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Scots and English Across the Union: Linguistic
Connexions and Contrast

Abstract

This paper argues that the literary deployment of varieties of Scots and English in the eighteenth century reflected something more complex and nuanced than has sometimes been argued. The complexities of this relationship are illustrated through the analysis of certain key texts published during the years before and after the emergence of the United Kingdom.

I. A LANGUAGE SUPPRESSED?

One widespread narrative of Scottish cultural history holds that the Scots language was suppressed, as part of a general and incrementally severe attack on a Scottish vernacular culture, during the period after the Unions of Crowns and Parliaments: *A Language Suppressed*, to quote the somewhat misleading title of Charles Jones's otherwise excellent book on eighteenth-century Scots and English in Scotland.¹

It is certainly true that the 'cultural capital' of Scots vernacular expression has been frequently contested, but the true story is more complex. When we go behind a simple narrative of distinctively oppressed victimhood, we find something rather more interesting: a trans-border cultural engagement, projected across and between the nations (imagined and otherwise) that constitute the 'social union' of the British Isles, in which the linguistic differences between Scots and English are shown not to be aligned in a clear-cut way with political differences. This paper illustrates the complexities of this engagement through the analysis of certain key texts published during the years before and after the emergence of the United Kingdom.

II. THE AFTERLIFE OF HARY'S WALLACE

Blind Hary's *Wallace* survives in MS Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland 19.2.2: the only medieval manuscript copy, dating from the end of the fifteenth century. The manuscript also contains one of the two earliest copies of Barbour's *Bruce*, the epic-romance that is traditionally taken as the first literary work in Scots. However, there were many more pre-nineteenth-century editions of *The Wallace* – with a wider geographical spread and by a wider range of printers – than of *The Bruce*, which difference offers an interesting (and perhaps unexpected) perspective on early modern taste. In some cases *The Wallace* was printed alongside *The Bruce*, but in such cases the title of the former appeared in prime position on the title page with *The Bruce* referred to as an addendum. A few folios remain of an edition printed by Walter Chepman and Andro Myllar about 1509. A single copy survives of an edition printed by Robert Lekprevik at the expense of the literary impresario Henry Charteris (Geddie's still useful bibliography records the tradition that this copy was 'said to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth',² suggestive at least of an audience for the poem outside Scotland). Henry printed the poem on his own account in 1594, and the inventory in his will records 'fyue scoir tua Wallaces' as part of his stock, suggestive at least of the demand he anticipated for the work;³ since print-runs in the early modern period typically consisted of some 200 copies, it could be argued that almost half of the run was by that time in circulation. Henry's son Robert produced an edition in 1601, while the major Edinburgh printer Andro Hart produced editions in 1611, 1618 and 1620. Other seventeenth-century Edinburgh editions were those produced by James Bryson (1640 and 1645), Gideon Lithgow (1648, 1661), an anonymous Society of Stationers (1661), and Andrew Anderson (1666, 1673). Edward Raban printed the work in Aberdeen in 1630, while in Glasgow the firm of Robert Sanders (elder and younger) in Glasgow issued no fewer than six editions of *The Wallace* (1665, 1684, 1685, 1690, 1699 and 1713). In the eighteenth century, editions of *The Wallace* continue to outnumber those of *The Bruce*, with Edinburgh prints dating from 1701, 1711 and 1758. The 1758 edition, which also included *The Bruce*, was by Robert Freebairn.⁴

All these editions of *The Wallace* were attempts to reflect, to a greater or lesser extent, a medieval text, often adopting black-letter font to emphasise

the point and referring to the ‘genuineness’ of the text presented. But alternative versions of the narrative had already appeared. In 1633 Andro Hart printed a text of a Latin poem, the *Vallados*, composed by Patrick Panter *ad Fanum Andreae Theologo*, and Robert Freebairn (with Andrew Symson and Henry Knox) reprinted this text, as *De Gestis Illustrissimi GULIELMI VALLÆ*, in 1705.⁵ A play based on *The Wallace*, called *The Valiant Scot*, by ‘J. W. Gent.’, dedicated to James, Marquess of Hamilton and Earl of Cambridge and Arran, was printed in London in 1637.⁶ And in 1722, William Hamilton of Gilbertfield – a discreet Jacobite sympathiser who liked to be called ‘Wanton Willy’ – produced a modernised (and, in language, Anglicised) version of the poem for a contemporary readership. Hamilton’s version, ‘read across the eighteenth-century Scottish nation’,⁷ dominated publishers’ lists until the middle of the nineteenth century, with no fewer than twenty-three editions appearing by 1870. Hamilton’s edition was certainly read by Robert Burns, who offers a quasi-quotation from Hamilton’s poem in ‘Scots, wha hae’,⁸ and named Hamilton, along with Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson, in his *Epistle to William Simpson*, as a poet with whom he wished to ‘speel the braes of fame’.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, however, editions and versions of the *Wallace* poem – whether Hary’s or Hamilton’s – become rarer. Kurt Wittig’s influential survey, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (1958), devotes a whole chapter to Barbour’s *Bruce* but dismisses Hary’s *Wallace* (while praising it) in two pages,⁹ and it is interesting that, while selections from *The Bruce* are still common in standard student readers, *The Wallace* is rarely included. It does not, for instance, appear in R. Jack and P. Rozendaal’s excellent Mercat anthology.¹⁰ An exception to this neglect is the important and suggestive essay, in Ted Cowan’s *The Wallace Book*, by Felicity Riddy,¹¹ which not only offers a fine reading of Hary but also argues that the reception of *The Wallace* in subsequent centuries underpins the evolution in Scottish discourse of ‘a mythical geography of nationhood, a Scotland of the mind’.¹²

In the same collection as Riddy, Colin Kidd has written of the complexities of the cult of Wallace, as inter alia a ‘Unionist-nationalist’ figure,¹³ and in this context it is worth drawing attention to the appearance of *The Wallace* beyond Scotland. One of the most interesting expressions of what we might call Unionist cultural appropriation – albeit before the Union of Great Britain and Ireland of 1801 – is the appearance of a Belfast edition of

Hary's poem by James Blow in 1728, relating to the highly significant role of Scottish culture in Ulster.¹⁴

Blow was a Perthshire Scot, who arrived in Belfast in 1694 as assistant to Patrick Neill, himself a Glaswegian and Blow's brother-in-law. Neill and Blow set up their press in that year: the first Belfast printers. Neill died around 1705, and Blow succeeded him in the business. Blow's main focus was on the printing of Presbyterian books, such as James Kirkpatrick's *An Historical Essay upon the Loyalty of Presbyterians* in 1713, which is 'the first printed work to mention contemporary Belfast citizens, and provides a picture of the political and social position of Presbyterians in Belfast' (ODNB); Kirkpatrick was a graduate of Glasgow University, non-subscribing minister in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and moderator of the synod of Ulster. The emphasis on loyalty to the crown is flagged by the subtitle of Blow's edition of Kirkpatrick's book, viz. 'wherein their steady adherence to the Protestant interest, our happy civil constitution, the succession of Protestant princes, the just prerogatives of the crown, and the liberties of the people is demonstrated.'

Blow's edition of *The Wallace* is a small and frankly rather unimpressive volume of 324 pages (i-xxx, 31-324) in duodecimo format, 12.5 centimetres by 7.5 centimetres; it was clearly intended for mass-market circulation.¹⁵ The preface, 'To the Printer to the Reader', is a barely modified version of that which had appeared in all copies of the poem since Bryson's edition. The poem is printed, as by now was the usual custom for most editions of *The Wallace* (save Freebairn's), in roman font with italics for proper names, and the title page reads as follows:

THE | LIFE | AND | ACTS | Of the most Famous and Valiant |
Champion | Sir *William Wallace* | Knight of *Ellerslie*; | Maintainer of
the Liberty of SCOTLAND | *With a Preface containing a short Sum of*
the | *History of that Time.* | BELFAST | Printed by *James Blow*, and
are to be sold at | his Shop, 1728.

The opening of the text reads as follows:

OUR Antecessours of whom we should oft read,
And hold in mind their fame and worthy deed;
We let over slide through very slothfulness,

And cast us ever to other Business.
On vain Gaming is set our whole intent,
Which hath been seen into these times by went
Our next neighbours that came of *Brutus* Blood,
They oftentimes to *Scots* wish't little good:
Though now of late God turn'd their mind and Will,
That great Kindness they have shown us until.
The Hearts of People the Lord hath in his Hand,
He may them rule and guide at his Command;
And though all Leids would have this land in thrall,
Upon his Power, God can against them all;
As we have seen in our Forbears before;
But of these Parables as now I spake no more.

This opening is closely aligned with that commonly found in seventeenth-century editions. Punctuation, including italicisation to mark proper names, is deployed in accordance with eighteenth-century conventions. This opening of the poem is that first witnessed in Lekprevik's 1570 edition, in which an attack on the treachery of the English, found in Ramsay's text, is replaced by a discourse on the evils of gambling ('vain Gaming') and an assertion of the relationship to Brutus, mythical and eponymous founder of Britain and notoriously part of the regnal claim by English kings to sovereignty over Scotland; Lekprevik's adoption of this opening had been in line with his Protestant, proto-Unionist sentiments as 'the king's printer'. Lekprevik also offered an anti-Catholic gloss on the passage, towards the end of the poem, where a 'monk of Bury' has a vision of Wallace's apotheosis, versions of which occur in all the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century editions except the Jacobite Freebairn's. Blow's version of the paragraph reads as follows (p. 317):

An Admonition to the READER. | *These things which follow savouring of the superstiti- | ous Cruelity¹⁶ of the People, and deceitful Cousenage of | the Monks of those times, we have notwithstanding insert, | lest we should seem at our own hand rashly to omit any | thing which we found in our Copy: to the end that they | may admonish us to study to be thankful to our blessed | LORD who hath now opened our Eyes to see through the | Mist wherewith those former Ages were blinded.*

For Blow to produce an edition of *The Wallace*, a poem which notoriously asserts Scotland's freedom, might at first seem at odds with his printing of a text such as Kirkpatrick's *Historical Essay*, with its clear statement of the virtues of the 'happy civil constitution'. However, a little thought, in the light of Kidd's insights, suggests that Ulster purchasers of the edition saw no problem in reconciling an assertion of Scottish identity with the values of Protestant-inflected liberty, also reflected in the poem's inherited paratextual accompaniments, such as title-page ('the Liberty of SCOTLAND') and preface. Such values had been, of course, insisted upon in the rhetoric surrounding the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and confirmed for so many Protestant Ulster Scots by the events of 1690, as Kirkpatrick's reference to 'the liberties of the people' suggests. And, interestingly for our purposes, this assertion of a particular kind of Scottish identity did not seem to require the deployment of Scots; in common with other early eighteenth-century editions (including Freebairn's) the poem is anglicised in spelling and grammar, with the only relict Scots form in non-rhyming position being 'Leids' ('peoples'). So far, then, the story of the editing of the poem aligns with the notion of linguistic suppression.¹⁷

III. A VERNACULAR REVIVAL?

However, another narrative often found in literary histories is of a vernacular 'revival' in the eighteenth century, although closer inspection reveals rather important continuities alongside further complexities. One such continuity was the Scots ballad tradition which in the eighteenth century moved out of the shadows into 'mainstream' literary tradition, sometimes overlapping with that distinctive eighteenth-century urge to recuperate and re-work the medieval which expressed itself most famously through Ossian in Scotland, through Gray and Chatterton in England, and through Percy in Ireland. Lady Wardlaw's *Hardyknute* of 1719 is another good example, as is David Mallet's *William and Margaret* of 1725; James V was supposed to have written *The Gaberlunzie Man* and *The Jolly Beggar*. The driving forces here were complicated ones, and this point leads to the next example to be studied here: that bridge between the medieval and the eighteenth century (and intimate of William Hamilton), Allan Ramsay the Elder (1658–1758).

Ramsay, often credited with inspiring the 'revival' of vernacular litera-

ture, was a Jacobite sympathiser, and it is commonly argued that his antiquarian interest in Older Scots poetry stemmed at least in part from his traditionalist views. In 1724, for instance, he published *The Ever-Green* ('a Collection of Scots Poems, Wrote by the Ingenious before 1600'). This book was based on the well-known sixteenth-century anthology of Older Scots verse, the Bannatyne manuscript, now MS Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' 1.1.6, copied in 1568 by the Edinburgh merchant George Bannatyne (1545–1607/8). Ramsay had earlier used the Bannatyne manuscript as the source for his 1721 version of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, published by Thomas Ruddimann and which survives in both Bannatyne manuscript and a broadside tradition (the National Library of Scotland has an interesting 1701 example). The poem was traditionally ascribed to James I, the probable author of *The Kingis Quair*, but Allan MacLaine¹⁸ has argued cogently, from the evidence of rhyming practice, that this attribution is very unlikely.¹⁹

Although he follows Bannatyne, albeit going on to add two continuations of his own composition, Cantos II and III, with the (modified) original forming Canto I, Ramsay modified his exemplar in interesting ways. Two parallel texts of the opening lines of *Christ's Kirk on the Green* are offered here: the Bannatyne version, and Ramsay's reworking:

(1) Bannatyne Manuscript (1568) [folio 99r]

Was nevir in scotland hard nor sene
 Sic dansing nor deray
 Nowthir at falkland on the grene
 Nor peblis at the play
 As wes of wowaris as I wene
 At chryst kirk on ane day
 Thair come our kitteis weschin clene
 In thair new kirtillis of gray full gay
 At chrystis kirk of the grene

5

To dans thir damysellis thame dicht
 Thir lassis licht of lait
 Thair gluvis wes of ye raffell rycht

10

Thair schone wes of ye straitis
 Thair kirtillis wer of lynkome licht
 Weill prest *with* mony plaitis 15
 Thay wer so nys quhen men thame nicht
 Thay squeilit lyk ony gaitis / so lowd
 At chrystis kirk of ye grene *yat* day

(2) Allan Ramsay, *Poems* (Ruddiman: Edinburgh, 1721)

WAS ne'er in Scotland heard or seen
 Sic Dancing and Deray;
 Nowther at *Fakland* on the Green,
 Nor *Peebles* at the Play,
 As was of Woers, as I ween, 5
 At *Christ's Kirk* on a Day;
 There came our Kitties washen clean,
 In new Kirtles of Gray,
 Fou gay that Day.

TO dance these Damesels them dight, 10
 Thir Lasses light of Laits,
 Their Gloves were of the Raffel right,
 Their Shoon were of the Straits
 Their Kirtles were of *Lincome* light,
 Well prest with mony Plaits, 15
 They were so nice when Men them nicht,
 They squeel'd like ony Gaits
 Fou loud that Day.

Comparison of the usages in Bannatyne's and Ramsay's versions is illuminating. Editorial innovations adopted by Ramsay include early eighteenth-century conventions of capitalisation and italicisation, and punctuation deployed to reflect the periodic structure of the verse. But – unlike the other anglicised versions of the poem such as the broadside of 1701 – he presents the poem in Scots; indeed, he even modifies the language to 'improve' or 'emphasise' its Scots character. Thus we might note the form 'Fakland' for 'Falkland', an attempt to reflect a sound-change characteristic of Late

Middle Scots, viz. *l*-vocalisation. The form *Falkland*, without *l*-vocalisation, appears in the Bannatyne manuscript, flagging that – as is the expected pattern – the sound-change had not yet completed its diffusion across the lexicon; the form *Fakland* is therefore a hyper-form, introduced to emphasise the ‘authentic’ Scots character of the poem.²⁰

Ramsay’s edition is therefore a ‘revival’ of Scots, but, unsurprisingly perhaps, a revival in line with Ramsay’s own conception of authenticity, correlated with concessions to eighteenth-century tastes in presentation. The text is clearly Scots, but a reshaped, refashioned Scots. And it is hard to avoid the conclusion that such a recuperation, albeit reworked, correlated with Ramsay’s traditionalist political stance.

IV. JAMES WATSON’S MONTROSE, AND GRISELL BAILLIE

It is within this context of a continuity of Scottish vernacular culture that we may turn lastly to two contrasting figures. The first example is James Graham, first marquess of Montrose (1612–1650), one of the more glamorous royalist figures of the Civil Wars of the mid-seventeenth century. After a brief brilliant career of guerilla-style warfare, and following the execution of Charles I in 1649, Montrose was captured in Assynt, taken to Edinburgh, and there hanged; his corpse was dismembered and his head displayed on Edinburgh’s Tolbooth. After the restoration of monarchy in 1660, his body was reassembled and buried in St Giles’s Cathedral.

Now, Montrose is associated with a clutch of poems published in James Watson’s *Choice Collection* of 1706:

A Choice Collection of COMIC and SERIOUS Scots Poems BOTH
ANCIENT and MODERN By several Hands . . . EDINBURGH,
Printed by *James Watson*: Sold by *John Vallange*. M. DCC. VI.

The *Choice Collection* appeared in three parts, spanning the period between 1706 and 1711. Watson was a significant figure in Scottish publishing and a prominent Jacobite; he produced his collection as an assertion of Scottish traditional culture in the period preceding the Union of 1707. A report to the Edinburgh Burgh Council in 1694 had referred to him as ‘a printer and a profest papist’, and he was later in trouble with the authorities for his production of works with titles such as *Scotland reduced by force of arms and made a*

province of England, and *A Pil for Pork-eaters or a Scots Lancet for an English Swelling together with The Englishman's address to his pock-pudding*.²¹ It would be hard to find someone more explicitly opposed to the foundation of the new United Kingdom.

Watson included seven poems ascribed to Montrose in the *Choice Collection*, including one supposed to have been written on the eve of his execution; one legend has it that Montrose had inscribed the poem on a pane of glass in his cell, using a diamond in his ring to do so. Two versions of the poem also survive in seventeenth-century manuscript collections: MS London, British Library, Additional 10422, folio 110v, and MS Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, RH 13/40.²² The text in the *Choice Collection* (Part I, 1706) reads as follows [p. 116]:

Let them bestow on ev'ry Airth a Limb;
Open all my Veins, that I may swim
To Thee my Saviour, in that Crimson Lake;
Then place my purboil'd Head upon a Stake;
Scatter my Ashes, throw them in the Air: 5
Lord (since Thou knowest where all these Atoms are)
I'm hopeful, once Thou'lt recollect my Dust,
And confident Thou'lt raise me with the Just.

Watson was, as had been said, a proud Scotsman opposed to the Union; he was also a 'profest Papist', as many later Jacobites were. Nevertheless, demonstrating that nationalism and linguistic choice were not tied together during the period, the poem he prints is written in English, except for the word 'Airth' ('quarter, direction of the compass') – a form that seems at this date to be restricted, with this meaning, to Scots and northern English; a common alternative later spelling is 'airt' (see DSL airth, OED airt).²³

Watson claimed in his preface a wish to publish verses 'in our own Native Scots dialect', and certainly some of the poems he included are marked by the comparatively 'thick' deployment of forms characteristic of Scots, e.g. *The Blythsome Wedding, or The Epitaph on Sanny Briggs*. Others, however, such as *The Lintoun Address, or The Poor Client's Complaint, or The Speech of a Fife Laird, Newly come from the Grave, or even The Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan or, The Epitaph of Habbie Simson*, demonstrate a general anglicisation, with Scots forms being sporadic, often largely

restricted to rhyming position. The two opening stanzas of Watson's version of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, which he placed at the beginning of the first volume of the *Choice Collection*, demonstrate the restriction of Scots forms to rhyme (e.g. 'Deray', 'Gaits') [p. 1]:

Was ne'er in *Scotland* heard nor seen
 such Dancing and Deray;
Neither at *Faulkland* on the Green,
 nor *Peebles* at the Play,
As was of Wooers as I ween
 at *Christ's Kirk* on a day:
For there came *Katie* washen clean
 with her new Gown of Gray,
 Full gay that day.

To dance these Damosels them dight,
 these Lasses light of laits,
Their Gloves were of the Raffal right,
 their Shoes were of the Straits;
Their Kirtles were of *Lincoln*-light,
 well prest with many Plaits;
They were so nice when Men them neigh'd
 they squell'd like any Gaits,
 Full loud that day.

As a contrast to Watson's practice we might turn to a poem published by Lady Grisell Baillie (1665–1746) (other spellings are also used), aptly described by Barbara Murison in the ODNB as a 'heroine and business woman'. If Montrose represents a royalist martyr, Lady Baillie represents a later generation of persecuted covenanters, though she herself had a highly successful career despite early vicissitudes.

Grisell's future father-in-law, Robert Baillie, was hanged during the 'Killing Time', the suppression of presbyterianism in Scotland during the 1670s and 1680s. Grisell, aged eleven, had smuggled a letter into Baillie's cell during an earlier imprisonment. Her father, Patrick Hume, had been a close associate of Baillie's, and, with Grisell's assistance, went into hiding when Baillie was arrested, first in the family vault and subsequently in a

specially constructed refuge underneath the family house; Grisell kept him supplied with food and drink. When her father escaped to the Netherlands, Grisell and the rest of the family followed; since her mother was ill, Grisell ran the household.

Grisell returned to Britain with her father in the train of William of Orange in 1688. She turned down the offer of the position of maid of honour to Queen Mary, instead preferring to marry George Baillie, Robert's son. She then took on the running of large estates, supporting the political rise of her husband. George Baillie was a member of the oddly named *squadronne volante* who voted, eventually, for the Union and later became a 'convinced Hanoverian' who supported the accession of George I in 1714, becoming a lord of the Treasury in 1717. Grisell amassed a large fortune, and also found time for developing her literary interests, including the writing of verse. She died in London in 1746. Her career, like that of her husband, clearly demonstrates support for the newly forged Union.

Were ne my Hearts light I wad Dye is probably Lady Baillie's best-known poem, with many Scots features, and it supplies an interesting bridge between the Older Scots poets and the poetry of the post-1700 so-called 'vernacular revival', represented by the poetry of Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. Various versions are recorded; the text is that surviving in *Orpheus Caledonius*, a book of songs with music, collected by William Thomson and dating from 1726. The title-page of *Orpheus Caledonius* reads as follows:

Orpheus Caledonius | or | a Collection of the best | Scottish songs |
set to Musick | by | W. Thomson | London, Engrav'd and Printed for
the Author at | his house in Leicester fields | Enter'd at Stationers
Hall according to Act of Parliament

Were ne my Hearts light I wad Dye appears in *Orpheus Caledonius*, with the first stanza accompanied by music. Much of this material, comparatively neglected until recently, is now being reassessed by scholars.²⁴ *Orpheus Caledonius* was merely one amongst many such publications containing Scottish songs which appeared throughout the eighteenth century, selling widely across the new United Kingdom, e.g. *The Goldfinch* (London, 1748), *The Masque* (London, 1768), or *The Lark* (Edinburgh, 1763).²⁵ *The Masque*, for

instance, contains a version of a poem later made famous by Robert Burns, viz. *John Anderson my jo*.

Here is the opening of Grisell Baillie's poem [p. 40]:²⁶

1

There was ance a May and she lo'ed na men,
 She Bigged her bonny Bow'r down in yon Glen,
 But now she cryes dale and a-well-a-day,
 Come down the Green gate and come here away.
 But now she cryes dale and a-well-a-day,
 Come down the Green gate and come here away.

5

2

When bonny young Johnny came o'er y[e] sea,
 He said he fan nathing so bonny as me,
 He haight me baith Rings and mony bra things,
 And were ne my Hearts light I wad dye.

10

The language of the poem demonstrates the remaking of the ballad tradition in the eighteenth century – and it is noticeable that the writing-system adopted seems to reflect, fairly accurately, what can be reconstructed of contemporary speech in Scots. The so-called ‘ideological apostrophe’ is apparent, flagging a perceived lack even in words where historic sound-changes would mean that the form in question would have been a genuine Scots form, e.g. ‘lo’ed’, flagging *v*-deletion, and ‘fu’ (‘full’) with *l*-vocalisation; but it is interesting that the form is reflected nonetheless. It is also interesting that there is variation between ‘wad’ and ‘wou’d’ for ‘would’, the latter clearly flagging that pronunciation of <l> would have been regarded as more prestigious by at least some in the early eighteenth century (cf. the present-day English pronunciation), cf. also ‘shou’d’; but again, the form ‘wou’d’ is the usage deployed here. Old English *ā* is reflected in <a(i)> in ‘ane’, ‘na’, ‘baith’ and ‘lang’, but cf. ‘so’ (cf. Older Scots ‘sa’, OE *swā*). There are some anglicisations in comparison with Older Scots spelling-practice; Old English *hw*- appears as <wh-> in ‘when’ etc., and Old English *-b-* is reflected in <gh> in ‘light’ etc.; cf. Older Scots <quh>, <ch> respectively. However, such spelling-differences do not necessarily flag a difference in pronunciation in the same way as <a(i)> in ‘ane’ etc.

In grammar and vocabulary there is a similar attempt to reflect Scots usage of the period. The third person singular feminine pronoun is ‘she’, a form also found in English (cf. Older Scots ‘scho’). However, some closed-class words are prototypically Scots, e.g. ‘sick’ (‘such’), ‘till’ (‘to’) and ‘yon’ (‘those over there’). We might note (from elsewhere in the poem) such forms as ‘appose’ (‘although, albeit’), cited by DSL only from this text and seen as a variant of ‘albuist’ conflated with ‘suppose’. Distinctively Scots open-class forms found in the poem include ‘Bigged’ (see DSL ‘big’ (‘build’)), ‘bra’ (see DSL/OED ‘braw’ (‘fine’), derived from French *brave* with *v*-deletion), ‘gang’ (from Norse *ganga* ‘go’), Titty (‘sister’ – ‘Perhaps a childish pronunciation . . .’ – DSL) and ‘Tykes’ (‘(ill-bred) dogs’). The word ‘bing’ (‘pile’), from Norse *bingr*, is of interest; the DOST section of DSL notes that the word was used especially by Gavin Douglas with reference to ‘a funeral pile’ [*sic*]. Most inflexional endings are as in Present-Day English, e.g. present participle in –ing, but we might note ‘Een’ (‘eyes’), cf. Old English *eagan*; the inflexion in –n lasted longer in Scots than in English (see DSL *ee*). Thus, despite the use of apostrophes, the Scots deployed in this poem clearly has a sound philological basis.

But for the purposes of this paper it is worth checking the subscriptions for the volume, as an indication of at least the initial envisaged readership. Several impressions of the book were made, with different subscription lists, but the copy in the Euing Collection in Glasgow University Library, Sp. Coll. N.a.2 may be taken as representative.²⁷ The book was dedicated to the Princess of Wales. Subscribers included the Duchess of Bedford, who bought two sets, and the Duke of Buccleuch, who bought three. ‘The Right Hon. the Lady Grisel Bailie’ is recorded as a subscriber, as well as many others, including the Prime Minister Robert Walpole (who ordered two copies). It seems therefore that poetry and song in Scots was now, not long after the Union of 1707, attracting a British audience as part of an emerging Unionist culture.

The example of Grisell Baillie, a good Unionist whose verse was clearly appreciated by the new British establishment, shows that the recuperation of a distinctively Scottish linguistic culture in the eighteenth century was not the sole province or indeed possession of those who emphasised Scottish separateness. Such complexities are a reminder that the analysis of language, the shared tool *par excellence*, has a habit of denying simplistic cultural narratives of the kind with which this paper began.

Notes

- 1 C. Jones, *A Language Suppressed: the pronunciation of the Scots language in the eighteenth century* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1995).
- 2 W. Geddie, *A Bibliography of Middle Scots Poets* (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1912), p. 134.
- 3 G. Brunnsden, 'Aspects of Scotland's Social, Political and Cultural Scene in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries, as Mirrored in the Wallace and Bruce Traditions.' in E. Cowan and D. Gifford (eds), *The Polar Twins* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1999), pp. 75–113, p. 76.
- 4 The 1758 edition was actually printed in around 1730; see J. Miller 1920. 'Some additions to the bibliography of Blind Harry's *Wallace*', *Records of the Glasgow Bibliographical Society* 6 (1920), pp. 14–19, cited in M. McDiarmid (ed.), *Hary's Wallace* (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1968–69), p. xii. For further discussion and an elaborated version of this outline of *The Wallace's* printing history, see J. J. Smith, 'Textual Afterlives: Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*', in J. M. Kirk and I. Macleod (eds), *Scots: Studies in its Literature and Language* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), pp. 37–69.
- 5 For Patrick Panter, see L. Eriksonas, *National Heroes and National Identities: Scotland, Norway and Lithuania* (Brussels: Lang, 2004), p. 76; I am most grateful to Theo van Heijnsbergen for this reference. Panter (not, as has been pointed out to me, to be confused with the sixteenth-century royal secretary of the same name) deserves further study. Robert Baillie (1602–1662), later principal of Glasgow University, in his account of the discussions associated with the development of the Scottish National Covenant of 1638, records Panter's contribution in the session on 1st December:

The nixt was Dr. Panter, professor of St. Andrewes: I never saw the man; bot his Walaidos makes me love him as one of the best poets I know now living: the man hes a bonny spirit; somethings in all sciences; bot St. Andrewes was far in the wrong to advance him to a divinity profession before he had well learned the grounds of that science. He was never diligent; but he had not sooner settled himself in his chair while he began to recommend the Englishe method of studie to our youth, to begin with the Popish schoolmen and Fathers, and to close with Protestant neotericks; a most unhappie and dangerous order. I hear, in his publick notes, he hes deboarded to the Popish justification, and, in his discourses, to the grossest Pelagianism in originall sin, let be in other points of Arminianisme.

(cited from D. Laing, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1841, p. 148).
- 6 STC 24910. See Eriksonas, *National Heroes*, pp. 75–79.
- 7 R. Crawford, *The Bard* (Princeton: University Press, 2009), p. 48.
- 8 *ibid.* p. 49.
- 9 K. Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), pp. 104–05.
- 10 R. Jack, and P. Rozendaal (eds), *The Mercat Anthology of Early Scottish Literature 1375–1707* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1997).
- 11 F. Riddy, 'Unmapping the Territory: Blind Hary's *Wallace*', in E. Cowan (ed.), 2007. *The Wallace Book* (Edinburgh: Donald, 2007), pp. 107–16.

- 12 *ibid.* p. 115.
- 13 C. Kidd, 'The English Cult of Wallace and the Blending of Nineteenth-Century Britain', in Cowan, *The Wallace Book*, pp. 136–50.
- 14 At the other end of the eighteenth century, we might note how no fewer than three editions of Burns's *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, were published in Belfast in 1787, 1789 and 1793. See A. Mann, *The Scottish Book Trade 1500–1720* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), pp. 227–28, and R. Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 450.
- 15 I am grateful to the staff of the Belfast Linen Hall and of the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, for their kind assistance in providing me with copies of this edition.
- 16 The form *Crudelity*, although known in the eighteenth century with the meaning 'cruelty', is almost certainly a misprint for *Credulity*, the form in other versions.
- 17 For further discussion of the textual afterlives of *The Wallace* and also *The Bruce*, but without special emphasis on the Ulster connexion, see further Smith, 'Textual Afterlives'; see also discussion in Eriksonas, *National Heroes*.
- 18 See A. Maclaine (ed.), *The Christis Kirk Tradition: Scots poems of folk festivity* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1996), p. 156.
- 19 For further edited material from this text and a fuller discussion, see J. J. Smith, *Older Scots: A Linguistic Reader* (Woodbridge: Scottish Text Society, 2012), pp. 190–94.
- 20 For a comparable practice in *The Ever-Green*, see J. J. Smith and C. Kay, 'The pragmatics of punctuation in Older Scots', in P. Pahta and A. Jucker (eds), *Communicating Early English Manuscripts*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), pp. 112–15.
- 21 See H. Harvey Wood (ed.), *James Watson's Choice Collection* (Woodbridge: Scottish Text Society, 1991), pp. xii, xv.
- 22 See Smith, *Older Scots*, pp. 183–84 and references there cited.
- 23 As pointed out in Smith, *Older Scots*, both manuscript versions of the poem are similarly anglicised. The BL manuscript, according to Harvey Wood, replaces 'Airth' with 'earth', while the NAS manuscript replaces 'Airth' with 'wind': 'wind' seems a weaker, less 'difficult' reading than the *Choice Collection's* 'Airth'.
- 24 See R. Perry, "'The Finest Ballads': women's oral traditions in eighteenth-century Scotland", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 32 (2008), pp. 81–97.
- 25 See Crawford, *The Bard*, p. 61.
- 26 For a longer extract with full commentary, see Smith, *Older Scots*, pp. 184–87.
- 27 I am grateful to the staff of Special Collections, Glasgow University Library, for their assistance with this text.

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