

Some Recent Books on Scottish Literature

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Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams, eds. *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006. Pp. 229. ISBN 1 84384 096 0.

Ian Brown (gen. ed.), Susan Manning (co-ed.), Thomas Owen Clancy, and Murray Pittock, eds. *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*. Vol. 1, *From Columba to the Union (until 1707)*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2007. Pp. ix+334. ISBN 978 0 7486 1615 2.

John J. McGavin. *Theatricality and Narrative in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xi+160. ISBN 978 0 7546 0794 6.

Jon Robinson. *Court Politics, Culture and Literature in Scotland and England, 1500-1540*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. Pp. xi+186. ISBN 978 0 7546 6079 8.

Nicola Royan, ed. *Langage Cleir Illumynate: Scottish Poetry from Barbour to Drummond, 1375-1630*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. Pp. 222. ISBN 978-90-420-2319-2.

As one might expect from a literature in which flyting is prominent, criticism can be a vigorous exercise in medieval and early modern Scotland. More than one Scots poet ends a substantial work with a premonition of the carping it will arouse. Completing his *Eneados*, Gavin Douglas added a pre-emptive “Exclamatioun aganyst detractouris and oncurtas redaris that beyn our studyus, but occasioun, to note and spy owt faltis or offencis.” Proprietary readers like William Dunbar are always ready to be stung into vituperative action by rivals who “hes thame self aboif the sternis

stylid.”¹ Given the Caledonian scope of the books about to be discussed, what follows may be taken in the spirit of such traditional exchanges: “Of this fabill, as myne author dois write, / I sall reheirs in rude and hamelie dite.”²

A behindhand quality haunts the latest round of scholarly writing about this subject, much of which seems dedicated to fossicking out second-hand ideas and methods approaching their best-before dates. This tendency gives rise to various characteristic gestures, from the sweepingly inclusive to the obsessively repetitious to the cosily confidential. Meanwhile, fundamental questions about medieval Scottish literature remain to be framed, let alone answered. The relations between Gaelic and Scots traditions, the apparent transformation of Scots verse style in the fifteenth century, and continuities across the century of the Reformation all continue to demand attention. The subject, as the five books under consideration show, is highly diverse. But if Older Scots verse in particular can be characterized by its “great self-assurance and originality,” as Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams declare in the Introduction to their *Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, work remains to be done to locate and define these qualities.³ Belatedness may also be adduced to this verse, which well into the sixteenth century remains aligned, Bawcutt and Hadley Williams assert, with the medieval rather than the modern, “whether one considers their style and rhetoric, their choice of themes and genres, or their religious beliefs.”⁴ All of these aspects are presumed to be given cohesion by the last, religion, the one most thoroughly suppressed and even excised in the earliest witnesses — post-Reformation — of many of the poems. The Reformation presents various problems to the student of Scottish literature. It may end or transform a national literary tradition distinguished previously by its increasingly lay associations, from Barbour, the politically adept archdeacon of Aberdeen, to Lyndsay, the diplomatic Lyon King of Arms. The old association between the rise of Protestantism and the decline of Scots hardly helps to define the poetry of late medieval Scotland as a distinct tradition: Barbour’s language is largely northern Middle English; Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate are venerated repeatedly; and Gavin Douglas is unique in contrasting the virtues of Scots to those of other languages, including English. The relations between Scots and Gaelic literature in the period also remain to be investigated. With Latin a prestigious *lingua*

1 William Dunbar, *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy*, l. 3.

2 Robert Henryson, *Morall Fabillis*, ll. 118-19.

3 Bawcutt and Williams, Introduction, in *Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, 1-18 at 1.

4 Bawcutt and Williams, Introduction, 1.

franca, Scots poetry partakes of a heterogeneous culture, its status always partial and incomplete. What can be said in comparison about Gaelic is that the records of its literature show even greater fragmentation and contingency: the unique Book of the Dean of Lismore is virtually the only literary manuscript, and its orthography is largely that of Scots. Faced with this daunting complexity, Bawcutt and Hadley Williams treat the circumstances under which Scots poetry flourished as if they were matters of fact rather than significant pointers to a defining problem of cultural identity and continuity.

The editors approach the problem of origins cautiously. They accept that “a profound change took place in Scottish poetry around the middle of the fifteenth century,” a change perhaps stimulated by *The Kingis Quair* but not attributable to any single cause.⁵ A potentially valuable emphasis on an innovative “openness to new influences, themes, genres and traditions, lying outside the ancient ‘matter of Scotland’” begins to emerge, but the discussion of origins teeters at the mention of Chaucer, a *bête noire* of Scottish literary history.⁶ The editors apply the usual restrictions to this subject: Chaucer is admitted to be the bringer of small goods such as rhyme royal, the flowers of rhetoric, and a regular metre; in this way his influence can be quarantined within a small group of obviously derivative poems, mainly ones found in the Chaucerian anthology Bodleian MS. Arch. Selden. B. 24. The limits thus proposed to ‘medieval Scottish poetry’ have telling blurs and inconsistencies. Barbour and Wyntoun, comparatively unsophisticated and exclusively concerned with national history, stand just outside the category thus defined; it may be relevant that when R. James Goldstein discusses these works, later in the volume, he struggles to depict them as artifacts shaped by anticipation and retrospection.⁷ Comic verse, meanwhile, unless by Dunbar, remains largely unexamined; the ensuing portrait of Scottish verse is one of largely unrelieved sobriety — no *ballatis mirry*, despite the outpouring that distinguishes, for example, the Bannatyne Manuscript. Opportunities are lost to consider the range of activity across genres and social registers. Similar limitations hamper the characteristically accurate, detailed discussion of texts and transmission. The point is not made that many of the poems under discussion survive only in much later manuscripts and prints. The note of finality with which the Introduction concludes

5 Bawcutt and Williams, Introduction, 9.

6 Bawcutt and Williams, Introduction, 10.

7 Goldstein, “‘I will my proces hald’: Making Sense of Scottish Lives and the Desire for History in Barbour, Wyntoun and Blind Hary,” in *Companion*, 35-47.

seems off-key: the assertion that medieval Scottish poetry was largely forgotten by seventeenth-century readers is becoming increasingly untenable. Henryson continued in print, as did *The Freiris of Berwick* and several romances, not to mention Hary's *Wallace* and Lyndsay's *Works*. Further, the evidence in post-Reformation writings suggests a deeper awareness and appreciation of the medieval heritage than Bawcutt and Hadley Williams admit. Their neat closure completes a narrative that shrewdly adjusts the focus on select evidence; the full range remains out of view.

The factors that made the cultivation of poetic talent worthwhile demand to be considered, and a subsequent essay on the historical context by Elizabeth Ewan brings the reader somewhat closer to understanding the value of literacy and national self-confidence in the development of a fruitful literary environment.⁸ Ewan points to new styles in buildings and books as indicators of cultural vitality despite the usually adduced symptoms of decline and disruption in late fifteenth-century Scotland. From this perspective, the Education Act of 1496 assumes a decisive significance with its requirement that the sons of the powerful and rich should go to school so that they might perform their roles effectively. The increasingly productive connection between literature and the professions, especially the law and the military, also receives attention, as does "Disparagement of Highland language and culture."⁹ These exclusions and affiliations merge the late medieval into the early modern: Ewan's stimulating survey makes one wish that the editors had extended the time frame of the collection.

Essays on Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*, James I's *Kingis Quair*, Gilbert Hay's *Buik of Alexander the Conquerour*, and Henryson's poems sit more comfortably within the usual compartments. *The Howlat* gains moral force from its fable and its alliterative thirteen-line stanza and offers layers of advice and admonition; Nicola Royan depicts a stylistically exuberant poem but not a funny one, the episode of knockabout farce going unmentioned.¹⁰ Julia Boffey calls *The Kingis Quair* "vitaly illustrative of Scottish literary traditions and yet in some sense outside them" but does not develop this arresting comment beyond referring to the Anglo-Scots language of the poem.¹¹ More provocative is her suggestion that the final stanzas, from the point at which the second scribe commences work in the manuscript, may have been

8 Ewan, "Late Medieval Scotland: A Study in Contrasts," in *Companion*, 19-33.

9 Ewan, "Late Medieval Scotland," 31.

10 Royan, "'Mark your Meroure be Me': Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*," in *Companion*, 49-62.

11 Boffey, "*The Kingis Quair* and the Other Poems of Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24," in *Companion*, 63-74 at 67.

added to the poem at a later stage of composition.¹² These stanzas and the poems that follow them exhibit a quickening of literary initiative, the most obvious impetus for which — though Boffey recoils from describing it thus — must be the poems by Chaucer that dominate the manuscript. Joanna Martin contributes a judicious overview of the substantial but neglected *Alexander the Conquerour* attributed to Sir Gilbert Hay; Martin's analysis of "the poem's distinctive and at times troubled discussion of Alexander's kingship" takes a more decisive edge in her later exploration of love as the source of political trouble in Hay's *Buik*.¹³ A mismatched pair of essays on Henryson makes one wish that the editors had guided the volume with a firmer hand. Roderick J. Lyall's vision of the *Fables* is as uncompromising as is Boffey's of *The Kingis Quair*, but where she finds a telling inconsistency, he, more conventionally, assumes an overarching thematic coherence: the maker of the *Fables* is a demanding teacher, pushing his genre and readers to the limits of their capacity for theology.¹⁴ Lyall notes Henryson's excellence at dialogue, veiled topicality, and narrative irony, but might have gone further in considering how these elements might be related. By contrast, Anne McKim's essay on *Orpheus* and *The Testament of Cresseid* mainly presents an uncritical survey of recent work.¹⁵ *Robene and Makyne* and Henryson's shorter poems escape even such attention.

Some genres fare better than others in the disposition of chapters. Priscilla Bawcutt's essay on religious verse reviews the main manuscript sources and is studded with names that whip past disconcertingly, especially for the reader who actually needs a companion.¹⁶ One may wonder why, if religious poetry made a minor contribution to late medieval literature in Scotland, it warrants a whole chapter. A similarly quizzical reaction may arise in relation to Rhiannon Purdie's essay on romances, which has the disadvantage of apparent overlap after previous chapters on Hay's *Alexander* and Hary's *Wallace*. Purdie tackles the problem of temporality but perforce departs from the editors' assumptions: here the sixteenth and even the seventeenth century become partly medieval. The problem of genre proves even harder to resolve: *Bruce* and

12 Boffey, "The Kingis Quair and the Other Poems," 71.

13 Martin, "'Of Wisdome and of Guide Governance': Sir Gilbert Hay and *The Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour*," in *Companion*, 75-88 at 75. Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424-1540* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 61-78.

14 Lyall, "Henryson's *Morall Fabillis*: Structure and Meaning," in *Companion*, 89-104.

15 McKim, "Orpheus and Eurydice and *The Testament of Cresseid*: Robert Henryson's 'fine poetical way,'" in *Companion*, 105-117.

16 Bawcutt, "Religious Verse in Medieval Scotland," in *Companion*, 119-31.

Wallace are first excluded for their lack of fantasy and then included as “heavily romanticized historical narratives” comparable to English ancestral romances such as *Guy of Warwick*.¹⁷ More impressive is Purdie’s explication of the definitive topic of the ‘imperious host,’ in which the protagonist must relent in order to resolve a conflict.¹⁸ She also writes perceptively about the increasingly permeable boundary between romance and ballad: one looks forward to future work exploring such borders of period and genre in greater depth.

Essays on Dunbar, Douglas, and Lyndsay offer fitfully clearer prospects. Dunbar’s central value — the embodiment of matter in “expertly realized” form — emerges at once.¹⁹ John Burrow achieves what is rarely attempted in academic writing: he sends the reader eagerly to the poems. This feat is never achieved uncritically, notably with regard to the misogynist malaise of *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*; how the book would have been strengthened by a parallel discussion of Henryson’s *Cresseid*, Douglas’s *Dido*, and Lyndsay’s *Sensualitie!* Douglas Gray does not neglect the eldritch qualities of Gavin Douglas’s *Palace of Honour* in his engaging summary of this dazzling, allusive, labyrinthine poem. Douglas’s liminality, especially in the *Eneados*, gains clarity, as do his openness to humanist trends and his sense of contemporaneity with the world of Virgil. Both dimensions become apparent in Douglas’s warmly loquacious rendering of emotionally rich moments in the *Aeneid*. For Gray, “imaginative involvement” is the key to Douglas’s rendering of Virgil.²⁰ In contrast, the final essay of the collection returns to a simpler perspective in which history neatly trumps literature. In her truncated survey of Sir David Lyndsay, stopping short of the late work such as *Squire Meldrum* and the *Satire of the Three Estates*, Janet Hadley Williams acknowledges Lyndsay’s manifold continuities, especially the role of his much-reprinted *Works* in expanding the audience for Scottish literature. Still, one would wish that this *Companion* were doing more to advance an appreciation of such continuities and what they signify. Through much of its contents, this volume seems more a collection of scholarly essays than a true companion for students as they commence work on the poems of Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, and the others; indeed, it hardly touches large areas of the late medieval poetry of Scotland.

17 Purdie, “Medieval Romance in Scotland,” in *Companion*, 165-77 at 169.

18 Purdie, “Medieval Romance in Scotland,” 172-73.

19 Burrow, “William Dunbar,” in *Companion*, 133-48 at 134; Gray, “Gavin Douglas,” in *Companion*, 149-64; and Williams, “Sir David Lyndsay,” in *Companion*, 179-91.

20 Gray, “Gavin Douglas,” 161.

The glibly pugnacious stance with which *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature* commences seems designed to repel any reader not at ease within the confines of cultural nationalism. Perhaps the ambitions of coverage demand such a stance: this is a much wider compendium than the *Companion*, in which some inclusions — the *Gododdin*, *Orkneyinga saga*, *The Dream of the Rood* — are controversial. Declarative zeal evidently entails redundancy: with no less than two introductory essays, the volume begins by establishing what will prove to be an overarching principle. In the first of these essays, the editors resolve the problems of periodicity and inclusion resolutely, claiming to subsume in Volume 1 all the literary writing that can be associated with the geographical concept of Scotland, across a millennium that ends abruptly with the Union of the Parliaments in 1707. The Union does not serve well as a cultural marker, as the editors admit: “the basis of the Enlightenment [. . .] is also buried deep in Scotland’s Renaissance”; but in acceding to it, they apparently do not perceive that this burial owes more to current scholarly prejudice than to eighteenth-century cultural practices.²¹

Its death already recorded as its defining feature, literary culture in Scotland before the Union assumes the blame for the imperialistic distortions of modern literary canon-building, only recently in retreat. From the second barrel of the double introduction, Cairns Craig, invoking Michael Alexander, unloads a volley upon the likes of Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lyndsay, all guilty of upholding “a poetic tradition with Chaucer at its head.”²² No wonder the editors of the *Companion* are so nervous about the Chaucerian yoke. Craig offers a mitigating gesture when he praises the Scots poets’ articulation of their distinctive qualities, but then delivers the damning counterblow: these poets wielded their praise of Chaucer as a weapon with which to deprecate and dismiss the rival Gaelic tradition. Insofar as late medieval Scots literature possesses identifiably Chaucerian qualities, it advances a cultural narrowing and exclusion, a strong argument as far as it goes — though, as Craig admits, Scots from Gavin Douglas to James VI also distinguish their practice from that of their English counterparts. Scots poetry would not be the first literary practice to define its values by exclusion, nor would it be the last. Not that late medieval literature matters in itself: depicting the *makars*’ work as pretty poison enables Craig to identify a phenomenon of greater import, namely, the deformation of eighteenth- and

21 Brown, Clancy, Manning, and Pittock, “Scottish Literature: Criticism and the Canon,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:3-15 at 9.

22 Craig, “The Study of Scottish Literature,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:16-31 at 18.

nineteenth-century literature in Scotland. Imbibing their supposed literary heritage, Allan Ramsay, Walter Scott, and the rest were “trapped [. . .] into fake reproductions of earlier versions of Scottish literature.”²³ For Craig, who is echoing Robert Crawford’s tendentious *Scottish Invention of English Literature*, the medieval Scots poets can be deplored as encomiasts of Chaucer who set the trap, or can at best be acknowledged with an embarrassed squirm.

As did the *Companion*, the *Edinburgh History* proceeds straight into history; now, however, geography, linguistics, and philosophy duly take their place. Whether these contexts contribute to an understanding and appreciation of the literature or relegate the literary to a secondary remoteness deserves to be asked. At least Benjamin Hudson and Sally M. Foster offer an implicit antidote to Cairns Craig’s polemic when they indicate the culturally laden imperative of Malcolm III and Margaret and their descendants to retain foreign supporters.²⁴ In the royal institution of the burghs, trade accelerated immigration. William Gillies detects an analogous trend towards assimilation early in the history of Gaelic culture in Scotland: with the assertion of Gaelic hegemony and the subsequent shift of its power centre eastward to Scone, the Gaelic language adopted features of the Welsh-related language indigenous to the region.²⁵ Thus, the language became a link between peoples, even while the Irish affiliations of Gaelic literary culture were already assuring that this culture would long remain a “focus for linguistic conservatism.”²⁶ This focus had rivals: Northumbrian and, subsequently, Viking influences leave traces to the south and east; in the Lothians, a form of English held its own. In some ways, Gaelic, with its Irish affiliations, is comparable to its much younger rival, Scots, with its ties south of the border; more deep-seated are the differences between the stabilizing effect of a traditional literary class, on the one hand, and the later efforts, on the other, of fifteenth-century Scots poets to synthesize and assert a linguistic and stylistic distinctiveness, perhaps in late competition with that of Gaelic.

Regarding nascent literary traditions, individuation begins to seem the sincerest form of flattery. Thomas Owen Clancy notes, for example, the Gaelic poets’ metrical elaboration and striking verbal ornamentation, their counterpoise of praise and

23 Craig, “The Study of Scottish Literature,” 1:23.

24 Hudson, “One Kingdom from many Peoples: History until 1314,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:35-43; and Foster, “The Topography of People’s Lives: Geography until 1314,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:44-51.

25 Gillies, “The Lion’s Tongues: Languages in Scotland to 1314,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:52-62.

26 Gillies, “The Lion’s Tongues,” 1:58.

blame; one way the Scots poets would exhibit their indebtedness to these predecessors could be by competing with them on their own terms.²⁷ Controversy stimulates study: witness the vexed problem of the date and authenticity of the *Gododdin*, an elegiac sequence celebrating a band of warriors of the sixth-century Brythonic kingdom Gododdin in southern Scotland. Jenny Rowland gingerly advances the possibility of a route of transmission of the poem via Strathclyde to the northern Welsh kingdom of Gwynedd.²⁸ If there is to be any progress towards learning whether the thirteenth-century Welsh manuscript of the *Gododdin* preserves even in fragments a sixth-century poem from a Brythonic kingdom with its capital Din Eidyn (Edinburgh) and its most famous poet Aneirin, this progress is likely to come via a digital analysis of the sole manuscript and its text; the lack of reference to such a development is telling. The Vikings' sagas and courtly verse also have a Scottish footprint — as with *Karlamagnus saga* — but are preserved in manuscripts compiled elsewhere. Chronology and geography continue to be elastic means of inclusion in this *History of Scottish Literature*, as do text and canon. The *dróttkvætt* of eleventh-century Orkney is part of a tradition with its centres far from anywhere that can begin to be called Scotland; and not even Orkney was under Scottish rule until the late fifteenth century. Transmission is so central a problem to understanding *Orkneyinga saga* (c.1200), for example, that comment on its supposed closeness to the events it reflects remains merely at the level of plausible hypothesis. Judith Jesch wisely emphasizes the initiatory role of the Orcadian earl Rögnvaldr, a specialist in *lausavísur*, stanzas on occasions: she articulates Rögnvaldr's transformation of the traditionally oral *dróttkvætt* into a literate mode, designed to be preserved in books.²⁹ Discussing the *Jómsvíkingadrápa* by a bishop of Orkney, Bjarni Kolbeinsson, Jesch identifies sardonic wit and a deft use of refrain as the bishop's inheritance from the earl. Much play, earlier in the *History*, is made of confluence and alliance as the underlying theme of an emerging Scottish culture; but this theme breaks up under the accumulating evidence of individual traditions taking root and then transplanted to more secure cultural centres.

Given the amount of reliance on manuscript evidence, it would have been useful if manuscripts had been identified and described consistently throughout this volume. Among the earlier chapters, Katharine Simms's study of the Gaelic poet Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh comes close: here are citations for individual poems

27 Clancy, "The Poetry of the Court: Praise," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:63-71.

28 Rowland, "Aneirin, the *Gododdin*," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:72-76.

29 Jesch, "Norse Literature in the Orkney Earldom," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:77-82.

rather than a general list of select modern studies and editions, but still no information about the manuscripts preserving these poems.³⁰ Muireadhach's career coincides with the articulation of two modes of classical Irish poetry. His Scottish connection remains predictably shadowy: nicknamed Albanach, "the Scotsman," he is identified as the author of twelve poems and the poet of an early thirteenth-century Mormaer of Lennox, Alún Óg, but the Scottish sojourn of this Gaelic poet was only that — his tradition as yet had its main centre elsewhere. Because the problem is never taken on directly, the first section of this *History* presents what appear to be conceptual sleights of hand by which literature written in Scotland becomes Scottish literature. As if to compensate for this fundamental uncertainty, the focus shifts suddenly: Gilbert Márkus sweeps across language, century, and 'nation' to survey early medieval religious poetry.³¹ Of the linguistic diversity — Latin, Welsh, Gaelic, English, Norse — Márkus claims, "These are all 'Scottish' languages, in the sense that they are all languages once used by settled populations in the area we now call Scotland."³² Some of these languages are extremely thin on Scottish ground. Thematically, the zone is Christendom, with the Psalms as its means to literacy and devotion, but Márkus attempts to localize Scottish Latin verse by arguing that it adopts elements of the prosody and diction of Gaelic poetry of praise. Special pleading, question-begging, the illusion of comprehensive coverage, a skeptical reader might observe, are the means by which this *History* all too often proceeds.

At this point in the *History*, the ineffectually compensatory gestures towards cohesion and articulation are becoming obtrusive. Several of the chapters are marked by recurrent self-citations. James E. Fraser acknowledges the heterogeneity and paucity of saints' lives from "northern Britain," the geographical expression significantly subsuming Iona and Wearmouth-Jarrow.³³ What guarantees the inclusion here of the lives of Ninian, Kentigern, and Margaret is not that they were written by or for Scots, but that the saints themselves are reputedly Scottish. Attempting to fill the gap, Clare Stancliffe provides a close reading of Adomnán's life of Columba.³⁴ In Thomas O'Loughlin's essay grandly entitled "Theology, Philosophy and Cosmography," absence

30 Simms, "Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh and the Classical Revolution," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:83-90.

31 Márkus, "Saving Verse: Early Medieval Religious Poetry," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:91-102.

32 Márkus, "Saving Verse," 1:91.

33 Fraser, "Hagiography," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:103-109 at 103.

34 Stancliffe, "Adomnán of Iona and his Prose Writings," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:110-14.

of evidence ceases to be a barrier.³⁵ Adomnán arises yet again (this time with a useful table of texts³⁶), followed by a little cortège of notionally Scottish philosophers — Adam of Dryburgh, Michael Scotus, and Duns Scotus (not the last such sequence in the *History*, the second part of which includes Alexander Broadie’s similarly clipped survey of Richard of St. Victor, the multiply spelled “Michael Scott,” and Duns Scotus among others).³⁷ Thomas Owen Clancy, one of the editors of the volume, discusses an Irish tale because its characters recur in Gaelic Scotland.³⁸ Before making memorably large claims for the Scottishness of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Vita Merlini*, Clancy lets the reader in on what has become a fairly open secret: the editors and authors of the *History* “have been trying to give some sense of the literary riches of the earlier period — yes, all this literature is contested, in terms of text, place of origin, relationship to Scotland, but it nonetheless fills out our sense of Scotland as having a literary history which goes back before 1314.”³⁹ The date, that of the battle of Bannockburn, is illuminating, as is the belated appearance of the passage.

The second section of the *History* commences as did the first with framing, or perhaps distancing, chapters of context. Edward J. Cowan boldly announces that Bannockburn produced a demand by “a new, muscular, articulate and memorious Scotland” for “a new historiography and a new literature.”⁴⁰ Where Elizabeth Ewan noted a disjunction between power and culture, Cowan posits a simple line of influence.⁴¹ Not all his lines are so simple: the union of the crowns of England and Scotland is described as both an outcome of the failure of English attempts at conquest and a perennial consideration for Scottish rulers after Robert Bruce. Circumscribed by partisan history, late medieval literature is deprecated for its exposure to English cultural practices: it is new and articulate, but, apart from *Bruce* and *Wallace*, not sufficiently “muscular.” Predictably, James VI and I serves as Cowan’s great Satan, lusting for England and plotting a “final solution” [*sic*] for the Gaelic Highlands;⁴² literature

35 O’Loughlin, “Theology, Philosophy and Cosmography,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:115-22.

36 O’Loughlin, “Theology, Philosophy and Cosmography,” 1:119.

37 Broadie, “Philosophy and Theology in Scotland before the Reformation,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:226-30.

38 Clancy, “A Fragmentary Literature: Narrative and Lyric from the Early Middle Ages,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:123-31.

39 Clancy, “A Fragmentary Literature,” 1:124.

40 Cowan, “Land and Freedom: Scotland, 1314-1707,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:135-43 at 135.

41 Ewan, “Late Medieval Scotland: A Study in Contrasts,” in *Companion*, 19-33.

42 Cowan, “Land and Freedom: Scotland, 1314-1707,” 1:141.

is a hapless collateral casualty. After such sweeping strokes, the geographer Charles W. J. Withers provides a bracing, substantial vantage: from this perspective, 1314 initiated a new “national space” defined by its cross-currents of political integration, cultural diversity, and “material transformation.”⁴³ Across the next four centuries, maps give this space an increasingly detailed, localized character; in the process, enduring divisions and boundaries come into relief. The decisive sites were the burghs, catalysts of linguistic transformation: Christine Robinson and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh describe a Gaelic increasingly divergent from Irish and a Scots gaining dominance in the urban markets, lawcourts, and tolbooths;⁴⁴ the authors make large claims for the individuation of Scots relative to English.

The editorial design of this *History* seems to involve an overlap of two stages, with consequent fragmentation and compensatory efforts at synthesis. The larger problem of framing detracts from even the better chapters. Though Nicola Royan and Dauvit Broun offer the reader surer footing in their chapter on historiography, they willy-nilly cover much of the same ground as did Benjamin Hudson earlier in the volume.⁴⁵ Their attention to the internal characteristics of historical writing and their tacit refusal to assign formative value to external factors offer a striking indication of what the *History* might have provided throughout. Their description of John of Fordun’s late fourteenth-century *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* as a rich, largely fictional narrative at last rights the balance between history and literature. Telling recourse to anecdote distinguishes this essay, as in the episode from Walter Bower’s mid-fifteenth-century *Scotichronicon*, in which Alexander III’s wedding festivities culminate in the apparition of a ghostly figure. With the sixteenth century, the quest for wholeness in a historical account culminates in Hector Boece’s *Scotorum Historia* (printed 1527) and its Scots translations, notably John Bellenden’s (printed c.1540), in which generations of readers found the vision of “the Scots as united under God” enduringly attractive; this pre-Reformation vision would be appropriated by John Knox and his followers in their depiction of the godly.⁴⁶ Turning to Jack MacQueen’s chapter on Latin

43 Withers, “Emergent Nation: Scotland’s Geography, 1314-1707,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:144-52 at 144.

44 Robinson and Ó Maolalaigh, “The Several Tongues of a Single Kingdom: The Languages of Scotland, 1314-1707,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:153-63. Hudson, “One Kingdom from many Peoples: History until 1314,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:35-43.

45 Royan and Broun, “Visions of Scottish Nationhood, c.850-1707,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:168-83.

46 Royan and Broun, “Visions of Scottish Nationhood,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:179.

literature, the reader experiences puzzlement anew at encountering territory already crossed and re-crossed in this book.⁴⁷ MacQueen's discussion of George Buchanan and his successors opens new prospects: briskly and authoritatively reviewed, Buchanan's poetry is an underplayed highpoint of the volume. One could wish only that scope had been given for Buchanan's plays, which in a subsequent chapter are merely alluded to. Into the seventeenth century, distinguished Scoto-Latin poets refined the enormous range of Buchanan's genres, with especially brilliant results in satire. Buchanan having been crammed into seven pages, there follow two chapters lavishing attention upon an "unremarkable quarto paper manuscript now consisting of 159 folios and four fragments," the Book of the Dean of Lismore.⁴⁸ Granted, the Book of the Dean of Lismore is very important, and, as Martin MacGregor indicates, its unique contents and Scots orthography make it seem an attractive emblem of cultural openness and flexibility — but two chapters? In contrast, the key literary anthologies in Scots — notably Bodleian Arch. Selden. B. 24 and the Asloan, Bannatyne, and Maitland Folio manuscripts — are relegated to passing mention at best, their orientation apparently not deserving emphasis. Herein is perhaps the most glaring editorial intervention of the collection: the effort to give Gaelic literature prominence produces manifold repetition, on the one hand, and suppression, on the other.

In the closing chapters of this *History*, a few sporadic efforts are made to justify the volume's assumptions and emphases. Short chapters are included on international reception (by Paul Barnaby and Tom Hubbard), legal writing (by David Sellar), and, with an appropriately polemical edge, Reformed theology (by Crawford Gribben).⁴⁹ Writing on literature and art, Michael Bath tackles a complex area. For Bath, celebrating the intermittent great names and works distorts the larger picture, but avoiding names and categories turns out to be difficult when Bath calls Henryson a Renaissance poet, Bill Findlay ascribes *The Manere of the Crying of Ane Playe* to Dunbar, and Mary Ellen Brown shoehorns the Bannatyne Manuscript into

47 MacQueen, "From Rome to Ruddiman: The Scoto-Latin Tradition," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:184-208.

48 MacGregor, "Creation and Compilation: *The Book of the Dean of Lismore* and Literary Culture in Late Medieval Gaelic Scotland," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:209-18 at 209. Gillies, "Gaelic Literature in the Later Middle Ages: *The Book of the Dean* and beyond," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:219-25.

49 Barnaby and Hubbard, "The International Reception and Literary Impact of Scottish Literature of the Period 1314 until 1707," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:164-67; Sellar, "Legal Writing, 1314-1707," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:238-44; Gribben, "Scottish Theological Literature, 1560-1707," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:231-37.

a discussion of “balladry” — after all, Bannatyne calls his selections *ballatis*.⁵⁰ In contrast, Sally Mapstone runs mindfully athwart of the easy conjunction in her title, “Older Scots Literature and the Court.”⁵¹ She develops a perspective that has become a powerful theme in her work, namely, that literary patronage in Scotland is more significantly and sustainedly noble than it is royal; it is from an often critically magnatorial position that the theme of kingship is scrutinized. Countering the prevailing current of the *History*, she praises *The Kingis Quair* as “a defining moment in the establishing of Scottish ‘courtly’ values.”⁵² The inconvenience of *The Kingis Quair* is its English affiliation, its inheritance from Lancastrian statecraft and Chaucerian poetics; Mapstone seeks to mitigate these supposed demerits by advocating the “cultural creativity” in the making of the *Quair*.⁵³ In contrast, Henryson seeks distance from courtly values, so that self-knowledge is to be found in a leper house on the edge of the burgh. The lapses in this essay are partly dictated by the enormous range and rigorous word limit imposed on it: having been mentioned as dedicated to Lord Henry Sinclair, Douglas’s *Eneados* flits past. Such compression produces a flattening of perspective: Scots literature begins to seem very serious stuff, even such richly comic achievements as Lyndsay’s *Satire of the Three Estates*. This is a shame. The substantial comic energies of Scots verse accelerate the divide in later sixteenth-century poetry between the broader, freer modes outside the court and the increasingly narrow ones within it.

Volume 1 of *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature* ends with three essays on individual poets: Henryson, Dunbar, and Sìleas na Ceapaich, a seventeenth-century woman composer of Gaelic verse. Antony J. Hasler writes decisively about Henryson’s critique of arbitrary signs but shows less certainty when he discusses individual poems: to describe *Sum Practysis of Medecyne* as “a blistering, lexically virtuosic assault” is once again to miss the pervasive humour.⁵⁴ Similarly, the *Fables* and *Orpheus* come off as hermeneutically shifty but not especially delightful. Hasler works through the usual topics — the morals, the order of the fables, the duality of body and soul —

50 Bath, “Literature, Art and Architecture,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:245–52 at 246; Findlay, “Performances and Plays,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:253–62 at 254; Brown, “Balladry: A Vernacular Poetic Resource,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:263–72 at 264.

51 Mapstone, “Older Scots Literature and the Court,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:273–85.

52 Mapstone, “Older Scots Literature and the Court,” 1:274.

53 Mapstone, “Older Scots Literature and the Court,” 1:275.

54 Hasler, “Robert Henryson,” in *Edinburgh History*, 1:286–94 at 287.

without imparting cohesiveness and force to his recitation. *The Testament of Cresseid* earns a livelier reading, but one in which Henryson's complex relation to Chaucer is treated as unproblematic, a move that in this volume may be too optimistic. Hasler's more original flourishes distract the reader, as in his over-reading of Cresseid's regret that she cannot return the brooch to Troilus. By contrast, Priscilla Bawcutt's less mannered reading of Dunbar produces a fine insight into that poet's "hard, cruel, edge" that makes unforgettable his penchant for elegant brevity and his *thocht* on mutability.⁵⁵ It is difficult to write cohesively about Dunbar; sometimes Bawcutt pursues an apparent critical quibble, as when she insists that the so-called *Lament for the Makaris* ("I that in heill wes and gladnes") is "not primarily an elegy for dead poets,"⁵⁶ a comment that diminishes the cumulative, tonally complex power of the virtual procession of the dead, with the poetic *brether* climactically and extendedly given final position. More illuminating is Bawcutt's discussion of *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*, which confirms the initial emphasis on cruelty with its reshaping of courtly pastime into "something far more savage and painful."⁵⁷ The decision to conclude the volume with a chapter on a Gaelic female poet is strikingly in tune with the larger priorities and affiliations of the volume. Unfortunately, the level of discussion dips appreciably after the stronger passages in Mapstone's and Bawcutt's chapters: Colm Ó Baoill seeks biographical information and relies on 'may have been.'⁵⁸ Not until the penultimate paragraph does he consider the phenomenon and the attendant problems of a woman poet in a seventeenth-century Gaelic community. One of the striking impressions left by this book arises from the varying achievement and emphasis in the disciplines it embraces. Giving each area the appearance of fair treatment produces some harsh contrasts. Inconsistencies of style and approach intensify the impression of overall unevenness and emphasize the redundancies. This is a disappointing book, despite its occasional jewels.

Turning to John J. McGavin's *Theatricality and Narrative in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, one is cheered by the promise of much sparkle. McGavin commences his study with some reflections on the role of the chronicler as a retrospective shaper of scenes, but also with some murkiness concerning the location of these scenes. He refers to 'showings' as textual or even conceptual phenomena, but also as

55 Bawcutt, "William Dunbar," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:295-304, at 297.

56 Bawcutt, "William Dunbar," 1:298.

57 Bawcutt, "William Dunbar," 1:300.

58 Ó Baoill, "Sìleas na Ceapaich," in *Edinburgh History*, 1:305-314.

more conventionally theatrical events. This linkage may stimulate the reader to ponder whether dream visions, for example, or even devotional prose — Julian of Norwich's *Showings*, for example — might fit in this concept of the theatrical, in the sense that they frame and present scenes. Dunbar's vision of the boys of Edinburgh mobbing the vagrant Walter Kennedy seems apposite, and, indeed, the horizon crowds with vivid examples from medieval Scottish literature. Though McGavin's categories lack precision and his anecdotes are often more digressive than illuminating, his writing is zestful, a woefully rare quality. His detailed, lively, capacious familiarity with a variegated mass of primary sources is frequently in evidence, to the extent that one could wish for a little less hermeneutical footwork and much more presentation of the evidence. The focus sharpens with an illustrative case, drawn like most in this study from a documentary rather than a strictly literary source: as recorded from the perspective of the censorious spectators of the event, a feigned fool suffers the wrath of the Kirk when he wants to wed. Official displeasure at the supposed fool's request arises from the authorities' having been drawn into a willing suspension of disbelief, only to realize that what they believed has turned out to be only a show. An editor of *Records of Early Drama: Scotland*, McGavin at times overestimates his average reader's documentary knowledge and linguistic skills. For a book with a thematic rather than a textual emphasis, the passages of primary material are too literally transcribed, lacking glosses and with accidentals and lacunae distracting one's attention from the performance being depicted. In more than one instance, relations between elements in the scene remain unexplained, as between defiance and penitence in the episode of the feigned fool, where the discussion shifts suddenly from one state to the other. The discussion proceeds spiritedly but at the cost of the reader's confidence that important points of connection will indeed emerge.

Still, McGavin's anecdotes can be extremely evocative. His account of the interrogation of Sandie Furroure exemplifies his acute perception of the capacity of 'play' to transform social meaning — with the prisoner's witty aphorisms overcoming the prosecutor's quest for evidence.⁵⁹ Farce becomes a powerful instrument of protest even in a court of law, and McGavin shows a fine instinct in turning from Furroure to Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates*; but the haste with which the author turns his attention from that play is, sadly, not atypical of the way this book unfolds. The critical scene having been set for a climactic discussion of the roles poor folk play at key

59 McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative*, 20-23.

junctures in the *Satire*, McGavin's attention shoots away.⁶⁰ A similar experience of rich opportunity offered and then withheld occurs in the discussion of performative elements in Knox's and Buchanan's accounts of Mary Queen of Scots and her devising or anticipating of the Earl of Arran's attempt to abduct her. Mary's taste for spectacle and the censure that taste evokes in her chroniclers cry out for fuller treatment. Even a brief reflection on the defining significance of the *fained fray* for Mary's persona would contribute substantially to current debate about this most theatrical of Scottish monarchs.⁶¹ Instead, McGavin holds back from offering such a contribution, as if everyone can be assumed to know all about such matters already, with the result that the reader is left begging. The overarching problem is that for virtually all the readers of this book the material is so new, the contexts and sources so unfamiliar, that an allusive progression through rapid transitions and apparent digressions is bound to be discouraging; readers will likely wonder if the editors of the series in which this volume appears might not have provided more guidance. One particular point at which such a question may arise comes at the end of the chapter on Furrou, Lyndsay, and Mary, where a reference is made to poetic personae at the court of James VI: when theatre can be actual, imaginary, or devised retrospectively by a biased chronicler, the area of discussion seems to expand giddily.

As the study proceeds, McGavin's treatment of his material is uneven. As if to compensate for the diffuseness just observed, the second chapter concentrates largely on one episode from the early fourteenth century in Walter Bower's fifteenth-century *Scotichronicon*. The backward shift is presented as if unproblematic, and the selection of the episode is given no justification, its exemplary value assumed. Hasty framing gives way to exhaustively speculative attention to a single detail: more than four pages are devoted to the possible implications of an assailant's prefacing his attack with the greeting "Ave Rabita."⁶² The third chapter, with its discussion of "Theatre of Departure," has a similar air of associativeness. Discussing the traditional encounter of a departing king with an aggrieved commoner, the chapter could well have culminated with the eerie performance on the eve of James IV's setting forth from Edinburgh to Flodden. McGavin prefers to focus on an earlier royal departure: his perceptions about the blend of charivari and harvest-home presented in protest to Robert III are scrupulous and

60 McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative*, 24.

61 McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative*, 30, quoting David Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. Thomas Thomson (Edinburgh: The Wodrow Society, 1842-1849), 2:158.

62 McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative*, 54-58.

cumulatively convincing. Where this scholar shines is in the analysis of textual evidence: in a passage from a late chronicle, a demented sailor interrupts an entertainment at the court of the young James VI and delivers a stern admonition; the *ordinacio* of the manuscript page on which this episode is laid out gives the reader the opportunity “to reflect on the meaning before turning the leaf.”⁶³ The admonitory intrusion into the progress of courtly protocol is a recurrent element in McGavin’s selected episodes, one that reveals the persistence of the performative impulse even when the performer is protesting the corruptive effects of vain *sportes*.⁶⁴ Yet this recurrence remains largely unremarked: McGavin emphasizes instead the lingering appreciation of theatre among some reformers, including James Melville, who draws on Lyndsay’s *Satire*; but missing from the centre of the stage in this book is a working out of the relations between this pivotal Scottish play and the narrative representation of theatricality.

One ends *Theatricality and Narrative in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* regretting that its author didn’t write more; reaching the conclusion of another Ashgate book, Jon Robinson’s *Court Politics, Culture and Literature in Scotland and England, 1500-1540*, produces a different emotion. Intimations of trouble start early in this book: on page one, Gregory Kratzmann’s name is misspelled, as it will be throughout — failing to get the name of one’s predecessor in an area of specialization right does not instill confidence in one’s reader. Robinson simplistically treats poetry at the Tudor and Stewart courts as comparable. He depicts the court of Henry VIII as a nightmare, a depiction that is fairly unadventurous despite Robinson’s concoction of an opposing perspective. An element of strain enters when Robinson attempts to describe the courts of James IV and James V in similar terms: what he misses is the contrastive openness of the Scottish court to uncourtly voices. One could not imagine one of Henry’s poets, not even Skelton, addressing him in the forthright way taken by Dunbar or Lyndsay towards the Jameses. Nor is flyting even remotely a literary correlative to Henry VIII’s treason laws.⁶⁵ Repeatedly, Robinson makes a feint towards the Scottish court on the way to an extended discussion of an English poet, usually Wyatt. A promising outcome of Robinson’s facile equating of the two courts should at least be to provide new fuel for the debate about whether the making of poems was important therein. On the Scottish side, the evidence, at least regarding Dunbar and James IV, remains inconclusive. Writing under royal patronage is not

63 McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative*, 86.

64 McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative*, 86.

65 Robinson, *Court Politics*, 75.

always the same thing as pimping, Robinson's simplistic analogy:⁶⁶ the rewards for such writing are less narrowly definable, so that when Dunbar refers to *service* and the recompense of royal *sufficiance*, he is not merely offering his verse for hire.⁶⁷

Tempting as ambitious gestures of inclusiveness may be in regard to the literary history of medieval and early modern Scotland, they are as yet dangerous to make. Robinson's disdain for the achievements of his forerunners in the criticism of Scottish poetry becomes blatant in his persistent lack of care with ascriptions, as when he reassigns a lyric addressed to Margaret Tudor, its sole witness an English manuscript, to Dunbar. It is telling that Robinson must resort to such a measure to support his contention that Dunbar "shapes his poetics to fulfil the demands that would have been placed upon him by the king."⁶⁸ In the poems firmly attested to him, Dunbar takes a sturdier, more outspoken approach to the court and its values. More substantial and persuasive than Robinson's is the view of Dunbar that has been developed by Priscilla Bawcutt, Alasdair MacDonald, and others: they see the poet situated at the edges of a system of privilege who turns these edges into a place rich in creative possibility. Robinson insists that Dunbar is no "whiner and whinger," no "whinging, whining sycophant," but one cannot remember when the poet seemed more spineless than he appears in these pages.⁶⁹ Robinson's purview of early sixteenth-century Scots poetry is restricted to a few poems by only two poets, Dunbar and Lyndsay; but then he also manages to discuss English satire of court without referring to Alexander Barclay. Robinson's partiality becomes breathtaking when he illustrates Lyndsay's use of the advice-to-princes genre by a reference to Chaucer's *Lack of Steadfastness*,⁷⁰ and without any mention of the prevalence of this genre in Scottish literature for over a century; it is as if the last decade's work by Sally Mapstone and others had never taken place. At least this obliviousness is even-handedly bestowed: Robinson discusses Wyatt's adoption of the guise of "a speaker of blunt truths" without mentioning David Norbrook's groundbreaking work on this topic.⁷¹ Incompletely thought out and poorly researched, this book does not offer many advances into Anglo-Scots literary relations in the important decades of the early sixteenth century.

66 Robinson, *Court Politics*, 30.

67 Dunbar, "Be diuers wyis and operatiounes," ll. 3 and 26.

68 Robinson, *Court Politics*, 35.

69 Robinson, *Court Politics*, 8 and 24.

70 Robinson, *Court Politics*, 57.

71 Robinson, *Court Politics*, 105.

In her Introduction to *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, Nicola Royan describes this collection of essays originating in a recent conference as “[i]ndirectly” charting “a history of Scottish writing,”⁷² poetry especially, from Barbour’s *Bruce* to William Drummond of Hawthornden’s *Flowres of Sion* (1623). Royan states that these essays indicate continuities by “suggesting parallels between Barbour and Lyndsay, Henryson and Stewart of Baldynneis, Dunbar and Drummond.”⁷³ This is too much to claim for a volume of proceedings from a conference: the narrowness of focus of many of the essays produces an impression of diversity rather than cohesion. The sequence begins with a rousing discussion of the heraldic antecedents to Barbour’s episode of the doomed charge of Sir Giles D’Argentan at Bannockburn. Andrew Taylor is keen to produce a historical Robert le Roy as the maker of a herald’s chronicle bridging oral and written traditions. That chronicle not forthcoming, Taylor embarks on a biography of Sir Giles the lovable rogue. Under all the bustle, the valuable perception emerges that Barbour’s telling of the episode represents the coalescence of anecdote into the proper telling of a chivalric exploit, “setting Argentan apart so that his deed is not lost in the general mêlée, and giving him one splendid laconic speech.”⁷⁴ However, Taylor’s goal, to show that Robert le Roy was a prime contributor to the development of this narrative, remains unreached: the author of the essay has, like Sir Giles, plunged gloriously into the fray; but it is a shame that his most valuable perception is undeveloped.

As is the case throughout the books under review, the best finds in the essays of *Langage Cleir Illumynate* tend to be tangential to the often unprovable, sometimes unexceptionable, main contentions. Joanna Martin reinterprets the political dimension of *The Kingis Quair* in light of its relations to Gower and Hoccleve’s “acute understanding of a troubled English political life.”⁷⁵ Like Hoccleve, James inherits from Gower a sense that youth and old age are not straightforwardly distinguishable. An illuminating comparison of Gower’s and James’s princely dreamers produces a deepened awareness of James as a commentator on the arts of rule. Nicole Meier’s essay on *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy* is less rewarding: the usual

72 Royan, Introduction, *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 11.

73 Royan, Introduction, *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 11.

74 Taylor, “From Heraldry to History: The Death of Giles D’Argentan,” in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 25-41 at 37.

75 Martin, “The Translations of Fortune: James I’s *Kingis Quair* and the Rereading of Lancastrian Poetry,” in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 43-60 at 45.

answers to the hoary problem of the origin and affiliations of the flyting are reviewed, and the conclusion, that the contestants are displaying poetic craft, has been better developed elsewhere.⁷⁶ Not much richer is Rosemary Greentree's essay on Dunbar's "This hindir nycht in Dumfermeling" as a Henrysonian reworking.⁷⁷ Greentree reviews the theme of trickery in Henryson's *Fables* and then notes that Dunbar's poem merely looks like a fable; an interesting but undeveloped proposition is that Dunbar has handled the fable the way Henryson handled romance. For Thomas Rutledge, Gavin Douglas, author of *The Palace of Honour* and translator of the *Aeneid*, had an inventive successor in John Bellenden, translator of Livy and Hector Boece. Both of Bellenden's translations begin with poems in the mould of Douglas's *Palace*: Bellenden sets a precedent for later Scots poets striving for recognition at court and beyond — it is as if *The Palace of Honour* becomes a set piece for poetic auditions.⁷⁸ J. Derrick McClure provides one of an expanding series of prosodic studies in which duration and pitch-prominence are treated as significant elements independent of stress, a contention which seems to resist full typographical representation.⁷⁹ In an abrupt change of focus, R. James Goldstein reads Lyndsay's *Squire Meldrum* as a not-quite-Derridean work of mourning.⁸⁰ Goldstein notes that much of Lyndsay's work dwells on loss, and he alludes perceptively to the poet's building on the *Aeneid*, and hence on Douglas's translation, in having Squire Meldrum woo a widow. The Squire's tryst with the Lady of Gleneagles provokes Goldstein into a Lacanian excursus that is intermittently apposite to the playfulness with which Lyndsay depicts the scene. A trio of essays on late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century poetry completes the sequence: Katherine McClure relegates the amatory to one side of the main thematic focus of sonnet-making in Scotland, David Atkinson seeks a medieval resonance in Drummond's *memento mori*, and Michael Spiller uses Drummond's critical writing as a springboard from

76 Meier, "The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy in Context," in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 61-79.

77 Greentree, "'That he in brutal beist is transformate': The Translation of Man's Deeds to Those of Beasts," in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 81-91.

78 Rutledge, "Gavin Douglas and John Bellenden: Poetic Relations and Political Affiliations," in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 93-116.

79 McClure, "Lyndsay's Dramatic Use of Prosody in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*," in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 117-44.

80 Goldstein, "'With Mirth My Corps 3e Sal Convoy': *Squyer Meldrum* and the Work of Mourning," in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 145-63.

which to read his Petrarchism.⁸¹ Sally Mapstone dutifully constructs a retrospective cohesiveness in her Afterword, but saves her best comment for a seventeenth-century Bannockburnian, Patrick Gordon of Ruthven, who is sedulous to conceal his indebtedness to Barbour: “seventeenth-century royalist writers like Drummond and Gordon seem thus to have had a far from straightforward relationship with the earlier Scots literature of the independent kingdom.”⁸² Throughout the volume, indeed throughout all these books, much toil has been expended on conventional readings, and one wishes that such original surmises and promising findings had been more abundant. Completing these rapid, partial comments, this reviewer recalls the magisterial survey of the state of medieval and early modern Scottish studies that Joanne Norman gave in 1999 as a plenary address to a conference in St Andrews. The depth and ease of Dr. Norman’s scholarship set a high example that will continue to inspire and nourish work in this field for many years to come.

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81 McClune, “The Scottish Sonnet, James VI, and John Stewart of Baldynneis,” in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 165-80; Atkinson, “*Flowres of Sion*: The Spiritual and Meditative Journey of William Drummond,” in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 181-91; Spiller, “‘Quintessencing in the Finest Substance’: The Sonnets of William Drummond,” in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 193-205.

82 Mapstone, Afterword, in *Langage Cleir Illumynate*, 207-19 at 211.