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CHAPTER FOUR

ADVICE TO A PRINCESS: THE LITERARY ARTICULATION OF A RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMME FOR MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS, 1562

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In Geneva, early in 1559, John Knox received news of changes of religion in Scotland, as heralded by the St Giles' riot in Edinburgh on 1 September 1558. This news was then relayed to John Bale in Basle, in a letter which was subsequently printed (in Low German) as *Truthful tidings concerning the ascendancy of the Gospel and the punishment of its declared enemies, of the papist priests, in Scotland*. From this tract it would seem that Scotland was experiencing a wave of evangelical fervour, leading inexorably towards a radical Reformation. Michael Lynch has recently brought this print to our attention, providing a historical, *longue durée* perspective on this apocalyptic ambience through reference to documents and events of the immediately following period.¹ The present chapter continues this line of inquiry by looking at more exclusively literary texts responding to these events, in particular those that directly addressed Mary on or immediately after her return to Scotland.

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Recent scholarly publications have focused on two particular kinds of dialogue between subjects and sovereign, namely royal entries and weddings. At entries, relationships past, present and future between monarch and subjects were dramatised in a carefully stage-managed, formal public dialogue in which both parties acknowledged one another's roles as part of the political community. The Edinburgh town council used a key instance of such 'performatisation' of crown-subject relations, Mary's 1561 entry into Edinburgh, to push its own agenda, while Mary herself used the 1566 baptism—another example of such ritualised

¹ M. Lynch, 'John Knox, minister of Edinburgh and commissioner of the kirk', in R. A. Mason (ed.), *John Knox and the British Reformations* (Aldershot, 1998).

crown-subject dialogue—of the future James VI to address a national and international audience.² In a wider context, the literary texts linked to the formal entries (often following royal weddings) of Scottish monarchs in, for example, 1503, 1537/8, 1579, 1590, 1617 and 1633 have received growing critical attention.³ This is closely linked to an increase of interest in late medieval and early modern entries in Europe more generally, which have come to be recognised as an important source of information regarding political changes and intentions.⁴

The increasingly self-conscious nature of the Scottish literary texts that recorded these events or were used as part of them suggests that their authors had grown more aware of what it was that these texts were

² On 1561, see A. A. MacDonald, 'Mary Stewart's entry to Edinburgh: an ambiguous triumph', *IR*, 42 (1991), 101–10; P. Davidson, 'The entry of Mary Stewart into Edinburgh, 1561, and other ambiguities', *Renaissance Studies*, 9 (1995), 416–29; and G. Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998), 352–6. On the 1566 baptism, see M. Lynch, 'Queen Mary's triumph: the baptismal celebrations at Stirling in December 1566', *SHR*, 69 (1990), 1–21. S. Carpenter, 'Performing diplomacies: the 1560s court entertainments of Mary queen of Scots', *SHR*, 82 (2003), 194–225, includes a look at lesser-known examples of the formal dramatisation of relations between commonweal and monarch, or between monarchs, during Mary's personal reign.

³ The best introduction to this is D. Gray, 'The royal entry in sixteenth-century Scotland', in S. Mapstone and J. Wood (eds.), *The Rose and the Thistle: Essays on the Culture of Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland* (East Linton, 1998), which succinctly and perceptively delivers both background and detail. L. O. Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland* (Madison, Wis., 1991), does likewise, but in a more theoretical format which looks more exclusively at the earlier sixteenth century. M. M. Bartley, 'A Preliminary Study of the Scottish Royal Entries of Mary Stuart, James VI, and Anne of Denmark, 1558–1603' (University of Michigan PhD thesis, 1981), provides descriptive rather than analytical comment. On James VI's 1579 entry into Edinburgh, see M. Lynch, 'Court ceremony and ritual during the personal reign of James VI', in J. Goodare and M. Lynch (eds.), *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton, 2000), 74–8; A. L. Juhala, 'The Household and Court of King James VI of Scotland, 1567–1603' (University of Edinburgh PhD thesis, 2000), 193–6. On Anna's entry in 1590, see D. Stevenson, *Scotland's Last Royal Wedding: the Marriage of James VI and Anne of Denmark* (Edinburgh, 1997), 57–63, and (the Danish account) 107–20; Juhala, 'Household and Court', 197–201, 273–7; and M. M. Meikle, 'Anna of Denmark's coronation and entry into Edinburgh, 1590: cultural, religious and diplomatic perspectives', Chapter 12 below. On James VI's re-entry into Scotland in 1617, see R. Cummings, 'Drummond's *Forth Feasting*: a panegyric for King James in Scotland', *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), 1–18. On Charles I's visit to Edinburgh in 1633, see E. McGrath, 'Local heroes: the Scottish humanist Parnassus for Charles I', in E. Chaney and P. Mack (eds.), *England and the Continental Renaissance* (Woodbridge, 1990); D. M. Bergeron, 'Charles I's Edinburgh pageant (1633)', *Renaissance Studies*, 6 (1992), 171–84.

⁴ See e.g. D. M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558–1642* (London, 1971); R. Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450–1650* (Woodbridge, 1984); Kipling, *Enter the King*.

doing: they were not just commemorating a socio-political event but were themselves part of it. Established authorities as well as their critics understood the importance not just of entries, weddings and civic processions themselves, but also of reporting them, and they often asked poets not just to help organise entries but also to advertise them by printing their descriptions as soon as possible after the event. Thus, accounts of the festivities attending the marriage of Mary queen of Scots to the Dauphin in Paris on 24 April 1558 were almost immediately printed, reprinted and even pirated. One of these was in Scots, printed by John Scot already in late May or June 1558.⁵ Such alacrity suggests that this print was part of an ongoing attempt to win the hearts and minds of the Scottish people. Celebrating the occasion and the projected concord lying behind it provided an opportunity to remove Scottish reservations as to whether Scotland was on the verge of becoming a French colony.

Political action thus had pronounced cultural dimensions. The public politics of earlier sixteenth-century Scots entries and royal weddings clearly reflected French influence. David Lyndsay's description of the entry planned for Madeleine deliberately echoed the pageantry of her wedding to James V in Paris earlier that year (1537), and Knox described the entry for Mary in Edinburgh in 1561 as 'fools counterfeiting France'.⁶ The Scottish audience had to be persuaded of the value of what was already being sumptuously celebrated in Paris: a Catholic Renaissance court culture and its attendant relations between monarch, court and civic community. The urgency with which the pamphlet narrating the St Giles' riot was printed mirrors that lying behind the printed account of Mary's French wedding only a few months earlier: Protestants, too, recognised the importance of manipulating such ritualised dialogue between monarch and subjects and of controlling its representation.

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Mary's 1561 entry into Edinburgh provided her with a major opportunity to gain control of that dialogue. A typical royal entry into Edinburgh saw the sovereign and his or her train meeting prominent local

⁵ Only fragments remain of this print, which is discussed in S. Carpenter and G. Runnalls, 'The entertainments at the marriage of Mary queen of Scots and the French Dauphin François, 1558: Paris and Edinburgh', *Medieval English Theatre*, 22 (2000), 145–61, and in D. Hamer, 'The marriage of Mary queen of Scots to the Dauphin', *The Library*, 4th ser., 12 (1932), 420–8.

⁶ Carpenter and Runnalls, 'The entertainments', 159, note 11; Knox, *Works*, ii, 287–8.

citizens and churchmen at the city gate opposite the Castle. The keys of the town were presented to the monarch, after which the assembled company went on a formal procession along the High Street, pausing to witness pageants or listen to speeches. Key components of the latter included a celebration of the sovereign's genealogy and, thus, authority; praise of the monarch in question, including encouragement to live up to an idealised image of rulership; and the presentation of the four cardinal virtues, Wisdom, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance (variations on their names occur), as the basis for such 'arts of rule'.⁷ The cardinal virtues link these royal entries to the tradition of advice to princes, an important strand of Scottish literature in which the virtues motif was often likewise used to provide continuities at moments of transition. The language of virtue had become the new political language.⁸

In line with developments on the continent, Scottish royal entries in the sixteenth century, while reiterating that a sovereign's main civic task was to secure peace and concord, were increasingly used to promote royal status and policies.⁹ Moreover, the imagery used was increasingly secular. The function and nature of royal entries thus increasingly differed from those of religious festivals such as the St Giles' procession in Edinburgh in 1558. Entries in fact tried to usurp religious enthusiasm: the notion of the sovereign as a kind of messiah, and the entry as part of the religion of royalty, was common in early modern entries, with the sovereign increasingly functioning as a redemptive figure carried processionaly through the community in order to affirm a more secular social order, controlled by the crown rather than the church.¹⁰ In response, religious processions could become a focal point for popular

⁷ Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament*, 118, 121.

⁸ J. Hankins (ed.), *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge, 2000), 11. G. Wickham, *Early English Stages, 1300 to 1660*, 2 vols. (reprint, with corrections, London and New York, 1980), i, 78, notes that both Elizabeth I's and James VI and I's reigns started with 'virtues' pageantry. On the advice to princes tradition, see S. L. Mapstone, 'The Advice to Princes Tradition in Scottish Literature, 1450–1500' (University of Oxford DPhil thesis, 1986); R. J. Lyall, 'Politics and poetry in fifteenth and sixteenth century Scotland', *Scottish Literary Journal*, 3 (1976), 5–29, at pp. 17–26.

⁹ B. Guenée and F. Lehoux, *Les entrées royales françaises de 1328 à 1515* (Paris, 1968), as quoted in Gray, 'Royal entry', 11.

¹⁰ Kipling, *Enter the King*, especially pp. 20–47; E. P. Dennison and M. Lynch, 'Crown, capital and metropolis: Edinburgh and Canongate: the rise of a capital and an urban court', *Journal of Urban History*, 32 (2005), 22–43, at p. 38; J. Norman, 'William Dunbar's rhetoric of power', in G. Caie *et al.* (eds.), *The European Sun* (East Linton, 2001), 195.

dissent which a call for reformation could radicalise, turning a procession from a celebration of harmony into an occasion for disrupting it.

The 1558 royal wedding in France and the St Giles' riot in Edinburgh thus become two different kinds of crown-subject dialogue, each with its own position within 'the dialectic of accessibility and inaccessibility' to the sovereign: a hierarchical one that prioritises legal and economic structures such as dynasty, office and status, and a communitarian one that stresses more affective unities such as community, people and religion.¹¹ The sovereign's ability to blend the languages of both community and hierarchy and thus gain access to a consensual community was likely to determine success or failure as a ruler, at least according to contemporary political thinking. From the subjects' point of view, access to the sovereign was the critical factor in their public dialogue with the crown, and under Mary of Guise such access had proved possible if one used a similar blend of the languages of both community and hierarchy. Access to the sovereign was the key political metaphor of Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* (Scotland's only surviving pre-Reformation play, performed in 1552 and 1554), which staged opportunities for liminal energies to rise to the cultural surface—energies that advance the commonweal at the expense of certain established structures, yet without breaking them. Instead, the play rewarded the kind of potentially revolutionary force that ultimately allowed itself to be absorbed back into hierarchies and structure (John the Commonweal), while it warned against the kind of radicalism, as represented in the play by Pauper, that did not.

The St Giles' riot of 1558, like Mary queen of Scots' entry of 1561 and Alexander Scott's 'New Yeir Gift' poem to Mary (to be discussed below), was similarly about access to the sovereign and about guiding any political forces within Scotland that showed signs of breaking away from existing hierarchies back into—either existing or revised—centripetal structures. The new Protestant town council in Edinburgh in 1561 understood the political importance of entries, and was willing to take considerable financial risks in order to make Mary's 1561 entry convey its agenda to the queen in a most forceful manner.¹² However, some of the energy and language of the 1558 riot on this occasion invaded the

¹¹ Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament*, 73; V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago, Ill., 1969), 96.

¹² A. R. MacDonald, 'The triumph of Protestantism: the burgh council of Edinburgh and the entry of Mary queen of Scots, 2 September 1561', *IR*, 48 (1997), 73–82.

royal entry tradition. The result was more of an ambush than an entry. Douglas Gray called it 'perhaps the most extraordinary royal entry recorded', in which the new Protestant council conveyed an uncompromisingly Protestant message: 'it would be hard to find a more extreme or intense example of a tendentious "message" being given to a monarch', its apocalyptic imagery and militant Protestantism rehearsing the community's possible rejection of its sovereign and the political model she represented.¹³ Crucially, it replaced the traditional dialogical nature of entries by 'a programme of pageants both monitory and minatory'.¹⁴

Mary understood the importance of such performed public dialogues between crown and subject, having witnessed many at close hand in France. A month after her entry she caused the dismissal of four bailies of the Edinburgh town council and its staunchly Protestant provost, Archibald Douglas of Kilspindie, under whose provostship the entry had been organised.¹⁵ Nevertheless, from a royal point of view, unfinished business remained. Later in 1561, entries into Perth and St Andrews also proved difficult, and by Christmas Mary still had not entered her kingdom and capital on her own terms.¹⁶ But Yuletide brought formal occasions at which, as at an entry, new beginnings could be made that might reflect a happier understanding between sovereign and subjects. New Year was traditionally the moment to articulate new beginnings and give these a positive spin; sovereigns dispensed gifts while their subjects sought their monarch's attention, often by presenting verses or books to her or him in person. Moreover, crucial to the celebratory character of the occasion—again, as at an entry—was the notion that subjects and sovereign shared an ideology. A public occasion at which that ideology might be newly defined, such as an entry or New Year celebration, would thus, paradoxically, attempt to bring into being the very thing it purported to celebrate, namely that both parties already shared an 'ideology which would govern the mutual relations of ruler and ruled'.¹⁷ Such assumed or projected common ground characterised New Year gifts as well as entries.

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¹³ Gray, 'Royal entry', 27.

¹⁴ MacDonald, 'Mary Stewart's entry', 108.

¹⁵ M. Lynch, *Edinburgh and the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1981), 96–8.

¹⁶ Keith, *History*, ii, 84, 86; *CSP Scot.*, i, 555.

¹⁷ MacDonald, 'Mary Stewart's entry', 101.

The 1561 entry spectacularly failed to find such common ground between sovereign and political community. It is the contention of this chapter that moderate forces among the educated elite of Edinburgh and at court used Mary's first New Year back in Scotland to erase the memory of that entry. They found a spokesperson in the poet Alexander Scott, a former Chapel Royal prebendary who had been a trusted servant of the royal family in the 1540s, one closely involved with the household of the infant Mary queen of Scots.¹⁸ He here turns his 'New Yeir Gift' poem to Mary (henceforth *NYG*) into a welcome poem which includes many of the components and emphases that normally feature in a royal entry. The poem thus capitalises on, by creating, the assumed 'shared ideology' that is characteristic of both New Year gifts and entries, as discussed in the previous paragraph. It thereby encourages as well as enables both Mary and her subjects to surmount and overgo the awkward entry of September 1561.¹⁹ The custom of involving poets and lettered men in the organisation of royal entries, making them spokespersons for the community, puts Scott's *NYG* in a long-standing tradition of literary texts provided for royal entries. Indeed, the poem's subtlety betrays exactly the kind of political as well as literary understanding that is required for making a contribution to that tradition. Thus, Scott astutely transfers the use of the virtues motif in advice to princes literature and entries to the genre of gift poems, by making the cardinal virtues provide the framework within which, as well as the reason why, the proposed affiliation between the different parties as suggested by his literary gift should come into force. Such intergeneric practice shows Scott's keen awareness of the fact that the language of virtue had become the new political language.

New Year poems centred on 'the affirmation of peaceful solidarity and the establishment of rank', and, while gift exchanges generally could put pressure on existing socio-political hierarchies by proposing subtle alterations in them, they ultimately 'fostered allegiances and affirmed hierarchical relationships'.²⁰ New Year gift poems that are presented to sovereigns

¹⁸ T. van Heijnsbergen, 'Scott, Alexander (c.1520–1582/3)', *ODNB* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24857>, accessed 24 Nov. 2006].

¹⁹ The poem is best consulted in J. Cranstoun (ed.), *The Poems of Alexander Scott* (STS, 1896), 1–8, or in A. K. Donald (ed.), *The Poems of Alexander Scott* (Early English Text Society, 1902), 3–9.

²⁰ J. Donawerth, 'Women's poetry and the Tudor-Stuart system of gift exchange', in M. E. Burke et al. (eds.), *Women, Writing and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain* (New York, 2000), 6; L. M. Klein, 'Your humble handmaid: Elizabethan gifts of needlework', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 50 (1997), 459–93, at p. 461.

thus, in this respect like entries, mark a moment at which relationships between monarch and subjects could be renegotiated, with advice passing from subject to sovereign. As such, they fit into a core tradition in Scottish state formation, in which 'kingship and national identity are closely intertwined' but in which defining these two concepts is 'not the sole prerogative of the monarch' and is frequently the subject of literary texts. Kingship in this Scottish tradition is central to the formation of nationhood but always 'predicated on the congruence of its interests with those of the political community'.²¹

In the medieval political theory of the king's two bodies, the monarch's natural body is mortal, but his or her spiritual body transcends such earthly vulnerability.²² This capacity confers on the sovereign the hereditary, divine right to rule, ensuring the continuity of monarchy even when the monarch has died. Sovereigns therefore tended to emphasise lineage and legitimate bloodlines, presenting dynastic kingship as a concern for the continued benefit of the Christian community and, consequently, the embodiment of moderate and centripetal civic policies. Royal entries and their narrated accounts therefore often explicitly detail the monarch's bloodline and emphasise the need for legitimate heirs. Both are prominent in Scott's *NYG*, too, and explain the dynastic emphasis of the poem's opening, as will be detailed below.

Recent scholarship has indicated how otherwise perplexing political phenomena in mid-sixteenth-century Scotland can be explained if we view them in dynastic terms. Thus, Mary of Guise prioritised dynastic over religious concerns, protecting the latter by pursuing the former, until a point was reached at which a critical mass of opposition exposed her unwillingness to separate these two goals and pursue more radical church reforms.²³ Until then, she protected her daughter's position by allowing—and thus partly controlling—criticism of the Catholic clergy in Scotland, such as vented in Lyndsay's *Satyre*.

A few years later, Mary queen of Scots' return to Scotland coincided with a political situation and climate in which her dynastic interests

²¹ S. Mapstone, 'Scotland's stories', in J. Wormald (ed.), *Scotland: a History* (Oxford, 2005), 307, 308.

²² E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ, 1957), is the *locus classicus* for an analysis of this concept.

²³ P. Ritchie, *Mary of Guise in Scotland, 1548–1560: a Political Career* (East Linton, 2002); R. A. Mason, 'Renaissance and Reformation: the sixteenth century', in Wormald (ed.), *Scotland*, 127; C. C. Hulley, 'Marie de Guise' (University of Washington PhD thesis, 1943), 260.

were still best served by reconciliatory policies. In 1559–60 the notion that force should be eliminated from religious controversy had taken root at the highest level in France, and Mary, too, had been exposed to this idea.²⁴ At the Colloquy of Poissy (September 1561) even the inquisitorial Cardinal of Lorraine, the powerful brother of Mary of Guise and, most likely, adviser of Mary herself (the Guises held a family conference a week before Mary returned to Scotland on 14 August),²⁵ temporarily steered a reconciliatory course, careful not to trigger sedition by overplaying his Catholic hand but focusing instead on separating Lutherans from Calvinists.²⁶ Mary continued such a policy of dividing rather than confronting the opposition, seeking to win the hearts and minds of those Protestants in Scotland who were less fundamentally opposed to her faith. Moreover, in his reports sent to England in the winter of 1561–2, the English ambassador Thomas Randolph frequently wrote how Mary seemed genuinely to seek ‘amity’ between Scotland and England.²⁷ Such sentiments were shared by prominent Scottish politicians, notably Lord James Stewart and William Maitland, who also put political ‘quyetnes’ ahead of theological absolutes.²⁸ Scott’s NYG is informed by these same emphases, on dynasty, commonweal, concord, and on trying to make two types of reform find common ground, the one from within the existing hierarchy that the other was trying to level.

Scott articulates his political understanding of the situation through a particular use of his poetic abilities, derived from past Scottish makars. One of these is that of purposefully combining different genres, a characteristic feature of the Scottish literary tradition that allows Scott to include images, tones and intentions that mimic those of entry poems, amongst others. His poem can thus speak with a wider range of voices and accommodate different perspectives. A precedent for such generic inventiveness is provided by the 1537 entry and welcome speeches for Madeleine, James V’s first French bride, which had to be turned into

²⁴ On how Scottish debates on confessional cohabitation echoed French ones, see W. I. P. Hazlett, ‘Prophecy and politics: the exchanges between John Knox and Mary, queen of Scots, on religious freedom of conscience’, in M. Rose (ed.), *Histoire et herméneutique: mélanges pour Gottfried Hammann* (Geneva, 2002), 185, 189–93.

²⁵ M. Loughlin, ‘The Career of Maitland of Lethington, c.1526–1573’ (University of Edinburgh PhD thesis, 1991), 117.

²⁶ N. M. Sutherland, ‘The Cardinal of Lorraine and the *Colloque* of Poissy, 1561: a reassessment’, in her *Princes, Politics and Religion, 1547–1589* (London, 1984).

²⁷ *CSP Scot.*, i, 550, 559, 562, 575–7, 580; Keith, *History*, ii, 98–99, 104n., 114, 120.

²⁸ See Moray’s letters of 6 Aug. 1561 to Elizabeth and to Cecil: *CSP Scot.*, i, 540–1; Loughlin, ‘Maitland of Lethington’, 99–102.

laments when she died within weeks of setting foot on Scottish soil. Lyndsay's 'Deploration of the Deith of Quene Magdalene' details how her entry would have been if it had taken place, thus effectively describing an entry within a lament, prioritising the potential for social continuity of the former over the disruptive finality of the latter.²⁹ NYG displays similar generic dexterity, for example by embedding a satirical study of contemporary social conditions within a welcome poem.³⁰ Crucially, it is also effectively a welcome speech that incorporates key features associated with entries, thus aligning itself with the real entry of September 1561, but only in order to overwrite the message of that entry more effectively, with a much more constructive message of welcome to the queen. Its opening 'Welcomes' echo those of the poem presented at the 1561 entry, but outdo those in quality and quantity:³¹

Welcum illustrat ladye and oure quene
 Welcum oure lyone with the floure delyce
 Welcum oure thrissil with the Lorane grene
 Welcum oure rubent roiss vpoun the ryce
 Welcum oure jem and joyfull genetryce
 Welcum oure beill of Albion to beir
 Welcum oure plesand princes maist of pryce
 God gif the grace aganis this guid new yeir.

That such a rhetorical opening links Scott's NYG to the tradition of entry poems also appears from Patrick Hume's *The Promine* (1579), which celebrates James VI's official entry into public life as a king. Descending from Stirling Castle, James is greeted by a hail of 'welcomes', very much like Scott's opening stanza.³² Similarly, in Prologue 12 of his *Eneados* (1513), Gavin Douglas hails the month of May with fourteen lines beginning with 'Welcum', which suggests that such passages mark the arrival of a benevolent ordering principle that is in tune with, or even represents, God's creation.³³ In his poem celebrating the entry of Margaret Tudor into Aberdeen (1511), William Dunbar had reported how

²⁹ J. H. Williams (ed.), *Sir David Lyndsay. Selected Poems* (Glasgow, 2000), 101–8.

³⁰ As noted by A. A. MacDonald, 'Scottish poetry of the reign of Mary Stewart', in Caie *et al.* (eds.), *The European Sun*, 45–6.

³¹ The 1561 poem is in MacDonald, 'Mary Stewart's entry', 109–10.

³² P. Hume, *The Promine*, in D. Laing (ed.), *Early Popular Poetry of Scotland and the Northern Border*, 2 vols., revised by W. C. Hazlitt (London, 1895), ii, 268–78 (ll. 159–66).

³³ D. F. C. Coldwell (ed.), *Virgil's "Aeneid", translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas*, 4 vols. (STS, 1957–64), iv, 73–4 (ll. 252–65).

Aberdonians used a similar phrase to welcome James IV's queen: 'Welcum, our quein'.³⁴ The point is not the similarity in words; it is a self-evident phrase to welcome a queen, even in Aberdeen. Rather, Scott's use of it is an unusual way of opening a New Year gift poem to a queen who had already been officially welcomed four months earlier; but it makes sense if Scott envisaged his poem as forming, at some level, part of an entry of Mary into her own kingdom and therefore modelled his poem on the blueprint of such an event.

Other key ingredients of *NYG* likewise imitate royal entries. The celebration of Mary's ancestry through heraldic reference in these opening lines evokes the kind of imagery well known from entry pageantry, with its heraldic decorations and painted pedigrees often in the form of genealogical trees.³⁵ Linked to this is the usual emphasis of royal entries on the issue of marriage and legitimate succession (ll. 6, 184–92). Scott also urges Mary to base her policies on the four cardinal virtues, a staple component of entry imagery.³⁶ Crucially, *NYG* uses a mixture of praise and exhortation, a key characteristic of entries and of advice to princes literature.

In line with the coded nature of entries, Scott's opening stanza contains a politically meaningful mixing of genres. Scott introduces Marian iconography by referring to his queen as a 'rubent roiss' (l. 4), a popular image of the Virgin. This prioritises pre-Reformation traditions over Reformed sensibilities, but Scott is careful to make those same traditions provide an alternative, less Catholic reading of this stanza, by blending this biblical rose with the rose of courtly love poetry as well as with the

³⁴ P. Bawcutt (ed.), *The Poems of William Dunbar*, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1998), i, 65, l. 55; Dunbar's 'Ballade of... Barnard Stewart', Duke of Albany (1508), also has several salvos of 'Welcome' (*ibid.*, 177–9).

³⁵ Heraldic imagery in 1503: A. J. Mill, *Mediaeval Plays in Scotland* (St Andrews, 1927), 178–9. 1511: Bawcutt, *Dunbar*, i, 65, ll. 37–8 (see note in ii, 305–6). 1579: Mill, *Mediaeval Plays*, 194; Juhala, 'Household and Court', 196. 1590: Mill, *Mediaeval Plays*, 204, n. 2; Stevenson, *Scotland's Last Royal Wedding*, 115; Juhala, 'Household and Court', 200. 1633: Mill, *Mediaeval Plays*, 216.

³⁶ 'Virtues' pageantry in 1503: Mill, *Mediaeval Plays*, 178. In 1561 there are three virgins 'in maist precious attyrement' (Mill, *Mediaeval Plays*, 190) identified as Love, Justice and Policy, and four unnamed fair virgins 'in the maist hevenlie clething'; these probably represented the three theological and four cardinal virtues, as suggested by their reappearance in 1579: Mill, *Mediaeval Plays*, 194, n. 1; Juhala, 'Household and Court', 196. Sir P. Walker, *Documents Relative to the Reception at Edinburgh of the Kings and Queens of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1822), 31. 'Virtues' pageantry in 1590: Mill, *Mediaeval Plays*, 203; Stevenson, *Scotland's Last Royal Wedding*, 111; Juhala, 'Household and Court', 200.

heraldic flower, here, suggestively, the Tudor rose. Nevertheless, Scott's references to the Virgin in *NYG* are unmistakable. 'Flour delyce' (l. 2) is the lily of the French royal coat of arms and thus mirrors the heraldic allusion to the Tudor rose, but at the same time it is 'a type of lily... often shown in depictions of the Annunciation and believed to symbolise [the Virgin] Mary's royalty and also her chastity'.³⁷ 'Genytryce' (l. 5) is likewise a standard literary reference to the Virgin Mary, as the *DOST* entries for this word show. Considering Scott's careful, deliberate and informed use of earlier Scottish verse and its conventions elsewhere, he was undoubtedly aware of the cumulative Marian symbolism in *NYG*, which effectively hails Mary in more ways than one.

The formal precision seen in Scott's other lyrics is put to good use here, too. In accordance with the medieval political theology of the king's two bodies, literary texts often transferred the qualities of the monarch's body from the physical, material realm into the spiritual sphere. This idea is here fittingly and neatly merged with the language of dynastic politics: Scott's opening lines alternate between dynastic-heraldic (ll. 1, 3 and 6) and Christian (ll. 2, 4–5, 7) discourse,³⁸ culminating in the 'grace' of the refrain line that brings these sacred and profane registers together, blending the Queen's spiritual grace ('Hail, Mary, full of grace') with her more worldly grace of mortal royalty. Scott interweaves the physical dimension of Mary's royalty with its spiritual counterpart, foregrounding her desiderated roles as intermediary in conflict and dynastic mother of a redemptive power, the 'beill [i.e. protector] of Albion' (l. 6) that she will hopefully deliver. At the same time, at this stanza's centre there still remains the 'rubent roiss' of marriageable femininity.

The rest of Scott's poem continues to apply the language of advice with the rhetorical control of a lyricist in order to produce a framework sturdy enough to balance a wide range of genres, perspectives and topics. After its intricate and multi-purpose opening stanza, Scott's poem has six stanzas (2–7) with general advice: use reason (stanza 2), based on the cardinal virtues (4), to establish the 'trew' religion (3); dispense justice 'equale without discrepance' (4) and choose good counselors to serve the commonweal, so that it in turn will serve you (5); to maintain stability, ensure that debates on religion are conducted only by

³⁷ Bawcutt, *Dunbar*, ii, 323, note to l. 42.

³⁸ 'Princes maist of pryce' (l. 7) is modelled on the standard reference to Christ as 'prince of prys'.

those authorised to do so (6–7). Five stanzas (8–12) then condemn in strong terms the abuses of the pre-Reformation church. Coming exactly halfway, stanzas 13–14 form the centre of the poem in qualitative as well as quantitative terms, expressing the hope that, under Mary’s rule, ‘rycht and reasoun . . . may rute’ (l. 111) in Scotland. The next five stanzas (15–19), focusing on the abuses perpetrated by opportunists who have embraced Protestantism for material reasons, mirror in quantitative and qualitative terms stanzas 8–12 and their critique of the old church. Stanzas 20–6, mirroring stanzas 2–7, provide advice to the sovereign, but that advice is now of a more particular nature, offering practical suggestions on how to maintain order and create a splendid court which will attract suitors and thus lead to healthy royal offspring. Stanzas 25–6, the final stanzas of the poem proper, recur to the dynastic promise of the poem’s beginning by referring to the well-known prophecy that a male descendant in the ninth degree of Robert the Bruce, born of a French Queen, ‘shall rule all Britain to the sea’ (discussed below). The poem as a whole endorses several of the Reformers’ starting points—as is the case with Lyndsay’s verse, this need not prove anything about Scott’s personal religious persuasion at the time of writing—but, crucially, its checks and balances allow those with different confessional backgrounds a role in the wider political dialogue that the poem itself develops. Unlike the 1561 entry, this ‘welcome’ is not averse to compromise for the sake of institutional continuity within a civic commonweal, and the intention is to trigger a similarly accommodating response from the sovereign.

* * *

Certain poems of the reign of James V prepared the way for Scott, especially texts offering advice to princes.³⁹ They clearly reflect the concerns of a closely-knit coterie that urges the king to align his governance of the country with that of his own body,

For quha can nocht him self gyd nor awance
 Quhy suld ane provynce do on him depend
 To gyd him self that hes na purveance.⁴⁰

³⁹ A. A. MacDonald, ‘William Stewart and the court poetry of the reign of James V’, in J. H. Williams (ed.), *Stewart Style, 1513–1542: Essays on the Court of James V* (East Linton, 1996), 188–91, 195, 198.

⁴⁰ W. Stewart, ‘Precellend prince, havand prerogatyve’, in W. T. Ritchie (ed.), *The Bannatyne Manuscript Written in Tyme of Pest, 1568*, 4 vols. (STS, 1928–34), ii, 232 (fo. 89a), ll. 45–7.

These lines by William Stewart, from a poem included in the same section of the Bannatyne Manuscript as *NYG*, are echoed in Scott's poem: 'Thai gyde nocht ill that governis weill thame sell' (l. 99).⁴¹ Such governance should be based on the four cardinal virtues, which are also evoked by Alexander Kyd in the advice to princes poem that follows *NYG* in the Bannatyne Manuscript.⁴² This section of the manuscript also includes a dream vision by Stewart in which Lady Verity names the four cardinal virtues together with 'commounweill and auld experience' as the first qualities of an ideal court.⁴³

These poems are clearly of a kind with the political ideas and language of John Bellenden and David Lyndsay, the major poets of James V's reign.⁴⁴ Their views regarding the social responsibility of monarch and church in service of the commonweal provided Scott with the moral and political concepts for *NYG*, in which he tells Mary:

... on the commoun weill haif e and eir
Preiss ay to be protectrix of the pure. (ll. 38–9)

The similarity of Bellenden's ideas to those of Lyndsay and lesser-known writers such as William Stewart has been noted before.⁴⁵ Explaining the reasons behind his translation of *Livy*, Bellenden's ideas are also clearly close to the socio-political perspective that informs *NYG*:

Myne auctor schewis, and sum tyme will declare
The damage of divisoun populare,
Quhilk haistelie (quhare na concorde is socht)
The commoun weill resoluiss in to nocht.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Sir Richard Maitland's 'My sone, in court gif thou plesis remaine', and its refrain, 'He reullis weill that weill in court can guyde', are rewritings of William Dunbar's poem, 'To dwell in court, my freind, gife that thou list', with its refrain 'He rewllis weill that weill him self can gyd'. There was clearly an ongoing discussion in sixteenth-century Scottish culture regarding the integrity of the self in its courtly environment. See P. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar* (Oxford, 1992), 141–2; A. A. MacDonald, 'Sir Richard Maitland and William Dunbar: textual symbiosis and poetic individuality', in S. Mapstone (ed.), *William Dunbar, 'The Nobill Poyet'* (East Linton, 2001), 139–40.

⁴² Ritchie (ed.), *Bannatyne Manuscript*, ii, 243 (fo. 92b), ll. 33–7.

⁴³ Ritchie (ed.), *Bannatyne Manuscript*, ii, 230 (fo. 88b), ll. 65–6.

⁴⁴ Williams, *Lyndsay*, 38, ll. 1065–8, and 53, ll. 379–90. On Lyndsay's concern with the commonweal, see C. Edington, *Court and Culture in Renaissance Scotland: Sir David Lindsay of the Mount* (Amherst, Mass., 1994), especially pp. 115–41.

⁴⁵ MacDonald, 'William Stewart', 190–1, 197–8.

⁴⁶ W. A. Craigie (ed.), *Livy's History of Rome: the First Five Books translated into Scots by John Bellenden, 1533*, 2 vols. (STS, 1901–3), i, 3.

Lyndsay's *Dreme* (c.1526) and *Complaynt* (1530), both reprinted in 1559, resemble Scott's *NYG* in positing the four virtues as the cornerstone of good government and the commonweal, while Lyndsay's *Testament of the Papyngo* (1530), also reprinted in 1559, indicates that its author agrees with the above emphasis on royal self-governance:

Address the first, abufe all uther thyng,
 Tyll put thy bodye tyll sic ordinance
 That thyne vertew thyne honour may avance;
 For quhou suld precis governe gret regionis,
 That can nocht dewlie gyde thare awin personis? (ll. 292–6)⁴⁷

A revealing comparison is that between, on the one hand, *NYG* and Lyndsay's last writings, and, on the other, Knox's inaugural sermon in 1547. Lyndsay's *Buke of the Monarche* (1554) was a direct response to the issues raised by that sermon, and Scott's *NYG* contributes to this ongoing discussion.⁴⁸ Lyndsay agreed with the Reformer on pilgrimage, celibacy and fasting as well as—more particularly in *Ane Satyre*—the selling of pardons, but he disagreed with Knox on the role of good works to procure salvation. He rejected justification by faith alone, and deliberately avoided discussing the mass. *NYG* in all these respects concurred with Lyndsay. It raised these same key targets of the Reformers, but Scott left much room for dialogical manoeuvre. Thus, he stressed the value of good works, avoiding extreme notions of justification by faith alone (l. 109: 'Wordis without werkis availyeis nocht a cute'). Likewise, Scott shares Lyndsay's social conservatism, as expressed in their dislike of upstarts who have little learning yet quarrel with 'letterit men' about scripture (*NYG*, l. 52; *Papyngo*, ll. 392–94). 'With mess nor matynes' will Scott meddle, leaving that to 'doctouris...devyne' who are 'cunningy in clergie' (ll. 97, 101–2; see also ll. 50–54).

This emphasis on education raises an important point: attention to key Reformation issues must not hide this poem's didactic-humanist framework. Scott's derogatory reference to 'sophistrie' (l. 114) might superficially be read as anti-Catholic thunder, but given Scott's careful positioning of himself in a range of discourses in *NYG* he is likely

⁴⁷ Williams, *Lyndsay*, 68.

⁴⁸ Knox, *Works*, i, 189–92; Edington, *Court and Culture*, 176. The actual title of Lyndsay's poem is *Ane Dialog betwix Experience and ane Courteour*, but 'The Buke of the Monarche' became its popular title, derived from the printer's running header. It is best consulted in *The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, 1490–1555*, 4 vols., ed. D. Hamer (STS, 1931–6), i, 197–386.

to have been sensitive to the distinction that contemporary humanists made between 'true eloquence', i.e. eloquence as a means to propel people towards virtue, and 'sophistry', the circumlocutionary logic of scholastic thought. Nevertheless, these same humanists emphasised that such emotive, aesthetic and ethical rather than intellectual persuasion should be based on balanced, constructive synthesis and unhurried design, in order to persuade. Scott's *NYG* provides precisely that. It makes good social use of eloquence, and does not merely report on socio-political realities but actively becomes itself one of the forces that *create* these realities, by providing deliberative advice that is itself conducive to action.⁴⁹ The poem in this respect instances a humanist use of vernacular literature, i.e. of literature as primarily a form of eloquence that served an active public function in the interest of the civic community.

* * *

The poets in James V's reign had emphasised that the monarch's 'prime duty was to preserve the existing structure of society; while one of his main responsibilities was to prevent sedition because it broke down the integral order of society and altered the delicate mechanism of its component parts.'⁵⁰ The only extant version of *NYG* appears in the Bannatyne Manuscript, in the midst of these advisory poems from James V's reign.⁵¹ It is the only poem within that sequence that recognisably refers to contemporary events. Written by the foremost poet of Mary's reign, it was clearly seen as the most significant contemporary text representing those core political ideals that mattered to the compiler and to the manuscript's implied readers, and the poem emerges as the imprint or even 'manifesto' of the mindset lying behind the manuscript's composition.

What that mindset was, and who were the manuscript's—and thus *NYG*'s—implied readers, are issues that have been dealt with elsewhere.⁵²

⁴⁹ The description of humanist literary practice in this paragraph is based on H. H. Gray, 'Renaissance humanism: the pursuit of eloquence', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46 (1963), 497–514, at pp. 498–99, 507–8, 513.

⁵⁰ D. Shaw, 'John Knox and Mary, queen of Scots', in D. Shaw (ed.), *John Knox: a Quatercentenary Reappraisal* (Edinburgh, 1975), 62.

⁵¹ On this group of poems, see J. Hughes and W. S. Ramson, *Poetry of the Stewart Court* (Canberra, 1982), 97–101; Lyall, 'Politics and poetry', 22.

⁵² T. van Heijnsbergen, 'The interaction between literature and history in Queen Mary's Edinburgh: the Bannatyne Manuscript and its prosopographical context', in A. A. MacDonald, M. Lynch and I. B. Cowan (eds.), *The Renaissance in Scotland* (Leiden, 1994).

Its readership seems to have consisted largely of court servants, legists, merchants, clerics and minor lairds mainly located in or near Edinburgh. They held predominantly Christian-humanist views and pursued Erasmian-style reform, tending towards moderate, eirenic Protestantism that left intact certain pre-Reformation features. Mary was not hostile to such a brand of 'Protestantism characterised by civic responsibility and social conservatism'.⁵³ In return, *NYG* subtly supports its addressee's political ambitions. Scott understood that Mary was the 'key arch' of a dynastic edifice, 'not only a queen, but a Stewart, a Stuart, a Guise, a Tudor (and a Valois in-law)'.⁵⁴ But where the first three lines of *NYG* foreground the first three and the last of these dynastic identities, the verbal context, as discussed above, suggests that the rose with which Scott associates Mary in line 4 is not necessarily the heraldic, Tudor rose; it could equally well refer to the Virgin Mary and to the archetypal female of courtly love verse, and thereby draw a discreet veil over this particular (English) part of Mary's dynastic claim.

However, the final lines of this concentric poem duly return to this issue (ll. 193–200) and do support Mary's claim, through reference to a famous prophecy that claimed that Mary will indeed 'beir' (give birth to) the 'beill' (protector) of Albion, i.e. all of mainland Britain. This is a reworking of the prophecy of Bridlington, a fourteenth-century Yorkshire Augustinian, which enjoyed great currency in the sixteenth century.⁵⁵ This upholding of the Stewart claim to the English throne, which also featured prominently in contemporary French entries, at Mary's Paris wedding, and at James VI's baptism, not surprisingly touched a raw nerve with Elizabeth.⁵⁶ Scott's endorsement of Bridlington's prophecy shows that, although *NYG* represented a Reformed set of values, it also upheld the Stewarts' dynastic claim, even invoking a strongly Catholic prophecy—Bridlington's prophecy had been used in the 1530s to undermine Henry VIII's Reformation—to support it.⁵⁷ As many diplomatic

⁵³ Lynch, *Edinburgh*, 104.

⁵⁴ M. H. Merriman, 'Mary, Queen of France', in M. Lynch (ed.), *Mary Stewart: Queen in Three Kingdoms* (Oxford, 1988), 31.

⁵⁵ J. A. H. Murray (ed.), *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune* (Early English Text Society, 1875), pp. xxxiv, xxxvi, lxii.

⁵⁶ Merriman, 'Mary, Queen of France', 44; Henri II had already been represented as 'Henry IX' in an earlier entry (40). Lynch, 'Queen Mary's triumph', 13.

⁵⁷ S. L. Jansen Jaech, 'The "Prophecies of Rymour, Beid, and Marlyng": Henry VIII and a sixteenth-century political prophecy', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 16 (1985), 291–300, at p. 296.

letters of 1561–2 show, this dynastic claim was the one political goal that Mary refused to sacrifice in her search for ‘amity’ with Elizabeth,⁵⁸ and she would have been extremely pleased with *NYG*. At the same time, the poem no doubt ingratiated itself with the queen in order to make her more willing to accept, in return, her subjects’ reforms, brought about in her absence. The politics of Moray and Lethington are at work here, not those of radical reform.

Scott thus acknowledges Stewart claims to the English throne through Mary’s ‘French blude’, not via the recent French claim that she herself in fact already *was* Queen of England, but rather by anticipating that she will *give birth* to the sovereign who will rule all of Britain. This represented a dynastic ambition that Mary’s Scottish subjects, both Catholic and Protestant, could more readily share. Mary’s role was to unite Britain as the future mother of its next sovereign, rather than as a pawn of France. Arguably, even Elizabeth might not have been utterly opposed to an interpretation of this prophecy that implied that Mary was in fact willing to renounce her own claim to the English succession in favour of supporting that of her as yet unborn heir. In January 1562, such an interpretation may not have seemed an implausible proposition. That this topic was high on the political agenda is quite likely, given the increased anticipation that month of a meeting between the two queens.⁵⁹

The poem’s final emphasis thus represents an ‘Annunciation’ of its own, based on, but drawing attention away from, the Marian opening towards the as yet unborn male, messianic heir. The latter, not Mary, becomes the apotheosis of the poem; Mary thus facilitates rather than usurps male prerogatives, and the opening stanza’s evocation of the Virgin Mother can be further toned down by interpreting it as emphasising the queen’s hoped-for intercessory role in any future conflict, identifying her own with her subjects’ interests.⁶⁰ This foregrounding of a future heir at the expense of Mary’s role as a monarch in her own right neutralised or at least delayed possible sectarian tensions as well as any immediate conflict between the Scottish and English monarchs. It also pre-empted contemporary unease

⁵⁸ *CSP Scot.*, i, especially Lord James Stewart’s letter to Elizabeth, pp. 540–1 (6 Aug. 1561), and William Maitland’s letter to Cecil, p. 589 (15 Jan. 1562).

⁵⁹ *CSP Scot.*, i, 590–1.

⁶⁰ Kipling, *Enter the King*, 319–24, 341–2. The finale of the 1561 entry had also used traditional imagery of the Virgin Mary to articulate its views on the Scottish queen, but towards a much more apocalyptic end: MacDonald, ‘Mary Stewart’s entry’, 107.

about female monarchy as seen in entries of other queens that emphasise the female ruler's subordinate status in a male dynasty.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the poem is able to underwrite Mary's crucial role in these various processes, while also helping her to meet her key political target.

NYG ends with two stanzas (27–28) that function as a formal signing off. The verbal acrobatics of the *envoy* (stanza 27) are rhetorically akin to those of the French *rhétoriciens* as already vernacularised by earlier makars such as Dunbar and Douglas. The quadruple internal rhymes in every line try to preserve the moment in a crescendo of sound effects, a technique that gives Scott's poem colour, sound and splendour—appropriately compatible with the pageantry and speeches at entries—as well as an interlocking surface veneer that protects the text against the wear and tear of time and criticism. This is a variation on the technique of poetic enamelling, as seen particularly in Dunbar, namely 'the application of style to matter as a process of enamelling' that transforms the impermanent event of an occasional poem such as *NYG* into enduring artifact.⁶² The poem in this way became the textual equivalent of the social and political intention of entries to preserve values and institutions from the past within a context of change. To counter potentially dangerous fluidity of meaning, such deliberately artificial verse embodied the notion that where language accords, as expressed through verbal and rhythmic concordance, there harmony reigns.

The poem's formal and quantitative characteristics thus enacted the reassurance that, ultimately, the world in which the events discussed took place was orderly and interpretable. In other words, *NYG* used its identity as literature to 'impose an artistic order on the indeterminacy or chaos of ordinary life', just as an entry did, and also to dramatise the interdependency between order and change in a way that put these opposites in a dialogical rather than—as the apocalyptic 1561 entry had done—mutually exclusive relationship.⁶³ The meticulously worked out balances in Scott's poem disempowered attempts to enlist this text for any single ideology. The poem made clear its expectation that the monarch considered serving the commonweal to be her priority, but shunned any mention of the legality of political resistance against rulers.

⁶¹ Kipling, *Enter the King*, 297–9, 307, 311, 316–8.

⁶² L. Ebin, 'Dunbar's "fresch anamalit termes celical" and the art of the occasional poet', *Chaucer Review*, 17 (1982–3), 292–9, at pp. 292, 293, 297.

⁶³ Gray, 'Royal entry', 14.

Instead, the poem almost subliminally asked Mary to accept the reforms that Scotland had just witnessed by using language that supported her main political ambitions.

Each section of *NYG* might thus be said to resemble an individual component of a 'virtual' entry, consistently offering rhetorical space for the monarch to 'enter'—into a dialogue. Scott offers the following sequence: welcome; gift (the poem itself); heraldic display; 'virtues' pageantry; and set speeches which blend didactic exhortation with praise, set within an advice to princes framework. Future concord and the entrant's authority are explicitly illustrated through established genealogy, buttressed by authoritative prophecy and underlined by a splendid and affirmative flourish. All this makes *NYG* a complex choreographed dialogue between subjects and sovereign, a welcome poem modelled on the rhetoric and imagery of royal entries.

* * *

Where and when was this textualised entry staged? Mary spent her first New Year's Eve back on Scottish soil in Holyrood Palace, but on 1 January she left Holyrood to go to the Palace of Seton, where she stayed until 5 January.⁶⁴ Lord Seton was a staunch Catholic, and head of a family with a pedigree of loyal service to the Crown. According to Bishop Lesley, he had been appointed by Mary of Guise as provost of Edinburgh in response to the St Giles' riot of 1558.⁶⁵ He was greatly disliked by the Protestants, but when Mary ordered the dismissal of key members of the Edinburgh town council shortly after her entry into Edinburgh—in part probably on account of the nature of that entry—she proposed Seton to be the new provost, possibly because, as Bishop Lesley claimed, he had been successful, after the St Giles' riot, in keeping Edinburgh 'in resonable guid ordour quhill the nixt symmer thaireftir'.⁶⁶

Although the candidate eventually appointed as Provost of Edinburgh in October 1561 was a Protestant, Mr Thomas MacCalzean, the new Council's more moderate composition may have encouraged the

⁶⁴ E. M. Furgol, 'The Scottish itinerary of Mary queen of Scots, 1542–8 and 1561–8', *PSAS*, 117 (1987), 219–31, 1:C1–D6, at fiche C4.

⁶⁵ John Lesley, *Historie of Scotland*, 2 vols., eds. E. G. Cody and W. Murison (STS, 1888–95), ii, 383. Seton's country residence in East Lothian became an important post-Reformation centre of Scottish Catholicism.

⁶⁶ Bishop John Lesley, as quoted in Knox, *Works*, i, 561.

kind of reconciliatory language of *NYG* to come to the fore.⁶⁷ Even more crucially, Seton's position in these matters shows that he was a royal favourite of considerable prominence. His sumptuous home, long since destroyed, was in its time 'the most perfect specimen in existence of Gallo-Scottish Renaissance', and was often called 'the Palace of Seton, because it was so frequently the abode of royalty'.⁶⁸ It was also the venue where Drummond presented his *Forth Feasting* to James VI on the latter's re-entry into Scotland in 1617, after a fourteen-year absence.⁶⁹ In other words, for the Stewarts Seton Palace was a place with a court-inclined cultural-political pedigree that was considered fit to serve as a theatre for the performance of royalty. Moreover, in the 1560s it was, after Stirling Castle, as close to a home ground for Mary as could be devised, away from Holyrood and from more radical urban elements in Edinburgh. At Seton, therefore, unlike at the September 1561 entry, an opportunity could be created for a more exclusive—and affirmative—meeting between monarch and community and for the performance of literature as politics in front of an enclosed audience—in short, for Scott's *NYG*.⁷⁰

There is an important precedent for a New Year gift being presented to a Scottish queen at Seton. Mary of Guise spent her last New Year there in December–January 1559–60; Edinburgh sent wax and three tuns of wine to her there.⁷¹ That the town could also present more 'performative' New Year gifts is shown by its council's decision in December 1554 to accept the 'farsche and play be William Lauder' as its New Year gift to the Regent.⁷² Yule festivities could be the occasion of more serious, political performance, too: thus, the embryonic version of Lyndsay's *Satyre* in 1540 was staged on 6 January in Linlithgow Palace, another royal retreat where the Stewarts could control their audience to a greater degree than was possible in Edinburgh. In other words, the presentation of *NYG*, read out in the ambience of Seton Palace, can be seen as fitting into something of a New Year tradition.

⁶⁷ Lynch, *Edinburgh*, 98.

⁶⁸ Monsignor Seton, *An Old Family, or, the Setons of Scotland and America* (New York, 1899), 76, 81. The illustrations on pp. 77–81 support the author's claim.

⁶⁹ Cummings, 'Drummond's *Forth Feasting*', 6.

⁷⁰ The possibility of Seton as a 'stage' for Scott's *NYG* was already mooted in MacDonald, 'Scottish poetry', 46. I hope to deal with this topic in more detail in a future publication.

⁷¹ *Edin. Recs.*, iii, 60.

⁷² *Edin. Recs.*, ii, 206.

It was on 5 January 1562, the day she returned from Seton to Holyrood Palace, that Mary sent Elizabeth the famous letter in which she rebuffed the English queen's request that she ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh—which would mean giving up her claim to the throne of England—while yet expressing, in tones of firm compromise, a desire for amity.⁷³ Scott's *NYG* complements Mary's political manoeuvring here, and the queen's stay at Seton provided the best possible occasion for its 'performance'.

* * *

Scott's *NYG* marked an important moment in Mary's 'creation of a royal court at once inclusive of competing factions and projecting royal authority over them' and the 'promotion of a more "civilised" society through the education of the lay elite.'⁷⁴ This exposes the cultural agenda that the poem supported. 'A royal entry... served to display the talents of artists and architects to the leading patrons of the realm, thus setting the tone for the cultural style of the reign.'⁷⁵ The same can be said of Scott's *NYG*, which projected a vision of an educated sovereign and court that protected an orderly commonweal in which public ceremony and cultural politics centred on images of concord. As anticipated at the beginning of the present chapter, weddings were another means to this end, by virtue of their function as a ritual that declared new beginnings based on a confluence of interests. Significantly, the earlier part of Mary's reign featured a string of high-profile weddings, which were arguably used as a means towards activating a courtly discourse of concord and affiliation. These weddings were also felt to anticipate the queen's own marriage. Barely two weeks after *NYG* must have been presented to Mary, and in the middle of a flurry of weddings in Scottish courtly circles, Randolph reported to Cecil: 'Men now begin to wish the Queen might be next.'⁷⁶ In this same letter, the English ambassador referred to an impending

⁷³ *CSP Scot.*, i, 586–7; Keith, *History*, ii, 133.

⁷⁴ Mason, 'Renaissance and Reformation', 111, 113.

⁷⁵ Juhala, 'Household and Court', 193–4.

⁷⁶ *CSP Scot.*, i, 590. In many cases, the queen determined the day of these courtly weddings, often also paying for such things as the accompanying masques. That a deliberate policy lay behind Mary's interest in her subjects' weddings also appears from a comment made by the French ambassador when Mary herself was contemplating marriage, in the spring of 1565: 'Elle a commencé à marier ses Quatre Maries... et dict qu'elle veult estre de la bande': J. Robertson (ed.), *Inventaires de la Royne d'escosse* (Bannatyne Club, 1863), p. xlvi. On pp. xlvi–li, Robertson provides more detail about Mary's involvement in arranging the weddings of some of those closest to her.

courtly wedding as a 'pagient', which underlines a key assertion of the present chapter, namely that contemporaries were acutely aware of the theatrical nature of public events such as weddings and entries, and that these were indeed seen as forms of carefully scripted political dialogue. Such politicisation of marriage followed a practice that Mary had witnessed in France after her own wedding in 1558, an event that was followed by 'sindre gret mariages maid in the Court'.⁷⁷ NYG, which even raised the prospect of a royal marriage to refrain-status in ll. 184 and 192, contributed to the development of a similar politicisation of matrimony and weddings and their attendant languages of concord in Scotland. It is one of many ways in which this poem, through the literary exploitation of the dialogical processes involved in crown-subject relations, as outlined above, adroitly outlined a political and cultural programme for Mary queen of Scots.

Finally, on the religious front Scott's poem shows that the rise of Protestantism in Scotland was not a relentless march towards an inevitably radical Reformation, as the 'Truthful tidings' from Geneva may suggest, but a much more measured process, reflecting—as NYG does—a complex pattern of religious loyalties in a community in which Catholic and Protestant views were often juxtapositional rather than mutually exclusive. The poem provides Mary with advice that reflects such a complex confessional situation, helping her to develop the appropriate political language in the politico-religious sphere, too. Moreover, NYG, when properly historicised, helps deconstruct further the myth of confessional polarisation offered by many early modern historians. Eliding explicitly aristocratic and clerical interests, NYG argues against religious fervour and instead favours a conservative, top-down magistrates' reformation, of the kind that was 'designed to foster the values and also to enhance the power of the élite' in order to serve the commonweal.⁷⁸ NYG and its manuscript context indeed suggest strongly that 'the key to the progress of the Reformation in the larger Scottish towns lies in tracing the route to consensus' among the urban oligarchy, and not in the seductive reductive of

⁷⁷ John Lesley, *The History of Scotland*, ed. T. Thomson (Bannatyne Club, 1830), 265.

⁷⁸ G. DesBrisay, M. Lynch and M. Pittock, 'The faith of the people', in E. P. Dennison, D. Ditchburn and M. Lynch (eds.), *Aberdeen before 1800: a New History* (East Linton, 2002), 294.

‘dramatised irreconcilables—“In religion there is na middis”’—of Knox’s *History*, or indeed of some of Knox’s opponents.⁷⁹ It is scholarship in the ‘middis’ of history, as instanced in many of the publications listed in the footnotes to the present chapter, that has permitted the apperception of these more complex historical truths.

⁷⁹ M. Lynch, ‘The Reformation in Edinburgh: the growth and growing pains of urban Protestantism’, in J. Obelkevich, L. Roper and R. Samuel (eds.), *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy* (London, 1987), 284. On the manuscript context of *NYG*, and in particular the composition of the Bannatyne MS, see Hughes and Ramson, *Poetry of the Stewart Court*, and important revisions thereof in A. A. MacDonald, ‘The Bannatyne Manuscript: a Marian anthology’, *IR*, 37 (1986), 36–47; *idem*, ‘The printed book that never was: George Bannatyne’s poetic anthology (1568)’, in J. M. M. Hermans and K. van der Hoek (eds.), *Boeken in de late Middeleeuwen* (Groningen, 1994); and *idem*, ‘The cultural repertory of Middle Scots lyric verse’, in G. J. Dorleijn and H. L. J. Vanstiphout (eds.), *Cultural Repertoires: Structure, Function and Dynamics* (Leuven, 2003).