WARTON LECTURE ON ENGLISH POETRY

ALEXANDER SCOTT AND SCOTTISH COURT POETRY OF THE MIDDLE SIXTEENTH CENTURY[1]

By JOHN MACQUEEN

Read 14 February 1968

GEORGE BANNATYNE divided his manuscript anthology—compiled, or at least completed, during the pestilence which in late 1568 afflicted Scotland—into five separate sections—'Ballatis of Theoligie', 'Verry Singular Ballatis full of Wisdome and Moralitie', 'Ballettis Mirry and uther solatius Consaittis set furth be divers ancient Poyettis', 'Ballattis of Luve', and 'The Fabillis of Esop with divers uthir Fabillis and Poeticall Workis maid and compyld be divers lernit Men'. My paper is based primarily on the fourth of those sections, 'Ballattis of Luve', from which a few leaves have been lost, but which at one time occupied folios 211a to 297b of the manuscript. Bannatyne clearly thought of the section as something complete in itself, and he made a further thematic subdivision into four parts, entitled respectively 'Songis of Luve', 'Remeidis of Luve', 'The Prayis of Wemen', and 'The Contempt of Blyndit Luve'. The entire section contains 143 poems, of which roughly 100 are love-lyrics. Sixty-six are attributed, sometimes erroneously, to

[1] For some of the material used in this paper, I am particularly indebted to the following works: J. Cranstoun, *The Poems of Alexander Scott* (Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh and London, 1896); K. Elliot and H. M. Shire, *Music of Scotland, 1500–1700* (*Musica Britannica*, xv, London, 1957); H. G. Farmer, *A History of Music in Scotland* (London, 1947); H. S. P. Hutchison, *The St. Andrews Psalter* (unpublished Edinburgh Mus. Doc. thesis, 1957); C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford, 1954); D. McRoberts (ed.), *Essays on the Scottish Reformation* (Glasgow, 1962); K. Muir, *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (London, 1949); J. Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London, 1961); W. Tod Ritchie, *The Bannatyne Manuscript* (S.T.S., 4 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1928–34); R. H. Robbins, *Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (Oxford, 1952). See also my 'Some Aspects of the Early Renaissance in Scotland', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, iii (1967), pp. 201–22. For advice and information I am also indebted to my friends and colleagues, Miss Winifred A. Maynard, Professor M. Dominica Legge, and Professor A. J. Steele.

named authors, and it is possible to name the authors of a few among the anonymous poems.

Not many scholars have examined this collection, but a few details are clear. One is the continuity which it displays with the English courtly love-lyric of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Several poems indeed are Scottish transliterations or adaptations of English originals. Bannatyne, for instance, showed his sense of historical development by including a Scottish version of the *Canticus Troili* from Book I of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, a poem, the first twenty-one lines of which, as Robinson observes,[1] form 'a fairly close rendering of Petrarch's Sonnet 88 (in Vita), "S'amor non è" '. Petrarch, of course, is the source from which derives much Western European love poetry of the later fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, while recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of Chaucer, and more particularly the *Troilus and Criseyde*, for the development of the English lyric. Bannatyne also attributes an anonymous lyric, clearly more nearly contemporary with himself, to 'ane Inglisman'—perhaps the court musician, Thomas Hudson.

Other instances are less obvious. Bannatyne shows no awareness that

> In to my Hairt emprentit is so soir
> Hir schap, hir forme and eik hir seymlines—

is in fact an extract from the complaint of the knight in Part II of Lydgate's *The Temple of Glas*, or that the mysterious

> I am as I am and so will I be,
> Bot how that I am nane knawis trewlie:
> Be it evill, be it weill, be I bund, be I fre,
> I am as I am, and so will I be—

is attributed to Sir Thomas Wyatt in the Devonshire manuscript. (I shall return later to a second apparent borrowing from Wyatt.)

Bannatyne equally is unaware of the more complicated English sources for a poem of which I quote the first two stanzas:

> Allace depairting, grund of wo
> Thou art, of everilk joy ane end!
> How suld I pairte my lady fro?
> How suld I tak my leif to wend?

[1] F. N. Robinson, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (2nd ed., Boston and London, 1957), p. 815.

Sen fals fortoun is nocht my frend
Bot evir castis me to keill,
Now, sen I most no langir lend,
I tak my leif aganis my will.

Fairweill, fairweill, my weilfair may,
Fairweill, fegour most fresche of hew,
Fairweill, the saiffar of assay,
Fairweill, the hart of quhyt and blew,
Fairweill, baith kind, curtas and trew,
Fairweill, woman withowttin ill,
Fairweill, the cumliest that evir I knew;
I tak my leif aganis my will.

The refrain, together with the second, third, and fourth stanzas, are taken directly from an English poem, preserved in Rawlinson MS. C. 813 of the early sixteenth century, and printed by Mr. R. H. Robbins in his *Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*. The first stanza is more original, but it is still closely related to a fragment set to music in Ashmole MS. 191 of the middle fifteenth century:

Alas, departyng is ground of woo!
  oþer songe can y not synge.
but why part y my lady fro,
  Syth love was caus of our metyng?
  þe bitter teris of hir wepyng
    myn hert hath pershid so mortaly,
  þut to the deth hit wil me bryng,
    but yf y se hir hastily.

This *contaminatio* probably results from the fact that one English poem had a tune, the other a refrain, and both a common metrical and stanzaic structure. Some adaptor, probably a Scot, of no little skill, has combined the two, rewriting the first stanza to introduce the refrain, while preserving the first line to indicate the tune.

Such a process, if it is accepted, suggests that at least one sixteenth-century Scottish poet may have interested himself in the relation of words and music in a way which paralleled the general English concern of the time. I speak from an almost complete ignorance of music and musical scholarship, but the assumption does not seem to contradict our knowledge of Scottish conditions at the time. Indeed, abundant evidence survives to show the mass of instrumental music and secular song which was familiar in the Scotland of the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries. The Lord Treasurer's accounts contain many references, as do the records of the burghs. Sang sculis existed in many of the burghs. Those were primarily ecclesiastical, but secular music has always had a tendency to encroach on religious music, and some masters of sang sculis are known to have composed secular pieces. All the major Scottish musicians of the time, in fact, were churchmen. The technicalities of musical theory figure prominently in the *Orpheus and Eurydice* of Robert Henryson (? *c.* 1420–*c.* 1490), and in *The Palice of Honour* (1501) of Gavin Douglas (?1474–1522). William Dunbar talks of the 'Musicianis, menstralis and mirrie singaris' at the court of James IV. Thirty-eight songs are listed in *The Complaint of Scotlande* (1549), while at least thirty of *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis* are, or have the appearance of being, adaptations of Scottish and English secular songs for more or less spiritual purposes.

Nor is the surviving music of the period either entirely anonymous, or a matter merely of folk-tunes. The full establishment by James IV of the Chapel Royal at Stirling (1501) quickened the musical life of Scotland and during the sixteenth century known composers included such formidable names as that of Robert Carver of Scone (1491–*c.* 1550), of whose compositions five masses and two motets have survived; Robert Johnson of Duns, whose dates are uncertain, but who was an approximate contemporary of Carver, and spent much of his life in England; Sir John Fethy (? *c.* 1480–? *c.* 1570), who was poet as well as composer, to whose work I shall return; and Andrew Blackhall (1536–1609), who before the Reformation was a canon of Holyrood, but who became a Presbyterian minister, and spent the greater part of his life at Musselburgh near Edinburgh. The latter three all wrote music for secular lyrics. The work of those men and their contemporaries is admittedly little known and almost never performed, but it has considerably impressed a number of distinguished musicologists, Sir Henry Hadow, for instance, describing Carver as 'this great forgotten master', while others have been scarcely less enthusiastic.

Two quotations will show, in quite different ways, the level of musical accomplishment in Scotland before the Reformation. One is the outcry of the Augustinian canon, Robertus Richardinus of Cambuskenneth, who in 1530 wrote a Latin *Commentary* on the Rule of his order, which he dedicated to his abbot, Alexander Mylne, the humanist author of the *Lives of the*

Bishops of Dunkeld, who was to become first president of the College of Justice in Edinburgh. *Bone deus*, exclaims Richardinus,[1] *quantum ocii boni hisce temporibus in Anglia et Scotia in una missa cantanda inaniter conterunt!*—how much good time they waste in England and Scotland singing a single mass! They can sing three at most in the course of a day, and that at the expense of all serious study. He contrasts the style of music encouraged by the abbot of Inchcolm, John Elliot or Elwand, and by Alexander Paterson, *sacrarius* of the Chapel Royal at Stirling. The method of those men is to emphasize meaning by allotting a single musical note to each syllable sung (*ubi litera una intelligitur cum nota*).

Several points emerge. Richardinus, writing from Paris, treats English and Scottish music as indistinguishable at a time when the musical prestige of England in Europe was high. The musical style which he dislikes clearly belongs to the school of which his fellow Augustinian Carver was the most distinguished Scottish exponent. Against it, he sets up the new Reformation ideal of a music subordinated to the words which it accompanies, an ideal which in Scotland at any rate was to wipe out much earlier musical accomplishment, but which also helped, as Mr. John Stevens has pointed out,[2] to establish the theory and practice of madrigal and lutenist composers in Elizabethan England. Mr. Stevens is inclined to limit this effect to the latter part of the sixteenth century, but one must reflect that Richardinus wrote in 1530, and was able to quote as exemplars John Elliot in Inchcolm and Alexander Paterson in Stirling. It is certain that the musical ideas of those men were not unique in the Europe of their day.

The general musical concern and accomplishment of the Scottish Augustinians is also to be noted. Robert Carver and Andrew Blackhall both belonged to that order, as did the poet and musician Alexander Scott, whose love-lyrics form the main topic of the latter part of this paper.

My second quotation dates from the latter part of the sixteenth century. It is the note which Thomas Wode, the post-Reformation vicar of St. Andrews, wrote in his manuscript *St. Andrews Psalter* for the first alto part of the canticle *Si quis diligit me*. He tells how Francis Heggie, 'ane noveice in the abbay

[1] G. G. Coulton, *Commentary on the Rule of St. Augustine by Robertus Richardinus* (Scottish Historical Society, Edinburgh, 1935), p. 80. Coulton's introduction and notes are very inadequate.

[2] Op. cit., p. 92.

of Sanctandrous', before 1547 added this further part to the four-part setting composed about 1530 by David Peebles (*c.* 1510–79). (Both composers, it will again be noted, were Augustinians.) When Wode wrote, the revolution which Richardinus helped to initiate had been completed:

> Now yee knaw that this is the fyft pairt maid to the four as David Pables first set it and presentit the sam to king Jamis the fyft quha wes ane musitian him selft; he had ane singular gud eir and culd sing that he had never seine before, but his voice wes rawky and harske. I have said in ane of thir buks that musik will pereishe, and this buke will shaw you sum resons quhy. We se be experiance that craft nor syence is not learnit bot to the end he may leive be it quhen he hes the craft or science; and if Doctor Farfax wer alive in this cuntry, he wald be contemnit and pereise for layk of mentinance; and sa of neid force it man dikeay.

Wode begins from the decay of church music, but it is obvious that his mind is on secular as well as ecclesiastical composition. By his references he draws an implicit contrast between the lack of musical patronage at the post-Reformation court of James VI and its presence before the Reformation at the courts of James V, Henry VII, and Henry VIII. (The note may well have been written during the minority of James VI, who certainly became a more active patron of music than Wode's words might suggest.) As for secular music, it may surely be assumed that James V's interests lay as much there as in sacred music, while Dr. Fayrfax, organist of St. Albans and Gentleman of the English Chapel Royal, is today best remembered for the manuscript song-book which bears his name (B.M. Add. MS. 5465), and which, as Dr. Stevens has remarked,[1] 'reflects the taste of the court under the first Tudor king. The songs, which are all in English, are of three kinds: two- and three-part songs on themes of courtly love; others, designed on a larger scale, treating of the Passion and Christ's Pleading with Man; lastly, topical, satirical and humorous songs.' The emphasis of the collection, in other words, is as much secular as religious, and none of it, strictly speaking, is church music.

In the general scope of its contents, the Fayrfax manuscript parallels, albeit on a smaller scale, the Bannatyne manuscript. Bannatyne included no musical scores, but some of the lyrics which he includes bear self-evident traces of the fact that they were written for music—even that Bannatyne copied them

[1] Op. cit., p. 4.

directly from a song-book. To give only one example, the second stanza of 'O Lusty May', an anonymous lyric, reads as follows:

> Than Esperus that is so bricht
> Till wofull hairtis castis his lycht
> With bankis that blumes on every bray/bis//
> And schuris ar sched furth of thair sicht
> Thruch glaidnes of this lusty May.

In a purely literary context, the word 'bis', *twice*, in line 3 is meaningless. By a fortunate chance, however, the original musical setting of the poem has survived, in each stanza of which the words which correspond metrically to 'on every bray' are to be repeated—indeed, in terms of the usual interpretation, which may, I am told, be wrong, are to be doubly repeated. For present purposes the precise musical interpretation does not matter; one need only emphasize that Bannatyne, probably inadvertently, transcribed a word which makes musical rather than literary sense, and thus seems to establish that at least one source for his text was a song-book.

Similar arguments might be advanced to show that at least half a dozen of Bannatyne's lyrics are ultimately derived from texts set to music, and that possibly they were written to be sung. For several the tune has survived. Invariably the setting is art, rather than folk, music—in a sixteenth-century secular context, that is to say, music composed for the court and the more leisured reaches of society. On more than one occasion evidence exists to prove a direct connection with the courts of James IV, James V, Mary of Guise, or Queen Mary. In addition, there is such indirect external evidence as the treatment in musical terms of the relationship between James V and his mistress Margaret Erskine (Lady Sensualitie) in David Lindsay's play, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*. Most direct of all is Bannatyne's inclusion of a poem by Lord Darnley, a poem probably written to further his suit with Queen Mary, whom he married in July 1565:

> Gife langour makis men licht,
> Or dolour thame decoir,
> In erth thair is no wicht
> May me compair in gloir:
> Gif cairfull thochtis restoir
> My havy hairt frome sorrow,
> I am for evirmoir
> In joy both evin and morrow.

Darnley's sufficiently accomplished control of metre and the paradoxes of courtly love need surprise no one. At least two other of his poems survive, one in Bannatyne, the second in the Devonshire manuscript, and he was raised in a circle where a modicum of literary accomplishment was taken for granted. His mother was Margaret Douglas, daughter of Henry VIII's sister Margaret Tudor, by her marriage to Archibald, Earl of Angus (her second marriage—her first, it will be recollected, was the Marriage of the Thistle and the Rose in 1503). Margaret Douglas was a member of the circle at the court of Henry VIII, which for us centres on the figure of Sir Thomas Wyatt. Several of her love-poems have been preserved in the circle's main literary memorial, the Devonshire manuscript. It is clear that Darnley grew up in an English tradition which was also acceptable to the Scottish court where he arrived in February 1565.

In a European context, of course, all this is nothing new. From the very beginning, as its name implies, the courtly love-lyric had been associated with skilled musicians and the courts of kings and noblemen. In Scotland, James I (1406–37) and his courtiers were already familiar with the conventions and accomplishments of the genre. But only with the middle years of the sixteenth century do individual poet-musicians begin to come into biographical focus. As musician the most important was certainly Sir John Fethy (? *c.* 1480–? *c.* 1570). The late C. S. Lewis made an appreciative but somewhat oblique reference to him in his volume of *The Oxford History of English Literature.*[1] 'It must not be supposed', he said, 'that Dunbar dominates the minor poets completely. In the beautiful lyric by "Fethe" or Fethy (Bannatyne CCCIX) the poignancy of the refrain, "Cauld, cauld culis the lufe that kendillis our het", depends on a quality of rhythm which is quite unlike Dunbar's.' The difference is certainly to be related to the fact, which Lewis seems not to have been aware of, that Fethy was a musician and composer of distinction. Thomas Wode has several notes about him, as for instance to the treble part of 'Shir Jhone Futhies Sang of Repentance':—'I call this man Shir Jhone that he might be knawin, for he wes a papeist preist, and the first trim organeist that ever wes in Scotland.' In the fifth book he notes that the song was 'composit be Shir Jhone Futhy, bayth letter and note', and adds 'This man wes the first organeist that ever brought in Scotland the curious new fingering and playing on

[1] Op. cit., pp. 99–100.

organs, and yit it is mair nor threescore yeiris since he cum hame. This is written I.M. V.c., fourscore and XII.' Wode, that is to say, wrote in 1592, and Fethy introduced the new technique in or about 1530. In January 1542 the Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland record the granting of liveries to 'Schir Johnne Fethyis childer that plays on the viols', probably in return for their services at the recent festivals of Christmas and Epiphany. The entry may indicate that Fethy was already in charge of the six boy clerics of the Chapel Royal at Stirling, for in 1545 he is mentioned as precentor of the Chapel Royal, and in 1563 it is noticed that his benefice was the parsonage and vicarage of St. Marie Kirk of Lowes, in Ettrick Forest, annexed since 1501 to the Chapel Royal. A document dating from about 1625 shows that the officials who drew rent from St. Marie Kirk were the chanter, the treasurer, and 'the Maister of the bairnis' in the Chapel Royal. Fethy may have combined at least two of those offices—and others also. In 1544 he was master of the Aberdeen Sang Scule. By 1551 he was master of the choir school of St. Giles in Edinburgh, a post which he held until 1568 when he renounced it and gave it over to Edward Henderson. He was then a prebend of the choir of St. Giles' Kirk. During the 1560s there are several references to him as a member of the Chapel Royal. The date of his death is unknown.

Two of Fethy's love-poems appear in Bannatyne's Fourth Pairt. I quote a stanza from the first to show how thoroughly his secular work belongs to the courtly tradition:

> My trewth is plicht unto my lufe benyng
> That meit and sleip is quyt bereft me fro.
> With luvaris mo of murnyng I may sing
> Without glaidnes, quhair evir I ryd or go.
> And I hir freind, quhy suld scho be my fo?
> Do as scho list, I do me in hir cure
> On to the deid to be hir serviture.

This is conventional enough with almost the only point of interest the reference to singing in line 3, a reference which *may* indicate that from the first the words were set to a tune, perhaps of Fethy's own composition.

More important as a poet, though not apparently as a musician, is Alexander Scott, the best of whose lyrics in their humorous, ironic, and passionate complexity are scarcely equalled by those of any other known Scottish poet. His work and his life illustrate almost every point I have tried to make in

the earlier part of this paper. All his poems are to be found in the Bannatyne manuscript. His life, distressingly often, remains obscure, but the few surviving details are occasionally vivid, and suggest a likely enough pattern of development. He was born, we may guess, somewhere about 1515. Elsewhere I have tried to show that the authorship of the beautiful lyric, 'Lo quhat it is to luve', attributed both to Scott and Sir Thomas Wyatt, more probably belongs to Scott, but that Wyatt composed a reply.[1] If this is so, Scott probably wrote the poem in the 1530s or very early 1540s, and must also have had some kind of connection with English court literary circles. Scott's weaker poems—

Thocht I in grit distress
  Suld de in to dispair,
I can get no redress
  Of you, my lady fair.
  Howbeid my time I wair
Alhaill in your schervyce,
  Ye compt nocht of my cair,
I find you ay so nice—

might almost be taken for sub-standard Wyatt.

In 1540 we have a possible vivid glimpse of the poet,[2] for in Paris on 26 June of that year, Claude Chorel, 'clerk of the Palace and captain of the band of the Knights of the Round Table of the king of the Basoche' made a contract with Jehan de Laulnay, a Swiss tambourin player, who lived in the rué Greneta, and Alexander Scott, a fife player, who lived in the rue du Temple. No further details are given, save that de Laulnay and Scott were each to receive an elaborate plumed livery together with 21 *sous tournois*. It is possible, however, to go a little beyond the letter of the document. The king of the Basoche was the leader of the official association of clerks of the Palace of Justice in Paris. His empire was divided into chapters, the members of which wore a special uniform and were governed by a captain.

They assembled at stated times, such as the beginning of July, when they were obliged by statute to present themselves at a *montre*, or general review. On these occasions they performed pantomimes, or

[1] 'Some Aspects of the Early Renaissance in Scotland', pp. 219–20. See also Appendix.

[2] M. Connat, 'Documents Inédits du Minutier Central', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, xii (1950), p. 113.

tableaux vivants, and, as time went on, dialogues, farces and moralities, often written by their own members and usually satirizing the world of the judicature, from which these members were drawn.
(I quote the article in *The Oxford Companion to French Literature*.)

It seems pretty certain that a few days before the *montre* held at the beginning of July 1540, Chorel hired de Laulnay and Scott, two foreign-born professional musicians, to take part in the festivities, and as part payment issued them with the livery of his chapter, the Knights of the Round Table. It is no more than a suggestion that Alexander Scott, the fife-player, and Alexander Scott, the poet, were the same, but at least fairly definite evidence exists that the poet Scott was also a professional musician, and the tone of many among his poems would blend admirably with the festivities of the Basoche. It is conceivable that he was a student (perhaps of music) in Paris who grasped the opportunity to turn an honest penny and at the same time have a little fun.

If Scott was a student in Paris, he was almost certainly supported financially by a Scottish benefice. On 28 February 1539 the Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland records that one Alexander Scott was presented with the prebend of the Chapel Royal at Stirling called Ayr—his rent, that is to say, was the revenue of the parsonage of Ayr which, like St. Marie Kirk of Lowes, was annexed to the Chapel Royal. A somewhat complicated line of argument, beginning from the fact that the poet Scott had demonstrable connections with the Erskine family, suggests that this prebendary and the poet were the same. It was in memory of Lord Erskine's eldest son, Robert, the lover of the Queen-dowager, Mary of Guise, that Scott wrote 'The Lament of the Maister of Erskine', a poem which is obviously written to be sung, and for which a musical setting has survived. Erskine was killed at the battle of Pinkie in 1547.

He had been commendator of the Augustinian priory of Inchmahome, situated on an island in the Lake of Menteith, Perthshire, where he was succeeded by his younger brother John, the future Regent Mar. On 12 July 1548 John Erskine granted a canon's portion in his priory to the musician and organist Alexander Scott, 'for the decoir of our queir in musik and playing'.[1] Almost certainly, as Dr. Durkan has indicated,

[1] J. R. N. Macphail, *Papers from the Collection of Sir William Fraser* (S.H.S., Edinburgh, 1924), pp. 223–4. See J. Durkan in D. McRoberts (ed.), op. cit., p. 149 and note.

this musician is to be identified with the poet. It is probably significant, however, that the grant stresses payment to Scott 'alsweill in his absence as presens', for, two weeks later, on 23 July, the Queen and the Regent Arran granted a licence 'to oure lovit familiar clerk, Maister Johne Erskin, prior of Inchmaholmo, and with him in service Alexander Scott, persoun of Balmaclellane, to pass to the partis of France and ony utheris beyond sey in our service'. Erskine's servant must be the same as the organist, more especially since his designation as parson of Balmaclellan (in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright) implies that he was a canon of the Chapel Royal, to which Balmaclellan also had been annexed, and so a musician. As it seems unlikely that two Alexander Scotts were members of the Chapel Royal in the course of a decade, the poet and musician is almost certainly to be identified with the prebendary who in 1539 became parson of Ayr.

It only remains to be added that in 1547 Mary Queen of Scots had resided in the priory of Inchmahome, and that Erskine's journey to France probably had some connection with the Queen's own departure for France on 7 August 1548. In the Register of the Privy Seal the document which directly follows the one just quoted is a respite and exemption granted by the Queen and her Regent to John, Lord Erskine, the commendator's father, and Alexander Livingstone, 'forsamekle as it is thocht expedient . . . that thai pas instantlie with us to the realme of France'. Commendator Erskine and Alexander Scott may well have travelled in the Queen's company, when on 7 August 1548 she sailed from Dumbarton for France.

The documentary evidence thus converges on a poet and musician who was parson of Ayr and Balmaclellan, canon of the Chapel Royal, canon and organist of Inchmahome, servant of the Erskine family and in all probability of the Queen, one too who must have had a fairly thorough acquaintance with French life at more than one social level. One more touch completes the picture. On 21 November 1549 the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland records the legitimisation of John Scott and Alexander Scott, full brothers, bastards, natural sons of Alexander Scott, prebendary of the Chapel Royal, Stirling. In time the second of those sons was himself to become a prebendary of the Chapel Royal; on 6 February 1567 Alexander Scott younger received the canonry and prebendary of the Chapel Royal of Stirling 'callit the half personage and vicarage of the kirk of Quiltoun Secundo' (Coylton in Ayrshire).

The earlier events all occurred at precisely the period during which differences between Catholic and Protestant in Scotland were becoming acute. George Wishart, the Protestant martyr, had been burned on 1 March 1546; on 29 May Cardinal Beaton was murdered in revenge. The Reformers who held St. Andrews Castle surrendered in July 1547. Important reforming Provincial Councils of the Scottish church were held in 1549, 1552, and 1559. The Protestant rebellion of 1559 led to the Reformation of 1560. Those events cannot have left Scott unaffected. By 1555 his old patron Erskine had begun to show mild Protestant inclinations. Scott wrote 'Of May', a poem with distinctly Protestant undertones, between 1555 and 1560 (possibly in 1558). His longest poem, 'Ane New Yeir Gift to the Quene Mary, quhen scho come first Hame, 1562', contains some vigorous adverse criticism of the old church and its clergy, although Scott, it should be noted, avoids any positive condemnation of the mass (which, under the circumstances, would certainly have been tactless), and is as severe on the behaviour of some members of the Reformation party as on that of the Catholic hierarchy. The poem is certainly the work of a Protestant. A reference in another poem, 'Quha lykis to luve', suggests that it was written during the pestilence of 1568. All the extant poems were in existence by 1568, when Bannatyne completed his manuscript. It is conceivable that Scott died during the plague.

Alexander Montgomerie probably refers to Scott in a sonnet addressed in or about the year 1584 to the English musician and poet, Robert Hudson, who in 1586 became Master of James VI's Chapel Royal:

> Ye knaw ill guiding genders mony gees,
> And specially in poets. For example,
> Ye can pen out two cuple, and ye pleis,
> Yourself and I, old Scot and Robert Semple.
> Quhen we ar dead, that all our dayis but daffis,
> Let Christain Lyndesay wryte our epitaphis.

This need not imply that in 1584 Scott was still alive; 'we' in 'Quhen we ar dead' probably means 'you, Robert Hudson, and I, Alexander Montgomerie', while the adjective 'old' might well suggest that Scott was dead when Montgomerie wrote. Hudson was a musician of the Chapel Royal as Montgomerie was not; correspondingly, Scott was a musician of the Chapel Royal as Semple was not. Semple, in fact, was the most outspoken and accomplished Protestant versifier of the

1570s, and it may be significant that the Catholic Montgomerie links his name with that of Scott.

It is clear from his work, as well as from the surviving details of his life, that Scott had close professional connections with the court and the nobility, connections which help to explain, for instance, the grave familiarity of tone with which he addresses Queen Mary on her return. The pure love-lyrics belong entirely to such a courtly milieu. Less self-evident, or at least less often mentioned, is the gradual inclination towards Protestantism suggested by the biographical details, and to some modest extent confirmed by the existence of vernacular translations of the first and fiftieth psalms attributed to Scott. Those parallel the other Protestant translations of the century, most notably perhaps those of Wyatt and Surrey.

The majority of Scott's poems fall into two main categories—on the one hand, love-lyrics and poems about lovers, which would fit well enough into the court of Lindsay's Lady Sensualitie; on the other, moral poems of advice and exhortation, many in condemnation of the practices of lovers and their ladies. Poems of the second group sometimes show traces of Protestantism. On *a priori* grounds it seems likely that the first group, as a whole and on the whole, preceded the second.

It is certainly easy to arrange Scott's poems in an order which suggests some such history. Indeed, it is scarcely necessary to alter the order in which the poems appear in the manuscript. Some are not so much love-poems as detached, cynical, somewhat satiric comments on love and lovers. Consider, for instance, the treatment of women which Scott recommends lovers to adopt in 'It comes you luvaris to be laill':

> Defend thair fame, quha evir fyle thame,
> And ay with honest havingis style thame,
> To Venus als suppois ye wile thame,
> Ressoun;
> Bot be ye fraudfull and begyle thame,
> Tressoun.
>
> Ye suld considdir or ye taik thame
> That littill service will nocht staik thame;
> Get ye ane goldin hour to glak thame,
> Ressoun;
> Bot be ye fraudfull and forsaik thame,
> Tressoun.

Particularly noticeable is the way in which Scott exploits the formal qualities of his stanza to give ironic expression to his

observation of the hypocrisy and self-contradiction inherent in the practice of courtly love. (This is important also in terms of his later development.) The poem as a whole depends on an apparent opposition between the first four and the concluding two lines of each stanza, an opposition which seems to appear at its most acute in the one-word rhyming lines which form a kind of refrain, 'ressoun' and 'tressoun'. The third line of each stanza, however, makes it plain that neither word has its ordinary meaning, that courtly lovers use a kind of double-speak which bears little relation to the normal conventions of language or the facts of the situation, but a great deal to the preservation of appearances. In the stanzas quoted, 'fame', 'honest havingis', 'service', and 'ressoun' are balanced against 'fraudfull' and 'tressoun'; the effect depends on the fact that 'fame' and 'honest havingis' are reconcilable with Venus; 'service' with 'ane goldin hour to glak thame'. The vulgar force of 'glak' (a four-letter word usually glossed 'trifle with') is especially striking, not least because it is balanced by the deliberately conventional and colourless 'forsaik thame', the ultimate sin of the courtly convention.

'Luve preysis but comparesone' moves towards personal involvement but it is again primarily the statement of Scott's ironic and anarchic philosophy of love. Earlier poets had often enough worked in terms of the religion of love which parodied the hierarchy of the universal church. Scott went one stage further, and might almost be regarded as a Lollard in the theology of love. (This again may have a relevance to his later development.) One stanza certainly seems to echo the famous question posed almost two centuries before by John Ball and his followers:

> Ferme luve for favour, feir or feid
> Of riche nor pur to speik suld spair:
> For luve to hienes hes no heid,
> Nor lychtleis lawlines ane air,
> Bot puttis all personis in compair
> This proverb planely for till preve
> That man and wemen, les and mair,
> Ar cumd of Adame and of Eve.

The consequences are obvious:

> So luvaris lair no leid suld lak,
> A lord to lufe a silly las,
> A lady als for luf to tak
> Ane proper page hir time to pas,

For quhy as bricht bene birneist bras
As silver wrocht at all devys,
And als gud drinking out of glas
As gold, thocht gold gif grittar prys.

That Scott regarded the love which he describes as merely if also enjoyably appetitive is suggested not only by the phrase 'hir time to pas' but also by the imagery of the last four lines which parallel the enjoyment of love with the use of silver and brass platters for food, gold and glass vessels for drink. And his power of humorous *double entendre* is obvious from the first stanza:

For luve makis nobill ladeis thrall
To bassir men of birth and blud;
So luve garris sobir wemen small
Get maistrice our grit men of gud.

The poem as a whole gains force from Scott's masterly use of alliteration, within single lines, or to emphasize syntactic continuity from one line to another.

A few of the genuine love-lyrics are poems of happy abandonment to the sensual power of love. Most notable of those is 'Up, helsum hairt', with its somewhat unusual treatment, this time of the feudal imagery of courtly love. Cupid is king: the lover is one of his barons—a heritor whose heritage is the lady's heart, which he holds subject to the payment of token dues, 'in blenche ferme for ane sallat every May'. No other service is demanded; he is 'free of all thirlaige'. In the courtly tradition, the love is adulterous:

I coft hir deir, bot scho fer derrer me,
Quhilk hasard honor, fame, in aventeur,
Committing clene hir corse to me in cure.

The dominant note is joy of possession:

I know no siching, sadnes, nor yit soun,
Walking, thocht, langour, lamentatioun,
Dolor, dispair, weiping, nor jelosye;
My breist is void and purgit of pussoun;
I feill no pane, I haif no purgatorye,
Bot peirles, perfytt, paradisall plesour—

This note is rare in the other poems, and even when it occurs it tends to be qualified by reminiscences of pain. The quiet sequence of beautiful images, for instance, in 'Rycht as the glass bene thirlit thrucht with bemis' is disturbed by a single

line, 'And as the kokatrice keilis with hir sicht', where the suggestion of poison and cruelty alters the balance of the entire poem. 'Quha is perfyte' ends with the same joy of possession as 'Up, helsum hairt', but the structure of the poem turns on the expression and realization of the balance between pain and pleasure in the experience of love. Pleasure is the obverse of pain, and the poet realizes in himself how the two states are united and how he must keep silence about it afterwards—again, it is an adulterous relationship:

Albeid I knaw
Of luvis law
The plesour and the panis smart,
Yit I stand aw
For to furth schaw
The quiet secreitis of my harte,
For it may Fortoun raith
To do hir body skaith,
Quhilk wait that of thame baith
I am expert.

The paradoxical synthesis of the final stanza is expressed in one of Scott's most perfect cadences

Thair is nocht wie
Can estimie
My sorrow and my sichingis sair,
For so am I
Done fathfullie
In favouris with my lady fair,
That baith our hairtis are ane,
Luknyt in luvis chene,
And everilk greif is gane
For evir mair.

I have several times hinted at the rational, almost philosophic attitude of mind which shows even through the cynicism of some of Scott's poems. The same quality is clearly present in 'Quha is perfyte'. Scott not only realizes the conventional paradoxes of love, he attempts to resolve them to his emotional, if not always his intellectual, satisfaction. He observes as he experiences, and he is never wholly unconscious of the inner dichotomy traditionally expressed in terms of the conflict between wit and will. His wit, however, is a practical one, concerned more with immediate physical experience than abstract reason. One may compare the unusual use of the word 'Ressoun' as a refrain in 'It cumis you luvaris to be laill'. This

characteristic combines with the tradition of the address to the heart, and may go far to explain the fact that Scott personifies his interior debate, not in terms of wit and will, but body and heart. For Scott the lyric poet, the body seems the normative, common-sense part of the human being; the heart is the seat of the unregenerate, irrational will—the will which at the same time is the only part of the human being to possess a freedom which in some sense is genuine, despite the abuse to which it subjects itself.

The concept most closely fits those poems which express the dichotomy at its greatest felt intensity; poems, that is to say, which deal with the pains rather than the pleasures of love. This is true, even in 'Anschir to Hairtis', a poem which appears to have been written in response to 'Haif hairt in hairt', which in turn must have been addressed to Scott by a woman. The intention of this latter poem is certainly encouraging. Even so, pain is what Scott emphasizes:

> It is na gravit hairt in stone,
> In silver, gold nor evir bone,
> Nor yit ane payntit symlitud,
> Bot this same verry hairt allone
> Within my breist of flesch and blude.

Scott gives the conceit a more precise treatment in 'Oppressit hairt, endure'. He addresses his heart throughout:

> Perforss tak paciens
> And dre thy destany;
> To lufe but recompens
> Is grit perplexitie;
> Of thyn adversitie
> Wyt thy self and no mo,
> For quhen that thou wes fre,
> Thou wald nocht hold thee so—
>
> Bot yit my corpss, allace!
> Is wrangusly opprest
> Be thee in to this cace
> And brocht to grit wanrest.
> Quhy suld it so be drest
> Be thee, and daly pynd,
> Quhilk still it ay detest,
> Thy wantoun, folich mind?

One might easily quote further examples. It would be strange, however, if the passage of time had not intruded

abstract Reason into this world of body and heart—in a sense, indeed, abstract Reason had been present there from the very beginning. I have already mentioned the detached cynicism characteristic of the poems which observe rather than participate in the ritual of love. To an extent such cynicism is rational, and it is absent from only a few of Scott's poems. One might even venture a little further. Notoriously it is risky to postulate a direct connection between literature and life, and in the absence of precise biographical details it is particularly risky. Nevertheless, it is easy to read Scott's lyrics as recording the effect on a temperament naturally inclined to detachment and cynicism of an unhappy experience of passionate love,[1] an experience which ultimately impelled him towards total rejection and a position from which it was easy for him to accept some, perhaps all, of the more rigorous beliefs and attitudes of the Reformers.

Reason is opposed to Cupid and triumphs over him in 'Leif, Luve, and lat me leif allone'.

Cupeid, thou kennis I burd to knaw
The langsum leving in thy law,
Bot this is nocht the first ourthraw
That thou hes done to me;
Bot of thee now I stand nocht aw,
Sen Ressoun dois my benner blaw
Aganis the feid of thee.

This lady is so gud ane gyd
Scho lettis me nevir gang on syd,
Bot teichis me both time and tyd
Recent befoir mine e;
Quhome in to lippin and confyd
I slip, and lattis all ourslyd
Aganis the feid of thee.

'In June the Jem' is a serene and humorous rejection of passionate love couched in a parody of legal terms which would almost fit a 'Lybell of repudie' such as Diomeid sent to Cresseid in Henryson's poem. A few legal phrases—'This present to compile express', 'Gif scho my luve quit clame'—suffice to point the legal style of the poem as a whole, with its carefully balanced clauses and conditions—'Be scho', 'Will scho—',

[1] One should particularly notice the colophon which Bannatyne added after 'To luve unluvit', 'Quod Scott, quhen his wife left him'. We have no means of judging the accuracy of this.

'Quhen scho—', 'Pleiss scho—'. Scott makes a few apparently conciliatory gestures, but his rejection remains in all essentials total:

Quhair power ma not plaiss,
Adeu without diseiss,
Als gud luve cumis as gais,
Or rathir bettir—

Bot gif scho steidfast stand,
And be not variand,
I am at hir command—
Conforme to ressone.

'Ressone', it is obvious from this last stanza, belongs to a range of the spectrum very different from that of 'luve'—and Scott himself is to be the judge in all questions of rationality.

Two poems show Scott's rational cynicism merging into the religious rationalism of the Reformers. In one, the emphasis is on the triumph of wit over will in old age:

Fra raige of youth the rink hes run,
And Ressone tane the man to tune:
The bruckle body than is wune,
And maid ane veschell new.
For than thruch grace he is begune
The well of wisdom for to kune:
Than is his weid of vertew spune:
Trest weill this taill is trew.

Reason in old age controls and reconciles body and heart alike, and the vocabulary and phraseology—'veschell new', 'grace', 'well of wisdom', 'weid of vertew'—are at once strongly biblical and strongly Protestant.

Dark and violent tones predominate in the portrait of the lover which is found in 'Quha lykis to luve'. His world is self-evidently preposterous:

Fle thocht he wald,
Lufe sall him hald
Within the dungeon of dispair;
Quhyle het, quhyle cald,
A thousand fold,
His purpoiss salbe heir and thair;
He sall hald wisdome vice,
And vertew of no price,
Bot as a fule unwyce,
So sall he fair.

The Old Testament note in the last few lines is palpable, and helps to prepare for the final stanza, which I quote more as illustrating Scott's eventual position than for any intrinsic literary merit:

My brethir deir,
We most forbeir
And fra this sinfull life evaid us:
Lat Ressoun steir
Your hairtis inteir
And nocht thoill lathly lust to leid us,
Quhilk is the verry net
That Satane for us set,
To causs us quyt foryet
The Lord that maid us.

Reason now has, or ought to have, so complete a mastery over the heart that it turns inevitably to God. The Scott who wrote this poem is very close to the Scott who translated the Psalms:

Wesche me, and mak my sawle serene
Frome all iniquite that bene;
Clenge me of crime and mak me clene
All vycis for to fle.
For my transgressioun haif I sene,
Quhilk tormentis me with tray and tene,
And ay my sin forgane mine ene:
Lord God, deliver me.

'Quha lykis to luve' may have been written during the pestilence of 1568. It is unlikely that Scott afterwards wrote any more love-poems.

So for us ended the career of the greatest Scottish lyric poet of the time. His witty, evocative use of Scots and his mastery of metre are unique; for the rest, he epitomizes in himself the history of his culture. He was both court poet and court musician; his external contacts were with France and England; he was an Augustinian canon and belonged to the Chapel Royal. Early in his career, his artistic ideals were secular versions of those which dominated at least the later stages of the Reformation, and it seems likely that his poetry was finally overwhelmed by the full impact of that movement.

APPENDIX

Wyatt, Scott, and 'Lo, what it is to love'

THE usual attribution of the poem to Wyatt is the result of three factors:

(*a*) The poem appears in the Egerton manuscript with no external indication that the author is anyone other than Wyatt. The two poems which directly follow are usually taken as rejoinders by Wyatt to his own poem, rejoinders which preserve the same structure, and in which for the purposes of reply Wyatt assumes a second *persona*.

(*b*) Bannatyne's attributions are sometimes apparently unreliable.

(*c*) Scott's dates are not supposed to favour the hypothesis of his authorship.

Against those, seven points may be urged:

(*a*) The body of this paper has, I hope, established the fact that dates offer no particular difficulty.

(*b*) Bannatyne's unreliability usually[1] takes one of four forms:

(i) Sometimes he does not name an author when it looks from his manuscript as if he might have done so.
(ii) He is capable of a kind of jocular obscurity in his attributions.
(iii) He gives only surnames of authors.
(iv) He attributes to Chaucer poems which at best are only Chaucerian.

None of those points is immediately relevant to the problem at hand.

(*c*) The general textual importance of the Bannatyne manuscript is gradually coming to be realized.[2] The particular importance for Scott should be self-evident. There is obviously some fairly close relationship between Scott and Bannatyne, who were contemporaries separated in age only by a generation. Bannatyne includes more poems by Scott in Part IV of his anthology than by any other author. He appears also to have some personal knowledge of Scott's life.

(*d*) The poem is closer to Scott's stylistic norm than to that of Wyatt. In particular, the frequent internal rhymes closely parallel Scott's habitual usage.

[1] MacQueen, 'Some Aspects of the Early Renaissance in Scotland', p. 203.
[2] MacQueen, *Robert Henryson* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 189–99.

(*e*) The first poem in Egerton reads like a song; the second and third do not—a point which suggests that, whoever the author of the first poem may be, it was written with a purpose and for an occasion separate from that of the others. To my ear, the additional stanza in Egerton seems to go more readily with the second and third poems than with the first. I would regard it as probably written later than the remainder of the poem.

(*f*) Any author who adopts the form of rejoinder to himself will write as if in two different persons. Wyatt's behaviour, at least in the third poem, is different. He writes as the voice of common humanity:

> Ye graunt it is a snare,
> And would *vs* not beware—

This reads more naturally as a rejoinder to another poet than as a rejoinder from himself to himself.

(*g*) In the third stanza of both versions we find the rhyme 'wise', 'advice', 'dice'—a rhyme which fits more readily into a Scots than an English context. (Compare the spelling 'wyce' in Modern Scots.) Scott more than once provides a parallel, as for instance in 'Quha lykis to luve':

> He sall hald wisdome vice,
> And vertew of no price,
> Bot as a fule unwyce
> So sall he fair.

Compare too 'Thocht I in grit distress':

> Lang time ye haif me pruffit,
> And evir fund me trew;
> Bot now that I haif luvit,
> Rycht sair I may it rew.
> First quhen I did persew,
> I wont ye had bene wys,
> Bot now, fair weill, adew!
> I find you ay so nys.

Rhymes in Wyatt follow a markedly different pattern. In poem 10 of Muir's edition (lines 1, 4, 5, and 8) we have *devise* (= 'devise sb.'), *gyse*, *wyse*, and *rise;* in poem 197 (lines 53, 55, and 57), Ise (= 'eyes'), *unwise*, *gyse*. Poem 198 is slightly ambiguous; in lines 74, 76, and 78 we have *unwyse*, *nyse*, and *prise* (= 'prize'). The evidence of poem 197 establishes, I think, that the pronunciation to be assumed here is that with *z*, and that *nyse* is introduced as a partial expedient to satisfy the

demands of *terza rima*. Little is to be made of poem 148, lines 32–5, where we find *suffise, wise, eyes, twise;* the poem is carelessly written, as may be shown by the Cockney rhymes of the second stanza, *skarce, cace, place, was*. Wyatt's natural tendency was, as might have been expected, to rhyme the adjective 'wise' with words ending in *z;* in difficulties, he was prepared to admit rhymes in voiceless *s* in company with others in *z;* we have no certain example in which he rhymes 'wise' *only* with words in *s*.

The likeliest solution would seem to be that Scott wrote 'Lo, what it is to love', and *either* that Wyatt made a personal reply *or* that he utilized a song by Scott as the basis for a more extended poem of his own.