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THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH BORDER BALLADS
- A CRITICAL STUDY

by

Roger Grant Kendall, B.A.

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Durham

1973

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ABSTRACT

Critics concerned with the ballad have seldom in the past ventured any sustained analyses of texts and only incidentally have they raised one of the most fundamental questions of all - "what makes a good ballad?" This thesis attempts to answer that question, by close reference to a seemingly homogeneous group of texts, popularly known as "The Border Ballads". Since, however, the term "Border Ballad" has often been misconstrued, a new definition is here advanced, namely that a Border Ballad may be so called if it can be proved to have had an oral genesis and transmission among the singing folk of the English-Scottish Border region, or if its thematic content and referends render it unlikely to have been composed elsewhere. From a study of these themes emerges the Border Ballad's identity as an artistically shaped yet socially motivated narrative type, since besides providing entertainment for the folk, it can also be seen to constitute a testing-ground for their shared ideology. This is at the basis of the Border Ballad's greatness, for its poetic values and dramatic tensions are born of a distinctly regional dilemma - the attempts of an aware minority to come to terms with the Border Problem, a long period of political and economic malaise lasting from the Scottish Wars of Independence until the union of the two kingdoms in 1603. The Border Ballads were in their heyday during this period, and so an attempt has been made to present them chronologically, with careful attention to the difficult problem of dating. Finally, they are shown to be most successful as ballads to the extent that they embody the "genius loci", and express through their words and music the life-style of a particular folk community at a crucial moment of its history.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT AND FOOTNOTES

A.D.C.P.	Acts of the Lords of Council in Public Affairs
A.o.C.	Archie o Cawfield
A.S.D.	An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary
B.B.M.	British Ballads From Maine
B.F.S.S.N.E.	Bulletin of the Folksong Society of the North-East
C.B.P.	The Calendar of Border Papers
C.S.P. Dom.	Calendar of State Papers, Domestic
C.S.P. For.	Calendar of State Papers, Foreign
C.S.P. Scot.	Calendar of State Papers, Scotland
D.N.B.	A Dictionary of National Biography
D.O.S.T.	A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue
E.D.D.	The English Dialect Dictionary
E.D.S.L.	An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language
E.R.S.	The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland
E.S.P.B.	The English and Scottish Popular Ballads
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
H.N.	Hobie Noble
J.A.F.	Journal of American Folklore
J.o.S.	Jock of the Side
L.L.	Last Leaves of Aberdeenshire Ballads
M.	Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border
M.E.D.	A Middle English Dictionary
N.Q.	Notes and Queries
N.W.	A Glossary of Northumberland Words
O.E.D.	Oxford English Dictionary
O.M.	The Outlaw Murray
P.M.L.A.	Publications of the Modern Language Association
R.E.S.	Review of English Studies
R.P.C.	The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland
R.R.	Rookhope Ryde
S.N.D.	The Scottish National Dictionary
S.S.L.	Studies in Scottish Literature
T.A.P.A.	Transactions of the American Philological Association
T.T.C.B.	The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads

INTRODUCTION

The northern Borderers of the Middle Ages had, amongst the rude judicial customs of their "clannit" society, an effective shaming-device to expose to ridicule anyone who had offended against their code of honour. They called the device "baffling" and historians and chroniclers of the period tell us that a man was "baffled" if he broke his sworn oath, his word of honour as a clansman. To make his disgrace public a painted effigy of the perjurer, depicting him with heels uppermost and his name "wonderynge, cryenge and blowing" from his mouth, was tied to a horse's tail and carried for all to see through the "toun", or village. Thus the man's own family and clan might acknowledge that in failing to keep his pledged word he had "brought no small dishonour upon the country that gave him birth".[1]

It would not be untrue to say that critics have been baffled by the Ballad. Disputing for a century or more, and hotly, about definitions, origin and diffusion, they seem to have been standing on their heads, tackling the problem from only one end. No wonder, then, that they have failed to appreciate the Ballad for what it really is - an artistic creation of the human intellect, a tale sung by men and women to entertain other men and women. Either through reluctance or inability to discuss in proper terms the Ballad's artistic - poetic - musical merits, critics have done the Ballad no small disservice. They have deserved, many of them, to be baffled by it.

However, it is not my intention in this introduction to dwell on the shortcomings of previous ballad scholarship, nor even to attempt more than a very cursory survey of that scholarship's development. This has

1 John Major, A History of Greater Britain (trans. Archibald Constable), 325. For a fuller description of the "baffling" custom see infra, ch. IX, 'Ballads of Revenge', pp. 477-8.

already been done, notably by Sigurd B. Hustvedt[1] and Albert B. Friedman[2] for the early years of ballad study and by D.K. Wilgus[3] for a more recent period.

An interesting perspective is gained from a reading of Wilgus's survey. He covers in Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship roughly the first half of the twentieth century. A glance at his chapter headings is sufficient to reveal what Wilgus himself admits as the hitherto serious imbalance in ballad and folksong research. He devotes his first two lengthy chapters to what he calls "The Ballad War", the critical controversy over ballad origins, and his third chapter to ballad and folksong collections in Great Britain and North America. Together, these three chapters represent well over two thirds of Wilgus's entire study - a fairly accurate reflection, proportionately, of the time spent by collectors in garnering their texts and by scholars in debating their theories of composition and origin.

Of course, one should not belittle the importance of the above occupations. The concept that folksong is the spontaneous, artless and autochthonous expression of some kind of collective soul was at first sufficiently fascinating to warrant thorough examination. Also, it can be readily appreciated that attempts to index, classify and evaluate folksongs and ballads could not get under way until most of the collecting and recording had been done. Nevertheless, it is now seventy-five years since the great ballad scholar Francis James Child closed his near-definitive collection, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (1882-1898), and nearly half a century has passed since

1 Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain during the Eighteenth Century; Ballad Books and Ballad Men.

2 The Ballad Revival.

3 Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898.

the publication of the last important collection of ballads from an oral source, Gavin Greig's Last Leaves of Traditional Ballads and Ballad Airs, Collected in Aberdeenshire (1925)[1]. What is now needed is a careful and considered appraisal of the ballad texts that have been so painstakingly gathered for us.

By far the most frequent kind of ballad "criticism" over the last fifty years has been writing offered as a comprehensive guide to the general reader. Although such handbooks have often confined themselves exclusively to an assessment of the Child canon of ballads, many of them are still excellent introductions to the ballad field. Among them one finds especially informative and helpful G.H. Gerould's The Ballad of Tradition (1932), E.K. Wells's The Ballad Tree (1950) and M.J.C. Hodgart's The Ballads (1950). A comparative study of the ballads, but one which took no account of their tunes, was W.J. Entwhistle's European Balladry (1939), and a compilation of the Child ballads' folkloristic elements was undertaken by L.C. Wimberly in Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads (1928). In 1959 B.H. Bronson began the task of collecting and annotating the recoverable tunes of the Child ballads[2], a task which Child himself had largely neglected in his search for the texts.[3]

Still, it is apparent that as far as studies of individual ballads, or even groups of ballads, are concerned, whilst considerable effort has been expended in the attempt to determine their authorship and origin, critical attention has not focused on the ballads as sharply as on more

1 "Last Leaves" has, in fact, turned out to be a misnomer. In the last twenty years the Fellows of the School of Scottish Studies have collected several thousand more folksongs from the Northeast of Scotland, among which have been several ballads.

2 The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads, with their texts, according to the extant records of Great Britain and America. Bronson's work is still in progress.

3 He did, however, publish a few ballad airs from manuscript sources, see E.S.P.B., V, 411-24.

literate forms of poetry and song.[1] Child, and the collectors and editors who have followed him, have often passed incidental judgements on ballad texts, while it is to be remarked that the beginnings of literary scrutiny have more frequently found their way into American folklore journals than into our own. Even in America, the folksong scholar Archer Taylor described a situation in 1931 that has altered very little since. Taylor complained:

> No detailed analysis of any ballad has been undertaken by an English or American scholar since the completion of that monumental work [Child's] ... Obviously we must know the history and relations of the existing texts before we can profitably indulge in speculations about ultimate origins. Such speculations ... have been unduly generous with quotations from ethnological writers on the South Seas and other parts of the globe equally remote from direct connection with the English and Scottish popular ballad. They have totally ignored Scandinavian texts and studies. It is wiser to stay at home and determine, as well as may be, the life-history of a single ballad; to seek the information to be derived from a study of the texts themselves, instead of visiting Malaysia.[2]

What I propose in this thesis is the close analysis of a number of individual ballads. Adopting a line of approach postulated by Wilgus - the study of ballad traditions within a particular region[3] - I have taken advantage of the homogeneous links thrown up by a well-known family of texts, the ballads of the English and Scottish Border.

A study of these Border Ballads, as they have come to be called, ought to prove valuable. Since, as Louise Pound has stated, "all oral tradition is necessarily regional or group lore, a generalisation too often overlooked"[4], we should welcome the opportunity to scrutinise a regional corpus of ballads, if only to correct the global view of the older folklorists who were so busy in their search for a mysterious

1 The few exercises in ballad criticism worthy of note have been reviewed by Wilgus, op.cit., 240-317.

2 'Edward' and 'Sven i Rosengård', vii.

3 Op. cit., 302.

4 'Folklore and Dialect', California Folklore Quarterly, IV (1945), 151.

national "folk". Indeed, "there is never any one folk from the point of view of folklore, but instead many folk groups, as many as there are regional cultures or occupations or racial groups within a region[1]. The Border Ballads are indigenous to a specific geographical locale, although it will be necessary to circumscribe this locale in order to attach any real value to what has often been a somewhat loose term. Further, it is just possible to observe the evolution of the Border Ballads through a well-documented period of our national history, thus adding an important temporal dimension.

Folklorists have for some time now been stressing the need for historic-geographic methods of enquiry. Philips Barry, an American folk-song collector and scholar, has stated the underlying assumption of these methods: "no two song histories", writes Barry, "are necessarily similar: each quest is an investigation by itself, unrelated to any other"[2]. A constant awareness of this fact is crucial to any ballad study since it compels us to take full account of the eccentricities of oral transmission, the difficulty that ensues once we try to force traditional forms of literature into clear-cut categories. Barry goes on to determine three fixed areas of research requisite to the writing of a full critical history of any given ballad. These are:

> The folklore background, including the factual basis, if any, of the plot of the ballad-drama; the origin of the ballad as the artistic expression, through words and music, of a particular folk complex; the re-creation of the ballad both psychologically and in relation to the evolving multiplicity of versions of texts and sets of airs[3].

1 Ibid.

2 Bulletin of the Folk-Song Society of the Northeast, no. 8 (1934), 17.

3 Op. cit., 24.

Three similar avenues of investigation have been opened by Stith Thompson for the folktale:

> (a) establishing an approximation to an original form which will sufficiently account for all the available variants;
> (b) determining as nearly as may be the age and place of origin;
> (c) tracing the vicissitudes of the story through time and place, the course of its wanderings, and the modifications it has undergone[1].

The Border Ballads seem to afford ideal material for a three-fold investigation along the lines of Barry and Thompson. To begin with, many of these ballads, such as The Battle of Otterburn (Child 161) and Johnie Armstrong (Child 169), take their plots from well-chronicled historical events, and one would expect a careful comparison of fact and fiction to shed some light on the heart of the ballad enimga - the choice and arrangement of ballad material by the ballad artist.

The "particular folk-complex", as Barry terms it, of these Border Ballads is also capable of reconstruction. It is the turbulent society, part feudal, part "clannit", of the Anglo-Scottish frontier as it existed for well over two centuries until the union of the two kingdoms in 1603. Subject to continual political and military tensions and torn by internecine feuds, this Border society was peopled by small tenant farmers and their powerful Lairds, most of whom were notorious cattle reivers and freebooters[2]. They were also the heroes of ballads.

1 Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend (ed. Maria Leach), I, 498.

2 For studies of this society, its political, cultural and administrative history, see Howard R. Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches of England and Scotland; D.L.W. Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier; T.I. Rae, The Administration of the Scottish Frontier, 1513-1603; W.R. Kermack, The Scottish Borders (with Galloway) to 1603; George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, the Story of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers. The Calendar of Border Papers (ed. Joseph Bain) is the most useful single source of information about this period.

Comparative studies have revealed that traditional ballads flourish in a frontier society. The Spanish, Danish and Yugoslavian traditions of oral poetry were all rooted in communities where similar social conditions prevailed. Thus the archetypal ballad society has been outlined by J.E. Housman who writes that:

> Traditional balladry ... thrives best in a homogeneous, feudal and agricultural society, and preferably in a border region subject to political or social tension.[1]

The ballad community is likely to be "small, stable and self-sufficient" and the social unit the small one of the "tribe or family state"[2]; it will also be mediaeval, "in contrast not only to modern but to pre-mediaeval society like that of the wandering Germanic peoples",[3] and it will be a society in which there is "no considerable gap, in way of life or in taste, between the leaders and the people".[4]

The artistic integrity of the English and Scottish Border Ballads, their success and effectiveness as a special type of narrative folksong, will perhaps be found to be in direct proportion to the degree of their outgrowth during transmission from this frontier matrix. Because not a few of the ballad stories have been carried north and south from the Border, an investigation of these transitional texts should help us to arrive at a clearer understanding of the oral-regional tradition. And because most of the individual Border Ballads I have selected for study exist in more than one version, the kind of textual comparison suggested

1 British Popular Ballads, 49.

2 Entwhistle, op. cit., 7.

3 Hodgart, op. cit., 131.

4 Hodgart, op. cit., 132.

by Stith Thompson in his requirement (c) above and by Barry in his twin postulate should also be possible.

But before I proceed to discuss the Border Ballads themselves, I shall try to give some account of their history both in oral transmission and in print, within and without the mainstreams of English and Scottish poetry, and to draw attention to some of the problems such a history raises.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BORDER REGION - ITS BALLADS, BALLAD SINGERS AND COLLECTORS

The term "Border Ballad" appears to have been first used by Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, Dumfriesshire, in the annotation of his ballad manuscripts - a collection dated about 1791[1]. Riddell, the friend and patron of Robert Burns and an antiquarian of no mean repute on the Scottish Border, collected his copies of ballads from local sources, mainly in Dumfriesshire, during the latter half of the eighteenth century. He classified Archie o Cawfield (Child 188) as "an old West Border ballad"[2], since it tells of the rescue of a prisoner from Dumfries gaol. Riddell also used the expression "Border Ballad" to describe his copy of The Lochmaben Harper (Child 192)[3].

But if the name originated with this eighteenth-century ballad-collector, it was Sir Walter Scott who popularised it and gave it a wide currency in the early years of the nineteenth century through his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.[4] First published in 1802-1803 in three volumes, this work was the culmination of Scott's early passion

1 See E.S.P.B., V, 398. For a description of the Glenriddell MSS, see William Montgomerie, 'A Bibliography of the Scottish Ballad Manuscripts, 1730-1825', Studies in Scottish Literature, VI (1968), 91-7. For a brief biography of Robert Riddell, see A Dictionary of National Biography, XVI, 1157-8.

2 Glenriddell MSS, XI, 14, see E.S.P.B., III, 489.

3 Glenriddell MSS, XI, 42, see E.S.P.B., IV, 23.

4 Scott refers frequently to the "Border Ballads" and "Border-raid ballads" in his Introduction, Minstrelsy, I, 160, 169, et passim. Unless otherwise stated, I have referred to and quoted from T.F. Henderson's 1932 edition of Scott's Minstrelsy.

for the history, antiquities and folklore of the Scottish Border counties. It was a passion that was first aroused when, as a childhood victim of polio, Scott was sent to convalesce on his grandfather's farm at Sandyknowe, under the shadow of craggy Smailholm tower, in Roxburghshire. There, from the shepherds, farm-labourers and household servants he heard the ballads, folk-tales and legends of the Border as they had been handed down through generations of country people[1]. This love of ballad poetry was later confirmed and given a literary direction when, shortly after graduating from the Edinburgh High School at the age of thirteen, Scott read Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry for the first time[2].

According to his fellow-student at Edinburgh University, John Irving, Scott had begun to collect ballads at an early age[3]. His interest became more serious and absorbing when he made his first "raid" into Liddesdale in 1792, in the company of Sheriff Robert Shortrede, to explore the strongholds and scenery of the district and to collect some of its songs and tunes[4]. But the information which Scott gathered on these excursions was not necessarily written down, it seems, but simply transferred to his extremely retentive memory[5].

As a result of a chance meeting with an old school-friend, James Ballantyne, who ran a small printing and newspaper business in Kelso, Scott hit on the idea of gathering together his ballad material for publication. He told Ballantyne in 1799:

1 See J.G. Lockhart, Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott (1900 ed.), I, 64-9.

2 Lockhart, op. cit., I, 29-30.

3 Minstrelsy, I, x.

4 Lockhart, op. cit., I, 166-7.

5 See William Montgomerie, 'Sir Walter Scott as Ballad Editor', R.E.S., new series, VII (1956), 160.

> I have been for years collecting old Border ballads, and I think I could, with little trouble, put together such a selection of them as might make a neat little volume to sell for four or five shillings[1].

The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border represents the first attempt to gather and edit the texts of traditional folk ballads on a purely regional basis. Scott explained his intention in an essay 'On Imitations of the Ancient Ballad', written in 1830 and prefixed to the last volume of later editions of the Minstrelsy. "I attempted", Scott says,

> a collection of ballads of various kinds, both ancient and modern, to be connected by the common tie of relation to the Border districts, in which I had gathered the materials[2].

The work enjoyed an immediate and prolonged success on both sides of the Border. A second edition swiftly followed the first in 1803. The third and fourth editions appeared in 1806 and 1810, and the Minstrelsy was edited with additional notes and tunes to the ballad texts (wherever these were available) by Scott's nephew, John Gibson Lockhart, in a four-volume edition published in 1833.

The immense popularity of Scott's ballad collection was the stimulus behind a whole spate of anthologies which appeared with astonishing frequency in Scotland and the north of England in the subsequent decades of the nineteenth century[3]. Scott's use of the term "Border Ballad" had established a vogue-word and drawn attention to Scotland's wealth of folksong and ballads. But because Sir Walter had employed the expression "Border Ballad" somewhat loosely, including in the Minstrelsy

1 Cited Lockhart, op. cit., I, 275-6.

2 Minstrelsy, IV, 51.

3 These will be found listed in the Bibliography.

a number of ballads not specifically connected with the Scottish Border, his literary emulators felt little or no compunction either to distinguish between the different areas from which the pieces in their collections were drawn. Hence we find the Newcastle printer and antiquary, Moses A. Richardson, in the 'Legendary Division' of The Borderer's Table Book (1841-1846), offering under the head 'A Border Ballad' traditional ballads of the timeless, place-less kind, such as Lord Beichan (Child 53)[1] and Riddles Wisely Expounded (Child 1)[2].

The ballad Edom o Gordon (Child 178) is a prime example of ballad mis-classification. It turns up in a collection of Border Ballads published in 1895[3], and again in a selection made by Douglas Percy Bliss in 1925[4]. More recently it has been included by M.J.C. Hodgart in The Faber Book of Ballads (1965) in a section headed 'Robin Hood and Border Ballads'[5], this after T.F. Henderson rejected it as "a Scottish non-Border ballad" as long ago as 1912[6]. In point of fact, Edom o Gordon describes an incident which occurred in the November of 1571 during the hostilities between the Gordon and Forbes families of Aberdeenshire, and thus properly belongs to that county[7].

A glance at the Table of Contents of Graham R. Thomson's 1888 anthology, Border Ballads, reveals again the complete lack of interest in any realistic grouping of ballads on the part of these earlier editors. Besides offering the text of another Aberdeenshire ballad, The Baron of Brackley (Child 203)[8], as a Border Ballad, Thomson places certain ballads

1 Op. cit., 'Legendary Division', II, 20.

2 Op. cit., 'Legendary Division', II, 83.

3 Border Ballads (ed. Andrew Lang), 71.

4 Border Ballads (ed. Bliss), 16.

5 Op. cit. (ed.Hodgart), 111.

6 The Ballad in Literature, 118.

7 See E.S.P.B., III, 424.

8 See E.S.P.B., IV, 80-2.

of the Robin Hood cycle in his section headed 'Border, or Riding Ballads'.

The Robin Hood ballads and those from the Border may be akin in spirit as Hodgart, who also links them, points out:

> The true 'Border' ballads are also (like the Robin Hood ballads) celebrations of outlawry ... The Robin Hood and Border Ballads are local in origin and do not belong to international folk-lore; but like the Spanish ballads and the Yugoslavian epics they breathe the air of the "frontier", mountain or forest, where crime and the heroic life are never far apart[1].

The point of comparison is just: one group of Border Ballads does have outlawry as a specific theme and there is also an attraction of elements from the Robin Hood tales into the ballad of The Outlaw Murray (Child 305), where a Border outlaw's men are dressed in a livery of Lincoln green[2]. But the people who inhabited the Borders were not all outlaws in the technical or legal sense of the word, and in any case to insist on too close a resemblance between these two groups of folk narratives will not do full justice to the wide range of themes which we shall find presented by the Border Ballads.

Hodgart, moreover, is quite wrong when he adds that "despite the name" the setting of the Border Ballads "is Aberdeenshire as much as southern Scotland"[3]. Versions of Border Ballads have certainly been recovered from oral sources as far north as Aberdeenshire, some by Peter Buchan in the early nineteenth century, others by Gavin Greig in the twentieth century. Amongst the Greig "Last Leaves" are versions of the following Border Ballads:- True Tammas (Child 39, Tam Lin); Johnnie Ha' (Child 188, Archie o Cawfield); Hughie Grame (Child 191);

1 The Faber Book of Ballads (ed. Hodgart), 16.

2 See infra, ch. V, 'The Outlaw Ballads', p. 204.

3 The Faber Book of Ballads (ed. Hodgart), 16.

and The Lochmaben Harper (Child 192)[1]. Nevertheless, as I hope to demonstrate, these northern variants are severely weakened examples of ballad-stories that were once vital and meaningful to the Border folk who first conceived and nurtured them.

The reason for the refusal of earlier ballad collectors and editors to make strict distinctions between texts of ballads from the Border and elsewhere, is that by the late nineteenth century the literary world seems to have classed any stirring narrative of the ballad type as a Border Ballad[2]. This was no doubt due in part to the precedent carelessly established by Sir Walter Scott and followed by other ballad editors. Current also has been the late Romantic notion that in some mysterious way the Border texts have a poetical superiority over all others. Thus in a letter of August 1873, John Ruskin writes that:

> The Border district of Scotland was ... of all districts of the inhabited world, pre-eminently the singing country, - that which most naturally expressed its noble thoughts and passions in song[3].

And Graham R. Thomson introduces his anthology of 1888 with the claim:

> the ballads of the North are so infinitely superior to those of the South, that English ballads only obtain a place by favour in a collection chosen for poetical and not for scientific and archaeological interest ...
>
> The Scottish Border, with Denmark and Sweden and Germany, has perhaps the richest wealth of narrative ballads[4].

1 See L.L. 27-9, 116-17, 118-20. Greig's ballads and others collected in the north-east region of Scotland are the object of a study by David Buchan, The Ballad and the Folk.

2 See A.L. Lloyd, Folk Song in England, 159; Hodgart, The Ballads, 17.

3 Fors Claveriga, Letter No. 32, in The Works of John Ruskin (ed. E.T. Cook and A. Wedderburn) XXVII, 593-4.

4 Op. Cit., xxx.

No-one, I think, would wish to dispute the excellence of those Border Ballads that have survived to us, but why this region should have been so favourable to the cultivation of a certain kind of narrative song and why those narratives should have been felt to be so artistically satisfying has not been fully or seriously investigated.

The events of long years of Border warfare and the local exploits of the reivers seem to have been eminently suitable subjects for ballads from the early fifteenth century onwards. In fact, the conditions of Border life, as far as they can be ascertained from historical records and from the ballads themselves, were strongly reminiscent of the ideal ballad environment as Entwhistle has described it:

> In the high places of Montenegro and the Dinaric Alps a heroic form of poetry and society has persisted in vigour to our day. The social unit is small, it is the tribe or family state. Wealth, commerce, and elaborate hierarchies require an ampler space for their growth, and in fact have come to possess the Serbian river valleys. But in the mountains, the criterion of aristocracy is personal prowess; allegiance is given to a leader who joins birth to valour, and it is perturbed by personal feuds. Raids on traditional enemies, vendettas, marriage under the figure of bride-stealing, and calamitous battles make up the stuff not only of entertainment, but of instruction[1].

Immediately recognisable in this portrait of a modern "ballad" - producing community is the background to the Border Ballads - a "small, stable, and self-sufficient community"[2], with a homogeneity of interests and a clan-based structure of kinship that has evolved in response to centuries of frontier violence. As a place of origin, therefore, the Anglo-Scottish Border ought to be of prime interest to ballad students. Yet it is clear from what has been said so far that we need to re-examine the term "Border Ballad" and to see whether, in fact, it can be a useful and meaningful one for the purpose of

1 W.J. Entwhistle, European Balladry, 5.

2 Entwhistle, op. cit., 7.

ballad study. Before we can do this, however, we must decide in more precise terms what the Border is and what, geographically and historically speaking, it has been.

The earliest recorded reference by name to this part of the British Isles occurs in 1455, in an Act of Parliament for Scotland which specifies the inhabitants of the region as "Thai that ar ner hande the bordouris"[1]. In the singular, and used emphatically to denote the English Border (being the only one Scotland has), the first recorded usage is in the Treasurer's Accounts of 1496, where a sum of money is "giffin to Rolland Robysone to ryde to the Bordour"[2]. By the second quarter of the sixteenth century, this part of Scotland was being distinguished not only from England, but from other Scottish regions as well. In David Lyndsay's poem, The Complaynt of Schir David Lyndsay to the Kingis Grace (c. 1536), we find Lyndsay approving that,

> Justice haldis hir sweird on hie ...
> Baith throw the Heland and the Bordour.
> (ll. 381, 384)[3]

Innumerable examples of the noun-singular, usually spelt with a capital, occur in The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland from 1545 onwards[4].

The evolution of the Border was from the first that of a no-man's land, a buffer-state between two warring kingdoms, and began with the Roman occupation of northern Britain. Hadrian's Wall is famous. Constructed in the years A.D. 122-128 it linked a series of forts running from the mouth of the Tyne in the north-east to the Solway Firth in the

1 Cited William A. Craigie, A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue, I, 305.

2 Cited ibid.

3 The Poetical Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount (ed. David Laing), I, 58.

4 R.P.C., I, passim.

west[1]. What is not so well known is that, earlier, in A.D. 78, Cnaeus Julius Agricola, consular legate in Britain, had marked off and secured his conquests in the north by a line of forts running south of the Firth of Forth as far as the Firth of Clyde. In A.D. 142, Lollius Urbicus, British Lieutenant of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, connected the forts of Agricola with a rampart similar to Hadrian's, which came to be known as "Antonine's Wall"[2]. These two great east-west ramparts effectively sealed off the tract of country between them (now known as the Border) as a kind of debateable land. To the north lay the Scoto-Pictish monarchy, to the south the civilised Roman provinces. Within the enclosed area dwelt four native peoples: the Selgovae (upper and middle Tweeddale), the Voltadini (Northumberland, Berwickshire and the Lothians), the Damnonii (Clydesdale and Ayrshire) and the Novantae (Nithsdale and Galloway)[3].

Between them, the emperors Antoninus and Hadrian caused the first tangible and lasting division in this part of the country. Its subsequent history is complex and to trace it in any detail at all would be beyond the scope of this chapter. It will be sufficient to state that, during the period of the Anglo-Saxon invasions (the fourth to sixth centuries A.D.), the rise and fall of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria (A.D. 600-800) and particularly during the Scottish Wars of Independence (1286-1371), the area was bitterly contested and the boundary line between the emergent kingdoms of England and Scotland in a state of constant fluctuation. The date of most significance is perhaps the year

1 For an appraisal of the adverse effects of Hadrian's Wall on the inhabitants of the north country, see George MacDonald Fraser The Steel Bonnets, 13-15.

2 See J.D. Mackie, A History of Scotland, 20-3; George Douglas, A History of the Border Counties, 1-32; Howard Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches, 6-7.

3 K. Steer, 'Roman Scotland', Scottish Historical Review, XXXIII (1954), 119-22.

1018 when Malcolm II, King of Scots, after his victory over the English at the battle of Carham, carried the frontier of his kingdom as far south as the river Tweed. Thereafter, no subsequent attempts by Scottish kings to add the northern English counties to their dominion were ever more than temporarily successful[1]. By 1157, when Malcolm IV agreed with his cousin, Henry II of England, to relinquish all claim to Cumbria and Northumberland, the boundary line between England and Scotland was acknowledged to be drawn by way of the Tweed and Cheviots to the Solway[2].

Today we take the Scottish Borders, strictly speaking, to include only those counties immediately adjacent to England - Berwickshire, Roxburghshire and part of Dumfriesshire. But Selkirkshire and Peeblesshire were also under the jurisdiction of the mediaeval Scottish Middle March[3]. On the same historical basis, Galloway ought to be considered as part of the mediaeval Borders, since "as well above as under the water of Cree" this area was comprised in the Scottish West March[4].

On the English side, the Border counties adjacent to Scotland are Northumberland and Cumberland; but Westmorland was also considered a Border county[5]. There is a case, too, for including County Durham. In the high moorland areas society was organised in much the same way as in Northumberland and Cumberland and shared the same stresses. Weardale could be subject to the same predatory incursions of the Border reivers

1 See Mackie, op. cit., 41; W.R. Kermack, The Scottish Borders (with Galloway) to 1603, 23.

2 See Pease, op. cit., 12-13.

3 See R.P.C., III, 334, 570. The Marches (east, west and middle) were the areas which both sides of the Border were divided into for administrative convenience. Each March had its own Warden who was backed by other officials and who was responsible for keeping law and order.

4 See T.I. Rae, The Administration of the Scottish Frontier, 23; D.L.W. Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, 21.

5 C.B.P., I, 30, No. 76.

as the valleys of the Rede and Tyne. One such attack is celebrated in the ballad Rookhope Ryde (Child 179), called "a Bishoprick border song"[1], and this I shall discuss in the chapter on 'Raiding Ballads'.

The Border was thus, through its elaborate March system of administration, a well defined area both politically and geographically in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The people of the Marches spoke the same language, shared the same habits, customs and systems of government. In short, the Border was a recognisable region and is still very much aware of its own peculiar identity today. In an essay called 'The Writer and his Region', Herbert Read wrote in 1957:

> The Border is precisely one of the authentic regions and Border Ballads one of the best examples of a great literature rooted in a defined geographical space[2].

This regionalism, or regional ethos, and the way in which it shaped and determined the character of a particular part of our ballad poetry, forms the central core of this thesis. But lest it should appear that this premise has been arrived at too quickly, it might be judicious to support it with one or two more pieces of evidence.

It would be impossible to say exactly when the Border became conscious of itself as an autonomous region, identifiable through its physical and cultural isolation from the rest of England and Scotland. The Scottish Wars of Independence may help to focus our attention. During this period the people of the Borders were caught up with the rest of lowland Scotland and northern England in a war which was, especially for Scotland, a struggle to establish a national identity. The emotional and patriotic, as well as the military drive towards independent statehood found its champions in Robert Bruce and William Wallace. These two naturally became the national heroes of the literature of the period. John Barbour's The Bruce (c. 1375), "instinct with pride but

1 Sir Cuthbert Sharpe, The Bishopric Garland (1834 ed.), 14.
2 The Tenth Muse, Essays in Criticism, 66.

devoid of savagery", has been called the birth song of a nation[1]. Not so devoid of savagery is Blind Harry's Wallace (c. 1460), in which hatred of the English is intensified.

There may have been ballads current at the time which also reflected this upsurge of nationalist feeling. The one surviving ballad of Wallace's guerilla action on the Borders is Gude Wallace (Child 157), which may have taken the substance of its plot from an incident in Blind Harry's poem[2]. But the patriotic fervour whipped up as Wallace stabs five Englishmen, tramples five others in the "gutter" and hangs another five in the greenwood, surely belongs to the period during or immediately after the wars. In any case, it is probable that Blind Harry may himself have composed portions of his narrative from nationalist ballads that were on the lips of Scotsmen in the fifteenth, or even the fourteenth century[3].

In The Bruce John Barbour referred to what may have been a ballad when he wrote of the victory won by the Scots leader, Sir Andrew Hercla, over Sir John de Soulis, governor of Eskdale. Writes Barbour:

> I will nocht reherss all the maner;
> For quha sa likis, thai may heir
> Young wommen quhen thai will play,
> Syng it emang thame ilke day.
> (Bk. XVI, ll. 519-22)[4]

Robert Fabyan in his Chronicles of 1516 tells how, after the battle of Bannockburn in 1314, a song was made by the Scots to celebrate their victory:

> Than the Scottis enflamyd with pryde, in derysyon of Englysshe men, made this ryme as foloweth.
>
> Maydens of Englonde, sore maye ye morne,
> For your lemmans ye have loste at Bannockisborne,
> With heve a lowe.
> What wenyth the kynge of Englonde,
> So soone to have wonne Scotlande
> With rumbylowe.

1 J.D. Mackie, A History of Scotland, 90.
2 See E.S.P.B., III, 266.
3 See ibid.
4 Op. cit. (ed. W.W. Skeat), II, 69.

> This songe was after many dayes sungyn, in daunces, in carolis of the maydens and mynstrellys of Scotlande[1].

Gerould does not doubt that the stanza quoted by Fabyan was the beginning of a ballad[2], but whether it was composed on the Borders or not we shall never know. However, we might expect any Border Ballads circulated during the last years of the fourteenth or the early years of the fifteenth centuries to be preoccupied mainly with national differences. The Battle of Otterburn (Child 161), our earliest Border Ballad capable of positive dating, since it describes the battle fought at Otterburn in 1388 between Percy and Douglas, is I believe, such a ballad and I shall discuss its national-propagandist elements in the chapter 'Ballads of Battle'.

After the Wars of Independence, the Border, as a separate entity, remained. But as a political and national barrier the line of the frontier probably assumed more significance in the minds of Border officials and the governments of the respective countries than it ever did in the minds of the Border inhabitants themselves. As Fraser summarises:

> The administrative advantages of a frontier system, whereby two sides are neatly divided and controlled by the frontier, were completely lost because the Borderers used the frontier as and when it suited them, and ignored it when they felt like it[3].

There were good reasons for this attitude. The people of the Marches had everything in common except nationality, and even this had been imposed on them by the more or less arbitrary line of demarcation drawn by the events of history across the countryside they lived in. Otherwise the English and Scots of both sides belonged to the same small, self-contained unique world, lived by the same rules and shared the same

1 The New Chronicles of England and France (ed. Henry Ellis), 420.

2 G.H. Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, 227.

3 George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 66.

inheritance. As Fraser has pointed out[1], they might raid and kill each other by way of business, but their view of Anglo-Scottish relations was quite different from the views of London and Edinburgh. Despite the traditional national hostility which rose to the surface from time to time, Englishmen and Scotsmen on the Borders understood each other and were, for the most part, quite prepared to sink their differences in intermarriage or "business" alliances.

The first of these, intermarriage between Scots and English, was a constant embarrassment to the authorities and both governments did their best to prevent it by law. But the Borderers pursued their own natural inclinations and inter-racial marriage became so popular that by 1583 when Thomas Musgrave, Captain of Bewcastle, drew up a list of the Border Riders, he made a special note of those Armstrongs of the Mangerton branch who had not married English girls[2].

Both a cause and a result of this intermarriage was the doubtful nationality of some of the Border families, especially in the west. The Graham clan especially was a constant puzzle and danger to the officials of the West March. The Grahams were Scottish by origin, English by adoption and ready to be either if it suited their nefarious purposes. The Armstrongs, although predominantly Scottish, had many members of the family living in Cumberland who felt no particular kinship with their Liddesdale namesakes. Nixons, Croziers, Forsters, Halls, Bells and Littles were all as much English as Scottish[3].

The international boundary was ignored to most advantage by the reivers. It was not uncommon for a "guide" living on one side of the Border to lead thieves from the other side to where a "prey", in the form of sheep and cattle, was to be had. Thus Hobie Noble in the ballad

1 Op. cit., 66.

2 C.B.P., I, 121-2, No. 197.

3 C.B.P., I, 105, No. 166.

of that name (Child 189), an Englishman living with the Armstrongs of Mangerton in Scotland, leads a party of Scottish raiders into Cumberland where he knows the terrain. Similarly, the Captain of Bewcastle is helped by two Scottish guides when he crosses the frontier to raid Teviotdale in the ballad Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead (Child 190). These incidents are not simply owing to the romanticising of folk-balladists. English and Scottish marauders frequently combined in their depredations, as numerous incidents recorded in The Calendar of Border Papers show[1].

Besides co-operation between reivers of both sides and marriage alliances, fraternisation at a social level was also common within the region. International race meetings, huntings, hawkings, and football matches were all frowned on officially by governments who had national security always in the forefront of their minds. The Complaynt of Scotlande of 1549 voices the attitude of officialdom to this well established regionalism. Written to counteract the influence of a number of pro-union tracts that had appeared in the first half of the sixteenth century[2], the author of The Complaynt attributes Scotland's present troubles to the ignoring of national differences by English and Scottish Borderers. Dame Scotia chastises her three sons:

> There is no thing that is occasione (O ze my thre sonnis) of your adhering to the opinione of ingland contrar zour natife cuntre, bot the grit familiarite that inglis men and scottis hes hed on baitht the boirdours, ilk ane vith vtheris, in marchandeis, in selling and bying hors and nolt and scheip, out fang and in fang, ilk ane among vtheris, the quhilk familiarite is expres contrar the lauis and consuetudis bayth of ingland and scotland ...
>
> Quhar for ... there suld be na familiarite betuix inglis men and scottis men, be cause of the grit defferens that is betuix there twa naturis. in ald tymis it vas determit in the artiklis of the pace be the tua vardanis

1 The rescue of Kinmont Willie, an Armstrong, by Buccleugh, a Scott, with the help of the English Grahams and Carletons, is a classic example, see infra, ch. VII, 'Ballads of Rescue', p. 398n.

2 See Op. cit. (ed. J.A.H. Murray), xv-xvi.

> of the bordours of ingland and scotland, that there suld be na familiarite betuix scottis men and inglis men, nor mariage to be contrakit betuix them, nor conventions on holy dais at gammis and plays, nor marchandres to be maid among them, nor scottis men til entir on inglis ground vith out the kyng of ingland saue conduct, nor inglis men til entir on scottis grond vith out the kyng of scotlandis save conduct, quhon beit that there var sure pace betuix the tua realmis.[1]

But familiarity there was. In this society national feeling was almost meaningless. Many men refused to recognise the suzerainty of the monarch on either side of the frontier and swore allegiance to the one or the other only when forced to do so, or when they found it convenient[2]. "The King of Fife" and "the King of Lothian" were frequent pejoratives used by Scotsmen to condemn a national figurehead who to them seemed to dwell, as the ballads put it, "in a far country". These are the sentiments that inspire the regional solidarity reflected in ballads like The Outlaw Murray (Child 305) and Johnie Armstrong(Child 169).

Out of this regional spirit grew the Border Ballads. It is a spirit that has been preserved continuously over the centuries, so that even in the twentieth century with the breakdown of geo-physical barriers and widespread communications, it is still possible to speak of "the Border". A monthly magazine, Border Life, began circulation in 1966. The region is catered for by the radio and television networks and it was television, too, that was responsible for a continuing interest in the history of the Elizabethan Border through the BBC series The Borderers (1967-1970). The old sense of regional, rather than national affiliations is still strong. It is not unusual, for instance, to hear a latter-day Borderer remark with obvious pride: "We dinna care two hoots what gangs on north o' Edinboro'." - a sentiment that might well

1 Op. cit. (ed. Murray), 106-8.

2 For examples see C.S.P. For. (1564-65), 1124; R.P.C., I, 301; C.B.P., I, 125, No. 197.

have been shared by Border men and women of the March years.

We have seen that a new definition of the term "Border Ballad" would be welcome, is indeed necessary for the purpose of ballad study. In the light of what has been said above of the Border's pronounced regional character, this should now be possible. In order to facilitate discussion in the chapters that follow and to limit the terms of reference of this thesis, it will be helpful to advance a definition of "Border Ballad" (a) by origin and (b) by referends, i.e. content and theme.

A Border Ballad may be accepted as such if (a) it can be shown that the ballad, or a version of it, has been sung, collected or even printed within the Border region described above. Or we may consider it a Border Ballad if (b) it can be said to concern itself with the way of life and Weltanschauung of the society that existed on the Borders during the period of the "Border Problem"[1]. As a final requirement we might add that this ballad should be traditional, that is, it must be a narrative folksong oral in origin and transmission.

Examining for a moment definitions under (a), it will be appreciated that Border Ballads may come from Northumberland (eg. The Death of Parcy Reed), Cumberland (Hughie Grame), or Durham (Rookhope Ryde), as legitimately as from the Scottish side of the Border. Indeed, it was this conviction that animated the poet Swinburne, himself a Northumbrian, to repudiate the title of Sir Walter Scott's collection as "misleading and mendacious".[2] Swinburne was intent on establishing

> the palpable and indisputable fact that even if England can claim no greater share than Scotland in the splendid and incomparable literature which is one of the crowning glories,

1 The period covers roughly the years 1400-1603, although the Border Problem was not resolved magically with the Union of the Crowns, see infra, p.30.

2 Cited Herbert Read, The Tenth Muse, 67.

> historic and poetic, of either kingdom, Scotland can claim no greater share in it than England.[1]

As a corrective, almost as a retaliation, to the bias shown by Scott's Minstrelsy, Swinburne made up an anthology entitled Ballads of the English Border, which was published posthumously in 1925. In his introduction the poet pointed out, very sensibly, that it is impossible to distinguish by differences in dialect, transcribed or transcriptible, a poem from a little to the north or a little to the south of the Border[2].

Swinburne's indignation at Scott and others is understandable, yet his impassioned attempt to defend the literary status of the English ballad was as needless as it was vociferous; for as we have now established, and as Herbert Read has observed, "what we call regionalism in literature has nothing to do with nationalism".[3]

Most of the Border Ballads I have chosen for discussion are known to have been sung and transmitted orally within the Border region until as late as the mid-nineteenth century. Often the singers' names and place of residence have been carefully recorded. Thus we learn that Child's B-text of Jock o the Side (Child 187) was "taken down from the recitation of Mr. Thomas Shortreed (of Jedburgh) who learnt it from his father", and that the transcriber was Alexander Campbell, editor of Albyn's Anthology (1816)[4]. Some of these early ballad-collectors, like William Motherwell, give the exact date, place and source of their transcriptions from performance, but they are unfortunately all too few. When the Border Ballads were being collected, modern scientific methods of field recording were largely unformulated and the information to be derived from them hardly appreciated. Often we are obliged to

1 Cited ibid.

2 Op. cit. (ed. William A. MacInnes), xiv.

3 The Tenth Muse, 67.

4 See E.S.P.B., III, 479. Thomas was the son of Sheriff Robert Shortreed who accompanied Scott on his ballad "raids".

make do with generalised information of the kind Scott sometimes volunteers, such as, "this ballad is preserved by tradition, on the West Borders"[1]. Such vague indications of his sources have laid Scott wide open to attack from later ballad scholars who find an a priori case for suspecting that some of the Minstrelsy texts (Kinmont Willie, for example, the source of which has just been quoted) are Scott's forgeries from beginning to end.

In the case of Kinmont Willie, however, it is not necessary to rule the ballad out of court as an orally composed narrative. We shall see in our investigation of this Rescue Ballad in a later chapter that, although we may have only Scott's word for its authenticity, it does fulfill the second of our definitive criteria; it is a Border Ballad by virtue of its content, allusions and themes and incorporates what we might call "The Matter of the Border"[2].

Definition under (b) may proceed from a number of features. Most obvious in trying to ascertain a ballad's origins will be the place-names in it, although it is important to realise that ballads tend to shed old place-names and attract new ones as they move from one locality to another[3]. Fortunately for our study, since most of the Border Ballads have at least remained within the region (if not always in the exact place) of their birth, place-names are usually preserved intact. Sometimes the places mentioned are small, parochial ones, features of the local landscape, such as Hathery Haugh and Swinburne Wood, introduced by Mr. Leadbeater of Hexham into his fragmentary version of Jock o the Side ($D5^4$, 7^1). In cases like this we may be sure that the ballad's composer and audience were local. Although the names of larger places, towns and cities, may be altered - Stirling substituted

1 Minstrelsy, II, 55.

2 See infra, ch. VII, 'Ballads of Rescue', pp. 389-411.

3 On this point see Child, E.S.P.B., IV, 156

for Carlisle as a place of execution, for example - the places pinpointed with a degree of accuracy along a raiding route, as in Jock o the Side, Archie o Cawfield or Jamie Telfer, offer circumstantial evidence that these ballads have originated with singers who knew the area intimately.

Frequently place-names have been transmitted in their sixteenth - or seventeenth-century form; some of them, inevitably, have disappeared altogether from the map. Most are verifiable, however, so to assist the interested reader in tracing and identifying them where relevant, I have given the locations on Blaeu's maps of the Border dales[1] and on the modern Ordnance Survey sheets[2]. Anyone who has read widely in the Child ballads will recognise this particularisation of localities as a distinguishing mark of the Border Ballads; they always give their narratives "a local habitation and a name".

Most revealing of all, but less readily assimilable as far as the modern reader is concerned, is the whole Border ethos from which these ballads derive and which they so faithfully mirror. They are a reflection of the troubled times in which they were composed. We may style them Border Ballads, without detailed knowledge of their place of origin, because their manifest concern is to sing of what most excited and concerned the Border folk of the two centuries before the union - cattle raiding, feuding, rescuing a captured kinsman from an enemy prison, the betrayal of one clansman by another, acts of trickery, murders, the clashes between individual and State. The infrastructure of folk superstitions and beliefs was of course more accesible to the audiences who first listened to the ballads and many of the allusions have become obscured with the passage of time. To recover these lost

1 Reproduced at the end of this thesis from Jan, or Johan Blaeu's Anglia Topographia and Scotiae Topographia (1662 ed.)

2 Sheets 62-64, 68-71, 74-78, 83-84, 7th Series, revised 1961-1964.

significances obviously involves an element of guesswork, but I have tried to re-read these Border Ballads in the light of what I feel may have been the quality of their early dawn. In order to allow as small a margin of error as possible, I have preferred to confine my discussion to those ballads which most obviously seem to belong to the Border region. For this reason I have chosen to exclude ballads which may have belonged to the Border, but which strike one by their very nature as being of the more "universal" type, ballads like The Braes o Yarrow (Child 214), The Douglas Tragedy (Child 7)[1], Lord Randal (Child 12) and Clerk Saunders (Child 69). These have all been included by Scott in his Minstrelsy and are the favourites of other anthologists. But unlike the ballads I shall discuss in this study, these and many more like them have enjoyed a world-wide dissemination. Their stories are international rather than regional. Thus, however ardently Scott may claim of The Douglas Tragedy that popular tradition on the Borders has ascribed to it "complete locality", pointing to the farm of Blackhouse in Selkirkshire as the scene of the tragedy[2], we now know through Child's list of analogues that the story-type is found in Scandinavia, Iceland, Norway, Germany, Albania and Italy. As The Seven Sleepers it was sung to Dorothy Scarborough in the Appalachian Mountains of America and one old man told the collector:

> 'The Seven Sleepers' was a true song. It happened way back yonder in Mutton Hollow. I was there myself. Somebody got killed over the girl. I was there soon after it happened. Another man was after the girl and one man shot him.[3]

Apart from Archie o Cawfield which crops up in a number of American variants, some more garbled than others[4], none of the other Border Ballads

1 This was the title given by Motherwell and Scott to their versions of Earl Brand (Child 7, B, E).

2 Minstrelsy, III, 1.

3 Cited W.J. Entwhistle, European Balladry, 3.

4 "Those cases in which Archie o Cawfield was found are not typical", E.K. Wells, The Ballad Tree, 100.

which handle regional material has been carried abroad; they are too topical[1]. This, then, is a fairly reliable aid to selection, although of course there will always be scope to investigate the ways and means by which an international ballad story has become localised.

In accepting a period of strong regionalism as synchronous with the years of the Border Problem, I have further limited the scope of this study. The Marches finally disappeared as an administrative area with the Union of England and Scotland under James I in 1603; henceforth they were to be referred to, tactfully, as "the Middle Shires"[2]. But although James managed to repeal the ancient Border Laws[3], and although he encouraged "the whole Isle" to think of itself as the "lawfull wife" of a Christian king who would not "be a polygamist and husband to two wives"[4], the problem of the Border did not automatically disappear. The "peccant" parts of the new realm took some time to subdue. Swingeing, near genocidal, measures were necessary to break many of the Borderers, especially hardened malefactors like the clan Graham[5].

It was not decided that the Borders had been pacified until July 1609, when certain landed proprietors felt that agricultural development of their estates was at last worth while[6]. Even so, it is doubtful whether the southern shires of Scotland fully recovered from their experience as the 300 year-old frontier of the realm, until well into the eighteenth century. By that time clanship and the old order had ceased to provide a meaningful mode of life for the Borders. So it was that the modern cultural regionalism superseded the mediaeval political.

1 See Wells, op. cit., 55, 77, 100; Hodgart, The Faber Book of Ballads, 16
2 See George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 362.
3 For a full description of these 'Leges Marchiarum', see William Nicolson, The Border Laws.
4 This was the extended metaphor used by James I in his speech to his first Parliament of March 1604, cited J.D. Mackie, A History of Scotland, 191.
5 See infra, ch. VIII, 'Ballads of Betrayal', pp. 434-5.
6 W.R. Kermack, The Scottish Borders, 109.

The last ballad I have considered in this critical survey, therefore, is Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight (Child 195). It may be dated from the incidents it refers to as certainly after 1608, the year in which one of the most prolonged and bitter of the old Border feuds was finally worked out. It seems to mark the end of an era.[1]

Ballads, of course, continued to be produced and sung by the Border folk in the years after the Union, as Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight testifies. Belonging also to the seventeenth century is a group of Covenanter ballads, printed by Scott in his Minstrelsy[2]; three of these are accepted as traditional by Child and admitted into The English and Scottish Popular Ballads[3]. But it has been well said that the Covenanters do little for balladry[4], and in any case these post-Union ballads are preoccupied with national, political and religious sectarian issues rather than local or regional problems.

Similarly nationalistic and political in tone are those ballads celebrating famous battles fought in the north - Durham Field (Child 159), Flodden Field (Child 168) and Musselburgh Field (Child 172). As narratives they are disappointing when compared with the two famous Border battle - pieces, The Battle of Otterburn and The Hunting of the Cheviot, which tell us so much about the region in which they were sung. The ballads of the three "Fields", all printed by Child from the Percy Folio Manuscript[5], give the impression of being patriotic verses put together by the English soldiers who saw active service during the campaigns in the north.

1 See infra, ch. IX, 'Ballads of Revenge', pp. 486-498.

2 Minstrelsy, II, 194-289. They are: Lesly's March, The Battle of Philiphaugh, The Gallant Grahams, The Battle of Pentland Hills, The Battle of London Hill and The Battle of Bothwell Bridge.

3 Child 202, 205, 206, see E.S.P.B., IV, 77-9, 105-110.

4 F.B. Gummere, The Popular Ballad, 254.

5 See E.S.P.B., III, 282, 353, 378.

They are clearly the work of southern minstrels[1] and I have preferred to ignore them in favour of Otterburn and Cheviot.

We may now turn to a consideration of the "makers" of these regional ballads, for ballads are made by people - a fact often overlooked in scholarly studies of folksong. A complete picture of the kind of people who composed the Border Ballads, their motives, status, ability and methods of handling traditional material, is difficult to piece together. Much will depend on inference and still more will depend on our dating and reading of the Border Ballads themselves.

Our knowledge of ballad-singing on the Borders before the fifteenth century is as fragmentary as the ballad verses that have somehow miraculously survived. The Independence song which John Barbour in The Bruce tantalisingly says he does not need to "reherss" in full, since it is so well known[2], may have belonged to the Border.

An early Liddesdale ballad may have been The Knight of Liddesdale (Child 160), a stanza of which was quoted by the seventeenth-century historian David Hume of Godscroft in his History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus (1643):

> The Countesse of Douglas out of her boure she came,
> And loudly there that she did call:
> 'It is for the Lord of Liddesdale
> That I let all these teares down fall'.[3]

William Douglas, the Knight of Liddesdale, was assassinated in 1353,

1 Child calls the Percy MS. version of Flodden Field "a history in the ballad style", E.S.P.B., III, 354.

2 See supra, p. 20.

3 Cited Godscroft, op. cit. (1643 ed.), 77: Child, E.S.P.B., III, 288. Scott also quotes the stanza and says that "some fragments of this ballad are still current", Minstrelsy, I, 162n.

while hunting in the Border forest of Ettrick, by his kinsman and godson, Lord William Douglas. According to Godscroft the motive for the killing was matrimonial jealousy[1]; however it was, an act of treachery seems to have been involved and this, as we shall see, forms a prominent theme in later Border Ballads.

The earliest list of identifiable ballads from the Border region is to be found in The Complaynt of Scotlande of 1549. There eight "sueit sangis" heard among the shepherds are mentioned and among them are The Hunting of the Cheviot and what appear to have been versions of The Battle of Otterburn and The Broomfield Hill (Child 43)[2]. Another list enumerates a group of "dancis"; recognisable are Tam Lin (Child 39) and Johnie Armstrong (Child 169)[3]. Whether these were simply the tunes which were danced to is difficult to decide. Studies of the singing and dancing traditions of the Faroese islanders are usually quoted as evidence that words accompany a kind of ring-dance in some cultures[4]. The shepherds in The Complaynt "began to dance in one ring" to the accompaniment of bagpipes and other wind instruments[5]. But "Schayke leg" and "fut befor gossep" were clearly not the titles of narrative ballads (as Tam Lin and Johnie Armstrong are known to be), and there is certainly no evidence that Border Ballads were danced to in later years.

The most circumstantial account of ballad-making on the Borders is that given by John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, in his De Origine, Moribus et Rebus Gestis Scotorum. Written originally in Latin and first published in Rome in 1578, this work was later translated into Scots by Father James Dalrymple in 1596, under the title The History of

1 Op. cit. (1643 ed.), 77.
2 Op. cit. (ed. J.A.H. Murray), 64-5.
3 Op. cit. (ed. Murray), 66.
4 See N. Annandale, The Faroes and Iceland, 62-3.
5 Op. cit. (ed. Murray), 65.

Scotland. Leslie wrote his history between 1568-1570[1], by which time the Border was considered a region of sufficient importance for Leslie to devote a whole chapter to it. In Book I he describes 'Thair maneris quha inhabites the borderis of Scotland foranent Ingland', and has this to say about the Borderers' love of music and singing:

> Placent admodum sibi sua Musica, & Rhythmicis suis cantionibus, quas de majorum suorum gestis, aut ingeniosis predandi, precandive stratagematis ipsi confingunt. Porro praedandi artem adeo sibi licere putant, ut nunquam ferventius suas preces percurrant, & ad calculos rosaria, quae vocamus sollicite percurrentes revocant, quam cum quadraginta aut quinquaginta saepe milliaria ad abigendas praedas se conferunt[2].

Dalrymple's translation of this passage is as follows:

> Thay delyt mekle in thair awne musick and Harmonie in singing, quhilke of the actes of thair foirbearis thay haue leired, or quhat thame selfes haue inuented of ane ingenious policie to dryue a pray and say thair prayeris. The policie of dryueng a pray thay think be sa leiuesum and lawful to thame that neuir sa feruentlie thay say thair prayeris, and pray thair Beides, quhilkes rosarie we cal, nor with sick solicitude and kair, as oft quhen thay have XL or L myles to dryue a pray.[3]

Dalrymple's Scots translation is, on the whole, acceptable, but two points deserve further elucidation. First, the word "Rhythmicis", from the Latin "rhythmicus", is better rendered as "composed in verse or rhyme"[4]. Leslie had obviously heard the monostrophic, rhyming ballads, and chose his Latin words carefully. Secondly, Leslie's "aut ingeniosis predandi, precandive stratagematis" refers back to "cantionibus", indicating that this was what the Borderers' songs were about. Dalrymple renders "precandive" as "say their prayers". In the Latin there is a pun here on the words pray/prey (meaning booty or plunder), which is obscured by the Scots translation.

1 See The History of Scotland (ed. E.C. Cody), I, xviii.
2 Op. cit. (ed. 1578), 60.
3 Op. cit. (ed. Cody), I, 101-2.
4 R.E. Latham, Revised Mediaeval Latin Word List, 409.

The verb "precor", in its general sense, means "to ask, beg, entreat, supplicate, request, beseech"[1]. The marchmen would have been unlikely to make up songs about their clever ways of praying, but if we look to the Border Ballads what we do find is a number of narratives where much of the interest derives from the comic eloquence and verbal trickery by means of which the ordinary Border peasant is able to dupe his betters.

In this way the blind harper of Lochmaben is able to steal King Henry of England's thoroughbred stallion and win compensation for the supposed theft of his mare, which he reports with eloquent sadness (The Lochmaben Harper). Dick of the Cow, in his ballad, is able through his loquacity and "courtisie" to trick the Laird's Jock and the Armstrongs out of two good horses, give his enemy Fair Johnie Armstrong a mock-sermon on the virtues of Faith and Conscience, and to pass one of the horses he has made off with to the Warden himself for the sum of thirty pounds, before selling the defeated Johnie's horse to the Warden's brother for a like amount.

Leslie makes much of the Borderers' oratorical gifts, especially in retreiving themselves from a tight situation. Dalrymple translates:

> Finalie gif thay be takne, thay ar sa eloquent, sa mony fair and sueit wordes they can gyue, that thay moue the Juges ze and thair aduersaries how seueir saeuir thay be, gif nocht to pitie, at leist to woundir vehementlie[2].

It is not surprising, then, that Thomas Rhymer, faced in the ballad with the prospect of being given by the Queen of Fairies a magical "tongue that can never lie", protests "My tongue is mine ain" (Thomas Rymer, Child 37, C17-18).

We gather from Bishop Leslie's account, therefore, that the Border folk learned, or composed themselves, verses about the heroic exploits of their ancestors, their cattle-raids (ingenious methods of driving a

1 Charles T. Lewis and Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary (1966 ed.), 1439, under I.

2 Op. cit. (ed. Cody), I, 103.

prey) and their clever verbal trickeries. The raiding ballads, as we shall discover, make up a whole group of Border Ballads.

The fact that Leslie uses the expression ipsi confingunt was taken by Gummere as unequivocal evidence in support of his argument that ballads were the compositions of a choral throng, a "comitatus" assembled after battle[1]. The theory of communal composition is no longer taken seriously by most ballad scholars, and there is no reason why we should assume that the mediaeval Border clans did not have their "makers", individual singers of tales, perhaps more gifted than the rest, but who gave the works of their genius modestly to posterity.

Another brief mention of the musical talents of these frontiersmen is to be found in a strange treatise by a sixteenth-century medical man, Andrew Borde, who visited Scotland and the Borders in 1536-1537. In The Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge (1547), the doctor writes:

> The people of the countrey be hardy men, and stronge men, and well fauored, & good musycyons[2].

We catch glimpses of these musicians in a few of the ballads. According to The Battle of Otterburn, Harry Percy ("Hotspur") urged his men into battle to some kind of musical accompaniment:

> 'Mynstrells, play vp for your waryson,
> And well quyt it schall be.'
> (A43[3-4])

Were these the same household minstrels as those in the retinue of a later Henry Percy, to whom the Mayor of Newcastle gave six shillings each in 1562? They consisted of players of "a Tabarette, a Luyte, and a rebece"[3].

1 F.B. Gummere, The Popular Ballad, 57.

2 Op. cit. (ed. F.J. Furnivall), 137.

3 See W.W. Tomlinson, Life in Northumberland during the Sixteenth Century, 247.

The Percy family of Alnwick have always kept their own piper. The Border piper with his Northumbrian small-pipes under his arm was always a popular figure at fairs, weddings and public gatherings. He was also particularly welcome in the harvest field. John Leyden, one of Scott's ballad contributors, describes how "the intervals of labour during harvest were often occupied in dancing the Ring-dance to the music of the piper attending the reapers". This was the common dance at the "Kirn", a feast celebrating the cutting down of the corn[1]. The Border pipes have been used as an accompanying instrument on occasions and it is possible that a talented singer and instrumentalist would have been able to recite a Border Ballad whilst playing his own tune. The highest perfection of the piper's art, according to John Leyden, was supposed to consist in being able to sing, dance and play the pipes at the same time[2].

The "crowd" or "croud", was a kind of bowed fiddle and was probably one of the few indigenous instruments of the British Isles[3]. Sir Philip Sidney heard "the olde song of Percy and Duglas" (probably a version of The Battle of Otterburn or The Hunting of the Cheviot) sung "by some blinde Crouder"[4], and this same instrument, or the more common fiddle, may have been the one the Wigtownshire farmer had in mind when in his version of The Lochmaben Harper he sang that the harper "bundled his fiddles upon his back" (C7[3]).

Of Scotland's three national instruments - the harp, bagpipes and fiddle - the harp, or "clarsach", is undoubtedly the oldest. It was early used in Scotland to accompany the voice[5], and there are a number of allusions to it in the ballads. In The Lochmaben Harper, the blind harper

1 The Complaynt of Scotland (ed. John Leyden), 130-1.

2 Op. cit., (ed. Leyden), 150.

3 See F. Collinson, The Traditional and National Music of Scotland, 199-201.

4 An Apologie for Poetrie (ed. J. Churton Collins), 32. Sidney is thought to have written his essay in 1580 or 1581, see Collins, op. cit., xxiii.

5 Collinson, op. cit., 228.

gains entry to the king of England's hall where he charms his audience to sleep:

> And aye he harpit, and aye he carpit,
> Till a' the nobles were sound asleep.
> (A10[1-2])

In what may be an earlier ballad, Thomas Rymer, the Queen of Elfland invites Thomas to "harp and carp" and go with her (B5[2]). To "carp" means to recite or sing and most probably suggests the kind of modulated recitation which these early harpists fitted to the tones of their instruments.[1]

However, if our information about the Border singers contacted by Scott and others is anything to go by, we shall have to conclude that the long Border Ballad narratives were delivered unaccompanied. "Singing" and "recitation" are synonymous in the notes of the Border collectors, and listening to recordings of the ballads sung without musical accompaniment by the contemporary folksinger Evan MacColl, one feels that the delivery often approximates closer to recitation. Observations on how individual singers performed their versions of Border Ballads will be noticed in the discussion of the texts.

James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd as he was familiarly known, who helped Scott to recover several ballads for the Minstrelsy, has described the singing tradition of his part of the Border during the eighteenth century. In 1801 Hogg wrote:

> Till this present age, the poor illiterate people, in these glens, knew of no other entertainment in the long winter nights, than repeating, and listening to, the feats of their ancestors, recorded in songs, which I believe to be handed down, from father to son, for many generations[2].

Old Mrs. Hogg, James's mother, was a veritable treasure-house of ballads and folklore. Scott describes the way in which she "sings, or

1 See E.D.S.L., I, 382, under 2.

2 Letter to Sir Walter Scott, June 30, 1801 [2], cited Scott, Minstrelsy, I, 240. The dating of the letter is Lockhart's.

rather chaunts" the ballad Auld Maitland "with great animation"[1]. She is deservedly famous among ballad critics for the insight which she brought to Scott's Minstrelsy versions of the ballads she had been used to singing. She is reputed to have exclaimed:

> There was never ane o' ma sangs prentit till ye prentit them yoursel' and ye hae spoilt them a' thegither. They were made for singing and no for reading, but ye hae broken the charm now and they'll never be sung mair. And the warst thing o' a', they're nouther right spell'd, nor right setten down[2].

Many would agree with Mrs. Hogg that a ballad in print is a dead thing. Furthermore, we know that Scott "improved" the ballad texts he received. As for Mrs. Hogg's last objection, that her songs were not "right setten down", it can be said in defence of Scott that the versions he printed in the Minstrelsy were not always Mrs. Hogg's. Her peevishness is typical of the folk-singer, who will always maintain that his or hers is the only "right" way to sing a song. Scott himself realised this when he pointed out in a letter to William Laidlaw:

> The truth is that in these matters, as you must have observed, old people are usually very positive about their own mode of telling a story and equally uncharitably critical in their observations on those who differ from them[3].

For a description of the typical ballad-singing occasion one has, unfortunately, to go north to Aberdeenshire, where Alexander Keith described the local entertainment:

> They met at somebody's house one evening, the women taking their knitting. All sat round in a circle, while some one of the company sang a ballad, the whole assembly joining in or repeating the last line of each verse in order to give the singer time to get breath for his next verse. Then others contributed, and all the while a pot boiled on the fire, cooking kail or turnips which were ladled out on a beremeal

1 Minstrelsy, I, 232.

2 Cited James Hogg, Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott, 61.

3 Letter to William Laidlaw, January 21, 1803, Letters of Sir Walter Scott (ed. H.J.C. Grierson), I, 173.

> scone before the guests departed. Then another evening they met in another house, and repeated the performance, with perhaps other ballads but the same hospitality[1].

The number of Border Ballads with choruses preserved in transcription, suggests that on the Border, too, ballad-singing was a corporate activity. We also learn from Keith's account that in Aberdeenshire the ballads were handed down within families[2].

Descriptions of the singing and performance of ballads leads me perforce to say something about the importance of the tunes and the lack of space devoted to a consideration of them in this thesis. It has been acknowledged for some time now that a study of ballad music is an essential part of ballad study as a whole. Robert Frost put the matter neatly when he said:

> Voice and ear are at a loss what to do with the ballad until supplied with the tune it was written to go with. Unsung, it stays half-lacking[3].

Similarly, Philips Barry:

> The field-worker knows that the ballad is a living organism, tune and text together, the spirit and the body. When the spirit is gone, what is left is a dead thing[4].

In the introduction to his work (still in progress) Bronson poses the question: "When is a ballad not a ballad?" to which he gives the answer: "When it has no tune"[5]. And he expands:

> Ballads without tunes are as unfulfilled, as paradoxical, as songs without words ...

1 'Scottish Ballads: Their Evidence of Authorship and Origin', Essays and Studies, XII (1926), 114.

2 'Scottish Ballads', op. cit., 113; cf. also, L.L. xxxviii.

3 Cited A.L. Lloyd, Folk Song in England, 136.

4 B.F.S.S.N.E., No. 6 (1933), 20.

5 B.H. Bronson, T.T.C.B., I, ix.

> These are the partners of an alliance so essential to the survival and vital circumstance of both. For only by fruitful marriage can they be self-perpetuating in tradition[1].

Bronson has been able to give tunes for most of the Border Ballads contained in the three volumes of his collection so far published. These I shall make reference to if necessary. Significant omissions are the tunes to Rookhope Ryde, The Lads o Wamphray, Hobie Noble, and Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead. The tune, or tunes, to The Outlaw Murray, if these still exist, should appear in the last volume of Bronson's work when this goes into print.

The study offered in this thesis is a purely literary one, however, but is defensible as such, I believe, on these grounds: first, ballads (the Border Ballads included) have so far given more pleasure to more people read rather than sung; the continuing popularity of them in ballad anthologies testifies to this. Secondly, it is very well for the ethno-musicologist and field-researcher to urge that, "since there is a musical as well as a textual tradition to every ballad, all the evidence be used[2]. The field-worker is in a highly privileged position; listening to ballads or folk songs on tape or gramophone record (even if these are field rather than studio productions) still does not compensate for the complete social-occasional experience that is ballad singing - the celebrational context described by Alexander Keith above. Even if the ballad-student genuinely in love with the poetry of the ballads is able to hear recordings, the chances are anyway that he will find the traditional modes in which folk tunes are composed and sung quite alien to his ears.

As far as the folk-singer himself is concerned, there is much evidence that he "attaches far more importance to the words of his song than to its tune; that, while he is conscious of the words that he is singing, he

1 Ibid. For a full discussion of ballad tunes, see Bronson's article, 'The Interdependence of Ballad Tunes and Texts', California Folklore Quarterly, III (1944), 185-207, and his collected essays in The Ballad as Song.

2 Philips Barry, B.F.S.S.N.E., No. 5 (1933), 20.

is more or less unconscious of the melody"[1]. Although, by way of qualification, it should be added that Greig found his Aberdeenshire singers using their melodies as an aid to the recollection of their ballad words[2].

It would seem to be the case, then, that for the folk-singer the tune is a vehicle for the words, an aid to memory, vital to performance but a sub-ordinate dimension as far as aesthetic appreciation is concerned. Perhaps, after all, valuable textual studies can be made independently of tune study; or at least without involving technical expertise. The plays of Shakespeare and other dramatists, written to be performed yet rewarding close textual analysis, suggest an immediate analogy to the text-tune problem of the ballad. No doubt it will be objected that it is even more pointless and dishonest to study ballad texts without their music, since plays at least can stand up to verbal scrutiny[3]. However, I am inclined to share James Reed's conviction that the Border Ballads are not only "more than merely poems", but also "more than merely folksongs"[4], and hope this thesis will finally persuade that they repay a thorough textual investigation.

The Border Ballads, like the best of our traditional folk-songs, have proved surprisingly resilient. Most scholars would now agree that originally ballads were the creation of talented individuals, of local rather than national reputation, who, because they were in direct contact with the social attitudes, beliefs and aspirations of their time, were able to speak for a whole community. These illiterate but intelligent folk-poets were prepared to relinquish all claim to their work in a way that is difficult for the modern copyright and royalty-conscious artist to appreciate. The tradition was more important than the

1 Cecil J. Sharp, English Folk Song: Some Conclusions, 18.

2 See Keith, L.L. xlii.

3 An objection voiced by Miller Frondigoun, The Use of English, XX (1969), 48-9.

4 The Use of English, XX (1969), 50; cf. also, James Reed 'Border Ballads', The Use of English, XIX (1968), 227-34.

individuals who composed within and perpetuated it. This desire to remain anonymous may also have stemmed, in part, from a desire to let the words speak.

The ballad, therefore, after its initial conception, will be communicated by singing to a wider circle, each performance of it being a re-creation as valid and authentic as the last, and will only cease to be a living, growing thing when the tradition of singing it at last dies out. This is perhaps the only real sense in which we can speak of the ballad as being composed by the folk, and why there can be no such thing as an "original text"[1]. I have tried, for this reason, to avoid applying the word "original" during the course of this study; however, I have retained it of necessity whenever I have attempted to discover which of several versions or variants[2] lies closest to an original tradition, or ur-form of the ballad story[3].

The biggest single contribution to our understanding of the ways of oral tradition has undoubtedly been the work of the American scholars Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord. Trying to account for the oral characteristics of the Homeric epic, Parry and Lord set out to examine

1 See Keith, 'Scottish Ballads', op. cit., 118; M.J.C. Hodgart, The Ballads, 64-5, 96-8; G.H. Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, 231-2; AL. Lloyd, Folk Song in England, 136-7. Philips Barry sums up the process of oral transmission in the formula: "Individual invention, plus communal re-creation", Modern Language Notes, XXVIII (1913), 4.

2 The terms "variant" and "version" have often been used synonymously in ballad scholarship, i.e. to indicate any kind of differing copy. Child seems to have conceived of the term "version" as "a copy with distinguishing characteristics in plot, style, age, atmosphere, or the like", see D.K. Wilgus, Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship, 396. I shall keep to Child's meaning throughout this thesis, using "version" to indicate a distinctive form of a ballad, but one which may itself be representative of a number of slightly differing variants.

3 We may, I think, presume that an original form lies behind a number of varying forms of a ballad; cf. the need envisaged by Stith Thompson to establish "an approximation to an original form which will sufficiently account for all the available variants", see supra, Introduction, p. 6.

at first-hand the living singing traditions of the Yugoslavian peasants of the 1930s. Entwhistle's description of the heroic-epic songs of this community has been quoted already; Lord gave his fuller account in The Singer of Tales (1960). In this study Lord records the observations and conclusions made by himself and Milman Parry, together with an application of these to the oral epics of other cultures.

To appreciate how far Parry and Lord's findings have permeated recent studies of orally produced literature, it is necessary to compare the attitudes of earlier scholars towards the function of the oral process. Because of their over-emphasis on the role played by memory in the transmission of folk-song, previous students have often completely misunderstood the real nature of orally preserved material. In 1907 Sharp had made his now-famous pronouncement that oral transmission is "the method ... not merely ... by which the folksong lives; it is a process by which it grows and by which it is created"[1]. But the far-reaching implications of this dictum for a study of traditional ballads are only just beginning to be felt. Gerould, for instance, spoke of "communal recreation" in his chapter discussing the nature of ballad variation[2]. He recognised

> a tradition of artistry current at least in certain groups or families and in certain regions, and probably continuing from century to century, which has guided the re-making of folk-songs[3].

Yet Gerould was unable to offer any helpful suggestions as to how that artistry operates. In the same chapter he remarks that "singers must have forgotten musical or verbal phrases and have repaired the gaps as

1 Cecil J. Sharp, English Folk Song: Some Conclusions, 10.

2 See The Ballad of Tradition, 163-88.

3 Op. cit., 184.

best they could"[1] - a theory that presupposes that the singer learns his ballad by memorising a fixed text.

Parry and Lord, however, discovered that for the singers of tales in Yugoslavia "transmission is really a phase of composition"[2]. The singer does not hand down a word-for-word text (although he may consider that he is doing so) and his successor does not attempt to reproduce this according to the accuracy of his memory; rather, it is the broad outline of the narrative that is passed on, together with a stock of formulae and set themes which enable improvisation. The "formula" was defined by Milman Parry as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea"[3]. The formula (e.g. "rosy-fingered dawn", "silver-footed Thetis") may be used or not used, but it may not be varied. The "theme", on the other hand, which Lord defines as "a recurrent element of narration or description, a subject-unit, a group of ideas, regularly employed by a singer, not merely in any given poem, but in the poetry as a whole"[4], may vary. Elsewhere, Lord explains:

> The themes function in building songs in much the same way in which the formulas function in building lines. The formulaic content of a theme is variable, depending on the wishes of a singer to lengthen or shorten his song[5].

Thus Parry and Lord concluded that the transmission of oral-epic is not a process of memorisation. No singer could memorise a song of six hundred lines or more, after hearing it only once, but he could

1 Op. cit., 187.

2 Albert B. Lord, Serbocroation Heroic Songs, I, 140.

3 Cited Lord, The Singer of Tales, 4.

4 'Narrative Inconsistencies in Homer and Oral Poetry', Transactions of the American Philological Association, LXIX (1938), 440; cf. also The Singer of Tales, 68.

5 'Homer's Originality: Oral Dictated Texts', T.A.P.A., LXXXIV (1953), 127.

re-create it by learning the plan of the song and improvising his own version with the aid of formulae and stock themes.

It was inevitable that the Parry-Lord researches should eventually be applied to the Child ballads. James H. Jones has demonstrated that the singers of the English and Scottish popular ballads transmitted their narratives in much the same way as the Serbocroation singers studied by Parry and Lord.[1] The oral method of transmission accounts almost certainly for the large number of ballad "commonplaces", as they used to be called somewhat disparagingly, and which previous ballad critics have hitherto found something of an artistic embarrassment.

In the Border Ballad Tam Lin we come across a traditional "theme" - that of the maiden gathering up her skirts and braiding her hair in preparation to run from one place to another:

> Janet has kilted her green kirtle
> A little aboon her knee,
> And she has broded her yellow hair
> A little aboon her bree,
> And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
> As fast as she can hie.
> (A3)

The theme (or to be specific, the two themes) are used again within the same ballad at stanzas 8 and 17. The singer could have employed them a fourth time, had he so wished, to effect the scene-change to Miles Cross, between stanzas 35 and 36. We find the same thematic use of the passage again in version B of Tam Lin, four times in all. The two themes appear either separately or in conjunction in the ballads: Hind Etin (Child 41, B2), Child Waters (Child 63, A9-10), Sweet William's Ghost (Child 77, A11), and Rose the Red and White Lily (Child 103, A13). But, as I hope to show in the next chapter, because the skirt-gathering/hair-

1 'Commonplace and Memorisation in the Oral Tradition of the English and Scottish Popular Ballads', J.A.F., LXXIV (1961), 97-112.

braiding is "commonplace", this does not prevent it from acquiring, in Tam Lin, a contextual significance far beyond its usage in other ballads.

Formulae enjoy a widespread usage in the Border Ballads. "Bordersyde" seems to have been a common noun-formula since it is employed in several narratives to indicate the Border. Proper names, usually with their appropriate epithet, seem to have provided the ballad-reciters with a handy half-line formula of two stresses. Thus with the adjective "keen" we have "the keen Lord Scrope" - traditionally villainous Warden of the West March of England who figures predominantly in Kinmont Willie. In the same ballad, Scrope's deputy, "the fause Sakelde" becomes a ready-made cipher to indicate the deception and treachery of officialdom.

It seems likely that as Border Ballads became more and more widely sung, they acquired their own regional themes and formulae. Lord noted in connection with the oral-epics of Yugoslavia that:

> Differences of dialect and vocabulary, of linguistic, social, and political history will be reflected in thematic material and in formulas[1].

The Border Ballads, for example, seem to favour a seasonal opening. Because raiding activities on the Marches usually commenced as soon as the meagre harvest was gathered in, when steeds had been well fed and when the nights were longest, several Border Ballads begin their action at Lammas tide (August 1), or Martinmas (November 11), opening with the formula: "It fell about the Lammas tide".

A Lord-Parry analysis of ballad texts is, therefore, most tempting. A.B. Friedman has rejected the formulaic improvisation theory, however, largely on the grounds that the Yugoslav epics are long and stichic whereas the ballads are short and strophic[2]. Yet Parry believed in

1 The Singer of Tales, 49.

2 'The Formulaic Improvisation Theory of Ballad Tradition - A Counterstatement', J.A.F., LXXIV (1961), 113-15.

the applicability of his researches to other oral poetries[1], while Lord also states in his Foreword to The Singer of Tales that the book is about "all singers of tales from time immemorial and unrecorded to the present"[2]. The oral-improvised background of the ballads clearly needs to be tested further, but I shall utilise the most significant of the Parry-Lord findings as supports to my main argument that the Border Ballads are the traditional oral poetry of a region.

One final consideration remains and this, too, has a direct bearing on the authenticity and orality of the Border Ballads. Because any critical writing on these ballads is bound to encounter Sir Walter Scott and his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, it will be in order to consider briefly the nature and extent of Scott's editorial practice.

Claims have been advanced for Scott as a collector in direct contact with the oral traditions of the Border country to which he belonged, but more has been claimed than seems justified by the evidence. Admittedly Sir Walter's first introduction to the "Matter of the Border" was oral and to an extent, therefore, he was aware that popular tradition was a living record on the lips of successive generations. Yet Robert Shortreed, who accompanied Scott on his ballad "raids" has left an eyewitness account of the Minstrelsy editor's fieldwork. When questioned by his son: "And how did Sir Walter obtain all the Liddesdale ballads? Was it from recitation, or how?" - Shortreed allegedly replied: "Not one o' them was got from recitation, but The Fray o' Support"[3].

1 See Albert B. Lord, Serbocroatian Heroic Songs, 4.

2 Op. cit., i. In fact, Francis P. Magoun has already utilised the Parry-Lord thesis to demonstrate the oral composition of Anglo-Saxon poetry, see 'The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry', Speculum, XXVIII (1953), 446-68. James Ross has examined 'Formulaic Composition in Gaelic Oral Poetry', Modern Philology, LXII (1959), 1-13.

3 Cited W.E. Wilson, 'The Making of the Minstrelsy: Scott and Shortreed in Liddesdale', The Cornhill Magazine, New Series LXXIII (1932), 274.

The inference to be drawn from this is that Scott was an editor merely, rather than a collector of ballads in the field. It is now realised that the sources of most of his Minstrelsy texts were manuscript collections of ballads, the best known being those of David Herd[1], Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, Mrs. Brown of Falkland[2], Thomas Wilkie[3], James Nicol[4], and the collection of an anonymous "old lady"[5]. Of these collectors only Riddell and Wilkie were Borderers. Except in rare instances, therefore, when Scott actually states that he himself was the transcriber, we may not accept his copies of Border Ballads as primary sources; they will always be secondary in so far as they stand between Scott and the living oral tradition.

In a sense, the Minstrelsy texts stand, indeed, at a third remove from the original live performances of the Border singers and reciters. This is because of Sir Walter's editorial methods, which were lamentably non-scientific. Lockhart's high claim that his uncle had "interpolated hardly a line, or even an epithet of his own"[6] has been totally

1 For a description of the Herd MSS of 1776, see William Montgomerie, 'A Bibliography of the Scottish Ballad Manuscripts', S.S.L., IV (1966-67), 13, 194-227.

2 See infra, ch. II, 'Ballads of the Supernatural', pp. 60-I.

3 For a description of the Wilkie MSS, see Montgomerie, op. cit., IV (1966-67), 19-20.

4 For a description of the ballads of James Nicol of Strichen, Aberdeenshire, see David Buchan, The Ballad and the Folk, 223-43.

5 This is a MS described by Scott as the "collection of an old lady's complete set of ballads" and is dated 1805-1807 and 1818, see E.S.P.B., V, 398; cf. also, Montgomerie, op. cit., VI (1968), 97-104; L.L., 294-5.

6 J.G. Lockhart, Memoirs (1900 ed.), I, 332.

invalidated by the discovery at Abbotsford of the original manuscripts from which Scott compounded his Minstrelsy texts[1]. By comparing originals with published versions, it is possible to measure the true extent of Scott's "emendations" and "corrections", and wherever these have a bearing on my discussion of individual ballads, I have felt obliged to take them into account.

Scott's professed editorial goal was, by blending elements derived from the different manuscript copies at his disposal, to produce the "best" text of the ballad concerned. The result was a ballad mosaic that never existed in the flux of genuine oral tradition, indeed, could never have existed. But although the modern field-collector and scholar may frown on Scott's procedure, this much can be said in defence of him. The reading-public which Scott hoped to introduce to the folk-poetry of the Border was not ready to accept oral texts of ballads, transcribed with the scholarly exactitude of a Lord or Parry. Scott knew this. Again and again he apologises, as Bishop Percy did before him, for the "vulgarities" and "crudeness" of the ballad reciters. He writes of The Dowie Dens of Yarrow:

> The Editor found it easy to collect a variety of copies; but very difficult indeed to select from them such a collated edition, as might, in any degree, suit the taste of 'these more light and giddy-paced times'[2].

There is much evidence now that Scott knew exactly what he was doing, without holding himself guilty of literary forgery. A remark in his review of Thomas Evans's Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative (1784) seems a pretty definite arraignment of his own editorial procedure:

> It may be asked by the severer antiquary of the present day, why an editor, thinking it necessary to introduce such alterations

1 "Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border-Minstrelsy", a folio volume made up from detached pieces to the number of above eighty, see E.S.P.B., V, 397.

2 Minstrelsy, III, 173.

> in order to bring forth a new, beautiful, and interesting sense from a meagre or corrupted original, did not in good faith to his readers acquaint them with the liberties he had taken and make them judge whether in so doing he transgressed his limits. We answer that unquestionably such would be the express duty of a modern editor, but such were not the rules when Dr. Percy first opened the campaign[1].

Scott later said that the time had come for the publication of Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript[2], but no doubt this was only because he felt that the public had become sufficiently familiar with the ballads in their beautified form. As for Scott's own originals, it seems likely that he intended to preserve the Abbotsford manuscripts exactly as he had received them and that he would have given them to his readers if and when they were prepared to want them. In support of this is Sir Walter's scrupulous regard for the sanctity of a manuscript. It is significant that, in speaking of a poet who had altered a manuscript to suit a revised reading of a ballad which he had published, Scott grew more indignant over that liberty than over the mere change of text in the published version. The Raid of the Reidswire, says Scott,

> first appeared in Allan Ramsay's Evergreen, but some liberties have been taken by him in transcribing it; and, what is altogether unpardonable, the MS, which is itself rather inaccurate, has been interpolated to favour his readings; of which there remain obvious marks[3].

One thing is certain: had Scott been able to share what is now known about oral tradition he would not have written and edited the Minstrelsy as he did. Like so many ballad critics before and after him he did not look for artistry among illiterate countrymen. In his 'Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry' he tries to explain his disappointment:

1 The Quarterly Review (1810), III, 482.

2 See Margaret Ball, Sir Walter Scott as a Critic of Literature, 28.

3 Minstrelsy, II, 18.

Another cause contributed to the tenuity of thought and poverty of expression, by which old ballads are too often distinguished. The apparent simplicity of the ballad stanza carried with it a strong temptation to loose and trivial composition. The collection of rhymes, accumulated by the earliest of the craft, appear to have been considered as forming a joint stock for the common use of the profession; and not mere rhymes only, but verses and stanzas, have been used as common property, so as to give an appearance of sameness and crudity to the whole series of popular poetry. ... The least acquaintance with the subject will recall a great number of commonplace verses, which each ballad-maker has unceremoniously appropriated to himself, thereby greatly facilitating his own task, and at the same time degrading his art by his slovenly use of over-scutched phrases. From the same indolence, the balladmongers of most nations have availed themselves of every opportunity of prolonging their pieces, of the same kind, without the labour of actual composition ... The bards of ruder climes, and less favoured languages, may indeed claim the countenance of Homer for such repetitions; but whilst, in the Father of Poetry, they give the reader an opportunity to pause, and look back upon the enchanted ground over which they have travelled, they afford nothing to the modern bard, save facilitating the power of stupefying the audience with stanzas of dull and tedious iteration[1].

One can only conclude that the aristocratic Walter Scott was really temperamentally unsuited to a collection and study of this kind of oral poetry. In denying the ballads, as they stood, artistry, he denied them everything. Philips Barry has urged:

> Let it be literally cried from the house tops that the folk singer is a personality, an individual, and most of all a creative artist. In the name of good science and good sense, let us have done once and for all with calling folksong and folk balladry artless[2].

If the following study of the Border Ballads manages to illuminate the artistry of an illiterate but aware frontier people of four hundred years ago, it will have achieved something.

1 Minstrelsy, I, 8-9

2 'The Part of the Folk Singer in the Making of Folk Balladry', in Critics and the Ballad (ed. MacEdward Leach and Tristram P. Coffin), 76.

CHAPTER TWO

BALLADS OF THE SUPERNATURAL: THOMAS RYMER[1] AND TAM LIN[2]

It would seem reasonable to suppose that among the earliest Border Ballads (indeed, among ballads anywhere), will be those which take their rise in popular beliefs and superstitions. John Veitch in his History and Poetry of the Scottish Border, says of this type:

> That form of the romantic ballad which relates to the feeling of supernatural powers above and around, is even an earlier product of the Border land than the historical ballad itself[3].

Child, too, no doubt wished to imply the chronological supremacy of ballads of this type when he printed the bulk of them together in the first volume of his collection[4]. However, although fairy ballads may antedate the more historical Border Ballads, which I shall discuss in the chapters that follow, superstition was slow to die on the Border. Scott mentions the strange beliefs of Border folk time and again in the pages of his Minstrelsy, and his contemporary, James Hogg, states that, "never was the existence of witches more firmly believed in, than by the inhabitants of Ettrick Forest at the present day"[5].

Since, to some extent, our survey of Border Ballads in the following pages will be based on an attempt to establish a chronological

1 Child 37, E.S.P.B., I, 317-329, IV, 454-455.

2 Child 39, E.S.P.B., I, 335-358, 507-508, III, 504-505, IV, 455-459.

3 Op. cit., II, 89.

4 See especially Child Nos. 2, 4, 6, 20, 34-44, in all of which, as G.H. Gerould remarks, "there would be no story except for the superstition", The Ballad of Tradition, 61-62.

5 Cited Andrew Young, The Poet and the Landscape, 155.

order, I shall begin with two ballads of Elfland - Thomas Rymer and Tam Lin. Because these make use of a particular Tweeddale setting and have, more than other Elfin ballads, "a local habitation and a name", I think we may reasonably assume that they are both ballads which were first sung on the Scottish Border.

Thomas Rymer tells the story of a man who meets the Queen of Elfland and is abducted by her to her kingdom. At the end of a period of time, because his otherworldly protectress has fears for his safety, Thomas is returned to the land of mortals and is given the fairy gift of "true tongue" or prophecy.

Such a character, styled "True Thomas" or "Thomas of Erceldoune"[1] is known to have flourished between the end of the twelfth and the end of the thirteenth century[2]. "Thome Rymor de Ercildune" acted as witness to a charter of Petrus de Haga de Bemersyde, who was himself witness to another charter of 1189, so that in that year Thomas was a contemporary of a man old enough to bear witness. In the year 1294 (November 2), "Thomas de Ercildoun filius et heres Thomae Rymour de Ercildoun", conveyed by charter to the Trinity House of Soltra, all the lands which he held by inheritance in the village of Ercildoun. Thus we may conclude, with Murray, that, "the prima facie purport of the charter of 1294 is that Thomas is already dead, and his son in possession of the paternal property, which he in his turn gives away".

Thomas the Rhymer is known in Scotland chiefly for the series of prophecies which he made in his lifetime. Besides the ballad, his story

1 Erceldoune, now Earlston, is situated on the east bank of the Leader Water, about 3m. north of Melrose in Roxburghshire, see OS Map, Sheet 70. It is marked "Ersiltoun" on Blaeu's map of Lauderdale.

2 What follows is a summary of J.A.H. Murray's introduction to The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune, ix-xi.

is told in a romance poem (alleged by some to have been written by himself) of which four MS. copies have been preserved - the Thornton, Cotton, Lansdowne and Cambridge MSS[1]. The first of these is the earliest, about 1430-1440, according to Murray, who dates from internal evidence[2]. It also retains the northern form of the language little altered[3]. The Cambridge MS. is a southernised version of about 1450; MS. Cotton is "about or slightly after 1450", and MS. Lansdowne of about 1524-1530[4].

The romance poem tells how Thomas, one May morning, meets "a lady gaye" at the foot of the Eildon Hills. He mistakes her for the "Quene of hevene", but she describes herself simply as coming from "ane oper countree", the fairyland of later literature, but not named as such in this poem. Thomas makes love to her seven times, thus unwittingly granting her a special power over him. She carries him off to the Otherworld, where he is held captive for three years or more. At the end of this time, and to prevent his being offered as a "fee" or payment to the "foulle fend" of Hell, the lady returns Thomas to "middle-earth". Before they part, he asks for some token to prove to his friends that he has spoken with her. She gives him the gift of prophecy and begins, for his immediate benefit, a series of predictions. These occupy the second and third fyttes of the romance, and are supposed to be the soothsayings that made Thomas Rhymer famous in his lifetime.

This romance has been generally agreed upon as the source of the ballad Thomas Rymer[5]. There is undeniably a close connection between

1 MS. Thornton (Lincoln A.1.17); MS. Cotton, Vitellius E.x; MS. Landsowne 792; MS. Cambridge, Ff. 5.48.

2 Op. cit., lvi.

3 Ibid.

4 Murray, op. cit., lvi-lix.

5 See Scott, Minstrelsy, IV, 91-2; Andrew Lang, Border Ballads, xix; Veitch, The History and Poetry of the Scottish Border, II, 89; Child, E.S.P.B., I, 319-20; Hodgart, The Ballads, 15, 76-7; David C. Fowler, A Literary History of the Popular Ballad, 81; 236-7.

the two, but the question remains: which MS. version of the romance poem (if it is one of those four extant) and which version of the ballad? Even more intriguing it seems to me, are we to suppose that an illiterate Border peasant of the fifteenth century was able to read (or have read to him) a long and sophisticated manuscript poem and then contract it into a ballad of some sixty or so lines? Would it not be more realistic to suppose that local ballads sprang up out of, or in response to traditions attached to the figure of Thomas the Rhymer, shortly after his death, and that a literate poet took these ballads as the basis for a longer romance narrative, after hearing them sung in Tweeddale? Or, to offer a solution that has enjoyed some vogue with students of balladry, might not a minstrel who had had access to a manuscript copy of the romance (perhaps even recited it himself), have produced an abbreviated form to suit a less courtly audience, and thereby set it going orally in the manner familiar to Border singers? Certainly the leisurely flow of the romance has been transformed into the dramatic and episodic movement which we recognise as typical of the ballad. And the social conditions that pertained during the later Middle Ages would have favoured this kind of ballad genesis. As the mediaeval manors broke up and their households were discharged, the minstrels found themselves on the open road, facing new audiences and a new set of patrons, the peasantry. As A.L. Lloyd has concluded:

> The effect on folk song was enormous ... from this synthesis of peasant and minstrel, amateur and professional, private and public-entertainment music grew the kind of song that remained dominant in the lower-class repertory for the next five hundred years, in short, folk song as we most readily recognise it today[1].

1 Folk Song in England, 111-12. This fruitful conjunction of minstrelsy and folksong is the subject of David C. Fowler's book, A Literary History of the Popular Ballad.

If we accept that, in the case of Thomas Rymer, the ballad was derived from the romance via the medium of a literate or semi-literate professional minstrel, we may be able, by extrapolating any common features of ballad and romance, to determine which of the different ballad versions has remained in closest proximity to the earlier romance tradition. After making a line-for-line comparison of the different texts of the ballad as given by Child, I have come to the conclusion that the deepest relationship exists between version E of the ballad and the northern (Thornton) MS. version of the romance.

The E version of the ballad was communicated to Sir Walter Scott by Mrs. Christiana Greenwood in a letter of May 27, 1806. She had it from the recitation of her mother and her aunt, both then above sixty, who had learned it in their turn, as children, from Kirstan Scott, a very old woman who lived at Longnewton near Jedburgh[1]. Longnewton is only about three miles from the Eildon Hills where Thomas is supposed to have met the Elfin Queen[2], so it looks as if this particular version has been handed down in close proximity to the scene of the legend. Now, if Christiana Greenwood's mother and aunt were "above sixty" in 1806 and had learned Thomas Rymer as children, this would have been about the mid-eighteenth century. And if we further suppose Kirstan Scott, the Longnewton transmitter (at that date "a very old woman") to have learned the ballad in her childhood, we may safely push the date of version E back at least to about the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

When we look closely at the Kirstan Scott/Christiana Greenwood version, we find many small but reverberant echoes of the romance - echoes not always heard in Child's other versions of the ballad (A-D).

1 See E.S.P.B., IV, 454. The copy was found among Scott's MS. collection, "Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy", No. 97, at Abbotsford.

2 See OS Map, Sheet 70.

To instance just a few: E picks up the word "follee" (E5[4]) of the romance (1.98) and the word "flood" (E10[3], cf. romance l. 174). "Waefou" (E10[4]) recalls "full wa es mee" of the romance (l. 175). The lady comes "riding down by the lang lee" (E1[4]), as she does in the romance (l. 36). Thomas Rhymer's boast that if he loved a fair lady, "nae ill tales o her wad I tell" (E7[2]), finds its parallel in the Elfin Queen making her request in the romance: "I praye the, speke none euyll of me" (l. 320). Moreover, version E of the ballad has remembered with some accuracy the romance poet's description of the lady and her horse - it is a "dapple-grey" (E2[1], cf. romance l. 17); she wears "jewels fine" (E3[2], cf. the "precyous stones" of the romance l. 51), and she carries a hunting-horn (E3[4], cf. romance l. 71). In E, as in the romance, the silver bells form part of the horse's decoration and are not held in the lady's hand, as depicted in ballad versions B and D. In E Thomas mistakes the lady for the Virgin Mary: "O save ye, save ye, fair Queen o Heavn", he cries (E4[3]), and this detail, too, seems to have been picked up by the ballad from the romance (l. 88). Furthermore, E is alone in stating, more or less explicitly, that Thomas had intercourse with the Elfin Queen ("lain wi a gay ladee", E6[4]), and this is similarly the direct cause of his being spirited away in the romance ("sevene sythis by hir he laye", l. 124)[1]. E is also the only version of the ballad to remember the length of the journey to the Otherworld, which takes "lang days three" (E10[2]); the duration, as given by the romance, is "the montenans of dayes three" (l. 173). Highly significant, finally, is the fact that only version E of the ballad has remembered an essential part of the

1 Scott's Minstrelsy copy (Child C), in what may be traditional lines, gives a softened rendering of the incident:

> 'And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
> Sure of your bodie I will be.' (C5[3-4])

Thomas Rhymer story as preserved in the romance tradition: the lady's fear that Thomas will be the next sacrifice or "teinding" to Hell (E.18[2], cf. romance ll. 289-92).

These strong narrative and verbal correspondences between the E text of the ballad and the romance (particularly the Thornton MS. copy), have never, I think, been fully brought out. If indeed the romance is progenitor of the ballad, then the tradition by which the ballad came down through Kirstan Scott and the Greenwood family, lies close to the original legend of Thomas of Erceldoune.

But this is not to say that Thomas Rymer is not a genuine folk-ballad, transmitted orally from generation to generation. The number of oral devices present in the different versions is a reliable test of the ballad's traditionality[1]: Lord concluded, as a result of his long familiarity with the oral-compositional methods of Yugoslavia, that:

> An 'oral' text will yield a predominance of clearly demonstrable formulas, with the bulk of the remainder 'formulaic', and a small number of nonformulaic expressions. A 'literary' text will show a predominance of non formulaic expressions, with some formulaic expressions, and very few clear formulas. The fact that nonformulaic expressions will be found in an oral text proves that the seeds of the 'literary' style are already present in oral style; and likewise the presence of 'formulas' in 'literary' style indicates its origin in oral style. These 'formulas' are vestigial[2].

Thus our ballad can be seen to evolve its own formula when the Queen of Elfland shows Thomas the different roads to Hell, Heaven and Fairyland. The singers employ a simple "substitution system"[3]:

O see not ye that [ADJECTIVE] road,
That leads [DESCRIPTION]
That is the road [DESCRIPTION]
That leads straight to [PLACE].

The device is used, with only slight verbal alteration, in all the five extant versions of the ballad. Another useful system, to serve as place-

1 See Table A, 'Oral-formulaic repetition in Thomas Rymer', pp. 507-8.

2 The Singer of Tales, 130.

3 Lord, op. cit., 35

indicator, is that of:

by)
at) the Eildon Tree
underneath)

which forms a convenient half-line of two stresses.

The oral-formulaic test is an extremely useful one when we have to deal with a ballad text, the authenticity of which may be suspect. Anna Gordon Brown (1747-1810), the repository of the A version of Thomas Rymer, is a case in point. She has often been impeached as a ballad-singer, largely because, unlike other singers of traditional ballads, she was a literate and intelligent woman. She was the youngest daughter of Thomas Gordon, Professor of Humanity at King's College, Aberdeen. She married the Reverend Andrew Brown, minister at Falkland, and became popularly known as Mrs. Brown of Falkland.

There can be no doubt today that Mrs. Brown, the source of some of the finest Child ballads, exemplified the traditional mode of oral composition by which ballads were once created and transmitted[1]. We need not hesitate, therefore, in accepting her spirited rendering of Thomas Rymer as a bona fide oral text. It was the first of the nine ballads sent by Mrs. Brown to Alexander Fraser Tytler[2]. Yet David C. Fowler in his Literary History of the Popular Ballad makes the claim that this particular version of Thomas Rymer has been "composed directly from the romance", Thomas of Erceldoune[3]. His use of the word "composed" is the crux of his suspicions: we are asked to believe that Mrs. Brown

1 See David Buchan, The Ballad and the Folk, 62-73. For a full description of the Brown ballad MSS and their contents, see William Montgomerie, 'A Bibliography of the Scottish Ballad Manuscripts', S.S.L., VII (1969-70), 60-75, 238-54.

2 See E.S.P.B., I, 317, 323.

3 Op. cit., 321, 81, 330.

was not only a singer of ballads, but that she composed them into the bargain (Fowler is evidently picturing a written composition), and more especially in the case of Thomas Rymer composed with the manuscript text of the romance poem in front of her.

Yet despite the poetic eloquence and high "polish" of Mrs. Brown's Rymer ballad, I do not think that the romance poem could have been known either to her or to the aunt from whom Thomas Gordon said his daughter learned her ballad-stories[1]. Why else should the local setting of Huntlie Bank and Eildon Tree be forgotten in the A text, when this appears in every one of the romance manuscripts and is so well preserved in the other texts of the ballad? The reason, I would suggest, is that Mrs. Brown's Aberdeenshire version of Thomas Rymer has been learned from oral recitation in the north east of Scotland and has become de-localised as a result of textual drifting.

But this kind of migration away from an area where regional feeling is strong, as it clearly was on the Borders, results in other more insidious changes. There is a strong impulse to expand and aggrandise. A is the only other copy to preserve the detail of the horse's mane adorned with bells (cf. E2), but there are now fifty-nine instead of nine ($A2^{3-4}$). A describes the lady's apparel in language similar to Mrs. Greenwood's. But the line in E,

> Her mantle was o velvet green ($E3^{1}$)

is expanded by Mrs. Brown into:

> Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
> Her mantle of the velvet fine. ($A2^{1-2}$)

1 The information is contained in a letter written by Gordon to Alexander Fraser Tytler, dated January 19, 1793, and is cited in full by William Montgomerie, S.S.L., VII (1969-70), 245.

This is omitted in both B and D.

The Thomas of A,like the Thomas of E, mistakes the lady for the Holy Virgin, or Queen of Heaven ($A4^1$, cf. $E4^3$); but whereas versions E and B do not name her country of origin, leaving this deliberately unstated, Mrs. Brown's version feels a need for explication:

'I am but the queen of fair Elfland',
($A4^3$)

the lady tells Thomas. From the evidence of the other ballad versions, we would be correct to suppose that the original audience for whom this Border Ballad was composed did not need to have the lady's identity forced home to them. In the Glenriddell copy of Thomas Rymer, she announces herself quite simply as "a lady of an unco land" ($B4^3$), "unco" meaning unknown, or strange[1]. In the light of this impulse towards rationalisation, it is odd that the singers of A should have forgotten the essential narrative element of the Queen of Elfland's gift of prophecy to Thomas. This can be found in versions C and D of the ballad. (B and E may have preserved the detail originally, but, as the texts have been received, stanzas are missing).

Characteristic, too, of Mrs. Brown's rendering of the story is a delight in picturesque detail, a concentration (that strikes one as typically feminine) on the colour and fabric of items of clothing. The description of the lady's skirt and mantle has already been quoted. After his sojourn in Elfland, Thomas receives a costume of green - the fairy colour:

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green.
($A16^{1-2}$).

1 O.E.D., XI, 90; E.D.D., VI, 303-304; E.D.S.L., IV, 662.

Mrs. Brown specifies the wine given by the lady to her protégé as being "claret" (A10^2). She displays a tendency to prettify, relying more on stylised adjectives than the other versions - the "fernie brae" (A1^4, 14^2), "lillie leven" (A13^2) and "bonny road" (A14^1), are less descriptive of a real northern landscape than the "skerry fell" of version B (10^2), or the "frosty fell" (E15^2) and "pit o hell" (E15^4) of Mrs. Greenwood's version.

Most striking, however, is Mrs. Brown's seventh verse (which Scott was to borrow), with its atmosphere of Gothic horror:

> For forty days and forty nights
> He wade thro red blude to the knee,
> And he saw neither sun nor moon,
> But heard the roaring of the sea.
> (A7)

In conclusion, then, it may be stated that Mrs. Brown's version of Thomas Rymer is a genuine re-creation through oral themes and formulae but its tendency to clarify what it is afraid might be taken for obscurities, suggests a later rendering of the story, and this despite Child's placing it (chronologically) as the first of his printed texts[1]. We may now look further at the remaining texts of this ballad - Child's B, C, and D versions.

The B text was discovered among the Campbell MSS[2], a collection of about 1830 or earlier, of "Old Scottish Songs collected in the counties of Berwick, Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles", by an unknown person[3].

1 Child's method is to give texts from A-Z, in order of their known date of printing or transcription. But as we have seen in the case of Thomas Rymer, the earliest transcribed version (here Mrs. Brown's) may not necessarily be as close to the original tradition as versions received later (here those of Janet Ormiston and Mrs. Christiana Greenwood). Fowler notes that Child gave Mrs. Brown's ballad versions the "place of honour" in twenty-four out of thirty-three cases, op. cit., 297.

2 Campbell MSS, II, 83, see E.S.P.B., I, 317, 324.

3 See E.S.P.B., V, 398.

It is close in spirit and language to Mrs. Greenwood's version; for instance, the description of the road to Hell leading "out-our yon frosty fell" (E15[2]), is shared by the Campbell version's "skerry fell" (B10[2]). Like E, B employs the same formula to describe the progress of Thomas and his fairy escort: "It's she has rode, and Thomas ran" (B6[1], 7[1], cf. E9[1]).

But the B version also re-creates the story in its own way. We have already seen that the Queen of Elfin announces herself simply as "a lady of an unco land" (B4[3]); neither in this version does the Rhymer mistake her for the Virgin, as in E. It is B, too, which adds the small detail of Thomas casting off his "hose and shon" to wade the river (B6[3]). Aware of a taboo, ancient in folk superstition, that prevents mortals from eating or drinking in the Otherworld[1], the B copy has the lady bring along with her "a loaf and a soup o wine" (B9[1]), presumably from the land of mortals and therefore free from magical properties. B is at once more racy and more earthy than the other versions. The lady invites Thomas to lay his head down in her lap (B9[3]), while she points out the three different roads, and the singer has employed a vocabulary that is more colloquial in "cursed fruit" (B8[3]) and "beggared" (B8[4]), in place of "beguiled" (D4[4], E12[4]). On the other hand, the singer has missed a salient detail, that the fruit Thomas is forbidden to touch and eat is the apocryphal apple; this is made clear by versions E (11[3]) and D (3[3]), but is left vague by B:

> He's put up his hand for to pull down ane (B7[3])

Child C, as we have already observed, was the version printed by

1 See L.C. Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, 281-2; Child, E.S.P.B., I, 322.

Scott in his Minstrelsy[1]. Scott himself admitted that his version was an amalgam of two copies, one "obtained from a lady, residing not far from Ercildoune, corrected and enlarged by one in Mrs.. Brown's MSS (i.e. Child A)"[2]. The copy obtained from the Ercildoune lady has apparently not been preserved at Abbotsford, but we may deduce from those parts of C not borrowed by Scott from A, that this other source was close to D and E[3].

To begin with, we may isolate those portions of C which Scott obviously took from Mrs. Brown's copy. They are: C2-4, 7-8, 9^{2}, $10^{2,4}$, 11-14, $15^{1,3-4}$, 16^{2}, and 20. Of the remaining thirty-four lines[4], some are similar in expression to E. Most striking is the fact that C is the only other version, apart from E, to insist on the physical contact of Thomas with the lady ($C5^{3-4}$, and 6), and to use internal rhyme in the line, "it was mirk. mirk night, and there was nae stern light" ($C16^{1}$, cf. $E10^{1}$). Scott's Ercildoune copy also contained several important variations which I shall discuss when we come to evaluate the influence of the Border region on the making and shaping of Thomas Rymer.

Child D is our fourth and last local text of the ballad, having been taken down (probably by John Leyden one of Scott's field-collectors) from the recitation of Janet Ormiston of Kelso. The latter may have been the same singer who communicated the Campbell MS. copy of The Braes o Yarrow (Child 214K)[5]. The date of Child's D text is probably about 1806, since it precedes Mrs. Greenwood's copy of the ballad by one number in the "Scotch Ballads"[6] collection. As it stands it is an

1 Minstrelsy, II, 251 (1802 ed.), see E.S.P.B., I, 317, 325.

2 Minstrelsy, IV, 84.

3 The source of Scott's other copy could have been Kirstan Scott, although she is described as living at Longnewton, near Jedburgh, in Mrs. Greenwood's letter. This letter is dated four years after the ballad's publication in the Minstrelsy, so Scott could not have had Mrs. Greenwood's copy before him when making his composite text.

4 Out of eighty, i.e. just under half of the C text.

5 See E.S.P.B., IV, 173.

6 "Scotch Ballads", No. 96, Abbotsford, see E.S.P.B., IV, 454.

incomplete mixture of quatrains, couplets and a single-line second verse; what there is suggests a close relationship with Mrs. Greenwood's Border version.

D begins with stanza 2 of E. The colour of the lady's horse, "dapple gray", is remembered ($D1^1$), and so is her promise to Thomas, that the bells she carries shall be his ($D1^4$, cf. $E2^4$). However, D makes the lady herself hold the bells in her hand ($D1^2$), instead of attaching them to the horse's mane ($E2^2$). The "night without delight" formula ($D2^1$) is shared with $E9^3$. Stanza 3 of D is almost verbatim E11, and D picks up the "fruit o hell" reference ($D4^3$, cf. $E12^3$), which in both cases is specifically an apple and has "beguiled" mortal men and women ($D4^4$, cf. $E12^4$).

This survey of the different versions of Thomas Rymer suggests that there has, with the exception of Mrs. Brown's rendering of the tale, been a close "family" of texts, with the Kirstan Scott/Christiana Greenwood variant lying, as far as we can tell, closest to the "ur-form". However, a large time-gap still remains between the date of the earliest MS. of the romance poem (Thornton MS., C. 1430-1440) and the date to which we can reasonably carry back our earliest version (Kirstan Scott's, C. 1675?). Are we entitled to suppose, therefore, that the ballad was in oral circulation during the whole of the seventeenth, as well as the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries? Child thinks we may; despite what he considers the ballad's obvious source in the romance, he writes that:

> it is an entirely popular ballad as to style, and must be of considerable age[1].

T.F. Henderson, however, in his edition of the Minstrelsy, sees the connection between ballad and romance as "probably of somewhat recent date"[2].

1 E.S.P.B., I, 320.

2 Minstrelsy, IV, 97.

J.A.H. Murray is even more scathing. Commenting on Scott's claim for the traditionality of the ballad, he writes:

> that the "traditional ballad" never grew "by oral tradition" out of the older tale , is clear enough to me, even without the additional particulars that the source of the verses was that Mt. Athos of antique ballads, Mrs. Brown's MS.[1]

As we have just seen, it is possible to argue that Mrs. Brown's version of the ballad was received orally, and that it had nothing to do directly with the romance. On the contrary, it was derived, in all likelihood, from the Border stock of versions represented by Child B, part of C, D and E. The variant readings of this Border group of texts, moreover, have every appearance of being oral - the re-creations, re-workings, and refurbishings of successive singers, not the literary rewritings of sophisticated poets with written or printed copies of the ballad (or its romance equivalent) in front of them.

To clinch this point and marshall further evidence of the ballad's oral genesis, we may now consider Thomas Rymer in the light of what we know of Border society in the Middle Ages. The folk-singer and collector A.L. Lloyd has argued that "specific social ideas are mirrored even in the least factual, most magical and miraculous of ballad themes"[2], and Thomas Rymer is no exception. We find the Border region influencing the ballad in three main areas: first, the most obvious regional traits, the use of Border place-names and the virtual confinement of the singing tradition of the ballad to within the Border counties of Scotland; secondly, in a less readily definable, but equally apparent conception of the ballad hero's character; and thirdly, in the attitude of the Border folk towards the occult.

1 Op. cit., 1 iii.

2 Folk Song in England, 138.

I have already observed that the ballad sets its scene against the real background of the Eildon Hills and Tweeddale. Thomas, lying on Huntlie Banks recalls that other visionary of mediaeval literature, Piers the Plowman. But with Thomas Rymer we are not carried into a conventional dream-vision; we are in the real world of the Border where distances prove to be concrete and operative. Thomas lies on Huntlie Banks and from there he sees the lady come riding down by the Eildon Tree. Now the latter stood, in actual fact, in the declivity on the eastern side of the three Eildon Hills, looking across the Tweed to Leader Water, Bemerside and Earlston. The site of the Eildon Tree is still believed to be indicated by the present-day Eildon Stone, "a rugged boulder of whinstone" standing by the edge of the Melrose-St. Boswell's road[1]. In a letter to J.A.H. Murray, a local resident, Mr. T.B. Gray informed him that:

> This spot is in fact the point of vantage whence the most extensive view in the neighbourhood is commanded. Higher up the hill, or lower down the hill, or farther back on the road, Melrose and all its beauties are lost, and Huntlie Brae itself shut out from sight; while from the Stone, Bemerside, Smailholm Tower, Gladswood, Drygrange, Cowdenknowes, the Black Hill, Earlston (almost), Leader-foot and bridge, Galtonside, Galawater, and a long stream of silvery Tweed, start at once upon the view[2].

In Mrs. Greenwood's opening stanza, Thomas is said to be lying "spying ferlies" (El[2]). The word "ferly", in the singular, usually designates a marvel or wonder of some kind, a marvellous or wonderful sight; or it may simply be used in the sense of news, what is going on or happening[3]. These are the senses in which it is usually employed in the ballads, as part of a formula to introduce a new character or incident. So in Bewick and Graham (Child 211), Bewick

> lookd between him and the sun,
> To see what farleys he coud see; (26[1-2])

1 Murray, op. cit., 1.

2 Cited Murray, op. cit., lin.

3 See O.E.D., IV, 162; E.D.S.L., II, 212; D.O.S.T., II, 452; S.N.D., IV, 57.

But in version E of Thomas Rymer, might it be too fanciful to suggest that Thomas, "spying ferlies", was simply admiring the view?[1]

Be that as it may, the ballad singers have shown an exact knowledge of the landscape by placing Thomas on Huntlie Banks, from where he must have had a good view of the Eildon Tree[2]. T.B. Gray, moreover, called the attention of Murray to the following passage in John Bower's Account of Melrose:

> At the foot of the Eildon Hills, above Melrose, is a place called Huntlie Brae, where Thomas the Rhymer and the Queen of the Fairies frequently met, according to tradition. A little to the east of this is the trysting-tree stone[3].

On November 8, 1875, Gray wrote again to Murray to add:

> I have identified Huntlie Brae to my entire satisfaction, and in such a situation as to give a vivid tone of reality to the old Romance. Through the kindness of James Curle, Esq., ... I have been able to confirm old Bower's statement that there was such a place .... By the Parish Ordnance Map, Mr. Curle was able to put his finger on the identical spot as fields 2408 and 2584. And now I am pleased to add that the locality is in entire harmony with the poetical reference; for if 'True Thomas' lay on Huntlie Brae or Bank, he would have a clear and distinct view of the 'lady gaye' all the way along the road, or the hill side, to the Eildon stone, a distance of fully half a mile[4].

1 "Ferlies" seems to be used, at least partially, in this sense later in the ballad when the Elfin Queen indicates the three roads with their different landscapes:

> 'But look afore ye, True Thomas,
> And I shall show ye ferlies three!
> (E13[1-2])

2 B and C are the only two texts to give both places in their opening stanza. E has Thomas on "the Huntlie bank" (E1[1]), but he sees the lady "come riding down by the lang lee" (E1[4]). The ballad has equated this with the Eildon Tree spot, however, by making the lady claim later that she won Thomas's oath "at the Eildon tree" (E17[4]).

3 Cited Murray, op. cit., li-liin.

4 Ibid.

The only other place-name to be introduced into this ballad is "the bonny banks o Farnalie" in Janet Ormiston's version (D11[2]). Scott informs us that this was "an ancient seat upon the Tweed, in Selkirkshire"[1].

We have said something about the landscape of this Border Ballad in terms of the contrast between conventionalised emblems, "lilly lees" and such like, and more naturalistic descriptions. The road to Hell, for instance, is bleakly and characteristically northern, and the arduous journey of the traveller there likely to be fraught with disasters:

> 'But do you see yon road, Thomas,
> That lies out-owr yon frosty fell?
> Ill is the man yon gate may gang,
> For it leads him straight to the pit o hell'
> (E15)

It is no "primrose path", and one is reminded of the journey of Orpheus over a "mure, with thornis thik and scherp", in Henryson's Orpheus and Eurydice[2], and of "the pit to hell", in The Bludy Werk[3]. But the symbolist technique of the ballad is even closer to that of The Lyke-Wake Dirge[4], in which the progress of man's soul is pictured in terms of a journey across the north Yorkshire moors. Scott's copy of Thomas Rymer describes the path of righteousness as a narrow road "so thick beset with thorns and briers" (C11[2]), although he is here following Mrs. Brown's copy (A12[2]). With the "water wan" (E9[2]) and the "garden green" (A8[2], B7[2], C17[1], D3[2], E11[2]), the Rhymer's landscape is complete.

Amongst the earliest singers of Border Ballads and their audiences must have been many of the Border reivers, men who had a keen eye for

1 Minstrelsy, IV, 137. Modern Fairnilee is situated on the Tweed, about 3m. S.W. of Galashiels, see OS map, Sheet 69. It is marked as "Fernyly" on Blaeu's map of Tweeddale.

2 The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson (ed. H. Harvey Wood), 138.

3 Henryson, Poems (ed. Wood), 176.

4 John Aubrey collected this from oral tradition in the seventeenth century and printed it in his Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme (ed. James Britten), 31-3.

atmospheric and weather conditions: the success or failure of a night's raid might depend on the quality of the light. So three of the versions of Thomas Rymer observe:

> It was dark night, and nae starn light
> (E10[1])
> It was a night without delight [daylight?]
> (D2[1])

and:

> It was mirk, mirk night, and there was nae stern light
> (C16[1])

Nor is it surprising to find in a northern romance and its ballad equivalents from the Border, a lady who is out hunting:

> Her hawk and hounds were at her side,
> And her bugle-horn in gowd did shine.
> (E3[3-4])

The Elfin Queen thus makes her first appearance in the context of everyday mediaeval and Border life. But a further dimension is added when the hunting is seen to be symbolic of her predatory character: it is also Thomas who is hunted.

The Borderers, we find, were possessed of a strong business acumen a facility for bargaining, buying and selling at profit, and trading in livestock (especially horses and cattle). A more subtle way in which the Border ethos has permeated the ballad of Thomas Rymer is to be seen in Thomas's rejoinder when the lady gives him the "tongue that can never lie". In that part of Scott's version which he evidently derived from "the lady residing not far from Ercildoune", Thomas the Borderer is outraged at the lady's gift of "true tongue":

> 'My tongue is my ain', True Thomas said;
> 'A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
> I neither dought to buy nor sell,
> At fair or tryst where I may be.

'I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye:'
'Now hold thy peace', the lady said,
'For as I say, so must it be'.
(C18-19)

Child objected to these stanzas on the ground that their ironical vein was out of keeping with the tone of the ballad: they are "certainly a modern, and as certainly an ill-devised, interpolation", he wrote[1]. Elsewhere he commented:

> "The repugnance of Thomas to be debarred the use of falsehood when he should find it convenient", may have, as Scott says, "A comic effect", but is, for a ballad, a miserable conceit. Both ballad and romance are serious[2].

But to accuse the composer of these lines of bad taste and of trafficking in "miserable conceit" is to apply a totally different set of critical standards; it also ignores the facts. The Border Ballads, as we shall see, are often made up of a strange mixture of buffoonery and tragic pathos. They are not as F.B. Gummere claimed, "devoid of humour", nor is the humorist "left behind"[3]. When the tension is at its highest, the balladist will often play off climactic moment against comic relief. Jock of the Side's rescuers, in that ballad, have no time to strike his leg-irons from him, and so toss him side-saddle on to a waiting mount, with the quip:

'O Jock, sae winsomely's ye ride,
Wi baith your feet upo ae side!
Sae weel's ye're harnessd, and sae trig!
In troth ye sit like ony bride.'
(B25)

A similar joke punctuates versions A (35) and C (20).

1 E.S.P.B., I, 321.

2 E.S.P.B., I, 320n. Andrew Lang also maintained that "the cynical conclusion is out of tone and keeping", Border Ballads, xix.

3 The Popular Ballad, 341-2.

It is this ability to "joke fu wantonlie" at the moment of crisis that maintains equilibrium in the Borderer's precarious existence. As E.K. Wells has put it: "in the midst of grimness and cruelty and at times utter barbarity, there is the occasional play of ironic lightness"[1]. So, in the ballad of Thomas Rymer, something of the dreadful import of the Elf Queen's gift of true tongue to Thomas, is dispelled for a moment by the man's sardonic humour. We glimpse him as an intensely vulnerable human agent, a man of his time, who will never be quite the same again as a result of this strange encounter.

Bertrand H. Bronson has objected to the Scott stanzas for other reasons. He denies that the traditional ballad is capable of irony because,

> The relatively impassive outlines of a folk-tune suggest no latent shades of verbal meaning. Psychological implication, innuendo, irony cannot be heard in the straight rendition of a genuine folk-singer, and this is, of course, a source of strength as well as a limitation. Officious nods and becks, theatrical hints of a sub-surface understanding shared between singer and hearer, are an offence to that powerful impersonality which makes good folk-singing so uniquely impressive: they belong rather with the dramatic reading of words-without-notes which makes the ballads an alien art. That almost marmoreal inviolability of the ballad as traditionally sung subdues insinuations and forbids intimacy. Suggestive inflections of stated meaning, even broadly ironic, find no foothold on this smooth surface ... A more flexible medium is necessary for such effects; consequently, over the centuries, music and words have collaborated in evolving a style that makes few demands beyond the powers of either to supply. This has meant that the persons of balladry should also maintain a directness and simplicity of character incapable of sophistication. One may justly suspect the non-singing Sir Walter of inventing Thomas the Rhymer's biting rejection of the Elfland Queen's gift of "the tongue that can never lie" ... Thomas's insistence here on the crippling effects of truth-telling may be obvious enough to the reader, but it is too subtle for the musical phrase. The irony of the inter-change is lost in the singing, and the hearer is baffled by the long explanation[2].

1 The Ballad Tree, 67.

2 T.T.C.B., I, x-xii. The stanzas in question are included by Ewan Mac Coll in his version of the ballad, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Folkways Records. Listening to this, one notices that Thomas's reply is delivered in exactly the same tone of voice as the Elfin Queen's offer. Perhaps all that Bronson means is that irony cannot be helped by the ballad-singing voice, it cannot be made pointed by altering the stress or inflexion.

I have quoted Bronson's statement in full, because it has a bearing beyond the point he is making in connection with this ballad. What Bronson has to say about the rigidity of ballad tunes may be perfectly true, but I do not think that this necessarily excludes any flexibility in the word-patterns. For one thing, Bronson seems to overlook a very obvious fact, that is that ballads like Thomas Rymer were sung (and heard, probably by the same audience) on more than one occasion. What is more, lines that may seem to embody ironies and hints at sub-surface meanings may only appear to be so doing to a modern audience or reader, simply because the shared ideas and ideals of a bygone community have become buried, or even completely lost, to us.

The truth-telling theme is one which the Borderers seem to have favoured in their ballads. In Mrs. Greenwood's version of Thomas Rymer, the Elfin Queen plans to answer the curiosity of her court with regard to her mortal lover by saying that she got Thomas's "aith" at the Eildon Tree (E17[4]). Now the swearing of an oath or the making of a promise was a point of high honour to the Borderer of the Middle Ages. Bishop Leslie in his account of the marchmen quoted from in the preceding chapter, has this to say:

> Lat this mairouer be eiket to thair first vertue that quhomto ance thay gyue thair faith thoch til ane ennimie it be, thay keip it maist surelie, In sa far that quha ance brek his faith nathing is thocht mair vngracious than he ... na infamie is compared to this, his companiouns wissis oft that God take him out of this lyfe be ane honest deith[1].

In English literature Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is the most famous example of a poem embodying the mediaeval concept of truth-telling or "trawpe". The word "trawpe", as used in Middle English, "expresses a powerful, though now largely unacknowledged complex of ideas, in which

1 The History of Scotland (ed. Cody), I, 101.

the notion of good faith assumes a dignity quite strange to modern thinking"[1]. So, too, on the Scottish Border, men who in other respects were totally unscrupulous appear to have upheld and cherished this principle of good faith above all else and in every instance - at least, so Leslie and the ballads would have us believe. The ideal, in fact, may have had a strong basis in reality. Robert Carey, Warden of the English East and Middle Marches, wrote to Cecil of Scottish gentlemen "who will rather lose their lives and livings, than go back from their word, and break the custom of the Border"[2]. The words of an English spy, Robert Constable, bear this out. Constable, ironically enough for a man in his position, observed of the Border dalesmen:

> They would not care [i.e. scruple] to steale and yet they would not bewray any man that trusts in them for all the gold in Scotland and France[3].

The same English agent recounts the widespread disgust that was aroused on the Borders when the Regent Murray and an Armstrong clansman, Hector of the Harlaw, betrayed the Earl of Northumberland and surrendered him to Queen Elizabeth for his part in the Catholic rebellion of 1570. Dining one evening with "some outlaws of England, some of Scotland", Constable says that "Hector of Tharlowe's head was wished to hav ben eaten amongs us at supper"[4]. And the Herries Memoirs record that the name Hector of the Harlaw became synonymous on the Border with that of Judas Iscariot[5].

1 J.A. Burrow, A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, 24.

2 C.B.P., II, 667, No. 1195.

3 The State Papers and Letters of Ralph Sadler (ed. A. Clifford), II, 116, No. LIII.

4 Sadler, op. cit. (ed. Clifford), II, 119.

5 John Maxwell, Lord Herries, Historical Memoirs of the Reign of Mary Queen of Scots (ed. R. Pitcairn), 118-19.

Such betrayals form a prominent theme in many of the Border Ballads; indeed, the ballads probably played a large part in clarifying and consolidating the Border code of honour. But to return to Thomas Rymer, we can now appreciate that the word "aith" of Mrs. Greenwood's version is not simply being used to mean "speech", although this is the less forceful word employed by the Thornton, Lansdowne and Cambridge manuscripts of the romance (l. 180)[1].

What, then, we may ask, is the oath Thomas has taken? He has made a vow earlier (in stanza 7) not to tell "ill tales" of a fair lady and has promised to follow her to Heaven or Hell. Presumably, the elfin court will want to know who Thomas is, where he has come from and whether his dealings with their queen are honourable. In the romance, the lady confesses to Thomas that she would rather be "hanged and drawene" than that the king, her husband, should ever find out that a mortal has lain with her. In the ballad, if the Elfin Queen can assure her subjects that she has an oath from Thomas, then all will be well. So she begs him to answer none but her, to be "weel-learnd" (E16[2]), i.e. skilled, careful in not answering the questions put to him; in other words, simply to be tactful[2]. Thus his fairy mistress's honour will be preserved by Thomas's preserving silence; he must not betray his lady by disclosing their illicit amour.

The injunction upon Thomas to answer no-one but the queen, is a feature that has been sedulously preserved in the other versions of the

1 The romance at this point utilises the folk belief that fairies can deprive mortals of their speech, the Lansdowne MS. making the lady boast: "I toke the speche at elden tre" (l. 232).

2 The dictionaries are not much help here, but "lerned" is used in the sense of skilled in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight at ll. 1170 and 2447 (ed. Tolkien and Gordon), 36, 75, cf. Glossary, 171. In the Thornton MS. the lady begs Thomas to be "curtase" (l. 230).

ballad. In Mrs. Brown's rendering, the lady begs:

'But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever you may hear or see,
For gin ae word you should chance to speak,
You will neer get back to your ain countrie'.
(A15)

and Scott's copy, varying the last two lines, makes the taboo even more explicit:

'For, if you speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye'll neer get back to your ain countrie'.
(C14[3-4])

The Glenriddell MS. copy is the only other (apart from E) to remember the necessity for tact on the part of Thomas. After a missing stanza, the version continues:

It's when she cam into the hall -
I wat a weel bred man was he -
They've asked him questions, one and all,
But he answered none but that fair ladie.
(B12)

In its choice of the words "weel bred", this version is close to the "wel learnd" of E and the "curtase" of the Thornton MS. What versions A, C and D are acknowledging on the other hand, is the popular folk belief that it is dangerous to converse with Otherworld beings[1]. Falstaff realises this when he says, "They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die"[2]. But as far as the plot of Thomas Rymer is concerned (both ballad and romance), this is not the real reason for Thomas's silence: the real reason is that the lady's honour must be upheld. What has happened, it seems, in the case of this tale, is that the ballad versions A, C and D may have reverted to type (taboo on human speech in the Otherworld),

1 See Wimberly, op. cit., 281-2.

2 The Merry Wives of Windsor, V, v, 45, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (ed. Peter Alexander), 80.

whereas versions B and E have attempted to re-interpret the incident in terms of the mediaeval Border ethic (fidelity to one's pledged word as a matter of high honour).

Before leaving this Border Ballad theme of keeping faith, we should note that although the keeping of one's sworn "aith" was a cardinal point in the clansman's moral code, this does not seem to have prevented him or his fellows from dealing fast and loose when it came to securing material benefits for themselves and their families. On the contrary, nothing was appreciated so heartily as a clever ruse. This kind of deception (usually where a countryman of humble estate dupes his betters) is at the centre of comic Border Ballads like Dick o the Cow and The Lochmaben Harper. Here the world of the fifteenth and sixteenth century Borderer is close in spirit to the world of the Icelandic sagas. The Border Ballad hero is an opportunist, and his self-interest not infrequently appears in the form of deceit or trickery; so, too, in the sagas

> it is understood that materialism is a common feature in the character of such persons. Covetousness is no abject quality and no-one is ashamed of it[1].

We need to make a careful distinction between the "baffled" man, the liar and betrayer who breaks his oath and deceives in the sphere of inter-personal relationships, and the trickster who uses his tongue to gull persons with whom he is not personally acquainted, usually, like Thomas Rhymer, "at fair or tryst". So in terms of this esoteric Border Ballad code, it is scandalous that the Scottish king does not keep his promise of pardon to the outlaw Johnie Armstrong, whilst lying rogues such as the blind harper of Lochmaben and Dick of the Cow become heroes of no small veneration. The only disgrace in this scale of values is to be the one

1 M.C. Van Den Toorn, Ethics and Moral in Icelandic Saga Literature, 54.

tricked, as the Armstrongs are by Dickie. Thomas might well lament the loss of his volatile tongue. In the give and take at "fair and tryst" it is his very means of survival, of maintaining his self-respect.

A third area in which I suggested the ballad of Thomas Rymer has been moulded by its Border reciters, is in their conception of and attitudes towards the supernatural. Edwin Muir says in The Estate of Poetry, that to country people fairies are not supernatural beings so much as preternaturally long-lived mortals[1]. Certainly in both Thomas Rymer and Tam Lin there are few distinguishing marks. The elves and fairies were real enough and in the Border Ballads we are considering here, seem to be spoken of with the same sense of reality as the hand-to-hand encounters that fill the later "Raiding Ballads". As James G. Frazer expresses it, "what is metaphor to a modern European poet was sober earnest to his savage ancestors, and is still so to many people"[2]. No special artifice is necessary, therefore, to get stories such as Thomas Rymer believed in. The carrying off of a mortal man to Elfland is presented by the balladist as pure matter-of-fact. And in the next ballad we shall discuss, Tam Lin,

> Janet's confession that her lover is an elfin grey occasions no surprise; in fact, there is no reply to her confession, and thereafter we see her in no company but Tam Lin's[3].

As well as being accepted as real by the Border folk, the fairies and elves of the ballads also share the physical attributes of humans. This no doubt accounted for their reality in the minds of mediaeval countrymen. It was the poetic fancy of Shakespeare and later writers that was responsible more than anything else for our received picture of "the little folk"[4]. In balladry, "there is little or nothing to indicate that the elf differs in size from mortals. Certainly there is no reason to think

1 Op. cit., 18.
2 The Golden Bough, (1914 ed.), III, 34.
3 Walter Morris Hart, Ballad and Epic, 27.
4 See Wimberly, op. cit., 168.

that the fairy queen in Thomas Rymer is diminutive"[1]. She is called consistently a "lady gay", and it is only her exceptional beauty, not her size, that makes Thomas, in three of the ballad versions, mistake her for a spirit or the "Queen of Heaven". She is subject to the same human passions: she allows Thomas to make love to her (C5-6, E6-7), to lay his head in her lap (A11, B9, C10), and she is capable of both fear - that Thomas may become the next "tithe" to Hell (E18) - and anger:

'Hold your hand, Thomas', she says,
'Hold your hand, that must not be;
It was a' that cursed fruit o thine
Beggared man and woman in your countrie'.
(B8)

We shall discover the same human propensities in the character of Tam Lin. In this ballad, physical contact and procreation between human and elf is not impossible[2].

The world from which these preternatural forces emanate is an indeterminate region somewhere between Heaven and Hell. The Queen of Elfland indicates both these roads to Thomas in the ballad, but it is a third and different path which they take. Leading neither over "lilly lee" nor "frosty fell", it is a road whose physical (and by implication, moral) characteristics are left ambiguous in a sinister kind of way, by three of the Border versions of the ballad (B, D, and E). Only Mrs. Brown attempts to prettify, replacing bald objectivity with an almost Spenserian picturesqueness:

'And see not ye that bonny road,
Which winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland
Whe[re] you and I this night maun gae'.
(A14)

Willa Muir has tried to describe, from her own Scottish upbringing,

1 Wimberly, op. cit., 169.

2 For the mating of fairies with mortals, and their procreation, see Kathleen M. Briggs, The Fairies in Tradition and Literature, 95; Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 304.

this "uncanny region" which haunted the minds of country people:

> Perhaps not everyone has realised that the untamed wildness of the fernie brae leads into a part of the ancient world as it was before the coming of Christianity, full of archaic forces and strange portents, a surviving enclave of immemorially old Powers. The Christian Heaven apparently ignores this remnant of the archaic past, but Hell encroaches upon it in a sinister way ... A refuge from orthodox belief which has to pay tithes to Hell and is therefore tributary to the Devil is but a precarious stronghold. Yet there it is, according to the ballads, another dimension added to the imaginative world of the Scots, a wild enclave from which anything may come[1].

Pagan belief finds its most overt expression, in Thomas Rymer, in the ballad singers' evocation of a subterranean Otherworld. It is a sunless, moonless, starless region, with rivers of water or even blood, perhaps the familiar "water hell" of Germanic tradition[2]. To arrive there, the traveller must usually cross some sort of water barrier. The river-crossing is a motif which each of the ballad versions has been loth to relinquish: in Mrs. Greenwood's version, Thomas and the lady must ford "a water wan" (E9[2]); they must wade rivers of "red blude" (A7[2], C15[2], 16[2]), or the "water clear" (B6[2]), before they reach Elfland.

This motif should be fairly accessible to the modern reader. But there are other Border Ballads which we shall come to later, where the river or water-barrier (usually flooded) still retains its suggestive force as a symbol, but where the immediate context, the more obviously realistic setting of the narrative, does not make the connection between theme and objective correlative either direct or composite. To put this in a slightly different way, because of an upgrowth of increasingly naturalistic detail in some of the later Border Ballads, their foundations in the "underworld of feeling", as Willa Muir calls it[3], have become overgrown and the more archetypal aspects of the ballads' themes are seen as apparently divorced

1 Living with Ballads, 127.

2 See Wimberly, op. cit., 128-9. Rivers of blood in Hell are to be found in Icelandic literature, see Inger M. Boberg, Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature, 30.

3 Op. cit., 18, et. passim.

from content, if they are seen at all. After Thomas Rymer, the river crossing figures in no fewer than four of the Border Ballads which have come down to us; there may have been more. Super-human power is attributed to two ballad heroes who are able to swim across rivers in spate, and we may infer thereby the supernatural properties of the water itself.

"Christentie" and its teachings formed, of course, the second area of inherited belief for the mediaeval Border Ballad audience, and we should therefore be alert to the possibility of finding residual traces of Christian belief in these ballads also. Wimberly notices, for example, the "Christianisation of the fairy queen's cosmography" in the description of the parting roads in Thomas Rymer[1], and elsewhere refers to the ballad's "not unsatisfactory cosmographical compromise between Christianity and pre-Christianity"[2].

Most obvious of the conventionally Christian emblems in the ballad is the paradisian "garden green" (A8[2], B7[2], C17[1], D3[2], E11[2]), with its tree and forbidden fruit[3]. The allusion to the Tree of Knowledge in the book of Genesis and to the Fall of Man is made quite pointedly in three Border versions of the ballad. The lady tells Thomas:

> 'It was a' that cursed fruit o thine
> Beggared man and woman in your countrie'.
> (B8[3]; cf. D4, E12)

And, as one would expect, the fruit is the apocryphal apple (C17[2], D3[3], E11[3]).

One wonders just how this image of an earthly paradise and its associations with the Fall is being used thematically by the ballad-makers. That it was suggested by the following lines of the romance poem is clear enough:

1 Op. cit., 118.

2 Op. cit., 116.

3 "The arbor, or garden, being common to Paradise and Faëry, might serve to attract Christian material into a fairy-tale, or vice-versa", Josephine M. Burnham, 'A Study of Thomas of Ercildoune', P.M.L.A., XXIII (1908), 411.

Scho lede hym in-till a fair herbere,
   Whare frwte was g[ro]wan [d gret plentee,]
Pere and appill, bothe ryppe pay were,
   The date, and als the damasee;
Pe fygge, and als so pe wyneberye.
(11. 177-181).

But the trees of the romance belong less to a biblical Eden, more to the sacred groves of mythology in general with their ancient tree-cults, tree-haunting spirits and tree-souls[1]. What we have in the ballad is the taboo on mortals eating anything that belongs to the Otherworld. But also, in one version, C, an attempt is made to explain how Thomas came by his powers of prophecy. The cursed fruit, which the Rhymer is told not to touch in other versions, is here offered him by the Elf Queen as his "wages", to give him the tongue that will never lie (C17). Surely this must represent a weakening of tradition, or at least the substitution of a new for an old one. For as far as the other ballad-singers are concerned, there is evidently no need to explain <u>how</u>; it was sufficient to know that the gift <u>was</u> bestowed. It may even be for the same reason that the A, B and E texts omit all mention of the tongue that can never lie. They did not need to remind their hearers of the main (sooth-saying) point of the Thomas Rhymer story.

If then, there is a received or acknowledged point behind the ballad as it now stands, I think we may go some way towards accounting for the stress placed by the respective balladists on this "Forbidden Tree". By inviting comparison with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they wished to show their listeners how Thomas was denied one form of knowledge (which he would have liked to take for himself), but was given another. It is significant that all he asks for in the romance is a "tokynynge",

1 See Wimberly, <u>op. cit.</u>, 153-5.

or love-token (l. 247), so that he may have proof of his encounter to show others. But the gift is much greater than he expected.

It would be foolish to deny that the ballad is not concerned, in some way, with Christian eschatology. Why else should Thomas be shown the roads to Heaven and Hell? When he mistakes the lady for the Queen of Heaven, although she disclaims this high title something of its aura clings to her for the rest of the ballad. May not the deeper meaning of the Thomas Rymer legend, as it is reproduced in the Border Ballad, be the story of the progress of Man's soul? A.L. Lloyd, commenting on the ballad, is reminded that,

> the verses that describe the young man's dark journey into Elf-land across the roaring river of blood, the alternative roads ... that face him, the ceremonial meal of bread or apple and water or wine that he receives from the hand of the fairy queen, his "psychopomp" or soul-guide, are paralleled closely in Rumanian ritual songs for the dead, and may well have been transplanted into the Scots lyrical ballad from some other funeral-ceremonial of general European currency that died out in these islands with the fading of paganism[1].

There is no need, though, to seek Rumanian analogues. The rivers of blood are the blood of Christ crucified; the bread and wine are the Christian Eucharist; perhaps Thomas's love for the "lady gay" whom he mistakes for the Holy Virgin, and to whom he swears fidelity, may typify Christ's love for His Holy Church. Certainly Thomas's journey lasting "forty days and forty nights" ($A7^{1}$) has penitential overtones, suggesting Christ's temptation and fasting in the wilderness, a wilderness that appears, as it happens, in the traditional part of Scott's copy:

> they reached a desart wide,
> And living land was left behind, ($C9^{3-4}$)

Thomas casting off his "hose and shon" ($B6^{3}$) recalls the following verses of The Lyke-Wake Dirge:

1 Folk Song in England, 140-1.

If ever thou gave either hosen or shun
every night and awle
Sitt thee downe and putt them on
and Christ receive thy sawle.

But if hosen nor shoon thou never gave nean
every night, etc.,
The whinnes shall prick thee to the bare beane
and Christ receive thy sawle[1].

The antiquary, Joseph Ritson, found an account of the folk custom that lies behind the dirge, in a MS. letter of the sixteenth century. The account relates the belief of the villagers of Cleveland in Yorkshire that

> once in their lives, it is good to give a pair of new shoes to a poor man, for as much as, after this life, they are to pass barefoote through a great launde, full of thornes and furzen, excepte by the meryte of the almes aforesaid they have redemed the forfeyte[2].

The ballad of Thomas Rymer and the journey he made to Elfland, bringing back with him a strange and rare knowledge, seems to afford us some evidence that the mediaeval Borderer may not have been entirely unaware of human life placed in a spiritual or metaphysical context.

However, the irreligious character of the Border clansmen of history has been remarked on. Scott, for instance, wrote:

> Upon the religion of the Borderers there can be very little said. We have already noticed, that they remained attached to the Roman Catholic faith rather longer than the rest of Scotland. This probably arose from the total indifference upon the subject; for we nowhere find in their character the respect for the Church, which is a marked feature of that religion[3].

But if the Borderers were not orthodox churchgoers (and it is difficult to see how they could have been with so few church buildings), we should not forget that under David I of Scotland the Border counties with their famous abbeys had once been a national centre of religion and enlightenment[4]. The clansmen were certainly superstitious, aswe learn

I John Aubrey, Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme (ed. James Britten), 3I.

2 Cited Scott, Minstrelsy, III, I63.

3 Minstrelsy, I, I33-4; cf. also D.L.W.Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, 6I.

4 Fourteen were founded between III3 and I273, see W.R.Kermack, The Scottish Borders, 39.

from Bishop Leslie's account of them telling their rosaries the night before a raid[1], but as Scott adds, "these were superstitions flowing immediately from the nature of the Catholic religion"[2].

In the final event, we must accept the evidence of the Border Ballads themselves: that the subconscious world from which they sprang was Christian as well as pagan.

Tam Lin tells the story of another mortal who has been carried off by the fairies. A young girl meets him in the woods near her home at Carterhaugh, is seduced by him there, rescues him from the fairy court at Hallowe'en and bears his child.

The ballad exists in at least sixteen different versions, Child's texts A-N, a fragment, Child O[3], and a text given by Gavin Greig from oral tradition in Aberdeenshire. We know at least six of these to have been collected on the Scottish Border, or in Edinburgh, but I give below a complete check-list of all the variants.

Child A, 'Tam Lin', was communicated by Robert Burns to James Johnson who printed it in his anthology, The Scots Musical Museum, of 1792[4]. It is there "divided into 45½ four-line stanzas, without heed to rhyme or reason", according to Child[5]. We may take this to be a version procured by Burns on the Scottish Border[6]. It is one of the most complete texts of the ballad and probably one of the oldest.

1 See Chapter I, The Border Region, p. 34.

2 Minstrelsy, I, 140.

3 There is a mistake in Child's lettering of his texts, J being given to two of them, see E.S.P.B., I, 507-508, III, 504. I have called the second of these K, altering those which follow.

4 Op. cit., 423, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 340.

5 E.S.P.B., I, 356.

6 Burns has been suspected of adding stanzas of his own, see infra, pp. 99-102.

Child B is printed from the Glenriddell MSS, where it has the title, 'An old Song called Young Tam Line'[1]. The date of this MS. copy is 1791, but Mr. Macmath of Edinburgh found an even earlier transcript among the Glenriddell MSS, of 1789[2]. Child gives the chief variations, apart from those of spelling which, he says, are numerous[3]. This B copy was probably obtained by Robert Riddell somewhere in Dumfriesshire[4].

Child C, entitled, 'Kertonha, or, The Fairy Court', was first printed in David Herd's The Ancient and Modern Scots Songs in 1769[5]. This was the earliest version of the ballad to go into print in Edinburgh.

Child D is found in three copies. Child Da is "a North Country version" found in Motherwell's MS., where it is called 'Tom Linn'[6]. Child Db is to be found in James Maidment's New Book of Old Ballads, published in Edinburgh in 1844. There it is printed "from the recitation of an old woman"[7]. Child Dc, "procured by David Webster, Bookseller, from tradition", is given by Child from Pitcairn's MSS, where it has the title 'Tom o Linn'[8]. Willa Muir thinks that the D group of variants is from Aberdeenshire[9].

1 Glenriddell MSS, XI, No. 17, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 343.

2 Glenriddell MSS, VIII, 106, see E.S.P.B., III, 504.

3 See E.S.P.B., III, 504.

4 Riddell, as a Dumfriesshire man, was primarily interested in that county; 7 of the 16 items in his ballad MSS are about events that took place there, see William Montgomerie, 'A Bibliography of the Scottish Ballad Manuscripts', S.S.L., VI (1968), 93.

5 Op. cit., 300, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 345.

6 Motherwell's MS., 532, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 345.

7 Op. cit., 54, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 345.

8 Pitcairn's MSS, III, 67, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 345. David Webster was an Edinburgh ballad collector and published in 1824 A Collection of Curious Old Ballads. He apparently obtained the ballad from James Nicol, of Strichen, Aberdeenshire, see Buchan, The Ballad and the Folk, 226.

9 Living with Ballads, 129.

Child took his E text from William Motherwell's notebook, where it is called 'Young Tamlin'[1]. The date of this notebook is about 1826-27; it is described by Child as "a small octavo containing various memoranda referring to ballads, including the whole, or a portion, of several copies"[2].

Child F, taken down by Motherwell "from the recitation of Widow McCormick, February, 1825", is printed from Motherwell's MS., where it is titled 'Tomaline'[3]. We gather elsewhere the information that Widow McCormick (who lived at Westbrae, Paisley)[4] learned her version of Tam Lin" from an old woman in Dumbarton"[5]. This version of the ballad, as we shall see, bears the traces of its removal from the Border.

Child G exists in two copies. It is given as 'Tam-a-Line, the Elfin Knight' in Buchan's MSS[6]; and appears again as 'Tam-a-Lin, or the Knight of Faerylande', in Motherwell's MS.[7]; from this it was printed in James Henry Dixon's Scottish Traditionary Versions of Ancient Ballads, in London, in 1845[8]. The G text is generally acknowledged to be a Northern Scottish version. Willa Muir says it comes, like D, from Aberdeenshire[9].

Child H is one of Campbell's "Old Scottish Songs collected in the counties of Berwick, Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles", and bears the title 'Young Tam Lane'[10].

Child I is Scott's Minstrelsy version[11]. Sir Walter made the large

1 Motherwell's Note-Book, fol. 13, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 347.
2 E.S.P.B., V, 398.
3 Motherwell's MS., 64, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 348.
4 See E.S.P.B., II, 475.
5 Motherwell's Note-Book, 4, see E.S.P.B., II, 505.
6 Buchan's MSS, I, 8, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 349.
7 Motherwell's MS., 595, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 349.
8 Op. cit., 11, see E.S.P.B., 335.
9 Op. cit., 129.
10 Campbell MSS, II, 129, see E.S.P.B., I, 335, 352.
11 Minstrelsy, II, 228 (1802 ed.), II, 337 (1833 ed.), see E.S.P.B. I, 335, 353.

claim that his text was "the most perfect which has yet appeared; being prepared from a collation of the printed copies i.e. those of Johnson and Herd , with a very accurate one in Glenriddell's MSS, and with several recitals from tradition"[1]. Exactly what these "recitals from tradition" were, we do not know; apparently there is no record of them at Abbotsford. But there are lines and stanzas peculiar to Scott's copy, and these are given by Child in large type[2]. They are not, as Child seems to think, "very little", and demand consideration. The earliest of Scott's Minstrelsy editions (that of 1802) had incorporated into Tam Lin fragments of two other ballads called The Broomfield Hill (Child 43) and The Wee Wee Man (Child 38), but these fragments were fortunately dropped from the later editions[3]. But in one of the lines of the later Minstrelsy version, Tam Lin is still being described as "a wee wee man" ($I7^3$), demonstrating how strong and how persistent the syntactical pull may be from one ballad to another. This reduction of Tam Lin to a creature of less than mortal size is erroneous as we have seen in the case of the Elfin Queen of Thomas Rymer. For his last edition of the Minstrelsy in 1833, Scott obtained eleven new stanzas "from a gentleman residing near Langholm", the diction of which even the poet-editor himself suspected to be of "somewhat modern cast", but which he nevertheless included. The copy was "said to be very ancient"[4]. Child gives these stanzas in his notes[5], concluding that they

1 Minstrelsy, II, 376.

2 They are: Child $I3-4$, 6^2, 7^{3-4}, 9-13, 14^{3-4}, 15^4, 20, 22^4, 23^2, 25^2, $26^{1-2, 4}$, 27-30, 32^{1-2}, 41^4, 45^6, and 56. Scott says that "the variations in the tale of Tamlane", were derived "from the recitation of an old woman residing near Kirkhill, in West Lothian", Minstrelsy, II, 102 (1802 ed.), see E.S.P.B., II, 505.

3 See E.S.P.B., I, 335, 357-8; Minstrelsy, II, 376.

4 Minstrelsy, II, 376. The gentleman was a Mr. Beattie of Meikledale, as appears from a letter of Scott to Laidlaw, January 21, 1803, Letters of Sir Walter Scott (ed. H.J.C. Grierson), I, 171.

5 E.S.P.B., I, 356-7.

"are not simply somewhat of a modern cast as to diction, as Scott remarks, but of a grossly modern invention, and as unlike popular verse as anything can be"[1]. It will be useful to consider these spurious concoctions later; they provide a useful counterfeit by which we may judge the worth of the true coin.

Child J is "a fragment of 'Young Tamlane'" from the Kinloch MSS of 1826[2]. It is in the handwriting of the historian, Dr. John Hill Burton, and Child thinks it may be "from the recitation of Mrs. Robertson (Christian Leslie), mother of Dr. Joseph Robertson"[3]. Dr. Robertson's mother had also given him a copy of another ballad, The Broom of Cowdenknows (Child 217J)[4].

Child K, 'The Queen of the Fairies', is printed from the Macmath MS., where the collector states that it was "taken down by me 14th October, 1886, from the recitation of Mr. Alexander Kirk, Inspector of Poor, Dalry, in the Stewartry of Kircudbright, who learned it about fifty years ago from the singing of David Ray, Barlay, Balmaclellan"[5]. Balmaclellan is a town situated about twenty miles north of Kircudbright. The K text is therefore a version from the West Border, but Child is of the opinion that it "has been considerably made over, and was very likely learned from print"[6]. More than the place-names have been impaired, as we shall see.

Child L was communicated to Scott by Hugh Irvine of Drum, Aberdeenshire, on November 11, 1812, "as procured from the recitation of an old woman in Buchan"[7].

There now follow two complete versions and a fragment from the "Scotch Ballads, Materials for the Border Minstrelsy". Presumably these

1 E.S.P.B., I, 335.
2 Kinloch MSS, V, 391, see E.S.P.B., I, 507.
3 E.S.P.B., I, 507.
4 See E.S.P.B., IV, 202.
5 Macmath MS., 57, see E.S.P.B., III, 504.
6 E.S.P.B., I, 504.
7 Letters addressed to Sir Walter Scott, V, No. 137, Abbotsford, see E.S.P.B., IV, 456.

are copies from Border recitation. They are:-

Child M (no title given) in the handwriting of William Laidlaw[1]. Since Scott had made the latter's acquaintance in 1801[2], the date of this copy must be post 1801.

Child N was sent to Scott by a Major Henry Hutton of the Royal Artillery, December 24, 1802, as recollected by his father "and the family"[3]. This text contains several verses belonging properly to the ballad Thomas Rymer (verses 4-12), and the hero's name, "Tammas", is further evidence that this family had received a weakened version of the ballad.[4]

Child O, 'Tamlane', is two verses in the hand-writing of John Leyden[5], in which the hero is again called "Thomas".

A version of the ballad turned up in Belfast in 1904, sung by a woman called Anne Carter, who had learned it from an old woman in Connemara. It is in seven stanzas of four long lines each and is titled 'Lord Robinson's Only Child'[6].

Gavin Greig's text of the ballad was obtained from the singing of Miss Bell Robertson, of New Pitsligo, Aberdeenshire, who had learned it from her mother. She called it 'True Tammas'[7].

Finally, an American variant, sung by Margaret Widdemer, was recovered about 1932 by Dorothy Scarborough[8]. The text seems to be a refashioning of Child D.

1 "Scotch Ballads", No. 27, Abbotsford, see E.S.P.B., IV, 457.

2 This is the date fixed by Grierson, Letters of Sir Walter Scott, I, 141n.

3 Letters addressed to Sir Walter Scott, I, No. 77, Abbotsford; "Scotch Ballads", No. 15, Abbotsford, see E.S.P.B., IV, 458.

4 Thomas Rhymer also appears in the last line of a printed version in The Scots Magazine, LXXXII (1818), 327-9.

5 "Scotch Ballads", No. 96a, Abbotsford, see E.S.P.B., IV, 459.

6 Recorded by Mrs. Elizabeth Wheeler. The text and tune are given by Bronson, T.T.C.B., I, 327-8.

7 L.L., 27-9. For the ballads of Bell Robertson, see Buchan, op. cit., 247-54.

8 A Song Catcher in the Southern Mountains, 251-4; the text and tune are given by Bronson, T.T.C.B., I, 330-1.

The dissemination of Tam Lin has therefore been widespread, texts having been collected in four main areas of Scotland: the central Border county of Selkirkshire (the ballad's most probable place of origin); the West Border (Kircudbrightshire); Edinburgh; and northern Scotland (Aberdeenshire). However, apart from the two versions collected in Ireland and America, and despite the discovery of analogous transformation motifs (around which the climax of Tam Lin is built) in the folklore of other cultures[1], the ballad itself has not been found outside of Scotland.

Scott wrote that Tam Lin was "still popular in Ettrick Forest, where the scene is laid", at the start of the nineteenth century[2]. And Robert Riddell tells how the local people used to point out on the plain at Carterhaugh "two or three rings on the ground, where, they say, the stands of milk and water used by Janet to transform Tam Lin stood; and upon which grass never grows"[3]. Even the supposed residence of the girl's father was known to local tradition: Newark Castle, according to some, "though others place his residence in the tower of Oakwood"[4]. Miles Cross, the spot where Janet rescues her elfin lover in the ballad, is said by Scott to have been Mary's Cross, which "stood near the Duke of Buccleugh's seat of Bowhill, about half a mile from Carterhaugh"[5].

To establish the date when Tam Lin was first sung on the Borders, we need to proceed with some caution. We have what at first sight looks like strong evidence of the ballad's antiquity in the list of songs and dances

1 Transformations occur in ancient Greek myth, Scandinavian balladry and in modern Cretan folklore, see E.S.P.B., I, 336-8.

2 Minstrelsy, II, 373-4.

3 Glenriddell MSS, cited Child, E.S.P.B., I, 340. Carterhaugh is a plain at the conflux of the Ettrick and Yarrow waters in Selkirkshire, see OS Map, Sheet 69.

4 Minstrelsy, II, 377. Oakwood, or Aikwood, tower stood on the right bank of the Ettrick below Selkirk, see Blaeu's map of Tweeddale.

5 Minstrelsy, II, 377. Bowhill is marked on Blaeu's Map of Tweeddale.

given in The Complaynt of Scotlande of 1549. Here 'The Tayl of the zong Tamlene' is mentioned as told among the company of shepherds, and a little later 'Thom of Lyn' is named as the title of a dance[1]. Gerould is prepared to accept the latter as identifiable with our ballad, concluding that the list in The Complaynt must refer to "the dancing as well as the singing of lyrical narratives"[2]. Hodgart, on the contrary, is less ready to identify dance title with ballad title[3], whilst F.J. Furnivall quotes what he believes is the full title of the supposed ballad. As this is given in The Complaynt it runs: 'the tayl of the zong tamlene, and of the bald braband'[4]. The title of the tale known to the author of The Complaynt is thus, strictly speaking, a double-barrelled one grammatically. Furnivall points out that, although the second "of" is peculiar to this title, elsewhere in The Complaynt "the tayl" is usually repeated by way of introduction to each separate title[5]. T.F. Henderson argues that the different spelling of the name, "Thom of Lyn" in the dance title, suggests that we may be dealing here with two different characters[6], but this is hardly convincing since the hero's name is given as "Tom Line" in version B of the ballad and as "Tomlin" in version D.

A related English ballad called 'A Ballett of Thomalyn' is licensed to Master John Wallye and Mistress Toye in 1558[7], and Furnivall identifies this with the ballad from which Moros is made to quote in William Wager's "very merie and pythie Commedie", The Longer Thou Livest, The More Foole Thou Art (c. 1568):

1 Op. cit. (ed. J.A.H. Murray), 63, 66,

2 The Ballad of Tradition, 228; cf. also E.K. Wells, The Ballad Tree, 205, 222.

3 The Ballads, 83.

4 Op. cit. (ed. Murray), 63.

5 Captain Cox, his Ballads and Books (ed. F.J. Furnivall), cxlv.

6 Minstrelsy, II, 384-5.

7 A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London (ed. Edward Arber), I, 22.

Tom a lin and his wife, and his wiue's mother,
They went ouer a bridge all three together;
The bridge was broken, and they fell in;
"The Deuill go with all", quoth Tom a Lin[1].

But unlike our Tam Lin, this ballad known to Wager was clearly of a comic cast.

Child makes mention of several other humorous verses about a Scottish character called variously Tam o Lin, Tam o the Linn, Tommy Linn, or Thomas o Linn, and he cites J. Halliwell-Phillips as saying that, "an immense variety of songs and catches relating to Tommy Linn are known throughout the country"[2].

In the different versions of our ballad Tam Lin, the hero's name goes through several permutations: he is Tam Lin (A, E), Tam Lane (H, O), Tam Lien (M), Tom Line (B), Tomlin (D), Tam-a-Line (G), whilst also being called Earl Thomas (K), Thomas (B, C, F, J, L, O), Tamas (N) and even true Thomas or Tammas (J, L and Greig), no doubt by analogy with the hero of Thomas Rymer.

If it was not uncommon for cross-fertilisation to take place between ballad and ballad (as far as names, formulae and themes are concerned), neither was it unusual for a single hero to become the subject of a group or cycle of ballads. Robin Hood is a prime example in English balladry. On the Borders the same serial process was at work with real-life figures like Henry Percy (Hotspur) who appears in both The Battle of Otterburn and The Hunting of the Cheviot[3], and Hobie Noble, an English reiver banished to Scotland, who is the hero of Jock o the Side, as well as being the subject of his own ballad, Child 189.

1 Cited Furnivall, op. cit., cxlvi.
2 E.S.P.B., I, 340.
3 He may also be the Earl Percy who figures in Johnie Scot (Child 99).

This brings us back to 'The tale of the zong tamlene, and of the bald braband', referred to in The Complaynt, for there is no reason why we should suppose that Tam Lin was the hero of a solitary ballad. In fact, this is disproved if we turn back a few pages in Child's English and Scottish Popular Ballads. There at number 28 we find a fragment entitled Burd Ellen and Young Tamlane[1]. Child himself does not make very much of this, declaring that he "cannot connect it with what is elsewhere handed down concerning Tamlane, or with the story of any other ballad"[2]. This is surprising. Although incomplete, there is a pregnant lady (the ballad being an argument as to who shall rock the cradle, Burd Ellen or Young Tamlane) and a young hero who, Don Juan-like, is presumably a danger to young women, since

> Young Tamlane to the seas he's gane,
> And a' women's curse in his company's gane.
> (5).

This compares with the line in Tam Lin which warns that maidens who go to Carterhaugh will lose their maidenhead. We find here also a lady sitting in her bower "twisting the red silk and the blue (1^3)", as in some versions of Tam Lin; and we find a refrain in Burd Ellen and Young Tamlane which employs the "double rose" motif of Tam Lin ($A5^1$, $B5^1$, $K2^2$). The fragment was communicated by Robert Pitcairn to James Maidment, "from the recitation of a female relative, who had heard it frequently sung in her childhood", about 1764^3. Maidment gave the verses in his North Countrie Garland of 1824^4. Motherwell, in the introduction to his Minstrelsy, vouches for the fact that "Burd Helen and Young Tamlene, is very popular, and that various sets of it are to be found traditionally current"[5]. Child, however, says

1 See E.S.P.B., I, 256.
2 Ibid.
3 See E.S.P.B., I, 256.
4 Op. cit., 21, see E.S.P.B., I, 256.
5 Op. cit., xciv.

he was unable to find the ballad outside Maidment's publication, neither does it appear to have been included in Motherwell's folio MS[1].

On the whole, and after reviewing the conflicting evidence, I am inclined to favour an early date for Tam Lin, as indeed have most ballad scholars. John Veitch, somewhat fancifully, sees the original as being, "as old as the formation even of the northern English dialect"[2]. Willa Muir attempts to be more specific when she states her belief that the fairy ballads were composed by way of reaction against the insistent dogma of a post-Reformation Christianity. She writes:

> Tam Lin must have been composed in its present form at some time after the Reformation. Perhaps the existence of Elfland and Norse demons in that enclave from which the uncanny Powers emerged on Hallowe'en, preserved for the Scots a back-door escape from the encroaching rigours of a totalitarian religion. In one version of Tam Lin, dated 1769 , the David Herd copy, Child C , Tam Lin says:
>
> 'O pleasant is the fairy land,
> How happy there to dwell!
> But ay at every seven years end
> We're a' dung down to hell'.
>
> C5
>
> According to Calvinism, most people, except the few Elect, were due to be 'dung down to hell' anyhow, and the country people in the North-East of Scotland may have preferred to take the risks of fairyland"[3].

But it is to be objected that neither Calvinism nor anti-Calvinistic accretions can be taken as evidence of the date of composition of the ballad as a whole. And, if we accept that the ballad Thomas Rymer began to circulate at some time during the second half of the fifteenth century, we have final proof that the "teind to Hell" motif had nothing originally to do with Calvinistic Predestination. In any case, since the fairies were considered to be fallen angels who had not yet descended as low as Hell,

1 See E.S.P.B., I, 256.

2 History and Poetry of the Scottish Border, II, 99. On the ballad's evident antiquity, cf. also Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 374; Lang, Border Ballads, xvi; Gerould, op. cit., 228. W.M. Hart, in Ballad and Epic, classes Tam Lin (with Thomas Rymer) as one of his "Simple Ballads", thereby implying an early date.

3 Op. cit., 139-40.

they might, in the popular mind, be thought to owe allegiance to Lucifer[1]. Thus Alison Pearson, condemned to death as a witch in 1586, claimed at her trial that, "William Sympsoun" bade her "keip hir and sane hir, that scho be nocht tane away with thame [the fairies] agane; for the teynd of thame gais euerie zeir to hell"[2]. Scott explains that this "paying of the kane" was the "popular reason assigned for the desire of the Fairies to abstract young children, as substitutes for themselves in this dreadful tribute"[3]. When Tam Lin has escaped her clutches, the Queen of Fairies, in the version from Campbell's MSS, cries out:

> 'And the koors they hae gane round about,
> And I fear it will be mysel'.
> (H15[5-6]).

That there has been a fusion of Christian and Pagan in the ballad Tam Lin, as in Thomas Rymer, is quite obvious. In the versions from the Border, Janet shows concern for the Christianity of her elfin lover:

> 'O tell me, tell me, Tam Lin', she says,
> 'For's sake that died on tree,
> If eer ye were in holy chapel,
> Or Christendom did see?'
> (A21, B20, D11, I26)

and he assures her that he is of mortal parentage.

In several versions of this ballad, the heroine is required to enact a semi-Christian, semi-pagan ritual before attempting the rescue:

> She rid down to Miles Cross,
> Between twelve hours and one,
> Took holy water in her hand
> And cast a compass round.
> (D25, G44)

1 See Emily B. Lyle, 'The Ballad Tam Lin and Traditional Tales of Recovery from the Fairy Troop', S.S.L., VI (1968-69), 181.

2 Robert Pitcairn, Criminal Trials in Scotland (1833 ed.), I, 162-164.

3 Minstrelsy, II, 369; cf. also, Wimberly, op. cit., 323.

This device occurs in the two northern Scottish texts. The holy water and the drawing of a magic circle are apparently traditionally associated with recovery from the fairies[1]. These Christian "props" are carried to excess in Child's K version where Janet must take a Bible in her right hand (as well as a cane), holy water in her left, and God as her guide (K14-15) - but perhaps this is what we might expect from a Kircudbrightshire Inspector of Poor.

It is in another northern text (Buchan's, Child G) that we find Tam Lin giving as the reason for his abduction a faulty baptism at the hands of his step-mother:

'When I was young, o three years old,
Muckle was made o me;
My step-mother put on my claithes,
An ill, ill sained she me'.
(G25)

In the version taken down by Greig from Miss Bell Robertson, in Aberdeenshire, the girl actually calls for a Bible to determine the nature of her lover:

'It's bring to me a bible', she says,
'An' I'll clear the verity'.

Fan she got a bible brought,
An' lookit it upon,
'Gin I be wi a bairn', she says,
'It's nae to an earthly man'.
(Greig XV, 10^{3-4}, 11)

The conclusion we might draw from all this is that, in the Border texts Christian eschatology and fairy lore achieve, as they do in Thomas Rymer, a modus vivendi, whereas in the later northern texts and the one from Kircudbrightshire they are aggresively hostile to each other.

The ballad, then, in its original form, may still be pre-Reformation. We know that a "zong tamlene" character was popular in tales, dances and

1 Emily B. Lyle, op. cit., 179.

songs by 1549 (the date of The Complaynt), and that certain versions of the Tam Lin ballad must have been in circulation on the Border at the same time as the ballad of Thomas Rymer, for the name of the latter (and even actual verses from the ballad) attached themselves to the former. The phraseology and language of most of the versions, together with the narrative aids of formulae and incremental repetition, indicate a long process of oral transmission. Nevertheless, at least one copy of the ballad, that sent to Johnson by Robert Burns (our oldest transcript as it so happens) has come under suspicion, so perhaps the case of the sceptics had best be heard.

Merely the fact that Burns was a known poet and song-writer himself, has been enough to jeopardise the reputation of the whole of his version of Tam Lin. The case for Burns's extensive reworking of the ballad was stated at length by T.F. Henderson, who argued that the Museum copy is "clearly not an independent version", but the Glenriddell version with emendations from David Herd's, plus "other emendations and additions, the more important of which - as both Scott and Professor Child somehow overlook - could have been the work of none other than Burns"[1]. Henderson thinks that stanzas 24-26 are from the pen of Burns; they are, he says, a re-working of verses from the Glenriddell copy, Burns's method being to sentimentalise and humourise. Henderson describes the final couplet of stanza 24 -

> 'I am sae fair and fu o flesh,
> I'm feard it be mysel'.
> (A24$^{5-6}$)

- as "the sword of fate suspended above the individual head of young Tam Lin" (in the Glenriddell text the latter is not singled out), and speculates that this "was selected by Burns from his own special budget of fairy lore"[2].

1 Minstrelsy, II, 380.
2 Minstrelsy, II, 381.

But the idea is by no means unique to Burns. In the E version of Thomas Rymer a well-fed mortal is also expected to form the tribute to Hell, as the Elfin Queen fears:

'And ye're sae leesome and sae strang,
That I fear, Thomas, it will be yoursell'.
(E18[3-4]).

With regard to the order of the transformations which Tam Lin undergoes before he is finally freed from enchantment, Henderson is also suspicious, since the order is only observed with complete correctness in the Burns copy. "Would it be too rash to infer", Henderson asks, that the correctness is due rather to emendation by Burns, than to preservation by another unknown tradition?"[1] I think it would.

Finally, Henderson objects to what he calls the "bathetic anti-climax" of the Glenriddell version, which Burns "omits altogether"[2]. The verses in question are the Queen of the Fairies' angry shout when she sees that Tam Lin has escaped her:

'Had I but kend, Thomas', she says,
'Before I came frae hame,
I had taen out that heart o flesh,
Put in a heart o stane'.
(B41)

Far from being a descent into bathos, the last verse of the Glenriddell Tam Lin strikes me as singularly horrific in its implications: these preternatural beings have it in their power to deprive Tam Lin, or any other mortal, of all human feeling. They are also able to take away a mortal's sight:

'I wad hae taen out thy twa grey een,
Put in twa een o tree'.
(B40[3-4])

1 Minstrelsy, II, 382.

2 Ibid.

R.H. Cromek, a West Border contemporary of Scott's, explains:

> The taking out of the eyes would probably be to deprive Tam of the faculty of recognising fairy folk thereafter. Mortals whose eyes have been touched with fairies' salve can see them when they are to others invisible, and such persons, upon distinguishing and saluting fairies, have often had not simply this power but their ordinary eyesight taken away[1].

The Burns copy retains the "een o tree" verse but omits the "heart o stane"; nothing is gained, as Henderson would have it, but more than a little is lost.

Hodgart, as well as Henderson, suspected the genuiness of two other stanzas in the Burns version. Hodgart is in no doubt when he says:

> I feel sure that he [Burns] was personally responsible for the magical stanzas in Tam Lin:
>
> Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
> And eerie was the way,
> As fair Jenny in her green mantle
> To Miles Cross she did gae.
>
> About the middle of the night
> She heard the bridles ring;
> This lady was as glad at that
> As any earthly thing.
>
> (A36-37)[2]

Yet Hodgart is careful to add:

> From Burns's practice, we can learn how the other ballad revisers of the eighteenth century worked. They were poets of taste who were close enough to folk-tradition to be able to adapt it without making it look literary or artificial[3].

But if the two verses quoted above do not "look literary or artificial", then what are Hodgart's grounds for suspicion in the first place? - perhaps the fact that the verses are found only in the Burns copy? Willa Muir

1 Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song, 304, cited Child, E.S.P.B., I, 339; cf. also Wimberly, op. cit., 391.

2 Op. cit., 109-10.

3 Ibid.

offers a more balanced view when she writes that they "come out of the same imaginative underworld as the feeling in all good ballads"[1]. And her conclusion, which I endorse, is that Burns "as a poet ... would be likely to leave traditional verses untampered with"[2]. In any case, Burns was not greatly interested in the ballads but preferred other kinds of folksong, so it is unlikely that he would have given much time to "improving" them[3]. Lastly, A.B. Friedman's opinion that Burns was simply "the collector of a genuine folk ballad in Tam Lin", might be quoted in support.[4]

What may indeed happen when a poetaster decides to compose in the ballad vein, is best illustrated by those additions to Tam Lin made by Mr. Beattie of Meikledale. I give these fabricated verses below; they are to be found in Child[5] and in Henderson's edition of Scott's Minstrelsy[6]. In them Tam Lin describes fairyland to Janet.

'But we that live in Fairy-land
No sickness know nor pain;
I quit my body when I will,
And take to it again.

'I quit my body when I please,
Or into it repair;
We can inhabit at our ease
In either earth or air.

'Our shapes and size we can convert
To either large or small;
An old nut-shell's the same to us
As is the lofty hall.

'We sleep in rose-buds soft and sweet,
We revel in the stream;
We wanton lightly on the wind
Or glide on a sunbeam.

'And all our wants are well supplied
From every rich man's store,
Who thankless sing the gifts he gets,
And vainly grasps for more'.

(Ia 32-36)

1 Op. cit., 133.

2 Ibid.

3 See Hodgart, op. cit., 109.

4 The Ballad Revival, 314.

5 E.S.P.B., I, 356-7.

6 Minstrelsy, II, 396-7, 401-2.

Later, Janet's adventure is described in equally precious and artificial terms:

> The heavens were black, the night was dark,
> And dreary was the place,
> But Janet stood with eager wish
> Her lover to embrace.
>
> Betwixt the hours of twelve and one
> A north wind tore the bent,
> And straight she heard strange elritch sounds
> Upon that wind which went.
>
> Their oaten pipes blew wondrous shrill,
> The hemlock small blew clear,
> And louder notes from hemlock large,
> And bog-reed, struck the ear;
> But solemn sounds, or sober thoughts,
> The fairies cannot bear.
>
> They sing, inspired with love and joy,
> Like skylarks in the air;
> Of solid sense, or thought that's grave,
> You'll find no traces there.
>
> Fair Janet stood, with mind unmoved,
> The dreary heath upon,
> And louder, louder waxed the sound
> As they came riding on.
>
> Will o wisp before them went,
> Sent forth a twinkling light,
> And soon she saw the fairy bands
> All riding in her sight.
>
> (Ia 52-53, 55-58)

At this point, thankfully, Mr. Beattie laid down his pen.

The most deleterious effect of verses like these is not simply to produce a language that is out of harmony with that indefinable, but easily recognisable, "ballad language"; it is that they strike at the ballad's very philosophy. In the view of the honest Border folk, Fairyland (and one cannot help noticing that in Mr. Beattie's verse it has acquired a capital "F") was never Elysium, a paradise where pain, sickness and "sober thoughts" were unknown. The real effect of these verses is therefore to clash violently with those other passages in the ballad where reality is squarely and uncompromisingly faced. It is this pain-pleasure

antithesis which, I feel, characterises the world of the Border Ballads and gives to Tam Lin, as well as Thomas Rymer, its atmosphere of brooding uncertainty.

The illustrations of the eighteenth-century artist Johan Füssli for A Midsummer Night's Dream are a good visual example of this dichotomy. In Füssli's fairy paintings there is often a strange, nightmarish play of imagination worthy of Bosch. In the picture Titania and Bottom, there is a blend of the ethereal and the downright sinister. A white-robed fairy with diaphonous wings looks conventionally harmless enough; but in her hand is a lead, and on the end of it, captive, is a small, wizened, bearded figure. Füssli's work might be compared and contrasted with that of a later, nineteenth-century illustrator, Richard Doyle, whose Fairyland: A Series of Pictures from the Elf World of 1870, pictures the fairies as mischievous, but basically innocent "little people"[1].

We shall notice this dual vision at work again in other Border Ballads. It is, as we might expect, the characteristic outlook of a frontier people, unsure of the physical boundaries of their No-Man's-Land and of their national allegiance. And the landscape itself with its peculiar half-lights, its indefinable expanses of sky and bent-covered hills must have worked subtly to produce a strong impression of para-normal forces of the king bodied forth in elfin ballads like Tam Lin. These forces have not been honestly realised in Mr. Beattie's poetic inversions.

The creatures of these Border Ballads are inconstant. One moment the Queen of Fairies can appear beneficent and saving and be mistaken for the "Queen of Heaven", the next she can be angrily vexed and vengeful,

1 Reproductions of these illustrations will be found in Kathleen M. Briggs, The Fairies in Tradition and Literature, 135, 182-3.

calling down curses on those who, like Janet, oppose her will:

> Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
> And an angry woman was she:
> 'Shame betide her ill-far'd face,
> And an ill death may she die,
> 'For she's taen awa the boniest knight
> In a' my companie'.
>
> (A41)

The ambivalency is set out most forcibly, however, in Tam Lin's description of the "unco land" he has been inhabiting:

> 'And pleasant is the fairy land,
> But, an eerie tale to tell,
> Ay at the end of seven years,
> We pay a teind to hell.
>
> (A24)

It is an ambivalence of outlook which folk tradition has preserved well in the different versions of the ballad.

The singers have all made full artistic use of this indeterminate state of things in their delineation of Tam Lin himself. In the opening stanzas of what I shall argue later are the best versions, maidens are issued a warning not to go near Carterhaugh (or Chaster's/Charter's wood) because "Young Tam Lin is there". He demands a forfeit or pledge of some kind - rings or green mantles, but usually a girl's virginity. This is ominous, but it should be observed there is no suggestion, as yet, that Tam Lin is an enchanted being. It is not until he is introduced as being "at the well" (A4, B4), or until Janet herself goes "beside the well" (I6), that we gain the first clue to the hero's otherworldy nature[1]. Wimberly has pointed out that wells, springs, or rivers were associated in the popular imagination with fairy capture and enchantment[2], and an audience of Border folk would not have been slow to pick up the implications. Hodgart, commenting in isolation on the stanza that follows

1 L has "Tam Lien was at the wall" (L3^2). E makes "Lady Well" the spot from which Tam as a boy is abducted. In K it is "yon grass-green well" (K8^2).

2 Op. cit., 316-17. Scott writes that, "there were, upon the Borders, many consecrated wells", Minstrelsy, I, 142.

("She had na pu'd a double rose", A5), says that we have here a folklore motif of the taboo against plucking flowers; by so doing, Janet summons perforce a fairy lover[1].

But Tam Lin is not pure fairy or "elfish grey", as the C text states a little too categorically[2]. He is of human parentage, the father, or grandfather, being variously named as the Duke or Earl of Roxburgh (A, B), the Laird of Foulis (D), the Earl o Forbes (G), Randolph Earl of Murray (I), Earl Douglas (K), or a "noble knight" (N) - depending on the immediate singing locality of the version. In a verse peculiar to Scott's copy, Tam Lin tells Janet, "a knight me got, and a lady me bore" (I27[3]), and this he swears is the truth.

As in the romance Thomas of Erceldoune and the ballad Thomas Rymer, mortal and elf (or enchanted mortal) are able to have intercourse together, with the result, in Tam Lin, of Janet's pregnancy. But Tam Lin is quite definitely more than mortal; as Janet later laments to her father:

'If my love were an earthly knight,
As he's an elfin grey,
I wad na gie my ain true-love
For nae lord that ye hae'.
(A15, B15).

This, I think, makes Janet's determination to rescue Tam Lin all the more ad mirable, since, as it has been discovered to their cost, women are not usually successful at recovering mortals who have been snatched by the fairies[3].

We have said that one of the features of these elfin ballads is their ability to view a character or situation from more than one angle. The events of the ballad story are also multi-faceted. Beyond the level

1 Op. cit., 36.
2 'I am a fairy lyth and limb' (C4[3]).
3 See Emily B. Lyle, op. cit., 175-185.

of a fairly simple account of fairy disenchantment and rescue, there is a presentation of the mediaeval Border ambience, less timeless perhaps in its appeal, but a crucial mainstay which pins down the ballad action in a number of the Border versions.

Tam Lin plays a variation on the theme of rescue - a theme which we shall discover is central to a whole group of later Border Ballads. Here it is a rescue which flies in the face not only of supernatural but of daunting earthly powers also. One of the essential and fixed narrative elements or "themes" (in the Parry-Lord sense) appears to have been the prohibition contained in the opening stanza:

> O I forbid you, maidens a',
> That wear gowd on your hair,
> To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
> For young Tam Lin is there.
> (A1)

This warning injunction has been retained by exactly half our known texts.[1] It may be spoken by the girl's father, although he is said later to be "meek and mild" (A13[2], cf. "thick and milde", B13[2]). It may represent the collective authoritarian voice of a community. However it may be, it is a clear taboo which affects all the maidens, and Janet chooses deliberately to ignore it[2]. Going to the taboo place, Carterhaugh,

1 Versions A, B, D, G-I, and M. It disappears in the northern texts, E, L, and Greig.

2 Ann Carter's Irish version makes nonsense of this when Janet tells Tam Lin:

> 'I have leave from my mother and from my father too.
> Why can't I walk through these green fields without the leave of you?'
> (2^{1-2}).

she wilfully courts seduction. There is something impulsive, but also premeditated about her headlong flight to the greenwood. She runs "as fast as she can hie", in the words of a ballad commonplace. Her virginity, what is more, is not only being strictly adhered to but is being flaunted when she braids or "snoods" her yellow hair, "a little aboon her bree" (A3, 17; B3, 16). The detail is important: to "snood" means to bind the hair up with a head-band or ribbon. The "snood" itself was the distinctive head-band worn by young, unmarried women[1]. Jamieson gives the following account of its significance to the community in his Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language:

> The "snood", or ribband with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and was applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the curch, toy, or coif, when she passed by marriage into the matronal state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden, without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the "snood", nor advanced to the graver dignity of the curch. In old Scottish songs there occur many sly allusions to such misfortunes ...
>
> In some parts of the country, it is said, where the "snude" was commonly worn by young women, if anyone dared to assume it, who was known to have made a "faux pas", it would have been torn from her head with indignation[2].

The "snooding" formula of versions A and B thus takes on connotations far beyond its purely formulaic usage, when it appears for a second time at A17 and B8. Janet has now lost her maidenhead to Tam Lin and is visibly with child (her father and his retainers remark on it in both texts). Yet Janet refuses to discard her maiden's snood when she sets out on her second visit to the greenwood of Carterhaugh. And the word-for-word repetition of "Janet has kilted her green kirtle", etc.,

1 O.E.D., X, 326-7; E.D.D., V, 590; E.D.S.L., IV, 324.
2 Op. cit., IV, 324.

underscores her defiance of social convention. It is a pity that this description of the hair snooding was lost to other versions of the ballad[1].

We learn elsewhere, though, that, "the crown of gold was an ornament which only maiden ladies were entitled to wear, and the loss of it prevented their being received in society[2]. This important addendum to the hair-braiding is kept by Scott (I1), as well as by two other Border texts, H and M, and by Buchan (G1).

Weakened traditions of the hair-braiding/gold-wearing are to be found in the opening of Motherwell's "North Country" version (Da), in Maidment's "from the recitation of an old woman" (Db), and in David Webster's, all of which read simply,

> O all you ladies young and gay,
> Who are so sweet and fair,
> (D1[1-2]).

or by those versions which tell how the girl merely "prickt hersell and prind hersell" (C1[1], I22[1]).

Similarly unconventional is the girl's refusal to make her pregnancy more respectable by marrying one of her father's noblemen, and her strong, individualistic acceptance of the consequences:

> 'If that I gae wi child, father,
> Mysel maun bear the blame;
> There's neer a laird about your ha,
> Shall get the bairn's name'.
> (A14, cf. B14, G13, I19, L8).

She is spirited, too, in her rebuff of the "auld grey knight" who is afraid that he and the others may be held responsible for Janet's undoing.

1 Scott keeps it in his Minstrelsy version (I5), but loses the full effect by not repeating the stanza after Janet's seduction.

2 R.C. Alexander Prior, Ancient Danish Ballads, III, 147, cited Wimberly, op. cit., 318.

She replies:

'Haud your tongue, ye auld fac'd knight,
Some ill death may ye die'.
Father my bairn on whom I will,
I'll father none on thee'.
(A12, cf. B12, G13, I17, L8).

Janet's first course of action, when she finds herself pregnant, is to seek an abortaficient. This she does by plucking either rose (A, B, F, G, H, I and M), tree (C), herb (F, and H), or flowers (D, E, H and L). In versions D, G and L, the herb is a flower with "pimples gray" (D10[2]), or "the pile o the gravil green" (G18[2], L12[1-2]). David Donaldson, in his supplement to Jamieson's Etymological Dictionary, thinks that "gravil" is "the plant graymill or gromwell, of the genus "Lithospermum", "anciently used in the cure of gravel, hence its name. Said to have been used also in producing abortion"[1]. But Child thinks that, "the pile seems to be simply some downy plant (velvety moss) which grows on stones; indeed we are expressly told this ...: 'a flower, it grows on gravel greay', 'the pile that grows on gravel green'"[2].

But whatever the herb in question, there can be little doubt that Janet's intention was to terminate her pregnancy, and I take this to be an essential part of the girl's character and of the whole Tam Lin story[3]. Some versions get this herb - or flower-picking completely wrong. Alexander Kirk and Miss Bell Robertson both have a maid visiting a garden "for flowers to flower her hat" (K1[4], Greig 1[4]). In others, the flower-picking is out of order, preceding instead of following the girl's seduction (D, E, and M)[4].

1 Op. cit., 304.

2 E.S.P.B., V, 341.

3 Only 3 of our extant texts (M, N, and fragment O), fail to mention the girl's pregnancy and consequently the herb-induced abortion. Of those texts which have remembered the pregnancy but do not refer directly to Janet's intention to terminate it (C, E and K), the flower-picking motif is still present in some guise, suggesting that the link between the two has not been entirely obliterated.

4 In H, Janet declares her intention to "flower mysell the gown", or "hat" (H34, 44), but is then accused by Tam Lin of "putting back the bonny babe" (H6). In this text, her earlier declaration may, therefore, have been seen simply as an excuse to go to the greenwood.

Finally, if Janet is outspoken in her meeting with her father and the "auld grey knight", she is no less defiant when she is challenged for the first time by Tam Lin. Asked why she has come to Carterhaugh without his permission, she retorts:

> 'Carterhaugh, it is my ain,
> My daddie gave it me;
> I'll come and gang by Carterhaugh,
> And ask nae leave at thee'.
> (A7, cf. B7, C3, D6, E5, G6, I9, K4, L4, M6)

Twinned with this attitude of youthful defiance is Janet's bravery, most important among the Border virtues. Janet challenges not only the social conventions of her age but what is seen by the balladists as even more daring, unseen powers. Thus the transformations which Tam Lin goes through - snake, wild beast, fire and a naked man - make up a terrible ordeal for Janet and are not simply a wild flight of fancy on the part of the ballad-singers. In a very real sense Tam Lin's manhood has to be forged and re-cast and in helping him to regain his original state Janet's courage is tried to the limit. Willa Muir is appreciative of this when she describes how,

> In Scotland November was known as the Black Month; it was a glumly dark time of year. What Tam Lin proposed to his lady amounted to a severe trial of nerve. Sir Walter Scott, in volume two of his Minstrelsy[1], relates a tradition about a farmer in the Lothians whose wife had been carried off by the fairies; he set out on Hallowe'en to rescue her, but when the fairy train came past lost his nerve and lay low among the furze, so that he lost his wife too, forever. Janet was made of different metal[2].

And, as I have already stated, so far as we can tell from folk-tale analogues, no woman ever succeeds in this kind of rescue.

1 Minstrelsy, II, 370.

2 Op. cit., 134.

The fact that Janet is probably several months pregnant when she undertakes her dangerous mission is further evidence of her heroism. It combines superiority not only over social convention but also over physical weakness - a combination admired especially in the rescue ballads, as we shall see in a later chapter. That this additional handicap was also in the minds of the singers may be construed from Bell Robertson's version, which ends:

> But wisna she a lady wight,
> A lady wight an keen,
> She borrowed her love at mark midnight,
> An' bore her son at neen.
> (45)[1]

The two events are nicely telescoped in this stanza of Bell Robertson's, in such a way as to bring out the full extent of Janet's bravery. The same effect is achieved in Peter Buchan's text which concludes:

> She borrowed her love at mirk midnight,
> Bore her young son ere day,
> And though ye'd search the warld wide,
> Ye'll nae find sic a may.
> (G59).

There is a strong Germanic flavour in such a frank appreciation of courage and will-power. Whether these concluding verses already belonged to these two versions of Tam Lin when the ballad came to Aberdeenshire we have no means of telling. But an appreciation of such bravery was not confined to the north of Scotland and although the Border singers do not break out into explicit commendation of their heroine, it is present throughout in their tone.

In the man's world of the Border Ballads, women appear infrequently. But when they do they show extreme resourcefulness, practicality and

1 L.L.,.29.

cunning, like the blind harper of Lochmaben's wife who plans the ruse whereby he is able to steal the king of England's best stallion; or, like Janet, they display a manly courage and resilience. In The Lament of the Border Widow (Child 106)[1], a woman is obliged to give burial to her young husband who has been the victim of an attack:

> I took the corpse then on my back,
> And whiles I gaed, and whiles I sat;
> I digd a grave, and laid him in,
> And hapd him wi the sod sae green.
> (5).

Janet is clearly marked as a true Border Ballad heroine, by her spirit of self-sufficiency, of noble defiance, and by her refusal to be crushed by either parental authority, social taboo or superhuman powers. She belongs with those other ballad rebels against the existing order - Hobie Noble, Hughie Graham, Johnie Armstrong and the rest, all of whom refuse to be governed in their conduct by a set of first-order principles which impose an arbitrary morality. At the same time Janet stands in a long line of heroines in Scottish literature, who show themselves to be spirited, witty, broadminded and none too subordinate in matters of

1 Child printed the ballad as part of his preface to The Famous Flower of Serving Men (Child 106), to which it is clearly related, but seemed to doubt its genuineness, see E.S.P.B., II, 429-30. The ballad was first published in the 1803 edition of Scott's Minstrelsy, III, 83. It was, he said, "obtained from recitation in the Forest of Ettrick", and was supposed "to relate to the execution of Cockburne of Henderland, a Border freebooter, hanged over the gate of his own tower by James V, in the course of that memorable expedition in 1529 which was fatal to Johnie Armstrong, Adam Scott of Tushielaw, and many other marauders". The ballad was sent Sir Walter by James Hogg, and the stanza quoted above is given from this copy, "Scotch Ballads", No. 133b, Abbotsford, in the handwriting of James Hogg, See E.S.P.B., IV, 492.

love. One thinks of Robert Henryson's Makyne[1] and David Lyndsay's beautiful, widowed chatelaine[2], both of whom take an active, rather than passive role in their respective courtships.

There is, perhaps, a strong Germanic influence at work on the Border Balladists' conception of their young heroine in Tam Lin. C.S. Lewis has observed that,

> What is certain is that where a Germanic race reached its maturity untouched by the Latin spirit, as in Iceland, we find nothing at all like courtly love. The position of women in the Sagas, is, indeed, higher than that which they enjoy in classical literature; but it is based on a purely commonsensible and unemphasized respect for the courage or prudence which some women, like some men, happen to possess[3].

This is just what we find where women appear in the Border Ballads; it is also a feature of Scottish poetry generally. Even in Lyndsay's Squyer Meldrum, which comes nearest to presenting a love story of the chivalric, courtly-love type, the widowed lady who comes to Meldrum's bedchamber in the early morning and gives him little chance to resist her wooing, is treated neither as a highly romantic character nor as a naughty creature, but as a delightful and natural woman who does not conceal her liking.

We may then, if we so wish, read Tam Lin not only as a ballad of rescue from enchantment, but as the story of a young Border woman's ordeal in claiming the husband of her own choice. In this case, it is crucial to the ballad that Janet's self-determinism be seen to operate against a closely-controlled kinship structure that entails some kind of parentally-arranged match within the clan group, and hence the

1 'Robene and Makyne', The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson (ed. H. Harvey Wood), 151-4.

2 'The Historie and Testament of Squyer William Meldrum', The Poetical Works of Sir David Lyndsay (ed. David Laing), 191-5.

3 The Allegory of Love (Oxford paperback ed.), 9.

"I forbid you" stanza of the opening. It is for this reason that Willa Muir appears to be wide of the mark when she attributes this admonitory stanza to Burns and then deduces that it was copied later by all the other versions except two from the north. Muir seems to think that its tone belongs to the second half of the eighteenth century rather than to earlier times. A ballad heroine, she points out, "takes to the greenwood on impulse, dropping her needle and her seam, running fast". Muir considers, this being so, that the third stanza of Child's A text ("Janet has kilted her green kirtle", etc.) should properly come first, replacing the "I forbid you"[1]. But not all our Border Ballads begin *in media res*, as we shall see. Prefatory remarks - a warning, a regret, a condemnation - are not always out of place, traditional and objective as these ballads are for the most part. The Border Ballads are usually concerned with issues that seemed vital in the centuries of the old Border Problem, and there is some evidence that generations of singers and their audiences may have used the Border Ballads as a kind of testing-ground for new ideas. Willa Muir may simply have been trying to account for what she, as a northerner, considers the superiority of her two Aberdeenshire texts of *Tam Lin*. But I would suggest that these texts are weaker precisely because, in omitting the "I forbid you" verse, they lose an opportunity to exploit the conflict of ideas which is so much a part of the Border Ballads' frame of reference.

In point of fact, a shift towards a less uncritical acceptance of the Border way of life is detectable in what are almost certainly the later Border Ballads. Here, in these fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century elfin ballads, it is unquestioned that life on the Border must be long-suffering and rigorous, made up of hard sacrifices and no

1 *Op. cit.*, 135-6.

compromises. Thus the young girls of Carterhaugh must pay Tam Lin a "wad"[1] or forfeit of some kind - either their rings or green mantles, or else their maidenhead. Whichever they choose is hardly significant, it is a forfeit just the same. The denizens of fairyland, in their turn, must make a sacrifice, or pay a forfeit (the "teind to Hell") once every seven years. So the universe comes to be viewed as a hierarchy of carefully controlled obligations, a regulated series of interdependences, whether within the family circle, clan group, or wider supernatural community. Moral laws are usually cut-and-dried, inflexible. If the individual transgresses he accepts his fate without protest. Janet recognises the penalty of disobedience yet decides to take her fate into her own hands. As in the rescue ballads, Jock o the Side, Archie o Cawfield and Kinmont Willie, human passion (whether of friendship or, as in Tam Lin, of love) overrides all other considerations. The unforgivable thing is to be concerned for the consequences, as is brought out in the rescue ballads by the Borderers' treatment of cowards.

Perhaps a revolt against this kind of rigid social fabric is being sensed for the first time in Tam Lin. Janet disobeys her father's warning, while Tam Lin's revolt is of another order: who would want to go to fairyland at the bidding of the fairies, as Thomas Rhymer meekly did? Worse, who would wish to become part of a system that makes a living sacrifice every seventh year to infernal powers? The voice of the Fairy Queen, and the curse she calls down on Janet and her lover, is thus the voice of an authority flagrantly thwarted.

1 Derived from a Germanic word meaning "cloth", because this kind of merchandise was given and received instead of money; if a pledge needed to be made at any time, a piece of cloth would be commonly used; hence a pledge was called a "wad", see E.D.S.L., IV, 704.

It is paradoxical that the Border-land seems to have supported a system of rigid caste whilst at the same time (and in its balladry) tolerating sometimes extreme deviations from it. It is this impulse towards individualism, freedom and independence which the Border Ballads most often seem to register. A lawless community within the nation as a whole, erects its own structure of authority and unspoken laws. How is the individual to react? The dilemma makes for good ballad drama.

It has been said that "the history of Scotland has been a perpetual protest against despotism. Its lesson is, first, the power of individualism, and latterly that of the rights of conscience"[1]. In Tam Lin, reckless defiance is openly admired by the balladist. In other ballads it is beginning to be recognised as perhaps the short route to chaos. Conciliation and compromise and a new spirit of pacifism need to be the active principles.

The imagery of the Border Ballads springs from the same world as the social contest and moral ambivalence, only it is the relentless struggle with natural, rather than social forces. Most of the texts of Tam Lin make some attempt to suggest, through contrasting imagery, Janet's pregnancy, even before we are actually told that she "goes wi child". She has once been "the flower among them a'" ($A9^4$, $B9^4$), but on her return from the greenwood she is obviously sick and "as green as onie glass" ($A10^4$, $B10^4$), or "grass" ($I15^4$, $M8^4$). In another version, Janet is "like the snaw" ($M9^4$), compared with the other ladies, most of whom are a rosy red. A similar image is used of Tam Lin who says he will grow cold "like ice on frozen lake" in the version of the old woman who sang for William Motherwell ($Db\ 24^2$). The green as glass/grass simile is simple but effective; it seems to lose much of its effect when it

1 John Veitch, The History and Poetry of the Scottish Border, II, 12.

becomes, in Buchan's copy, a "gown o' green" (G11[4]), which the lady puts on "when eight months were past and gone". In Henry Hutton's much-garbled version, it is not the girl's dress but the gowns of the other maidens that are "green as grass" (N15[4]).

Where the best versions rely simply on this one striking image to indicate a change in the girl's maiden state, Scott's copy cannot resist pointing a finger, as it were, and giving a complete list of medical symptoms. There is some tedious use of detail and much mawkishness in:

> When she came to her father's ha,
> She looked pale and wan;
> They thought she'd dreed some sair sickness,
> Or been with some leman.
>
> She didna comb her yellow hair
> Nor make meikle o her head,
> And ilka thing that lady took
> Was like to be her deid.
>
> It's four and twenty ladies fair
> Were playing at the ba;
> Janet, the wightest of them anes,
> Was faintest o them a'.
>
> (I 12-14)

The stanzas may have been those of the old Kirkhill woman, and merely interpolated by Scott. The point is that they are sadly out of keeping with the sturdy resilience of Janet's character in other parts of the ballad.

Other images are drawn from the natural, everyday surroundings of the Border folk. They are often felt, tactile as well as visual, capturing the coarse texture, the violent contrasts of a physical world the Borderer took so much for granted and was therefore able to extemporise when he sung his ballads. The quick simile "as hot as any coal" (J8[2]), is brought in to describe Tam Lin during the transformation process; "like iron cold" (L20[4]), to convey the opposite; and "fleeter than the wind" (N3[4]), to capture the speed of his fairy mount. The wind blows again through another highly imaginative image when the Queen of the

Fairies makes her boast that Janet has been lucky to recover Tam Lin:

> 'But hadst thou waited, fair lady,
> Till about this time the morn,
> He would hae been as far from thee or me
> As the wind that blew when he was born'.
> (K19)

The rapidly changing and often harsh atmospheric conditions of the Border are felt by the balladist as an appropriate background to Tam's abduction: when he was taken by the fairies it was "a cauld day and a snell" ($A23^2$, $B22^2$, $I30^2$). The "frosty fell" of Thomas Rhymer's journey reappears in those verses borrowed by the Hutton family from the earlier ballad ($N8^2$). And winter is again used by the Border balladist as a measure of Janet's devotion to her unborn child when she vows, "I would wake him the length of the winter's night" ($H7^4$, $L13^4$).

The northern winter, from October to March or April on the Borders, was the occasion of scores of remarks during the sixteenth century; and complaints as to its ferocity were not all made by southerners visiting or passing through the region. The worst winter was that of 1570-1571, when a storm began about the third week in November and lasted well into February[1]. Perhaps the whole subject of Border climate and weather from a southerner's point of view is best summed up by Lord Willoughby, Warden of the East March of England, in a letter to his friends in London, written in December 1600:

> If I were further from the tempestuousnes of Cheviot hills, and were once retired from this accursed country whence the sun is so removed, I would not change my homlyest hermitage for the highest pallace ther[2].

The Border landscape is glimpsed fleetingly in Tam Lin. It is one of castles, forests, wells, green hills and tracts of broom, or cultivated

1 See D.L.W. Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, 25.

2 C.B.P., II, 718, No. 1299.

patches of rye and "shots" (fields) of wheat. We catch the glare of one of the old "bale" fires, hung by the Borderers in an iron cone or grate over the rampart of their peel towers as a warning signal to their neighbours[1], when Tam Lin is changed into "a bale that burns so fast" (I41[2]).

Details of dress may be significant in a Border Ballad. We have already commented at some length on the country girl's "snood", or gold headband. Tam Lin as a boy is wrapped in his father's hunting-coat (N2[1]), and he is out hunting or hawking in versions A and B, D and I, when he is captured by the fairies.

The transformations which Tam Lin must go through are nearly all drawn from a wild Border setting. In all the versions except F, he is changed into some kind of snake, usually the native adder. The "grey greyhound" of B31[2], the "wood black dog" of E12[2], the "deer sae wild" of G41[2], the wolf of G38[2], the dove and swan of C10[2] and I45[2], the toad and eel of C9[2] and I44[2], the "esk" or newt of A31[2], C8[2], H11[2] and I41[2], the eagle and ass of F11[1-2] - must all have been familiar creatures to the Border dalesman. Even the lion of A may have been believed in, for we find the chronicler Raphael Holinshed writing: "Lions we have had verie manie in the north parts of Scotland"[2] - and this is the statement of an educated Englishman of Elizabeth's reign!

When a ballad exists in as many versions as Tam Lin does, we may conclude by establishing a prototype of the ballad narrative, or, in Stith Thompson's words, "establishing an approximation to an original

1 See Robert Bruce Armstrong, The History of Liddesdale, I, 77; Tough, op. cit., 92-93; Howard Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches, 165-70.

2 Chronicles (1585 ed.), 379

form which will sufficiently account for all the available variants"[1]. In the light of our examination, the following narrative elements would seem to be essential to the story-pattern of Tam Lin:

1. A prohibition, or warning, must be given, which the heroine later flouts (A, B, D, G, H, I, M).
2. A preliminary encounter between the girl and Tam Lin (A, B, F, G, I, L, M).
3. The girl's spirited rebuff of Tam Lin's challenge and her claim to ownership of the land (A-E, G, I, L, M).
4. The girl returns pregnant, either to her father's house, or to her bower (A, B, F, G, I, L, M). This pregnancy is the outcome of (2) and motivates stages (7) and (13).
5. The lady is questioned or taunted, either by an old knight in her father's retinue, or by her brother, mother, or sister (A, B, F, G, I, L). Her rebuff is spirited.
6. The heroine, in her pregnant state, is compared to the other ladies in their virginal state (A, B, I, L, M).
7. The lady goes to a second encounter with her elfin lover (A-M). Both encounters, however, are only preserved by A, B, F, G, L and M.
8. The purpose of the girl's second visit to the wood at Carterhaugh is to procure an abortaficient herb (A, B, F, G-I, L).
9. Tam Lin tells of his human and noble ancestry (A, B, D, E, G, I, K, N).
10. Tam Lin tells of his abduction by fairies (A, B, D, E, G, I, K, L, N).
11. Tam Lin gives an account of fairyland and the tribute to Hell (A-D, G, I, K, N).

1 See supra, **Introduction, p. 6.**

12. Tam Lin advises the girl how to rescue him (A-L).

13. The rescue operation and various transformations (A, B, D-G, I, K, L).

14. The Fairy Queen's angry reply (A, B, D-I, K, L).

Those versions which contain all fourteen of the narrative elements are A, B, G, and I. The Aberdeenshire copy from Hugh Irvine of Drum (Child L) omits only stages 1, 9, and 11. Discounting the incomplete or fragmentary copies (C, H, J, M and O), the weakest renderings or re-creations of the tradition are those given by N (which omits 1-8 and 12-14, eleven stages in all) and F (which omits six stages: 1, 3, 6, and 9-11). Version D omits five stages: 2, 4-6, and 8; so, too, does version K (stages 1-5).

Is it possible, then, to pass any critical judgement on the different versions of this ballad? I believe it is possible, although the criteria on which our value-judgements are based may differ slightly from those normally relied upon in literary criticism.

We have observed ways in which a ballad tradition may become weakened. It should be possible to claim, therefore, that nothing is gained with respect to characterisation in Buchan's version of Tam Lin, when the girl is elevated to the position of King of Scotland's daughter, i.e. she is made into a princess. The other additions, expansions and explications of this northern Scottish text are merely cumbersome, detracting from the dramatic unity of the best versions of the story. Consider, for example, the way in which G protracts the shape-shifting and rescue through fifteen stanzas (45 to end), compared with the Burns copy which takes only five stanzas (38 to end), and the Glenriddell copy, six stanzas (36 to end). One might have expected the singers of A and B to employ their technique of oral repetition for this sequence, repeating word-for-word the transformations already anticipated in Tam Lin's speech; but

for once, perhaps with a subconscious sense of the need for economy at this point in the ballad, they both eschew it. The climax is thus speeded as the rescue operation is completed in a few verses. Further, Buchan's text loses something of this dramatic condensation by prefacing the rescue with an interchange between the girl and the Queen of Elfin (G49-51). To gain their full impact these verses should be placed after the rescue.

Buchan"s version strives after other effects. There is no real reason, as far as the internal logic of this ballad's plot is concerned, why the girl should spend seven days in the greenwood:

> Seven days she tarried there,
> Saw neither sun nor meen;
> At length, by a sma glimmering light,
> Came thro the wood her lane.
>
> (G10)

In a conscious striving after pathos, it looks rather as if this northern reciter has borrowed a stanza from Thomas Rymer. Also incongruous is Tam Lin's metamorphosis into "a silken string" ($G42^2$), in the midst of a succession of ferocious or repulsive wild creatures and "fire that burns sae bauld" ($G39^2$). The need that is felt to make the girl's brother (who "meant to do her harm", G15) suggest an abortion, is also a weakening of the traditional story-pattern. In other versions the suggestion is placed in the mouth of a sister (Widow McCormick's, F5), or an interfering old man (Hugh Irvine's version, L9). It is totally inconsistent with that spirit of hardy self-determinism that we have seen to be the mainstay of Janet's character in the Border versions.

The ballad has been impaired also by singers in Kircudbrightshire. The David Ray/Alexander Kirk version (Child K) was thought by Child to have been learned from print:

> it has been considerably made over ... The cane in the maid's hand, already sufficiently occupied, either with the Bible or holy water, is an imbecility such as only the "makers" of latter days are capable of[1].

The title of this version, 'The Queen of the Fairies', is symptomatic of the shift of emphasis which the ballad has undergone. God and the Devil stand on either side in a conflict that has been systematically Christianised. Even the brusqueness of the girl's seduction has been softened; when he has taken her by the milk-white hand, Tam Lin "gently" lays her down ($K5^{1-2}$). And as the singer presumably runs out of inspiration after remembering only two of the transformations, we are told:

> They turned him in this lady's arms
> Like to all things that was vile;
> ($K22^{1-2}$)

Finally, I cannot resist quoting the stanzas which describe the girl's seduction in Scott's Minstrelsy text;

> He's taen her by the milk-white hand,
> Among the leaves sae green,
> And what they did I cannot tell,
> The green leaves were between.
>
> He's taen her by the milk-white hand,
> Among the roses red,
> And what they did I cannot say,
> She neer returned a maid.
> (I10-11)

No mediaeval ballad-singer from the Scottish Border would have been guilty of such prudishness.

Enough should now have been said to confirm that a Border Ballad becomes vulnerable once it is removed from a community of shared outlook, customs and ideas. The changes it will undergo will sometimes pass unnoticed or appear insignificant to a modern reader of ballads. They may

1 E.S.P.B., III, 504.

cause only a single verse or stage in the ballad story to atrophy or even drop away completely. At worst they may suppress the pulse of felt life which is at the centre of every good Border Ballad.

CHAPTER THREE

BALLADS OF BATTLE - (1) THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN[1]

About 32 miles from Newcastle, on the main road to Jedburgh, lies the village of Otterburn. There, during a night of full moon in August 1388, a small Scottish raiding force under the leadership of James Douglas, the second earl, joined with and defeated a much larger English army led by Sir Henry Percy, popularly called "Harry Hotspur" and the eldest son of the first Earl of Northumberland. The Earl of Douglas was killed on the field of battle and his body carried to Melrose where he was buried in the abbey. Sir Henry Percy was taken prisoner by the Scots but was later ransomed by the English king, Richard II, for the sum of £3000[2].

There were other more important engagements, politically, between the English and Scottish forces than the one at Otterburn, especially during the Wars of Independence (1286-1371). Yet it was this relatively minor skirmish between Douglas and Percy and their armies of a few thousand men that fired the imagination of both historian and balladist, leaving us with at least six contemporary, or near-contemporary accounts of the fight in chronicles of the period[3], and two ballads on the subject, The Battle of Otterburn and The Hunting of the Cheviot[4].

The earliest reference to a ballad about the battle of Otterburn is found once again in The Complaynt of Scotlande of 1549, where the

1 Child 161, E.S.P.B., III, 289-302, IV, 499-502, V, 243-4.

2 Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland (ed. Joseph Bain), IV, 93.

3 Thomas Walsingham, Historia Anglicana (c. 1390); Jean Froissart, Chronicles (c. 1390); Johannes Malverne, continuator of Ranulph Higden, Polychronicon (c. 1390); Henry Knyghton, Chronicon (c. 1390); Andrew of Wyntoun, The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland (c. 1420); John Hardyng, The Chronicle (c. 1465).

4 Although The Hunting of the Cheviot (Child 162) purports to describe the battle of Otterburn, and although the two ballads are closely related, Child prefers to give them under separate titles rather than as different versions of one ballad. I shall therefore deal with The Hunting of the Cheviot in the next chapter.

following line is quoted:

> 'The persee & the mongumrye met, that day, that day, that gentil day;'[1]

A character called Sir Hugh Montgomery is mentioned in all the versions of The Battle of Otterburn, and in two of them he is accredited with having himself defeated Henry Percy[2]. In Child's B text of the ballad, a version collected by the Scottish antiquarian David Herd[3], appears the line:

> Then Percy and Montgomery met,
> (B9[1])

And in The Hunting of the Cheviot, the ballad's first fytte concludes with a stanza beginning:

> That day, that day, that dredfull day!
> (A24[1])

Either the writer of The Complaynt misquoted, or else another version of The Battle of Otterburn once existed in which the above two lines had become blended; but in any case the author of The Complaynt intended the Otterburn ballad, since he had already mentioned by name "the huntiss of cheuet" among his list of "sangis of natural music of the antiquite", as sung by the shepherds[4].

1 Op. cit. (ed. J.A.H. Murray), 65.

2 Froissart says that Percy was taken prisoner by "the lorde of Mountcombre, a valyaunt knyght of Scotlande", Chronicle (trans. Sir John Bourchier), V, 223. Cf. also John Leslie, The History of Scotland (ed. Cody), II, 27; John Major, A History of Greater Britain (trans. Archibald Constable), 323. Bishop Percy says that Sir Hugh was the eldest son of John, Lord Montgomery. Hugh was slain by an arrow and Lord John took Percy prisoner. Bishop Percy derives his information from Crawford's Peerage, see Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (ed. Henry B. Wheatley), I, 36n.

3 Herd's MS., I, 149, II, 30, see E.S.P.B., III, 289, 299.

4 Op. cit. (ed. Murray), 65.

Sir Philip Sidney must have been referring to either The Battle of Otterburn or The Hunting of the Cheviot when he wrote in praise of the folk Muse:

> Certainly, I must confesse my own barbarousnes, I neuer heard the olde song of Percy and Duglas, that I found not my heart mooued more then with a Trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blinde Crouder, with no rougher voyce, then rude stile; which, being so euill apparrelled in the dust and cobwebbes of that vnciuill age, what would it worke trymmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?[1]

In 1643 we come across another mention of "the olde song of Percy and Duglas", this time by the Scottish historian, David Hume of Godscroft. In The History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus, after his account of the battle of Otterburn, Hume adds a note on the character of the Scottish earl, James Douglas:

> this is the man apparantly, who hath given subject to those songs, being the first that encountred with Percie in such a particular conflict ... neither are the songs that are made of them [Douglas and Percy] both one, for the Scots song made of Otterburn telleth the time about Lamasse, and the occasion to take preyes out of England; also the dividing of the Armies betwixt the Earles of Fife and Douglas, and their severall journeys, almost as in the authentick History: it beginneth thus:
>
> It fell about the Lammas tide
> When yeomen wonne their hay,
> The doughtie Douglas gan to ride,
> In England to take a prey.
>
> Whereas the other [The Hunting of the Cheviot?] maketh another occasion, and altogether different, yet it is not more effectuall to move vertue, then the true History here set downe: nor indeed so effectuall as it[2].

Hume makes much of this distinction between the two ballads, recognising The Hunting of the Cheviot as the more fictitious and The Battle of Otterburn as the more accurate historically. This historical truth Hume considers important, moreover, since a faithful presentation of the facts can work a good moral effect. Speaking of what moved Sir Philip Sidney, Hume adds:

1 An Apologie for Poetrie (ed. J. Churton Collins), 32.

2 Op. cit. (1643 ed.), 104-5.

> neither is it the musick of that rough finger, that giveth it [The Battle of Otterburn] this force, farre lesse the vertue of the grosse rime: it is the matter that gives the efficacie, and the vertue of the man that begetteth a resembling vertue in the heart; not by Poesie, but by the rightly described History[1].

We cannot be sure exactly which version of The Battle of Otterburn David Hume had heard. He writes of a "Scots song made of Otterburn" and says that it described the tactical manoeuvre employed by Douglas of dividing the Scottish host into two separate raiding-parties, one under the command of the Earl of Fife to spoil the west coast of England (the Solway and Cumberland), the other under his own leadership to ravage Northumberland and the east[2]. The only surviving version of the ballad to include this military detail is Child's A text and this is (as it now stands) manifestly an English, not a Scottish version. The opening runs:

> The yerlle of Fyffe, wythowghten stryffe,
> He bowynd hym over Sulway;
> The grete wolde ever to-gether ryde;
> That raysse they may rewe for aye.
> (A2)

A is the oldest transcribed version of the ballad. It exists in two copies both made about 1550, the Cotton MS. (Child Aa)[3], and the Harleian MS. (Child Ab)[4]. As I hope to demonstrate later in this chapter, the A version is markedly pro-English and its partisan spirit is perhaps attributable to a professional minstrel of some kind in the retinue of the Percy family of Alnwick.

The Scottish versions of the ballad that have survived to us are three: Child B, and what I have called for convenient reference Child F

1 Op. cit. (1643 ed.), 104n.

2 Froissart gives the most accurate account of the division of the Scottish army, Chronicle (trans. Bourchier), V, 210-11.

3 Cotton MS. Cleopatra, C. iv, leaf 64, see E.S.P.B., III, 289, 295.

4 Harleian MS. 293, leaf 52, see E.S.P.B., III, 289, 295.

and Child G[1]. There also exist two fragments, Child D (of two verses)[2] and Child E (of one verse only)[3], both printed as from recitation in Scotland.

The B text, we have seen already, was a Scottish copy of The Battle of Otterburn, obtained by David Herd and included by him in his Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs of 1776[4]. It was used later by Sir Walter Scott to make up a "corrected" text for the first edition of his Minstrelsy[5].

The version which I have lettered Child F has a somewhat involved history and this is inextricably bound with Scott's almost obsessional desire to find a complete Scottish text of the ballad, and one as historically accurate as possible, for publication in his Border collection. As early as December 1802 - January 1803, Scott admits himself to be "so anxious to have a complete Scottish Otterburn that I will omit the ballad entirely in the first volume, hoping to recover it in time for insertion in the third". So he writes to his friend and contributor William Laidlaw[6].

In 1805 Scott received just such a complete Scottish text of the ballad, not, as it happened, from Laidlaw, but from his Ettrick Forest informant, James Hogg. This copy formed the basis of the "standard" text of The Battle of Otterburn which first appeared in the third edition of

1 They are left unlettered by Child but are distinct enough to be considered as genuine versions.

2 Printed in John Finlay's Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads, I, xviii f, see E.S.P.B., III, 289, 301.

3 Printed in William Motherwell's, Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern, lxxi, see E.S.P.B., III, 289, 301.

4 Op. cit., I, 153, see E.S.P.B., III, 289, 299.

5 Minstrelsy (1802 ed.), I, 31, see E.S.P.B., III, 289, 299.

6 Cited Robert Carruthers, 'Abbotsford Notanda', appended to Robert Chambers, Life of Sir Walter Scott, 127. The letter is undated, but is assigned to the winter of 1802-1803 by Andrew Lang, Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy, 67.

the Minstrelsy in 1806 (Child C)[1]. There it was given to the public, no doubt with considerable satisfaction on the part of the editor, as "The Scottish Edition", and the following observations as to its source were made:

> This song was first published from Mr. Herd's Collection of Scottish Songs and Ballads, Edin. 1776, 2 vols. octavo; but two recited copies have fortunately been obtained, from the recitation of old persons residing at the head of Ettrick Forest, by which the story is brought out, and completed, in a manner much more correspondent to the true history[2].

At one time, Scott was thought to have manufactured the complete text of the 1806 Minstrelsy version himself[3]. But the discovery of Hogg's original copy at Abbotsford, from which Scott worked, has made it possible to trace the nature and extent of Sir Walter's alterations.

Hogg's copy is Child F. In a letter dated September 10 (1805?), Hogg wrote to Scott from Ettrick House:

> Though I have used all diligence in my power to recover the old song about which you seemed anxious, I am afraid it will arrive too late to be of any use ... as for the scraps of Otterburn which you have got, they seem to have been some confused jumble made by some person who had learned both the songs you have [i.e. The Hunting of the Cheviot and Herd's Otterburn], and in time had been straitened to make one out of them both. But you shall have it as I had it, saving that, as usual, I have sometimes helped the metre without altering one original word[4].

Hogg here gives his version from recitation as far as stanza 24.

He then writes:

> The ballad, which I have collected from two different people, a crazy old man and a woman deranged in her mind, seems hitherto considerably entire; but now, when it becomes most interesting,

1 See Lang, op. cit., 67. Hogg's copy is in "Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy", No. 132, Abbotsford, sts. 1-24, 35-38, 40; No. 5, sts. 25-34, 39, see E.S.P.B., IV, 499.

2 Minstrelsy, I, 280-1.

3 By Fitzwilliam Elliot, author of Further Essays on Border Ballads, 18-45.

4 Cited Lang, op. cit., 79. Child dates the letter September 10 (1802?) see E.S.P.B., IV, 499. But this is too early according to Lang.

they have both failed me, and I have been obliged to take much of it in plain prose. However, as none of them seemed to know anything of the history save what they had learned from the song, I took it the more kindly. Any few verses which follow are to me unintelligible.

He told Sir Hugh that he was dying, and ordered him to conceal his body, and neither let his own men nor Piercy's know; which he did, and the battle went on headed by Sir Hugh Montgomery, and at length -

[Stanzas 25-38 follow]

Piercy seems to have been fighting devilishly in the dark. Indeed my narrators added no more, but told me that Sir Hugh died on the field, but that

He left not an Englishman on the field,
. . . . . .
That he hadna either killed or ta'en
Ere his heart's blood was cauld.

Almonshire (stanza iii.) may probably be a corruption of Bamburghshire, but as both my narrators called it so I thought proper to preserve it. The towers in Roxburgh fells (stanza iii.) may not be so improper as we were thinking, there may have been some English strength on the very borders. - I remain, Dear Sir, your most faithful and affectionate servant, James Hogg.

[There follows a postscript:]

Not being able to get the letter away to the post, I have taken the opportunity of again pumping my old friend's memory and have recovered some more lines and half lines of Otterburn, of which I am becoming somewhat enamoured. These I have been obliged to arrange somewhat myself, as you will see below, but so mixed are they with original lines and sentences that I think, if you pleased, they might pass without any acknowledgement. Sure no man will like an old song the worse of being somewhat harmonious. After stanza xxiv. you may read stanzas xxv. to xxxiv. Then after xxxviii. read xxxix[1].

The field methods of Hogg, like those of so many early ballad and folk-song collectors, were far from scientific. If they had been, Hogg would have transcribed the prose sections of the ballad exactly as he heard them recited, together with any broken lines or stanzas. But he was at least scrupulous in indicating to Scott the parts he had rendered

1 Cited Lang, op. cit., 79-80.

more "harmonious". As far as we can tell, then, up to stanza 24 the ballad is as given by the two old reciters. From stanza 25 to 34 Hogg, on his own admission, "harmonises" what he got in plain prose and snatches of verse. Stanza 39 is apparently Hogg's.

It needs to be said that Hogg's contributions to The Battle of Otterburn, however great, were well within the traditional ballad idiom. More so than Scott's, the Ettrick Shepherd's efforts to patch a worn oral tradition appear less as literary rifacimento, more as the genuine, life-infusing re-creations of the folk-singer who understands the material he is working with and is completely in tune with that long line of oral transmitters to which he belongs. For example, Hogg makes use of formulaic repetition in at least two complete stanzas and in several other lines and half-lines, which Scott either varies or edits out completely. Scott's procedure with his received text is exactly the same in respect of the stanzas not "harmonised" by Hogg. The editor of the Minstrelsy deletes stanza 15 of Hogg's transcript because it repeats, almost word-for-word, stanza 11. In Hogg's copy, Douglas describes his dream of victory:

> 'But I have seen a dreary dream,
> Beyond the isle o Sky;
> I saw a dead man won the fight,
> And I think that man was I'.
> (F20)

and he repeats this at the moment of his death, in the stanzas reconstructed probably by Hogg:

> 'Last night I dreamd a dreary dream,
>
> I dreamd I saw a battle fought
> Beyond the isle o Sky,
> When lo, a dead man wan the field,
> And I thought that man was I'.
> (F26[3], 27).

Scott, preferring to avoid the repetition, uses only Hogg's stanza 20, altering "seen a dreary dream" to "dreamd a dreary dream" (C19[1]). Scott also deletes Hogg's stanza 9, no doubt because the first two lines of the preceding verse are carried over.

Scott was unwilling to accept the "Almonshire" of the reciters (F3[2]), and substituted Hogg's suggested reading "Bambrough shire" (C3[2])[1]. Here, perhaps, is proof that the Ettrick Shepherd had derived his copy from oral recitation, a copy which at this point neither he nor Scott could properly understand. As Andrew Lang has explained, "Almonshire" is the old "Alnshire", or "Alnwickshire", Alnwick being the seat of the Percy family[2]. In Froissart's account of the progress of Douglas's army, the Scots advance "brinnyng and exyling the countrey" above Newcastle and the Tyne[3], in other words the "Almonshire" (Alnwick and its surrounding country) of the ballad reciters.

In the same verse, Scott refused to accept Hogg's supposition (correct as it so happens) that there were English strongholds in Roxburghshire at the time of the battle of Otterburn[4], and so for the line "three good towers on Roxburgh fells" (F3[3]), Scott substitutes "three good towers on Reedswire fells" (C3[3]). The Redeswyre most likely was the pass into England taken by the Scottish army[5], but according to Blaeu's map of Northumberland it is doubtful whether in fact there were ever any tower-houses situated there. In any case there was no real need for Scott to have altered. After the Redeswyre, Douglas would have

1 "Bamborowe schyre" is harried by the Scots in version A of the ballad (A6[1], 12[1]), and in Sir Walter's first Minstrelsy version (Bb3[2]); this reading may have been in the MS. copy which Scott used to "correct" Herd, see E.S.P.B., III, 302.

2 Op. cit., 68.

3 Chronicle (trans. Bourchier), V, 212.

4 Roxburgh itself was for a long time a thorn in the side of the Scots because of its English garrison, which was not won back by the Scots until 1460, see T.I. Rae, The Administration of the Scottish Frontier, 44; W.R. Kermack, The Scottish Borders, 104.

5 Froissart says the Scots held a council of war at "Zedon" (Southdean), 4m. from the Redeswyre, Chronicle (trans. Bourchier), V, 208.

marched his army in a south-easterly direction down Redesdale and this is exactly where the A version of the ballad makes him go:

> Over Hoppertope hyll they cam in,
> And so down by Rodclyffe crage;
> Vpon Grene Lynton they lyghted dowyn,
> Styrande many a stage.
>
> And boldely brente Northomberlond,
> (A3, 4[1])[1]

In Herd's version,

> They have taken Northumberland,
> And sae hae they the north shire,
> And the Otter Dale, they hae burnt it hale,
> And set it a' into fire.
> (B3)

and in Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's (Child G)[2],

> The hae brunt Northumberland,
> And sae have [the] Northumbershire,
> And fair Cluddendale they hae brunt it hale,
> And he's left it all in fire fair.
> (G3)[3]

To return to Scott's Minstrelsy text, his other alterations seem to be either omissions of other stanzas in Hogg's transcript (Scott deletes F25 and 33), grammatical corrections, or else the insertion of lines the purpose of which is apparently to exculpate Douglas from the infamy of defeat at the hands of an Englishman. We know that Sir Walter was in possession of another MS. copy (besides the one he received from

1 "Hoppertope hyll", according to Bishop Percy, is "Ottercap Hill" (now Ottercops), about 5m. south-east of Otterburn, see Reliques (ed. Wheatley), I, 40. "Rodclyffe crage" is Rothley Crag, and "Grene Lynton" is now Greenleighton, both near the village of Rothley in Morpeth Ward, see OS Map, Sheet 77.

2 See infra, p. 137.

3 "Northumbershire" may be either Norhamshire or Bamburghshire. "Cludderdale" is possibly a corruption of Glendale.

Hogg, which he used to "correct" Herd's version for the text he published in the first edition of the Minstrelsy[1]; so we should not assume too hastily that these additions are fabrications of Scott's. The first is a versification of a tradition reported by Andrew of Wyntoun that Douglas, in his haste to arm himself during the surprise attack of the English, forgot his helmet[2]. The ballad runs:

> He belted on his guid braid sword,
> And to the field he ran,
> But he forgot the helmet good,
> That should have kept his brain.
> (C20)

(Certainly, the half-rhyme of ran/brain and the near-banality of the last line do not sound like the work of Scott.) In the next verse but one Percy is able to strike Douglas's unguarded head:

> But Percy with his good broad sword,
> That could so sharply wound,
> Has wounded Douglas on the brow,
> Till he fell to the ground.
> (C22)

In the copy James Hogg took down from his Ettrick Forest reciters, nationalist feeling was put far enough aside for them to feel able to record that the Scottish leader was actually made to retreat before the blows of an Englishman:

> But Piercy wi his good broad-sword,
> Was made o the metal free,
> Has wounded Douglas on the brow
> Till backward he did flee.
> (F23)

1 See E.S.P.B., III, 299, 302.

2 The Original Chronicle (ed. F.J. Amours), VI, 330:

> The Erll Iames wes sa besy
> For till array his oste haly,
> And for to fecht so egyre was,
> That he tuke nocht on in pat place
> His cot armour, bot wes forzet;
> The Erll of Murraiffis basnet,
> Men sais, wes forzet alsua,
> And oper mony lordis ma.
> (Bk. IX, ll. 773-780)

The remaining Scottish version of The Battle of Otterburn, Child G, is from Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's collection of ballads[1]. It follows the tradition (adhered to by David Herd's text) that Douglas was murdered by one of his own men either just before or during the battle. David Hume of Godscroft records:

> There are that say, that he was not slain by the enemy, but by one of his owne men, a Groome of his Chamber, whom he had struck the day before with a truncheon in the ordering of the battell, because he saw him make somewhat slowly to: and they name this man John Bickerton of Luffenesse, who left a part of his armour behinde unfastened, and when he was in the greatest conflict, this servant of his came behinde his back, and slew him thereat: but this narration is not so probable[2].

Scott did not like the tradition either:

> Indeed it seems to have no foundation, but the common desire of assigning some remote and extraordinary cause for the death of a great man[3].

Perhaps it was the thought of Douglas being treacherously assassinated by one of his own countrymen that Sir Walter found repugnant. He was obliged to keep the verses in his first edition text, but was pleased to be able to offer his readers a version "much more correspondent to the true history" in the later editions of the Minstrelsy.

Another tradition that seems to have found much favour with the reciters, is that Douglas, instead of being carried to Melrose abbey, was buried (or hidden) on the field of battle, to conceal his death from the two armies. The germ of this tradition is contained in Froissart's account, when the dying Douglas begs the other leaders,

> I praye you rayse up agayne my baner, whiche lyeth on the grounde, and my squyer Davy Collemine slayne. But, sirs, shewe

1 "First Collection", 21 (C. 1820), see E.S.P.B., V, 243, 398.

2 Op. cit. (1643 ed.), 105.

3 Minstrelsy, I, 280.

nother to frende nor foo in what case ye se me in, for if myne enemyes knewe it they wolde rejoyse, and our frendes discomforted. The two bretherne of Saynt Clere and Sir James Lymsey dyd as the erle hadde desyred theym, and reysed up agayne his baner, and cryed Duglas[1].

In his History of Scotland of 1582, George Buchanan says that Douglas's followers "covered his body with a cloak, that it might not be known"[2]. According to Holinshed, after Douglas had made his last requests, the Scots "first seuered his bodie that it should not be knowen"[3].

In the ballad, as received by Hogg, the wounded Douglas tells his men,

'My wound is deep, I fain wad sleep,
Nae mair I'll fighting see;
Gae lay me in the breaken bush
That grows on yonder lee.

'But tell na ane of my brave men
That I lye bleeding wan,
But let the name of Douglas still
Be shouted in the van.

'And bury me here on this lee,
Beneath the blooming brier,
And never let a mortal ken
A kindly Scot lyes here.'

He liftit up that noble lord,
Wi the saut tear in his ee,
And hid him in the breaken bush,
On yonder lily lee.

(F28-31)

Later, when Percy is on the point of being defeated by the Scottish knight Sir Hugh Montgomery, he is told to yield to this same bracken bush:

1 Chronicle (trans. Bourchier), V, 222. Cf. also John Major, A History of Greater Britain (trans. Archibald Constable), 322.

2 Op. cit. (1762 ed.) I, 434.

3 The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1587 ed.), 249.

'O yield thee, Piercy', said Sir Hugh,
'O yield, or ye shall die!'
'Fain wad I yield', proud Piercy said,
'But neer to loun like thee'.

'Thou shalt not yield to knave nor loun,
Nor shalt thou yield to me;
But yield thee to the breaken bush
That grows on yonder lee'.

'I will not yield to bush or brier,
Nor will I yield to thee;
But I will yield to Lord Douglas,
Or Sir Hugh Montgomery'.
(F36-38)

When Percy realises he has been in combat with Montgomery, he falls to his knees and gives up the fight.

The "riddling-trick" used here, when taken with Percy's vow to Douglas in The Hunting of the Cheviot that he will yield "to no man of a woman born" ($A35^4$), bears a remarkable resemblance to the assurances given Shakespeare's Macbeth, that "none of woman born shall harm Macbeth" and that he will not be defeated in battle until "great Birnham Wood, to high Dunsinane Hill/Shall come against him"[1]. In an article 'Macbeth and The Battle of Otterburn', D.S. Bland has suggested that the "riddling-trick" and Percy's vow not to yield to "man of a woman born" are survivals from some ur-form of the ballad, and that the original composer meant the same sort of outcome as Shakespeare did. "Unfortunately", Bland concludes, "it would seem probable that the passage of time has destroyed the point while preserving one half of it in The Hunting of the Cheviot and the other half in the companion poem"[2]. Be that as it may, the bracken bush motif was enjoyed by all the singers of The Battle of Otterburn except the English composer of A, and it belongs very much to

1 Macbeth, IV, i, 80-94, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (ed. Alexander), 1017.

2 Op. cit., Notes and Queries, CXCIV (1949), 335-6.

the world of those folk beliefs explored by Wimberly. The complete identification assumed by the ballad-singers between the bracken bush (or briar) and the corpse of Douglas, may have been part of the Border folk's belief in the transmigration of the soul. The idea that the soul at death may pass into a tree is widespread[1], and is illustrated in the ballads by the familiar commonplace of plants (one of them usually a briar) that spring from the graves of lovers. It is especially well preserved in Motherwell's version of Earl Brand (Child 7):

> The one was buried in Mary's kirk,
> The other in Mary's quire;
> The one sprung up a bonnie bush,
> And the other a bonny brier.
> (C17)

It is interesting to read the comment with which Wimberly introduces these beliefs in the plant-soul; he writes:

> Prefatory to a survey of soul beliefs in balladry it should be said that posthumous metamorphosis of man into a plant or animal or other forms does not, as a rule, carry with it the idea of retribution ... metamorphosis seems not to be punitive, for it is generally the good man or woman, the hero or heroine, who is changed into a flower, a bird, or an animal.[2]

The use of this plant-soul motif in The Battle of Otterburn may well have sprung from the singers' subconscious desire to eulogise the Scottish hero, to show, in the words of Douglas's dream, how "a dead man won a fight", and how his English enemy was finally cowed and overcome by his superior spirit. The English version of the ballad (Child A) significantly, I think, omits all reference to the bracken bush and Montgomery's call to Percy to yield to it. Perhaps the English Northumbrian reciter felt that it made Percy look slightly ridiculous.

1 See Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, 37-8.

2 Wimberly, op. cit., 33.

We need to be cautious in our evaluation of these different popular traditions. Are we justified, for example, in saying that Herd's version of Otterburn is inferior as a ballad to, say, Scott's version, because it believes that Douglas was murdered by his serving-boy and a "little penknife"? Certainly not; the historian searching for accurately rendered historical facts may be disappointed, but the ballad-singer has given his statement of the truth, as he sees it, and there is a real sense in which the truth, as glimpsed by the balladist, may be the higher one. The soul of the great leader lives on to inspire his men, says the ballad-maker; the great and good man never dies but returns to the earth, and this is far more effective as a statement of a belief in immortality than for example the lame tribute put into the mouth of Percy by the broadside versifier of Chevy Chase:

> Then leauing liffe, Erle Pearcy tooke
> the dead man by the hand;
> Who said, 'Erle Dowglas, for thy life,
> wold I had lost my land'.
>
> 'O Christ! my verry hart doth bleed
> for sorrow for thy sake,
> For sure, a more redoubted knight
> mischance cold neuer take'.
>
> (B38-39)

A similar kind of empathy is attempted by the A text of The Battle of Otterburn, when, at the moment of Douglas's death,

> The stonderdes stode styll on eke a syde,
> Wyth many a grevous grone;
>
> ($A57^{1-2}$)

but even this personification is weak by comparison with the bracken bush burial of the Scottish variants. There a folk belief becomes a ballad motif, but one that is not merely decorative: the balladist puts it to work, invests it with meaning. For this reason Child seems to me to fail to understand the workings of the folk imagination when he concludes:

> The summons to surrender to a bracken-bush is not in the style of fighting-men or fighting-days, and would justify Hotspur's contempt of metre-ballad-mongers[1].

Although it has been well said by Gerould that The Battle of Otterburn and The Hunting of the Cheviot are "less important as chronicles of fact than of spirit",[2] and although I have stated above that the folk imagination will often cling to what it might be said to regard as a higher Truth, nevertheless the different versions of The Battle of Otterburn reproduce sufficiently accurately a number of details that can be corroborated from written historical records. If we assume that a ballad about the battle of 1388 began circulating soon after the events it relates[3], then we may also assume that some at least of those events would have been correctly remembered. On the whole I believe that these early Border poets did distinguish between fact and fiction. When they contradict well-known historical fact, as in the case of Douglas buried beneath a bracken bush on the field at Otterburn, they do so for a particular (often, I would suggest, artistic) reason. Gerould denies the ballad-maker this ability when he states:

> It is not strange, therefore, that the makers and singers of European ballads - simple folk, though far removed from primitive culture - have not been reliable reporters of historical events. They have shown themselves to be interested in public affairs of various kinds, as the reader may observe for himself ... but always in their sensational aspects and seldom with any understanding of their true significance[4].

1 E.S.P.B., III, 294.

2 Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, 134.

3 So Entwhistle, European Balladry, 233, who thinks the Otterburn ballads were extant shortly after 1400. Hodgart, however, is more cautious: "the ballads were probably written a long time afterwards", and "are clearly from the repertoire of Tudor minstrelsy", The Ballads, 69.

4 Op. cit., 132.

This is not necessarily true, as I think may emerge from a closer look at the opening of the respective Otterburn texts. Here is version A:

Yt fell abowght the Lamasse tyde,
  Whan husbondes wynnes ther haye,
The dowghte Dowglasse bowynd hym to ryde,
  In Ynglond to take a praye.

The yerlle of Fyffe, wythowghten stryffe,
  He bowynd hym over Sulway;
The grete wolde ever to-gether ryde;
  That raysse they may rewe for aye.

Over Hoppertope hyll they cam in,
  And so down by Rodclyffe crage;
Vpon Grene Lynton they lyghted dowyn,
  Styrande many a stage.

And boldely brente Northomberlond,
  And haryed many a towyn;
They dyd owr Ynglyssh men grete wrange,
  To batell that were not bowyn.
(A1-4)

The viewpoint here is that of the English Borderer. The balladist does not make the mistake of the over-enthusiastic local historian who might be tempted to regard the battle of Otterburn as an event of national importance. Yet he does not underestimate its impact on the small land-holders and strip-cultivators of Northumberland, trying to gather in their meagre and belated hay harvest (Lammas is August 1). Many of them would have to abandon their fields immediately on being called up to join Percy's English army; others would have their crops burned by the advancing Scots. Moreover, the ballad-makers of versions F and G use the word "muir-men", which captures by implication the mediaeval hierarchical division between high and low: the big landowners, Border lairds and nobles, would have owned much of the best land in the valleys, the fertile soil on the banks of the Tweed, Till and Aln, while the peasant classes would have been obliged to scratch a living from the shallower soil of the moors and fells[1]. Under the terms of their feudal service contract,

1 On high ground crops were frequently grown by means of cultivation terraces, see A. Graham, 'Cultivation Terraces in South-eastern Scotland', Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, LXXIII (1939), 289-315.

they would, in addition, have been obliged to help with their lord's harvest before starting work on their own. So things are, the balladist says, when the great, war-mongering barons decide to indulge their own petty feuds and ride together. The note of annoyance would not have gone undetected by an audience of simple farming folk.

It is noticeable, too, that the composer of A uses the expression "to take a praye" (A1[4]) and this is followed by all the other versions except Sharpe's. In other words, Douglas's invasion is not regarded as political by the ballad-singers on the Border; rather it is seen as a typical Border raid or foray. To take, drive, or catch a "prey" means, in the Border dialect, to drive off stolen cattle, to make a cattle-raid[1]. This usage is common in the Border Ballads. In the Raiding Ballad, Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead:

> It fell about the Martinmas tyde,
> Whan our Border steeds get corn and hay,
> The Captain of Bewcastle hath bound him to ryde,
> And he's ower to Tividale to drive a prey.
> (A1)

These cattle-raids were usually made in the autumn months (Martinmas is November 11), once the harvest had been reaped and the Border ponies had been well fed. Sir Robert Carey, Warden of the English Middle March in the last years of the sixteenth century, seems to have studied closely the seasonal habits of the reivers. He explains in a letter of 1597:

> These border thieves ... will never lightly steale hard before Lammas, for feare of the assises, but beeing once past, they returne to their former trade: and unles in such yeares as they cannot ride upon the wastes by reason of stormes and shower, the last moneths in the yeare are theyr cheife time of stealling: for then are the nightes longest, theyr horse at hard meat, and will ride best, cattell strong, and will drive furthest: after

1 S.N.D., VII, 242.

> Candlemas [February 2] as the nightes grow shorter, all cattell grow weaker, and oates growing dearer, they feed their horses worst, and quickly turne them to grassel.

So, Carey concluded,

> their chief time of stealing ... is not the dead of winter ... for then the ways are so foul, and cattle so weak, that they cannot drive, or carry anything off. Their chief time is always betwixt Michaelmas [September 29] and Martinmas: then are the fells good and drie and cattle strong to dryve[2].

We shall see that the seasonal opening (alluding to actual reiving practice) was a favourite "theme" of the Border balladists with which to begin their narratives. It is a "theme" (in the Parry-Lord sense) which belongs uniquely to the Border Ballads, hence the Lammas-tide verse with which all the Otterburn texts begin.

We know from the chroniclers that the battle of Otterburn was, in fact, fought about Lammas-tide, the dates being variously given as August 5, 12, or 19, 1388. There was a full moon on August 20, 1388 (St. Oswin's Day) and it is likely that Douglas would have favoured the habitual Border-raid procedure, which was to make as much use of the moonlight as possible. As an old Border motto has it: "reparabit cornua Phoebe". Robert White, the Newcastle historian, thus concluded in a monograph on the battle of Otterburn that it was fought on the evening of Wednesday and the morning of Thursday, August 19 and 20, 1388, immediately before the full moon.[3]

The A version of the ballad says that Douglas pitched his camp at Otterburn "vpon a Wedynsday" (A18[4]) and that the armies "fowght the day, and all the nyght" (A57[3]), and "bytwene the nyght and the day" (A68[2]).

1 C.B.P., II, 391, No. 745.
2 C.B.P., II, 629, No. 1121.
3 History of the Battle of Otterburn, 132-3.

In B, the battle is concluded and Percy yeilds "about the breaking of the day" (B14[2]). Hogg's Ettrick Forest reciters remembered, moreover, that "The moon was clear, the day drew near" (F32[1]). Finally, in the related ballad, The Hunting of the Cheviot, the second part of which is closely modelled on Otterburn, we are told:

> This battell begane in Chyviat
> an owar befor the none,
> And when even-songe bell was rang,
> the battell was nat half done.
>
> The tocke ... on ethar hande
> be the lyght off the mone;
> (A48-49[1-2])

Another fact which the balladist reproduces correctly yet in his own terms, is the unpreparedness of the English forces at the time of the Scottish invasion. At the close of the summer of 1388, Richard II was caught up in dissention with his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, and his Parliament, while in the north the Percys and the Nevilles were at feud. Douglas and the other Scottish barons seem to have taken advantage of England's internal disputes to launch an attack in reprisal for Richard's raid into Scotland of three years previous[1]. We have seen how the ballad-maker presents the Northumbrians as being "not bowyn" or ready for battle (A4[4]), but he cleverly reinterprets this in terms of the English Borderers' annual preoccupation with the task of harvesting. Thus the opening of The Battle of Otterburn may be seen as a skilful fusion by the balladist of the national-political situation and the regional-social. He exploits the coincidence of the battle of Otterburn's being fought at Lammas-tide under a reiver's moon, to place the ballad situation firmly within a regional perspective - that of the autumnal Border raid.

1 See John Hill Burton, The History of Scotland, II, 357.

The confrontation between Percy and Douglas at Newcastle is also treated with a reasonable degree of accuracy by the different ballad reciters. According to Froissart, after the Scots had ravaged County Durham they retired to Newcastle and camped before the city walls where they engaged in daily skirmishes:

> The erle of Northumberlandes two sonnes were two yonge lusty knyghtes and were ever formaste at the barryers to skyrmysshe. There were many proper feates of armes done and atchyved; there was fyghtynge hande to hande. Amonge other, there fought hande to hande the erle Duglas and Sir Henry Percy, and by force of armes the erle Duglas wanne the penon of syr Henry Percyes, wherewith he was sore dyspleased, and so were all the Englysshmen. And the erle Duglas sayd to sir Henry Percy, Syr, I shall beare this token of your prowes into Scotlande, and shall sette it on hyghe on my castell of Alquest [Dalkeith], that it may be sene farre of. Syr, quod sir Henry, ye maye be sure ye shall nat passe the bounder of this countrey tyll ye be met withall, in suche wyse that ye shall make none avaunte thereof. Well syr, quod the erle Duglas, come this nyght to my lodgynge and seke for your penon; I shall sette it before my lodgynge, and se if ye wyll come and take it away[1].

Thus the Percy of history seems to have had a personal motive for following Douglas to Otterburn. In the version of the ballad which Hogg took down, the Ettrick Forest reciters do not mention Percy's pennon, but they do say that his sword is taken by the Scottish earl. Douglas boasts:

> 'Had we twa been upon the green,
> And never an eye to see,
> I should have had ye flesh and fell;
> But your sword shall gae wi me.'
>
> (F10)

Not surprisingly, it was the Scottish historians who chose to preserve this incident[2], as did Sir Walter Scott in his final Minstrelsy text, while the English balladist suppressed it. Instead, in version A,

1 Chronicle (trans. Bourchier), V, 213.

2 See John Major, A History of Greater Britain (trans. Constable), 317-18; Hector Boece, The Chronicles of Scotland, translated into Scots by John Bellenden (ed. E.C. Batho and H.W. Husbands), II, 348; Godscroft, op. cit., 97.

Douglas rides up to the city walls and taunts Percy, using, in the words of the continuator of Hidgen's Polychronicon, "responsa opprobriosa"[1].

To the Newe Castell when they cam,
The Skottes they cryde on hyght,
'Syr Hary Perssy, and thou byste within,
Com to the fylde and fyght.

'For we have brente Northomberlonde,
Thy erytage good and ryght,
And syne my logeyng I have take
Wyth my brande dubbyd many a knyght'.
(A9-10)

Percy's "erytage" would, of course, have been those lands in Northumberland which he possessed by heritable right[2], so that Douglas's taunting remarks here may be construed as a personal insult. No wonder then that Percy vows "the tone of vs schall dye" (A12[4]). When Douglas asks where he shall wait for the Englishman, Percy offers him the full game-rights of Otterburn in Redesdale. There, on the heights, was the expansive park which the Umphraville family had enclosed as a preserve for roebuck and pheasant[3]:

'[T] he roo full rekeles ther sche rimes,
[T] o make the game a[nd] glee;
[T] he fawken and the fesaunt both,
Among the holtes on hye.

'Ther mast thou have thy welth at wyll,
Well loged ther mast be;
Yt schall not be long or I com the tyll',
Sayd Syr Harry Perssye.
(A14-15)

And then, to seal his chivalrous offer,

A pype of wyne he gaue them over the walles,
For soth as I yow saye;
Ther he mayd the Dowglasse drynke,
And all hys ost that daye.
(A17)

1 Op. cit., (ed. J.R. Lumby), 185.

2 See S.N.D., V, 116, under "Heritage".

3 See White, op. cit., 32.

The balladist thus shows Percy repaying Douglas's insults with gentlemanly patience and magnanimity. In Hogg's Scottish version, however, it is Douglas who makes the speech about Otterburn, complaining that there is nothing there to feed his army, merely ferae naturae, but that he will wait there nevertheless to give Percy his chance. Says Douglas:

'The Otterburn's a bonny burn,
'Tis pleasant there to be,
But there is naught at Otterburn
To feed my men and me.

'The deer rins wild owr hill and dale,
The birds fly wild frae tree to tree,
And there is neither bread nor kale
To fend my men and me.

'But I will stay at Otterburn,
Where you shall welcome be;'
(F12-14[1-2])

This is obviously regarded by the Scottish reciters as chivalrous conduct on the part of Douglas.

Returning to our consideration of the ballad's historical accuracy, a further tradition reported by the chroniclers - that Percy himself killed Douglas in personal combat - is also enlarged on by the ballad-singers. The earliest chronicler to attribute Douglas's death to Percy, is the English monk of St. Albans, Thomas Walsingham, who writes:

> Erat ibidem cernere pulchrum spectaculum, duos tam praeclaros juvenes manus conserere et pro gloria decertare; et quamvis neutri virilis deesset animus, tamen sors contulit Henrico victoriam, qui Scotum, Scotorum maximum, suis manibus interfecit.[1]

Walsingham's account is paralleled by that of Henry Knyghton, a monk of Leicester writing on the 1390s[2]; by John Hardyng, whose patron Sir Henry Percy was[3]; and by the continuator of Higden[4]. Versions A, C,

1 Historia Anglicana (ed. Henry Thomas Riley), II, 176. Walsingham was compiling before 1394, see Riley, op. cit., II, xi.

2 Chronicon (ed. J.R. Lumby), II, 297.

3 Historical Chronicle in Metre (ed. Henry Ellis), 342.

4 Polychronicon (ed. J.R. Lumby), 186.

and F all make the slaying of Douglas by Percy the central incident of their narrative.

Finally, three of the Scottish versions of the ballad recall the fact that Percy was taken prisoner after the battle (B, C, and G).

Before attempting a summary statement of the ballad's treatment of history, it will help our appreciation of the aims and intentions of these folk-poets if we return again to version A. I stated earlier that this version is probably the work of a Northumbrian singer-composer in the employ of the Percy Household, for not only is it thoroughly English in its standpoint, it also appears to be strongly biased towards the house of Alnwick.

Bishop Percy was the first editor to describe The Battle of Otterburn as being "related with the allowable partiality of an English poet"[1], and although no-one would wish to dispute this, later readers of the ballad in its A version have probably never realised just how thoroughly English and partisan it is. Its "English-ness" is compounded of two strongly marked elements: the nationalist sentiments of the true patriot, and the loyalty of the Percy-worshipping Northumbrian.

On the patriotic level, this ballad-poet is intent on aggrandising the English achievement, whilst at the same time making the Scottish victory look no more than a Pyrrhic one, if a victory at all. We have already noticed how, at the outset, the balladist identifies himself with the English cause through his use of the first person plural: "They dyd owr Ynglyssh men grete wrange" (A4[3], cf. A47[3], A48[3]).

Numerical distortion is used with little subtlety to present the odds as being all in the Scottish favour. As far as can be ascertained from the various accounts, the Scottish army numbered about 6,600 horse and foot, and the English about 8,600[2]. The ballad swells the number of

I Reliques (ed. Wheatley), I, 35.

2 These are the figures arrived at by White after a comparison of the various historical accounts, see op. cit., I22-3.

the Scottish host to an epic 44,000 ($A35^3$), against a mere 9000 ($A35^1$) on the side of Percy. This balladist is bent on making the odds look impressive, since he has Douglas boast: "I have twenty agaynst thy one" ($A31^3$). At the end of the ballad, far from stating the outcome of the battle honestly and from a detached standpoint, the ballad does its best to convince us of an English victory. We are asked to believe that,

> Of fowre and forty thowsande Scottes
> Went but eyghtene awaye.
> ($A62^{3-4}$)

while the English did not fare too badly:

> Of nyne thowsand Ynglyssh men
> Fyve hondert cam awaye.
> ($A65^{3-4}$)

And surely the tell-tale juxtaposition of the different fates of the two leaders was not unintentional:

> Ther the Dowglas lost hys lyffe,
> And the Perssy was lede awaye.
> ($A68^{3-4}$)

The ballad does not end here. In the penultimate stanza we are informed that Percy was ransomed or "borrowed home agayne" ($A69^4$). The final note is a fervent prayer for the hero of Northumberland's salvation:

> Now let vs all for the Perssy praye
> To Jhesu most of myght,
> To bryng hys sowlle to the blysse of heven,
> For he was a gentyll knyght.
> (A70)

Criticism of the Scots is begun early in the A version. Their nobles ride about the countryside wantonly and recklessly, destroying the harvest or impeding it. One is reminded of Fielding's condemnation of the landed gentry of three hundred years later, disturbing the balance

and harmony of the landscape with their wild pursuits. As the Scots come marauding down Redesdale, they are to be seen "styrande many a stage". If we accept Bishop Percy's reading of this line (A3[4]) as, "stirring" or "rousing many a stag"[1], we can appreciate it as part of the balladist's social comment.

Thus, from the opening stanzas, the Scots are presented as the aggressors. It is a trick achieved and supported by the balladist's manipulation of the evidence, by a persistent (sometimes quite subtle) deployment of epithets, which although frequently submerged in the narrative interest of the ballad, tend to deprecate and discredit the Scots. In stanza 5, after Northumberland has been harried, a "berne vpon the bent" (A5[1]), urges the army to proceed now to Newcastle. He is described as a man "of comforte that was not colde" (A5[2]), suggesting the warrior eager for further plunder[2]. His counsel to approach the city "so styll and stalworthlye" (A6[4]) conveys the cunning and stealthy movements of a guerilla raiding-party. The description of the Scottish Earl of Huntley as "cawte and kene" (A26[3]), although put into the mouth of Douglas, performs a similar function. "Cawd", or "cawte", is a specifically Northumbrian word meaning cross-grained in temper[3]. "Keen" is always used by the Scots to suggest an avaricious person, one who looks sharply after his own interests, or at worst, a cruel person[4]. It is the ballad-singers' favourite epithet for hated Wardens like the English Lord Scrope, whom we shall meet with later.

1 Reliques (ed. Wheatley), I, 40; this reading is adopted by Child, E.S.P.B., III, 301.

2 Child glosses "colde" as "understood", E.S.P.B., V, 324. We might explain the phrase: "that did not understand comfort, was without comfort or mercy".

3 E.D.D., I, 549; Oliver Heslop, Northumberland Words, 141.

4 S.N.D., V, 376; E.D.S.L., III, 19; E.D.D., III, 408.

The English soldiers, on the other hand, call for the ballad-singer's most eulogistic and commendatory phrases. Sir John Fitz-Hughe (Syr Jhon Fechewe, A63[3])[1] is called "a gentell knyght", and his death is bewailed: "yt was the more pety" (A63[4]). Of Sir James Harbottle (Hardbotell, A64[1])[2] we are told, "for hym ther hartes were sore (A64[2]), whilst Lovell (A64[3])[3] is "the gentyll Lovell". Of the rest of the English dead, un-named, the balladist prays "Cryste kepe ther sowlles from wo!" (A66[2]), and, playing on his audience's sympathy for the fact that they were outnumbered (in the ballad) by the Scots, he adds:

> Seyng ther was so fewe fryndes
> Agaynst so many a foo.
> (A66[3-4])

Finally, we might notice that they call on "Sent George the brygh t, owr ladyes knyght" (A48[1]) to aid them in their struggle.

The balladist is also very partial to the Percy cause. But to appreciate fully the reasons for this, we need to follow briefly the fortunes of the Percy family prior to and after the battle of Otterburn. The Percys were extensive landowners and one of the most powerful families in the whole of the north, as is well known[4]. What is not so well known is the fact that, after their insurrection against the English king and

1 Sir William Dugdale in his The Baronage of England, I, 403, informs us that John, son of Henry Lord Fitzhugh, was killed at Otterburn.

2 Harbottle is a village on the river Coquet, about 10m. west of Rothbury, see OS Map, Sheet 71. The family of Harbottle was once considerable in Northumberland, see Thomas Fuller, The Historie of the Worthies of England (1811 ed.), 199-200.

3 Hector Boece, The Chronicles of Scotland (ed. Batho and Husbands), II, 351, mentions a Sir Patrick Lowell, who was taken prisoner by the Scots. Cf. also, John Leslie, The History of Scotland (ed. Cody), II, 27; Holinshed, Chronicles (1587 ed.), 250.

4 See J.M.W. Bean, The Estates of the Percy Family, 5-10, et. passim.

their defeat at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, the illustrious family was in disgrace for several years and not restored to favour again until March 16, 1416, when the second earl (Hotspur's son) was re-instated by Henry V[1]. Shortly after this date, what had become the almost hereditary offices of Warden of the East March of England and Governor of Berwick, were once more bestowed on the head of the family[2]. May there not be some connection between these events and the pro-Percy sentiments of version A of the ballad? The Percys may have used The Battle of Otterburn ballad to erase the shame of their defeat in that battle, believing in this instance that "the song is mightier than the sword". And after the temporary eclipse of the family's fortunes outlined above, they would have an additional motive for wishing to re-establish their honourable name by singing of the deeds of their ancestors, especially the young idol of Northumberland, Henry Hotspur.

Sir Charles Firth has put forward the hypothesis that certain ballads, such as The Rose of England (Child 166), Sir Andrew Barton (Child 167) and The Hunting of the Cheviot, may at one time have had a propagandist importance. They may, thinks Firth, be the remnants of three fifteenth-century ballad cycles composed by household minstrels in the employ of the Stanleys, Howards and Percys. The intended effect of these ballad cycles would presumably have been to strengthen the allegiance of dependants[3]. Setting aside for the moment Firth's observations about The Hunting of the Cheviot, we may note that in the case of The Battle of Otterburn

1 See Edward Barrington de Fonblanque, Annals of the House of Percy, I, 245; Bean, op. cit., 13.

2 See Barrington, op. cit., 245; Howard Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches, 197.

3 'The Ballad History of the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Third Series, II (1908), 22; cf. also, C.L. Kingsford, English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century, 252.

version A, the Percys may have had good cause to pay for a minstrel's talents, to sing them back into favour and consolidate the bonds of Northumbrian loyalty towards them. What better means than to recount the former exploits of a Percy who, in his lifetime, had been a county hero, the Northumbrian "hammer of the Scots"?

A.B. Friedman, in The Ballad Revival, has remarked on some of the more utilitarian purposes of balladry. He writes:

> the ruling and responsible classes have in all ages used popular poetry (here taken in its broadest sense) for purposes that have little to do with literary worth. For one thing, precisely because this kind of poetry was written for, or by the vulgar, it served as an invaluable index to popular feeling ... there must always have been politicians like the minister of state described by Steele, who "had all manner of books and ballads brought to him ... and took great notice how much they took with the people; upon which he would, and certainly might, very well judge of their present disposition[1].

It would, of course, have been but a short step, after finding out what the people thought, to influence their thinking. There is evidence that professional minstrels were used for this purpose. Roger of Hovedon records that in the year 1190, Archbishop Longchamps, the chancellor of Richard I, sent minstrels around "in plateis" to remind the people of his virtues, "quod non erat talis in orbe"[2]. A later example is quoted by Friedman. At the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace (1536), a political ballad called An Exhortacyon to the Nobylles and Commons of the North was disseminated to incite the people of "the boreal region" to rebellion. The seditious verses were in this instance composed by a Dominican doctor, one John Pickering, at the command of his prior. They were memorised from the manuscript by minstrels and were apparently "soon in every man's mouth"[3]

1 Op. cit., 67.
2 Chronicon (ed. William Stubbs), 111, 143.
3 Cited Friedman, op. cit., 68; cf. also C.H. Firth, op. cit., 38.

In The Battle of Otterburn there are frequent encomiums of Henry Percy, his character and martial prowess. As soon as he makes his first appearance in stanza 8, we are presented with his credentials as a Borderer and statesman:

> He had byn a march-man all hys dayes,
> And kepte Barwyke vpon Twede.
> (A8$^{3-4}$)

Henry Percy (Hotspur) who fought at Otterburn had been made Warden of the East and West Marches of England in 1384[1]. A strong garrison was maintained by the English at Berwick and this would have fallen under the control of the Lord Warden[2]. To have "kept" Berwick-on-Tweed would of itself have been praise enough for a military man, and in the ballad acts as a summation of Hotspur's character.

We have seen already how Percy matches the taunts of Douglas and the Scottish soldiers with righteous anger moderated by gentlemanly reserve. And it is Percy who concludes with the bold oath:

> 'For the trespasse thow hast me done,
> The tone of vs schall dye'.
> (A12$^{3-4}$)

He gives Douglas his word of honour as a knight (and, we might add, as a Borderer) to meet the Scots leader at Otterburn - "my trowth I plyght to the" (A16^{4}). And he seals the oath with a gift of wine.

On the battlefield he decides to fight on foot, a custom which Holinshed observed of the Border fightingmen. At the Battle of Flodden in 1513, James IV dismounted to encourage his men:

1 See Pease, op. cit., 195.

2 Pease, op. cit., 47; Tough, op. cit., 7; cf. also, Walter Scott, The Border Antiquities of England and Scotland, I, lxvi-lxvii.

> Wherevpon, without delaie, king James putting his horsse from him, all other as well nobles as meane men did the like, that the danger being equall, as well to the greatest as to the meanest, and all hope of succour taken awaie, which was to be looked for by flight, they might be the more willing to shew their manhood, sith their safeguard onelie rested in the edges and points of their weapons[1].

So in the ballad, Percy

> He lyghted dowyn vpon his foote,
> And schoote hys horsse clene awaye.
>
> Every man sawe that he dyd soo,
> That ryall was euer in rowght;
> Every man schoote hys horsse hym froo,
> And lyght hym rowynde abowght.
>
> (A33[3-4] - 34)

In actual fact, battle seems to have been joined precipitately. Most of the chroniclers are agreed that Percy threw his men into battle unrested and unfed after a long afternoon's march from Newcastle. The continuator of Higden's Polychronicon says that,

> dominus Henricus Percy incaute irruit in eos circa horam vesperarum suis indispositis protunc ad pugnam[2].

Later, he gives as the prime reason for the English defeat this hasty attack of Percy's:

> primo propter impetuosum animun et excessivam audaciam domini Henrici de Percy, quae causabant nostros propter festinatiam prodire ad bellum sine ordinatione[3].

In a parallel incident in the ballad, a knight rides up to Percy just as battle is about to be joined. He bears letters from Percy's father who offers additional military support, if only his son will await him. Percy's reply to the messenger is characteristic:

1 Chronicles (1587 ed.), 828; cf. also, Major, A History of Greater Britain (trans. Constable), 324: "the very noblest among the Scots and Englishmen alike go out to battle indeed as horsemen, and return from battle in like fashion, but it is as foot-soldiers that they fight".

2 Polychronicon (ed. Lumby), 186.

3 Ibid.

'For Jhesus love', sayd Syr Harye Perssy,
'That dyed for yow and me,
Wende to my lorde my father agayne,
And saye thow sawe me not wyth yee.

'My trowth ys plyght to yonne Skottysh knyght,
It nedes me not to layne,
That I schulde byde hym vpon thys bent,
And I haue hys trowth agayne.

'And if that I w[e]ynde of thys growende,
For soth, onfowghten awaye,
He wolde me call but a kowarde knyght
In hys londe another daye.

'Yet had I lever be rynde and rente,
By Mary, that mykkel maye,
Then ever my manhood schulde be reprovyd
Wyth a Skotte another day.

(A39-42)

Thus the balladist manages to raise Percy's action in engaging the already superior Scottish force, to a level of gallantry and heroism: he will fight with the odds exactly as they are.

In connection with this tactical blunder of Percy's rash evening attack, it is interesting to find that not once is the Northumbrian hero called by his well-known pseudonym of "Hotspur". It was Percy's Scottish enemies, it seems, who first dubbed him as a youth with this sobriquet:

> Quem Scoti quondam vocaverunt Henry Hatspure, quia ferventer eos infestaverat[1].

And Walsingham tells us that Percy was feared by them:

> Henricus ... qui, pro suae strenuitate personae, a Scotis maxime timebatur[2].

1 St. Alban's Chronicles (Rolls ed.), II, 245.

2 Historia Anglicana (ed. Riley), II, 175.

Holinshed explains in more flattering terms the meaning of the nickname; Percy, he says,

> was surnamed for his often pricking, Henrie Hotspur, as one that seldome times rested, if there were anie seruice to be done abroad[1].

Robert White suggests that the sobriquet was acquired during the rigorous performance of Percy's duties as Governor of Berwick and Warden of the Marches[2]. His military career, in fact, was a series of persecutions of and stands against the Scots. On the occasion of the battle of Homildon in 1402, he has been charged by historians with an act of gross cruelty in contriving, under the appearance of justice, to have a Sir William Stewart of Forest, in Teviotdale, put to death, and one of the quarters of his body exposed on the gate at York[3].

The nickname "Hotspur", then, became a popular summation of that element in the English leader's personality which was largely responsible for his defeat at Otterburn. It hardly needs to be said, therefore, that Percy himself would hardly have regarded "Hotspur" as a flattering nickname, and as we might expect, our ballad tactly avoids using it.

1 Chronicles (1587 ed.), 249.

2 Op. cit., 68.

3 White, op. cit., 70. Worcester, in Shakespeare's Henry IV, detects the faults built into Hotspur's obstinate eagerness, and tells him:

> You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault;
> Though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood -
> And that's the dearest grace it renders you -
> Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,
> Defect of manners, want of government,
> Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain;

- King Henry the Fourth Part One, III, i, 180-185, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (ed. Alexander), 498.

Instead, he is called "the noble Perssy" (A20[3], 53[3]), or simply "the Perssy" (A29[1] et passim), "wych was ever a gentyll knyght" (A29[2]).

We mentioned in the preceding chapter the scant respect paid by the Borderers to the established Church. It is all the more surprising to find in The Battle of Otterburn a proliferation of liturgical oaths and expressions, most of them put into the mouth of Percy. Wimberly, whilst believing that, "Christian thought in our popular poetry is on the whole alien and intrusive" and that, "our best ballads are pagan at heart"[1], nevertheless attests to what he calls "the fair sprinkling of Christian oaths throughout the ballads"[2]. So Percy implores,

'For Jhesus love', ...
'That dyed for yow and me', (A39[1-2])

' By Mary, that mykkel maye', (A42[2])

and:

'By the fayth of my bodye': (A16[2])

But these imprecations seem to go beyond mere convention, for we are told expressly by the balladist that God was on the side of the English and their leader:

Jhesu Cryste in hevyn on hyght
Dyd help hym well that daye. (A34[3-4])

Before the battle, Percy calls on his soldiers to dedicate themselves:

'Euery man thynke on hys trewe-love,
And marke hym to the Trenite;'
For to God I make myne avowe
Thys daye wyll I not flee'. (A44)

1 Op. cit., 401.
2 Op. cit., 403.

Devoutness is thus added to Percy's other virtues and he emerges in this version of the ballad as the traditional Christian knight.

After his abortive rebellion against Henry IV and his death on the battlefield at Shrewsbury, Hotspur's remains were treated as irreverently as those of other traitors. At Henry's command he was decapitated on the field of battle and his head placed over the gates of Shrewsbury. According to the chronicler Richard Grafton, his trunk was carried into Shrewsbury and there hung, drawn and quartered. Later, his body was exhumed after it had been buried by a friend, Thomas Nevill, and exhibited in Shrewsbury "bound upright betweane two millstones, that all men might see that he was dead". His head was "set up at York lest his men wolde have said that he hadde be alive". And finally his quarters were distributed among the different northern cities. There is no record of Percy's final place of burial[1].

In view of all this, it is not surprising to find that The Battle of Otterburn closes with a fervent prayer for the repose of Hotspur's soul. Again, what might be taken as a ballad commonplace has behind it the strong pressures of a particular regional cult.

Two things would seem to emerge from the above discussion of The Battle of Otterburn. First, it is abundantly clear that the ballad versions give no more than a rough and ready account of events, but this is not necessarily to be attributed to the ignorance of the early balladists. They were intelligent men of their age, able to appreciate the local and regional significance of historical events, if not always the national. The Scottish ballad-makers, especially at the turn of the fourteenth

1 See Edward Barrington, Annals of the House of Percy, I, 226-7.

century, were singing when their country had just emerged from a long and bitter struggle for independence and was highly conscious of its national identity. For this reason they were prepared to falsify the evidence whenever possible to discredit the English, their "auld enemy". The latter, in their turn, were only too ready to abuse the Scots, and the process continued for centuries. However, I believe there is much evidence to support a view that The Battle of Otterburn, in its different versions, was first sung at a time when nationalist feeling was running high. But it is also possible to detect a new regional consciousness, creeping into this ballad, a consciousness that becomes more articulate in later ballads from the Border. In the A version of Otterburn, the regional, as opposed to the national spirit begins to assert itself in the ballad's devotion to the House of Percy. The devotion is loyal and absolute, but often crudely maintained. However, another ballad-maker of the time was, I think, more successful in his presentation of the greatness of this Northumbrian family, as well as more generous in his attitude towards the men from across the Border. At the same time, through a more artistic and less propagandist ordering of his material, he was able to shut down further the national perspective that had distorted The Battle of Otterburn and to open up the widening regional one. The ballad he made was The Hunting of the Cheviot, one of the most famous of all the Border Ballads, and this I propose to discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

BALLADS OF BATTLE - (2) THE HUNTING OF THE CHEVIOT[1]

The relationship between The Battle of Otterburn and The Hunting of the Cheviot has never been satisfactorily explained. Child, who printed the two ballads consecutively in The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, evidently regarded Otterburn as the earlier. He assigned it a lower number and wrote in his introductory notes to The Hunting of the Cheviot:

> The differences in the story of the two ballads, though not trivial, are still not so material as to forbid us to hold that both may be founded upon the same occurrence, The Hunting of the Cheviot being of course the later version, and following in part its own tradition, though repeating some portions of the older ballad[2].

But Child does admit in a footnote to the above that, "the grammatical forms of The Hunting of the Cheviot are, however, older than those of the particular copy of Otterburn which has been preserved", and he instances the frequency of the noun plural in - 'es or - ys, which is rare in The Battle of Otterburn[3]. Child never really explained why he thought that Cheviot was "of course" the later version. His view has been seriously questioned by David C. Fowler who believes that Cheviot is in fact the earlier and Otterburn the later ballad[4], but I find Fowler's argument unconvincing and shall adduce evidence to the contrary later in this chapter.

1 Child 162, E.S.P.B., III, 303-15.

2 E.S.P.B., III, 304.

3 E.S.P.B., III, 304n.

4 'The Hunting of the Cheviot and The Battle of Otterburn', Western Folklore, XXV (1966), 165-71; cf also Fowler, A Literary History of the Popular Ballad, 108-14.

D.S. Bland sees both ballads as derived from an older ballad, now lost, perhaps known as The Hunting of the Cheviot, but which celebrated not a battle but a Border raid of no particular date[1]. We have seen in the previous chapter that Bland points to what appear to be the vestiges of a "riddling trick" in both The Hunting of the Cheviot and the Scottish texts of Otterburn, as evidence that the ballads had a common ancestor[2].

In this chapter I hope to take a further look at the two ballads, and I shall suggest that The Hunting of the Cheviot is, as Child supposed, a later reworking of The Battle of Otterburn, but that this was no haphazard affair on the part of a balladist ignorant of history, rather a careful and artistic reshaping by him of that body of regional material we have called the Matter of the Border. First, however, we must consider the date of the Child texts of Cheviot.

Our earliest copy of the ballad (Child A) is contained in MS. Ashmole 48, a minstrel's book, the date of which is 1550 or later[3]. There the ballad is signed "Expliceth quoth Rychard Sheale", which subscription has led to Sheale being considered the author and not simply the transcriber[4]. Sheale was a minstrel living at Tamworth during the reign of Elizabeth I, and is known to be the author of four other pieces in the Ashmole manuscript. From these we can form a sufficient impression of Sheale's style and ability (inferior by far to the

1 'The Evolution of Chevy Chase and The Battle of Otterburn', Notes and Queries, CXCVI (1951), 160-1.

2 See supra, Ch.3, Ballads of Battle - (I), p.139.

3 See E.S.P.B., III, 303, 307. For a full description of the contents of MS. Ashmole 48, see Fowler, op. cit., 96-108. The MS. was edited by Thomas Wright for the Roxburghe Club in 1860, under the title Songs and Ballads, with Other Short Poems, Chiefly of the Reign of Philip and Mary.

4 See Sir Egerton Brydges, The British Bibliographer, IV, 94f; Wright, op. cit., viii.

artistry of the composer of Cheviot), and we may conclude with Child that, "the supposition that he was the author of The Hunting of the Cheviot is preposterous in the extreme"[1]. It now seems more probable that the ballad was inherited by Sheale, perhaps from a predecessor, that it was part of his minstrel repertoire and that by signing his name after it he was merely claiming his minstrel's copyright[2].

The A version was first printed by Thomas Hearne in 1719 in Guilielmi Neubrigensis Historia[3], and then by Bishop Percy in his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry in 1765[4].

The only other version of The Hunting of the Cheviot is Child B. This is not a genuine traditional version (in the sense of a re-creation through oral composition), but a "modernised" version of A, revised for the popular press during the seventeenth century. It exists in a number of broadside copies, English and Scottish, most of which are listed by Child[5]. This was the version popularly known as Chevy Chase, which prompted one of the first pieces of sustained ballad criticism in English, that by Joseph Addison in two editions of the 1711 Spectator[6]. In the first of these papers, Addison describes Chevy Chase as "the favourite ballad of the common people of England" and he quotes Ben Jonson as saying that he had rather have been the author of it than of all his works[7].

That this version of the ballad was sung is evinced by a statement in Wit and Mirth, or, Pills to Purge Melancholy that, "to sing Chevy Chase o'er a Pot of good Ale" constituted a gay evening for carters and artisans[8].

1 E.S.P.B., III, 303.

2 Fowler, op. cit., 106.

3 Op. cit., I, lxxx ff, see E.S.P.B., III, 303.

4 Op. cit. (ed. Wheatley), I, 19-35.

5 See E.S.P.B., III, 303, 311, 314-15.

6 The Spectator No. 70, Monday, May 21, 1711; No. 74, Friday, May 25, 1711 (ed. Donald F. Bond), I, 297-303, 315-22.

7 Spectator, No. 70. (ed. Bond), I, 298.

8 Op. cit. (ed. T. D'Urfey), III, 19.

Even grave philosophers seem to have enjoyed such entertainment, for John Locke, listening to a choir singing in 1665, commented acidly:

> He that could not though he had a cold make better music with a chevy-chace over a pot of smooth ale, deserved well to pay the reckoning and go away athirst[1].

Bronson gives ten tunes[2], including the famous northern one printed by Bruce and Stokoe in their Northumbrian Minstrelsy of 1882, "the tune which has been identified with and sung and played to Chevy Chase by all Northumbrian minstrels and pipers without exception from time immemorial"[3].

Broadside copies of Chevy Chase were also popular in America although the ballad only appears to have had a limited circulation in oral tradition[4]. An interesting perversion of the title is found in The Battle of Shiver Chase, which was written out by a Mr. D. Cromett Clark of Winter Hill, Massachusetts, as he was taught it in his boyhood by his grandmother, Mrs. Sarah Leonard Morton of Buckfield, Maine. Mrs. Morton was born in Middleborough, Massachusetts, in 1798, and learned the ballad from her father in childhood[5]. But apart from the quaint title, the Clark-Morton variant is Child B almost word-for-word, and further evidence that the Border Ballads have found it difficult to take root orally in an alien community.

So much for the history of the ballad in print. What we now need to ask is, whether The Hunting of the Cheviot, as it existed in oral tradition, is as old as Child guessed[6], or older, as Fowler maintains.

1 Cited A.B. Friedman, The Ballad Revival, 89.

2 T.T.C.B., III, 113-16.

3 John Collingwood Bruce and John Stokoe, Northumbrian Minstrelsy, a collection of the Ballads, Melodies and Small-Pipe Tunes of Northumbria, 2.

4 See Helen Hartness Flanders, Ancient Ballads Traditionally Sung in New England, III, 135.

5 Philips Barry, British Ballads from Maine, 243.

6 Child favours a date not earlier than 1424, the year in which James I of Scotland was crowned ("Jamy the Skottishe kynge" is mentioned in the ballad, A33[4], 59[2]), E.S.P.B., III, 304.

We saw in the previous chapter that this ballad may have been the one known to Sir Philip Sidney in the 1580s as "the olde song of Percy and Duglas", although Sidney is just as likely to have been referring to The Battle of Otterburn, which he may have heard in its English version. However, we know for a certainty that The Hunting of the Cheviot was in existence by the mid-sixteenth century, since "the huntiss of cheuet" is given as the title of one of those "sueit melodius sangis of natural music of the antiquite" listed in The Complaynt of Scotlande in 1549[1]. Unfortunately for the purpose of dating, there is no earlier reference to our ballad than this.

If we turn to examine the internal evidence, there is at least one piece which immediately suggests that The Hunting of the Cheviot is as old as the early fifteenth century. At the end of the ballad and after "the hontynge off the Cheviat" has been described, the balladist states quite categorically that,

> Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe
> call it the batell of Otterburn. (A65[3-4])

and the stanza that follows repeats,

> At Otterburn begane this spurne, (A66[1])

In other words, the ballad-poet is telling his audience that the fray he has just sung about is also known popularly as the battle of Otterburn. And his statement that old men, familiar with the ground on which it was fought, call it by this name, looks like evidence that the composer of The Hunting of the Cheviot was at work on his ballad within living memory of the events of 1388. So, if the ballad was being sung on the Borders

1 Op. cit. (ed. J.A.H. Murray), 65.

in the 1420s, it would have been possible for men who actually fought at the battle of Otterburn to have been present in the audience.

Moreover, the original composer of The Hunting of the Cheviot was certainly well acquainted with The Battle of Otterburn. The correspondences between the two ballads are quite pronounced, even at a first reading[1]. If the Cheviot poet borrowed lines and stanzas from the Otterburn ballad, in its English or Northumbrian version, and if we accept that the latter's date is some time after 1403 (when Hotspur was killed fighting against Henry IV's army at Shrewsbury, and when the favour of the Percy family was suddenly eclipsed), then it follows that The Hunting of the Cheviot must also belong to a date after 1403. However, it is not a propagandist piece in the same way that we noticed The Battle of Otterburn to be, since it is far more just in its estimation of both the English and Scottish leaders, and for this reason I think the balladist's purpose in reworking the Otterburn story was quite different.

That the Cheviot balladist may have intended a deliberate and consciously fictitious retelling of the battle of Otterburn has not been generally appreciated. There is not a little condescension behind Child's words when he writes:

1 The lines and stanzas common to both are:-

Otterburn A		Cheviot A
12^4, 30^4	similar to	17^4
16	" "	9
50_{1-2}	" "	31_{3-4}
51^3	" "	32^1
58_4	" "	33^1
60^4	" "	47_2
61	" "	52^2
67	" "	56
68_2	" "	57
69^2	" "	66_2
		40^2

> The singer is not a critical historian, but he supposes himself to be dealing with facts; he may be partial to his countrymen, but he has no doubt that he is treating of a real event; and the singer in this particular case thought he was describing the battle of Otterburn, the Hunting of the Cheviot being indifferently so called[1].

We have seen in the previous chapter that David Hume of Godscroft considered The Hunting of the Cheviot the least satisfactory and satisfying of the pair of ballads, because it appeared to muddle historical fact with ballad fiction. Similarly, Thomas Fuller noted that "the story is not true in the letter and latitude thereof"[2], while more recently E.B. Nicholson has seen the ballad as consisting of "a pitifully mangled account of the battle of Otterburn", and has berated the balladist for what he calls "this disgraceful distortion of the simplest facts"[3]. Was the ballad-singer, then, genuinely confused in his own mind as to the identity of the battle he was describing? Or is it that later readers and commentators have failed to understand properly what the ballad-poet was trying to do? A more satisfactory answer to these questions is clearly needed before we can hope to establish The Hunting of the Cheviot in its true relation to The Battle of Otterburn.

We may begin with a few preliminary observations on the title given to the ballad. The balladist may not have been quite so indifferent to the title of his narrative as Child believed, since he includes it on three occasions within the ballad itself. At the end of the first fytte, to hold his audience's attention, the singer promises:

> And youe wyll here any mor a the hountynge a the
> Chyviat,
> yet ys ther mor behynde. (A24[3-4])

1 E.S.P.B., III, 304.

2 The History of the Worthies of England (1811 ed.), II, 191.

3 'Chevy Chase', Notes and Queries, Third Series, XII (1867), 123-4.

We have a similar formulation of the title at stanza 65:

> This was the hontynge off the Cheviat,
> (A65[1])

and again at stanza 68:

> Thus was the hountynge of the Chivyat:
> (A68[3])

There are, besides, no fewer than fourteen direct memtions of Cheviot, or the Cheviot Hills, as the scene of this encounter. Finally, it was as "the huntiss of cheuet" that this ballad had come to be known by the time of The Complaynt of Scotlande in 1549. Clearly, the Border folk wanted to differentiate between this ballad and their other Border Ballad, The Battle of Otterburn.

Thus far all is apparently straightforward. It is not until we reach the verse in which both Cheviot and Otterburn are named by the balladist that confusion arises. What the balladist says is:

> This was the hontynge off the Cheviat,
> that tear begane this spurn;
> Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe
> call it the battell of Otterburn.
> (A65).

In connection with this stanza, Child remarks that "the minstrel was not too nice as to topography either: Otterburn is not in Cheviot"[1]. A glance at the modern Ordnance Survey map will reveal this to be quite true - Otterburn is in Redesdale, and the Border, marked by the line of the Cheviot Hills, runs at least twelve miles to the north. Nevertheless, a local ballad-singer may have been quite correct in saying, in the fifteenth century, that Otterburn lay within the Cheviots. Whenever he refers to "Chyviat" or the Cheviot "hillys" or "mowntayns", surely it is obvious that he means the whole of the Cheviot area, what he calls

1 E.S.P.B., III, 304n.

elsewhere in the ballad "Chyviat chays" (A15[3]). "Chyviat chays" becomes Chevy Chase (as in the later broadside version of the ballad) by the same process as Teviotdale becomes in Border parlance "Tividale" (A12[4], 58[1]). There is no need either for Nicholson's elaborate conjecture that "Chevy Chase" is a corruption of the Old French "Chevauchée", meaning a foray or raiding expedition[1].

What exactly was this Chevy Chase, then? As a geographical area it was probably only vaguely defined, but as a hunting chase it appears to have formed part of the great forest which extended across the Border of England and Scotland, as far as Jedburgh to the north and Redesdale to the south. A picture of it, already sadly denuded of trees by the reign of Henry VIII, is given by the antiquary and traveller John Leland:

> In Northumberland, as I heare say, be no Forests except Chivet Hills, where is muche Brushe Wood, and sum Okke, Grownd ovar growne with Linge, and some with Mosse. I have hard say that Chivet Hills stretchethe xx. miles. There is greate plenty of redd Dere and Roo Bukkes ...
>
> but the great Wood of Chiveot is spoylyd now, and crokyd old Trees and Schrubs remayne[2].

There are two mentions of these "woodës" (A6[1]) and "grevis" (A6[3]) of Cheviot in the ballad, whilst in David Herd's copy of The Battle of Otterburn, "Earl Douglass is to the English woods" to "fetch a prey" (B1[3-4]). We discussed in the previous chapter Percy's chivalrous conferment of the hunting rights of Otterburn, "among the holtes on hye" (A14[4]), on his enemy Douglas. The ballad-singers of the fifteenth century may be allowed their poetic licence, therefore, to say that Otterburn is within the Cheviots or Chevy Chase, since the site of the battle lay within that same forest.

1 E.B. Nicholson, op. cit., 123-4.

2 The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary (ed. Thomas Hearne), VII, 66-7. Leland made his journey about 1535-1543.

If we return now to stanza 65 of The Hunting of the Cheviot, we shall encounter one other textual crux. The second line, "that tear begane this spurn" (A65[2]), has proved difficult to interpret. The word "spurn" in Middle English means an encounter, or fray[1]. Skeat has interpreted the line as proverbial, meaning "that tear, or pull brought about this kick"[2], and he is followed in this by Wheatley in his gloss to Bishop Percy's Reliques copy of the ballad[3]. But Child hesitates to accept Skeat's reading because, he says,

> Such a proverb is unlikely and should be vouched. There may be a corruption, and perhaps we should read, as a lamentation, That ear (ever) begane this spurn! Or possibly, That tear is for That there, meaning simply there[4].

The last reading of Child's seems the most logical and convincing, particularly since the balladist is concerned in this stanza to fix the locality of the foray he has been describing. The lines are thus capable of having a realistic sense put upon them, with the demonstrative "that" of line 2 in apposition to the subject of the verse ("the hontynge off the Cheviat") and linked to the demonstrative "this" of the first line. "Grownde" may refer back to "tear" (i.e. there), and the "it", of the last line may be taken as a pronoun standing for the noun "spurn" of line 2. A paraphrase of the whole stanza would then probably run something like this:

> This (that I have just related) was the hunt in the chase of Cheviot. That hunt there was the cause of the battle here, which old veterans (who remember the battle-ground well) call the battle of Otterburn.

If this reading of the stanza is correct, then it is the second line that provides the most likely clue to the balladist's intentions.

1 O.E.D., X, 714, under 2c.
2 Walter W. Skeat, Specimens of English Literature (1892 ed.), 402.
3 Op. cit. (ed. Wheatley), I, 34.
4 E.S.P.B., III, 307.

His approach to his story material was two-fold: first, he set out (with a stroke of some originality) to describe the hunt led by Percy across Douglas's territory in the Cheviot Hills; and secondly, it was his intention to show how this forbidden hunt was directly responsible for that battle which "old men", among others, had come to refer to popularly as the battle of Otterburn. Of course, if The Hunting of the Cheviot was first sung within living memory of the battle, then a ballad audience from the Border could not help but see the balladist's new motivation of the events leading up to it as an entire fabrication. But this need not have impaired their enjoyment of an old battle sung about in a new way.

Such a re-creation no doubt presupposes a fairly high and consistent level of artistry on the part of the ballad-poet. Yet this is exactly what we find if we examine the balladist's careful division of his subject matter into two fyttes, the first depicting the hunt in Chevy Chase, the second the tragic outcome of this as the battle of Otterburn[1]. These two stages of the ballad narrative, besides being structurally marked, receive their final cause-and-effect juxtaposition in the poet's summary: "that tear begane this spurn". We can fairly safely say, then, that not only did the early Border balladist think he was describing the battle of Otterburn, he knew he was, and so sure was he that he even dared to give over the whole of the first section of his narrative to his own imaginative reconstruction of a well-known historical event.

1 It should also be noticed that of the thirty lines borrowed by the Cheviot balladist from Otterburn, nearly all are worked into his second fytte. The later balladist is therefore careful to reserve his Otterburn portions for that part of his ballad where he, too, is ostensibly describing the battle of Otterburn.

We have discussed above the reference to the battle of Otterburn as evidence of the Cheviot ballad's early-fifteenth century origin. One further allusion which may help us to fix a terminus a quo for the piece is the "epilogue", if we may call it that, of stanzas 59-64, which describe the vengeance exacted by the English king for Percy's death. The balladist has it (and once again this is quite inaccurate historically) that after receiving news of the death of his best March Warden in this skirmish among the Cheviots, King Henry the Fourth marched to the Border where he slew thirty-six Scottish knights at the battle of Homildon. This engagement, fought at Homildon Hill, a mile and a half north-west of Wooler in Northumberland in 1402, was lost by the fourth Earl of Douglas[1]. In one detail the balladist is correct: Henry IV (1399-1413) was the English king at the time of the battle, although he did not personally lead the English force. The English army was under the command of the Earl of Northumberland and his son Hotspur[2].

The balladist is also wrong when he says that "word ys commen to Eddenburrowe to Jamy the Skottishe Kynge" (A59[1-2]), since James I, king of Scots, did not succeed to the throne until 1406, the Scottish king at the time of Homildon being Robert III (1390-1406). This fact, therefore, must bring the terminus a quo of the Cheviot narrative forward to 1406. But if stanzas 59-64 of the ballad are not a later interpolation[3], and

1 See J.D. Mackie, A History of Scotland, 95.

2 John Hill Burton, The History of Scotland, II, 379.

3 This is argued by David C. Fowler in 'The Hunting of the Cheviot and The Battle of Otterburn', Western Folklore, XXV (1966), 171. Fowler's supposition is based on the rhyme-scheme of Cheviot which, he says, is mainly abab. This scheme, Fowler points out, ceases abruptly after stanza 58, the point at which the supposed interpolated passage begins. But this is not in fact the case, since there are at least three stanzas in this last section of the ballad which also rhyme abab (sts. 60, 63, and 64.).

stylistically they do not appear to be, then there is no reason why we should not assume The Hunting of the Cheviot to have been composed when the battle of Homildon was also fresh in the memory of Border folk.

What the balladist appears to be doing in this Homildon passage, is giving us a wider perspective on the events he has just narrated. The "word is come" formula is a common one in balladry. The ballad of Henry Martyn (Child 250) ends with a report of the sinking of an English merchant-ship reaching "old England" ($A9^1$) and in particular "London street" ($A10^1$), whilst in version C the news is brought directly to "our king, old Henrie" ($C7^2$). Word comes to the Scottish king about an outlaw dwelling within his realm in the Border Ballads of Johnie Armstrong and The Outlaw Murray. Despite the lack of concern for national and international affairs that has been reported of the Borderers of history, and despite the Scottish Borderers' disparaging references to their kings as "the king of Lothian", there is some evidence in the Border Ballads that the more sensitive and politically aware men of the time did appreciate the impact of regional events on the world beyond their frontier confines.

There may be also in this epilogue, more than a trace of that same partisanship which characterised the distinctly pro-Percy version of The Battle of Otterburn. When news is brought to the Scottish king that Douglas, his March Warden, has been slain in Chevy Chase, Jamy laments:

> His handdës dyd he weal and wryng,
> he sayd, alas, and woe ys me!
> Such an othar captayn Skotland within,
> he sayd, ye-feth shuld neuer be.
> (A60).

But the English king, after a suitable obituary to his "leyff-tenante", claims a hundred others like him:

'God haue merci on his solle', sayde Kyng Harry,
'good lord, yf thy will it be!
I haue a hondrith captayns in Ynglonde', he sayd,
'as good as euer was he:
But, Persë, and I brook my lyffe,
thy deth well quyte shall be'.
(A62)

On the whole, however, there is little of this national feeling in The Hunting of the Cheviot.

We have now looked at the most obvious details from which we may posit an early-fifteenth century date for this ballad. But there is even more illuminating evidence to be drawn from the hidden background of the ballad, which, if it can be reconstructed, may also give us a further clue to the balladist's source of inspiration.

Bishop Percy was the first ballad scholar to put forward the hypothesis that The Hunting of the Cheviot owed its origin to another event in the history of the Border besides the battle of Otterburn. In the fourth (1794) edition of his Reliques, he included the following information:

> Since the former impression of these volumes, hath been published, a new edition of Collins's Peerage ... which contains ... an historical passage, which may be thought to throw considerable light on the subject of the preceding ballad: viz.
>
> "In this year, 1436, according to Hector Boethius, was fought the battle of Pepperden, not far from the Cheviot Hills, between the Earl of Northumberland (IId. Earl, son of Hotspur), and Earl William Douglas, of Angus, with a small army of about four thousand men each, in which the latter had the advantage. As this seems to have been a private conflict between these two great chieftains of the Borders, rather than a national war, it has been thought to have given rise to the celebrated old Ballad of Chevy-Chase; which, to render it more pathetic and interesting, has been heightened with tragical incidents wholly fictitious"[1].

1 Op. cit. (ed. Wheatley), I, 252. Percy quotes from Arthur Collins's Peerage (1779 ed.), II, 334.

The battle of Piperden was fought in 1435 or 1436. There are several varying accounts of it[1], although it seems to have made but a slight impression on the chroniclers by comparison with the battle of Otterburn. The most striking parallels between the historical battle of Piperden and the Cheviot ballad are the presence once again in the Cheviots of a Percy and a Douglas; the attempted invasion of the Scottish Border country by Percy, on his own rather than royal authority it seems; the "grete slauchter and murthir on all sydis", as Hector Boece calls it[2]; and lastly, the mention in the ballad of "Jamy the Skottishe kynge" (A33[4], 59[2]). James I (1406-1437) was the reigning Scottish monarch at the time, although the English king was in fact Henry VI (1422-1461; 1470-1471) and not "King Henry the Fourth" as the ballad has it (A22[4], 61[2]).

It seems, then, from these correspondences, that the skirmish at Piperden may have had some bearing on the present ballad. Nevertheless, we have still left unaccounted for the fact that the Percy of the Cheviot ballad is leading a hunting-party, not an invading army of 4,000 men. The fact, too, that both Percy and Douglas are slain in the ballad must be attributed to the poet's imagination, his desire to ennoble these two great heroes of the "March-parti" by means of a valiant death. However, the actual hunt of the first fytte may well have had some basis in

1 See John Major, A History of Greater Britain (ed. Constable), 364; Hector Boece, The Chronicles of Scotland (ed. Batho and Husbands), II, 398; John Leslie, The History of Scotland (ed. Cody), II, 42; Raphael Holinshed, Chronicles (1585 ed.), 266; David Hume of Godscroft, History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus (1643 ed.), 209. Piperdean, according to George Ridpath, was a village on the Breamish Water, among the Cheviot foothills, The Border History of England and Scotland (1848 ed.), 277. The battlefield is mentioned as "Piperdone" in 1513, Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, II, 845.

2 Op. cit. (ed. Batho and Husbands), II, 398.

historical fact. Bishop Percy was the first to refer his readers to the ancient Leges Marchiarum, or Border Laws, formulated partly from custom and partly from treaties by commissioners of both countries, at various stages between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Among the treaty laws was one interdicting hunting in the opposite realm, unless permission had been given by the owner of the land to be hunted on or by one of his deputies. This law ran as follows:

> Item ... Concordatum est, quod ... nullus unius partis vel alterius ingrediatur terras, boschas, forrestas, warrenas, loca dominia quaecunque alicujus partis alterius subditi, causa venandi, piscandi, aucupandi, disportum aut solatium in eisdem, aliave quaecunque de causa, absque licentia ejus ... ad quem ... loca pertinent, aut de deputatis suis prius capt. et obtent.[1]

The hunting law was formulated in two treaties of 1438 and 1449[2]. Bearing in mind that the date of the battle of Piperden was either 1435 or 36, it might be that the ballad-poet took the germ of his first fytte from these two sources - the battle and the Border Law. Both the institution of the new hunting leges and the Percy-Douglas encounter at Piperden would have been bruited locally, if not nationally, during this period, and what would be more likely than that a minstrel living on the Border should seize on these two affairs for their ballad potential?

Yet there remains one further area of historical background which, so far as I am aware, has never been made generally known to readers of The Hunting of the Cheviot. It concerns a series of disputes that occurred during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries between the rival families of Percy and Douglas, over possession of that forest land which we have seen to be the historical Chevy Chase[3].

1 William Nicolson, Leges Marchiarum, or Border Laws (1705 ed.), 27, 51; cited Bishop Percy, Reliques (ed. Wheatley), I, 20-1.

2 See Robert Bruce Armstrong, The History of Liddesdale, 49.

3 The summary that follows is taken from Alexander Jeffrey, The History and Antiquities of Roxburghshire, II, 240-3, and J.M.W. Bean, The Estates of the Percy Family, 1416-1537, 5-10.

The Percy family had a connection with this district from the earliest times. When David I of Scotland inherited it at his father's (Malcom III's) death in 1093, Allan de Perci was one of those whom the new king honoured. He obtained a grant from David of the baronies of Oxnam and Heiton, in present day Roxburghshire, then a part of the broad regality known as Jedburgh Forest. Part of Chevy Chase also lay within this forest. Later, the barony of Oxnam and Heiton passed into the Colville family. Such was the connection of the early Percys with an extensive portion of the Chevy Chase.

For the next 150 years, the family does not seem to have possessed any part of the forest. But when in 1334 Edward Balliol, "King" of Scots, ceded to Edward III, the English king granted Jedburgh castle and constabulary and the towns of Bonjedworth and Hassendean to Henry de Percy, in exchange for lands in Annandale. So firmly was it believed by all that the territory belonged to the Percy family, that when Hugh, brother to "the good" Sir James Douglas, made over the Douglas estates to the king, in favour of his nephew William Douglas, the town and forest of Jedburgh were not included in the deed. However, the young Douglas boldly laid claim to the forest and the whole territory as the heir, not only of his uncle Hugh, but also of his other uncle Sir James Douglas "the Good". But the land was still in the hands of the Percy family in 1363 and 1367.

In 1374 a commission was appointed by Edward III to settle the disputes that had arisen between the families of Percy and Douglas. The Percy at this time was Henry Percy the fourth Lord of Alnwick (later first Earl of Northumberland), father of Henry Hotspur who lost the battle of Otterburn in 1388. The Douglas at this time was the first Earl, father of the James Douglas who died at Otterburn. The Lord of Alnwick, it seems, had been accustomed to making hunting expeditions along the

southern fringe of Jedburgh Forest. Several bloody skirmishes resulted, any of which might have been called by a balladist "the hunting of the Cheviot". It was Douglas who at length laid complaint before the English court, and the king appointed commissioners to settle the matter. These peacemakers seem to have been singularly unsuccessful in their endeavours, for after a while the altercation broke out with renewed vigour, matters being complicated by the fact that Douglas now took to hunting in Northumberland.

There appears to have followed a brief lull, which Lord Percy took advantage of to travel to France. The eight-year-old Hotspur accompanied him. When they returned the quarrels broke out afresh. This time Sir John Gordon had a grievance against the Northumbrians, and enlisting the aid of the Earls of Douglas and March, raided the countryside from Berwick to Newcastle. Percy retaliated by harrying Teviotdale. Raid followed raid throughout the years 1375-1376. The Buik of the Croniklis of Scotland, or A Metrical Version of the History of Hector Boece gives a vivid account of these contests:

> tha sparit nother man no wyfe,
> Zoung or ald of mankynd that buir lyfe;
> Like wod wolfis in furiosite,
> Bayth brynt and slew with greit crudelitie.
> (11. 55, 689-92)[1]

The feud seems to have spent itself once more at the close of 1376.

The next stage in the Chevy Chase debate was Douglas's acquisition of the territory which had belonged to his uncle Sir James, except, that is, for Jedburgh and Roxburgh which remained in the hands of the English. This was in 1384, just four years prior to the battle of Otterburn.

1 Op. cit. (ed. William B. Turnbull), III, 395. The Metrical Chronicles are thought to have been composed by a William Stewart, between 1531-35, see Turnbull, op. cit., I, vii.

In 1403 the whole of Teviotdale was bestowed on Percy. Two years later, Jedburgh and the whole of the neighbouring country were claimed by the English king, Henry IV, as his own property. After their act of rebellion, the Percys' estates had become escheat to the Crown. Thus Jedburgh Forest and Chevy Chase became a regality and the territorial disputes were at an end.

From the above summary it should be evident that when the English power prevailed, the Percys were favoured with possession of this rich hunting chase, and vice-versa, the Scottish Douglases. These grants of land by the kings of Scotland and England to their preferred warriors were thus the cause of emnity between the two houses of Douglas and Percy.

I have traced the course of these disputes in some detail because it seems to me that they were the most likely source of at least the first pa rt of the ballad we are considering. The Hunting of the Cheviot, although alluding quite specifically in the second half to the historical battle of Otterburn, may also be based upon some equally historical conflict which occurred between the rival factions of Douglas and Percy when the former held the forest of Chevy Chase. The most likely period within which such a conflict might have fallen, would be between 1384 and 1403, when, as we have seen, Douglas was in possession. This period also happens to coincide with the date of the battle of Otterburn in 1388. Viewed in regional terms, therefore, that battle can be regarded as no more than a larger-than-normal frontier raid by the Scots. And there would have been a superb ballad irony in Hotspur's conferment of the hunting rights of Otterburn on his arch-enemy (Otterburn A13-15), especially if Douglas considered that these belonged to him by right anyway.

The inference to be drawn from this "submerged" background is that a balladist (perhaps in the employ of the Percy family of Alnwick,

like the composer of Otterburn), steeped in the Matter of the Border, would find, at any time after 1438, three historical sources and one literary source immediately available to him, these being: the battle of Piperden (1435/6); the new hunting laws (1438, 1449); the Chevy Chase disputes (resolved 1403); and the ballad, The Battle of Otterburn (probably composed between 1403 and 1416). The most likely date, therefore, for The Hunting of the Cheviot would be about the year 1440. Perhaps Bishop Percy's date, "not lower than the reign of Henry VI", was based on an instinctive feel for the dimly-lit mediaeval background of the ballad, as well as "the style and orthography of this old poem"[1].

What sort of man was this fifteenth-century balladist? The vividness of the ballad and a number of circumstantial details, together with an assured knowledge of the Cheviot terrain, speak for a folk-singer who had the observant eye of a soldier-huntsman as well as the imaginative insight of a true poet.

He was obviously closely acquainted with the geography of this part of the Border. Percy makes his vow to "hunte in the mowntayns off Chyviat" ($A1^4$), and from this first mention of the Cheviot Hills, the locality is firmly fixed. The fight takes place high up on the Cheviot dome:

> in Cheviat the hillys so he; ($A4^2$)
>
> in Chyviat the hyls abone, ($A7^1$)

while the difficult terrain, as well as the arduous battle, takes its toll of human lives:

1 Reliques (ed. Wheatley), I, 20. Henry VI reigned 1422-1461, see S.T. Bindoff, Tudor England, 316.

Many hade no strenght for to stande,
in Chyviat the hillys abon. (A49[3-4])

Besides the well-known Border names of Banborowe (A3[1], Bamburgh), Tweed (A12[3]), Tividale (A12[4], 58[1]) and Eddenburrowe (A59[1], Edinburgh), the balladist mentions Hombyll-down (A63[4], Homildon) and the battle fought there in Glendale (A64[3]). Also, a reference that would only have been assimilated by an audience of Border folk, is that to the "shyars thre" (A3[4]), out of which Percy chooses his fifteen hundred archers. Like the "Almonshire", or Alnwick-shire, of Hogg's copy of The Battle of Otterburn, these three shires were districts of Northumberland that even today go by the name of "shires" - Islandshire (the district around Holy Island); Norhamshire (after the town and castle of Norham); and Bamburghshire (the ward of Bamburgh castle and village). Another "shire" was Bedlingtonshire, still so designated, which with the other three made up the English East March[1]. At least two of the knights who fight with Lord Percy in the Cheviot ballad come from the district of the three shires: "Ser Johan of Agerstone" (A52[2]) was no doubt one of the ancient family of Haggerston, of Haggerston Castle, near Beal in Bamburghshire[2]; and "Ser Wyllyam, the bolde Hearone" (A52[4]) would have been one of the Northumbrian Heron family, of Ford, near Coldstream, in Norhamshire[3]. Percy's army, then, comprised of men from the "shyars thre", would have marched from Alnwick and proceeded northwards to Bamburgh, the next fortified position on the coast. From there they would have moved off in a south-westerly direction through Islandshire and Norhamshire, towards the Cheviot Hills. From the wooded slopes of the

1 See D.L.W. Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, 3; Bishop Percy, op. cit. (ed. Wheatley), I, 24n.

2 See Bishop Percy, op. cit. (ed. Wheatley), I, 51. Haggerston Castle is marked on Blaeu's map of Northumberland, and OS Map, Sheet 64.

3 See Blaeu's map of Northumberland, and OS Map, Sheet 71.

foothills the hunting-party would have been able to sight Douglas and his men "borne along be the watter a Twyde yth bowndës of Tividale" (A12[3-4]).

The ballad action is thus firmly rooted in a definable topographical locale, with which the reciter is clearly intimate. As a foot-soldier himself, or else as a native of the region, he is well aware that the nature of the terrain determines the nature of the battle. It is soon obvious that the formidable English longbow cannot be strategically employed to win the fight, either because of the dense woodland or the darkness (the Cheviot skirmish, like the battle of Otterburn was fought at night)[1], and so swords and spears become the crucial weapons in a close hand-to-hand encounter:

> The Ynglyshe men let ther boẏs be,
> and pulde owt brandes that wer bright; (A29[1-2])

E.K. Wells has observed that there is a close attention in The Hunting of the Cheviot to particulars of armour and weapons[2] - spear, bylle and brande" (A11[1]), "basnites" (A29[4]), "ryche male and myneyeple" (A30[1]), swords "of fyn myllan" (A31[4]) and the "harde stele" of arrow-heads (A45[2]). The bill, a kind of halberd, known locally as a "Jedwood axe" and usually carried at the saddle-bow, ready to the rider's hand; the lance or spear; the basinet, or basnet, a light steel cap; the coat of mail (here, probably, the Border "jack", a leather jacket strengthened with small steel plates) and the gauntlet, or manople, to protect the hand and forearm[3], were all part of the Borderer's arms and armour[4]. As

1 Robert White, History of the Battle of Otterburn, 38, attributes the weakness of the English forces at Otterburn to the ineffectiveness of the longbow as a result of Hotspur's night attack.

2 The Ballad Tree, 209.

3 Skeat, op. cit. (1892 ed.), 398-9.

4 See Tough, op. cit., 89-90; W.R. Kermack, The Scottish Borders, 59. For other ballad descriptions of the Borderer's arms and armour see Rookhope Ryde st. 18, Bewick and Graham st. 22.

we saw in The Battle of Otterburn, the leaders, as well as the common foot-soldiers, fight on foot.

The deaths of Douglas, Percy, and Montgomery are all observed with the grim satisfaction of the fighting-man who has an eye for a clean, swift death. First Douglas:

> With that ther cam an arrowe hastely,
> forthe off a myghttë wane;
> Hit hathe strekene the yerle Duglas
> in at the brest-bane.
>
> Thorowe lyvar and longës bathe
> the sharpe arrowe ys gane,
> (A36 - 37$^{1-2}$)

then Percy, slain by Montgomery's lance:

> He set vppone the lord Persë
> a dynte that was full soare;
> With a suar spear of a myghttë tre
> clean thorow the body he the Persë ber,
>
> A the tothar syde that a man myght se
> a large cloth-yard and mare:
> (A42-43$^{1-2}$)

and finally, in a startling contrast of colours, red blood and white swan-feathers, the death of Montgomery:

> An archar off Northomberlonde
> say slean was the lord Persë;
> He bar a bende bow in his hand,
> was made off trusti tre.
>
> An arrow that a cloth-yarde was lang
> to the harde stele halyde he;
> A dynt that was both sad and soar
> he sat on Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry.
>
> The dynt yt was both sad and sar
> that he of Monggomberry sete;
> The swane-fethars that his arrowe bar
> with his hart-blood the wear wete.
> (A44-46)

Despite traces of the mediaeval verse romance in alliterative phrases such as "Bomen byckarte vppone the bent" ($A5^3$), the impression that "the vocabulary, like the story, belongs to the world of courtesy and chivalry"[1], seems to me to be misformed. In The Hunting of the Cheviot we are moving away from the courtly world of gentle knights and gay ladies, carried over as the subjects of the so-called "minstrel ballads", to the unequivocally realistic one of the newly-emergent Border. Quaint and romantic as some of these ballad minutiae may appear to the modern reader, like the description of Achilles' shield in The Iliad, we should remind ourselves that, to the fifteenth-century Borderer, they were the very props on which he relied for survival. The ballad is woven out of the coarse stuff of the actual Border way of life.

The ballad-singer knew, for example, that the courtesy of addressing a superior by his correct title might make all the difference between employment or discharge. It may be significant, therefore, that the Cheviot poet is at least accurate when he calls Percy "the good lord Persë" ($A18^2$, etc.), as indeed he was at the time of the hunting disputes. The House of Percy passed through no less than four lordships before, on July 16, 1377, Henry Percy, fourth Lord of Alnwick (Hotspur's father) was elevated to the dignity of first Earl of Northumberland[2]. But if the balladist had in mind a particular, even a typical, incident in the Percy-Douglas feud of the years 1370-76, then it is just possible that he may have preserved Percy's former title as Lord of Alnwick, in order to indicate a historical period and lend greater authenticity to his narrative. Not once is the Percy of the Cheviot ballad called by the

1 Wells, op. cit., 209.
2 G. Brenan, History of the House of Percy, I, 30.

title of Earl; he is "the good lord Persë", or else simply "the Persë" (A1[1], etc.). Douglas calls him "a lord of lande" (A19[1]), and contrasts their respective ranks when he boasts:

'But, Persë, thowe art a lord of lande,
I am a yerle callyd within my contrë'.
(A19[1-2])

Later, when they are in combat, the Scottish leader tries to persuade Percy to yield, with the bribe of an earl's position if he will defect across the Border:

'Yëlde the, Persë, sayde the Doglas,
'and i feth I shalle the brynge
Wher thowe shalte haue a yerls wagis
of Jamy our Skottish kynge'.
(A33)

The early meaning of the word "earl", or "erl", was a man of noble rank, as distinguished from a "churl", or "ceorl", an ordinary freeman[1]. In Old English poetry it stands for a warrior, a brave man, or a man generally[2]. In late Old English the word is used to designate one of the Danish under-kings, the earl, or "jarl" being viceroy or governor of one of the great divisions of England such as Wessex or Northumbria. In this sense the word was practically synonymous with the native title of Alderman[3]. After the Norman Conquest, the word was equivalent to the Latin "comes", or count, and came to be applied to any of the great post-Conquest nobles of England and Scotland. These were the lords or governors of counties, ranking until the fourteenth century under the king, then under dukes and finally under marquises[4]. Thus in Middle English the

1 O.E.D., III, 7, under 1.
2 A.S.D., 254, under II.
3 O.E.D., III, 7, under 2; M.E.D., III, 224, under 2a.
4 O.E.D., III, 7, under 3; M.E.D., III, 224, under 2b.

word earl was often used as the typical designation of a great noble, whilst also being used specifically in England, Scotland and Ireland, as the title of an order or rank. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of examples shows that the title was regarded as specific (third in precedence, in fact) of a rigidly observed hierarchy. Thus in about 1420, under the king ranked "Dule, Errelle, and eke Baroun"[1]. And about 1500, the hierarchy was extended to include "The kyng, the queene ... and alle other lordes, dukes, merkeisses, herles and barons"[2].

The word "lord", on the other hand, was in its early use employed more loosely for any man of exalted position in a kingdom or commonwealth. There is an example of this generic usage about 1420: "Men myghten lordis knowe By there arraye, from opir folke"[3]. One of the more specific usages of the word, however, was to indicate an owner, possessor, or proprietor of land or houses[4], and it is this sense probably which comes nearest to the title accorded Percy by Douglas in The Hunting of the Cheviot: "thowe art a lord of lande" (A19[1]). There is an example from Langland's Piers the Plowman, when Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar: "Amonges lowere lordes thi londe schal be departed" (B Passus VII, 156)[5].

The ballad-poet's usage seems to be consistent. The evidence points not towards a synonymous, interchangeable usage, but rather towards one of contradistinction, the titular "earl" being applied only to Douglas (A26[1], 36[3]), and the more general "lord" being reserved consistently for Percy. A retrospective glance at The Battle of Otterburn may help to

1 Cited O.E.D., III, 7, under 3b.
2 Cited M.E.D., III, 224, under 2b.
3 Cited O.E.D., VI, 444, under II, 8.
4 O.E.D., VI, 443 under I2d.
5 The Vision of Piers the Plowman in Three Parallel Texts (ed. W.W. Skeat), I, 246.

clinch the fact that the early ballad-makers knew what they were about. In version A of that ballad, Percy is styled "Syr Henry/Hary Perssy" (A8[1], 9[3], etc.). Now Hotspur, at the time of the battle of Otterburn was a knight, his father, as we have seen, the first Earl of Northumberland. Other titles are correctly reproduced by the balladist: "The yerlle of Fyffe" (A2[1]), "Lord Jhonstoune and Lorde Maxwell" (A27[3]), "The Baron of Grastoke" (A38[1]), "Syr Hewe Mongomery" (A69[2]). Herd's version mistakenly refers to Percy as "Earl Percy" on one occasion (B10[3]). In Hogg's copy of the ballad he is simply "Piercy", or "the proud Piercy" (F8[4], 21[3], etc.), although he is called "proud Lord Piercy" once (F5[1]), perhaps to indicate his noble birth. Douglas, on the other hand, is still "the doughty Earl Douglas" (F1[3]).

Of course, there is no reason why the Cheviot minstrel should not have given Percy the title which he enjoyed after 1377, that of Earl of Northumberland; unless, that is, he wanted to provide a further indication that he was dealing, at least in the first fytte of his ballad, with events of a period some seventy years ago. The balladist's usage of the title "Lord" to describe the Percy of that period may have provided a subtle distancing device as far as his audience was concerned, whilst the all-embracing meaning that the word also had (i.e. a lord could be an earl, duke, or baron, in terms of specific rank) would have cleared the balladist of any charge of tactlessness towards the contemporary earl, who might have been his patron.

By the time of the later broadside version of The Hunting of the Cheviot, this careful attention to details of rank had been completely lost. Percy, in Chevy Chase, has become both "Erle Pearcy" (B2[2], etc.) and "Lord Pearcy" (11[1], etc.), a confusion of nomenclature of which the earlier Border minstrel was not guilty. Thus, when Douglas addresses his noble

antagonist, he says:

> 'I know thee well, an erle thou art;
> Lord Pearcy, soe am I'.
> (A21[3-4])

The Border balladist is correct in his handling of other terminology. He refers to both Percy and Douglas as "lyff-tenante of the Marchis" (A59[3], 61[3]), Lieutenant being an alternative title to describe the office of Warden[1]. This, too, is shed in the broadside. Either the Border Marches and their attendant problems had ceased to exist by the time the broadside presses were running off sheets of Chevy Chase, or else southern street-singers were not really interested in the technicalities of the material they were handling. The detail is important: Percy and Douglas, as Lord Wardens, were legally responsible for keeping peace on the Borders.

The private nature of the Cheviot conflict is underlined again by the Border minstrel's careful choice of words to describe the two parties. This is a personal vendetta, not a full-scale battle between national armed forces, acting on royal authority. Percy collects, or chooses, huntsmen "owt of shyars thre", and remembering the ballad tendency to swell out the numbers engaged, it is interesting to note that here only 1,500 archers are involved. Percy's force is called "a myghtee meany" (A3[2]), as is Douglas's (A10[4]), and I would suggest that the ballad-singer is using the word "menȝe", or "meany", carefully and precisely (as he did the word "lord") to indicate a body of personal retainers, attendants or dependants, a household retinue, suite, or train[2]. We

1 See Robert Bruce Armstrong, A History of Liddesdale, 4n, 8n. In later years, the Border Lieutenant held a separate office, see T.I. Rae, The Adminstration of the Scottish Frontier, 104-11.

2 O.E.D., VI, 310 under 1 and 2. Compare the word "oste" used of the two armies in Otterburn (A11[2], 29[1]), and the formation of the Scottish troops into vanguard, rearguard and flanks (A26-27), to create the impression of a full-scale battle in that ballad.

might set the number of Percy's troops in this ballad against the number of the English army in The Battle of Otterburn - "nyne thowsand Ynglyssh men". In that engagement there were no fewer than "fowre and forty thowsande Scottes", whereas Douglas's retinue in the later ballad is made up of "twenti hondrith spear-men good" (A12[1]). As Major wrote of the battle of Piperden, this encounter "was no great one"[1] and the balladist is aware that he is working on a relatively minor scale. Still, this does not prevent him from imbuing the incident in the hunting chase of Cheviot with tragic significance, and it is this quality of the ballad that I hope to bring out in the remaining section of this chapter.

I have already suggested that The Hunting of the Cheviot shuts down the national perspective even further than did The Battle of Otterburn. Of course the Cheviot minstrel betrays his nationality with references to "our Ynglyshe archery" (A28[1]), and "the fourth Harry our kynge" (A61[2]). The English are presented, as in the earlier ballad, as being outnumbered by the Scots, although in Cheviot the odds do not weigh quite so heavily. And the English do not emerge from the battle any more favourably than do the Scots; the losses are great on both sides:

> Of fifteen hondrith archars of Ynglonde
> went away but seuenti and thre;
> Of twenti hondrith spear-men of Skotlande,
> but even five and fifti.
>
> (A50).

Lastly, the Homildon stanzas might have been taken by a contemporary Northumbrian audience as a vindication, in ballad terms, of the might and right of the English cause. Yet, as Addison was quick to observe in his Spectator critique of Chevy Chase:

1 John Major, A History of Greater Britain (ed. Constable), 364.

> At the same Time that our Poet shews a laudable Partiality to his Country-men, he represents the Scots after a Manner not unbecoming so bold and brave a People.[1]

Indeed, they emerge in a far more favourable light than their compatriots in The Battle of Otterburn:

> Hardyar men, both off hart nor hande,
> wear not in Cristiantë. (A11[3-4])

The balladist is as liberal in his encomiums of their leader, Douglas, as he is of Percy: Douglas is an accomplished warrior: "a captayne good yenoughe" (A26[2]); "a bolder barne was never born" (A14[4]); he is "lyk a cheffe cheften off pryde" (A27[2]). He dies urging on his men, a bravery Addison much admired, comparing him to Camilla in Virgil's Aeneid[2]. More important, Percy in the ballad is moved to speak to his enemy:

> The Persë leanyde on his brande,
> and sawe the Duglas de;
> He tooke the dede mane by the hande,
> and sayd, Wo ys me for the!
>
> 'To haue savyde thy lyffe, I wolde haue partyde with
> my landes for years thre,
> For a better man, of hart nare of hande,
> was nat in all the north contrë'. (A38-39)

Addison was fired by the magnanimity of the Northumbrian hero. He saw him as a "good sport" in the best English tradition, and commented:

> Earl Piercy's Lamentation over his Enemy is generous, beautiful, and passionate; ...
>
> That beautiful line, Taking the dead man by the Hand, will put the Reader in mind of Aeneas's Behaviour towards Lausus, whom he himself had slaid as he came to the Rescue of his aged Father[3].

1 The Spectator, No. 70 (ed. Bond), I, 301.

2 The Spectator, No. 70 (ed. Bond), I, 302.

3 The Spectator, No. 70 (ed. Bond), I, 303.

In his haste to elevate the status of the popular ballad by comparing it to the classical epic, it is a pity that Addison did not appreciate more fully the effect of these verses on the character of the Scottish leader.

But besides Addison's eloquent recognition of the ballad-poet's impartiality, there is perhaps something else underlying the narrative at this point. It is not just a case of the oft-mentioned ballad objectivity. Major, one of the first of the Scottish historians to display a marked quality of national fairness in his writings, lauds the Borderer's sense of fair play:

> For with the men of the Borders such is the custom: they wage fiercest war one with another, but the conqueror does not slay his prisoner, but in all clemency spares his life, and grants him for the most part a safe return home, when he pledges his word[1].

In this ballad, it is not Percy who gives Douglas his mortal wound, but an unknown archer:

> With that ther cam an arrowe hastely,
> forthe off a myghttē wane[3];
> Hit hath strekene the yerle Duglas
> in at the brest-bane.
> (A36)

Had Percy gained the victory, he would presumably have spared Douglas's life and released him on parole, as Major says the leading knights did their prisoners after the battle of Otterburn. As a further illustration of the Borderers' paradoxical clemency towards each other we might mention the alliance of the same houses of Percy and Douglas against the English Crown in 1403. The Douglas who helped Hotspur at the battle of

1 Op. cit. (ed. Constable), 325.

2 Skeat glosses "wane" "quantity; multitude; a single arrow out of a vast quantity", Specimens of English Literature (1892 ed.), 399. But the balladist might have intended a multitude of archers, or men, the sense of the word given by E.D.D., VI, 377.

Shrewsbury in that year was the same as the Percys' opponent at the battle of Homildon in 1402[1].

We are told that the incursions of the mosstroopers, or reivers, were marked by a desire for spoil rather than bloodshed[2]. In spite of their obvious love of a hard set-to, when the blows had been freely dealt they bore few resentments, providing there was no death to occasion a feud. The Hunting of the Cheviot seems to me to be permeated, in a large measure, with this Border spirit. It is a spirit which may possibly have begun to develop by the mid-fifteenth century, displacing the intense hatred caused by the Wars of Independence for what the Scots called "the auld enemy". The new chord of international tolerance may have been struck as early as 1420, when the Scottish historian Andrew of Wyntoun wrote in his rhyming chronicle:

> Set we haf nane affection
> Off cause til Inglis nacion,
> Zit it war bath syn and schayme,
> Mar pan pai serue, paim to defame.
> (Bk. IX, ll. 1859-62, Cotton MS.)[3]

Later, writing about 1460, "Blind Harry" in his national epic poem Wallace, managed to be generous to the Percys, representing them as more courteous than other Englishmen. When he receives the news of Wallace's sack of the castle of Kinclaven on Tayside, and of his other victories, the Percy of the day exclaims:

> 'Now suthlye that war syne;
> So gud of hand is nayne this warld within.
> Had he tayne pes, and beyne our kingis man,
> The haill empyr he myght haiff conquest than'.
> (Bk. V, ll. 501-504)[4]

1 See J.D. Mackie, A History of Scotland, 95.

2 John Leslie, The History of Scotland (ed. Cody), 100-1.

3 The Orygynale Cronykil (ed. F.J. Amours), VI, 386.

4 Henry the Minstrel, The Actis and Deidis of the Illustere and Vailzeand Campioun Schir William Wallace (ed. James Moir), 402.

We do not need to look to ballad convention, then, for an explanation of Percy's eulogy over the body of the dead Douglas. A society that was guilty at times of gross barbarities was also, paradoxically, capable of the reaction typified by Percy's lament. His speech marks a definite and recognisable stage away from the thinly-disguised national prejudice and partisanship which we encountered in The Battle of Otterburn. In this respect, The Hunting of the Cheviot is probably closer to the true Border Ballad, for, as Herbert Read has well said, "what we call regionalism in literature has nothing to do with nationalism in literature (which is usually a disguise for politics)"[1]. For this reason alone, I would venture to assign the Cheviot ballad a later date than its precursor.

A guage of the ballad's regional quality may be made if we compare it with the broadside version, Child B. The "Broadside" was a printed version of a known popular ballad, or else an original composition, on a single folio sheet, with the title of a familiar tune to which it could be sung, and often with a rough wood-cut illustration. Publishers began to produce these sheets in the first decades of the sixteenth century, causing something of a revolution in popular taste. Unlike the Border Ballads, and the traditional ballads of the country folk, the broadsides were aimed at capturing an entirely different, largely urban audience, many of them able to read. Their success seem to have been due to a trafficking in the more sensational news items of the day, and a claim to be up-to-date and true[2].

1 'The Writer and his Region', in The Tenth Muse, 67.

2 Hodgart, The Ballads, 140-1. Up-to-date broadsides are a part of Autolycus's wares in The Winters Tale. They are "very true, and but a month old", IV, iv, 261, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (ed. Alexander), 399.

The Chevy Chase broadsides were nearly all printed in London, those extant dating from the first decade of the seventeenth century, although, as we have seen, the ballad was hawked about and sung before then. Much of it reads like a bad translation. The regional character of the A text is dissipated - Percy's title is inaccurately given, we lose the Border version's strong feeling for its local history and social customs, together with its geographical sense, as the name Chevy Chase becomes little more than a repeated catch-phrase. The broadside displays the consciousness of a nation rather than of a homogeneous cultural group. It opens with the patriotic sentiment:

> God prosper long our noble king,
> our liffes and saftyes all!
> ($B1^{1-2}$)

and closes with a trite prayer for political stability:

> God saue our king, and blesse this land
> with plentye, ioy, and peace,
> And grant henceforth that foule debate
> twixt noble men may ceaze!
> (B64)

Addison was quick to commend this "precept for the benefit of his [the minstrel's] readers[1]. But the modern reader may be left cold.

The broadside is, moreover, consistently Anglicised. Percy is styled "the English erle" ($B5^{3}$) and the "Erle of Northumberland" ($B3^{1}$), no doubt for the benefit of a southern readership. Whereas the Border audience would have grasped the balladist's allusion to the hunting-chase controversy, the London man-in-the-street has to be told more explicitly that Percy is going to hunt "in the Scottish woods" ($B3^{3}$).

1 The Spectator, No. 70 (ed. Bond), I, 299.

National distinctions are sharpened even further when Percy, instead of riddling that he will not yield to any man of woman born, staunchly refuses to "yeelde to any Scott" (B35[3]). Whereas in A the Northumbrian archers launch a volley of arrows that kill "seven skore spear-men" (A25[4]), in B "our English archers" bend their bows and slay "full foure score Scotts" (B27). In the Border text, Douglas is struck by a mysterious arrow, perhaps accidentally, perhaps even from a Scottish archer - the balladist is content to leave it anonymous. But the broadside transcriber prefers to be more explicit:

> With that there came an arrow keene,
> out of an English bow,
> (B36[1-2])

It is above all this over-explicitness which constitutes one of the major weaknesses of the B text. Gerould appraises the narrative method of version A, by means of which the hunting of Percy in the Chase "is told in brief dramatic sequences with little concern for any connective tissue"[1]. Percy declares his intention to hunt in Cheviot in three days time, just long enough for his boast to be carried to Douglas. In a kind of cinematic montage we are given Percy's vow and Douglas's reaction to it, within the four lines of a single stanza:

> The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat
> he sayd he wold kyll, and cary them away:
> 'Be my feth', sayd the doughtei Doglas agayn,
> 'I wyll let that hontyng yf that I may'.
> (A2)

Compared with this the broadside amplifies unnecessarily:

> These tydings to Erle Douglas came
> in Scottland, where he lay.
>
> Who sent Erle Pearcy present word
> he wold prevent his sport;
> The English Erle, not fearing that,
> did to the woods resort,
> (B4[3-4], 5)

1 The Ballad of Tradition, 100.

The result is to slow down and labour the ballad's natural impetus. Similar redundancies occur when the broadside refuses to allow the clash of speeches to work their own dramatic effect, as when Douglas's "one of vs tow shall dye" ($B21^{2}$) is introduced by:

> Then Duglas swore a solempne oathe,
> and thus in rage did say:
> ($B20^{3-4}$)

A self-consciously poetic note creeps into the picture of the hunt in the broadside text, the use of the adjective "tender" to describe the slain deer establishing a quite deliberate pathos:

> The hounds ran swiftly through the woods
> the nimble deere to take,
> That with their cryes the hills and dales
> an eccho shrill did make.
>
> Lord Pearcy to the querry went
> to veiw the tender deere;
> ($B10\text{-}11^{1-2}$)

Where the townsman dwells on the pleasant auditory and visual aspects of the hunt, the countryman is more aware of the business nature of the job in hand and Percy in the Border version goes to watch "the bryttlynge", or breaking down[1] of the deer carcases. Not one, but a hundred fat harts are slaughtered ($A7^{4}$).

At its worst, the broadside is marred by descents into sheer bathos:

> The bowmen mustered on the hills,
> well able to endure;
> Theire backsids all with speciall care
> that day were guarded sure.
>
> They closed full fast on euerye side,
> noe slacknes there was found,
> But many a gallant gentleman
> lay gasping on the ground.
> (B9, 29)

1 O.E.D., I, 1114.

The verse in which Squire Witherington loses both his legs has been justly ridiculed and parodied:

> For Witherington needs must I wayle
> as one in dolefull dumpes,
> For when his leggs were smitten of,
> he fought vpon his stumpes.
> (B50)

It is not surprising that ballad scholars have always found the broadside ballads "vulgar" and viewed them as symptomatic of, as well as one of the major causes of the decline of the ballad form generally[1]. In the case of the broadside rewriting of The Hunting of the Cheviot it should not now be difficult to appreciate that the detritus is largely a result of the ballad's wandering from its regional origins.

If spurious nationalism can destroy the essence of a Border Ballad, so too can a narrow provincialism. Herbert Read, in his essay, makes a careful distinction between "ethos", the prevailing spirit of a region, and the debased, modern sense of the word, "provincialism", and he goes on to observe that regionalism in literature, in spite of its local origins, contains within itself the genius of universality[2]. The appeal of ballads like The Hunting of the Cheviot is not only to the limited audience of the region in which they were first sung, but to mankind everywhere and at all times. The balladist, as a local folk artist, is in direct contact with the ethos of his region, and his art draws strength from it. Yet there is a point at which the ballad manages to transcend its purely local, or regional origins, to become super-regional. Hardy and the Brontës, Turgenev in his A Lear of the Steppes and Leskos in Lady Macbeth of the Mtensk District were alike in that

1 Gerould attributes the excellence of the Scottish ballads to the fact that Scotland suffered less from an infiltration of Grub Street writing, op. cit., 243-4.

2 Op. cit., 68-9.

their works, too, were emanations of a similar genius loci. For Hardy, Wessex was a microcorm of the universe, not a narrow province; its ethos lent accent, colour and being to universal prototypes of the novelist's mind. This is perhaps the quality in art which Charlotte Brontë called "power"[1] - the largely unconscious communication from a region's ethos, from its physical physiognomy and racial collectivity - and what Read calls "the concentration of infinite time in a finite place"[2].

It is not necessary to look far to discover the source of power of the Border Ballad we have been examining. The Hunting of the Cheviot has survived a merely local, antiquarian interest, because it is above all a ballad on the perennial theme of war's futility. Whilst recognising and applauding a certain kind of heroic conduct, the ballad-maker looks beyond the chivalric trappings to expose the very real human grief and suffering caused by the Border Problem. The two poles of the mediaeval world are time and again contrasted in this and other Border Ballads, just as the romance and real worlds are juxtaposed in Gawain and the Green Knight. The ballad is not carried far before, in the fourth verse, we are forewarned of the consequences of this petty quarrel between local chieftains:

> The chylde may rue that ys vn-born,
> it was the mor pittë. (A4$^{3-4}$)

This is repeated again in stanza 51.

If the leaders, who are supposed to be exemplary, embrace one ideal:

> 'To kyll alle thes giltles men,
> alas, it wear great pittë! (A18$^{3-4}$)

1 See her Preface to the 1850 edition of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights (ed. David Daiches), 41.

2 Op. cit., 74.

the common foot-soldiers (and Squire Witherington speaks on their behalf) embrace another, which makes the first impossible to realise. Witherington subscribes to the Border code of loyal service and manly courage, but it is also his bogus patriotism that finally precipitates the engagement of both forces:

> Then bespayke a squyar off Northombarlonde,
> Richard Wytharyngton was his nam;
> 'It shall neuer be told in Sothe-Ynglonde', he says,
> 'to Kyng Henry the Fourth for sham.
>
> 'I wat youe byn great lordës twaw,
> I am a poor squyar of lande;
> I wylle neuer se my captayne fyght on a fylde,
> and stande my selffe and loocke on,
> But whylle I may my weppone welde,
> I wylle not [fayle] both hart and hande'.
> (A22-23)

Here, as the Fool in King Lear realises, is the tragedy of the Common Man - the great wheel rolls downhill and the lesser follows it.

The whole affair, then, loses sight of both ideals to become a mass slaughter. Ironically, it is the same honourable young squire who is also made by the balladist to show the ultimate horror to which the rigid cult of personal honour can descend. His legless fight to the death is a rebuke to the glittering armour and bright swords of the first fytte[1].

Although there is a minimum of direct comment on the part of the ballad-poet, we cannot help but sense his presence in the fine ordering and shaping of the dénouement. He presents us with the aftermath of the battle:

> So on the morrowe the mayde them byears
> off birch and hasell so g[r]ay;
> Many wedous, with wepyng tears,
> cam to fache ther makys away.
> (A57)

1 Needless to say, the Border balladist's account of this is couched in language more acceptable than that of the hack writer of Chevy Chase.

And these are not only the bereaved of England, but of both sides:

> Tivydale may carpe off care,
> Northombarlond may mayk great mon,
> (A58[1-2])

A sense of tragic inevitability pervades the ballad. This, I would suggest, is due to the balladist's skilful linkage of the actual events he is working from - the petty hunting dispute gives way to a personal conflict which gives way to a pitched battle involving the lives of innoeent men, which leads only to a further vendetta involving the massacre at Homildon of a further "syx and thrittë Skottishe knyghtes" (A64[1]).

The last image is one of blood as the balladist laments at and despairs before the Border predicament. Percy and Douglas have set a precedent: the Marches, since the conflict in the Cheviots, have become the scene of one prolonged blood-letting:

> Ther was neuer a tym on the March-partës
> sen the Doglas and the Persë met,
> But yt ys mervele and the red blude ronne not,
> as the reane doys in the stret.
> (A67).

"The stret" would not have been a paved, or cobbled one, but a cross-country track of trodden earth which could absorb rain or moisture[1]. Here, the balladist is saying, there was such a torrent of blood that it ran like a river over the surface. The image is thus given a double force.

Once we have appreciated something of the singer's response to the tragedy, we cannot easily reconcile the last verse of the ballad

1 O.E.D., X, 1102, under 1b; O. Heslop, Northumberland Words, 702. There is a high escarpment in the Cheviots called "The Street", see OS Map, sheet 70.

with Wells's dismissal of it as a "minstrel tag", a "formal close"[1]. In place of the canting chauvinism of the Chevy Chase broadside, is a sincere prayer:

> Ihesue Crist our balys bete,
> and to the blys vs brynge!
> Thus was the hountynge of the Chivyat:
> God send vs alle good endyng!
> (A68)

"Bale", in the mediaeval meaning of the word, could be active and operative evil, as well as the more usual physical suffering, pain, or grief[2].

The author of The Hunting of the Cheviot was clearly a man of insight and sympathy. Perhaps better than has hitherto been realised, he was voicing the unspoken thoughts and fears of his community. The story and heroic traditions pertaining to the battle of Otterburn were well known by this community. The fact that a ballad-singer of the mid-fifteenth century could re-work them into a compelling regional tragedy of far-reaching implications, and achieve for this one ballad a degree of popularity unmatched by any other, is surely a mark of his artistic and poetic genius. Not only that, it is proof of a certain ambivalency of outlook, already remarked on, among these Border folk. G.M. Trevelyan, the Northumbrian historian, has attempted to summarise the character of the people who composed the Border Ballads:

> Like the Homeric Greeks they were cruel, coarse savages, slaying each other as the beasts of the forest; and yet they were also poets who could express in the grand style the inexorable fate of the individual man and woman, and infinite pity for all the cruel things which they none the less perpetually inflicted upon one another.
>
> It was not one ballad-maker alone, but the whole cut-throat population who felt this magnanimous sorrow and the consoling charm of the highest poetry[3].

1 E.K. Wells, The Ballad Tree, 210.

2 O.E.D., I, 634.

3 The Middle Marches, 24-5.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE OUTLAW BALLADS - THE OUTLAW MURRAY,[1] JOHNIE ARMSTRONG[2]

Territorial disputes are the subject of another early Border Ballad, The Outlaw Murray. This time the scene is the ancient forest of Ettrick in Selkirkshire, and the dénouement a happier, more providential one. The King of Scotland receives word that a powerful outlaw is dwelling on the Border and in despite of royal authority. The king sends a messenger to command the outlaw to submit himself and his men, but the outlaw refuses. The king, outraged, gathers an army of five thousand men and rides to the forest where the outlaw has his castle. On the advice of his chief counsellor, the king dispatches a second messenger to request a peaceful meeting with his rebellious subject. This time the outlaw consents. He appears before the king, sues for pardon and relinquishes all the lands in Ettrick Forest which he lays claim to. The king is merciful, spares the outlaw's life and conveys his lands back to him again as the lawful inheritance of his heirs. Finally, he grants the outlaw the sheriffship of Ettrick Forest.

The outlaw is a familiar figure in balladry, especially the English cycle of Robin Hood ballads. Indeed, the Outlaw Murray's menage, with his merry men clad in a livery of Lincoln green, reminds one immediately of the English greenwood hero. Robin Hood was known to the country people north of the Border at least as early as 1441-47 when Walter Bower was making his additions to Fordun's Scotichronicon. Bower says that Robin Hood, Little John and their comrades rose to prominence among those who had been disinherited and banished as a result of Simon de Montfort's

1 Child 305, E.S.P.B., V, 185-200.
2 Child 169, E.S.P.B., III, 362-72.

rebellion of 1266. Rustic people, adds Bower, loved to sing the deeds of these outlaws in their songs and ballads:

> de quibus stolidum vulgus hianter in comoediis et in tragoediis prurienter festum faciunt, et, prae ceteris romanciis, mimos et bardanos cantitare delectantur[1].

John Major, writing at the turn of the century, also records that "the feats of this Robert are told in song all over Britain"[2]. Bower and Major were both Scottish historians.

However, outlawry was a social reality in Scotland as it was in England, and the ballad outlaw, as he appears in two of our Border Ballads, was not simply a mythical figure. In an attempt to solve the Border Problem governments frequently resorted to the outlawing of a rebellious subject when all else had failed. David Masson explains in his introductory notes to The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland:

> The one and universal process in Scotland for intimating that a person was disobedient to the law, in any way or form, was to denounce that person rebel, and to put him to the horn ... the "horners", specially so called, were those who obstinately and persistently remained in their state of rebellion, by not appearing to the charges, whatever they were, that had been issued against them ... The word "outlaws" defines their position accurately enough; they were "the King's rebels", standing out in disobedience, and liable to very summary further process against them personally or their goods[3].

So Hobie Noble, in the ballad of that name, is "banished" for his misdeeds by the English authorities and decides to quit his native Bewcastledale to join up with the Scottish Armstrongs of Mangerton, in Liddesdale[4]. Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough and William of Cloudesly, three Cumberland yeomen in Child 116, are outlawed for breach of the

1 Scotichronicon (ed. Walter Goodall), II, 104.

2 A History of Greater Britain (ed. Archibald Constable), 156.

3 R.P.C., V, xxxviii-xxxix.

4 Cf. also Jock o the Side, B7.

game-laws and so betake themselves to the forest of Inglewood, near Carlisle[1].

In a sense, many of the other Border Ballad heroes would have been considered "King's rebels" in their day and the different ways in which they set themselves at variance with the law obviously fascinated the folk-balladists and their audiences. In particular, two of these singers of tales treated the outlaw in his free Border forest as a subject of interest in itself, using the plight of the basically good but technically felonious man to voice the common man's desire for social justice[2]. The Outlaw Murray and Johnie Armstrong both explore a common situation - the meeting on the Border between king and outlaw. In the first of these ballads the outcome is fortunate, in the second it has tragic consequences. Since The Outlaw Murray is in all likelihood the earlier of the two, I shall discuss it first.

Sir Walter Scott has said that The Outlaw Murray was for a long time "a popular song in Selkirkshire"[3], which, however, Child did not credit as we shall see. Scott was also the first of the nineteenth-century editors to print the ballad and it appeared in the first edition of his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border[4]. The text given by Scott in the second edition of the Minstrelsy is that referred to by Child as Ab[5].

The ballad as we have it must have been written down at some time between 1689 and 1708. This we can deduce from a note accompanying the ballad and explaining its circumstances, which was discovered in the charter-chest at Philiphaugh, seat of the Murray family of Selkirkshire[6].

1 Adam Bell, st. 4.

2 Maurice Keen has seen this as the main reason for the appeal of the Robin Hood and other outlaw ballads, see his The Outlaws of Mediaeval Legend, 145-73.

3 Minstrelsy, I, 304.

4 Minstrelsy (1802 ed.), I, 1, see E.S.P.B., V, 185.

5 Minstrelsy (1803 ed.), I, 1, see E.S.P.B., V, 185, 191, 198-9.

6 Philiphaugh is situated on the north bank of Yarrow Water, 1½m. south-west of Selkirk, see OS Map, Sheet 69, and Blaeu's map of Tweeddale.

The note explains: "This Outlaw Murray was ancestor to the now Lord Philiphaugh, the Heretable Sheriff of the Forest"[1]. Now we know that Sir James Murray, Lord Philiphaugh, was appointed an ordinary Lord of Session on October 28, 1689, and that he took his seat on November 1 of that year; also that he died on July 1, 1708[2].

Child was unable to find this manuscript copy of The Outlaw Murray (containing the note) when he searched among the Philiphaugh archives, but fortunately we have no doubt as to its existence since the collector William Aytoun printed his text of the ballad from it in 1859[3]. This text is lettered Ac by Child and according to him it agrees closely with his Aa, a version of the ballad in David Herd's manuscript collection[4]. This was sent to Herd with an accompanying letter dated January 12, 1795, by Andrew Plummer, Sheriff-Depute of Selkirk. Plummer stated that this text of the ballad was "as received by a carrier from a lady, who neglected to impart how she came by the copy"[5].

There are numerous verbal differences between the Herd MS. copy (Aa) and Aytoun's (Ac), mainly, Child thinks, for the worse. So that although Aytoun's transcript of the lost Philiphaugh version is the earliest extant copy of the ballad, it is by no means the most accurate in Child's opinion. He comments on it:

> The text, if earlier transcribed, shows no internal evidence of superior age, and exhibits several inferior readings, - two that are highly objectionable. I mean Soldan Turk, C22[3], for Soudron, a, b, d, and Soldanie, C33[2], for Soudronie, Southronie, a, b.[6]

1 Cited T. Craig-Brown, The History of Selkirkshire, II, 355-6.

2 Craig-Brown, op. cit., 345-6.

3 The Ballads of Scotland, II, 131, see E.S.P.B., V, 185, 191, 199-200.

4 Herd's MSS, II, fol. 76, see E.S.P.B., V, 185. There is another copy in Herd's MSS, I, 255, but Child believes the second volume to contain "the original text", E.S.P.B., V, 185.

5 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., V, 185.

6 E.S.P.B., V, 185 and n.

In the ballad, the Outlaw Murray claims to have won his lands in Ettrick Forest "frae Soudron" (A22[3]), in other words, from the Southerners, the English. The ballad is very probably looking back to the years of the Scottish Wars of Independence or to a period not long after when, as we saw in the previous chapter, much of the Border country was still debatable land[1]. It is just possible, however, that certain reciters may have been transmitting their material faithfully. I shall try to show later in this chapter how, in fact, the idea of the Outlaw Murray winning his lands from a pagan people can be seen to be consistent with the ballad's allegorical meaning. In this case the spelling is not a corruption either of the reciters or transcribers.

The fourth copy of The Outlaw Murray's A version is that actually preserved among the Philiphaugh papers. This is Child Ad, dated by Child (from the water-mark) as not earlier than 1848[2].

Child version B, 'An old song called Outlaw Murray', is printed from the Glenriddell manuscripts of 1791[3]. Child finds it to be "defective, corrupted, and chargeable with flat repetition"[4] - a charge which may, I hope, be refuted.

Child C is fragments of 'Outlaw Murray, an antient historical ballad', preserved at Abbotsford in the handwriting of William Laidlaw[5].

Disregarding for the moment certain interpolations in Scott's Minstrelsy copy (Ab) which we shall examine in more detail later, we may note that the four copies of the A version do not, as Child says, "differ more than transcripts of one original may be expected to, remembering that copyists are apt to indulge in trivial verbal improvements", and

1 From the end of the thirteenth until the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Scottish Border county of Selkirkshire was often in English hands, see W.R. Kermack, The Scottish Borders, 96.

2 E.S.P.B., V, 185-6, 191.

3 Glenriddell MSS, XI, 61, see E.S.P.B., V, 185, 194.

4 E.S.P.B., V, 186.

5 "Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy", No. 31, see E.S.P.B., V, 185, 197.

he adds in a footnote:

> That the four copies of A are transcripts from writing and not from oral recitation, will be obvious when we observe their correspondences[1].

This brings us immediately face to face with the ethnic problem of The Outlaw Murray's origins. There is no real reason for supposing that copies Aa and Ad were not made from actual performances of the ballad by Border reciters.[2] The fact that there are no striking divergences in language or content need not surprise us since it may be observed of the Novi Pazar poets studied by Parry and Lord in Yugoslavia, that a song can be repeated frequently, never in identical terms the whole way through, but with only comparatively minor variations and with a considerable degree of verbal precision[3]. The Novi Pazar singers are the typical inheritors of an oral tradition that has reached its penultimate stage, a stage characterised by reproduction rather than re-creation[4].

Andrew Lang suspected that The Outlaw Murray had been in contact with writing at a fairly early stage, but saw the process of transcription as incidental, not as an end-product. He writes:

> An educated person might make a written copy, filling up gaps himself in late seventeenth or in eighteenth century ballad style, and this might pass into the memory of children and servants of the house, and so to the herds and to the farm lasses. I suspect that this process may have occurred in the cases of Auld Maitland and of The Outlaw Murray - "these two bores" Mr. Child is said to have styled them[5].

1 E.S.P.B., V, 185 and n.

2 For his Minstrelsy text (Ab), Scott made occasional use of Herd's and Riddell's MSS, but resorted principally to a copy "apparently of considerable antiquity, which was found among the papers of the late Mrs. Cockburn of Edinburgh", Minstrelsy, I, 305. Ad, as we have seen, is a copy of the lost Philiphaugh MS.

3 The "guslari" from the Novi Pazar region are the subject of Albert B. Lord's study Serbocroation Heroic Songs.

4 For a succinct outline of the four different stages in the life-cycle of an oral tradition, see G.S. Kirk, Homer and the Epic, 27-9.

5 Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy, 3.

Maurice Keen also recognises The Outlaw Murray as a type of fairly static ballad:

> Some were never changed much, and that is why one may find in a version of as late as, say, the eighteenth century, a ballad whose origins clearly belong to the middle ages.. One such is the ballad of the Outlaw Murray, which was written down about the year 1700, but which in its incident carries us back to a world which is purely medieval[1].

Nevertheless, Child entertained grave doubts as to the genuineness of the ballad. He included it in his first collection of traditional ballads of 1857, but with reservations. "I cannot assent to the praise bestowed by Scott", he wrote. "The story lacks point and the style is affected - not that of the unconscious poet of the real traditional ballad"[2]. He is surprised, therefore, when he comes to include The Outlaw Murray in his later famous collection, that B and C, "a few fragmentary verses, are all that have been retrieved from tradition"[3]. And he explains why the piece was placed last in The English and Scottish Popular Ballads at number 305:

> That it was not originally intended to insert The Outlaw Murray in this collection will be apparent from the position which it occupies. I am convinced that it did not begin its existence as a popular ballad, and I am not convinced that (as Scott asserts) "it has been for ages a popular song in Selkirkshire". But the "song" gained a place in oral tradition, as we see from B, C, and I prefer to err by including rather than by excluding[4].

The difficulty is that Child did not always give his full, or even his real, reasons for suspecting the authenticity of a given ballad or for excluding it from his collection. As Walter Morris Hart has stressed, Child's comments "are mere obiter dicta, based upon no underlying principle and forming no part of a set purpose"[5]. They are to be

1 Op. cit., 96.

2 English and Scottish Ballads, VI, 22, cited W.M. Hart, 'Professor Child and the Ballad', P.M.L.A., XXI (1906), 799.

3 E.S.P.B., V, 186.

4 E.S.P.B., V, 190n.

5 Op. cit., P.M.L.A., XXI (1906), 755.

found scattered throughout the five volumes of The English and Scottish Popular Ballads and are adumbrated in an article he contributed to Johnson's Universal Cyclopaedia in 1874, which, however, F.B. Gummere has reported Child wished "to be neither quoted nor regarded as final"[1].

In the light of this, it will not appear heretical to question Child's basic assumption that The Outlaw Murray did not begin life as a popular ballad - in other words, that it was originally composed and written down by a literate author. The evidence is nearly all on the side of tradition. Quite apart from the marked oral features by which the narrative is carried forward and which I shall discuss, we know for instance that Scott was able to insert "a few additional verses" which he got from Sheriff Plummer for the second edition of his Minstrelsy[2]. He was also able to restore two verses from the recitation of Mr. Mungo Park, the explorer, who lived nearly opposite to Newark Castle where the Outlaw Murray is supposed to have held out[3].

However, Child's editorial objections offer a useful means of assessing the true character of the ballad. We may take it, I think, that Child continued to hold those reservations which he made when introducing The Outlaw Murray in his first collection. Let us look at his second accusation first. The style, he finds, "is affected - not that of the unconscious poet of the real traditional ballad". Here Child makes himself at once guilty of that assumption so common among ballad scholars - that the folk-poet is some kind of passive medium incapable of a deliberate act of creativity (can there ever be such a thing, indeed, as an unconscious poet?) It is difficult to grasp what exactly Child means by "affected", unless he is referring to the unusually well deployed passages of repetition in The Outlaw Murray. One or two checks with the

1 'Primitive Poetry and the Ballad III', Modern Philology, I (1904), 378.

2 Minstrelsy, I, 306.

3 Ibid.

editor's other intuitions might help us at this point.

Child seems to be wary, for example, of any kind of over-refinement in ballads. He objects that the brothers in one version of The Braes o Yarrow (Child 214) "have taken offence because their sister was not regarded as his equal by her hsuband, which is perhaps too much of a refinement for ballads"[1]. The real traditional ballad, Child thinks (and one is inclined to agree) is unsophisticated. It was the influence of John Home's tragedy, Douglas (1756), that in Child's view gave vogue to the ballad Child Maurice (Child 83) and "the sophisticated copy passed into recitation"[2]. We have already noted that Child suspected a similar process to have given rise to the oral fragments (B and C) of The Outlaw Murray.

With regard to ballad style, Child declares himself to be sceptical of all that is not artless and homely. He finds stanzas 2 and 42 of version C of Andrew Lammie (Child 233) "not homely enough"[3]; but whilst it is easy to appreciate why he dislikes the artificiality and conceitedness of these, it is not so easy to fault The Outlaw Murray on this score. The first line of Scott's stanza 59 - "He'll loose yon bluidhound Borderers" - and his stanza 61 are perhaps chargeable with over-refinement. The last runs:

> 'My merryemen's lives, my widowe's teirs -
> There lies the pang that pinches me;
> When I am straught in bluidie eard,
> Yon castell will be right dreirie'.
> (Ab 61)

These are more obviously the additions of a later romantic poet. Yet the rest of the Minstrelsy interpolations still remain fundamentally oral and

1 E.S.P.B., IV, 161.
2 E.S.P.B., II, 263.
3 E.S.P.B., IV, 301n.

traditional in their style and content, so we should be careful not to dismiss them out of hand.

I can only conclude, after much consideration, that what Professor Child was objecting to in actual fact was the striking, and by no means artless, narrative symmetry which this ballad has preserved so well in all its transcribed versions. This symmetry is created by means of repetition (usually in triplicate) of formular lines and stanzas - "themes" and "runs" in the Parry-Lord terminology. It is this shapeliness that strikes one first of all when reading The Outlaw Murray. In version A alone, out of a total of 298 lines, 182 appear to be formulaic. Some of these formulae can be used conveniently to make up a half-line of 2 or 3 stresses, the place-name Ettrick Forest frequently serving this purpose. Thus we have:

to)		)fair
of)	Etterick forest	)frie
in)		

More often, a stanza, or run of stanzas, is paralleled at strategic points within the narrative. The most pronounced of these thematic passages are:-

(1) The description of Ettrick Forest itself and the wild life it supports; the description of the outlaw and his lady in their magnificent castle (A1-4, repeated A15-19, A29-32).

(2) The advice offered to the king by his chief counsellor, the Earl of Hamilton (A7-9). This advice is taken by the king, who

(3) instructs his messenger, James Boyd (A10-14; message repeated A21, 23-24).

(4) The advice offered to the king by Hamilton, in which he suggests a peaceful meeting with the outlaw (A50-52). This advice is taken by the king, who

(5) instructs his second messenger, James Hope Pringle (A53-56; messege delivered A58-60).

These repetitions, whilst they give the ballad a kind of statuesque, frozen, formal quality, are not entirely "dead" or functionless. Quite apart from the obvious utilitarian part they play in aiding the singer in the construction (without writing) of his rather protracted narrative, they may be an important traditional means of suggesting character or underlining structurally the ballad's theme. For instance, we are first allowed an objective view of Ettrick Forest, the outlaw and his household (A1-4), and thereafter we see them through the eyes of the first ballad messenger, through the description he gives of them to the king (A29-32). Each time the language of the description is the same - the scene, we are made to realise, is tranquil, fixed, unchanging (the balladist uses the word "picture" and this is repeated three times). The king always acts on the advice of his counsellor and whilst this suggests a monarch who is perhaps inexperienced, relying on others for advice, it also (again because of the exactness of the repetition) delineates a group of beings whose conduct runs to a prescribed formula. The balladist is not, therefore, using oral repetition crudely to secure an obvious emphasis; he is employing it quite subtly to build towards the climax of his narrative. The audience want to know how king and outlaw, both of whom apparently move along set lines of conduct, will react to each other in a situation that demands tact and compromise.

If Child was, as I have supposed, wary of the ballad's extremely formal arrangement, this is all the more surprising in the light of the knowledge he displays elsewhere. He comments, for example, on the traditional ballad practice of repeating verbatim a message given to a messenger in his note to Fair Mary of Wallington (Child 91). He notices that:

> The stanza which should convey this part of the message is wanting, but may be confidently supplied from the errand-boy's repetition[1].

Further, Child recognises that similar incidents may be conveyed in similar language, even in different ballad-stories[2].

Perhaps Child failed to understand to the full what Parry's and Lord's researches have since made clear, that these orally repeated themes and formulae are not only a stylistic hallmark of the popular ballad, but the very means by which it is constructed at the moment of performance and perpetuated in further performances. By and large, the ballad scholars and editors of the nineteenth century had not progressed beyond the stage of spotting and enumerating what they tended to call disparagingly the "common-places" and "clichés" of the ballads[3]. Their appreciation, at best, is of the formula's operation in the cross-currents of balladry, not of its systematic and ubiquitous operation as the modus vivendi of each individual performance. For this reason Parry and Lord were anxious to adopt the terms "theme" and "formula" as being less pejorative than the related terms "commonplace", "stereotype" and "cliché"[4].

What I have said of the A text of The Outlaw Murray also holds good for versions B and C. These, too, have grown under non-literate conditions. A measure of the eighteenth-century collector's impatience with the ballad's frequent use of repetition may be had from Robert Riddell's manuscript copy in which he indicates numerically the repeated passages[5], saving himself time in transcribing, but obscuring what was in performance the ballad's living, organic structure.

1 E.S.P.B., II, 309n.

2 E.S.P.B., III, 96.

3 See G.L. Kittredge's list of "Commonplaces" in the 'Index of Matters and Literature', E.S.P.B., V, 474-5. These are only a fraction of the vast quantity of ballad themes and formulae contained in the Child collection.

4 See Lord, The Singer of Tales, 30.

5 Thus: 19-25 = 6-12, 27-32 = 12-17, see E.S.P.B., V, 195.

We may now return to Child's first objection, that the story of The Outlaw Murray "lacks point". To a large extent this criticism is bound up with Child's strictures on the ballad's "affectedness". What he is clearly getting at is the (apparently) periphrastic way in which the story of the Outlaw Murray is told. Elsewhere Child is adamant on the brevity of the traditional ballad. He observes that version C of Brown Adam (Child 98) "has the usual marks of Buchan's copies, great length, vulgarity ... extravagance and absurdity"[1]. Again he objects to Peter Buchan, "who may generally be relied upon to produce a longer ballad than anyone else"[2]. Unhappily for Child, The Outlaw Murray happens to be the longest of the Border Ballads[3]. And yet length is not necessarily an indication of written composition, witness the Serbo-croation songs studied by Parry and Lord and the Homeric epics. Moreover, the title of the ballad we are considering is sufficient proof that its length did not deter from singing, since in all the MS. copies the title has been given (presumably) as it was popularly known: 'The Sang of the Outlaw Murray', or, 'An Old Song ...'[4]

In his introduction to the text, Child expresses his dissatisfaction with the climactic moment of the ballad:

> After all the strong language on both sides, the outlaw has only to name his lands (but gives a very imperfect list), and the king (waiving complete particulars) renders him whatever he is pleased to claim[5].

1 E.S.P.B., II, 373.

2 E.S.P.B., II, 342. The basic trustworthiness of Peter Buchan's texts may now be accepted however, see David Buchan, The Ballad and the Folk, 205-22, and Gavin Greig, L.L., xix-xxiv.

3 If 4 lines were not missing from version A, the complete text would run to 302 lines. Cf. The Battle of Otterburn (A), 280 lines, The Hunting of the Cheviot (A), 282 lines.

4 I have, however, retained Child's title for convenience.

5 E.S.P.B., V, 186.

In other words, Child seems to be saying, what a lot of fuss about nothing! This accords with what Andrew Lang reports Child as saying - that The Outlaw Murray was a "bore". But this kind of literary criticism, the sort which mistakenly equates simplicity of structure, content and expression with simple-mindedness in the author, is criticism of the very worst kind. Actually, as I hope to demonstrate, The Outlaw Murray is a ballad richer in content than has perhaps been appreciated, and although the story turns on a series of unambiguous situations and encounters, with the ballad characters assuming clear-cut ideological positions, this does not prevent the ballad-maker from extending his terms of reference. The story is not "lacking in point", but because the point is one which would have been of more interest to a contemporary folk-audience, this is not to deny the balladist any capacity for dramatic structuring and arrangement. And we would do well to remember that a ballad that was sung more than once (often, no doubt, to the same audience) and has survived because someone thought it worth writing down, was obviously not considered boring. Once again, I suspect that the problem of critical appreciation may, for the modern reader, resolve itself into a problem of "lost" background. Some attempt to reconstruct this is obviously necessary before we can pass judgement.

The first fact of interest is that in a charter dated November 30, 1509, a John Murray of Philiphaugh was vested with the dignity of heritable Sheriff of Selkirk by King James IV of Scotland[1]. In version A of the ballad, the outlaw begs the king, "Mak me the sheriff of the forest" (A67[3]), and this the king does (A73[3]). In version B, Murray is told by his sovereign, "thou shalt be laerd o this forest fair" (B55[1]).

However, since the ballad deals with the granting of land and an important office to a man and his kin we might naturally wish to consider earlier members of the Murray clan as the possible counterparts of the

1 Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, II, 724, No. 3388.

outlaw-hero. The first of the Murray family to be connected with Selkirkshire was a John de Moravia who acquired the lands of Philiphaugh in 1461 on the resignation of Thomas de Hoppringill[1]. This was one year after the death of King James II of Scotland and when James III was a boy of seven. In 1460 and 1461 we find this John de Moravia described as "armentario domine regine in foresta" (Queen's Herdsman in Ettrick Forest)[2]. In 1462 he was styled for the first time "custodia castri de Newwerk" (Keeper of Newark Castle)[3], and in 1471 he added to the Philiphaugh estate the forest steadings of Harehead, Hangingshaw and Lewinshope[4]. All but one of these are actually claimed by the Outlaw Murray of the ballad, although not, it must be admitted, in any single version[5]. John de Moravia died in 1477, the seventeenth year of James III's reign[6].

The cause of the Murray family's rise to power in this part of the Border was undoubtedly the fall of another powerful clan, the Black Douglases. By 1400, this family (favoured by successive monarchs since the reign of Robert Bruce) held the whole of south-west Scotland, including Selkirkshire and Ettrick Forest. In the words of one historian, "the house of Douglas, indeed, bestrode Scotland like a colossus"[7]. James II was not blind to the dangers threatened by such a powerful sept. After a series of Douglas rebellions, the king was obliged to enter the Douglas territory with fire and sword. In June, 1455, the last Earl of

1 E.R.S., VII, 65.

2 E.R.S., VII, 9, 98.

3 E.R.S., VII, 478.

4 E.R.S., VIII, 101.

5 He claims Hangingshaw in A71[2], 85b[1], C13[3] and in the (1802) Minstrelsy verse which Scott may have got from Mrs. Cockpool of Edinburgh (Ab71[3]). Lewinshope is claimed in C13[3], Ab72[2]; Philiphaugh in A71[1], C13[1], Ab71[1]; Newark (and Newark lee) in B56[4], C13[2], Ab72[3]. These places all lie on the banks of the Yarrow Water to the west of Selkirk, see OS Map, Sheet 69 and Blaeu's map of Tweeddale.

6 E.R.S., VIII, 435.

7 W. Croft-Dickinson, Scotland from the Earliest Times, 256.

Douglas was attainted and the vast Douglas estates forfeited to the Crown[1]. We know that in this year the Scottish king went to Newark Castle to make arrangements for the management of Ettrick Forest and its revenues[2]. According to the Exchequer Rolls, "dominus rex erat in foresta cum exercitu", where he compelled the whole gentry to follow his standard upon pain of having their lands burned and their houses pulled down[3]. In the ballad, the king tells his messenger that if the outlaw refuses to submit, "We'll conquess baith his lands and he" (A13[4]), and he vows, "I'll cast his castell doun" (A14[1]).

Following the defeat of the Black Douglases and the escheat of their lands, the Scottish Parliament, in August, 1455, proceeded to pass a number of acts annexing various castles and lordships inalienably to the Crown, and amongst these were the now forfeited Douglas lands. Henceforth all confiscated territory was to be divided into two categories: "annexed lands", which were to be inalienable and retained within the Crown, for the support of the Crown; and "unannexed lands", which the king could dispose of at his pleasure[4].

Any or all of these events may have provided a singer attached to the Murray clan with the germ of his ballad[5]. We might conjecture that the Outlaw Murray was a small local chieftain who had won for himself (or whose father had won) lands in the Ettrick Forest district of Selkirkshire. As he claims in the Border Ballad, he won them "frae Southron", and such a conquest would have been a real possibility during, or after, the Wars of Independence, when these lawless Border families held their

1 See Croft-Dickinson, op. cit., 257.

2 E.R.S., VI, 226.

3 E.R.S., VI, 227.

4 See Croft-Dickinson, op. cit., 258.

5 The person who originally wrote out the ballad in the lost Philiphaugh MS. obviously thought the ballad referred to events in James II's reign, since his note reads: "This King ... is King James, the second of the name of Stewart, the 102 King of Scots ... and in the 15 year of this reign [i.e. 1452] he made this raid," cited Craig-Brown, op. cit., II, 355. James II had, in fact, tried to break the Douglas power in 1452, when he marched through their lands, see Mackie, op. cit., 104.

lands by conquest and occupancy rather than through any feudal right. We might further conjecture that this Murray chieftain was discovered, perhaps accidentally, when the Black Douglases were crushed by James II, and that his lands (along with those of the Douglases) were "annexed" temporarily to the Crown before being entrusted back again. We know that in 1461, perhaps after having proved himself to be a loyal subject, a John de Moravia received as a gift from the Scottish king (i.e. as "unannexed lands") the lands of Philiphaugh. Later, officially and by royal authority he was appointed Keeper of Newark Castle, an office which entailed the supervision of the surrounding Ettrick Forest. Finally, in 1509, the grandson of John de Moravia was made hereditary Sheriff of Selkirk by James IV. The conflation of events and characters which has clearly resulted in the ballad of The Outlaw Murray need not astonish us. We have watched the same thing happen in The Hunting of the Cheviot and, as in that ballad, the process of telescoping historical incidents actually wide apart may be the master-stroke of a folk-artist in complete control of his material. Other things in The Outlaw Murray will bear this out.

The balladist, for example, has managed to create the impression of a typical fifteenth-century Scottish monarch, uninformed about the exact bounds of his kingdom. He knows nothing of Ettrick Forest or its inhabitants. As far as he is concerned, this part of his realm is terra incognita and he must ask his messenger who returns from there: "What forests is Ettrick forest frie?" ($A28^4$). James Boyd then proceeds to give his king a detailed description (A29-33).

For his own part, the Outlaw Murray is equally vague about the Scottish king and receives the royal messenger as if he were a foreigner and with scant deference: "Sum king's-messenger thou seems to be" ($A20^4$). This forces Boyd to clarify: "The King of Scotland sent me hier" ($A21^1$).

Murray, as we have seen, boasts that he has won his territory from the English, in the absence of any feudal superior. He accuses the Scottish king of cowardice in the wars against the "Southron":

> 'Thir landis are mine', the Outlaw said,
> 'I own na king in Christentie;
> Frae Soudron I this forest wan,
> When the king nor's knights were not to see'.
> (A22)

A similar brag is made by the outlaw of versions B and C[1]. In the ballad Johnie Armstrong, we shall hear another Scottish outlaw make a like accusation. The truth is that the Scottish throne was indeed weak during the century that followed the Wars of Independence. In James III's reign (1460-88), the royal revenue from all sources was pitifully small, about £16,380 in Scots currency, or about £5,500 English[2]. Force was almost totally lacking in the royal personality - "rex togatus" his warlike son called James III[3]. During the fifteenth century the kings of Scotland were still, to a large extent, kings by courtesy and title only in many parts of their realm. They were trying desperately to consolidate their power from central and eastern Scotland, with little support at all from the south, especially the Borders[4]. This dilemma is reflected in the ballad of The Outlaw Murray when the king recruits his forces from those counties which make up the north-eastern and south-eastern portions of his realm:

> 'Gar warn me Fife an a' Lothian land,
> An Perth an Angus, to ride wi me,
> (A7[1-2])[5]

The Border country, on the other hand, held many clan chieftains

1 Cf. B26, C3.

2 J.D. Mackie, A History of Scotland, 111.

3 Mackie, op. cit., 119.

4 For an interesting discussion of the problems of Scottish sovereignty, see David MacRitchie, Ancient and Modern Britons, II, 135-9.

5 Cf. B33, C7.

who were virtually kings in their own right. James V, who was most vigorous in his attempts to "daunton" the thieves of Teviotdale and Liddesdale, had to ride in person at the head of a large army in 1529, to smash the power of freebooters like William Cockburn of Henderland and Adam Scott of Tuschielaw. Bishop Leslie records that Tuschielaw was "commounlie callit king of traytouris",[1] whilst, according to Sir Walter Scott, "King of the Border" was another familiar title bestowed on him[2]. Johnie Armstrong, who was executed by James V the year after Cockburn and Scott, also represented a direct threat to the king's sovereignty. In the ballad which we shall be considering, the king meets this powerful Border chieftain and cries petulantly:

> 'What wants that knave that a king suld haif,
> But the sword of honour and the crown!'
> (J.A., C26[3-4])

In treating with England for peace on the Borders about this time, the Scots representatives were obliged to plead that the Crown had not full control over the Armstrongs, that they were not "in due obeissance"[3]. Clearly, then, the Border country was a virtually independent territory where the king of Scotland's writ seldom ran, and men like Cockburn, Scott, Murray and Armstrong, although sung as heroes in the ballads, were in political reality outlaws, "horners", or "King's rebels".

Another piece of internal evidence that presupposes a fairly early date for The Outlaw Murray, is the picture the balladist sketches of Ettrick Forest. It is an area of dense, thriving woodland:

> Etrick Forest is a fair foreste,
> In it grows manie a semelie trie;
> The hart, the hynd, the dae, the rae,
> And of a' [wylde] beastis grete plentie.
> (A1, cf. B1)

1 John Leslie, The History of Scotland (ed. E.G. Cody), II, 219.

2 Minstrelsy, I, 340.

3 State Papers of Henry VIII, 424.

This vignette is reproduced twice more when the royal messenger, James Boyd, spies the forest for the first time (A15-16), and when he describes it later to the king as "the fairest forest That ever man saw with his ee" ($A29^{1-2}$).

When the king and his army arrive on the outskirts of the forest and get their first glimpse of it from Caddon Ford:

> They saw the forest them before,
> They thought it awsom for to see.
> ($A49^{3-4}$)

These cameos clearly belong to an early period when the remnants of the vast forest of Ettrick were disappearing as yet but slowly. In the twelfth century this forest (then the forest of "Seleschirche", or Selkirk) was famous for its high trees, jealously preserved by local barons from the axes of the Melrose Abbey woodmen, and its oaks were frequently the gifts of Scottish kings to their favourites[1]. But by the start of the sixteenth century this national store-house of timber and game had become so seriously depleted that acts of parliament, increasing in their stringency, had to be passed from 1535 onwards, making wood-stealing, on a third offence, punishable by death[2].

As further evidence of a date of origin in the late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth century, we might briefly look for the historical contemporaries of the John Murray, Keeper of Newark, whose biographical details I sketched earlier. In versions A and B of the ballad, the king sends as his first messenger to the Outlaw Murray, James Boyd, Earl of Arran (A10, B5). Now we know that Thomas, son of Lord Boyd, was created the first Earl of Arran in 1467, upon his marriage to the eldest sister of James III[3]. This Thomas Boyd had a son, James, who was much in favour

1 Craig-Brown, The History of Selkirkshire, I, 63-4.
2 Craig-Brown, op. cit., I, 123-4.
3 Mackie, op. cit., 105; Croft-Dickinson, op. cit., 225.

with James IV about 1482[1]. Versions A and B of the ballad have possibly mistaken the son's Christian name for the father's, since James Boyd is called the king's "brother" (A10[2]) which William Aytoun's copy has corrected to "brother-in-law" (Ac10[2]). Whether this explication is due to Aytoun himself or whether it was the reading of the lost Philiphaugh MS. from which Aytoun made his copy, we do not know.

As for "the erle hight Hamilton" (A7[1]), who appears as the king's chief adviser in the ballad, we know that James II of Scotland enjoyed the confidence of one "Hammilton, tunc deputati per dominum regem" (the king's deputy)[2].

Sheriff Plummer, who supplied David Herd with his text of The Outlaw Murray, provides information regarding James Murray, Laird of Traquair, who laments in the ballad, "the king has gifted [i.e. given away] my lands lang syne" (A48[1]). A Willielmus de Moravia had forfeited the lands of "trakware" prior to 1464, since Plummer claimed to have possessed a charter in which those lands were "gifted" to Willelmo Douglas de Cluny upon Murray's forfeiture"[3]. Sir Walter Scott speculated that the Sir James Murray of the ballad was the male heir of this William Murray who stood confiscated, and his explanation sounds feasible; Scott says:

> The grant of 1464 was not made effectual by Douglas; for, another charter from the Crown, dated 3rd February, 1478, conveys the estate of Traquair to James Stewart, Earl of Buchan, son to the black knight of Lorne ... The first royal grant not being followed by possession, it is very possible that the Murrays may have continued to occupy Traquair long after the date of the charter. Hence Sir James might have reason to say, as in the ballad, "The king has gifted my lands lang syne"[4].

1 Scott, Minstrelsy, I, 327.

2 E.R.S., VI, 226.

3 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., V, 187. Traquair is situated 1m. south of Innerleithen in Peeblesshire, see OS Map, Sheet 69, and Blaeus's map of Tweeddale.

4 Minstrelsy, I, 328.

Lastly, James Hope Pringle of Torsonse (A53[3]), the king's second messenger in the ballad, is perhaps identifiable as the "Jacobi Pringill, cursoris foreste de Ettric infra wardam de Tweda" mentioned in the Exchequer Rolls in 1467[1]. The Pringle family, says Scott, is an old one in Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire[2].

Now that we have disentangled the somewhat involved skein of historical personages and events that seems to have provided the stuff out of which our ballad story was spun, it should be possible to conclude that the author of The Outlaw Murray did not merely follow ballad convention in singing of another greenwood hero. Despite affiliations with the Robin Hood outlaw cycle, this Scottish Border balladist has established his own independent tradition. The Outlaw Murray's historical status, moreover, was as a ruler within his own domain and this, too, is credible, not imaginary. The ballad character belongs fairly and squarely to a period of strong Border regionalism. The Scottish Wars of Independence are over, but not so far distant that some ballad-maker of the late 1400s, perhaps attached to the House of Murray of Philiphaugh, has forgotten the manner in which (tradition claims) his patrons came by their infeftment.

Yet the balladist and his audience were obviously not so interested in the objective facts of Scottish political history - the struggle between the Crown and the Baronage that occupied most of the fifteenth century - as in the regional implications of this: the apparently irreconcilable demands made by a Border set of mores on the one hand, and the claims of allegiance and authority made by a supra-regional power on the other.

1 E.R.S., VII, 475. The old tower of Torsonse could be seen on the banks of the Gala Water in Scott's time, see Minstrelsy, I, 328-9, and OS Map, Sheet 62.

2 Minstrelsy, I, 328.

Setting aside for the moment such ethical considerations, it is evident that one of the balladist's first tasks was a purely dynastic one. He was commissioned by the Murray clan to make an oral record, that might be circulated easily amongst the illiterate populace of Ettrick Forest, of the Murray lands there and how the family came to possess them hereditarily; most important of all, how the head of the Murray clan also came to inherit the coveted position of Sheriff of Ettrick Forest with all its attendant privileges. Thus the naming of the outlaw's lands forms an important and integral narrative element in all three versions of the ballad. As we have observed, Murray claims Philiphaugh, Newark, Tinnis, Foulshiells, Hangingshaw and Lewenshope - in effect, a six-mile stretch of territory on either bank of the Yarrow Water.

The need to explain and account for an inheritance has been recognised by anthropologists as the source of many "naming traditions", and such traditions, because they are dependant on self-interest, are likely to be highly reliable. This may also explain in part why The Outlaw Murray has come down to us in several copies that do not display marked verbal differences. As a modern French anthropologist has observed of oral cultures in Africa, if a tradition has rights of ownership or substantial privileges attached to it, the possibility of failure of memory on the part of the carriers or transmitters may be entirely eliminated[1]. Certainly, the large number of local place-names in this, as in other Border Ballads, indicates a tradition preserved within the confines of a particular locality, here that part of Ettrick Forest that lies between the rivers Tweed and Yarrow[2].

1 Jan Vansina, Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology, 41.

2 Most of the other places mentioned in the ballad may still be traced on the OS Map, see sheet 69. Others no longer marked were known in Walter Scott's day, see Minstrelsy, I, 328-9.

Practically important as the land-naming may be, however, one cannot help feeling that the unknown maker of the ballad was able to invest his tale with a significance less purely dynastic and consequently less ephemeral. There is a peculiar blend of the topical and a-topical, the particular and the universal, the factual and the fantastic, that impresses one from the opening verses. Were it not for the well-documented historical background we have been investigating, we might be forgiven for thinking that we are in the tangled forests of fairyland. We reach the Outlaw Murray and his men through a series of dissolving close-ups, as it were, each presenting a colourful but fixed tableau like the mosaics of a stained-glass window. First there is the panorama of the forest itself, already quoted. Then we are taken up to the castle:

> There's a castell biggit with lime and stane,
> O gin it stands not pleasantlie!
> In the fore front o that castell fair
> Twa unicorns are bra to see.
>
> (A2)

Lime and stone are concrete enough, but what, we wonder, are two mythological creatures - the pair of unicorns - doing in a Scottish Border stronghold?

Next, we are shown the outlaw and his lady:

> There's the picture of a knight and a ladye bright,
> And the grene hollin aboon their brie;
> There an Outlaw keepis five hundred men,
> He keepis a royalle companie.
>
> (A3)

Of interest here is the balladist's use of the word "picture" to introduce the outlaw and his lady and the fact that Murray is called a knight before he is actually styled an outlaw.

Finally, we are given the details of dress of this "royal company" in language that evokes at once the greenwood vocabulary of the English Robin Hood ballads:

His merrie men are in [ae] liverie clad,
Of the Lincoln grene so fair to see;
He and his ladie in purple clad,
O if they live not royallie!
(A4)

This, then, is how we first picture the Outlaw Murray and his household; it is the same impression as that gained by the royal messenger and later rendered to the king.

The balladist has chosen his words carefully. He is at great pains to establish the beauty, the perfection of this natural scene, its unspoiled character. The forest, in ballad adjectives, is "fair" ($A1^1$) and its trees "semelie" ($A1^2$); it is full of royal game and "all" wild beasts ($A1^4$). Perhaps the balladist was inviting his audience to contrast the forest of his ballad with Ettrick Forest as it was rapidly becoming at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a place of "theftuous destruction"[1].

The description of the people who inhabit this forest is conveyed in a similar cluster of adverbs and adjectives. The impression again is one of bounty and harmony, but this time with the added dimension of regality. The castle stands "pleasantlie" ($A2^2$) and is "fair" ($A2^3$). The two unicorns are "bra" (fine, handsome) to see ($A2^4$). The lady is "bright" ($A3^1$). The outlaw's company is "merrie" ($A4^1$), "royalle" ($A3^4$) and lives "royallie" ($A4^4$) - a fact underlined by the wearing of a "liverie" ($A4^1$). There is no doubt that the ballad-poet wishes us to approve and sympathise.

Yet all is perhaps not quite perfect. The keeper of this paradaisall forest is called an outlaw - a specific, non-romantic term to define a state of rebellious disobedience and to mark a man who sets himself beyond the pale of the law. Nevertheless, the very word outlaw necessarily

1 The phrase used by the prosecutors of wood-thieves in December, 1510, cited Craig-Brown, op. cit., I, 123.

implies the existence of law and order. This the outlaw of the ballad disregards, obviously, and it too sets him at nought. The king vows:

'I'se either be king of Etrick forest,
Or king of Scotland that Outlaw's bee'.
(Ab 3-4)

The balladist's use of the word "picture" may be his way of intimating to his audience that all is not quite as it should be. On the whole, the Border Ballads seem to take a slightly derisory, or at any rate non-comprehending, attitude towards sophisticated literate achievements - reading, writing and so on. A snobbish boast of good education is the precise cause of a tragic family feud in the ballad Bewick and Graham (Child 211). Old Bewick, probably quite illiterate himself,as were most of the great Border lairds[1], brags of his son's superiority, because

'my son Bewick can both write and read,
And sure I am that cannot he'.
(5 3-4)

Bewick refers to Old Graham's son who has been to young Bewick's school but has remained unlettered. The father, old Graham, believes himself to be disgraced and challenges his son to wipe out the insult. Young Graham is unwillingly forced to settle the issue by the sword and slays his sworn-brother, young Bewick, thus proving (perhaps ironically) that in the rough and tumble of the Border situation, the sword is mightier than the pen after all.

Letters in the ballads usually bring bad news and are associated, therefore, with unhappiness and disappointment, as in the well-used formula:

1 When in 1567 a marriage contract was concluded between Wat of Harden and Mary Scott, neither the bride's father, nor the bridegroom, nor any of the five lairds present as witnesses could write his own name, see W.R. Kermack, The Scottish Borders, 51-2. In 1578, a certain John Romannus of Blainslie and his son both signed "with my hand touching the pen led by the notary underwritten", a quite common declaration in Border charters, see ibid.

The next line that [so-and-so] read,
The tear blinded his ee[1].

Or they are associated with insincerity and perfidy. The king in Johnie Armstrong "wrytes a luving letter" to the outlaw asking to meet him and signs it "with his ain hand sae tenderly" (C2[1-2]). The letter promises Armstrong a safe-conduct, but the king hangs him and his men on the spot.

The ballad-reciters, then, whilst finding such accomplishments as reading and writing useful as stock activities in their narratives, hardly attach any superior value to them. What are admired, on the contrary, and especially in the Border Ballads, are the practical, manly, physical accomplishments of horsemanship, the ability to guide a raiding-party by night over difficult ground, or to swim a flooded river, and the vital skill of fencing.

So, in The Outlaw Murray, "the picture of a knight and a ladye bright" may be the ballad-maker's way of saying that this set-up is unreal, or real only in appearance, that it needs more solid foundations.

How do the two unicorns fit into this scheme? They are not part of the picture, since the balladist has introduced them already in the preceding stanza. In version A they stand "in the fore front o that castell fair" (A2[3]), but in C, the "Scotch Ballads" text, they are actually inside the building:

An in that castle a unicorn
An waly, but they war fair to see!
(C9[1-2])

In each case, however, the unicorns are followed by the description of the knight and his lady, which forces an association in the mind of reader or listener. Again, this is the "montage" effect which ballads,

1 See, for example, Sir Patrick Spens (Child 58), Johnie Scot (Child 99), Lord Derwentwater (Child 208), The Rantin Laddie (Child 240).

like film, can achieve so effortlessly[1].

Attempts have been made to explain away these fabulous beasts as part of the Outlaw Murray's coat of arms, Scott remembering that he had seen the insignia on the old tower of Hangingshaw, the seat of the Philiphaugh family[2], and Sheriff Plummer claiming the unicorns as the arms of Scotland, as seen on the west end of Newark Castle[3]. Newark, as we have noticed, was in fact a royal fortress with its Keeper appointed by the Scottish king. James I was the first Scottish monarch to assume the unicorn as a supporter of the royal coat of arms, while James III (in whose reign the events of The Outlaw Murray apparently took place) adopted a pair of unicorns as the right and left-hand supporters of his royal badge[4]. This seems to me to be highly significant, since in the ballad the outcome hangs upon the crucial question, will the outlaw and his lady give their support to their lawful sovereign?

The lore of the unicorn is, however, extensive. Apart from its obvious association (through its single projecting horn) with masculinity, the creature has in folk belief been representative of agression and ferocity, also of proud rebellion. Hence Spenser's simile in The Fairy Queen:

> Like as a Lyon, whose imperiall powre
> A prowde rebellious Vnicorne defies.
> (Bk. II, canto V, 10)[5]

The unicorn was supposed to be swift and difficult to catch and, according to the folklore of the Middle Ages, could only be trapped by placing a virgin in his haunts. When he saw her the beast would lose his fierceness and lie quiet in her lap or at her feet[6]. A twelfth-century

1 See Hodgart's application of Eisentein's technique of montage to the ballads, The Ballads, 27-31.

2 Minstrelsy, I, 304.

3 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., V, 190, from Plummer's letter to Herd.

4 J.H. Stevenson, Heraldry in Scotland, II, 397.

5 The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser (ed. J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt), 91.

6 See Peter Lunn, Fabulous Beasts, 68.

Latin bestiary compares the unicorn to Christ, because of his oneness with the Father, because of his speed in outwitting the devil and because Christ came down into the Virgin's womb for our salvation. Furthermore:

> It is described as a tiny animal on account of the lowliness of his incarnation, as he said himself, "learn from me, because I am mild and lowly of heart"[1]

Thus Stith Thompson records that the unicorn was popularly regarded as the Creator's companion[2], and we can see how the animal consequently became a symbol of virtue, purity, solitude and the monastic life[3].

A sixteenth-century folk-balladist might have found several of these associations pertinent to his story of an outlaw who at first proudly and fiercely defies his king and sovereign, but who at last submits with humility and wisdom. Even more suggestive, perhaps, is the way in which these ballad unicorns fit perfectly into the paradaisal forest called, because this is a Border Ballad, Ettrick Forest. It is certain that these creatures (whether live or sculptured) are being used by the folk-poet for their marvellous aspect, the uniqueness they bestow on the outlaw's castle, and this is emphasised in all three versions of the ballad. The unicorns seem to epitomise, in their very being, the wonder of the natural world, of creation.

The Christian parallel between Christ and the unicorn is echoed further in The Outlaw Murray. The king, for example, makes a vow "unto the man that dear bought me" ($A6^2$), and he is consistently presented as a "good" king and a "nobell" ($A5^1$, 6^1, 7^2, 11^1, etc.). The outlaw, moreover, begs the king to be merciful, "een for his sake who died on tre!" ($A63^4$). And in return for the favour shown them by the king, the

1 The Book of Beasts (trans. T.H. White), 21.
2 Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, I, 69, under A36.
3 Arnold Whittick, Symbols, Signs, and their Meaning, 68-70, 285-6.

outlaw and his lady hand over the keys of their castle with their "blessing" (A67-68).

There may be other symbols at work in the ballad. The knight and his lady wear wreaths of "grene hollin", or holly, "aboon their brie" ($A3^2$) - an uncomfortable crown, to say the least! The holly, as we know from the carol, The Holly and the Ivy, has been traditionally a symbol of fruitfulness and fertility, even in mid-winter, and is associated with the nativity and passion of Christ[1]. The purple in which the outlaw and his lady are clad may strengthen this Christian association, although the most obvious association is of the colour purple with royalty[2]. In any case, the holly crowns may be taken, I think, as a symbolical reinforcement from another angle of the summation of natural creation in two beings, the holly with its aura of fertility and longevity adding to the sense of wonder created by the unicorns.

To try and draw together all of these different strands of association is difficult. If a single consistent level of meaning is sought it may best be found in relation to the three central images which the ballad provides - the beautiful, unspoiled forest-garden, the rebellious but intrinsically worthy human couple who dwell there and the figure of the pardoning, merciful, but at first wrathful, king. Taking these together, it is possible, I believe, to see in the story of The Outlaw Murray a quasi-allegorical level of the kind that interested Coleridge[3]. It has been said by Northrop Frye that all literature is, from the point of view of commentary, more or less allegorical[4], and The Outlaw Murray and other Border Ballads are perhaps no exception. It is certainly hard to resist the obvious correspondences between the story of the

1 See The Standard Dictionary of Folklore (ed. Maria Leach), I, 501.
2 E.C. Brewer, Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (1963 ed.) 223, 274.
3 See his Miscellaneous Criticism (ed. T.M. Raysor), 151.
4 See Angus Fletcher, Allegory - The Theory of a Symbolic Mode, 8.

Ettrick Forest outlaw and the Fall and Redemption of sinful man. The Border rebel thus emerges as something more powerful even than a simple champion of insubordination, as in the Robin Hood ballads. Although the Outlaw Murray's role, from the Border point of view, is to sustain a spirit of resistance to oppressive authority, this role, as I have suggested, is both admired and challenged. The outlaw is trying to hold his own, but without his lord's (i.e. God's?) blessing. His defiant and proud claim to have won his possessions "frae Southron" may, as I have shown, have a historical basis, but that this may also contain allegorical overtones is shown perhaps by the despised readings of this word, which scholars dismiss as a "corruption". In fact, "Soldan Turk" ($Ac22^3$, $C3^3$, 5^3) may represent the reciters' rationalising of a felt antithesis in the ballad between Christian and non-Christian sets of values. What the outlaw of the C version says, in effect, is that he won his birthright without the help of any Christian king, which is tantamount to claiming that he is a self-made, self-created man - the sin of pride. What he has to learn is the humility of Adam to entreat forgiveness and to accept his independence and freewill as a gift from one higher and more powerful ultimately than himself. And this is made possible by the king's own realisation that the errant subject has that within him which is worth redeeming.

It will be a moot point, no doubt, whether a folk-ballad can sustain such an allegorical reading, and since this issue has a bearing on my discussion of other Border Ballads it may be opportune to clarify it further. Angus Fletcher, in his study of allegory, anticipates the qualms of the cautious reader who will argue that a good adventure story needs no interpolated secondary meaning in order to be significant. But, Fletcher, resumes:

> that objection does not concern the true criterion for allegory. The whole point of allegory is that it does not need to be read exegetically; it often has a literal level that makes good enough sense all by itself. But somehow this literal surface suggests a peculiar doubleness of intention, and while it can, as it were, get along without interpretation, it becomes much richer and more interesting if given interpretation. Even the most deliberate fables, if read naively or carelessly, may seem mere stories, but what counts in our discussion is a structure that lends itself to a secondary reading, or rather, one that becomes stronger when given a secondary meaning as well as a primary meaning[1].

The Outlaw Murray obviously lends itself to a secondary meaning and I have indicated those points at which the primary, surface meaning suggests, in Fletcher's phrase, "a peculiar doubleness of intention". If the reader is still not convinced, he might pause to consider the way in which mediaeval man, for instance, regarded his king: in person he was human but the authority of his office was divine; he was "God's vicar". Thus in The Outlaw Murray the king represents an authority which ultimately endorses the moral law and makes its justice official.

Fletcher concludes:

> It is commoner to find a veneer of action laid over a moralising intent ... whether one thinks there is such a thing as pure story-telling, or only degrees of abstract thematic structure (Aristotle's dianoia) underlying every fiction, the main point is surely that in literature generally one must be ready to discern in almost any work at least a small degree of allegory[2].

Perhaps an audience of fifteenth-century Border folk would have been more ready than the twentieth-century reader to perceive "the seamless coat of the Universe", as Nevill Coghill has called it[3], and we may heed his warning that "allegory is to be perceived and not dissected"[4].

1 Allegory - The Theory of a Symbolic Mode, 7.

2 Op. cit., 8.

3 Introduction to The Vision of Piers Plowman (trans. H.W. Wells), xvi.

4 Op. cit., xvii.

For this reason I would prefer to call the folk-balladist's method "subliminal allegory", in the sense that a moral or secondary level of meaning is being introduced by him, but without making his work openly (or even perhaps indirectly) didactic.

In terms of Border life and customs, however, a consistent thematic approach is not hard to discover. For in The Outlaw Murray, what is recognisable as the Borderer's regional point of view comes into conflict with the wider, national concept of law and order. But the Border viewpoint is not overborne or rejected out of hand; rather, it is sanctioned and endorsed. The theme of the ballad, as I have already stressed, is reconciliation - of the forces of law and order with the elements that lie outside their apparent jurisdiction. These are elements of which Order has no knowledge at first - the king does not know what sort of forest Ettrick is (A28) - and in that sense has "outlawed", but which are finally regarded as too valuable either to continue to neglect or to destroy. The act of reconciliation, however, requires several things to take place, or rather five virtues to be practised. These are respect, trust, loyalty, mercy and forgiveness. They must be operative, the balladist seems to be saying, if the complex administrative problems of a frontier region are to be resolved without bloodshed and if peace, stability and prosperity are to follow.

Mutual respect is held out, first and foremost, as the necessary basis for a coming-to-terms on the part of two opposed parties. On the one side respect for one's crowned king, on the other, respect for what a man like the Outlaw Murray may have striven hard to win, make his own and defend. Both kinds of homage are difficult to command because of the lack of concern shown by successive Scottish monarchs for the

outlying parts of their kingdom[1] and because, the balladist admits, Border folk have often merited no more than a summary dispensation of justice. The old concept of degree is the key to pacification. So, when James Boyd first meets the outlaw, he initiates a series of political conferences in which respect for the other party's "degree" plays a large part. Boyd

> kend he [Murray] was master-man,
> And served him in his ain degree.
> (A19[5-6])

Child glosses the last line, "rendered him respect accordant with his rank"[2], and this is as it should be. James Hope Pringle does the same later (A57[2]).

On the other side, Andrew Murray is one of the first of the clan to disapprove of treasonable conduct:

> 'It stands me hard', quoth Andrew Murray,
> 'Judge if it stands not hard with me,
> To enter against a king with crown,
> And put my lands in jeopardie'.
> (A44)

The recognition that this king is "a king with crown" represents a step in the right direction.

When the final confrontation takes place, the Outlaw Murray and his followers have sufficient diplomacy to realise that deference to their lawful monarch will achieve far more than blunt threats. For a moment anger gets the better of the Scottish king as he threatens the outlaws

1 The Armstrongs claimed, perhaps with some justice, that they got no proper protection from their king, whom they represented as a mere nonentity, "all set upon viciousness", Letters and Papers Hen. VIII, IV, Pt. ii, 2205, No. 5055, Henry, Earl of Northumberland, to Brian Tuke, December 20, 1528.

2 E.S.P.B., V, 327.

with the gallows, but he is calmed by his adviser and shows a "pitye" and "mercye" that were to do more towards healing the Border wound than the high-handed justice dealt out by certain other Scottish kings.

Loyalty is also vital in dealing with this Border Problem. It embraces loyalty to the Crown (after this meeting, the outlaw "was not traytour to the king", A73[5]), loyalty towards his subjects on the part of the king and loyalty to one's own principles. The outlaw displays a magnanimity that must have made him one of the most attractive of Border Ballad heroes. His finest moment is when he confesses:

'I reck not of losing of mysell,
But all my offspring after me'.
(A61[3-4])

And after affirming his loyalty to his king, he asks:

'But, prince, what sall cum o my men?
When I go back, traitour they'll ca me;
I had rather lose my life and land,
Eer my merry men rebukëd me'.
(A69)

Wrongly, perhaps, Andrew Murray puts loyalty to the head of his clan above loyalty to his sovereign, whilst James Murray also vows, "with that Outlaw I'll live and die" (A47[4]). A ballad audience made up of clansmen from the Ettrick dales would have found such a poser a fascinating one.

Mutual trust has to be shared by both sides. The king promises Murray a "safe-warrand" (A13[2]) if he will come to Edinburgh, as does the king in Johnie Armstrong. Each side must rely on the other to bring no more than the agreed number of retainers to the appointed place. Unlike Johnie Armstrong's, the Outlaw Murray's trust is not misplaced and all goes well. The last image of the ballad - "surely while upward grows the trie" (A73[4]) - is an optimistic one of growth, natural strength and hope for the future.

The story, then, does not "lack point" as Child complained. The boastful exchanges between king and outlaw evaporate for the very good reason that this balladist wished to show what could be achieved on the Border by peaceful means. One imagines him sufficiently well acquainted with ballads like The Battle of Otterburn and The Hunting of the Cheviot to appreciate the alternative. The climax, or anti-climax as Child felt it to be, depends for its effectiveness on the very act of political compromise. The ballad-maker's greatest achievement lies in the shaping of his material (the granting of the historical sheriffship and land to a previously unrecognised Border chieftain) into a vision of an ideal society, where redemptive goodness might prevail and men live in equality and harmony.

Far from Utopian was the state of affairs on the Border during the reign of James V, and unhappy the fate of another 'bold outlaw" and his men when they met their king. John Armstrong of Gilnockie[1], alias Black Jock, was one of the most powerful of the Border overlords in the early sixteenth century. The story of his "murder" is told in the Border Ballad that the folk named after him. This is likely to have been in circulation shortly after the event itself, which took place in 1530. A version of it is perhaps that referred to as "Iohnne Ermistrangis dance' in 1549 in The Complaynt of Scotlande[2].

There are three principal versions of Johnie Armstrong, two English (possibly altered from an earlier Scottish version) and one Scottish.

Of the English A version there are two printed copies. Child Aa, called 'A Northern Ballet', was printed in Wit Restord in severall Select

1 Gilnockie is about 4m. south of Langholm in Dumfriesshire, on the river Esk, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

2 Op. cit. (ed. J.A.H. Murray), 66.

Poems not formerly publishd, which appeared in London, in 1658[1]. Child Ab, also called 'A Northern Ballad', was one of the "jovial poems" to be published in Wit and Drollery, for the entertainment of Londoners in 1682[2].

Child's B version of the ballad may be read from any one of a large number of broadsides. There are three principal variants, Child Ba being the earliest. The full title of this broadside is:

> 'John Arm-strongs last Good-Night. Declaring how John Arm-strong and his eightscore men fought a bloody bout with a Scottish king at Edenborough. To a pretty northern tune called, Fare you well, guilt Knock-hall'.

It is signed "T.R." and was printed for Francis Grove on Snowhill, London[3]. It was discovered in the Wood broadside collection[4], and has been assigned a date about 1620-55[5]. Another broadside, Child Bb, may be found amongst the Pepys Ballads[6], also signed "T.R." and printed for W. Thackeray and T. Passenger in about 1660-82[7]. The title is similar to that of Ba.

A third copy of the B version of Johnie Armstrong, probably printed from a broadside, appeared in A Collection of Old Ballads in 1723[8]. This is Child Bc.

The third of Child's versions, C, stands alone and in one copy, that printed as 'Johnie Armstrang' by Allan Ramsay, one of the earliest folk-song collectors at work in Scotland, in his The Ever Green, "being a collection of Scots Poems, wrote by the ingenious before 1600"[9]. This,

1 Op. cit., 30, see E.S.P.B., III, 362, 367.
2 Op. cit., 57, see E.S.P.B., III, 362, 367.
3 See E.S.P.B., III, 371.
4 Wood, 401, fol. 93b, Bodleian Library, see E.S.P.B., 362, 368.
5 See E.S.P.B., III, 368.
6 Pepys Ballads, II, 133, No. 117, see E.S.P.B., III, 362, 368.
7 See E.S.P.B., III, 368, 372.
8 Op. cit., I, 170, see E.S.P.B., III, 362, 368.
9 Op. cit., II, 190, see E.S.P.B., III, 362, 370.

Ramsay's first collection, was published in Edinburgh, in 1724. Although the Wood broadside (Ba) is possibly the oldest copy of the ballad we now have, nevertheless Ramsay claimed of his text that,

> This is the true old ballad, never printed before ... This I copied from a gentleman's mouth of the name of Armstrang, who is the sixth generation from this John. He tells me this was ever esteemed the genuine ballad, the common one [i.e. Child A, B] false[1].

Speaking here is the man of letters who deems it necessary to construct the ideal text or to seek an original, and who finds it difficult to conceive of the ballad as multiform. Not surprisingly, William Motherwell countered Ramsay's claim to have discovered the "original" of Johnie Armstrong, when he informed his readers:

> The common ballad alluded to by Ramsay is the one, however, which is in the mouths of the people. His set I never heard sung or recited; but the other frequently[2].

But if Motherwell had heard the "common ballad" sung by Scottish people it is unlikely that this was identical with the version in the printed broadsides, for as T.F. Henderson remarks, the Scots would never have invented the story that their hero was a native of Westmorland, or that he died fighting in Edinburgh[3]; nor, we might add, would Scottish Borderers have left the broadside references to "falce" and "cowardly" Scots to stand (A15[3], B17[3]). I shall return to a more detailed consideration of the story as it is told in the A/B broadside group, but first a miscellaneous family of Scottish copies must be recorded.

A MS. copy of the B version was communicated to Bishop Percy by George Paton, one of Percy's chief correspondents in Edinburgh during

1 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., III, 363.

2 Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern, lxii, n3, cited Child, E.S.P.B., III, 363.

3 Minstrelsy, I, 350.

the decade following the publication of the Reliques. Paton was an antiquary, bookseller and friend of David Herd[1]. His copy of the ballad, entitled 'Gillnokie', was sent to Percy on December 4, 1778, and has some of the peculiar readings of the Wood broadside[2], thus providing evidence that an English broadside version of a ballad which in all likelihood originated on the Scottish Border, might return there. The Paton version has clearly been in contact, at some stage, with the Ramsay version, since stanza 27 of C is introduced in place of stanza 12 of the broadside group, and the line "Away, away, thou traitor strong", which appears in C but not in B, is also made use of[3].

A copy in Peter Buchan's MSS[4] called 'The Death of John Armstrong', has the first half of C18 and also of C19 (with very slight variations, according to Child)[5].

Child claimed to have a third Scottish copy in MS., which he thought was "probably a transcript from recent print", but could not remember how he came by it. It diverges, he says, from the ordinary text (C is probably intended) more than any other, introducing C23 after 14, and after 17 this stanza:

> They took the gallows frae the slack[6],
> An there they set it on a plain,
> An there they hanged Johnnie Armstrong,
> Wi fifty of his warlike men.

1 See David C. Fowler, A Literary History of the Popular Ballad, 237.

2 See E.S.P.B., III, 363.

3 See E.S.P.B., III, 363.

4 Buchan MSS, I, 61, see E.S.P.B., III, 363.

5 E.S.P.B., III, 363.

6 A "slack" is a hollow, especially in a hillside; a gap or narrow pass between two hills, E.D.D., V, 492-3; E.D.S.L., IV, 273-4; S.N.D., VIII, Pt. iii, 311. If the Armstrongs were hanged, as is supposed, at Carlenrig, in Teviotdale, the word "slack" is quite appropriate to the gap between the hills where the Frostlie Burn flows into the river Teviot at Teviothead, see OS Map, Sheet 69.

Verses 18-20 and 23 are apparently missing. A "pretty little boy", in what corresponds to B21 and 22, says, "Johnnie Armstrong you'll never see", and the lady of the B version ends the ballad with:

> If that be true, my pretty little boy,
> Aye the news you tell to me,
> You'll be the heir to a' my lands,
> You an' your young son after thee[1].

The lady is Armstrong's wife, and the little boy his son, as in other copies of version B[2].

It is clear from what has been said so far that we would not be warranted in claiming these broadside copies of Johnie Armstrong as Border Ballads by recorded source or by origin. Yet it is also clear that versions A and B especially do not belong to the same motley company of broadside ballads as those inferior productions originally commissioned for the penny press. 'Iohn Arm-strongs last good night' has every appearance of being "caught" and "fossilized" from an oral (Border) tradition, but by the commercial transcriber and copyist rather than by the bona fide folk-song collector.

It is just possible to trace the oral devices by means of which A and B were first composed. For instance, the "building" device, whereby the first line or lines of one stanza repeat with slight variation the last lines of the previous stanza, is a common one in oral narrative and has been preserved in the broadside copies of this ballad. The description of the fine garments of the outlaws provides a good example. Johnie tells his men:

1 See E.S.P.B., III, 363n.

2 We know that Armstrong had a son called Christy who was later reinstated in his father's lands, see The Book of Carlaverock, II, 479, No. 102, where he is called "Johnis Christe".

'Every man of you shall have his scarlet cloak,
Laced with silver laces three.

'Every won of you shall have his velvett coat,
Laced with sillver lace so white.'
(A6$^{3-4}$, 7^{I-2}, cf. B6$^{3-4}$, 7^{I-2})

We might call this device "incremental transition", or "repetetive transition", since it provides a useful means by which the ballad reciter may move easily from one narrative theme to the next, giving him ample time to recall or compose a pair of new lines to advance the story he is telling. On occasions this incremental transition may coincide with another favourite device of the oral narrator, that of question and answer, or request and refusal[I]. The outlaw in the ballad begs for mercy:

'O pardon, my soveraine leige', he said,
'O pardon my eight score men and mee!'
(A9$^{3-4}$)

but the king will not hear of it:

'Thou shalt have no pardon, thou traytor strong,
For thy eight score men nor thee'.

and he adds:

'For tomorrow morning by ten of the clock,
Both thou and them shall hang on the gallow-tree'.
(AIO)

A glance at the table will show the extent to which the A and B versions of Johnie Armstrong rest upon this bedrock of oral constructional techniques[2]. Both versions, however, have received a liberal sprinkling of what are generally acknowledged to be the "tags" of the professional minstrel, the "good Lord!"s and "God wott!"s; indeed a minstrel working

I See F.B. Gummere, The Popular Ballad, 250.

2 See Table B, p. 509, 'Oral-formulaic repetition in the Broadside Copies of Johnie Armstrong'.

the roads between the northern shires and the capital would have been the most likely person to carry a Border Ballad to the south. Such a man, when he was satisfied that he had performed the song as much as possible, might sell a copy of it, written down by himself, to a printer of broadsides for a small fee. One broadside might then be easily copied from another with slight verbal differences.

A and B are close relatives, so close in fact that Henderson believes Child's Aa (the Wit Restor'd copy) should properly be given as a variant reading of B, since it is clearly "a mere corruption" of the Wood blackletter broadside (Child Ba). Furthermore, Henderson speculates that since later copies of Ba contain readings superior to those in earlier copies, broadsides earlier than any now known may have been lost[1]. This should be ample warning to us not to accept our earliest extant ballad transcripts as necessarily the most "accurate", or the most "original". In the case of Johnie Armstrong, the copy closest to actual tradition turns out to be Ramsay's text of 1724. Henderson gives as his reasons for supposing Aa to be a corruption of Ba:

(1) the omission of the first stanza of Ba which connects Johnie Armstrong with Scotland (although it should be pointed out that stanza 2 of Ba still maintains inconsistently that the outlaw lived in Westmorland); (2) Aa is less full of details and (3) it is "decidedly inferior as literature"[2]. To illustrate the last two points, Henderson observes that the detail of the king moving his bonnet as a token of respect to Armstrong and the reiver's noble bearing both disappear in the Aa text. Also that the two stanzas in Ba (10-11) in which these details occur are "muddled into one" in Aa (9)[3]. We may concur with all this and with

1 Minstrelsy, I, 343.
2 Ibid.
3 Minstrelsy, I, 344.

Henderson's judgement that the B group of broadsides is earlier than the A group, if only for the fuller and more coherent treatment B gives the story. At this point we may allow the B version some closer consideration.

The B text includes all of A and some 38 additional lines besides[1]. It is superior in conception to A, and is probably the work of a more skilled balladist. A nicely tragic irony is glimpsed at moments, especially in the first verse, a kind of proclamation which we might imagine the king himself issuing:

> Is there a never a man in all Scotland,
> From the highest state to the lowest degree,
> That can shew himself now before the king?
> Scotland is so full of their traitery.
> (B1)

The royal demand acts both as a challenge (a dramatic note on which to open the ballad) and as a direct comment on the treasonous state of affairs within the realm. The surprise is to find later that the king himself is not exonerated, as this comment at first sight implies. The A-poet, on the other hand, points the irony of the ballad situation less subtly, by omitting this verse and instead commenting that the king, in his letter to the outlaw, "promised to doe him no wrong" ($A4^4$). Compare this with the B-poet's ironic choice of "lovely" and "tenderly" to suggest that the king's letter promising pardon to a hardened rebel might be too good to be true:

> The king he writ a lovely letter,
> With his own hand so tenderly,
> And has sent it unto John Armstrong,
> To come and speak with him speedily.
> (B4)

1 Sts. 1, 8, 9^{3-4}, 10^{3-4}, 11^{3-4}, 15^{1-2}, 16, 19, 20^{3-4}, and 21-23.

In the alliterative "l"s and "s"s one can almost hear the glozing James, and the duplicity is further carried by the tension between a commonplace vocabulary (letters are usually "lovely" in the ballad world) and the unprecedented meaning it imparts. Perhaps this accounts for the satisfaction derived by a modern reader, but there must have been occasions when a ballad audience was aware that old formulae were being put to a fresh and original use.

The second stanza of the broadside version answers the question put by the first. Again, where A states baldly that Armstrong "livëd lyke a bold out-law" and "robbëd all the north country" ($A3^{3-4}$), B leaves the audience to draw their own conclusions:

> He has no lands nor rents coming in,
> Yet he keeps eightscore men within his hall.
> ($B2^{3-4}$)

This is not quite true historically, since we know from a "bond of manrent" to Robert, Lord Maxwell, dated November 2, 1525, and signed "Johne Armistrang, with my hand at the pen", that the outlaw owned extensive lands in and around Canonbie and was entitled to their "pertinentis"[1]. To a ballad audience, however, the point would not need to be laboured: if a clan chief could support eight score men and keep them in livery and horse and harness (B3) without land or rent, then his income must be from other sources. And the Border audience well knew that Armstrong's source was "Blackmail". Robert Lindesay of Pitscottie, writing his Chronicles of Scotland in 1576-79, confirms this:

> it is said, That, from the Borders to Newcastle, every Man, of whatsomever Estate, paid him Tribute to be free of his Trouble[2].

1 The bond is given in full by Robert Bruce Armstrong, The History of Liddesdale, appendix No. XIII, xviii, and by Scott, Minstrelsy, I, 359-61. This is the first historical record of Johnie Armstrong.

2 The Historie and Cronicles of Scotland (ed. R. Freebairn), 145. For the date of compilation, see A.J.G. Mackay (S.T.S. ed.), I, xlviii.

And in the Ever Green version of the ballad Armstrong himself promises the king, in return for his life, to arrange that,

> 'All betwene heir and Newcastle town
> Sall pay thair yeirly rent to thee'.
> (C17[3-4])

Blackmail - the expression was coined on the Borders - meant something slightly different from blackmail today. Its literal meaning is "black rent", in other words, illegal rent, and this was paid either in money or in kind by the ordinary Borderer deprived of the protection of law and too weak to resist his despoilers. It was paid to a superior, who might be a powerful clan chief, a reiver, or even, as in the case of Johnie Armstrong, an acknowledged outlaw. In return, the superior left alone the man who paid him blackmail[1]. It was a practice common on both sides of the Border, although the payment of blackmail by an Englishman to an Englishman was in 1595 stated to be new[2]. Blackmail was levied over a wide area, there being a tradition that Borderers collected it even in North Lancashire[3], so Armstrong's claim (for it amounts to that) in the ballad, that he collects a yearly "rent" from those dwelling between Eskdale and Newcastle, may be no idle boast. In the last years of the sixteenth century, a Report on the Decays of the Borders recommended, in 1596, that the practice of blackmail be put down by act of parliament, since it was now taken and given by both Scots and English:

> The Borders being in great "penurie" of silver, pay rent in meal, corn.&."Soe that this bribenge they call Blackmeale, in respecte that the cause for which yt is taken is fowle and dishoneste: (according to the sayeng of the civill lawe: pacta turpia sunt quae turpem causam continent) and is paid in meale corn or victuall[4].

1 E.D.S.L., III, 209-10; S.N.D., II, 150. For a full description of the practice of blackmailing, see George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 192-5.

2 Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, 160.

3 Fraser, op. cit., 192.

4 C.B.P., II, 163-4, No. 323.

So Johnie boasts in the ballad:

'But Ingland suld haif found me meil and malt,
Gif I had livd this hundred yeir!'
(B20$^{3-4}$)

Armstrong, then, was a Scottish outlaw extracting protection money from the English, and the balladist, I believe, was able to use this implicitly as a symbol of the man's great power - a power which he knew the rightful sovereign of Scotland did not possess. Certainly in the Scottish version, Johnie emerges as the sympathetic protector of his countrymen and for this reason:

Scotlands heart was never sae wae,
To see sae mony brave men die.

Because they savd their country deir
Frae Englishmen; nane were sae bauld,
Whyle Johnie livd on the border-syde,
Nane of them durst cum neir his hald,
(C32$^{3-4}$, 33).

The English broadsides, however, make Armstrong a Westmorland man, erroneously of course, since he lived on the Scottish side of the Border, either at the Hollows tower[1] or Gilnockie (if a tower ever existed there)[2], on the river Esk. The mistake could be made by a broadside copyist, ignorant of northern geography, but I am inclined to think that it is part of the general Anglicizing process that has gone into the making of the A and B versions. The English broadside reader or audience wanted an English hero, betrayed and foully put to death by his old enemies,

1 Marked "Holhouse" on Blaeu's map of Liddesdale. Fraser, op. cit., 100, says that Armstrong's tower was near Hollows village, but this has disappeared and the present Hollows was probably built later in the sixteenth century.

2 A Gilnockie Tower is supposed to have stood a little below the Hollows pele, on the east bank of the Esk: "We can also inform our readers that Giltnock Hall was situate on a small rocky island on the river Esk below the Langholm, the remains of which are to be seen", Crito, Edinburgh Evening Courant, March 8, 1773, cited Child E.S.P.B., III, 363n. Most historians, however, seem to be agreed that Armstrong lived at Hollows, see R.B. Armstrong, op. cit., 228. There is no Gilnockie tower marked by Blaeu.

the Scots, and this is exactly what they got. It is not mentioned that this Border chief levied blackmail from the English as far as Newcastle (as in the Scottish Ever Green version). Instead, an oblique reference to the fact that he had "neither lands nor rents coming in" ($A1^3$, $B2^3$), supported by the equally vague statement that he "robbëd all the north country" ($A3^4$), tones down Johnie's criminal activity, and we are left with a noble English gentleman, lured to the Scottish capital under false promise of a safe-conduct, where three thousand "falce" and "cowardly" Scots massacre his gallant band. That this was the English view of Johnie Armstrong in the early-seventeenth century may be judged from one of the many penny histories that told Gilnockie's life story in extravagant prose. These often formed a preface to the ballad broadsheet and were bound with it as a small chap book. The History of Johnny Armstrong of Westmoreland[1] presents the hero as a kind of Robin Hood figure, feeding and clothing the poor and keeping open house. The writer tells how Johnie marries the daughter of a local squire and defends England against the barbarian Scots, about the time of Bannockburn[2]. After a glorious career, he dies fighting in the streets of Edinburgh against "Robert, Rex" and his treacherous subjects[3]. It does not seem to matter to the broadside writers that the proclamation in B asks, "Is there never a man in all Scotland?" ($B1^1$), and is met with the reply, "Yes, there is a man in Westmerland" ($B2^1$). Perhaps it is a mark of how little known this part of his country was to the average Londoner of the seventeenth century[4]. At any rate, the reference to Scotland in the opening is surely an indication of this version's Border origins.

1 'Printed and sold in Aldermary Church Yard, Bow-Lane, London'. No date is given, but the history must have been printed after 1603 as the Union is referred to.

2 Op. cit., 4.

3 Op. cit., 24.

4 It is noticeable that the A text does not even know the name of Armstrong's tower.

A more satisfying feature of the B version, artistically, is its use of symbolism to heighten the tragic effect of the tale. The weather reference in the verse which describes how Johnie set out for Edinburgh strikes one as belonging to the Border world:

> But when John he went from Guiltnock Hall!
> The wind it blew hard, and full sore it did rain:
> 'Now fare you well, brave Guiltnock Hall!
> I fear I shall never see thee again'.
> (B8)

The natural phenomena of storm and rain here seem to take on symbolic overtones as omens of disaster, while the last two lines look forward to the condemned man's "Goodnight" of version C (29-31). It is precisely this atmosphere of dark foreboding that the A version lacks, rendering it less successful as a ballad.

The concluding verses of B in which Armstrong's little foot-page brings home the news of his master's death, are also skilfully handled by the B version. Little Musgrave, as he is called, rescues his chieftain's horse, his "bonny grissell" ($B20^4$), and rides him back to Guiltnock Hall with the bad news. The outlaw's wife bears it with fortitude and says:

> 'Yet thou are welcome home, my bonny grisel!
> Full oft thou hast fed at the corn and hay,
> And now thou shalt be fed with bread and wine,
> And thy sides shall be spurred no more, I say'.
> (B23)

The lady accepts the horse in place of her slain and sacrificed lord. It is almost as if the animal has become a surrogate for the great man who once rode in its saddle, just as the bread and wine acts as a surrogate in the sacrament of Communion. This allusion would appear to reinforce what can only be termed a "resurrection" motif in stanza 18, when the wounded lord comforts his dismayed followers:

Said John, Fight on, my merry men all,
I am a little hurt, but I am not slain;
I will lay me down for to bleed a while,
Then I'le rise and fight with you again.
(B18)

The theme of the ballad is thus not treachery merely, but survival despite and through treachery. It is a theme that one might expect to emerge on the troubled Borders of the sixteenth century, and again I take it that its survival in the English broadside is evidence of the version's having been written down at some stage from oral recitation. The A version, which Henderson suggested was a "mere corruption" of B, weakens this resurrection motif as I have called it when Johnie says:

For I will stand by and bleed but awhile,
And then will I come and fight againe.
(A16[3-4])

And the "bonny grissell", which is to be fed on bread and wine and spurred no more, completely disappears.

The English broadsides have, as we saw, become overlaid with nationalist sentiment. This is true also of the Scottish copies mentioned by Child, in which "chiell" or "man" has to be substituted for the "false" or "cowardly Scot" of the English versions[1]. If nationalism is baser and more vituperative than regionalism, we would expect to find it perpetuated or resuscitated in these broadsides, rather than in the ballad of oral tradition. The fact that the extant blackletter copies of Johnie Armstrong were all printed in the years after the Union of the Crowns in 1603, goes to show that in some places the old national emnity had never quite died, or been allowed to die. Daniel Defoe, describing the Union as "an Union of the Crowns, but not a Union of the kingdoms"[2],

1 See E.S.P.B., III, 363, V, 263.

2 The History of the Union between England and Scotland (1786 ed.), 50.

watched a fanning of the flames of Anglo-Scottish hatred, to which ballads of the broadside type no doubt contributed. Defoe described how

> a pen and ink war made a daily noise in either kingdom, and this served to exasperate the people in such a manner, one against another, that never have two nations run upon one another in such a manner, and come off without blows.[1]

On the accession of James VI of Scotland to the English Crown the Scots were aliens in England and unpopular, mainly because of their poverty[2]. National rivalry broke out afresh soon after the accession of Queen Anne, and with a degree of vehemence superior to anything that had taken place in any former period[3], so the popularity of broadside ballads like John Arm-strongs Last Good-night is easy to account for. We are told that in 1530 "the Englisch people were exceeding glade when they understood that John Armestrang wes execute"[4], yet it is heavily ironic that they themselves should have turned the outlaw into an English champion leading his countrymen in the wars against the barbaric Scots!

A different situation obtains in the Scottish version of the ballad, Child C. National emnity and Johnie Armstrong's levying of English blackmail are there, but these themes are subordinated to wider, more complex issues - the dilemma of a Scottish outlaw powerful, respected and loved by his fellow-countrymen faced by his own sovereign whose power is weak and despised. The overriding concern of the Scottish Borderer is with the relation of his region which supports a system of personal and social autonomy (thanks to the power and influence of men

1 Op. cit., 76.

2 See Mackie, A History of Scotland, 179, 191.

3 Defoe, op. cit., 14; cf. also Mackie, op. cit., 264.

4 Patrick Anderson, MS. History of Scotland, I, fol. 154, cited R.B. Armstrong, op. cit., 275. Anderson flourished about 1618-35 and his MS. History is preserved in three folio volumes in the Advocate's Library, Edinburgh, see D.N.B., I, 389-90.

like Johnie Armstrong), to an outside government which attempts to make inroads and stringent demands upon it. As in The Outlaw Murray, the balladist builds his suspenseful tale around a situation in which the macrocosmic forces of law and order are on the point of trying to absorb the microcosmic.

This traditional Scottish version of the tale is Allan Ramsay's, collected from a descendant of the Armstrong chief some time before 1724, the date of its publication in The Ever Green. If A and B originated from a Border version of Johnie Armstrong may this copy not be it? It may, but unfortunately suspicions have been aroused as to its genuineness; first, because of its apparently late date of discovery, and secondly, because of its close resemblance to the account of Gilnockie's capture and execution as given by Robert Lindesay of Pitscottie. We may dispense with the first of these objections by arguing that there may well have been two separate ballad traditions, one more intensely local and regional (represented by the Ramsay version) and the other more adaptable as an English or Scottish broadside. Or perhaps the C version was simply confined to the Armstrong clan of Eskdale and Liddesdale. Sir Walter Scott would appear to corroborate this when he writes:

> The common people of the high parts of Teviotdale, Liddesdale, and the country adjacent, hold the memory of Johnie Armstrong in very high respect[1].

With regard to the second objection, it will be found that the C text and Lindesay's chronicle narrative do bear a striking resemblance to each other. As Lindesay's is by far the most circumstantial account of the raid of 1530, I shall quote it now in full[2]:

> Syne after [the king] made a Convention at Edinburgh with all his whole Lords and Barons, to consult how he might stanch all

1 Minstrelsy, I, 342.

2 Passages that correspond with the ballad are underlined and the relevant stanzas of version C given in parenthesis.

Theft and Reving within his Realm, and cause the Commons to live in Peace, which long Time had been perturbed before, for fault of good Guiding of an old King. To this effect, the King made Proclamations to all Lords, Barons, Gentlemen, Landwardmen, and Freeholders, that they should compear at Edinburgh, with a Month's Victual, to pass with the King where he pleased, to danton the thieves of Teviotdale, Anandale, Liddisdale, and other Parts of the Country: and also warned all gentlemen that had good Dogs, to bring them, that he might hunt in the said Country, as he pleased ...

The second Day of June the King past out of Edinburgh to the Hunting, with many of the Nobles and Gentlemen of Scotland with him, to the number of twelve thousand men; and then past to Meggitland, and hounded and hawked all the Country and Bounds; that is to say, Crammat, Pappert-Law, St. Mary laws, Carlaverick Chapel, Ewindoores, and Longhope. I heard say, he slew, in these Bounds, eighteenscore of Harts.

After this Hunting he hanged John Armstrong, Laird of Kilnocky, and his Complices, to the Number of thirty six Persons: For the which many Scottish-Men heavily lamented (cf. C32$^{3-4}$); for he was the most redoubted Chiftain that had been, for a long Time, on the Borders, either of Scotland or England (cf. C33). He rode ever with twenty four able Gentlemen, well horsed; yet he never molested any Scottish-Man.(cf. C21$^{3-4}$). But it is said, That, from the Borders to Newcastle, every Man of whatsomever Estate, paid him Tribute to be free of his Trouble (cf. C17$^{3-4}$). He came before the King, with his foresaid Number richly apparelled (cf. C25-26), trusting that, in respect of his free Offer of his Person, he should obtain the King's Favour. But the King, seeing him and his Men so gorgeous in their Apparel, with so many brave Men under a Tyrant's Commandment, frowardly turning him about, he bade take the Tyrant out of his Sight, saying, What wants that Knave, that a King should have? (cf. C26^{3}). But John Armstrong made great Offers to the King (cf. C9-17), That he should sustain himself with forty Gentlemen, ever ready at his service, on their own Cost, without wronging any Scottish-Man. Secondly, That there was not a Subject in England, Duke, Earl, or Baron, but, within a certain Day, he should bring him to his Majesty, either quick or dead. At length, he, seeing no Hope or Favour, said, very proudly, 'It is Folly to seek Grace at a graceless Face (cf. C22^{3}): But, (said he) had I known this, I should have lived on the Borders, in despite of King Hary and you both (cf. C23$^{3-4}$); for I know King Hary would down-weigh my best Horse with Gold, to know that I were condemned to die this Day' (cf. C24).

This being done, the King returned to Edinburgh the twenty eigth Day of July, One thousand five hundred and twenty eight years[1].

Despite the obvious correspondences between ballad and prose account, it is highly unlikely that the composer of C had any contact with Lindesay's Cronicles. It is thought that the latter began writing his

1 The Historie and Cronicles of Scotland (ed. R. Freebairn), 145-6.

history about January, 1576[1]. Now, although the precise date of the author's birth cannot be fixed, it is probable that he was born about 1532[2], and so could have heard Johnie Armstrong's tragic death sung in ballads when he was a young man. And there is nothing to gainsay the possibility that ballads were composed on the Border soon after Gilnockie had been hung. Moreover, in putting together this part of his narrative, Lindesay may have had recourse to hearsay, for there are more serious errors in dates in this section than in any other part of his history[3]. (The date of Armstrong's execution is two years out, for example). Even if our ballad was not, by some chance, composed until much later, it still remains doubtful whether a balladist (even a literate one) could have consulted Pitscottie's work, since this did not appear in print until 1728[4], four years after Ramsay had published 'Johnny Armstrong's last Good-night' in The Ever Green. Admittedly, there were sixteen MS. copies of Pitscottie's Cronicles, but many of these do not give the full account which I have quoted[5]. Also, the C version of the ballad contains much information not to be found in Lindesay's account, nor at that period known elsewhere than on the Border - for instance, the fact that Johnie was brother to the Laird of Mangerton (C29[1-2]), or that he had a son, Christy or Kirsty (C30[1]). And finally there is the obvious oral character of the ballad to support the case for its authenticity. The long, symmetrically patterned middle section of version C, in which the outlaw makes repeated offers of gifts and service only to have them flatly refused by the king, is the work of a reciter in

1 See Pitscottie's Chronicles (ed. A.J.G. Mackay), I, xlviii.

2 Mackay, op. cit., I, xxxv.

3 Mackay, op. cit., I, cliv.

4 This was Freebairn's edition from which I have quoted.

5 Some do not give the account of Armstrong's meeting with the king, suppressed no doubt because of its reflection on the royal conduct, see T.F. Henderson, Minstrelsy, I, 346.

the oral tradition. This method of composition was hardly appreciated, as we have seen, until the findings of Parry and Lord, let alone in the early-eighteenth century when Ramsay was publishing. In support of this view is Ramsay's use of the editorial "etc." to indicate repetitious matter within a stanza - the solution of the man-of-letters confronted by the thought-processes of the traditional singer of tales. The function of the repetition is simply not understood.

Belonging also to the traditional world of the C version is the "sister's son" formula, used by balladists whenever they wish to indicate the closeness of a kinship-tie and thereby to underline the importance of any relationship. The ballads, as F.B. Gummere pointed out, have preserved some remarkable traces of the precedence of a sister's son over a man's own son, a condition noted by Tacitus among the ancient Germanic races[1]. In Johnie Armstrong one of the offers the robber makes to the king is of "four-and-twenty sisters sons" to fight for him "tho all sould flee" ($C15^{3-4}$). Later Johnie boasts:

> 'Wist Englands king that I was tane,
> O gin a blyth man wald he be!
> For anes I slew his sisters son,
> And on his breist-bane brak a tree'.
> (C24)

- a deep-seated cause of emnity that a Border audience might well appreciate, whilst the "brag" in the last line seems part of the same mythologising process we watched at work in The Outlaw Murray. In the minds of ballad audiences "Black Jock" must have been a giant of a man.

We need not doubt, then, the truthfulness of Ramsay's statement that he got his copy of the ballad from a descendant of the Armstrongs; nor

1 The Popular Ballad, 183; cf. also Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, 264, where instances of the close relationship between brother and sister in balladry are given.

need we doubt that Robert Lindesay derived the material for his chronicle from the ballad (or ballads) current in his day, and not vice-versa.

The C text is thus a genuine recreation of the Johnie Armstrong story through oral-poetic devices, and, I wish to argue, is a better ballad than either A or B for having remained in close proximity to its folk origins. Let us begin our critical evaluation of the Scottish version by considering again the historical events behind the tale.

The circumstances of Johnie Armstrong's death, as given in the C text, are substantially close to tradition. Most historians are agreed that James V was guilty of some kind of double-dealing in persuading Gilnockie and his accomplices to surrender themselves. Robert Pitcairn in his Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland concludes:

> There cannot now be a doubt that he was most basely betrayed and put to death, even without the mockery of a form of Trial[1].

Behind the brevity of the official record may shelter an embarrassed silence. There are a couple of grim lines only:

> John Armestrange, 'alias Blak Jok' and Thomas his brother convicted of common theft, and reset of theft etc. - Hanged[2].

Another historian, George Buchanan, who would have been about twenty-five at the time of the Armstrongs' execution, and whose History of Scotland was first published in Edinburgh, in 1582, writes:

> This John was enticed by the King's officers, to have recourse to the King; which he did, unarmed, with about fifty horse in his company; but neglecting to obtain the King's pass and safe-conduct for his security, he fell into an ambush, who brought him to the King, as if he had been taken prisoner by them[3].

A later historian, Patrick Anderson, who flourished about 1618-35, supplies us with further information which throws light on the ballad:

1 Op. cit., I, 152.

2 Ibid.

3 Op. cit. (1762 ed.), II, 183.

> On the eight of June the principalls of all the surnames of the clannes on the borders came to the king upon hope of a proclamation procleamed in the king's name that they sould all get thair lyves, if they wold cum in and submit themselves in the king's will, and so opon this hope Jhone Armestrang, who keipit the castell of Langhame (a brother of the laird of Mangerton's, a great theiff and oppressour, and one that keiped still four and twentie well-horsed men), came in to the king, and another called Ill Will Armstrang, another stark theiff with sundrie of the Scots and Elletts, came all forwarde to the campe where the king was in hope to get their pardones. But no sooner did the king persave them, and that they were cum afarre aff, when direction was given presentlie to enclose them rownd about, the which was done accordinglie, and were all apprehendit to the number of threttie-fyve persones, and at a place called Carlaveroke Cheapell, were all committed to the gallowes[1].

By Carlaverock Anderson may have intended Carlenrig, as in C32[1]. It is known that James V arrived there on July 5, 1530[2] and three days later, on July 8, a letter was issued by royal order conveying all the property that had belonged to "umquhile Johne Armstrang, bruther to Thomas Armstrang of Mayngertoun" to Robert Lord Maxwell, "be resoun of eschete throw justifying of the said umqhill Johnne to the deid for thift committit be him"[3]. And tradition has been consistent in pointing to Carlenrig as the spot where Gilnockie and his men ended their days[4].

The Ever Green version accords with history in saying that "The Eliots and Armstrangs did convene" (C3[1]). Anderson mentions this other "grayne", or sept, as does the Diurnal of Remarkable Occurents[5]. The proclamation by which Anderson says Gilnockie was wooed into the king's

1 MS. History, I, fol. 154, cited R.B. Armstrong, The History of Liddesdale, 274-5.

2 See Armstrong, op. cit., 213.

3 R.P.C., VIII, 195.

4 The Rev. R. Young, minister of the Parish of Teviothead, wrote in 1875: "When, after the erection of our new church near the spot, the burying ground was extended and properly enclosed, one of the first places opened in the new ground contained a large quantity of bones which were supposed at the time to form remains of the once-noted freebooter and his men. That they were not buried in consecrated ground is extremely probable, and it is remarkable that no such remains have appeared in any other portion of the new ground that has yet been opened." John Armstrong of Gilnockie, 1530, 14.

5 A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents in Scotland (ed. T. Thompson), 14.

presence becomes, in ballad terms, the familiar "luving letter" (C2[1]), whilst the C version is also geographically correct in putting Armstrong's residence near "the Langum [Langholm] howm" (C5[1]).

Yet in other respects the ballad deliberately distorts what can be construed as facts, especially where these might cast the hero in an unflattering light. It seems only too likely, for example, that the chieftain's depradations were not confined, as he claims in the ballad, to the English side of the Border. One may applaud Johnie's boast,

> 'But neir a Scots wyfe could haif said
> That eir I skaithd her a pure flie'.
> (C21[3-4])

and then check this against what Anderson has to say of the kind of company kept by Armstrong. At the same time as Johnie Armstrong was hanged, "One Sandie Scot, a prowd theiff, was brunt becaus it was provin that he haid brunt a pure wedowes house, togither with sum of her children"[1]. Indeed, just how far Scotland was spared the ravages of the Armstrong clan may be guaged from what Sim the Laird told the Earl of Northumberland in 1528. Sim declared that

> in the realme of Scotland he wold nevir looke to have justice kepit, seying, that hymself and hys adherentes have endway laid waiste in the said realme lx myles, and laid downe xxx[to] parisshe churches; and that there is not oone in the realme of Scotland dar remedy the same[2].

Here, as Fraser comments, "is an apparent naivete that is the essence of subtlety, for Armstrong was saying, in fact: It is a pretty poor government that tolerates me"[3]. It is therefore worth remembering the kind of company Johnie Armstrong is likely to have kept when considering the heroic eminence given to him and his riders by the balladist.

1 MS. History, fol. 154, cited Armstrong, op. cit., 275.

2 Letter from Henry, Earl of Northumberland, to Brian Tuke, December 20, 1528, Letters and Papers Hen. VIII, IV, Pt. ii, 2205, No. 5055.

3 George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 235.

There is, however, one redeeming patch of light at the centre of this dark act of political treachery and this it is that forms the emotional and dramatic core of the ballad in its C version. In the Border world it is a man's pledged word that links or severs the human relationships which the Borderers appear to have valued so highly. We have seen how it operates in the situation described in The Outlaw Murray, to build something meaningful out of the chaos of a frontier limbo. Now, in Johnie Armstrong we appreciate how the absence of this virtue is operative in breaking up the social order, however primitive that may be, of the Border society.

This notion of good faith, then, is one of the ballad's twin poles. It is at the centre of peripheral but connotative terms such as "degrie" ($C1^1$), "luving" ($C2^1$), "tenderly" ($C2^2$), "safe" ($C3^4$), "grace" ($C7^1$), "loyal" ($C7^2$), "honesty" ($C19^4$); whilst a further polarization is offered by the words "traytor" ($C8^1$), "unkynd" ($C23^2$, and more forceful in its sixteenth-century sense), and "cruel" ($C27^4$). Explored in this way, the surface simplicity of the ballad's vocabulary can be seen to take on a cumulative force, not only within this ballad but by way of reference also to others within the Border canon, to create a tension bred of the warring of eternal opposites in human behaviour.

Both aspects of human conduct, the loyal and the treacherous, are given further emphasis by the ballad's formal structure. Seen in this way, the highly symmetrical pattern set up by stanzas 7-18 of version C, is more than simple verbal repetition. The balladist is putting his inherited and traditional mode of composition (governed by its set formulae) to the service of his theme - the conflict between two rigid and inflexible modes of behaviour. The constant element throughout Johnie's speeches is his generosity, his offer of various "bony", or

"brave", or "great" gifts. But whereas the outlaw's gifts vary with each individual offer ("milk-whyt steids", English gold, twenty-four "ganging mills", etc.), encompassing all that is most precious in terms of the Border economy, and suggesting a likeable, generous, extrovert character, the king's refusal is repeated without verbal alteration of any kind:

> 'Away, away, thou traytor, strong!
> Out of my sicht thou mayst sune be!
> I grantit nevir a traytor's lyfe,
> And now I'll not begin with thee'.
> (C8, 11, 14, 16, 18)

- five times in all. The king's answer is thus rigid and uncompromising, suggesting a narrow, unyielding character.

The impression throughout this series of spirited offers and cruel rebuffs is one of gentlemanly composure on Armstrong's part, made all the greater by contrast with the king's first outburst in stanza 8. One does not feel that the outlaw is piling one bribe on top of another in a desperate bid to gain a reprieve, rather that he is working towards a complete exposure of the king's insincerity:

> 'Ye lied, ye lied, now, king', he says,
> 'Althocht a king and prince ye be,
> For I luid naithing in all my lyfe,
> I dare well say it, but honesty.'
> (C19)

The accusation is obvious: government must set a strong example; kings and princes should keep their word. What is more, they should inspire by their example on the field of battle ($C27^{3-4}$). The question asked by the king in his rage -

> 'What wants that knave that a king suld haif,
> But the sword of honour and the crown!!
> ($C26^{3-4}$)

- is ironically a compliment. Johnie, the ballad seems to be saying,

has all the princely virtues, and although he wears fine clothes and "targats"[1] on his hat, he does not need to rely on these to convince others of his natural superiority. The fact that the "king with crown" attaches such weight to them betrays the basic weakness of his character. The tragedy is that, although the king grudgingly recognises that Gilnockie is "a king as well as he" ($C6^4$), he is not prepared to match this with respect, as did the king in The Outlaw Murray. And whereas the latter takes off his cap in that ballad (B54), the monarch in Johnie Armstrong will only "move his bonnet to him" ($C10^3$).

Johnie thus emerges as a supreme example of that good faith and loyalty revered by the Border folk. This, as I have pointed out, is a marked regional characteristic, although in this ballad Johnie's loyalty is also couched in terms of Scottish patriotism. The chief of his offers is to the consternation of the English - "Inglis gilt" ($C10^3$) and a "yeirly rent" or blackmail (C17). Finally we might note how careful the balladist is to make the king's perfidy all the more heinous in view of the welcome Gilnockie had prepared for him. The Armstrongs, says the ballad, intended to escort their "lawful king" ($C3^3$) and bring him "safe" ($C3^4$) to Gilnockie hall, there to dine with them. We may also infer, I think, that they ride to keep their tryst unarmed:

> They ran their horse on the Langum howm,
> And brake their speirs with mekle main.
> ($C5^{1-2}$)

And no doubt the womenfolk are aware of the folly of this when they cry, "God bring our men weil back again!" ($C5^4$). Later Johnie wishes:

1 A "targat", or "terget", is a pendant, tassel, or ornamental drop of some kind. It appears as a sort of ornamental blazon, worn in the royal bonnet or hat in the court Inventories of c. 1542: "Item, ane bonnet of velvet with ane targat set with ane gryt tabill dyamont", cited in E.D.S.L., IV, 511.

'Had I my horse, and my harness gude,
And ryding as I wont to be,
It sould haif bene tald this hundred yeir
The meiting of my king and me'.
(C28)

But, unlike the Johnie Armstrong of the broadsides, he is not allowed to die fighting (the hero's death) but is hung as a common felon.

Besides the ballad's theme of good faith, there is a further concept which runs through it and that is the idea of the Border itself. Looking back regretfully to what might have happened if he had known of the king's real intention, Johnie says:

'But had I kend, or I came frae hame,
How thou unkynd wadst bene to me,
I wad haif kept the border-syde,
In spyte of all thy force and thee'.
(C23)

The "border-syde" is referred to three times in this version, twice by the outlaw himself. It emerges, almost, as a symbol of freedom and insular security between a treacherous Scottish sovereign on the one hand and the emnity of the English king on the other. In stanza 23, Johnie knows that he is far "frae hame" and looks back to his Border stronghold as a place of refuge. In the following verse the balladist plays on the associations of the tower with wealth and solidarity:

'Fareweil, my bonny Gilnock-Hall,
Whair on Esk-syde thou standest stout!
Gif I had lived but seven yeirs mair,
I wald haif gilt thee round about.'
(C31)

Johnie thus makes a journey symbolically as well as literally, from the safety and respectability of the Border world to the court world of subterfuge, danger and betrayal[1]. Perhaps this was why the

1 We might compare this with the journey made the other way, to the sanctuary of the Border, by Archie Weir in Robert Louis Stevenson's Weir of Hermiston.

other balladists brought the outlaw to Edinburgh city to die in the streets; subconsciously they may have associated the town with duplicity and intrique whilst consciously they would have associated it with trials and executions.

Lastly, and without attempting to read too much into the ballad, we might say that the Border becomes a symbol of energy, of the life-giving, life-loving principle. As in the paradaisal ambience of the Ettrick Forest descriptions in The Outlaw Murray, the Border in Johnie Armstrong is associated with teeming animal life which produces abundance of food - "kinnen", capon, venison (C4$^{1-2}$), "beif and mutton" (C21^{2}) - and with the harvest of man's labour - "gude reid wheit" (C13^{3}), "meil and maut" (C20^{3}). And what matter if these have to be "lifted" from across the Border? - the Borderers appear to have believed that all goods and "gear" were held in common and there for the taking[1]. Moreover, the Border folk enjoy a jestful, open-air existence, lived recklessly perhaps, but lived to the full. All a man needs is

> a fat horse, and a fair woman,
> Two bony dogs to kill a deir:
> (C20$^{1-2}$)

Valued highly for its life-supporting abundance, the Border contrasts sharply with the court. When the king turns down one after another of Johnie's magnificent offers, he is, as far as the Borderer is concerned, negating a way of life and all it has to offer. The lusty outlaw realises in more ways than one that it is useless "to seik het water beneth cauld yce" (C22^{1}) - one of the ballad's most forceful and memorable images. This king brings no renewal, no approval of the greenwood-

1 Sir Robert Carey, Warden of the English Middle March in the last years of the sixteenth century, wrote of the Scots: "They have been used to rob and spoil, and think it their inherytance, scorning all opposition", C.B.P., II, 577, No. 1020.

frontier way of life, but death. He kills rather than absorbs the Border spirit.

James Hogg in a letter to William Laidlaw of July 20, 1801, surmised that The Outlaw Murray and Johnie Armstrong might have been "written by the same bard"[1]. We know that traditional ballads were not written, but it seems more than likely that the earlier Outlaw Ballad was well known to the Armstrong reciter of sixteenth-century Eskdale. There are verbal as well as thematic correspondences between the two narratives. When the king asks Johnie where he won his "targets" and he replies:

> 'I gat them in the feild fechting,
> Wher, cruel king, thou durst not be'. (C27$^{3-4}$)

we are at once put in mind of the Outlaw Murray's brag:

> 'Frae Soudron I this forest wan,
> When the king nor's knights were not to see'. (O.M., A22$^{3-4}$)

In George Paton's manuscript copy of Johnie Armstrong, when the king asks where the outlaw got his "targets", he replies:

> 'I got them, cukel king, in the field,
> Where thow and thy men durst not come to see'[2].

The similarity between these lines and the Outlaw Murray's boast in the Glenriddell MS. copy of that ballad, is even more pronounced. Murray says he won his lands

> 'frae the Soudan Turk,
> When their cuckold king durst not come to see;
> For I wan them in the fields fighting,
> Where him and his nobles durst not come to see'. (O.M., B26$^{3-6}$)

1 See Robert Carruthers, Abbotsford Notanda, in Robert Chambers, Life of Sir Walter Scott, 117.

2 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., III, 363n.

Both story-tellers, then, sang of a king confronted by an outlawed subject. In one ballad the latter is pardoned and restored to grace, in the other he rides out and does not come "weil back again". But both tales hold up good faith, mutual respect and clemency, together with a need to recognise the strength and worth inherent in the Border way of life, as the better part of conduct for men in the northern shires.

CHAPTER SIX

THE RAIDING BALLADS - JAMIE TELFER OF THE FAIR DODHEAD[1], ROOKHOPE RYDE[2], DICK O THE COW[3], THE LOCHMABEN HARPER[4], THE LADS OF WAMPHRAY[5]

We come now to a group of ballads which make up the central core of Border Balladry - the Raiding Ballads. Unfortunately, "raiding", or "riding"[6], as a literary term has been as vaguely conceived and as inexactly applied as the term Border Ballad itself. Willa Muir, for instance, refers to "the Border Riding Ballads", yet she includes Johnie Armstrong under the same heading as Dick o the Cow and Jock o the Side[7], without differentiating clearly enough between the three, all of which contain different themes. E.K. Wells also uses the term indiscriminately. She devotes a whole chapter of her book The Ballad Tree to what she styles "Border Raid Ballads"[8], and in this she refers not only to the raiding ballads proper (listed in my chapter head above) but also, and quite at random, to Johnie Armstrong, Hobie Noble, The Outlaw Murray, The Baron of Brackley (Child 203) and The Fire of Frendraught (Child 196), the last two not being ballads from the Border at all, but from the north of Scotland[9].

Sir Walter Scott, drawing a rough distinction between the Romantic Ballads as he called them in one section of his Minstrelsy, and the Raiding Ballads, remarks that the former carry with them

1 Child 190, E.S.P.B., IV, 4-8, V, 249-51.

2 Child 179, E.S.P.B., III, 439-41.

3 Child 185, E.S.P.B., III, 461-8.

4 Child 192, E.S.P.B., IV, 16-23.

5 Child 184, E.S.P.B., III, 458-60.

6 A "ride", or "ryde" as it is spelt in Scotland and Co. Durham is, in the sense in which it is used in Rookhope Ryde, synonymous with the word raid, see E.D.D., V, 100, 103; S.N.D., VII, 325; E.D.S.L., III 601. Similarly, "to ride" can mean to go on a raid or foray, O.E.D., VIII, 654.

7 Living with Ballads, 185-8

8 Op. cit., 55-76.

9 They are both based on events that took place in Aberdeenshire, see Child, E.S.P.B., IV, 39-42, 80-3.

> a general, and not merely a local interest, and are much more extensively known among the peasantry of Scotland than the Border-raid ballads, the fame of which is in general confined to the mountains where they were originally composed[1].

Finally, James Reed confuses the terminology even further when he defines the "riding ballads" as "those concerned with raiding and reiving or rescue"[2].

All that is really necessary, is to make the simple thematic definition of a Raiding Ballad as one which deals specifically with a raid or foray upon or across the Border, and in which the exploits of the Border reivers as reivers are celebrated[3]. Bishop Leslie recognised this as one of the favourite themes of the Borderers when he wrote that in their songs they tell of their "ingenious policie to dryue a pray (i.e. cattle)"[4]. This is the subject of the five ballads I have chosen for discussion in this chapter, a choice which clearly rules out ballads such as Johnie Armstrong or The Outlaw Murray which we have now seen to be preoccupied with quite different issues. It would, perhaps, have been legitimate to have dealt with The Hunting of the Cheviot, or even The Battle of Otterburn as Raiding Ballads, since Percy in the one and Douglas in the other both cross the Border "to take (or drive) a praye"; but I have preferred to make my thematic definition a little more flexible and to regard this pair of ballads separately as "Ballads of Battle". In other Border Ballads raiding may figure, but as a subsidiary theme. This is the case in Hobie Noble which begins as a raiding ballad but has at its centre the crime of betrayal. In this chapter, therefore, I wish to confine myself to those ballads which deal with

1 Minstrelsy, I, 168-9.

2 'Border Ballads', The Use of English, XIX (1968), 229.

3 S.N.D., VII, 434, gives as a definition of Riding Ballad, "a traditional ballad commemorating a border foray".

4 The History of Scotland (ed. E.G. Cody), I, 102.

the plight of individuals - the Jamie Telfers of the Border - who often, through no fault of their own, became the innocent victims of a predatory frontier society. They were typical of the many who wanted simply, in the words of the Durham ballad-singer, to "live on their own"[1], tilling their small plot of land, or working their cultivation terrace, and driving their cattle to the summer "sheiling" or to market; but who became the unwilling protagonists in a number of broils and small domestic tragedies, the story potential of which the balladists of the time were not slow to seize on.

The business of cattle-stealing is an old one in heroic songs and epics. As a literary motif, it reaches far back into the past of the Indo-European nations. Although, as might be expected, it first enters the tales of warlike, nomadic tribes, whose main economy derived from cattle-breeding, this motif preserved its attraction even after agriculture had tied man to a fixed abode[2]. Thus in The Odyssey (Bk. XI, l. 288 f.) we read of Neleus who will only give his beautiful daughter, Pero, in marriage to the man who will "lift" the oxen of the mighty Iphicles[3]. And in The Iliad (Bk. XI, l. 671 f.) Nestor tells a story of cattle-raiding[4]. The old Irish epics, too, are concerned largely with cattle-raids, "Táin Bó" (meaning cattle-raid) being the title of many of them. The most famous is Táin bó Cualnge, in which Medb, the Queen of Connacht who has quarrelled with her husband Ailill, decides to steal the famous Brown Bull of Cualnge[5].

But although cattle-reiving is a motif of the folk-tales of other cultures, it is often no more than that, while in the cowboy songs of the American south-west cattle-rustling as a theme is strangely absent[6].

1 Rookhope Ryde, 5[2].
2 See Jan de Vries, Heroic Song and Heroic Legend (trans. B.J. Timmer), 75.
3 Op. cit. (trans. E.V. Rieu), 178-9.
4 Op. cit. (trans. E.V. Rieu), 215.
5 See de Vries, op. cit., 74-6.
6 See Wells, The Ballad Tree, 297.

The Border Ballads, however, have taken cattle-reiving as a fundamental theme, and no wonder, since to the freebooters living there during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it represented a whole way of life. Summed up by the motto on the coat of arms of the Scotts of Harden, Phoebe reparabit cornua, is all the romantic splendour with which posterity has tended to invest these common thieves and cut-throats. Sir Walter Scott was largely responsible for this glamourisation, in anecdotes like the following which tradition tells of Scott of Harden's wife:

> When the last bullock was killed and devoured, it was the lady's custom to place on the table a dish, which, on being uncovered, was found to contain a pair of clean spurs, a hint to the riders that they must shift for their next meal[1].

A picture representing this humorous episode may be seen at Abbotsford.

Motto, anecdote, picture, ballad - all of these reflect the means by which the mediaeval Border economy remained solvent. They are the manifestations of a culture that was part mythical, part real. Above all, it is probably the Border Ballads that have helped to establish the myth, so that in the past they may have been read uncritically and without an ear for the note of censure sounded by the ballad-makers not far beneath the surface. John Veitch is characteristic of this Romantic school of Border lovers when he praises the ballad of Jamie Telfer:

> The whole spirit of the old Border life is there in its fidelity to clanship, its ready daring, its fierceness in fighting, its delight in romantic deeds, its heart of pathos. The power and truth of manhood were never more firmly tested than in the wild grips of a Border raid[2].

While admitting that it is difficult not to be captivated by the romantic side of the reivers' way of life, it is important to keep it in perspective, and this the raiding ballads may help us to do. Let us look first at Jamie Telfer.

1 Minstrelsy, I, 154n.

2 The History and Poetry of the Scottish Border, II, 147.

Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead is a stirring ballad of 49 verses (in its longest version) and tells a story of raid and counter-raid. The Captain of Bewcastle, an English official under the Warden of the West March[1], crosses the Border with his band of men and penetrates as far as Teviotdale. A Scottish "guide" advises him to plunder the tower of Dodhead, and this he does, driving off Jamie Telfer's ten "milk-kye". Jamie runs on foot to summon help from the local clansmen who pursue the English raiders and after a bloody battle recover Jamie's stock.

The ballad exists in two versions and, as in the case of Johnie Armstrong, there has been much sparring in the literary and antiquarian arena to decide which of these is the "original", or earliest copy. Scott was the first to publish Jamie Telfer. It appeared in The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, in the first edition of 1802[2], where it occupied a position immediately after The Lochmaben Harper. Scott gives no account of how he came by it, but says:

> There is another ballad, under the same title as the following, in which nearly the same incidents are narrated, with little difference, except that the honour of rescuing the cattle is attributed to the Liddesdale Elliots, headed by a chief, there called Martin Elliot of the Preakin Tower, whose son, Simon, is said to have fallen in the action. It is very possible that both the Teviotdale Scotts, and the Elliots, were engaged in the affair, and that each claimed the honour of the victory[3].

It has been supposed that this other version, alluded to by Scott, was the one later discovered by Child's correspondent, Mr. Macmath, among the papers of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, and printed in volume V of The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, under 'Additions and Corrections'[4]. The hand of this MS. copy "is a good and careful one of about the beginning of this century [i.e. c. 1800] , with a slight shake

1 See infra, p.287.

2 Minstrelsy (1802 ed.), I, 80, see E.S.P.B., IV, 4. I have called this version Child A.

3 Minstrelsy, II, 1.

4 See E.S.P.B., V, 249. I have called this version Child B.

in it, and probably that of a person advanced in life"[1]. Child himself clearly believed this to be the unprinted copy "referred to in the Border Minstrelsy, in which the Elliots take the place assigned in the other version to the Scotts"[2]. But a little later Child also mentions a letter of James Hogg to Sir Walter Scott, in which Hogg states that Jamie Telfer, as given in the Minstrelsy, differs in many particulars from his mother's way of singing it. The letter, dated June 30, 1803, runs as follows:

> I am surprised to find that the songs in your collection differ so widely from my mother's. Is Mr. Herd's MS. genuine? I suspect it. Jamie Telfer differs in many particulars[3].

Macmath thought that C.K. Sharpe's version was in David Herd's hand, as affected by age[4].

From Hogg's remarks, Child speculated that, "Mrs. Hogg's version may very likely have been a third copy"[5]. If this is so, then two questions need to be asked. First, if Mrs. Hogg's version was not the "other ballad" known to Scott, then what became of it? - could it not have been preserved by one of Scott's enthusiastic ballad-scouts, Hogg, Leyden, or Laidlaw? Secondly, we may ask, if Mrs. Hogg's version was markedly different, why did not the editor of the Minstrelsy, on learning this from Hogg, give instructions immediately for a transcript to be made? The only reasonable answer seems to be that Scott was, in fact, already well acquainted with this version and considered that the incidents in it were "nearly the same" and narrated "with little difference". The probability is therefore strong that the Sharpe MS. copy was one and the same version of Jamie Telfer as that chanted by old Mrs. Hogg, and also the same as that "other ballad" known to Scott. This was Andrew

1 Cited ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Cited Andrew Lang, Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy, 123.
4 See ibid.
5 E.S.P.B., V, 249.

Lang's opinion[1], but Lang also believed that a third copy of some kind was used by Scott in the compiling of his Minstrelsy text[2]. It will help if we now compare the two versions through the medium of Scott's editorial alterations.

We may wonder why, if Scott had seen or heard the B version of Jamie Telfer he chose not to publish it. The answer is not hard to find. In the B version of the story, Jamie runs for help first to Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh at Branxholm Hall[3]. He is shocked at the response to his plea for aid, for Buccleugh tells him:

'Gae seek your succour frae Martin Elliot,
For succour ye's get nane frae me;
Gae seek your succour where ye paid blackmail,
For, man, ye never paid money to me.'
(B10)

Clearly, this version does not present a very flattering picture of a man whom Scott liked to number among his ancestors. In the ballad as it was published in the Minstrelsy, the equivalent verses make Telfer run to Gibby Elliot at Stobs Hall[4]. This time the poor farmer is told:

'Gae seek your succour at Branksome Ha,
For succour ye'se get nane frae me;
Gae seek your succour where ye paid blackmail,
For, man, ye neer paid money to me'.
(A10)

The name-change was a simple one, whoever made it (Scott may have been responsible, though not necessarily if he was working from another copy). The substitution results in Telfer's being forced to run a further distance across country to "Branksome", picking up help from the Grieves and, presumably, the Scotts, and arriving finally at Buccleugh's

1 Op. cit., 98.

2 Op. cit., 99-100, 116-23.

3 Branxholm is on the river Teviot about 3m. south of Hawick, see OS Map, Sheet 64, and Blaeu's Map of Teviotdale.

4 Stobs Castle is situated on the Slitrig Water, about 4m. south of Hawick, see OS Map, Sheet 70, and Blaeu's Map of Teviotdale.

residance. In this version Buccleugh, true to what we know of his character in history, mobilises the whole countryside and leads his clansmen in pursuit of the English reivers. There is no doubt that the A version was the work of a Scott sympathiser, for we find verses like the following, not in the Sharpe copy:

> The Scotts they rade, the Scotts they ran,
> Sae starkly and sae steadilie,
> And aye the ower-word o the thrang
> Was, Rise for Branksome readilie!
> (A28)

Even if the above is not of Sir Walter's making, it is possible to pick out what are almost certainly his emendations. Scott was fastidious. As a poet his obvious preferences were for poetic diction of the kind Wordsworth abhorred, and a mellifluousness of rhythm and phrase. We find him in a letter to C.K. Sharpe asking permission to "ornament" the Minstrelsy with the latter's poem, The Lord Herries, His Complaint[1]. He suggests that Sharpe alter the line: "Ere that heart light can be", to: "Ere light that heart can be", perhaps to remove the heavy stress on the demonstrative. He criticises Sharpe's expression, "cut the throat", as being "rather too plebeian and unbaronial a mode of committing murder", and suggests that "pierced" might be substituted "without injury to either sense or rhyme"[2]. And so, with these alterations made, the poem appeared in the Minstrelsy[3].

This kind of punctiliousness, amounting almost to prudery, is exactly what we find in Scott's known ballad revisions. One expurgation which we might guess to be the work of the editor of Jamie Telfer is the description in the A version of the injury sustained by the Captain of Bewcastle:

1 The Letters of Sir Walter Scott (ed. H.J.C. Grierson), I, 156.

2 Letters (ed. Grierson), I, 156-7.

3 Minstrelsy, IV, 306. This was Scott's final section entitled 'Imitations of the Ancient Ballad'.

The Captain was run through the thick of the thigh,
And broken was his right leg-bane;
If he had lived this hundred years,
He had never been loved by woman again.
(A40)

And he laments in the stanza that follows:

'For gin I suld live a hundred years
There will neer fair lady smile on me'.
(A41$^{3-4}$)

The Captain's extreme concern for a broken leg is not fully explained until we compare Scott's copy with Sharpe's. There,

The Captain was shot through the head,
And also through the left ba-stane;
Tho he had livd this hundred years,
He'd neer been loed by woman again.
(B34)

And Sir Walter confesses in a modest note, part in Latin:

> The Editor has used some freedom with the original ... The account of the captain's disaster, (<u>teste laeva vulnerata</u>) is rather too naive for literal publication[1].

Romantic and poetic is stanza 12 of Scott's copy. When Jamie has been robbed and refused help by Elliot, he gives way to self-pity:

'My hounds may a' rin masterless,
My hawks may fly frae tree to tree,
My Lord may grip my vassal-lands,
For there again maun I never be!'
(A12)

This verse is not in version B; it is inappropriate here. Jamie does not even possess a horse, let alone hawks and hounds, and at this point in the narrative there is no reason why he should think that he will not return to the Fair Dodhead. The stanza, in fact, is a commonplace one, a kind of "lament for lost possessions", and as such recurs in the ballad

1 <u>Minstrelsy</u>, II, 17.

Young Beichan (Child 53, E6)[1], but whereas in that story the hero is possessed of a hall "with other castles two or three" (E11[1-2]), Jamie Telfer is presented as a small-holder living in a pele tower with "ten milk-kye" and their calves. Moreover, he is not even the owner of the Fair Dodhead, merely the tenant, as we shall see. Child did not hold Scott responsible for this "floating" stanza[2]. Even if he had known Young Beichan, and there is no evidence that he did[3], it is unlikely, as Andrew Lang remarks, that he would introduce into Jamie Telfer lines so utterly out of keeping with Telfer's circumstances. Lang sees the inapplicability of the "lament for lost possessions" stanza as evidence that Scott had before him another copy of the ballad, besides the Sharpe version. That copy, Lang argues, contained A12, as well as the transposition of Scotts and Elliots, and "into that copy Scott wrote the lines and stanzas which bear his modern romantic mark"[4].

A verse generally considered to be of Scott's fabrication is A36. Old Wat of Harden's son, Willie, is slain in the skirmish with the English raiders. Harden, naturally, "grat for very rage" (A35[3]),

> But he's taen aff his gude steel cap,
> And thrice he's waved it in the air;
> The Dinlay[5] snow was neer more white
> Nor the lyart locks of Harden's hair.
> (A36)

1 The line, "My hawks may flie frae tree to tree", recurs as a separate formula in Jamie Douglas (Child 204, B15[2]).

2 E.S.P.B., IV, 5.

3 The ballad does not appear in the Minstrelsy. Version E is an amalgam of "A, a manuscript and a stall copy from Scotland, a recited copy from the north of England, and a short version picked off a wall in London. It was first published in Jamieson's Popular Ballads, in 1806", see E.S.P.B., I, 469.

4 Lang, op. cit., 120-1.

5 Dinley is a small settlement at the foot of the Dinley Burn where it flows into Hermitage Water, see OS Map, Sheet 69.

Quite apart from the fact that the verse is, as Child put it, "in Hardyknute style"[1], a fighting mosstrooper in the middle of a dangerous melee would never remove his steel bonnet, especially after his son has just been "stricken ower the head" (A35[1]). In connection with this verse, it might be mentioned that Sir Walter was pleased to claim descent from the old reiver, Wat of Harden, who plays such a conspicuous part in the A text. Scott boasted of having made this chieftain's name "ring in many a ditty"[2], and one wonders if the ballad of Jamie Telfer may not have been one of them.

Other small revisions which are probably the work of Scott involve one of two things: either a softening or polishing of what in the B text is coarse and colloquial; or the variegation of what Scott no doubt considered to be passages of flat repetition. We catch, for example, the hard cut-and-thrust of the mosstrooper's vernacular in lines such as:

In spite o (Jamie Telfer's) teeth and thee
(the Captain's)

(B29[2], 40[4])

But this is emasculated in the Scott text when it becomes: "In spite of every Scott that's here" (A32[4]), and "In scorn of a' his men and he" (A47[4]).

Where the Sharpe version introduces a character by saying, "There was a man in our company" (B37[1]), A embroiders with "a wild gallant" (A44[1]).

Perhaps for reasons of etiquette and consistency, Scott rationalised stanza 15 of B. There, auld Jock Grieve says that Jamie was married "t' the auld sister" and himself "t' the younges t o' the three"

1 E.S.P.B., IV, 5.
2 Cited J.G. Lockhart, Memoirs of Sir Walter Scott (1900 ed.), I, 3.

(B15$^{3-4}$). Although we know of several hoary Border chiefs who took young brides for themselves[1], we find the marriages reversed in Scott's text, so that Jamie marries the youngest sister, to accord possibly with Scott's conception of him as a youthful hero.

Whilst much of the oral repetition of version B survives Scott's editing, a certain amount appears to have been done to remove what nineteenth-century taste might have despised as mere repetition. In Sharpe's copy, each time Jamie Telfer announces himself, he laments:

'It's I, Jamie Telfer i the Fair Dodhead,
And a harried man I think I be;
There's naething left i the Fair Dodhead
But only wife and children three'.
(B9)

This recurs four times, without variation, except that the reciter of B has split the verse on one occasion (B13-14). The same verse reappears in Scott's copy, but attempts have been made to vary the expression. We read "at" or "in" the Fair Dodhead (A9^{3}, 15^{1}); a "waefu wife" (A9^{4}), a "greeting wife" (A15^{2}); "naething left" (A9^{3}) and "nought left" (A23^{3}). In one instance, for the last two lines of the verse is substituted:

'The Captain o Bewcastle has driven my gear;
For God's sake, rise and succour me!'
(A19$^{3-4}$)

These, of course, may have been in Scott's third copy of the ballad; the point is that they are his preferred readings, and appear as such in the Minstrelsy text.

Finally, we might set out the way in which Jamie's cross-country journey is carried from stage to stage in the oral version. A substitution system is employed, the only addition required being that of a new place-name, as in the formula

1 Auld Wat of Harden, who married Mary Scott, "the Flower of Yarrow", was one, see Minstrelsy, II, 16.

Then he's taen out a bonny black,
   It was weel fed wi corn and hay,
And set Jamie Telfer on his back,
   To the (Catlock hill[1]) to take the fray.
         (Pricken haugh[2])
(B16, 20)

Compare this with Scott's text which reproduces the "bonny black" formula in stanza 17, but which avoids repetition of this in stanza 21 by means of conventional third-person narrative:

He's set his twa sons on coal-black steeds,
   Himself upon a freckled gray,
And they are on wi Jamie Telfer,
   To Branksome Ha to take the fray.
(A21)

We know, then, that Scott "used some freedom" with one verse of the ballad, and we know his reasons. But in the case of some of the readings peculiar to A it is by no means easy, if we think we detect the editorial pen, to account for Scott's motives. Andrew Lang has asked why, if Scott had no other copy than Sharpe's as a basis for his Minstrelsy text, he should have altered stanza 7 of B: "The moon was up and the sun was down" (B7[1]) into: "The sun wasna up, but the moon was down" (A7[1])?[3] Surely Scott gained nothing by that, and we know that some reivers favoured moonlight, others complete darkness for their actions[4]. Also, Scott's text concludes with a stanza not found in the Sharpe MS., which sounds authentic and traditional. After the recovery of the stolen cattle, Jamie

has paid the rescue-shot,
   Baith wi gowd and white monie,
And at the burial o Willie Scott
   I wat was mony a weeping ee. (A49)

1 Catlochill was the name of the place now called Branxholmbraes, see Lang, op. cit., 110-11, and OS Map, Sheet 69.

2 "Prickinghauch" is marked on Blaeu's Map of Liddesdale, at the junction of the Liddel and Hermitage waters, but has disappeared from the modern map.

3 Lang, op. cit., 121-2.

4 See George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 92.

Lang thought that Scott found this in a copy other than Sharpe's, although his reason, that "the verse is so prosaic, and so injurious to the triumphant preceding verse"[1], is purely subjective.

Perhaps no-one will ever disentangle the often involved skein of Sir Walter's ballad refinements. We know that he loved to give his ballads, as he did stories he heard, "a cocked hat and a sword"[2], but on the whole I am inclined to feel that the extent of Scott's work has been exaggerated. Of the fourty-four lines peculiar to version A[3], it is only possible to prove conclusively that Scott had a hand in two of them - those euphemizing the Captain of Bewcastle's injury. Scott's "improvements to the rest must remain conjecture. A certain Colonel Fitzwilliam Elliot, however, who undertook what is, as far as I know, the only protracted study of the historicity of the Border Ballads, accused Scott of having fabricated <u>all</u> the lines and stanzas not found in the Sharpe copy, and of perverting his original in a quite ungentlemanly way (the switching of a false Elliot for a false Scott in stanza 8)[4]. To Scott's defence came Andrew Lang[5], who attempted to remove Fitzwilliam Elliot's suspicions by postulating a third copy of the ballad (as I have indicated above). The defence was calmer and more carefully reasoned than the prosecution, but one or two things emerged in the process which deserve to be taken into account, since they may influence our critical evaluation of the ballad.

1 <u>Op. cit.</u>, 117.

2 Cited Andrew Lang, <u>op. cit.</u>, 124-5.

3 These are A7[1], 12, 26, 27[1-2], 28, 32[2,4], 34, 35[3-4], 36, 37[1, 3-4], 38, 40[1-2], 41[1-2], 43[3], 47[4], and 49. I have not dealt with all of these in the text, only those where Scott's style seems most obviously detectable.

4 See Fitzwilliam Elliot, <u>The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads</u>, 1-51, <u>Further Essays on Border Ballads</u>, 155-215.

5 <u>Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy</u>, 87-125; cf. also Lang's review of <u>The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads</u> in <u>The Scottish Historical Review</u>, IV (1906), 87-9.

Elliot had been at pains to champion what he believed were the greater age, authenticity and topographical accuracy of the Sharpe copy. Crucial to his argument was the position of the Dodhead tower. This has generally been identified as the Dodhead marked on Blaeu's map of Teviotdale, near the source of the Dodhead Burn which flows into Ettrick Water, about nine miles below Selkirk[1]. The English raiding-party were certainly heading in this direction when, according to both versions of the ballad, they met a guide "laigh down in Borthwick water" (A2[4], B2[4]). This water flows south of the Dodhead Burn. If, in version A, Jamie Telfer ran across the tops to Stob's Hall, he would have covered a distance of roughly eleven miles (the ballad says he ran "ten myles a-foot", A7[3]). If, as in version B, he ran straight to Branxholm, he would have covered eight miles (the ballad says, "Jamie Telfer has run eight miles barefoot", B7[3]). The topography in either case is quite meticulous. But we now reach the crux of Elliot's argument. He objects that,

> the allegation that Buccleugh had refused to strike a blow at a party of English raiders, who had insolently ridden some twenty-five miles into Scottish ground and into the very middle of his own territory, is too absurd to be believed[2].

Lang agrees with this and points out that the story is even more ridiculous as Buccleugh (who was the greatest chief on the mid-Border and lived close to the Dodhead) pretends to believe that Telfer, living in Ettrick, pays protection-money to an Elliot, residing at Freakinghaugh, high up the water of Liddel. This, says Lang, is nonsense[3]. The same

1 There is still a Dodhead farm there, see OS Map, Sheet 69.

2 Further Essays on Border Ballads, 199.

3 Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy, 91.

objection, presumably, holds good for the A version. Why should a man living in Ettrick run "ten myles a-foot" to seek protection from a man living in Liddesdale, only to be refused and have to retrace his steps to within a few miles of where he started?

The explanation, which both Elliot and Lang seem to have overlooked, is that these things did happen. We know from our study of Johnie Armstrong that Border folk, small farmers and dalesmen, were paying annual tribute, or blackmail, to this Eskdale freebooter, when they lived as far away as Tyneside[1]. Moreover, such was the complexity of the clan-feudal system on the Borders that the unfortunate peasant often had to pay what amounted to two sets of rent - blackmail to the reiver, or military protector, and rent to the landlord[2]. The word "mail" meant, in fact, the rent paid for a farm, lands or possessions, and this might be in money, grain or otherwise[3]. Jamie Telfer was the tenant-farmer of Dodhead. This we know from the title of the Sharpe copy, Jamie Telfer in the Fair Dodhead, since "in", according to Scottish usage, signifies occupancy merely and not possession[4]. This at least suggests that Child B is closer to tradition. The quite feasible possibility thus arises that Telfer, farming near to Branxholm, paid "mail", or rent, to Buccleugh, but "blackmail", or protection-money, to Elliot of Preakinhaugh. Telfer did not belong to either of these great surnames, so there is no real reason why he should not have preferred Elliot's protection to Scott's, but if he was living on Scott territory he would at least have been obliged to pay a land-rent to Buccleugh.

1 See supra, Ch. 5, 'The Outlaw Ballads', pp. 246 - 8.

2 See Fraser, op. cit., 193; T.I. Rae, The Administration of the Scottish Frontier, 9.

3 E.D.S.L., III, 209, under 2; S.N.D., VI, 179; D.O.S.T., Pt. XXII, 49; E.D.D., IV, 11.

4 See Fitzwilliam Elliot, The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads, 3n; Lang, op. cit., 94; Child, E.S.P.B., V, 249. Jamie refers to himself consistently in the B version as "I, Jamie Telfer i the Fair Dodhead" ($B9^1$, 13^3, 18^1, 22^1).

Now let us look at the crucial verse in the ballad. The wording is exactly the same, except that in A it is spoken by Elliot and in B by Buccleugh. Both chieftains tell Jamie:

'Gae seek your succour where ye paid blackmail,
For, man, ye never paid money to me'.
(A10$^{3-4}$, B10$^{3-4}$)

And Jamie soliloquises:

'I'se never pay mail to (Scott / Elliot) again',
(A11^{3}, B11^{3})

In other words Buccleugh/Elliot claims that Telfer never paid <u>blackmail</u> to him ("money" in the second line stands for blackmail), and this is probably the case, as Telfer must no doubt realise. But he may have paid "mail", or rent, and thought that in his desperate plight his landlord might also act in the capacity of protector. When his prayer falls on deaf ears he swears that he will not pay any more rent, and so realises he must give up his farm:

'And the Fair Dodhead I'll never see'.
(A11^{4}, B11^{4})

There is thus no need for Fitzwilliam Elliot's supposition that Buccleugh's refusal of aid was not in the original ballad, but has been inserted at some later period[1].

If we wish, we may attempt to explain why "the bold Buccleugh", who usually needed no excuse to lead a frontier raid, declined to assist one of his tenants. The ballad of <u>Jamie Telfer</u> is, in effect, a realistic description of what happened during a "Hot Trod". The law of "Hot Trod" was one of the Border Laws which permitted a subject of either realm who had been robbed or injured in any way, to follow the guilty party across

1 <u>Further Essays on Border Ballads</u>, 200.

the Border and raise the fray as he went. Provided this was done within six days from the time the crime was committed, and provided (by a later clause) that the person following the "trod" reported "to any man of good fame or sound judgement dwelling within the March which he had just entered", and declared the cause of his entry[1]. The clauses relating to the law of Hot Trod were ratified in treatises from 1424-1551[2]. At one time the March Wardens were legally entitled to lead the Hot Trod pursuit[3], but in 1596 it was forbidden by law for any warden or keeper to ride in person, or direct or command any other person to ride in hostile manner within the opposite realm, without first obtaining royal permission[4]. Normally, of course, such prohibitions would hardly have deterred steel bonnets like Scott of Buccleugh. But in 1596 Buccleugh was Keeper of Liddesdale, an office granted hereditarily to him in 1594[5]. In fact, the Keeper was virtually a fourth warden, the office being described as an "office of wardenry", and the officer being expected "to do for the cuntre of Liddesdale and inhabitantis the samin as accordis a wardane to do of his office"[6]. Also, in the April of 1596, Scott of Buccleugh had, on his own initiative, led a party of Scottish Borderers in the rescue of Kinmont Willie, a notorious reiver, from Carlisle castle. For some time afterwards he was in bad odium with both the Scottish and English governments and had to walk circumspectly[7]. If the events narrated in Jamie Telfer belong to this year, we can appreciate Buccleugh's other, more pressing reasons for refusing military aid to a harrassed tenant.

1 See R.B. Armstrong, The History of Liddesdale, 46; for a full account of the various regulations pertaining to the Hot Trod, see Fraser, op. cit., 114-21. Scott gives an account in Minstrelsy, II, 159-60.

2 Armstrong, op. cit., 46

3 Armstrong, op. cit., 47.

4 Armstrong, op. cit., 48.

5 Rae, op. cit., 36

6 A.D.C.P., 426, 301.

7 See infra, ch. VII, 'Ballads of Rescue', p.395.

How, then, does all this affect our interpretation of the ballad? Whatever the motives of the characters concerned (and historically there may have been good ones), the ballad says that Jamie Telfer was let down in his hour of greatest need. His only other course of action was the one he in fact adopted - to keep running and try for help at the other powerful Teviotdale bases. So, in both versions of the ballad, he takes the fray to Coultart Cleugh[1] (A13[3], B12[3]) where Jock Grieve lived; to Catlock Hill (A17[4], B16[4]) where in A William's Wat and in B Martin's Hab resided; and finally to "Pricken haugh" (B20[4]), seat of Martin Elliot, or to Branxholm, seat of Buccleugh in the A version. Whatever the route (and Fitzwilliam Elliot and Andrew Lang took page after page to establish a consistently topographical one), the area covered by Jamie Telfer is conceived as a real one and the balladist has succeeded admirably in conveying a sense of urgent haste, panic, and at one moment when Telfer weeps with despair after his first plea for help has failed, utter confusion. The thoughts beating incessantly in Jamie's mind - his "greeting" wife, three children and six helpless calves "routing" in their stall - are there in the oral repetition, whilst the physical exertion of the hard run across rough, snow-covered ground is suggested by the ballad's regular four-stress rhythm. The impression of a man literally running round in circles is conveyed by a series of adverbs and adverbial clauses: "Between Dodhead and Branxholm Ha" (B7[4]); "Jamie he's turnd him round about" (B11[1]); "Now Jamie is up the water-gate" (B12[1]), and so on, with the "And when he came to" formula carrying the movement from point to point. Thus, even if the geography is impossible as given in either version[2], the story may be true in a higher

1 Now Colterscleugh on the river Teviot, about 1m. north of Teviothead, see OS Map, Sheet 69.

2 This was Lang's conclusion, op. cit., 93. Fitzwilliam Elliot argued that of the two versions, Sharpe's was the more accurate with regard to topography, see The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads, 36, et passim.

sense as a general statement of what might and did happen in raids and recoveries of driven cattle on the Borders.

What did happen and may have formed the ground-plan of Jamie Telfer may be ascertained from certain events of the latter half of the sixteenth century. We must, I think accept that the ballad belongs to a period before 1603 when the Union of the Crowns finally began to eradicate the ingrained Border habit of reiving. Also the Captain of Bewcastle is one of the central characters. He held an office as deputy to the Warden of the English West March, was appointed by the English Crown and resided with a garrison at Bewcastle fortress. His particular duty was to stop the men of Liddesdale from raiding the English country that lay to the south of the famous Bewcastle Waste[1]. This office, like all the others of course, ceased with the Union of England and Scotland in 1603.

In the latter half of the sixteenth century, Thomas Musgrave, author of the often-quoted List of Border Riders, which he sent as a letter to Burghley in 1583, was Captain of Bewcastle. He was a ruffian, accused of conspiring with thieves and outlaws and supposed to have given his illegimate daughter in marriage to Sim Armstrong of Whithaugh[2]. Among the bills filed by the West March of England against Liddesdale in October, 1582, we find the following entry:

> Thomas Musgrave deputy of Bewcastle and the tenants, against Walter Scot lard of Buckluth, and his complices; for 200 kine and oxen, 300 gaite and sheep[3].

And again, in July, 1586:

> Thomas Musgrave deputy Warden of Bewcastle complains upon The Lard's Jock, Dick of Dryupp, and their complices; for 400 kine and oxen, taken in open forrie from the Drysike in Bewcastle[4].

1 See Howard Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches, 48-9; D.L.W. Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, 38.

2 See Fraser, op. cit., 353n.

3 Joseph Nicolson and Richard Burn, The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland, I, xxxi.

4 Ibid.

This same Thomas Musgrave is mentioned at a later date, in a letter from Lord Scrope, Warden of the English West March. Scrope writes to Lord Hunsdon:

> I have to report that Thomas Musgrave captain of Bewcastle, having made me privy to his design of revenge for injuries to his office, and being warned by me to see his men were in sufficient strength, and to prevent straggling, - with the assistance of the soldiers, entered Scotland this night, and finding only empty houses, returned homewards, "over carelessly", allowing his force to separate. Himself with only ten men, fell into an ambush of the Scots near Bewcastle, was chased to the house of Brackenhill, where he hoped to take refuge, but those within shut the gates against him (such good service do the Graemes to her Majesty)! and is taken prisoner to Scotland[1].

Now we know from both versions of the ballad that the Captain of Bewcastle was taken "prisoner in enemy's land" (A42[3], B35[3]). His captors were the Armstrongs, who sent him to Buccleugh at Branxholm and he was released on July 15, under a bond of £200 for ransom[2]. We learn from the Captain's Bill of Damages', indented April 28, 1597, that Johm (Armstrong) of Langholm, Will of Kinmont and others, are in the Captain's debt for "24 horses and mares, himself prisoner, and ransomed to £200, and 16 other prisoners, and slaughter"[3]. Apart from the fact that Armstrongs, not Scotts and Elliots, are involved, this incident almost matches the one in Jamie Telfer.

A further incident, however, may lie somewhere in the background of the ballad. A year after the ambush of Thomas Musgrave, there followed a series of raids and reprisals by Liddesdale Elliots and some men of Tyndedale. On July 7, 1597, Ralph, Lord Eure, Warden of the English Middle March, wrote to Cecil:

> On Sunday night last the 3[d] instant, some Scotsmen came in and stole from a "pooer creature" in Tyndale 3 kine; when the fray arose, and some of my men from the Waste joined the company, mostly footmen.

1 C.B.P., II, 148, No. 296. The letter is dated July 3, 1596.

2 C.B.P., II, 152, No. 302.

3 C.B.P., II, 307, No. 606.

> They failed to rescue these goods for want of warning; but knowing of a number of cattle to be had, the soldiers without a leader ventured into Liddesdale with the country foot, and in a "loane" where the cattle were folded, belonging to Martin Ellot and his clan, they "raysed" 200 cattle, 100 sheep, some goats, nearly 20 horse and mares. They entered his "sheeld", and in the violent resistance, "one Martin's Gibb Ellott" light in the hands of one Dodd of Tyndale (which Doddes kinsemen the said Ellott had formerlie slaine), yt pleased God, this Ellott for the punishment of his sinns, was by the said Dodd now slaine, some others woonded"[1].

Martin Elliot of Braidley[2], "a very wise and stout fellawe", had a nephew known as Martin's Gibb, and he it was who fell in the skirmish of July, 1597[3]. Described as "a leader of that wicked race", he was a reiver who had been hardened by the wars in France and Flanders, according to Eure, and his name crops up regularly in raid records[4]. The B version of Jamie Telfer makes the character slain Martin's son, Simmy; he was the eldest son, but although there are notices of him from 1580-1592, there is no record of his being killed in a fray[5].

At first sight one is tempted to draw a comparison between the "pooer creature" mentioned in the above account (surely a woman) and the "auld wif ayont the fire" (B39[1]) from whom Willie Wudspurs and his gang steal the Captain's herd in the ballad. But the old woman's house in the ballad is at Stonegarside (B37[3])[6], on the Liddel Water, near Kershope, and not in Tyndedale, the location given by The Calendar of Border Papers. Still the account of Lord Eure provides a useful corrective to our imagining that the people raided were always the Border magnates - the "pooer creature" mentioned only had "3 kine" to lose, and like Jamie Telfer, obviously had no personal powers of retaliation.

1 C.B.P., II, 356, No. 676. Cf. also Eure's letter to Burghley, July 5, 1597, C.B.P., II, 356, No. 675.

2 He is referred to variously as Martin Elliot of Braidley and "of the Prickinge Hawghe", see C.B.P., I, 299, No. 596; 349, No. 668; R.P.C., III, 45, et passim.

3 See G.F.S. Elliot, The Border Elliots and the Family of Minto, 218, 146, 239.

4 Fraser, op. cit., 202n.

5 See G.F.S. Elliot, op. cit., 509.

6 Now called Stonegarthside, see OS Map, Sheet 26. Scott says that this was a house belonging to the Forester family, Minstrelsy, II, 17.

The other dramatis personae of the ballad were actual figures on the sixteenth-century Border. Martin Elliot had a son called Hob, the Martin's Hab of the ballad (B17[3]), who is mentioned in 1580 and 1583[1]. The "doughty Willie o Gorrenberry" (B25[4]) whom Jamie is advised to warn, took part in the rescue of Kinmont Willie in 1596[2]. Walter Scott of Harden ("Auld Wat") has already been indicated. He had a son, William, perhaps the Willie Scott of the A version, who is "stricken ower the head"[3]. The John o' Brigham who is also slain (A39[1]) may, Sir Walter Scott thinks, have been "one of the ancient family of Brougham, in Cumberland"[4].

The only character of whom there is no historical record, however, is Jamie Telfer himself. In Scott's time there was still a family of Telfers, residing near Langholm, who claimed descent from the Telfers of the Dodhead[5]. But, according to Craig-Brown, the farmers of Dodhead were Scotts, apart from a man called Simpson who farmed there in 1510[6].

It looks, then, as if Jamie Telfer was first sung in the late 1590s. The ballad-maker was perhaps recreating his own fictitious account of the ambush and capture of Thomas Musgrave, Captain of Bewcastle, in the July of 1596, the summer in which "the bold Buccleugh" was trying to defend his honour after springing Kinmont Willie from under Scrope's nose at Carlisle, and when in any case it was prohibited for any Warden or Keeper to follow the Hot Trod in person. The balladist has also worked into his narrative the death of Martin's Gibb Elliot, killed in a skirmish the following July, 1597.

These incidents, handled with poetic freedom, are perhaps the

1 R.P.C., III, 309; C.B.P., I, 352, No. 668.

2 C.B.P., II, 122, No. 252, where he is called "Will Ellot goodman of Gorrombye". He is mentioned earlier in 1584, R.P.C., III, 634.

3 Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 17.

4 Ibid.

5 Minstrelsy, II, 14.

6 T. Craig-Brown, The History of Selkirkshire, I, 356.

materials of Jamie Telfer. It is significant, I think, that they belong to the last few years of the sixteenth century when more enlightened Scotsmen and Englishmen were beginning to realise that the Border reivers were rapidly becoming something of an anachronism. If we re-read the ballad with this in mind, we may begin to appreciate how some unknown folk-poet of Teviotdale was able to give voice to the climate of opinion of his troubled times.

It is the pathos of the situation that strikes one first in reading the tale of Jamie Telfer's cross-country run. His home is "ranshakled" ($A4^4$, $B4^4$), his cattle "ane and a'" driven away, and only six young calves left, to die presumably from lack of milk. He is presented to us, not as a skilled or hardy mosstrooper, but as a quiet family man whose life is lived by the ploughshare rather than by the sword. The Captain of Bewcastle taunts him:

> The Captain turned him round and leugh:
> Said, Man, there's naething in thy house
> But ae auld sword without a sheath,
> That hardly now wad fell a mouse.
> (A6, B6)

This seems to me an unprecedented ballad standpoint. The inherited scale of values is upended in such a way that we are forced into sympathy with a man who, in terms of the received Border Code, is to all intents and purposes an anti-hero, a man whose sword has rusted through long disuse. And our antipathy is directed towards the swordsman who, in other Border Ballads, is usually the unqualified hero. Moreover, rather than settle the issue by combat, Jamie, "the tear aye rowing in his ee" ($A5^2$, $B5^2$), prefers to plead with his attacker for the restoration of his "gear" ($A5^3$, $B5^3$).

The heroics of the ballad world are further called into question when it becomes apparent that Telfer must run barefooted, an action which

would have rendered him ridiculous in the eyes of a Border audience, for as Bishop Leslie discovered of these folk:

> A filthie thing thay esteime it, an a verie abiecte man thay halde him that gangis vpon his fute, ony voyage. quhairthrouch cumis that al ar horsmen[1].

And Sir John Forster, who held the English Middle March, wrote in 1575 that,

> Whensoever the world groweth anye thinge troublesome or unquiet, they will bestowe all they have rather than theye will want horses[2].

Not only is Jamie forced into the one indignity a Borderer hoped to be spared, but those he has left behind form a pathetic spectacle also:

> 'There's naething left in the Fair Dodhead
> But a greeting wife and bairnies three,
> And sax poor ca's stand in the sta,
> A' routing loud for their minnie'.
> (A15, B14)

The balladist thus parallels the havoc caused by human theft with the disturbance of the natural order of the animal world: the calves are motherless; Jamie's bairns, should he be killed following the Hot Trod, will be left fatherless.

The close ties between the natural and human worlds are conveyed by the line, "And Moscrop[3] made a dolefull rage" (B31[3]), when Simmy Elliot is slain. The collective use, or substitution, of a place for the people in it is a feature of Scots expression, often encountered in

1 The History of Scotland (ed. E.G. Cody), I, 99.

2 Cited W.W. Tomlinson, Life in Northumberland during the Sixteenth Century, 28.

3 There are so many "mosses" in Liddesdale that it would be difficult to say which one is intended here. There is no Moscrop marked on the modern OS Map, but a Dinley Moss, and a Redmoss above Kershope, where in the ballad the skirmish takes place, see Sheet 76.

the Border Ballads. It is highly effective in the Homildon stanzas of The Hunting of the Cheviot, as a means both of distancing the action while at the same time registering its extent. We are told that, in revenge for his March Warden's death, the English king "dyde the battell of Hombyll-down",

> Wher syx and thrittë Skottishe knyghtes
> on a day wear beaten down;
> Glendale glytteryde on ther armor bryght,
> over castille, towar, and town.
> (A64)

The great slaughter is by this means transposed in terms of the bright, sunlit valley looking down on the armour of the dead knights.

In Scott's text of Jamie Telfer, the line "Harden grat for very rage" (A35[3]) is substituted for "Moscrop". Strangely enough, this is less moving, I think, especially since it is succeeded by the image of this old chieftain removing his steel cap and displaying his "lyart locks". In other words, we are treated to a conventional picture of grief, an old man bewailing the death of his son, rather than the Border balladist's empathic sense of Nature's loss.

This bizarre use of local colour takes us to the very heart of the ballad. The depersonalisation marks the point at which Jamie Telfer has ceased to be the central character in the ballad. Actually, when the narrative is read, we are so carried by the rhythm and suspense that we hardly notice Jamie's disappearance at stanza 22 or thereabouts. Yet he does not figure again until the last verse, and in the section in between the balladist shows, I think, what happens once the game is out of his hands. The business of retrieving the ten stolen cattle passes into the control of an Elliot or a Scott chieftain (depending on the version) and his son, who, once their blood-lust is up, turn the whole pursuit into a kind of personal vendetta. In B Simmy Elliot, in A Willie Scott, challenges the Captain of Bewcastle with the words:

'Whae drives thir kye", can Willie say,
'To make an outspeckle o me?'
'It's I, the Captain o Bewcastle, Willie;
I winna layne my name for thee'.
(A30, B27)

To make an "outspeckle" of someone was to turn them into a laughing-stock, to make them look ridiculous[1]. The leaders are not simply concerned to recover the stolen goods. The whole business, the balladist seems to be saying, is so trivial as to be almost ridiculous. For ten head of cattle a wild chase is mounted in which men lose their lives. Martin Elliot's (old Harden's) son has his "napskape" split open, the English Captain is shot through the head and made impotent, two of his men are killed and fifteen left "bleeding on the ground" (B33[4])[2]. At this point, the balladist skilfully slows down his narrative, to allow us one of those fleeting glimpses into the world of the Border women-folk. The Captain's injury and captivity are presented through the response of his bride, by means of a swift flash-forward device:

Then word is gane to the Captain's bride,
Even in the bower where that she lay,
That her lord was prisoner in enemy's land,
Since into Tividale he had led the way.

'I wad lourd have had a winding-sheet,
And helped to put it ower his head,
Ere he had been disgraced by the border Scot,
Whan he ower Liddel his men did lead!'
(A42-43, B35-36)

Not satisfied with having recovered Telfer's herd, Willie Wudëspurs[3] urges the company to join him in a retaliatory raid into England. He

1 E.D.S.L., III, 418; S.N.D., VI, 516.

2 Version A swells the number to thirty (A39[3])

3 The name, "Madspurs", like the sobriquet Hotspur, is not inappropriately given to this ballad character.

knows of a house where relatives of the Bewcastle Captain live and a "prey" is to be had. The appeal to the manhood of his fellow riders is unmistakable: "If any man will ride with us" (A44[4], B37[4]). So the old woman's house at Stonegarthside is broken into:

> When they cam to the Stanegirthside,
> They dang wi trees and burst the door;
> They loosed out a' the Captain's kye,
> And set them forth our lads before.
> (A45, B38)

So, at the end of the ballad, instead of his own ten cows, "Jamie Telfer has gotten thirty and three" (A48[4], B41[4]), to him, no doubt, a small fortune.

It is noticeable that Jamie is associated in the ballad with the good things of life - a wife and family, a pleasant home (the adjective "fair" belongs repeatedly with Dodhead), peace, and in spite of his poverty, hospitality - one of the characters agrees to help Jamie because, he says,

> 'I never cam bye the Fair Dodhead
> That ever I fond thy basket bare.!
> (A20[3-4], B19[3-4])

Perhaps in Jamie Telfer a ballad-singer has caught something of the tension that must have been felt by intelligent people, between the courage and the foolhardiness of the reiver's way of life. Superficially, the balladist seems to commend the resourcefulness and bravery of the clan (whether it be Elliots or Scotts), but beneath the surface one detects a dissatisfaction with the conduct of sinewy old Border warriors who want only the slightest provocation to rush to arms. Moreover, in this complex social fabric of kinship ties, where an isolated man like Jamie Telfer may owe a dual allegiance to landlord and feudal protector, "Jock upon land", as the Scots writers often called him, stands to lose in more ways than one.

Ballad objectivity has often been invoked by critics, as we have already seen, but an ambivalence of viewpoint, if not explicit censure, is, I am sure, at work in the Border Ballads. This censure is heard more stridently at the beginning of another raiding ballad, this time from the English side of the Border.

In Rookhope Ryde, a ballad from Weardale in County Durham, which Gerould calls "an excellent minstrel piece"[1], we again watch the action through the eyes of the raided rather than of the raiders. Again there is apparent a tension between two almost unreconcilable points of view.

The insecure state of affairs which prevailed on the Scottish Border found its mirror image in the counties of Cumberland, Northumberland and north Durham. Rookhope Ryde is the only traditional English raiding ballad that has come down to us, but one feels certain there must have been many others. There are no manuscript copies of the ballad extant, but its oral origins and transmission are verifiable by a number of oral characteristics and by the information that it was "Taken down from the Chaunting of George Collingwood, the elder, of Boltsburn, in the neighbourhood of Rookhope, who was interred at Stanhope, Dec. 16, 1785"[2].

Collingwood's was an ancient Weardale family. His house is dated 1764, and a family Bible is in existence dated 1633-34, only sixty-four years after the event narrated in the ballad[3]. It seems likely that the ballad did not move outside this small, isolated community.

1 Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, 53.

2 Sir Cuthbert Sharp, The Bishopric Garland (1834 ed.), 14, where it is styled a "Bishoprick border song". Rookhope is a village on the road from Stanhope to Allenheads. The Bolts Burn flows into the river Derwent, about $4\frac{1}{2}$m. north of Rookhope, see OS Map, Sheet 84.

3 See W.M. Egglestone, Picturesque Weardale, 14.

According to the editor of The Bishopric Garland, the ballad was taken down from George Collingwood's recitation by the antiquary Joseph Ritson, who intended publishing it as one of a projected collection of Border Ballads[1]. Ritson supplied several emendations, but was careful, as always in his work, to indicate these by single commas, which Child left to stand when he reprinted the ballad. The last line of verse 23 is missing because, Ritson informs us, "The reciter, from his advanced age [Collingwood died in his eightieth year] could not recollect the original"[2]. Ritson inserted a line of his own composition.

The ballad was first published in The Bishopric Garland[3], in 1784. Joseph Ritson's nephew, Joseph Frank, sent Ritson's copy to Sir Walter Scott who managed to accomodate it in The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border[4], in spite of the title of that work. Rookhope Ryde was also one of John Bell's Rhymes of Northern Bards[5], published in Newcastle upon Tyne, in 1812.

The ballad tells how English reivers from Thirlwall[6] in Northumberland, and Williehaver, or Willeva[7] in Cumberland, take advantage of the defenceless state of their countrymen to the south at the time of the Rising in the North. This was the Catholic rebellion led by the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland in 1569 - a futile attempt to put Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne and restore "the old religion"[8].

1 Sharp, op. cit. (1834 ed.), 14.

2 Cited Sharp, op. cit., 19.

3 Op. cit. (1784 ed.), 14.

4 Minstrelsy (1833 ed.), II, 101, see E.S.P.B., III, 439.

5 Op. cit., 276, see E.S.P.B., III, 439.

6 Thirlwall is a place on the line of Hadrian's Wall, between Haltwhistle and Gilsland. Thirlwall Common lies to the north and south of Thirlwall Castle, see OS Map, Sheet 76, and Blaeu's Map of Northumberland.

7 Willeva is marked "Willolor" on Blaeu's Map of Cumberland, but has since disappeared, see The Place-Names of Cumberland (ed. A.H. Armstrong), Pt. I, 56.

8 For accounts of the rebellion see S.T. Bindoff, Tudor England, 209; W. Croft-Dickinson, Scotland from the Earliest Times, 346-7. Sir Cuthbert Sharp collected letters and documents relating to the event in Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569. Cf. also the ballad, The Rising in the North (Child 175).

The exact date of the raid to Rookhope can be ascertained from the ballad which says that the Northumberland reivers were spied "upon Saint Nicholas' day" (13^4), December 6. We may assume, therefore, that the ballad was in circulation among the Weardale folk soon after that date, December 6, 1569.

The raiders know that most of the fencible men will be away, some with the two earls and others holding out in Barnard Castle (11). (The insurgents did, in fact, seize Barnard Castle after a siege of almost two weeks). Taking advantage of a small community's defencelessness while the men were away seems to have been a common tactic in Border warfare. We saw how the Earl of Douglas seized an opportunity to invade Northumberland at harvest-time and when there was political dissent in court circles. The battle of Neville's Cross in 1346 was fought when many of the northern armed forces were on active service in the wars with France. In the ballad which describes the battle, Durham Field (Child 159), the Scottish king boasts that the only men left to oppose him are

> 'But shepards and millers both,
> And preists with their staues.'
> (35^{3-4})

So the thieves of Thirlwall and Willeva wait their chance:

> One of them could to another say,
> 'I think this day we are men enew.
>
> 'For Weardale men is a journey taen;
> They are so far out-oer yon fell
> That some of them's with the two earls,
> And others fast in Barnard castell.
>
> 'There we shall get gear enough,
> For there is nane but women at hame;
> The sorrowful fend that they can make
> Is loudly cries as they were slain'.
> (10^{3-4}-12)

In order to make the achievement of the Weardale resistance as glorious as possible, the balladist is careful to allow the raiders an

impressive introduction. They are well armed and well mounted:

> They gathered together so royally,
> The stoutest men and the best in gear,
> And he that rade not on a horse,
> I wat he rade on a weil-fed mear.
> (7)

They outnumber the Weardale men by at least two to one, and the balladist juxtaposes the numbers to good effect in two consecutive verses:

> But when the bailiff was gathered,
> And all his company,
> They were numberd to never a man
> But forty [or] under fifty.
>
> The thieves was numberd a hundred men,
> I wat they were not of the worst
> That could be choosed out of Thirlwa'nd Williehaver,
> (22-23)

The ballad-singer's build-up of the raiders occupies eleven verses in all (including verse 23 quoted above). Again, as I suspected was the case in Jamie Telfer, there is more than a hint of criticism of the coldly calculated rapine and irresponsible jocosity that are contingent to the mosstrooping way of life. Some of the reivers' old charisma is still to be found, perhaps, in stanza 7, in the balladist's choice of adverb and adjectives:

> They gathered together so royally,
> The stoutest men and the best in gear,
> (7[1,2])

but this modifies into the raiders' noisy descent upon sleeping Weardale, "with many a brank and whew" (10[2]).

An unpleasant and sinister parenthesis is introduced in stanza 20, underscoring the very real menace of these Tynedale riders and thereby emphasising the courage of men like Bailiff Emerson[1] who takes his

1 According to Richard Surtees in a letter to Sir Walter Scott, the family of Emerson of Eastgate long exercised the office of Bailiff of Wolsingham (the chief town and borough of Weardale), see Minstrelsy, II, 141.

stand against them; for, we are told,

> His brother was hurt three days before,
> With limmer thieves that did him prick;
> Nineteen bloody wounds lay him upon;
> What ferly was't that he lay sick?
> (20)

The rest of the ballad lauds the bravery of the Weardale farmers and their womenfolk who act quickly and decisively in the face of overwhelming odds. Within the space of an hour, four of the thieves have been killed, many wounded and eleven taken prisoner; whereas the Weardales lose only one man, Rowland Emerson, and he, promises the ballad-maker, will rest in peace, "because he 'fought' unto the right" (30^4).

The ballad becomes almost an allegory of the crushing of human pride - pride in human strength and arms - and the upholding of the weak but just man's cause:

> Thir limmer thieves, they have good hearts,
> They nevir think to be oerthrown;
> Three banners against Weardale men they bare,
> As if the world had been all their own.
> (34)

The ballad story is an <u>exemplum</u> of the familiar proverb, "Pride goeth before a fall", expressed through the medium of the dalesman's own experience and metaphor:

> For he that bears his head so high,
> He oft-times falls into the dyke,
> (36^{3-4}).

The balladist gives his assurance that divine retribution will be visited on such proud hearts:

> For God wil punish all those
> With a great heavy pestilence.
> (33^{3-4})

The author of Rookhope Ryde is the acting spokesman of his community. He uses the first person plural, as does the maker of Kinmont Willie, vocalising the shared attitudes, hopes and fears of a homogeneous group. Here it is not clan loyalty but a firm committment to the Weardale farmer's innate sense of economy, his preoccupation with how to make ends meet and his desire, above all, to be left alone in peace so that he "may live on his own" (5^2) and get on with the day-to-day business of earning a living. Threatening this social order and the natural harmony of Weardale are the reivers:

> Rookhope stands in a pleasant place,
> If the false thieves wad let it be;
> But away they steal our goods apace,
> And ever an ill death may they die!
>
> Lord God! is not this a pitiful case,
> That men dare not drive their goods to t' fell,
> But limmer thieves drives them away,
> That fears neither heaven nor hell?
> (1, 4)

The ballad does not plunge straight into the action[1]. There is, measured by traditional standards, a long proem of six stanzas (from which the two quoted above are taken), plus an "epilogue" of five stanzas (33-37). Taken together these offer an important commentary on the ballad action, pointing in more outspoken terms to the same scale of values which I believe Jamie Telfer may have been trying tentatively to establish. The thieves are "false" (1^2), they have no scruples ("at their stealing stands not out", 2^4)^2, they fear "neither heaven nor hell" (4^4). The term of opprobrium, "limmer"[3], is applied to them here and elsewhere in the narrative (4^4, 20^2, etc.). Like his Scottish contemporary,

1 Cf. Hodgart who describes the traditional ballad as "beginning in the fifth act", The Ballads, 10, and Gerould who observes "this way of telling a story in terms of its crucial or concluding incident, to the neglect of the chain of events that precedes it", op. cit., 5.

2 I accept Child's gloss, see E.S.P.B., V, 378.

3 Knavish, scoundrelly, O.E.D., VI, 301, under B; E.D.D., III, 609, under 1; E.D.S.L., III, 149, under 1; D.O.S.T., III, 785-6 under 1a, b.

the balladist speaks on behalf of what, by the last decades of the sixteenth century, must have been a rapidly growing majority. He expresses the plight of the Border Everyman who wishes for "peace into the realm".

Gerould classes Rookhope Ryde as "an excellent 'minstrel' piece"[1]. This is interesting because fortunately we know from whose recitation the ballad was taken down and he was not by any means a professional minstrel in the accepted sense. Superficially, this "Border song" may appear to wear some of the trappings of the professional's song-bag. It abounds in the "I trow", "I wot" tags which have so often been claimed as the sole trademark of these decadent songsters, in spite of the fact that we meet them in other traditional ballads[2]. The deity is frequently apostrophised, and there is no shortage of moralising, cursing or entreating. Gerould noted that, "as a rule, strong feeling is shown by persons taking part in the action, but not by the makers themselves"[3]. To describe this quality in the Spanish ballads, Menendez Pidal coined the phrase "realistic austerity"[4].

The inclusion of a couplet rhyme in stanza 16 jars momentarily against the familiar rhyme-scheme of the traditional Border Ballad, alerting us to the possibility that this may be one of those jingling products of the broadside press:

> That Rowley was the first man that did them spy;
> With that he raised a mighty cry; (16^{1-2})

Otherwise the ballad adheres to the traditional abcb rhyme-scheme, and failure to rhyme at all occurs only in stanza 15.

1 Op. cit., 53.
2 See, for example, Dick o the Cow, 10^2, 15^2, 34^3, etc.
3 Op. cit., 10.
4 Cited Gerould, ibid.

One thinks one has caught the voice of the itinerant minstrel requesting his fee from an audience of good yeoman stock in the concluding stanza:

> And now I do entreat you all
> As many as are present here,
> To pray for [the] singer of this song,
> For he sings to make blithe your cheer.
> (37)

But there is no reason why this should not be taken as the request of old George Collingwood to his farmer and shepherd friends gathered round the peat-fire of his cottage.

In fact the singer of Rookhope Ryde emerges as no itinerant from the world outside. He aligns himself at once with the Weardale community by employing the first person plural. Moreover, he is a countryman who displays an intimate knowledge of the local dales with their sheep-fells and forest $(14^{2})^{1}$. In four hours, the balladist says, the reivers were able to gather together six hundred sheep. This bears out accounts of Weardale's prosperity in sheep-farming. In 1516, for example, thieves could get away with 132 sheep, worth 20 pence each[2].

Places are put on the ballad map with topographical accuracy, for instance:

> the Smale Burns,
> Which stands above the Hanging Well,
> $(17^{3-4})^{3}$

The Dry Rig $(13^{3})^{4}$ over which the attackers are seen riding, is presumably no more than a minor feature of the landscape, but one which a native of

1 Weardale Forest is described by John Leland in his Itinerary (ed. Thomas Hearne), I, 74.

2 See William Fordyce, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, I, 667.

3 Smailsburn is about 1m. above Hanging Wells on the west bank of the Rookhope Burn, see OS Map, Sheet 84.

4 There are many "rigs", or ridges, in Weardale. The Dry Rig is, however, not marked on the one inch OS Map.

the valley might be expected to record.

The "word is come" formula tells us that the bailiff's house was "at the East Gate" (17^{2}), a detail which Surtees, in his explanatory note to Scott's copy of Rookhope Ryde, remarks "is (were such a proof wanting) strongly indicative of the authenticity of the ballad"[1].

The manoeuvres of the Tynedale raiding-party and their route are given with the accuracy of one brought up amongst Border forays. The reivers set out early after breakfast (8^{1-2}), halt at mid-day, or "fore-noon", when they eat again (8^{3-4}) - the balladist comments acidly that "some of them did eat their last" - and choose captains to lead them (9). The normal route into Rookhope would, during the sixteenth century, have been over Bewdly Top, from the south-east; or alternatively, following the road over Hunstanworth Moor from the north[2]. But the mosstroopers generally discarded roads, preferring to plunge helter-skelter over the fells. So the balladist is quite correct when he makes the raiders descend on Rookhope from a "bye fell" (8^{3}), "oer the moss" $(10^{1})^{3}$, in at Rookhope-head $(13^{1})^{4}$ and over the Dry Rig (13^{3}). They are overtaken and defeated by the Bailiff and his force at Nuketon Cleugh $(24^{2})^{5}$.

1 Cited Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 141. Eastgate is situated at the foot of Rookhope Burn where it flows into the river Wear, see OS Map, Sheet 84.

2 See W.M. Egglestone, Picturesque Weardale, 14.

3 Byerhope Moss and Quickcleugh Moss both lie directly north-west of Rookhope Head, see OS Map, Sheet 84.

4 This is about 1m. east of Allenheads, at the source of the Rookhope Burn, see OS Map, Sheet 84.

5 Nookton Cleugh and Burn run in a north-easterly direction into the river Derwent, about 3m. north of Rookhope, see OS Map, Sheet 84.

Finally, such metaphor as the ballad uses is drawn directly from the day-to-day round of the Weardale farmer or shepherd, and achieves a homespun proverbiality:

> It is a sore consumed tree
> That on it bears not one fresh bough.
> (33-4)

is the comment of the fair-minded dalesman, ready to make allowances even for the conduct of these northern freebooters. The good-hearted Weardale men, on the other hand, are not so blighted, but "are as stif as any tree" (35[2]).

If the ballad-poet, then, was a native of Rookhope, the mouthpiece of a community, different from his fellow-farmers only in that he had a greater ability to articulate their shared opinions, their "felt" ideas, we may have gone some way towards modifying received notions about the minstrel as a wandering professional. Whilst Child opposed the minstrel as a method of ballad dissemination to the peasantry, made up of its "knitters and weavers"[1], Gerould, whom I quoted earlier, concluded that ballads perpetuated by the former "have both the structural and the stylistic qualities common to the kind at large"[2]. In other words, professional singers were not moving in one direction and folk-singers in another. Gerould instances the Gest of Robyn Hode (Child 117) as proof of this[3]. But whereas Gerould, in the final event, seems to cling to the idea of "professional vagabonds" of a kind, who "must often have been completely in the current of tradition", and for whom "making a ballad would not have been imitating a ballad"[4], I would prefer to disclaim altogether the "minstrel" label that has been pinned to Rookhope Ryde.

1 E.S.P.B., I, 257.
2 Op. cit., 101.
3 Op. cit., 102.
4 Ibid.

This, however, does not account for the incontrovertible feeling one has that somehow, in style rather than content, Rookhope Ride, is not on a par with other Border-raid ballads. In a large measure this is due to a longer line often over-stressed and resulting in a rhythm that frequently falters and on occasions almost comes to a standstill. A good example is stanza 6, describing the troubles of the Weardale folk:

> For great troubles they've had in hand,
> With borderers pricking hither and thither,
> But the greatest fray that ere they had
> Was with the 'men' of Thirlwa 'nd Williehaver.
> (6)

The reading voice cannot help turning the last line into one of six stresses (compared with the ballad's usual three or four), placing them thus:

> Was wíth the 'mén' of Thírlwá 'nd Wíllieháver.

Compare this with the steady beat of footsteps in Jamie Telfer, a regular 4:4 rhythm throughout, and the ballad of Rookhope Ryde is discovered to be lacking in an essential quality. It is tempting to suggest that the fault was George Collingwood's, that he possessed no ear for rhythm, but in the absence of any other version this cannot be proved. Certainly odd verses here and there sound like the prosaic ramblings of an elderly person whose memory is failing; verse 15 is very lame:

> And horses I trow they gat,
> But either ane or twa,
> And they got them all but ane,
> That belanged to great Rowley.
> (15)

In spite of its lapses, however, one would not wish to be without Rookhope Ryde.

A victim of the Liddesdale inroads was an English rustic named Dick of the Cow. Strangely enough, his story has been preserved by Scottish tradition. Hodgart calls this "one of the best of the Border Ballads"[1] and indeed the claim is justified. More so than either Jamie Telfer or Rookhope Ryde, Dick o the Cow has at least received some amount of critical attention.

There is only one version of the ballad but it is found in three variants. The oldest of these, Child a, was communicated to Bishop Percy by Roger Halt in 1775, together with a copy of Hobie Noble[2]. Child b was contributed to George Caw's The Poetical Museum of 1784[3], by John Elliot of Reidheugh, "a gentleman well skilled in the antiquities of the Western Border", according to Sir Walter Scott[4]. Child c is taken straight from oral tradition in Liddesdale. With the omission of a few verses through lack of space on the page, it was published by Alexander Campbell in 1818, in his Albyn's Anthology[5], with the following note:

> [The ballad] is here given as taken down by the present Editor from the singing and recitation of a Liddesdale-man, namely, Robert Shortreed, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute of Roxburghshire, in the autumn of 1816. In consequence of which the public are now in full possession of what partly appeared in the Hawick Museum [sic], 1784, and afterwards a more perfect edition in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, 1802. This popular Ballad is thus completed by its melody being united to it[6].

Child notes that this copy is the same as b (Caw's) with the omission of thirteen stanzas[7].

1 Op. cit., 17.

2 Percy Papers, (1775), where it is titled, 'An excelent old song cald Dick of the Cow', see E.S.P.B., III, 461, IV, 1.

3 Op. cit., 22.

4 Minstrelsy, II, 71. Redheugh is situated on the west bank of Hermitage Water, about ½m. above its junction with the Liddel Water, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

5 Op. cit., II, 31. see E.S.P.B., III, 461.

6 Cited Henderson, Minstrelsy, II, 72-3. Campbell took down Jock o the Side from Thomas Shortrede, who learned it from his father, see Minstrelsy, II, 97.

7 E.S.P.B., III, 461. The stanzas are 17-18, 24, 32, 35-38, 51-52, 56-68.

Another copy, again the same as b, and also from the Scottish Border, is in the Campbell MSS[1].

Scott, when he gave the ballad in his Minstrelsy, implied in his introductory note that his source was Caw's Museum[2]. But he may also have received a copy from Sheriff Shortrede, who was his guide during his ballad "raid" into Liddesdale in 1792-98[3]. We know that Shortrede introduced Scott to Elliot of Reidheugh, who sent Dick o the Cow to George Caw some time prior to 1784, and that he also introduced him to "auld Thomas o' Twizzelhope, celebrated for his skill on the Border pipe, and in particular for being in possession of the real lilt of Dick o the Cow"[4]. Also, Scott states in his introduction to Dick o the Cow that he was indebted to Shortrede "for many valuable communications"[5]. We know that Scott could not have used Alexander Campbell's copy (as Child mistakenly supposed)[6], since Campbell himself mentions that he did not get his Anthology version from Robert Shortrede until 1816, fourteen years after Scott's text had appeared in the Minstrelsy.

As far as we can tell, Sir Walter's textual emendations are not extensive. As Henderson observes, the Minstrelsy text of Dick o the Cow is the same as Campbell's, even down to punctuation[7]. This, then, leaves us with the thirteen stanzas Scott took from Caw's copy, in which the alterations may be seen to be consistent with Scott's usual editorial practice. He shortens a line to regularise or concentrate the stresses, for example Caw's "'What meikle wae's this happen'd o' me?' quo he" (b17[2]), which in Scott becomes: "'What meikle wae is this?' quo he"

1 Campbell MSS, I, 204, see E.S.P.B., III, 461.
2 Minstrelsy, II, 71.
3 J.G. Lockhart, Memoirs of Sir Walter Scott, I, 167.
4 Lockhart, op. cit., I, 169.
5 Minstrelsy, II, 71.
6 E.S.P.B., III, 461.
7 Minstrelsy, II, 73.

(M, 17[2]). Scott introduces the more obviously poetic "Yet he has come up to the fair ha' board" (M, 18[1]), for the barer line of Caw: "Yet he's com'd up to the ha' amang them a'" (b18[1]). And Scott avoids the repetition of "fair Johnie Armstrong's horse" (b55[3], 56[1]), by substituting on the second occasion "the bonny horse" (M, 56[1]).

We know that Dick o the Cow had become a popular ballad in England before the turn of the sixteenth century, since the earliest reference to it occurs in Thomas Nashe's Have With You to Saffron-Walden of 1596. There Nashe alludes to "Dick of the Cow, that mad Demilance Northren Borderer, who plaid his prizes with the Lord Iockey so brauely".[1] The year 1596 thus gives us a terminus ad quem for the ballad, making nonsense of Fowler's statement:

> That there were men still capable of composing symmetrical narratives in the traditional manner is evident ... in such eighteenth-century examples of baroque minstrelsy as Dick o the Cow[2].

Th ballad was still current in the latter half of the seventeenth century, as Dick-a-the-Cow, containing north country songs was one of the collections printed for and sold by P. Brooksby of London in 1688[3].

Although we may allow a few years for the ballad to have travelled south and established itself, a date prior to 1596 can only be more accurately given if we search once more for a historical basis. We know, for a start, that Dickie's "lord and master" (10[1]) is the brother of "good Ralph Scrupe" mentioned in verse 55. The Scropes, or Scroops, were Barons of Bolton and provided three wardens at different times for

1 The Works of Thomas Nashe (ed. Ronald B. McKerrow), III, 5.
2 David C. Fowler, A Literary History of the Popular Ballad, 15.
3 See Minstrelsy, I, 164; E.S.P.B., III, 461.

the West March of England. The first of these was a Lord Scrope who held office from 1542-47[1]. From 1562/3-92, Henry, Lord Scrope, 9th Baron of Bolton, was warden, and from 1592-1603 his son Thomas (from whose custody Kinmont Willie escaped)[2]. We know that Thomas Scrope had a brother from a reference to him in a letter of the Warden to Burghley, dated March 26, 1597[3]. Whether or not this brother was named Ralph and was Bailiff of "Glazenberrie"[4] as the ballad states (54[4]), I have been unable to discover.

The Laird's Jock, mentioned in stanza 18, was a well-known Border felon in his day. Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington was able to joke about his undiscriminating cleptomania in his poem, Aganis the Thievis of Liddisdaill, composed in about 1567. Writing of the Scottish reivers, Maitland says:

> Thai spulze pure men of pair pakis
> Thai leif pane nocht on bed nor bakis
> Baythe hen and cock, with reill and rok
> The lairdis Iock/all with him takis.
> (ll. 37-40)[5]

The Laird's Jock was probably a son of Thomas of Mangerton who was the elder brother of Johnie Armstrong of Gilnockie[6]. There are notices of the Laird's Jock from 1569-99[7]. In Thomas Musgrave's letter to Burghley, listing the Border Riders, and dated at the end of 1583, we find him described as

1 See Howard Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches, 199.

2 See Pease, op. cit., 201; Fraser, op. cit., 54n.

3 C.B.P., II, 288, No. 574.

4 Marked on Blaeu's Map of Cumberland as "Glasenbye", this is present-day Glassonby, a village about 2m. south of Kirkoswald, see OS Map, Sheet 83.

5 The Maitland Folio MS. (ed. W.A. Craigie), I, 302.

6 This is the opinion of Robert Bruce Armstrong, The History of Liddesdale, Appendix, ciii.

7 Cited in ibid.

> Joke Armestronge called the Lordes Joke dwelleth under Denyshill besydes Kershope in Denisborne[1].

But according to this record he was the son of "Seme Armstrong Lord of Mangerton", by the daughter of John Foster of Kershope-foot.

As for "Fair Johnie Armstrong", he is styled in stanza 19 of the ballad a "man", or retainer, of the Laird's Jock. In 1590 we find a complaint filed against

> Mungo and Jock Armstrong servants to the "Laird's Jock", & c. for stealing 37 wedders from Heatherie Burn at Candlemas, 1588[2].

This Jock (i.e. John) Armstrong may be the "Fair Johnie" of the ballad.

In the ballad the Armstrongs are dining together at Puddingburn (16[1]), which Scott notes was a house of strength, the ruins in his day forming a sheep-fold on the farm of Reidsmoss, which belonged to the Duke of Buccleugh[3].

One further piece of information may give us a <u>terminus a quo</u> for <u>Dick o the Cow</u>. It is interesting to note that, in 1553, under Henry, Lord Scrope's predecessor, a series of new articles were devised at Newcastle on the 12th and 13th of September, "for better service of the king's majesty, and the piece and quiet of the frontiers". Amongst these articles was the following requirement:

> That every gentleman and subject give information of any theif or receivers of theft, to their knowledge, to my lord deputy warden general, or to the sheriff of the country where the gentleman or subject dwelleth ...
>
> Also, that no subject speak with any Scotchman, except upon licence so to do, of my lord deputy warden general, or of the deputy wardens within their own offices[4].

1 <u>C.B.P.</u>, I, 121, No. 197.

2 <u>C.B.P.</u>, I, 350, No. 668. Child points out, however, that Jock, the Laird's son, an Armstrong of Liddesdale, had a brother called John, <u>E.S.P.B.</u>, III, 462. But he would not have been described in the ballad as a "man", or servant.

3 <u>Minstrelsy</u>, II, 90. Redmoss is on the east bank of the Tinnis Burn which flows into the Liddel Water at Kershopefoot, see OS Map, Sheet 76. No Puddingburn is marked on Blaeu's map of Liddesdale, but R.B. Armstrong has verified Scott's statement that there was "a considerable building of a rude kind" on the Tinnis Burn, see <u>E.S.P.B.</u>, III, 463n.

4 <u>C.B.P.</u>, I, lxxxiii.

Dickie thus observes the new Border Law to the letter when he asks permission from his lord and master, Scrope, to go in pursuit of his stolen gear. Previously, as we know, it had been legitimate for a man to follow the Hot Trod without informing the warden[1].

Dick o the Cow may be placed, therefore, within the period 1553-96, when the Laird's Jock and his band of Armstrongs were flourishing in Liddesdale. The ballad enjoyed a vogue in the south of England as we have seen, but by the eighteenth century when the first transcripts were made it was being preserved by Scottish singers. George Caw tells us that it had "been long admired by the people of Liddisdale and its neighbourhood"[2], a statement corroborated by Scott[3]. Since Dickie was a Cumberland man, one would expect the ballad celebrating his trickery of the Armstrongs to have been first sung on the English side of the Border. From the opening line, "Now Liddisdale has lain long in" (1^1), one is inclined to place it beside other songs celebrating the Armstrong clan like Jock o the Side and Johnie Armstrong. If it is, indeed, originally a Liddesdale Raiding Ballad we must credit the reciters with a good-humoured lack of prejudice towards this little Englishman who was able to fell Fair Johnie Armstrong, "the prettiest man in the south countrey" (41^2). Perhaps the last line goes to show how meaningless national distinctions had become to the sixteenth-century Borderers. What matters is the celebration of individual achievements. National rivalry is not made an issue as it was in the Otterburn ballad. Still, Caw adds the curious information that the Armstrongs eventually caught Dickie and, by way of revenge, tore his flesh from his bones with red-hot

1 See Joseph Nicolson and Richard Burn, The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland, I, xviii.

2 The Poetical Museum (1784 ed.), 22.

3 Minstrelsy, II, 72.

pincers[1]. Scott informs his readers that the reciter always added this after concluding the ballad[2], no doubt to remind his audience that an Armstrong would always come out top in the end.

The ballad has been well moulded by oral tradition. That all of its sixty-three verses were no stumbling-block to singing is shown by Alexander Campbell's note (that his transmitter "sang and recited") and by the preservation of the ballad's tune[3] and refrain[4]. Characteristic of Dick o the Cow is the method of connecting different stages in the narrative by means of what I called in the last chapter "incremental transition"[5]. Thus stanza 8^{3-4} is carried over as 9^{1-2} (and similarly, $22^{3-4} = 23^{1-2}$, $26^{3-4} = 27^{1-2}$, $37^{4} = 38^{1}$, and $43^{3-4} = 44^{1-2}$).

These repeated formulae are handled most effectively in this Border Ballad. For instance, the first time the balladist describes how the Armstrongs have lifted Dickie's three cows, "And tane the coerlets off his wife's bed" (7^{4}), we accept the statement at its face value. The line is repeated when Dickie accuses Fair Johnie Armstrong of the crime (38^{4}). But when the line comes round for the third and final time, it is with a small but subtle variation: they were only three "auld" coverlets after all (61^{4}). When Dickie tells Scrope, "I may nae langer in Cumberland dwel" (12^{1}), he is simply expressing his ardent desire to follow his stolen goods; and so, "Dickie has tane leave at lord and master" (15^{1}). But these two lines, repeated again in the last verse, are used to convey an entirely different kind of departure for an entirely different reason - it is now no longer safe for Dickie to remain in Cumberland. A third example is the couplet used to describe the discovery

1 Op. cit. (1784 ed.), 35.

2 Minstrelsy, II, 72.

3 See Bertrand H. Bronson, T.T.C.B., II, 165-7.

4 Given as various permutations of "Fa la, fa la, fa la didle", and sung after the first, second and fourth lines of each verse, see E.S.P.B., III, 464, 467-8.

5 See supra, Ch. 5, 'The Outlaw Ballads', p. 243.

of the theft of Dickie's cows and coverlets (8^{1-2}), which also serves, ironically, to convey the Armstrong's dismay when they discover their hamstrung horses $(28^{1-2})^{1}$. These examples should counterbalance Gerould's dismissal of ballad repetition as "pure rhetoric"[2]. On the contrary, they offer interesting evidence of the way in which oral formulaic devices perform a superior function and may assume additional levels of significance through their situation and context.

The function of all three repeated passages just quoted is to heighten, usually through ironic comparison, the comedy inherent in the ballad's situations. With regard to ballad humour, F.B. Gummere drew the following somewhat surprising conclusion:

> The main work of civilisation for the onlooker in life has been to detach the notes of agony, misery, grief, weariness, from the notes of fighting, of victory and defiance and defeat, and to make literature the reflection upon life instead of life itself. Barred from this reflective note, the old poetry was devoid of humour. The humourist is left behind; for comedy, after all, must be the affair of prose. The last word of the great poem, like that last word of the ballads, expresses life in its tragedy; and only the tragic can be finally true[3].

Without pursuing the literary or philosophical implications of this extreme statement, we might be inclined to agree with Gummere that, broadly speaking, the ballads are tragic in character. But Dick o the Cow and The Lochmaben Harper (which I shall discuss next) are enough to show that the Borderer could laugh loud and long as well as "greet for very rage". The comic genius does demand a certain detachment, a placing of characters in their social context to highlight man's foibles and idiosyncracies. Irony especially presupposes that the reader feels the presence of a hidden but watchful and shrewd commentator. Such an "alert

1 This is the meaning of "He has ty'd them a' with St. Mary knott" (26^{3}), see Caw, op. cit., 27; E.D.D., IV, 45.

2 The Ballad of Tradition, 110.

3 The Popular Ballad, 341-2.

eyesight", as Willa Muir calls it[1], seems to make itself felt for the first time in balladry, in the Border Ballads.

In Dick o the Cow a ballad-maker has exploited the comic possibilities of the old Border problem. The ballad is full of situational humour - Dickie outwitting the Armstrongs, the most feared bunch of Liddesdale reivers, and striking up bargains with his betters; Dickie being offered a steak off his own cow to eat at the Armstrongs' supper; Dickie unable to drop his enemy with the blade of his sword, but butting him clumsily under the eye with the pommel. And there is a rich verbal humour that makes mockery of learned abstractions. Dickie lectures Johnie Armstrong:

'There is a preacher in owr chapell,
   And a' the lee-lang day teaches he;
When day is gane, and night is come,
   There's never a word I mark but three.

'The first and second's Faith and Conscience;
   The third is, Johnie, Take head of thee;
But what faith and conscience had thow, traitor,
   When thou took my three kye frae me?'
(36-37)

Whereupon Dickie unseats his antagonist, relieves him of jack, two-handed sword, steel cap and fine mount, and bids adieu with laconic irony:

'Gramercie', then can Dickie say,
   'I had twa horse, thou hast made me three!'
(41[1-2])

The ballad-singer sees the farcical element in the theft of the three old coverlets, whilst the tears of Dickie's wife after the raid become a cacophany far removed from the lament of Jamie Telfer and his wife. Again it is the repetition that suggests the comic monotone of the wife's grief:

1 Living with Ballads, 186.

'Hold thy tongue, my wife', he says,
'And of thy crying let me bee.

'Hald thy tongue, my wife', he says,
'And of thy crying let me bee,
And ay that where thou wants a kow,
Good sooth that I shal bring the three'.
(83-4, 9)

The reiving habit can be seen in a grotesque as well as a serious light. There is a joke right at the beginning of the ballad over the Liddesdale ponies growing "so lidder and fatt" and "lazie in the sta" (1^{3-4}) through lack of good reiving exercise. There is something preposterous, too, in the Laird's Jock's reprimand to Fair Johnie Armstrong:

'Ye wad never be teld it', quo the Laird's Jock;
'Have ye not found my tales fu leel?
Ye wade never out of England bide,
Till crooked and blind and a' wad steal'.
(30)

The balladist inserts his own wry comment on occasions. At the beginning of the tale, Johnie and Willie Armstrong are foiled in their projected raid on Hutton Hall because,

the laird he was the wiser man,
For he had left nae gear without. (3^{3-4})

There is a nicely euphemistic touch in the balladist's description of Fair Johnie Armstrong coming to after Dick of the Cow has laid him unconscious: "When Johnë wakend out of his dream" (43^{1}).

Perhaps the main reason for the ballad's popularity was the excellent comic use it makes of the Englishman's love of fair play. Folk could hardly have helped sympathising with this Cumberland yokel who gets his own back on one of the strongest, most feared Border clans, and with an increase in his own livestock and ready cash into the bargain. The business acumen of the Border dalesman usually forces some kind of final

stock-taking in these ballads. Quite simply, the audience wanted to know what Jamie Telfer or Dick of the Cow "made" as a result of their efforts and to be reminded pleasurably of the little they had at the beginning. "Better", "good", "as good", "bigger", "mair" - comparatives such as these round off the plot in the last stanzas of many a Border Ballad.

Innocent victims of countless raids from across the Border must have derived a wholesome vicarious satisfaction and sense of justice from the deeds of ballad heroes like Dick of the Cow. If the system is corrupt, this ballad seems to be saying, nevertheless a man can fight it if he keeps his wits about him. But the ballad-maker is careful to emphasise that Dickie has the law on his side, by making him report the theft to his lord and master and promise with his "trouthe" and "right hand" only to steal from those who stole from him (13). So he is seen to triumph by observing the Border Laws of his day, together with a little of his own initiative on the side.

If every Borderer loved to hear the tale of a good bargain hard driven, he loved even more to hear it when a hero recognisably like himself was the winner. Scott thought that Dickie, "from the privileged insolence which he assumes" was Lord Scrope's jester[1], but this is extremely doubtful. More probably the word "fool" which Dickie uses of himself is a term of endearment, or a word signifying simply "an ordinary chap". The word has a much stronger derogatory sense in modern English that it had at an earlier period[2]. The poet also uses the adjective "innocent" (39^2) to describe his hero, again to convey the sense of an ordinary, down-to-earth, straightforward person[3]. Certainly, Dickie is no

1 Minstrelsy, II, 71.
2 See O.E.D., IV, 398, under 1 and 4.
3 O.E.D., V, 313, under B3.

Elizabethan court or household jester, but a small-time farmer with a wife, cottage and a few cattle. Neither is he a simpleton. He displays a cunning and alertness that would have commended him to any organised band of reivers.

He is courageous:

> Yet he's comd up to the hall among them all;
> So wel he became his courtisie:
> 'Wel may ye be, my good Laird's Jock!
> But the deil bless all your companie.'
> (18)

George MacDonald Fraser has pointed out just how dangerous following the Hot Trod could be[1]. Dickie quickly takes in the situation, making a mental note of the old peat-house where he intends to spend the night and observing where the key is flung. He is able to hamstring thirty of the Armstrongs' horses and escape undetected with two of the best. And he is a shrewd dealer in horseflesh, familiar with the custom of the local markets:

> 'I'le either have thirty pound for the good horse,
> Or else he's to Mattan[2] Fair with me'.
> (58^{3-4})

Finally, he has the good sense to retire with his profits to Burgh under Stanemuir (63^{4})[3], as far from Armstrong country as possible. The district of Stainmore "contained many scattered hamlets and houses dispersed in the narrow gills and thwaites"[4], so Dickie would have been well hidden.

1 The Steel Bonnets, 115-19.

2 This is given as Mortan in $b52^{4}$, 58^{4} and is probably Morton, now the south-west district of Carlisle, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

3 This is Brough in Westmorland, called Burgh-under-Stainmore until about 1671, see The Place-Names of Westmorland (ed. Albert Hugh Smith), Pt. II, 61, and OS Map, Sheet 84.

4 William Whellan, The History and Topography of Cumberland and Westmoreland, 371.

The ballad audience thus laughs with Dickie rather than at him. But congenial and jocular as the tale is, it is not without suspense; the danger and threatened violence which we encounter in the other Border Ballads is not wholly absent. The Armstrong clan, eager for sport, are not lacking in inventiveness in their dealings with their victims:

> Quo Johnie Armstrong, we'll him hang;
> 'Nay', thain quo Willie, 'we'll him slae;'
> But up bespake another young man, We'le nit
> him in a four-nooked sheet,
> Give him his burden of batts, and lett him gae.
> (20)

And later the poor countryman is nearly run through by Johnie Armstrong's spear. No doubt "the powers above" (39^3) are on Dickie's side and he has the last laugh in the ballad; but not in actual fact, if we are to believe the reciters.

Another Borderer of Dick of the Cow's ilk is the blind harper of Lochmaben. With the help of his crafty wife, a certain amount of base cunning and a talent for harping audiences to sleep, the blind man gains admittance to the castle of the English king, Henry, and steals his best stallion, Wanton Brown. The theft is managed by the harper tying Wanton Brown to the tail of his own mare, who, once freed, will not stop galloping until she reaches the harper's stable and her young foal. When the disappearance is discovered the next morning, the harper complains bitterly to the king and gets compensation for the pretended theft of his mare, as well as thirty guineas for the foal he says he has had stolen from him in Scotland. But the harper's biggest achievement was to become a ballad hero and have his fame sung along the Western Border.

The ballad was obviously highly popular. It has survived in six different versions, one recovered as late as the early 1900s by Gavin Greig in Aberdeenshire.

The earliest recorded version is Child A, which has been preserved in three variant copies. Titled 'The Blind Harper of Lochmaben', it was discovered in the Glenriddell MSS of 1791, as taken from another MS. collection of a Mr. Henderson[1]. This is Child Aa. Robert Burns sent a copy to James Johnson for publication in The Scots Musical Museum[2] in 1803, under the title 'The Blind Harper'. This is Child Ab. A third copy, Child Ac, was that printed by Sir Walter Scott in his Minstrelsy[3] and titled 'The Lochmaben Harper'.

Child's B version was also found among the Glenriddell MSS[4], this copy being "from Dr. Clapperton of Lochmaben", and called simply 'Lochmaben Harper'.

Child C, 'The Auld Harper', was published in The Edinburgh Topographical and Antiquarian Magazine[5] in 1849. It was communicated by a subscriber in Anderston, Glasgow, who signed himself 'W.G.' after the following note recording the ballad's origins:

> The following is an oral version of a ballad which appears in the first volume of the Minstrelsy. I have written it down from the recitation of a friend who learned it many years ago from her grandfather, a Mr. John Macreddie, farmer, Little Laight, parish of Inch, Wigtownshire. He died in 1813, at the age of ninety-four, and is supposed to have acquired the song from tradition in his youth. On comparison it will be found to differ in several respects from Sir Walter's version[6].

If Mr. Macreddie was born in 1719 and learned the ballad in his youth, we may give this version a fairly early date.

Child D, without a title, is taken from the Macmath MS.[7] Macmath,

1 Glenriddell MSS, XI, 42, see E.S.P.B., IV, 16-17, 23.

2 Op. cit., VI, 598, see E.S.P.B., IV, 16-17.

3 Minstrelsy (1802 ed.), I, 65, see E.S.P.B., 16-17.

4 Glenriddell MSS, XI, 39, see E.S.P.B., IV, 16-17, 23.

5 Op. cit., 58, see E.S.P.B., IV, 16, 19.

6 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., IV, 23.

7 Macmath MS., 35, see E.S.P.B., IV, 16, 20.

on sending the copy to Child, explained:

> This version was copied by me in fac-simile from the original manuscript in the handwriting of the late Rev. George Murray, of Troquhain, minister of Balmaclellan, in the Stewartry of Kircudbright, and was in possession of his son, the Rev. George Murray, to whose kindness I was indebted for the loan of it. The late Mr. Murray took down the ballad from the singing of Sarah Rae, a poor weak-minded woman of his parish[1].

George Murray, the son, wrote to Child on January 12, 1883, with the further information:

> I may add that I have heard her sing the ballad myself, to a very simple but particularly plaintive lilt - more like a rapid chant than an ordinary song - which rings in my ears yet, although I only heard it once, when a lad[2].

Child version E, 'The Jolly Harper', is from Peter Buchan's MSS[3]. It was first printed in James Dixon's Scottish Traditional Versions of Ancient Ballads[4], in 1845.

Lastly, Gavin Greig took down a version from the singing of one of his most productive informants, Miss Bell Robertson, of New Pitsligo, Aberdeenshire[5]. "She had learned it from her mother, who had it when young"[6]. Bell Robertson, it will be remembered, had given Greig a text of Tam Lin.

Three tunes have been recorded for The Lochmaben Harper[7], and the ballad's "owerword", or chorus, may be found preserved in all of the versions except Buchan's and that printed by Scott.

1 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., IV, 16. A Dr. Mitchell, who was present with Murray when Sarah Rae sang, gives the date as 1866, see Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, XII (1877), 260.

2 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., IV, 16.

3 Buchan's MSS, I, 35, see E.S.P.B., IV, 16, 21.

4 Op. cit. (Percy Society Publications), XVII, 37, see E.S.P.B., IV, 16, 21.

5 L.L., 119, No. 57.

6 Ibid.

7 See B.H. Bronson, T.P.C.B., III, 182-3.

The ballad may possibly be as old as the mid-sixteenth century, since there are two entries of ballads with a similar title in the registers of the London stationers. One is an entry for July 22, 1564 - July 22, 1565, of a fee from Owyn Rogers for licence to print "a ballett intituled The Blende Harper, etc."[1] The other is an entry in the following year of a fee from Lucas Haryson for licence to print "a ballett intituled The Blynde Harpers, with the Answere"[2]. Against this evidence, it has to be admitted that none of our extant MSS or printed copies of the ballad derive from English singing traditions, and in any case blind harpers and blind "crowders" were common types of musician during an age when these handicapped persons could develop few other skills.

All the surviving versions of The Lochmaben Harper are agreed in naming a king Henry of England as the dupe of the harper's trickery, and Henry VIII reigned from 1509 until his death in 1547. Of course, one does not need to suppose for a moment that this monarch was in actual fact swindled out of a prize stallion, but the ballad which would like to think he was may have been composed during his reign. The name of Henry VIII was hated and feared on the Scottish Border perhaps more than that of any other English king since Edward I. It was Henry who instigated the hostilities leading to the disastrous slaughter of the Scots army at Flodden Field in 1513, and "the rough wooing" of 1543-47 succeeded in alienating Scotland and England for another half century. As Fraser has described it:

> The Border had been taught once again the harsh lesson it had been learning for 250 years - that might was right, that wolves survived where sheep went under, that security existed only in the sword and the tower ... King Henry had lit the fire in which the steel of the frontier received its final tempering[3].

1 A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London (ed. Edward Arber), I, 260.

2 Op. cit., (ed. Arber), I, 294.

3 The Steel Bonnets, 275. For an account of Henry's Scottish policy, see Fraser, op. cit., 254-75; J.D. Mackie, A History of Scotland, 143-4.

In view of this, it is surprising that King Henry emerges in the favourable light he does. But in The Lochmaben Harper wish-fulfillment assumes the spirit of a genial and farcical comedy. It was probably Scott who, to reduce improbability, substituted the Lord Warden for King Henry (Acl[4])[1] and so gave this wish-fulfillment a new direction.

We may place the ballad, then, in the first half of the sixteenth century, and call it, as Willa Muir does, "an early tale of trickery ... a kind of Riding Ballad, since it has to do with horse-stealing across the Border"[2].

Dr. Clapperton of Lochmaben's version, despite the later chronological position assigned it by Child in his collection, may stand closest to the original tradition. By far the most interesting thing about this, the B version, is that the reciters have displayed at least a modicum of common-sense in recognising the problems that would beset a blind man trying to distinguish his own horse from the thirty-three others in a strange stable. In this version, the harper is made to exclaim:

'My blessing light upon my wife!
I think she be a daily flower;
She told me to ken my ain gray mare
When eer I felt her by the ewer'.
(B8)

We might ask, too, how a blind harper would know when everyone in his audience was sound asleep? Bronson seems to me correct in supposing that, "originally more was done with this element of the story than has come down to us"[3]. Indeed, it is only the two earliest versions of the ballad, A and B, that make any mention of the harper's blindness. In C he is called an "auld harper" (Cl[1]), in D a "poor silly harper-man"

1 See Child, E.S.P.B., IV, 16. Scott gives no account of his source, but it was almost certainly the Glenriddell MSS.

2 Living with Ballads, 246.

3 T.T.C.B., III, 182.

(D1[1]), in E a "jolly harper-man" (E1[1]) and finally, in Bell Robertson's peculiar rendering of the tale, he has become, diminutively, a "little wee harpin mannie" (Greig, 1[1]).

This last may afford us a clue to the real nature of this ballad hero. Miss Robertson in her choice of "little wee" as the descriptive tag to describe her harper, may have unconsciously accepted him as a musician of magical power. Charmed music which works a soporific effect on its listeners is a motif that occurs frequently in popular literature[1]. In Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight (Child 4), an Otherworld knight begins his wooing of a king's daughter by the sleep-binding strains of his harp:

> He's taen a harp into his hand,
> He's harped them all asleep,
> Except it was the king's daughter,
> Who one wink couldna' get.
> (B2)

Glasgerion, in the ballad of that name (Child 67, B5) does the same.

The harper of Lochmaben plays so enchantingly that he sends the king and all his nobles to sleep. But he also makes the groom forget the key to the stable door - a small detail introduced by Dr. Clapperton's reciter (B5[4]), by Sarah Rae (D7[4]) and Bell Robertson (Greig 6[4]). If we compare this detail in The Lochmaben Harper with the similar incident in Dick o the Cow, we can see that the one is working on a marvellous level (at least in this part of its plot), the other on a purely circumstantial, practical level where effects are dictated by local causes and customs. In Dick o the Cow, Dickie manages to get hold of the stable key because, the ballad is careful to explain,

> Then it was the custom of Puddingburn,
> And the house of Mangerton, all haile!
> These that came not at the first call
> They gott no more meat till the next meall.

1 For music as a mode of enchantment, see L.C. Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, 293-8.

The lads, that hungry and aevery was,
Above the door-head they flang the key;
Dickie took good notice to that;
Says, There's a bootie younder for me.
(24-25)

The blind harper, on the other hand, gains possession of his key by, it is hinted, preternatural means.

We saw in our first chapter that fairies were usually of no less than mortal size, but that later popular belief[1] (influenced perhaps by literature) began to call them "the little people", or "the wee folk". Could the early ballad-reciters have instinctively felt (and Bell Robertson later rationalised) that the Lochmaben Harper was a more than normally gifted mortal?

However, even if we do not accept that such a superstition lies somewhere in the background, we may appreciate that the story also works tolerably well on the realistic level. The ballad-maker displays the countryman's shrewd knowledge of animal husbandry - the trick will only work with a mare that has recently foaled; and such a mare will not stop running, nor allow herself to be covered by a stallion until she is alongside her young:

She never loot Wanton licht till she
Was at Lochmaben, at her foal.
(D10[3-4]).

Sarah Rae's version (perhaps following Dr. Clapperton's) adds a detail that suggests the deviousness of the horse thief who operates through back-yards and secret entrances:

He ca'd her through at the bye-yett,
Through mony a swyre and mony a hole;
(D10[1-2])

1 Bell Robertson was singing at the end of the nineteenth century.

The "moss and muir" formula ($A5^2$, 13^2) and the "hills and mire" formula ($B2^2$) are the Border balladist's accustomed means of shifting his action from town to country, or vice-versa. "Fair Carlisle" is the scene of the harper's trick in B. Buchan's version exaggerates and has his blind hero journey from "Striveling" (Stirling) to "Lunan toun" (London). Sarah Rae introduces a reference to Lochmaben Heights ($D11^1$).

A feature that seems to have given delight to early audiences of Border folk, but which is shed when the ballad is carried north to Aberdeenshire, is that of the "lazy lass", or servant-girl, of the blind harper and his wife. Her part in the conspiracy is to rise up early in the morning and let the harper's mare, with Wanton Brown tied to her tail, into her master's stable. Artistically, the girl's function seems to be to comment on the excellence of King Henry's stallion (which she at first mistakes for another foal), and to heighten the cunning and industry of the harper and his wife, by comparison with her own sloth and stupidity. So, the following verses appear in one form or another in the Border texts:

'Rise up, rise up, my servant-lass,
  Let in your master and his mear;'
'It's by my sooth', the wee lassie goud say,
  'I'm in a sleeping drowsy air'.

Wi mony a gaunt she turned her round,
  And keekit through at a wee hole;
'It's by my sooth!' the wee lassie goud say,
  'Our mear has gotten a braw brown foal!'

'Lie still, lie still, ye lazy lass,
  It's but the moon shines in your ee;'
'Na, by my sooth', the lassie gond say,
  'And he's bigger than ony o his degree'.
(B11-13)

Again, there is a marvellous quality about these verses - it is almost as if the servant-lass in her "sleeping drowsy air" had also been charmed by the harper's music. In any case her exclamations point to the magnificence of the stolen beast - "he's bigger than ony o his degree".

The contrasting bustle and busy-ness of the old Border wife is the subject of the verse that follows:

> Then lightly rose the gude auld wife,
> I wat the first up in a' the town;
> She took the grit oats intil her lap
> And foddered King Henry's Wanton Brown.
> (B14)

The "grit oats", or groats, would have been the very best fodder the old woman had, being the improved or whole kernels of oat, as distinguished from the "sma corn" or inferior oats[1]. In Sarah Rae's version, the harper's wife is up before the rest of the town and

> She's stealing the corn and stealing the hay,
> And wappin it oer to Wanton Broun.
> (D18[3-4])

With her ready ingenuity, her volatile tongue, her energy and her comic dream of being "fouie", or well-off[2], as in the Wigtownshire farmer's rendering (C10[4]), this "gude auld wife" has been well characterised by the various ballad-singers.

A degree of calculation, a self-conscious literariness creeps into Buchan's version of the ballad, that sets it in a world apart from the earthy humour of the Border texts. Fearing that the comedy of situation and character may not speak sufficiently for itself, the northern reciter has employed the adjective "jolly" to do service for anything he feels his ballad hero may lack, and for the first time the harper is given a name, "jolly John" (E13[3]). Instead of the direct bluntness of the Border harper's request to the king:

1 S.N.D., IV, 288.
2 S.N.D., IV, 168.

'By my sooth', says the silly blind harper,
'I wad rather hae stabling to my mare'.
(B3$^{3-4}$).

the harper of Buchan's Aberdeenshire text apes the courtly style of speech:

'Indeed, my liege, and by your grace,
I'd rather hae stabling to my mare.'
(E4$^{3-4}$)

and: "He said, My liege, wi a' my heart" (E14^{3}).

Longer by several verses than the others, the Buchan version dilutes the vigour and polishes out the knotty grain that is one of the most appealing characteristics of the Border copies. The harper's mare, for example, is "placed" beside Wanton Brown (E9^{3}), instead of tied or stabled; she goes "prancing" from the town (E11^{2}), whereas in the Wigtownshire farmer's idiom, she and the stallion are "hounded" out (C9^{2}) - the more active verb suggesting the amount of shoving and whipping that a countryman might find necessary to start a pair of reluctant animals. The picture of Buchan's harper whispering his instructions into the grey mare's ear (E10), represents a descent into gratuitous whimsy. Nor can E resist what is often quite superfluous explication:

Then forth he ran, and in he came,
Dropping many a feigned tear:
(E15$^{1-2}$)

Finally, two narrative elements are introduced which carry this version far beyond the real world of the Border. First, Buchan's reciter has felt a need to motivate the harper's theft, and this motivation he supplies in the form of a wager between the harper and two knights:

Sir Roger he wagered five ploughs o land,
Sir Charles he wagered five thousand pound,
And John he's taen the deed in hand,
To steal King Henry's Wanton Brown.
(E2)

Although Border reivers might wager their spoils on occasion[1], we can fairly assume that not one of them would need an excuse to make off with a piece of valuable horseflesh. This superfluous motivation has also crept into Sarah Rae's version (D1). Secondly, E has the harper actually return Wanton Brown to the English king after he has won his bet - again, a most unlikely course of action in the days when men like Hughie Graham could be hanged for horse-stealing.

Important narrative components have become even more confused in the version Gavin Greig collected from Bell Robertson. In her rendering of the tale, the harper, after lulling the court to sleep with his excellent music, creeps down into the stable and himself mounts Wanton Brown, riding the stallion back to Lochmaben. The groom goes down next morning to find the animal gone but the harper's grey mare still standing. He saddles up and pursues the harper. The harper complains loudly that he has lost both mare and foal, and the groom, presumably overhearing, promises him compensation for the foal and delivers up the mare. Many of the story details have become submerged. The foal no longer plays an essential part in the trick. The garters fastened by the harper into Wanton Brown's tail (Greig 8^{1-2}), and by the groom into the grey mare's tail (Greig 10^{1-2}), are a nonsensical remnant of the original device whereby the two animals were tied together. At the beginning of verse 9, the stable is empty, yet the king's groom finds the harper's mare standing there. The wily plot, suggested by the cunning wife is reduced to a flagrant theft which could hardly have deceived. Alexander Keith, who edited Greig's collection, suggested that the explanation for all this was that the song had come to be used for nursery entertainment[2].

1 See Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 78.

2 L.L., 119.

A far more satisfactory explanation seems to me to lie in the fact that The Lochmaben Harper, as sung by Bell Robertson, has strayed far in time and place from its Border origin. Perhaps it is just as well that Burns, Riddell, Murray and Mr. "W.G." took down their texts of this delightful comic ballad when they did.

We conclude our discussion of the Raiding Ballads as we began, on a more serious note. The Lads of Wamphray is a spirited treatment of raid, counter-raid and bloody revenge. Willy Johnstone of Wamphray[1], nicknamed the Galliard, goes to the Crichtons' stable to steal Simmy Crichton's prize Dun. By mistake he mounts a blind horse and when he deliberately boasts his theft is easily overtaken and captured by the Crichtons. They hang him from a tree in front of his nephew, Will of Kirkhill. The latter swears revenge, assembles a band of trusty men and reives the Crichtons' cattle up in Annandale. The Crichtons pursue their stolen herd but come off worst in the battle which ensues.

The ballad exists in a single version preserved in one copy among the Glenriddell MSS[2]. Unfortunately, there is no record of the ballad in oral tradition, but its character as an orally constructed narrative must be beyond dispute. A quarter of the lines are formulaic and there are perfect examples of other oral-poetic devices. Incremental repetition is at work throughout, not least in the Border balladist's technique of using place-names as his chief means of advancing the narrative, as a substitution system.

The Lads of Wamphray uses local place-names in a quite remarkable way, there being twenty different localities mentioned[3]. Their presence

1 Wamphray parish lies between the river Annan and Wamphray Water, about 6m. south-east of Moffat, see OS Map, Sheet 69.

2 Glenriddell MSS, XI, 34, see E.S.P.B., III, 458.

3 The ballad-story's location is the Nithsdale-Annandale area of Dumfriesshire. The places mentioned can all be traced on the OS Map, Sheets 68, 69, and 75.

has a two-fold effect and is largely cumulative. First, we are impressed, I think, by a sense of sheer power: stanzas 1-8, which are no more than an enumeration for its own sake of the different branches of the wild Johstone clan, must surely have intimidated and awed the ballad's first audiences. The places catalogued suggest the extent of the territory owned, or rather terrorised, by the Johnstones, a family that vied with the powerful Maxwells for supremacy on the West Border. "In this territorie the Johnstons are the men of greatest name; a kinred even bred to war", wrote Camden during the reign of Elizabeth[1].

In the ballad it is the sentence-structure that conveys the idea of expansiveness; of free-ranging independent spirits that accept no bounds, of pride in dominion. The adverbial clause, "Twixt the ... and ... ", used twice (1^1, 7^1), and the juxtaposition of the formula, "It is the lads of ... " (2^1, 3, etc.) followed by a new place-name at the end of each line, both serve to establish a wide angle of vision. Secondly, we are meant to feel, I would say, a sensation of hurried but determined movement from place to place. It is the way in which one place-name succeeds another with an almost cinematic abruptness of scene-change that achieves this effect and produces in the ear of the listener or reader the rhythmical drumming of hoofbeats - the analogy which most obviously springs to mind. Adverbial combinations suggestive of unchecked motion carry the quick transitions - "back to", "out at", "in at", "hame for", and so on. For a sense of broad, unhampered and boundless movement this must be one of the most satisfying Border Ballads.

Names of characters and names of clans seem to exert a similarly fascinating pull on the balladist. The Crichtons are named twelve times, the Johnstones three and "the Galliard", who is at the centre of the piece, eight times in all.

1 William Camden, Britannia (1695 ed.), 907.

The narrative method of the ballad is largely conjunctional, a prime example of what Milman Parry termed "the adding style"[1]. The ballad-singer has only to use the rudimentary "and when", "but when", "and", and "then" conjunctions to place one line on top of another and so carry the story a stage further. This compares with Lord's observations on the style of Yugoslav epic. Lord notes:

> In a style in which actions or things are added one to another in series, the conjunction plays a large role, and the most common patterns for the beginning of the line naturally begin with a conjunction[2].

In consequence, the end of the line is very clearly marked, and there are few run-on lines. Lord concludes:

> This absence of necessary enjambement is a characteristic of oral composition and is one of the easiest touchstones to apply in testing the orality of a poem[3].

So, in The Lads of Wamphray, the author in rapid, almost staccato style, may add together a series of actions, moving the story quickly forward:

> But the Crichtons wadna let Willy bee,
> But they hanged him high upon a tree.
>
> O think then Will he was right wae,
> When he saw his uncle guided sae.
>
> 'But if ever I live Wamphray to see,
> My uncle's death revenged shall be!'
>
> Back to Wamphray Willy's gane,
> And riders has raised mony a ane.
>
> Saying, My lads, if ye'll be true,
> Ye's a' be clad in the noble blue.
>
> Back to Nidsdale they are gane,
> And away the Crichtons' nout they hae taen.
> (20-25)

and so on.

1 Cited Albert B. Lord, The Singer of Tales, 54.

2 Op. cit., 41.

3 Op. cit., 54.

Because of these pronounced oral characteristics and because of the ballad's two-line stanza form, Gummere was tempted to see in The Lads of Wamphray "earlier marks of structure and style"[1]. He wrote:

> The Lads of Wamphray ... was surely sung though we have no refrain with it, and is full of repetitions and lively quotation ... It differs, however, from the mass of ballads which were founded on deeds of the border ... in its fresh and immediate tone. It seems to spring straight from the fact; and one is tempted here, if anywhere, to apply Bishop Leslie's ipsi confingungt, and to charge the making of the ballad to the very doers of its deed of revenge[2].

Gummere is thus able to use the ballad as evidence in support of his communal-composition theory, concluding that, "the making of border ballads by men-at-arms in improvisation and choral [sic] becomes a quite intelligible fact"[3]. Yet other Border Ballads sound as "fresh and immediate" as they must have done when they were sung for the first time. And, as T.F. Henderson remarks, Gummere could have applied his ipsi confingunt equally well to ballads like Kinmont Willie, which also lapses into a spontaneous first person plural narrative[4].

With regard to the two-line stanza, Gerould observes that it has been all too often assumed that ballads made up of couplets and with lines of four stresses are the oldest preserved specimens[5]. But we happen to know that The Lads of Wamphray is a comparatively late ballad, celebrating a skirmish, in 1593, between the Johnstone and Crichton clans, which led to a revival of the old feud between Johnstones and Maxwells and finally to the battle of Dryffe Sands, December 6, 1593, in which Lord Maxwell lost his life. The following is an account of the facts reflected in our ballad, as related by John Spotiswoode, Archbishop of St. Andrews:

1 The Popular Ballad, 57n.
2 Op. cit., 249
3 Op. cit., 250.
4 The Ballad in Literature, 110.
5 The Ballad of Tradition, 126.

> In the end of this year 1593 there fell out great Troubles in the West Marches. Some of the surname of Johnstone having in the July preceding made a great depradation on the lands of Sanwhare and Drumlanrig, and killed eighteen persons that followed for rescue of their goods ...[1]

The story is elaborated by the author of The Historie and Life of King James the Sext, who writes that peace between the Johnstones and Crichtons would have remained unbroken and lasted longer,

> geve sum unbrydlit men of Johnestons had not hapnit to ryd a steiling in the month of Julij this present yeir of God 1593, in the lands and territoreis pertening to the Lord Sanquhar and the knyghtis of Drumlanrig, Lag and Closburne, upon the water of Nyth; whare attoure the great reaf and spulye that they tuik away with violent hand, they slew and mutilat a great nomber of men, wha stude for defence of their awin geir and to reskew the same from the hands of sik vicious revers[2].

The stealing by the Galliard of Simmy Crichton's horse, which sparks off the whole chain of events in the ballad, almost certainly takes its rise from a theft which occurred in July, 1593, when a simple reiver named Willie Johnstone of Kirkhill lifted "ane blak horse" at Gretna from Willie Carmichael of Reidmyre. Willie Carmichael was a cousin to no less a person than Sir John Carmichael, who resigned his office as Scottish West March Warden on July 11, 1593. Probably his last official act was to write on July 10 to Sir Richard Lowther, acting Warden of the English West March, and to the Laird of Johnstone, asking their assistance in seeing that the black horse was returned[3]. Johnstone probably ordered his clansman to restore the stolen beast, after which, deprived of his booty, he may have looked to the Crichtons to supply him with a mount. Certainly, as the ballad story goes, Willie Johnstone of Kirkhill is with his uncle, William Johnstone of Wamphray, nicknamed "the Galliard", when the latter rides to steal Simmy Crichton's famous Dun.

1 The History of the Church of Scotland (1655 ed.), 401.

2 Op. cit. (1825 ed.), 297. The Historie was written towards the latter part of the sixteenth century, probably by John Colville.

3 C.B.P., I, 400, No. 758.

Willie Johnstone of Kirkhill (nephew to the Galliard) is mentioned at various times between 1594-98 and is also named amongst the pledges given by the Laird of Johnstone at Holyrood House, on January 6, 1595/6, "for the gang of Wamfra"[1].

As for the Galliard himself, Scott informs us that

> William Johnstone of Wamphray, called the Galliard, was a noted freebooter. A place, near the head of Teviotdale, retains the name of the Galliard's Faulds (folds), being a valley where he used to secrete and divide his spoil with his Liddesdale and Eskdale associates. His nom de guerre seems to have been derived from the dance called The Galliard. The word is still used in Scotland, to express an active, gay, dissipated character[2].

The story, as told by the balladist, is by no means as straightforward as that given by Spotiswoode and by the author of the Historie. The motivation for the reiving of the Crichtons' cattle is to be found in the Galliard's single-handed attempt to thieve Sim Crichton's prize Dun. The act is open-handed, carried out apparently in broad daylight, a piece of sheer bravado. The Galliard, thinking that he has indeed succeeded in capturing Simmy's favourite mount, cannot resist proclaiming his feat. He calls out to the Crichtons, thus giving the game away:

> 'Come out now, Simmy o the Side,
> Come out and see a Johnston ride!
>
> 'Here's the bonniest horse in a' Nithside,
> And a gentle Johnston aboon his hide.'
> (11-12)

One feels that the purpose of these verses is to assert that the Galliard is more of a reckless braggart and adventurer than a determined horse-thief working under cover of night. What is more, he makes a comic mistake in leading a blind horse out of the stable instead of the coveted Dun.

1 R.P.C., V, 431, 739; cf. also, V, 739-40, 534, VI, 115, et passim.
2 Minstrelsy, II, 186.

The Crichtons, led by Simmy, mount in pursuit, and the Galliard, alone but for his nephew, Will of Kirkhill, is surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered. After making a short series of appeals in the manner of Johnie Armstrong, he is overwhelmed by the merciless Crichtons who "hanged him high upon a tree" (20^2). There can be little doubt which way the audience's sympathies must have been directed at this point in the narrative. The Crichtons' action is condemned in lines such as "And nane wi him [the Galliard] but Willy alane" (16^2), and "But the Crichtons wadna let Willy bee" (20^1), the last following hard on the Galliard's fine offers of gold and his promise "neer to do a Crichton wrang" (17^2).

The lifting of the Crichtons' "nout" in the second half of the ballad (and the raid of the historians' accounts) is carried out in revenge for the Galliard's murder. It is the Johnstones' means of drawing out the Crichtons. Child felt that stanza 37 - "Sin we've done na hurt, nor we'll take na wrang", spoken by the Lads of Wamphray after their slaughter of the Crichtons - "does not come in happily"[1]. Scott, careful as always, put the verse after 29, omitting "sin", to read:

> But when they cam to the Biddes-law[2],
> The Johnstones bade them stand and draw;
> 'We've done nae ill, we'll thole nae wrang,
> But back to Wamphray we will gang'.
> (M, 15)

But attempts to alter the position of the verse, or to explain it, as Child does, as anacoluthon[3], merely constitute a failure on the part of editors to grasp the whole point of the ballad. In terms of the Border Code there is no inconsistency: the Johnstones sincerely believe they

1 E.S.P.B., III, 459n.

2 The Biddes (now Bidhouse) Burn flows into the Evan Water, about 8m. north-west of Moffat, see OS Map, Sheet 68. Biddes-law must have been a local name for one of the surrounding hills.

3 E.S.P.B., III, 459n.

have "done na hurt". The Galliard's attempted theft of Crichton's Dun was not a crime, but to hang a man for it, in cold-blood, was. Fraser has distinguished (for the sake of a confused posterity) between the Borderers' two apparently irreconcilable attitudes. He explains:

> It is most important to appreciate the distinction, in the Border mind, between reiving, with its associated offences - blackmail, kidnapping, feud-killing, and so on - on the one hand, and "ordinary" crime on the other. Robert Carey was one outsider who fully understood this distinction, and although he did not condone the reivers' behaviour, he did try to explain it. "So have they (the Scots) been used to rob and spoil, and think it their inherytance, scorning all opposition," he wrote, adding that, "the English thief is as bad or worse than the Scot". Most of us do not think of ourselves as criminals, but possibly there are things in our daily lives which we regard as our "inheritance" which will move future generations to critical disgust[1].

Crime, therefore, had nothing to do with reiving, and may have been regarded by the Borderers much as other communities have always regarded it. Neither had crime to do with revenge, as we shall see in the chapter on ballads of revenge. The Johnstones in The Lads of Wamphray would have considered that it was a far greater "wrang" to allow the Galliard's murder to go unavenged.

Interpreted in this way, the ballad becomes a glorification of the reiving life and of the principle of honourable revenge. It is a gruesome spectacle which the balladist does not shrink from depicting:

> O but these lads were wondrous rude,
> When the Biddes-burn ran three days blood!
> (33)

And Will of Kirkhill expresses his satisfaction:

> 'I think, my lads, we've done a noble deed;
> We have revenged the Galiard's blood.
>
> 'For every finger o the Galiard's hand,
> I vow this day I've killed a man'.
> (34-35)

1 Op. cit., 99.

A pint at the Wamphray Gate[1] is all that is needed to add the perfect finish to a perfect day.

Irony, indeed, seems to be the key to the ballad, especially in the light of the "prologue". Unless we regard the first eight verses as a kind of macabre, tongue-in-cheek commentary on what is to follow, it is difficult to reconcile them with the last two verses of the ballad. In the proem, the lads of Lethenha[2], we are told, are "The greatest rogues among them a" (2^2); others are "neer for good, but aye for ill" (6^2); whilst more subtle reverberations are set up in a way that may not be entirely fortuitous by the name Hellbackhill (6^1)[3], and by the line "The diel's in them for pride and greed" (8^2). When we read later that, "The lads o Wamphr[a]y's king o men" (41^2) we begin to wonder whether the ballad-maker has not been guilty of gross inconsistency again.

I think there may be something here of the tension felt in other Border Ballads between heroic idealisation and painful realisation. The Border reivers of four hundred years ago may not have been slow to recognise the ambiguity of their situation, described and highlighted in the ballads they composed with an increasing self-awareness. In The Lads of Wamphray, for example, one feels a consciously self-directed irony in the Galliard's remark "And a gentle Johnston aboon his hide" (12^2). A lot would have depended, of course on the alertness of any given audience, but I find it difficult to believe that there were no critics or forward-thinking men among the Border singers of tales.

1 "Wamphray-gate was in these days an ale-house", Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 188. It is marked on the south bank of Wamphray Water, about 7m. south-east of Moffat, see OS Map, Sheet 69.

2 Now Leithenhall, opposite Wamphraygate, on the north bank of Wamphray Water, see OS Map, Sheet 69.

3 Now Elbeckhill, 2m. east of Annanbank, see OS Map, Sheet 75. The balladist must surely have realised the association and used the name to convey a picture of the raiders coming down from their hell-like retreats in the fastnesses of Annandale.

Romantic exuberance, a cheerful cameraderie and a reckless enjoyment of danger may be uppermost in The Lads of Wamphray and parts of Jamie Telfer. The comic aspects of the reiving habit are well to the fore in Dick o the Cow and The Lochmaben Harper. But it is difficult to ignore the poignantly felt desire for peace, the longing to be "let be" by the "false thieves", which is heard at times in these Raiding Ballads and it is the expression of this desire which gives these songs their narrative breadth and emotional depth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BALLADS OF RESCUE - JOCK O THE SIDE[1], ARCHIE O CAWFIELD[2], KINMONT WILLIE[3]

When justice eventually caught up with the reivers they would be made prisoners of the March Wardens and be kept under close guard in one of the Border gaols - Dumfries or Annan tolbooth, Carlisle castle or Newcastle castle - there to await their trial at the Warden -, or Justice-Court. On occasions a rescue bid might be attempted (especially if the convicted man was a close kinsman or leader of ability) and the judicial authorities would lose their man once more to the fastnesses of the Border.

A prison-break is the subject of three Border Ballads, Jock o the Side, Archie o Cawfield and Kinmont Willie. These are so closely related thematically and share so many common formulae, that they have been supposed to refer to the same incident, if not to have been composed by the same author. Scott printed them in close proximity to each other in the first edition of his Border Minstrelsy, remarking that,

> the incidents ... nearly resemble each other; though the poetical description is so different, that the Editor did not think himself at liberty to reject any one of them, as borrowed from the others[4].

Child also grouped the three ballads together in the third volume of The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, although he chose to place Jock and Archie after Kinmont Willie "in deference to history ... for it [Jock o the Side] may be a free version of his [Kinmont Willie's] story"[5]. This is not, however, the case as we shall see.

1 Child 187, E.S.P.B., III, 475-84.
2 Child 188, E.S.P.B., III, 484-95, IV, 516.
3 Child 186, E.S.P.B., III, 469-74.
4 Minstrelsy, II, 93.
5 E.S.P.B., III, 477.

I shall begin this chapter with a study of Jock o the Side, since its tradition and authenticity as a folk ballad may be vouched for, whereas Kinmont Willie has more than once been attributed to the romantic imagination of Sir Walter Scott[1]. Also Jock o the Side appears in print earlier than either of its companion pieces.

The oldest complete version of Jock o the Side is Child's A text which was sent to Bishop Percy in 1775 by Roger Halt. It is preserved in the Percy Folio Manuscript[2]. It is the longest of the four extant versions, having 41 stanzas and 163 lines, but there is one line missing at 3^1. The title of this copy is 'John a Side', and it is given in the Percy Folio without its refrain; as Bronson remarks, "nothing is clearer than the fact that whoever compiled the Percy Folio had no interest in singing songs"[3].

In the same year that Roger Halt sent Percy his copy of the ballad, the editor of the Reliques received another "imperfect copy" from Kielder, "as collected from the memory of an old person by Mr. William Hadley"[4]. The text is preserved in the Percy Papers and this time the burden is given[5]. This version is Child C.

Child D is the earliest recorded transcript of Jock o the Side having been "repeated" to Bishop Percy himself by a Mr. Leadbeater "from the neighbourhood of Hexham, 1774"[6]. This copy, unfortunately, is incomplete, though of interest for two local place-names not found in Child's other versions and for the detail of the cutting of the ponies' tails to allow them to run faster. The text is preserved, with version C, in the Percy Papers.[7]

1 See infra, p.389.

2 Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript (ed. J.W. Hales and F.J. Furnivall), II, 203.

3 B.H. Bronson, T.T.C.B., II, 171.

4 See E.S.P.B., III, 481.

5 See E.S.P.B., III, 484.

6 See E.S.P.B., III, 483.

7 See ibid.

Child version B exists in two principal variants. Ba was published by George Caw, in 1784, in The Poetical Museum[1], "from an old manuscript copy". Bb is similar and was given by Alexander Campbell in his Albyn's Anthology of 1818[2]. In a note to his text Campbell says:

> The melody and particularly the words of this Liddesdale song were taken down by the editor from the singing and recitation of Mr. Thomas Shortreed, who learnt it from his father[3].

Thomas's father was, of course, Robert Shortreed, from whom Campbell got his copy of Dick o the Cow. Bronson gives the Shortreed tune to Jock o the Side, with others to which this ballad has been sung[4].

Scott, too, must have derived his copy of Jock o the Side from one of the Shortreeds, probably the father who, as we have already noted, accompanied Sir Walter on his ballad-hunting expeditions into Liddesdale. Scott could not have been given a copy of the ballad by Campbell, as Child seems to imply[5], since Campbell could not have obtained his transcription until 1816 when he first made the acquaintance of the Shortreed family[6].

So much, then, for the history of the ballad in manuscript and print. We may now turn to a consideration of the ballad's likely date of composition and early circulation, drawing on literary and historical information. That there was a song on the subject of Jock of the Side's rescue by Hobbie Noble and his gang of brave Armstrongs before the end of the sixteenth century, is proved by a ballad in the Bodleian Rawlinson MS. (Poet. 185, fols. 9-10) the date of which is not later than 1592. This ballad is directed to be sung to the tune of 'Hobbinole and Iohn A Side'[7].

1 Op. cit. (1784 ed.), 145.
2 Op. cit. (1818 ed.), II, 28, see E.S.P.B., III, 475, 479.
3 Cited Child, E.S.P.B., III, 475.
4 T.T.C.B., II, 171-4.
5 E.S.P.B., 475n.
6 See T.F. Henderson, Minstrelsy, II, 97.
7 See Bronson, T.T.C.B., II, 171.

An account of Jock's rescue from Newcastle which, as far as I know, has remained undiscovered, may be found in a letter of the reign of James VI, dated September 1, 1599. The letter, in a Scottish hand and possibly addressed to John Colville, runs as follows:

> In the reign of the King's mother [i.e. Mary, Queen of Scots] John Armstrong called the "lairdis Jok" and "Hob the Nobill" come to the prison of Newcastle and broke up a "postroune zet" and took out John Armstrong called "Johone of the Syd", their kinsman and no fault found with it by England but only punished their own gaoler for his sloth[1].

Mary, Queen of Scots, reigned from 1542-67, when she was forced to abdicate at Loch Leven[2]. The rescue, if we are to accept the evidence of the letter, therefore took place at some time during Mary's reign and a ballad commemorating the daring feat was popular enough by 1592 to have its tune quoted as suitable for other ballads.

Jock, or John, of the Side is first mentioned in the list of free-booters against whom complaint was made to the Bishop of Carlisle "presently after" the young Mary Stuart's departure for France in 1548; there he is called "John of the Side (Gleed John)"[3]. The tower of "Syid" is marked by Blaeu on his map of Liddesdale as standing on the west bank of the Liddel Water[4]. After the rebellion of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland in 1569, some Liddesdale men stole the Countess of Northumberland's horses, and the two earls abandoned her "on foote, at John of the Syde's house, a cottage not to be compared to any dogge kennel in England"[5]. The last mention we have of Jock is in 1601, when it seems he was in trouble again, named as one of "the outlaws under the Laird of Buccleugh's charge"[6].

1 Calendar of State Papers (Scotland) XIII, Pt. I, 547, No. 435.

2 See J.D. Mackie, A History of Scotland, 169, 394.

3 Joseph Nicolson and Richard Burn, The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland, lxxxi.

4 Probably present-day Gillside, about 1m. south of Mangerton, on the opposite bank of the Liddel Water, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

5 Sussex to Cecil, December 22, 1569. The letter is given in full by Sir Cuthbert Sharp, Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569, 115.

6 C.B.P., II, 743, No. 1353.

Jock of the Side's notoriety had established itself beyond the confines of the Borderland, since Richard Maitland of Lethington was able to introduce this hardened mosstrooper into his diatribe Aganis the Theivis of Liddisdaill, composed about 1567. Maitland says of him:

> He is weill kend Iohnne of pe syde
> a gritter theif did neuer ryd
> He neuer tyris, for to brek byris
> Ouir mwir and myris, ouir gude a gyd.
> (ll. 46-50)[1]

If he was an experienced guide on reiving forays and, as version B of the ballad has it, a nephew to the Laird of Mangerton, a sister's son, no wonder Jock's fellow clansmen were anxious to arrange his escape.

Of the Laird of Mangerton himself we find Henry, Lord Scrope, writing to Walsingham in a letter of January 13, 1584:

> This man is the chief and principal of his surname, and also the special evildoer and procurer in the spoils of this March, next after the Laird of Whithaugh[2].

In a later 'Act for the Borders' of 1590-91, he is named as "Sym Armstrong of Mangertoun"[3].

The Noble clan are mentioned in Thomas Musgrave's 'List of the Border Riders' at the end of 1583, and, in particular, a "Hobbe Noble"[4] who may be the character in Jock o the Side and the hero of Child 189, since he was a contemporary of Jock Armstrong of the Side and of Sim, Laird of Mangerton. Since the Nobles, according to Musgrave, dwelt "within the Nyxons ... hard by the howse of Bewcastell"[5], in the West March of England, one wonders at first what Hobie Noble was doing fraternizing with the Liddesdale Armstrongs. But version B of the ballad explains:

1 The Maitland Folio Manuscript (ed. W.A. Craigie), II, 302.
2 C.B.P., I, 127, No. 198.
3 C.B.P., I, 373, No. 700.
4 C.B.P., I, 124, No. 197.
5 Ibid.

Now Hobie was an English man,
In Bewcastle-dale was bred and born;
But his misdeeds they were sae great,
They banishd him neer to return.
(B7)

The same information is provided by the ballad Hobie Noble:

Now Hobie he was an English man,
And born into Bewcastle dale,
But his misdeeds they were sae great,
They banishd him to Liddesdale.
(3)

Other Nobles must have followed Hobie across the Border, for in 1596 they were being referred to as "lawfull and liege subjectes of Scotland"[1].

Jock would appear to be in the condemned cell, since the ballad implies (and in version A states) that he has killed Peter (Michael, $B1^3$, $C1^3$, $D1^3$) of Whitfield:

Peeter a Whifeild he hath slaine,
And Iohne a Side, he is tane,
And Iohn is bound both hand and foote,
And to the New-castle he is gone.
(A1)

The village of Whitfield[2], in Northumberland, seems to have supplied Hexham with several of its bailiffs in the sixteenth century[3], so the Peter of Whitfield killed in the ballad may have been an English officer. The same murder is alluded to in Hobie Noble, when Hobie tells the men who are trying to persuade him to act as their "guide":

'I dare not with you into England ride,
The land-sergeant has me at feid;
I know not what evil may betide,
For Peter of Whitfield his brother's dead.
(9)

1 C.B.P., II, 111, No. 228.

2 Spelt "Whitfeld" on Blaeu's Map of Northumberland, the village is situated 6m. south-west of Haydon Bridge on the road to Penrith, see OS Map, Sheet 77.

3 See C.B.P., II, 514, No. 907, 604-6, Nos. 1065, 1066, 1067.

But the fact that Jock has possibly killed a representative of the English law by no means detracts from the build-up of audience sympathy towards him. He is, in Mangerton's words at the end of the ballad, "good Iohn oth Side" (A41[3]), and everyone is overjoyed at his return to Liddesdale.

On external evidence alone, then, we may assign the ballad a date soon after the event it narrates, say in the late 1560s or early 1570s, when the House of Mangerton and its notorious adherents were flourishing. The allegiance to Mangerton suggests that the balladist may have had some kind of commission to sing of the exploits of Sim Armstrong and his sons just as the earlier Percy "minstrel" was commissioned to sing of Hotspur's deeds at Otterburn.

Child paid tribute to the quality of Jock o the Side when he called the ballad "one of the best in the world, and enough to make a horse-trooper of any young borderer, had he lacked the impulse"[1]. Since the ballad has survived in two remarkably intact oral texts, it should be rewarding to try and account for their excellence in greater detail. We may begin with version A.

We know that this (the Percy MS. version) precedes Ba (Caw's Museum copy) by nine years. It is also five verses longer. Although, as we have noted in connection with Peter Buchan's ballads, the general tendency is often for later versions to expand on earlier[2], in this instance the reverse appears to be true, B having omitted five verses of A. These five verses make up the "Goodnight" section of A. The Goodnight is a theme widespread in balladry (both traditional and

1 E.S.P.B., III, 477.

2 Lord also observed of the Yugoslav singers that, "Expansion is what one would normally expect from an old singer repeating the song of one much younger", The Singer of Tales, 102.

broadside) being, as Gummere explains, "the supposed words of a criminal before execution, written by some humble pen and sold under the gallows"[1]. The title of the broadside versions of Johnie Armstrong (Ba, b, c), it will be remembered, was 'John Arm-strongs last Good-Night', and in Allan Ramsay's Ever Green text Johnie takes three verses (C29-31) to bid farewell to his brother Kirsty, to his son Kirsty, to the Laird of Mangerton and to "bonny Gilnock-Hall". One of the ballads of revenge which we shall discuss in the next chapter is called Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight. And Scott printed a ballad fragment of two verses under the title Armstrong's Goodnight, "said to have been composed by one of the Armstrongs executed for the murder of Sir John Carmichael of Edrom, Warden of the Middle Marches"[2]. The Goodnight thus seems to have been a popular title and theme in Border balladry.

In Jock o the Side version A, the prisoner, presumably on the eve of his execution when the rescue is carried out, "makes his moane trulye":

He sayd, God be with thee, Sybill o the Side!
My owne mother thou art, quoth hee;
If thou knew this night I were here,
A woe woman then woldest thou bee.

And fare you well, Lord Mangerton!
And euer I say God be with thee!
For if you knew this night I were heere,
You wold sell your land for to loose mee.

And fare thou well, Much, Millers sonne![3]
Much, Millars sonne, I say;
Thou has beene better att merke midnight
Than euer thou was att noone o the day.

1 F.B. Gummere, The Popular Ballad, 211.

2 Minstrelsy, II, 156. This fragment was first printed by David Herd in his Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs (1776), II, 225, but without title.

3 The attraction of this character, usually associated with tales of Robin Hood, into a Border Ballad is inexplicable, apart from Much the Miller's son's proverbial dishonesty. He appears in A Gest of Robyn Hode (Child 117, a4[2]) and this copy may have been printed in Edinburgh, see E.S.P.B., III, 39-40. The Gest may have been compiled as early as 1400, ibid.

And fare thou well, my good Lord Clough!
   Thou art thy ffather's sonne and heire;
Thou neuer saw him in all thy liffe
   But with him durst thou breake a speare.

Wee are brothers childer nine or ten,
   And sister's children ten or eleven.
We neuer came to the feild to fight,
   But the worst of us was counted a man'.
(A20-24)

At this point Hobie Noble and his rescue party interrupt.

The Goodnight verses are a particularly effective means of lowering the tension, a transition from external to internal action. They offer a brief lull before the final event serving a similar purpose to Brutus's reflections the night before Philippi in Julius Caesar. Possibly, the Borderers had a set number of farewell formulas which they worked into the Goodnight theme - the farewell to mother or wife (the condemned man's closest relative); the farewell to clan chieftain or protector (here Lord Mangerton); the farewell to "sonne and heire"[1], and finally a general leave-taking of friends, plus a call to vengeance if this was deemed necessary. Not a little of the poignancy of Jock of the Side's Goodnight resides in this close inter-relationship of family, personal and clan ties, the address to the mother recalling perhaps dimly Christ's last words to his mother from the cross in the mediaeval dialogue, and Mary's uncomprehending reply:

Maria: Mi suete sone, that art me dere,
What hast thou don? Qui art thou here?[2]

There is an irony that once again underscores the supremacy of these close kinship ties in Jock's farewell to Lord Mangerton; for, Jock says,

1 This, I take it, is the purport of A23, although there is no record of a Lord Clough, son to Jock of the Side.

2 R.L. Greene, The Early English Carols, 119, No. 157D, from MS. Advocates 18.7.21., dated about 1372.

if you knew this night I were heere,
You wold sell your land for to loose mee.
(A21$^{3-4}$).

and this is the exact tenor of the promise made by Jock's fellow-clansmen in A5. Thus a ballad convention, the Goodnight, may, in the hands of a skilled reciter, become an effective means of portraying character and exploring a man's personal response to the mesh of group relationships at the centre of which he finds himself. Such psychological insight is rare in ballads of any kind.

The Goodnight stanzas are dropped by version B, rendering somewhat inconsequential Jock's address to his rescuers in verse 16:

But wha's this kens my name sae weel,
And thus to hear my waes do [es] seik?
(B16$^{3-4}$)

The omission of Jock's catalogue of "waes" does nothing, it must be admitted, to impair the structure of this text. It may, however, be a sign of later composition. One is led to this conclusion, also by B's introduction of the explanatory verse about Hobie Noble and his connection with the Armstrongs of Mangerton (B7). Although the A version attributes the rescue of Jock of the Side to Noble's bold leadership, it makes no attempt to explain his banishment and adoption by Mangerton. Possibly, explicit commentary was unnecessary for the original Armstrong audience, whereas a reciter working outside this coterie, or at a further remove from the event, may have considered that he owed his listeners a word of explanation.

We might now consider the different uses to which the A and B reciters put the central episode of the flooded-river crossing. In both versions Hobie and his five companions set out from Liddesdale disguised

as "poore badgers" (A8[4]), or "corn-caugers" (B8[4])[1]. In A, their first stop is at "Culerton ford" (A10[1]), or Chollerford[2], where they find the river in spate. They are considering how they might best cross when they notice "a good old man" ploughing with his boy (A10[3-4]). Hobie rides up to the old man, gives his blessing and politely enquires the whereabouts of the ford. He is met with a churlish and riddling reply. The old man tells him:

'I haue dwelled heere three score yeere,
Soe haue I done three score and three;
I neuer sawe man nor horsse goe ore,
Except itt were a horse of tree.'
(A13)

This, Child, supposes, means a foot-bridge of some kind[3], but the old ploughman's choice of phrase may be deliberately ambiguous and provocative. At any rate, it draws from Hobie the reply it deserves:

'But fare thee well, thou good old man!
The devill in hell I leave with thee,
Noe better comfort heere this night
Thow giues my bretheren heere and me'.
(A14)

In fact, they manage to discover a way across which they are able to ride "by two and two" (A15[4]), and when they are safely across Hobie expresses the general sense of relief:

'Thankes be to God! sayes Hobby Noble,
'The worst of our perill is past'.
(A16[3-4])

This seems a little premature in view of the fact that they have not yet rescued their kinsman - surely the most difficult and dangerous part of

1 "Badgers" were hawkers who dealt in corn (especially), fish, butter and cheese, O.E.D., I, 618; E.D.D., I, 125; S.N.D., II, 8-9; N.W., 8; similarly "cadgers", see O.E.D., II, under 1 and 2; E.D.D., I, 483, under 1 and 3.

2 Chollerford is about 4m. north of Hexham, in Northumberland, on the river North Tyne, see OS Map, Sheet 77. Cf. B11[1], C8[1], D6[1].

3 E.S.P.B., III, 476, V, 385.

the night's operation[1].

In the encounter and exchange of speeches with the old man, we notice other things that are decidedly odd. As the reivers generally rode by night (and Hobie as a banished Englishman would have had to take additional precautions)[2] we might conclude that it was dark when the rescuers met the old man and his boy ploughing. This is not certain, although we do know that "it smote twelue vpon the bell" (A29[4]) as they broke open Jock's prison door in Newcastle gaol. Further, it should be noticed that the old man's statement is obtuse in the extreme: he says that never in his life (of sixty-three years) has he seen man or horse cross this river; he does not say simply that he has never seen it crossed in flood. The "horse of tree" quip is almost impossible to explain satisfactorily[3], unless we construe, "I have never even seen a horse swim across this river except a wooden one (i.e. one that could float)". Even so, it is apparent that the old man is being deliberately oracular. He reminds one in his riddling of the early ballads in Child's collection in which the questioner is none other than "Clootie", or the devil[4]. The devil as riddle-monger is found not infrequently in popular tales, and in an Ayrshire version of The Elfin Knight (Child 2, I) he is, interestingly, "an auld, auld man" (I2[1])[5].

1 Cf. C29[2] where the Laird's Jock says, "The worst perel is now past," but after they have delivered Jock from prison and crossed the river.

2 In Hobie Noble, Hobie must wait "until the night come oer the grund" (I1[2]), before he dare lead a reiving party into England.

3 A "horse-tree" may be the piece of wood to which the swingle-tree of a pair of harrows is attached; it may be the beam on which timber is placed prior to sawing, or else a support for a frame used for drying wood, E.D.D., III, 237, 239. None of these senses, however, seem to fit the ballad.

4 See Riddles Wisely Expounded (Child 1), C18-19, a version in Motherwell's MS. from the recitation of Mrs. Storie, E.S.P.B., I, 4-5.

5 See E.S.P.B., I, 18.

In literature a river often symbolises death, or the water-barrier believed to separate our world from the Otherworld[1]. That this river or water-barrier belonged to the folklore of the Borderers we have seen in the ballad of Thomas Rymer. The belief that Hell was at the other side is expressed in Johnie Cock (Child 114), when the hero's mother warns him that there are seven foresters at Pickeram,

> 'And for a drop of thy heart's bluid
> They wad ride the fords of hell'.
> (A3[3-4])

The river is usually turbulent or in spate, as Howard R. Patch has pointed out in a study of Otherworld mythology:

> It is quite fitting for these rivers to be filthy, turbid, boiling or burning because they are the boundary rivers of Hell itself, the barriers between earth and paradise, into which man must fall if his virtues cannot carry him across[2].

Thus in Gavin Douglas's description of "hellys flude of Acheron", which Aeneas must cross, we read of a river,

> With holl bysme and hydduus swelch onrude,
> Drumly of mud and skaldand as it war wod,
> Popland and bulrand furth on athir hand.
> (Bk. VI, ch. 5, ll. 2-5)[3]

On the other side of the river there may be a castle of some kind, usually guarded by armed figures, which it is hard for the characters in the story to enter, but even more difficult to leave[4]. In Jock o the Side the rescue is of a prisoner from Newcastle, a city which perhaps holds associations of hazard and treachery, as in Johnie Armstrong. In

1 See L.C. Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, 108 ff.

2 Howard R. Patch, 'Some Elements in Mediaeval Descriptions of the Otherworld', P.M.L.A. XXXIII (1918), 631.

3 Virgil's Aeneid, translated into Scots verse by Gavin Douglas (ed. David F.C. Coldwell), III, 22.

4 Patch, op. cit., 605.

version B of Jock o the Side the prisoner lies in a "dungeon mirk and drearie" (B19[4]), and the delivery of him from this horror is well appreciated. In A, Mangerton says,

> Blest be thou, Hobby Noble,
> That euer thou wast man borne!
> Thou hast feitched vs home good Iohn oth Side,
> That was now cleane ffrom vs gone.
> (A41)

In B, it is the conviviality of brotherhood in the safety of a Liddesdale sanctuary that is brought out by the balladist:

> Sae now they're away for Liddisdale,
> Een as fast as they coud them hie;
> The prisner's brought to his ain fire-side,
> And there o's airns they make him free.
>
> 'Now, Jock, my billie', quo a' the three,
> 'The day was comd thou was to die;
> But thou's as weel at thy ain fire-side,
> Now sitting, I think, tween thee and me.'
>
> They hae gard fill up ae punch-bowl,
> And after it they maun hae anither,
> And thus the night they a' hae spent,
> Just as they had been brither and brither.
> (B35-37)

It is almost as if Hobie Noble is conceived of by the balladists as a kind of saviour-figure. Certainly his rescue of his "brother" from the jaws of death, from a dungeon in a hostile city, recalls mediaeval descriptions of the Harrowing of Hell. In Piers the Plowman, Christ commands the denizens of the Underworld:

> 'Dukes of this dym place anon vndo this zates,
> That Cryst may come in the kynges sone of huene'.
> And with that breth helle brake with Beliales barres;
> For any wye or warde wide opene the zatis.
> (B, Passus XVIII, ll. 317-20)[1]

1 Piers the Plowman in Three Parallel Texts, by William Langland (ed. W.W. Skeat), I, 542. Skeat remarks on the very frequent allusions to the Harrowing of Hell in our old authors, op. cit., II, 256.

In a similarly striking metaphor, Dunbar portrays the resurrection of Christ:

> The fo is chasit, the battell is done ceis,
> The presone brokin, the jevellouris fleit and flemit;
> The weir is gon, confermit is the peis,
> The fetteris lowsit and the dungeon temit,
> The ransom maid, the presoneris redemit;
> The feild is win, ourcumin is the fo,
> Dispulit of the tresur that he yemit:
> Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro.
> (11. 33-40)[1]

The "proud porter" of version B of the ballad who "withstood baith men and horse" (B13[4]) belongs to the same world. The porter of hell-gate is alluded to in Macbeth[2], and he reappears in Gavin Douglas's Aeneid as the "hyduus portar" in his cave (Bk. VI, ch. 6, 11. 33-4)[3].

Adept as the makers of these Border Ballads were at creating folk-heroes out of common murderers and thieves, the ballad-poets of Jock o the Side seem to have gone out of their way to establish Hobie Noble as a character of virtue and redemptive powers. There may be a play on his surname, Noble, which would hardly escape an audience looking to its folksongs to provide it with its paladins. The colour of Hobie's coat in the B text may help to clinch this impression of a noble character. Mangerton, choosing his men for the rescue-party, picks Hobie Noble because, "Thy coat is blue, thou has been true" (B6[3]). The idea is repeated in C6 and again in the ballad The Lads of Wamphray when Willy Johnstone gathers his raiders,

> Saying, My lads, if ye'll be true,
> Ye's a' be clad in the noble blue.
> (24)

1 The Poems of William Dunbar (ed. W. Mackay Mackenzie), 160.

2 Macbeth, II, iii, 1, The Compete Works of William Shakespeare (ed. Peter Alexander), 1007.

3 Op. cit. (ed. Coldwell), III, 27.

Fynes Moryson, a gentleman, who visited the Borders in the early-seventeenth century, described the inhabitants as having "their heads couered with blew caps"[1]. However, besides being the colour of part of the reiver's dress on fine occasions there seems to have been an obvious symbolism attached to the colour blue. It is often taken as the colour of constancy or unchangingness, hence its figurative use in the expression "a true blue", to mean a person faithful, staunch and unwavering in his faith or principles[2]. Often the colour of angels' robes in mediaeval art, blue or azure became a symbol of divinity, eternity and immortality[3].

Perhaps we find the same kind of subliminal allegory at work in Jock o the Side that we encountered in The Outlaw Murray. There is no sense of incongruity in the balladist's presentation of Hobie Noble, a banished English reiver, in the role of omnipotent saviour and leader. On the contrary, the singer of the ballad in these two versions seems to have enjoyed the potential of his material for a kind of spiritual suggestiveness. In this light the "horse of tree" riddle of version A might be interpreted as alluding to the upright or central piece of the Cross. Once again, Patch is informative here, since he records at least one tradition in which the timber of the Cross is placed as a bridge across the brook of Siloam as a clear symbol of Christ and his redeeming power[4]. So we might put the following construction on the old man's riddling speech: "I have never seen a man ford this river unless it were by the power of the Cross, by the aid of some divine power". In other words, by alluding to Man's redemption through the "tree", or Cross

1 An Itinerary, by Fynes Moryson Gent (1617 ed.), 155. "Blue Bonnet" eventually became a synonym for a Scotsman, see O.E.D., 944, under 1 and 2. Shakespeare refers to the Scots as "blue-caps" in Henry the Fourth - Part One, II, iv, 347, Complete Works (ed. Alexander), 494.

2 O.E.D., I, 943, under 1e.

3 See E.C. Brewer, Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (1963 ed.), 118, 223.

4 Howard R. Patch, The Other World According to Descriptions in Mediaeval Literature, 156.

of Christ, the ballad sets the exploit of Hobie Noble and the Armstrongs in a moral light, not necessarily in order to condemn it, but to make it appear even more desperate, and, from the Borderer's point of view, more heroic. Despite the old man, God appears to bless the enterprise by allowing the rescuers to cross the flooded river barrier and free the prisoner and this, in itself, forms an analogue to the Harrowing of Hell, as we have seen. As in The Outlaw Murray, the conduct of the self-deterministic Borderer comes into conflict with law and order (moral and spiritual as well as political), but this is once again sanctioned and endorsed rather than rejected. Zest for life and delivery from death make up the ballad-pattern in Jock o the Side as they did in Johnie Armstrong, with the balladist setting his seal on the purposive, life-supporting, energetic values of the Border-side.

In version B, the river-crossing and the meeting with the "auld man" appear to have lost something of their otherworldly suggestiveness, whilst at the same time gaining in another direction, that of dramatic emphasis. In B, the fording of the flooded Tyne occurs at a point during the return journey where it presents the Laird's Jock and his companions with one more obstacle. Thus, while there is a clear explanation for the flooded river in B (the rescuers in their glee have forgotten the wet weather, mentioned in B26[1]), the position of this argues that the balladist knew it was part of his inherited story, but that he either failed to see, or chose to ignore its semi-allegorical significance. Instead, he used it for suspense. This is carefully built up, first when the rescuers find their scaling-ladders (improvised from tree trunks) "three ells oer laigh" (B12[3]), then when they are opposed by the "proud porter" who bars their way (B13), and finally when they discover that Jock is burdened with "full fifteen stone o Spanish iron" (B19[1]).

When they reach Chollerford and ask the old man if the water will "ride" the riddling answer of A disappears to be replaced with the more pragmatic:

> 'I wat weel no', quo the good auld man;
> 'Heere I hae livd this threty yeirs and three,
> And I neer yet saw the Tyne sae big,
> Nor rinning ance sae like a sea'.
> (B28)

Tension mounts as "the Laird's saft Wat", described as "the greatest coward in the company" (B29[2]), believes they are all doomed to die ("fie", B30[2])[1]. However, the Laird's Jock takes the prisoner up behind him and they manage to swim across. As they reach the opposite bank, the English Land-sergeant rides up with his posse of men and the tension is relaxed by means of a joking exchange, the sergeant demanding the prisoner's irons back and the Laird's Jock declaring that he will keep them to make shoes for his mare.

The B-poet is of a more practical turn of mind than the A-poet, and this shows itself in other details. It is B that introduces the description of the scaling ladder, a tree "wi fifteen naggs upo ilk side" (B11[3]), and the detail of the porter whom they must kill for his keys (B14). In the event, neither ladder nor keys are of much use to the rescuers, which makes them appear even more resourceful when confronted with the unexpected.

The composer of A is not so concerned with practicalities (although he does mention the "Fflanders files two or three" which Hobie Noble thoughtfully takes along with him, A32[1]). Neither is he so interested in the careful dramatic structuring of his tale as the reciter of B. His

1 Fie is the obsolete form of "fey", meaning fated, or doomed to die, see O.E.D., IV, 182; E.D.D., II, 346; E.D.S.L., II, 220; D.O.S.T., II, 465; S.N.D., IV, 65.

bent is towards the rhetorical gesture, the "wonderous hye words" of Hobie Noble as he declines the Laird's offer of five thousand of the best Teviotdale troopers. His preferred detail is that of Jock of the Side's horse stumbling against a stone on the return journey, an ill omen that the fearful Much is not slow to expound (A36). And as we have seen, the A-poet draws out the significance of his tale, making the enigmatic conversation with the old man, the crossing of the river barrier, and the rescue of a prisoner from his dark dungeon an allegory of the redemption of fallen Man.

There is a natural tendency to assume that a narrative carefully planned with an eye to the dramatic effectiveness of a given sequence of events is later in date than a more haphazard, but possibly more "truthful" arrangement of the events in a different sequence. Thus I am led to conclude that version A of Jock o the Side is earlier than version B. However, this is not to say that A is the "original", simply that the life-philosophy it gives expression to is different from B's.

Both versions, for example, bear the same surface realism. The route taken by the rescue party from Liddesdale can be followed on the map. Heading south from the Kershope ford, where they would most likely cross the Liddel Water, the reivers strike the river North Tyne at Chollerford (A10, B11). Once across they halt, in version A, at Howbrame wood (A17)[1], where they cut down a tree for use as a scaling ladder.

1 "Howbrame towne" is also mentioned in A36[1]. A "toun", or "tun" in Scottish usage may signify not only a town or city, but also a farmstead, a collection of dwellings however small, see E.D.S.L., IV, 603, under 1 and 2; E.D.D., VI, 211, under 3 and 5. Remembering this, we should seek a location for "Howbram" somewhere between Chollerford and Newcastle on the north bank of the Tyne. If Howbram is not a disappeared farmstead, it may be an earlier spelling (or corruption) of Howburn, which was a small manor in the parish of Heddon-on-the-Wall, see John Hodgson, The History of Northumberland, XIII, 114. There is a small hamlet called Houghton, about ½m. west of the village of Heddon, see OS Map, Sheet 78. Neither of these places would be too far from Newcastle to carry a scaling ladder.

Then they ride on for Newcastle. Version D, Mr. Leadbeater's, from the Hexham area, has the Armstrongs go by Hathery Haugh (D5[4])[1] and Swinburne Wood (D7[1])[2].

Besides lending authenticity to the narrative, some of these place-names are used in a quite striking and emotive way. In lines such as, "Now Liddisdale has ridden a raid" (B1[1], C1[1], D1[1]), and "For if a' Liddisdale were here the night" (B18[3]), the formula achieves a degree of compression amounting almost to personification of the place through its name - the kind of ballad shorthand we noticed in the use of Glendale (Cheviot, A64[3]) and Moscrop (Jamie Telfer, B31[3]). The repetition of Liddesdale in Jock o the Side allows the name to take on an almost symbolic force, building up a feeling of regional solidarity that would originally have encompassed singer and audience (the dales' clannishness). In this way Liddesdale comes to stand, here and in other Border Ballads, for a haven of refuge and brotherhood amidst the turbulence and treachery of a frontier society. Thus there is no need to set an event in its temporal relations, since the "Liddesdale has ridden a raid" formula brings its own kind of immediacy to the ballad opening.

The picture of the Border-side emerges once again in this Rescue Ballad by way of the strong surface texture of realism. For example, the balladist draws on his knowledge of a semi-nomadic, herd-based economy to provide a measure of clan loyalty. When they learn of his capture, Jock's friends promise:

> 'But wee'le goe sell our droues of kine,
> And after them our oxen sell,
> And after them our troopes of sheepe,
> But wee will loose him out of the New Castell'.
> (A5)

1 This place lies in a hollow on the right bank of the Rowley Burn, see Hodgson, op. cit., IV, 64.

2 The Swin Burn flows into the North Tyne at Barrasford, about 2m. upstream from Chollerford, see OS Map, Sheet 77.

The fact that for once an honest transaction is involved (the Armstrongs will sell their own goods and gear rather than plunder someone else's) underlines the extent of the sacrifice. In the Caw-Campbell copy, it is the Laird himself who tells his sister (Jock of the Side's mother):

'Neer fear, sister Downie', quo Mangerton;
'I hae yokes of oxen four and twentie,
My barns, my byres and my faulds, a' weel filld,
And I'll part wi them a' ere Johnie shall die'.
(B4)

(This tells us once again that the rescue took place in the autumn).

Eating and drinking figure prominently in the Border Ballads and are probably part of that Border zest for life, which I described earlier. In Jock o the Side version A, there is a nice symmetry in the presentation of the Laird of Mangerton at his table, at the beginning and end of the ballad. On the first occasion, the author uses Mangerton's sudden loss of appetite as an indication of the chieftain's concern for the plight of his sister's son:

The Lord was sett downe at his meate;
When these tydings shee did him tell,
Neuer a morsell might he eate.
(A3$^{2-4}$)

On the second occasion, the same incident is repeated to give moral point to the successful accomplishment of the rescue:

The lord then he was att his meate;
But when Iohn o the Side he there did see,
For faine he cold noe more eate.
(A40$^{2-4}$)

Whereas B, the practical poet, ends with a commonplace carouse over the punch-bowl, the singer of A who is more concerned with moral and spiritual significations, regards satisfying the appetite as inconsistent with the drama of big events.

The escape and the means whereby it is carried out seem to have fascinated all the reciters. Circumstantial detail proliferates in the description of the rescuers' disguise as "poore badgers" - the straw-filled sacks and barefooted steeds[1] harnessed with the rustic "brank and brecham" (A9, B9); the detail of shoeing the horses back-to-front (B8); the tree-ladder "thirty ffoote and three" (A17^{4}), "wi fifteen naggs upo ilk side" (B11^{3}), which unfortunately proves too short by "three ells" (B12^{3}); the Flanders files and ropes which Hobie Noble brings with him to tie Jock's irons about his legs (A34$^{1-2}$). Mr. Leadbeater adds his own detail: to help their long-tailed Border ponies to move more swiftly, the men cut their tails "a little abune the hough" (D5$^{1-2}$).

A rough frontier humour marks the moments of greatest tension in the ballad. When Jock, because his ankles are manacled together, is forced to ride side-saddle, Hobie Noble laughs and quips:

> 'Thou sitts soe finely on thy geldinge
> That Iohn, thou rydes like a bryde'.
> (A35$^{3-4}$)

The word "finely" and the juxtaposition of bride and gelding (a point the other reciters miss) sum up nicely the comic-seriousness of the prisoner's precarious position at the moment of escape.

There is a grim humour combining zeugma with understatement in B's description of the assault on the porter:

> His neck in twa I wat they hae rung,
> Wi hand or foot he neer playd paw;
> His life and keys at anes they hae tane,
> And cast his body ahind the wa.
> (B14)

1 This may account for Jock's horse stumbling (A36^{2}).

Archie o Cawfield exists in many versions. This makes possible a fairly detailed comparative textual study, since their wide distribution has resulted in three principal groups, one from the Border, one from the north of Scotland and one large group from America.

Of the Border texts, Child A is the oldest copy. It was sent to Bishop Percy by Miss Fisher of Carlisle, in 1780, under the title 'Archie of the Cawfield'[1]. Miss Fisher also sent Percy the excellent A text of Johnie Cock (Child 114)[2].

A copy entitled 'Archie of Capeld' is among the Glenriddell MSS (dated 1791)[3], where Robert Riddell has referred to it as "an old West Border ballad". This is Child Ba, and was the basis of the text printed by Scott in the first edition of his Minstrelsy[4].

Child Bb is the text given by Scott in the later 1833 edition of his work[5], where he remarks that he has been able to add several verses obtained from recitation, and that,

> as they contrast the brutal indifference of the elder brother with the zeal and spirit of his associates they add considerably to the dramatic effect of the whole[6].

Titled 'Archie o Ca'field, Variations', the stanzas from recitation are to be found, in John Leyden's transcript, among Scott's Abbotsford papers[7].

1 See E.S.P.B., III, 484, 487. It is "written in long lines, without division into stanzas, excepting a few instances", see E.S.P.B., III, 495. Child prints as quatrains however.

2 See E.S.P.B., III, 1, 3.

3 Glenriddell MSS, XI, 14, see E.S.P.B., III, 484, 489.

4 Minstrelsy (1802 ed.), I, 177, see E.S.P.B., III, 484. "Stanzas 11, 13, 15^{3-6} ($15^{3,4}$, $16^{1,2}$, of the MS.), $17^{3,4}$ ($18^{1,2}$ of the MS.) and 27-28 are omitted. There are many editorial improvements, besides Scotticising of the spelling", see E.S.P.B., III, 484.

5 Minstrelsy (1833 ed.), II, 116, see E.S.P.B., III, 484, 489.

6 Minstrelsy, II, 146.

7 'Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy', Abbotsford, No. 90, see E.S.P.B., IV, 516. I have called this copy Child G.

The northern Scottish group comprises Child C-E plus a text from Greig's informant, Miss Bell Robertson, who learned the ballad from her mother; she in turn "had it from her mother (about 110 years ago)". The Robertsons called their version 'Johnnie Ha, or Archie o' Cawfield'[1].

Child C, 'The Three Brothers', was published by Peter Buchan in 1828 in his Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland[2]. Surprisingly, it is not the longest text.

Child D, 'Billie Archie', was "received in MS. by Buchan from James Nicol of Strichen, who wrote as he had learned early in life from old people"[3]. This text was printed by William Motherwell in 1827 in his Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern[4].

Child E, a fragment of eleven lines, was taken down by Mr. Macmath from his aunt, Jane Webster, who had heard it in her youth at Airds[5].

The American group is the largest. Bronson has noted that no fewer than eight more or less fragmentary versions of the ballad and its cognates have been collected in America, one from as far west as Michigan, the rest from New England[6]. Child was sent one American copy in 1889 from a Mr. J.M. Watson, of Clark's Island, Plymouth Harbour, Massachusetts, "as remembered by him from the singing of his father"[7]. This is Child's F text. Mr. Watson's father called the piece 'The ancient and veritable ballad of Bold Dickie'[8]. It appears that 'Bold Dickie' later passed unchanged into the memory of a Miss Mary P. Frye[9].

Cecil Sharp, the English folksong scholar, collected a text from a Mrs. Glover who sang him a version called 'The Burglar' at Huish Episcopi, January 5, 1906[10].

1 L.L., 116-17, No. LV.
2 Op. cit., I, 111, see E.S.P.B., III, 484, 491.
3 See E.S.P.B., III, 492.
4 Op. cit., 335, see E.S.P.B., III, 484, 492.
5 Macmath MS., 76, see E.S.P.B., III, 484, 493.
6 T.T.C.B., III, 175.
7 See E.S.P.B., III, 494.
8 See E.S.P.B., III, 495. Mr. Watson's title here refers to Child E.
9 See T.T.C.B., III, 177.
10. Sharp MSS 748/821, see T.T.C.B., III, 176.

F.M. Collinson and F. Dillon published a text entitled 'Bold Archer' in their Songs from the Countryside of 1946[1].

Finally, there is a group of texts from Maine referred to as 'Billy and Johnny' and 'John Webber', given by Phillips Barry, Fannie Hardy Eckstorm and Mary Winslow Smyth in their collection British Ballads from Maine, published in 1929[2]. 'John Webber' is placed by the Maine editors in their section headed 'Secondary Ballads', that is, ballads derived from Professor Child's collection, but so divergent as to demand new titles[3]. John Webb, or Webber, was (according to Mrs. Seth S. Thornton of Southwest Harbour) "a mint master in colonial days and lived in or near Salem. He was unjustly imprisoned by the Government and his friends set him free"[4]. The song about John Webber was much sung in Massachusetts and probably dates back to about 1740. In that year there was considerable excitement about a change in the Massachusetts currency, and a broadside, The Death of Old Tenor, was produced, Old Tenor being one of the superseded coins[5]. In Mrs. Thornton's version, learned from her great grandmother, the ballad opens:

> There were nine to hold the British ranks,
> And five to guard the town about,
> And two to stand at either hand,
> And one to let Old Tenor out.
> (John Webber, A1)

It is certain, then, that Archie o Cawfield must have been taken over to America as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century, and remodelled to suit the John Webber incident. It is thus a good example of a Border Ballad being virtually recreated. Bronson writes:

1 Op. cit., I, 20, see T.T.C.B., III, 176.

2 Op. cit., 393-400, hereafter abbreviated in the footnotes as B.B.M.

3 See B.B.M., xix, 375.

4 Cited Barry B.B.M., 395. Mrs. Thornton's great grandmother brought the ballad with her from Byfield, Massachusetts, when she came to live in Southwest Harbour.

5 See B.B.M., 395.

> This ballad ... is a good instance of a kind of variation of which more account will have to be taken. It is not gradual nor unconscious, but a deliberate making over to suit the changing times. The adaptation, if successful, goes on its own traditional way, and may be again remade at a later date. These are the sharp corners in oral tradition. It is probable that many of our most esteemed ballads have once, and more than once, been subjected to such treatment ... Though it be a kind of vandalism, leading to what in more recent decades has proved disintegrative in effect, there is little question that formerly it has given a new lease of life to many a song which would otherwise have perished[1].

The only other Border Ballad to have undergone a similar divergence is The Battle of Otterburn which, as we saw, attracted other narrative elements and in the recitation of a ballad-maker of some genius became The Hunting of the Cheviot. Why this should be so in the case of Archie o Cawfield and why that ballad should have been capable of migration to America in the first place (unlike the other Border Ballads) is a matter for further speculation. Perhaps chance was not the only factor in operation. Let us see if we can arrive at a satisfactory explanation via a study of the ballad's obviously Border origins.

As Miss Fisher of Carlisle's version is the earliest recorded, it will be appropriate to give a summary of the Archie o Cawfield narrative from her text. Two brothers, Jock the Laird and Dicky Hall, lament the capture of their brother, Archie, and his imprisonment in Dumfries gaol. They choose ten of the best Liddesdale troopers, Jocky Hall their cousin being foremost, and set off on a rescue-bid. On the way to Dumfries they have a blacksmith turn their horses' shoes back to front in order to confuse would-be pursuers. At three in the morning they arrive in Dumfries. Five men are left behind to hold the mounts and five are put on guard, while Dicky Hall and his cousin Jocky break the prison door and carry off Archie between them. They ride post-haste

1 T.T.C.B., III, 175.

for Annan Holme[1] with the lieutenant of Dumfries and a hundred men in hot pursuit, but on reaching the river they find it in spate. Dicky Hall takes his brother Archie on behind him and swims his horse across. The officer declines further pursuit and the three brothers ride back reunited to Wauchopedale.

The first thing that is apparent from the above synopsis is the ballad's obvious narrative affinity with Jock o the Side. In both we have as the subject the rescue from prison of one kinsman by another (although in Archie o Cawfield three brothers are specified); in both a flooded river must be negotiated; there is a timorous, cowardly character among the rescuers (here, Jock the Laird); a pursuit by the prison officer and a joking exchange with him about the prisoner's manacles forms the conclusion of both ballads.

The similarities become even more pronounced when we compare more particularly Archie o Cawfield version A with Jock o the Side version B. Scott remarks of these Rescue Ballads that "there is considerable variety in the language"[2], but in fact there are close linguistic and syntactic parallels between them. Of the 191 lines of Archie (A) about 22 are substantially the same as lines in Jock o the Side (B), besides other verbal echoes interspersed throughout the text[3]. Some of these may be

1 Probably present-day Annanbank, about 1½ m. below Wamphray Gate where the Halls were hoping to seek the protection of the Johnstones (A31[5-6]), see OS Map, Sheet 75.

2 Minstrelsy, II, 146.

3 The shared lines are as follows:-

ARCHIE O CAWFIELD (A)		JOCK O THE SIDE (B)
18[1]	=	15[3]
18[3]	=	16[2]
18[4]	=	16[3]
18[5-6]	similar to	26[3-4]
21[3]	=	20[3]
22[3-4]	=	19[1-3]
25[1]	=	22[1]
26	=	23
34[4]	=	28[4]
39[6]	=	30[2]
40[1]	similar to	31[1]
43	" "	33 + 34[4]
19[3-4]	=	18[3-4]

attributable to a shared local dialect[1].

The two versions match each other in smaller narrative details - in both, the principal characters are Liddesdale reivers; both rescue parties employ the ruse of reversing their horses' shoes; in each a Laird, or clan chieftain, takes part; there is a natural leader, the Laird's Jock in Jock o the Side (B), Dicky Hall in Archie o Cawfield (A); there is a second-in-command renowned for his reliability, Hobie Noble, Jocky Hall. Further, a close relative of the prisoner is one of the rescuers and calls to the captive in his cell, the Laird's Jock in the one, Dicky Hall in the other. The minutiae of the actual rescue are similar - in both, the door, or doors, are forced and the chains or bolts made to "flee" (J.o.S. B21[4]; A.o.C. A23[6]); in both, the leader hoists the prisoner, irons and all, upon his back, refusing his second's offer of help, and there is a joke about him being "lighter than a flee" (J.o.S. B23[4]; A.o.C. A26[4]).

These correspondences are what we might expect of two ballads circulating in the same area at the same time. And we know that Jock o the Side (B) was in print in George Caw's Poetical Museum in 1784, "taken from an old manuscript copy", while Archie o Cawfield (A) was communicated to Bishop Percy by Miss Fisher four years previously, in 1780. I doubt, however, if the transcriber of the Caw manuscript copy had seen Miss Fisher's copy of Archie, which in any case one would imagine to have been written down at Bishop Percy's request in 1780, the year she sent it to him. The Caw manuscript, on the other hand, is described as an "old" one. So although the resemblances between the two ballads in

1 Both balladists are fond of the word "billy": J.o.S. (B) 17[2], 36[1]; cf. A.o.C. (A) 18[1,2], 20[1], etc. The word "wantonly" is used by both to describe the light-heartedness of the rescuers: J.o.S. (B) 24[4], cf. A.o.C. (A) 27[4].

these particular versions are close, there is no need to rush to the assumption that they are written plagiarisms. Rather, the oral character of these versions indicates their common source in the constant re-creations of a ballad-singing community. Three hypotheses are now made possible: either both ballads were originally the composition of a single reciter, or else Archie o Cawfield (A) was derived orally from Jock o the Side (B), or vice versa. Before we can arrive at a decision, it will be necessary to consider the probable date of Archie.

The only mention we have of an Archie of Cawfield is of Archie Armstrong, called "Sym's Archie of Cowfield", who is listed among the fugitives from a court session held in Hawick, on August 25, 1605[1].

There appear to have been three Armstrong brothers holding "Calf-hills" in 1590, and they are named in a list of attempts by the Scottish West Marches as "Wille, Syme and Jok"[2]. This Jock may be the same person as "Jok Armstrong, callit of Casfeild" whose name occurs at frequent intervals from 1578-96[3], and who is probably the character named "Jock the Laird" in the ballad. He is obviously the eldest brother, since he claims the Cawfield as his own (A44[3]). Archie, who is probably the youngest brother, says that the crime for which he has been imprisoned is "breaking a spear in the warden's breast", whilst defending his master's land (A20[3-4]). If Jock the Laird was head of the Cawfield branch of the family, it is just possible that Archie would refer to his elder brother as his "master". The consensus of opinion among the reciters in any case seems to have been that the three brothers all

1 R.P.C., VII, 725. Calfield is situated about 1½m. west of Langholm, in Wauchopedale, see OS Map, Sheet 76. It is marked "Cafild" on Blaeu's Map of Ewesdale and Eskdale. The Armstrongs had spread across into Wauchopedale in the sixteenth century, see Child, E.S.P.B., III, 485.

2 C.B.P., I, 558, No. 681.

3 C.B.P., I, 558, No. 681, 111, No. 176, 122, No. 197; II, 199, No. 399, 122, No. 252; cf. also R.P.C., III, 43, 85, 133, 535.

inhabited the same tower-house. In version B, Dickie promises Archie that he will be dining with him at Cawfield the next morning (B12[4]), which implies that they both live there. Buchan's version makes Archie bid farewell, in a brief Goodnight, to "ye lands o Cafield" (C23[3]). And in John Leyden's Border copy, Dickie, with Archie the prisoner on his back, says:

> 'Gin I were at my little black mare,
> At Ca'field soon I trust to be'.
> (G10[3-4])

But if there is evidence that Armstrong brothers inhabited the Cawfield in the 1590s, there is no record at all of a family of Halls residing there. The Halls are listed in 1583, in "a note of the gentlemen and surnames in the Marches of England and Scotland", as belonging to Liddesdale[1]. It begins to look as if a Hall minstrel has substituted the names of his sept for Armstrongs, or has awarded the laurels to the Hall brothers for an exploit in which perhaps both Halls and Armstrongs were involved. The only other information we have as to the ballad characters, is Scott's suggestion that "mettled John Hall" (G4[1]), who is described by the singers as "cracking", or boasting, of "leugh o Liddesdale" (lower Liddesdale, A6[2]), and "laigh o Teviotdale" (B10[2], G4[2]), may be John Hall of Newbigging[2]. He is mentioned in a list of Border clans in 1590 as one of the chief men of name residing on the Middle Marches[3]. Earlier, he is styled "Jok Hall, called Paittis Jok of Newbiging", in lists of complaints made in 1579 and in 1580-81[4].

From an account by a Mr. William Bennet, there appears to have been a version of Archie o Cawfield in which the Johnstones played the part

1 C.B.P., I, 105, No. 166.
2 Minstrelsy, II, 146.
3 C.B.P., I, 364, No. 678.
4 R.P.C., III, 236-7, 354.

of the Halls or Armstrongs, but against their hereditary enemies, the Maxwells. The Maxwells had taken the Johnstone chieftain prisoner and locked him up in Dumfries gaol. The rescuers had to swim across a flooded river Locher, which deterred their pursuers. Bennet derived his account from a gentleman of Dumfries who informed him that he had "often, in early life, listened to an interesting ballad, sung by an old female chronicle of the town", which was based on the above-quoted circumstances[1]. Whatever this eighteenth-century version of the ballad was, it has not been preserved, but the prose account of it is interesting as evidence of what may have been a further substitution of names. The Johnstones, curiously enough, are mentioned as allies of the Halls in Miss Fisher's version (A31[6]).

One piece of internal evidence which might help us to date the ballad to within a few years, is Archie's information that he has been tried by a "justice-court" (A19[3]). Now the March Wardens (who are frequently mentioned as "justices")[2] were legally entitled to hold justice-courts for the trial of Scottish subjects accused of offences against their own country[3]. The Border Lieutenant (an office separate and distinct from that of Warden)[4] was also empowered to preside over a justice-court, and it is the Lieutenant "with a hundred men of his company" (A33[3-4]) who pursues the escaping Archie in the ballad. In 1586 we find the Lieutenant/Justice assisted by a force of 100 horsemen[5], so the commonplace number in the ballad has an actual historical basis. Although they were only temporary officials (usually appointed during a

1 William Bennet, 'A History of Dumfries', The Dumfries Monthly Magazine, III (1826), 9 ff., cited Child, E.S.P.B., III, 485.
2 Robert Bruce Armstrong, The History of Liddesdale, 4n.
3 Armstrong, op. cit., 5.
4 See T.I. Rae, The Administration of the Scottish Frontier, 104.
5 Armstrong, op. cit., 9.

royal minority or in the king's absence from the country), the Lieutenants possessed all the powers wielded by the Warden, with greater authority and more extensive resources[1]. It is likely, therefore, that a Border audience would have regarded this officer as the embodiment of almost absolute power; as Rae says, in a sense the Lieutenants were the king[2]. This fact renders the gibes of Dicky Hall in the ballad all the more audacious.

The power possessed by these officers was supposed to be largely and basically judicial. They were to hold days of truce for the settlement of March complaints and to preside over justice-courts, where they could "prosecute all persons suspect or accused of theft, reset of theft, arson, homicide, murder, violent oppresion ... or whatsoever other odious crimes are perpetuated"[3]. It was thus within their power to pass the death sentence and we may assume that Archie in the ballad, like Jock of the Side, was rescued from the condemned cell. Dumfries was well known as a centre for justice-courts and they are recorded at intervals, especially between the years 1578 and 1582[4].

But the Lieutenants, like other Border officials, abused their office, so that in December, 1590, "his Majesty, with advice of his Council" annulled "all and sundry commissions of justiciary and lieutenandry granted to whatever persons in times past"[5]. The year 1590 is therefore of some importance for our placing of the ballad, since a reciter would have been unlikely to introduce the Border Lieutenant into his tale if the role played by him had been long forgotten.

1 Rae, op. cit., 104.
2 Op. cit., 104.
3 Warrender Papers (ed. Annie I. Cameron), I, 112-13.
4 R.P.C., IV, passim.
5 R.P.C., IV, 552.

Finally, it is of interest to note that in the Glenriddell version of Archie o Cawfield this officer is named as Lieutenant Gordon (B26[1]). There was a George Gordon, fourth Earl of Huntly, who was Lieutenant of the West March of Scotland in 1542 and who attended a judicial raid in May, 1555[1]. Later, Sir John Gordon of Lochinvar was joint Warden of the West March in 1596, together with a commission of nine others, and a quorum of this group was to remain permanently stationed at Dumfries to carry out both internal and international duties[2]. The name of Gordon was thus one to be feared in this part of the Border.

From the above accumulation of evidence we would probably be not far out if we accepted a date in the 1580s or early 1590s for the composition of the ballad as it stands in version A. Whether or not the A text of Archie o Cawfield is indeed the earliest now remains to be seen.

The Glenriddell MS. version of the ballad (Child Ba) post-dates the Miss Fisher text (Child A) by only eleven years, in other words, the MS. is younger than Miss Fisher's "communication" (also a MS.). But this does not necessarily mean that the B version itself is younger. It therefore deserves to be considered as a possible "earliest version". Ba is 69 lines shorter than A and yet has none missing. Moreover, a cursory reading of the two texts reveals that of B's 122 lines, about half are substantially the same as A's. There are several narrative parallels: both begin in the first person; the rescue is carried out by two brothers with the help of their cousin, Jocky Hall; both rescue-parties reverse their horse-shoes; and both escapes involve swimming a flooded river Annan. The major differences in B are: the more

1 Hamilton Papers (ed. Joseph Bain), I, 158-9.
2 R.P.C., V, 112-13.

prominent part played by Jocky Hall, Dicky being relegated to a subordinate place; a band of 13 instead of 12 men, and a second visit paid to the smith's on the return journey, in order to file off Archie's chains and leg-irons (B19-20).

However, what seems to impair the authority of version B and to destroy any claim to greater antiquity than A, is the fact that many parts of B seem to be watered down bits of A. We might profitably compare, for example, the interpretation placed by the respective singers on the gathering-together of the rescue-band. In Miss Fisher's rendering, Dicky Hall, "the wisest o the three", says:

'A hundre men we'll never get,
Neither for gold nor fee,
But some of them will us betray;
They'l neither fight for gold nor fee.

'Had I but ten well-wight men,
Ten o the best i Christenty,
I wad gae on to fair Dumfries,
I wad loose my brother and set him free'.
(A4[3-6], 5)

In other words, "if you were to collect a hundred men, some of them would be sure to betray us. I would rather have ten men only and faithful". The warning, in effect, is not to trust those outside the sept, since their loyalty cannot be bought, whatever the price. Only kinship is to be relied upon. The Glenriddell text sets out to say the same, but then employs the device of reduction from 100 to 16 men, which is awkward since it is not, on the face of it, clear why 11 should be more trustworthy than 16. Moreover, B plays with these numbers for 10 lines, compared with the 6 lines which A takes to make the point; the eldest brother (not named) speaks to the youngest (not named):

'O chuse ye out a hundred men,
A hundred men in Christ e ndie,
And we'll away to Dumfries town,
And set our billie Archie free'.
(B3)

to which the youngest objects:

'A hundred men you cannot get,
   Nor yet sixteen in Christendie;
For some of them will us betray,
   And other some will work for fee.

'But chuse ye out eleven men,
   And we ourselves thirteen will be,
And we'ill away to Dumfries town,
   And borrow bony billie Archie'.
(B4-5)

The last line of B4 is otiose as the last line of A4 is not; the sharp contrast breaks down to be lost in a jumble of numerals.

Consonant with A's strong conviction that brotherhood cannot be purchased is stanza 45. When the Laird's Jock is complaining that he may lose his lands and be outlawed as a result of the night's venture, he is sternly rebuked by his brother:

'Now wae light o thee and thy lands baith, Jock,
   And even so baith the land and thee!
For gear will come and gear will gang,
   But three brothers again we never were to be'.
(A45)

But this - the clearest statement of the ballad's theme - is lost to version B.

It is version A, too, which contains a moment of fine metaphorical humour during the banter between Lieutenant and reivers across the flooded river. Dicky Hall, who has gained the safety of the opposite bank, calls to their antagonist:

'Come through, come thro, my lieutenant,
   Come thro this day, and drink wi me,
And thy dinner's be dressd in Annan Holme,
   It sall not cost thee one penny'.
(A42)

The subtlety is missed by the reciter of B when Dicky makes the more literal invitation to their enemy:

> 'Come through, come through, Lieutenant Gordon!
> Come through and drink some wine wi me!
> For ther's an ale-house neer hard by,
> And it shall not cost thee one penny'.
> (B26)

A number of other lines in B look very much as though they are the misunderstandings of an oral poet. There is manifest corruption at $B7^4$, where "For it is forward we woud be", which follows the request to the smith to "turn back the caukers of our horses feet" ($B7^3$), although it makes sense, is clearly a "misremembering" of the line in A, "where foremost they were wont to be" ($A9^4$). The line which follows the linking of Archie's irons about the grey mare's neck is somewhat puzzling - "And her girth was the gold-twist to be" ($B16^4$). The equivalent line in A is "And galloped the street right wantonly" ($A27^4$).

These considerations, then, taken together with the close interconnection between Archie o Cawfield (A) and Jock o the Side (B), point to the derivation ultimately of Archie o Cawfield version B from version A. Thus we can say with some certainty that not only will one ballad borrow from another, but, more specifically, one reciter will pick up themes and formulae he has heard in the rendering of a particular variant of a ballad by another reciter.

It is possible, I think, to draw the conclusion that Archie o Cawfield (A) is not the composition of the reciter of Jock o the Side (B) by comparing the style of the two ballads. If anything, the singer of Jock o the Side is more circumstantial, preferring a longer line and an expansion of detail. The prisoner describes his captivity:

'Full fifteen stane o Spanish iron
They hae laid a' right sair on me;
Wi locks and keys I am fast bound
Into this dungeon mirk and drearie.
(J.o.S. B19)

The singer of Archie contracts this by half to:

'For fifteen stone of Spanish iron
Lyes fast to me with lock and key'.
($A22^{3-4}$)

In Jock o the Side,

The prisner now, upo his back,
The Laird's Jock's gotten up fu hie;
($B22^{1-2}$)

which description takes a single line in Archie:

He's got the prisoner on o his back
($A25^{1}$)

And we might compare the dispute over the prisoner's leg-irons as it is treated by the two reciters:

'But leave the irons, I pray to me'.

'I wat weel no', cryd the Laird's Jock,
'I'll keep them a', shoon to my mare they'll be;
My good grey mare, for I am sure,
She's bought them a' fu dear frae thee'.
(J.o.S. $B33^{4}$, 34)

'But throw me my irons, Dicky,
I wait they cost me full dear;'
'O devil be there', quo Jocky Hall,
They'l be good shoon to my gray mare'.
(A.o.C. A43)

Leyden's copy (Child G), sent to Sir Walter Scott prior to 1833 when the latter drew on it for the "edited" version which he published in the third edition of his Minstrelsy, has clearly been the work of a later reciter than the singers of Archie o Cawfield A and B. It is,

however, a distinctly oral ballad, as is evinced by the frequent repetitions, and its authenticity need not be doubted. Unfortunately, the text is much impaired. Child was obliged to print omission marks in seven places to indicate missing lines, and asterisks in two places to mark lost verses. Dicky is introduced suddenly in stanza 9. We are not told why the rescue-party halts at the smith's on the return journey, although it would appear from the remark of the speaker in 13^4 that he simply wished his horse to be shod, not to have the shoes themselves reversed. It looks as if a later reciter has remembered to include a blacksmith at this stage in the narrative, but without remembering the proper motivation behind this part of the story. "Coarse Cafield" is cursed and his lands with him in stanza 21, but somewhat inexplicably since he has not lamented his anticipated loss of them, as in A44. The invitation to cross the river and drink, faithfully retained in the mouth of Dicky Hall in the other two Border versions, is here given to the Lieutenant who would seem to be offering Dicky service, with a fresh livery every week (G22). Leyden's version does, however, introduce the charming little vignette of the smith, knocked up in the middle of the night to shoe one of the horses by candlelight - a passage which obviously appealed to Scott who incorporated it into his 1833 Minstrelsy text.

Version G, then, appears to be a later Border version derived ultimately from A and B^1, the ballad story itself borrowing heavily (in

1 Version G appears to have borrowed the following:-

$G3^1$ similar to $A15^1$, $B9^1$
$G4^{1-2}$ similar to $A14^{1-2}$, $B10^{1-2}$
$G7^{1-2}$ similar to $A18^2$, 19^6, $B11^2$, 4
$G8^3$ = $A21^3$, $B12^3$
G9 similar to $A25^1$, 26^{1-2}, $B15^{1-4}$
$G10^2$ similar to $A26^4$, $B15^6$
$G11^4$ similar to $A34^4$, $B22^4$
$G17^{2-4}$ similar to $A33^{3-4}$, $B20^4$, 21^{1-2}
$G19^3$ = $A39^3$
$G21^1$ = $A45^1$
$G22^{1-2}$ similar to $A41^{3-4}$, $B26^{1-2}$

$G4^2$, 17^2 occur only in version B.

the absence of any firm historical basis) from the events of the earlier Rescue Ballad, Jock o the Side.

Archie o Cawfield nevertheless manages to establish a separate identity, utilising the Matter of the Border in its own colourful way. The rescue-route through the Dumfriesshire hills is accurately traced. In version A, the Halls ride in a south-westerly direction from Cawfield until they come to "fair Barngliss" (A8^{3})^{1}, where they call on a smith to turn the horse-shoes. They then ride for the cover of Bonshaw Wood (A10^{3})^{2}, where they hold council. It is decided to avoid the Annan road to Dumfries as it is a public highway, and so the rescuers go out of their way a little, keeping to a north-westerly line, crossing the river Annan at Hoddam ford^{3}, and so on to Dumfries, approaching the town from the west. They return via Bonshaw Shield (A29^{3})^{4} where a further council is held, then head up the river Annan to ford it at Annan Holme opposite Wamphray Gate where they can be sure of help from the Johnstones. From there they return across the Eskdale hills to Wauchopedale and Cawfield.

In version B, a different route is chosen. The rescuers ride south-west from Cawfield to cross the Annan higher up at Murraywhat (B6^{3})^{5}. Here the horse-shoes are turned. They make the return journey leaving Dumfries by the Lochmaben port, or gate (B17^{3}), filing off the prisoner's shackles at the Murraywhat and so back to Cawfield.

1 This is Barngliesh on the river Sark, about 7m. south-west of Langholm, see OS Map, Sheet 75. It is marked "Barnglyish" on Blaeu's Map of Annandale.

2 There is still a Bonshaw tower about 4m. north-east of Annan, see OS Map, Sheet 75. It is marked on Blaeu's Map of Annandale, together with a "Bonshaw Syd".

3 Hoddam castle and church are situated on either side of the river Annan, about 4m. north-west of Annan. A bridge has replaced Hoddam ford, see OS Map, Sheet 75, and Blaeu's Map of Annandale.

4 This would have been a "sheiling" or summer pasture.

5 Now Murraythwaite, about 2m. upstream from Hoddam, see OS Map, Sheet 75. It is spelt "Moriwhat" on Blaeu's Map of Annandale.

This careful following of a route well removed from the public highways, obviously of greatest importance to the Borderers, disappears from the northern texts. Buchan's and Greig's Aberdeenshire versions remember Annan gate (C14[4]), Annan water (C15[1]) and Annan toon (Greig, 7[3]), but otherwise the ballad action has become delocalised. This, almost certainly, must have been one factor contributing to the ballad's readiness for migration at about the start of the eighteenth century.

The Border virtues extolled by Archie o Cawfield are those of loyalty to family and clan. The binding ties of kinship are felt throughout. On one level the surname or clan represents a self-contained, autonomous, social unit characterised by democratic council and the overriding claims of familial relationships. This is set against the autocratic power and injustice of jailor, Warden and Lieutenant. On a still higher level, the ballad lauds the priority of human and familial ties over the rival claims made by land, wealth and possessions - all of which the ballad sums up in the one word "gear". The moral explication of the tale, as given by version A has already been quoted. Leyden's Border version expresses the same sentiment less poetically, perhaps, but in terms of a similarly sharp moral choice: "Wad ye een your lands to your born billie?" (G21[2]), one brother asks the other.

Good strength, good cheer, courage and physical prowess are held in high esteem. It is Dicky and Jocky Hall who dare to force the gaol. The faint-hearted, the "saft" and cowardly, are held in least reverence. Archie himself is rebuked as a "crabby chiel" (A23[2]) for bewailing his fate when it lies in his own hands to remedy the situation. Jock the Laird is ridiculed in version A for displaying fears and regrets, whilst there is explicit condemnation of his counterpart, "coarse Cafield" in version G: "I wat and little gude worth was he" (G5[2]).

Even a horse is to be preferred to a faint-hearted man, and so side by side with this admiration for the "worth" of the mosstrooper goes an admiration for the strength and courage of the horse he rides. The part played by these sturdy Border ponies does not often go without appreciative comment in the ballads. A hero's prowess and ability is often closely linked with and reflected by the capabilities of his steed. Thus Jocky Hall appears to grow in stature when he boasts:

'I have a mare, they ca her Meg,
  She is the best i Christenty;
An ever we come till a pinch,
  She'll bring awa both thee and me'. (A14[3-6])

The grey mare is rewarded for her pains with a new set of shoes, made from the prisoner's irons. There may be some hint of a different kind of reward in version B, where we read "and her girth was the gold twist to be" (B16[4]). The Borderers, as we saw in our discussion of Jamie Telfer, placed the highest value on their ponies. As a rider remarks in version G of Archie:

'But lees me on thee, my little black mare,
  Thou's worth thy weight o gowd to me'. (G15[3-4])

A man's character can be read by the way he controls his horse. Jock the Laird loses face as a result of his inability to persuade his four-year-old colt that "wannels like the wind" (A38[4]) to take the flooded stream. Dicky exchanges horses with him and is able to master the colt and take the prisoner behind him. He is, moreover, the last to plunge in and the first to reach the opposite bank of the river. Not surprisingly, Dicky Hall "rides foremost of yon company" (A35[4], 36[4]). The interdependence of man and beast is well appreciated, then, by these Border balladists.

As in Jock o the Side, the river-crossing incident seems to have attracted its share of supernatural overtone and association. There is something uncanny, fay and otherworldly about the power of men like Dicky Hall. The Lieutenant declares that a man would need to be "well saint", or blessed (A37[3]), to come safely through the hands of such a freebooter, and he attributes Dicky's strength to the fact that his birth must have been preternatural:

> 'I think some witch has bore thee, Dicky,
> Or some devil in hell been thy daddy;
> I would never have swum that wan water double-horsed,
> For a' the gold in Christenty'.
> (A42)

Wimberly notes that witches, in popular belief, were able to swim through impossible floods[1]. The superstitious explanation for Dicky's success was clearly an attractive one to the ballad reciters since it is retained by version B and also by Buchan's version from the north of Scotland[2].

In Kinmont Willie Lord Scroope is likewise amazed that the bold Buccleugh can swim the flooded Eden Water:

> All sore astonished stood Lord Scroope,
> He stood as still as rock of stane;
> He scarcely dared to trow his eyes
> When thro the water they had gane.
>
> 'He is either himsell a devil frae hell,
> Or else his mother a witch maun be;
> I wad na have ridden that wan water
> For a' the gowd in Christentie'.
> (45-46)

In our discussion of Jock o the Side we noticed the realistic surface texture of the ballad. The Border Balladist's love of credible,

1 L.C. Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, 221.

2 The superstition is completely lost, however, by Buchan's other version from James Nicol, D18-19.

graphic detail emerges again in Archie o Cawfield, on this occasion in the careful note taken of the passing of time. The story opens "late in an evening", "on the dawning of the day" (A1[1-2]). When the rescuers reach fair Dumfries, "it was newly strucken three" (A13[4]). The detail is apposite in what is, after all, a highly time-conscious operation. The rescue is conducted with an acute sense of speed and urgency, conveyed in the insistent refrain-like rhythms of:

> And there was horsing, horsing of haste,
> And cracking of whips out oer the lee,
> (A10[1-2], etc.)

Everything, in fact, is done "hastily" or in haste[1]. There is a realisation of the sudden change in circumstance which the events of a few hours can bring about:

> 'This has been a dearsome night to me;
> For yesternight the Cawfield was my ain,
> Landsman again I never sall be'.
> (A44[2-4])

reflects the Laird's Jock sadly.

When Archie o Cawfield left the Border to be carried by reciters further north in Aberdeenshire, many of these Border characteristics were lost. It shed, as we have already seen, the place-names along the reivers' route which gave the ballad an air of topographical reality. Furthermore, the story lost its regional actors, the Lieutenant disappearing in version C and the clan chieftain being replaced by the meaningless Caff o Lin in version D. Gone, too, are the references to Wardens and justice-courts, matter too particular to be fully assimilated by a northern audience. Where the Border reciters were familiar enough

1 See A8[1], 10[1], 13[1], 29[1], 34[1], 37[1], 40[2] and 41[2].

with the powerful figure of the Lieutenant and his hundred outriders, the Aberdeenshire folk were not, and so he becomes a "proud sheriff" with "five hundred men in his companie" (C22$^{3-4}$). Aggrandisement is, indeed, the order of the day: the prisoner's irons now weigh fifty tons of Spanish iron (C11^{3}), but this does not prevent him from being carried, or even sink him as he swims the flooded river.

It soon becomes obvious that this reciter had never ridden with the mosstroopers. A lover in the ballads may "tirl at the pin" to announce his arrival at his true-love's dwelling, but what Borderer bent on a desperate rescue would declare his presence by tirling the pin of the gaol-house door? Equally ridiculous is the turning aside of the fleeing rescue-party to take refreshment at "Robert's at the mill" (C16). At details such as these one is inclined to sigh with Archie, "ohon, alas!"

Mr. Nicol of Strichen's version (Child D) preserves intact most of the narrative elements of A and B and remembers the Lieutenant with his hundred men, this in itself suggesting a greater antiquity than version C. Yet even this rendering of 'Billie Archie' displays the same penchant for romantic colouring and generalisation as the other Buchan version. The bond of kinship which is the main-spring of the plot in the Border versions is superseded by a feeble attempt to disguise the ballad as a love-story. Nicol's version begins:

> Seven years have I loved my love,
> And seven years my love's loved me,
> But now tomorrow is the day
> That billy Archie, my love, must die.
> (D1)

But whoever the girl of this verse is, she vanishes from the rest of the narrative.

In places D is downright unintelligble. "And hold the prisoner unthought lang" ($D5^4$) makes no sense at all, and there has clearly been ellipsis in stanza 20^3, where the line "If she gang barefoot till they are done" can only refer to the irons-into-horse-shoes banter of the earlier texts, but which is missing after stanza 19 here. Caff o Lin, described as "the worst fellow" ($D3^2$), is surely a corruption of the "coarse Ca'field" character of Leyden's copy, and with this name, too, disappears the ballad's last anchorage in a particular locale. The hero is called "Little Dickie", as in version C, and the diminutive marks a further stage in the ballad's deterioration, as it did in Bell Robertson's retelling of The Lochmaben Harper. The reference to grenadiers and dragoons in C4 is a further accretion of this latter-day rendering of the tale. The theme of clan loyalty and the precedence of human over material ties is absent from these north-Scottish texts, although the men are still brothers in C and E.

A further weakening results when the ballad crosses the Atlantic, since in 'John Webber', Mrs. Seth Thornton's re-creation, the story is reduced to the commonplace gaol-break of the American westerns. Where the characters remain brothers the ballad manages to preserve something of its original spirit and integrity. In Collinson and Dillon's 'Bold Archer' one of the characters says:

> O, now our brother in prison do lay,
> Condemned to die is he
> If I had eleven such brothers as he,
> It's soon the poor prisoner I'd set free.
> (2)

Nevertheless, the point about loyalty within the sept is missed entirely by this version when it is objected:

> Eleven, says Richard, is little enough,
> Full forty there must be,
> (3^{1-2})

Time, which in the Border versions would appear to be operational, is purely decorative in many of these American texts. Buchan's version opens:

> As I walked on a pleasant green -
> 'Twas on the first morning of May -
> (C1 1-2)

and this is followed by the Watsons' version (Child F) and by the B and C texts from Maine. Collinson and Dillon's 'Bold Archer' begins:

> It was all in the month of June,
> Just as the flowers were in full bloom,
> (1 1-2).

One is reminded of the May-morning conventional opening of so many mediaeval narratives. What has happened, I suggest, is that, in leaving the harsher climate of the Border, the ballad has been softened into the pictorial vagueness and timelessness of a romance landscape. Detail is appropriate, as it were, because it is not inappropriate. Thus there is nothing remarkable in the presence of a smith riding with the rescue-party (F16), but we know that his presence is vestigial merely and that his original role (in the Border versions of the tale) was an important one.

As a measure of the extent to which a Border text may degenerate once it has lost contact with its life-supporting regional ethos, it is interesting to read the three verses that make up Mrs. Glover's 'The Burglar', as noted down scrupulously by Cecil Sharp. The ballad runs in its entirety:

> I'm just like an owl that flies by night
> I fly from tree to tree,
> Good iron will do to shoe our horses
> And blacksmiths to ride in our company.
>
> Dicky broke locks and Dicky broke keys
> And why shan't your ten be much better than my eleven
> This night we will set the bold prisoner free.
>
> So boldly she took it her pistol in hand
> She asked for his mind and his mind she soon filled,
> And I'll have you stand back or you are a dead man.

This is not even one of Bronson's "sharp corners" of balladry, it is a cul-de-sac, the end of the road of oral re-creation.

To be fair to the American variants, it should be said that some are perfectly coherent as ballad narratives in their own right - Child F, and Collinson and Dillon's 'Bold Archer', for instance. One thing that survives from the earliest versions is the ballad's individualistic and highly rhythmic "riding refrain". This is repeated five times in the A text (a repetition Scott felt constrained to vary in at least two instances)[1], and four times in the B text, and is used with the substitution of a new place-name at the end of the third line to carry the story buoyantly on to the next stage:

> There was horsing and horsing of haste,
> And cracking o whips out oer the lee,
> Till they came to fair Barngliss,
> And they ca'd the smith right quietly.
> (A8, etc.)

This verse is still recognisable in the Watsons' singing of the ballad, as:

> They mounted their horses, and so rode they,
> Who but they so merrilie!
> They rode till they came to a broad river's side,
> And there they alighted so manfullie.
> (F5)

The verse is born as much from the rhythms of the Borderers' ingrained reiving habit as from a desire for poetical flourishes. Fynes Moryson in his Itinerary of 1617 writes:

1 Scott gives "O there was mounting, mounting in haste" for 23[1], and for stanza 19:

> The live-lang night these twelve men rode,
> And aye till they were right wearie,
> Until they cam to the Murraywhate,
> And they lighted there right speedilie.
> (M, 19)

> I said that they [the northern horses] are all strong, and the horses for iornies indefatigable, for the English, especially the Northerne men, ride from day breake to the euening, without drawing bit, neither sparing their horses nor themselues[1].

But it was no doubt the rhythmic quality of the ballad verse that attracted subsequent reciters[2], as did the following verse which first appeared in Leyden's Border copy:

> Ten to had the horses' heads,
> And other ten to walk alee,
> And ten to break up the strang prisoun
> Where billie Archie he does lie.
> (G3)

Scott preserved the verse and a familiarity with his Minstrelsy text may have been the cause of its inclusion by trans-Atlantic reciters, for in 'Bold Archer' it reappears as:

> Now ten for to stand by our horses' reins,
> And ten for to guard us round about,
> And ten for to stand by the castle door,
> And ten for to bring bold Archer out.
> (4)[3]

By way of conclusion, I venture the following explanation of Archie o Cawfield's escape from the usual regional confines of Border balladry. The ballad, as we have seen, had moved as far as Airds of Kells in Kircudbrightshire (where Jane Webster learned fragments of it in her youth) and as far as Aberdeenshire (where Mr. Nicol of Strichen remembered it). This was by the early 1800s, according to the recorded information, but the ballad had detached itself from its Border origins as early as the 1700s when it gave rise to the parody 'Old Tenor' in Massachusetts. This particular Rescue Ballad was ripe for adaptation by singers outside

1 Op. cit. (1617 ed.), 148-9.

2 The verse recurs in the A, C and D texts of 'John Webber', see B.B.M., 394-8.

3 Cf. 'John Webber' A, C, B.B.M., 394-6.

the Border region because its theme (originally one of sectarian loyalty) had slowly been abstracted and generalised and its narrative structure broken down into a few simple and archetypal components: a brother imprisoned; a rescue-party gathered; brother freed; pursuit by and confrontation with the law; return home. Moreover, as Archie o Cawfield was retold and as it drifted away from the Border, the names of the characters became mere ciphers. This does not happen in the case of Jock o the Side; in that ballad, the prisoner is named as Jock o the Side in all five versions and he is imprisoned because "Liddesdale has ridden a raid" and one of the English Whitfields has been killed. Other characters' names remain stable - the Laird of Mangerton, Hobie Noble, the Laird's Jock. Perhaps it would be true to say that Jock o the Side is a ballad that has remained in a fairly rigid state with a number of unchanging regional factors governing each retelling. Archie o Cawfield, on the other hand, passed early into a fluid state in which any amount of recreation was possible. Perhaps the historical cause for this was that the ballad action was pure fiction from start to finish, whereas Jock of the Side's escape from Newcastle was not; it was recalled by a writer in 1599 who was even then remarking on the laxness that had made such an escape possible. In the case of Archie o Cawfield this tale of a prison rescue became anyone's for the telling, an archetypal story that could be appredíated as easily in Aberdeenshire, Massachusetts or Maine, as on the Scottish Border. In a sense, the ballad has come full circle, for 'Bold Archer' and 'Bold Dickie' are paradoxically more truly representative of the traditional ballad form as we have come to recognise it - shorn of all inessentials and concentrating upon a single dramatic moment, objectively presented - than those versions from the Border itself. If one prefers the Border versions, perhaps this is because the balladist has understood his material better and has been able to weave a richer substance out of the strands of an experience

close to him in time and place.

Our third Rescue Ballad, Kinmont Willie, has been as controversial as it has been popular. Argument has centred on the question of the ballad's traditionality and has been heavily weighted against Sir Walter Scott. F.B. Gummere wrote in The Popular Ballad in 1907:

> Scott himself retouched old versions, set them dancing where they limped, or seemed to limp, and in one case, Kinmont Willie, really made up a new ballad by the best model in the world[1].

Fitzwilliam Elliot also adopted an extreme view, claiming that, "Scott did not merely emendate or add stanzas, but wrote the whole ballad from beginning to end"[2]. A more conservative and carefully balanced view is Andrew Lang's in Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy[3], and he is followed in this by G.L. Kittredge in his introduction to the abridged edition of the Child ballads[4]. Hodgart commits himself so far as to say that, "we owe many of the best anthology pieces to Scott: Kinmont Willie is probably his entire invention"[5]. Finally, Child admitted the ballad to his collection, though not without a certain degree of scepticism.

The facts of the matter are these. Scott's text of Kinmont Willie is the only one in existence, although this in itself is not unusual since other Border Ballads have been recovered in only one version. Scott published the ballad in the first edition of his Minstrelsy[6] with the following note as to his source:

> This ballad has been preserved, by tradition, on the West Borders, but much mangled by reciters; so that some conjectural

1 Op. cit., 314.

2 Further Essays on Border Ballads, 130.

3 Op. cit., 126-147.

4 George Lyman Kittredge and Helen C. Sargent, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, xxix - xxx.

5 M.J.C. Hodgart, The Ballads, 111.

6 Minstrelsy (1802 ed.), I, 111, see E.S.P.B., III, 469.

> emendations have been absolutely necessary to render it intelligible. In particular, the Eden has been substituted for the Esk, the latter name being inconsistent with geography[1].

In a list of twenty-two ballads pasted into a commonplace book at Abbotsford, eleven are marked X, as if Scott had managed to obtain them, and eleven others are unmarked, as if they were still to be recovered. Unmarked is Kinmont Willie[2]. This, at least, looks like a hint that Scott believed a ballad on the subject of Kinmont Willie's rescue to be still in oral circulation on the Borders towards the close of the eighteenth century. Did he find it, or did he fake it himself when his search was unrewarded? I believe, with Lang, that he found the ballad but in a state that clearly did not satisfy his poetic meticulosity. One imagines it in its "mangled" state perhaps no worse than the Leyden copy of Archie o Cawfield, or William Hadley's transcript of Jock o the Side, "as collected from the memory of an old person". Child responded to Scott's introductory remarks with characteristic open-mindedness, suspecting that "a great deal more emendation was done than the mangling of reciters rendered absolutely necessary" and adding that, "one would like, for example, to see stanzas 10-12 and 31 in their mangled condition"[3]. Child believed that, in general, no changes or additions are "in so glaring a contrast with the groundwork as literary emendations of traditional ballads"[4]. This being so, it should be possible to pick out those lines and stanzas in Kinmont Willie which do not bed comfortably into the groundwork and which betray literary, rather than popular origins. We can usually track Scott by his too decorative, too poetical, or too literary interpolations and his distaste for what he calls

1 Minstrelsy, II, 55.
2 See Andrew Lang, op. cit., 129.
3 E.S.P.B., III, 472.
4 E.S.P.B., II, 428.

"unnecessary and disagreeable repetition"[1]. Using these approaches, then, as we have done before, and drawing on our knowledge of two other, undoubtedly genuine Rescue Ballads, let us attempt to separate out the traditional elements in Kinmont Willie.

Lord has said that "an oral text will yield a predominance of clearly demonstrable formulas, with the bulk of the remainder formulaic"[2]. If we submit the text of Kinmont Willie to such an analysis we find that just under a quarter of the ballad's 184 lines are formulaic[3]. The ballad opens with a repetetive question:

O have ye na heard o the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o the keen Lord Scroop?
(1^{1-2})

"The fause Sakelde" forms a convenient half-line name-epithet formula carrying two stresses and is brought in again by the balladist at 20^4, 21^2, 22^2, and 24^2. Consistent with this, Sakelde dies when Dickie of Dryhope runs a lance through his "fause" bodie (25^4). Sakelde, or Salkeld, was the deputy English Warden and came of a powerful family in Cumberland[4]. He was technically guilty of condoning, if not of actively encouraging the arrest of Will Armstrong of Kinmont on a day of truce in the early spring of 1596. "The keen Lord Scroope" also forms a convenient half-line formula (1^2, 42^4).

In the second stanza there is repetition with increment as the second half of the first line becomes the first half of the second, thus:

Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
(2^{1-2})

1 Minstrelsy, II, 93.
2 Albert B. Lord, The Singer of Tales, 130.
3 See Table C , p.510, 'Oral-formulaic Repetition in Kinmont Willie'.
4 See Minstrelsy, II, 68.

Incremental transition is employed in stanzas 3 and 4:

> And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack[1].
> They led him thro the Liddel-rack, (3^4, 4^1)

and with variation in stanzas 37 and 38:

> 'Till of my Lord Scroope I take farewell.
> 'Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!' (37^4, 38^1)

The sudden introduction of the speaker without assigning his dialogue, in stanza 5, is so typical of the traditional ballad as to need no further comment. We have already met the "fear na ye that" formula (7^1) in Jock o the Side ($B20^1$), and the "now word is gane to ... where that he lay" opening (8^{1-2}) has also been noticed as a device for transferring the scene in other Border Ballads.

There is nothing in the first eight stanzas of the ballad, therefore, to warrant the suspicion that it has not been put together in the usual manner by a reciter working within the mainstream of oral tradition. The stanzas which follow, on the other hand, are composed in an entirely different vein, introducing grandiose statement and a consciously poetic and rhetorical vocabulary quite foreign to the ballad of tradition. We view the Border through the retrospective glance of the armchair historian and it is an angle of vision that strikes one immediately as false. After the traditional-sounding lines of verse 8, in which the news of Kinmont Willie's capture is brought to Walter Scott of Buccleugh at Branxholm Hall, we get the following:

1 The Liddel-rack was a ford on the Liddel Water, see Minstrelsy, II, 69.

He has taen the table wi his hand,
He garrd the red wine spring on hie;
'Now Christ's curse on my head', he said,
'But avenged of Lord Scroop I'll be!'
(9)

It is not that such histrionics are out of place here, but that one remembers the ballad manner of Jock o the Side where a similar "bad news theme" is handled with restraint, the balladist realising that what a man does not do at the moment of revelation or crisis is often more telling than what he does do. So the Laird of Mangerton could eat "neuer a morsell" when he was informed of Jock of the Side's imprisonment after a Liddesdale foray (J.o.S. A3[4]).

Fanciful and totally inappropriate is the description of the attire of Buccleugh's rescue-band in verse 17:

He has called him forty marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleugh,
With spur on heel and splent on spauld,
And gleuves of green and feathers blue.
(17)

Johnie Armstrong's men wear similarly elegant apparel, but they are in festive, not warlike mood, hoping to win their pardons from the king. The dress of the marchmen in Kinmont Willie, however, is decidedly dangerous in its flamboyance, since these men are about to cross the Border, bent on an illegal night-time foray in enemy country. They would by no stretch of the imagination have risked calling attention to themselves by regaling in such finery. Mangerton recognised the risk of going undisguised and advised his clansmen in Jock o the Side:

'Like gentlemen ye must not seem,
But like corn-caugers gawn ae road!.
(B8[3-4])

And in version A of that ballad, Hobie Noble says,

'Wee will ryde like noe men of warr;
But like poor badgers wee wilbe'.
(A8[3-4])

Even Buchan's north-Scottish text of Archie o Cawfield understands the importance of such a disguise on such a mission, borrowing its stanza 6 from Jock o the Side:

> 'But we winna gang like men o weir,
> Nor yet will we like cavalliers;
> But we will gang like corn-buyers,
> And we'll put brechens on our mares'.
> (A.o.C. C6)

In point of fact, if Scott composed the lines in Kinmont Willie he apparently failed to notice thier incongruity, for in the verses that follow we are told that the reivers went some as a "mason-gang" carrying "ladders lang and hie" (19^{1-2}), and others "like broken men" (19^{3}). "Broken" was the technical term for men without a responsible head or chief, but who were not necessarily outlaws[1]. A third group of rescuers was to ride with Buccleugh himself, "like Warden's men arrayed for fight" (18^{4}). We know how these auxiliaries were dressed from contemporary records and from other Border Ballads: nowhere else do we find the crudely constructed leather plate-jack described as "splent on spauld"[2]; no feathers were worn either in the Border trooper's steel bonnet.

Buccleugh enters scrupulously into the ethical pros and cons of rescuing a man who has in any case been taken illegally against the truce[3]. In stanzas 13-15 he is found vowing not to harm "English lad or lass" because the two countries are at peace and later the ballad exculpates him again when, on the roof of Carlisle castle,

1 See Howard Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches, 102; George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 395.

2 The "splent", or splint, was one of the plates or strips of overlapping metal in mediaeval armour, O.E.D., X, 642; E.D.S.L., IV, 369. The "spauld", or "spaul", is the shoulder, O.E.D., X, 530; E.D.D., V, 650-1.

3 Under March Law, every man attending the truce was held to be inviolate to his enemies until next day's sunrise, see Fraser, op. cit., 329-30. For a full account of the regulations governing Days of Truce, see D.L.W. Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, 137-45; Fraser, op. cit., 154-69.

He has taen the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead:
'Had there not been peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou hadst gaed'.
(30)

Such a point of honour - the horror of breaking assurance - is as likely to have been the conception of an early Border balladist as of Sir Walter Scott "repairing" the ballad in the nineteenth century. Yet Henderson suggests that, where the deeds of Scott's ancestors were concerned, he could not always "resist the temptation to employ some of his own minstrel art on their behalf"[1]. Nevertheless, if we examine the available records detailing the Kinmont Willie affair, it is obvious that Buccleugh was careful not to follow one breach of protocol with another, since during the weeks that followed Kinmont's detention, he corresponded personally with Mr. Salkeld, with Lord Scroop himself and with the English ambassador, Mr. Bowes, entreating the prisoner's liberty. Moreover, he was "loath to inform the king [James VI] what was done, lest it might have bred some misliking betwixt the princes"[2]. The English Border officials thus receive the balladist's full condemnation for their "fause" conduct, and just in case the audience should still be in any doubt that Buccleugh's action was a perfectly honourable one, the English treachery is driven home in the ballad allegation that,

they hae taen bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Hairibee to hang him up,
(13-4)

Harraby was the place of execution at Carlisle. But, in point of fact, the English authorities probably had no intention of hanging the free-booter and Scrope seems to have placed him on some kind of limited parole[3].

1 Minstrelsy, II, 57.

2 John Spotiswoode, The History of the Church of Scotland (1665 ed.), 415.

3 "The assurance that he [Kinmont Willie] had given that he wolde not breake awaye", Scrope to the Privy Council, April 14, 1596, C.B.P., I, 121, No. 251.

So we have here the Border balladist's natural tendency to side with the underdog against his traditional enemies, rather than a piece of overt moralising on the part of a later poet-editor.

What does betray the literary origins of at least one of the Buccleugh verses is the ingenious and elegant series of comparisons in stanza 10. The Scottish chieftain, outraged at the news he has just received, storms:

> 'O is my basnet a widow's curch?
> Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree?
> Or my arm a ladye's lilye hand?
> That an English lord should lightly me.
> (10)

In the two verses which follow, on the other hand, there is just sufficient repetition to hint at an oral-traditional groundwork, although the tone of high moral indignation is not relinquished.

The popular note is sounded again in stanza 13 with an "I wot" in line 2 and a commonplace conjunctive clause in,

> I would slight Carlisle castell high,
> Tho it were builded of marble-stone.
> (13^{3-4})

Stanza 16 even has some of the excrescences of the stall-copy style and, as Andrew Lang remarks[1], could surely not have been composed by Scott:

> He has calld him forty marchmen bauld,
> I trow they were of his ain name,
> Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, calld
> The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.
> (16)

In passing this verse, we may note that Gilbert Elliot of Stobs is the same character to whom Jamie Telfer ran for help in that ballad.

1 Op. cit., 137.

Stanzas 18-19 are marked by the four-fold repetition of "five and five" to describe the assumed identities of the different groups of rescuers, recalling the "ten to hold the horses" heads" formula in Archie o Cawfield.

Stanza 20 is arresting for its sudden reversion to the first person plural. With some consistency this is held to for the remainder of the ballad until stanza 43 where the narrator rounds off his tale, as he opened it, in the objective third person. It seems to me that this intrusion of the author as member of a group provides us with one ground for arguing the ballad's folk origins. At any rate, it is extremely unlikely that a poet over-nice as to stylistic regularity, as Scott was, should have deliberately introduced such a narrative inconsistency had he written the whole ballad himself. On the other hand, he might conceivably have overlooked it if he had received the piece in a fragmentary state from oral transmission and was preoccupied with getting into shape the most seriously impaired verses. It does seem likely, therefore, that Kinmont Willie was originally the recital of a member of the Scott clan who had ridden with the bold Buccleugh on the night of the expedition to Carlisle and who lapsed naturally into "we" when he sang the ballad. The first person viewpoint must have been retained during transmission and survived into a written transcript made from a performance some two hundred years later.

Stanzas 21-24 preserve a pleasing symmetry of question and answer, conducted by means of repeated formulae which allow a neat mirror-image of stanzas 18 and 19. In those two verses the rescuers set out:

> There were five and five before them a',
> Wi hunting-horns and bugles bright;
> And five and five came wi Buccleugh,
> Like Warden's men, arrayed for fight.

And five and five like a mason-gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five like broken men;
And so they reached the Woodhouselee.[1]
(18-19)

Unluckily, as they cross the Debateable Land[2], the rescuers meet with "fause Sakelde" who submits them to rigourous interrogation (stanzas 21-24). His questions are addressed, symmetrically, to each of the groups - "where be ye gaun, Ye hunters keen (21^1), marshal-men (22^1), mason-lads (23^1), broken men?" (24^1) - and from each he receives a cryptic answer:

'We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespassed on the Scots countrie'.
(21^{3-4})

- i.e. Scrope who has taken a Scottish reiver captive on Scottish soil[3] and on a Day of Truce.

'We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi the bauld Buccleuch'.
(22^{3-4})

- Scrope again; and:

'We gang to herry a corbie's nest,
That wons not far frae Woodhouselee'.
(23^{3-4})

1 Woodhouselee was a house on the Scottish side of the Border, a seat of the Graham clan. It is marked as Woodhouselees on OS Map, Sheet 76, 1m. below Canonbie, and on Blaeu's Map of Liddesdale. Buccleugh was later quoted as admitting of the Carlisle raid: "I could nought have done in that matter without the great friendship of the Grahams of Eske", see Fraser, op. cit., 335.

2 The Debateable Land was an area of disputed territory lying between the rivers Sark and Esk on the west Marches. It was inhabited largely by the Armstrongs and Grahams, who were permanent residents, but it was also the refuge of broken men, outlaws and common criminals. The most thorough description of it is T.J. Carlyle's The Debateable Land, and cf. also Fraser, op. cit., 276-9; Pease, op. cit., 55-65; T.I. Rae, The Administration of the Scottish Frontier, 21-2.

3 Spotiswoode says that Kinmont was "riding down the river of Liddell on the Scottish side, towards his own house", op. cit., 414.

- in other words, "we are going to beseige Carlisle castle". The enigmatic replies are clever but not quite clever enough. Sakeld's last question, "Why trespass ye on the English side?" (25^1) gets a deadly spear thrust for answer. The line "Row-footed outlaws, stand!' quo he" (25^2) sounds like Scott's, but the fictitious murder of Salkeld belongs, surely, to the imagination of a sixteenth-century ballad-singer.

Stanza 31 has been generally accredited to Scott. At the crucial moment after Buccleugh has dealt with the castle watchman and immediately before the castle hall is entered through a hole cut in the roof, the Scottish leader gives the signal for his trumpets to sound. Now Fitzwilliam Elliot objected that this was a most foolhardy action and referred his readers to a poor doggerel account of the rescue by an old soldier-poet, Captain Walter Scott of Satchells. Composed in 1688 and entitled A Metrical History of the Honourable Families of the Names of Scott and Elliot, the narrative at this point says that Buccleugh's trumpets sounded after Kindmont Willie had been rescued, after the critical moment had passed. Fitzwilliam Elliot concludes that Satchells, an old soldier (who, incidentally, claimed that his father was present at the rescue) would never have made such a glaring blunder, nor, he adds, would an ancient ballad-maker[1]. In fact the ancient ballad-maker was wiser than his critics, since we learn from a manuscript account of the time that,

> thame that was within ... did thereupon also correspond upon the first sound of the trumpet, with a crye and a noyse, the more to confirme his awne that ware gone upon the castell, and to terrifie both castell and toune by ane imagination of a greater force[2].

And another contemporary, Robert Birrel, writing in his diary, notes that

1 Further Essays on Border Ballads, 125.

2 'Relation of the Maner of Surprizeing of the Castell of Cairlell by the Lord of Buccleugh, in the later End of Q. Elizabeth's Reigne', cited Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 44. Spotiswoode used this MS. in compiling his History of the Church of Scotland.

the exploit was performed

> with shouting and crying, and sound of trumpet, puttand the said toune and countrie in sic ane fray, that the lyk of sic ane wassaledge wes nevir done since the memorie of man, no in Wallace dayis[1].

The sounding of the Scots' trumpets was thus far from being a tactical blunder.

Two other points need to be dealt with in this verse. The first concerns the reference to Scott of Buccleugh as Warden (31^3), which he was not; he was Keeper of Liddesdale from 1594 onwards, as we saw in connection with Jamie Telfer. The ballad also calls him "the bauld Keeper" (8^1) and Buccleugh names himself as such later (11^4)[2]. From our reading of other Border Ballads, sung not long after the events they celebrate, we know that the ballad folk were not generally careless as to the rank and title of their heroes. In this ballad Scrope is given his correct title of Lord; his deputy is plain "Sakelde"; Gilbert Elliot is "Laird" of Stobs. Possibly Sir Walter Scott was responsible for elevating Buccleugh to Warden status, out of a desire to aggrandise his illustrious ancestor and perhaps also to vary the poetic vocabulary.

The second crux concerns the tune supposedly played by Buccleugh's trumpet, given in the last line of stanza 31 as "O whae dare meddle wi me?" Scott gives a vague note to the effect that this was "the name of a Border tune"[3]. It is, in fact, a quotation from the supposed refrain of a Border Ballad entitled Little Jock Elliot, a fragment of which runs:

1 The Diarey of Robert Birrel, Burges of Edinburghe, 1532-1605, under April 6, 1596, in John Graham Dalyell, Fragments of Scottish History, II, 37.

2 The detachment that rides with Buccleugh is dressed "like Warden's men, arrayed for fight" (18^4).

3 Minstrelsy, II, 64n.

'My name is Little Jock Elliot,
And wha daur meddle wi me?'[1]

Because this seems to have been the gathering-slogan of a rival clan, the Elliots, it was quite inappropriate to rally the Scotts; so argues Fitzwilliam Elliot, concluding that Sir Walter wished to attribute the glory of the exploit solely to his own surname[2]. Yet the ballad itself tells us that Elliot of Stobs was with the company, and Elliots are named in a partial list taken down by an informer from one who was present at the surprising of Carlisle castle[3]. If, indeed, Scott added the last line of verse 31 it was at least an informed substitution.

As for the remainder of Kinmont Willie, I can find little either in style or content to support the hypothesis that "as literature" it "belongs to the early nineteenth, and not to the seventeenth century"[4]. Buccleugh throwing his glove at Scrope across the flooded river is the same melodramatic figure as the table-thumping chieftain of stanza 9, otherwise the spirit seems to be that of the Border folk who composed Archie o Cawfield and Jock o the Side.

Fitzwilliam Elliot attempted to disprove the authenticity of Kinmont Willie by tracing what he envisaged as its derivation at key points from Satchells' Metrical History[5]. Andrew Lang has refuted this quite satisfactorily, to my mind, favouring the view that Satchells had, on the contrary, himself gathered his material from ballads current in

1 The song is supposed to relate to an encounter between the Elliots and James Hepburn, fourth Earl of Bothwell, who led a judicial raid against the Borders in October, 1566. Jock Elliot, one of many Elliots of the Park, is said to have died of his wounds. See Fraser, op. cit., 208-9. The ballad fragments are discussed by Fitzwilliam Elliot, The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads, 73-82.

2 Op. cit., 128. Scott, however, was probably unacquainted with the Jock Elliot fragments, since he makes no mention of them in the Minstrelsy

3 C.B.P., II, 122, No. 252, Scrope to Burghley, April 14, 1596.

4 Fitzwilliam Elliot, Further Essays on Border Ballads, 130.

5 Further Essays on Border Ballads, 115-30, 132-51.

his day[1]. Moreover, if Scott had worked up Kinmont Willie from Satchells' doggerel, he was singularly ingenuous in calling his readers' attention to the similarities, since he writes:

> In many things Satchells agrees with the ballads current in his time, from which, in all probability, he derived most of his information as to past events, and from which he sometimes pirates whole verses, as noticed in the annotations upon 'The Raid of the Reidswire'. In the present instance, he mentions the prisoner's large spurs (alluding to the fetters), and some other little incidents noticed in the ballad, which was, therefore, probably well known in his days[2].

Also, Satchells was just the man to use oral tradition as his source, since he tells us himself on the title page of his work that he was,

> An old souldier and no scholler,
> And one that could write nane,
> But just the letters of his name[3].

He is reputed to have hired schoolboys to write from his dictation[4].

Andrew Lang finds traces of traditional ballad lines imbedded in Satchells' prolix narrative, as in the opening about Kinmont Willie:

> It fell about the Martinmas
> When kine was in the prime

that Willie "brought a prey out of Northumberland"[5]. An earlier (lost) version of the ballad may well have disregarded the actual date of the rescue (Sunday, April 13, 1596)[6] and opened with the seasonal formula of other Border Ballads. In Satchells, Scrope vowed to be revenged for Willie's predatory incursion and

1 Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy, 132. Cf, also, Frank Miller, The Poets of Dumfriesshire, 33, who anticipated Lang's view.

2 Minstrelsy, II, 48-9.

3 Cited in A Dictionary of National Biography, XVII, 1018.

4 See ibid.

5 Cited Lang, op. cit., 132. Lang re-arranges Satchells' longer lines as ballad quatrains.

6 This is the date given by Spotiswoode, op. cit., 310.

Took Kinmont the self-same night.

If he had had but ten men more,
That had been as stout as he,
Lord Scroup had not the Kinmont taen
With all his company.[1]

In Kinmont Willie it is the "fause Sakelde", Scrope's deputy, who makes the arrest (as, in fact, he did):

Had Willy had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont taen,
Wi eight score in his companie.
(2)

Both Satchells' verse and the ballad lines have the traditional ring about them. If, however, Scott borrowed the ballad verse from the Metrical History, substituting for the sake of historical accuracy "fause Sakelde", he could also have written in "ten score", the number of English troopers quoted in the MS. account which he knew[2].

The light thrown on the Kinmont Willie enigma by Scott of Satchells' rhymes thus tends to strengthen even more the hypothesis that a version of the ballad was circulating on the Borders in the late-seventeenth century.

As a final refutation of the argument that the ballad is a forgery of Scott's we might examine in more detail Sir Walter's own attitude towards literary imitations of the popular ballad. One has to exercise some caution here since Scott was, alas, not always straightforward in his pronouncements as a literary critic, nor was the silence he preserved towards certain of his ballad interpolations always a sign of pure modesty. For example, in a letter to Richard Heber of October 19, 1800, he drew

1 Cited Lang, op. cit., 133.

2 The MS. says that the English "brake a chace of more than 200 men" out of their train, 'Relation of the Maner of Surprizeing of the Castell of Cairlell', cited Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 41.

the latter's attention to Kinmont Willie with the remark, "some of the ballads I have recovered are very fine indeed - what think you of this verse? - " and he quotes the stanza beginning "O is my basnet a widow's curch", etc.[1] Such mystification is quite consistent with his later denials (before 1827) that he had written the Waverley Novels. However, Scott's very question to Heber may have been a tongue-in-cheek way of soliciting his friend's praise and in any case one hesitates to call his reluctance openly to admit authorship dishonesty, because of Scott's idiosyncratic view of himself as the last of the great Border bards[2]. What is more, although by modern standards of folksong scholarship Scott's literary improvements to and collation of texts is inadmissible, it is extremely doubtful whether he in a single instance attempted to pass off one of his own ballad compositions as an original. Had he been the creator of Kinmont Willie he would, I feel sure, have placed the ballad in the final section of his Minstrelsy, headed 'Imitations of the Popular Ballad', along with Glenfilas and The Eve of St. John.

A reading of Scott's prefatory essay to this section of his work, written in April, 1830, goes some way towards reaffirming one's faith in his editorial procedure. Whilst excusing forgeries such as Hardyknute with the opinion that "the public is surely more enriched by the contribution than injured by the deception"[3], Scott nevertheless admitted the extreme difficulty of imposing on "those who have made this branch of literature their study"[4]. Speaking of the vogue for imitating traditional ballads which began among men of letters of the eighteenth century, Sir Walter clearly approves of those which "honestly avowed an

1 The Letters of Sir Walter Scott (ed. H.J.C. Grierson); XII, 173.
2 See Margaret Ball, Sir Walter Scott as a Critic of Literature, 23-4.
3 'Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad', Minstrelsy, II, 10.
4 Ibid.

attempt to emulate the merits and avoid the errors with which the old ballad was encumbered"[1]. His predilection is for "extremely beautiful" pieces like Lord Henry and Fair Catherine, "which pretends to engraft modern refinement upon ancient simplicity"[2]. What Scott abhors, on the other hand, are the "errors" which the traditional ballad was prone to - "long passages of monotony, languor and inanity ... the trite verbiage of a bald passage, or the ludicrous effect of an absurd rhyme"[3] - so that he would hardly have felt inclined to imitate this style even assuming he had the gift. Consequently, when in 1799 Scott ventured on his first original composition in the ballad idiom, Glenfilas, he considered himself as happily "liberated from imitating the antiquated language and rude rhythm of the Minstrel ballad"[4]. A comparison of this poem with Kinmont Willie confirms the suspicion that stanzas 9-10, 17^{3-4} and perhaps 25^{2} are the "conjectural emendations" of the polished poet, but that the rest is substantially as Scott received it from tradition. Lastly, as a measure of Sir Walter's scrupulousness in at least one instance of a ballad rifacimento, it might be well to give his introductory note to Christie's Will, the first ballad in his 'Imitations' section. Scott cautions:

> The reader is not to regard the ballad as of genuine and unmixed antiquity, though some stanzas are current upon the Border, in a corrupted state. They have been eked and joined together, in the rude and ludicrous manner of the original; but as it is to be considered as, on the whole, a modern ballad, it is transferred to this department of the work[5].

Despite Scott's avowal, though, the 28 verses of Christie's Will are far from being "rude and ludicrous" - in their rhymes, rhythms, vocabulary

1 Minstrelsy, IV, 9.
2 Ibid.
3 Minstrelsy, IV, 6-7.
4 Minstrelsy, IV, 44.
5 Minstrelsy, IV, 66.

and syntax they bear the hallmarks of the author of the historical novels and The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

Finally, in support of the conviction that Kinmont Willie is for the most part a traditional Border Ballad, I shall enlist an interesting point made by Bronson in considering the traditionality of the ballad's one surviving tune. Bronson observes of the ballad:

> If Scott were its actual creator instead of its mere agent of transfiguration, one would hardly have expected to find it appearing in a collection like Albyn's Anthology less than a decade after its first publication[1].

I have dwelt at length on the problems raised by Sir Walter Scott's acknowledged editing of Kinmont Willie, because it seems to me a limiting factor in our investigation of these Border Ballads as the product of a region. It is of prime importance to disentangle the antiquarian interleavings of a later century in order to assess correctly the nature of the ballad as it was conceived by the folk at a particular time in history and in order to determine the purpose served by its composition. This we have already tried to do in the case of other Border Ballads, and we may conclude our appreciation of Kinmont Willie by seeing how this piece fits the pattern of the two Rescue Ballads already dealt with in this chapter.

To begin with, if we extrapolate what are almost certainly Scott's "Buccleugh verses" we lose the Minstrelsy editor's projected ancestor-worship and, I think, see the ballad gain thematically. In place of the personal animosity vented by the "bauld Buccleugh" towards Lord Scrope -

> 'Now Christ's curse on my head', he said,
> 'But avenged of Lord Scroop I'll be!' (93-4)

1 B.H. Bronson, T.T.C.B., II, 168. Kinmont Willie appeared in Alexander Campbell's Albyn's Anthology (1816 ed.), I, 78, see ibid.

- the ballad's essential preoccupation with the breaking of faith assumes larger proportions. Sakeld has falsely interned Will of Kinmont "between the hours of night and day" (8^4) with the intention of hanging him at Haribee. A Border truce has been broken. Worse, the imprisonment of Willie in Carlisle castle is viewed by the folk imagination as a fundamental infringement of the Scottish Borderer's personal liberty and autonomy. This trespass on the very sanctity of the Borderside is conveyed admirably in the verbs chosen by the balladist to underline Kinmont Willie's helplessness:

They band his legs beneath the steed,
  They tied his hands behind his back;
They guarded him, fivesome on each side,
  And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.

They led him thro the Liddel-rack,
  And also thro the Carlisle sands[1];
They brought him to Carlisle castell,
  To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.
(3-4)

Yet in spite of his physical plight Willie can protest with something of Thomas Rhymer's spirit:

'My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
  And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the border law?
  Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?'
(5)

Many of the ballad's structural parallels are in fact between Kinmont Willie and Scrope, not between the latter and his arch-enemy Buccleugh. Set against Scrope's broken assurance is Kinmont's word of honour:

'By the faith of my bodie, Lord Scroop', he said,
'I never yet lodged in hostelrie
  But I paid my lawing before I gaed'.
(7^{2-4})

1 Now called simply the Sands, see The Place-Names of Cumberland (ed. A.M. Armstrong), Pt. I, 46.

And Willie reaffirms his promise as he is being rescued:

> 'Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!
> My gude Lord Scroope, farewell!' he cried;
> 'I'll pay you for my lodging-maill
> When first we meet on the border-side'. (38)

The term "rank reiver", applied to Willie in stanza 6^1 is turned against Scrope in stanza 22^3 and the point is made once again that the English Warden has "broken faith" (22^{3-4}).

Like the other Rescue Ballads, Kinmont Willie exhibits a tension between realism and romance. A strong surface realism is conveyed in the mapping of the rescue-route to Carlisle via Woodhouselee (19^4), the "Bateable Land" (20^1) and the river Eden, which is crossed at Staneshaw-bank $(26^2)^1$. As Fraser points out, this northern approach to the city is unusual in that the Stanwix Bank - a high line of cliffs on the north bank of the Eden - makes the city (and consequently beseigers) invisible until one is within a quarter of a mile of it[2]. Other place-names - the Liddel-rack, Carlisle sands, Haribee and Branxholm - lend further verisimilitude to the story.

The rescue operation is described in a swift but tactically convincing series of details - the horses are left at the river "for fear that they should stamp and nie" (27^{3-4}); scaling ladders bring the assailants to the castle roof where a hole is cut in the sheet of lead (29-32); the trumpets are sounded to terrify the garrison (31); the castle-hall is entered and the door of Willie's "inner prison" forced

1 This is the Stanwix bank, called the "stonie bank beneath Cairlell brig" in the MS. account, cited Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 43. See OS Map, Sheet 76.

2 George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 338.

with "coulters and wi forehammers" (34). Willie is carried bodily, fetters and all, on the back of Red Rowan[1], "the starkest man in Teviotdale" (37[2]), as indeed he would have been if Willie was chained, to the waiting horses at the Staneshaw-bank. The Carlisle bells ring to alert the city (42[2]) and the weather is noticed:

> And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
> The wind began full loud to blaw;
> But 't was wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
> When we came beneath the castel-wa.
> (28)

Scrope excused his guards for their failure to spot Buccleugh and his men because of the "stormye night" and "the violence of the wether"[2].

As might be expected, however, there is a fair amount of romantic embellishment and distortion of historical fact. The rescue is depicted as a daring exploit made by a handful of 40 men - all kinsmen to Buccleugh, except for Elliot of Stobs (16) - when in fact, and according to Buccleugh's account, there were at least 80 raiders in the party[3]. This seems to have been one of those occasions on which the ballad-reciter reduced his side's numbers against those of the enemy - the Carlisle garrison was 1000 strong and "but twenty Scots and ten" threw them into confusion (33[3-4]). The ties of kinship among the rescuers are stressed, as in Jock o the Side and the Border versions of Archie o Cawfield, although we know that Elliots, Bells and Armstrongs also rode with Buccleugh and his Scotts[4]. The myth-making Border balladist has

1 This may be Willie "redcloak" Bell who is named as one of the principal assailants in Scrope's letter to Burghley, C.B.P., I, 122, No. 252. There is also a Red Rowie Foster in the list of reivers presented to the Bishop of Carlisle in 1548, see Joseph Nicolson and Richard Burn, The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland, lxxxi.

2 C.B.P., II, 121, No. 252, Scrope to the Privy Council, April 14, 1596.

3 See Fraser, op. cit., 337. The MS. account says that Buccleugh "did draw together 200 horse", cited Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 43. Scrope, for obvious reasons, gave the number as 500, see his letter to the Privy Council, C.B.P., II, 121, No. 251.

4 See Scrope's list of the principal assailants (made by an informer), C.B.P., I, 122, No. 252.

thus enlarged the exploit into a glorious commando raid in the face of tremendous odds, whereas it could not have been achieved at all without the co-operation of informers, traitors among the English Border officials and fifth-columnists[1].

Unlike Jock o the Side, in which the rescuers are faced with one obstacle after another, all runs smoothly in Kinmont Willie. The scaling ladders reach, whereas in the MS. account "the ledders proved too short thro' the error of thame quha had bene sent to measure the wall, and could not reach the top of the wall"[2]. The sparing of the watchman's life accords with the ballad-maker's interpretation of his story as a chivalric feat of arms, yet Scrope in his letter to the Privy Council the morning after the break-out states otherwise: he says that Buccleugh and his accomplices "in their discoverie by the watch, lefte for deade two of the watchmen, hurt a servant of myne, one of Kynmontes keperes"[3].

Finally, the pursuit of the Scottish raiders by Scrope has no historical foundation[4], but has been introduced, I suggest, by analogy with the other Rescue Ballads which demanded a final confrontation between hunter and hunted and the marvel of the flooded-river crossing.

Based as it is on a real event, Kinmont Willie observes what had become, by the time of its composition in 1596, the conventions of the Rescue Ballad. In structure and in many of its "themes", the ballad adapts earlier Rescue Ballad material to suit its own purposes. It opens, as do Jock o the Side and Archie o Cawfield with the prisoner's

1 See Fraser, op. cit., 335-7, 340-1.

2 Cited Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 44.

3 C.B.P., II, 121, No. 252.

4 Buccleugh, on the contrary, "did reteire himselfe in order", MS. account, cited Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 46.

capture and the news of this being brought to his friend and headsman. The middle section of the ballad follows the rescue-party on its journey to the city, encountering a man who opposes them (here Sakeld, the English deputy; in Jock o the Side the unhelpful old man) and a river (here the flooded Eden the water of which "was great, and meikle of spaite", 26^{3}). At the moment of surprising the castle there is a quick cut to Kinmont Willie's Goodnight (36), and he is alerted by exactly the same formula spoken by the rescuers of Jock o the Side and Archie o Cawfield:

'O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou's to die?'
(35^{3-4})

to which Kinmont replies:

'O I sleep saft, and I wake aft,
It's lang since sleeping was fleyd frae me;'
(36^{1-2})

At the moment of greatest tension there is a joke, this time, as before, about the prisoner's irons and his ride on Red Rowan's back:

'O mony a time', quo Kinmont Willie,
'I have ridden a horse baith wild and wood;
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have neer bestrode.

'And mony a time', quo Kinmont Willie,
'I've pricked a horse out oure the furs;
But since the day I backed a steed
I nevir wore sic cumbrous spurs'.
(40-41)

The attribution of supernatural powers to the leader of the rescuers by their pursuer when he watches in amazement as they swim the angry river, has already been mentioned.

In the foregoing pages, then, we have looked at a particular type of Border Ballad - what I have called the Rescue Ballad - at the height

of its popularity in the last years of the sixteenth century, but preserved by oral tradition until Scott's day, and in the case of Archie o Cawfield, even later. There were no doubt others besides the three that have come down to us. The escape theme is an age-old one, its archetypal nature making it possible for American singers of the twentieth century to adopt as their own a ballad which began life on the Scottish West March in the 1590s. For the Borderer the theme held an especial fascination - it enabled him to project his own fear of officialdom, the absolute power of Warden, Land-sergeant or Border Lieutenant, into a situation that was immediately recognisable and comprehensible. The regaining of freedom, the hero's return to the Border sanctuary to food and drink and feasting with champions, besides reaffirming the reiver's self-determinist creed, may also at a deeper level have symbolised every man's longing to escape the tyranny of death. As long as the ties of brotherhood and mutual interdependence operated, the Life-force was triumphant and it was possible to boast, with the Laird's Jock, "There'll nae man die but he that's fie" (J.o.S., B30[2]).

CHAPTER EIGHT

BALLADS OF BETRAYAL - HOBIE NOBLE[1], HUGHIE GRAME[2], THE DEATH OF PARCY REED[3]

Kindred and clan make up the background against which the rescues of Jock of the Side, Archie of Cawfield and Kinmont Willie are played out. Fidelity to their chieftain or the head of their "grayne" on the one hand, and to their fellow clansmen on the other, are the guiding principles of the Border ethic in each case. But to say that the tie of kinship was sacred and inviolable under every circumstance is to ignore the evidence. The Border balladists were not the last to realise that the bond was often more practical than mystical and in the group of ballads we are now to consider the exaltation of clan sentiment gives way to despair at the act of betrayal.

The theme has already been prefigured in Johnie Armstrong where an act of treachery on the part of the Scottish king draws the ballad's fullest censure. In Hobie Noble, Hughie Grame and The Death of Parcy Reed, the Border "makers" are not ashamed to show this anti-principle in the reivers' code of behaviour working its worst. English and Scottish folk alike sang of the Judas-act with equal abhorrence, holding out the tragic undoing of three of their heroes as a warning and at the same time as an exhortation to good conduct. In each ballad the deed of betrayal becomes the mainspring of the ballad action, an essential part of the tragic hero's dilemma.

1 Child 189, E.S.P.B., IV, 1-4.
2 Child 191, E.S.P.B., IV, 8-15, 518-20, V, 300.
3 Child 193, E.S.P.B., IV, 24-8, 520-1.

One of the saddest of Border Ballads is Hobie Noble. We have met Hobie already as the rescuer of Jock of the Side, his adopted kinsman, and now we meet him in his last adventure as the saviour-figure cruelly betrayed. After Hobie's gallant rescue of Jock of the Side, he is asked by five Scotsmen to act as a guide on a foray into England. But the feud between Noble and the English Land-sergeant (whose brother, Peter of Whitfield, has been killed by the Armstrongs on a previous raid) is not yet forgotten. An Armstrong, Sim of the Mains[1], offers to sell the Land-sergeant information that will lead to Noble's capture, and so, on the night of the foray, Hobie's five companions desert him as Sergeant Whitfield rides up with his troopers. Hobie is taken to Carlisle where he refuses to confess to crimes he has not committed. He is condemned. This time there is no rescue.

There is only one principal version of Hobie Noble, although the ballad has been preserved in two copies. Scott published the ballad in the first edition of his Minstrelsy[2] and in an introductory note to Dick o the Cow gave the following information as to his source:

> This ballad and the two which immediately follow it in this collection [Jock o the Side and Hobie Noble] were published, 1784, in the Hawick Museum, a provincial miscellany to which they were communicated by John Elliot, Esq. of Reidheugh, a gentleman well skilled in the antiquities of the Western Border[3].

The Hawick Museum referred to here is George Caw's The Poetical Museum, published at Hawick in 1784. This contains the Child a text of Hobie Noble[4].

1 The tower of Mains is marked on Blaeu's Map of Liddesdale, on the triangle of land between the Liddel and Hermitage waters; the place-name has survived as a farmstead, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

2 Minstrelsy (1802 ed.), I, 164, see E.S.P.B., IV, 1.

3 Minstrelsy, II, 71.

4 Op. cit., 193, see E.S.P.B., IV, 1.

Child b is a copy of the ballad amongst the Percy Papers and seems to have been sent Bishop Percy by Roger Halt, together with a copy of Dick o the Cow, in 1775[1]. Fowler calls this a "stall-copy"[2], despite the fact that the ballad displays many of the features of a song that has long been in oral circulation. About a quarter of the ballad's 140 lines are formulaic and many of them are organised after the oral manner. The following, for instance, is a typical formula exployed for scene-change or movement in Hobie Noble:

They have tane him on) for West Carlisle
up) the Ricker-gate[3]
thro) Carlisle town
(26^1, 27^1, 29^1)

There is a good deal of unassigned dialogue - notably in the conversation between Hobie and the Scots reivers, which lasts through six stanzas (7-2); the dialogue between the informer and the Land-sergeant of Askerton, which occupies three and a half stanzas (14^{3-4}-17); and the traditional Goodnight soliloquy (33-35) with which the ballad closes. The assignation "they", or "he says", is used on only three occasions (30^3, 31^1, 31^3). Naming of the hero plays a large, almost ritualistic part, Hobie being named as many as 23 times in all[4]. Moreover, there is an oral symmetry in the way the name is used by the reciter to fill out a line. The pattern generally favoured is to include Christian name in the first half-line and surname in the last line of the verse, thus:

1 See E.S.P.B., IV, 1.

2 David C. Fowler, A Literary History of the Popular Ballad, 235.

3 The Ricker-gate is a street in Carlisle leading from Eden Bridges into the town, see 'A Plan of the City of Carlisle' in David and Samuel Lysons, A Topographical and Historical Account of the County of Cumberland, 56; The Place-Names of Cumberland (ed. A.M. Armstrong), Pt. I, 48.

4 At stanzas 2^4, 3^1, $5^{1,4}$, $6^{1,4}$, 7^4, 13^4, 15^1, 18^1, 19^3, $21^{1,4}$, $23^{1,4}$, 24^1, 25^1, 29^3, 30^4, $31^{1,3}$, 32^1, 35^1.

Then Hobie has graithd his body weel,
_____;
_____;
And there, brave Noble, he rade him weel.
(5)

This stanza-shape recurs in stanzas 6, 21 and 23.

The rhyme-scheme is that of the traditional ballad - abcd. In several verses the rhyme is unsubtle and repetitive[1]. The ballad tenses shift between the preterite and historic present, while the survival into print of the ballad's chorus is further evidence of a sung history.

The ballad must post-date Jock o the Side, whose rescue is recalled by the women of Carlisle as they watch the pinioned Hobie make his way through the town:

And ilka wife to anither can say,
That's the man loosd Jock o the Side!
(27[3-4])

The reference to the events of the earlier ballad is well timed: it is the balladist's way of underscoring the heinous conduct of Sim of the Mains towards Hobie, a man to whom the Armstrong clan owes so much.

Sim of the Mains, otherwise styled "the young laird of Whithawghe", appears in records from 1569 until about 1600. At the end of 1583, the "Armestronges of Whetaughe Towre" were:-

> Lance Armestronge the olde larde of Whetaughe; Sime Armestronge the younge lord his sonne ... John Armestronge, called John of Whetaughe; Hobbe Armestronge his sonne, marryed Jeme Foster's daughter of the Stanegerthsyde[2].

We find Sim styled "of the Mains" in 1569[3], and he is named as one of

1 The b rhyme-word repeats itself in stanzas 3, 7, 8, 13, 20. The a rhyme-word repeats itself in stanza 31.

2 C.B.P., I, No. 122. The Hobbe Armstrong mentioned here is not Hobie Noble, who as we know was the Laird of Mangerton's man, or adopted retainer.

3 R.P.C., II, 54.

the principal assailants of Carlisle castle at the rescue of Kinmont Willie in 1596[1].

In other details the ballad is historically and topographically accurate. The Land-sergeant did "lie" customarily at Askirton, or Askerton, for we find that place named as his residence in March 1592 in The Calendar of Border Papers:

> Upon the east side of Eaden lyeth the baronie of Gilsland under the government of a steward, who ought to ly att Askerton Castle. In his charge is all the safetie of that baronrie, without either help or warden or other, for that yt lyeth somewhat farre off, or as by itself[2].

The men of Askerton Tower were supposed to keep watch and aid Bewcastle, but these services were not fulfilled owing to local feuds.[3]

The numerous place-names of the ballad may all be authenticated - Bewcastle Dale and Waste (14^4, 20^4, 22^4)[4]; Kershope-foot where the important March Meetings were held and where Hobie arranged his "tryst" with the five Scots raiders ($4^{1,2}$)[5]; the Foulbogshiel where Hobie was taken prisoner by the Land-sergeant (13^3, 18^2, 19^3)[6]; Hartlie-burn (16^1)[7];

1 C.B.P., II, 121, No. 252, Scrope to Burghley, April 14, 1596.

2 C.B.P., I, 392, No. 743. The duties of the land-sergeant are given by Thomas Carleton in his report to Burghley of 1597, C.B.P., II, 447, No. 825. The ruins of Askerton castle lie 5m. north-east of Brampton, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

3 See D.L.W. Tough, The Last Years of a Frontier, 14.

4 "The Waste" is a desolate tract of country, bordering on Liddesdale and lying to the north of Bewcastle, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

5 Kershopefoot marks the junction of the Kershope Burn with the Liddel Water, see OS Map, Sheet 76. It is almost the exact geographical centre of the West and Middle Marches, see George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 100.

6 This would have been a "shieling" at the head of the Foulbog Sike, a stream which flows into the River Irthing from Highgrains Waste, see OS Map, Sheet 76, and The Place-Names of Cumberland (ed. A.M. Armstrong), Pt. I, 57.

7 The Hartlie Burn takes its course through Bewcastledale in the district of Willeva and Spade Adam, see Scott, Minstrelsy, II, 117.

Willeva (16^3); Spear Edom (16^3)[1]; Rodrie-haugh (17^1)[2]; Conscow thart Green (17^3, 24^3)[3], and the Ricker-gate and West Carlisle (27^1, 26^1).

Kurt Wittig has noticed the way in which Border Ballad place-names may be "purely suggestive and symbolic", the power and intensity of the narrative deriving from what is left untold[4], and as an example of this Wittig quotes the lines:

> 'Gar warn the bows of Hartlie-burn,
> See they shaft their arrows on the wa!
> Warn Willeva and Spear Edom,
> And see the morn they meet me a'.
> (16)

These are the commands of the English Land-sergeant. Place-names, as we saw in earlier chapters, can stand for people, for bands of fighting men ready to muster at a moment's notice. Here, through their accumulation they suggest the omnipotence of the forces already amassing themselves against the lone figure of Hobie Noble. Liddesdale, too, is made to speak for the clansmen there in the phrase, "That Liddesdale may safely say" (1^2). There may be not a little significance, I think, in the balladsinger's choice of the Foulbogshiel (13^3, 18^2, 19^4) as the place of Hobie's last stand and capture. His betrayal into the hands of his sworn enemy and the desertion of his "feiries five" is indeed a foul and filthy crime. Further overtones of mortality, of the good life untimely ended, seem to attach to the balladist's constant usage of "the Waste" (14^4, 20^4, 22^4). The Border background is at once real and symbolical.

1 Spadeadam, 2½m. north-east of Askerton Castle, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

2 Now Rotheryhaugh, on the River Irthing, 4m. north-east of Gilsland, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

3 Now Scotchcoultard, 2½m. east of Rotheryhaugh, see OS Map, Sheet 76.

4 The Scottish Tradition in Literature, 142.

The atmosphere of death and betrayal is further evoked by the strikingly sombre image the poet uses to describe the night of Hobie's ill-fated expedition: "Tho dark the night as pick and tar" (12^{1}), says Hobie, "I will guide you and bring you safely back". The loyalty of Hobie's five companions is to be tested against this moorland night; he asks them before they set out:

'But will ye stay till the day gae down,
Until the night come oer the grund', (11^{1-2})

If Hobie Noble is a ballad primarily concerned with the theme of betrayal, it is a betrayal which goes deeper and wider in its implications than we might at first imagine. Like version A of Jock o the Side there is a kind of subliminal allegory at work here. Consider, for instance, the way in which the "selling" of Hobie by Sim of the Mains is carried out - not, as far as we are led to believe, for personal reasons, but purely and simply for money: "Brave Noble is seld away" (2^{4}). Hobie's final cry is against the baseness of the man who can betray and leave him for a handful of silver:

'Keep ye weel frae traitor Mains!
For goud and gear he'll sell ye a'.' (34^{3-4})

and he makes his proud boast:

'I wad betray nae lad alive,
For a' the goud in Christentie'. (33^{3-4})

Dicky Hall in Archie o Cawfield was right when he warned his brother that, even for a fee, some men were not to be trusted.

Sim has no real need, moreover, to betray Hobie for financial gain. This is made clear right at the beginning since the balladist emphasises

the abundance of victuals and fodder in Liddesdale:

> Foul fa the breast first treason bred in!
> That Liddisdale may safely say,
> For in it there was baith meat and drink,
> And corn unto our geldings gay.
> (1)

Hobie's final curse, called down on "traitor Mains that eats and drinks of meal and maut" (35[4]), illustrates the particular enormity of the crime. Sim has betrayed the trust of the valley that has fed him - the sin Gawain must guard against and which will result if he commits adultery with his host's wife[1].

Because Noble has been adopted by the Armstrong sept we are drawn most forcibly, I think, to make a comparison with another archetypal betrayal - that of Judas Iscariot who "dipped his hand in the dish" with the master he was to deceive. Judas, we know, was the central character of our earliest known ballad, or proto-ballad[2]. That his breast may have been popularly regarded as the one "first treason bred in" is not unlikely. John Skelton in his poem Woefully Arrayed has Christ say:

> Sith I for thy soul sake was slain in good season,
> Beguiled and betrayed by Judas' false treason.
> (11. 9-10)[3]

And we saw in an earlier chapter how Hector of the Harelaw's name became synonymous with that of Judas because of his betrayal of the Catholic earls.

The redemptive powers with which the balladist of Jock o the Side apotheosized Hobie Noble are to be felt again when Hobie vows:

1 Gawain has, in Malory's phrase, his host's meat and drink in his body, see J.A. Burrow, A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, 95.

2 Judas (Child 23) is found in a MS. of the thirteenth century (MS. B 14, 39, Trinity College Cambridge), see E.S.P.B., I, 242.

3 The Complete Poems of John Skelton (ed. Philip Henderson), 12.

'I'll be a guide worth ony twa
That may in Liddisdale be fund'.
(11[3-4])

and when he promises to bring his companions "a' in safety back" (12[3]). His "brag","I wad betray nae lad alive" (33[3]),reminds the ballad-reader of Chaucer's belief that Christ "nyl falsen no wight, dar I seye" in Troilus and Criseyde (l. 1845)[1]. Hobie's overriding concern at the moment of crisis is for the safety of his followers:

Yet follow me, my feiries five,
And see of me ye keep good ray,
And the worst clock of this companie
I hope shall cross the Waste this day'.
(22)

The cocks crow on the morning of Hobie's betrayal, reminding one of Peter's denial of Christ in the Gospels. It is the desertion of him by his fellow riders that Hobie feels most keenly:

And I wat his heart was neer sae sair
As when his ain five band him on the brae.
(25[3-4])

Hobie seems to know that he may be riding to his death, or at least Mangerton and the other loyal Armstrongs do. They try their best to dissude him from keeping his "tryst", or appointment with Sim of the Mains and his "private companie", but

Tho they shoud a' brusten and broken their hearts,
Frae that tryst Noble he would not be.
(6[3-4])

By his very speech Hobie puts himself meekly and loyally at the disposal of the Mains gang: "And aye, what is your wills wi me?" (7[2]). Since we have been warned by the balladist what to expect from the start, by means of his careful choice of ballad epithets - "traitour Sim o the

1 The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (ed. F.N. Robinson), 564.

Mains", "a <u>private</u> company" (4^{3-4}) - we extend our own moral awareness of the situation to experience a similar feeling of predestination as is present in the Gospel story of Jesus keeping his "tryst", or pre-ordained journey up to Jerusalem. Finally, it is possible to see in the baiting of Hobie by the Land-sergeant and his men, their attempt to make him confess to a crime he is not guilty of in order to win his freedom, a parallel to the trial of Jesus by Pilate. Certainly his heroic silence invites comparison:

> They have tane him [on] for West Carlisle;
> They askd him if he knew the way;
> Whateer he thought, yet little he said;
> He knew the way as well as they.
> (26)

On a more literal level, for Hobie to have admitted that he knew the way from the Bewcastle Waste to Carlisle would have been proof to the English officials that he had raided along that route before.

I suggest the above anagogical reading of <u>Hobie Noble</u> because, as in <u>Jock o the Side</u>, I feel that a spiritual-moral dimension is impossible to ignore when we are struck by so much that is emotive and symbolically suggestive. There are other features which contribute to the ballad on this level.

Most striking is the animal imagery. Hobie is pictured twice as the hunted, wounded animal, once in a metaphor prolonged through two stanzas and once in a comparison drawn by himself. In stanzas 14-15, Hobie is the deer that the English Land-sergeant (intent on avenging his brother's death) has "hunted lang". Stanza 15 makes the analogy explicit:

'Then Hobie Noble is that deer;
I wat he carries the style fu hie!
Aft has he beat your slough-hounds[1], back,
And set yourselves at little ee[2].
(15)

He is called the "prey" again in stanza 17. Later the savagery and baseness of Hobie's capture by men who outnumber him is conveyed in the image of predatory creatures attacking the weaker of their species. Hobie protests as he is led through the Carlisle streets:

'Fy on ye, women! why ca ye me man?
For it's nae man that I'm used like;
I'm but like a forfoughen hound,
Has been fighting in a dirty syke'.
(28)

From this comparison between the human and animal worlds, the human emerges as no better, if not worse, than the animal.

At once more heroic and more chivalric is the allusion to a past national hero of Scotland, one who would have defeated his enemies if anyone could:

had he been as wight as Wallace was
Away brave Noble he could not win.
(23[3-4])[3]

Broadly symbolic is the dream which Hobie has in stanza 18, the night before his betrayal and defeat:

1 Scott notes that, "the bloodhound, or sluith-hound (so called from its quality of tracing the slot, or track, of men and animals), was early used in the pursuit and detection of marauders", Minstrelsy, II, 128-9. Cf. also Bishop Leslie's description of these "slewe-dogges", The History of Scotland (ed. E.G. Cody), I, 102-3.

2 Child glosses "awe", but admits that this is an unsatisfying emendation. A copy of the ballad in the Campbell MS. has "fee", meaning, probably, value, see E.S.P.B., V, 331. The sense of the line is that Hobie has set the Land-sergeant and his men at nought, held them in contempt.

3 There is a ballad about one of Wallace's exploits, Gude Wallace (Child 157), versions A-E of which come from the Border, see E.S.P.B., III, 265-71.

Then Hobie Noble has dreamd a dream,
In the Foulbogshiel where that he lay;
He thought his horse was neath him shot,
And he himself got hard away.
(18)

The dream prophecy is, of course, borne out by events and serves as a catalyst to the atmosphere of tragedy and foreboding. As in the Icelandic sagas, the function of dreams in the ballads is a purely aesthetic one - "to emphasise fate and this-wordliness"[1]. The rain that falls on the "fu ill day", like the rain in Johnie Armstrong (B8) and in Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms, adds to our sense of an invisible "weird" conspiring against man and plotting his destruction.

As in Jock o the Side, eating and drinking may be informative. Traitor Mains can eat the meal and malt and still be a traitor. Yet Hobie, who is innocent, is given a wheat loaf to eat by his captors and the balladist comments with characteristic understatement, "And that was little his desire" (29[4]). The food and drink which Hobie is forced to take are, of course, a bribe:

Then they gave him a wheat loaf to eat,
And after that a can o beer;
Then they cried a', wi ae consent,
Eat, brave Noble, and make good cheer!

Confess my lord's horse, Hobie they say,
And the morn in Carlisle thou's no die;
'How shall I confess them?' Hobie says,
'For I never saw them with mine eye'.

Then Hobie has sworn a fu great aith,
By the day that he was gotten or born,
He never had onything o my lord's
That either eat him grass or corn.
(30-32)

Folk who had heard Jock o the Side sung would have drawn their own comparisons between brave Noble sitting by the chimney fire in Carlisle

1 Theodore M. Andersson, The Problem of Icelandic Saga Origins, 52.

castle and Jock returned to his "ain fireside" in that ballad. The ballad-reciters left their hearers in little doubt that Hobie was here being charged with a non-existent crime to satisfy the personal vendetta of the Land-sergeant - the crimes Hobie <u>is</u> guilty of have been enumerated by him earlier in the ballad:

'And Anton Shiel, he loves not me,
For I gat twa drifts of his sheep;
The great Earl of Whitfield[1] loves me not,
For nae gear frae me he eer coud keep'.
(10)

The ballad's rich texture is woven out of the very vocabulary of betrayal and is permeated by it in such a way as to suggest an impending doom. About the repellant pole of Border morality we find the following cluster of words: "foul" and "treason" (1^1), "traitor" (4^3, 34^3, 35^3), "betray" (33^3), "cruel men and keen" (21^3) - words all associated with Sim of the Mains and his accomplices. The attractive pole, on the other hand, draws a cluster of words embodying the Borderer's Code of loyalty: "stout-hearted" (2^1), "true" (2^1, 12^4), "safe-warrand" (8^2), and the adjective "brave" with which Hobie is associated nine times in all (2^4, 5^4, 7^4, 13^4, 21^4, 23^4, 25^4, 29^3, 30^4). The ballad concludes as these two poles are set in opposition through the names of the chief antagonists and all that they have come to stand for:

'I'd rather be ca'd Hobie Noble,
In Carlisle, where he suffers for his faut,
Before I were ca'd traitor Mains,
That eats and drinks of meal and maut'.
(35)

1 Scott did not think that the Whitfields were earls but lords, <u>Minstrelsy</u>, II, 128. However, 'J.F.', the Editor of Sir Henry Ellis' <u>Original Letters, Illustrative of English History</u>, says that, "Ralph Shearman, Esq., of Garwick Hall, has this MS. note on the History of Northumberland: 'The old owners of Whitfield were usually styled yearls [earls]'," cited Henderson, <u>Minstrelsy</u>, II, 128. The detail is confirmation of my earlier supposition that the Border folk knew the correct style of address for their superiors.

It has been suggested that some of the Border Ballads - Jamie Telfer, Kinmont Willie, Dick o the Cow, Hobie Noble, Jock o the Side and Archie o Cawfield - may have been the work of a single balladist[1]. The supposition undoubtedly stems from the inability of previous ballad scholars to countenance the large regional stock of formulae and themes which must have existed at one time among the Border folk and which were pressed into service again and again as tales were told and retold. A comparison of the texts of Hobie Noble and Jock o the Side reveals that this at least was the case.

Common to both ballads are the verses explaining Hobie's English birth and banishment to the Scottish side of the Border where he was adopted by the Armstrongs of Mangerton (H.N., 3, J.o.S., B6-7). Both allude to the killing of the Land-sergeant's brother, Peter (or Michael) of Whitfield, as a result of a previous Armstrong incursion (H.N., 9, J.o.S., A1, B1, etc.). The small detail of Hobie Noble's "fringed grey" was popular, too, with the reciters of this part of the Border (H.N., 5^3, J.o.S., $C7^1$). In both ballads Hobie rides out with five companions (H.N., 7^1, J.o.S., $A8^1$), and in both it is the Land-sergeant who embodies autocratic power (H.N., 9^2 etc., J.o.S., B33, C27).

Both ballads enjoy a chorus or refrain, the nonsense syllables of which seem to echo one another. Here is the burden as it is given in the Percy Papers copy (Child b) of Hobie Noble:

Fa (La, Ta) la didle) after 1st and 2nd lines
Ta la la didle, etc.)

Fala didle, lal didle) after 4th line
Tal didle, tal didle)

1. T.F. Henderson, The Ballad in Literature, 111.

In Jock o the Side the burden follows the first and fourth lines, thus:

Wi my fa ding diddle, lal low dow diddle (Bb)
With my fa ding diddle, la la dow diddle (Ba)
With my fa dow diddle, lal la dow didle (C)

What the syllabic and rhythmic parallels of the respective choruses of these two ballads go to suggest is that there may have been a shared family of tunes for the ballads from the West Border. Unfortunately, no melody has been recovered for Hobie Noble, so this is not capable of final proof. But it is indisputable that the singers of this ballad and Jock o the Side shared a common oral heritage and that, by means of cross-references, formulae and themes they were able to assume a fund of traditional folklore in the audiences who heard them.

Another reiver who fell foul of the West March authorities was Hughie Graham. Lord Scrope is the villain of the piece in some versions of the ballad, the Bishop of Carlisle in others. Yet it is the betrayal of Hughie by his wife to these officials which, in all but one of the eight recovered texts, is the hidden cause of her husband's undoing. Hughie is accused of stealing the Bishop's mare - unjustly, the ballad-singers are quick to point out - and he is to be hanged for the theft. But his wife is the culprit in at least three versions (B, F, and I)[1], and in others has been the Bishop's mistress or "whore" (A-C, E, H-J). She is, as the unhappy victim acknowledges, the "causer" of his death.

The appearance of this accusatory verse in all of the best texts of Hughie Grame is evidence, I think, that where the tradition was strong and healthy it bore this theme as an essential and climactic part of the

1 In Greig's copy, Hughie laments: "She bade me steal the Bishop's mear", Greig LVI, 5[4].

narrative. Professor Gummere is therefore wide of the mark when he regards this detail as the sign of a weak structure, a faulty repetition. He complains that,

> When Hughie Grame is awaiting a felon's death, he looks "over his left shoulder", and spies his father lamenting sorely; ... then "over his right shoulder", and sees his mother tearing her hair; but now for the third increment, instead of a minatory message, our ballad breaks lamely into anti-climax and makes Hughie wish merely to be "remembered to Peggy my wife", who had brought about his doom[1].

A comparative survey of the extant texts, however, reveals that this verse, together with a call to avenge his death (which occupies the concluding verse in A-D and H), is the climax of the tale. It is the balladist's last deft stroke in his build-up of sympathy for a man who, as I hope to demonstrate, has been wrongly accused and unjustly tried. It is all the more surprising that Gummere should fail to appreciate this, since the accusatory verse is so similar to those other verses in Edward and Lord Randal which hold back a damning piece of evidence until the eleventh hour[2].

The ballad of Hughie Grame has survived in eight complete texts and two fragments. It enjoyed considerable popularity in the south of England as a broadside, Child's A text being representative of a number of London black-letter copies, printed about 1672-95(?)" for P. Brooksby, at the Golden-Ball, in West-smith-field, neer the Hospital-gate", and set "to a pleasant new northern tune"[3]. The title of these broadsides was somewhat extravagantly given as 'The Life and Death of Sir Hugh of the Grime'[4].

1 F.B. Gummere, The Popular Ballad, 121-2.

2 Gummere calls this theme "the last will and testament of curses," op. cit., 144.

3 See E.S.P.B., IV, 15. The broadside is to be found in Roxburghe Ballads, II, 294 (Child Aa); Douce Ballads, II, 204b (Child Ab); Rawlinson Ballads, 566, fol. 9. (Child Ac); Thomas D'Urfey, Pills to Purge Melancholy, VI, 289, 17 (Child Ad); Roxburghe Ballads, III, 344 (Child Ae). Another copy (also printed for P. Brooksby) was found among the Pepys Ballads, II, 148, No. 130, see E.S.P.B., IV, 8.

4 See E.S.P.B., IV, 8.

Child D is a later broadside, printed and sold by L. How, in about 1770 (?), in London. That the ballad had by this date gone through several printings may be deduced from How's title which runs: 'Sir Hugh in the Grime's Downfall, or, A New Song made on Sir Hugh in the Grime, who was hangd for stealing the Bishop's Mare'[1]. Child calls this "a late and corrupt copy"[2].

The Border folk were, however, the first to hear the ballad of Hughie Grame and Scott says that it was "long current in Selkirkshire"[3]. William Laidlaw was able to collect two texts from oral tradition for Sir Walter, at the turn of the eighteenth century (Child H and J)[4]. The ballad appeared in the first edition of the Minstrelsy, though with the editor's habitual recourse to "better readings"[5].

In about 1813-15, Thomas Wilkie, a collector living in the Melrose area, took down a text from "a young girl, a Miss Nancy Brockie, Bemerside, who learned it from an old woman called Maron Miller, Threepwood"[6]. This copy is Child I. Nancy Brockie also sang versions of The Twa Sisters (Child 10)[7] and Johnie Scot (Child 99, R)[8].

1 See E.S.P.B., IV, 15.

2 E.S.P.B., IV, 8.

3 Minstrelsy, III, 131.

4 Child H is "Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy", No. 4, see E.S.P.B., IV, 519. J is my lettering of the copy "Scotch Ballads", No. 87, "from Robert Laidlaw", see E.S.P.B., IV, 518. Both copies are in the handwriting of William Laidlaw.

5 Minstrelsy (1803 ed.), III, 85, see E.S.P.B., IV, 8, 12. For his "better readings" Scott resorted to a text in Joseph Ritson's Ancient Songs (1790 ed.), 192, see Minstrelsy, III, 131.

6 See E.S.P.B., IV, 517. There is another copy also in Wilkie's hand in Wilkie MS., No. 86. For a description of Thomas Wilkie's MS., see William Montgomerie, 'A Bibliography of the Scottish Ballad Manuscripts', S.S.L., IV (1966), 19-20. Bemersyde is 3m. east of Melrose, see OS Map, Sheet 70. Threepwood, where Maron Miller lived, is 15m. north of Melrose, see OS Map, Sheet 63.

7 See E.S.P.B., IV, 448.

8 See E.S.P.B., IV, 487.

Macmath received two verses of Hughie Grame from his aunt, Jane Webster, on August 10 and September 7, 1887. Jane Webster had derived the fragments from her mother, Janet Spark, who lived in Kircudbrightshire, and they are given by Child as his F version[1].

The remaining copies are all from further north. Child B was contributed by Burns to James Johnson for publication in The Scots Musical Museum of 1787-1803[2]. This version appears to have come "from oral tradition in Ayrshire"[3].

Child E, entitled 'Sir Hugh the Graeme', is from Peter Buchan's MSS[4] and was first printed in James Henry Dixon's Scottish Traditional Versions of Ancient Ballads published in 1845[5].

Child G, 'Hughie Grame', is a solitary verse from Perthshire[6].

Finally, Gavin Greig took down a fragmentary version from the singing of Bell Robertson, who had it from her mother and an aunt, who both learned the ballad from their own mother. The most notable coincidences are with Buchan's text[7].

Ewan MacColl, the contemporary Scottish folk-singer, has recorded Hughie Grame[8].

Scott called this "a Border ditty"[9] and despite the fact that only three of our extant versions were actually collected on the Border, the

1 Macmath MS., 79, see E.S.P.B., IV, 8, 15.

2 Op. cit., IV, 312, No. 303, see E.S.P.B., IV, 8, 11.

3 See E.S.P.B., IV, 11.

4 Buchan's MSS, I, 53, see E.S.P.B., IV, 8, 14.

5 Op. cit., 73 (Percy Society Publications), XVII, see E.S.P.B., IV, 8.

6 Harris MS., fol 27b, see E.S.P.B., IV, 8, 15. The Harris MS. is a collection of "ballads learned by Amelia Harris in her childhood from an old nurse in Perthshire (the last years of the eighteenth century), taken down by her daughter, who has added a few of her own collecting", see E.S.P.B., V, 398.

7 L.L., [illegible] 117-18, No. LVI.

8 English and Scottish Folk Ballads sung by A.L. Lloyd and Ewan MacColl.

9 Minstrelsy, III, 131.

song clearly relates to another event in Border history. Whether this event was real or imaginary remains to be seen.

Hughie Graham was a member of the Graham, Graeme, or Grame clan[1] which inhabited the West March of England and Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries[2]. Apart from the Armstrongs, they were probably the most troublesome family on the Border and their dual allegiance caused much confusion to the authorities. In 1592, they were considered the greatest surname on the West Marches[3]. Their villainy was proverbial: the character Common Theft, in Sir David Lyndsay's Ane Satire of the Thrie Estaitis (c. 1540), numbers the Grahams among his "brethern common thieves"[4].

In the ballad (versions A and D), Hughie bequeathes his sword to Johnny Armstrong, charging the latter to avenge his death. The naming of a Johnny Armstrong in this Border Ballad would surely have put an audience of western Marchmen in mind of that other ballad hero who was so despicably betrayed. Also, the Grahams were, in their historical context, allies of the Armstrong clan during the sixteenth century[5].

The ballad Hughie Graham finds his historical counterpart in an infamous fin de siècle reiver and blackmailer, Hutcheon Graham, called "Ritchie's Hutcheon" and "Young Hutcheon", who figures prominently in Border records at the close of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. Outside the ballad, Child was puzzled to be able to find only one other Hugh[6], but this was no doubt because Hugh or Hughie

1 The name is variously spelt and seems to have been pronounced "Grime". In the inscription on the Martyrs' Stone in Wigtown Churchyard, "Grahame" is made to rhyme with "crime".

2 See 'The Roll of the Clannis' of 1590, R.P.C., IV, 782; C.B.P., I, 100, No. 166.

3 C.B.P., I, 394, No. 743. The Grahams had 500 "serviceable men", ibid.

4 Op. cit. (ed. J. Kinsley), 178.

5 C.B.P., I, 122, No. 197.

6 E.S.P.B., IV, 9n.

is not the usual northern form of the Christian name. "Huchon", "Hutcheon", or "Hutchin", are the common spellings, being variants of the other northern form "Hugon", itself a variant of southern English "Huon" or "Hugh"[1]. The ballad hero's name has clearly become southernised, owing perhaps to the early printing of the London broadsides which must have worked their influence on later oral traditions. But those copies which name him as "Hugh in the Grime" may be recalling in their peculiar broadside spelling the "Hutchin" Graham[2], or Grime, of earlier Border reciters.

Hutchin Graham was one of Buccleugh's men at the rescue of Kinmont Willie from Carlisle in 1596, and seems to have first attracted the notice of the West March officials about this time.

After the Kinmont Willie affair, Scrope found himself in a difficult position. Since he was unable to avenge himself personally on Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh, the English Warden appears to have directed his energies towards the apprehension and prosecution of the Graham conspirators. Scrope discovered that "Young Hutcheon Graham was the first man which moved Buclughe to make the attempte at this castell"[3]. So he was taken into custody and sent by Scrope on May 23, 1596, to London, to be cross-examined there[4]. The English government, however, were not as eager as Scrope to take action. This did not satisfy the "keen" March Warden and his correspondence during the next few weeks is filled with urgent requests for Her Majesty to give "sharpe chastisement" to the Grahams[5]. He even threatens to resign from his office as Warden if

1 See E.G. Withycombe, The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names, 70.

2 This is the spelling favoured by the Muncaster MSS, published in Historical Manuscripts Commission (Tenth Report, Appendix part iv), XIII, 237-60.

3 C.B.P., II, 170, No. 332.

4 C.B.P., II, 131-2, No. 270.

5 C.B.P., II, 160, No. 318.

Elizabeth sends the malefactors back to the Border without punishment[1].

We know that the Grahams involved in the Kinmont Willie plot were examined by Lord Scrope and the Bishop of Carlisle on May 31 and July 26, 1596[2]. After "verie contemptuouslie" refusing to present himself to Scrope again throughout the December of 1596, Young Hutchin was eventually forced to submit "on his knees" before Scrope at Carlisle Castle on January 21, 1597[3].

By this time Scrope's animosity towards the Graham clan had developed into a positive mania. In spite of frequent protestations of his lack of prejudice or subjective involvement, the Warden's letters give him away. He refers to the Grahams as "those caterpillars" in a letter sent to the Privy Council in the July following Kinmont Willie's escape[4], and as "this viperouse generation" in a letter to Cecil later that year[5]. Indeed, Scrope seems to have taken it upon himself personally to bring the Grahams to justice and his "greved mynd" is felt brooding over the lengthy correspondence of 1596-97.

The submission of the Grahams to Scrope in the January of 1597 was not, alas, the end of the affair. In the days following the death of Queen Elizabeth I in March 1603, before James VI of Scotland ascended the English throne, the Border suffered a remarkable wave of crime known as "Ill Week". Reivers galloped the whole frontier pillaging, burning and killing, driving deep into England in search of plunder. On the West March, Young Hutchin Graham was active, riding in a predatory sweep through north Cumberland. He and his accomplices raided in and around Carlisle, flaunting themselves in the meadows along the south bank of

1 Ibid.
2 C.B.P., II, 393, No. 747.
3 C.B.P., II, 229, No. 457, 238, No. 479.
4 C.B.P., II, 160, No. 317.
5 C.B.P., II, 486, No. 868.

the river Eden, in full view of the Bishop of Carlisle who watched their every move from the castle battlements[1]. If the ballad story is correct, the Bishop did not forget Young Hutchin's bravado.

It is not surprising that the Border Commissioners, elected on the accession of James VI to the English throne in order to subdue the Marches, had special instructions to deal with "the malefactors of the name of Graham". The lands belonging to this clan were confiscated, hundreds were transported to Ireland and the Low Countries under what was euphemistically called "The Change of Aire" Statute of 1605, and the most notorious of them were imprisoned in Carlisle Castle. Among them was Hutchin Graham who submitted himself in October, 1605[2]. Not only was Hutchin indicted for his raids during "Ill Week" and for previous offences of manslaughter and blackmail, but also for his part in the Kinmont Willie escapade of ten years before. The authorities were obviously prepared to go to any lengths to discover a capital charge. On September 13, 1606, the chief Grahams still in custody were sent to the port of Workington for transportation to Ireland, and among them was Young Hutchin[3]. This is the last we hear of him.

In the June of 1606, after transportations and hangings, it was reported that there were not above thirty Grahams in Esk "fit to be sent away"[4]. By September there were only three "left between Leven and Sarke", of whom two were more than eighty years old[5]. In later years, many of those who had been shipped abroad managed to make their way back to the Border country, but James's administration had effectively

1 See Lord Muncaster's MSS, in H.M.C., XIII, 258.
2 H.M.C., XIII, 237-8.
3 H.M.C., XIII, 261-2.
4 H.M.C., XIII, 256.
5 H.M.C., XIII, 262.

succeeded in reducing one of the largest and most powerful of all the Border clans to a pitiful remnant. In 1629, Christopher Lowther writing an account of his tour in Scotland, described how he and his party passed "the houses of the Grames that were",

> but one little stone tower, garreted and slated or thatched, some of the form of a little tower not garreted[1].

One may be sure that no other moment in the history of the Graham family would have been found so appropriate for keeping alive the legendary name of one of its sons as the year 1606 and the period immediately afterwards.

The persecution of the Grahams is thus the larger "betrayal" lying behind the ballad. Thomas Scrope's part in their extermination is remembered in lines like the following:

> 'For war there but twae Graems o the name,
> They sould be hangit a' for me'. (J5$^{3-4}$, 7$^{3-4}$)

An element of personal vindictiveness is contained in the judge's (or the Bishop's) "it's for my honour he maun die" (B7^{4}, cf. A15^{4}, 17^{4}, E5^{4}, 7^{4}). In A Hughie tells the Bishop:

> 'Here I am, thou false bishop,
> Thy humours all to fulfill;' (A11$^{1-2}$)

John Maye, or Mey, was Bishop of Carlisle at the time of the Kinmont Willie episode and until about 1603[2]. He assisted Scrope in examining the Grahams, including Young Hutchin, as we saw earlier. It is a "Good

1 Our Journall into Scotland, Anno Domini 1629 (1829 ed.), 10.

2 See C.S.P. Dom. (Elizabeth and James I), Addenda (1580-1625), passim.

Lord John" who takes Sir Hugh in the Grime prisoner in How's broadside copy (D1[1]).

The other characters in the ballad are not difficult to link up with historical personages. "Lord Boles" (A14[1]) is almost certainly Bowes - either Robert Bowes, Elizabeth's Ambassador to Scotland, who died in 1597[1], or Sir William Bowes, a treasurer of Berwick and a Commissioner for Border Affairs in the 1590s[2]. Hughie's intercessor, "Gude Lord Hume" (C8[1], J4[1], Greig 1[1]) would have been a member of the Home family which provided the Scottish East March with most of its Wardens from 1513-1603[3]. The Whitefords of version B entered the ballad, in all likelihood, when it circulated in their locality, being "an ancient family in Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire, and latterly in Ayrshire"[4].

The town in which Hughie is tried in most of the versions is Carlisle, "Garland" in version A9[2] being, as Child says, an obscuration of this[5]. But as the story achieved a popularity among singers further north, "Strieveling", or Stirling, town was introduced to add local colour (B, E and H). Robert Laidlaw, although he sang that Hughie was "brought up thro Carlisle town" (J2[2]), thought evidently that the jurors were "the best that were i Coventry" (J3[2]). This may be a mistake for Carlisle, but is at least evidence of William Laidlaw's fidelity in transcribing the text from his brother's (?) performance.

1 See C.B.P., II, passim. The family of Bowes was, however, a large one and provided the Border with many officials in the sixteenth century, see Howard Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches, 199.

2 C.B.P., II, 101, No. 210; cf. also George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 46n.

3 See T.I. Rae, The Administration of the Scottish Frontier, 237-8.

4 James Paterson and Charles Gray, The Ballads and Songs of Ayrshire, 50, cited Child, E.S.P.B., IV, 10n.

5 E.S.P.B., IV, 10.

Let us now, having established the ballad's date, reconsider it as it is represented by the broadside group and then see how this compares with the other two groups of texts - those from the Border and the north of Scotland.

Child A, the oldest transcribed version of Hughie Grame, is disappointing in so far as it belongs to a London tradition of the late-seventeenth century. It is not without a number of weaknesses. "In the Grime" ($A5^2$, etc.), "Lord Screw" ($A2^2$, etc.), "Garland town" ($A9^{2,3}$) and "Lord Boles" ($A14^1$, 15^1), though recognisable, are all either typographical errors or the mis-hearings of a southern transcriber working from a performance in northern dialect and unfamiliar with the names of characters and places. "Rid after this same scrime" $(A2^2)^1$, and Hugh's speech,

> 'I do not think my fact[2] so great
> But thou mayst put it into thy own will'.
> ($A11^{3-4}$)

suggest, rather than convey intelligibly, their meaning.

On the other hand, a few areas of the broadside version have survived their journey to the south, so that the A-group is sufficiently close to an earlier Carlisle or West Border tradition (and not so very far removed from it in time) to repay closer attention.

1 $Ad2^2$ prints "the same serime", see E.S.P.B., IV, 15, which Child understands as a corruption for "crime" and reads: "pursuing the crime for pursuing the criminal", E.S.P.B., V, 372.

2 A "fact" may be an evil deed or crime, O.E.D., IV, 11, under 1c. "To put oneself in, or to come in a person's will; to submit oneself to his will, surrender at discretion", are all given as obsolete Scots in O.E.D., XII, 131, under 17b. We might paraphrase $A11^{3-4}$: "I do not believe my crime is so great that I dare not surrender (it, or myself) to your fair judgement".

The folk-poet who sang of the downfall of Hughie Graham must have originally been a dweller on the West Marches. He opens his tale, as other Border balladists did before him, with a seasonal trope:

> As it befell upon one time,
> About mid-summer of the year,
> ($A1^{1-2}$)

He places the events of his narrative against a landscape that is none the less real and vivid to a Borderer for being described in formula as "moss" ($A2^3$, 7^3) and "moor" ($A22^2$). The Border-side itself is mentioned ($A23^3$) and one of its most renowned outlaws (albeit anachronistically). Moreover, the reciter who stands somewhere behind these London stall-copies was well aware of the exigencies of the ancient Border Code, that a man's death must be revenged:

> 'Here Johnny Armstrong, take thou my sword,
> That is made of the mettle so fine,
> And when thou comst to the border-side,
> Remember the death of Sir Hugh of the Grime'.
> (A23)

It was no doubt the ballad's southern copyist or printer, however, who decided to confer on Hughie Graham a knighthood, since in all the broadside copies he appears as "Sir Hugh".

Out of the A-text's 92 lines, some 43 are repeated in the oral-formulaic manner. Of the 23 verses, 10 whole verses and 2 half-verses are made up entirely of dialogue and this is frequently unassigned. Child is perhaps being over-literary when he inserts in square brackets " [Then cry'd] the good wives all in Garland town" ($A9^3$).

Child calls How's broadside copy a corrupt one, yet even this manages to remember Carlisle correctly as the scene of Hughie's execution ($D2^2$). If we accept the A-group as parent copies, we can see at once that D is a later offspring. It keeps the elevated status of its hero,

as in A, and also the same principal characters - Hugh (in prison) spies his father and mother[1]; two juries are summoned to try him; Lady Ward pleads on his behalf; Johnny Armstrong is called upon to avenge the hero's death - all as in A. But the memory of the singer from whom How got his copy has evidently forgotten Lord Boles', or Bowes' part in the proceedings and has had to make do with a "Lady Moor", perhaps a weak play on Lady Ward for the sake of variety. "Good Lord John" ($D1^1$) may, as we have already stated, be Lord John Mey who was Bishop of Carlisle in 1596.

D is a strange mixture of surface realism overlaying traditional ballad commonplace. The "muir" and moss" or "muir and mire" of the Border versions has given place to the less regional, more general ballad formula "hills and dales" ($D1^2$). The Carlisle women are "merry" ($D2^3$) and the balladist sighs sympathetically, but tritely, when the jury of men is ushered in, "More the pity for to be!" ($D4^2$). He comments later on the pathetic spectacle of the criminal looking out between the bars of his prison door: "Oh, what a sorry heart had he!" ($D13^2$). The traditional silver fan of other ballads makes its appearance as the object with which Lady Ward promises to "stroke up" the money she is offering as a bribe for Hughie's release ($D7^2$). Glaringly inappropriate is the golden hair of the reiver's father ($D11^4$) who, in all the other versions of the ballad, is correctly an old man. All of these stock colours, conventional responses and descriptions which are the flattering mirror-image rather than the substance of reality, are what we have come to accept as characteristic of the non-Border ballad. In a way, therefore, it is strange that Child should deem this broadside of How's a corrupt copy.

1 A and D are the only two versions to introduce both parents for heightened dramatic effect; the others have only the "old father".

Turning to the group of Border texts, the copy from the recitation of Robert Laidlaw is perhaps the one we should single out as standing closest to Border tradition. This text (Child J) was the second of two procured by Scott's friend and correspondent William Laidlaw, of Blackhouse farm in Selkirkshire[1]. This may have been the version of Hughie Grame which the Minstrelsy editor claimed had been "long current" in the county. J has kept the ballad names intact: Carlisle is the scene of Hughie's imprisonment, despite the Coventry blunder in stanza 3; Lord and Lady Hume plead for Hughie's life, but to no avail; Lord Scrope (as he is properly called) is, however, unrelenting, just as the sixteenth-century Border folk knew him to be. Although the seasonal proem has fallen away from this version, the ballad-reciter has felt the impulse towards another Border theme - that of the hunt. Scrope is "to the huntin gane" ($J1^1$), Hughie Graham of course, being his quarry, or prey, as Hobie Noble was the Sergeant of Askerton's. The "moss an muir" formula is employed in the first stanza also.

Child writes in a footnote to the Abbotsford copies of Hughie Grame that versions H and I are "varieties of B" (the Burns-Johson-Cromek version from Ayrshire)[2]. Certainly both these Border texts are closely related to B and to each other. There are numerous similarities of phrase and vocabulary. H and B both use the "(white) stotts" as a bribe offered for Hughie's release ($H6^3$, $B4^3$). I and B both make the hero accuse his wife of stealing the bishop's mare ($I14^4$, $B13^3$). The persistence of the Stirling town location in H would suggest that this

1 We may assume that J was received after H by Scott from Laidlaw, since J is No. 87 and H is No. 4 of the "Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy" collection.

2 E.S.P.B., IV, 9n.

version of the ballad is a "returned" one, i.e. it is derived directly or indirectly from the more northern copy B, but has passed back into Border recitation at too late a date to restore the original place-name of Carlisle.

In other respects, too, H represents a weakened tradition. Lord Scrope as the instrument of injustice and vengeance has disappeared in favour of the more vaguely picturesque "lairds and lords" who go a-hunting (literally) "out-over hills and valleys clear" ($H1^{1-2}$); and Hughie is caught in the act, riding on the bishop's mare ($H1^{4}$) - a curious departure from every other variant, in which the Border hero's guilt is by no means proven. H reverts to type in its concluding stanza where Johnny Armstrong as the figure of revenge is replaced by the familiar eldest son sitting by his nurse's knee; he it is who vows:

> 'If êre I come to be a man,
> Revenged for my father['s] death I'll be'.
> (H14)

This verse is formulaically parallel to that which concludes Johnie Armstrong version B. The revenge theme, therefore, is not lost.

Nancy Brockie's rendering of the tale (Child I) is close to H but is more likely to have been a further offshoot of the northern tradition. It looks as if this time, however, the singer has attempted to correct what is felt to be erroneous, as Stirling becomes simply "the town" ($I2^{2}$). "Mountains clear" are found side by side with moors as the natural setting of the opening ($I1^{2}$), but in the place of Scrope we find "dukes and lords that hunt and go" ($I1^{1}$), a line also caught up in the Perthshire fragment ($G1^{1}$). It begins to look, then, as if Hughie Grame is a ballad which has been impaired by an early carriage to the north and the resultant changes made by reciters there may be studied in texts B, E,and the text recovered from Bell Robertson by Gavin Greig.

Child evidently felt that the version contributed by Burns to Johnson's Museum was the earliest of the northern adaptations, since he assigns it second place in The English and Scottish Popular Ballads. Child agrees with Cromek in thinking that Burns was responsible for stanzas 3, 8, and 10^{3-4}. Yet Burns is unlikely to have introduced the Stirling town location. Neither would a Border balladist who knew that the Grahams were "put down" by Scrope and others on Harraby Hill in Carlisle, have chosen Stirling out of mere whim or poetical fancy. The song has definitely moved from its original West Border locale to one further north. A different region will produce different formulas and so we find instead of the "muir and moss" landscape the mountains of Bl^1 and "mountains clear" of Greig, 1^2. The "keen" Lord Scrope, bent on a personal vendetta, vanishes, to be replaced by "our lords" (Bl^1). What is more, the hunting of the criminal is displaced by these lords "A hunting o the fallow deer" (Bl^2). There is evidence of oral misunderstanding in the line "My sword that's bent in the middle brown" ($Bl2^2$), which appears in stronger versions as "the metal clear/brown/fine" ($A23^3$, $D15^3$, $E10^2$, $H12^2$). It may have been northern reciters, too, who began the tradition of Hughie Graham accusing his own wife of the theft for which he is accused; but this obscures the theme of betrayal, since in other variants the wife has apparently sold her husband in return for the bishop's favours. Fortunately, the call to revenge remains, finely expressed in Hughie's request to tell his kith and kin,

> 'When they meet the bishop's cloak,
> To mak it shorter by the hood.' ($Bl4^{3-4}$)

Peter Buchan's is not, in this instance, the longest of the different versions, but it is almost certainly the worst planned.

Incremental repetition loses its climactic force through poor structural arrangement: for example, the balladist has employed the "He looked over his shoulder" formula ($E8^1$) to set in motion Hughie's series of last requests. These then culminate in the accusation verse (E13) after which, and separated from it by five more verses, we are held up by "Again he ower his shoulder lookd" ($E14^1$). This introduces the "little son ... screaming by his nourice knee" ($E14^{3-4}$), who swears to avenge his father's execution. Lastly, the ballad allows Hughie to scale a wall eighteen feet high to freedom. Lord Home raises ten armed men and these ride in pursuit. A third time Hugh "looked ower his left shoulder" ($E18^1$), to spy his three brothers who fight "fierce and valiantly", defeat Hugh's enemies and ship him to safety.

The leaping of the wall is an interesting example of the literality of these northern reciters. In other versions Hughie's vain yet heroic leap in his prison acquires a symbolic force, suggesting frustrated energy and an unyielding courage "never to submit or yield", like the flight of Milton's Satan from the burning lake, or Yeats's wild swans. The leap is deliberately exaggerated:

> Sir Hugh of the Grime's condemnd to dye,
> And of his friends he had no lack;
> Fourteen foot he leapt in his ward,
> His hands bound fast upon his back.
> (A18)

The verse is retained by the singers of D, J, H and I, and I am inclined to think that it belonged originally to Border renderings of the tale; it seems so much a part of the anarchic, zestful, individualistic world of these freebooting spirits of the sixteenth-century frontier. V.U. Hammerschaimb in his Faerøsk Anthologi describes the way in which the Faroe islanders in their dancing to ballads bring out the characteristics of the narrative through mime, so that "hands are tightly clasped in

the turmoil of battle and a jubilant leap expresses victory"[1]. Something of this heightened sense of the ritualistic moment may be present in the stanza quoted above from Hughie Grame. Buchan's reciter, on the other hand, has felt the moment of victory, the assertion of a bold and independent spirit that cannot be contained, but interprets the leap as an actual physical escape to freedom.

The happy ending of the Buchan version also constitutes a weakening of the Border Ballad action. Of course, a singer is entitled to his own ordering of the narrative elements in his received story-pattern and not every poet will have a tragic cast of mind. But it seems to me that the best versions of this Border Ballad succeed expressly because their life philosophy is so uncompromising. They know that Hughie Graham is the victim both of his wife's infidelity and of a highly suspect legal machinery and they are not afraid to look these facts squarely in the face, to let their hero die for a crime he has not committed.

It is to a consideration of this last point that I wish to turn before leaving the ballad of Hughie Grame. It would be natural to assume that a folk-poet concerned with the plight of a man whose own wife has betrayed him to his enemy, would be on the side of the common man against a corrupt power that could make such an act of betrayal possible. In Hughie Grame I believe the ballad's tension springs from this opposition: a contemporary "maker" has used the ballad form in order to expose the weaknesses, as he sees them, of the judicial system of his day. The cumbersome machinery of the Border administration with its numerous Border Laws, Warden Courts and Days of Truce took centuries to evolve and, as Rae has shown, creaked at the best of times. The Border reivers knew this and exploited it; but they, too, were exploited.

1 Cited W.J. Entwistle, European Balladry, 35.

Hughie Graham seems to stand for an older order of trial by Combat[1]. He tells Scrope:

'It will be try'd between me and you
Which of us two shall be the best man!
(Ab$^{3-4}$)

But the odds are against him. Ten yeomen ride over the moss, Hugh is surrounded, fights with his back to a tree and is eventually taken. The ballad may thus be opposing the Borderer's sense of justice - namely, that "there could be no proof by witnesses, there could only be probation by the body of a man"[2] - to the justice imposed on him from without.

The trial, as it is presented by the balladist, is suspect in most of the versions of Hughie Grame, and would have been felt to be so by a Border audience. In versions A, D and J, the good wives or lads and lasses of the town assure Hughie that he will not be hung: "Sir Hugh in the Grime, thou'st ner gang down" (A9^{4}), "The name of Grime shall never go down!" (D2^{4}). If I have interpreted this line correctly, the meaning is, "You wont swing for it; they'll never manage to put an end to you or your name"[3].

The prisoner is brought before two juries in versions A and D. The first acquits him:

Eleven of them spoke all in a breast,
'Sir Hugh in the Grime, thou'st ner gang down'.
(A12$^{3-4}$, cf. D3$^{3-4}$)

1 Until an indenture of 1533 in the Leges Marchiarum which instituted the first Warden Courts, disputes on the Borders were usually settled by combat or "Handwarsil", see R.B. Armstrong, The History of Liddesdale, 72-7; George Neilson, Trial by Combat, 312-18.

2 Neilson, op. cit., 128.

3 D.O.S.T., II, 616 gives as the sense of "gang down", to end, see under 4b. To go down can also mean to be overthrown, to fall before a conqueror, see O.E.D., IV, 258, under 78c.

But in order to secure a conviction a second jury is summoned and is unanimous in its pronouncement: "Sir Hugh in the Grime, thou'st now guilty" (A13[4], cf. D4[4]).

The instructions given to Archibald Douglas, 8th Earl of Angus in November, 1586, bear out the injustice apparent in the ballad trial. The earl, who served as a Lieutenant of the Scottish West March, was to examine carefully the accusations against apprehended men, taking into consideration at the same time those who were available for jury service; only if there was likelihood of achieving a conviction was Angus to undertake immediate judicial proceedings. He was to see that the assizes consisted of men well aware of the crimes of the accused and was expressly forbidden to present any offender to an assize which might acquit him[1].

The calling of a second jury was thus illegal practice and the ballad-maker is able to suggest this by means of repetition. Admittedly, only one jury is summoned in the Border versions, but part of the narrative may have been lost in transmission, and in any case the reciters have other means at their disposal. In versions A, B, H and I, it is the bishop himself who presides over the court[2], and there is a telling contrast in A between Hugh "brought to the ground" (A8[4]) and the Lord Bishop who "on the bench is set so high" (A10[2]) - a discrepancy that must have symbolised in precise, visual terms the Border folk's sense of inferiority and powerlessness before such representatives of authority. On the West March the Bishop of Carlisle was frequently joint-warden

1 See Rae, op. cit., 143.

2 In J it is simply "the judge" who presides; in other versions the dialogue is left mysteriously unassigned.

with another principal figure and we have seen how those who took part in the Kinmont Willie Raid were examined before Thomas, Lord Scrope and John, Bishop of Carlisle, in the May and July of 1596.

In versions B, H and I, there is no mention at all of the "quest of jury-men"; thus it is Hughie's fate to be tried by the very man who has brought charges against him. We may be sure, I think, that an audience of Borderers would have had an ear for what was omitted as well as included amongst the ballad details.

Whilst A places Hughie's crime and trial in the wider context of the general assize - "Every man was taxt of his crime" ($A1^3$, 10^3) - the other texts all hint darkly at some kind of personal feud between judge and judged. The bishop's (or Scrope's) determination to put down Hughie Graham, even if he is the last surviving member of his name, has already been quoted. This is further supported by the bishop's vow: "It's for my honour he maun die" ($B7^4$, $E5^4$, 7^4).

Rae sums up the way in which the average Border assize was conducted, when he writes:

> It is therefore obvious that the case was heavily weighted against any offender actually brought to trial ... Those who did suffer the death penalty were unfortunate in being sacrificed to provide a warning to their fellows[1].

In all of our extant versions except Buchan's, the ballad-singers have allowed Hughie the glorification of a martyr's death. This wild freebooter goes to the gallows convinced of his spiritual, if not of his earthly, reward:

> 'Peace, peace, my father dear,
> And of your speeches set them by!
> Though they have bereaved me of my life,
> They cannot bereave me of heaven so high.'
> (A20)[2]

1 Op. cit., 143.

2 Cf. D12, 14; E9; H11; I10; J10.

The skill of the Hughie Grame balladists thus lies in their ability to bring a questioning, critical eye to the surface appearance of life in their day. Hughie encounters and is defeated by powers greater than himself, but a courage and defiance to match these powers do not desert him in the struggle. Once again a man is crushed in the conflict between the Border-side and the forces that lie beyond it. The world beyond the Border, the city of Wardens and Bishops, is shown to be degenerate and calls for an alienation of the ballad-audience's sympathy. In the face of a decadent, however orthodox, social order the only course of action open to the ballad hero is that sanctioned by the Border Code - an eloquent, anarchistic struggle, a champion's leap of defiance, and after the resolve to accept a hostile fate, the call to vengeance.

The Death of Parcy Reed is unusual in that sympathy is aroused on this occasion for a representative of the Border Law. Parcy Reed, the Laird of Troughend[1], was apparently Keeper of Redesdale on the English side of the Border, at some time towards the close of the sixteenth century. Acting as he would have under the aegis of the West March Warden, Reed appears to have captured and raised proceedings against one of the Liddesdale family of Crozier - a son, whose father, according to the ballad, promptly swore revenge. The Croziers, using as decoys three English brothers from Redesdale by the name of Hall, succeeded in luring Parcy Reed to a lonely glen during the course of a day's hunting. There the Halls deserted him to be butchered by the avenging Croziers.

We know for a historical fact that a feud did exist between the Reeds of Redesdale and the Croziers of Scotland, for we find Sir John

1 Troughend is situated off Dere Street about 1¼m. south-west of Otterburn, see OS Map, Sheet 77, and Blaeu's Map of Northumberland where it is marked "Troughwhon".

Forster, Warden of the English Middle March from 1560-95[1], addressing "all Christiane people" in the last year of his office, to relent of "the deadly and detestable feuds existing between (amongst others) the Reedes 'loyal and dutyfull subjectes of England' and the Croziers, 'lawfull and leige subjectes of Scotland'"[2].

Amongst the Middle March Bills of April 13-19, 1590, we find a "Percewell Read of Trowhen" complaining against "Quintin's Arche Croser" and others of the clan for a day foray which they had made on May 19, two years previous[3]. The same Quintin's Arche Croser is complained against by a "William Hall of Gersomffeld" for "reaving the Frydaye at night after Fastinges, even 1589"[4]. The character taken by Parcy Reed and brought to justice in the ballad is called "young Whinton Crosier" (A1[4]) and may have been a son of the "Quintin (Whinton) Crosier" noticed above.

Other mentions of "Percevall Reade, the younge larde of Trochen" are made between the years 1583-1590[5] and there can be little doubt, in view of the Reeds' dealings with the Scottish Crozier family, that this man is the same as the hero of our ballad.

The Croziers, Crosiers, or Crosers, were a small but hard-riding surname which inhabited the upper part of Liddesdale, together with the Nixons. They were probably dependent on an Elliot chief[6]. The B-text of the ballad is thus quite well informed when it makes the murderers of Parcy Reed ride off in the "airt", or direction, of Liddesdale (B31[4]). In the 'Rules for the Defence of the Borders' drawn up in 1583, the Croziers are styled "theves of Scotlande, that comonlie truble the same our

1 See Pease, op. cit., 201; Tough, op. cit., 280-1.
2 C.B.P., II, 111, No. 228.
3 C.B.P., I, 351, No. 668.
4 C.B.P., I, 350, No. 668.
5 C.B.P., I, 109, No. 174, et passim.
6 See W.R. Kermack, The Scottish Borders, 93.

Middle Marches"[1]. In July of the same year, Scrope writes that this clan are "at the feedes"[2].

Searching through the Calendar of Border Papers, we find several records of the third "grayne", or surname, whose members play the part of arch-deceivers in The Death of Parcy Reed. The Halls of Girsonfield[3] were well known in Redesdale in the sixteenth century. In the ballad they are introduced as three brothers - Tommy Hall (A7, B22, C13), Johnnie Hall (A11, B18, C9), and Willie Hall (A13, B20, C11). It is interesting to come across a ballad in which the names of a group of principal characters remain stable throughout all the versions, and this may be best explained by the strength of local tradition retaining a firm grasp on transmitted material. There are, in fact, records of a John Hall, a Thomas Hall and a William Hall of Gressounfeild, or Gersomfeeld, who were all alive at the same period and, presumably therefore, brothers[4]. Robert White was sure that the farm of Girsonfield had been the property of families other than the Halls since the reign of Elizabeth I, and concluded from this that the story of the ballad is not to be dated later than the sixteenth century[5].

The Death of Parcy Reed thus presents us with few problems as far as dating is concerned. The events described in the ballad, and supported by local Redesdale legend, probably took place at some time in the 1590s, at any rate before 1603 when Parcy Reed's office as Keeper of Redesdale would have been annulled. We may suppose the ballad to have been composed by some Northumbrian singer soon after Parcy Reed's death.

1 C.B.P., I, 103, No. 162.
2 C.B.P., I, 106, No. 167.
3 Girsonfield lies about ½m. north of Otterburn, see OS Map, Sheet 77.
4 C.B.P., I, 358, No. 678, 346, No. 668, 350, No. 668.
5 See E.S.P.B., IV, 25.

Child recovered and printed three versions of the ballad. Version A, entitled 'A Song of Parcy Reed and the Three False Halls', was taken down from the memory of Thomas Hedley of Bridge End, Corsenside, in Northumberland, by Robert White. The date of the transcript, preserved among Robert White's papers, is December 1, 1829[1]. This version White considered to be "the original" at the time he sent a copy of it to Child[2].

Child's B-text was the first to appear in print. It appeared as a 12-page pamphlet, 'The Death of Parcy Reed', in 1844, from the press of the Newcastle printer Moses A. Richardson. Richardson worked from Robert White's copy of the ballad and got White to provide an introduction[3]. Richardson later included Parcy Reed in his anthology The Borderer's Table Book published in 1846[4]. Since Richardson's text was also Robert White's, we may hear the latter's account of his source. The ballad, according to White, had

> been taken down by my valued friend, Mr. James Telfer, of Saughtree, Liddesdale, from the chanting of an old woman, named Kitty Hall, who resided at Fairloans in the head of Kale Water, Roxburghshire. She was a native of Northumberland, and observed she never liked to sing the verses, as she knew them to be perfectly true, and consequently could not bear to think there had been, of her own surname, such wretches as the betrayers of Parcy Reed[5].

Version B is the longest of the three texts, having in all 41 verses. The tune, called 'Hey sae green as the rashes grow', or 'Lord Trowend', was also taken down by Telfer, perhaps at the same time as he recorded Kitty Hall's text[6].

1 See E.S.P.B., IV, 24, 25. Corsenside Parish lies 4m. south-east of Troughend. Bridge End, where Thomas Hedley lived, is not marked on the OS Map, but may have been Brig Farm, as it is now called, on the Brig Burn which flows into the River Rede, see Sheet 77.

2 See E.S.P.B., IV, 24.

3 See B.H. Bronson, T.T.C.B., II, 184.

4 Op. cit., II, 363.

5 Richardson, op. cit., II, 363.

6 Bronson, T.T.C.B., II, 184.

The earliest transcribed text of the ballad is that printed by Child as a variant of B in his 'Additions and Corrections' to volume IV of The English and Scottish Popular Ballads. This text, too, was taken down by James Telfer who sent it to Sir Walter Scott on May 18, 1824, with this accompanying note:

> Parcy Reed, exactly as it is sung by an old woman of the name of Cathrine Hall, living at Fairloans, in the remotest corner of Oxnam Parish[1].

Scott, however, did not publish the ballad, as he could have done, had he so wished, in the 1833 edition of his Minstrelsy.

Behind this note of Telfer's lies concealed what is virtually an admission of editorial tampering. Telfer was a Liddesdale schoolmaster and a friend of Scott's, born in 1800 in the obscure village of Newbigging, near the head of Oxnam Water[2]. In 1824, he published at Jedburgh a small volume entitled Ballads and Poems and was wrongly suspected of writing ballads for Scott's Minstrelsy[3]. However, we do know that he inserted verses into The Death of Parcy Reed. James Henry Dixon was the first ballad collector to express his doubts as to the genuineness of the Telfer ballad. Writing in Notes and Queries in 1868, Dixon says:

> In the first edition of my Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England (Percy Society Publications), I inserted a very excellent Border ballad called "Parcy Reed". I omitted it in the second edition which I prepared for Mr. Bell's series (published by Parker and Son), because I had doubts as to its being a genuine old ballad. It turns out to be what I suspected - an ancient traditional ballad improved and added to by James Telfer[4].

1 'Letters Addressed to Sir Walter Scott', XIII, No. 73, Abbotsford, cited Child, E.S.P.B., IV, 520. Fairloans, where Kitty, or Catherine Hall lived, is just across the Border on the west bank of the Hawkwillow Burn, about 3½m. north-east of Carter Bar, see OS Map, Sheet 70.

2 He died January 18, 1862, see the brief biography by Robert White, November 2, 1867, Notes and Queries, Third Series, XII (1867), 352.

3 See J.H. Dixon, N.Q., Third Series, XII (1867), 242.

4 N.Q., Fourth Series, I (1868), 108.

Telfer's original transcript of the ballad, which for the purpose of clarification I have called Child C, was unknown to Dixon at the time of writing in Notes and Queries, so he was unable to say just what additions the Liddesdale schoolmaster had made. He was, however, investigating along the right lines when he gave his reasons for suspecting part of the ballad to be spurious:

> What principally shook my faith in the antiquity of Parcy Reed was the following line -
>
> It was the hour of gloaming grey, -
>
> which is almost verbatim with what is found in an exquisite stanza, which, like a Danish burden, is repeated two or three times in The Gloamynge Bughte:-
>
> It was the witching time o' night,
> The hour o the gloamynge gray.1

In the same note, Dixon states that Robert White had written to him confirming his suspicions. White says:

> Parcy Reed, as you suspect, is not genuine, for it bears the marks of our friend's improvements. I have a copy of the original somewhere, but may not be able to find it[2].

As we now know, White apparently did manage to find this so-called "original" because he sent it to Child, in whose collection it eventually appeared as the A version.

Dixon seems to have been well informed in this protracted mystery, for elsewhere he states:

> In a letter to the late Robert Storey, the Northumbrian poet, Telfer said, "I will send Mr. Dixon the real verses, but it is but a drole of a ballad"[3].

Dixon claimed never to have received the verses. The reason, most probably, was because James Telfer changed his mind and presented the

1 Ibid. Dixon is quoting from one of Telfer's own poems.

2 N.Q., Fourth Series, I (1868), 108.

Fourth Series, V (1870), 520.

ballad instead to Sir Walter Scott, on May 18, 1824.

What did Telfer mean when he described the "real" (i.e. un-edited) version of Parcy Reed as "but a drole of a ballad"? Droll may mean either intentionally or unintentionally amusing or comic; but it is more likely that Telfer was hinting at what he felt to be the crudeness, the eccentric and unpolished style of the traditional oral text. As we shall see later in this chapter, some of the obscurities of Telfer's copy may be due to oral misinterpretations of version A.

Dixon throws further light on James Telfer's critical judgement when he claims to have read somewhere that Telfer only gave a copy of Parcy Reed to Scott on condition that the ballad should not be printed[1]. Scott appears to have complied. One is left to surmise that Telfer's only reason for making his stipulation was that he knew the unedited copy might show up the printed version, made public as a traditional ballad in The Borderer's Table Book, for what it most certainly was - an edited text bearing a schoolmaster's poetical improvements. We are fortunately in a position, thanks to Telfer's final honesty, to compare the two texts he acquired, the one printed in Richardson's anthology, the other the original Abbotsford copy (Child C).

A Mr. William Kerr, writing in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, stated he distinctly remembered, when visiting Saughtree with Robert White, "Telfer saying he had taken it [the ballad of Parcy Reed] down from the recitation of the old woman mentioned"[2]. Further, the schoolmaster himself was later careful to stress that the copy he sent Scott was Parcy Reed "exactly" as it was sung to him by Catherine Hall of Fairloans. We may accept, therefore, that a large part of the ballad is genuine. The tradition it carries may also be vouched for as

1 N.Q., Fourth Series, V (1870), 329.

2 Cited John Stokoe, The Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend, 371.

authentic, by reference to Kitty Hall's remark that she felt ashamed to think how her ancestors had betrayed the hero of the song. As Vansina has proved in his study of historical methodology, facts which go against the enhancement of national or personal prestige yet are nevertheless transmitted orally through generations, are proof that a tradition has not been falsified[1]. Private traditions, moreover, are less likely to become distorted than what Vansina calls "Official Traditions"; in these, facts which do not help to maintain the social institution or status quo are often omitted or falsified[2].

In attempting to separate out Telfer's additions to his traditional copy, we need to work cautiously, since as Child realised "B also has some stanzas not found in A which may be accepted as traditional"[3]. Expanding version B (Telfer's edited copy) are stanzas 1-3, 6, 8-12, 13, 16[5-6], 26-32, 34-37 and 40. It is possible that James Telfer may have made separate transcripts of the ballad from Kitty Hall's singing on two separate occasions. Although by no means common practice, there are other instances of nineteenth-century ballad collectors noting down texts from two performances of the same singer[4]. An alternative is that Telfer knew of another version of Parcy Reed apart from the one Kitty Hall gave him. Whichever is the case, our problem is to decide which verses Telfer wrote himself and which, if any, are the pure accretions of oral re-creation.

1 Jan Vansina, Oral Tradition, 83.

2 Vansina, op. cit., 84.

3 E.S.P.B., IV, 24. Cf. also John Veitch, The History and Poetry of the Scottish Border, II, 167: "The original version has been added to, but it does not follow that all the stanzas were due to Telfer".

4 Two distinct versions of Lady Maisry (Child 65) were obtained by the Scottish collector William Motherwell from the recitation of Mrs. Thomson of Kilbarchan, see E.S.P.B., II, 119, 124. Jane Webster sang Get Up and Bar the Door (Child 275) to Mr. Macmath on two occasions, October 15, 1886 and August 26, 1887, see E.S.P.B., V, 98. She also recited The Jolly Beggar (Child 279) to Macmath on August 8, 1893, and again "on the same occasion", see E.S.P.B., V, 113.

In tone and language the first three verses stand in direct line with the "prologues" of other Border Ballads we have looked at. The lines

> And curses heavy may they light
> On traitors vile oursels amang.
> (B3[3-4])

compare in spirit with the opening of Hobie Noble: "Foul fa the breast first treason bred in!" (1[1]). Here in both cases is the balladist's intelligent and principled moral comment on a practice which, if it were to become endemic, would wreck the whole clan-based social fabric. As for the reiving habit which persisted well into Parcy Reed's decade, the ballad-singer has this to say:

> God send the land deliverance
> Frae every reaving, riding Scot;
> We'll sune hae neither cow nor ewe,
> We'll sune hae neither staig nor stot.
>
> The outlaws come frae Liddesdale,
> They herry Redesdale far and near;
> The rich man's gelding it maun gang,
> They canna pass the puir man's mear.
>
> Sure it were weel, had ilka thief
> Around his neck a halter strang;
> (B1-3[1-2])

We are put in mind of the Weardale ballad Rookhope Ryde and of the condemnation voiced by Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington in his poem Aganis the Theivis of Liddisdaill:

> Off Liddisdaill pe commoun thevis
> Sa peirtlie stelis, now and revis
> That none can keip, hors nolt nor scheip
> Nor zit dar sleip, for pair mischevis
> (ll. 1-5)[1]

Ballad-singer and courtly poet alike shared a desire to see these common cut-throats and felons gain their just reward. Maitland anticipated hopefully:

1 The Maitland Folio Manuscript (ed. W.A. Craigie), I, 301.

Zit or I de, sum sall pame se
Hing on a tre, quhil pai be deid.
(ll. 74-75)[1]

while the balladist sang:

Sure it were weel, had ilka thief
Around his neck a halter strang;
(B3[1-2])

We can trace other parallels between ballad and poem. Maitland's lines:

Thai leif rycht nocht quhar eir pai ga (l. 11)

and:

Thai haue neir hand hirreit haill (l. 16)[2]

correspond with the sentiments expressed by the folk-poet in the second verse of the ballad (B2).

Despite the fact that Maitland's poem had been made available to the Scottish reading public in 1786 in John Pinkerton's Ancient Scottish Poems[3], and could therefore conceivably have been consulted by the Liddesdale schoolmaster-poet, I do not think we are dealing here with a case of plagiarism but of shared animus and idiom. As a Commissioner for the Scottish Border in 1552 and 1559[4], Sir Richard Maitland would no doubt have been well acquainted with the Border vernacular, its ballads and songs, and may have found himself attuned, if not to the voice of the majority, at least to a sensible minority among whom the prevailing moral climate of the Border was at last being called into question.

1 Op. cit. (ed. Craigie), I, 303.
2 Op. cit. (ed. Craigie), I, 301.
3 Op. cit., I, 331, see Craigie, The Maitland Folio Manuscript, II, 112.
4 See R.P.C., I, 120; C.S.P. Scot., I, 193, 246, 250.

Ballad-maker and diplomat, then, both adopted a common moral standpoint as enlightened men of their age and there is thus no need to assume that the verses from the opening of Parcy Reed took Haitland's inculpation as their model.

The "God send the land deliverance" verses lead naturally into the ballad action proper, since as a result of a Scottish inroad Parcy Reed arrests young Crozier. The father swears revenge:

> But Crosier says he'll do waur than that,
> He'll make the tower o Troughend fa.
>
> And Crosier says he will do waur,
> He will do waur if waur can be;
> He'll make the bairns a' fatherless,
> And then, the land it may lie lee.
>
> (4^{3-4-5})

These lines, too, sound traditional with their repetition and their shrewd knowledge of where a countryman may be hit hardest - the wasting of his land through lack of manpower.

When we reach stanza 6, however, the whole tenor of the ballad changes as Parcy Reed summons his friends to the hunt:

> 'To the hunting, ho!' cried Parcy Reed,
> 'The morning sun is on the dew;
> The cauler breeze frae off the fells
> Will lead the dogs to the quarry true'.
>
> (B6)

The Border dalesman's direct, idiomatic utterance has been replaced by a more forced, consciously poetic diction. With words like "dew", "breeze", "heathery" ($B8^2$) and "birken" ($B8^2$) we pass into the more picturesque world of literary imitations of the popular ballad, the world of Christie's Will and the Scott pastiches.

The treatment of the hunt in B is surely evidence that a poetaster

has been at work[I]. Whereas, for example, the A text states briefly, yet rhythmically:

> They hunted up they hunted down,
> They hunted all Reedwater round,
> (A4[I-2])

the B text elaborates through six additional verses which contribute nothing to the plot and read like a later antiquarian's tapestried picture of what a sixteenth-century Border hunt might have been:

> They hunted high, they hunted low,
> They made the echoes ring amain;
> With music sweet o horn and hound,
> They merry made fair Redesdale glen.
> (B9)

Although B7[I] repeats B6[I], and B8[I] also introduces stanzas 9 and I0, it is clear that repetition in this version of the ballad has become a tired vestige of a device that was once structurally organic. This may be demonstrated by reference to The Hunting of the Cheviot which gives a much more accurate account of a mediaeval hunt. In that ballad, "The blewe a mort vppone the bent" (A8[I]) at the close of the morning's chase, the "mort" being a call sounded on the hunting horn when the game has been killed[2]. In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, after the "mort" has been sounded the day's sport comes to an end. But in Parcy Reed the "mort" is blown in verse 8, after which the hunting continues for a further three verses. Parcy then announces that they will "homeward go" (BII[4]), after which he promptly falls asleep (BI2). Now in Thomas Hedley's rendering, at least a practical reason is given for Parcy's fatal sleep:

I It should be noted that three lines (B7[2-4]) are to be found in A(3[2-4]) and may therefore be of traditional origin.

2 See Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (ed. Tolkien and Gordon), I04-5.

They hunted up and they hunted down,
They hunted all Reedwater round,
Till weariness has on him seized;
At the Batinghope[1] he's fallen asleep.
(A4, cf. C4)

The story is resumed at stanza 12 of B, a variant of stanza 4 of A. Then follows a quatrain which, in parenthesis, warns proverbially against the danger of trusting too far:

There's nane may lean on a rotten staff,
But him that risks to get a fa;
There's nane may in a traitor trust,
And traitors black were every Ha.
(B13)

The homiletic nature of this verse is not unusual, however; we have met with such homespun philosophising in other Border Ballad metaphors[2].

Imbedded in stanzas 15-23 is the main part of version A. Stanzas 14 and 24-25 seem to have been drawn largely from version C. There now follow from this point verses describing in more graphic detail than the other two texts the cruel murder of Reed. These are verses 26-31, and I can find nothing in them to suggest anything other than oral-popular origins. Imagery is simple but effective and its like has been noticed in other Border Ballads. The pejorative hound, or dog, simile is common: "We shall hang thee like a hound" (B28[2]), threaten the Croziers[3]. Vocabulary is racy and vigorously expressive: "graithed" (B26[4]), "fankit" (B28[3]), "mangled" (B30[2]), and "hacket" (B30[5]) are all well within the folk idiom.

1 The Bateinghope is a narrow "cleugh", or glen, through which the Bateinghope Burn flows to join the River Rede near Carter Bar, see OS Map, Sheet 70.

2 Notably in Johnie Armstrong (C22) and Rookhope Ryde (3). The proverb "to trust a broken staff" appears in H. Gifford's Poesie of 1580, cited William George Smith, The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs (1948 ed.), 66.

3 Cf. "It shall never be said we were hung like doggs", J.A., B15[3].

But between verses 32-37 the dying agonies of the hero are protracted by an incident that is surely romantic in conception and literary in execution. At "the hour of gloaming grey" (B32[1]), the line Dixon singled out as being artificial, a solitary herdsman discovers the wounded Reed, flings off his "clouted shoon" (B36[1]) and runs to the "nearest fountain" (B36[2]), where he scoops up water in his bonnet, Samaritan-like, to win "the blessing o the dying man" (B36[3-4]). Whilst there is dialectical precedent for words like "gloaming", "clouted" and "fountain" before these enjoyed a wider romantic favour, they are nevertheless a comparatively recent adoption into the literary language[1]. Their usage in Parcy Reed appears to be deliberately archaic and precious, the self-conscious straining after a diction that a man like James Telfer may have believed to be poetically fitting.

The herd episode adds pathos and throws the main action into relief. This might be acceptable in a traditional folk ballad, but what is at once noticeable about these verses is the way in which the honest herdsman is made to act as a link between the fight and Parcy's farewell oration. He is asked by the dying Keeper to bear the tidings of his death to Troughend and to "bear likewise my last farewell" (B37). It is possible to regard this as a literary attempt to preserve surface consistency or probability, since (the literate ballad-editor must feel) Parcy's last farewell could not have been known unless some bystander, who is also worked into the action, had heard and reported it. But as we have seen, the hero's Goodnight is a ballad convention which does not

1 O.E.D., I, 662, IV, 222, 495. The word "gloamin" is used on only one other occasion and that is in The Battle of Harlaw (Child 163, A233), obtained from the country people of Aberdeenshire in about 1838, see E.S.P.B., III, 318-19. "Clouty", meaning patched, is common in the Child ballads, but not "clouted", see E.S.P.B., V, 324. There is no recorded ballad usage of "fountain".

necessarily demand an audience other than the ballad one. Parcy Reed's Goodnight occupies verses 33-35 and 38-41. At the end of verse 35 the dying man requests "a draught o water frae the spring" ($B35^{3-4}$), which the herd brings him, making his "bonnet serve a cup" ($B36^{3}$). These two lines belong to the herd "link", therefore, and are almost certainly one of Telfer's interpolations. So, too, must be stanzas 36 and 37.

Further evidence of literary revision appears in the orthography of the B-text. Whereas in A, C, and most of B, Parcy is styled "Laird Troughend", his name is spelt "Troughen" in lines $B32^{4}$ and $B33^{2}$, no doubt to accord with "pen" ($B32^{2}$) and "ken" ($B33^{4}$) - a perfection that is aimed at pleasing the reader rather than the listener.

By way of summary, then, we may conclude that portions of B's added material belong to the pen of James Telfer, notably stanzas 6-11 (describing the hunt); 32, 35^{3-4}; and 36-37 (the herd incident). Of the other lines and stanzas peculiar to B we can say little with any certainty. They have the appearance of being traditional and may have been improvised by Kitty Hall when asked to give a second performance of The Death of Parcy Reed.

We are now in a slightly better position to establish the relationship between the three extant texts of the ballad. Since we know that James Telfer added verses of his own composition to B, we may only accept copies A and C as unspoiled oral texts.

C is most probably derived from A, in spite of the fact that it was the first version of Parcy Reed to be written down. A and C seem to stand in a parent-child relationship, and this I deduce from there being several misconstrued "borrowings" apparently by C from A. For example, the C version states in stanza 3 that Parcy Reed "has ridden a raid" and that "he had better have stayed at hame" (the old "Liddesdale

has ridden a raid" formula). The reason he had better have stayed at home is because he took three false Halls with him (C3). But the balladist is here using the word "raid", or so he thinks, as a synonym for hunt, as appears immediately from C4 which follows. Yet "raid" cannot under any etymological circumstance be read as signifying "hunt"[1]. What has happened, it seems, is that the later ballad-singer has vaguely recalled the opening of Thomas Hedley's version of Parcy Reed, in which

> The Liddesdale Crosiers hae ridden a race,
> And they had far better staid at hame,
> (A1[1-2])

and where "race" can, and does, have the sense of "a raid, rush or onset"[2].

In C15[2] Parcy Reed curses his betrayers, the Halls of Girsonfield, and cries: "I wish England ye may never win", which line might be considered to make less sense than its equivalent in the Hedley text:

> 'Now foul fa ye, traitors all,
> That ever ye should in England won!'
> (A15[1-2])

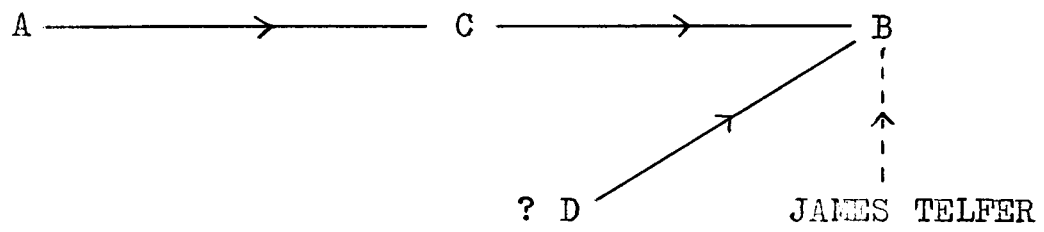
The Reeds "won", or dwell in England, and Parcy is saying, in effect, that they are a disgrace to their country. In the Telfer copy, on the other hand, the Halls are already inhabitants of England (as in A) and could hardly hope to "win", or escape there, if we take that as the meaning of the transitive verb.

A further small detail is the expression Parcy uses to bid farewell to his daughter Jean in C: "I loved ye best ye were born alive" (C19[4]), which in the A-text is rendered more legitimately: "That I love best that's born alive!" (A16[4]).

1 See O.E.D., III, 111, for meanings.
2 O.E.D., VIII, 86, under 2.

In all, about 27 lines are possibly borrowed from A^{I}. But if Kitty Hall, the singer of C, received her version from the same tradition which preserved A, Jamie Telfer was apparently unfamiliar with Thomas Hedley's text. Had he been, he would have been able to supply from it the missing lines at $C5^{I-2}$, indicated by asterisks in Child.

It is also quite clear from a textual comparison that the traditional part of B owes nothing to A, but that independent formulae and themes have established themselves. We might show the genetic relationship between all three of our surviving texts in a diagram (D representing a "lost" tradition which has gone unrecorded but which has nevertheless made a significant contribution to B):



Parcy Reed has been seen by one critic as a ballad counterpart to The Finnesburgh Fragment, "a story of a treacherous onset and a good defence"[2]. More will be said on the theme of revenge in the Border Ballads in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to notice how, because revenge was part of a very positive ethical code among the Border clansmen, the ballad of Parcy Reed is striking for the way in which opprobrium is heaped by the ballad-singers on the treacherous Halls, whilst Parcy's

I $C3^{I-2}$ similar to AI^{I-2}
$C4$ = $A4$
$C5^{3-4}$ = $AI8^{3-4}$
$C6^{I-2}$ similar to $A5^{I-2}$
C7 " " A6
C8 similar to A7
$CI5$ " " $AI5_{2-4}$
$CI8^{2-4}$ = $AI7^{2-4}$
CI9 similar to AI6

2 W.P. Ker, Mediaeval English Literature, 89.

actual assassins escape with muted condemnation. The Border Code may embrace revenge, the kindling or extinguishing of a deadly feud, but not the act of betrayal. This is why the title given for version A of the ballad was not 'Parcy Reed and the Five Croziers', but, 'A Song of Parcy Reed and the Three False Halls'.

The moral climate of the ballad may be gauged[1] to a large extent by the adjectival tags used to introduce the principal characters and classify them according to one or other of the Borderer's moral absolutes. In A the Croziers are either simply and objectively "the Liddesdale Crosiers" (A1[1]), or "the five Crosiers" (A6[3]), and their headsman is named as "auld Crosier" (A2[3]). The Halls, on the other hand, are labelled clearly "the three false Halls" (A3[3]), even before we are told what they have done, and their treacherousness is insisted on again at A18[3]. The line is borrowed by texts B and C, the latter stressing "the fause, fause Ha's o Girsenfield" (C5[3]).

In terms of the Border Code, the Croziers have a sound motive for the assassination of the Redesdale Keeper. The clan chieftain has lost his son to the English and the moral right of self-defence in a frontier society where the law has been as often powerless to protect the weak as to punish the aggressor, demands retaliation. Just as it was "right" for Jock of the Side's kinsmen to attempt his rescue - right, that is, within the framework of Border ethics, whether or not the man was guilty and deserved punishment - so we may be sure it was not considered altogether "wrong" for old Crozier to avenge his son's death[1]. The ballad-maker is thus left free to concentrate his interest on the act of betrayal.

1 The "gallant gay" is "lost", by which an audience of Border folk would understand that young Whinton Crozier had been put to death by the English March officials.

The Halls are conspicuously lacking in any substantial motive for their infamous deed. The ballad keeps silence, except to call the brothers "false" or accuse them of being "traitors". In version B, their family is compared to a rotten staff (B13[1]). Their character may be hereditary for "traitors black were every Ha" (B13[4]). They deny their victim even the most fundamental Border right of self-defence, of trial by combat:

> They've taen frae him his powther-bag,
> And they've put water i his lang gun;
> They've put the sword into the sheathe
> That out again it'll never come.
> (C6, cf. A5[1-2], B14)

Parcy Reed embodies the Border principles of Truth and Loyalty. In his moment of greatest need he appeals to the Halls:

> 'If they be five men, we are four,
> If ye will all stand true to me;'
> (A7[1-2], C8[1-2])

but in vain. The heart of the tragedy lies in Parcy's series of fine offers, as it did in Johnie Armstrong. Parcy makes one generous gift after another only to be met with a callous and obdurate refusal - the ballad-maker's way of saying that these men were inhuman, for only the devil could refuse such "gear": a steed worth twenty pounds, five yoke of oxen, one half of a rich man's land and his pretty daughter into the bargain[1]. The Halls are unmoved and the ballad consigns them and their heirs to a future in which they will be despised (like Hector of the Harlaw) as universal types of the faithless man:

> 'And the three false Halls of Girsonsfield,
> They'll never be trusted nor trowed again'.
> (A18[3-4], C5[3-4])

1 She is offered in versions B and C.

As late as the mid-nineteenth century apparently it was still common in Northumberland to hear the saying "As false as the Ha's"[1].

Version A achieves its tragic effect by means of irony and what one feels is surely a symbolic use of place-names. The murderous Croziers enter England "by the Hingin Stane" (A6[4]), the boulder which marked the limit of the English East March to the west[2]. There is a note of bitter irony in the use of the word "fair" in Parcy's realisation "You have left me in a fair field standin" (A15[3]). This strikes one as being more than a commonplace epithet.

The parts of B which may owe something to oral tradition capitalise on the direct force of harshly realised detail. Stanza 30 emphasises the enormity of the Croziers' deed, and by implication the extreme cruelty of the false Halls in betraying Parcy to them:

> They fell upon him all at once,
> They mangled him most cruellie;
> The slightest wound might caused his deid,
> And they hae gien him thirty-three;
> They hacket off his hands and feet,
> And left him lying on the lee.
> (B30)

The passage is one of the most violent in all the Border Ballads - the gentle Liddesdale schoolmaster, poet of The Gloamynge Bughte, was not the author of these lines, nor of Parcy's grimly euphemistic "My faes hae made me ill to ken" (B33[4]).

Colour is used in versions B and C for its emotive and symbolic effect, black being most obviously associated with evil and falsehood and therefore appropriate in its application to the Halls (B13[4]). More puzzling at first is the allusion to Parcy Reed's brother,

1 See M.A. Denham, A Collection of Local Rhymes, Proverbs, etc., relating to Northumberland, 24-5.

2 See C.B.P., I, 30, No. 76.

'Wha sits into the Troughend tower
Wi heart as black as any stone'.
(B38[3-4], C17[3-4])

Whilst it is difficult to point to precise meanings, one can sense the direction in which the balladist is moving. Wimberly gives examples of fairies who plant in unfaithful mortals hearts of stone[1], and in the context of the whole ballad it would seem as though some other breaking of faith lies behind these lines. It is almost as if the balladist is hinting obscurely at the universal implications of his chosen theme - a dark world in which treachery, betrayal and untruth have become the order of the day. If this is so, then it is a mark of the extent to which the reciter of version C, Kitty Hall, has been able to enter fully into the emotional world of the ballad. She may have been incorporating into her tale some shred of tradition known only to her contemporary local audience and now impossible for us to recover[2], or she may have been responding in a purely artistic way to the ballad theme by building on the enigma of human behaviour to suggest a whole background of deception and falsehood. However we may choose to account for them, the lines are an interpolation that works and contributes greatly to the sombre atmosphere of The Death of Parcy Reed. They were taken up by the same singer, with variation, in her other version (B38[3-4]), but are missing from A.

The tragic cast of these Ballads of Betrayal adds a little more, therefore, to our picture of a region's poetry. Hobie Noble, Hughie Graham

1 L.C. Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, 391.

2 A John Reade, who lived at Troughend, attempted in 1597 to murder a man and his wife "coming or going from the markett at Hexhame", C.B.P., II, 339, No. 337, 350, No. 666. Perhaps Parcy Reed had encountered viciousness within his own family.

Parcy Reed come to their untimely end because they are all men who have trusted too far. In a minor key, at the moment of their anagnorisis, we experience something of Othello's despair and pain as he at last recognises in Iago the man who is his sworn enemy and betrayer. But the ballads we have considered in this chapter, unlike Shakespeare's tragedy, offer no sense of a final cathartic reconciliation, of spiritual release won through long suffering. Parcy Reed ends on a note of vengeance as stark as any found in the Jacobean drama:

'The laird o Clennel bears my bow,
The laird o Brandon bears my brand;
Wheneer they ride i the Border-side,
They'll mind the fate o the laird Troughend.'

(B4I, C2I)

The Border-side, in fact, contained the canker that was eventually to lead to its decay - the deadly feud. This is the last of the great Border Ballad themes and I shall explore it in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

BALLADS OF REVENGE - BEWICK AND GRAHAM[1], LORD MAXWELL'S LAST GOODNIGHT[2]

"Deadly feud", the vendetta between family and family, clan and clan, was, as Fraser has put it, "the great cancer of the Borders"[3]. As far as the ballads are concerned, the principle of revenge provides the motive force, colouring the actions of the characters and determining their standpoint in relation to the chaotic and turbulent society that is the Border Ballad world.

Thus The Death of Parcy Reed is enclosed by (in the opening verses) the blood-vengeance of the Liddesdale Croziers for the judicial execution of one of their sons, and (in the concluding verses) by Parcy Reed's own exhortation to his friends to "mind the fate o the laird Troughend". In The Lads o Wamphray the same eye-for-an-eye philosophy leads to the resurgence of the old feud between Maxwells and Johnstones when "the Biddess-burn ran three days blood!" Johnie Armstrong (versions A and B) ends with the outlaw's young son swearing to avenge the hanging of his father, an interesting point at which to leave the ballad story, since this would involve no less than the killing of the Scottish king. Hughie Graham bequeathes his own sword to Johnie Armstrong in three versions of the ballad, that it may be the instrument of vengeance against Lord Scrope and the Bishop of Carlisle who has cuckolded Hughie.

1 Child 211, E.S.P.B., IV, 144-50.
2 Child 195, E.S.P.B., IV, 34-8.
3 George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 169.

A 'Report on the Decays in the Borders' of July, 1596, attributes one of the causes of the increasing difficulty in frontier administration to "deadly foed, the word of enmitye on the Borders, implacable without the blood and whole family distroied"[1].

William Grey, the Newcastle topographer and local historian writing in the 1640s, gives a vivid description of the mores of earlier inhabitants of Tynedale and Redesdale:

> The people of this Country hath had ane barbarous Custome amongst them; if any two be displeased, they expect no law, but bang it out bravely, one and his kindred against the other and his; they will subject themselves to no Justice, but in an inhumane and barbarous manner, fight and kill one another; they run together clangs (as they terme it) or names. This fighting they call their Feides, or deadly Feides, a word so barbarous, that I cannot expresse it in any other tongue[2].

Unchallenged by the government of either country and even condoned for a time by the Church, this conviction of the absolute need for retaliation vis à vis some injury or insult done to family or kin, ruled the actions and social history of the Borderers from the earliest times until long after the Union. The bloody debates, moreover, were not confined to individuals but involved, as Grey was aware, whole surnames and clans, being kept alive sometimes over several generations. Thomas Musgrave, Captain of Bewcastle, described how "they are growne so to seke bloode, for they will make a quarrell for the death of theire grandfather, and they will kyll any of the name they are in feade with"[3].

A feud could break out over something less than a killing, yet its consequences could be equally bloody and destructive. The futility of such a terrible enmity is the theme of Bewick and Graham, a ballad from the West Border.

1 C.B.P., II, 163, No. 323.

2 Chorographia (1818 ed.), 47-8. For a more detailed account of feuding on the Borders see Fraser, op. cit., 169-88.

3 C.B.P., I, 126, No. 197.

Sir Robert Bewick and the Laird Graham go armed to a tavern in Carlisle where they drink till they are both merry. Their discourse becomes heated when Graham proposes a toast to their two sons and this is rejected by Bewick on the grounds that young Christy Graham is not good enough to be a friend to his son, Young Bewick:

'Nay were thy son as good as mine,
And of some books he could but read,
With sword and buckler by his side,
To see how he could save his head,

'They might have been calld two bold brethren
Where ever they did go or ride;
They might [have] been calld two bold brethren,
They might have crackd the Border-side.

'Thy son is bad, and is but a lad,
And bully to my son cannot be;
For my son Bewick can both write and read,
And sure I am that cannot he'.
(3-5)

Young Bewick is a schoolmaster and Young Graham has been one of his pupils, but has failed to succeed in the realm of letters. Old Bewick, therefore, boasts the superiority of these accomplishments in his son (in somewhat alien fashion for a folk ballad), adding insult to injury by saying that Old Graham's son is no swordsman either.

Old Graham reports Old Bewick's contumely to his son, Christy, but unknown to both their parents, Young Graham and Young Bewick have sworn themselves brothers. Christy Graham is now faced with an impossible choice: whether to fight with a man that is "faith and troth" to him (the Border Ballads' loyalty theme again), or to refuse and in so doing disgrace his father and family. He agrees to the duel, but only after promising his sworn-brother that, should he fell him in equal combat, he will take his own life. This, in the event, is what happens. Graham gives Bewick "an ackward stroke"[1] which mortally wounds his friend,

1 Awkward, back-handed, with the back of the sword blade, O.E.D., I, 596, under Bl.

refuses to entertain Bewick's entreaties to flee, and so sticks his sword in a mole-hill and leaps upon it. The two fathers are reconciled, but like the houses of Montagu and Capulet, only over the corpses of their offspring.

The ballad is a long one of 56 verses and has survived in one principal version together with a single tune, apparently from North-umbrian tradition[1]. Of this one version, however, there are several stall-copies extant, listed by Child as variants a-f[2]. The earliest of these to have gone into print appears to be b, for which the British Museum Catalogue conjectures a printing-date of 1720, and (again conjecturally) names Newcastle as the place of origin[3]. Probably of about the same date is broadside c, which was found amongst the Percy Papers[4]. Copies a, d, e and f also belong to Newcastle[5], the first three being of eighteenth-century date, the last of nineteenth[6].

Sir Walter Scott was the first to publish the ballad under the title 'Graeme and Bewick', in the 1803 edition of his Minstrelsy[7]. It was given by him "from the recitation of a gentleman who professed to have forgotten some verses"[8]. The deficiences were made up in the later 1833 edition of the Minstrelsy "from a copy obtained by the recitation of an ostler in Carlisle, which ... also furnished some slight alterations"[9].

1 See B.H. Bronson, T.T.C.B., II, 292.
2 See E.S.P.B., IV, 144, 148-50, V, 402.
3 The British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books, XVI, col. 977.
4 See E.S.P.B., IV, 144.
5 See ibid.
6 See ibid.
7 Minstrelsy (1803 ed.), III, 93, see E.S.P.B., IV, 144.
8 Minstrelsy, III, 75.
9 Ibid.

This copy Child letters g; it is preserved at Abbotsford[1] and James Maidment reprinted it in 1868 as 'The Brothers-in-Arms'[2]. Another Abbotsford copy, entitled 'Chirstie Graeme', was sent to Scott by William Laidlaw on January 3, 1803, as taken down from the singing of Mr. Walter Grieve, of Craik, Borthwick Water[3]. This is Child h.

Besides the numerous stall-copies, then, the ballad seems to have enjoyed a limited popularity in the singings of Border folk in Carlisle, Craik Forest, and, we may suppose, Newcastle. In spite of Child's misgiving - "I am persuaded that there was an older and better copy of this ballad than those which are extant"[4] - a solid substratum of oral characteristics attests to the popular origins of these printed copies and transcripts.

With regard to date, Scott says that he is "from internal evidence ... inclined to place it late in the sixteenth century"[5]. Fowler, however, in support of his thesis, sets Bewick and Graham squarely within the eighteenth-century broadside canon, dismissing the functional repetitions around which the ballad is organised as "reminiscent" of earlier minstrel techniques and "survivals" merely[6]. Although Fowler comments on several of the most striking parallelisms within the ballad, it is doubtful whether he has appreciated the full extent to which oral repetition is employed[7], or whether he has taken into account other traditional features such as unassigned dialogue[8]. It is noteworthy that the balladist's

1 "Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy", No. 145, see E.S.P.B., IV, 144.

2 Scotish Ballads and Songs, II, 150, see E.S.P.B., IV, 145.

3 "Scotch Ballads", No. 89, see E.S.P.B., IV, 144. Craik lies at the foot of the Aithouse Burn where it flows into Borthwick Water, about 7m. below Roberton, see OS Map, Sheet 69. Laidlaw also took down from Walter Grieve's recitation some verses of James Harris the Daemon Lover (Child 243, F), see E.S.P.B., IV, 367, 369.

4 E.S.P.B., IV, 145.

5 Minstrelsy, III, 75.

6 David C. Fowler, A Literary History of the Popular Ballad, 215-16.

7 Out of 224 lines, about 102 are repeated.

8 See especially, stanzas 3-6, 10-17, 19-20, 23, 27-37, 39-40, 44-47.

by real use of assigned speech, introduced, by the formulaic "with that bespoke", is reserved for the confrontation of the two fathers at the end of the ballad. Elsewhere, this peculiar folk habit of leaving the audience to work out who is speaking at any given moment is surprisingly effective in Bewick and Graham, since it suggests the depth and intimacy of the "brothers'" understanding.

Regular oral-syntactic patterns which the folk ballad depends on, occur frequently. Such are the lines:

> When he came home, there did he espy,
> A loving sight to spy or see,
> There did he espy his own three sons,
> Young Christy Grahame, the foremost was he.
>
> There did he espy his own three sons,
> Young Christy Grahame, the foremost was he, etc.
> (9-10[1-2])

and:

> He flang ... from off his ...,
> His ..... flang he,
> (38[1-2], 41[1-2])

Against Fowler's supposition of later composition, it may be argued that a writer composing ballads for the broadside press would hardly have been as thoroughly steeped in the implications of the sworn-brotherhood theme as the author of Bewick and Graham shows himself to be. To this theme I shall return again later.

The ballad, then, is certainly of greater antiquity than the eighteenth century. But in the absence of any historical account of the events it narrates we can do little more than accept Scott's dating of the ballad, with the added knowledge that the tale refers to a period at least prior to 1605-1606, the years when, as we saw in our last chapter, the Graham clan was all but exterminated on the West Border.

A pointer to the ballad's theme and an indication of the way in which this is going to be treated may be found in the ballad's title.

This reads in full (in copies a-f):

> A Remarkable and Memorable Song of Sir Robert Bewick and the Laird Graham, giving an account of Laird Graham's meeting with Sir Robert Bewick in the town of Carlisle, and, they going to a tavern, a dispute happened betwixt them which of their sons was the best man. How Graham rode home in a passion and caused his son to fight young Bewick, which proved their deaths[1].

This title, or synopsis, may afford us a clue as to what earlier ballad-singers, or even eighteenth-century printers, thought the Bewick and Graham story was about. As in the case of The Death of Parcy Reed, the modern ballad reader may be called upon to shift the emphasis slightly from what appears to him to be the ballad's thematic core, to peripheral issues no less significant or worthy of consideration. Just as the author of Parcy Reed was primarily concerned with the abhorrent treachery of "the three fause Halls" (rather than with the "crime" of the Croziers), so the maker of Bewick and Graham was at pains to show how the tragic death of the pair was the inevitable outcome of the parents' drunken quarrel. It can hardly escape attention that the balladist has devoted the first eight verses of his narrative to a depiction of this quarrel, and that he concludes with five more verses to show the reaction of the fathers to their folly. The conflict of loyalties over which the younger generation agonise is thus systematically framed by the sudden feud of their elders and its resolution. I do not feel that this incorporation of two situations within one ballad detracts from its forcefulness, as Gummere seems to imply[2], nor is the balladist's handling of the one situation more effective than his handling of the other. The ballad's main intention was to tell the story of a preposterous family feud

1 See E.S.P.B., IV, 148-9. The wording of a's title is slightly different.

2 F.B. Gummere, The Popular Ballad, 116n.

and the tragic consequences of it. The title stresses this when it relates "how Graham rode home in a passion".

The fundamental process of upholding the family's good name is introduced in stanza 11. Here Old Graham angrily maintains that he is a "baffled" man (11^4) and baffled, or disgraced, by his own son into the bargain. The verb "to baffle" is derived from the Old French word "bafouer", meaning to subject to public shame or infamy[1]. An actual custom called "baffling" seems to have been built as a kind of social corrective-mechanism into the curious society of the mediaeval Borderers. John Major describes the custom thus, in 1521:

> For with the men of the Borders such is the custom: they wage fiercest war one with another, but the conqueror does not slay his prisoner, but in all clemency spares his life, and grants him for the most part a safe return home, when he pledges his word. But if he does not keep his word, then the conqueror fastens to a horse's tail the effigy of his prisoner, and so carries it across the Borders, whereupon all of his own people acknowledge him for all time to be a perjured and perfidious person who has brought no small dishonour upon the country that gave him birth[2].

Edward Hall in his Chronicle of 1548 gives a slightly different account. He writes that "baffulling",

> is a greate reproache among the Scottes, and is used when a man is openly perjured, and then they make of him an Image paynted reverted with hys heles upwarde, with hys wonderynge cryenge and blowing out of hym with hornes[3].

Holinshed follows Hall, but explains that it is the man's name which is painted coming from his mouth[4]. We have in this queer custom what seems to have been an early example of the caricaturist's art. As a shaming-device it may have been used most often to expose to the public gaze

1 O.E.D., I, 620, under Il.
2 A History of Greater Britain (trans. Archibald Constable), 325.
3 Hall's Chronicle (1809 ed.), 559.
4 Raphael Holinshed, The Chronicles of England (1585 ed.), 827.

the name of a Borderer who had broken his oath or pledged word, but the fact that Old Graham feels so keenly his "baffling" by Bewick's studied insults, is an indication that the full force of the calumny could still obtain where other kinds of grievance had been given.

The duty of erasing any blot or slur upon the honour of one's family, provided one of the strongest links in the kinship of the Border. We are reminded of Hughie Graham's concern when he says:

> 'And ye may tell my kith and kin,
> I never did disgrace their blood,' (B14$^{1-2}$)

The obligation dates back, of course, beyond Border society to the Teutonic culture. Saxo Grammaticus shows how the supremacy of the obligation is enforced again and again by his characters, the most imperative cases always being those nearest to one - a father, mother, or sister[1].

But if the tragedy in Bewick and Graham is set in motion by the senseless feuding of the older generation, it is also further complicated by the affections and personal ties of the younger generation, and these, too, the balladist exploits for their story-potential.

Much is made of the sworn-brotherhood theme in Bewick and Graham. The two are not simply good friends: the force of the words "bully" and "bullyship", used so often of them in the ballad, is difficult to recapture for a modern reader. A "bully" could be a "fellow" or a "mate" (Child's gloss)[2], but was this and much more besides. The word looks back to the Germanic "comitatus" with its brothers-in-arms, and is best

1 The Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus (trans. Oliver Elton), II, 53, III, 75, IV, 110, VIII, 280.

2 E.S.P.B., V, 320. Child also gives "brother" as a sense of the word. For the meaning brother-in-arms, see O.E.D., I, 864, under 3, 1171, under 2; E.D.S.L., I, 189, under b; S.N.D., I, 126, under 1.

rendered "sworn-brother" or "blood-brother". In any case, behind the word lies the pledging of eternal friendship of one man to another, a complete co-mingling of two personalities sealed in some cultures by a ritual mingling of blood,or blood and earth,before the assembled tribe[1]. Thus, in the ballad, Bewick and Graham are called "sworn-brethren" (37^2), as are Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough and William of Cloudesly, the outlaws of Child 116. Bewick and Graham are "faith and troth" to one another (14^4, 34^4), and Young Bewick calls Young Graham his "nighest friend" (27^3), his "dear" ($28^{2,3}$), his "brother" (50^4). Strengthening the bond even further is the fact that it has been made sacrosanct by some kind of public ceremony, for Christy realises:

> 'If it be [my] fortune my bully to kill,
> As you shall boldly understand,
> In every town that I ride through,
> They'll say, There rides a brotherless man!'

Old Bewick and Old Graham are either unaware that their sons' brotherhood is widely acknowledged, or else in their selfish wrangles ignore the depth and importance it holds for the pair.

The balladist uses this brotherhood motif to set the relationship between the two members of an older, more choleric generation in ironic contrast to the intimacy of their offspring. Old Graham, for example, calls Old Bewick "brother" at the beginning of the ballad (2^2), the irony implicit in this being missed completely by Scott who alters "brother" to "Sir Robert Bewick" (M, 2^2). The two old Border lairds

1 See L.C. Wimberly, Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads, 76. The custom of blood-brotherhood is a common device by which people are enabled to visit or traverse the territory of potentially hostile neighbours, so that it is not difficult to appreciate how such a custom might have survived among the clans of the Border country, see Notes and Queries on Anthropology (6th ed.), 135-6.

thus parody in a grotesque way the more sincere, firmly-based friendship of their sons.

The story of Bewick and Graham has its analogues, the locus classicus of sworn-brotherhood being the tale of the "svaribroedr", Thorgeir and Thormód. In The Sworn Brothers Saga, Thormód refuses to pit himself against the man he has taken to his heart, because he knows only too well that any rivalry will destroy their great friendship which is so sacred to him:

> Then Thorgeir said: 'And which of us would overcome the other if we two fought together?' Thormód answered: 'That I don't know; but I do know that this question of yours will put an end to our comradeship and fellowship and that we can no longer get along together'.[1]

In his "drápa" on Thorgeir, Thormód alludes to their disagreement in the following strains:

> 'I care but to recall the
> comradeship betwixt us -
> good it was, though grudged us
> guileful men our friendship'[2].

In the tale of Asmund and Aswit, Asmund the son of Alf, king of Hethmark, is lost on a hunting expedition and comes to the court of King Bjorn, with whose son he becomes a bosom friend:

> the son of the king and he, when they had lived together a short while, swore by every vow, in order to ratify the friendship which they observed to one another, that whichever of them lived longest should be buried with him who died. For their fellowship and love were so strong, that each determined he would not prolong his days when the other was cut off by death[3].

And so, when Aswit dies, Asmund enters the burial-mound in which his corpse has been placed.

1 The Sworn Brothers Saga (trans. Lee M. Hollander), 105.

2 Op. cit. (trans. Hollander), 106.

3 The Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus (trans. Oliver Elton), V, 199-200.

In the ballad, Christy Graham says:

'If it be my fortune my bully to kill,
I swear I'll neer come home alive'.
(21[3-4])

and Bewick voices an identical oath in one of the passages of oral repetition (36[3-4]). The last request of the dying Bewick is:

'Nay, dig a grave both low and wide,
And in it us two pray bury;
But bury my bully Grahame on the sun-side,
For I'm sure he's won the victory'.
(51)

Gerould instances Bewick and Graham as one of the most interesting examples (besides being the last written down) of the custom of "broperhede". He distinguishes the relationship of the two ballad heroes as a "brotherhood by oath", however, as against blood-brotherhood proper with all its attendant rituals. This makes the relationship no less sacred, though, and Gerould concludes:

> Nowhere is the feeling inspired by the oath of brotherhood more clearly expressed. The memory of a tie so strong that it almost outweighed the claims of a man's father gives the ballad surprising force and shows how intimately the principle involved affected the life of our ancestors[1].

For a full appreciation of Bewick and Graham, then, we need to be aware of the moral absoluteness of these two principles - loyalty to one's kin, and, as a direct result of this, the upholding of family honour (the "bafflement" theme) and loyalty to one's adopted or sworn-brother (the "bullyship" theme). Both demand a man's unquestioning obedience and allegiance, and for Bewick and Graham the only exemption from either lies in a tragic acceptance of the one before the other; there can be no compromise.

1 G.H. Gerould, 'Social and Historical Reminiscences in the Middle English Athelstan', Englische Studien, XXXVI (1906), 196-8.

We have looked briefly at proto-types of the Bewick and Graham story found in earlier Scandinavian literature. It now remains to be seen how the sixteenth-century Border Ballad maker, working within his set form, presented the tale to his folk audience.

First, and most obviously, the balladist shows how personal feud and conflict arise out of the clan situation. When earlier audiences heard Old Graham protesting the ignominy of being "baffled", they would have been ready at once to infer the total involvement of the Graham clan.

The microcosm in which the vendetta catches fire is that of the Border-side. The last decade of the sixteenth century was as full of trouble and insecurity as previous years. It was a time when an aged parent might need the support of his male heirs, and Old Graham feels this loss keenly when he cries after his son's death:

'Had I gone through all Ladderdale[1],
And forty horse had set on me,
Had Christy Grahame been at my back,
So well as he woud guarded me'.

Old Bewick, representing as he does the limited vision of an older, more sanguinary generation, is proud to visualise their two sons as potential mosstroopers, "cracking", or defying the whole Border (4[4]).

There are constant reminders of the harshness of the laws of survival in this frontier society, where men go in arms to their wine (1[3])[2] and drink hard and long and where the slightest insult can spark off a bloody enmity. Even Young Bewick, the schoolmaster, must teach

1 Scott reads "Liddisdale" for Lauderdale (K, 42[1]), "as the more probable seat of war betwixt the Graemes and the Scottish", see The Letters of Sir Walter Scott (ed. H.J.C. Grierson), I, 169, Letter to William Laidlaw, January 21, 1803.

2 Scott loses the suggestive force of this by making Old Bewick and Graham go "arm in arm" to the tavern (K, 1[3]).

his scholars "well to fence/To handle their swords without any doubt" (25^{1-2}), and he goes armed himself even during his leisure:

> He's taken his own sword under his arm,
> And walked his father's close about.
> (25^{3-4})

The details of arming are graphic and the ballad cannot help admiring Young Graham as he dresses for combat:

> He put on his back a good plate-jack,
> And on his head a cap of steel,
> With sword and buckler by his side;
> O gin he did not become them well!
> (22)

The earliest broadside copy, b, has "spear" instead of "sword" at 41^{3} - the other traditional weapon of the Border reiver.

As in some of the Raiding Ballads, we sense in Bewick and Graham that an older order is being called into question. Although the balladist sings of arms and the man, a close reading of this tale reveals the emergence of a new moral philosophy which prefers (by implication) a brotherhood of love to a brotherhood in arms. The conflicts that provide the action of the ballad are thus made to extend beyond the merely conventional hostilities and incommunicados of the generation-gap. It is significant, I think, that after accoutring himself in the traditional armour of the Border trooper, Christy Graham later discards this. Young Bewick takes the lead; he throws off his cloak, the sole protective garment he is wearing, which moves Young Graham:

> 'Now I have a harness on my back;
> I know that thou hath none on thine;
> But as little as thou hath on thy back,
> Sure as little shall there be on mine.'
>
> He flang his jack from off his back,
> His steel cap from his head flang he;
> He's taken his sword into his hand,
> He's tyed his horse unto a tree.
> (40-41)

Quite apart from the obvious magnanimity of this gesture - Young Graham will have no advantage over his friend - the action underpins in a symbolic way the vulnerable quality of a younger generation which espouses old causes reluctantly.

The actual duel lasts "for two long hours" and there is something half-hearted about it, since at the end of this time there is "never a drop of blood to see" (42^4). The "ackward stroke" which Graham deals Bewick (43^1) is clumsy and unintentional, as the word "ackward" itself implies. The death-wound which Bewick receives is symbolic as well as real: "Thy sword is sharp, it hath wounded my heart" (45^3), Bewick admits sadly to his friend.

Both Young Bewick and Young Graham attempt to staunch their fathers' feud in its early stages. Graham openly rejects the trial by combat which his father, "in a passion", impulsively offers his son, throwing down his gauntlet to make the challenge in the old Border style:

> Christy stoopd low unto the ground,
> Unto the ground, as you'll understand:
> 'O father, put on your glove again,
> The wind hath blown it from your hand'.
> (16)

Young Bewick, especially, is associated with the things of peace. He walks in his father's close, or courtyard, to take his leisure, and like Thomas Rhymer he seems to be a reflective man:

> He lookd between him and the sun,
> To see what farleys he coud see;
> (26^{1-2})

When we first meet him he is teaching his "scholars five" (24^4). His reaction to his comrade's challenge to duel is one of horror and his first impulse is to settle the dispute by peaceful means:

'Away, away, O bully Grahame,
And of that talk, man, let us be!
We'll take three men of either side
To see if we can our father's agree.'
(32)

Bewick's psalm-book (38^2) is an unforgettable minor symbol.

The Christian morality which the ballad opposes to the pagan, Border ethic, is not new in Border balladry nor is it necessary to regard it as the overlay of a seventeenth-century broadside writer. Christy Graham debates with his conscience in specifically Christian terms:

'Nay, for to kill my bully dear,
I think it will be a deadly sin;
And for to kill my father dear,
The blessing of heaven I neer shall win.

'O give me your blessing, father,' he said,
'And pray well for me to thrive;'
($20-21^{1-2}$)

As they prepare to fight, Bewick can only trust that, if it is his fortune to kill Graham, then "God's will's it all must be" (36^2). And Graham, before he leaps on his own sword, bequeathes his soul to God (48^3).

The final section of Bewick and Graham returns us to the two fathers. The last five verses are a kind of "coronach", or lament, for their stupidity. In a metaphor that is strikingly appropos, Old Graham expresses his deep sense of loss:

With that bespoke my good lord Grahame:
'O man, I have lost the better block;
I have lost my comfort and my joy,
I have lost my key, I have lost my lock.'
(54)

We may be sure that the last line would have spoken in real terms to a community whose only safeguard ultimately was the lock and key on their pele-tower doors.

In the last verse, the balladist guides his audience's response through the "one or two words" that mark his own moral standpoint:

> 't will be talk'd in Carlisle town
> That these two [old] men were all to blame.
> (56^{3-4})

Revenge was still good stuff for a Border Ballad as late as 1608, the date soon after which Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight was probably first sung.

We can ascertain the ballad's date of composition from historical accounts of the event it relates. This was the murder, on April 6, 1608, of Sir James Johnstone, head of the Scottish Johnstone clan, by Lord John Maxwell. The murder was to avenge the death of Maxwell's father who had been slain by the same Sir James Johnstone in the battle of Dryfe Sands, fought in December, 1593. As The Long Lay of Brunhild puts it, "Revenge is sought by every son, and the feud is fresh as long as a son lives!" (ll. 47-48)[1].

The series of factions and conflicts leading up to this private encounter between two of the most powerful Border families, need not delay us here. Suffice it to say that the feud lasted for nearly a hundred years and was probably one of the bitterest and bloodiest quarrels in the whole of Border history[2].

One incident in the long chain of events has been seen commemorated in The Lads o Wamphray, a pro-Johnstone ballad. Here the two narrative threads of revenge and cattle-raid are inextricably woven. The blood-lust of the private vendetta breathes through the speech of Will of Kirkhill:

1 Corpus Poeticum Boreale (ed. Gudbrandr Vigfússon and Frederick York Powell), 295.

2 For an account of the Maxwell-Johnstone feud, see George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, 174-80.

'For every finger o the Galiard's hand,
I vow this day I've killed a man.'
(35)

Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight was, as the title suggests, a song made by adherents of the Maxwell clan. The ninth Lord Maxwell is said to have been a boy of eight at the time of his father's death at Dryfe Sands[1]. The ballad gives us to understand that he nursed a plan of revenge which ruled his whole life and actions:

'Both night and day I did proceed,
And a' on him revainged to be;
But now have I gotten what I long sowght,
Trust me, I may not stay with the'.
(A4, cf. B4)

This action of Maxwell's is, moreover, no cause for censure, nor even for regret. We are back in the curious world of the old Border Code.

The ballad, in each of its versions, is narrated almost entirely in the first person by Maxwell himself on the eve of his escape to France. The Goodnight of the Rescue Ballads here forms a self-contained ballad, an added poignancy being the audience's knowledge that for this hero there is no escape to a Border sanctuary - Maxwell was beheaded at Edinburgh on May 21, 1613.

In his Goodnight Maxwell alludes to a number of previous events, and since a common knowledge of these would have been assumed in his listeners by the Border singer, it might be as well to give that portion of the story which forms the ballad background. John Spotiswoode, Archbishop of St. Andrews, gives what is perhaps the most objective of the many colourful accounts. I take it up after the escape of the young Maxwell from Edinburgh castle, where he had been imprisoned in 1607 for his "extravagant turbulence". Spotiswoode continues:

1 See Sir William Fraser, The Book of Carlaverock, I, 300.

No sooner found he himself at liberty, than he fell a plotting the Laird of Johnston's murther, which he wrought in a most treacherous manner. He pretending to use his friendship in obtaining his Majesty's Pardon, employed Sir Robert Maxwel of Orchardtown[1], whose sister James [Johnstone] had married, to draw on a meeting betwixt them, as he did: at a little hill called Achmanhill they did bring each of them one servant only, as was agreed, the said Sir Robert being present as a friend to both. At meeting after they had courteously saluted one another, and conferred a little space very friendly, the two servants going aside, the one called Charles Maxwel a Brother of Kirkhouse, the other William James of Locherby, Charles falleth in quarrelling, the other shooteth a pistol at him; the Laird of Johnston making to part them, the Lord Maxwel shooteth him in the back with two bullets, whereupon he falleth, and for a while keeping off the Lord Maxwel, who made to strike him with his sword, expired in the place. It was the 6 of April in the year 1608 that this happened. The fact was detested by all honest men, and the Gentleman's misfortune sore lamented ... Maxwel, ashamed of that he had done, forsook the Country, and had his Estate forfeited. Some years after, stealing quietly into the Kingdom, he was apprehended in the Country of Cathnes and beheaded at Edinburgh the 21 of May, 1613[2].

With regard to the date of the ballad, Sir Walter Scott surmises:

It seems reasonable to believe that the following ballad must have been written before the death of Lord Maxwell, in 1613; otherwise there would have been some allusion to that event. It must therefore have been composed betwixt 1608 and that period[3].

We may accept Scott's dating with the reservation that Border balladists have been notable for their tact with regard to the ignoble ends of their different heroes. Thus the Percy minstrel prefers his champion to die on the field at Otterburn (in The Hunting of the Cheviot) rather than at Shrewsbury in open rebellion against his king. Johnie Armstrong, a victim of James's machinations, is not executed (in the ballad) but "murdered" at Carlenrig (C32[1]), or else he dies the death of the heroic resistance-fighter, hopelessly outnumbered by a cruel Edinburgh mob (A, B). The ballads of Hobie Noble and Hughie Grame lead their audiences

1 In the ballad, Robin in the Orchet (A1b[3]), fair Robert of Oarchyardtoan (B1[3]).

2 The History of the Church of Scotland (1655 ed.), 338-9, 401-2;

3 Minstrelsy, II, 175.

as far as the gallows on Harraby Hill, but no further. This is effective: in terms of each ballad it means that the central character lives perpetually, and with each recitation, at the moment of his greatest triumph. Hughie Graham calling for his death to be remembered and Hobie Noble declaring that he is not ashamed of his name or to suffer for his fault, both win the martyr's apotheosis. The heroic "brag" is the note on which these ballads close.

There are two versions of Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight. Child A was communicated to Bishop Percy by George Paton of Edinburgh, on December 4, 1778[1], over 150 years after the ballad event. Child B follows Paton's copy by thirteen years and is given in The English and Scottish Popular Ballads from a version in the Glenriddell MSS[2]. The ballad was first published by Scott in the 1802 edition of his Minstrelsy, "from a copy in the Glenriddell MSS, with some slight variations from tradition"[3]. In this somewhat cryptic statement, an editor's liberties are once again to be detected, since Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight appears in Scott with the addition of two verses[4], two couplets to avoid repeating the refrain (M, 3^{7-8}, 7^{7-8}), and various other emendations.

"A and B", says Child, "agree entirely as to matter. The order of the stanzas, not being governed by an explicit story, might be expected to vary with every reciter"[5].

Henderson dismisses Paton's copy as "a much ruder production" than the Glenriddell copy[6]. It is almost certainly the earlier of the two by way of origin as well as transcription. In B rhyme is perfected,

1 See E.S.P.B., IV, 34, 36.
2 Glenriddell MSS, XI, 18, see E.S.P.B., IV, 34, 37.
3 Minstrelsy (1802 ed.), I, 194, see E.S.P.B., IV, 34.
4 Stanza 6 (Scott prints two verses together as an octave).
5 E.S.P.B., IV, 34.
6 Minstrelsy, II, 176.

"convoy" ($A15^4$) being altered to "convay" ($B15^4$) to accord with "away" ($B15^2$). Also B makes a more consistent use of first and second-person pronouns to clarify stanza 12:

'Ten thousand times I'll kiss your face,
And sport, and make you merry;' ($B12^{1-2}$)

which in A reads:

'Ten thousand times I'll kiss thy face;
Make sport, and let's be mery:' ($A2^{1-2}$)

The archaic expression "I vallow not" of $A3^2$, becomes in B the more rhetorical "What care I?" ($B3^2$). B makes Maxwell more logically take "off" his ring ($B13^1$), where A states that he took it "out" ($A13^1$). In version B orthography (especially of place-names) has become standardised and Scotticised.

Nevertheless, it is the Paton copy which is artistically the finer of the two. Two reciters may be seen at work in Lord Maxwell, each choosing his own arrangement of a certain number of orally inherited "themes". The B-singer adopts a somewhat random distribution; for example, he begins in what is the middle of A's text, with the chieftain bidding adieu first of all to his mother, two sisters and brother, and in the second half of stanza 2 to his "lady and only joy". There then follows a break of two verses in which Maxwell explains the feud and his revenge on the Laird Johnstone (B3-4). Stanzas 5-10 take up the farewell motif again, but this is continued unbroken through stanzas 5-10 in A, coming after the allusion to the deadly feud. Furthermore, stanzas 11-12 of version B are placed with less logic in A, since Maxwell has already stated five times (by way of the ballad's refrain) that he "manna stay" with her, and of course has also given good reasons why.

Both balladists make skilled use of the refrain as an emotional undertow running counter to the superficial arrogance and recklessness which strike one at first in Maxwell's speeches. The positioning of the refrain has been the cause of some dispute. Are we, for example, to regard the refrain lines as a chorus placed after alternate verses (as Child prints the ballad)? or do they form the last two lines of an octave? This, in fact, is the shape of the ballad as it is written in the Glenriddell MSS[1], and as it is printed by Scott in the Minstrelsy and by Bronson[2]. Fowler complicates the issue even further by saying that Lord Maxwell is "most remarkable ... as an eighteenth-century survival of the 'pseudo-ballade'"[3]. He continues:

> Child prints the text in quatrains, but there is little doubt the original was in octaves (ababbcdc), as is suggested by the following two stanzas, which are printed here as one (A7-8):
>
> 'Adue, fair Eskdale, up and doun,
> Wher my poor frends do dwell!
> The bangisters will beat them doun,
> And will them sore compell.
> I'll reveinge the cause mysell,
> Again when I come over the sea;
> Adue my leady and only joy!
> Fore, trust me, I may not stay with the'[4].

Fowler concludes, therefore, that:

> The literary form of Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight and the fact that its story belongs to the early seventeenth century combine to suggest that Paton's text is the first recorded version of a ballad more than 150 years old. If this is correct, then it must be admitted that the preservation of its octave stanzas is a rarity in the history of oral transmission[5].

1 See E.S.P.B., IV, 38.

2 B.H. Bronson, T.T.C.B., II, 186-7.

3 David C. Fowler, A Literary History of the Popular Ballad, 237.

4 Ibid.

5 Op. cit., 238.

As far as can be made out from the information supplied by Child, Paton's copy of Lord Maxwell is written in the usual four-line stanza of the popular ballad, whereas it is the Glenriddell copy which is "written in stanzas of eight lines"[1]. In any case, neither text (read as an octave ballad) observes any degree of regularity. If we try to make up octaves with a rhyme-scheme ababbcdc, we shall find none outside the example of Fowler's already quoted. Instead, the following rhyme-patterns emerge:

A text (Paton)

3 Octaves (A3 + 4, A5 + 6, A9 + 10) : abcbbded

1 Octave (A1 + 2) : abaccded

1 Octave (A11 + 12) : abcbdefe

1 Octave (A13 + 14) : ababcbdb

1 Octave (A15 + 16) : abacadbd

1 Octave (A7 + 8) : ababbcdc

B text (Glenriddell)

2 Octaves (B1 + 2, B3 + 4) : abcbdefe

2 Octaves (B5 + 6, B7 + 8) : abcbbded

1 Octave (B9 + 10) : ababbcdc

1 Octave (B11 + 12) : ababbcbc

1 Octave (B13 + 14) : ababcbdb

1 Octave (B15 + 16) : abcbcdbd

The temptation to write or print the ballad in octaves no doubt arose from the observation of rhyme-links between certain of the four-line stanzas, the last line of one rhyming with the first line of the next. In the A-text there are five examples of this (sts. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10), and in the B-text four (sts. 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12).

1 See E.S.P.B., IV, 38.

But is there any reason why this should not have been a mnemonic? Looking at the ballad's stanzas as quatrains, on the other hand, reveals that for the most part both texts are holding to the traditional ballad form of a four-line verse, alternating four and three stresses and rhyming abcb. The only departures from this are those verses which rhyme abab, but here rhyme is often imperfect. Thus, the rhyme-patterns for the quatrains are as follows:-

A text (Paton)
abcb : sts. 3-6, 8-I2, I4, I6.
abab : sts. I-2 (rhyme imperfect), 7, I3, I5 (rhyme imperfect).

B text (Glenriddell)
abcb : sts. I-8, I0, I4-I6.
abab : sts. 9, II (rhyme imperfect), I2 (rhyme imperfect), I3.

Most of the evidence, therefore, points to the fact that, far from being a written 'pseudo-ballade', Lord Maxwell has been sung fairly vigorously over a long period of time, and the four tunes published by Bronson confim this[I]. Moreover, the ballad is largely formulaic in its method of telling the story, being structured fairly loosely around a series of familiar leave-taking themes. "Adue" and "fair well" are the words sounded most often in the Goodnight, and usher in one of two syntactical patterns as the hero parts from each of the persons or things he has loved in his lifetime:

```
Adue ------------------------------ [NAME ] !
   Fair well ------------------------ [ "  ] !
Adue ------------------------------- [ "  ] !
   ---------------------------------------- .

Adue ------------------------------- [NAME ] !
   And ------------------------------ [ "  ] !
Adue ------------------------------- [REFRAIN] !
   ---------------------------------- [ "  ] .
```

I T.T.C.B., III, I86-7.

A perfect sense of balance is obtained by means of this structural symmetry, giving an impression of dignity, decorum, nobility, and unperturbed, deliberately unhurried leave-taking. The Border Ballad hero, even though forced to flee into voluntary exile, like Lord Maxwell here, or, like Jock of the Side, Hobie Noble and Archie of Cawfield, soliloquising on the eve of their execution, can be relied upon to bow out in style.

The farewells fall into two groups; they are addressed to people and to possessions. A sense of imperial pride and power swells out the verses in which Maxwell enumerates his land-holdings and military strengths:

'Adue, Dumfriese, that proper place!
Fair well, Carlaurike faire!
Adue the castle of the Trive,
And all my buldings there!

Adue, Lochmaben gaits so faire,
And the Langhm shank, where birks bobs bony ...
Adue, fair Eskdale, up and down, etc.
(A5, 6^{1-2}, 7^{1})[1]

Power is conveyed, too, in a symbol of wealth. Maxwell gives his wife "a good gold ring,/Where at hang sygnets three" (A1$3^{1-2}$, B1$3^{1-2}$). This reminds one of Johnie Armstrong's "targets", or tassels - symbols of royalty and military prowess.

The line above which describes the birch-clad hills of Langholm so concisely, seems to betoken a very real, very strong feeling for place, an appreciation of the softer aspects of Nature which seldom materialises in the Border Ballads beyond the conventional epithets

1 The Maxwell family owned extensive lands in Eskdale. The fortresses of Lochmaben, Langholm, Carlaverock and Threave were the keys to the Scottish West March and all of them were in the possession of the Maxwells at one time or another. The Maxwells also held property and lands in Dumfries, see Sir William Fraser, The Book of Carlaverock, passim.

"fair" and "gay". Lady Maxwell tries to persuade her husband to escape with her to her father's house where they will be safe to walk in "gardines green" (A1[3], B11[3]). Maxwell himself bids,

> 'Adue, the lillie, and fair well, rose,
> And the primrose, spreads fair and bony!'
> (A12[1-2], cf. B2[1-2])

There is an obvious pathos in lines such as these, increased through the tension set up between the harmony of a beautiful, semi-cultivated Nature of gardens green, trees and flowers, and the treachery and cruelty of human nature, apostrophised bitterly by Maxwell:

> 'Adue, Dumlanark! fals was ay,
> And Closburn! in a band;
> The laird of the Lag from my faither fled
> When the Jhohnstones struck of his hand.
>
> 'They wer three brethren in a band;
> I pray they may never be merry;
> (A9-10[1-2], B5-6[1-2])

The horrific crime alluded to by Maxwell is the skirmish at Dryfe Sands in which his father was slain barbarically by the Johnstones, whilst his own friends deserted him. David Moysie, the seventeenth-century historian, relates what happened:

> The lord Maxwell stood in the midst of these forces unarmed, as tho he regarded not his enemy; when the laird of Johnston approached to him, and gave him the first stroke on the head, by which he fell from his horse, and was there cruelly murdered, with sundry others of his kindred and friends ... Maxwell was all mangled in the face and left for dead. The lairds of Drumlanrig and Closeburn, who were in the lord Maxwell's company, escaped very narrowly with their lives[1].

The author of The Historie and Life of King James the Sext writes that Maxwell's enemies,

1 Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland (1755 ed.), 219-21.

> not content with his simple slaughter onlie, did cut af baith his hands, and careit the same with thayme on speir poynts, as a memoriall of his perfidie, and for ostentatioun of ther awin glore[1].

The fact that the lairds of Drumlanrig, Lag and Closeburn are said by Maxwell in the ballad to have been "in a band" (A9[2], 10[1], B5[2], 6[1]) would have been sufficient indication to a Border audience that their desertion of Maxwell's father was prearranged, an act of deliberate betrayal.

Such dark incidents give the ballad of Lord Maxwell's Last Goodnight a weird chiaroscuro quality. A bitter-sweetness spreads over it from the opposition of words such as "faire", "bony" and "good" (applied to the natural world) and words like "wiked", "sore" and "fals" (applied to the human). In A especially, the landscape of "gardines green" of the opening offers a sombre contrast to the "floods so gray" which provide the hunted chieftain with his only hope of happiness at the conclusion (A16[3]). His courage assumes in the ballad heroic proportions because it is set against this final image of a desolate seascape, also against the chivalric world of sporting kisses, gardens, flowers and country houses which he is seen to forfeit and leave behind him.

Heroic, too, is Maxwell's last defiant threat to put down any of the "bangisters", or outlaws, who might try to intimidate his "poor frends" in Eskdale during his absence:

> 'I'll reveinge the cause mysell,
> Again when I come over the sea.' (A8[1-2], B10[1-2])

1 Op. cit. (ed. Thomas Thomson), 299. Cf. also Spotiswoode, who says that Maxwell called to Johnstone to spare him, but he was "unmercifully used, and the hand that he reached forth cut off", The History of the Church of Scotland (1665 ed.), 402.

Otherwise Maxwell has no regrets. There is no question of the rightness of his action in murdering his father's assassin; the feud is all. The Glenriddell text makes the sacredness of the son's duty in avenging his father's murder quite apparent:

> 'Tho I have killed the laird Johnston,
> What care I for his feed?
> My noble mind dis still incline;
> He was my father's dead.
> (B3)

For "noble mind" A reads "my wiked heart" ($A3^3$), which might be thought to suggest a troubled conscience, but again this is negated in the preceding line - "I vallow not the feed" ($A3^2$), in other words, "What do I care if the feud continues as a result of my action?"

The only execrable conduct, indeed, is that of the men who deserted and betrayed Maxwell's father at Dryfe Sands, and "joy may they never see!" ($B6^2$). Commendable, by comparison, is the act of vengeance and the bravery of Maxwell's followers who turn out to give their chieftain a safe convoy to the waiting ship. They do not stint to toast him either:

> They drank the wine, they did not spare,
> Presentting in that good lord's sight;
> ($A16^{1-2}$, $B16^{1-2}$)

Here is the Borderer's hardy acceptance of the vagaries and sorrows of life. As the lost lord departs to what will almost certainly prove his death, his disciples commemorate his passing with wine. There can be no railing against an unkind Fate; like the ones left behind after the death in Frost's Out, Out,

> they, since they
> Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs[1].

1 The Complete Poems of Robert Frost, 161.

This "heathenish bloody custom" of feuding, as William Grey called it[1], persisted well into the seventeenth century. But stringent measures were already being adopted by James VI of Scotland before his accession to the English throne[2] and good laws were made "against such barbarous and unchristian misdemeanours and fightings"[3]. Had it not been for these and the greater power of the monarch accruing from the Union of 1603, the head of the Maxwell clan would almost certainly have escaped the death penalty when he slipped back into Scotland. His beheading on Castle Hill at Edinburgh in 1613 marks the end of an era: the close of the old period of individualism and lawlessness and the beginning of modern respectability and order.

1 Chorographia (1818 ed.), 48.

2 In November, 1600, an act was passed entitled 'Anent removing and extinguishing of deadly fead' and Parliament declared that King James was to act as arbitrator in the settlement of such disputes, see John Veitch, The History and Poetry of the Scottish Border, II, 48.

3 Grey, op. cit. (1818 ed.), 48.

CONCLUSION

The solving of the centuries-old Border Problem and the change in social conditions which resulted brought to an end a particularly creative period of balladry. Thereafter, no new themes of the kind we have been examining in the last eight chapters were added. In fact, judging by the number of ballad fragments that chance has preserved, it would appear that many of the old themes were cast away as the Border entered a new era of comparative peace and prosperity as part of James I's United Kingdom.

The fresh problems caused by the Presbyterian Revolution occupied not just the Borders but the whole of Scotland, although the Scottish Border saw much of the fighting between Covenanters and Royalists. But the ballads which deal with these denominational contests (if, indeed, they were all composed by the Border folk)[1] are of an entirely different cast. Scott remarked in his introductory preface to the ballad Lesly's March that this period was one "highly unfavourable to poetic composition"[2]. It is not difficult to appreciate why. Religious fanaticism of the kind which possessed the Scottish Kirk in the first half of the seventeenth century may win battles but will hardly make for the subtleties of great poetry. Such a fanaticism, in its rigid polarising of attitudes, is unlikely to use the popular literature of the day as a forum for debate, a testing-ground of social values, as to a large extent I believe the

1 Scott says that The Battle of Philiphaugh, which Child accepted as traditional, was "preserved by tradition in Selkirkshire", Minstrelsy, II, 213. The Battle of Pentland Hills, excluded by Child, was taken down from the recitation of an old woman residing on the Livingston estate at Airds, Kircudbrightshire, see Minstrelsy, II, 245.

2 Minstrelsy, II, 194.

Border Ballads of the previous centuries did. The violent hatred of episcopacy and royal absolutism carries us instead further away from even the old Border freebooter's disdain for authority and monarchical intervention. At its most extreme it takes up a standpoint that is both sectarian and bigoted. Whereas the mediaeval Borderer was prepared to adopt a moderate, regional standpoint and to allow that,

> It is a sore consumed tree
> That on it bears not one fresh bough.
> (R.R., 3^{3-4})

the Covenanter was entrenched in his own self-righteous conviction that,

> There's nane in the right but we,
> Of the auld Scottish nation.
> (Lesly's March, ll. 14-15)

Whereas the "debatable land" of clan mores had earlier led to a mixed admiration for the heyday of the blood among the riding men of the old Border surnames, English as well as Scottish, a willingness to admit to the worth of the next man (fostered by a strong sense of regional community), the later Covenanting ballads are composed out of a xenophobic invective which even The Battle of Otterburn was not guilty of. I quote again from Lesly's March:

> When to the Kirk we come,
> We'll purge it ilka room,
> Frae Popish relics, and a' sic innovation.
> (ll. 10-12)

It is my conviction, therefore, that the excellence of the Border Ballads we have examined in this thesis is informed and determined by the Heroic Age of the Border itself. Comparable in their ideology (if not in their structure and form) to other heroic narrative poems, such as those of Scandinavian and early Iron Age Greece, the Border Ballads can

be seen to share similar preoccupations, motifs and themes. G.S. Kirk, the Homeric scholar, has listed the main components of such a Heroic Age as:

> A taste for warfare and adventure, a powerful nobility, and a simple but temporarily adequate material culture devoid of much aesthetic refinement.[1]

All of these the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Border had. But Kirk goes on to insist that, although in such conditions the heroic virtues of honour and martial courage dominate all others (and are fitting material for heroic songs), they will ultimately have depressive effects on the stability and prosperity of the society[2].

Thus by about the second half of the sixteenth-century it would seem that the Border could not support the reivers' way of life for much longer and committed and intelligent men, March Wardens like Robert Carey and government officials like Richard Maitland of Lethington, became increasingly aware that rigorous measures were imperative to reform this backward region. It is no accident, I think, that many of the best Border Ballads belong to this period when the folk-poets, too, were beginning to detect and voice subtle criticism of the moral dichotomies at the heart of the heroic Border Code.

Without wishing to over-simplify (and remembering that many other Border Ballads have almost certainly been lost) our survey has shown that it is possible to trace in these narrative poems three stages or periods of composition. First, an early period of nationalism characterised by a defiance of "the auld enemie" (The Battle of Otterburn). Secondly, a long middle period of regionalism in which the established

1 Homer and the Epic, 2.

2 Ibid.

Border powers of March Warden, Lieutenant and Justice are antagonised and the reiving life celebrated for its camaraderie - the comic ballads, Dick o the Cow and The Lochmaben Harper are probably most typical of this period. And finally, a period of later regionalism which has become, however, more politically realistic in its recognition of the need for trust, compromise and justice, and which begins to undermine the earlier, unquestioned authority of the Borderers' mafiosi life-style (such themes as belong to this period are contained in ballads like The Outlaw Murray, Johnie Armstrong, Jamie Telfer).

However, the greatness of these Border Ballads, it must again be insisted, lies not so much in their fidelity to historical detail, as in the means by which this is collected and adapted as the raw stuff of exciting ballad narratives. Selecting and often fusing together unconnected events (as in The Hunting of the Cheviot, The Outlaw Murray and Jamie Telfer) and presenting these from their own regional angle, the makers of the Border Ballads managed to produce a series of heroic poems that were rich in drama, conflict and tension, as well as possessing at times an almost allegorical level of suggestiveness.

The best of these ballads, as we have seen, were first composed by singers working within strict regional and oral traditions, then preserved and handed down by the Borderers of the centuries that followed. These people kept alive the memories of their heroic past, at best reproducing accurately both the substance and spirit of that Heroic Age, at worst (and here Walter Scott is often culpable) casting over inherited tales a theatrical light of spurious romanticism.

That the inhabitants of the latter-day Border shires should have kept alive at all an interest in the old Border Problem is not really surprising when we consider that ballads and folksongs were one of the chief recreations in remote and illiterate valleys. Yet there may have

been something more, for as Stevenson (who knew the Border dalesmen well) explains:

> that is the mark of the Scot of all classes: that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to Englishmen, and remembers and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good and bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation.[1]

During the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Border Ballads went through what was essentially a reproductive stage. Kirk, in his sensible reappraisal of the work of Parry and Lord, has outlined four discernibly different stages in the life-cycle of an oral tradition[2]. First comes an originative stage when the idea of narrative poetry (as opposed to prose narrative or sage) first occurs. This is followed by a long creative stage in which the range of narrative songs is greatly extended, when existing songs may be radically altered (as in the case of Otterburn) or new ones be given circulation - always, of course, with the aid of inherited formulae and themes. The third stage is the reproductive one when established oral techniques are still used by unlettered singers but with the emphasis on memorisation rather than on re-creation through pure improvisation. This is why information about the singers of our Border Ballads - Mrs. Greenwood, Widow McCormick, Nancy Brockie and the others - almost always states that they "learned" the ballad from an older person. A fully oral-reproductive stage, Kirk concludes, is unlikely to last for many generations, and oral poetry begins to enter its last and degenerate stage[3].

1 R.L. Stevenson, Weir of Hermiston (Tusitala ed.), 54.

2 Op. cit., 27-9.

3 David Buchan has observed a similar process of slow deterioration in the texts of the Aberdeenshire ballads, see The Ballad and the Folk.

The spread of literacy usually speeds up the whole process. As in the decline of other oral cultures (the Serbo-Croation studied by Parry and Lord included), literacy has probably been responsible for a weakening and adulterating of what were once good Border Ballad texts. Once a folk culture achieves a state of literacy the old oral narratives soon begin to seem unreal, crude, unauthoritative and old-fashioned and they are then vulnerable to the sophisticated additions and reworkings of poetasters like Mr. Beattie of Meikledale or James Telfer the Liddesdale schoolmaster. At this point the oral tradition nears the end of its life-cycle and the only hope is for good texts to be preserved in writing, or, better still, on tape or record.

There was, however, another factor involved in the deterioration of texts from the Border and this was their removal to a different culture or community. Our study has revealed that some ballads are highly dependant on non-aesthetic controls for their survival. Continuity of race, for example, would seem to be of vital importance. This is why I have tried throughout to emphasise that the best features of the Border Ballads are regional.

There has been, I am sure, a communication more vital than we might expect from this region's ethos, from its philosophy, its racial collectivity and perhaps even its physical physiognomy. All of these, I suggest, the ballad folk have sensed, succeeding somehow in giving them form and expression in their own kind of poetry. For, as Herbert Read acknowledges, it is not sufficient merely to feel the ethos of a region; one must also realise it, and this is the immediate concern of the artist[1].

We would not expect the untutored Border singers to share the same approach to their regional material, though, as novelists like Hardy,

1 'The Writer and his Region', in The Tenth Muse, 71.

Bennett or Walpole. But just as these later writers conceive of their regional locale as a subject of interest in itself, there is some evidence that the makers of the Border Ballads were also conscious of the regional worth of their immediate surroundings. The number of direct references to the Border, or the Border-side, in the ballads tends to confirm this, and the place itself begins to assume the force of a literary symbol, especially when placed in relation to the world outside.

In the very best ballads this symbolism operates in several areas at once to suggest levels of meaning beyond the historical and contemporary, what Read has called "the concentration of infinite time in a finite place"[1]. Thus everyday phenomena like a Border stream in spate and actions like the crossing of it, or the habitual frontier clashes between individual and State, can be used within the heightened dramatic atmosphere of the ballad to establish patterns of plot and character which evoke the "racial memory". This ability to strike deep into the "collective unconscious" is undoubtedly the most satisfying single quality in the Border Ballads, a quality that is conspicuously lacking in all those modern imitations of the popular ballad carefully composed by Scott, Swinburne, Lang[2] and others.

To stress, by way of conclusion, what I have tried to demonstrate is a real folk art consciously at work, we might return once again to Charlotte Brontë's preface to Wuthering Heights, a novel which often seems to inhabit the same atmospheric world as the Border Ballads. She writes that the tale

1 Op. cit., 74.

2 Andrew Lang's attempts to persuade his readers how easily a traditional Border Ballad might be imitated will be found as an appendix to his Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy.

> was hewn in a wild workshop, with simple tools, out of homely materials. The statuary found a granite block on a solitary moor: gazing thereon, he saw how from the crag might be elicited the head, savage, swart, sinister; a form moulded with at least one element of grandeur - power. He wrought with a rude chisel and from no model but the visit of his meditations. With time and labour, the crag took human shape; and there it stands colossal, dark, and frowning, half statue, half rock; in the former sense, terrible and goblin-like, in the latter, almost beautiful, for its colouring is of mellow grey, and moorland moss clothes it; and heath, with its blooming bells and balmy fragrance grows faithfully close to the giant's foot[1].

The Border Ballads may not be "colossal" works of literature, but Charlotte Brontë's metaphor of the craftsman half-methodical, half-inspired, transforming life and nature into art, is surely appropriate to them.

1 Charlotte Brontë's Preface to the New [1850] Edition of Wuthering Heights (ed. David Daiches), 41.

TABLE A

ORAL-FORMULAIC REPETITION IN THOMAS RYMER

VERSION A: Stanzas: 16 Lines: 64

	Formula	Similar to	Type	Times Used
1^1	True Thomas	3^1, 5^2, 6^2, 16^4	name	5
1^4	the fernie brae	14^2	noun-adjective	2
4^1_1	O no, O no, True Thomas, she says	9^1	line	2
5^1	ye maun go wi me	5^2	half line	2
12^1	O see not ye (yon (narrow) / that (braid) road / bonny)	13^1, 14^1	line	3
12^3	That is the path of (righteousness / wickedness)	13^3	line	2

VERSION B: Stanzas: 13 Lines: 50

	Formula	Similar to	Type	Times Used
1^2	A wat a weel bred man was he	12^2	line	2
1^4	by) the Eildon tree	13^2	place-name	2
	at)			
2^3	this)			
	my) fair lady	3^3, 12^4	noun-adjective	3
	that)			
4^1_1	O no, O no	4^2_1	half line	2
4^1_2	Thomas, she says	5^1_2, 8^1	half line	3
4^2	that (can never) be / (must not)	8^2	half line	2
5^1_4	O harp and carp	5^2	half line	2
5^4	Or you see man (or)woman in your Beggared man (and)ain countrie	8^4	line	2
6^1_2	It's she has rode and Thomas ran	7^1	line	2
6^2	Until they came to yon (water clear / garden green	7^2_2	line	2
8^1	Hold your hand	8^2	half line	2
10^1	It's don't you see yon (broad / narrow) way	11^1	line	2
10^2	That leadeth down by yon (skerry fell / lillie lea	11^2	line	2
10^3	It's (ill's)the man that doth / (weel's)thereon gang	11^3	line	2
10^4	For it leadeth him straight to the (gates o hell / heaven hie	11^4	line	2

(TABLE A CONTINUED)

VERSION D: Stanzas: 11 Lines: 38

Formula	Similar to	Type	Times Used
1^{3} harp and carp	9^{1}	half line	2
1^{3} Thomas, she said	4^{1}_{2}	half line	2
4^{1} had your hand	4^{2}_{3}	half line	2
4^{4} in (your countrie / to (	9^{3}	half line	2
5^{1} O see you not that road, Thomas	6^{1}	line	2
5^{3} Curst (is the man has that road / Blest (to gang	6^{3}	line	2
5^{4} For it takes him to the (lowest hell / (heavens hie	6^{4}	line	2
7^{1-4} 'When ye come to my father's ha, / To see what a learned man you be / They will you question, one and a', / But you must answer none but me,	8^{1-4}	part-stanza	2

VERSION E: Stansas: 18 Lines: 72

Formula	Similar to	Type	Times Used
1^{3} a (lady gay / this (	4^{2}, 5^{3}, 6^{4}	noun-adjective	4
4^{3}_{1} Queen o Heavn	5^{1}_{2}	name	2
8^{1}_{1} Then harp and carp	8^{2}_{1}	half line	2
8^{1} Thomas, she (said / (cried	12^{1}	half line	2
8^{4} to (yere (ain) countrie / o (	12^{4}	half line	2
9^{2}_{1} Untill they cam to	11^{2}_{1}	half line	2
14^{1}_{2} And dinna ye see yon road, Thomas	15^{1}_{2}	line	2
14^{2} That lies out-ows yon (lilly lee / (frosty fell	15^{2}	line	2
14^{3} Weel (is the man yon gate may gang / Ill	15^{3}	line	2
14^{4} For it leads him straight to the (heavens hie / (pit o hell	15^{4}	line	2

TABLE B

ORAL-FORMULAIC REPETITION IN THE BROADSIDE COPIES OF JOHNIE ARMSTRONG

VERSION A: Stanzas: 17 Lines: 68

	Formula	Similar to	Type	Times Used
1^{2}	Iohnne Armstrong	17^{1}	name	2
1^{4}	eight score men	8^{3},9^{4}, 10^{2}	half line	4
2^{3}	O the golden bands an about (their / your) necks	7^{3}	line	2
3^{1}	Newes then was brought	17^{1}	half line	2
5^{3}	before (the / any) king	6^{1},9^{1}	half line	3
6^{3}	Every (man / won) of you shall have his (scarlet cloak / velvett coat)	7^{1}	line	2
6^{4}	Laced with silver lace(s)	7^{2}	half line	2
8^{1}	By the morrow morning at ten of the clock	10^{3}	line	2
9^{3-4}	'O pardon, my soveraine leige', he said, 'O pardon my eight score men and mee!'	10^{1-2}	request-refusal	2
13^{1-2}	Saying, Fight on, my merry men all, And see that none of you be taine;	16^{1-2}	half stanza	2

VERSION B: Stanzas: 24 Lines: 96

	Formula	Similar to	Type	Times Used
1^{1}	Is there never a man	2^{1}	question-answer	2
2^{2}	John Armstrong	4^{3}_{2},11^{3}_{2}	name	3
2^{4}	eight score men	9^{2},10^{2} 11^{2},12^{4}	half line	5
3^{3-4}	With their goodly belts about their necks With hats and feathers all alike	7^{3-4}	half stanza	2
5^{1}	(But) when John he	8^{1},9^{1}, 10^{1}	half line	4
6^{1}	before the king	10^{1}	half line	2
6^{3-4}	You shall every one have a velvet coat, Laid down with golden laces three.	7^{1-2}	half stanza	2
8^{1}	Guiltnock Hall	8^{3},21^{1}	place-name	3
15^{1}	my merry men all	18^{1}	half line	2
16^{1}	Then they fought on	19^{1}	half line	2
17^{1}	But then (rise up / They)	17^{2}	half line	2
20^{4}	bony grisell	23^{1}	noun-adjective	2

TABLE C

ORAL-FORMULAIC REPETITION IN KINMONT WILLIE

	Formula	Similar to	Type	Times Used
1^1	O have ye na heard o	1^2	half line	2
1^1	(the) fause Sakelde	$2^3, 20^4, 21^2, 24^2$	name-adjective	6
1^2	the keen Lord Scrope	42^4	name-adjective	2
1^3	bauld (Kinmont Willie / the (	$8^3, 35^3$	name	3
2^1	but twenty men	2^2	half line	2
3^4	And they (brought / led) him (ower / thro) the Liddel rack	4^1	line	2
5^4	the bauld Buccleugh	$17^2, 22^4$	name-adjective	3
6^1	thou (rank reiver / a (	22^3	half line	2
11^1_3	And have they taen him Kinmont Willie	12^1_3	line	2
11^3	And forgotten that the bauld Buccleugh	12^3	line	2
13^1_1	O were there war between the lands	15^1_1	line	2
16^1_1	He has calld him forty marchmen bauld	17^3_1	line	2
18^1	five and five	$18^3_3, 19^1_3, 19^2$	half line	4
19^2	ladders lang and hie	23^2	half line	2
19^4	the (Woodhouselee / frae (	23^4	place-name	2
21^1	Where be ye gaun ye (hunters keen / (marshal-men / (mason-lads / (broken men	$22^1_1, 23^1_1, 24^1$	line	4
21^2	come tell (to me / (me true	$24^2_2, 22^2_3$	half line	3
24^4	the nevir a (word / (horse	$25^3_4, 26^4_1$	half line	3
27^1	And when we (reachd / (left) the Staneshaw bank	28^1	line	2
34^{3-4}	Untill we came to the inner prison, Where Willie o Kinmont he did lie.	35^{1-2}	half stanza	2
37^1	Red Rowan	$37^3_3, 39^3_3, 40^2$	name	4
38^1_1	Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope	38^1_1	line	2
40^1	O (many a time, quo Kinmont Willie / And (	41^1	line	2

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Septentrio
ANNANDIÆ Præfectura,
Vulgo
THE STEWARTRIE of ANNANDALE.
NITHIÆ
PARS.
Part
of
Nithisdail.
ESCIÆ
PARS.
Part
of Eskdail.
Occidens
Orientes
Annand
ITVNÆ ÆSTVARIVM Vulgo SOLWAY
FYRTH.
ANGLIÆ
PART
OF
ENGLAND.
PARS.
Carlile
Scala Milliarum.
Auct. Timotheo Pont.
Excud. Io. Blaeu.
Meridies

Septentrio

Occidens

Orients

Meridies

SCOTIÆ

NORTHVM. BRIÆ

PARS.

PARS.

Gilsland.

THE PICTS WALL

Part of

Northumber

land.

THE BRIGANTES.

MARE

HIBERNICVM.

Anglis

WESTMORIÆ

PARS.

Part of

Westmorland.

THE IRISH SEA.

Fournes Yelds

LANCASTRIÆ.

PARS.

CVMBRIA,

Vulgo

CVMBERLAND.

Inglewood Forest

West Wirde Forest

Copeland Forest

Cockermouth

Workington

Keswick

Penreth

Egremond

Raven

Septentrio

PARS TVEDIÆ.

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LIÆ.

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DAIL.

Occidens.

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Meridies.

Amo

Illustrissimo Nobilissimo
D. FRANCISCO,
COMITI DE BACKLEVGH,
DOMINO SCOTT DE WICHESTER
et DALKEITH, &c. Tab. hanc D. D.
J. Blaeu.

EVIA et ESCIA,
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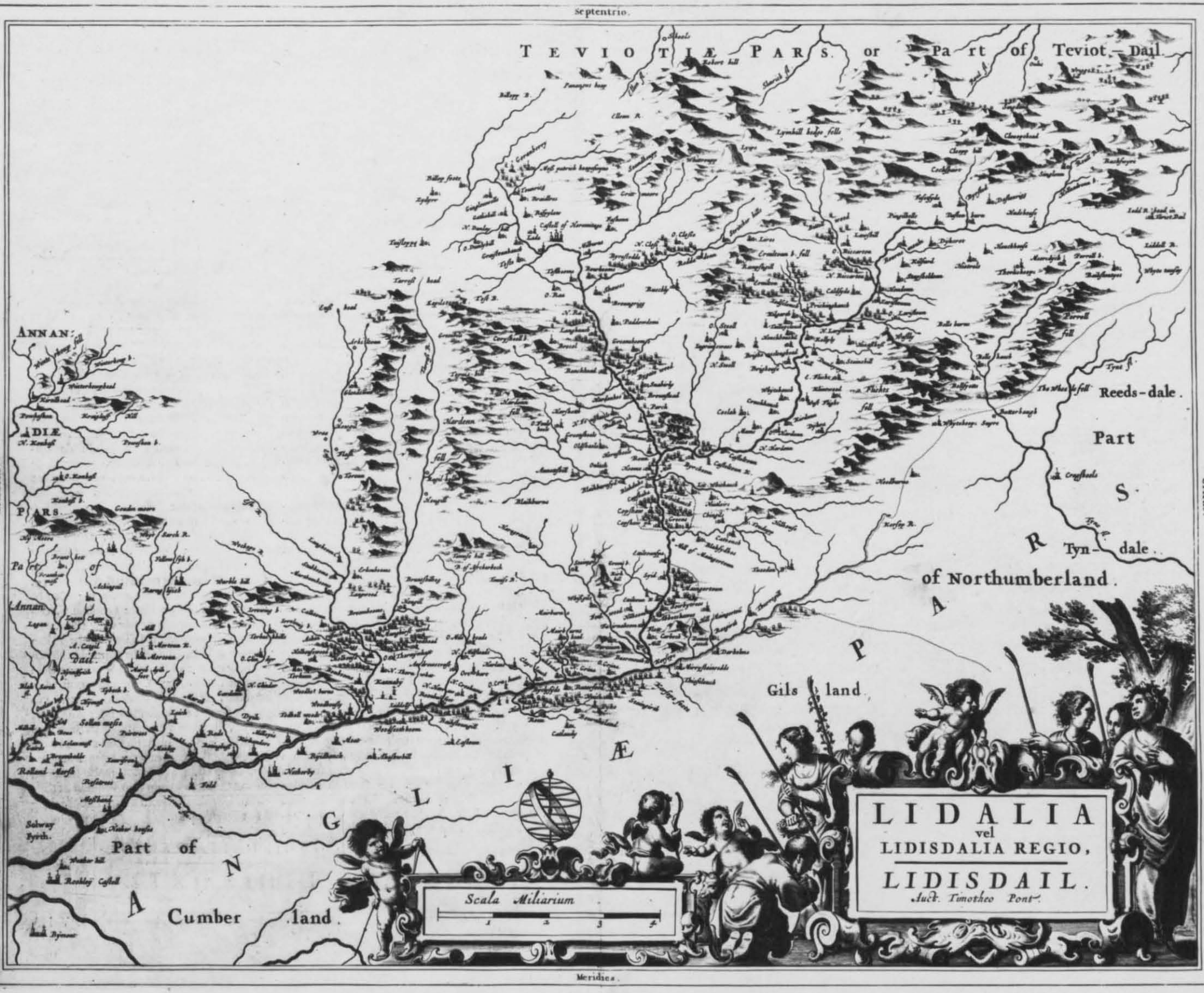
EVSDAIL
et
ESKDAIL.

Scala Milliaria.

Auct. Tim. Pont.
I. Blaeu Excud.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Part of
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Reeds-dale.
Part
S.
Tyn-dale.
of Northumberland.
Gils land
LIDALIA
vel
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Auct. Timotheo Pont.
Scala Miliarium
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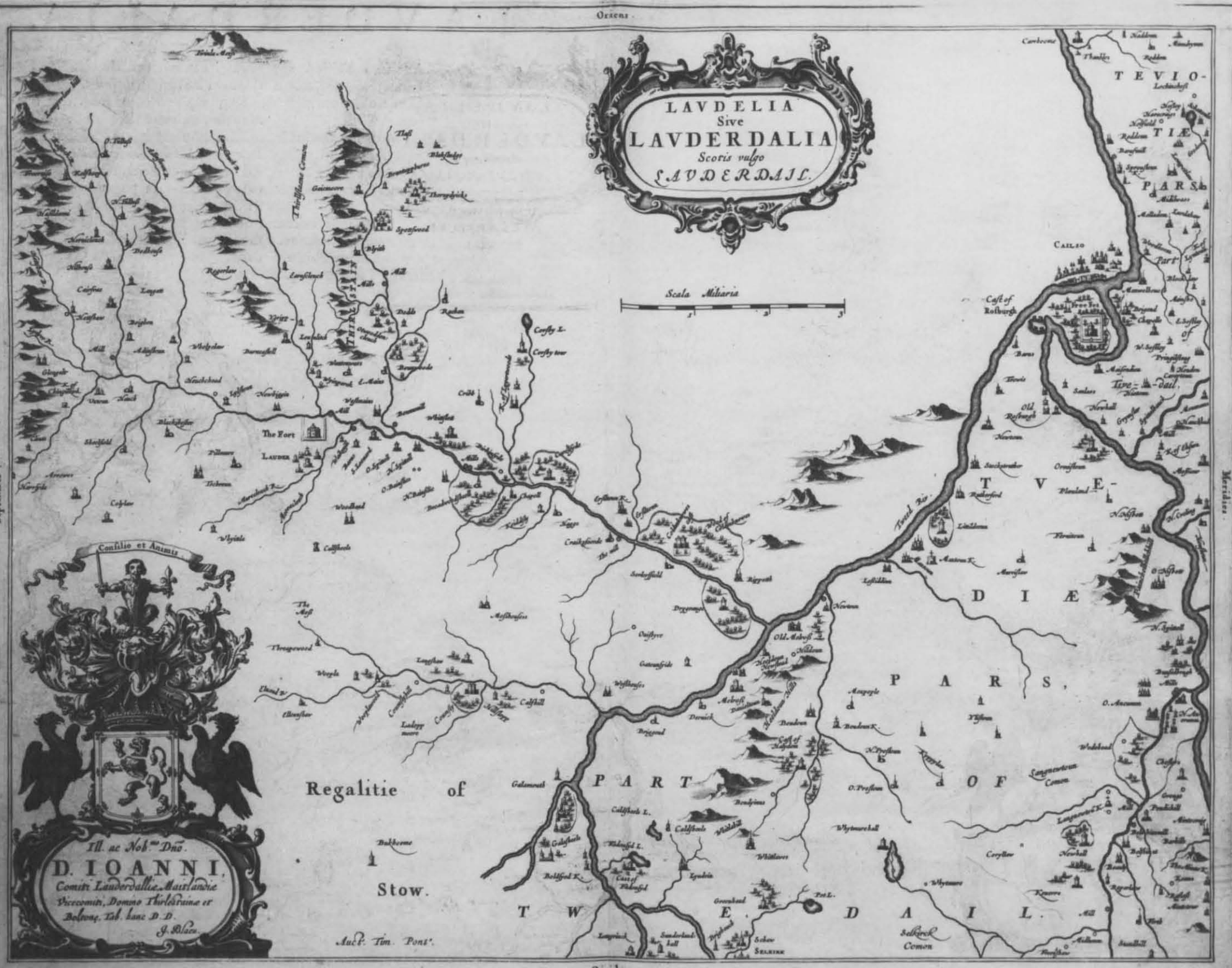
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LAVDERDAIL.
Scala Miliaria
Consilio et Animis
Ill.ae Nob.mae Dnae
D. IOANNI,
Comitis Lauderdalliae, Maitlandiae
Vicecomitis, Domino Thirlestaine et
Boltoun, Tab. hanc D.D.
J. Blaeu.
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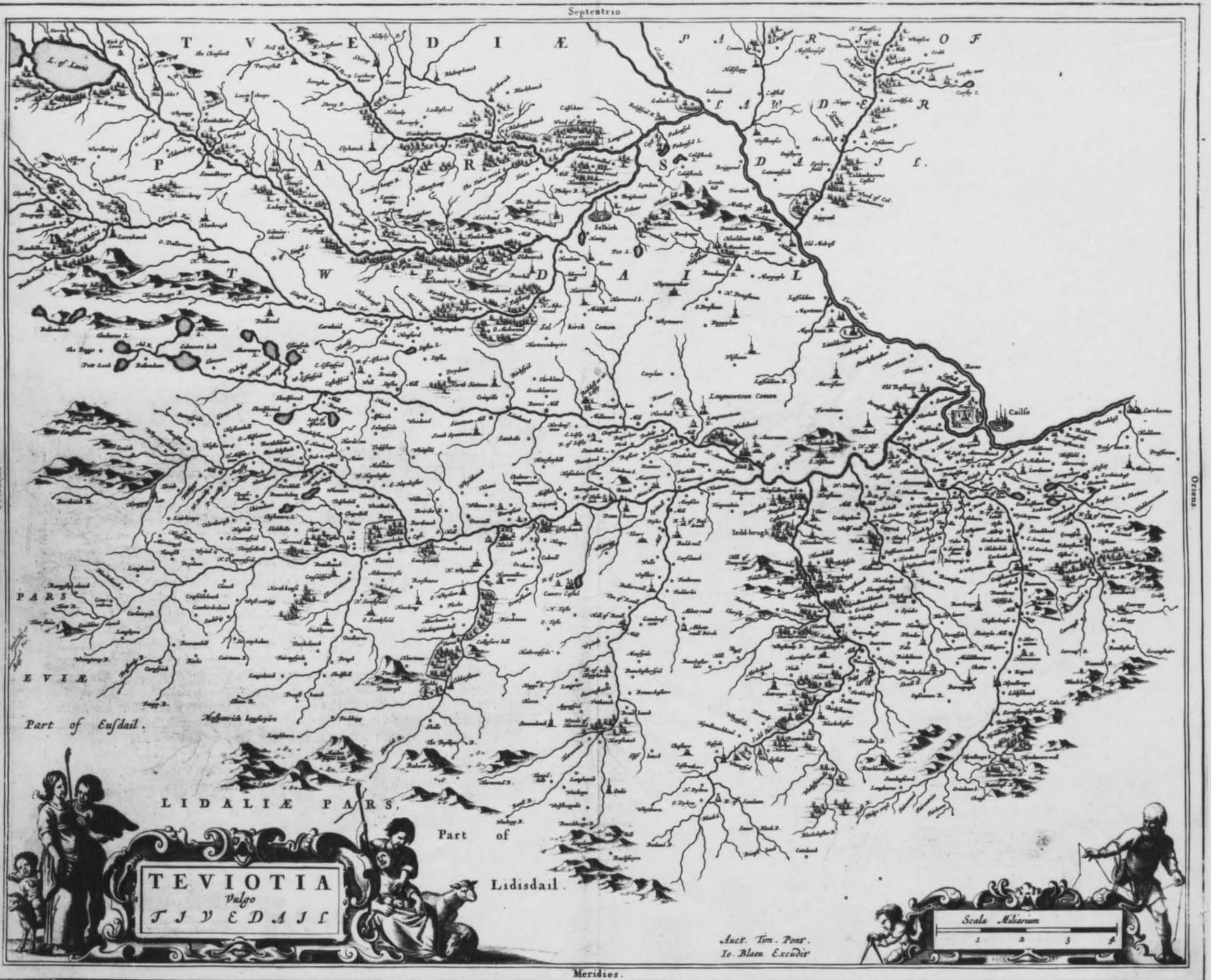
Auct. Tim. Pont.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LIDALIÆ PARS.
Part of
Lidisdail.
Caillo
Teddi-brugh
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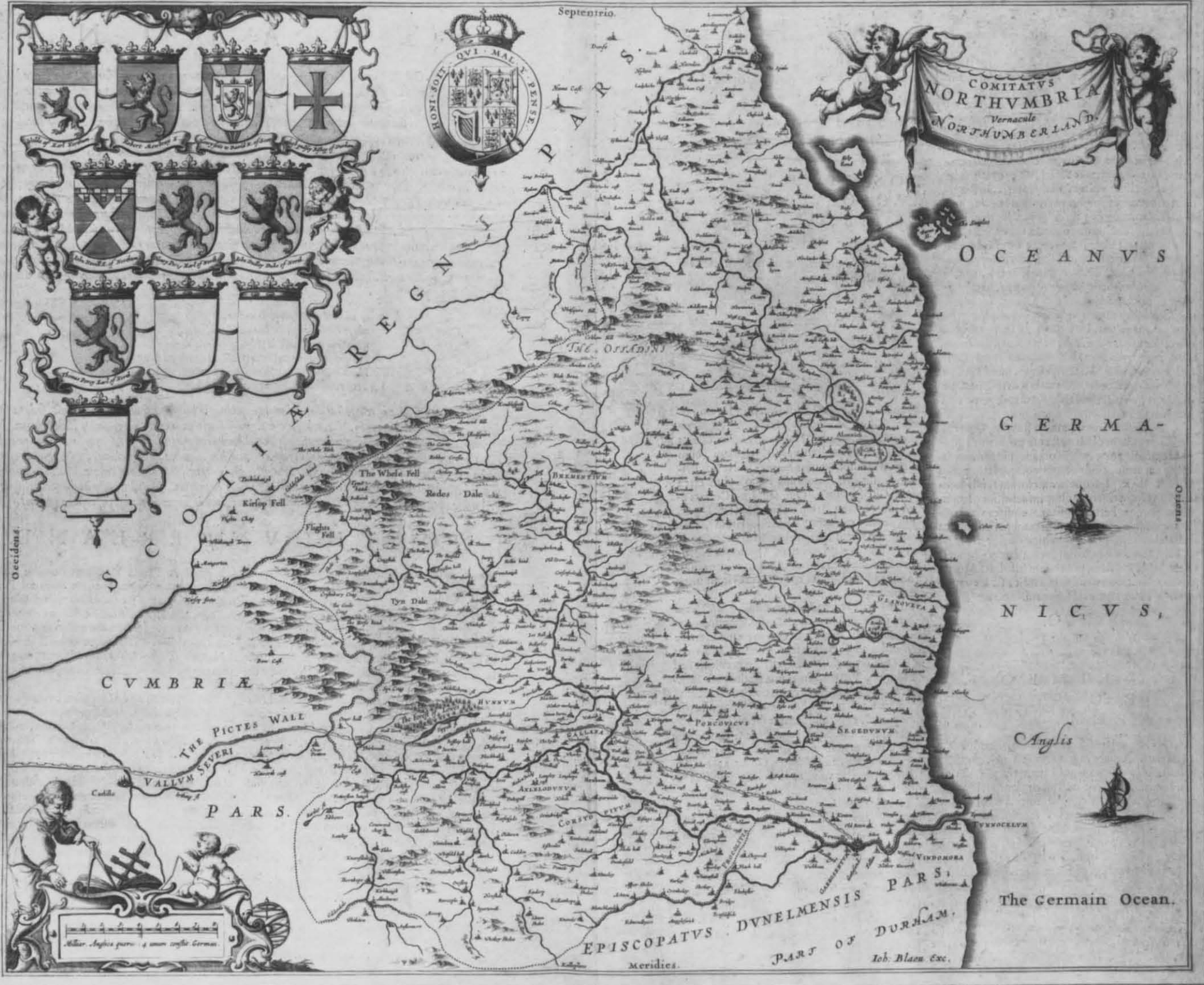
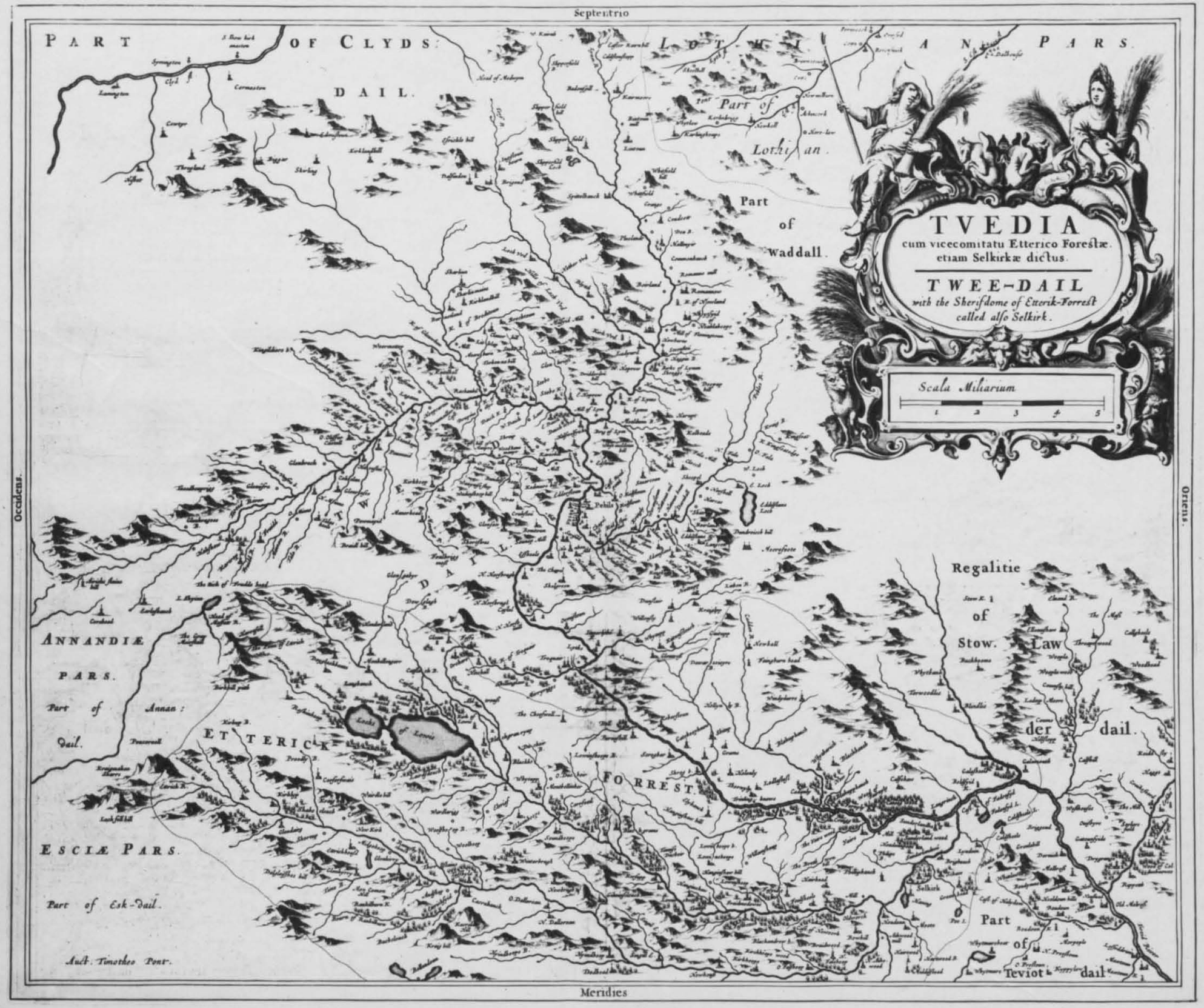

Septentrio.
HONI SOIT QVI MAL Y PENSE
COMITATVS
NORTHVMBRIA
Vernacule
NORTHUMBERLAND.
OCEANVS
GERMA-
NICVS,
Oceanus
Occidens.
REGNI PARS
SCOTIÆ
CVMBRIÆ
PARS.
THE PICTES WALL
VALLVM SEVERI
The Whele Fell
Redes Dale
Kirkop Fell
Flughes Fell
Tyn Dale
THE OSTADINI
BREMENIVM
HVNNVM
GALLENA
PORCOVICVS
SEGEDVNVM
AXELODVNVM
CORSTOPITVM
VINDOMORA
EPISCOPATVS DVNELMENSIS PARS.
PART OF DURHAM.
Anglis
The Germain Ocean.
Meridies.
Iob. Blaeu Exc.


Septentrio
Occidens.
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Meridies
PART OF CLYDS: DAIL.
LOTHIAN PARS.
Part of Lothian.
Part of Waddall.
TVEDIA
cum vicecomitatu Etterico Foreſtæ. etiam Selkirkæ dictus.
TWEE-DAIL
with the Sheriſdome of Etterik-Forreſt called alſo Selkirk.
Scala Miliarium
1 2 3 4 5
Regalitie of Stow.
Law der dail.
Part of Teviot dail
ANNANDIÆ PARS.
Part of Annan: Dail.
ETTERICK FORREST.
ESCIÆ PARS.
Part of Esk-Dail.
Auct. Timotheo Pont.