* for his wife Euridices. On the allegorical level, however, he must cross them because they represent the challenge of the *affeciouns* to hinder the soul’s pursuit of the *summum bonum*.

In similar vein, the romance lament that Orpheus delivers as he leaves home on his quest for his lost wife is enriched with a coloring of allegorical significance. Without disrupting the affective impetus of the

lament, Henryson achieves this simply by deploying such allegorically sensitized words/notions as “plesance” (literally, legitimate happiness but, morally, vain pleasure) and “woddis wyld” (literally, a threateningly desolate romance landscape through which to quest and in which to lament, and, allegorically, a place of spiritual loneliness, fleshly sin, uncontrolled will, and earthly *affeccious*):

“Fairweill my place, fairweill plesance and play
And wylcum woddis wyld and wilsum way.”³⁴

Lexicographically, however, the word “wilsum” in the collocation “wilsum way” is something of a keyword and refrain. No hermeneutic wilderness, it yields a fertile harvest of meanings literal and allegorical, as *DOST* and *MED* both attest:

DOST, s.v. *wilsum*:

a. Of a way (lit. or fig.), route, place or journey: Treacherous; apt to lead one or go astray; remote, desolate; dreary. Also transf.b. lit. and fig. Of a person: Wandering, erring, astray; perplexed, bewildered. Also transf.c. absol. as noun. A wandering or homeless person.

MED, s.v. *wilsum*

1. (a) Of a person, one's wits: bewildered, lost, wandering; ~ of wone, homeless; (b) of a place: pathless, wild, desolate; of a path, way, etc.: without clear direction, devious, uncertain; also, *fig.* morally errant.
2. Headstrong, obstinate, willful; of sin: resulting from willfulness; also, as noun: one who is obstinate.

Many “morall sweit sentence[s]” spring here “Oute of the subtell dyte of poetry / To gude purpois, quha culd it weill apply.”³⁵ *Wilsum* makes for a fecund lexical lesson, being a verbal token at once intuitive, analytic, affective, ethical, and personal, pressed into the brevity of a common word equally agile and agilely equal across *narratio* and *moralitas* alike. Each sense of *wilsum* applies without strain to the Scottish Boethian work. Each sense, be it literal or allegorical — each human condition of being bewildered, lost, remote, desolate, erring, homeless, obstinate, willful in sin, without clear direction, and so on — is simultaneously comprised, suggested, and intuited in the form and utterance of one word. Each sense also belongs self-evidently with its fellow-senses in a thematically and conceptually integrated whole, which produces a rhetorical effect of proving

their truthfulness and validity both separately and together in relation to each other. Moreover, in its immediate apprehensibility, the revelatory suggestiveness of *wilsum* presents the discriminating reader with opportunities for self-glossing lexical play that make the drama and the *sentence* of reading *Orpheus and Eurydice* all the more vivid, substantial, and engaging. As a detail *wilsum* may be small, but it is telling and productive.

We have seen something of the significations and significance of what Orpheus can do with his harp, be it literally or allegorically. What, however, can be said about the strange absence of harp and music when, in his most impassioned lament, he bewails the disappearance of Euridices “Withowttin sang, sayand with siching sair, / ‘Quhair art thow gone, my luve Euridices?’”³⁶ Like Chaucer’s Man in Black in *The Book of the Duchess*, he merely says his verses and does not sing them.³⁷ What does it mean that Orpheus does not sing? Even though he is the archetypal *musicus*, his musiclessness here is exegetically apt, for although his lament is eloquent, heartfelt, and personally moving, the silence of his harp betrays a lack of sapient eloquence: our hero is subsumed in grief, neither inclining towards wisdom/the *summum bonum*, nor yet aware of the necessity of setting out on a rescue mission of descending to the sunken and hellish place where the *affectus* languishes. As with the weeping verses of the unenlightened Boethius-persona in the opening metrum of the *De consolacione*, Orpheus’s complaint is an expression of personal woe rather than a song of *sentence*. Orpheus speaks as a man, with all the more edge and authenticity for that, but like Chaucer’s Man in Black, he declaims his plight without exhibiting understanding, let alone acknowledgement, of the fact of the beloved’s death. Henryson’s well-schooled reader, however, will be alert to the allegorically freighted shortcomings of the grieving *vates*, who is not yet looking in the right place for what he needs (which is what we need too).

Standing and Falling: Grace, Light, and Cloudy Darkness

Boethius wrote *De consolacione* as a Christian, but when his text was reworked in the later Middle Ages by the likes of Geoffrey Chaucer and John Walton, it was colored with more than a touch of affective piety, as well as with a more overt Christianizing of its theology.³⁸ Henryson, in tune with the Boethianism of his time, closes the *moralitas* of *Orpheus and Eurydice* with a prayer to the Almighty. Acknowledging feeble humanity’s tendency to fall, he bids for God’s grace to strengthen us so that we stand and do not fall:

Now pray we God sen our affectioun
 Is allway promp and reddy to fall down
 That he wald undirput his haly hand
 Of mantenans and gife us fors to stand
 In perfyte lufe as he is glorius
 And thus endis the taill of Orpheus.³⁹

Note the pious formulation of this prayer as a petition couched in terms of praise — which was common enough in prayer at this time. Henryson asks that we be given the strength to stand in a love as perfect as God is glorious. This equation emphasizes “affectioun,” not righteousness, nor the expunging of original sin. The emotive aspect is uppermost at this moment, so it is apt that grace is linked to love, in a manner typical of late medieval affective piety. It is, at the same time, decorous that grace be conceived of in terms of strengthening “fors,” for *consolatio* and its French and English equivalents, “comfort,” entail the strengthening of the soul. This concluding prayer is the heavenly threshold for the *sentence* of *Orpheus and Eurydice*. It assumes a Godward-directed Christian soul piously seeking the *summum bonum*, loving him, praising him in his glory, and petitioning for grace as a form of strengthening — a form of *comfort*. The prayers Henryson devises for the *narratio*, delivered by Orpheus to Phoebus and Jupiter, compare intriguingly to the closing prayer of the *moralitas*. They are Christian in language and tone whilst maintaining consistency with the non-Christian narrative setting. They are also theologically sensitized in a manner that would be noticeable to the informed reader. Phoebus is addressed first:

I thee beseik, my fair fadir Phebus,
 Haif pety of thy awin sone Orpheus,
 Wait thow nocht weil I am thy barne and chyld?
 Now heir my plaint panefull and peteus,
 Direk me fro this deid so dolorus
 Quhilk gois thus withouttin gilt begyld.
 Lat nocht thy face with cluddis be oursyld,
 Len me thy lycht and lat me nocht go leis
 To find that fair in fame that nevir was fyld,
 My lady quene and lufe Euridices.⁴⁰

Henryson chooses features familiar in Christian prayer: the divine father is addressed; pity is sought; the deity is asked to direct the life/conduct of his needy, distressed, lamenting, petitioning child, who begs for the illumination of divine light. Given that Phoebus is of course the sun itself, it is fitting, on a literal level, that Orpheus should ask for light to help him

on his murky way. Allegorically, however, the obscuring of divine light by clouds is, in Boethian terms, a typical problem for imperfect humanity. Henryson enlarges on this in the *moralitas*:

This ugly way, this myrk and dully streit
Is nocht ellis bot blinding of the spreit
With myrk cluddis and myst of ignorance,
Affetterrit in this warldis vane plesance
And bissines of temporalite.⁴¹

It would not be lost on Henryson's educated readers that the same clouds, ignorance, blinding of the *aspectus*, worldly fetters, vain pleasures, and temporality keep frequent company with each other in the Boethian tradition and of course in Trevet's commentary. To take one example, Trevet's gloss on the Orpheus meter — on the matter of Juno putting a protective cloud between herself and the would-be rapist, Ixion — tells us that this cloud signifies the obscuring of human reason:

Iuno significat uitam actiuam, que consistit in curis temporalium ...
Iuno interponit nubem, quia per hanc uitam incurrit homo obscuritatem rationis.⁴²

[Juno signifies the active life, which consists of the temporal cares ...
Juno put between them a cloud, for through this life man runs into the obscuring of reason.]

The divine lending of light ("Len me thy lycht") begged for by Orpheus will disperse such "cluddis." It is a theologically apt plea because, in Henryson's time, God's grace was normally conceived of not as a boosting of the human faculties but as a shining of divine light on what the human mind attempts to perceive and to judge. It is thus not a permanent gift but a gracious lending for the time being to those who put themselves piously in the way of it. The prayer to Phoebus, then, is a pagan prayer with a Christian temper, fit to be appreciated as such by the kind of reader acquainted not only with the standard conception of grace but also with the teachings of *De consolatione* — most famously in book III, meter 9 — on such clouds, divine grace and light, frail humanity's obscured view of God, worldly *affecciouns*, etc. — on which Trevet comments with fluent economy:

Deinde cum dicit DISSICE petit ad istam cognicionem disponi et primo quoad remocionem impedimenti cuiusmodi est obtenebracio intellectus per affectum terrenorum. Unde dicit DISSICE id est

disperde et dicitur a dis et iacio –cis PONDERA scilicet trahencia affectum ET NEBULAS scilicet obscuritates intellectionum TERRENE MOLIS scilicet que aggrauat animam et ad inferiora detrahit. Secundo petit collacionem auxilii dicens ATQUE MICA id est resplende in intellectu meo SPLENDORE TUO quasi diceret conforta intellectum meum ad uidendum te.⁴³

[Then, when he [i.e. Boethius] says DISSIPATE, he asks to be disposed towards acquiring the knowledge, and first of all in terms of the removal of an impediment, such as is the clouding of the understanding by a love of worldly things. So he says DISSIPATE, that is “disperse.” That word comes from *dis* and *iacio-is*; THE WEIGHTY OBJECTS, that is, things which distract the affections; AND THE CLOUDS, that is those things which obscure men’s understandings, OF THE MASS OF THE EARTH, that is, which weighs down the soul, and drags it down to a lower level. Secondly, he seeks that that aid should be bestowed on him when he says: AND FLASH OUT that is shine in my understanding; IN YOUR BRIGHTNESS, as if he were to say “strengthen my understanding to enable it to see You.”]

Orpheus’s prayer to Jupiter in the following stanza is in similar vein to the prayer to Phoebus:

“O Jupiter, thow god celestiall
And grantser to myself, on thee I call
To mend my murning and my drery mone,
Thow gif me fors that I nocht fant nor fall
Till I hir fynd, for seke hir suth I sall
And nowther stint nor stand for stok na stone,
Throw thy godheid gyde me quhair scho is gone,
Gar hir appeir and put my hairt in pes.”⁴⁴

“Thow gif me fors that I nocht fant nor fall” echoes the formulation in the closing prayer of the *moralitas*, which asks that God “gife us fors” so that we do not “fall down.” The distinctly theological “thy godheid” chimes more with fifteenth-century devotion than it does with the last days of Ancient Rome. Likewise, the plea “gyde me” resembles routine Christian pleas to the Almighty to assist the soul through the perils of this life in the quest for the heavenly *summum bonum*.

Still on the subject of light and vision, it is significant that Orpheus asks Jupiter to make Euridices *appear*, as such: he wants a *sight* of her. He also asks the same of Venus: “Of my lady help me to get a sicht.”⁴⁵ A sight

of the beloved is, of course, all well and good for putting a bereft lover's "hairt in pes" in a romance, but, aside from the fact that appearance is not substance, the soul, on an allegorical level, is not meant to be content with flimsy, merely worldly, viewings. The gaze of the intellect instructed in wisdom should not be preoccupied with contemplating the lower part of its own soul but with striving for the steadfast ultimate vision of the transcendent *summum bonum*, God. Orpheus's plea to make Euridices merely appear, however much one may sympathize with it, will inevitably evoke suspicion in the allegorically suspicious reader. Even though, on one level, the desire and the quest to recover Euridices (the *affectus*) by Orpheus (the reason) are both good, this appeal would ring alarm bells in informed contemporary readers, who will of course know that Orpheus's "lady that he had bocht so deir / Bot for a luk so sone wes tane him fro."⁴⁶

Readers would be similarly suspicious about word-choices and allusive nuance when want of light, twinned with a danger of falling, are chosen to characterize the fearful way across Hades:

Beyond this mure he fand a feirfull streit
Myrk as the nycht, to pas rycht dengerus,
For sliddrenes skant mycht he hald his feit.⁴⁷

Alertness to such features would be intensified all the more once the corresponding passage of the *moralitas* is read and the *narratio* then repondered in its murky didactic light:

This ugly way, this myrk and dully streit
Is nocht ellis bot blinding of the spreit
With myrk cluddis and myst of ignorance,
Affetterrit in this warldis vane plesance
And bissines of temporalite.⁴⁸

The "myrk" condition of the "streit" may now be thought and felt not only as the perilous blinding of spiritual ignorance but also as the binding of the soul to false temporal pleasures. Failure to keep one's feet is now linked, implicitly but firmly, to the absence of, and the need for, the sustaining support of divine grace, which, however, can only be lent under the right conditions when the soul addresses itself adequately to the deity. Here, with considerable theological accuracy, "sliddrenes" betokens not falling per se but the prompt propensity of humans to fall, for, as we know, "our affectioun / Is allway promp and reddy to fall down." In this slippery life, it is a matter of free will, responsibility, and psychic vigilance whether

the frail and vulnerable human actually falls or not. The term “sliddrenes” is thus precise, vivid, and well chosen.

Winning Euridices: Orpheus and Us

In Henryson’s doctrinally fine-grained re-performance of the story of Orpheus and Euridices, the world of romance converses with the demands and opportunities of Boethian *sentence*, as articulated by Nicholas Trevet. The reader applies *discretio* not by discarding the *narratio* and focusing only on the message of the *moralitas*, but by pondering the ways in which the semantic and experiential possibilities and logics of *narratio* and *moralitas* inform each other. When the schooled *habitus* invests its learning and experience in the Henrysonian text, a new personal, moral-cum-spiritual gloss of fresh affective charge emerges to stir and to reconfigure the individual consciousness. This would happen, when, for example, Henryson’s *moralitas* takes a third-person tragedy of culpable loss, otherwise fixed and unchangeable in the legendary past, but then re-focuses on it the possibility of a happy outcome where it most matters — in the present-tense here and now of the reader’s soul, of ourselves:

Than Orpheus has wone Euridices
 Quhen oure desyre with ressoun makis pes
 And seikis up to contemplatioun,
 Of syn detestand the abusoun.⁴⁹

Orpheus gets his love back and the readers/we get their/our souls properly reintegrated “Quhen” he/they/I/we get things right. “Quhen” qualifies a perpetual and open-ended outcome, conditional on what readers do in their undetermined futures.⁵⁰ Indeed, the *moralitas* of *Orpheus and Eurydice* converses continuously with the *narratio* by repeatedly stimulating this effect. It then becomes the task of the reader to respond accordingly. “Quhen,” then, the reader does the right thing, the happy ending of the *Sir Orfeo* tradition enjoys a Boethian upgrade without sacrificing the allure of romance. Concomitantly, personal moral backsliding can now be personally re-dramatized as a mythic tragedy to be avoided. What could be more appealing than being allowed, and even exhorted, to project one’s own moral and spiritual condition and quest for true happiness — indeed the trials and trajectory of one’s inner life — in terms of romance loss, desire, lament, quest, marvelous narrative, heartbreak, reunion, and — one hopes — moral and spiritual beatitude? To read like this would

not be too unfamiliar: after all, late medieval literature commonly drew on romance and the conventions of love with immense inventiveness and variety. The reader, then, by dint of experiencing *narratio* with *moralitas* not only intellectually but also affectively, is better able to answer feelingly the question of what it is like when, in the soul, reason and desire make peace, and the soul, spurning sin, turns to God in contemplation. It is like Orpheus winning back his love, Euridices.⁵¹ Conversely, the tragic but blameworthy loss of Euridices serves as a warning against moral frailty in readers' still unresolved lives. The narrative allows a foretaste of how appallingly and unnecessarily awful it would, but need not, feel to lose out. It is therefore up to the *discretio* of readers to rewrite *Orpheus and Eurydice* in their imaginations and memories *in bono*. Moreover, without taking themselves too seriously (after all, this *is* Henryson!), it is also up to them, depending on their situation, variously to re-perform *narratio* and *moralitas in bono* in their own moral and spiritual conduct. Readers may thus find relevance and encouragement in this piously glamorous new romance of the soul.

Reading, Habitus, and Interiority

Some modern readers conjecture that the apparent inconsistencies and disorientating properties of *Orpheus and Eurydice* may be due to it being an early work, lacking the formal and thematic elegance of *The Testament of Cresseid* or the *Moral Fables*. Early or not, it seems more likely that such discomfort was not experienced by contemporary readers educationally and culturally attuned to the obligations and opportunities of reading the kind of work that *Orpheus and Eurydice* is.

Reading, a serious life skill, was used to teach many other serious life skills. Through reading the pupil learnt how to live, how to be saved, how to avoid sin and damnation, how and what properly to feel, how to be happy and good legitimately, how to face the prospect of mortality, how to approach God, how to learn, interpret, and judge (especially when it came to those texts on which one's hermeneutic and behavioral life skills centered). Such was readerly *discretio*.

A syllabus of Christian-humanist-scholastic writings, which drew on collections of set texts such as the *Auctores octo*, focused on the processes of *habitus*-forming.⁵² The discipline of reading aimed to surmount the simultaneously cognitive, emotional, and rational challenge of bridging gaps between, on the one hand, works and knowledge that were relatively trans-

parent, and, on the other, those that at first looked counter-intuitive. Any such text or knowledge, once learned, however, should and would become more and more naturalized, rethought, re-felt, and re-proved in the routine experience and exercise of the habituated mind engaging with an array of authoritative discourses and interpretative practices (to say nothing of issues arising as part and parcel of lived experience itself).

Late medieval readers were taught to be hermeneutically resourceful. It was not just in the educational system, however, that they negotiated mixtures of shifting and contradictory discourses. Consider what it must have taken for Langland's readers to start to cope with the challenges of *Piers Plowman*. If Henryson's readers possessed just a bit of what it took to take on Langland then they would have been able to skip around *Orpheus and Eurydice* with brio as well as with *discretio*. Such agility, it must be said, is not mere flitting. A middlebrow reader of *Orpheus and Eurydice* should, for all the textual gymnastics it invites, also be in vivid control of a subtle, supple, yet stable interiority capable of self-aware moral reflection. This owes itself to the minute and programmatic demands not only of educational training and literary tradition, but also to the culture of confession.

The sacrament of confession required self-scrutiny of motivation, act, and mitigating circumstance. This self-scrutiny was applied in narrative fashion to the subject and to his or her behavior through a highly developed typology of sin, and, somewhat more dynamically, to an understanding of the pathway of sin from temptation through to commission and the remedial processes of virtuous penitence. A relentlessly self-aware interiority, at once inquisitive, ethically driven, narratively structuring, emotionally precise, and implacably rational, shaped and motivated the interior lives of Henryson and his readers. *Orpheus and Eurydice* is a work that partakes of this confessional sensibility, especially when it deals with the whole messy business of not sinking into, but escaping, the pit of worldly wretchedness — sin — even in its moments of greatest romance, and even when Henryson has dimmed down the moralizing.

Another aspect of the late medieval tradition of representing and managing interiority is relevant to the reading of *Orpheus and Eurydice*. The late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw a remarkable increase in the demand for, and production and circulation of, texts (mainly but not exclusively religious) on the inner life, such as the works of the *Cloud* author, Walter Hilton, William Langland, Richard Rolle, Thomas Hoccleve, Thomas Usk, Reginald Pecock, James I of Scotland, and John

Ireland. Many manuals and codices, such as *The Chastising of God's Children*, *The Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, *Book to a Mother*, the *Speculum Christiani*, and such miscellanies as the Vernon, Amherst, and Simeon manuscripts dealt with an inner moral and spiritual life directed towards the Christian *summum bonum* of salvation, holy living, and contemplation of the divinity.⁵³ This tradition entertained a multiplicity of approaches. In these works, the highest precepts and doctrines are articulated imaginatively through various admixtures of genre where the reader's will and reason diversely interact with literal, allegorical, metaphorical, cosmic-historical, heavenly, and moralizing phenomena in a problematic yet edifying process. A reader experienced only in a few such texts, in whole or in fragment, would have access to knowledge and skills appropriate to coping with *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

Conclusion

We can conclude by reviewing some key points. In Henryson's time, not only Latin set texts and commentaries, but also vernacular works taught the formation of moral and spiritual life. These works often mixed sacred and profane, doing so with multi-thematic and multi-generic disciplinary focus. Their readers were schooled to be agile in darting from one area of experience or discourse to another without losing the moral or emotional thread. In taking account of text, sources, and historically re-imaginable readerly strategies, this essay has attempted to provide examples of the rich multiplicity of ways in which Henryson's readers (always re-readers) might straddle *narratio* and *moralitas* — for example, “enjoying” the work as a romance whilst simultaneously investing its *moralitas* with an emotional romance charge that on its own generic terms it would not otherwise be licensed to carry. We have also seen some instances of how readers might take on a perspective in which personal, moral, and spiritual health or backsliding could be seen respectively through self-fictive filters of Orphic glamor or Orphic self-contamination. In similar vein, when Henryson's text translates the threat of the soul's damnation and moral ruin to the sphere of romance heartbreak and loss, his readers are obliged and stimulated to re-read and re-feel their own post-lapsarian hopes and vulnerabilities. For Henryson, how to read is about how to live and how to experience living, and this involves bringing an armory of romance and Boethian *expositio sententiae* to the serious business of confecting and saving the self. Reading and the reader are at the heart, so it would seem, of the *sentence* and sensibility of his most under-rated work.

NOTES

¹ For a useful survey of critical approaches to this work, see McKim, “*Orpheus and Eurydice*,” 108–11. For an article relevant to the approach developed in this essay, see Johnson, “Hellish Complexity.”

² See ODNB, and Fox’s introduction to his *Poems of Robert Henryson*, xiii–xxv.

³ Cannon, “The Art of Rereading,” 402.

⁴ ll. 428–29. For the text of *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the *Fables* I am using Parkinson’s edition (Henryson, *Complete Works*), and will cite line numbers after each quotation in the main body of the essay.

⁵ l. 626.

⁶ ll. 431–32.

⁷ l. 624.

⁸ l. 627. For background on traditions of Orpheus, see Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages*. For the vernacularization of the Orpheus meter, see Johnson, “Walton’s Sapient Orpheus.”

⁹ For A. B. Scott’s transcription of Trevet’s glosses on the Orpheus meter, see Fox’s editorial commentary to his *Poems of Robert Henryson*, 384–91. The complete but unfinalized edition of Nicholas Trevet’s commentary on *De consolatione philosophiae*, which Professor E. T. Silk, formerly of Yale University, was still working on at the time of his death, has been prepared electronically by Andrew Kraebel and is now available at <http://minnis.commonswill.edu>. For discussion of the nature of Trevet’s commentary, see Nauta, “Scholastic Context.”

¹⁰ *Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Fox, 384.

¹¹ Translations of Trevet are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

¹² *Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Fox, 384.

¹³ For discussion of Christianity and the *Consolation*, see Marenbon, *Boethius*, 154–59, 173–78.

¹⁴ For Henryson’s distinctive approach in his own Aesopic fables, see Lyall, “Henryson’s *Morall Fabillis*,” 93–104.

¹⁵ *Fables*, l. 1.

¹⁶ *Fables*, ll. 5–7.

¹⁷ *Fables*, ll. 12–14.

¹⁸ Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, especially 41–167.

¹⁹ Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop*, 77–78.

²⁰ Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop*, 88, 91.

²¹ Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop*, 149–89.

²² ll. 438–41.

²³ *Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Fox, 385.

²⁴ ll. 92–98.

²⁵ *Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Fox, 385.

²⁶ ll. 456–57.

²⁷ ll. 289–92. For an informative study of the harp as a symbol of order and

control, especially in a patristic context and with reference to Scottish literature, see Petrina, "Medieval Harps."

²⁸ ll. 507–11.

²⁹ Henryson's Arretheus, on a literal level, despite representing virtue, is pierced with sin too, as by a briar: "Preckit." It would be up to readers to see or not to see any phallic associations here.

³⁰ ll. 93–105.

³¹ l. 7.

³² ll. 160–61.

³³ ll. 243–46.

³⁴ ll. 154–55.

³⁵ ll. 12–14.

³⁶ ll. 162–63.

³⁷ Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess*, 463–86.

³⁸ For Chaucer, see *Boece* and Walton, see *Boethius*. For discussion of the religious coloring in Chaucer's and Walton's translations of Boethius, see Johnson, "The Ascending Soul" and Johnson, "Walton's Heavenly *Boece*."

³⁹ ll. 628–33.

⁴⁰ ll. 164–73.

⁴¹ ll. 600–4.

⁴² *Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Fox, 389.

⁴³ Extracts from Silk's edition of Trevel's glosses on this meter are published in Minnis, *Chaucer's Boece*; this quotation, 51. Scott's translations of these glosses are in the same volume; this quotation, 76.

⁴⁴ ll. 174–81.

⁴⁵ l. 209.

⁴⁶ ll. 396–97.

⁴⁷ ll. 303–5.

⁴⁸ ll. 600–4.

⁴⁹ ll. 616–19.

⁵⁰ For a reading of this work that also supports the idea that Henryson wished at this point and in general to turn the gaze of his readers towards heaven, see Rutledge, "Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*," esp. 403–4.

⁵¹ Likewise, *Pearl* answers another universal question allegorically in devastatingly personal terms: what is it like encountering the Kingdom of Heaven? It is like finding your dead baby daughter alive and thriving. I owe this observation to the late Stephen Boyd. For an edition of this poem, see *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*.

⁵² For a modern English edition with comment, see Pepin, *Auctores octo*.

⁵³ See *The Cloud of Unknowing and Related Treatises*; Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*; Langland, *Piers Plowman*; Rolle, *The Psalter and Richard Rolle: Prose and Verse*; Hoccleve, *My Complainte*, and Usk, *Testament of Love*. For Pecoock, see *The Donet*; *The Folewer to the Donet*; *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*;

The Reule of Crysten Religioun, and *Reginald Pecock's Book of Faith*. See also James I of Scotland, *The Kingis Quair*; Ireland, *The Meroure of Wyssdome*; *The Chastising of God's Children*; *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*; *Book to a Mother*, and *Speculum Christiani*. For the Vernon manuscript, see Scase, *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript* and *Vernon Manuscript Project*. For the Simeon manuscript, see *Simeon Manuscript Project*. For Amherst, see Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism*, which is also an important study of the vernacular tradition of the literature of interiority, as are Rice, *Lay Piety*, and Bryan, *Looking Inward*.

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Seget's *Comedy*: A Scots Scholar, Galileo, and a Dante Manuscript

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Naming first occurrences is a risky and not always very productive venture. But where access to texts of major foreign authors is concerned and where firm evidence is thin on the ground — as it is with Dante in Britain from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth — it is at least worth reviewing some of the earliest known encounters. Chaucer's references to *the wise poete of Florence* are wide ranging and specific enough to suggest that he had acquired a manuscript of the *Commedia* either in Italy or perhaps from Italian contacts in London.¹ Shortly after his time, copies of the Latin translation of the *Commedia* produced at the Council of Constance in 1416–1417 are known to have been circulating in England, although none of the translation's three surviving manuscripts can be linked to its fifteenth- or sixteenth-century English readers.² The earliest documentation of an original *Commedia* reaching Britain is in a manuscript that changed hands in London at the beginning of August 1451, although the evidence here is in the form of a note written by an Italian purchaser.³

With the advent of the *Commedia*'s first printed editions (from 1472 on) and the subsequent growth in importation of Italian books, the likelihood of Dante's work reaching British readers increases. By the end of Henry VIII's reign (1547) twenty-nine editions of the *Commedia* and three of the *Convivio* had been published in Italy.⁴ Since Dante's work was of interest to writers constructing a literary canon in Henrician England, it seems likely that copies of his work were circulating in some form then.⁵ Indeed, in 1520 a prebendary of St. Paul's presented one of Henry VIII's courtiers — Henry Parker, Lord Morley, translator of Boccaccio and Petrarch — with a copy of the 1493 Venice edition of the *Commedia*.⁶

Another early example of a British name in a text of Dante is that of Sir Thomas Hoby, translator of Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano*. Hoby's Dante was a copy of the 1544 Venice edition of the *Commedia*, and its front flyleaf bears the inscription in his own hand: *Thomaso Hoby Inglese*, with the date 1550 above and *In Vineggia* below.⁷ The style of the inscrip-

tion reflects a performative attitude to ownership of the text — written at a time when, fresh from Cambridge and in his late teens, Hoby was in the midst of a continental tour and already beginning to strut his stuff as (to use Ascham's and Florio's phrase) an *inglese italianato*. As Charles Lamb would say of reading and fashion some three centuries later, "We read to say we have read."⁸

About half a century later than Hoby, another scholarly traveler from the British Isles enters his name and nation — this time in Latin and at the beginning of a much older Dante text. On the paper flyleaf of the manuscript of the *Commedia* now at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (MS C 198 inf.) this owner/reader has written:

Thomae Segeti Scoti.

and the same hand has signed the same name (without *Scoti*) on the reverse of the flyleaf.

This fine parchment manuscript of Dante's *Commedia* seems to have been copied in the late fourteenth century or the very early fifteenth.⁹ Despite its relatively late date, it "counts as one of the best of the known manuscripts of the poem."¹⁰ Its text is written in an elegant gothic book hand and has elaborate ornamentation on the opening page of each *cantica* (fols 1r, 53r, 105r). It also contains extensive marginal glosses in Latin and a substantial number of diagrams (geographical, cosmological, and astronomical) accompanying and following the text. The extent and significance of these diagrams will be considered later on; meanwhile, to return to the beginning of the manuscript, a note by the Ambrosiana's librarian in 1609 (beneath the signature on the verso of the flyleaf), confirms that it was owned at one point by a scholarly Briton in Northern Italy, the Scot, Thomas Seget.¹¹

This Scottish name written in Latin twice in a distinguished Italian manuscript's flyleaf prompts some questions which this essay will address. Who was Thomas Seget? When, how and why did he obtain this manuscript? What is known about his wider Italian contacts and interests? How might such acquisitions, contacts, and interests be located within the context of cultural encounters between Scots *latinitas* and Italy?

As befits the range (and occasional mysteriousness) of his travels and contacts, published information about Thomas Seget's life is dispersed in a wide range of sources, British and European, not all of which are easy to access. His career and work were summarized in 1804 by David Irving

in his *Lives of the Scottish Poets*, and important documentation of his association with Padua and Galileo was provided by Antonio Favaro early in the following century.¹² During the 1930s and 1940s further details and sources emerged in articles and manuscript notes by Florio Banfi, John Purves, and Edward Rosen.¹³ More recently, there have been brief references to Seget in surveys of Scottish and European humanism and science during the early modern period.¹⁴ There has not yet, however, been any attempt to place his ownership of the *Commedia* manuscript in the context of these humanistic and scientific interests, whilst the most thorough and detailed investigation of Seget's whole career and contacts remains an article by an eminent Czech historian, Otakar Odložilík, writing in a journal of Polish studies over forty years ago.¹⁵

Seget's immediate family were probably from Seton near Edinburgh.¹⁶ A "Thomas Segatus" received his MA from the newly founded University of Edinburgh in August 1588, and then matriculated in 1589 at Leyden where the great humanist editor and historian Justus Lipsius was lecturing.¹⁷ Odložilík argues that the Edinburgh graduand and the student matriculating at Leyden in 1589 was an "elder" Thomas Seget, and that we may be dealing with a "father and son, or uncle and nephew, one old enough to have a degree of master of arts, the other young, not registered but known to Lipsius from contacts elsewhere than in the classroom."¹⁸ It is with this "younger" Thomas Seget that this essay is concerned.

The fullest documentation concerning the Seget who owned the *Commedia* manuscript follows that second meeting with the Dutch scholar. For, after Lipsius had moved to the Catholic culture of Louvain in the early 1590s, the young Seget went to study with him there, receiving from his master a testimonial describing him as one who "even from early youth has ... been my pupil or auditor" and acknowledging the Scot's "acute and excellent genius," "the ardor of his application to study" and "his progress in every department of elegant and useful learning."¹⁹ Since the middle of the sixteenth century, the "friendship album" (*album amicorum*) had become increasingly popular as a form of social networking; and as the collection of names in Seget's album shows, Lipsius's testimonial gained a number of learned and influential acquaintances for the young scholar in the course of his subsequent travels through Germany and on to Italy in the autumn of 1597.²⁰

Lipsius's report was addressed to the Paduan scholar and bibliophile Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535–1601), in whose household Seget seems to

have been resident from late 1597; a letter from Lipsius on 28 December the following year congratulates his pupil on his “reception into the house of the great Pinelli.”²¹ Seget remained in and around Padua for several years, and during this period he is documented as matriculating in jurisprudence at the University (June 1, 1598) and acting as *consigliere della Nazione Scozzese* (identified as such in August 1602).²² More attention will be given later to the nature and effects of Seget’s encounter with Pinelli and with Padua’s literary and learned culture, but this brief outline of his fortunate and unfortunate travels continues with an unintentionally extended stay in Venice.

Seget made several visits to Venice from Padua in 1599, and in August of that year he met Galileo at the home of the glassmaker and poet Girolamo Magagnati. On that occasion Galileo (identifying himself as professor of mathematics at Padua, where he may already have met Seget) contributed to the *album amicorum* as “a sign of esteem and friendship;” the consequences of that friendship will be considered later.²³ The purpose of Seget’s journeys to Venice and his travels elsewhere in Northern Italy is uncertain, but they seem eventually to have led him into trouble. On October 22, 1603 the Venetian Council of Ten ordered his arrest on an unknown charge and in December 1604 sentenced him to confinement “in one of our strong prisons for a period of three years,” followed by twenty years’ banishment from Venetian territories.²⁴ To make matters worse, he was then falsely accused of libel, being eventually acquitted and released only in September 1605, thanks to several intercessions by James VI and I’s new ambassador in Venice, Sir Henry Wotton, whose plea to the Doge and the Collegio Secreta on August 11, 1605 eloquently outlines Seget’s predicament:

“io raccomando esso Thomaso alla pietà di Vostra Serenità et alla sua gratia per molti rispetti, per esser egli giovane e povero, per esser litterato et nutrito tra le buone arti, per haver patite già tante miserie, et finalmente per esser suddito di Sua Maestà, et se piacesse a Vostra Serenità di farli la gratia come io la supplico, et di liberarlo, io lo manderei via senza che tornasse mai più qui, il che dirò perchè i suoi avversari vanno considerando che uscendo dale carcere potrebbe restar in casa mia, et machinar a i loro danni ...”

Rispose il Serenissimo Principe. “Sig.r Ambasciator. Per quello che tocca al scocese, diremo a V.S. che egli è stato costituito ... le affermamo bene che sarà espedito con quella buona giustizia che è debita et solita della Repubblica.”

["I commend the case of this Thomas to the mercy and grace of your Serenity on many grounds: he is young, poor, learned and bred in the arts, has suffered much, and lastly is a subject of my master. And should it please your Serenity to show him favour and grant him his liberty [as I entreat] I undertake that he shall go away, and never return; and I say this because there is no fear that, as his enemies suspect, he will, having got out of prison, stay on here at my house to plot against them ..."]

The Doge replied: "My Lord Ambassador. As to the Scot, we say to your lordship that he has appeared in court ... we assure you that he shall be treated with all proper justice as is due and customary in the Republic."]²⁵

Wotton's plea seems to have had its due effect. Having finally been acquitted on 28 September 1605, Seget did indeed then go some distance away from Venice, into Germany. Almost exactly a year later (22 September 1606), a letter to a Swiss scholar, Caspar Waser, places him in Frankfurt, where he seems to have concentrated on the safer activity of writing eulogies.²⁶ During several years there he composed two epitaphs to mark the death of Lipsius, five poems to accompany the biography of his Paduan host and mentor, Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, and a slim collection of his own occasional verse, *Thomae Segheti Meletemata Ypogeia* published in 1607.²⁷ He then travelled north to Hamburg in 1609, before heading south again for an important appointment in Bohemia.²⁸

It was Seget's friendship with Galileo, whom he had met earlier during his time with Pinelli in Padua, that led him to undertake perhaps his most historically and scientifically important mission. In April 1610 he was in Prague, where on behalf of the Tuscan ambassador, Giuliano de' Medici, he delivered a copy of Galileo's work on the mountains of the moon and the four satellites of Jupiter (*Sidereus Nuncius*) to the Imperial astronomer, Johannes Kepler.²⁹ Kepler (in a letter to Giuliano de' Medici prefacing his *Dissertatio cum Nuncio Siderio* later that year) mentioned Seget's role in delivering Galileo's work, and in the main text he also speaks of "our Thomas Seget" as "a man of manifold learning (*multiplix vir eruditione*)."³⁰ Seget remained in Prague for some time, and he is referred to as a co-worker several times in Kepler's *Narratio* on the moons of Jupiter, for example in this entry for 5 September:

Die 5. Septembris mane, vnus clarus satelles Iouis ad orientem, tertia parte instrumenti; nulli praeterea coelo clarissimo, sed iam multum albicanti, ob auroram et lumen Lunae. Vidit et THOMAS SEGETHUS Britannus, vir iam celebrium virorum libris et litteris notus.

[The 5th of September, early in the morning: a bright moon of Jupiter to the east, with the third part of the instrument; moreover the sky not at all clear, but already lightened by dawn and the brightness of the Moon. Seen also by THOMAS SEGET, a Briton and a man already noted among famous men of learning and letters.]³¹

Seget's detailed observations of the "Medicean stars" on 6 and 9 September 1610 are also recorded by Kepler; and there are further references to him in the correspondence of both Kepler and Galileo.³² Seget himself corresponded with Galileo, late in 1610, when he was still in Prague. He writes in Italian referring to the Latin poems he had attached to Kepler's work on the moons of Jupiter.

(Thomas Seget to Galileo Galilei, Prague, October 24, 1610)

Molto Ill[ust]re Sig[no]re P[ad]rone O[ptim]ss[i]mo

Ho differito apostata fin a questa settimana di rispondere alla cortesissima et a me gratissima lettera di V[ostra] S[ignoria], per mandarle l'inchiusa relazione del Sig[no]r Keplero intorno a quell c'havevamo osservato nelle Stelle Medicee. Egli fece insieme stampare i miei versi; ma è stata usata così poca diligenza nello stamparli, ch'io mi vergogno. Per questo, disegnando V[ostra] S[ignoria] di farmi l'honore (di che la ringratio di buon cuore) che escano in luce con le sue osservazioni celesti (il che a me sarà di sommo contento), io glieli mando ancora una volta, scritti di mia mano et cresciuti d'un epigramma, ch'è il settimo, et su questa copia V[ostra] S[ignoria] gli potrà fare stampare.

[Most illustrious master and best of patrons,

I have left it until this week to reply to your excellency's most generous and welcome letter, in order to send you Master Kepler's enclosed report concerning our observations of the Medicean Stars [i.e., Kepler's *Narratio*]. He had my verses printed along with them, but the printing was done with so little care that I am ashamed of them. For that reason, and since your excellency means to do me the honor (for which I am deeply grateful) of publishing them along with his astronomical observations (which is most pleasing) — I now send them to you once again, written in my own hand and with an additional (seventh) epigram; and your lordship may have them printed from this copy.]³³

Seget's seventh epigram celebrates Galileo's city, Florence, for having given the name of its rulers to "newly discovered stars." The sixth, addressed to Galileo himself, conveys his sense of sharing in the glamor of the occasion:

Keplerus, Galilaeae, tuus tua sidera vidit:
Tanto quis dubitet credere teste tibi?
Si quid in hoc, et nos Mediceia vidimus astra,
Vultava marmoreum fert ubi flava iugum.
Vicisti, Galilaeae! Fremant licet Orcus et umbrae,
Iuppiter illum, istas opprimet orta dies.

[Your Kepler, Galileo, has seen your stars; so who now can hesitate to believe you? Thus we as well have seen the Medicean moons, here where the tawny Vltava strikes the marble bridge. You have prevailed, Galileo! Let Orcus and his shades, Jupiter himself, grumble; against them all the rising day prevails.]³⁴

It was soon after sharing and celebrating this moment of scientific history that Seget set off on his travels again. His departure from Prague for Poland in the company of one David Riches (probably a native of the Baltic states) was noted in a letter from Giuliano de' Medici writing from Prague to Galileo on February 7.³⁵ His interest in new thinking seems to have extended to religious as well as scientific ideas, and led him to visit the Socinian communities of the Polish Brethren, first at Lublin and then at Raków in southern Poland. Records of the Raków community give the dates of his stay (13–19 July 1612) and describe him as

Nobilissimus vir ... Scotus, veritatis divinae, cuius gustum quondam
Lublino conceperat, amplius investigandae causa.

[a most noble man ... a Scot who was seeking to investigate more fully the bases of divine truth, of which he had received a taste at Lublin.]³⁶

Nor were his literary ventures neglected. At Cracow in the New Year of 1611 he published a couple of "Idylls" in a pamphlet dedicated to his travelling companion and guide David Riches (*Riquius*).³⁷ Later in the following year he met the poet and humanist Szymon Szymonowicz, several of whose Latin odes he had earlier managed to get published during his time at and near Frankfurt.³⁸

Meanwhile — adding a fourth string to his intellectual bow — Seget seems also to have been drawn into the world of politics. He had earlier developed close contacts with the Polish Court (having travelled

to Lithuania in the summer of 1611 and published verses on Sigismund III's victory over the Russians at Smolensk), and in 1612 he accompanied a Polish mission back to Prague.³⁹ At Prague (where he had at least one highly placed friend at the Imperial Court) he seems to have been considering some form of further diplomatic employment.⁴⁰ Early in October 1613 he communicated with James VI and I through James's ambassador, Sir Stephen Lesieur, noting that he had now spent sixteen years

cum animo optimis disciplinis excolendo, moribusque hominum et rerum publicarum institutis noscendis, exteris gentes perlustrandis

[eagerly absorbing the highest forms of learning, becoming acquainted with human behavior and the structure of states, widely surveying foreign nations]⁴¹

The letter — which mentions Seget's travels in "Belgium, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Bohemia," his recent experiences in Poland and Lithuania, along with his mission to Prague and his indebtedness to both Lesieur and Wotton — is clearly designed with employment in mind. However, its author still did not return to Britain, and within two years was back in Germany, perhaps re-establishing contacts with Kepler again at Regensburg, then entering academia once more, registering as a student at the nearby University of Altdorf (another center of radical Protestantism) in March 1614.⁴²

From this point and for the last thirteen years of his life, evidence about Seget's life and studies is much sparser. He still seems to have harbored some ambitions for employment at or for the British court. At Magdeburg early in 1622 he published a pamphlet exonerating himself "from serious calumny" — namely the charge of having celebrated the assassination of Henri IV of France back in 1610 when he was in Prague.⁴³ The immediate purpose of the pamphlet seems fairly clear: it was dedicated to James VI and I (sig. A1v), and Seget sent copies to both James and his heir, Prince Charles.⁴⁴ The copy sent to the King (now at Cambridge, St. John's College) is prefaced by a long hand-written letter (flyleaf 1r–2v, dated from Hamburg in March 1622), in which Seget draws attention to the purpose of his "vindication," looks forward to appearing before James, and offers his services to king and country:

Cis paucos menses ipse me Tibi, Deo annuente, sistam, coram obiecta (si opus erit) diluturus, et qualescumque studiorum itinerumque meorum fructus post tot annorum absentiam Tibi patriaeque dicturus.

[Within a few months, I shall myself (God willing) appear in your presence to resolve (if need be) any questions put to me and, after so many years of absence, to dedicate to you and my country any fruits of my studies and travels.]⁴⁵

The last phrase (*studiorum itinerumque meorum fructus*) replicates one Seget had used in his application to James nine years earlier and suggests he was keeping a file on the subject.⁴⁶ He also refers to further distinguished testimonials here, notably from the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf, and from the editor of Tacitus, Petronius, and Apuleius, Johann van der Wovern (1574–1612) whom Seget had encountered in Italy and later in Hamburg.⁴⁷ Later that same year (26 September 1622) — and perhaps as a result — James's Latin Secretary Thomas Reid wrote to Seget in friendly terms, exonerating him from the charge of "Spagnolisme," claiming "to be compted one of your partie," and asking to be remembered "to all good friends."⁴⁸ Seget does not seem to have exploited this opening, and within two years he had moved from war-torn Germany to Holland. Returning yet again to academia, he then appears in the records of the University of Leyden, where on 20 September 1625 he enrolled as a very mature student to read law, not much more than two years before his death in December 1627.⁴⁹

Even by the standards of the time, then, Thomas Seget seems to have been a widely wandering scholar and one with several eminent acquaintances. The motives for some of those wider wanderings, especially in the last fifteen years of his life, are not entirely clear, and it is tempting to apply to him a recent description of a near-contemporary Scots scholar and Latinist, Thomas Dempster, who died in Bologna in 1625 and who is said to have gone "from place to place all over Europe with a mobility that can only be called suspicious."⁵⁰ Seget's connections not only with the world of humanist scholarship and science but also with courtiers and diplomats (along with several of his own later publications) might well suggest that he was, or aimed to be, involved in some form of intelligence gathering.

Writings by and about Seget thus include letters preserved in the collections of distinguished correspondents such as Galileo, Kepler, Lipsius, and the British Court. Evidence of the extent of his early contacts is in the *album amicorum*, which contains the signatures and greetings of over a hundred friends of various nationalities — Scots, Italians, Germans, Netherlanders, Poles and some English — and charts his initial European itinerary over the course of three years (September 1597 to December 1600) from Louvain, via Frankfurt and Augsburg, and on to Padua and Venice.⁵¹

His ambitions as a writer and student of the classics are reflected in the collection of twenty-nine Latin poems, which were originally published at Hanau near Frankfurt in 1607 and were subsequently reprinted in an anthology ten years after Seget's death.⁵² Seget's collection contains two poems relating to his own recent experiences and concerns: the opening *Carmen* is a morale-building defiance of Fortune; and no. 24 is an appeal to God on behalf of an innocent falsely accused. It also includes dramatic snapshots of a number of Romans from the early Brutus and Marcus Attilius Regulus, through to Pompey, Cato, Marcus Brutus, Caesar; of several important opponents of Rome (Cleopatra and Arminius); and of three other heroic figures (Polyxena, Ajax, Sophonisba) at the moment of their deaths.⁵³ Of its last five items, four are addressed to eminent Venetians, amongst them a eulogy of Leonardo Mocenigo, a member of the Council of Ten who had taken an interest in his case (no. 26), and a more complex address to the Secretary of the Council (Pellegrini), who may also have been implicated in the original offence for which Seget was imprisoned (no. 25). The final poem (no. 29) appropriately keeps James VI and I in view as a potential patron by paraphrasing the prefatory sonnet to *Basilikon Doron*, and can thus be seen as a preliminary to Seget's later addresses to the King in 1613 and 1622.⁵⁴

Seget may also have hoped to increase his appeal to the British Court through a later, more extensive published work in prose. This was an account of the eleven principalities of Italy, *De principatibus Italiae: Tractatus varij*, according to the title-page he had translated from Italian; it was first published by Elzevir at Leyden in 1628. The author's aim of strengthening his now somewhat diminishing credentials as an Italy-watcher is reflected in his dedication (dated November 1627) to Sir Dudley Carleton, Charles I's ambassador to the Low Countries (who had himself earlier acted as James I's ambassador to Venice) and in his reference at the close of this to the prospect of royal patronage.⁵⁵ Although the work was a considerable success (going into a second edition in 1631), Seget was unable either to pursue this ambition any further or even to complete the whole of the project. His work extended only to the first fifty pages or so, whilst the remaining three hundred were completed by "one of the principal collaborators of the Elzevirs, Jan de Laet."⁵⁶ Dedicating the work to another British courtier (Charles Caesar), De Laet's tribute to Seget thus notes:

Honorando Domine, Libellum proxime praecedentem, Vir Doctissimus Thomas Segethus Scotus, variis accessionibus augere destinaverat, sed à morte inopina praeoccupatus perficere non potuit.

[Honoured Lord, that most learned man, Thomas Seget of Scotland intended to add a variety of new material to the short work preceding this, but was snatched away by unexpected death and was unable to complete the task.]⁵⁷

Seget's life, travels, contacts and works nonetheless cover a striking range within the world of seventeenth-century European culture. Early in the nineteenth century David Irving's *Lives of the Scottish Poets* described him as "a scholar of no common proficiency," and his humanistic and scientific milieu has been the subject of discussion by a number of European scholars over the past century.⁵⁸ None of those who have focused on the course of this career seems to have known about (or wished to mention) Seget's ownership of the Ambrosiana Dante, although the catalogue that mentions him several times had been published in 1933.⁵⁹

Rivolta's catalogue and a note in the manuscript itself provide some information about Seget's acquisition of this *Commedia*. On the verso of the Ambrosiana manuscript's flyleaf the first librarian of the collection, Antonio Olgiati, notes its provenance in some detail:

Codex hic diligentissime conscriptus et notis antiquioribus illustratus primum fuit Thoma[e] Segeti, mox Vincentii Pinelli v[iri]. cl[arissimi]. a cuius heredibus tota eiusdem biblioteca Neapoli empta fuit, iussa Ill[ustrissi]mi Federici Borromaei Ambrosiana[e] biblioth[ec]a[e] fundatoris.

Olgiatus scripsit anno 1609.

[This manuscript, carefully written and remarkable for its ancient glosses first belonged to Thomas Seget and soon after to Vincenzo Pinelli, a most distinguished man. His (Pinelli's) whole library was bought from his heirs at Naples by order of the most illustrious Federico Borromeo, founder of the Ambrosiana Library.

Written by (Antonio) Olgiati 1609.]⁶⁰

The change of ownership Olgiati mentions brings us back to Padua and the household of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, which Seget frequented from 1597 to the year of Pinelli's death in 1601.⁶¹ Pinelli had been in Padua since 1558 and his wide circle of learned acquaintances included not only Lipsius and Galileo but also, for example, Tasso, the Venetian theologian and reformer Paolo Sarpi, and the scholarly cardinals Roberto Bellarmino and Federico Borromeo (founder of the Ambrosiana).⁶² His library has been described as "the most important in sixteenth-century Italy ... for the sheer number

of volumes acquired, his passion for collecting and his fidelity to the goal of constructing a great tool for research.”⁶³ His tastes were wide-ranging in both classical and vernacular literature, and he is said to have been fluent not only in Latin and Greek but also in Hebrew, French, Provençal, and Spanish. As his friendship with Tasso suggests, Pinelli also showed considerable interest in the Italian *volgare*. This enthusiasm is reflected in his acquisition of works by Dante — not only Seget’s *Commedia* manuscript, but also one of the *Vita nuova* (now Ambrosiana MS F n. 399 R, fols. 229r–252r), along with a letter said to be from Dante to Guido da Polenta — and works on the history and features of the vernacular.⁶⁴ Part of this interest seems to have been transmitted to his Scottish guest, Seget, who along with the *Commedia* is also known to have possessed at least two other vernacular manuscripts now in the Ambrosiana. One of these is a fifteenth-century copy of Ovid’s *Heroides* “translated ... into the Italian language” (MS I 69 sup.). The other is a fifteenth-century copy on paper of Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (MS C 225 inf.); the parchment flyleaf at the front of this volume once again has Seget’s name in his hand (*Thomae Segeti Scoti*), and he has also added below: *Decameron del Boccacio* [*sic*].⁶⁵ Following Pinelli’s death in August 1601 his nephew and heir, Cosimo, seems to have intended Seget to take charge of the library, and that may have been one reason for the Scots scholar’s continuing presence in Padua in August 1602, a year before his final visit to Venice and his imprisonment there.⁶⁶

When, how, and why, then, did this Scots Latinist acquire a share of such important vernacular Italian manuscripts, and what might have interested him in the presentation of Dante in this particular form? We can date Seget’s possession of the *Commedia* to within about three years, between his arrival in Padua in late 1597 and the death of Pinelli, who by that time owned the manuscript (August 1601). Rossi rightly raises the question of how Seget, as an impoverished twenty-year old (*un ventenne squattrinato*), could have had the means to acquire this *Commedia*; and he cites some evidence that suggests the purchase could have formed part of the dealings between Pinelli and the Venetian aristocrat and book-collector Alvise Mocenigo (1532–1598), who is known to have possessed a “Dante with glosses in Latin.”⁶⁷ We know that Venice was a prime source of books for Pinelli’s library, and that “when he was not well enough to travel to Venice ... his erudite friends kept him informed of newly arrived books and bought on his behalf;” hence this could have been one reason for Seget’s journeys there during the last years of his Paduan patron’s life.⁶⁸

His temporary ownership (or borrowing?) of the *Commedia* and the other manuscripts could perhaps then have been some kind of reward for services rendered. It may also be worth noting that during Seget's imprisonment at Venice his visitors included several who were associated with the Venetian book-trade.⁶⁹

As for the attractions of this particular manuscript: the marginal diagrams and sketches may provide a clue, if we view them through the glass of Milton's "Tuscan artist," Galileo. It was probably through Pinelli that Seget had become acquainted with Galileo, whose work he would later help to disseminate and whose friendship is documented in the *album amicorum* during the time when and in the place where Seget is likely to have acquired the *Commedia* manuscript.⁷⁰ A few years before taking up his post in Padua (1592) Galileo had delivered two lectures on *il nostro Dante* to the Florentine Accademia, and here, amongst other things, he calculated the precise dimensions of the divisions of the *Inferno*, the height of some of its inhabitants such as Lucifer and the Giants, and the size of the mouth of Hell. Amongst his conclusions about the "shape, location and size of Dante's underworld" is the following exact measurement:

troveremo che il vano dell'Inferno occupa qualcosa meno di una delle 14 parti di tutto l'aggregato: dico quando bene tal vano si estendessi sino alle superficie della terra, il che non fa; anzi rimane la sboccatura coperta da una grandissima volta della terra, nel cui colmo è Ierusalem, ed è grossa quanto è l'ottava parte del semidiametro, che sono miglia 405 15/22.

[we find that the opening of Hell occupies something less than a fourteenth part of the entire aggregate, even if, I say, this opening really extends up to the earth's surface, which it does not. Indeed, the opening remains covered by a very great vault of earth, at whose peak lies Jerusalem, and which is as deep as one eighth of the radius, amounting to 405 and 15/22 miles.]⁷¹

Galileo's interest in the details of Dante's cosmography was shared by the fourteenth-century scribe of the Ambrosiana *Commedia*. It is very likely that members of Galileo's intellectual circle, such as Seget and Pinelli, would have had their attention caught by the prominent images of celestial spheres, star signs, solstices, and epicycles that illustrate the Ambrosian manuscript. Two full-page charts of the Ptolemaic universe, with details of zodiac signs and planetary orbits, are strategically placed for reference immediately before the *Purgatorio* and immediately after the *Paradiso* (fols

52r and 155v). Marginal diagrams illustrate terms such as *quadrante* and *zodiaco* (*Purg.* 4.42, 64); the *quattro cerchi* and *tre croci* of *Par.* 1.39; *dal centro al cerchio* and *giunture di quadranti in tondo* in *Par.* 14.1, 102 (fols. 58r, 105v, 124r, 125r). The orbit and epicycle of Venus are prominently displayed at the start of *Par.* 8, and the gloss on Saturn's position in the sign of Leo (*Par.* 21.13–15 directs the reader to a chart further down the margin (*vide figura[m] celi sic designata ut hic*; fols 115v and 135r). As well as illustrating various physical features and images in the *Commedia* — from the topography of Umbria (*Par.* 11.61) to the geometry of triangles (*Par.* 17.15) — the program of the Ambrosiana manuscript thus seems particularly designed to clarify the poem's references to astronomy (fols 120r and 129r). This degree of attention to the movements of Dante's *alte rote* is very likely to have been noticed by a scientifically-minded young reader who would not only study Galileo's *Siderius Nuncius* but would also work for a considerable period with another leading astronomer, Kepler, when the latter was in the process of formulating the laws of planetary motion.⁷²

Seget is not the first British bibliophile who is known to have possessed a copy of the *Commedia*. As was acknowledged at the start of this chapter, Chaucer must have had a version of some sort; English clerics and Duke Humfrey of Gloucester had access to Serravalle's Latin translation; Pennant in 1520 is the first known and named British owner of a printed text; and Hoby, like Seget, obtained his copy in Italy. We also know that soon after Seget's dealings with the manuscript another Scot, Drummond of Hawthornden, bought a copy of Lodovico Dolce's duodecimo edition of the *Commedia* (Venice: Giolito, 1555) in London in 1610, since his autographed copy is now in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. This copy has a nineteenth-century note on first recto after flyleaf:

1865 D[uke]. of Grafton's sale £1.5.0
 Belonged to Drummond of Hawthornden
 See his autograph on the title page
 This is the first edition bearing the title of Divina commedia

And the claim seems to be borne out by the autograph *Gu. Drummond* at the top of the title page and an Italianate note at the foot of the title page in the same hand: *Londra 1610*.⁷³

Ownership of a text does not, of course, mean familiarity with it. We have been reminded by the work of scholars such as John Purves, Ronald Jack, Donna Heddle, Katherine McClune, and Alessandra Petrina that Scots readers and translators of Italian at this time, such as William

Fowler (another visitor to Padua) and John Stewart of Baldynneis, were more obviously interested in authors such as Petrarch, Machiavelli, and Ariosto than they were in the *Commedia*.⁷⁴ For these Scottish writers, Dante seems to remain a mere “perhaps” among their Continental authors.⁷⁵ Yet my enquiries into the context for the Ambrosiana manuscript’s ownership have suggested that the reputation of *il nostro Dante*, as Galileo called him, was still of importance to the intellectual circles in which Thomas Seget moved.

Religious controversy may also form part of the context for this encounter with the *Commedia*. Dante was at this time and well into the seventeenth century still being conscripted for the reformation by many Protestant readers and polemicists, a number of whom, like Milton, were well-versed in Italian culture and texts.⁷⁶ As part of the Counter-Reformation response to such polemic, the *Commedia* at least was being reclaimed for Catholicism by Jesuits such as the English exile Robert Parsons and by Pinelli’s friend (and Galileo’s later judge) Roberto Bellarmino.⁷⁷ It is very likely then that Seget’s interest in Dante may also relate to his own contrasting experiences of the Protestant ethos of late sixteenth-century Scotland and the Catholic cultures of Italy and central Europe — and his participation in debate about religion in communities such as the Polish Brethren at Raków and theologians at the University of Altdorf.⁷⁸

Thomas Seget’s ownership of the Ambrosiana Dante was certainly short-lived. There is not much further evidence about his knowledge of Dante, although he did (as we have seen) own at least two other medieval vernacular Italian works, and he seems to have been familiar enough with the *Commedia* to supply a missing line in the Ambrosiana text of the *Paradiso*.⁷⁹ His attention, as I have suggested, may have been directed primarily to passages where the poem’s cosmology could be compared to Padua’s “new learning,” which would eventually yield the results that he would have a hand in disseminating. His dealings with the Ambrosiana manuscript contribute to the evidence about the presence of Dante in British book collections through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He is (for what it’s worth) the first reader in the English-speaking world whose ownership of a manuscript of the *Commedia* in Italian can be firmly documented. He is also among the earliest Scots readers known to have possessed any copy of the poem — although we should also note that the first items acquired for the infant James VI’s library from his mother’s collection in 1573 included a copy of “Dante en Italien.”⁸⁰ Seget’s encounter

with Dante, like much of his vagrant and various career, takes place at a number of cultural interfaces: between literature and science; between Reformation and Counter-Reformation; between Renaissance Italy and the new kingdom of England and Scotland; and (not least) between the *volgare* and *latinitas*.⁸¹

NOTES

¹ On Chaucer's encounter with Italians and the *Commedia*, see Schless, *Chaucer and Dante*, 3–15, and Havely, "The Italian Background," 313–31.

² Serravalle's text was circulating in England well before the middle of the fifteenth century; see Weiss, *Humanism*, 36 (n. 12), and 65 (n. 3). The manuscripts known to have still been at Wells and Oxford in the early sixteenth century have since disappeared, and the only one now in Britain (British Library, MS Egerton 2629) arrived (possibly via Spain and France) in the early nineteenth century.

³ Berlin Staatsbibliothek, MS Hamilton 207; the *nota di possesso* is on fol. 202v. See also Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, no. 19 and p. 11B; and Havely, *Dante's British Public*, 1–7.

⁴ Richardson, "Editing," 255–58.

⁵ Havely, "From 'Goodly Maker,'" esp. 79–86.

⁶ This *Commedia*, with the inscription to Morley from *Johannes Pennandus* (John Pennant) on the title-page, is now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester (Deansgate R20724).

⁷ This copy is now at St. John's College, Cambridge, Special Collections, Gg.8.38. According to his travel journal, Hoby left Siena on July 19, 1550 and was in southern Germany by 5 August; see Powell, *Travels*, 61–62. The evidence in the St. John's volume thus makes it possible to place and date its acquisition quite precisely: in Venice during the last week in July of that year.

⁸ Lamb, "Readers Against the Grain" (1825), cit. in Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 51.

⁹ The Ambrosiana catalogue dates the MS "1391–1410;" thus also Rossi, *Chiose*, IX. An earlier date (between 1355 and 1383) is proposed by Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, 180 (no. 430).

¹⁰ Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, 179.

¹¹ For the text of the librarian's note, see below, 209.

¹² Irving, *Lives*, 113–14; Favaro, "Tommaso Segeth."

¹³ Banfi, "Marino Ghettaldi;" Purves MSS, NLS Edinburgh MS 15879 (particularly useful for its bibliography up to about 1940); Purves, "Fowler;" Rosen, "Segeth."

¹⁴ See Birrell, "Some Rare Scottish Books," esp. 413–14.

¹⁵ Odložilik, "Segeth." See also McNally, *The Sixth Scottish University*, 90–94; and Gattei, "Wandering Scot," n. 21.

¹⁶ Rosen, "Seget," 93.

¹⁷ Rosen, "Seget," 94 and n. 5. See also *A Catalogue*, 9.

¹⁸ Odložilik, "Seget," 3–5. This would be consistent with the description of the Thomas Seget for whom Lipsius wrote a testimonial and whom Sir Henry Wotton would describe in 1605 as still *giovane* (see below, 202). In his letter of 1613 to James VI and I, this Seget describes himself as *e Scotiâ discessu adolescentulus* (TNA, London, SP 80/3 fol. 43r). For more on the activities of "Seget senior," see Odložilik, "Seget," 19 and n. 67.

¹⁹ Irving, *Lives*, 113; original text in Banfi, "Marino Ghetaldi," 3 n. 1.

²⁰ On the development of the *album amicorum*, see Kellas Johnstone, *The Alba Amicorum*, 1, and Schlueter, *The Album Amicorum*. For details of Seget's album (now in the Vatican Library, MS Lat. 9385), see Banfi, "Marino Ghetaldi," and Odložilik, "Seget," 5–13. An edition by Stefano Gattei has recently appeared ("The Wandering Scot").

²¹ See Banfi, "Marino Ghetaldi," 15 with n. 1 for the text. On the date of Lipsius's letter, see Rosen, "Correspondence," 63–67.

²² See Padua, Archivio antico dell'Università di Padova, MS M.U.L.J.30 (for 1598), fol. 143v (no. 17), and MS A.V.L.15 (for 1602), fol. 109v. I am grateful to Dr. Francesco Piovan of the Archivio for assistance in locating these references. On foreign students in Padua during the early modern period, see also Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors*.

²³ *Hoc ... observantie et amicitie ... signum*; Vatican, BAV, MS Lat. 9385, fol. 79r, cited in Odložilik, "Seget," 10, n. 29.

²⁴ On the possible nature of the first offence described by Wotton as an *errore giovanile* (possibly involving an unauthorized visit to a nunnery in the company of Pietro Pellegrini, Secretary of the Council of Ten), see Favaro, "Tommaso Segeth," 629–30; for the initial proceedings against Seget, see 640–42. On Pellegrini, see also below, 208.

²⁵ Venice, Collegio — *Esposizioni Principi*, filze, pezzo 15, in Favaro, "Tommaso Segeth," 649; translated in Brown, *Calendar*, 267 (with my additions and corrections).

²⁶ Odložilik, "Seget," 19 and n. 67, citing a letter in Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Msc. S 159, no. 62.

²⁷ The two epitaphs for Lipsius represent Seget's early mentor as heroic restorer of Rome's literary heritage and appeared in *Iusti Lipsi Sapientiae et Litterarum antistitis Fama Postuma* (Antwerp: Plantin-Moret, 1607), 66–67. On *Meletemata Ypogeia*, see below, 205. For this period in Seget's travels, see Odložilik, "Seget," 18–22; there are briefer references in Banfi, "Marino Ghetaldi," 4 and n. 6, and Purves, "Fowler," cxxxiv.

²⁸ Odložilik, "Seget," 23–28.

²⁹ On *Sidereus Nuncius* and its impact, see Frova and Marenzana, *Thus Spake*, 153–82.

³⁰ See von Dyck and Caspar, *Kepler*, 285, 306.

³¹ Johannes Kepler, *Narratio de Observatis a se quatuor Iouis satellitibus erronibus, quos Galilaeus Galilaeus mathematicus Florentinus iure inuentionis MEDICAEA sidera nuncupavit* (Frankfurt: Palthenius, 1611); reprinted in von Dyck and Caspar, *Kepler*, 320.

³² von Dyck and Caspar, *Kepler*, 321–22 and vol. 16, 341–42; Favaro, *Opere*, vol. 10, 428; and vol. 11, 12 and 43.

³³ Favaro, *Opere*, vol. 10, 454.

³⁴ Favaro, *Opere*, vol. 10, 455.

³⁵ Favaro, *Opere*, vol. 11, 43.

³⁶ The visit is recorded by Valentinus Smalcus, whose account appears as the *Supplementa* in Zeltner, *Historia*, 1196.

³⁷ *Thomae Segheti Idyllia duo*. The first poem describes how Seget travels from the “shores of the Elbe” (near Prague) through the “harsh Carpathians” and “perhaps” on to wilder points east, “sticking to Riches’s side” (*RIQVI haerens lateri*, sig. A2r).

³⁸ Odložilík, “Seget,” 30–31; cp. also 22 and n. 75. Seget’s role in publishing Szymonowicz’s work would be acknowledged in the preface to a later edition by Morsius, *Simonus Simonidae*, sig. (?)3r. The Morsius edition also contains two letters from Szymonowicz to Seget, dated 10 December 1612 and 13 June 1613 (49–50).

³⁹ Odložilík, “Seget,” 29–31.

⁴⁰ An influential acquaintance at Prague was Johann Matthäus Wacker von Wackenfels (ca. 1550–1619) who had been an Imperial councilor since 1597 and was a friend of Kepler; see the article by Colmar Grünhagen in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* vol. 40 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1896), 448–49. Wacker was also a dedicatee of one of the poems that Seget published at Cracow in 1611 (see n. 38 above and *Idyllia duo*, sig. A2r–A3r).

⁴¹ London, National Archive, SP 80/3, fol. 43r.

⁴² Odložilík, “Seget,” 33 and n. 108. Later that year (October 7, 1614) he was in Frankfurt again, where he signed the *album amicorum* of a fellow Scot, Thomas Cumming; see Kellas Johnstone, *Alba Amicorum*, 41.

⁴³ *Thomas Segethus a gravi calumnia vindicatus*. For Seget’s account of his situation in Prague and his protestations of loyalty, see especially sigs A2ir–v, A3ivv and A3vir.

⁴⁴ The two copies are now at Cambridge, St. John’s College, MS S.10 (sent to James I), and British Library C.190.a.30 (sent to Prince Charles); see also Birrell, “Some Rare Scottish Books,” 413–14. The BL copy does not contain “a manuscript letter” as Birrell claims (414), but there is a handwritten note to the *Ser[enissim]o Walliae Principi CAROLO, domino suo Clementiss[im]o* at the foot of the title page.

⁴⁵ Cambridge, St. John’s College, MS S.10, flyleaf Iv.

⁴⁶ The letter of October 1613, in London, National Archive SP 80/3, fol. 43v: *simulque me et studiorum itinerumque meorum qualescumque fructus M[aiesta]ti V[ost]rae consecrare*.

⁴⁷ Cambridge, St. John’s College, MS S.10, flyleaf 2r. On Wower (Wouver/Wowerius), see also Odložilík, “Seget,” 14–16 and 23.

⁴⁸ Reid's *Letterbook* in British Library, Additional MS 38597 fols 71v–72r.

⁴⁹ On the records for these final years of Seget's life, see Odložilik, "Seget," 36–38 and esp. nn. 122–23.

⁵⁰ Morét, "Early Scottish," 251. See also Irving, *Lives*, 107–8, the article on Dempster and his troubled career in *ODNB*, and McNally, *The Sixth Scottish University*, 90–91. He and Seget seem to have shared acquaintance and regard for at least one member of Pinelli's circle (the antiquarian and translator of Gualdo's *Vita* of Pinelli, Laurentius Pignorius); see Odložilik, "Seget," 11 and n. 32.

⁵¹ See Banfi, "Marino Ghetaldi," 8–10 for a list of 124 names; for more detail, Favaro, "Tommaso Segeth," 623–25 and Odložilik, "Seget," nn. 5, 10, 13, 15, 20–22, 25, 27, 30–42.

⁵² The original edition of Seget's *Meletemata Ypogeia*, published at Hanau in 1607, is a rare item. Odložilik ("Seget," 21 and n. 72) obtained a photostat copy from the Augsburg Stadtbibliothek; there is also a copy at Trinity College, Cambridge (Lower Library G.10.151[4]). The twenty-nine poems later appeared without Seget's elaborate glosses in *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum*.

⁵³ *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum*, nos 2–15, 16–17, and 20–23.

⁵⁴ See above, 206–07.

⁵⁵ *De principatibus Italiae: Tractatus Varij*, 3, 6; on Carleton, see Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors*, 139, 269.

⁵⁶ Odložilik, 38 and n. 126.

⁵⁷ Seget, *De principatibus*, 55, dated "Idibus Decemb, Anni 1627."

⁵⁸ Irving, *Lives*, 113, and above, nn. 11–13.

⁵⁹ Purves (NLS MS 15879, fol. 13) mentions the work that is crucial from this point of view: Rivolta, *Catalogo*. Since then the question of Seget's ownership of the manuscript has been addressed briefly but usefully by Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri*, LXXXVII and n. 105, and 180A) and by Rossi, *Le chiose ambrosiane*, XLVI–IX.

⁶⁰ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS C 198 inf. (previously S.P.5): note on verso of paper flyleaf. On Olgiati, see Rivolta, *Catalogo*, lxxix–lxxx, n. 3.

⁶¹ For accounts of Pinelli's household, collections and contacts, see Gualdo, *Vita*, esp. 25–26; Favaro, "Tommaso Segeth," 619–22 and the "notizie biografiche" in Rivolta, *Catalogo*, ii–xxxii.

⁶² Rivolta, *Catalogo*, xxi–xxiii and (on Tasso) xxv–xxviii.

⁶³ Nuovo, "Creation," 39. On Pinelli's library, see also Grendler, "A Greek Collection," 386–416. For the dramatic story of the collection's fortunes after Pinelli's death, see Nuovo, "Creation," 42–43 and Hobson, "Sale."

⁶⁴ Rivolta, *Catalogo*, 177 and 229.

⁶⁵ Rivolta, *Catalogo*, 26 and 213–14.

⁶⁶ Rivolta, *Catalogo*, lxxii and n. 1. On the acquisition of the library by Borromeo, see Gualdo, *Vita*, 121, Rivolta, *Catalogo*, lxxii–lxxx, and Nuovo, "Creation."

⁶⁷ Rossi, *Le chiose ambrosiane*, XLVII, citing Gabriele Braggion, "Ricerche attorno al carteggio tra Gianvincenzo Pinelli e Alvise Mocenigo" (Tesi di Laurea,

Facoltà di lettere e Filosofia, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, 1980/1), 54–57. For evidence about dealings between Mocenigo and the Roman bibliophile Fulvio Orsini that mention a Latin-glossed Dante, see Nollac, *La bibliothèque*, 109, n.1.

⁶⁸ Nuovo, “Creation,” 44. Nuovo also points out here (44 and n. 14) that Pinelli had dealings with a variety of Venetian booksellers, some of whose letters to him survive in the Ambrosiana (S 105 sup).

⁶⁹ These included (on June 4, 1605) the Sienese book-seller and publisher Giovanni Battista Ciotti, and (on December 13, 1604 and again on September 3, 1605) Giacomo Castelvetro, who was working for Ciotti in Venice from 1599 to 1611. For the documents relating to these visits, see Favaro, “Tommaso Segeth,” 642 (doc. IV), 647 (doc. X) and 650 (doc. XVI). On Ciotti, see *DNI* (s.v. “Ciotti”); Rhodes, “Neglected Aspects;” and (for Ciotti’s earlier dealings in books for another Scottish scholar, William Fowler) Petrina, *Machiavelli*, 79–80. On Castelvetro, see *DNI* (s.v. “Castelvetro, Giacomo”) and Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, 192–93.

⁷⁰ Favaro, “Tommaso Segeth,” 633–36.

⁷¹ “Due lezioni all’Accademia fiorentina circa la figura, sito e grandezza dell’Inferno di Dante,” in Chiari, *Galilei*, 51; translation in Caesar, *Dante*, 303.

⁷² On Kepler’s three laws of planetary motion (the first two of which he had already formulated by the time of Seget’s visit in 1610), see Crombie, *Augustine*, vol. 2, 187–92.

⁷³ On Drummond’s other Italian books (including Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Tasso, and Machiavelli, as well as Florio’s 1598 *World of Wordes*), see Lieve-say, *The Englishman’s Italian Books*, 40–42. See also MacDonald, *The Library*.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Purves, “Fowler;” Jack, *Italian Influence*, 54–144, and *Scottish Literature’s Debt*, 1–21; Heddle, *John Stewart of Baldynneis*; Petrina, *Machiavelli*.

⁷⁵ For tentative suggestions about Stewart’s possible knowledge of and appropriation of Dante, see McDiarmid and Stewart, “Notes,” 12–18 (esp. 17–18), and McDiarmid, “John Stewart,” 52–63 (esp. 62: “perhaps Dante”). I am grateful to Dr. Katherine McClune for references to both these articles.

⁷⁶ See Havelly, “Italian Writer,” 127–49.

⁷⁷ Havelly, “Italian Writer,” 144, 145 and n. 1.

⁷⁸ See above, 205 and 206.

⁷⁹ On fol. 115r the missing line (*Par.* 7.116) is written in what appears to be Seget’s own hand. See also Rossi *Le chiose ambrosiane*, XLVI and n. 4.

⁸⁰ See Warner, *Library*, xvi–xx and xxxi. James VI was later taught Italian in 1591–1594 by Giacomo Castelvetro; see Purves, “Fowler,” cxii–cxiv, and Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, 192–93.

⁸¹ This essay is an expanded version of material I have published in *Dante’s British Public*, 79–93. I am grateful to Alessandra Petrina for the invitation to present an initial paper on the subject at the Thirteenth International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature, at the University of Padua, July 22–26, 2011.

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The Inventions of Sir Thomas Urquhart

Jeremy J. Smith

Urquhart and Scottish Prose

Whereas the effectiveness of present-day English expository prose is generally judged in terms of pithiness and perceived grammaticality, in accordance with aesthetic principles developed from the eighteenth century onwards, early modern English prose in the nations of Britain worked according to different canons of taste. Models for such prose, adopted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were classical, and correlated with the rise of humanistic culture linked to Renaissance Latinity.

Some, practitioners of so-called Ciceronian prose, attempted to transfer the syntactic structures of golden-age Latin to the vernacular; examples of such writers are the sixteenth-century Scot George Buchanan and the seventeenth-century Englishman John Milton. Ciceronian prose placed major demands on the ingenuity of its practitioners in, for instance, the deployment of verb-final clause-structures, and it is therefore not surprising that its adoption was comparatively rare. Other writers, more commonly, adopted so-called Senecan prose. More suited for a vernacular language with many fewer inflexional endings than its classical model, Senecan prose was a looser affair, in which short and long periods were varied in syntactic structures that seem to us much closer to usages characteristic of speech rather than of formal written expression. “Plain-style” Senecan writers, often like John Knox with a preference for reformed, “godly” religion, preferred simpler diction.

Other writers, such as John Donne or Jeremy Taylor, linked Senecan syntax, in line with other contemporary forms of artistic expression (such as “metaphysical” poetry), to a delight in verbal ornament. In doing so these latter produced what is now sometimes termed “the baroque style” in prose.¹ Perhaps the most famous — or notorious — practitioner of baroque prose in the Scottish literary canon is Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty (1611–1660). Urquhart was a member of the minor Scottish gentry, who

supported the Royalist cause during the civil wars of the seventeenth century. In 1650, Charles II landed in Scotland and was crowned at Scone in 1651; Urquhart joined Charles's army, and was captured at the Battle of Worcester in September. He was then imprisoned at Windsor Castle.

The conditions pertaining to Urquhart's imprisonment seem to have been fairly relaxed, and, while at Windsor, he composed most of his major works, including most famously his translation of Rabelais. He was released in 1655 and sent into exile in the Netherlands, where he died in 1660; tradition — perhaps suspiciously close to an anecdote repeated concerning Rabelais² — has it that he died of an apoplexy brought on by laughter on hearing of the restoration of Charles II. As this anecdote suggests, Urquhart was seen by contemporaries as primarily a humorous writer, a reputation he has sustained, and it is clear from his later critical reception that an element in this reputation derives from his perceived linguistic inventiveness. This inventiveness is suggested by his presence in the top thousand of cited sources in OED.

Urquhart's verbal facility is famously demonstrated in the following notorious passage from *The Jewel*.³ The transcription below is taken from the 1652 edition, reflecting the printed source's deployment of punctuation and italics. The italics indicate that — whoever was responsible for deciding so to flag them in this way — contemporaries saw something remarkable about the words so distinguished.

Thus for a while their eloquence was mute, and all they spoke, was but with eye and hand; yet so perswasively, by vertue of the intermutual unlimitedness of their visotactil sensation, that each part and portion of the persons of either, was obvious to the sight and touch of the persons of both; the visuriency of either, by ushering the tacturiency of both, made the attrectation of both co[n]sequent to the inspection of either: here was it that Passion was active, & Action passive; they both being overcome by other, and each the conquerour. To speak of her *hirquitalliency* at the *elevation* of the *pole* of his *Microcosme*, or of his luxuriousness to erect a *gnomon* on her *horizontal* dial, will perhaps be held by some to be expressions full of obscoeness, and offensive to the purity of chaste ears: yet seeing she was to be his wife, and that she could not be such without consummation of marriage, which signifieth the same thing in effect, it may be thought, as *definitiones logicae verificantur in rebus*, if the exerceed act be lawful, that the diction which suppones it, can be of no great transgression, unless you would call it a *solacisme*, or that vice in grammar which imports the copulating of the masculine with the feminine gender.⁴ (125–26)

From such passages it is fairly clear what this remarkable characteristic was. The passage just cited contains several words which seem — from citations in the online *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (DSL) — to be unique to Urquhart:

hirquitallieny “loudly-expressed excitement” (OED only, offering an etymology from Latin *hirquitallire* “(of infants) to acquire a strong voice,” from *hircus* “he-goat” + *-ency*).

tacturiency “desire of touching” (OED and DSL; OED relates to a reconstructed Latin form **tactūrīre*, a desiderative form derived from the past participle stem, i.e., *tact-*, of *tangere* “touch” + *-ency*)

visotactil “involving both sight and touch” (not in OED; DSL derives from Latin *visus* “sight” and *tactus* “touch”)

visuriency “desire of seeing” (OED and DSL, both giving an etymology from a reconstructed desiderative Latin verb **visūrīre*, derived itself from *vīsere*, a frequentative of *vidēre* “to see”).

Such forms represent one of the most notable, and most discussed, features of Urquhart’s baroque style: his substantial and learned deployment of polysyllabic Latin- and Greek-derived vocabulary, adopted in this case for (it seems hardly necessary to say) humorous purposes. Indeed, the use of italics in the 1652 edition seems to flag that contemporaries themselves perceived words such as *hirquitallieny* as in some sense marked, masking potentially pornographic description behind the veil of high style. Quite simply, such words were intended to raise a laugh amongst those readers who had a facility for Latin.

Unlike the Victorians, of course, modern critics are aware that “high seriousness” — perceived by Matthew Arnold as lacking in Chaucer, whom Arnold thus classified as “not of the first rank” — is not isomorphous with solemnity. It should therefore be possible for us to re-evaluate Urquhart as more than an ingenious purveyor of louche double-entendres. It is an argument of this essay that — while certainly humorous and inventive (in a modern sense) — Urquhart’s baroque vocabulary relates to similar (if perhaps less egregious) stylistic behaviors found in many of his contemporaries, not always deployed in a humorous fashion. I therefore argue that Urquhart’s readers would have seen his usage as not detached from contemporary discourses but deeply, and knowledgeably, engaged

with them. Such readers would have appreciated the mixture of humor and seriousness that Urquhart deployed even in the title-page of *The Jewel*, perhaps his most remarkable work, with its sophisticated, jesting title linking gold with dung, its complex ironies, and its hostility to perceived extreme religious cant:

Εκκυβαλαυρον: | OR, | The Discovery of | A most exquisite JEWEL, |
more precious then Diamonds | inched in Gold, the like whereof |
was never seen in any age; found in the | kennel of *Worcester*-streets,
the day | after the Fight, and six before the Au- | tumnal Æquinox,
anno 1651. | Serving in this place, | To frontal a VINDICATION |
of the honour of *SCOTLAND*, | from that Infamy, whereinto the
Rigid | *Presbyterian party* of that Nation, | out of their Covetousness
and | ambition, most dissembled- | ly hath involved it.⁵

Urquhart in Lexicography

As might be expected from his long-standing reputation as a linguistic innovator, Urquhart occupies a prominent position as a source of citations in the two principal British historical dictionaries: the OED (now online), and the online DSL (the latter combining the resources of the *Scottish National Dictionary* = SND and the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* = DOST). According to OED, of the 1441 citations from Urquhart recorded, in 363 cases his writings provide the first evidence for a word and in 601 cases the first evidence of a particular meaning.

However, these statistics also indicate that, in 840 cases, Urquhart is not the first authority cited in OED for a word's usage in form and/or meaning, and the passage just cited above bears this out. It will be noted from the 1652 edition's deployment of italics, reproduced in the quotation given, that *hirquitalliency* is not the only word to be so flagged; other words so distinguished are *gnomon*, *solacisme*, *microcosm*, *horizontal*, *elevation*, *pole*. But, although *hirquitalliency* is clearly an oddity, the others are more commonplace. The latter four at least are still part of well-established present-day English usage, as witnessed by their appearance in modern desk-dictionaries based on up-to-date corpora, such as *Collins Cobuild* (1987), designed explicitly for language-learners; and all six words, according to the OED, had a fairly wide currency in seventeenth-century texts. Accordingly to the recently-developed EEBO-TCP resource, which offers a large corpus of searchable printed texts from the

period, the form *gnomon* occurs 774 times in 215 distinct records, and it is clear from the OED citations from the period, now supplemented by EEBO-TCP, that the lexemes *gnomon*, *microcosm*, *horizontal*, *elevation* and *pole* cluster semantically as terms in astronomy; OED, for instance, gives a 1650 citation: “The distance between places may be known by the elevation of the pole” (James Howell, *Instructions for Forren Travell*). The deployment of italics by Urquhart’s printer, even if non-authorial, would seem to represent a contemporary reader’s acknowledgement of the metaphorical frame in question.

An analysis of other lexemes where either DSL or OED, supplemented by EEBO-TCP, cite solely Urquhart is illuminating. Many of the forms for which his is the first or only attestation are simply transferences from Rabelais, for instance, such as

sphagitid “one of the arteries in the neck”: DSL and OED cite only Urquhart, relating to Rabelais’s *sphagitide*, as does EEBO-TCP. The form is clearly simply transferred from the original.

spiroil “kind of cannon” (a direct transfer of Rabelais’s *spirole*): DSL and OED cite only Urquhart. The form is not recorded in EEBO-TCP.

It is moreover notable that many other citations given in OED are recorded in another dictionary that was clearly by Urquhart’s side: Randle Cotgrave’s *A Dictionarie of the French and English tongues* (1611). Cotgrave is known to have been a resource from which Urquhart repeatedly drew, especially when translating Rabelais,⁶ and another major source for the OED with 5870 citations in 5127 entries. The *Dictionarie*, dedicated to Cotgrave’s employer Lord Burghley, went through no fewer than five editions during the seventeenth century (1611, 1632, 1650, 1670, and 1673), attesting to its popularity as a resource for contemporaries; it was, according to Cotgrave’s entry in ODNB, “the most extensive French word-list of its time ... [and] the seventh most quoted source for earliest citations in the second edition of OED (1989).” It is the obvious work for a translator of Rabelais to use, since over 750 citations from that writer appear in Cotgrave. However, Urquhart also seems to have ransacked Cotgrave for other forms as well, and, even when DSL and/or OED do not refer to Cotgrave, the form in question is often to be found there, for example:

abastardized “degenerate”: OED cites only Urquhart, although the verb from which the adjective is derived is found in other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century citations, and there are a few occurrences of the form in EEBO-TCP, including the citation from Urquhart. The form is not recorded in DSL. However, the form does occur in Cotgrave’s *Dictionarie*, although not cited from there in OED.

cestrin “yellow stone,” used for beads; OED cites only Urquhart, although referring to Cotgrave in the etymology, and EEBO-TCP gives only these references. The form does not occur in DSL.

plasmature “form, mold”: DSL only cites Urquhart, but OED gives an earlier seventeenth-century citation, to a scientific work on surveying (William Folkingham’s *Feudigraphia*, 1610). Cotgrave, not acknowledged by OED, has *plasmateur* “potter.” OED and DSL cite not only Urquhart (“The sovereign plasmator God Almighty”) but also Gavin Douglas and Sir David Lyndsay for the use of *plasmatur* (from post-classical Latin *plasmator*) for “a creator, a shaper; spec. God;” OED’s most recent citation is from Ezra Pound’s *Quia Pauper Amavi* (1919).

provection “advancement”: DSL only gives a citation from Urquhart, as does EEBO-TCP. OED gives Urquhart as the first citation, with another near-contemporary reference from 1660 to a treatise on episcopacy; the word appears again with philological senses in the nineteenth century, and has been retained by modern linguists to refer to consonantal devoicing, especially in Celtic languages. The form, however, appears in Cotgrave (not acknowledged by OED), glossed “well growne in age.”

sluggingly “slothfully”: DSL and OED cite only Urquhart for the adverb, but OED gives citations (not including Urquhart) from ca. 1430 for *slugging* “slothful.” One of these citations is from Cotgrave: “*Dormir*, The slugging or sleepe Cat at length awakes.”

turlupin (translating Rabelais’s *tirelupin*, cf. medieval Latin *turlupinus*) “member of a heretical sect, later, an upstart, a person of no value”: DSL cites only Urquhart, and flags a discussion in Cotgrave to the effect that it refers to people who eat lupin-flowers, presumably

a false etymology; OED cites Urquhart but also others, cited by EEBO-TCP, who use the form with a more general meaning.

unstone “castrate”: DSL cites only Urquhart. OED cites Urquhart but also Cotgrave: “*Escouiller*, to geld, lib, vnstone, cut away the stones of.”

unstopple “remove stopper or plug from”: DSL cites only Urquhart; OED again cites Urquhart, but also Cotgrave: “*Destoupé*, vnstopped, vnstopelled.”

It seems likely, moreover, that Urquhart derived further forms from Cotgrave even though they are recorded in OED from other witnesses, e.g. *coursy*, *depucelate*, *duggishly*, *fambling*, *huff-snuff*, *madpash*, *resuscitative*, *tamin*, *victorial*. Of these forms, DSL records only *tamin* and *victorial* (these last two are more commonly used, in addition to Urquhart).

Two other dictionaries, Gaule’s *Pousmantia* (1652)⁷ and Blount’s *Glossographia* (1656), the former a specialist work on magic and astrology, are also likely major subsidiary sources for Urquhart. As an illustration, we might note for instance the entry for the form *sternomancy* “divination by the breast-bone”: DSL cites only Urquhart, while OED, giving Rabelais’s *sternomantie* as the direct source, cites Urquhart and also Gaule. Both Urquhart and Gaule may have themselves independently plundered Cotgrave, as flagged by the form *circumbilivagination* “circumambulation,” which is cited from Cotgrave, Urquhart and Blount; Cotgrave, although not cited by OED, glosses the form “divination by a mans breast.” Seventeenth-century lexicographers were of course enthusiastic plagiarizers.⁸ Several other forms in *-mancy* indeed clearly derive from Urquhart’s engagement with contemporary lexicographers. Thus the following “methods of divination” in *-mancy* are also cited from Urquhart in OED, mostly also with citations from Blount and/or Gaule: *alphitomancy* “by means of meal, flour, cakes or bread” (also Gaule), *anthropomancy* “human entrails” (also Gaule), *axinomancy* “an axe-head” (Holland’s translation of Pliny, 1601),⁹ *captotromancy* “a mirror” (Purchas’s *Pilgrimage*, 1613), *ceromancy* “wax figures” (also Blount, Gaule), *gastromancy* “sound of belly” (also Blount), *ichthyomancy* “heads/entrails of fish” (also Blount), *metopomancy* “face/forehead” (also Blount), *onomatomancy* “names” (also Gaule), *onymancy* “fingernails” (Purchas’s *Pilgrimage*, 1613, and Saunders’s *Physiognomie, and Chiromancie, Metoposcopia*, 1653; cited as *onychomancy* by Gaule), *sciomancy* “spirits of the dead/shadows” (also Blount), *tephro-*

mancy “ashes blown or thrown in the air” (also Blount, Gaule), *tyromancy* “cheese” (also Blount, Gaule). Further examples of Urquhart’s usage likely to derive from his lexicographical researches include:

compartition “laying out of plan” (architecture): cited in OED (and EEBO-TCP) from several sources, including Blount (1656). Not cited in DSL.

genethliac, i.e., adjective from noun *genethliac* “horoscope” (Gaule). Not cited in DSL.

oneiropolist “interpreter of dreams” (Gaule). The form is not cited in DSL.

opisthograph “text written on both sides of a slab/a piece of parchment”: various possible sources, but it seems likely that Urquhart derived the form from Blount’s adjectival form *opisthographical*. DSL does not cite the form.

petarade “an act of breaking wind”: beside Urquhart, OED cites only Phillips’s *New World of Words* (1658), but the form is also found in Cotgrave, deriving from Rabelais’s *petarrade*. The form is not cited in DSL.

predial “rural,” cf. Blount “*Predial Tythes*, are those we call great Tythes, as of Corn and Hay.” Not cited in DSL.

sacriful(e) “a priest.” The form does not seem to appear in Blount, Cotgrave, or Gaule; OED cites (in addition to Urquhart) only Robert Cawdrey’s *Table Alphabeticall* (1604). Not cited in DSL, not in EEBO-TCP.

salsitude “brackishness.” OED cites Henry Cockeram’s *English Dictionarie* (1623), but again the form appears in Cotgrave. Not cited in DSL, and with the exception of the example in Cockeram all citations in EEBO-TCP post-date Urquhart’s writings.

squinant “schoenanth, camel’s-hay (plant)”: DSL cites only Urquhart. OED offers citations from Urquhart, from three herbals (Turner’s *Names of Herbes*, 1548, and a later version of 1568, and Gerard’s

Herball, 1597), and two dictionaries already mentioned (Blount's *Glossographia*, 1656, and Phillips's *New World of Words*, 1706 — the latter including large-scale plagiarism from Blount). EEBO-TCP in addition offers citations predating Urquhart from a series of surgical works (including John Banister's *A needful, new, and necessarie treatise of chyrurgie*, 1575, Philip Barrough's *The method of phisicke*, 1563, and James Hart's *Klinike*, 1633), from *Batman vppon Bartholome* (the 1582 translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum*), and from Peter Levins's English-Latin dictionary, *Manipulus vocabulorum* (1570).

squirt “void excrement forcefully”: DSL cites only Urquhart. OED cites Urquhart and Cotgrave (“*Foirer*, to squirt, to shite thinne as in a laske” — the form *shite* had yet to acquire fully its modern taboo-status), and in addition John Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement* (1530), a textbook on French, and John Florio's *Worlde of Wordes* (1598), the first Italian-English dictionary.

tenebrio “night-prowler,” “night-spirit” (Blount). DSL does not cite the form.

vaticinator “prognosticator” (Gaule). Not cited in DSL.

vellication “twitching.” OED cites Cockeram, but the form also occurs in Cotgrave (not cited by OED). The form is recorded in DSL, but no citation from Urquhart is given.

Moreover, several forms where Urquhart is cited in OED or DSL as the sole witness are clearly related to forms used by other writers. Some of the items listed as unique by OED/DSL are derived from rather commoner forms recorded elsewhere, e.g., *miniardly* (cf. *miniard*), *monasterially* (cf. *monasterial*), *sanctrel* (cf. *sanct* “saint”), *spink* (cf. *goldspink*), *swinking* (cf. *swink*), *thumpatory* (cf. *thump*), *tribunian* (cf. *tribune*), *unmaiding* (cf. *unmaiden*), *wattilled* (cf. *wattle*), *pelf-licker* (cf. *pelf*).

Such examples flag that Urquhart was perhaps not as exceptional among his contemporaries as he has sometimes seemed. Indeed, it is clear that Urquhart, although remarkably ready to develop “special” forms in a way appropriate for a “baroque” writer, and thus in modern terms inventive, is also inventive in a rather older fashion, i.e., as a “finder,” in the same

way as Geoffrey Chaucer was described by his near-contemporary Thomas Hoccleve as “the firste fyndere of our faire langage” (ca. 1412).¹⁰

According to the classical and medieval rhetoricians *inventio* had a distinct meaning, i.e., discovering (“finding”) something. Reflecting widespread views on the subject, the nineteen-year-old Cicero composed *De inventione*, defining the notion as “the discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments that render one’s thoughts plausible;”¹¹ and this discovery of arguments was extended to the broader notion of “materials.” *Inventio* in its classical and medieval sense, then, is essentially about discovery; once the matter was determined through *inventio*, “poetic art” — in the words of the medieval rhetorician Geoffrey de Vinsauf, Chaucer’s “Gaufred, deere maister soverayn” — “came forward to clothe the matter with words,” in an appropriate manner.¹² It seems from the evidence supplied by OED and DSL that Urquhart was “inventive” in this latter, older sense as well as in the more modern one.

Urquhart and Intertextuality

Two interesting examples of forms where Urquhart is apparently the sole witness, according to OED, but where a closely-related form is attested elsewhere, are the following:

affabulatory “of the nature of a moral or practical lesson”: OED cites only Urquhart, as does EEBO-TCP. The word does not appear in DSL or Cotgrave. However, the related verb *affabulate* occurs according to OED “only in the works of Peter Heylyn, and in references to these” (the form is not recorded in EEBO-TCP). Heylyn (1599–1662) was a prominent Laudian cleric who had a strong reputation as a Royalist controversialist; he was the first editor of the proto-newspaper *Mercurius Aulicus*, had commemorated the execution of Archbishop Laud in elegiac verse, and — during the Commonwealth period and deprived of his livings — retired to internal exile. Urquhart may have come across the word in Heylyn’s *Historie of ... St George* (1633) or more probably in his *Cosmographie* (1652), by far his most famous work.

anthypophoretic “of the nature of an anthypophora” (rhetorical term): Urquhart is the only source in OED; the form does not appear in DSL or in Cotgrave. However, the related noun *anthypophora* “a

figure in which an objection is refuted by a contrary inference or allegation" (OED) is recorded in rhetorical manuals and encyclopedias from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, e.g., George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589) or John Smith's *The mysterie of rhetorique unvail'd* (1656). Puttenham's work never achieved a second edition, and by the time of publication there is some evidence that his writings would already have been considered outdated, since most of the examples cited dated from early to mid-sixteenth century verse.¹³ If one of these witnesses is to be deemed the source for Urquhart, Smith seems the more likely; Smith's work was fairly widespread in use as an introductory handbook drawing upon the Authorized Version of the Bible for its examples. *The mysterie* offers a definition of the word: "Anthypophora signifies a contrary illation or inference, and is when an objection is refuted or disproved by the opposition of a contrary sentence: as *Matt. xxi. 23–25.*"

These forms suggest that, in his deployment of obscure forms, Urquhart was in some kind of dialogue with his contemporaries, and indeed close analysis of the forms where Urquhart is acknowledged by OED not to be the sole witness enables us to "place" Urquhart in relation to other authors there cited. Of course, OED or DSL simply draw upon a particular set of texts, and it is perfectly possible that the terms used had currency elsewhere in texts not drawn upon by OED or DSL, or indeed included in EEBO-TCP; but analysis of the other writers cited by these authorities is at least suggestive of the intellectual milieu within which Urquhart wrote.

Some words for which Urquhart is cited by OED are fairly common even now: *ABC*, *boatwright*, *cannon-shot*, etc. But others, many derived ultimately from Latin, are generally no longer in common use or have a distinct prototypical meaning, for example

accresce "increase by accretion," *angiport* "narrow passage," *antiperistatic* "contrary to its surroundings," *bardash* "catamite," *commensal* "eating at/pertaining to same table," *companionry* "companionship," *contrist* "make sorrowful," *debording* "excess," *deific* "making divine," *dialectician* "one skilled in dialectic," *dictamen* "pronouncement," *discamp* "depart from place of encampment," *elabour* "elaborate" (verb), *enthusiasm* "supernatural inspiration," *erogation* "expenditure," *exolete* "obsolete," *exponible* "proposition requiring explanation," *fretish* "adorn," *gemel* "twin," *gigantal* "gigantic," *gnathonic* "parasitical," *impeditive* "obstructive," *indigenary* "native," *knurry*

“knotty,” *maleficiated* “bewitched,” *mediastine* “partition in thorax,” *mesnagery* “management,” *metoposcopy* “art of judging character from person’s forehead/face,” *mignardise* “affectation,” *mulieb-
rity* “womanliness,” *multure* “toll for grain,” *nitrosity* “bitterness,” *omoplate* “shoulder blade,” *patrocinate* “champion” (verb), *peri-
peteia* “sudden reversal in classical tragedy,” *periscian* “inhabitant
of either polar region,” *plutocracy* “government by wealthy,” *pre-
sidiary* “guard” (noun), *proficiat* “expression of welcome,” *prorogate*
“extend in duration,” *prosopopey* “rhetorical device whereby dead/
absent/imaginary person speaks,” *proxenete* “matchmaker,” *recre-
ate* “gratify,” *refection* “food or drink,” *reprehensory* “reprehensive,”
resudation “process of sweating/exuding moisture,” *sempiternally*
“eternally,” *subservience* “instance of being subservient,” *supercilios-
ity* “superciliousness,” *suscitate* “stir up (feeling etc.),” *symbolization*
“agreement or participation in qualities (science),” *symmyst* “col-
league in sacred office,” *theftuously* “as by theft, stealthily,” *transfrete*
“cross strait/sea.”

Some of these forms fall into distinct semantic fields. Some words are medical/anatomical: *mediastine*, *nitrosity*, *omoplate*. As befits Urquhart’s background as a Scottish landowner with an interest in litigation,¹⁴ other words are derived from Scots law: *accresce*, *debording*, *exolete*, *impedi-
tive*, *prerogate*, *suscitate* and *theftuously*. The form *debording* exemplifies
such usages; the term is quite commonly recorded in DSL in accusations
found in Scots legal texts/Kirk records, e.g., in the Records of the Kirk
Session, Presbytery, and Synod of Aberdeen for 1651, “The insolencies &
gross deboardingis of souldiers.” The form does seem to be Scots in origin;
EEBO-TCP gives citations from Scottish writers such as William Lithgow,
and OED cites David Person’s *Varieties* (1635). Lithgow (“Lugless Will,”
so-called because his ears were alleged to have been mutilated by the venge-
ful family of a woman with whom he had an affair) was a famous Scottish
traveler whose travel-writing attracted much attention in the first half of
the seventeenth century. Person has no ODNB entry, but is recorded in
his book as “of Loughlands in Scotland, Gentleman.” However, OED also
gives seventeenth-century English citations from Robert Burton (*exolete*)
and John Donne (*suscitate*), and both words are also fairly widely cited
in EEBO-TCP. Some words are more generally and largely (though not
exclusively) characteristic of Scots, as flagged in both DSL and OED, e.g.,
companionry, *gemel*, *knurry* (cf. Scots *knorry*, recorded in DSL from Gavin

Douglas), *multure*, *refection*. Other words are terms in classical rhetoric, albeit sometimes partially Englished: *peripeteia*, *prosopopey*. Some words in the list above are semi-translated from French, e.g., *contrist* (a form also witnessed by the 1625 English version of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, itself translated from Antoine de Maçon's French reworking of the Italian original), *deific*, *indigenary* (cf. Rabelais's *indigène*), *proxenete*, *transfrete* (cf. Rabelais's *nous tranfretons*).¹⁵

However, examination of the earlier seventeenth-century uses of some of the terms cited above reveals some interesting patterns suggestive of more complex intertextual relationships. *Impeditive*, for instance, is not only a legal term but is also found in the writings of Bishop Joseph Hall, and Hall is also a witness for other forms in the list above: *commensal*, *presidiary*; in addition, Hall uses the alternative past participle *maleficiate* (cf. Urquhart's *maleficated*). Joseph Hall (1574–1656) was not only bishop of Norwich but also a friend of John Donne and (late in his life) patient of Sir Thomas Browne; a prolific poet much admired by (*inter alia*) Alexander Pope, Hall was also politically active, involved in a vigorous pamphlet-controversy with John Milton. At the end of his life he was exiled by the victorious Parliamentary party to the parish of Higham, Suffolk, where he died.

The form *maleficiate* is also found in the writings of Richard Saunders (1613–75): a very different figure. Saunders is described by ODNB as a “medical practitioner and astrologer,” who started publishing his almanac *Apollo Anglicanus* in 1654, with such success that the work was republished every year until he died. But in the previous year he had published *Physiognomie, and Chiromancie, Metoposcopia*, a major work with a considerable vogue in intellectual and wealthy circles, and the form *metoposcopy* in Urquhart probably derives from his encounter with Saunders's work.

And indeed professional figures are frequent witnesses for the remaining words on the list given above, as follows:

angiport “narrow passage.” The form is recorded in OED, but not in DSL. The witness cited immediately before Urquhart is Nathaniel Ward (1578–1652), a puritan divine from Essex who opposed Archbishop Laud and in 1634 emigrated to Massachusetts, where he assisted in the drafting of the colony's code of laws. In 1646, Ward returned to England, where he published *The Simple Cobler of Aggawam* (1647), an attack on religious toleration and women's fashions; he then took the Presbyterian side against the “independ-

ents” of the New Model Army, deploring the execution of Charles I. He himself died in 1652. The form *angiport* appears in *The Simple Cobler*.

antiperistatic “contrary to its surroundings.” Again, the form is not recorded in DSL, nor in EEBO-TCP. The witness for this word nearest in date preceding Urquhart, according to OED, is Sir William Cornwallis (ca. 1579–1614), a “paradoxical essayist” (ODNB) in the manner of his friend and contemporary John Donne. The word *antiperistatic* occurs in the second volume of Cornwallis’s *Essayes*, published in 1601.

bardash, in the form *Bardachio* “catamite.” The form does not occur in DSL. OED gives two citations preceding Urquhart’s in date, the first (as *bardasses*) from an Italian grammar and dictionary of 1548 but another (*bardassaes*) from 1600, in Matthew Sutcliffe’s *A brief replie to a certaine ... libel lately published by a seditious Jesuite* (1600). Sutcliffe, who died in 1629, was a leading Anglican writer whose writings displayed “a neurotic fear of the power of Rome” (ODNB) and, later, hostility to the Arminians associated with Archbishop Laud, who, in his view, sought “to bringe in poperie.” EEBO-TCP’s citations from before Urquhart are only Florio’s dictionary (1598), and “H. C. Gent.”’s translation of *The scarlet gown: or the history of the present cardinals of Rome* (1653), a polemical work.

dialectic “one skilled in dialectic” is cited in DSL and OED, with quotations preceding Urquhart’s from John Knox (ca. 1514–1572), the great Scottish religious reformer, and also from Knox’s secretary Richard Bannatyne (d.1605); the citations from Knox come from his *Buke of Discipline* (1560) and his *History of the Reformation in Scotland* (ca. 1572), both high-profile works.¹⁶ OED (but not DSL) cites Urquhart.

dictamen “pronouncement” is not given in DSL. OED citations are interesting, with one from Humphrey Leech and Robert Parsons’s *Dutifull and respective considerations vpon foure seuerall heads of prooffe and triall in matters of religion* (1609); Parsons (1546–1610) was a leading Jesuit exile from England, and the *Dutifull and respective considerations* were published in France at the Jesuit College at St-Omer. The second citation preceding that from Urquhart is

from William Chillingworth's *The Religion of Protestants* (1638). Chillingworth (1602–1644) had briefly himself converted to Roman Catholicism before returning to Anglicanism, though of a distinctly (and for his time rather unusually) tolerant kind. *The Religion of Protestants*, not surprisingly, was condemned by both Calvinists and Roman Catholics. A convinced royalist, Chillingworth died when under guard by parliamentary forces.

discamp “depart from place of encampment.” The form is not cited in DSL. The citation nearest in date preceding Urquhart's in OED is from Philemon Holland's well-known 1606 translation of Suetonius, *The historie of the twelve Caesars*.

elabour “elaborate” (verb). The form does not appear in DSL, but the two citations preceding Urquhart's are of some interest. OED's earlier citations are from Bartholomew Traheron's translation of a surgical work by Joannes de Vigo, the great Spanish pioneer-surgeon (1543) and William Birnie's *The blame of kirk-buriall* (1606). Traheron (ca. 1510–?58) was a Protestant author and reformer who fled into exile on the accession of Mary Tudor, where he disputed with John Knox, referring to the latter's *Admonition to England* as an “insane pamphlet” (ODNB). It might be noted that the anatomical term *mediastine* “partition in thorax,” found in Urquhart, is also cited in OED from Traheron's translation of de Vigo. Birnie (1563–1619) was a Church of Scotland minister who — against the commonly preferred position — favored James VI and I's royal policy of imposing bishops on the kirk.

enthusiasm “supernatural inspiration.” The form is not in DSL. Citations in OED predating Urquhart include Holland's translation of Plutarch's *Morals* (1603), John Pyper's translation of d'Urfé's *History of Astrea* (1620), but perhaps most significantly Richard Baxter's *Plain Scripture proof of infants Church-membership and baptism* (1651). Baxter (1615–1691) was one of the most prominent Presbyterian ministers and controversialists of his day.

erogation “expenditure.” The word does not appear in DSL; the nearest preceding citation in OED to that from Urquhart is from the Protestant martyrologist John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (1563). There are, however, several citations in EEBO-TCP, including John

Bastwick's *A learned, useful and seasonable discoverie concerning the Church of England, and the Chvrch of Rome addressed by way of letter to M. St. John, a Romish priest* (1643), and Simon Birckbek's *The Protestants evidence* (1635). Both Bastwick (?1595–1654) and Birckbek (1583/4–1656) were well-known religious controversialists, the former being particularly prominent as a member of the Presbyterian party in the 1640s.

exponible “proposition requiring explanation”: a term from philosophical logic. The form does not appear in DSL. The term is first recorded in OED — in the citation immediately preceding that from Urquhart — from James Sanford's *Of the vanitie and vncertaintie of artes and sciences* (1569), a translation of the German occultist Henricus Cornelius Agrippa's *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* (1526). The form does not appear in EEBO-TCP before 1697.

fretish “adorn”: a term from architecture, not cited in DSL. OED cites from Nathaniel Baxter's *Sir Philip Sydney's Ourania* (1606). Nathaniel Baxter (d.1611) was a radical Protestant preacher who developed an unfortunate reputation for financial irregularity and mismanagement; the long poem in which this form appears was, it seems, written towards the end of his life in order to secure patronage from the Sidney family. There is no indication that he was successful.

gigantal “gigantic.” The form does not appear in DSL, and the only two OED citations are from Urquhart and from William Drummond of Hawthornden's *Urania* (ca. 1614);¹⁷ Drummond (1585–1649), although a major Scottish poet, wrote and published in English. He later developed a second career as a controversialist pamphleteer on the royalist side, showing a particular distaste for Presbyterianism. He died in the same year as Charles I was executed.

gnathonic “parasitical.” Although the form does not appear in DSL, the citation in OED immediately preceding that from Urquhart is from a work published by another Scot: George Gillespie's uncompromisingly-titled *A dispute against the English-popish ceremonies*, first published in Leiden in 1637. Gillespie (1613–1648) was a radical minister in the Church of Scotland, fiercely opposed to the imposition of bishops. He was a leading member of the Kirk, end-

ing his career not only as minister of St. Giles in Edinburgh, perhaps the church's most high-profile charge, but also moderator of the General Assembly in 1648.

mesnagery "management." The word is not cited in DSL, and the only two citations in OED are from Urquhart and from the roughly contemporary letters of John Bramhall (d. 1663), Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh. Bramhall was almost certainly personally known to Urquhart. Like Urquhart, he spent time in Charles II's exiled court in the Netherlands — though unlike Urquhart he survived the Restoration, dying in 1663.

mignardise "affectation" does not appear in DSL, but citations in OED earlier than Urquhart are from the playwright Ben Jonson and the lexicographer John Florio (1553–1625). Florio's translation of Montaigne's essays (1603), in which the form *mignardise* occurs, also saw him introduce into English the words *conscientious* and *endear*, for which he is the earliest recorded witness in OED.

muliebrity "womanliness": not cited in DSL, and the only earlier citation than Urquhart is from an anonymous play from 1592, *The Tragedye of Solyman and Perseda*. EEBO-TCP has a citation from an anatomical work of 1615, Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia a description of the body of man*.

patrocinate "champion" (verb). The form does not appear in DSL, but the use nearest in date preceding Urquhart's is a high-profile one: Jeremy Taylor's *Theologia eklektike* (1647). Taylor (d.1667), one of the leading Anglican churchmen and theologians of his generation, rivaled John Donne as a writer of English baroque prose.

periscian "inhabitant of either polar region" (*The Jewel* has *Perisian*). The form is not recorded in DSL, and EEBO-TCP gives only citations from Urquhart; the only citation predating Urquhart in OED is from Robert Ashley's translation of Louis le Roy, *Of the interchangeable course, or variety of things in the whole world* (1594). Ashley (1565–1641) was a translator and bachelor book collector whose library, bequeathed to the Middle Temple in London where he had lived most of his life, covered a range of topics from law through mathematics and medicine to politics and theology.

plutocracy “government by wealthy.” The form is not recorded in DSL, and EEBO-TCP cites only Urquhart. Only one citation precedes Urquhart, from Wye Saltonstall’s *Picturae loquentes* (1631). Saltonstall (d. after 1640) was a translator of Ovid and Eusebius (*inter alia*), and a minor poet; *Picturae loquentes*, a collection of satirical portraits, is probably his best-known work. His brother Charles was more prominent in public life, being a sea-captain in Parliamentary service.

proficiat “expression of welcome.” The form is not recorded in DSL. From three citations, Urquhart is cited twice; the earliest citation recorded in OED is from William Fulwood’s *The enimie of idleness* (1568). Fulwood (d. 1593) composed *The enimie* as a writer’s manual, “Teaching the maner and stile how to endite, compose, and write all sorts of Epistles and Letters;” his work therefore prefigured the kind of letter-writing manuals that were so commonly printed for the socially-aspirant from the late sixteenth century onwards, starting with Angel Day’s *The English Secretorie* (1586).

recreate “gratify.” The only citation in OED preceding that from Urquhart is from Sir Thomas Browne’s *Religio Medici* (1643); the form is also cited from several writers in DSL, ranging from the Older Scots poets Robert Henryson and Gavin Douglas to various government documents. Browne (1605–1682) — royalist, doctor, philosopher, and composer of baroque prose — is an excellent comparator for Urquhart, in that he too deployed numerous neologisms. It is not surprising that Browne, like Urquhart, appears in the list of “top-thousand” authors most cited in OED, with overall statistics very similar to Urquhart’s: 4131 citations in OED, 775 providing first evidence of the form in question. Browne is the first witness in OED for such words as *antediluvian*, *carniverous*, etc.

reprehensory “reprehensive,” cited in OED from Urquhart’s *The Jewel*. The form does not appear in DSL. The only other seventeenth-century citation is from the sermons of Peter Lilly or Lily. Peter Lily (d. 1615) was a minor Anglican clergyman chiefly distinguished for his pluralism; his sermons were posthumously published in 1619.

resudation “process of sweating/exuding moisture”: not in DSL. The form is according to OED rare, with only four citations dated

between 1578 and 1838. The citation immediately preceding in date that from Urquhart is from John Swan (d. 1671), a Laudian Church of England clergyman whose *Speculum mundi*, in which the word occurs, is a major seventeenth-century encyclopedia.

sempiternally “eternally” is not recorded in DSL. By contrast, the form occurs at least twice in the witness immediately preceding Urquhart for this form, viz. Ephraim Pagitt, who uses the term at least twice in his *Christianographie* (1635). Pagitt (1574–1646) was a significant figure in theological debate in the 1630s until his death; his *Heresiography* (1645), an account of sects deemed heretical, went through no fewer than six editions and three issues between 1645 and 1662.

subservience “instance of being subservient.” The form does not occur in DSL; the citation immediately before Urquhart in terms of date is from Thomas Hill’s *The spring of strengthning grace* (1648). Hill (d. 1653) was a prominent puritan cleric who ended up as head of Trinity College Cambridge, confirmed in post by a parliamentary order in 1648.

superciliosity “superciliousness.” DSL cites both Urquhart and William Birnie’s *The blame of kirk-buriall* (1606); for the latter, see *elabour* above.

symbolization “agreement or participation in qualities (science).” The form is not found in DSL; in OED it occurs largely in specialist contexts, e.g., Gerard de Malynes’s *Consuetudo* (1622) (on trading).

symmyst “colleague in sacred office.” The form is not recorded in DSL. It appears in Ephraim Pagitt’s much-reprinted *Christianographie* of 1635, e.g., “The sacred Symists of his Religion.” For Pagitt, see *sempiternally* above. EEBO-TCP records the word, before Urquhart, in Richard Bernard’s *A key of knowledge for the opening of the secret mysteries of St Iohns mysticall Reuelation* (1617); Bernard (d.1642) was a well-known Church of England clergyman and religious writer, “an example of those godly protestants who practiced as much nonconformity as they could within the established church” (ODNB), whose allegorical *The Isle of Man* (1627) has been cited as an influence on John Bunyan.

Such examples as those cited above reveal very clearly that Urquhart, though undoubtedly egregious in his deployment of Latinate usages in baroque prose, was by no means alone among his contemporaries. Indeed, it seems certain that his first readers, while undoubtedly amused by his writings, would have seen his outputs as not only within a specific prose tradition but in dialogue with numerous contemporary trends in religious, philosophical, and scientific thinking, some of which were close to him in cultural attitudes (e.g., Browne, Cornwallis, Hall, Swan, Taylor), others clearly rather less so (e.g., Richard Baxter, Bernard, Birnie, Gillespie, Hill, Pagitt). Informed readers would have detected the seriousness that, in the *Epistle Liminary* to *The Jewel*, led Urquhart to speculate on such major intellectual issues as linguistic “universals,” prefiguring the concerns of the Royal Society savants of the 1660s but also beyond them in ways which recall Saussurean semiotics.¹⁸ Contemporary readers may well have laughed; but the cognoscenti would also, surely, have discerned alongside the humor the serious and current issues and concerns that informed Urquhart’s “curious” writings.

A general methodological point might also be made about the kind of work underpinning this chapter. When the OED and DSL, and indeed the ODNB, were begun in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries their editors saw their main goal as recording for posterity the usages of the past. However, as is so often the case with such accretive scholarship, what is so exciting about these resources is how they can so often, and for so many functions, be repurposed. OED and DSL, now supplemented by EEBO-TCP, are *inter alia* great corpora of material, now available for searching using sophisticated electronic tools, and alignment with ODNB opens up further possibilities for new insights: a kind of “computational philology.”¹⁹ As has been illustrated here, there are now ways forward for aligning productively philological research and the historical study of the social networks of the kind with which Urquhart so evidently — and so profoundly — engaged.²⁰

NOTES

¹ The formulations of style offered here are those adopted in Jack, *Scottish Prose*, which is still the best discussion of Scottish prose before 1700. Classic discussions of early modern prose in English include Barish, *Ben Jonson*; Croll, "Attic Prose;" Gordon, *Movement*; Mueller, *Native Tongue*; see also Smith, *Older Scots*, 61–67, and references there cited. For discussions of Urquhart, see most recently Craik, *Sir Thomas Urquhart*, and the papers presented in Thomson, *Sir Thomas Urquhart*. Seneca's looser style was notoriously summed up by the seventeenth-century biographer John Aubrey: "Seneca doth write as a boar doth pisse: scilicet, by jirkes" (from the life of Dr. Kettle: Clark, *Aubrey*, vol. 2, 25).

² Craik, *Sir Thomas Urquhart*, 37.

³ For a modern edition of a work which, according to its editors, "defies generic classification," see Urquhart, *The Jewel*, ed. Jack and Lyall.

⁴ Urquhart, *The Jewel*, 125–26.

⁵ The reference to "the Fight" and to "Worcester-streets" refers to the Battle of Worcester, during the so-called "second Civil War": the abortive attempt by Charles II in 1650–1651 to reclaim his throne. "Εκσκυβαλαυρον" (i.e., *Ekskubalauron*) is a coinage by Urquhart, "made up from Greek *ekskubalou* ('out of dung') and the Latin *aurum* ('gold') modified by the substitution of the Greek noun ending *-on* for the Latin *-um*" (Urquhart, *The Jewel*, 215).

⁶ Craik, *Sir Thomas Urquhart*, *passim*.

⁷ Gaule, a royalist Church of England clergyman who managed to hold onto his living throughout the Commonwealth period, was a well-known writer on witchcraft, astrology, and magic.

⁸ Landau, *Dictionaries*, especially ch. 1, for a lively account.

⁹ Holland (d.1637), a distinguished and indefatigable translator of classical works, was "a byword for weighty erudition" (ODNB).

¹⁰ Hoccleve, *Works*, l. 4978. The present-day sense of *invent*, *invention* found, for instance, in Collins *Cobuild* (1987) is as follows: "If you *invent* something such as a machine or process, you are the first person to think of it or make it ... If you *invent* a story or excuse, you try to make other people believe that it is true when in fact it is not ... An *invention* is a machine, device, or system that has been invented by someone ... *Invention* is the act of inventing something that has never been made or used before ... If you refer to someone's account of something as an *invention*, you think that it is untrue and that they have made it up ... *Invention* is the ability to invent things or to have clever and original ideas."

¹¹ Summarised in Murphy, 11.

¹² See Geoffrey de Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova*, 17.

¹³ For the "outdatedness" of the *Arte*, see Puttenham's ODNB entry.

¹⁴ As witnessed by his surviving letters; see Smith, *Older Scots*, 119–20.

¹⁵ Urquhart's treatment of French expressions when translating Rabelais is a study in itself; see Smith, *Older Scots*, 215–16, for examples and discussion. More

generally, see Corbett, *Written in the Language of the Scottish Nation*, and Corbett, “Verbs, mongrels.” For Urquhart’s translation of Rabelais, see Rabelais, *Works*. It should be noted that Urquhart is not the only “semi-translator;” although DSL only cites Urquhart for the form *transfret(at)e*, OED gives several other witnesses for intransitive as well as transitive uses of the form, from 1548 onwards. The citation nearest to Urquhart in date is from Waterhouse’s *An humble apologie* (1653), published in the same year as Urquhart’s translation from Rabelais; Waterhouse (1619–1670), who was to become a minor member of the Royal Society, was a writer on heraldry, whose *humble apologie* was a meditation on the role of statesmen in history in the light of human transience.

¹⁶ John Knox’s *History of the Reformation in Scotland* appeared posthumously.

¹⁷ *Urania*, in Drummond of Hawthornden, *Poems*.

¹⁸ See Corbett, “Verbs, mongrels;” see also Dobson, *English Pronunciation*, especially vol. 1.

¹⁹ I owe this term to Anneli Meurman-Solin (private communication).

²⁰ For the kind of work that can be done, see the discussion in Fitzmaurice and Smith, “Evidence for the history of English.”

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Afterword

Nicola Royan

To [my history], which in its Scottish dress could interest Scotsmen only, I have, with some trouble, given the power to speak to all through the medium of Latin.¹

JOHN LESLEY'S CHARACTERIZATION of his own *De Origine et Moribus Scotorum* (1578) identifies two important and obvious features of Scottish *latinitas*: the breadth of audience, and the Scottish participation in European culture. Even in Lesley's account, however, there may be discerned an element of defensiveness, in the need to court an audience for Scottish affairs using an international language. While such a position is not really tenable, given the interest in and importance of Lesley's queen to European affairs, nevertheless it could be argued that a similar defensiveness has colored the scholarship on Scottish *latinitas* for several, far more recent, decades.² This collection challenges that perspective, by exploring without apology aspects of Scottish *latinitas* from the eighth century to the seventeenth, and opening that great area of Scottish culture to further scholarly scrutiny, to support its rediscovery in anthologies and histories, and crucially to embed it in our understanding of Scottish culture from the eighth to the eighteenth centuries, rather than isolating it as a curious and additional cousin to the vernacular cultures.³

That a battle standard for new approaches to Scottish *latinitas* should be raised by a volume of essays with its foundations in the 13th International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Languages and Literatures, held in Padua in 2011, is not at all surprising for scholars in this area. Indeed, it is something of a trope to describe these conference proceedings as statements of the discipline, as it has grown in confidence, breadth, and depth.⁴ Studies in Older Scots have benefited from developments in book history, both with respect to individual manuscripts and prints, and to broader work on production, reception, and circulation; we have become even more sophisticated in tracing intertextuality and encoded responses; and we have enriched and broadened the canon, so much so that the great works of the fifteenth century, even Henryson, can become overshadowed by new discoveries in the seventeenth. Older Scots as a discipline has also developed in self-confidence

and self-assertion, both in comparison with its cousins in Middle English and contemporary Scots. These developments have been evident at each of the triennial conferences: when the 15th International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature takes place in Glasgow in 2017, research will have moved on again, and new areas, as well as new perspectives on familiar ones, will be brought to our attention.

In contrast to Older Scots, Scottish Latin writing, and, just as important, the Scottish reception of Latin writing, have not perhaps been able to attract quite the same attention.⁵ There have of course been exceptional scholars who have engaged profoundly with Latin writing. Some of these are primarily historians: for instance, Donald Watt's supervision of the nine-volume edition of Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* is a triumph of shared scholarship and vision; Dauvit Broun has unraveled our assumptions about Fordun and the *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*;⁶ Roger Mason's dissection of the political writings of John Mair and George Buchanan underpins many more recent examinations of sixteenth-century articulations of government and national identity.⁷ The intersection of cultural history and literary criticism in this area is clear in the invaluable work of John Durkan and John MacQueen;⁸ Alexander Broadie's work on the Scottish traditions of philosophy has also foregrounded the significance of Scottish Latin writing.⁹ It is fitting that Steven J. Reid, a graduate of the University of St. Andrews (supervised by Professor Mason) should have undertaken at the University of Glasgow (intellectual home of Dr. Durkan) such a significant research project as "Bridging the Continental Divide" on Scottish Latin poetry. The disciplinary challenge is now to integrate Latin culture and writing seamlessly into our understanding of Scottish culture and writing, to move beyond straightforward source-study and consideration of the occasional bright star, into a broader conception of a polyglot culture among readers as well as writers. This collection of essays demonstrates the possibilities of Scottish *latinitas*, as well as providing foundational studies to which future scholars will return.

The collection offers three main approaches to its material, which might be very broadly categorized as production, reception, and external understanding. The last category refers particularly to those essays by Alessandra Petrina and Tommaso Leso, for both of these are concerned with the representation of the inhabitants of Scotland outwith the geographical region. Leso's examination of Bede's understanding of the peoples who lived to the north of Jarrow, specifically the Picts, encourages us to reflect on national boundaries and ethnic definitions. Leso outlines

the critical assumptions that Bede brings to his ethnography. In particular, Leso points out the tension between literary genre and political context, and the way in which the Pictish participation in church reform may have colored Bede's description of them. In the same way that, as Leso points out, Bede inherits Roman attitudes to the Picts, in terms of name and location, so later medieval and early modern writers relied on Bede's understanding of British ethnography without necessarily being able to or indeed concerned to contextualize it. As Leso explains, Bede's position reflected his own situation, while later readers used it to reflect theirs, using the inherited authority to bolster their position. But while Bede's name and reputation were crucial to the survival of the text, it was the medium, namely Latin, that enabled its continued influence beyond Northumbria and beyond the eighth century.

Petrina's subject is to be found at the other end of the chronological spectrum. For Petruccio Ubaldini, the Scots — or at least his description of their location — were a means to an end. There is then a subtle difference between the attitudes of these non-Scottish writers. Whereas, for Bede, the Picts had immediate political and religious importance which he encoded into a familiar genre, for Ubaldini, the encoding was the crucial point, for he wished to draw attention to his gifts as a rhetorician, rather than to communicate anything new. Nevertheless, it is revealing that descriptions of Scotland appear as common cultural currency, the kind of topic by which rulers (or their bureaucrats) could assess the rhetorical competence of a potential worker. We might judge Ubaldini to have limited himself almost to the sixteenth-century equivalent of paraphrasing Wikipedia: that in itself indicates just how accessible his sources were, particularly Hector Boece's *Scotorum Historia*. Even from these two essays alone, we can see the ways in which Latin material about the Scots and Scotland circulates outwith its borders.

That it does so is in part due to the Latin chronicles and distinguished writers, men (largely) like Walter Bower, John Mair, Hector Boece, George Buchanan, and John Lesley. It happens that neither Bower nor Buchanan receive direct consideration in this collection, but they sit as important Wallie digs¹⁰ at either end. The *Scotichronicon* underpins sixteenth-century narratives of the Scottish past; Buchanan's influence as a poet, as well as a politician and a historiographer, is inescapable, but his European reputation means that his work has been explored in other publications.¹¹ None of the three historiographers considered in this collection are exactly unknown, but their treatment here demonstrates a diver-

sity in approaches that provides new perspectives. Building on his investigation of the impact of Latin grammar on vernacular political expression, John C. Leeds looks at the way in which “realist” philosophy underpins John Mair’s *Historia*. In contrast, John Cramsie points out how personal knowledge enables John Lesley to enrich his description of Scotland, and to challenge the assumptions of the accounts of Boece and Bellenden. Finally, Elizabeth Hanna explores in detail one particular story in Boece’s *Scotorum Historia*, namely the reign of Arthur, and how Boece weaves that into his larger narrative of Scots greatness. Each of these builds on previous examinations of the material, but in focusing on particular details, each enables a new perspective on how these texts communicate their understanding of the Scottish present as well as its past.

The other writers of Latin considered in this volume are the poets, Thomas Maitland and Thomas Seget. While Latin historiography is regularly trawled for its content rather than for its style, Scottish Latin poetry is generally less familiar. There are editions of some Latin poets — the Scottish Text Society edition of Sir Robert Ayton’s verse, for instance, has both Latin and English, and the Scottish Historical Society has published a collection of Buchanan’s political poetry, while the *Delitiae* project at Glasgow is publishing digital editions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets — but they are rarely core parts of university syllabi. Steven J. Reid’s account of Maitland’s erotic *oeuvre* demonstrated that Scottish Latin culture was not limited to serious political and religious matters. Reid’s account challenges us to look beyond the straight-laced aspects of the Northern Renaissance and Erasmian humanism, to see a richer culture, which has different parallels and intersections with vernacular literatures. The role of vernacular lyric and erotic poetry in political life has been explored for several decades now, with reference to English Elizabethan and Jacobean culture. Reid’s essay opens the possibilities of looking at the contemporary situation in Scotland through Latin poetry alongside Older Scots — to see Ayton in the round, for instance — and to think about the relationship between the languages and their users.

If Maitland’s fame has been in part maintained by his association firstly with Buchanan and secondly with his bureaucratic family, Thomas Seget has not been so fortunate. Nick Havely’s essay explores Seget’s career as a scholar, and how this figure moves between Dante (as an owner, however briefly, of a significant manuscript of the *Commedia*) and Galileo (as a messenger between Galileo and Kepler). On the one hand, such a narrative points up the uniqueness of Seget’s experience, and his extraordinary

if circumstantial role. On the other, Seget's education at Edinburgh and the Scots contacts on the Continent enabled him to make the necessary connections in the Low Countries and then in Italy, in order to follow a scholar's life. Seget's engagement with scientific thought as well as theology and poetry marks him out in this collection: discussions of *latinitas* have curiously focused on the political, even over the philosophical and theological, and the consideration of Scottish Latin scientific writing is still quite small.¹² It is interesting to speculate how many other men went to the Continent like Seget, but were not able to leave quite such a trail as scholars, writers, and messengers.

That speculation points up two issues: firstly, the peripatetic existence of many Scottish Latin writers, and secondly, their audience. Hector Boece was educated in Paris before coming back to Aberdeen. Mair and Buchanan worked both on mainland Europe as well as in Scotland, and had particular international constituencies. For instance, tracing the current locations of Mair's publications indicates his strong Spanish following, replicating his student body. John Lesley, Thomas Maitland, and Thomas Seget travelled in France, Italy, and in Seget's case to Germany and Bohemia. The time they spent residing in Scotland was in some cases comparatively short. Sometimes this determined their audiences. In Lesley's case, he deliberately sought a European audience for his work to defend his sovereign. He was not alone, for printed histories and other political writing often had foreign publishers. While it was common in the sixteenth century for insular presses to print vernacular works, and Latin and Greek material was printed on the continent, nevertheless, a Parisian printing, such as the one chosen by Mair and Boece, would offer greater opportunity for circulation. It can be assumed therefore that at least part of the audience for Scottish Latin writing is non-Scottish, even when the material or the writer advertises itself or himself (usually) as Scots. The difficulty this brings to definitions of Scottishness may indirectly contribute to the comparative neglect of Scottish Latin as literary text. Even in contemporary literary studies, the definition of what makes literature Scottish is inordinately complex: questions about the national identity of the author, the place of writing, the subject matter, and the language all contribute to definitions of Scottish literature. How much harder, then, to categorize John Barclay's *Argenis*, a romance written in Latin by a man who identified as Scots through his father but never set foot in Scotland before or after the publication of his work.¹³ The use of Latin does not expedite these kinds of discussions, yet this collection demonstrates the

significance, the quality, and the influence of Latinate culture on the vernacular, as well as its own reflexivity. Ultimately, whether or not Maitland and Barclay are defined as Scottish writers or as (unspecific) European writers, neither was remotely anxious about the idea of a Scotsman participating in an international culture, or deliberately inviting an international audience. Indeed, like Lesley, they may actively have sought it, if not necessarily for wider political ends.

The writers so far mentioned have been producers as well as readers of Latin text. There is another group of writers, those who read Latin texts and reworked them into Older Scots. Accounts of this kind of interaction have often been focused on source studies. Where such borrowing exists, recognizing a source can be a vital piece of information, particularly if the Scots text has not survived intact. However, they can present the relationship as a simple one of the vernacular text borrowing from Latin text, whether classical or medieval, and have a tendency to value the vernacular text in terms of its closeness to its model, in effect valuing its dependency rather than its reworking, and to assume incompetence on the part of the Scottish writer rather than innovation. Such a pattern has also been true of older accounts of the relationship between Scots and French texts, notably the fifteenth-century romances, *Golagros and Gawane* and especially *Lancelot of the Laik*. Only fairly recently have there been discussions that have foregrounded the deviation in the Scots texts as something significant to their own contexts and traditions.¹⁴ This approach might be best described as vernacular humanism, a term used by Priscilla Bawcutt to describe Gavin Douglas's engagement with the *Aeneid*, but which may have purchase in considering other writers and texts.¹⁵ In his essay describing the phenomenon in sixteenth-century England, Warren Boutcher notes that "not only English but Italian, Spanish and French treatments of classical concepts, stories and texts were widely used ... as a pedagogical resource alongside Latin ... 'originals' ... [T]he modes of mediation of these stories in disparate vernacular contexts were related and interdependent."¹⁶ Such a definition would equally fit with some fifteenth-century Scottish texts, where their writers draw on vernacular understandings to re-present classical material. In this collection, Kate Ash-Irisarri and Ian Johnson explore the reworking of *Ludus Scaccorum* into *The Buke of the Chess* and the classical narrative of Orpheus and Eurydice (with later accretions) into Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

The Buke of the Chess, as Ash-Irisarri presents it, takes a thirteenth-century Latin text and reworks it for a fifteenth-century Scottish audience. That

reworking involves a change of target, from the monarch alone to a wider body responsible for government, including the nobility. This has also been identified as a feature of other Scottish vernacular advice to princes, and is a change apparently manifested in *Golagros* and *Lancelot*. Here then is a question that might trouble the relationship between Latin and Older Scots: does the writer of *The Buik of the Chess* see his Latin model as having similar authority to the French romance sources? Such a question not only demands further thought regarding linguistic status in fifteenth-century Scotland, but also much broader questions about adaptation generally. In the case of *The Buik of the Chess*, it would seem that the fundamental allegory was deemed still useful both in its familiarity and its applicability to general European precepts of good government. However, in order to apply those shared precepts to fifteenth-century Scots culture, the text needed some reshaping. The domestication, therefore, is taking the general and recognizable and making it specific: in so doing, the Latin text is reshaped apparently to fit with other vernacular expressions of good government and advice material.

The case of Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* is different again, for Johnson argues that in that poem Henryson deliberately brings together material and modes of reading from both Latin and vernacular traditions. Such a view is even more radical perhaps than perceiving Latin texts as having authority equivalent to that of French texts, for here the argument is that Henryson presents the act of reading as having authority no matter the material under consideration, but that authority needs to be stretched and exercised to have the necessary moral benefit. Henryson's blending of different expectations undermines the claims of elitism on the one hand, in that the moral benefit is available to all readers, but on the other, continues to challenge the experienced by offering multiple approaches. In order to do this, Henryson himself seems familiar with a multiplicity of reading strategies of what Boutcher identifies as "modes of mediation," and a sound knowledge of academic approaches to reading, mostly expressed in Latin.

This assumption points to the final aspect of Latin reception presented by this collection. It is possible through some source studies and occasionally through direct acknowledgement (as when Boece notes his quotation of Tacitus in the margin), to be certain that particular texts were available in Scotland or to identifiable individuals at the appropriate time. In other cases, such knowledge is based on the work done by John Durkan and Anthony Ross and their successors in *Early Scottish Libraries*.¹⁷ Tracking the existence and circulation of particular volumes

as well as particular texts is ongoing, and will only reveal a proportion of what must have circulated. In working on university and school curricula, Dr. Durkan and others have shown what was basic in education, and although that kind of education was certainly not accessible to all the Scottish population, those who undertook it would have shared common references.¹⁸ This last is key to considering the relationship between Scottish *latinitas* and Scottish vernaculars.

Jeremy Smith's essay looks with a linguist's eye at the work of Sir Thomas Urquhart, one of the extraordinary figures of the seventeenth century. Urquhart's work is undoubtedly idiosyncratic, and has often been portrayed as completely beyond obvious influence and tradition. In examining Urquhart's lexis, particularly with reference to dictionary corpora, Smith demonstrates that Urquhart was less eccentric in his usage than we have been accustomed to believe, but still splendidly polymathic. His lexis is drawn from various disciplines and discourses, including litigation and accounts of language associated with dictionaries. Crucially, however, Smith points out that some of Urquhart's most baroque expressions are designed to provoke laughter, for they are clever euphemisms or elaborate circumlocutions. Those kinds of laugh can only be elicited from those in the know, those whose education and thought patterns are largely similar to the author's. In short, no matter how strange and baroque Urquhart's prose looks to a modern reader, to Urquhart's contemporaries it would have seemed more familiar and certainly less opaque. Most of those people, presumably mostly men, have not left behind their own Latin poetry or baroque Scots prose, so they are less visible. Yet in understanding what Havely calls the "cultural interface ... the *volgare* and *latinitas*,"¹⁹ apprehending their existence is essential. It is a common and necessary assumption to all the essays in this collection, but the essays by Smith and Johnson are where it is articulated and explored most fully. Understanding the nature of that interface, for instance, how easily educated Scots readers might move between Latin and Scots (leaving aside other vernaculars), or how writers of Latin texts understood vernacular texts and responded to them, is very hard to establish, but in any case the exchange should not necessarily be assumed to go only one way.

To take only one example, in the case of Thomas Maitland, there is perhaps a microstudy of this interface. For, in addition to Thomas's Latin poetry, the patriarch, Sir Richard, wrote in Scots and responded to Latin texts; at least one daughter, Marie, also wrote Scots verse and was familiar with Italian poets, and the other brothers became government servants

and stayed home.²⁰ It seems probable that William and John Maitland, Thomas's brothers and very clever men, were able to read his poetry, as they read his sister's. It may also be that they might not have differentiated the exercises, that to them reading Latin poetry came as easily as reading Scots poetry, and that they were comfortable in moving from one to the other. It may be that Marie and her sisters had some competence in Latin in addition to French, but, as with most aspects of women's experience, it is even harder to be sure. The Maitlands were an extraordinary family. Nevertheless, as Douglas's earlier suggestion that grammar school teachers would value a crib for the *Aeneid* should not lead us to assume that there was no Scottish audience able to correct his translation, so the Maitlands' distinction does not deny the capacities of their neighbors.²¹ In short, these essays reinforce and develop the perception that the audience for Scots and the audience for Latin are entangled, and that this is evident as much from the Scots texts as from the library lists.

The implication of this is surely that Scottish *latinitas* is essential to the deepest and broadest understanding of Older Scots literature, history, and culture. Such a view does not mean that writing in Older Scots cannot be read, appreciated, and analyzed by those with little or no knowledge of Latin: had it been intended to be read only by those who read Latin, it would surely have been written in Latin. Nevertheless, among scholars, *latinitas* needs to be embraced as a language of creativity, rather than simply of sources; and as a significant contributor to Scottish culture in shaping inter-textual understanding and mind-set, even if it does not appear to do so directly. More specifically yet, particular areas are only beginning to attract sustained attention: Latin poetry; scientific writing; the relative receptions of neo-Latin and classical Latin in Scottish culture; and the interaction between Latin and the vernaculars. This collection of essays, as a whole and as individual examples, builds on the scholarship of some thirty years to point out new directions and explore old assumptions. In so doing, it offers a challenge to others to take the research forward and highlight the polyglot nature of medieval and early modern Scottish culture in their scholarship. In a context similar to this, after discussing Arthur Johnston's Latin opinion of William Drummond, Sally Mapstone noted that "Johnston's ... remarks are a telling reminder of how our own understanding of Older Scots writing is enhanced by reading around and beyond its standard parameters."²² This volume makes good on that reminder, but issues a reminder of its own, that the standard parameters may not be as standard and as fixed as we think.

NOTES

¹ Cramsie, “Lesley” 136 in the present volume.

² Although Scottish Latin writing has been covered in the major histories of Scottish literature, it is often limited to a single chapter: see, for instance, the chapters in *The History of Scottish Literature*: MacQueen, “Scottish Latin Poetry,” and MacQueen, “Latin Prose Literature.” See also MacQueen, “From Rome to Ruddiman.” There has been an attempt to include Latin texts in larger narratives of Scottish writing: see, notably, Crawford, *Scotland’s Books*.

³ For editions of Scottish Latin material, see Crawford, *Apollos of the North*. Buchanan’s work features heavily in editions, for instance Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*; McGinnis and Williamson, *George Buchanan*; and Mason and Smith, *Dialogue on the Law of Kingship among the Scots*. Sometimes translated editions are embedded in essay collections: see, for instance, Cunningham, “Andrew Melville’s *Scotiae Topographia*.” Through the “Bridging the Continental Divide” project, a whole range of Latin poetry has been made available.

⁴ See, for example, Royan, “Introduction,” esp. 18; van Heijnsbergen and Royan, “Introduction,” esp. x; Mapstone, “Introduction,” esp. 3.

⁵ The linguistic situation in medieval and early modern Scotland is complex, involving at least three languages. This essay and the volume generally focus on Latin; the place of Gaelic and its interaction with Latin and with Scots at this period is equally interesting and deserves just as much attention.

⁶ Broun, *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots*.

⁷ Mason, *Kingship and the Commonweal*.

⁸ See, as only a single example, MacQueen, *Humanism in Renaissance Scotland*, which contains Durkan, “Education: Laying Fresh Foundations.”

⁹ Broadie, *The Circle of John Mair* and *A History of Scottish Philosophy*.

¹⁰ “Wallie *adj., adv., interj., n.*” DSL, accessed 8 Dec 2016 <<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/wallie>>, with particular reference to meaning 3.2.

¹¹ See, as examples, Erskine and Mason, *George Buchanan*; Green, “George Buchanan’s Psalm Paraphrases;” Ford, “Self-presentation.”

¹² For a slightly dated summary article, see Keller, “The Physical Nature of Man;” for a more recent account, Withers, *Geography*.

¹³ See “Barclay, John (1582–1621),” ODNB. Barclay is excluded as non-Scottish from Green, *Scottish Latin Authors*.

¹⁴ For a discussion of *Golagros and Gawane* and this issue, see Purdie, “The Search for Scottishness in *Golagros and Gawane*.”

¹⁵ Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*.

¹⁶ Boutcher, “Vernacular Humanism,” 193.

¹⁷ Durkan and Ross, *Early Scottish Libraries*. See also Hillyard, “Durkan & Ross.”

¹⁸ See Durkan, “Education;” Durkan, *Scottish Schools*.

¹⁹ Havely, “Seget’s *Comedy*” 214 in the present volume.

²⁰ For the Maitland men, see “Maitland, Sir Richard, of Lethington (1496–1586),”

"Maitland, William, of Lethington (1525×30–1573)," and "Maitland, John, first Lord Maitland of Thirlestane (1543–1595)" in ODNB. For Marie Maitland and her possible poetic career, see Martin, *The Maitland Quarto*, 28–30.

²¹ See Douglas, *Virgil's Aeneid*, IV, Translator's Direction, 88–92, ll. 41–48. Douglas's anxiety is perhaps best expressed in "Ane exclamatioun," IV, 192–93.

²² Mapstone, "Afterword," 219.

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