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JAMES VI AND I
POET AND LITERARY CRITIC

by

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Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Ph. D. in English Literature

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
OTTAWA, CANADA, 1980

Stanley G. Mullins was born in Bristol, England in 1920. He took his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Toronto in 1943 and his Master of Arts from the same institution in 1947. From 1948 to 1951 he was a graduate student in French language and literature at Université Laval, Québec. In 1970 he was admitted to the Graduate School of Carleton University, taking a Master of Arts degree in Comparative Literature in 1972. The following year was spent taking the qualifying courses and examinations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature at the University of Ottawa. The final requirements for the degree were met in 1980.

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Foreword

Some years ago a chance footnote reference to a play by Shakespeare sent me in search of Basilikon Doron, a work by an author whom I had not as yet read. Over a period of several months I tracked down other volumes of prose by that writer, James VI and I: Daemonologie, A Counterblaste to Tobacco, The Trew Law of Free Monarchies, and, eventually, The Collected Works edited by Bishop Montague during King James's own lifetime. These, of course, were the prose works; not until much later did I read his poetry, in the two-volume edition of James Craigie.

My knowledge of James VI and I had been at best sketchy, gleaned from general histories of Tudor and Stuart England. Later, after reading the prose works of James, I added to this knowledge by individual histories on the King himself. What struck me were the disparaging--even censorious--references to this King of Scotland and England, references that all too often were one-sided. It seemed to me that historians and literary critics alike were prone to enlarge upon his failures, while minimizing his accomplishments. Historians were reluctant to show how successful had been his reign in Scotland, how far-sighted had been his policy of seeking peace for England, how skillfully (by and large) he had accomplished the union between Scotland and England. For their part, literary historians and critics appeared to neglect his influence on Scottish lit-

erature of the day and to lack knowledge of the whole corpus of his poetry, relying on scattered observations handed down over the centuries and coloured by partisan opinions.

Nowhere was there an unbiased critical analysis of the aesthetic qualities of the prose and poetry of King James. Charles H. McIlwain had issued an edition of James's political works, with a good introduction; but this introduction, while it provided excellent insights into the thoughts and ideas of these works, failed to offer a student of literature a satisfying analysis of the form and style. Similarly, James Craigie's edition of The Poems of James VI and I stands as a first-rate example of scholarly editing; nevertheless, here again a critical appreciation and a thorough analysis of individual poems were lacking.

To remedy this deficiency in criticism, at least in part, I originally intended to prepare a comprehensive study of James VI and I as a man of letters. Unfortunately, time and space have not permitted such an all-inclusive examination of James's entire literary work. What follows, therefore, must be considered as part of an unfinished study which, I hope, will one day be completed by the analysis of the King's writings in prose.

My thanks must go to Professor Richard Pollard (now retired), who first encouraged me to undertake this research. The helpful criticism, too, of Dr. Leo Stock must be mentioned. But most important has been the advice and guidance given unstintingly by Dr. Helen Peters, without whose assistance this study would never have been completed. Any shortcomings in the presen-

tation, nevertheless, remain my own. Finally, to my family and friends, who at times despaired of seeing this work at an end, I say, "Thank you for your patience."

Introduction

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries both Scotland and England had as their rulers several persons of literary attainments. England could claim both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, each of whom wrote one or two poems of great beauty; Scotland for its part could look to James I, James III, James IV, James V, and Mary Stewart. Both royal lines found their most notable literary figure in the person of James VI of Scotland (1566-1625), who ascended the throne of England as James I in 1603. In poetry, criticism, prose, and oratory, he ranks far above his royal predecessors and indeed may claim an honourable position in both Scottish and English literary history, a position denied him by many adverse historians and literary critics over the centuries.

Much of the negative opinion generated with reference to his literary accomplishments finds its origin in the attitudes and remarks of James's contemporaries. The latter, often reflecting political or religious bias, present an unjust picture of the King; for they, like many of their successors, saw him first as a ruler, secondly as a person, and only in third place as an author. Robert Ashton has assembled many of their remarks, with annotations, in his excellent work, James I by His Contemporaries¹. The documents chosen by Ashton show the wide range of opinion held by James's subjects and by

diplomats with whom the King came into contact. Ashton himself perhaps sums up the judgment passed by historians when he states that James's poetry "ranges between tediously didactic Christian verse, including translations of the French poet Sallust de Bartas and the Psalms into feeble and contrived English verse, and love poems which, at their best, are not without a certain winsome charm. . . ."2 An historian, Ashton here reveals an appreciation that comes either from second-hand literary opinions or from only a partial knowledge of James's complete poetry, for he ignores the King's narrative verse and the many individual poems based on themes other than love and religion.

Even D. H. Willson, who has written the most balanced appraisal of King James and his reign, introduces a chapter on the King as an author with these words:

It is pleasant to turn from James the sly young politician to James the youthful poet; for although his earliest verses, composed while he was still in his teens, are crude, immature and amusingly ambitious, the work of a clever schoolboy, they illustrate the amiable and good-natured aspects of his character and place him in a pleasing and attractive light.3

Despite his quick sketch of each of James's major poetic compositions, the following remark is indicative of Willson's lack of detailed knowledge of the King's writings: "James's mechanical approach to poetry and his lack of true poetic feeling were doubtless the reasons why he gradually abandoned verse--although he continued to write occasional poems all his life--and turned to prose."4 James himself has pointed

out in the introductory remarks to his translation of Du Bartas' Furies that his reason for giving up his pleasant pastime--for such he considered poetry-- was the increasing commitment of his energies to statecraft:

And nowe on the other parte; being of riper years,
my burden is so great and continuall, without anie
intermission, that when my ingyne* and age could,
my affaires and fasherie* will not permit mee, to
re-mark the wrong orthography committed by the
copiars of my vnlegible and ragged hand, far les
to amend my proper errorrs: Yea scarslie but at
stollen moments, have I the leasure to blenk* upon
any paper, and yet not that, / with free and vnuexed
spirit.⁵

Scottish literary historians were even harsher than English historians in passing judgment on their King. Writing in 1798, Alexander Campbell quotes a contemporary eighteenth-century critic (Pinkerton) with whom he agrees: "This pitiful Prince, was also / a pitiful poet."⁶ Campbell himself, after devoting several pages to the eulogizing of James's tutor, George Buchanan, gives an equally unflattering description of the young King as a poet:

Meanwhile the royal pupil of Buchanan was advancing to manhood; and when he came finished, from the hand of his accomplished master, behold he was a pedant! a scribler of verse! a smatterer in Greek, and Latin! a mere maker of puns!--yet, such was the prince, who was destined to ascend the throne of Elizabeth.⁷

We sense a more reasonable point of view in a history of Scottish literature written some sixty years later. Following

* "ingyne"--native talent; "fasherie"--harassment;
"blenk"--glance

4

a lengthy passage in which he details the accolades accorded James by such writers as Bacon, Grotius, and Casaubon (contemporaries of the King who shared his political and religious views), the author continues:

But the honours which he obtained from his contemporaries have not been confirmed by the sanction of a more impartial posterity; the dead author cannot participate in the splendours of the living monarch; and when he is thus deprived of adventitious support, we can neither regard him as a great poet nor as a great king. His Scottish poems are more remarkable for their number than their excellence, but they are not perhaps so despicable as they have sometimes been represented; and a royal poet, who affords so unequivocal a proof of his love of letters, may fairly claim a considerable degree of courtesy.

Here again, nevertheless, the author hints that his evaluation of James's poetry will be based not only on its literary merits but also on such intangibles as the courtesy due a patron of letters.

Only in the last hundred years have cautious steps been taken to rehabilitate the reputation of King James VI and I as an author. In 1870 Edward Arber wrote in the introduction to his reprint of two of James's works:

Literature is a Republic that admits of no authority but that of Learning, Genius, and Persuasion. The Writer--whether King, Peer, or Commoner--is judged with one judgment. Curiosity, Reverence, or Loyalty may procure for a Work an attentive reception and some present applause; but its perpetuation, its place in the Literature of the country, will depend upon either its intrinsic merits, or on its illustrative power in respect to the age in which it was written.

On these latter grounds, the Royal productions here reprinted have been admitted into the Series.⁹

Arber nowhere offers a critical appendage to support his rather fulsome praise. It has remained for the twentieth century to attempt an equitable appraisal of King James's contribution to poetry, a contribution based on the criteria in Arber's quotation. The position taken by several modern literary critics--a position to which this present study is directed--finds its most succinct statement in the words of the Scottish critic, James Kinsley:

Not its best poet, but an active and helpful Preses of the Band, was the young King himself, who early shows an intelligent interest not only in literature but in its technique. Letters had sheltered him in that dreadful youth, and given him, too, an outlet of self-expression the boy must have needed to the verge of madness.¹⁰

But Kinsley, like Arber, fails to adduce sufficient textual proof to substantiate his words. Indeed no study of any consequence has yet appeared which would offer a critical evaluation of King James as a poet and theorist in terms of the works themselves and their relationship to similar works of the sixteenth century.

A study of his works will show that "they are not perhaps so despicable as they have sometimes been represented" (as Irving suggested in his quotation above); moreover, some of King James's poetry can, I believe, hold its own with much of the published material of his time. Not that James can be considered a Spenser, Shakespeare, or Donne! He should, however, be re-evaluated in the light of his own age; his poetry should be recognized as the expression of a young but tal-

gented man of letters; and his theory of poetry should be seen as the distillation of much critical thought common to writers on the Continent at that time. Taken as such, his work will accord James an honourable place as a poet of consequence in both Scottish and English literature of the sixteenth century.

Much of his poetry is rightly described as mechanical and lacking true poetic sensibility; the same, of course, can be said of the work of most poets who publish too early or too indiscriminately. Unlike most poets, who either refrain quite often from publishing all their creative efforts or, on occasion, purge their editions of weak poems, James felt compelled to offer his youthful efforts to the public. Nor must we forget that he was the first British monarch to dare publish such volumes. Critics of his day such as Francis Osborne and Anthony Weldon, hostile to the King, took every opportunity to disparage him as man, author, and ruler. The anti-Stuart forces gathered impetus during James's English reign and exploded into civil war while his son occupied the throne. When the Stuarts regained the throne in 1660, literary tastes had changed; and for two centuries sixteenth-century literature for the most part was to remain in disfavour. The works of James were ignored, along with those of many greater authors of his day. Nor did the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with their advances in democratic government, look with favour on a King who so strongly proclaimed the doctrine of divine right.

Yet in part it was precisely James's strong belief in this doctrine that caused him to publish his works. In his tract The Trew Law of Free Monarchies (1598) James gives a comprehensive study of what absolute monarchy means to him. At one point he states, "I have chosen to set downe in this short treatise, the trew grounds of the mutual dewtie and allegiance betwixt a free and absolute Monarche and his people."¹¹ The key word here is mutual, implying a shared duty to be observed by both people and king. It was but one step from absolutism to divine right, a theory widely accepted in the sixteenth century, although considered blasphemous by James's Puritan subjects. "Kings are called Gods by the prophetical King David," writes James, "because they sit upon God his Throne in the earth, and have the count of their administration to give to Him."¹² As pater patriae, the king was both steward and shepherd to his people, accountable to God for his stewardship; his people were to the king a sacred trust from God, and his people were to look upon him as God's own representative, ruling them by divine right. It is this thought that inspires James's sonnet "God giues not Kings the stile of Gods in vaine", a sonnet that incorporates much of the argument of his Basilikon Doron.

The young Scottish King, therefore, felt it his duty to publish his works, if only to set an example for other poets. But there was more to his reason for offering his works to the public: Creative literature written in the vernacular, especially lyric poetry (which had flourished earlier), re-

quired a new impetus and a new leader. As king and poet, James set the example that he felt his country needed. Moreover he recognized that Scotland, a nation set apart by geography and language, had to be drawn into the stream of literary practices then in vogue on the Continent. Educated in these theories, James considered himself to be the man best suited to demonstrate these new ways. It must be stressed, however, that James's desire to publish also owed much to his own sense of pride of accomplishment in letters. Pride and stubbornness, indeed, were to bring him into disfavour once he ascended the English throne. Meanwhile, as King of Scotland, his duty was to bring about a renaissance of poetry.

More than James the king, James the man has often been the object of intense abuse, with adverse criticism of his person spilling over to cloud literary judgments. Printing, although one hundred years old in England when James was a young man, was coming into its own as a political weapon just as James ascended the throne of Scotland. His enemies took every opportunity to make public their opinions of him. No previous ruler of Scotland or England was so exposed in print to the public eye. From 1567, when at the age of thirteen months he became King of Scotland, until 1603, James suffered humiliation at the hands of both Scottish nobility and Scottish divines alike. Lacking the stability of family life, he developed attitudes that his enemies delighted to describe or to hint at. One such attitude was his behaviour towards his male favourite, Esmé Stewart, the protagonist of his narrative

poem "Phoenix". Later, English critics were to intensify this particular attack when James's relations with Robert Carr (later Earl of Somerset) and George Villiers (later Duke of Buckingham) implied a royal tendency to homosexuality. In gossip, letters, and print, James's fondness for these male favourites was exploited.

Perhaps, too, his contemporaries--and later historians also--expected much more from a young man who had received an intensive education directed by the greatest Scottish scholar of the day, George Buchanan (1506-82). The latter enjoyed a reputation of being one of the most distinguished Latinists and one of the ablest educators in all Europe. Undoubtedly the principles of James's education were laid down by Buchanan, although by reason of age and other interests he did not devote as much time to his royal pupil as did the young King's other tutor, Peter Young (1544-1628). A much younger man than Buchanan when they were appointed joint tutors in 1569, Young had been educated in both Scotland and Switzerland. His sympathetic approach to the day-by-day education of James, combined as it was with Buchanan's demanding curriculum, over the years transformed the precocious boy into the most learned monarch ever to inherit the throne either of Scotland or England. As he matured, the young King was able to make his own judgment as to the type of monarchy that he would conduct, opposed as it was to the populist theories of Buchanan. In literature, too, James asserted his individuality, rebelling against the rules of Latin prosody insofar as Scottish and

English poetry was concerned. Taking thought for his people and their language, James moved with his time, preferring accentuation over the quantitative measures of classical Latin.

Since both tutors were themselves products of continental education, it is not surprising to see that young James early came under the influence of French and Italian literatures. Much research has established the library to which James had access as a boy and as a young man. Peter Young has left us an inventory of the basic library prior to 1583, and to this list modern scholars have added many more titles from sources as diverse as legacies and gifts to the King, orders and binding directions to booksellers, and so on. As Westcott points out:

The King's own library contained over four hundred volumes, which, with other recorded acquisitions not mentioned by Young, bring the total to about six hundred books accessible to the King in 1578: Buchanan and Young were guided in their purchases by their own scholarly tastes and a solicitude for the edification rather than the entertainment of their pupil. More than half of the books in Young's list are, as one might expect, in Latin, perhaps one hundred and fifty in French, a few in Greek, Italian, and Spanish, and scarcely two score in English. The latter included Ascham's Toxophilus and The Schoolmaster, Elyot's Governour and The Institution of a Gentleman, Hoby's translation of Il Cortegiano, and almost nothing else of literary interest.¹³

The names of Wyatt, Surrey, Gascoigne, and Spenser do not appear among the authors included in the royal library, although the omission does not prove conclusively that James did not have access to the works of these authors. Also missing from the royal library were two of the most popular English books of

that day, Tottel's Miscellany (1557) and The Mirrour for Magistrates (1559 and 1563). James, however, had other sources for books apart from his own library; undoubtedly his tutors and members of his court would lend him volumes that they thought would be of interest to him. One example of such works with which James was acquainted and yet which is not listed by Young is the play Gorboduc, used by the King at a later date in his Basilikon Doron. Titles of books by members of the Pléiade figure prominently in the section of the list devoted to French books. We find volumes by Marot, Du Bellay, and Ronsard, as well as several works by another contemporary of James, Du Bartas; the King was later to translate some of these works into his own tongue, late Middle Scots.

King James never did learn to speak English without including in his speech both the accent and many of the Scottish words of his early years. Indeed one wonders whether Scots, French, or Latin was the language of instruction during the King's youth and young manhood. Peter Young has recorded among the "Apophthegmata Regis" on the flyleaves of the library list the following rather petulant expression of the young royal pupil: "Thay gar me speik latin ar I could speik Scotis."¹⁴ That he was fluent in French can be seen in his translations of Du Bartas' complex and obscure vocabulary. Thoroughly grounded in Greek and Latin language and literature, well read in contemporary French poets, schooled rigorously in the Bible and in theology, James was a prodigy. The English ambassador, Sir Henry Killigrew, recorded in 1574, when the boy was only

nine years of age:

His Grace is well grown, both in body and spirit, since I was last here. He speaketh the French tongue marvellous well; and that which seems strange to me, he was able extempore (which he did before me) to read a chapter of the Bible out of Latin into French, and out of French after into English, so well, as few men could have added anything to his translation. His schoolmasters, Mr. George Buchanan and Mr. Peter Young, rare men, caused me to appoint what chapter I would; and so did I, whereby I perceived it was not studied for.¹⁵

From the age of four until he formally took over the reins of government at sixteen, James was crammed with as much learning as his two tutors could give him. Themselves the possessors of fine minds, they appreciated the intelligence, aptitudes, and memory that their young pupil exhibited. It may well be true, as historians have suggested, that the adult King could have occupied the chair in theology or in letters of any university of his day. This is not surprising when one reads the contents of a typical day's curriculum which the boy followed:

First in the morning he sought guidance in prayer, since God Almighty bestows favour and success upon all studies. Being cleansed through prayer and having propitiated the Deity, he devoted himself to Greek, reading either from the New Testament, or Isocrates, or from the apophthegms of Plutarch, with practice in the rules of grammar. After breakfast he read Latin, either from Livy, Justin, Cicero, or from Scottish or foreign history. After dinner he gave some time to composition; and during the rest of the afternoon, if time permitted, he studied arithmetic or cosmography, which included geography and astronomy, or dialectics or rhetoric. But these subjects were taken up in turn, not followed all at the same time.¹⁶

James, an excellent scholar, absorbed learning easily. The unfortunate aspect of his character, however, was that his learning became, early in life, pedantry, a trait that crept into much of his lyric poetry. And the flattery of his courtiers only added to his desire to display his learning, both in his discussions and in his writing.

Unfortunately, too, his self-esteem soon turned into conceit. As a lyric poet, for example, James was encouraged to believe that he was the equal of other members of the Castalian, the poets whom he attracted to his court and who were frequently his dinner companions. Certainly the young man held his own in the literary discussions that went on far into the night, when poems and poetic theory often formed the topic of conversation. Yet his poetry, once published in 1584 and 1591, displayed an unevenness that showed the royal poet to be inferior to many of his professional courtier poets. It must be noted, nevertheless, that several poems in The Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie (1584) demonstrate that the youthful James possessed more than a mechanical ability to assemble words in verse form. Personal feelings and thoughts, all well expressed, are found in poems such as Sonnet 5, the subject of which is autumn, and "Ane Schort Poeme of Tyme". For several centuries, this volume was thought to contain all of James's lyric poetry except the occasional poems which occur in his prose works.

His known works increased dramatically in number with the publication in 1911 of A. F. Westcott's New Poems by James I.

Westcott, however, does little in his commentary to redeem James's reputation as a poet, for his edition is primarily the product of a literary historian concerned more with editing a manuscript than giving a critical analysis of the poems themselves. Westcott, of course, does provide us with much new material which aids in re-evaluating the King's lyric compositions. As a lyricist, James appears best in the volume by James Craigie in 1958. Craigie resembles Westcott; his purpose was to prepare a definitive edition of James's poetry. But he also furnishes the reader with fresh data which aid in establishing the King's worth as a lyric poet. The publication for the first time, for example, of James's sonnets written during his courtship of Princess Anne of Denmark and the touching poems composed at the time of her death in 1619 are proof that true poetic sensibility could move James when the occasion warranted.

The young monarch did not limit himself to lyric poetry. In his published volumes he attempted narrative verse with a considerable degree of success. The two poems written in this genre are "Ane Metaphoricall Invention of a Tragedie Called Phoenix" and The Lepanto, either of which would win for its author a worthwhile place in the history of English poetry and would certainly gain him a high standing in the development of poetry written in Middle Scots. It is necessary to make this distinction between the two literatures, for James's works appeared first in Scots and only later in English verse form. In its own day The Lepanto was widely praised, especially on the

Continent, where the Du Bartas translation made it accessible to a wide audience. On the basis of poetic imagination, however, "Phoenix" stands as a far superior poem, combining as it does symbol, poetic sensibility, and literary craftsmanship. Why it has been neglected as an example of narrative poetry is difficult to explain. It may be that narrative verse as a genre has been given less attention than other forms of poetry. But perhaps the reasons adduced earlier for the pejorative attitude towards all of James's works, both in prose and in poetry, may suffice. And to those reasons one may add that the poem in its original form was in a tongue that may well have proved a barrier to enjoyment on the part of English critics and readers.

A fourth grouping of James's poetry would consist of his translations. As a pupil of Buchanan and Young, the King undoubtedly wrote many translations, especially from Latin and French, but also from Italian. Elizabeth's ambassador noted how he could translate the Latin Bible into modern tongues; and of the classics, thanks to the Craigie edition, we now have examples of his ability to set Lucan into Scots and of his skill in adapting Greek, Latin, and Italian poets into his own verse. James himself includes only one or two short fragments of his own Latin poetry. By far the greatest portion of his published translated work consists of excerpts from the long, prolix, tedious poetry of Du Bartas. James held this French poet's work in high esteem, translating not only the early poem, L'Uranie, but also a long segment of La Sepmaine. On the whole,

the royal translator does an excellent job with a difficult subject, for the most part improving on the original. The same can not be said for James's translations of the Psalms. During the sixteenth century many translations of the Bible into Latin and into modern tongues had appeared. Several translations, indeed, were set in metrical verse, especially to be sung by members of the Reformed Church. James chose to base his verse translations on the recent Latin edition of Tremellius, a very good translation that enjoyed considerable popularity at the time. Unfortunately, the King's efforts in versifying the Psalms do not reach the high standard of the Tremellius edition. Stilted and mechanical, often complex in form, they were far surpassed by other sixteenth and seventeenth-century metrical translations whose superiority is proved by their continued use in the Scottish Church to this day.

No discussion of James's poetry would be complete without an analysis of his work on poetic theory, Ane Schort Treatise, Containing Some Revlis and cautelis to be obseruit and eschewit in Scottis Poesie (1584). This work, included in his first published volume, was meant to supply the critical basis which his poetry would exemplify. James nowhere makes such an explicit statement; however, the fact that he published the theory and poetry in one volume suggests the conclusion stated. Considering himself to be pater patriae, he was perhaps moved by Du Bellay's words spoken in defence of the vernacular: "No greater honour exists than to fight on behalf of the language of one's native land."¹⁷ In any case, for James it was a

natural course of events not only to write poetry in his native tongue but also to compose a treatise on poetic theory in order to guide his subjects; in so doing, he would qualify himself in his role as literary steward of Scotland.

That the young King's throne was no sinecure in his tiny, troubled kingdom, a kingdom in the process of transition, suggests an additional reason for his entry into the field of literary theory. In every possible way he had to show himself as a leader who could both rule and, if possible, unify his country. An avid student of French history, politics, and literature, James found ample evidence in that land of what wars of religion could do to one's kingdom and of the role that literary works could play in fostering either unity or dissension. A modern critic gives this appreciation of the relationship between literary theory and politics in France during the sixteenth century:

The political theories of Renaissance France are of much greater interest than those of Italy and England in the sixteenth century. In them are, on the one hand, a larger body of antimonarchical theory and, on the other more exaggerated defense of divine right than was needed in the other two countries. In the realm of literary criticism the result is that in France there is occasionally a critic who is less blinded by kingly power than are critics in the other two countries; but more often the critical treatises express the utmost contempt / for the people and the highest praise for absolutism. The persistence of the odi profanum vulgus theme in French criticism is a witness to the fact that there existed antiaristocratic ideas strong enough to need combatting.¹⁸

Admittedly, James was too close to the scene to come to such a clear appreciation of the situation; nevertheless, he was

astute enough to realize that literature could provide a unifying force in his own, badly-divided Scotland. The politico-religious struggle between Catholic and Reformed Church and then between the Reformed Church and the monarchy caused a constant upheaval during James's adolescence and manhood. His Reulis and Cautelis, along with his published verse in the Scottish vernacular, was but one means that he employed in an attempt to furnish leadership and to rally forces loyal to his person.

Scottish literature needed a leader at that time. Very little vernacular verse was printed in Scotland before 1530; but in the second half of the century the amount of vernacular verse that was printed is surprisingly great, when one considers the population of the country and the divisive forces at work. So marked was the practical orientation of authors that only two poets of note were writing at mid-point in the century: David Lindsay (c. 1485-1555) and Alexander Scott (c. 1515-1583); their lyric works were to influence both James's poetry and his critical approach to Scottish literature. Their poems were the only worthwhile exceptions to the satirico-religious mode employed by most authors writing Middle Scots:

The literature of this period was in the closest touch with the national life, and was the direct expression of the convictions and passions of that section of the nation which was eventually to control its destinies and to inform the national spirit. Not pleasure or amusement but strenuous purpose directed to practical results was the motive and note of this later period.¹⁹

The Reulis and Cautelis indicates the young King's self-esteem as a scholar. It has been said that "literary criticism of a humanistic period shares the philosopher's chair with the artist's creation. . . . / The development of literary criticism is the chief feature of Renaissance philosophical speculation."²⁰ Neo-platonists vied with Aristotelians, scholars of Horace disputed with students of Quintilian. And members of all groups, profiting from the invention of printing, poured forth a spate of words in an effort to prove their favourite ancient critic pre-eminent. The battle lines, nevertheless, were not that clearly defined; for even among members of one group conflict arose between those who postulated the superiority of the ancient languages and those who asserted the growing power of modern vernaculars. Literary theory and criticism (and no attempt will be made in these pages to distinguish between the two terms as they apply to the sixteenth century) occupied much of the time and consumed much of the energy of many humanists. King James VI, even as a young man, accounted himself a scholar who could and should decide the path to be taken by Scottish writers during his reign.

Despite his conceit, King James was an astute ruler of Scotland. He brought stability to the throne for the first time in many decades and he successfully negotiated a workable truce between Church and State, no mean achievement for a young man to whom Henry IV of France later, contemptuously, gave the title "the wisest fool in Christendom". And if one adds to his

credits as King of Scotland a higher valuation of his work in poetry and criticism, the title accorded him by Henry IV reflects not so much on James's as on Henry's lack of perspicuity.

Notes

¹ Robert Ashton, James I by His Contemporaries (London: Hutchinson, 1969).

² Ashton, p. 141.

³ David Harris Willson, King James VI and I (London: Cape, 1956), p. 58.

⁴ Willson, p. 68.

⁵ James VI and I, The Poems of James VI of Scotland, ed. James Craigie, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1955 and 1958), I, 98-99.

⁶ Alexander Campbell, An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland, from the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century to the Present (Edinburgh: Andrew Poulis, 1798; rpt. New York: Garland, 1972), pp. 67-68.

⁷ Campbell, p. 77.

⁸ David Irving, The History of Scottish Poetry, ed. John Aitken Carlyle (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861; rpt. New York: Johnson, 1972), p. 487.

⁹ James VI and I, The Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie and A Counterblaste to Tobacco, ed. Edward Arber (London: 1870; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 3.

¹⁰ James Kinsley, Scottish Poetry, a Critical Survey (London: Cassell, 1955), p. 52.

¹¹ James VI and I, Political Works of James I, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1918; new ed., New York: 1965), p. 54.

¹² Political Works of James I, pp. 54-55.

¹³ James VI and I, New Poems by James I of England from a hitherto unpublished manuscript (ADD. 24195) in the British Museum, ed. with intro. and notes by Allan F. Westcott (New York: Columbia Univ., 1911; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. xxii.

¹⁴ James VI and I, The Library of James VI, 1573-1583, ed. with intro. by George Frederic Warner (Edinburgh: Univ. Press, 1893, in Miscellany of the Scottish History Society, xiii-lxxv), p. lxxii.

- ¹⁵ Willson, p. 24.
- ¹⁶ The words are those of Peter Young, cited by Willson, p. 23.
- ¹⁷ Joachim Du Bellay, La Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise, ed. Henri Chamard (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1948), p. 10. The quotation is taken from a poem in Greek dedicated to Jean Dorat, a friend of Du Bellay and a member of the Pléiade.
- ¹⁸ Vernon Hall, Jr., Renaissance Literary Criticism: a Study of Its Social Content (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959, pp. 6-7.
- ¹⁹ Thomas Finlayson Henderson, "Sir David Lindsay and the Later Scottish 'Makaris'" in The Cambridge History of English Literature (Cambridge: University Press, 1909), III, 138; hereafter this work will be referred to as CHEL.
- ²⁰ Baxter Hathaway, Marvels and Commonplaces: Renaissance Literary Criticism (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. v-vi.

CHAPTER I

The Published Lyrics

By the time that James VI of Scotland, age fifteen, was composing his first verses, poetry both in Scotland and England was far short of distinction. In Scotland the golden age of verse had passed some fifty years before; the Scottish Chaucerians had flowered during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. By the middle of the sixteenth century only David Lindsay and perhaps Alexander Scott could claim notice as practising poets worthy of attention. In England Wyatt and Surrey had initiated a creative period that would reach its peak later in the century with the work of Spenser and Shakespeare and that would continue to flourish well into the seventeenth century with Donne and his followers. Meanwhile almost two decades were to pass without the appearance of sustained poetry meriting great distinction.

From a strictly chronological viewpoint King James would have had access to printed copies of Tottels Miscellany, to the poetry and criticism of Gascoigne, and possibly to some early Spenser. Yet, as we know, these were not normal times in Scotland either in politics, in religion, or in the education of a young man of royal blood. James's first work (published in 1584) appears early in the list of lyric poetry. Gascoigne's revised poems had reached the public in 1575 as The Posies of George

Gascoigne Esquire, which with his other volumes was to make him the most representative poet of that particular decade. Spenser, already the author of some twenty-six sonnets by the year 1569 and already in print with The Shepheardes Calender (1579), was working on The Faerie Queene (the first three books of which were to appear only in 1590). Sidney, perhaps the best of the Elizabethan lyric poets at this point in the Queen's reign, was circulating his Astrophel and Stella (composed between 1580 and 1584) in manuscript; it would be published only in 1591 in a pirated version and in 1598 in an authorized edition. When assessing the literary merits of James VI and I, we must retain the details of this time scheme if our conclusions are to be valid.

The existence of James's two principal works of poetry has always been known. The Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie (1584),¹ published when the King was but eighteen and a half years of age, and His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres (1591)² not surprisingly had large circulations during the King's own lifetime. Included in the former volume is James's short critical work Ane Schort Treatise, Containing Some Revlis and Cautelis to Be Obseruit and Eschewit in Scottis Poesie, referred to generally in a short title as Reulis and Cautelis.

The contents of the manuscripts used by scholars of the twentieth century, however, show that James's career as a poet did not end in 1591. Indeed his poems span a period of forty years (1581-1623), although affairs of state left

him little time for poetic creation and recreation after the year 1591. Certainly his most productive period, insofar as poetry is concerned, came between the years 1581 and 1591. Educated in Middle Scots, surrounded by Scottish noblemen and counsellors, never leaving his native land except for his wedding trip, James was not exposed, at least to any great extent, to English influences. We must therefore think of him as belonging to the Scottish rather than to the English literary tradition. Even this statement must be hedged, for James corrected his manuscripts late in life. In so doing, he very often substituted an English sound or word to make the poetry more palatable and accessible to his English-speaking subjects. A study of the Craigie edition, in which two versions of many poems appear, will demonstrate these changes.

As a patron of poetry, James played an important role in shaping the future of Scottish literature. He chose as his particular companions poets such as Alexander Montgomerie (whom James called the "master poet"), Alexander Hume, and William Fowler. These men and others formed the King's band of "Castalians", and so much did James appreciate their company that he awarded life pensions to them. Through them and through his own education James came under the influence of French literature, for Scotland's cultural ties with France remained strong and pervasive. The Pléiade had brought France into the forefront of literary craftsmanship; and the influence of Marot, Du Bellay, Ronsard, and Du Bartas in turn made

Scottish poets aware of developments in poetry that were occurring on the Continent. Under such conditions the King emerged not only as an author but also as a catalyst, for he urged the court poets to break with the old Scottish Chaucerian practices. Whether in the long run this emergence into the Renaissance world of letters represented a good course for Scottish literature may be debatable since it destroyed the natural development of works in native Scots. But the fact remains that James's role as the patron of the arts in a country that still displayed many traits of its wild and unruly history must be recognized as paramount. Craigie states the matter quite categorically:

The sympathy and the support they needed was supplied by James. All the Renaissance poetry produced in Scotland before Drummond of Hawthornden began to write was the work of members of James's small circle of intimates, and most of it seems to have been written after the publication of his own Essayes / of a Prentise in 1584. Thomas Hudson's version of La Judith of Du Bartas, which was published in that same year, was directly inspired, if not commissioned, by King James.³

No doubt exists that James from the age of twenty to thirty considered himself not only a practising poet but also an arbiter of poetic taste. His advocacy of a new style is indicated by the term "Castalian", which has been described as follows:

A flowing smoothness of style closely related to suitability for matching with music, was one of the main requirements of the Castalian manner, even sonnets being set to "musick fyne". The way to royal favour, Fowler tells us in a poem addressed to Robert Hudson, was at this time un-

doubtedly prowess in the making of verse. . . .⁴

Hudson's brother, Thomas, even acknowledged in the introduction to his translation of Du Bartas' Historie of Judith that the King had corrected the finished translation in his own hand. Close and intimate were the relations between James and his circle of poets, relations which were cemented at the royal dinner table with much fine talk and elevated discussion.

James's own contributions to such literary disputations must have included some of the poetry and some of the theory that he would print anonymously in his first book, The Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesie. Although the author's name did not appear on the title page, the adulatory tone and references of the eight sonnets saluting the author left no doubt as to his identity. Indeed one Latin sonnet (Sonnet 7) entitled "Acrostichon" uses the first letter of each line to spell out Jacobus Sextus. Lines such as the following are typical of these opening sonnets:

And yow who wrytes in stately verse and prose,
This glorious Kings immortall gloire display.
Tell how he doeth in tender yearis essay
Aboue his age with skill our arts to blaise.⁵

The author of these lines, Master William Fowler, had recently returned from France and was, at the time, a minor courtier. Several years later James was to return the compliment when he himself addressed a sonnet to Fowler, congratulating the poet on his translation of Petrarch's Trionfi.

In evaluating the contents of The Essayes of a Prentise, one should keep the title in mind. James himself had no illusions, conceited though he was by nature when art and learning were concerned, that his was a great work of art. The poems are "essays", attempts made by a very young man to produce poetry. For him, poetry was indeed a "divine art", one to be attempted by someone divinely appointed. Viewed from this double perspective, the contents of the volume constitute a respectable contribution to the art of poetry. Ostentation of classical learning abounds to the detriment of imaginative endeavour; slavish adherence to rules stifles creativity and often leads to awkward phraseology; the struggle between Middle Scots and English makes occasionally for infelicities of vocabulary, for the Scottish language was not immune to intrusive English words. All such pejorative criticisms of the twelve sonnets appearing in the volume are more than justified. On the other hand, a study of the sonnets in their chronological Elizabethan setting will reveal strengths and inventiveness. For example, the poems display a deep and appreciative knowledge of classical studies, an innovative use of poetic techniques recently developed on the Continent, and an eye for significant detail.

Critics, particularly from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, have often labelled James as a man deficient in poetic imagination. The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature best sums up this opinion when it

describes James's literary tastes and efforts as "mean"⁶ and as possessing a "jejuneness and insipidity"⁷. To some extent, the charge is true. There are, however, indications of an inventive mind. The opening lines of James's own verse the author calls "Ane Quadrain of Alexandrin Verse"; the title is notable for, as Craigie points out, this represents an early use--perhaps the earliest--of the term alexandrine⁸. The Oxford English Dictionary accords Puttenham the distinction of being the first Englishman to use the term, in his Arte of English Poesie; but Puttenham's work did not appear in print until 1589. Critics who see only the weak aspects of the King's literary efforts forget perhaps that much of his inventiveness and imagination often lay in his ability to adopt and to adapt foreign influences into English literature, a practice widely employed in the sixteenth century.

The quatrain itself expresses the customary invocation to the Muses, here addressed as "Immortall Gods". Aesthetically the lines possess no great merit, for obvious reasons. The distinctive Middle Scots pronunciation and rhythm are prominent, warring with English words. Also evident is one of James's recurring faults: awkward inversions. The last two lines of "Ane Quadrain" will illustrate these points:

I pray then euerie one of you to help his pairt,
In graunting this my sute, which after follow shall.⁹

In theme and content, however, the quatrain sets the tone

for the sonnets which follow.

To consider each of the twelve sonnets individually would be tedious. A more fruitful approach would be an assessment of certain poetic techniques that are common to the sonnets as a whole.

Mention has already been made of James's addiction to classical learning, and the sonnets are full of mythological references. Initially, Jove is addressed, he being the greatest of the Pantheon; in Sonnet 2, the poet turns to Apollo, for the latter supplies the impulses that bring about the four seasons of the year. Then come four sonnets, each based on one of the seasons: "Springtyme", "Sommer", "Harvest", "VWinter". Sonnets 7 and 8 centre upon Neptune and his domain, with Sonnet 8 providing an interesting catalogue of creatures which inhabit the ocean. In Sonnet 9, James turns to the underworld of ancient mythology in his address to Pluto and to Pluto's consort, Proserpine. Sonnets 10 and 11 in turn have Mars and Mercury as their deities. The closing sonnet, invoking the entire Pantheon, begs "That all my works may perfyte be alway"--a fitting close to these opening sonnets and a graceful entrance into what James considered the more important part of this volume, the long translation from Du Bartas (The Uranie) and James's own long poem, "Phoenix".

At least one critic¹⁰ sees a loose sonnet sequence in these twelve poems. A close study of the thematic material reveals that all twelve sonnets do form a sequential pattern devolving from Jove's position as pre-eminent god. Each

sonnet describes part of what Jove oversees: the sun, the seasons, the oceans, Hades, war, poetic inspiration. One hesitates to use the term "sequence" for such a loose grouping; but one can understand why James decided to assemble the sonnets as a group.

A more serious question concerning the poet's use of mythological references must be faced. Within each poem, are these references, apart from the designation of the god being addressed, mere embellishments, or do they form an integral, organic aspect of the sonnet? The answer must be that, with perhaps two exceptions (Sonnets 4 and 9), the classical imagery arises naturally from the theme and purpose of the sonnet concerned. In Sonnet 1, for example, the poet addresses the mightiest of the gods, Jove, whose epithet in ancient writings was often Jove the Thunderer. What could be more natural than that the poet should include in his invocation a reference to one of the god's greatest deeds, the hurling of the thunder upon the Giants, and a reference to a good deed of the same god when he came to the aid of Bacchus's mother, Semele. Similar justifications can be made for the references to "whiddering* Boreas", the winter wind of Sonnet 6; indeed, the image of hoary Saturn's white hair being likened to the snow is quite effective in the poem.¹¹ In the closing couplet of Sonnet 7, the reference to Neptune's trident arises naturally from the context, as does the mention of the vigilant Parcas (the Fates) in line

*whiddering--gusting

12 of Sonnet 10.

With regard to the two exceptions mentioned above, the classical references seem somewhat forced. In the octet of Sonnet 4, the poet gives quite a powerful description of the dry, parching heat of summer. The sestet is meant to depict the productive aspect of the season--birds and fruit --and the effect of these on human feelings. What spoils the sestet is, precisely, the reference to birds as "Floras wingde musicians" (line 10). Not only is the allusion erroneous (Flora is the goddess of spring rather than of summer), but also one has the feeling that the poet gratuitously embellishes rather than specifically describes real birds. The second exception occurs in Sonnet 9, addressed to the god of the classical underworld. No less than eleven mythological references occur in the poem. Quite evidently we have in the sonnet a learned poet writing for a learned audience. But even making allowances for that attitude and even crediting the poet with having as his purpose to terrify the reader through allusions to tragic events and to horrible creatures inhabiting Hades, the reader senses ostentation of learning for its own sake. In short, we have in Sonnet 9 an excellent example of James the pedant, a poem in which learning successfully smothers poetic talent.

Many passages in the sonnets, however, do show imagination. If one can define the latter, in poetry, as the effective evocation of sensuous imagery, then the sonnets do reveal this quality. True, very often the poet transgresses

by employing the general rather than the particular term; occasionally, too, he prefers the abstract to the concrete epithet; and, finally, all too often he bases his imagery on classical rather than personal material. Despite these shortcomings, the poems frequently show a gift for imagery, as in this description of spring, in Sonnet 3:

Graunt Readers may esteme, they sie the showris,
Whose balmie dropps so softlie.dois distell,
Which watrie cloudds in mesure suche downe powris,
As makis the herbis, and verie earth to smell
With sauours sweet, fra tyme that onis thy sell
The vapours softlie sowkis with smyling cheare.¹²

Even lacking specific instances, the lines still make an appeal to three of the five senses; the immediate application of the general reference in each case is left to the reader's own personal experience.

Again in Sonnet 5, dedicated to autumn, the poet is able to conjure up a splendid picture of the season. This sonnet, perhaps the most successful of the twelve, is worth quoting in its entirety because of its strict adherence to the stated theme, because of its excellent balancing of the octet against the sestet insofar as content is concerned, and because of its evocative power in painting a word picture of the harvest:

Or when I lyke my pen for to imploy
Of fertile Harvest in the description trew:
Let Readers think, they instantly conuoy
The busie shearers for to reap their dew,
By cutting rypest cornes with hookes anew:
Which cornes their heauy heads did downward bow,
Els seking earth againe, from whence they grew,
And vnto Ceres do their seruice vow.

Let Readers also surely think and trow,
 They see the painfull Vigneron pull the grapes:
 First tramping them, and after pressing now
 The greneest clusters gathered into heapes.
 Let then the Harvest so viue* to them appeare,
 As if they saw both cornes and clusters neare.¹³

Particularly well done is the extended image in the octet. The shearers* approach to cut the ripe cornes*, which in their heavy ripeness let their heads droop as if seeking to return to Ceres (the Earth Mother) from whom they have sprung. But the poet does not linger; he moves to another scene: the grape harvest. We see the picker with his aching back and arms; we see (and, of course, smell in our imagination--although the poet does not mention it) the "clusters" of grapes being trampled and pressed for their juice. Before James wrote these lines, no English poet, to my knowledge, had ever devoted a whole sonnet to the harvest theme.

One final example from The Essayes of a Prentise will suffice to demonstrate James's ability to write descriptive poetry. The following lines, found in Sonnet 7, deal with exterior description but have as their main thrust the evocation of fear in the reader. The poem would appeal to the instincts and experience of seafaring nations such as the Scots and the English:

Graunt syne, ô Neptune, god of seas profound,
 That readers think on leeboard, and on dworce*
 And how the Seas overflowed this massiue round:
 Yea let them think, they heare a stormy sound,
 Which threatnis wind, and darknes come at hand.¹⁴

*shearers--reapers; viue--life-like; cornes--wheat
 dworce--athwart the ship

The ship is buffeted by wind and wave--"weltring* waves like
 hiest towres on land". At the mercy of the storm, it "Now
 climmes & skippes to top of rageing seas, / Now downe to
 hell"; the crew, unable to stand upright, "lifts their hands
 to pray thee for some eas". Again, English poetry prior to
 James VI is devoid of powerful descriptions dealing with this
 subject. To match it, one would be obliged to go as far back
 as The Seafarer.

The very success of such descriptions should make the
 reader suspicious. Where, for example, would James have seen
 a grape harvest, when would he have experienced a storm at sea
 during his youth? The answer lies in the books that he had
 read. Classical literature, Virgil in particular, has a great
 deal of such descriptive poetry; and word pictures of this kind
 had already been written by French authors, by poets of the
 Pléiade, whom James had read with obvious enjoyment. This bor-
 rowing by James does not lessen his contribution, for his was an
 age when such borrowing and adaptation were accepted as part
 of the normal method of literary composition.

One final aspect of these early sonnets requires comment:
 the poet's use of the sonnet form. Neither Wyatt nor Surrey
 (the great practitioners of the sonnet form before the last
 quarter of the century) employed the rhyme scheme adopted by
 James (abab, bcbc, cdcd, ee). Montgomerie, James's favourite
 Scottish poet at court, uses the same scheme regularly; and

*weltring--rolling

indeed it appears in his congratulatory sonnet prefacing The Essayes of a Prentise ("Can golden Titan shyning bright at morne"¹⁵), the first known poem to be printed in this rhyme scheme. Spenser was to make it his own in the Amoretti (1595); but Spenser's contribution, in print, to sonnet form and sonnet sequence was still more than a decade in the future.

At times, James makes a clear separation in content, although not in physical division, after the octet, the last six lines of each sonnet being themselves separated into a grouping of four and two, with the latter invariably a rhyming couplet. The subject matter of each of the three parts is, in certain poems, distinct. Sonnet 5, quoted above, is representative. Lines 1 and 2 state the subject and lead into the first major word picture (the reaping), which ends at line 8; lines 9-12 contain the vineyard and wine-pressing scene; the concluding couplet ties both parts together in a sort of finale. This is the form of Sonnets 4, 5, 7, 11, 12. But such a clear delineation does not exist in Sonnets 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10. Sonnets 1 and 2, for example, show a separation after the opening invocation (ll. 1-2) and after line 12; lines 3-12 flow without a major break in thought. Sonnet 3 has a clearcut division of thought only at the end of line 12. Sonnet 6, on winter, separates into an opening group of four lines, an eight-line central description based on Boreas and Saturn, and a closing couplet. Sonnet 8, describing the inhabitants of

the sea, opens with two lines which state the subject of the poem ("the swimming sort / Of all thy subjects skaled I list declare"), devotes the next ten lines to a catalogue of these creatures, and adds a couplet which generalizes the subject (as both Spenser and Shakespeare were to do later). Sonnet 9, too, is built around a catalogue, this time a list of the important inhabitants of Hades. Here we have a two-line opening address to Pluto and Proserpine which is followed by a statement of three subjects inspired by these two deities (Elysian fields, tragedy, and fate); then comes a description of part of Hades (ll. 8-14). The couplet is particularly weak in this sonnet, giving the impression of an afterthought. In Sonnet 10, on war, the poet asks Mars to give him the gift of realism (a standard opening in most of these sonnets), then describes two armies approaching each other (ll. 3-6), next portrays the actual battle (ll. 7-12), and finally, after the battle, shows us the conqueror and the conquered (ll. 13-14).

No one pattern predominates, although James does prefer to break up the sonnet form into two parts: part one, lines 1-12; part two, the closing couplet. It is in the first twelve lines that he employs a variety of divisions. Only in Sonnets 4, 5, 7, 11, 12 does he make a distinct break between octet and sestet, a division which Spenser in the Amoretti was to use later.

James's final contributions in lyric form included in The Essayes of a Prentise are "Ane Schort Poeme of Tyme" and

the envoi sonnet beginning "The facound Greke, Demosthenes by name".¹⁶ The latter represents the author's apology for his shortcomings, with James asking "Therefore, good Reader, when as thow dois reid / These my first fruictis, dispyse them not at all." His plea, reinforced by classical allusions, comparisons, and metaphors, makes no significant addition to the author's handling of the sonnet form.

"Ane Schort Poeme of Tyme", however, shows that James, once freed from sonnet restrictions, has lyric talent. Five anthologists over the past two centuries have thought fit to include it in their collections.¹⁷ The poem, consisting of six stanzas of seven lines each, in what James calls Troilus Verse,¹⁸ ends with an apt Latin tag: Haec quoq; perficiat, quod perficit omnia, Tempus (May Time, because it brings all things to an end, so bring these to a final close). The subject matter, a meditation on man's use of time, would seemingly offer James an opportunity to perform at his pedantic worst. Yet the poem moves easily. Indeed the tone of the first two stanzas reflects a lighthearted spirit, as the opening lines indicate:

As I was pansing* in a morning aire,
And could not sleip, nor nawayis take me rest,
Furth for to walk, the morning was sa faire,
Athort* the fields, it semed to me the best.¹⁹

The rising sun salutes all creation, drying up the dew,
"VVich made the soile to sauour sweit and smell". Stanza 3

*pansing--meditating; athort--across

introduces the subject proper, with James observing that although most men and creatures were "bissie as the Bee: / Yet ydle men deuysing* did I see". Those men, intent only on pastimes, cause the poet to wonder how people are able "So willingly the precious tyme to tyne*". Time, the poet insists in stanza 4, is not only a precious commodity but also, once gone, is something that cannot be recalled: "therefore, men sould be warr, / To sleuth* the tyme that flees fra them so farr".²⁰

The theme of stanza 5 is enunciated clearly: All that man has in this life is time, and time should therefore be employed to learn about God; avoid strife, which will only shorten one's life. The last stanza reinforces this thought: Time is so precious that we must use it to please "our heauenly King. / Flee ydilteth*, which is the greates lat*"; let us employ our time in doing well so "that good men may commend vs".

The poem, then, is well structured. The carefree tone of the opening stanza is reflected in the short, quick-moving words in which a predominance of light vowel sounds and an abundance of unvoiced sibilants and fricatives are used. The sound picture harmonizes with the clean, sunny, morning air. After the statement of theme in stanza 3, however, the tone becomes moralistic, emphasized by weightier words, heavier sounds, and, in stanza 5, more-involved syntactical constructions. The closing stanza stresses the poet's commandments, but returns to a less-complicated sentence pattern expressed in simple imagery

*deuysing--plotting; tyne--lose; sleuth--neglect;
ydilteth--idleness; lat--obstruction

and in phrases which are notably shorter and sharper.

Altogether, the poem represents a great advance in the craft of poetry when compared with James's early sonnets. The exposition may well be sententious in tone; but the thought moves easily, is not impeded by too-frequent allusions to classical lore. In brief, "Ane Schort Poeme of Tyme" achieves its goal as a successful lyric poem.

An interesting departure in form from the lyrics discussed up to this point is found in James's one shaped poem. Used as a prefatory poem to his narrative "Phoenix" in The Essayes of a Prentise, the column-shaped lines identify the subject of the poem. Although Herbert was later to write several poems in pictorial stanza patterns, once again we discover that James must be counted as one of the early experimenters in patterned verse, at least among Scottish and English authors.

Shaped poetry, if we can believe the critical essays written during the sixteenth century, was still new to England--and even newer to Scotland. Puttenham, who discusses geometrical shapes for poetry in The Arte of English Poesie (1589), composes his own illustrations.²¹ He is either unaware of the few existing pictorial patterns in English literature or he chooses to ignore them. Owing principally to J. C. Scaliger's Poetices Libri Septem (1561), interest in shaped poetry revived in the sixteenth century. G. G. Smith in his notes to Puttenham's treatise cites a passage from Scaliger in which he discusses at least two shapes (the egg

and the axe), both used by writers of antiquity.²²

In English publications, Abraham Fraunce in The Arcadian Rhetorike (1588) states: "Theocritus hath expressed the forme of an egge and an alter in verse; so hath Willy represented the figure of a sword, and an old Abbot the image of the crosse, in verie laboured and intangled verses".²³ The Willy referred to is Richard Willes or Willey (dates unknown) whose Poematum Liber appeared in 1573.²⁴ But again, no English example of shaped verse can be found in that work. Finally, for our purposes, Gabriel Harvey in his Letter-Book makes the fullest statement on the subject:

Simmias Rhodius, a folishe idle phantasticall poett . . . first deuised this odd riming with many other triflinge and childishe toyes to make verses, that shoulde in proportion represente the form and figure of an egg, an ape, a winge, and sutch ridiculous and madd gugawes and crockchettes, and of late foolishly reuiuid by sum, otherwise not vnlearnid, as Pierius, Scaliger, Crispin, and the rest of that crue. Nothinge so absurde and fruteles but beinge once taken vpp shall haue sune imitatoures. The like veyne of those that hunte the letter; and I heard one Mr. Willes, a greate trauelour, very well learnid, and nowe of riper yeares and sower iudgment, that hath vsid them himselfe, call them meere fooleryes, vices taken vpp for virtues, apish deuices, friuolous boyishe grammer schole trickes.²⁵

Harvey, however, offers no examples either ancient or modern to support his attack on patterned verse.

English examples of shaped poetry which antedate James's prefatory poem are quite scarce. The one poem that does strike the reader forcibly was written by Thomas Watson (1557?-1592), whose Ἐκατομβεῖα or Passionate Cen-

turie of Loue was licensed for printing in March, 1582.

His poems are eighteen-line sonnets; each preceded by a prose commentary explaining the purpose of the poem. Poem XXXI is entitled "A Pasquine Piller erected in the despite of Loue".²⁶ It is reproduced below as it appears in the original edition:

LXXXI.

MY LOVE IS PAST.

A Pasquine Piller erected in the despite of Loue.

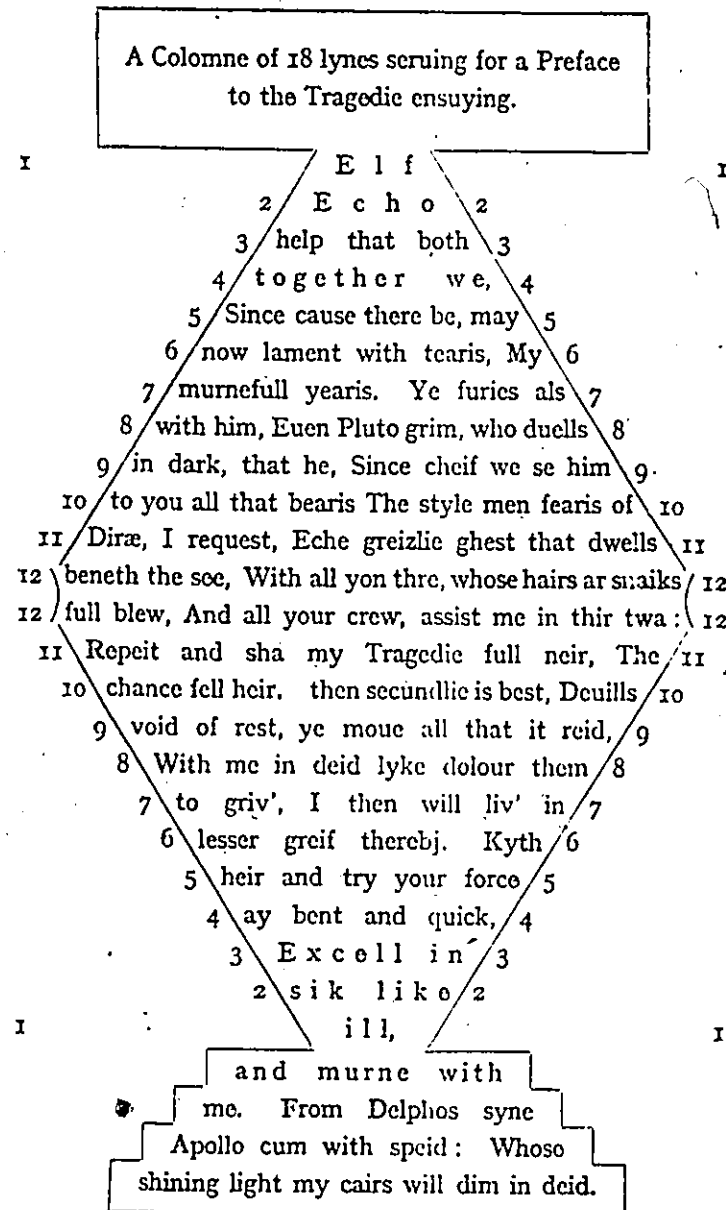
A 1 At
2 last, though
3 late, farewell
4 olde well a da: A
m 5 Wirth of mischance strike
a 6 by a newe alarm, And m
7 Cypria la nemica
r 8 miA Retire to Cyprus Ile, a
c 9 & cease thy walk, Els must thou proue how r
E 10 Reason can by charmes Enforce to flight thy e
s 11 blindfolde bratte & thee. So frames it with mee now, E
t 12 that I confesse, The life I ledde in Loue deuorde
I 12 of reue, It was a hell, where none felte more then I, i
n 11 Nor anye with lyke miseries forlorne. Since n
s 10 therefore now my woes are wored lesse, And s
a 9 Reason bidds mee leaue olde wellada, a
n 8 No longer shall the worlde laughe mee
i 7 to scorn; I'll choose a path that n
r 6 shall not leade awrie. Rest i
5 then with mee from your
4 blinde Cupids carke r
c. 3 Each one of
2 you, that
1 letue,
3 and would be
5 free. Whis dooble thall e.
7 that liu's as Loue thinks best, whose
9 hande still Tyrant like to hurte is pteffe.

In shape, the poem is almost identical to that by King James. Moreover, as Watson explains in his prose commentary, the first and last letters of each line spell out the

Latin tag, amare est insanire. Finally, as in James's poem, the base of the pillar is represented by lines which expand arithmetically in a progression of one, three, five, seven, and nine syllables. The reader, too, is struck by Thomas Watson's attainments as a student of ancient and modern literatures (as he himself indicates in the source allocation which he appends to his poems).²⁷ If a model exists for James's shaped verse, we might well postulate that Thomas Watson's poem served as such, although Watson's book does not figure in the lists of books which formed part of the young King's library.

James's poem does not offer one of the best attempts at shaped poetry. George Herbert, for example, surpasses him. Placed beside Watson's "A Pasquine Piller erected in the despite of Loue", however, the King's "If Echo help" can hold its own as a good example of patterned verse written during Queen Elizabeth's reign. James arbitrarily divides up the lines in order to provide the desired shape; the lines of the column do not truly indicate complete lines of poetry. To such a degree is this a fact that the author was obliged to write a complementary poem, "The expansion of the former Colonne", in order to elucidate for the reader exactly what he was trying to accomplish. As we have noted, Watson did the same for his pictorial verse patterns. In "The expansion of the former Colonne", the original twenty-eight lines of the column are reduced to the promised eighteen lines. The new poem is in the form

of an acrostic, having the initial and final letter of each line spell ESME STEWART DWIKE (i.e., duke). The name of the person who is the real subject of the "Phoenix" is spelled out twice; James was taking no chances that his allegorical narrative would be misunderstood. The column poem and its expansion poem are given below as they appear in the Craigie edition:



* The expansion of the
former Colomne.

	E	If Echo help, that both together w	E
	(S	ince cause there be) may now lament with teari	S
	M	y murnefull yearis. Ye furies als with hi	M
	E	uen Pluto grim, who dwels in dark, that h	E
5	S	ince cheif we se him to you all that beari	S
	T	he style men fearis of Diræ: I reques	T
	E	che greizlie ghest, that dwells beneth the S	E
	W	ith all yon thre, whose hairis ar snaiks full ble	W
	A	nd all your crew, assist me in thir tw	A
10	R	epeit and sha my Tragedie full nei	R
	T	he chance fell heir. Then secoundlie is bes	T
	D	euils void of rest, ye moue all that it rei	D
	W	ith me, indeid, lyke dolour tharpe to gri	V
	I	then will liv', in lesser greif therobi	I
15	K	ythe heir and trie, your force ay bent and quic	K
	E	xcell in sik lyke ill, and murne with m	E

From Delphos syne Apollo cum with speid,
Whose shining light my cairis wil dim in deid.

Apart from the peculiarity of the acrostical form, the prefatory poems by the King have no great literary value, being merely a catalogue of figures associated with death and Hades. These figures the poet calls upon to aid him in his grief at the loss of Esmé Stewart. The shaped poem, however, does have literary merit, for it represents an early Elizabethan example in this genre, albeit written by a Scot.

Mention must be made of the only short lyric to appear in James's second volume of poetry, Poeticall Exercises (1591). In sonnet form, "The azur'd vaulte, the crystall circles bright" comes at the end of the volume; only a brief six-line Latin poem of farewell comes after the sonnet.²⁸ Generalized and conventional describe fairly accurately the imagery of the poem, which is written in Eng-

lish rather than Middle Scots. In part, it is redeemed by its rather stately movement, which accords well with the theme. A "catalogue" poem, its list leads up to the final two lines: "All these, for teaching man, the LORD did frame, / To do his will, whose glorie shines in thame."²⁹

The theme suggests that God's universe exists to bear witness to His glory, with the poet employing the first twelve lines to mention without interruptive comment the aspects of God's handiwork that have struck his imagination; the final two lines he reserves to enunciate the theme. Of interest in the catalogue is the stress that James places on things found in the heavens. Not only does he reflect conventional learning in his reference to the heavenly spheres, but he also peoples the heavens with "monsters faire: / the prodigies appearing in the aire". Approaching nearer the earth, he mentions the perturbations of storm and wind, and draws our attention to "the foules, in hew, in shape, in nature raire". Obviously, the unusual rather than the usual captures James's interest to the extent that he shares with us his belief in monsters.

Although the poem has been placed in several anthologies over the past two hundred years, not all critics have found it meritorious. T. F. Henderson, who allots James less than two paragraphs in his Scottish Vernacular Literature: A Succinct History, sums up the King's ability to write lyric verse with these words:

For so young a man his verses display considerable

technical / accomplishment, but are deformed, the most of them, by the same absurd mixture of familiarity and pomposity which characterised his own address. Yet he does occasionally attain to a certain semblance of dignity and grace, as in this sonnet prefixed to The Lepanto But the close is mean and tame; nor has the poem anything of the character of a sonnet.³⁰

The poem, indeed, may not contribute a great deal to the sonnet as a poetic genre; but Henderson's remarks lack the understanding that one would expect from a scholar of Scottish literature. Firstly, he errs in fact: the sonnet is at the end of the volume and is not "prefixed to The Lepanto". Secondly, he fails to take into account the date at which the sonnet--indeed all the early lyrics of James--was written; the English sonnet was still not fixed in its final forms and with its final characteristics by 1591. Finally, Henderson does what so many historians have done when he argues from the man to the poetry, rather than permitting the poetry to stand on its own merits. Therefore, one must hold his judgment suspect. This sonnet, indeed several of the lyrics which the King saw fit to include in his two published volumes of verse, deserve recognition as a worthwhile contribution to Scottish and English literature of the day.

Notes

¹ James VI of Scotland, The Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesie (Edinburgh: Vautroullier, 1584). Craigie, The Poems, I, lvi, suggests the month of December.

² James VI of Scotland, His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres (Edinburgh: Waldegrave, 1591). Craigie, The Poems, I, xlv, suggests the month of May.

³ The Poems, I, xxiv-xxv.

⁴ Maurice Lindsay, History of Scottish Literature (London: Robert Hale, 1977), p. 94. Lindsay may also be cited as one twentieth-century literary historian who questions the beneficial effect that James may have had on Scottish poetry.

⁵ The Poems, I, 4.

⁶ George Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1961), p. 292.

⁷ The Concise Cambridge, p. 398.

⁸ The Poems, I, 298-99.

⁹ The Poems, I, 8.

¹⁰ David Harris Willson, King James VI and I (London: Cape, 1956), p. 61.

¹¹ This sonnet was included in an anthology compiled by Muriel M. Gray, Scottish Poetry from Barbour to James VI (1935).

¹² The Poems, I, 11.

¹³ The Poems, I, 11.

¹⁴ The Poems, I, 12.

¹⁵ The Poems, I, 5.

¹⁶ The Poems, I, 89 and 94 respectively.

¹⁷ The Poems, I, 315 lists these anthologies.

¹⁸ A discussion of James's terminology will form the substance of Chapter V.

- 19 The Poems, I, 89.
- 20 The Poems, I, 89.
- 21 George Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, 2 vols. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1904; rpt. 1965), II, 95-105.
- 22 Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, II, 416.
- 23 Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, I, 305.
- 24 Richard Willes, Poematum Liber (London: Tottell, 1573). Smith quotes from Willes in his discussion of Gascoigne, I, 46-47.
- 25 Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, I, 126. The Letter-Book by Harvey contains letters which span the period 1573-80. It has been reprinted with an introduction and index by Edward Scott in the Camden Society Series, 1884, and reprinted again by Johnson, 1965.
- 26 Thomas Watson, Ἐκατομταδεῖα or Passionate Centurie of Loue (London: Gabriell Cawood, n.d.; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, 1965), p. 95. "Pasquine" is from the Italian Pasquino and refers to a statue in Rome on which anonymous lampoons were hung.
- 27 Sidney Lee, ed., Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder, 1899), LX, 34-37.
- 28 The Poems, II, 283. Craigie identifies these lines as coming from Ovid, Metamorphoses, XV, 871-76.
- 29 The Poems, I, 258.
- 30 T. F. Henderson, Scottish Vernacular Literature: A Succinct History, 3rd ed. rev. (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1910), pp. 266-67.

CHAPTER II

The Unpublished and Uncollected Lyrics

The poems studied in this chapter form part of the second volume of King James's poetry edited by Craigie. This volume, published in 1958, has made available to students of the period the entire corpus of James's unpublished and uncollected lyrics for the first time. The editorial "Introduction" to the volume establishes two principal sources for the contents. The first source, MS. ADD. 24195 in the British Library, bears the title All the Kings short poesis that ar not printed; the second source is composite, for Craigie has brought together the occasional poems appearing in various works written by the King. A short section of "Doubtful Poems" appended by the editor to the authenticated poems will not be discussed.

Although the poems in the British Library manuscript were composed over a very long period, these lyrics were assembled and rewritten between 1616 and 1618. In all probability they were to form an impressive volume designed to match the recently-published collection of James's prose works published by Bishop Montague in 1616. The authenticity of the manuscript cannot be questioned:

That MS. Add. 24195 originated within James's family circle is certain since it was not only carefully revised by both Prince Charles and his Groom of the

Chamber, Thomas Carey, but was even written in part by them. That James both knew of it and approved is shown by the number of corrections which he himself made in it.¹

In the manuscript, the unpublished poems are divided into three sections, which Craigie follows in his edition. These are Amatoria, Miscellanea, and Fragmenta. The Amatoria is itself divided into two parts: seven poems inspired by the young King's marriage to Princess Anne of Denmark and five others, of which only four can be described as love poems (the non-love poem of this group being "A Satire against Woemen"). The Miscellanea selections are numbered from one to thirty-six; but several contain more than one piece so that there are more individual poems (as we know the term) than are indicated by the table of contents. There are, for example, thirty sonnets; many of which are dedicated to persons whom James wishes to honour; there is also a miscellaneous collection ranging from the long poem which criticizes Alexander Montgomerie to the earliest verse written by the King (at the age of fifteen). The third section, Fragmenta, contains four poems: part of a marriage masque, a few lines describing James's wedding voyage to Denmark, and two translations from the French poet, Du Bartas.

The poems in this volume constitute the best of James's short lyrics and his satiric verse, for the level of poetic achievement is far superior to that which we have seen in his two published books of poetry. On the basis only of the poems in the Amatoria and Miscellanea sections of the volume, James deserves the attention of literary critics. By their

variety and freshness, by their structure and thought, many of these poems will repay the effort taken to appreciate the poetic sensibility that their author is seen to possess. Even more important from the point of view of history, the poems disprove the opinion that James was but a pedantic, self-centred monarch; rather, they show him to be a man capable of love, affection, and friendship.

The seven love poems concerning James's wedding are indebted to Petrarch for stylistic effects, but appear to be the most personal works to come from the King. The feeling expressed seems sincere; yet, as history records, James's love soon diminished in intensity and at length became nothing more than a sense of friendship--not even companionship--for his Queen. History also indicates that he found a stronger attraction in male friendships--of these intimate relationships records exist, although James left no poems to celebrate them. Of the remaining love poems in the Amatoria, Craigie rightly states that they "read like no more than exercises in the conventional amatory poetry of the time."²

The details of James's marriage to the sixteen-year-old princess make interesting reading. Through fear of possible political consequences, Elizabeth of England opposed any marriage of James. Sir James Melville in his Memoirs affirms that Elizabeth's purpose "was to stay him fra any marriage, as sche and hir consail had ever done and delt, baith with his mother and himself."³ Negotiations for a marriage had been initiated as early as 1580; but it was not until 1585 that the King's

former tutor, Peter Young, travelled in person to the Danish court to seek the hand of Anne's older sister on behalf of his master. This match proved impossible to arrange since the older sister was already promised to another. Again in 1586 and 1587 Young went to Denmark; only in the spring of 1589, however, did the proposals become specific on both sides. On August 20, 1589, the King was married by proxy in a preliminary ceremony in Denmark; the bride then set sail for Scotland.

Meanwhile James, who had never seen his bride, suffered the strong emotions expected of a young, twenty-three-year-old man. If we are to believe the sentiments expressed in the poetry that he was writing at the time, he reacted like a love-sick bridegroom. Messengers and letters sent from him to Anne during the late summer of 1589 attest to the reality of his impatient love. Historians who have concentrated their attention on the later James would do well to study in more detail the character of James which emerges from this brief period in his life.

Social conventions, the many demands of his royal position, and, finally, the character of Anne herself may explain why the burning passion evident in the Amatoria later waned into a formal relationship between husband and wife. In the late summer of 1589, however, James so experienced the passions of love that he was almost beside himself when, on September 15, he received the news of a storm that had forced the Scottish fleet, carrying Anne to Scotland, to put into Oslo. He was in Scotland, but his bride was in Norway. Five weeks passed while the King

fumed in impatience. Unable to contain himself any longer, James secretly set sail from Scotland to claim his bride. Not even Maitland, the Chancellor of Scotland (and pro-Elizabethan in state affairs), was privy to details of the voyage. Braving a stormy crossing of the North Sea, James reached Norway on October 28, travelled by land and sea for another two weeks, and at last met his bride. The final religious ceremony occurred on November 23 at Oslo. The bridal party, unable to depart for Scotland because of the winter season, spent the next few months in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. On May 1, 1590, the royal couple returned to Scotland.

Like most educated men of his time, James knew his Petrarch thoroughly and did not hesitate to imitate the Italian model when writing his own amatory verse. A detailed source study of Amatoria, nevertheless, reveals that the young King rarely borrows a theme or image from Petrarch without adapting the theme or image--be it ever so little--for his own purposes. The reader will note that the Scottish poet strives to make the image suit its new context. Nor, as we shall see, does James merely paraphrase a theme taken from the Italian poet (as so often occurs in Renaissance borrowings from one literature to another); James adapts--perhaps "acclimatizes" is a better term--the theme to the situation existing in Scotland.

Written during the summer, fall, and winter of 1589-1590, the sonnets reflect the intensity of the royal poet's excitement and love. The first two sonnets voice James's complaint that contrary winds had delayed the arrival of his bride. The

opening sonnet ("From sacred throne in heuen Empyrick hie") shows his predilection for classical allusion, as in the rather cryptic reference found in the closing couplet: "What hatefull Juno AEolus entiseth / Wherby contrarious Zephyre thus ariseth."⁴ The theme of the sonnet, that, alone of all creation, mutinous winds do not obey the divine power of harmony entrusted to poets, finds expression in James's classical and mythological references to Apollo, Diana, Juno, Aeolus, and Zephyr--causing both theme and poem to lose much in spontaneity.

The second sonnet ("O cruell Cupide what a ruthless rage"), more Petrarchan in theme and imagery, possesses both a movement and a feeling that render it much more personal. The first person singular is used fifteen times. Here we see the poet, mortally wounded by the poisoned arrow of love, discovering that his entire body is being consumed by a fever--the bones dry out, the marrow melts, the sinews grow enfeebled, the blood boils as in a hot pan; no medicine or poultice can ease his pain: "Through deadlie shott alieue I daylie dye / I frie* in flammes of that envenomed darte / Which shotte me sicker* in at ather eye."⁵

In addition to the frequent Petrarchan images of love as a source of intense heat, there are other borrowings or inspirations from the Italian poet. The theme of cruel Love unwilling to heal the wounds that it has caused is found in Petrarch's Rime sparse (Poem 174), where the poet sets forth the idea that

*frie--burn; sicker--without doubt

Love can both wound and heal: "and a cruel lady who with her eyes, and with the bow whom I pleased only as a target, made the wound about which, Love, I have not been silent to you, for with those same weapons, you can heal it." Other thoughts and images which may have a source in Petrarch occur throughout the sonnet. James's "I daylie die" echoes the Italian poet's "who makes me die and live" (Poem 105); "the envenomed darte" in James suggests Petrarch's "that sweet poison I feel going from my heart through my veins" (Poem 152) and "As a hart struck by an arrow, with the poisoned steel within its side" (Poem 209); the images of the wound entering through the eye is found in "For from my lady's right eye . . . to my right eye came the illness" (Poem 233); the double wound found in James's poem and the wound "smoaking" finds a possible source in the "burning arrow of love . . .; from both sides he pierces and assails my heart" and "One wound burns and pours forth smoke and flame" (Poem 241); the inability of medicine to heal the wound repeats Petrarch's "Before medicines old or new can heal the wounds" (Poem 214); and, finally, the mention of marrow, bone, and sinews echoes "I have no marrow in my bones or blood in my tissues" (Poem 198).

James's imagery and sense of decorum are inferior to Petrarch's, perhaps because the Scottish poet overdoes his anatomical references. He concentrates into three quatrains references to the ~~body~~ that Petrarch has used in several sonnets; moreover, he does not link them closely enough to the emotion of love, as Petrarch does. We notice, too, that James asks in

the closing couplet that his lady be made to learn of his suffering and thus ease his pain through the shared knowledge: "I onlie wishe for ease of all my paine / That she might witt what sorrowe I sustaine." Although the idea of shared suffering in love finds expression in Petrarch, a wish such as that found in the couplet cited above would find no place in the more elevated Petrarchan description of a lover's condition and sentiments.

The sonnet entitled "To the Queene", although it contains a similar image of the poet suffering from the disease of love, strikes an even more Petrarchan note: "So can I troubled be with no disease / Bot ye my onlie Medicinar remaines." This appeal to one's beloved for help in assuaging the wounds of love occurs often in Petrarch. Sonnet 75, which might well be the source poem for the King's sonnet, begins: "The lovely eyes that struck me in such a way that they themselves could heal the wounds, but not the power of herbs or of magic art or of any stone distant from our sea. . . ." This same appeal to Love for the purpose of healing also appears in Petrarch's Sonnet 29 and Sonnet 133. Love requited, indeed, can have a healing effect, as in Sonnet 21 of the Rime sparse.

James gives his sonnets a personal stamp not only by reflecting his own point of view but also by employing a variety of source material which enriches the texture of his poetry. We have seen in Sonnet 1 that classical mythology is one such source, and similar references to ancient myths and cosmogonies occur frequently throughout this volume of lyrics. Sonnet 3,

like Sonnet 1, has its setting in a framework of myth. Here Anne is referred to as "our earthlie Juno"⁸ who, being royal, requires a royal consort. James, as always conscious of his "divine" prerogative, asserts that the goddesses have chosen him to fill this role. The "happie Monarche sprung of Fergus race" makes reference to Scottish mythology and reflects James's evident pride in tracing his ancestry to the mythical Fergus who had come from Ireland to set up a new kingdom in Scotland. The poem, like the early stanzas of Spenser's Faerie Queene, creates a happy blend of classical and national mythology.

Two more sonnets make up Poem 4 in the royal collection and bear the title "Two Sonnets to her M^{tie} to show the difference of Stiles". The "stiles" referred to have nothing to do with the literary nature of the poems, but rather deal with the King's attitude to his role as a poet-lover. The first poem defends his inability to act in the accepted role of both lover and poet: "Long since forsooth my Muse begunne to tire / Through daylie fascherie* of my oun affaires."⁹ The "fascherie" refers to the quarreling and bickering among those nobles who formed the royal suite at the time of the King's sojourn in Norway. Sir James Melville in his Memoirs affirms "the company that ever with his Maieste held him in gret fascherie, to agre ther continuall stryf, pryd, and partialities."¹⁰ and the King blamed these annoying quarrels for the drying up of his poetic inspir-

*fascherie--harassment

ation. The second sonnet, taking the opposing viewpoint, denies vehemently that he can refuse his bride's request for love poems from her bridegroom: "No yee euen yee shall carrie to the skie / My barren verse and shall my Muse inflame."¹¹ She will reinvigorate his tired Muse, and as had already occurred in Scotland, his love for Anne would cause his spirits to soar.

Poem 5 consists of a sonnet sequence of six lyrics, the first of which does not reveal any great originality on the part of King James. Rather, as Westcott points out,¹² the poem follows very closely a French sonnet by the sixteenth-century poet, Melin de Saint-Gelais; even more, he proposes that James's poem is a line-by-line translation of its French original (perhaps the earliest sonnet published in France). A closer reading, however, suggest that James adapted rather than translated Saint-Gelais' poem.

James's ~~second~~ sonnet in this sequence strikes a graceful theme, "As man, a man am I composed all / Of brethren foure which did this worlde compone."¹³ It develops an image common in the period that man, like the universe, is fashioned of fire, air, moisture, and earth. But James, the lover, is now bereft of fire, which has been consumed by love; air, too, has left him through the sighs of love; and his tears of love have dried up his moisture. "Now onelie earthe remaines with me at last / That am denuded of the other three." The closing couplet begs Anne either to allow his earth to become part of the ashes of death or else to make him once again a whole man, composed of the four elements.

Sonnet 3 of this sequence, like so many of James's short poems, reflects a lack of decorum on the part of its author. Such lapses, indicative in literature of a failure to practise discrimination in theme, diction, or imagery, make themselves all too evident in the King's personal and public life. Lack of self-control, evident relishment of seamy stories, almost prurient interest in details of other persons' intimate lives--all of these proofs are held up by historians as evidences of James's moral weaknesses. Here in his poetry we have this character once again confirmed. The poem in question begins with a very good, although not new, image: Anne's face supplies the radiance for his whole world; when she departs from him, he is in darkness--so dependent is he on her light. After this introduction James presents the jarring image, "Since Lezardlike I feede upon her face / And suckes my satisfaction from her sight,"¹⁴ which may recall James's reading of Alexander Montgomerie's Sonnet XXVII. The similarity in the two poems (noted by both Westcott and Craigie in their editions of James's poetry) strikes the reader in the following image: "I am a lizard, faines of his face, / And not a snaik, with poison him to byte."¹⁵

Of happier interest is the closing couplet of the King's sonnet: "How may a man, a floure, a corps in smart / See, blossom, breathe; but eyes, but Sunne, but hart." James employs a series of nouns followed by a parallel series of verbs to recall the various images that he has used in the earlier lines of the poem. Syntactically abrupt, they make a strong closing

for the sonnet. This device, of course, occurs frequently in both French and English poetry of the day; both Du Bartas and Montgomerie, whom James admired as poets, used it as Westcott points out.¹⁶

The fourth sonnet in James's sequence ("Come fruitfull thoughts that fertil euer flowes") delights in alliterative effects. Line 1 with its repeated "f's" merely initiates a sonnet whose every line seems to be structured as much on alliteration as on thought and imagery. Perhaps line 4 offers the best example: "And painefull pangues of passions playe there parte."¹⁷ Such lines and such poetry were the target of Shakespeare's satire and criticism in A Midsummer Night's Dream. He had the untutored workmen recite verse after verse that exaggerate alliterative effects, perhaps the worst being,

Quince Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broached his boiling bloody breast.

(V, i, 145-46)

James obviously was not the only offender; Shakespeare in this play (written in 1598) takes aim at a whole generation of poets and playwrights. To our modern ears, James's abuse of alliteration shows him adopting the less happy features of the poetry of his day.

The last sonnet of this short sequence again shows James's debt to Petrarch. It begins: "O wogans witt that wauers with the winde / . . . As weathercocke thy stablenes I finde."¹⁸

Petrarch in the closing lines of Poem 183 exclaims: "A woman is

a changeable thing by nature, and I know well that a state of love lasts little time in the heart of a woman". James does not accuse Anne, as Petrarch obviously accuses Laura, of inconstancy in love; his complaint seems to indicate her lack of appreciation for all that he has done for her: "Yett absence thogh bot for a space did spill* / The thankes deserued of all my seruice trewe."¹⁹ James finds justification for this charge in his lady's lack of "langour", perhaps best rendered by the modern English "longing for him". Both Petrarch and James echo the Aeneid, where "varium et mutabile semper / femina" (IV, 569-70) not only refers to the inconstancy of womankind but also expresses the opinion with contempt (as seen in Mercury's use of neuter rather than of feminine endings to describe Dido to Aeneas). The Scottish poet speaks reproachfully but not contemptuously. His sonnet works well, comparing her inconstancy both to a weathervane in line 3 and to the ceaselessly-moving sea in line 4.

If women are fickle and changeable, the poet pledges for his part in Poem 6 ("Constant Loue in all Conditions"²⁰) that he will remain true. This poem breaks away from the sonnet form, employing rather a stanza form that James calls Ballat Royal in his critical treatise, Reulis and Cautelis. Each eight-line stanza contains two quatrains, with a rhyme scheme ababbcbc; the metre is iambic pentameter. In describing Ballat Royal, James advises that it be used for "any heich* & graue

*spill--mar
heich--lofty

subjectis"²¹, presumably the poet attaches more importance to this piece than to the sonnets, although the theme of Poem 6 remains love. One can only conjecture that James, like Petrarch, preferred to vary his form either to maintain reader interest or, more probably, to test his own creativity in a different poetic form. The three stanzas are conventional in every respect, carrying through the theme that, despite the cold season of the year when nature seems "deaz'd with frost", the poet will not allow his love to diminish:

And shall I then like birde or beast forgett
 For anie stormes that threatning heuen can send
 That object sweete, wheron my hart is sett
 Whome for to serue my senses, all I bend

 No winters frost, nor sommers heate can end
 Or staye the course of constant loue in me.

(ll. 17-20, 23-24)

The poem, by no means innovative in subject matter, rhythm, or imagery, is well crafted. The overall structure develops the theme in an organized manner, with one major thought in each stanza. The imagery is restrained and yet effective: "disdainfull Saturne sad and olde" sets the tone for stanza 1; "no Cupide . . . / Darr make there harts his harbour" is central to stanza 2; "My inward flame with colde it dothe contend" forms the core of stanza 3. Unlike his practice in the sonnets, whose form at times caused James's syntax to take on a twisted, unnatural shape, the poet in this poem avoids objectionable inversions; the thought flows in an almost conversational manner, which (along with the introduction of the first person in

stanza 3) lends an effective personal note to the expression of his love. The imagery, too, supports the tone of the poem, nowhere marred by overabundant alliteration or unwelcome word pictures. As a love poem, it can hold its own with most similar works of the age.

Craigie prints two versions of the following selection, Poem 7 ("A Dier at her M^{ties} desyer"²²). On facing pages he places the work as found in the British Library and the Bodleian manuscripts. Each version has fifty-eight lines without stanzaic divisions. What emerges from this long "dirge" (if such is the meaning of "dier"--Westcott is undecided) is the conviction that James requires the discipline of stanza form to order his presentation. As it stands, Poem 7 lacks a sense of progression; it meanders through a self-pitying catalogue of the lover's miserable condition. Added to this obvious defect must be the utter lack of new inspiration in the thought and the imagery. Therefore, conventional and formless, "A Dier at her M^{ties} Desyer" is better put to one side. Nor does his "retraction" as expressed in the succeeding sonnet, "My Muse hath made a willfull lye I grante, / I sung of sorrows neuer felt by me,"²³ redeem the situation, at least aesthetically. Like the former poem, it invents no new image, is prosaic in its expression. Only the final four lines give a new twist to the thought:

What should yee doe who haue for haplesse hire
The lucklesse lott, to loue and not be lou'd.
Your plaints I thinke should pierce the starrie skyes
And deaue the Gods with shrill and cairfull cries.²⁴

The poet's fate to love and to remain unloved is his "hapless hire" (his unfortunate deserts), causing him to deafen the gods themselves with his woeful cries. It is of interest to note that the Bodleian manuscript does not contain this sonnet. James inserted it at a date subsequent to the composition of the longer poem in order to fill the lacuna indicated by his note at the end of the longer poem: "the sonnett lakkis heere quiche interprettis all the matter."²⁵

Poems 8 and 9 of the collection are conventional addresses to a mistress -- Poem 8 "A complaint of his mistressis absence from Court"²⁶ and Poem 9 "A dreame on his Mistris my Ladie Glammis"²⁷. As already pointed out, scholars have ample proof that, although James's love for Anne quickly cooled, no intimacy with women other than his Queen has ever been documented. Nor is it likely that, when the manuscript for All the Kingis Short Poesis was assembled, James would permit any undisclosed amours to become public knowledge. Indeed a study of the two poems, along with some familiarity with the chronology of the period, reveals an emotional attachment which can best be described as platonic.

Poem 8 expresses the normal sentiments of a man separated from a lady²⁸ whom he admires for her beauty and for the joy that her presence affords. Not until stanza 7, after much verbiage and mythological supportive material, does James state the situation in which he finds himself:

Since she who did our Princelie Court decore
is absent, absent doth allace remaine

Whose comelie beautie graced our Princelie traine
 Whose modest mirth express'd alluring grace
 Whose absence makes vs lacke our light allace.²⁹

There is no mention of love or even of passion in the entire sixty-three lines.

This poem and the one following date from a later period than the marriage poems, as both chronology and style suggest. The later poems show considerable progress over the earlier verse, particularly in James's ability to develop an image (in Poem 8, the comparison of the change which takes place in the royal court with the change of climate at sea; in Poem 9, the interpretation of his lady's "tokens"). In both cases James has structured his poems around these two ideas. Poem 9 also makes better use of the eight and six syllable couplet than does the poetry written by James during the seventies and eighties. The lines move more easily and naturally, with no forcing of the diction. Although not divided into stanzas, the lines employ a rhyme scheme (ababcbdedef) which conveys the impression of stanzaic divisions. James shows himself quite adept in structuring a variety of rhymes throughout the 268 lines of the poem.

Because of its length and because of the demonstrated improvement in technique, "A dreame on his Mistris my Ladie Glamis" must be considered an important contribution to James's collected verse. The narrative itself, however, is quite simple: the King merely relates that, in a dream, his lady hung two "tokens" (l. 53) around his neck:

Sine with her soft and silken hands
 About my necke she layes
 A tablet and an Amethyst
 And silent slipps her wayes.³⁰

The poet then attempts to decipher the meaning of the black-enamelled, gold tablet and of the heart-shaped amethyst. The latter, because of its powers to help one overcome enemies and preserve one from inebriation, is taken to represent himself; the tablet (which in ll. 229-30 proves to be a locket) stands for his lady. Both are joined on the one chain, symbolic of their union in love. Thus does James interpret his dream; but even if his interpretation be wrong, the poet still finds cause to rejoice:

Bot if I be deceau'd,
 And in the opening of a dreame
 Haue ather dream'd or reau'd*,
 Yett wellcume be a gladd deceate,
 For as into my sleepe,
 My dreame deceaued me, so my guesse,
 In gladnes doth me keepe.³¹

Despite the declaration of deep attachment which James expresses in this poem, it is extremely doubtful that a liaison was formed between King James and Lady Anne Murray.

The tone of Poem 10 seems more in keeping with the character of James as depicted by historians. Called "A Satire against Woemen", the poem possesses a quality that can best be summed up in Westcott's words. He states that the poem displays "a cleverness of invention which somewhat atones for

*reau'd--seen in delirium

the absence of more poetical qualities." Women are in turn compared to birds, animals, and fish (including mermaids). In each case an unfavourable characteristic of women emerges: the birds are predatory and noisy, the animals crafty and greedy, the fish cruel and hateful. In revealing these characteristics, women are but following their natural dispositions; for the poet suggests that "all liuing things are euer bounde / To followe nature ruling them allwaye. . . ."33

The Amatoria section closes with two songs. "Song 1" expresses the poet's sorrow at being separated from his beloved; yet he realizes how she, too, must be suffering from his absence. This gives him, as it has so often given to lovers, a degree of comfort:

Bot by the contrare I reioyes
 When I persauwe we marrowes* be
 In trouble, sorrowe and in noyes*
 That is a thing which comforts me
 The prouerbe makes relation
 That likes in tribulation
 Is wretches consolation
 So now are we.34

Even greater, however, will be their joy when they meet again.

Both songs seem to be addressed to Princess Anne of Denmark and were probably written while James was awaiting the arrival of his bride in September, 1589. "Song 2" confirms this interpretation since it is built around both the myth of Hero and Leander and the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. More

*marrowes--companions; noyes--griefs

fortunate than the lovers of antiquity, who perished in the sea, James and Anne at least can communicate with each other (just as Pyramus and Thisbe were able to do). Neither diction nor imagery shows any distinction in these poems. "Song 2" alone possesses an unusual and attractive metre: lines one to seven of each stanza are octosyllabic, while the last line with its four syllables offers a sense of finality to each stanza. James cleverly employs the rhyme scheme to divide the stanza into two parts, the first four lines suggesting the situation of the lovers and the last four lines the perilous resolution that their love will discover. Theme, metre, rhyme, and imagery combine to make this piece one of James's better non-sonnet love poems, despite its lack of new matter.

The selections in Miscellanea were composed over a much longer time period than those in Amatoria, a period ranging from the youthful "first verses that ever the King made" at the age of fifteen to the sonnet on the cold winter of 1616 which, if correctly dated, would make James at that time almost forty years of age. The scope of the subject matter is equally great. Twenty-two poems discuss thirteen different persons; five selections describe nature, and five more deal with various aspects of creative literary composition. Two short lyrics fit none of these categories, one telling of civil disorder in Scotland and one rendering homage to those who have given their lives for the King. Lastly, one poem is a translation from the Latin poet, Lucan, a poem already published in James's Essayes of a Prentise; being a translation, it will

be discussed in Chapter Four. This present chapter will study representative poetry from each of the groups mentioned above in order to assess the value of Miscellanea.

Of the two sonnets³⁵ and the short poem³⁵ that James composed on the Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), the second merits attention. Although Copernicus had published On the Revolution of the Celestial Spheres between 1540-43, many European scientists refused to accept his findings. Such was not the case in England where the Copernican system with its boundless infinity of stars received wide acceptance. James could not avoid being influenced by the Copernican revolution in astronomical (and consequently religious) thought. Quite naturally for a man of James's temperament, he made it a point to visit one of the major supporters of Copernicus, Tycho Brahe. The Dane's astronomical observations, published under the title De nova stella (1574) and followed by further research, led to the accurate positioning of no less than 777 stars and weighed heavily in favour of the Copernican hypothesis. Westcott has documented the King's visit to Brahe:

The home of the famous Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe was on the small island of Hveen, in the sound between Elsinore and Copenhagen, where he had built a large observatory and castle called Uraniborg. Here James visited Brahe, March 20, 1590, and spent the day in learned discourse,--"de mobilitate praesertim, quam terrae Copernicus tribuit." . . . In 1593 James sent the astronomer a thirty-year privilege for the circulation of his / books in Scotland, and with it two sets of verses in Latin, which were published in Brahe's Astronomiae instauratae Progymnas-mata, Prague, 1602. . . . The Latin verses are translations of the second sonnet printed here and of the hexastich following. . . .³⁶

The "learned discourse" referred to tells us a great deal about James. Although schooled in the classics and in ancient philosophy, and although he still believed in astrology, James had kept an open mind on scientific matters, even when the latter destroyed the accepted religious belief that both the earth and man on the earth stood at the centre of the universe. He had a lively intelligence, capable of more than the tiresome philosophic and religious discussions so often mentioned by his biographers. To see him in conversation with a man of science is to see the young King in a quite different light.

The closing lines of the first sonnet to Tycho Brahe assign to the Dane an intellectual grasp of the entire universe. The second sonnet, however, is structured on the second-century Ptolemaic system with its geocentric universe and its interlocking planetary spheres: "The glorious globe of heuene lie matter made / Containing ten celestial circles faire."³⁷ James cleverly lulls the reader by suggesting that such ordered harmony "does declare / Gods minde to blisse* great kingdomes or confounde."³⁸ Brahe, of course, had confounded the established system, so that the poet continues:

There ordour, course, and influence appeare
 Looke Tichoës tooles, there finelie shall be founde
 Each planet dansing in his propre spheare
 There fires diuine into his house remaine
 Whome sommerlie his booke doth here containe.

*blisse--bless

James departed from Tycho Brahe in good spirits according to the record of his seven-hour visit; apparently convinced that Copernicus and Brahe had proved the former's hypothesis through practical observations of the stars and planets.

Another sonnet that offers evidence of James's ability as a poet is that praising William Fowler's translation of Petrarch's Trionfi, a translation completed in 1587. The King's poem, "A Sonnet on M^r W. Fullers translation of Petrarch's triumphe of love", received favourable comment from at least one anthologist who remarked that the poem is "in a strain of versification, which for vigour and fluency is vastly superior to his common style."³⁹ A favourite of anthologists during the nineteenth century, it was reprinted in six collections.

James arranges his poem chronologically, referring to poetry written in turn by Homer, Virgil, and Petrarch. The sonnet's closing couplet lists the four subjects that constitute Petrarch's themes in the Trionfi and praises Fowler's poetic talents: "In triumphe ledde loue, chastnes, deathe, and fame / Bot thou triumphes ouer Petrarchs propre name."⁴⁰ Not only those lines but also the entire poem show good taste and the careful thought given to its structure. One is tempted to cite it as no mean contribution to "Phoebus art" (l. 2). Of interest to readers familiar with Francis Meres's Palladis Tamia; Wits Treasury (1598) is James's reference to Petrarch's "sugred stile": "So loftie Petrarch his renoume did Blaze / In tounge Italique in a sugred stile" (ll. 9-10). The King's

sonnet antedates the Palladis Tamia so that one may well suspect that Francis Meres is paying an indirect tribute to James by using the same phrase--albeit a trite, sixteenth-century expression--that was applied to Shakespeare's sonnets.

If we are to believe Ben Jonson's recollection of his conversation with William Drummond of Hawthornden, the latter quoted James as saying, "Sir P. Sidney was no poet."⁴¹ Yet in Poem 18, "An Epitaphe on S^r Philip Sidney", James praises Sidney as soldier and patron of the arts: "Lament for him who dew-lie seru'd yow all / Whome in, yow wiselie all your arts did mell."⁴² A careful reading of the sonnet, nevertheless, shows the King stressing the military achievements, the family name, and the general reputation for learning enjoyed by Sidney, rather than his creative gifts. James, therefore, in his description may not be denying the opinion that Drummond attributes to him. In confirmation of this conclusion, one can look at the Latin hexameters that James wrote, along with the sonnet, for Academiae Cantabrigiensis Lachrymae (1587), published in the year following Sidney's unexpected death in the Low Countries. The Latin lines again praise Sidney's accomplishments in arms rather than in poetry.⁴³ In passing, we may note that Sir Philip Sidney in his Apologie for Poetrie expresses his admiration for James as a patron: "Sweete Poésie, that hath aunciently had Kings, Emperors, Senators, great Captaines . . . not onely to fauour Poets, but to be Poets. And of our neerer times can present for her patrons a Robert, king of Sicil, the great king Francis of France, King James of Scotland."⁴⁴ Such a judgment should not

go unnoticed in determining James's reputation as a man of letters; for in making the statement quoted above, Sidney had nothing personal to gain.

"An epitaphe on John Shaw", Poem 19 in the Miscellanea section, comes as a refreshing and touching tribute to a man who gave his life for the King. John Shaw, Master Stabler to King James, tried to prevent the rebel Bothwell and his followers from escaping after their attack on the King during the infamous raid on Holyrood Palace (December 27, 1591). The intruders slew Shaw as they fled through the stables. The honesty of the King's feelings reveals itself in the simple, unadorned diction--no gods or goddesses, no hyperbolic descriptions of achievements are required. A moving tribute, the sonnet must stand as one of James's better compositions. As a man, James may not have lived up to the thought contained in the closing couplet; yet the intent is sincere: "Bbt here my inward greefe does make me staye / I minde with deeds, and not with wordes to paye."⁴⁵

A contrast both in sincerity and in poetic worth is found in the poem, "A Sonnet on the moneth of May"⁴⁶. Uninspired and lacking in originality, it is best described as a "catalogue" poem; for James "hails" May no fewer than five times in the opening six lines, each time adding a new quality to his depiction of the month. As so often in his poetry, the King fragments his thought rather than developing a coherent image. When one adds to these faults that the poet employs no less than Aurora, Phoebus, the Titans, and Saturn to support his

description, the sonnet suffers in comparison with such lyrics as Richard Edward's "May" and Thomas Dekker's poem of the same title, to cite only two other selections on the identical month.

A much better poem is "An aenigme of sleepe". The word "enigma" here implies not so much a riddle as a mystery, for James seems concerned with the strange, pervasive power of sleep. All creatures and all estates of men require and obey its summons. It is the stuff of life itself, as the poet indicates in the opening lines: "Life is my selfe, I keepe the life of all / Without my helpe all liuing things they die."⁴⁷ Moreover, all men--be they kings or commoners--react in the same way to the coming of sleep:

I am not nyse*, the poore I'le not disdaine
 Poor catches more then Kings may me command
 Where cumme in all senses man refraine*
 Softer nor silke, and sadder* nor the sand
 I hurte, I helpe, I slaye, and cuire the same⁴⁸
 SLEEPE, and aduise, and pause* well what I am.

As both Westcott and Craigie show in their notes, "enigma poems" are not original with James. However, the latter's treatment of the theme does demonstrate a personal interpretation of the subject which is developed into a sonnet that even contemporary anthologists still find worthwhile.⁴⁹

Of the three sonnets relating James's reaction to the traitorous attack of the Earl of Bothwell on his royal person,

*nyse--particular; refraine--control; sadder--steadfast, in the sense of being ever present; pause--think

the first deserves attention. The historian Charles Williams has best caught the spirit of these sonnets:

In some hour or two during the process of the affair, James put his anger and his desire into three sonnets. Two of them do but lament the triumph of "perjured infamous foxes" (Bothwell and his confederates) and the infection of the heart of Justice. . . . But the King's other poem inquires into his own state of mind, and reflects what he hoped was happening: courage and wisdom were united within him.⁵⁰

The form of this sonnet should occasion no surprise. The debate, for such is the structure, was again becoming a favourite literary form in the sixteenth century, especially in French literature; indeed in English literature debate poems had a long tradition, going back to the thirteenth century (Chaucer, too, made use of it in his poetry). Closer to home, Alexander Montgomerie, the King's preferred Scottish poet, had already given prominent place in The Cherrie and the Slae to debates between such abstract qualities as Danger and Courage.⁵¹ His disciple, James, was ever ready to attempt new poetic forms, as he does in "A sonnet when the King was surprised by the Earle of Bothwell" (Poem 29), a debate between the personified qualities of Courage and Wisdom. The poem does not make, however, direct reference to the attack. Rather, the poet makes the attack an occasion for an examination of his conscience, probing to discover whether or not he had acted both courageously and wisely while in great physical danger from Bothwell and his followers.

He was anything but cowardly in his reaction to the drawn sword of Bothwell on the occasion of the Ruthven attack. And during his lifetime, as we know, several other attempts were

made on his person, the most memorable being the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Certainly his sonnet on courage and wisdom does not present the reaction of someone who is as cowardly as many historians have depicted him. It may be that James himself best sums up his personality, insofar as courage is concerned, in the closing couplet of his sonnet: "Of all these straits* the best is out of doubt / That courage wise, and wisdom should be stout."⁵²

Poem 30, "A Sonett: on Sr William Alexanders harshe yeares after the Inglish fasone" bears a different title in the Denmylne manuscript, whose wording of the sonnet Craigie prints on the facing page of his volume. The Denmylne title reflects even more strongly James's dislike of Alexander's poetic style: "The complainte of the Muses to Alexander vpon him selfe for his ingratitude towardes them by hurting them with his hard hammerd wordes fitter to be vsed vpon his mineralles".⁵³

A study of the chronology provided by Craigie in his notes⁵⁴ would indicate that the poem was written after 1608-09 (the date on which Alexander was knighted), perhaps after 1613 (if the reference in the Denmylne title and in line 13 refers to Sir William's silver-mining venture). In any case, it was written while English poetry was undergoing the influence of Donne and his metaphysical literary mode. Donne's sonnets indeed hammer out forceful epithets, and it may well be that Alexander--a prolific poet and dramatist of the second order--

*straits--commandments

followed the metaphysical trend in poetry. James, as we have seen, preferred the Elizabethan style of the period 1560-1580.

In the poem, James points out to Sir William that he had been nourished and formed by the style used by the Castilians in Scotland, a style that the English now had ruined:

Although your neighbours haue conspir'd to spill
That art which did the Laurel crowne obtaine
And borrowing from the raven there ragged quill
Bewray there harsh hard trotting tumbling wayne
Such hamringe hard the mettalls hard require
Our songs ar fil'd with smoothly flowing fire.⁵⁵

It should be pointed out that Craigie does not see this poem as an attack on the metaphysical style of poetry but rather as a complaint that Alexander is following the mode of the French poet, Du Bartas. The latter's style, however, is one which James himself admires and imitates from time to time in its form and diction.⁵⁶

The structure and diction of Poem 32, "Not orientall Indus cristall streames", mark this sonnet as one of the King's successful creative efforts. The controlling idea suggests that none of the great rivers of the world (Indus, Nile, Tagus, Lados) is able to contain the nameless lady mentioned in line 7. Only a simple Scottish stream enjoys her presence; and her influence on this stream is evident. As it moves past her, the current seems to slow: "Against thy will, as if thou went away, / And, loathe to leaue, the sight of such a one / Thou still imparts, thy complaints, to eüery stone."⁵⁷ The structure shows careful thought, as do the references. No conceits mar the progression and development of the theme; indeed, the poet

seems to rely on the majestic names and the sonorous diction of his vocabulary to strike the right note. The sense of loss indicated in the sestet is expressed gracefully, with an appropriate personification of the stream.

Both Westcott and Craigie associate in their notes this sonnet and the following ("Faire famous Isle, where Agathocles rang") with the Lady Cicely Wemyss. If such is the correct identification (made on the basis of a play on Sicily and Cicely in lines 25-26 of the second sonnet), then the first sonnet may well have been written to celebrate her marriage to William Murray in 1599, and the second sonnet to mourn her premature death some time before 1604 (the year when Murray remarried).

Poem 33 puts into words a feeling that James must have experienced on many occasions. Entitled "Vpon occasion of some great disorders in Scotland"⁵⁸, the lines give vent to the King's disillusionment with his royal position.* No specific occasion can be determined as provoking this outburst, for outburst it certainly is. The number of monosyllables, the choice of long vowel sounds, the repetition of "In vaine" to open five lines--all these effects render the tone forceful. James traces his life from the moment when the stars "Before my birth my bale* sa sharpe & saire" fixed his fate, through his birth itself when "O miserable Mother that desir'd / The Midwife wise na paines on me to spaire", through

*bale--fate

vain years of boyhood until "In vaine ye made me syne to take a place / Vpon that forked hill in honour hie". His whole life, it seems, was a succession of disillusionments, of trials: "All were but shewes Marcellus sure am I / Or Job whaise patience Sathan thinkes to try."⁵⁹ The chronological development, on the basis of which the poet draws the conclusion expressed in the closing couplet, gives the sonnet a closely-knit structure. As a result, the sonnet can be considered one of the most sincere and most personal in the collection.

At this point in Miscellanea, James breaks away from the sonnet form to give his readers a rather long poem (119 lines) written in a humorous tone. That the royal poet had second thoughts about including it in his volume is evident because the entire poem is crossed out in the manuscript. Westcott concurs with Craigie on this point:

The poem shows clearly the extent to which Alexander Montgomerie, "the Master poet", and his fellows of the Castalian band were boon companions of the King's youth. The crossing out of the poem in the MS. may indeed indicate that the King hesitated to publish so complete a revelation of his early friends and pleasures, or else considered its facetious tone out of keeping with his royal dignity.⁶⁰

The narrative relates what occurs when Alexander Montgomerie rashly boasts that his brown horse can outrun any other horse in the city. The title of the poem suggests the theme: "Ane admonition to the Master poet to be warr of great bragging hereafter lest he not onlie slander himselfe; bot also the whole professours of the art"⁶¹. The poem purports to have

been written by an eyewitness to the events, one William Mow.

As a literary composition, the poem exhibits no striking achievements. However, it does show the King in one of his lighter moods. Since part of the poem appears in James's Reulis and cautelis, we know that the poem was composed before 1584. As such, it is a youthful piece (the King would be less than eighteen years of age), telling us something of his life and of his companions. The occasion was evidently a merry drinking party; either present at the festivities or mentioned in the poem are the poet Robert Hudson, Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, Rob Steene the court jester, and a minor poet by the name of Christian Lindsay. To add to the humour of the poem, James indulges in a private joke: he writes the poem in Ballat Royal, a stanzaic form which he elsewhere insists should be reserved for lofty matters. To justify his use of the form, the poet inserts a long epic simile (ll. 35-60) taken from the Aeneid (V, 362-484). In the original passage, the young Trojan, Dares, and the aged Sicilian, Entellus, engage in physical combat (a combination of wrestling and boxing) for prizes offered by Aeneas; Entellus is the victor over his boastful opponent. It appears that Montgomerie's words are similar in tone to those of Dares, for James says, "Thus cracked* ye and bragged."⁶² And, like Dares, the braggart Montgomerie is soundly trounced: "It chanc'd ye were forerunne a prettie space / A mile or more. . . ." One has the impression throughout

*cracked--boasted

the poem of a storyteller employing ordinary language to strengthen the conversational tone and to add to the realism. One good example of this style occurs in the opening stanza with its reference to the Aesop fable of the lion and the mouse, its urging Montgomerie to take these words of warning in good part, and its expression of goodwill to Montgomerie:

So I protest ye take it in good part
My admonition cumming from a hart
That wishes well to yow and all your craft
Who woulde be sorie for to see yow smart
Thogh other poets trowes ye be gone daft.

James may not have desired to see this poem in print; but for his readers, it adds a human touch to this unusual and complex man. From a literary point of view, the poem reveals that James is capable of relating a story, that he has a gift for narrative verse.

The last poem in Miscellanea has been reprinted many times, if only to prove the youthful talents of King James: "Song. the first verses that euer the King made". In an early manuscript⁶³, the heading adds the following note: "The kingis verses when he was fyftene yeere old". The lines, therefore, were written before James's sixteenth birthday, which occurred on June 19, 1582. Highly sententious, the poem accords more with the style of the older Scottish Chaucerians than with the less didactic, smoother poetry that James would shortly urge his Scottish poets to adopt. The theme reflects quite possibly one of the lessons that Buchanan had drilled into his precocious pupil: Think before you speak; for once uttered, words can not be

recalled. James adds a further dimension to this advice when he counsels, "Be cairefull aye for to inuent / The waye to gett thy owen intent"⁶⁴--a free translation of which might be, "Make sure that you find the best way to express what you want to say." The last stanza sums up the didactic theme when the poet states that with "foole haste cumes not greatest speede"; one must have patience and follow the old Latin tag, festina lente. As a youthful effort, the poem is acceptable; however, its merits--if any--are historical rather than literary.

Of the four works that constitute Fragmenta, two are original ("An epithalamion vpon the Marques of Huntlies mariage" and "The beginning of his Mties jurnei to Denmarke; neuer ended.") and two are translations from Du Bartas' La Sepmaine ou Création du Monde (the earlier parts of which were published in 1579). Leaving aside the translation, one is confronted with two incomplete works whose unfinished state makes value judgments difficult.

Of the two original poems, the more successful would appear to be the epithalamion, written in the form of a masque.⁶⁵ The marriage for which James composed the masque took place in 1588; as such, the poem is an early example of this literary genre in Scotland, although masques had been played at the English court from the early years of Henry VIII's reign. James attempts nothing new in his only venture into dramatic literature. The masque opens with the poet's invocation (ll. 1-34) to a multitude of gods and muses to bless the marriage: "Then graunte to me who patrone am of Hymens triuphe here / That all your graces

may vpon this Hymens band appeare" (ll. 9-10). Mercury, accompanied by a suite of forest spirits (fauns, satyrs, nymphs, and so on), replies that the gods have granted the King's wish and that the sylvan deities are willing "To iudge on euerie sporte whereat there brethren with yow mells" (l. 44). The Nymphs in chorus echo this acceptance, urging the horsemen to join in combat as part of the entertainment (ll. 47-52). In contrast with the lofty diction and sentiments expressed up to this point, Agrestis (a country man) now steps forward to utter in homely language his simple desire to take part in the feast. Knowing that he is out of place among the nobility, he concludes: "Sirs thogh this language seeme both hard and haske* / Appardone new come strangers in a maske" (ll. 73-74).

James proves that he has a good sense of the dramatic. His opening speech had been composed in the long heptameter line, a metre that he has skilfully adapted to the diction of himself, Mercury, the Nymphs, and the country man. Now, with the Scholar who next appears, he changes to the more common iambic pentameter for the Scholar's recitation of a sonnet in honour of the bride (Lady Henrietta Stewart, daughter of James's close friend and relative, Esmé Stewart, Duke of Lennox). Like a goddess she seems to the Scholar; for she is peerless, possessing "Wealth, beautie, noble race, and vertues all" (l. 84). At this point, unfortunately, the masque disintegrates into eleven short, unrelated speeches delivered by characters who are simply

*haske--harsh

indicated by such names as "Woman I", "The verteous man 4", "Zanie 5", "L. G. I", "Scholler 3", and so on. Westcott suggests that this part of the masque took place within the palace during the evening:

The masque proper followed the tilting and probably took place indoors in the evening. The lady with her attendants approached the King seated in state at the end of the hall (l. 86), and was there addressed by her rival suitors. The numbering of the speeches would seem to indicate that only a portion of this dialogue has been preserved.⁶⁶

One wishes that James had completed the masque by giving us more of the dialogue and more directions as to the movement of the actors. As it stands, nevertheless, because of its excellent beginning and its use of varied diction, this selection reveals yet another talent of the King that most critics have ignored.

"The beginning of his M^{ties} jurnie to Denmarke; never ended."⁶⁷ is the title of Poem 38. "Never ended" is perhaps an overstatement, for the poem is scarcely begun. The thirty-eight lines fall into two thematic parts: God decrees man's fate (ll. 1-28) and God has assigned a difficult role to the poet King (ll. 29-38). The metre is again iambic heptameter, a favourite of James when he deals with important matters. The tone is lofty, as befits the words of a King revealing his innermost thoughts. Although the first part of the poem shows the poet's ability to develop a thought slowly yet completely, it is the second part that affords the reader a personal glimpse of the King's own character. His lot was to rule a kingdom without the help of "parents, brethren, bairns, or anie neare of kinn"

(1. 33): We sense his loneliness, and we begin to see why he sat so long at dinner night after night with his circle of literary friends. It was one of his few solaces, one of his few recreations in a life that imposed so many burdens upon a young man who had not really known what it was to be a boy and who, as a young man, had the heavy weight of government thrust upon him: "And chieflie in so kittle* a land, where few remember can / For to haue seene gouerning ther a King that was a man."⁶⁸ His final resolve, and here the fragment leaves off, states that he would never depart from Scotland: "it was my settled minde / That I shoulde neuer on vncouth coastes a harberie seeke to finde (ll. 37-38).

Amatoria, Miscellanea, and Fragmenta, like most of James's poetry, are collections that reveal his strengths and weaknesses both as a man and as a poet. His strong points as a poet can be seen in his ability to work in many metres and forms, employing a diction that suits each theme and tone. His weakest points must be his lack of self-discipline (seen in lapses in decorum in his choice of certain images) and his tendency to borrow excessively from other sources, padding his own creative efforts with ideas and figures drawn from both ancient and contemporary writers, history, and mythology.

*kittle--unruly, difficult to manage and control

Notes

- ¹ The Poems, II, xxiii.
- ² The Poems, II, xxiii.
- ³ Westcott, New Poems by James I of England, p. 69.
- ⁴ The Poems, II, 68. The reference is to the Aeneid, I, 50-83 where, early in the epic, Juno asks Aeolus to create a storm that would overwhelm Aeneas.
- ⁵ The Poems, II, 68.
- ⁶ Robert M. Durling, trans. and ed., Petrarch's Lyric Poems (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976). References are to individual poems rather than to pages in order to facilitate location in this particular edition. The translation is in prose.
- ⁷ The Poems, II, 69.
- ⁸ The Poems, II, 69.
- ⁹ The Poems, II, 70.
- ¹⁰ Sir James Melville, Memoirs (Edinburgh: 1827), p. 373. Published for the Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh.
- ¹¹ The Poems, II, 70.
- ¹² Westcott, New Poems by James I of England, p. 73.
- ¹³ The Poems, II, 71.
- ¹⁴ The Poems, II, 71.
- ¹⁵ The Poems, II, 227, note to Poem 5.
- ¹⁶ Westcott, New Poems by James I of England, p. 74, note to Poem IX.
- ¹⁷ The Poems, II, 72.
- ¹⁸ The Poems, II, 72.
- ¹⁹ The Poems, II, 73.

- 20 The Poems, II, 73.
- 21 The Poems, II, 80.
- 22 The Poems, II, 74-78.
- 23 The Poems, II, 78.
- 24 The Poems, II, 78.
- 25 The Poems, II, 78.
- 26 The Poems, II, 80-81.
- 27 The Poems, II, 82-89.
- 28 Westcott, New Poems by James I of England, pp. 78-80, note to Poem XVII. He identifies the lady as Lady Anne Murray, whose father had been a childhood friend of King James. Lady Anne married Lord Glamis in 1595.
- 29 The Poems, II, 80-81, ll. 45-49.
- 30 The Poems, II, 83, ll. 41-44.
- 31 The Poems, II, 88, ll. 254-60.
- 32 Westcott, New Poems by James I of England, p. 1.
- 33 The Poems, II, 92, ll. 40-41.
- 34 The Poems, II, 96, ll. 41-48.
- 35 The Poems, II, 100-01, Poem 15.
- 36 Westcott, New Poems by James I of England, pp. 85-86.
- 37 The Poems, II, 101.
- 38 The Poems, II, 101.
- 39 The Poems, II, 233, note to Poem 17. The quotation is from Leyden's Scottish [sic] Descriptive Poems (1803).
- 40 The Poems, II, 104.
- 41 The Poems, II, 234, note to Poem 18.
- 42 The Poems, II, 104. The awkward inversion at the beginning of l. 7 spoils an otherwise well-written and graceful compliment.

43 The Poems, II, 249, note to Uncollected Poem I, Craigie cites the lines in both Latin and English.

44 The Poems, I, Appendix "A", 274.

45 The Poems, II, 106.

46 The Poems, II, 108.

47 The Poems, II, 109.

48 The Poems, II, 109.

49 J. W. Hebel and H. H. Hudson, Poetry of the English Renaissance 1509-1660 (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1929; rev. 1957), p. 546. This volume includes five lyrics by King James (pp. 545-47).

50 Charles Williams, James I (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969; first published in 1934), p. 126.

51 The Scottish Text Society has published four volumes of Alexander Montgomerie's poetry. Volumes I-III were edited by James Cranstoun in 1885, 1886, and 1887 respectively; volume IV, edited by George Stevenson, appeared in 1907.

52 The Poems, II, 110.

53 The Poems, II, 115.

54 The Poems, II, 237-38, note to Poem 30.

55 The Poems, II, 114.

56 The Poems, I, 16, James's prefatory matter to his translation of Du Bartas' The Vranie.

57 The Poems, II, 118

58 The Poems, II, 119.

59 The Poems, II, 119. The "forked hill" is a reference to Mount Parnassus; Marcellus is identified by Craigie as Pope Marcellus I (308-309) who was twice enslaved by the emperor and obliged to do manual labour because he refused to worship pagan gods.

60 Westcott, New Poems by James I of England, p. 100, note to LI.

61 The Poems, II, 120-28.

62 The Poems, II, 122, l. 33.

63 Draft MS. of Calderwood, Historie of the Kirk of Scotland, British Library Add. MS. 4737. Cited by both Westcott (pp. 105-06) and Craigie (pp. 244-45).

64 The Poems, II, 132, ll. 5-6.

65 The Poems, II, 134-44.

66 Westcott, New Poems by King James I of England, p. 107.

67 The Poems, II, 144-48.

68 The Poems, II, 148, ll. 35-36.

CHAPTER III

The Narrative Poems

As I have noted, James's greatest success in lyric poetry occurs when he frees himself from the highly-structured, closely-knit sonnet form. The tortured syntax, the too-frequent classical allusions, the pretentious display of learning become less evident, yielding to an easier, more natural expression. The improvement in poetry continues in the King's two published narrative poems. "Phoenix", the shorter of the two, appeared in his 1584 collection, The Essayes of a Prentise; The Lepanto, a more complex work, forms part of His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises (1591). Both poems, as we shall see, meet most of the accepted criteria of good narrative verse and merit better critical acclaim than they have hitherto received.

The complete title of the phoenix poem, combined with the prefatory verses, reveal to the reader what James has in mind. "Ane Metaphoricall Invention of a Tragedie Called Phoenix" suggests that we should look upon the history of the mythological phoenix as an allegory describing the fate of a certain person unnamed in the title. The "Colonne" poem already referred to in Chapter One identifies the individual as the young King's close friend and second cousin, Esmé Stewart.

As the sixteenth Seigneur d'Aubigny, Esmé Stewart held

estates only in France, where he was born about 1542 and where he spent most of his life. Coming to Scotland in 1579 at the invitation of James, he quickly gained influence over the impressionable young King and soon became the royal favourite. So much was James under the influence of his handsome thirty-seven-year-old cousin, whose culture and accomplishments (formed at the French court) outshone anything that James's poor northern court had to offer, that the King restored to Stewart the title of the Lennox family in 1580, raising the rank from earl to duke in the following year. Over the period 1579-1582, Lennox gradually took into his own hands the complete guidance of Scottish government.

In so doing, needless to say, he incurred many enemies. The latter, for the most part Scots and Protestants, objected to the course on which Lennox's government was taking their country; quite obviously, intrigues on behalf of France and of the Catholic religion directed many of his decisions. In August, 1582, these men engineered the famous Ruthven raid, seized the person of the King, and forced Lennox to return to France shortly afterwards. He died in 1583, leaving his son Ludovick (1574-1624) as his heir. This young boy whom James in the narrative poem proposes as the reborn phoenix accepted the King's invitation to visit Scotland, where he arrived towards the end of 1583. For the rest of his life, the second Duke of Lennox ably and devotedly supported James throughout the latter's reign in both Scotland and England.

Esmé Stewart's natural beauty and talents must have sug-

gested the phoenix as a fitting image. His sudden fall from power and his early death confirmed the poet's choice of this mythological bird of great splendour, a bird endowed with a mysterious aura that made it so attractive to all who saw it. To the dour Scottish Presbyterians, Esmé Stewart was all these things --talented, glamorous, mysterious; but to them he remained suspect.

James's description of "Phoenix" as a metaphorical tragedy requires, perhaps, a word of explanation. Although modern usage would prefer the term allegory, the author's choice of metaphor is no less correct; for the poem draws an analogy between the life of the phoenix and that of Esmé Stewart. But what of James's use of the word tragedy? Again, the author employs the word correctly, although selecting a less-obvious usage. He has taken the term in its mediaeval sense of a long narrative poem which depicts the fall of a great man and has used the image of Dame Fortune's wheel to account for Esmé Stewart's fall.

The phoenix legend itself had become a commonplace in literature, used from Hesiod to Pliny and Ovid. Marion Kaplan in The Phoenix in Elizabethan Literature discusses the use of the myth in Renaissance France and England. According to emblem books of the period, Renaissance man saw the phoenix as a symbol of Christ's resurrection, of the fall and regeneration of man; he saw it, too, as a symbol of man's self-renewal and rebirth after death. On a non-religious level, the phoenix represented perfection in beauty and human qualities; adjectives such as peerless and incomparable are attached to it.

In addition to the best-known poem in which the legendary bird figures--Shakespeare's The Phoenix and the Turtle--(dozens

of references to the phoenix exist in Elizabethan literature. As in Shakespeare's poem, the phoenix may provide the title, as it did again in The Phoenix Nest, an anonymous collection of poems that appeared in 1593, in which the phoenix symbolizes the art of poetry itself. The legend furnished material for a lengthy digression in Nicholas Breton's "Countess of Pembroke's Love" (1592). It offered an appropriate image in John Phillip's poetic epitaph on Lady Douglas (1577). Most important, perhaps, is the identification, in literature, of Queen Elizabeth with the phoenix, an identification that she fostered by using the bird as her personal emblem. Poets, seizing upon the idea, praised her as the incarnation of distinctiveness, excellence, and inimitability (as in Michael Drayton's "The Second Elegy" of Idea the Shepherds' Garland, 1593). James, quite logically, becomes the new phoenix when he succeeds Elizabeth, at least for Henry Raymond in his work The maiden queene (published in 1607, but written earlier). Indeed Joshua Sylvester (a translator of Du Bartas) in his poem "Our Sun did Set" (1605) finds James a better phoenix than Elizabeth. Of all English poems using the legend, Robert Chester's Loves Martyr: or Rosalin's Complaint makes the most complete use of the phoenix, portraying the bird and his beloved as matchless and unique.

James's treatment of the phoenix legend in the Scottish vernacular, however, is itself unique. He, for example, is the only English or Scottish author of the period to have a new phoenix born from a worm found in the fire which consumes the old phoenix. Moreover, his description of the bird, based on Pliny,

is more detailed than that of his English contemporaries, albeit he illogically makes the sexless bird of the legend into a female, and then applies it to a man. Despite this aberration, his use of the phoenix both as a story and as a metaphor stands as a fresh contribution to Scottish poetry.

As it appears in Craigie,¹ the poem is printed in two versions on facing pages. On the left-hand page one finds the poem just as James had it printed in The Essayes of a Prentise; on the right-hand page is a version, taken from MS. Bodley 165. The latter version, in the Scottish vernacular, was probably the young King's original version, for it is written in the King's own hand. However, even the published version on the left-hand page presents more linguistic difficulties than one finds in the poems studied thus far. James in "Phoenix" has remained closer to



his Scots tongue, making fewer concessions to English than in his lyric poetry. Perhaps, too, a paradox can be seen; it may well be that, because of the intimate nature of the subject matter, James is here more lyrical, more personal, than he had been in the shorter lyrics. In both versions, the King's orthography occasionally presents an obstacle to easy reading of the text, as the opening stanza shows:

The dyuers falls, that Fortune geuis* to men,
 By turning ouer her quheill* to their annoy,
 When I do hear them grudge*, although they ken
 That olde blinde Dame delytes to let* the ioy
 Of all, suche is her vse, which dois conuoy
 Her quheill by gess*: not looking to the right,
 But still turnis vp that pairt quhilck* is too light.²

The poem continues for 280 lines of iambic pentameter, divided into forty stanzas. The rhyme scheme of the seven-line stanza is unique to James at that time: ababbcc. Metre, rhyme scheme, and stanza length work well together; consequently, these technical aspects, combined with the poet's development of theme and skillful use of detail, make for a quick-moving narrative.

The theme of the poem is the loss of a friend, and "Phoenix" must be considered an early example of English elegy treating this idea. The narrative forms a simple story: Just as Esmé Stewart had come from his native France to Scotland only to be driven out by jealous enemies, so the phoenix had abandoned her birthplace, Arabia, and had flown to Scotland

*geuis--gives; quheill--wheel; grudge--complain;
 let--prevent; gess--chance; quhilck--which

where, befriended by the poet, she had found happiness and had become a leader among the birds. Envy on the part of some birds drove her friends from her and caused the phoenix to seek refuge with the poet. The parallel "Lennox-phoenix" fate is developed even further; for just as Lennox returns to France and to his early death, so also does the phoenix return to the island of Panchaia, near Arabia, there to be consumed by fire. In both cases, the poet is left to his grief when informed of the death of his companions. The parallel ends with a ray of hope, for each leaves an heir who will reincarnate his progenitor and who will go to Scotland.

James divides his narrative into five main parts. Part One (stanzas 1-5), the introduction, informs the reader of the general circumstances which occasioned the writing of the poem. The author, hearing men complain of the treatment which Dame Fortune and her wheel had meted out to them, states that his own loss, unlike theirs, is irremediable. They had lost only their possessions (the "geir" of line 15) and friends; however, his loss was of no such common order:

But I lament my Phoenix rare, whose race,
Whose kynde, whose kin, whose offspring, they be all
In her alone, whome I the Phoenix call.

(st. 5, 31-33)

He determines at this point to revive her beauty in verse.

Part Two (stanzas 6-13) can be subdivided into two parts: a description of the phoenix (stanzas 6-9) and her flight from Arabia to the poet in Scotland (stanzas 10-13). Stanza 6, which

gives the brilliant colouring of the bird, is particularly well done:

In Arabie cald Foelix was she bredd
 This foule, excellling Iris farr in hew.
 Whose body whole, with purpoure was owerclodd,
 Whose taill of coulour was celestially blew,
 With skarlat pennis* that through it mexed grew:
 Her craig* was like the yallowe burnisht gold,
 And she herself thre hundreth yeare was old.³

(st. 6, 36-42)

Unfortunately for the poet, the phoenix perished when only half of her allotted life span had passed. Thus he was deprived of her comfort and beauty, especially the latter, for when she had soared through the evening skies,

Out through the Azure skyes, whill she did shame
 The Sunne himself, her coulour was so bright,
 Till he abashit beholding such a light.

(st. 9, 61-63)

The Scottish people themselves marvelled, so rare and so strange was her beauty.

Part Three (stanzas 14-26) forms the core of the poem, relating with evident feeling on the author's part the experiences of the phoenix in Scotia and her escape to a friendlier island. This section can itself be divided into three subsections. Stanzas 14-17 show how the phoenix gained ascendancy in Scotland and relate her powers of leadership:

So, all thir fowlis did follow her with beir*,

*pennis--plumes; craig--neck

beir--noise

For loue of her, fowlis rauening* did no deir*.

Such was the loue, and reuerence they her bure*,
Ilk day whill euen, ay whill they shedd* at night.

(st. 15-16, 104-07)

Her power, her talent could not go uncontested. Stanzas 18-23 relate how birds from neighbouring countries were stirred by envy and malice. James here may well be aiming not only at the Scottish nobility, who had shown dissatisfaction at Lennox's position in court and government, but also at the English; the latter, always nervous about the influence of France everywhere in Europe, were particularly sensitive to such influence in Scotland. Consequently, Elizabeth continually sent envoys to Scotland in order to intervene in such matters. These factions formed a common front in their attack:

For then they made her as a commoun prey
To them, of whome she looked for no deare*,
They strake* at her so bitterly, whill feare
Stayde other fowlis to preis* for to defend her.

(st. 23, 157-60)

Obliged to flee (stanzas 24-26), the phoenix instinctively sought refuge with the author:

From these their bitter straiks, she fled at last
To me (as if she wolde wishe me to iudge
The wrong they did her) yet they followed fast
Till she betuix my leggs her selfe did cast.

(st. 24, 163-66)

*rauening--rapacious; deir--harm; bure--bore;
shedd--separate

deare--injury; strake--struck; preis--strive

Even there as she sought protection, her enemies continued their attacks to such an extent that they caused the poet's legs to bleed. If proof of James's affection for Lennox is required, surely stanzas 24 and 25 may be cited. We feel with him (as a teen-aged ~~king~~) how deeply he regretted his inability to protect his friend and kinsman from the attacks of the latter's adversaries. Helpless, the phoenix finds herself obliged to flee from Scotia and to take refuge on the fabled island of Panchaia, lying in the Erythraean Sea to the east of her native Arabia. There she sought "to assuage / With outward fyre her inward raging fyre" (ll. 180-81).

The poet here introduces the Messenger whose report forms the first section of Part Four (stanzas 27-37). This part has two divisions: the Messenger's story (stanzas 27-32) and the author's painful reaction to that story (stanzas 33-37). From the Messenger he learns that the phoenix has made her nest on the altar of Phoebus Apollo and that, inflamed by the heat, she has determined to burn herself. Stanza 32 gives the details of the fire and, at the same time, initiates a description of the poet's grief:

And syne* he tolde, how she had such desyre
 To burne herselfe, as she sat downe therein.
 Syne how the Sunne the withered stra did fyre,
 Which brunt* her nest, her ~~fathers~~ bones and skin
 All turnd in ash. Whose end dois now begin
 My woes: her death makes lyfe to greif in me.
 She, whome I rew my eyes did euer see.

*syne--then; brunt--burned

His grief continues to grow in intensity through the following four stanzas. Stanza 37, however, offers him some grounds for consolation when the Messenger adds the news that an heir may exist, born in the very ashes of the fire:

Ane worme bred of her ashe: Though she, alace,
(Said he) be brunt, this lacks but plumes and breath
To be lyke her, new gendred by her death.

(st. 37, ll. 267-69)

The last three stanzas of the poem constitute Part Five. Entitled "L'envoy", they are addressed to Apollo, patron of the phoenix. The poet seeks the help of the god in a special way; he would have Apollo (the sun god) shine his warm beams on Scotia:

That in this countrey, which is colde and bair,
Thy glistring beames als ardent may appeir
As they were oft in Arabie: so heir
Let them be now, to make ane Phoenix new
Euen of this worme of Phoenix ashe which grew.

(st. 39, ll. 269-73)

Although the poem most closely resembles a mediaeval tragic poem, it also contains strong classical elements. Mention has already been made of the poet's introduction of the Messenger, whose role is as ancient as tragedy itself. In the last stanza, too, James shows that he appreciates the Aristotelian distinction between tragedy and comedy when he concludes his remarks by saying, "This if thow dois, as sure I hope thou shall, / My tragedie a comike end will haue" (ll. 274-75). Of the many classical mythological references, perhaps the stress

on the role of Apollo is the most important, although the remarks which James makes near the beginning of the poem concerning Dame Fortune and her wheel also reveal a debt to either mediaeval or ancient sources.

The same influence can be seen, too, in the epic similes that occur in the poem. James's education in the literature of Greece and Rome would have familiarized him with this device, so common in Homer and Virgil and recommended by rhetoricians ancient and mediaeval whom the author had read. The first of these two similes occurs in stanza 8:

Like as ane hors, when he is barded haile*,
 An fethered pannach* set vpon his heid,
 Will make him seame mor braue: Or to assaile
 The enemie, he that the troups dois leid,
 Ane pannache on his healme will set in deid:
 Euen so, had Nature, to decore her face
 Giuen her ane tap*, for to augment her grace.

(st. 8, 50-56)

This simile resembles many Virgilian images of the same type; beginning with one comparison, the poet breaks off abruptly, saying "Or like so and so. . .". James does exactly this in line 52 where he leaves off the comparison of the war horse and introduces the new image of the battle leader. The second epic simile appears in stanza 15 and makes use of a more common object in the comparison, the swarming of bees around the leader (which James indicates as the king bee rather than the queen). However, the image is well developed and catches just the right

*Barded haile--armoured completely; pannach--plumed crest; tap--top

feeling of movement and self-interest that the comparison demands, especially with the line, "Syne to be nixt him bissellie they striue" (l. 103).

More should be said, perhaps, about the many allusions to places, events, gods, and figures of antiquity, for this is a stylistic trait common to much of James's poetry. James cannot refrain from parading his learning. The reference to the rainbow goddess, Iris, in stanza 6 adds colour and interest to the description of the phoenix. In the next stanza, Nature is personified; and the poet introduces Egypt and the Nile as places which offer proof of Nature's bounty (a reference that occurs from time to time in ancient writings). Jove and his symbolic bird, the eagle, are found in stanza 9, with lesser gods appearing in other stanzas (Titans, stanzas 14 and 31; Phoebus Apollo, stanzas 12, 26, 30, 33, 38). In addition to Nature, the personification of Malice, Envy, Chaos, Death, and Time occurs. "Phoenix", then, in so many ways bears the stamp of James's classical reading that one can almost see George Buchanan at his shoulder.

Through the narrative structure of the poem, we have seen that James has considerable powers as a poet in this genre; but structure alone will not keep reader interest, something that a narrative poet must be able to do. What are the necessary ingredients for maintaining reader interest that we find in "Phoenix"? One could begin by noting the valid comparison that James sustains between the history of the phoenix and that of Lennox. Stress could be laid on his ability to construct a

story to which the reader can relate on a personal basis and whose main sections move quickly and smoothly within a planned compass. Mention has been made of classical devices which, for the learned reader of James's day, certainly created interest.

But as important as several of these must be--even taken together--the author's skill in setting a tone and sustaining this tone throughout the poem must count for a great deal. The poem is an elegy, and the poet sets the elegiac tone at the outset. "Phoenix" is not simply the retelling of a classical myth; it also incorporates a deep note of personal grief. James, therefore, opens the poem in the first person, then allows the story to become almost objective, but returns in the strong central section (Parts Three and Four) to a description of his own personal happiness, sorrow, and anguish in quick succession. After the Messenger makes his appearance (another centre of interest for the reader) and gives his complete report, the poem ends with a heartfelt plea by the poet, a plea that strikes a note of hope. Throughout the poem one can see that, at every step of the way, poet and reader are skillfully united in their reactions to the narrative.

James's other narrative poem, The Lepanto,⁴ forms the second part of His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres. Although the book was entered at Stationers Hall in the year 1591, the Register contains an entry referring to The Lepanto in August, 1589. The actual date of composition of the poem was several years earlier, the precise date being given

in a reference by James himself. Speaking of the poem, James states that it was "both begun and ended in the same Summer, wherein the league was published in France."⁵

The league to which James makes reference is the Catholic League, formed in 1584 to prevent Henry of Navarre from becoming king of France. In the following year, July, 1585, the League gained sufficient political power to oblige the reigning monarch, Henry III, to yield on all matters touching on religious toleration. Together they concluded the Treaty of Nemours, published in the same year. It is to this document that James refers. In fact the persecution of the Protestants in France began again in that year. In the same "Preface", the King states that he was moved to write The Lepanto "by the stirring up of the league and cruell persecution of the Protestants in all countries, at the very first raging whereof, I compiled this Poëme, as the exhortation to the persecuted in the hinmost eight lines thereof doth plainly testifie."⁶ Some of the pertinent lines read:

And also heere I end:
Exhorting all you Christians true
Your courage up to bend,
.....
Then though the Antichristian sect
Against you do conjure,
He doth the bodie better loue
Then shadow be ye sure!
Do ye resist with confidence,
That God shall be your stay.

(ll. 1018-20, 1025-30)

Confirming this date is an entry in the margin of Thomas Moray's Latin version of The Lepanto: "An Chr. 1585. Aetatis

Regiae 18."⁷ Moray's translation is interesting for another reason; it was composed in 1588, before the King's poem appeared in His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises of 1591. Moray had translated both the "Preface" and the poem itself, noting in the margin of the former, "Prid. Cal. Maias. 1588" (the beginning of May, 1588). His translation Naupactiados, sive Lepantiados, was published only in the year 1604; however, it assisted him in gaining the post of tutor (and later secretary) to Prince Charles.

That a volume containing two poems of such length and quality was written by a young man who had just turned nineteen years of age reveals something of James's talents. Of all his poetry, The Lepanto brought him most recognition. In addition to Moray's Latin translation, one of the most prolific poets of France, Du Bartas, paid him the compliment of translating the poem into French under the title La Lèpante de Iaques VI. Roy d'Escosse, a translation which originally was published as a third section of His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises. In his own day, therefore, we can see that The Lepanto brought James sincere recognition; indeed, the poem merits more praise than some later critics have accorded it. One nineteenth-century historian, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, can be numbered among those who find nothing good in the poem. In his work, Don John of Austria (1883), he states:

In the catalogue of poets who have sung of Lepanto is our own royal pedant King James VI of Scotland. A doggerel narrative in the ballad-measure, of above eleven hundred lines, entitled 'Lepanto', forms one

of 'His Majesties poetical exercises at vacant hours'; and if it be, as the preface declares it to be, the work of a lad of twelve or thirteen, it is not altogether destitute of spirit and promise.⁸

The inexactitude in his transcribing the title of the King's volume of poetry, combined with the flagrantly wrong age assigned to James, makes one question the value of Sir William's worth as a precise historian.

As in the case of "Phoenix", The Lepanto occurs in MS. Bodley 165. Again we are fortunate that Craigie has printed both versions, on facing pages, in his edition of James's poetry.⁹ A comparison of the two versions reveals not only the King's personal approach to spelling but also the changes (and improvements) that his royal hand brought to the printed version of this second volume of his poetry. Visually, a more striking difference is the change made not by James but by the sixteenth-century printer with regard to the metre of the poem. James had written The Lepanto in what is known as "fourteeners"; the printer, however, chose to break each line into two separate lines of eight and six syllables--what we know today as the "ballad stanza". The danger of the shorter line is that the marked iambic rhythm and the rhyme scheme make for a singsong effect which does not fit well with the high seriousness of the content.

In choosing the battle of Lepanto (1571) as a subject, James had set himself a problem not of aesthetics but of politics. The battle saw the defeat of the Turks at the hands of a Roman Catholic coalition organized by Pope Pius V and commanded

by Don Juan of Austria (the Don Joan of James's poem). King James, a recognized defender of the Protestant faith and a favourite target for conversion to Catholicism on the part of both France and Spain, set out to celebrate the heroic exploits of a Catholic. How would statesmen in England and on the Continent construe James's political position after his writing such a poem? James left nothing to chance and no one in doubt:

And for that I knowe, the special thing mislike in it, is, that I should seeme, far contrary to my degree and Religion, like a Mercenary Poët, to penne a worke, ex professo, in praise of a forraine Papist bastard. . . . / And in a word, what so euer praise I have giuen to DON-JOAN in this Poëme, it is neither in accepting him as first or second cause of that victorie, but onely as of a particular man, when hee falles in my way, to speake the truth of him. For as it becomes not the honour of my estate, like an hireling, to pen the praise of any man: So becomes it far lesse the highnes of my rancke and calling, to spare for the feare of fauor of whomsoever liuing, to speake or write the trueth of anie.¹⁰

Such a forthright statement of the poet's position makes it abundantly clear that James regards himself first and foremost as a royal defender of the Protestant religion.

If James does not show any religious bias in the story of the battle proper, what then of his treatment of historical facts? Whether for aesthetic or political reasons--although, more likely for the former--the poet focuses only on the centre of the battle and nowhere mentions the fierce struggle taking place on the two wings. Needless to say, Don Juan commands the centre, and his exploits guide the movement of the main part of the poem. Apart from this limiting of his point of view, James

proves himself a competent historian, using his sources with considerable skill and manipulating veracity only when artistic demands so require.¹¹ For the most part he follows the text of Pietro Bizari, Cyprium Bellum inter Venetos et Sely-mum Turcarum Imperatorem Gestum (1573), a work that had appeared also in a French version, having been translated by Belleforest as Histoire de la Sainte Ligue contre les Turcs pour L'Isle de Cypre ès années 1570, 1571, & 1572 (1573).

James may have consulted a third source, Giovanni Pietro Con-tarini's Historia della Guerra contra Turchi (1572); this Italian work also was translated, but into Latin, in 1573. One last source was available to the poet, Ferrante Carac-ciolo's I Commentarii della Guerra fatta contra i Turchi, al-though this work seems to have been used sparingly. In addi-tion to these exterior sources, we are fortunate to have in MS. Bodley 165 a two-page outline of the poem in the King's own hand. It may well be that James made use of this outline as an aide-mémoire while composing the poem.

Perhaps some explanation of the battle, its antecedents and consequences would be useful before proceeding to an ana-lysis of the poem itself. Selim II, who had ascended the throne of Turkey in 1567, took advantage of a disunited Christ-ian Europe to launch an attack on Cyprus. In itself this at-tack would not appear of great moment; but Cyprus represented the last possession of Christian Venice in the Mediterranean Sea. Symbolically, Selim would have extended Turkish dominion over the entire eastern portion of the Mediterranean (symbolic-

ally because the Greek islands would not form part of his conquest). Selim invaded Cyprus in 1570 and conquered all but the capital of the island. Venice, unable to repel the Turks, appealed to other Christian states for aid. Pius V, who cherished the idea of launching a holy crusade against the infidel Turks, deemed it the proper time to intervene. As a result of the Pope's efforts, Venice, Spain, and the Papal States succeeded in mounting a barely-respectable fleet, the leader of which was Don Juan of Austria (illegitimate half-brother to the King of Spain). These activities took the better part of a year to complete, and the battle itself was not fought until October 7, 1571. The scene of the encounter was the Gulf of Lepanto, located just within the larger Gulf of Corinth. After only four hours of actual combat, the Christian fleet routed the Turks, whose naval forces never again proved strong enough to threaten Venice and its allies. The hero of the battle was Don Juan, whose personal conduct certainly rendered possible the victory. Rightly, James makes Don Juan the focus of attention in his account of the battle.

In his preface to The Lepanto, the author describes the structure of the poem. In form he follows the examples of ancient classical poets, opening with a "Poetique Praeface" (ll. 1-12) and an "inuocation" (ll. 13-24). The divisions continue with "The poetique History of his comparison" (ll. 25-940), "the song of the Angels" (ll. 941-1016), and "the Epilogue" (ll. 1017-1032). The central part of the poem, the narrative proper, has as its basis a parallel between the war in heaven

(God and the rebellious angels) and the war in the Mediterranean (Christians and Turks), of which latter war the Battle of Lepanto receives most attention.

The echo of the Aeneid's opening lines immediately reveals James's model. Where Virgil begins "I sing of arms and the man . . .", James writes "I Sing a wondrous worke of God . . .". The "Poetique Praeface" suggests that the outcome of the Battle of Lepanto, fought "Betwixt the baptiz'd race, / And circumsised Turband Turkes" (ll. 10-11), offers proof of God's justice. As in the classical example that follows, James keeps the preface short and to the point. Once the subject is stated--and again the poet does so clearly and briefly--the poem moves to the next section as indicated in the outline. The preface, like the rest of the poem, demonstrates that James as a poet, unlike James the philosopher and theologian in prose, practises restraint and even economy in his narrative.

Following both the classical models and the precepts of writers of his own day,¹² James includes an invocation to God (ll. 13-24), asking Him "to make Thy holie Spreite my Muse / And eik my pen inflame" (ll. 21-22). The brevity of this section, if not the imagery, is praiseworthy. In connection with the imagery, it should be observed that, even making allowances for changes in usage over the centuries, James's choice of "inflame" would appear somewhat curious in this context.

The main part of the poem (ll. 25-940) opens with a dialogue between Christ, Satan, and God. By so introducing a favourite sixteenth-century genre (the dialogue), albeit in an

abbreviated form, the poet creates a favourable literary impression. Even more, his readers' interest would be stimulated by the heavenly confrontation. Some sixty years later, John Milton was to exploit a similar situation successfully in Paradise Lost. Using as a starting point the concept of the Trinity, to which he had referred in his invocation, James moves smoothly into the imagined dispute before the heavenly throne. Christ accuses Satan of stirring up Turks against Christians; He asks God how long such a situation will be allowed to continue, how long He will permit the persecution of Christians "by faithless folkes, who executes / What in this snake is bred" (ll. 59-60). Satan interposes his own words before God can answer. In eight short lines (ll. 61-68), he mocks Christ's power, suggesting that the Son of God has not much influence even over His own flock. The latter seem very ready to backslide as they seek "who farthest backe can fall" (l. 64). God, who for James is the Old Testament Jehovah, settles the matter; He speaks "from thundering throte, / Graue wordes of waight to bring" (ll. 77-78). His words are brief (ll. 78-92); but He makes it clear that He will come to the aid of the oppressed Christians. To this end He sends the Archangel Gabriel to Venice, where the angel is to

put into their minds
To take reuenge of wrongs the Turks
Haue done in sundrie kinds.

(ll. 90-92)

There follows (ll. 97-112) a short but striking description

of Venice, where the visitor sees

a wondrous sight,.
A Towne to stande without a ground,
~~Her~~ ground is made by slight.

(11. 102-04)

As the poet suggests, it is an "artificial Towne". There Gabriel in human form stirs up the Venetians to make war on the Turks. Even the Duke of Venice and his Senate eventually were moved to act because

The Turke had conquest Cyprus Ile,
And all their lands that lay
Without the bounds of Italie.

(11. 145-47)

James well describes the Venetians' grief at their loss. Prayers and lamentation rose from the people:

Was nothing heard but sobs and sighs,
Was nothing seene but teares,
Yea sorrow draue the brauest men
With mourning to their beares*.
The women swound for sorrow oft,
The babe for woe did weepe,
To see the mother giuing milke
Such dolefull gesture keepe.
Young men and maids within the towne
Were ay* arraid in blacke.

(11. 157-66)

The poet's description of their distress continues, augmenting both in detail and in imagery until at last even the poet exclaims, "O stay my Muse, thou goes too farre, / Shewe where we

*beares--biers; ay--always

left before" (ll. 181-82). Again we note that the transition is made quite smoothly. Although the poet intervenes, the reader of James's day would not consider the intervention awkward; rather, it would add a personal note to the narrative, especially when the King with poetical exaggeration states that the Venetians' tears would dilute the ink on his pen (ll. 183-84).

If he exaggerates in the preceding passage, James returns to historical truth in the next section (ll. 190-216). As a result of the Venetian entreaties, a combined fleet from several nations assembled at Messina, Sicily. There one of the naval commanders, Ascagnio de la Corne, addresses his fellow leaders assembled in council (ll. 217-56). As Craigie demonstrates,¹³ the poet here follows his source material very closely. In examining this speech, we immediately note two devices used by James to create interest: his wise decision to break up extended narrative description by inserting direct speech and his ability to choose the essential facts from the long speech of Ascagnio de la Corne. One notes, for example, the excellent poetic effect achieved by de la Corne's persuasive tongue. James has made use of the rules of rhetoric, as applied to oratory, to transform cold logic into the art of persuasion. Whether through instinct or training, James has so carefully constructed the speech that the reader's interest never flags.

In the case of Ascagnio de la Corne's speech, James isolates the underlying structure of the address: first, reasons against and then reasons for the battle. Within this broad framework, the speaker debates the pros and cons of each point that he makes.

The commander's peroration is worth noting. After summing up his discussion by saying, "With trust in God assay your chance / Good ~~cause~~ availeth much" (ll. 243-44), de la Corne counsels his colleagues to take a decision immediately as to the disposition of the battle order of the fleet. Everyone from commanders to lowest ranks would then derive courage from the knowledge that a sound plan of battle existed. The effect of his words are conveyed succinctly to the reader in only four lines:

Their preparations being made,
They all upon a day,
Their biting ankers, gladly wayed,
And made them for the way.

(ll. 261-64)

Movement, imagery, and theme work together to produce just the right expression of poetic intent in these lines. Nor are they isolated examples, as we shall see.

The next long passage (ll. 265-328) describes the composition of the Christian fleet. Here James goes to Caracciolo's Commentarii for his material;¹⁴ and again he follows his source quite closely. In his interpretation of this material, the poet is able to impress on the reader the majestic sight of the fleet, the rhythm of the oarsmen's beat, and the lively movement of the sailors--all this in the brief compass of four lines:

THIS cloude of Gallies thus began
On NEPTUNS back to rowe,
And in the Shippes the marriners
Did skippe from towe to towe*.

(ll. 293-96)

*towe--rope

The attentive reader senses the measured beat of the first two lines and the change to a lighter, faster movement in the remaining two. James here demonstrates a grasp of the essentials of poetic diction in imagery, rhythm, and sound. The conceit, Neptune's back (to indicate the sea), too, show his imaginative gift--a gift denied him by those critics who consider him a pedant. Even though similar sea images exist in classical literature,¹⁵ James alone extends this figure by using Neptune to personify the sea in this particular context. His contemporaries would find the image both entertaining and instructive. Prodesse et delectare was a lesson that the young poet had learned well from his tutors.

As in all coalitions, discord bred of jealousy caused dissension in the Christian fleet. Because of Don Juan's diplomacy, nevertheless, the differences between the commanders were settled without prejudice to the plan of battle. Following the image used so well in the Aeneid to describe fama, James depicts rumour as flying to the Turkish admiral. News of the Christian quarrels (but not of their amicable settlement) reached his ears, as a result of which he underestimated the numerical strength of the coalition. As James describes the situation, rumour "did into the great Turks mind / A great disdainful breed" (ll. 335-36). The poet then interjects his personal observation that the most dangerous thing a commander can do is to hold his enemy in contempt (ll. 337-40). This remark not only provokes the reader's interest but also provides a bridge passage between the description of the Christian fleet and that of the Turks. The

latter are skillfully parodied in a long epic simile (ll. 345-56) where they are compared to ripe ears of grain that are lulled and that droop in the hot summer sun. Contrasted with their condition is that of the Christians. They, for their part, have set sail from Messina in September, the month "when that leaues, with ratling falles / In banks of witherd boughes" (ll. 365-66). That the September so described is such as occurs in Scotland rather than in the Mediterranean region is of no great importance.

At this point, just as the two fleets are about to join battle at Lepanto, James breaks off the story and moves to an account of how these earthly events are received in heaven at the throne of God (ll. 381-424). Weighing carefully the merits of Christians and of Turks, God recognizes at once "The Christian faults with faithlesse Turks, / The ballance stood not eauen" (ll. 407-08). Although the outcome is thus decided in advance, the poet must still narrate the events of the battle.

James introduces his version of the Christians' preparations for battle by another epic simile. Their activities are compared to those seen and heard in a town as it awakens in the morning (ll. 429-40). The contrast is striking:

Euen so, how soone this Warriour world
With earnest eies did see
Your signe of Warre, they all prepard
To winne or else to die.

(ll. 441-44)

Don Juan, who up until this point has had scant direct notice from the poet, now emerges as the hero. First his tactical plan

of battle is outlined: a tripartite disposition of the fleet, with Colonna commanding the right, Venier the left, and Don Juan himself controlling the centre. This brief mention of the other leaders (ll. 475-80) represents all the notice that they will receive. James had promised in the preface that Don Juan would be the centre of attention; and the poet keeps to his intention.

Like any good commander, Don Juan makes a tour of his forces. His purpose in so doing is twofold, to check on the preparations and to raise the morale of his men. That he is successful can be seen from the following lines:

The SPANIOL Prince exhorting thus
 With glad and smiling cheare,
 With sugred wordes, and gesture good,
 So pleas'd both eie and eare
 That euerie man cryed victorie:
 This word abroad they blew,
 A good presage that victorie
 Thereafter should ensew.

(ll. 497-504)

With such touches, a portrait of Don Juan as man and as leader begins to appear.

James's handling of the speeches delivered by the opposing Christian and Turkish leaders raises interesting speculation. Why, for example, does the poet limit his account of Don Juan's speech to less than fifteen lines (ll. 483-96), when he allocates to Ali Pasha's oration more than twice that number? His source, Belleforest, gives approximately equal space to each leader.¹⁶ One concludes that the answer does not lie in the availability of data but perhaps in the poet's sense of the

dramatic: Build up the prowess of the opponent and the consequent glory to the victor will be that much greater. In addition to mere length, another aspect of these speeches requires comment. Belleforest writes both accounts in reported speech. James does likewise for Don Juan's discourse; but in the case of Ali Pasha he begins with indirect speech (ll. 521-28), only to change abruptly in midsentence to the direct words of the speaker (ll. 529-53). By far the greater part of the Turkish admiral's speech is written in the livelier mode. The reader can again conclude that the poet's instinct led him to create interest by means of this literary technique. If critics wish to fault James's poetic ability in this passage, the only grounds could lie in his awkward transition from reported speech to direct discourse (ll. 528-29). Certainly the Turk's speech in every other respect--factually, psychologically, aesthetically--deserves praise. His appeal to the past glories of Turkish conquest, for example, must have raised the emotional fervour of his men:

And would yee then giue such a lie
Vnto your glories past,
As let your selues be ouerthrowne
By loosers at the last?

(ll. 529-32)

As the poet reports, the speech so moved them that "clincks of Swordes, and rattle of Pikes, / His speeches did approoue" (ll. 555-56).

Without further preparatory details, James moves to a description of the battle. Two natural factors favoured the

Christians from the outset. They had the sun at their backs, whereas the Turks were dazzled by the sun and its myriad reflections in sea and armament; and the wind, which earlier had helped the Turkish cause, miraculously (l. 567) became a head wind, resulting in difficulties for the infidel fleet. As a matter of course the Christians took these two phenomena to be tokens of God's support for their cause. The epic tone intensifies in this section, with the poet adducing classical references for poetic effect; in turn he introduces Titan, Bellona, Mars, and Thetis. Metaphor, too, adds to the effect:

HOVV soone a Cannons smokie throat
 The Seas did dindle* all,
 And on BELLONA bolde and wise,
 And bloodie MARS did call,
 And that the sounding clear of brasse
 Did als* approoue the same,
 And kindled courage into men
 To winne immortall fame.

(ll. 573-80)

A lengthy ⁷intervention on the part of the poet follows. Its purpose may well be to suggest that the battle calls for a pen-mightier than that of James, so terrible was the struggle; and probably contemporary readers would recognize this purpose (ll. 581-604). For modern readers, the passage adds very little if anything to the poem as a whole. Such a device, nevertheless, constitutes part of the literary heritage that James received and practised--to the delight of sixteenth-century readers. Moreover, as a bridge passage, these line prepared readers for

a *dindle--tremble; als--also

the horrors of the battle.

* The battle proper begins with a prolonged cannonade (ll. 613-84). Although James for the most part avoids technical terms, he does show a knowledge of military vocabulary, especially in the introductory lines: "Bullets, Raisers, Chaines, and nailes / That from their peeces flew" (ll. 611-12).¹⁷ The rest of his description of the artillery barrage evokes the noise and carnage of battle: "Like thunder rearding* rumling* raue / With roares the heighest Heauen" (ll. 621-22) and

The piteous plaints, the hideous howles,
The greeuous cries and mones,
Of millions wounded sundrie waies,
But dying all at ones*.

James here pulls out all the poetic stops at his command: similes, alliteration, hyperbole, and mythological references. Nor does he forget the military aspect; for he indicates that the Christian barrage, far from intimidating the Turks, merely incites them "With boldest speed their greeuous harmes / With like for to repay" (639-40). As in dramatic poetry, the intent is plain: Whoever wins the Battle of Lepanto will indeed have gained an unforgettable military victory; glory and honour will be theirs forever.

If this section of the poem consisted merely of description such as mentioned above, it could be dismissed as another purple passage in Renaissance literature. But James shows himself to

*rearding--running wild; rumling--low steady rumble
ones--once

be conscious of the human predicament, of the personal element in battle. Short three and four-line vignettes raise the level of his account, redeeming the description from the category of merely lavish descriptive effects. Bullets and shell fragments thud into a cluster of soldiers where a father and son stand side by side: "The lead that dings the Father in drosse* / And fills the Sonne with feare" (ll. 663-64). Again, a captain is gesturing and shouting orders to his troops when a bullet "staies his pointing hand" (l. 668). And, finally, the lesson that every soldier knows from experience is underlined in verses 675-84: Discipline allows one to respond to duty instinctively, even in the midst of death, suffering, and destruction.

The cannonade terminated, the two fleets lock in hand-to-hand combat (ll. 685-740). The poet isolates individual skirmishes in order to convey the personal nature of this kind of fighting. The Knights, for example,

with Coutlasse sharpe
Of fighting foe doth part
The bloodie head from bodie pale.

(ll. 697-99)

The archers, the pikemen, and even the oarsmen contribute their share of slaughter (ll. 709-12). Nor do the Turks alone die; Christians, too, are killed in revenge:

Whill time a Christian Cannon killes
A Turke with threatning sound,

*dings the Father in drosse--fells the father

A Hagbut hittes the Cannoner,
 Who dead, falles to the ground;
 The beggers boltes by forceates casten,
 On all hands made to flie,
 Iaw-bones and braines of kild and hurt,
 Who wisht (for paine) to die.¹⁸

(ll. 721-28)

So reddened with blood was the sea that the fish were poisoned (ll. 737-38). The wealth of detail in this passage not only creates realism but also makes James's reporting quite believable to the reader's imagination.

The intensity of such descriptive passages cannot be maintained unduly or the words will begin to lose their impact. James is sufficiently a creative artist that he understands this negative effect; he therefore inserts a section in which he implies that, so fierce was the fighting on both sides, victory teetered in the balance for a considerable time (ll. 741-60). The terrible slaughter obliges the poet once again to interject his own reaction to the horror: "My pen for pitie cannot write, / My hair for horreur stands" (ll. 761-62).

The Christians, however, favoured by God, were gaining the upper hand (ll. 769-70). To ensure a Christian victory, no less a person than Don Juan leads an attack on Ali Pasha's galley:

For euen the Spanish Prince himselfe
 Did hazard at the last,
 Accompanied with boldest men,
 Who followd on him fast,
 By force to winne the Turkish decke.

(ll. 797-801)

But the Turks do not yield to him; rather, they force the Christians to withdraw from the ship and to count themselves fortunate

that they have escaped (l. 809). Like a true leader of men in battle, Don Juan resolves to redeem himself in a second attack; for he "Did rather chuse to leese* his life / Then tine* his spreading fame" (ll. 815-16). Ali Pasha must yield on this occasion and he flees to a fort on shore. There he is killed and beheaded by a Macedonian soldier (in the sources called a Spaniard). The sight of their leader's head affixed to the top of Don Juan's mast is sufficient to dishearten the Turkish fleet. Nearly all are either taken prisoner or slain by Christians (ll. 843-44). Moreover, twelve thousand Christian prisoners already held by the Turks are released from imprisonment, a figure that James obtained from his other principal source, Caracciolo.¹⁹

The poet brings his account to a quick conclusion. A reference is made to Don Juan's untimely death seven years later (1578) at the age of thirty-three (ll. 857-60); a brief description of Venice shows the reader how the citizens rejoice after the victory (ll. 873-80), when "Matrons graue, and Maids modest, / The Market place bespred" (ll. 875-76) for dancing and singing. It is this reference to singing that permits the poet to move into the next section of the poem, the Chorus Venetus (ll. 881-916).

This song of praise sung by the Venetian chorus finds its model in Psalm 150.²⁰ The psalm itself is a hymn of praise to the Almighty: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary:

*leese--lose; tine--lose

praise him in the firmament of his power. . . . Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs".²¹ James also writes a song of rejoicing and of thanksgiving: "Sing praises to our mightie God, / Praise our deliverars name" (ll. 885-86). Just as the Psalmist in so many of his religious songs extols God for causing the enemies of Israel to fall into traps and pits, so James does likewise, merely paraphrasing various psalms. Indeed Psalm 9 might well be an alternative source for much of the Chorus Venetus; this psalm begins with a paeon of praise addressed to God because He had delivered the Israelites from their enemies; and it, too, contains references to nets and pits into which the enemy have been cast. In keeping with the spirit of the Psalmist, James assigns the entire victory to God's intervention on behalf of the Christians, "For he it was reuenged our cause, / And not our armie braue" (ll. 907-08). Coming so shortly after two hundred and fifty lines of praise for the arduous efforts of the Christian fleet, this statement may seem paradoxical. But James himself was and always remained a firm adherent of the powers of divinity, whether of God or of kings.

The song of the Venetians has had its effect on the poet, as lines 917-40 indicate. Exhausted by the sustained effort required to write the story of Lepanto in verse, lulled by the music of the song, he slips into deep rest:

And through my weak and wearie hand,
Doth slide my pen of lead,

And sleep doth els* possesse mee all,
The similtude of dead.

(ll. 925-28)

There he sleeps, dreaming angelic songs "Of all the fethered bands / Of holie Angels in the heauen". (ll. 938-39).

The "holie Angels" of line 939 provide the transitional expression necessary for the last section of the poem, the Chorus Angelorum (ll. 941-1032). Much of the imagery in the chorus finds its inspiration in the Book of Revelation.²²

Like that book, the chorus has for its purpose to give courage to those who practise true Christianity. For James, the enemy of true Christianity is the Church of Rome. Like other writers of the day (Spenser, for one), James uses the imagery of Revelation to designate symbolically the Roman Church.²³ His argument, however, is more complex than the Biblical source. Let us, says the poet, praise God who in His infinite grace showed mercy to the Venetians (i.e., Roman Catholics) by saving them from the Turks. But now, he continues, these same Roman Catholics are persecuting the Protestants of France. What are we to think? Here, at some length, are the King's words:

And since that so he pities them
That beare vpon their brow,
The mark of Antichrist the whoore
That great abuser now,
Who does the truest Christians
With fire and sworde inuade
And make them holie Martyrs that
Their trust in God haue laid

*els--also

How will he them that thus are vsed,
 And beares vpon their face
 His speciall marke, a certaine signe
 Of euerlasting grace?

(ll. 993-1004)

This theme (i.e., how much more God will show mercy to the persecuted French Protestants) is picked up again in the last lines of the poem, lines that form a separate section (ll. 1017-32). James here reverts to the first person, saying, "THVS ended was the Angels song, / And also heere I end" (ll. 1017-18). To complete the circle of his poem, he restates his original purpose, which is to offer comfort and strength to the French Huguenots who are persecuted by the League. To this end James again states categorically that Lepanto proved God's love for those who believe in Him. If God could thus help the Roman Catholics, how much more will He love those whose belief reveals substance rather than shadow (ll. 1027-28).

To modern readers The Lepanto may be thought to lack proportion. After all, it is a poem of 1032 verses of which only 250 deal with the battle itself. Why, also, does the poet employ two choruses at the end, rather than integrate the Venetian Chorus into the body of the narrative? James's contemporaries did not object to The Lepanto on either ground. Sixteenth-century poetic taste found no fault with digressive material and choruses. If some found weaknesses in the poem, they did so for reasons that we, too, would share. The chief criticism then as now was levelled at the inequality of James's verse as a whole. He lacks that necessary gift of truly great poets, self-criticism.

Yet the poem functions well as a minor epic, and as such his

contemporaries viewed it. He met many of the criteria set for the genre: praising a hero (Don Juan); dealing with the twin subjects of glory and sacrifice; making obeisance to both classical mythology and Christianity; employing just the right degree of inflated diction in word and imagery to remove his subject from the level of day-to-day language. In short, the poem was accepted for what the poet had intended that it should be, a poem on an original subject written in imitation of earlier models. As such The Lepanto, alone among all James's poetry, gained for him international recognition from both readers and fellow poets alike. Translated, as we have seen, into Latin by Thomas Moray and into French by Du Bartas, the poem confirms the remark made by the indefatigable commentator of the Elizabethan scene, Francis Meres: "and as James 6, nowe king of Scotland is not only a fauorer of Poets, but a Poet, as my friend master Richard Barnfield hath in this Disticke passing well recorded:

The King of Scots now liuing is a Poet,
As his Lepanto, and his furies show it.²⁴

Notes

- ¹ The Poems, I, 42-59.
- ² The Poems, I, 42.
- ³ The Poems, I, 42. James here follows closely Pliny's description of the phoenix which the Latin author gave in his Natural History, Book Ten, Chapter Two. James has printed this description, in Latin, as the last item in The Essayes of a Prentise; The Poems, I, 95-96.
- ⁴ The Poems, I, 198-257.
- ⁵ The Poems, I, 198, "The Avthors Preface to the Reader".
- ⁶ The Poems, I, 198.
- ⁷ The Poems, I, xlviil.
- ⁸ Cited by Craigie in The Poems, I, lxx.
- ⁹ The Poems, I, 198-257. This edition prints for the first time the manuscript version of James's poetry as found in MS. Bodley 165.
- ¹⁰ The Poems, I, 198 and 200.
- ¹¹ The Poems, I, lix-lx. Craigie here does an excellent job of detailing James's use of source material; see also his "Notes", pp. 327-334.
- ¹² Pierre Ronsard, Abbrégé de l'art poétique françois (1565) in his Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 996. Ronsard advises the inclusion of such an invocation: "Si tu entreprends quelque grand oeuvre, tu te montreras religieux et craignant Dieu, le commençant ou par son nom, ou par un autre qui représentera quelque effect de sa majesté. . . ."
- ¹³ The Poems, I, 328-29. Craigie prints the entire speech as it appears in Belleforest.
- ¹⁴ The Poems, I, 330, note to ll. 269-80.
- ¹⁵ The image of "the back of the sea" is widely used by Greek authors (e.g., Iliad 2:159; Odyssey 3: 142; Euripides, Helen, 129 and 774). The "cloud of galleys" metaphor is original, although possibly James's reading of the Bible would have awakened the memory of the "cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews 12: 1.

16 The Poems, I, 331-32.

17 These terms refer to various types of shot: bar shot for sweeping effect and shrapnel-like shot for wounding and killing.

18 The "hagbut" was another form of arquebus, a type of hand gun mounted on and fired from a rest. James uses in these line his spelling of the French forçats, the galley convicts used as oarsmen. They, not having proper weapons, improvised their own projectiles, which James calls "beggars boltes".

19 The Poems, I, 333, note to ll. 855-56.

20 The Poems, I, 334, note to ll. 881-916.

21 The Holy Bible (New York: Thomas Nelson, n.d.), p. 585.

22 The Poems, I, 334, note to ll. 943-54. This note suggests Revelation 4:4 and 4:10-11, with the references to the four and twenty elders around the throne of God.

23 Revelation 13:16-17 describes the false god that puts a sign or mark on the forehead of those who accept him. As the quotation (ll. 993-1004) shows, James interprets this passage in Revelations as referring to Rome.

24 Francis Meres, Palladis Tamia (London: P. Short, 1598), p. 284.

CHAPTER IV

The Poetry Translations

Like his own poetry, James's translations reveal the strengths and the weaknesses of the King as a maker of verse. In his translations from the French poet, Du Bartas, he demonstrates once again that, when both the subject and his own critical faculties work together harmoniously, good poetry results. Even in his paraphrase of lines from the Latin author, Lucan, James shows his poetic talents. Paradoxically it is when the young King attempts to translate some of the psalms from the Bible that he, theologian and poet, overreaches himself on occasion, failing to render the Latin verses into English that is at one and the same time good poetry and good translation.

Much of his schooling, as we know, concentrated on the art of translation. Certainly James understood the problems involved in transposing poetry from one language to another. In the "Preface" to his translation of Du Bartas' L'Uranie, he goes to the heart of the problem that has always faced translators; for he states that "translations are limitat*, and restrained in some things, more then free inuentions* are. . . ."1

*limitat--restricted; free inuentions--creative,
original works

Although the art implies interpretation of the original material, a translator must be judged by his ability to elicit both the tone and the thought expressed there. One does not expect absolute fidelity because some expressions and certainly many rhythms remain untranslatable. The business of the translator, then, must be to seize the surface meaning and, if possible, communicate something of the original author's style.

The latter, nevertheless, may have to be sacrificed if the translator is to give to his own work the impression of a native work of art, employing its idioms and avoiding infelicities in diction, grammar, and composition that crude literalness might impose. Again James understood this essential quality of the art, for we remember his instructions to the learned divines who were to produce the King James's Translation of the Bible. He insisted that the translation be "as little altered as the truth of the original will permit."² Margolis, who cites these words of the King, sums up the translator's dilemma in a striking image:

Translators have been likened to the reverse side of Dutch tapestries: the threads are the same, but so twisted as to produce almost a caricature. The translator finds himself face to face with a dilemma, how to combine fidelity to the original with due regard for the genius of his own language.³

On the basis of such criteria we must evaluate the work of King James as a translator: Du Bartas' L'Uranie and, from La Sepmaine, The Furies; a short selection from Lucan's The Civil War; and, finally, parts of the Book of Psalms, which he based on Tremellius' Latin translation of the Bible.

It must be admitted that James did not make his task any easier in the choice of the French poet whom he chose to render into English. Guillaume de Salluste Sieur Du Bartas (1544-1590) was perhaps the most learned poet in France, a man who had studied science, ancient and modern languages, philosophy, theology, and law (he obtained his doctorate in laws from Toulouse in 1567). A Renaissance man, he possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge of the thought and information available in the sixteenth century. Much of his erudition crowds the pages of his principal work, La Création du Monde ou Première Sepmaine, published in Paris in 1578 and often referred to simply as La Sepmaine. A prolix work, it is divided into seven cantos, one for each day. James, however, wisely began his translation of Du Bartas with an earlier work, L'Uranie, a poem of some 336 lines, which appeared in a collection entitled La Muse chrestienne (Bordeaux, 1574).

But even that comparatively short poem manifests the traits for which Du Bartas was to become either admired or detested as a poet. First, he possessed a thorough knowledge of the French language (both vocabulary and grammar), which for him was a second language--he had grown up speaking the Gascon dialect. Much of eastern France, of which Gascony was part, had abandoned Catholicism in favour of the Huguenot faith. And here we touch on the second reason for many contemporary readers' dislike of his works: Du Bartas, a true son of Gascony, embraced Huguenot beliefs; and the sincerity of his faith, combined with his per-

sonal piety, marks his writings. Third, he was also a patriot. A love of his country communicates itself in his many successful nature descriptions, a characteristic that gained him favourable attention among his readers. Nevertheless his immediate allegiance was to Henry of Navarre, the Protestant who became Henry IV of France; for Henry and his cause, Du Bartas fought many military campaigns and, in his own day, achieved considerable reputation as a valiant soldier.

Chiefly however it is the rivalry between Du Bartas and Ronsard (one the poet of the provinces and the other the poet of Paris) that literary historians remember. Although Du Bartas makes but little mention of it, Ronsard appears to have taken their rivalry to heart. One nineteenth-century French critic goes so far as to declare that "the three greatest literary events of the sixteenth century were La Sepmaine, La Franciade, Les Discours [the last two being by Ronsard]."⁴ The bulk of critical remarks concerning Du Bartas are not in that vein; indeed they are adverse. In his own day the critics who admired the excellent poetry of members of the Pléiade could find little good to say about a poet who refused to adopt pagan and Catholic themes, who embellished his poems with masses of gratuitous information, and whose excesses both in style (neologisms, compound words, prolixity) and in subject matter lacked the moderation that they themselves prized so highly. Perhaps the most serious fault that such critics found with Du Bartas, a fault inherent in both his form and his style, was the constant didacticism, a trait that conflicted with what was

essentially heroic and panegyric poetry. Of all the critics who have admired or condemned Du Bartas' poetry, nevertheless, only Benedetto Croce has noted the importance of the panegyric content; in La Critica Croce maintains that Du Bartas should be studied as an orator and not as an epic poet.⁵

Strange as it may seem at first glance, Du Bartas' content and style appealed to many readers outside France. James VI of Scotland, for example, has nothing but praise for the Huguenot poet, a copy of whose La Sepmaine he had received in 1579⁶:

Hauing oft reuolued, and red ouer (fauorable Reader) the booke and Poems of the deuine and Illuster Poëte, Salust du Bartas, I was moued by the oft reading & perusing of them, with a restles and lofty desire, to preas to attaine to the like vertue. . . . But knowing my self to vnskilfull and grosse, to translate any of his heauenly & learned works, I almost left it of, and was ashamed of that opinion also.

When one notes the number of translations made of Du Bartas' poetry, it is seen that his style seems to lend itself to translation into Germanic languages. Literally dozens of partial or whole translations of his works appeared during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in English, Dutch, and Swedish (not to mention Polish and Latin). One must remember of course that many of these countries had strong Protestant elements so that Du Bartas' works, although not particularly slanted to the Huguenot cause, appealed on religious grounds.

In England and Scotland five contemporaries of King James laboured to translate the French poet. Sir Philip Sidney's Saluste: La Première Semaine has never been discovered, although

it is mentioned by his literary acquaintances.⁸ No record of its having been printed has been discovered. In 1604 Thomas Winter's translation of The Third Day's Creation appeared. William L'Isle (also known as William de Lisle) not only produced some translations of Du Bartas in 1595 but also defended the French poet's reputation. Ashton in his study of translations of Du Bartas' poetry cites a contemporary of King James as stating, "Le roi Jacques VI . . . a corrigé de sa propre main le manuscrit [de Lisle]."⁹ We know also that James asked Thomas Hudson to translate Du Bartas' La Judit, a long epic in six books, written between 1567 and 1572, which appeared as part of La Muse chrestienne (1574). Hudson's translation, as we have already noted, was printed in 1584 with a prefatory sonnet by James. The best and by far the most important English translator was Joshua Sylvester (1563-1618) whose own piety and autodidacticism, along with a sensitive ear, combined to produce the only complete English version of La Création du Monde ou la Première Sepmaine under the English title Devine Weekes and Workes (1605), a translation that he corrected three times before his death.

More than any other translator, Sylvester recreated Du Bartas's verbal wit, acclimatized his French for English readers, and promoted his extraordinary popularity in England. He was effusively hailed by Harvey as the Christian Homer, saluted by Lodge as a "living and speaking Library of all Learning," praised by William Lisle for his compressed yet cosmic inclusiveness, appreciated by Robert Allot in Englands Parnassus for his numerical patterns, vivid descriptions, apt comparisons, and emblematic images.¹⁰

For his part, King James advised his readers in The Essayes

of a Prentise that "I resolved vnaduysedly to assay the translating in my language of the easiest and shortest of all his difficile, and prolixed Poems: to wit the Vranie or heauenly Muse. . . ." ¹¹ The translation, therefore, was written by a very young man (scarcely eighteen years old), but a man whose command of French was sufficient for him to undertake the task of translating the most difficult of sixteenth-century poets, a poet whom Douglas Bush has caricatured as "a kind of Albert / Memorial of encyclopaedic fundamentalism." ¹² Even James realized his own temerity, as we see not only in the preface already cited but also in Thomas Hudson's "Epistle Dedicatorie" to his own translation of Judith, where he reports James's opinion that the "French Salust . . . could not be followed, nor sufficiently expressed in our rude and unpolished english language." ¹³

As for James's version of Du Bartas' L'Uranie, it follows the only edition available to him, that of 1574. The poem as it was printed finally in the seventeenth century omits the first sixty-nine lines; but as it appeared in the edition used by the King, the poem was complete. It can be divided into three parts. Lines 1-52 express the poet's dissatisfaction with the themes chosen by contemporary poets; he himself remains undecided until Urania, Muse of the heavens and of astronomy, appears before him. Lines 53-328 contain the speech of Urania to the poet, a speech in which she reveals her displeasure at the course taken by poets; she also spends considerable time discussing the role of the poet and the qualities of good poetry.

Here Du Bartas is able to criticize the thematic material of members of the Pléiade, as when he has Urania exclaim:

Ne vueillez employer vostre rare artifice
A chanter la Cyprine, & son fils emplumé;
Car il vaut beaucoup mieux n'estre point renommé,
Que se voir renommé pour raison de son vice.

(ll. 229-32)

Let not your art so rare then be defylde,
In singing Venus, and her fethred chylde:
For better it is without renownme to be,
Then be renownme for vyle iniquitie.¹⁴

She would prefer that they choose other themes and subjects:

Consacrez moy plutost ceste rare eloquence
A chanter hautement les miracles compris
Dans le sacré fueillet: & de vos beaux esprits
Versez là, mes amis, toute la quinte-essence.
Que Christ, comme Homme-Dieu, soit la croupe iumelle
Sur qui vous sommeillez.

(ll. 237-42)

Then consecrat that eloquence most rair,
To sing the lofty miracles and fair
Of holy Scripture: and of your good ingyne*,
Pour out, my frends, there your fift-essence fyne*.
Let Christ both God and man your Twinrock be.

The final lines of The Vranie (ll. 329-36) bring the poem quickly to a close, with the poet declaring that he will be a follower of the Muse; he will attempt, though not necessarily with success, to win the crown of laurel.

In form The Vranie is cast as a long epic speech, supporting Croce's contention that Du Bartas should be studied as an orator. James does not retain the mechanical separation of the

*ingyne--native ability or talent; fift-essence fyne--pure quintessence

poem into indented quatrains; he does, nevertheless, translate him "lyne by lyne,"¹⁵ so that the closed, four-line syntactical pattern emerges. With regard to individual lines, James substitutes the English iambic pentameter for the French twelve-syllable alexandrine verse, an achievement in which he takes some pride according to his prefatory remarks. His use, too, of a closed couplet is notable; it anticipates the widespread use that this form will have in the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth century. The effect, in English, seems to reflect a tightening up of the rhythm and a succinctness in meaning, both of which can be illustrated in the following lines:

Je suis [dit elle alors] ceste docte VRANIE,
 Qui sur les gonds astrez transporte les humains,
 Faisant voir à leurs yeux, & toucher à leurs mains,
 Ce que la Cour celeste & contemple & manie.

(ll. 53-56)

I am said she, that learned VRANIE,
 That to the Starres transports humanitie,
 And maks men see and twiche* with hand and ene*
 It that the heauenly court contemplating bene*.

In the prefatory remarks the King also states that his is not a "iust translation".¹⁶ As the verses just quoted demonstrate, however, he does follow the original text so closely that at times he falls into the trap of rendering lines almost literally, leading to infelicitous and awkward constructions.

Du Bartas' reputation among his contemporaries suffered

*twiche--touch; ene--eyes; bene--are

because of his abuse of certain stylistic traits. One of these weaknesses, especially in his later works, is the creation of compound nouns. Used successfully by Homer, Aeschylus, and Virgil, this characteristic was considered one of the marks of the good epic poet, a title to which Du Bartas aspired. In The Vranie, very few compound nouns appear; but it is of interest to observe how skilfully James has handled them. He can make a literal translation: "sa bouche à neuf-voix"--"her nynevoked mouth" (l. 35) and "ce monstre blece-honneur"--"this monster honnors-hurt" (l. 317); more often, however, he prefers to avoid the compound word in English: "Fille . . . du grand Dieu lance-foudre"--"the Thundrers daughter" (l. 32), "le ciel porte-feux"--"the fyrie heauen" (l. 120), "les peu-constantes moeurs"--"the fickle manners" (l. 147).

Another criticism levelled often at the French poet was that he employed Gascon terms and created neologisms in his efforts to pack too much information into his poetry. Leaving aside words taken from the Gascon dialect (which offer additional proof of James's detailed knowledge of the French language in its many varieties), we can see that the translator is able to cope with the problem of vocabulary. His translation may retain the original word, in the modern conversion of a noun into a verb: "Je quinte-essence l'ame"--"I quint-essence the Poets soule" (l. 57); or it may substitute an accepted English term: "l'exercite Hebrieu"--"the Hebrew hoste" (l. 191). Occasionally, too, Du Bartas employs an affected term, which James carefully replaces with a more usual English word, as in "carmes"--"verse" (ll. 176 and 178); "carmes" is defined as a

"mot burlesque pour dire vers" in a seventeenth-century dictionary.¹⁷ James, when the occasion arises, creates variety. Du Bartas, for example, repeats the expression "d'un oeil sec" in lines 69 and 73, which James renders first by his own word "unwel" and then by a circumlocution, "weping neither".

The vast learning and multitudinous references of Du Bartas would offer a considerable challenge to any translator. One has the feeling that the French poet's erudition may well have been one reason why James was attracted to his work. Certainly the King handles the vocabulary and references with ease and, in fact, often improves on the original by employing a name or a proper adjective more readily recognizable. As one might expect in a poem on Urania, astronomical names occur frequently, as in lines 49-52 where we meet "le grand Char" (Charles's Wain), "la Lyre" ("the Harp"), "la Poussiniere" ("Seamans starre"), and "les deux Poissons" ("the Fishes twaine"). Biblical learning also makes its appearance; and here James facilitates the reader's understanding by rendering the unusual "Jessean" as "Dauids" (l. 67) and "la tour Assyrienne" as "Babell Tower" (l. 269). In each of these substitutions the poetic effect of the entire line improves in the translation, both in sound and rhythm. James practises the same substitution in several references to Greek antiquity when, in lines 93 and 106, he uses Homer and Troy to replace Du Bartas' "le chantre Meonide" and "Pergame". In no instance, nevertheless, is either the tone or the style of the original text disturbed; James has merely improved for the most part on the quality of the verse.

Insofar as the translation of images and figures of speech is concerned, James most often preserves the essential word picture of the original. At times, however, he either changes the basic image or retains only a part. Two simple examples will demonstrate his technique in this respect; in line 192 he translates "sauué des rouges flots" as "the Redsea coste" and, in line 216 "l'Erebe" as "howest* hells". He also may introduce an image where none exists in the French: "nul" becomes "no flesh nor Bone" (l. 86); in line 148, again, the words "for day, the night" have no equivalent in the French version.¹⁸ Unfortunately the introduction or the change made by James does not always make for clarity of meaning. Where Du Bartas, for example, states that "vne sainte erreur" has resulted in man's reaching the heavens, James translates "So heauenly fury can / Make man . . . wander in a holy mist" (ll. 118-19).

Without distortion of meaning, James occasionally succeeds in strengthening the poetic impact of certain pedestrian lines of the original text by the addition of one or two words: "satan" becomes "crafty Satan" (l. 197) and "Non d'vne libre language, ains par nombre, & mesure" is rendered "By nomber and measure, whiche they durst not breake" (l. 200).

Even with many Middle Scots terms to contend with--and James shows a preference for his native tongue on many occasions where an English word is available--the reader of the translation is struck not only by the fidelity of the translator to the

*howest--lowest

spirit of the original poem but also by the admirable clarity of meaning found in the translation. Mistranslations are almost non-existent,¹⁹ the result of James's insistence on making his version as literal as possible. Although his translation at times suffers from this desire to achieve literalness, as in an occasional awkward or inelegant construction, the overall impression emerges of a translation which is superior to the original as a poetic construct.

Du Bartas' chef-d'oeuvre, however, was his very long epic, La Création du Monde ou Première Sepmaine. It is not hard to find a reason for the popularity of this poem in England.

Apart from the works of the Jesuit, Robert Southwell (1561-95), the Elizabethan Age produced no body of religious poetry which merits critical acclaim. To fill this gap, translations from Du Bartas' massive volumes were eagerly welcomed, not only as religious poetry but also as Protestant poetry. The Reformation had flowered several decades earlier in Europe than in England, and by mid-century Protestants both on the Continent and in England were still awaiting something comparable in bulk to Dante's Catholic epic to support their belief. Little wonder that Du Bartas' works, sponsored as they were by no less a person than the learned King James VI of Scotland, should find ready acceptance in England. Première Sepmaine and Seconde Sepmaine took for their subject matter new material: they were epics based on the Bible itself, celebrating the creation and the early history of the world. Pagan themes, which formed the material of so many sixteenth-century poets both on the Continent

and in England, had often scandalized persons of a religious bent. With the poetry of Du Bartas, sacred Christian themes and content were re-introduced to the joy and enthusiasm of Protestants.

But perhaps Du Bartas' greatest fame came after his death. Undeniably, it was his works that suggested to Milton how the necessary Biblical themes could be shaped into his Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained.²⁰ Besides Milton, forty-seven other English authors make reference to Du Bartas between the years 1584 and 1641,²¹ references which range from passing remarks to extensive borrowings.

It would be difficult for a twentieth-century critic to trace the vast number of sources used by Du Bartas; almost as difficult would be the task of sifting the prodigious knowledge displayed by the French poet. Fortunately a sixteenth-century scholar, Simon Goulart, published an exhaustive work in several volumes²² devoted to an examination of Du Bartas' sources and vocabulary. James VI did not have the benefit of Goulart's work; his translation, therefore, acquires significance if not for its aesthetic value then for its substantiation of the vast knowledge and considerable talent of the young monarch.

Les Furies is the third of the four poems that constitute the first day of La Seconde Sepmaine of Du Bartas work entitled La Seconde Sepmaine ou L'Enfance du Monde (1584). His grand design had been to publish four poems for each day of this second week of the Earth's history, a total of twenty-eight poems. Like Chaucer's and Spenser's ambitious plans, that of Du Bartas

was never completed; only two of the seven days were published in 1584 and only incomplete drafts of the third and fourth days were found.

In addition to The Furiès, James translated several sections of Du Bartas' work. He prepared a version of lines 40-147 from Book II of The First Week, lines that describe the four constituent elements of the created universe (fire, air, water, and earth). This translation, found in the Fragmenta²³ of Add. MS. 24195, would have formed part of the collected poetry of King James. The same manuscript contains "the beginning of M^r du Bartas Eden",²⁴ a translation that appears as "The Exord, or Preface of the Second Week of Dv Bartas" in James's translation of The Furies.²⁵ As we have seen, in the King's published volumes of verse The Furies, with The Lepanto, makes up all but two or three pages of His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres (1591).

Regarding the aesthetic qualities of the King's version not a great deal can be added to the remarks already made about The Vranie. James's ability to cope with the French poet's extensive vocabulary and learned references continues to leave the modern-day reader astonished. Du Bartas had chosen as his subject matter Man and his world after the Fall. Original sin had resulted in the Earth and the animals inhabiting the Earth becoming the enemies of Man. The latter, in turn, proves to be his own worst enemy and suffers ills both of his physical body and of his soul. These are the furies that attack him. The vocabulary and source material used to paint this scene, especi-

ally in the long middle section of the poem depicting physical illnesses (ll. 573-1113), make demands that only a very learned translator and talented poet could possess. James was that man as his translation proves. Just one example out of many is this description of certain diseases that trouble human breathing:

La Peripneumonie un brasier consumant
 Va dans ses trous venteux, inhumaine, allumant.
 Le cracheur Empieme, impiteux, l'assassine,
 D'apostume emplissant le creux de sa poitrine.
 La Pleuresie encor le dague par le flanc,
 Faisant tousjours bouillir sous ses costes le sang.
 L'Incube apres l'estouffe, et d'une phlegme espesse,
 Comme importun daemon, le sein panthois luy presse.

(ll. 355-62)

The Peripneumonie withall
 A hote consuming braize*,
 Goes cruell in his breathing boares*
 And heat doth kendle and raize.
 And als the pittillesse Empiem doth
 Him sease among the rest,
 With an Apostume filling vp
 The howest* of his brest.
 And furthermore the Pleurisie
 Doth brod* him in the sides,
 In making euer boile that blood
 Which vnder his ribbes abides.

(ll. 729-40)

Although the poetic quality of these lines may not be high, it rises above the very pedestrian verse of Du Bartas. Where the latter for the most part scarcely departs from the simple word order of subject, word, object, James employs inversions successfully, subordinates material of less importance, and adds the occasional adverb or adjective to give life to the subject matter.

*braize--flame; boares--passages; howest--hollows;
 brod--prick

King James does not always succeed so well in rendering Du Bartas' prolix flow of words. His original verse form (the fourteener) in rhymed couplets catches the spirit of the French alexandrine; however, when made into "eight and six" (with a consequent rhyme every four lines), the rhythm and sound can easily degenerate into a bouncy, almost jingly, pattern. The following lines, in which the poet attacks the upper class, offer an example:

Je ne veux discourir des plus sales pechez
 Dont les infames lits des plus grands sont tachez,
 De peur qu'en offensant des saints l'oreille tendre,
 Je ne les semble plus enseigner que reprendre.

(ll. 703-06)

Of sinnes discourse I will not that
 Are vildest in degree,
 Wherewith the bedds infamous of
 The greatest spotted be.
 For feare that in offending of
 The holies tender eare,
 I rather seeme to teach them then
 To wish them to forbear.

(ll. 1425-32)

In his endeavour to present an almost literal rendition, even to the point of retaining as much as possible of the assonance and alliteration in which Du Bartas delights, James has failed to create poetry of a high order. Despite these aesthetic weaknesses, the King has still given us a translation which, on the whole, is both accurate in meaning and faithful to the spirit of the text.

One cannot but wonder why James chose to translate Du Bartas, to devote hundreds of hours to intense and detailed translations. Several reasons suggest themselves in addition to his personal

admiration for the French poet. Perhaps the most obvious explanation lies in the King's vanity; for as he grew older, James missed no occasion to display his learning. What better way of manifesting it than through a translation of the most learned poet in Europe? James, too, felt that Du Bartas expressed themes and subject matter that he, as king, should make available to his own people. He states this opinion in his epilogue to The Furies:

Wherein as I haue preast to make
The Authour knowne to all,
That into Brittain Ile remaine,
Where he before was thrall
Within the onelie bounds of France.

(ll. 1517-21)

Despite the misgivings--sincere or false--expressed by James concerning the qualities of his translation, he feels that "both profite may heerein, / And pleasure reaped be" (ll. 1529-30). It may be that the profit and pleasure were not to be limited to moral instruction. James, an admirer of French rather than of English poetry, may well have purposed to encourage the French influence through his translations and through his admiration for Du Bartas. He was determined to modernize Scottish literature insofar as technique was concerned. Certainly he and his Castalians succeeded, although the King's departure for England in 1603 put an end to the experiment in Scotland.

Six lines of Latin hexameter from Lucan's The Civil War are all that James offers us of his translations from classical

Roman authors. Yet in passing from the French to the Latin translations, one is struck by the fact that, as in the case of Du Bartas, James has chosen an author whose style owes much to oratory. Apostrophes, for example, abound in Lucan's work to such an extent that Quintilian remarked: "Lucan's poem is full of fire and energy and famous for epigram; and, to speak my mind, he is a safer model for the orator than for the poet."²⁶ One is struck, too, by a parallel between Lucan and James, for the former (A.D. 39-65) began writing poetry when still a boy, was educated intensively in literature and rhetoric, and wrote both in poetry and prose. James's education had followed a similar pattern, as did his career as an author. Yet of the many works written by Lucan, only one has survived, The Civil War, an epic poem in ten books which remained unfinished at the time of the author's death. Because of a reference in the poem (IX, 985), the epic for centuries was known and referred to as The Pharsalia; James probably knew the work under that title rather than by the name given to it by Lucan.²⁷

Perhaps the qualities of Lucan's style attracted James, perhaps the the young Roman's literary achievements and reputation. More likely, Lucan was set as compulsory reading under the watchful eye of George Buchanan. The latter, being the author of Latin tragedies, must have admired Lucan as a model for rhetorical style and must have seen the value of such a style in shaping the talents of his royal pupil. In any case, the King included his paraphrase of the short selection from The Civil War in The Essayes of a Prentise (1584) and again in the manuscript of his unpublished poetry. In the margin of

that manuscript James notes: "This is alreadie printed."²⁸

In the table of contents of The Essayes of a Prentise, James assigns to his translation the title "A Paraphrasticall Translation ovt of the Poete Lvcane". If indeed a paraphrase implies a free rendering of an original text, which at the same time amplifies the thematic material, then James is justified in calling his translation from Lucan a paraphrase. One may question whether his restatement in a much fuller form makes the meaning any clearer. Like the style of Du Bartas in French, Lucan's in Latin is diffuse and prolix, noted for its display of vocabulary rather than for succinct exposition of intention. James's translation of lines 335-40 of Book Five comes closer to being a lengthy interpretation which expands into a poem of forty lines.²⁹ In the text, the title appears simply as "Lvc-anvs Lib. Qvinto", and is preceded by the six Latin lines that he intends to paraphrase. James's eight-line stanzas in iambic pentameter are his own Ballat Royal form which he preferred for serious subject matter and lofty themes.

In his paraphrase James does not attempt to convey the rhetorical impact that Caesar's address to his troops possesses. Lucan in his lines shows Julius Caesar haranguing his mutinous soldiers:

CAEsaris an cursus vestrae sentire putatis
 Damnum posse fugae? Veluti si cuncta minentur
 Flumina, quos miscent pelago, subducere fontes:
 Non magis ablatis vnquam decreverit aequor,
 Quam nunc crescit aquis. An vos momenta putatis
 Vlla dedisse mihi?

(V, 335-40)

Think you that Caesar's career can feel the loss of your desertion? 'Tis as if all the rivers threatened to withdraw the waters they mingle with the sea: if those waters were removed, the sea-level would not fall any more / than now their presence raises it. Think you that you have even turned the scales in my favour?³⁰

James takes this theme and, after restating it in the first of his five stanzas, proceeds to apply it to the condition of a king and his subjects. Stanzas two and three demonstrate that through evaporation and rainfall the sea nourishes the rivers, rather than the contrary: "I put the case then that they neuer ran*:/ Yet not theles that could him nowise pair*" (ll. 19-20). In stanza four, the royal poet makes his comparison between the rivers and the ocean on the one hand and the subjects and the king on the other. Should the subjects rebel against a benign ruler, hoping thereby to "smure*/ That grace, wherewith God maks him for to ring*" (ll. 27-28), they can do him no harm and will regret their foolish action. The final stanza, "L'enuoy", contains James's advice to his own people: Do not act counter to what God has ordained; do not divide what God has joined. If you do so, your rebellion will merely "kythe* your spite, & do the Depe no skaith*" (l. 38).

The theme both of the selection from Lucan and of James's paraphrase reveals yet another reason why the King would choose

*that they neuer ran--even if they never flowed;
pair--diminish

smure--smother; ring--reign

kythe--make known; skaith--harm

these lines. The suggestion of "divine rights" contained in line 28 and reference to the duty of a good king in lines 29-30 epitomize James's view of kingship. No doubt Buchanan, whose task it was to form the taste and to develop the mind of his royal pupil, saw the value to be derived from intensive work on those few Latin verses.

Buchanan, however, was not James's only tutor; Peter Young, an enthusiastic yet diplomatic young Scottish dominie also had much to do with the young King. Freshly arrived from advanced studies in Protestant Geneva, Young must have brought with him new religious ideas that were circulating on the Continent. Some of these ideas sprang from the many translations of the Bible, with their commentaries and marginal notes, that appeared during the sixteenth century. For hundreds of years Saint Jerome's edition of the Vulgate (originally compiled during the fourth and fifth centuries) had remained the only admissible translation; but with the Renaissance came many new versions, in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and modern languages. In the sixteenth century, for example, Luther's German Bible was printed (1534); Tyndale and Coverdale in England worked at their translations (of which Coverdale's, published in 1535-36, was the first complete English Bible); the Great Bible of 1539-41 revised Coverdale's version and was placed in every church in England; another revision of Coverdale's edition was the Geneva (Breeches) Bible of 1557-60--the first English Bible with numbered verses. And, in addition to these editions in English, there appeared several dozen versions of the Psalms of David. King James, who prided

himself on being the defender of the Protestant faith, no doubt felt compelled to make his contribution to Biblical translation as part of this great outburst of scholarly activity.

Latin translators, too, were busy on the Continent. Several Latin editions of the Bible were printed during the century, of which the translation by Immanuel Tremellius³¹ in 1579 was highly regarded. From it James made the many commentaries, translations, and metrical versions of the psalms, relying on this translation as his sole source.

As we know, James was already acquiring a considerable reputation as a theologian, well versed in Biblical knowledge. He recognized the value of the psalms not only as liturgical elements but also as valuable aids to the Christian life. In this he shared the view of the translators of the Geneva Bible, who introduced the Book of Psalms with a lengthy exhortation:

If we wolde knowe the great, and hie maiestie of God, here we may se the brightnes thereof shine moste clearely. . . . If we wolde knowe wherein standeth our saluation, and how to atteine to life euerlasting, here is Christ our onely redemer, and mediator moste euidently described. The riche man may learne the true use of his riches. The poore man may fynde ful contentation. . . . Briefly, here we haue moste present remedies against all tentations and troubles of minde and conscience, so that being wel practised herein, we may be assured against all dangers in this life, luive in the true feare, and loue of God, and at length atteine to that incorruptible crowne of glorie, which is laid vp for all them that loue the comming of our Lord Iesus Christ.³²

It would appear that James originally intended to translate the complete Book of Psalms; for after his translation, "Psalm CIIII", he prepared versions of psalms 1-7 and 9-21. As with his edition

of collected poems, he never finished his complete translation of the psalms.

By the time that he had become King of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in that country was already singing metrical versions of the psalms, versions in a simple ballad-type metre that lent itself to easy memorization and to unadorned melodies. Dissatisfied with the metrical version made by the Wedderburns, The Gude and Godlie Ballatis (printed in 1567 but used long before that date³³), James over the years translated thirty or more psalms into a variety of metres and stanzaic forms.

Despite having ten complete Bibles, and as many versions again of the Book of Psalms, in his library, James showed his strong preference for the Tremellius version. In so restricting his sources, James reveals his lack of true scholarly intention in his Biblical translations. Indeed his translations from the Bible should not be considered as scholarly works but as the artistic undertaking of a poet who, although concerned with accuracy of meaning, takes more thought for the aesthetic qualities of his poetry.

We are left to speculate why James felt such a strong personal attraction to the work of Tremellius. It may well have had its source in the man himself, for Tremellius was a fervent convert to Protestantism who had moved from one country to another in search of a haven where he could practise his faith without being persecuted. Moreover, he was a proven scholar with a widespread, established reputation on the Continent and

in England for his knowledge of various scriptural languages (Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, Latin). His translation of the Bible, which was his greatest contribution to scholarship, met immediate success and continued to be reprinted several times over the next hundred years. King James, as a promising theologian, would doubtless recognize the merits of the Tremellius version. Moreover, the King had little use for the Geneva Bible (1560), preferred by John Knox and licensed for printing in Scotland in 1568. James's antipathy towards the Geneva Bible showed itself publicly at the Hampton Court Conference (1604), when he condemned the reading of it, especially the reading of the marginal notes, as "sauouring too much of daungerous and trayterous conceites." ³⁴

With regard to the stanzaic form and the metre employed in the Psalters sanctioned in both Scotland and England, Craigie makes an interesting observation:

By the time James came to translate the Psalms into English metre, the four-line Ballad Stanza had come to be almost inseparably associated with metrical versions of them both in Scotland and in England. This was because that was the verse-form which predominated in the official metrical Psalter used in both countries, which, in England almost wholly and in Scotland very largely, was the work of the two Englishmen, Sternhold and Hopkins.³⁵

As we have stated, James did not subscribe to this standardization of poetic form, preferring to render the psalms into different metric and stanzaic forms: "For the thirty Psalms and three Paraphrases in MS. Royal. B. xvi he used no fewer than twenty-eight stanza forms, most of them his own invention and

some / of them of considerable complexity of structure."³⁶ To these psalms must be added "Psalm CI", included in the Uncollected Poems of the King. It is evident from this quotation that James was not the author of the 1631 edition of the Book of Psalms which Charles I attributed to him. It, too, was written in varied and difficult meters, but was the work of Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, whom James had encouraged to undertake the translation.

One wonders on what grounds James selected the psalms which he rendered into poetry. I have already noted the sequential numbers 1-7 and 9-21, indicative of his intention to translate the entire Psalter. Length of individual psalms may have played a part in his decision, for only two psalms (18 and 104) have more than 30 verses; of these two, Psalm 104 was the first psalm that James rendered into poetry and Psalm 18 forms part of the sequence noted above. Perhaps surer grounds for selection would lie in the thematic material; out of possibly eleven major themes used by the Psalmist, James chooses psalms from eight.³⁷ Thematic content, inasmuch as it established both tone and rhythm, provides an interesting approach to James's versions of the psalms.

Five of the psalms (19, 29, 104, 148, 150) are hymns of praise to the Lord of Creation, celebrating His glory in heaven and on earth. He is a God whose greatness and power can be found not only in living things but also in the law. Psalm 19 reflects this aspect of the majesty of God and, indirectly, of James who believed himself to be God's representative in Scotland.

It is written in eight-line stanzas of iambic pentameter, with a rhyme scheme ababbcbc. The first two stanzas describe the glory of God's physical creation: "The heuens of michtie godd the glorie tell / & of his hands the uorkes spredd out doth schou."³⁸ The last four stanzas see God reflected in the laws of the Jewish people. Such a subject is difficult to render into poetry that will hold a reader's interest; nor does James always succeed, for even the meaning of the original is lost on occasion:

Desyderatissima desiderabilia sunt auro & quidem
auro purgatissimo quamplurimo; ac dulciora melle, &
quidem acoeto melle. . .³⁹ in quorum observatione
est emolumentum magnum.

(vv. 10, 11)

in pretiousness the fynest golde thay* staine*
& sueter are then honnie to the mouth
the honnie euen that droppis á sugred raine
& of it self distillis the self at fouth*.

then me thy ouin taucht by thaise thingis I say
the quhiche to be obseruid neidful be⁴⁰

(ll. 29-34)

The literal meaning of line 34 ("In observing them there is great reward") has vanished completely. In the same psalm we note that James, as he occasionally does, expands the original image, creating also a secondary figure. In his rendering of lines 29-32, the last line and a half offers a good example. Psalm 19, therefore, represents a work in which the translator and the poet are at odds.

*thay--refers to the judgments and laws of God;
staine--eclipse; at fouth--in abundance

In making a poetic translation of Psalm 148, one of the five hallelujah hymns of praise that bring the Psalter to a close, James was attempting to render the ecstatic oral ejaculations of the Jewish people. The translation of this well-known psalm can be judged as one of James's finest poems, and it may well surpass the efforts of the learned Protestant scholars who produced the Geneva Bible and even of the English divines who prepared the Authorized Version. James uses short lines, iambic trimeter and dimeter in seven stanzas, each stanza translating two verses of the psalm proper. He catches the tone and movement of the Psalmist in both his vocabulary and rhythms:

Ye beastis and cattell tame
 Eche fowle and creping thing
 Eche people and prince of name
 Eche earthlie Iudge and King
 Ye virgins eik*
 Ye babes and olde
 With young men bolde
 His praise furth speik.⁴¹

(ll. 41-48)

Many of the psalms express either thanksgiving or petitions to Jehovah. James translates only two psalms of individual (as opposed to corporate) thanksgiving; but he attempts six psalms of individuals who ask God for relief, a theme familiar in his own day-to-day life in Scotland. The six psalms of individual petition (3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 17) ask for deliverance from either an enemy, a peril, or a sickness. The basic pattern of these

*eik--also

psalms has the appeal followed by a statement of confidence in God's mercy or thanks to the Almighty for answering the petition. Again James experiments with meter, stanza, and rhyme scheme so that no two of these poems have the same technique. Like so much of James's verse, most of these poems leave the impression of uninspired, pedestrian movement. Such is not the case with Psalm 6, in which an imaginative stanza form and rhyme scheme combine with a varied line length to convey the tone and movement of the psalm. The first stanza admirably shows this technique:

O lorde into thy uraithfull yre
 reprove me not I humblie pray
 nor chasten me in thy furiose fyre;
 but shou me mercie euerie uay
 for that I languish sore
 then cure me lorde thairfore;
 for bones & soule are more
 then trublit ay.⁴²

(ll. 1-8)

Despite this imaginative approach, James fails in this poem because of irregularities in metre (ll. 3, 26, 29), the use of fillers to extend the line to its required length (ll. 11, 12, 18, 19, 21, 22, 27); awkward inversions (ll. 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, 25), and an unduly long paraphrase of the last thought contained in the following quotation:

Recedite a me omnes operarii iniquitatis: nam audit
 Jehova vocem fletus mei; audit Jehova deprecationem
 meam: Jehova orationem meam suscipit.⁴³

(vv. 8-9)

remoue then from me auay
 ye uorkeris of euill apace

for that the lorde doth heare I say
 my ueping uoyce euen of his grace
 yea euen iehoua great
 did heare from holy seat

my prayeris air & lait*
 & pitteouse cace.

the lorde did of his meare gooduill
 my humble praieris glaidlie heare
 both same & greatest trubbill still⁴⁴
 then lett my cruell ennemies beare.

(11. 29-35)

Psalms which express the ancient Jewish poet's trust in Jehovah were sometimes added to an existing psalm or were written separately. James gives us versions of three psalms which utter words of confidence in the Lord (4, 16, 131). Of these, the translation of Psalm 4 makes the most interesting reading because the aesthetic components combine to offer an integrated and satisfying work of art. The basic iambic tetrameter is maintained up to and including the penultimate line of each stanza, with the last line being an iambic dimeter. The rhyme scheme, too, is both unusual and effective: ababcccb). The combination of the final short line with the return to an earlier rhyming vowel results in great emphasis being placed on the last idea expressed in each stanza. Consequently there is no diminishing of force or of tone as the poem progresses; for each stanza compels the reader to focus on the final thought: "lyes seeking ay" (l. 8), "& sinne no more" (l. 16), "& in his naime" (l. 24), "richt ioyfull be" (l. 32). One can imagine how

*air & lait--early and late

personal the theme of this poem must have been to the young King, beset as he was by powerful enemies in his trouble-filled kingdom:

but ô ye sonnes of men how long
my glorie uill ye mokke & urong
youre loue on uaine thingis shall be strong
lyes seeking ay.⁴⁵

The next group of psalms brings together those poems that contrast God's view of righteous men and of sinners. It is the largest thematic section of James's translations from the Psalter. The latter, as originally conceived by the Hebrew poets, was to be a book of worship and devotion for those persons who believed in the Law and the Covenant of Jehovah with the Jewish people. The psalms in this group describe such believers, each poem effectively contrasting the believer with the ungodly person.

Psalm 10 is representative of this group. Here James reduces the original eighteen verses to nine stanzas, each of which translates two verses. The psalm offers abundant scope for a poet because it describes in great detail the character and deeds of the sinful man. James successfully carries the tone of diatribe into his translation:

Nam laudat illa improbus pro desyderio animi sui: &
quaestuosus praedicat, irritat Jehovam. Improbis
iste pro elatione vultus sui non inquirat; non esse
Deum, sunt omnes cogitationes ejus.⁴⁶

(vv. 3-4)

the uikked fully lykis thir thingis alluaye
for that his soule to loue it is inclynde
& redie glories als uith glaiddest mynde

& doth prouoke iehouase uraith I say
 but yett the uikked lookis so hie & stay*
 as he for all this matter uill not caire
 quhose thochtis concludis godd is not any quhaire.⁴⁷

(11. 8-14)

He has used a seven-line stanza, with the iambic pentameter rhythm giving the reader the feeling of the spoken work. Despite his unusual rhyme scheme (abbaacc), the syntactical order of the words is not abused, so that one is left with the impression of a well-constructed poem.

Omitting three hymns of pilgrimage which sing the praises of Jehovah, we move to a theme which James found much more congenial: psalms which laud a human king. Here James has much more success. Of the eight psalms in the Psalter that can be classed as royal hymns, James translates four (2, 20, 21, 101). Many of the ideas must have found favour with the Scottish King who hoped to hear--in his imagination--sentiments expressed about him that were similar to those sung about the kings of ancient Israel. In Psalm 2 we find words to encourage and hearten the ruler; in Psalm 20 the people utter praises on behalf of their king; in Psalm 21 the past blessings and future victories of the king are rehearsed; and in Psalm 101 are described the moral ideals of the earthly monarch, his commitment before God, his personal life, and the resultant moral uplift experienced by his subjects.

Certain verses of these psalms have an almost direct appli-

*stay--haughtily

cation to James's own beliefs. The opening stanza of Psalm 2 describes how evil kings and counsellors join with the people on occasion, setting themselves up against an anointed king:

Sistunt se reges terrae, & dominatores consultant
simul; contra Jehovam, & contra Christum ejus?⁴⁸

(v. 2)

the earthly kings do stand & freat
with thaime consultis the reularis tall
against iehoua great I say
& his anointid christ uithall⁴⁹

(ll. 3-5)

Yet the psalm ends with words of encouragement for the king,
whose God will destroy his enemies:

Confringes istos virga ferrea; ut vas figuli dissip-
abis eos.⁵⁰

(v. 9)

but thou shall bruse thir fordsaide men
euin as á heavy yron rodd
brekkis earthin pottis, so uill thou then
thaime skattir all ashunder sone⁵¹

(ll. 25-28)

This psalm, with its strong wording, helped James justify his belief in the divine right of kings and the consequent qualities and powers of the royal person.

Nevertheless, even these poems, dealing with a theme which should have inspired some of his best verse, fail. His extension and forcing of images found in the original text (as in the two quotations just given), the pedestrian movement of his lines, and the padding of so many verses to eke out the

rhythmic pattern or the rhyme scheme, all these reasons justify our rejecting these psalms as both poor poetry and poor translations, even though they represent a higher standard than that attained in many of his versions of the psalms.

James has left us three more translations from the Bible: "Ecclesiastis Cap. xij", "The lordis prayer", and "Canticum Mosis ex Deuter. Cap. 32". The level of poetry achieved in these three selections, however, is much superior to that of his psalms; indeed all three read well and are deserving of critical acclaim.

"Ecclesiastis Cap. xij" offers a metrical rendering of verses one to eight of the well-known passage beginning "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" and ending with "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity". The original text is characterized by rather short, sententious phrases that make the translator's task much easier than that of translating the psalms. Moreover, the choice of these verses must have appealed to the King, who saw himself as the keeper of his subjects' ethical and religious standards. The theme (warning man to respect God because of the brevity of our life span) has a sober tone and occurs in one of the most evocative passages of the Bible. James does not experiment in his prosody, relying on the seven-line, iambic pentameter stanza, with a rhyme scheme which he had already employed in the psalms* (ababacc). In addition, James avoids distorting or enlarging upon existing imagery, being content to present it in a straightforward, at times pedantic, fashion.

He catches the tone right from the outset: "Be glad o yong man in thy youthfull dayes / And let thy soule reioyse in youth I say" (ll. 1-2).⁵² Although he has missed, at least in these opening lines, the theme of reverence for the Creator (preferring to develop the idea of carpe diem), in stanza two he does instruct the young man: "Therefore on thy creator think thow shall" (l. 11). The rest of the version follows the text closely both in theme and tone. Technically James's poem, although it cannot match later translations in nobility of expression, reflects a great improvement over his translation of psalms. He has succeeded for the most part in omitting words which merely fill out required rhythms and rhymes; he has also achieved tolerably normal syntactical patterns, so that the final result possesses the resonance of a Scottish sermon.

On the page of the manuscript that has James's version of the Lord's Prayer are the words, "Lat this prayer be writtin with the psalmes other before or after."⁵³ Quite evidently the King attached considerable importance to his poem--and rightly so, for it is a good metrical translation. Both in form and tone it remains close to the original. The economy of expression in James's lines reflects the same characteristics in the Biblical prayer; and for once James has neither added new ideas or indulged in useless padding. The following lines offer a good example:

Forgiue ws also our trespassis ay,
As we forgiue ilk other small or great
Lord, in tentatioun lead vs not we pray,
But ws from euill delyuer euermore.

(ll. 6-9)

Had James been able to duplicate this style in his work on the psalms, critics would have accorded him more praise as a poet.

Just before his death, Moses, having turned over command of the Israelite host to Joshua, addressed his people for the last time. The contents of his charge to them constitute the last selection that James translated from the Bible, "Canticum Mosis ex Deuter. Cap. 32". The original lines are in the form of a psalm which relates the history of the Israelites: what God has done for them, how they have betrayed Him in their weakness, how events in their history are linked with Jehovah's decrees, and, finally, when God will turn His wrath on their enemies. Such, in brief, are the contents of Deuteronomy XXXII, verses 1-43. The tone of the passage is strongly didactic; yet the faith that Moses has in God gives to his words a fire and intensity that redeems its didacticism. James has the task of duplicating this difficult feat in a poem of 162 lines.⁵⁴ To carry out his purpose, he adopts a straightforward iambic pentameter line, with rhyming couplets free of stanzic divisions. It is true that, at irregular intervals, marginal indentations occur; but these guides merely indicate divisions of thought as they appear in the Book of Deuteronomy and are not meant to designate stanzas.

In his version, James does not stray far from the text. He refrains, for example, from introducing new images; and the images already in the Bible are rendered faithfully. On one occasion he does give an unexpressed meaning to an existing image by suggesting in the following quotation that the eagle sits on its nest "for thair warmer rest"; and in so doing James

may well have improved on his original:

& as the eagle stirrith up hir nest
& on hir young sittis for thaire heit & rest
& streitchis sine abrod hir uingis to tak
& beir hir birdis upon thaime & hir bak
so iehoua he did alone thaime gyde

(11. 39-43)

The narrative form of this chapter of Deuteronomy seems to bring out the best qualities of James as a translator, only his version of the Lord's Prayer being a better Biblical translation. Not great poetry if one reflects what Milton might have achieved with these lines, nevertheless this passage does confirm our opinion of James as a competent craftsman in verse.

Notes

- ¹ The Poems, I, 17, ll. 40-42.
- ² Max L. Margolis, The Story of Bible Translations (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1917), p. 73.
- ³ Margolis, p. 121.
- ⁴ The words are those of Cénac-Moncaut, written about 1822-23 and cited by Holmes in the standard modern edition of Du Bartas: Urban Tigner Holmes, Jr., John Coriden Lyons, and Robert White Linker, eds., The Works of Guillaume De Salluste Sieur Du Bartas (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Univ. Press, 1935), p. 32.
- ⁵ Benedetto Croce, La Critica, XXVII, 307-16. Cited by Holmes, Du Bartas, I, 60.
- ⁶ Warner, The Library of James VI. Warner also lists works by such members of the Pléiade as Du Bellay, Ronsard, and Marot.
- ⁷ The Poems, I, 16, ll. 1-5 and 14-16.
- ⁸ Harry Ashton, Du Bartas en Angleterre (Paris: 1908; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1969), p. 127.
- ⁹ Ashton, Du Bartas en Angleterre, p. 134.
- ¹⁰ Waldo F. McNeir, Spenser Newsletter, 10:3 (Fall, 1979), p. 6. Contained in a review of Anne Lake Prescott, French Poets and the English Renaissance (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1978).
- ¹¹ The Poems, I, 16, ll. 18-21.
- ¹² Cited by McNeir, pp. 66-67.
- ¹³ Cited by Holmes, I, 20.
- ¹⁴ The Poems, I, 31.
- ¹⁵ The Poems, I, 17, l. 50.
- ¹⁶ The Poems, I, 16, l. 23.

17 Pierre Richelet, Dictionnaire françois (Genève: Widerhold, 1679; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1970).

18 For further examples, see ll. 135, 153, 164, 216, 236, 255.

19 Perhaps mistranslations occur in l. 114, where "qui facent teste aux ans" becomes "with his age" and in ll. 135-36, where for effect James translates "Tout-iour donques sera vostre style empesché / A remplir, monsongers, des songes vos volumes" by "Shall still your brains be busied then to fill / With dreames, ô dreamers, euery booke and bill?".

20 See George Coffin Taylor, Milton's Use of Du Bartas (New York: Octagon Books, 1968).

21 Holmes, III, 540.

22 Simon Goulart, Du Bartas, Guill. de Saluste, Sieur . . . Ses oeuvres (Paris, 1611).

23 The Poems, II, 148-55.

24 The Poems, II, 156-58.

25 The Poems, I, 106-11.

26 Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, X, 90; trans. and cited by J. D. Duff, Lucan (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. xiii.

27 In modern times, the English poet and scholar, R. E. Housman has published the standard edition of Lucan, an edition which uses the original title (Blackwell, 1926).

28 The Poems, II, 128.

29 The Poems, I, 62-63.

30 Duff, Lucan, pp. 263-65.

31 Immanuel Tremellius, born a Jew in Ferrara, Italy, was converted to Catholicism in 1540 at the age of thirty. The following year he became a Protestant and remained in that faith until his death in 1580. For almost seven years (1547-53), he lived and taught in England, part of the time as Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge. The temporary restoration of Roman Catholicism under Mary Tudor caused him to return to the Continent, where he suffered for his adherence to a non-Lutheran interpretation of Protestant theology. A good scholar, Tremellius made his greatest contribution with his translation of the Bible into Latin, using both Hebrew and Syriac sources.

32 The Geneva Bible, A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p. 235.

33 The Poems, II, xii. Craigie devotes twelve pages (pp. xi-xxii) to the complicated history of James's translation of the psalms. In Appendix "A" (pp. 269-70), he adds further information.

34 Geneva Bible, p. 15.

35 The Poems, II, xx.

36 The Poems, II, xx-xxi. It has not been thought necessary to give a detailed explanation of the forms and metres used by James because Craigie (II, xxi-xxii) has supplied this information.

37 Based on the analysis found in Pius Drijers, The Psalms: Their Structure and Meaning (London: Burns & Oates, 1964), pp. 230 ff. The only themes omitted by James are communal thanksgiving, communal petition, and condemnation of unjust judges.

38 The Poems, II, 32, ll. 1-2.

39 The Poems, II, 223.

40 The Poems, II, 33.

41 The Poems, II, 49.

42 The Poems, II, 13.

43 The Poems, II, 220.

44 The Poems, II, 13-14.

45 The Poems, II, 8.

46 The Poems, II, 221.

47 The Poems, II, 18.

48 The Poems, II, 219.

49 The Poems, II, 4.

50 The Poems, II, 219.

51 The Poems, II, 4.

52 The Poems, II, 50.

53 The Poems, II, 53.

54 The Poems, II, 54-63.

CHAPTER V

The Theory and Criticism

To assess the contribution to Renaissance literary theory made by King James, particularly in Ane Schort Treatise, Conteyning Some Reulis and Cautelis to be Observit and Eschewit in Scottis Poesie (1584), presents a task that is at once complex and simple. Complexity arises from the rapid development of the science of literary theory during the latter part of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries, especially on the Continent; simplicity results from the nature of James's little book which, because of its limited scope, permits the modern student to restrict his analysis of sources to a comparatively small number of theorists, in particular to those who stressed the technical (as opposed to rhetorical) aspects of poetic theory and practice.

James, however, did not limit his sources to theorists. As we shall see, poets--both ancient and modern--provided him with ideas which he incorporated into his work on criticism. In Scotland, two practising poets influenced the thought of the young King. Alexander Scott, whose poetry dates from approximately 1547 to 1568, composed about thirty-six lyric poems. Not large in volume, his works are significant because his is one of the last voices in that country to express amatory themes and content in an age that had surrendered to the passions of

religion and politics. Equally significant, he combines in his poetry the influence of William Dunbar of the old Scottish school, of the English sonneteers as represented in Tottel's Miscellany (1557), and of Ronsard in France. These were the exact influences that James would seek to develop through his own poetry and his Reulis and Cautelis. The second Scottish poet writing successful lyrics at the time was Scott's younger contemporary and disciple, Alexander Montgomerie, regarded by King James as the master poet. He instructed the young King in the art of the makaris, the craft of making poetry. Like Scott, Montgomerie wrote principally lyric poetry; but even more than the former, he practised a variety of forms and metres in Middle Scots. Through him, James developed a penchant for the technical aspects of verse, which we see stressed in the royal treatise and which James practised (as we have seen) in his own poetry. Although a talented poet, Montgomerie lacked the profound sensibility essential to greatness:

His temperament was, however, less poetical [than Scott's]; lacked Scott's geniality as well as artistic grace; he was more varied and voluminous; he was a still greater, if / less successful, experimenter in curious metres, and, as might be supposed from his later date, he was, in some respects, still more influenced by the English school. Still, like Scott, as a metrist, he belongs to the Scottish school. . . . 1

The influence of both Scott and Montgomerie, and indeed of the long history of Scottish poetry, impressed upon James the technical aspects that differentiated Middle Scots verse from that of English. This difference was one of the principal reasons for his writing Reulis and Cautelis, the first such

handbook written in and for his native tongue. No doubt the King felt keenly the loss of pre-eminence in poetry which Scotland had enjoyed over England during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. He would count it an obligation, being himself a student and practitioner of verse, to set the poets of his realm once again on a road that would take them in the successful direction along which poetry was being explored by authors in England and France insofar as theme, content, and form were concerned.

When one seeks specific sources for James's handbook on poetry, a natural starting place would be the French literary theorists of the sixteenth century. Buchanan, during his extensive travels and sojourns in France, had become intimately acquainted with their ideas and their poetry, although he disagreed with their stress on the value of vernacular literature. The number of French literary works in the royal library, too, testifies to the influence that French exerted in the King's education; next to Latin, French is the most frequently-met language of the books he studied. Indeed, if the marginal notations made by Peter Young on the list of the King's library books are any indication, French was spoken as much as Scots during the tutorial hours, for these notes are as often in French as in the Scottish tongue.²

French poetic theory of the sixteenth century had as one of its main purposes to set forth rules that would promote the use of French, the national vernacular tongue, in the composition of poetry. There exists a feeling of pride and patriotism

in those treatises as well as a strong belief that a modern vernacular could, if provided with rules, produce works of art that would rival those of ancient times. James early came under the influence of two of the most distinguished authors of sixteenth-century France: Joachim Du Bellay (1524-85) and Pierre de Ronsard (c.1525-60), poets and theorists who were the acknowledged leaders of the Pléiade. Several of their works were in his personal library; and in his own treatise he mentions Du Bellay by name. Indeed the latter is the only modern author of a critical work whose name James cites in Reulis and Cautelis. As for Ronsard, a study of James's poetry easily reveals that his acquaintance with this poet's work was not superficial.

Doubtless, too, the young King of Scotland knew the works of other theorists, ancient and modern, for he states in defence of his own treatise:

The vther cause is, That as for thame that hes writ-
ten in it of late, there hes neuer ane of thame writ-
ten in our language. . . . I haue lykewayis omittit
dyuers figures, quhilkis are necessare to be vsit in
verse, for twa causis. The ane is, because they are
vsit in all languages, and thairfore are spokin / of
be De Bellay, and sindrie vtheris, quha hes written
in this airt. Quhairfore gif I wrait of thame also,
it sould seme that I did bot repete that, quhilk thay
haue written, and zit not sa weil, as thay haue done
already.³

Among the English works written on the art of composition, we know that James had studied Roger Ascham's The Scholemaster (1570), a copy of which was in the royal library. Ascham, however, in Book Two of his work shows himself to be a strong

partisan of classical prosody with its quantitative metrical system; he has nothing good to say about the innovative modifications required by modern English. Ascham, therefore, can be put aside as a possible source of ideas congenial to James, who most certainly promotes the use of Middle Scots as the language for a Scottish national literature. Other English theorists also would have had little to offer the King in his discussion of poetry. These would include Leonard Coxe (Arte and Crafte of Rhetoric, 1524), Wilson (Arte of Rhetoric, 1553), Thomas Lodge (A Defence of Poetry, 1579), and Gosson (Schoole of Abuse, 1579). All of these works appeared before the publication of James's Reulis and Cautelis (1584); but for the most part the first three of these books concern either prose style or a defence of poetry as a genre, while Gosson's work forms part of the current polemic on drama.

One English poet-theorist whose work bears a resemblance to James's is George Gascoigne, and the parallels between their works will be discussed in detail. Gascoigne's Certayne Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Ryme in English, Written at the Request of Master Edouardo Donati appeared in 1575. Like the treatise by the young Scottish king, it deals with the technical rather than the philosophical and rhetorical aspects of writing poetry. Just as James's Reulis and Cautelis represents the first published manual on Scottish versification, so too does Gascoigne's Notes of Instruction hold that distinction in English. Some critics have suggested that another work, the Arte of English Poesie by Puttenham,

may also have been used by James; but the work was not published until 1589. It may well be, as Puttenham's biographers point out, that he had been working on his treatise during the sixties and seventies and that a manuscript of parts of the Arte of English Poesie existed. Since there is no record of communication of any kind, direct or indirect, between James and Puttenham, it is doubtful that James had access to a manuscript, even if one were in existence.

What can be said about Sir Philip Sidney's Apologie for Poesie? Here again we have a work which, although it may not have been published until 1595 (its date of publication is still disputed), most certainly did exist in manuscript for more than a decade before that date. We know, too, that James, at least in later life, was familiar with Sidney's poetry, albeit he wrote contradictory remarks about his appreciation of it. But in the case of their respective critical treatises, one hesitates to suggest that Sidney influenced James. The emphasis in the Englishman's work rests on a defence of poetry as a literary form and on rhetorical devices employed in verse. It does, of course, touch on the technical aspects of creative composition, although that is not its principal subject matter. In the case of James's Reulis and Cautelis, the author restricts himself almost exclusively to the technique of writing poetry and, moreover, focuses on rules and admonitions that meet his own aims, which are stated in his "Preface". Where Sidney writes extensively, James writes briefly and suggestively, simply because he is writing for a different audience and for

a different purpose: "I esteme all thais quho hes already some begining of knowlege, with ane earnest desyre to atteyne to farther, alyke meit for the reading of this worke, or any vther, quhilk may help thame to the atteining of thair foirsaid desyre."⁴ He is addressing his work to those who are willing to learn about the technical processus of poetic composition, as he sets forth again in "A Qvadrain of Alexandrin Verse, Declaring to Qvhom the Authour Hes Directit His Labour":

To ignorants obdurde, quhair vvilfull errorr lyis,
Nor zit to curious folks, quhilks carping dois delect thee,
Nor zit to learned men, quha thinks thame onelie vvyis,
But to the docile bairns of knavvledge I direct thee.⁵

The tone of the whole Reulis and Cautelis, being strongly didactic, differs from that of Sidney, whose urbane tone and luxuriant style offer a distinct contrast.

Basing our observations on material that appears in the King's work and taking cognizance of such additional facts as chronology, availability, and education, we may postulate that James had access to critical treatises by Du Bellay, Ronsard, and Gascoigne. Moreover we can be almost positive that he used the works of these three authors in the preparation of his own treatise, although Du Bellay's La Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise (1549), Ronsard's Abbrege de l'art poetique françois (1565), and Gascoigne's Notes of Instruction (1575) do not appear among the books listed by Peter Young as constituting the royal library between the years 1573-83. In so limiting the analysis of sources and influences which James probably employed, one runs the risk of overly delimiting one's search. In

defence, I would cite Spingarn, who points out how difficult is the task of disentangling such sources because "sixteenth-century Italy furnished the source of all accepted critical documents of western Europe."⁶

As noted earlier, however, James makes the task less difficult by limiting the scope of his little book. In the "Preface", he declares that he has no intention of discussing what today we call figures of speech, and this for two reasons: others have already treated the subject with greater success than he could have done and, second, "they are figures of Rhetorique and Dialectique, qu'il kis airtis I professe nocht."⁷ Strangely enough, Du Bellay, whom James cites in this context, does not allot very much space to figures of speech; indeed he barely mentions the subject. Part One of his famous Defence et illustration devotes the major part of its discussion to a defence of poetry in the vernacular, to ways in which one can strengthen and enrich the French language as a literary vehicle. In the second half of his treatise Du Bellay offers the reader a "poetic" for French verse; but he avoids the subject of rhetorical devices, saying: "Since so many excellent philosophers and orators have discussed this matter, I shall not speak of it. I want our poet to read and reread these authors before he undertakes some lofty, worthwhile work."⁸ The first part of this quotation sounds very much like the disclaimer that James has placed in his own Reulis and Cautelis.

A second limiting consideration that adverse critics of James have ignored when labelling his work on poetry as high-

schoolish⁹ is what is implied in the author's remarks after he has stated that no such work had ever existed in Middle Scots: "For albeit sindrie hes written of it in English, quhilk is lykest to our language, zit we differ from thame in sindrie reulis of Poesie, as ze will find be experience."¹⁰ James is conscious that he is breaking new ground insofar as the Scottish language is concerned; moreover, the passage suggests that James himself is not sure of the differences between the poetics of the two languages and that he would prefer to restrict his own remarks to basic matters useful to other apprentices like himself.

To entangle an inexperienced practitioner in difficult, abstruse rules would defeat the prime objective of providing the Scottish people with a handbook for poetry in their own language. Granted that James in his treatise accepts English poetry as a model insofar as diction is concerned; but his aim remains to write a book that the Scots will appreciate. To this end he inserts the word "Scottis" in his title, takes most of his examples of poetry from Alexander Montgomerie, and gives specific rules for a genre that was peculiarly Scottish, the flyting poem. We note, too, that he endeavours to create a new technical vocabulary of critical terms: section (caesura), flowing (rhythm and metre), literall (alliteration), rhyming in terms (feminine and triple rhymes), tumbling verse, which he also calls rouncefalls (irregular anapaestic lines), to name but the most important. As such, Reulis and Cautelis, the only work of its kind written before or since for Middle

Scots, demands our respect and our attention, the more so when we reflect that the book is the product of a young man of seventeen or eighteen years of age.

That James desires to bring Scottish poetry into the mainstream of Renaissance literature is also evident from another remark that occurs in the "Preface": "As for them that wrait of auld, lyke as the tyme is changeit sensyne, sa is the ordour of Poesie changeit."¹¹ He is referring here not to critics but to poets and, among others, may well have in mind the Scottish Chaucerians whose works, did not, at least in James's opinion, show evidence of the technical advances that he believed necessary for verse written in late Middle Scots. His own verse, following the lead given by Scott and Montgomerie, reveals his taste for change in form, metre, and tone; indeed, those matters are what occupy his attention in the pages of his handbook on poetry. Quite evidently, what emerges from the directives that James gives is a poetry which blends the rich traditions of the Scottish makaris with the new discoveries and innovations of sixteenth-century French and English verse. He could not foresee that his exciting and enriching vision would, in the seventeenth century, vanish under the influence of narrow Presbyterian moral bigotry.

One subject to which James addresses himself both in the "Preface" and in the body of his treatise had occupied the attention of critics since the days of Plato. What part does inspiration play in poetry, to what extent is poetry mimetic, and where does one find material to imitate? Spingarn and many

other scholars who have followed that pioneer's path in studying Renaissance literary criticism state that James places too much stress on the technical aspects of poetry, to the exclusion of any appreciation of creative imagination and poetic sensibility. They accuse James of failing to recognize the high calling of poetry as an art. It may well be that these critics, applying a form of retrogressive modernism, are reading into sixteenth-century critical concepts certain ideas that James's contemporaries and models did not discuss, at least from the point of view that we today consider the subject. Spingarn is particularly hard on what King James has to say in the "Sonnet Decifring the Perfyte Poete", which James places at the opening of his treatise:

The marks of a perfect poet are there given as skillfulness in the rhetorical figures, quick wit, as shown in the use of apt and pithy words, and a good memory; -- a merely external view of the poet's gifts, which takes no account of such essentials as imagination, sensibility, and knowledge of nature and human life.¹²

It will be noted that Spingarn ignores the key phrase in line one of the sonnet, "rype ingyne", from which all other qualities flow. Even Craigie, who most often can be relied upon to offer a favourable reading of James's text, states quite laconically: "That poetry was a spirit working from within and animating the whole was a conception to which he was unable to rise."¹³

Surely such appraisals of James's insight have missed the stress that James places on a poet's native ability, on the

fire that ignites the poetic vision. Here are the first six lines of the sonnet:

Ane rype ingyne, ane quick and vvalkned vvitt,
 VVith sommair reasons, suddenlie applyit,
 For euery purpose using reasons fitt,
 VVith skilfulness, vvhere learning may be spyit,
 With pithie vvordis, for to expres zovv by it
 His full intention in his proper leid*¹⁴

(11. 1-6)

Form is important, admits James; but more important is the poet's "rype ingyne, ane quick and vvalkned vvitt." These qualities--mature native talents and a lively intelligence--come from within and surely animate the whole art of composition; they form the substance of much of the poet's sensibility, and as such are anything but external (as Spingarn would have us believe). Craigie and others seem to have missed also the earlier reference which occurs in the "Sonnet of the Avthor to the Reader". There, in discussing the origin of poetry, James again equates "ingyne" with an innate quality akin to what modern critics call poetic sensibility:

And thou, ô Mercure, for to help thy pairt,
 I do implore, sen thou be thy ingyne,
 Nixt efter Pan had found the quhil¹¹, syne
 Thou did perfyte, that quhilk he bot espyit.¹⁵

Finally, in regard to terms that have been misunderstood by some modern critics, there appears to have been a complete lack of appreciation concerning the full import of James's use

*leid--language

of the word "nature" as found in the "Preface". Critics seem to have restricted their interpretation to mean exterior nature rather than the inner nature of man. James's words in the following passage, however, make more sense when applied to human nature, at least where poetic creativity is concerned:

I will also wish zow (docile Readar) that or ze cummer* zow with reading thir reulis, ze may find in zour self sic a beginning of Nature, as ze may put in practise in zour verse many of thir foirsaidis preceptis, or euer ze sie them as they are heir set down. For gif Nature be nocht the cheif worker in this airt, Reulis wilbe bot a band to Na-/ture, and will mak zow within short space weary of the haill airt: quhair as, gif Nature be cheif, and bent to it, reulis will be ane help and staff to Nature.¹⁶

James is telling us that he, too, believes poets to be born, not made. Although he does not define specifically what he means by "nature", it would appear from the context that the term implies natural abilities, which in his estimation play a much greater role than do rules in the writing of poetry.

One must combine James's use of "nature" with his like emphasis on "ingyne" to realize the importance that the author attaches to innate talents such as intelligence, inspiration, and creative imagination. Such an interpretation derives from his sonnet "Decifring the Perfytte Poete", where "rype ingyne" stands foremost in his list of a poet's attributes; most certainly they take precedence over the mechanical and technical aspects of the art.

Nor was James alone in his belief. Du Bellay in his

*cummer--burden

Deffence et illustration states that "natural gifts accomplish more without doctrine than does doctrine without natural gifts."¹⁷ And Du Bellay himself is merely paraphrasing both Cicero and Quintilian; for the former says: "I respond first to my own character and temperament",¹⁸ and the latter: "One's natural bent, even without learning, will be of great worth, but learning without natural endowments will accomplish nothing."¹⁹ James, a classical scholar, would likewise share Du Bellay's interpretation of the furor poeticus, which he suggests is nothing other than "this furious quickening of mind and feelings that by nature excites poets, without which every doctrine would fail to be of use."²⁰ Another member of the Pléiade, Ronsard, describes the poet as "being carried away by artistic passion (without taking thought overly much for grammatical rules) and, above all, endowed with anticipative insight and natural judgment. . . ." ²¹ As for George Gascoigne, whom James is supposed to have followed "disingenuously" (a word that successive critics have picked up in this connection),²² he makes no mention of these basic qualities, although he does speak of poetic invention.

When one considers carefully what James has said in the sonnet to the perfect poet, Craigie's statement that "the qualities here desiderated in a poet are purely external ones, such as skilfulness in rhetorical figures, a quick wit as shown in the apt use of pithy words and a good memory, and that no account is taken of such essentials as imagination, sensibility, and knowledge of human life"²³ does not make much sense. He is, of

course, following the lead of Spingarn in making his assertion.

James, true to his stated purpose of writing a practical treatise, purposely confines to the opening matter most of his remarks concerning a poet's innate gifts, taking the subject for granted from that point onwards in order to deal in more detail with some technical aspects of poetry. However, to confirm the fact that the young royal scholar values such talents, one has only to add to the foregoing what the author has to say about literary invention and imitation--a subject also dear to Du Bellay and Ronsard.

The King declares his views on invention in Chapter Seven, where he begins: "Bot sen Inuention, is ane of the cheif vertewis in a Poete, it is best that ze inuent your awin subiect, your self."²⁴ Avoid, he counsels, finding your subject matter either in books that you have read or in translations that you have made because, in so doing, you do not employ "your awin ingyne of Inuention."²⁵ For him, then, invention arises in the intellect and creative imagination of the poet, furnishing the artist with his theme, subject, and method of treatment. The relationship between Nature, Ingyne, and Inuention is very close, for together they constitute the poet's greatest attribute:

Bot because ze can not haue the Inuention except it come of Nature, I remit it thairvnto, as the cheif cause, not onely of Inuention, bot also of all the vther pairtis of Poesie. For airt is onely bot ane help and a remembraunce to Nature, as I shewe in the Preface.²⁶

It follows, therefore, that James sees no need for Scottish poets to enrich either their language or their subject-matter by imitating the writers of antiquity. In Chapter Six, part of which he devotes to imitation, James cautions against imitating other writers, especially on the subject of love; "for thir thingis are sa oft and dyuerslie writtin vpon be Poëtis already, that gif ze do the lyke, it will appeare, ze bot imitate, and that it cummis not of zour awin Inuentioun, quhilk is ane of the cheif properties of ane Poëte."²⁷ Such a position represents the antithesis of advice given to French poets by Du Bellay and Ronsard. Both French authors stress the need to imitate the ancients in order to enrich the modern vernacular. Du Bellay, who borrows most of his ideas from a French translation of Sperone Speroni's Dialogue des Langues (1542), recommends: "Necessarily, therefore, these two languages [Greek and Latin] must be understood by anyone who wishes to acquire the copious and rich imaginative inventiveness which constitutes the primordial and principal piece of the literary artist's equipment."²⁸ Du Bellay, nevertheless, does not believe that translations are the only means of developing one's native tongue: "In any case, this so laudable task of translating does not seem to me to be the only means and sufficient method of elevating our vernacular to the exemplary level of the other more famous languages."²⁹ Ronsard, for his part, leans more heavily on imitation as a poetic resource, not only for language but also for invention: "The principal trait remains the imaginative inventiveness which derives as much from

one's own natural genius as from the lessons of the good, old authors."³⁰

But Ronsard also advocates that poets go to exterior nature where they can find material for poetry, just as the ancients did: "I am of the opinion that no poetry must be praised as 'finished' perfectly unless it resembles nature."³¹ Exterior nature will provide the poet with those models necessary for the creation of works in which verisimilitude will both instruct and delight. This idea was one of the guiding principals of all members of the Pléiade.

Ronsard also dwells at greater length on invention than does either Du Bellay or James. He states, for example:

Imaginative inventiveness is nothing more than the natural product of an imagination which is conceiving ideas and shapes of every imaginable thing, in heaven or on earth, animate or inanimate, so that later one can verbally represent them, describe them, imitate them. The aim of a poet consists in imitating, discovering, and representing things that are or that may be true to life.³²

Those words adequately sum up the position of James's French models insofar as invention and imitation are concerned.

Gascoigne, the King's other probable source for his manual, has something to say about invention but nothing on imitation. For Gascoigne, invention indicates more particularly the order in which a poem is to be set forth, as when he states: "Yóur Inuention being once deuised, take heede that neither pleasure of rime nor varietie of deuise do carie you from it,"³³ Earlier in his Notes of Instruction, the English critic devotes a whole page to the subject of invention, but without linking it specifi-

cally to what James calls "rype ingyne". In the following quotation, however, Gascoigne does imply that wit, in the sixteenth-century sense of the word, plays a role.

The first and most necessairie poynt that euer I founde meete to be considered in making of a delectable poeme is this, to grounde it upon some fine invention. For it is not inough to roll in pleasant woordes, . . . vnlesse the Inuention haue in it also aliquid salis.³⁴

The unidentified commentator, "N", who has provided marginal notations to Gascoigne's treatise, defines aliquid salis as "a witty invention. Something elegant, rare, and unique."³⁵ James, it would appear, borrows very little from Gascoigne on this topic, at least in the full meaning of invention as the working out of whatever nature and ingyne propose. Both men share Ronsard's opinion that invention has the highest priority in composing poetry.

Although neither Gascoigne nor James speaks at length on imagery, each does allot one passage of his treatise to this subject. In this connection, one probable borrowing by James from Gascoigne emerges from the latter's discussion of invention. Gascoigne gives for the correct structuring of an invention only one example: how to praise the qualities of a beautiful, high-born lady whom one loves. James chooses exactly the same example, shaping it to suit his own treatise. Moreover, he uses it as a springboard to make another important point that Gascoigne does not pursue: avoid always using the same mythological name when referring to people or things or emotions when both Greek and Latin titles are available.

Imagery and vocabulary are both closely associated with decorum as a literary tenet. Although James does not use the term, Chapters Three, Four, and Eight of his Reulis and Cautellis exemplify this practice. James begins his list of specific admonitions regarding descriptive language with "Ze man also take heid to frame zour wordis and sentencis according to the mater;"³⁶ and a few lines farther on he states: "Ze man lykewayis tak heid, that ze waill* zour wordis according to the purpose: As, in ane heich and learnit purpose to vse heich, pithie, and learnit wordis."³⁷ He then continues by listing what kinds of language are suitable to discuss and describe love, tragedy, and pastoral matters. He mentions only one poetic form in this passage, the flyting poem, in which Scottish literature is so rich. James, like the French critics and like Gascoigne, counsels verisimilitude in description: "Quhat sumeuer be zour subiect, to vse vocabula artis, quhairby ze may the mair viuelie* represent that person quhais pairt ze paint out."³⁸ Having discussed vocabulary, James then turns to the type of argumentation and reasoning that suits each of several subject matters, again using lofty matter, love, and pastoral as examples.

He concludes this section of Chapter Three with advice which, today, we find perhaps strange: "Let all zour verse be Literall, sa far as may be, quhatsumeuer kynde they be of, bot

*waill--choose

viuelie--life-like

speciallie Tumbling verse for flyting. By Literall I meane, that the maist pairt of your lyne, shall rynne vpon a letter."³⁹ This strong advocacy of alliteration reflects a personal preference; Gascoigne, for his part, counsels against too much alliteration. The term was unknown in the sixteenth century; but Gascoigne raises the subject under the heading of imagery, complaining that it is the only device that many authors know and consequently abuse:

But yet therein remembre this old adage, Ne quid nimis, as many wryters which do not know the vse of any other figure than that whiche is expressed in repeticion of sundrie wordes beginning all with one letter, the whiche (beyng modestly vsed) lendeth good grace to a verse, but they do so hunte a letter to death. . . .⁴⁰

What James describes in some detail with respect to vocabulary and reasoning in Chapter Three of Reulis and Cautelis, Gascoigne does not mention, except to advise that "to vse obscure and darke phrases in a pleasant Sonet is nothing delectable, so to entermingle merie iests in a serious matter is an Indecorum."⁴¹ Considering the importance of the principle of decorum in literary theory of the Renaissance, one wonders why Gascoigne does not go to greater lengths in treating the subject. He crams his advice regarding form and content into twelve lines at the end of his Notes of Instruction, where the matter appears almost as an afterthought:

Then to returne too my matter, as this riding rime serueth most aptly. to wryte a merie tale, so Rythme royall is fittest for a graue discourse. Ballades / are beste of matters of loue, and rondlettes moste apt for the beating or handlyng of an adage or common

prouerbe: Sonets serue aswell in matters of loue as
 of discourse, Dizaynes and Sixaines for shorte Fant-
 azies. . . . 42

A comparison of his almost offhand treatment of such an important subject with the more carefully-constructed chapter (with examples from contemporary authors) that James has written will demonstrate that James owes very little, if anything, to the English author on this particular aspect of literary theory. The King certainly deals more fully with the matching of form and content than does Gascoigne when once again in Chapter Eight of his Scottish handbook--the longest chapter--he offers in great detail the correct poetic form and metre to be used for specific subject matters.

Admittedly, James is too restrictive in the suggestions that he sets forth; but at least he acts as a guide to inexperienced poets. He gives illustrations and advice regarding eight forms and metres. Heroic couplets (he does not use the term) are to be used for long stories; Heroicall verse for heroic, martial, and knightly deeds. Ballat Royal, a rhyme scheme used in the French ballade (ababbcbc), is a variation of the scheme used in Ottava Rima and not in Rhyme Royal and is to be employed in lofty and serious matters. Making a distinction in subject matter, James recommends that Troilus verse in which Chaucer wrote his Troilus and Criseyde--the true Rhyme Royal, ababbcc--serve for tragedies, tragic subjects, and poems expressing strong indignation or conviction. James introduces a new term when he speaks of Rouncefallis or Tumbling verse, to be used for flyting poems and for poems of invective; the word

"Rouncefallis"--or Rouncival--has the connotation of boisterousness, without the abusive tone associated with Scottish flyting poetry, whereas "Tumbling" describes the irregular anapaestic movement of flyting verse. Sonet verse, which James specifies as a fourteen-line poem⁴³ with ten syllables to the line (iambic pentameter as we know it today) should serve for succinct praise of books and authorities, for setting forth the arguments of stories, and indeed wherever the poet feels obliged to relate various opinions and/or changes in direction of his subject matter. Commoun verse, a term taken from Ronsard, who uses it to describe a ten or eleven-syllable line in contradistinction to the alexandrine line of twelve syllables, should be employed for descriptions of love, again as in Ronsard.⁴⁴ Finally, there is a ballad form to which the King does not assign a name but which he describes as suitable for amatory subjects, it being a form which the poet may create from any of the regular (not irregular) verse forms previously described. In this last-named form, the final line of the first stanza is employed as the last line of each successive stanza as a kind of refrain.

Neither Du Bellay nor Ronsard speaks extensively of decorum in the narrow sense of suitable form. Both, however, do discuss one aspect of the subject: the use of appropriate language and terminology. The following quotations almost certainly form the source of James's chapter on the same topic. Du Bellay in his Deffence et illustration seems to be James's prime source:

Again I want to advise you to frequent sometimes not only the society of learned men but also that of all sorts of workmen and men in the trades such as mariners, foundry workers, painters, engravers, and others in order to learn of their equipment and processes, the materials that they use, and the terminology employed in their crafts so that you may find therein fine comparisons and realistic descriptions of all manner of things.⁴⁵

Ronsard in two places discusses the same subject. In the Third Preface to La Franciade he urges the poet to seek comparisons in various trades and professions; later in the Preface, he gives as a rule: "Do not forget the correct names of the tools used in all trades, and do take pleasure in investigating them as much as possible, especially those of hunting. Homer drew all of his finest comparisons from that source."⁴⁶ In the first chapter of his Abbrégé he is even more specific. After repeating what Du Bellay had said in different words, Ronsard makes a striking image:

Just as one could not declare the human body to be beautiful, agreeable, and complete unless composed of blood, veins, arteries, and tendons--and above all having a healthy colour, so Poetry can not be said to be entertaining, life-like, or well made without beautiful, imaginative discoveries, descriptions, and comparisons, which are the nerves and life of the book.⁴⁷

The fourth chapter of Reulis and Cautelis discusses ornaments, more specifically "Comparisons, Epithetis, and Prouerbis."⁴⁸ From the references to Du Bellay and Ronsard it can be seen how closely form and imagery are associated in the thought of the French theorists. James, too, makes this association when he remarks that comparisons should be appropriate to the subject matter, "that nather they be ouer bas, gif zour subiect

be heich, for then sould zour subiect disgrace zour Comparisoun, nather zour Comparisoun be heich quhen zour subiect is bas, for then sall zour Comparisoun disgrace zour subiect. Bot let sic a mutuall correspondence and similitude be betwixt them."⁴⁹

Similarly, one should choose Epithetis with great care. For James, the term includes both adjectives and synonyms. Like Renaissance theorists in general, he subscribes to the ut pictura poesis tenet, as when he states: "As for Epithetis, It is to descryue brieflie, en passant, the naturall of euerie thing ze speik of, be adding the proper adietive vnto it . . .,"⁵⁰ and again he remarks that "airt is onely bot ane help and a remembraunce to Nature."⁵¹ Du Bellay, in fact, translates Horace with his own words, "[Poetry] is like a painting."⁵² Du Bellay had already suggested the phrasing of an idea to the young King in the following passage: "As for verbal attributes, . . . I want you to use an abundance of them so that, if your writing were deprived of them, you would say much less and less well. . . and see to it that they be suitable, not only concerning the nouns to which they refer but also with regard to what you are describing."⁵³

In using epithets, James notes that two means may be employed: the creation of a neologism in the form of a compound word (he gives the example, Apollo gyde-Sunne) and circumlocution (his example is Apollo reular of the Sunne). Properly speaking, the second is not circumlocution but the rhetorical figure antonomasia, which is the substitution of another designation for a noun in place of the normal epithet. Again James

probably borrows from Du Bellay, who also speaks of antonomasia:

Amongst other things, I advise you to employ often the figure ANTONOMASIA, a figure used frequently by ancient poets but a figure little used--even unknown--by the French. Its charm is seen when one designates the name of something by one of its attributes, such as the Father fulgator for Jupiter.⁵⁴

James prefers this method of using epithets since the poet can best express his meaning and "zit makis na corruptit wordis, as the vther dois."⁵⁵

He also mentions two other means of qualifying meaning, both of which he recommends. The first of these is the use of proverbs to enrich the language and meaning of a poem. However, he admonishes the poet that such proverbs "man be proper for the subiect, to beautifie it, chosen in the same forme as the Comparisoun."⁵⁶ The second recommendation urges the poet to employ repetition as an ornament in verse, although his advice appears to modern readers as outrageously excessive: "This forme of repetitioun sometyme vsit, decoris the verse very mekle*: zea quhen it cummis to purpose, it will be sumly to repete sic a word aucht or nyne tymes in a verse."⁵⁷ As we have noted in his own poetry, James follows this advice. Gascoigne makes no mention of either of these suggestions, nor does Du Bellay in the Deffence et illustration or Ronsard in his Abregé.

The sound of poetry, on the other hand, occupies all four of these men in their respective works. More so than today,

*mekle--much

poetry was recited aloud, often to musical accompaniment. Sound, caesura, rhythm, rhyme, and metre stand in the forefront of their considerations of verse. James, for example, opens Chapter Three of his Reulis and Cautelis with this remark:

First, that in quhatsumeuer ze put in verse, ze put in na wordis, ather metri causa, or zit, for filling furth the number of the fete, bot that they be all sa necessare, as ze sould be constrainit to vse thame, in cace ze wer speiking the same purpose in prose. And thairfore that zour wordis appeare to haue cum out willingly, and by nature, and not to haue bene thrawin out constrainedly, be compulsioun.⁵⁸

This admonition, along with his rules for "flowing" and "cul-louris" in the opening two chapters, reveals the importance that he attaches to sound. Having seen how often he transgresses his own advice with regard to "filling furth the number of the fete", we perhaps find his remark somewhat ironic.

One piece of advice that he both gives and follows, however, concerns brevity in poetry. He includes it in the octave of his "Sonnet Decifring the Perfyte Poete" when he refers to "sommair reasons" and "pithie vvordis", just as he does in his description of a sonnet as being useful for "compendious praysing of any bukes."⁵⁹ Gascoigne writes more precisely on the topic when he describes poets who draw out their thoughts to such length that the reader, before reaching the end of a thought "hath forgotten where he begon. But do you (if you wil follow my aduise) eschue prolixitie and knit vp your sentences as compendiously as you may, since breuitie (so that it be not drowned in obscuritie) is most commendable."⁶⁰

Regarding the use of monosyllables in poetry, the views of several of these writers are divided. James makes a categorical statement: "Ze laucht lykewise to be war with oft composing zour haill lynis of monosyllabis onely, (albeit our language haue sa many, as we can not weill eschewe it). . . ."61 Gascoigne, reasoning from a different viewpoint, offers his opinion that "the most auncient English wordes are of one syllable, so that the more monasyllables that you vse the truer Englishman you shall seeme, and the lesse you shall smell of the Inkehorne."62 Yet both agree on the difficulty created by polysyllabic words, namely, the problem of adapting the basic iambic foot to such words. Ronsard does not dwell on the subject of syllables; in the only judgment that he passes on the topic, he tends to agree with James: "Avoid also employing an abundance of monosyllables in your lines lest the result be rough and unpleasant to the ear."63 It may well be that James and Gascoigne used Ronsard as a common source, merely interpreting his remarks differently.

For the members of the Pléiade, harmony was the principal guide and aim. All parts of a poem should work smoothly together, just as the rules of harmony do in music. The link between poetry and music was very close, as we have seen. Speaking of Clément Marot's translation of the Psalms, Du Bellay observes that the poet has arranged his rhythms "so that they may be sung more easily, without disturbing the rhythm."64 In the same connection, he advises the poet to leave nothing in the lines of his poem that would clash:

See to it above all that your verses have nothing about them that is harsh, shocking in sound or rhythm, redundant. Let your sentences be well linked, rhythmic, and sounding well; let them not run on beyond what we feel should be a nice length, whether they be heard or read.⁶⁵

Every line, in short, must be submitted to "the measure and judgment of the ear."⁶⁶

Ronsard mentions several of these same ideas in his Abbrégé. He states, for example, "Do not be afraid to cut or lengthen your lines as much as you like, but always keep a certain measure, in consultation with your ear, which latter is a sure judge of the structure of your verses."⁶⁷ One final remark from Ronsard's Abbrégé will demonstrate how closely he sees the association between music and poetry. Describing masculine and feminine lines, he urges that poets use both as much as possible "so that they are more suitable to the music and to the harmony of the instruments; it seems to me that Poetry was born to be associated with musical instruments, for Poetry without them, or without the charm of one or more voices, is most certainly not pleasurable."⁶⁸

The emphasis that both Du Bellay and Ronsard place on oral recitation (Ronsard urges the poet to have the poetry read aloud by a fellow poet) and the close relationship between poetry and music were not new. The Pléiade group of poets, however, stressed the sound of poetry--words and rhythm--to a greater extent than other French poets of the sixteenth century.

James, consequently, reflects some of their ideas regarding sound. When describing his rules for caesura, he estab-

lishes a link with song and oral recitation. Section (caesura) must occur after a monosyllable or after a word whose final syllable is long: "The cause quhy it man be ane of their twa, is, for the Musique".⁶⁹ He then shows how closely he follows the custom of his age when he implies that poetry is to be sung: "Quhen zour lyne is ather of xiiij or xii fete, it wilbe drawin sa lang in the singing".⁷⁰ In the same passage James insists that "the Musique sall make zow sa to rest in the middes of that word, as it sall cut the ane half of the word fra the vther. . . ."⁷¹ The musical quality of the verse is certainly indicated in these passages; even more, knowing the influence exerted on James by French poetry, we can be sure that he is telling his readers that poetry is made to be set to music and must, therefore, accommodate itself to certain rules of its sister art. Indeed when he speaks of "flowing", the King minces no words: "To knaw & discerne thir kynde of wordis from vtheris, zour eare man be the onely iudge, as of all the vther parts of Flowing, the verie twichestane quhairof is Musique."⁷² Like Du Bellay and Ronsard, James insists on the role of music in composing poetry; like them, too, he emphasizes in several places that the poet's ear--"the onely iudge and discerner"⁷³--will be the poet's best guide to harmonious verse.

Gascoigne makes only one brief reference to the relationship between poetry and music. The remark, as do two of James's, occurs when Gascoigne is discussing the positioning of the caesura; and here he states only that caesuras "haue bene first deuised (as should seeme) by the Musicians."⁷⁴ Perhaps the scant

attention given to the subject in Notes of Instruction arises from Gascoigne's own taste in poetry. Unlike the members of the Pléiade, Gascoigne preferred verse where the reader does find lines that, to use Du Bellay's delightful neologism, are "hyulque" and shock by their harshness. Whatever the reason, it is clear once again that James's primary source for his material is French rather than English.

Rhyme and metre, of course, play major roles in establishing the music of poetry. It is not surprising, therefore, to find James devoting his first two chapters to these aspects of prosody. The material is admittedly elementary, but no more so than similar discussions in the counsels given by Du Bellay and Ronsard.

In any discussion of James's rules and directions regarding rhyme and metre, his terminology must first be clarified. For the most part the young King chooses his own technical terms rather than borrowing the English terminology. To do so, he goes either to the Scottish language or to the root meanings of English words which at first glance seem to have little relationship to the literary context. A good example is the word "flowing", by which James means the movement of a line with the exact number of syllables required by the metre. James takes the term from the Greek *ῥυθμός* (from the verb *ῥέω*, flow), used in the sense of measure; other prosodists transliterated the Greek into "rhythm". To the rhythmic flow of stressed and unstressed syllables, which is the established rhythmic pattern of a line of verse, he gives the name "cullouris",

a term that had been previously used by two or three Scottish poets, although James appears to be the only author in sixteenth-century Scotland to use it. James and his predecessors also used the term to indicate simply a rule of verse.

One word which has an ambivalent meaning in the Reulis and Cautelis is "foot". James most often--but not always--employs it to refer to a syllable, as in "Always tak heid, that the number of your fete in euery lyne be euin, and nocht odde."⁷⁵ I have already noted his use of "section" for caesura, a strange usage since most French and English writers employed the latter in James's own day. Most probably James was attempting once again to establish a Scottish terminology. In any case, the verb "to section" (to divide into parts) shows how logically James's mind worked insofar as prosody was concerned. If the modern reader finds "section", an unusual usage, what can be said in defence of "la quadrature", Du Bellay's term for caesura?⁷⁶

Another expression used by James may at first appear strange to twentieth-century readers. On several occasions in the first chapter he speaks of a long vowel as "eating up" a short vowel: "As for example, in this word, Arabia, the second syllable (ra) is sa lang, that it eatis vp in the pronouncing [a] quhilk is the hinmost syllable of the same word."⁷⁷ No critic as yet was using the term "elision" (of which this usage is one kind) in English. James himself had found the term in Ronsard, who uses the verb in passages such as the following: "Avoid juxtapositioning vowels and diphthongs which do not eat each other [i.e., elide]."⁷⁸

In writing the opening chapters of his treatise, the King was exploring territory that was still very debatable in his own day. The adherents of Latin quantitative verse fought hard to retain the rules of Latin prosody in English verse. Gascoigne, James, and Puttenham advocated changing the old rules, or at least modifying them to suit the modern vernacular. Traces of the old terminology remain in James's treatise as he speaks of long and short vowel sounds, whereas Gascoigne straddles the prosodic fence. In describing an iambic foot, the English poet states: "We vse none other order but a foote of two sillables, whereof the first is depressed [unaccented] or made short, and the second is eleuat [accented] or made long."⁷⁹ Both James and Gascoigne, nevertheless, agree on the basic principle of accented syllables.

James devotes Chapter One to a discussion of rhyme. He lays down rules so that the apprentice poet will, in rhyming, still "keip iust cullouris".⁸⁰ Rhyme should be placed on the last long syllable--and he adds in parenthesis, "with accent". As for the word that one chooses for rhyme, "ze ryme nocht twyse in ane syllable."⁸¹ Puttenham explains what James intends by this rule:

But though we haue sayd that (to make good concord) your seuerall verses should haue their cadences like, yet must there be some difference in their orthographie, though not in their sound, as if one cadence be constraine, the next restraine, or one aspire, another respire, this maketh no good concord, because they are all one; but if ye will exchange both these consonants of the accented sillable, or voyde but one of them away, then will your cadences be good and your concord to, as to say, restraine, refraine, remaine; aspire, desire, retire.⁸²

The source for James as for Puttenham is to be found in Du Bellay's Deffence et illustration where, describing rhyme formed by words which sound the same but have different meanings, he states: "Keep as far as possible away from me these equivocal words and these simple nouns that set up a rhyme when a syllable is added--that is, unless they change or greatly increase the significance of the simple nouns."⁸³

The rest of Chapter One discusses "ryming in termis", a phrase created by James to describe two errors against which he cautions. The first occurs when the poet begins his line with a polysyllable (i.e., for James a word of more than two syllables) and the second when a poet ends a line with a polysyllable. That statement then leads into James's discussion of accented syllables which "eat up" unaccented sounds. He also gives another reason for avoiding the two practices: "Ze will scarcely get many wordis to ryme vnto it, zea, nane at all will ze finde to ryme to sindrie vther langer wordis."⁸⁴ We have already observed that Gascoigne shares James's opinion on polysyllabic words: "Thrust as few wordes of many sillables into your verse as may be."⁸⁵ Of course, as an earlier quotation has demonstrated, Gascoigne adduces quite different reasons from those given by King James.

In passing, it is of interest to note that James, in remarking on the accented syllables of long words, makes the first recorded use of the word "antepenult" in either English or Scottish. Nor was this the only first for James. His opening poem to Reulis and Cautelis, "To ignorants obdurde" has two words

which also make their first appearance in Scottish-English print: "Quadrain" (which, borrowed from the French, became English as quatrain) and "Alexandrin" (again from the French and which in its final English form added a terminal "e").

In Chapter Two, James goes into considerable detail concerning basic rhythm and metre. Once again he starts very simply by describing in much the same manner as does Gascoigne the three kinds of syllables: "some schort, some lang, and some indifferent."⁸⁶ He then offers a description of the basic iambic foot and warns the inexperienced poet to ensure that he place an even number of syllables in every line. Like a good teacher, he gives the reader examples of good and bad iambic rhythm, telling him to use his own ear as a guide.

Then comes the long passage on Sectionoun. James here offers rules which are too mechanical, but at least they provide a guide for the poet. We must, of course, remember that rules for caesura in the sixteenth century were strict, so that James is merely following the dictates of his own age in the directions that he is giving. For the most part, he agrees with Gascoigne, differing only in the placement of the caesura in decasyllabic lines. James prescribes the break after the sixth syllable, whereas Gascoigne requires it after the fourth.

There is much in these particular pages that James shares with the Englishman, and for this reason the young Scot has been accused of taking his material from Notes of Instruction. James, however, goes into more detail than Gascoigne and is more categorical. They share basic ideas, many if not all of

which are found in the works of the Pléiade critics or in the treatises of other ancient and modern theorists. James cannot be charged, at least in these two chapters, with plagiarism. Ideas at the time were freely borrowed, for undoubtedly Du Bellay and Ronsard were pillaged for material by English critics of the day; and the French authors in their turn had no hesitation in plundering both the writers of antiquity and the Italian theorists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But Ronsard in particular provided both Gascoigne and James with many ideas. The French critic, for example, has several pages in which he analyzes the uses and abuses of French verse forms⁸⁷; and many of his thoughts were adapted to apply to English verse.

In his Reulis and Cautelis, James does indeed reveal himself as a bookish young man, yet one endowed with considerable intelligence and talent. Considering the age of its author, the treatise is a remarkable document and in no way inferior to Gascoigne's Notes of Instruction. In making such a statement, one must take into account the difference in tone between the two works. James's text is intended as a manual of instruction for "docile bairns of knowledge,"⁸⁸ whereas Gascoigne's is in the form of an informative letter to a friend. Both, however, rely on common sources, and neither reaches the excellence of Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie.

Later, James was to become a teacher once again when he wrote the Basilikon Doron (1599) for his son and heir, Prince Henry. The young Prince would never live to put his father's

advice into practice as a king; but the book continues to occupy a high place in the prose genre generally known as "the Education of a Prince". In the Basilikon Doron (The Kingly Gift), James prescribes an excellent way of life for a king-to-be. In Book Three, entitled "Anent a Kings Behaviour in Indifferent Things", the Prince is given instruction on a multitude of subjects, only one of which claims our interest in this study: how a king should write.

James does not waste words. His first directive states: "Vse a plaine, short, but stately stile . . . and if your engine spurre you to write anie workes either in verse or in prose, I cannot but allowe you to practise it, but take no long-some works in hande for distracting you from your calling."⁸⁹ Once written, the work should be scrutirized by knowledgeable authors who will pass judgment on it. Ronsard in his Ab-bregé counselled the would-be poet to pass his works to his peers for evaluation and criticism,⁹⁰ and James concurs with this advice, saying: "Before they be set foorth, let them firste bee priuelye censured by some of the best skilled men in that craft. . . ."⁹¹ Ronsard, too, advocated "invention" and figures of speech, both of which topics James had discussed in his own Reulis and Cautelis. In the Basilikon Doron he once again gives similar advice:

& if ye write in vers, remember that it is not the principal part of a poëme to rime right, and flow wel with manie prettie wordes; but the chiefe commendation of a poëme, is, that when the verse shall bee shaken sundrie in / prose, it shalbe found so rich in quick inuentions & poëtick floures, as it shal reteine the lustre of a poëme although in prose.⁹²

And the King's final piece of advice to his son again echoes his own earlier work and also the words of both Du Bellay and Ronsard: "I would also advise you to write in your own language: for there is no thing left to be said in Greeke & Latine already, & ynow of poore scholars would match you in these languages: besides that, it best becommeth a King to purifie & make famous his owne language, wherein he may go before all his subjectes."⁹³ The reasoning is not that of either Du Bellay or Ronsard; it is the voice of the royal steward. It is, too, the royal pride which speaks here, voicing this opinion, a pride that soon became conceit.

Basilikon Doron does not add greatly to the instructions given in the Reulis and Cautelis. Some modern critics, however, have used it once again to imply that James had no true conception of what constitutes poetry and poetic sensibility. Such a conclusion represents not only a misreading of the book but also a neglect of ample evidence to support a contrary opinion as found in his earlier critical treatise. Such a negative attitude reveals, too, an ignorance of many ideas that he has in common with Cicero, Horace, Quintilian, Du Bellay, Ronsard, and Gascoigne, to name only the critics whom we have met in discussing James's literary criticism and theories. As one literary historian has wisely said, "James is, in fact, a good prentice who has had good masters and attended to them."⁹⁴

Notes

- ¹ Henderson, CHEL, III, 135-36.
- ² Warner, The Library of James VI, in which a good example is found on p. xxi, the title page of the manuscript, where the heading and several notes are in French.
- ³ The Poems, I, 67-68, ll. 24-35.
- ⁴ The Poems, I, 67, ll. 3-7.
- ⁵ The Poems, I, 66.
- ⁶ Joel Elias Spingarn, A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1908), p. 172. This work was originally published in 1899.
- ⁷ The Poems, I, 68, ll. 36-37.
- ⁸ Du Bellay, pp. 159-60: "Je n'en parle point apres si grand nombre d'exellens phylosophes & orateurs qui en ont traicté, que je veux avoir été bien leuz & releuz de nostre poëte, premier / qu'il entreprenne quelque hault & excellent ouvraige."
- ⁹ Two examples will suffice: Robert S. Rait, A Royal Rhetorician (New York: Brentanos, 1900), p. xiii: "It is a schoolboy's essay, and it represents the fruit of George Buchanan's teaching." David Harris Willson, King James VI and I (London: Cape, 1956), p. 60: "It is a schoolboy's essay, expounding with amusing gravity the most obvious matters."
- ¹⁰ The Poems, I, 67, ll. 26-29.
- ¹¹ The Poems, I, 67, ll. 13-15.
- ¹² Spingarn, pp. 262-63.
- ¹³ The Poems, I, xliv.
- ¹⁴ The Poems, I, 69.
- ¹⁵ The Poems, I, 69.
- ¹⁶ The Poems, I, 68, ll. 42-50.
- ¹⁷ Du Bellay, p. 103: "Le naturel faire plus sans la doctrine que la doctrine sans le naturel."

- 18 Marcus Tullius Cicero, De Oratore, Books I & II, trans. E. W. Sutton (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969), I, xxv, 113: "Sentio naturam primum, atque ingenium."
- 19 Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, II, xix, 2. Cited by Chamard in his edition of Du Bellay, p. 103: "Natura etiam sine doctina multum valebit, doctrina nulla esse sine natura poterit."
- 20 Du Bellay, p. 105: "ceste ardeur & allegresse d'esprit qui naturellement excite les poëtes, & sans la quele toute doctrine leur serait manque & inutile."
- 21 Pierre de Ronsard, "Avertissement aux quatres premiers livres de la Franciade" (1572), Oeuvres complètes, 2 vols., ed. Gustave Cohen (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), II, 1009: "porté de fureur et d'art (sans toutesfois se soucier beaucoup des reigles de grammaire), et sur tout favorisé d'une prévoyance et naturel jugement. . . ."
- 22 Westcott, New Poems by James I of England: "The King and his guide in the art appropriated from the English treatises, after the fashion of border reivers, making adroit and somewhat disingenuous changes. . . ."
- 23 The Poems, I, 308, note to "Sonnet Decifring the Perfyte Poet".
- 24 The Poems, I, 79, ll. 3-4.
- 25 The Poems, I, 79, l. 7.
- 26 The Poems, I, 79, ll. 15-20. Nature here comes close to the Romantics' concept of creative imagination.
- 27 The Poems, I, 78, ll. 14-17.
- 28 Du Bellay, pp. 33-34: "Il fault donques necessairement que ces deux Langues soient entendues de celui qui veut acquerir cete copie & richesse d'invention, premiere & / principale piece du harnoys de l'orateur."
- 29 Du Bellay, p. 32: "Toutefois ce tant louable labour de traduyre ne me semble moyen unique & suffisant, pour elever nostre vulgaire à l'egal & parangon des autres plus fameuses Langues."
- 30 Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 996: "Car le principal poinct est l'invention, laquelle vient tant de la bonne nature que de la leçon des bons et anciens autheurs."
- 31 Ronsard, "Avertissements aux odes", p. 973: "Je suis de cette opinion que nulle Poësie se doit louer pour accomplie, si elle ne ressemble la nature. . . ."

32 Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 999: "L'invention n'est autre chose que le bon naturel d'une imagination concevant les idées et formes de toutes choses qui se peuvent imaginer, tant celestes que terrestres, animées ou inanimées, pour apres les représenter, descrire et imiter; . . . le but . . . du poëte est d'imiter, inventer et représenter les choses qui sont, ou qui peuvent estre, vraisemblables."

33 George Gascoigne, Certayne Notes of Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse or Ryme in English, Written at the Request of Master Edouardo Donati (1575), reprinted in George Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, 2 vols. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1904, rpt. 1964), I, 48.

34 Gascoigne, p. 47.

35 Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, I, 359, note to p. 47, l. 9: "Inuentio salsa. Aliquid lautum, rarum, et singularis."

36 The Poems, I, 75, ll. 21-22.

37 The Poems, I, 76, ll. 1-3.

38 The Poems, I, 76, ll. 10-12.

39 The Poems, I, 76, ll. 22-25.

40 Gascoigne, p. 52.

41 Gascoigne, p. 48.

42 Gascoigne, pp. 56-57.

43 Gascoigne also limits the sonnet form to a poem of fourteen lines. See Gascoigne, p. 55, ll. 12-22, in which he gives much more specific directions for the sonnet form than does James. On p. 57, l. 3, he remarks: "Sonets serue aswell in matters of loue as of discourse."

44 Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 1005. James also permits irregular lines at the poet's pleasure for this subject; Ronsard does not.

45 Du Bellay, p. 172: "Encores te veux-je advertir de hanter quelquesfois, non seulement les scavans, mais aussi toutes sortes d'ouvriers & gens mecaniques, comme mariniers, fondeurs, peintres, engraveurs & autres, scävoir leurs inventions, les noms des matieres, des outillz, & les termes usitez en leurs ars & metiers, pour tyrer de la ces belles comparaisons & vives descriptions de toutes choses."

46 Ronsard, "Avertissement de la Franciade", p. 1026: "Tu n'oublieras les noms propres des outils de tous mestiers, et

prendras plaisir à t'en enquerre le plus que tu pourras, et principalement de la chasse. Homere a tiré toutes ses plus belles comparaisons de là."

47 Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 998: "tout ainsi qu'on ne peut dire un corps humain beau, plaisant, et accomply, s'il n'est composé de sang, venes, arteres et tendons, et sur tout d'une nayve couleur, ainsi la Poésie ne peut estre plaisante, vive ne parfaite sans belles inventions, descriptions, comparaisons, qui sont les ners et la vie du livre. . . ."

48 The Poems, I, 77, ll. 4-5.

49 The Poems, I, 77, ll. 7-12.

50 The Poems, I, 77, ll. 14-15.

51 The Poems, I, 79, l. 19.

52 Du Bellay, p. 182: "[La poésie] est comme une peinture." See Horace, Ars Poetica, 361.

53 Du Bellay, p. 162: "Quand aux epithetes, . . . je veux que tu en uses de sorte, que sans eux ce que tu diras seroit beaucoup moindre . . . & regarde bien qu'ilz soient convenables, non seulement à leurs substantifz, mais aussi à ce que tu / decriras. . . ."

54 Du Bellay, p. 161: "Entre autres choses, je t'avery' user souvent de la figure ANTONOMASIE, aussi frequente aux anciens poëtes, comme peu usitée, voire incongne des Francoys. La grace d'elle est quand on designe le nom de quelque chose par ce qui luy est propre, comme le Pere foudroyant, pour Jupiter. . . ."

55 The Poems, I, 77, ll. 23-24.

56 The Poems, I, 77, ll. 25-26.

57 The Poems, I, 78, ll. 5-8.

58 The Poems, I, 75, ll. 1-7.

59 The Poems, I, 81, l. 25.

60 Gascoigne, p. 56.

61 The Poems, I, 73, ll. 15-17.

62 Gascoigne, p. 51.

63 Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 1003: "Tu eviteras aussi l'abondance des monosyllabes en tes vers, pour estre rudes et mal plaisans à l'ouyre."

64 Du Bellay, pp. 164-65: "afin que plus facilement on les peust / chanter sans varier la musique."

65 Du Bellay, pp. 165-66: "Regarde principalement qu'en ton vers n'yait rien dur, hyulque our / redundant. Que les periodes soient bien jointtz, numereux, bien remplissans l'oreille, & telz qu'ilz n'excedent point ce terme & but, que naturellement nous sentons, soit en lisant ou ecoutant." The word "hyulque" means a word or phrase that shocks the ear by leaving a hiatus of sound and/or meaning. Du Bellay has probably invented this word.

66 Du Bellay, p. 150: "mesure & jugement de l'oreille." He is here taking up Cicero's "quod sub aurium mensuram aliquam cadat." (De Oratore, XX, 67).

67 Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 1006: "sans crainte tu trancheras et alongeras ainsi qu'il te plaira, gardant toujours une certaine mesure consultee par ton oreille laquelle est certain juge de la structure des vers. . . ."

68 Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 997: "pour estre plus propres a la musique et accord des instrumens, en faveur desquels il semble que la Poésie soit née; car la Poésie sans les instrumens, ou sans la grace d'une seule ou plusieurs voix, n'est nullement agreable."

69 The Poems, I, 72, ll. 16-17.

70 The Poems, I, 72, ll. 17-19.

71 The Poems, I, 72, ll. 22-23.

72 The Poems, I, 74, ll. 24-27.

73 The Poems, I, 72, l. 3.

74 Gascoigne, p. 54.

75 The Poems, I, 71, ll. 29-30.

76 Du Bellay, p. 163.

77 The Poems, I, 71, ll. 3-6.

78 Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 1002: "Tu eviteras . . . les rencontres des voyelles et diftongues qui ne se mangent point."

79 Gascoigne, p. 50.

80 The Poems, I, 70, l. 1.

81 The Poems, I, 70, l. 3.

⁸² George Puttenham, Arte of English Poesie (1589) in Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, II, 7. Cited by Craigie in The Poems, I, 308, note to line 3.

⁸³ Du Bellay, p. 146: "Ces equivoques donq' & ces simples rymez avecques leurs composez, comme un baisser & abaisser, s'ilz ne changent ou augmentent grandement la signification de leurs simples, me soint chassez bien oing."

⁸⁴ The Poems, I, 71, ll. 15-17.

⁸⁵ Gascoigne, p. 51.

⁸⁶ The Poems, I, 71, ll. 23-24.

⁸⁷ Ronsard, Abbrege, pp. 1004-06.

⁸⁸ The Poems, I, 66, l. 4,

⁸⁹ The Basilicon Doron of King James VI, ed. James Craigie, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1944 and 1950), I, 184, ll. 11-15.

⁹⁰ Ronsard, Abbrege, p. 997.

⁹¹ Basilicon Doron, I, 184, ll. 16-19.

⁹² Basilicon Doron, I, 186, ll. 12-17.

⁹³ Basilicon Doron, I, 186, ll. 18-23.

⁹⁴ C. S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century excluding Drama in Oxford History of English Literature (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), III, 431.

Conclusion

The preceding chapters have endeavoured to present critical insights into James as poet and critic. In so doing, they have kept in the forefront his literary works, disregarding moral characteristics of James as a man and referring only where relevant to James the King. We have seen that far too many critics, their judgments biased by considerations other than aesthetic, have rejected King James as a poet and critic. His two published volumes, the work of a teenager and of a young, ever-developing monarch of a disunited country, offer only part of his creative work, and perhaps the inferior part of his lyric poetry. Until the twentieth century, when opinions of James as a poet slowly are being revised, his unpublished and uncollected poems, especially his lyric poems, were not available to critics--even to those who should have offered an honest appraisal. Only now can we look at his entire corpus of verse and arrive at a balanced judgment.

Had I considered James as a man of letters, the task would have been easier. The King as a prose writer reveals strengths that he often lacks as a poet. His Basilikon Doron (1599) presents a very personal and affectionate guide to kingship, written for his son and heir, Henry, and showing qualities of both heart and head that appear all too rarely in his verse. A Counterblaste to Tobacco (1604) is filled with a wealth of

vivid detail expressed with vigour and passion--again a power that critics have shown to be missing in much of his verse. In his philosophic, political, and religious works such as The Trew Law of Free Monarchies (1603), the Declaration against Cardinal Perron (1607), his speeches in Parliament, and even his commentaries on the Bible, he demonstrates a lively mind, ever ready with excellent arguments and apt figures.

Although they appear to a greater degree in his prose writings, these same characteristics are present in his poetry. Many poems, along with his work on poetic theory, reveal a technique and sensibility sufficiently refined that we may assign James an honourable place among poets of Scotland and even of England. In asserting this conclusion, one must necessarily place James in the time frame of his age.

In Scotland, as we have seen, lyric poetry lacked distinction in 1584, when James's Essayes of a Prentise appeared. Alexander Scott and Alexander Montgomerie, it is true, were writing good but undistinguished poems. Poetry in Middle Scots needed revitalizing, and it is to James's credit that he assumed the literary leadership of his country. Almost alone, through his discussions at the royal court, through his urging his Castalian band to write and to translate, and through his own literary works, he made his countrymen aware of the developments in both poetry and criticism that were occurring in France and Italy. The King's efforts brought Scottish poetry into the mainstream of Renaissance letters. Unfortunately, even before James's death the literary tastes of his Scottish countrymen

were undergoing a change. Lyric and narrative poetry of the kind favoured by King James was already losing ground to works exhibiting both a sterner moral code and a more didactic message than he and his Castilians had advocated. But James had at least set Scottish letters on a new path, replacing the old Scottish Chaucerian tradition (which had served Scotland well during the "drab" days of English literature) with a new and smoother verse and with content that reflected the new tastes of Renaissance poets.

In so doing, he retained the richest legacy of Scottish letters: the language itself, late Middle Scots with its own rhythms, vocabulary, and pungent directness. He kept, too, the flyting poem, urging his fellow poets to write this type of poem. His own poetry does not include a poem in this peculiarly Scottish genre; yet, that he would have been capable of composing such poetry is evident when one reads James's satirical poems, "Ane admonition to the maister poete to leave of greit crakkin" and "A Satire against Woemen"--two fine examples of satiric verse.

Not all of James's poetry, especially his early lyrics, attain such a high standard. Many of them sound less like the work of an inspired craftsman than they do the efforts of a pedant writing versified exercises. Classical allusions abound, diminishing whatever there might have been of personal inspiration. The heightened style demanded by poetry all too often remains a decorated shell, empty of profound thought. Yet on occasion, even the early lyrics of The Essayes of a Prentise reveal a nugget in which thought, theme, diction, and imagery--the essentials of poetry--

combine to show that the poet is a true literary artist capable of reporting in a competent aesthetic entity what he sees, feels, and thinks. Such are Sonnet 5 (Autumn), Sonnet 6 (Winter), and Sonnet 7 (Ocean). These are lively, pleasing, word pictures. Gone for the most part are mechanical effects such as inversion and the use of "filler" expressions; gone, too, are the abuse of classical allusions and the use of the general rather than the specific word to denote a trait or an object.

The early sonnets, in short, can not all be set aside as being the amusements or the exercises of a schoolboy. The poet's chronic inability to combine the elements of good poetry into a successful poem destroys many of James's early sonnets. When he succeeds, however, as in the lyrics cited above, the poems possess more than mere antiquarian interest and represent sound contributions to the sonnet form. We must remember that the King can be counted among the pioneers of the sonnet form in Scotland, and even in England. Any assessment of his early sonnets must take this historical fact into account, for it may well be a cause of much of the unevenness of quality found in these poems. Wyatt and Surrey had experimented with the form; Gascoigne had rough hewn one or two sonnets; even Spenser had composed a handful of poems in the genre by the year 1584. But King James was apart from the English stream, choosing to go--as the English authors themselves had gone--to Italian and French sources for models. James, too, was to be outstripped as a sonneteer by later Elizabethan authors; but his poetry,

although comparable to what was being produced in England, was written in Middle Scots and remains part of the Scottish literary tradition.

Gradually James mastered the art of integrating poetic qualities into a successful lyric. By the time of his marriage in 1589, he was writing poetry which at its best reveals his own personality and which expresses authentic feelings and experiences. Moreover, his difficulties with metre were being overcome, yielding to a fluency and smoothness of diction that allow his lines to flow rather than to emerge like spurting jets of inspiration. In this characteristic he excels both Wyatt and Surrey on occasion. Sonnets such as "The azur'd vaulte, the crystall circles bright" (included in His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises), "As on the wings of your enchanted fame" (addressed to his bride), and "God give not kings the style of gods in vain" (found first in the 1603 edition of his Basilikon Doron) are typical of James's hard-won mastery over this demanding lyric form. Of the last-named sonnet, Percy in his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry affirmed that it "would not dishonour any writer of that time."¹ In passing, it may be noted that these three sonnets have been included in many anthologies and cited for their excellence. One is tempted to make a comparison with Drayton, a contemporary of James, who succeeded--in the opinion of a twentieth-century critic-- in writing only one poem that reached "the highest level of poetic feeling and expression."² He was referring to Drayton's sonnet, "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part".

Of other sonneteers in Elizabethan England, the same critic states that they displayed "clumsy inanity" and "slavish mimicry": "Rarely did they show facility or individuality, and still more rarely, poetic feeling."³ James may well have written many sonnets meriting the same criticism; but he also demonstrated his ability to write competent poems. Many of his later sonnets clearly show him to be the superior of poets such as Samuel Daniel, Henry Constable, Richard Barnfield, and Michael Drayton. On the basis of his best sonnets alone, the King deserves higher recognition than he has been accorded.

James, moreover, did not restrict his lyric poetry to the sonnet form. Several longer poems are well composed and set King James apart from many lesser poets of his time. Both "A complaint of his mistress's absence from Court" and the lengthy "A dream of his Mistress my Ladie Glammis" offer examples of a different style of love poetry. The first, although a conventional poem insofar as theme is concerned, most probably has no foundation in fact to support the occasion celebrated in the poem; yet it is well crafted, the theme being carefully developed and expressed with skillful use of image and rhythm. The second poem, perhaps less successful because it leaves some doubt regarding the symbolism employed, shows the inventiveness of James's poetic imagination and his ability to construct a long poem which is neither monotonous nor tedious. The union in love of the golden locket and the heart-shaped amethyst, indeed, is a fine conceit, worthy of any poet of the age. Both poems must be judged as more than trifles, for the poet has



known how to develop his subject and to maintain interest with no loss of lyric quality.

As a lyric poet, however, James appears best in the sonnet form. The many poems included in Miscellanea of Craigie's second volume reveal a rare gift that James possessed to a degree greater than many of his contemporaries: the ability to turn a successful sonnet on any subject that he chose. Although uneven in quality, for James lacked the essential quality of self-criticism, the lyrics in Miscellanea represent a much higher standard than those in The Essayes of a Prentise. The sonnet being a lyric form, James composed verses on love, personal loss, friendship, and loneliness; he also wrote poems about many persons whom he had known (not necessarily friends), on civil disorder, on his disillusionment at being betrayed, on sleep, and even on his reactions to translations of poems from foreign languages. Most of these sonnets reflect James's inventive mind and his poetic sensibility. Such a poem is "A Sonnet on Mr W. Fullers translation of Petrarch's triumph of loue"; here James was dealing with two topics that he knew well: Petrarch and the art of translation. Another poem reveals his honest expression of mingled sorrow, loss, and gratitude, "An epitaphe on John Shaw", which in its structure, theme, and diction ranks high as a sonnet. The King composed only a handful of sonnets on the theme of nature; but he seems to be quite at home in his handling of the topic, as in "Not orientall Indus cristall streames" where the comparison between the simple, unsullied Scottish stream and the majestic, renowned

rivers of the world is well developed. Taken as a whole, therefore, the aesthetic standards maintained in the Miscellanea sonnets again demonstrate James's power of imaginative expression and hard-won facility with a difficult form. These sonnets must be added to those of the Amatoria section where, again, James had shown himself capable of writing a series of love poems that are the equal of many sonnets on the same subject composed by several of his contemporaries, although he by no means achieves the excellence of Spenser or Shakespeare.

If James proves his abilities as a lyric poet, even more does he show his claim to greater recognition when we consider his two narrative poems, "Phoenix" (in The Essayes of a Prentise) and The Lepanto (in His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises). Indeed it was as a narrative poet that King James gained an international literary reputation during his own lifetime. Elizabethan Critical Essays, compiled by G. Gregory Smith, contains at least six or seven references to James as a "heroic" poet, praising especially The Lepanto. One such comment, effusive to the extreme, is the following from Gabriel Harvey's Pierces Supererogation (1593):

And now whiles I consider what a Trompet of Honour
Homer hath bene to sturre vp many woorthy Princes,
I cannot forget the woorthy Prince that is a Homer
to himselfe, a Golden spurre to Nobility, a Scepter
to Vertue, a Verdure to the Spring, a Sunne to the
day, and hath not onely translated the two diuine
Poems of Salustius du Bartas, his heauenly Vransy,
and his hellish Furies, but hath readd a most val-
orous Martial Lecture vnto himselfe in his owne
victorious Lepanto, a short, but heroicall, worke,
in meeter, but royal meeter, fitt for a Dauids harpe
--Lepanto, first the glory of Christendome against
the Turke, and now the garland of a souveraine crowne.⁴

More restrained is his comment in A New Letter, written in the same year: "The glory of such an immortal memorial as some noble and royal wits have bestowed upon the ever-renowned Lepanto."⁴ Because of Du Bartas' translation of The Lepanto into French, the King's reputation as an epic poet soon spread on the Continent. Praise was certainly merited, for the poem displays not only James's grasp of epic style, of history, and of classical lore, but also an instinctive understanding of how to present a narrative in a poetic yet structured and entertaining manner. His choice of illustrative anecdotes and of supportive imagery combines well with a diction reflecting the movement and progress of the battle. A short epic in the Virgilian style, The Lepanto merits rereading even today.

Better, however, is "Phoenix"; a shorter narrative in which the King's personal emotions are much more intimately involved. The departure of Esmé Stewart, the handsome relative who had inspired and supplied the affection so lacking in James's boyhood, was deeply felt. Fortunately, consolation presented itself in the realization that Esmé's son still lived and would perhaps one day return to Scotland. Thus, phoenix-like, the line and the love would be restored. The allegory is well developed and the poem structured in such a way that the parallel (phoenix-Stewart) appears as a natural expression of the poet's sorrow. His ability to evoke this emotion and to sustain it over a lengthy narrative is a test of James's poetic power; even more, to introduce the note of hope towards the end of the poem and to unite poet and reader by having the latter accept

the final resolution of the narrative demand a careful structuring of thought and feeling. James has skillfully accomplished this difficult task, so that "Phoenix" represents a minor masterpiece when considered in relation to both Middle Scots and Elizabethan literature written up until 1584. The poem is the more remarkable when one considers that it is the creation of a young man who had just turned nineteen years of age. Certainly these two narratives confirm our opinion that King James be placed among the significant contributors to sixteenth-century poetry.

It would be too much to expect that James would excel in all fields of literature. As a translator of the Bible, indeed, he fails lamentably. After successfully carrying out the difficult task of putting Du Bartas' The Uranie and The Furies into Middle Scots (and into a kind of Scots-English), the King attempted from time to time translations of various parts of the Bible, particularly the Book of Psalms. His objective was not simply to make a literal rendition of the Latin text but to produce a new metrical version. Already several metrical versions existed, prepared to be sung in churches. With these Scottish and English texts (often so monotonous in the ballad stanza form), the King was not satisfied. Yet he failed conspicuously to produce anything better. So complicated were his metrical versions, so varied his metres and stanza forms, that not one of James's translations has been adopted by the Scottish Church. The best that can be said for them is that they again demonstrate his inventive mind insofar as poetic creativ-

ity is concerned. At their worst they resemble the pedantic exercises of someone preoccupied with style rather than content.

That this should be so is strange when one considers that James devotes much of his critical treatise, the Reulis and Cautelis, to describing content suitable for various verse forms. The paradox is but one of the perplexing aspects of the treatise, for perhaps no work by King James VI has provoked more controversy among students of literature. It may well be, for example, that parts of this guide to the writing of verse are traceable to Gascoigne. But James for the most part prefers to use European sources and models, sources which provided material for every English critic during the sixteenth century. All scholars and most poets of the Elizabethan period had studied both the ancient and modern works of literary criticism. They were a common heritage that all felt could be drawn upon at will.

What we should remember is that James's Reulis and Cautelis was the first work of its kind written in Middle Scots and for use by Scottish poets. He himself made great efforts to follow his own dictates, even if they are today unpalatable in some instances (as, for example, his stress on alliterative effects). As steward of his people and as a practising poet, James felt compelled to direct his subjects' attention to what he considered best in literary theory. Some of his remarks may appear obvious, even childish, to modern readers; but the same may be said for Aristotle's Poetics. We should recall that the young King was not writing for us but for a race that had never

enjoyed its own literary handbook of poetry. He kept in mind the views that he had placed in his own "Preface": to indicate the new rules that now played a part in poetic composition and to provide a primer for poetry serviceable to his own compatriots. Certainly he places great stress on the mechanics of verse; more importantly, he recognizes that without natural poetic abilities (e.g., imagination) his readers will never progress beyond the level of mere versifiers: "For gif Nature be nocht the cheif worker in this airt, Reulis wilbe bot a band to Na-/ture, and will mak zow within short space weary of the haill airt."⁶ James, therefore, emphasizes the fundamentals of the art, and in so doing has written a practical vade-mecum for would-be practitioners of poetry. Keeping his purpose in mind, we realize that the limited compass of the treatise makes the work all the more valuable for its time and place, a worthwhile contribution to poetic theory.

His own poetry, as I have attempted to demonstrate, goes far beyond the basics that he offers to the readers of his Reulis and Cautelis. For too long his works have been relegated to the lowest ranks of poetry, and often unjustly and unreasonably so. James succeeded in making a vernacular language that lacked much in both flexibility and subtlety the vehicle for poems which in their style, form, and content helped to establish Middle Scots as a tongue capable of expressing thoughts and feelings in a manner worthy of a people living in the world of sixteenth-century Europe. His poetry, in short, reflects the new poetics of the Renaissance world, poetics

characterized by a smoother style and a new content written with an ease of expression that the Pléiade had already made a reality in France. His was only a moderate ability; but with that talent he was able to create a body of poetry which at its best is characterized by variety and by a style at once vivid and fresh.

Notes

¹ Percy, Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (2nd ed., 1767), II, 304. Cited by Craigie, The Poems, II, 255.

² CHEL, III, 263.

³ CHEL, III, 265.

⁴ Gabriel Harvey, Pierces Supererogation (1593), in G. Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, II, 265.

⁵ Gabriel Harvey, A New Letter (1593), in Brydges, Arch-aica (1815), pt. ix, 7 and cited by Craigie in The Poems, II, 274.

⁶ The Poems, I, 68, ll. 46-48.

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Abstract

James VI of Scotland (1566-1625), who became James I of England in 1603, has deservedly earned the reputation of being Britain's best educated and most literate monarch. Unfortunately his was an age of changing values in religion, politics, and literature; and James fell victim to difficulties associated with all three. This study, however, concerns itself with his reputation as a man of letters, more particularly with James as a man of letters in poetry and criticism.

Influenced often by politics and/or religion, historians and literary scholars for over two hundred years gave short shrift to James's poetry and criticism. His work, labelled schoolboyish, pedantic, derivative, was never studied in depth by unbiassed critics. Consequently, James has until recently occupied a very low position in English and Scottish literature. Early in the twentieth century an American scholar, Allan F. Westcott, discovered a manuscript containing new poems by King James. In the fifties a Scottish literary historian, James Craigie, incorporated Westcott's findings into his own research and produced a two-volume work, The Poems of King James VI of Scotland, the standard edition of the King's poetry and criticism.

Only since Craigie's edition has appeared could an impartial study of James's contribution be undertaken. This present

study attempts to show that James in both his Essayes of a Prentise (1584) and His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres (1591) wrote some good lyric poetry and some very good narrative poetry ("Phoenix" and The Lepanto).

Profiting from Craigie's research, I have also been able to demonstrate that in James's unpublished and uncollected lyric (and satiric) poetry, the royal author achieved quite a high standard of literary composition--certainly much higher than historians and critics have heretofore accorded him. In only one area of literary endeavour did James fail: his translations from the Book of Psalms. His failure is ironic for two reasons; first, James was recognized as a learned linguist and theologian, and second, he had already made successful translations of much more difficult material (part of the French poet Du Bartas' La Sepmaine).

As for the King's critical work, the Reulis and Cautelis, this study disproves the accepted opinion that it is a wholesale borrowing from Gascoigne's similar treatise. Rather, I have demonstrated that both Gascoigne and James used as common sources the works of two distinguished members of the French Pléiade, Du Bellay and Ronsard. As a contribution to Middle Scots literature, it merits a high place in Scottish literary history.

James, therefore, has been undervalued as poet and critic, the victim of biassed scholars who lacked access to his complete works. This present study, it is hoped, will help to set the record straight.