

THE ADVICE TO PRINCES TRADITION IN
SCOTTISH LITERATURE, 1450-1500

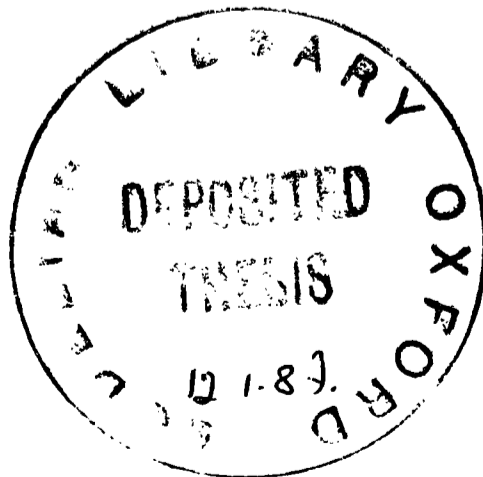
A thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Trinity Term 1986



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Preface

Anyone embarking upon a thesis, particularly one upon Middle Scottish literature, would be well advised to dwell upon Johnson's remarks in his Preface to the Dictionary on the lively pleasure with which he at first envisaged 'the obscure recesses of northern learning, which I should enter and ransack' in embarking upon the project, and the ensuing realization that 'one enquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and that to find was not always to be informed'. In writing this thesis I have entered many northern recesses, retreating sometimes with booty, but more often with the profound sense that there was more to be found with better light and more companions. That is, however, in no manner to decry the very great debt I owe to my companions over the past few years, in particular the volumes of the Scottish Text Society and the formidable compilations of the Acts of Parliament, Lords in Council, and other such institutions.

If there is any merit in this imperfect survey of a vast domain, it is also due to the patient encouragement of my supervisor Professor Douglas Gray, whose gentle asides over the years have sent me on fascinating searches, not always leading where either of us envisaged, but always worth the quest; to the generous advice of Dr Rod Lyall, the stimulus of whose research, both published and unpublished, is inadequately recorded in many a footnote; to Dr Roger Mason, who kindly allowed me to refer to his unpublished work on John Ireland; and to many friends and colleagues who have given me advice and information, particularly, Dr John Cartwright; Dr Vincent Gillespie; Dr Doreen Innes; Dr Elspeth Kennedy; Dr David Norbrook; and Dr Ted Powell. Dr Hugh Montgomery took me to Rosslyn, and Mrs Liz Ryder typed the thesis with exemplary skill and good humour. I am also very grateful to Dr A.J. Aitken and his colleagues at the Dictionary of the

Older Scottish Tongue for permitting me to consult their files of entries then unpublished, and to the staffs of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the British Library, London, St John's College Library, Oxford, the National Library of Scotland, Scottish Record Office, and University Library, Edinburgh, for permission to consult and transcribe MSS and theses in their possession.

This thesis was completed at St Hilda's College, Oxford, where I have spent two very valuable years as Randall-MacIver Junior Research Fellow. I have received much support and encouragement from my friends and colleagues here, who now know more about Scottish kingship than they might perhaps have desired; I am also grateful to Wadham College and St Cross College, Oxford where I began my graduate career, and it gives me great pleasure to record the support I have received from Alan Ward, under whose tuition I first set out upon the study of medieval literature.

My last acknowledgement is to my husband, Peter Godman, to whom I accord the dubious distinction of dedicating this thesis; for without him it would have been a different enterprise altogether.

SLM

3 July 1986

Conventions and Abbreviations

In quotation from modern editions of Middle Scots and other medieval works the spelling and punctuation of those editions has been retained, apart from the silent expansion of abbreviations and the normalization of the distinction between *i* and *j* in Macpherson's volume of the Meroure of Wyssdome. Transcription from manuscripts and from books printed before 1641 retains their orthography, apart from the use of *ß* in Middle Scots MSS, and, where relevant, punctuation; abbreviations are again expanded. In manuscripts folio references are given in the form fol. 1^r; in early printed books with no foliation reference is to quire signatures or chapter numbers.

The abbreviations listed here are those used throughout this dissertation. Abbreviations in individual chapters are indicated in the text or footnotes.

<u>ADA</u>	<u>[Acta Dominorum Auditorum], The Acts of the Lords Auditors of Causes and Complaints, 1466-1494, edited by Thomas Thomson (1839)</u>
<u>ADC I</u> <u>ADC II</u> <u>ADC III</u>	<u>[Acta Dominorum Concilii], The Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes, vol. I, 1478-1495, edited by Thomas Thomson (Edinburgh, 1839); vol. II, 1495-1501, edited by George Neilson and Henry Paton (Edinburgh, 1918); vol. III, 1501-1503, edited by the Rt. Hon. James Avon Clyde, Stair Society, 8 (Edinburgh, 1943)</u>
<u>APS</u>	<u>The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland 1124-1704, 12 vols, edited by Thomas Thomson and Cosmo Innes (Edinburgh, 1814-75)</u>
BL	British Library
CUL	Cambridge University Library
<u>DOST</u>	<u>A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue from the Twelfth to the End of the Seventeenth Century, edited by Sir William Craigie, A.J. Aitken, and James A.C. Stevenson (1951-)</u>
<u>DRP</u>	<u>De Regimine Principum (Fairfax MS or Maitland Folio MS) in The Maitland Folio Manuscript, edited by W.A. Craigie, 2 vols, STS 2nd Ser. 7, 20 (1919-27), I, pp.115-25, II, pp.74-91</u>

EETS	Early English Text Society
E. Ser.	Extra Series
O. Ser.	Original Series
<u>EHR</u>	<u>The English Historical Review</u>
<u>ER</u>	<u>The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, 1264-1600</u> , edited by John Stuart, George Burnett, George Powell M'Neill, A.J. Mackay, 23 vols (Edinburgh, 1878-1908)
<u>IR</u>	<u>The Innes Review</u>
<u>LP</u>	<u>Liber Pluscardensis</u> , edited by Felix J.H. Skene, 2 vols, <u>The Historians of Scotland</u> , VII, X (Edinburgh, 1877-80)
<u>M AE</u>	<u>Medium Aevum</u>
<u>MED</u>	<u>Middle English Dictionary</u> , edited by Hans Kurath, Sherman M. Kuhn and John Reidy (Ann Arbor, 1952-)
<u>Meroure I</u>	<u>The Meroure of Wyssdome by Johannes de Irlandia</u> , vol. I, Books I-II, edited by Charles Macpherson, STS, New Ser. 19 (1926);
<u>Meroure II</u>	vol. II, Books III-V, edited by F. Quinn, STS, 4th Ser. 2 (1965);
<u>Meroure III</u>	Books VI-VII, transcribed from National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS. 18.2.8.
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
<u>OED</u>	<u>The Oxford English Dictionary</u> , 13 vols (Oxford, 1923)
<u>Prose MS I</u> <u>Prose MS II</u>	<u>Sir Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript</u> , edited by J.H. Stevenson, 2 vols, STS, 1st Ser. 44, 62 (1901-14)
<u>RES</u>	<u>The Review of English Studies</u>
<u>RMS</u>	<u>[Registrum Magnis Sigilii Scotorum], The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, 1306-1668</u> , edited by John Maitland Thomson and James Balfour Paul, 11 vols (Edinburgh, 1862-1914)
<u>SHR</u>	<u>Scottish Historical Review</u>
<u>SLJ</u>	<u>Scottish Literary Journal</u>
SRO	Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh
<u>SSL</u>	<u>Studies in Scottish Literature</u>
STS	Scottish Text Society
<u>TA</u>	<u>Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, 1473-1566</u> , edited by Thomas Dickson and Sir James Balfour Paul, 11 vols (Edinburgh, 1877-1916)

Introduction

We cum pure we gang pure baith king & commoun
Bot þow reule þe richtuis þi rovme sall orere¹...

So concludes the fallen howlet in Richard Holland's Buke of the Howlat, composed probably about 1448.² The warning to kings to preserve the common profit of the realm is thoroughly characteristic of the linked and long-established genres of advice to princes and fall of princes literature. However, recent studies of the composition and imagery of The Buke of the Howlat have shown that the poem has a strong degree of contemporary reference and may have a particular bearing on the relationship between the Douglasses and James II.³ But though some general warning to the monarchy may be intended in the conclusion to the poem, to have presented the king in the guise of an overmighty and arrogant being liable to be attacked and deposed by his fellow men would be distinctly against the grain of Scottish advice to princes literature in the second half of the fifteenth century. In this respect, The Buke of the Howlat neatly touches on a central issue in this type of writing: the corruption of monarchy may be alluded to, and its imminent removal implied, but the means by which this would be achieved are commonly placed in the capable hands of the vigilant Divinity. The Buke of the Howlat is in several ways untypical of the advice literature of this period because we can be confident about its dating, authorship, and intention. None the

1. Ll. 983-4 in The Asloan Manuscript, vol. II, edited by W.A. Craigie, STS, New Ser. 16 (1925).

2. A date argued for by Felicity J. Riddy, 'Dating The Buke of the Howlat', RES, New Ser. 37 (1986), 1-10.

3. Ibid; R.J. Lyall, 'The Court as a Cultural Centre', History Today, 34 (September 1984), 27-33 (29-30) mentions that the fall of the howlet may be intended to allude to the fall of the Livingstons or may be an attempt to 'forestall an attack by the King on the Livingston's erstwhile allies, the Douglasses'. The first suggestion seems quite possible, although the Livingstons were put down by James in 1449, a date later than that put forward for the poem by Riddy.

less, through its brief excursus into the advisory mould, it sets the tenor for the works that were to come.

Advice on the government of princes or rulers is one of the oldest established literary genres in many countries and cultures, but its distinctive flowering in the literature of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scotland has received relatively little detailed attention. The period 1450-1500 covered here is one of high production of advisory material during the reigns of three monarchs, James II, III, and IV. While Scottish historians over the past ten years have done much to reassess the nature of fifteenth-century Scottish conceptions of kingship, they have taken little account of the range and vitality of the discussion of this subject in vernacular literature. This study sets out to show how the advice literature of this period illuminates these views of kingship, by examining the sources, arguments, and extent of political comment of each individual piece. In analysing the cultural setting of these works it employs both literary and historical sources to reveal the largely unrecognized impact of continental, especially French, political thought on a number of Scottish authors. Some of the most important points of interaction between them are displayed in the writings of Sir Gilbert Hay and John Ireland, both of whom are considered here with more detailed attention than they have previously received.

That is not to imply, however, that all the pieces covered here are advice to princes pieces per se. Some, such as De Regimine Principum, manifestly are, but others, indeed most others, insert their counsel within a wide variety of genres: the treatise on warfare; the romance; the tale collection; the estates treatise; the devotional poem. And many, including a work specifically written for James IV, John Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome, address themselves through the figure of the king to a far wider audience. An expansive definition of advice to princes literature is therefore advanced as

that which includes substantial or significant counsel for a monarch or monarchs. This has led me to exclude detailed consideration of a number of works which have some overlap with this sort of writing, such as The Porteous of Noblenes, which deals with similar issues but is not especially addressed to princes, or The Foly of Fulys, which has a more broadly advisory purpose.⁴

It is not common for works in this period to be precisely directed towards a named monarch, though at the end of the century Ireland does address his Meroure to James IV. This lack of clear direction has, as we shall see, given rise to the attribution of many advisory pieces to the reign of James III, on the strength of his reputation as a corrupt monarch, prone to favouritism. In recent years, historians, notably Norman Macdougall, have revised this view of a monarch whose historical image is seen to have been substantially created by hostile Scottish historians such as Lindsay, Lesley and Pitscottie.⁵ Instead it has been argued that James III, like all Scottish kings of this period was motivated by an assertive desire to manifest power, which in his case 'was taken to dangerous lengths',⁶ and alienated influential noble factions. But it should also be acknowledged that there was continued noble support for a strong and stable monarchy in which they had a vested interest.⁷ It will be shown that it is less common for writers to make veiled allusions to particular kings, than for them to manifest (and inherit) a number of general but well-defined preoccupations about the nature of kingship

4. For some brief discussion of the latter, Ch. 3, pp.151-3.

5. Norman Macdougall, 'The Sources; A Reappraisal of the Legend' in Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century, edited by Jennifer M. Brown (1977), pp.17-32; also his James III: a Political Study (Edinburgh, 1982), esp. pp.269-98.

6. Jenny Wormald, Court, Kirk, and Community, The New History of Scotland, 4 (1981), p.11.

7. Jennifer M. Brown (now Wormald), 'The Exercise of Power' in Brown, pp.33-65 (esp. 51-65), Wormald, pp.3-26.

in Scotland. I believe it is a mistake to look for personalities in most of the literature examined here. However, this is in no manner to suggest that this literature is blandly unhistorical. The degree of precision is highly variable - the two extremes might be reflected by De Regimine Principum and The Buke of the Chess - but a common feature is a sensitive and conscious use of legalistic language concerning the practice, institutions, and conceptual basis of the law. Kings have in this context both a high constitutional and symbolic status. This common area of associative language, along with an essentially pragmatic view of the monarchy, are distinctive characteristics of Scottish advice to princes literature, especially in comparison with its English and French counterparts. It is here that we can talk of a distinctive Scottish tradition of advice writing.

If, moreover, a preoccupation with justice and the law is manifested in a number of features that do reflect on the lives and personalities of the monarchs, it is in a collective as much as an individual manner. I have referred already to the conflicting desires for strong kingship and an accountable monarchy; another prominent area of concern is the issue of minority rule. The reigns of James II, III and IV all began as minorities - as had the reign of James I and would that of James V. And it was at these times that the stability of kings, and the stability of the community, were especially vulnerable to incursions of particular individuals or factions. It is probably no coincidence that there would seem to be certain periods of activity in the composition or copying of advice to princes literature in Scotland in 1460, with the minority of James II, and 1488, with the death of James III and minority of James IV.⁸ And these two factors, concern for the

8. See the discussion in Ch. 2, pp.47-9, 140-1, Ch. 3, p.145 and Ch. 8, pp. 451-2.

extent of the accountability of the king and concern for a country prone to periods of minority rule come together in the creation of another area of tension which was to become far more pronounced in the next century: in 1490 we see John Ireland devoting a chapter of Book VII of the Meroure of Wyssdome to the respective merits of succession or election in the choice of king. The solution is naturally in favour of the latter, but it is hard not to feel that Ireland had an acute sense of the relevance of the issue following the troubled times up to and after the death of James III.

In making a study of the advice to princes literature of this period one encounters difficulties in three main areas: authorship; date; and readership. We can positively identify three authors discussed here: Gilbert Hay, Robert Henryson, and John Ireland; and we can fairly confidently do the same for William Touris and The Contemplacioun of Synnaris. Other cases remain unsolved. The author of De Regimine Principum still evades us, and the evidence for Stobo as the author of The Thre Prestis of Peblis is primarily circumstantial. There are interesting links between The Talis of the Fyve Bestes and The Buke of the Chess, but perhaps the densest cloud hangs over the author or authors of Lancelot of the Laik. We can of course say with a large degree of certitude that many of these unidentified authors were churchmen. The half-century covered here was one of growing literacy among the laity, and the small amount of evidence we have suggests that not quite all Scottish writers of the periods were clerics, but the majority were.⁹ As most notaries public were also churchmen, the affinity with legal language that many advice writers

9. Alexander Grant, Independence and Nationhood, Scotland 1306-1469, The New History of Scotland, 3 (1984), pp.102-3; Wormald, p.69, where the literate are described as 'almost entirely a clerical elite' as late as the mid-fifteenth century: 'They wrote the poems and histories for a non-literate aristocratic and gentry audience, and they read them to that audience.' This is possibly a slight overstatement.

display is also natural and comprehensible. However, it is important that we bear in mind a still undefined but doubtless existing difference between those authors such as Hay and Ireland who were writing within court circles and under conditions of patronage, and those authors writing with less close contact with the centre of power, such as perhaps those of The Talis of the Fyve Bestes and The Thre Prestis of Peblis. On the other hand, while the works of Hay and Ireland show the most obvious influence of contact with European (particularly French) literature and political thought, sources for the less sophisticated Fyve Bestes and Thre Prestis are also impressively wide-ranging.

Dating presents cognate problems. Hay's prose MS and Ireland's Meroure can be definitely located to 1456 and 1490, but the dating of other works remains in dispute (De Regimine Principum) or very vaguely within the last quarter of the fifteenth century (Fyve Bestes, Buke of the Chess). Again Lancelot of the Laik floats freest of all - perhaps even originally composed in part before the opening date of this survey. It must therefore be understood that my ordering of material here is only broadly chronological. Cases have been argued for placing The Thre Prestis of Peblis and The Contemplacioun of Synnaris later than Ireland's Meroure, for example. I remain still unconvinced in both instances, and I have also chosen to place Ireland prior to the Conclusion on the grounds that his attitude to the king invites us to look ahead to the changing relationship to the monarch found in some sixteenth century writers, notably Dunbar.

Readership too is a largely uncharted area for the Scottish literature of this period, but one which present research into the production of MSS in Scotland should render increasingly well defined. We can have no certainty that the kings saw or heard all the pieces that address themselves to the monarchy. As I have indicated, there are necessary distinctions to be made

between learned and less overtly learned pieces; and between works produced under conditions of commission or patronage and those whose origins are far more obscure. The nobility clearly provided one source for an audience. We have already seen the instance of Holland's Howlat; Hay's prose MS was produced for William Sinclair, earl of Orkney, and recopied for his son Oliver in 1488. Another, and probably substantial body of readers would have been constituted by members of the clerical estate who, as we have seen, were also authors of much advice to princes literature. And these readers would have included such highly literate and politically influential figures as Bishops Kennedy, Elphinstone and Scheves and archdeacon Whitelaw.¹⁰ Lay literacy too was increasing in these years. Nearly half of the works considered in this study appear in the Asloan MS, produced c. 1515-30,¹¹ by John Asloan, a scribe and notary public.¹² Recent research by Dr R.J. Lyall into the manuscript's production shows that the items in it were probably circulating separately before being brought together by Asloan.¹³ This gives us a glimpse of the dissemination of Scottish literature at this time in more detail than it has previously been possible to envisage; and it is clear that the relationship between readership and the content of advice to princes literature is a fruitful one for further study in terms of the demand for such writing and the popularity of particular pieces.

10. Lyall, 30-1; Macdougall, James III, pp.11-13, 53, 126-8, 195-8, 213-14.

11. Described at present in most detail by Catherine van Buuren in her edition of The Buke of the Sevyne Sagis (Leiden, 1982), pp.5-20 and 41-2; Dr Lyall at a paper given in Oxford, 20 February 1986, has suggested the MS was produced between 1515 and 1525, perhaps earlier rather than later.

12. On Asloan, van Buuren, pp.21-30.

13. On the identity of the piece þe Regiment of kingis with þe buke of phisonomy referred to in the contents list of the Asloan MS, see Ch. 2, pp. 61-4 and Ch. 5, p.249, n.15.

The detailed examination I have made of each work attempts to raise these questions and the many further questions they inspire, but in no respect to answer them with finality. But it is to be hoped that certain issues raised here, particularly the continued importance of French political writing throughout the period, and the continued employment of legalistic vocabulary, will prompt further reassessments of many of these unjustly overlooked works.

The study opens with a consideration of De Regimine Principum, politically one of the most interesting pieces of advice to princes literature, precise and forthright in its criticism, and clearly well-known for a century or so after its composition. The complex questions of its date and authorship recur in the next chapter, which deals with advice to princes in the writings of Sir Gilbert Hay. Here, even more so than with De Regimine Principum we can see the pronounced impact of continental political thought on Scottish advice writing, an influence that is apparent in the works of Hay's prose MS but receives its fullest statement in a section of his Buik of King Alexander, a text that has thus far been subjected to very little critical discussion. De Regimine Principum and the Buik of King Alexander are seen to share a concern for the king's exercise of power through certain political institutions, a relationship which poses a number of questions about the milieu in which such works circulated, and indeed about the authorship of De Regimine Principum.

Chapter 3 deals with the presentation of advice in another romance, Lancelot of the Laik, a poem far less precise in its allusions, but clearly indicative of a number of recurrent preoccupations in Scottish advisory literature in the areas of justice and kingly minorities. Moreover, the depiction of good kingship extends from the lengthy section of advice-giving into the depiction of the main protagonists, with the author clearly intent on drawing out features of his source which heighten a sense of the differences between Lancelot and Arthur. Then follow two chapters dealing with works

whose advice has a similarly generalized, but occasionally more pertinent tenor. The Talis of the Fyve Bestes gives particular voice to demonstrating the value of a strong indeed nationalistic kingship; and in both tales and format demonstrates the value of a kingly justice exercised in accord with nobility and counsellors. The Buke of the Chess shows Scottish advice to princes at its least adventurous, its least politically aware, though still with a sense of legalistic resonances. In Chapter 6 we move into yet another genre, with The Contemplacioun of Synnaris, a work with a complex textual history, whose use of advice to princes within a meditational and eschatological context gives the most acute rendition of the divine framework in which ideas of kingship must always be viewed. Here too, as also in Hay's Buik of King Alexander, we perceive the wider associations of 'kingship' with the nosce te ipsum tradition, in which every man governs his own little kingdom.

Chapters 7 and 8 concern two works, The Thre Prestis of Peblis and John Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome, which like the pieces in the first two chapters suggest shared sources or borrowing. The Thre Prestis of Peblis makes use of exempla from Jean Gerson's Vivat rex, which are also used by Ireland in Book VII of the Meroure of Wyssdome. However, the two works are in other respects very different, and I have argued that it would be unwise as yet to posit any direct collaboration between their authors. The Thre Prestis is a skilful and entertaining work far less concerned with aspects of political theory than the Meroure. The latter reveals the most pronounced employment of French political thought, especially Gerson's sermons, to be found in Scottish advice writing at this time, along with further borrowings from sources as diverse as The Court of Sapience and Marsilius of Padua's Defensor pacis. However, examination of Ireland's use of Gerson also makes very clear one essential divergence from the more radical extremes of French political theory, as advocated by Gerson: the avoidance of direct discussion of tyrannicide. In

this, as was indicated earlier, he presents a view of kingship consonant with that portrayed in all other pieces considered here.

This detailed account of the shifts in argument and register in Scottish advice to princes literature throughout this period enables us to see more sharply the way in which Henryson adopts the advisory idiom in his fable of 'The Lion and the Mouse', which I discuss in the Conclusion. I have taken this work out of a strict chronological order because I believe that it is through a detailed analysis of other works studied in this dissertation that we can appreciate what Henryson is doing in this fable with more ease and sensitivity.¹⁴ Henryson gives us the best example of a work that resists crude political allegorization and provides a consummate summary of the conceptual and theoretical issues to which Scottish writers returned throughout the period. Indeed in the final stanza of the poem Aesop provides some words of advice which might well be regarded as a rubric for all those who took on the advisory role in fifteenth-century Scotland:

Quhen this wes said, quod Esope, 'My fair child,
Perswaid the kirkmen ythandly to pray
That tressoun of this cuntrie be exyld,
And iustice regne, and lordis kepe thair fay
Vnto thair souerane lord baith nycht and day.'
And with that word he vanist and I woke;
Syne throw the schaw my iourney hamewart tuke.¹⁵

14. I have always remarked on places in the course of the study where there may be a Henrysonian influence.

15. Ll. 1615-21 in The Poems of Robert Henryson, edited by Denton Fox (Oxford, 1981).

Chapter 1

De Regimine Principum

Despite the incomplete state of two of its major witnesses it must nevertheless be said that De Regimine Principum Bonum Consilium¹ has more surviving witnesses than many other Scottish works of the period, and indeed than other advice to princes pieces. Its earliest witnesses are two manuscripts of the Liber Pluscardensis chronicle, which was completed by 1461: MS Fairfax 8 (F), transcribed in 1489, and Glasgow, Mitchell Library MS 7396 (M), which is a copy of F and had been transcribed by 1500.² The next witness is also one of the earliest examples of printing in Scotland - one of that small number of prints executed by Chepman and Myllar in 1508 (C).³ In both FM and C, however, the poem is incomplete, and thus the version in the Maitland Folio Manuscript (Mt), probably produced between 1570 and 1586, constitutes what appears to be the only full version.⁴ Such hesitancy in describing Mt as a complete work is necessary because the textual differences between the two principal witnesses, F and Mt, are considerable. Along with variant readings, each contains stanzas not found in the other; and Mt has a different, two-part structure, including the re-ordering of certain stanzas in F. Moreover, while

1. This title is given to the poem only in the Maitland Folio version, and it is not clear where and how it originated. The title of course recalls the works by Aegidius Colonna and Thomas Hoccleve, though the addition of Bonum Consilium here seems the more appropriate in the light of the strong emphasis placed upon it in the poem. The poem is sometimes referred to as 'The Harp', or as Ane Buke of Gud Counsale to the King, a title supplied 'by conjecture', by David Laing in his reprint of the Chepman and Myllar prints, The Knightly Tale of Golagrus and Gawane, and other Ancient Poems (Edinburgh 1827), p.13.

2. See Liber Pluscardensis, edited by Felix J.H. Skene, 2 vols, The Historians of Scotland, VII, X (Edinburgh, 1877-80), I, pp.xii-xvi; the Mitchell MS was previously the Marchmont MS.

3. Printed in Pieces from the Makculloch and the Gray MSS together with The Chepman and Myllar Prints, edited by George Stevenson, STS, 1st Ser. 65 (1918), pp.171-8; quotation is from this edition. See also The Chepman and Myllar Prints, edited by William Beattie, Edinburgh Bibliographical Society (Oxford, 1950), pp.101-8.

4. The Maitland Folio Manuscript, edited by W.A. Craigie, 2 vols, STS, 2nd Ser. 7, 20 (1919-27), I, pp.115-25 and II, pp.74-91 (FM); all quotations are taken from this edition.

Mt shares a number of readings with C, it also differs from it significantly in a considerable number of places. Mt then, must either stem from a different textual tradition from FM and C, or have been rewritten and amended in later years. The latter hypothesis seems the more likely.⁵ That the poem continued to be quite well known in the sixteenth century is also manifested by the appearance of two of its stanzas in the Bannatyne Manuscript of the 1560s.⁶

A fundamental question concerning De Regimine must be whether it originally formed part of the Liber Pluscardensis and was written by its author or whether it existed independently of the chronicle and was brought into it. Early commentators on the poem, along with W.A. Craigie in his edition of the Maitland Folio concluded, as Craigie puts it, that the 'original source of this piece is the Liber Pluscardensis, at the end of which it is introduced in such a way as to suggest that the chronicler (conjectured by W.F. Skene to be Maurice Buchanan) is also the author of the verses'.⁷ Buchanan appeared a likely candidate because he was known to have travelled to France in 1436 as treasurer to the princess Margaret on the occasion of her marriage to the dauphin; the Liber Pluscardensis refers to French affairs in a manner that suggests its author has personal experience of the country, and witnessed the death there of Margaret in 1445.⁸ However, papal records show

5. See below, pp.31-41.

6. The Bannatyne Manuscript, edited by W. Tod Ritchie, vol. II, STS, 2nd Ser. 22 (Edinburgh, 1928), pp.190-1; see also The Bannatyne Manuscript, edited by Denton Fox and William A. Ringler (1980), p.xxv, where these stanzas were first identified. The stanzas quoted are ll. 183-9 and 127-33 in F.

7. Maitland Folio MS, II, pp.72-3.

8. See also below, pp.18, 20-1; LP, I, p.xxv.

that Buchanan was dead by 1438.⁹ John MacQueen has suggested that 'the style, versification and subject matter come very close to the moralitates of the Morall Fabillis' of Henryson, and that given the association of manuscripts of the Liber Pluscardensis with Dunfermline 'there must ... be a reasonable possibility that it is Henryson's work'.¹⁰ He sets out no detailed reasoning for this suggestion which, as we shall see, is effectively contradicted by the circumstantial evidence for the poem's production and dating. Another recent commentator, Roderick Lyall, in two articles on the political and cultural milieu of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scotland, has rejected the suggestion that De Regimine Principum was composed by the author of the Liber Pluscardensis and thus written around 1461, arguing instead that it was written a decade or so earlier for James II, in response to a royal commission, and that it is indeed a work of deliberate political propaganda.¹¹ He claims that the manner in which the poem is introduced into the chronicle indicates a different author and a link in the chronicler's mind with the potential problems in 1461 for the minority of James III, given those that had come about in the reign of James II:

Sed quia in defectu justitiae multi periunt fame, quidam siciens et esuriens justiciam quandam instructionem ignaris iudicibus in vulgari nostro compilavit, ut sequitur.¹²

9. Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome, vol. IV, 1433-1447, edited by Annie I. Dunlop and David MacLauchlan, Scottish History Society (Glasgow, 1983), no. 456.

10. John MacQueen, 'The Literature of Fifteenth-Century Scotland' in Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century, edited by Jennifer M. Brown (1977), pp.184-208 (202-3).

11. R.J. Lyall, 'Politics and Poetry in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Scotland', SLJ, 3 (1976), 5-29 (19-20); 'The Court as a Cultural Centre', History Today, 34 (September 1984), 27-33 (29-30).

12. LP, I, p.391.

But it is possible also to read these lines as a disclaimer of authorship, a slightly defensive use of anonymity against possible repercussions. And as we shall see below, there are important links between the chronicle and the poem, which encourage the idea of a common authorship.

Lyall further argues that the last stanza, surviving only in Mt, and beginning, 'My souerane lord sen þow hes gevin me leif/To fy[nd] faltis þat forfaltis to thy croun' [302-3] must be directed towards a monarch who has assumed the full responsibilities of office, and hence to James II, not James III. He has claimed too that this conclusion is confirmed by the nature of the four stanzas which occur only in the chronicle manuscripts [FM ll. 155-82], 'presumably because of their special concern with the consequences of James II's minority'.¹³ And he has most recently suggested that ll. 78-84, taken in conjunction with the second and third stanzas in the chronicle MSS group [FM ll. 162-75] may be seen as relating specifically 'to the financial problems of the Crown in terms which leave little doubt that the poem was written shortly after James took over the reins of government in 1449'.¹⁴ The period 1449-52 was that in which James II was freeing himself from the dominance of the Livingstons and then the Douglasses, culminating in his murder of William Douglas in 1452. Though James, like all Scottish kings of the fifteenth century, was concerned to assert his own dominance and control of government, it has been frequently suggested that the straitened financial circumstances of the monarchy made his motivation here also strongly financial.¹⁵ Robert

13. Lyall, 'Politics and Poetry', 19; 'The Court as a Cultural Centre', where the poem is said to have been 'written ... in response to a royal commission', 29.

14. 'The Court as a Cultural Centre', 29.

15. E.g. Norman Macdougall, James III: A Political Study (Edinburgh, 1982), pp.14-15; Ranald Nicholson, Scotland, The Later Middle Ages, The Edinburgh History of Scotland, 2 (Edinburgh, 1974), pp.355-6.

Livingston himself, when Comptroller, had loaned the king £930; and it is no coincidence that after the repressing of the Black Douglases, lands of theirs were forfeited to the crown - a policy of appropriation which was to continue as a major source of acquiring income throughout the century.¹⁶

It is in this specific context that Lyall has proposed that we should read such lines in De Regimine Principum as this:

This may [thow]se be suth experience
Be officeris þat has þi gud to spend
þai gar the trow thou ma nocht mak dyspence
On þi houshald nocht halfe a 3eire till end [F 78-81]

And all þe sommys of Iowalis & tresoure
Of þin elderis quhare is it went away
Quha it as now suld þou ask count þair fore
Off þe dettouris mast forþ ar lukyn in clay
þi gret 3outhage has put let in delay [F 169-73]

He puts it thus: 'The political commonplaces take on a new sharpness if they are related to the crisis years of 1449-52'.¹⁷ In this statement we have one of the perennial problems assailing all who try to read advice to princes literature in politically precise terms: the danger of putting the cart before the horse. One accepts the commonplace nature of the advice, but yet on importing historical knowledge of events into the poem can see them in a less conventional, more exceptional light. But it is still a highly attractive way of seeing the conditions of the poem's production. However, various other factors still have to be taken into account here.

Firstly, of the four verses unique to the chronicle manuscripts, only the second and third, as we have seen, can be said to deal directly with the

16. Macdougall, p.15; Nicholson, p.349; Alexander Grant, Independence and Nationhood, Scotland 1306-1469, The New History of Scotland, 3 (1984), p.155.

17. Lyall, 'The Court as a Cultural Centre', 29.

question of a kingly minority; thus the omission of all four stanzas in Mt and C is less easy to understand.¹⁸ Secondly, it is hardly of crucial importance that the poem was composed for a king senior enough to receive it. The final verse in Mt is another conventional form of poetic defence, hardly dependent upon the adult status of the monarch to whom it is addressed. Moreover, the conventions of the genre allow the author to address himself both to the king (but without further identification) and to all kings in general; this is reflected, as we shall see, in the poem's movement between the recording of specific abuses and more general advice points. Of still more importance, however, for both the authorship and the dating of De Regimine Principum, is its relationship to the chronicle in which it appears.

Perhaps because of his assurance concerning the independent origins of De Regimine Principum Lyall omits much discussion of the Liber Pluscardensis itself. The Liber Pluscardensis is founded on Fordun's Chronica Gentis Scotorum (c. 1385), and its continuation, Bower's Scotichronicon (1440s). It contains, however, significant additions and expansions of certain material, especially relating to events in France from 1420 to 1445, which may be recognized as distinctively its own.¹⁹ Apart from its expansions of historical matter, Book VII of the Liber Pluscardensis also develops sections from Book X of the Scotichronicon on what kind of counsel a king should have and the virtues he should cultivate. The author of the Liber Pluscardensis indeed not only expands the section but considerably rewrites it, thus manifesting an interest in the question of advice to monarchs which encourages him to move beyond his original. In both chronicles, moreover, the chapters on kingship

18. Ll. 78-84, which Lyall also sees as highly specific in their reference are of course included in all the witnesses; yet this is perhaps explicable on the grounds that a kingly minority is not explicitly mentioned in them.

19. See Skene's account in LP, I, pp.xxv; and pp.20-1 below.

come between narration of the death of Alexander II and the beginning of the reign of Alexander III and are related to the minority of that king, in particular the removal of suspect counsellors, the subsequent seizure of the young king by the Comyn faction, and their ravages of the country. The dovetailing of such incidents with advice on kingship might well provoke a sense of parallels for a contemporary chronicler and audience with the early years of James II and anxiety for those of James III.

The Scotichronicon, having stated that 'Nihil in regimine magis convenit regi quam bonos consiliaros habere', moves on to the assertion that bad counsellors make a bad king and good counsellors a good, then using Cicero's comparison of a counsellor to the 'gubernator' of a ship in which, while others pull the ropes and so forth he who sits quietly in the pilot's place does the most; Avicenna is then cited on the four things counsellors and kings should have, 'in vita sanctitatem, in verbo veritatem, in zelo aequitatem, in experimento sagacitatem'.²⁰ The comparable passage in the Liber Pluscardensis does not give examples from classical authors (a distinguishing characteristic throughout) preferring to quote prophets or unidentified 'poets'; it also exhibits somewhat different concerns. The initial statement is more emphatic: 'nichil enim sanctius vel utilius, vel melius in regno quam [quod] rex bonos consiliaros habeat, sive juvenis, sive senex; nam, ut dicit poeta, "Consilium dignum facit durable regnum"'; as the prophet says, we should all have an obligation to the state, and according to Solomon, 'Salus ubi multa sunt consilia; quia tot capita tot diversi sensus'. It is only then that the opening statement from the Scotichronicon, quoted above, is brought in to round off the passage.²¹ The interpretative emphasis in the Liber

20. Joannis de Fordun Scotichronicon cum Supplementis et Continuatione Walteri Boweri, edited by Walter Goodall, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1759), II, p.85.

21. LP, I, p.85.

Pluscardensis is thus on the advantage to the king of having a number of wise and prudent counsellors whereas the Scotichronicon dwells more on the virtues inherent in good counsel and the extended image of the good counsellor as steersman. The former's preference for prophets rather than classical sages is certainly in keeping with the De Regimine Principum where the only identified attribution is to what 'Sanct davy says in haly prophesy' [F 246].

The Scotichronicon, followed by the Liber Pluscardensis, next quotes the example of the system of senators in Rome, working for the good of the community rather than private ends, an idea that also features in lines 141-7 of De Regimine Principum. Once more, however, there are differences between the two chronicles. The Scotichronicon, giving Plutarch as source, describes the election of senators, the admiration of the system by the Greeks, and how the abuse of such a system can lead monarch and country to collapse, giving also another classical example.²² The Liber Pluscardensis treats the subject differently, opening out into a digression of considerable length; and here the Roman senatorial system is linked to the Parisian governmental system, which is described, and praised, in detail. The classical references of the Scotichronicon are again omitted, the author quoting instead an example from the 'Gestes' of France. These references to France are of course characteristic of the author of the Liber Pluscardensis, but it is interesting that he should bring them in even here, in an essentially theoretical context. Yet more interesting is the fact that De Regimine Principum also brings in a French comparison at a point where the argument hardly demands it. The similarity does not stop there. For the Liber Pluscardensis and De Regimine Principum use what is quite simply the same

22. Bower, II, p.85.

example. In the Liber Pluscardensis the longish passage discussing what would happen in the French system if a king, through bad advice, revoked a decision, runs thus:

... et si rex male consultus, ymmo pocius seductus privato consilio, pervertendo similiter iudicium et justiciam, talibus iniquitatibus faveret, ut ipsemet sententiam parleamenti everteret, omnes isti senatores, cum eorum sequacibus, cessacionem audiencie in parleamento publice proclamarent; et campanis pulsatis, valvis parleamenti [c]eratis, cappis exutis, quilibet in domum suam rediret, et finaliter, nunquam reversuri, nec audienciam dare, aut causam quamcunque tractare, donec rex, punitis praevaricatoribus, venia ab eis petita, emendacionem condignam in parleamento faceret. 23

in the comparable passage in De Regimine Principum, the author, citing how all wonder at the way the king changes his mind and revokes decisions made by his justice adds, almost as if it had just occurred to him:

War it in france ane wald make cession hale
In parliament and nocht bow to þi crown
quhill þou had maid þaim a reformacioun [278-80]²⁴

While the material in De Regimine Principum is presented in the spare style that is characteristic of the poem, the similarity in idea and language in chronicle and poem is hardly likely to be a coincidence.

After this passage, both Scotichronicon and Liber Pluscardensis then continue with a further consideration as to what sort of advisers a king should have and give respectively ten and twelve 'moral counsels' for a king - yet another expansion by the later chronicle. The emphasis in the Scotichronicon

23. LP, I, p.86.

24. Here Mt (257) reads 'war it in france thai wald mak se sessioun (corrected to cecessioun) hale', which should be compared with the phrase cessacionem audiencie in the chronicle. Both cessioun and cecessioun are possible readings, but it may be that Mt is preserving an older reading; cf. DOST, cessioun, n', where DRP is the first entry: there is no entry for cecessioun; cf. OED, cessation.

is far more strongly on acts of religious piety to be performed by the king: that he should read the hours of the Virgin every day, contemplate the five vices for which Christ sustained five wounds on the cross, fast on numerous days, wash the feet of paupers, and so forth. Indeed the passage is framed in the narration of a speech by St Bridget.²⁵ This element is lacking from the Liber Pluscardensis, and though it contains admonitions to the king to protect the Church, cherish all paupers, say the hours, and consult his confessor, the emphasis is different. These are broad general statements on the nature of kingship, in which the Liber Pluscardensis is markedly more practically concerned than is the Scotichronicon. Its last three points of advice are that the king should know the characters of his officers, and have no contact with bad men; that he should have a discreet man to distribute his alms and oversee them carefully; and that he should not bring new and evil customs into his state or he will never be loved by his subjects or by God, because the king is only the state's 'procurator' in God's name and unless he governs well is not worthy of the name of king.²⁶ While the Scotichronicon shares the last of these admonitions it does not present it in such a developed form.

In both chronicles these lists of values precede another list of ten further counsels given to the king by God, introduced by a discussion of the days on which he should wear his crown. Much of the advice here and in the earlier sections is of course manifestly in the advice manual tradition of the Secreta Secretorum and Colonna's De regimine principum. In both the Scotichronicon and the Liber Pluscardensis the concern here is markedly with justice, and in this respect both resemble too the essential two-part structure of De Regimine Principum which also broadly divides its advice

25. Bower, I, pp.86-8.

26. LP, I, pp.86-8.

between kingship and good counsel in the first section and justice and its practice in the second. In the Liber Pluscardensis this chapter is also preceded by the comment that most of the previous values are gathered chiefly from three points in Aristotle's Ethics.²⁷ Not only Aristotelian but pseudo-Aristotelian ethical argument is an important source for much advice to princes in Scottish literature. But it is true of this poem, as of many other vernacular pieces, that there are relatively few explicit acknowledgements of Aristotelian influence, with the exception of John Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome.²⁸

The second lists resemble each other initially but then diverge. This is in fact because the Liber Pluscardensis expands its source substantially so as to take many of the points made there into a third list of additional values, for which it has no original in the Scotichronicon. Both have the familiar injunction to temper justice with mercy and temper ire (the Liber quoting Solomon) and to avoid distraction from the path of right reason - themes which, hardly surprisingly, appear in De Regimine Principum. The Liber Pluscardensis continues to place stress on the merits of a king's counsellors, while the Scotichronicon advises more on the king's overseeing of his own justice and that of his delegates. And the Scotichronicon then goes on to set out the traditional advice to beware of flatterers, and, characteristically, that the monarch should warn unruly clergy to reform, and love his realm as a parent a child.²⁹ The corresponding passage in the Liber Pluscardensis, however, can only be described as determinedly topical:

27. 'Hoc est quod primo, debet virtuose regere personam suam quam ad suam familiam; tercio, quod debet bene regere pronunciam suam sive patriam, vel regnum si rex est...' LP, I, p.88.

28. Ch. 8, pp.372-5.

29. Bower, II, pp.88-9.

the king should make the powerful men in his land provide fleets of fishing boats, as they do in England and other countries, to bring much profit to the realm; the king should 'study' to let out certain lands in perpetual feoffment because an intelligent man would see that such actions could only increase his subjects' loyalty; and the author adds that it is very strange that the whole world is leased thus apart from Scotland, and quotes Aristotle to the effect that base is that part that does not accord with its whole. The ninth point is that by a decree of parliament the king should have his laws examined by wise men sanctioned in the law, and that if there are things that are contradictory or useless they should be amended. This is also quite strongly reminiscent of the parliamentary acts of 1425 and 1449, in which 'wise and discrete men' were appointed to 'examyn' and 'mend the lawis'.³⁰ The concluding admonition returns to the more generalized theme of kingship, but still asserts a concern with the king's active contemplation of his duty, even when he wakes in the middle of the night.

The third section on good characteristics of a king, which is not found in the Scotichronicon, is essentially a series of more general statements on the appearance and conduct of a king, which are common to much advice literature, such as that a king should not be changeable in justice; that he should not hesitate to retract his errors; should not be rash; should not trust flatterers; should not be over talkative; and should keep *the mean between* pride and humility. The pseudo-Aristotelian ethical basis is certainly manifest here, as such lists are highly characteristic of the

30. '... quod rex decretum parliamenti sui leges suas examinari faciat, et cum actibus parliamenti per viros sapientes juris peritos collacionari et considerari; et si quae sint sibi invicem contraria, inutilia, irrationabilia, vel frustratoria, per certos deputatos coram generali consilio reformatur, et consuetudines malae, si quae sint, delantur.' LP, I, p.90; cf. APS, II, pp. 10/10 and 36/10.

Secreta Secretorum and its derivatives;³¹ but the conventional nature of the advice notwithstanding, its inclusion registers the particular emphasis which this author sought to give it in his chronicle. The topical references in the second section are now carefully flanked by more general and uncontentious assertions. The Liber Pluscardensis thus diverges considerably from its source, in a manner that not only suggests an engaged interest in the advice to princes question but also that its author intends to make at least some of his advice of practical contemporary concern to the monarch. Yet it is of course inserted at a point in the chronicle that historically sets it back a couple of hundred years. This is surely a similar situation to the positioning of De Regimine Principum. The placing of such advice at a historical remove may make it less obviously pointed but hardly renders it any less contemporary - and in the case of De Regimine Principum we are talking about setting such advice back by only ten years or so. Further evidence for the common authorship of poem and chronicle is suggested by the mixture of traditional advice to princes with more practical reforming advice that both works share, as we shall see in the textual discussion below. There is, however, yet another area of linking between Scotichronicon, Liber Pluscardensis and the poem which is highly suggestive, especially when considered in relation to the links already established.

This concerns the image of the harp itself. In the two chronicle manuscripts in which the poem appears, it is preceded by the sentence, 'figurata per citharam statum regni designans quaedam moralitas' and the drawing of a Gothic harp; this illustration does not figure in Mt.³² In F,

31. A good example is the abbreviated advice to prince's section at the end of Sir Gilbert Hay's Buke of the Law of Armys: Prose MS, I, pp.299-303.

32. The illustration appears on fol. 190^r of F. It appears to be drawn by the same hand that has transcribed the chronicle.

the harp is quite well drawn, with eight holes and strings visible. Its appearance suggests that some importance attaches to the figure of the harp in the poem, and yet as we read it today it appears to be little more than a framing device, a simile on the relation between king and country that is even a little difficult to understand in the form in which the poem has survived: the most troubling line is the third of the first stanza, which the various MSS have as follows:

F quhilk is as kyng þan curiusly þai carpe

M Quhilk as a king than curiusly thai carp

Mt Quhilk is ane king þat curiouslie wald carpe

(This is the corrected line: the original reads:

Quhilk is ane king þan curiusly thai carpe)

It seems a little unclear as to whether the image is of the king and country as a well tuned harp, or as the following lines and the conclusion to the poem seem to suggest, the king as the minstrel tuning the harp of his realm. In its simplicity of execution the image here has almost an emblematic quality - as indeed in later emblem books such as the Hieroglyphics of 'Horapollo' (1505) in which the lyre 'is treated as a symbol of the political leader who binds together and unites his fellows'.³³

However, the harp already had a strong symbolic function as an image of harmony, order and sweetness in the Middle Ages. Machaut's Dit de la harpe, where the lady is compared to a harp, with her virtues as its strings, is perhaps the most extreme example of '[t]he ideal completeness of a human body

33. John Hollander, The Untuning of the Sky, Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500-1700 (Princeton, 1961), p.46.

... figuratively compared to a musical instrument',³⁴ but the instrument was also clearly associated with monarchs, particularly Orpheus and David, 'rex et propheta', who was frequently portrayed enthroned and crowned with his head bent forward over his harp.³⁵ As a ruler, psalmist, tested and tried monarch, penitent sinner, and prophet, David had many linked significances, and as he is the only named authority in De Regimine Principum some such symbolism may well have been in the author's mind. The comparison between the harmony of a king's rule and that of a harp is made in Gower's Mirour de l'omme, and M.A. Manzalaoui has suggested that this may be the source for the image in De Regimine Principum.³⁶ But there is another clear source much closer at hand. In Book IV of the Scotichronicon, Bower, as M.P. McDiarmid has recently noted, uses Plutarch's image of the good king as a good harper, who uses all the strings to bring harmony.³⁷ This is the passage in question:

Rex enim, ut dicit Plutarchus, debet esse in publico sicut citharoeda, qui cordas oberrantes compescit, et ad dulcem harmoniam reducit, altas relinquo, remissas astringendo: tutius est enim cordas laxare quam praescindere; remissa namque per artificium corrigitur et debitum sonum reddit; quae vero semel rupta est, nullo artificio reparatur.³⁸

A comparison with the opening (and in Mt the closing) stanzas of De Regimine

34. Leo Spitzer, Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony (Baltimore, 1963), p.166; Karl Young, 'The Dit de la harpe of Guillaume de Machaut', in Essays in Honor of Albert Feuillerat, edited by Henri M. Peyre, Yale Romanic Studies, 22 (Yale, 1943), pp.1-20.

35. Emanuel Winternitz, Musical Instruments and their Symbolism in Western Art (1979), p.204; Hugo Steger, David, rex et propheta (Nuremberg, 1961); cf. the discussion in Peter Godman, Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance (1985), p.12.

36. M.A. Manzalaoui, '"Noght in the Registre of Venus": Gower's English Mirror for Princes', in Medieval Studies for J.A.W. Bennett Aetatis Suae LXX, edited by P.L. Heyworth (Oxford, 1981), pp.159-83 (181).

37. M.P. McDiarmid, 'The Kingship of the Scots in their Writers', SLJ, 6 (1979) 11-18 (10).

38. Bower, I, p.235.

Principum makes it inescapable that the Scotichronicon is being recalled. This particular passage does not occur in the Liber Pluscardensis, and it is thus an indication of how well the author of De Regimine Principum knew the work which is also the major source for the Liber Pluscardensis. It is surely far less likely that an independent author, unconnected with the composition of the chronicle, would have come upon the passage and appropriated it, than that the chronicler himself is responsible for the poem, particularly in the light of the additional evidence accumulated above. But I should like to suggest that we can look still further into the relationship between the Scotichronicon and the Liber Pluscardensis for an explanation of the harp image at this particular point in the poem - and in the chronicle.

In the Liber Pluscardensis, De Regimine Principum occurs shortly after the narration of the death of James I and the events surrounding it. It is interesting to compare the respective treatment of the king's death in the Scotichronicon and the Liber Pluscardensis. The Scotichronicon expends numerous chapters on describing the death, the great lamentations, James's numberless virtues and attributes, and the desolation felt at his demise.³⁹ The Liber Pluscardensis is far more brisk, but characteristically allows itself a long preceding digression on the death of the Dauphiness Margaret in France, and gives a translation of a lament composed after her death. Then follows James's murder, the sorrowing of the country, and the trial of his murderers. After which, like the Scotichronicon, but in a rather shorter space, the author declares that James I had no equal, that none was so gifted, virtuous, or charitable to the poor. And it is from this consideration that the author moves into a lament on how often the nation's kings have been too youthful and too prone to bad counsellors. It is immediately following this

39. Ibid., II, pp.503-16.

juxtaposition of the excellence of James I with the bad state of minorities and poor counsel, therefore, that the De Regimine Principum poem appears.⁴⁰

To return to the source: in the description of James I's virtues in the Scotichronicon Bower dilates at length on James's musical prowess, for which he was well known; and the following lines give a particular emphasis:

... praesertim in tactu citharae, tanquam alterum Orpheum,
principem et praelatum omnium citharoedorum citharizantium
in citharis suis delectabiliter et dulciter illum praedotavit.⁴¹

While James's skill with most musical instruments ('in tympano et choro, in psalterio et organo, tibia et lyra, tuba et fistula') has been mentioned, it is his skill as a harpist that is particularly dwelt upon. The Scotichronicon comments further

In hoc patuit ipsum naturalem fore Scotum, ipsos etiam
Hibernienses in modulationibus lyricis mirabiliter
praecellentem. De quibus congratulando, propter huiusmodi
artis peritiam, loquitur auctor de mirabilibus Hiberniae ...⁴²

Then follows a chapter, largely based on Gerald of Wales, on the skill and preference for the harp in Scotland.

One can hardly hope to prove that this vivid depiction of James I as a harper 'tanquam alterum Orpheum', generated the imaginative link to prompt the use of the image from Plutarch, which after all originates not in the corresponding final section of the Scotichronicon but much earlier on in Book IV. But we have already seen the author of the Liber Pluscardensis be independent in the rearrangement of his source material elsewhere. It is almost as if the

40. LP, I, pp.380-400.

41. Bower, II, p.504.

42. Ibid.

evocation of the merits of James I is subsumed into a symbolic role in the poem, the perfect monarch as harpist contrasting with those who have not achieved this. The presence of the harp illustration in the chronicle would thus set up an image retained in the mind while reading the rest of the poem.

We are thus left with a number of hypotheses concerning the relationship between De Regimine Principum and the Liber Pluscardensis. That despite the parallels between them they are by different authors seems to my mind the least likely, though that the chronicler was borrowing ideas from the poet does remain a possibility, particularly if we conceive of two authors working and moving in a common milieu. In the next chapter I shall in fact be suggesting a possible connection of this kind between the author of De Regimine Principum and Sir Gilbert Hay.⁴³ Yet the manifest and substantial interest in the whole question of advice to princes in the Liber Pluscardensis and the parallels set out above would seem to encourage the conclusion that poem and chronicle are by the same writer. We are left here with two further possibilities: that the author of the Liber Pluscardensis included in his chronicle a poem that he had himself composed a decade or so earlier, perhaps, as Lyall suggests, around the period 1449-52, or that he composed the poem, as it were, retrospectively, with a sense of advice made relevant on the opening of another period of minority rule after the death of James II. At present this would appear to be as far as we can go.

No illustration of the harp occurs in the Chepman and Myllar print of the poem. Its presence among the Chepman and Myllar publications is intriguing, and not least because in the single surviving copy the poem, as we have observed, is incomplete. It breaks off at line 224, even earlier than the Fairfax and Mitchell MSS. It seems distinctly likely that C is unfinished not

43. Ch. 2, pp.136-42.

because the concluding stanzas have perished but because its (presumably manuscript) source was also incomplete, since there are two blank leaves following the breaking-off of the poem.⁴⁴

Most of the other surviving Chepman and Myllar prints of 1508 are of a more literary and entertaining character than De Regimine Principum, and none of them may really be said to match up to the sort of works designated in the original statement of the king's patent to the printers. Golagros and Gawane, the Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy, or A Gest of Robyn Hode, for example, hardly fall into any of these categories:

... bukis of our Lawis, actis of parliament, croniclis, mess bukis and portuus efter the use of our Realme, with addicions and legendis of Scottis sanctis ...⁴⁵

The reference to 'portuus' more likely refers to Bishop Elphinstone's efforts to promote his own service book for use in Scotland than to The Porteous of Noblenes,⁴⁶ but it is with this advice-type work that De Regimine Principum would seem to have most in common among the Chepman and Myllar productions. (There is also an interest in kingship in Orpheus and Eurydice, generalized advice in The Prais of Aige and complaints on the times in The Want of Wyse Men.) Considering the emphasis on the promulgation of works concerned with law and history and beneficial and instructive dogma, the presence of both such 'literary' works as those above and a relatively critical piece like De Regimine Principum among the first Scottish publica-

44. The Fairfax MS breaks off with space for two more stanzas (fol. 191^V) and the following folios of the MS have not survived.

45. Quoted in Annals of Scottish Printing, edited by Robert Dickson and John Philip Edmond (Cambridge, 1890), p.7. For discussion of Walter Chepman, see Ch. 7, pp.320-1.

46. Nicholson, pp.591-2.

tions is all the more interesting. Given the poem's early history, the reference to 'croniclis' in the patent is perhaps worth dwelling on, but what is certainly clear is that in the half-century since its first appearance De Regimine Principum had become sufficiently well known and sufficiently well considered to be chosen as one of the first printed publications in Scotland, along with works by Henryson and Dunbar.

That a poem containing so much criticism of kingly rule should have been felt an acceptable offering to a monarch who would presumably have seen these initial examples of Scottish printing is another interesting consideration; and there is, as it were, negative evidence to suggest that this version may have been adapted to accord with the position of James IV.⁴⁷ It does not contain the four stanzas that are also missing from Mt, two of which deal with the regrettable effects of the monarch's minority. It is possible that these stanzas may have been seen as potentially particularly offensive to a monarch who himself came to the throne at the age of fifteen. Alternatively, it is also clear that Chepman and Myllar were working from a source or sources different from F (although in many respects similar), which - for whatever reason - may not have contained the four stanzas. For C contains one stanza not found in FM, though present in Mt over half a century later.⁴⁸

Textual evidence is against the origination of the stanza in the hands of Chepman and Myllar: the quality of the compositing is frequently slapdash, suggesting hurried printing or a poor witness, and the quality of C's 'emending' variants is sufficiently low as to indicate misreading rather than

47. See also below, p.36.

48. Lines 64-70 of C and Mt. The reading 'iuges' (65) in Mt makes better or at least more realistic sense than C's 'Juge'.

ingenious editorial invention.⁴⁹ The evidence is thus strongly towards the existence of another varying witness, now lost.

The rehandling of De Regimine Principum may therefore be seen to have started at a relatively early date. It seems probable too that the poem existed in a number of manuscripts and by 1508 had become separate (or separable) from its chronicle link. By the time of the Mt manuscript the poem had been altered more substantially still, and it is quite clear that it was deliberately reworked in certain passages. C shares far more readings with F than with Mt and was evidently based on a manuscript resembling F quite closely.⁵⁰ (Mt, on the other hand, has sufficient differences from C and similarities to F to indicate that it is not simply a direct descendant of C.) Thus C, poised chronologically almost mid-way between the original composition of the work which F represents and Mt, indicates that the major changes to the poem found in Mt had not been made by 1508, but, as the additional stanza suggests, that the poem had already acquired a flexible quality and an amenability to reworking. An alternative hypothesis, that the distinguishing features of Mt - its two-part division, its reordering of stanzas, its rephrasings - merely reproduce a now-lost version of the same data as F or C, is hardly tenable. Mt is probably based upon a complete earlier version of the poem, but as will be shown many of its significant changes date from a later period in the sixteenth century.

49. Examples of the kinds of different readings regularly found in C are 'The sound is suete quhen that þe sang is suth' (C, 4); 'þe sang is sueit quhen þat þe sound is suyth' (F, Mt); 'Thus may you neuyr of ther deidis haif honour.' (C, 35) 'þus may þow neuer of þi diedis haf honour.' (F, Mt); 'The maneris ar of iugis generall' (C, 169), 'Iij maneris ar of Iustice generale' (F, 218), 'Thre maneris ar of iustice in generale' (Mt, 204). In the first two examples the version in F is alone cited as Mt is very similar.

50. I estimate that C agrees with F about sixty times, as opposed to seventeen with Mt.

The amount of empty space left after the abrupt breaking-off of C suggests that the original poem was envisaged as of a length consonant with that of Mt, and this too lends force to the argument that Mt's conclusion is not the invention of a later writer. Mt is however, presented in a more sophisticated and consciously structured manner than either F or C. After line 154 there is a Latin heading, 'Explicit prima pars incipit secunda'. Each of these two parts moreover contains twenty-two stanzas. Clearly the poem has been rehandled with some deliberation. The two-part nature of the poem is now emphasized: the first part dealing generally with kingly responsibility while highlighting the duties of justice, good counsel and kingly largesse and honour; the second concentrating on more specific legal abuses and their remedies. In this second part Mt changes the order of a couple of stanzas in F [Mt 169-82; F 225-38], so as to place first the definition of the two parts of 'iustice speciall' [Mt 176] ahead of the definition of the 'Thre maneris... of iustice in generale' in line 204 [Mt]. In F and C the order is the other way round and the phrasing linking the two types of justice is different. The ^wre~~o~~rking in Mt seems very much to be a part of what might be called its general editorial policy of 'tightening up' the legal references themselves. For instance, in the reordered stanzas, where F has the introductory statement that

Gud Iustice has ij partis principale [F 232]

in Mt this has become the more precise

Twa partiis ar of iustice speciall [Mt 176]

If we take 'speciall' as agreeing with 'iustice' here, Mt seems to be making more of the distinction between the particular administration of justice in practice, and what is later called 'iustice in general' [Mt 204], whereas F refers to 'Gud Iustice' here and 'Iustice generale' elsewhere [F 218].

However, this is not to deny a legal precision to both versions. As Jenny Wormald has observed, the legal details of rightful judgement and reparation in this stanza are entirely accurate. She notes too that the phrase 'dettovre veruly' [F 238; Mt 182] recalls the act of 1432 which ordered defaulting judges to satisfy the wronged kin.⁵¹ But while the two versions are in accord in the first three lines which set out the definition of such judgements:

þe tan is dome & rychttwyß Iugement
þe toþer is to mak þe schathis hale
efter þe dome þe partyis to content [F 233-5; cf. Mt 177-9]

F then claims that the point of such justice is

& þairof mak þaim sikkyr in continent [F 236]

Mt takes on a different and a little more detailed legal tenor, referring directly to the 'sythment', another legal phrase referring to the amount of settlement from an injury,

Without delay to mak the sythment [M 180]

Given the close parallel with the 1432 act, it may well be argued that what we see in Mt is simply the survival of an alternative legalistic reading dating from the early composition of De Regimine Principum. However, it is true firstly that C has the same reading as F, and secondly that this concern with the delaying of the execution of justice is a distinguishing feature of the Mt version of the poem, and one which perhaps encourages a later dating of it. We can see this concern at lines Mt 183-5 [F 197-200], where F's forceful but more general comments on jurisdiction

51. Jenny Wormald, 'Bloodfeud, Kindred and Government in Early Modern Scotland', Past and Present, 87 (1980), 54-97 (85).

Thy Iugis als at as Iustice to leed
Abusis oft tym þaire Iurisdiccioun
Stopand þe law for luff frenschip or feed

are altered to Mt's more specific comments on the execution of justice:

Thy iustice all þat iustice hes to leid
Oft tymes delayis þair executioun
Sparand the law for frendschip luif or feyd

(The reading in C, in lines 162-4, is the same as F.) It is noticeable that Mt chooses not to assert that the rule of law is worse but, perhaps more realistically if not less tendentiously, that it is badly hampered by delay. Once more we see the tendency towards a more sophisticated and often less emotive presentation of argument in the poem. Other changes heighten this effect. F's

& syn þi selfe to leyfe mast tyranly [227]

becomes

And syn thy self levand maist wranguslie [Mt 171]

'Wranguslie' too brings out a more legalistic connotation, a suggestion perhaps that the king may be dealt with within the bounds of law that 'tyranly', although more evocative, does not hold. This latter instance is interestingly one of the readings Mt shares with C [C 178], suggesting that this alteration was made fairly early in the poem's history. Perhaps 'tyranly' was felt too strong a criticism in the reign of James IV, perhaps also further indicated in the lines that follow, where F reads

lord god sic lordschip may nocht lang endure
wald þou tak tent til þir auld storis
how many princis ar perysde on þis wyis [229-31]

Mt is very similar here [Mt 173-5]; in C, however 'perysyde' has become 'punist', with a less overt suggestion that princes who behave badly will die

for it. The claim that a king's rule is imperilled is one we shall see frequently in Scottish advice to princes, as is the concurrent point that the question of how the monarch might come to perish or be punished is not far investigated.

In the light of Mt's concern with legal exactitude and more measured reasoned approach, it seems all the more likely that the extra stanza [ll. 225-32] found in Mt alone is indeed a later, sixteenth-century, addition. In this verse an emphatic accumulation of imperative adverbs 'Send but delay furth with in-continent' [227] serves to stress that after 'dome is gevin and richtwous Iudgement' [225], known as 'Iustice iudicatiue' [226], 'Iustice executive' [227] should immediately follow,

with all the costis þat ressoun wald descryve
bayth interes and all the scathis hail
To be assythit richt as the principall

The whole stanza effectively restates the substance of lines 178-82, and with continued emphasis on the question of correct assithement. Again the terms used are those also found in contemporary documentation: 'costis', 'scathis', and 'interes' are well attested individually and in combination from the late fourteenth century, as in this document of c. 1457, 'als wele of the costis, skaithis, expenses, and interes quhilkis he or thai sustenis';⁵² similarly 'principall', defined by the DOST as 'the principal piece of property or sum of money involved in a transaction, claim or dispute', is found from the same date.⁵³ Characteristically Mt concentrates on the exactness of the restitution, 'richt as the principall'.

52. The Lennox, edited by William Fraser, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1874), II, p.72.

53. DOST, principale, n', 7; the earliest example is 1390.

However, the verse also contains some less common themes. The importance of the carrying out of justice is expressed by the use of the phrases 'Iustice iudicative' and 'Iustice executive'. That these should be seen as official, indeed even learned terms, is signalled by the explanation that this is what they are called by 'clerkis' [226]. From the DOST it appears that these phrases were hardly well established in the vernacular until at least the mid-sixteenth century: the first recorded usage is indeed in a letter of bailliary in the archives of the city of Aberdeen, c. 1527. (The printed version is regrettably full of ellipses and the full sense is hard to judge.) The relevant section is as follows:

... and thair in till dew executioun and justice
to mak alsweill executife as iudicative ...⁵⁴

The usage in such an unelevated setting probably intimates that the phrase had established some limited currency before this date. But the use of "executive", as opposed to "judicial" and "legislative" is not recorded by the OED before 1649,⁵⁵ and we may thus infer that Mt is perhaps deliberately bringing into the poem a relatively new phrase in the vernacular to make its alteration of emphasis to the question of delayed execution rather than (as in F and C) the establishment of judicial order all the more forceful. The point at issue, the distinction between judicative and executive justice, is of course quite straightforward, stemming ultimately from Roman or canon law where the distinction between judicative and executive was a clear and established one. In the Libri de iudiciorum ordine, an important thirteenth-century compilation by Tancredus Bononiensis, for example, the section on

54. Illustrations of the Topography and Antiquities of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff, vol. III, Spalding Club (Aberdeen, 1857), pp.248-9. Cf. DOST, executive, a.

55. OED, executive, a and sb, 3b.

judgement and sentences is followed immediately by one entitled De exsecutione sententiae, which sets out how, if there is no reason why a sentence should not be executed, this should happen straightaway:

Illa sententia, quae a competenti iudice lata est,
ordine iudiciario servato, quae ipso iure tenet et
valet, nec per appellationis vel in integrum restitutionis
beneficium est suspensa, exsecutioni debet mandari... 56

We might also note that in the stanza following that described above, Mt again differs from F, replacing 'And be it a sentence of a soueran lord' [F 253] by 'And be it in heid court of our soverane lord' [Mt 231]. The question of the just nature of sentences having been already fulfilled by the interpolation of a new verse, Mt, with perhaps characteristic attention to detail, increases the practical relevance of the verse by referring to another area of judicial procedure.

The case for the undelayed execution of justice is thus strengthened in Mt by the citing of established and authenticated legal information. Two points are of particular interest here. Firstly it would seem wise to date the inserted stanza at least post-1525, thus suggesting that the poem was revised at a later date. Secondly, we should observe that such alterations add up to a deliberate shift of focus in the Maitland version. The practical workings of justice are represented not so much from the viewpoint that they should be brought into operation, as in F, but that the machinery, now existing, should be made to work.

In another passage, however, it is F which stresses the importance of

56. Pilli, Tancredi, Gratiae Libri de Iudiciorum Ordine, edited by Frederick Bergmann (Gottingen, 1842), p.285; cf. Corpus Juris Canonici, 2 vols, edited by A. Friedberg (Leipzig, 1879-81), II, cols 393-402; Stephan Sipos, Enchiridion Iuris Canonici (Rome, 1954), pp.770-1.

keeping the law, while Mt places the value on kingly reputation. Yet even here the different reading in Mt probably arises from a re-evaluation of the poem's areas of attention. The stanza in question is lines 92-8, a curious stanza in itself in that Mt lags one line behind F (and C), beginning with a version of F's second line, 'Na king suld of þair small comptis knaw' [Mt 92],⁵⁷ and cutting F's opening line, 'Thaire suld neuer catyfe consale be to kyng' [F 92], making up the gap by inserting a different middle line: 'Quhilk may him caus to be callit ane dring' [Mt 95]. The two diverge once more at line 96 where F's 'all his delyt suld be to keip þe law', becomes Mt's 'His delyt suld be to encreasing'. The effect in each version is different: the emphasis in F is on the avoidance of corrupt counsel in order that the monarch may not become small-minded, that his happiness should consist in keeping the law and thereby attaining honour and worship; in Mt the emphasis is relocated to the building up of that honour and renown by avoiding contact with petty-minded counsellors which would put him on the level of a 'dring', a low-living man. The question of maintaining the law is not raised in Mt. The point here is surely that generalized statements on maintaining the law, while clearly an integral part of Mt, and felt to be less centrally appropriate, and Mt thus includes a no less traditional notion of increasing kingly renown. But again, the simpler statements of F have been reworked.

Mt's attention to detail is also seen in another minor but telling example at lines 72-3 where F reads,

& tak nocht all þe birdyng on þi bak
wt speciale counsale in to priuyte

C too has 'speciale counsale', but in Mt it has become 'pertiale counsale'.

57. Cf. 'Na kyng suld neuer of his smale comptis knaw' (F, 93). C here agrees with the form of the stanza in F.

'Pertial counsale' is first given by the DOST in 1510 as a legal phrase meaning advice or assistance given improperly to one party by a judge, juror, witness or other member of court.⁵⁸ It may be argued that the combination of 'pertiale' and 'counsale' is merely fortuitous in Mt and does not have this particular legalistic meaning, but in the light of the preceding stanza (the one found in C but not in F) this seems less convincing. The king is being pictured as the chief temporal judge who will ultimately have to 'compeir' [67] (another legal term) before the chief Judge of all. The 'pertial counsale' phrase thus works doubly well in the continuation of the judging metaphor backed up by the utilization of an appropriate legal term.

While De Regimine Principum is thus a poem written with an obviously reforming purpose in mind, it would be unwise to see it as particularly radical in one area commentated on by the historians Wormald and Macdougall. They claim that lines 57-63 show a remarkable departure from the prevalent thinking of the time by asserting that the king should 'chei~~ß~~ na man for hee lordschip na blud/Na gret pouware of ryche to consale' [F 57-8].⁵⁹ But this idea appeared frequently within the Secreta Secretorum corpus. In Gilbert Hay's translation, for example, we may find:

And tharfor kepe the wele, Alexander, that thou despis nocht a man
for his law birth sa he be vertuous; na ches nane to thy counsale
and to thy governaunce na othir service for his hie birth bot thare
be vertu folowand.⁶⁰

and in the 'Regimen' section of his version of the Buik of Alexander:

58. DOST, partial, 1b, 2; on the question of partiality see also Ch. 6, pp. 291-2.

59. Jenny Wormald, Court, Kirk and Community: Scotland 1470-1625, The New History of Scotland, 4 (1981), p.67; Macdougall, pp.274, 295.

60. Prose MS, II, p.151.

Wise men ar not ay grettest of estate ...
For wysdome followis nocht to dignite⁶¹
Na takis na hede of goodness or degre

There can be no denying, however, that De Regimine Principum raises in detail and with force most of the important matters concerning kingship which feature in advice to princes literature in the fifteenth century - and with more precision than many others exhibit. In the next chapter I shall return to De Regimine Principum to show its shared interest with Sir Gilbert Hay's Buik of King Alexander in defining the role of the king's great council, a subject of concern throughout the period covered in this study. In this connection too is introduced the issue of kingly remissions, and both Lyall and Macdougall have noted the pertinency of the comments in De Regimine Principum on an issue which was 'a constant source of complaint in the later fifteenth century and into the sixteenth'.⁶² And the number of witnesses and reworkings of the poem certainly suggest that it was a popular and influential piece - a point also incidentally illustrated in the giving of advice in several other pieces to be examined later. Like many of these works indeed it has remained somewhat overlooked, regrettable because it is a work of considerable intelligence and spirit, whose learning is worn quite lightly. The statement at the conclusion in Mt, for example, that 'iustice sa is ane standand well/perpetuallie withouttin waryance/Quhilk to all men þair richtis will þame tell' [Mt 288-90] appears to be a translation of the Aquinan statement that 'justitia est perpetua et constant voluntas, jus suum unicuique tribuens ...', which Ireland later inherited from Gerson in Book VII of the Meroure of Wyssdome: 'Justice is a perpetuall stable and constant will to gif

61. BL, Add. MS 40732, fol. 140^r.

62. Lyall, 'Poetry and Politics', 20; Macdougall, p.202, relating the comments in particular to the parliament of 1458.

ilk persoune þe thing þat is his or pertenis to him'.⁶³ Yet for the purposes of advice it was polemic rather than erudition that was foregrounded in this particular piece. Its literary history demonstrates in fact a continuing pragmatic adaptation to changing times by those who transmitted it, with a discernible concern to keep its legalistic references up to date. As such, it is an indirect testimony to the gradual improvement in administration of the Scottish legal system in the fifteenth and into the sixteenth centuries, as well as a valuable reflection of the particular concerns of some advisers to princes.

63. Meroure, III, fol. 307^V; cf. Ch. 8, p.413.

Chapter 2

Sir Gilbert Hay: the prose MS and the
Buik of King Alexander

Sir Gilbert Hay is one of the few fifteenth-century authors of Scottish advice to princes literature of whom we have a reasonable amount of biographical information. We know for sure that he was the person who in 1456 completed at Rosslyn Castle the translation (although the word does not do Hay justice) from French originals of the three prose pieces preserved in the late fifteenth-century manuscript that is now MS TD 209 in the National Library of Scotland: the Buke of the Law of Armys, the Buke of the Order of Knychthede, and the Buke of the Governauce of Princis.¹ We know with almost as great certainty that he was the author of the massive poem on the life of Alexander the Great, known as the Buik of King Alexander, and probably produced in the early 1460s. This survives in two manuscripts: British Library MS Add.40732, copied c. 1530, and Scottish Register House MS GD/112/ 71/9, which the poem's editor believes to have been copied from the earlier MS in the last quarter of the sixteenth century.²

1. The manuscript is described in Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript, edited by J.H. Stevenson, 2 vols, STS, 1st Ser., 44, 62 (1901-14), I, pp.vii-xiii. For the early history of the MS, see pp.xxxvi-lii. The MS was placed on temporary deposit in the National Library of Scotland in the 1930s; I am most grateful to the Clerk of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, for permission to consult it. All quotations are taken from Stevenson's edition.

On the date of the MS see note 5, below.

2. Both MSS are known to have been in Taymouth Castle from the end of the sixteenth century. The MSS are described in most detail in 'Sir Gilbert Hay's Buik of King Alexander the Conqueror: A Critical Edition of Lines 1-4263' by John Cartwright (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1974), pp.iii-ix. On the earlier MS see also British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts, 1921-1925 (1950), pp.154-5; and for the later MS, Scottish Record Office, Annual Report of the Keeper of Records of Scotland for the Calendar Year 1971 (Edinburgh, 1972). Cartwright shows that external evidence suggests the second MS, copied from the first, was produced between 1579 and 1597, and that by 1597 both were in the possession of Duncan Campbell of Glenorquy, whose family had links with the Sinclair family for whom Hay produced the prose MS. A resumé of the romance and extracts from it taken from the later and inferior MS were published by A. Herrmann in 'The Taymouth Castle Manuscript of Sir Gilbert Hay's Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour' (dissertation, University of Berlin, 1898) and 'The Forraye of Gadderis. The Vowis. Extracts from Sir Gilbert Hay's Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour' (dissertation, University of Berlin, 1900). See also The Black Book of Taymouth, edited by Cosmo Innes, Bannatyne Club (Edinburgh, 1855), p.vi, n.2,

An account of Hay's career will be given shortly, but it must first be said that his work constitutes a very interesting part of the Scottish advice canon since it consists of advice to princes in the form of both prescriptive treatises and imaginative literature. And in all but one of Hay's works the advice element exists within the wider context of a work not itself exclusively devoted to the counselling of a monarch. In the case of the Buik of King Alexander, this is particularly striking for the poem contains a number of discrete advice passages which appear to be additions to Hay's known sources. In the Buke of the Law of Armys and the Buke of the Order of Knychthede there is a continual expansion of material and a shift of emphasis towards the advice mould. The Buke of the Governauce of Princis is an advice to princes work in itself, a translation of the Secreta Secretorum, a work on which Hay also drew heavily for the main advice section of the Buik of King Alexander, and which occurs in abbreviated form at the conclusion of the Buke of the Law of Armys. Both the prose MS and the Buik of King Alexander were commissions: the former was produced for William Sinclair, Earl of Orkney and Caithness, and the latter for Lord Erskine. Yet the distinctive nature of Hay's treatment of advice material in both commissions, and his insertion of it into the Alexander romance indicate also his own interest in the issues involved in advising monarchs and their nobles.

As we shall see, the prose MS and the Buik of King Alexander reveal similar preoccupations with kingship, differently expressed according to the

2. cont.

and the brief extracts from the poem in David Laing's Extracts from the Buke of King Alexander, a Manuscript in the Library of Taymouth Castle (privately printed, 1831). The whole work is being edited by Dr Cartwright for the Scottish Text Society. Extracts from it will also appear in a forthcoming collection of Middle Scots verse edited by Priscilla Bawcutt and Felicity Riddy.

Hay's authorship of the romance has recently been contested by Matthew P. McDiarmid. See note 20 below.

constraints and freedoms of the respective works and genres. It is possible that there were other works by Hay manifesting similar themes and tendencies. For the contents list of the Asloan MS refers to a work or works by Hay which may be different from those that have survived. This question will be discussed in detail below,³ but the presence of works by Hay in the Asloan MS clearly shows that his writing had a wider circulation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than merely the noble households for which it had been commissioned, and the reference to Hay by name also suggests he had a certain reputation, which the allusions to him in Dunbar's Lament for the Makaris and Lindsay's Testament of the Papyngo further support.⁴ There is, in addition, evidence that there was renewed interest in Hay's work in the difficult years around the conclusion of the reign of James III and the beginning of the minority of James IV. The surviving manuscript of the prose works is generally agreed to have been copied in the late fifteenth century, possibly between 1485 and 1490, by the same scribe who copied MS Arch. Selden B 24, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.⁵ The MS of Hay's prose pieces seems likely to have been made for Sir Oliver Sinclair, son of Lord William, who had obtained the baronage of Rosslyn in 1481. Relatively little is known about Sir Oliver, although he is recorded as a 'familiar knight' of James III in the 1480s,

3. Below, pp.61-3

4. 'Schir Gilbert Hay endit has he', l. 67, The Poems of William Dunbar, edited by James Kinsley (Oxford, 1979); 'Quintyng, Mersar, Rowle, Henderson, hay & holland/Thocht thay be ded, thair libells bene leuand', ll. 19-20, The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, edited by Douglas Hamer, 4 vols, STS, 3rd Ser., 1,2,6,8 (Edinburgh, 1931-6), 1.

5. John Norton-Smith, letter in The Times Literary Supplement, no. 3614, 4 June 1971, p.649; M.B. Parkes, English Cursive Book Hands 1250-1500 (repr. 1979), p.13; N.P. Ker, Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, vol. II (Oxford, 1977), pp.1-2, where the attribution of both MSS to the hand of James Gray is rejected. Dr Roderick J. Lyall has yet to assign a dating to the MS in his checklist of Scottish fifteenth-century MSS.

after the Lauder Bridge affair.⁶ It is thus interesting to consider that this copy of Hay's prose works was probably made around the time when other advice works such as Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome and The Thre Prestis of Peblis were being produced.

There is also another side to the question of Hay's reputation and influence. Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we may see overlapping themes in many advice works, but it is generally less easy to demonstrate that individual authors are showing knowledge of each other's works. Yet occasionally we can suggest links and correspondences which shed valuable light on how some writers viewed the literary advising of a monarch. A good later instance of this is the relationship between The Thre Prestis of Peblis and Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome.⁷ In this chapter I shall be suggesting something similar for Gilbert Hay and the author of De Regimine Principum. And in discussing the influence of French political theorists such as Jean Juvenal des Ursins and Jean Gerson on Hay's writings, especially the Buik of King Alexander, I shall also be suggesting links between Hay and another Scots advice writer greatly indebted to Gerson, John Ireland.

Information about Hay's early career is a little vague, but the researches of J.H. Stevenson and more recently Dr John Cartwright have enabled us to distinguish its basic pattern. Hay obtained his BA and MA from the University

6. Norton-Smith, p.149; Ker, pp.1-2; The Scots Peerage, edited by Sir James Balfour Paul, vol. VII (Edinburgh, 1910), p.570; Father Richard Augustine Hay, Genealogie of the Sainteclaires of Rossllyn (Edinburgh, 1835), pp.xii-xv, 82-7, 106-7; Ranald Nicholson, Scotland: The Later Middle Ages, The Edinburgh History of Scotland, 2 (Edinburgh, 1974), p.515.

7. See Ch. 7, pp.317-22, 344-7, 353-4; Ch. 8, pp.451-2.

of St Andrews around the years 1418-19.⁸ His contemporaries included several men who were to rise to positions of influence in the Scots kirk and government, such as William Turnbull, later Bishop of Glasgow, and George Lauder, Bishop of Argyll.⁹ Thereafter he spent many years in France - twenty-four according to the copyist of the Buik of King Alexander:

. . . Sir gilbert þe Hay
Quhilk into France trewlie was duelland
Weill xxiii zeir our of Scotland
And in the king of Francis seruice was¹⁰

In the opening of the Buke of the Law of Armys Hay himself tells us that the service was that of being 'Chaumerlayn umquhyle to the maist worthy king Charles [VII] of Fraunce' [I, p.2],¹¹ but the earlier part of his career was spent in military service. Cartwright notes that there are records in 1422-3 of a 'Gilbert de la Haye, Esc. Capit. à vi hommes d'armes xviii archers'.¹² He also suggests that the circumstances of Hay's first arrival in France were thus: 'Soon after coming down from the University of St Andrews, Hay may have joined a Scottish expeditionary force to help the French against the invading armies of Henry V, perhaps the contingent led in 1421 by John Stuart, Earl of

8. He is recorded as a determinant in 1418 and a licentiate in 1419: Early Records of the University of St Andrews, edited by James Maitland Anderson, Scottish History Society, 3rd Ser., 8 (Edinburgh, 1926), pp.5-6.

9. John Durkan, William Turnbull, Bishop of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1951), p.9.

10. Prose MS, I, p.xxiv; Add. MS 40732, fols. 281^{r-v}; Cartwright (pp.xxxi-xxxii) suggests that Hay was thus born c. 1395-9, but he may have been born slightly later, for the common age of determinants was thirteen-fifteen: R.G. Cant, The University of St Andrews (rev. ed. Edinburgh, 1970), p.18.

11. For an enlightening account of the personality of Charles VII, a monarch who 'undoubtedly had a number of not very important neuroses, the best documented of which is anthropophobia', P.S. Lewis, Late Medieval France, the Polity (1968), pp.114-16 (115).

12. Cartwright, p.xxxi; William Forbes-Leith, S.J. The Scots Men-At-Arms and Life-Guards in France, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1882), I, p.155.

Buchan, and Archibald, Earl of Douglas'.¹³ In fact the records printed by Forbes-Leith reveal that this was precisely the case: among the muster rolls of the men-at-arms in the list of the second contingent travelling with Buchan and Douglas is the name 'Gilbert de la Haye'.¹⁴ In the years following this, Hay seems to have seen distinguished military service in France; Cartwright has noted that in addition to reference to a Gilbert de la Haye being present at the crowning of Charles VII of France in 1429, Fordun's Scotichronicon has a not previously noted reference to his participation in the battle of Senlis in 1430, after which he received his knighthood.¹⁵ Cartwright also suggests that he may thereafter have become a member of the French court and ultimately a chamberlain to the monarch, brought about in part through the marriage of Margaret, the daughter of James I to the dauphin Louis in 1436, and that at that time too he may have made the acquaintance of his later patron, William Sinclair, who was the commander of the fleet of ships which escorted the princess to France on the occasion of her wedding.¹⁶

It was probably while he was in France that Hay became acquainted with the writings and views of the French commentators on kingship which manifest their influence in aspects of his own writing on the subject. Gerson had died in 1429, but his reputation continued, and a writer of the next generation, Jean Juvenal des Ursins, who was delivering his sermons to the monarch during the 1430s and 1440s (and in the 1450s, after Hay's departure), thought highly

13. Cartwright, pp.xxxi-xxxii.

14. Forbes-Leith, I, p.155.

15. Cartwright, pp.xxxii-xxxiii; Joannis de Fordun Scotichronicon cum Supplementis et Continuatione Walteri Boweri, edited by Walter Goodall, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1759), II, p.501.

16. Cartwright, p.xxxiv.

/s of Vivat rex, Germon's sermon on kingship, of which Ireland was later to make such extensive use.¹⁷

Cartwright further makes the suggestion that on the occasion of Margaret's death in 1445, Hay 'may have felt himself to be redundant at the French court, and ... may have taken the opportunity to return at last to his native land'.¹⁸ Since he would then have been twenty-four years in France, this argument makes very good sense. At what point before 1456 Hay became a member of Lord Sinclair's household is not recorded, but it should also be noted that he had at some period in his career taken holy orders, since in that year the will of Alexander Southerland, Sinclair's father-in-law, requests him to say 'ten Psalters' for the dead man's soul, and he himself describes himself as a 'prest' in the Buke of the Law of Armys.¹⁹ Cartwright estimates that Hay died during the 1460s, rather than at a date later in the century, which some scholars have inferred by remarks made by the copyist of the Buik of King Alexander.²⁰ This suggestion is given some support by other

17. P.S. Lewis, 'Jean Juvenal des Ursins and the Common Literary Attitude towards Tyranny in Fifteenth-Century France', MAE, 34 (1965), 103-21 (107); see below, pp.83-4, 94-5, 117-34 and Ch. 8, pp.407-33.

18. Cartwright, p.xxxiv.

19. Father Hay, Genealogie of the Sainteclaires, p.98; Prose MS, I, pp. xxviii-xxix; Cartwright, p.xxxvi. In the Buke of the Law of Armys Hay inserts the statement that 'becaus I am a preste, I suld nocht our hyely exhort kingis and princis to do justice, but erar to merci and to grace' (I, p.299) at a place where his source has no equivalent disclaimer. Cf. The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet, an English Version, translated and edited by G.W. Coopland (Liverpool, 1949), p.212. However, we should also note that at a place in Bonet's L'Arbre des batailles where Bonet refers to himself as a priest, Hay omits the reference: cf. Tree of Battles, p.190, and Prose MS, I, p.243/23.

20. Cartwright, pp.xxxii-xxxviii. Stevenson saw the claim of the scribe of the romance that he had 'pairt of faltis mendit/With help of him þat maid the first indyit' (fol. 281v) as meaning that Hay must have been alive in 1499 when the copyist claims to have written the MS (Prose MS, I, p.xxx). Cartwright, however, argues that 'It is on the whole, far more probable that the writer of the Epilogue used the noun indite in an otherwise unrecorded sense [meaning 'copying'] ... than that Hay was alive and compos mentis in

evidence, which also provides us with an interesting insight into Hay's status within the royal household as well as noble circles. That Hay had contact with the court and maybe even some favour from the king is witnessed by a couple of gifts and payments made to him and recorded in the exchequer rolls. The first in 1459-60 is of a gown given to 'domino Gilberto de Haya', here also described as 'militi'.²¹ Annie Dunlop speculates that this gift from James II 'perhaps betokens an inherited interest in letters',²² but it also suggests that after the composition of his prose treatise and around the time of the composition of the Alexander Hay was a reasonably well-known figure in court circles, despite the fact that the patron of his prose work, William Sinclair had suffered something of a demotion in office at the hands of the monarch. The second payment is of xx solidi to Hay in 1465.²³ Here he is

20. cont.

1499: the reference then is to the first copyist, and not to Hay' (pp.xxxvii-xxxviii). Matthew P. McDiarmid has recently disputed Hay's authorship of the Buik of King Alexander, claiming the work referred to in the Epilogue to be the earlier octosyllabic Alexander romance, surviving only in an edition of 1580, but given the date of 1438 in its colophon. McDiarmid therefore argues that the 'translator' of the Buik of King Alexander, writing in 1499 is referring in the Epilogue to Hay as the author of the earlier work. He does not offer much linguistic evidence to support the claim, and seems unfamiliar with Dr Cartwright's thesis, which includes on pp.xxi-xxiii a lengthy section showing the substantial amount of shared vocabulary between the prose MS and the romance, particularly words and phrases not elsewhere recorded in Middle Scots. See Barbour's Bruce, ed. by Matthew P. McDiarmid and James A.C. Stevenson, 3 vols, STS, 4th Ser, 12,13,15 (Edinburgh, 1980-5) I, pp.27-32. In the light of Dr Cartwright's work and my own researches as set out below, I believe the case for Hay as the author of the Buik of King Alexander rather than the earlier romance to be by far the stronger one. See also the interesting comments on Hay's use of the term manrent in the context of his career and the dating of the Buik of King Alexander in Jenny Wormald, Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent 1442-1603 (Edinburgh, 1985), p.450.

21. ER, VI, p.489.

22. Annie I. Dunlop, The Life and Times of James Kennedy, Bishop of St. Andrews, Saint Andrews University Publications, no. 46 (1950), p.395.

23. ER, VII, p.367.

merely described as 'domini'. It is always possible that neither of these recipients of gifts may be Hay the poet, but given the coincidence of dates and what we know of Hay's career, it would seem more likely that he is the person in question. After this date there are no more records of payments to any person according with what we know of Hay's status. McDiarmid has made the additional suggestion that Hay 'is likely to have been the Sir Gilbert Hay knight, of the diocese of St. Andrews, who claimed that money was owing to him from the Dean of Dunkeld at the time of the latter's death in 1444-5'.²⁴ As we have seen, it is possible that Hay had returned to Scotland by this time.

It is also possible that during his time in France Hay may have known the author of the De Regimine Principum poem, whom I have suggested to be the same person as the author of the Liber Pluscardensis.²⁵ The author of the chronicle describes himself as present at the French court for the nine years up to the death of the dauphiness Margaret in 1445, a period when Hay was also in France and probably at the court;²⁶ the two may even have returned to Scotland around the same time after Margaret's death. The next fifteen years saw in Scotland the end of the minority of James II and his determined efforts thereafter to confirm his dominance by the controlling and indeed suppression of the Livingstons and Douglases.²⁷ Whether produced in the early period of James II's reign as an adult or at the beginning of the minority of James

24. Bruce, I, p.30. Stewart, the Dean, was dead by 14 July 1445; Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome, vol. IV, 1443-1447 edited by Annie I. Dunlop and David MacIauchlin, Scottish History Society (Glasgow, 1983), no. 1229.

25. Ch. 1, pp.14-30.

26. LP, II, pp.381-2.

27. For the crown-nobility relationship in these years, Alexander Grant, Independence and Nationhood, Scotland 1306-1469, The New History of Scotland, 3 (1984), pp.171-4.

III,²⁸ De Regimine Principum had certainly been composed by 1461, a dating which is also suggested for Hay's Buik of King Alexander. And as we shall see there are interesting correspondences between these works which suggest either knowledge by one of another or of at least a milieu of closely shared ideas.²⁹ But there are also differences between them. Whereas De Regimine Principum is more politically explicit, the Buik of King Alexander and Hay's other writings are more those of a stylist and a man of letters. His inventive and lucid writing shows a keen literary feel for his subject matter as well as a strong concern for its ideas. But the context that De Regimine Principum provides is a constructive one in which to set Hay's writings.

Hay and his patron Sinclair probably encountered all the three works that Hay translated for the prose MS in France, since all three were extremely popular in Europe during the fifteenth century, especially among noble circles. In translating them into Scots for William Sinclair Hay might be said to be providing in effect vernacular versions of three contemporary best-sellers. The works were in demand among royalty and nobility alike. R.F. Green has shown that several European monarchs possessed in their libraries copies of the Secreta Secretorum (Hay's Governance book), Colonna's De regimine principum and other works in the advice genre; and it is clear that the other two works which Hay translated were equally esteemed: 'There is hardly a single aristocratic library which does not contain at least one copy of Vegetius, or failing that, one of the works by Lull, Bonet, or Christine de Pisan'. (Lull's work was of course Hay's Buke of the Order of Knychthede.) Green goes on to suggest that 'like the handbooks for princes, these works

28. Ch. 1, pp.15-30.

29. Below, pp.136-42.

were evidently received quite seriously as practical manuals', but he does not offer any direct evidence of a conscious application of advice theory into practice.³⁰ As we shall see, there was in Scotland a distinct link between theory and practice in advice to princes, but it would be most rash to suggest that the highly idealized works were seen as capable of wholesale adoption.

The first work in the prose MS, the Buke of the Law of Armys, was originally composed by a Benedictine monk, Honoré Bonet, at the end of the fourteenth century.³¹ The work had aristocratic and royal associations from early on in its history, since Bonet sent copies to king Charles VI of France and the dukes of Berry and Burgundy. Thereafter, as we have just noted, it was to become extremely well known among the aristocracies of Europe. Numerous MSS of the work survive: there are forty-seven MSS in France, twenty-seven in the Bibliothèque Nationale alone, mostly dating from the fifteenth century;³² and while L'Arbre des batailles, to give it its French title, was often the sole work in such manuscripts, it is from time to time found in conjunction with other works of a political or advisory kind. In the Rouen Bibliothèque Municipale MS 1233, for example, it is preceded by a (still unpublished) advice piece entitled 'Lestat et le gouvernement comme les princes et seigneurs

30. Richard Firth Green, Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages (1980), p.144.

31. Tree of Battles, pp.15-20; N.A.R. Wright, 'The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bouvet and the Laws of War', in War, Literature and Politics in the Middle Ages, edited by C.T. Allmand (Liverpool, 1976), pp.12-31. Wright establishes that the correct form of the name is Bouvet, but I have used the more familiar form, which Hay himself spells Bonnet.

32. Tree of Battles, pp.216-18; more recently, N.A.R. Wright, 'Honoré Bouvet, the Tree of Battles and the Laws of War in France' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1972), has listed 79 MSS in all (Appendix, pp.202-5).

se doivent gouverner'.³³ The inclusion in one MS of Bonet's work with L'Ordre de chevalerie was probably not a combination introduced by Hay: the two are found together in French in a manuscript of the first half of the fifteenth century, now British Library Add. MS 22768. L'Ordre de chevalerie is itself found in the same manuscript as the Livre dou gouvernement des rois in a late fourteenth-century MS, now St John's College MS 102, but I am not aware of any other MS containing the three works altogether, and in this respect their combination appears to be original to Hay.

Although Hay's was the only translation into Scots or English the work was clearly popular in Britain as in the rest of Europe. John Holland, duke of Norfolk, for example, had a copy with him on his 1481 expedition to pillage Scotland³⁴ - a somewhat ironic combination, illustrating well the fact that the ideals of warfare set out by Bonet's treatise were rarely met in the actuality of medieval political strife. The Buke of the Law of Armys is essentially a lengthy four-part treatise on the nature and rules of war. It moves from a generalized analysis of the origins of battle in Christian pre-history to a more detailed analysis of the ethics and rules of war; the work is greatly influenced in its legal arguments by the work of a fourteenth-century legal writer John of Legarno. It shows a strong hostility to the Germanic principle of reprisals by private individuals or groups against those who have done them wrong, on the basis, as N.A.R. Wright has shown, that the private interests of soldiers should never be at odds with the public interests of the crown. In this he adds, the work may have read strangely to

33. Noted in Four English Political Tracts of the Later Middle Ages, edited by Jean-Philippe Genet, Royal Historical Society, Camden 4th Ser., 18 (1977), pp.176-7.

34. Wright, 'The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bouvet and the Laws of War', pp.12-13.

some French readers, and indeed, given the persistence of the blood feud in Scotland, one might add, to some Scottish readers as well. It was also characterized by a strong anti-chivalry approach, at least to those aspects on chivalric conduct which lauded the individual chivalric action at the expense of the wider concern of the safety of the realm.³⁵

None of Hay's prose works has received much attention, but the Buke of the Law of Armys has perhaps been the most neglected. It is characterized by the same small-scale but consistent enlargement of and addition to the text that has been observed of the other two prose works;³⁶ the Buik of King Alexander enacts a similar approach on a far broader scale. Hay is capable of accurate and steady translation, but he also moves readily into his own readings and expansions. The Buke of the Order of Knychthede is a translation, as we have seen, from the French Livre de l'ordre de chevalerie, a work originally written in Catalan by Ramon Lull in the early thirteenth century. No Latin MSS are now extant, but several French MSS of the work survive;³⁷ it was substantially added to by subsequent French writers, but Hay's enlargements make it twice their length again. Lull's original version was around 13,500 words; the French versions and Caxton's translation into English are around 17,000; Hay's is 34,000.³⁸ Like L'Arbre des batailles, the work is

35. Ibid., pp.18-23, 28; see also M.H. Keen, The Laws of War in the Middle Ages (1965), pp.7-9, 11-12, 56.

36. On Hay's treatment of his sources, see notes 63 and 127 below. Hay's originality has not always been accepted. Janet M. Smith in The French Background of Middle Scots Literature (Edinburgh, 1974) states that 'In all three works Hay made no attempt at originality. He is more original in his version of the Alexander romance, and he is certainly original in using the vernacular at all' (pp.139-40).

37. See The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry, edited by Alfred T.P. Byles, EETS, O. Ser. 168 (1926), pp.xi-xxii, xxxi-xxxiv; on Lull's presentation of chivalry, Maurice Keen, Chivalry (1984), pp.8-11.

38. Ordre of Chyualry, p.xxx.

frequently found on its own in manuscript, but as we have seen it is also found in conjunction (separately) with the other two works translated by Hay. In the St John's MS, as in Bibliothèque Nationale French MS 1972, it is also in the company of Melibee et Prudence, another work in the general advice tradition.³⁹ In British Library MS Royal 14 E ii it is included along with Alain Chartier's Le Breviaire des nobles,⁴⁰ another piece of specific advice to the nobility, which was of course translated in Scotland by Andrew Cadiou in or before the early sixteenth century.

L'Ordre de chevalerie was highly popular in England and in Scotland. Again, Hay's translation is the earliest, but Caxton's was published in 1483 and in 1494 Adam Loutfut, Kintyre Pursuivant translated this version into Scots as part of his compilation of heraldic material now in British Library Harley MS 6149.⁴¹ Caxton, and consequently Loutfut, tended rather to condense than expand material; Hay, as the figures quoted above show, took the opposite course. As Stevenson and Byles noted, Hay's version has distinguishing features which relate it to the group of MSS descending from one of the two main French versions of the work which have survived in fewer witnesses.⁴²

39. The St John's MS is itself an interesting compilation of advice and entertainment containing in addition to the Secreta translation, L'Ordre de chevalerie, and Melibee et Prudence, French versions of the Book of the Seven Sages and the story of Walter and Griselda.

40. Margaret S. Blayney has suggested that Sir John Fortescue may have been the translator into English of other works by Alain Chartier, namely Le Traité de l'esperance and Le Quadrilogue invectif. This is of some interest, given Fortescue's connection with Scotland described below, on pp.110-1. See Fifteenth-Century English Translations of Alain Chartier's Le Traité de l'Esperance' and 'Le Quadrilogue Invectif', edited by Margaret S. Blayney, 2 vols, EETS, O. Ser. 270, 281 (1974-80), I, pp.26-31. These two works were of course also later used in the Complaynte of Scotland.

41. Caxton's and Loutfut's editions are printed by Byles in Ordre of Chyualry.

42. Prose MS, II, pp.x-xii; Ordre of Chyualry, pp.xxxv-xlii. Byles' comments very much qualify Stevenson's.

Having said that, his version remains very much his own. His manner of translation is not so much to alter what the text says as to go beyond it and extend the argument further. The Buke of Knyghtede is thus in Hay's hands, even more than in the original, a thoroughly prescriptive and instructive document, with a powerful stress on the Christian basis to chivalric obligation. In this respect it of course accords very well with the argument of the Buke of the Law of Armys. It is divided into seven chapters, dealing with the nature of the order of knighthood, the receiving of it, and the rules and obligations therein. The properties of the order and the examination of a prospective member are extensively set out, as are the significations of a knight's dress and armour, which relate in turn to the customs of knighthood and the honour attached to it. In Hay's translation, as in the others, this is prefaced by a prologue describing how a very aged and very honourable knight retires from the world into a wilderness to spend the last years of his life in spiritual contemplation. One day he is met by a young knight who has strayed from his course while travelling to the king's assembly. They talk on the properties of knighthood and the young knight is so inspired by the elder's replies that he begs him to 'teche me and informe of the documentis and proprieteis belangand to the said ordre of knichthede' [II, p.9]. The hermit knight then gives him 'a lytill buke quhare in all the reuglis and the ordynaunce of all the poyntis and documentis that pertenis to the said ordre ar writtin' [II, p.9]. He will not come to the court with the young knight for he is too old and weak to travel, so the young man takes the book back to the court with him, and we are told that 'the quhilk buke the king lovit mekle, and prisit, and all the lordis, and helde it rycht dere' [II, p.10]. In this last point Hay is far more positive than other versions of the work, which say rather that anyone who desired could read it and do not single out

the king as particularly valuing it.⁴³ The motif of advising a monarch, who should be a knight par excellence is thus unobtrusively and succinctly stated at the opening of the work. Similarly, while it is customary for the age and feebleness of the old knight to be stressed - as Caxton puts it, 'I am an old man & feble/and may not forthon moche longe lyue'⁴⁴ - Hay phrases his version in a way that emphasizes both age and distance from the court: 'I am bathe alde and wayke, and may nocht travaill to schaw the reuglis, and documentis, and proprieteis of the said ordre to thame that desyris thame, that ar with the king' [II, p.10]. The phrasing here is rather similar to the way he expresses Aristotle's apology in the 'Regimen' section of the Buik of King Alexander that he cannot travel with him:

Fro my grete age and waik prosperetie
 May not accorde to pas in Ynd with þe
 . . .
 I am sa waik and febill of nature

and also indeed of the equivalent passage in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis, where Manzalaoui notes that the sense of the imminence of death is particular to Hay:

43. Compare British Library MS Royal 14 E ii, 'Quant lescuyer fut venu a la court moult sagement et ordonneement se presenta au Roy puis luy monstra le livret que lancien cheuallier luy avoit bailliet ouquel estoit escripte la doctrine de lordre de cheuallerie. Si offry que tout noble homme quy desirit a receu lordre de cheuallerie et icelle deument scavoir pourrait avoir copie du dit livre adfin que aulcune fois regardist les points quy appartiennent a cheuallier et sur icelles enseignmens reglait sa vie et son affaire' (fol. 339v). Thus the king is not mentioned here. The account in St John's College, Oxford, MS 102 (fol. 110r) is similar, if rather more abbreviated. On these French MSS, see note 63 below.

44. Ordre of Chyualry, p.13.

45. Add. MS 40732, fol. 133^r.

... for grete quantitee of age and grete febilness of
body has maid me sa paysand and hevy to travaile that
power wantis and na gude will [II, p.77] 46

Certainly what all these works stress is not only the necessity for the advice to be put in written form but also that the old man is the repository of sound doctrine which the younger recipient needs. And as Byles notes, Hay's translation of the Buke of Knychthede gives 'great emphasis'⁴⁷ to the value of the education of a knight, which is already a subject of considerable discussion in the original. The double emphasis on the value of 'documentis' and the pedigree of the adviser thus features in all of Hay's works: twice the advisor is Aristotle, and on the other occasions the worthy hermit, and the worthy 'doctour', Bonet, to whom Hay constantly refers throughout the Buke of the Law of Armys. And yet, as we have also seen, Hay's translations were very much his own. It was perhaps the avowedly pedagogic quality of his writings, along with his reputation as a public figure of some degree, that led to the curious designation in the contents table of the Asloan MS of be document of Sir gilbert hay.⁴⁸

It was not the customary practice for authors to be named in the contents table; only five are so referred to along with Hay - Ireland, Henryson, Chaucer, and Dunbar. Possibly Asloan did not know the names of all the authors of the material he compiled, but the fact that he did choose to mention Hay by name may tell us something about his status as a writer in the

46. M.A. Manzalaoui, 'The Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century', 2 vols, (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1954), I, p.343.

47. Ordre of Chyualry, p.xxxviii.

48. The Asloan Manuscript, edited by W.A. Craigie, 2 vols, STS, New Ser. 14, 16 (1923-5), I, p.xiv.

eyes of men like Asloan. This is particularly so since the authors of the other works mentioned are not translators, and Asloan does not assign a name to those who translated such pieces as the Buke of the Sevyne Sagis or The Buke of the Chess. The term document is also of interest. The meaning here is either 'instruction, teaching' or 'piece of instruction',⁴⁹ and though the term is probably not Hay's own it is appropriate to the instructional nature of his writing. He used the word much himself, as we have seen, and examples from the prose MS form the earliest entries in the DOST.⁵⁰ For example he refers to the Buke of the Governauce of Princis as 'the buke callit the Secrete of Secretis of Arestotil ordanyt for document and teching of governauce of princis' [II, p.75].

Given that this document of Sir gilbert hay occurs in the Asloan contents list before two other works entitled þe buke of curtasy and nortur and þe Regiment of kingis with þe buke of phisnomy, it is of course tempting to identify the first as the Buke of Knychthede, and the second as a version of the Governauce of Princis, with the 'document' as the Buke of the Law of Armys, linked perhaps to Hay's name since he specifically refers to himself by name and title at the opening of that work. There are, however, several problems with this hypothesis. Firstly, of course, the order here is not the same as in the prose manuscript, though this need not matter greatly since Asloan also selected and reordered some of Henryson's Fables, for example. Secondly, Hay's translation of the Buke of the Governauce of Princis does not contain a physiognomy section; though his verse 'Regimen' in the Buik of King Alexander does. It could be the case that this version of the 'Regiment' was originally separate from the Buik of King Alexander, or was circulated

49. DOST, document, n. 1 and 2.

50. This is also true of definition 3, 'proof, evidence, testimony'.

separately. Cartwright makes the additional suggestion that this item in the contents list could be two works - a 'Regiment' without a physiognomy section, and a physiognomy as a separate work.⁵¹ There are further possibilities too, given Hay's interest in advice material. It is possible that the Regiment might be yet another Secreta-like work. Or indeed it might not be his at all, as also might not be buke of curtasy and nortur.⁵² Likewise, be document of Sir gilbert hay may be another no-longer surviving work. Yet whatever the case, Hay was apparently considered of a status worthy of mentioning along with Ireland, Henryson, Dunbar, and Chaucer.

It is worth bearing this in mind when considering the significance of Hay's version of the Buke of the Governauce of Princis, the only rendition in Scots of another extremely popular work, and one which in this case was also translated, extensively so, in England.⁵³ That it was well known in Scotland is indicated by the use which later advice writers make of it. How well known Hay's version was is of course less certain. His translation, as Manzalaoui and others have shown, is in the tradition of one of the abbreviated French recensions of the Secreta.⁵⁴ This version omits much of the occult and onomantic material found in the longer versions, as well as the physiognomy. The translation by Hay thus contains the sort of Secreta material that is more

51. Cartwright, pp.xvii-xviii; R.J. Lyall in 'Politics and Poetry in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Scotland', SLJ, 3 (1976), 5-29 (28), suggests that the 'Regiment' is Hay's Buke of the Governauce of Princis, but does not note that this work contains no physiognomy.

52. See also p.141 below, and Ch. 5, p.249, n.15.

53. The most extensive discussion is in Manzalaoui, 'Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature'; see also his edition of nine texts in Secretum Secretorum, Nine English Versions, vol. I, EETS, O. Ser. 276 (Oxford, 1977); volume II, the commentary, has yet to appear. Other English versions are printed in Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum, edited by Robert Steele, EETS, E. Ser. 74 (1898).

54. See note 127 below.

extensively to be found in Middle Scots literature: the advice concentrating on counsellors and justice, rather than diet and the occult. It is thus more in the Fürstenspiegel tradition, as are De Regimine Principum and Lancelot of the Laik. That other versions of the Secreta than that translated by Hay as the Buke of the Governauce of Princis were available to Scots readers is made clear by his own Buik of King Alexander, where the advice section contains an extensive physiognomy. Without more direct evidence it is difficult to assess the influence of Hay's translation, but the presence of his work in the Asloan MS and the recopying of the prose MS in the 1480s-90s, proves that his writings were in circulation, and it is surely quite likely that a translation of so popular a work as the Secreta would have been in some demand.

The inclusion of these three particular works in one volume has a distinctive effect overall and individually. Each exists separately as a treatise and yet is recontextualized by the presence of the others. (In the MS each work follows directly on after the others, on the same page, clearly showing that the volume was conceived as a whole - as collation of the quires confirms. Thus on fol. 85^r the Buke of the Ordre of Knychthede follows on directly after the Buke of the Law of Armys, and the same is true on fol. 103^v of the Buke of the Governauce of Princis.) The recipient of the manuscript had what amounted to a composite manual on all aspects of knightly and courtly life: battle, both in individual and collective combat; knightly obligation, and guidance on government. As I have suggested, all these works are highly idealistic, and all are constructed on a firm Christian basis, which is further strengthened and emphasized by Hay. The inclusion of the Secreta, a work originally designed for monarchs, shows that it was seen as a work of relevance and import as much to the regimen of a nobleman as to a monarch. Just as the king, ideally the exemplary knight, could benefit from the advice given in the Buke of Knychthede, so noblemen could partake of the

instruction given to the monarch. By the Buik of King Alexander Hay had expanded this position yet further.

The prose MS was, as Hay tells us, composed 'at the request of ane hie and mychty Prince and worthy lord. William erle of Orknay - and of Cathnes/lord Synclere and chancelare of Scotland' [I, p.2]. The description of Sinclair here as 'prince' indicates his noble status and his worthiness to receive a work such as the Buke of the Governauce of Princis. In having the works translated by one in his employ Sinclair was in the line of the increasing number of members of the European nobility who obtained translations of French works, or the works themselves, probably for prestige as much as practicality. Certainly it seems hard to avoid the conclusion that the ostentation of the collegiate chapel at Rosslyn and Sinclair's patronage of the arts were in part designed as a conspicuous manifestation of his grandeur and status at court.⁵⁵ The reference in Hay's dedication to Sinclair as 'chancelare of Scotland' also indicates that the MS was composed at a date when Sinclair appears to have been at the peak of his personal power and royal influence. He had been awarded the earldom of Caithness in 1454 and was appointed chancellor by James II in 1455.⁵⁶ James II had two principal reasons for favouring Sinclair. Firstly, Sinclair had from the early 1450s identified himself with that noble faction which, as Norman Macdougall puts it,

55. There is a good and detailed description of Sinclair's fantastic, almost Baroque, chapel in Will Grant's Rosslyn, Its Castle, Chapel, and Scenic Lore (Edinburgh, n.d.). The carvings and decorations which abound in Rosslyn testify further to the literary and artistic awareness of Sinclair and his craftsmen. An elaborate dance of death, for example, concludes with a king figure; an inscription warns that Forte est vinum: fortior est Rex: fortiores sunt mulieres; super omnia vincit veritas. Readers of Henryson's Fables might also be interested to know that one of the carvings on the left of the north entrance depicts the fox escaping with the cock (or goose) in his mouth, and the farm-woman in pursuit.

56. Norman Macdougall, James III: a Political Study (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 27,39,49.

'had a strong interest in the success of the king and the elimination of the Black Douglasses'. Secondly, Sinclair had a strong claim to the lands of Garioch, which James II, having sequestered as royal domains in 1452, was determined to keep.⁵⁷ His awards to Sinclair of the earldom of Caithness, and the chancellorship - one of the most potentially powerful offices in the government, with considerable power in the governmental secretariat⁵⁸ - seem to have been designed at least in part to appease Sinclair and keep his support. Commenting on Hay's presence in the household of the powerful Sinclair, Cartwright notes that 'Hay must have been present at many discussions of political and military matters, both practical and theoretical',⁵⁹ and, as we shall see, evidence of such contemporary concerns is manifested in the works of the prose MS. It is surely also likely then that Hay's translations of works strongly associated with military matters and government were to some extent intended to reflect and confirm Sinclair's exalted status. Whether the personal concerns about kingship which manifest themselves in Hay's translation were equally Sinclair's is a difficult question, but their re-emergence in the Buik of King Alexander indicates the continuity of Hay's own interest.

For Sinclair, however, the upswing of Fortune's wheel was brief. By the end of 1456 the king clearly felt secure enough to remove him from the chancellorship and install another ally, the Bishop of Brechin.⁶⁰ Despite this eclipse, Sinclair was still of enough apparent importance to have been made one of those responsible for the young king James III on the death of his father in 1460. Indeed, it would seem that in 1461 when Hay was writing (or

57. Ibid., pp.22-3, 38-9.

58. Grant, Independence and Nationhood, p.149.

59. Cartwright, p.xxxv.

60. Macdougall, p.39.

perhaps had just written) the Buik of King Alexander, the young monarch was actually in the care of William Sinclair. A letter originally in Latin from the Bishop of Orkney to the King of Norway describes how '... in this present month of June in the year 1461 the renowned lord, the Earl of Orkney and Caithness and Lord of Sinclair, was personally residing with the most serene prince James, illustrious King of the Scots, for the purpose of keeping his royal person during his tender age by the desire and anxious care of the three estates of the realm of Scotland, as he still does'.⁶¹ That one of Hay's patrons could have had so close and instructive a role to the young king, must have influenced Hay's attitude towards the writing of advice designed for the advisers of monarchs as well as the monarch himself.

Sinclair's closeness to the monarch, however, did not last for long. By 1470, when the monarchy finally achieved its aim of appropriating from him the titles of Earl of Orkney and Caithness, Sinclair was willing to sign terms of compensation which, as Macdougall notes, indicates that 'Sinclair had no personal interest in the business of government and wished to opt out of his responsibilities'. The man who had been encouraged to push for such status in the 1450s had now obtained exemption from attendance at parliaments and general councils, justice ayres, foreign embassies, and so forth.⁶²

The nature of Hay's alterations to the works in the prose MS is essentially three-fold. The spiritual and Christian basis to the regimen they set out is more strongly affirmed; the language of law which he uses is made in places more precisely Scottish in phrasing and application and the relation

61. Records of the Earldom of Orkney, 1299-1614, edited by J. Storer Clouston, Scottish History Society, 2nd Ser. 7 (Edinburgh, 1914), pp.53-4; Dunlop, p.220; Nicholson, p.398.

62. Macdougall, pp.90-1; Nicholson, p.417.

of earthly justice to divine justice is equally heightened; the third area of expansion is of a more literary and philosophical kind, where Hay appears to have a particular interest in developing a conceit or metaphor. But none of these categories is exclusive. The philosophical issues relate in turn to the spiritual and legal concerns.

Turning first to the Buke of the Law of Armys,⁶³ much of Hay's translation is a faithful and accurate rendition of his French source, retaining material more directly relevant to the original readership as 'gif the King of Spaigne sendis socouris to the King of Fraunce ... quethir than may the Spangnollis ask waxis at the King of France?' [I, p.138].⁶⁴ He also keeps in Bonet's abductions to the king, which given the prevalence of minority monarchies in Scotland may have been felt to have a particular relevance, such

63. In comparing Hay's Buke of the Law of Armys with L'Arbre des batailles in manuscript I have principally made reference to two fifteenth-century MSS, British Library Add. MS 22768 and MS Royal 20 C viii; I have additionally checked some readings in two other fifteenth-century MSS, Edinburgh University Library, MS 187, and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 566. I have also used an early printed edition of 1481 (hereafter cited as Bonet) and unless otherwise indicated quotations and references are from this edition. I have cited Coopland's edition for further comparison, as the most readily available modern edition. Coopland's text is based on that published by Ernest Nys in his edition of L'Arbre des batailles d'Honoré Bonet (Brussels and Leipzig, 1883).

The extent of Hay's alterations naturally makes it impossible to identify any one MS which might have been his exemplar, and in any event this may not have survived. Although one cannot be totally sure of Hay's originality without checking all the available witnesses, it should be noted that the textual evidence is strongly against there existing a French version with so many additions. Coopland shows that, apart from a number of MSS with one major interpolation (not found in Hay's version), the MSS are generally without much textual divergence (Tree of Battles, pp.217-18). The principal area in which they do differ is in chapter division and rubrication. On this point Stevenson speculated that Hay may have been working from two MSS, since the rubric division of his contents list does not always correspond with that in the text. (Prose MS, I, pp.lxix-lxxii).

There is of course valuable circumstantial evidence for Hay's originality in the fact that he adopts a policy of enlargement of material in the two other translations.

64. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.143; Bonet, IV, cap. xxxii, sig. [G viii^r].

as: 'And now, to schawe our hienes in our ȝouthede in quhat maner the juris-
 dictioun of the temporale kingis and princis has bene in grete tribulacioun in
 the tyme ancien bypast' [I, p.33-4];⁶⁵ although Bonet later makes the point
 that 'ȝouthede' can be an intellectual condition, and Hay echoes this, both
 citing the scriptural quotation that was frequently used of young kings in
 this sort of context. As Hay puts it: 'And thar to acordis wele haly writt,
 sayand, that unhapp cummys to thes lands of quhilk the king is a barne. Bot
 the understanding is nocht allanerly of a barne of ȝouthede, bot of ane alde
 king full of barnhede, but wit, wisdom, and vertew' [I, p.297].⁶⁶ Indeed,
 the Buke of the Law of Armys is full of much direct advice to princes, not
 just as here in the latter couple of chapters, but throughout. It is rare
 that Hay cuts or condenses any of this or other material in the text, although
 he does exclude the long list of the electors of the Emperor in Book IV.

Bonet quite frequently returns to the issue of what constitutes a good
 prince and good rule. At the end of Book II he makes a distinction, which Hay
 follows, between good princes and tyrants, on the familiar basis that a good
 prince thinks and acts 'mare for the proffit of the commouns of his contree na
 for his proffit singular' [I, p.70]. Familiar though the concept may be, this
 is but one instance of an idea to which we shall see Hay returning time and
 again, both in translation and in his developments beyond it. In fact in this
 instance Hay after a couple of sentences on tyrants, common to both French and
 Scots, then adds another couple of sentences which do not occur in his source:
 'And sik jugis ar bot bastardis, in regarde of gude faithfull lordis that ar
 enclynit to cheritee and commoun proffit, to goddis law and mannis; for of sik
 men the jurisdiccioun is feynyt, and tane of fors, and nocht commyttit of the

65. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.95; Bonet, I, cap. viii, sig. [C vi^r].

66. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.211; Bonet, IV, cap. cxxxii, sig. [Q v^v].

hiest juge' [I, p.70].⁶⁷ It is not completely clear whether such 'jugis' means kings or those corrupt lords they use as judges in the pursuit of their own gain, but the inference is probably both, and the argument is one of the basic tenets and repeated in Hay's revisions of his texts: for the common profit to prosper 'goddis law and mannis' must work together.

Hay keeps to Bonet's argument in another case where, given Sinclair's support of James II against the Douglasses, it might have been construed a little undiplomatic, if the monarch himself were to read the work. Bonet states, Hay following, that while a king's nobles should always support him financially if he needs help in defending the common profit of the realm, they are not under the same financial obligation if the king wishes to make war upon a lord of his own country, whether the cause be right or wrong: 'For defence of the kingis persoun, and his landis, and placis, and of the commoun prouffit of the realme is fer mare privilegit na is ony rychtwis querele of pursuying, or were making till his awin legis' [I, p.123].⁶⁸ The theoretical standpoint behind this is broadly that of the king's 'two bodies': that a king, whoever he be, is identified with the common profit of his realm, but that a quarrel with one of his nobility may arise of his own individual making. The reference to 'privilege' here, in this instance a direct translation from the French, but a word well in use in Scots by this date, testifies to this, suggesting a special right of rank, containing within it a degree of priority.⁶⁹ We shall see the term used significantly again later.

Thus while Hay generally stays fairly closely with Bonet's text, the

67. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.116; Bonet, III, cap. ii, sig. C ii^v.

68. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.135; Bonet, III, cap. xv, sig. G i^v.

69. 'Car deffence est une chose tropt moult plus preuilege que ne nest iuste offence', Bonet, III, cap. xv, sig. G i^v; DOST, privilege, n, 1.

alterations that he makes have a distinctive cumulative effect, for they principally revolve around the issue of justice and the law, seen frequently in terms of the common profit. Hay is of course not writing directly about the legal system of his own day, but he yet brings into his translation the phrasing of the contemporary Scottish legal climate. An example of both such 'Scottish' phrasing and a small but characteristic expansion of Bonet's text, is in Book IV, chapter 44. Here the issue under discussion is whether a man may lawfully keep goods he has taken from a thief who has robbed or attempted to rob him. In the conclusion Bonet states that a man may take a thief's horse or sword for his own defence, but that ultimately, to avoid mortal sin, 'ie les dois rendre a la seigneurie du territoire ou ie lay tollue car ainsi mest aduis en cestuy debat'.⁷⁰ Hay concludes his chapter thus: 'Bot I am behaldyn to present thame to the lord of the justice of that contree, and ask him law and resoun, and to mend my scathe, and to hald me harmles of the thef and his party' [I, p.155]. That Hay is lengthier and more detailed in his phrasing is immediately obvious, but it is worth considering the detail more closely to see the precision of his usage. Firstly, for 'ie...dois', Hay has the phrase 'I am behaldyn'. This is the earliest example in the DOST for the meaning of being obliged, or bound to do something,⁷¹ but the phrase was also part of legal rhetorical phrasing, as is testified by, for example, its use in the courts of the Lords Auditors as recorded in 1478. In this instance the context is one of a pecuniary claim being made by one man from another because of an indenture between them, one claiming that 'he suld nocht be behaldin to gif the said some'.⁷² Thus not only did the phrase have legal connotations,

70. Bonet, IV, cap. xlv, sig. [H vii^r]; cf. Tree of Battles, pp.150-1.

71. DOST, behalidin, p.p. 1.

72. ADA, p.74.

but it was used within the context of obligations concerning money or property passing between parties; Hay's use of it here is thus highly apposite. The phrase 'ask law and ressoun' is not only an addition to the account as in French, but is another strongly legalistic phrase. 'Law and ressoun', in the sense of the legal basis of one's case is attested in the business of the Lords in Council of 1479 thus: 'And bring with aim ~~ap~~er partii sic lawis & Resons as ~~p~~ai will vse in ~~p~~is mater'.⁷³ Again Hay shows a detailed knowledge of legalistic context, for the meaning in his terms is that the horse and sword form the basis of the case for reparation of compensation, a point which is then taken up in the phrase 'mend my scathe', which is well attested in the early Ship Laws and, for example, in the Peebles Records of 1458.⁷⁴ Similarly, 'harmles' was a phrase often associated legally with 'scathe' in the phrase 'harmles and scathles', with the sense of being free from damage of obligation, as shown by entries for 1478 and 1483 in the acts of the Lords Auditors and Lords in Council.⁷⁵ Hay is quite exact in his phrasing, using only 'harmles' (and not 'scathles') here to make the point that he is free of any claim of damages from the thief 'and his party' (another legalism), but that he may be entitled to 'scathe'.

Hay has therefore deliberately phrased the passage in such a way as to recall the phrasing of legal documents and legal procedure. The point at issue here, the paying of assithment and settling of claims is a subject of similar attention in De Regimine Principum.⁷⁶ In fact many of Hay's rewritings and additions show a like concern with the subject of reparations, although this

73. ADC, I, p.31.

74. Illustrated in DOST, mend, v, 4.

75. See DOST, harmles, a, 1a and b; ADA, p.71; ADC, II, p.cxxi.

76. Ch. 1, p. 35.

is naturally in part dictated by the material in Bonet. We find Hay using phrasing such as 'And nocht gaynstandand that this said knyght had tane satisfioun and assithement of the barouns gudis' and 'it passis bot in dispens of the persuyte of the principale' [I, pp.166-7] to translate similar points in the French,⁷⁷ but again in a way that suggests Scottish legal affairs rather than French ones. There are many small additions: in referring to a debate over the application of a safe-conduct Hay adds in the phrase 'for quhy that his letter of assurance is expirit and the date passit' [I, p.177], 'expirit' and 'date' being legalisms used frequently of letters and documents.⁷⁸ Elsewhere, his intention is to add a point of explanation or information, as in Book IV, chapter 29 where he is explaining a confusing point concerning whether a knight or his lord should claim recompense against someone who has seized goods the knight was carrying, and takes pains to point out that 'for he may nocht tak payment in twa placis na have twa dettouris of a thing' [I, p.136].⁷⁹

A particularly interesting incidence of Hay's legal thinking occurs in Book IV, chapter 137, where the question at issue is whether a knight who has appealed another in battle may think again and reach agreement with him with or without the agreement of the prince. Bonet states that ultimately it depends whether the giving of the battle-gage was done before the prince or his representative, and continues, 'Car ce gaige cy de bataille est figure de ung libel qui seroit baille en iugement. A pres lequel libell celluy qui la

77. Cf. Tree of Battles, pp.155-6; Bonet, IV, cap. liii, sig. I iii^r.

78. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.160; Bonet, IV, cap. lviii, sig. [I vi^v]. DOST, expire, v.1 (and 2); date, n, 1; the phrasing was also used in canon law: Corpus Juris Canonici, edited by A. Friedberg, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1879-81), II, cols. 169-70. On safe-conducts, as presented by Bonet, Keen, Laws of War, p.204.

79. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.142; Bonet, IV, cap. xxix, sig. [G vii^r].

ainsi bataille convient qui poursuyue le proces de la plaidoierie'.⁸⁰ Hay initially keeps quite closely to the phrasing of the French, but then introduces another phrase instead of the wording it offers: 'For the gage of that bataill is a libell in court ordynare. And fra litiscontestacioun be, the plede is begunnyn, etc.' [I, p.276]. This is the earliest recorded example by fifty years of the term litiscontestatioun.⁸¹ It was of course a common legal term in the Latin of canon law, meaning a suit that had been formally entered. It is the phrase that Henryson translates as 'this stryif had contestait' in 'The Sheep and the Dog', a phrase which other evidence suggests was in some use in the legal vernacular in the second half of the fifteenth century.⁸² Hay, however, is doing something rather different here, but which also testifies to his knowledge of the language of canon law. It would seem that his impulse on reading the French was to translate it into the equivalent procedural term in canon law, and then transliterate this into Scots.⁸³ There is a possibility that Hay may have gained acquaintance with Scottish legal and parliamentary material through transcribing it. A manuscript containing acts, statutes, the Regiam Majestatem and other Scottish legal material, now National Library of Scotland Advocates MS 25.4.14 (1), has at the end of a section on the laws of King David a note 'Per manum venerabilis viri G.H.'.⁸⁴

80. Bonet, IV, cap. cxxiii, sig. P iii^r; in Bodleian Library Laud MS Misc. 566, the equivalent clause is phrased thus: 'Après lequel cellui qui la donne lui faut poursuivre la pladoierie' (fol. 113^v). Cf. similar readings in British Library MSS Add. 22768, fol. 89^r, and Royal 20 C viii, fol. 151^v.

81. DOST, litiscontestatioun, n, for a good summary of the legal usages. Hay's is also the earliest example in the OED.

82. 'The Sheep and the Dog', l. 1237; see note to this line in The Poems of Robert Henryson, edited by Denton Fox (Oxford, 1981), pp.259-60.

83. For litiscontestatio in canon law, see Corpus Juris Canonici, II, cols 257-65; Dictionnaire de droit canonique, edited by R. Naz et al. 7 vols (Paris, 1924-65), VII, cols 534-5, litispendance.

84. Fol. 90^v.

Stevenson suggests that the hand-writing of this note is that of Sir William Sinclair of Rosslyn, great grandson of the earl for whom Hay translated the works in the prose MS.⁸⁵ The manuscript is dated c. 1455-60, but the evidence that it was ever actually at Rosslyn is slight; on the other hand 'venerabilis vir', an unusual description for a scribe, would be quite an appropriate designation for Sir Gilbert Hay.

But what, it may be asked, was the real intention behind so much Scottish legal contextualizing of Bonet's work? On one level, it appears to come almost naturally to Hay, as the example above suggests. Hay, as a priest, could also have become well acquainted with the law in that context, since many early notaries in both canon and civil law were clerics.⁸⁶ But the alterations that he makes are not so much random transliterations and reworkings as revisions which, taken together, suggest there were wider theoretical issues in his mind. We may see an instance of this where Hay appends a different conclusion to a chapter from the one given by Bonet. The point under discussion is the use of the 'marc', so called by Bonet, a form of war and justice whereby if a king cannot levy justice on a man from another country who has committed crimes within the land, he may imprison a countryman of the offender, who may have no links with or knowledge of him, and whose goods may be sequestered in the offender's stead. Bonet (and Hay) argue that effectively there is no justification for kings or others to pursue this cause, but give instances where in time of war it might reasonably be excusable - in terms of wrongs done by the English to the French, for example, where all the English then in France might be held guilty. Bonet concludes:

85. Prose MS, I, pp.xxxiv, xlii.

86. James J. Robertson, 'The Development of the Law' in Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century, edited by Jennifer M. Brown (1977), pp.136-52 (esp. 149-51); Roderick J. Lyall, review of this volume in SLJ Supplement 8 (1978), 22-6 (24-5).

Et pource quil appartient bien a ung prince de scavoir respondre et determiner des querelles des causes et debatz quant elles pendent en sa court devant luy, atfin quil sache mieulx parler ordonner et oppinier quant il sera entre les gens sages et les clerks du conseil quant telles choses viendront a sa congnoissance; je seray aulcunes demandes sur ceste matiere pour mieulx la declarer et entendre.⁸⁷

The equivalent passage in Hay is thus:

And trewly this is a poynt of fors and of were, for in law writtin we find in nocht; forthy it is commendable that a prince fynd lawis of subtiliteis to ger law and resoun be done quhare men fleis the law, and sett remedis till all new weris of wrangis that cummys dayly before him in his court, sa that he and his counsale be prisit and honourit, and has los for the grete justice and equitee that cummys fra him till all men. [I, p.206]

Whereas Bonet lays the emphasis on the equipping of the prince to make judgments when he is in his council, Hay also brings in other points. Firstly we see a concern for ensuring the establishment of law and the responsibility of a prince to provide legal action when men escape the law: the phrase 'law and resoun' recurring again here. The law must be both established and executed. The prince too is seen in conjunction with his council, in the estimation that they will have in men's eyes if they act well. This is a frequent and significant feature of Hay's advice writing, that he will in the same sentence or clause speak of the prince's responsibility and of the prince and council's responsibility in a manner that, as here, shows both the separate nature of the prince as annointed monarch and the essential presence of his council. It is a familiar theme of advice literature that kings and their ministers will be honoured and valued if they are seen to dispense 'justice and equitee', but the fact that Hay has chosen to include it here shows his ready awareness of the necessary relation between the daily administration of the law and the wider issues of what good justice means. Attention

87. Bonet, IV, cap. lxxx, sig. L ii^r.

to the 'execucion of justice', although a phrase also used by Bonet on some occasions, is a distinguishing characteristic of Hay's revisions - as it is of De Regimine Principum, and was to be of much other Scottish advice literature. It is a phrase that he used, for example, in recounting the familiar exemplum of the king Valerius and his son. For Hay, the king would have been at 'fault of execuicoun of justice' if he had not kept his law and blinded his son [I, p.298].⁸⁸

What Hay saw as the dire effects of a monarch's negligence in fulfilling his role as dispenser of justice is made very clear in perhaps the most forthright addition he makes in the Buke of the Law of Armys. Book IV, chapter 103 is concerned with how men who break the king's truce should be punished. Bonet argues that truce-breaking is a capital offence. While thieves on their first offence should be 'batu par la ville iusques a la iustice', when it is a case of breaking truce 'les loix ne sont aucune grace ne la premiere foy ne la seconde: mais pugnition sans remission quelconque'. He goes on to say that it should be no marvel that the law should be thus severe: 'Car qui le feroit ainsi par ceste maniere les aultres y prendroient exemple tellement quils garderoient bien de rompre les treues puy que le roy les auroit donnees et iugees'.⁸⁹ Hay makes a number of changes to Bonet's argument. He omits the comparison with the thief, altering the argument to the effect that though some say that first offenders as truce breakers 'suld be dungyn nakit throu the toune, and, efter that, punyst as the caus requerit', he feels that the effect of this would be that 'there suld be mony brekaris of trewis, gif thai mycht yet gude, for to be quyte for a dynging'. Therefore

88. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.212; Bonet, IV, cap. cxxxii, sig. [Q vi^r].

89. Bonet, IV, cap. xv, sig. N iii^v; cf. Tree of Battles, p.190.

his judgement is that even if someone breaks the truce for a small a sum as five shillings (a sum also mentioned by Bonet) 'thare followis, the law civile, payne capitale, that is to say the hede' [I, p.243]. Thus far Hay has effectively stated the case that Bonet makes more forcibly. His conclusion takes in the points that Bonet makes but then goes way beyond it:

... for that is a thing specialy and expressely determynt in the lawe. For gif a king be a rigorous man, and wele sett to kepe law and justice, is nane sa grete bot he will sare drede till offend him, na to breke his commandement. Bot and he be lathe, and our settand, and favourable in punycioun of mysdoaris, traist wele he is fosterar and manetenar of all mysdoaris of his realme, and aw to geve compt to the hiest juge of thair allaris mysdedis that gais away unpunyst fra justice, throu his negligence. [I, p.243]

Hay's emphasis is thus placed squarely on the king as either an effective or negligent overseer of justice, and it is obvious that what is in his mind is a far wider question than simply the punishment of truce-breakers. The implication is that he can only render himself both an effective and secure monarch if he is known to execute justice rigorously; it is perhaps particularly significant that Hay notes that if this is done well there will be 'nane sa grete' but he will fear incurring his wrath. Disloyalty could come from among the highest, as among the lowest, as James II might have claimed of the Douglasses. The point that the monarch might be not simply negligent but actually 'favourable in punycioun of mysdoaris' is of course also levelled at the monarchy in De Regimine Principum, and warned against in later works like The Contemplacioun of Synnaris,⁹⁰ but we should note here that Hay immediately makes the monarch accountable to God, 'the hiest juge', rather than expressing his accountability in more directly political terms.

Thus while passages like this one, in addition to those using language

90. See below, p.139 and Ch.6, pp.289-303.

obviously relevant to the Scottish legal system, heighten the sense of the application of this advice to the Scottish monarchy, Hay's approach here and that of De Regimine Principum are markedly different. De Regimine Principum is a sustained attack on monarchical failings in justice and governing, with clear arguments for its reformation. Hay's comments are distributed throughout his translations, are in general less constructively prescriptive; and would also of course be read as part of the translation by anyone not intimately familiar with the original. This latter point is supported by the fact that Hay's additions often take the form of running on from a sentence or half-sentence closely based on Bonet's original; nor does Hay ever suggest that in making a point he is differing from his source. There is an important instance of this at the near-conclusion of the work where Hay makes a statement revealing the fundamental principles behind his view of monarchy. It occurs in the final chapter, largely based in Bonet's account on the Secreta Secretorum, in which, as Hay puts it 'speris the doctour quhat thingis efferis till all gude prince to do, and quhat suld be in thame' [I, p.292]. For Hay the section on justice herein provides a means of reiterating a number of points he has made in the course of the work. Bonet states that it is no wonder that a king feels 'grant charge', since he should as a monarch keep under him ten-twelve princes and as many cities in his governance, for which 'luy convient rendre compte a dieu'; this is what distinguishes a king from a prince.⁹¹ Hay keeps quite close to this, but adds beforehand another half-sentence: 'And thus it is na ferly, suppos a man have grete drede to tak the charge of the governaunce of a realme, sen he mon geve compt on his last day of all the misgovernance of the realme, and faultis of executioun of justice' [I, p.297]. The idea of rendering account is thus treated by Hay in terms of

91. Bonet, IV, cap. cxxxii, sig. [Q vi^V]; cf. also Tree of Battles, pp.211-12.

wrongful execution of judicial responsibility that we have seen him bring in elsewhere. Concern with the execution of justice as well as its establishment is indeed a characteristic feature of Scottish advice to princes literature, as we have already seen and shall go on to see. In parliamentary or judicial business it is also not uncommon to find the king invoked in this kind of context: '[The king] ordanit the first decret grantit to the lordis to be put to execucion' (1428), and phrases like 'þe keping and execucione of Justice' abound in parliamentary dealings.⁹² It is far less common to find the monarch described in the terms that were used in 1398 during a parliament dealing with the special circumstances of the inescapable inadequacies of Robert III: 'þe king be obliste at he sal nocht lette his office na þe execucion of it bi na contramandmentis as sumqwhile hes bene seyne'.⁹³ Later parliaments urged the overseeing of justice in less critical terms, such as the request of the 1473 parliament, that James III 'be persuadit to remane within his Realme to þe execucioun of Justice',⁹⁴ but with no less sense of the primacy of the presence of the monarch in such matters, and it is important to read Hay's references in this context.

Nor do his own comments on justice end here. He makes a further addition a few lines later: while Bonet states that 'propoz tout bon roy doit avoir en soy vertu de droicturiere justice, car selon droit cest propre condicion de roy de faire justice' and goes on to say that the ruler should deal with all ranks and types in society without favouritism.⁹⁵ Hay's version is: 'And sit aw a king to have the vertew of justice in him, for be all lawis, it is the

92. Cited DOST, executioun, n.3; APS, II, p.41/1 (for 1454).

93. APS, I, p.211.

94. *Ibid.*, II, p.103/2.

95. Bonet, IV, cap. cxxxii, sig, [Q vi^V]; cf. Tree of Battles, p.212.

verray proper condicioun of a vertuous king to do justice, quhilk gif he dois nocht, he tynis be law the privilege of a king' [I, p.298]. This is a classic example of Hay's style and thinking in translation. The first two-thirds of the sentence keep very near to the original, to the extent of using the closest Scottish equivalents in 'to have the vertew of justice in him' and 'proper condicioun', but the remaining third then breaks away to make his own addition. Hay's statement that an unjust king 'tynis be law the privilege of a king' is a striking one. It is possible that the phrase occurred in another version of Bonet's work now no longer extant, but given the cumulative evidence for Hay's alterations here and in his other works, and the sense of coherent argument that emerges from them, it is surely more likely that this is his own *idea*. But the statement is entirely in keeping with much medieval thinking on the subject of kingship - a sort of 'stop in the mind'⁹⁶ that among Scottish writers prevented the open discussion of the removal of a bad king by its subjects until the sixteenth century, when it begins to feature strongly in the writings of authors such as Major, Boece, and George Buchanan. The issue was centred on the whole question of 'privilege', and the central issue is well stated by Annie Dunlop, writing here about Bishop Kennedy's attitude to the monarchy and its practical ramifications:

Privileges involved obligation. The king was God's steward upon earth appointed to safeguard and protect the lives and property of the 'Christian people subject to his sway' and answerable to God. If, however, the Crown proved false to its trust, there

96. See Christopher Hill, The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714 (1974), pp. 62-5. Much of what Hill has to say about the attitudes of the English parliamentarians to the Scots King James I bears interesting relation to the theoretical debate emerging in Scotland a century earlier: 'The "stop in the mind" ensured that the furthest the Parliamentarians could go was to speak of the sovereignty of King in Parliament, or more often of a mixed monarchy, a balanced constitution. In case of conflict it was difficult, historically, legally, and emotionally, for anyone to deny the ultimate authority of the King'. (p.64).

existed no constitutional machinery for curbing the power of the arbitrary prince. The rather tentative efforts to make the lords of session an independent body, and Kennedy's injunction to the king to act 'that god may be emplesit of him' are indications that the Bishop of St Andrews was aware of the problem.⁹⁷

Thus when Hay says that the king loses his princely privilege 'be law', it seems more likely to be the case that what he is referring to is the divine justice which unjust monarchs were frequently warned would descend upon them and remove them from office, rather than any specific point of law. Parliaments might be critical of monarchs, as they were of Robert III and of James III, but under James II they in fact went as far as to praise the monarch for his just actions - though with Kennedy's proviso that he should still incline himself diligently to the responsibilities of monarchy.⁹⁸ The notion of a limited monarchy, in the sense of the dependence of the monarch on the people for his continued power was established as early as the Declaration of Arbroath, but the reality of dealing with a monarch who did not accord with the will of the people was another question. For Hay, then, the loss of princely privilege might be a judgement of the people, but ultimately more importantly, a judgement of God. While he does not discuss what may happen to a monarch who acts as a tyrant or fails through negligence, he implies here that he should in one sense be seen no longer as king because he is abusing the privileged status and acting contrary to the power invested in him by God.

There were those among medieval and political theorists who were prepared to see tyrannicide as legitimate. In English political writing, for example, John of Salisbury had argued that it was justified, but the position taken by Bracton, that 'The subjects ... must trust God who eventually will punish the

97. Dunlop, pp.426-7.

98. APS, II, p.52/48.

tyrant and annihilate his rule',⁹⁹ is the closer to Hay's. But perhaps the most developed corpus of this kind of thinking was to be found amongst fifteenth-century French political theorists. The position that Hay intermittently articulates has much in common with the views expressed by writers whose works he must surely have encountered in France. Their writings on kingship continually return to the essential point that, as Lewis puts it, 'The will of a prince is a true will only when it is good'.¹⁰⁰ The question of how a bad monarch should be dealt with therefore necessarily arose, but there was manifest hesitancy in expressing an explicit view on this. Gerson was one of the few prepared to argue that resistance to tyranny could be legitimate and tyrannicide could be justified, though subjects must always first seek to reform their ruler.¹⁰¹ But such a position was unusual. 'The kind should be left to God was the normal reaction in the fifteenth century to the question of resistance.'¹⁰² And perhaps partly because of this, criticism of monarchy was often deflected not so much into criticism of oppressive cruelty, but of 'a tyranny of inefficiency'.¹⁰³ Paradoxically, in criticizing monarchs what was asserted was a need for greater strength, the unifying power that only the monarch could bring - the French writers make great use of the image of the body politic.¹⁰⁴ Thus, like Hay's, the writings of Jean Juvenal des Ursins reveal a constant concern for the controlling of ministers, the

99. Fritz Schulz, 'Bracton on Kingship', EHR, 60 (1945), 136-76 (153); Ernst Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies (Princeton, 1957), pp.143-64.

100. Lewis, 'Jean Juvenal des Ursins', 108; see also Late Medieval France, pp. 78-110; and his edition, Écrits politiques de Jean Juvenal des Ursins, vol. I, Société de L'Histoire de France (Paris, 1978).

101. Lewis, 'Jean Juvenal des Ursins', p.109.

102. *Ibid.*, p.110.

103. *Ibid.*, p.114.

104. *Ibid.*, pp.106-7; Late Medieval France, pp.87-93.

administration and execution of justice, which is seen all too often to be frustrated by the inadequacy of the monarch. In Loquar in tribulacione, he pictured the state of affairs thus: 'Et si scay bien que le roy en est tres desplaisant, et vouldroit que lesdictes tirannies cessassent, et que justice se feist, mais il n'est semblant qu'il face de l'executer; on fait bien des ordonnances, mais il souffist de les escripre et publier, qui est une grant moquerie, derision et deshonneur pour le roy'.¹⁰⁵ Hay is not writing from such a position of direct comment - this, and the expression of the sentiments are perhaps rather more like De Regimine Principum. But the constant movement we can observe in the prose texts to define the nature of kingly office, both theoretically and in its practical responsibilities, does suggest that the influence of the French theorists, which can be more directly observed in the advice section of the Buik of King Alexander was already making itself felt in the earlier works.

Concern for the overseeing of justice also appears in Hay's expansion of his source in references to the place of counsellors or a council - a familiar enough feature of advice literature, of course, but one which Hay was to significantly develop in the Buik of King Alexander. In many instances where a monarch is referred to in connection with his council Hay is following Bonet, but there remain quite a number of cases where he includes ministers and officers where the French original refers to the king alone, often when it is a case of a monarch sitting in judgement. Thus a clerk 'allegeis and complenzeis to the king and the parlement' [I, p.221] where there is no equivalent assembly in Bonet.¹⁰⁶ Elsewhere, the case is being considered of a knight who is in dispute with the king of France over his wages. Whereas in

105. Écrits politiques, p.366.

106. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.180; Bonet, IV, cap. lxxxvi, sig. [L vii^V].

Bonet's account the knight deals directly with the king, Hay makes the business take place with the king's treasurer [I, p.147].¹⁰⁷

There are other additions to the Buke of the Law of Armys, which illustrate Hay's military interests. This is a feature which Cartwright also finds in Hay's Buik of King Alexander,¹⁰⁸ and which provides further evidence of his military career. When Bonet is describing what Hay renders as 'sutelteis ynew that men may us to barate thair inymyes' in war [I, p.164], he sets out how they may be set ambushes, or placed in a battle position where the sun gets in their eyes, to which he adds 'or the wynd, and the pouder in thair face ... or ... fynd wayes to stryke down thair banner or thair standart' [I, p.164].¹⁰⁹

In the Buke of the Law of Armys Hay also treats of material which recurs in the 'Regiment' section of the Buik of King Alexander. In the second book of L'Arbre des batailles Bonet gives a brief account of the foundation of jurisdiction and monarchy, which in its combination of Aristotelian argument and Christianity is characteristic of medieval writers on political theory. He states the familiar case that since too many leaders caused confusion and destruction people agreed to establish one leader among them. This is prefaced by the equally familiar organic concept of the body politic. Since God gave to man, in Hay's translation, 'wit and resoun, knaulage and discrecioun to governe him resonably', he also ordained that to each thing of parts there should be a head to govern the members, for 'quhare thare is na hede, regemen na ordinaunce, thare resoun naturale failis' [I, p.66].¹¹⁰ In

107. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.147.

108. Cartwright, pp. vi and notes to lines 448 ff.

109. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.155; Bonet, IV, cap. 1, sig. I ii^r.

110. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.114; Bonet, III, cap. i, sigs. Ci^v-Cii^r.

treating of human society, Hay renders Bonet's 'tu sais bien que par droite experience la tous sont seigneurs celle gent est en perdition et en confusion'¹¹¹ as 'For man may se be ryght experience that quhare every man is ylike gret maister, that folk is bot in divisioun and discensioun, and sone efter cummys to perdicioun' [I, p.67]. Hay's version is thus as usual slightly more elaborate and extended. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the conclusion to the chapter, a quotation from Aristotle's Physics, 'In omni pluralitate membrorum, necesse est ut unum principetur et cetera fuerint subjecta' is identified by Hay as Aristotle's, but not by Bonet [I, p.67].¹¹² The same idea and comparisons in fact occur a second time in Book IV, under consideration of the question of the subjection of the King of France to the Emperor. Here Hay again refers to Aristotle and quotes the same point, 'pluralitee of princis ar all evil, and tharfore suld thare be bot a prince' [I, p.210], while Bonet does not include this.¹¹³

Thus the Buke of the Law of Armys establishes the pattern of Hay's writing in the prose MS: small-scale, but consistent expansion of the text, revealing an interest in kingship and concern for good justice, which would be given a fuller and more personal statement in the Buik of King Alexander.

Although the Buke of Knychthede, the second work in the prose MS, is the shortest of Hay's works, it is, as we have already noted, about twice as long as the other versions. Again he often adheres to the French original, translating sometimes word for word and giving the nearest Scottish equivalent;

111. The printed edition does not contain this passage; Add. MS 22768, fol. 28^r.

112. Cf. Tree of Battles, pp.114-15; Bonet, III, cap. i, sig. C ii^r.

113. Cf. Tree of Battles, p.175; Bonet, IV, cap. lxxxiiii, sig. [L iiiii^r].

again he will then step outside the source and alter the argument when it suits him. Byles, who did some work on Hay's sources, claimed that there is evidence to link his translation to the recension of the work exemplified by British Library, MS Royal 14 E ii;¹¹⁴ but cumulatively the evidence is neither great nor conclusive, and I have also found Hay's translation to have similarities in phrasing with the group containing St John's College, Oxford, MS 102. In any event, most of the passages I cite to show Hay's originality will not be paralleled in either MS.¹¹⁵

The Buke of Knychthede complements well the two works that precede and follow it in the prose MS. Like the Buke of the Law of Armys it exalts and advocates a sort of chivalry that is avowedly based on Christian and national obligation, rigorously opposed to any acts of daring and adventure for themselves. Like the Buke of the Governauce of Princis, and indeed the advice sections of the Buke of the Law of Armys it communicates a clear and uncompromising sense of kingly responsibilities. In the French versions, as in Hay's translation the point is made that the 'ordre of knycthede' applies to kings and emperors too, for they are the highest representatives of knighthood, and have gained their worthiness by 'annexing' it. But Hay then makes a further distinction in his account: 'And thus knycthede is the hiest temporale ordre that is in the world, but nocht the hiest office: for kingis and Emperouris is

114. Ordre of Chyualry, pp.xxxv-xxxvi.

115. In comparing Hay's translation with L'Ordre de chevalerie I have consulted Caxton's and Loutfut's versions in Byle's editions, along with the notes he gives on variants in some of the French MSS. I have also used the following MSS: St John's College, Oxford, MS 102 (late fourteenth century, also containing Le Livre dou gouvernement des rois); British Library Add. MS 22768 (early fifteenth century, also containing L'Arbre des batailles), and British Library MS Royal 14 E ii (late fifteenth century). It is again possible that Hay was drawing from an MS no longer surviving or not consulted by Byles or myself, but given the sheer length of Hay's version, and his practice in the other prose works, this seems highly unlikely.

nocht ordre, bot it is office' [II, pp. 21-2].¹¹⁶ Later, in the concluding chapter of the work, he restates this argument, with a somewhat different emphasis: 'For suppose the office be gretare, the ordre is ylike ane in kingis and in knyghtis, as presthede is ylike of degree, bathe in pape, cardynale, and patriarche, alsmeikle is it in a symple preste' [II, p.67].¹¹⁷ Again, the argument and the comparison are Hay's. Clearly the distinction between office and order was an important one for him. As in the Buke of the Law of Armys, the monarch was seen as separate from but dependent on his counsellors, so in the Buke of Knychthede, the monarch is the knight par excellence, but distinguished from other knights by his office as monarch. Effectively this enables Hay to direct his advice to both knights and monarchs, for in asserting their differences he has yet also drawn them together. The sense of the collective responsibility for the common profit is thus heightened by Hay here, as in all the works.

A good example of both the fidelity of Hay's translation and the sort of additions he brings into the Buke of Knychthede may be found in the opening of the Prologue. From the beginning of the first paragraph Hay is translating virtually word for word, but after six lines or so he begins to become more expansive and fluid, putting the quite concise phrasing of the French original into more extended periods. A comparison is being made between the domination of God over the planets and the domination of kings and princes over knights (Hay was to open the advice section of the Buik of King Alexander in a similar

116. This passage does not occur in the other versions. Cf. Ordre of Chyualry, p.29; St John's MS 102. fol. 114^v. For the background to the idea, Kantorowicz, pp.202-61 (esp. 204).

117. Again, this does not occur in other versions. Cf. Ordre of Chyualry, p.116; MS Royal 14 E ii, fol. 353^v.

way),¹¹⁸ and knights over the people. The French '... les chevaliers par similitude doivent avoir pouvoir et domination dessus le meun peuple',¹¹⁹ becomes in Hay, 'sa suld knyghtis have dominacioun and seignourye subordinate of the princis and lordis behalve, be semblaunce of syk like figure, apou the small people, to governe, reugle, and defend thame in all thair necessiteis' [II, p.1].

Hay thus expands on the nature of the knight's responsibilities to 'the small peple', and elsewhere he makes rather more of the application of this part of knightly responsibility to the 'commoun proffeit'. The French versions, Caxton, and Hay with them, define knightly responsibility towards the 'small people' as consisting of making sure that those who work the lands do so diligently, for by people's respect for the knights 'are the kingis dred' [II, p.24] protecting the weak, especially widows and orphans, and defending them in time of war [II, pp.27-8]. But a comparison between the French versions and Hay shows how in discussing the issue of the common profit generally he goes beyond the original. In MS Royal 14 E ii the relevant passage states that:

A cheuallier appartient amer le bien commun car par communitie fut establee et ordonnee lordre de cheuallerie/Et bien commun est plus propre et plus necessaire que bien propre ne particulier.¹²⁰

The equivalent passage in Hay reads thus:

Item, till knyghte afferris, principaly to be amorous of the commoun prouffit, and of the commouns; for quhy be the commouns and for the commoun prouffit knyghte was foundyn, stablyst, and ordanyt. Than suld knyghtis be curious of thair prouffit, be resoun;

118. See below, pp.117, 122.

119. St Johns MS 102, fol. 107^r.

120. MS Royal 14 E ii, fol. 353^v. Cf. also Ordre of Chyualry, p.113.

for gude resoun gevis, that all princis, lordis and knychtis
 specialy, suld be mar curious of the commoun prouffit, na of thair
 awin propre gudis; for quhy it is mare nedefull and mare spedefull,
 and gretter and mare necessair, for the commoun prouffit riches
 bathe prince and peple, and gude propre gudis bot a persone
 proprely, and mare gude isto be bathe riche, prince and peple, na
 he allane, and nocht his peple. [II, p.65]

Stylistically this passage epitomizes the structured expansiveness of Hay's approach to translation in the Buke of Knychthede. The repeated phrases in the first two lines and the balanced and grouped comparatives 'mare nedefull and mare spedefull, and gretter and mare necessair', build up the sort of emphatic climax that is quite different from the French original. Hay, too, particularly dwells on the point that the common profit is something that 'riches bathe prince and people', and that it is what knighthood should 'principaly' aim at. This sense of the interdependence of king and people is a point much made in the Secreta, and indeed is a point which Hay reiterates with frequency in the advice section of the Buik of King Alexander in terms which manifestly resemble those used here:

The realme not riche Is quhare pepill pure is
 Na 3itt the king þat has him [sic] in his curis
 Bot quhan baith Riche is pepill and þe cuntrie
 That on nede force þe king mon rich be ...

For bettre it ware to riche ane hale regioun
 Na pure ane realme and riche bot ane persoun ...

And fulis princis ar governit oft be fulis
 Throw quhilk oftymes þe commoun proffite culis
 And quhan the commoun proffeit gais abak
 Ill merit be þe king has all the lak 121

Such categorical statements of the centrality of the common profit to a monarch's rule are always further shaped for Hay by the sense of the relationship of the earthly kingdom to the heavenly one. Thus it is that the king must

121. Add. MS 40732, fols 133^v, 134^r, 137^v.

have the people's interests at heart, both for the good of the country and because he must account for his actions towards it before a higher judge.

It is this concern for the common profit and the 'small people' that makes Gilbert Hay one of the most humane of Scottish advisers to princes. Yet given the rigorousness of his standards it is not surprising that he also heightens those parts of L'Ordre de chevalerie that deal with those knights who do not live up to its demanding levels of behaviour. In one remarkable passage he adopts a well-nigh flyting style to castigate those who are not worthy to be knights: 'na common leare, na commone viciouse hurdomare hasatour, commoun tavernouris full of sleuthe, barganouris, commouns glotouns, kid and knawin for syk, dronkynsum, manesuourne, and all outrageus commoun vicious men' [II, p.40]. There is nothing to parallel this in the French original,¹²² and the manner in which Hay so suddenly matches style to subject is typical of the great freedom with which he approaches this text. Not surprisingly, in a less legalistic work we find fewer of the legalisms that characterize the Buke of the Law of Armys and more of the sort of writing that primarily enables Hay to demonstrate the skill of his prose style. Indeed in the chapter enumerating knightly virtues Hay's passage on justice is considerably shorter than its equivalents in other versions; but he does independently make some additions to the pieces of armour itemized in terms of knightly attributes. Their effect is primarily to increase the sense of knightly obligation and obedience. Thus 'the quhip is gevyn to the knyght in his hand, quhen he is on horse, to that significacioun, that he suld stand aw and be obedient till his lord; for disobeisaunce undois the knyght and brekis his order, that all his offspring will forthink: as for the inobedience of Adam,

122. Cf. Ordre of Chyualry, pp.64-5; MS Royal E 14 ii, fol. 347^r; St John's MS 102, fol. 124^r.

all his offspring was punyst' [II, p.46]. Such an addition tells much about the cast of Hay's thought. The remarks can be applied alike to kings and knights, both of whom owe allegiances to lords in an ordered earthly and divine hierarchy. The reference to Adam also illustrates the fact that kings and knights are but men. Hay cites the poll-ax 'in takenyng that he is officer ryale; and that gif ony man disobeyis till his wand, that he lay that maise on thame to hald the kingis rychtis on fut' [II, p.46].¹²³ Again, as in the Buke of the Law of Armys the necessity for kingly (and knightly) responsibility to be tangibly expressed is emphasized.

Nor is it surprising, given Hay's pedagogic nature that, as Byles noted, Hay translates to the full the passages on the value of education and instruction in L'Ordre de chevalerie.¹²⁴ And as we have already seen, Hay implies in the prologue that the king and court receive the document in a positive manner which is not matched by the other versions.¹²⁵ Thus the idealism inherent in all the works in the prose MS is here extended to their reception. Moreover, conventional as are such views on the divine perspective and the common profit, they have a profound influence on the shaping of Hay's advice thought into the general rather than the particular. Though Hay may intimate the relevance of his writing to Scottish affairs he clearly sees the premises behind them as fundamentally and vitally important to all monarchs and princes as examples to all men. Within this framework though, certain concerns will keep recurring and in so doing will indicate Hay's consciousness of political or ideological points of particular weight at his time of writing.

123. Cf. the discussion in Prose MS, II, pp.xxiv-xxvii, and Ordre of Chyualry, pp.xl-xlii.

124. Ordre of Chyualry, p.xxxviii.

125. See above, pp.59-60.

Hay's translation of the last work in the prose MS, the Buke of the Governauce of Princis, follows the pattern of the two previous works. Comparison with a French MS it closely resembles, St John's 102, reveals that Hay keeps virtually exactly to the same chapter divisions; but within this scheme he makes many alterations. Manzalaoui observes that Hay generally makes additions to 'enlarge the sense or imagery of the original text'.¹²⁶ This is certainly so, and one can enjoy the expansive and rhythmic qualities of Hay's style in this pursuit, but it is also apparent that in his choice of what he enlarges Hay is doing more than simply enhancing the expression of the sense. In this respect the Buke of the Governauce of Princis is more like the Buke of the Law of Armys than the Buke of Knychthede. As we saw earlier, this version of the Secreta is in the Fürstenspiegel tradition, concentrating on the issues of good government, justice, and good counsel, with additional sections on the monarch's physical well-being, along with chapters on the seasons of the year, and so forth. Manzalaoui notes too that the work is characterized by its application to 'princis' as well as kings, but this is something essentially present in Hay's original;¹²⁷ nevertheless it was manifestly his intention to direct the work to those who might advise the

126. Manzalaoui, 'Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature', I, p.341.

127. Ibid., p.348. Both St John's College, Oxford, MS 102 and British Library MS 18179 (early sixteenth century), two MSS from the French recension used by Hay which I have consulted, address themselves to princes and grandseigneurs as well as rois. I have also checked some references with another MS in this group, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 18.7.4. (fifteenth century) and found it not markedly different. For an account of the characteristics of this French recension and a discussion of the MSS, J. Monfrin, 'La Place du Secret des Secrets dans la littérature française médiévale', in Pseudo-Aristotle, 'The Secret of Secrets', Sources and Influences, Warburg Institute Surveys, 9 (1982), edited by W.F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmidt, pp.73-113 (89-92).

On the Fürstenspiegel aspect of Hay's work, Manzalaoui, 'Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature', I, pp.341-65, and W. Kleineke, 'Englische Fürstenspiegel vom Policraticus Johannis von Salisbury bis zum Basilikon Doron König Jacobs I', Studien zur Englischen Philologie, 90 (Halle, 1937), 109-12.

monarch as well as the monarch himself. In so doing he makes much of the idea ~~which~~ is well put in the French version that the monarch will be constantly observed by those two bodies to whom he has primary responsibility - his people, and his God. As the French version succinctly has it:

Et le prince qui eschue ou decline ceste iustice nest une
juste, mais est contraire a iustice, a dieu, a son peuple...¹²⁸

This is the sort of rhetorical phrasing that appeals to Hay, but his version is, as so often, more expansive:

And quhat prince or king that has nocht this soverane vertu in dede and in hert, he is nocht king na prince, bot he is contrarious to kingis and princis. For proprietee is to king or prince tobe just, or ellis he declynis fra the proprietee of princehede, and fra the glorious God of quham he tuke that office [II, p.146].

The categoric statement of the first sentence, 'he is nocht king na prince', confronts the reader in an even stronger manner than the French 'nest une juste'. The idea is in keeping with the remarks on kingly privilege in the Buke of the Law of Armys, and again prompts comparisons with the sentiments of the French theorists. Thus Jean Juvenal des Ursins was prepared to concede that a king could change the law, but 'il ne doit point faire sans just cause ne raissonable et si se veult et doit soubzmettre aux loys; car aultrement on pourroit dite que ce seroit fait de tirant et non mis de roy'.¹²⁹ And Hay also makes it clear that what is really in his mind is the standing of the king before 'the glorious God of quham he tuke that office', the 'office' so deliberately identified in the Buke of Knychthede. Indeed, quite what that office was seen to be is well brought out by Jean Juvenal des Ursins in Loquar in tribulacione, with reference to Jerome's commentary on Jeremiah, 'C'est

128. St John's MS 102, fol. 61^v; cf. also Add. MS 18179 fols. 47^v-8^r.

129. Lewis, 'Jean Juvenal des Ursins', 108; cf. pp.81-2, above.

vostre charge et vraye office, et chose propre a vous, de faire jugement et justice et oster les opprimés des main de ceulx qui les oppriment et destrusient...'.¹³⁰ In the remainder of this chapter Hay speaks of the ultimate justice before which the king will come at greater length, bringing in a number of legal phrases which, as before, evoke a more contemporary legal context while at the same time heightening the divine one. Thus he makes more of the assertion in the French that 'Et encore est il une autre justice entre Homme juge et son createur',¹³¹ to state that, 'And 3it is thare ane othir maner of justice betuix a man and his creatoure God almychty that is deferrit quhill the uterest terme, quhilk justice men suld nocht forzett, and thai be wys' [II, p.146]. And he similarly enlarges the sense of the final sentence to emphasize the role of the divine judge as the figure on whom a monarch should model himself, and who will judge him more harshly than others. The French concludes, 'beau fils alisandre garde que tu saches iustice et loyaulte a toy meismes a tes subgetz, et a dieu ton souverain et ainsi gouverneras tu ton souverain royaume'.¹³² Hay concludes, 'For quhen thou kepis justice among thy subjectis, thou dois to thy self, and to thy soverane lord God almychty the quhilk sall mak interrogacion of all princis dedis of justice straytelyar na of othir mennis dedis; and [princis] salbe fer sairar punist of thair faultis' [II, p.146].

And as with the Buke of the Law of Armys, the reworking that Hay gives to the legal material in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis shows evident preoccupation with the execution of justice. Thus where the French has 'y bien

130. Écrits politiques, pp.382-3; Lewis's note gives similar Latin phrasing in the Decretals.

131. St John's MS 102, fol. 61^V; Add. MS 18179, fol. 48^r.

132. Ibid.

affiert a souvierain prince garder rigueur et abstinence par quoy il ait distinction et difference de personnes entre les souverains et les sujets',¹³³ Hay has, 'it efferis wele till a lorde to be rigourouse in execucioun of justice, and tobe discrete to discern betwix statis of personis and the qualitee of the dede, and betuix soveraine and subgettis' [II, p.98]. Further, in a passage shortly following this Hay recasts the French version into a more obviously Scottish legal form. The point in question is the nature of the offence, to which the king should accordingly attune his judgement. Where the French reads 'mais sil la fait en despit et en honte de la maieste Royal il doit estre mis amort et occis sans mercy',¹³⁴ Hay writes, 'And gyf it war done aganis the magestee ryale in fellouny and forethocht felouny, it sulde be punyst to the dede; for quhen ony man dois despising or villany or ony grete excesse to the prince or oucht that belangis his majestee it requeres dede but merci, gif it be done be his awin subjectis and legies' [II, p.99]. What is interesting about Hay's much expanded version is not simply that he has imported the phrase 'forethocht felouny', a term well established in legal formulæ by the fifteenth century, but that the phrasing he gives itself recalls that of legal business in both Latin and Scots. For example, where **death** by capital punishment is being set out, 'Si homicidium fuit perpetratum ex cuncto et deliberato proposito vel per forthocht-felony siue murthir ... incontinenti facienda est iusticia';¹³⁵ or how any officer of the king should 'ger inquer diligently and but ony favor gif þe deide was done apon forthocht felouny or throw suddande

133. St John's MS 102, fol. 43^V; Add. MS 18179, fol. 18^r; Advocates MS 18.7.4., fol. 12^V.

134. St John's MS 102, fol. 43^V; Add. MS 18179, fol. 18^V; Advocates MS 18.7.4., fol. 12^V.

135. APS, I, p.184/1; cf. Grant, Independence and Nationhood, p.158.

chaudemellay'.¹³⁶ This parliamentary phrasing indeed has its echo in the way in which Hay phrases the preceding sentence, '... he suld ger inquere gyf it be done in playing or disporting, or othir wayis in lychtly contempt of ony persone nocht in felouny' [II, p.99]. We must again conclude that when presented with this sort of passage in the French original, Hay quite easily moved into a familiar legal idiom, with the intent and effect of increasing the sense of application to affairs in Scotland.

Manzalaoui noted that a small addition Hay makes is to add a final point to the list of fifteen virtues that a king must possess, that 'he se nocht a mote in his falowis eye, and nocht a grete balk in his awin eyne' [II, p. 156].¹³⁷ As in the Buke of Knychthede, scriptural comparisons come readily to Hay's mind. But kingly vigilance is a political concern as well, and this is something that Hay urges strongly. A sense of the social fragmentation that may arise from kingly negligence is indicated by the phrasing he gives to a passage where the French version is urging the king to prevent envy among his counsellors, for from this 'naissent les occasions de toutes trahisons et de toutes aultres choses qui tournent a la destruction de toy et de ton royaulme';¹³⁸ Hay writes 'And thus genderis divisioun, and efter divisioun desolacioun, for than sall thai fynd occasioun of malice and of fedis, quhilk sall strouble the and thy realme, and bring it sone doune to destructioun' [I, p.149]. As we have already seen, the prospect of the realm's 'division' and 'desolation' occurs and recurs in the Buke of the Law of Armys and the Buik of

136. Ibid., II, p.9/7. For discussion of the significance of this act in terms of kingly mediation in private feudal justice and public justice, see Jenny Wormald, 'Bloodfeud, Kindred and Government in Early Modern Scotland', Past and Present, 87 (1980), 54-97 (80-1).

137. Manzalaoui, 'Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature', I, pp.345-6.

138. St John's MS 102, fol. 61^v; Advocates MS 18.7.4., fols. 41^v-2^r.

King Alexander. Moreover Hay brings the idea in again in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis at a place where there is no such suggestion in the French. This is in the final chapter which takes the form of an elaborate comparison between the king and realm and a garden and gardener, an idea perhaps given its most famous rendering in Richard II.¹³⁹ Hay's account is one of his most sustained pieces of measured cadence and rhetoric. The idea that the king should be the sole governor of his realm is touched on in the French 'un seul gouverneur par toy';¹⁴⁰ but Hay expresses himself with new and characteristic phrasing: 'For quhare mony maister gardeneris ar, the gardyn is nocht commounly all prouffitabily governyt, the quhilk suld be of gude governauce, that stent him nocht to spill they treis na gader thy frutyis, that is to say thy subjectis gudis wrangwisly' [II, p.163-4]. Given the disrupted politics of the 1450s in Scotland, and the importance which James II evidently placed in asserting his control, it is not hard to see that the idea of too many contending masters would be of particular concern to a man like Hay who had presumably had the chance to observe the struggle for power quite closely. He also contrives to include again the idea of the common profit here, with a warning against covetousness of the people's possessions a familiar theme in much Scottish advice literature, particularly Lancelot of the Laik.¹⁴¹

Elsewhere, translating otherwise very closely a passage dealing with how a prince should go to all lengths to avoid spilling his subjects' blood, he adds that 'it is the thing that plesis maist to God, and maist efferis till a noble prince to do: for God that kennis the secrete thouchtis of mannis hert

139. Manzalaoui, 'Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature', I, pp.343-3. For the background to the use of this image, G.R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (2nd edn.1961), pp.549-51.

140. St John's MS 102, fol. 67^r.

141. Cf. Ch. 3, pp.187-90.

will reward the tharfore in they grete nede; for suppose thou be a king and ryall Emperour, 3it art thou bot a man, and mankynde mon folowe. And schape the nocht to tak the office of God the makare, to wrangwisely undo the mankynde that he has made till his awin propre semblaunce' [II, pp.102-3].¹⁴² The passage adroitly reminds the monarch that he is both 'bot a man' and distinguished with an 'office' which reproduces the dominion of his kingly maker over mankind. The chapter concludes, in French and Scots with an invocation of the vengeful Old Testament God, 'for traistis wele, he that slais salbe slayn; for quhy, the vengeaunce is in my hand, the quhilk I sall tak' [II, p.103];¹⁴³ but once more Hay does not choose to expand on what form this might assume.

In relation to this idea of the king as man as well as monarch, there is one particularly interesting addition by Hay to the Buke of the Governauce of Princis. As Manzalaoui has shown, this occurs in the chapter entitled by Hay 'How the man is maid of the four elementis' [II, pp.156-61].¹⁴⁴ Here, men are first compared to beasts and to the four elements, and Hay then includes additional comparisons of man to the cosmos and of the soul of man to God in the microcosm. Man's five wits governing his body are compared with the 'mony vertuous planetis, sternis and signes in the firmament, quhilkis governis all this warlde' [II, p.158]. And the soul is described thus:

And rycht as the saule, that is the lyf of man, steris, movis, ledis and governis all the mannis body, sa dois the grete God in hevin, steris, movis, ledis and governis all the hevynis. And

142. Cf. St John's MS 102, fol. 45^r, which goes straight from the equivalent of Prose MS, II, p.102/32 to p.103/4.

143. Cf. *ibid.*

144. Manzalaoui, 'Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature', I, p.342. Cf. for example Add. MS 18179, fols 55v-6r, which continues with the story of the Jew and the Saracen.

tharfore is the man callit the lytill warld, for he has all the proprieteis that the grete world has. [II, pp.158-9]

Though the idea of the 'little world of man' was a common one, Hay's inclusion of it here suggests that ideas were taking shape in his mind that were, in conjunction with other influences, to reach their full literary and political expression in the Buik of King Alexander.

Moreover, the two preceding chapters also contain material which is of interest both in its influence on Hay's portrayal of kingly self-government and constitutional government in the Buik of King Alexander and in its differences from it. The connection between government of self and government of the realm is made through the analogy of the five wits of a person, 'that the grete God, makare and governoure of all thingis has gevin ... to governe thaim with and to knaw all erdely thing' [II, p.147] and the officers a king should have, 'fyve soveraine baillies governouris under the, and fyve counsailouris severalie devisit' [II, p.147]. But while here, and in the next chapter, entitled 'How kingis and princis suld governe be grete counsale' [II, p.150], the necessity for governing with council is stressed, so too is the necessity for a king to keep a distance from his counsellors. In order to make them work best for them he should 'schaw never thame thy purpos, na the opynioun that to thy purpos maist accordis, quhill thou mak it knawin in dede be execucioun' [II, p.149]. Similarly, too much trust or power should never be invested in one minister: 'And our all thing kepe wele that thou geve never thy playne powar till a bail³e or commissare allane in thy realme, na ³it geve na credence allanerly till ane of thy counsailouris, be him allane' [II, pp.152-3]. This is standard Secreta advice, but it also neatly balances the distinctive office of the king with the emphasis on his governing with his counsellors that we have already seen concerning Hay in the other works in the prose MS. But this conventional statement was by no means his last word on

the subject, and makes all the more distinctive his treatment of the king and his 'grete counsele' in the Buik of King Alexander.

In discussing the Buik of King Alexander I shall necessarily be confining my remarks primarily to one section of this vast poem: the 'Regimen' set out by Aristotle for Alexander, which occurs about half-way through the work.¹⁴⁵ I shall hardly be considering the theme as it is presented in the work as a whole, for it is at present not possible to consult a printed copy of the entire poem.¹⁴⁶

In the Buik of King Alexander Hay undertook the task of recounting the life and works of a figure he had already presented as the object of advice in the final work of the prose MS.¹⁴⁷ Hay must have had many occasions to encounter versions of the life of Alexander, which abounded in the Middle Ages. As Chaucer's monk puts it:

145. The 'Regimen' occurs on fols 132^r-48^r of the work in Add. MS 40732.

146. See note 2 above. I am indebted to Dr Cartwright's comments on the poem for some of the interpretational points below.

147. Cartwright, p.xxi, suggests that Hay's reference to the Secreta Secretorum in the Buke of the Law of Armyes suggests that he clearly thought of the three translations as one compilation from the start: 'And this is the doctrine that the noble philosophour Arestotil gave to King Alexander the Grete in the buke that men callis the Secrete of Secretis. And be caus, in sum othir party of this buke, I think to speke mare of this mater, tharfore I pas mare lichtly at this tyme' (Prose MS, I, 124). However, this is translated directly from Bonet (see Tree of Battles, p.136; Bonet, IV, cap. xv, sig G ii^r) and refers instead to Bonet's later use of Secreta material in the concluding chapters.

It is interesting to note, however, that Hay includes a reference by Bonet to Alexander, which it is tempting to think may have prompted his interest in the Alexander romance: 'Bot as in this part of this buke myn entencioun is nocht to speke of the citee of Macedone; be caus that Alexander foundit it, and of him thare is a grete buke, and of his dedis, the quhilk I will nocht here rehers;' (Prose MS, I, p.37; cf. Tree of Battles, p.28; Bonet, II, cap. i, sig. [C vi^v]).

The story of Alisaundre is so commune
That every wight that hath discrecioun,¹⁴⁸
Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune

In composing the Buik Hay worked in a different manner from his earlier translations. Dr Cartwright's researches so far show that he was using a variety of sources, his main texts being versions of the French Roman D'Alexandre and the Historia de preliis, supplemented by other works including the Epistola ad Aristotelem, Orosius, and the Old French Prose Alexander romance.¹⁴⁹ It is possible too that he may have known the earlier English translation of King Alisaunder, but Dr Cartwright has so far found no evidence (to) convincingly demonstrate this, and the freedom with which Hay treats his material makes it extremely unlikely that one will ever be able to confidently identify all the material on which he was drawing.

However, two other sources may be identified. One was the Secreta Secretorum. For one of Hay's boldest innovations in this poem is to import into it sections of advice-giving from Aristotle to Alexander not normally included within versions of the life-histories of the monarch in this tradition.¹⁵⁰ There is only one other version of a life of Alexander, preserved in Stockholm Royal MS Fr 51, a version of the Old French Prose Alexander romance, in which the connection of the life and exploits of Alexander with the advice tradition has been extensively made with the interpolation of a long passage from the Secreta, along with in fact other interpolated material not normally

148. The Monk's Tale, ll. 2631-3, in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by F.N. Robinson (1957).

149. Dr Cartwright's latest conclusions on the sources of the work will appear as 'Sir Gilbert Hay and the Alexander Tradition', in Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Scottish Literature, Medieval and Renaissance (Mainz, 1985).

150. See George Cary, The Medieval Alexander, edited by D.J.A. Ross (Cambridge, 1956), pp.46, 105-10.

associated with the work.¹⁵¹ But it does not seem that there are links between Hay's poem and this work. Not only are there differences in the Secreta material which they include, but Hay's entire policy towards the material he uses is more radical and sophisticated. He does not insert an abridged version of the Secreta wholesale into the poem, as seems to be the way in the Stockholm MS; rather he selects, reorders and rewrites Secreta ideas in such a way as to devise a regimen very much of his own distinctive making. Further, as Hay himself makes clear, the whole poem itself has as a strong shaping force the idea of the exemplary function of good kingship.

And the second source is also concerned with this. For as we shall see, the advice section contains within it an extended allegorical passage, which though perhaps inspired by elements in the Secreta owes much of its conceptual framework and some of its expression to a number of sermons by Jean Gerson.¹⁵² But on the same pattern as the prose works, here writ even larger, Hay takes the essential conception and remoulds it into something very much of his own devising. It was of course not uncommon for those who translated the Secreta to add their own material to the work, as did James Yonge, for example.¹⁵³ But Hay's treatment is far more adventurous, in his altering of the order,¹⁵⁴

151. The MS was copied in the early fourteenth century, possibly in Spain or Portugal (Cary, p.194). Extracts of the MS with the Secreta passages (excluding the physiognomy) are given in W. Söderhjelm, 'Notice et extraits du MS Fr 51 de la bibliothèque royale de Stockholm', Mémoires de la Société Neophilologique de Helsingfors, 6 (1917), 305-33. See also the introduction to Der altfranzösische Prosa Alexanderroman edited by A. Hilka (Halle, 1920) p. xliv; and Monfrin, p.84.

152. See below, pp.117-34.

153. In Three Prose Manuscripts; discussed by Manzalaoui, 'Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature', I, pp.365-404.

154. Cartwright, 'Sir Gilbert Hay and the Alexander Tradition'; Hay's advice section uses early on, in keeping with all Secreta versions, the division of the four types of king, but thereafter it is hardly possible to relate the order to any one recension.

and inserting of the dramatic inner allegory. The effect, as will be shown, is to bring rather more political comment into this advice section, but the rendition of the Secreta material still keeps this version very much within the Fürstenspiegel tradition. Everything recounted is designed to equip the monarch with some necessity of kingly life: although greatest attention is given to justice and counsel, also included are reading and entertainment, dress, demeanour and speech, in a summary but still inclusive fashion. Moreover, completeness is also aimed at in equipping the monarch to deal with any situation in his realm in time of peace and war, as Hay makes clear in a later passage.

..... is buk schawis nocht allanerlie
 The worthie deidis of men þat war worthie
 Bot schawis þe wayis of virtue and valieance
 Rycht reull and ordour of kingis governance
 And quhow ane prince suld to his pepill him beire
 Baith in to tyme of peace and in time of were
 And till gif exempill to þir lordingis 3ing
 Quhow þai suld serue and bere þame to þair king 155

Similarly, the copyist at the end of the poem sees it as a work not just for monarchs:

Quhilk treattis þe wisdome and of gude governaunce
 How kingis and princis and nobleis sould þame bare
 Baith in the tyme of peace and tyme of ware 156

The work thus aims to equip the prince or noble in a manner entirely in keeping with the thinking behind the earlier works. However, the fact that not only Hay but the copyist identify the instructive nature of the poem as something as significant as its account of worthy deeds, indicates a clear consciousness that the material had a distinctive emphasis, and suggests too

155. Ll. 2055-62, quoted in Cartwright, 'BKA', p.xxiv.

156. Add. MS 40732, fol. 281^V.

that its function as an advice to princes work was an integral part of its conception.

The Buik of King Alexander was produced, as the copyist of the British Library MS informs us, 'At the instance of Lord Erskine'.¹⁵⁷ Cartwright very plausibly suggests that Erskine may have requested what is referred to by the copyist as the 'translatioun' on the strength of Hay's earlier work for Sinclair, and that Hay produced the work in or around 1460.¹⁵⁸ There were also other factors to connect Erskine and Sinclair, though the circumstances might not have led to any great amity between them. For Erskine, like Sinclair, was a victim of the repossession of noble lands to the crown effected by James II in the 1450s. The Erskines had a claim to the earldom of Mar which had been held by a life-renter Alexander Stewart, but when he died in 1435 as Macdougall put it, 'James I ... simply ignored the Erskine claims and annexed Mar to the royal domains'.¹⁵⁹ Since that date the Erskines, first Robert, and then his son Thomas, the 'Lord Erskine' referred to by the copyist, had been contesting the crown's retention of the title. After years of delay, James II finally had the matter settled in Aberdeen in 1457, when a jury decided in his favour: 'Leslie [who had supported the king's claim] was bribed; the Aberdeen jurors appear to have been intimidated; and the Erskines were simply robbed'.¹⁶⁰ Not unlike Sinclair, who after similar set-backs, ultimately retired from public life, Erskine did not pursue the contest or his own career much further. As the Scots Peerage has it 'Lord Erskine then

157. Ibid., fol. 281^r; Prose MS, I, p.xxxi.

158. Cartwright, 'BKA', p.xxxvii.

159. Macdougall, p.38.

160. Ibid., p.39.

practically retired into private life, as little more is heard of him'.¹⁶¹

By 1457 Sinclair too had been snubbed by the king and replaced as chancellor, and the two men might well have been brought together by the shared experience of receiving less than justice from a monarch determined to increase his wealth and power at their expense. But on the other hand, there were other matters to keep them apart. Alexander Stewart had held in addition to the earldom of Mar the earldom of Garioch. The Erskines had in fact a stronger claim to Mar than Garioch since Stewart's wife Isabel, whose heir was Sir Robert Erskine, had already been countess of Mar before she married Stewart, and this may explain why they concentrated their claim on it. But the crown had not annexed Garioch to itself on Stewart's death; James I instead bestowed it upon Elizabeth Douglas, the widowed countess of Buchan, who later married William Sinclair, Earl of Orkney. Thus, until the early 1450s, Erskine and Sinclair could theoretically have been in contention over the earldom of Garioch. But in 1452 Elizabeth died and James II took the step of annexing Garioch to the crown; it was at this point that he gave the earldom of Caithness to Sinclair to placate him.¹⁶² Erskine and Sinclair, who had earlier had occasion to see each other as rivals to a title, might henceforth have seen each other as fellow victims of monarchical acquisitiveness. The power of monarchy was such that neither seems to have attempted resistance against the king over these matters, and indeed Sinclair was a loyal supporter thereafter. But both would surely have had an added interest in literature advising the monarch, particularly where good justice is involved; and Hay, moving in these circles is likely to have been influenced too by his perception of these events.

161. The Scots Peerage, edited by Sir James Balfour Paul, vol. V (Edinburgh, 1908), p.606.

162. Macdougall, pp.38-9.

In any event, in moving from Sinclair's prose MS to Erskine's Alexander life Hay kept more than a little continuity in subject matter and treatment. Cartwright argues well that part of his aim in the work was to translate the practical giving of advice in the earlier works into a context of greater actualization through the character and conduct of Alexander.¹⁶³ What is also preserved, and particular so in the section we shall consider here, is the pedagogic role of the adviser. Moreover, in this particular section the advice is rendered in such a way as to make it only intermittently directly applicable to Alexander in a manner that indicates its relevance beyond the circumstances of his conquests and campaigns.

Aristotle is introduced as a teacher to the monarch earlier in the work when the opening stages of Alexander's education are described. At the university of Athens he is taught by Aristotle, who instructs him in the ways of astronomy and science, as well as good government and religion, urging him especially to keep the one God:

And þat þair was bot ane God anerlie
Quhilk spirituall was nother mettell stane na tre
Bot Indivisibill in His divinitie 164

Interestingly at this point Alexander wishes to be instructed in the physiognomy of man, but Aristotle does not instruct him here; later however an extensive Physiognomy is included in the 'Regimen' section. It is also significant that Aristotle gives his advice to Alexander in the 'Regimen' in the form of counsel to a king who is young but not flawed by wickedness, one who has within himself 'Witt and knowlege to ken his maiestie...haettand vice

163. Cartwright, 'BKA', p.xxvi.

164. Ibid., p.22, ll. 125-7. On the language here see also the quotation from Gerson on p.125 below.

luffand vertew and richt'.¹⁶⁵ Aristotle, and Hay, are consequently able to evoke the image of an unjust and negligent king without appearing directly to criticize the monarch.

Gilbert Hay's Alexander is also in one essential way a different figure from the ruler found in his sources: as Aristotle's instruction to him in Athens has already indicated, he is a Christian ruler. Medieval writers of Alexander romances and lives had a perennially embattled approach to the question of his heathenism. Some see him as damned, some do not refer to the matter, some regret it; or some, like the Old French Prose Alexander confusedly attempt to accommodate a knowledge of God on Alexander's part to a sense of the inappropriateness of such a state.¹⁶⁶ Here too, Aristotle is being presented as the exponent of Christian doctrine in a manner in one sense consistent with the Christian readings also given to his genuine writings in the Middle Ages. Thus in the introductory passages of the 'Regimen', Alexander is unequivocally linked to the Christian order, and this is an essential preface to all Aristotle's ensuing remarks on kingship. When Alexander asks him whether 'he suld call him sone to god or man/Syne he throw goddis all his wourship wan',¹⁶⁷ Aristotle's response is that all these gods and planets are themselves further ruled by the 'god universale/Quhilk governis all the warldit in generall', and that Alexander is thus 'ane send of god of hevin'.¹⁶⁸ The basis of his kingship is then more fully set out:

165. Add. MS 40732, fol. 132^v.

166. Cary, pp.181-9; Cartwright, 'BKA', pp.xliiii-xlvi.

167. Add. MS 40732, fol. 132^r.

168. Ibid.

King Phillip bot þi foster fader was
 Nocht than he tuke þe barne in till his lyffe
 He held the as his sone adoptive
 He made þe are in till his testament
 Thus art þow king by richtewis jugment
 Syne was þow chosin by þe communitie
 Thow may not falzee richtewis king to be
 Syne throw conquest þe world þe obeyis
 Thus thrinfald richt into þi ballance weyis 169

Alexander has thus a threefold claim to the throne: (i) inheritance (ii) choice by the people (iii) conquest - in addition to being one sent by God. Hay did not, as far as we can tell, get this threefold division from the Historia des Preliis or the other main Alexander sources; where he did get it and why he should use it here are highly interesting questions. For a threefold claim to kingship based on precisely these three points had been notably made about sixty years earlier in England by supporters of the replacement of Richard II by Henry IV.

Perhaps the clearest statement is given by Gower in the Chronica Tripartita:

Unde coronatur trino de iure probatur,
 Regnum conquestat, que per hoc sibi ius manifestat:
 Regno succedit heres, nec ab inde recedit:
 Insuper eligitur a plebe que sic stabilitur:
 Ut sit compactum, iuris nil defuit actum 170

These reasons are given in the same order in Froissart's Chronicle and briefly in Chaucer's 'Complaint to his purse'.¹⁷¹ As Dominica Legge notes the reasons were 'advanced in such a way as to appear cumulative, and the order is from

169. Ibid., fol. 133^r.

170. John Gower, Chronica Tripartita, III, ll. 332-6, in The Latin Works of John Gower, edited by G.C. Macaulay (1905).

171. Collection des Chroniques nationales francaises, edited by J.A. Buchout (Paris, 1826), vol. xv, p.31; 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', ll. 22-3, in Works.

the theoretically least to the theoretically most important'.¹⁷² In Hay, of course, the order is different, and pride of place seems to be given to the first cause, heirship, where the adjoinder 'Thus art þow king by richtewis jugment' is a little reminiscent of 'que per hoc sibi ius manifestat'; but in fact the general impression is that all three reasons support and confirm each other - there is none of the sense of necessary justification that is attached to Gower's defence of Henry IV. All the same it seems likely that Hay inherited the argument from English sources, since apart from those mentioned already, several were known in Scotland, although earlier Scottish writers such as Andrew Wyntoun had supported the side of the deposed monarch Richard II rather than his Lancastrian successor.¹⁷³ It is worth considering, however, that there were important Lancastrian exiles in Scotland during 1460-3: the deposed Henry VI; his wife Margaret of Anjou; the prince Edward, and others, including one of their major ideologues and allies, Sir John Fortescue. It is possible that Fortescue's treatise De Natura Legis Naturae, with its detailed justification for the Lancastrian claim to the throne was actually produced while he was in Scotland.¹⁷⁴ Yet while the presence of the Lancastrians may go some way to explaining Hay's familiarity with the three-fold justification, there was a reason yet closer to home for justifications for kingship to concern him. For in 1460 James II had died, and the difficult years of minority government under the regency of Mary of Gueldres were

172. M. Dominica Legge, '"The Gracious Conqueror"', Modern Language Notes, 68 (1953), 18-21 (20). In Gower's gloss to the passage quoted above, the order is in fact the same as Hay's: 'Primo Successione; Secundo eleccione; Tercio conquestu sine sanguinis effusione', although the latter phrase would hardly apply to Alexander. See also Green, pp.180-1.

173. On the dissemination of the threefold argument for Henry IV's succession, Gaillard Lapsley, 'The Parliamentary Title of Henry IV'. EHR, 49 (1934), Part I, 423-49, Part II, 577-606, (429-34).

174. The Governance of England ... by Sir John Fortescue, edited by C. Plummer (1885), pp.41-2.

beginning. It is hardly surprising that a writer on kingship should then feel compelled to state the grounds on which sound monarchy was based. On the other hand, Hay would hardly have asserted that 'conquest' was an essential pre-condition for ruling, and this clearly applies more to Alexander (and Henry IV) than to any Scottish monarch. But in putting heirship first, Hay could be seen to be supporting the established line of the monarchy if the passage were to be applied to contemporary Scottish affairs. Heirship, though, must go hand in hand with the support of the 'communitie'. The claims of heirship and/or election in the establishment of the monarch were to consume Scottish theoreticians in the sixteenth century, but earlier writers had also established choice as a principle of from time to time great importance in the establishment of a monarch, particularly since it was claimed that up to the time of Kenneth II the king had been chosen by election rather than inheritance.¹⁷⁵ As we shall see, the issue was sufficiently important for John Ireland to devote a whole chapter of Book VII of the Meroure of Wyssdome to its discussion.¹⁷⁶

It is well-nigh impossible to assess how greatly the threefold right to kingship would have been associated in people's minds with primarily the × Lancastrian claim to the English throne, but given that it was in this context that it had had widespread circulation, the argument follows that Hay must have known that in using it he could also be interpreted as claiming that an unjust monarch could legitimately be deposed. In his terms too this is made more strongly felt still by the emphasis he gives to the idea that God supports Alexander's rule. We have seen in the other works that Hay stead-

175. Marjorie Jean Drexler, 'Attitudes to Nationality in Scottish Historical Writing from Barbour to Bruce' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1979), pp.41-2. Fordun attributed the alteration in the method of choosing the monarch to the reigns of both Kenneth and his son Malcolm.

176. Ch. 8, pp.433-43.

fastly avoids discussing how bad monarchs might be replaced, other than invoking the wrath of God. It is perhaps possible that in this, his last work, he was issuing a covert warning in drawing the analogy.

Alexander, however, is more than worthy to rule. Thus when he assumes kingship he makes it clear that he is king at the behest of his people and will be dependent on them:

Than sat þe king doun in his maiestie
And tuk possessioun of soueranetie
And askit þame help and þair counsaill
Sen he was 3oung, to mend his governall
Sayand, 'Suppois 3our king 3e ordanit me,
3it am I nothing bot a man as 3e,
And rycht as I have grete gouernall
I have more charge, vexatioun and travell
Thus have I nocht of lordschipe bot ane name
And gif I fail3e I ber þe grete blame 177

Many of the concerns in the prose MS resurface here, but in a rather more explicit manner: the necessity for kings to be counselled, along with that conjunction of the sense of the king as 'bot a man' and the inescapable and greater responsibility of his office. What is particularly striking here is the emphasis on the fact that it is only 'name' which distinguishes Alexander as a monarch, and the stress on his youthfulness. The latter was of course highly relevant to a Scotland experiencing another period of minority rule, in the 1460s, and it is interesting to conjecture whether the former may be also. It is certainly a very categorical statement, an implicit rejection even of the kind of sacerdotal basis to kingship to which English and indeed French monarchs attached such importance.¹⁷⁸ The tradition for this was perhaps not

177. Cartwright, 'BKA', p.116, and note to ll. 2475-88 on p.262.

178. My comments here are much influenced by an at present unpublished paper by Dr A.E. Goodman, 'The Religious Personality of Kingship in Medieval Scotland and England', given at the Traditional Cosmology Society's conference on Kingship, 9 August 1985; on France, see Lewis, Late Medieval France, pp.81-4.

so pronounced in Scotland, but a sense of the symbolic and in that respect quasi-divine nature of monarchy was certainly present in the consciousness of many writers - Hay himself effectively makes the connection in the 'Regimen'. Moreover, while it was common for kings to be reminded of their responsibilities towards their subjects, it was less so for the monarch himself to actually express the sentiment. And the point in fact recurs in the 'Regimen', where a king is urged to act wisely to make his people honour him, for

Ane king is bot a man be him allane
Quhat is he wourth bot as a stok or stane
Bot gif he for his wourschip mak deffence
And gar his folk mak him obedience
Quhat is ane king worth bot distruction
Off hie prudence to governe his regioun
Bot as ane ass war crounit in scornynge
For but honoure sall end his governing

Once more Hay does not state how such a removal of the monarch might happen, but he would have known from the removal of Richard II and Henry VI in England how it could come about.¹⁸⁰

The advice that is dispensed to Alexander then is given to a monarch securely based as such and already capable of acting as an exemplum, and an exemplum not just to knights and nobles but to **mankind** in general. The intention behind Hay's assertion that the king is 'bot a man' is not only to remind him of the (divine) limitations on his power, but to indicate to all men how they may imitate him. The interrelation between monarch and men is

179. Add. MS 40732, fol. 140^r.

180. French commentators in fact referred more frequently to the English phenomenon of executing or removing their kings: Lewis, 'Jean Juvenal des Ursins', 103.

further fostered by the continued emphasis on the 'common profit' as a crucial criterion of successful kingship.

Emphasis on the common profit is of course frequently given by advisers to princes, notably perhaps by Gower, who returns to the point almost as often as does Hay himself. For both of them it is the keystone of kingship. Hay makes the link between divine blessing and concern for the people abundantly clear:

Tharefore be evirmare to þi commounis kynd
God luffis þe man þat is all commounis freynd¹⁸¹

And he specifically makes the point that the prince should be an example to his people, as a sort of temporal pastour:

For king suld be þe reule and the ballance
Of all his liegis and þare governance
For pepill followis þe trad of þare patrour
The commounis als þe regent of þe toune
For comonlie þe world dois as þai se
Thay think þare dede exempill to þame sould be¹⁸²

And in a passage which draws from similar statements in the prose MS works he sets out how the first wars begun 'For Ilkane elike maister wald be þan', and thus:

... kingis war ordand first to be
And uþer laware princis of degrie
To gere the pepill kepe obedience
And kepe lawte to be in þare defence
And to kepe lawe justice and equitie
As war maist proffeit [for] þe communitie¹⁸³

181. Add. MS 40732, fol. 133^r; for discussion of the theme in Gower, Russell A. Peck, Kingship and Common Profit in Gower's 'Confessio Amantis' (1981).

182. Add. MS 40732, fol. 133^r.

183. Ibid., fol. 138^v.

The 'commounis' 'communitie' and 'peple' appear to have much the same meaning. Though never specifically defined the term is clearly meant to be inclusive from the highest orders beneath the king to the lowest, and perhaps with greatest emphasis on those lowest orders who may severely suffer from the king's greed or lack of justice.¹⁸⁴

However, despite the conventionality of these ideas in advice literature, it should still be noted that in referring thus frequently to the common profit Hay was also reflecting the tone and content of legislation being produced in the Scottish parliament at that time. The phrase itself appears with regularity in acts and decrees in such collocations as 'It is statute and ordanyt for þe common profet of all þe burowis of þe Realme' (1455)¹⁸⁵ and in a well-known passage in a decree of 1457 the king was urged that 'his hienes be inclinyt in himself and his ministeris to þe quiet and commone profett of þe Realme'.¹⁸⁶ It is likely that some at least of Hay's readers would feel the contemporary quality of his phraseology and hence the contemporary application of the advice. Similarly, the well-known phrase at the opening of the act of the 1455 parliament that 'þe pouerte of the crowne is oftymis þe caus of þe pouerte of þe Realme'¹⁸⁷ can be compared with the descriptions of wanton monarchs depicted as one of the four types of kings described by Hay in both the Buke of the Governauce of Princis and the Buik of King Alexander.

The common profit, the reciprocal relationship between king and people, meets its literary expression and extension in the sustained passage on the

184. See DOST, commounis, n; commounite, n, 11, 2.

185. APS, II, p.43/9.

186. Ibid., p.52/40.

187. Ibid., p.42/1.

inner council of the soul, which dominates the first half of the 'Regimen'. Thus far Hay has set out the four main types of king, defined in terms of their attitude to the common profit, and then how a king should 'oure all thing ... desire gud name', both pace the Secreta,¹⁸⁸ and having stated that he 'sould think on mornys quhen he walknis/That all his govirnance fra god he takis',¹⁸⁹ the analogy is then reiterated between a prince's rule and God's over the world. It is from this point that Hay moves into the elaborate metaphorical section that develops both the idea of kings as men and men as kings, the moral and social fusion of thought that we have seen hinted at in the earlier works.¹⁹⁰ The inner council of the mind is in fact the most extended of a series of three major organic metaphors which Hay uses here and allows to overlap upon each other. Following the initial reminder that a prince's rule is based upon God's, the division is thus: the world governed by God is compared to a man governed by his soul; the realm is compared to a man's body - the familiar image of the body politic; and man's soul and the workings of the will and rational faculties compared 'As till a king þat governis his kinrik' and his various officers and institutions of government.¹⁹¹ We have already seen the ideas of the 'little world of man' and the governance of man's soul compared to the governance of the cosmos by God brought into the prose works, especially the Buke of the Governauce of Princis. And indeed the language in which Hay expresses the linked ideas in the Buik of King Alexander is strikingly similar to that used in the last prose work. This can be well seen in comparing the passage on the governance

188. Add. MS 40732, fol. 134^v; cf. Prose MS, II, pp.80-6.

189. Add. MS 40732, fol. 135^v.

190. See above, pp.99-101.

191. Add. MS 40732, fols. 135^v-7^r.

of the soul already quoted from the Buke of the Governauce of Princis, with some lines from the Buik of King Alexander:

And rycht as the saule, that is the lyf of man, steris, movis, ledis
and governis all the mannis body, sa dois the grete God in hevin,
steris, movis, ledis and governis all the hevynis. [II, pp.158-9]

For as ane sprite alhale þir hevynns steris
And elementis ilkane in þare regionis
Governis and ledis þare operatiounis
That is grete god quhilk all þis world gouernis
Movis and steris þe planeteis and þe sternis ...
Thus be our saule we leiff we move we ar
We slepe we walk we trauel late and are
Quhilkis saul makis all þare operationis
Obeysand to þe sperite superlative 192

However familiar the ideas, the correspondences in language show the continuity in Hay's thought, and it is interesting to note too that this chapter in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis also contains comparisons of the part of man's body to features of the world, and his five wits to the planets and stars. But despite these links with the Secreta, the threefold division that Hay employs here and his development of the soul/king conception also owe something to the writings of Jean Gerson. The latter also made use of the body politic idea, notably in Vivat rex, but it is in the conception of the realm of the soul that his influence on Hay may be most directly detected. It must be said from the start that Hay has not, as Ireland was later to do, imported passages from Gerson wholesale and translated them. He rather responds to the material by reshaping and enlarging it in his own way, yet in such a fashion that the correspondences are still there to be observed.

Moreover, Gerson's influence on Hay is both small scale - echoes in phrasing and vocabulary - and on the larger scale more generally pervasive, which is best to be gathered by reading through his sermons and other writings,

192. Ibid., fols. 135^v-6^r.

many of which, especially in the earlier part of his career in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, utilize the idea of the soul as a regnum.¹⁹³ What Gerson did with the traditional ideas embodied therein was to give them a frequently dramatic and narrative cast. Many of his writings take the form of dialogues or dramatized scenes with the recurring characters of the Heart, the Soul, Reason, Conscience, the five senses, and so on. Thus in L'École de la Conscience Conscience instructs the Heart and the five senses with Reason, who also speaks similarly in L'École de la Raison.¹⁹⁴ But such treatment of the subject is in itself part of a larger conceptual framework, based on Trinitarian ideals and divisions. Within this the realm of the soul is frequently included by Gerson in the form of a threefold division consisting of the regnum personale; the regnum civile or politicum; and the regnum divinale or evangelicum.¹⁹⁵ The relation of these kingdoms is described thus by Pascoe: 'When his intellectual, volitional and sensitive faculties preserve their proper hierarchical order, and function harmoniously in the issuance of commands and in obedience thereto, then man is interiorly at peace and his faculties enjoy the tranquility of order.... On an analogous level, the regnum civile et politicum also enjoys its peace which consists in the ordered and harmonious activity of its citizens in both issuing and obeying commands. The peace of the third kingdom, the regnum divinale or evangelicum, comes from the enjoyment of God's intimacy'.¹⁹⁶ It is the regnum personale that will particularly concern us in relation to Hay, but yet the

193. Louis B. Pascoe, S.J. Jean Gerson: Principles of Church Reform, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 7 (Leiden, 1973), pp.183-91.

194. Jean Gerson, Oeuvres complètes, edited by Palémon Glorieux, 10 vols (Paris, 1960-73), VII, pp.5-10, 103-11.

195. Pascoe, pp.189-93.

196. Ibid., p.192.

interrelationship of these three 'kingdoms' is in a general sense very similar to that which emerges in Hay's construction of the inner council.

In the regnum personale Gerson makes use of a variety of groupings of elements to represent its government, including the distinction of the faculties of memoria sui, intelligentia, and voluntas.¹⁹⁷ These correspond to other threefold distinctions of vices and virtues, and like the framing Trinitarian argument, are strongly influenced by Augustine.¹⁹⁸ He also frequently makes use of the three-fold idea of reason, will and sensuality existing within the regnum personale in accord or discord. Thus in Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur, every human creature is portrayed as possessing 'dedans soy ung royaume espirituel ... fait et ordonne par nature' and 'deffait et destruit par pechie et forfaiture, et refait et repare par grace et par droicture'.¹⁹⁹ The constituents therein are seen as the three estates: 'Raison represente l'estat de clergie; franche volente de chevalerie et seigneurie, sensualite de bourgeoisie'.²⁰⁰ Their roles are described thus:

Raison devoit sagement aviser ce qu'estoit a faire comme conseilariesse, et avoir en aide les vertus intellectuelles, science, prudence, etc. Franche volente devoit croire et escouter ce qui estoit conseille, comme dame et maistresse, et avoir en aide les vertus morales. Sensualite devoit du tout obeir et executer, comme chamberiere sans paresse, et avoit en sa compaignie les vertus sensibles et appetitives.²⁰¹

197. Ibid., pp.183-91; Gerson also uses other threefold divisions for these faculties including mens, notitia, and amor; and memoria Dei intelligentia, and amor.

198. Ibid., pp.183-4; Sancti Avrelii Augustini 'De Trinitate' (Libri XV, Libri I-XII), edited by W.J. Mountain, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, vol. L (Turnholt, 1968), XI, 17-XII, 19; see also Etienne Gilson, Introduction à L'étude de Saint Augustin, Études de Philosophie Medievale (Paris, 1929), pp.87-137.

199. Gerson, Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.753.

200. Ibid.

201. Ibid.

As will be seen below, Gerson's distinctions here are somewhat different from Hay's in the naming of the parts of the soul and in their representation of various parts of society. Most noticeably, Gerson uses the parallel of the three estates here, with the will as 'chevalerie et seigneurie', whereas Hay identifies the will with the monarch. But Gerson can also conceive of the will as a royal figure, the queen, as is made clear in his account of the consequences of a break-down in the correct functioning of the rational parts of the soul, where sensuality takes over. For when reason is blinded and made mute by sin and will errs from divine intention, 'franche voulente qui devoit estre roynne et dame, et soy gouverner par raison, est subiecte et serve et sourdre par la meschancete'.²⁰² The notion of will as governor and yet governed by reason's counsel is very close to Hay's rendition of the roles of king and counsel, and it might be said that what Hay has done is to extend logically the implications of the political analogies drawn by Gerson, since the latter makes it clear that the second kind of realm, the regnum civile et politicale, should be constructed under one head ruling in accordance with the law.²⁰³ Gerson comes closer in fact to such implications in Adorabant eum omnes terre, where the will is identified more particularly as the queen and where the sense of man ruling the kingdom is heightened. This sermon, which was later used by Ireland extensively in the Meroure of Wyssdome,²⁰⁴ adroitly fuses the politically instructional and the morally exemplary in addressing the 'king' both as to the king in whose presence the sermon was given, and to all men as masters of the realm of their selves:

202. Ibid., p.754.

203. Pascoe, p.191.

204. See Ch. 8, pp.420, 422-3.

Tres noble et tres excellent prince, le premier et principal royaume qui vous est commis a gouverner et duquel vous devez avoir la plus grant diligence, est vostre ame et vostre royal personne, car dit Seneque in epistolis que ung grant royaume et empire est de soy gouverner.... Prenez doncques Sire, prenez pour vostre royaume personnel bien gouverner, ceste premiere royne que on nomme franche et noble voolunte. 205

In this work, moreover, the felt connections between personal, temporal and divine realms are particularly strong, and the political connections are pursued in the image of the regal will seated on the throne surrounded by ministers:

Quant ainsi sera franche voulente assise en son trone en sa maieste, tantost venra a elle pour son chancellier discrecion, pour son conseil verite, pour les prevostz et bailliz, justice et misericorde; pour l'escharuette providence, pour son messagier yssuel entendement... 206

Of course the dramatization and allegorizing of the realm of the soul or the counselling roles of reason and conscience were hardly original to Gerson. The court scenes in Piers Plowman with Reason and Conscience, the depiction of the soul in Sawles Warde, or de Guilleville's Pèlerinage de l'ame are all working within this broad tradition.²⁰⁷ But the parallels between Gerson's and Hay's writings are rather more extensive. Both were writing pieces of advice to princes and wider exemplary instruction; both utilize the macro-cosmic/microcosmic divine framework in a similar fashion, and bring out the political connotations of the material in the regnum personale. And the mixture of instruction and drama, scene and soliloquy in both is striking. In addition, Hay seems to occasionally echo or recall Gerson's phrasing, as we

205. Gerson, Oeuvres complètes, VII, pp. vii, 524-5.

206. Ibid., p.525.

207. On the theme see A.L. Hench, 'The Allegorical Motif of Conscience and Reason, Counsellors', University of Virginia Studies, 5 (1961), 193-201.

shall see below. Taken altogether, and recalling Hay's treatment of kingship in the prose works, the case for Gerson's influence is a strong one.

As we have seen Hay's section opens with the comparison of the world to a man, and the governance of the body by the soul set in comparison to God's government of the heavens. Thus as God has angels ministering under him, so the actions of our body should accord to the soul 'As angelis dois to þe hiest God of live'.²⁰⁸ Hay then moves on to the second comparison, of man to a realm, the body politic, which had its roots in Aristotle and St Paul, and which had been given particularly elaborate and influential exposition by John of Salisbury in the Policraticus.²⁰⁹ The sequence of the argument was commonly to depict the king as head with the nobles as body and the commons as limbs.²¹⁰ In Hay's version here, however, the head is seen as the 'spiritualite', the body as the prince and nobles, and the 'laaboraris' as the legs.²¹¹ Unless the legs are 'in law mantenit' and the body and arms 'kepe þe

208. Add. MS 40732, fol. 136^r. For a quite extensive medieval treatment of the idea of the little world of man see Higden's Polychronicon, Book II, Ch. 1, in the translation by Trevisa and another, edited by Churchill Babington, vol. II, Rolls Series, 41b (1869), pp.174-201. There is also a very useful discussion of the theory and its background in J.B. Bamborough, The Little World of Man (1952).

209. On the classical background, Salisbury, and the later development of the idea by medieval jurists, Kantorowicz, esp. pp.207-32; Ioannis Saresberiensis, Episcopi Carnotensis Policraticon, edited by Clement C.I. Webb, 2 vols (Oxford, 1909), I, pp.282-4. In this version the king is the head, the senate the heart, the judges and governors the eyes and ears, the officers and soldiers the hands, the labourers, the feet. One of the most elaborate expositions in medieval literature was Christine de Pisan's Livre du corps de policie, the Middle English translation of which is edited by Diane Bornstein, Middle English Texts, 7 (Heidelberg, 1977). See also Anton-Hermann Charot, 'The Corporate Idea and the Body Politic in the Middle Ages', The Review of Politics, 9 (1947), 423-52.

210. In Gerson's Vivat rex, for example, the head is the king and the blood royal, the breast and arms the nobility, the belly and thighs, the clergy, and the legs, the bourgeoisie. See Ch. 8, p.444.

211. Add. MS 40732, fol. 136^r.

spiritualetie/And all the memberis to resoun obey/Than sall gar sone baith hede and body swey'.²¹² In political terms this is seen as 'mony maistaris makis divisioun/And throw divisioun desolatioun'.²¹³ This is an idea we have seen in the prose works, but the phrasing here also has echoes of Gerson's conclusions in Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur, 'et partant si ot en ce royaume d'oleureuse division et miserable desolacion'.²¹⁴ But Hay then goes further, presenting the effects of what happens when 'policy pervertit Is bakwart' as 'Quhan crounles kingis a crounit king ourethrawis', for 'Quhat witt hes he suppois he kepe na lawis'.²¹⁵ Thus he concisely states the moral dilemma for advice writers who were not prepared to, or did not have to, envisage practically what might ensue if a negligent king were to be overthrown. Those who take over from him are 'crounles', effectively not God's chosen, and there are numbers of them, as opposed to 'a crounit king', thus destroying the divine/earthly symmetry. But if the monarch has not kept to the laws, an important point for Hay as we have seen, what alternative effectively is there?²¹⁶ But having asked the question, the conclusion is to retreat into an assertion of the theoretical order:

Thus spedefull is þat all þis world here doun
 As is the hevin war governit with a croun
 For all kyn vertew fro þe hevin dependis
 All grace and gudnes fra þe hevin ws send is
 And as he governis the hevynnis in unite²¹⁷
 Sa suld in erde all thingis governit be

212. Ibid.

213. Ibid.

214. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.754; see above, p.86.

215. Add. MS 40732, fol. 136^r.

216. See above, pp.94-5. Cf. the attitudes of French writers to the king's position of the king in terms of the 'law' in Lewis, 'Jean Juvenal des Ursins', 107-9.

217. Add. MS 40732, fol. 136^r.

Hay then continues to the third comparison, of the government of a man's soul with a king's government of his kingdom. The idea of the ruling of the soul had its roots in Aristotle's Politics, then rendered in Christian terms in Aquinas and Augustine.²¹⁸ Aristotle reminds Alexander of what he had previously taught him in Athens, how

... mannys saul is thing Indivisibill
And all knowlege is to it cognisibill
All craft and sience it can conprehend 219

and again,

Oure saul is bot a quyknare spirituall
Indivisibill image perpetuall
Formit of god nexte nature angelike
Of his substance and till his semblance like 220

And the capacity of the soul to comprehend is compared, in a manner ultimately drawn from Plato's Timaeus, to the capacity of the eye to see 'Baith hevin and erde at anys'.²²¹ Hay states that it is

... ane frely thing
Sa litil a thing suld present be figure
Off all þis world with all his portraiture
Before oure witt with all our properteis 222

The soul as king is seen as governing the kingdom of the body, with the five wits and the intellectual faculties as the institutions of government, 'his

218. Aristotle, Politica, edited by Benjamin Jowett, *The Works of Aristotle translated into English*, vol. X (Oxford, 1921), I, 5, 1254b; St Thomas Aquinas, De regimine principum, Ch. 12, in Aquinas, Selected Political Writings, edited by A.P. D'Entrèves (Oxford, 1974), p.67; Summa theologiae, 1a, 81,2, ad. 3; 1a-2ae, 9,2, ad. 3; 1a-2ae, 17 (esp. 2); Gilson, pp.53-70, 125-38.

219. Add. MS 40732, fol. 136^v.

220. Ibid.

221. Plato, Timaeus, 36.

222. Add. MS 40732, fol. 136^v.

parliament his counsale generale', and 'his officeris of ministratioun/Oure all his memberis spred ar up and doun'.²²³

Such ideas were part, as we have seen, of a long tradition, but yet Hay's depiction of the ruling of the soul and some of the language in which he expresses it have a great deal in common with Gerson's portrayal of the subject, especially perhaps in Videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate, one of the pieces featuring debates between reason and the soul. Here the soul is continually defined by reason in relation to God, a God who himself is 'chose indivisible et espirituelle' with 'souveraine vie et congnoissance'.²²⁴ The comparison of the soul to God is then set out point by point in terms in which we see Gerson's characteristic mixing of the doctrinal and the dramatic. He moves from the points that Hay shares (both in the present comparison and in the first) of the governing of the world of man, and the single eye's view, into the power of the will to govern regally well or badly. In Gerson's description of the latter processes there seems even a slight arbitrariness, perhaps suggesting thereby the necessity for the will to govern in conjunction with reason, who is of course delivering the address:

Premierement ton essence est immortelle et sans corrupcion....
Secondement tu as vie qui meut et gouverne son petit monde, c'est a scavoir tout le corps, a son plaisir.
... Tiercement tu pues en ta memoire et an ta congnoissance faire et former mil et mil mondes, tu les pues mettre comme en ung estre espirituel dedans toy.... Quartement tu congnois par ung seul oeil le mouvement du temps passé, du present et du futur, sans toy mouvoir.... Quintement, tu es par tous les membres de ton corps tant en la teste comme es piez, et ou cuer et es braz, sans ce que tu soyes maindre en la plus petite partie que en la plus grande, sans ce que tu soyes hors du cuer et se tu es avec ce au chief.... Sextement, tu es de si franche volenté que tu puez les choses qui sont subgettes a toy perdre ou garder a ton plaisir, occire ou non tuer, d'une mesme masse de terre ou de plonc ou d'argent tu puez

223. Ibid.

224. Gerson, Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1128.

faire ung vaissel a beau usaige et ung vaissel a vil usaige... Se tu as deuz serviteurs qui ayent tous deuz forfait contre ta vie et ton estat, tu en puez l'un jugier a mort et a l'autre pardonner... 225

In the continuation of Hay's portrayal of the soul, the five wits are said to carry down their messages to the heart, which is identified with the will: 'Oure hart is bot ane desire and a will/Suppois ane lumpe of lyre we likin it till'.²²⁶ The soul rules there and remains until 'our deying day', hanging in the middle of the body.²²⁷ And the will, the faculty later equated with the king, has 'fre commandment/And all the memberis followis his intent', though 'The hert may nowther here na se na smell/Bot as þe portaris cummys to him to tell/Quhilk kepis þe fyfe entris of the palais'.²²⁸ It is thus that, according to the general theory, the rational faculties are necessary to interpret the messages that have been brought to the heart.²²⁹ The political ramifications of this are manifest, as we have already seen in Gerson's presentation of the functioning of will and reason. Each is essential to the other. Thus it is that Hay now goes on to define the intellectual faculties, as all the while their political significance is emerging.

Thus far Hay's depiction of the king governing with his parliament and general council has been an accurate reflection of the state of government in Scotland, since these were the two bodies which carried out the major legislative business. Parliament was the supreme common law court, and the two were

225. Ibid., pp.1130-1.

226. Add. MS 40732, fol. 136^v.

227. Ibid., fol. 136^r.

228. Ibid.

229. Bamborough, pp.35-6, 53-4, 120-9; E. Ruth Harvey, The Inward Wits, Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Warburg Institute Surveys, 6 (1975), pp.41-4, 54-6.

also distinct from each other in that the king's presence was not essential at general councils.²³⁰ Hay now refers to another body within the palace, a body in perpetual session, equated with the rational parts of the soul, and described in terms of their working:

Quhare his grete counsale sittand euer he has
That is to say witt intellective
His memor and his witt indicative²³¹
The quhilkis are herbreit in þe chalmeris thre
In mannys harnes Ilkane in þare degrie
Witt is þe first we call understanding
Quhilk has þe first consait of alkyn thing
Quhilkis fra þe five portaris consait he takis
And eftir syne to ressoun knowlege makis
And he is herbryt in þe farther part
Nixt him ressoun quhilk gouernis þe mydwart
Behind him in þe nodill lyis memor
As kepare of all thing þat cummys before
First witt consavis syne ressoun gevis þe domis
Syne memor in his keping all resumes
And syne shawis to þe hart and speris his will²³²

In medieval theorizing on the inward apprehension of the soul there was

230. Grant, Independence and Nationhood, pp.148, 166-70; R.K. Hannay, 'Early Records of Council and Session, 1466-1649', in An Introductory Survey of the Sources and Literature of Scots Law, Stair Society, 1 (Edinburgh, 1936), pp. 16-24.

231. The MS here appears to read indicative, though iudicative might initially appear more likely, and the form in the Scottish Record Office MS is certainly iudicative (fol. 230). Hay uses the term iudicative in a somewhat similar context in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis, where the source does not have this phrasing: 'Alexander, faire sone, though sulde understand that the jugement of a man folowis his corps; for quhy, efter as the man is of better nature, of better witt and of better counsale, sa is his vertu iudicative mare worthy' (Prose MS, II, p.150). Cf. 'Alixandre beau fils saces que le iugement de lomme suivit le corps car selonc ce que lomme est de meillier deposicion est il de meillier nature et de meillieur conseil' (St John's MS 102 fol. 62v). Moreover indicative is only recorded in a grammatical sense in late Middle English (MED, indicatif) and not at all in Middle Scots. However, in the quotation from Gerson's Dedit illi gloriam regni below, it will be seen that the term facultas indicativa is used, and it is quite possible that Hay was transliterating the term from this or a similar source. This is made likely too by his use of the word intellective, also used of the soul by Trevisa in his translation of the Polychronicon, where it is translating intellectuam (II, p.183). Again, Hay has probably taken over the term from a Latin context. See also MED, intellective and OED, intellective.

232. Add. MS 40732, fol. 137^r

considerable variation in naming and numbering of the parts involved, but Hay's account is quite in keeping with accepted theory.²³³ His expression is interestingly close to that later used by Douglas in the Prologue to Book X of his Aeneid:

Lyke as the sawle of man is ane, we wait,
Havand thre poweris distinct and separate,
Undirstanding, rayson, and memor;
Intelligens consideris the thing befor,
Rayson discernys, memor kepys the consait. 234

Gerson's categories are not so close, but there are some interesting connections between his versions of the rational processes and Hay's rendition, both in phrasing and in a shared sense of the potential political connotations of the subject, as two passages, the first from the 'De Mentis Cordis et Cognitione Dei' section of the lengthy Tractatus septem super Magnificat, and the second from Dedit illi gloriam regni, illustrate:

Assignabimus igitur humano cordi tanquam loco grandi et spatioso, tria coenacula: supremum, medium et infimum. Primum nominabimus coenaculum mentis; medium vero coenaculum rationis; tertium erit et infimum animae coenaculo deputatum.²³⁵

Regnum naturale et intrinsecum seu monasticum in homine est societas, ordinata in imperando et obediendo virium diversarum ut sunt intellectus, voluntas, sensus et hoc secundum dictamen rectae rationi naturalis inditae. Potest autem describi dictamen rectae rationis quod est facultas indicativa docens tribuere unicuique quod suum est sicut justitia describitur quod est perpetua et constans voluntas tribuens unicuique quod suum est.²³⁶

233.. Bamborough, pp.35-40; Harvey, pp.31-61; C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image (Cambridge, 1964), pp.152-65.

234. Ll. 66-70, Virgil's Aeneid Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas, edited by David F.C. Coldwell, vol. III, STS, 3rd Ser. 30 (1957).

235. Gerson, Oeuvres complètes, VIII, p.292.

236. Ibid., VII, pp.184-5.

Hay and Gerson both speak in similar terms of the crucial adjudicating power of reason in this rational process, and readily pursue the political connotations. Hay works this particularly neatly here in effectively describing at one and the same time both the way counsel and judgements should be given to the monarch and the workings of his own rational powers. And like Gerson, too, Hay moves swiftly to the consideration of what may happen if the will or king then 'demys wrang'. Straightaway comes conscience to show the heart that he has 'done errour' and brings 'distruction' as witness.²³⁷ The political analogues are not made more precise here, but the political tenor is taken up strongly again when the king is rebuked and called to explain himself before his parliament, while reason shows forth the judgement that was previously made. Clearly there is little intention of directly mirroring a political reality at this point, but what is stressed is the accountability of the monarch to his people. The way in which this comes across is very interesting. When he is before his parliament, 'the corage quhilk is callitoure will/That to þe king may best be likynnyt till', addresses them thus:

My fais ar cummin in me with ydilnes
 With lust with 3ewthede and with wantones
 And brocht with þame glutoney and covatesie
 With uþeris of my mortale inemyis
 And blyndit me quhen I was myne allane
 And all my counsallouris was fra me tane
 And braik my purpose and changit myne entent
 And to þare folysis gart me þus consent
 Quhilk me forthinkis and I sall mend it sone
 With 3oure counsale as 3e think best be done ²³⁸

The speech is almost a synopsis of the first part of Lindsay's Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis. The king has been corrupted by vices depicted both as facets

237. Add. MS 40732, fol. 137^r.

238. Ibid., fols. 137^{r-v}.

of his own personality and evil counsellors within his court - though not, it should be noted, those who are part of his great council. Unlike Gerson, Hay does not present reason as at fault, blinded, which was a common way of presenting the erring of the will. He rather seeks to preserve the great council and its judgements intact, and to suggest more that the will has fallen in itself, which was another way of accounting for the coming in of sin, on the grounds that the will 'had a certain sympathy with the sensitive Appetite'.²³⁹ Indeed it is to reason that Hay's will king turns back for counsel. But we may still detect Gerson's influence in the tendency towards the dramatic that Hay has adopted in his version. In several works Gerson makes use of the dramatic soliloquy delivered by the penitent heart, or in this case the soul in La mendacit  spirituelle, the first part of which consists of a dialogue between a contemplative man and his soul, and the second of prayers and meditations of the soul, of which this is one:

Vrayement ce royaume est en guerre et persecucion sans cesser, et n'y ha vice ou pech  qui ne s'efforce l'envair et l'occuper par les cinq passaiges de mes cinq sens. Orgueil s'escrue a haute voys et se vente qu'il dominera. Envie, ire et haine jurent que leur demeure y sera. Peresse l'endormie ne s'en veult de partir. Gloutonie la souillarde y veult sa cuisine tenir. Luxure afferme que tout en tout ce royaume enflammera. Avarice la convoiteuse bien cuide que ja n'en partira et ainsy d'autres tyrans sans nombre qui sans ordonnance et a tres horrible confusion quierent regner en mon royaume.²⁴⁰

Thus both Gerson's soul and Hay's will king speak of their corrupted selves in terms of wider political corruption. Gerson speaks of a state of war in the realm; in Hay a more direct and local political connection is being suggested - the breakdown of a process whereby the great council takes a judge-

239. Bamborough, p.47.

240. Gerson, Oeuvres compl tes, VII, p.243. Cf. the speeches of the heart in L' cole de la Conscience and L' cole de la Raison.

ment by which the monarch will then not abide or concerning which he changes his view. Gerson specifically relates the turmoil to the incoming and dominance of the seven deadly sins, as he also does, for example, in Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur, where reason is rendered blinded and made mute by their attack.²⁴¹ Hay also identifies several of the sins as overtaking the will, as well as the dominance of wanton sensuality, but he also includes 'zewthede' - the dangers of young council were an advice to princes commonplace, but one with a certain resonance in Scotland.

Both speakers also recognize their faults. In La mendacité spirituelle prayers to God are offered, and penances promised. Hay's king, as we have seen places himself in the hands of his counsellors. Unlike Lindsay's Rex Humanitas this king seems somewhat more quickly aware of his fault and how to rectify it. This being so, the response he gets from reason, 'quhilk' Hay adds is 'þe grete counsale', is thus:

Senze ar sette to governe zow alhale
 Be oure avise and at our ordinance
 Than ar ze wourthy to have þe governaunce
 þocht ze be king with power absolute
 To giff ane wrangous dome it war na bute
 Suppois for all zoure counsale thole it stand
 Nocht þan all gud men will be murmurand ²⁴²

And they would pray to God that the king should not live long, and that his 'sede' should not succeed him, but rather that there should be sent 'ane king þat luiffis lawte best'.²⁴³ Once more the consequences of bad kingship are seen as residing in the hands of God, but, though hypothetically stated only,

241. Ibid., VII, 754-5.

242. Add. MS 40732, fol. 137^V.

243. Ibid.

the point that a bad king's son may not be looked upon favourably by his people has still been made.

The advice that reason gives to the king has thus been adroitly presented by Hay as both the advice of his own reason and the advice of his 'grete counsale', thereby stating simultaneously the necessity for there to be a king to rule with justice and the necessity for that king to rule with the consent and accord of his good counsellors. The advice and indeed the whole theoretical basis on which it is constructed, is a classic condensed statement of limited monarchy. A king may have 'absolute power', like the will's 'free commandement', but he is always accountable, and, Hay suggests, can only function with his council, and in accord with it. And with his people: the relationship of king and subjects is again stated here. A monarch should find out how he is regarded by the 'hale commoun' and if necessary redress his behaviour accordingly. The two ideas come together thus:

To mend 3our falt þan war it grete honor
Ane lord but lake may ganecall his erreure
þocht 3e be king and singulare justicere
With all powar 3itt suld 3e counsale spere
Na juge never man agane gud conscience
Than war 3oure saul condampnit but diffence 244

This lengthy metaphorical section is then rounded off with a final summarizing statement of its essential basis, the accord, or lack of it, between will and reason:

Thus quhan oure will conformis it to ressoun
The wertewis of oure body up and dun

244. Ibid. The more general moral implications of this are well indicated by Gerson's comments on a similar king of ignorance in Le Profit de savoir quel est peché mortel et véniel: 'Ignorance puet venir ou pour negligence de non vouloir mettre peine a savoir ce que on devroit savoir, ou a fin que on peche plus franchement et liement; et ces ygnorances ne excusent point de pechie, mais aucune foiz le font plus grant (Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.370).

Contentis in þe hele and gude prosperitie
And quhan þai disobey to veretie
That lust and will concordis not to Resson
Than excess makis ane wrang proportioun
And all the memberis ar at grete discourde
Quhen Resoun is nathing obeyit as lord 245

In reducing it to these terms Hay noticeably plays up the crucial role of reason here, and in a manner which recalls Gerson's frequent exposition of the necessity for will to govern with reason's counsel. We recall that 'Franche volente devoit croire et escouter ce qui estoit conseille ... et avoir en aide les vertus morales'.²⁴⁶ Hay then, however, takes the metaphor still further by relating the idea of excess to a change in the humours of the body, a disturbance of the 'gud complexioun' without 'remed' of which a man must die; such ideas would reappear of course in the physiognomy section.²⁴⁷

What makes Hay's choice of the soul allegory so brilliantly worked is his understanding of the principle behind it which informs the whole way in which kingly rule is represented. At its centre is the idea of the divine origins of the soul, and that 'The will was created good and incapable of doing evil', although it could still err through faulty perception.²⁴⁸ Thus the monarch can be portrayed as an essentially good ruler misled by either - or both - his own false judgements or by evil counsellors - Hay's allegory functions fluidly enough to suggest both. And, in keeping also with the essential conservatism of Hay's position on the replacement of bad monarchs, such a view implies that the monarch is ever likely to reform, although it equally allows for the

245. Add. MS 40732, fols. 137^r-8^r.

246. Gerson, Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.753.

247. Add. MS 40732, fol. 138^r; see below, p.135.

248. Bamborough, pp.45-9 (47); Gilson, pp.61-70; Pascoe, pp.184-7.

possibility that this might not happen; a happy, or at least positive, ending is instead imposed.

Nor does Hay lose sight of the idea of the exemplary nature of monarchy, an innate part of the conception here, as in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis. Thus he concludes the allegory by returning to the initial comparison of kings and men:

And not for þi þat of kingis speke we
All kynd of men to king may liknyt be
That governis him bot lak to god and man
He is worth be king þat governe him sa can 249

Gerson similarly points out the further relevance of his allegory of the realm: '... non mie seulement du royaume temporel, mais generaument de toute communaute ou assemblee, comme de menage entre homme et femme et enfans, et de citez entre bourgeois...'.²⁵⁰

We have seen that while asserting the 'absolute power' of monarchy, Hay also contrived to stress the necessity for it to govern with the accord of parliament and more importantly perhaps with the 'grete counsale', which was what the three chambers of the rational soul suggested to him, rather than, say, the three estates. It is interesting to consider whether Hay had something in particular in mind by his use of the term. Given that he describes it as 'sittand euer', it is possible that he may have been thinking of the body which was probably carrying out day-to-day decision-making from the early-mid fifteenth century, although documentary evidence only survives from about 1470.²⁵¹ Grant describes it as a 'secret' or privy council - generally called

249. Add. MS 40732, fol. 138^v.

250. Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur, Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.759.

251. Grant, Independence and Nationhood, p.148.

'the council'.²⁵² It was quite small in composition, a 1459 body being recommended this composition: two bishops, an abbot, a prior, the lord chancellor, the master of the household, the chamberlain, the privy seal, the secretary, the treasurer, and the clerk of the register.²⁵³ The term 'grete counsaile' was also used sporadically in the fifteenth century to signify meetings of the nobility, but it would seem that Hay had a more prescriptive and specific usage in mind; we shall return to this question below.²⁵⁴

Following this section, the 'Regimen' proceeds to its conclusion with more general accounts of the perils of covetousness and the foundation of justice in faith and loyalty, interspersed with intermittent injunctions on kingly chastity, discretion, clothing and so forth, which were well-known Secreta material.²⁵⁵ Within this scheme Hay continually returns to the issues of justice, good counsel, and the common profit. Located two-thirds of the way through is the other lengthy inserted section, the physiognomy, which is indeed distinguished by a separate heading.²⁵⁶ Unfortunately this section cannot be given detailed consideration here, for analysis of this part of the 'Regimen' would undoubtedly reveal considerably more about which recensions of the Secreta Hay knew. A point continually referred to in the Physiognomy, however is that 'Quhare nature falzeis his proportiounis/Thare follows oftymes ewill conditionis'.²⁵⁷ As in the inner, so the outer man. But Hay also makes use of the idea that it is possible to resist the imbalance of

252. Ibid.

253. Hannay, p.22.

254. Nicholson, pp.509, 537; see below, pp.138-9.

255. Add. MS 40732, fols. 138^r-41^v, 146^r-7^v.

256. Ibid., fols. 141^v-6^r.

257. Ibid., fol. 144^r.

one's complexion to reiterate the point that kings can set themselves against a propensity to do wrong, stressing again too the exemplary role of the monarch:

All this ane wourthy king suld evirmare do
In Vertewuis nocht Inclynand his lustis so
For of ane king it is a mare tinsale
Na of ane thousand uþeris pepill smale
For quhyl ill pasture ill exampill gevis 258
Hyne all þe pepill in sic maner liffis

We have seen this idea earlier in 'For pepill followis þe trad of þare patroun',²⁵⁹ and though proverbial, not to say semi-Biblical it may be, very similar phrasing occurs in another advice work of the same period, De Regimine Principum. There are in fact a good many correspondences between these two works, as is witnessed by the stanza containing the 'good pastour example' which is concerned with setting out a threefold (Aristotelian) division of justice:

Iii maneris ar of Iustice generale
fyrst to þi god syn to þi awyn persoun
To god þou hald þi hart & consciens hale
as to þi selfe þou exceid nocht resoun
Syn to law to pepill & to commoun
Bot fyrst þou suld schaw þaim a gud merroure
For pepill oft tym folowys þe trad of þe pastoure 260

Like Hay, De Regimine Principum asse^rts a duty to God, to oneself, and to the people. The description of the nature of the king's allegiances in the Fairfax version, quoted here, is especially worthy of note, since it is presented in terms of the king's heart, conscience and reason, important elements in Hay's monarchy metaphor. Yet again we can see how differently the subject

258. Ibid., fol. 147^r.

259. Above, p.114.

260. DRP (Fairfax MS) ll. 218-24.

is being treated. De Regimine Principum is prescriptive and specific; Hay more general and dramatic, writing more within the Secreta idiom of what 'a king' should do. But the correspondences between the texts still suggest the possibility of more than shared ideas. For example:

Hay: Nocht mell him with small wrechit besines
 His small materis with small men ay repess
 On hie materis ay travell his prudence 261

DRP: It is degrading till a kyngis croun
 To mell him with smale wrechit besines ...
 And specialie þe ryale mageste
 Suld neuer be traueled bot in materis hee 262

Here the similarities in phrasing look distinctly like a borrowing on one side or another. Likewise both urge justice on the monarch in similar terms. De Regimine Principum complains that the king's judges are often 'Stopand þe law for luff frenschip or feed';²⁶³ Hay tells the king to 'Be not changeabill for guld frendship na fede',²⁶⁴ although phrases involving combinations of 'frendship' and 'fede' had quite common circulation, including in parliamentary business.²⁶⁵ Another parallel also nicely reflects their distinct natures as advice pieces. Both present the image of the frustrated poor demanding justice. Hay pictures an angel representing the impoverished people, crying:

 ... with ane hie clamoure
 To the makare of humane creature
 And 3ammerand with hie voce and reuthfull stevin
 Askin vengance for þame at the toun of hevin 266

261. Add. MS 40732, fol. 139^r.

262. DRP (Fairfax MS), ll. 99-100, 104-5.

263. Ibid., l. 199; the Maitland MS, l. 185, reads 'Sparand'.

264. Add. MS 40732, fol. 139^v.

265. DOST, fede, n; cf. Ch. 5, p.266; Ch. 6, pp.294-5.

266. Add. MS 40732, fol. 135^v.

In De Regimine Principum, the people themselves are knocking at the king's door:

... pure plantis þat 3hameris at þi 3et
Quhilkis dayly has nocht halfe þaire fill of met
With wyffis & Barnis suownand for falt of bred
For quhilkis god sall þe chalance of þaire deed 267

Though the De Regimine Principum author never forgets to remind the king that he is accountable to the highest judge, his thrust is more direct than Hay's; for him the issue is more immediately part of a larger practical point on the administration of justice. But in addition to sharing vocabulary, image, and the albeit familiar themes of the common profit, justice, and good counsel, Hay's Buik of King Alexander and De Regimine Principum have more in common.

For, like Hay, the De Regimine Principum writer is concerned at some length with the responsibilities of the great council. The 'consale generale' is referred to once, where it would seem to represent the official body functioning alongside parliament.²⁶⁸ But throughout the poem a clear definition of the duties of the great council is urged. The author wants this body to choose the king's officers, and to avoid being side-tracked by smaller issues.²⁶⁹ This probably relates to the administrative difficulties of the council in the fifteenth century when, as Wormald puts it, 'before the reign of James IV the king's council, consisting of clerical lawyers and whichever amateur laymen happened to be present, simply turned to judicial business when

267. DRP (Fairfax MS), ll. 194-6.

268. *Ibid.*, l. 277.

269. Bot wald þou wit all þe prouidence
Of all þin office to þi gret consale

It is vnpossible to þi gret consale
for till discus all caus smal & gret
Bot to smale men comyt all caus smale (*Ibid.* ll. 113-14, 190-2)

a backlog had piled up, and then spent a fortnight or so getting through as much as they could'.²⁷⁰ The great council may have been intended as a body kept separate from these kinds of dealings, but the comments in De Regimine Principum imply that this was not always the case. The author certainly writes as if the institution is already in existence, but more interestingly still he describes in the abstract what Hay has effectively dramatized in the political allegory in the Buik of King Alexander:

Bot of a thing all gud men mervalis mare
 Quhen gret consale with þin awyn consent
 Has ordand strayt Iustice na man to spare
 Within schort tym þou changis þin entent
 Sendand a contre letter incontinent
 Chargeand þat of þat mater mare be nocht
 þan all þe world murmuris þat þou art bocht²⁷¹

This author may be more legalistic, less dramatic about the details, but the idea is the same: the great council take a decision, which the monarch then ~~counter~~mands. It is characteristic of De Regimine Principum that the writing has a far more reforming tone to it than does Hay's dramatic representation of the scene, but the correspondence is manifest.

The two similarly coincide on the question of counsellors. Hay states that the king should appoint those to administer his justice who are 'Expert in lawis and condut in police'.²⁷² Then follows the admonition that 'Wise men ar not ay grettest of estate', and he should appoint those who are 'To mannys sicht as here maist healdin wise'.²⁷³ It is necessary therefore that a king should have a body of advisers and administrators since (recalling the Buke of

270. Jenny Wormald, Court, Kirk and Community, Scotland 1470-1625, The New History of Scotland, 4 (1981), p.24.

271. DRP (Fairfax MS), ll. 267-73.

272. Add. MS 40732, fol. 139^v.

273. Ibid., fol. 140^r.

the Governauce of Princis) 'In mony hede is oft tyme mekill witt'.²⁷⁴ Once more we may find the same argument in more political form in De Regimine Principum, where it comes very near the opening of the poem:

For sic men as þou deputis vnder þe
quethir þai be full wykkyt men or wyþþ
all men will trast þat sick lyk man thou be
as þou committis to gouerne þin office ²⁷⁵

Then comes the idea that 'In mony hede is oft tyme mekill witt':

Bot sen a mannis wyt may nocht sufficiþþ
For to maynteyne sa hee a gouernance
Thou suld gar cheiþ, þe consale þat ware wyþþ
Be all þe iii estatis ordinance ²⁷⁶

Characteristically, the author relates this more than Hay does to the quasi-democratic machinery that would ensure that this choice was made with the consent of the whole commons. But both writers have a pronounced consciousness of the need for a strong monarch functioning with the assistance of a council committed to him.

While it can always be said that the themes which these two writers choose to emphasize were familiar enough in advice literature generally, as Roderick Lyall (writing of these years and the rest of the century) has noted, 'the insistence with which the themes are repeated suggests that the poets in and around the court were articulating a concern which had its basis in the realities of political life'.²⁷⁷ And whether or not we accept Lyall's view of

274. Ibid.; cf. p.100, above.

275. DRP (Fairfax MS), ll. 29-32.

276. Ibid., ll. 50-3.

277. R.J. Lyall, 'The Court as a Cultural Centre', History Today, 34 (September 1984), 27-33 (30).

De Regimine Principum as 'a propagandist work, part of a factional struggle within the government',²⁷⁸ we can see that the shared concern between Hay and the chronicle poem's author over the role of the king's closest body of counsellors gives a strongly contemporary picture of political business over the function and functioning of kingship. The closeness of the two writers also makes the question of borrowing a provocative one. To those who date De Regimine Principum in the late 1440s-mid-1450s, Hay would seem the likelier borrower. But if we date it around 1460-1, there is little between the two works in date of composition. Similarly, it is possible that Hay composed the Buik of King Alexander earlier than 1460, though after 1456. It is even possible that Hay himself was the author of De Regimine Principum, but his eschewal of direct political statement, his preference for more generalized comment or allegorical treatment suggest that the more direct idiom of that poem would not have come naturally to him. It is equally possible, too, that the Regiment referred to in the Asloan MS contents list is De Regimine Principum, since its appearance in the Chepman and Myllar prints suggests that it was a reasonably well-known work.

Thus in what was most likely to have been his final work, Hay had greater opportunity to write freely on a subject which had exercised his interest in the earlier translations. The concerns that those works reveal, for justice, the common profit, and the dangers of abuse of princely privilege are now clothed in a new idiom. Verse deprives Hay of little of his literary vigour, though he is not quite able to match the balanced rhythms and cadences of his prose style. He is still, however, capable of the striking phrase. We have already seen the lovely parison in his description of the soul:

278. Ibid., 29.

Thus be our saule we leiff we move we ar
We slepe we walk we travel lait and are 279

Moreover, the way in which Hay responds to Gerson both in literary and ideological terms is of considerable significance. J.A.W. Bennett has made the point that while in fifteenth-century England allegory was 'dying from overwork and mechanical exploitation' in Scotland, the Buke of the Howlet, Dunbar's court poems and Douglas' Palice of Honour all show that there it was taking on 'new, vigorous and independent life'.²⁸⁰ The Buik of King Alexander should certainly be added to this list. From the theoretical point of view Hay demonstrates a concern for the implications of the presence of a bad or inadequate king in the country, which, despite his acquaintance with Gerson, will stop at the brink and go no further on the question of how this should be dealt with by his subjects. Like many other French writers, and like his successors in Scottish advice to princes, he presses instead the ideas of divine vengeance, the reminder that, as the conclusion of the 'Regiment' put it 'þow mon gif compt quhan þow gais syne',²⁸¹ and the necessity for establishment of the correct organs of government to protect both people and monarchy. In this respect, and in others, Hay, perhaps rather more than the author of De Regimine Principum, set the tenor for the presentation of advice in the next half-century: often encased within a genre not naturally occupied with it, and with the advice often being capable of being read in general moral terms as well as more particular counsel to a king. Sir Gilbert Hay has in fact been underrated not only as a translator and author, but as an important shaping force in the traditions of Middle Scots literature.

279. Add. MS 40732, fol. 136^r.

280. J.A.W. Bennett, Poetry of the Passion (1982), p.131.

281. Add. MS 40732, fol. 147^v.

Chapter 3

Lancelot of the Laik

As an advice to princes piece, Lancelot of the Laik is very much a sign of the literary times in fifteenth-century Scotland, both in its subject matter and the influences it exhibits. It is based on a version of the Old French thirteenth-century prose romance Lancelot do Lac, and while generally keeping close to its source yet exhibits considerable independence in places, especially in the section of advice-giving to king Arthur. It is primarily with this aspect of the poem that this chapter will be concerned, although it is important to note from the outset that the poem's advice message is not confined to its advice section.

As we shall see, there are various possible pointers to the dating of the poem, arising out of its sources and literary allusions. But a detailed study still remains to be done on its complex and peculiar linguistic composition. Previous considerations of the linguistic evidence have tended to place the Lancelot in the second half-latter quarter of the fifteenth century.¹ However, in an as yet unpublished article Roderick Lyall intends to argue that certain orthographic differences between the prologue and the rest of the poem show that the former is a late fifteenth-century addition to a work composed before 1460, and possibly as early as the second quarter of the century.² I have not seen his argument in detail, and am thus not equipped to discuss it here, but it is obvious that these datings would have a number of significant implications, not least of which would be the placing of Lancelot of the Laik as one

1. Specimens of Middle Scots, edited by G. Gregory Smith (Edinburgh, 1902), p.316. For further references and discussion of the poem's language see 'An Edition of Lancelot of the Laik', edited by Jeanette Johnston (unpublished M.Litt. thesis, University of Oxford, 1979), pp.107-17. This edition also contains an excellent study of the poem, to which I am indebted in several places indicated below. All quotations are taken from Lancelot of the Laik, edited by W.W. Skeat, EETS, O.Ser. 6 (1895; repr. 1965).

2. Dr Lyall's article will appear in a forthcoming number of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions. I am most grateful to him for informing me of the general line of his argument.

of the earliest pieces to be considered in this study. A few necessary provisos should perhaps be made, however. Firstly, one should be slightly hesitant of assigning on linguistic evidence an early date to a work on the grounds that no later examples are recorded; for the scarcity of evidence makes it always possible that this scribe could have been preserving older forms into a later period.³ Secondly, Dr. Lyall himself notes that there may be orthographic links between the prologue and Books II and III of the poem, which might detract from the theory that the prologue is a later addition.⁴ Moreover, the prologue reveals a quite detailed knowledge of the poem's French source, which is certainly designed to encourage the idea of prologue and poem as linked.⁵ However, whatever the date of composition, it is important to note that Dr Lyall's latest analysis of the watermarks of CUL MS Kk.I.5, in which Lancelot of the Laik is contained, shows that this unit of the MS was copied around 1484-90, and probably 1489-90⁶ - in other words around the time that much Scottish advice to princes literature was either composed or recopied, at the end of the reign of James III and the beginning of the reign of James IV.

3. On the complex questions of assessing scribal practice, Michael Benskin and Margaret Laing, 'Translations and Mischsprachen in Middle English Manuscripts' in So Meny People Longages and Tongues, edited by Michael Benskin and M.L. Samuels (Edinburgh, 1981), pp.55-106. The possibility should also be borne in mind that the scribe of CUL MS Kk.I.5 may have copied the prologue of Lancelot of the Laik from a different exemplar to that used for the rest of the poem.

4. '/yh/ is very common in the Prologue but never occurs in Part I, recurring strangely in Parts II and III'; in contrast, however, '/wh/ and /w/ for OE./hw/ never occur in the Prologue but predominate over /quh/ in the main text'; private communication, 20 September 1985.

5. See below, pp.168-9, 171, n.81.

6. He sees the Scottish material in the MS as an early sixteenth-century compilation of originally disparate units, ranging in date from the mid-1450s to c. 1490; private communication, 20 September 1985; and see below, p.148.

Well before Lyall's suggestion that Lancelot is the work of more than one author, argument as to its authorship had been extensive.⁷ Skeat and various later commentators argued for common authorship with The Quare of Jelusy, with which Lancelot shares quite a deal of phrasing and imagery, as well as a number of linguistic features. The desire to yoke and thus date the two poems together has certainly been heightened by the existence of the Quare's colophon, variously interpreted as quod auchin, quod autor, and quod ane Lufar.⁸ Several candidates have been put forward for the first, all of whom could have produced the works in the last twenty years of the fifteenth century. Such attributions and their consequent dating for the Quare remain conjectural, but in any event if Dr Lyall's researches on Lancelot are confirmed, these datings would in fact make the case for common authorship of Lancelot and the Quare less likely. However, the stylistic similarities between the two poems occur mainly in the most conventionally stylized parts of Lancelot, dealing with love and landscape, and principally in the prologue;⁹ it may thus be that future claims will be made for the author of the later prologue to Lancelot being the same as that of The Quare of Jelusy.

As to further comment on the nature of the author - or authors - of Lancelot, one can start, and indeed almost finish, with an earlier judicious assessment by Lyall that 'all we can positively say about him is that he was

7. See Johnston, pp.118-25, summarizing the discussion, especially Skeat's article, 'The Author of "Lancelot of the Laik"', SHR, 8 (1910), 1-4.

8. Skeat, 'The Author'; 'Vidas Achinlek, Chevalier', correspondence from Margaret Muriel Gray, Skeat, Alexander Lawson, and J.T.T. Brown, SHR, 8 (1910), 321-6; also Lancelot of the Laik, edited by Margaret Muriel Gray, STS, New Ser. 2 (1912), pp.xviii-xx; R.J. Lyall, 'Two of Dunbar's Makars: James Affleck and Sir John the Ross', IR, 27 (1976), 99-109; The Quare of Jelusy, edited by J. Norton-Smith and I. Pravda, Middle English Texts 3 (Heidelberg, 1976), pp.14-17; see also DOST, Register of Titles of Works Quoted.

9. Johnston, pp.121-4.

competent in French and familiar with the traditions of advice to rulers which are a dominant theme in fifteenth-century Scottish writing'.¹⁰ Familiarity with French literature of various types is something of which we see much in this study, but given the difficulties of dating Lancelot of the Laik it is worth dwelling a little further on the nature of the poet, or poet's acquaintance. For, although the figure of Lancelot was known to Scots and English audiences before the fifteenth century, it was not until then that works featuring him in a more prominent role began to appear, with the stanzaic Morte d'Arthur c. 1400 and Malory's works c. 1470. The earlier we place Lancelot of the Laik, then, the more strikingly innovative it appears as a work bringing the character of Lancelot to the fore. Given the great popularity of Lancelot do Lac, and the close relations between French and Scottish culture in this period it is not unlikely that the French romance had some circulation in Scotland in manuscript during the fifteenth century. This is certainly suggested by the reference to it in The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part (1461).¹¹ The Lancelot poet may of course have encountered the work in France and brought it back for translation - as we have seen Hay returning to work on the prose manuscript. Those who have made detailed studies of Lancelot of the Laik have not so far been able to identify any one of the many surviving MSS of the French prose romance as being likely to be that used by the Scots author, and with this in mind it is also worth observing that the first printed edition of Lancelot do Lac appeared in 1488, with at least two further editions before 1500.¹² If the prologue to Lancelot of the Laik is a

10. Lyall, 'Two of Dunbar's Makars', 109.

11. The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part, Bannatyne Miscellany, III (Edinburgh, 1895), pp.39-40; here it is attributed, as commonly, to 'Maister Walter Map'.

12. Johnston, p.5; Brian Woledge, Bibliographie des romans et nouvelles en prose française antérieurs à 1500, Société de publications romanes et françaises, 42 (Geneva, 1954), p.7, and Supplément, 1954-73, 130 (Geneva, 1975), pp.54-5, records two editions dated 1494 but possibly printed later.

later appendage, it is possible that its author may have become acquainted with the French work in an early edition and been prompted by it to thus rework the earlier Scottish poem.¹³

As we shall see, the Lancelot poet's¹⁴ interest in advice to princes was sufficient for him to extensively expand the section of his source that dealt with it. Yet it remains that as an advice work the poem manifests little of the legalistic vocabulary that characterizes Hay's writings or De Regimine Principum, and little of the theoretical concern that we see manifested in strongly French influenced writers like Hay again and later Ireland. In part this is by virtue of its generic nature of a romance, but we have already seen how Hay was capable of dealing with advice questions in some legalistic and theoretical detail in the Buik of King Alexander.¹⁵ The level of Lancelot of the Laik is more that of The Thre Prestis of Peblis or The Talis of the Fyve Bestes. This in itself should prompt further consideration as to the status of its author and the intended audience of the poem. John MacQueen who believes that the poem was 'apparently composed during the reign of James III', states that it was written 'in all probability for the queen, or another lady of the court', since 'the translator claims to have written only to assuage the pangs of a love which is obviously courtly'.¹⁶ Identification of prologue and poem as separate compositions might make this a

13. As a printed edition may have been the basis for the late Middle Scots romance, Clariodus; cf. Woledge, Bibliographie, p.34.

14. I shall henceforth refer to the possible existence of a separate author of the prologue only where directly relevant.

15. Ch.2, pp.101-42.

16. John MacQueen, 'The Literature of Fifteenth-Century Scotland', in Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century, edited by Jennifer M. Brown (1977), pp.184-208 (193). Norton-Smith and Pravda make the curious statement that Lancelot of the Laik may have been written 'with Robert III's Margaret in mind' (p.11).

more tenable view, for it is hard to see it as viable for the whole of Lancelot of the Laik.¹⁷ Here too, perhaps, the existing manuscript context of Lancelot of the Laik is relevant, at least as far as it reveals the way in which its late fifteenth-early sixteenth century compiler saw the poem. For the context in which it has survived here in its sole and incomplete witness, MS Kk.I.5 in Cambridge University Library is more indicative of its moral or political application than of courtly entertainment. Though an originally separate unit (no. 7), it appears to have been bound with other Scottish items of a legislative or instructive nature in the early sixteenth century.¹⁸ One unit (no. 6), containing The Craft of Deyng, Ratis Raving, the Dicta Salomonis, and various other moral pieces was apparently written by the same scribe, according to Dr. Lyall, probably around the same time as Lancelot, in the very late 1480s.¹⁹ However, the paper in these units is different and in Lyall's opinion 'there is no codicological reason to suppose that their common scribe intended the two units to occur together'.²⁰

As I have said, the Scottish material surrounding Lancelot of the Laik can be divided into two main categories, legislative and instructive. In the former category are the first two items: a Scots version of Books I-III of the

17. See further the discussion below, pp.151-4.

18. The contents of the complete MS are described in The Scottish Metrical Romance of Lancelot du Lak, edited by Joseph Stevenson, Maitland Club 48 (Edinburgh, 1839), pp.xiii-xxiv.

19. Lyall, private communication, 20 September 1985; R. Girvan, in his edition of Ratis Raving and Other Early Scottish Poems on Morals, STS, 3rd Ser. 11 (1939), describes the contents of item 6 on pp.vii-xxx, and identifies Lancelot (no. 7) as the same hand but originally separate on p.xii; he dates item 6, which he also suggests may have circulated separately, as in 'the latter half of the fifteenth century' (p.ix). Johnston, pp.1-4, describes the Lancelot unit, and attributes item 6 to the same scribe. The legend 'per manum V de F' appears at the conclusion of the Dicta Salominis. Though as yet unidentified, Dr Lyall thinks him very likely to have been a notary public.

20. Private communication, 20 September 1985.

Regiam Majestatem and The Rolls of Oleron and some Burgh Laws (dated by Lyall, c. 1457-74);²¹ and the final two, an abbreviated Regiam Majestatem (dated by Lyall c. 1455-60), and some parliamentary acts from the reign of James III and other legislative material (dated by Lyall, c. 1470).²² The second category consists of a Scots version of Bernardus' De cura rei familiaris (dated by Lyall, 1470s-80s); the contents of item 6, which in addition to those listed above also includes The Foly of Fulys and the Thewis of Wysmen, The Consail and Teiching at the Wysman gaif his sone, and The Thewis of Gudwomen (dated by Lyall, with Lancelot, c. 1483/5-90).²³ Some works of a political prophetic nature, probably of originally English provenance from their references to the 'cock of the north' and Thomas à Becket also follow the Rolls of Oleron and the Burgh Laws.²⁴ Two other items were later bound into the volume, a late Middle English translation of Christine de Pisan's Livre du corps de policie, and Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia, dated in the MS 1584.²⁵ It is interesting to speculate that another later compiler in the sixteenth century saw the advice to princes links between this material and the Scottish items in the MS and so brought them together.²⁶

21. Ibid.; these datings revise those given in his 'Checklist of Fifteenth-Century Scottish Manuscripts', delivered at the Fourth International Conference for Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Literature, Germersheim, July 1984. They are based on detailed study of the MS watermarks.

22. Ibid.

23. See above, p.149. The Scots version of Bernardus de cura rei familiaris, with some Early Scottish Prophecies, &c, was edited by J. Rawson Lumby, EETS, O.Ser. 42 (1870).

24. Listed by Stevenson on pp.xv-xvi; some of it is printed on pp.131-54.

25. The Middle English Translation of Christine de Pisan's 'Livre du Corps de Policie', edited by Diane Bornstein, Middle English Texts, 7 (Heidelberg, 1977), pp.17-19.

26. Bornstein notes that 'The entire manuscript ... was in the library of Richard Holdsworth, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge (1590-1649)' (p.19).

Commentators have not seen much of significance in the relation of Lancelot to the other material in the MS. Skeat felt that 'The MS of "Lancelot" has little to do with any of the rest as regards its subject', and Gray that 'The pieces ... have no connection with one another'.²⁷ These conclusions might perhaps be qualified somewhat. For several of the pieces (Ratis Raving, De cura, The Consail and Teiching) take the form of instructional addresses; the figure addressed in Ratis Raving, The Foly of Fulys, and The Consail and Teiching is a young man in receipt of advice, and The Craft of Deyng and the Dicta Salomonis are particularly concerned with the transience of worldly life. All these features relate to the advice section of Lancelot of the Laik; and on a more general level, much of the instruction on the pursuit of an honest life and the avoidance of foolish friends and counsellors overlaps with the advice to princes tradition. The depiction of a wise man in The Foly of Fulys, for example, could equally depict the sage monarch:

he heris consaill radely
 And al with consail dois glaidly.
 he speris of wysdome euir and wyt,
 and euir his ere rady tyll It.
 he Settis his wordys ay wysly,
 and haldis hyme with gud cumpany.
 he gouernys euir with paciens,²⁸
 And euir is of fair eloquens.

Similarly, in the depiction of the wise man's concern for justice in this poem, a monarch or a monarch's ministers could equally be implied:

Thai mak na dissimelacioune
 Qwhare cauβ is of Pwniscioune.
 Of budis na bewsertis by thai nocht
 To slok Justice out of thare thocht;

27. Lancelot of the Laik, p.vi; Gray, Lancelot, pp.vii-viii.

28. Ll. 93-9; quotation is from Girvan's edition.

Thai have thare E euir to the ryght,
 and euir thar mynd one god almycht.
 Thai desyr neuir na wrang conquest,
 One vthire menys erd to byg thare nest,
 Bot owthir the parteis thai content
 Or gouernys thaim be Jugment.
 Thai luf al men that are ryghtwyce,
 All thare delyt is in Justice. 29

In Lancelot of the Laik a just king is seen as one who should

But dissemblyng reprevith as afferis;
 And pwnice them quhar pwnysing Requeris, [1961-2]

and criticism of flattering ministers who are not fearful of God and distort
 the administration of justice is also part of the expanded advice section.
 (The Foly of Fulys is in fact rather more legalistic in its usage, and
 slightly reminiscent in places of De Regimine Principum than is Lancelot of
 the Laik.³⁰) Later in The Foly of Fulys, after the anatomizing of various
 sorts of fools, it is asserted that:

For of al taknis of foly
 That may be knawin proprely
 in manis persone be semblans,
 The principall is ignorans,
 For ignorans and neglygens
 Ar ennemys till al sciens,
 wyt and resone thai disspice,
 and lufis na wysdome one na vyß. 31

In Lancelot of the Laik, of the three principal things which enable flatterers
 to gain favour with a monarch,

29. Ibid., ll. 143-54.

30. Cf. 'Bot owthir the parteis thai content' (Foly 151), 'Eftir þe dome þe
 parteis to content' (DRP (Fairfax MS), 1325); 'All thare delyt is in Justice',
Foly, 154), 'All his delyt suld be to keip the law' (DRP, 96). Also a
 legalistic term is 'wrang conquest': see DOST, conquest, n, 3.

31. Foly of Fulys, ll. 315-22.

And on, It is the blyndit Ignorans
Of kingis, wich that hath no gouernans
To vnderstond who doith sich o my β . [1935-7]

and the resulting bad government makes the people 'presume that he is negligent' [1959]. Such remonstrances were of course thoroughly conventional, and very widespread; nevertheless such correspondences of material would make it seem likely that Lancelot of the Laik was included in this sort of company in the MS because of its substantial moral passages, rather than because of its entertainment value as a romance.³² Thus despite MacQueen's claim, which is also put forward by Ross, that the poet's 'principal intention was to celebrate Lancelot as he is celebrated in the French romance, and in so doing to please his lady with a tale of love and chivalry',³³ it is clear that from fairly early on its readership was unlikely to have been confined to ladies at the court. Denton Fox has recently made the basic but important point that 'the very existence of works like The Thre Prestis of Peblis and The Talis of the Fyve Bestes presupposes a reading public',³⁴ of a kind not necessarily confined to the court, and the same could well be said of Lancelot of the Laik. Moreover, the presence of legal material in the MS makes it, like the Makculloch and Gray MSS of the late fifteenth-early sixteenth centuries, a good example of how a Scottish reader could have linked before him the relation of such moralistic literature to the legislation being

32. See Johnston, p.59. On the relation of the poem to the other works in the MS, cf. Dieter Mehl's comments on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight in The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (1968), p.161.

33. Flora M. Ross, 'A Study of the Treatment of Romance Subjects in Golagros and Gawane, Lancelot of the Laik, and Rauf Coilyear' (unpublished B.Litt. thesis, University of Oxford, 1967), p.144.

34. Denton Fox, 'Middle Scots Poets and Patrons', in English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages, edited by V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (1983), pp.109-27 (117).

established in burghs and parliament.³⁵ In this sort of context, a poem like Lancelot of the Laik would not have to be specifically contemporary in its comment to gain political reference.

The evidence then suggests that the poem was viewed as a piece of moral instruction from relatively early in its history. This is not to deny what the prologue suggests, that it could also be read as a piece of courtly entertainment, but the disposition of material makes it clear, as we shall see, that the author of Books I-III had enough concern with the issue of advice to princes to make this a substantial force in his poem. In this he was both responding to and furthering certain literary and ideological trends; but it must be said from the start that the author of Lancelot of the Laik does not appear to have had a particularly strong political axe to grind. Most of the advice is thoroughly conventional, and may be paralleled in numerous Scots and English advice works.³⁶

In keeping with its source and with its generic nature as a romance, the poem focuses much of its advice on qualities of a chivalric leader - largesse particularly. This was far from being uncommon; as we have seen in Hay's writings, there was frequent overlap between counsel to monarchs and to knights. The treatment of love and courtly ideals also shows the influence of

35. Pieces from the Makculloch and the Gray MSS, together with The Chepman and Myllar Prints, edited by George Stevenson, STS, 1st Ser. 65 (1918), pp. xiv-xvii. In these MSS the poetry is inserted on fly leaves and blank pages, whereas in CUL MS Kk.I.5, the compilation of legal and literary material in one MS is deliberate. This aspect of the MS's history is worthy of much more attention.

36. Johnston, pp.50-60, and notes to individual passages. The ideas used are so conventional in general that many parallels could doubtless also be found in French advice literature, and a number of instances are cited in Johnston's survey. Elspeth Kennedy, 'Social and Political Ideas in the French Prose Lancelot', M AE 26 (1957), 90-106, notes the influences of such ideas in later French works such as Robert de Blois' L'Enseignement des princes (100).

English and Scots as well as French romance tradition.³⁷ However, the poem also draws on the Scots tradition of nationalistic romance and epic writing, as epitomized by the Bruce and later the Wallace;³⁸ and in the conjunction of the evocation of knightly valour, primarily through the depiction of the eponymous hero Lancelot, and the more temporal advice to Arthur, there is generated an area of thematic, not to say ideological, conflict. This is innate in the prose Lancelot too, and in its sources, and indeed in Malory's Arthur, but the reworking by the Scots poet reveals it with particular clarity, not least because the king has less opportunity to demonstrate his reformed good government or his qualities of leadership. It is this which gives Lancelot of the Laik its distinctive interest as a Scottish advice to princes work.

The predominantly conventional nature of the advice also makes any dating of Lancelot of the Laik on this evidence a risky task. Nevertheless, quite a number of critics have been tempted to see in Amytans' counsel, and indeed in the events in the poem, references to particular sets of historical circumstances or to the depiction of one particular monarch. While Göller was perhaps the most specific, claiming the campaign of Galiot against Arthur as being used to parallel the conflict between James III and John of the Isles in 1476,³⁹ a good number of critics have followed the argument put forward by Vogel that the poem's criticisms of justice and flatterers in the court

37. Johnston, pp.16-34, 77-85, 92-106; cf. also Ross, pp.78-95.

38. See below, pp.161-3; Barbour refers to his work as a romance at I, l. 446. Barbour's conception of the Bruce in romance terms is discussed in J.A.W. Bennett, The Oxford History of English Literature, vol. II, part I, edited by Douglas Gray and Norman Davis, forthcoming.

39. Karl Heinz Göller, 'König Arthur in der englischen Literatur des späten Mittelalters', Palaestra 238 (Göttingen, 1963), p.130, n.58.

relates to the circumstances of James III's rule in the 1480s.⁴⁰ It is echoed, for example, by Fulton, and by Flora Alexander, who has yet done valuable work to show that the poem is frequently less critical of Arthur than its French source.⁴¹ This is an important point since, as we shall see below, Lancelot of the Laik should not be identified with a Scots tradition of nationalistic anti-Arthur, in the sense of anti-English, writing, which is present in some Middle Scots writing but was more strongly manifest from the sixteenth century.

The image of Alexander the Great as the exemplary chivalric monarch, memorably evoked by Gilbert Hay in the Buik of King Alexander, recurs in the advice section of Lancelot of the Laik, a work which makes sparing use of such examples. Those Alexander sought to conquer, it is said, hearing of his reputation and 'worschip', 'offerith them with-uten strok of spere' for such was the fame of his 'gentilleß' [ll. 1837-48]. To his 'awn folk', he was so distinguished in his 'larges, humilitee, and manhed' that they never failed him in time of war [ll. 1848-55]. Alexander's liberality is given especial emphasis, as was traditional.⁴² It has been noted that this passage, unparalleled in the prose Lancelot, resembles a passage in Hay's Buke of

40. Bertram Vogel, 'Secular Politics and the Date of Lancelot of the Laik', Studies in Philology, 40 (1943), 1-13; also suggested in Skeat's edition, p.xii.

41. R.W.M. Fulton, 'Social Criticism in Scottish Literature, 1480-1560' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1972), claims that many of the poem's allusions, especially ll. 1645-50, 'have an undoubted bearing on the reign of James III' (p.180); Flora Alexander (née Ross), 'Late Medieval Scottish Attitudes to the Figure of King Arthur: a Reassessment', Anglia 93 (1975) 17-34, posits relevance to 'a particular historical figure', and restates Vogel's theory (27). In 'Romance Subjects', pp.128-54, her consideration is too dependent on sixteenth-century Scottish historians, but she rejects Göller's argument (pp.148-52).

42. George Cary, The Medieval Alexander, edited by D.J.A. Ross (Cambridge, 1956), pp.209-18, 324-9, 358-68.

Knychthede.⁴³ It also calls to mind his overall presentation of Alexander in the Buik of King Alexander. Such was the reputation of Alexander in the Middle Ages (though not of course always as favourable as here) that such a similarity could well be sheer coincidence.⁴⁴ Yet it is interesting to note that Lancelot of the Laik and Hay's Alexander also have something in common in the inclusion and placing of large sections of advice in the course of their narratives. In Hay's romance, as we have seen, the advice passage occurs about mid-way through the work and takes the form of a long address by the philosopher Aristotle to Alexander, following broadly the model of the Secreta Secretorum. Lancelot of the Laik has not survived as a complete work, but the advice section occurs in the second Book, and at a highly important point;⁴⁵ it takes the form of an address by a learned clerk, Amytans, to king Arthur, interspersed with a small amount of dialogue between them and some relevant narrative action. The placing of the advice section and much of its content are of course derived from the source, but as successive studies have noted, the Scots poet develops the ideas there expounded at far greater length.⁴⁶ The material is recast in a way that, in places very obviously, more strongly recalls the Secreta Secretorum tradition. In so extending the advice element in his own work and structuring it in this way the Lancelot poet may thus be emulating Hay's treatment of advice in a romance based on a French original.⁴⁷

43. Johnston, note to l. 1835 (her numbering), p.292; Prose MS, II, pp.58-9.

44. See also Johnston's comments on the two works, pp.87-8.

45. The text breaks off at l. 3486. Johnston suggests that from the prologue it would seem that 'a substantial part is missing' (p.2), but this may not necessarily be the case. The poet's variable expansion and abbreviation makes it impossible to be confident either way.

46. See below, pp.167-73. The most useful account is in Johnston, pp.5-15, 47-60. For a detailed outline see Ross, pp.32-71.

47. In another genre he also had an obvious model in the lengthy speculum principis delivered by Genius to Amans in Book VII of Gower's Confessio Amantis.

It is not inconceivable, of course, given the undated nature of Lancelot that the influence is in fact the other way. We have seen that Hay was capable of being a highly innovative writer. To assess how innovative was the Lancelot poet we need to establish a fairly broad literary context.

We have already seen that in singling out the figure of Lancelot, the Scots poet was adopting a course hardly firmly established in English or Scots vernacular literature. Arthur, by comparison, was a most familiar figure in English and Scottish literature, though the presentation of him by Scottish writers was not always approving. While he could be portrayed as the renowned chivalric ruler (as he is cited in both the Bruce and the Wallace), there was also a consistent tradition of depicting him as the illegitimate ruler who had displaced the rightful heir, Modred, from the English throne. Some chronicle writings, such as The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part, were particularly hostile to Arthur. On the other hand, Fordun and Bower record his illegitimacy, but point out that he was best equipped to rule at the time. Indeed they even quote Geoffrey of Monmouth, in terms which have some relevance to Lancelot of the Laik, setting out an image of Arthur which is almost the opposite of that given by Amytans in his criticism:

Erat autem Arthurus quindecim annorum juvenis,
inauditae virtutis et largitatis: in quo
tantam gratiam innata bonitas praestiterat, ut
a cunctis fere populis amaretur. ⁴⁸

Though only a young man, his virtue and liberality ('solitum morem servans') win him the support of the people.

48. Joannis de Fordun Scotichronicon cum Supplementis et Continuatione Walteri Boweri, edited by Walter Goodall, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1759), I, p.129; The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth, edited by A. Griscom (1929), p.432.

Hostility to Arthur, which was more dominant in later Scottish writers from Boece onwards, had obvious nationalistic motivation. The author of Lancelot of the Laik may refer to Arthur's illegitimacy, but this comment was already present in his source, and had he wanted to give his work a particularly nationalistic tenor through the critical presentation of Arthur he could clearly have made more of this.⁴⁹ That he does not do so, and that he in fact also expands what the source has to say about Arthur's reformation, are indications of the significance of Arthur as king figure in the poem. Too great an identification with his English origins and unremitting criticism of him would have been contrary to the advisory purpose. Nevertheless, it has still been possible for one recent commentator on the poem to claim that 'The hostility of the author ... toward the British hero was of a peculiarly virulent kind' and that 'he has made of the king a bully and a tyrant of almost Caligulan proportions'.⁵⁰

However conventionalized the advice given to Arthur, its presence within a romance is itself distinctive. Malory's depiction of Arthur may reflect some of the heroism he associated with Henry V and would have liked to see in Edward IV, and other non-Arthurian romances, such as Havelok the Dane and Sir Orfeo, are concerned with the idea of good kingship, but they do not formulate their comment in a manner comparable with the treatment in Lancelot of the Laik. Johnston sees the advice as very much an integral part of the poem by arguing persuasively for its nature as a "social romance",⁵¹ like the

49. Alexander, 25-6.

50. C.S. Kelly, 'The Northern Arthur: A Study of Two Alliterative Romances in their Literary and Social Context' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1975), pp.277, 281; see also Rosemary Morris, The Character of Arthur in Medieval Literature, Arthurian Studies, 4 (Cambridge, 1982), p.60.

51. The term is from John Steven's Medieval Romance: Themes and Approaches (1973), p.66.

Knight's Tale, Franklin's Tale, or Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, in which 'courtesy is developed as an ideal which governs all relationships in a courtly society'.⁵² Thus, 'Arthur must be advised of his kingly duty in order to gain the love of his subjects and Lancelot, and Galiot will be required to make the ultimate gesture of courtesy in sacrificing his personal victory out of love for Lancelot.'⁵³ However, the extensive delineation of advice in this poem is still an unusual feature, particularly in comparison with the English romances cited above, non-Arthurian and Arthurian. In terms of the latter, Ackerman noted that, 'The late fifteenth-century Scots Lancelot of the Laik is the sole Arthurian work in the English [sic] language which refers directly to the contemporaneous political scene',⁵⁴ but, however striking, such an assessment neglects the French source and the Scottish traditions behind the poem. As we have noted, the political emphasis is not original. The prose Lancelot is itself distinguished in romance and Arthurian literature by what Elspeth Kennedy has described as its 'detailed discussion of political and social questions', in which it 'shows unexpectedly close affinities with feudal theory as represented by the law books', particularly in respect of kingship and vasselage.⁵⁵ The Scots poet was drawn to one of the most significant expositions of these issues in the prose romance. His reasons for being so may have some origin in the nature of earlier Scottish literature.

We have also already noted the link between Lancelot of the Laik and Sir Gilbert Hay's Buik of King Alexander, in which a lengthy advice section is

52. Johnston, pp.94-107 (102).

53. Ibid., p.101.

54. Robert Ackerman, 'The English Rimed and Prose Romances', in Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, A Collaborative History, edited by Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford, 1969), p.491.

55. Kennedy, 55.

similarly inserted within a romance. (It is tempting to speculate that Hay was himself, like so many authors, influenced by this feature of Lancelot do Lac, which he must surely have encountered during his twenty-four years in France.)⁵⁶ However, whereas in Hay's romance Alexander exemplifies both the perfect knight in battle and leadership and the perfect monarch in government, in Lancelot of the Laik these qualities are manifestly more divided between monarch and knights, with Lancelot as the principal focus of the latter. It is interesting too to compare the representation of monarchy here with some other Scottish romance-style works of a nationalistic nature. The Bruce and the Wallace may not offer much specific advice as such, but they present images of men who lead their people both in personal excellence and on the field. The Bruce is particularly distinctive in this context because he combines as king military prowess, knightly excellence, and good government. Although the work necessarily focuses on the former, Bruce is shown learning to judge men and to take decisions in a manner that involves many of the qualities of judgement and government that were advocated in the advice tradition.⁵⁷ Thus it may well be said of him that

Yis nobile king þat we off red
Mellyt all tyme with wit manheid, 58

56. Hay shows possible knowledge of Lancelot do Lac in his additions to the list of knightly armour in the Buke of Knychthede where he adds the poll-axe and attributes to it the 'takenyn that he is officer ryale; and that gif ony man disobeyis till his wand, that he law that maisse on thame to hald the kingis rychtis on fut' (Prose MS, II, p.46); in her description of the parts of knighthood, on which Ramon Lull's passage may well be based, the Lady of the Lake makes the point of the sword signify 'obedience, car totes genz doivent obeir au chevalier', Lancelot do Lac, edited by Elspeth Kennedy, 2 vols (Oxford, 1980), I, p.144.

57. For a very useful analysis of the Bruce as displaying exemplary kingship, Anne M. McKim, 'The Bruce: A Study of John Barbour's Heroic Ideal' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1981), Ch.4.

58. Bruce, VI, 361-2; quotation is from Barbour's Bruce, edited by Matthew P. McDiarmid and James A.C. Stevenson, 3 vols, STS, 4th Ser. 12,13,15 (Edinburgh, 1980-5).

It is the Bruce who speaks with stirring authority to his men at Bannockburn, and continually exhorts them by speech and example. He also becomes renowned for his government,

For better gouvernour yan he
Mycht in na countre fundyn be. 59

Indeed, in The Balletis of the Nine Nobles Bruce is also exalted as a Scots tenth noble worthy, to be added to the corpus already of course containing both Alexander and Arthur.⁶⁰

The Wallace presents in many respects a ruler manqué, a man exhibiting leadership on the field and carrying out the fundamental monarchical responsibility of defending the nation, who yet will not accept the throne, and who also memorably confronts and reproaches the rightful king. Though Lancelot is motivated by chivalric values rather than the nationalistic motives that inspire the Wallace,⁶¹ there is an essential similarity between the two Scots works in which they appear. Both record the effects of an absence (more literally in the Wallace) of true kingship, while celebrating the heroism of another figure, who although making no claims to the kingly title yet inevitably presents a contrasting figure with the failing monarch.⁶² The important difference, however, is that in Lancelot of the Laik we have a king portrayed who has it in him to be both fallible and exemplary. This, to whatever extent consciously, is surely one of the attractions of the Arthur-

59. Ibid., XX, 289-90.

60. Text in The Buik of Alexander, vol. I, edited by R.L. Graeme Ritchie, STS, New Ser. 17 (Edinburgh, 1921), pp.cxxxiv-cli.

61. Chivalry is also an aspect of the Wallace's character, however; see below, p. 197.

62. Cf. his function in the hart's tale in The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, Ch. 4, pp.220-31.

Galiot part of the prose Lancelot to the Scots poet. It is not necessary to posit any specific reference to the continuing conflict with England during the fifteenth century,⁶³ or a comparison of Arthur with any one Scottish king for the poem to have contemporary relevance. The Wallace is a poem specifically about the defence of the nation, possibly in part inspired by anxiety over James III's approaches towards the English in the late 1470s, but by no means dependent on this understanding for its political message.⁶⁴ Lancelot of the Laik, possibly the earlier work, has a bearing on the question of Scottish politics and kingship which is deliberately unspecific but still revealing in broader terms. As I have suggested, in a manner in some respects similar to the Wallace, the poem manifests an anxiety about the instability that lack of correct kingship can bring and the need for a strong monarchy, while at the same time reasserting the necessity for a limited kingship. The way in which those limitations are seen reveals how Scottish concepts of kingship in one area more closely resemble the French than the English tradition. As Jenny Wormald has shown, the stabilizing power which a strong personal monarchy had in Scotland was of as great (if not greater) importance as the support of an efficient administrative machine.⁶⁵ The English emphasis on the value of the king in parliament is very different from the Scots emphasis on the personal role of the king and his rule with counsellors.

63. Throughout the fifteenth century, Anglo-Scottish relations had 'a characteristic aspect of uncertain, but frequent and fairly continuous truces, frayed by maritime and Border outrage, and interspersed by warlike enterprises', C. Macrae, 'Scotland and the Wars of the Roses, the Diplomatic Relations of England and Scotland, 1435-1485' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1939), p.18; see also Norman Macdougall, James III: A Political Study (Edinburgh, 1982), pp.208-34.

64. Cf. Ch. 5, pp.220-3, 229-30.

65. Jennifer M. Brown (now Wormald), 'The Exercise of Power' in Brown, pp.33-65; Jenny Wormald, 'The House of Stewart and its Realm', History Today, 34 (September 1984), 21-7.

Moreover, while in emphasizing the divinely ordained nature of the king's role Scots writers were in tune with both English and French writers, including that of Lancelot do Lac, they were not in practice preparing for the sort of absolutism that was to come in France in particular. For successive historical accidents, in successive Scottish minorities had, as Wormald notes, the paradoxical effect of strengthening the monarchy and the Stewart succession in allowing the nobility a degree of autonomy that gave them a vested interest in preserving the existing system.⁶⁶ In the long term this reduced the potential to autocratic monarchy seen in France, Spain - and in England too. And indeed we can perhaps see an early awareness of this in literary tradition in Lancelot of the Laik itself, for it is on this question that the poet chooses to introduce a clearly original comment.⁶⁷

Thus it is that through the figure of Arthur the poet can suggest both the dangers that can arise through a corrupt or negligent king and the crucial central status that the king, 'the lynchpin of society',⁶⁸ was seen to have in fifteenth-century Scotland. These two conflicting views of Arthur, the renowned yet at times strangely passive monarch were, as we have noted, established in the source. Elspeth Kennedy sees this paradox as 'at the very heart of the first part of the prose Lancelot'.⁶⁹ Yet the excerption of these particular episodes by the Scots poet throws these features into sharp focus. Further, in the episodes he has selected comparisons which inevitably arise

66. Wormald, 'House of Stewart', 24; on different conceptions of kingship in England and France, Walter Ullmann, Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages (1961), Part II, Chs 3 and 4.

67. Below, pp.179-84.

68. Brown, 'The Exercise of Power', p.50.

69. Elspeth M. Kennedy, 'King Arthur in the First Part of the Prose Lancelot', in Medieval Miscellany Presented to Eugene Vinaver, edited by F. Whitehead, A.H. Diverres, and F.E. Sutcliffe (Manchester, 1965), pp.186-95 (187).

not only between Arthur and Lancelot but between Arthur and Galiot.⁷⁰ To a certain extent this is redressed in the course of the prose Lancelot by praise of Arthur, such as that by Claudas, and by reference to his involvement in campaigns outside this work but recounted in other chronicles or Arthurian romances.⁷¹ The Scots poet necessarily lacks much of this range and context. Moreover, as the poem goes on, the sense of Lancelot as the active manifestation of the force of right is heightened. Lancelot of the Laik would presumably have ended with Lancelot effecting the sort of peace between Arthur and Galiot that is seen in the prose Lancelot and referred to in the poem's prologue [ll. 403-8].⁷² The Scots poet may develop his source somewhat in relating how Arthur's reformation wins back the hearts of the people, yet there remains a contrast between the quite short account of this at the end of Book II and the lengthy portrayal of the knights, especially Lancelot, in inspiring the people by action and by speech. This was of course knightly obligation and a manifestation of the monarch's power through the deeds of those in his service. Yet in this particular poem the separation of activities in the exercise of government between monarch and knights is complicated by

70. The comparison is more pronounced still in the prose Lancelot, of which Kennedy writes, 'Galehot témoigne d'une noble résignation devant son destin, ce qui lui confère une grandeur tragique qu'Arthur n'atteint pas dans ce texte'; Elspeth Kennedy, 'Études sur le Lancelot en prose. I. Les allusions au conte Lancelot et à d'autres contes dans le Lancelot en prose. II. Le roi Arthur dans le Lancelot en prose', Romania, 105 (1984), 34-62 (61). It would seem very likely, however, that in the remainder of Lancelot of the Laik Galiot would have come closer to this sort of status.

71. For further discussion of these features in the prose Lancelot, Kennedy, 'King Arthur in the Prose Lancelot', pp.191-2; 'Études sur le Lancelot en prose', 46-62; and 'Feudal Links and the Role of Arthur within the Work', in Lancelot and the Grail, forthcoming.

72. Johnston argues that the theme of courtesy would have resulted in a climax with Guinevere's acceptance of the hero's love and service: 'courtesy thus establishes love and harmony at all levels, personal, social, and national' (p.101). This may be the aim, but the poet's response to the combination of the exemplary and the fallible in the persona of Arthur contrives to work somewhat against such a sense of achieved harmony.

the powerful and exemplary presence of Lancelot who, while fighting for Arthur, is also a figure with a history outside the court.⁷³ Any such comments on Lancelot of the Laik must be qualified by the fact that the poem remains unfinished, yet while, as we shall see, it is probable that Arthur had a somewhat more active role in the final stages of the poem, the events of the prose romance which the poet has chosen to follow celebrate Lancelot rather than Arthur, and make the latter's dependency on the former very clear. As in the Wallace, a central character must de facto (if less explicitly) be contrasted against the king. Thus in Lancelot of the Laik, whether deliberately or not, a positive affirmation of strong monarchy is somewhat undermined by the events of the poem.

The advice given to Arthur is delivered in the Scots poem by a clerk called Amytans. Unlike his French counterpart, identified only as a preudhomme, he does not come into the court as a mysterious figure, but as someone the king already knows and respects.⁷⁴ The description of him is in keeping with the portrayal of good counsellors in the advice tradition, or indeed of good kings:

Famus he was, and of gret excellence,
And rycht expert in al the vij. science;
Contemplatif and chast in gouernance, [1301-3]

The reworking of the advice on Secreta Secretorum lines also makes a

73. The fact that Arthur did not keep his obligation to his vassal Ban, Lancelot's father, who thus lost his kingdom, is referred to in ll. 1446-51 (cf. prologue, ll. 200-2, 215), but there is far less sense of the importance of this than in the source. What does emerge strongly from the Scots poem is how essentially separate Lancelot is from the court, despite the fact that it is so dependent upon him.

74. On the role of the preudhomme, and other such figures in the prose Lancelot and romance and chronicle tradition, see Kennedy, 'Feudal Links'.

comparison with Aristotle likely.⁷⁵ Amytans is obviously distinguished from the king's other counsellors who have earlier been seen as incapable of advising him properly on the significance of his dreams. Yet at the same time his role as a renowned counsellor acts out the necessity for kings to receive good advice - though also perhaps the rareness with which they get it. However, in the one-to-one format which the advice section has the focus remains very much on the king as the point from which all good government must begin. In fact Lancelot of the Laik gives a more unadulterated presentation of this fundamental point than most other works of the period. The advice given substantiates this.

The importance of the advice to princes section in Lancelot of the Laik is emphasized not just by its length but by the part it plays in the reorganization of the structure of the episode in which it occurs. For the Scots Lancelot's main structural differences from the French source are found in its first two Books. The division of the work into books is of course a feature introduced by the Scots poet, as one of the several characteristics that cast the work in the Chaucerian tradition.⁷⁶ This structure also imposes a more overtly ordered pattern upon the poem, making the narrative less unbroken and more obviously self-contained. Thus it is surely significant that while there are minor additions or omissions as regards the source throughout Lancelot of the Laik, after the revelation of the significance of Arthur's dream in Book II (the real end of the advice-giving scene), the narrative of the Scots version more closely adheres to the sequence of events in the French with far less reorganization and redistribution of material than characterizes its first 2,000 lines.

75. Noted by Johnston, p.8. In Gower's Confessio Amantis, VII, 27, Aristotle is described as 'Wys and expert in the sciences'.

76. Johnston, pp.65-75.

For up to that point the interlacing of the French prose Lancelot at this point in its narrative is deliberately undone, whether by one poet or two. After the opening part of the prologue, where the poem is said to be written at the instance of the God of Love in honour of a lady, Lancelot's childhood and upbringing, and his adventures up to his imprisonment by the Lady of Melyhalt are summarized. In the prose Lancelot the adventures that precede the imprisonment are part of a repeated movement back and forth from Arthur's court where the king is having difficulty getting his strange dreams interpreted to Lancelot's exploits away from the court. In the prologue of Lancelot of the Laik attention is thus concentrated on Lancelot. Moreover, despite his protestations that love is his motivation for writing the work, the poet of the prologue makes it clear that he has chosen to excerpt an episode that deals not only with Lancelot's love for Guinevere but also with his role in Arthur's wars. Indeed, it is this aspect that is put first, and described at some length, when the poet has finished his summary and arrived at the matter of the tale:

Bot of the weris that was scharp and strong,
 Richt perellouß, and hath enduryt long,
 Of Arthur In defending of his lond
 Frome galiot, sone of the fair gyonde,
 That brocht of knyghtis o pasing confluens;
 And how lancelot of arthuris hol defens
 And of the veris berith the renown;
 And how he be the wais of fortoune
 Tuex the two princis makith the accorde,
 Of al there mortall weris to concorde; [299-308]

It might be said that the extensive nature of the advice given to Arthur is hardly singled out here, but in contrast too the dealings with the subject of love are summarized in four lines:

And how that venus, siting hie abuf,
 Reuardith hyme of trauell in to loue,
 And makith hyme his ladice grace to have,
 And thankfully his seruice cane resave; [309-12]

The emphasis is thus given to Lancelot's crucial role in the 'richt perellus' wars that endanger Arthur and his land, both as the 'hol defens' and as the establisher of peace between the two rulers. While the criticism of Arthur that is to come is not hinted at, the figure who 'berith the renown' is presented as Lancelot rather than the king. Such has been the attention on Lancelot's nobility and prowess in the prologue that, despite the fact that we know him to be in the Lady of Melyhalt's prison ('Bot stil he mot rycht with the lady duell', 314), it is with his figure foregrounded in our minds that we turn to the opening of Book I. It is for this sort of reason that one may be hesitant to ascribe the prologue of Lancelot to a different writer for it may otherwise appear that the poet has thus quite skilfully enabled himself to concentrate upon matters concerning Arthur while establishing Lancelot as a powerful if absent presence. The contrasts between Lancelot and the monarch will thus be all the stronger.

Book I therefore opens with the spotlight entirely upon Arthur, and Lancelot does not himself appear until over three hundred lines later. The Book opens with a chanson d'aventure style opening, and the depiction of Arthur at Carlisle as,

... the worthi conqueroure
 Arthure, wich had of al this worlde the floure
 Of cheualry auerding to his crown,
 So pasing war his knyghtis in renoune, [343-6]

The equivalent passage in the French source comes earlier in the narrative before Lancelot has had to kill the Lady of Malohaut's knight, material already dealt with in the prologue to the Scots version. Not surprisingly, there is no comparable praise of Arthur in the prose Lancelot at this point. It is merely recorded that, 'Li rois Artus, ce dit li contes, avoit longuement sejourne a Cardueil en cel termine, et il n'i avenoit mie granment

d'aventures'.⁷⁷ This technique, of defining Arthur by reference to his conquests outside the range of the work is, as we have seen, one also used by the prose Lancelot. It is not greatly employed by the Scots poet, but its use here has the function of establishing him as a king worthy of Lancelot's service and of making his suddenly revealed fall of grace the more shocking. It also suggests his essential goodness, so that he may be seen to have fallen from a retrievable position.⁷⁸

There then follow the events of Arthur's two disturbing dreams, their partial interpretation by his reluctant clerks,⁷⁹ the speedy rebuttal of Galiot's knight threatening invasion, his rejection by Arthur,⁸⁰ and the coming of the Lady of Melyhalt's messenger to announce Galiot's conquests in the land, interspersed by two hunting outings by the king [ll. 363-686]. It is only as Arthur sets out for battle that the narrative switches to the imprisoned Lancelot. As we have noted, this is far more compressed than the source. At this stage we are aware of Lancelot only in absentia. One effect of this is that the sense of opposition between Arthur and Galiot is made starker, and the Scots poet here goes even further than his source in establishing Arthur's adversary as a man of worth and reputation comparable to even Arthur himself. Galiot's knight describes his master in terms highly resonant for the poem as a whole:

'Schir king, one to yow am y sende
Frome the worthiest that in world is kend,

77. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.260.

78. Cf. below, p.189.

79. Johnston notes that the Scottish poet gives the king's clerks a somewhat more favourable treatment than that of the source, 'which might indicate his own vocation' (p.15).

80. Cf. below, p.174.

That leuyth now of his tyme and age,
Of manhed, wisdom, and of hie curag,
Galiot, sone of the fare gyande; [547-51] 81

Here the French reads:

'Rois, a toi m'anvoie li plus preuzdom qui orandroit
vive de son aage - c'est Galehouz, li filz a la Jaiande.' 82

Galiot is thus ascribed particular knightly virtues in the Scots version. It is possible that the poet may have been prompted in this by a slightly later description in the prose Lancelot, where part of Galeguantin's description of Galehot to Arthur runs thus:

... si est li hom del monde plus amez de sa gent et cil qui plus
a conquis de son aage, car il est juvenes bachelers. Et dient cil
qui l'ont a acointe que c'est li plus gentis chevaliers et li
plus deboenneres do monde et toz li plus larges. 83

In the Scots the equivalent passage is:

Hyme lakid nocht that to a lord recordith.
For visare of his ag is non than hee,
And ful of larges and humylytee;
An hart he haith of pasing hie curag,
And is not xxiiij 3er of age,
And of his tyme mekil haith conquerit; [606-11]

But on both of these occasions the Scots poet adds the qualities of wisdom and courage in addition to the praise of gentility, humility, and largesse. The idea is thus conveyed that Arthur is matched against a knight and monarch who is said, not only by his own knight but by others, to be a paragon of monarchical virtues. Moreover, in combining the political virtue of wisdom with the

81. We should note that this repeats the description of Galiot in l. 302 of the prologue.

82. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.263.

83. Ibid., p.264.

more active qualities of 'courage' and 'manhede', the poet is evoking through Galiot a certain standard against which Arthur must be compared. As we have seen, the combination of wisdom and manhede was celebrated in the Bruce; nor was it seen as confined to kings, as Wallace's threnody to Graham illustrates.⁸⁴ Yet in Lancelot of the Laik, as far as it has survived, although Arthur may regain his wisdom, 'manhede' is far more a characteristic of his knights. From this point of view, Galiot - like Alexander - seems a more complete king. Likewise, his numerical superiority of troops also emphasizes the fact that he has the hearts of his people. Finally, in the prose Lancelot - and its prologue would suggest, in Lancelot of the Laik - the real reason for Arthur's ultimate victory (despite the renewed loyalty of his people) is because Galiot gives up his winning position out of admiration for Lancelot.⁸⁵

The effect of so much continuous attention upon Arthur in the first three hundred lines of Book I is to place him as a major figure firmly in the audience's thoughts. The introduction of Lancelot into the narrative when warfare with Galiot is imminent is therefore highly significant, as evinced by the Scots poet's addition of the scene in which Lancelot first appears, bewailing his imprisonment [ll. 687ff.]. As Johnston puts it, 'The introduction of the sorrowing hero at this crucial point underlines his potential importance for Arthur's struggle to maintain his kingdom'.⁸⁶ While there is increasing attention to Lancelot's love for Guinevere in the following scenes, our

84. Wallace, XI, ll. 566-83, e.g. 'In the was wyt, fredom and hardines' (571). Quotation is from Hary's Wallace, edited by Matthew P. McDiarmid, 2 vols, STS, 4th Ser. 4,5 (Edinburgh, 1968-9).

85. Kennedy, 'King Arthur in the prose Lancelot', pp.189-90; 'Etudes sur le Lancelot en prose', 61-2; 'Feudal Links'.

86. Johnston, p.18.

enforced attention to Arthur and the imperilled realm for the first part of the Book ensures that we view Lancelot's heroic deeds just as much in terms of the necessity to defend the kingdom. Indeed the restructuring of the material in Book I interacts skilfully with the advice argument that king and people are dependent on each other. In concentrating first on Arthur the ordering of events anticipates the argument that first and foremost the country must have a worthy monarch.

So, having unravelled the interlacing of the French source in the first part of the Book, the Scots poet restores some of it in relating the movement from Arthur's court to Lancelot and the lady of Melyhaut, though as Johnston has shown he takes considerable freedom with his source, generally playing up Lancelot's chivalric qualities and playing down the incidental detail more suited to the wider frame of reference of the French work.⁸⁷ The dependency of Arthur and his people on Lancelot is already very clear [ll. 1113-15]. With the opening of Book II the focus of attention returns once more to Arthur, thus creating an obvious parallel with the first Book, with the sense of danger to the realm now heightened. Towards the end of the first Book Arthur is shown to recognize the interdependence of his own fate and his people's, but not yet to perceive that he is the cause of the problem. The Scots poet makes him speak what is indirectly reported in the French source:⁸⁸

'For why my men fail³eis now at neid,
My-self, my londe, in perell and in dreide.' [1151-2]

The second Book opens with Arthur brooding anxiously. As he wanders about in the early day, Amytans arrives. Though modelled on the source, the advice section that follows is again expanded and restructured. It is one of the

87. Ibid., pp.17-30.

88. Cf. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.282.

more extended revisions of what survives of the whole poem.

In terms of the actual advice, the Scots poet omits virtually nothing in the source but, in addition ~~to~~ inserting more counsel, he treats the narrative of the passage in several different ways: changing and contracting the confession scene [ll. 1399-1453] so as to make it a less public occasion; bringing in Galiot's messengers at a different point [ll. 1543-89], so as to heighten the sense of providential wrath, and providential mercy after Arthur's confession; and reducing the amount of dialogue between Arthur and Amytans, thus causing the passage to more closely resemble a Secreta-type exposition.⁸⁹ Further, the Scots poet does not use the French advice section and then build his own additional advice on to it; rather, he inserts and expands throughout and then, at the conclusion of the advice passage in the prose Lancelot, where the king thanks the preudhomme and requests him to explain his dreams, the Scots poet introduces another 200 lines of advice, expanding ideas nascent in the source, but for all that his own invention. Some of his insertions in the preceding 400 lines of advice are also quite lengthy. As Johnson has pointed out, the reshaping of the advice takes the form of a movement through the virtues of wisdom, justice, truth, liberality and honour.⁹⁰ Overall, the poet's main additions are on the administration of justice, nature of largesse, and a disquisition on the dangers of flattery.

In the early parts of the advice section the poet heightens the sense of the providential wrath of God towards the unjust monarch, developing the idea of vengeful divine correction present in the source into both a more rhetorical and a more abstract statement on kingship; and one which was

89. Cf. Johnson, pp.8-11.

90. Ibid., p.53.

perhaps recalled by Sir David Lindsay in Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis.⁹¹ The Scots poet inserts several Biblical quotations to enhance the idea of a wrathful Old Testament God. In both French and Scots works the image of a country brought down by a ruler's neglect, where there is no justice and where widows and orphans are ill-treated, recalls Isaiah 1, and both cite Biblical references at this point.⁹² However, the Scots author also inserts the Biblical tenets, "'Wo be to hyme that is byleft alone,/He haith no help;" [Ecclesiastes 4.10] at ll. 1378-9; '... the begyning is of sapiens,/To dreid the lord and his magnificens;' [Proverbs 9.10: Psalms 111.10] at ll. 1401-2; and later [ll. 1483-94] cites the example of the fearfulness of the Jews, having disobeyed God. The poet then follows for some twenty-thirty lines the exposition of the French source on how the king's 'awn offens' is the reason for his people failing him, for he does not judge properly and fails to reward where it is due. But at this point the Scots poet then develops the idea of the king's tyrannical tendencies to 'auerice' and 'errogans', and he demands,

91. In Ane Satyre Divine Correction, the personification of the vengeful judgement of God, powerfully evoked in Lancelot of the Laik, delivers a lengthy speech beginning with a demand reminiscent of Lancelot's 'What is o prince', and continuing in terms very similar:

Quhat is ane King? nocht bot ane officiar,
To caus his Leiges liue in equitie,
And vnder God to be ane punischer
Of trespassours against his Maiestie.
Bot quhen the King dois liue in tyrannie,
Breakand Iustice for feare or affectioun,
Then is his Realme in weir and povertie, [1554 edn., ll. 1605-11]

(The Works of Sir David Lindsay, edited by Douglas Hamer, STS, 3rd Ser. 2). The fundamental difference between the two works, showing the emergence of a more qualified conception of kingship in the sixteenth century, is Lindsay's stress on the role of the king in council, more in keeping also with the arguments of Hay and De Regimine Principum.

92. Ll. 1365-7, citing Daniel; Lancelot do Lac, I, p.283, citing David.

What is o prince? quhat is o gouernoure
Withouten fame of worschip and honour? [1523-4]

and asks further whether he may sustain his realm in 'serwyng of his wrechit appetit' [1529] The answer is an adamant, 'Nay! that shal sone his hie estat consome' [1532]. Such kings are destroyed thus:

For oft it makith vther kingis by
To wer on them In trast of victory;
And oft als throw his peple is distroyth,
That fyndith them agrewit or anyth;
And god also oft with his awn swerd,
Punysith ther wysis one this erd. [1535-40]

As usual in advice to princes of this period, the fundamental idea is that bad monarchs will be brought down by an act of God. The argument here is similar to Ireland's that conquest is not legitimate 'be the law of men/bot throw þe gift of god' if a people are being punished for their misdemeanours.⁹³ In Lancelot of the Laik, however, it is the king who is primarily to blame. Yet despite the concentration on the monarch, the effect of these lines is also to set the advice within a far more generalized and abstracted context. Whereas in the French source the preudhomme in the second person: 'Cil te sont failli ... Cil te failient ... Ensin te failient ...',⁹⁴ the Scots poem has detached itself somewhat from the specific situation. The king is referred to in the third person - singular or plural. The Arthur-Galiot conflict has, temporarily, become moralized into a more generalized Secreta-like setting, with matching delivery. Attention is kept on the king, but application to monarchs other than as well as Arthur is made more of. As we shall see, this is characteristic of the Scots poem.

93. Meroure, III, Book VII, fol. 347^v.

94. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.286.

Following the confession scene and the disquisition against tyranny quoted above, the Scots poet at this point introduces the messengers offering truce from Galiot, in a clever reordering of events in the source which works to emphasize the prospects of recovery for Arthur's kingdom if he will act more in accord with God's wishes, as he has expressed the desire. In the source this episode occurs at the very end of the advice section, after the interpretation of Arthur's dreams. Thus, as Johnston suggests, the Scots poet also conveys Arthur's innate if obscured worth as a monarch by showing God's readiness to withhold this anger from him.⁹⁵ Indeed, the Scots poet inserts a passage immediately following the agreement on the truce in which Amytans accounts for it in terms of God's providential mercy [ll. 1590-6]. The effectiveness of good advice and the interaction of kingly intention and divine judgement are thus explicitly shown.

This passage is then followed by a further forty additional lines on justice, stressing the necessity for the monarch to serve God, appoint good ministers, and be vigilant in the overseeing of justice in his land [ll. 1599-1643]. The argument then for the next ten lines takes in a passage from the French source on how the king should make a circuit through all the chief towns in his country, ensuring that justice is dispensed rightly and giving audience to the poor [ll. 1645-54]. These lines are in fact sandwiched between the forty added lines that precede them and a further thirty thereafter dealing with the most manifestly contemporary advice in the poem: the responsibility of monarchs who come to the throne as minors to ensure in their years of maturity that those who have abused the law while during this time should be punished [ll. 1658-68]. This in turn is followed by much more

95. Johnston, p.15, noting also that this 'testifies to the veracity of Amytans' advice'.

conventional advice on mercy and truth, which is nevertheless material not found in the original. As we shall see below, the Scots poet follows the French quite closely on the details of the monarch's tour of justice, but the passage has now been recontextualized within a setting more concerned with the overseeing of justice. At the equivalent point in the source, the narrative quickly moves on to discussion of the dispensation of largesse.⁹⁶

The lines immediately preceding the prescription concerning the tour of justice are dealing with the idea that the king should enquire carefully into how judgement is given in court cases and punish those who do not carry out the law - the familiar preoccupation with the administration of justice in fifteenth-century Scotland. Indeed, though characteristically generalized, the poet's phrasing does here catch something of the tenor that we have seen in other works dealing with legal questions:

And als I will that it well oft be sen,
Richt to thi-self how thei thi low conten
And how the Right, and how the dom is went,
For to Inquer that yow be delygent.
And punys for, for o thing shal yow know,
The most trespas is to subuert the low,
So that yow be not in thar gilt accusit,
And frome the froit of blissit folk refusit. [1637-44]

The general import and expression of this passage are reminiscent of the section in Hay's Buke of the Governauce of Princis on 'How punicioun suld be maid eftir the cass and state of personis'.⁹⁷ Lancelot of the Laik has little to match the precision and range of Hay's approach, but the poet uses, for example, the idea of 'diligent enquiry' which we have already seen utilized by Hay in the style of parliamentary business, as in 'ger inquer diligently and

96. Cf. Lancelot do Lac, I, pp.286-7.

97. Prose MS, II, pp.98-100.

bot ony favor'.⁹⁸ Though his usage is less exact, the poet here is phrasing his material within this fashion to enhance the sense of contemporary relevance. There is another interesting example slightly earlier, when the king is urged to ensure that justice is done by 'he the Iug, that no man may susspek' [1633]. The very precise usage of 'iuge suspect' in Henryson's fable of 'The Sheep and the Dog' (c. 1470-80) is a very early example of a phrase only recorded in the vernacular in legal terminology in the early sixteenth century.⁹⁹ Thus, however generalized the points the Scots writer is making, he is delivering them with an eye to the use of legalistic terminology that is characteristic of other advice writers. It is in this legalistic context that he then moves into the description of the royal progress:

And pas yow shalt to euery chef toune,
 Throw-out the boundis of thi Regioun
 What yow sall be, that Iustice be Elyk
 With-out diuisione baith to pur and ryk.
 And that thi puple have awdiens
 With thar complantis, and also thi presens;
 For who his eris frome the puple stekith,
 And not his hond in ther support furth rekith,
 His dom sall be full grewous & ful hard,
 When he sal cry and he sal nocht be hard. [1645-54]

It is indisputable that this is very like the equivalent passage in the prose Lancelot:

Tu t'an iras an ton païs, si venras sejourner an totes les boenes viles, an l'une plus, en l'autre moins, selonc ce que l'une vaudra miauz de l'autre. Si garde que tu i soies tant que tu aies oïz et les droiz et les torz, et les granz et les petiz, car li povres hom sera assez plus liez, se droiz li done sa querele devant toi, que se il an avoit plus devant un autre, et dira par tot que tu meïsmes li as sa droiture desraïsniee. 100

98. APS, I, p.52/48; cf. Ch. 2, pp.96-7.

99. The Poems of Robert Henryson, edited by Denton Fox (Oxford, 1981), pp. 256-7 (note to l. 1190).

100. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.286.

Close the Scots and French passages certainly are, but in the Scots work the place of the argument within a larger statement on the king's control over justice gives it a somewhat different force. That the Scots poet chose to treat it in this way suggests that he may have been aware of its particularly neat appropriateness to contemporary Scotland. The 1458 parliament had urged James II to diligently apply himself to ensuring that justice was executed in the land,¹⁰¹ but a far closer correspondence in kind may be found in the parliament of 1473 under James III. During a parliament highly critical of the king's determination to leave the country and involve himself in warfare in France, James III was urged that instead he should improve the rule of justice in the country, and:

... tak part of labour upon his persone/and travel throw
his Realme/ ... put sic Justice & policy in his awne
realme/þat the brute & þe fame of him mycht pas in uþeris
contreis And þat he mycht optene the name of sa Just a
prince & sa vertewis/& sa wele Reuland his awne Realme
in Justice policy and peax/þat uþeris mycht tak exemple
of him 102

In discussing advice to princes literature I have frequently argued that it draws upon contemporary argument or legal and parliamentary phrasing. Yet in passages such as this one we can perhaps see contemporary parliamentary parlance itself drawing on the advice tradition. This is not of course to imply that the parliament was necessarily appropriating the Lancelot's advice, since the idea was a common one. It is interesting to note, for example, that the Liber Pluscardensis describes the practice of Alexander III thus:

Hoc enim de more habuit, ut omni anno cum comitiva maxima
per universas provincias regni sui peragere solebat, gentes

101. APS, II, p.53/40.

102. Ibid., II, p.104/6.

agnoscere, defectos corripere, et cum officiariis cujusque
provinciae omnes penitus defectus reformare. 103

The royal round of justice ayres was brought up again in one of the first parliaments of the reign of James IV, in 1488. The quasi-symbolic values of the monarch's presence at such events is particularly apparent here, since at that date James IV would have been a young prince of fifteen, although he assumed monarchical responsibility from fairly early on.¹⁰⁴ The 1488 parliament stated that:

It is avisit and Concludit anent the furth putting of
Justice throw all the Realme that our souerane lord sall
rid in proper persoun about to all his aieris And at his
Justice sall pas with his hienes to minister Justice as
beis thoicht expedient to him and his Counsale for the tyme 105

While according to Wormald 'Very early in the reign of James IV, it was clear that an active king once again ruled, as he dragged his councillors about the country on justice ayres',¹⁰⁶ it is still noticeable here that there is a distinction set out in the first and second sentences between the significance of the king's presence at justice ayres and the actual carrying-out of justice. The king's presence, authorizing his justice, has a symbolic as well as a

103. LP, I, p.81.

104. The importance of this sense of the king's assumption of full legal responsibility of justice, and how relatively early this happened, are well indicated in the note on the back of a crown charter in favour of Duncan Campbell of Glenorquay for lands in 'lochtay', dated 5 March 1491/2 in the Breadalbane muniments:

... the nev charter of lochtay quhen the kyng was in his
yowng was [sic] ag. Item I have a new gyft of it eftir
that the kyng was at his lachfull ag

SRO, Breadalbane muniments, GD 112/75/7.

105. APS, II, p.208/8.

106. Wormald, Court, Kirk and Community, pp.14-15.

practical significance. There is a similar effect in the use of the new legend appended to Scots unicorn coins from 1489, Exurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici eius [Psalm, 68.1].¹⁰⁷ It evokes an active, judicial, even war-like monarchy, with the king, to use Ireland's phrase, as 'Goddis loutenand', a role both real and emblematic. Indeed, the Scots rider coins, featured the equestrian figure of the monarch with drawn sword, symbolic of justice as well as battle, in his hand.¹⁰⁸ Yet the statement by the 1488 parliament also suggests an awareness of the necessity for a more realistic administrative approach to the king's participation in justice ayres. By 1491, the impracticability was being officially recognized in parliament. An act of that year shows that while it was still considered valuable that the king should go to justice ayres himself, it was acknowledged that when expedient he should send others.¹⁰⁹

The French work shares with its Scots descendant a sense of the almost mystical symbolism of the role of the king as God's appointed representative; and doubtless in France as in Scotland, this was rooted as much in real as in literary experience. On the face of it, the fact that the Scottish passage is so closely paralleled in the source would lead one, as Johnston suggests, to discount any likelihood of deliberate reference to specific events in Scotland here.¹¹⁰ Yet the possibility that the poet may have desired to indicate the applicability of the idea to his own environment cannot be discounted, given the new context in which the passage appears, and the lines that immediately follow it:

107. Ian Halley Stewart, The Scottish Coinage (1955), p.65.

108. Ibid., p.62.

109. APS, II, p.225/10.

110. Johnston, p.47.

But kingis when thei ben of tender ag,
 Y wil not say I trast thei ben excusit,
 Bot schortly thei sall be sar accusit,
 When so thei cum to yheris of Resone,
 If thei tak not full contrisioune.
 And pwny^β them that hath ther low mysgyit.
 That this is trouth it may not be denyit;
 For uther ways thei sal them not discharg, 111
 One estatis of ther realm that shold
 With-in his 3outh se that his low be hold [1658-68]

There is no passage that corresponds to this in the prose Lancelot, and it surely must be seen, as several commentators have suggested, as a deliberate comment on the succession of minorities in the second half of the fifteenth century in Scotland.¹¹² Johnston notes that the parliamentary proceedings of the 1490s show that there were moves for the monarch to bring to justice those who had been responsible for the murder of James III in 1488.¹¹³ However, the passage here seems to refer rather to the general administration of the law by those who should be ensuring its upkeep while the monarch is a child. This interpretation would also link back with the previous admonitions to the king on the overseeing of justice and the choice and appointment of officers and ministers. The reminder that 'The most trespas is to subuert the low' [1642] applies as much to the king's responsibility for those who carry out his laws as to his own rule. The principle here is similar to that given in Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome, written for the instruction of the young king James IV in 1490, that a king on reaching the years of maturity must take full

111. The lack of rhyme suggests a line is missing here. Skeat suggests 'Excep thei pwny^β them that have the charg'.

112. E.g. Johnston, p.49; R.J. Lyall, 'Politics and Poetry in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Scotland', SLJ 3 (1976), 5-29 (14); Vogel again associates this with the reign of James III, 'Secular Politics', 7.

113. Johnston, pp.49-50.

responsibility for his realm.¹¹⁴ And like that work, the comments here are written in such a way as to be presented as appropriate to all monarchs, though obviously particularly relevant to some. This is witnessed here by the references to 'kingis' in the plural - all too appropriate for fifteenth-century Scotland, but showing once again the tendency to move away from a precise identification with Arthur¹¹⁵ or indeed to any one Scottish king. Dealing with those who had abused their power during minorities was something for which all Scottish kings of the second half of the fifteenth century showed a ready aptitude, particularly perhaps James II, whose strong-handed dealings with the Douglasses were supported by similarly vehement legislation in the 1450s.¹¹⁶ As such then, it is possible to see the author of Lancelot of the Laik as writing his comments on the administration of justice with a sense of their relevance to a country in which the monarch was faced with the necessity to reassert the authority of the crown after a period of minority rule. The passage on royal tours of justice has been knitted into a setting which gives it not a precise but a somewhat more specific resonance; and it may even be that a sense of the particular relevance of the idea - say in the 1450s - prompted the author to make his comments on minorities, and was seen in the late 1480s to have renewed significance.¹¹⁷

114. Thus Ireland will argue that the king's father and the law should provide in the event of a minority for people 'quha suld have the governaunce of him and the realme/quhil he cum to eild and wisdome' after which he is very much in charge (Meroure, III, Book VII, fols. 348^v-9^r).

115. Cf. Johnston: 'Although in romance Arthur is to some extent ageless, he cannot here be regarded as youthful, for he was occupied in subduing his barons at the time when Lancelot was still a baby.' (p.49) Yet this judgement requires an acquaintance beyond Lancelot of the Laik with the French romance, which not all members of a Scottish audience would necessarily have had.

116. E.g. APS, II, pp.35/3-6; 50/18; 52/39-40.

117. See below, p.200. There is an interesting parallel with the idea of a king being less responsible in his youth, but obliged to judge properly when he comes to maturity, in the earlier version of Gower's Vox Clamantis, Book VII, ll. 557-70, Latin Works, edited by G.C. Macaulay (Oxford, 1902).

After this, by far his most outspoken statement in the work, the poet inserts ten additional lines of classic Secreta advice, on mercy, and the necessity for a king to keep his word and be 'of trowth ... the werray lyght' [1669-79]. It is almost as if in so obviously restating the orthodoxy he is trying to cover his tracks a little, to suggest that he is merely reiterating established doctrine over the minorities question by inserting it amidst this material.¹¹⁸

For the next hundred lines or so (that is, until the conclusion of the equivalent advice passage in the source), the Scots follows the French text quite closely on the subjects of liberality and honour, making relatively few additions. The arguments that the king should distribute largesse to great and small, and take the advice of a mature or experienced counsellor in each city he visits are repeated, as is the material on the nature of the gifts that should be given to different ranks, and the obligation of the queen to dispense gifts also. And the final admonition that such gifts must be given with an open heart, for then the recipient will put his goods, heart and service at the king's disposal, also echoes the French. The Scots poet does, however, add one admonition, that in dealing with his subjects the king should not be

... our fameliar,
For, as the most philosephur can duclar,
To mych to oyβ familiaritee
Contempnyng bryngith one to hie dugre; [1699-1702]

The 'most philosephur' probably implies Aristotle, and the idea of establishing measure in liberality and in dealings with subjects was of course an established part of the tradition.¹¹⁹ Again the poet manifests his attention

118. For parallels, see Johnston, p.55.

119. See below, p.187.

to orthodoxy in advice, perhaps feeling that the particularly extended treatment of largesse in his source needed some counterbalancing. This attention to kingly self-containment is also witnessed in his reduction of the public nature of Arthur's display of contrition and in his later additional passages on the dangers of flattery.

After reaching the conclusion of the advice section in the French,¹²⁰ (at l. 1776) the poet takes his own version further in a manner that reiterates and develops ideas already therein or already introduced in the Scots, that is, the questions of virtue, reputation, liberality and justice, rounded off by a more extended treatment of flattery. Though he goes beyond his source, the poet does not venture much beyond the thematic perimeters set out there, and the manner in which he expresses the advice is characteristically generalized. Indeed, though the address to Arthur is broadly kept in view, the phrasing of the Scots poet's material is frequently less personal, moving towards an effect which suggests far more its appropriateness to all rulers than to any one especially. Though the king is accused of degrading 'al thyne hie dugree' [1793] and flattery is later said to be taking over in the present time [ll. 1969 and 1972], this is not the characteristic focus. Until the conclusion of the section, the advice is frequently given to a monarch described in the third person singular, and on two occasions in the second person plural: 'ȝhe, wich that princes ben' [1814] and 'ȝhe, the wich that kingis ben' [1818]. The tone here is similar to that used in The Contemplacioun of Synnaris, for example, where the range of reference is also wide-ranging.¹²¹

120. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.289. It is not within the province of this chapter to discuss the interpretation of Arthur's dreams, which in the Scots poem shows in any event more stylistic difference than great difference in subject matter. Cf. Johnston, pp.11-14.

121. Cf. Ch. 6, p.280.

Nor is there so great a sense that criticism is being levelled as accusation. The tone is one of warning against potential abuses rather than cataloguing and demanding reformation.

This is by no means to say that the advice given does not bear on Arthur's situation, and it is quite possible to discern glances in that direction in what the poet chooses to include.¹²² In the discussion he gives a dramatic and quite unusual (in terms of advice material) depiction of the response of the people to the departure of an illiberal king:

The puple saith and demyth thus of thee,
'Now is he gone, a werray vrech was hee,
And he the wich that is our king and lord
Boith wertew haith & larges in accorde;
Welcum be he!' and so the puple soundith. [1807-11]¹²³

Similarly, liberality is linked to 'the victory of kingis' [1826], and celebrated in Alexander, whose reputation is sufficient to bring him victory without the necessity for battle [ll. 1837-55]. Alexander is significant too, as we have seen, for possessing as a ruler not only 'larges' and 'humilitee' but 'manhed' [1849]. As the only monarch cited by name in the advice section he stands out yet further, but the poet does not pursue a comparison, and moves on to restate the necessity for kings to use a largesse 'A-myd standing of the vicis two,/Prodegalitee and awerice also.' [1865-6].¹²⁴ Ways of dispensing largesse and avoiding oppression in justice are then given, followed by a renewed urging of the accountability of the king to God. His personal

122. Cf. Göller, p.135.

123. This is quite strikingly unusual. Johnston cites Hoccleve's Regement of Princes, ll. 2878-84 as a parallel, but this is praise for a departed ruler rather than reproach.

124. Though proverbial, note the very similar phrasing in Hay's Buke of the Governauce of Princis, '... larges, quhilk is the myddis betwix prodigalitee and avarice' (Prose MS, II, p.85).

responsibility is dwelt on yet again, with the point reiterated that the king should exercise justice precisely because as God's appointed representative he is strictly answerable to no one but God, as by extension the people are answerable to him:

For he forsuth haith ifyne hyme the wond
To Iustefy and Reull in pece his lond,
The puple all submytit to his cure;
And he a³an one to no creatur
Save only shall vn to his gode obey. [1891-4]

This is the point that Ireland too continually makes 'bat his power and regiment he haildis of god Imediatly/and bat nane is above him in this mortall world in the temporale governaunce and regimen'.¹²⁵ And so the Lancelot poet goes on to claim that God 'sal strek his mychty hond' on kings who fail in justice 'Not euery day, bot shal at onys fall/On hyme, mayhap, and his succescione all' [1901-2, cf. also ll. 1889-90]. As we shall see, this is an issue which for Ireland assumes considerably greater significance.¹²⁶ This is the important difference between a 'popular' work like Lancelot of the Laik and a more theoretically concerned one, like the Meroure.

Having thus emphasized the question of kingly accountability, the poet ties it yet once more into the question of discretion in giving and taking:

The most wertew, the gret Intellegens,
The blessit tokyne of wysdom and prudens,
Is^β, in o king, for to restren his honde
Frome his pupleis Riches & ther lond. [1905-8]

This was received opinion in advice thought and the sentiments here are very akin (as is much of the poet's argument on this subject) to Hay's comments in

125. Meroure, III, Book VII, fol. 341^r.

126. Cf. Ch. 8, pp.437-43.

the Buke of the Governauce of Princis:

... quhen a king absteynis him to tak the fynauce and
the richness of his people fra thame, that is a takyn
that the king is full of vertu of justice and grete¹²⁷
bountee and cumys of hie perfectioun and of wisdome.

Yet the Lancelot poet gives the idea of kingly restraint especial prominence; it is the 'most vertew'. Once more the question of divine judgement is important here. As what is often called 'fool largesse' can lead to the destruction of a realm, so can monarchical acquisitiveness. In a work that places such particular emphasis on conspicuous generosity, it is quite appropriate that the worst manifestation of vice in a king should be graspingness towards his people's goods - and the most dangerous, for it will make him lose their love. Yet it is also interesting to see this concern with restraint in the context of R.H. Bloch's argument that to European rulers and magnates of the Middle Ages the figure of Arthur in the romances may in part have been intended to function as an exemplary figure of restraint, a corrective mirror to acquisitive rulers, as 'an ideal image of a feudal king who maintains traditional rights and obeys customary laws, but who does not seek to extend his own prerogative or power'.¹²⁸ While this may seem rather remote from the critical view of Arthur offered in the advice section, it coalesces with the picture of the reformed Arthur given at the end of Book II, where the Scots poet is far more specific than his French source about the manner in which, to quote the latter: 'atornent tuit lor cuers au roi par la grant debonairete que il lor mostre':¹²⁹

127. Prose MS, II, p.83. This is even closer than the example Johnston gives from p.84.

128. R. Howard Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law (1977), p.220.

129. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.304.

He kepit the lore of maister amyntans
In ryghtwysnes, In festing and larges,

. . .
He rakith not of riches nor tressour,
Bot to dispend one worschip & honour;
He ifith riches, he ifith lond and rent,
He cherissyth them with wordis eloquent,
So that thei can them vtraly propone
In his seruice thar lyves to dispone:

. . .
Thus hath the king non vthir besynes
Bot cherising of knyghtis and large^β,
To make hyme-self of honour be commend; [2446-7, 2457-62, 2467-9]

Generosity and lack of acquisitiveness are indicative here of one concerned to respect his fellow men and to inspire their service; and as we have seen the potential for exemplariness is certainly inherent in the poem and in Arthur himself. What is also noticeable about this survey of Arthur's reformation, however, is the lack of attention given to any display of the exercise of justice in the land. Arthur is initially described as 'walkyng ... furth in to his Regiounis,/And soiornt in his ceteis and his townis,/As he that had of visdome sufficyans.' [2443-5], but thereafter it is his largesse that is dwelt upon. In part this is in keeping with the chivalric tenor of the romance and the emphasis on largesse in the source; in part, too, it also reflects that deliberate thematic principle in the Lancelot do Lac which in effect enables Arthur to be criticized by the preudhomme for lacking just those sorts of qualities which he is earlier said by Claudas to possess.¹³⁰ But in the very act of not referring extensively to justice at this point the Scots poet is perhaps also acknowledging the wider application of the advice he has included. This is similarly applicable to the denunciation of flattery with which his advice section concludes.

The issue of flattery is obviously related to the theme of largesse, since it is flatterers in a king's court who divert to themselves the gifts

130. See above, p.165.

that should reward honest servants of the monarch, and thus 'al the kingis larges fongith' [1922]. Moreover, flattery is a vice which may imperil the nation by undermining the rule of law: a flatterer 'the law and puple boith distroyith' [1932]. The poet sets out three things which make flatterers successful with kings; the first two are 'blyndit Ignorans' or viciousness in the king [ll. 1933-63] himself: the third is interestingly described thus:

The thrid, is the ilk schrewit harrmfu wice,
Wich makith o king within hyme-self so nyce,
That al thar flattry and ther gilt he knowith
In to his wit, and 3hit he hyme with-drowith
Them to repref, and of ther vicis he wot;
And this It is wich that dissemblyng hot, [1945-50]

The state of mind described here, in which a king gives an ear to those he knows to be false without rebuking them is similar to that described by the king in The Thre Prestis of Peblis who will incline to deceitful tales about his wife even though he knows them to be untrue.¹³¹ The poet's discussion of flattery is, as Johnston has decisively shown, generally too conventional to permit the identification with James III and his flatterers made by such critics as Skeat and Vogel.¹³² The similarity of idea in Lancelot of the Laik and The Thre Prestis of Peblis demonstrates a persistent anxiety in Scottish advice writing that kings should be strong enough to distance themselves from such influences. The reason why they should do so - the nature of the power invested in them - is yet again stressed in a passage which follows that quoted above:

That in no way accordith for o king.
Is he not set abuf apone his Ringne,
As souerane his puple for to lede?
Whi schuld he spare, or quhom of schuld he dred
To say the treuth, as he of Right is hold? [1951-5]

131. Cf. Ch. 7, pp.348-9.

132. Johnston, p.59.

This insistence on the power invested in the king is then coupled once more with the admonition that a king should 'pwnice them quhar pwnysing Requeris' and equally give rewards where they are due [1960-8], with the result that flattery will recede and virtue, now exiled, return to the court, as justice is restored [ll. 1969-76]. The simplicity of such equations, the lack of attempt at any deep consideration of the reform of justice, links Lancelot of the Laik once more with The Talis of the Fyve Bestes and The Thre Prestis of Peblis, but its virtually unswerving concentration on the king exceeds even those works. It would seem likely that the poet chose to include the flattery section not only because such criticism was an established part of the advice canon but because it worked in well with his particular emphasis on strong personal monarchy.

Amytans concludes his advice by reemphasizing the interrelation of king and people:

Thus is o king stud lyk his awn degree,
Wertwis and wys than shuld his puple bee, [1977-8]

And further, the king's wisdom is seen to depend upon the exercise of his will:

And so thus, sir, It stant apone thi will
For to omend thi puple, or to spill; [1989-90]

In arguing that the convergence of will and wisdom in a king ensures the stability of a realm the Lancelot poet is restating the orthodox in a conclusion that characteristically resists being prescriptive in any detailed way. It is affirming the fundamental integrity of a kingship in which the monarch strikes the classic mean between being 'not oure fameliare' and yet sufficiently conspicuous to confirm his people's sense of his divinely established authority.

In the rest of the poem, however, such an ideal of kingship does not so clearly emerge. Book III opens with the end of the truce approaching. The strengthened loyalty of Arthur's people to him is apparent in the speech that Gawain makes to his fellowmen, emphasizing the interdependence of king and people, 'For we but hyme no thing may efschef/And he but ws in honore well may lef;' [2513-14]. He thus urges them 'in the feld with hyme for til endur,/Of lyf and deth and tak our aduentur' [2519-20]. This is based on, though expanding, a similar speech by Gauvain in Lancelot do Lac.¹³³ Yet though Gawain may encourage the men to endure with Arthur in the field, the king does not go into battle himself at this point,¹³⁴ for in both French and Scots Gawain in fact counsels his uncle not to bear arms because Galiot will not be doing so. It may be said that this is justification enough for Arthur's necessary passiveness in the third Book, and that his knights are effectively representing him in battle. Yet a number of factors combine to make this less than satisfactory resolution: as we shall see, they accord with the source to varying degrees.

Firstly, Arthur's absence from the field is a response to Galiot rather than his own initiation, giving Galiot a quality of decisive mastery which we have already seen suggested, and to which we shall return. Secondly, though Gawain in speech and in action makes it clear that he performs (and encourages his men to do so) for the honour of his king and country, Lancelot, on whom Arthur is ultimately dependent, is motivated from rather different causes. The

133. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.304; here, though, the idea of a quest is also at issue.

134. See below, p.197. The question as to whether monarchs should go into battle themselves was much debated in the later Middle Ages: Ernst Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies (Princeton, 1957), pp.232-72. The death of James IV at Flodden well illustrated the dangers. See also Ranald Nicholson, Scotland, the Later Middle Ages, The Edinburgh History of Scotland, 2 (Edinburgh, 1974), p.494.

reasons are the same in the French and the Scots texts: as Elspeth Kennedy puts it, he may be an agent of the divine, but 'son inspiration conscience soit son amour pour Guenievre'.¹³⁵ Moreover, the Scots poet chooses to make this quite explicit in a major speech of self-reflection which he gives to Lancelot, unparalleled in the French source [ll. 3270-88]. Thus he does not directly see defence of the kingdom as a prime reason for his participation; moreover, the woman he serves is of course the wife of Arthur. The central paradox in the figure of Lancelot, in the words of Malory's Ector 'the trewest lover, of a synful man, that ever loved woman, and ... the kyndest man that ever strake wyth swerde',¹³⁶ is well apparent here, and from an abstract point of view necessarily complicates the fact that he is Arthur's knight on the field. This is heightened by Gawain's speech to the Queen, urging her to respond more favourably to the Black Knight (Lancelot). Though, based on a speech in the French source, the Scots poet has again recast it somewhat so that in places it deliberately recalls Amytans' advice to Arthur:

For well it oucht o prince or o king
 Til honore and til cheriþ in al thing
 O worthi man, that is in knyghted prewit.

. . .
 With his manhed for helping of the king,
 We sal have cauþ to dred in to no thing.
 Our folk of hyme thai sal sich comfort tak, [2995-7, 3009-11]

This quality of 'manhed' is what inspires Galiot, the other figure with whom Arthur must inevitably be compared, to concede victory at the moment when he has Arthur's troops at the point of defeat. Moreover, it is noticeable, too, in the Scots as in the French that while Galiot does intervene to rally his

135. Kennedy, 'Études sur le Lancelot en prose', 61. Johnston, pp.16-30, gives a detailed account of how the Scots poet adapts the source in presenting this.

136. The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, vol. II, edited by Eugene Vinaver (Oxford, 1967), p.1259.

men and take to the field, Arthur's dispirited troops are not similarly encouraged by their king. As they despair, it is Lancelot who assumes the hortatory role. His actions have previously encouraged them, now his words have a similar function.

The speech that he delivers is a vastly expanded version of the sentiments in the source at this point. In the French work, his address to the assembled ranks is short and to the point:

'Seignor, vos iestes tuit ami lo roi. Ge ne vos sai
nomer, mes mout iestes tenuz a preuzdome. Or i parra
qui ert a droit loez.' 137

In the Scots the speech is of twenty-eight lines. It opens with a restatement of important values from the advice section, that the people's valour will ensure that their reputation, like their rulers, will be known throughout the world:

'What that 3e ar I knaw not yhour estat,
Bot of manhed and worschip, well I wat,
Out throuch this warld yhe aw to be commedit, [3445-7]

And he exhorts them to take courage and continue in this manner:

Quharfor yhour strenth, yhour curag, & yhovr mycht
Yhe occupye in to so manly wyß,
That the worschip of knychthed & empryß
That yhe have wonyng, and ye gret renown
Be not ylost, be not ylaid doune. [3456-60]

The relationship of king and people is nowhere better illustrated, as the terms of 'worschip' and 'renown' have already been used to evoke successful monarchy [e.g. ll. 1841-3]. There are obvious tonal echoes of Amytans' address as well, and Lancelot indeed offers his own advice to the people:

137. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.319.

And to yhow al my consell is, tharfore,
With manly curag, but radour, yhe pretend
To met tham scharply at the speris end, [3464-6]

The tenor here is very much like that of the Bruce to his men at Bannockburn:

... ȝour gret manheid
ȝour worschip and ȝour douchti deid
And off þe ioy þat we abid
Giff þat ws fall as weill may tid
Hap to wencus þis gret battaill
In ȝour handys with-out faile
ȝe ber honour price and riches
Fredome welth and blythnes
Gyff ȝe contene ȝow manlely 138

The people reply to Lancelot 'with o woys' [3473] in a passage not corresponding in the French:

... 'sir knyght
Apone yhour manhed, and yhour gret mycht,
We sal abid, for no man shall eschef
Frome yhow this day, his manhed for to pref [3473-6]

This may in fact borrow something from an earlier boast by Sir Kay in both French and Scots,¹³⁹ but it is also again in keeping with the spirit of the response of the king's supporters in the Bruce:

And with a woce þan gan þai cry,
'[Gud] king forowtyn mar delay
To-morne alsone as ȝe se day
Ordane ȝow hale for þe bataill,
For doute off dede we sall nocht fail
Na na payn sall refusyt be
Quhill we haiff maid our cowntre fre.' 140

The Bruce defines his people's service, and they respond, more precisely in terms of the country's freedom, but to the Lancelot poet proof of 'manhede' is

138. Bruce, XII, 269-75.

139. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.327; Lancelot of the Laik, ll. 3207-20.

140. Bruce, XII, 200-6.

clearly also part of the defence of the nation. Wallace's dedication to the defence of Scotland is defined in similar terms:

Thus his haill mynd, manheid and hye curage,
Was playnly set to wyn out off bondage
Scotland agayn, fra payn and felloun sor. 141

The Lancelot poet makes less of the idea of freedom for Arthur's people are not - yet - enslaved; they are fighting to defend themselves from conquest. As Gawain's earlier speech makes clear, if the king is lost 'our honoure we tyne, & ek our land' [2516]. Lancelot's speech is thus delivered as a last-ditch rallying of the men, which, though obviously in the tradition of Livy's generals, Roland, or the Bishop of Caerleon in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia, also strikes a sufficiently Scottish chord to draw attention to the fact that it is not spoken by the king. There is indeed a slight irony in the attribution of this lengthy speech to Lancelot, since the poet's treatment of Arthur's response to Galiot's messenger in Book I has shown him well capable in ll. 561-4 of responding with a defence of the country's freedom that recalls the nationalistic romances and epics or the response of the citizens of Lapsat in The Talis of the Fyve Bestes.¹⁴² Moreover, in the account of Arthur's reform at the end of Book II, it is said that he cherishes his people not only with his deeds but 'with wordis eloquent' [ll. 2460, 2464].

Arthur is however given one of the eulogistic speeches added by the Scots poet in a characteristic insertion. Praise of 'manhede' is a recurring feature here. Thus Arthur laments Gawain, whom he believes to be dying:

Fare well of manhed al the gret curage,
Yow flour of armys and of vassolage, [2723-4]

141. Wallace, XII, 301-3.

142. Cf. Ch. 4, p.238.

Lancelot, however, bewails him thus:

In hyme was manhed, curtessy, and trouth,
Besy trawell In knychthed, ay but sleuth,
Humilyte, gentrice, and cwrag. [275~~6~~-7]

We might note that even here the poet has given Lancelot the better speech, and one that recalls Wallace's tribute to Graham. The language is very similar to that used to evoke perfect kingship in Lancelot of the Laik. There is more stress on the chivalric values of 'curtessy', 'trouth', and 'humilyte', along with 'manhed' and 'curag', than on the qualities of 'wisdome' and 'rychtwysnes'. But as we have noted, the only kings seen or said to combine the two groups of qualities are Alexander and Galiot. Arthur may attribute knightly prowess to others, but in what has survived of Lancelot of the Laik he does not display it himself. It is probable of course that in the remainder of the poem he did assume a more active role. In the prose Lancelot Arthur takes to the field himself in the final battle with Galiot, but the fact remains that Galiot's surrender is prompted by his devotion to Lancelot rather than Arthur's supremacy; the king believes himself to be at the point of defeat.¹⁴³

Thus while it may be said that at the end of Book II Arthur is seen to have reacquired the kingly qualities of wisdom, justice, largesse, and so forth, which in Book III his knights complement on the field with displays of 'manhede', the events of the poem as presented by the Scots author contrive to diffuse such a unified sense. As the third Book progresses, Arthur is more and more eclipsed by the figure of Lancelot. While this was inherent in the source, the poet shows little concern to recast it by making more of the figure of Arthur in terms of his own work, as he had done for reasons of criticism in Books I and II. The poem celebrates Lancelot the knight, but in

143. Cf. Lancelot do Lac, I, p.327.

its evocation of the spirit of the Bruce and (perhaps) the Wallace and its expansion of the advice to princes element, it reveals a concern for kingship and for Scots kingship which would not have been so conspicuous in a straightforward retelling of the French source.

Elsbeth Kennedy has made the point concerning the depiction of Arthur in the prose Lancelot that 'Les éclairages différents portés sur Arthur peuvent .. à un autre niveau, correspondre à des tensions sociales et politiques analogues dans la société de l'époque'.¹⁴⁴ The same may also be said of the relation of the roles of Arthur and Lancelot (and to a lesser extent Galiot) in Lancelot of the Laik in fifteenth-century Scotland. While forcefully asserting the need for a strong and just monarchy, the poem also reveals a sense of the potential fragility of the institution. The extent to which the poet consciously intended to highlight this is, as I have indicated, debatable, but both the choice of this particular episode and its treatment show an ideal asserted but presented in a qualified way reflecting an anxiety about the general condition of monarchy at the time. Scottish historians often make the point that despite the many minorities and events such as the assassination of James III in 1488 a strict line of Stewart inheritance was maintained in Scotland in the fifteenth century, making an obvious contrast with the disorder and usurpation taking place in England during the Wars of the Roses. And as we have noted, the king did have an important stabilizing force in the realm, not least in controlling factions of the nobility who might rise against each other and indeed against him. The monarchy was stronger than it might in the abstract seem, u Yet we must remember that to advice writers this inherent stability may not have been so apparent. It is thus that we find authors such as the Lancelot poet concerned to remind the king of the limited

144. Kennedy, 'Études sur le Lancelot en prose', 62.

nature of his rule, but also to encourage (as the parliamentary records show), the important exemplary nature of monarchy, and the necessity for a visibly powerful king.

There is no great evidence that Lancelot of the Laik was a well-known work in late medieval Scotland. It was not included in the Asloan MS with Rauf Coilgear or Golagros and Gawane, nor with the latter in the Chepman and Myllar prints. Yet, if Lyall's theory is correct, it was thought interesting enough to be reworked with a prologue some length of time after its initial composition. Its existence in booklet form in a composite MS also suggests some degree of independent circulation. And its recopying in the late 1480s is, as we have noted, of considerable interest in the light of the number of other advice pieces recopied or written around this date. However, this particular boom in MS production may of course reflect a more general literary interest and demand for texts - or indeed that more MSS have tended to survive from this period. Further analysis of the linguistic and textual history of Lancelot of the Laik should go some way towards clarifying these questions. But we can at least say that the poem, along with The Talis of the Fyve Bestes and The Thre Prestis of Peblis (and indeed Hay's romance) is in itself evidence that advice to princes enjoyed a certain popularity in Scotland in genres of a less sophisticated, more popular kind. In Lancelot of the Laik it is the necessity for strong personal kingship that emerges unequivocally from the advice section of the poem and, it may be argued, indirectly from its action. More explicit is the comment on minority rule, manifest testimony that the poet saw some contemporary relevance in his work. But the very conventionality of much of the advice, expressed at some length, is itself worthy of consideration. The equation between the felt need for a stable continuous monarchy, which we shall see constantly recurring in this study, and the reiteration of established, traditional advice, should not be overlooked.

Chapter 4

The Talis of the Fyve Bestes

Scottish advice to princes literature comes in many shapes and forms and The Talis of the Fyve Bestes is certainly one of the most distinctively shaped examples. Animal life is by no means uncommon in Scottish advice literature as Holland's howlet, Henryson's lion and mouse, and Lindsay's papyngo well testify, but this particular framework where the animals themselves tell stories is unusual both in the advice canon and in medieval literature as a whole. A complete copy of the poem has not survived, but from what remains in the existing witness, the Asloan MS,¹ we can deduce that King Lion is holding some sort of court during which four noble, indeed 'Ryall', counsellors - the horse, hart, unicorn, and boar - come to offer advice which they give in the form of tales. The fifth beast, a wolf, apparently garbed as a Franciscan ('his habit was me thocht of cottoun gray' [370]) then attempts to deceive the monarch by literally tale-telling, with the aim of gaining status for himself and his allies in the court by effectively encouraging the king to destroy his present counsellors. But the king takes advice from his counsellors, detects the deception and exiles the wolf. The four counselling beasts and the wolf are then swiftly given allegorical significance by the poet as the four cardinal virtues and the vice of covetousness, which should be respectively espoused and eschewed and so the poem concludes. Like many Scottish advice works, it is only of late beginning to receive attention for its literary merit and significance.²

1. The poem has been most recently edited by Gregory Kratzmann, 'Colkelbie Sow' and 'The Talis of the Fyve Bestes', Garland Medieval Texts 6 (1983), but I quote from the Asloan Manuscript, edited by W.A. Craigie, 2 vols, STS, 2nd Ser. 14, 16 (1923-5), vol II. The Talis of the Fyve Bestes is also printed in Select Remains of the Ancient Popular and Romance Poetry of Scotland, re-edited by John Small (Edinburgh, 1885). The unicorn's tale is included in The Oxford Book of Late Medieval Verse and Prose, edited by Douglas Gray (Oxford, 1985), pp.156-9.

2. Particularly in the introduction to Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes' (especially here pp.31-3) and by R.J. Lyall, 'Narrative Technique and Moral Purpose in Middle Scots Poetry' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1979), pp.47-58. But see the still negative comments by Felicity Riddy, reviewing Kratzmann's edition in SLJ, Supplement 20 (1984), 10-11.

The animal parliament or court is of course a familiar feature in medieval literature. An important source for many subsequent court scenes was Branch 1 of the Roman de Renart, where the lion king summons all the animals to court.³ Henryson drew on this for his portrayal of the lion's court in 'The Trial of the Fox', in which the wolf is also portrayed as a cleric; Lydgate used the court of the lion (and eagle) to form the setting for his 'Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep';⁴ and there are many others.

The telling of tales within a larger overall framework is so well used in medieval literature as hardly to require discussion. From the massive structure of The Canterbury Tales to in Scotland the small but interlaced forming of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, it was the quintessential way of bringing together exempla, romances, satires, and so forth, from a vast variety of origins.⁵ But the narration of tales about humans by beasts is certainly an unusual feature. While beasts often appear in tales, as in the (Aesopian) fable tradition, and while bestiaries had long presented the natural and symbolically signifying qualities of animals and birds,⁶ this

3. The Poems of Robert Henryson, edited by Denton Fox (Oxford, 1981), see pp. 230-2 on the background to the parliamentary setting.

4. The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part II, Secular Poems, edited by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS, O. Ser. 192 (1934). The poem is in the animal debate tradition exemplified by The Owl and the Nightingale, in which the participants dispute each other's worth. The beasts are consequently discussing themselves rather than offering counsel. But it is interesting that Lydgate claims to have got the initial inspiration for the work from seeing its subject in 'similitude/Ful craftily depeyntid on a wall' (17-18). The stylized depiction of the animals in the Fyve Bestes provokes similar artistic comparisons. See below, pp.210-13.

5. Well set out by Helen Cooper in The Structure of the Canterbury Tales (1983), pp.8-55.

6. The hart and the lion, for example, appear in the Middle English bestiary: Selections from Early Middle English 1130-1250, edited by Joseph Hall, 2 vols (Oxford, 1920, repr. 1963). For beast tales generally and other animal parliaments in Middle Scottish Literature, see I.W.A. Jamieson, 'The Beast Tale in Middle Scots: Some thoughts on the history of a genre', Parergon 2 (1972), 26-36, and Douglas Gray, Robert Henryson (Leiden, 1979), Ch. 2.

particular form of putting stories into the mouths of beasts seems rather distinctive. There is some similarity with the Indian story of Kalilah and Dimnah, in which two jackals, courtiers of the king, tell stories to each other within the context of a larger tale relating their dealings with the lion king over an obstreperous ox; in a number of versions the Kalilah and Dimnah episodes are themselves set within the broader context of stories told to a king of India by his philosopher Bidpai, each of which is intended to convey a moral point.⁷ Latin versions of Kalilah and Dimnah were certainly known in Europe in the late fifteenth century, and there were also translations into German and Spanish;⁸ but its links with the Fyve Bestes seem tenuously thematic at the most.

We have no precise way of dating the poem, as it may well have been composed sometime before its inclusion in the Asloan manuscript. All the source material on which it draws would appear to have been in circulation by the late 1470s, and given the sizeable amount of advice literature produced in the last quarter of the fifteenth century it is tempting to suggest a date of composition within that period.⁹ However, although it shares themes and concerns with other advice works of the time, there is no sense that it is working from the same sort of critical perspective that is found in De Regimine Principum, or even of Lancelot of the Laik or The Thre Prestis of Peblis. Stylistically, it has some interesting similarities with the Buke of the Chess, and the two works also have a fair degree of coincidence

7. Joseph Jacobs, The Earliest English Version of the Fables of Bidpai (1888); I.G.N. Keith-Falconer, Kalilah and Dimnah, or the Fables of Bidpai (Cambridge, 1885).

8. Ibid., esp. Keith-Falconer, pp.xiii-lxxxv.

9. Kratzmann states that 'The poem was written late in the fifteenth century or early in the sixteenth.', 'Fyve Bestes', p.26. See also below, pp.241-2.

ideologically.¹⁰ The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, as an advice work, gives a dignified but not complacent affirmation of the monarchical status quo, affirming the interdependence of king and nobility. The tales that the noble beasts tell work to affirm a sense of the value of strong monarchy, in conjunction with advisers, and the actions of the lion king himself ultimately confirm this. The poem indeed well illustrates the argument forcibly made by recent historians of Scotland that, as Jenny Wormald has put it, 'in secular society kings and lords were of the same mind; both had ideals as well as individual ambitions', and thus for the nobility, 'Their understanding of kingship ... derived less from the actions, the successes, the failure of particular kings, than from an awareness that kingship was the unifying factor, the focal point of the highly localised communities which made up the kingdom of Scotland'.¹¹

As has been noted, The Talis of the Fyve Bestes has survived only in the Asloan MS, and there in an imperfect state. The opening is missing, a small portion of the text in the middle of the third tale is omitted, and parts of the fourth tale are now illegible.¹² The poem is placed between The Buke of the Howlat and Henryson's 'Tale of the Twa Mys', forming a small 'animal' subgroup in the MS. The Talis of the Fyve Bestes and The Buke of the Howlat are further linked by the courts and advice elements which they both contain. Moreover, both have for the modern reader the sense of a now obscured original

10. See Ch. 5, for a more detailed account, and pp.235-6 below.

11. Jenny Wormald, Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent 1442-1603 (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 155, 159.

12. The break occurs after l. 176. Craigie suggests that 'Here a considerable portion of the text is wanting' (Asloan MS, II, p.180) but comparison with the Speculum Stultorum suggests that this is probably not the case since the equivalent passage there covers only half a dozen lines. See Nigel de Longchamps, Speculum Stultorum, edited by John H. Mozley and Robert R. Raymo, University of California Publications 18 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960), ll. 1307-13; also the note to l. 176 in Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.130.

intention in their use of symbolic representation, heightened in the case of the Fyve Bestes by its incomplete state.

Conceptually the Fyve Bestes also superficially resembles another work included in the Asloan MS, The Thre Prestis of Peblis, in which tales are told to form a cumulative advice offering. But it completely lacks the obvious structural cohesion of that work: the interlinked tales; the shared characters; the sense of a firmly controlled overall unity.¹³ In comparison, the scheme of the Fyve Bestes is very free. Each tale is separate and distinct from the others, with no overtly stated inter-linking or cross-referencing. The beasts appear, tell their tales, and disappear, with minimal communication, the most substantial being only, 'So quhen þis riall horþ his tale had endit/This Ryall hart richt gentilly It commendit' [56-7]. There seems moreover a certain lack of tonal accord between the polished stately beasts who 'head' the tales and who are indeed described with considerable care, as Priscilla Bawcutt has noted,¹⁴ and the delivery of the stories themselves, which is in an essentially 'low', simple, sometimes gently humorous style.¹⁵ Despite a shared overall voice then, the tales do stand apart from each other, and from the figures who deliver them, in self-contained isolation. No direct indication is given that any one tale has more importance than another; the third tale may be almost twice as long as the others, but its moralization hardly attributes to it a more elevated status. Moreover, as we shall see, the moralizations of each tale do not add up to a unified advice policy as

13. See Ch. 7, and also R.D.S. Jack, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis and the Growth of Humanism in Scotland', RES, New Ser. 26 (1975), 257-70 (258-9).

14. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Bear or Boar in The Tales of the Five Beasts?', SLJ Supplement 13 (1980), 11-12.

15. Gregory Kratzmann has pointed out the adroitly neo-Chaucerian style of the unicorn's tale in his study, Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550 (Cambridge, 1980), pp.94-9. See also his 'Fyve Bestes', p.39, and pp.231-4 below.

such. They rather reveal a movement from very generalized moralization in the first tale to more specific advice to a monarch in the last, the boar's tale; the final episode with the wolf then differently dramatizes the question of advising a king. The four tales are initially moralized in terms of the body/soul division; the virtues of just battle; the perils of oppressing the poor; and the importance of a monarch's vows. Were the opening of the poem to be discovered, I doubt whether it would provide a much clearer context in which to see the tales, such as some particular situation on which the beasts are asked to advise, since the final episode makes it clear that the ravages in the country to which the wolf refers are here mentioned for the first time.¹⁶

Ultimately, it is a retrospective unity that is imposed upon the narrators of the tales and consequently upon the tales themselves, at the conclusion of the poem:

Now be þis wolf schortly be myne awyþ
 Is wnderstand þe syn of covatiþ
 And be þire four of counsall to þe king
 The wertuiþ foure þat in a king suld ryng
 Prudence Iustice and magnanimite
 And continence þat Is content to be [405-10]

The concluding allegorizing works well here, showing how the wolf's efforts to destroy the four counsellors represent the way in which each of the four cardinal virtues can be endangered by covetousness, and thus all stability placed at risk:

The wertew no tyme suthly lestis
 In no persone þat covatiþ In restis
 Quha may be prudent with þat desyre
 Or 3it content had he þe hale empyre
 Curage throw covatiþ Is set at nocht
 And be þat mayn Is Iustice sauld & bocht [411-16]

16. Cf. Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', pp.31-2; Lyall, 'Narrative Technique', p.57.

And further in allegorizing the beasts as the four virtues 'þat in a king suld ryng', the final rather clever effect is that the beasts who have told the tales and given counsel are allegorized into aspects of the monarch's wisdom. Thus while the necessity for giving advice has been established, the image of the monarch as containing all virtue within himself has also been preserved. This is quite a delicate sleight of hand, and a distinctly diplomatic way of giving advice.

So it is that we are given a unified way of seeing the apparently loosely connected tales. The larger scheme now applied allows the earlier moralities to stand while placing them within a more resolved and morally enforced whole. It is not explicitly stated whether 'Prudence Iustice and magnanimite/And continence' are supposed to represent in turn the horse, the hart, the unicorn and the boar, but within the now-given context it is possible to see how each tale in fact exhibits or considers more than one of the virtues involved: justice as well as prudence in the first tale; prudence as well as magnanimity in the fourth, and so on. The conception of The Talis of the Fyve Bestes is manifestly so fluid and imprecise that it does seem to be straining the poem to suggest, as Kratzmann does, both that the tales depict the qualities or virtues that are later assigned to the beasts and that the tales and/or moralities reflect features with which the beasts were traditionally associated. For in order to make such applications work he has, for example, to move from associating the moralitas of the horse's tale with 'the later allegorization of the Horse as Prudence'¹⁷ to associating the boar's tale with that beast, thus: 'The Boar may appear to be a rather strange emblem of Contenance, in view of his heroic connection with ferocity in battle, but nevertheless, it is quite fitting that he should tell a story about Alexander,

17. Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.33.

the greatest military leader of classical and medieval legend'.¹⁸ Such forced readings indicate that it is simpler to see the four beasts as mouthpieces for their tales, but not a part of them. For they were hardly all well known as being strongly or exclusively associated with the four virtues to which they are here attached. The unicorn, for example, was more commonly used to signify chastity, purity, or Christ, than magnanimity or other cardinal virtues.¹⁹ The wolf remains a separate case, and will be dealt with separately, for as his 'tale' differs from those of the other beasts so does the manner of his depiction.

Thus we should not look for a close match between the representation of the four beasts and the virtues to which they are ultimately assigned. As we have already noted, the rich, carefully wrought nature of their descriptions is itself distinctly different from the looser delivery of their tales. The rare splendour of the jewelled appearance of the beasts and their regal deportment are given a stylized, highly visual quality, as in this passage on the hart:

His statly hed with tyndis set on hicht
Of polist gold & siluer birnist bricht
Before þis kyng he laid his tyndis lawe [57-60]

18. Ibid., pp.33-4.

19. Francis Klingender, Animals in Art and Thought to the end of the Middle Ages (1971), pp.463-8; Beryl Rowland, Animals with Human Faces (Knoxville, 1973), pp.152-6. The horse may have had a 'traditional fable association ... with obedience' (Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.33), but it also had other well-known associations with magical or sexual prowess, and could provide the mount for figures of both evil and honour. In the latter case it was given considerable status in works on chivalry, which may have some relevance to the chivalric context to be discussed below. But the use of the horse to signify a cardinal virtue does not appear to have been a very frequent feature of literary or artistic representation, although in Lydgate's 'Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep' the four differently coloured horses seen by Zechariah are allegorized as the four cardinal virtues. Similarly, the hart, although having a substantial number of religious and symbolic significations, was again not directly represented as a type for virtue. And the boar, had a long tradition of symbolizing almost mystical strength, force and vigour, rather than specifically the virtue of continence. Rowland, pp.37-43, 94-112.

Though these descriptions are short, the change in style makes them memorable, and their visual impact gives a suggestion as to where the real significance probably lies.

Coloured, intricately executed illustrations and miniatures of animal life made an ever-increasing part of various artistic genres in the fifteenth century. In Europe, from the bestiary illustrations onwards, images of animals featured in manuscripts and later printed books of works both secular and religious, as well as on tapestries and carvings on bosses and misericords in churches. With heightened sophistication, concurrent movements towards naturalism and stylization developed. Animals both real, like the horse, hart, and boar, and mythical, like the unicorn, regularly appeared, particularly in manuals on hunting, arms, and heraldry,²⁰ and it seems likely that the animals in the Fyve Bestes, combining as they do natural features and bejewelled exteriors, belong in this broad tradition of iconographic or artistic representation, which is being recalled in the manner of their depiction. The boar, for example, is directly referred to as 'ane blyth sicht', and in his description natural physical elements ('haire', 'scheldis', 'tuskis') come together with the strong metallic images of 'reid gold' (twice) and 'stele ... baith stark & sture' [281-6].

Among a number of sources, works illustrating animals drew on styles of representation deriving from the originally Eastern form of heraldic art, of highly wrought, clear-cut and richly coloured animal images.²¹ And the beasts of heraldic art were themselves appropriated by medieval regality and nobility to signify honour and might on their shields and seals; by the fifteenth century in Scotland, as in England, this practice was well developed with

20. Klingender, Chs. 11 and 12, esp. pp.425, 450-76.

21. Ibid., pp.286-8, 453.

individual families sporting their own heraldic coat of arms.²² A sizeable amount of literature was produced on the subject. One such instance was the compilation produced in Scotland in the late fifteenth century by Adam Loutfut, Kintyre Pursuivant, in the service of William Cummyng of Inverellochy, the Marchmond Herald who was ultimately in 1512 to become Lyon King of Arms.²³ MS Harley 6149 in the British Library is a large collection of heraldic material drawn together by Loutfut containing treatises and tracts on a wide variety of subjects concerning heraldic matters and the laws of arms, from rules for conducting tournaments and funerals to Caxton's Ordre of Chyualry, and a poem on heraldry.²⁴ One of the treatises appears to incorporate material from a translation of the fourteenth-century Tractatus de Armis of Johannes de Bado Aureo an important and highly influential work for subsequent treatises on heraldry and arms.²⁵ In an English translation of De Bado Aureo found in MS Laud Misc. 733 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the animals in the section on the signification of harts in arms include the lion, hart, horse, and boar. In the first instance,

22. Ibid., pp.454-5; Anthony Richard Wagner, Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1956), pp.65-82.

23. See The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry, edited by Alfred T.P. Byles, EETS, O. Ser. 168 (1926), pp.xxvi, xxix.

24. Ibid. The manuscript is discussed by Terence O'Neill in 'Adam Loutfut's Book', The Coat of Arms, 4, (1957), 307-10. The poem was printed in Queen Elizabeth's Academy, A Booke of Precedence &c, edited by F.J. Furnivall, EETS, E. Ser. 8 (1869); it is also discussed by H. Stanford London, 'Some Medieval Treatises on English Heraldry', The Antiquaries Journal 33 (1958), 169-83. London does not appear to have looked at the whole manuscript, which is regrettable as his analysis of the other material would surely have been highly illuminating.

25. Versions of the Tractatus are printed and discussed by E.J. Jones, Medieval Heraldry (Cardiff, 1943), but it is important to see the re-evaluation of Jones's conclusions in London's article. The question of authorship is particularly complex here for portions of Johannes de Bado Aureo's treatise were later incorporated by Nicholas Upton in De Studio Militari, and in several places it is difficult to tell whether certain details are Upton's own additions or drawn from revised texts of the Tractatus which have not survived.

the interpretations given to these animals have little in common with their function in the Fyve Bestes. This, for instance, is from the passage concerning the hart:

To bere an herte in armys is a tokyn that the berer or at the leest wey the first taker was pouere in his first age whos substaunce litil and litill somdell encreessed Hit semeth also that the berer was wyse in dedes of batell and sotil in armys how he shuld assaile his enemyes and with sufficiant defence ...²⁶

But, on the other hand, this manuscript contains marginal illustrations of the animals which have just the sort of detailed, shimmering qualities evoked by the descriptions in the Fyve Bestes. Loutfut's translation, however, is far more extensive than this version, containing a substantial number of beasts and birds not found there - including the unicorn. Familiar themes in connection with the unicorn are rehearsed, such as that it can only be captured by the aid of a virgin. And it 'signifis' that a man is 'stark' and that he who bears it has 'wit in his entent and in his hed attour all utheris';²⁷ such material has little direct relation to the portrayal of the unicorn in the Fyve Bestes and again demonstrates the more unusual interpretation of the hart in the poem. Yet the animals are again all pictured in the MS, and it is surely this kind of pictorial context which is partly in the poet's mind. We can indeed go further than this, as will be seen below. It is worth noting, too, that Loutfut's compilation exists still in a number of other manuscript copies, testifying to its value and circulation.²⁸

There are of course numerous similar English works on heraldry and the

26. MS Laud Misc. 733, fol. 7^r; this section on the hart is also printed in Gray, Late Medieval Verse and Prose, pp.143-4.

27. MS Harley 6149, fol. 21^r.

28. Queen's College, Oxford, 161 is a fifteenth-century copy; NLS, Advocates MSS 31.5.2 and 31.3.70 (David Lindsay's copy) are from the sixteenth century.

bearing of arms.²⁹ In England too we find heraldic devices being used within political allegory. Heraldic 'badges', including those of harts and horses, are used in Richard the Redeles to criticize the followers of Richard II and the king himself, whose favourite badge was the hart. Such allegorized referents are of necessity only thinly veiled, in order for the political criticism to function. However, heraldic representation in Scottish literature could be used for purposes other than the politically critical. Part of the key to understanding the production and meaning of The Buke of the Howlat, as Felicity Riddy has recently shown, lies in analysing the symbolism of the shields of pope, emperor, France, Scotland, and the Douglas brothers, described in stanzas 26-49.³⁰ The Talis of the Fyve Bestes too appears to make use of heraldic representation. The use is much more simply formulated and cannot be followed through to the sorts of personal identifications that are possible for the Howlat, but it is striking that two works so closely positioned in one manuscript should share such a number of features.

The horse, hart, unicorn, boar - and lion - all appear on fifteenth-century Scottish arms and seals. The lion is figured on royal seals from virtually the earliest records onwards, and was certainly well established by the thirteenth century. It also frequently features in the arms of noble families, sometimes in conjunction with other beasts, sometimes in a supportive role; we can see this, for example, in the seals of (not surprisingly) the Stewarts, and also the Wallaces.³¹ From the reign of Robert the Bruce onwards, human figures of kings were often represented as seated on a throne

29. Wagner, pp.67-73.

30. Felicity J. Riddy, 'Dating The Buke of the Howlat', RES, New Ser. 37 (1986), 1-10.

31. J.H. Stevenson and M. Wood, Scottish Heraldic Seals, 3 vols (Glasgow, 1940), I, pp.1-36; II, pp.601-20, 640.

the four corners of which were formed from the heads and legs of beasts, although these do not appear to have included all of those with which we are concerned here.³² The horse, generally with the monarch astride it, was a frequent reverse feature on royal seals over the same period. The image of horse and rider also occasionally appeared on noble seals, as on the elaborate devices of the Dunbars, and horse's heads too, although not the most popular of emblems, also feature.³³ Boars and harts are extremely common images, whether alone or along with other symbolic devices; the seals of the Gordons, for example, often show boars, lion, and stag together.³⁴ Often it is the head alone that is displayed, and we should note that in the Fyve Bestes it is this feature of the boar and the hart that is emphasized [ll. 59-61, 283-6]. Unicorns too, appear on noble seals, such as those of the Meldrums or the Prestons, although like the horse they are not among the most common images. Unicorns were not included on the royal great seal or arms until after 1500, but they do appear earlier on some royal seals, for instance the second signet of James III.³⁵

There are noble seals and arms, as we have seen, which combine two or even three of the beasts in the Fyve Bestes, but as far as I am able to tell they never appear all together. Wolves heads do occasionally feature, but their usage is far smaller than that of any of the other beasts we are considering.³⁶

32. Ibid., I, pp.6-7; also Walter De Gray Birch, Seals (1907), pp.194-208.

33. Stevenson and Wood, I, pp.1-36; II, pp.365-6; the Bruce arms also feature figures on horseback and horses' heads, II, pp.262-5.

34. Ibid., II, pp.373-8; the Campbells also used boars' heads with lion supporters, II, pp.270-5.

35. Ibid., II, pp.501-2, 545-7; I, p.32. Kratzmann, who observes the general heraldic associations of the beasts, notes that the heraldic office of Unicorn Pursuivant had been introduced in the reign of James I. 'Fyve Bestes', p.32.

36. Stevenson and Wood, II, pp.223, 576.

Kratzmann, noting the different depictions of the four story-telling beasts and the wolf, goes as far as to claim that 'it would appear that the poem makes a clear distinction between the four heraldic beasts on the one hand and the non-heraldic wolf on the other'.³⁷ It is at least clear that horse, hart, unicorn, boar (and lion) appeared more regularly among coats of arms, and the existing sigillary records provide good evidence of this. It would seem that the poet is using heraldic images that had widespread distribution not to disguise specific nobles or families³⁸ but to evoke the idea of the innate nobility and importance of these counsellors to the king. The advice they give is supported by the splendour and gentility of their bearing. The prevalent impression given even before they speak is that they are the right and rightful advisers to the monarch. They come forth to tell their stories in a ceremonial manner, the hart and unicorn bowing before the monarch [ll. 61, 128], but while they are thus intently respectful to him, their own nobility of manner demands that they be listened to. And the action of the final episode confirms their value as advisers. The presentation of these four beasts as both noble and wise-counselling relates interestingly to the general conception of nobility in advice literature. It was commonly held that nobility did not de facto guarantee good counsel, and that if kings did appoint nobles as advisers they should, as Hay puts it in the Governance of Princis, 'ches nane to thy counsale and to thy governaunce na othir service for his hie birth bot thare be vertu folowand'.³⁹ Yet it was also felt important that, as in the words of De Regimine Principum, 'Nobilite suld mell bot with nobilneß',⁴⁰ and we are made to feel strongly in the Fyve Bestes that

37. 'Fyve Bestes', p.32.

38. Also suggested by Kratzmann, *ibid.*

39. Prose MS, II, p.151.

40. DRP (Fairfax MS), l. 103.

these counsellors are distinguished by the quality of their rank. On this level, as an advice to princes piece, the poem is as much about the appropriateness of such counsellors to advise a king as it is about the advice itself.

Indeed, and as has already been suggested, The Talis of the Fyve Bestes offers cumulatively and retrospectively a number of ways of viewing the tales themselves, their moralities, and tellers. Such a sense of layered, or to use Tuve's term, 'imposed allegory', where the text can yield up a series of (re)interpretations, often heightened by an apparent lack of concord between text and moralitas, is common in medieval exemplary literature from the Gesta Romanorum to Henryson's Fables.⁴¹ The Fyve Bestes should certainly be seen in this light, but I shall also be suggesting below that as an advice to princes work the poem adroitly gains force by illustrating a relation between tales and tellers that is less dependent on the characteristics of the beasts as animals than on their role as counsellors.

The tales of the horse, hart, unicorn and boar come from a variety of sources, some well known, some distinctly less so. The exempla tradition of moral tales features in sermons and moral compendia such as those by Etienne de Bourbon, Vincent of Beauvais, or English translations like the Alphabet of Tales provides the background for at least two of them; English and Scottish chronicles and popular tradition for another; and Anglo-Latin ecclesiastical satire for another. The latter example refers to the third tale, a version of the story of Gundulfus and the vengeful cock, taken from Nigel of Longchamps' Speculum Stultorum, a twelfth-century work. The author thus has synthesized material from an impressively wide range.

41. Rosamund Tuve, Allegorical Imagery (Princeton, 1966), Ch. 4; Gray, Henryson, pp.124-5. See also Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.34.

The horse's tale starts (probably) about ten or fifteen lines into a version of the two fellow-travellers, here as often elsewhere brothers, the wise man and the fool, who have to choose between two paths to a city, one fair-seeming, one of hazardous appearance; the fool's advice prevails, they take the fair-seeming way, fall in with thieves, and are ultimately brought to justice and put to death. This was a very popular exemplum in the repertoire of moral tale collections, with many variations in length and detail. Kratzmann states that "The Horses Tale" derives ultimately from the Gesta Romanorum',⁴² but the tale is also found in the earlier collection by Etienne de Bourbon in a form which is more similar to the Fyve Bestes rendition than the vastly expanded Gesta version.⁴³ In the numerous MSS and early printed examples the exemplum is cited under a range of different conceptual headings; for example, in Vincent of Beauvais' Speculum morale, 'De peccati diversis effectibus'; in Albertus Magnus' Liber de abundantia exemplorum, 'De divino iudicio'; in Bromyard's Summa praedicatorum, 'Amicitia'.⁴⁴ There is in addition to the English Gesta, another version in the Alphabet of Tales, but this has no important correspondences with the horse's tale.⁴⁵ Interestingly,

42. Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.27.

43. For the exemplum, Frederic C. Tubach, Index Exemplorum, FF Communications 86 (Helsinki, 1969), nos. 5325a-b. On Etienne de Bourbon, the Gesta Romanorum, and other collections, J-Th. Welter, L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du moyen age (Paris, 1927), esp. pp.215-23, 369-75. In the Gesta, a long opening describes the establishment by a king of two cities, a good and a bad, to which the travellers have the choice of going. There are no references to this detail in what survives of the horse's tale. Cf. The Early English Versions of the 'Gesta Romanorum', edited by Sidney J.H. Herrtage, EETS, E. Ser. 33 (1879), pp.19-21.

44. Speculum morale Vincenti (1493), Lib. III, pars iii, Dis. xix; Albertus Magnus, Liber de abundantia exemplorum (1478), pars iv; Johannes Bromyard, Summa praedicatorum (1518), A, xxi, Art. viii, 27.

45. An Alphabet of Tales, edited by Mrs Mary Macleod Banks, 2 vols, EETS, O. Ser. 126-7 (1904-5), II, pp.483-4. The Alphabet also contains the exemplum of Alexander and the philosopher which constitutes the boar's tale in the Fyve Bestes.

however, another vernacular Scottish instance is to be found in Book V of Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome.⁴⁶ Comparison suggests that each Scottish rendition is textually independent, though the use of one in an advice context might have inspired the other. The two works have a further general area of similarity in their emphasis on the four cardinal virtues, which is an important organizing principle in Book VII of the Meroure.⁴⁷ Assigning a specific source for the version here is well-nigh impossible, but in comparing this account with the other extant versions, I have noted a number of small but significant differences in the narrative.

Firstly, there is a marked variance among the many accounts as to what happens when the two travellers are captured and brought to justice. In Alexander Carpenter's Destructorium vitiorum they are brought before a judge, having been put in jail; in Humbert of the Roman's De dono timoris the king summons all those in jail to be brought before him; in the Speculum morale no ruler or judge is mentioned, it being merely said that the two were brought to justice; in the Summa praedicatorum, the debate over who is to blame takes place only between the two travellers in jail; Ireland's account is even more summary, with no reference even to prison.⁴⁸ In the Gesta Romanorum, however, the 'domys-man' comes to the city to sit in judgement on all law-breakers.⁴⁹ This is closer to the Fyve Bestes version of events, but still different. In

46. Meroure, II, pp.141-3.

47. Ch. 8, pp.411-12; Ireland's version of the narrative is a close rendition of that found, for example, in Bromyard and Vincent of Beauvais, where there are two gates with 'hirdis' at them, and where the brothers are put to death by the 'euill murderaris and briggantis' themselves.

48. Alexander Carpenter, Destructorium vitiorum (Cologne, 1484), pars iv, cap. xi; Humbert of the Romans, Tractatus de abundantia exemplorum ad omnem materiam in sermonibus BL, MS Sloane 3102, fol. 69^v; Speculum morale, Lib. III, pars iii, Dis. xix; Summa praedicatorum, A. xxi, Art. viii, 27; Meroure, II, p.142.

49. Gesta Romanorum, p.21.

the horse's tale it is specifically the 'kingis Iustice' who deals with the men, and they are not brought before him - he comes, apprehends, and brings them to justice:

So come þe kingis Iustice of þe land
And tuke þaim all and to law gart þaim stand [11-12]

Thus, whereas in most versions where justice is pronounced, it is carried out either by the king or a justice figure, in the horse's tale judge and king are both included 'þe kingis Iustice', and there is a strong sense of the justice figure actively bringing criminals to law, because, as the wise brother puts it, they have committed a 'gret trespaß' [15]. One must not overstate this, and it would be rash to argue that the poet had in mind here the travelling justice ayres of fifteenth-century Scotland, but there is a further detail that makes a conscious contemporaneity possible.

In no other version are the brothers beheaded. In the great majority, they are put to death, but where the means is identified, it is always hanging.⁵⁰ The difference here is all the more striking, for as Irskine-Smith notes, in medieval Scotland, 'Beheading was usual for, inter alios, habitual thieves' - and it is with thieves of course that the brothers have fallen in.⁵¹ The tale is thus given an aptly Scottish conclusion.

We have seen frequently in this study that a concern for the execution of justice as well as its prescription was a consistent feature of parliamentary dealings in the fifteenth century and of much advice literature. The Talis of the Fyve Bestes clearly falls within this broad context; yet we shall

50. As in the Alphabet, 'þe king gaf a sentence & bat þat þai bothe sulde be hanged' (II, p.484).

51. J. Irskine-Smith, 'Criminal Procedure', in An Introduction to Scottish Legal History, Stair Society, 20 (Edinburgh, 1958), p.20.

continually see that as an advice work it is not greatly concerned with criticism or setting out how justice should be done. Here the king's presence is implicit behind the actions of his justice, but his minister is shown as capable of administering the law without his direct involvement. As I have suggested, his attention to the abilities of and necessity for such ministers is a recurrent preoccupation in the poem. We might also note that the theme of the giving and taking of advice has been introduced in this first tale.

The exemplum of the two travellers was, as it is here, generally allegorized in terms of the dangers of bodily desires predominating over the soul, something that clearly applies to all men as much as to monarchs. And there is a concentration too on urging the way of 'pennance & of grace' [53] towards eternal bliss, a conclusion that is similarly found in two of the other tales, and the poem's own ending.⁵² What we see in the moralities of the tales is in fact a consistent movement towards moralities of greater application to the king, thus building the poem to something of a climax.

The second tale is told by the hart and describes the ascent into heaven of the soul of William Wallace, as displayed to a hermit by an angel in a vision. The hermit also sees souls descend to hell and purgatory, and three (probably) religious figures accompany Wallace to heaven; all have died that day.⁵³ The inclusion of this tale in the Fyve Bestes is highly interesting. As applied to William Wallace it survives prior to the Fyve Bestes only in two longer 'historical' narrative works, Bower's Scotichronicon [Book XII, Ch. 8] and Hary's Wallace [Book XII, ll. 1232-1304)]. The Wallace's editor,

52. For further comment on the allegory, Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', pp.126-7.

53. The MS is damaged at this point. Craigie in the Asloan MS (II, p.280), and Matthew P. McDiarmid in his edition of Hary's Wallace, 2 vols, STS, 4th Ser. 4,5 (Edinburgh, 1968-9), II, pp.227-8, have offered reconstructions of the lines. See also Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.128.

M. McDiarmid argues that the author of the hart's tale knew both these accounts, and it is certainly true that his version contains material found separately in both of them.⁵⁴ In Bower, as in the hart's tale, the hermit sees a vision; in the Wallace the story forms part of the account of a 'monk off Bery' who makes a compact with a younger monk to return after death and recount his experiences in the after-life. Though Bower does not refer to the three souls ascending to heaven, McDiarmid suggests that his phrasing 'inumeras animas' is recalled by 'Of saulis ... Ane multitud Innomerable' [88-9].⁵⁵ Even so, it is worth noting that whereas in Bower the souls are 'de poenis Purgatorii liberatas, quasi praestolantes aditum regni coelestis',⁵⁶ in the hart's tale their state is rather less agreeable:

Of saulis doвне to hell declyne
 Ane multitud Innomerable
 Perpetually to suffer pyne
 To purgatory he saw paß syne [89-91]

McDiarmid's claim that Bower's play on Wallace's name, 'sine vae' is recalled in the reference to Wallace passing to heaven 'Or he was cald' [118] also seems debatable.⁵⁷ However, the Wallace does have the three souls ascending, and McDiarmid also argues that the phrase 'Saif reuerance of þe [croun]' [66] recalls the Wallace, XII, 1208.⁵⁸ Again, while not conclusive, this is indeed possible, and a number of other echoes, such as the reference to 'sanct edmond and sanct [thomas]' [74; cf. Wallace, Book XII, l. 1308] make it likely that

54. Wallace, II, pp.277-9.

55. Joannis de Fordun Scotichronicon cum Supplementis et Continuatione Walteri Boweri, edited by Walter Goodall, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1759), II, p.230. Wallace, II, p.277.

56. Bower, II, p.230.

57. Wallace, II, p.268.

58. *Ibid.*, p.276.

the author of the Fyve Bestes knew this work.⁵⁹

However, it is likely that he also knew other material. In the Fyve Bestes the hermit is accompanied in his vision by an angel: 'Sa come ane angell fra þe hicht/And schew him baith of hevin & hell' [79-80]; and this may stem from Bower's reference to the removal of the freed souls with Wallace 'per ministerium Angelorum'.⁶⁰ The angel does not appear in the Wallace. But the author probably had greater prompting than this for the idea.

McDiarmid indeed suggests that the vision of Wallace's heavenly salvation 'derives ultimately, perhaps, from a similar one concerning Richard the Lion-Heart current in the fourteenth century'.⁶¹ He notes that Sir Thomas Gray's Scalachronica records how Edmond, archbishop of Canterbury saw Richard's soul ascent to heaven accompanied by the souls of Stephen, the late archbishop of Canterbury and Stephen's chaplain.⁶² Were this to be the only such reference

59. He wan all scotland in ...
Tharfor in hevin Is his ...
And þat I trow be rich [t resoun] [68-70]

Scotland he fred and brocht it off thrillage;
And now in hewin he has his heretage,
As It prewyt be gud experians. [Wallace, Book XII, 1235-7]

Cf. also note 67, below.

60. McDiarmid argues that Hary took the idea of the compact between the monks in the Wallace from a later chapter of the Scotichronicon (Wallace, II, pp.278-9). But this was also a popular exemplum theme. In British Library, MS Harley 1288, for example, is recounted the tale of a dead abbot who returns to one of his brothers to tell him that on the day of his death more than 30,000 died, but only he and two others were saved (fol. 38^r). This example should also be considered in relation to those described on pp.225-6 below. See J.A. Herbert, A Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, vol. III (1910), p.446.

61. Wallace, II, p.277. I.W.A. Jamieson mentions that the source is 'a common exemplum story, usually not particularly secular', but gives no details at all (33).

62. Wallace, II, p.277; Scalacronica: by Sir Thomas Gray of Heton, Knight, edited by Joseph Stevenson, Maitland Club, (Edinburgh, 1836), p.81.

to the soul of Richard I (it is the only English source McDiarmid gives) the likelihood of its being known by the author of the Fyve Bestes would seem fairly remote, since only one manuscript of the poem has survived. Moreover, the passage in question is extremely short. But the story in fact occurs in several more well known thirteenth- and fourteenth-century chronicles, although interestingly the Scalachronica is the only one in which it is related directly after the death of Richard. In Matthew Paris' Chronica Majora, the Flores Historiarum, and the chronicle of Roger of Wendover, Henry, bishop of Rochester, relates how he saw the souls of Richard, archbishop Stephen of Canterbury and a chaplain ascend to heaven in a vision.⁶³ There is nothing in the phrasing here that directly links with the accounts in the Scotichronicon, Wallace and the Fyve Bestes. But on the other hand, it is noticeable that both Bower and Hary set their accounts of the story in England (the author of the Fyve Bestes is not so specific, as will be discussed below). Hary's story is concerned with the monk of 'Bery' (Bury St Edmunds) and Bower, although he does not name a place emphasizes that the hermit was in England and that the story is witnessed by many of the English themselves, 'cum ipsi plerique Anglici veridici testantur'.⁶⁴ It is not inconceivable that the sleight of hand which has transformed Richard into Wallace is being indirectly indicated here. In any event, the popularity and wide circulation of these chronicles makes it highly probable that this was the route through which the story came into Scotland, although how and when it was first applied to Wallace remains unclear.

63. Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora, edited by Henry Richards Luard, 7 vols, Rolls Ser. 57a-6 (1872-83), III, p.212 (for 1232); Flores Historiarum, edited by Henry Richards Luard, 3 vols, Rolls Ser. 95a-c (1890), II, p.203; The Flowers of History by Roger de Wendover, edited by Henry G. Hewlett, 3 vols, Rolls Ser. 84a-c (1886-9), III, pp.21-2.

64. Wallace, Book XII, l. 1238; Bower, II, p.230.

Moreover, in none of these chronicle instances does the guiding angel appear; nor indeed does the hermit, a feature of both Bower and the hart's tale. The angel and hermit do however both appear in the only other source cited by McDiarmid, a fourteenth-century Spanish work, the Libro de Patronio, by one Don Juan Manuel, in which a dying hermit desiring to know who his companions on the journey to heaven would be is told by an angel sent from heaven that he would be accompanied to paradise by the soul of 'el rey Richarte de Inglaterra'.⁶⁵ When the hermit expresses displeasure at accompanying one who has slain so many, the angel responds that one action of Richard's against the infidels was worth more than all the hermit's good deeds.⁶⁶ Thus, although this example does not contain the group of three souls, it does have both angel and hermit, as well as the justification for Richard's warring actions which is also found in both the Wallace and the conclusion of the hart's tale [ll. 111-18].⁶⁷ The inclusion of the story within the Libro de Patronio also makes an interesting comparison with The Talis of the Fyve Bestes since like that work it excerpts the tale on its own within a larger collection of stories that in toto form in fact into a rambling advice compendium - the advise of the counsellor Patronio to count Lucarnor.

The existence of the story in Spain and in this slightly divergent version also indicates its circulation as part indeed of the cult of legends

65. Obras de Don Juan Manuel in Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 51, Escritores en prosa anteriores au siglo xv, edited by Don Pascual de Gayangos (Madrid, 1860), Libro de Patronio, Enxemplo III, pp.373-4.

66. Ibid. Also noted by McDiarmid, Wallace, II, p.277.

67. Libro de Patronio, p.373 and cf. Wallace, Book XII, ll. 1284-6:

He is Wallace, defendour off Scotland,
 For rychtwys wer that he tuk apon hand.
 Thar rychtwysnes is lowyt our the lawe,
 Tharfor in hewyn he sall that honour have.

and tales about Richard I that had such currency in the Middle Ages.⁶⁸ While it is surely unlikely that the author of the Fyve Bestes would have known the Spanish example its existence confirms that there were a series of different versions of the story. However, it is in fact possible to trace the pedigree of the story back further still, once more to the exemplum tradition.

It seems extremely likely that the stories of Richard I's and latterly Wallace's ascents to heaven are themselves accretions onto an existing story which occurs in quite a number of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century collections of exempla. The visions of hermits, bishops, and so forth were after all a fairly familiar feature of such works, as the revelations of mystics and visionaries also demonstrate. In the exemplum in question it is often St Bernard who is being venerated, but the exemplum was also politicized by being given application to St Thomas a Becket. In a common version, the bishop of London meets a dead hermit, formerly dean of St Paul's who tells him that on the day of his death 30,000 souls died: he and St Bernard ascended to heaven, three others went to purgatory, and the rest to hell.⁶⁹ In another account a hermit is visited daily by an angel, whose arrival on one particular day is delayed because, as he explains, he has been conducting the soul of St. Thomas a Becket to heaven. Of those who died that day, St Thomas and a hermit went to heaven, a pilgrim to purgatory, and the 5,000 others to hell.⁷⁰

We can see from this that the story had already branched out into the versions dealing with a meeting or conversation between two clerics and those

68. B.B. Broughton, The Legends of King Richard I, Coeur de Lion (The Hague, 1966); for a more sophisticated appraisal, John Gillingham, Richard the Lionheart (1978), Ch. 1, esp. p.8.

69. BL, MS Royal 15 D v, fol. 305^v; Herbert, p.446.

70. BL, MS Arundel 506, fol. 57^r; Herbert, p.558.

featuring the hermit and the angel. The last of course resembles the Fyve Bestis version most closely. Other versions also contain the motif of three saved souls, indicating the sort of 'rationalization' of elements in the story which it is also easy to see working elsewhere.⁷¹ The exclusion of the three souls who go to purgatory, the absorption of the role of one hermit into another, and finally the inclusion of a secular figure could easily be fitted into such a flexible framework. And it thus seems highly probable that the author of the Fyve Bestes, while knowing the story of Wallace in either or both of Bower and Hary's accounts, also knew the similar story from the exempla collections on which he drew for two other tales in the poem. The essential story was therefore one which had had widespread circulation before ultimately being moulded around the Wallace.

There were obvious similarities between Richard I and the Wallace to spark the association of stories. Both were celebrated fighters and leaders of a cause, soon to become after death almost larger than life figures, the objects in popular culture of mythologizing legends and literature.⁷² The major difference between them however was that Richard was English. The Scotichronicon, the Wallace and the Fyve Bestes are all vehemently nationalistic and anti-English in their sentiments, and all are using the story in question to advance the reputation of Scotland and Wallace at the expense of the 'sutheren' English. The appropriation of the story originally told about an English monarch to the cause of a Scottish hero may quite possibly have been originally a deliberately aggressive and slighting borrowing. We have

71. See Tubach, no. 3591; Schimpf und Ernst, herausgegeben von Johannes Bolte edited by Johannes Pauli, 2 vols (Berlin, 1924), no. 464.

72. For a later reference to the hermit's vision of Wallace see, for example, Hector Boece, The Chronicles of Scotland, tr. John Bellenden, edited by R.W. Chambers, Edith C. Batho and H. Winifred Husbands, 2 vols, STS, 3rd Ser. 10, 15 (Edinburgh, 1938-41), II, p.264; and Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.29

noted already that the story is 'based' in England in both Bower and the Wallace - more status would of course be gained for its authenticity were the events to have been witnessed by members of the hated English! In the Fyve Bestes, on the other hand, the setting is less localized but the imprimature on the story is claimed to be established, however vaguely: 'Ane haly heremed quhar he [was]/As in autentik writ we reid' [75-6]. This necessarily takes us on to the question as to why in any case the story of Wallace's soul should have appeared in the Fyve Bestes collection. Its historical concerns make it distinctly unlike the others, and its variance is also reflected in its different formal division into eight-line stanzas as opposed to consecutive couplets. Its context is thus essentially dissimilar to that of Bower and Hary, but its aim is in many ways identical.

In the Wallace the passage comes near the conclusion as an appropriate indication of Wallace's salvation and lasting fame. In the Scotichronicon a similar determination to establish Wallace's reputation, part of what McDiarmid calls Bower's 'quasi-religious exaltation of Wallace' is manifest.⁷³ Bower depicts Wallace as a type for the sort of man deserving of good reputation, contrasted against two other sorts of men, traitors and tyrants, represented here by John Comyn and Edward I of England respectively. Both Hary and Bower were aware that Edward had had Wallace publically hanged and disembowelled in order to ensure that his reputation was tarnished and his status as a common criminal encouraged. Hary, although he mentions the manner of Wallace's death, refuses to dwell on it or to accept that his reputation is damaged: SP

73. Wallace, I, p.lxiv. P

... fair was his endyng,
Quhill spech and spreyt at-anys all can fayr
To lestand blys, we trow, for euirmayr.
I will nocht tell how he dewydyt was
In v partis and ordand for to pas.

Bower considers that Edward's motivation for hanging Wallace was this: 'In hoc iste tyrannus Eadwardus Angliae putabat famam nobilis Willelmi delere in perpetuum'.⁷⁴ The Wallace was clearly written partly to oppose such a fate and Bower's partisanship obviously stems from the same response.

Their assessment of the English reaction was of course entirely consonant with the English interpretation of events. The English literature dealing with Wallace's career and death uniformly sets him out as a rogue and a rebel who met the appropriate end. Caxton's Chronicles of England, a version of Trevisa's translation of the Polychronicon, for example, heads its chapter on the subject, 'Of the deth of William Waleis the false traitor', and goes on in similar vein to describe 'that ribaud William Waleys that never to the king wold him yelde ... on Seint Bartholomewes eve he was hanged and drawe and his hede smyten of and his bowels take oute of his body and brende, and his body quatred and sent to iiij the best tounes of Scotland, and his hede sette upon a spere & sette upon London bugge in example that the Scottes sholde have in mynde for to bere hem any ageins hir liege lord eftsones'.⁷⁵ It is apparent that such a damning repudiation of Wallace (some versions are even more detailed) is motivated in part by the reputation of his valour and prowess. Caxton's 'that never to the king wolde him yelde' recalls the manner of the hart's 'Thar was na force mycht gar him fald' [111]. Such vituperative accounts seem to have begun fairly soon after Wallace's death. The metrical

74. Wallace, Book XII, 1404-8; Bower, II, p.229.

75. The Chronicles of England, (1480), cap. clxxviii.

verses inserted in Langtoft's chronicle, for example, are very similar in material to the matter in Caxton.⁷⁶ And as Wright noted, the number of popular songs produced was probably sizeable: 'the enmity of the two nations was manifested in multitudes of songs, of which the greater part are lost'.⁷⁷ One such song dates from 1298, soon after the battle of Falkirk. Here Wallace is reviled, as elsewhere, for his humble origins and presumption in accepting the status of knighthood, and again the song proclaims the demise of his reputation:

Cadit, Waleys, tua laus, ut quid arma geris,
Ex quo gentem gladio tuam non tueris,
Jus est ut dominio tuo jam priveris.
Ast michi qui quondam semper asellus eris.
Eris in proverbium quod non praeteribit
Regnum tuum scissum est, et stare nequibit... 77

It was at least partly in response to such taunts that the Scottish tradition of magnifying Wallace's valour grew up. The hart's tale forms a contribution to this tradition, perhaps following soon after the first appearance of the Wallace in or around 1478, at a time when McDiarmid argues that some rapprochements by James III towards the English were causing anxiety about Scottish independence in certain quarters.⁷⁹ But other connections are equally possible. Kratzmann suggests that, 'It may be, for example, that the lines about standing "stedfast" against southern subjection are an oblique warning against James IV's policy of rapprochement with England, symbolized by

76. The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft, edited by Thomas Wright, 2 vols, Rolls Ser. 47a-b (1866-8), II, p.362.

77. The Political Songs of England, edited by Thomas Wright, Camden Society, 6 (1839), pp.159-60.

78. *Ibid.*, pp.176-7.

79. Wallace, I, pp.xiv-xxvi.

the royal marriage of 1503'.⁸⁰ The point being made could thus relate to specific political circumstances, perhaps even the period around 1488 and the new monarchy of James IV when quite a body of advice literature was composed or recopied. But the unspecific nature of the poem in general would seem to suggest also that it is a current literary and ideological preoccupation of the late fifteenth century that is being reflected rather than a comment occasioned by something in particular.

Certainly Scottish independence as personified by Wallace is stressed in the concluding stanzas of the tale:

Bot scotland ay defend he wald
Fra subiectioun of saxonis blud
Thus for his realme stedfast he stud [113-15]

The moralitas of the tale, however [ll. 119-126] is somewhat curious. After the fairly fluid eight-line stanzas, the final verse while still of eight lines, is composed of rather stiff and clumsy couplets. This formal uneasiness reflects a similar uncertainty in the moralizing. The first six lines establish the value of a just cause, the courage and fame it brings, and how it increases the grace of the souls of those who die in such causes. But there is a distinct lack of assurance and a failing of syntax in their expression:

Movand awert to haf ane querell gud
Quhat corage in a mannis hart It bringis
The fame of it how lovably It ryngis
And quhat of grace þe sely saull encreþ
Throw Iust batale quho so þairin deceþ [120-4]

The last two lines then rather lamely put another point of view:

80. Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.39.

Bot never eles quhat euer þe pepill deme
The gud of pece þair can no man expreme [125-6]

The message to a monarch is thus two-fold but rather blurred: a just cause, particularly Scottish independence, is worth fighting for, but peace is also of great value - no matter what the popular feeling may be. The argument is left rather unresolved and compromised. As with the first tale, this is not a prescriptive work, and no specific advice is given to the king, nor is specific criticism made. Yet, although not expanded upon, the suggestion that reason may advocate peace against the common wish is an interesting one. The ideal of peace which the just ruler should espouse was very much a part of the conciliarist tradition espoused by Jean Gerson in France and particularly manifest in Scotland in the writings of John Ireland.⁸¹

As in the horse's tale then, the just action is not carried out by the monarch but by another acting in his interests. Wallace is perhaps a usefully diplomatic example in this context since he had no pretensions to the crown. His defence of the independence of Scotland may thus be exalted without being seen to challenge the order of monarchy.⁸² But that monarchy is neither exalted itself nor criticized; its role in this poem is very much to listen to reason.

Although both the horse's and the hart's tales are concerned with the salvation of souls and with justice they have little more overtly in common. Likewise the unicorn's tale can hardly be said to follow on with any schematic succession to the hart's. The source for this tale, as we have seen, was the twelfth-century anti-clerical Latin satire by Nigel of Longchamps, the

81. See Ch.8, pp.363-4.

82. Cf. Lyall, 'Narrative Technique', p.53.

Speculum Stultorum, a work that was extremely popular during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Most of the forty or so surviving manuscripts date from this period, and there were six editions printed in Europe before 1500. The work was also frequently borrowed from, those who did so including Gerald of Wales, Odo of Cheriton, Boccaccio, Chaucer and Gower.⁸³ It was not, however, much translated, the unicorn's tale being indeed the only known British translation of a part of the work - the story of Gundulfus and the cock.⁸⁴

The version of the episode in the Fyve Bestes differs in a number of ways from the original, principally in simplifying and condensing much of the material. This tale is also distinctive, as Gregory Kratzmann has so well shown, for its skilful Chaucerian pastiche.⁸⁵ Kratzmann is though perhaps a little hard on the Speculum when he claims that there is 'no precedent' for the characterization of the lordly cock in the unicorn's tale in the Latin work. For there are sharp exchanges of dialogue between the cock and his wife in the Speculum, providing an obvious spur for the cock's neo-Chaucerian response to his wife in the unicorn's tale that 'madame/Wysest 3e ar quhen þat 3e hald 3ow still/And 3it 3e wyfis evir speike 3e will/Dame Intromet 3ow in 3our wyfis deid' [232-5]:

... Noli vexare, quiesce!
Semper eris stulta; stulta, recede, precor!
Vae cui stulta comes sociali foedra nupsit!
Non erit illius absque dolere torus;⁸⁶

83. Speculum Stultorum, pp.9-16.

84. *Ibid.*, p.8.

85. Kratzmann, Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, pp.94-9.

86. Speculum, ll. 1365-8.

In essence, the story in the unicorn's tale is simplified on several levels. The most obvious omission is Gundulfus' dream, which comes mid-way in the equivalent part of the Speculum. Indeed, time is much condensed in the unicorn's tale. Simpler, too, are the sentiments involved: the cock is rendered free of pain and of 'gud cheire' [263] by his success in ruining his old enemy's chances of obtaining a benefice, whereas in the Speculum the cock merely feels that he has made Gundulfus atone for his spiritual suffering. But the most significant difference comes, as Kratzmann notes, in the different treatment given to the cock in both the end of the story and the moralization.⁸⁷ In the Speculum, the cock is blamed by his wife for the downfall of Gundulfus and the ruin of his family; the unicorn's tale omits this. Why it should do so is made clear in the allegorizing. In the Speculum, the allegory is part of a general criticism of ambitious, grudging monks, 'who, like the cock, cannot forget the smallest injury until they are avenged'.⁸⁸ In the unicorn's tale, on the other hand, a quite new, if rather standard, interpretation is introduced. The cock, rather than being the object of criticism, is interpreted as a type for the poor who, if oppressed by the 'lord and rewar of his land' [270] will ultimately rebel against him. This is reminiscent of Henryson's sentiments in 'The Lion and the Mouse', and of 'The Wolf and the Lamb'.⁸⁹ But, characteristically, the moral phrasing and sentiments remain generalized, with no admonition as to how the monarch should avoid oppressing the poor, and the poem here lacks the urgency of works that address themselves forcibly to this subject, such as Henryson's Fables or De Regimine Principum.

87. Kratzmann, Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, p.94.

88. Mozley and Raymo in Speculum, p.3.

89. Cf. Kratzmann, Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, p.95.

The choice of morality is also rather Henrysonian in its unlikeliness, since the tale hardly prepares one for the moralizing that follows.⁹⁰ However, this tale is also distinguished from the others in another way. It takes place not in Scotland but in Kent: in the Speculum the events take place in Apulia. Had the author wanted to make the parallel between an oppressive ruler and the (potential) situation in Scotland really powerful the obvious solution would have been to reset the story in Scotland. That this is not done is in keeping with the diplomatic nature of the poem. The morality is kept imprecise. Though a monarch is at last addressed directly, it is in such a conjectural way 'Gif ge be lord and rewar of þis land/3e schape 3ow nocht for till oppreþe pure' [270-1] as hardly to suggest it is being aimed at a particular sovereign. We should also not forget that The Talis of the Fyve Bestes is clearly designed to entertain as well as advise, as the wittiness of the Chaucerian mannerisms well indicates.⁹¹

It is perhaps of some interest to note that there is some evidence of MSS containing the Speculum Stultorum also containing material of Scottish interest. MS Bodley 761 contains, along with some medicinal and herbal material, the Speculum and Baker's Chronicle, an important source for historical Scottish records, especially on the battle of Neville's Cross; in MS Bodley 851 the Speculum is sandwiched between political material including Bridlington's prophecies, and a poem on Neville's Cross, which is one of those containing vituperative criticism of the Wallace. Another MS, All Souls 37

90. Cf. Lyall, 'Narrative Technique', p.53.

91. Kratzmann ('Fyve Bestes', p.34) claims that 'The final moralitas which represents the Unicorn as "magnanimite" is in one important respect truer to the spirit of the story than is the first moral about the consequences of oppressing the poor, in that the tale of the cock's victory over the negligent clerk may be seen as an ingenious definition of magnanimity in terms of its opposite'. But this is surely over-ingenious and strained.

places the Speculum not with Scottish material but with the Flores Historiarum of the chronicles that contains the Richard I story. One can suggest no more than that such a political context may have prompted the nature of the moralitas in the unicorn's tale had our author seen the work in such a context.

For the source of the boar's tale, the encounter between Alexander and the philosopher, where Alexander's rash vow to do the reverse of whatever the philosopher asks of him rebounds upon him and ensures the safety of the city of Lapsat which he had intended to destroy, we return to the exempla tradition. This exemplum was already well established within the advice corpus. It appears in Valerius Maximus' Factorum et dictorum memorabilium and was used in the Ludus scaccorum; subsequent versions draw principally from these works.⁹² There were a number of English renditions, including a rather muddled account in the Alphabet of Tales and a version in Hoccleve's Regement of Princes which will be discussed below. Neither the Alphabet nor Caxton's English version has much in common with the Fyve Bestes; Caxton's version does not veer greatly from the source and is delivered in the low-key manner that characterizes his less adventurous translations. His avoidance of direct speech may be well contrasted with the lively dialogue of the boar's tale.⁹³ More similar to the latter is the partial version in the Scots translation of

92. Valerius Maximus, Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri novem edited by Charles Halm (Leipzig, 1865) Liber VII, cap. iii, Ext. 4, pp.345-6. Cf. William Caxton, The Game and Playe of the Chesse, 1474, edited by William E.A. Axon (1883, repr. 1970), pp.21-2.

93. Cf. ll. 320-43 of the boar's tale with Caxton's account:

And whan he sawe Alixandre he supposid to haue axid his
requeste/Alixandre brake his demande to fore and swore to hym
to fore he axid ony thyng by his goddes. That suche thyng
as he axid or requyrd of hym/he wold in no wyse doon/Than the
philosopher requyred hym to destroye the cyte; Game and Playe
of the Chesse, p.22.

the Ludus scaccorum, The Buke of the Chess, which is of course also in the Asloan MS. But unfortunately there is a gap in the MS just after the opening of the relevant passage. However it begins:

A kingis word in till effect suld stand
Mor þan þe aith of ony fre merchand
Alexander he tynt þe tovne lapsat 94
For rekleslye he swor in his estait

The phrasing here recalls the conclusion of the boar's tale:

Ane kyngis word in till effect suld bene
More preciouþ in worschipe of his crowne
Than gud or gold or ony wallit tovne [354-6]

Moreover, the only instances of the phrase 'in till effect' noted in the DOST are in these two works.⁹⁵ Given their other stylistic links, it is certainly tempting to suggest common authorship, or at least mutual acquaintance.⁹⁶

The exemplum is also given lengthy treatment in another Scottish work, Sir Gilbert Hay's Buik of King Alexander. This, however, is a far more extended and dramatized rendering, differing from the boar's tale in many details. Here, for example, the city in question is Athens, and the lengthy narrative contrives to show both the skilfully strategic counselling of Aristotle⁹⁷ and the worthiness of Alexander. There are also numerous other narrative threads worked in, such as the sub-theme of the treachery of

94. Asloan MS, I, p.92 (ll. 357-60).

95. DOST, effect, n, 36, citing here l. 143 (using 'in/to effect') from The Buke of the Chess.

96. Cf. above, p.203, and more detailed discussion in Ch. 5, pp.250-1.

97. BL, Add. MS 40732, fols 70^V-4^V. Hay's identification of the philosopher as Aristotle is in keeping with his portrayal of Aristotle as a mentor of Alexander in the Buik of King Alexander (cf. Ch. 2, pp.106-7). More commonly the philosopher was named as Anaximenes.

Transagorus, which means that the Athenians do not take their decision of resistance 'With ane assent' as do the people of Lapsat.⁹⁸ It would thus seem more likely that if the author of The Talis of the Fyve Bestes knew Hay's poem, he was inspired by it to include an exemplum within a broadly similar advice context rather than in any point of detail.

There are also similarities between the Fyve Bestes version and the account in Hoccleve's Regement of Princes, a work very likely to have been circulating in manuscript form in Scotland in the late fifteenth century.⁹⁹ Hoccleve was working, as frequently, from the Ludus scaccorum, but he amplifies his material by extending the narrative with description and dialogue, treatment also given to it in the boar's tale. Hoccleve also extends the morality that a king should swear with caution and always keep his oath, by bringing in another authority to show how swearing may lead to perjury. The morality of the boar's tale also differs somewhat from the conventional form, as will be shown below, though it is also different from Hoccleve's. However, there are smaller similarities too: both name the town 'lapsat' whereas in Caxton it is rendered 'Lapsare' and in Valerius Maximus and numerous other versions 'Lampsascus'.¹⁰⁰ And neither of them actually names the philosopher. There are also a number of resemblances in phrasing, but this is perhaps hardly surprising in accounts that are still in many places adhering fairly closely to the original form.¹⁰¹

98. See below, p.238.

99. M.C. Seymour, 'The Manuscripts of Hoccleve's Regement of Princes', Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions, 4 (1974), 253-97; The Regement of Princes, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS, E. Ser. 72 (1897).

100. It is also of course 'lapsat' in The Buke of the Chess.

101. 'Purposynge bete it to þe erthe adoun' (Regement, 2309), 'And in entent to cast þe cite doun' (Fyve Bestes, 315); 'And or þat this kyng fully cam ther-at' (Regement, 2306), 'So or þis ost was commyn to this toune' (Fyve Bestes, 325); 'That to this kyng somtyme had maister be' (Regement, 2309), 'And had bene master to þis riall kyng' (Fyve Bestes, 321).

Indeed it still remains that this tale is distinguished from Hoccleve and all the others by its freedom or reference and expansion of the existing material. New material enters the exemplum from its opening lines onwards, when the poet makes it known that Alexander 'of þe nyne nobillis was one' [290], and sets out how Alexander invokes the example of the 'tovne of tyre' to the people of 'lapsat' in order to encourage them to give in to him [ll. 296-9]. Although the destruction of Tyre was an established feature in the Alexander legends mention of it is not made in any other version of this story.¹⁰² Another highly significant addition is that the response of the citizens of Lapsat to Alexander's demand for their submission is lengthily set out in uncompromising language:

That quhill we leif we will þis tovne defend
 In sic fredome as our antecessouris
 Has left till ws and till þis tovne of owris
 Erar we cheiþ with worschipe for to de
 Than for to leif in subiectioun to be
 And in þis querell maid þaim Ilkone bovine
 With ane assent to defend þis toune [302-8]

Such a categorically unanimous statement by a commonly united people (no ruler is distinguished here!) makes a striking addition to the narrative and revives the tone of fervent national independence seen in the hart's tale, using some of the same terms, such as 'subiectioun' and 'querell'.¹⁰³ Alexander's response is to set out for the town 'with ane ost þe riallest of one/Of kyngis and princis and worthy men of weire' [312-13], detail again not found in other accounts, although in Hay's the king is among his 'douzeperis'. (We should recall that the four counselling beasts are themselves described in terms such as 'riall'.)

102. See for example ll. 1581-1654 of Kyng Alisaunder, edited by G.V. Smithers, 2 vols, EETS O. Ser. 227, 237 (1952-7).

103. Cf. ll. 114, 120; also Lyall, 'Narrative Technique', pp.57-8.

Like Hoccleve, the author of the boar's tale chooses to use direct speech for the confrontation between philosopher and king, adding once more small details of narrative description that even Hoccleve does not include. For instance, we are told of the philosopher that 'our all thing þis toвне he lufit best' [323] and that 'This clerk on kneis befor þis king fell doune' [326]. Further, once rejected by the king, the philosopher, instead of replying as he does elsewhere with the astute retort that saves the city, introduces the doctrinal theme that is later taken up in the moralitas, thus closely linking the two parts: 'A kingis word in more effect suld be/Than ony of lawar degre' [334-5], and he then draws attention to what the results of the king's alternative response would be:

Now may 3e cheiþ to lat 3our wordis stand
 And tyne þe cost or tak þis toвне on hand
 And brek 3our word befor þis riall rowte [342-4]

This is good craftsmanship for the introduction of the 'riallest' host earlier now makes greater sense. The king's dilemma is heightened by the fact that he took an oath before such an exalted company.¹⁰⁴ Yet, in another significant addition to the tale, the company can also provide the king with advisers: 'The king ... /To counsall 3eid and quhen he was degest/To tyne þis cost erar he thocht it best/Than for to breke þe wordis þat he spak' [345-7].

The morality continues the expansion and reinterpretation. The point made in all versions is put, that a king should value and take care to keep his word. But, having reiterated this, the morality then branches out into ideas not linked elsewhere with the tale:

104. Kratzmann notes also that 'The detail of losing the cost is absent from the other versions' ('Fyve Bestes', p.136); for the legalistic connotations of the term, cf. Ch. 1, p.36.

Or gif a kyng has said or done amyß
That to Justice oucht grevand is
It Is more worschipe till his hie estait
For to revoke þan to be obstinat [361-4]

There are slight echoes of the mouse's appeal to the lion in Henryson's fable, but the inference goes further. The implication is that monarch and justice are separate entities, that a king can be judged against an absolute of justice as much as anyone. In Scottish advice literature it is of course common to find remonstrances being made to the king as the chief representative of justice that he should keep his house in order; yet the inclusion of a similar argument here is intriguing, particularly since it in practice contradicts the events of the tale, where the king does have to keep his word. Clearly the poet felt it necessary to establish, however gently, the potential fallibility of the monarch; but having done so we should observe that he also shows that the power of correction is seen to reside within the king himself, rather than being imposed from the outside. Thus tale and morality together offer an effective compromise. In the tale a king is shown needing advice and advisers, but the ultimate assertion in the moralitas is that he will possess within himself the means of recognizing an unjust deed. The need for advice is thus established, but the judgement of the king is not really challenged. This idea is carried through into the action of the final episode and the allegorizing of it, where we see the king acting in response to a complaint and arriving at a decision that is both the product of advice and the domination of virtue over vice in his own mind.

So, rather neatly in fact, we now move from the final tale actually depicting a king to the actions of a monarch himself. The 'wolfis tale', though so designated in the MS, is not of course a tale in the way in which the four preceding tales are. There are other differences too. Unlike the four ornate creatures who make their way to the king and gesture with obeisance, the loathsome wolf is already lurking close at hand. As we have

noted, his dress suggests he is, or is assuming the disguise of, a Franciscan friar.¹⁰⁵ His approach to the lion is not one of reverential advice, but of complaining on behalf of the 'common proffet' [378], making himself the mouth-piece of the common people. The protection of the people and the nation has, we recall, featured as a theme in the other tales. The wolf describes how the king's 'schepe and nolt distroyit ar & deid' [381], and suggests that in order to let them revive the king should turn to eating 'wenysoun and wyld meit ... And ... gret bestis' [385-6]. The implication is therefore that the king lion should consume his counsellors. The monarch well understands this, and its ramifications 'Than quha wald byde and of my counsall be' [392]; his counsellors, moreover, are also his kinsmen, 'My cosingis of my counsall' [390].¹⁰⁶ The suggestion that he should be without such advisers is clearly untenable to him, and his natural solution is to seek their advice and so get to the real cause of the problem. Discovering that it is in fact the ravaging attacks of the wolf's allies, he 'with all þar hale awyþ' exiles him.

We might note here the use of the term 'allya' [374, 396] to describe those whom the wolf is trying to bring into court and who are responsible for pillaging the land. The king and his 'cosingis' are in opposition to a group possibly of kinsmen or sworn allies, something which was a perennial liability for rulers of Scotland.¹⁰⁷ The scene is however hardly sufficiently detailed to prompt a closer identification with particular individuals or circumstances. Similarly, we might speculate as to whether we should see in

105. Cf. Henryson's 'Freir Volff Waitaskaith' ('Fox and Wolf', 667), and Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', pp.136-7.

106. There is a potential point of confusion here in that the king's 'schepe and nolt' (381) are presumably his common people, whom he should protect rather than consume. But see Kratzmann, 'Fyve Bestes', p.137.

107. Wormald, esp. pp.76-90.

the statement that the king's counsellors are also his kinsmen a veiled contemporary reference to the vested interests of those nobles especially close to a particular king. Certainly the heraldic imagery might imply so, but the greater emphasis of the passage is on the conjunction of counsel and balanced judgement that was made prominent in the preceding tale. Nor does the poem pursue the political theme; it rather, in a similar manner to The Thre Prestis of Peblis, broadens out to remind the audience that death and final judgement await everyone. Unlike The Thre Prestis, or Lancelot of the Laik, or indeed 'The Lion and the Mouse', however, we have no sense that the monarch has moved from a position of relative ignorance to one of sound understanding. This king is already in possession of reason, but always in conjunction with his noble counsellors. Further, there seems to be no question of criticizing the king for the fact that his country has been ravaged in the attacks. The fault lies in the perpetrator of evil counsel, and by removing him order is restored. We might bear in mind here that the wolf is only exiled, not executed. This is of course a further manifestation of measured kingly justice, but it also perhaps serves to suggest that we are not invited to feel that the country is under threat from within. Yet it may be so from without. We have seen that the Wallace story and the vehemently independent response of the threatened citizens of Lapsat may have a propagandist role in discouraging relations with the English. But can we on that basis start dating the poem to the late 1470s? Only if we are happy to extend the argument to the rest of the poem and conclude that the reasonable and wise-acting king to whom the tales are addressed is James III - so often cited as a prime candidate for the butts of more critical advice literature! I think that we must conclude that the poem is deliberately generalized in much of its advice, though distinguished by its nationalism, and not aimed necessarily at a particular monarch or a particular state of events. It gains a further distinctiveness in its clear concern to establish the interdependence of king and counsellors

as a broad principle. Indeed, the poet offers the final allegorization of the vice and virtues 'be myne awyß' [405], thus working himself directly into the advice-giving of the poem. Whether the heraldic depiction of the beasts is acting out a more personal concealed message, we shall probably never know.

Chapter 5

The Buke of the Chess

Among the relatively small number of surviving early printed books owned by Scotsmen is a volume, now British Library C 54.d.3, containing three works in French: a version of the Ludus scaccorum of Jacobus de Cessolis, originally composed c. 1275 and translated into French in the fourteenth century, Le Jeu des eschez moralisé; Ramon Lull's L'Ordre de chevalerie; and Melibee et Prudence (in extract), printed in Paris by Verart in 1504-5.¹ The volume was owned by James Oglivie, whose name appears on the title page, along with that of its subsequent owner: 'Liber magistri Jacobi oglivy Canonici Aberdonen', 'Et nunc georgii gordon de methlak 1524'.² There are two principal candidates for identification as this James Oglivie, but he seems most likely to have been the notable churchman with quite considerable involvement in affairs of state, who was the first professor of civil law at Aberdeen University and who died in Paris in 1518.³

This edition and Oglivie's ownership of it, are interesting for a number of reasons. In the first instance we might note that Le Jeu des eschez moralisé is combined with two works we have already encountered in connection

1. John Durkan and Anthony Ross, Early Scottish Libraries (Glasgow, 1961), p.183; cf. p.134 for another book known to have been owned by Oglivie, then 'abbatis de driburgh', Gratian's Decretum (Paris, 1507); Antonius van der Linde, Geschichte und Literatur des Schachspiels, 2 vols (Berlin, 1874), I, pp. 120-1; William Caxton, The Game and Playe of the Chesse, 1474, edited by William E.A. Axon, 1983, repr. 1970; hereafter Caxton, GPC), pp.xli-ii. There were two roughly contemporaneous French translations both used by Caxton, by Jean Ferron and Jean de Vignay, the latter more extensively.

2. Durkan and Ross, p.183.

3. Copiale Prioratus Sanctiandree, edited by J.H. Baxter (Oxford, 1930), p.496. Baxter claimed (pp.495-7) that this Oglivie was the same as the figure prominent in the Council of Basle in the 1440s, and who had a long career associated with the University of St Andrews and a number of continental universities. This view is echoed by John Durkan and James Kirk in The University of Glasgow, 1451-1577 (Glasgow, 1977), pp.111-12. But as J.H. Burns has pointed out, this would have made him a near-centenarian in the second decade of the sixteenth century when he was still active: Scottish Churchmen and the Council of Basle (Glasgow, 1962), pp.73-4.

with advice to princes literature. L'Ordre de chevalerie and Melibee et Prudence are two of the works in St John's College Oxford MS 102, which also contains Le Livre dou gouvernement des rois, the first and last of which were translated into Scots by Gilbert Hay, probably from a manuscript in this tradition.⁴ The collection of the three works in Oglivie's volume may reproduce a similar manuscript grouping since in British Library MS Royal 19 C xi, for example, there is a Jeu des eschez moralisé along with a Melibee et Prudence.⁵ It is thus possible that French versions of the Ludus scaccorum were circulating in Scotland in manuscript in the fifteenth century, though no copies have survived.

Slight though the evidence may be, it seems highly unlikely that Oglivie was greatly distinguished among literate Scotsmen in his acquaintance with the Ludus scaccorum, for the work was one of the most popular of medieval moral pieces. Oglivie who had travelled frequently abroad, as in 1514 when he was despatched to France to request the Duke of Albany to return as regent, may well have acquired his copy on the continent;⁷ but in any event it is interesting that he had a French version in his possession, rather than Caxton's English translation (the first, and based on the two French versions), which had been printed in 1475, and again in 1483.⁸ That the English translation was perhaps not widely available in Scotland may be

4. See Ch. 2, p.57.

5. For the French MSS, van der Linde, I, pp.114-20, although unfortunately the other contents of the MSS are not listed.

6. Oglivie's edition appears to be the first printed edition of a French version. For printed editions, van der Linde, I, pp.120-1; Caxton, GPC, pp. xli-xlii.

7. Baxter, p.496.

8. Caxton, GPC, pp.x-xix; The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton, edited by W.J.B. Crotch, EETS, O. Ser. 176 (1928, repr. 1956), pp.cix-ci.

suggested by the fact that the translator of The Buke of the Chess included by Asloan in his manuscript did not base his Scots version on it. Nor did he, however, use a French version: comparison of names, stylistic analysis, and the presence of material in the Scots version not found in the English but present in the Latin, shows that the Scots author had access to a Latin version.⁹ However, the overlap in phrasing in some instances between the Scots and English versions is, as we shall see, so close that the possibility that the Scots author also consulted Caxton's version should not be completely discounted until a more detailed textual study of the work has been carried out.¹⁰ Nor is it possible yet, concerning the Latin source, to say whether the Scot was translating from a manuscript or printed witness. The task is a daunting one, since there are about eighty manuscripts of the Latin version, which was also printed at least four times before 1530.¹¹

The use of the Latin version may simply have arisen because this was the form in which the work was most available to the translator, but the manuscript traditions of the work are worthy of a little further consideration. We have seen that in Oglivie's volume it was to be found in the company of

9. This was noted by W.A. Craigie in The Asloan Manuscript, 2 vols, STS, New Ser. 14, 16 (1923-5), I, pp.v-vi; all quotations from The Buke of the Chess are taken from this edition. The Buke of the Chess contains two exempla in the section on the king, ll. 319-51, not found in Caxton's version, but present in the Latin. See Das Schachzabelbuch Kunrats von Ammenhausen nebst den Schachbüchern des Jakob von Cessole und des Jakob Mennel, edited by Ferdinand Vetter (Frauenfeld, 1892), cols 91-4; here the Latin is printed beneath the German text. There is also an edition by Ernst Köpke, Iacobus de Cessolis, Mittheilungen aus den Handschriften der Ritter-Akademie zu Brandenburg A.H. II (Brandenburg, 1879).

10. See below, pp.262-4. The Buke of the Chess is being edited for the Scottish Text Society by Dr C.C. van Buuren-Veenenbos, who is at present researching the textual transmission of the Latin version (private communication, July 1985).

11. Latin MSS and prints are listed by van der Linde, I, pp.104-14; see also Caxton, GPC, pp.xxviii; Jill Mann, Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire (Cambridge, 1973), p.300.

works of a chivalric and moral nature, but it is also to be found in both French and Latin MSS alongside works of a more overtly spiritual as well as moral character. Thus in British Library MS Add. 20, 697, a French version by Jean Fevrou is included with a treatise on 'la sainte abbaye' and a French version of the Lignum vitae of St Bernard. And in some Latin MSS, moreover, we find it in conjunction with a work which combined spiritual advice with instruction to princes. All three of the Latin MSS of the Ludus scaccorum in the Bodleian Library, for example, contain also the Breviloquium de quattuor virtutibus cardinalibus by the thirteenth-century Franciscan Johannes Wallensis, which Manzalaoui describes as a 'conscious attempt to supplement the non-Christian ethics of the Secreta Secretorum, and so bring it into closer and fuller conformity with the highest and widest mediaeval ethos'.¹² Two of these Latin MSS also contain the De cura rei familiaris, attributed to St Bernard, a work instructing a knight on the governance of himself and of his household, which has much overlap with the general premises of advice literature, and which was also rendered into Scots in the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century.¹³

Thus, rather like Colonna's De regimine principum, which is included in MSS with both Vegetius' De rei militari and commentaries on Aristotle's Ethics and De anima, the Ludus scaccorum was circulating in the company of pieces both chivalric and pronouncedly spiritual. This may be of some relevance to

12. M.A. Manzalaoui, 'The Secreta Secretorum in English Thought and Literature from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century', 2 vols (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1954), I, p.174. MS Bodley 881 also contains a seven-part Eruditio regum et principum by a Dominican; this is apparently different from the work by Gilbert of Tournai, which Manzalaoui (I, p.423) notes is included with the Breviloquium in MS Jesus 18.

13. Bernardus de cura rei familiaris, with some Early Scottish Prophecies, &c, edited by J. Rawson Lumby, EETS, O. Ser. 42 (1870). This is of course another example of direct translation from Latin by a Scot.

the slightly curious placing of The Buke of the Chess in the Asloan MS. Unlike most medieval versions of the work, including Caxton's, The Buke of the Chess is in verse.¹⁴ It is the second main item in the MS, after the treatise by Ireland on penance and confession, but it is the only piece of verse among the first ten items. The Asloan MS is in fact divided quite neatly between prose and verse. All the items that have survived following the last prose piece, on the Sex Werkdayis and Agis, are in verse, although this is not to say that the same would have been the case for all the now-missing pieces, although probably for the majority.¹⁵ It would seem that for Asloan there was some general felt distinction between the two sorts of material, and the most obvious would appear to be a separation of instructional or historical pieces and more imaginative literature. The Buke of the Chess may be placed where it is simply because the poem came into Asloan's hands at that point, but he may also have felt it to be more fittingly placed amidst the more serious moral works. If Asloan had encountered the work in the context of moralistic and spiritually advisory pieces in other MSS this too might have heightened his sense of its greater appropriateness to the context of the prose material.

Though it was so popular a work, Caxton's translation and the Scots version are in fact the only renditions of the Ludus scaccorum in British vernaculars in the Middle Ages; in this respect it is again more like De

14. The German version by Kunrat von Ammenhausen is in verse; an MS of a French verse version is mentioned by van der Linde, I, p.122.

15. It is obvious that many pieces of which we have other witnesses, were in verse, such as The Testament of Cresseid and The Golden Targe, as were presumably the many ballats that are mentioned in the contents list, and other works such as þe buke of colkelby. Indeed the only pieces that would seem more likely to have been in prose are þe document of Sir gilbert hay and the two items before and after it, which may also be by Hay (See Ch. 2, pp.60-2). But if Hay had originally written the advice section of the Buik of King Alexander as a separate piece of verse, þe Regiment of kingis with þe buke of phisnomy might also be a piece of verse writing.

regimine principium than the Secreta Secretorum. The precise reasons for the making of the Scots translation remain of course obscure. There is nothing to show that it was a commission, and no author is named in the contents list of the Asloan MS or at the work's conclusion. However, The Buke of the Chess does have a number of interesting links with another piece in the same MS, which would be well worthy of more detailed study. It shares certain characteristics of phrasing with The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, as well as including the same exemplum, of Alexander's rash boast at Lapsat, although unfortunately copy is lacking in the Asloan MS just after the opening of this passage. Moreover, as we have seen, the unicorn's tale in the Fyve Bestes is a rendition from a Latin source, the Speculum Stultorum, with no known intermediary. While The Buke of the Chess does not exhibit much of the polished or witty style occasionally achieved by The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, the author is not an insensitive translator. The two pieces are of course also linked by their advice to princes element. It might be argued here that common authorship is made less likely by the fact that The Talis of the Fyve Bestes is, as far as we can tell, an original composition, and The Buke of the Chess shows little innovation or originality. Yet the Fyve Bestes is based on exempla and does not venture greatly into moral exposition, being very much part of the more generalized, less specific category of Scottish advice writing, of which The Buke of the Chess is perhaps the classic example. Linking of the two poems would also necessarily throw up questions of date, but their very generality makes it impossible to ascribe them to anything more precise than the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, though again more detailed textual and linguistic study may enable a closer dating.¹⁶

16. Gregory Kratzmann in his edition of 'Colkelbie Sow' and 'The Talis of the Fyve Bestes' (1983), notes that 'Stylistically, there are marked resemblances between the two works, which may indicate common authorship' (p.27), but he does not provide any detailed analysis beyond noting that 'The loose linking

To a great extent of course this generalized aspect of The Buke of the Chess is dictated by the nature and form of the original Ludus scaccorum itself. And like L'Arbre des batailles or L'Ordre de chevalerie, the Ludus scaccorum is not solely an advice to princes work, but it contains a fair amount of advice and the king is a central structural and thematic figure. The Ludus scaccorum is based on the analogy between society and the pieces of a game of chess. The work is divided into four parts comprising an account of the origins of the game; description of the nature and function of the king, queen, bishops, knight, and rooks; description of the same of the pawns who represent different trades and offices from tavern-keeper to notary; and lastly setting out the movements of each piece, what it may and may not do within its allotted role in society. In each section the points are illustrated by exempla.

The king is patently the key piece in the game of chess, and all other pieces are defined in relation to him. The Ludus scaccorum thus contains its advice to monarchs both directly and indirectly: directly in the sections setting out his significance and functions; indirectly through the depiction of the other pieces carrying out their responsibilities in (ultimate) service of the king, and through the exempla therein which frequently feature rulers.

16. cont.

of clauses by a series of and's [sic] is a regrettable feature of the FB-poet's style ... This kind of construction is also marked in The Buke of the Chess' (p.126). Among similarities in phrasing should be noted 'be myne awyß' (BC, 97; FB (Asloan MS) 405; 'erar for to de/Than for to leif & to behald & se' (BC, 111-12), 'Erar we cheiß with worschipe for to de/Than for to leif in subiectioun to be' (FB, 305-6), 'Takyne he was and...' (BC, 121), 'Takin þai war and ...' (FB, 10); 'This worthy prince he was awysit sone' (BC, 282), 'Thir worthy folk war awysit sone' (FB, 300; both rhyming with done); 'And be þir thre ge sall weile vnderstand' (BC, 1570), 'Now be þis tale ge sall wele wnderstand' (FB, 269).

Both works are dated c.1500 by the DOST. For a useful summary of the general dating of the works surviving in the Asloan MS see Appendix II, 'Dates of the Items in the Asloan Manuscript' in The Buke of the Sevyne Sagis, edited by Catherine van Buuren (Leiden, 1982), pp.418-19.

The Ludus scaccorum was not, however, original in its moral and political advice, but drew heavily on the Secreta and Colonna's De regimine principum, and for many of its exempla on Valerius Maximus' Factorum et dictorum memorabilium.¹⁷ As I have said, the Scots version is similarly generalized, although it does manifest occasional Scottish legalisms, which though relatively undeveloped suggests an acquaintance with other Scots advice pieces.¹⁸ In comparison, Caxton's English version makes the connection between the advice given and the present state of England most manifest in several places.¹⁹

Comparison with Caxton's edition, which is a fairly careful and complete translation from the French, also usefully illustrates how closely the Scots author kept to the substance of his text and, as I have suggested, there remains the possibility that he did consult the English edition and make use of its phrasing. Comparison must also be made with the Latin text in order to show his occasional divergences and some of his stylistic traits, although with regard to the former it must always be borne in mind that the author could have been working from a version containing these features not represented among those I have consulted.²⁰ This is also a possible (but I think not particularly likely) explanation for another way in which the Scots version differs from the Latin and English versions, which is that in many

17. Caxton, GPC, pp.xxviii; liv-lxxi; Vetter also provides comprehensive lists of sources and analogues in the notes to his edition, passim.

18. See below, pp.262-9.

19. Caxton, GPC, pp.xxxiv-xxxvi; Prologues and Epilogues, pp.c-ci.

20. .In addition to the editions of Vetter (using one MS and collating other witnesses including Köpke's edition cited above, note 9), I have consulted a 1505 Latin printed edition, the Tractatus de scachis, and the three fifteenth-century MSS in the Bodleian Library, MSS Bodley 58, 881, and Hatton 105. Quotation will be from Vetter's edition, with indicated emendation in square brackets in places. For Vetter's witnesses, see pp.25-6 of his edition.

places the author cuts or drastically abbreviates the text, particularly the exempla. This is especially marked in the later sections of the work, as Craigie noted.²¹ It may be accounted for by the translator having simply become wearied of his task and seeking to curtail it as swiftly as he could. But there also seems to be a certain patterning in his cutting, with the omission or abridgement of material which could be seen as repetitious or unnecessary to the argument, thus paring the work down to a far sparser piece. Thus the passage 'de libertate' in the section concerned with the rook is reduced to only fifteen lines [ll. 1296-1309], probably because the quality had already been dealt with in the section on the knight [ll. 986-1033].²² Such treatment does not fundamentally refocus The Buke of the Chess, but it does, if anything, heighten the sense of the status of the king within it, or certainly the roles of those defined as great lords or officers. There is the usual overlap between the roles of kings and knights, but the Scottish author's phrasing also evokes the application of much of the doctrine given to princes as well as their representatives in other sections. Thus in the section on the rook, 'Lordis suld be of gret humilite/The grettest lord maist humble suld he be' [1256-7] and 'Princis þat bene Richt werraye liberall/For falt of men þir princis may nocht faile' [1296-7]. This is implicit, but less overtly stated in the Latin.²³ The highly abridged form of the third and fourth sections also suggests that the author was more interested in the

21. Asloan MS, I, p.vi.

22. The Scots poet condenses the two exempla he gives and cuts another altogether; cf. Vetter, cols. 355-63, and Caxton, GPC, pp.71-2.

23. Cf. the phrasing of the Latin, avoiding the subject: 'Humiles enim esse debent. Quanto enim maior es, tanto humilia te omnibus'; 'Liberales [eos] decet esse, ut per liberalitatem et munera populum a labore [allevient]'; Vetter, cols. 333-4, 355-6, emended by Tractatus de scachis, Sig. D ii^r-v; MS Bodley 58, fol. 84^r; MS Bodley 881, fol. 17^v; MS Hatton 105, fols. 31^v-2^r.

material in the earlier parts.²⁴

Such conventionality makes it difficult to posit The Buke of the Chess as a particularly influential advice work itself, since where it overlaps with other Scots advice pieces there is little reason to presume that their authors could not have encountered the advice or exempla in many other places.²⁵ The exception here is of course The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, but The Buke of the Chess is also interesting for what it intermittently reveals of its authors' reception of advice features and idioms. The following account is necessarily a very selective study of the poem. P

The Buke of the Chess is also distinguished from Caxton's version and the principal Latin witnesses by its forty-line prologue. I have not encountered this in those witnesses I have consulted, but the general lack of innovation in the Scots version makes it perhaps less likely that this is an original feature, and location of an MS or group of MSS (or prints) with this prologue would clearly go some considerable way towards more closely identifying the version from which the poet was working. The prologue is additionally interesting because it has a slightly neo-Chaucerian or neo-Lydgatian tone, which, though not the adept mimicry of the unicorn's tale, might again prompt the suggestion of common authorship with The Talis of the Fyve Bestes. It opens in astrological vein, describing how 'Sone efter þe tyme þat ald saturnus/He Regnit had and woidit of his houþ' [1-2] a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter²⁶ caused 'ane richt gret Influens/Throw þe quhilk generit was a

24. This is particularly true of the fourth section, which is far more detailed in both advice and exempla, cf. Vetter, cols. 740-802.

25. See below, pp.260-1, and note 36.

26. In the Middle Ages the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn was widely regarded as the portent of Noah's flood. See Robinson's note to Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, Book III, l. 624, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (1957).

pestilens .../Of þe grevouþ passioun malancoly/That bene all gentill hertis werray deid' [7-11]. Prudent men seek to alleviate the effects of this and 'till eschew þe wyce of ydilneþ' [16] by a variety of recreations: singing, dicing (though this is against the law), hunting, reading romances, minstrelsy, which are catalogued in a manner that recalls similar passages in, for example, Lydgate's Reson and Sensuallyte.²⁷ And some

Gois to þe Riall sporting of þe cheþ
Of þe quhilk quha prentis wele in mynd
The circumstance þe figur & þe kynd
And followis it he sall of werteu be
The manere of office lawe & hie
Of kingis and lordis sall he efter know
And of craftis as I sall efter schaw [32-7]

All men are thus urged to take in and reflect on a work which, unlike the Secreta, is concerned with all ranks of society.

The first part of The Buke of the Chess deals with the reasons for the establishment of the game. There is both contradiction and overlap with the prologue. On the one hand the author sets out (pace the Latin Ludus scaccorum here, as always hereafter) how the game was established in the reign of the tyrant king 'euelmoradrag' of Babylon [71], and devised by the philosopher 'perses' [95; Xerxes]; on the other hand, he repeats as the second cause that the aim was also 'For till eschew þe wyce of ydilneþ' [176]; and the third cause, that it is good to have something instructive to contemplate in the mind presented through a novelty, is also consistent with the injunction set out above. The Scots author is already condensing and abbreviating the source

27. Lydgate's 'Reson and Sensuallyte', edited by Ernst Sieper, 2 vols, EETS, E. Ser. 84,89 (1901-3, repr. 1965), I, ll. 2394-407, and II, pp.107-9.

here, not always with full intelligibility.²⁸ But the point that well comes across is that the work is both instructive to kings and exemplary in the general sense of using the monarch as a means of displaying virtue, vice and the transience of worldly existence. The characteristic style of the Scots translation can be seen in the way in which the author renders the response of Theodorus 'tyrantius' [118, for Cyrenaicus] who was hanged for attempting to speak reprovingly to the 'tyrrand prince þe king lessymmek' [120]. As he hangs from the tree he speaks thus to the king:

Iniust þow art þat reiffis þi counsall
And giffis me þat suld be þaris haile
That suld de þus and to þis deid to go
That in þi vycis dissimilis with þe so
Bot nocht I rek for þis in myne entent
So þat I de for Iustice Innocent [123-8]

This is rendering the Latin:

Tuis consiliariis purpuratis sit hec pena, quam timent; mea quidam nichil interest, utrum in humili aut sublimi putrefiam. Voluit dicere, quod parum curabat de ipsa morte et mortis modo, dum tamen innocenter pro iusticia moreretur.²⁹

Caxton's translation from the French is in fact strictly closer:

...upon thy counceyllours & them that ben cladd in thy clothyng
& robes were more reson that this torment shold come/For as
moche as they dar not saye to the The trouthe for to do Justice
right wysly/of my self I make no force whether I dye on the
lande or on the water or otherwyse &c as who sayth he recched
not to dye for Justice.³⁰

The difference in the Scots version is essentially as much one of degree as of substance, but we might note that the author focuses rather more directly on

28. Cf. Vetter, cols. 32-75. There is a break in the Scots text at l. 140, but there is also difficulty in the transmission of names so that as we see below, the virtuous Theodorus Cyrenaicus is rendered rather confusingly as 'theodorus tyrantius' [118].

29. Ibid., cols. 47-8.

30. Caxton, GPC, p.12.

the king than on the criticism of his counsellors, and this is reflected in his more direct approach 'Iniust þow art', in comparison with the more indirect and impersonal constructions used by Caxton and in the Latin. There is a simple though forceful style to the delivery, and the author also contrives to insert an additional irony, that the unjust king 'reiffis' the council of what should by rights be theirs. This kind of small shift in emphasis occurs a number of times in the work, as we shall see below.

The issue of good justice thus having already been introduced, the second part of the work opens. As 'hieast in degre' [226], the king is the first piece to be described. What follows is a classic statement of the symbolic power of monarchy, where the king's instruments of office signify the principles of good government.³¹ We have encountered this with variations on the instruments in many works: 'O prince think quhy þi crown was gevyn the till/þi sueirde þi septoure in takynnyng of Iustis'; '... boith thi Ringe, thi ceptre, and thi crovn,/Frome hie estat he smyting shal adoune', but this is one of the more extended treatments.³² A king should be set 'on hicht' to show his dignity and give his people example. The robe he wears signifies how he should 'Be cled with morall werteu & sciens' [242]; and the globe and sceptre he carries are explained thus:

de pila

This Round ball suld in þe self pretend
That of þe realme all fro end till end
The rewll he beris and als þe regiment
The sceptour Is in to a gud entent

31. For other iconographic examples, see Ernst Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies (Princeton, 1957), plates 5, 18, 20.

32. DRP (Fairfax MS), ll. 43-4; Lancelot of the Laik, ll. 1325-6. The attributes of royalty thus vary somewhat, but the sceptre is a consistent feature. Cf. also sword, sceptre and crown in Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome, Book VII, fol. 353^v.

de sceptro

The Wand of Rigour and of Iustice plane
And for wertew and werite Agane
Kepis a king his crowne of maieste
Stabillit and groundit with Iustice suld It be
And in him suld mercye & gentilneß
Appeir & schyne fer mor in euery caiß
Than ony man in lawar honour [243-53]

The equivalent passages on the sceptre are rendered thus in the Latin and in Caxton:

... in dextra manu portat sceptrum signum iusticie et rigoris³³....
Et quia misericordia et veritas custodiunt regem et stabilitur
iusticia thronus eius, in eo debet lucere clementia et misericordia...³⁴

And for as moche as hit apperteyneth unto hym to punyshe the rebelles hath he þe sceptre in his right hand And for as moche as mysericorde and trouthe conserve and kepe the kynge in his trone/Therefore ought a kynge to be mercyfull and debonayr For whan a kynge or prynce desired or will be belouyd of his peple late him be gouerned by debonarite.³⁵

Both the Scots author and Caxton add something in conclusion to the passage and Caxton is also more expansive within it, with the comment on rebels. The Scots author keeps quite closely to the Latin, rendering 'iusticie et rigoris' by their nearest equivalents, and retaining the image of the virtues illuminating the king. But while the Latin may imply that the king is particularly distinguished by such attributes, the Scot makes the statement more explicit, 'Than ony man in lawar honour'; Caxton's statement is both more qualified in its argument - a king should do this to be loved - and in the very nature of its phrasing, more detached, more sober. While too much should

33. Vetter, (cols. 85-6), renders this vigoris, but the Scots translation is clearly from the Latin rigoris, which is the Tractatus de scachis, sig. A iv^v, as well as MS Bodley 58, fol. 46r; MS Bodley 881, fol. 3r; MS Hatton 105, fol. 5r.

34. Vetter, cols. 85-8.

35. Caxton, GPC, p.20.

not be made of these small differences in emphasis, they do suggest something of the different perspectives from which the two works seem to have been produced. Caxton's version has a more politically alert view of the role of the monarch than ever emerges from the Scots. Here, although there are occasional attempts to evoke a more Scottish context, the view of monarchy is essentially uncritical. The status of the king as exemplary and personally powerful comes through, in a manner consistent with much late medieval Scottish writing, but little is done to make more of this in any strongly prescriptive way.

In the rest of the section on the king the other attributes he should have are then set out, illustrated by exempla: patience; care in speaking and making vows; avoidance of cruelty; constancy and avoidance of lechery. There is nothing here that cannot be readily paralleled in other Scots advice literature, and the exempla cited are generally equally common.³⁶ They include, as I have mentioned, Alexander's vow at 'Lapsat', and also, in illustration of the necessity to temper cruelty, the response of the captured pirate Diomedes to Alexander, which the Scots poet renders thus:

Richt as þe world said diomedes
 Has þe at feid so nouþer mor nor les
 And for I reif with a galay allone
 Callit I am a theif quhar euer I gone
 And for þow reiffis bath be se & landis
 Ane empriour our all þe world þow standis
 Bot had fortune me helpit ony thing

36. Note the further link here between ll. 357-8, and the very similar phrasing in The Talis of the Fyve Bestes:

A kingis word in till effect suld stand
 Mor þan þe aith of ony fre merchand (BC)

A kingis word in more effect suld be
 Than ony of lawar degre (333-4)

Cf. Ch. 4, p.236 and note 95; and cf. the idea that the king is singled out against those of 'lawar degre' with the added comments about 'lawar honour' on p.258 above.

I suld do gud bot sen þow art a king
The more þat fortoune giffis þe of grace
The war þow art ... [400-10]

As the Scots author states, the story is found in 'augustyne', De Civitate Dei [4, 4], but it was also very common in other collections of exempla³⁷ It was also used by Ireland in the Meroure of Wyssdome, where the pirate's response is given thus:

Thow Alexander quhy spulzeis þou and refis sa many divers peple
and trubuluris all the waurld for caus þou has gret power and
nane may resist to þe Thou art emperour lord and conquerour
and for caus my power is litle I am callit a thef & spulzuour
bot þie faut is gretar na myn³⁸

There are occasional similarities in vocabulary, but nothing sufficient to suggest that Ireland, who found the exemplum in Gerson's Vivat rex, was recalling The Buke of the Chess in his rendition.³⁹ Moreover, whereas Ireland merely concludes that 'And for þat wourd of wertu and werite he gat grace atour Alexander', The Buke of the Chess is more explicit:

He maid him lord & so he changit Is
Frome thift & reif and slauchter Is he gone
And was in erd þe Iustest man of one [412-14]

which is rendering the Latin, 'Et sic factum est, ut qui prius fuit pirata maris et latro, fieret princeps et iusticie mirabilis amator'.⁴⁰ The use of

37. Vernacular examples include the Alphabet of Tales and the Gesta Romanorum; see Frederic C. Tubach, Index Exemplorum, FF Communications 86 (Helsinki, 1969), no. 113; also Vetter, cols. 117-18.

38. Meroure, III, Book VII, fol. 331^v.

39. Influence the other way is of course unlikely, since The Buke of the Chess is also a translation. It is also possible that The Buke of the Chess was completed after Ireland's work was produced in 1490.

40. Meroure, III, Book VII, fol. 331^v; Vetter, cols. 105-6.

the phrase 'thift & reif and slauchter' gives a slightly legalistic colouring, and is used elsewhere by the poet to this effect.⁴¹ Ireland also shares another exemplum from the king section of The Buke of the Chess, which is there used to illustrate 'continencia', of the victorious Scipio's refusal to accept a woman of Carthage given to him by the people because she is betrothed to another noble [ll. 439-58], but once more the example was quite a common one and there is no evidence to suggest borrowing.⁴²

The lack of concern to develop his material in any profoundly contemporary way is well evinced by the way in which the author of The Buke of the Chess simply renders a passage on a subject which Ireland felt sufficiently important to devote an entire chapter of Book VII of the Meroure of Wyssdome to discussing. The section on the queen, which follows that on the king, has a passage on the merits of succession over election, which does in fact effectively state in ten lines the case that Ireland makes at far greater length [ll. 466-78]. Out of context, it would be tempting to see the passage as reflecting the Scots poet's awareness of the relevance of this issue to fifteenth-century Scotland, but it is, however, a very close translation of the Latin, and Caxton's translation is made in very similar language.⁴³ The

41. See below, p.266.

42. Meroure, III, Book VII, fols. 339^v-40^r, where it is also illustrating virtuousness in youth, and where the exemplum is much longer and more developed.

43. 'Nam melius est regem habere per successionem natura progenituram quam per electionem et principum voluntatem. Sepe enim principes diversis causis intervenientibus sunt discordes. Necesse autem est electionem non tardare aut plus utilitatibus adherentes personam regis in electione non meliorem aut digniorem, sed utiliorem. Qui vero per ordinem progeniture ad dignitatem regalem ascendit, necesse et educatos esse bonis moribus aut iustis actibus, quibus est genitor informatus; necesse est principes timere movere in regno discordiam, cum vivente rege nato primogenito considerant regnaturum.' Vetter, cols. 121-2.

'For better is to haue a kynge by succession than by election/For oftentimes the electours & chosers can not ne wyll not accorde/And so is the

last four lines had certainly some obvious relevance to Scotland:

Bot quhen a king has liffand to succeid
A sone of his þairof þe prince has dreid 44
To mofe discord in to þat regioun
Quhen þai on think his sone suld weir þe crowne [475-8]

since preservation of the succession was an obvious concern for kings with hostile neighbours across the border; but the real problem for Scots kings was not so much ensuring succession as dealing recurrently with minorities, and, unlike even the poet of Lancelot of the Laik, the author of The Buke of the Chess shows no desire to endow his text with any greater relevance here.

There are however a number of places where the Scottish author does do something more to write in a more recognizably Scottish advisory idiom which may owe something to the advice tradition, and where he does move further away from his original. In many of these cases the poet is dealing with questions of law and justice, where the king is either directly or by implication involved. One instance is that of the description of the bishops, which is of double interest since it is one of the places where there are marked similarities between the phrasing of the Scots and Caxton's version. Yet both are also very close to the Latin, and that the similarity may be no more than coincidence is also suggested by the way in which later in the passage the Scots poet moves into a somewhat different idiom. The opening of the passage is as follows in the three versions:

43. cont.

election left/And otherwhyle they chese not the beste and most able and conuenient/But whan the kynge is by lignage and by trew succession/he is taught enseygned and nourrishid in his youth in alle good & vertuous tacches and maners of hys fader/And also the prynces of the royame dar not so hardily mene ware against a kynge hauynge a sone for to reyne after hym.' Caxton, GPC, p.27.

44. Here 'prince' is clearly a mistake for the plural, as witnessed by the plural pronoun in l. 478; in l. 470 'For quhy þe prince is' is also a mis-transcription for 'princis'.

Sciendum est, quod alphiles ad modum iudicum assessorum in cathedra magistrali cum libro aperto ante oculos fuisse formatos. Et qui quedam sunt cause criminales, quedam vero circa possessiones et res temporales litigatorie, ideo duos iudices necesse fuit esse in regno, quos unum alphilem in nigro, quo ad primos, alterum album[albo], quo ad secundos. Horum enim officium [regi consulere] est, leges de mandato principis condere totumque regnum moribus informare... 45

The Alphyns ought to be made and formed in manere of Iuges syttyng in a chayer wyth a book open to fore their eyen/And that is be cause that some causes ben crymynell/And some ben cyuyle as aboute possessyons and other temporell thynges and trespaces/And therefore ought to be two Iuges in the royaume/one in the black for the first cause/And that other in whyte as for the seconde/Theyr office is for to counceyll the kyng/And to make by his comandements good lawes And to enforme alle the royaume in good and vertuuous maners 46

The forme of alphyne as I wnderstand
Suld be a Iuge intill a chier sittand
Ane opyne buke of law befor his eyne
And so for quhy for twa cauß pair bene
And criminale ane noþer of possessioun
Of gud and land and wrang done in þe tovn
Richt so twa alphinis suld pair be but fable
Ane set in blak for cauß criminable
The secund alphine in to quhyte he standis
For wrang & richt and possessioun of landis
Thar office Is to counsall wele þe king
Lawis to mak and kepe at his bidding
And all þe people till Informe & leire
Of gudlie manere & Iustlie leving ... [689-702]

The similarities between the two vernacular translations are marked here, both using the same terms and phrasing in several places, but comparison with the Latin shows that 'possessioun' 'cauß criminable' or 'That office Is to counsall wele þe king' are the more literal translations; nor do the two versions always coincide in phrasing. And having set out the responsibilities of the bishops as counselling the monarch and acting as his judges, there is then rather more divergence:

45. Vetter, cols. 165-70, emendation in square brackets is from the Tractatus de scachis, sig. B iv^r, MS Bodley 58, fol. 65^v, MS Bodley 881, fol. 8^v and MS Hatton 105, fols. 13^v-14^r. Cf. also Köpke, p.7.

46. Caxton, GPC, p.36.

... causas iustas fovere secundum allegata sententiam diffinire, consilia equa et recta sine personarum acceptione postulantibus dare, contemplationi intendere, ut, que alii manu operantur, ipsi mente et sua sapientia disponant et ordinant. Debet iudex firmus esse et constans, ut non amore pecunie aut livore invidie aut carnis origine corrumpatur.⁴⁷

And to Iuge and gyue sentence well and truly after the caas is had/And to counceyll well and Iustely alle them that are counceyll of hem/Wyth oute hauynge of ony eye opene to ony persone/And to estudye diligently in suche wyse and to ordeygne alle that/that ought to be kept be obseruyd be faste and stable/ So that they be not founde corrupt for yeft for favour ne for lignage ne for envye variable⁴⁸

. . . heire
A Iust sentence without corrupcoun
And at þe Instance of euery persoun
For covatiß for dangere or for dreid
Stratlie to gif for fauour or for feid
A Iuge of law he suld be in sic a kynd
Richt ferme & werray constant in his mynd
That covatiß settis him no thing by
Carnale Infectioun Ire nor 3it Inwy [702-10]

The Scots writer is keeping fairly near to the sentiments of the Latin, but he concentrates on the giving of just sentences and omits further discussion of the giving of council. Caxton's 'lignage' is a bit closer than the Scots 'Carnale Infectioun', and the syntax of lines 703-4 is slightly difficult, but the differences between the two versions in phrasing and material are now more manifest. The Scots writer puts in a legalism 'faouour or for feid', and invokes the vice of covetousness in a manner that catches something of the spirit of the criticism of justice in other Scots advice pieces such as Lancelot of the Laik or The Contemplacioun of Synnaris.

There is further evidence that he may have had this kind of writing in mind towards the end of the same section. The comparison has been made

47. Vetter, cols. 170-2.

48. Caxton, GPC, pp.36-7.

between the laws of the state and a spider's web, in which the poor people, the flies, but not the 'gret best' or nobles, will be caught.⁴⁹ The Latin takes up the comparison thus: 'sic legibus et iuribus infirmiores ligare, maiores vero et potentiores legibus non [constringi]'.⁵⁰ Both Caxton and the Scots writer also relate this to the present day, but in this instance we can see the Scots writer working closely from the Latin and rendering it rather more pithily than Caxton:

So ar þir lawis now on dayis wrocht
 Thir sympill folk ar by þe law constrengeit
 The gret men all ar fra þe law derengeit [807-9]

In lyke wise the lawes now a dayes ben not executed
 but vpon the poure peple/the grete and riche breke hit
 & goo thurgh with all 51

The Scots poet is translating quite adroitly here, appropriating the verb constringi, though applying it to the poor and not the rich, and matching it with the derengeit which has its own legal connotations.⁵² The Latin then continues:

Et ideo ex hoc nascuntur bella civilia, incitatur animorum discordia super minores et populares, maiorum et super eorum oriuntur dominia violenta, pauperes rebus et nobiles genere non constricti legibus moventur ad predam, exercert latrocinia, requirunt coacta servicia. 53

49. The same comparison (a common one, used also in Valerius Maximus, 7,2. ext. 14) is also used by Ireland, Meroure, Book VII, fol. 333r.

50. Vetter, cols. 201-2 has astringi, but the Tractatus de scachis reads constringuntur, sig. C i^r, and the MSS constringi: MS Bodley 58, fol. 67v; MS Bodley 881, fol. 9v; MS Hatton 105, fol. 16v.

51. Caxton, GPC, p.41.

52. DOST, derenge, v. 1 and 2; the meaning here is presumably 'vindicated' (1) rather than 'challenged' or 'arraigned' (2), though this is the definition under which this quotation is cited.

53. Vetter, cols. 201-2.

Caxton renders his translation from the French thoroughly:

And for this cause sourden bataylles & discordes/and make þe grete & riche men to take by force and strengthe lordshippis & seignouries vpon the smale & poure peple/And this doon they specially that ben gentill of lignage & poure of goodes And causeth them to robbe and reue And yet constrayned them by force to serue them. 54

The Scots version reads thus:

And throw þe quhilk Is generit in þe land
Baith thift and reif and slauchter of mannis hand
Stryf contempcioun feid yr & violens
lordschippe on forþ Iniuris & offens
Oppressioun of pepill þat war pur [810-14]

The Scots make less of the idea of civil warfare and of the particular involvement of the nobility in fomenting this, and more of the cataloguing of the kind of civil disorders that ensue from a breakdown in justice, which are described in a distinctly Scottish manner. We will see in relation to The Contemplacioun of Synnaris the legal resonances of 'thift', 'reif', and 'oppressioun', and the same is particularly true of 'contempcioun', and of 'feid'.⁵⁵ That the author is less concerned to highlight criticism of the nobility is also indicated by his then omitting a further sentence or two in the Latin (and in Caxton) criticizing the great for not fearing God and not setting an example to the common people. He rather concentrates more on the office of the judges:

And all in falt of þaim þat beris þe cure
Of Iustice & of lawis Regiment [815-16]

As so often in Scottish criticism of justice, such accusations implicate both

54. Caxton, GPC, p.41.

55. See Ch. 6, pp.294-5; DOST, contempcioun, n. 1, 2, and e.g. ADC, I, p.31, 'The lordis decretis and deliueris that for þe lychtlines contempcion and offence done to the kingis hienes be Alexander hume ...' (1479); contempcioun is not recorded in ME before 1502, OED, contemption. DOST, fede, n. 1c, 2; cf. also lordschip n, 1; injure, n. 1, 2; offence, n. 1,2.

the monarch and those more locally responsible for upholding the law. Great men were of course often judges, but the Scots poet does not pursue the point offered in the source. He does include its next passage on the necessity for judges to be well read in the law, and to establish it clearly before the people - familiar points in other Scots advice pieces - but he then concludes the section in a manner unparalleled in his source and not found in Caxton. Stability cannot come

... but Iustice haf a lest
 Of aduocatis quhar þat þai bene to get
 In sic a kynd þe maist part Is set
 That þair sylens Is als weile to sell
 As Is þe proves or þe taile þai tell [823-7]

At this point the Latin version is giving exempla on justice and quoting Didimus to Alexander on the transitory nature of earthly life.⁵⁶ It seems just possible that the Buke of the Chess poet was recalling here the criticism of justice and the law in The Contemplacioun of Synnaris, especially that of 'schrewit aduocatis/The quhilkis sum sessoun þair silence þai will sell'.⁵⁷ Acquaintance with this kind of writing and its legalistic phrasing might have prompted him to use it in his own work.

There are various other small examples to give support to this. In the section on the knight the exemplum of Damon and Pythias is cited as an instance of true friendship. The generous response of the king to them is put thus in the Latin, 'et admiratus rex amborum animum supplicium remisit',⁵⁸ and given appropriate legal colouring in the Scots:

56. Vetter, cols. 203-8; Caxton, GPC, pp.41-2.

57. The Contemplacioun of Synnaris, ll. 177-8 (Asloan MS, emended by Harleian MS, see Ch. 6, pp.301-2).

58. Vetter, cols. 245-6.

The king wounderit how sic ane luf suld be
In two knychtis and of þair gret lawte
Remittit all þe querell & þe scaith [976-8]

The difference here from more legalistically inclined advice works is, however, also well illustrated. The phrasing is essentially provided by the Latin and the terms, though legal, are very general. Similarly is this true of the concluding passage in the section on the knight, where the twelve laws established by Lycurgus are set out. The fifth of these was that while the prince was in charge of waging wars, 'maistaris of law' to keeping the laws, and knights to defending them [ll. 1080-4], the people had the right to elect those they wished to have as magistrates. The Latin here is, '... populo eligendi vel creandi quos velit in magistratus potestatem permisit', translated by Caxton as 'And to the comun people he gaf power to chese suche Iuges as they wold have', and in the Scots as, 'The pepill suld haue werraye power plane/Ballies to cheiþ and to depryve agane' [1084-5].⁵⁹ Two points are of note here. Firstly the closer precision of the term in the Scots, 'ballies' being a Scots legal term for either the town magistrate or an administrative officer in a barony or regality.⁶⁰ Secondly, the poet has added the point that the people also had the right to deprive the officer of his post. In this collocation we can see just how removed from any practical application The Buke of the Chess is as an advice piece. The author has a sense of the place of a legalism, but there is hardly any sense of prescriptive power or contemporary comment in his reinterpretation of the source. In part, as we have noted, the simplicity of this advice is innate to the Ludus scaccorum,

59. Ibid., cols. 279-82; Caxton, GPC, p.55. The tenth law is also omitted in the Scots, and the form of the ninth is quite different from that of all the witnesses I have consulted, which is thus: 'Nona pueros pauperes non in foro, sed in agro deduci et educari iubet, ut primos annos non in ludo aut ioco, sed in opere agerent.' (Vetter, cols. 279-82).

60. DOST, baillie, n. 1, 2.

but a more engaged or polemical writer would not have been deterred from making more of this, as witness Hay in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis. This point is further confirmed by the way in which the author treats the section on the notary, one of the pawns described in the third part. There are a few legalisms [ll. 1430 and 1432], but the section is very abbreviated in comparison with the Latin and with Caxton.⁶¹

Such effects are thus occasional rather than cumulative and hardly go far to invest the work with any strongly contemporary relevance. The poet's attitude, as far as this can be detected, is perhaps summed up by two passages from the sections on the function and the movements of the rooks, who act as the king's 'luftenandis', administering his rule in those parts of his realm in which he is unable to be present. The Scots poet sets this out keeping close to the Latin [ll. 1104-18], but then adds in a couple of lines to make it completely clear that,

For quhar a king Is present with his wand
Thar nedis no luftennand ner about [1119-20]

This may be implicit in the Latin, but, unlike Caxton, the Scots poet chooses to make it explicit.⁶² Like the earlier evocation of the king with his instruments of office, the sense of the intrinsic value of the monarch and of monarchy is being heightened; the effect is however also one of rather reducing the prescriptive power of the passage. On the other hand, the author is also happy to translate the statement in the section on the movement of the rooks that

61. Cf. Vetter, cols. 449-504; Caxton, GPC, pp.92-106.

62. Cf. Vetter, cols. 301-4; Caxton, GPC, pp.57-8.

Two rokis maye a king allone put dovne
And him de pryve of his lyf & his crowne [2160-1]⁶³

The effect is actually particularly stark here, since in the two final sections exempla are increasingly pared down or omitted. Thus while in the Latin (and in Caxton) these sentiments are then slightly tempered by reference to biblical kings treated in this way, in the Scots it is the conclusion to the passage on the rooks' movements.

Likewise, the author then makes rather more forceful the description of the powers of the pawns, with which The Buke of the Chess concludes. Again the Scots version is greatly abbreviated, and towards the end the author takes this passage from the Latin,

Nemo tales populares despiciat, quia tam ad imperium tam ad summum pontificium virtutibus peditos et graciis legimus pervenisse.⁶⁴

rendered thus by Caxton's version,

... no noble man ought to haue despite of the comyn people/
for hit hath ben ofte tymes seen/that by their vertu & witte/
Diuerce of them have comen to right highe & grete astate as
poopes bishoppes Emperours and kynges/⁶⁵

and makes this of it:

And no man suld in to þis warld pretend
To lichtly ocht or sic men to dispyß
For oft we reid of pur men in þis wyß
That wonnyng has þe kinrik & þe crowne
Throw þar werteu and wycis has put dovne
Kingis princis and gret men of degre
As in exampill euerye daye 3e se [2177-83]

It is a little hard to know quite what sense to make of l. 2181. It would be

63. Cf. Vetter, cols. 791-2: '... ut ipsis solis duobus liceat adversarium regem deponere et captum regno privare et vita'.

64. Ibid., cols. 799-800.

65. Caxton, GPC, p.181.

logical not to despise poor men who bring down monarchs through their virtue, but hardly not to despise those who do so through their 'wycis'. Some mistake in transcription would seem likely here, but the point remains that the author has altered or extended the argument of the source to say that in becoming powerful the poor may 'put douvne/Kingis princis and gret men of degre'. At this point The Buke of the Chess is brought to a conclusion in a manner a little sudden, in which respect, as in some of its phrasing it is again reminiscent of The Talis of the Fyve Bestes,⁶⁶ although the appeal to Christ and the hope for eternal bliss is common enough elsewhere.⁶⁷ Yet it would seem overreading this essentially simply argued text to see in the more explicit treatment of the potential of poor men to bring down monarchs any veiled warning to fifteenth-century Scottish kings. The author omits completely the summarizing epilogue that follows the fourth section in the other versions,⁶⁸ and seeks instead a general moral that may apply to everyman, which is, very simply, 'Tharfor frome wycis suld 3e set 3our thocht/And of wertew þe well It suld be socht' [2184-5].

Consideration of The Buke of the Chess as an advice piece inevitably ignores many of its other points of interest and qualities of writing, such as the rather good rendition of the exemplum of the sword of Damocles [1890-1941]. In this respect it remains still one of the most neglected of Middle Scots poems. Within the advice to princes canon in Scotland the work is rather like a control experiment against which one can compare other results.

66. Cf. ll. 2186-91 and FB, ll. 419-23.

67. Cf. The Thre Prestis of Peblis, ll. 1339-41; The Contemplacioun of Synnaris, ll. 1545-52.

68. Vetter, cols. 823-8; Caxton, GPC, pp.182-7.

It has most of the conventional advice on kingship, in thoroughly general and undeveloped form; but this very conventionality is interesting in that it throws into greater light the originality and precision of many of the other advice pieces discussed in this study, which have themselves in the past been labelled conventional and uninteresting.

Chapter 6

Friar William Touris: The Contemplacioun of Synnaris

The Contemplacioun of Synnaris has survived in a greater number of witnesses than most works considered in this study. Like De Regimine Principum and The Thre Prestis of Peblis its witnesses range over a period of over half a century; but unlike those two poems, and unusually for a work in this period, its earliest witness is in fact a print, Wynkyn de Worde's quite heavily anglicized version of 1499.¹

Like that of De Regimine Principum, the textual history of the Contemplacioun is of some complexity, with revisions taking place from an early date and the relationship of the principal witnesses difficult to plot. A number of factors point to the early and continuing (until the sixteenth century) popularity of this now neglected work: its early printing, the four surviving witnesses, and its presence in the Asloan MS, its earliest manuscript witness. Its positioning in the Asloan MS is also, if not necessarily deliberately, indicative of its dual nature as devotional poem and advice piece: it is placed between The Thre Prestis of Peblis and Ane Ballat of the Passioun. The Contemplacioun of Synnaris takes the form of verse meditations (accompanied by

1. Quotation is taken in virtually all instances from the earliest Scottish witness, the Asloan MS (edited by W.A. Craigie, 2 vols, STS, New Ser., 14,16 (1923-5), vol. II). The Arundel and Harleian MSS are printed concurrently in Devotional Verse and Prose [DP], edited by J.A.W. Bennett, STS, 3rd Ser., 23 (1955, for 1949), and I have occasionally emended quotations from the Harleian MS; this was also used for the stanza omitted in Asloan after l. 184, and those omitted between ll. 880 and 934, but apart from here, numbering is according to the Asloan MS. Quotations from the de Worde print [CS] are taken from Douce 41, one of the two copies in the Bodleian Library. There is a modern facsimile reprint, Wynkyn de Worde's Contemplacon of Synners, The English Experience 645 (Amsterdam and Norwood, New Jersey, 1974).

The MSS were also collated and edited by D.J. Young in 'A Critical Edition of "The Contemplacioun of Synnaris"' (unpublished B.Litt. thesis, University of Oxford, 1955), using the Harleian MS as copy-text, and also giving de Worde's text separately, with the Latin sententiae for the first section.

The section of the poem in the Bannatyne MS (see p.278 and note 11 below) has recently been edited by Alasdair A. MacDonald in an article which also contains excellent literary revaluation of the poem, 'Catholic Devotion into Protestant Lyric: the Case of the Contemplacioun of Synnaris', IR, 35 (1984), 58-87.

prose Latin sententiae in the printed edition) for each day of the week, on the pattern of the influential pseudo-Bonaventuran Meditationes Vitae Christae.² The subjects covered are the vanity and transience of life; the perversion of innocence and imperilling of the soul; the imminence of damnation for sin; the last judgement; the passion; hell; and heaven. As such, the Contemplacioun also has links with the long tradition of works on the Nosce te ipsum and contemptus mundi themes, and some of the eschatological qualities of some of Dunbar's religious writing, or the treatises, de novissimis, one of which, Antony Woodville's translation of Jean Mielot's Cordiale survives in a Scots manuscript (from a print) of the late fifteenth century.³ And within the seven-part framework the author also makes use of advice to princes material, primarily in the first four meditations, after which the work is concentrating more on the next world rather than the present. In its use of advice ideas within a broader generic setting and in its particular focus on the issue of justice, especially its execution, the Contemplacioun is very much a part of the Scottish advice tradition.

According to the incipit of one of the three MS witnesses of the poem, MS Arundel 285, the Contemplacioun was 'compilit be frer William of Touris of be

2. See Nicholas Love's Middle English version, The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ, edited by Lawrence Powell (1908). It was printed by Caxton in 1486 and 1490, and by de Worde in 1494. On the work and its influence, Elizabeth Salter, 'Nicholas Love's "Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ"', Analecta Cartusiana, 10 (1974), esp. 39-54.

3. For the Nosce te ipsum tradition, Pierre Courcelle, Connais-Toi, toi-même, de Socrate à Saint Bernard, 3 vols, Études Augustiniennes (Paris, 1974-5), esp. I, pp.125-63, 258-72, III, pp.722-7; for the contemptus mundi genre, a classic and influential work was Lotario Dei Segni's De Miseria Conditionis Humane, edited recently by Robert E. Lewis, The Chaucer Library (1978); on the eschatological in Dunbar's poetry, Ian Simpson Ross, William Dunbar (Leiden, 1981), pp.111-14; Woodville's work is in SRO, Breadalbane Muniments, MS GD 112 71/1 (1), apparently based on the edition printed by Caxton in 1479. For details of other MSS and the work itself, The Cordyal by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, edited by J.A. Mulders (Nijmegen, 1962). Cf. also MacDonald, 68.

ordour of þe frer minouris'; the explicit further notes that the work is 'ex compilacione et translatione fratris Willelmi Touris Ordin[i]s Minor[i]s'.⁴ William of Touris has not to date been identified with complete certainty. There are records of a student named Touris at the University of Paris in the late 1460s-early 1470s, of the diocese of St Andrews;⁵ he may or may not be the same person as a Friar William of Touris recorded in a Glasgow document of 1495;⁶ there is also a Friar Touris listed among the Observantine Friars of Aberdeen in 1502.⁷ Such information at least supports a dating of the Contemplacioun in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, with the terminus ad quem being provided by de Worde's 1499 edition. It must be noted, however, that this, the earliest witness is still the most removed linguistically from the work's Scottish origins, having been adapted for an English readership. But it is also the most complete rendition of the Contemplacioun in what was probably its original form. De Worde's Contemplacon of Sinners preserves two important parts of the work not found in any of the manuscript versions. It has a prose prologue, setting out the purpose of the work (though not identifying its author) and summarizing its contents. Shared phrasing in prologue and

4. DP, p.64, and cf. p.168; Arundel MS 285, fols 47^r and 84^r. For discussion of the Contemplacioun as a 'compilation', see MacDonald, 78, and below, pp. 282-3.

5. Young, p.8, quoting Auctarium Chartularii Universitatis Parisiensis, vol. III, edited by C. Samaran and A.A. van Moe (Paris, 1935), cols 132, 180, and 199. As there are no references to Friar William Touris here after 1472, Young believes that he had left Paris after that date, and that the Contemplacioun was produced at some point during the period 1472-99. For further discussion of the date of the work, see below, pp.279-82.

6. John Durkan and James Kirk, The University of Glasgow, 1451-1577 (Glasgow, 1977), p.172.

7. Young, pp.6-7; Durkan and Kirk, p.181; ER, XII, p.87. On Observant Franciscanism in Scotland in this period, MacDonald, 70-1, and John Durkan, 'The Observant Franciscan Province in Scotland', IR, 35 (1984), 51-7, in which it is also noted that the St Andrews records refer to the death of a Friar William in the period 1505-8, whom Durkan identifies with the author of the Contemplacioun (53).

poem strongly suggests that the prologue is an authentic part and not a later appendage.⁸ In the printed edition, too, paragraphs of Latin sententiae (the use of which is also a feature of the prologue) from biblical, patristic, and classical sources, precede each stanza. The nature of the relation between sententiae and verse will be discussed in more detail below.

De Worde's print and MS Harleian 6919 also preserve another of the work's apparently original features, but only in the latter is this in consistently appropriate form. The Harleian MS and the print have illustrations at the opening of each section, which as the text itself makes clear in its references to each opening 'lef' and 'figuris', must have formed an integral part of the work from the start. However, de Worde's illustrations are not always relevant to the subject depicted; and though the Harleian illustrations more accurately accompany the text, it is impossible to judge their relation to the illustrations in the original version.⁹

The Arundel MS is dated c. 1539-55 and the Harleian MS, c. 1550.¹⁰ It is clear, however, that by the early sixteenth century, when the Asloan MS was compiled, the poem had in one form shed both illustrations and sententiae, emerging as a rather differently-focused work in the process. The

8. DP, p.xxviii; Young gives detailed parallels between prologue and poem, pp. 12-14.

9. DP, p.xxxv-vi. The Arundel MS has woodcut illustrations pasted in at some appropriate places, but not for the Contemplacioun. For discussion of the linking of image and text in devotional MSS, Douglas Gray, 'A Middle English Illustrated Poem' in Medieval Studies for J.A.W. Bennett, edited by P.L. Heyworth (Oxford, 1981), pp.183-205; Thomas W. Koss, 'Five Fifteenth-Century "Emblem" Verses from Brit. Mus. Addit. MS 37049', Speculum, 32 (1957), 274-82. For another example of the separation of originally integrated text and pictures in later MSS of an illustrated work, see Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, 'The Texts called Lumen Anime', Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum, 41 (1971), 5-113 (37-8).

10. DP, pp.i-ii.

Contemplacioun of Synnaris was an even more adaptable piece than De Regimine Principum. It has recently been pointed out that some stanzas from the fifth section, on the passion, are reworked in the Bannatyne MS as the lyric beginning 'O wondit spreit and saule in till exile'.¹¹ Early variation in the text as well as the form of the work is also suggested by the fact that the textual variations between the witnesses are so extensive. It has been shown, however, that the Asloan and Harleian MSS and de Worde's print are more closely related to each other than to the Arundel MS, but the two former MSS are related to the print independently of each other, nor are they based upon it.¹² Thus from the end of the fifteenth to the late sixteenth centuries, the Contemplacioun was circulating in a number of forms for a variety of audiences. The two later MSS seem to have been intended for private lay devotion, and may have been copied in England, since both exhibit Southern forms. Little is known of the history of the Harleian MS, but the Arundel MS seems to have become part of the collection assembled by Lord William Howard (1563-1640), an English Catholic antiquary, possibly in the early seventeenth century.¹³ Despite the presence of Southern forms in these MSS, they have nothing like the extensive anglicizing of de Worde's print, perhaps because Northern audiences would have had less difficulty with the Scottish linguistic forms. In the Harleian MS, the Contemplacioun is the only work; in the Arundel MS it is surrounded by other devotional pieces. In the Asloan MS it has a somewhat different presence, for the contents as a whole are wider ranging. Here, shorn of both its illustrations and its accompanying apparatus, the poem has a

11. MacDonald, 58-69; also discussed in his 'Poetry, Politics and Reformation Censorship in Early Sixteenth-century Scotland', English Studies, 64 (1983), 410-21 (418).

12. Young, pp.59-71.

13. DP, p.i; the contents are described on pp.iii-xxv; see also J.A.W. Bennett, Poetry of the Passion (Oxford, 1982), p.120.

more moral, less contemplative nature.

It has been stated above that the two features particular to de Worde's print, the prologue and the Latin sententiae, are parts of the work as originally composed. This is the view taken by both Bennett and Young. In his recent article on the Contemplacioun, however, Alasdair A. MacDonald has put forward a number of alternative suggestions concerning its method of composition and dating. My own arguments will follow and respond to an account of MacDonald's highly interesting view of the poem. Taking first the question of dating, MacDonald sees the Contemplacioun as another example of the growing body of spiritual verse composed during the reign of James IV, whose notable exponents were Dunbar and Kennedy. And the king's own noted piety, taken in conjunction with the Contemplacioun's manifest advice to princes content, prompts his suggestion that it may have been composed for the king himself, and perhaps specifically for contemplation during the week (and possibly even Holy Week) of one of James' periodic retreats to the Observantine priory in Stirling, which had been founded in 1494.¹⁴ He cites a parallel here with Dunbar's Dregy, which 'evidently arises out of a protracted royal retreat of this kind'.¹⁵ These conjectures produce a more precise dating of the Contemplacioun than has previously been attempted, between 1494 and 1499 (the date of de Worde's print). MacDonald supports this attractive theory further by detailing the advice element in the poem, its 'leitmotiv [of] the winning of the heavenly crown' and other factors such as 'The exemplary figures to whom reference is made are all, with the exception of Job [212] and Cicero [576] royal'.¹⁶ He sees the poem as having a broader purpose than giving

14. MacDonald, 'Catholic Devotion', 71-2.

15. Ibid., 71.

16. Ibid., 72-3.

advice, which is to reveal 'the man within the king, the soul within the man and the position and predicament of the soul within the divine scheme',¹⁷ but maintains that its 'true function' is to advise the monarch: 'Touris says little to the common man'.¹⁸

Yet, as we have often seen in this study, general addresses or advice to kings are not always written for or aimed at particular monarchs. Advice can have a directed thrust, but can also be making more broadly applicable moral points by presenting rulers in an exemplary or unexemplary way. And there is, as we shall see, little precise advice in the Contemplacioun, which also frequently addresses 'princis lordis and nobillis of renovne' [201] in a notably generalized manner. Moreover, while an appreciation of the significance of the Contemplacioun as an advice to princes piece is long overdue, the focus of the poem is a shifting one. As MacDonald rightly observes, there is a movement 'from the explicitly royal situation of the sovereign ... towards a consideration of the common humanity of the monarch',¹⁹ but it is also clear that its author is increasingly addressing a wider audience, in which all men are invoked. The monarch, as not infrequently in advice works, functions as a focus for general doctrinal instruction.

The composition of the Contemplacioun for a retreat in Stirling is also open to question. There is no evidence to link Touris directly to the Observant priory there, although he is signatory to a document witnessed by Friar Patrick Ranwick, its provincial and warden, which might indicate that he did have some contact with the place.²⁰ Durkan and Kirk have suggested that

17. Ibid., 72.

18. Ibid., 72-3.

19. Ibid., 72.

20. Ibid., 70.

the poem may have been written in Glasgow, from where the document just mentioned originates.²¹ Conceding this, MacDonald argues that, 'even if the CS was written in Glasgow, the intended relevance could still be to Stirling'.²² But it remains that there is no certain evidence for this; and it is worth noting that a similar point can be made concerning Dunbar's Dregy, which derives its title from the version in the Bannatyne MS. There is again nothing specific in the poem to indicate that it is addressed directly to James IV or intended to relate particularly to one of his retreats.²³

Further evidence relating to the dating of the poem as viewed by MacDonald will be discussed below. On the stages of the Contemplacioun's composition, he starts from the 'intriguing fact that there seem to be two textual traditions for the CS: an English one, with the Latin quotations; and a Scottish one, without'.²⁴ And he goes on to suggest that the variation in concord between the poem and the Latin sententiae in the print and the differences between the English and Scottish witnesses may reflect successive stages of composition, in which the role of Bishop Fox, for whom the work is said in the introduction to the prologue to have been 'compyled & fynysshed', is of significance. Fox was bishop of Durham from 1494 to 1501, and it was suggested by Bennett and Young that he encountered the Contemplacioun in manuscript while in the north of England or in Scotland on episcopal duties and had it brought to London for recasting and publication, rather than that he was the original commissioner of the piece.²⁵ Yet MacDonald has now shown

21. Durkan and Kirk, p.172.

22. MacDonald, 'Catholic Devotion', 82, f.n. 52.

23. The Dregy will be reconsidered in this light in Priscilla Bawcutt's forthcoming study of Dunbar.

24. MacDonald, 'Catholic Devotion', 76.

25. DP, p.xxx; Young, pp.9-11.

that what did take Fox into Scotland was 'diplomatic missions on behalf of the English king' in which he was 'intimately involved ... over a considerable number of years ... [and] ... had on several occasions personal access to James IV'.²⁶ Moving on from his view of the poem as possibly written for James IV, Macdonald thus sees Fox as having 'both the opportunity and the motive for taking an interest in the CS since it is likely that it had been a work which had had some influence on Henry VII's prospective son-in-law'²⁷ - though quite what the nature of this influence might have been is not stated. And in view of the differing Scottish and English witnesses, and the reference to Fox in the print's prologue, he sees the work as being not only anglicized for the English print but furnished at this point with the Latin sentences, which add a certain weight to a work which had not previously possessed them. It is important to note, however, that he believes this activity to have been carried out by the poem's author. MacDonald thus posits three stages in the work's compositional history:

(1) the original (Scottish) text of the poem by itself; (2) an augmented version (also in Scots), in which the poem is equipped with the Latin quotations; and (3) an anglicised version of this augmented work. The first of these stages would represent Touris's poetic achievement within the purely Scottish context, the second would represent the result of Fox's encouragements, and the third would represent the handiwork of an anglicising coadjutor, exercised upon the text desired by Fox.²⁸

This argument is supported by the use of lexical evidence to show that the idea of 'compiling' a work in the Middle Ages could have the particular meaning 'bringing it to its complete and final state, with illustrations and

26. MacDonald, 'Catholic Devotion', 75.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 78.

examples from authorities';²⁹ which, according to the introduction to the prologue in the print, was done at the instigation of Fox. However, as MacDonald has to note, the Contemplacioun is also referred to in terms of 'compilacione', and indeed 'translatione' in the colophon to the Arundel MS, which might be taken as further evidence that the work had in fact been furnished with sententiae, subsequently discarded, in earlier Scottish witnesses. That Fox is particularly singled out in the introduction to the prologue in the print is still not surprising if the anglicizing was done at his behest.³⁰ MacDonald's theory is also an attractive one in accounting for the frequent lack of direct concord between the sententiae and the verses that follow them. And he argues further that in several places sentences run on from stanza to stanza, again indicating composition independently of the Latin sentences.³¹ Yet, while it is clear that the verses are not intended to translate the sentences, and can exist independently of them, the relation of the two is perhaps more complex than he allows. As will be amply demonstrated below, while it is often true that there is little close relation between Latin and vernacular, this is not always the case. In some instances the correspondences are much closer, and the verse would seem to be prompted by the sententiae - though not always all of them: frequently one quotation, often the first, seems to provide the link for the verse that follows. It would be hard to imagine correspondences of such closeness being contrived, as it were, after the event of composition. Thus though the sententiae do not consistently create the poem, they support and in some cases directly inspire its arguments. It is to be regretted that MacDonald did not enter into the

29. Ibid.

30. For MacDonald's interesting suggestion on the identity of the anglicizer, see 'Catholic Devotion', 79.

31. Ibid., 77-8.

detail of textual comparison of verse and sentences in his article; and it is clear that much more work needs to be done in this area. But, as will be shown below, I have concluded from my own study that the text did not emerge in the manner he describes. It might be the case, for example, that the original form of the poem had less extensively documented sententiae, which were made more weighty for the English version; but this too must remain a conjecture.

A distinctive feature of the Contemplacioun is that the language which the author uses is often, especially in those parts concerned with advice-giving, of a legalistic tenor similar to that which we also encounter in De Regimine Principum, Hay, and Henryson. And the criticisms of bad justice which such stanzas are often articulating have indeed in places 'an earnestness akin to Henryson's' as Bennett noted, with the tone and phrasing also occasionally reminiscent of De Regimine Principum.³² Yet the Contemplacioun does not have the consistent reforming thrust of that poem or some of Henryson's Fables. This is perhaps in large part due to the wider context in which it is employing advice material. Though it uses advice ideas, with a conscious sense of their Scottish relevance, the work is not in the first instance designed as a mirror for a prince. In many of the pieces discussed in this study we have seen advice to rulers taken out into a larger divine framework. The Contemplacioun is the best example of a work in which that framework manifestly comes first. There is, as has already been noted, a deliberate movement from worldly matters, especially justice, in the first half, through contemplation of the general judgement and Christ's passion to the two alternatives of hell and heaven which are offered to man, a structured climax in keeping with the idea that the Contemplacioun may have been intended

32. DP, p.vi; see below, pp.293-5.

to be read as a meditation on successive days of the week.³³ However, the meditational aspect is hardly the most dominant feature of the earlier sections, where the influence of the Scottish legalistic advice tradition is particularly strong, and where, for all the spiritual recontextualizing to come, the author seems to be writing in a tone that is not simply that of convention.

In its grouping in seven parts and its constant citation of authorities (though primarily in the sententiae in the printed edition) The Contemplacioun of Synnaris has some affinities with its near contemporary, Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome, which is also in large part concerned with theological and sacramental subjects while using the king as a focusing centre.³⁴ But whereas Ireland's work is written specifically for a monarch though continually proclaiming its relevance to a wider audience, the Contemplacioun inverts the pattern by aiming at the broadest audience while retaining the king as a central exemplary figure. The prose prologue to de Worde's edition makes it clear what the audience of the work is intended to be and to what use the advice material will be put. The work is 'a compendyous treatyse to the honour & praysynge of god and spyrytuell prouffyte to theym that lyketh to here or rede therin'. For

ryght spedefull it be to all estate & condycyon of men
to rede or here dyuerse scryptures & comylacyons of bokes/
in whiche are conteyned noble hystoryes morall techynges/ &

33. See above, p.275; also discussed by Alasdair A. MacDonald in 'The Middle Scots Religious Lyrics' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1978), p.86.

34. On the background to this kind of organization in pastoral manuals, and other examples, Vincent Anthony Gillespie, 'The Literary Form of the Middle English Pastoral Manual with particular reference to the Speculum Christiani and some related texts' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1981), 2 vols, I, pp.94-187.

ryall examples of men of vertue by the whiche we may eschue
vyce & chese vertue. 35

This application to all states of society is reiterated in the opening of the poem, where it is stated that the 'brevit buke ... Accordis weile for all stait & degre' [1-3]. This opening insistence on the relevance of the work to all men, may be contrasted with Ireland's Meroure, which aims at a similarly widespread audience, but begins by directly addressing the monarch for whom it is especially written. The prose prologue also interestingly sets out the reasoning behind the combination of sententiae and vernacular instruction:

And to make this compylacyon more autentyke. I purpose
to alledge no sentence in the same in our vulgare speche/
but that whiche is prouable by holy scrypture & doctours
sayenge with some mixtyon of morall philosophres/ 36

and the author adds that he will also provide translations for those who cannot read Latin. Thus like Henryson in the Prologue to the Fables, Friar Touris is suggesting his work to be 'ane maner of translatioun' in a way which seeks to minimize the degree of his own original involvement in it. Yet the detachable nature of the sententiae must have been readily apparent to early readers of the work, not least those more interested in, or more able to read easily, the stanzas in the vernacular. And without them the remaining poem does have a rather different nature, since authorities are rarely cited in the stanzas themselves. Certainly, in the sections using advice it necessarily becomes a less obviously conventional, more manifestly individual and contemporary composition.

As has been suggested, the treatment of the sententiae in the ensuing

35. CS, sigs A iiii^v; A iii^r.

36. Ibid., sig. A iiii^v.

stanzas varies considerably. On many occasions one conventional idea in the apparatus is merely exchanged for another, often related point, in the stanza. The Latin paragraph before ll. 569-76, for example, begins with a quotation from Ecclesiastes 1.4, 'Generacio preterit generacio aduenit', and continues with similar sentiments, including Baruch 3.16, 'Ubi sunt principes gentium qui dominantur super bestias', etc.³⁷ In the Scots stanza this is transmitted into a rendering of the familiar fall of princes topos:

Quhar Is now hector cheif stok of chevalrie
 Quhar Is alexander þat kinglie conqueroure³⁸
 Quhar Is king dauid prince of prophecye ...

But as we shall see, elsewhere the stanzas move further away from the catenae, or develop a single image or idea from them, where, as Bennett puts it, '[the compiler's] fancy [is] caught by a mere word or phrase in the Latin'.³⁹ It is this which has led MacDonald to posit the later addition of the sententiae, but there are also quite a number of places where a closer relation can be found, suggestive of some kind of concurrent composition.⁴⁰

The aim of the first day's meditation is to provide a sense of the vanity of human existence, the dangers of being 'blunderit in wardlie besynes' [49], which is the condition of all estates, 'Baith spirituale temporale hie estait & law' [50]. Thus as one of those 'ryall examples of men of vertue' cited in the Prologue, Solomon, 'That prudent prince and wyse king' [41] is instarced as one who realized that all his power and pleasure 'Was of na wicht bot

37. Ibid., sigs G i^v-G ii^r.

38. Cf. for example, the Cordiale: 'I pray the tel me wher is now hector of troye were is become Iulius cesar wher is Alexander the greit wher is Iudas Machabeus wher is the mychty Sampson', SR0, MS GD 112 71/1 (1), fol. 17^r.

39. DP, p.vi.

40. See below, pp.290-1, 294-5, 296-300, 302-3.

werray wanite' [47].⁴¹ Thus a king is cited as an exemplary figure to all men, who are then seen as so oppressed by wordliness which, 'Iust men oppressand and schrewis settand hie/Makis mony a man to tyne a hevinlie crowne' [63-4]; the movement from tyranny to the potential crowning of all men in heaven thus illustrating well in one stanza the range and scope of the use of the idea of kingship in the Contemplacioun.⁴²

The first direct invocation to princes comes in ll. 65-72. It is a characteristically generalized admonition, to all monarchs, 'Now to 3ow kingis I cry with compassioun' [65]. In de Worde's edition this stanza is headed, 'An Instruccyon for kynges'. Such added titles are not common in this witness (and do not occur in any of the others), although there is another, also relating to kingship before the stanza beginning at l. 129, headed, 'Euery subget sholde praye for his prynce'.⁴³ It is interesting to speculate as to whether these headings were a part of the original version, since they suggest an awareness of the particularly pointed nature of some of the advice. The heading 'An Instruccyon for kynges' is however especially relevant here, for the Scots stanza consists of a recitation of the parts of the king's coronation oath:

41. As prompted by the sententiae, CS, sig. B iii^r. The quotations are from Ecclesiastes 1. 12-13; 2. 4,8,10,11,13; III Kings 4. 22-3, 26, 32; III Kings 5. 13,17. (In the sententiae in CS, only books are cited; verse references are not given.)

42. The term tyranny is not actually used in the sententiae, which are Ezekial 2. 6; Jerome, 'Rarus homo vel bonus vel malus efficitur, nisi ob societatis causam'; Ecclesiasticus 7. 2; Bernardus, 'Mundus est vbi malicie plurimum. sapiencie modicum. vbi sunt omnia viscosa. omnia lubrica. omnia operta tenebris. obsessa laqueis. vbi periclitantur anime. perduntur corpora. vbi est veritas et afflictio spiritus'; Hosea, 4. 1-3. CS, sig. B iiiii^r.

43. Ibid., sigs B iiiii^v and C ii^v. Also noted by MacDonald, 'Catholic Devotion', 73.

Now to 3ow kingis I cry with compassioun
 That of 3our stait 3e tak Intelligens
 Think on 3our band and hie professioun
 How 3e suld kepe with deulie deligens
 Pece in 3our pepill throw Iustice & prudens
 Resumand corage with walkryf besyne
 But parciale proce or wilfull negligens
 Baith fraude and fors of schrewis to repre [65-72]

In this instance the author's selection of Latin sententiae and his phrasing of the Scots stanza are, for slightly different reasons, of equal interest. In the catenae, the first authority is Wisdom 6. 9, 'Ad vos ergo reges sunt hii sermones mei vt discatis sapientiam et non excidatis'. There then follows what is described as 'Promissio regis in sua coronatione', which is given thus:

In christi nomine promitto tua [tria] populo christiano michi subiecto. i. In primis me preceptorum et opem pro viribus impensurum vt ecclesia dei et omnis populus christianus veram pacem nostro arbitrio in omni tempore seruet. ii. Aliud ut rapacitates. et iniquitates omnibus gradibus interdictam. iii. Tercium vt in omnibus iudiciis equitatem. et misericordiam precipiam. vt michi et vobis indulgeat suam misericordiam clemens et misericors deus. Responsio a clero et populo Amen. Et viuat rex.⁴⁴

It has not previously been noted that this is in fact a direct quotation from a twelfth-century version of the English coronation oath, which in all but the last line here is exactly the same as this passage in the sententiae of the Contemplacioun.⁴⁵ Here the conclusion reads 'Et respondeant omnes Amen'.⁴⁶

This form of the coronation oath is, interestingly, not that commonly used in the later Middle Ages, for it was replaced in the fourteenth century by a

44. CS, sig. B iiii^v. In the first line tua has been mistakenly printed for tria.

45. Quoted in Leopold G. Wickham Legg, English Coronation Records (1901), pp. 30-1. This is the third existing recension of the oath, which is known as the order of Henry I (pp.xviii-xix).

46. *Ibid.*, p.33.

somewhat different four-fold vow.⁴⁷ Thus its presence in this Scottish work is quite intriguing. It is likely, of course, that Friar Touris found it in whatever collection, or collections, of catenae he used as the basis for his selection. Bennett thinks it unlikely that the cited sources 'were actually "compiled" by the author of the poem, though he may well have made his own selection from earlier florilegia', a view apparently accepted by MacDonald.⁴⁸ If Touris did take the oath from an existing collection, put together by an English compiler, he clearly did not feel it to be inappropriate in a Scots context. We have very little surviving material on Scots coronation records, and it is of course not impossible that the same form was used in the two countries.⁴⁹ Yet it is perhaps more likely that the Scots author merely took over the formula wholesale, feeling it to be generally relevant to his argument. This is perhaps further indicated, as we shall see below, by the care he then takes to make his phrasing in the stanza discernibly Scottish.

The paragraph of sententiae is concluded by an admonition from the Psalms 2. 10-12:

Nunc reges intellegite erudimini qui iudicatis terram.
Seruite domino in timore. et exultate ei cum tremore.
Apprehendite disciplinam.⁵⁰ neqnon irascatur dominus.
et pereatis de via iusta.

'Nunc reges intelligite', along with 'Ad vos ergo reges sunt hii sermones mei' may have suggested the phrasing of the opening two lines of the stanza. The

47. Ibid., p.xix.

48. DP, p.v; on possible Franciscan provenance, p.vii; a similar conclusion in Young, p.27 echoed by MacDonald, 'Catholic Devotion', 76-7.

49. Summarized in R.J. Lyall, 'The Medieval Scottish Coronation Service: some Seventeenth-Century Evidence', IR, 28 (1977), 3-21.

50. CS, sig. B iiii^v.

emphasis on fearing God and eschewing his wrath is effectively held over until the next stanza. The delineating of what is the king's 'band' is not overtly divided into three points as in the source, but the attention to keeping the peace and ruling justly are obviously inspired by it. However, the second point in the Latin oath, that a king should forbid rapacity and all iniquities to (or in) all degrees, is reworked in the Scots into an instruction to kings to ensure that corrupt justice is not practised. Moreover, some of the language here has the familiarly Scottish legal cast. Though equity is referred to, there is no precise source in the Latin for the phrase 'But parciale proce' [71].⁵¹ Though the idea of 'partial' judgement was present in the language of law in both Middle English and Middle Scots, it had a more precise use in Scottish law, which is what it is being used to convey here. The phrase 'parceale proceding' or 'perciale proces' is found in legal records from 1480 onwards. Thus in the acts of the Lords in Council for 16 June 1480 a 'bailze' is invoked for 'his wrangwiß Inordinat and parceale proceding in the servyng of a brefe of Inquest';⁵² and in 1501-2, another officer is blamed for 'His wrangus ... and perciale process ... becaus he made nocht the sade breif til be proclamyt at the mercat cors ... opinly befor witnes'.⁵³ Thus the Scots author is specifically distinguishing here between those who do not

51. Though CS and the Harleian MS also read 'parcyall' here, the Arundel MS reads 'perrall', which is not found in the DOST as an adjective.

52. ADC, I, p.53; cf. also a sherrif accused before Council in February 1499-1500, of 'wrangus, parciale and inordenat procedyng in the execucione of our soverane Lordis letters', ADC, II, p.400. Cf. DOST, partial, adj, I, b (1). The criticism here is also reflected in contemporary legislation. Thus an act of 1487 'Of Jurisdiction and proceß in Civile accionis questionis and pleyis', decreeing that civil actions should be dealt with by ordinary justices, unless the parties have particular reason to bring the complaint to the king or Lords in Council, notes how a party may have complaint against an officer 'for wranguwis & Inordinat proceding in ony materis'. APS, II, pp.17 and 177/10.

53. ADC, III, p.171.

carry out justice by failing to implement their responsibilities properly, and those who do not do so deliberately, through 'wilfull negligens' [71]. Further, the phrasing of this passage makes it possible for 'parciale proceß or wilfull negligens' to apply to the rule of kings themselves as well as the 'schrewis' they are obliged to repress [72]. This is indicative of the dual nature of the position of Scots kings as chief justice and overseer of the actions of their judges and ministers, who, as the final line of the stanza confirms may abuse justice through 'fraude' ('parcial proceß') or 'fors' ('wilfull negligens'). Friar Touris is thus making it clear that he has a particular state of affairs in mind, though once more it is unnecessary to posit that these remarks are directed at a particular Scottish ruler. Indeed The Contemplacioun of Synnaris, a poem so determinedly general in its identification of the rulers it invokes but yet still Scottish in the process, is a work that very much bears out Wormald's point that Scotsmen's understanding of the nature of kingship, 'its political power and responsibilities, rested less on concern with the success or failure of individual kings than on a political instinct about kingship as the focal point which would hold together a fissiparous collection of highly localized communities'.⁵⁴ It is this sort of generalized attitude to justice and the role of monarchs that informs the Contemplacioun.

The next stanza [ll. 73-80] makes it clear that the 'Instruccyon for kinges' was not confined to one verse, and it indeed effectively continues for six more stanzas up to l. 128. In ll. 73-80 four injunctions on kingship are cited, given in the sententiae as from 'Plutarchus', and in fact from his

54. Jenny Wormald, 'The House of Stewart and its Realm', History Today, 34 (September 1984), 21-7 (22); expounded at more length in Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent 1422-1603 (Edinburgh, 1985), pp.145-55.

Institutio Trajani.⁵⁵ This is further supported by other quotations from classical, scriptural and patristic authorities,⁵⁶ but the principal source for the stanza is Plutarch. The king's responsibilities are set out thus:

First to dreid god & luf abone all thing
Syne of his persone haue greable governyng
And se his officeris be trewe and deligent
Defend his liegis thus throu his gud beryng
He wyn þair luf as conquest congruent [76-80]

Such precepts are of course familiar, and, in comparison to the last stanza, the author shows little desire to veer greatly from the ideas provided by the source. In the next stanza, however, where the issue of justice is further explored, he again treats his authorities with more freedom:

In wichty materis gif personale presence
In smaller actionis giffand commissioun
Till men of faith gude fame & sapiens
Iustice to kepe without excepcioun
As þai list answeare to god and to þour crowne
And tak Inquest how Iustlie þai proceid
But feid or fauour or clokit correctioun
Syne gif þaim dome according to þair deid [81-8]

The style and sentiments here are quite similar to passages in De Regimine Principum on the execution of justice,⁵⁷ and were it not for the survival of the prose sentences in de Worde's print, it would hardly be likely to strike a reader that the actual source for the ideas here is Jethro's advice to Moses in Exodus 18, which forms the major part of the citation in the apparatus.⁵⁸ There is no allusion to the biblical source in the stanza (unlike in the

55. CS, sig. B [v^r]; discussed by Young, p.23.

56. The authorities cited are Aristotle, Politics; Plato; Aquinas, De regimine principum; Psalms; II Chronicles; Solon; Cicero.

57. Cf. DRP (Fairfax MS), ll. 29-35; 99-105; 211-17.

58. CS, sig. B[v^v]. The exact source is Exodus, 18. 13-14, 18-19, 21-4; also cited are Solon and Revelation, 2.

previous one where both the philosopher and Trajan are referred to), and as Young has noted, the reason for the advice in the Biblical passage, 'that a ruler of a large nation is incapable of dispensing all justice in person' is omitted.⁵⁹ Thus while the opening lines are based on the conclusion of the passage quoted, 'quicquid autem maius fuerit referant ad te et ipse minoratum [sic] iudicent', Touris has recast them in language that, with its references to 'actionis' and 'giffand commission' is in keeping with the earlier depiction of the king as both executor and overseer of justice.⁶⁰ And while there is an obvious parallel for the 'men of faith gude fame & sapiens' in 'Elege autem de omni plebe viros sapientes et timentes deum in quibus sit veritas et qui oderint auariciam', the quasi-legalistic phrase 'without exception',⁶¹ is the Scots author's own, and heightens the sense of the necessity to execute justice, in the De Regimine Principum tradition.

Another addition is the author's instruction that the king should 'tak Inquest how Iustlie ai proceid' [86], showing the characteristic Scots attention to vigilant observation of justice. The idea of rewarding judges is probably inspired by the final quotation in the catenae, from Revelation 2.23, 'Dabo vobis unicuique vestrum secundum opera sua',⁶² but the Scots author again plays up the legal and judicial connotations, by using the phrase 'But feid or fauour' [87], for which there are many parallels in Scots advice works (De Regimine Principum, Buke of the Law of Armys, Buik of King Alexander, Buke

59. Young, p.23.

60. CS, sig. B [v^V]. Where the text here reads 'minoratum', the Vulgate has 'ipsi minora tantummodo'.

61. Ibid. See DOST, exceptioun, n¹. 1, 2, 3; this passage from the Contemplacioun is cited for the latter, as 'Leaving out of account, excepting', but the associations of 1, 'A plea by a defendant against a charge or decision; a defence' are clearly also relevant.

62. CS, sig. B [v^V].

of the Chess) all in the legal context of the correct pursuit of justice.⁶³

These two stanzas thus well illustrate the varying degrees of relation of verse to sententiae in the Contemplacioun. And, in the form in which the Contemplacioun exists in the Asloan MS, such stanzas, removed from their accompanying authorities, fit very easily into a recognizably Scottish tradition of advice, although the language was clearly still sufficiently general to make the transition to England, for there are few significant alterations in de Worde's print in the passages so far considered.⁶⁴ The stanzas discussed above may indeed act as models for the various ways in which the author treats his advice material in the rest of the work, sometimes paraphrasing the sententiae or translating them closely, at others introducing other ideas unparalleled or only hinted at there.

Thus, for example, in the next stanza [ll. 89-96], there the author gives the familiar exemplum (from Valerius Maximus and cited in the apparatus) of Cambyses' flaying of a corrupt judge and lining with the skin the seat of justice in which his son was to sit. In the sententiae the quotation from Valerius is surrounded by other scriptural comments on good and bad justice, which are not made use of in the stanza. And Touris chooses to refer to the seat of justice (selle in the Latin)⁶⁵ as 'þe sete quhar he gaf sensyment'[94], 'sensement' being a Scots term for legal decisions, recorded from the late

63. DRP (Fairfax MS), ll. 218-24; Hay, Prose MS, I, p.262/13; Buik of King Alexander, Add. MS 40732, fol. 139; Buke of the Chess, l. 706 (Asloan MS, I); cf. DOST, fede, n.

64. Apart from anglicizations. This chapter cannot discuss the process of translation and revision in de Worde's print, as well as the extent to which it may preserve some original readings. Both Bennett and Young conclude that the reviser was not merely anglicizing the work, but was seeking to improve it in places. DP, pp. xxviii-xxx; Young, pp.28-58. Cf. also MacDonald, 'Catholic Devotion', 79.

65. CS, sig. B [vi^r].

fifteenth century.⁶⁶ De Worde's anglicizer may perhaps have been unfamiliar with the word since on this, its first occurrence, he renders it 'sentment'; however in two later places [198 and 651] he retains the Scots form.⁶⁷

The subject of kingly justice is then further pursued, with the familiar arguments that were a king to cherish just men and 'suspend' [99] corrupt justices and 'opyn synnaris' from his court and council, there would be 'Iustice polise & peß/And all gud reull in to þe realme' [102-3]. Then, in keeping perhaps with the author's clerical status, the discussion of appointments to offices is extended to 'kirkly promocioun' [105]. The authorities cited in the sententiae are warning generally against the evils of the appointment of bad spiritual officers.⁶⁸ Appointments by monarchs to benefices were a matter of some importance and debate in Scotland, particularly after the papal Indult of 1487 allowed them greater control.⁶⁹ However, the tenor here remains generalized, though like the author of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, the Contemplacioun's writer makes the point that the king has 'na correctioun/On spirituale stait' [113-14]. The return of justice and security for all men are then envisaged, with the sententiae providing many key words and phrases: indeed, often when Touris is making general points about justice and kingship he will adhere quite closely to what the catenae give him. It is when the opportunity to criticize part of the judicial apparatus arises that he tends to move further away from them.

66. OED, sensement.

67. CS, sigs C [vi^V] and G [vi^V].

68. Ibid., sigs B [vi^V]-C i^r. E.g. Jerome on Isaiah: 'Sicut in ordinacionibus malorum particeps est peccatorum qui tales constituit. Sic in ordinacione sanctorum particeps est eorum iusticie qui bonos eligit.' Daniel 14; Augustine, Aristotle, Politics 6, and Economics; Bernard; Gregory; Psalms; and Genesis 41 are the other authorities cited.

69. Ch. 7, p.340.

The stanza that in de Worde's print is headed 'Euery subyet sholde praye for his prynce' [ll. 129-36] makes explicit the particular focus on kingship that is being given in the Contemplacioun and comes increasingly to dominate in the final sections. As 'in erd' [129] the welfare of every subject 'Dependis apon þe king mast principale' [131] so should every man beseech Christ to guide him to set aside mortal sin 'And syne in hevyn to haue ane endleß crowne' [135]. The sententiae support this with biblical authorities, but also include quotations from Aquinas' De regimine principum.⁷⁰ It should be noted too that 'syne in hevyn to haue ane endleß crowne' [135], the penultimate line of the 'Instruccyon to kinges' section, looks back to 'Makis mony a man to tyne a hevinlie crowne' [64], the line preceding its opening. This may perhaps strengthen the possibility that the distinction of this passage as an inner section within Monday's meditation was present in the original.⁷¹ The sense that this part of the argument has reached a conclusion of sorts is heightened too by the opening of the next stanza with 'Bot' [137], for while kings are still being discussed here it is within the context of a more sustained attack on the corruption of justice which is addressed to 'kingis & ledaris of þe law' [138], and judicial officers of all sorts. Like Henryson in 'The Sheep and the Dog', the author of the Contemplacioun is directing his remarks towards both 'consistory court' and 'Ciuile Cessioun' [167].

The break-up of 'Ciuile Iustice' [139] is first seen as stemming from 'kingis & ledaris of þe law' [138] breaking faith with God. The author is treating the sententiae in characteristic fashion here, by making the instructive apophthegms such as 'Primum iusticie officium est coniungi cum deo.

70. CS, sig. C ii^r, 'Tunc solent homines timere regem quondam vident eum timere deum. Ibidem. Summa sapientia in rege est seipsum regere.' The latter is also cited on B [v] before ll. 73-80.

71. See above, p.288.

secundum est coniungi cum homine',⁷² into a more active statement of a present menace. In similar fashion is his treatment of the idea attested in the sententiae from Proverbs 29. 14 that 'Rex qui iudicat in veritate pauperes, tronus eius in eternum [sic] firmabitur.'⁷³ This is rendered as

Quhat prince to pure kepis Iustice but lesing
Herand complant with gud deliuerans
In hevin & erd as Roy he sall ay ryng [142-4]

The depiction of a prince 'but lesing/Herand complant' of the poor strikes resonances with De Regimine Principum and the advice section of the Buik of King Alexander.⁷⁴ The Contemplacioun is a differently directed work, but the author's other addition, that a king shall 'ay ryng' on earth as well as heaven shows his equal concern for the execution of justice and the stability which a good monarch can impart to a realm.

In the next stanza [ll. 145-52] Touris goes even further in rendering the sentiments of the sententiae in an inescapably Scottish manner. In the sententiae the point is stressed that, to give the first example, 'Aristotil. v. poli. Policie maxime dissoluuntur propter iustice transgressionem.'⁷⁵ Other authorities develop the idea of the peace that comes from good justice and the loss of kingdoms that come from bad, for example:

Aug. Amota iusticia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia.
Ysaie. xxxii. Erit opus iusticie pax. et cultus iusticie
silencium et securitas usque in sempiternum. Ecclesiastici
x. Regnum a gente in gentem transfertur propter iniusticias
et iniurias et contumelias. ac diuersos dolos.⁷⁶

72. Ibid., sig. C ii^v; from Lactantius.

73. Ibid., C iii^r.

74. Cf. Ch. 2, pp.136-7; DRP (Fairfax MS), ll. 183-6; Buik of King Alexander, Add. MS 40732, fol. 135^r.

75. CS, sig. C iii^r.

76. Ibid., sig. C iii^{r-v}.

The stanza keeps close to the source in its opening description of justice as the 'cauþ of pece & polise' [145], and the dangers of tyranny without it.⁷⁷

But the remainder of the verse is phrased thus:

Throw reif stouth purete and oppressioun
Murmour discord and dissolacioun
That realmes & lordschippis oft as men may se
Confiskit ar fra ald successioun
In lak of Iustice & throw Iniquite [148-52]

The idea of the destruction and despoliation of realms without kingly justice is obviously suggested by Aristotle, and more specifically Augustine's 'magna latrocinia',⁷⁸ but the catalogue of 'reif stouth purete and oppressioun' is a very Scottish one. The terms were in fact current in northern Middle English too, but de Worde's anglicizer felt them to be sufficiently unfamiliar to be restated in part as 'robbery/theft/pouerte and oppressyon'.⁷⁹ It is clear that combinations of these terms had a neo-legal tenor in Scottish documents and literature from the late fifteenth century. Thus in a similar context in Hay's Governance of Princis: 'unlautee engenderis outhir ref, stouth, pillery, or rubbery'; or The Buke of the Chess on what follows the degeneration of law: 'thift and reif and slauchter of mannis hand ... Oppressioun of pepill þat war pur'; and in an entirely legalistic context, the register of the privy council for 1546, 'All maner of refis, spulzeis, oppressiounis, slauchteris, allegit to have bene committit'.⁸⁰ And though the final three lines of the

77. Although tyranny is not actually mentioned in the sententiae. Young, pp.24-5, notes the closeness of the first two lines to the quotation given from Cyprian 'Justicia regis est pax populorum. tutamen patrie. gaudiam hominum. solacium pauperum. hereditas filiorum. et sibi metipsi spes future beatitudinis' and Isaiah, 32. 17, 'Erit opus iusticie pax. et cultus iusticie silencium et securitas vsque in sempiternum'.

78. Also suggested by Young, p.25.

79. CS, sig. C iii^v.

80. Hay, Prose MS, II, p.88; Buke of the Chess, ll. 811-14 (Asloan MS, I); OED, reif, n, 2.

stanza are clearly based on the quotation from Ecclesiasticus, the use of 'Confiscat' [151] preserves the legalistic tenor. There is a nice thematic irony here, since the term seems to have been more generally used for goods or lands confiscated by the king.⁸¹ Here the sense is that a greater king will have such 'realmes & lordschippis' [150] confiscated. This stanza thus well illustrates how Touris is drawing on the legal associations of the terms he uses to point up both their direct relevance and their broader spiritual setting, always keeping the idea of kingship as a central idea to this.

More detailed criticism of corrupt justice continues in the next stanza. Familiar as such criticisms are in medieval literature, Touris shows again a Henrysonian touch for giving a conventional idea a particular legalistic bite. Thus he begins the stanza in ll. 153-60, with the image of justice in exile, which is taken from his biblical sources, but he reduces the emphasis there on the vengeful Old Testament God, to play up instead the idea of a corrupt court in which the representatives of truth and justice have departed because

3our counterpart in court has sic entray
I speike of covatice & parcialite [157-8]

'Counterpart', the claimant on the other side, is a legalism, as is 'parcialite', for which there was much criticism in legal acts and documents in the late fifteenth century, as in the acts of the Lords in Council of 1498, where claimants received exemption against a deputy steward because of 'the parcialite done be him to thame in the execucioun of his office'.⁸² As in the earlier discussion of justice, it is the lack of execution of judicial responsibility to which the author returns. A similar pattern is followed in

81. DOST, confiscat, p.p. and p.t. and confisk, v.

82. Ibid., countepart, n, and counter-party; n: cf. Hay, Prose MS, I, p. 277/33; DOST, part-cialite(a); ADC, II, p.280.

the next stanza where while the biblical and patristic authorities warn against those who corrupt justice for their own rewards and, to quote the Scots rendition, 'magre treuth optene þe victorie' [168], the Scots author states, as I have mentioned, the relevance of this to both spiritual and ecclesiastical courts. This is not the sustained critical attack of 'The Sheep and the Dog', but for a work of avowedly meditative nature it is quite a pronounced passage of complaint. The sententiae here are bitterly critical of bad justices but do not distinguish between types of court.⁸³ Having made the point that no matter how 'richt na cleir' [164] the action may be, bribery will corrupt the court, the point is then made in the next stanza that mercy is lacking as well as justice [ll. 169-76]. Here too is introduced the idea of lack of fair settlement in 'composicionis' [169], the settlement, or sum paid in settlement, between two disputing parties.⁸⁴ The emphasis in the sententiae is slightly different, making more of the idea that 'Nam nunc iusticia nichil est nisi publica merces' (Petronius).⁸⁵

The criticism then moves on to 'schrewit aduocatis' [177], the causidicos, of a quotation from Bernard,⁸⁶ who

. . . sum sessoun þair silence⁸⁷ þai will sell
 And be þair practik þe sentens sa resplatis
 Quhill þat þe pley oft pass þe principale [178-80]

83. CS, sig. C iiii^r. E.g. Micah, 3. 9-11, 'Audite hoc principes domus jacob et iudices domus israel qui abhominamini iudicium. et omnia recta peruertitis qui edificastis syon in sanguinibus. et jerusalem in iniquitate principes eius in muneribus iudicabunt'.

84. DOST, compositioun, n, 1 and 2.

85. CS, sig. C iiii^v.

86. Ibid., sig. C [v^r].

87. The Asloan MS here reads 'sciens' and I have used instead the reading in the Harleian MSS and the other witnesses: 'silence' is clearly the correct reading here, as the quotation from Bernard shows.

This is one place where the presence of the sententiae is very helpful in understanding the sense of the stanza. Bernard is quoted criticizing lawyers whose speeches are venal unless 'bound with silver cords', and Innocent that the charge of their expenses is often more than the proceeds of the sentence:

Bernardus. Apud causidicos eciam ipsum silencium venale est. ac lingua earum dampnifica nisi funibus argenteis ligetur. Innocencius. Causas tantum differunt. quod maior est expensarum sumptus quam sentencie fructus. ⁸⁸

The idea in the Scots is close to this, that in some court sessions the advocates can be bribed to 'silence' or that they can by their skill so delay or adjourn the action ('pley') that the costs involved often exceed the amount being claimed or disputed (the 'principale'). Once more the use of quite technical legal vocabulary turns a general statement in the sententiae into something far more specific.⁸⁹ Like the author of De Regimine Principum, Hay and Henryson, and perhaps deliberately in their style, the poet has sought to translate a general comment into something of greater contemporary relevance.

The two later MS^{7 MSS?} and de Worde's print have a stanza at this point not found in Asloan, which effectively sums up the argument so far and the role of the king within it. Kings must in no way suffer corrupt men 'Be fals affectioun or parcialite/To execut þe office of iustrye' [189-90] or they may dread the 'ferefull iugement' of God. And again, with 'Nobillis' and 'officeris of Iustre' [193] they are similarly urged to give sentences after wise thought, 'for as ȝe serf ȝe sall haf sensyment' [197]. Job and David (pace the sententiae) are cited as examples of those who were merciful to the poor, severe to the wicked and diligent in seeking out injustice, thus winning men's

88. CS, sig. C[v^r].

89. DOST, pley, n, 1; DOST, principale, n', 7; see the discussion of this term in Ch. 1, p.36.

esteem [201-8]. The author has now reverted to the more general style of the less legalistic passages. He follows the catenae quite closely too in citing the familiar models of good justice in Trajan and 'Seleucus' (Zaleucus) [ll. 209-16].⁹⁰ Yet after this, the section does not conclude with attention focused on the great and mighty and on representatives of justice, who have had so much consideration in this day's meditation. The final stanzas [ll. 217-48] broaden out to encompass a 'we' that is everyman, unreasoning and distracted by covetousness, as in the prologue to Henryson's 'Lion and the Mouse' or in the final tale of The Thre Prestis of Peblis.⁹¹

For all this broader perspective, however, the larger part of the first section of The Contemplacioun of Synnaris is as much a piece of advice to princes as a meditational prompting. In this sort of advice writing the overlap with social complaint is obviously considerable, but as we have seen, the king is constantly returned to and invoked as a central symbol and figure. It is a feature of the Contemplacioun that this consciousness of an earthly king's role is gradually replaced by a more pronounced awareness of the divine ruler, but there can be little doubt that Friar Touris intended his work to have some advisory purpose. And the reader or audience of the work in its Asloan MS form, with none of the other meditational apparatus before him, would have seen this all the more clearly.

Tuesday's meditation, on 'þe sure stait of Innocent lyf' also offers a considerable amount of advice, but this is rather less continuous and legalistic. Indeed, this section opens with a discussion of innocence and

90. CS, sigs C [v^v]-D i^v.

91. Note how the author introduces himself into the final stanza of this section, 'Herfor I counsall all cristin creature' (241), like the speaker at the end of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, 'Thairfoir my counsall is that we mend' (1337), or The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, 'schortly be myne awyß' (405).

youthfulness which would have led a really engaged Scottish advice writer to make the obvious connection with the perennial theme of young kingship. Here, however, there is more general instruction on how 'men suld in to þair tender age/In wertewe & devocioun haue vsage' [308-9]. Souls should be nourished with spiritual food to give them 'Resumand corage' [332], a phrase earlier used of monarchs [70]. Lack of innocence is, however, to be seen in 'euey stait' [340], where the desire for 'temporale proffet' [341] has taken over. The author uses an appropriately financial metaphor to illustrate the point that mankind is devoted to material rather than spiritual gain, and singles out the nobility as those who should provide the example:

Wald god þat nobillis wald kepe with deligens
 Of gud consciens þe mast previouse depoiþ
 Of hevinlie hurdis hieast of excellens [345-7]

The idea is linked to phrasing in the sententiae such as 'Conscientia bona .. est ... thesaurus regis'.⁹² In the next stanza, however, a familiar enough concept, but one not attested in its accompanying authorities, is introduced:

The commoun pepill mycht stand in to gud stait
 Quhen þat þe heidis ar rewlit be ressoun
 And be þai viciouse and Infatuate
 Than flowis þe commonis to fulishe confusioun
 Of quhilk þe hedis Is gret occasioun [353-7]

Here the Scots author has substituted the idea of the body politic for an equally familiar idea in the sententiae, of kings and states as good or bad shepherds and flock.⁹³ While the financial metaphor is continued here, it is characteristic of this devotional work's emphasis that the disordering of the

92. CS, sig. E ii^v.

93. Ibid., sig. E iii^r. E.g. Proverbs 11. 10, 'In bonis iustorum exaltabitur ciuitas. et in perditione impiorum erit laudacio.' or Bernardus, 'Pastores tui mutati sunt in tonsores. agni in lupos, defensores in dissipatores ...'.

body politic is seen more in terms of the spiritual 'dampnacioun' [359] that will ensue than in social and political disruption. As in the previous section, readers are now given the royal example of David to 'Think on' [361] as an exemplum of one who turned from sin to acts of mercy and justice, finding through patience all his consolation in God [ll. 366-8]. A further stanza [ll. 369-76] stresses this, and the particular application to princes: '... king dauid cheif rute of all renovne/... Suld be to princis myrrour & patroun' [374-6]. David, rex et propheta, had of course a long history of exemplary function, and the precedence given to him here in a work combining the devotional and the political is in this tradition.⁹⁴

The following stanzas [ll. 377-400] then take up once more the accusation of 'wilfull negligens' [382] in princes and nobles, with attention now on the 'spiritual perdicioun' that this brings [383] rather than on corruption of justice. There are occasional Henrysonian echoes: 'Quhen opyn syn slydis but correctioun' [380; cf. 'Lion and Mouse', 1394, 'Now opin sin without correctioun'], but also something of the style of De Regimine Principum in the itemization of important points:

Into two poyntis dependis principally
 The keye of honest conuersacioun
 Into wyß counsall and gud company
 Herfor a king with deulie discrecioun
 Suld of his counsalouris know þe condicoun [385-9]

The first half of the sententiae preceding this stanza is concerned with warnings against the corrupting power of bad people, false prophets, and so forth. The second develops the idea of the dangers of bad company, as in this quotation from Jerome:

94. See Ch. 1, p.27; Hugo Steger, David, rex et propheta (Nuremberg, 1961).

Nil tam nocet homini quam mala societas. Plusque impossibile
puto. virum in bonis operibus diucius permanere qui malorum
assidua conversacione vtitur. 95

It is easy to see how this idea has been transformed into the verse sentiments, yet in making the two-part division, his own addition, the Scots author is giving the argument something of the Secreta or neo-Aristotelian tabulation of points. His awareness of aspects of the advice tradition is perhaps indicated here, but as elsewhere such features are not greatly pursued or developed. For the point about kingship here is soon made part of a more general comparison of spiritual corruption to a contagious disease, which recurs throughout the work. The remainder of this section follows the earlier pattern of widening the scope from princes back to all ranks of society. But the effect of the intermittent adoption of the advice tone has reinforced a sense of both the particular and general advice nature of the Contemplacioun with the monarch both temporally and spiritually at the heart (or head) of society.

A similar pattern is followed in Wednesday's contemplation, which gathers up the theme of spiritual sickness and the 'doloruβ damage of deidly syn' that may arise from it. In portraying the widespread nature of sinfulness, Touris occasionally transmits biblical admonitions on the imminent destruction of kingdoms into comments such as 'kingis counsalouris and vperis þat beris office/... Thai dreid nocht god nor þar dampnacoun' [491-3], retaining the spirit of the sententiae, but focusing them more directly on corruption in society.⁹⁶ The perils of this decline and the terrible torments of hell are given increasing emphasis in this section. The point emerging all the time is that the more 'in spirituale stait & temporale ... Princis nor prelati makis

95. CS, sig. E iiii^v.

96. Cf. CS, sig. F iiii^{r-v}. Quotations are from Psalms; Leviticus, 26. 14, 17, 36; Job, 15. 21, 24-6, 32; Proverbs 12.

nocht pvnicioun' [505-8], the more imminent is God's vengeance. The author again gives a legalistic edge to the phrasing here, with references to 'parciale affectioun' [509] and 'counterpleid' [510].⁹⁷

In order to suggest the inevitable destruction of the physical flesh in which men at present make such foolish delight but which shall soon be 'þe fude of worme & scorpion' [537] the author turns to the ubi sunt theme, having first linked princes with 'prelatis and ladyis mast lvstye' [531] as examples of those who most conspicuously are 'Ryngand in riche and raiffand rialte [532]. As we have noted earlier, he introduces a catalogue of past worthies which is thoroughly conventional but not directly dependent on the sententiae. As if almost to indicate the manner in which the work has turned from political advice to monarchs to placing them now within the far more generalized moral framework, Touris includes within the list two of those who have earlier been set up as models to princes, 'Quhar Is king dauid prince of prophecy ... Or salamon cheif sete of sapiens' [563-6]. And the removal of attention from monarch's to everyman is further signalled in the next stanza:

No neid Is now to makin Rehersall
 The deid of princis passing rememberans
 Bot of þi nychtbouris þe festis funeral
 Prent in þi hert & graith þi purvians [569-73]

The heightening sense of doom and death continues into Thursday's contemplation, 'þe Rememberans of þe generall Iugement', in which the author also once more employs legalisms and intermittent appeals to princes and judges. 'Thre diuerß kynde of Iugement devynall' [606] are distinguished: the first is in this life, where Christ allows sinners to prevail and iustice to be 'borne

97. DOST, counterplede; the Contemplacioun is the only reference in this early volume of the dictionary; but cf. MED, counre- pref. 2. Cf. the sententiae on CS, sig. F [v^v].

dovne be falset and mastry' [614]. The author is concerned to cite his authorities in the stanza here, using Augustine's arguments that those who patiently endure suffering under tyrants endure a spiritual purgation which will multiply their joys in heaven [ll. 617-32] and that God's mercy should cause sin to decline, but those who abuse it are imperilling their souls [ll. 633-48].⁹⁸ The second kind is God's 'personale' [650] judgement of each man, when, in legal terms 'efter deid sall followe sensyment' [651] and every soul shall go to purgatory, heaven, or hell. The third is the 'Iugement generale' [673], which will be far more clear and complete than the other two, and which the author is concerned to set out 'As doctoris dytis be trewe auctorite' [682], that men may completely understand what it is and apply themselves to penance. There then follows the most overtly eschatological passage of the work, in which the coming of Antichrist, which precedes the general judgement, is envisaged as near approaching.

Although most of the material here is supported by the sententiae, the author continues to insert legalisms in the build-up to the evocation of the coming of Christ to give judgement. The use of terms such as 'Before þis dome but dowl þair sall compere/The antechrist' [696-7] and 'but counterpleid' [710, cf. l.510] establishes a continuity of thought between the evocation of bad justice earlier in the poem and the divine context being now evoked. The echoes of earlier sections, such as 'Our clokit consciens sall clerlie þair be kend' [727, cf. 345-50), is a quite powerful way of suggesting that monarchs, nobles, and bad justices are as implicated as any other sinful man. Similarly, in the depiction of the justice of Christ that follows there is an implicit

98. Before ll. 617-24 Augustine is in fact only cited thus, 'secundum augustini sentenciam. Punito misericorditer puero pater iuste in ignem pericit virgam', and before the stanza opening 'Secundlie as says sanct Augustyne' (632), Augustine is not included at all in the sententiae; CS, sigs G [v^r-v]. Cf. Young, p.146.

comparison with the faulty justice earlier attacked. Thus 'All mortall man ... þat euer tuke lyf' [729] shall be summoned 'Incontinent be godlie ordinans/ Thar to sustene sentence diffinitif' [730-1]. The sententiae here are all generally asserting that all men shall be summoned (e.g. I Cor. 15, 'Omnes quidem resurgemus sed non omnes immutabimur in momento in ictu oculi in novissima tuba')⁹⁹ but the Scots author has heightened the legal colouring. Further, in ll. 745-52 notions of kingship and true justice come together in a stanza which gives the quintessential statement of 'advice' in the Contemplacioun:

Than sall our king quhilk Iugit was/ws Iuge
 In gloriis forme of our hvmante
 Fra quhais face þair sall be na refuge
 But fauour feid pryce or parcialite
 The natur of þat dome has no mercye
 Of rigorus Iustice þat Is þe proper place
 Herefor in tyme do pennans pacientlie
 And Ces fra syn and grath 3ow to his grace

The sententiae preceding this verse open with Mark 13.26, 'Tunc videbunt filium hominis veniente in nubibus celi', which provides the basis for the opening two lines; but the attention to earthly 'princis' in the earlier sections now makes even stronger the sense of the coming of the true king. His inescapable and rigorous judgement is attested in the following quotations:

Sa^e.xii. Quis stabit contra iudicium tuum aut quis in conspectu tuo veniet vindex iniquorum hominum. Prov. vi. Non parces in die vindicte nec acquiescet cuiusquam precibus nec suscipiet per redemptione doma plurima. Psta. Quam in seculum misericordia eius. Boromus [sic]. Si tantum cura pertimescitur iudicium pulueris quanta intencione cogitandis qua formidine providendum est iudicium maiestatis. Ps Misericordiam et iudicium cantabo tibi domine. Idem. Deus iudicium tuum regi da.¹⁰⁰

99. CS, sig. H iiii^r; cf. Ireland, Meroure of Wyssdome, 'and þai þat war condampnit be sentens diffinitive of god outhir for actual deidly syn or originale he deliuerit nocht' (II, p.41).

100. CS, sigs H iiii^v-[v^r].

The quotation from Proverbs has been transformed here into legal phrasing that deliberately recalls the depiction of bad justice in the earlier sections. There, we may remember, judges and rulers were urged to proceed 'But feid or fauour' [87] or 'parcial proceß' [71]. The effect here is actually not unlike that of the final tale of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, where the depiction of God as king 'sa ful of justice, richt and ressoun' recalls and throws into contrast the less than just monarchs depicted in the earlier tales. Like God the King in that tale, who 'lufis not na riches', this divine figure is an incorruptible judge.¹⁰¹ But in contrast to what was urged of earthly judges, and indeed to some of the sententiae ('Misericordiam et iudicium cantabo tibi domine'), it is stressed here that at the final judgement there is no place for mercy; it is right for this kind of justice to be completely rigorous. Both the similarities and differences in regard of earthly justice are brought out here to strengthen the message urged in the last two lines.

It was of course not uncommon for eschatological works to have a legalistic cast. Thus in Dunbar's Tabill of Confessioun, for example, he pictures himself 'Appelling fra thy justice court extreme/Unto thi court of marcy exultive' [163-4], having already pleaded guilty 'Off feid vnder ane freindlie continance,/Off parsiall juging and perverst wilfulnes' [130-1].¹⁰² But in The Contemplatioun of Synnaris the use of these sorts of resonances is far more extended. At this stage, in the fourth contemplation, the poem is both looking back and recalling its earlier advice to monarchs, and looking forward to the depiction of the respective states of heaven and hell which men may expect according to their deeds.

The legalisms continue. 'This proceß sall be schort but tarying/For of

101. Ll. 1069, 1071, Cf. Ch. 7, pp. 352-3.

102. Quoted from The Poems of William Dunbar, edited by James Kinsley (Oxford, 1979). The Tabill of Confessioun is of course also present in the Arundel MS.

our synnis we sall fynd na excu^ß' before 'crist our souerane king' [761-3]. Henryson uses similar language in his depiction of the response of the rigorous lion king in 'The Lion and the Mouse'.¹⁰³ As usual, the sententiae support the point, but tend to make it in a more broadly evocative, less procedural way, thus: 'Crisostomus super Matheum. In illa die ulcionis nichil est quam respondeamus. Nam celum. et terra. sol. et luna. dies. et noctes. et totus mundus stabunt aduersum nos. in testimonium peccatorum nostrorum'.¹⁰⁴ Now 'Prelatis princis and officeris of Iustry' [769], a formula that of course recalls earlier appeals to them are urged once more to reform their bad example [ll. 769-76]. The sense of imminent necessity is heightened by the immediate reference in the following chapter to 'ye Iuge' who shall pronounce 'sentens dyffinitive/Fra quhilk avalis na appellacoun' [780-1]. The sententiae mainly consist of Old Testament imprecations from God on the approaching and merciless destruction that is to come, and the legal tenor is again original to the Scots author.¹⁰⁵

The sentences that Christ will give to good men and sinners are then recounted, and the sinners of today urged again to awake and repent [ll. 785-816]. The comparison between earthly and divine justice is then brought in in a slightly different form to heighten the sense of difference between them, even when earthly justice is envisaged as working in proper form:

Gif sair be sentens for tressoun temporale
 Gevyne be a king ryngand in regallie
 Quhar pane of deid lestis bot a thrall
 With confiscacoun of richt short sen³georie
 Quha may ymagin þe grevand gravite

103. E.g. ll. 1447-8, 1454, 1457. Cf. pp.460-1.

104. CS, sig. H [v^v].

105. *Ibid.*, sig. H [vi^{r-v}]. The quotations are from II Corinthians 6 (given as 5). 10; Isaiah 13. 9-10; Ezekiel 6 (given as 7). 6-8.

Of dedlie dome quhar tynt Is hevinlie crowne
And quhar þe saull sall euer with þe bodie
Ay de but deid throw endles pvnicioun [817-24]

A king on earth may punish a treasonable offence with death and/or confiscation of property; 'confiscacoun' is being used here in its more common form of confiscation to the monarch. But even correct worldly justice is as nothing in comparison to the 'endles pvnicion' a sinner may receive from the divine king, losing in the process a chance of his own 'hevinlie crowne' [cf. ll. 64, 135]. Friar Touris has placed his comparison within a juridical setting not prominent in the two authorities cited in the sententiae, Mathew 10, 'Nolite timere eos qui occidunt corpus', etc, and a long quotation from Augustine 'de verbis dominum' on the foolishness of those who love this world too much and the prudence of those who work for eternal life.¹⁰⁶ 'Schrewis' and 'corruparis of þe law' are then accused yet once more [ll. 825-32] and two stanzas later comes an invocation to reform in all states of society, '... princis prelati and men of religioun/Baith riche and pure spirituale & temporale' [849-50], which marks the now familiar movement to the general instruction which concludes this contemplation.

Thus by the end of the fourth meditation the steadily increasing turning of attention to the after-life and world to come has been achieved, in part by a recapitulation of the themes and language of earlier sections. There is a degree of control here that perhaps makes the description of the work by one commentator as 'rambling' a little overstated.¹⁰⁷ It has also been suggested that the Contemplacioun 'looks like the versification of a series of

106. CS, sig. I ii^{r-v}.

107. Alexander Grant, Independence and Nationhood, Scotland, 1306-1469, The New History of Scotland 3 (1984), p.106.

sermons',¹⁰⁸ but in its serial nature the work has an integrity and cohesion overall as well as in parts.

In the three final sections of the Contemplacioun, on the passion, hell, and heaven, specific advice to princes is not a feature. Read within the context described above, it will be seen that this is a deliberate rather than unintentional exclusion. Moreover, Christ is of course in one sense an exemplary figure himself, and the idea of his 'rialte' is one that the author makes use of within the depiction of his passion.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, in the sections on hell and heaven there are occasional recurrences of the legalistic context, as in ll. 1345-52, where comparison is made between the 'pane of Ciuile lawe/As hereschipe exile deid and dismembering' [1346-7] which deters trespassing, and the deterrents from eternal pain which man should consider.¹¹⁰ Similarly, there is an implicit comparison in the depiction of heaven as the 'glorious kingdome, full of felicitee' [1385],¹¹¹ and the corrupt kingdoms depicted in earlier sections. This is heightened by a deliberate recalling of those passages in the renewed depiction of kings David and Solomon, taking consolation from God and seeing all this world as vanity [ll. 1417-32]. But in these sections the direct invocations are no longer to 'princis'; those addressed are now an individual 'I', or a collective 'we'. Indeed, as if to finally round off the point that attention has moved from

108. Ibid.

109. E.g. ll. 985-1000.

110. There is no parallel for the phrase 'Ciuile lawe' in the sententiae, though the closest to these ideas in spirit is given as from 'Prosper' (? of Aquitaine): 'Si eo tempore quo quis peccare deliberat attenta mente consideraret qui pena expetet in suis facinoribus deprehensos. quod supplicium convictos excruriet. quis tremor membra quaciat. pallor ora perfundat quantum denique execrabilem omnibus reddat eciam ipsum sordide opinionis obprobrium nescio an possit quibuslibet viciis accomodare consensum.' CS, sig. N [v^v].

111. Quotation here is from the Harleian MS. Asloan rather whimsically has 'O gloryus kingdome full of cupidite' [1377].

the significance of princes in this world to the chance for every man to be crowned in heaven, the poem concludes with a demand to those who labour earnestly 'Princis to pleiß and temporale gere to get' [1506] to commit themselves now as 'a knycht spirituale [1513] and with 'knycthlie corage to conqueß hevinlie crowne' [1544].

Thus, on one level advice to princes has been used in The Contemplacioun of Synnaris for the specific purpose of spiritual recontextualization, to emphasize the nature of worldly corruption and to heighten the contrast between earthly and divine kingdoms, and kings. Yet it is clear that Friar Touris also had a further interest in the issues involved, as witnessed by his readiness to phrase his advice and criticism in a language the application of which to Scotland and Scottish law is unmistakable. As we have noted, taken out of a meditative context, many of the stanzas in the earlier sections read like straightforward advice writing, mid-way between the general statements on justice in say, Lancelot of the Laik and the more detailed criticisms of De Regimine Principum. Its positioning in the Asloan MS, between a group of poems, several of which have advice elements (The Buke of the Howlat, The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, Orpheus and Eurydice, The Thre Prestis of Peblis) and a small sub-section of religious works (Ane Ballat of the Passioun, and several poems to Our Lady)¹¹² may, as I have mentioned, possibly reflect a recognition of its dual tenor as neo-advice work and meditative piece. The occasionally distinct imagery and use of Chaucerian mannerism reveal a literary interest,¹¹³ which we can also surely see manifested in a desire to write within a perceived Scottish advice idiom. The attention to justice and the law, and the particular role of the king within their dispensation are

112. Ane Ballat of the Passion is Dunbar's poem, also found in the Arundel MS.

113. Noted by Bennett, DP, p.vi.

discernibly Scottish preoccupations, but though the poem may have been written with James IV broadly in mind, the suggestion that it was written specifically for him finds little substantial support in the advice content or the Contemplacioun's general tenor. I am more inclined to see the work as incorporating Friar Touris's response to the increasing use of advice to princes ideas and themes in the last decades of the fifteenth century. MacDonald has pointed out that greater appreciation is needed of the poem as, among other things 'perhaps the first piece of Middle Scots literature to be translated into English and possibly the first piece of Middle Scots literature to be printed'.¹¹⁴ It also needs more consideration of what it tells us about attitudes to monarchy in late medieval Scotland, especially from the point of view of one writing neither under patronage nor direct personal contact with the monarch.

114. MacDonald, 'Catholic Devotion', 79.

Chapter 7

The Thre Prestis of Peblis

The difficulties in dating many fifteenth-century Scottish advice to princes works, and the variable and perverse conclusions that indefinite evidence may produce are hardly better illustrated than by the case of The Thre Prestis of Peblis. Most commentators agree that a late fifteenth-century date of composition is likely, but there is marked divergence of opinion between those who have seen the poem as specifically directed against James III and those who see its criticism and advice as less particular and more general.¹ Robb's view of the poem as a satire of the reign of James III produced in the latter years of his reign, has been an influential one,² not least because of the accompanying argument that a terminus ad quem of 1492 for composition may be provided by the reference to the kingdom of Granada as a heathen kingdom, since at that date it was conquered by the Christians.³ However, a different, and even more precise dating has recently been suggested by the identification of a section of Book VII of Ireland's Meroure of Wyssdome, completed by 1490, as a possible source for two of the episodes which occur in the middle tale of the Thre Prestis.⁴ This part of the Meroure is taken from Gerson's Vivat rex,⁵ and thus the relationship, if it is one, between the two Scottish works, is

1. For recent discussion see Robin Fulton, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis', SSL, 11 (1973), 23-46; also generally R.W.M. Fulton, 'Social Criticism in Scottish Literature, 1450-1560' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1972); R.D.S. Jack, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis and the Growth of Humanism in Scotland', RES, New Ser. 26 (1975), 257-70; R.J. Lyall, 'Politics and Poetry in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Scotland', SLJ, 3 (1976), 5-29 (11-13); Norman Macdougall, James III: a Political Study (Edinburgh, 1982), pp.270-2; Craig McDonald, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis and The Meroure of Wyssdome: A Possible Relationship', SSL, 17 (1982), 153-64.

2. The Thre Prestis of Peblis, edited by T.D. Robb, STS, 2nd Ser. 8 (Edinburgh, 1920), pp.ix-xiv. All quotations are taken from this edition. I quote from the Asloan MS version for ll. 1-359 (Asloan MS numbering).

3. *Ibid.*, p.ix.

4. McDonald, *passim*; I use the term 'episode' to distinguish the three stories in the second tale.

5. See Ch. 8, pp.427-8.

manifestly more likely to be a borrowing by the author of the Thre Prestis from the Meroure. However, the narration of the two exempla in these two works is very different, despite their shared advice context; and though the occurrence of like material (particularly the story of the pardoned murderer⁶) is striking, the conclusion that the Thre Prestis borrows from the Meroure is not yet absolutely certain. The author could, for example, have encountered the material in Gerson's sermon itself. McDonald's cautious view is that the correspondences in material make it highly likely that at least that particular part of the Thre Prestis was composed in 1490 or later. This is a commendably judicious position, but the contrived and controlled nature of the poem's construction argues against its being a piecemeal composition.

A 1490s (onwards) dating would of course place the poem after the death of James III and early in the reign of James IV. And if the Thre Prestis is intended as critical of James III, it is thus so in retrospect, a point which along with the less than historically precise nature of the work in general,⁸ weakens the case for a deliberate evocation of that monarch's role even further.

The question of the poem's dating must also be considered in the light of the equally repeated suggestion that the author of the Thre Prestis was John Reid, otherwise known as Stobo. The view of most commentators is summed up thus by McDonald, '[T]he evidence still tends to favour Reid or a man in a position similar to his' as the author of the poem.⁹ That evidence is entirely

6. The versions in the Meroure are quoted in full by McDonald, 159.

7. Ibid., 158, 161.

8. See particularly McDonald's discussion, 155-8, and below, pp.329-30.

9. McDonald, 154.

circumstantial, but to many cumulatively persuasive. Stobo is referred to in Dunbar's Lament for the Makaris (1507) as among the most recent of those to have died; records show that he had in fact died in 1505.¹⁰ Several of the other makars referred to in that poem of course remain unidentified, either by further biographical material or by attributions of works to them. For Stobo, however, there is a substantial amount of documentary material to round out what we know of the 'gud, gentill' figure described by Dunbar.

One of the earliest documentary references to Stobo shows that it was from fairly unpropitious beginnings that he made out for himself a lengthy and varied career: in 1476 he received a papal dispensation to allow him to receive benefices, necessary on account of his illegitimacy as the son of a priest and an unmarried woman.¹¹ By then he had clearly also ensconced himself professionally within the court, since from 1477-8 onwards a life pension was paid to him for his services as a royal secretary, primarily - the records suggest - as a scribe, writing letters for the monarch to 'Sanctissimo patri nostro Pape et diversis regibus, principibus, et magnatibus ultra regnum nostrum', as his labours were described in the treasurer's accounts as early as 1474.¹² He had in fact been engaged in such activities even during the reign of James II, according to the same document.¹³ Stobo, who came from Peebleshire, was, as we have seen a churchman (rector of Kirkcristie in Kirkcudbright), and a notary public, a common combination; common too was the

10. ER, XII, p.372; there is a useful summary of Stobo's career in J.W. Baxter, William Dunbar, A Biographical Study (Edinburgh, 1952), Appendix V, pp.233-4.

11. Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Papal Letters 1471-1484, vol. XIII, Part II, edited by J.A. Twemlow (1955), p.568.

12. ER, VIII, p.315; RMS, I, no. 1341, pp.273-4.

13. '... quondam progenitori nostro', ER, VIII, p.315.

employment of notaries as scribes.¹⁴ But Stobo seems to have been a particularly busy and well-known figure. Payments and gifts to him are frequently recorded over the years; and it is clear that Stobo combined his skills as notary and scribe on the king's behalf. Payment is made to him in 1497, for example, 'at the kingis command, gevin to Stobo, that tyme he wrait mony proclamationis'.¹⁵ And in the Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie, Kennedy instructs Dunbar to enlist his help:

Pas to my commissare and be confest,
Cour before him on kneis, and cum in will, 16
And syne ger Stobo for thy lyf protest ...

But it is in the professional role in which Dunbar cites him here, rather than for his literary endeavours of services that all the references to Stobo survive. He is, however, mentioned in connection with another figure who was to assume particular importance in Scottish literary matters. In 1496 payments are recorded 'to Stobo and Watte Chepman, be preceptis of the Kingis, for thare lawboris in lettrez writing the tyme the king passed in Ingland'.¹⁷ Like Stobo, Chepman was also a notary public, going on to become a successful merchant in Edinburgh, and in 1507-8 to set up with Andrew Millar under royal auspices the first printing press in Scotland. Chepman was clearly acquainted with many of those who moved within court circles as both professional and literary figures. In 1495, for example, he was co-witness to a document deal-

14. RMS, I, no. 1810, p.384. See John Durkan, 'The Early Scottish Notary', in The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland, edited by Ian B. Cowan and Duncan Shaw (Edinburgh, 1983), pp.22-40.

15. TA, I, p.339.

16. The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie, ll. 329-31, in The Poems of William Dunbar, edited by James Kinsley (Oxford, 1979).

17. TA, I, p.339.

ing with the resignation of lands to James IV with Gavin Douglas and John Ireland.¹⁸ However, The Thre Prestis of Peblis has not survived as one of his original publications.

What is clear, however, is that Stobo was regularly at court, and not infrequently in the king's company. In addition to the records of payments and gifts to him there are those such as that of 1489, '... to Stobo, for a horss the king boycht fra him, be a precep, x merkis'.¹⁹ And in October 1504 he was one of those who travelled with James IV on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Duthac at Tain, during which time he accrued payment 'be the kingis command, to ger feid caponis'.²⁰ Yet amidst all this there is no payment in recognition for literary services, though this in itself is not unusual at this period. While the Exchequer records note payments from the king to named and unnamed tale-tellers, such people were hardly of elevated status;²¹ and the pension which the Dunbar first began to receive in 1500 was not by virtue of his status as a poet.²²

Thus the attribution of The Thre Prestis of Peblis to Stobo still requires an essentially imaginative leap. Were it not for the reference in Dunbar's Lament, there would be no very strong reason for assigning the poem to him. It is hard of course to know exactly what kind of writing might be

18. Protocol Book of James Young 1485-1515, edited by H.M. Paton and Gordon Donaldson, Scottish Record Society (Edinburgh, 1941, 1952), no. 790; Priscilla Bawcutt, Gavin Douglas, A Critical Study (Edinburgh, 1976), p.5.

19. TA, I, p.131.

20. Ibid., II, p.462.

21. Ibid., II, p.cix; for instance, a payment in 1497 is recorded 'at the Kingis command, giffin to Widderspune the fowlar, and for fowlis and tales telling', I, p.330.

22. Ian Simpson Ross, William Dunbar (Leiden, 1981), p.50.

expected from such a figure, but it might be said that this clever but not over-learned poem, with its allusions to ecclesiastical dealings and legal business is the sort of piece that he might compose. But the poem still has very little of the acute observation of the court poet Dunbar, or the precise legal usage of Henryson, which make their works so evocative of fifteenth-century Scotland. The Thre Prestis seems far less deeply rooted in the society of its day.

And whether the poem is by Stobo or not, what was its aim as an advice work? McDonald's suggestion that the Meroure and the Thre Prestis may have been composed by their authors as complementary advice works for a young monarch does seem open to question.²³ For though Ireland and Stobo were common survivors from the reign of James III, there is nothing to demonstrate their close acquaintance, and their respective careers might not necessarily have brought them much contact. And there is little in the Thre Prestis to suggest that its primary concern is to be an advisory handbook to a particular monarch. The relation of its shared material with the Meroure looks more like one in which that material is borrowed to be worked into a very different setting. As advice literature, the two have in common the generalized nature of much of their counsel, and it may well be that both reflect a similar desire to use the advice context to gain the king's attention or patronage without giving that advice great contemporary relevance. But this does not imply that the two writers were working in conjunction or for similar advisory motives.

In its relatively undeveloped treatment of theoretical issues, and its quite simple style, The Thre Prestis of Peblis has more in common with

23. McDonald, 161-2; see also Ch. 8, pp.451-2.

Lancelot of the Laik and The Talis of the Fyve Bestes. And in its direct relation of advice to princes with the pressing need of each man to prepare for his death, it shows a similar movement to that in The Contemplatioun of Synnaris.²⁴ Like The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, too, it reveals an interestingly wide variety of sources, which give intriguing illustration of the range of material available to literate Scotsmen at this period.

Just over 350 lines of The Thre Prestis of Peblis occur in the Asloan Manuscript; the other surviving witness is the print made by Robert Charteris in Edinburgh in 1603, of which the only copy now known is in the Douce collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.²⁵ This too is in fact incomplete, lacking the final hundred lines and another hundred or so in the middle. We have to rely on yet later witnesses for a complete account of the poem: John Pinkerton's 1792 edition of Scottish Poems, Reprinted from Scarce Editions, which was taken from a complete copy of the 1603 print that has now disappeared, and the hand-written insertions in the Douce copy itself, which are very close to the Pinkerton version and are probably Douce's copying from it.²⁶

However, despite the somewhat composite nature of our complete version of the poem, comparison of the witnesses shows that the number of substantial

24. Cf. Ch. 6, pp.306-14.

25. The Charteris print is Douce R 527.

26. Scottish Poems, Reprinted from Scarce Editions, edited by J. Pinkerton, 3 vols (1792). Pinkerton printed the poem from a copy of the Charteris print 'belonging to Mr Gough' (I, p.xiii). Robb believed that the handwritten insertions in Douce R 527 were 'in the handwriting of a scribe of unknown date but modern penmanship' (p.viii). Comparison with Douce's writing in other volumes in the collection (including his edition of Pinkerton, Douce 272), shows the hand to be his.

variants between the Asloan extract and the Charteris print is far smaller than what one often finds in comparing witnesses of other Scottish works of the period, such as Henryson's Fables or the Testament of Cresseid. It would thus seem likely that despite the late date of the principal witness, the 1603 print, this yet bears a close resemblance to the lost part of the Asloan copy. This lack of important textual variants between the witnesses of The Thre Prestis of Peblis is probably in large part accounted for by the particular nature of the style of the poem. In comparison with the language of Hay, Henryson, or Ireland, for example, that of The Thre Prestis of Peblis is simple, straightforward and uninnovative, using many proverbs and much repetition, almost as it were deliberately recreating the tale-telling delivery, where the audience needs the guidelines of repeated formulas to keep key narrative points in mind. This stylistic simplicity goes hand in hand with the simpleness of the conclusions that are drawn from the exempla set out in the tales. We do not, as with Henryson's Fables, struggle to make a morality 'fit' a tale.²⁷

We know that the poem circulated in sixteenth-century Scotland since it is referred to in The Complaynt of Scotland, a mid-sixteenth-century work in something of a similar tradition to The Thre Prestis of Peblis. In the Complaynt Dame Scotia, who berates separately each of the three estates, cites the king's question to the burgesses in the first tale of the Thre Prestis. Dame Scotia's criticism of the commons is more swingeing, and her point is that the priest asked why burgesses' heirs didn't thrive to the third generation (interestingly she presents the question as put by the priest, not

27. Donald MacDonald, 'Henryson and The Thre Prestis of Peblis', Neophilologus, 52 (1967), 168-77, argues that Henryson is the author of the poem; but both the nature of its moralization and its simple style make this highly unlikely.

the king), when he might just as well have asked why the successors of all the common people don't prosper. And she adds:

... the solutione of this questione requiris nocht ane allegoric expositione nor 3it ane glose, be rason that the text of þis questione is nocht obscure ... 28

The subject-matter of the tales is indeed generally 'not obscure', but commonplace and conventional, matching the simplicity of their expression.

Yet, that said, the overall relation of the tales to each other and of the separate elements within each tale to each other is rather more complex. R.J. Lyall and other commentators such as R.D.S. Jack and Robin Fulton have argued that the effect of the final tale is to contextualize the other two, to move out into a wider spiritual sphere from which their more worldly concerns look limited.²⁹ Yet while this is so, the final tale also has a role to play in endorsing the advice given in the earlier two.

Before we consider the tales told by the three priests we need to consider the preamble. It is only some sixty lines long but commentators, notably Jack, have pored over it in an attempt to squeeze out hints as to the context in which the poem as a whole should be seen.³⁰ But such very close attention to detail is hardly necessary. The preamble is used with economy and humour to establish an atmosphere and to sketch the distinguishing personalities of the three priests. The atmosphere is cheerful, easy, and

28. The Complaynt of Scotland, edited by A.M. Stewart, STS, 4th Ser., 11 (1979), p.112.

29. R.J. Lyall, 'The Sources of The Thre Prestis of Peblis and their Significance', RES, New Ser. 31 (1980), 257-70 (269); Jack, 268-70; Fulton, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis'.

30. Jack, 259-61; his argument here and in The Italian Influence on Scottish Literature (Edinburgh, 1972), pp.14-20, for the manifestations of humanist learning in the poem, is discussed in Lyall, 'The Sources'.

secluded; the three priests are enjoying a good supper and their talk ranges, we are told, from the serious to the merry. And when the subject of telling stories is raised, the conversation between them establishes the characters which are then carried forward into the narration of the tales. Most critics have rightly pointed out that we are already supposed to distinguish masters John and Archibald from the more modest, less travelled and educated William. But we can distinguish still further than this. John, who tells the first tale, shows a penchant for the homely phrase, 'be him þat maide þe mone' [33] and repetitive phrasing 'sen we are heir ... Syne wantis nocht' [32-3], and for organization, 'The thing begwn Is þe sonere endit' [62], that is reflected in the straightforward, repetitively construction and the uncomplicated narration of his tale. Its scope is of course broad - all three estates - and John is the most travelled of the three priests; but the fact that we know this probably tells us just as much about Archibald as it does about John. Archibald, who tells the second and by far the longest tale, is the talker, the raconteur, comically parodying the manner of a legal interjection 'Heir I protest ... Presumptuosly I think nocht to presome' [45-7], and cataloguing the details of John's foreign travel. Archibald is the best tale-teller: he likes to embellish and he likes to invent. One might almost say he likes to go one better, for his tale starts off with precisely the same opening couplet as John's, but then takes off into a more elaborate and racy plot. William is self-effacing and more modest in speech: he avoids the little oaths - 'be þe hie hevin' [36], 'be þe rude' [59] - of the other two, but is certainly not unwilling to tell a tale. One suspects he is also somewhat teasing. 'To gret clergy I can nocht compt nor clame' [40] should probably not be read at face value, and Archibald, as we have seen, takes the bait. So with the characters of the narrators indicated if not dwelt upon, and with the scene set, we move to the tales.

All three tales then are characterized by simple phrasing, and this is encouraged and promoted by the trotting couplet form and the repetition used both within each tale and between all three. In terms of the latter the king, for instance, in the first tale describes his bishops as his 'speire & scheld' [128] and in the second tale Fictus the wise fool tells the king that he should be 'Speir and sheild' [758] to his subjects; the same proverbial idea 'Quhy suld he haf þe sweit had nocht þe sowre' turns up in both the first and third tales [226; cf. 1122]. And the figures in the tales - kings, rich men, bishops - overlap into one another. The strongest structural linking device is of course the sequence of 'threes' itself. The poem, as Jack says, is indeed 'meticulously constructed on a pattern of threes',³¹ and this extends into the smallest details of the narrative. It is not just a question of three tales told by three priests, each featuring a three motif - three questions to three estates, three episodes linked by the wise fool, three friends - for beyond that other, smaller, threes consistently appear: three halls for the three estates, three ways to choose a bishop, three murders, the three nights that the king spends unknowingly with his queen; and in the final tale comes the final three, where the king of kings signifies,

The Father, Sone and eik the haly Gaist,
In ane Godheid and 3it in persones thre: [1242-3]

This constant accumulation of threes has the effect of generating a sense of overall unity, and yet at the same time one is aware within the poem of the ways in which the threes often break up into two and one - and not always the same two and one at that. The most obvious division is the identical opening of the first two tales against that of the third. On the other hand, the first and third tales share an organizational patterning which links them

31. Jack, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis', 258.

together against the second tale: three statements of exposition, followed by three 'responses' or explanations. But yet again, the second tale resembles the third in the motif of the third element (the queen and 'almous dede') being recognized as of previously unappreciated value. Such interrelation is so substantial as to make it a mistake, I think, to see, as Fulton does, the tales of the first two priests as fundamentally 'worldly' products, capped as it were, by the spiritual concerns of the third.³² Similarly, Jack claims that 'William gains the victory in this collection',³³ but there is surely no suggestion of competition in this sense to start with. Lyall too argues that the 'divine perspective of [the third] Tale is ... carefully made to transcend the secular vision' of the first two.³⁴ But it should be noted that each poem has 'worldly' and other-worldly elements, and while the 'mix' is different in each one, they all essentially have a similar message. Thus the accumulative narrative process in the tales is one of working towards the most lengthy and explicit statement of this message, rather than coming upon it suddenly and unexpectedly. It is both a temporal and spiritual message, both spheres being embraced in the final tale rather than one being replaced by the other.

There is furthermore a distinct suggestion within the poem itself that we may see each of the tales as similarly, if not equally, worthy. This is manifested by another piece of repetition. The priests themselves do not distinguish any of their tales as being particularly better than the others. At the end of each tale the two listeners respond with a reply that hardly

32. Fulton, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis'. His argument that 'We are not asked to deny or reverse any judgments we may have earlier accepted, but to qualify them by subjecting them to a more fundamental discrimination' [23] is essentially correct, but he does not perceive the importance of the spiritual dimension in the first two tales.

33. Jack, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis', 270.

34. Lyall, 'The Sources', 269.

alters in formula each time:

'God and Sanct Martyne quyte ȝow of ȝour tail'. [446]

'God quyte ȝow, sir, ȝour tail and sant Martyne'. [1006]

'This gude tale, sir, I trow God will you quyte'. [1344]

Again, one could argue that the first two tales are linked by their reference to Saint Martin which the third does not share - an indication of its superior spiritual status? But even so the sense of the interlinked nature of the tales, formally and thematically, is heightened, and the basic uniformity of view behind the collection is quietly underlined.

The more 'worldly' tales of the first two priests are in fact set in a world which moves continuously from the more to the less realistic. This is well illustrated by the depiction of the parliaments that feature in both of them. It may be useful to bear in mind the insistence on the value of the advisory presence of the three estates that is evinced within contemporary documentation of the period. The procedures for summoning parliaments and the legislative and conciliary roles they carried out when summoned were subject to much shifting and redefinition.³⁵ But in the first tale in the Thre Prestis the king lodges the three estates in three separate halls, the opposite in fact of the Scottish system, in which all three estates were met together.³⁶ Moreover the two kings in this poem summon their parliaments not in the first instance to legislate, but to answer three questions - a device which immediately takes the narrative into the realm of the fictional, or of

35. On this see Jennifer M. Brown, 'The Exercise of Power' in Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century, edited by Jennifer M. Brown (1977), pp.33-65, especially pp. 41-7.

36. Alexander Grant, Independence and Nationhood, Scotland 1306-1469, The New History of Scotland 3 (1984), pp.167-8.

folk-tale;³⁷ and in the second tale to decide on the wisdom of a fool's advice. It is true that in the first tale we are told that the parliament 'maid a cleir conclude' [68]³⁸ for the welfare of the realm, and in the second that the three estates sought to find a way to make 'concordant vnitie' [800] in the realm, but this phrasing is hardly specific. We are misreading the poem's tone if we see the author as pressing for governmental reforms in the same manner as De Regimine Principum, for example. It is always possible, as Robb and others since have done, to bring more detailed contemporary readings into the poem; it is less easy to get them directly out of it.

The narrative in these tales, then, moves easily and unself-consciously within a fictionalized setting which yet allows for a degree of realism, in a manner consonant with the story-telling qualities of its delivery. The action of the tales - the king's questions, the flies in the wounds of the injured man, the substitution of the queen for the burgess's daughter - constantly moves outside the region of historical or realistic accuracy, while at the same time avoiding the miraculous or the outrageous. A similar movement is true of the 'characterization' of the kings. It is frustrating and, as I have indicated, probably ill-advised to try ~~and~~^{to} match them up with a particular X Scottish monarch. In the first tale there is no real attempt to build up a consistent 'personality' for the king, and the lack of accord that we may feel between the depiction of the faults in the kingdom and the king's easy acknowledgement of them is not one, I think, that troubles the author. Robb argues

37. For the asking of questions see the indexes to Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, edited by Stith Tompson, 6 vols (Copenhagen, 1955-8), VI, pp.623-4; Index Exemplorum, edited by Frederic C. Tubach, FF Communications 86, (Helsinki, 1969), p.488. There are a number of examples featuring the asking of three questions, but the form in the Thre Prestis is less riddle-like than these.

38. Asloan and Charteris differ slightly here; see Robb's note to lines 67-70, pp.61-2.

that the king is being satirized and that 'The reader will, of course, not make the mistake of judging him by what he says and does in the story, but by what is said of his conduct by the spokesman of the clergy and of the nobles'.³⁹ But this is to ignore the judgements, and particularly the final judgement that the poet actually gives of the king:

Than had this nobil King lang tyme and space,
And in his tyme was mekil luk and grace ...
And efter lang was neuer king more wyse,
And leuit and deit and endit in Gods seruise. [437-8, 443-4]

Satire is surely not at work here. We might even say that there is an agreeable element of realism: it takes a while for the king to develop fully his wisdom. And this motif or progression into a state of wisdom starts here and is writ increasingly large as the poem develops. Moreover, this sort of account of the general well-being of the monarch and the realm, following on after the narration of an exemplum, is very much in keeping with the presentation of advice for princes as found, say, in Gower's Confessio Amantis. Compare the rest of the conclusion of the first tale:

His Lords honourit him efter thair degrie,
The Husbands peice had and tranquillitie,
The Kirk was frie quhil he was in his lyfe,
The Burges Sones began than for to thryfe. [439-42]

with Gower's conclusion to a tale in Book VII:

He putte away the vicious
And tok to him the vertuous;
The wrongful lawes ben amended,
The londes good is wel despended,
The poeple was nomore oppressed,
And thus stod every thing redressed. 40

39. Thre Prestis, p. x.

40. The English Works of John Gower, edited by G.C. Macaulay, 2 vols, EETS, E. Ser. 81-2 (1900-1), II, Book VII, ll. 4005-10.

The Scottish poet certainly gives his judgements a contemporary relevance, but the generalized tone of his conclusions is more in the tradition of broadly based commentary and advice than in pointed political and topical references. In the second tale there are interesting attempts to give the king more of a 'character', which I shall discuss in due course, but the tale's conclusions is expressed in equally broad and unspecific terms.

Much of the poem's distinctiveness lies not in the arguments it uses but in the often unexpected ways in which it makes them act. Let us start with the first tale. The king calls a parliament of the three estates, puts them all in separate halls, entertains them lavishly, and then arrives to address first his burgesses:

... Welcome, my burgeß, beld & bliß
Quhen 3e fair wele I may na myrthis myß:
Quhen 3e 3our schippis haldis hale & sound,
In richeß gud and welefair I habound;
3e ar þe cauß of my lyf & þe cheire:
Of fer landis 3our merchandiß cummis heire. [85-90]

For those who want to make much of the contemporary application of the tale, this passage promises well. Fulton comments that, 'The king's welcome to his burgesses clearly relates this tale to fifteenth-century Scotland.... As was natural at the time, the commons is represented by its wealthier and more influential element. The burghers were rapidly becoming a highly important force in the development of society, increasingly distinguishing themselves, as a class who bought and sold, from the craftsmen, the class who manufactured but were discouraged from trading'.⁴¹ This assessment of fifteenth-century Scottish burghers is undoubtedly correct, but is it really the point behind the king's welcome? His evaluation of his burgesses is in fact very standard

41. Fulton, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis', 24.

Secreta Secretorum material. It occurs there in a section dealing with how kings should honour and reward all good and wise people, including merchants whose successes will increase a monarch's own prosperity and renown as well as that of his realm. The ruler, to cite Hay's version, should 'make seure passagis to merchandis and travaillouris' to protect these riches and he should encourage the movement and production of merchandise. And it continues:

And throu that, the custumes and kingis rentis and prouffitis growis and multiplyis mervailously. And tharfore suld all noble princis kingis and lordis nuris merchandis and labouraris and men of craftis for that is the ryching of all realmes. And than bere thai the princis name, even as herauldis, our all countreis of the world, quhilkis makis princis to have outhir gude, los, and honour, or lak and dishonoure efter thair desertis. Throu the quhilk repair of merchaundis, realmis ar puplit and richit, and rychess is multiplyit bathe to king and to commoun, quharefore all princis suld tak tent tharto and example thare efter.⁴²

The king in The Thre Prestis of Peblis, therefore, may be addressing the wealthier element of the commons, but he is hardly making a new or controversial statement to them. He is expressing the relationship very much by the book. Similarly, he uses the classic body politic image to evoke to the nobles his relationship to them:

Ane hed Dow nocht on body stand allane
Forowt memberis to be of mycht and mane [105-6]

His clergy the king describes as 'helme, speire & scheld' [128], 'Of all my realme ze ar be rewle & rod' [132]. This, and the placing of the clergy as the final estate whom the king consults, appears to establish them as the most important of the three estates. Again, the relation of this to the contemporary state of affairs in late fifteenth-century Scotland is hardly direct. Though certain churchmen like Elphinstone and Whitelaw were important as

42. Prose MS, II, pp.94-5.

statesmen and counsellors to the king, the clergy were not dominant in the institutions of government. And though the remark made by an outside observer, the Spanish ambassador Don Pedro de Ayala in 1498, that 'The prelates ... have the largest share in government' is often cited, Brown's researches have shown this to be inaccurate.⁴³ Further, the idea that the king should honour 'all men of kirk and religion'⁴⁴ features in many versions of the Secreta. There are clear links between these ideas and the king's assertion that 'as ȝe say þan all and syndry sayis' [136]. But the status of the clergy is certainly stressed here, and I think there are two principal reasons for this. First, and rather less important, these tales are being told by priests and there is a discernible level of vested interest at work in the poem. The bishops stress the value of the clergy and the importance of the right occupant of a benefice, and the detailed exposition of the manner of electing bishops in fact contrasts pronouncedly with the less precise criticisms of other abuses.⁴⁵ Secondly, the tale also contains the first statement in the poem of a theme that is followed through its whole course: the importance of spiritual guidance in this world in 'temporal' matters:

It þat ȝe think richt or ȝit resoun,
To þat can I nor na man haue enchesoun. [137-8]

Surely here the king is not being satirized into mouthing such ideas with no real sense of their value.

Indeed at this point in the tale one might almost ask whether this king

43. A.L. Brown, 'The Scottish "Establishment" in the Later Fifteenth Century', Juridical Review, New Ser. 23 (1978), 89-105 (102-3); Early Travellers in Scotland, edited by P. Hume Brown (Edinburgh, 1891), p.46.

44. Prose MS, II, p.90.

45. See below, pp.339-41.

really needs to know anything. He appears to have all the theory at his finger-tips. This in itself is rather a distinctive feature. The questions are not asked of him; he asks the questions. On the other hand, he asks them in order to compile a new book, to update his information. When he returns in the morning for the answers he is accompanied by a clerk who is instructed to record the replies in what is later referred to as a 'boke of rememberans' [350].⁴⁶ The 'advice manual' motif is thus rather effectively localized in the text. The question the king puts to the burgesses, 'Quhy burgeß barnis thryffis nocht to þe thrid aire' [94], has a proverbial sound and did indeed have a circulation in a rather distinctive proverbial form.⁴⁷ To the lords the king asks why they no longer uphold the chivalric values of 'worschip, fredome & honour' [119], as they did in the past. Of the bishops he enquires why their prayers no longer have the restorative effect they had 'In all tymes and dayis of ancestry' [148]. Each question thus invites each estate to identify and explain its own deviation from a derived state of being. Whether the king is being crafty or credulous here need not arise, as a character study of the monarch is hardly at issue.

All three replies share an identification of the corrupting power of 'riches' in all walks of life: greedy merchants, depraved heirs, grasping judges, desperate nobles, simony in the church. None of the complaints involved (and their criticism of the king) is of course at all uncommon in medieval literature, indeed they are amongst the most widespread; nor are they seen as dangerous just for the social disruption they produce, but for the

46. The first example of a memorandum book, or boke of remembrance, noted in the OED is in 1465: see remembrance, sb, 7.

47. For examples see Proverbs, Sentences and Proverbial Writings from English Writings Mainly before 1500, edited by Bartlett Jere Whiting (Oxford, 1968), G 333; and below, p.336.

moral and spiritual decay they encourage. In this respect advice to monarchs overlaps here with much advice to men. Indeed the burgesses' reply does not refer directly or specifically to the king and this has a distinct bearing on the thrust of the whole work. The emphasis is not consistently on the monarch. As we conclude in the third tale with the portrait of a rich but thoughtless man, so we begin here with a picture of the origins of one particular sort of rich man, a very vividly written account of 'upward [social] mobility', as Lyall has put it.⁴⁸

Fulton makes the point that the third heir's inability to thrive is often associated proverbially with the idea that ill-gotten gains do not survive to the third inheritor,⁴⁹ and this indeed seems to have been its most typical usage. In the fourteenth-century poem 'The Bird with Four Feathers', for example, the bird describes how its fourth feather 'ryches' brought it 'covetise', many lavish purchases, and then,

Catell fel fro me sodeynly,
Ryght as it come it went away:
men seith, good gete vntrewly,
the thridde heire broke it ne may.⁵⁰

If the author of The Thre Prestis of Peblis was aware of this association he chooses not to use it in precisely the same way. For the father burgess, the man who makes his way up from pedlar to wealthy merchant is not specifically criticized for the way in which he acquires his wealth, but his lavish display of it suggests excess and pride, and corruption in the sense of corruption of the spirit; and this is what is most manifest in the description of his son.

48. Lyall, 'Poetry and Politics', 11.

49. Fulton, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis', 24-5.

50. Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century, edited by Carleton Brown (Oxford, 1924), p.214.

The effect is thus suggestive rather than direct, with the concentration of the charge on the dissolute son. No comment is made on the spiritual degeneration of the rich self-made man, but the burgesses' terse couplet,

And efter þat þis burgeß we of reid
Deit as we mon do all in deid. [215-16]

will have been worked through into a severe change of emphasis by the time The Thre Prestis of Peblis reaches its conclusion. But the seeds are already sown here.

The poet has thus given a proverbial idea extensive and suggestive treatment. This narrative habit of expanding such ideas and stories is characteristic of the whole poem. The conclusion of the burgesses' response also sees a small but significant structural manifestation of a theme that is acted out in each tale and in the overall scheme of the poem. The king sees no need to initiate an active response to the burgesses' reply, unlike his reactions to those of the nobles and the clergy. He merely comments that they have earned their reward through answering wisely. Yet, at the end of the tale the fact that the 'Burges Sones began than for to thryfe' [442] is seen as dependent on improvement and action by the king. But it is entirely apposite that this should not be mentioned until the end of the tale, for the king's acquisition of the knowledge necessary to rule wisely is gradual and cumulative. This trend is repeated in the other tales. In the first and second tales both kings work towards a state of wisdom where they may best serve the welfare of the realm, and in the final tale the rich man moves towards an understanding of the true nature of his friendships, and the three tales are framed within the larger organizing structure of the poem wherein each tale acts on the others in the progression towards the final statement of man's worldly and heavenly lot.

To return to the replies. It is a rather nice irony that the king actually tells his nobles to come up with an answer to their question under threat of 'þe hieast pane' [123] and then has to sit through an indictment of his judges. The nobles complain against the corruption of legal officials and the effects of impecunity on both the highest and the lowest in the social order so that even the sons and heirs of lords are being forced to marry the offspring of rich 'churls'.⁵¹ The lords' reply ends up at a very similar point to that of the burgesses: with an attack on the rich young churl who knows nothing of 'gentryþ nor honour' [311]. Avarice and greed are now seen further corrupting the social fabric.

The description of corrupt justices and the abuse of the poor is, as we have seen elsewhere, generally apposite to fifteenth-century Scotland,⁵² but there is no movement towards a more explicitly contemporary criticism here. More unusual, perhaps, is the reference to the lack of adequate equipment for husbandmen going to war,⁵³ and more interesting still is the lords' espousal of the cause of the poor husbandmen. There is though a vested interest:

For riche husbandis and tennendis of gret micht
 Helpis aye þire lordis to hald þar richt. [301-2]

- an attitude that recalls the king's concern for the prosperity of his merchants, and reflects the body political concept of reciprocal relations

51. This was a criticism of courtesy literature too. Ramon Lull's treatise on the 'Order of Chivalry', much translated in the Middle Ages, insisted that knights must be of noble parentage, and that to marry outside this was to corrupt the order. See, for instance, Prose MS II, p.37, and generally, Maurice Keen, Chivalry (1984), esp. pp.143-78.

52. For example, Chs 2, pp.136-7; 4, p.234; 6, p.298.

53. Useful context for ll. 289-95 is provided by David H. Caldwell, 'Royal Patronage of Arms and Armour Making in Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Scotland', in Scottish Weapons and Fortifications, 1100-1800, edited by David H. Caldwell (Edinburgh, 1981), pp.73-93.

between the various parts of society. Yet this desire to protect the nobility's integrity from infiltration by the vulgar lower orders certainly has parallels in the way in which the 'heightened self-consciousness about recognition of rank' in late medieval Scotland manifested itself in parliamentary definitions of the visible display of wealth allowed to different ranks of society.⁵⁴ In this respect The Thre Prestis of Peblis has all the political conservatism of a work whose primary concern is not reform of society. If the status quo is not being affirmed, the status quo ante certainly is.

The king's response to the nobles is once more simplistic and unexploratory. This time he repeats the lords' arguments and then, once more adopting the style of the advice book, 'For weile we wait þar can be na war thing/Than covatiþ in Iustice or in King' [342-3], he invokes reason and God's grace in announcing that he will appoint a doctor in the law who 'lufis God his saull & our honour' [338] to ensure that offenders are punished and loyal men protected by travelling with 'our justice' presumably his justice ayres. The idea that 'ane doctour' can deal with the corrupt justice of a nation thus again takes the narrative deliberately away from the historically realistic, although this has not prevented Macdougall from positing an identification with John of Ireland and McDonald (but far more tentatively) with William Elphinstone.⁵⁵

The bishops' response to the king's question to them certainly reveals an acquaintance with ecclesiastical business on the poet's part, consistent with his status as a churchman; but, as we have seen, this is a common rather than

54. Jenny Wormald, Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent, 1442-1603 (Edinburgh, 1985), pp.98-9.

55. Macdougall, p.271; McDonald, 155-6.

a distinguishing factor among Scottish advisers to princes.⁵⁶ The bishops claim that whereas in the past appointments to bishoprics was through one of three methods by laity and clergy, now they are in the hands of the monarchy, and simony and corruption are rife. The king is thus deliberately *indicted* here. Broadly speaking, the situation here described does reflect that in fifteenth-century Scotland. While the threefold method may have been the established procedure in canon law, the reality was rather different. Appointments to bishoprics were nominally made by the Pope; in practice they were generally made by the king, a state of affairs effectively confirmed by the papal indult of 1487 which gave the king eight months in which to nominate appointees to benefices worth 200 florins or more.⁵⁷ It was certainly the case that after this dispensation James IV and V made numerous conspicuous appointments of family members and allies to such positions, but these particular abuses had a long history, nor were they by any means restricted to Scotland.⁵⁸ It seems hardly judicious to see the criticism here either as referring to the reign of James III, in which to quote Robb, 'capitular elections had become a sham'⁵⁹ or the post-1487 excesses of James IV. The poet is more likely drawing attention to a long-standing cause for complaint.

The king's response is once more placatory and simple:

With Kirk-gude sal I neuer haue ado,
It to dispone to lytil or to large;
Kirk men to kirk sen thay haue al the charge. [434-6]

56. Introduction, p. 6.

57. Jenny Wormald, Court, Kirk, and Community, Scotland 1470-1625, *The New History of Scotland*, 4 (1981), pp.75-81.

58. Ibid.; Ranald Nicholson, Scotland, The Later Middle Ages, *The Edinburgh History of Scotland*, 2 (1974), pp.556-61.

59. Thre Prestis, p.72.

For those who want to keep the tale in fifteenth-century Scotland, this is rather troublesome. Fulton indeed asserts that 'If the author is seriously putting this forward as a practicable solution (and presumably he is) then it ignores the fact that since the church had a major share of the nation's wealth and had strong overseas allegiances no king could possibly leave the church to look after itself'.⁶⁰ But the king is hardly absolving himself from all responsibility for the church. He seems rather to be saying that he will not interfere in ecclesiastical appointments, a not unfamiliar idea that occurs, for instance, in Hoccleve's Regement of Princes, a work with which The Thre Prestis of Peblis has a number of correspondences.⁶¹ Hoccleve makes forcibly the point that since the law allows for cathedral chapters to make elections to church offices, the king should not seek to promote his own nominee to the Pope. The solution offered in the Thre Prestis, however, demonstrates once again that there is little attempt to engage with a particular present-day problem, or to make the account credibly authentic, nor should there be for this is a different genre, and such simple solutions still characterize the way we expect 'tales' to work. Thus, though the poet raises as complaints issues which have a general contemporary bearing, he is clearly not greatly concerned about presenting consistently authentic or solutions to them. The realistic point is rather that the impulse to improve things is felt to be a morally and spiritually worthy one. And the king is not asked to be as credulous as is the monarch in another collection of tales in the Asloan MS, The Sevyne Sages, who changes his mind back and forth after every tale he is told and appears to learn very little indeed. On the contrary, in The Thre Prestis of Peblis the king's increased knowledge of his kingdom is indicated

60. Fulton, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis', 33.

61. The Regement of Princes, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS, E. Ser. 72 (1897), ll. 2899-2933; see below, pp.344-5.

after each reply. After the lords' reply we are told more than after the burgesses¹: that the king did carry out what he proposed and that no one could complain. But the real exposition of his successful rule comes at the end of the tale after he has heard from each of his estates. In its small way this prefigures the structure of the second tale, where the king makes clear steps, separated over a period of time, towards the achievement of wise and perfect rule.

As we have seen, the first tale concludes with the statement that the king then had a long time in which to rule and that over this period there 'was neuer King more wyse' and that he 'leuit and deit and endit in Gods seruise' [443-4]. This is important, for wisdom and service of God are two key values upheld by the poem. Of course this tale is merely setting out in a couplet what is the major source of the action of the final tale, but it nevertheless remains that there are clear signs throughout the first tale that the spiritual element is felt and present. Its emphasis is different but its heart is in the right place, and there will be no need to reject it completely.

The first tale is in many ways something of a control experiment for the one that follows it. Archibald's approach to his story is rather more cavalier - 'Gude tail or euil, quhider that euir it be' [448], and the tale he tells is more complex as well as more entertaining. There is the same 3 x 3 formula, but within this further sub-divisions occur. The second 'episode', the middle 'tale' in fact of the whole collection, contains its own tripartite division, of the three murders. This greater complexity of structure is accompanied by fuller treatment of the narrative elements of the tales themselves. We have already seen the poet's ability to expand a proverbial idea in the first tale, but the artistry and design here are yet more carefully worked. We can see this from the start. Archibald's tale opens with the same formula as John's:

A King thair was sumtyme and eik a Queene,
As monie in the Land befoir had bene. [451-2]

but then, instead of going straight into the action it takes time to further describe the king as 'fair in persoun, fresh and fors' [453], and so on, and then to add, 'And neuertheless feil falts him befell' [455]. Within six lines we are being given a different treatment of a different monarch. His primary failing is that 'Hee luifit ouer weil yong counsel' [456]. Critics such as Jack and Macdougall see this as very positive identification for James III, particularly since sixteenth-century historians such as Lesley and Pitscottie both asserted that James was brought down partly by his attraction to 'young counsel'.⁶² But 'young counsel' is a phrase much used by advice to princes writers, for warnings against its dangers was an established part of the canon. The warning in Hoccleve's Regement of Princes - 'Ware of yong conseyl, it is perilous' has many parallels.⁶³ The point in the second tale is rather that this king loved young counsel over well. The fact that it is specifically singled out here as the king's failing of course remains, but his behaviour is hardly defined in the sort of detail to encourage a precise identification. Henry IV's description of Richard II, 'The skipping King, he ambled up and down/With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits/Soon kindled and soon burnt'⁶⁴ has its earlier commonplace counterpart in the further portrayal of the king:

To sport and play, quhyle vp and quhylum down,
To al lichtnes ay was he redie boun. [461-2]

Therefore, while the king is described in more detail here than in the pre-

62. Jack, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis', 264-5; Macdougall, pp.271-2.

63. Regement of Princes, l.4947, and see ll. 4947-63; cf. Gower, Confessio Amantis, VII, 4027-4146.

64. Henry IV, Part I, III, ii, ll. 60-2.

ceding tale, we can hardly be expected to see him as representing a particular fifteenth-century Scottish sovereign; and the same is true of his depiction in the rest of the tale.

As we have seen, the acquisition and practice of good counsel had a major part in the advice canon and was stressed by Scottish authors. In this second tale the king's progress towards wisdom is accompanied and balanced by the transmogrification of the 'Fictus' character, from wise clerk to disguised fool to wise clerk-cum-bishop-cum-chief counsellor; and the relationship between king and fool provides the linking theme between the three episodes. Prudence, good counsel and justice, the themes of the first tale, are the dominant values asserted in the first two episodes.

As has been said, a possible source for the first two episodes is book VII of Ireland's Meroure, where they also occur. However, the narration of the two stories is vastly different in these two works. In the Meroure, they are clear exempla, economically translated from Gerson to illustrate small parts of a larger discussion of the practice of justice by the sovereign; in the Thre Prestis they are expanded and dramatized into parts of a sequential narrative, with the king and the fool participants in both episodes. The fool of course appears in the remissions exemplum in the Meroure and it may indeed be that the Thre Prestis poet responded initially to this detail, seeing then the narrative potential in the other exemplum close to it. Yet it is possible too that he may have been acquainted with another advice poem in which the lesser known exemplum was, interestingly, rendered, Hoccleve's Regement of Princes.⁶⁵ The dramatic account of it given here may also have inspired the

65. Regement of Princes, ll. 3123-64.

Scottish poet to use it in his work, as Lyall has suggested.⁶⁶ It is interesting to speculate as to whether Hoccleve, whose Regement was composed in 1411-12, had encountered Gerson's Vivat rex, composed in 1405, and taken the exemplum from there.⁶⁷

It will thus be seen that, despite its stylistic simplicity, the sources of the Thre Prestis reveal, at least potentially, a quite wide cultural range; and this is further indicated in the third episode linked to the other two, the source for which is generally agreed to be Boccaccio's Decameron, quite probably in French translation.⁶⁸

However, from even our partial understanding of the sources for all three episodes it is apparent that in The Thre Prestis of Peblis they have been reworked on a very broad scale. In only one of the 'original' episodes (that is, as found in the sources) does the character of the fool appear, for example. In The Thre Prestis of Peblis he has been neatly worked into each one.

Lyall has compared the first episode with a number of versions of the exemplum to show how greatly it differs from them in narrative detail and expression;⁶⁹ and the same remains true of its relation to the account in Ireland's equally condensed form. The involvement of the fool by the author of the Thre Prestis produces a 'doubling of the plot'⁷⁰ and establishes the

66. Lyall, 'The Sources', 262-4, noting also the similarities in the phrasing of the fool's response in Thre Prestis, ll. 743-52 and Regement, ll. 3144-50.

67. For the dating of the Regement, J.A. Burrow, 'Autobiographical Poetry in the Middle Ages: the Case of Thomas Hoccleve', Proceedings of the British Academy, 68 (1982), 389-412 (395).

68. Lyall, 'The Sources', 264-5.

69. *Ibid.*, 259-62.

70. *Ibid.*, 261.

contrast between the wisdom of the fool and the short-sightedness of the king that features in all three episodes. But the basic point of criticism behind the use of the exemplum of the man whose wounds are infested with flies, which the fool urges should remain (because they are sated with blood) and the king wishes to brush away, is consistent: a king who continually appoints new officers of the law, 'Justice, Crounar, sariand and justice clark' [625] is in danger of encouraging corruption and oppression of the poor. And, as we have seen, concern with the appointment and replacement of these sorts of officers is a typical feature in the Scottish blended advice and complaint works of the period.⁷¹ Like that of his counterpart in the first tale, the king's overall response to this initial evocation of faults in the kingdom is not in fact to instigate any action; but unlike the portrayal of the earlier king we see here how he begins to respond inwardly, to ponder gloomily his mistakes, which he can identify even before discussing the events with his fool:

Hauand in mynd greit murmure and mouing,
And in his hart greit hauines and thocht,
Sa wantonly in vane al thing he wrocht;
And how the Cuntrie throw him was misfarne
Throw zong counsel ... [564-8]

His response to the fool's explanation of his failings is to observe him with a certain amount of fearful wonderment. And at this point, with matters left rather adroitly in the air, the narrative moves on to the second episode.

In both Hoccleve's and Ireland's versions of the account of the man who murders again when pardoned by the king it is a case of two murders; the author of The Thre Prestis of Peblis typically increases this to three. In the Regement of Princes the story is told within the context of pity: that

71. Chs. 1, pp.35-41; 2, pp.68-9; 3, pp.186-7; 5, pp.263-4; 6, pp.299-302.

pity is a necessary and good thing in monarchs, but not towards murderers. Ireland makes the story apply more generally to the doing of justice, but particularly pace Gerson, within the context that no king should appoint or have working for him men who are not motivated by virtue but by desire for money. There is thus a link between this exemplum and that of the wounded man and flies, which is also present in the Thre Prestis version where the murderer attempts to bribe the king to pardon him [ll. 677-8]. However, the author of The Thre Prestis of Peblis also applies the story further to conclusions that are in line with issues already raised in the poem. In his interpretation of the events, Fictus singles out the king's responsibility to keep justice and the laws; and his obligation to account in the next world for murders that have taken place in his realm; and lastly notes that it is the bishops who must answer for men's souls. We should note the religious or spiritual dimension in each one of these points. The first two moreover are fused by the image of rendering account on the 'day of Dome' [765], which surely anticipates master William's tale of the man called to account by death. As in the case of the first tale, the primary considerations of the final tale are already being suggested here, and in this tale in considerably greater detail. As in the first tale, too, the importance of bishops is stressed; indeed later in this tale Fictus is appointed to a bishopric (though not until one naturally falls vacant! ll. 997-8). But the emphasis here is on their spiritual responsibilities, on the after-life.

The second episode does not end, however, without returning to the sphere of 'political' action, in keeping with the narrative scheme of the first two tales. The king decides to summon a parliament to assess whether his fool's advice is wise, and thereafter to ensure how he may have wise advice in future. After this he also swears an oath that murderers will be effectively dealt with in future. He agrees in effect to refuse remissions to murderers

henceforth:

The King sweir be his Sceptour and his Croun
That he sould neuer gif mercie to nane
That slauchter in his Realme committit than, [804-4]

Like the first tale the situation has a bearing on fifteenth-century Scotland, for remissions, especially for murder, were a highly lucrative source of income for both James III and James IV, who were several times urged by their parliaments to give up the practice.⁷² But the solution is again deliberately simple and idealistic.

So, as after the second section of the first tale, we see the king making some progress, and we are told that 'sik ane rewll he made into his Land/That luck and grace in it was ay growand' [807-8]. It would seem that all is nearly well, particularly when at a dramatic moment of realization the king describes himself as 'fule of fules' [776], the precise phrase used earlier to describe the court's opinion of Fictus [494]. But this is not quite the case. Perhaps, given the continual sequence of 'threes' in the poem, we would not even on a first reading expect it to be so, but the direction in which the narrative now moves does contain an element of the unexpected.

The king is caught out by a very human failing, his desire for other women, and he has moreover for the first time to assess directly the consequences of his own actions. This 'human' element, perhaps even looking forward to the Everyman echoes in the next tale, is interestingly played up in this episode. The poet shows a certain attention to personal motivation, consonant with the more exploratory narrative of master Archibald's tale. This is particularly apparent in the mid-point of the episode, where Fictus comes to the king and asks him why it is that he takes no pleasure in the

72. Nicholson, pp.430-1, 569-70.

queen's company in his bed; and the king admits that he cannot quite understand why it is that he lets himself be beguiled into wantonness by those who tell him evil stories about the queen - which he knows moreover to be false.

But there is another reason for the introduction of the theme of the king's lechery which relates once more to the literature of advice to princes. Kings were consistently warned against lechery, not simply as a vice, but as a vice whose ramifications could affect the whole realm. The following is merely an extract from the section in Gilbert Haye's Buke of the Governauce of Princis which deals at length with the terrible sequence of events that could follow an excursion into carnal delights:

... carnale affectioun engenderis avarice of gudis and desyre of richness, the quhilk desyre of richness gerris a man have syk ane ardent will to wyn gudis to contynue his lustis that he settis him for unrychtwys conquestis and acquisicioun of other mennis gudis, bot ony drede of schame tharfore.⁷³

This advice is appropriate both for mankind generally and for monarchs, for whom lechery could therefore be a serious failing nationally as well as personally. Its introduction here is thus doubly appropriate, and there seems no reason whatever to see it as alluding to James III. As McDonald notes lechery would seem to be 'uncharacteristic of the king [James III], at least as he is presented by contemporary records'.⁷⁴

Despite the higher degree of 'characterization', we nevertheless have to suspend our disbelief that such a monarch can be both fool of fools and a competent ruler. But there is certainly a greater sense at the conclusion of this tale that the king's education is complete. There is also a sense that the tale has come neatly full circle, tidying up the reference to the queen in

73. Prose MS, II, p.88.

74. McDonald, 157-8.

its opening line ('A king thair was sumtyme and eik a Queene') [451] in a manner unachieved by the first tale in which the queen does not figure. And Archibald concludes, 'God gif us grace and space on eird to spend' [1003], a conventional enough statement, but one that both involves the reader or audience more fully and makes a contrast with the emphasis on the longevity of the king in the first tale. The transition to the third tale is thus quietly established.

So far there have been two tales, both extensively and strategically expanding their likely sources, often overlapping, and prefiguring in theme and narrative patterning the third that is to come. The reflexiveness of all the tales on each other is almost endlessly suggestive. For instance, if, as has been suggested, we see the third episode of the second tale as paralleling the third friend of the third in the idea of unexpected value, one could also argue that the queen should be linked with the second friend, representative of the wife and children who, like riches, have only a transitory value in the eternal scheme of things. Such self-generating re-readings are I believe a deliberate element in the poem's design, and make it all the more important that we should not see the final tale as in any way excluding the others. The argument that it gives them a spiritual context which they are lacking is, as we have seen, open to debate. Moreover, what has also not been remarked is that this tale follows through the notion of ideal temporal kingship. And in so doing it shows us what kingship - and kings - really mean in the poem.

With the modesty and understatement in keeping with his demeanour in the preamble, William declares himself the 'febillest and leist of literature' [1009] of all three priests, and one who will tell a tale 'sik ane as I haue' [1011]. Certainly his tale is the least overtly inventive and by far the most familiar. Lyall shows well how the story of the three friends was one of the most popular of medieval exempla; the allegorizations may differ, however, the

version here being particularly close to that of Jacobus de Voragine's Legenda aurea.⁷⁵ However, William's final comment before commencing, 'Of me methink ȝe sould na vther craue' [1012], is rather nicely double-edged. His companions should not object if, as a less literary, less-experienced storyteller he does not devise something new and elaborate; but there is also the implication that they should see no need to ask for anything more, for this tale surely needs no justification for telling and retelling.

The first lines establish the salient difference from the two preceding tales:

A king thair is and emer mair will be,
Thairfoir the king of kings him cal we. [1013-14]

This is an opening which certainly seems to encourage the replacement of secular matters by spiritual. But the text actually treats more of the secular than this would suggest. For, in the same way that the idea of spiritual justice and the life after death is brought into the first two tales, so the final tale gives a memorable picture of the ideally just monarch. This comes at its greatest length in the response of the first friend. It is almost like a distillation of the advice of the first two tales, a skilful summary of all their main motifs, using terms and phrases that deliberately refer back to them. The king described by the first friend (who ironically is totally alienated from such a monarch by his own corruption) is full of 'justice, richt and ressoun' [1069], he 'lufis not na riches' nor 'hilynes in hart nor euil won gude' [1071-2], particularly not 'euil won gude to gar men giue agane' [1073] - perhaps recalling the rich burgess and his heir? The friend adds that he is 'Sa just ... and stark in his conscience' [1076], concluding:

75. Lyall, 'The Sources', 265-8.

And that to me is baith joy and gloir
As fantasys judgit him befoir. [1081-2]

'fantasy' was the word used to describe the king's lecherous desires in the second tale [ll. 827, 910].

Thus within the context of spiritual allegory the more secular concerns of the previous passages are reworked into their optimal statement. Moreover, yet further on in the depiction of the officer, death, the description again seems to be phrased in terms that set up a comparison with the corrupt legal officers portrayed earlier:

Is na practik agene him to appele;
Gold nor gude corne cattell nor 3it ky
This officer with bud may nocht ouerby. [1258-60]

His master, the king of kings, is the real king whom man should be serving. In this tale, almost ironically, all men are in fact rich:

This riche man is baith thow and he
And al that in the world is that mon die; [1261-2]

The rich man acts as an example in a manner that significantly resembles the portrayal of the kings in the first and second tales. Indeed the links between the kings and the rich man are very strong, and any disquiet over the monarchs' continual credulousness should be resolved when we see the same credulousness and inability to judge wisely in him. His movement towards enlightenment by progressive steps also parallels theirs - and the further explanation of what king, officer, rich man and three friends signify takes the reader or audience through a similar process of realization.

The emphatic message in the poem's final lines is that man should espouse the company of 'almous deid' and give away his wealth in charity. The necessity to be prepared for the unannounced arrival of death is starkly

visualised in the image of the cart at the gate and the insistent officer:

Than cumis deid: haue done, do fort thy det;
Cum on away, the cart is at the 3et. [1331-2]

The uncompromising plain-speaking of these lines and the poem's conclusion have much in common tonally and compositionally with medieval moralizings and lyrics on death, in which the image of the cart at the gate frequently occurs.⁷⁶ The Thre Prestis has clearly moved away from the advice to princes idiom to a point where counsel - 'my counsall', as William puts it - is simply that we 'mend',

And lippin nocht all to the latter end ...
That we may win the hie blys of heuin; [1338, 1340]

The three tales thus point out the need for counsel and moral virtue in this world and the importance of spiritual counsel as part of this, in preparation for the one to come. It is the third tale that brings the relation of these two things to the fore with a dramatic evocation of the fearful plight of the unprepared soul. In the first two tales the kings act as a focus for the depiction of faults in all walks of society; as such they act both as types, and, particularly in the second tale, as individuals, as men. In the final tale, the exchange of the king for the Everyman-type figure underscores the fact that as a corpus The Thre Prestis of Peblis is as much for and about men as monarchs.

Thus despite its interesting point of contact with Ireland's Meroure, The Thre Prestis of Peblis is a very different work from it in intent as well as style. It is not directed towards a named monarch, nor does it set out to compile an inclusive set of directions on kingly deportment. Though clearly

76. Whiting, C 51.

capable of being read as a piece of criticism and complaint, it hardly invites a precise one-to-one correspondence with individuals or circumstances; indeed its vague settings and simple delivery seem constructed to avoid this. But it is also a striking and attractive work in its combination of the uncomplicated tale-telling with a well-controlled design which moves the audience carefully to the final moral and spiritual point. Its range of sources certainly suggest it was written by a man with ready access to such material, perhaps indeed a man like Stobo within the court circles. But as a piece of advice writing it lacks any sense of direct engagement with either contemporary workings of justice, as in De Regimine Principum or with contemporary theoretical issues, as in Ireland's Meroure. It may have been composed in part to gain the king's attention, but it will be seen to stand out rather less as a piece of outspoken advice writing when set in the context of the Buik of King Alexander, Lancelot of the Laik and The Contemplacioun of Synnaris. It is, as Pinkerton noted in passing in 1792, a work 'more moral than facetious'.⁷⁷

77. Scotish Poems, I, p.xiv.

Chapter 8

John Ireland: the Meroure of Wyssdome

John Ireland and his work form a fitting point of conclusion for a study of fifteenth-century Scottish advice to princes literature for many reasons. His career spans nearly the second half of the century, culminating in literary terms in the composition of the Meroure of Wyssdome in 1490. During its course he was engaged, frequently simultaneously, in many capacities: as his best biographer puts it, he was 'scholar and author; professor, poet and divine; preacher and confessor; courtier; counsellor; diplomat and judge'.¹ Ireland's concerns as both academic and statesman were of prime importance in shaping the nature of his advice writing. Like Hay, he spent much time in France, but not primarily as a courtier. Ireland is one fifteenth-century Scottish writer who is definitely known to have attended a French university. Indeed, having left St Andrews in 1458, he spent over twenty years attached to the University of Paris, rising to a position of prominence and importance there.² Given this background, it is perhaps not surprising that his advice writing constitutes the most explicit statement of the influence of French political (and theological) thought on one branch of the Scottish advice tradition in the fifteenth century.

Ireland's career as diplomat and statesman showed, especially in its early stages, a similar combination of French and Scottish concerns. And considering this career simply in terms of its relevance to Ireland as an adviser to princes, he is, of all the writers considered in this study, the one who may be said to have been in a position of closest contact with the monarch. Ireland, who was probably born around 1445, lived through three Scottish **reigns**, but the king with whom he had the greatest dealings was

1. James H. Burns, 'John Ireland and "The Meroure of Wyssdome"', IR 6 (1955), 77-98 (96).

2. *Ibid.*, 78-80: he was rector of the University in 1469 and 1476.

James III. He first came to this king's attention after he had been sent to Scotland in 1479 and 1480 by the French king Louis XI with the dual purpose of inciting James to declare war on Edward IV of England and of reconciling him with his estranged brother Alexander, Duke of Albany.³ On his second visit Ireland stayed for some time in Scotland and was soon brought into the business of government. Macdougall's reading of the events is that during his two visits in 1479 and 1480 Ireland 'made such an impact on James III that he was sitting with the Lords of Council by 15 July of the latter year'.⁴ After returning to France for a few years, Ireland came back more permanently to Scotland in 1483. Records show him to have sat in parliament in 1483 and 1484, among the Lords in Council in 1485, and to have been engaged in diplomatic missions to France and England in 1484-5.⁵

He was also, as he stated in the Meroure, confessor to James III.⁶ And he was so described by James IV in a letter written to the Pope on Ireland's behalf in 1490 (the year in which the Meroure was produced): '... one whom our father held dear ... his ambassador to kings and princes abroad, and his counsellor at home - most admirable as his confessor. We ourselves', added ~~x~~ the young king, 'hold the man in sincere affection, and need his services in

3. Ibid.; Norman Macdougall, James III: a Political Study (Edinburgh, 1982), p.194.

4. Macdougall, p.194.

5. Burns, 82-5; Macdougall, pp.194-6.

6. The Meroure of Wyssdome, 2 vols, Books I-II, edited by Charles Macpherson, STS, New Ser. 19 (1926)(hereafter Meroure I), Books III-V, edited by F. Quinn, STS, 4th Ser. 2 (1965) (hereafter Meroure II). All quotations are taken from these editions. Quotation from Books VI and VII is taken from my transcription of Advocates Library, MS 18.2.8, the sole MS of the work, in the National Library of Scotland (hereafter Meroure III). For a description and dating of the MS see II, pp. ix-xi.

the same functions'.⁷ Such an approbatory statement supports the documentary evidence that Ireland had a position of considerable standing at court, but one must be wary of overestimating this. He never held any great office, despite the fact that, to quote Macdougall again, his literary and judicial activities in the 1480s would suggest that 'James III was keenly interested in employing him in Scotland'.⁸ Ireland was one of those in the higher ranks of what Brown describes as 'ecclesiastical civil servants ... normally graduates, often at the council and important but not powerful men'.⁹ And despite the interesting links between Ireland's Meroure and The Thre Prestis of Peblis, there seems no very good reason to claim as Macdougall has done, that the 'doctour in þe law', appointed by the king in the first tale in that poem to accompany the travelling justicier is 'indubitably' Ireland.¹⁰ As McDonald has suggested, Elphinstone who actually was a doctor in law (Ireland was a theologian) might be a more likely candidate, but there could equally be others.¹¹

Moreover there is a curious lacuna in what we know of Ireland's career in the later 1480s. After being prominent in the records from 1483 to 1485, there is little reference to him between 1485 and 1490.¹² He had returned to Scotland in the aftermath of the Lauder Bridge affair, and the years that

7. Burns, 86; see below, p.432.

8. Macdougall, p.195.

9. A.L. Brown, 'The Scottish "Establishment" in the Later Fifteenth Century', Juridical Review, New Ser. 23 (1978), 89-105 (101).

10. Macdougall, p.271.

11. Craig McDonald, 'The Thre Prestis of Peblis and The Meroure of Wyssdome: A Possible Relationship', SSL, 17 (1982), 153-64 (155).

12. Burns, 86.

followed saw the gradually worsening relations between James III and the noble faction ultimately headed by Argyll, which culminated in the events at Stirling Field in 1488 when the king was killed. Until that point it was likely that James would in fact prevail through the crisis, checked but not removed (and maybe even strengthened), as had been the case after 1482, such was the reluctance of the nobility to unite to take the final step and dislodge the king.¹³ Ireland is said by one source to have heard the king's confession before the battle, a sudden reappearance in the confused picture of events.¹⁴ But whether he had been absent or less involved through business abroad or from a desire to remove himself from political infighting, or some other reason, he was evidently not too closely associated with the deceased monarch's cause to bring himself into subsequent disfavour. And his allusions in the Meroure to his service to the new king's father illustrate a concern to emphasize the continuity of the Stewart succession which had its political counterpart in the speedy installation of James IV and in the effective cover-up over the death of his father. Indeed the attitude displayed by Ireland both directly and implicitly to the replacement of James III by his son is quite consistent with the position taken by those in power in the institutions of government.

For whatever the actual circumstances of the death of James III, those who had constituted the opposition to him were in large part concerned to preserve the Stewart succession. Nor would they, not surprisingly perhaps, admit any responsibility for his death. The parliament of October 1488 articulated the position thus:

13. Jenny Wormald, Court, Kirk, and Community, Scotland 1470-1625, The New History of Scotland, 4 (1981), pp.10-20.

14. Macdougall, p.196.

... Ilk man for him self declaris and concludis þat þe slauchteris committis & done in the feild of stervilin quhar our souerane Lordis faider happinnit to be slane and uþeris diuers his baronis & liegis wes aluterly in þar defalt & colourit dyssate done be him & his peruerst counsale diuers times befor þe said feild And þat our souerane lord þat now Is & þe trew lordis & barouns þat wes with him in þe samyn feild war Innocent quhyt & fre of the saidis slauchteris feild & all persute of þe occasioun and caus of þe samyn...¹⁵

As in theory, so in practice. An unpopular monarch, led astray by corrupt counsellors had happened to be killed; cause and effect were blurred together. As in advice literature the question as to how a bad monarch should be dealt with was perennially dodged, so those at least complicit in the removal of James III, including his own son, would not present the situation with any more explicitness.

Ireland refers to the death of James III in terms likewise oblique: 'And þe making of this buk he desirit richt gretlie, and sa did his pepil; bot, sene he is passit fra ws and is wndir þe mercy of jhesu, this buk is maid for þe honour and proffit of þi hieneβ and of þe pepil'. [I, p.15] Nor did he choose to use the unfortunate career of that monarch in any exemplary fashion in the Meroure of Wyssdome, or more precisely in Book VII, that which is primarily directed to advising the monarch politically. Indeed, what he did produce was by no means all of his own invention. It has recently been noted that the majority of the material in Book VII is translated or derived from two sources: a number of sermons by Jean Gerson, and, for the final chapter on counsel, a version or versions of the Melibee and Prudence work.¹⁶ And the

15. APS, II, p.211/15.

16. The identification has been made by Dr Craig McDonald, who is editing the last two Books of the Meroure for the Scottish Text Society. The relationship between Book VII and its sources is also discussed by Dr Roger A. Mason in his at present unpublished paper, 'Kingship, Tyranny and the Right to Resist in Fifteenth Century Scotland', first given at the Traditional Cosmology Society's conference on Kingship, Edinburgh, 9 August 1985. I am most grateful to Dr Mason for allowing me to quote from his work. See also below, pp.410-33, 443-8.

one other chapter for which Gerson is not a source appears to make substantial use of Marsilius of Padua's Defensor pacis.¹⁷ Thus in many places comments which might appear to have a particular bearing on the state of kingship in fifteenth-century Scotland had already been expressed in very similar terms a century or so earlier. However, there are various provisos to be made here. Firstly, Ireland does not acknowledge Gerson as a source, and it must therefore be borne in mind that some readers of the work might not have appreciated the origin of these chapters, though those of Ireland's peers with a similar training would have been very familiar with its theoretical basis.¹⁸ Nor does he acknowledge his debt for the Melibee material, even though he in fact makes reference to Chaucer (one possible source for it) almost immediately after the conclusion to the chapter in which it is used.¹⁹ And he refers to Marsilius, but not in such a way as to suggest he is a primary source.²⁰ Moreover, it must also be said that while Ireland can be demonstrated frequently to be translating word for word from his sources, this is by no means always the case. It is not only that he frequently abbreviates the material. Comparison with Gerson's writings in particular enables us to see that Ireland's omissions and additions in Book VII of the Meroure give it considerable interest as a Scottish advice to princes work.

As we recall from Hay's treatment of the French theorists, a number of positions on the question of resistance to tyranny were available therein. Though most retreated from directly discussing how the wrath of God would be

17. See below, pp.433-43.

18. See John Durkan and James Kirk, The University of Glasgow, 1451-1577 (Glasgow, 1977), pp.84-138; also below, p.367.

19. '[I] knew not the gret eloquens of chauceir', Meroure, III, fol. 357^V.

20. Below, p.447.

vented on iniquitous rulers, it was in fact Gerson who was particularly outspoken on the matter of legitimate opposition to a bad king.²¹ He gave notable expression to it in Vivat rex, which was to be one of Ireland's principal sources.²² But, as we shall see, Ireland charts a careful course about such material, and his reasons for doing so probably reflect the same ideological position that forbade the overt theorizing about the last years of James III. Had he voiced pro-tyrannicide views Ireland would also of course have been breaking the mould of Scottish advice to princes writing which we have seen established over the previous forty years, as well as quite possibly endangering his (apparently) favoured position with the monarchy. However, his additions to the material he borrows interestingly reflect a concern to preserve the status quo on the appointment of monarchs while at the same time stressing their accountability.

Before composing the Meroure of Wyssdome in 1490, Ireland had written a number of other works of a theological nature, not all of which have survived.²³ Looking for the moment at his Latin compositions, these included a commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard (c. 1476-83), a Tractatus de immaculata conceptione Virginis Mariae (c. 1481), and a treatise De speciali auxilio (c. 1481).²⁴ The last two were, if not commissions, produced under conditions of patronage, the former for the two monarchs with whom Ireland had become closely associated, Louis XI and James III, and the latter being

21. Ch. 2, pp.21-3; P.S. Lewis, 'Jean Juvenal des Ursins and the Common Literary Attitude towards Tyranny in Fifteenth-Century France', MAE, 34 (1965), 103-21.

22. Ibid.; below, pp.410-46.

23. Discussed by Burns, 80-3, 87-9; see also Meroure I, pp.xxxv-xxxviii; Meroure II, p.xix.

24. Burns, 80-3; the Tractatus is discussed in Brother Bonaventura Minor, 'John Ireland and the Immaculate Conception', IR 17 (1966), 24-39.

apparently addressed to James III.²⁵ The subject matter well illustrates Ireland's immersion in contemporary theological debate. The theory of special help, a strong stress on the 'absolute power' of God in conjunction with a pronounced Marian theology, along with issues such as predestination, discussed by Ireland in Book V of the Meroure were all important subjects in the University of Paris in the late fifteenth century.²⁶ And their treatment by Ireland also reveals the inseparability of much of the subject matter from essentially political questions. The immaculate conception was an especially contentious issue, having been authorized by the Council of Basle, but with the papacy taking a more equivocal position.²⁷ And in his commentary on the Sentences Ireland revealed himself, as Burns makes clear, as a thorough-going conciliarist: 'The Pope is certainly superior in authority to any single member of the Church; but he is not superior "to the universal Church nor to a General Council"; and there are and must be cases in which the Pope may be resisted and restrained by the Council.'²⁸

The conciliar movement and the Great Schism had themselves been of particular relevance to Scotland and the Scottish Church. Scots churchmen had been prominent at Basle, though there had been considerable oscillation in the degree of support for conciliarism in the Scottish establishment in the fifteenth century.²⁹ But more significantly, one of the effects of the Schism

25. Burns, 81-2.

26. Durkan and Kirk, pp.112-13.

27. Brother Bonaventura Minor, 27-30.

28. Burns, 82-3.

29. Alexander Grant, Independence and Nationhood, Scotland 1306-1469, The New History of Scotland, 3 (1984), pp.91-3; Ranauld Nicholson, Scotland, The Later Middle Ages, The Edinburgh History of Scotland, 2 (Edinburgh, 1974), pp.332-8; J.H. Burns, Scottish Churchmen and the Council of Basle (Glasgow, 1962).

was the weakening of papal authority in respect of ecclesiastical appointments, and from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, Scottish kings had been making concerted efforts to gain more control over elections. Ireland, in fact became a figure in the dispute, when in 1484 the king supported his election to the archdeaconry of St Andrews in the Dunkeld chapter. The Pope however annulled this, and the monarch was forced to accept it.³⁰ But in 1487 came the important breakthrough, in an Indult from Pope Innocent VIII giving the crown the right to recommend within eight months successors to vacancies in benefices or abbeys of a worth greater than 200 florins.³¹ Ireland might thus be said to have had a vested interest in the redefinition of papal power, though his view was also, as Burns puts it 'hardly surprising in an alumnus of Gerson's University in the fifteenth century'.³² This makes more noticeable the fact that while Ireland was quite prepared to follow Gerson's conciliarist argument on the question of legitimate opposition to the head of the Church, he would not follow the further extension of a similar argument to the head of state.

In addition to the Meroure, Ireland produced in the vernacular, the treatises on penance and confession that survive in the Asloan manuscript, and were probably composed in the mid-1480s, around the time when Ireland may also have been first preaching in Edinburgh.³³ At this time, too, it is possible that he was working on a first version of the Meroure since he refers in the treatises to 'ane noþer buke callit þe A B C of symple & devote peple

30. Nicholson, p.467; Burns, 'John Ireland', 83.

31. Nicholson, pp.468-9; Wormald, pp.76-7.

32. Burns, 'John Ireland', 82, 87.

33. Ibid., 86-8; printed in vol. I of the Asloan Manuscript, edited by W.A. Craigie, STS New Ser. 14 (1923).

christiane', a sub-title which he assigns to the Meroure in that work.³⁴ There are further signs that the Meroure in its final form represents an amended work in that Ireland refers to it first in his prefatory remarks as containing five books, although it should be noted that it was always intended that the final book 'sal schaw þi hienes mony nobile doctrine, hou þou sall gouerne then anens god, þi pepil and þi realme' [I, p.15]. However, at the conclusion to these remarks he then suggests that the book may be divided into seven books, the material in the present books four and five being that which is different from the earlier scheme [I, p.17]. Ireland may well have added this differing account of the content of the work after the appending of the new material, omitting to cancel the earlier description. It is interesting to conjecture here too whether the final book of the Meroure was first produced before the events of 1488. The quite frequent references to the king's youthfulness certainly show that, if so, it was at least revised to this extent thereafter.³⁵

The treatises demonstrate Ireland's concern for issues which are also brought into the Meroure: the necessity for true penance, the importance of the sacrament of confession; the opposition of heresy, and indeed the use of the vernacular in this connection.³⁶ This proselytizing element in Ireland's work, probably even more strongly manifested in his sermons, comes through in a number of vivid stylistic passages, which give a distinctive force to these

34. Asloan MS, I, p.50; Meroure, I, p.14. 'þe meroure of wisssdome or A.B.C. of cristianite'; Burns, 'John Ireland', 87. The title was clearly quite a common one. L'ABC des Chrestiens (Paris, c.1490) is listed in the library of Thomas Murray, a monk of Sweetheart: John Durkan and Anthony Ross Early Scottish Libraries (Glasgow, 1961), p.132.

35. Below, pp.432-3.

36. Burns argues that 'Ireland's use of the vernacular in these two works is in a sense the most important thing about them', 88.

underrated works. Thus in the 'table of confessioun':

Allswa I confes me þat I haue synnit in þe abusioun of my handis doand evill werkis forbidin to me strikand or hurtand slaand steland refand tuichand unlefyll partis or myn awne body and memberis or of þir personis havand plesance þairin clethand me or adornand me to pleis oþer personis for Inclinacoun to pryde or syn of þe flesche or plesance of þe world ... allswa with my feit gangand I haue offendit god gangand to placis vnhonest quhar I haue committit syn Into and to vnlefyll playis nocht gangand to þe kirk na þe pardone na þe mes na preching na pilgrimage no to vesye þe pure in preson or oþer placis quhar þai ware and with þe partis & memberis of my bodye halsand kissand clappand & brasand or othir waye abusand ony of my memberis oþer in pollucioun or oþer way abusand... 37

Ireland's choice of phrasing here has a straightforward and even colloquial quality which, although not perhaps to quite this extent, is a style also characteristic of parts of the Meroure, particularly the first three books expounding the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Credo, and Book VI on the seven sacraments. And there is in the treatises far less of the overt intellectual disquisition that adds a degree of at the least linguistic difficulty to Books IV, V, and VII of the Meroure.³⁸ Indeed, from this point of view, the Meroure falls into three parts: the exposition of Books I-III and VI; the more developed analysis of questions of faith, free will, and predestination in Books V-VI, and what Ireland later refers to as 'þe mater of polecye' in Book VII.³⁹

It is perhaps within this context that we should see Burns' comments that the Meroure may be called 'a piece of popular theology provided that we bear in mind the restricted character of the public which it could be expected to reach', but that at the same time 'it was not a book intended for Ireland's

37. Asloan MS, I, p.68.

38. Below, pp.371-4.

39. Meroure, III, fol. 306^v.

fellow-scholars'.⁴⁰ And yet if not intended primarily as a piece of scholarly erudition, the construction and writing of Books IV-V and VII of the Meroure are such that, as I have suggested, those most readily in tune with the arguments would have been those of Ireland's fellow members of the governmental establishment, such as Scheves or Elphinstone, who had a similar academic training.⁴¹ The Meroure, in effect, and especially in these books, provides the most conscious and extensive statement of the theological and theoretical setting against which most Scottish advice to princes literature must be seen, from the more intellectual prose works of Hay and Ireland to the less theoretically discursive Fyve Bestes and Lancelot of the Laik. And it thus gives the most developed picture of the intellectual grounding which many of those producing advice works would have received, whether at a Scottish or continental university, especially in the thorough Aristotelian basis, in both construction of argument through dialectic and syllogism and the employment of a Christianized Aristotelian world-view.⁴²

At this point we might note that there are further interesting parallels to be drawn between Ireland's writings and those of Jean Gerson. In a long and highly political career of teaching and preaching Gerson delivered sermons and composed treatises for audiences ranging from the monarch to the assembled populace, and his works range similarly in depth from the complex theological arguments of De theologia mystica, to the political concerns of Vivat rex, and a host of sermons and treatises on the fundamentals of the Christian

40. Burns, 'John Ireland', 90; see also Brother Bonaventure, 'The Popular Theology of John of Ireland'. IR, 13 (1962), 130-46; the idea was first put by John Durkan; 'Ireland's "Meroure of Wyssdome" was a popular version of the current theology of the schools'; 'The Beginnings of Humanism in Scotland'. IR, 4 (1953), 5-24 (5).

41. Burns, 'John Ireland', 84; Macdougall, pp.194-6.

42. Also discussed by Mason.

faith.⁴³ Gerson indeed himself composed a work entitled L'ABC des simple gens, the scheme of which may perhaps have inspired Ireland's 'A.B.C. of cristianite' or, as he refers to the work in the Asloan MS, the 'A B C of symple & devote peple christiane'.⁴⁴ Gerson's ABC is a short work, which he describes thus at its opening '... votre a.b.c. qui contient le pater nostre que Dieu fist de sa propre bouche, et l'ave Maria que l'angelz Gabriel annonca a la benoicte Vierge Marie, et le Credo qui fu ait par les douze apostres, et les 10 commandemens de la loy...'⁴⁵ There are then enumerated a long catalogue of familiar groupings, opening with the five corporeal senses, the seven deadly sins, and their remedial virtues, and so forth, through to the principal joys of paradise and the passions of hell.⁴⁶ The three pieces which Gerson singles out at the beginning are those around which Ireland constructs the first three books of the Meroure. And the items and order of Ireland's 'buke and table of confessioun' are also similar to Gerson's schema. However, the latter was common enough as comparisons with, for example, Dunbar's Tabill of Confessioun will show.⁴⁷ Yet we should also note that in the early fifteenth century Gerson composed a quite extensive series of sermons working through the correspondences in sevens, 'Et dicam primum de septem peccatis mortalibus, applicando septem petitiones ipsius Pater noster, et loquendo de decem Praeceptis legis. Et deinde de septem donis, de septem beatitudinibus &

43. His Oeuvres complètes are edited in ten volumes by Palemon Glorieux (Paris, 1960-73).

44. Oeuvres complètes, VII, pp.154-7; above, pp.364-5 and note 34.

45. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p. 154.

46. Ibid., pp.154-7. See the discussion of J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, translated by F. Hopman (1924; repr. 1955), pp.208-10.

47. References to other versions of this sequence in English and French are given in Devotional Verse and Prose, edited by J.A.W. Bennett, STS, 3rd Ser. 23 (1955), p.iv.

septem virtutibus; quatuor cardinalis & tribus Theologicalibus. De septem quoque Sacramentis, & septem operibus misericordiae, tam spiritualibus, quam corporaliis....'⁴⁸ This kind of framework shows Gerson writing at his less mystical, more 'moral and practical', and the impulse to communicate the essentials of the faith and the means of doing it are very similar to those later employed by Ireland. It is possible then that Ireland expended the number of Books of the Meroure from five to seven from a similar sense of practical symbolism, and that the Gersonian influence which we can see in his religious language, and his conciliarism as well as in the direct borrowings of material in Book VII, is also manifested in the forming of the treatises and the Meroure.

In the two treatises in the vernacular Ireland only occasionally touches on matters related to the advice material in the Meroure. The question of the limits of the power of the pope, for example, is raised in relation to the privacy of confession. Ireland argues that the pope has no right to force a priest who hears confession to reveal it, for 'þocht þe pap wald charge þe confessour vnder þe pane of cursing sentencie late he suld nocht do If for þe secret of confessioun Is commandit be þe law of nature & of god and þe pape Is nocht aboue þe lawe bot oblist to kepe and obserue þaim...'⁴⁹ The distinction between the power of what he elsewhere calls the 'absolut & infinit powere of god' and the power invested in the heads of church and state on this earth is given full exposition in Book VII of the Meroure. We may recall that Hay in the Buik of King Alexander speaks of the 'absolute power' of the king,

48. See James L. Connolly, John Gerson, Reformer and Mystic (Louvain, 1928), p.148.

49. Asloan MS, I, p.21; for sentencie late, see Corpus Iuris Canonici, 2 vols, edited by A. Friedberg (Leipzig, 1879-81), II, cols 393-400.

but insists that this can never justify the giving of a 'wringous dome'.⁵⁰ Ireland avoids applying the phrase to a temporal monarch, reserving it instead for the dominion of God, and thus articulating even more precisely the distribution of power in divine and earthly terms. Ireland also uses occasional legalisms, as in the example above, and earlier where he refers to 'kirkmen' hearing confessions as 'Iugis arbitouris'.⁵¹ In identifying which sins priests might associate particularly with different people he suggests that they should enquire 'at þe king and Iugis anentis þe keping of Iustice' and 'baronis and men of weir anentis reif murthour and stouth'.⁵² And dealing with the conditions of mercy he defines it as 'þe mair noble condicioun Ganand to a lord or prince', for 'men of gret curagis forgevis redely faltis as arestotill and philosophouris sayis Parcere prostratis est nobilis', a phrase often used in conjunction with appeals to princes for mercy, including Dunbar in the early sixteenth century in the Thrissill and the Rois.⁵³

Ireland is thus concerned to cover the whole range of society and to use monarchs in an exemplary fashion which is also characteristic of the Meroure. And this continuity between the vernacular works is heightened by Ireland's awareness of his innovative use of the vernacular. He gives us in the Meroure the fullest example of the dual function of an advice work to counsel here a specific, named monarch, and to use the idea of the king as an exemplary focus

50. Asloan MS, I, p.23; cf. Ch. 2, p.130.

51. Asloan MS, I, p.17.

52. *Ibid.*, p.20; on the legalistic connotations of these terms see Ch. 6, p.299

53. Asloan MS, I, pp.56-7; cf. The Thrissill and the Rois, l. 119. Ireland's is a particularly early Scottish usage. The significance of the phrase is discussed by Priscilla Bawcutt, in 'The lion and the thistle: symbols of sovereignty', a paper given at the Traditional Cosmological Society's conference on Kingship, Edinburgh, 9 August 1985, the substance of which will appear in her forthcoming study of Dunbar's poetry.

for advice to everyman. The links with The Thre Prestis of Peblis are again apparent. But in his use of the vernacular Ireland also shows himself to be, paradoxically almost, both Scottish and cosmopolitan. On the one hand he draws attention to his use of the vernacular and of prose which, as Burns notes, shows his sense of the innovatory nature of such writing.⁵⁴ On the other hand, in his comments on his use of 'the commoune langage of þis cuntre' he makes no reference to other Scottish vernacular works including Hay's prose writings, but rather to how 'gowere, chauceire, the monk of berry, and mony wthire has writtin in inglis tonge richt wisly, induceand personis to lefe vicis and folow wertuis' [I, p.164].⁵⁵ One might argue of course that Ireland had little of a Scots vernacular prose tradition upon which to draw, but there yet remains in his invocation and use of other authors and authorities both admitted and not admitted a desire to retain a wider sense of perspective. In his own terms Ireland reminds the king that he was 'thretty 3eris nurist in fraunce' and has now been 'sex 3eris preichin in þi faderis realme and þine'.⁵⁶ In advice terms this attitude is translated in the Meroure into a tension between the desire to make the advice part of a received and thereby conventional tradition, and a recognition of the inherent Scottishness of its intended audience and the trimming of the advice which may be thereby necessitated.

Despite the fact that Ireland may have composed the Meroure as a popular A B C of Christianity, it is yet the most scholarly setting into which we have encountered advice to princes. All those who have commented on the Meroure have noted the breadth of Ireland's reading, and it is impossible to do

54. Burns, 'John Ireland', 88.

55. Cf. p.361 and note 19 above, and pp.445, 447, and notes 238, 242 below.

56. Meroure, III, fol. 357^V.

justice to the whole work as a piece of theological writing here. Its theological concerns will primarily be discussed in so far as they relate to the advice material. Yet the two areas are not separated in a distinct manner. While on the face of it the Meroure may be, as Burns puts it, 'overwhelmingly theological',⁵⁷ advice concerns are not kept out of the first six books, and Ireland's theology is an essential part of the theoretical basis of the advice given in the final one.

The seven Books of the Meroure are divided into chapters in which the arguments are frequently set out through syllogism and dialectic. And in the course of the work Ireland alludes to the various Aristotelian works which were a part of the curriculum in Scottish and continental universities for the inculcation of the presentation of argument, especially the Prior and Posterior Analytics (for syllogism) and the Topics (for dialectic).⁵⁸ Thus, for example, in Book III, chapter 3, he writes:

Arestotil in his logic Primo Posterior and vther gret clerkis declaris þat in sciens and doctrine ar part of commone proposicions þat ar callit digniteis And vthir ar proposicions proper in þat sciens as the twa premissis in the sologisme demonstratiue And vthir proposicions ar conclusiouns and correleriis Richtsua in the hali doctrine of ihesu and the faith þar is sum proposicions þat precedis as þai þat ar of the dictamen of resson naturale As þat þar is a god at gouernis þe waurld be prudence and wisdome þat rewardis gud deidis and punysis euill [II, p.16]

He is referring here to the discussion of demonstratio and types of premises in Book I of the Posterior Analytics.⁵⁹ But the extent to which Ireland imports and transliterates Aristotelian methodology into his work in compari-

57. Burns, 'John Ireland', 90.

58. Durkan and Kirk, pp.84-108; Ian Simpson Ross, William Dunbar (Leiden, 1981), pp.18-21.

59. See also the notes in Meroure, II, p.154.

son with other Scottish writers and advisers to princes of this period is witnessed by the fact that in this passage four of the terms, 'digniteis', 'demonstratiue', 'correleriis', and 'dictamen', are either unrecorded or unrecorded in this sense in Scots or English before the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ Similarly diffuse in argument and expression are the later correspondences drawn between the Aristotelian categories of 'simplicium intelligencia', 'composicio vel divisio' 'affirmacioun & negacioun', and 'discurs & argumenciacioun' [II, pp.91-2] and the three parts of the activity of the will [II, pp.113-14].

Such apparatus is being used all the while to express the sort of Christian Aristotelianism characteristic of much medieval theological writing and influences above all by Aquinas.⁶¹ Aquinas' writings had covered the political as well as the philosophical ideas of Aristotle, and his influence is very evident in Ireland's thought, in his treatment of the double existence of man, earthly and heavenly, and the similarly double nature of society, in which civil government must always be seen in the wider context of divine jurisdiction. Aquinas' view that, as Wilks puts it, 'The ruler may be imago Dei, but he has not the unfailing rectitude of God himself', is very much Ireland's.⁶² But Ireland's arguments and terminology also reflect his wide acquaintance with later and more contemporary commentators and theologians, such as Bradwardine, Pierre d'Ailly, and, though he is not acknowledged, Jean Gerson. Thus his distinctive vocabulary comes not only from transliterating from Latin versions of Aristotle works, but from borrowings from commentators on them. A fairly random reading of Gerson's writings, for example, reveals

60. Ibid., pp.154-5.

61. Cf. Mason, also citing the importance of Aegidius Colonna in this context.

62. Michael Wilks, The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1963), p.212.

much linguistic overlap with Ireland. The following words, in Ireland's forms, all occur also in Gerson: causal; coniunct; cognoscitiue; essence; fundament; producit; sensitive; singler; supernatural.

The process of putting Aristotelian thought into a Christian context may sometimes also necessitate refutation of Aristotle's arguments. Thus in the first chapter of Book IV Ireland sets out how he will 'adduce' reasons and 'probaciouns' after the manner of Aristotle in both the Analytiks and the Topics to argue against the arguments 'þat arestotill and philosophouris makis þat ar in contrar to þe faith' [II, pp.81-3]. A less unremitting but still corrective attitude is also seen in his definition of wisdom, the central concept of the Meroure:

And, sene I speik samekile of wißdome, þi hieneß may spere at me quhat thing it is and how þi 3outheid and nobill wyt may grow and increas þarto. As to þe first, aristoteles þe gret clerk and philosophoure in þe secund buk of metaphysik sais þat it is a nobile thing and knowlage þat all the philosophouris has lauborit for, and euirilkane of þame gat part of it, bot neuir ane come to þe perfeccioune þar of. And sum sais þat it is þe gift of grace and haly and wertuus liffig. Othere sais þat it is obediens and complecioune of the law and commandment of god and standis in to fulfilling the hering of gud and wiß counsal. Bot þe verite is that Souuerane wißdome is a gift of the haly spreit, and ane of the hiest and maist noble of the diuinite and hevinly thingis. And it is gottin be þe inspiracioun of the haly spreit, & als be þe haly scripture and science of theologie þat teichis men þe gret dignite of eternall joy of paradice, and the way and the mene tocum to it; [I, p.12]

The wisdom to be expounded is thus said to be one ultimately consisting of reaching a state of personal spiritual surety, which will be portrayed against a framework in which God is exemplary to princes and through them exemplary to mankind.⁶³ Here the youthfulness of the monarch to whom Ireland is addressing the Meroure is also useful to him, providing a necessary cause for proffering advice, and a necessary reason for presenting it in fundamental and 'simple'

63. On wisdom, cf. Ross, pp.130-1.

theological terms. And the achievement of this 'Souuerane wisdom' is seen as a precondition for the other aspects described above, rather than arising from them: 'thire opyniounis before Spokin tellis part of condiciounis and properteis þat foluis it, quia Sapiencia est rerum diuinarum et humanarum certa cognicio' [I, p.12]. Thus, more than any advice to princes work we have encountered so far, the Meroure of Wyssdome places the spiritual side of kingly virtue unequivocally first. As in all advice to princes works, the prosperity of the realm and the prince's spiritual welfare are seen as essentially integrated - 'For quhilis the prince is punyst for þe synnis of the pepil and quhilis þe pepil for the fautis and trespassis of the prince; we se gret trubile in this realme, hunger, mortalite, rebellious and inobediens' [I, pp.12-13] - but Ireland gives pride of place to the prince's spiritual regimen. Whilst this relates to his intention to make the Meroure a theological work for 'all þi pepill' [I, p.16] as well as the prince, its division into six doctrinal Books and a final one on 'polecy' also formally reflects the idea that the prince must first be brought into a state of wisdom in which he can then govern accordingly. It also, however, inevitably places Book VII as the climax of the work.

Whereas, therefore, The Thre Prestis of Peblis builds up to a conclusion presenting the 'king of kings', the Meroure of Wyssdome establishes in its opening exordium that 'the blist sone of god, jhesus, has the gouernaunce aboue lordis, princis, kingis and emperouris.... And he is king aboue all kingis and lord our all lordis' [I, pp.6-7]. The significance of this is next more fully spelt out: 'All kingis and princis suld know þat þe powere is nocht gevin to þame to gouerne þe cristin pepil eftir þar will and plesaunce, bot eftir law & resson conformand to þe law of jhesu & to his wil & plesaunce, and at þai are nocht supreme in regiment and gouernyng, bot has a juge Souuerane aboue þame and 3e be neclegent, nocht knowand his will nore his law and

doctrine, he crabbis and commovis him agane 3ou for þe euill gouernaunce of 3oure self and his pepil, and suddanly he sall schaw 3ou his crabitneß and gret powere in 3oure punicioune and in his rigoruß jugement' [I, p.7]. Ireland presents here the familiar divine/earthly model, using like Hay the legalistic connotations of 'law & resson' to enhance the idea of divine justice as both corrective and exemplary to kings. It is not until Book VII that a more detailed exposition of the nature of the law will be given, along with the rest of the more specifically political advice, but Ireland still brings in more temporal considerations from time to time in the earlier books both through specific injunctions to the young king and through his treatment of the broader concept of every man's 'gouernaunce' of himself.

In the prefatory remarks to the first Book the king is urged to ensure that the kirk is in the hands of good men, that he should not put 'ignorant ore licht persounis and of euill lif in benefice ore digniteis' [I, p.13], a point made also in the first tale of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, and reflecting perhaps the increased power of the monarchy in elections to benefices. It also emphasizes the link continually made in the Meroure between spiritual and political order: 'for quhen kyrkmen and þar prayeris are nocht hard be jhesu, þar lord and master, all the nobilite and pepil fallis in horrible synnis, as adultery, separacioune fra þar wyfis, Reff, slauchtir and mony wtheris' [I, p.13]. Similarly the king should be concerned that in the governance of 'the temporalite of thi realme' [I, p.13] his counsellors are men of repute and integrity. The usual points about justice are made here, but Ireland is also a little more specific in one place: 'And þarfor considere þat þi office is nobile, hie & excellent and of hevy charge, and necessare is þat oft and mony tyme þi propir persoune be in counsale special in þe gret materis of þe realme, þat þi hieneß & 3outheid may lere wißdome, and in þi presens men will nocht be sa parciell as in þi absence' [I, p.14]. The 'counsale special'

(also referred to in De Regimine Principum) is not more precisely defined, but from the context would appear to imply the king's closer or closest advisers, perhaps like the 'great council', or more particularly those deputed to govern in the king's minority.⁶⁴ And Ireland, like others before him, exhibits a sense of the value of visible kingship in the suggestion that the mere physical presence of the king may encourage stronger adherence to the values which he evokes as the figure-head of justice, and as an effective warning to potentially corrupt officers. We have already seen that, with parliament's support, James IV was taken about the realm on justice ayres from early on in his reign.⁶⁵

Some of Ireland's admonitions to the young king are delivered with a gentle humour - 'Alsua þi hieneþ, I traist, thinkis to enter in paradice in propir persoune and nocht be procuratoure' [I, p.14] - and many also combine the functions of giving simple instruction to the young prince and making wider use of his exemplary role. Thus he will explain Qui es in celis by the analogy, 'In this twa thingis are wndirstand, as and I said, "The king is in Edinburgh," þar is twa thingis includit; first, þat he is a kinge, and þat he is in Edinburgh. Richtsua, qui es in celis; I say þat god is, and þat he is in hevin' [I, p.31].⁶⁶ But the connections of divine and temporal kingship are also treated in more depth, particularly in matters pertaining to justice, where Ireland is also manifestly making use of his own legal experience in a manner similar to that which we have previously encountered in Hay's writings.

64. On the development and function of the great council, see above, Ch. 2, pp.133-4, 137-9.

65. Ch. 3, pp.179-81.

66. There is an interesting parallel here with the conceit behind Dunbar's Dregy. See the comments by R.J. Lyall in 'Some Observations on the Dregy of Dunbar', Parergon, 9 (1974), 40-3.

Many of the places in which the theoretical vocabulary of theology, law and politics overlaps are those concerned with questions of remission of sins or reparation for them. Thus Ireland couches a discussion of man's ability to overcome original sin in these terms:

Alsua, he may nocht restore nore mak satisfaccioune for the cryme þat he has comyttit of lesit maieste agane the godheid, and his inobediens, for it is infynit þat he aw to restore and mak satisfaccioune for, and þat he may nocht do ... and, for cau~~s~~e god is infynit in maieste, in powere in wisdome, in wertu and in all gudne~~s~~, þarfore þe offence and cryme committit agane him is infinit ex parte obiecti at he has offendit, and þus þe man may noucht mak satisfaccioune for it. [I, pp.90-1]

Lese-majestee, the crime of high treason, was an established crime in the legal canon. The Regiam Majestatem had a section De Crimine Laesae Majestatis, and a 1457 parliament spoke of 'lesyng makaris and tellaris of þame þe quhilk ingeneris discorde betuix þe king and his pepill'.⁶⁷ And in the contentious dealings in the 1480s over appointments to or purchases of benefices through the papal court or the crown, those who attempted to deal with Rome over livings which had previously been controlled by the crown were described as committing 'the crime of his hurt Maieste agane his hienes'.⁶⁸ Phraseology dealing with the opposing party was also a regular feature in the business of the Lords in Council, and other courts.⁶⁹ As with Hay, the effect of the invocation of such terms is to evoke the highest standard of earthly justice while establishing the supreme quality of divine justice in comparison to it. But while he may draw on his experience in legal affairs, Ireland can hardly be said to foreground the Scottish legalistic connotations of such

67. Regiam Majestatem and Quoniam Attachiamta, edited by the Right Honourable Lord Cooper, Stair Society, 11 (Edinburgh, 1947), pp.249-57; APS, II, p.52/37.

68. APS, I, p.130.

69. See citations in DOST, object, v, 1 and 2.

terms strongly in his text.

In the first six books then Ireland uses the theme of kingship to write directly about man in relation to God as his ultimate king and sovereign, and uses the idea of an earthly king as a mediating exemplary figure between God and man. Thus in terms of forgiveness for sin, 'sene the man may nocht forgeue his self for he has maid the trespas & faute na may nocht remyt his awne syn na mak satisfaccioun for it Eftir his will 'for he can nocht be baith iuge and party Tharfor necessar is that þar be a lord of gret power aboue the man þat may remyt and forgeve him þe syn and faute þat he has maid and committit or ellis punys it eftir his pleasaunce And þat lord is god of hie power and maieste' [II, p.120]. God is in control of 'punicioun' and 'premiacioun' (the latter another coinage by Ireland) by virtue of the fact that he is, in manifestly Aquinan terms, 'of infynit sciens wisdom and all maner of perfeccioun in him is infynit' [II, p.122] - the same reason in fact that makes man incapable of making adequate reparation for his sins. God is also of course the exemplary figure of perfect wisdom. Ireland also stresses in this context that man needs a judge of whether his works are 'meritor or culpable iugeable premiabile or punyble' [II, p.122] because he has free will to make them so. And in the quite complex discussion of this issue in Book V this question is linked to two further ideas, the ideal domination of the spiritual over the corporeal in man and the innate mercifulness of God.

Ireland asserts the greater value of the soul over the body by drawing the familiar political analogy with the necessity for a realm to have one ruler. With a multitude of princes there would be 'na gud reule gouernaunce na polycy in the waurld bot gret trouble and confusion' [II, p.123]. Thus it is that the soul is 'mar Principale na the body' and commensurately 'þe principale remuneracioun and reward of þe man is spirituale and nocht corporale' [II, p.124], the essentially Aquinan argument that 'the good life

can only be understood with reference to the after-life'.⁷⁰ The soul is also described in terms of the workings of man's 'wit ressoune and his will hoc est in intellectu et voluntate [II, p.124], the three-fold division we have also seen used in Hay's Buik of King Alexander, where the Augustinian, Aquinan, and Gersonian influences are equally evident.⁷¹ But Ireland does not enter into political allegory at any length here, his emphasis being rather on the 'gouvernaunce' of everyman in terms of his soul and his God. Ideals of kingship, however, form a part of the evocation of divine mercifulness, devoid of anything arbitrary or capricious, and concerned to give man time to attone, as far as he may, for his sins. For it is man who, with free will, is capricious, and thus 'sene the fre arbiter of the man is þus changeable it requiris þat þe iuge þat is rewardar and punysar be richt mercifull and nocht gif sodanly his finale sentens for it is mekle better finaly to saif þe man na to tyn him' [II, p.126]. One is reminded here of Ireland's invocation of parcere prostratis in the treatises; injunctions to judges and rulers not to judge too rashly and to temper justice with mercy were of course regular points in advice to princes literature,⁷² but Ireland is also heightening the point here that we have seen stressed in The Contemplacioun of Synnaris, that the divine sentence is the most final.⁷³ It is only through true penance and God's grace that man may obtain forgiveness and remission for his sins and, as in the treatises these are points much stressed by Ireland, but he also makes much of man's possession of free will and God's kingly possession of infinite wisdom and potential for mercy. Thus Book V concludes with an explicit

70. Wilks, p.124.

71. Ch. 2, pp.115-20.

72. See also below, pp.429-31.

73. Ch. 6, pp.309-12.

comparison of a temporal monarch with the divine, providing a model by which the nature of divine power may be easily comprehended but also reminding the monarch of the responsibilities and limitations of his own power:

... for as a noble king or prince be his wisdom reulis him and rewardis gud peple in his realme and punyis the euill be his werty and iustice and in þat is knawin his hie power wisdom and gudnes Richtsua god þat is þe hie king and prince schawis his infinit power wisdom and gudnes benygite and iustice rewardand gud deidis and punysand euill werkis and hevy trespas [II, p.150]

The connection is then neatly reinforced by the next sentence opening, 'Now hie and mychty prince...', illustrating through the reiterated phrasing the inseparability of the earthly and divine tenets that are summed up here: a prince rules ideally by wisdom and with justice, but God's capacity in both respects is infinite.

There are numerous other instances of such presentation of 'kingship'. Thus in Book IV Ireland enumerates a comparison between the truth of the law and the support it gives to Christian faith and doctrine. The fourth point is 'iuramentum, it þat a king or prince sais in verbo regio suld be leill & it þat ony leill man sueris resonable he suld keip & þarfor god suld keip his wourd and aith þat is his iurament sene he is verite and king of kingis' [II, p.109]. One of the fundamental tenets of kingship that, as it is put in Lancelot of the Laik 'O kingis word shuld be o kingis bonde' (l. 1673) is expressed here in a way that enables it to function in an exemplary way for men in general and for kings in particular.

Yet as this example well shows, Ireland's use of advice to princes material in these books is mostly very generalized. Though he may invoke contemporary legalisms, he does so with no pronounced Scottish application, and though he may refer to the youthfulness of the monarch, he makes little further comment on the present government of the kingdom. In the introduction

he has invoked king David I of Scotland, as an ideal 'meroure and exampill of wertu to all princis befor and eftir' [I, p.11], but this sort of comparison is not developed in the first six books. There is, however, one section of Book II which is worthy of more attention, for a variety of reasons.

The section in question is the debate of the Four Daughters of God, the lengthy presentation, almost dramatization, of which takes up two chapters of the second Book. It forms a significant part of the account of man's original sin and the necessity for redemption by Christ, preceding the discussion of the incarnation and the exposition of the Ave Maria. It is evident that this debate engaged Ireland's imagination. The two chapters devoted to it are longer than the others, and its dramatic nature is particularly distinctive when set against the more characteristic assertively doctrinal style of the rest of the Meroure. It would also seem that Ireland saw in the idea of the debate the opportunity to bring out and recapitulate some of the most important ethical issues concerning kingship that arise in the early books.

The debate or parliament of the Four Daughters of God had of course a lengthy tradition of narrative representation in medieval literature in various versions from its appearance in parables by Hugh of Saint-Victor and St Bernard onwards, notably in the pseudo-Bonaventuran Mediationes Vitae Christi, the Latin Rex et famulus, and Grosseteste's Château D'amour.⁷⁴ Its numerous Middle English versions included those in the Castle of Perseverance, Ludus Coventriae, and The Court of Sapience. Ireland's use of the allegory is

74. For discussion of the debate's complex history and numerous versions, The Middle English Translations of Robert Grosseteste's 'Château D'amour', edited by Kari Sajavaara, Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki, 32, (Helsinki, 1967), pp.62-90; Hope Traver, The Four Daughters of God, A Study of the Versions of this Allegory, with Special Reference to those in Latin, French, and English, Bryn Mawr College Monographs, 6 (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, 1907).

that of the branch of the tradition which is primarily concerned with the theological elements of the debate (as opposed to the feudal narrative setting of other versions), and shows some interesting debts to both French and English sources. But in certain places he has also developed it in an apparently original way. Combined, these elements give the debate an emphasis that is very much that of advice to a divine prince.

The debate was in many respects already a perfect vehicle for setting out the various aspects of kingship which Ireland dwells on in the first six Books: the nature of kingly justice; the role of mercy; the question of reparation and remission. The opening of the first of the two chapters sums up once more how man's first ancestor had caused 'discord and discencioune' between God and mankind by 'þe gret syn and offens of hurt maieste ... throu þar inobediens agane þar souuernae lord and ouris, king of angellis and all creaturis' [I, pp.106-7]. For 5,000 years no 'way ore manere of trete ore reconsiliacioun' can be found until the time of grace when the Father sends his son [I, p.107]. It is against this context, but bearing always in mind that the matter 'may noucht be knawin perfitlie nore comprehendit be mannis wyt' [I, p.107] that Ireland invites his readers to see the question of the incarnation discussed in heaven, where 'ware present, foure nobile, excellent wertuis, secretaris and wiß counsalouris, Merci, verite, justice, and pece' [I, p.107], who after man's fall from grace had been exiled from earth and 'maid of the sacret counsale of þe hie and nobile king of paradice and the haly trinite' [I, p.108]. And he suggests that their debate in heaven should be envisaged thus: 'And we may ymagin the hie maieste in godheid with the infynit hevinly wißdome sittand for juge, and thire foure nobile wertuis as aduocatis, argwand and contendand before him anens þe mystere and matere of the incarnacioune and redempcioune, and eftir, þe sentens and conclusioune gevin be þe devin and

hevinly wißdome' [I, p.108].⁷⁵

The legal setting of the debate had always been an element in its tradition, with different versions utilizing it to greater and lesser degrees. But we might note that Ireland establishes the virtues not simply as advocates for their respective arguments, but as members of the king's secret or privy council, a body which we have already seen to have been developing in influence in Scotland in the fifteenth century.⁷⁶ In 1489, for example, the lords of the secret council were appointed in parliament to administer justice and give his highnes their counsel in all matters concerning his majesty and his realm.⁷⁷ On another level, of course the four virtues are all aspects of the divine king himself, as is the 'infynit hevinly wißdomesittand for juge'. As in the inner council in Hay's Buik of King Alexander or the final allegorizing in The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, abstract figures signify both political counsellors of the king and aspects of his own person.

As we have seen, the four main protagonists are Mercy, Truth, Justice, and Peace, but Ireland also includes other characters: the allegorical dames Charity and Sapience speak for and incline to the cause of Mercy, who is also supported by Divine Orison, and the three hierarchies of angels. The presence of these additional figures sheds some interesting light on Ireland's sources, as will be shown below. But the principal debate in the first chapter is conducted between Mercy on the one side and Truth and Justice on the other. Their arguments are framed by Ireland in such a way that what might be called

75. This very visual description again suggests Ireland may have seen a dramatic representation of the debate; cf. the mise-en-scène of Mercade's Mystère de la passion, quoted in Traver, pp.78-9; also Emile Mâle, L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France (4th edn., Paris, 1932 repr 1969), pp.6-8.

76. Ch. 2, pp.133-4.

77. APS, II, pp.220-1/12.

the ethical issues of divine kingship are very much to the fore. This is immediately apparent in Mercy's opening speech. She asks for mercy for mankind who has laboured under the oppression and tyranny of the devil for 5,000 years and more. This is a characteristic argument from Mercy in the debate, but in this version she then goes on to argue that to have pity on mankind would be 'gret honour to þi maieste to turne his miserie and distres' [I, p.109]. The appeal for mercy in conjunction with the argument that this will bring honour to the monarch might remind us of the speech of Henryson's mouse to the lion king,⁷⁸ or as it is put by Hay in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis, '... be ay mercifull and pitous apou thame that thou has subiectioun apou' for 'a rype discrecioun with gude deliberacioun is a grete glore to the dignitee ryale' in such matters.⁷⁹

In arguing against this, Truth takes up another ethical issue which we have seen raised elsewhere in the Meroure: 'King of angellis & souuerane lord of all wertu, necessare is to al Kinge & lord to kepe behest & promyß' [I, p.109]; and he should therefore keep to his ordinance that if Adam and his lineage broke his commandment they would incur 'baith bodely deid and spirituall'. The law of God must therefore stand, otherwise it would be felt that there was no perfection in the deity, but great instability and variance. Her second, and linked argument, is that 'þi powere and maieste is sa mychttty, gret and omnipotent, þat þi sentens and jugisment mone stand ferme in execucioune without ony brek ore falze, sene na maner of creature may resist to þi hie maieste and powere' [I, p.109]. We have already seen how in Book IV Ireland makes similar use of the idea that a king's word is his bond, a recurring injunction in advice to princes literature; and the idea that kingly

78. Cf. pp. 457-60.

79. Prose MS, II, pp.95, 99.

justice must stand firm and be seen to be executed was a recurrent preoccupation of advice literature and parliamentary business alike. The arguments that Truth articulates here of course also appeared in other versions, but what is particularly striking about Ireland's account is its emphasis on good kingship. In the Middle English translation of Grosseteste's Château D'amour, for example, she will make the point that 'þou art also so trew a king/And stable of þouȝt in alle þyng', and in the Ludus Coventriae Veritas claims that 'þou hast lovyd trewthe it is seyde evyr mo/þerfore in peynes lete hym evyr more endure'.⁸⁰ In the Meroure, however, the question of good kingly conduct is far more to the fore, and Truth's instructive injunction balances that put forward by Mercy. Perhaps the closest (and certainly the closest vernacular example) rendition to this one is that in the Court of Sapience, a work composed in the mid-late fifteenth century, with a terminus ad quem of 1480-5.⁸¹ The context in which the debate itself appears is rather different from Ireland's since the Court is one of those works which use the feudal narrative of the king and his sons, but it is, like the Meroure, a work devoted to the exposition of 'sapience', and has a number of interesting correspondences with it. As its latest editor notes, 'In the Court the conflict in heaven is realized more vividly, both as a family quarrel and as a legal dilemma, than in the sources'.⁸² It is in relation to the latter rather than the former aspect that there are notable correspondences with the Meroure. Mercy's opening speech in the Court bears little similarity to that in the Meroure, but in argument and phrasing the speech of Truth is sufficiently similar to

80. Castle of Love, ll. 383-4; Ludus Coventriae, edited by K.S. Block, EETS, E. Ser. 120 (1922), ll. 71-2.

81. The Court of Sapience, edited by E. Ruth Harvey, Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations, 2 (Toronto, 1984), pp. xxi-xxiv; quotations are taken from this edition.

82. *Ibid.*, p. xxx.

suggest, as we shall also see even more strongly later, either that Ireland knew the Court or an as yet unidentified source for it. Truth's case is presented thus:

Thow must of force observe thyne owne statute,
And thy promesse fulfyll for any sute.

Thynk that I am thy doughter Veryte,
That of al trouthe doothe execucyon,
Withouten whome thyne eterne deyte
Were vycyate with imperfectyon;
Thy wyl is lawe, they promesse is reason,
And syth thy wyl and thy promesse also
Was he shold dye, tho mayst not goo therfro.

Fro thy godhede put oute al varyaunce
Stable thy sentence, and thy just jugement;
Lete execute in dede the same penaunce
That was for brekyng of thy commaundement.⁸³

There are noticeable similarities in phrasing here: 'Withouten whome thyne eterne deyte/Were vycyate with imperfectyon'; 'litile perfeccioune ware in þi diete' [I, p.109]; 'Fro thy godhede put oute al varyaunce,/Stable thy sentence, and thy just jugement', '... bot gret instabilite and wariaunce ... þi sentens and jugisment mone stand ferme' [I, p.109]; and both refer to the execution of the king's promise. But it is also apparent that the argument in the Meroure is defined even more strongly in terms of the nature of kingship than in the Court, where there is a concurrent sense of Truth defining her own position as the king's daughter. This aspect is not emphasized by Ireland with, consequently, a more singular concentration on the role of the king.

It is only then that he goes on to show the two contending virtues defining themselves in terms of their essential natures. Mercy's opening statement, 'My scistir ... 3e know þat I ame sempiterne, and without me may be na duracioune of ressonabile creature, na reparacioune of humane linage' [I,

83. Ibid., ll. 235-49.

p.109] is close to the Court's 'For every resonable creature/Withoute mercy may not lyve ne endure./Knowe ye not wele that I am sempyterne?'⁸⁴ and there are other resemblances; but what in the Court is a dialogue between Mercy and Truth is shaped in the Meroure into a single speech by Mercy, the fundamental point of which, and one often made in versions of the debate, is that her existence itself would be pointless if she were unable to make restoration.

Truth's response to this begins, 'My scistir ... I ame my faderis child als well as ȝe' [I, p.110], exactly the same phrase as is used in her reply in the Court.⁸⁵ But whereas in the Court the argument for God's truth is that to suggest that he is variable denies his foreknowledge, Truth in the Meroure makes more of the point that there should be no imperfection in him, and moreover that 'gif ... þe promyß and ordinaunce suld be brokyn, þar was gret ignoraunce and imperfeccioune in þe promyß and ordinaunce of it' [I, p.110]. Again, such arguments are to be found elsewhere, but the emphasis has very much been kept here on the role of the father rather than the case for the redemption of man.

Now Justice, or 'dame equite' is introduced to support Truth and to 'put all strif to ressoune and gud conclusioun' [I, p.110], phrasing which perhaps recalls the claim by Ryghtwysenes in the Court that 'My sustres stryve I wyl dyscusse, and ... brynge to conclusyon'.⁸⁶ It is quite consistent with Ireland's general treatment of the debate that he chooses here to paraphrase the arguments she gives concerning the sin of Adam and the virtues of the godhead, and to open with a categoric statement on the nature of the divine king's justice and law:

84. Ibid., ll. 251-3.

85. Ibid., l. 291.

86. Ibid., ll. 299-301.

'O fader of treuth and werray richtwises, þi ressoune is law, þi will is equite; sene þou art god and hiest in maieste, conserue þi law, and keip þi promys and brek nocht verite ... [I, p.110]

If we read a passage like this in the light of statements such as Hay's in the Buke of the Governauce of Princis that a king should do to his subjects 'as dois God him self, in all charitee, lautee, justice and equitee.... For all the governauce and ordinaunce of the world is governyt, manetenyt and uphaldyn be justice in perfyte ordre of equitee, lufe and charitee',⁸⁷ it is clear what Ireland is doing here and how well it is controlled. He is evoking both the spirit of advice to princes writing and one of its most important principles, but at the same time he is allowing a sense of the incompleteness of the argument above to emerge. The point is stressed that it is the king of heaven's responsibility to uphold both the law (his promise) and the higher principle of equity. But, effectively by definition, what is omitted is the necessary concomitant value of mercy, or as Hay would put it, 'lufe and charitee'. I am aware of no other version of the debate that presents the arguments in quite this theoretical manner. In the Court, for example, Ryghtwysnes concentrates on the treachery of man in giving up the wealth on earth which was his while he fulfilled God's commandment. This is a part of Justice's argument in the Meroure, too, but her point is rather more that God, who is the supreme dispenser of reward and punishment, should not allow man mercy or remission, nor his son to take human form and deliver him 'considerand þe gret and hevvy trespas þat he has done agane þi hie maieste in gret inobediens, committand þe cryme of hurt maieste' [I, p.111]. Her argument is concluded with the citation of the familiar biblical sentences, 'Dilexisti justiciam et odisti iniquitatem; et iterum: "Judicabit orbem terre

87. Prose MS, II, p.145.

in iusticia et populos in equitate"' [I, p.111].⁸⁸

In the Court at this point Peace intervenes for the other side, but in the Meroure, Justice's arguments are further supported by another speech by Verity. She summarizes how Adam was made in God's own image, and given the four virtues to guide and counsel him, but how he nevertheless went against God's commandment. She heightens her case for man's failings against truth, claiming that he has ignored God in paradise, Truth herself, and many prophets. She then makes what turns out to be a major debating error, acknowledging as the voice of truth, that if the Father sends his son to earth he will be cruelly put to death. She concludes by asserting that the Father should therefore keep his original promise, for 'Super omnia vincit veritas' [I, p.112]. Again, such arguments are broadly traditional, but particular stress is being laid on the fact that Adam and his lineage have 'bene euir redy to persecut þi law' and that the heavenly king should keep his promise.

In response to this, Mercy appeals once more, her station as the 'lady souuerane of hevin ... queyne and mastres of all wertuis', being first emphasized, and the manner of her description is very visually dramatic: 'Richt humely sche descendit fra hire hie trone and sege to help humane linage, and ansuerit to hire scistiris, and, humylly one kne before hire fadere god of maieste kneland ...' [I, p.112]. Such detail may lend weight to the idea which we shall see below that Ireland may have been acquainted with the debate in dramatic form.⁸⁹ Mercy's speech here is moreover a piece of carefully constructed oratory. She seeks to finally state her case and to refute the arguments of her two sisters, using now biblical quotation more

88. Ps. 45, 7, and Ps. 98, 9; the former is also the title of one of the sermons by Gerson used by Ireland in Book VII of the Meroure.

89. And see above, note 75.

copiously to support the general points made earlier. The citation of sententiae is a feature of many versions, but Ireland has placed the most pronounced invocation of scripture at this climactic point. Comparison might be made here, for example, with a version of the debate which will be referred to more specifically below, the Mystère de L'incarnation et nativité de notre sauveur et rédempteur Jesus-Christ, presented in Rouen in 1474, where the scriptures are cited throughout the debate and where the virtues effectively attempt to cap each other in quotation.⁹⁰ Now, in addition to claiming her status as her Father's best loved daughter, Ireland's Mercy argues against excessive rigour in the execution of justice: 'For, and 3our hie maieste punyst all fautis be rigore, hevinly fadere, nouthire angell, man nor creature mycht surlie compeire befor 3our hie maieste and powere' [I, p.113]. One is reminded here of Henryson's mouse's claim that 'Quhen rigour sittis in the tribunall/The equitie off law quha may sustene? Richt few or nane, but mercie gang betwene'.⁹¹ She refutes Truth's arguments by making the case that it was a promise of the Father and an article of truth that his son would come and redeem mankind. In refuting the case made by Justice, she immediately takes up the theoretical issue:

... my scister knawis þat justice suld stand in werray richt and ressoune, and in werray equite and nocht in wourdis. And oft tymes necessite is, for werray richt to lefe þe wourdis of the law, and folow þe richt and gud entencione of the lord and makare of the law ... [I, pp.113-14]

The principle had been given important exposition by Aristotle, and it is indeed to Aristotle that Mercy attributes the exemplum which she then cites in

90. Edited by Pierre Le Verdier, Société des Bibliophiles Normands, 3 vols (Rouen, 1884-6), vol. I, pp.125ff; discussed in Traver, pp.103-9.

91. 'The Lion and the Mouse', ll. 1472-3, The Poems of Robert Henryson, edited by Denton Fox (Oxford, 1981).

support of the argument, though Aristotle is not in fact its source. Ireland appears here to be adapting and extending a well-known classical rhetorical case, found in Cicero's De oratore, and in Hermogines, for example, but also in the rhetorical manuals of Fortunatianus and the like.⁹² A city had a law that no strangers should ascend the walls by night on pain of death. Some strangers come to the city and have to spend the night outside the walls, during which time they defend the city from attacking enemies, ascending the walls in so doing. But in the morning the city's governors insist that they should be put to death for breaking the law. True equity would not allow this kind of decision. Similarly 'be werray equite' what should be understood by God's commandment concerning the fate of Adam and his lineage is that they 'suld nocht be restorit to þar hie state and dignite, quhil þai forthocht and knew þar faute and gret trespaß, and quhil satisfaccioune ware maid for þame' [I, p.114]. We have already seen the legalistic connotations of such language, although the idea itself was perfectly conventional. However, at this point Ireland brings in a very distinctive and interesting legal idea. Mercy cites the example of God's sentence of judgement on Ninevah, and how Jonas was sent to warn them and give them the chance to repent and gain grace, adding that 'The sentens was nocht put to execucioune, for it was condicionale and comminiatore' [I, p.114]. The only other example I have been able to locate of a version of the debate referring to the Ninevah story and making the legal point is the 1474 Rouen Mystère. This does not consistently match the Meroure's version, though it is in the theological and legalistic branch of the tradition, rather than the more feudal romantic. And the context in which the passage occurs is slightly different, for Misericorde is arguing firstly

92. Cicero, De oratore, II, 100: also Rhetores latini Minores, edited by C. Halm (Leipzig, 1873), p.99 (Fortunatianus, Ars Rhetorica), 351 (Sulpicius Victoris, Institutiones oratoriae) 384 (C. Iulius Victor, Ars rhetorica). I owe this point to Dr Doreen Innes.

that God's sentence on mankind related only to the corporal death, and secondly that if mankind^d is eternally doomed this would destroy the reason for its creation, therefore,

... ce n'est pas diffinitive
Sentence, mais comminative
Seulement. Quoy! ne lit on pas
Que Diue fist crier par Jonas
En Ninive de rue en rue
Que se une fois estoit venue
Une quarantaine de jours
Ilz seroient perdus a toujours

Et toutefois pas ne le funest
Pour ce que au saint prophete curent
Et firent grant penitance ... 93

Here, the example of Ninevah comes after the legal distinction, but the similarity of material and terminology is evident. The term 'comminatore' is not otherwise recorded in Middle Scots or in English before the early sixteenth century.⁹⁴ The difference in the nature of the sentences was an established one in canon law, although the distinction was commonly made between sententia declaratoria and sententia definitiva.⁹⁵ Thus the shared use of the term 'comminatore'/'comminative' in particular would suggest that Ireland had encountered the use of this distinction in the Rouen Mystère, which was presented at a time when he would have been in France, or in an unidentified source for it or imitation of it. As with his borrowings from the Court of Sapience, he makes selective and revisionary use of such material.

The point is in fact made more emphatically in the Meroure for Mercy

93. Mystère de l'incarnation, I, p.125.

94. Cf. OED, comminatory, a.

95. Enchiridion Iuris Canonici, edited by Stephan Sipos (Rome, 1954), pp.708, 762.

refers also to how Hezekiah persuaded the king of Israel to repent and thus the Father 'suspendit his sentens, for it was nocht absolute bot condicionale' [I, p.115]. By the conclusion of her speech, therefore, Mercy has established the essential premise that 'quhen mene sessis of syn and turnys to repentaunce, oure mychttly fader suspendis and reuokis his hevy and bitter sentens' [I, p.115]. The language of law and the idiom of advice to princes have not been used as, for example, in The Talis of the Fyve Bestes (and later in the Meroure), to suggest that the king may be fallible in justice and thus should revoke a wrongful sentence,⁹⁶ but to indicate the perfect equity and mercifulness of divine justice. And in so doing a further advice message is offered to earthly monarchs for Mercy ends with the claim that we have seen before in the treatises on penance, that 'all gud natur is mare inclinitt to mercy and piete þan to rigoure, cruelte and hevy punycioun', and a quotation from Ovid's Tristia brings it to an appropriately oratorical conclusion [I, p.115]. It may well be that Ireland's presentation of the theology in this section has 'little touch of originality',⁹⁷ but this is certainly not true of the way in which he has consistently remoulded the presentation of the arguments of the daughters to make it less of a disagreement between them and more the counselling of various advisers to the king.

Mercy is now supported by arguments from two new characters introduced into the debate, "'deuot prayere and orisoune", send fra þe nobile patriarkis, haly prophetis and all gud persounis in Erd and in þe lymbe and bosum of Abrahame' [I, p.115] and dame Charity. The inclusion of Divine Orison again points to Ireland's acquaintance with the debate in some French dramatic

96. See Ch. 4, pp.239-40; and also below, pp.430-1.

97. G.R. Owst, review of Meroure, I, in Modern Language Review, 22 (1927), 459-60 (459).

source, since this quite unusual personification appears, for example, in a Passion performed in Valenciennes in 1547;⁹⁸ the prayers of the fathers and prophets were not infrequently referred to in the debates but their dramatization in this form is far more rare. The inclusion of Charity in the Meroure is also interesting since she was also not regularly included in all versions and had come into the tradition as a personification quite late, perhaps first in Deguilleville's Pèlerinage de Jesuchrist.⁹⁹ She is not included in the Rouen Mystère, but appears, for example, in Mercade's Mystère de la passion (late fourteenth-early fifteenth century) and Ireland may well again have been given the idea for the personification by seeing Charity represented in a play of this kind.¹⁰⁰ But as the quotations from Hay's Buke of the Governauce of Princis above show, love and charity were essential parts of ideal kingly justice and Ireland's personification of the virtue should also be seen in this context. Her speech is essentially resumptive of the arguments for mercy, but with the added thrust that in keeping his purpose and promise the Father will 'schaw þi hie powere þi gret luf and cherite' [I, p.117].

This chapter concludes with reference to another allegorical character, hinted at earlier in the allusion to 'infynit hevinly wiþdome sittand for juge' [I, p.108], when we are told that Verity and Justice see 'the souerane lady, dame sapience, be werray ressone and equite inclyne to mercy and mannis redempcioune' [I, p.117]. At this sight they feel ashamed at their arguments against mercy, and 'gretlie desirit, þare honour saif, to haue hartlie pes and concord' [I, p.117]. Sapience, who is thus given a small but pivotal role

98. Traver, p.102 and f.n.

99. Ibid., p.76.

100. Ibid., pp.78-9.

here, was another figure who had come quite late into the tradition, again possibly first in Deguilleville's Pèlerinage de Jesucrist.¹⁰¹ She also has a considerable role as arbitrator in Mercade's Passion and in Greban's.¹⁰² Ireland may well have known the debate in this sort of form, as we have seen, but the figure of sapience was also given a very enlarged and significant role in the Court of Sapience,¹⁰³ the essential virtue sought in the Meroure.

Sapience, like all the other virtues, is of course a manifestation of an aspect of the divinity, as is fluidly evinced in the speech of Peace which opens the next chapter: 'O prince of peþ, O wiþdome infynit, and reulare of all creature, in þi realme may na way þis strif Endure' [I, p.118]. Peace not infrequently came into the debate at quite a late point, but her importance in Ireland's version is also signalled by the division of chapters at this juncture. The argument that she expounds is once more placed very much within the advice to princes framework, with the familiar themes that no realm may prosper in a condition of strife and that it is a king's responsibility to resolve such a state of affairs. One might contrast the direction of her arguments with, for example, Pax in the Castle of Perseverance who presents her case far more in terms of the necessary concord of the four sisters, or the Ludus Coventriae where she is more concerned with arguing that she could not abide in peace if man's soul were to remain in hell. There are, however, marked similarities between the portrayals of her case in the Meroure and the Court of Sapience, although the points at which they occur in the debate are again different: in the Meroure, as we have seen, her speech occurs when the virtues are looking for a means of resolution amongst themselves; in the Court

101. Ibid., p.75.

102. Ibid., pp.80-2, 87-8.

103. Cf. the discussion of the concept in Court, p.xxvi.

she appears when the angry arguments are still taking place. And thus, while Peace's remarks in the Meroure are addressed directly to the heavenly king, Pees in the Court is taking issue with her sisters, 'O Trouth, O Ryght, what may this mene?'¹⁰⁴ But the two are linked together by their shared use of the same sententiae, which do not appear to occur in other versions. In the Meroure these are placed at the opening of the speech, after Peace has set out how many famous realms have been destroyed by strife: 'Omne regnum in se diuisum desolabitur, et domus super domum cadet, et, si sathanas in se ipso esset diuisus, non staret regnum eius. Na realme may lang stand na endure with discord and diuisioun -- salustius: Concordia prae res crescunt, discordia vero maxime delabuntur [I, p.118].¹⁰⁵ Both these quotations had widespread usage. Gerson, for example, used Omne regnum as the cueing phrase for one of his key sermons on kingship and the two quotations also occur close together in Veniat pax. Archbishop Whitelaw had used the Sallust quotation in his speech to Richard III on the occasion of the truce-making visit by a Scottish delegation to the English king in 1484;¹⁰⁶ Ireland uses it again also in Book VII of the Meroure. However, it is still striking that both quotations are also included in the Court. Here Omne regnum is cited to support the necessity for concord among the four daughters:

Omne regnum in se diuisum desolabitur,

Syth every royalm that hath dyvysyon
 Within hymself must nedes be desolate,
 And we ben four for one conclusyon

104. Ibid., 1.338.

105. See also below, p.420.

106. Whitelaw's highly oratorical speech is studded with classical and scriptural allusions, and would well reward further study: Oratio Scotorum ad Regem Richardum Tertium pro pace firmanda inter Anglos et Scotos, in The Bannatyne Miscellany, II (Edinburgh, 1836), pp.41-8 (46).

For to sustene the reame and his estate -
Among us foure why shold thenne be debate?¹⁰⁷

And she then goes on to make the case for mercy, particularly the argument that mercy has no essential being without a trespass to pardon. The quotation from Sallust, here cited as from 'Jeronimus' occurs in support of this at the end of her appeal.¹⁰⁸ Clearly both the placing of the quotations and the context of argument in which they appear is rather different, but the correspondences in other material between the two works that will be shown below nevertheless make it likely that Ireland did not come upon the use of these sententiae independently.

In the Meroure, as has been suggested, Peace's speech places importance on the necessity for the Father to 'put pes' in his realm.¹⁰⁹ The point, often made in advice works that the world should mirror the order of the heavens is made here, but as it were with inverted significance: 'The hevinly melody & Concord of the speris and planetis abuf without peß and concord may nocht stand; stabilite among the elementis, without peß may nocht indure; ba lif in man nore beist' [I, p.119]. Therefore the father is urged to put peace among his daughters and counsellors and 'cauß unite, luf and fauour betuix þe hevinly court and humane linage' [I, p.119] by sending his son to redeem a humanity that may not make sufficient amends for itself.

In the Meroure this is the stage at which the four heavenly virtues embrace one another. And the three hierarchies and nine orders of angels applaud. The former are described by Ireland as the 'thre nobile staitis of

107. Court, p.90; ll. 343-8.

108. On this attribution see the note in Court, pp.91-2.

109. Cf. also the description of her shining brightness with Court, ll. 334-6.

his hevinly realme' [I, p.120], and they then give a series of three speeches beseeching God's mercy on behalf of man. Versions of the debate in the tradition influenced by the pseudo-Bonaventuran Meditationes Vitae Christe not infrequently included the supplicating angels. But commonly as in the Meditationes, the appeals come earlier in the debate, and if the angels are distinguished it is in their nine orders (as in the Rouen Mystère) rather than in their three hierarchies.¹¹⁰ The only other version in which I have encountered the three hierarchies making three separate prayers is the Court of Sapience.

Here their appeals occur after Sapience has moved the resolution of the debate of the Four Daughters through the Son, who has agreed to this. The hierarchies of angels then in compassion go to council,

To pray for man it was theyr hole entent,
That he myght come to his old herytage
Oute from the carybde, and the smoky cage
Of servytude, the whiche hym had incluse
Four thousand yere; he myght it not refuse.¹¹¹

This is how it is put by Ireland:

... þat he mycht be deliuerit fra þe dyrk place
of pluto and þe dyrk, gret and hevy seruitute of þe
auld serpent, and cum agane to his auld heretage. [I, p.120]

The verbal correspondence, such as 'cum ... to his auld heretage', and the use of the 'dark place of pluto', which may represent Ireland's rendering of Charybdis or 'the smoky cage' are striking here. In the speech of the first hierarchy in the Court, those 'next to the Trynyte', they describe themselves to the Father as 'assessours ... to thyn estate,/Cubyculers also of thy

110. Traver, p.104.

111. Court, ll. 612-16.

godhede'.¹¹² Some witnesses of the poem are accompanied by a Latin prose gloss, which describes them also as 'cubicularii, consiliarii et assessores'.¹¹³ Ireland may have known the poem with or without the glosses, but he describes the first hierarchy more simply as 'counsallouris assistant to þe diuinite' [I, p.120], a role, however, clearly distinct from the secret council mentioned earlier. The similarities in phrasing continue in the speeches.

The to byhold is our soverayne solace,
 Our lyf, our lust, and oure ay lastyng blysse;
 The hyghe glory that shyneth in thy face
 The wyt of kynd may not conceyve, ywys,
 And syth that man soo lyke unto the is,
 And fourmed was unto thyne owne lykenesse,
 Oute of thy blysse why lyeth he in derkenesse?

O hiest lord and souerane prince of maieste, our
 glore, oure blis, all oure delit and pleasaunce is, þi
 natur to know, and euir to consider and behold þi
 bricht face, þi powere and þi wertu. And sene mankind
 is maid to þi similitud, þat is sa like to þi ymage,
 lord of maieste, oure prayere is, þou schaw to him þi
 mercy and þi grace. [I, p.120]

As E. Ruth Harvey notes, the speech in the Court is probably developed from the appeal of the angels in the Meditationes,¹¹⁵ but as we have seen this is delivered at a different point in the debate, and by the angels collectively.¹¹⁶ It seems far more likely that Ireland was using the Court or an as yet unidentified intermediate source. And this is even more strongly indicated by the correspondences in the continuation of both speeches:

112. Ibid., ll. 620-1.

113. Ibid., p.98.

114. Ibid., ll. 624-30.

115. Ibid., p.99.

116. Cf. Meditations on the Life of Christ, translated and edited by Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton, 1961), pp.5-6.

What honour is, or yet what worthynesse
To thy godhede to suffre thyn ymage
Devoured be, and drenched in derkenesse,
For whome thou made lyght to be herytage? 117

And, fader of mercy, of wertu, of all honour and worthineß,
quhat honour may be to þi hie deite, to suffer all mankind
eternaly in sic mischaunce and hevines, þat was fyrst
ordand for eternall blis and heretage. [I, p.120]

The two thus ask the same question, but Ireland characteristically prefaces it with an assertion of the virtues residing in the heavenly king. Both bring the speech to its finish with a plea that 'For now is tyme of Mercy and of Pees/And tyme is come that al vengeaunce shold cees' 'now is tym of mercy and of grace, and at all wengeauns suld ces' [I, p.120], though Ireland again stresses the honour to be gained by this and the value of avoiding the ruin of the realm.

Ireland may perhaps have responded so strongly to this section of the Court because the appeals of the hierarchies are directed forthrightly to the Father, in keeping with his style in the earlier part of the debate. This is well evinced in the appeal of the second order, who in the Latin gloss to the Court are described in detailed terms as those 'qui habent officia ad regimen regni in communi, non deputati huic vel illi provincie, ut principes milicie et iudices curie', though in their appeal less specifically as those who 'With besy cure supporten thyn empyre,/And with knyghthode obeyen thy desyre'.¹¹⁸ Ireland's description has more in common with the latter, 'we are þi seruandis, þi knyghttis in all maner obedient to þi command, desyre and plesaunce' [I, p.120]. Both make something of the imperial nature of divine kingship, the Court poet referring to 'thy lawe imperyal' and 'thyn empyre',¹¹⁹ Ireland to

117. Court, ll. 631-4.

118. *Ibid.*, p.99, ll. 650-1.

119. *Ibid.*, l. 647, 649.

the king as 'emperoure souuerane' [I, p.120]. Both then make the same point that, to quote Ireland, 'þe prince of prid, lord of all iniquite and myrknes has drawin fra þis nobile realme mony spiritis of gret ranoune and hie estait' [I, p.120]. Both appeal for mercy to mankind and ask how long he must suffer under oppression. The terms in which they continue well illustrate how the Court contrives to evoke a more immediately active kingship, which will be demonstrated in the fuller evocation of the actions of the son, and how Ireland presents a more formal appeal for clemency to a king who is the absolute seat of justice:

Syth thou art lyf, why hath deth soveraynte?
 If thou be kyng, to thyn honour thou see!
 Soo bynd the fend, and take man by conquest 120
 Unto thy blysse, and set thy regne in rest.

And, hie emperoure and lord souuerane, sene þou art
 werray lif and prince of piete, hou lang sal þou tholl
 cruell deid to haue dominacione one þi humyll seruand
 and þi ymage, nature humane. And sene þou art king of
 blis, bynd þi innemy, loue þi seruand, and bring him to
 rest and pece. [I, pp.120-1]

The ideas stem ultimately, again, from the prayer of the angels in the Meditationes, but the phrasing of these two vernacular versions is far closer.¹²¹ Their slightly differently directed approaches can be seen too in the rounding off of the appeal of the second hierarchy. The Court has them asking the Father to 'rewe on man, though that al mercy hast' and repeats the couplet that concluded the appeal of the first hierarchy.¹²² Ireland's equivalent builds up to one further expression of the qualities inherent in the godhead, 'Rew now on him, And schaw þi powere, þi mercy, þi grace and pete' [I, p.121].

120. Ibid., ll. 662-5.

121. Meditations, pp.5-6.

122. Court, l. 670.

The third order are described in the Court's Latin gloss as those 'qui preponuntur ad regimen alicujus partis regni, ut prepositi et ballivi et hujusmodi minores officiales', but Ireland's description of them as the 'nobile and worthis officiaris of is realme celestiall and hevinly court' [I, p.121] has perhaps more in common with the poem's reference to them as 'trewe and dylygent/Offfycyals'.¹²³ Thereafter, however, there is much greater disparity between the Court and the Meroure in their presentation of the speeches of this group than in those of the two former orders. This is probably because the speech in the Court deals with the request of the angels for the king to bring back the exiled Dame Peace, and to be piteous to his children, details not relevant to the debate in the Meroure. Here the argument is essentially resumptive and is related as reported speech. Ireland makes much of the oppressive power of Satan and the 'princis of myrknes' who are depicted as oppressive tyrants who had made 'gret resistaunce ... to þe haly will of the souuerane king of glore and his seruandis' and 'vsurpacioune' upon his creatures [I, p.121]. There is an obvious contrast between types of kingship: the perfect justice of God, and the tyranny of Satan and his 'vile and cruel officiaris' [I, p.121]. Having referred initially to the orders as the three noble estates of the realm, Ireland has not done that much more to press an identification with the three estates, certainly in terms of the Scottish parliamentary system, but this version of the debate has by now established a firm impression of the concordance of the holy parliament of angels with the privy counselling virtues.

Now they appeal together to the Father on the two main principles, 'na for ³et nocht his awne natur and condicioune sa gretlie inclinit to mercy, na

123. Ibid., p.99, ll. 677-8.

3it the promy^β he maid before to ^βe hie lady and hevinly dochtir and of all wertu maistres, dame Mercy' [I, p.121] that Christ would be born to redeem mankind. There are henceforth no more precise correspondences between the debates in the Meroure and the Court of Sapience, the latter of which moves into dialogue between the Son and the daughters and an appeal from the Virgin. Ireland is more concerned to preserve the kingly focus and to present the heavenly king in the role of the judgemental monarch, who in the style of those who preside over courts or councils has 'hard' and 'considirit' the evidence; '^βe desolacioune of the hevinly relme, ^βe gret ressonis, contencioune and argumentis maid be the nobile and hevinly wertuis', of his council [I, p.122].¹²⁴ And his response is the classic one of the merciful monarch: 'he knew his awne propir nature & condicioune, sa gretlie inclinitt to mercy' [I, p.122].¹²⁵ Ireland skilfully contrives to suggest here both that the Father's response is instigated by the advice and pleas of his subjects and arises naturally from his own ideal nature.

Ireland deals quite shortly with the offer of the son to take human form, something that in many other versions was given considerable space. Again, this might well be explained by a desire to keep attention fixed fully on the heavenly king. It is interesting that he again distinguishes a legal context here, seeing the discussion as to which of the three persons of the divinity should take human form as occurring 'in ^βe hevinly counsall and conscistory of the trinite' [I, p.122]. And the context is sustained in the Father's issuing of his decision as 'sentens diffinitive', distinguished of course from the 'condicionale and comminiatore' sentence given earlier [I, pp.123, 114]. The

124. Cf., for example, ADC, I, pp.216/28.

125. A useful comparison with a less than perfect monarch is Henryson's 'Lion and Mouse', ll. 1503-6. Cf. Conclusion, pp.460-1.

form in which it is given is a fitting culmination of Ireland's treatment of the debate. God's sentence is presented in the style of a king's charter or decree, and though a final statement by the deity was not uncommonly a feature of the debate, there is no other version which is markedly similar to Ireland's. There are various literary and legal elements at work here. The whole idea clearly owes something to the tradition of the 'charter of Christ', as do details within the passage, such as the statement that the blood of Christ will wash away the 'cyrograf and lettir of perdicione of humane linage, maid to þe innemy be auld Adam' [I, p.123]. It was also customary for charters of Christ to invoke legal formulae, opening for example, with the Latin declaration Sciant presentes et futuri, Dedi et concessi, to cite witnesses, and to give the date of the charter, often as 'The first day of the gret merci'.¹²⁶ But Ireland's charter differs from this in a number of ways, not least in that it is a charter not given by Christ at Calvary, as was customary, but by God the Father. And he builds into it various elements which form it as a fitting conclusion to his account of the debate.

The evocation of exemplary divine kingship through use of the language of temporal kingly business is immediately shown in the appropriate royal phrasing with which the charter opens. This is not quite the same as that adopted in the charters of Christ: 'I, god, creature and fadere of hevin, makis kend to all my creaturis and to my seruandis sendis salutacione. [I, p.123]. We might compare with this the opening of an edict of James III in 1484, 'Jacobis dei gratie. Rex Scotorum Omnibus Probis hominibus ad quos presentes litteres pervenerunt, salutem'. And the charter in the Meroure then continues, 'I will 3e knaw', translating the 'Sciatis' which generally

126. Mary Caroline Spalding, The Middle English Charters of Christ, Ph.D. dissertation, Brwn Mawr University, Pennsylvania (1914), pp.5-7; Rosemary Woolf, The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1968), pp.210-14.

followed in such documents,¹²⁷ 'anens þe gret discencioune and discord þat lang tyme has indurit betuix me and my seruiture and wassale, humane linage...' [I, p.123], phrasing not dissimilar to that used in parliamentary records to describe trouble in the realm - 'anent the divisioun, debatis and discordis' or 'al discensions and discordis na standand'.¹²⁸ It is then repeated that 'befor me in my court riall of paradys has comperit my childer, þe hevinly wertuis, and at len^{ch} the I haue hard all þar strif, ressounis and argumentis ..' [I, p.123], which is very much in the style of, for example, the business of the Lords in Council, his 'Richtis, Resouns & allegacouns ... herd, sene & undirstandin'.¹²⁹ He now gives the definitive sentence that in order to make peace between himself and mankind and to make satisfaction for man's fault his son will take human flesh. Then comes the reference to the 'cyrograf' and the 'lettiris of plane indulgeans and grace' which will be written on the parchment of his holy body with the 'horrible pennis of irne', the nails that fix him to the cross. And the letter will be written in his blood, and 'subscrivit be þe consent of þe haly spreit, and selit with the sing of the haly croce', concluding, 'And þis lettir of grace be þe consent of þe hale trinite is gevin inoure gret counsale of hevin þe fyst 3ere of grace, þe day and houre of þe blist incarnacioune of jhesu, my sone, þat is god omnipotent and of maieste' [I, pp.123-4). The document, duly signed and sealed has thus been agreed by the king in his great council.¹³⁰ Perhaps there is an element of inconsistency here - the four virtues have previously been depicted as the

127. E.g. APS, II, p.165; cf. APS, XII, p.33.

128. APS, II, pp.188/8, 210.

129. ADC, II, p.19.

130. The charter here also broadly accords with the models for Scottish law set out in the fourteenth-fifteenth century collections, 'De Compositione Cartarum', edited by J.J. Robertson, The Stair Society, Miscellany 1 (Edinburgh, 1971), pp. 78-93.

privy counsellors, and the Trinity as the consistory. But, however fluid, what the reference to the Trinity as the great council does is to suggest that the heavenly king's decision is both his own (as three in one) and one taken in council (among the three persons of the Trinity). Again, like the temporal monarchs in The Talis of the Fyve Bestes or the allegory in the Buik of King Alexander, a monarch is seen to both judge for himself and with counsellors - the ideal combination.

This is effectively the conclusion of the debate of the four daughters in the Meroure. Thereafter the advice elements or temporal parallels are far less prominent, the remainder of the chapter being concerned with narrating the events of the incarnation and the reasons for it. We may now turn to the fullest exposition of the nature of temporal, political, kingship, as given in Book VII of the Meroure. Here Ireland reshapes the ethical concerns of the earlier books within one now devoted solely to covering the fundamental principles of social organization and justice and the essential parts of good kingly government. It is clearly a book very different from its predecessors, though at the end of Book VI Ireland shows the way in which the subject matter may in one sense be seen as continuous:

And considerand þat þi hienes suld be humyll and devot anens god and defensour of þe hali kyrk his lady and spous juste & wertuus in governing of þi pepill And use na wiolens bot lawis of Iustice and equite and prudent counsal in materis twichand þi stat persoune and realme... 131

Book VII is also different from the earlier books in that, while like them it is divided into chapters in which the argument is formally annunciated and enumerated, certain chapters include a far greater number of exempla than is common elsewhere in the Meroure. In general Ireland does not make substantial

131. Meroure, III, fols. 306^{r-v}.

use of such illustrations, though there is a rather interesting crop of exempla towards the end of Book V, including that of the two travellers also used in The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, and in which Ireland's language takes on the colloquial colouring that we have noted as an occasional feature of his writing.¹³² The reason for the presence of so many exempla in Book VII, however, is simply because Ireland found them in the source he used for the majority of the material in that book: a number of sermons delivered by Jean Gerson in Paris which, together with Marsilius of Padua's Defensor pacis in chapter 7, and Melibee in the final chapter, provide the basis of its content.

Yet despite the fact that Ireland can be demonstrated to have borrowed so greatly from Gerson's Adorabunt eum omnes rege terre, Diligite justiciam, Rex in sempiternae vive, Veniat pax, and Vivat rex, Book VII is in no respect a mere translation, and there is much that makes Ireland's choice and presentation of material highly interesting as Scottish advice to princes. That, having acknowledged the necessity for advice on temporal government to be given to a prince, he did not compose the material himself is perhaps not entirely surprising, given the plethora of advice material available. But, as Mason has recently pointed out, his treatment of what he did select as a prime source included a revealing excision of certain parts of it.¹³³

It was possibly because of the nature of the material that he omitted, that Ireland did not acknowledge Gerson as his principal source, although he must doubtless have been aware that there were those among his contemporaries who would be likely to recognize Book VII's origins. Printed editions of works by Gerson had been circulating since the 1460s (Gerson died in 1429),

132. Meroure, II, pp.140-2; cf. Ch. 4, pp.217-20.

133. Mason.

and several editions of his collected works had appeared by 1490.¹³⁴ Robert Keith (died c. 1500), Professor of Theology at St Andrews, had a copy of the 1489 edition.¹³⁵ This, however, like those others printed before 1490, contained primarily the spiritual and theological works of Gerson in Latin. Many of Gerson's compositions, originally in French, including Vivat rex and the other political sermons, did not appear in print until the beginning of the sixteenth century and then in a Latin translation.¹³⁶ Ireland must therefore have known the political works in MS, and while it is thus likely that they were less well-known in Scotland than the other writings, Ireland cannot have been exceptional in his acquaintance with them.

In any event, as I have suggested, his treatment of the Gersonian material used in Book VII is far from slavish imitation. The approach is one of skilful selection of passages from the various works, reordered, often revised, and linked with material from other sources to form a statement that, while on one level derivative, is on another distinctly independent. Ireland fashions thematic and metaphoric features from Gerson's sermons into his own coherent exposition of kingly virtue. And in so doing he expounds an idea of kingly government which, read closely and in conjunction with its sources, gives a valuable insight into some of the ideological concerns and constraints in late fifteenth century Scotland. This is particularly true of the linked questions of resistance to tyranny, the extent of kingly power, and the merits of succession or election, particularly in a kingdom beset by continual minority rule.

134. See the introduction to his Oeuvres complètes, I, pp.7, 87-103.

135. Durkan and Ross, p.106.

136. Oeuvres complètes, I, p.7.

In dealing with Book VII of the Meroure, I shall thus take what I regard as its most major and interesting aspects for consideration as advice to princes. A detailed comparison of the text and its sources must await the appearance of the edition at present under preparation of the final two books.¹³⁷

The scope of Book VII as formulated by Ireland is wide. In addition to setting out the king's necessary virtues and his governmental responsibilities it also gives extensive discussion of the fundamental principles of civil government, justice and the law; examines the question of succession or election; and also covers the kind of advice on diet and deportment which is to be found in works in the pseudo-Aristotelian Secreta tradition. In the Meroure, however, it is undoubtedly the Aristotelian influence, both through Gerson and Marsilius of Padua, and independently of them, that is the *most strongly felt*. As in the earlier books, in Book VII this is manifested not only through the construction of argument but also in much of the content. Through Gerson, Ireland invokes Aristotle for definitions of polity, justice, the law, and of types of kingship; and the examination of the merits of hereditary succession and election has its origins in Aristotle's comments on the subject its subsequent discussion in political treatises and commentaries on the Politics; for other issues too, such as the concept of epikeia, Ireland is indebted to Aristotle, through and independently of Gerson. Here, as elsewhere, of course, the Aristotelian world-view is given a Christian reinterpretation, and here, as elsewhere, it is open to criticism.

Book VII of the Meroure is also dominated by a recurring use of a series of organic images and metaphors, drawn principally from Gerson's sermons and

137. See note 16 above.

playing an important part in the Book's structure. The four cardinal virtues are used as the principal focuses for defining kingly duties, and they in turn are supported by and fused with a series of variations on the perennial theme of the body politic. There are numerous other series of correspondences, many between things spiritual and temporal: the three sorts of life, the three estates, the three kings. Constantly emphasized in all this is the reciprocal responsibility of the various estates and the king to each other, set against the equally familiar background of the divine model. Such schemes and themes are indeed the common stock of advice literature, but in Ireland's Meroure they have their most extensive and interlaced expression in Middle Scots. Their principal effect is of course to constantly bring to the fore an idea and ideal of unity, and the necessity for its achievement; and along with this a sense of the necessity for dynastic continuity and strength in monarchy. Such a context hardly allows for the discussion of resistance to oppression from the monarch or how to deal with a monarch who fails, but as we shall see the surface unity of the Meroure here is still occasionally broken.

Book VII has nine chapters, the longest of which is the seventh, dealing with the succession/election question. The first provides the definitions for the conceptual and ethical background against which the rest of the Book must be set, establishing the primacy of justice, and defining its major components in law, jurisdiction, and polity. Here too are outlined the distinctions and relations between things corporeal and spiritual, in the law and in the nature of man. The second chapter continues in similar vein, setting out the role and obligations of a king, and highlighting the God/king/man exemplary pattern; emphasized too is the necessity for all kingdoms from the divine to the human to be founded on wisdom, and for all types of king to have the four cardinal virtues and good counsellors about them. The framework of the cardinal virtues now begins to take clearer shape and, justice and prudence

having been covered, the third chapter turns to fortitude and temperance. Much is made here as well of the three-fold obligations of a king, to rule his people justly, love them, and defend them; and a series of organic metaphors are constructed to link the king and the three estates, which are in turn linked to the presentation of four further virtues which the monarch should possess (depicted as his daughters): love, security, mercy and liberality. The chapter concludes with an evocation of what should emerge from this conjunction of virtue: peace, twelve reasons for the necessity for which are enumerated. Having thus built up a composite picture of the basis for kingship and its various parts, Ireland deals in the next chapter with the reciprocal responsibilities of king and people. Chapter 5 returns to the theme of justice, dealt with now more in terms of its correct administration and execution; many exempla are given here, two of which also occur in The Thre Prestis of Peblis. The sixth chapter takes up temperance and fortitude once more, to cover kingly deportment and military matters. The following chapter, the seventh of the seventh Book, is the discussion of the preferability of hereditary succession or election in the appointment of kings. Chapter eight issues from this to a restatement of the king's function as God's lieutenant, with his power and mercy manifested in the execution of justice; a concluding elaborate organic metaphor, using the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, links in fullest form the king and the three estates with the four cardinal virtues. It might be felt that this was a fitting conclusion to the work, but Ireland gives a final chapter, outlining the qualities of good counsellors and how a king should choose and deal with them.

Of the five sermons by Gerson on which Ireland draws in the Meroure Book VII, he makes greatest use of Vivat rex, which provides material for six out of the nine chapters, but of those which use Gerson no one chapter can be said to be simply a straight borrowing from one sermon alone. Material may be

taken from a couple of sermons, condensed, expanded, or reordered by Ireland, and combined with his own inserted additions. Sometimes he translates closely, transliterating as often as possible, word for word, at other times he prefers to use paraphrase. The carefully controlled selectivity over content, to which I have already referred, is equally apparent in the choice of phrasing and expression. The presentation of justice in chapter 1 provides an excellent example of his approach. The principal Gersonian source for this chapter is Diligite iusticiam. Justice is defined in its broadest sense as a divinely ordained virtue, constant and permanent and in this sense set apart from the temporal order. Following Gerson, Ireland uses the familiar definition from Aquinas:

Justicia est constancia et perpetua voluntas Ius suum unicuique tribuens Justice is a perpetuall stable and constant will to gif ilk persoune þe thing þat is his or pertenis to him and þus aperis clerlie þat properly spekind of iustice it is þe will ressoune and ordinance of god for na will of creatur properly is of the natur constant stabill perpetual or perdurable And þus þe rut fundament and fontane of all regiment dominioun and polite is þe will of god . . . 138

This is a very close rendering of:

. . . justitia est perpetua et constans voluntas jus suum unicuique tribuens: justice est perpetuelle et constans ou perdurable et constant ou estable voulente donnant our rendant a ung chascun son droit, ou ce qui est sien, ou ce que luy affiert.

Appart premièrement que justice est la divine voulente, car de nulle aulture voulente on peut dire qu'elle soit perdurable et estable ou immuable. Et cecy est divinement dit et tres veritablement; car comme la souveraine seignoirie, royaulte, empire ou dominacion, est en Dieu mais est vrayment et especiallement Dieu . . . 139

From this the argument follows the familiar course that there is an essential distinction between divine and human justice, but that the latter must attempt

138. Meroure, III, fol. 307^V.

139. Oeuvres complètes, VII, pp.599-600.

to conform to the former; that kings are ordained to administer justice in a realm as God rules the heavens and as each man rules the little world of his own self. The spiritual/temporal distinction is also manifested in several other categories, drawn from Diligite justiciam, and providing the first of the series of interlinked unifying metaphors. Thus for example, parallels are drawn between the three 'things in the divinite' that rule the three parts of the soul - power, over the irascible virtue, prudence, over the reasonable virtue, and temperance over the 'concupiscible' virtue, and the three estates - the nobility equated with power, the clergy with wisdom, and benevolence with the burgesses. Here Ireland is in fact abbreviating Gerson, who includes a further comparison of the three orders of angels to the three estates.¹⁴⁰

The spiritual and temporal connotations are similarly manifested in the further definitions of law as both 'a takin be þe quhilk a man may know þe thing at his lord and souverain oblis him to' and something that should enable him 'to cum to þe perfit end of his temporall and spirituall liffing or ellis of baith'.¹⁴¹ Policy is similarly divided and the law itself is seen as composed of four types: natural; civil; canon; and spiritual.¹⁴² However, having followed Gerson closely thus far, Ireland makes one of his characteristic clarifying interventions. The continuity of subject matter is so smooth and the argument so conventional that there is no sense in reading the passage of a movement into any more personal idiom. But the addition indicates Ireland's determined control over his material and his own deep immersion in the Christian Aristotelianism on which the arguments here are founded. He clearly felt that at this early stage in his first chapter some fuller defini-

140. Meroure, III, fol. 308^V; cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.603.

141. Meroure, III, fol. 309^V; cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.604.

142. Ibid.

tion was given of a group of distinctions that Gerson makes very summarily in Diligite justiciam. There the different types of temporal polity are summarized thus:

. . . royaume ou ung domine bon; l'aristocatie ou peu bons; police ou plusieurs bons; contraires a tirannie, obligarchie, democratie.

The condensed manner indicates the commonplace nature of the subject matter, the source for which was Book III of Aristotle's Politics, as Ireland acknowledges in his expanded and somewhat different version:

And arestotile in his poethicke puttis thre maneris of policie all gud the first is regnum quhar a king gud and wertuus haldis þe soveranite reule and governaunce The secund is callit aristocria quhar few þat ar gud wertuus persoun has þe reul & governaunce The third is polite quhar þe pepil ar gud & has þe governaunce In contrar to þe first is tyanny In contrar to þe secund Oligarchea & in contrar to þe third democrarthea¹⁴⁴

And he then makes a further explicit statement, unparelled in Gerson:

And all thir thre ar euill governing of the pepill bot þe best of all maner of policy is quhar þe king and souerain is gud and wertuus quhar þai at ar next under him gretast and of his counsall all gud and wertuus and quhar þe multitud of þe pepill is gud and wertuus¹⁴⁵

Again, such a statement is hardly uncommon in advice literature, but the necessity for a realm with a strong king accorded with the nobility and the people is an idea that we shall see recurring in subsequent chapters. Nor do Ireland's additions end at this point. There then ensues a piece of classic Christian Aristotelianism in which it is stated that 'sic police Jhesus ordanit and institut in þe haly kirk', and as he established cardinals and bishops so he established kings and lords; once more the temporal and

143. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.605.

144. Meroure, III, fol. 310^r.

145. Ibid.

spiritual relation is clearly made.

Having thus rounded out his argument, Ireland returns to Diligite justiciam at the point where he had broken off from it to make the final link in the God-king-man chain by expounding the idea of man as microcosm, that we have already seen given memorable advice to princes form in Hay's Buik of King Alexander. The little body politic of man, as it were, is seen as having become at odds with the soul after man's transgression against God, and the subsequent disorder is described in terms of social and political disruption:

... and of þis come and cummys 3it synnys and crymes and gret
wiolens agane resoune as reiff murthir stouth tressoune and mony
uthir And an enterit in the realme of the saule four gret tyrannis
richt contrar to iustice and maid gret battall and dissensioun þat
ar þe four passiounis Joy tristis hop and dreid ... 146

Ireland is close in spirit to Gerson here:

... de quoy vinrent et apres viennent pechies et violences contre
raison, lesquelles nous apercevons en chascun jour, en rapines,
larrescins, homicides, sacrilleges, traisons. Et a parler par
metafore ou similitude, sont quatre tirans s'embatirent au royaulme
de l'omme qui sont contraires a la justice. Et qui sont ces quatre
tirans? Telz qui sont les quatre passions qui se nomment joie,
tristesse, esperance, paoure. 147

This is also a good example of how Ireland will render Gerson's discursive style more sparely, while preserving its essential points. We should also note how he avoids here direct transliteration of sacriligies in favour of 'stouth', which we have seen used legalistically in association with 'reiff' in other Scottish advice works.¹⁴⁸ So it was, in any event, that laws and judges had to be established. Ireland follows Gerson's distinction between natural law and other types of law. Natural law should be enough for each man

146. Ibid., fol. 310^v.

147. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.606.

148. Cf. Ch. 6, p.299 and p.370 above.

to judge and rule himself. As Ireland puts it 'thir reulis of the law naturall ar þai þat ilk man þat has wit and ressoun knawis and affermys and iugis to be trew'.¹⁴⁹ But having fallen, man now requires both spiritual law to achieve eternal salvation, and because he is a political animal, civil law to restrain those who will not be sufficiently governed by natural law. The nosce teipsum tradition overlaps here well with the depiction of the government of the state. And Ireland, pace Gerson, describes how laws were made and princes and popes established for their respective spheres. Ireland is at this point condensing and cutting the equivalent passages in Diligite justiciam, probably because he had made this point already at a stage more suitable to him, and also one suspects because the material on ecclesiastical law and its interpretation by theologians was not relevant to his essentially king-centred argument.¹⁵⁰

Continuing with the distinction between canon and civil law, Ireland next responds to his source in a manner and spirit which are in many respects similar to Hay's practice in the prose manuscript. He begins by translating the French directly:

... the noble civil law is a signe and takin þat schawis a man how he is oblist to certane things be the ressonne Iugament and will of þe souerain ...¹⁵¹

Loy est un signe ou signification par lequel homme congnoist ce a quoy il est oblige par le jugement et voulente de son souverain, si est la loy.¹⁵²

But whereas Gerson then goes on to distinguish the significance of the types

149. Meroure, III, fol. 311^v.

150. Cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, pp.608-13.

151. Meroure, III, fols. 313^{r-v}.

152. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.609.

of law and their effect on man, Ireland distils this into the difference between God as ruler and the carrying out of the civil law by the prince

þe law of god and of natur ar unmovuable & indispensable anent any persone excep god þat may do of his creaturis quhat he emplexis bot the law civil or canon may be interpret & dispensit be the prince and souverane be prudence ... 153

In this passage Ireland is here making his own point that God's law is by definition unchangeable but that a prince must adapt to particular circumstances. He must do this not only through prudence but through

a wertu þat is callit Ephekea þat arestotil spake of and þat is quhen werray ressoune & equite repugnis to þe wourdis of the law 154

Epikeia, given considerable discussion by Aristotle in Book V of the Ethics, would also have been thoroughly familiar to Ireland through many of Gerson's other writings. This is of course a concept which had already been advocated and indeed demonstrated in Ireland's rendition of the debate of the Four Daughters of God in Book II, and it is interesting to see him wishing to restate it here.¹⁵⁵ For, while Ireland acknowledges the need for kings to address their interpretation of the law to particular circumstances, he is throughout the Meroure hardly more specific on how this may be done. And the idea is itself expressed in the most generalized terms. As Pocock has noted, how prudence might be used to accommodate particular circumstances to principles consistently advocated in universalized terms represents a

153. Meroure, III, fol. 313^r.

154. Ibid.

155. Discussion and examples in Louis B. Pascoe, S.J. Jean Gerson: Principles of Church Reform, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 7 (Leiden, 1973), pp.66-8. See above pp.388-9, 391-4.

recurrent area of conflict in much medieval political thought.¹⁵⁶ And further in identifying this power of judicial discrimination with the monarch Ireland is both endorsing the idea of equity as a general principle, with the monarch as its symbolic representative, and tacitly acknowledging what, in late fifteenth-century Scotland at least, was a considerable problem, that monarchs, as men, were changeable and unpredictable beings. The king must be prudent; but what if he were not?

For Ireland here the question is not to be further looked into. He returns instead to a series of reassuring organic images, which move him back into borrowing from Diligite justiciam until the end of this chapter.¹⁵⁷ As Christ is head of both spiritual and temporal jurisdiction, like the head between the two shoulders in a man's body, so too should all judges be poised, 'Nec declinando ad dextram nec ad sinistram', aided in this by the support of the four cardinal virtues.¹⁵⁸ The three signs of a good judge - obligation to God, his king, and himself - are then set out, and the example of Constantine's testing of his court cited in support.

In chapter 1, then, Ireland has selected and shaped material from Gerson's Diligite justiciam to provide him with the broad conceptual setting in which to place his advice to the monarch. This broadness is indeed his characteristic approach throughout Book VII, Ireland's personal additions to the material chosen from his source have been seen to be relatively small, but nevertheless significant, and this is a pattern that recurs throughout.

Chapter 2 continues with Gersonian distinctions of the three sorts of

156. J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton, 1975), pp.3-30.

157. Cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, pp.614-15.

158. Meroure, III, fol. 313^V.

realms and kings: personal, temporal, and spiritual.¹⁵⁹ At the beginning Ireland appears to be drawing from passages in Adorabunt eum and possibly Rex in sempiterna vive as well as for the first time Vivat rex.¹⁶⁰ Ireland concentrates on the second kind of realm, and the corresponding roles of king and God are once more stated:

... in a realm suld be bot a king or prince souverane for as god þat is bot ane be his hevinly wisdom governis the waurld and all his creaturis Richtsua & þe realme suld be bot a king þat be his power wisdom and cherite suld governe all his pepil

and the analogy with the little world of man also continued:

And as we se þat in þe man is bot a saule þat has þe governance of all the partis and operatiounis of the man þat ar many and divers Richtsua in a realm suld be bot a king þat suld have þe regimene and governance¹⁶¹

The latter part is in fact Ireland's small addition to a passage borrowed from Vivat rex, possibly recalling another passage in Gerson's sermon Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur,¹⁶² a text which is in fact cited here to instance the destruction that may come about when 'þar is nocht unite in the realme'.¹⁶³ Indeed also quoted here is Sallust's Concordia prae res crescunt, discordia vero maxime delabuntur; both these texts were cited by Peace in the Debate of the Four Daughters of God,¹⁶⁴ which Ireland may also be intending to be recalled. He then moves to a later passage of Vivat rex for material to establish the elaborate metaphorical linking of the monarch and the three

159. Cf. the discussion in Ch. 2, pp.117-21.

160. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1144 (VII, p.1006); VII, pp.520-1.

161. Meroure, III, fol. 316^V.

162. Cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, 753, 'chascune humaine creature a dedans soy ung royaume espirituel...'.¹⁶³

163. Meroure, III, fol. 316^V.

164. Above, p.397.

estates and the prominent theme of the cardinal virtues. Comparison with the source shows once more that the material is often condensed and reordered.

Prudence is first expounded, the importance of a monarch's vigilance and forethought being emphasized, but little practical example being given of how this should be exercised. A prince, for example, is urged to take counsel and keep it secret, but the exposition is prescriptive rather than analytic: 'he suld have vertu and prudence to discerne bitwix gud counsal and evill'.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, the other major point to be made is that 'þe king or prince be wis in his self 3et richt profitable is þat he wse wis counsal', but how this may be done is hardly explored.¹⁶⁶ This is perhaps one of the reasons why Ireland appended a final chapter to Book VII on the choice of counsellors and taking of counsel, though the material there is hardly less conventional. There is little to suggest that these generalized statements, supported continuously by scriptural and classical authorities, are felt to have any especial reference to fifteenth-century Scotland; and it is in this chapter in particular that we see Ireland staying most closely with his source.

He has now covered two of the cardinal virtues, prudence in the latter chapter and justice in the first. Chapter 3 turns to consider 'þe wertu of strenth and temporaunce'.¹⁶⁷ The opening section, in which another three-fold series of kingly obligations - to love the people like a father, be merciful to them and defend them - is set out, is loosely based upon Vivat rex,¹⁶⁸ and illustrated by several exempla. To expound the virtue of temp^orance further sb

165. Meroure, III, fol. 318^v.

166. *Ibid.*, fol. 319^r.

167. *Ibid.*, fol. 319^v.

168. Cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1160.

Ireland then turned to another sermon, Adorabunt eum, for the idea of the king keeping control over the three passages of his ears, eyes, and mouth, and above all, his heart.¹⁶⁹ The overlap with the inner council tradition, as used by Hay, is well evinced here. And Ireland continues to treat Gerson's argument with freedom, condensing and expanding as it suits him: making far more in the discussion of the eyes of the blasme des dames tradition, for example, and in warning against the dangers of ambition. But he follows Gerson quite closely in recounting next the familiar body politic example of the belly and the members, and then outlining further the necessity for each part of the realm to help the other. As has been described, other kingly virtues of love, security, mercy, and liberality are also advanced, pace Adorabunt eum still.¹⁷⁰ Ireland's choice of this passage may reflect a desire for inclusiveness in the depiction of kingship, but it is also true that these qualities adumbrate the idea of the common profit, an important theme throughout the Meroure; and the idea of reciprocity also well prepares the way for the account of the merits of peace with which this chapter concludes. Here Ireland has turned to another Gersonian source, the sermon Veniat pax.

Like Gerson himself, and like the author of The Talis of the Fyve Bestes, Ireland appears in the Meroure very much to believe that 'The gud of pece ther can na man expreme'.¹⁷¹ It would be tempting to think, for example, that Ireland may have seen a particular application to Scottish relations with England in the statement that, 'And in the tim of pes mony noble considera-tiounis may be maid with þe uthir pepil for þe gud of þe prince and realm And

169. Ibid., VII, pp.525-8.

170. Cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.529.

171. Asloan MS, vol.II, edited by W.A. Craigie, STS, New Ser. 16 (1925), l. 126.

þe strangis nationis ar mar inclinit þar to quhen þai se þe prince and realm in pes na and þai war in wer or adversite',¹⁷² but he is here working from statements that Gerson had made eighty years or so earlier in terms of relations between the French and the English; and in Gerson that particular application was explicitly stated.¹⁷³ It is fair enough to argue that in selecting such passages Ireland was making a political point, but it must also be noted that many of the reasons given in its favour relate to the spiritual health of the kingdom; and further, as Mason has observed, that in appropriating such material from Gerson 'he was merely reinforcing an ideological stance first adumbrated by Fordun a hundred years previously'.¹⁷⁴

Thus, as Mason again puts it, 'The appeal to Ireland of Gerson's sermons lay not in their occasional advocacy of resistance, but rather in their irenicist preoccupation with promoting peace and unity within the realm'.¹⁷⁵ Yet it is also true that when those sermons provide opportunities to define the nature of kingly responsibility Ireland shows a tendency to strike out a little on his own. Chapter 4 provides another instance of this. Vivat rex is the major source for the idea of the responsibility of the king and people to one another within the body politic. Following Gerson, Ireland states that neither can endure without the other, but then heightens the point by adding, 'And betwix þe king and his pepill is double obligacioun of eþir syd for a

172. Meroure, III, fol. 326^v.

173. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p. 1116. The material used in this chapter is taken from VII, pp.1110-17.

174. Mason. ???

175. Ibid.

gudnes requiris ane uthir'.¹⁷⁶ Further exempla support this, as Ireland continues to adhere to the course of Vivat rex; however as the argument continues, his treatment turns to a more paraphrasing kind, and the reason for this is manifestly that at this point Gerson is dealing with the question of legitimate resistance to a tyrant monarch. To Ireland it would clearly be anathema to cite with Gerson 'vim vi repellere licet', but he is prepared to adapt the source so as to make a theoretical statement on the nature of kingly power:

And þai þat be þar errour sais þat all þat is in the realme is þe princis & pertenis to his properte and þat he may do of ilk thing quhat him emplexis þir ar pepil of evill mynd and spekis agane all ressoune naturall agane moral philosophy and polite agane all law and agane e haly scripturis¹⁷⁷

In Ireland's version this is linked beforehand to the traditional duty of the king to defend the people, and is followed afterwards by the equally conventional statement that if the head fails so will the rest of the body. Manifestly a monarch must not rule tyrannically and without the consent of his people, but Ireland will go no further in the consideration of this. Moreover the passage is angled in such a way as to suggest not so much that the situation may occur but that this is an argument put forward by evil thinkers, even evil counsellors - one is reminded of the parliamentary reference to the 'peruerst counsale' of those who had corrupted the mind of James III.¹⁷⁸

176. Meroure, III, fol. 322^r, cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1155. The context for Ireland's thought here is nicely indicated by a passage from Hay's Buke of the Law of Armys, where Hay is, as it were, caught in the act of translation, showing in the process the presence in both French and Scots of a phrase which Gerson and Ireland also both use in terms of obligation: 'Nochtforthy I say, that treuly be all natural equitee and kyndnes atour all civile accioun, he is naturally oblist till him in the lyke courtasy, puis que ung bonte autre requiert per obligacioun naturall, Sen a bountee askis ane othir be obligacioun naturale' (Prose MS, I, pp.139-40).

177. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1156; Meroure, III, fol. 328^r.

178. Above, p.360.

Ireland is also prepared to cite scriptural examples both of tyrannical monarchs brought down by their own corruption and cases where God allowed tyrannical rule to punish the people; and Christian and Aristotelian elements are blended again as he 'reinforce[s] Aristotle's much loved distinction between a virtuous king acting for the common good and a vicious tyrant pursuing his own self-interested ends', but again the argument stops short at the point where how the people might oppose such a ruler could be discussed.¹⁷⁹

Gerson too had made a similar distinction, but Ireland then pursues the point further in quite an interesting manner. For he considers here not only that the king may be bad and the people good, but 'quhilis þe king is gud and wertuis and the pepil evill or mony of the noblis'.¹⁸⁰ Therefore (although Ireland presents this rather as 'Ane uthir doctrine'),

... þe king suld be of gret power þat na utheris in þe realme may contend or prevale agane him for an uthiris be of equale and elik power it is able to caus divisoun dystruccioun and battale and finaly þe tynsale of the realme ...¹⁸¹

Such statements do not occur in Vivat rex at this point; and though they are hardly original, it is striking that Ireland should choose to so assert the power of the monarch at a place where his source was asserting a particular limitation upon it. And certainly his conclusion that 'þarfor it is nocht convenient þat in a realme be a perygall or compere to a king',¹⁸² is consonant with the characteristic treatment by his magnates of the fifteenth-century Scottish king as the most powerful noble, with less emphasis on ideas

179. Mason.

180. Meroure, III, fol. 329^V.

181. Ibid.

182. Ibid., fol. 330^r.

of divine right and more on practical ascendancy. Thus in this chapter, while indicating the necessary limitations on a king's power (though the power of limitation is seen to rest primarily in the hand of God) Ireland is also concerned to state its necessary dominance.

This chapter concludes with warnings against possible corruption through flattery and lechery, once more selected from Vivat rex; these were once more conventional constituents of advice literature and there is a sense again here that Ireland includes such material partly at least for reasons of inclusiveness. It also has the effect of reinforcing the generalized advice idiom after a brief excursion into more abstract theoretical commentary.

Chapter 5 returns to the theme of justice, now examined less as an absolute concept and more in terms of its execution, though the emphasis remains on generalized instruction rather than anything more detailed. Ireland continues to draw copiously from Vivat rex, sometimes translating closely, at others paraphrasing, or expanding, as he does with the opening exemplum, of Alexander and the pirate Diogenes to make it more dramatically narrative. He adopts too a more recognizably Scottish idiom, as comparison of the respective renditions of the dialogue between the king and the pirate indicate:

... Diomedez, larron de mer, auquel demanda Alixandre pour quoy il pilloit ceulz qui passoient la mer; respondi franchement: mais pour quoy pillez tu tout le monde? Pour ce on m'appelle larron qui n'ay que une petite nasselle, et tu qui as grant exercitez es nomme empereur.¹⁸³

... the Emperour Alexander demandit and sperit at him quha he reft and spulzeit the peple and merchandis that passit in the say þan ansuerit he hardely and said Thow Alexander quhy spulzeis þou and refis sa mony divers peple and trubuluris all the waurld for caus þou has gret powir and nane may resist to þe Thow art emperour lord and conquerour and for caus my powir is litle I am callit a theif & spulzeour ...¹⁸⁴

183. Oeuvres complètes, VII, pp.1172-3.

184. Meroure, III, fol. 331^v. Cf. Ch. 5, pp.260-1.

Ireland then follows Gerson in making the familiar points that a king should neither 'sel iustice or equite' nor appoint ministers through bribery.¹⁸⁵ Gerson is indeed the more long-winded in his criticism of 'procureux, advocas, promoteurs' who persecute the poor by violent extortion.¹⁸⁶ In Vivat rex these comments are illustrated by a number of exempla, from which Ireland makes a selection in his version: first the well-known story of the judgement of Cambyses, and then the far less common account of the king's remissions to the murderer, which is also narrated as one of the three episodes of the middle tale of The Thre Prestis of Peblis.¹⁸⁷ Ireland gives his sources here as the 'corniclis of France', a perhaps deliberately vague attribution, but one not uncommon in Book VII of the Meroure.¹⁸⁸ The exemplum of Alexander and Diogenes is introduced 'as þe corniclis & storiis rehers' and that of the judgement of Cambyses by 'we reid in the auld storyis'.¹⁸⁹ However, the reference to the chronicles of France in this instance gives a slightly greater degree of specificity, which probably stems from the fact that in Vivat rex the exemplum is cited as concerning a king of France: 'On demandoit a ung roy de France remission pour ung homme qui avoit tue ung aultre'.¹⁹⁰

As we have noted, this exemplum was not a common one. It may have been known to the author of the Thre Prestis of Peblis from Hoccleve's Regement of

185. Ibid., Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1173.

186. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1173; these terms are transliterated exactly by Ireland, Meroure, III, fol. 332^r.

187. Cf. Ch. 7, pp.344-7.

188. Meroure, III, fol. 332^r.

189. Ibid., fols. 331^v, 332^r.

190. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1174.

Princes, where a characteristically free rendition is given,¹⁹¹ but as McDonald has shown, that the Meroure of Wyssdome was also a likely source for the poem is made highly probable by the fact that it also includes - and within a short space - another exemplum also used in the Thre Prestis of the wounded man and the flies.¹⁹² This was in fact a fairly common exemplum, but the collocation of both in these two works certainly suggests that in The Thre Prestis of Peblis we have one literary response to Book VII of Ireland's Meroure.

The latter story is one used to illustrate the dangers of multiplying and frequently changing officers, traditional advice in which Ireland renders Gerson's version very precisely.¹⁹³ However, in relating the next point, that a king may have to wring the accumulated wealth of his officers out of them like water from a sponge, Ireland gives a contemporary example from his own experience, though not of Scotland: 'And þe noble king lewis of fraunce þis kingis fader þat now is þat I was counsalour oratour & familiar to was nocht fer fra þis condicioun'.¹⁹⁴ This kind of remark suggests an attempt to perhaps make the work look more like Ireland's own invention than is actually the case; it also of course contrives to remind those reading it of the international status of this adviser to princes.

Ireland also shows a certain interesting independence in developing from Gerson's use of Anarches' comparison of a country's laws to a spider's web that 'takis fleis and litle bestis bot þe gret best as dog kow or beris ar

191. Discussed in Ch. 7, pp.344-7.

192. McDonald, 156-61.

193. Cf. Meroure, III, fols. 332^v-333^r, and Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1175.

194. Meroure, III, fol. 333^r.

away with ar hornis'.¹⁹⁵ Whereas Gerson concludes with a general warning X against vice, Ireland is more specific on the necessity for vigilance against the corruption of the nobility:

... for þe gret men þat ar gevin to hauld ane hie stat þar powar
baith in the kyrk and temporalite ar lik to a part of þe seye þat
þe grund can nocht be gottin of for thir men spendis without reule
or mesour and þat þai want na gud þai reif fra all men kirk men
and uthire without any pete¹⁹⁶

In a country where members of the nobility could wield considerable power during a minority the potential for this kind of abuse of power was clearly great; and the statements here are not unlike those expressed in De Regimine Principum in criticism of those officers who 'by lordschippis bot ou art
alwais bare'.¹⁹⁷ Clearly these were recurrent problems.

Gerson's argument continues with discussion of the abuses of prodigality, and while Ireland takes this up briefly, for the rest of the chapter he would appear to be writing independently, certainly so of Vivat rex. The tone is summarizing, but this long section not infrequently refers to the 'tender ag' of the monarch; again pointing to the particular circumstances of its composition, but hardly responding to this with tailor-made advice.¹⁹⁸ The king is urged anew to ensure that there is justice and peace in the realm, and to defend his religion and his people. There is attention here too to the king's own self-government, for if he cannot govern himself he is unlikely to be able to govern a multitude. Therefore 'in þi 3outheid & tender ag þi hienes suld her and lere doctrine and sciens to gowerne eftirwart þe peple of þi realme

195. Ibid.; cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1175.

196. Meroure, III, fols. 333^{r-v}.

197. DRP (Fairfax MS), l. 84.

198. Meroure, III, fols. 334^r, 334^v, 335^v.

outhir to reward þame or punys'; this is language familiar from the earlier books,¹⁹⁹ but here where Ireland might be more specific and is indeed acknowledging a situation which might be said to demand such advice, he shows little desire to be markedly so.

Chapter 6 resumes the discussion of the virtue of temperance, with an account of the merits of the Aristotelian ideal and moderation, which while it has some parallels in Vivat rex also catches some of the idiom of advice works in the Secreta tradition.²⁰⁰ And, whereas Gerson deals with such issues as measurable control of the finances of the realm, Ireland is more concerned, yet again, with the question of justice. It is stressed that a king should not urge execution of justice when he is angry, for if sentence of death is carried out there can be no revocation, and when the prince 'cummys to his wit and gud dispocioun' he may 'forthink it gretlie'.²⁰¹ The phrasing here may prompt us to recall the inner council section of Hay's Buik of King Alexander, where the king is brought to reconsider his decisions;²⁰² and rather interestingly at this very point, Ireland intervenes to tell his readers how the text should be read:

And ilk redar suld wnderstand that in this buk and all my writtin I take evir the prince for the king and maist hie and souverain lord for sua dojs all clerkis oraturis and poetis in þar scripturis and writtis ²⁰³

199. Ibid., fol. 334^v; cf. pp.378-80 above.

200. The opening is very much in Secreta style: 'It is rycht convenient and honourable to all noble king and prince to use temporance and mesure in his werkis and operaciounis and first in his eting & drinking...', Meroure, III, fol. 335^v.

201. Meroure, III, fol. 336^r.

202. Cf. Ch. 2, pp.128-9.

203. Meroure, III, fol. 336^r.

Whereas elsewhere Ireland has indicated the exemplary nature of the king, as symbol of virtues to which all men should aspire, he chooses now to make the terms of reference more restricted. This suggests that something more specific is about to be stated, and indeed Ireland goes on to make such a point:

And for caus þar is law þat ordanis þat and the prince beand in crabitnes or ire or gif a sentens or ordand executioun to be maid on a persoun for þe deid at the execioun be nocht done xxx dais eftir þat þe prince in that space of tyme may inform him quhen he is sobyr of þe mater and sentens and outhir hauld or conferme it or revok it or change it and schaw his mercy eftir þat þe mater and cause be perfitlie knawin to him²⁰⁴

If the king did have such a power, it does not appear to be noted in Scottish legal records, nor is there an apparent Gersonian source for this passage. But the point is made in a very similar manner in the concluding pages of Sir Gilbert Hay's Buke of the Law of Armys:

And tharfore ordanyt the alde lawis, that quhen a king gevis a suddane sentence of dede, that execucioun of that sentence suld be delayit for xxx^{ti} dayes efter; for quhy, that in that space he mycht be culit of his ire rigorous, and peraventure, change his sentence and do grace.²⁰⁵

It is interesting to consider whether, as this correspondence might indicate, Ireland was recalling here the writing of the Scottish adviser to princes that he most closely resembles.²⁰⁶

The argument now naturally turns to warnings against hasty credence, all of which appear thoroughly familiar, until Ireland again inserts a slightly less usual admonition:

204. Ibid., fols. 336^{r-v}.

205. Prose MS, I, p.301.

206. Cf. also the argument in ll. 361-4 of The Talis of the Fyve Bestes.

Alsua quhen þe king prince or lord is requirit be ony persoune to wryt in his proper name to pape or ony uthir cardinal or prince for þe help or promocioun of any man he suld rycht diegestlie consider and awis of quhat stat condicioun or dignite þe persoune is þat he writtis for and gif he be digne and sufficient for þe thing þat he writtis for or nocht ²⁰⁷

It was in 1490, the year of the Meroure's composition, that James IV was writing to the Pope on Ireland's behalf against the machinations of archbishop Scheves;²⁰⁸ possibly a vested interested, or even a slight note of humour may be detected here under the cover of generalized statements on the virtue of temperance.

Now Ireland returns to fortitude and to Vivat rex, expanding and cutting his source with an apparent view to making it more relevant to the youthfulness of the king.²⁰⁹ Several natural and organic metaphors are used to advocate the inculcation of military arts in young men and to show of what profit such well-trained young people are to the realm. Advice is next given on how a prince should go to battle and control his troops; Ireland is very close to Gerson here,²¹⁰ although he expands in rather entertaining fashion on criticism of excessive eating and drinking before battle and elaborate dress on the field, in which today's warriors are contrasted unfavourably with classical heroes. And an exemplum illustrating the respect and service which 'þe noble scipio affricanus' won in Spain in allowing a noble woman brought to him as paramour in a town he had captured to marry her betrothed lover, rounds off a chapter devoted to temperance and fortitude.²¹¹ Ireland has shaped his

207. Meroure, III, fol. 336^v.

208. Burns, 'John Ireland', 86.

209. The material here is in fact appropriated from the section in Vivat rex on prudence.

210. Meroure, III, fols. 337^r-339^r; Oeuvres complètes, VII, pp.1168-70.

211. Meroure, III, fols. 339^v-40^r.

material well here, and continues to do so; the praise of Scipio notably describes him as 'of sic ȝoutheid wertu and autorite þat he was worthi and digne to have dominacioun our all the waurld';²¹² youthfulness was not always one of the characteristics singled out in this exemplum, and Ireland probably includes it here as a deliberate complimentary touch - if the young king follows the advice he may attain such renown.

At the conclusion of this chapter, the subject matter of the next is announced. According to Ireland, it will deal with a question that is at once 'of gret difficulte & favorand to þi noble linage & crown'.²¹³ It is, he goes on, an issue that has been much discussed by many clerks of Paris and elsewhere; the only one he mentions by name is Marsilius of Padua. At this point Ireland appears to feel constrained to add a proviso. The 'fyrst argument' will appear 'of gret strenth', but the king and his auditors are urged not to be disturbed, but to wait to hear the argument on the other side.

As yet we have not been told what this great issue is, but the rubric to the next chapter makes it apparent:

This cheptur sal adduce mony ressons and argumentis pro and contra quhe þir it be mar expedient to realmes to haue þar kingis succedand be lyne of heritage or be new eleccioun²¹⁴

For this chapter Ireland turned away from the works of Gerson, where the question of the preferability of hereditary succession or election is not discussed. That he should wish in a work so largely constructed from Gerson's writings (to) yet³ include this subject might suggest that it was of particular importance to him. Bearing in mind that only thirty years or so later John

212. Ibid., fol. 340^r.

213. Ibid., fol. 340^v.

214. Ibid.

Major, 'without a political axe to grind', was putting the case for an elective monarchy,²¹⁵ it is not difficult to see how the events of the late 1480s and the prospect of another period of minority rule might have prompted an advice writer to reconsider the methods of appointing the monarch in Scotland. Yet against this must be set Ireland's claim that he is discussing a subject favourable to the present monarchy. And indeed, as we shall see, consideration of the best means of government during a minority is one of Ireland's significant additions to the arguments put forward in this section. For it must also be seen that there were considerable generic reasons for the inclusion of such material in the Meroure. As we have observed, Ireland has reshaped Gerson's sermons to provide a systematic depiction of the basis of civil government and the parts of good kingship. As such the form of the work has a good deal in common with others grounded in Aristotle in argument and method, notably Aegidius Colonna's De regimine principum. This, like many other such advice and neo-advice works had (in Part III) a section on the merits of succession and election in kingship, which took, as Ireland and many others also did, Aristotle's statements in Book III of the Politics as the basis for its discussion.²¹⁶ Moreover, while many such works customarily supported succession against election, their position was not unequivocally one of easy endorsement of the former. As Quillet has put it, 'Les partisans de cette forme de gouvernement, et en premier lieu Gilles de Rome, sont favorables, en principe, à l'élection. Ce n'est guère douteux pour ce dernier: elle lui paraît, absolument parlant, la meilleure; pourtant, il opte en définitive pour l'institution de la monarchie héréditaire, en raison de la

215. Wormald, p.146.

216. See Li livres du gouvernement des rois, edited by Samuel Paul Molenaer (New York, 1899), Part III, chapter 5.

corruption des hommes'.²¹⁷ It is precisely in this context that Ireland's evaluation of the subject must be seen.

Another work in which the question was given substantial discussion was Marsilius of Padua's Defensor pacis.²¹⁸ Here, however, the author argued strongly in favour of election. As we saw, Marsilius is the one 'clerk' actually named by Ireland as among those in opposition to whom he is writing; and it would seem that for a large part of both the arguments in this chapter of the Meroure and their organization he was in fact borrowing from and heavily influenced by this section of the Defensor pacis. There in the chapter specifically devoted to the question, the arguments for hereditary succession are enumerated first, before being countered by those in favour of election. Inverted, this is the same structure that Ireland uses for the presentation of his argument, and, as will be shown, the majority of his arguments in favour of both hereditary succession and election are the same as those given by Marsilius. Similar arguments could of course be found in Colonna, or other commentators such as Peter of Auvergne, but as far as I am aware Ireland comes much the closest to Marsilius.

Thus in making the case for election as powerfully as he does in the first part of chapter 7 Ireland must be seen as writing within an established tradition of support for it as ideally the best system, and as perhaps deliberately constructing his argument thus to answer the case as put by Marsilius of Padua. As we shall see, the position he finally arrives at is one which claims for Scotland the near-ideal status as a kingdom originally

217. Jeannine Quillet, La philosophie politique de Marsile de Padoue, L'Église et L'état au moyen age, 14 (Paris, 1970), p.119.

218. Reference for comparison here is to the most accessible modern edition in translation by Alan Gewirth, Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching (Toronto, 1980).

elective and now ruled through succession. As with his consideration of the extent of kingly power, the conclusion is ultimately a thoroughly conservative one, and what comes through particularly strongly is that desire for continuity and stability which was so powerful and ideological force in fifteenth-century Scotland.

Ireland opens this chapter by referring to Aristotle's attention to the question in the Politics and his argument 'þat it is nocht convenient þat þe realme and croune discend be heretage and naturall succession for it may happin and cum þat þe airis and barnis of þe king be nocht proffitable na convenient for þe realme or pepil'.²¹⁹ One can see immediately why he had found it necessary to issue the king with an advance warning about the content of this chapter. He then cites Aristotle's further argument that it would be contrary to human nature for a king to refuse to pass on the crown to a son he knew not to be virtuous, 'for ilk man is be natur Inclinit to luf his propir sone'.²²⁰ In the Defensor pacis Marsilius' view was that Aristotle was firmly in favour of elective monarchy. Ireland's conclusion at this point is less unequivocal: 'And þus arestotil outhir couth nocht assolge þe questioun as apperis or ellis was of his opynioun that it war bettir þat þe king succedit be electioun'.²²¹ Such a view did not, however, have to necessitate a full-scale rejection of election as an ideal.

As Marsilius in Book I, chapter 16 of the Defensor pacis opened his debate with the case for succession, so Ireland here opens his discussion with the case in favour of election. He adduces the following reasons in its favour:

219. Meroure, III, fol. 341^r.

220. Ibid., fol. 341^v.

221. Ibid.

(1) Aristotle supports it; (2) a king's heirs may be unprofitable to the realm; (3) a king might die and a minority ensue during which those appointed to rule were harmful to the realm; (4) the son of the king would not be prejudiced by the elective system if he were virtuous enough; (5) a man cannot be a good king without first having been a subject; (6) if, as often happens, a king dies leaving a young son, this is bad, for young kings are bad for the realm; (7) a newly chosen king will feel more obliged to labour for the realm, and will so instruct his heirs that they might succeed him; (8) an example is given of a people who do not allow hereditary government and are strong and wise; (9) David and Saul, kings of Israel were elected monarchs; (10) popes, bishops, and emperors are elected, and it is better for peace and for the people.

The majority of these arguments are also cited by Marsilius; those which are not are those dealing with young kings (3 and 6) and those giving examples of other rulers and countries (8 and 9).²²² It is thus quite striking that Ireland should draw such attention to the question of minorities and succession, and it is worth while looking in more detail at the way in which this is expressed:

Alsua it mycht happin þat quhen þe king deit his fyrst sone war nocht of age to governe the realme and þan war it convenient to cheis certane persouns to governe him and þe realme quhil he war of age and wisdome And gif þai be governouris be nerenes of blud it is possible þat þai be unproffitable ...

... and comonly quhen þe king deis his sone is nocht of gret age and þarfor it apperis bettir quhen þe king deis þat ane uthir of wisdome be chosin ...²²³

It was certainly the case in Scotland that commonly when the king died his son

222. Ibid., fols. 341^v-343^r; cf. Defensor Pacis, pp.71-80.

223. Ibid., fol. 342^r.

was of no great age, and even within the context of so many otherwise traditional arguments, it is hard to see that the relevance of this could not have struck Ireland's contemporaries. The periods of disruption following each of the three most recent minorities, and the past bids for power by noble factions such as the Douglasses and Boyds, might all contribute to a sense of uncertainty. But it is probably to this anxiety, rather than to a genuine sense of the need for a reassessment of the constitutional process of kingship, that Ireland is giving vent here.

He then turns to the arguments for succession: (1) that a man puts more labour and care into what is his own and thus a king will treat a realm in this way if he knows his heirs will succeed; (2) a newly chosen king may not rule with complete justice for fear of the revenge of those who elected him; (3) people are more likely to obey one whose ancestors they have obeyed; (4) mutation and change in princes and laws is dangerous; (5) similarly, novelty should be avoided, and elections would inevitably bring discord; (6) the king as a father will labour for the common good if he knows his heir will succeed, and he who knows he rules only for his lifetime might try to make as much as he could for himself out of the people; (7) Aristotle argues that men newly rich are more corruptible, and so might a newly elected king be; (8) under an electoral system, a corrupt man might pretend to be good to gain the realm; (9) Aristotle says that good progenitors provide good sons, and thus there is more reason to trust this system; (10) succession discourages the ambitions of those who know they can never come to the throne; (11) if the election were to be made by a multitude of people there would be danger of sedition and violence; (12) if by a few there could be corruption among them; (13) the great empire of Rome was greatly weakened by the electoral process; (14) realms such as France and Spain use the method of succession; (15) succession is a system closer to the regimen of the heavens, for God is without change

and ever enduring; and the closest process to this among mortals is succession for 'The fader þat was king he is like þat he was nocht deid quhen he lefis his sone eftir him king þat is lik to him';²²⁴ (16) in the golden age of hereditary succession was used; (17) and so it was in all great realms and lineages.

With the exception of 14, 16, and 17, every one of these points occurs, sometimes in extremely similar form, in the Defensor pacis.²²⁵ But what we might also note is that, despite the analogy of the king with God and the nascent exposition of the idea of his two bodies, the reasons for espousing this form of choosing the monarch are essentially pragmatic. There is no exaltation of the monarch's quasi-divine status nor declaration of his absolute right to the throne. This and the emphasis on continuity and peace are the arguments as presented by Ireland in accord with the 'low-key' attitude to the Scottish monarchy characteristic of those in government and court circles in the fifteenth century.

Ireland's next concern is to distinguish various ways in which a king may come to possess a realm, in time of peace and war. His material here does not seem to be drawn primarily from the Defensor pacis but the origin of this question was again Aristotelian, and Ireland makes many references to the Politics throughout. This section then may be more of Ireland's independent making, and what is particularly interesting about it is his account of the third method of establishing a king, which is mid-way between election and succession. A people establish a king first by election, and thereafter his heirs succeed him. At which point Ireland adds, 'And in þis maner regnis the

224. Meroure, III, fol. 345^r.

225. Ibid., fols. 343^r-345^r; cf. Defensor Pacis, pp.68-71.

noble kingis of fraunce and scotland & mony uthiris realmes'.²²⁶ Given the paucity of Ireland's references to his country, it is all the more noticeable that he includes it here. The theoretical standpoint he is adopting was, as we have seen, an established one, but Ireland's deliberate allusion to Scotland is clearly a strong endorsement of the status quo.

There then ensues a disquisition on 'quhat condicioun þe kingis suld be' who will succeed to the throne.²²⁷ The points raised range from the assertion that 'na strangearis of ane uthir toung' should succeed to the realm to a re-statement of the impossibility of any vicious ruler governing profitably.²²⁸ To support this Ireland cites 'the sext consal of salust ... þat eftir þe deces of the king nane suld tak þe crown or dignite riall be presumptioun or tyranny and þat nane þat war professit in religioun suld be promouit to the dignite riall or had gret faute in his persone or com of servitute and nocht of a noble linage bot he þat war of gret wertu and meritis And he þat did agane þis suld Incur hevy & dampnable cursyn ...'²²⁹ This is a classic statement of the essential contradiction in this theoretical position: no vicious or tyrannical person should be allowed to succeed; but if he does, he should be dealt with by divine justice. Here, as ever, the argument sticks, and Ireland turns to his conclusion.

This is a resumé of his case and a point-by-point refutation of the arguments for election, thus creating a good symmetry to the chapter's construction. It is prefaced by the statement that in a perfect world the system

226. Meroure, III, fol. 346^r.

227. Ibid.

228. Ibid.

229. Ibid., fol. 346^v.

of election would undoubtedly be the best, but since this is not the case, the system of succession is the best way of avoiding difficulties and dangers. We have seen this to be a common claim, but Ireland may also have felt there to be some truth in it qua Scotland in particular. It is stated secondly that succession should be through primogeniture, as a first-born son will be more prudent and wise, and his succession will also honour Christ, himself a first-born son. The assertion of the importance of primogeniture was a traditional means of establishing and confirming the principle of dynastic continuity.²³⁰ Again Ireland was writing within the received system, but his decision to include this point may reveal a sense of its particular relevance.

It must be said that in a cold evaluation Ireland's refutation of the case for election is not completely convincing. In this short section what we see is a continual fall-back to a generalized advocacy of kingly value and authority, coupled with a necessary but unspecified attention to the limitations of that power. Ireland first claims that Aristotle spoke conditionally, on the basis that election could be carried out without discord - an impossible situation. However, he also makes the point here that

... gif the king þat cummys be successioun war miserable and unproffitable to þe realme þe pepil mycht put remeid be wys counsal & governyng of him and of þe realme²³¹

This is clearly not quite the same as a tyrannical monarch being dealt with by divine justice, and so what is advocated is reform rather than replacement. Ireland's evocation of the common profit here is of course entirely consistent with his earlier references to the double obligation of king and people, but

230. Ernst Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies (Princeton, 1957), pp.330, 392-3.

231. Meroure, III, fol. 348^v.

he will not be drawn into more particular statements on the role of the latter; they may counsel, but they may not resist.

On the related questions of minority rule and the youthfulness of kings, Ireland sets out optimistic contingency plans:

... To the third ressonne þat sais þat it may fall quhen þe king decess þat his sone be nocht of age To þis I ansuer þat in þis cais his fader and the law suld provide quha suld have þe governaunce of him and the realme quhil he cum to eild and wisdome 232

And gif þe prince be tendir in age in the decess of the king I say þat þe realme and law suld ordand þat he and þe realme be tendirlie and iustlie governit and all þai of the realme suld have naturall luf and reverens to him and suld have gud hop of him as of þar lord cheif and prince 233

The points may have been countered, but there is no attempt made to deal with the anxiety raised earlier that those who governed in the king's stead might be corrupt. It is perhaps for this reason, and in view of his other remarks about wise counsel that Ireland's final chapter deals with the qualities of good counsellors. The 'gud hop' that Ireland encourages towards a young king is manifestly in part a compliment to the young James IV, but it also reinforces the sense of the importance of the monarch's role. It is interesting that Ireland invokes the abstract entities of 'realme and law' as ensuring as great a continuity of government during a minority. Again, in the very acknowledging of the particular circumstances of a disruption in the natural ordering of the kingdom, an attempt is made to affirm generalized and undisrupted principles. The familiar point is also made that a king need not be old in years but in wisdom, and this the son of a good king is likely to be. The other arguments are equally conventional: succession is a better way

232. Ibid., fol. 348^v-349^r.

233. Ibid., fol. 349^r.

of ensuring that a king's son reigns; he has no need to be first a subject if he has been instructed in government; and so forth. However, the chapter does not end with any climactic affirmation of the benefits to be gained from having a secure hereditary monarchy. Instead Ireland leaves a final clear statement of the qualified nature of his position:

... to þe x ressonne I ansuer that and all wertu and noble condicion
war kepit in the election þat way war maist convenient bot þat
happynis nocht among men bot mony inconvenientis wauld folow of þat
way and þarfor þe way of succession is mar sar 234

Thus, set within its generic context, this chapter and the majority of Ireland's comments within it may be seen to be as conventional as much of the advice he appropriated from Gerson's sermons, but his particular attention to the problems of minority rule does suggest that this was a perceived contemporary difficulty. The matter is resolved as far as it effectively can be by attack as the best form of defence, in asserting here - as elsewhere - the ultimate worth to be gained from a young monarch's succession, and of the greater security to the realm through this system. The resolution achieved very much reflects the characteristic thinking on the position of the monarchy in Scotland in the fifteenth century; but in discussing the matter in this depth, Ireland was opening up a question which was to be far more problematic in the next century, and it would indeed be interesting to know whether his work was read by Major and his successors.

Chapter 8 returns to the subject of the king's wisdom, and now, perhaps with a heightened *sense* of the status of royalty his role as God's lieutenant to execute justice and to defend the people. It is emphasized anew that 'the gret power is gevin to þe king and undir him to his officiaris and memberis

234. Ibid., fol. 349^v.

nocht for þe distructioun of his people bot for þe help suple and defens of þam'.²³⁵ The necessity for a king's vigilance in this is also stressed, as Ireland makes use of Gerson's Rex in sempiterna vive, which also provides the source for the account of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar which then follows.²³⁶ In his dream the king saw a huge figure with golden head, silver arms, iron legs, and feet of iron and earth, which was then struck asunder by a great stone which rolled down upon it from a mountain top.

This was obviously a very well-known story, and as is noted, there had been many interpretations of it from Daniel's onwards; with Gerson, Ireland declares that he will 'mak a morale expositioun conforme to arestotil and plutark and sanct paule'.²³⁷ And this is certainly how he begins: the image is effectively the culminating representation of the unified body politic, and Ireland's treatment of it extends beyond what he found in Gerson to produce a heightened and stronger statement.

Following Gerson very carefully he first shows how the head signifies the king, and under him the three parts of the realm, nobles, clergy, and burgesses, all of which must nourish and support each other. These are then linked further to the theme of the four cardinal virtues: the king is justice, the nobles fortitude, the clergy prudence, and the people temperance. The analogy is then further pursued to four principle points concerning the welfare of the kingdom: that the king govern with justice; that he defend the people; that the clergy sustain the faith; and that the people provide the king with revenue.

235. Ibid., fol. 350^r.

236. Cf. Oeuvres complètes, VII, pp.1012-14.

237. Meroure, III, fol. 327^v; Oeuvres complètes, VII, p.1013.

Though Ireland is working continually from Gerson here, he could hardly have selected a more appropriate sermon from which to construct the concluding section of the Meroure. All the major themes and images of the preceding advisory chapters are now skilfully brought together. And Ireland's control is shown too in the way in which he abbreviates the last point described - the question of revenue having been not greatly treated in this Book - and then, as previously, moves further away from a source that he has up to now firmly adhered to. Whereas in Rex in sempiterna vive Gerson proceeds with further accounts of kingly duties and responsibility for peace and justice, considering also counsellors and tyranny further, Ireland takes up other elements of the dream. His source for this - if there was one - remains unidentified, although he may in one place be recalling Gower's Confessio Amantis, a work which in another connection he mentions at the end of this chapter and which also contained in its Prologue a version of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Ireland first refers to the significance of the stone, and his description is slightly reminiscent of Gower's, though their interpretations differ.²³⁸ For Ireland the stone should remind the king that he himself will have to submit himself to one who is king of kings. He then, in a very interesting passage, the authority for which is cited as the 'paip gelasius', goes on to consider the difference between temporal and spiritual authority. A distinction is made between three crowns that an emperor has, of gold, silver, and iron (recalling the three parts of the dream image), signifying nobility, justice, and strength, and the crown of gold that a king receives

238. Cf. Meroure, III, fol. 353^r, 'And the stane þat come from þe hill and brak & þe ymage ... in powder'.
and Gower's 'The Ston, which fro the hully Stage
He syn doun falle on that ymage
And hath it into pouldre broke ...' (Prologue, ll. 651-3).

The English Works of John Gower, vol. I, edited by G.C. Macaulay, EETS, E. Ser. 81 (1900).

which 'signifyis his gret excellens and dignite our all his pepil he is anoyntit to signifye and duclar þat þe dignite riall he haldis of the hevinly king'.²³⁹

It is here that Ireland comes closest to attributing to the monarch a quasi-divine, almost mystical status; and it is probably no coincidence that it is after the endorsement of the principle of hereditary succession that he should choose to adumbrate his portrayal of kingly power in this manner. After referring to anointment, he then turns to the symbols of kingly office - sceptre, sword and crown. The two former indicate, as was customary, justice and authority. Less common is the treatment of the crown, and more particularly the precious stones within it which are seen as signifying God's assistance to the king in his government; the wisdom that should be in a king; the strength he should show in administering justice and defending the people. Following this resumptive passage, Ireland makes this statement:

And þis noble crowne is set on þe heid and hiest part of the king to duclar and signifye þat his power and regimen he hauldis of god Imediatly and þat nane is above him in this mortall waurld in the temporale governaunce and regimen for þe haly prophet david þat Jhesus come of linialie Secundum carmen said to god efter his syn commitit agane him Tibi soli pottam et malum coram te feci he menit þat na temporal man na powar mycht be ressoune punys him sene he was vicar and louetenand of god in temporalite²⁴⁰

Ireland's ultimate comment on kingship in this chapter is therefore that the king is beyond the reach of punishment by a temporal power. In the light of his earlier definition of kingly obligation this can hardly be read as advocacy of absolutism, but it is the clearest representation in the Meroure of the conviction that the king was answerable only to God. The conciliarist view of opposition to a bad pope could not survive transference to this kind

239. Meroure, III, fol. 353^v.

240. Ibid., III, fol. 354^r.

of context. And whatever might have been the view of James III before his fortuitous demise, the reluctance of the parliaments that followed it to account for his murder in any precise terms can usefully be set against this theoretical background. With his young son assuming the throne it would have been unwise and possibly disruptive even to publicly depict his death as an act of God against an unjust ruler. And statements such as that above hardly allow for the sort of resistance to the king that had occurred. Thus, after such a period of instability, it is hardly surprising to find Ireland reinforcing principles of dynastic continuity and obedience to James III's direct successor - whatever the difficulties caused by his youth.

The king's youthfulness is in fact the justification Ireland gives for the final chapter of the Meroure dealing with the choice of counsellors and how they should be treated.²⁴¹ However, the advice that is given is hardly particular to Scotland, since it is very largely based on parts of Melibee. Ireland's precise sources for this section are most likely to have been Chaucer, whom Ireland mentions several times in the course of the Meroure, and who tells the story in the Canterbury Tales, or the French version by Renaud de Louens (which Chaucer used). The situation is further confused by the fact that in Ireland's version the sententiae are given in Latin, which is not the case in either Chaucer's or the French version. Moreover, Ireland occasionally adds material not found in either version, and suggesting that he may have had other sources or versions.²⁴²

241. 'And soverane lorde sene þi hienes is of tendir age risand to stenth and wisdom', Meroure, III, fol. 354^r.

242. Cf. The Tale of Melibee in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by F.N. Robinson (1957) and J. Burke Severs, 'The Tale of Melibeus' in Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, edited by W.F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (1941), pp.560-614; this chapter of the Meroure was printed by G. Gregory Smith in Specimens of Middle Scots (1902), pp.92-9. An example of one of Ireland's added passages, is p.94, ll.12-23 (Meroure, III, fol. 355^v).

In this chapter the king is therefore given thoroughly conventional advice on the advantages of keeping secret counsel, of choosing counsellors, and avoiding fools, flatterers and vicious men. Ireland also selects the passages counselling a king to revoke or reconsider a precipitate action, which recall similar comments in chapter 6.²⁴³ Yet despite the unmistakable conventionality of the content of this final chapter, its significance does not rest there alone. Ireland's response may be partly a generic one, since a section on good counsel was a requisite part of most advice treatises, but in the light of his statements on kingly authority, particularly at the end of the previous chapter, Ireland may have felt the need to make a qualifying distinction of the need for a king to function always with counsellors. And, though a keystone of advice literature generally, we have seen the necessity for good counsel constantly urged in Scottish advice to princes literature throughout this period, and in Ireland's Meroure it has one of its fullest, if most derivative, statements.

Ireland concludes the Meroure by stressing his loyalty to the king, and the spiritual aims of the work as a piece of instruction and encouragement to the people. He alludes too to his own past history and career:

And finally considerand þat I was mony ȝeris oratur to þe hie and noble prince þi fader of honour and gud mynd in his realme and utouth anens the kingis of fraunce Inland and uthir princis and his confessour and tendir to be noble lady and wertuus quene þi moder And in þi ȝoutheid in a part eftir my opinioun lifit with þi hienes and desyris nocht bot to serve þi hienes in wertu in all maneris þat I can gud ressonne wauld þat sic maneris of men suld be hard and þat service thankfully tane²⁴⁴

The last sentence in particular reads as if Ireland was making a bid for

243. Above, pp.431-2.

244. Meroure, III, fol. 357^v.

patronage and support from a new monarch who by 1490 was already signifying the ending of his minority and his assumption of power.²⁴⁵ If Ireland was looking for political influence he does not appear to have attained it to any great extent; he does not figure in the judicial records of James IV's reign, but he is possibly referred to in connection with the church at Linton, a rich prebend which was in the king's gift. Perhaps then Ireland's reward for his concern for the spiritual welfare of the realm was in that rather than the governmental sphere.²⁴⁶

With the Meroure of Wyssdome we have come to the first piece of Scottish advice to princes composed for a named monarch. In considering all such literature knowledge of the conditions of production is invaluable, and with this work the closeness of its dating to the death of James III and the subsequent installation of his young son must affect our reading of the text. Ireland's omissions of contentious material in his sources, his constant assertions of unity and harmony, his affirmation of hereditary successions would have been in keeping at any point in the fifteenth century in Scotland, but the continued references to the king's youthfulness and the newness of the reign function as a constant reminder of things past. As we have seen elsewhere, advice literature is not infrequently composed or recopied at the openings of reigns or after periods of disruption, and Ireland's elaborate evocation of ideal unity in the realm comes precisely at this sort of point. The Meroure's function is thus more than simply to advise the new young monarch; like all advice literature it acknowledges an audience that includes those who will also advise him. And to such readers as well as to the king Ireland continually shows that it is as important to affirm the monarch's

245. Nicholson, pp.539-40.

246. Burns, 'John Ireland', 95.

power as to define its limitations, for it is only the monarch who can guarantee the realm's stability.

Yet there is another side to this. In the Debate of the Four Daughters of God what is ultimately invoked is the ideal of equity, the ability of a judge to descend to a particular set of circumstances and judge accordingly. As an example to temporal rulers, the divine king is seen exercising it perfectly. And it is an ideal endorsed in Book VII of the Meroure of Wyssdome. But Ireland will not and perhaps cannot descend to such a consideration of particular circumstances in advising a contemporary temporal ruler. Current events are kept out of the text; recent examples will not be cited; a French ruler may be mentioned, but not a Scottish one. In comparison, the author of De Regimine Principum and even Hay in the Buik of King Alexander seem to feel a far greater degree of freedom to make their work evocative of contemporary Scotland.

The Meroure, then, is the work of a man widely read in classical and patristic literature and in the cultures of France and England - as his interesting use of the Court of Sapience demonstrates. In language and style too the work is more evocative of continental scholarship than of a particular Scottish tone - apart from its occasional excursions into a more colloquial style. As an advice work its interest lies in both its literary and political responses to what we have seen to be a wide variety of sources. In terms of the Scottish advice tradition Ireland contrives to be very much part of it and apart from it. He is apart from it in the level and range of his scholarship, in particular its pronounced Aristotelian basis; in few other Scottish advice writers is this so manifest, though it doubtless constitutes the theoretical framework of most of them. He is part of the tradition in his pragmatic concern for the exercise of kingly authority and justice, and in his avoidance of openly discussing the implications of bad kingship. And in

fact his allusions to young kings and the problems of minorities are cumulatively greater than in any other work of the fifteenth century. This paradox is at the heart of the Meroure: a sense of writing in particular circumstances is continually suppressed by the affirmation of generalized received truth.

Though there is little directly to indicate that Ireland was influenced by other Scottish works in the advice to princes genre, his treatment of the Debate of the Four Daughters of God is another example of the attraction to the dramatization of legal matters and legal language that we have seen throughout the century. McDonald has suggested that the connection of material between the Meroure and The Thre Prestis of Peblis (particularly perhaps if the latter was composed by Stobo) may reflect the concern of two royal servants to produce 'handbooks' for the young monarch. But, as he acknowledges, the two works are of 'very different character',²⁴⁷ The Thre Prestis is hardly a handbook on kingly conduct. Rather than seeing the two authors as 'debating relevant issues together' and then composing their respective offerings,²⁴⁸ it is possible to see them as linked in another way. Though very different formally, the two works are the most elaborately contrived and structurally composed of all those we have considered: the Meroure with its seven books and its skilfully interlinked final Book, the Thre Prestis with its conspicuous paralleling and patterning on threes. It is possible to see the authors of the Meroure and the Thre Prestis using the advice genre in part for reasons of artistic display, and a desire to attract from James IV the patronage and support for the arts for which his court was increasingly to

247. McDonald, 161-2.

248. Ibid., 161.

become known. In this light the borrowings in the Thre Prestis may not signify so much concern for contemporary issues as literary appropriation. Scottish advice literature is entering a different phase here, which was soon to see its most dramatic manifestation in the poetry of William Dunbar.

Conclusion

From the beginning of the sixteenth century we have a much fuller picture of the composers and the recipients of Scottish advice to princes literature. Some of the advisory pieces preserved in the Bannatyne and Maitland MSS may remain anonymous (and approximately dated),¹ but we know a good deal more about the major advice writers in the first half of the sixteenth century, than we do of their counterparts in the latter half of the fifteenth; and a sense of the authorship of a work plays an increasingly important part in our appreciation of it within the advisory canon. As the sixteenth century advances too, an ever stronger image of the advised monarch emerges, until in fact the king himself is moved to compose a speculum principis, James VI's Basilikon Doron for his son Henry, at the very end of the century.

The three most important literary figures in the first part of that century, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lindsay, all produced significant pieces of advice in a range of genres quite as wide as those taken up by earlier writers, including Dunbar's celebratory poem, The Thrissill and the Rois, Douglas' presentation of the hero of his Eneydos, and Lindsay's long and ambitious drama, Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis. Although Dunbar and Lindsay in particular cultivate an image of personal closeness to the king which has no real parallel in the writings we have so far considered, their presentation of kingship is not substantially different from that of their predecessors. They certainly inherit their broadly conservative attitude to the monarchy from the literature of the earlier period, and all are indeed writers with a strong sense of a Scottish literary tradition.² But the sixteenth century is

1. See the discussion in R.J. Lyall, 'Politics and Poetry in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Scotland', SLJ, 3 (1976), 5-29 (22-4); also Poetry of the Stewart Court, edited by Joan Hughes and W.S. Ransom (Canberra, 1982), pp.97-101.

2. Cf., for example, Lament for the Makaris, ll. 53-93; Palice of Honour, ll. 92-4 (and Priscilla Bawcutt, Gavin Douglas (Edinburgh, 1976), pp.42-4); The Testament of the Papyngo, ll. 15-54.

also notable for the appearance of works by Scotsmen - Major, Boece, and Buchanan - advocating elective rather than hereditary monarchy, and theories of resistance ultimately including tyrannicide.³ The possibility of an alternative response to questions of royal accountability unexplored in the late fifteenth century has now been entered into; but it is important to remember that these later writers are yet part of a tradition which we have seen manifested in the writings of Ireland, and in the numerous other Scots who spent time on the Continent and were strongly influenced by the debates they encountered there. Major, Boece, and Buchanan were all present in Paris during periods of intense theological and political controversy, and all clearly responded to the dissemination of theories of kingship which we have already seen manifested in Gerson's defence of tyrannicide.

To talk of Major, Boece, and Buchanan as constitutional radicalists in the same breath is greatly to simplify the matter, but the contrast between their depiction of kingship and that perpetuated by Lindsay is profound. Ane Satyre and his earlier poems such as The Testament of the Papyngo and the Complaynt may level quite rigorous criticisms against monarchs, but the force which will rebuke and oppose the failing monarch is still primarily seen as 'Divine Correctioun'.⁴ Advice writing of course continues in Scotland in such works as William Lauder's Office and Dewtie of Kyngis (1556),⁵ but in the second half of the century the most determined and whole-hearted presentation of kingship from the conservative view comes in fact from the king himself, not only in James VI's Basilikon Doron, but in his The True Lawe of Free Monarchies published a year earlier in 1598, in part at least a deliberate

3. Very useful discussion in I.D. McFarlane, Buchanan (1981), pp.392-440.

4. Cf. the definition of the role in Ane Satyre (1554 edn), ll. 1372-620.

5. Cf. Lyall, 24.

refutation of the theories expressed by his erstwhile tutor George Buchanan. In its arguments that the king is God's lieutenant, supreme over parliament, in its frequent citation of the body political metaphor and its continual invocation of Scripture, it could well have been written a century earlier, but woven in with this is a consciousness of the need to refer to and reject the view of those who claim that the king may be legitimately resisted by his people. The result is a curious depiction of the preferability of a mutilated body politic to a decapitated one:

And for the similitude of the head & the body, it may very well fall out that the head will be forced to garre cut of some rotten member (as I have already said) to keepe the rest of the body in integritie. But what state the body can be in, if the head, for any infirmity⁶ that can fall to it, be cut off, I leaue it to the readers judgement.

So, a metaphor that we have seen continually evoked, most memorably perhaps by Hay and Ireland, gains a new and slightly menacing interpretation from the king himself. And despite the stress on the traditional theme of the shared interest of king and people, 'The reciprock and mutuall duetie betwixt a free King and his naturall subjects', as the subtitle to The True Lawe puts it, it is far less easily achieved here.

Between James IV and James VI, and between John Ireland and James VI, the character of the advisory writer thus saw many changes. The influence on the later authors of the earlier Scottish advice corpus will form the subject of another study, but I should like in conclusion to turn back into the fifteenth century and to the work of (to our eyes) its most dominant figure, not yet discussed in detail here. The accounts above of the themes and preoccupations of Scottish advice to princes in this period provide the appropriate context

6. Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I, edited by James Craigie and Alexander Law, STS, 4th Ser. 14 (Edinburgh, 1982), p.75.

in which to place their quintessential literary statement, which comes in Robert Henryson's fable of 'The Lion and the Mouse'.

'The Lion and the Mouse' is of central status and significance in the corpus of Henryson's Fables.⁷ Questions of what should constitute 'justice', a major element in many of the other fables, are extensively worked through in the various roles which the lion is playing in this poem. To set these out, he is (1) the king, against whom a treasonable offence has been committed; (2) as king, the ultimate representative of the law to whom the offending mouse may appeal; (3) as ruler, the example of justice in the realm. These last two roles are linked in turn to two further areas of allusion: the potential in monarchy for tyranny, and the necessity for monarchs to receive counsel.

Also important here is the mingling of advice-giving with legalistic language and references, deep-set in this poem as in many of Henryson's Fables. From the start the mouse recognizes that she has committed a crime and will be brought to judgement for it. There are two inter-related strands of meaning here: the idea of the trial scene, half-mock, half-real is being established; but reference is also being given to the conventional idea - often seen in judicial scenes featuring tyrants - that pleas for mercy involved an acceptance of some culpability on the defendant's part.⁸ In the mouse's second speech we can begin to see the piling up of the elaborate metonymic structure and phrasing that are found in her main speech. Lines

7. Denton Fox, and before him, H.H. Roerecke, have argued strongly for the Bassandyne order of the Fables, which makes 'The Lion and the Mouse' the central fable, with two hundred stanzas before it and two hundred after it. The Poems of Robert Henryson, edited by Denton Fox (Oxford, 1981), pp. lxxxv-lxxxix; H.H. Roerecke, 'The Integrity and Symmetry of Robert Henryson's Moral Fables', (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1969).

8. Cf. J.D. Burnley, Chaucer's Language and the Philosophers' Tradition, Chaucer Studies 2 (Cambridge, 1979), p.128.

1432-9 are in effect a condensed version of the longer speech, establishing the lion's status, the contrast between them, and the value of modifying justice with mercy for sins that are not of the grossest nature. We may see how closely Henryson is drawing upon (traditional these ideas and their X expression by comparing the mouse's claim that,

... thingis done off neglygence,
Nouthur off malice nor of prodissioun,
Erer suld haue grace and remissioun.

....

The sweit sesoun prouokit vs to dance
And mak sic mirth as nature to vs leird; [1437-9, 1442-3]

with Gilbert Hay's comments on discretion in judgement:

... quhen a king fyndis ony misgovernaunce in his realme or in his houshalde, he suld ger inquire gyf it be done in playing or disporting, or othir wayis in lychtly contempt of ony persone nocht in felony, and sa suld it be punyst.⁹

In addressing the lion as 'Lord' [1432], the mouse is respectfully repeating the phrase of his initial demand, 'Knew thow not weill I wes baith lord and king/Off beistis all?' [1430-1]; she is also recognizing his dual status, both as wronged monarch and court of appeal. Indeed in a manner later also adopted in Ireland's debate of the Four Daughters of God,¹⁰ we may well have here a verbal echo of the actual language of appealing, used in well-nigh the highest appeal court in the land, the Lords in Council. The mouse's first appeal to the lion is constructed around the phrases 'Heir ... Consider ... Se' [1434-7]. In the records of the Lords in Council, 'sene herd and understandin' appears not infrequently as a formula for recording cases, but in the

9. Prose MS, II, p. 99.

10. Ch. 8, p.406.

records of 1501, for example, we find something even closer:

... the comptis and chargis herd sene considerit and weile
understandin of baith the sadis partiis ... ¹¹

The lion's language is equally distinctive. We should bear in mind that, although we are told that the lion 'gart mercie his cruell ire asswage' [1504], on the only occasions on which we hear him speak in the fable his speeches are underwritten by a series of absolute statements and avowals. In the first instance, these are suggestive of a rule of law arising from unchallengeable and merciless majesty: 'Thy fals excuse ... Sall not auaill ane myte For thy trespas thow can mak na defence ... For to excuse thow can na cause pretend' [1428-31, 1447-60]. The sentence he pronounces on the mouse evokes an absolutism of intention, paralleled in uncompromising phrasing. The lion's tyrannical potential is manifest.

The mouse's long speech in response lays constant emphasis on her appeal for 'mercy', takes the lion through the emotional stages by which the 'pietie' necessary to generate this might be realized, and at the same time maintains the necessary praise and honour due to his exalted status. She uses rhetorical devices designed to evoke pity, such as conduplicatio and permissio, and in the second stanza opens with an enthymene, allowing her to argue from generalized truths and away from the specific instance of her crime. This movement also establishes the wider symbolic reading of the poem.

For the disposition of language in this stanza [ll. 1468-74] is extraordinarily detailed and contrived:

11. ADC, III, p.124.

In euerie iuge mercy and reuth suld be
As assessouris and collaterall;
Without mercie, iustice is crueltie,
As said is in the lawis sprit uall,
Quhen rigour sittis in the tribunall,
The equitie off law quha may sustene?
Richt few or nane, but mercie gang betwene.

This is the heart of the poem - indeed its central statement comes at the literal centre of the fable, with twenty-one stanzas on either side. Again, careful syntactic plotting underscores the argument. Within this one stanza, mercy is presented as inseparable from reuth, justice and equity - the emotion of judging, the actuality of judgement, and the supreme principle behind it. All the 'areas' of justice suggested in the fable are drawn together: distinct legal words from the practical workings of the law, 'assessouris' and 'tribunall', occur, and are also made to function metaphorically; the personification of 'rigour ... in the tribunall' suggests the court of appeal, implicit in the nature of the mouse's speech; the idea of mercy is brought in, 'Without mercie, justice is crueltie', as is yet another dimension of the law, 'the 'lawis spirituall'. But it is 'the equitie of law' that is the resounding climactic phrase.

In contrast to the mouse's elaborate speech we are given a fairly swift summary of the lion's response. Dialogue is such a fundamental part of this fable that its abridgements or 'silences' are all the more interesting and suggestive. However, on the surface, the mouse's appeal seems to have worked:

Quhen this wes said, the lyoun his language
Paissit, and thocht according to ressoun,
And gart mercie his cruell ire asswage,
And to the mous grantit remissioun, [1503-6]

This seems ideal. The lion shows mercy and reason, and we are told later that he 'had pietie' [1569]. He has tempered his 'cruell ire' - a phrase particularly associated with medieval literary tyrants: 'the tyrant is irous, lacks

reason and prudence, often rages madly, and entirely lacks compassion'.¹² But what we do not see is the reasoning process. This is unlike the depiction of another literary monarch with tyrannical potential, Theseus in Chaucer's 'The Knight's Tale'. On the occasion when his potential is tested, the language used to show the effects of reason and assuaged ire is close to that we have seen in the passage above:

And although that his ire hir gilt accused
Yet in his resoun he hem both excused.

But Chaucer then continues 'As thus - ', and there follows fifteen lines of Theseus' thought and reasoning.¹³

The lion's reasoning here, clearly contrasted with the weighty speech preceding it, is, I would argue, expressed shortly because its effects last only a short while. The lion demonstrates that he is not a completely tyrannous being, but almost as soon as the mouse has gone, he becomes once more a 'cruell lyoun' slaying both tame and wild. Moreover, his flinging in the net in which he becomes trapped, 'Welterand about with hiddeous rummissing' [1524], recalls the tyrant monarch's characteristic raging. And his lament reveals that in another sense he has learnt nothing from the mouse's speech: he expects no 'succour', With self-centred absolutism in keeping with his earlier speeches he anticipates no 'pietie' from others. Even when captured he continues to conceive of himself in terms of his 'excellence' and 'croun', although his 'mycht' has been removed. The mouse's response in releasing him, in comparison, is generated not through rhetoric (or indeed flattery) but through genuine pity at the lion's state. We are

12. Burnley, p.24.

13. 'The Knight's Tale', ll. 1765-6.

surely intended to be left in some doubt as to how we should ultimately conceive of the lion: there is another textual 'silence' after he has been released by the mice. The idea is in fact carried through into the moralitas, where we may see the lion as any number of monarchs, as one of the 'lordis of prudence' or as 'ane lord of grit renoun,/Rolland in wardlie lust and vane plesance' [1574-5, 1594, 1601-2].

In a fable like 'The Lion and the Mouse', where the allusiveness of the tale is so great, it is hardly surprising that the moralitas should seem a little cursory, or inconclusive. This is surely Henryson's intention. We are not supposed to detach either moralitas or tale, but to see that the effect of the language of the tales is frequently to create a broader sphere of reference, a sense of relativity, that must inform even the plainly stated 'significances' that we draw from the moralities. For this reason I have stressed the 'literary' quality of this fable's character as an advice to princes piece. To investigate it, as many have done,¹⁴ for precise political references is to strain and restrict a subtle and suggestive poem. Henryson was clearly alert to the main currents of thought that we have seen emerging in Scottish fifteenth-century advice writing, especially concerning the effectiveness of justice and kingly power. In relation to the latter, it could be argued that the contradictory impression that is presented of the lion king - at once capable of merciful justice and liable to tyranny - is a close rendition of the particular view of kingship that dominates this period: a desire for a strong monarch, coupled with concern that that monarchy may be

¹⁴. See, for example, Ranald Nicholson, Scotland, The Later Middle Ages, The Edinburgh History of Scotland, 2 (Edinburgh, 1974), pp.500-20; R.L. Kindrick, 'Lion or Cat? Henryson's Characterization of James III', SSL, 14 (1979), 123-36; Norman Macdougall, James III: A Political Study (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 269-71.

either insufficiently vigilant or draconian in the exercise of its power. To suggest that a more precise allegory works beneath the narrative of 'The Lion and the Mouse' is to claim for Henryson a concern for pointed allusion that we have seen to be less than common. An advice piece could indeed be all the more effective for being general rather than insistently specific. And this indeed is the effect of 'The Lion and the Mouse'. Placed in the centre of a fable corpus ranging through many different styles and genres, like the king at the centre of a broad and varied society, it intimates both Henryson's inclusive literary vision and his sense of the central status of advice to princes literature in late medieval Scotland.

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