

To Shape an Emergent Public
Covenant, satire and panegyric

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To Shape an Emergent Public

Thank you, Theo, for introducing me with such kindness and generosity. I have been especially glad to know you and work alongside you these several years — and what follows has been informed by some powerful insights you have contributed to current thinking about literary writing in reformed Scotland.

Thank you as well to the organisers of the symposium for seventeenth-century Scottish literature for inviting me to speak and guiding me through the preparations. I'd like to note that Jessica Reid advised me wisely about next steps for the paper I gave at last year's symposium. This year's lead organiser, Lorna MacBean, gave me some stimulating suggestions about the cultivation of eccentricity in the Scottish seventeenth century. I've felt especially welcome in this virtual venue and hope to continue supporting it.

The quotation 'to shape an emergent public' is from Laura Stewart's *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution* (31). I hope to show that this shaping, which Stewart ascribes to the political manoeuvres around the Covenant itself, also takes place in an offset fashion within the literary texts written 1638–41, that generative interval between the collapse of the royalist, episcopalian regime and the resumption of political stability under a parliamentary committee of estates.

The rest of the title is a bit misleading. There will be a lot of satire and not much panegyric in what follows. In making some last-minute revisions, I wondered afresh why satire is such a persistent generic keynote at moments of historical change. In Scotland and for Scottish writers, this persistence may have something to do with a perennial, besetting need for tactics of resistance.

1630 Greevances givin in be the gentrie ...

Item, that his majestie may be petitioned by the whole conventioun to consider of the great feare the leigis hes conceaved anent his majesteis revocatioun and summounds alreadie raised, and that his majestie would be pleased to declare himselffe for removing of these feares and that the lieges may be freed thairof. (RPS A1630/7/20)

1633 Seven years after his coronation at Westminster, Charles I is crowned at Holyrood on 18 June.



I

¹ Nicholas Briot, Medallion for the Scottish coronation of Charles I, 1633, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, nationalgalleries.org, accessed 12.04.2022

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1630, 1633

Here is the historical moment. At the start of his reign, Charles I revoked all grants made since 1540 to the Scottish nobility and gentry from royal or ecclesiastical lands: according to Walter Makey, 'the mere prospect of a resurgent Crown buying Scottish power with English money at bargain prices was enough to shake baronial Scotland to its foundations' (13).

At the final sitting of Parliament in June 1633, with Charles 'present in his royall persone within this kingdome', the revocation was ratified (RPS 1633/6/24). Sir James Balfour of Denmilne identified this revocation and the raising of episcopal prerogatives as 'the verey ground stones of all the mischeiffes that hath since followed' (Haig ed. 1824, 2.199).

David Primrose, Scotlands welcome to her dread sovereigne K. Charles (ΕΙΣΟΔΙΑ, 1633)

Feast fertile Forth, feast as thou didst before,
Whiles Heaven-blest James was seene upon thy shore (sig. arv)

You few but noble sprites, my minions rare ...
Straine all your veines in one and sweetly sing
A thousand welcomes to our gracious King. (a2r)

Church-ruling prelates ...
Who teach their faithfull followers to repell
All furious fyre-brands, flasch't from deeps of hell (a3v)

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Such dire prospects were distant during the national welcome for its visiting monarch in 1633. Typical of the official mood is an encomium by the advocate David Primrose. An allusion to William Drummond's *Forth Feasting* offers assurances of continuity despite the usual absence of yet another monarch. In the phrase 'few but noble sprites', there is the suggestion of cultural refinement since 1617 – but perhaps attenuation would be a more accurate word. Under these circumstances, singing the requisite 'thousand welcomes' might be punishing. The Scottish bishops are located within the national establishment, which offers no welcome to zealously radical agitators, 'furious fyre-brands' – a term that opposing factions will be applying to each other with increasing frequency. In 1633, there is no place in the kirk or kingdom for uncompromising presbyterians.

- 1637 Laud's Liturgy, Supplicants, Tables
- 1638 Covenant, General Assembly
- 1639 Pacification of Berwick
- 1640 Battle of Newburn
- 1641 Treaty of London
Charles comes to the Scottish Parliament

slide 4 1637–8: setting the stage

Balfour would later comment that ‘Thir unhappey bischopes they were eivell counsellors, bot worsse musitians; for they tempered their stringes to such a cleiffe of ambition and superstitious fooliry that befor ever they yeildit aney sound, they burst all in peices’ (Haig ed. 1824, 2.140).

On 23 July 1637, riots commenced in Edinburgh against the imposition of the Book of Common Prayer. Behind this English-style liturgy was seen the totalising influence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud. In September the Supplicants, led by the magnates opposing the expansion of episcopal authority, gathered petitions against ‘Laud’s Liturgy’. In November, the Supplicants, firmly ensconced in the capital, organised themselves into four committees (nobles, barons, burgesses and ministers) – the Tables.

After negotiations among the Tables, the National Covenant was inaugurated on 28 February 1638. In the coming weeks it was signed and sworn in parishes across much of Scotland, with resistance notably in the western Highlands and the north-east.

Following the controversial election of delegates (including prominent lay representatives), a General Assembly of the Church of Scotland commenced on 21 November at Glasgow Cathedral. By the 28th, the royal commissioner, the Marquis of Hamilton, adjourned the Assembly, but the delegates resisted and proceeded to depose the bishops and repeal all acts passed under their authority.

Signed on 10 August 1641, the Treaty of London indemnified the Scots for the costs of their invasion of Northumberland. Charles came to Scotland for the parliamentary passage of an ‘act of pacification and obliuion declairing that the late commotiones and troubles arysing from the innovationes of religioun and corruptione of churche government ... are turned into a quyet calme and comfortable peace’; this act is pointedly withheld from ‘any of the Scottish prelates’ (RPS 1641/8/22).

How did the events around the National Covenant affect literary production?

What changes to literary production can be associated with these events?

What sorts of literary texts were printed 1637-41, and what do they have in common?

Why is it worthwhile to focus attention here?

Contexts (slides 1-11)

Study texts (slides 12-23)

Sample studies (slides 24-30)

References (slides 31-2)

slide 5

Goals

The intention behind this lecture is to help you consider relationships between the pieces under discussion as evidence of an affirmation and expansion of literary style and function in the second quarter of the seventeenth century in Scotland.

What lies ahead is a fuller discussion of the focus and scope of this project, followed by a survey of the main texts. The paper will end with three brief studies on recurrent stylistic and thematic features that might be described as distinctively literary. These studies need to be fairly carefully set up, but once we get to them, things will be moving swiftly.

How far along is this research?

✓ study materials selected and prepared

👉 documentary evidence being collected

👉 comparison underway

🔭 implications only just coming into view

⚠ Much remains to be learned! Corrections are welcome.

Patrick Mackenzie? Religions complaint

John Corbet? The epistle congratulatory of Lysimachus Nicanor

Anon. The Popes conclave

George Lauder, Caledonias Covenant

George Lauder, Tweeds teares

William Mure, A Counter-buff to Lysimachus Nicanor

William Mure, Caledons complaint

... ?

slide 6 Stage of research

While manuscript satires about the Covenant have recently attracted some attention, most of the printed poems and prose in this vein are available only in digital facsimile. Alasdair MacDonald's edition of George Lauder goes far to correct this imbalance. The satirical pieces that have selected for attention in my own study represent this material, released during the interval I've referred to already, between the inauguration of the Covenant in 1638 and the assertion of parliamentary authority in 1640-41. Some literary writing published during this period (by William Lithgow, Henry Adamson, and T. H.) has been set aside, because its concerns and affiliations lie elsewhere or it has been the subject of an earlier stage of this research.

The similarities and differences between the study texts are beginning to come into view. Time and again I'm grasping for explanations for some of the phenomena I'm noticing. Even in its delivery, therefore, this paper extends its own research by testing your sense of the validity of the explanations so far and the directions to take to improve or develop them. This research is only at its inception. I need to apologise in advance for mispronunciations and factual blunders.

How are primary texts represented?

for fluency rather than authenticity
punctuation reflects modern practice
(exception: apostrophes not adjusted)
related letters are redistributed (i/j; u/v/w)
capitalisation reflects modern practice
italics are eliminated

slide 7 Representation of texts

I won't pretend to be editing these texts. The goal in presenting passages is to enhance immediacy of comprehension without losing all connection to the language and style conveyed in the witnesses.

MacDonald describes the diction of Scottish Jacobean verse as standard English augmented by Scots forms wherever metrically or rhetorically advantageous. His description provides a useful starting point for the consideration of the language of these verse pieces. As to style, the poems are consistently in heroic couplets. While some of the Covenant poems are metrically regular, others are more rugged, not coincidentally perhaps with a higher proportion of Scots. Role-playing is a determinant of style. The prose pieces feature ironic portraits of their personas; sharp contrasts between periodic and aphoristic structure are prominent, as is an exceptionally rich blend of allusive topics, and various parodic and invective devices.

In the mid-seventeenth [century], the elect and covenanted followers of a Calvinist God, aided by the follies of the second Stuart king of Britain ... turned vitality into stagnation and intolerance.

(Wormald 2005, 123)

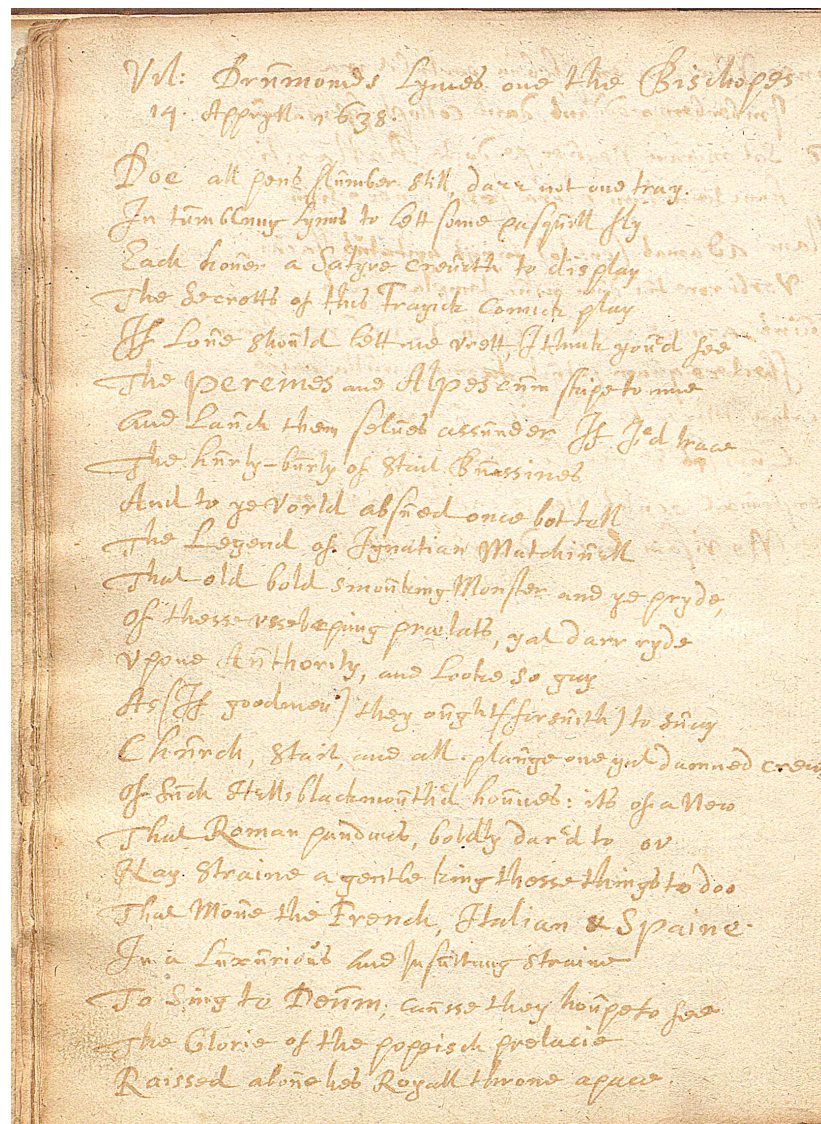
slide 8 Wormald on stagnation

To what extent do the study texts confirm the dominant interpretations of the period? Here is a memorable statement from a distinguished historian. From the perspective of 1649, or 1660, 1688, or 1707 – let alone 2005 – it has value as a talking point. The danger is that culture is subsumed into a boldly polarising evaluation of political and social trends. One might respond that the Covenant created an unprecedented opportunity for participation in literary writing, based in established vernacular practices but involving quite daring formal innovation and conceptual range.

In 1637, the king's imposition of a new liturgy for the Scottish kirk stimulated an innovative petitioning campaign featuring repeated supplications made in the name of local and national communities, backed with male subscriptions. To avoid charges of sedition, these supplications to the privy council concentrated their criticism on the Scottish bishops instead of the king, while encouraging large crowds of men and women to gather to present the supplications and hear anticipated answers. (Bowie 2020, 70)

slide 9 Bowie on petitioning

Karin Bowie argues that women played an active role in depicting bishops as peculiarly deserving of their scorn and enmity. Not only did women's presence in the forefront of demonstrations distract the king's officers and deflect retaliation, but women also participated in the role-playing under which a more seriously punishable opposition to royal power could take hold and advance. There may have been something theatrical about the demonstration of female hostility to bishops.



[From 1637] to 1641, at which point political norms were successfully restored by the implementation of a new constitution, the Covenanters were able neither to control debate nor to impose restrictions on who participated.

(Stewart 2016, 30)

² 'Vil: Drummonds Lynes one the Bishops', Edinburgh, NLS, Advocates' MS 19.3.8, fol. 14v; by permission of the National Library of Scotland.

slide 10 Stewart on unrestrained debate

For her study of the satirical poems of the National Covenant, Laura Stewart draws on Sir James Balfour of Denmilne's verse anthology, NLS Adv. 19.3.8. She argues that the disturbances 'spontaneously created a context in which satirical material became marketable' (48). It seems as if resistance to episcopacy and dedication to the Covenant released the floodgates of authorship. The air was soon whizzing with lampoons, pasquinades and more serious verse. No longer was the literary scene the preserve of the 'few but noble sprites' David Primrose alluded to in 1633. In 1638 and for a few years thereafter, a spate of demotic poems recorded the topics and attitudes that were already afoot in rumour and gossip. It's a convulsive, heady few years; but is literary innovation simply a reflection of the political developments?

I wonder whether a study sample of mainly printed literary material in prose as well as verse might produce a description that refines this interpretation. To what extent do these texts inventively shape the characters and sentiments they convey? In other words, what might be the lasting literary heritage of the Covenant? I emphasise printed material because I'm interested in the transition from pasquinade to a more formally ambitious development of satire. Though the printed material is almost as anonymous as that in manuscript, it enters public record more freely – not just in confidential dossiers and private anthologies, but more in the the sammelbände in which ordinary citizens collected the record of the great events through which they were living.

Literary innovation does not develop in simple reaction to political change but instead within literary discourse itself.

Making sense of significant literary change requires focus on stylistic and thematic change along with interpretation of relevant documentary evidence.

This lecture has to do with these stylistic and thematic dimensions.

slide 11 The literary plane

To end the first part of this paper, I should restate the argument that is taking shape, in order to prepare for its application in the section approaching. My current sense is that the flurry of literary writing 1638–41 shows in parvo how Scots literary invention achieves new focus and style through dismantling and re-assembling bygone and opposed texts. The pieces considered here arguably stand as a group with echoes, parallels, and perhaps a recognisable stylistic continuum. Though it is too soon to say for sure, cumulatively they may work out areas of formal and thematic innovation.

This is not to deny that certain kinds of political change can stimulate literary invention. What I am trying to ask is whether in the temporary widening of public discourse in the wake of the Covenant, contestiveness, grounded in traditional forms (flyting, invective), might itself provide an opening for innovation. In vernacular literary writing in Scotland, this process involves fairly independent-minded sampling and re-mixing of the iconic texts of previous generations, often for satirical ends.

A fault is a fracture, or a zone of several fractures, across which movement has taken place ...
... Longer faults are generally composed of several fault segments ... Segments are often arranged in an echelon, that is, each one is slightly offset from the line of its neighbours.

Hancock and Skinner 2003



slide 12 faultline

While literature isn't geology, the faultline makes a useful analogy, and I'm grateful to this symposium's organisers for this cue. Each of the pieces about to be discussed trace recurrent changes of attitude and foreground some terms and topics with fairly high regularity. I'm quite interested in the concept of the echelon of offset segments as a way to think about patterns and variations in the distinguishing characteristics of these pieces. The making and reading of the satirical text are arguably events in their own right, and they sometimes diverge from predictable linear progression in reaction to events. The evidence for and significance of, 'offset' literary invention will be of particular importance in everything that follows.

Doe all pens slumber still? Darr not one try
In tumbling lynes to let some pasquill fly?
Each hour a satyre cravith to display
The secretts of this tragick comick play.
If love should lett me wrett, I think you'd see
The Perenies and Alpes cum skip to me
And lauch themselues assunder if I'd trace
The hurly-burly of stait bussines,
And to the world abused once bot tell
The legend of Ignatian Matchivell,
That old bold smouking monster and the pryde
Of these usurping praelats that darr ryde
Upone authority and looke so gay
As if (good men) they ought (forsuith) to sway
Church, stait, and all – plague on that damned crew
Of such Hells blackmouth'd hounes!

slide 13

Vil: Drummonds Lynes

Before diving into the printed materials, a reminder may be useful about the ways satire functioned and was perceived in 1638. Here is a lightly modernised edition of a poem from NLS Adv. 19.3.8, Balfour's anthology of pasquinades. The initial impression of inactivity or lethargy with which Drummond's poem begins lasts for only the first couplet. 'Tumbling lynes' refer to the alliterated long lines in prevalingly trisyllabic metres that King James cited in 1583 from Alexander Montgomerie's *Flying with Patrick Hume of Polwarth*. Drummond keeps instead to regular pentameter couplets, with alliteration unleashed only at the end of the passage.

The poet observes that the air is whizzing with satires. They are personified as craving to divulge secrets; the verb *crave* has its Scots legal signification, to petition or demand by right. There is nothing obsequious about the demands these texts make upon their audience; the 'tragick comick play' they have come to divulge concerns the struggle between royalist episcopalians and presbyterian Supplicants. By the end of March 1638, the Bishops' party was in disarray and ready to negotiate. It was now the turn of the Covenanters, in the words of John Leslie, earl of Rothes, to dictate 'the least' terms 'that can be craved for Peace' (Nairne 1830, 96).

Drummond knows the flyter's trick of alluding with gleeful anticipation to the extraordinary outcomes of being permitted to speak freely, as here, about shameful goings-on and depraved protagonists. Ignatius Loyola and Niccolo Machiavelli resurface with heavy regularity throughout all the satiric discourse of this period. One might be forgiven for wondering whether Drummond's allusion to 'Ignatian Matchivell' is meant to refer to a particular personage (Archbishop Laud, perhaps?) or in general to the spirit of deviousness inspiring both sides. The uncertainty may itself be politic, but it doesn't last long before the full weight of denunciation drops upon the 'usurping praelats'. It does so through a wicked imitation of their idiom – '(good men)', '(forsuith)' – but then, in yet another turn, there comes a no less wicked imitation of waspish Covenanting invective rounds off the passage. Drummond is wishing a plague on both their houses.

P. M., Religions complaint to the honourable ladyes of Scotland, lamenting for the torne estate of that kirk and kingdome.

I am Religion, who was borne in blood.
 In blood I grew, and, as I first began,
 I feare my last gasp like the pelican
 Shall bee in blood (lines 2-5)

Thereafter for my cause great warres began,
 That mercillesse and cruell hearted man
 Did dreg the infants from their mothers wombes,
 Made sucklings cradles to become their tombes (17-20)

And you, chast dames, let teares fall from your eyes
 To hear me tell my dismall tragedies (35-6)



4

+ R. B. McKerrow, Printers' and publishers' devices in England and Scotland, 1913, no. 225 (Arbuthnet and Finlason's device), archive.org, accessed 13.04.2022.

slide 14 Religions complaint to the honourable ladyes of Scotland

What follows is a survey of the main texts being studied. Occasionally they reveal an awareness of the closeness of public affairs to the conventions of theatre, lyric or fiction. Persistently, those conventions give shape and colour to the discourse.

P. M. is given as the author of *Religions Complaint to the honourable ladyes of Scotland*; perhaps this is the Patrick Mackenzie whose commendatory poems appear with Habakkuk Bisset's *Rolment of Courtis* (1622) and John Kennedy's *Calanthrop and Lucilla* (1629).

Religions Complaint engages in a fairly basic sort of literary stereotyping, as if for a common audience. Printed on a single sheet by John Wreittoun (d. 1640; Fox 2020, 315), this poem employs the conventionally suffering female persona of reformed Religion to address Scottish women. In its final refuge in Scotland, pure religion is once again imperilled. Physically present as protestors, women confirm the sincerity and totality of resistance to the king's impending attack.

Heere rocked in his cradle was his Grace.
Heere did your ladships with tender hands
Invest his Highnesse in his swadling bands,
And heere when as his Grace began to weepe
With sweet balowes you lull'd his eyes asleepe;
And so it doth surpasse all sense and wit
To think his Grace can his own soyle forget
And to storne foorth his princely wrath on babies,
On widowes, orphans, mayds and sakeless ladyes

(116-24)

5



⁵ William Marshall, illus., 1635, Francis Quarles, Emblemes, 2.viii (detail); image from EEBO.

slide 15 'sweet balowes'

The sentimental portrait of Scotland as a royal nursery, in which 'your ladships' dote on baby Charles, makes the adult Charles's vengefulness seem all the more culpable. The readers of this sad tale, men as well as women, will be moved to learn the roles they are expected to play in the next act of the national political drama.

George Lauder, Tweeds teares of joy, to Charles Great Brittain's king

Rush forth, my billows, in the roaring maine
And rouse the Tritons of old Neptune's traine
Through the vast ocean of the furthest shore
To publish these our joyes and triumphs o're
The watrie world, whilst long-wingd flying fame
To Nile and Ganges dwellers doth proclaime
Our feasts and bone-fires, that both sea and land
May hear our happinesse and joyfull stand,
To see great Charles, his anger smoothed, smile
And kisse his mother, from whose love ere while
Seditious sycophants had him estrang'd (lines I-II)



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⁶ Chris Gunns, View across the mouth of the River Tweed, CC BY-SA 2.0

slide 16 Tweeds teares of joy

George Lauder takes up this Charles-romance at the moment of the Pacification of Berwick. He also makes use of prosopopoeia, the rhetorical figure in which an inarticulate entity is depicted as speaking. The River Tweed, running between Scotland and England, raises its lowly voice to congratulate the king on hesitating before crossing his Rubicon and committing allegorical matricide.

G. L. [George Lauder], Caledonias Covenant: or ane panegyrick to the world

I heere rip up my brest that every eye
Not bleard with passion may my heart descrie,
And all unpartiall eares may rightlie ponder
The load of wrongs which I lie groaning under (lines 17–20)

God great and just who tries the heart and reins,⁷
Is witnesse if to warre my heart enclynnes ... (lines 213–14)

⁷ Psalm 7:8, 'Oh let the malice of the wicked come to an end: but guide thou the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins'; note in Geneva, 'Though they pretend a just cause against me: yet God shall judge their hypocrisy.'

slide 17 Caledonias Covenant

In Lauder's second poem on the Covenant, Caledonia displays her loyalty in a mixture of hyperbole and acerbity. Her protestations recall the beginning of Religions Complaint to the ladyes of Scotland, considered earlier. The anatomising undertaken by self and God guarantees the persona's sincerity . We'll have the opportunity to consider the topic of anatomising further in a minute or two.

[John Corbet?] The epistle congratulatorie of Lysimachus Nicanor of the Societie of Jesu, to the Covenanters in Scotland ...



The Anticovenanters are no more offended with your writ and printed books (which they call infamous libells and Jesuiticall pasquils) then they doe please us. Not that wee delight in your contention, as the vultur in the apologie beheld the strife of the lion and the bore to snatch the prey from both parties, but with an assured hope that within short time you shall become our fratres fraterrimi, for your writings and actions promise no less (page 2)

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⁸ Alciato, Emblemata (Padua, 1621), no. 124; Alciato at Glasgow, emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk, accessed 13.04.2022.

slide 18 The Epistle Congratulatorie of Lysimachus Nicanor (1640)

The pseudonym Lysimachus Nicanor comes from the books of Maccabees in the biblical Apocrypha: Lysimachus robs the temple and is resisted by the common people (2 Maccabees 4:41); defeated by Maccabeus, Nicanor has his tongue cut out and fed to the birds (2 Maccabees 15:33). This controversial pamphlet is a satire on the Covenanters. It is conveyed ironically in the person of a Jesuit,

Under his discrediting pseudonym, Lysimachus extols the Covenanters for placing their religious prerogatives above their secular duties, by which choice they are turning Scotland into a theocracy. He praises them for the craftiness with which they avert royal wrath and deceive the common people.

And as for those calumnies, filthy ballads which these men set out to the disgrace of themselves rather than of those whom they hate ... [notably] that vile person Alexander Sempill, who for whoredome, drunkennesse and all kinde of licentiousnesse hath not a second in Scotland, and now by meanes of whorish women is brought to a piece of bread and extreme poverty, having nothing left but a decrepit body, an intoxicate braine and railing tongue, so that I wonder who could be so base as to lend him their hand to write for him that foolish but seditious ballad called the Bishops Bridles.⁹ (Lysimachus Nicanor, pages 69–70)

⁹ 'The Bishops Bridles' appears in NLS, Wodrow Quarto CVI, fol. 28r. An English transcription is contained in Sir Ralph Assheton's Commonplace Book (ca. 1646; Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, pages 67–70, digitized at collections.library.yale.edu, accessed 14.04.2022).

slide 19

Sempill

The mask of the admiring Jesuit slips when Lysimachus discusses the Covenanters' 'filthy ballads' and zestfully attacks Alexander Sempill. 'The Bishops Bridles' survives; Jamie Reid Baxter has found an unattributed copy of it in Wodrow Quarto CVI. Amid all the buzz of anti-episcopal satires in 1639-40, it's this 'foolish but seditious ballad' that Lysimachus singles out.

The Alexander Sempill whom Lysimachus disparages may be the one with that name who was the sheriff-clerk of Renfrew in 1622 (Anderson ed., 460, no. 1914). He may also be the 'A. S.' who sent William Mure 'Tua Sonets' Unlike 'The Bishops Bridles', those sonnets are in Scots; they express a defiant attitude toward the current paragon of English eloquence, Philip Sidney. Another sonnet is attributed to Alexander Sempill in the second version of *The Packmans Pater Noster* (Lyle 1827, 128-9).

In true flyting manner, Lysimachus consigns Alexander to the depths of depravity and incompetence, and wonders who possibly could have ghost-written the Bishops Bridles for such a derelict of a poet.

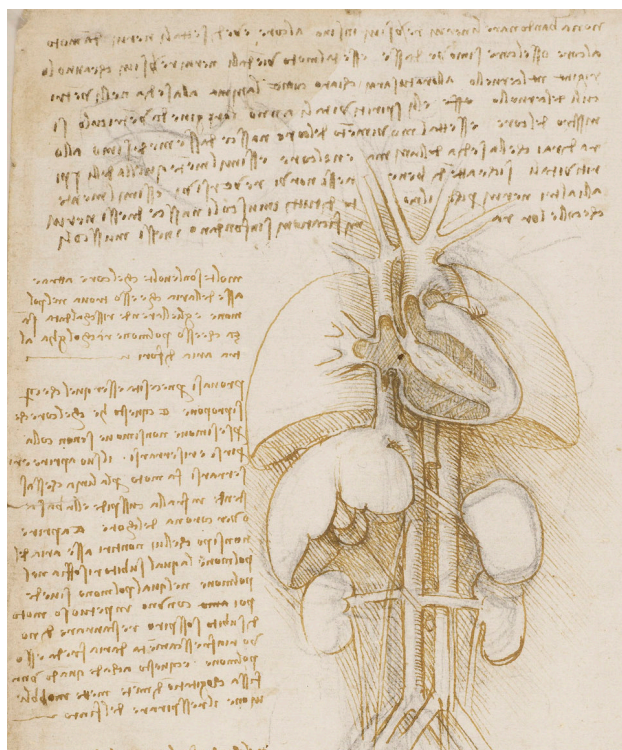
Robert Baillie, 'A postscript for the personate Jesuit Lysimachus Nicanor'

Ye prove a good schollar to your masters Petronius Arbiter, Lucian, Rabelais.¹⁰ None that come in your way, whether men or women, whether living or dead, nobles, pastors, commanders, people, may escape the fire and filth of your envenomed tongue (page 25)

¹⁰ Compare Anon. 1595 [Catholicon of Spayne], page 203: 'the most skilfull amongst the Romanes made satyres ... which Macrobius sayth were called Cyniquized and Menippized, to which he gave that name because of Menippus the Cynicall philosopher, who also had made the like before him, al ful of salted jestings and powdred merie conceits of good words; to make men laugh and to discover the vicious men of his time ... as since his time there hath done the like, Petronius Arbiter and Lucian in the Greek tongue, and since his time Apuleius, and in our age that good fellow Rabelaiz, who hath passed all other men in contradicting others and pleasant conceits ...'

slide 20 fire and filth

In his reply to Lysimachus Nicanor, Robert Baillie earnestly refutes each of his adversary's arguments about similarities between Covenanters and Jesuits. Baillie assumes that satire is malicious and pollutive. In a more appreciative English account of the history of satire (the *Catholicon* of Spayne, 1595), Petronius, Lucian and Rabelais are extolled for pleasing their readers while correcting their vices. That 'good fellow Rabelaiz' earns special praise for having 'passed all other men in contradicting others, and pleasant conceits' (203-4). However, Baillie condemns this literary genre as a mischievously reactionary tool. Reading his response, one can anticipate that the reassertion of governmental control will result in the curbing of satire.



William Mure of Rowallan, A counter-buff to Lysimachus Nicanor

But now thy piece I must anatomize
And try with lynxes sight what therein lyes.¹¹
First for the bulk: though spacious to the eye,
It's pesterd with a full hydropisie,
And from a liver rotten, drencht and spent,
Poyson for bloud throughout the veines are sent (lines 119–24)

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¹¹ The keen sight ascribed to the lynx derives from verbal association with the Argonaut Lynceus, who was able to see through solid objects and into the earth.

¹² Leonardo da Vinci, The heart, lungs, liver, spleen and kidneys ... c. 1508–10, Royal Collection Trust, rct.uk, accessed 14.04.2022

slide 21 A Counter-buff to Lysimachus Nicanor (1640)

In contrast to Baillie, William Mure takes Lysimachus Nicanor as a stimulus to invention. 'In the literary sphere,' Jonathan Sawday wrote, 'dissection and anatomization have been associated with satire, and hence with a violent and often destructive impulse, no matter how artfully concealed' (1995, page 1). In Scottish literary discourse, such diagnosis is related to the pastime of flyting. Henryson, Kennedy, and Hume of Polwarth all use the topic of the sick text, though each of these older poets emphasises what they called skabrous collouris (Montgomerie 99.iii.11) and mock-cures. In contrast, Mure holds out no hope of a cure; his depiction of Lysimachus's epistle as a bloated liver in an advanced stage of morbidity is wicked but also potentially serious. The 'veines' through which Lysimachus's poison flows extend through the text but also implicitly via its readers into the commonweal. This poison can be counteracted by enjoyment of Mure's diagnosis.

Anon. The Popes conclave: or, a speech made by his Holinesse, upon the Covenant of Scotland.

But when before the fulnesse of time, the Book [of Common Prayer] pointed out his unknowne head, O how it was most profanely persecute, and how the sharp invectives like points of spears have rent and discovered his bowels. It was abhorred as a leprous brood, and every parret in the land was taught to raile reproaches, the very children to preach against it, and every mouth could most profusely vomit forth his blasphemies. (sig. B4^r)



¹³

¹³ Peter Paul Rubens, Parrot (c. 1630–40); London, Courtauld Gallery, accessed 27.04.2022

slide 22 The Popes Conclave, or a speech made by his Holiness (1640)

My study is indebted to a 2002 paper by Theo van Heijnsbergen, 'Masks of revelation and the female tongues of men', about the pervasiveness in Scottish literary writing of 'fictional impersonation' that 'intruded upon the factual' (page 73). This 'ventriloquising' guaranteed a space for literary invention in the heat of political controversy.

The anonymous satire *The Popes Conclave* outdoes *Lysimachus Nicanor* in deploying ventriloquising, anatomy, and an unprecedented subtlety and inventiveness of allusion. Now, however, Catholic personae are used ironically to defend the Covenant. The speakers are Pope Urban VIII and a cardinal named di Uranio. With ironic personae, pointed allusions, prevailing cynicism, and abundant inset verse, *The Popes Conclave* presents itself as a Menippean satire.

As in the passage presented on this slide, books and authors become one: which bowels are pierced, Archbishop Laud's, or figuratively those of the Book of Common Prayer? The reaction to such piercing is a spontaneous expulsion of toxic matter from 'every mouth'. The phrase, 'his blasphemies' is meaningfully ambiguous: for the persona, this refers to the Covenanters and their beliefs; for the author, it refers instead to the actual words of the Book of Common Prayer.

William Mure of Rowallan, Caledons complaint against infamous libells

Most sacred soveraigne, honour of this age,
Thy justice wee appeale, brought on the stage
By close camelions (foes who friends appeare)
Abusing our indulgence and thine eare,
Deserving on the parchment of their backe
The hang-mans whips should in characters blacke
Drawe out each passage of those wicked arts
They us'd to wound thy grievous subjects hearts (lines 29-36)



¹⁴ Conrad Gesner, *Historia animalium* (1551), II,3; Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, via archive.org, accessed 15.04.2022

slide 23 'on the parchment of their backe'

In Caledons Complaint, William Mure departs from prosopopoeia to address Charles I in an unnamed collective voice. If the character of the persona is cautiously anonymous, the setting is explicit. It is a 'stage', a platform for the public viewing of an action or process. Mure seems to be imagining a trial or even a play.

Previously repudiated as sycophants and snakes, the episcopal advisors of Charles are now chameleons, the emblematic frenemies of the Renaissance. The task of the satirist is to anticipate punishment of such creatures. In this vision, the hangman's whips inscribe 'each passage' of the chameleons' malicious plot 'on the parchment of their backe'. The punishment articulates the previously hidden 'passage[s]' of their conspiracy. This uncomfortably embodied language invites the reader of Caledons Complaint to anticipate the wished-for next scene.

dazzle

When from the dauning of the Gospels day
 The sunne of trueth, long sett, did first display
 His glorious beames and gild the glowing East,
 The light so dazel'd Babels blindfold beast
 That like a roaring lion mad hee ranne
 And cast false clouds of scorne t'ecclypst againe

(Caledonias Covenant, lines 21-6)



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¹⁵ Albrecht Dürer, Apocalypse, 1496-7 (detail), Williamstown, Clark Art Institute, clarkart.edu, accessed 15.04.2022

slide 24 watchwords, catchwords, bywords

The final phase of this lecture consists of three quick case studies. Here is the first of these. One recurrent word in the pieces being studied is dazzle. This semantically rich word refers both to the loss of visual acuity in excessively bright light (with the dizziness and disorientation resulting from that loss) and to the imposition of one (apparently) luminous object upon another, thereby dimming it. In some of its occurrences, the word dazzle is related to observations of eclipses.

[A]ll the resplendent rayes of our dazeling pomp, wherewith we have obfuscat, even at a great distance, the rest of nations ... (Popes Conclave, sig. F1v)

For though your Holines hath now obscured the brightnes of the patriarches of the East and hath erected your apostolick crest to that unparalled height of preeminencie from whence you doe stately overlook them and all other Churches, even as the mountaines of Ararat whereupon the Ark rested lifted up their welcome and triumphing tops above the decreasing waters, yet the appearing of this patriarch [Richelieu] as of a new unknown starre, may beget a desire in the laicks, to study the motion of our heavens too officiouslie, and so run the hazard of revolting heresies, in their supererogatory contemplations.¹⁶ (Popes Conclave, sig. F2v)

¹⁶ E.g., Galileo's Dialogue on the Two World Systems (1632)

slide 25

Galileo

In the second oration of The Popes Conclave, Urban VIII is imagined as a heavenly body outshining all others. The advent of a 'new unknown starre' has the consequence of disturbing hierarchies in the political sphere but also the cosmos. The mention of 'revolting heresies' may refer to a celebrated recent case, Urban VIII's prosecution of Galileo for justifying the Copernican system. In the main passage displayed, Cardinal Richelieu is imagined as a new 'starre' that demands a new theory of hierarchies and movements. Disruptive correction of vision is a threat common to both the new science and the religious sphere. The pope is vulnerable to such investigation. The danger within the Catholic hierarchy generates 'supererogatory contemplations in both the scientific and theological spheres. Galileo's Dialogue on the Two World Systems is this a counterpart to the National Covenant.

*your women, whom they call virago's and monsters of women, a disgrace to their sex,
man-like-women, and a new kind of hermaphrodits*

R. A. The good old Matron of the holy Sisters of Edinburgh, did more cunningly cover her daughters infirmity of the flesh, who (as she said to her sisters at their meetings) had fallen in a holy fornication with a brother, not out of lust but love, and therefore decreed that she should not confesse it before the congregation lest the Gospell should be scandalized, and that it was better to fall in the hands of God by swearing that she did not know the man than to fall in the hands of men by confessing her carnall fact.

(Lysimachus Nicanor, pages 73, 75)

slide 26 'man-like-women, and a new kind of hermaphrodits'

I'm now shifting to the second case study, pertaining to the depiction of women in Covenant satire. Laura Stewart has noted how the 'perception that Presbyterians allowed females a degree of licence putatively not tolerated by society at large' resulted in the depiction of women 'in polemic material as a means of criticizing the Covenanters' (2016, 57). A lightning rod for such polemic was Rachel Arnot.

Rachel Arnot was a leading figure in the presbyterian movement in the early seventeenth century. In 1620, the Catholic priest William Paterson described her as 'the maistresse of the congregation' of 'the houling-Puritan-typling sisters' (151). In 1600 she controversially harboured the ousted minister Robert Bruce and later may have sheltered other expelled ministers (Paul 1896, 6-7). She was also a grandmother of the radical Covenanter Archibald Johnstone of Wariston. As the keystone in his attack on the Covenant, Lysimachus Nicanor depicts Arnot as the shameless, blaspheming champion of wild excess. It is a charge designed to evoke indignant rejoinder.

Then like a swinish, base, pedantick slave
Thou makes thy snout dig in a Matrons grave,
Snuff at her asses, though now ne're there be,
Since she did change her mansion lusters three.
Blinde mole taine in thy work, harsh screaching oule,
Thou bankrupt chyding beast, thou envy's soule ... (Counter-buff, lines 445-50)

slide 27 virago's and monsters

Here is William Mure's riposte, a passage which ends in a series of nicely balanced abusive metamorphoses in Mure's best flyting manner.

*strange scenes,
new songs*

Scotland was by their conclave first ordain'd¹⁷
 To be the theater, this Church unstain'd,
 With Romish rites, which preach'd the Gospel pure,
 The weakest thought, did seeme the place most sure,
 To act the prelats plot which Rome had laid,
 And meant with great applause to have it plaid.
 The Common Prayer was the name it had,
 Written, as was alleadg'd, by Bishop Laad.
 Strange scenes, new songs, and action, masks and cloaths
 Had made it fine, with many pretty shows,
 If it had been presented. But it found
 So hard a welcome that the name did wound
 The peoples hearts and ears, who begg'd with tears
 No puppet play might interrupt their prayers (Tweeds Teares, lines 97–110)

¹⁷ OED, conclave 3. assembly of cardinals; 4. private assembly, esp. ecclesiastical

slide 28 strange sceanes, new songs

The last of these case studies involves a recurrent analogy between contemporary politics and theatrical performance. We already saw a bit of this analogy in Mure's scene of the chameleons. This analogy is already complete in George Lauder's *Tweeds Teares*, as here. The theatrical allusions diminish the ritual in the Book of Common Prayer, which now appears to turn worship into a demeaning 'puppet play'. Note how the second, third and fourth lines of this passage work syntactically in two columns: the theatre with 'Romish rites' and its 'weakest thought' versus the unstained church which preached the pure gospel and seemed the 'place most sure'. This columnar construction represents the opposition in strikingly textual form.

The senate-house of planets hath at no time beene more unfriendly set for the acting of some strange trage-comedie in Europe. (Popes Conclave, sig. F1r)

Heavens great substitute, absolute Father of the Church, if ever power did shew a masterie in you, let it now appeare, and make the redacted world stand amazed.

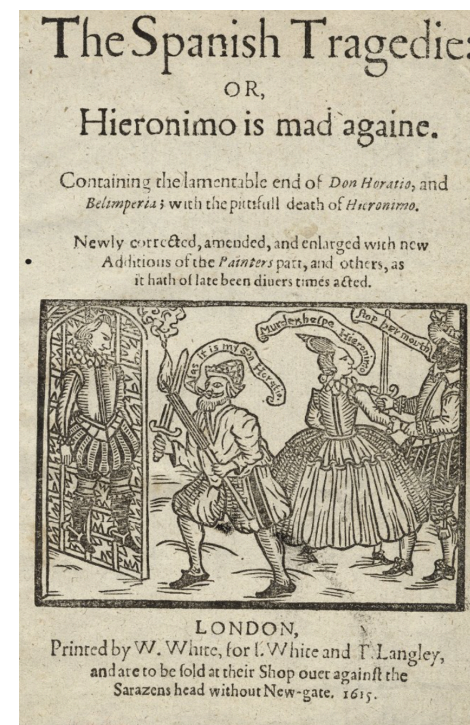
O nimium dilecte Deo cui militat æther,

Et conjuratae curvato poplite gentes

Succumbunt –

Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.¹⁸

(sig. F3r)



19

¹⁸ Claudian, *De Tertio Consolatu Honorii* line 96; Kyd, *Spanish Tragedie* I.2.13; *Æn.* 6.95: O one too much loved by God, for whom heaven fights, and the conspiring populace fall on bended knee – thou shouldst not submit to evils but attack more boldly.

¹⁹ The Folger Shakespeare Library copy of the 1615 edition of *The Spanish Tragedie*, digitized at luna.folger.edu, accessed 15.04.2022.

slide 29 boldly go

Within months of *Tweeds Teares*, the theatrical analogy has evolved from an illustrative topic into a governing concept. The *Popes Conclave* is distinguished by an unusually inventive, combinative use of quotations and allusions. It is a technique learned from Lysimachus Nicanor, who used familiar lines from Ovid's *Tristia* and *Fasti* as ironic barbs against the Covenanters.

In the passage quoted here from *The Popes Conclave*, the world is 'redacted' – in Scots, it means 'diminished'. Earlier, James Melville described the episcopalians having 'redactit the Kirk to one oligarchie' (Pitcairn ed. 1842, 567). But the display quotation holds greater interest. It begins with a line from Claudian, one that is used freely in a brief encomium in *The Spanish Tragedy*, act 1, scene 2. As displayed here, the passage begins (in pale blue) by following Claudian exactly, before shifting (in mid blue) into the wording in the play. The last line is a Virgilian tag with a similar sentiment. I think that this little patchwork plays up the speaker's grandiosity: praise to the emperor Honorius, in whose reign Rome was captured by Alaric in 410; a bit of flowery praise from a villainous — Spanish — character in a much-parodied warhorse of Elizabethan theatre; and only then the Sibyl's encouragement to Aeneas en route to Hades. The remixing conveys a sense of allusive discourse as histrionic. The passage exhibits anxiety about the making of fiction.

And as to the Parliamentary stage-men, who doe now personat so bravely, we hope before they come to the last act of the play, where they trust to bring in your Holines as a mitred boufon, if there be any soule amongst us, we shal do our best to make their dalliance epilogue in a tragedie and over-turne the stage upon the actors.

Finis. (Popes Conclave, G2r)

slide 30 over-turne the stage

The stage topic is important enough to the author of *The Popes Conclave* to feature in its closing words. Again, the overarching satire depends on double perspectives: for the cardinal who is speaking, the Covenanters' devising of a rough comedy about the pope will be forcefully revised into a 'Spanish tragedy', with its parting words spoken by Revenge, who foretells an eternity of punishment for the play's evildoers.

Abbreviations

NLS	Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
RPS	Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707

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slide 31

Does my reading of the Covenant confirm the applicability to literary production of Jenny Wormald's judgement about stagnation and intolerance? Did Scots poets use the opportunity to intervene in public discourse simply to repeat what their predecessors had been doing for generations? I would suggest that satirists on both sides took up some established techniques of Scottish literary style – flyting, remixing, ventriloquising – and refined them in quite original and suggestive ways, especially through a vastly widened range of allusion. Far from signalling the end of a literary tradition, the Covenant revealed how adaptable that tradition could be, given relative freedom of scope and sufficient engagement with matters of national importance.

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