

The Traditional Sources of Four Burns Songs: 'The Posie', 'Craigie-burn Wood', 'Ae day a braw wooper' and 'A waukrife Minnie'

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Abstract

Robert Burns devoted much effort to the collection of tunes which he expected to be published in James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* and George Thomson's *Select Collection*. The tunes were often accompanied by the words of songs and Burns related to these sources in different ways. This article studies in detail his relationship to four songs and demonstrates how the partial information that he gives explicitly can be developed to give an impression of these source songs as wholes, so increasing our knowledge of traditional Scottish song in the eighteenth century. The study also throws light on Burns's method of composition when he was using a traditional base.

Robert Burns supplied the four songs discussed here – 'The Posie', 'Craigie-burn Wood', 'Ae day a braw wooper' and 'A waukrife Minnie' – for publication in *The Scots Musical Museum* which was nominally edited by James Johnson but had Burns as co-editor.¹ The songs come from the period from 1788 to 1796 when Burns was farming at Ellisland on the River Nith about six miles from Dumfries or was resident in Dumfries. At this time Burns was working in collaboration with the musician, Stephen Clarke, who was based in Edinburgh but paid visits to Nithsdale in order to link up with him.² The song 'Ae day a braw wooper' and a different version of 'Craigie-burn Wood' to the same tune were also published in George Thomson's *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs*. The Burns contributions to this publication and details of its various editions are now conveniently available in volume 4 of *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns* edited by Kirsteen McCue (2021).

These four songs can serve to open up discussion of a number of aspects of the relationship of Burns's compositions to earlier songs and to the broader fields of the interconnections between Scottish and English song traditions and of the parallel contributions to current knowledge available through orally received songs and the texts preserved in the broadside and chapbook press.

Burns's principal aim as a collector from tradition was to capture previously unpublished tunes, which were normally found as the tunes of songs. When he heard a new song tune that appealed to him, he considered whether or not he found the words of the source song worthy of being retained along with the music. In the case of the first two tunes discussed here, he dismissed the folksong words out of hand but the songs he composed to them still retain traces of his sources. In the third case, he seems to have appreciated the traditional song text and accepted it as it stood, while composing fresh words for its tune. In the last case, the tune was published with an approximation to the folksong text, but comparison with other versions of the folksong along with an awareness of Burns's mode of working indicate that the song as Burns would have heard it has been converted into something rather different.

¹ Murray Pittock, ed., *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, Vols 2–3: The Scots Musical Museum, Part One, Introduction and Text; The Scots Musical Museum, Part Two, Notes and Appendices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). For Burns as co-editor, see especially 2.1, 10, 12–13, 18.

² For Clarke, see Katherine Campbell and Emily Lyle, *Robert Burns and the Discovery and Re-Creation of Scottish Song* (Glasgow: The Musica Scotica Trust, 2020), chs 7 and 8.

Burns was not generally concerned to preserve in their original form the folksongs that he heard or read.³ He appreciated the high quality of some of the traditional verses that he knew but he was prepared to extract them and re-compose around them. For him folksongs were primarily the raw materials to be drawn upon in his own compositions, often with the aim of providing respectable alternatives to bawdy verses. However, a crucial point for the study of tradition is that Burns, despite his lack of interest in preserving the folksongs, actually does give us, directly or indirectly, a considerable amount of information about folksongs in Scotland in the late eighteenth century. Occasionally he is the sole source of an item and quite frequently he is the only eighteenth-century source and further instances of the songs he treats are not found until considerably after this time. The four cases discussed below throw light in various ways on eighteenth-century folksong in Scotland as well as illuminating Burns's methods of collection and composition.

The Posie

The first song to be discussed, 'The Posie', was composed for a tune that Burns had taken down from the singing of his wife, Jean (née Armour), who was an exceptionally fine singer. Speaking of the psalms sung in family worship, Burns says of her that she 'has a glorious "wood-note wild" at either old song or psalmody'.⁴ Jean Burns also had an extensive repertoire. When Burns noted that the tune of 'A Southland Jenny' in *The Scots Musical Museum* had come from her, he observed that many of the ballad tunes in this collection were 'written from Mrs Burns's voice'.⁵ When Burns speaks of a song he knew coming from a 'country girl', it may be from Mrs Burns although this is not necessarily the case.

Slow

O luv will ven-ture in where it daur na weel be seen, O

luv will ven-ture in where wis-dom ance has been but

I will down yon ri-ver rove, a - mang the wood sae green, And

a' to pu' a po - sie to my ain dear May.

Fig. 1 'The Posie', *Scots Musical Museum*, no. 373

The opening verses and the last verse of 'The Posie' are given here with Jean Burns's tune to which the song was published in *The Scots Musical Museum* in 1792.⁶ Note that in Figure 1 and the other music examples only the melody line is given.

³ He did, however, note down a batch of songs from his own memory for William Tytler. Campbell and Lyle, *Discovery and Re-Creation*, Ch. 3.

⁴ G. Ross Roy, ed., 2nd edition of *The Letters of Robert Burns*, ed. J. de Lancey Ferguson, 2 vols (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985), 1.415, no. 346.

⁵ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 3.235, no. 373.

⁶ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.453, no. 373.

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2. The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year;
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my Dear,
For she is the pink o' womankind, and blooms without a peer;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

.....

7. I'll tie the posie round wi' the silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her breast, and I'll swear by a' abuve,
That to my latest draught o' life the band shall ne'er remuve,
And this will be a posie to my ain dear May.

Writing to Thomson about this song on 19 October 1794, Burns comments both on the words Jean had sung and on the tune, which he places in the context of one already known to him:

'The Posie,' is my composition; the air was taken down from M^{rs} Burns's voice. – It is well known in the West Country, but the old words are trash. – By the by – take a look at the tune again, & tell me if you do not think it is the original from which Roslin Castle is composed. – The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air.⁷

Burns here identifies a folksong melody which has a relation in instrumental tradition. He knew the tune he calls 'Roslin Castle' in volume 4 of Oswald's *Caledonian Pocket Companion*.⁸



Fig. 2. 'Roselana Castle', *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, vol. 4, p. 3.

That tune does indeed bear similarities to the one he obtained from Jean Burns; however, it is in two contrasting parts, rather than one. It is worth pointing out that the tune of 'The Posie' corresponds to the second part of the air only, and even here there are differences. As it is relatively unusual to find song melodies built on the second part of an instrumental air in Scottish tradition, we might tentatively suggest that Burns has provided us with an independent folksong melody which may, at some point in the past, have provided the base for the instrumental melody. The transcribed tune of 'Roslin Castle'

⁷ Roy, *Letters*, 2.316, no. 644.

⁸ James Oswald, *The Caledonian Pocket Companion*, Vol. 4 (London: Printed for the Author, 1752), 3. Burns mentions the Oswald collection in connection with this tune though noting that Oswald did not claim it as his own; see Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum* 3.134, 213. The tune appeared earlier in William Macgibbon's *Second Collection of Scots Tunes* under the title of 'House of Glams' (Edinburgh: Printed by R. Cooper, 1746), 3.

given in Figure 2 does not include the variation sets provided by Oswald following the initial statement of the two-part melody.

In the Laing MS,⁹ Burns repeats his low opinion of the old words Jean sang to the tune in his comment on ‘The Posie’, but here he actually gives the first three verses before breaking off impatiently with ‘&c. &c. &c.’ Clearly, he knew the whole song but felt no need to write it out in full.

The old verses to which it was sung, when I took down the notes ↑from a country girl’s [singing, (*deleted*)] voice↓ had no great merit. The following is a specimen:

There was a pretty May & a milkin she went;
 Wi’ her red, rosy cheeks & her coal black hair;
 And she has met a young man a comin o’er the bent;
 With a double & adieu to thee fair May.

O whare are ye goin, my ain pretty May,
 Wi’ thy red, rosy cheeks & thy coal-black hair;
 Unto the yowes a milkin, kind Sir, she says,
 With a double & adieu to thee fair May.

What if I gang along wi’ thee, my ain pretty May,
 Wi’ thy red, rosy cheeks & thy coal black hair;
 Wad I be ought the warse o’ that, kind Sir, she says,
 With a double and adieu to thee fair May. –
 &c. &c. &c. –

Slow

There was a pret-ty May & a mil - kin she went; Wi' her
 red, ro - sy cheeks & her coal black hair: And
 she has met a young man a co - min o'er the bent, With a
 dou - ble & a - dieu to thee fair May.

*Fig. 3 ‘There was a pretty May’ set to the tune of ‘The Posie’,
 Scots Musical Museum, no. 373.*

In composing ‘The Posie’, Burns has not echoed the second-line refrain of the folksong, but his last line is repeated as in the folksong, either exactly as in verses 2–6, or in slightly modified form as in the first and last verses. In Figure 3, the tune he used for ‘The Posie’ is restored to the opening of the folksong that Jean Burns sang.

Although a complete text from Burns is lacking, we can get a good impression of how the song known to him would have continued from a nineteenth-century song text published without music in

⁹ Robert Burns, ‘Laing MS’. Edinburgh University Library MS La.II.210(9), 7.

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Robert Ford's *Vagabond Songs and Ballads of Scotland*.¹⁰ This opens with two verses that correspond to Burns's verses 2–3 and continues the narrative to its conclusion with the maid's retort. Ford's source was Hugh M'Aulay, of Johnstone, Renfrewshire, who told him that he had learned it more than twenty-five years previously 'from the singing of a girl named Bathgate, who had quite a host of these simple old wandering songs'.

Where Are You Going, My Pretty Fair Maid?

'Where are you going, my pretty fair maid,
With red rosy cheeks and coal black hair?'
'I'm going a-milking, kind sir,' she replied,
'Rolling on the dew makes a milkmaid fair.'

'May I go with you, my pretty fair maid,
With red rosy cheeks and coal black hair?'
'O, just if you're willing, kind sir,' she replied,
'Rolling on the dew makes a milkmaid fair.'

'What is your father, my pretty fair maid,
With red rosy cheeks and coal black hair?'
'My father's a farmer, kind sir,' she replied,
'Rolling on the dew makes a milkmaid fair.'

'And what is your mother, my pretty fair maid,
With red rosy cheeks and coal black hair?'
'A wife to my father, kind sir,' she replied,
'Rolling on the dew makes a milkmaid fair.'

'And what is your fortune, my pretty fair maid,
With red rosy cheeks and coal black hair?'
'A coo an' a wee calf, kind sir,' she replied,
'Rolling on the dew makes a milkmaid fair.'

'Then I won't go with you, my pretty fair maid,
With red rosy cheeks and coal black hair.'
'And naebody asked ye, kind sir,' she replied,
'Rolling on the dew makes a milkmaid fair.'

The song has been widely known in England under the titles 'Rolling in the Dew', 'Roving in the Dew' and 'Dabbling in the Dew',¹¹ and the 'double and adieu' of the repeated last line of each verse in the Burns version evidently arose from a mishearing in transmission of 'dabbling in the dew'. The song is less well known in Scotland, but the Greig-Duncan collection has two tunes, one with a verse of song,¹² and fragmentary versions were sung by the Travellers Jeannie Robertson and Duncan Williamson.¹³ None of these versions has the tune collected by Burns.

¹⁰ Robert Ford, ed., *Vagabond Songs and Ballads of Scotland*, 2 vols (Paisley and London: Alexander Gardner, 1899–1901), 1.149–50.

¹¹ Steve Roud, Roud Folk Song Index, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (2006), no. 298 (<https://www.vwml.org/roudnumber/298>); Steve Roud and Julia Bishop, eds, *The New Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* (London: Penguin, 2012), no. 67 'Dabbling in the Dew'.

¹² Patrick Shuldham-Shaw et al., eds, *The Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection*, (Aberdeen and Edinburgh: Aberdeen University Press and Mercat Press, 1981–2002), 4.203, GD 812 'Rolling in the Dew' A and B.

¹³ See 'Dabbling in the Dew' (<https://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/34278?l=en>) and John D. Niles, *Webspinner: Songs, Stories, and Reflections of Duncan Williamson, Scottish Traveller* (Jackson: University

The Ford version reflects a change in farming practice. In the eighteenth-century version, the girl is milking ewes while in the Ford version it is apparent that she is milking cows since she says that her fortune consists of a cow and a calf. In most versions of the song, the girl says that her fortune consists only of her face and the parallels suggest that the song sung by Jean Burns mentioned a dowry that consisted only of the girl's good looks as in the phrase 'my face is my fortune' included in Williamson's version or, if taking a hint from Ford, of a yowe and a lamb.

The meeting of a high-born young man and a low-born shepherdess as found in this song is in the *pastourelle* tradition as discussed in a study by Charles B. Lewis.¹⁴ The equivalent to Burns's first verse is not commonly found and is probably an early feature of the song that was later generally dropped, as Lewis indicates. A twentieth-century version of the meeting of the man and the maid does occur, however, in a sea-shanty from Captain Vickery of Minehead called 'Heave Away, My Johnny' published by Cecil Sharp.¹⁵ Without the shanty repeats, its opening verses run:

As I walked out one fine morning
 All in the month of May,
 I overtook a fair pretty maid,
 And unto her did say.

 O where are you going to, my pretty maid?
 I unto her did say.
 I'm going a milking, sir, she said,
 All in the month of May.

The encounter with a shepherdess and the prelude to the conversation are early features found in the Burns version. Burns quotes a sufficient part of the song for its direction to be quite apparent and for its complete form to be sketched out in general although the precise wording of the later verses cannot be recovered. Burns also captured in print the tune to which his wife sang the song.

Craigie-burn Wood

Writing to Thomson about his song 'Craigie-burn Wood' as published in *The Scots Musical Museum*, Burns states that 'the Chorus [is *deleted*] was not my work, but a part of some old verses to the air',¹⁶ and in a note to the song he expresses his low opinion of the 'old verses', saying, 'The chorus is part of an old foolish ballad.'¹⁷

Burns told his excise friend, John Gillespie, in a mutilated letter tentatively dated January 1791, that his song was composed on Jean Lorimer, to whom Gillespie had formed an attachment, and he notes: 'She was born [near Craigiebur]n-wood, a beautiful place still in her [father's posse]ssion.'¹⁸ Jean was born in 1775 and her father was 'William Lorimer of Craigieburn, merchant in Dumfries'.¹⁹ When Burns was at Ellisland, the Lorimer family was living two miles away at the farm of Kemmishall and Mrs Burns recorded that 'Jean used to visit at Ellisland'.²⁰

Craigieburn Wood is near Moffat, and Burns comments on his song and its location in a letter to Thomson of 7 April 1793:

Press of Mississippi, 2022), 35–7, and 'Bonnie One' (<https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AB2ZUH657JMBMZ8B>).

¹⁴ Charles B. Lewis, 'The Part of the Folk in the Making of Folklore,' *Folklore* 46, no.1 (1935), 37–75.

¹⁵ Cecil J. Sharp, ed. *Folk Songs from Somerset*, Fifth Series (London: Simpkin, 1909), 58–61.

¹⁶ Roy, *Letters*, 2.326, no. 646.

¹⁷ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 3.235.

¹⁸ Roy, *Letters*, 2.67, no. 432.

¹⁹ Joseph Jackson Howard, ed., *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, vol. 2, new series, (1877), 421–3 'Lorimer, Scotland' (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1877), 423.

²⁰ P. Hatley Waddell, *Life and Works of Robert Burns*, 2 vols (Glasgow: David Wilson, 1867–69), 2. Appendix xxiv.

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There is also one sentimental song, of mine, the first in the 4th Vol. of the Museum, which never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood, untill I got it taken down from a country girl's singing. – It is called, Craigieburnwood; & in the opinion of M^r Clarke, is one of the sweetest Scots Songs. – He is quite an enthusiast about it; & I would take his taste in Scots music against the taste of most connoisseurs.²¹

Since Burns says that he 'got it taken down from a country girl's singing' he clearly arranged for the tune to be recorded. It seems that the 'country girl' in this case was Jean Lorimer, since Burns claims that the song 'never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood' until he had it taken down and it was she who was his 'country girl' contact with that area.

The tune was evidently one of sixteen bars accommodating eight lines of text, since Burns says in a letter to Johnson tentatively dated 1791:

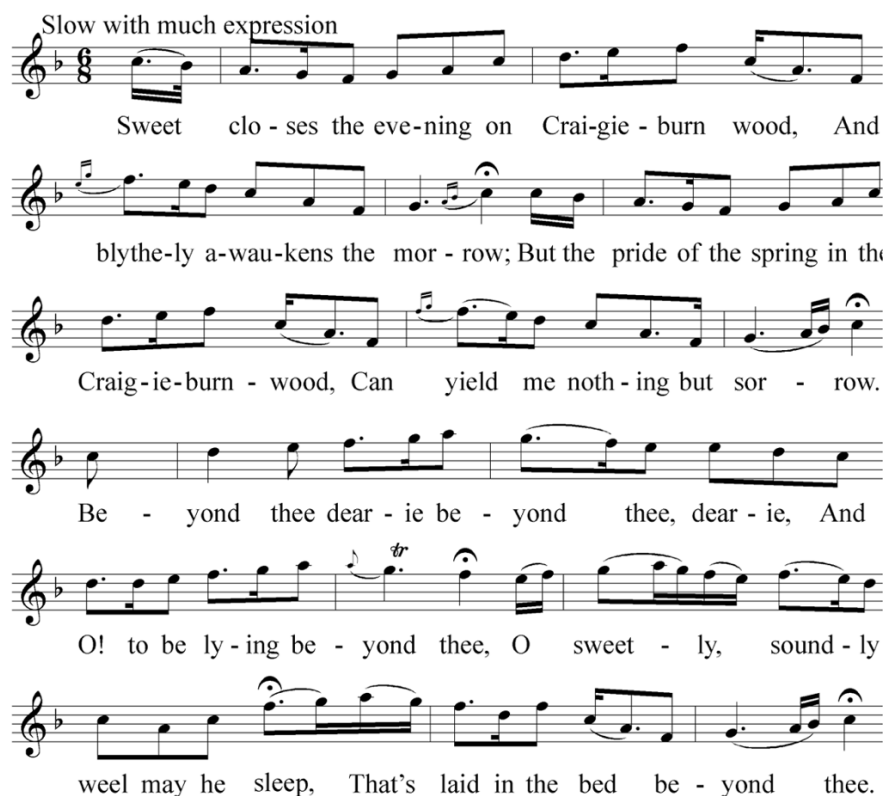
I received your letter with the Proofs of two songs, but M^r Clarke has mistaken one of them, the song, Craigieburnwood, sadly, having put the Chorus to the wrong part of the tune – so I have given it him to correct.²²

Burns took great care over this song as is evident from his letter to Johnson of about May 1792:

I inclose you another & I think a better set of Craigieburnwood, which you will give to M^r Clarke to compare with the former set, as I am extremely anxious to have that song right.²³

The first stanza and chorus of Burns's song are given in Figure 4 as in *The Scots Musical Museum* volume published in August 1792.²⁴

Slow with much expression



Sweet clo - ses the eve - ning on Crai - gie - burn wood, And
blythe - ly a - wau - kens the mor - row; But the pride of the spring in the
Craig - ie - burn - wood, Can yield me noth - ing but sor - row.
Be - yond thee dear - ie be - yond thee, dear - ie, And
O! to be ly - ing be - yond thee, O sweet - ly, sound - ly
weel may he sleep, That's laid in the bed be - yond thee.

Fig. 4. 'Craigie-burn Wood', *Scots Musical Museum*, no. 301.

²¹ Roy, *Letters*, 2.206, no. 557.

²² Roy, *Letters*, 2.91, no. 452.

²³ Roy, *Letters*, 2.141, no. 503.

²⁴ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.378, no. 301.

The melody as presented here is quite difficult to sing and would be more suited to playing on an instrument. Singers evidently made changes to simplify the melody, as John Glen indicates in *Early Scottish Melodies* when he says, 'It is really a beautiful tune: the set now in use is slightly altered from that given by Johnson, and is more vocal.'²⁵ There is a real puzzle here. It is to be expected that the tune as taken down from the country girl would have been vocal and yet the tune published from this ultimate source appears instrumental. A solution to this puzzle is suggested by the information in Burns's comments quoted above. First, he supplied the music as taken down from the singer and then later he sent another set that he thought a better one. This implies an intervening step, and it seems possible that the musician who took down the tune at Burns's request went on to play the tune himself and develop it for his instrument and then gave this embellished form to Burns who preferred it for publication.

If this was what happened, there are several indications that Robert Riddell of Glenriddell could have been the intermediary. He resided on the estate of Friars' Carse which bordered on Ellisland²⁶ and so could easily have been brought together with the singer from the same locality. Unlike Burns, he had an antiquarian interest in ballads and he contributed material to *The Scots Music Museum* from his manuscript collection,²⁷ and so would have taken an interest in a ballad if he had heard about it. He was a fiddler who published a volume of tunes that he had gathered, and another volume of tunes composed by himself.²⁸ Four of Burns's songs were written to tunes that were certainly or probably composed by him,²⁹ and a tune of 'Ay Waking oh!' 'was received by Mr Stephen Clarke from Captain R. Riddell of Glenriddell'.³⁰ There is no direct evidence of Riddell's involvement in the case of 'Craigie-Burn Wood' but Burns must have had assistance from some musician other than Clarke and it may perhaps have been Riddell.

Glen stated in 1900 that 'The melody of this song is not contained in any collection previous to the Museum',³¹ and his statement has been followed in the editions by Kinsley and Pittock while McCue has no reference to any music before Burns's song.³² However, as Anne Gilchrist observed, the tune appeared in Playford's *English Dancing Master* in 1651 as no. 93 'Lulle Me Beyond Thee'.³³ Comparison of the 'Lull Me Beyond Thee' and 'Craigie-burn Wood' tunes shows that it is really the second part they have in common, where Burns has his chorus. It is worth noting too that 'Lull Me'

²⁵ John Glen, *Early Scottish Melodies* (Edinburgh: J. & R. Glen, 1900), 158.

²⁶ Roy, *Letters*, 2.475–6.

²⁷ Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, 'Ballad Collection' contained in MSS 581–9, vols 8, and 11. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, National Museums Scotland Library, Edinburgh. Items in *The Scots Musical Museum* related to this collection are Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, vol. 2, no. 155 'Where Helen Lies', no. 411 'Tam Lin' and no. 579 'O heard ye e'er of a silly blind Harper'. See further Emily Lyle, 'The Burns Text of "Tam Lin"', *Scottish Studies* 15 (1971), 53–65.

²⁸ Robert Riddell, *A Collection of Scotch Galwegian & Border Tunes for the Violin and Piano Forte [...]* Selected by Robert Riddell of Glenriddell (Edinburgh: Johnson & Co., [1794]) and *New Music for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord; composed by a Gentleman* (Edinburgh: J. Johnson, c. 1785).

²⁹ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.365, no. 294 'The blue-eyed Lassie', 2.366, no. 295 'The Banks of Nith', 2.391, no. 314 'The Whistle' and 2.442, no. 364 'Nithsdall's welcome home'.

³⁰ Stenhouse, William, ed., *Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland*. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1853), 352. For 'Ay Waking oh!', see Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.463, no. 382.

³¹ Glen, *Early Scottish Melodies*, 158.

³² James Kinsley, ed., *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), no. 483, Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 3.100, Kirsteen McCue, *Robert Burns's Songs for George Thomson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 368–70.

³³ Anne G. Gilchrist, 'Some Additional Notes on the Traditional History of Certain Ballad-Tunes in the "Dancing Master" (1650)', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 3, no.4 (1939), 279–80.

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would have been performed at a faster tempo for dancing to than the air of ‘Craigie-burn Wood’, which is marked in *The Scots Musical Museum* to be performed ‘Slow with much expression’.

As I was wal - king all a - lone, I
 heard a man la - men - ting, Under a hol - low
 bush he lay, But sore he did re - pent him:
 Alas quoth he, my Love is gone: which cau - seth me to
 wan - der, Yet mer - ry wil I ne - ver bee,
 till I lye lul - ling be - yond her.

Fig. 5. The broadside words of ‘The Northerne Turtle’
 with tune from Chappell (1859), 1.260.

The ‘Lull Me Beyond Thee’ tune given in Figure 5 was studied by William Chappell who noted that a number of broadside ballads were sung to it.³⁴ Chappell gave the tune with the first verse of ‘The Northerne Turtle: / Wayling his unhappy fate, / In being deprived of his sweet Mate’ which occurs on a broadside printed in London for I. H. and provisionally dated 1628,³⁵ and the opening of that ballad with Chappell’s melody runs as shown in Figure 5. The Chappell tune is the same as the one presented in Playford’s early form of notation although it is in a different key.³⁶

‘The Northerne Turtle’ includes the lines comparable to those in the Burns chorus: ‘Good Lord, so soundly I could sleep, / if that I lay lulling beyond her’ (2.1–2), ‘Nay soundly will I never sleepe, / till I lye lulling beyond her’ (6.7–8) and ‘Then soundly, soundly shall I sleepe / when as I lay lulling beyond her’ (7.7–8). It can be noted that the ‘John Barleycorn’ broadside ballad to this tune gives the tune title simply as ‘Shall I lie beyond thee’ without the word ‘lulling’ and this is even closer to the Burns form.³⁷

The Playford title and the lines quoted from ‘The Northerne Turtle’ are similar to the Burns chorus, and clearly there is a verbal as well as a musical line of connection going back to the

³⁴ William Chappell, *The Ballad Music and Popular Literature of the Olden Times*, 2 vols (London: Chappell, 1859), 1.259–60. See EBBA (Early English Broadside Ballads) under Standard Tune Titles: ‘Lull Me Beyond Thee’. <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/>

³⁵ EBBA 20021, from Pepys Ballads 1.372, Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge. See also EBBA 20022 for another edition and EBBA 30219 for this ballad as a second part which is preceded by ‘The paire of Northerne Turtles. / Whose love was firme till cruell Death, / Deprivid them both of life and breath’.

³⁶ A transcription of the Playford tune by Chris Partington is available on the Traditional Tune Archive (https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Lull_Me_Beyond_Thee).

³⁷ See, e.g., EBBA 20199.

seventeenth century. However, there is a more immediate connection with a ballad (an ‘old foolish’ one in Burns’s opinion) known in the eighteenth century which is untitled but can be called ‘The Earl and the Shepherd’s Daughter’. It is only the chorus of Burns’s ‘Craigieburn-wood’ song, and not his verse text, that is relevant to the comparison, and his chorus occurs in variant forms that are explored here before the ballad is introduced.

The text in Burns’s hand in the version of the song that he gives at folio 58 in the Hastie MS³⁸ adds his chorus separately at the end, as shown:

Old	–	Chorus
		Beyond thee, Dearie, beyond thee, Dearie, And Oh to be lying beyond thee! Sweetly, soundly, weel wad I sleep, Were I laid in the bed beyond thee.

It is clear from the layout, with ‘Old’ placed in the margin, that Burns is not speaking of an ‘old chorus’, that is, words that had formed a chorus in his traditional base, as erroneously indicated in the Kinsley text and commentary,³⁹ but only that the words which he is giving as chorus are old ones. Burns also gave the chorus at the end of his song when he wrote it out for John Gillespie in the letter already quoted. The letter is mutilated but the following words are visible and it can be seen that Burns is again making the point that the chorus is not his own work:

– Old words –
 <xxxxx> Dearie, beyond thee Dearie,
 <xxxxx> be lying beyond thee
 <xxxxx>y weel may he sleep
 <xxxxx> laid in the bed beyond thee!⁴⁰

Burns moved from the first person (‘wad I sleep’) to the third person (‘may he sleep’) when he revised from the Hastie MS form to the form in the letter to Gillespie and the *Museum*. It is a first-person form that occurs in the ballad that was apparently his source, of which a fragment is included in Herd:

‘O my bonny, bonny May,
 Will ye not rue upon me;
 A sound, sound sleep I’ll never get,
 Until I lye ayont thee.
 I’ll gie ye four-and-twenty gude milk kye,
 Were a’ caft in ae year, May;
 And a bonnie bull to gang them by,
 That blude-red is his hair, May.
 I hae nae houses, I hae nae land,
 I hae nae gowd or fee, Sir;
 I am o’er low to be your bryde,
 Your lown I’ll never be, Sir.’⁴¹

Hans Hecht comments on the Herd fragment ‘The first verse of this beautiful piece seems to have suggested the chorus of Burns’s *Craigieburn Wood*’ and notes that Child quotes it in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* and finds ‘that it belongs to a ballad of a shepherd’s daughter and an earl,

³⁸ Robert Burns, ‘Hastie MS’, British Library Additional MS 22307, f. 58.

³⁹ Kinsley, *Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, 2.599, 3.1384.

⁴⁰ Robert Burns, ‘Letter to John Gillespie, ?January 1791’. Robert Burns Birthplace Museum MS 3.6069.

⁴¹ David Herd, ed., *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Printed by John Wotherspoon, for James Dickson and Charles Elliot, 1776), 2.6–7.

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which is preserved in two copies in Motherwell's MS.⁴² Kinsley, commenting on 'Craigie-burn Wood' says that the chorus is related to the first verse of the Herd fragment and adds: 'This is part of a ballad of an earl and a country girl, which is given a local habitation and a name in *The Laird o Drum* (Child, no. 236).'⁴³ This ballad, however, is distinct from 'The Laird o Drum', and Child gives it separately as an appendix to that ballad. Child's version B of 'The Laird o Drum' from the 'old lady's MS' from Aberdeenshire also includes elements of this song.

The first two stanzas of the Herd fragment correspond to the first two in the text which William Motherwell recorded from Mrs Crum, Dumbarton, on 7 April 1825, which is given in full below.⁴⁴ The third of the Herd stanzas corresponds to the sixth stanza in the other version noted by Motherwell which came from a Paisley smith called Thomas Risk who learned it in Stirlingshire in his youth:

'Oh no, oh no,' the fair maid says,
'Thou'rt rich and I am poor;
And I am owre mean to be thy wife,
Too good to be thy whore.'

The following is the version from Mrs Crum.

1. 'O fair maid and true maid,
Will ye not on me rue, maid?
Here's my hand, my heart's command,
I'll come and go by you, maid.
2. 'I've four-and-twenty good milk-kye,
A' calved in a[e] year, maid,
And a bonnie bill to eisin them,
Just as red as your hair, maid.'
3. 'Your kye go as far in my heart
As they go in my heel, sir;
And, altho I be but a shepherd's dochter,
I love my body weel, sir.
4. 'I love my body weel, sir,
And my maidenhead far better;
And I'll keep it to marry me,
Because I'm scarse o tocher.'
5. This knicht he turned his bridle about,
While the tear stood in his ee;
And he's awa to her father gane,
As fast as he could dree.
6. 'Gude een, gude een, you gude auld man,'
'Gude een, you earl's knicht, sir;'
'But you have a fair dochter,' he says,
'Will you grant her to me, sir?'

⁴² Hans Hecht, ed., *Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts* (Edinburgh: William J. Hay, 1904), 301, referring to *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Francis James Child, 5 vols (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1882–98), 4.322.

⁴³ Kinsley, *Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, 3.1384.

⁴⁴ William Motherwell, 'Ballad Book', Glasgow University Library MS 5001, pp. 37–40 Thomas Risk version; pp. 252–4 Mrs Crum version. The Motherwell texts are given here from Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 4.330–2, except that in 8.1 of the Crum version Child's readings 'would' and 'not' are corrected from manuscript to 'wuld' and 'out'.

- O silks and satins she shall wear,
Indeed and so shall ye, sir.’
7. ‘I have a fair dochter,’ he says,
‘She’s fair of blood and bane, sir;
But an ye had your will o her
Ye wud leave her alane, sir.’
8. ‘Ye wuld steek her out your chamber-doors,
And bar her at your yett, sir;
And an ye had your will o her
Ye wud her soon forget, sir.’
9. This knight he turned his bridle about,
While the tear stood in his ee,
And he’s awa to this fair maid gane,
As fast as he could drie.
10. ‘O fair maid and true maid,
Will ye not on me rue, maid?
Here’s my hand, my heart’s command,
I’ll come and go by you, maid.
11. ‘Cast aff, cast aff your gay black gowns,
Put on your gowns of silk, maid;
Cast aff, cast aff your gay black snoods,
Put the garlands on your hair, maid.’
12. ‘It’s I can bake, and I can brew,
And good kye can I milk, sir;
But I was neer born in the time o the year
To wear the gowns o silk, sir.
13. ‘Yestreen I was a shepherd’s dochter,
Whistling my hogs to the hill;
But the nicht I am an earl’s lady,
I may wear what I will.’

Although the quatrain that Burns echoes is not a chorus, it does occur twice in the Crum version (sts 1 and 10) and three times in the old lady’s version of ‘The Laird o Drum’ (sts 5, 7 and 11) and so it has some similarity to a chorus. Since it appears from the Burns record of the tune that the ballad as he knew it had eight-line stanzas, it seems likely that the repeated plea for the woman’s pity was present in the same position as Burns’s chorus and was sung to the second half of the tune.

To give an impression of how a source ballad in eight-line stanzas might have been sung, stanzas 9–10 of the Crum version are given on the next page (Figure 6) to the air of ‘Craigie-burn Wood’. The melody has been simplified to make it more suited to vocal performance (cf. Glen’s earlier comment).

Burns localises the ‘sweet old tune’⁴⁵ of ‘Craigie-burn Wood’ precisely when he comments:

It is remarkable of this air, that it is the confine of that country where the greatest part of our Lowland Music, (so far as from the title, words, &c. we can localise it,) has been composed. – From Craigieburn, near Moffat, untill one reaches the West Highlands, we have scarcely one slow Air of any antiquity.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Roy, *Letters*, 2: 67, no. 432.

⁴⁶ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 3.235.

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Burns's comment has an important implication for the content of the ballad since it must have included 'Craigieburn' in its title or words for Burns to be able to localise it as he does. So far as the Burns song is concerned, 'Craigie-burn Wood' is a place but, in the context of the ballad, it seems that Craigieburn or Craigieburn Wood would probably have been a man's name taken from his property. There is some likelihood that the ballad began with the name of the protagonist as in the Risk version which opens: 'Montrose he had a poor shepherd, / And a poor shepherd was he'. It can be suggested that the version known to Burns began with a line like 'Craigieburn had a poor shepherd'.

The image shows a musical score for six stanzas of a ballad. Each stanza is written on a single treble clef staff in 6/8 time. The lyrics are printed below the notes. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some phrases marked with slurs. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

As I was wal - king all a - lone, I
 heard a man la - men - ting, Under a hol - low
 bush he lay, But sore he did re - pent him:
 Alas quoth he, my Love is gone: which cau - seth me to
 wan - der, Yet mer - ry wil I ne - ver bee,
 till I lye lul - ling be - yond her.

*Fig. 6. Stanzas 9–10 of Mrs Crum's words from Motherwell
 set to tune of 'Craigie-burn Wood', Scots Musical Museum, no. 301.*

In the Herd fragment quoted above, the end of the verse, like the Burns chorus, takes the form: 'A sound, sound sleep I'll never get, / Until I lye ayont thee.' This may be compared with the lines in Burns's Hastie MS version: 'Sweetly, soundly, weel wad I sleep, / Were I laid in the bed beyond thee.' So far as our evidence goes, only the Herd fragment of the ballad has the concept expressed in the last two lines. It seems possible that Burns, while familiar with the ballad as sung by Jean Lorimer, was attracted to the Herd lines from it and based his chorus on Herd. If so, he has adapted the last two lines and extrapolated from them, addressing the woman by the term 'Dearie' which would have been inappropriate in the ballad context and omitting the 'rue' motif stressed in the ballad.

It is not possible to be certain about what Burns had available to him, but he clearly regarded his chorus as old as opposed to his own fresh composition and, as noted above, the name 'Craigieburn' or 'Craigieburn Wood' must have been present in the traditional song. The slim information derived from Burns and Herd can be filled out by reference to the nineteenth-century texts and the seventeenth-century tune to give an impression of the form that the ballad took in the eighteenth century.

Ae day a braw wooer

Burns composed this song to the tune called ‘The Lothian Lassie’. In May 1795 he sent Thomson the words and music of the traditional song with the following remarks:

‘The Lothian Lassie,’ I also inclose: the song is well known, but was never in notes before. – The first part is the old tune. – It is a great favorite of mine, & here I have the honor of being of the same opinion with STANDARD CLARKE. – I think it would make a fine Andante ballad.⁴⁷

Lively

Ae day a braw woo - er came down the lang glen, And
sair wi' his love he did deave me; But I said there was nae-thing I
ha - ted like men, The deuce gae wi' him to be -
lieve me be-lieve me The deuce gae wi' him to be - lieve me.

Fig. 7. ‘Ae day a braw wooer’, *Scots Musical Museum*, no. 522, first text.

On 3 July he sent Thomson the song he had composed to this air with the heading, ‘Scottish Ballad. – Tune the Lothian lassie – / Clarke has this air’.⁴⁸ Thomson published it in his *Select Collection* in 1799 with the title ‘Last May a Braw Wooer Cam’ Down the Lang Glen’, noting that the air was ‘The Lothian Lassie’.⁴⁹ When the Burns song was published in 1803 in *The Scots Musical Museum*, with the title ‘Ae day a braw wooer, &c.’, it was paired with the traditional song which was given as a second set of words to the tune. The opening of the Burns song as published in *The Scots Musical Museum* runs as shown in Figure 7 above.⁵⁰

Burns has followed his source in having a set of five lines which matches the music but, in using the device of repeats of the fourth line of each stanza, he has diverged from the form of the original narrative which is in couplets with a nonsense chorus following each of the two lines.

Burns wrote out the source song in a manuscript that was acquired by the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum as part of the accession from the Blavatnik Honresfield Library in 2022 and, with the kind permission of the National Trust for Scotland,⁵¹ we are able through a scan to make direct use of this manuscript for the text of this song which had previously been available only through the transcript

⁴⁷ Roy, *Letters*, 2: 356, no. 670.

⁴⁸ Roy, *Letters*, 2: 359, no. 673.

⁴⁹ McCue, *Robert Burns’s Songs for George Thomson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 58–9, 390–1, ST32 (T52).

⁵⁰ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.618–9, no. 522.

⁵¹ We are very grateful to Ian Riches, Archivist – Collections Management, National Trust for Scotland, for his assistance.

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published by Davidson Cook in 1926.⁵² The manuscript consists of a single folded sheet with four unnumbered pages. Burns first wrote out the whole song on pages 1–2 with abbreviated indications of the chorus lines which appear as ‘Fal lal &c.’, ‘Fal &c.’ or ‘Fall &c.’ He then noted ‘M^r Clarke has this tune – The chorus goes as follows’ and gave the first verse in full. Page 2 is faced by page 3 which is blank except for see-through of the title. Page 4 has only the title ‘The queen o’ the Lothians’ which is written on the right rather more than half-way down the sheet which shows signs of folding in such a way that the title would have been visible. If this title is to be correlated with the tune title ‘The Lothian Lassie’, it seems that the word ‘queen’ is to be understood in the sense of ‘girl, lassie’ which is generally spelt ‘quean’ or, with a different pronunciation, ‘quine’.

The first verse as written by Burns at the end of his text is given with the *Scots Musical Museum* tune as above. The rhythm in the seventh bar has been altered to fit the syllables of the chorus. Burns is very specific about where the stresses occur as he underlines the stressed syllables in the manuscript, as shown in Figure 8.

Lively

The queen o' the Lothians cam crui-sin to Fife,
 Fal de ral, lal de ral, lai-ro, To see gin a woo-er wad
 tak her for life, Sing hey, fal lal de ral,
 lal de ral, lal de ral, Hey, fal lal de ral, lai-ro.

Fig. 8. ‘The Lothian Lassie’, *Scots Musical Museum*, no. 522, second text.

Although Burns says that ‘the song is well known’, the only known text is the one he provides. As it stands, its narrative line is incoherent and puzzling. It opens, as shown, with a young woman travelling into Fife in search of a husband. The problem arises in relation to the lack of connection with the rest of the song which is on the theme of a bashful wooer called Jockie who makes an indirect approach to a young woman called Jenny who was already aware of his interest. Their meeting takes place at Lochnell which is near Oban and is introduced in a couplet which refers back to the quean:

She had na been lang at the brow o’ the hill,
 Till Jockie cam down for to visit Lochnell,

The solution to the problem of the apparent lack of connection may be that verse 2 is actually the beginning of a different song, but this solution would require a revision in its opening line. The location at ‘the brow o’ the hill’ would be appropriate for a natural phenomenon, as in the Burns song which begins ‘The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill’,⁵³ and it may be that the song opened with a reference to a time in the morning and that the line originally ran ‘The sun had na been lang at the brow o’ the hill’. If that had been so, by changing ‘The sun’ to ‘She’ the two texts could readily

⁵² Davidson Cook, ‘Unpublished Manuscripts of Burns: Mr A. J. Law’s Collection’, *Burns Chronicle and Club Directory*, second series, 1 (1926), 67–8.

⁵³ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.302.

have been cobbled together. There seems no reason for Burns to have done this cobbling and the probability is that the fusion, if indeed it took place, had already occurred in the song as he found it.

The text given below (Figure 9), with the reading ‘The sun’, is offered as a free-standing song with the editorial title ‘Jockie’s Wooing’. Since Burns mentions that Clarke had the tune it seems likely that it was Clarke who took it down. There is no record of the source singer. In the music, the rhythm in bar seven has again been altered to comply with Burns’s indications of the stresses.

Lively

The sun had na been lang at the brow o' the hill,
 Fal de ral, lal de ral, lai - ro, Till Jock - ie cam down for to
 vis - it Loch - nell, Sing hey, fal lal de ral,
 lal de ral, lal de ral, Hey, fal lal de ral, lai - ro.

Fig. 9. ‘Jockie’s Wooing’ (editorial title), text from Burns’s holograph copy (with adaptations), set to tune of ‘The Lothian Lassie’, *Scots Musical Museum*, no. 522.

2. He took the aunt to the neuk o’ the ha’,
Whare naebody heard, & whare nae-body saw.
3. Madam, he says, I’ve thought on your advice,
I wad marry your niece, but I’m fley’d she’ll be nice.
4. Jockie, she says, the wark’s done to your hand,
I’ve spoke to my niece, & she’s at your command.
5. But troth, Madam, I canna woo,
For aft I hae tried it, & ay I fa’ thro’.
6. But, O dear Madam, & ye wad begin
For I’m as fley’d to do it, as it were a sin.
7. Jenny cam in, & Jockie ran out,
Madam, she says, what hae ye been about.
8. Jenny, she says, I’ve been workin for you,
For what do ye think. Jockie’s come here to woo.
9. Now Jenny tak care, & dash na the lad,
For offers like him are na ay to be had.
10. Madam, I’ll tak the advice o’ the wise,
I ken the lad’s worth, & I own he’s a prize.
11. Then she cries but the house, Jockie come here,
Ye’ve naething to do but the question to spier.
12. The question was spier’d, & the bargain was struck,
The neebors cam in, & wish’d them gude luck.

As Adam Fox notes, ‘Jockey’ and ‘Jenny’ were typical names in broadside songs given a Scottish setting though of English derivation,⁵⁴ but in this case the song seems to be authentically Scottish and to belong to a Scottish tradition of which other examples are ‘Robeysn Iok come to wow our Iynny’ in the sixteenth-century Bannatyne MS and ‘Hey, Jenny come down to Jock’ beginning ‘Jocky he came here to woo’.⁵⁵ It is an unusually lively and warm-hearted treatment of the theme of the bashful wooer which is more clearly focussed when the ‘queen o’ the Lothians’ verse is removed. In isolation, that verse would then be understood as a surviving fragment of a largely lost song appropriately entitled ‘The Lothian Lassie’. It can be suggested that the two texts were drawn together by being sung to the same tune as well as by their common theme of courtship.

A waukrife Minnie

Concerning ‘A waukrife Minnie’, which was published in *The Scots Musical Museum* in 1790, Burns remarks: ‘I pickt up this old song & tune from a country girl in Nithsdale. – I never met with it elsewhere in Scotland. –’⁵⁶ It seems from this comment that Burns made the record of both the words and tune of the song himself. It is noteworthy that Burns names the country girl as his sole source and so ascribes it to her although, as will be discussed below, he had a very active role in modifying the song before publication. When this case is taken into account, it can be seen that, when Burns ascribed ‘Auld Lang Syne’ to an old man, his statement would in his mind have been compatible with his having made substantial revisions to the text he had received, as has been thought likely.⁵⁷

Although Burns had encountered ‘A waukrife Minnie’ only in Nithsdale, the song belongs to a widely distributed type called ‘Seventeen Come Sunday’.⁵⁸ Steve Roud and Julia Bishop, commenting on the ninety-four English entries they have for it, note that it has two different forms and ends either with the young man and the girl staying together or with the young man deserting the girl. They make no mention of another major difference found within this type as described by G. Malcolm Laws with reference to American versions from British broadsides. Speaking of the young man, Laws says: ‘In some versions [the girl’s] mother does not hear him arrive; in others she does and gives the girl a beating.’⁵⁹ In the version published in Roud and Bishop the mother is mentioned but does not make an appearance, and the song has only two characters.⁶⁰ The Burns text, on the other hand, belongs to a form which has three characters.

In the three-character form which occurs traditionally in Scotland in addition to the two-character form, the mother’s entrance upon the scene is the focus of the story. The Burns version is atypical in some ways that imply authorial reworking, as discussed below, but it is true to the spirit of the three-character form of the story by naming the song from the mother – ‘A waukrife Minnie’ (a wakeful or vigilant mother). The ‘mother’ form is a rough and farcical narrative, and it seems that this was the older form (perhaps known all over Britain) which has been smoothed down in the two-character form to a meeting and parting of the lovers without the violent interaction with the mother.

The information about the song as probably heard by Burns comes partly from later tradition and partly from a previously undiscussed version entitled ‘The lassie lost her maiden-head for a’ her

⁵⁴ Adam Fox, ‘Jockey and Jenny: English Broadside Ballads and the Invention of Scottishness’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 79, no. 2 (2016), 201–20.

⁵⁵ See Janet Hadley Williams, ed. *Textual and Bibliographical Studies in Older Scots Literature: Selected Essays of Priscilla Bawcutt* (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2022), 137–8, and Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.227, 3.51, no. 167.

⁵⁶ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 3.234.

⁵⁷ M. J. Grant, *Auld Lang Syne: A Song and its Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0231>), xi, 21, 41–5, 50, 88, 232 and 253.

⁵⁸ G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1957), 234, O 17 ‘Seventeen Come Sunday’; Roud, *Index*, no. 277.

⁵⁹ Laws, *American Balladry*, 234.

⁶⁰ Roud and Bishop, *English Folk Songs*, 87–9, no. 37.

waukrif mammie' which is found in a Scottish chapbook with an estimated date of 1795.⁶¹ When Allan Cunningham and Thomas Lyle published the song in 1825 and 1827, they included Burns's text but they knew that the song as they had heard it in Nithsdale and in the Ayrshire and Renfrewshire area differed from this and they supplied extra verses.⁶² The only full traditional text from the south-west is the version in the Crawford collection recorded in Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire, about 1829, by William Orr from an unnamed source,⁶³ and this text corresponds verse by verse with the chapbook form except that the order of two verses is reversed and one of the chapbook verses (the girl's retort to her mother) is lacking. The Greig-Duncan collection made in the north-east of Scotland in the early twentieth century includes two full versions of the three-character form. One version (Ba) is from the Reverend James B. Duncan's sister, Mrs Margaret Gillespie, who learned it from their mother, née Elizabeth Birnie, and the other (L) is from Bell Robertson, who learned it from her mother, née Jean Gall.⁶⁴

The Burns text is given below on the right in parallel with the chapbook text on the left.

As I went o'er the highland hills,
I met a bonny lassie,
She looked at me and I at her,
and vow but she was saucy.
To my rou tou fal de lal, &c.

Where are you going, my bonny lass?
where are you going my honey?
Right modestly she answer'd me,
an errand for my mammie.

What is your age, my bonny lass?
what is your age, my honey?
Right modestly she answer'd me,
I'm fifteen years come Sunday.

Will you take a man, my bonny lass?
Will you take a man, my honey?
Right modestly she answer'd me,
I dare not for my mammie.

Where do you live my bonny lass?
where do you live my honey?
Right modestly she answer'd me,
in a wie house wi' my mammie.

I went into my love's chamber,
to see if she was wauking:
But we had not spoke a word or to
till her mother heard us talking.

Whare are you gaun, my bony lass,
Whare are you gaun, my hiney.
She answer'd me right saucily,
An errand for my Minnie.

O whare live ye, my bony lass,
O whare live ye, my hiney.
By yon burn-side, gin ye maun ken,
In a wee house wi' my Minnie.

But I foor up the glen at e'en,
To see my bony lassie;
And lang before the grey morn cam,
She was na hauf sae sacey.

⁶¹ National Library of Scotland Ry.III.e.16(25) *Four excellent new songs. The lassie lost her maiden-head for a' her waukrif mammie. Johnie Cope, Rinordin; or The mountains high. The general toast.*

⁶² Thomas Lyle, *Ancient Ballads and Songs, Chiefly from Tradition, Manuscripts, and Scarce Works* (London: Printed for L. Relfe, 1827), x, 155–6.

⁶² Allan Cunningham, *The Songs of Scotland, Ancient and Modern*, 4 vols (London: Printed for John Taylor, 1825), 2.244–6.

⁶³ Emily Lyle, ed., *Andrew Crawford's Collection of Ballads and Songs*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1975–96), 2.140–1.

⁶⁴ Shuldham-Shaw, *Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection*, 4.149–57 and notes 4.542–3, GD 791 'The Soldier Lad' versions A–M.

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Then she began to blaw the coal,
to see if she could ken me,
But I creep'd out at the bed-foot,
and took the fields to screen me.

The she took her by the hair of the head,
and to the floor she brought her;
And with a good green hazel rung,
she made her a well paid daughter.

O haud your hand, mother, she says,
you're like for to devour me;
For I would ne'er have done the like,
if you had not dont't before me.

Blink o'er the burn, my bonny lass,
blink o'er the burn, my honey;
For you've got the clod that will not cling,
in spite of your waukrif mammie.

So fare you well, my bonny lass,
so fare you well, my honey;
For I would come and see you again,
were't not for your waukrif mammie.
*With my rou tou dam dail, all, all to my
rou.*

O weary fa' the waukrife cock
And the founart lay his crawin!
He wauken'd the auld wife frae her sleep,
A wee blink or the dawin.

An angry wife I wat she raise,
And o'er the bed she brocht her;
And wi' a meikle hazel rung
She made her a well pay'd dochter.

O fare thee weel, my bony lass!
O fare thee well, my hinnie!
Thou are a gay and a bony lass,
But thou has a waukrife minnie.

Burns is alone in giving 'minnie' not 'mammie' or 'mammy' in the title and text. This difference affects the rhyme-scheme, and Lyle has 'my lammy' rather than 'my honey' or 'my hiney' as in the chapbook and Burns. It seems possible that Burns's source had the non-rhymes 'honey' and 'mammie' and that Burns converted to the rhymes 'hiney' and 'minnie'. Perhaps by doing this he was restoring an earlier form before the rhyme was lost.

Considering the first part of the song and assuming that the source was similar to the chapbook text given above, the following points can be made. Burns omits the first verse, reduces the number of question-and-answer verses to two and varies the wording in the third line on the second occasion to 'By yon burn-side, gin ye maun ken' instead of using formulaic repetition. Lyle notes that the Burns text lacks 'the commencing stanza' which he gives as:

As I gaed o'er the Highland hills,
I met a bonnie lassie;
Wha' look'd at me, and I at her,
And O but she was saucy.⁶⁵

This verse is found widely in tradition, and it seems that it was available to Burns and that Burns is actually echoing it when he says, 'She answer'd me right saucily'. In the traditional texts, the replies are generally made 'modestly' but Crawford has 'scornfully' which comes closer to Burns's word.

The equivalents of the chapbook verses beginning 'Will you take a man?' and 'Where do you live?' are given in the reverse order in Crawford and the Crawford order is more forceful since the girl implies her consent through basing her reluctance on her fear of her mother and the man's immediate response is to visit her. It is interesting to see that the 'But' which opens Burns's verse 3 appears to relate to a verse like the 'Will you take a man?' one that is no longer present in his text; despite the girl's refusal, the young man makes his way to her home.

⁶⁵ Lyle, *Ancient Ballads and Songs*, 155.

Burns's lines 'But I foor up the glen at e'en / To see my bonnie lassie' differ from the chapbook lines and this difference relates to divergent traditional forms of the two stanzas that cover the encounter with the mother. In the one in this chapbook and also in Crawford and Robertson, the young man arrives in the girl's chamber and later creeps away to escape the mother while in the other the young man travels to the girl's home and later knocks the mother into the fire. This form, found in an isolated verse from Nithsdale tradition given by Cunningham and fully in Gillespie, is shown below.

<p>Up banged the wife to blow the coal, To see gif she could ken me – I dang the auld wife in the fire, And gaur'd my feet defend me.</p>	<p>I gid to see that bonnie bonnie lass I gid to see my Annie But the auld wife she got out o her bed An came slippin ben fu cannie. She took the claw to clear the clow To see gin she could ken me, But I dang the auld wife into the fire An bade my heels defend me.</p>
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It was this form that was known to Burns who has the 'travel' lines. The idea of an 'I' travelling was in the unused opening 'Highland hills' verse of the song and its rhymes of 'lassie' and 'saucie' have been caught up in Burns's travel verse. In Gillespie, the girl is named and this involves the need for an earlier 'What is your name?' verse which occurs in Gillespie just before the 'What is your age?' one found in the chapbook and also in the same position in Robertson where the girl gives her name as Nanny. By replacing with the generalised 'lassie', Burns has obviated the need for the 'name' verse which would have been present in this particular expression of the song.

The passage at 3.3–5.1 of Burns's song containing the evocative 'O weary fa' the waukrife cock' lines has no parallel in the traditional versions and is evidently Burns's substitution. It eliminates the violent action of pushing the mother into the fire which he may well have found inappropriate for publication in his work. There would have been a strong association in Burns's mind between a night visit and interruption by the crowing of a cock through his acquaintance with the song 'O Saw ye my father?'.⁶⁶ As Child indicates, the separation of the lovers by the coming of dawn in that song belongs to the genre of the *aubade*.⁶⁷ A good approach to Burns's major change is to see that he has converted the narrative into one where the lovers are interrupted after their night together by the coming of daylight. In the *aubade*, the approach of dawn is responded to directly by the lovers themselves but here it is the indirect cause of their separation through the mother's response to the crowing of the cock. Before the cock crows, the mother is sound asleep and oblivious, in contradiction to the song's title 'A waukrife Minnie'. In the traditional song, on the other hand, the mother becomes aware of the lovers in the night-time. Since the Burns version defers the introduction of the old woman until the cock crows, it has a line after that devoted to her response, 'An angry wife I wat she raise' (5.1), which replaces the line expressing the vivid action of seizing the girl's hair, which is the norm for the opening line of this stanza.

At the close of the song, Burns has only a single verse where the chapbook has three. He may quite likely not have met the verse containing the girl's response since this has not been found elsewhere than in the chapbook, but he quite probably heard two closing parallel verses of farewell and decided to reduce repetition by giving only the final one announcing that the lover will not return. Incidentally, the Robertson version has the alternative positive outcome mentioned by Roud and Bishop and concludes, 'The time will come that ye sall be mine, / For a' yer waukrife mammy.'

The first verse of the song as published in *The Scots Musical Museum* in 1790 is given in Figure 10.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.123, no. 76.

⁶⁷ Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 4.390.

⁶⁸ Pittock, *Scots Musical Museum*, 2.359, no. 288.

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Lively

Whare are you gaun, my bo - ny lass, Whare
are you gaun, my hin - ey. She ans - wer'd me right
sau - ci-lie, An er - rand for my min - nie.

Fig. 10. 'A waukrife Minnie', *Scots Musical Museum*, no. 288.

Thomas Lyle commented on the traditional song he knew, 'The air is a very pretty one, with two lines of nonsensical chorus, sung after each stanza.'⁶⁹ Since this song normally has a chorus it seems likely that the version Burns heard had one which he chose to omit, and probably it would have been of the type found in the chapbook which also occurs with the Gillespie text quoted above as 'Wi' my row dum tow dum tarra reedle ow; / Wi' my row dum tarra reedle ah-dee' and with the Robertson version as 'To my rowdum tow dum, fala reedle ee, / To my rowdum tow fal dee'.

However, Gillespie knew another tune for the song with a different chorus (version Bb that she learned from George Park). This tune, which bears more similarity to the Burns version, is presented in Figure 11. An interesting point regarding the Gillespie tune is that, when the refrain is omitted, the melody ends on the dominant (fifth) degree of the scale, giving the song an unfinished feel. This is also a characteristic of the melody in *The Scots Musical Museum* which ends on the dominant. Although there is nothing unusual about ending on the dominant, the addition of the refrain does serve to finish off the tune so that it ends on the tonic. The melody itself then may provide further evidence that a refrain has been omitted in the Burns version.

As I cam owre yon high high hill, I
met a bon-nie las-sie, She looked at me and I at her, An'
oh, but she was sau-cy. Wi' my rol-ling eye, Fal de ree-dle eye,
rol - ling eye, dum dad - dy, Wi' my rol - ling eye.

Fig. 11 'My Rolling Eye', Mrs Gillespie, Greig-Duncan 791 Bb.

There is considerable reason to think that the song as Burns heard it in Nithsdale ran something like the following (Figure 12) in both tune and text, although some of the verses might not have been present, and the melody of the chorus might not have been exactly like this. The text is based on the

⁶⁹ Lyle, *Ancient Ballads and Songs*, 156.

chapbook form, which has been edited here by the revision of ‘dout’t to ‘done’t, the addition of capitals and the omission of the indication of a chorus after each verse following the first. The chorus is an estimate on the basis of the ‘row tow’ syllables in the chapbook and other sources and on the musical treatment in Gillespie. It should be noted that the final chorus in the chapbook is on a single line at the bottom of the page and runs right to the edge of the paper, which suggests that there was no room to complete a longer form and that it was simply cut off. The order of the verses beginning ‘Will you take a man’ and ‘Where do you live’ has been reversed. The two Gillespie verses dealing with the encounter with the mother have been substituted for the two equivalent verses in the chapbook, and the associated additional verse on the girl’s name is given in the chapbook form found in similar verses and concludes with a line from Gillespie. The tune employs the *Scots Musical Museum* melody (Figure 10) plus the chorus melody from Mrs Gillespie (Figure 11), presented in E minor rather than E major.

As I went o'er the high-land hills, I met a bon-ny
 las - sie, She looked at me and I at her, An
 vow but she was sau - cy. To my rou tou tou
 fal de lal de day rou tou dam de lal, al to my rou tou.

Fig. 12. Chapbook text of verse plus editorially revised chorus syllables set to tune of ‘A waukrife Minnie’, *Scots Musical Museum*, no. 288, and chorus melody adapted from Gillespie Bb.

2. Where are you going, my bonny lass?
 Where are you going my honey?
 Right modestly she answer'd me,
 An errand for my mammie.
3. What is your name, my bonny lass?
 What is your name, my honey?
 Right modestly she answer'd me,
 My mammie ca's me Annie.
4. What is your age, my bonny lass?
 What is your age, my honey?
 Right modestly she answer'd me,
 I'm fifteen years come Sunday.
5. Where do you live my bonny lass?
 Where do you live my honey?
 Right modestly she answer'd me,
 In a wie house wi' my mammie.
6. Will you take a man, my bonny lass?

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- Will you take a man, my honey?
Right modestly she answer'd me,
I dare not for my mammie.
7. I gid to see that bonnie bonnie lass
I gid to see my Annie
But the auld wife she got out o her bed
An came slippin ben fu cannie.
8. She took the claw to clear the clow
To see gin she could ken me,
But I dang the auld wife into the fire
An bade my heels defend me.
9. Then she took her by the hair of the head,
And to the floor she brought her;
And with a good green hazel rung,
She made her a well paid daughter.
10. O haud your hand, mother, she says,
You're like for to devour me;
For I would ne'er have done the like,
If you had not done't before me.
11. Blink o'er the burn, my bonny lass,
Blink o'er the burn, my honey;
For you've got the clod that will not cling,
In spite of your waukrif mammie.
12. So fare you well, my bonny lass,
So fare you well, my honey;
For I would come and see you again,
Were't not for your waukrif mammie.

Burns's modification and the traditional song both remained current in Scotland, and the two were hybridised to produce versions with a base in the traditional form which incorporated the Burns 'waukrife cock' passage, as can be seen in the 1827 Lyle text, which is copied in a chapbook of c. 1830–40,⁷⁰ and in the version called 'My Rolling Eye' sung by the street singer, Sandy Smith, published by Ford in 1899.⁷¹ A similar hybridisation can be demonstrated in the case of 'MacPherson's Farewell' in the Greig-Duncan collection. The Duncan family sang Burns's song, a version of the broadside song, and a song that contained elements of both.⁷² In these cases, items in the Burns corpus, as well as having their own distinct identities, were absorbed into the continuing song tradition.

Concluding Remarks

One conspicuous feature that calls for comment is the prominent role played by women both in Burns's sources for these songs and in their contents. Writing to Thomson in April 1793, Burns spoke

⁷⁰ *Two old songs. The perjured maid, and The waukrife mammy.* Falkirk: Printed for the booksellers. [1830–40?].

⁷¹ Ford, *Vagabond Songs and Ballads*, 1.102–5.

⁷² Shuldham-Shaw, *Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection*, 3.594–6 and notes 3.697, GD 697 'Macpherson's Rant' versions A and B. Katherine Campbell, 'Enactments and Representations of the National Bard: Burns and the Folk Context' in *Performing Robert Burns: Enactments and Representations of the 'National Bard'* ed. Ian Brown and Gerard Carruthers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), pp. 164–82.

of having ‘several M.S.S. Scots airs by me, which I have pickt up, mostly from the singing of country lasses’, and he sent him ‘There was a lass, & she was fair’, the tune of which was taken down by Clarke from Mrs Burns.⁷³ In the set of four discussed here, two can be identified as from Mrs Burns and Jean Lorimer, and one is from an unnamed ‘country girl’.

The first two songs deal with a young man’s advances and show the young woman exerting her right of refusal. This is final in the first case when she takes down the over-confident young man. In the second case, she yields to the man’s entreaties, but proclaims at the end that, as the earl’s lady, she has acquired freedom of choice. The ‘quean of the Lothians’ in the fragment about her takes the initiative and sets out in search of a partner. In the last two songs, a woman of the generation before the young couple controls the action. In ‘Jockie’s Wooing’, it is the intervention of the young woman’s aunt that brings about the anticipated wedding, and the ‘waukrif mammie’ aims to keep her daughter safe from the advances of young men outside marriage and reacts vigorously when she finds that her guardianship has been in vain.

In general, the traditional songs took longer to sing than the typical Burns replacements. Not only did they contain extended narratives, but they slowed the action by including verses of incremental repetition and favouring choruses, including ones consisting of nonsense syllables that Burns was inclined to reject. Burns in his compositions and revisions was setting up a new range of songs that was suited to the changed conditions of his time but, paradoxically, because of his use of tunes that already had associated words, he had ties to the past that allow us insight into the world he was leaving behind.

Glossary of Scots Words

a’ , all	but the house , to the outer part of the house	dree, drie , go
ae , one	by , beside	ee , eye
aft , often	ca’s , calls	e’en, een , evening
ain , own	caft , calved	eisin , pleasure
ance , once	canna , cannot	fa’ thru’ , fail
an, and , if	cannie , stealthily	fare thee/you weel/well , farewell to you
auld , old	claw , scraper	fee , money
awa , away	cling , shrink	fley’d , afraid
ay , always	clod , little thing, foetus	foor , went
ayont , beyond	clow , fused dross	foumart , polecat
banged , jumped	crawin , crowing	frae , from
ben , to the inner part of the house	creep’d , crept	fu , full, very
bent , rough grass	cries , calls	gae, gaed , go, went
bill , bull	cruisin , seeking a sexual partner	gane , gone
blaw , blow	cud , could	gang , go
blink n., while	dang , knocked, pushed	gaun , going
blink v., look	dash , discourage	gaur’d , caused to, let
bonnie, bonny , good-looking	daur , dare	gay (gey) , very
braw , fine	dawin , dawn	gid , went
brocht , brought	deave , weary	gie , give
brow , top	deuce , devil	gif , if
burn , stream	devour , destroy	gin , if
burn-side , side of a stream	dochter , daughter	gowd , gold
		gude , good

⁷³ Campbell and Lyle, *Discovery and Re-Creation*, 174–8.

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hae , have	nae , no	steek , close
haud , hold	naeboddy , nobody	tocher , dowry
hauf , half	naething , nothing	troth , indeed
hinnie, hiney , honey	neebors , neighbours	vow , oh, wow
hogs , young sheep	neuk , recess	wad, wud, wuld , would
ken , know	nice , particular	waukrif, waukrife , wakeful, vigilant
knicht , knight	nicht, the , tonight	warse , worse
kye , cattle, cows	o , of	wat, I , indeed
lang , long	or , before	wauking , awake
lass, lassie , girl	owre , over	wauken'd , woke
lay , silence	pink , carnation, the finest example of excellence	weary fa' , a curse on
low , low-born	pu' , pull	wee, wie , little
lown , whore	quean, queen, quine , girl	well paid , well-chastised
maun , must	rung , rod	wi' , with
may , maid	sair , sorely, extremely	wife , woman
meikle , big, sturdy	screen , hide	yestreen , yesterday
milk-kye , cows	snoods , hair ribbons	yett , gate
minnie , mother	spier, spier'd , ask, asked	yon , that, yonder
morrow , morning	spoke , spoken	yowes , ewes.
na , not		

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