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GEORGE THOMSON (1757-1851): HIS COLLECTIONS OF NATIONAL AIRS IN THEIR SCOTTISH CULTURAL CONTEXT

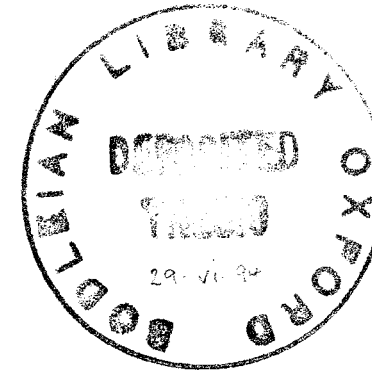
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ABSTRACT

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Between 1793 and the mid-1840s George Thomson published numerous volumes of Scottish, Welsh and Irish folksongs with new lyrics by over eighty contemporary literary men and women, including most importantly Robert Burns, and with new musical arrangements by Pleyel, Kozeluch, Haydn, Beethoven, Carl Maria von Weber and Hummel.

These collections have become an historical curiosity primarily through the contributions of Haydn, Beethoven and Robert Burns, but scholars have generally regarded Thomson's venture as an artistic failure. Thomson, the editor, has been castigated for adjusting the arrangements of Beethoven and setting the lyrics of Burns to new melodies. Few have queried Thomson's editorial decisions, and no one has examined them in the context of performance skills, or literary and musical tastes in Scotland during this period. Although Thomson was in favour of the Union with England and regarded himself as a British citizen, his collections were created to please a specifically Scottish clientele.

By concentrating most of all on the body of Thomson's correspondence and the publications themselves, the aim of this thesis is to place Thomson's collections in their Scottish cultural context. Thomson's publishing venture - the financial organization, the creation of his publishing house, the transmission of musical manuscripts and the distribution of volumes - is examined in view of Scotland's fast-developing publishing industry during the second half of the eighteenth century, and the expansion of her trade and transportation networks. The newly commissioned European arrangements of the melodies are considered in the context of Scotland's musical life, and the skills of her amateur and professional musicians. Examination of the lyrics, and Thomson's handling of them, illustrates the preoccupation with taste and morality and the insecurity of national identity which prevailed amongst educated Scots during this period.

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The Louise Dyer Award of the Musica Britannica Trust enabled me to purchase microfilm of the copies of musical manuscripts sent to Thomson and now kept in the British Library. Travel grants from the Scottish Education Department, Balliol College and the Faculty of Music, Oxford gave me the opportunity to travel to Germany and Austria. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Regine Zeller, librarian at the Goethe-Museum, Düsseldorf; Dr Helmut Hell and his staff at the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin; Dr Wolfgang Goldhan and his staff at the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek also in Berlin; Evelyn Liepsch at the Goethe--Schiller-Archiv in Weimar; Dr Oswald Bill at the Hessiche Landes-und Hochschulbibliothek in Darmstadt; the staff of the music room of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek and the Stadt-und Landesbibliothek in Vienna; and especially to Professor Sieghardt Brandenburg and Jürgen May at the Beethoven Archiv in Bonn. The staff at the Suffolk Record Office were keen to help with the manuscripts of Alexander Straton and I am grateful to them and to Olivia Pye for their assistance. John Wagstaff, librarian at the Music Faculty in Oxford, Chris Banks of the British Library and Sheila Craik, former music librarian at the University of Glasgow, made examination and comparison of editions and issues so much easier. Special thanks are owed to Roger Luce, Ruzena Wood and Tim Lawrence of the Music Room at the National Library of Scotland for whom nothing was a problem.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Libraries:

A-Wn - Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung
D-B - Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussiche Kulturbesitz
D-Bds - Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek
D-Nba - Bonn, Beethoven Haus and Beethoven Archiv
D-DS - Darmstadt, Hessische Landes-und Hochschul-bibliothek
D-DÜk - Düsseldorf, Goethe- Museum
D-WRgs - Weimar, Goethe-Schiller-Archiv
F-Pn - Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
GB-En - Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland
GB-Ep - Edinburgh Public Library, Central Library
GB-Eu - Edinburgh University Library
GB-Gm - Glasgow, Mitchell Library
GB-Gu - Glasgow University Library
GB-Lbm - London, British Library
GB-Lpro - London, Public Record Office
GB-Ob - Oxford, Bodleian Library
SRO - Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office
SuRO - Ipswich, Suffold Record Office

Publications & others:

EMS - Edinburgh Musical Society
MMC - The Merry Muses of Caledonia, eds. J. Barke & S. Goodsir Smith, Edinburgh, 1982.
SMM - J. Johnson, The Scots Musical Museum, ed. D. A. Low, Aldershot, 1992.
TMM - A. Ramsay, Tea-Table Miscellany, Glasgow, 1871.

Currency:

One pound (£1) = twenty shillings (20s.)
One shilling (1s.) = twelve pence (12d.)
One guinea (1gn.) = £1. 1s.
10/6 = ten shillings and sixpence (half a guinea)
1 ducat (Europe) = 4½ gulden = about 9 shillings (9s.)

Abbreviations for Thomson's volumes (see Appendix I):

Sets of Scottish Airs:

A - First set 1793
Aa - First set 1794
B - Second set 1798
C - Third set 1799
D - Fourth set 1799

Scottish volumes (S):

Volume I

SIa - 1801
SIb - 1803
SIc - 1809
SId - 1814
SIe - 1817
SIf - 1826
SIg - 1831
SIh - 1838

Volume II

SIIa - 1801
SIIb - 1803
SIIc - 1810
SIId - 1815
SIIe - 1826
SIIf - 1831
SIIg - 1838

Volume III

SIIIa - 1802
SIIIb - 1803
SIIIc - 1810
SIIId - 1817
SIIIe - 1826
SIIIf - 1831
SIIIg - 1838

Volume IV

SIVa - 1805
SIVb - 1808
SIVc - 1812
SIVd - 1815
SIVe - 1826
SIVf - 1831
SIVg - 1838

Volume V

SVa - 1818
SVb - 1826
SVc - 1831
SVd - 1838

Volume VI

SVIa - 1841

Welsh volumes (W):

WI - 1809
WII - 1811
WIII - 1817

Irish volumes (Ir):

IrI - 1814
IrII - 1816

PREFACE

Literature concerning George Thomson (1757-1851) and his three collections of National Airs - Scottish, Welsh and Irish - is difficult to find. A biography by James Cuthbert Hadden was published in 1898, with the title George Thomson: the friend of Burns. Since then single articles in Scottish musical histories, or passing comments in biographies of Haydn, Beethoven, Weber or Burns are the only sources of information available to a general reader.

Hadden's decision to refer to Thomson's collaboration with Burns in the title of his biography was deliberate. At the end of the nineteenth century Thomson was known primarily in this context. By 1898, however, Thomson and his work were already viewed with some scepticism. His controversial decisions relating to the editing of Burns's lyrics, in particular, had already produced a history of misrepresentation of Thomson and his editorial procedure. Even today, Thomson is known and unquestionably accepted as James C. Dick's 'egregious editor',[1] or James Kinsley's 'priggish Thomson'.[2] He is the publisher who had the 'absurd idea'[3] of employing European composers to arrange national melodies, and who produced, eventually, nothing but a 'monstrous white elephant',[4] or, at best, 'huge pretentious volumes' which are 'a sad memorial to

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[1] J.C. Dick, The Songs of Robert Burns, Pennsylvania, 1962, p. xiii.

[2] J. Kinsley, 'The Music of the Heart', delivered as part of the Gregynog Lectures, University of Wales, February 1963, and printed in Renaissance and Modern Studies, University of Nottingham, viii (1964), 25-36. Part of the essay was reprinted in Critical Essays on Robert Burns, ed. D.A. Low, London, 1975, pp. 124-36.

[3] C. Thorpe Davie, Scotland's Music, Edinburgh, 1980, p. 16.

[4] D. Johnson, Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, Oxford, 1972, p. 146.

misplaced enthusiasm and ignorant amateurishness'.[5] Most scholars have accepted, without question, the little information available in print, which is often untruthful or, at the least, biased.

The aim of this thesis is to explain George Thomson's reasons for producing a collection of Scottish airs, and to examine his editing of the musical and literary content in the context of Scotland's unsettled cultural identity during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. With the exception of J.C. Hadden, no-one has looked closely at the information presented in Thomson's letterbooks. This thesis presents hitherto unpublished material relating to Thomson's publishing business and the financial foundation from which it grew. It also presents detailed discussion of the songs themselves. Individual songs have not previously been examined in relation to Thomson. Ironically it is this procedure which begins to reveal the true complexities of Thomson as an editor and as a businessman.

Discussion centres primarily around Thomson's Scottish collection, although the Welsh and Irish collections are mentioned in passing. Chapters I and II concentrate on the inspiration for Thomson's collections, and also on the collating of material and the formation of the publishing house. Chapters III and IV look more closely at Thomson's editorial practice. Thomson's choice of melodies and his decisions relating to the musical settings are discussed in Chapter III. Although the musical manuscripts of most of Thomson's composers are no longer extant, examination of Beethoven's sketches presents new information concerning Thomson's editorial procedure. Discussion of individual songs in Chapters III and IV illustrates that Thomson's editing

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[5] Thorpe Davie, p. 16.

always reflected the tastes and preoccupations of his public.[6] Finally, contemporary reception of Thomson's collections is discussed in Chapter V, where the general financial organization of the collections is also examined. Information in the letterbooks and in banking ledgers together is incomplete, and consequently affects the discussion of payments to individuals.

While the thesis concentrates on the artistic content of the collections, an awareness of the bibliographical complexity of Thomson's Scottish collection is essential when discussing the various versions of individual musical settings and lyrics as they appear throughout this collection. Since Hopkinson and Oldman's bibliographical study in 1940,[7] scholars have understandably avoided detailed examination of the volumes themselves. Appendix 1 is a Tabulated List of the various issues of Thomson's volumes. The volumes and their subsequent issues are numbered separately, and these numbers are used when discussing particular musical settings or lyrics in Chapters III and IV.[8] It should be recognized that the list in Appendix I is created to introduce the reader to these bibliographical problems, and to help when trying to decipher one issue from another. The index of songs produced in Appendix II provides a guide to the songs published by Thomson in his three collections. The reader is given a citation for each song in its first form. Only a detailed and extensive thematic catalogue of the collections, which includes all songs in their various versions, would allow one to give exact

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[6] Although titles of individual songs should technically appear in single quotation marks, I have emboldened them in the text. This distinguishes the titles at a glance, and thus helps the reader.

[7] C. Hopkinson and C.B. Oldman, 'Thomson's Collections of National Song', Transactions of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, ii (1940), Part 1, 3-64. Amendments were published in the same journal, iii (1954), Part 2, 123-4.

[8] These numbers are emboldened in the text, and a list of them is included with the abbrevations and again with Appendix 1.

numbers of songs published by Thomson and produced by individuals.[9]

Quotations from the correspondence between Thomson and Beethoven, which was conducted almost exculsively in French, are taken directly from manuscript sources and are thus full of inconsistences and mistakes (i.e. spellings and accents). I have chosen not to give translations. The eagerly awaited new edition of Beethoven letters will provide readers with copies of the complete correspondence between editor and composer.

This thesis, by its nature, is unable to constitute a full bibliographical survey, a detailed study of the cultural climate of Scotland, or a full examination of the interest in folksong settings throughout Europe during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But it presents new information on Thomson's publishing house and on his editorial procedure, and as such it aims to provide a firm foundation for future research in these areas.

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[9] Numbers mentioned in Chapter IV are estimates only.

CHAPTER I - THE INSPIRATION OF EDINBURGH AND ITS MUSIC SOCIETY

George Thomson arrived in Edinburgh in 1774, at the age of seventeen. Although he was born in Limekilns in Dunfermline, not far from the capital, he had been raised and educated in Banff, where his father Robert was a schoolmaster.[1] Arriving in the metropolis from a rural town in the north-east must have been both exciting and awesome.[2] The Old Town, as it was then called, linked the castle at one end and the Palace of Holyrood at the other. The High Street stretched between them, and from it ran numerous closes and wynds, their tall multi-storeyed tenement houses casting darkness over most streets and giving the justifiable impression of overcrowding.[3] In striking contrast, on the other side of the city's newly-drained North Loch,[4] James Craig's plan for the New Town was taking shape,[5] incorporating designs by William Playfair, the Adam brothers, William Stark, William Burn and the Mylne brothers, whose cumulative efforts produced one of the finest Georgian cities ever built.[6]

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[1] For information about the Thomson family see Hadden, Thomson, pp. 1-116.

[2] E. Topham, Letters from Edinburgh, London, 1776, p. 8. Topham arrived in Edinburgh in the same year as Thomson. See also Alexander Campbell, Journey from Edinburgh through parts of North Britain, London, 1802, ii. 147.

[3] Topham, Letters, p. 10 and p. 28. It is well known that the tenement houses in central Edinburgh often rose as high as eleven or twelve storeys. Topham wrote in 1774: 'The ground-floors and cellars are in general made use of for shops by the tradesmen; who here style themselves Merchants, as in France; and the higher houses are possessed by the genteeler people'.

[4] A.J. Youngson, The Making of Classical Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1988, pp. 59-60. The North Loch was drained in 1759.

[5] Ibid., p. 100. Youngson stated that between 1784 and 1792 there was what can only be referred to as 'the building boom'. In fact the process of building the New Town continued until the 1830s.

[6] Thomson wrote to Dr Harden on 8 September 1844 that Edinburgh was, 'the most beautiful city in Europe': **GB-En** 9814/104.

The city's physical characteristics were impressive and the lure of the capital was self-evident: the population of Edinburgh multiplied from the mid-1750s, and there was an almost threefold increase within a century.[7] The plans for the respectable residences of Craig's New Town were accepted by the city in the hope that they would tempt the upper ranks of Scottish society to move from their noble country residences, at least for part of the year, to new, refined accommodation in the city, thereby helping to improve the city's European reputation. The original 1752 proposals for refurbishment of the Old Town had stated quite clearly the city's intention:[8]

> A Nation cannot this day be considerable unless it be opulent. Wealth is only to be obtained by trade and commerce, and these are only carried on to advantage in populous cities.[9]

Many moved from their country homes to the New Town, and wealthy men and women already living in Edinburgh left the Old Town for the New. But in order to reach its goal of opulence, the city required workers too. Thomson's family was one of many who moved to the city in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Changes in agricultural policy after the Union of the Parliaments in 1707 resulted in a more economical use of land and resources, consequently reducing the number of labourers and estate workers and causing drastic changes within rural communities. Unable to make a decent living in the country, many families were left little alternative but to

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[7] Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-9, ed. Sir John Sinclair, Edinburgh, 1975. The above account stated that in 1755 the population of the city of Edinburgh (with the parishes of Canongate, St Cuthbert's and Leith) was 57,220. The New Statistical Account of Scotland, published in 1845, stated that though the population of Edinburgh and Leith was 82,560 in 1801, it had increased to 163,726 by 1841.

[8] Youngson, Making of Classical Edinburgh, pp. 4-17. These plans were entitled Proposals for carrying on Certain public works in the City of Edinburgh.

[9] Ibid., p. 10.

move to the cities. Thomson's father was struggling financially in Banff and, in the hope of earning a more substantial living, he decided to move his family to Edinburgh.

No documents exist to show how easily and naturally Thomson adjusted to his new surroundings.[10] He seems to have had little experience outside the schoolroom, but he quickly found himself the position of a legal clerk in the office of a Writer to the Signet.[11] The poet Robert Fergusson (1750-74), though better educated than Thomson, worked as a commissary clerk in the early 1770s and was miserable with the thankless task of copying documents in bad light and cold surroundings for long hours and little pay. Thomson was fortunate, for by 1780 he had become Junior Clerk to the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Art and Manufactures in Scotland. In an autobiographical letter, written in 1838 to his friend Robert Chambers, Thomson claimed that he achieved his new position at the Board of Trustees with the help of John Home, the author of the then controversial play Douglas.[12] Home had been forced to resign from his position as Minister to the parish of

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[10] Hadden is the only scholar who has been fortunate enough to have seen Thomson's family documents and correspondence. The letterbooks at the British Library (**GB-Lbl**) are connected with Thomson's publications alone, and I have been unable to trace the missing family letters. Letters in this thesis are referred to by the number of the manuscript (i.e. Add. MS 35267) and folio numbers are given immediately after the manuscript number, preceded by / (i.e. Add. MS 35267/1-2 = 35267, ff. 1-2).

[11] Youngson, The Making of Classical Edinburgh, p. 42. Youngson, quoting from a census of 1841, noted that the profession of a legal clerk was looked on as one of the 'lower' professions, with those of domestic service, shoemaking, tailoring and even common labouring regarded higher on the social scale. This seems most unusual for the legal profession as a whole was regarded highly at the time. See R. Mitchison, A History of Scotland, London, 1982, p. 296.

[12] J. Wilson, The Land of Burns. A Series of Landscapes and portraits illustrative of the Life and Writings of the Scottish Poet, Edinburgh, 1840 pp. 38-42. Wilson appears to be the only source of publication of this letter, although much of its information is quoted by Hadden, and D.F. Harris also quotes from it in his Saint Cecilia's Hall in the Niddry Wynd, Edinburgh, 1899.

Athelstaneford in East Lothian in 1757 after the kirk-session's outcry over the success of Douglas.[13] But when he returned to Edinburgh from London in the late 1770s, he was warmly welcomed as a highly successful playwright. Thomson gave no details in his letter of a meeting with Home, but wrote that it was 'through the influence of Mr John Home, author of Douglas, with one of the members of the honourable Board of Trustees, I was recommended to that Board, and became their junior clerk'.[14] Thomson was a newcomer to the city with an unimpressive family background, and with no professional status. This promotion to the Board of Trustees was a most influential move. Within six years of his arrival in Edinburgh, Thomson found himself working amongst a group of men who, appointed to the Board by Royal Warrant, lived within the top echelon of Edinburgh society.

The Board of Trustees was originally entitled 'The Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements in Scotland'. It was established by an Act of 1726,[15] and the first trustees were appointed in the following year by a commission 'under the Great Seal'. The Board was therefore regarded as one of the offspring of the 1707 Union, but it assumed the administration of several funds which were already in existence. Most of the revenue came in the form of government annuities. In the Treaty of Union (Article 15) an annuity of £2,000 was set aside for seven years for the encouragement of the manufacture of coarse wool, and in 1718 another annuity of the same amount was directed towards the

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[13] Douglas: a Tragedy was first performed in Edinburgh in December 1756. The Presbyterian Church in Scotland had always been set against the activities of the theatre, which they regarded as an evil and corrupting force. It is well known, however, that in 1784, when the famous Mrs Siddons came to Edinburgh, the General Assembly made changes in its schedule to allow attendance at her performances.

[14] Wilson, The Land of Burns, p. 38.

[15] Details of the establishment of the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, and their records, are held at the SRO: ref. NG.1.

encouragement of fisheries, manufactures and improvements. The herring fishing industry became a priority for the Board, and in 1808 as many as seven of its trustees - there were between 21 and 28 on the Board at this time - were associated with it. Even more revenue came from the surplus of the notorious Malt Tax of 1724, which, in Scotland, amounted to approximately £20,000 per annum.[16] This sum was likewise directed towards fisheries, manufactures and improvements, and the trustees were also responsible for Scotland's linen and hemp manufacture, which was to increase greatly throughout the century. The Board's annual income fluctuated, but the trustees always received an annuity, and, in addition to the Malt Tax surplus and private payments, new annuities were often created for the encouragement of individual areas such as linen manufacture in the Highlands, or the growing of flax and hemp. The administration of the production and export of flax, hemp and linen became the Board's chief activity in the second half of the century.[17] The Trustees' Linen Hall, which became a famous marketing centre for the new merchants of the city, opened in 1766 and its success resulted in the foundation of a Woollen Hall in the 1770s. The latter was much needed, for while the linen trade flourished, the woollen industry suffered.

The trustees thus spent most of their time administering the manufacture and exportation of Scottish produce, but they were also interested in the finer points of Scotland's trade and

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[16] The Malt Tax was understandably most unpopular and caused riots in Glasgow in 1725. See Mitchison, History, pp. 321 and 326.

[17] H. Arnot, The History of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1779, p. 541. Arnot stated, 'This institution [the Board] has been of great advantage to the country. It is in consequence of this establishment, and of the bounties granted upon the exportation of linen, that this valuable branch of manufacture has risen to any importance'. Arnot also listed the materials imported and exported to and from the port of Leith. Scotland exported linen products to Denmark, Norway, Spain, Gibraltar, Russia, North America and the West Indies, and woollen products to Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, North America and the West Indies. Fish was exported only to the Netherlands (salmon) and the West Indies (herring): see p. 576.

commerce. The Board's records state that when the Regulation of the linen industry was abolished in 1823 the trustees were allowed to appropriate funds for other purposes, in particular the encouragement of fine arts. However, the trustees had already established a drawing school in the 1760s. According to Hugo Arnot,[18] the Board decided to employ a professor of art and design in order to school about 20 boys and girls in the skills of drawing with particular reference to the linen industry. Alexander Runciman (1736-85),[19] who had been studying in Rome since 1767, arrived to take up the post in 1772.[20] Although the Academy was 'not intended as an academy of painting',[21] the teachers it employed were not content to concentrate on drawing for the manufacturing industry alone; and while the school became known as the first British school of design, it also prided itself on training many young fine artists. David Wilkie, who later produced several illustrations for Thomson's Scottish collection, first met Thomson when he was a student at the Trustees' Academy.[22]

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[18] Arnot, History of Edinburgh, p. 541.

[19] Runciman designed part of the scheme of the Caroline Park in Granton and, with his brother John, was also involved in the interior design of the Clerk's House at Penicuik.

[20] D. MacMillan, Painting in Scotland - The Golden Age, Oxford, 1986, p. 44. MacMillan states that the Trustees' Academy, also known as the Academy of Art, was founded in 1760, when Lord Kames emphasized the need to encourage the art of design in manufacture, and that the first teacher at the Academy was the French artist William Delacour. Arnot and MacMillan also differ in their accounts of the financing of the Academy, for while Arnot, expressing in this regard the commonly accepted view, states that the Academy was wholly subsidized by the Board of Trustees, MacMillan has written recently that its activities were funded by the combined support of the Trustees and the City.

[21] Arnot, History of Edinburgh, p. [423] - paginated 323 in error.

[22] Hadden, Thomson, pp. 66-8. Hadden gives a long account of the controversial meeting of Wilkie and Thomson in the 1790s. See also A. Cunningham, Life of Sir David Wilkie, London, 1843, pp. 32-3, and MacMillan, Painting in Scotland, p.160. Hadden and Thomson (in his letterbooks) gave the impression that Cunningham dealt unfairly with Thomson in connection with Wilkie's entry into the Academy. In fact, Cunningham was far from vindictive in his account.

The Board's interest in and encouragement of the fine arts in Scotland continued and strengthened throughout the nineteenth century.[23]

Thomson worked solely in an administrative capacity at the Board. By the early 1780s he had become its Senior Clerk and he was to remain in this position until his retirement in 1839.[24] The organization of meetings, minutes and trustees' reports were his main tasks, and he quickly grasped the procedure of exporting and importing materials to and from Europe and further afield. He also familiarized himself with the management of the Board's funds in association with the country's leading bankers, and became accustomed to the process of transporting government documents by way of connections in the diplomatic service. But he made more of an impression on the trustees than his secretarial role suggests. At the testimonial dinner held on Thomson's 90th birthday in 1847, Lord Cockburn nostalgically observed that,

> Though not actually in the chair of that institution, it was his [Thomson's] mind that predominated and directed its proceedings. I may vouch from what I used to see that there was no man under that Board, or under its patronage, who did not bless the name of Mr. Thomson.[25]

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[23] In 1858 the Academy was transformed into a School of Art, and in the 1850s the Board also became involved with the building of the new National Gallery in Edinburgh, to which it contributed £20,000 (half of which was a private donation). In the 1880s it was associated, though not financially, with the building of the National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh and supervised the restoration of the Cathedral at Dunblane. The Board's activities, indeed, became so closely connected with the arts in Scotland that in 1906 its functions became those of the new Board of Trustees for the National Galleries.

[24] Hadden, Thomson, pp. 8-10. Hadden gives details of the Board and of Thomson's salary.

[25] Ibid., pp. 97-8, and Caledonian Mercury, 4 March 1847.

Robert Arbuthnot (1728-1803),[26] who was the Board's secretary when Thomson was appointed its Junior Clerk, was to be a particularly important and faithful friend. Arbuthnot too had moved from the north-east to Edinburgh, where he founded a bank;[27] but his financial aspirations were shattered in 1772 along with those of many others, when a bankruptcy plague swept Edinburgh in June of that year destroying many small banks and severely disrupting others.[28] Arbuthnot was, from this time, the Board's Secretary and was succeeded in this role by one of his sons, William (1766-1829), who became Lord Provost of the City in 1815.[29] It was Robert, William and another son George (1772-1843),[30] who were financially responsible for Thomson's early publications.[31] Moreover, Robert's personal connection with Alexander Straton, a Scottish diplomat in Vienna, created the channel of communication that made viable Thomson's idea of commissioning

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[26] P.S.M. Arbuthnot, Memories of the Arbuthnots of Kincardineshire and Aberdeenshire, London, 1920. Robert's official family title was Robert Arbuthnot, second of Haddo-Rattray. A description of him is found in W. Forbes, Life of Dr. Beattie, Edinburgh, 1806, pp. 28-9. Arbuthnot appears to have been spirited and humorous in addition to being fluent in French and Italian.

[27] The bank was called Arbuthnot & Guthrie.

[28] W. Forbes, Memoirs of a Banking-House, Edinburgh & London, 1860, p. 39. Forbes recounts the story of 'Black Monday', as it was called, and states that the only banks that remained solvent were Forbes's own bank, Mansfield, Hunter & Co., William Cunning & Sons, the Bank of Scotland, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the British Linen Bank.

[29] E. Grant, Memoirs of a Highland Lady, ed. A. Tod, Edinburgh 1989, ii. 42-3. This edition is a reprint of Grant's first edition of 1898. She describes William and his wife as follows: 'he was a kind hospitable man, and his wife Mrs Arbuthnot very Highland, and though neither the one nor the other had the least pretensions to good manners, they were general favourites'. He was Lord Provost from 1815-17 and then again from 1821-3.

[30] He was to follow in his father's favoured footsteps and became a merchant banker, travelling first to Ceylon and in 1803 settling in Madras, where he worked for the bankers Lautour & Co., which in turn became Arbuthnot & Co. He returned to Britain in 1816.

[31] See Chapter V, pp. 235-8.

some of that city's eminent composers.[32] But Robert may have been even more influential, for in addition to making the venture possible in real terms, there is evidence to suggest that it was he who introduced Thomson to Edinburgh's sophisticated musical society. The administrative skills taught him by the trustees were invaluable, but Thomson's main inspiration for his collections of songs came directly from the concerts of the Edinburgh Musical Society (EMS).

Although there is evidence of earlier activity,[33] the EMS was officially formed in the 1720s by a group of enthusiastic amateur performers who had been meeting on a weekly basis in the Cross Keys Tavern in the Old Town, which was run by a keen amateur singer called Patrick Steil.[34] By 1728 the tavern had become too small to accommodate both performers and audience, so the group decided to give themselves an official title and took out a lease on premises nearby - St Mary's Chapel in Niddry's Wynd. The men agreed to meet there at weekly intervals to perform 'concerts of Musick', and they also devised a book of 'Articles and Regulations' to which they were all obliged to submit.[35] These laws were both strict and scrupulously followed, and they resulted in a small society of no more than 70 members, each of whom paid an annual subscription of one guinea. There was a committee comprising a Governor, Deputy Governor, Treasurer and five Directors appointed by the subscribers;[36] and new members were hand-picked by this committee from a list of hopeful candidates.

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[32] Straton's role in the transportation of Thomson's musical manuscripts from Vienna to Edinburgh is discussed in detail in Chapter II - iii: Transportation and distribution.

[33] Johnson, Music and Society, p. 33-4.

[34] Marie W. Stuart, Old Edinburgh Taverns, London, 1952, pp. 58-9.

[35] 'Minutes of the Procedure of the Governour and Directors of the Musical Society, 1728', EMS Sederunt Book 1, **GB-Eu** (copies in **GB-Ep** and at St Cecilia's Hall).

[36] In 1762 another two directors were appointed, making seven in total: see Edinburgh Courant, 3 July 1762.

There was a weekly concert every Friday evening beginning at six in the summer and half past five in the winter, to which only the committee members could invite guests. Ladies were only permitted to attend special concerts, and even then only 60 ladies were allowed, 'except on the Feast of St Cecilia'.[37] The original intention was to vet hopeful members by their enthusiasm and skill as performers, but the truth was that the Society's new, formal surroundings attracted a different clientele altogether. Because of the limited number of members, only 'gentlemen' performers were accepted, and by the 1750s at the latest the membership consisted primarily of the most important individuals in Edinburgh, who were simply interested in music, or liked to be associated with it: dukes, earls, baronets, Members of Parliament, advocates, Writers to the Signet, bankers, surgeons, university professors, merchants and booksellers.[38]

By Thomson's arrival in Edinburgh the EMS was something of an exclusive organization. Its membership had risen dramatically since 1728, and there were now approximately 180 members (170 full members, with an additional ten performing members, discussed below, who were admitted in 1771). Regardless of this booming membership, the process of being elected a member of the Society was just as difficult as ever. One has the impression from Thomson's descriptions of his attendance and performance at the EMS concerts,[39] and from other accounts written then and recently, that he was the Society's ideal member. In fact, Thomson was never a member of the EMS. His name fails to appear on its Members' Lists of 1774 and 1793, or in the Sederunt Books from the early 1770s until the Society's final minutes in 1795. Thomson worked for a

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[37] Regulation 9 of the 'Minutes of the Procedure...', 1728: Sederunt Book 1.

[38] A List of the Members of the Musical Society at Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1774 and 1793. **GB-Ep** YML 28 MS B30381.

[39] R. Chambers, Traditions of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1868, pp. 272-9. Thomson wrote the essay on 'St. Cecilia's Hall' in 1847.

government institution, but he was only a clerk, and bearing in mind the social calibre of the Society's membership, this fact alone was probably enough to account for his failure to gain membership.[40] His descriptions of performing for the Society's concerts are therefore confusing, as we are led to believe from the regulations that all performers had to be members. There is some discrepancy in the Sederunt Books concerning the members who performed in the Society's concerts. Though instrumental or vocal skills had been a requirement for membership in its earliest years, from the 1760s most of the performers, especially those who had come from abroad, were salaried employees of the EMS.[41] Alexander Campbell, writing in 1802, explained:

> In the process of time, either from the want of gentlemen performers, or from a desire to make the entertainment keep pace with the advancement that music had made in England, particularly toward the middle of the eighteenth century, the influence of which had reached the northern capital, professional men invited from abroad, and others, natives of the place, who were taken into the orchestra, filled up the band; till at length it almost wholly consisted of professional musicians.[42]

Before the 1770s these professional performers were joined by local gentlemen players, who were not required to be members of the Society. However, when William Douglas, the Society's

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[40] W. Maitland, The History of Edinburgh from its foundation to the Present Time, Edinburgh, 1753, p. 301 and D. F. Harris, Saint Cecilia's Hall in the Niddry Wynd, pp. 34-5. Both Maitland and Harris suggest that the EMS was strongly associated with Freemasonry. St Mary's Chapel was originally owned by the Society of Wrights and Masons (see Maitland), and St Cecilia's Hall was eventually sold in 1809 to the Grand Lodge of Scotland, for the purpose of converting it into a Freemasons' Hall. Arguably most of the EMS members were Masons, but it is possible that Thomson was not. This could also account for his failure to gain membership.

[41] Jennifer Pickering has recently stated that the employment of professional musicians by the EMS was unusual for a British musical society: Jennifer M. Pickering, 'Polite or Commercial Concerts?: Influences on orchestral repertoire in the British Isles, 1750-99'. Oxford, D.Phil (in draft) 1993.

[42] Campbell, Journey, p. 183.

treasurer, died in 1771 there were many changes to the Society's rules and regulations. The new treasurer John Welsh decided that the EMS needed to increase its yearly revenue from members. Rather than invite new members from outside, for the hall was already overcrowded, Welsh chose to make ten of these regular local gentlemen performers full 'Performing Members' of the EMS.[43] Their vacancies were to be filled only by 'an approved performer', who would undoubtedly be one of the other regular local players.

How then did Thomson gain access to concerts, or play and sing in them if he had failed to be elected a member? The original rule, which stipulated that committee members alone could invite guests, was soon forgotten, and most ordinary members were able to bring friends if they asked in advance. Robert Arbuthnot was elected a member of the EMS in 1762, paid a subscription for the Society's new concert hall in 1764, and resigned from the Society in 1772, the year of his bankruptcy. This was two years before Thomson's arrival in the city and eight years before his promotion to the Board of Trustees, but it is still most likely that Thomson's introduction to the Society was in connection with Arbuthnot, who was well acquainted with other members. There was no apparent difficulty in attending concerts once contact with Society members had been forged, and Thomson stated that by the 1780s 'no money was taken for admission, tickets being given gratis to the lovers of music, and to strangers'.[44] It may also be the case that as a keen performer Thomson was able to participate more often than if he had simply been a guest. In this respect he was unlucky never to be granted membership, for in his own account of his contribution to the EMS

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[43] Sederunt Book 3: 13 November 1771. Jennifer Pickering discusses at length the changes made by Welsh's direction after the death of Douglas in 1771: see Pickering, 'Polite or Commerical Concerts'.

[44] Chambers, Traditions, p. 276.

concerts,[45] Thomson explained that he often sang alongside Alexander Wright (a famous city lawyer), Gilbert Innes of Stow, John Russell (a Writer to the Signet) and John Hutton, all of whom, with the exception of Wright, were performing members.[46]

There were two aspects of the Musical Society that immediately impressed the young Thomson. The first was its relatively new concert hall near Niddry's Wynd. By the late 1750s, owing to the ever-increasing number of members, St Mary's Chapel had become too small and the Society decided to build an all-purpose concert hall, every member paying a subscription towards its construction.[47] In 1760 they approached the young Scottish architect Robert Mylne, who had been studying in Italy, and he designed a new concert hall, modelled on the 'great opera theatre of Parma'.[48] Thomson's description of St Cecilia's Hall, which was completed in 1762, is almost identical to other contemporary accounts:

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[45] Wilson, The Land of Burns, p. 39. This part of Thomson's autobiographical letter is also given in Harris, Saint Cecilia's Hall, pp. 51-6.

[46] Chambers, Traditions, p. 274. Thomson lists the above names, and his own, referring to them as 'Edinburgh amateurs' who 'took the lead as choristers'.

[47] The subscription totalled £1,332. 13s. 6d., but the building costs amounted to £1,627. 11s. 10d. Most of the difference was taken from the annual members' subscription of 1764: Sederunt Book 2.

[48] Chambers, Traditions, p. 276. These are Chambers's own words inserted into Thomson's essay.

> The hall was an exact oval, having a concave elliptical ceiling, and was remarkable for the clear and perfect conveyance of sounds, without responding echoes, as well as for the judicious manner in which the seating was arranged. In this last respect, I have seen no concert-room equal to it either in London or Paris.[49]

The seating was arranged 'amphitheatrically' around the hall's oval circumference, thereby creating a space in the middle of the hall in which the audience could walk and chat during intervals.[50] Thomson also explained that the rows of seats were raised so as to allow everyone a clear view of the proceedings, and he thought this much superior to other concert halls in which 'the whole company must look one way, and see each other's backs'.[51] Twice annually, and sometimes more often, when ladies and guests were permitted, the hall would accommodate an audience of about 400, and it was on such occasions that women were advised not to wear hoops. The orchestra was situated at the upper end of the hall on a platform, 'opposite to the door of entrance',[52] and was 'handsomely terminated by an elegant organ' which was also newly built.[53] A private staircase at the back of the hall provided a performers' entrance.

This sophisticated and cosmopolitan setting was striking, but the interaction of EMS members and invited guests was even more stimulating. Thomson's essay is full of descriptions of

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[49] Ibid., p. 276. Thomson could speak from experience in comparing St Cecilia's Hall with those in Paris and London, for he was a regular visitor to London and made a tour to the Netherlands and France in 1819. Details from letters to his wife, which acted as the journal of his tour, were published by Hadden, Thomson, pp. 52-61. Sadly I have been unable to find these manuscripts.

[50] Harris, Saint Cecilia's Hall, p. 30.

[51] Chambers, Traditions, p. 276.

[52] Ibid., p. 276.

[53] Arnot, History of Edinburgh, p. 379. The instrument was built by John Snetzler and was installed in 1775.

the individuals who attended, with particular reference to the young ladies and the men they married: 'Miss Chalmers of Pittencrief, who married Sir William Miller of Glenlee, Bart.; Miss Jessie Chalmers of Edinburgh, who was married to Mr Pringle of Haining; Miss Hay of Hayston, who married Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Bart.', and so forth.[54] Forbes was the treasurer of the Society for some time and, as one of Scotland's most famous and influential bankers, was possibly associated with the financing of Thomson's own publications.[55] Also mentioned in his description was Miss Kinloch of Gilmoreton, 'who married Sir Foster Cunliffe of Acton, Bart.'. They subsequently moved to Chester, and Lady Cunliffe became the centre of Thomson's circle of Welsh poets for his collection of Welsh songs in the 1810s. EMS concerts to which ladies were also permitted clearly became gatherings for match-making, as a large proportion of the city's important individuals attended. In 1781 Thomson married Katherine Miller, the daughter of a lieutenant in the 50th Regiment, and it is possible that they met at the EMS concerts.

Undoubtedly the greatest influence of all on Thomson was the music itself. Oratorio concerts were held at least once a year, with choruses and arias from Handel's oratorios - particularly Messiah, Alexander's Feast and Acis & Galatea - appearing regularly in the St Cecilia's Concert.[56] The Society's list of music shows that they also held copies of Deborah, Samson, Judas Maccabeus, Israel in Egypt and other oratorios by Pergolesi, Jomelli and Boyce.[57] As with so many amateur music-makers of this time, the oratorio was a

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[54] Chambers, Traditions, p. 275.

[55] See Chapter V, p. 237.

[56] Sederunt Book 2: December 1753. Handel was well aware of the Society's performances of his works, and he allowed them copies of works not yet published. See also W. Forbes Gray, 'The Musical Society of Edinburgh and St Cecilia's Hall', The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, xix (1933), 202-5.

[57] 'Index to the Whole Musick Belonging to the Edinburgh Musical Society', 1782: **GB-Ep**.

favourite of Thomson, who practised regularly at home for these concerts. Acis was especially loved:

> Many were the times and oft that I sung myself hoarse as a raven at 'Wretched Lovers!', 'Behold the Monster, Polypheme', &c. I almost wept for sweet Galatea when the amorous giant hurled a rock at the head of his [sic] beloved Acis, and deaved the whole house with my din singing the sorrows of the young lovers.[58]

The weekly concerts, which omitted much of the vocal music heard at special concerts, were carefully structured to include a wide range of musical genres. Interspersed with choruses and arias were orchestral overtures and symphonies, quartets, concertos and songs of various nations. The EMS music library included trios, quartets and quintets by Abel, J.C. Bach, Boccherini, Giardini, Mozart, Stamitz, Stanley, Pleyel and also by Schetky, who was the Society's principal cellist. Symphonies of Boyce, Haydn and Torelli and the overtures of Arne, Filtz, Galuppi, Giordini and Green were performed; and concertos by Avison, Bate, Burney, Felton, De Fesch, Hebden, Vivaldi, Weideman, Wagenseil and Castrucci, among many others, were heard.[59] The song repertoire was also extensive. Thomson listed compositions of Handel, Arne, Gluck, Sarti, Jomelli, Guglielmi, and Paisiello. The most popular solo vocal items were Italian, although the songs of Scotland were undoubtedly favoured by some members. The library also stocked some English and French songs, though they were not performed so regularly. Weekly concerts followed a three-act format, exemplified by the programme for 5 August 1785:[60]

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[58] Hadden, Thomson, p. 16. This passage is only found in Hadden and is not included in Thomson's autobiographical letter published by J. Wilson in 1840.

[59] Names found in the 'Index to the Whole Musick' of the EMS: **GB-Ep**.

[60] The EMS Plan Books, which include copies of the programmes of most of the concerts given at St Cecilia's Hall, are found in the **GB-Eu**, with copies in St Cecilia's Hall and **GB-Ep**.

Act 1

Overture	Lord Kelly
Song	Sigr. Urbani
5 Concerto	Handel

Act 2

Quartetto	Haydn
Song	Sigra. Corri
Concerto	Sigr. Stabilini
Song	Sigra. Corri

Act 3

Sonata piano forte	Mr Cramer
Song	Sigr. Tenducci
Overture in E flat	Haydn

Thomson obviously enjoyed his introduction to this repertoire, and his subsequent preoccupation with central European music was shared by most who attended the EMS concerts. He was also particularly impressed by the visiting performers. The first foreign performer arrived in the city long before Thomson's birth - Giuseppe Passerini, a violinist, came to the city in 1751[61]- but while the earliest visitors stayed for a matter of months, those who arrived during the 1760s and later frequently ended up spending the rest of their lives in the city. The process of invitations from the EMS thus became an important part of Scottish musical life. These performers travelled around the country, taking part in provincial musical society concerts and bringing with them new European compositions and instrumental techniques. Their influence was

[61] Sederunt Book 2: 28 April 1749. The Passerini family were in Moscow and the Hague before coming to Edinburgh. They were on a three year contract with the EMS. See W. Forbes Gray, 'The Musical Society of Edinburgh and St Cecilia's Hall', p. 206.

of paramount importance on the development of Scottish awareness of European music and styles of performance.

It was without doubt the Italian performers who were most popular and memorable. There were more Italians than those of any other nation, and anecdotes are to be found throughout contemporary accounts, such as Robert Chambers's picture of the violinist, Girolamo Stabilini (d.1815), who was known as 'Stab' and was the orchestra's leader during the 1780s and the early 1790s:[62]

> Stabilini, twitching up his shirt-collar, a common trick of his, would say,
>
> 'A piece ov toarkey for a hungree bellee
> Is moatch supeerior to Corelli!'.

Thomas Pinto led the orchestra from 1771, before moving on to Dublin in 1773; Giuseppe Puppo (1749-1827), affectionately known by the Edinburgh public as 'Puppy', came to England, Scotland and Ireland between 1775 and 1784, and led the EMS orchestra from 1778 until 1782; and Giovanni Giornovicki (c.1735-1804), born in Palermo, was a soloist at the concerts in the 1780s and was 'the most accomplished player' that Thomson heard.[63]

The Italian singers made an even greater impact, for they were also shrewd businessmen who, in addition to performing and teaching, frequently opened up music selling and printing shops in the city. Pietro Urbani (1749-1816), who Robert Burns stated 'sings so delightfully, that whatever he introduces at

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[62] Chambers, Traditions, p. 279. See also Johnson, Music and Society, pp. 58-9.

[63] Chambers, Traditions, p. 244. The spelling of Giornovichi varies. The Scots referred to the violinist as Giornovicki, but the name was variously spelt Jarnovic, Jarnowick and Jarnovicki.

your concert, must have immediate celebrity',[64] became something of an agent for the EMS, suggesting other Italian singers whom the Society might invite.[65] Urbani, born in Milan, had been in Glasgow for three years before moving to Edinburgh in 1784, and he retired to Dublin in 1801. Domenico Corri (1746-1825), who arrived in 1771 to fulfil a three-year contract, stayed for 18 years before moving to Bath and then to London. He performed, taught, published and sold music, and arranged songs himself, as did Urbani. In Thomson's opinion, his wife was a singer with 'a fine, full-toned, flexible soprano voice', and he had 'a falsetto voice, which he managed with much skill and taste'.[66]

The famous castrato Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci (1735-90) was, however, the most popular of the Italian singers in the city, and the performer above all others who greatly impressed Thomson. He first came to Edinburgh in the 1760s,[67] and while some accounts of his activities state that he was not a salaried member of the EMS, a letter of 14 December 1769 to

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[64] Burns to Thomson, 25 August 1793: [R. Burns] The Letters of Robert Burns, eds. J. De Lancey Ferguson & G. Ross Roy, Oxford, 1985, ii. 231 (578). This is the edition of Burns's letters used throughout the thesis. The number in parenthesis is the number of the letter. This edition will subsequently be referred to as Roy, Letters. The only publication of Thomson's letters to Burns was in the fourth volume of J. Currie ed., The Works of Robert Burns, Liverpool, 1800, and thereafter in numerous issues of Currie's work. Later copies included material not published in the 1800 edition. Thomson gave Currie his manuscripts of the correspondence with Burns for this first edition, but edited the letters himself before sending them to Liverpool. Few of Burns's criticisms of Thomson's work thus appear in Currie. Some have been salvaged from the few remaining manuscripts and are included in Ross Roy's edition of The Letters of Robert Burns. I have used an 1816 edition of Currie's Works of Robert Burns, hereafter referred to as Currie, Works. Numbers in parenthesis are the numbers of the letters, but as with Roy, page-numbers are also given.

[65] Sederunt book 4: 13 July 1786, concerning Urbani's suggestion of a female singer from Venice.

[66] Chambers, Traditions, p. 277.

[67] Ibid., p. 277. Thomson notes that Tenducci's major sponsors were the Hopetoun family, which accounted for his frequent visits to Edinburgh. See also Sederunt Book 3: 2 June 1768.

Mrs Tenducci states otherwise. William Douglas wrote to Tenducci's wife Dora because the Society had heard of Tenducci's absence from Edinburgh. He had neither informed the Society nor asked for permission to travel to London, and information that he had agreed to sing at the 'Opera & Theatre' there was coolly received. That Dora Tenducci had apparently also written a letter,[68] in which she stated that the Directors of the EMS had given Tenducci leave of absence of one year, outraged them, and they subsequently decided to 'dismiss him from their service'.[69] However, Tenducci's success in London in the early 1770s eventually brought him back to Edinburgh. On his first London appearance in the 1750s he was regarded as 'a singer of the second or third class', but, as Charles Burney commented,[70] he was

> now so much improved, during his residence in Scotland and Ireland, as not only to be well received as the first man on our stage, but, afterwards, in all the great theatres of Italy.

The fact that Tenducci was so warmly and enthusiastically received by the Edinburgh audience on his first visit is easily explained. While Burney and other experienced London concert and opera-goers had the knowledge to judge a singer's skill and calibre, the opportunity of hearing a castrato in Edinburgh was rare. Tenducci's talents were not questioned, because the sound he produced was so striking, and because the people who heard him had few other castrati with whom to compare him. Thomson explained that it was a 'Jubilee year' when Tenducci came, and, 60 years later, the memory of hearing

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[68] D. Tenducci, A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr and Mrs Tenducci in a letter to a friend at Bath, London, 1768. This gives an entertaining account of Dora's affair with Tenducci in Ireland, but, although she notes that she intended to write a following letter when the Tenduccis were in London, no letters were subsequently published.

[69] Sederunt Book 3: 13 December 1769.

[70] C. Burney, A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period, ed. F. Mercer, London, 1935, ii. 877.

him sing was still an exciting and vivid one. Tenducci and Signora Corri, said Thomson,

> so delighted every hearer that in the most crowded room not a whisper was to be heard, so entirely did they rivet the attention and admiration of the audience. Tenducci's singing was full of passion, feeling, and taste, and, what we hear very rarely from singers, his articulation of the words was no less perfect than his expression of the music.[71]

His rendition of Scottish songs, more than anything else, struck a note with the young Thomson, who listed the particular songs Tenducci sang - **Lochaber no more, The Braes of Bellenden, I'll never leave thee,** and **Roslin Castle.**[72] The singer's 'expressive simplicity', and the 'intensity of interest' which he displayed 'by his impassioned manner, and by his clear enunciation of the words',[73] Thomson said later, 'inoculated [sic] me for Scottish song'.[74] Although he had undoubtedly heard Scottish songs sung by other performers at the EMS concerts, it was only when Thomson witnessed Tenducci's Italianate execution of these songs that he realized their emotional and political power. It may seem a contradiction in terms that an Italian singer was able to reveal the qualities of a specifically Scottish artform to a Scot, but it is easily understood when the state of music in Scotland is briefly explained.

As David Johnson has shown,[75] the blend of musics in lowland Scotland during the eighteenth century was unique. What Johnson refers to as 'folk' and 'classical' lived alongside one another and were equally enjoyed by 'almost everyone above

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[71] J. Wilson, The Land of Burns, p. 39. See also Hadden, Thomson, p. 20.

[72] Chambers, Traditions, p. 277.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Hadden, Thomson, p. 21.

[75] Johnson, Music and Society, Chapter 1.

the common rank of mankind'.[76] While traditional songs were in vogue throughout Europe at this time, the Scots' obsession with definitive collections of their songs and fiddle or bagpipe tunes was of even greater national importance than in most other European countries. The restrictions of the Church of Scotland from the Reformation and the departure of the Court in 1603 had resulted in a dearth of musical activity. By the eighteenth century there was consequently a lack of Scottish composers and trained performers. The only genres which had continued to develop from the mid sixteenth century were those of song, fiddle and bagpipe music. The Union of 1707, and the transformation of Scotland into North Britain, arguably provided the perfect stimulus to exploit these specifically national traditions. Many Scots were keen to emphasize the elements of their society and/or history which characterized them as unique and independent. Scottish song, above all other musical genres, assumed an almost sacred quality among the Scots, regardless of their political or social standing. Topham noted that 'the modern music' of Scotland was 'not of the same excellence, or breathes that natural spirit and agreeable sweetness' which distinguished her traditional songs.[77]

Thomson's failure to mention the works of modern Scottish composers accentuates Topham's point and is particularly noteworthy because the EMS was not uninterested in new Scottish compositions. It included the works of several Scots in its programmes: the concertos and overtures of William McGibbon (c.1690-1756), a famous violinist in the city; the marches and minuets of John Reid (1721-1807), who founded the Reid Chair of Music at Edinburgh University; and a great many of the compositions of the Earl of Kelly (1732-81), who had studied with Johann Stamitz in Mannheim in the 1750s and had served on the EMS committee from 1767 until 1781. But with no

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[76] Topham, Letters, p. 370.

[77] Ibid., pp. 373-4.

concert platform until the eighteenth century, and little musical education available in Scotland, budding composers including Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (1676-1755) and the Earl of Kelly were encouraged to travel abroad for lessons with the great masters.[78] This resulted in Scottish works which were, to all intents and purposes, Italian or German in style. Topham continued his discussion by stating that he was an admirer of Italian music, but chiefly because it was 'adapted to the spirit and disposition of Italy'.[79] He was critical of Scotland's new orchestral and instrumental music, particularly that of Kelly, because it lacked this individuality.

Few were as perceptive as Topham, and societies like the EMS did little to help the situation. They were happy with the 'richer charms of the German and Italian muses'[80] and were unperturbed by the lack of a distinctly national school of composition. Some writers regarded the Scots' obsession with their traditional music as a barrier that prevented them from realizing the true power and energy of contemporary European music. Robert Chambers suggested that it was the beauty of the melodies of Scotland which was 'partly to be blamed for the indifference to higher music',[81] and George Farquhar Graham, writing as late as 1815, was keen to discourage an interest in things Scottish:

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[78] Clerk studied with Corelli in 1697-8. Two other Scottish composers of the period had studied or lived abroad, namely David Foulis (b.1710), who studied in the Netherlands, and Alexander Munro (b.c.1695) who worked in Paris.

[79] Topham, Letters, p. 375.

[80] Chambers, Traditions, p. 279. Chambers wrote this in his epilogue to Thomson's essay.

[81] Ibid.

> The love of one's country, and of everything connected with it is, within proper bounds, a most amiable passion, and productive of the most beneficial effects; but whenever it operates so strongly as to shut our eyes and ears, and turn our minds against what is admirable in a different country, it is no longer an amiable passion, but a silly vanity, or a paltry jealousy and weakness of mind, altogether unworthy of rational creatures.[82]

Graham's attack on the parochiality of the Scots' musical taste was out of place, since at that time Scotland's concert programmes were dominated by foreign works. In all probability Graham was worried rather about the large numbers of publications of Scottish traditional music which appeared from early in the eighteenth century. While the lack of peculiarly Scottish orchestral or chamber music enhanced the profile of the Europeans, it also emphasized the importance of Scottish songs and tunes. In addition to collections of melodies and songs, histories of Scottish music began to appear, concentrating most closely on Scotland's song tradition. More often than not scholars tried to link Scottish traditions to those of other European countries. The similarities between Scots song and the music of ancient Greece were discussed in Tytler's 'Dissertation on the Scottish Music' of 1792, and described in much more technical detail in Thomson's own 'Dissertation concerning the National Melodies of Scotland', which appeared in the first volume of his octavo edition in 1822. Even more powerful was the impact of Mary Queen of Scots' Italian courtier, David Rizzio, who, it was firmly believed, was the composer of some of the finest Scottish songs. A great many of those attributed to Rizzio were in fact written in the eighteenth century, accounting to some extent for their popularity at this time. The Rizzio story prevails over most of the century's essays on Scottish song - in Tytler's 'Dissertation' and that of Joseph Ritson

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[82] G.F. Graham, An Account of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival, Edinburgh and London, 1816, p. 8.

(An Historical Essay on Scottish Song of 1794), in Thomson's 'Dissertation', Topham's letter 'On the Scotch Music', and essays written earlier by Richard Eastcott (Sketches of the Origin, Progress and Effects of Music with an Account of the Ancient Bards and Minstrels..., 1793) and James Beattie (An Essay on Poetry and Music as they affect the mind, 1776).[83]

The development of two distinct musical cultures in Scotland - European concert repertory and Scottish traditional songs and tunes - was mutually beneficial, but not without some debate and discomfort. Musicians like Graham were desperately keen to avoid musical parochiality, while others were equally passionate about encouraging what Beattie referred to as the 'amiable prejudice' towards Scottish music.[84] Robert Fergusson, probably the most commonly quoted of the anti-Italian school, was vehement in his attack:[85]

> Now foreign sonnets bear the gree,
> And crabbit queer variety
> Of sound fresh sprung frae Italy,
> A bastard breed,
> Unlike that saft-tongued melody,
> Which now lies dead.

But no writing on musical thought in Scotland was exclusive: in reality, neither group could avoid the music of the other, and most chose to enjoy the music of both. It was Fergusson who wrote the lyrics for the three Scots songs sung by Tenducci as part of the 1769 Edinburgh production of Arne's

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[83] See O. Goldsmith's 'On the different schools of Music', the British Magazine, February, 1760, p. 753. Also April, 1760, p. 183. This second article was initialled S.R., who wrote: 'This Rizzio must have been a most original genius, or have possessed extraordinary imitative powers, to have come, so advanced in life as he did, from Italy, and strike so far out of the common road of his own country's music'.

[84] J. Beattie, An Essay on Poetry and Music as they affect the mind, Edinburgh, 1776, p. 174.

[85] R. Fergusson, Poems, Edinburgh, 1772. 'Elegy on the Death of Scots Music'.

Artaxerxes, and he was said to have wept frequently at performances.[86] And it was educated Scots like Graham who inevitably bowed before the 'amiable passion' for their national music and published their own collections of Scottish songs. Graham, for example, is now best known for his collection entitled the Songs of Scotland of 1848-9. No music-loving Scot could turn his back on his native musical heritage, even if, paradoxically, he believed that 'the type of music which the foreigner brought with him was the only type worth having'.[87] The following passage from William Tytler's 'Dissertation on the Scottish Music' illustrates the problem. He too contradicted himself:

> A Scots song can only be sung by a Scottish voice. To a sweet, liquid, flowing voice, capable of swelling a note from the softest to the fullest tone, and what the Italians call a voce di petto, must be joined sensibility and feeling, and a perfect understanding of the subject and the words of the song, so as to know the significant word on which to swell and soften the tone, and lay the force of the note...We sometimes, however, find a foreign master, who, with a genius for the pathetic, and a knowledge of the subject and words, has awarded very high pleasure in a Scottish song. Who could hear with insensibility, or without being moved in the greatest degree, Tenducci sing I'll never leave thee, or The braes of Bellenden! - or Will ye go to the ewe-bughts Marions sung by Signora Corri.[88]

Thomson, who agreed wholeheartedly with Tytler above, is a prime example of the Scot who stood between these two musical traditions. He was introduced to the world of European orchestral and chamber music at the EMS concerts and it is

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[86] A.B. Grosart, Robert Fergusson, Edinburgh & London, 1898, p. 88. Grosart wrote: 'Fergusson had a special box near the stage, that he might come and go as he chose, and that he was often melted to tears'.

[87] R. Vaughan Williams, National Music and Other Essays, Oxford, 1987, p. 5.

[88] W. Tytler, 'Dissertation on the Scottish Music', Transactions of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland, Edinburgh and London, 1792, pp. 469-510.

little wonder that his accounts concentrate so closely on this repertoire and its performers. He was clearly inspired and excited by the works he heard and appears to have had advanced tastes in comparison with many others who attended the concerts. He implies in his essay that the EMS was generally rather unadventurous in its choice of repertoire,[89] attempting to excuse the lack of new works in its programmes:

> ... for at that time, and till a good many years after, the magnificent symphonies of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, which now form the most attractive portions of all public concerts, had not reached this country'.[90]

New works by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were in fact fairly quick to arrive in Britain via the monopoly of London publishers.[91] The problem with the EMS was simply that some of its members were happy to listen repeatedly to their favourites and were reluctant to agree to change. We are led to believe that Haydn's compositions were remarkably unpopular, referred to by one Edinburgh lady as 'unfashionable' and by another member as 'poor new-fangled stuff'.[92] Thomson's own role in furthering the works of Haydn and Beethoven in Scotland was not to be unimportant. Hadden stated that Haydn was 'Thomson's first love',[93] and there are frequent references in Thomson's correspondence to the pleasure he gained from trying to play some of Haydn's quartets:

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[89] The EMS repertory was representative of the music heard in similar societies throughout Scotland, particularly those of Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow. Jennifer Pickering has suggested that it was one of the most progressive of provincial music societies in Britain: see J. Pickering, 'Polite or Commercial Concerts'.

[90] Chambers, Traditions, p. 273.

[91] See Pickering, 'Polite and Commercial Concerts'. Pickering gives list of the works performed at the EMS concerts.

[92] Chambers, Traditions, p. 273.

[93] Hadden, Thomson, p. 303.

> I had so much delight ... in practising the violin quartettos of Pleyel and Haydn, that it was with joy I hailed the hour when, like the amateur in the good old Scotch songs, 'I could hie me hame to my Cremona and enjoy Haydn's admirable fancies.[94]

His appreciation of Beethoven's works also appears to have been advanced in comparison with most Scots. In one of his letters to Beethoven of September 1813,[95] he described his enjoyment at attempting, with some friends, the quintet in C (Op. 29) and the First Razumovsky Quartet (Op. 59 No. 1), which had been published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1808. On his mini Grand Tour of 1819 he was keen to purchase copies of the scores of music which he had heard performed in Rouen, Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Haarlem, the Hague and Rotterdam. While his musical knowledge and taste would arguably have been slower to develop without the stimulus of the EMS, the fact that he was more progressive than others with regard to repertoire suggests that his musical ear and understanding was keener than has sometimes been thought.

Thomson's initiation into the world of Scottish traditional music also took place at the EMS concerts. When he arrived in Edinburgh, he undoubtedly had some knowledge of fiddle music from the north-east, where the tradition was particularly strong, and perhaps also of some songs or ballads, but he confessed that it was

> At the St Cecilia concerts I heard Scottish songs sung in a style of excellence far surpassing any idea which I previously had of their beauty, and that too from Italians, Signor Tenducci the one, and Signora Domenico Corri the other.[96]

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[94] J. Wilson, The Land of Burns, p. 39. See also Harris, Saint Cecilia's Hall, pp. 55-6.

[95] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/82-3.

[96] J. Wilson, The Land of Burns, p. 39. See also Hadden, Thomson, p. 20.

As with Tytler and many others, Thomson was naturally impressed by the ability of a foreigner to render these peculiarly national songs. It was clearly the sophistication and cosmopolitanism of the singers' interpretation and style that touched him so deeply. Thomson was introduced to these songs in the context of EMS concerts where they were performed with accompaniments for harpsichord, forte piano or small ensemble. These songs were no mere folk songs sung innocently by a country lass. They were, in Thomson's opinion, pieces of the highest musical order worthy of performance on any concert platform in Europe.

His ardent enthusiasm for European orchestral and instrumental music, combined with this love of Scottish traditional music, makes Thomson something of a stereotype of the late eighteenth-century music-loving Scot. Had he stayed in Banff for the rest of his life and been unaware of singers like Tenducci, he might still have produced a collection of Scottish songs. But it was his life in Edinburgh and his EMS education that incited him to collect 'all our best melodies and songs' and, more importantly, to create 'accompaniments to them worthy of their merit'.[97] His love of traditional Scottish music was unconditional, but without the experience of the European repertoire of the EMS, Thomson's collections would not have presented such an unusual blend of musics. It was the social milieux of Thomson's Edinburgh that at once motivated him and shaped his collections. And this seed of an idea, initially planted at the EMS concerts in the early 1780s, grew into a major publishing venture that was to occupy him for the next 70 years of his life.

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[97] Ibid.

CHAPTER II - THOMSON'S PUBLISHING HOUSE

i) The Background

Thomson stated that the inspiration for his collections of songs came directly from the concerts of the EMS, but his decision to produce his publications must also have been influenced by the commercial climate of Edinburgh, and by the large number of similar publications produced there at the end of the eighteenth century. Though the Glasgow-based Foulis partnership, which was closely associated with the University of Glasgow between the early 1740s and 1776, had forged the way in sophisticated Scottish publishing, by the 1770s Edinburgh had become the Scottish publishing centre. There was a surge in the production of serial publications: periodicals, magazines and newspapers; and multi-volume reference books including, most importantly, the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Youngson's 'building boom' of the turn of the century was matched by something of a boom in Scottish publishing, with firms such as James Ballantyne & Co., Constable & Co., William Blackwood and W & R Chambers creating best-selling publications which in turn established the city as a major European publishing centre.[1] Many of these firms rivalled the large London businesses, but most of them had houses in both Edinburgh and London, for

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[1] Ballantyne & Co. and Constable & Co. both dealt in musical publications. Ballantyne published William Whyte's Selection of Scottish Airs in 1806-7. Both companies were linked to Thomson's publications: Ballantyne produced Thomson's new edition of Melodies of Scotland in 1831, and Constable's link with the London firm Hurst, Robinson & Co. meant that they too were involved with Thomson by the 1820s - Hurst, Robinson & Co. were jointly responsible (with Preston) for Thomson's octavo editions of 1822-3 and 1825.

> The cheapness of labour here, when compared with London, induces many Scotch Booksellers who reside there, to have their books printed at Edinburgh, and then sent to them; which they find much better than printing at their own shops: and for this purpose, many of them have partners in this place.[2]

While the fashion for producing books of Scottish songs and tunes was arguably well established before this publishing boom, the two became inextricably linked. The publication of music was new in the north, for Scotland, unlike England, had no specialist music publishers until the eighteenth century. Yet by the 1770s and '80s the turnover in musical publications in Edinburgh alone was impressive, with at least 30 booksellers in the city dealing in music in addition to other publications.[3] Some publishing houses, including, most importantly, those established in the 1780s and '90s by the Gow family, George Walker, James Johnson, Urbani & Liston and the Corri family, were concerned almost wholly with the production and sale of music.[4] While Walker and Johnson ran small houses and were better known as engravers than publishers,[5] Nathaniel Gow, son of the famous fiddler Neil, opened his first shop in 1796 and recruited other members of the family who subsequently opened shops in Edinburgh and London. The Gows ran a large, successful company and were still in existence in the late 1820s. Kidson noted that Urbani & Liston of 10 Princes Street were 'extensive Edinburgh Music

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[2] Topham, Letters, p. 179.

[3] This number is approximate and is based on names listed in Kidson, Humphries & Smith and publications of G.H. Bushnell listed in the bibliography. No lists of music publishers or studies of publishing in Scotland during this period are available.

[4] It is most significant that the firms listed here were all established in the 1780s (Gow, Corri, Johnson) or 1790s (Walker, Urbani & Liston c.1800). There is little information concerning music publishers before this time.

[5] Johnson was particularly important as the first Scottish publisher to introduce pewter engraving of music, which was far cheaper than copper-plate. See J.Johnson & Robert Burns, The Scots Musical Museum, ed. Donald A. Low, Aldershot, 1991, p. 7.

Sellers',[6] who concentrated primarily on sheet music and Urbani's own works, but they had ceased activity by 1808-9. Domenico Corri opened his first shop in 1780 with James Sutherland, but Sutherland died in 1790, at which point the company changed its name to Corri & Co. and was run primarily by Natale Corri (Domenico's brother).[7] By 1794 Domenico had set up a business in London with his brother-in-law, J.L. Dussek, at Dean Street and the Haymarket, and Domenico continued the business alone from 1801. There were many smaller offshoot companies with the name Corri attached, but the premises run by Natale in Edinburgh and Domenico in London were the most important. The Corri business was undoubtedly one of the most influential to the Scottish trade as a whole, with the Gow family firm being the only other house of comparable size and influence. Because companies like these had outlets in London, the Scottish trade in music publishing began to make its mark elsewhere in Britain. Many Scots were already established in London, and the most famous Scottish musical publications of the 1700s were produced by Scots living and working there: Robert Bremner, William Thomson, William Whyte, William Napier, James Oswald and others.

Although some orchestral and chamber music was published, most of the musical publications produced in eighteenth-century Scotland were connected with traditional Scottish music. There was a general interest in volumes of national songs and tunes elsewhere in Britain, but the number of publications of this sort in Scotland far outnumbered those produced in England, Ireland or Wales at this time. With the exception of famous collections like D'Urfey's Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy (1719-20) and Thomas Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765), the English were remarkably uninterested in their traditional songs. The Welsh were very

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[6] F. Kidson, British Music Publishers, Printers and Engravers, London, 1900, p. 199

[7] Corri & Co. was based at 37 North Bridge Street, with additional premises added in 1796 at 8 South St Andrew Street.

interested, but no musical publications were produced in Wales before the late 1820s. Wales had no major publishing centre at this time and as London was her capital city all her musical engraving was done there. It is possible that this handicapped the Welsh to some extent, as publications of traditional Welsh song (in Welsh) were understandably unpopular with English speakers. The first main collection of Welsh song was produced by the blind harper John Parry (1710-82) in 1747,[8] and it was followed by several significant publications including Edward Jones's Musical Relicks of the Welsh Bards, first published in 1784.[9] There were also several volumes of Welsh, and even Scottish, songs by another John Parry (1776-1851) who became, in 1809, a musical director at Vauxhall Gardens.[10] The Irish interest in their own songs and tunes came a little later than in Scotland and Wales. There were some single songs, and some collections of Irish songs produced in Dublin, but they were insignificant amongst the numerous publications of English songs (those performed at Vauxhall Gardens and on the London stage appear to have been remarkably popular), operatic arias and instrumental music. Collections by Turlough Carolan, William Jackson, Edward Bunting and then Thomas Moore were the most important publications of traditional Irish music.[11] The publisher William Power appears to have instigated the interest in collections of Irish song almost single-handedly, producing both Bunting's collection and encouraging Moore to work on his Irish Melodies. But there were as many Scottish songs published in Dublin during the first decades of the

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[8] This collection was entitled Antient British Music.

[9] Also William Bingley's Sixty of the most Admired Welch Airs of 1810 and Maria Jane Williams, Ancient National Airs of Gwent and Morganwg; being a collection of Original Welsh Melodies, London, 1844.

[10] See Parry's A Collection of Welsh Airs, arranged on a plan never before attempted, London and Dublin, [1810]; also The Beauties of Caledonia, being a Selection of the most Popular Scottish Songs, London, c.1815; and A Selection of Welsh Melodies and Symphonies and Accompaniments, London, 1822.

[11] Perhaps also collections by Joseph Cooper Walker, Bartholomew or Bartelett Cooke, Smollet Holden (who published many single songs) and Sidney Owenson. They all published at the turn of the century.

nineteenth century as there were Irish, and one or two Welsh songs were published there too. The real peak of Irish interest in Irish song appears to have come in the 1840s, substantially later than in Scotland, or Wales for that matter.

The Scottish publications were also more varied than those of Ireland or Wales. Collections of psalm and hymn tunes of the Church of Scotland were common from early in the eighteenth century. Song books appeared during the first two decades, and although initially published with lyrics alone, by the 1720s they were also appearing with music. Allan Ramsay's publications set the precedent for song books with words and music, for his Tea-Table Miscellany (TTM), which first appeared in 1724, was reissued in 1726 with music by Alexander Stuart (b.c.1695),[12] and it has been labelled as the first example of engraved music in Scotland.[13] From the 1730s there was more interest in instrumental music than in song. Some of the publications of fiddle tunes, including James Oswald's Caledonian Pocket Companion (published throughout the 1740s), presented melodies alone. But such collections were influential on printed song of the late eighteenth century, as they introduced publishers to interesting tunes for which new words could be written. Melodies in Oswald's Pocket Companion, for example, became the sources of many of Burns's songs. Other collections of tunes originally played on fiddle or bagpipe were newly presented for the voice with delicate arrangements. James Craig's Collection of the choicest Scots Tunes, adapted for the Harpsichord or Spinnet and within the compass of the Voice, Violin, or German Flute was produced in Edinburgh in 1730 and was dedicated to the gentlemen of the

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[12] D. Baptie, Musical Scotland, Paisley, 1894, p. 182.

[13] W. Gamble, Music Engraving and Printing, London, 1923, p. 60. Gamble wrote: 'In Scotland, at Edinburgh, Richard Cooper worked from about 1725 to 1764. He was the first who engraved music in Scotland, his earliest work being a small oblong volume of music which Allan Ramsay issued about 1725, as a companion to his Tea-Table Miscellany'.

Musical Society. Oswald, before moving to London, published some minuets and a sonata in Edinburgh in the mid-1730s and a Curious Collection of Scots Tunes, for a Violin, Bass-Viol, or German Flute, with a thorough Bass for the Harpsichord in 1738-9. The violinist William McGibbon, who had studied composition in London with William Corbett, compiled and edited three Collections of Scots Tunes between 1740 and 1755. Charles MacLean, who flourished as a composer of violin music, published sonatas based on Scottish airs in 1737, and a selection of Scots tunes appeared after his death in 1773. From the 1780s instrumental music appeared most commonly in the form of collections of reels, strathspeys and jigs, frequently arranged for fiddle with violoncello and harpsichord, and later for any combination of harp, piano, sometimes even organ, flute, guitar, violin and cello.[14] The most important of these were published by the Gow family, whose collections appeared continuously in new editions until the 1820s. Others by James Davie (of Aberdeen), John Anderson, Alexander MacGlashan, Robert Petrie, Donald Grant, John Pringle, James Porteous, John Burns, William Shepherd, Duncan Mackercher, Robert MacIntosh and William Marshall were also published repeatedly from the early 1780s. Many of the above publications were wholly devoted to dance music, which was, even including song, more popular than any other musical genre in Scotland at the time. Dance, like song, had a special property of being able to cross social barriers with ease.[15]

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[14] The pedal-harp clearly became a popular instrument in the first decades of the 1800s. Parts are frequently found in connection with publications of reels and strathspeys or other dances.

[15] Topham, Letters, pp. 262-8, and pp. 338-45. Topham has two letters which concentrate on dance in Edinburgh. The first entitled 'On the Scotch Dances' included descriptions of the dances and more especially the dancers: 'up they start, animated with a new life, and you would imagine they had received an electrical shock, or been bit by a tarantula'. Or 'In most countries men have a partiality for dancing with a woman; but here I have frequently seen four gentlemen perform one of these reels seemingly with the same pleasure and perseverence as they would have done, had they had the most sprightly girl for a partner. The Reel is the only thing which gives them pleasure'. He also commented that 'The lower class of people here are as fond of dancing as their betters'.

Printed songs were not out of favour between the 1730s and 1780s, but there were fewer of them than the instrumental publications mentioned above. Single song-sheets became popular during the last decades of the century, often published for voice with harpsichord or piano accompaniment, but just as often with variations for the harpsichord, piano, or harp. John Ross, James Dewar, Domenico Corri, John Sinclair, William Reeve, John Watlen, Thomas Hamley Butler, Pietro Urbani, Alexander Robertson (who also arranged Scottish songs for the flute), John Macpherson and John Thomson were the editors of the majority of single songs issued between 1780 and 1830. Several of them were also responsible for larger collections of Scottish songs. As is clearly illustrated by their numbers, collections of this type came into vogue at the turn of the century.

Beginning in the 1780s with Corri's volumes entitled A New and Complete Collection of the Most Favourite Scots Songs ... With Proper Graces and Ornaments Peculiar to Their Character (1785),[16] books of Scottish song continued to be published in Scotland until the 1840s and beyond. Pietro Urbani published his arrangements of Scots songs in six volumes between 1792 and 1804: A Selection of Scots Songs, Harmonised and Improved, with Simple and Adapted Graces; and James Johnson published his Scots Musical Museum (SMM), also in six volumes, between 1787 and 1803. These, in addition to Thomson's volumes, were the three most important collections published in Scotland after those of Allan Ramsay. Other significant publications, including William Thomson's Orpheus Caledonius (1725), had also appeared in London. William Napier's Selection of Original Scots Songs (in three parts dated 1790, 1792 and 1795) was certainly important to Thomson, for his second volume included settings by Joseph Haydn, whom Napier had met in London in 1791. His colleague William Whyte also contacted

[16] Corri also embarked on a collection of songs and duets of many nations together with his Treatise on the Art of Singing and The Singer's Preceptor (1780-1810).

Haydn and published more of his arrangements at the same time as Thomson.[17] Although Whyte's volumes did not appear until 1806, Thomson had several distinct collections to study before publishing his first set of 25 songs in 1793. Most collections of Scottish song produced in the eighteenth century drew on a common stock of material and simply presented it with different musical settings and/or format. There was a great deal of interaction of material between the collections themselves, even if there was little contact, or more often intense rivalry, between the various editors or publishers.

Thomson stated clearly in the 1793 Preface that he had 'employed his leisure hours, in examining all the collections, both printed and manuscript, that could be procured'. He was critical of the majority of publications in the same mould as his own, referring to them as 'all more or less exceptionable - a sad mixture of the good and evil, the pure and the impure'.[18] He explained at length in the same preface that he regarded himself as a rescuer of Scottish song:

> Many collections have been presented to the public, with different pretentions to favour, but all of them liable to particular objections. In the smaller selections, many charming Airs are omitted: while, on the other hand, in the large collections, there is always a great proportion of trifling and inferior airs, which serve only to swell the volume, and add to its expense - the Through Bass, though of the greatest importance in giving effect to the Air, and supporting the voice, is, in most of the collections, denoted by figures, of which the generality of Piano forte players know little or nothing. And every collection that has yet been published, is exceptionable with respect to the poetry.

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[17] Willian Whyte, A Collection of Scottish Airs Harmonized for the Voice and Piano Forte with Introductory and concluding Symphonies and Accompaniments for a Violin and Violoncello by Joseph Haydn, London, 1804. For more information see Karl Geiringer 'Haydn and the Folksong of the British Isles', Musical Quarterly, xxxv (1949), 191-2.

[18] J. Wilson, The Land of Burns, p. 39. See also Hadden, Thomson, p. 23.

Thomson printed many songs which had been presented in the SMM, and he was as impressed with Johnson's choice of primary lyricist - Robert Burns - as he was with Napier's successful Haydn commission. The format of these particular collections, however, did not impress him. Napier's volumes were simply produced with figured bass and single lines for violin and for the voice. Johnson's SMM was produced in well-nigh pocket-sized format, like the Caledonian Pocket Companion, and was, in Thomson's opinion, an 'omnium gatherum' which was 'brought out in a miserable style and without letterpress'.[19] It too had simple musical arrangements with figured bass - by the Edinburgh organist Stephen Clarke and his son William - about which Thomson was equally aggressive: 'as much a book for topers as for piano players'.[20] Thomson's initial disgust was proved ironic, for Burns greatly respected Clarke and later encouraged Thomson to work with him.[21] In stark contrast to Napier and Johnson, both Corri and Urbani produced large, sophisticated folio volumes, and the songs were presented with their own Italianate settings. Corri arranged his songs for voice and keyboard with continuo if desired, and Urbani sometimes included parts for violin and/or flute and optional cello to reinforce the bass. His songs frequently had introductory and concluding 'symphonies' to the airs, and his Scottish volumes of the 1790s had obbligato parts for two violins and viola.

Urbani's volumes (1792-1804), in particular, were suspiciously similar to Thomson's. Thomson's title-pages were generally finer than Urbani's, owing primarily to their elaborate

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[19] Thomson's letter to Dr Tweedie of 7 September 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/61-5. Dr Tweedie was connected with the firm Hurst, Robinson & Co. and as such received most of Thomson's correspondence to them. In this letter Thomson discussed contemporary editions of SMM and referred to Riston's Scottish Songs and to Constable's plans for producing a volume of 'The Lyrical Poetry of Scotland'.

[20] Ibid.

[21] See Chapter III, i: The Composers, pp. 77-9.

illustrations, but Urbani ingeniously designed some of his title-pages to incorporate a thematic index (the first bar of each song), which ran around the outside edge of the page thereby acting as a border. Each song appeared over one opening, with music on one page and corresponding lyric on the opposite page - this was identical to Thomson's volumes. Urbani's first volume of A Selection of Scots Songs (1792) appeared one year before Thomson's first set of 25 songs. It is impossible to determine whether or not Thomson had already decided on the format of his volumes by this time. It may be that he copied Urbani's impressive design, or perhaps Urbani stole Thomson's idea. The collections are too similar to have come into existence in ignorance of one another, but the intense rivalry between the two editors makes it impossible to discover the truth of the matter. Burns informed Thomson in August 1793 that Urbani 'looks with rather an evil eye upon your WORK',[22] and Thomson stated in a letter to Kozeluch several years later that he thought Urbani's was 'a water-gruel collection'.[23] As Hadden concluded, 'it is evident that no love was lost between Thomson and his brother editor'.[24]

While the Scottish collection came directly from a long line of similar publications, and was heavily influenced by contemporaneous collections, Thomson's decision to produce volumes of Welsh and Irish songs was more unusual. Some other editors refused to limit themselves to Scottish songs. Corri, for example, published A New & Complete Collection of the Most Favourite Scots Songs, including a few English & Irish with proper Graces and Ornaments in 1788, perhaps stealing the idea from Alexander Smith, whose Musical Miscellany, published in Perth in 1786, also included English and Irish songs.

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[22] Roy, Letters, ii. 231-2 (578). While Burns was clearly a fan of Urbani, he referred to him as 'a contracted character'.

[23] Thomson's letter to Kozeluch of 28 February 1800, in which Thomson also discussed A Collection of Sixty favourite Scotch Songs, edited by Joseph Dale in 1794: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/86-7.

[24] Hadden, Thomson, p. 26.

David Sime's Edinburgh Musical Miscellany of 1792-3 incorporated 'Scotch, English and Irish songs', as did The Musical Repository, published by William Anderson in 1802, and The British Musical Miscellany published in Edinburgh in 1805. The interest in producing these mixed collections of British songs continued well into the nineteenth century, and such volumes became more and more popular. Thomson differed in that he decided to produce quite separate collections. The idea of publishing his Irish volumes (1814 and 1816) was understandable, as Scotland and Ireland shared many songs, which had travelled between the two countries for centuries. Several letters from Burns discussed the close relationship of melodies from the two countries, and indeed it was Burns who suggested the idea of an Irish collection as early as 1793.[25] Even although Thomson was inspired by the collections of Bunting and Moore,[26] his Irish volumes did not consume the same time or energy as the Welsh. Doubtless inspired by Jones's Relicks and Parry's volumes, Thomson set out to discover Welsh song. With the help of Lady Cunliffe he set up a circle of Welsh poets, and sent two associates - Owen Jones and Edward Williams - to find old Welsh melodies that he could publish. He was obsessed with the Welsh bardic tradition, commissioning his composers to produce special harp accompaniments for his three Welsh volumes (1809, 1811 and 1817) and even going to Wales himself in 1806 in search of her living bards and unpublished songs. It is a mystery that he did not treat his Scottish or Irish collections in the same way, but it was doubtless his total ignorance of Welsh song that inspired such enthusiasm. While the others developed naturally from his personal background, this collection was a

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[25] Burns's letter to Thomson of mid-August 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 229-30 (576). Burns wrote: 'what I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the wandering Minstrels, Harpers or Pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scotland and Ireland, & so some favourite airs might be common to both'. Also Burns to Thomson, September 1793: ii. 249-53 (588). Burns wrote: 'Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty five of them in an additional Number? - We could easily find the quantity of charming airs'.

[26] Moore contributed lyrics to Thomson's Irish and Welsh collections.

novelty, but it was also Thomson's romantic quest. He chose to ignore the excitement of 'the field' in his other two collections. The Scottish and Irish songs came from a lowland, urban society, but these Welsh songs 'emanated from the populace itself in a distant and eminently desirable bygone age'.[27] The illustrations created for the first and third volumes of this collection, by Thomson's younger brother David, are representative of this difference of attitude, for they are romantically Gothic in contrast with the pastoral scenes of the Scottish volumes and the classical paintings of the Irish.[28]

It is therefore something of an anomaly that Thomson was relatively uninterested in Highland song. He was enthusiastic about the linguistic challenge presented by the Welsh language and by the ancient harping traditions of Wales, but was much more reluctant to touch the Gaelic language and the equally historic clarsach tradition of the Gaels. This was unusual, because collections of Highland song were popular at the turn of the century. By the 1770s and '80s the fear of the mysterious and dangerous Highland terrain and the threat of Jacobitism had diminished. Macpherson's poetry had generated an interest in this part of the country, and the Highland Society of London (established in 1778) had officially declared an interest in the 'Preservation of the Ancient Music of the Highlands'.[29] Patrick MacDonald produced his Collection of Highland Vocal Airs ... to which are added a few ...

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[27] Carl Dalhaus, Nineteenth-Century Music, tr. J. Bradford Robinson, California, 1989, p. 108.

[28] S. McVeigh, Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 113-6. Simon McVeigh controversially states that the Welsh collections of Parry and Jones were 'more genuine' than contemporary collections of Scottish songs, but he also comments that Welsh song was more popular with London audiences at the end of the eighteenth century than Scots song.

[29] Sir John Sinclair of Ulster, Bart., An Account of the Highland Society of London from its establishment in May 1778, to the commencement of the year 1813, London, 1813.

Country Dances or Reels of the Northern Highlands, & Western Isles: and some specimens of Bagpipe music in 1784, and Simon Frazer's Airs and Melodies peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles of 1815 supposedly included songs which he had collected between 1715 and 1745. This was a clever sales tactic for Frazer, since the Jacobite risings now held special nationalistic significance for most Scots. Alexander Campbell, whose famous Albyn's Anthology was published the following year, claimed that he was printing 'hitherto unpublished' songs from Scotland and the Isles, though Frazer disagreed.[30] Thomson included one or two carefully chosen Highland songs and was keen to print some Jacobite songs too, but he was undoubtedly politically uncomfortable about doing so.[31] He was happier to move further west to Ireland, or further south to Wales, and even into central Europe, for he also embarked on a collection of foreign airs in the 1810s.[32] Variations on single foreign melodies can be found in lists of Edinburgh publications throughout the 1700s.

While Thomson's collections were unusual in some respects, it is vital to realize that they grew out of a tradition of hundreds of similar publications spanning almost a century. Books of national songs and tunes - the immediate ancestors of Thomson's volumes - and the growth of Scotland's publishing trade were instrumental to his venture. His decision to set up a publishing business in the 1790s was neither unusual nor inventive. By this time Edinburgh was full of experienced

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[30] For more information see H.G. Farmer, A History of Music in Scotland, London, 1947, pp. 356-7. Other Highland collections seem to have been much later than Frazer and Campbell. In 1830 Robert Purdie published A Selection of Celtic Melodies consisting of original Highland Airs, Pipe-Reels and Cainntearachd...selected and arranged by a Highlander, and Angus Mackay issued his Collection of ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe Music, much of which was arranged for piano, in 1838.

[31] See Chapter IV, iv: National identity.

[32] See Chapter V, pp. 243-5.

booksellers and publishers, and because connections with the south had already been forged, transportation and thus distribution networks were open to, and keen for, business.

ii) Thomson's Publishing House

Thomson was obsessed from the beginning with high standards of presentation: the aesthetics of his product relied equally upon its artistic content and its visual beauty. From the outset he wanted to produce top-quality, sophisticated and elegant volumes. Fortunately, Edinburgh's newly-found freedom in the publishing trade made this task a simple one. With the exception of large firms such as those run by the Gow or Corri families, or George Walker, who could afford to employ engravers and printers on their premises, smaller businesses were able to produce musical publications by subcontracting to free-lance engravers, printers and papermakers. This was precisely what Thomson did. As Senior Clerk to the Board of Trustees he had limited time to spend on his publications. The establishment of a full-time publishing house was unthinkable, for he had little capital and, at the outset, planned only to produce one or two small books of Scottish songs. He remained Senior Clerk to the Board until 1839, by which time all but the final editions of the Scottish Collection had been produced; he was therefore never in the position of being able to devote himself solely to the production of his collections. Although he found enough time to supervise the artistic content of his volumes, he relied, for the practical production of his publications, on a group of individuals who were based in Edinburgh and its surrounding districts, or in London. Thanks to the expansion of the Scottish trade, he was able to find willing engravers, printers and papermakers who would produce the goods quickly and cheaply. He was also able to choose from a wide range of individuals and companies who were able to create high-quality products which were amongst the best in Britain. An understanding of the mechanics of this

group is an essential tool for following Thomson's activities as a publisher and, more importantly, as an editor.

Thomson chose to present himself on the title-pages of his volumes, from the first sets of Scottish Airs in the 1790s, as 'proprietor' of his publications, but he never appeared as their publisher. While he was undoubtedly the publisher in spirit, it was crucial at the beginning of the venture to find a fully-fledged publisher able to deal with the large-scale production and distribution of the volumes. Thomson followed the general pattern of the bigger non-musical Scottish publishers by having an almost wholly Scottish production line while at the same time forging a strong link with a much bigger London publisher. The main publisher involved from the beginning was Preston of London. John Preston began his business in 1774-5 as a musical instrument maker, printer, music seller and publisher. In 1789 he purchased the stock and plates of the Scotsman Robert Bremner, and this may have influenced his decision to work with Thomson only four years later. John Preston and subsequently his son Thomas dealt with all of Thomson's publications from 1793 until the company's closure in 1834, when they were succeeded by Coventry & Hollier, who published most of Thomson's later volumes. It is impossible to determine the reasons Thomson had for choosing Preston, when he could have selected any number of London publishers. It was no surprise that he veered away from Edinburgh's music publishers - Corri, Urbani, Gow and Johnson - for all of them were producing rival collections. A London publisher removed parochial pressure from the venture and also opened distribution networks for Thomson, who as an amateur would have found it difficult to break in upon the monopoly of the main music publishers in London. There is also no explanation as to why Preston should want to take on such a venture, especially with someone who was a novice in the trade. The Bremner connection may be the key, for Preston

acquired many other 'Scottish' publications in 1789.[33] Perhaps Napier's Haydn arrangements had shown that there was an expanding market for such a publication. As programmes for the musical societies of major towns and cities illustrate, there was something of a British vogue for the 'Scotch Song'.[34]

The problems of defining the term 'publisher' at the turn of the nineteenth century are highlighted by the fragmentary nature of the correspondence between Thomson and Preston. At first glance it may appear that Preston was chiefly concerned with assembling the printed sheets which Thomson shipped to him from Edinburgh. Thomson wrote to Preston, for example, on 27 October 1822 to inform him that he had shipped 20 copies of Vol. IV of his octavo edition along with an extra two copies for Stationers' Hall.[35] The firm was responsible for issuing the early volumes in a simple paper cover, since they would most likely be bound to order for the customer. By the 1810s the volumes had sturdy, coloured, millboard bindings - pink for the Welsh volumes, green for the Irish and grey for the Scottish. But closer examination of Thomson's letterbooks, particularly his letters concerning paper orders, show that Preston was much more closely involved with the publications and that, in addition to at least two other Edinburgh companies, the firm was responsible for printing many of the volumes.

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[33] An Additional Catalogue from 1790 - 'The Late Property of the Eminent Dealer ROBERT BREMNER' - printed by Preston includes copies of Bremner's Scots songs and Scots reels, of his Curious Collection of Tunes with Variations and of publications by William McGibbon and Francis Peacock: **GB-Lbl** Hirsch IV 1113 - 1-13.

[34] R. Fiske, Scotland in Music: A European Enthusiasm, Cambridge, 1983. Chapter 1 is entitled 'The Scotch Song comes to London'.

[35] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/107.

Preston is mentioned in Thomson's earliest correspondence - concerning the publication of Kozeluch's piano sonatas[36]- but, although Thomson explained in a letter to Kozeluch dated April 1797 that he was planning to travel to London to organize printing and engraving,[37] no names were given. The first detailed reference to Preston's printing volumes is not until late in 1812.[38] Preston had written to Thomson with his account of sales of the volumes from July to December 1811, and had also informed him that they had only a small amount of paper left. Thomson replied by asking him to print 100 copies of the fourth volume of the Scottish Collection without delay, and informed him that he had shipped 11 reams of paper on 'The Nimble' the previous day.[39] He also sent a detailed inventory of the volumes which Preston had printed - and the paper he had used - since 23 August 1811, when Thomson had shipped another batch of paper to London (the numbers 50 or 100 refer to the number of copies printed):[40]

Sep 21:	50	Scottish Songs	Vol. 2	---- 28	quires
" 28:	50	Scottish Songs	Vol. 1	---- 28	quires
" 28:	100	Welsh Songs	Vol. 2	---- 40	quires
Oct 5:	50	Welsh Songs	Vol. 1	---- 17½	quires
" 26:	100	Scottish Songs	Vol. 4	---- 56	quires
Nov 2:	50	Scottish Songs	Vol. 3	---- 29	quires

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[36] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/ 36-7; 54-5; 56-7; 74-5; 86-7.

[37] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/16-7.

[38] This letter is undated, but must have been after 2 November, as mentioned in the list below.

[39] Because of the differing weights and quality of Thomson's paper, the number of sheets in a ream, or quire, would vary. A quire was generally 24 or 25 single sheets, and a ream normally consisted of 20 quires, or 480 sheets. See: Philip Gaskell, A New Introduction to Bibliography, Oxford, 1985, pp. 57-77.

[40] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/39. Thomson concluded that Preston had used 198½ quires or 9 reams 18½ quires of paper and should still have at least 6 reams 7½ quires remaining.

The letter therefore states that between late September and early November 1811 Preston had printed 400 volumes of Scottish and Welsh songs for Thomson, and he was clearly also printing in 1812, as Thomson's letter proves. Another letter of 11 June 1815 from Thomson to his paper-maker also referred to 20½ reams of heavy paper (for music) which he ordered on behalf of Preston.[41] Such evidence is enough to prove that Preston was far more than a distributor. The appearance of Preston's name on the title-page of Thomson's volumes was most probably a result of his printing and distributing in London, and because he was better known and doubtless better respected than any of Thomson's smaller printers.

Thomson's correspondence with his paper-maker presents most of the information concerning the printing of his volumes. In addition to finding a main publisher for the collections, one of Thomson's initial tasks was to find good quality paper upon which the letterpress for the lyrics and the musical plates could be printed. Unlike the printing, engraving and publishing, which were distributed amongst many, the paper for Thomson's collections was produced by one firm alone, namely Cowan & Sons of Valleyfield, near Penicuik to the south of Edinburgh. Scotland's rising reputation for paper-making was a natural consequence of the success of her publishing trade at the end of the eighteenth century. The south-west of Scotland, thanks to partnership with a French company, began to produce high quality white paper, but the mills to the south of Edinburgh nursed the Scottish reputation.[42] Thomson, by all accounts, could not have found better paper than that produced for him by Cowan.

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[41] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/151.

[42] D.C. Coleman, The British Paper Industry 1495-1860, Oxford, 1958, p.221. Coleman noted that by the 1840s 'the mills within the Parish of Penicuik paid more duty than did the whole Irish industry'.

Thomson's letters to Cowan outnumber all of his letters to printers, engravers, publishers and illustrators and provide much of the information of print-runs which is missing elsewhere in the correspondence. It is Thomson's letters to Cowan, for example, which show that, in addition to Preston, several Scottish printers - Balbirnie, McLeod, Walker and Lizars - were employed by Thomson. The Cowan correspondence shows that the printing of letterpress usually always exceeded that of music, but also reveals that the print-runs of music frequently exceeded 100 in number before the 1820s.[43] As Thomson stated in 1815:

> The above quantity of paper is meant to be used as follows, vizt. - the 70 reams of the finest kind for letterpress, thus
>
> | | | | R |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | for | 750 | copies of the Scots Songs, Vol. 2 | 24 |
> | | 750 | D°. _____, Vol. 4 | 24 |
> | | 500 | D°. of the Irish Songs, Vol. 2 | 11 |
> | | 500 | D°. of the Welsh D°., Vol. 3 | 11 |
> | | | | 70 |
>
> The 30 reams of a thicker kind to be applied as follows
>
> | | | | R | Q^s |
> |---|---|---|---|---|
> | for | 600 | volumes of Scottish Songs | 17 | |
> | | 150 | volumes of Welsh Songs 1st & 2d | 2 | 13 |
> | | 250 | volumes of the 3d Welsh Songs | 4 | 8 |
> | | 250 | D°. _____ 2d Irish Songs | 4 | 8 |
> | | 100 | D°. _____ 1st Irish Songs | 1 | 15 |
> | | | | 30 | 4 |

Moreover Thomson's letter to Cowan of 11 December 1824 is the only evidence to show that, by this time, Thomson's print-runs of music rarely exceeded 100 copies at any given time.[44]

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[43] Thomson to Cowan, 17 February 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/138.

[44] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/135. Thomson ordered 30 reams of paper for the octavo edition. He also stated that the order of 25 reams of heavy paper for the folio volumes is 'only for 100 copies of the music at a time, & I fear will last for a year at the least'. The letter reveals that sales of the folio

The numbers of volumes being produced, and the details of large print-runs of letterpress and music in particular, help to explain Thomson's mixing of sheets between editions, for numerous sheets, particularly the prints from the musical plates, were left unused and were incorporated in later issues of the same volumes.[45]

Thomson was just as fastidious about the thickness, colour and general quality of his paper as he was about the standards of printing or engraving. As his volumes illustrate, he experimented with paper thicknesses earlier in his career, sometimes employing a standard thickness throughout a volume, and often using thicker paper for the musical plates and thinner for the letterpress. The colour of the paper also varied considerably from volume to volume. Orders for different 'dimensions, quality & thickness'[46] of paper correspond with the arrival of more beautiful and sophisticated presentation in Thomson's volumes. In his letter of 10 April 1813 he criticized Cowan's paper for being 'not so good either in colour or free of specks as before' and stated quite clearly that he wanted the Irish volumes to be as elegant as possible.[47] The letter of 1815, mentioned above, was written at the time of the production of the two Irish volumes and the last Welsh volume, which surpassed any earlier volumes in appearance.

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volumes left much to be desired and illustrates Thomson's desperation in deciding to issue an octavo edition.

[45] Hopkinson and Oldman, p. 4. Hopkinson and Oldman noted: 'when...he [Thomson] ventured on a new edition, he was continually finding himself with sheets of previous editions on his hands, which he was apt to mix indiscriminately with sheets freshly printed for the new edition'.

[46] Thomson to Cowan, 12 February 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/138. See also Thomson to Cowan, 11 June 1815 (35267/151) in which Thomson asked for different weights of paper. Also Thomson to Cowan, 2 March 1818 (35268/37-8), in which Thomson orders thicker paper for music: 'of the same quality and weight with what I have been used to get lately from you'. The thicker music paper was described by Thomson as 'the soft or music paper' in his letter to Cowan of 11 December 1824 (35268/135).

[47] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/75.

In addition to Preston there were other publishing houses connected with the collections, several of them also based in London. Coventry & Hollier's name is found on the folio volumes printed after 1834, and Hurst, Robinson & Co. (and to a lesser extent Constable & Co.) were involved with the octavo editions of the 1820s. Preston was unhappy about Thomson's relationship with Hurst, Robinson & Co., for they were known as general booksellers and were not chiefly concerned with musical publications. Thomson explained that his collections were as much literary as musical and that he had to encourage every bookseller who showed interest in distributing his volumes.[48]

While some of Thomson's volumes were printed in the south, many of them were produced in Edinburgh by a small group of printers and engravers. Little is known about John Moir, whose name is frequently found on the colophon of Thomson's volumes. He was originally a partner in the firm of Grant & Moir of Paterson's Close (1790-93) and set up independently in New Bank Close until he was declared bankrupt in 1825. Thereafter he is said to have worked for D. Stevenson & Co. He was known primarily for his publication of Gaelic and Roman Catholic books and pamphlets, which may well explain his lack of prominence amongst Scottish publishers of the period. The Gaelic language was known only in the Highlands and Western Isles, and during the eighteenth century much effort had been channelled into eradicating it altogether. With the exception of those who had been forced to move to the Lowlands for want of employment, there can have been few buyers for Moir's books. Arguably, Roman Catholicism was still too closely associated with the Jacobite rebellions of mid-century to attract a large readership, though there may have been an underground market for such publications. Moir was also

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[48] Thomson described his connection with John Murray, another Scottish publisher working in London, as his example: 'Mr Murray had copies of the Folio edition as long as he chose to sell them'.Thomson to Preston, 27 October 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/107.

responsible for producing Anne Grant of Laggan's Poems on Various Subjects in 1803,[49] a product with which Thomson must have had some connection, as Mrs Grant was one of his most important contributors and he makes reference to this publication in his correspondence.[50] As Hadden explains at length, however, Thomson's name is not mentioned in her account of the publication.[51] Moir's name is found on many of Thomson's early folio volumes and on those of the octavo edition of 1822-3.[52] A letter from Thomson to his paper-maker of 11 December 1824, in which he ordered 30 reams of single paper for the letterpress of the octavo edition,[53] suggests that Moir was also involved in printing some of the 1825 volumes. After this date, doubtless as a result of his bankruptcy, Moir disappears from Thomson's publications.

By 1825 at least two other names had been mentioned in Thomson's letterbooks in connection with the printing of his volumes. William Balbirnie's name is found on the octavo volumes of the 1820s: 'Eng$^{d.}$ by W$^{m.}$ Balbirnie, 105 High S$^{t.}$ Edin$^{r.}$' appeared at the foot of the first page of music of Vol. I of 1822. Even less is known about Balbirnie than Moir.

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[49] The title-page gives Moir as the printer (Royal Bank Close) and also lists the publishers involved, who included, most importantly, Longman & Rees and J. Hatchard both of London. See also Thomson's letter of 22 December 1803 to Anne Grant which refers to subscriptions for the above: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/20-1.

[50] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/20-21.

[51] Hadden, Thomson, pp. 34-5.

[52] Moir's name always appears on the colophon at the foot of the last page of lyrics in Thomson's volumes. Sometimes his name is not included, and so it is probable that on these occasions the reader is dealing with a volume printed by Preston. Preston's name never, to my knowledge, appears on the colophon, only on the title-page.

[53] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/135. Thomson wrote: 'for Mr Moir says that only a little is necessary'.

He is not included in Bushnell's Scottish Engravers,[54] or in any lists of publishers such as those of Kidson or Humphries and Smith. Thomson's letter to him of 12 October 1818,[55] however, shows that Balbirnie was both an engraver and a printer to trade. Thomson's order is similar to the aforementioned order which he sent to Preston in 1812. Thomson sent the 8 reams 9 quires of paper which Balbirnie requested and ordered the printing of the following 350 volumes, with paper estimates given (reams/quires/sheets):

100 copies	Scottish songs - vol. 5 -----	3/ 6/16
50 copies	Welsh songs - vol. 1 -----	/16/16
50 copies	Welsh songs - vol. 2 -----	/17/17
50 copies	Welsh songs - vol. 3 -----	1/ /20
50 copies	Irish songs - vol. 1 -----	1/ 1/21
50 copies	Irish songs - vol. 2 -----	1/ 1/21
	total	8r 5q 15s
	+ wastage	3q 9s
	=	8r 9q

Mention was made in the same letter of another printer, one Mr McLeod, whose printing of volumes for Thomson clearly included a great wastage of paper.[56] McLeod is also a mystery, though he was probably Peter McLeod, an amateur composer and semi-serious music publisher in Edinburgh.[57] Although his name does not appear on the publications themselves, McLeod is mentioned in one other letter, of 26 October 1818, when Thomson asked

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[54] G.H. Bushnell, Scottish Engravers, Oxford, 1964. Perhaps Balbirnie worked too late for inclusion.

[55] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/27-8.

[56] Thomson suggested that Balbirnie should save paper during his print run and referred to 'the waste of Mr McLeod's printing'.

[57] Baptie, Musical Scotland, p. 126. Baptie gives the dates 1797-1859 and states that McLeod's songs are 'at once melodious and vigourous, full of animation in the bolder passages, yet tender and pathetic in other places'. His three collections of Original Melodies were published in 1828, 1834 and 1838 respectively.

his paper-maker to deliver 5 reams 11½ quires of paper to 'Mr McLeod Music Printer' for 100 copies of both Vols. II and III of the Scottish Collection and one additional volume.[58]

Balbirnie was not the only engraver who undertook two jobs for Thomson. George Walker was associated with Thomson's publications from the 1810s. He began his engraving career in the 1790s and was still in business in 1848. Between 1815 and 1826 he was in partnership with John Anderson, and, based at 42 High Street, they were known equally well as music engravers, printers and publishers. Thomson's letter of 26 October 1818, mentioned above, requested a delivery of 2 reams 15 quires of paper to Walker & Anderson to print 100 copies of Vol. IV of the Scottish Collection. In 1826 Walker & Anderson's partnership dissolved, and Walker set up alone as Walker & Co. In this capacity he continued to work for Thomson, and on 24 August 1826 Thomson asked Walker to print 100 copies of the new Vol. V.[59] It was in this letter that Thomson explained the need to produce a high quality product and faultless impressions: 'The English Public will not look at works imperfectly printed and it is in vain to send any such to London'. He also warned Walker to take particular care over his use of paper. Reference was made to the creasing of paper in the printing of engraved plates, for this produced 'faulty impressions' and Thomson warned Walker that this could lose him the job of printing his music, as it did with Lizars. Walker obviously continued to impress Thomson, for the name Walker & Co. is found on the 1831 volumes of the Scottish Collection.

William Home Lizars (1788-1859) was associated with Thomson's publications until the mid 1820s. Unlike Walker, he was not well known as a music engraver but was chiefly concerned with

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[58] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/28.

[59] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/168. The address for Walker is now 140 Princes Street.

illustrations. He had been nurtured, like Wilkie, by the Board of Trustees' Academy and was a keen and talented portrait painter. When his father Daniel died in 1812, William was compelled to take over the engraving and printing firm which his father had established, and as its director he became famous for his engravings of Scottish landscapes and for his etching technique, which was employed primarily in the illustration of books. Unbelievably there is only one letter from Thomson to Lizars, of 1 August 1825,[60] in which Thomson ordered a print run of 50 copies of the songs of Vol. V and 30 copies of The Jolly Beggars - 'in all 63 plates requiring paper'. Lizars must also have engraved musical plates for Thomson, for his name is found in connection with the song **Low down in the broom** in the sixth volume of the octavo edition of 1825.[61] Not surprisingly, Lizars also engraved some illustrations for Thomson which were likewise included in the octavo edition. One nameless London engraver is mentioned in Thomson's letter of November 1813 to William Smyth with reference to the song **Dermot and Shelagh** - included in Vol. I of the Irish Collection.[62] It is therefore possible that Thomson was also employing a London music engraver, though there is no evidence as to who it was. The only London engravers mentioned in the correspondence were those connected with Thomson's illustrations.[63]

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[60] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/157.

[61] 'Engraved W.H. Lizars. 3 James's Sq. Edin.' appears at the foot of the page.

[62] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/86-7. 'Dermot and Shelagh' is found in Vol. I of the Irish Collection - no. 14, p. 35. Smyth's verses were not printed, for the song appears with lyrics by T. Toms.

[63] The knowledge that Thomson was working with numerous printers and engravers is invaluable when examining the volumes themselves. The letterpress of Thomson's volumes, for example, is rarely the same from one issue of a volume to the next. On first examination, one automatically assumes that Thomson was obsessed with producing new, more beautiful and presentable publications at every turn. But surely, it was both a waste of time and money to change the letterpress from one print run to the next, especially when nearly all of the songs had the same lyrics from issue to issue of the same volume. Thomson was working with numerous printers. Several of them had small

Thomson's decision to include illustrations in his volumes resulted in his employment of a completely separate group of artists/engravers. These illustrations, while regarded as an investment - no other similar contemporary Scottish publications included such sophisticated illustrations - also stretched Thomson's budget considerably. They were originally offered to subscribers alone, but by 1801 they had become an integral part of the volumes, and they were also sold separately at Preston's shop. Two Scottish artists, David Allan[64] and David Wilkie, and the Englishman R.T. Stothard were approached, and all three accepted Thomson's commission. Allan and Stothard produced by far the greatest number of illustrations included in his volumes, particularly the octavo volumes of the 1820s. Alexander Nasmyth's portrait of Burns (**SIV**), Sir Joshua Reynolds's depiction of St Cecilia (**IrI** and **SIf**), and drawings by W. Hamilton,[65] Robert Smirke,[66] and Thomson's brother, David, also appeared.[67] Thomson was characteristically over-enthusiastic with his commissions and was in possession of far more illustrations than he could publish. He therefore offered several of Allan's unpublished

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establishments, and some would work with different type-faces. Most of them would be unable to store standing type - they would have to dismantle the type after print-runs of the letterpress - and when Thomson approached them with a new order for 300 copies of letterpress they would set the type afresh. This process immediately explains the slight changes in letterpress between volumes, most noticeable in the differences of type-face or in spacing. For further details, see Appendix 1.

[64] Thomson to Smyth, 28 January 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/83-5. Thomson referred to Allan as 'an Artist who had a peculiar talent for the humorous deliniation of Scottish character and costume'. See also Burns to Thomson, November 1794: Roy, Letters, ii. 327-31 (647). Burns was delighted with Allan's illustrations for his songs: '...I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. - "Pride in Poets is nae sin", & I will say it, that I look on Mr Allen [sic] & Mr Burns to be the only genuine & real Painters of Scotish Costume in the world!'.

[65] 'The Birks of Invermay' (**SI**) and 'The Soldier's Return' (**SIII**).

[66] Robert Smirke (1752-1845) was a book illustrator in London. His father and uncle were architects of the British Museum. See 'The Fortune Teller' (**IrII**).

[67] 'Llangollen Vale' and 'Conway castle' (**WI** and **WIII**).

designs to William Blackwood in 1818 in the hope that he would buy them for inclusion in his new edition of Johnson's SMM.[68] Thomson offered these engravings (finished by Stothard) and about 40 others to Blackwood for 100 guineas. Naturally, Blackwood refused. It may be that Thomson did eventually use some of these etchings in his octavo edition, which he produced between 1822 and 1839, but he failed to list the names of the engravings in his letter to Blackwood. Hadden stated, however, that many of Allan's illustrations in addition to those of Stothard and Smirke were still in Thomson's possession when he died, along with Raeburn portraits of Thomson and his wife.[69] Allan, Wilkie and Stothard often engraved their own designs, but other engravers were also employed: Paton Thomson, John Thomson, Robert Scott, David Scott, Lizars and Cunego. Of these six, four were particularly well known. Paton Thomson engraved in London but was of Scottish extraction: he was in fact George's elder brother. Robert Scott is included in Bushnell's dictionary as 'a great Scottish engraver', and David, his son, was apprenticed to him and was well known as a line engraver. He was admitted to the Royal Scottish Academy in 1829 and designed 25 illustrations for the 1831 edition of Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner. Lizars was famous, as already noted, while little is known about John Thomson or Cunego.

Thomson's hand-picked papermaker, engravers, illustrators and printers presented a finished product which was lavish and expensive both to manufacture and to purchase.[70] Thomson then had to find distributors who were willing to sell his volumes. His connections with larger music publishers such as Preston and Coventry & Hollier made his task easier. Moreover, the

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[68] Thomson to Blackwood, November 1818: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/29-30. Thomson also listed the price of the engravings in his next letter to Blackwood of 17 November 1818 (35268/30-1) and he withdrew the offer on 14 December 1818 35268/31.

[69] Hadden, Thomson, pp. 99-100.

[70] See Chapter V.

advances in the transportation system both in Britain and beyond in the first decades of the nineteenth century made world-wide distribution possible. The production of his volumes took place in London and Edinburgh, but his musical manuscripts came from Europe and his finished volumes sold from Edinburgh to America, and Dublin to Calcutta.

iii) Transportation and Distribution

The developments in transportation had wide-ranging effect on Thomson's business. His use of several Scottish engravers and printers resulted in immediate Scottish outlets for his publications. Thomson sold his volumes from home, and undoubtedly copies were also sold by Moir, Balbirnie, Walker and Lizars. His letterbooks show that Constable & Co., McLachlan & Stewart[71] and Nathaniel Gow were also selling his volumes, and some copies have even been found with an Urbani & Liston stamp. The London connection, forged by Preston, also opened up the sales network for Thomson's collections. Volumes were available in London through Preston, Goulding, D'Almaine & Co., Hurst, Robinson & Co., Paine & Hopkins, Coventry & Hollier, Willis & Co., and the Scottish firms of John Murray, probably Constable & Co. and the Gows' London shops. These are the only booksellers named in the correspondence, but the publishing network was so closely interrelated at this time that volumes were doubtless sold by other sellers in Edinburgh and London. The Dublin publisher Maurice Hime (who also had large businesses in Manchester and Liverpool) was responsible for selling many of Thomson's volumes in Ireland. John Cumming[s] was asked by Thomson in 1814 to take charge of all the booksellers known to him in Ireland,[72] and Goulding, of Goulding. D'Almaine & Co., was also asked about Irish

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[71] Booksellers on the South Bridge in the city. They were involved in the production of the second edition of Angus Mackay's book of Highland Pipe Music in 1839.

[72] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/96.

distribution.[73] Many London-based publishers also had shops in Dublin. P. Willis of 7 Westmorland Street, Dublin sold volumes for Thomson, as did his brother in London.

The Irish connection may have been the key to American sales. In the late 1810s copies of Thomson's early Scottish volumes began to appear in Philadelphia, not long after two young musicians from the EMS had emigrated there.[74] In 1818 Benjamin Warner issued a volume called The Scottish Minstrel, which included the Burns/Thomson correspondence. Even more importantly, J. Dobson issued:

> A Select Collection/of /Original Scottish airs/ for the voice,/ With Introductory & Concluding Symphonies/ and Accompaniments for the/ Piano forte, violin, or flute &c./ By/ Pleyel, Haydn, Weber, Beethoven &c./ With/ Select Characteristic Verses both Scottish & English,/ Adapted to the Airs,/ Including upwards of One Hundred Songs by/ Burns./ The whole collected by George Thomson F.A.S. Edinburgh in Five Volumes[75]

Although there are no extant letters from Thomson to either Warner or Dobson, Thomson did correspond with Samuel Campbell in New York. A letter from Thomson to Campbell of 1812 enquired about the sales of his volumes in New York from the period 1808-12.[76] Another letter to Archibald Constable of

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[73] Thomson to Goulding, 30 March 1814: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/95-6. In addition to offering Goulding some Irish volumes, Thomson stated that he would send him some Scottish and Welsh volumes (and instrumental parts).

[74] Anne McClenny Krauss, 'James Bremner, Alexander Reinagle and the Influence of the Edinburgh Musical Society on Philadelphia', Scotland and America in the age of Enlightenment, ed. Richard B. Sher & Jeffrey R. Smitten, Edinburgh, 1990, pp. 259-74. Bremner (son of Robert) moved to America in the early 1760s and Reinagle in the mid-1780s.

[75] There is no date on this publication, but it is likely that it was produced in the 1810s.

[76] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/39-40.

Constable & Co., written later in 1822, also mentioned the possibility of selling the collections in America.[77]

The sale of volumes in Calcutta was doubtless due to Thomson's connection with George Arbuthnot,[78] who moved to India in 1803. Even if Arbuthnot was not wholly responsible for Indian sales, his connections with other British residents could have resulted in the little distribution that there was. In a letter to the Calcutta booksellers McIntosh & Co. of 31 January 1823, Thomson stated that he had organized one Mr Lewis to give McIntosh a box 'containing a number of copies of my National Songs, with [sic] which they said you would have the goodness to put into the hands of a reputable dealer, for sale, and when sold, that you would remit the proceeds to me'.[79] Returning accounts to Thomson every six months, which the editor asked of all his distributors, was not so easy for many of these sellers, though some were happy to keep hold of their revenue for long periods, failing to send accounts to Thomson and thus infuriating him. Henry Home in the Cape of Good Hope was so reluctant to send regular accounts that Thomson was still waiting for payment some fifteen years after sending volumes to him.[80] Thomson's letter to Home of 16 August 1821 stated that Home's father and brother were good friends of Thomson, suggesting that the family lived in Scotland and that Henry had therefore emigrated to South Africa.[81] This link with the Cape of Good Hope may, however,

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[77] Thomson to Constable, September 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/10.

[78] See Chapter I, p. 8.

[79] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/120-1.

[80] Thomson to Home, 25 March 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/145. Thomson wrote: 'Allow me earnestly to beg that you will send me the amount of the Account. I have charged interest for 10 years only tho' it is about 15 since the books were in your possession.

[81] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/57. Thomson wrote: 'Nothing that ever occurs to me has so greatly surprised and mortified me, as to find an old friend, the son & brother of my old friends, delaying for so many years the payment of a just debt'.

have been forged by one of Thomson's lyricists. Lady Anne Lindsay (1750-1825) married in 1793 (becoming Lady Anne Barnard) and moved to the Cape of Good Hope where she lived from 1797-1802.

This widespread distribution caused numerous financial problems for Thomson, and a long and exhausting battle with copyright and piracy, which will be discussed at length later.[82] Thomson's sales network was impressive, even though the sales themselves were not satisfactory; but his transportation network for the musical manuscripts of his composers was both impressive and effective.

Thomson was sending packages and letters to and from France, Vienna, and then Weimar and Dresden, from the early 1790s until the 1830s. This was a period of uproar in central Europe. Britain's relations with the French were far from amicable, and by the 1790s wars between the two countries had raged intermittently for almost a century. Between 1793 and the battle of Waterloo in 1815 Britain was at war with France, battling against the strategies of Napoleon and his army. Thomson needed to find a transportation channel to ensure the safe delivery of musical manuscripts and letters to and from his composers. Introducing himself to his first composer Ignace Pleyel was easy, for Thomson claimed that he travelled to London specifically to talk to the composer.[83] But Thomson had no friend or agent working for him in France to help with the correspondence after May 1792, and French political problems were arguably too complex for Thomson in any case. Pleyel became embroiled with the French authorities because he had previously worked with the Viennese aristocracy, and Thomson lost contact with him after May 1792. It was not necessarily a huge advantage that his next three composers,

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[82] See Chapter V, pp. 246-53.

[83] Preface to the first set of 1793. For additional information see Chapter III, i: The Composers, pp. 76-7.

Kozeluch, Haydn and Beethoven, were based in Vienna. Central European transportation networks were all affected by the problems of the French Wars, and this time it was not possible for Thomson to introduce himself in person. This was the point at which connections with the diplomatic service came into play. Robert Arbuthnot, Thomson's colleague at the Board of Trustees, was in correspondence with a Scottish diplomat, Alexander Straton (1763-1832), who was born in Laurencekirk, not far from the Arbuthnot family home in Kincardineshire.[84] Straton was working as Secretary to Sir Robert Murray Keith, and when Keith moved to Vienna in 1782 Straton went with him. In 1789, when the post of Secretary of the British Legation there became vacant, Straton was appointed. He was to remain in this position until 1799, acting as Chargé d'Affaires during Keith's absence at the Congress of Sistova in 1790-1, and in 1792-3 when Keith resigned and the Legation was awaiting the arrival of Sir Morton Eden.[85] During Eden's absence in 1794 he also took charge.[86] Although there is no mention of Thomson in Arbuthnot's letters to Straton, it is almost certain that the connection was forged by Arbuthnot. The probability of composers such as Kozeluch, Haydn or Beethoven accepting work from an unknown Scottish publisher was by no means guaranteed, but a personal visit on behalf of Thomson by an important diplomat like Straton was a different proposal altogether. Thomson was well aware of this:

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[84] Correspondence between Straton and Arbuthnot is found in the **SuRO**: Straton Collection HA 239/2/503-524.

[85] A letter from P. Sevright is found in the first letterbook: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/66-7. Sevright was Sir Morton Eden's Private Secretary and was apparently called upon, by Straton, to help with the payment of 200 Ducats to Kozeluch on 18 July 1799. Whether Sevright gave the money himself, or whether he was simply responsible for signing a document on behalf of Thomson is unclear. Sevright was also asked if he might help with the transportation of Kozeluch's settings to and from Britain: Thomson to Kozeluch, 17 May 1799: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/64-5; Straton to Thomson, 25 November 1799: 35263/76-7; Sevright to Thomson, undated, but amongst the 1799 correspondence: 35263/66-7.

[86] Straton's letterbooks written during his time as Chargé d'Affaires in Vienna are now with the Foreign Office Records at **GB-Lpro**: FO 7/24; 31; 32; 37. The books contain Straton's letters to the Secretary of State, written, though not continuously, between 1790 and 1794.

> If you happen not to be personally acquainted with him [Kozeluch], I daresay you must know some of the Dilettanti acquainted with him who would assist you in the negotiation proposed in the letter. Going to him through a channil [sic] so respectable, it will doubtless be regarded with much more attention than if from me without the intervention of such a friend.[87]

The links with both Kozeluch and Haydn were shaped by Straton,[88] and much of the information concerning payments and the discussion of musical settings was related to Thomson in Straton's letters. Thomson expected Straton to make contact with the composers and to deliver the melodies which they were to set. He was also responsible for transporting completed musical arrangements to Edinburgh, and ensuring that the composers were paid for their work.[89] It helped, of course, that Thomson also worked for a British government body, and he used his official address at the Board of Trustees for his transactions with composers and lyricists alike.[90]

On occasion Straton was also called upon to persuade Kozeluch and Haydn to carry out Thomson's wishes when they disagreed. The first problem to overcome was Kozeluch's 'extreme

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[87] Thomson to Straton, 6 February 1797: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/7-8.

[88] Thomson never made a direct reference to his connection with the diplomatic service, but went so far as to thank Straton indirectly in the preface to his 1801 volumes (**SIa** and **SIIa**): 'He [the Editor] was so fortunate, however, assisted by the good offices of a gentleman at Vienna, as to engage Mr KOZELUCH and DR HAYDN, to proceed with the work'.

[89] Straton's letters to Thomson between 4 March 1797 and 20 September 1801: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/11-12; 20-21; 25-6; 28-9; 34-5; 38-9; 42-3; 46-7; 60-61; 76-7; 81-2; 84-5; 90-91; 96-7; 103-4; 121-2; 124-5 and 128-9.

[90] Burns humorously commented: 'Little do the Trustees for our Manufactures, when they frank my letters to you, little do they consider what kind of manufacture they are encouraging. - The manufacture of NON-SENSE was certainly not in idea when the Act of Parliament was framed; & yet, under my hands & your cover, it thrives amazingly. - Well, there are more pernicious manufactures, that is certain'. Burns to Thomson, [September 1794]: Roy, Letters, ii. 305 (636).

reluctance'[91] to sign a declaration of copyright. The difficulties created by Pleyel's disappearance had infuriated Thomson - 'I have been juggled, disappointed and grossly deceived'.[92] He had no written contract with Pleyel, though in the circumstances such an agreement would have made little difference, but his experiences convinced him that contracts and declarations were essential. After much debate Kozeluch signed Thomson's contract and the agreement between 'Leopoldo Kozeluch Professor of Music & Maitre de Chapelle to his Imperial Majesty at Vienna, of one part, and George Thomson of the City of Edinburgh, North Britain, Gentleman, on the other part', was sent to Thomson along with a letter from Straton on 1 June 1797.[93] Another main problem for Straton was persuading both Kozeluch and Haydn to accept the fee which Thomson had offered them. Any financial problems with Kozeluch were dealt with carefully, since there had been something of a war between editor and composer concerning the simplification of completed arrangements.[94] Thomson was unable to afford Kozeluch's price for piano pieces, but managed to avoid the problems of refusing them by persuading Preston to publish them instead.[95] Thomson's relationship with Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was much more amiable than that with Kozeluch, yet he too complained of Thomson's fee. On 16 February 1800 Straton wrote to inform Thomson that Haydn had agreed to arrange the 15 airs which Thomson had forwarded, but that he was unhappy about the fee of 2 Ducats per song.[96] Thomson was not in a position to be able to offer more money, but Haydn had requested that Thomson send him some India handkerchiefs, which were apparently easier to come by in Edinburgh, and it

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[91] Straton to Thomson, 1 June 1797: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/20-1.

[92] Thomson to Straton, 6 February 1797: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/7-8.

[93] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/18-24.

[94] See Chapter III, iii: Difficulty and Simplification, pp. 108-12.

[95] Thomson to Kozeluch, 1 August 1798: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/54-5.

[96] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/84-5.

was Straton who devised the ingenious idea of sending them as gifts to the composer.[97] The hope was that Haydn would be so pleased with Thomson's gifts of India handkerchiefs, along with a snuff box, and copies of proofs of his arrangements, that he would consequently forgive or forget the fee. The plan worked. Haydn received the present from Straton on 20 September 1801,[98] and no mention of fees was made from then until 1803,[99] when Thomson silenced the composer once more with some India handkerchiefs.[100] It helped that Haydn was blessed with a less impetuous personality than Kozeluch, but Straton was also apparently a likeable character. A document amongst his papers from Vienna, which was written for Straton on his departure from the city, includes descriptions of many of the characters with whom he socialized. The unidentified author described Straton as

> d'une figure forte interessante, d'une caractere solide et douce, froid en amour. En apparence chaud en amitiés, le coeur honête et loyal, l'esprit aimable, instruit parlant très bien, sa façon de penser est originale mais d'une originalité qui ne peut que plaise, dans le premier moment il [ne s'] n'interesse pas autant que quand on le conait mieux, alors on ne peut lui refuser tout l'estime que son Caractere inspire, il est d'une humeur toujours égale, ses sentiments sont nobles et génereux. Il est sur et agréable en société.[101]

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[97] Straton to Thomson, 30 April 1801: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/124-5.

[98] Straton to Thomson: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/128-9.

[99] Haydn to Thomson, 30 June 1803: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/170.

[100] Haydn to Thomson, 1 July 1803: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/171.

[101] This document includes descriptions of Charles Lichnowsky and Count Razumowsky, two of Beethoven's sponsors, and also of 'Le Colonel Stuard', most probably Charles Stuart who was Straton's successor at the Legation (he had 'le coeur sensible et génereux, l'esprit juste' and was 'aimable en sociétés' like Straton). There is also a description of 'Mme de Kageneck' who corresponded with Straton for many years after his depature from Vienna. It should be noted that this quotation is taken directly from the manuscript and thus includes the mistakes made by the writer. It may be that French was not his/her first language. **SuRO**: Straton Collection HA 239/2/859.

Straton left Vienna in 1801 for Constantinople,[102] where he was to remain until 1805, when Robert Arbuthnot's relative Charles arrived to assume the role of British Ambassador.[103] Thomson must surely have been sorry to lose his Viennese agent, especially as Straton's relationship with Haydn had blossomed into one of friendship. Haydn himself was rather worried about the consequences of losing Straton, asking Thomson immediately that he 'designate another person to take Mr Straton's place'.[104] Thomson's connection at the Legation, and with Haydn, continued through Straton's successor, Charles Stuart (1779-1867), an experienced diplomat who was later to serve in Russia, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and France.[105] However, Stuart was of little help to Thomson's venture, and was only involved in arranging two payments to Haydn and transporting the composer's six variations on Scots songs. He finally informed Thomson in 1802 that, due to ill health, Haydn had decided to 'decline further communications'.[106] In fact, Haydn continued to produce arrangements for Thomson, or at least to send settings by himself or by his pupils, until 1805.[107] There is no evidence

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[102] Thomson wrote to Straton in Constantinople on 29 December 1801. Straton had written to Thomson to explain a problem with one of the payments, and Thomson replied by thanking Straton for the trouble of explaining all of this in detail before leaving Vienna: 'For this and the many proofs of your kindness, which I never can forget, I beg you will accept of my warmest & most grateful acknowledgment'. **SuRO**: Straton Collection HA 239/2/662.

[103] For information about Charles see **SuRO**: Straton Collection HA 239/2/863-95, the Arbuthnot Memories, pp. 189-226, and The Correspondence of Charles Arbuthnot, ed. A. Aspinall, Royal Historical Society (lxv), London, 1941.

[104] Haydn to Thomson, 27 October 1801: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/130.

[105] For information on Charles Stuart's diplomatic activities see the Stuart de Rothesay Papers at **GB-Lpro**: FO 342 and his letters to the Secretary of State: FO 7/68-9. Stuart's letters to Thomson from 4 March 1802 until 6 August 1803: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/150-51; 158-9; 178-80.

[106] Stuart to Thomson, 6 August 1803: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/178-80.

[107] Haydn's last letter to Thomson was dated 6 February 1805: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/254. H.C. Robbins Landon commented that 'we now know that Haydn himself only supervised most of the work [for Thomson], giving it to his

to suggest that Stuart was involved in other transactions for Thomson after 1802, and in 1804 he moved on from Vienna to St Petersburg.[108] In a letter of 2 September 1805 to Charles Broughton, a London-based diplomat, Thomson inquired about the possibility of recruiting the help of another diplomat in Vienna. He stated that Stuart had mentioned his successor Charles Jenkinson (1784-1851) as a possible contact.[109] Rather than writing directly to Jenkinson, Thomson chose to make the connection through Broughton, asking that he persuade Jenkinson to visit Haydn and

> represent to him as emphatically as possible my earnest desire, that he would compose Ritornellos and Accompaniments without delay to the 20 Airs which I sent him.[110]

Thomson also asked, in the same letter, if Jenkinson could inquire whether 'the India Handkerchiefs I sent him [Haydn] be worn out, and if he would wish to have a few more', proving that, until the end of his correspondence with Haydn, Thomson's gift of India handkerchiefs was strategic. There are no letters to or from Jenkinson in the Thomson letterbooks, and no mention of him was made elsewhere. From this point Thomson's diplomatic link became much less active. Straton's efforts had forged the connections for Thomson, and the publication of Kozeluch's arrangements, and particularly those

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pupils. Probably Neukomm was responsible for most of the settings of this period'. H.C. Robbins Landon, Haydn Chronicle and Works: The Late Years 1801-1809, London, 1977, p. 22.

[108] Stuart returned from St Petersburg to serve as Chargé d'Affaires in Vienna from November 1805 until January 1806.

[109] Some of Jenkinson's letters are held in the National Library of Wales (**GB-AB**), but family correspondence and political letters and papers dating 1795-1825 are held amongst the Liverpool papers (as Jenkinson was Earl of Liverpool) in the British Library: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 38190-489 and 38564-581. Miscellaneous correspondence from 1793-1851 is on indefinite loan to the British Library: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS Loan 72. Letters connected with Jenkinson when he worked in Vienna between 1804-7 are also found at **GB-Lpro**: FO 605/Vol.1.

[110] 2 September 1805: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/70-1.

of Haydn, had brought him to public notice. It is doubtless the case that neither Stuart nor Jenkinson were personally as interested in Thomson's venture as Straton had been. Straton's role was invaluable, but such a link was no longer necessary.

In 1803 Thomson sent his first letter to Beethoven without a diplomat as intermediary.[111] Banking channels in Vienna had been opened by the combined efforts of Straton and Thomson's main British bank Coutts & Co., who had already been involved in payments to Kozeluch and Haydn.[112] Most of the Beethoven correspondence passed between Coutts in London and Beethoven's Viennese bankers Fries & Co.[113] Thomson still used connections with the diplomatic service when he needed them. Charles Broughton at Downing Street, who was often asked to help in the transportation of settings by Kozeluch and Haydn, and with their payments, was also called upon to distribute materials to and from Beethoven.[114] On 29 June 1815, Coutts informed Thomson that they had received two packages from Vienna which had come from Beethoven via Fries & Co. to the Austrian

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[111] No copy of Thomson's first letter has been found, but Beethoven made reference to it in his reply of 5 October 1803: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/189-90. Donald MacArdle has dated Thomson's original letter 20 July 1803. See D. MacArdle, 'Beethoven and George Thomson, Music & Letters, xxxvii (1956), 28.

[112] The Coutts connection had been forged in the early 1790s, through the Arbuthnot family. Burns had written to Maria Riddel early in 1795: 'Pleyel is still in statu quo.- In a little time, however, we will have all the work.- He is still in Strasbourg; but the Messrs Coutts, the London bankers, have been so obliging as to allow my friend Thomson, the Editor, the channel of their correspondence in Switzerland, through which medium the business is going forward.' Roy, Letters, ii. 342 (658). Coutts have no record of this. See also Chapter V.

[113] Coutts wrote to Thomson on 26 December 1803 to inform him that his packet for Dr Haydn and a letter for Beethoven had arrived in London and that it would be forwarded the following day: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/102.

[114] Two copies of a letter to Beethoven dated 29 September 1809 were sent, the first through Coutts & Co. and the second through Broughton, suggesting that while the banks were regarded as the first route, Thomson still occasionally made use of diplomatic connections: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/308-9. In 1813 Broughton was still involved in transporting manuscripts for Thomson: 35267/72-3. And a letter of 14 June 1820, from Thomson to Fries & Co., also refers to materials being sent via the British Ambassador, and quotes Broughton's name: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/51-2.

Ambassador before being sent on to London, showing that the diplomatic connection was still used during the 1810s.[115] Personal couriers who worked for the diplomatic service or in connection with the banks often carried Thomson's packages to and fro, and friends were only too keen to inform Thomson if their associates were planning to travel from Britian to the Continent and back, in the hope that they might be able to help him. George Arbuthnot wrote to Thomson on 27 February 1798 to tell him that his friend 'Chevalier Acciaporce' would be travelling to Paris.[116] Likewise Straton informed Thomson, on 25 March 1798, that Mr Bacon had just set out for England and that he was going to send Thomson's package by mail coach to Edinburgh, when he reached Britain.[117]

The banks of Coutts and Fries exchanged a great deal of material and there are several letters from Thomson to Coutts asking them to forward packages and letters to Vienna, and from Coutts to Thomson informing him of the arrival of a package from Fries and stating how they intended to send it north. Frequently the packages came on the London-Edinburgh mail coach,[118] but some went by boat, the same channel used by Thomson to send loose sheets to Preston. While some of the

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[115] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/221-2. See also Thomson to Coutts, 2 July 1815, in which Thomson informed the bank that he would send someone to collect them: 35267/151.

[116] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/36-7.

[117] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/42-3. Straton wrote again to Thomson on 18 June 1800, informing him that 'a messenger' would send the manuscripts from London to Edinburgh: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/90-1.

[118] In 1813 the Royal Mailcoach travelled from Edinburgh to London every day and a mailcoach from London arrived in Edinburgh every morning except Wednesday. There were several routes, but the Edinburgh to London coach usually stopped for an overnight at Newcastle and then York, suggesting that it took the coach approximately three days to travel between the two cities. See The General Almanack of Scotland and British Register for 1813, pp. 44-5. The Edinburgh Almanack of 1822 stated that 'the London mail is despatched every day at 7 o'clock P.M.' and that it 'arrives every evening, except Tuesdays, at half past nine' (p. 59). Shiela Margetson in her Journey by Stages, London, 1967, p. 140, noted that in 1786 the coach travelled north from London in sixty hours.

materials sailed from the Thames to Leith,[119] others came from different ports, such as that forwarded from Coutts to Thomson via Amos Jun [sic] of Falmouth on 29 June 1812.[120] Some manuscripts seem to have made their way to Thomson independently. A 'box of music' came from Vienna to Rotterdam in January 1811,[121] and Beethoven manuscripts were also sent to Rotterdam in 1814.[122] It was between these dates that Thomson found himself in serious difficulties with his transportation network. Beethoven was required to send a second copy of his 53 airs to Thomson on 20 July 1811,[123] because they had gone missing en route to Edinburgh, and Thomson became anxious about the possibility of losing manuscripts, letters and receipts. He insisted on duplicating all letters and musical manuscripts to Vienna during 1812-14,

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[119] Preston's materials travelled by ship from Leith to the Thames, and in the 1840s Coventry & Hollier were still using this means of transport, sending copies and plates to Thomson on the company clipper: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/134-5. Thomson did explain that John Richardson and his family travelled to London by 'steam paddler' in his letter to Preston of 27 October 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/44-6. During the early 1820s Shipping Company Smacks travelled on average three times a week (on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) from Leith to London and three times a week (on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday) from London to Leith. See The Post Office Annual Directory from Whitsunday 1822, to Whitsunday 1823, pp. 462-3. By the early 1840s ships were sailing to London from smaller ports such as Kircaldy, but steam vessels travelled from Leith to London on average four times a week. See The New Edinburgh Almanack of 1840, pp.104-5.

[120] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/65-6.

[121] William Jay to Thomson: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/1-2.

[122] Another letter from William Jay of 4 October 1814, informing Thomson that a friend of Jay's had kept the package for some time: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/169.

[123] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/24-6. On 23 November 1809 (35263/310-11) Beethoven agreed to set 43 Welsh and Irish airs for Thomson. Donald MacArdle believes that Thomson sent another letter on 10 February 1810 with 10 extra airs - MacArdle, Beethoven and George Thomson, pp. 32-3. In any case on 17 July 1810 Beethoven sent 53 'Scottish' airs (35263/322-3). He must have confused 'Scottish' with 'British', for the manuscript contained no Scottish songs. **D-DS** Mus. MS 975 contains the 53 songs - 43 Welsh airs + 10 Irish airs. The number 53 has been changed from 43. **D-Bds** 29 IV contains exactly the same 53 songs, but the original number 43 has been altered to 44. This manuscript has an extra song sandwiched between the first 43 and the extra 10 settings, beginning 'When Mortals all...' (WIII/78).

and demanded that his Viennese correspondents do the same. A copy of his letter to Beethoven of 5 August 1812, along with the payment for 18 settings of foreign melodies, was sent to Fries & Co. with a duplicate sent to Samuel Latham at Dover (who was apparently working in association with Frederick Faber in Paris), and a third copy sent to one Mr McLean at Messrs Wilson Allardyce & Co. in Malta.[124] Thomson maintained close contact with the above package and payment, and wrote again to Fries on 30 October asking that they send copies of their receipt to both Samuel Latham and Frederick Faber.[125] But this Vienna-Paris-Dover-Edinburgh channel, which Thomson employed throughout 1813, was not wholly successful. The next package from Beethoven included his settings for 30 Irish airs, which he dispatched to Thomson on 19 February 1813.[126] Beethoven received payment for these settings from Fries on 27 February,[127] long before they arrived in Edinburgh. Thomson complained, in a letter to Beethoven of 27 March 1813,[128] that he had sent 21 airs in August 1812, which he still had not received.[129] However, he made no mention of the 30 Irish settings until 9 December 1813, when he wrote to John Thomson to explain that a package of settings from Beethoven had gone missing en route between Fries in Vienna, Faber in Paris and

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[124] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/45-7. This is followed, in the letterbook, by a letter from Thomson to Latham dated 11 August 1812, in which Thomson specifically asked Latham to send 'packages' on to Paris and then Vienna, suggesting that the package to Fries was probably sent via Latham and not via Coutts: 35267/47.

[125] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/54-5. The receipt in this letter was not related to the 18 settings, but to the large collection of 53 settings which had been sent in duplicate in 1811.

[126] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/84-5.

[127] Beethoven to Thomson, 27 February 1813: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/91.

[128] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/72-3.

[129] It is unclear exactly which settings these were. Thomson's letter of 5 August 1812 (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/45-7) referred to particular settings (from the 53 which included Welsh and Irish songs), and he noted that he sent 26 new airs to Beethoven, without specifying which they were.

Latham in Dover.[130] Apparently Thomson had already informed Latham, who was planning to speak to one of 'the folkstone smugglers', presumably to ask if such a packet from Vienna had recently passed through smuggling channels. Eventually on 23 April 1814, just when Thomson was giving up hope of the package ever arriving, the 30 settings reached Edinburgh and Thomson wrote to Beethoven to inform him.[131] It had taken this package 14 months to travel from Vienna to Edinburgh, yet when the transport system was in fine working order Thomson could receive a package within a month.[132] It must have been particularly infuriating for the editor that some letters and packages were arriving promptly, while others were taking over a year to reach him.

The transportation of songs and letters to and from Weber in Dresden and Hummel in Weimar seems to have been far less dramatic or problematic. When he first wrote to Weber in January 1825, Thomson gave the name of a contact in Dresden with whom Weber could collaborate if he so wished:

> I shall according to y^{r} pleasure either pay the money here to y^{r} countryman the Baron Ende to be paid to you by his mother the Baroness Ende née de Globig, or if you write me on receipt of this, & name a Banker at Dresden to receive the money, I will write to my Banker Messrs Coutts & Co London to remit it to Dresden.[133]

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[130] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/89.

[131] Thomson to Fries/Beethoven, 23 April 1814: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/96-7.

[132] Thomson's letter to Beethoven written on 15 October 1814 (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/122-4), thanked him for his manuscript containing corrections for some of the Irish airs, which Beethoven had sent to Thomson on 15 September 1814 (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/161-2). This letter is unusual, as it was written in Italian, while all other letters from Beethoven were in French.

[133] Thomson to Weber, 18 January 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS35268/137-9.

Thomson had befriended Ende and his mother on their visit to Edinburgh in 1824.[134] Although Weber tried to arrange for an associate to forward a letter to Thomson, the gentleman concerned 'neglected forwarding it' and returned it to Weber in 1826 so that he could take it to London himself.[135] Ende was involved in collaborating with Weber in person, as his letter to Thomson explains, but the transportation of the songs was most probably arranged by the Frankfurt bankers Messrs J.N. and J.P. Gogel, who organized the payments to the composer.[136] When Messrs Gogel were contacted on behalf of Thomson by the British bankers Brougham & Anderson on 9 June 1826, they were informed that they would also be asked to organize a payment to Hummel:

> A short time since we gave Mr Thomson an order upon you for twenty ducats, which he sent to a composer at Weimar, who has probably applied or will very soon apply to you for payment.[137]

Hummel was given the same information in Thomson's letter of introduction to the composer, which had been written on 3 April 1826.[138] There is no other information concerning the

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[134] Baron Ende to Thomson, 1 March 1826: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/159-60. Ende wrote that he and his mother had travelled on from Edinburgh to Paris where they arrived on 13 November. He concluded his letter thus: 'My mother desires me to present her compliments to you and we both wish to be remembered to all your family. We very often talk of the kindness you have shown us during our stay in Edinburgh'.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Thomson to Weber, 6 December 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/158-9. When Weber died in 1826, Thomson had already arranged for the payment of 16 Ducats for the extra 4 settings which the composer had planned to complete (see 35265/159-60), but he organized that the bankers Brougham & Anderson write to Messrs Gogel to ask that they withold the payment should anyone request it: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/171-2.

[137] Ibid.

[138] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/161-4. Thomson explained that 'at the foot of the next leaf you will find an order on Messrs. J.N. and J.P. Gogel of Frankfort-Maine for 20 ducats - which order you will please send to Frankfort accompanied by your own draft for that sum, & it will immediately be paid to you'.

transportation of songs from Weimar. Hummel informed Thomson, in a letter of 20 June 1832, that a relative in London would collect copies of Thomson's volumes from Preston's London shop. Yet while it is possible that this relative acted as an agent, it is more than likely that Hummel's settings were sent directly to Thomson. The composer's address book lists Thomson as 'Mr Georg Thomson, Trustees Office, Edinburgh'.[139]

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This chapter has moved from the first days of Thomson's venture to his established publishing house of the 1820s, and has examined the logistics of the organization and distribution of both musical manuscripts and finished volumes. Because it presents something of a summary of Thomson's publishing house, it may also have given the impression that most of Thomson's time was spent administering this group. This would be an untruthful picture, for back at the very beginning Thomson had to find material to publish. And from the outset as much, or even more, of his time and energy was spent commissioning and editing the artistic content of his collections.

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[139] **D-DÜk**: Miscellaneous Mss. 2219.

CHAPTER III - THE MUSIC

> There is hardly any people, however rude, that has not its music. The warrior, the hunter, and the shepherd, sing their triumphs, their exploits, and their loves, in strains dictated by nature, and inspired by feeling. Even among the most barbarous tribes, if there are any traces of the softer and better emotions, it is in their Songs that these traces are to be found; and music is thus not merely the most innocent pleasure which a rude people can enjoy, but a powerful instrument in quickening the progress of improvement, by cherishing the best feelings of our nature.[1]

So wrote Thomson at the beginning of his 'Dissertation Concerning the National Melodies of Scotland' of 1822-3. Even though the philanthropic properties of music were accepted by many at this time,[2] this conviction was informed by Thomson's personal experience, for he had undergone such a 'progress of improvement' through the concerts of the EMS, where he heard for the first time the works of the great European masters. Music, for Thomson, was not only a hobby about which he was passionate; it was the catalyst in his social progression, and the fact that it had been so influential in his own life was reason enough for his wish to share it with others. His hope was to capture the beauties of traditional Scottish songs (and later those of Wales and Ireland) on paper, to preserve the best of her melodies and lyrics for future generations, and, equally importantly, to educate as many as possible in the glories of modern composition. From the beginning his main musical aim was to present Scottish melodies with 'Symphonies and Accompaniments by the most distinguished Composers

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[1] From Thomson's 'Dissertation concerning the National Melodies of Scotland', The Select Melodies of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1822-3, i. 3.

[2] In the Preface to the first octavo volume of 1822, in which Thomson's 'Dissertation' also appeared, Thomson quoted Burney: 'It should be a principal object of mankind to attach the fair sex by every means to music, as it is the only amusement that may be enjoyed to excess, and the heart still remain virtuous and uncorrupted'.

living'.[3] The musical problems resulting from the unusual combination of traditional melody and contemporary European composition, and the details of Thomson's editing of the settings, will be discussed later. But without doubt, the selection of a group of eminent European composers to produce these musical settings for the volumes was Thomson's most important editorial decision, for, as he stated, it distinguished his collections from all others:

> No other National Melodies whatever, except those published by him, have had the pre-eminent advantage of being arranged by musicians of such acknowledged genius, profound knowledge and fine taste.[4]

i) The Composers

Thomson's impressive choice of composer/arrangers was primarily influenced by his experience of contemporary chamber and orchestral works at the EMS, and was doubtless also affected by the appearance of Napier's Selection of Original Scots Songs with its arrangements by Haydn. Thomson began by contacting two popular, and at that time relatively well-known, composers, namely Pleyel and Kozeluch, who together produced the first 100 settings for Thomson's early sets of Scottish songs between 1792 and 1801.[5] His reason for choosing them, rather than other better known artists, may have resulted from the introduction of their works at the EMS concerts, for pieces by both composers began to appear in the repertoire of the Society in the 1780s. Furthermore, as this

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[3] Preface to the first volume of 1801 (**SIa**), p. 1.

[4] From 'On Scottish Airs and songs', published as the preface to Thomson's volumes of 1831 (**SIg**, **SIIf**, **SIIIf**, **SIVf** and **SVc**).

[5] 32 of the settings published were Pleyel's and the remaining 68 were Kozeluch's, but Thomson published at least another 31 of Kozeluch's arrangements in other Scottish volumes and in the Welsh volumes (see Appendix 1). A total of 140 settings were mentioned in the correspondence between Kozeluch and Thomson.

was the very beginning of Thomson's venture, he may have deliberately decided to avoid collaboration with the musical giants of the moment, preferring to wait until he had found some stability as an editor/publisher, and until he had created more capital with which to entice them. Ignace Pleyel (1757-1831), 'Thomson's first Apollo',[6] was at that time the most famous of Haydn's pupils, and his works were particularly enjoyed by the London concert-goers. The collaboration with Pleyel was not altogether successful.[7] Thomson contacted him initially when the composer was still in London, since he was resident in the city from December 1791 until May 1792.[8] But when he returned to France he was repeatedly arrested by the authorities who believed that his earlier associations with the Viennese aristocracy before he moved to France in the early 1780s were representative of his pro-Austrian and pro-aristocratic feelings. When Thomson wrote to Burns on 10 August 1794, he had apparently given up hope, believing that 'I shall have no more songs from Pleyel till France and we are friends'.[9] In fact the 32 airs received in January 1793 were the only songs Thomson managed to extract. This episode was Thomson's first taste of the disruption brought about by

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[6] Hadden described Pleyel in this way, explaining that this was 'Thomson's own term'. Hadden, Thomson, p. 292.

[7] The first of the Thomson letterbooks includes letters from Thomas Hankey of London and from Robert Horsfield, the Clerk of the Company of Stationers, written between January and June 1793 concerning Pleyel's 32 settings and six of his Sonatas for the piano forte or harpsichord: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/ 1-5. There are no letters to or from the composer in Thomson's letterbooks, but in addition to those above, Pleyel was mentioned in several of the letters to and from Kozeluch and Alexander Straton (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/ 7-8; 64-5; 118-9; 123) and also in several of the letters to and from Burns (Roy Letters, ii. 211 (559), 224 (571), 239 (585), 280 (615), 294 (625), 302 (632), 340 (656), 342 (658) and Currie, Works, iv. 1 (I), 19 (VII), 28 (XI), 38 (XVII), 53 (XXIII), 117 (LIII)).

[8] Thomson stated, in the Preface to his First set of 1793, that he 'went to London' specifically to show Pleyel the airs which he wanted to have set. There is no other source by which this can be verified.

[9] Currie, Works, iv. 117 (LIII).

the French wars, which was to become increasingly troublesome when he corresponded with Beethoven.[10]

Robert Burns, who was Thomson's closest correspondent at the time, was generally uncomfortable about Thomson's decision to commission professional, and moreover non-Scottish, musicians to provide sophisticated arrangements for the airs. He was the only correspondent to display discomfort about the so-called elegance of the settings, and although much of his pessimism was related to his self-confessed musical ignorance,[11] his opinions were doubtless shared by many of Thomson's prospective buyers. He made little comment about Pleyel in his first letters to Thomson, though Thomson had proudly told Burns of his collaboration with Pleyel in his first letter, describing him as 'the most agreeable composer living'.[12] Instead Burns warned Thomson about the disastrous consequences of allowing Pleyel to alter the melody before arranging it,[13] and showed particular concern when the progress of the first set of 25 songs was hindered by Pleyel's disappearance: 'I am quite vexed at Pleyel's being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work',[14] and 'Is there no news yet, my dear Sir, of Pleyel?'.[15] After a short time Burns decided to promote his friend Stephen Clarke (1735?-1797) as Pleyel's successor. Clarke, who was ironically English by birth, had lived and worked in Scotland for most of his life and was a well-known keyboard player, teacher and composer. His

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[10] See Chapter II, iii: Transportation and Distribution, pp. 69-71.

[11] Burns wrote: 'I am sensible that my taste in Music must be inelegant & vulgar, because people of undisputed & cultivated taste can find no merit in many of my favorite tunes ... many of our Strathspeys, ancient & modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you & other judges would probably be shewing signs of disgust': Roy, Letters, ii. 307 (637).

[12] Thomson to Burns, September 1792: Currie, Works, iv. 1 (I).

[13] Roy, Letters, ii. 211 (559).

[14] Roy, Letters, ii. 294 (625).

[15] Roy, Letters, ii. 302 (632).

His contributions to the SMM had failed to impress Thomson, who was keen to avoid contact altogether, but Burns was adamant about Clarke's skill as a musician, and more importantly as an arranger. He stated early in the correspondence that he thought Clarke superior to Pleyel on the subject of Scots song - 'Our friend, Clarke, than whom, you know, there is not a better judge of the subject'[16] - and in August 1793 he even took the opportunity of sending some of Clarke's work to Thomson in the hope that it would be accepted.[17] He also made moves to organize a meeting between Thomson and Clarke in his letter of 19 October 1794, by informing Thomson that Clarke 'goes to your town by today's Fly' and by stating that he wanted Thomson to 'call on him, & take his opinion in general'.[18] Burns's persistence ultimately triumphed and Thomson did meet with Clarke on more than one occasion, apparently even enjoying the experience, as he and Clarke spent time playing and singing through old melodies.[19] But Thomson still refused to recruit Clarke. When the possibility of contacting Pleyel still looked unlikely in 1795, Burns wrote to Thomson again recommending his friend. Though he stated, on seeing Thomson's first set of 1793, that he had never before seen such 'elegance and correctness' in a musical publication,[20] he still thought Clarke preferable to Pleyel:

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[16] Roy, Letters, ii. 211 (559).

[17] Roy, Letters, ii. 226 (574).

[18] Roy, Letters, ii. 315 (644).

[19] Thomson wrote to Burns, 'since receiving your last, I have had another interview with Mr Clarke, and a long consultation'. 15 November 1794: Currie, Works, iv. 151 (LXIII).

[20] Roy, Letters, ii. 220 (569).

> If you are ultimately frustrated of Pleyel's assistance, what think you of applying to Clarke? - This, you will say, would be breaking faith with your Subscribers; but, bating that circumstance, I am confident that Clarke is equal, in Scotish Song; to take up the pen, even after Pleyel.[21]

Thomson was obviously keen to discuss melodic matters with Clarke, but if Clarke did produce any arrangements for the collections,[22] then Thomson failed to attribute them to him. He did use one of Clarke's melodies entitled **Margaret's ghost** with an arrangement by Haydn, which was published with David Mallet's famous ballad 'William and Margaret' (**SIII/105**), but this was after Clarke's death. It would have been both cheaper and easier for Thomson to have commissioned Clarke, and his settings, though doubtless not as sophisticated as those which Thomson did commission, would surely have been truer to the idiosyncracies of the melodies, and thus in many ways closer to the culture whence they came. But Thomson chose deliberately to avoid Clarke and other contemporary Scottish musicians. He did not want to produce a collection like the SMM, but planned, instead, 'a correct and an elegant Repository of our national airs'.[23] He was to commission British musicians - namely Henry Bishop, George Hogarth and George Farquhar Graham - later in his publishing career, but his primary aim was the bringing together of his national song and the European musical works which so inspired him. Thomson may not have been fully aware of the transformation which the melodies would experience at the hands of European musicians who knew little of Scotland as a nation, and were thus ignorant of her cultural life. But it could be argued that he was blinded by his passion for their music. Thomson was as keen to develop an understanding and enjoyment of European music in Scotland as he was to introduce these national

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[21] Roy, Letters, ii. 340 (656).

[22] One setting in Vol. IV of 1826 (**SIVe/183**) was attributed to Clarke's son, William.

[23] Preface to First Set 1793.

melodies to the Europeans. His overriding principal was enlightenment, though it was wrapped in the term 'improvement'. He was particularly careful never to denounce simple Scottish songs, and even emphasized his love for unaccompanied song,[24] but he clearly felt such songs to be superior when they were interpreted by the great European masters. Contemporary Scottish settings could have been tastefully done, while still embodying an understanding of the melody and thus directly relating to its cultural background, but Thomson's new arrangements embodied a different vision of Scottish culture. His collections presented, at least to some extent, a European view of Scotland (and also of Wales and Ireland), which was inextricably linked with the vision Thomson himself wished to portray. The musical settings were the product of a modern Germanic school of composition, and they were created to attract the interest of those who enjoyed such works, be they British or European.

Thomson stood firmly by his decision to look towards Europe for his musical arrangements. He bypassed Clarke, and by 1797, when Pleyel had failed to respond to his letters, he decided to approach his second composer, Leopold Kozeluch (1747-1818), with whom he had a heated but profitable correspondence. Kozeluch was working at this time as the 'Professor of Music and Maitre de Chapelle to his Imperial Majesty at Vienna', as he was termed in the contract with Thomson.[25] Even though Pleyel was known to British audiences and performers alike, Kozeluch was in Thomson's opinon 'equally celebrated'.[26] His works were well known throughout the British Isles, and the editor thus clearly thought him appropriate for his collections. Yet, within two years Thomson had plucked up the

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[24] Preface to Vol. I of 1801 (**SIa**).

[25] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/18-19. See also Chapter II, iii: Transportation and Distribution, pp. 62-3.

[26] Preface to the second set in 1798 (**B**).

courage to make contact with Haydn, his 'first love',[27] whom he had avoided initially. Haydn's involvement in Napier's collection of songs, produced between 1790 and 1795, had doubtless convinced Thomson that his decision to commission such famous composers was viable, but he probably felt uncomfortable about making immediate contact with Haydn during the composer's first visit to London in 1791, choosing his pupil Pleyel instead. Thomson was sensitive enough to see that an approach, when Haydn was already working with a rival publisher on a similar publication, could be wrongly interpreted. When he decided eventually to write to Haydn in 1799, he found the composer was genuinely delighted to contribute to the collections. Haydn was to be the keenest of Thomson's composers, always displaying enthusiasm, and believing that through Thomson's publications his name would would 'live in Scotland many years after my death'.[28] Correspondence with Kozeluch and with Haydn ran from the late 1790s, and although Thomson's last Haydn settings arrived in 1805, the connection with Kozeluch lasted until 1809.[29]

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[27] Hadden, Thomson, p. 303. Thomson's first letter to Haydn is missing, but he asked Alexander Straton to make contact with the composer in his letter of 30 November 1799: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/79-80. His first letter to the composer was apparently written on 30 October 1799, as he explained in a letter to a friend. See Hadden, Thomson, p. 304.

[28] Prefaces of volumes including Haydn settings, almost without exception, quoted a translation of Haydn's phrase, which had originally been written in a letter to Thomson of 5 December 1801, in Italian: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/136-7 - 'I boast of this Work, and by it I flatter myself, my name will live in Scotland many years after my death' or 'con quello lavoro mi lusinglo di vivere in Scozzia molti anni doppo la mia morte'. Thomas Moore was to state in a letter to Thomson of 16 July 1805: 'I feel very much flattered by the application with which you have honoured me, and the idea of my being associated in any way with Haydn is too tempting to my vanity to be easily resisted': **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/270-1.

[29] Thomson's last extant letter to Kozeluch is dated 21 February 1801: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/118-9. In it Thomson complained bitterly about Kozeluch's refusal to simplify settings (see below iii: Difficulty and simplification). The last documents from Kozeluch to Thomson, dated 6 January 1809 and 9 January 1809, took the form of a receipt for 10 Irish airs, and an account of the money paid to Kozeluch between 1807 and 1809 for another 27 Welsh and Irish settings: 35263/301-3.

After receiving a favourable response from Haydn, Thomson then became more confident about approaching other famous composers, and in 1803 he sent a letter of introduction to Beethoven (1770-1827). His choice of Beethoven as his next composer has already been touched upon.[30] By the beginning of the nineteenth century Thomson was sufficiently keen to purchase his own copies of chamber works by Haydn, and to acquaint himself with some of Beethoven's early pieces. Although Beethoven's works were too recent to appear in the EMS concerts,[31] the new concert life in Edinburgh, which grew directly from the activites of the EMS, was both exciting and eventful,[32] and Beethoven's compositions became more popular as the nineteenth century progressed. His 'Grand Symphony' (the First Symphony in C, Op. 21) was included in the Second Evening Concert of the first Edinburgh Musical Festival of 1815,[33] and the first part of the Fourth Morning Concert ended with the 'Hallelujah' from The Mount of Olives.[34] His works were also included in the second Festival of 1819, as described in detail by Thomson in his letter to Beethoven of 23 November,[35] and in the third Festival of 1824.[36]

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[30] See Chapter I, pp. 27-8.

[31] There are no works by Beethoven in the 'Index to the Whole Musick' of the EMS.

[32] The best account of Scottish musical life after 1800 is R.A. Marr, Music for the People: A Retrospect of the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1888, with an Account of the Rise of Choral Societies in Scotland, Edinburgh & Glasgow, 1889. Marr's introductory essay gives a detailed account of the various musical institutions in the main Scottish cities, and describes how they grew from the activities of societies like the EMS.

[33] G.F. Graham, An Account of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival held between the 30th October and 5th November 1815, Edinburgh & London, 1816, p. 61.

[34] Ibid., pp. 116-121.

[35] Thomson described the success of the second Festival, explaining that amongst Haydn's Creation and Mozart's Requiem, Beethoven's Symphony in D (the Second Symphony Op. 36), Mount of Olives (Op. 85) and the overture to Egmont (Op. 84) were enthusiastically received - 'toutes ont été reçus avec enthousiasme,- et l'auditoise demandoient le derniere Piece une seconde fois avec les acclamations. Enfin nous avon été au Paradis pendant une semaine':

Beethoven's compositions had rarely been performed in Edinburgh before 1815, and it is significant that performances of his works became more regular and held greater importance as the Festivals progressed, for Thomson was an ordinary director of the first Festival and served on the Musical Committee of the second and third Festivals. It would be an exaggeration to suggest that Thomson was solely responsible for promoting Beethoven's works in Scotland, but he was surely influential in persuading his colleagues to include such pieces in the Festival programmes, perhaps hoping that sales of his own volumes would consequently rise. Although contact with the composer was made in 1803, the correspondence proper did not begin until 1806, when Thomson commissioned Beethoven for settings of Welsh and Irish airs. It was a stormy exchange, for both editor and composer had strong opinions,[37] but Beethoven was a conscientious contributor, who worked hard for Thomson, and who felt strongly about the collections. While Pleyel, Kozeluch and Haydn were probably interested in the commission primarily for financial reasons, Beethoven's impetus was not purely monetary. As Felix Lederer commented, it was because of the composer's interest in the writings of Rousseau, and especially in Herder's plans to produce a collection of 'Lieder aller Völker', that Beethoven was drawn towards Thomson's collections.[38] He wrote to Thomson in

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GB-Lbl Add. MS 35268/44-5.

[36] There was no published account of the Festivals of 1819 and 1824. Information has been gleaned from festival programmes in the Edinburgh Room of the **GB-Ep**, and also in a manuscript, now in private hands, of the minutes from the meetings of the directors of the 1819 and 1824 Festivals. Programmes from the Festival of 1824 show that Beethoven's Mount of Olives was performed in its entirety in the last concert of the Festival on Sunday 30 October. A septet of Beethoven's was also performed in 1824 in the second Miscellaneous Concert on Wednesday 27 October. See **GB-Ep**: Festival Programmes, Marr Collection: YML 38 e.

[37] See below, iii: Difficulty and Simplification.

[38] Felix Lederer, Beethoven's Bearbeitungen schottischer und anderer Volkslieder, Bonn, 1934, pp. 46-7. Lederer also believed that Beethoven was drawn towards Scottish melodies in particular because Herder wrote about Ossian: 'Wir wissen, daß Beethoven Herder gelesen, daß er Herdersche Gedichte

September 1814 that he would not have undertaken Thomson's commissions were it not for the particular affection he felt for the English nation and Scottish melody.[39]

There were undoubtedly similar influences at work upon Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), whom Thomson approached in 1824.[40] It was tragic that the commission came so late in Weber's life, for his settings are some of the best in the collections. He was only able to complete ten settings for Thomson before his death in 1826,[41] although he had already accepted another four melodies,[42] and might have been expected to have produced many more settings had he lived longer. Why, when Weber was so pressured by his operatic writing and his bad health, did he agree to setting ten Scottish melodies for an unknown publisher like Thomson? To a greater extent than Beethoven, Weber was genuinely interested in folksongs, having spent time in his youth travelling with Gottfried Weber and Alexander von Dusch collecting and performing Rhenish

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abgeschrieben und vertont hat, und Herders Idee einer Sammlung der Lieder aller Völker hat ihm ohne Zweifel die Anregung gegeben, aus sich heraus, ohne fremden Auftrag eine Reihe von ausländischen Volksliedern verschiedenster Herkunft zu bearbeiten. Herders Gedanke findet deutlichsten Ausdruck in dem "Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter [sic] Völker", sowie in den Vorreden zum dritten und vierten Buch der "Alten Volkslieder"'.

[39] Beethoven wrote: ' Senza una certa speciale stima ad attaccamento per la Nazione Inglese e per la Melodia scozzese non mi presterei a tal lavoro nè per questo nè per verun altro prezzo': **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/161. This was one of very few letters in Italian, as almost all of the Thomson/Beethoven correspondence was in French. The Haydn correspondence, on the contrary, was almost all conducted in Italian.

[40] Thomson to Weber, 18 January 1824: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/137-9.

[41] Copies of these ten settings, and Weber's revisions of two of them, are now kept at **GB-Lbl**: Add. MS 35271. Original manuscripts, in Weber's hand, of Nos. 9 & 10 are in the **D-Bds** Slg. Weberiana, Cl. I. 31.

[42] The commission for four airs was sent to Weber on 6 December 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/158-9. Baron Ende of Dresden, who seems to have acted as an agent for the composer, replied to Thomson on 7 March 1826, informing him that Weber 'would set about to arrange them as soon as time would allow': 35265/159-60. See K. McCue, 'Weber's ten Scottish Folksongs', Weber Studien, eds. G. Allroggen & J. Veit, Mainz, 1993, 163-73.

folksongs.[43] His visit to Heidelberg in 1810-11 was most influential, for this was the city in which Arnim and Bretano, the former of whom had been particularly impressed by Walter Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802-3), had produced their collection of folksongs entitled Des Knaben Wunderhorn in 1805. It is possible that the Scottish melodies sent by Thomson to the composer almost 15 years after his visit had a powerful nostalgic effect.

Thomson was most probably unaware of the depth of Weber's interest in folksong. His decision to commission Weber was stimulated by a need for new names in his Scottish collection. By the 1820s he had produced five volumes of Scottish, three volumes of Welsh and two volumes of Irish songs with settings by his first four composers. Pleyel had disappeared only one year after Thomson's first commission, Kozeluch had stopped producing settings after years of disagreement with Thomson, Haydn had died in 1809, and the collaboration with Beethoven had come to a natural end in 1820. Although the Welsh and Irish volumes were now complete, Thomson desperately needed new, exciting composers to contribute to his Scottish collection. His decision to choose Weber was influenced by the the popularity of Weber's works in Britain, and more especially in Edinburgh, at that time. Der Freischütz was first performed in Scotland at the Old Theatre Royal in Edinburgh on 29 December 1824 and was an 'extraordinary success', receiving 'loud applause' throughout.[44] Thomson thought it a 'a work which ought to place the name of Weber upon ever-lasting and glorious record',[45] and wrote to the composer fewer than three weeks after the first performance, telling Weber that:

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[43] J. Warrack, Carl Maria von Weber, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 88-92.

[44] Caledonian Mercury, 30 December 1824. 3. See also G. Croall, Living Memories of an Octogenarian (chiefly of Edinburgh) from the Years 1816 to 1845, Edinburgh, 1894, p. 32.

[45] Thomson to Weber, 18 January 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/137-9.

> No words of mine can express the delight which it [Freischütz] has afforded to the lovers of music here: you have soared into the highest and wildest regions of my imagination with the happiest success, and I feel for you the utmost admiration, respect and gratitude.[46]

Shortly before Weber's death, doubtless in the knowledge that he would be unable to ask Weber for more arrangements,[47] Thomson made contact with Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837).[48] This was a particularly interesting choice, because Hummel had in fact visited Scotland and performed in Edinburgh in the 1790s. A journal of this tour, kept by his father, mentioned the names of some of the most famous of Edinburgh's performers, including Stabilini and Corri.[49] Hummel had apparently been a great success with the Scots, but in the 1790s he was not yet known as a composer, so Thomson did not

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[46] Ibid. The overture from Der Freischütz was performed as the opening piece of the first concert of the Musical Festival in Edinburgh in 1824. See **GB-Ep**: Festival Programmes, Marr Collection: Yml 38 e.

[47] By this time Weber was in London preparing Oberon. He was ill on leaving Dresden in February, and by March was not expected to live for much longer. This was common knowledge in London musical circles, and it is probable that Thomson also knew of his fast-approaching death.

[48] Thomson's first letter to Hummel was dated 3 April 1826: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/161-4. Joel Sachs has made the interesting suggestion that Thomson had second thoughts about sending this letter to Hummel, for the editor wrote the next day to Nathaniel Gow to offer him several songs and also The Jolly Beggars. Sachs suggested that Thomson had decided only to contact Hummel if Gow bought The Jolly Beggars. But Thomson sent the letter regardless, and he never managed to sell the cantata. He obviously decided that he could afford to produce his new fifth volume without having to sell The Jolly Beggars. See J. Sachs, 'Hummel and George Thomson of Edinburgh', Musical Quarterly, lvi (1970), 272.

[49] 'Johannes Hummel: Tagebuch der Konzertreise 1788-1793': **D-DÜk**: 2321. This manuscript is almost completely illegible. Names of performers are legible as they were written in large, clear letters, but the general description of Edinburgh is impossible to read. There are also entries for Newcastle, Durham, York, Cambridge (spelt 'Cembritsch') and London. The manuscript is in separate unnumbered sheets, and it is impossible to determine the pattern of the tour from this journal alone. See also Inge Kähmer & Jörn Göres, Katalog der Musikalien - Goethe Museum Düsseldorf Anton-und Katharina-Kippenburg-Stiftung, Bonn, 1987.

consider him for the collections.[50] By the 1820s, however, Hummel was a well-known performer, teacher and composer, and it is likely that he remembered his British, and specifically Scottish, visit with some affection. His correspondence with Thomson was reminiscent of that with Haydn. There were no problems or serious arguments between composer and editor, and Hummel admirably insisted on writing to Thomson in English, excusing his mistakes by explaining that it was 'about 35 years since I was in Scottland [sic] and England'.[51] Although Beethoven, Weber and Hummel all seriously considered travelling to Scotland, not one of them was able to fulfil his plans, and of all six composers Thomson only ever met Pleyel.[52] Hummel, with whom Thomson collaborated until 1832, was the last of his major European composers. New settings introduced in the volumes of 1838 and the 1840s were either old settings which Thomson had failed to publish earlier or, more commonly, new settings by his British composers Henry Bishop, George Hogarth and George Farquhar Graham. That Thomson ultimately reverted to British composers was not necessarily a change of editorial policy, but more probably a sign of old age. The collaboration with busy and famous European composers was complex, and Thomson had doubtless run short of energy by the 1830s. At the age of almost 80, it was far easier to have composers near at hand.

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[50] There is no evidence that Thomson heard Hummel perform in the 1790s, but it is highly possible that Thomson attended some of the concerts Hummel gave during his visit.

[51] Hummel to Thomson, 1 June 1826: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/165-70.

[52] Thomson stated, in a letter to Beethoven of 25 June 1817, that he was delighted by Beethoven's decision to come to Britain and that he would be charmed to show him Edinburgh, but the visit never transpired: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/8-10. Baron Ende informed Thomson that Weber was intending to travel to Scotland to meet Thomson in 1826, but his bad health prevented such a meeting: 35265/159-60. And a second visit by Hummel to Edinburgh was discussed in Thomson's letter to the composer of 14 December 1829, in view of Hummel's planned visit to London in 1830. Though Hummel visited England in 1830, 1831 and 1833, there was no mention of a meeting with Thomson, or of a visit to Edinburgh: 35269/7-9.

ii) The Melodies

Although Thomson's first letters to Pleyel, Kozeluch, Haydn and Beethoven are missing, copies of his first letters to both Weber and Hummel are extant. The approaches to composers and poets alike were always flattering and informative. In the case of Weber, Thomson discussed the première of Der Freischütz in euphoric detail, and then continued his letter as follows:

> I beg leave to inform you that I have for many years employed my leisure in collecting and publishing the National Melodies of Scotland, along with verses by our most celebrated lyric Poets, Burns, Scott, Byron &c. My unbounded admiration for your illustrious countrymen, Haydn & others induced me to request them to compose Ritornelles for introducing & concluding each melody, and Accompaniments for the Piano forte, Violin, Flute & Violoncello, to a great number of those Melodies, which they have done most happily. Admiring your genius no less, I am going to intreat that you will have the goodness to contribute your talents also to enrich the Work. In the hope of your gratifying me, I enclose ten of the Melodies, for which I wish to have your Ritornelles & Accompaniments. They are, like the Scotch melodies in general, of a simple character; and it is desirable that the Pianoforte Acco^{t}. sh^{d} be of a similar description, because our young ladies who sing, generally accompany themselves on the Piano, and some of them cannot do this well, if that accompts. is much crowded with notes or of very difficult execution. For the other accompts I do not wish any greater facility than you yourself think proper. Far from wishing to better you in any way, I wish you to be directed entirely by your own fancy & fine taste. The Ritornelles at the beginning & at the end of each Melody may be of whatever length you please. tho' in general, I sh^{d} not like them to be shorter than 6 or 8 bars each. In order to indicate to you the character of the song which is sung to each Melody, I have prefixed to each, the two lines which are the most expressive of its general meaning - the figures under the note indicate the place at which each line of the Poetry begins.[53]

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[53] Thomson to Weber, 18 January 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/137-9.

This introduction incorporates all the important details of Thomson's collection in addition to briefing Weber on the problems which Thomson had encountered by 1825. The composer was encouraged to feel free to compose as he wished, yet he was confined by Thomson's criteria of length ('I should not like them [the symphonies] to be shorter than 6 or 8 bars each') and, more importantly, simplicity ('because our young ladies who sing, generally accompany themselves on the Piano, and some of them cannot do this well'). Ensuring that the composers produced playable settings had been an immense problem for the editor.[54] Along with this information Thomson sent copies of the ten melodies he wanted Weber to set. This was also a common feature of Thomson's first letters. He always sent copies of melodies, or listed the songs for which he wanted new musical settings or new lyrics, in his first letters to composers or poets, so that they could begin his commission without delay, if they so wished. The introductory letters to Weber and Hummel[55] are sadly only copies of Thomson's originals and are thus not necessarily complete. The bulk of the letter proper was copied into Thomson's letterbook, but he only ever made a note of the melodies he sent to composers, and never copied this part of the letter in full. However, it seems reasonable, on the evidence given, to assume that Thomson sent full copies of the melodies alone, with a two- or three-line description of the subject of the song, though not with complete copies of the lyrics. His decision not to send the lyrics to composers was a controversial one, and he has been castigated by scholars throughout this century for his procedure. But he had practical reasons for editing words and music separately,[56] and moreover, there was no European copyright law to protect

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[54] See below, iii: Difficulty and Simplification.

[55] Thomson to Hummel, 3 April 1826: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/161-4. Thomson's first letter to Hummel included almost exactly the same information as that to Weber.

[56] See below, iv: Songs Without Words.

Thomson's newly commissioned lyrics. He dreaded the appearance of his songs on the Continent before he had published them in Britain, and it was this fear of foreign musical pirates more than any other consideration which resulted in his policy of refusing to send the lyrics to Europe. The outcome of this decision will be looked at much more closely in the last section of this chapter. Suffice it to say that the composers' understanding of the melody was naturally affected by the absence of the words, and in the early stages of the correspondence with Kozeluch and with Beethoven he was constantly urged to send copies of the lyrics to his composers.

Surprisingly, there was little comment on the melodies themselves. There was no explanation of the melodic peculiarities, which some composers might have found difficult to understand or interpret. Thomson did describe the melodies as 'simple' in his letter to Weber, but there seems to have been no discussion about the potential problems of modality, or the unusual rhythmical qualities of a melody, and Thomson took time to describe the unusual form of particular melodies only when Kozeluch complained to Straton that he could not understand some of the melodies Thomson had sent. He wrote to Thomson on 10 August 1797 to ask 'combien de couplet il y a dans chaque Airs',[57] and Thomson replied to Straton on 18 September that he had marked the number of couplets by 'a small red point under the note where each line or half couplet of the poetry begins'.[58] It did not help that Thomson refused to send copies of the lyrics, and Kozeluch quickly came to the conclusion that he was dealing with 'une musique barbare'.[59]

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[57] Kozeluch to Thomson: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/32.

[58] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/32-3.

[59] Straton wrote to Thomson: 'M. K. called on me yesterday to mention that on perusing the airs lately put into his hands, he had found most of them une musique barbare, which set at defiance all the rules of the art that he possessed, & that therefore he did not think it worth while to add Ritornellos &c to them': 28 October 1797: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/34-5. Straton, who found

With no explanation of the structure of the tunes, Kozeluch, and later Beethoven, were often confused. The melodies most commonly comprised four short phrases of four bars each. The first two phrases were closely related in content, and the second two phrases were usually also similar to each other (and were normally in a higher register than the first two phrases), resulting in the pattern AA'BB'. Sometimes the first, second and fourth phrases would be almost identical with only the the third phrase containing fresh material, giving the pattern AA'BA'. In conclusion, the melodies were short and full of repetitive phrases. Thomson explained that he wanted introductory and concluding symphonies to each melody, but he did not explain the form of the melodies or guide the composer through them by describing the form of the lyric, which was after all dictated by the melodic structure.[60] Beethoven's confusion over multiple verses for some of the airs indicates that Thomson's instructions were far from clear.[61] The only information sent to Beethoven included a brief description of the subject of the song, and on occasion he was told how many verses there were. This was misleading, for in Thomson's volumes it was generally the case that the same accompaniment for the song proper was used for every verse, with the symphonies played as an interlude between verses. Though no other composer found this problematic, Beethoven decided to produce a different ending for every verse. His sketches show that he dealt with the symphonies quite separately from the song proper, but if there were several verses for the song, he often decided to give a first, second and third time bar at the end of the melody.

Kozeluch a difficult customer, had already commented to Thomson on 29 July 1797 that 'these muscial geniuses are strange men indeed!': 35263/25-6.

[60] Thus literary forms for Thomson's lyrics were most commonly found to adhere to rhyming patterns of abab, aabb, axbx (where x represents the same line used as second and fourth lines of the stanza), abcb, ababcdcd, aabbccdd, abcbdefe or variants thereof.

[61] It is possible that composer and editor had linguistic problems. They corresponded in French, but neither was fluent in this language.

His copies of the Welsh song **The Monks of Bangor's March,**[62] of the Irish songs **Norah of Balamagairy**[63] and **Oh! who, my dear Dermot**[64] and of the Scottish song **Robin Adair**[65] all illustrate his confusion. On 17 July 1810 Beethoven explained that because he had not been told exactly how many verses were to be printed with the airs, he had simply provided Thomson with what he termed later in this letter as a '1 2 3 etc. volta'. If Thomson needed new endings for multiple verses then he would have to put them together himself:

> Pour ce, qui regarde les repetitions dans les airs, que j'ai composés à deux parties, vous n'avez qu'à les omettre à votre gré, et à faire les airs senza replica. - come j'ignorois, si l'un ou l'autre de ces airs avoit plusieurs couplets ou non, il m'a fallu les composer de manière qu'ont pût les répeter au besoin; ainsi c'est à vous, d'arranger la chose, et de laisser les repetitions dans les airs qui n'en ont qu'un seul.[66]

Beethoven's ignorance surrounding the verses of the songs naturally inspired him to ask Thomson for copies of the lyrics, and this was the first of many letters in which the composer pleaded with his editor on this subject. In addition to the muddled instructions sent to him by Thomson, Beethoven

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[62] Two sketches of this song are found in **D-Bds** Artaria 187 ff. 23-5 and 32-4, and another copy is found in **D-DS** Mus. MS. 975 ff. 7-8. Kinsky lists it as no. 2 of 26 Welsh songs, WoO 155. It was published by Thomson in 1817 - WIII/64-6.

[63] There are two identical copies of this song in **D-B** Artaria 190 ff. 46-50, and in **D-Dbs** 29IV ff. 146-7. Kinsky lists it as no. 8 of 20 Irish songs WoO 153. It was published by Thomson in 1816, where the tune was entitled **The humours of Balamagairy** - IrII/86-8.

[64] There are two copies in **D-B** Artaria 190 ff. 4-6 and **D-Dbs** 29IV ff. 172-3. Kinsky lists it no. 5 of 12 Irish songs, WoO 154. Thomson published it in 1816 - IrII/111-12.

[65] There are three copies of this song in **D-Dbs** 29II ff. 28-30, which is a sketch, **D-Dbs** 29V ff. 129-32, which is a publisher's copy, and **D-B** 29I ff. 6-7, which is also a neat copy. It is listed by Kinsky as no. 7 of 12 songs of different nations, WoO 157, but it was never published by Thomson.

[66] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/332-3.

was unaware of performance practice in Scotland, especially in relation to her national melodies. In the postscript to his letter he explained to Thomson that at the end of the last verse of the song, the alternative endings were to be omitted, but he was unsure whether or not this was done in Scotland. After spending time creating these 'repetitions' for Thomson, Beethoven was given no alternative but to leave his settings entirely in Thomson's hands, asking that the editor shape them to suit his potential buyers:

> quand on prend l'ultima volta dans les airs Ecossais, on laisse 1 2 3 etc. volta, c'est à dire, on ne sonne pas toute la Mesure de 1 2 3 etc. volta, si ce n'est pas asséz clair pour votre pays, il faut que vous faites à un autre manière.

Sadly Thomson's reply is missing,[67] but in the published versions of these particular songs he simply omitted Beethoven's creative repeats altogether. With the exception of **Robin Adair**, these songs were all published without alternative endings. **Robin Adair** appeared with settings by both Pleyel (see **D/92** and **SIIa/92**) and Haydn (from **SIIb/92**), but Beethoven's setting was never published.

Structure was apparently the only melodic characteristic about which Thomson was questioned by his composers, and even then he was only queried by two of the six: Kozeluch and Beethoven. No one asked about the unusual rhythms found in some of the tunes, about the modal quality of many of them, or about those that failed to end on the tonic and frequently ended on the dominant or sub-dominant. Composers dealt with these idiosyncracies without questioning their editor, and he obviously did not see the need to mention them in his correspondence with the composers. This is curious since Thomson discussed all of these characteristics in depth, and

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[67] Donald MacArdle, 'Beethoven and George Thomson', Music & Letters, xxxvii (1956), 27-49. MacArdle dates Thomson's reply as 17 September 1810, as a letter of this date was mentioned in Beethoven's letter of 20 July 1811: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/24-6.

gave the histories of some individual melodies, in his 'Dissertation on the National Melodies of Scotland' which was bound into the first volume of the octavo edition in 1822. This essay gives valuable insight into Thomson's attitudes about the presentation of melodies and his understanding of them. He was fascinated by the history of Scottish song, and by those characteristics which were comparable with the songs of other nations. He was equally interested in the workings of the 'national scale' which, in his opinion, gave these melodies their unmistakably Scottish tonality. Thomson obviously regarded his 'Dissertation' as an important academic essay, ensuring that it was printed with copious notes and references to the works of important scholars and literary figures including Burney, Rousseau, Hawkins, Ritson, Beattie, Dr Franklin and Lord Kaimes, Macpherson, Bellenden, Gavin Douglas and Sir David Lindsay.[68] His essay concentrated on specific songs and tunes, but he was determined to show the breadth of his historical, musical and literary knowledge.

Thomson's discussion of the properties of Scottish melodies is particularly informative.[69] Not suprisingly, resting firmly on the principles of the antiquarian movement, he laid great importance upon the ancient melodies, and those which were 'known to have been popular before the year 1724'[70] were marked in the indices of Thomson's volumes both folio and octavo. But some of the ancient tunes were a little primitive

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[68] Thomson also footnoted Gunn's Historical Enquiry into the Performance on the Harp, Laborde's Essai sur la Musique Ancienne et Moderne (1780), Rousseau's Dictionnaire de la Musique (1770).

[69] Thomson's 'Dissertation concerning the National Melodies of Scotland', Thomson's Collection of the Songs of Burns...United to the Select Melodies of Scotland, Ireland and Wales, Edinburgh & London, 1822, p. 3. Thomson stated that he was able to determine the old airs from the new simply by their style and structure. There is some inconsistency here, for Thomson stated in a letter to Hector MacNeill of 10 December 1805, 'I confess that I find it impossible to ascertain the ancient or most ancient Airs, by examining the music': **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/84-5. Perhaps he had learnt between 1805 and 1822.

[70] Preface to Vol. I of 1801 (**SIa**), from the 'Index to the Airs'.

for modern taste. Thomson explained that time itself, with the help of performers and/or editors, had brought about changes to some melodies, adjusting them to make them 'smoother and more graceful' but without altering the structure substantially, and he cited several examples of melodies which had undergone this process.[71] One such example was that entitled **The Ewe-bughts**, which was published, in what Thomson referred to as its ancient form, in William Thomson's Orpheus Caledonius in 1725 (**Ex. 1**).[72] It was presented with the lyrics **Will ye go to the Ewe-bughts Marion** (anon.) and **O Marian, so sweet are thy kisses** (Pindar) in Thomson's first set of songs in 1793 (**A/8**), but by this time the melody had been adjusted. Not only was the version Thomson published now in the minor, and much more symmetrical, but the second part of the original tune, which reflected Marion's 'bonny' and 'blythe' personality so successfully, disappeared altogether, leaving the singer to capture her lively nature in rather mournful tonality. Although the smoother air published by Thomson still encompassed a range of an octave and a third, it did remove some of the awkward jumps in the ancient tune and changed the ending so that it closed on the tonic and not on the dominant. Thomson published Haydn's arrangement of this melody in 1803 (**Ex. 2**).

This particular melody encompasses many of the qualities of traditional Scottish tunes that caused problems for Thomson as an editor. The first of these was the conflict between the old and the new, for while laying great importance on the nation's ancient melodies and drawing attention to them in his publications, Thomson's personal preference was for those airs which conformed with current musical style. The conflict arose because of the nature of the melodies themselves. The ancient tune of **The Ewe-bughts** was formed on 'the national scale',

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[71] Dissertation, p. 13.

[72] W. Thomson, Orpheus Caledonius, London, 1733, ii. 32 (15). The edition used is a facsimile copy edited by H.G. Farmer, Philadelphia, 1962.

the characteristics of which Thomson described in detail at the beginning of his 'Dissertation'. In Thomson's words this national scale was 'the modern diatonic scale, divested of the fourth and the seventh' and which 'has occasionally been altered by the introduction of the the flat seventh'.[73] In Thomson's opinion it was 'impossible to hear this scale without feeling how entirely it possesses the character of Scottish melody', and he believed that 'every air (with a very few exceptions) which is really ancient, is constructed precisely according to this scale'.[74] The modern version of **The Ewe-bughts** was, on the contrary, virtually 'irreconcilable to the national scale'.[75] Through the 'progress of taste and refinement'[76] many of these old airs were softened or rounded, and in the process they lost that essentially 'national' feeling which they had previously possessed. The conflict between ancient and modern, old and new, lay in the loss of a peculiarly national tonality. Even though Thomson's friends and colleagues were proud of the ancient melodies, they still preferred the less obviously Scottish, but much more elegant and graceful, modern versions of these tunes.

In admitting his preference for the new versions of such airs, Thomson explained that the smoothing process was undertaken simply to achieve a 'greater degree of grace and elegance', and he claimed that 'these changes do not in the least conceal the original form of the air, or render it at all difficult to reduce it to its primary elements'.[77] With **The Ewe-bughts** this was untrue, for the whole nature of the melody, its rhythms and its tonality had been transformed, and the adjustments had

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[73] Dissertation, p. 4.

[74] Thomson stated that this national scale was shared by the Irish, 'which results in the similarity of the songs of the two nations': Ibid., p.7.

[75] Ibid., p. 13.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

basically resulted in a brand new tune, bearing only a tenuous link with its original. However, of those 'smoothed' melodies listed by Thomson **The Ewe-bughts** was the only one which had been dramatically altered. The other melodies, which were much closer to their ancestors, were **Lochaber, The mill, mill O** and **The Lass of Patie's Mill,** all of which appeared in Thomson's volumes.[78] Only **Lochaber** had been altered, for in the second half of the melody the 'exquisite flat seventh'[79] had been rather incongruously introduced, obviously intended to emphasize the lyric, which at that particular moment described the 'rough seas' responsible for parting the lovers of the song.

Awkward leaps within melodies, like those found in the ancient version of **The Ewe-bughts,** were common, as many Scottish song melodies had originally been fiddle tunes, and most were also extensive in range. This was another melodic characteristic which proved to be something of a problem for Thomson. As a result of the expansive range, many amateur singers found themselves unable to sing some of the songs included in the collection. By 1817, when he re-issued his first four Scottish volumes (**SIe, SIId, SIIId, SIVd**) Thomson had selected specific songs for alteration, as he explained in the preface to Vol. I:

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[78] **Lochaber** was published in the first set with an arrangement by Pleyel (**A/10**) and then replaced by a Haydn setting in 1803 (**SIb/10**). **The mill, mill O** was published with Pleyel's arrangement only, and also appeared for the first time in the first set (**A/22** and thereafter **SI/22**). **The Lass of Patie's Mill** was published with Haydn's arrangement only, and first appeared in the third volume of 1802 (**SIIIa/17**).

[79] Dissertation, p. 13.

> Having had very frequent occasion to observe with what difficulty many young Ladies sing such of the Melodies as rise to G or A, he carefully examined every Melody of that description; and where it could be done with propriety, he has introduced an optional lower note, which may be sung instead of the high one, by those who find the latter above their compass, while the original is still retained without alteration for such voices as can reach it; and thus the Melodies are placed quite within the reach of all voices of ordinary compass. Two of the Melodies, and two only, have been wholly lowered; for the Editor did not find that more of them would admit of being so, without rendering the lowest notes too low for female voices.[80] Two other Melodies have been expunged, Allan-water, and Patrick Spence; the former because of its too extensive compass, and the latter as being a meagre and uninteresting air.[81]

Even though the editor changed only selected songs in the 1817 issues of these volumes, by 1830 he claimed to have searched his five volumes comprehensively for those airs which were too high for his clientele, and to have adjusted them accordingly:

> The Songs too have been somewhat weeded and Flowers given instead of the Weeds. A number of the Melodies too which were found to have been placed at too high a pitch for the generality of voices, are set a note or half a note lower, and are thus placed more within the range of every Singer than they have been heretofore.[82]

Thomson was thus happy to reject melodies which were either too primitive and unrefined or the range of which was too great for most amateur singers, and he felt quite comfortable about adjusting melodies which incorporated awkward intervals.

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[80] The two transposed settings were nos. 4 and 38, to the tunes of **My Nanie O** and **Lord Gregory** respectively, and both were simply lowered by a tone.

[81] Those 'expunged' arrangements were replaced by two new Haydn settings of different melodies: the tune entitled **Jinglan Johnie** (**SIId/79**) was published in place of **Allan-water,** and **Sir Patrick Spence** was replaced by an Irish air called **The three captains** (**SIVd/193**).

[82] Thomson to William Smyth, 18 February 1830: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/10-12.

His choice of melodies to be included in his collections was influenced most of all by the popularity of those contained in contemporary publications. The majority of the melodies included in the Scottish collection were the same as those published by Ramsay, Johnson, Urbani, Corri, and Napier, and Thomson's choice of Irish and Welsh melodies likewise mirrored those published in the collections of Carolan and Bunting, or Jones and Parry respectively. While the bulk of the tunes published thus came from an established repertory, Thomson was proud to present newly composed melodies, and he made a point of distinguishing them in his volumes: 'Air - O Jean I love thee. - Composed by Oswald' (**SI/29**), or 'Air - The Tears of Caledonia/ Composed for this work/ By Allan Masterton, Edinburgh' (**SII/87**), or 'The air composed by the late Stephen Clarke, Organist, Edinburgh' (**SIII/105**), or 'The air by Miss Lucy Johnston, afterwards Mrs Oswald of Auchencruive' (**SIII/114**), or 'The air composed for the words by William Clarke, Organist, Edinburgh./ And never before published' (**SIV/180**), or 'The air composed for the words by a friend of the Editor' (**SV/214**). Few tunes came from old manuscripts, and even fewer came from 'the field', but if they did, or if they were anonymous, then there was even more reason to advertise them: 'From a ms. in the Editor's possession' (**SII/89**). Those which were hitherto unpublished were closely linked to Scotland's untouched and undiscovered heritage. This was to be an equally important editorial policy in relation to the lyrics, where anonymity played an essential part.[83]

While the 'ill-bred' ancient melodies, or those which were too difficult to sing, were automatically excluded or altered, many of the most popular melodies were modal, or failed to end conventionally on the tonic, and this caused problems for composers and editor alike. The accompaniments for the song proper were dictated by the structure and content of the melody alone, but the symphonies were free and allowed the

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[83] See Chapter IV, i: The Lyricists, pp. 155-7.

composers to give vent to their imagination.[84] They were also technically useful, especially in the context of melodies which ended on a note other than the tonic. In the case of **Ay Waking O** (**SIII/11** or **111**) Haydn transformed the melody, which deliberately ended on the dominant, by adding an extra two bars in which he brought it home to the tonic (**Ex. 3**). Thomson wrote an extra line for Burns's lyric so that the words would fit Haydn's musical alteration. It is unclear whether this adjustment was Thomson's decision initially, or whether Haydn's addition compelled Thomson to write his extra line for the lyric only shortly before publication.[85] Just as Thomson claimed to love the ancient, truly Scottish melodies, while at the same time preferring the grace and elegance of the modern ones, he was similiarly torn between his affection for those melodies ending on the dominant, or subdominant, and those which neatly concluded on the tonic. He proudly expressed his delight at the freedom and innocence with which such melodies had been created:

> In saying, that an air is constructed upon a certain scale, it is meant that the melody is strictly confined to the notes of that scale, though they may be taken in any order, or carried upwards or downwards to any extent ... From this manner of wandering up and down the scale, and stopping on any part of it at pleasure, our old airs are found not always to close on what we call the key-note, but frequently on other parts of the scale; and a greater or lesser degree of wildness is given to the melody, in consequence of its close being more or less different from what we are used to in modern music.[86]

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[84] Thomson wrote to Weber, that it was in the symphonies he heard 'the exquisite touches of your own imagination'. Thomson to Weber, 6 December 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/158-9.

[85] Thomson noted at the bottom of the lyric that 'the lines printed in Italics, are supplied by the Editor for the sake of the music'.

[86] Dissertation, pp. 4-5.

Yet he was apparently equally delighted when his composers conventionalized such melodies with their educated harmonizations. They obviously failed to see the special quality of a melody which did not resolve in the expected way. Haydn's setting of the tune **The birks of Abergeldie** (**SIII/36** or **136**) is one of the best examples of the obvious confusion rendered by such a melody. Like **Ay Waking O**, this tune does not end on the tonic. Although the melody is a strange mixture of major and minor, it is basically in the key of D major, but it ends on B. For Scots this final note is instinctively interpreted as an impromptu extra with little harmonic significance, but Haydn dealt with it more seriously, insisting on harmonizing it and following it by a short two-bar concluding symphony which reinforced the key of B minor, mirroring his introduction (**Ex. 4**). This particular tune also illustrates the problems of coping with a modal melody, for while it is mostly in the major, it has two final cadences on the second degree of the scale, giving the song a strong modal flavour. Haydn naturally decided to harmonize the tune diatonically, choosing to set it in the relative minor, complete with plagal cadences. Numerous examples of this problem are found in Thomson's volumes, and are particularly interesting when settings of the same melodies by different composers are compared. The tune entitled **Kind Robin lo'es [also loo's] me**, like many of the Scottish melodies published by Thomson, was basically pentatonic.[87] Although it is clearly felt to be in the major, and Weber's arrangement of it has no suggestion of the minor (**SIIe/60**), Kozeluch's arrangement (**SII/60**) comprises a peculiar blend of G major and E minor. Beethoven's setting of **Charlie is my darling** (**SIf/49**) displays

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[87] Thomson wrote 'the "Banks and Braes of Bonny Doon" was composed by a gentleman of Edinburgh, who had been jocularly told that a Scottish air could be produced by merely running the fingers over the black keys of a piano-forte, which give precisely the progression of the national scale"'. Dissertation, p. 12. This song was published by Thomson, with an arrangement by Kozeluch in 1798 (**B/43**, thereafter **SI/43**).

simliar confusion, or rather lack of awareness.[88] This time the tune is clearly in the minor and Beethoven set it as such, but inexplicably changed it to the tonic major at the very end. This may exhibit the problems of interpreting a modal folktune from a different country, but perhaps this example displays a Beethoven idiosyncracy rather than a melodic misunderstanding.

That Thomson's composers had difficulties in dealing with modal melodies is illustrated best of all when their arrangements are examined in the context of simpler Scottish settings such as those included in the SMM. Clarke understood the harmonic implications of these melodies, and his settings were generally created to accommodate them. Thomson's composers, on the contrary, were sometimes unaware of these peculiarities, and on occasions, when they did see modal problems, they simply attempted to harmonize them as they knew best, often transforming the melody in the process. **Bonnie Dundee** (**SI/46**) was published in the first volume of the SMM in 1787.[89] The shift from the last bar of the first half of this song to the beginning of the second half is most unusual, moving from the minor (the home key) to the major a tone below - the juxtaposition of keys a tone apart is also a common characteristic of Scottish melodies. In Clarke's setting (**Ex. 5a**) this shift is obvious because of the sparseness of his accompaniment, which included only a bass line intended to be filled out by the performer. The awkward leap of a seventh - from a low g to f' - was removed, probably by Thomson, when this melody was sent to Kozeluch. His arrangement (**Ex. 5b**) was naturally much richer than Clarke's for there were now three parts, and this particular cadence, though following exactly the same move as Clarke's, was less stark because of Kozeluch's introduction of a dominant seventh. Kozeluch's

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[88] Published by Thomson in his first octavo volume of 1822 and again in 1824, before being published for the first time in the folio edition in 1826.

[89] SMM, i. 100 (99).

second version of this tune was transposed to the key of E minor (with hints of G major) in 1801 (**SIa/46**) when the time signature was also adjusted from the rather antiquarian 6/4 to the more modern 6/8. Weber set the same melody almost twenty years later (**SIf/45**), and the cadence in his setting differs altogether because of the emphasis he places on the first b at the beginning of the last bar of the first section (**Ex. 5c**). **John Anderson my jo** was also set by Clarke, Kozeluch and Weber, and exhibits the difference in the interpretation of a similar progression, this time at the end of the first phrase of the melody, from the home key to that one tone below.[90] The shift in Clarke's setting in Vol. III of the SMM (**Ex. 6a**) is again the most obvious of the three,[91] and although Weber (**SIIe/51**) sets the same melody as Clarke, the melody of Kozeluch's setting (**C/51**/simplified version **SIIa/51**) has once more been very slightly altered. Kozeluch's harmonization eventually brings the melody to its chosen destination, although it follows an unusual path (**Ex. 6b**), and Weber changes it altogether, for while his setting at this cadence suggests F major, he moves instead to D minor, thus cancelling the original progression altogether (**Ex. 6c**).

Thomson was far from ignorant of the potential difficulties of the modal melodies he sent to his composers, but he believed that they dealt valiantly with such problems, and he saw no reason to discuss them in detail. His delight in their harmonizations was one he wished to share with those who purchased his volumes. Perhaps he expected some resistance, but he anticipated, or answered, any disagreement and complaint with the following passage in his 'Dissertation':

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[90] David Johnson refers to this movement as the 'double-tonic sequence': Music and Society, pp. 157-60.

[91] SMM, iii, 269 (260).

> It will be observed, however, that, as all these different kinds of airs are, in reality, constructed upon one series or scale of sounds, and as their composers had no idea of the distinction of major and minor modes, but were prompted merely by their taste or feeling to rest or close upon particular notes of the scale, we cannot expect that exact distinction of modes which is to be found in modern music. The melody is frequently equivocal in this respect, and may be considered as belonging either to one mode or the other: modern composers, in harmonizing these airs, find it necessary to make frequent transitions from the harmony of the major mode to that of the minor, and vice versa: and it is the skill with which these transitions have been managed, so as to gratify the ear with beautiful harmony, without impairing the original character of the air, that the celebrated composers, whose labours have contributed so much to the value of this work, have so greatly distinguished themselves.[92]

Once more the shaping of the primitive by the civilized was thought highly acceptable. The improvement of these airs by the eloquence of modern composition was, apparently, the greatest testament of Thomson's love for them. It seems that Thomson was genuinely unaware that his sophisticated settings sometimes did impair 'the original character of the air'.

On a basic level, then, Thomson's melodies were chosen for their popularity and desirability. Those which were refined, but still had some connection with the past, were the most sought after; those which were too primitive, too distant from the modern diatonic scale, or which failed to end in the expected way were shaped and softened by their eloquent accompaniments; those which embodied awkward intervals or which were too far-ranging for the average singer were altered accordingly. Because Thomson failed to discuss particular aspects of his national melodies with his composers, their settings were, to some extent, created in innocence. Only Haydn was already familiar with some of the melodies through his work with Napier; the other composers approached these

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[92] Dissertation, p. 5.

tunes with no previous knowledge of their peculiarities or of the tradition whence they came. They also produced their settings at a time when the harmonization of folksong as such was relatively new, and so characteristics which these Scottish tunes shared with the folksongs of the composers' respective nations had not necessarily made themselves apparent. The technique of understanding such melodies and then composing arrangements for them was, however, far removed from Thomson's task as an editor. There were only two main problems for Thomson in editing these musical settings. The first related to the performance standards of Thomson's prospective buyers, who were unable to attempt many of the sophisticated settings sent to Thomson, and the second lay with the continuing problem of Thomson's refusal to send the lyrics of these songs to his composers.

iii) Difficulty and Simplification

The biggest editorial problem for Thomson in relation to the music of the collections was that of simplicity. Thomson's musical knowledge and skill had grown from the EMS and its performers, who were in part experienced players from nations where musical training was a much more common attribute than it had been in Scotland. Thomson made it clear from the beginning that his collection was to surpass all previous volumes of national songs in its musical quality. Unlike earlier publications which provided crude harmonies, or 'through bass ... of which the generality of Piano forte players know little or nothing', this collection was to include 'the most eligible harmony', and there were to be 'introductory and concluding symphonies to each Air'.[93] The decision to commission symphonies was influenced by Thomson's wish to render 'the Airs more fit for concerts than they have ever been' and, secondly, to present 'delightful pieces of the cantabile style, replete with fancy and all the graces of elegant composition'.[94] These settings, which included parts for voice, piano, violin, cello, and later flute, lifted the melodies into the concert hall, where they could be performed as tasteful chamber music. They were to be used by professional musicians for the salon and the concert hall, but they were also produced for domestic use, for the growing market of amateur musicians who were only beginning to understand and appreciate the art of music. Thomson's volumes were designed to satisfy the professional, but they were, at the same time, intended as a textbook to show the public how good music was written, or simply what good music was.

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[93] Preface to First Set of 1793.

[94] Ibid.

The primary decision to commission and to publish refined symphonies and accompaniments was controversial in itself. The incorporation of a Scottish air in a contemporary orchestral or chamber work, as illustrated in so many of the popular pieces of the EMS, was for some Scots, highly respectable and, indeed, flattering. But the situation concerning settings of the songs themselves was much more complex, and in general the Scots were difficult to satisfy.[95] By the second issue of his first 100 songs in 1801 (**SIa** and **SIIa**), and obviously feeling pressurized by opposition to his sophisticated accompaniments, Thomson took the opportunity of explaining in greater detail his decision to include such settings. He continued to print this explanation in later issues of his volumes:[96]

> There are many persons, who never having cultivated Music, have little relish for Accompaniments. It will not be denied, that, when a Scotish Song is sung by a fine voice, and the words distinctly and feelingly expressed, it gives very great pleasure without any Accompaniment.- But everyone conversant with Music, knows that the voice needs the support and guidance of an Accompaniment, otherwise that it insensibly falls from the pitch in which it is set out; and that the Italians, who have numberless charming airs equally simple with the Scotch, always set Accompaniments to them, not only for the purpose of supporting the voice, but to give variety and effect to the song.[97]

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[95] Little work has been done on the success of publications like Thomson's, but it appears that collections such as those published by Urbani, Corri and even by Johnson were equally unsuccessful, whereas simple pocket-books, such as McGibbon's Caledonian Pocket Companion which contained tunes alone, were much more popular, perhaps because they were also much cheaper. This suggests that the Scots preferred to hear the melodies alone, and, if they were performed with an accompaniment at all, then the simpler the better.

[96] See the Preface to the first Irish volume of 1814 (**IrI**).

[97] From a footnote of the Preface to Vol. I of 1801, p. 2.

Two themes were clear: firstly, the enjoyment of such accompaniments had a great deal to do with the acquisition of musical knowledge and understanding, and secondly, such enjoyment was closely related to performance standards, which generally left much to be desired. It is arguably the case that Thomson himself sympathized with those of his contemporaries who preferred to hear their national songs sung without accompaniments, for he wrote to William Smyth in November 1813:

> I confess I would much rather hear every national song, where the Melody and words are both very good, performed by one voice only; and if the voice is perfectly true, very fine, and expressive, (one in about five hundred), I do not wish to hear any accompaniment to it: but with the generality of voices, the Accompaniments are indispensable.[98]

As usual, after explaining his actions in print Thomson believed he was then immune from serious criticism on the subject. In any case he was apparently unperturbed by public opposition to his settings. At no time in his publishing career, even when his volumes were not selling and even when he was distraught with the difficulties of Beethoven's settings, did Thomson consider changing his mind about commissioning them.

As the above preface suggests, the problem of difficulty raised its head early in Thomson's publishing career. Had he been able to interact more closely with Pleyel the issue would probably have arisen then, for many of the Pleyel settings were awkward and technically difficult for most amateurs. But it was with Kozeluch that Thomson first mentioned the problem, informing the composer in his letter of 17 May 1799 that he had taken the liberty of simplifying some of the settings

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[98] [November 1813]: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/86-7.

without adjusting the harmony.[99] Initially the composer appears to have been quite happy about Thomson's tinkering, and he was also content to simplify settings himself. On 13 December 1800 he sent Thomson the simplified versions of '10 Scotish Airs' and revised cello parts.[100] Comparison of these simpler versions with the originals sent by Kozeluch reveals many of the characteristics which Thomson considered too difficult for his public. The ten settings were printed in their original form in the second (**B**), third (**C**) and fourth sets (**D**) of the 1790s, but in the first and second volumes of 1801 (**SIa, SIIa**) eight of them were replaced by Kozeluch's simplified versions.[101]

The biggest problem was Kozeluch's persistent use of semiquavers, which Thomson clearly felt were too difficult for his amateurs. The symphonies for the tune entitled **The posie** (**B/36** and **SIa/36**) were adjusted so that the semiquavers in the bass part were replaced by quavers (**Exx. 7a & 7b**); the symphonies for the tune **Kind Robin lo'es me** (**C/60** and **SIIa/60**) were also substantially altered, again removing all semiquavers and replacing most of the accompanimental quavers with crotchets; the continuous semiquavers in the bass of the first version of **Auld lang syne** (**C/68**) were replaced by very simple quaver octaves in the second version (**SIIa/68**), and Kozeluch attempted to fill the texture by rewriting the right hand piano part in thirds; this was also the case with **Lewie Gordon** (**C/74** and **SIIa/74**), the chorus of which was rewritten

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[99] It is not clear what these alterations were: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/64-5.

[100] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/102. The copies of Kozeluch's settings are also in **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35277 and 35278. The simplified settings appear on pp. 27-9 of 36277.

[101] The two simplified songs of the ten completed by Kozeluch, which are not discussed here, were no. 88, which was published in its more difficult version in 1798 (**C/88** thereafter **SII/88**) - **On a bank of flowers on a summer day**. And no. 53, a tune called **We'll gang nae mair to yon town** which was published in its difficult version in 1798 (**C/53** and **SIIa/53**), but was replaced in 1803 (**SIIb/53**) by a Haydn setting of a different tune entitled **Fy gar rub her o'er wi' strae**.

for two voices; and semiquavers were also removed from the setting of **O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad** (**D/94** and **SIIa/94**) where the dexterity required to play them, and the stretches of the left hand in the introductory and concluding symphonies, clearly caused problems (**Exx. 8a & 8b**). Wide stretches were regarded as too uncomfortable and difficult to play. In his first version of **The posie** Kozeluch had employed octaves in both the right and left hand parts, but most of these were removed in the simplified version, and thirds became much more common. Octave stretches were also removed for the new version of **Bonny Dundee** (**B/46** and **SIa/46**) and for the simpler setting of **Kind Robin loe's me.** Many of these settings, primarily because of the semiquavers, had been busy and energetic, but Thomson also made it a policy to publish static accompaniments, especially in the setting of the song proper (i.e. to accompany the voice), so as to allow the melody to speak for itself. This was doubtless also because the buyers of his volumes frequently accompanied themselves. The new version of **Auld lang syne** was much quieter than the original, which must have been spoiled by Thomson's amateurs unsuccessfully trying to play semiquavers. The accompaniment for **The posie** (see **Exx. 7a & 7b**) was adjusted, so that the setting became much simpler overall, and the right hand played the melody at the same pitch as the singer rather than roaming into a higher register. The new version of **John Anderson my Jo** (**SIIa/51**) was likewise quieter and less dramatic that the original (**C/51**), for the continuous quaver motion in the bass part of the second half of the song was replaced by crotchets (see **Ex. 6b**). Another alteration was the transposition of the setting of **Bonny Dundee,** originally in F minor to the new key of E minor (see **Ex. 5b**) In this case transposition was the only significant alteration, for although the sophisticated use of quavers in the introductory symphony was removed, the particular phrasing in the right hand part of the new introduction, and Kozeluch's mixing of quaver and semiquaver motion did not necessarily result in a simpler setting. This was also true of the new version of **For a' that and a' that**

(**C/55** and **SIIa/55**), which was almost exactly the same as its first setting even though Thomson advertised it as 'simplified by Mr K. in 1801'.

No sooner had Kozeluch completed these simpler settings, than Thomson was demanding that he adjust even more. On 26 December 1800 he asked the composer to revise and simplify nine of the ritornelli and accompaniments of songs in manuscript and fifteen of the printed ones.[102] The composer now took offence at Thomson's request and wrote what Thomson referred to as 'a rude epistle' to the editor of 30 January 1801.[103] Thomson was hurt by Kozeluch's objections, stating in his reply: 'I asked nothing unreasonable ... the people in this country will not look at any other but a simple and easy accompaniment'.[104] Kozeluch was still angry with Thomson's criticism and eventually on 2 April 1801 he informed Straton that he would not retouch any more of the symphonies and accompaniments as he regarded them perfect. Straton told Thomson that Kozeluch thought the advisers who wanted to see the accompaniments simplified were 'evil counsellors who wished to spoil your [Thomson's] work and to detract from his [Kozeluch's] reputation'.[105] Thomson chose not to battle with Kozeluch, and the question of difficulty and simplicity was never mentioned in the correspondence with the composer after this date, although Kozeluch was still to produce settings of

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[102] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/106-9. The nine airs were no.2 **The Mucking o' Geordie's Byre**, no.6 **Orangaoil**, no.7 **Green grow the rashes** , no.8 **Of a' the airts the wind can blaw**, no.14 **Strathallan's lament**, no.16 **Fy gar rub her o'er wi' strae**, no.22 **Muirland Willie**, no.5 **Willy was a wanton wag** and no.10 **Oonagh** or **Sae flaxen were her ringlets**: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/110-11.

[103] Referred to in Thomson's letter of 21 February 1801, but not extant: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/118-9.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Straton to Thomson: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/121-2.

Welsh and Irish airs.[106]

The question of simplicity strangely never arose with the Haydn settings. Many of them were just as difficult as some of the above arrangements, and George Farquhar Graham commented that they were too sophisticated for many of Scotland's young ladies to play, but Thomson replied by stating:

> I am sensible of what you say, that many Ladies cannot play Haydn's Symphs & Accompant. to the Scottish Songs correctly at sight: I know however, that we have many Ladies who can play them correctly, after playing them over three or four times.[107]

Perhaps his love of Haydn's music, or Haydn's popularity in Edinburgh, dissuaded Thomson. He never discussed the possibility of simplifying Haydn's settings, and there is no clear evidence that he altered any of them. It was only when he made contact with Beethoven that the issue arose once more. Thomson received Beethoven's first settings on 17 July 1810,[108] but it was 1812 before he explained to Beethoven that the British success of his arrangements depended on their simplicity and playability.[109] Although Thomson referred, in his letter of 12 December 1812,[110] to agreeable changes which

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[106] Some of the copies of settings sent to Thomson included corrections, and were often marked by Thomson with directions for his engravers. Some songs at the end of the copy book were supposedly simplified settings including versions of **Whistle o'er the lave o't**, **Fy gar rub her o'er wi' strae** and **Gil Morrice**: **GB-Lbl** Add. Ms 35277. But Thomson apparently failed to publish Kozeluch's settings of these three songs publishing only Haydn's settings instead **SIV/169**, **SIIb/53** and **SIb/45** respectively. It becomes almost impossible to determine whether the changes were the composer's adjustments, or whether Thomson himself reverted to retouching the undesirable settings as he had done originally.

[107] Thomson to G.F. Graham, 29 October 1814: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/125-6.

[108] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/322-3.

[109] Thomson to Beethoven, 5 August 1812: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/45-7 and 30 October 1812: 35267/52-3.

[110] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/63-5.

Beethoven supposedly made to some of the arrangements, Beethoven had immediately objected to the idea of simplification, explaining that he was not accustomed to altering finished pieces, and that he would rather compose new arrangements instead:

> Je ne suis pas accoutumé de retoucher mes compositions; Je ne l'ai jamais fait, pénétré de la vérité que tout changement partiel altère le caractère de la composition. Il me fait de la peine que vous y perdez mais vous ne sauriez m'en imputer la faute, puisque c'était à vous de me faire mieux connaître le goût de votre pays et le peu de facilité de vos executeurs. Maintenant muni de vos renseignements je les ai composé tout de nouveau, et comme j'espère de sorte qu'ils reponderont à votre attente.[111]

He sensibly commented that Thomson had given him few details of the tastes of the British or of their performing capabilities. Naturally the composer was not well acquainted with the tastes and standards of British domestic music-makers. Thomson replied on 27 March 1813 that simplicity for the eyes was as important as it was for the fingers, and stressed that the success of his collection depended most of all on the simplicity of its music. The settings had to be simple because the melodies were of this nature, but also because this was what the British people liked -'Une telle simplicité est de la derniere importance au succés de mon ouvrage; car ce n'est que le style simple dans ces Airs qui s'accomode au goût de ce pays-ci'.[112] It made little difference to the editor that Beethoven insisted on producing brand new arrangments of the songs which had been classified 'too difficult'. The production of playable settings was the most important thing for Thomson and, although he was prudent

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[111] Beethoven to Thomson, 19 February 1813. This letter is not kept with the other Beethoven letters in the British Library. The original is in **D-BNba** (Slg. H.C. Bodmer, Br 258) and a copy is found in Emily Anderson's edition of The Letters of Beethoven, London, 1986, i. 405-7 (405).

[112] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/72-3.

with his budget, the composers were paid for simplifying or rewriting.

Thomson had specifically asked, in his letter of 5 August 1812, that Beethoven concentrate on simplifying six of the songs which were part of the commissioned '53' songs.[113] Thomson listed them as numbers 4, 28, 37, 43, 44 and 52 which were songs from all three collections - **To the Blackbird** (Welsh), **On the Massacre of Glencoe** (Scottish/Irish), **I'll praise the Saints** (Irish), **Faithfu' Johnie** (Scottish), **'Tis but in vain** (Irish), and **I dreamed I lay** (Irish) respectively.[114] Thomson published the so-called simplified versions of all but one of the six songs. The second version of **On the massacre of Glencoe** was discarded by Thomson, and he published Beethoven's first arrangement instead.[115]

Kozeluch's settings had been simplified if there were too many semiquavers, awkward stretches or difficult key signatures. There were similar criteria in connection with the Beethoven

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[113] Details of this commission are given in Chapter II, iii: Transportation and Distribution p. 69.

[114] The copies of these songs are in **D-Bds** 29 IV. By far the best source of details of the contents of the manuscripts of Beethoven's song settings is, Willy Hess, 'Handschriftensammelbände zu Beethovens Volksliederbearbeitungen', Beiträge zur Beethoven-Bibilographie, ed. K. Dorfmüller, Munich, 1978, pp. 88-103.

[115] The versions which Thomson did not accept were all published by Willy Hess in 1971 in his Supplement (XIV) to the Beethoven Gesamtausgabe. Hess's volume was entitled 'Volksliederbearbeitungen: Nachträge und Berichtungen', Wiesbaden, 1971. The six songs listed above were found as follows: **To the Blackbird/Pen Rhaw** (**WIII/113-14**) - Hess no. 40; **The massacre of Glencoe**, or **The Highland Lament** (**IrI/11-13**) - Hess no. 47; **I'll praise the saints** or **Abigail Judge** (**IrII/101-2**) - Hess no. 44; **Faithfu' Johnie** (**SV/222**)- Hess, no. 51; **'Tis but in vain** or **The twisting of the rope** (**IrII/121-2**) - Hess no. 46; **I dreamed I lay where flowers**, or **O Molly, Molly my dearest honey** (**IrII/73-5**) - Hess no. 42. In addition to these arrangements Hess also included alternative versions for the Scottish song **Oh! thou art the lad of my heart Willy** (Thomson **SV/203**/ Hess no. 50); for the Welsh songs **Oh let the night my blushes hide** (Thomson **WIII/79-80**/ Hess no. 38) and **The Dream** (Thomson **WIII/99-101**/ Hess no. 39); and for the Irish songs **Oh! would I were but that sweet linnet** (Thomson **IrII/119-20**/ Hess no. 41), **When far from the home of our youth** (Thomson **IrII/99-100**/ Hess no. 43), **'Tis sunshine at last, come, my Ellen** (Thomson **IrII/109-10**/ Hess no. 45).

settings, although their technical standard was generally far in advance of Kozeluch's, and this caused even more problems for Thomson. The first version of **Faithfu' Johnie** (Hess no. 51) was clearly much too difficult for Thomson's buyers, for it was full of semiquaver passages which could only have been played by a skilled pianist (**Ex. 9a**). This setting is the supreme example of the visual difficulty of many of Beethoven's settings, as described by Thomson in several of his letters to the composer, for the physical appearance of this arrangement was enough to deter any amateur. The published version (**SV/222**) was truly simple in comparison but was still technically difficult, especially when compared to the majority of the settings already published by Thomson (**Ex. 9b**). It is highly possible that Thomson wanted Beethoven to compose a third version, but was bashful about approaching him for the third time. **'Tis but in vain** is another example of the need for removal of semiquavers, except where they occurred in the melody, for the simpler version (**IrII/121-2**) was more self-contained than that which Thomson decided against (Hess no. 46). The new version of **On the massacre of Glencoe** was discarded by the editor because of the semiquavers which characterized the bass part of the accompaniment (Hess no. 47). But there had clearly also been problems with Beethoven's first setting, which was published by Thomson (**IrI/11-13**). In **D-Dbs** manuscript Artaria 187 (ff. 12-14) this first version appears in sketch form with alterations by the composer: the semiquavers were scrubbed out, and most of them were replaced by crotchets.[116] Rhythmical difficulties, never discussed in connection with Kozeluch's settings, were also problematic. The original arrangements of **To the blackbird** and **I'll praise the saints** were obviously discarded as a result of their sophisticated rhythms. The more difficult setting of **I'll praise the saints** (Hess no. 44) incorporated a syncopated accompanimental motif in the right hand of the piano part, which Thomson obviously thought would cause confusion.

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[116] A clean copy of this version is found, with the crotchets in the bass and with dynamic, and pizzicato/arco markings in **D-Bds** 29IV ff. 63-5.

Beethoven spent little time on his second version (**IrII/101-2**), removing all interesting twists and restricting the rhythms to those of the melody alone. In the case of **To the blackbird** the original setting (Hess no. 40) made use of a cross-rhythm in the bass part of the piano accompaniment, which Thomson also decided was too challenging (**Ex. 10a**). This was one of the less successful choices made by the editor, for this particular setting was much more sensitive to both the melody and the lyric. In the discarded setting the right hand duplicated the melody and was effectively accompanied by a gentle flowing movement created by the triplets of the bass, but the published setting (**WIII/113-14**) was much thicker in texture and ungainly in comparison, with the voice alone (and occasionally the violin) projecting the melody (**Ex. 10b**). Thomson's decision to include this version in his collection was also inconsistent, for he had specifically asked Beethoven to incorporate the melody in his accompaniment just as he did with the first version of **To the blackbird**, explaining that this was appreciated by the British amateurs:

> Dans plusieurs de vos accompagnements vous avez compris dans la partie du Piano Forte la Melodie de l'air, ou quelque chose de très ressemblant. Ce genre arioso d'accompagnement èst le plus adapté à notre goût national; C'est pourquoi je vous supplie d'y faire attention dans les Accompagnements de touttes [sic] les Airs entre vos mains, du moins dans la partie du Piano Forte.[117]

Beethoven settings never published by Thomson included the Scottish songs **From thee Eliza, I must go** (Hess no. 32),[118] **Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion** (Hess no. 29) to the tune known as **Deil tak the wars** (see Haydn's setting **SIV/157**), **Oh ono chrio** (Hess no. 26), **Red gleams the sun** (Hess no. 27), and **O Mary ye's be clad in silk** (Hess no. 30); the Welsh song **The vale of Clwyd** (Hess no. 56); and arrangements of four

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[117] Thomson to Beethoven, 12 November 1812: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/130-2.

[118] Pleyel's setting of this tune, known as **Donald**, can be found in the first volume of the Scottish collection - **SI/15**.

Irish songs, namely **Erin! oh Erin!** (Hess no. 28), **Adieu my lov'd harp** (Hess no. 33),[119] **Castle O'Neill** (Hess no. 34) and the **Lament for Owen Roe O'Neill** (Hess no. 35).[120] In the majority of cases these settings also display the difficulties which Thomson asked to be removed. **Red gleams the sun**, for example, had a very uncomfortable piano accompaniment which relied solely on semiquavers (**Ex. 11**), as did **Adieu my lov'd harp, O let the Night my blushes hide, The vale of Clwyd** and **Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion**, which resembled some of the Kozeluch settings with its semiquaver Alberti bass. **O Mary ye's be clad in silk** was rhythmically too adventurous, as were corners in **From thee Eliza**, which Thomson had already published with a successful easy accompaniment by Pleyel. Neither **Oh ono chrio** nor **Erin! oh, Erin!** was technically so difficult, but two settings on the same subjects had already been published, and perhaps this was why Thomson decided against them.[121] **Castle O'Neill**, which was also simple enough, was arranged for four voices, when Thomson only ever included duets or trios in his volumes.

The battle over simplification did not end with the arrival of Beethoven's new settings discussed above. Thomson was still unhappy about the general standard of Beethoven's arrangements, and in 1814 he raised the subject again and attempted to explain his editorial difficulty by giving the composer a description of performance skills in the north, where the women, who were the bulk of Thomson's clientele,

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[119] These two songs are particularly confusing because Thomson published two songs in his Irish collection with similar titles - **Oh harp of Erin** (**IrI/59-60**) and **The farewell song** which began **Oh Erin to thy harp divine** (**IrII/143-4**). The first of these appeared in two different versions.

[120] These unpublished songs are all included by Hess in his Supplement and he also included Beethoven's settings of foreign airs, which Thomson commissioned but was unable to publish himself. This commission is discussed in further detail in Chapter V, pp. 243-5.

[121] **Oh ono chrio** resembled the second lyric published alongside Beethoven's arrangement of **The lovely lass of Inverness**, which Thomson published in 1818 (**SV/210**), and **Erin! oh, Erin!** was too like the Irish songs mentioned in the above note.

were generally unable to sing and play such arrangements at the same time, especially if the accompaniment was at all chromatic:

> Je vous renvoye un de ceux que vous m'avez fait tenir, dans l'esperance que vous aurez la bonté de la refaire d'un stile plus simple et Cantabile, parce-que les Dames d'ici ne voudroient jamais toucher un Accompaniment si chromatique. En veritè elles ne pourroient chanter l'air et executer en même tems une telle partie de la main gauche.[122]

The composer did not respond to Thomson's letter and almost a year passed before Thomson specifically complained about one of the 15 settings sent by Beethoven in June of 1815.[123] Thomson stated in his letter of 20 August 1815 that the seventh song - an unidentified and unpublished Scottish song[124] - was not adapted to the taste of the British ladies, for it was too complicated and difficult for them to play correctly. He continued his letter by repeating that the settings must be simple both for the eyes and for the hands, illustrating that the physical appearance of the arrangements was as important as the level of practical skill required to play them. Thomson was anxious about the difficulty of Beethoven's arrangements, telling William Smyth on 10 August 1815: 'You can have no idea of the difficulties and obstacles I have encountered in my negotiations with musical composers'.[125] But to those removed from his editorial problems he was still prepared to sing the composer's praises, referring to him in a letter to Joanna Baillie as 'a genius

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[122] Thomson to Beethoven, 12 November 1812: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/130-2.

[123] Fries informed Thomson that Beethoven had delivered the 15 settings, and been paid for them on 10 June 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/210-11.

[124] Thomson wrote that this song was 'trop compliqué et trop difficile pour être correctement executé par elles [nos demoiselles]'. Thomson did not publish this song - Kinsky lists it as the sixth song of the second group of WoO 158 - songs from different nations. It is not included in Hess: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/155-6.

[125] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/152-5. On the subject of Beethoven.

strikingly original' who had 'done wonders for the Airs in those volumes which are forthcoming'.[126] And in his letter of 1 January 1816 he excitedly congratulated the composer on the three settings he had sent. In Thomson's opinion they had been written in a simple and cantabile style which he stated was most agreeable to the amateur musicians in Britain.[127]

There was, however, little consistency on the part of the composer. While he was able to produce arrangements like those above, he was also inclined to create settings which were far too difficult. By 28 December 1817 Thomson was clearly becoming frustrated. His plan to publish an appendix of foreign airs had been unsuccessful,[128] and the difficulty of the instrumental parts of Beethoven's new accompaniments was becoming a serious problem.[129] He demanded that the composer produce easier violin parts for two of the Scottish songs - **The Maid of Isla** and **Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie** - explaining that while the accompaniments for the songs were charming, the violin parts were simply 'trop remplie de notes, trop difficile d'executer, et trop eloignée du genre des Airs'.[130]

As illustrated by the new version of **On the massacre of Glencoe**, it was not always the case that Beethoven simplified everything in his second setting. The published instrumental symphonies for the Irish song **Oh! would I were but that sweet linnet** were, for example, more adventurous than those which Thomson discarded. The sketch of the arrangement published by Thomson (**IrII/119-20**) is found in **D-B** manuscript Artaria 190

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[126] 14 October 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/158-9.

[127] These three settings were supposedly of **Kenmure's on and awa** (**SVa/203**), of the Irish tune **Moll Roone** (**IrII/109-10**) and of **Robin Adair**, which Thomson did not publish: **Gb-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/169-70.

[128] See Chapter V, pp. 243-5.

[129] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/15-6.

[130] Ibid.

(ff. 34-6), and there are many alterations, especially to the instrumental parts. But the cello part of both arrangements is technically difficult and far in advance of the cello parts previously published by Thomson, which had always adhered unadventurously to the bass part of the piano accompaniment. While Beethoven felt obliged to rearrange several of the songs completely, many of his sketches show that he frequently had problems with the instrumental parts alone. The sketch for the Irish song beginning **We fairy-elves, in secret dells** to the tune **Planxty Kelly** is also found in **D-B** manuscript Artaria 190 (ff. 68-73) and displays the difficulty of composing playable instrumental parts.[131] The violin and cello parts are scrubbed out in this sketch - as is so typical of Beethoven's general compositional procedure - and he spent several pages tinkering with them alone (**Ex. 12a**), when the accompaniment to the song itself was complete. The published version (**IrII, 96-8**) shows that he did not completely overcome the problem, and in order to express the transience of the fairy world he insisted on incorporating the shimmering tremolando part for the violin which had caused problems initially (**Ex. 12b**). The sketches for the Welsh song **The dairy house** (**WIII/107-8**), which is found in **D-B** manuscript 29III (ff. 7-8), and for the Irish song **The kiss, dear maid, thy lip has left** (**IrII/89-90**), which is found in **D-B** Artaria 190 (ff. 52-55), also show difficulties in composing instrumental parts, though there is no evidence that Thomson asked Beethoven to adjust these arrangements. The violin and cello parts for the two Scottish songs mentioned in Thomson's letter of 28 December 1817 caused continual problems. The piano accompaniment for **The Maid of Isla** was not altered by Beethoven, and it is the same in Thomson's published version (**SV/209**) as it is in the discarded setting published by Hess (Hess no. 48). But there were clearly problems with the instrumental parts which are best exemplified by examining the three copies of the parts found in **D-Bds** manuscript 29V (ff. 20-21 and then ff. 113-15).

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[131] This song is also referred to as **The Elfin Fairies** and was published with a lyric by Thomson's younger brother, David.

The first copy (ff. 20-21) is that published by Hess (**Ex. 13a**), which has difficult parts for both violin and cello, requiring much dexterity and skill and with a great deal of high playing for the cellist.[132] Alongside this particular copy is a copy of Beethoven's second attempt at the instrumental parts entitled, by Beethoven's copyist, 'Violino & Violonc° simplified for The Maid of Isla'. In this second version Beethoven set out to remove the semiquaver passages for both violin and cello, but this new version was still not acceptable, and later in the same manuscript there is yet another copy of these instrumental parts entitled 'Further improved Violino & Violoncello of the Maid of Isla', which were those eventually published by Thomson in his fifth volume of 1818 (**SVa/209**). A neater copy of this setting is found in **D-BNba** Mh52 (ff. 63-7) (**Ex. 13b**). In this third attempt Beethoven simplified both parts by bringing them rhythmically and melodically in line with the much simpler piano accompaniment. The composer also had three attempts at producing a playable violin part for **Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie**, as Hess reveals in his supplement (Hess no. 49). The first version (Hess no. 49a) was technically difficult only because it required the violinist to double-stop, but it adhered closely to the melody; the second version (Hess no. 49b) was also built closely around the melody but the player was challenged by continuous semiquavers. The final version which Thomson published included only one or two semiquaver runs and stuck rigidly to the task of projecting the melody along with the voice and the right hand of the piano (**SV/207**).[133] This difficulty with violin parts in particular mirrored the lack of development of violin playing in Britain at the beginnning of the nineteenth century. It was at the time of preparing the fifth volume of the Scottish collection, in which these two songs were published, that Thomson decided

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[132] The sketch of this version is found in **D-Bds** 29II ff. 35-6 with an incomplete copy in **D-B** 29I f. 8.

[133] A clean copy of the setting published by Thomson is found in **D-BNba** Mh52 ff. 76-9.

it might be better to include parts for flute rather than violin. He explained to Beethoven in 1817 that there were more flautists of stature in Britain than there were violinists and that it would be a good idea to include obbligato parts for flute.[134]

Beethoven's instrumental parts set new standards in the collections as a whole, which were to be maintained by both Weber and Hummel. Thomson spent much time early in his correspondence with these two composers stressing the importance of simple piano accompaniments, but both composers were asked to simplify instrumental parts. In his first letter Thomson wrote to Hummel:

> For each of these [melodies] I beg you will have the goodness to compose Ritornelles or Symphs, & Accompaniments for the pianoforte, & for the violin, Flute & Violoncello - The Piano Forte to be itself complete, because it is very often the only Accomp^{t}. we can have: - Yet we wish the Accompaniments for the Violino-Flauto & Violoncello to be each in its turn a little obligato, as being thus more amusing than when merely ad libitum: these Accompaniments may be as fanciful as you think proper, but the ladies like the Pianoforte Accompt. to their National Melodies to be rather in a simple Cantabile style.[135]

The information in this letter confirms, as one might suspect, that these parts were played much less frequently than the piano accompaniments. This was understandable, considering the instrumental parts were published separately, but it is also illustrative of their difficulty for amateur players. By 1826, the date of this letter to Hummel, Thomson's volumes had been on the market for over 30 years, and it was clearly the case that more copies of the volumes alone had sold than copies of

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[134] Thomson's exact description of British violinists was 'rare and weak', and he informed Beethoven that a musician friend of his was able to play the necessary passages on flute though they were often too low. 28 December 1817: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/15-6.

[135] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/161-4.

volumes and instrumental parts together. Weber was asked to adjust the symphonies for the first and fourth songs, **Gang to the kye wi' me** and **Bonny Dundee**, with particular reference to their instrumental parts and not to the piano accompaniment, which was apparently exactly what Thomson sought. Weber sent the simplified versions almost immediately, apologizing to Thomson by explaining that 'if I have not been capable to satisfy you entirely, it depends upon my unfittness to compose in conformity with commands'.[136] Only four of the Hummel settings required alteration. Thomson wrote to Hummel on 14 December 1829 expressing delight at Hummel's first settings which 'are full of talent', and Thomson took the opportunity of telling Hummel once more that the accompaniments would not be looked at if they were 'learned or recherche'. He was asked to simplify four songs: no.6 **Despondency (Again rejoicing nature sees)**, no.8 **Highland Pibroch (Pibroch of Donuil Dhu)**, no.11 **Evening (the sun upon the wierdlaw hill)** and no.9 **The Maid deserted (The blossom that silver'd the tree)**.[137] Thomson was delighted with the simplified settings - 'these are quite what I wished and very beautiful'[138] - and he tried to persuade Hummel to consider retouching the symphonies for no.2 **Admiration (True hearted was he)** and no.5 **Constancy and ardour (O were I on parnassus hill)**. No simplified versions of these were sent, and Thomson published neither in his volumes.

While Thomson maintained a balanced and altogether friendly correspondence with Weber and Hummel, his collaboration with Beethoven was characterized by lack of understanding. Beethoven tried to explain that Thomson's wishes were not so

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[136] These simplified versions were sent to Thomson on 18 September 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/153-4. The copies of the settings and these simplified versions : **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35271. It should be noted that the original versions were published complete by H. A. Probst of Leipzig in his edition of Weber's Schottische National-Gesänge mit neuen Dichtungen in 1826.

[137] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/7-9. These simplified versions are found alongside their originals: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35270.

[138] Thomson to Hummel 17 February 1830: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/10.

easy to fulfill (taking this opportunity of asking the editor to pay more for the settings), and he found it wellnigh impossible to simplify his style, failing to understand that the performance standards of the German and Austrian people were generally far superior to those of the British. Thomson, meanwhile, refused to accept Beethoven's so-called naïvety, did not discuss the tastes of his potential buyers, or the nature of the melodies in any detail, and simply did not understand the compositional problems which Beethoven described.[139] Beethoven asked intelligent questions about the melodies and was apparently willing to try to accommodate the settings to suit Thomson's criteria, yet Thomson's information was always the same and clearly insufficient. Constantly informing the composer that his settings were too difficult was simply not enough, and was no aid to the composer, who eventually lost interest altogether, writing to Thomson in May 1819:

> Vous écrivez toujours facile, très facile - je m'accomode tout mon possible, mais - mais - mais - l'honoraire pourroit pourtant être plus <u>difficile</u>, ou plutôt pesant!!!![140]

He ended his letter: 'je vous souhaite toujours le bon gôut pour la vraie Musique et si vous cries facile - je crierai <u>difficile pour facile</u>!!!!!'. Thomson's inadequacy infuriated Beethoven, and Beethoven's failure to produce simple settings enraged Thomson. The two were at odds with one another; they were equally decisive about their aims and objectives, and the debate became more heated. Thomson chose to quote a London music seller in his next letter to the composer in an attempt to show that it was not just Thomson who thought that the Beethoven's settings were much too difficult for the public:

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[139] Beethoven wrote 'Ce n'est pas toujours si facile comme vous peut-être croyes de moi, on trouve un Nombre infinie des Harmonies, mais seulement une est Conforme au genre et au Caractêre de la Melodie'. Beethoven to Thomson, 21 February 1818: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/7-9.

[140] Beethoven to Thomson, 25 May 1819: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/59-60.

> Beethoven quoique grand et sublime Artiste, n'est pas compris, et son arrangement de vos Chansons est beaucoup trop difficile pour le public. Aprés tous nos annonces dans les Journaux, on n'achete aucun de volumes avec ses Accompagnements.[141]

Thomson continued to draw comparisons between those amateurs with whom Beethoven was acquainted and some of Thomson's friends. One of his associates, who was a brilliant pianist, had struggled to play some of Beethoven's themes and variations, and most of the ladies he knew had abandoned Beethoven's settings, despairing at their difficulty and chromaticism.[142] Thomson stressed that there was only a tiny number of British music masters who were able to play Beethoven's settings, and that for the majority of amateurs in the country they were much too difficult. Yet, ironically, in his letter of 2 June 1818 he congratulated the composer on his variations (Op. 105 and Op. 107) for piano with flute obbligato, expressing his pleasure that they were in a familiar and easy style, though still possessing a streak of Beethoven's brilliance, and that most of the women were able to play them.[143] This seems difficult to accept, for these variations are technically advanced and far from simple to play. Even though Britain's flautists were far more skilled than her violinists, the piano part was difficult. Thomson had pressurized Kozeluch to simplify passages in his song settings which were full of semiquavers, and yet many of these variations included long and complicated semiquaver passages. Such a comment displays inconsistency on Thomson's part. It is both strange and inexplicable that these variations were

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[141] 22 June 1818: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/21-5.

[142] Thomson to Beethoven, 5 April 1819: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/39-40. Thomson also complained that some other variations on foreign airs, while written in a style at once beautiful and brilliant, were again far too difficult - 'car il s'en faut beaucoup que les dames de l'ecosse ne soient aussi fortes que celles de votre Pays ou la musique èst si cultiviée': January 1819: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/35-6.

[143] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/21-5.

commendable, while several of the song settings were apparently unacceptable.

After receiving many of the best and certainly the most adventurous settings that he was to publish, Thomson became as negative as Beethoven. The correspondence, after Thomson's failure to publish the arrangements of songs from different nations, came to an end in 1820, and by 1821 Thomson began to express his disappointment, writing in one of his letters to William Smyth that Beethoven's contribution was 'too learned and eccentric for my purpose'.[144] The composer's brilliance, which had attracted Thomson in the first place, was simply not understood by the majority of Thomson's public. Ultimately the editor deeply regretted his decision to commission Beethoven, lamenting the lack of musical knowledge amongst the British, and more specifically Scottish, people, and feeling dejected by Beethoven's failure to accommodate his settings to the tastes and talents of the Scots. In 1814 he had written to George Farquhar Graham:

> The German composers are far less considerate than the Italians with respect to execution, because Germany is full of great performers who can master any thing - Yet Beethoven in his latter compostions for me has abated greatly of difficulties for the Piano Forte & excluded bravura Accompts entirely, as equally unsuitable to our simple strains, and to the talents of our young Ladies.[145]

In retrospect Thomson had been over-optimistic. By 1822 he concluded that the composer's 'pegasus is too much addicted to frisking, curvetting & flying for us', and he continued: 'Would I had the many hundred good gold ducats which Beethoven has received from me, and the manuscripts were at the bottom of the Danube'.[146]

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[144] 29 August 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/79-80.

[145] 29 October 1814: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/125-6.

[146] Thomson to Smyth, 28 January 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/83-5.

The reality of the situation was that the musical standards of Thomson's British public were not comparable with those of Beethoven's, or indeed with any of his composers, and that there was also a movement away from the works of such serious composers, as they were regarded, by the late 1810s. George Croall, writing about the developments in musical taste in Scotland at the beginning of the nineteenth century, commented:

> I remember well that the works of such old masters as Pleyel, Kozeluch, and Dussek, which in the beginning of the century had no doubt been popular, were relegated to the back shelves of the music shop, and almost never named; while the rare request for a Sonata by Beethoven made the vendor think that the inquirer must be a lunatic.[147]

Thomson also wrote about these developments, though with much more resentment and bitterness, for they directly affected the sales of his volumes. The prefaces to his later issues, particularly that published in 1831, were vehement, and his anger was also voiced in his correspondence. In the early 1840s Thomson wrote to his son-in-law George Hogarth about the latter's article on chamber music which had just appeared in the first issue of Dickens's Daily News:

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[147] George Croall, Living Memories of An Octogenarian (Chiefly of Edinburgh) from the Years 1816 to 1845, Edinburgh, 1894, p. 26.

> I am decidedly of the opinion that Chamber Music has been retrograding under the influence of Fashion and bad taste, since our younger days, and that the Music both for the Piano Forte and the Voice which was put into the hands of young Ladies 40 or 50 years ago was much superior in Melody, Simplicity, and pleasing effect to that which the generality of Teachers have for sometime been giving to their fair pupils, - Opera Airs with the most common place Variations, Waltzes, Polkas and dancing bagatelles, instead of the judicious lessons of a Clementi, Kozeluch, Pleyel, Haydn, Mozart & Hummel; and the inimitable chef d'ouvres [sic] of Beethoven, instead of the rattling impracticabilities of Thalberg & his followers. It quite vexes me to see the charming young creatures jingling at such trumpery things, and their precious years of study wasted under the direction of Masters void of conscience, and of the pride they ought to feel, in giving valuable instruction for sterling money, and elevating the Taste of their pupils above common place stuff.[148]

Thomson was understandably infuriated by what he referred to as 'Idiot Fashion', which steered impressionable young ladies to the florid arias of Rossini, when, for the same time, effort and expenditure, they could 'sing with expression and effect the beautiful Melodies of their own Country'.[149] But as he stated above, the British amateurs of the 1830s and 1840s had long since discarded the music in which Thomson had placed his faith.

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[148] Thomson to Hogarth [1845]: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/118-9.

[149] Thomson to David Vedder, 21 December 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/9-10. See also Thomson to Vedder, 18 June 1831: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/23-5.

iv) Songs Without Words

Thomson's other editorial problem in relation to the musical settings was connected much more closely with his editing of the newly commissioned lyrics which will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV. As already mentioned, Thomson's decision not to send copies of the lyrics to his composers was, understandably, highly controversial. It has already been suggested that the failure of copyright law to protect Thomson's work from European musical pirates was fundamental to this decision. But, in any case, Thomson dealt with the words and the music of his songs as entirely separate entities. This separation of the two components of song seems paradoxical, especially because Thomson was apparently dealing with folksong, that organic whole, where words and music are inexplicably born together never to be parted. In fact the separation of word and music was common editorial practice throughout the eighteenth century.

The pattern of printing song-books without music had been set in Scotland long before the 1700s. Songsheets and broadsides, and the mid-sixteenth century volume of religious songs entitled The Gude and Godlie Ballatis, the words of which were written to match specific tunes, were produced without music. In Scotland, as elsewhere, from the early 1700s this was an accepted procedure when editing song. The most important Scottish volumes of the eighteenth century - including James Watson's Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Poems both Ancient and Modern (in three volumes dated 1706, 1709 and 1711), Allan Ramsay's The Evergreen (1719) and the first edition of the TTM (1724) and David Herd's Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs (1769) - presented lyrics alone, even though in most cases the title of the tune to which the lyrics were meant to be sung was also given. When he decided to publish his octavo edition in the 1820s,[150] Thomson also considered

[150] See Appendix 1, pp. 279-83.

the possibility of producing a book of song lyrics without corresponding melodies or musical settings, but he decided against such a publication.[151] It was arguably books like these which led to the creation of 'song' as a poetic or literary medium quite distinct from that of traditional folksong (the combination of word and music), which was its ancestor. The publishing industry in the eighteenth century thus changed folksong's historical path. Volumes like those listed above were instigated by an oral tradition, by a performing art which became something very different when it appeared on paper.[152] The song collections produced by editors like Thomson, Johnson and Burns, Ramsay and Herd were not volumes of folksong. While often based on traditional folksongs, these pieces were brand new creations most commonly referred to now as 'national rather than traditional'.[153] There was one basic similarity between the traditional folksong and the new 'national' song, for just as the former would be performed in numerous ways by numerous different performers - with different narrative elements, or different words, or variations in the tune - so the printed song would appear in several different states, depending on the editor or publisher's criteria.

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[151] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/61-5. Thomson's letter to Dr Tweedie of 7 September 1821, discussing Constable's proposed book of Scottish songs. Thomson wrote: 'At one time I certainly did think of adopting that mode [reference to Hogg's Jacobite Relicks], but abandoned it upon this consideration, that the mere poetical reader wants no music at all; while the musical Amateur would be dissatisfied with Melody unless united with harmony; so that were I to adopt the method in question, I conceive that I should please neither class: and this is also the opinion of Mr Preston my London Publisher, who has had a great deal of experience.'

[152] T. Crawford, 'Lowland Song and Popular Tradition in the Eighteenth Century', The History of Scottish Literature, ii: 1660-1800, ed. A. Hook, Aberdeen, 1987, Chapter 7, pp. 123-139. Crawford believes that because of the the level of literacy in Protestant countries like Scotland the printed word actually reinforced its oral transmission.

[153] F. Collinson, The Traditional and National Music of Scotland, London, 1966, p. 2.

In a practical sense Thomson was left with little alternative. He was not producing a collection of traditional songs with new musical arrangements, or new lyrics alone. Thomson's decision to commission several composers to arrange the melodies and numerous writers to write new lyrics for them meant that it was impossible for him not to organize word and music separately. Commissions for lyrics were sent off in one direction at the same time as the melodies for which they were intended were parcelled up and sent in another. But often Thomson did not decide which musical arrangement would be presented with a particular lyric until shortly before publication. Apart from these practicalities, Thomson had strong artistic reasons for mixing and matching his music and lyrics, as he explained in a letter to one of his lyricists:

> What I assert is this, that among national melodies there are many of a similar character, and in measure & rhythms precicicely [sic] the same, consequently that words written for one of those melodies will often suit another melody of the same nature perfectly - A Poet may take a liking to a very indifferent melody, from hearing it play'd by his mistress, or when his spirits are exilerated by pleasant Society, of this there can be no doubt - Well he writes verses for that air far beyond its desert [sic]. Another person sees the air without the partiality, which in the poet becomes strong & fixed after writing his verses with it; & if that person finds a better air of the very same measure & rhythm, & is more worthy of the verses, he forms a new union advantageous to them ... Hence different poets in writing verses for the same Melody will naturally characterize it by a greater or less degree of passion in their compositions & each of the songs may to an unpregudiced [sic] hearer appear suited to the air. From this uncertainty of precise character in Airs it follows that words written either for a lively or a plaintive air can frequently be applied with the utmost propriety to another air of the same class, where the measure & rhythm happen to be the same, & in many of our airs this is truly the case.[154]

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[154] Thomson's letter of 1804 to Hector MacNeill: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/35-6. Similar opinions have been voiced in literature from this century. In Kinsley's Music of the Heart, he quotes from B. H. Bronson's Music and Literature (Los Angeles, 1954). Bronson wrote: 'There is often a chameleon

For Thomson, then, the music and the lyrics of the songs were equally important components, and he was apparently also aware that the creation of a good song lay in the successful fusion of word and music. This was ultimately demonstrated by the time and effort that the editor devoted to matching the right words, in his opinion, with the best melody. Ironically this understanding was not displayed in relation to his composers, or to his lyricists, who were left to create their part of the whole, with little or no knowledge of the other part. Lyricists were usually sent the name of the melody for which the lyric was initially intended, and, if they were musically illiterate, Thomson would describe the characteristics of the tune and give them details of its rhythmic qualities. They rarely, if ever, saw a composer's arrangement until they held a copy of the volume in their hands. The composers likewise had little idea of Thomson's choices of lyric, and they were left to interpret the subject of the song from the melody alone, or with the aid of a two- or three-line description of the lyric's content. This description at least gave them some information to interpret and express, if they so chose, in their accompaniments and symphonies. It should be stressed, however, that there were many occasions when Thomson published a traditional melody with the words most often associated with it, in which case the composer did not necessarily need to see the lyric, for the melody alone told him all he needed to know about the song. Although Beethoven was the only composer to argue with Thomson over his failure to send copies of the lyrics, he was the most sensitive interpreter of melody. Several of the melodies sent to Beethoven were published with the lyrics which had been traditionally associated with them. In cases such as these, even when there was no copy of the lyric, Beethoven was able to deduce, from the melody alone, the content of the lyric, the personalities in the narrative, and even the importance of particular words with uncanny expressivity. His setting of **Duncan Gray (SIf/48)**,

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quality about these Scottish tunes that makes them notably adaptable to different tunes'. Kinsley, p. 42, Bronson, pp. 51-54.

for example, was particularly successful, because the melody itself embodies all the details of the narrative (see **Ex. 14**). Beethoven was sent the following description, which, combined with the melody, presented him with more than enough information:[155]

> Un Berger amoureux d'une Coquette du village èst repoussè, devient dedaigneux a son tour: mais la Villageoise se repent de sa folie, èst pardonée, et ils s'epousent.[156]

Other notably successful settings by Beethoven included **O thou art the lad of my heart Willy** to the tune **Kenmure's on and awa Willy** (**SV/203**), **The lovely lass of Inverness** (**SV/210**) to the tune **Fingal's Lament** (with Beethoven's emphatic diminished sevenths), and **Bonnie Laddie Highland laddie** (**SV/207**). In these cases Thomson's choice of lyric was so well fused with the melodies sent to Beethoven that the final published song was the 'perfect product' which Beethoven set out to create.[157] Several of the Weber settings (**O Poortith cauld** (**SIf/49**), **Contented wi' little and canty wi' mair** (**SIIe/65**) for example), and some of the Hummel settings (**Jock o' Hazeldean** (**SVb/231**), **Pibroch of Donuil Dhu** (**SVb/234**) and **For the sake of somebody** (**SVb/232**)) also display this quality. There was an understanding of the invisible lyric from the melody alone, and the short description sent with the melody gave the composer enough information to create a sensitive setting. It is unlikely that the most successful arrangements in Thomson's volumes could have been better had the composers seen copies of the completed lyrics. The settings of Pleyel and Kozeluch might have been more expressive if they had seen the words. Yet the arrangements of both composers tended to

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[155] Burns had written to Thomson on 4 December 1792 that 'Duncan Gray is that kind of light-horse gallop of an air, which precludes sentiment.--The ludicrous is its ruling feature.--' Roy, Letters, ii. 163-4 (523).

[156] Thomson to Beethoven, 22 June 1818: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/21-5.

[157] Beethoven to Thomson, 29 February 1812: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/63-4.

adhere to the melodic structure and rarely to step outside it. Their process of composing arrangements was generally very similar from one melody to the next, and this ultimately resulted in dry and unadventurous settings which did little for the lyric, visible or invisible.

Kozeluch questioned Thomson about the lyrics in relation to the structure of the melodies, but was not particularly perturbed that Thomson did not send him copies. Beethoven, on the contrary, found Thomson's failure to send the words for the melodies both confusing and frustrating. In his letter to Thomson of 17 July 1810, in which he asked Thomson about the repetitions of the airs, he also mentioned the necessity of seeing the lyrics, stating 'Je voudrois bien avoir les paroles de ces airs écossaisais, pour en faire usage en allemagne dés que vous les aurez publiés en Ecosse'.[158] It was unfortunate that Beethoven suggested here that the main reason for his requiring the words was to enable him to publish a German edition of the songs after their publication in Scotland. The composer obviously did not realize that this was probably the very reason why Thomson forbade him to see the lyrics. Beethoven then caused even more trouble for himself by mentioning, in his next letter of 20 July 1811, that he wanted the dates of the British publication of the volumes so that he could arrange for their launch in Austria and Germany.[159] Even if Thomson had considered sending copies of the lyrics to Beethoven purely on artistic grounds, Beethoven's self-confessed commercialism must surely have dissuaded him. Thomson liked to ensure that he possessed a contract with each of his composers, which gave him the 'absolute and exclusive right to the property of the work in Great Britain'. Such a

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[158] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/322-3.

[159] Beethoven wrote: 'J'attends de vous que Vous fixerez l'epoque à laquelle, il vous plaira de publier mes compositions et que vous m'en avertirez pour que je puisse après le terme échu les faire imprimer et ainsi rendre compte en public du Continent de mes occupations dans la parti dont je m'occupe.' **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/24-6.

contract stated that his composers were not to compose works of a similar nature for any other publisher; that each Viennese publication of Thomson's material was to be sold at the same price as it would be in London; and that the composer would be held responsible, and would face court action should he disobey.[160] Beethoven signed several receipts in which he declared his settings Thomson's sole property within Britain - 'in all the dominions of his Britanic Majesty'[161] - but at no point did he state that he would not negotiate a German or Austrian publication of these songs, nor did Thomson ask him to refrain from doing so. The only demand on the editor's part was that the foreign publication should be after the British launch of the volume concerned. That Thomson was anxious about such foreign editions was obvious by his refusal to help the composer. Yet, not surprisingly, foreign editions of the songs by Beethoven[162] and Weber did appear in Austria and Germany at exactly the same time as Thomson's volumes were presented to the British public, for publishers simply printed the settings with new German lyrics. In the case of Weber's ten songs published by H. A. Probst in Leipzig in 1826, Thomson's two-line descriptions, or the first few lines of the lyric which he had sent to Weber, became the basis of newly written German lyrics by Arthur vom Nordstern, Eduard Gehe, Carl Förster, Friedrich Ludwig Breuer, Theodor Hell and Frierich Kuhn. These new lyrics were not literal translations, but the sentiment of the songs was very close to those Thomson pubished in the same year.

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[160] These are the specific terms of the contract of 1 June 1797 between Kozeluch and Thomson: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/22-4.

[161] Receipt of 4 February 1813: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/83.

[162] Various editions of Beethoven's settings appeared from Schlesinger's first edition in [1822], published again between 1845 and 1850. These included Scottish song settings published by Fr. Ph. Dunst in Frankfurt c.1830, Artaria's edition of 12 Irish settings in 1856 (with lyrics by Thomas Moore), Franz Espagne's edition published by Peters in Leipzig and Berlin also in the 1850s and a new edition by L. Benda, published by H. Litolff, which was produced c.1860.

Commercialism thus became an artistic obstacle. But although Beethoven wanted the lyrics to enable him to publish the songs, he also had strong artistic principles behind his request. It is astounding that he was the only one of the six main composers to question Thomson about this, and it is not at all clear what excuse or rationalization Thomson gave for not sending copies of the words when his composer had specifically asked him for them. Thomson's letters to Beethoven between 1810 and 1812 discussed commissions and the simplification of settings, rather than the lyrics for the songs. Thomson tried to appease Beethoven by giving descriptions of the song's content alongside the melody: such as that for **Duncan Gray**, or for the song **To fair Fidele's grassy tomb**, which Thomson described as a 'Lamentation sur la morte d'une belle jeune fille'.[163] Beethoven produced his first settings for Thomson without copies of the lyrics, and with the aid of descriptions like those above,[164] but by 1812 he was beginning to run out of patience, and he threatened Thomson by stating firmly that if the editor did not send copies of the lyrics then he would be given no choice but to refuse to complete the commission:

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[163] In the same letter Thomson described **Low down in the Broom** as follows: 'Mon père est Morose et ma Mère me gronde, - mais n'importe, car mon amant est constant'. All descriptions here from Thomson's letter of 22 June 1818: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/21-5.

[164] Thomson's first letter to Weber includes similar descriptions of the ten songs which Thomson wanted the composer to arrange: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/137-9. Thomson had noted in his letterbook, beside each song description, where these songs were to be found in the volumes. It should be noted that not all of the songs were published with the words Thomson sent. Nos. 4 and 10 of Weber's songs were published with different words in the 1826 Appendix (See Appendix 1 - **SIf**) and no. 5 was given a new set of lyrics by John Richardson entitled **Yes, thou mayst walk in silk attire** in 1826 (**SIf/44**). No.9 was published with a new lyric by David Vedder beginning **Robin is my joy, my dear** in 1831 (**SIIf/60**). See K. McCue, 'Weber's ten Scottish folksongs', Weber Studien, eds. G. Allroggen & J. Veit, Mainz, 1993, pp. 163-73.

> Je vous prie instamment d'ajoindre toujours le texte aux chansons ecossaises. Je ne comprends pas comme vous qui êtes connaisseur ne pouvez comprendre, que je produirais des compositions tout à fait autres, si j'aurai le texte à la main, et les chansons ne peuvent jamais devenir des produits parfaits, si vous ne m'envoyer pas le texte et vous m'obligerez à la fin de refuser vos ordres ultérieurs.[165]

Thomson's immediate reply on 5 August made no mention of the words, not did his next letter of 30 October, but Beethoven's threat finally pressurized him to write to the composer with an explanation, which he sent on the 21 December 1812:

> Vous voulez que je vous envoye les paroles des Airs:- Cela ne se peut pas. Plusieurs de ces paroles sont encore dans la cervelle du poëte; et il faut beaucoup d'attention et de ce flexion [sic], avant d'unir les paroles à la musique. Mais aussitôt que je pourrai imprimer un volume comptez que je vous l'enoerrai [sic], et voila tout ce qu'il m'est possible de faire.[166]

Thomson obviously felt uncomfortable, and in September 1813 he sent Beethoven the words for the song beginning **Raving winds around her blowing.**[167] Discussion concerning lyrics came to an end after Thomson's letter of 2 January 1815, when he stated that the prose descriptions would be the only information sent with the melody.[168] Beethoven did not stand by his threat, accepting Thomson's editorial process without further comment, and he continued to produce settings for the collections. The manuscript of Beethoven's settings of Scottish songs which was sent to the German publisher Schlesinger for his new edition of 25 Schottische Lieder in 1822, however, contains copies of

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[165] 29 February 1812: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/63-4.

[166] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/63-4.

[167] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/82-3. These were the lyrics printed with the Welsh melody **The old man of the wood** (**WIII/77-8**), but Thomson published a Haydn setting of this melody, and not Beethoven's arrangement.

[168] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/134-5.

lyrics both in English and in German, and the English lyrics are exact duplicates of those published by Thomson.[169] This suggests that either Thomson ultimately decided to send copies of the lyrics to Beethoven, or Schlesinger cleverly managed to find a copy of Thomson's fifth volume of 1818. Though there is no mention in the Beethoven correspondence of Thomson sending completed volumes to the composer as a gift, he did send a newly printed copy of Vol. III to Haydn in 1803.[170] But it seems unlikely, after Thomson's long-standing refusal, that he finally decided to help foreign publishers by sending them, or the composers, copies of the lyrics. If contemporary foreign editions appeared with exact copies of the lyrics published by Thomson, then it is most likely that the new publisher found them in a Thomson volume.

The combination of words and music in the majority of the songs was not disastrous; indeed the cases when Thomson chose to marry unsuitable lyrics to melodies which clearly bore no relation to the words were not as common as is often suggested. On occasion, the composers had a difficult time trying to deduce their invisible lyrics, but the lyricists often had just as frustrating a time watching their creations change shape to fit Thomson's choice of melody. **Ay Waking O** (**SIII/111**) was probably adapted because of Haydn's musical misunderstanding (see **Ex. 3**), but Thomson changed the length of some of the lines of **The siller croun** (**SI/44**), noting, in the octavo edition of 1822, that 'in their original state', they 'were too short to be properly sung with the melody, and therefore have been slightly altered'. The most famous and controversial case of the 'wrong' choice of melody was that for Burns's lyric **Scots wha hae** which he sent to Thomson in 1793:

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[169] **D-BNba** Mh52. The German text is added usually above or below the English text, in a different hand.

[170] Haydn to Thomson, 6 July 1803: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35363/172-3.

> I do not know whether the old Air, 'Hey tutti taitie', may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Fraser's Hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears.- There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places of Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's March at the battle of Bannock-burn.- This thought, in my yesternight's evening walk, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of Liberty & Independance, which I threw into a kind of Scots Ode, fitted to the Air, that one might suppose to be the gallant ROYAL SCOT's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.[171]

Burns skilfully told Thomson that he had already shown the melody to Pietro Urbani, who was 'highly pleased with it, & begged me to make soft verses for it',[172] knowing that Thomson would immediately want to publish the song before Urbani, who was of course his arch-rival.[173] He also guided Thomson to Clarke's setting of the tune **Hey tutti taiti** in the SMM,[174] but knew that Thomson would probably dislike it - 'Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum; though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection'.[175] Burns was correct: Thomson did not like the melody, and he replied to Burns on 5 September 1793:

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[171] About 30 August 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 235-6 (582).

[172] Ibid.

[173] Burns used this trick more than once. See also Burns to Thomson, about 25 August 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 231 (578).

[174] SMM, vi. 597 (577).

[175] Roy, Letters, ii. 236 (582).

> Your heroic ode is to me the noblest composition of the kind in the Scottish language. I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it; intreated me to find a suitable air for it, and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest and grandeur as Hey tuttie taittie. Assuredly your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it; for I never heard any person, and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scottish airs, I say, I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.[176]

He then informed Burns that he had chosen a Jacobite air entitled **Lewie Gordon** for Burns's song, but there were one or two alterations required in order for the lyric to fit the tune. He continued:

> There is in Lewie Gordon more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit, which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in the room of Lewie Gordon, which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the poetry that characterize your verses. Now the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse, the only line is too short for the air, is as follows:
>
> Verse 1st, Or to glorious victorie.
> 2d, Chains - chains and slaverie.
> 3d, Let him, let him, turn and flie.
> 4th, Let him bravely follow me.
> 5th, But they shall, they shall be free.
> 6th, Let us, let us, do, or die!
>
> If you connect each line with its own verse; I do not think you will find that either the sentiment or the expression loses any of its energy. The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is 'Welcome to your gory bed'. Would not another word be preferable to welcome?

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[176] Currie, Works, iv. 86-7 (XLV).

Burns's reply, written only three days later, included a new second version of the song, with the lines altered as Thomson had suggested above, though the poet refused to change 'Welcome to your gory bed', stating that although Thomson's idea was 'beautiful' it was also 'hacknied', and he preferred to leave it as it was.[177] Thomson published this second version with an arrangement by Kozeluch in the third set of songs in 1799 (**C/74**) alongside the traditional words for the tune, beginning **O send Lewie Gordon hame**, which he had originally said he would replace with Burns's **Scots wha hae** (**Ex. 15a**). But this decision was one with which Thomson was not entirely happy. He continued to publish **Scots wha hae** with **Lewie Gordon** in his second volume along with the traditional words for the air, but when he organized the new Vol. III of 1802 he thought again. He returned to Burns's choice of tune and presented **Scots wha hae**, and another lyric, with **Hey tutti taiti** (**SIIIa/33** or **133**),[178] and in a note accompanying his new setting he explained his decision (**Ex. 15b**):

> The Poet originally intended this noble strain for the Air just mentioned; but, on a suggestion from the Editor of this Work, who then thought 'Lewie Gordon' a fitter tune for the words, they were united together, and published in the preceding volume (p. 74). The Editor, however, having since examined the Air 'Hey tutti taiti' with more particular attention, frankly owns that he has changed his opinion, and that he thinks it much better adapted for giving energy to the Poetry than the Air of 'Lewie Gordon'. He therefore sent it to HAYDN, who has entered into the spirit of it with a felicity peculiar to himself; his inimitable Symphonies and Accompaniments render it completely martial, and highly characteristic of the heroic verses.

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[177] Roy, Letters, ii. 237 (584).

[178] The other lyric was entitled 'The Jacobite words of "Hey Tutti taiti"' beginning **Weel may we a' be**. But by 1817 Thomson had added another lyric, **The Land o'the Leal**, which he did not attribute, but it is now known to have been written by Carolina Oliphant (Lady Nairne) (**Ex. 15c**).

Thomson was not afraid to admit that he was wrong on occasion, but it is noticeable that while he ultimately printed Burns's choice of melody, he continued to print his own combination in Vol. II. It is also noteworthy that the original alterations were not Thomson's doing. Burns agreed to change his song for the editor, so that it could be published with Thomson's choice of melody. The poet showed no signs of disgust or disagreement in the case of **Scots wha hae**, nor would he have been angry with Thomson for choosing to publish **Auld lang syne** with a different melody. Burns had stated quite clearly that he was unhappy with his original choice of melody as published in the SMM.[179] When he sent the song to Thomson in September 1793, he described the air as 'mediocre', but he had been moved by the lyric when he heard it sung by an old man, and was thus inspired to note it down and write his own version. In a letter of November 1794 he explained that there were in fact two airs commonly sung with the lyric, one of which was old, and the other of which was a 'common country dance'.[180] There is a complex history surrounding this song which is still unclear. When Thomson first published it with a Kozeluch setting in 1799 (**C/68**) he decided to use a modern tune which he stated was taken from the overture to William Shield's opera Rosina of 1783. James C. Dick, who gives a long historical note about the song, claims that although the new air was from Rosina, it had been taken by Shield from Cumming's collection of Strathspeys published in Edinburgh in c.1780, and that it was a tune called **The Miller's Wedding**.[181] Stenhouse stated that this new melody became commonly known as **Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey**, because Gow, who stole it from

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[179] SMM, v. 426 (413). This is the tune commonly known as **Auld lang syne**.

[180] Roy, Letters, ii. 329 (647).

[181] J.C. Dick, The Songs of Robert Burns, 1903, p. 438. Dick noted that the melodies for Burns's lyrics **O can you labour lea** and **Comin thro' the rye** were also set to the strathspey known as **The Miller's wedding**, and he believed that these sets of the tune were all variants of a strathspey published in Robert Bremner's Reels of 1759.

Shield, published it in a collection of strathspeys and reels and dedicated it to Sir Alexander Don.[182] Meanwhile information about the 'common country dance' described by Burns in 1794 is difficult to find. Johnson published it in the first volume of the SMM, but the air had no name and the lyric was a variation on that which Thomson published.[183] **Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey** has become the tune most commonly paired with Burns's lyric. Thomson's choice of melody was appreciated by his public, and few now know the traditional tune of **Auld lang syne**.

It is possible that Thomson found some opposition to his choosing new melodies for old words. In the later issues of his volumes where he decided to publish a different melody with a traditional lyric he sometimes also included a copy of the traditional melody, engraved at the foot of the musical plate. Several songs appeared with a setting for one melody, but with a copy of the original or more common choice of melody beside it: Burns's **O wat ye wha's in yonder town** was set to the tune **Fy gar rub her o'er wi' strae** (**SII/53**), but its original tune **I'll gae nae mair to yon toun** was also given;[184] Burns's **My heart is a breaking, dear Titty** was set to the tune **The Mucking o' Geordie's Byre** (**SII/66**), but its original tune, **Tam Glen**, was also given;[185] Susanna Blamire's **What ails this heart of mine** was set to a new tune by William Clarke (**SIV/180**), but its original tune was engraved alongside the setting. Thomson also presented the song **The Gaberlunzie Man** (**SIV/191**) with the tune **The brisk young lad**, but noted alongside the lyric that he had given the original melody 'to satisfy those who wish to see the other tune'.

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[182] W. Stenhouse, Illustrations of the lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1853, pp. 23-4.

[183] SMM, i. 26 (25).

[184] Low, Songs of Robert Burns, p. 710-11, no. 280.

[185] Ibid., pp. 308-9, no.104.

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Some of the combinations of lyric and melody were clearly Thomson's personal choice, just as the decision not to send the words to the composers was his own. But the musical content of the collections was steered by the public rather than the artist. The public's musical skills, or lack of them, forced Thomson to insist on simplification, or the adaptation of melodies; and the public preference for refined, as opposed to primitive, airs was also reflected in the editor's choice of content. But the public played a far more intrusive role in the editing of the verses to be published with these musical settings. The moral, linguistic and political opinions of Thomson's fellow Scots predominated over his editorial procedure for the lyrics.

CHAPTER IV - THE LYRICS

> The public can never know what research and scrubbing and solicitation it cost me to obtain the Melodies in their purest form; then the Harmonies from the most profound Musicians; and the most difficult of all to procure above two hundred new songs from living Poets, a large proportion of them requiring much revising and retouching before meeting the public eye.[1]

> The Poetry ... was to the Editor a subject of anxious consideration, and engaged him in a vastly more extensive correspondence than he had ever anticipated - a correspondence, indeed, that has occupied almost the whole of his leisure during many years.[2]

It has already been established that Thomson treated the words and the music of his songs as separate entities, but it was his intention from the outset of his venture to concentrate as closely on the lyrics of his songs as on the music. He wrote in the preface to his First set of 1793 (**A**) that 'the poetical department of the work will be found every way worthy of the music', and was keen to state that 'it is as much a literary as a musical work'.[3] These declarations were not unfounded or exaggerated. Thomson's letterbooks reveal that between 1792 and the late 1830s more of his time was spent in correspondence with his lyricists than with his composers. Thomson's correspondence with individuals was time-consuming, as was his handling of diverse texts, which ranged from pastoral love songs to staunch political statements.

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[1] Thomson to David Vedder, 18 June 1831: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/23-5.

[2] From the Preface to Thomson's later issues of the Select Collection, first published in 1831 (see **SIg** or **SIh**) p. 2. The preface was entitled 'On Scottish Music and Song'.

[3] Thomson to the publisher Alexander Constable, when discussing the possibility of Constable distributing Thomson's octavo volumes, September 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/103-4.

The editing of the lyrics for his collections was more complex than the editing of the music, or any other aspect of his publications.

i) The Lyricists

Between 1792 and 1846 Thomson printed the work of almost ninety writers: men and women, known and unknown, whose names and dates, where possible, are listed below. Those included on **List I** were the lyricists whom Thomson commissioned and with whom he corresponded. The names on **List II** had no personal contact with Thomson and he gathered their lyrics from other published sources.

Lyricists for the Scottish, Welsh and Irish collections

List I

BAILLIE Joanna (1762-1851)
BARBAULD Anna (1743-1824)
BOSWELL Alexander (1775-1822)
BURNS Robert (1759-95)
BYRON George G., Lord (1788-1824)
CAMPBELL Thomas (1777-1844)
COLEMAN George? (1762-1836)
CUNNINGHAM[E] Allan (1784-1842)
CURRAN John Philpot (1750-1817)
DOVASTON John. F. M. (1782-1854)
ERSKINE Hon. Andrew
GRANT Anne (1755-1838)
GRIFFITH Thomas
HEWIT Richard
HOGG James (1770-1835)
HUNTER Anne (née Home) (1742-1821)
JONES Sir William (1746-94)
LLWYD Richard (1752-1835)
LINDSAY Lady Ann (1750-1825)
MacNEILL Hector (1746-1818)
MOIR David ('Macbeth') (1798-1851)
MOORE Thomas (1779-1852)
OPIE Amelia (1769-1853)
PINDAR Peter (1738-1819)
RICHARDSON John (1780-1864)
ROGERS Samuel (1763-1855)
ROSCOE William S. (1753-1831)
SCOTT Walter (1771-1832)
SMYTH William (1765-1849)
SPENCER W. R. (1769-1834)
TAIT John
THOMSON David (d.1815)
THOMSON George (1757-1851)
TOMS T
WARRINGTON Revd George
WILLIAMS Edward (1746-1826)
WOLCOTT Dr (see P.Pindar)
VEDDER David (1790-1854)

List II

AUSTIN John (fl.1820)
BEATTIE James (1735-1803)
BICKERSTAFF Isaac (1733?-1808)
BINNING Lord Charles(1697-1733)
BLACKLOCK Thomas (1721-91)
BLAMIRE Susanna (1747-94)
BROWN William (1766-1835)
CAREY Henry (1687-1743)
COCKBURN Alison (1712-94)
COLLINS William (1721-59)
COOPER Gilbert (1723-1769)
CRAWFORD Robert (d.1733)
DUDGEON William (1753?-1813)
ELLIOT Sir Gilbert (1722-77)
FALCONER William (1732-69)
GAY John (1685-32)
GLOVER Jean (1758-1801)
GRAHAME Revd James (1765-1811)
GRANT Mrs, of Carron (1745-1814)
GWILLIM David Ap (b.c 1320)
HAMILTON William (1665?-1751)
JENYNS Soame (1704-87)
LANSDOWN Lord (1667-1735)
LEWIS M. G. ('Monk') (1775-1818)
LOGAN Revd John (1748-88)
LOWE Alexander
LYTTLETON Lord (1709-73)
MALLET David (?1705-65)
MITCHELL John (1789-1865)
MONTAGUE Lady M. W. (1689-1762)
MOORE Edward (1712-57)
MOORE Richard
OTWAY Thomas (1652-85)
PERCY Thomas (1729-1811)
PHILIPS Ambrose (1674-1749)
PICKERING William (1796-1854)
PRINGLE Thomas (1746-1834)
PRIOR Matthew (1664-1721)
RAMSAY Allan (1686-1758)
ROWE Nicholas (1674-1718)
SHAKESPEARE W. (1564-1616)
SHENSTONE William (1714-63)
SHERIDAN R. B. (1751-1816)
SKINNER Revd John (1721-1807)
SMOLLETT Tobias (1721-71)
TANNAHILL Robert (1774-1810)
THOMSON James (1700-48)
TOWNSEND Chauncy Hare (1798-1868)
WHITEHEAD Paul (1710-74)
WILLIAMS Helen Maria (1762-1827)
WILLIAMS Revd John (1748-1818)

The majority of the writers listed above supplied Thomson with only one or two songs - Lord Byron, John Gay, William Shenstone, R.B. Sheridan, Matthew 'Monk' Lewis, Tobias Smollett, James Beattie, J.P. Curran, Lord Binning,[4] Susanna Blamire, Isaac Bickerstaff, Chauncy Hare Townsend,[5] Jean Glover, Thomas Percy, Ambrose Phillips, Soame Jenyns, Lord Lansdown,[6] Lady Mary Whatley Montague, Lord Lyttleton, William Shakespeare etc. There was also a large group of writers connected solely with the Welsh Collection. Thomson's friend Lady Cunliffe, who lived in Acton near Chester, administered Thomson's circle of Welsh lyricists, which included Samuel Rogers, Richard Llwyd, W.R. Spencer, William S. Roscoe, R. Fenlon, T. Griffith and George Warrington.[7] Several of the women who wrote songs specifically for Thomson also contributed more to the Welsh Collection than to any other of Thomson's volumes: in particular Joanna Baillie,[8] who was a close and long-standing correspondent, Anne Hunter,[9] Amelia Opie[10] and Anne Grant.[11]

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[4] Also known as Charles Hamilton.

[5] Often spelt Townshend.

[6] Also known as George Granville.

[7] Many of Thomson's letters to Lady Cunliffe mention one Mr Roberts, whose lyrics do not appear in the Welsh volumes, but it is most probable that he was a translator who worked specifically on the poems of David Ap Gwillim, the fourteenth century Welsh poet whose work Thomson included. See **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/120-2/ 125-7/ 128-9.

[8] Baillie was born in Bothwell in Lanarkshire, Scotland and although she lived most of her life in Hampstead, she always maintained connections in Scotland. Best known for her plays, she was also a poet and clearly enjoyed song-writing. She corresponded with Thomson until 1851, the year in which both she and Thomson died. See Margaret S. Cathcart, The life and work of Joanna Baillie, 1923. Also S. Tytler and J. L. Watson, The Songstresses of Scotland, London, 1871, ii. 181-334. This two-volume work is a fascinating account of several of the famous lady song-writers of the period, though much of its information should be treated with suspicion.

[9] Anne Hunter (née Home) was Mrs John Hunter, the wife of the famous London surgeon who met Haydn in 1791 on his first London visit and who wrote the lyrics for his two sets of Original Canzonettas published by Corri, Dussek & Co. in 1794.

While many of Thomson's lyrics were taken from works already in print, and from writers who were long since dead, the popularity of writing songs is suggested by the number of living writers who were willing to contribute lyrics to Thomson's volumes. The enthusiasm for writing songs at the end of the eighteenth century was widespread. Professional and amateur writers alike were active, and even those with little or no musical skill were able to experiment in song-writing by adhering to particular formal structures which were simple and rhythmical. In addition to those with whom Thomson corresponded, several other well-known writers sent him lyrics. Anna Barbauld, for example, had begun her literary career writing songs and hymns, though during the 1790s she became increasingly involved in the production of political pamphlets. Thomson did not correspond with her, but she was probably introduced to his work through Joanna Baillie, Samuel Rogers or Robert Southey,[12] who were all personal friends of hers and correspondents of Thomson. He published her lullaby to love entitled **To Sleep** in 1801 (**SIa/15**). Also found in the Irish Collection is a song by the radical writer

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[10] Opie (née Alderson) was both a poet and a novelist. She married the painter John Opie in 1798 and spent much of her time with writers in London, including, most importantly, Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. But she doubtless knew Joanna Baillie and Anna Barbauld.

[11] Anne Grant of Laggan (née McVicar), after spending much of her childhood in America, lived in Laggan near Inverness until the death of her husband when she moved to Edinburgh. She was also a friend of Thomson - see Chapter II - ii) The publishing house. See Letters from the Mountains, London, 1844, with a Memoir by J.P. Grant.

[12] Thomson did not publish any of Southey's songs and Southey, apparently, failed to reply to Thomson's letters. There are only two letters to Southey: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/21-5, which was Thomson's introductory letter of 24 December 1803, and **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/43-4, which was a second letter repeating the commission of 1803, but was dated August 1812. In this second letter Thomson tried to entice Southey by explaining that most of the 'great poets of the time have contributed to enrich my work'.

Helen Maria Williams, friend of Mary Wollstonecraft,[13] who may seem another unusual choice for inclusion. But she had corresponded with Burns for some time, and had written poetry inspired by him, and she was probably known to Thomson in this context.[14] If no contact was possible through a mutual friend, Thomson was quite happy to approach a famous writer with no introduction; but, with the exception of those whose work he published posthumously, most of the lyricists were personally acquainted with him, or with a writer who was already sending lyrics to him. Joanna Baillie, for example, often sent Thomson the work of her friends.[15]

It emerges from the letterbooks and the collections that there was a central group of writers who were responsible for the majority of Thomson's lyrics.[16] By far the largest number of songs produced by any one writer were those by Robert Burns. Thomson was astute enough to recognize that Burns was more knowledgeable about Scottish song in general than any other living poet in the country. Inspired by Burns's role in the

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[13] C. Tomalin, The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft, London, 1992. Chapter 11 of Tomalin's biography is concerned with Wollstonecraft in Paris during the 1790s and discusses Helen Maria Williams.

[14] Eighteenth-Century Women Poets, ed. R. Lonsdale, Oxford, 1990, pp. 414-5. Lonsdale includes Williams' 'Sonnet on Reading the Poem upon the Mountain Daisy, by Mr Burns'. Thomson published her love song in Vol. I of his Irish Collection (**IrI/27**), beginning 'No riches from his scanty store/ My lover could impart'

[15] See Baillie's letters dated 11 April, 27 April and 21 June 1804: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/227-31/239. Sadly no names are listed.

[16] Hadden, Thomson, pp. 152-291. Hadden gives a detailed account of the correspondence between Thomson and his main lyricists, or rather the most famous of his lyricists: Walter Scott, James Hogg, Byron, Thomas Moore, Thomas Campbell, John Gibson Lockhart, Alexander Boswell, Joanna Baillie, Amelia Opie, David Macbeth Moir ('Delta') and David Vedder. He also mentions Southey, Samuel Rogers, Monk Lewis, Allan Cunningham, Mrs Hunter, William Smyth, Charles Gray, Richard Llwyd, Hector MacNeill, William S. Roscoe, John Richardson, Dr. Latham, Patrick Frazer Tytler, Sir William Forbes, Thomas Pringle and Chancey Hare Townsend. Generally speaking, Hadden's information is correct and reliable, but is infuriating for he rarely, if ever, gives references to the letterbooks, and it is sometimes impossible to find particular letters from which he quotes.

SMM - the first four volumes of which appeared in 1787, 1788, 1790 and 1792 respectively - Thomson decided to contact Burns with regard to his own collections. He wrote to the poet in September 1792 with a detailed explanation of his proposed books of Scottish songs and the particular ideas he had concerning the lyrics for inclusion.[17] Thomson was fortunate, for Burns was keen to contribute to the collections. He wrote on return to Thomson, accepting his commission for lyrics and writing modestly, 'I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of Enthusiasm'.[18] There is no evidence to suggest that Burns lost this enthusiasm for Thomson's collections at any point in their collaboration. In April 1793 he told Thomson that 'my vanity is flattered when you give my songs a place in your elegant and superb work',[19] and he stated in 1795 that he thought Thomson's collection superior to Ritson's Scottish Songs,[20] after noting earlier that Ritson's work was 'of the utmost importance to me'.[21] Although the collaboration lasted only four years, the correspondence between poet and editor presents the most valuable information concerning the lyrics of the collections in general. No other contributor understood the material and the problems of editing as well as Burns and no other displayed that innate artistry found in the best of Burns's songs.

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[17] Currie, Works, iv. 1-2 (I).

[18] Burns to Thomson, September 1792: Roy, Letters, ii. 148-9 (507).

[19] Burns to Thomson, April 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 210-11 (559). Burns was equally enthusiastic when he received a copy of the 1793 First Set. He wrote to Thomson in July 1793: '--Never did my eyes behold,[such (deleted)] in any Musical work, such elegance & correctness.--Your Preface, too, is admirably written; only your partiality to me has made you say too much: however, it will bind me down to double every effort in the future progress of the Work.--': ibid., 220-22, (569).

[20] Burns to Thomson, 6 February, 1795: Roy, Letters, ii. 340-1 (656).

[21] Burns to Thomson, November 1794: Roy, Letters, ii. 322-331 (646).

Burns died in 1796, by which time Thomson had published only one book of songs, but the poet had already given Thomson the copyright for the songs that he had written for the collections.[22] Thomson appears to have been the only editor/publisher to whom Burns gave the copyright of his songs, for he wrote to Thomson in April 1793 that

> Though I give Johnson one edition of my songs, that does not give away the copy-right; so you may take- "Thou lingering star with lessening ray", to the tune of Hughie Graham, or other songs of mine.[23]

Thomson continued to publish Burns's lyrics until the 1840s - issues of the Scottish volumes dated 1831, and the sixth volume published in 1841 included Burns songs not previously printed in Thomson's collections.[24] As far as it is possible to determine, over 170 of Burns's songs in addition to his lyrics for The Jolly Beggars, which appeared as Part 2 of Vol. V in 1818 (**SVa**), appeared in Thomson's collections. The majority of these songs were published in the six Scottish volumes, with only four of his lyrics appearing in the Welsh, and five in the Irish volumes. This was more than double the number of lyrics produced by any other lyricist.

After Burns the most important individual contribution was that of William Smyth, a keen amateur poet and music lover, who was Professor of history and Fellow of Peterhouse College, Cambridge. Smyth produced over 50 lyrics for Thomson: equal numbers in the Scottish and Irish collections and fewer in the

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[22] Burns' Deed of Assignment of Copyright to GEORGE THOMSON, dated 2 August 1793. Burns wrote: 'I do hereby certify to all those whom it may concern, that all the Songs of my composition, published & to be published along with Scotish airs by Mr George Thomson of Edinburgh, are so published by my authority & consent: in particular, that I never authorised any other person to publish any of those songs which were written by me for his work'. Roy, Letters, ii. 226-7 (574).

[23] Burns to Thomson, April 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 204-7 (557).

[24] See Appendix 1: **SIg**, **SIIf**, **SIIIf**, **SVc** and **SVIa**.

Welsh.[25] Next to the correspondence with Burns, Smyth's letters to and from Thomson are the most revealing, for Thomson respected Smyth's opinions and treated him as his confidant. In 1817, when he believed his collaboration with Smyth was nearing its end, he wrote:

> You have indeed been to me another Burns, and have supplied my wants with so much courtesy and good humour, that when your truly welcome epistles cease to appear, I must for sometime feel as if one of the channels of my happiness were dried up.[26]

Eight years later, when he was still writing to Smyth and receiving lyrics from him, Thomson stated once more that 'without your generous aid, I could not have completed my work with any satisfaction to myself'.[27] There is no copy of the first letter from Thomson to Smyth and the correspondence now extant begins in 1809, but Thomson may have contacted Smyth earlier than this, doubtless inspired by reading an edition of Smyth's English Lyrics, first published in 1797, which had received particularly favourable notice in the Edinburgh Review.

Alexander Boswell, eldest son of the famous James, was another close correspondent who produced over 20 of Thomson's lyrics, which were published in all three collections. Boswell's songs were nearly all jovial drinking songs, particularly well suited to the jaunty Irish airs: for example, **Paddy O'Rafferty, merry and vigorous** (**IrII/48**), **The Parson boast of mild ale** (**IrI/30**), **The Pulse of an Irishman ever beats quicker** (**IrII/47**) and **Farewell Mirth and Hilarity** which was set to the tune called **Norah of Balamagairy** (**IrII/36**). Thomson also published over 20 of Walter Scott's lyrics, the majority of

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[25] Nearly all of Smyth's lyrics in the Irish Collection were published with musical settings by Beethoven.

[26] Thomson to Smyth, 2 June 1817: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/4.

[27] Thomson to Smyth, 11 March 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/140.

which were found in the Scottish volumes. Scott corresponded with Thomson from 1805, but in 1818, by then immersed in his Waverley Novels, he withdrew from contributing lyrics, though he was happy to allow Thomson access to lyrics from other works already in print. Thomson was apparently relieved that he no longer had to correspond in detail with regard to individual songs. He had written to Smyth in 1814 that 'song writing is not Walter Scott's forte: for once that he succeeds, he far more frequently fails'.[28] This was illustrated by the length of the correspondence regarding Scott's song **Glencoe**, which lasted from May until December of 1811, as Thomson fussed over the measure and the syllabic stress of Scott's lyric.[29]

Anne Grant of Laggan gave Thomson over 30 songs, many of which he published in the Welsh volumes. Joanna Baillie wrote over 20 lyrics, and Anne Hunter also presented Thomson with more than 20 songs, most of which appeared in the three Welsh volumes. The other lyricists of importance produced fewer than 20 lyrics for the collections. Although Allan Ramsay had died in 1758, Thomson published several of his songs in the Scottish collection, and some of Peter Pindar's (Dr Wolcott's) lyrics, many of which were admired by Burns,[30] were also published mostly in the Scottish collection.[31] Other important regular contributors were John Richardson, Hector MacNeill,

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[28] Thomson to Smyth, 16 May 1814: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/101-3.

[29] Scott's letters to Thomson relating to **Glencoe**: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/33-4; 35; 46-55; 62. Thomson's replies are found in the fifth letterbook: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/20; 27; 33; 33-4.

[30] Burns wrote: 'But one thing I must hint to you, the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your Publication; so, get a verse from him now & then, though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business'. Burns to Thomson, August 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 231-2 (578).

[31] One of Pindar's lyrics appeared in the first Welsh volume (**WI**) and one in the first Irish volume (**IrI**).

the Orkney poet David Vedder (author of the 'Epistle to George Thomson, Esq.'),[32] and Thomson's brother, David.

Over 100 of the songs in the collections were presented with anonymous lyrics, or, rather, lyrics which Thomson failed to attribute to a specific writer. Often Thomson presented them with a note explaining that they were traditional lyrics which had been passed on to him by a friend, or which he had found in a manuscript. The ballad **The Cruel Chief** (**SIV/162**), for example, was presented with the note: 'Founded on an old Highland Tradition, From a Manuscript presented to the Editor, never before published'. Statements such as 'By a Lady' or 'By a Gentleman' were also frequently printed. Anonymity was a characteristic Thomson was happy to use where he could, explaining, in a letter to Hector MacNeill, that he was generally unperturbed about the problems of attribution:

> There is some ground for supposing, tho' it is by no means certain, that a number of the anonymous Songs were written by persons living on the banks of the streams celebrated in those Songs; but whether written by real shepherds or gentle shepherds, or at what precise time, is a fact utterly hid from us.[33]

Presenting lyrics as anonymous was sometimes also the writer's prerogative. In 1802 (**SIIIa/35**), for example, Thomson printed Anne Grant's lyric entitled **The Marquis of Huntly's Departure for the Continent with his Regiment, in 1799**, more commonly known by its first line **O, where, tell me where, is your Highland Laddie gone?** But he noted, by means of sticking an erratum strip to the printed page, that Mrs Grant preferred

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[32] Vedder sent Thomson the epistle on 18 May 1841: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/293-4. Thomson replied on 28 May: 'you should not place me on a pedestal I am unworthy to occupy, as you have done in the sixth verse of your panegyric'. In this stanza Vedder compared Thomson's contribution with that of Shakespeare and Scott: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/76. See also Hadden, Thomson, pp. 273-4.

[33] Thomson to MacNeill, 4 May 1808: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/130-3. The letter was written in reply to MacNeill's dissertation of Scottish music and song which he had sent to Thomson.

her name not to be printed alongside her songs.

> Note.- After this volume was printed off, the Editor received a letter from MRS GRANT, earnestly requesting that her name might not be prefixed to her Songs. Had this request reached him in time, he certainly must have complied with it; although he conceives there are few authors who would not be proud to own such beautiful productions.

Thomson apparently failed to obey her wishes and it appears that nearly all of the songs she gave to Thomson were attributed to her.

It may be that this anonymity lent a mysterious quality which was, for some of Thomson's buyers, a tangible link with the 'folk'. In several cases Thomson stressed the antiquity of the air, and the words, which were most often newly written, were left without explanation, so that a reader could easily be lulled into believing that the lyrics were as ancient as the tune. **The Siller Croun** also known by its first line - **And ye shall walk in silk attire** - was a popular lyric which was known to have been written by Susanna Blamire, 'The Muse of Cumberland'.[34] Thomson failed to attribute the lyric to her when he first printed it in 1798 (**B/44**), even although he printed another of Blamire's lyrics in 1805 with her name attached (**SIVa/180**). Blamire's **Siller Croun** is a beautiful, timeless love lyric, which assumes antiquity by the dreamy quality of the narrative and also by the historical insinuation that the girl's lover has died in battle (**Ex. 16**). In presenting it without Blamire's name, Thomson was therefore able to give the impression that it was a traditional song. Even when he printed a new set of lyrics

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[34] 'The Muse of Cumberland' was the title given to Blamire in 1842, when the first edition of her poems - The Poetical Works of Miss Susanna Blamire, 'The Muse of Cumberland' - was published. See Poetical Works, ed. H. Lonsdale, Edinburgh 1842. Also Tytler and Watson, The Songstresses of Scotland, i. 224-279.

based on Blamire's in 1826 (**SIf/44**),[35] this time written by John Richardson,[36] he still presented **The Siller Croun** beside Richardson's new song without acknowledgement to Blamire. The presentation of lyrics with the well-known song **The Flowers of the Forest** is another example of this false or implied antiquity. This song was particularly powerful historically and nationally, for it related to the battle of Flodden of 1513 which, as Thomson printed, 'proved so fatal to JAMES IV and the Scottish Army'. Two sets of lyrics were printed with the air, arranged by Kozeluch, and on their first appearance both were presented as anonymous (**D/81**). By the 1810s (see **SIId/81**) the first lyric was rightfully attributed to Mrs Cockburn (née Alison Rutherford), who was a well-known Edinburgh poetess,[37] but the second set of lyrics - **I've heard o' lilting at the ewes milking** - was still presented as anonymous. In fact this set of words was written by a contemporary of Mrs Cockburn, Jean Elliot (1727-1805),[38] and these words were not, as Thomson printed, 'THE OLD VERSES - Written upon the Battle of Flodden' (**Ex. 17**).

Thomson's principles in editing lyrics were not as simple as those concerning music for, in general terms, he, and a great many of his clientele, knew more, or thought they knew more, about words and poetry than about music and the intricacies of composition. While many previous editors of Scottish song

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[35] The first setting of 1798 (**B/44**) was by Kozeluch and Thomson continued to publish this setting with Blamire's lyric and an alternative lyric by an MP called Soame Jenyns until 1826. From 1826 Kozeluch's old setting was presented alongside a new setting by Weber (**SIf/44**). Jenyns's alternative lyric was deleted and Richardson's was presented with Blamire's original.

[36] Probably John Richardson (1780-1864), a solicitor from Midlothian. His lyric began **Yes thou mayst walk in silk attire**. Thomson may have found this lyric in A Collection of Poems chiefly manuscript and from living authors, which was edited by Joanna Baillie and published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown in 1822. Thomson's name appears on its subscription list. Richardson's song is found on pp. 212-3.

[37] See Tytler and Watson, The Songstresses of Scotland, i. 52-196.

[38] Ibid., i. 196-224.

simply accepted the tune and its setting, they reaped great satisfaction by fiddling with the words. The melody and arrangement might convey some aspect of love, humour, militarism, or Highland culture, but it was the lyric which defined the tune, which obviously placed it in its historical and social context. It was through the lyrics, more than through the music, that Thomson was able to tailor his collections to fit his public, by printing lyrics which would please them, and by creating lyrics which embodied their ideas of pleasure, fun, peace or harmony. He felt that the verses of contemporary song collections left much to be desired primarily because 'the publishers of former collections appear to have bestowed very little consideration upon the verses which they have united to a number of the Airs'.[39] He sought improvement in both musical and literary spheres - 'my experience of what the public likes & dislikes, will enable me to improve the work both musically and poetically'.[40] Thomson's musical editing provides much information relating to musical skill amongst a defined group of Scots at the time, and his editing of lyrics is an equally safe gauge of the tastes and prejudices of the men and women with whom Thomson lived and worked. He decided to tackle the literary content with 'a critical eye'.[41] New lyrics were dissected by Thomson, who made suggestions concerning narrative structure, language and general sentiment.[42] Though some songs appeared in their original state, most traditional songs were manipulated to match Thomson's criteria.

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[39] See the Preface to the First Set of 1793 (**A**).

[40] Thomson to William Smyth, 30 July 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/52-5.

[41] Preface to First Set of 1793 (**A**).

[42] Although he wrote no lyrics for the Welsh and Irish volumes, several of Thomson's lyrics appeared in the Scottish collection: see **Poor fluttering heart** (**SVa/225**), or the last two stanzas of **My love's a winsome wee thing** (**SVb/245**), or **Spring's primrose banks and woodnotes wild** (**SIVe/169**), or **O these charms no longer hide** to the tune **Kelvin Grove** (**SIVe/173**) as examples. Although some of the melodies in the later issues were attributed to him (see, for example, **SVb/230** and **233**) no musical settings were ever attributed to him.

There were three main principles behind Thomson's editorial procedure. The first related to the morals and manners of his lyrics. In his 1793 Preface Thomson expressed his desire to present respectable lyrics by substituting 'select Characteristic verses in the room of those which are exceptionable', and by removing 'those absurd and improper ones by which the music has been debased'.[43] To render his work, as he explained in his first letter to Robert Burns, 'acceptable to all persons of taste' was the most important of Thomson's criteria as an editor.[44] The second, and equally important, principle related to language. Though carefully moulded to satisfy the tastes of contemporary Scots, Thomson wanted his volumes to appeal to a British audience:

> The Editor being aware however, that the Scotish words which occur in many of the songs, are scarcely understood beyond the limits of the country; and as it was his wish from the beginning to render this collection equally interesting in England as in Scotland, he has therefore along with every song in the Scotish dialect, given a song purely English, suited to the different Airs.[45]

Almost every song in the first issues of the Scottish volumes appeared with two sets of lyrics and on some occasions more than two sets were presented.[46] Songs in Welsh had to be given English translations, and songs in Scots - a language displaying marked and consistent variation from standard English - had to be given English alternatives. This linguistic dilemma led, in turn, to a third editorial battle for Thomson. By removing the linguistic individuality of the Scottish lyrics, in particular, Thomson was also frequently

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[43] See the Preface to the First Set of 1793 (**A**).

[44] Currie, Works, iv. 1-2 (I).

[45] See Preface to the First Set of 1793 (**A**).

[46] Examples include: **Scots wha hae**, which appeared in 1803 (**SIIIb/133**) with three different sets of lyrics, and **Contented wi' little & canty wi' mair**, which appeared in 1826 (**SIIe/65**) also with three sets of lyrics and was newly entitled **A Soldier am I**.

altering their political or nationalistic bias. In attempting to satisfy the men and women whom Burns referred to as 'the illustrious Jury of the SONS & DAUGHTERS of Taste - all whom Poesy can please, or Music charm',[47] Thomson often destroyed the very qualities which identified the songs he was presenting. The remaining sections of this chapter aim to look more closely at these three editorial principles and to show the practical problems that Thomson had and the decisions he ultimately made.

ii) Morals and Manners

a) The Acceptable

Thomson saw his role as that of 'Song-broker' for the ladies,[48] and he was obsessed with presenting 'delicate', 'suitable' or 'proper' verses, as they were variously termed in his prefatory material. He confidently stated that there was not 'a single song in the whole collections that can offend female delicacy'.[49] The suitability of his lyrics did not rely on censoring the vulgarity and crudeness of their language or sexual morality alone. Propriety was a requisite of every type of lyric that passed through the editor's hands. Lyrics about love, war, rural bliss, death, joy, hardship etc. were all vetted by Thomson and only those of proper sentiment were allowed.

The majority of the lyrics in the collections were common of those published by Watson, Ramsay and Johnson, and they were thus derived from that common stock of much older songs which had been collected and published throughout the eighteenth

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[47] Burns to Thomson, July 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 220-2 (569).

[48] Thomson to David Vedder, 21 December 1829: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/9-10.

[49] Thomson's proposal to the publishers concerning London distribution of his volumes, December 1843: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/90-4.

century. While editors gave them a 'folksong' or 'national song' label - and many of them were based on traditional folksongs - many of these lyrics were a continuation of other literary traditions, including 'high-style' court song, which had been developing for centuries. The transformation which traditional songs underwent through contact with the editors listed above, or with poets including Burns and Scott, was that of refinement: a transformation from 'low-style' to 'high-style'. These songs were moulded to acquire acceptability both in content and in literary form. Thomson's lyricists, rather than creating pieces which were altogether new, drew upon existing material as the basis of their lyrics: traditional Scottish, English, Welsh and Irish folksongs, theatre songs, court lyrics, and other songs already in print. Their new pieces bore the characteristics of songs from times past, but they shaped them and added to them in order to fit contemporary tastes and prejudices.

As with all other contemporary collections, most of the songs printed in Thomson's volumes were love-songs, which presented themselves in three guises - pastoral scenes, love-dialogues and comic love-songs.[50] The pastoral - the leading form for lyricists who aimed to present 'high-style' pieces, while maintaining a tenuous link with the 'low-style' whence these songs often came - was the most common of these and it was regarded equally highly by musicians and literary men:

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[50] T. Crawford, Society and the lyric, Edinburgh, 1979, p. 16. Crawford concluded from expansive study of song-books, broadsides and manuscripts produced during the period, that 'Every sub-group of the culture produced more songs on love than on any other subject, some of them purely conventional stereotypes, others showing real insight into the love and family of eighteenth-century Scotland'.

> One of the most affecting styles in music is the Pastoral. Some airs put us in mind of the country, of 'rural fights and rural sounds', and dispose the heart to that chearful tranquillity, that pleasing melancholy, that 'vernal delight', which groves and streams, flocks and herds, hills and vallies, inspire. But of what are these pastoral airs imitative ... They are such, as we think we have heard, or might have heard, sung by the inhabitants of the country.[51]

Beattie's description, while concerned with music, is equally applicable to the poetry of the period. More than any other literary genre, the pastoral, at least conventionally, had the ability to remove the mind from the stresses of everyday living and to transport it to a better place. It was, as Beattie stated, a direct link, for those who did not live in the country, with a primitive life where, it was thought, nature ruled and all was peaceful and stable. On its simplest level the pastoral was employed to extol the virtues of the country and to encourage its readers to escape from the horrors of city life.[52] On a secondary and equally important level, the countryside became the place where life's philosophers and philanthropists could think about themselves and about others. The pastoral was not simply a literary genre: it was a complex European philosophical ideal.

Escapism was the central impetus of many of the lyrics in Thomson's collections, one of the most common scenes being that in which a narrator beckons his lover to join him in the country - to leave the town or city and to forget everything but love: the non-attributed **Come, dear Amanda quit the town** (**SI/7**), Thomas Percy's **Oh Nancy wilt thou go with me** (**SI/4**) or the anonymous **On Ettrick banks, in a summer's night** which was

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[51] J. Beattie, An Essay on Poetry and Music as they affect the Mind, Edinburgh, 1762, pp. 142-3.

[52] J. Todd, Sensibility - An Introduction, London, 1986, p. 14. Todd explains that the city, usually London in fiction of the period, was regarded as the centre of vice and frivolous pleasure, and that the country became 'a state where mind harmonized with natural beauty and nature displayed human moods'.

the Scottish lyric given beside it, Burns's **Bonnie lassie, will ye go** to the tune **The Birks of Abergeldie** (see **Ex. 4**), Ramsay's **Now wat ye wha I met yestreen** (**SIV/194**) which includes the line 'Katie wilt thou gang wi' me', and Anne Grant's lyric for the tune called **The wish**, which began **Could I find a bonny glen,/ Warm and calm, warm and calm** (**SIV/181**). Equally common were the seasonal celebrations of the beauties of nature such as Burns's **Behold my love how green the groves** (**SV/201**), and Ramsay's lyric for **The yellow hair'd laddie** (**SI/13**), which began:

> In April, when primroses paint the sweet plain,
> And summer approaching rejoiceth the swain,
> The yellow-hair'd laddie would oftentimes go
> To wilds and deep glens, where the hawthorn[53] trees grow.

In nearly every case the glories of natural surroundings were compared, or indeed at one, with those of love and the lover. The countryside and its beauty did not simply inspire love, it was love. Lovers' trysts, and seductive scenes which took place in green groves, or by a burn or stream, were clearly thought most appropriate for 'the sons and daughters of taste'. The lovers who meet in Crawford's **When trees did bud, and fields were green** (**SIII/103**), for example, are surrounded by green fields, blooming broom, and a 'flow'ry dale'. Likewise Burns's two lyrics for the tune **Dainty Davie**, namely the Scots lyric **Now Rosy May comes in wi' flowers** and the English lyric **It was the charming Month of May** (**SII/69**), successfully combined the exhilaration of spring with that of youthful love. Burns's descriptions in the Scots lyric in particular are natural and effective, especially in combination with the tune (**Ex. 18**).

Again, as was common of other printed songs and poems, the seasons of the natural year were highly symbolic. Spring and

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[53] Anne Grant's lyric for **The Crystal Ground** and Anne Hunter's lyrics for **Away to the Oaken grove** (**WI/22**) and **The Dairy House** (**WIII/108**) also include descriptions of the hawthorn, which appears with symbolic regularity.

summer were always associated with love and youth - 'Without my love there is no spring',[54] or 'Thy presence lasting joy shall bring/ And give the year eternal spring'.[55] Autumn and winter were most often associated with death, ageing or the absence of the lover - '... winter on me seizes,/ Since my young highland rover/ Far wanders nations over'.[56] The ever-revolving cycle of the seasons was philosophically juxtaposed with man's inability to grow young again in Burns's **But lately seen in gladsome green** (**SIII/139**) and it is significant that Thomson chose **The Birks of Invermay** as the first song in his Scottish collection, for it too dealt with this theme, and it was one of the most popular songs of the day:

> The smiling morn, the breathing spring,
> Invite the tuneful birds to sing;
> And while they warble from each spray,
> Love melts the universal lay:
> Let us, Amanda, timely wise,
> Like them improve the hour that flies;
> And in soft raptures wast the day,
> Among the birks of Invermay.
>
> For soon the winter of the year,
> And age, life's winter, will appear:
> At this thy lively bloom will fade,
> As that will strip the verdant shade.
> Our taste of pleasure then is o'er,
> The feather'd songsters please no more:
> And when they droop, and we decay,
> Adieu the birks of Invermay.

Mallet used the comparison of the lover's transient beauty with that of the flowers, which was a common device in many of the love-lyrics in the collections. In **What beauties does Flora disclose** (**SI/3**), Crawford compared Flora to the daisy and 'sweet blushing rose' and in **Adown winding Nith I did wander** (**SII/66**), Burns also likened Phyllis to the daisy, 'so

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[54] From Thomson's **Unless with my Amanda blest** (**SI/43**).

[55] From William Falconer's **The smiling plains &c.** (**SII/72**).

[56] From the Burns lyric **Loud blaw the frosty breezes** (**SII/67**), which Thomson fails to attribute to Burns. See also SMM, ii. 150 (143).

artless, so simple, so wild'. In **O were my love yon lilac fair** (**SIV/154**), Burns likened his love to the lilac; Richardson, in his second stanza, likened her to 'the vi'let sweet'; and the traditional stanza which had inspired the poem likened her to the 'red rose'.[57] The red rose was a recurring simile for Burns, also found in his **O my love is like the red, red rose** (**SII/89**), in **O a' the airts the wind can blaw** (**SIV/159**) and in **A Rosebud by my early walk** (**SIII/112**), and Mitchell also used it in his **By Pinky House oft let me walk** (**SIII/146**). Burns's **O love will venture in**, set to the tune appropriately called **The posie**, made use of a long list of similies: the primrose, the pink, the budding rose, the hyacinth, the lily, the daisy (again representative of 'simplicity and unaffected air'), the hawthorn, the woodbine (another plant included in many lyrics) and the violet (see **Exx. 7a & 7b**).

The pastoral was also effective when used to describe unrequited love, the departure or absence of the lover, or the death of the loved one. Beattie referred to 'that pleasing melancholy' which the pastoral encouraged. The joy of grief, or happiness derived from pain,[58] was most certainly a popular song theme. Just as love and the excitement of love was inspired by, and at one with, the beauties of the natural surroundings, so the pain of unrequited love or the absence of the lover was exaggerated by the same beauties, or reflected by the harshness of the natural world - by her storms, the grey or black of the skies, and the onset of winter. Examples in Thomson's volumes are numerous and diverse. In Burns's

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[57] J.C. Dick, The Songs of Robert Burns, London, 1903, p. 401 and D. A. Low, The Songs of Robert Burns, London, 1993, pp. 610-11 (237). Both Dick and Low note that Burns was inspired by a traditional stanza included in the Herd MS. The last stanza was taken almost directly from Herd, and Burns wrote the first stanza. Thomson insisted on printing a second stanza by John Richardson, which arguably does little to improve the song. In fact the traditional stanza, 'O gin my love were yon red rose', stands best alone, without the new verses it inspired.

[58] Crawford, Society and the Lyric, p. 58. Crawford refers to this as 'love-melancholy and despair' and comments that they are 'perhaps the commonest feelings expressed in the love-lyric' of the eighteenth century.

Ye banks and braes of Bonny Doon (**SI/43**), the pain of rejection is acute because of the beauties of the girl's surroundings. Burns successfully juxtaposes the constancy of the river with the lover's inconstancy.[59] In contrast, in **Had I a cave on some wild distant shore** (**SII/92**) - which Thomson thought 'a striking and affecting composition'-[60] the lover has chosen to remove himself from the natural beauties of life and to live and die, as the noble savage, in a cave 'where the winds howl to the waves dashing roar' (**Ex. 19**). Examples following these patterns were plentiful, and once more reflected lyrics from past centuries.[61]

The melancholy of unrequited love was portrayed in fiery, almost jovial lyrics in which the spurned lover vented his or her anger and bitterness - like Mrs Grant of Carron's **Roy's wife of Aldivalloch** (**SII/70**) - or in long, languishing self-indulgent lyrics where the setting played an important supportive role. The absence of the lover was just as painful as rejection and was just as often exaggerated by one's surroundings. Burns wrote to Thomson on 30 August 1794, for example: 'The last evening as I was straying out & thinking of [your favourite air], O'er the hills and far away - I spun the following stanzas for it'.[62] It is typical that, even though the tune for this song is buoyant and happy, the lyric he wrote, namely **How can my poor heart be glad** (**SIV/161**) was concerned with a young girl lamenting her lover's absence 'On stormy seas and far away' instead of 'O'er the hills and

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[59] The river resembles continuous love in other songs such as Crawford's **When trees did bud and fields were green** (**SIII/103**).

[60] Thomson to Burns, 1 September 1793: Currie, Works, iv. 77-79 (XXXVII).

[61] See the alternative for **Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon**, entitled **Unless with my Amanda blest** by Thomson; Otway's **Come, all ye youths &c.** (**SII/96**); Burns's **O Poortith cauld and restless love** (**SI/49**); the anonymous **Thou'rt gane awa** (**SII/72**) and its English alternative **The smiling plains &c.** by William Falconer as other examples. Burns's **Thickest night o'erhang my dwelling** is similar to **Had I a cave**.

[62] Roy, Letters, ii. 304-5 (635).

far away' (**Ex. 20**).[63] Faith in love, especially if the lover was far away and perhaps fighting for his country, was an even more popular theme than unrequited love. Thomas Crawford noted that love-songs which emphasised virtue and constancy were the most popular of all tea-table lyrics, and their number in Thomson's collections provides strong evidence of this. **The last time I came o'er the muir** and **I'll never leave thee**,[64] which Crawford lists as two of the most popular of the love- lyrics were included in Thomson's volumes.[65] Thomson was keen to have new lyrics by Burns for **The last time I came o'er the muir** (**SII/80**), but Burns was a better judge of Thomson's public and refused to write new words: '"The last time I came o'er the moor", I cannot meddle with, as to mending it; - & the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words, that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received' (**Ex. 21**).[66]

Eternal love was conveyed repeatedly in simple, but effusive declarations like Burns's **By Allan stream I chanc'd to rove** (**SII/79**), or **Wilt thou be my dearie** (**SII/77**), and **Of a' the airts the wind can blaw;** in Crawford's **Love never more shall give me pain** (**SIII/122**); Smyth's **O thou art the lad of my heart, Willy** (**SV/203**); and in high-spirited statements such as MacNeill's **I lo'e ne'er a laddie but ane** (**SIV/185**), and his almost comic **O say, my sweet Nan, can you lie in a hammock ?** (**SIV/164**). But it was even more powerfully portrayed in songs of parting. Burns's **O my love's like the red, red, rose** and

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[63] Burns's **Where are the joys I have met &c** (**SIII/102**) is also positively joyful, though we are led to believe that the narrator is filled with sorrow and 'sad sighing care!', and like **How can my heart be glad**, the melody, this time **Saw ye my father**, does little to counter the obvious pleasure of mourning.

[64] Crawford, Society and the Lyric, pp. 40-2.

[65] Allan Ramsay's **The last time I came o'er the muir** (**SII/80**) and **I'll never leave thee**, beginning 'One day I heard Mary say', by Robert Crawford (**SI/6**).

[66] Burns to Thomson, 28 August 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 233-4 (580).

Behold the hour, the boat arrive (**SIV/154**) dealt with parting and the prospect of future life without the beloved. Burns's **Behold the hour, Will ye go to the Indies my Mary,**[67] his lyric for the song known as **Ae fond kiss,** and ultimately Thomas Pringle's **The Emigrant's Farewell** (**SVI/299**)[68] did not simply provide a vehicle for lovers to give each other the highly fashionable pledge of their love, even through death. Songs like these also held an immediacy for many Scots whose loved ones had decided, or were compelled by financial straits, to set sail for the West Indies. **Farewel, dear mistress of my soul** (**SII/96**) also by Burns, and **Ae fond kiss,** concentrated on the moment of parting, inducing tears - 'these precious drops' - in those who listened. Thomson published Burns's **Ae fond kiss** only once, set by Beethoven and entitled **Parting for ever,** in 1831 (**SVc/229**), but he used the verse beginning 'Had we never lov'd sae kindly' as the third stanza of Anne Grant's **Farewell bliss and farewell Nancy** for the Irish Air **Lough Sheeling** (**IrI/20**). Parting was also presented in more joyous lyrics. John Tait's lyric for **Langolee** (**SIV/167**) described the departure, but also anticipated the joy of the lover returning though he was far away on 'rude roaring billows', just as he was in Burns's **How can my poor heart be glad,** the narrator of which also longs for her lover's safe return. Anne Grant's **Faithfu' Johnie** (**SV/222**) looks forward with equal excitement to Johnie's return, but is less spirited than either Burns's or Tait's lyrics (see **Exx. 9a & 9b**).

The induction of tears in poignant lyrics such as **Farewell dear Mistress of my soul,** or even more powerfully in William Brown's **Dim, Dim is my eye** (**SV/216**), was common practice in sentimental writing of the period. To experience one's own anguish was a lesson which would improve oneself, but to share in another's grief proved that one was already benevolent.

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[67] Thomson first printed it 1803 (**SIb/8**).

[68] Thomson first printed Pringle's poem in his 1826 issue of Vol. V (**SVb/231**). It was presented as the alternative to Scott's well-known lyric **Jock o'Hazeldean,** with a new setting by Hummel dated 1826.

Beattie also wrote on 'Sympathy':

> When we consider the condition of another person, especially if it seem to be pleasurable or painful, we are apt to fancy ourselves in the same condition, and to feel in some degree the pain or pleasure that we think we should feel if we were really in that condition. Hence the good in others becomes in some measure our good, and their evil our evil; the obvious effect of which is, to bind men more closely together in society, and relieve the distress of one another.[69]

Sharing in the grief of another's tragedy was even more therapeutic than sharing in the joy of another's love, and, moreover, it was highly fashionable.[70] Dying for one's lover, or finding love in death was the greatest testament of constancy.[71] Burns's **John Anderson my jo** (**SII/51**) appeared in the Second Set of 1798 (**B/51**) and in every subsequent Vol. II until 1838. It inspired an illustration,[72] which was usually bound with copies of Vol. II, and was given two musical settings, by Kozeluch and then by Weber (**SIIe/51**). Although it did not deal directly with death, it was one of very few songs written about love in old age. It was clearly thought a proper message to communicate, for it traced the perfect partnership, from its first days until the final one when 'we maun totter down, John, but hand in hand we'll go/ And sleep thegither at

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[69] Beattie, pp. 194-5. Janet Todd notes that although the term 'sensibility' had been employed to 'suggest delicate emotional and physical susceptibility' it 'came to denote the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering'. J. Todd, Sensibility - An Introduction, p. 7.

[70] See **One Morning very early** set to the tune **Gramachree** (**SI/18**), which was taken almost directly from the bedlam scene in Henry MacKenzie's popular sentimental novel The Man of Feeling (1771).

[71] Crawford, Society and the Lyric, pp. 44-5.

[72] Thomson's description of the illustration: 'The old couple are seated by the fireside. Mrs Anderson, in great good humour, is clapping John's shoulders, while he smiles, and looks at her with such glee, as to shew that he fully recollects the pleasant days and nights when they were first acquent [sic]. The drawing would do honour to the pencil of Teniers'. Thomson to Burns, August 1793: Currie, Works, iv. 69-70 (XXXII).

the foot/ John Anderson, my jo!' (see **Exx. 6b & 6c**).[73] Likewise **The Siller Croun** appeared first in 1798 (**B/44**), continued to appear until 1838, and was set twice. It dealt with the constancy of young love in death. While the heroine's lover, 'Brave Donald', is absent, fighting for his country, the heroine is pressed to take the hand of another. But her love for Donald was to last until death and beyond (see **Ex. 16**):

His gentle manner won my heart,
He gratefu', took the gift;
Cou'd I but think to seek it back,
It wou'd be war' than theft:
For langest life can ne'er repay
The love he bears to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my troth,
I'll lay me down and die.

Burns's **Ay Waking O** (**SIII/111**), usually received as a simple love song, could also be construed as love in death (see **Ex. 3**). In Thomson's collections it underwent something of a transformation, for Thomson did not print the lyric found in the SMM,[74] and though he still attributed the song to Burns, neither Dick nor Low list Thomson's printed version as one of the poet's songs. In Burns's original, the girl, who is the narrator, lives between sleeping, dreaming and waking, and though happy in love, there is a suggestion that all is not well with her lover. She is 'eerie' when she wakes and when 'I think on my bony lad/ And I bleer my een wi' greetin'. In Thomson's version, the lyric is still concerned with sleeping, dreaming and waking, but it is wholly related to the acute illness of the lover, who is now female (Chloris). The constancy of love is emphasized because death is introduced,

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[73] Ironically, this version of **John Anderson my jo** was based on a bawdy song, or chanson de la mal mariée, discussed below - b) The Unacceptable.

[74] SMM, iii. 222 (213) and iv. 396 (382). There are two versions of the tune. The first of these is the better known. See also Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts, ed. Hans Hecht, Edinburgh, 1904, pp. 240 and 326.

but the lyric loses the original ambiguity which makes it so powerful in its first form.

David Mallet's famous ballad **William and Margaret** was included in the Scottish collection (**SIII/105**), as an example of the disatrous results of inconstancy, and it also used the device of dream to express depth of emotion. The ghost of Margaret appears at William's bedside at midnight and appalled by Margaret's accusations of faithlessness, he wakens the next morning and dies in tears at her graveside. Pindar's **Lord Gregory** (**SI/38**), which deals with a similar subject, was much admired by Burns, who wrote the alternative lyric which Thomson printed with Pindar's original.[75] The story of Lord Gregory was also a warning about inconstant love, but although William earned forgiveness and indeed showed his constancy for Margaret in death, the ghost of Gregory's lover failed to find constancy or comfort. Gregory has promised her his love and has then rejected her, leaving her to haunt him for evermore.[76]

Following the sentiment of many published pieces of the period, songs which referred to ghosts, tombs or gravesides were equally popular - such as Andrew Erskine's gloomy expression of love for Mary who now 'sleeps in her tomb' in **How sweet the lone vale** (**SIII/134**), or Richard Moore's **Hark! Hark! 'Tis a voice from the tomb!** (**SIII/118**). The anonymous lyric **I wish I was where Helen lies** (**SIV/168**) was presented with a long historical note describing the famous story of Ellen Irvine, which Pennant had included in his

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[75] Burns wrote: 'The very name of Peter Pindar is an acquisition to your work.- His "Gregory" is beautiful. - I have tried to give you a set of Stanzas in Scots, on the same subject, which are at your service.- Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter: that would be presumption indeed. - My Song, though much inferiour in poetic merit, has I think more of the ballad simplicity in it'. Burns to Thomson, January 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 181-2 (535).

[76] The device of dream was found in other lyrics concerned with death and dying: see Alexander Lowe's **Mary's Dream** (**SIII/107**).

Tour of Scotland (1774).[77] Loved by two men, she saved the life of her beloved by stepping in front of him, as the rival lover tried to shoot him. After killing the murderer and fighting abroad, Ellen's true love returned to her graveside to die (**Ex. 22**):

> Where Helen lies, where Helen lies,
> I wish I were where Helen lies!
> Soon may I be where Helen lies,
> Who died for love of me!

Songs like these were important, for Thomson also had the opportunity of presenting an editorial note on the song's distinguished history. As with anonymity, the historical importance of individual lyrics was stressed. Such songs were a link with the people of the past and thus acquired a special quality for Thomson's men and women, several of whom were actively involved in the antiquarian movement.

Lyrics in a pastoral style, which either gloried in or despaired of love, proved the immortality of true love through absence and death, or glanced philosophically at the journey of man's life, were all wholly acceptable, for they voiced elevated moral principles. Commissioned lyricists were encouraged to bear their readers in mind when creating new songs for Thomson: 'we must accomodate [sic] our verses to the tastes of our readers, or we print in vain'.[78] Songs that presented the above themes, or those that were written in the patterns already discussed were, by far, the majority of the lyrics printed by Thomson.[79] Songs which were concerned with

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[77] Burns also wrote a version of this song which appeared in the SMM, ii. 163 (155). See also Low, Songs of Robert Burns, pp. 246-7 (77).

[78] Thomson to David Vedder, November 1829: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/1-2.

[79] Thomson wrote: 'Dr Reeve writes me that the Wye exhibits a compound of all that is picturesque beautiful & romantic in Scotland. Can I suppose then, that none of the love stricken maidens and soft sighing swains on its bank have been poetical? Have they never sung of the pleasures, or hope or pangs of despised love?' Songs of this nature were to be the norm in Thomson's

other subjects or emotions were the exception. In the first volume of the Scottish collection, for example, only one song - **Duncan Gray** - was at all humorous. Vols. II and III each included approximately five songs, which did not conform with the patterns of the pastoral: some ridiculed love and marriage, some were songs with strong national overtones, and one of two were drinking songs. Vol. V, in its first issue (**SVa**), also contained only five songs which were different from Thomson's regular pastorals, though Burns's cantata The Jolly Beggars was most unusual, for it was fervent in its political message and contained love songs which were unrefined in comparison to those in Thomson's other volumes.[80] It is thus significant that The Jolly Beggars appeared only once: by 1826 Thomson had replaced it with 25 Scottish songs. Five of those newly published in 1826 were related to Scottish historical events, or Highland activities, and in Vols. IV and VI there were about 15 and 10 songs respectively, which dealt with subjects other than those which were considered most appropriate. Not surprisingly, the songs which were the exception were the ones which caused the greatest problems for the editor, and which thus tell us more about his editorial procedure.

Welsh collection too. Thomson's letter to Dr Bevan of 1803: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/13-4.

[80] The lyrics of the finale of The Jolly Beggars, included the following verse as published by Thomson - Burns's original included 'Churches built to please the priest' as its last line:

> A fig for those by law protected!
> Liberty's a glorious feast!
> Courts for cowards were erected,-
> Jails, to be our scorn and jest.

b) The Unacceptable

While Thomson hoped to educate, he was compelled to uphold moral standards already set by his public. Love songs which ridiculed marriage or the particular weaknesses of one or both partners caused much greater problems for Thomson as an editor, and he was also aware that a great many of the traditional tunes he wanted to include had equally traditional but unacceptable lyrics. His fear of printing offensive lyrics was apparent even before the editing itself had begun. In his first letter to Burns, for example, he stated his disapproval of other collections in which 'some charming melodies are united to mere nonsense and doggerel, while others are accommodated with rhymes so loose and indelicate, as cannot be sung in decent company'.[81] And when writing in reply to Burns's acceptance, he specifically asked the poet for care and consideration on the matter of decency:

> One thing only I beg, which is that however gay and sportive the muse may be, she may always be decent. Let her not write what beauty would blush to speak, nor wound that charming delicacy which forms the most precious dowry of our daughters. I do not conceive the song to be the most proper vehicle for witty and brilliant conceits; simplicity, I believe, should be its prominent feature; but in some of our songs, the writers have confounded simplicity with coarseness and vulgarity ... The humorous ballad, or pathetic complaint, is best suited to our artless melodies; and more interesting indeed, in all songs, than the most pointed wit, dazzling descriptions and flowry fancies.[82]

This passage stimulated a heated debate about simplicity which ran the course of the correspondence between editor and poet, for though Thomson stated vehemently that he believed simplicity to be the most important ingredient of a good

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[81] Thomson to Burns, September 1792: Currie, Works, iv. 1-2 (I).

[82] Thomson to Burns, 13 October 1792: ibid., 5-6 (III).

lyric,[83] Burns found that it was a quality too often missing from Thomson's chosen lyrics.[84] The debate concerning the decency of lyrics also continued. If Thomson was reluctant to print songs of a 'meagre, vulgar, or indelicate character'[85] he was also, in Burns's opinion, too reluctant to include more humorous pieces in his collections:

> Your Collection of Sentimental & pathetic songs, is, in my opinion, very compleat; but not so your Comic ones.-- Where is Tullochgorum, Lumps o' puddins, Tibbie Fowler, Rattlin roarin Willie, & several others, which in my humble opinion, are well worthy of preservation.[86]

Inspired by Burns's criticism, Thomson made a point of printing the songs listed above. **Lumps o' puddings** was incorporated by him almost immediately, in the second Set of 1798 (**B/65**) with Burns's lyric **Contented wi' little, and canty wi' mair** and the anonymous **Pho! Pox o' this nonsense**, and in 1826 Smyth's **A Soldier am I** was added along with a new setting by Weber; **Tibbie Fowler** appeared in the first issue of the fourth volume in 1805 (**SIV/192**), with its traditional lyric

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[83] Thomson wrote: 'Besides, as I have repeatedly taken the liberty to remark, a Song should always be so clear, as to preclude all need of guessing who the speaker is, or what the song means'. Thomson to William Smyth, 22 September 1822 with reference to Smyth's **Address to Fortune**: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/120-1.

[84] Burns wrote: 'Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is in my opinion reprehensible: (you know I ought to know something of my own trade) of pathos, Sentiment & Point, you are a compleat judge; but there is a quality more necessary than either, in a song, & which is the very essence of a Ballad, I mean simplicity - now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing'. Burns to Thomson, April 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 199-200 (554). Understandably this was one of the passages deleted by Thomson and it is therefore not included in Currie. Also deleted was Burns's comment, 'What pleases me, as simple and naïve, disgusts you as ludicrous and low'. Burns to Thomson, September 1793: ibid., 249-53 (588). Thomson stated vehemently that 'I consider simplicity, rightly understood, as the most essential quality in composition, and the groundwork of beauty in all the arts'. Thomson to Burns, 26 April 1793: Currie, Works, iv. 53-4 (XXIII).

[85] 1831 Preface, (see **SIg** or **SIh**), p. 2.

[86] Burns to Thomson, 7 April 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 204-7 (557).

and Burns's vivid and entertaining **Willie Wastle's Wife** (**Ex. 23**); **Rattlin' roarin' Willie** appeared in the same volume (**SIV/153**), but with Anne Grant's lyric **O wise and valiant Willy** which was a tribute to William Pitt, rather than Burns's celebration of William Dunbar; and **Tullochgorum** was eventually printed in 1826 (**SVb/246**) with the lyric by the Revd John Skinner, which called for friendship and brotherhood between men of all opinions, and also claimed that the Scottish tune of **Tullochgorum** was far better than the musics of other nations. His third stanza reflected exactly the same belief as that of Robert Fergusson in his 'Elegy on the Death of Scots Music'. This was perhaps an unusual choice for inclusion by Thomson, yet the song was most popular, and setting new lyrics to it would have been, as with many of Ramsay's lyrics, a mistake (**Ex. 24**):

What needs there be sae great a fraise,
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays, — slow, spiritless
I wadna gie our ain Strathspeys
For half a hunder score o' them;
They're dowf and dowie at the best, — pithless,fatigued
Dowf and dowie, dowf and dowie,
Dowf and dowie at the best
Wi' a' their variorum;
They're dowf and dowie at the best,
Their allegros and a' the rest,
They canna' please a Scottish taste
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum.

Thomson was apparently happy to include those suggested by Burns. He regarded **Duncan Gray** as one of the best of Burns's songs - 'Duncan is indeed a lad of grace, and his humour will endear him to every body'[87] - and he was equally pleased to include Burns's **O Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad**, the 'humour and fancy' of which 'will render it nearly as great a favourite as **Duncan Gray**' (see **Ex. 14**).[88] Several songs appeared which ridiculed marriage and comically showed that the wooing so emphasized in other songs in the collections,

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[87] Thomson to Burns, 20 January 1793: Currie, Works, iv. 26-9 (XI).

[88] Thomson to Burns, 1 September 1793: ibid., 81 (XXXVIII).

could result in a life of purgatory once the marriage bond had been forged. Burns wrote to Alexander Cunningham that 'Matrimony is quite a different thing from what your love-sick youths & sighing girls take it to be!',[89] and this became a common subject of his songs and those of many others. The sentiment of Burns's **First when Maggy was my care** (**SIV/169**) was particularly well suited to the jagged air **Whistle o'er the lave o't** to which it was set:

> First when Maggy was my care,
> Heaven, I thought, was in her air;
> Now we're married, speir nae mair,
> But whistle o'er the lave o't.

In **Willie Wastle's Wife** (see **Ex. 23**), the narrator stated firmly that he 'wadna gie a button' for Willie's wife, who certainly had few endearing qualities, and the anonymous lyric for **Hooly and Fairly** (**SIV/170**), subtitled **The Drunken Wife o' Galloway**, was a description of the narrator's wife, beginning 'Oh! what had I ado for to marry!' **What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man** (**SIII/45** or **145**) and **Auld Rob Morris** (**SI/17**) were concerned with young womens' unfortunate marriages to old men, which was a theme often presented in the chanson de la mal mariée. **What can a young lassie** (**Ex. 25**) was a humorous song, but it emphasized the young woman's strength of mind, and her hatred for the old man who was her husband, as shown in the central verses of the song:

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[89] Burns to Alexander Cunningham, 10 September 1792: Roy, Letters, ii. 145-8 (506).

He's always compleenin frae mornin to e'enin,
He hosts and he hirples the weary day lang;
He's doyl't and he's dozin, his blude it is frozen,
O dool on the day I met wi' and auld man!
He's doyl't &c.

He hums and he hankers, he frets and he cankers,
I never can please him, do a' that I can;
He's peevish and jealous of a' the young fellows,
O dool on the day I met wi' an auld man!
He's peevish &c.

The traditional lyric for **Auld Rob Morris**, as printed by Ramsay in the TTM,[90] took the form of a dialogue between a mother and her daughter, the latter of whom is refusing to marry Auld Rob. Her comments about the old man are equal to those of the young woman in **What can a young lassie**, although Thomson excluded the traditional **Auld Rob Morris**, and printed instead a new lyric by Burns which turned the story into one of unrequited love. Its narrator is the young man who is in love with the girl who ultimately married Auld Rob.

Women were frequently presented in Thomson's collections as independent and strong-willed.[91] They were not always the victim of a parent's or lover's cruelty, or left to live alone, or to die because a lover had been killed. Neither were they, as is shown in **Aikendrum** (**SVb/251**), always opposed to marriages with old men. They were frequently strong enough to survive and to make decisions for themselves. Burns was particularly adept at portraying this single-mindedness in his songs, for example: **My love she's but a lassie yet** (**SI/35**), **Last May a braw wooer cam' down the lang glen** (**SII/52**), **My heart is a-breaking dear Titty** (**SII/66**), **O Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad** (**SII/94**), **What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man** (**SIII/145**), and **I'm o'er young to marry yet** (**SVI/268**), which Thomson included in the final volume of 1841. This quality was likewise portrayed in another song in the

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[90] TTM, i. 59-60. See also Kinsley, Poems and Songs of Robert Burns, iii. 1414-5 (393).

[91] Crawford, Society and the Lyric, p. 25.

Scottish collection, namely **When she cam ben she bobbit.** Thomson first printed the song in 1818 in his fifth volume (**SVa/220**) with a setting by Haydn (**Ex. 26a**), but refused to include the traditional lyric, which had appeared in the fourth volume of the SMM.[92] The reasons for its exclusion are obvious when the SMM version is compared with the lyric by William Smyth which Thomson commissioned and printed. The traditional lyric blatantly accused the Laird of Cockpen, a friend of Charles II, of an extra-marital affair:

O when she cam ben she bobbit fu' law,
O when she cam ben she bobbit fu' law,
And when she cam ben she kiss'd Cockpen,
And syne deny'd she did it ar a'.

And was na Cockpen richt saucy witha',
And was na Cockpen richt saucy witha',
In kissing the dochter of a Lord,
And kissin' a collier lassie an a'.

O never look down, my lassie at a',
O never look down, my lassie at a',
Thy lips are as sweet and thy figure compleat,
As the finest dame in castle or ha'.

Tho' thou has nae silk and holland sae sma',
Tho' thou has nae silk and holland sae sma',
Thy coat and thy sark are thy ain handywark
And lady Jean was never sae braw.

This lyric was clearly too 'absurd' and 'improper' for inclusion, regardless of the fact that it was doubtless true. Even though it is often thought that the peasantry of the period were far more promiscuous than the middle and upper classes, Lawrence Stone explains that 'freedom of sexual expression was one of the many by-products of the eighteenth-century pursuit of happiness',[93] and that there was

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[92] SMM, iv. 364-5 (353). A lyric to the same tune appeared in the TTM, i. 49, but it was a drinking song beginning 'Come, fill me a bumper, my jolly brave boys'.

[93] L. Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, London, 1979, p. 328. Stone also describes the development of pornographic publications in England during the second half of the eighteenth century. There is as yet no evidence to prove that Scottish customs differed

consequentially an 'easy-going attitude to sexual promiscuity among the higher aristocracy'[94] and the professional classes, at least until the last decades of the century. This lyric is particularly interesting because it also presents the distinct roles of woman: as wife and mother, whose chief role was to produce the heir; and as mistress, who was there for 'companionship and sexual pleasure'[95] alone . Furthermore the lyric describes the facility of the crossing of social barriers for men - from the aristocratic Lady Jean, to the common collier lassie. That Cockpen, and many others, were highly promiscuous, was still no reason to present this story as an approved code of conduct. Instead Thomson printed Smyth's lyric in which, although ingeniously linking it to the original,[96] he managed to remove all suggestion of time, place and name and ultimately transformed it into a love song untainted by its original, and genuine, associations. His lyric is the song of the collier lassie, who at once mourns and delights in her dilemma:

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substantially.

[94] Stone, p. 330.

[95] Ibid., p. 338.

[96] Thomson wrote: 'when the name of an air has been derived from any particular event, & made the subject of a song, it is desirable that in any new Song for the Air, there should be some such allusion to the event as the Poet may be able to introduce, without injury to his Composition'. Thomson to P.F. Tytler, 15 May 1830: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/16.

Oh! was I to blame to love him!
Oh! was I to blame to love him!
So gallant, so kind,-
I could not be blind,-
I was not to blame to love him.

My heart it may break with sorrow,
My heart it may break with sorrow,
'Tis lost for his sake,
No complaint will I make,
My heart it may break with sorrow.

Oh! saw you yon tree's sweet blossom,
Oh! saw you yon tree's sweet blossom,
Like me to your sight
It fades with the blight,
Yet blame not the love or the blossom.

O pride of my heart! I love thee,
O pride of my heart! I love thee;
The zephyr,- the sky,
May alter - not I, -
I was not to blame to love thee.

The story of Cockpen's adventures continued in Thomson's collections, for in his 1825 octavo edition he printed a new song, set to the same tune, entitled **The Laird of Cockpen**, which he noted had been presented to him in manuscript by Sir Adam Ferguson (**Ex. 26b**).[97] In this lyric the Laird decides to find himself a wife and settles on 'MacLeish's ae daughter o'Clavers-ha'-lea,/ A penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree'. He dresses in his Sunday best and calls upon her, but she confidently refuses his proposal. This song, which demonstrates the same feminine stength of will as many of the Burns lyrics listed above, is now known to have been written by Carolina Oliphant (Lady Nairne), who was particularly secretive about the authorship of many of her songs.[98]

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[97] The song appears in the sixth volume of Thomson's octavo edition of 1825 as no. 49.

[98] The pseudonym for most of her songs published in the first decades of the nineteenth century was Mrs Bogan of Bogan. Thomson printed another of her most famous song lyrics, **The land o' the leal**, to the tune **Hey Tutti taiti**, beside Burns's **Scots wha hae** in 1802 (**SIIIa/133**) with the note: 'These simple and affecting verses came under the Editor's notice but very lately; he wished to give the name of the ingenious author, but his endeavours to find it out have not been successful'.

She did not present Thomson with any songs specifically written for him, and though she gave several of them to R.A. Smith for inclusion in The Scottish Minstrel - a rival publication which Thomson thought 'wretched doggerel'[99] - her name was never printed alongside them. It is therefore difficult to date the song, but it is almost certain that she wrote it after the appearance of **When she cam ben she bobbit** in the SMM. Oliphant kept an affiliation to the traditional song by using its first line in her story, but she changed it so that it was the Laird who bowed and not the lady who curtsied: 'An' when she cam ben he bowed fu' law'. Cockpen's arrogance was rather crudely undermined by Oliphant in Miss MacLeish's refusal, when in the middle of the dignified meeting, and between his bowing and her low curtsy, she gives the answer 'Na' to rhyme with 'awa'. This tightly-knit scene was, however, to be completely transformed by Thomson, for when he printed the song in 1843 (**SVd/2d.250**),[100] he added two stanzas written by himself (**Ex. 26c**):

> No sooner the Laird his exit had made,
> Than she 'gan to ponder on what he had said:-
> "What a fool", she exclaimed "was I to say Na
> To a wooer sae gallant, sae crouse, and sae braw!"
>
> But back came the Laird, right glad now to find
> The Lady had prudently alter'd her mind:-
> Quoth he, "I've come frankly to ask you again:"
> She blushed her consent,- and she's Lady Cockpen.

He apologized to the unknown author by stating that the song was frequently made more respectable by this false coda: 'The Editor hopes the Author will pardon him for thus terminating the courtship, to which he was induced by having observed that the song, as generally sung, rarely escapes without some sort of postscript matrimonial'. Two simple and rather

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[99] Thomson to R.A. Smith, 29 March 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/92-4.

[100] This later version of **The Laird of Cockpen** was printed with the same tune as Smyth's lyric, namely **When she cam ben she bobbit**, but with a new arrangement by George Hogarth.

unadventurous verses transformed the whole story, and the characteristics which made it so dynamic, into a rather common love song, for the Laird gets everything and the girl's gesture of independence is shown to be a foolish mistake on her part.[101] While **The Laird of Cockpen** was made more respectable, Thomson's other lyric for the tune printed alongside Haydn's setting, namely Smyth's **O! was I to blame to love him**, remained unchanged. In 1831, however, Thomson decided to print new verses by Patrick Fraser Tytler alongside Smyth's verses. Tytler's lyric (**SVc/220**), written in 1824, was entitled **I think it is time to marry**, and was subtitled 'Thoughts of a young lady after a ball, who, while putting in her papillotes, is casting a hurried glance over her prospects in life'. It was a comic song in which the young lady chose, by matter of elimination, the man she would marry, thereby securing her future, and ruining the chances of one of her rivals. The title of Tytler's song was misleading, for its narrator exhibited the same quick-wittedness of the original Lady Jean, and Tytler, perhaps unintentionally, presented something of a satire on arranged marriages within the upper echelons of society. Like Smyth's verses, Tytler's new song was linked to the story of Cockpen by way of the melody alone, and no names or places were mentioned (**Ex. 26d**).

Thomson often refused to print traditional lyrics, for the same reasons as those above. Not all of his letters to Burns are extant, but Burns's letters to Thomson often included discussion of the eligibility of lyrics, and present us with information concerning the songs which Thomson excluded. He refused to include the traditional lyrics for the tune **The mill mill O**, which Burns stated was 'on account of decency

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[101] An interesting comparison with the character of Cockpen is found in Alexander Boswell's lyric **I'll hae my coat o'gude snuff-brown** to the tune **The Auld Gudeman** (**SIII/147**). It is the dialogue between a Laird, who has decided to propose to 'a tocher'd quean', and his servant Meg, who thinks he'd 'better bide at hame'.

inadmissable'.[102] It was concerned with the seduction of a bonny lassie who had little skill at dancing 'the miller's reel', a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Thomson printed Burns's lyric **When wild war's deadly blast was blown** (**SI/22**) instead, which tells the story of a soldier returning home after fighting for his country to find that the girl he loved has waited for him; something of a transformation of the traditional verses, but far more appropriate for it proved, once more, the constancy of true love. The infamous selection of bawdy songs which Burns collected during his lifetime - a compilation of which was published in 1800 as The Merry Muses of Caledonia - in fact inspired many of his best love songs.[103] **The Lea-rig, Duncan Gray, Dainty Davie, She rose and loot me in, Comin' Thro' the rye, Andrew and his cuttie gun, Let me in this ae night** and even **John Anderson my jo** were all collected by Burns, or known to him, in their bawdy form before he composed new lyrics for them, and all were included, in their polite state, in Thomson's Scottish collection.[104]

Rather than giving Thomson the vulgar lyric for **Let me in this ae night**, Burns asked, first of all, for the Editor's opinion:

> I have begun anew, Let me in this ae night.- Do you think that we ought to retain the old Chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus & the first Stanza of the old Song.- I do not altogether like the third line of the first Stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself.[105]

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[102] Burns to Thomson, April 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 204-7 (557). Currie gives the date 7 April: Currie, Works, iv. 44-8 (XIX). **The mill mill O** was included by Ramsay in the TTM, i. 78-9. It is also found in Burns's MMC, p. 130.

[103] R. Burns, The Merry Muses of Caledonia, ed. J. Barke, S.G. Smith & J. DeLancey Ferguson, Edinburgh, 1982, p. 131. This publication of MMC is not complete or wholly comprehensive, but it contains some of the versions of some of the songs included in the Burns manuscript.

[104] The Art of Robert Burns, ed. R.D.S. Jack & A. Noble, London, 1982, pp. 98-126. R. D. S. Jack's essay entitled 'Burns and Bawdy'. Also D.A. Low's introduction to The Songs of Robert Burns, pp. 18-22.

[105] Burns to Thomson, September 1794: Roy, Letters, ii. 306-310 (637).

After quoting his new stanzas, he questioned Thomson once more: 'How do you like this? and would you have the denoument [sic] to be successful or otherwise? Should she "let him in", or not?' The bawdy song which originally inspired Burns took the form of a dialogue between the hopeful lover who begs consent from his lassie to let him in from the cold - synonymous with her consenting to sex - and the lassie's reply:[106]

> Cast aff the shoen frae aff your feet,
> Cast back the door up to the weet,
> Syne in my bed you may creep
> And do the thing you ken, jo.
>
> **chorus:**
>
> O well's on me this ae night,
> This ae, ae, ae night,
> O well's on me this ae night,
> That ere I let you in, jo!
>
> She let him in sae cannily,
> She let him in sae privily,
> She let him in sae cannily,
> To do the thing ye ken, jo.

The girl's agreement ends in disaster and comedy, for 'Out fell the bottom of the bed/ The lassie lost her maidenhead/ And her mither heard the din, jo.' No letter with Thomson's answers to Burns's questions appears to exist, though Burns's letter of 7 February 1795, in which he sent the verses that Thomson printed, included the comment 'Here is another trial at your favourite air', which suggests that Thomson did, in fact, make suggestions prior to the final version of the song.[107] Burns kept the form of the dialogue in addition to the first stanza ('O lassie art thou sleeping yet') and chorus of the bawdy version, but he delightfully twisted the lassie's

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[106] MMC, p. 119. The version printed here was found in David Herd's Ancient and Modern Scots Songs. See also Kinsley, iii. 1469-70 (485).

[107] Burns to Thomson, 7 February 1795: Roy, Letters, ii. 340-1 (656).

reply to the lover's plea to shelter him from the rain. The lassie in Burns's new lyric (**SIV/156**), specifically written for Thomson's collection, is a girl of strong moral principle who rightfully has doubts about the young man's intentions (**Ex. 27**). Despite the rain and cold, she refuses to let him in for she has seen too many women ruined because they 'trusted faithless man, jo!' Thomson was delighted with this new version and wrote to Burns on 25 February 1795: 'You have made a great address in the above song. Her answer is excellent, and at the same time takes away the indelicacy that otherwise would have attached to his entreaties. I like the song as it now stands, very much'.[108] Burns's ingenuity in this case was matched by that of the anonymous author of Thomson's chosen lyrics for the tune **She rose and let me in** (**SI/23**).[109] In the new version the narrator must be content with Nelly's love from afar, for like Thomson's maid in **Let me in this ae night**, Nelly has 'with accents all divine' forbidden the young man and has inflamed his love the more by refusing him.

Burns's alteration to the lyrics for **John Anderson my jo** (see **Ex. 6b**) was even more impressive than that for **Let me in this ae night**, for he removed all sexual connotations from the new lyric, and transformed what was originally a raw description of a sexual relationship into a love song of almost sacred purity.[110] He changed many other bawdy songs to suit Thomson's moral criteria, though often not so drastically as with **Let me in this ae night** or **John Anderson**. The new version of **The Lea-rig** (**SIV/195**),[111] for example, was simply a little more ambiguous than the traditional verses. In Burns's polite version the narrator simply 'met' Mary on the lea-rig, rather than 'Lyin' across the lee-rig' with her, thereby leaving the

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[108] Currie, Works, iv. 171-2 (LXXI).

[109] Kinsley, iii. 1209 (123).

[110] MMC, pp. 146-7 and Kinsley, iii. 1334-5 (302).

[111] MMC, p. 131 and Kinsley, iii. 1413 (392).

listener/reader to interpret the meeting as he or she might. Thomson naturally refused to present the crude lyric for **Andrew and his cuttie gun,**[112] the chorus of which was as direct as the verses:

> Blythe, blythe, blythe was she,
> Blythe was she but and ben,
> An' well she lo'ed it in her neive,
> But better when it slippit in.

Instead he printed a drinking song - 'The Old Verses' - and also a Burns lyric which simply celebrated the beauty of Phemie, beginning 'Blythe, blythe, and merry was she' (**SII/61**). **Dainty Davie**, as already discussed (see **Ex. 18**), became a charming pastoral, expressing the girl's delight at meeting with Davie, rather than a celebration of her sexual relationship with him,[113] and **Duncan Gray** (**SI/48**), which was originally a description of Duncan's sexual conquest of Maggy,[114] ending in an unhappy marriage where Duncan was scolded 'night an' day', became another of Burns's comic songs of wooing in which the heroine 'Maggy' taunts the poor love-sick Duncan (see **Ex. 14**).

These lyrics had obvious cause for concern, and were clear examples of the 'vulgar', 'indelicate' verses which were forbidden space in the collections unless they underwent Thomson's 'revisal and purification'.[115] Thomson made few comments about Burns's bawdy songs.[116] His discussion

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[112] MMC, p. 147 and Kinsley, iii. 1248-9 (179).

[113] MMC, p. 97 - this is only one version of the bawdy song. See also Kinsley, iii. 1437-8 (424).

[114] MMC, pp. 126-7 and Kinsley, iii. 1265-6 (204), and 1415-6 (394).

[115] As written in the preface to the first octavo volume of 1822-3.

[116] Thomson stated in his first letter to Burns, of September 1792, that 'I have no intention to displace any of the sterling old songs; those only will be removed, which appear quite silly, or absolutely indecent': Currie, Works, iv. 1-2 (I).

concerning **Let me in this ae night** was the most detailed opinion on unsavoury lyrics in his letters. He stated that the traditional song **Fy let's a' to the bridal** was 'so coarse and vulgar, that I think it fit only to be sung in a company of drunken colliers',[117] and that **O to be lying beyond thee, dearie** 'is perhaps a consummation to be wished, but will not do for singing in the company of ladies',[118] but he never discussed any of the traditional bawdy songs in any detail. In a letter to his close friend Robert Chambers later in the 1840s,[119] Thomson gave the impression that Burns had little or nothing to do with the bawdy songs included in Johnson's SMM. He protected himself and his main lyricist from association with such lyrics, yet Burns sometimes tired of Thomson's refinement, as his letter of September 1794 illustrates.[120] Burns enclosed the vulgar song known as **Cumnock Psalms** as an example of the use of a religious melody for secular lyrics, assuming, correctly, that Thomson would be unfamiliar with it. The song was, as Burns stated 'more famous for its humour than its delicacy', but Thomson appreciated neither characteristic. There is no extant reply to Burns's letter, but Thomson scribbled on the page which Burns had sent, 'delicate psalmody indeed'.[121]

While refusing to acknowledge the existence of such lyrics, there was still some element of inconsistency in Thomson's decisions relating to bawdy songs. He did not approve of the traditional but inoffensive verses for **The Collier's bonnie**

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[117] Thomson to Burns, 12 September 1793: Currie, Works, iv. 152-161 (LXIV). The TTM included **Fy let's a' to the bridal**, i. 85-6.

[118] Thomson to Burns, 27 October 1794: Currie, Works, iv. 140-1 (LXI).

[119] 12 April 1841: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/73-4.

[120] Burns to Thomson, September 1794: Roy, Letters, ii. 306-10 (637). See also MMC pp. 73-4 and Kinsley, iii. 1497 (555).

[121] Roy, Letters, ii. 306-10 (637). Roy includes this in his edition of the letters. It does not appear in Currie.

lassie,[122] choosing to print Burns's **O saw ye bonie Lesley** (**SI/33**) instead,[123] yet argued with Burns over Ramsay's suggestive lyric **My Patie is a lover gay**, which he thought 'though a little unequal, is a natural and very pleasing song'.[124] Burns disapproved, having already told Thomson that it was, in his opinion, 'far unworthy of Ramsay, or your book' and offering instead his lyric **Rigs of Barley.**[125] Thomson promised to print Burns's lyric - 'if the loose sentiments are threshed out of it, I will find an air for it'[126] - but he never published Burns's song. Instead, Ramsay's **Patie** appeared in Vol. I of the Scottish collection (**SI/7**), though without its last stanza (**Ex. 28**).[127] Its inclusion perhaps reflected

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[122] TTM, i. 89-90.

[123] Even though Thomson was delighted with the general content of Burns's alternative song - **O saw ye bonie Lesley** (**SI/33**) - he still made suggestions as to the use of certain words and even to the rhythm of some of the lines. For example he did not like Burns's use of 'Alexander' in the first verse, and also stated: 'Instead of the line "And never made anither", I would humbly suggest "And ne'er made sic anither"; and I would fain have you substitute some other line for "Return to Caledonie [sic]", in the last verse, because I think this alteration of orthography, and the sound of Caledonia, disfigures the word, and renders it Hudibrastic'. Thomson to Burns, November 1792: Currie, Works, ii. 16-19 (VII). Burns disagreed with the first two suggestions, though left the ultimate decision to the editor. He was unable to come up with another word for "Caledonia", though he too disliked it: Burns to Thomson, November 1792: Roy, Letters, ii. 157-8 (514). Thomson insisted on printing 'And ne'er made sic anither', but the rest of the lyric was printed in its original form.

[124] Thomson to Burns, April 1793: Currie, Works, iv, 48-9 (XX). Patie was included in the TTM, ii. 139-40.

[125] Burns to Thomson, April 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 204-7 (557).

[126] Thomson to Burns, 26 April, 1793: Currie, Works, iv. 53-4 (XXIII).

[127] The last verse was as follows:

Let maidens of a silly mind,
Refuse what maist they're wanting,
Since we for yielding are design'd,
We chastly should be granting;
Then I'll comply and marry Pate,
And syne my cockernony
He's free to touzle air or late,
Where corn-riggs are bonny.

popular demand, as much as Thomson's personal choice, as it was one of the songs known to Thomson's buyers through Ramsay's The Gentle Shepherd (1725). The impropriety of Ramsay's lyric concerned his rather incongruous mixture of refined expression and colloquial phraseology. The first stanza, for example, described Patie, who is stately, handsome and a lover gay, but this description was juxtaposed with the comments that 'his mind is never muddy' and his 'face is fair and ruddy'. The shape of the melody - **Corn Riggs** - exaggerated Ramsay's choice of 'muddy', and was specifically criticised by Burns.[128]

Thomson also chose to print Hector MacNeill's song **Come under my plaidy**, subtitled **Modern Marriage deliniated** (**SIV/171**), in which an old Highlander seduced a young lassie, who was betrothed to a younger man, by inviting her to come under his plaidy (**Ex. 29**). Its final stanza, written from the young lover's viewpoint, began: 'O the deel's in the lasses! they gang now sae bra',/ They'll lie down wi' auld men o'fourscore and twa'. It is strange that Thomson should allow it to be printed, for the tartan plaidy was a common sexual symbol. Even more unusual was his inclusion of **Muirland Willie** (**SIV/177**) in its traditional form as found in the TTM.[129] This song is a raucous celebration of love, which ends in a description of the consummation of Muirland Willie's marriage

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Thomson also printed Ramsay's famous **Lass of Patie's Mill** (**SIII/117**), which Burns agreed was 'one of Ramsay's best songs' - see Roy, Letters, ii. 201-7 (557) - but removed the second verse of the original which was a little too primitive for inclusion. See TTM, i. 41-2:

Her arms, white, round, and smooth,
Breasts rising in their dawn,
To age it would give youth,
To press 'em with his hand.
Through all my spirits ran,
An ecstasy of bliss,
When I such sweetness fand,
Wrapt in a balmy kiss.

[128] Roy, Letters, ii. 204-7 (557).

[129] TTM, i. 7-9.

(**Ex. 30**):

Sic hirdum, dirdum, and sic din,
Wi' he o'er her, and she o'er him,
The minstrels they did never blin',
Wi' meikle mirth and glee.
And ay they bobit, and ay they beck't,
And ay their wames together met,
With a fal, dal, &c.

Thomson printed the traditional lyric but not surprisingly changed the second and sixth lines of the ultimate verse to 'Sic daffin, laughin, and sic fun' and 'And ay they cross'd and merrily met' respectively. However, in the 1815 issue of Vol. IV (**SIVd**) he uncharacteristically gave his reasons for making these changes in a note printed with the song, and even presented the two omitted lines:

> The critical observer will find, that the Editor has taken the liberty of altering two lines of the last stanza, viz. the second and the sixth. He thought it a pity that there should be any thing in such a truly excellent song to render it objectionable in good company. But lest he should fall under the heavy displeasure of the antiquary, he shall subjoin the original lines. Would it were in his power to add the Name of the Author of the above most masterly composition. BURNS, with his characteristic enthusiasm, said, it had given him many a heart-ache to think, that the men of genius who had composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown.
>
> 2. Wi' he o'er her, and she o'er him.
> 6. And ay their wames together met.

It should be noted that this was the only occasion when Thomson let such antiquarianism dictate the publication of 'unsavoury' lines in any of his songs. **Muirland Willie** was the exception to the rule, but does display some sense of insecurity on Thomson's part.[130]

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[130] This song was apparently a favourite of Thomson, as described by George Croall: 'while still a young man, I had the pleasure of meeting at supper one evening Mr. George Thomson, the universally known correspondent of Burns, at whose instigation the poet wrote some of his most beautiful and undying lyrics. Thomson was then an octogenarian, but notwithstanding, seemed to be in the full enjoyment of all the amenities of social life. On the occasion I refer to he sang the song of 'Muirland Willie' with great spirit

This editorial inconsistency was also displayed in many of the pastoral lyrics published by Thomson. Pastorals concerned with ardent love, as illustrated by Ramsay's 'Patie' and the Burns lyric which it inspired, often employed highly sensual language and imagery, which could be almost as powerful as that found in the bawdy songs. The anonymous lyric presented with the tune **The Flowers of Edinburgh** (**SI/27**), which began 'The sun in virgin lustre shone/ May morning put its beauties on' was solely concerned, for example, with the seduction of Sylvia by the ever-hopeful Damon. The language is typical of that in many of the pastoral love-lyrics included in Thomson's collections. Damon wakens Sylvia, who is sleeping in 'the happy cot'. She is voluptuously introduced 'As Phoebus in meridian light' - a common image, for Classical allusion was a prerequisite. She induces a physical response, and renders Damon speechless (**Ex. 31**):

> Entranc'd in rapture, all confest,
> The shepherd clasp'd her to his breast;
> Then gazing, with a speaking eye,
> He snatch'd a kiss, and heav'd a sigh,
> A melting sigh, and seem'd to say,
> Consider youth's our holiday.[131]

As is the case with **Come, dear Amanda quit the town** (**SI/7**), the alternative lyric for **My Patie is a lover gay**, the heroine is unable to resist (see **Ex. 28**). In this second lyric the narrator tempts Amanda with the beauties of the countryside.

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and with all the humour it demands'. Croall, Living Memories, pp. 59-60.

[131] Names commonly found in the pastorals of the collections were: Damon, Sylvia, Chloe, Colin, Amanda, Eliza, Delia, Lucy, Strephon, Nancy, Phillis, Celia, Phemie, Jeanie, Donald, Tam, Rob, Peggy, Mary, Sandy and Nelly were commonly found in the Scots lyrics. Burns dicussed names with Thomson in his letter of September 1794 (Roy, Letters, ii. 306-10 (637)) in which he stated that he thought the name of George 'rather burlesque for sentiment', and of 19 November 1794 (Ibid., 327-31 (647)), when discussing the lyric for the tune **The Sow's Tail**, which began, ' O Philly, happy be the day'. Burns stated: 'I remember your objections to the name Philly; but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis, which is now a common Christian name.- Nelly, & Sally, the only name that suits, has, to my ear, a vulgarity about them, which unfits them for anything except burlesque'.

'A gentle radiance glads the sky' and 'Earth spreads a verdant couch' for her. She is encouraged to 'mark the gradual spring' just like the buds which 'peep' and the blossom which 'blows'. Physical responses - tears, sighs and heaving bosoms - were part of the machinery commonly employed by the writer, and were found in celebratory verses and those which talked of unrequited love, or the death of a loved one. The vogue for the pastoral allowed such lyrics access to Thomson's volumes without question, but they contradicted his apparent obsession with purity and delicacy discussed above.

At the age of 84, when looking back on his collections, Thomson commented that he thought James Johnson had made a bad decision in allowing so many bawdy songs to be printed in the SMM, for it had ultimately been, in Thomson's opinion, 'such a motely [sic] collection as no man of good sense could put into the the hands of a sister, a daughter or any modest girl of his acquaintance'.[132] Thomson continued:

> My 300 Songs which include every good one written by Burns, either for my own work, or for the Museum, and the best of those written by Scott, Campbell, Baillie, Tytler & Smith; together with the most select ancient Scottish lyrics, of all which there is not one which dying I could wish to blot. - These I say, will in the opinion of every person of good taste and of every moralist, far outweigh the 600 songs in the Museum.

Thomson had good reason to be proud of his collections, for morally, the majority of the lyrics printed, which far surpassed 300 in number, were wholly acceptable, proper and decent. Those in Scots, and those concerned with political or specifically Scottish events gave Thomson much greater problems than the general presentation of sound morals and good manners.

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[132] Thomson to Robert Chambers, 12 April 1841, discussing the SMM: GB-Lbl Add. MS 35269/73-4.

iii) The Linguistic Dilemma

Thomson's collections began to appear at a time when there was still something of a battle in Scotland between the general employment of the Scots language and standard English. Since the Union of 1707, educated Scots had been forced to lead the way with English, which they often did by choice. By the late eighteenth century, English was taught as the first language in Scottish schools, and, with the upper echelons, the vernacular was generally becoming synonymous with vulgarity and coarseness. As an Editor of 'national airs' Thomson therefore found himself in something of a dilemma. He was, after all, producing a collection of Scottish songs, most of which were written in national dialect. But in his Preface to the First Set (**A**), Thomson admitted to the Public that he had decided to provide alternative English lyrics for every song in Scots, in order to 'render this collection equally interesting in England as in Scotland'. The decision to incorporate these English songs was not made purely on commercial grounds. Thomson's inconsistent editing of lyrics in Scots reflects the complex issues surrounding nationality and language during this period.

Thomson's first preface was carefully constructed. His proposition to produce a collection of songs which could be appreciated and understood the length and breadth of the country, by people from different cultural backgrounds, was an admission of his commercial aspirations, but it was also a statement of his Britishness. Thomson side-stepped any political or historical discussion about the relationship between the Scots and the English. Even in later issues, when his preface expanded and became more scholarly, he still avoided such debate. This would be unremarkable were it not for the existence of the Preface to the first Welsh volume (**WI**) of 1809. The relationship between the Welsh and the English, which had been equally as unhappy as that between the Scots and English, was examined at length in this Welsh

Preface, even though Thomson was careful to ensure that it was in the words of another:

> The POETRY was the next object, and the Editor imagined at the outset that this would be a much easier acquisition than he has found it. Presuming that English Songs, suited to a number of the Airs, were to be found in Wales, either in print or manuscript, he wrote to his friends there, while collecting the Airs for him, earnestly requesting a communication of such Songs, amatory, humorous, or heroic, as might be in circulation; but all the letters he received, some of them from gentlemen intimately acquainted with whatever relates to the Poetry or Literature of Wales, concurred in stating, that no English Songs for those airs, at least none of any consequence existed. One of his correspondents, who, though not a native, had resided nearly twenty years in Wales [Mr John Clark], wrote as follows, viz. 'Gratitude to the inhabitants of the principality among whom I have passed the happiest period of my life, calls upon me to explain the cause of the non-existence of <u>English</u> songs to their melodies. It is by no means imputable to any want of poetical genius; the Welsh are distinguished for a most happy and energetic vein of Poetry; but the voice of the muse is heard only in their own original tongue. You know the animosities which so long subsisted between the Highland and the Lowland Scots, though both subject to the same monarch, and the same laws: What, then, must have been the feelings of the Welsh towards their inveterate enemies the English, who were continually harassing them, and at last destroyed their Princes, subdued their country, and overturned their laws? Why, till a late period they hated the English, their language, and all that belonged to them; and hence that language was not only not cultivated, but despised in Wales: How, then shall we look for English words to Welsh airs?'

Thomson's decision to avoid the presentation of such an argument in the preface to the volumes of the Scottish collection is a clear reflection of his discomfort. He was apparently unperturbed about expressing the Welsh hatred of the English in his Welsh collection, because the material and the problems were distant. This is not to say that his decisions to include newly written English songs to match the Welsh tunes, or translations of some of the traditional Welsh

songs,[133] failed to offend some Welsh buyers, or that his preface failed to rile his English clients. But the question of the Scots and the English was much too close to home. While some Scots were wholly in favour of the eradication of the Scots tongue, others were wholly opposed to standard English, and even more Scots were uncertain as to where they stood. Thomson was well aware that his potential buyers would include members of all camps, and to offend would result in commercial failure.

He found himself under great pressure first of all from those in favour of standard English and the British ideal, and his first Preface of 1793 suggests that he was at least partly sympathetic to their cause. For those Scottish, or rather specifically Edinburgh-based, intellectuals known as the literati, the acquisition of standard English was at one with the respectability of general education and improvement. It was, as already stated by Kenneth Simpson, 'considered as a matter of urgency'.[134] This urgency was apparent most of all in the lists of Scotticisms to be avoided published by reknowned and respected scholars including David Hume and James Beattie.[135] Able writers who produced work in unrefined Scots were advised to concentrate much more closely on perfecting their English - most notably Fergusson and Burns.

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[133] Thomson also explained this decision in the 1809 Preface: 'It thus became necessary (with one or two exceptions) to get Songs written purposely for every one of the Airs. This presented a formidable barrier to the undertaking, which the Editor almost despaired of surmounting. To ascertain, from an attentive examination of the Welsh Airs, the kind of Song which each particular Air seemed to require; then to find or to construct a verse suited to each Air, such as might exemplify to the Poet the precise measure and the character of every Song wanted; and above all, to find Poets willing and able to produce so great a number of Songs, was truly a task which the Editor was little aware of till he entered upon it. He succeeded, however, beyond his most sanguine hopes'.

[134] K. Simpson, The Protean Scot, Aberdeen, 1988, p. 75.

[135] Hume's 'Scotticisms' appeared in copies of his Political Discourses, Edinburgh, 1752. Beattie's list was entitled Scoticisms Arranged in Alphabetical Order, Designed to Correct Improprieties of Speech and Writing, Edinburgh, 1787.

Editors of Scottish works, like Scottish writers, were encouraged to bow to an English market, and were simultaneously enveloped by 'a genteel opinion among the Scots themselves which disclaimed any relationship with their native dialect'.[136] By the 1770s, when Topham visited Edinburgh, this linguistic division was obvious. Some still spoke the vernacular with a thick and alienating accent, but those educated Scots studied elocution and were striving to speak correct English:

> Their [the Scots'] pronunciation and accent is far from being agreeable; it gives an air of gravity, sedateness, and importance to their words; which, though of use sometimes in an harangue or public discourse, in common conversation seems dull, heavy, stupid and unharmonious. On which account I scarcely ever heard a Scotchman tell a good story in all my life; for, notwithstanding he might put in all the circumstances to work it to a point, he would be sure to spoil it by his deficiency in manner, and remove the sting which ought to tickle the imagination of the hearer, by appearing not to feel it himself. The inhabitants of this place, who are acquainted with the English, are sensible of this, and endeavour to speak like them, especially the politer sort of people, and the Professors of the College, who, in their lectures, strive to shake off the Scotch pronunciation as much as possible.[137]

Thomson seems to have had little trouble encouraging his lyricists, many of whom were English by birth, to produce lyrics written in standard English. Even the correspondence with most of his Scottish writers included only occasional comments about language, for most were happy about, or at least resigned to, writing in English, seeing it as the only path towards literary success in the new Britain. English songs in Thomson's Scottish collection were placed alongside lyrics in Scots, supposedly providing an alternative for the

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[136] E. Letely, From Galt to Douglas Brown: Nineteenth Century Fiction and the Scots Language, Aberdeen, 1988, p. 4.

[137] Topham, Letters, pp. 54-5. From his seventh letter 'Of the Good-breeding of the Scotch; their Language, particular Beauties in it, and Expressions'.

English buyer to sing if the Scots was particularly incomprehensible, or if he/she simply wished to avoid singing in a language with which they were not acquainted. In the first volume, for example, **My Patie is a lover gay** was combined with the anonymous English song **Come, dear Amanda, quit the town** (**SI/7**), both well suited to the melody and to one another (see. **Ex. 28**). The two lyrics by Burns for the tune **Dainty Davie** (**SII/69**), one in Scots and one in English, also provided basically the same lyric, but the Scots song was was written for a girl to sing, and the English for a male vocalist (see **Ex. 18**), as were the lyrics for the tune **Fair Helen of Kirkconnell** (**SIV/168**) - **O were I laid where Colin lies** and **I wish I were where Helen lies** (see **Ex. 22**). Most of the English alternatives were not literal translations of the Scots lyrics, but simply dealt with the same subject matter. The sentiment of the various love songs, which were of course the majority, was arguably the same from one language to the next. Such was the case with **My Patie is a lover gay** and **Come, dear Amanda**, or the two lyrics presented with the tune **Bonny Dundee** - namely Burns's English song entitled **True hearted was he** and Hector MacNeill's Scots lyric **Saw ye my wee thing?** (**SI/46**) - which were both celebrations of their narrators' loved ones, though Burns called her Jessie and MacNeill called her Mary (see. **Exx. 5a & 5b**). The lyrics presented with the tune **O'er the moor amang the heather** (**SIV/158**), were also identical in sentiment, though Jean Glover's Scottish song described the meeting of the lover with his bonny lassie 'o'er the moor amang the heather', and John Richardson, in his alternative English lyric, described the joy of the lovers living happily in 'a cot in some lone glen'. The changing environment was irrelevant to the song's general sentiment, as, it could be argued, was the language in which it was written. Lyrics in Scots and English generally stood quite happily together in the Scottish collection.

The appearance of single English lyrics, with no Scots lyrics to match, was not always so comprehensible. Often new English verses were combined with tunes which had also been newly written. Alexander Boswell's song in English, **Let my lass be young, my wine be old**, for example, was set to the new air called **The three captains** (**SIVd/193**),[138] and another of Boswell's lyrics, **Oft I went to her &c.**, appeared with his own tune referred to as **Shelagh o'Neal** (**SIV/173**). Mallet's **William and Margaret** was paired with a new tune written by Stephen Clarke (**SIII/105**), and Walter Scott's **Farewell to the Muse** (**SV/217**) appeared with a new air 'composed by George Kinloch, Esq. of Kinloch'. Sometimes Thomson also matched English songs with instrumental tunes which had previously appeared with no words: Scott's lyric **The sun upon the weirdlaw hill**, for example, was printed with the tune which Thomson called **Sunset** (**SV/215**), originally a fiddle tune in one of Gow's collections of strathspeys and reels. On occasion more than one English lyric was presented. For example, two English songs by Burns were printed with the melody entitled **Ally Croaker** (**SII/93**) and another two with **Deil tak the wars** (**SIV/157**), and English lyrics by Robert Crawford and R.B. Sheridan appeared alongside the tune **The bush aboon traquair** (**SI/5**). Although there were often political or moral grounds for Thomson choosing to present an English lyric alone, sometimes there was no apparent reason. He chose, for example, not to print the traditional lyrics for the tune **O'er the hills and far awa'**, even though it was supposedly one of his favourites, choosing to present Burns's new English song on its own (**SIV/161**). He chose to print William Smyth's drinking song in English, **Come fill, fill, my good fellow**, with the tune **There's three good fellows ayont yon glen** (**SV/213**), without presenting the Scots lyric as found in the SMM,[139] even though the verses in the SMM were morally sound and not unlike Burns's **Willie brew'd a**

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[138] This song appeared for the first time in Vol. IV of 1815, with a new arrangement by Haydn. See Appendix 1 (**SIVd**).

[139] SMM, v. 454 (442).

peck o' maut, which Thomson published in his fourth volume (**SIV/179**). Again with **Robin Adair**,[140] a tune of Irish descent, he chose to print Burns's lyric **O had I a cave on some wild distant shore** (see **Ex. 19**), as opposed to the traditional lyric which was apparently a celebration of Robin's friends and was therefore sound on moral and political accounts. Critics of this editing procedure are answered by Thomson's admirable belief that he was serving traditional Scottish song, by matching Scottish melodies with English words. He felt that the presentation of English lyrics with many of the best known and best loved Scottish melodies would reap valuable results, by introducing an English clientele, who were most probably alienated by the Scots language, to the beauties of these traditional Scottish melodies:

> I shall be able to present a considerable number of the very Flowers of English Song, well adapted to those melodies, which in England at least will be the means of recommending them to a still greater attention that they have procured there. But you will observe, my plan is, that every air shall, in the first place, have verses wholly by Scottish poets; and that those of English writers shall follow as additional songs, for the choice of the singer.[141]

Thomson was close to offending many of his Scottish buyers, who were angry that some of their favourite songs were excluded because they were written in a dialect which was incomprehensible to the English. But some of the English songs in the Scottish collection were concerned with Scottish subjects, illustrating the general progression of Scottish writers towards the new language, for, while still concerned with Scottish issues, they now wrote about them in standard

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[140] Low, pp. 590-1 (228) and pp. 616-7 (239). Burns wrote another two songs in English for this tune: the first about the French Jacobin General Charles François Dumourier, which Thomson would probably have been unhappy to print, and the second, known as **Phillis the fair**, beginning 'While larks with little wing/Fann'e the pure air', which would have been ideal.

[141] Thomson to Burns, November 1792: Currie, Works, iv. 16-19 (VII).

English. Examples include some of the songs which Walter Scott produced for Thomson, particularly **The Maid of Isla** (**SV/209**) (see. **Ex. 13b**), **Glencoe** (**SVI/298**) and even **On Ettrick Forest's Mountains Dun** (**SV/227**). Tobias Smollett's powerful **Mourn, hapless Caledonia Mourn** (**SII/87**) (see **Ex. 36b**), set to a new tune called **The Tears of Caledonia** by Allan Masterton, was also unsurprisingly written in standard English, though it was one of the most nationalistic songs printed by Thomson. One of the four songs of James Hogg printed in the collections was also written in English, though its theme was Highland - **The Highland Watch** (**SV/205**). The decision to include these lyrics will be discussed in greater depth below, but suffice it to say that if Thomson was at all uncomfortable about including strongly nationalistic songs in his collections, he was doubly anxious about including them if they were also written in the Scots tongue.

It is clear from the 1793 Preface, and by his inclusion of so many songs written in English, that Thomson was under the influence of those educated Scots who believed that a command of the English language was essential. But he also received strong opposition to his inclusion of English lyrics at the very beginning from his closest Scottish correspondent, who stood on the opposite side to the literati. When he wrote to Burns initially, Thomson was careful to emphasize the nature of his publication, though, as far as we are aware, he made no direct comment concerning the Anglicization of existing songs in Scots.[142] Burns was astute enough to suspect that English lyrics would be included in Thomson's proposed publications and he spent little time in giving Thomson his opinion on the matter:

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[142] Thomson's first letter to Burns, September 1792: Currie, Works, iv. 1-2 (I). Perhaps areas of the letter were deleted by Thomson or Currie.

> If you are for English verses, there is, on my part, an end of the matter.- Whether in the simplicity of the Ballad, or the pathos of the Song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of our native tongue.- English verses, particularly the works of Scotsmen, that have merit, are certainly very eligible. - Tweedside; Galashiels, viz. Ah! the poor shepherd's mournful fate &c. Gilderoy, viz. Ah, Chloris, could I now but sit, except, excuse my vanity, you should for Gilderoy prefer my own song, "From thee, Eliza, I must go" &c. all these you cannot mend; but such insipid stuff as, "To Fanny fair could I impart" &c. usually set to The Mill Mill O, 'tis a disgrace to the Collections in which it has already appeared, & would doubly disgrace a Collection that will have the very superiour merit of yours.[143]

Throughout his four-year correspondence with the Editor, Burns complained incessantly about writing songs in English, especially when he regarded a traditional Scots lyric to be far superior:

> These English Songs gravel me to death - I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. - In fact, I think that my ideas are more barren in English than in Scottish.- I have been at 'Duncan Gray' to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid.[144]

The English song referred to in this letter was Burns's new alternative for **Duncan Gray** entitled **Let not woman e'er complain** (**SI/48**). While its narrator was clearly supposed to be Maggy, the heroine of **Duncan Gray**, the lyric was certainly a poor alternative to **Duncan**, and even required rhythmical alterations in order to fit the melody. This lyric is an example of the artificiality of many of Burns's English songs, which Cedric Thorpe Davie described as 'self-consciously worked out' (see also **Ex. 14**):[145]

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[143] Burns to Thomson, September 1792: Roy, Letters, ii. 148-50 (507).

[144] Burns to Thomson, 19 October 1794: Roy, Letters, ii. 315-20 (644).

[145] C. Thorpe Davie, 'Robert Burns, writer of Songs', Critical Essay on Robert Burns, ed. Low, London, 1975, pp. 157-86.

Let not woman e'er complain,
Of inconstancy in love;
Let not woman e'er complain,
Fickle man is apt to rove:
Look abroad through Nature's range,
Nature's mighty law is change;
Ladies, would it not be strange
Man should then a monster prove?

Mark the winds, and mark the skies;
Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow;
Sun and moon but set to rise;
Round and round the seasons go.
Why then ask of silly man,
To oppose great Nature's plan?
We'll be constant while we can-
You can be no more, you know.

This is not to say, however, that some of Burns's Scots lyrics were composed along different lines. Burns scholars are generally only too keen to stress the battle which Burns had with Thomson, emphasizing Thomson's insistence upon English songs and Burns's hatred of writing them.[146] No one can deny that Burns preferred to write in Scots. He stated so in his first letter to Thomson and on several occasions thereafter - 'There [in Scots] I always find myself most at home [147] - but any examination of Thomson's volumes will show that almost as many of Burns's songs were written in English as in Scots, and as much of his time was spent searching for English songs for Thomson, as was spent writing Scots songs for him:

> I have been turning over some volumes of English songs to find verses whose measures would suit the airs for which you have allotted me to find English songs.[148]

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[146] Burns's quote 'These English songs gravel me to death' is repeatedly found in works on Burns, as is Burns's reference to English songs as 'Namby Pamby'. Burns to Thomson, 13 August 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 227-9 (575).

[147] Burns to Thomson, 13 August 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 227-9 (575).

[148] Burns to Thomson, September 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 249-53 (588).

> Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old Collections to pick out songs of which the measure is something similar to what I want, & with a little alteration so as to suit the rhythm of the air exactly, to give you them for your work.[149]

Whether Burns's efforts in English surpassed his Scots lyrics in quality is not in question. There is little room here for discussion of the 'Caledonian antisyzygy':[150] the dilemma of the Scottish writer who thinks and feels in one language (Scots), but writes in another (English). The Burns/Thomson correspondence and the Vedder/Thomson letters illustrate, however, that some Scottish writers found themselves torn between these two languages. While they felt moved to write in Scots, they were often compelled by an editor or publisher to write in English, and this consequently led to a sacrifice of quality in writing, or an absence of genuine feeling in what they wrote.

The reply to Burns's first letter is another example of Thomson's diplomacy. He endorsed the inclusion of good Scottish lyrics at all costs, but was sure to state that he was in support of the English and their language. Burns's Anglo-phobia was attacked by Thomson, illustrating his approval of Unification, or at least his determination to make it work and to break the deep-set racial hatred between the people of both countries. His decision to print English songs with Scottish melodies was, in his opinion, 'not an anti-Scottish gesture, but a pro-British one'.[151]

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[149] Burns to Thomson, November 1794: Roy, Letters, ii. 322-7 (646).

[150] G. Smith, Scottish Literature: Character & Influence, London, 1919, p. 4. Also E. Muir, Scott and Scotland, London, 1936.

[151] R. Crawford, Devolving English Literature, Oxford, 1992, p. 18.

> I agree with you in thinking English verses that have merit, very eligible, wherever new verses are necessary; because the English becomes every year more and more the language of Scotland; but if you mean that no English verses, except those by Scottish authors, ought to be admitted, I am half inclined to differ from you. I should consider it unpardonable to sacrifice one good song in the Scottish dialect, to make room for English verses; but if we can select a few excellent ones suited to the unprovided or ill-provided airs, would it not be the very bigotry of literary patriotism to reflect such, merely because the authors were born South of the Tweed?[152]

In general, however, Thomson was as sympathetic to Burns's love of Scots, as he was to those who put their faith in English. After stating his opinion as forcefully as Burns had stated his, Thomson then concluded his letter by explaining that Burns was under no obligation to write in English alone and that he would certainly be allowed 'a sprinkling of your native tongue, as you elegantly express it'.[153] Thomson was not wholly opposed to his national tongue. He produced English lyrics in his Scottish collection, but most of the time they were presented as 'alternatives' to the songs which were written in Scots, or to those which included 'a small sprinkling of Scoticisms', which Burns had stated 'is no objection to an English reader'.[154] Burns was correct: the inclusion of such 'Scoticisms' probably had more chance of offending educated Scots than it did of alienating English buyers. Yet, ironically, many of those who wished to see their national language banned from use in business and education were deeply moved when they heard it sung. Just as traditional Scottish melodies had a strange and mysterious power over the musically educated Scots, who were generally opposed to anything but the compositions of the great masters, so the use

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[152] Thomson's reply, dated 13 October 1792, to Burns's first letter: Currie, Works, iv. 5-6 (III).

[153] Ibid.

[154] Burns to Thomson, early September 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 239-48 (586).

of the Scots tongue in the lyrics which were combined with these tunes was accepted and even enjoyed. Burns explained to Thomson that it was the sounds of the Scots words which blended so well with the melodies, thus creating an organic whole, which was so closely related to genuine folksong from an oral tradition.

> If it were possible to procure songs of merit, I think it would be proper to have one set of Scots words to every air,- & that the set of words to which the notes ought to be pricked.- There is a naïveté, a pastoral simplicity, in a slight intermixture of Scots words & phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, & I will add, to every genuine Caledonian taste,) with the simple pathos, or rustic sprightliness, of our native music, than any English verses whatever.[155]

Thomson agreed with Burns on the above matter and included many lyrics written in the 'Doric style' as described by Burns.[156] There were numerous songs which were basically written in English, but which included Scottish names, or words like 'lassie', 'bonnie', 'mammie', 'braw', 'lo'e', 'een', 'winna', 'sae', 'wrang' etc. Lyrics which included Scottish phrases such as 'amang the bonnie blooming heather', or 'o'er the moor and far awa' were also common. There was no need to exaggerate the Scottishness of such lyrics, for these linguistic nuances identified the lyric nationally. Examples in the Scottish volumes are numerous: **O saw ye bonie Lesley** (**SI/33**), **The lawland lads they think they are fine** (**SII/78**), **Ay waking O** (**SIII/111**) (see **Ex. 3**), **O'er the moor amang the heather, O lassie, art thou sleeping yet** (**SIV/156**), or **O how can I be blythe and glad** (**SV/212**):

> O how can I be blythe and glad,
> Or how can I gang brisk and braw;
> When the bonnie lad that I lo'e best
> Is o'er the hills and far awa'.

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[155] Burns to Thomson, January 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 181-2 (535).

[156] Burns to Thomson, October 1792: Roy, Letters, ii. 153-4 (511).

Here Burns dealt with a message that was universal, and so the language itself made little difference to its accessibility. However, the sounds of the rhyming second and fourth lines - braw/awa', snaw/awa', a'/awa', shaw/awa' - gave the lyric a special aural quality which placed it firmly in the North. It was no wonder, at a time when writers were being encouraged to move away from Scots, that they held on so firmly to dialect and to local and national geographic description.[157]

Thomson went one step further, however, for in addition to pleasing many Scots by including Scottish lyrics, he also hoped to educate the non-Scots. The first issues of his fourth Scottish volume, produced in 1805, included an extensive 'Glossary of the Scottish Words which occur in G. Thomson's Collection of the Songs, made up from the best Authorities'. This glossary was sold with all copies of Thomson's Scottish volumes until the 1820s. It was created for the use of both Scots and English alike: to educate young Scots who were now being weaned on English, and to teach other British citizens who were unable to understand the Scots language.[158] As such it was a forceful statement of Thomson's realism, and disproves the theory that Thomson 'represented the whole Anglicizing tendency of the Scottish gentry and bourgeoisie, who were seeking to destroy the language and individuality of their country'.[159] Only publications of truly national pieces included such appendices. Most presented a list of 'Scotticisms' to be avoided. The first issue of Thomson's glossary was almost exactly contemporary with Jamieson's Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language (1808),

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[157] R. Crawford, Devolving English Literature, p. 94. Crawford writes of Burns: 'His confident deployment of such local names, like his use of dialect words, asserts the importance of the supposedly 'provincial', defiantly setting the little beside the great'.

[158] Walter Scott's Waverley novels included a simliar bias towards both languages.

[159] J. DeLancey Ferguson, Pride and Passion - Robert Burns 1759-96, New York, 1964, p. 275.

and it even included brief explanations of the differences in the Northern and Southern words which shared the same roots, in addition to details of pronunciation.

This glossary was essential for another reason. Just as he had printed single English lyrics, Thomson also chose to present single lyrics in Scots, without English alternatives, for some of the songs. Rather than incorporating only a smattering of dialect, however, many of them were written in Scots which was wellnigh incomprehensible, even to those who spoke the language. **Tullochgorum** was one such example (see **Ex. 24**), and there were many others including the verses for **The Auld Gudeman** (**SIV/147**), **Jenny dang the weaver** (**SIV/174**), **Hooly and Fairly** (**SIV/170**), **Muirland Willie** (**SIV/177**) (see. **Ex. 30**), **The Gaberlunzie Man** (**SIV/191**), and also the two sets of lyrics printed with the tune **Tibbie Fowler** (**SIV/192**). The second of these, Burns's comic **Willie Wastle's Wife** was written in thick Scots, as demonstrated by its last stanza (see **Ex. 23**):

> Auld baudrins by the ingle sits,
> And wi' her loof her face a washin;
> But Willie's wife is nae sae trig,
> She dights her grunzie wi' a hushion;
> Her walie nieves, like midden creels,
> Her face wad fyle the Logan water;
> Sic a wife as Willie had,
> I wadna gie a button for her.

Burns used Scots vocabulary and local dialect in this song in addition to referring to local places (Logan Water),[160] and the lyric was one that was really only accessible to Scots speakers, or to those who knew the area where the song was set. Likewise the issues raised in **Tullochgorum** (**SV/246**) were arguably only comprehensible to a Scot. If Thomson was so intent on producing a collection for a truly British market, why then did he include such songs in his collection?

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[160] Definitions: baudrins - cat; loof - paw; trig - neat; 'She dights her grunzie wi' a hushion' - she washes her mouth with an old stocking'; nieves - fists; midden creels - baskets for carrying rubbish; fyle -soil.

Even though the editorial policy of the Scottish volumes was steered by the wish to sell to an English-speaking public, Thomson was still dealing with traditional Scottish songs, and must have found himself under great pressure from close colleagues to include their favourite songs, some of which would be written in rich Scots. It is puzzling, however, that on those few occasions when Thomson printed Scots verses he failed to produce English alternatives. Perhaps he decided that no alternative was possible, and that he would spoil the traditional song by trying to present one, but this is inconsistent with his editing of numerous other songs in the Scottish collection which were automatically presented with verses in both Scots and English. It is also inconsistent with the editorial principle displayed in the Welsh collection, where the traditional lyrics in Welsh were excluded altogether.[161] The Welsh poet Richard Llwyd stated vehemently that Thomson's proposed English replacements of the Welsh songs would be completely different pieces, which could never embody the feeling of the songs in Welsh:

> There are in the Cambro-British many Pennillion, or short epigrammatic stanzas, which have in some degree intruded into the lyric province. Of these compositions, which in festive circles are frequently extemporaneous, Jones has given a variety; but with respect to these, and every thing else in the Welsh, there is such beauty of modulation, and neatness of expression, as renders a transfusion of them extremely difficult: And though I want neither words nor will, I must own that I have often thrown aside my pen, discouraged by the deficiency and unequal powers of another language to convey them.[162]

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[161] The index to the airs gave the titles of the airs both in English and in Welsh.

[162] Preface of first Welsh volume of 1809 (**WI**).

The English songs ultimately printed by Thomson, which he described as a 'happy adaptation',[163] rarely touched the genuine qualities of the traditional Welsh verses, for it was impossible to translate such intangible characteristics into another language. While the Welsh collection could be enjoyed by English speakers, it would never satisfy the Welsh speakers who knew the traditional songs, and who therefore understood these qualities. Thomson must have been aware that many potential Welsh clients would be in disagreement with his editorial practice, but he was arguably aiming his collection at those non Welsh speakers who would be as yet ignorant of the beauty of the Welsh melodies.[164] In any case, those Welsh critics were far enough removed from Edinburgh, and Thomson therefore saw no real problems with presenting English lyrics alone.[165]

In contrast, there were many Scottish critics in Thomson's Edinburgh who could easily cause problems for the editor. Bad press, even by the minority, would do nothing but damage the potential sales and success of his collection. It was in his interest to please everyone who might possibly purchase his volumes. Thomson chose to present English lyrics at every turn to impress the literati, and he included many songs in dialect to keep the Scots speakers happy. His decision to include the glossary also impressed many Scots, for it was a patriotic statement, helping to further the cause of their language. His publication of single Scots lyrics must have been equally deliberate. The glossary and his hope to educate non Scots speakers was arguably not enough to satisfy some Scots who were interested in purchasing his volumes. Thomson had to include some real Scottish songs, all be it very few of them,

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[163] Ibid.

[164] There were no Welsh distribution centres for Thomson's volumes.

[165] If the search for English verses for the Welsh collection proved difficult, the failure to find English verses to match Beethoven's settings of foreign airs resulted in Thomson abandoning their publication altogether. See Chapter V, pp. 244-5.

to transform his work into a genuine collection of Scottish songs. To present these songs with English alternatives was to undermine them.

The inconsistency of presentation of lyrics in Scots thus reflects something of a cultural dilemma. Thomson was under pressure initially from those in favour of English, but was under equal pressure from the Scots speakers to include their favourite Scots lyrics. Where Thomson stood himself is not altogether clear. His decision to produce his collections in the first place was inspired by his love for traditional song, but also by the philanthropic wish to educate those who were hitherto ignorant of the beauties of Scots song. He was in favour of Scots and realized its importance, but was forced to deal with English as it was regarded as the first language of education. He was pulled between the two languages in the 1790s, encouraged to think long and hard about them by Burns's staunch belief that Scots was the more expressive of the two, and he was still battling with this linguistic question in the 1830s, when he wrote to the Orkney poet David Vedder:

> Those two songs of yours [**The Bonnie House of Airly** and **Killiecrankie**] are written in the very broadest Scotch, which is every day losing ground even among ourselves - the Young People are positively taught to consider it vulgar, and being thus discouraged from speaking in the broad native dialect, feel no inclination to sing it. Poets therefore who write Songs would do well to use pure English, if they expect them to be sung.[166]

By this time, English was most certainly regarded as the first language in Scotland, but the letters to Vedder give the impression that Thomson, who had ironically helped in the cause of the English language, was not altogether happy with the situation, and that he deeply regretted the lack of interest amongst the young Scots in their own language and heritage. Thomson, as already shown, was equally disheartened

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[166] Thomson to David Vedder, 18 June 1831: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/23-5.

with the lethargy towards Scotland's national music.

> I do not like Scottifying words to excess at this time of day - I cannot allow myself to print an' for and, or leddies for ladies:- it is rendering them unintelligible to the English reader, without making them acceptable to our fair country women, who are every day becoming more & more English, & never hear the words so pronounced, except from their menials, & consequently regard them as vulgar. - There are many Scottish words of marked signification, which I never would think of parting with:- but to disguise words merely by the manner of spelling them, seems to me most injudicious...Writing for the present and the rising generation I would hesitate to take gie'd, & would rather incline to write "wi'" the bonny dear lassie that gave me her hand. I know however that I am talking to a sturdy Scot.[167]

Like many Scots Thomson was unable to decide in favour of one language and against the other. He realized the benefits and beauties of both, and incorporated both to keep everyone happy. It was clearly considered a necessity to bow to an English market in order to be successful with the finished product. The early emphasis on songs in English may also have reflected the growing strength of Unionist feeling during Britain's wars with Napoleon.[168] Even though Thomson's glossary disappeared in the late 1820s, reflecting the gathering strength of English as the first language of Britain, the increase of lyrics in Scots, particularly from the early 1820s, was undoubtedly linked to the popularity of Walter Scott's Waverley (1814), which had also included songs in Scots: those sung by Davie Gellatley and the Highland heroine Flora Mac-Ivor. Over half of the fifty songs in Thomson's final volume, produced in 1841 (**SVIa**), were written in Scots (without English alternatives), emphasising Thomson's

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[167] Thomson to David Vedder, 26 December 1837: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/54-5. In reply to Vedder's last letter which included lyrics for **My ain fireside** and **Wi' the bonny wee lassie wha gie me her hand.**

[168] The creation of a truly British national feeling, inspired by Britain's wars with France at the end of the century is examined more closely in Linda Colley's stimulating Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837, New Haven & London, 1992.

support of the national tongue, and perhaps also revealing shades of his personal regret at being so easily pressured into excluding many of the traditional Scots lyrics in the first place.

iv) National Identity

While the linguistic problems Thomson faced were associated with many of the songs included in the Scottish and Welsh collections, songs which discussed national historical events, or which related to contemporary politics were most certainly in the minority. That there were so few lyrics of this nature is illustrative of Thomson's general editorial principle: that all lyrics should be inoffensive. In the Welsh and Irish collections, he avoided political problems altogether by presenting new English lyrics, primarily love songs or drinking songs. In the Scottish collection it was not so easy to avoid political songs, for many of the best traditional songs had been inspired by famous battles, usually with the English, and by the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745. Songs concerned with unpleasant events between the Scots and the English, even those which had happened two centuries before, were politically dubious, bearing in mind the controversy of the Union, which had taken place only decades before Thomson's first publication in 1793 (**A**). Likewise Thomson's decision to present Jacobite songs was thought by some, including Burns, to be a huge risk. If Thomson's linguistic problems related to the cultural climate of Scotland during the aftermath of the Union, then his decisions to include, exclude and change many of the fervently national songs were equally reflective of the identity crisis of the Scots at this time.

On a basic level, national identity in the collections was closely linked to the linguistic content of many of the lyrics Thomson presented. A lyric written in dialect, as discussed above, was automatically labelled national or local, as it was

if it included specific place names, or descriptions of parts of the country which were identifiable to a reader or listener. When Thomson wrote to Thomas Moore about the possibility of writing some songs for his Welsh collection he asked Moore to include names which would immediately identify the lyric nationally:

> The subjects of the songs may be whatever your elegant & lively fancy suggests; only if you introduce any names or localities, they should be from Wales: the verses will thus be more appropriate to the airs & the mention of a well known mountain, river, or romantic spot heightens the pleasure we receive from a song.[169]

These 'romantic spots' which were described in famous songs became popular tourist destinations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Thomson visited many of the Welsh beauty spots in 1806, and a letter from Joanna Baillie of 1836 referred to Thomson's dissertation which he had written on a visit to the Western Isles - to Staffa and Fingal's cave.[170] Burns also stopped off at famous points on his trips, as described so often in his letters:

> I am such an enthusiast, that in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which the song took its rise. - Lochaber & the braes of Bellenden, excepted, so far as the locality, either from the title of the air, or the Tenor of the Song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scots Muse.[171]

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[169] Thomson to Thomas Moore, May 1805: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35266/63-4.

[170] Baillie wrote to Thomson: 'In truth you write with the fancy and vigour of a young poet, and this encourages me to think that, if the mind is young, the body must be in good health'. Thomson was 79 years old when he made this trip. Baillie to Thomson, December 1836: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/249-50.

[171] Burns to Thomson, January 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 181-2 (535). See also Burns to Mrs Dunlop, 5 February 1789: ibid., i. 369-71 (310): Burns wrote (referring to the River Afton): 'I have particular pleasure in those little pieces of poetry such as our Scots songs, &c. where the names and landskip-features of rivers, lakes, or woodlands, that one knows, are introduced'.

The Scots songs in Thomson's collection were generally identified by dialect, or by reference to the name of a river or area,[172] and there were several songs in the Welsh collection which included the names of Glamorgan, Snowdon, Llangollen, Rydlan, Bangor, Clwyd, or Cardigan, either in the title of the air or in the newly composed lyrics. Likewise names of places or rivers were included in many of the songs in the Irish collection - Killeavy, Coleraine, Balamagairy, Shannon, Garyone, Erin - and Christian names were also commonly used: Kate and Kitty, Molly, Paddy and Patrick, Kathleen etc. Thomas Crawford noted that songs produced at this time in Scotland, Ireland and Wales, but written in English, were linguistically inseparable. The inclusion of names and localities might seem trivial, but such recognizable nouns were often the only way of identifying songs as specifically Scottish, Welsh or Irish rather than generally British.[173] The content and/or general sentiment of the lyric was most often identical, but such references resulted in a song which was at once national and international, and was therefore both personal and universal.

Several of the songs included by Thomson voiced political beliefs and opinions. Wealth and love were often juxtaposed for the purposes of education in love songs: Lansdown's **Why, cruel creature, why so bent** (**SII/91**) and Burns's **Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion** (**SIV/157**) criticised the young lovers who were attracted by material goods, rather than true love. Political decision-making which was steered by want of money was the subject of only one song printed by Thomson, namely Hector MacNeill's biting satire entitled **The Dogs** (**SIV/187**), which was one of the earliest political songs to appear in

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[172] Thomson also included Thomas Campbell's lyric entitled **The Wounded Hussar** (first printed in 1801 - **SIIa/97**) which included a reference to the Danube in its first verse.

[173] Crawford, Society and the Lyric, p. 8. Crawford wrote: 'A large number of songs composed in Scotland are linguistically indistinguishable from English songs on the printed page'.

Thomson's collections:

> You ask me why great dogs should snarle,
> When we little dogs can agree?
> I answer - the cause of all quarrel
> Is nought but - the love of a fee.
> Look round for a clear illustration;
> Look round, and as clearly you'll see,
> That every great dog in his station
> Is snarling for love of a fee.

A much more common theme was that which emphasised the benefits of peaceful union between men of all creeds and all countries. Burns's famous lyric **Is there for honest poverty**, published in Thomson's volumes as **Where's he for honest poverty** (**SIV/163** or **SIIf/55**) was concerned with brotherhood - doubtless partly inspired by Burns's Masonic associations - and was a powerful statement of unity, expressed most of all in its ultimate verse:[174]

> Then let us pray that come it may,
> As come it will for a' that,
> That sense and worth, o'er all the earth
> Shall bear the gree, and a' that!
> For a' that, and a' that,
> It's coming yet, for a' that,
> That Man to Man the warld o'er,
> Shall brothers be for a' that.

Burns's lyric was concerned with the world-wide brotherhood of men, but most other lyrics which emphasized the theme of unity were specifically political or historical, and referred both to the ongoing battle between the Whigs and Tories,[175] and to the Scottish/English unification, which clearly loomed large in the editor's mind. Thomson's decisions relating to the Scottish songs which discussed battles between the Scots and the English were complex and unpredictable. The inclusion of

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[174] One of the songs in The Jolly Beggars - 'I am a Bard of no regard' - printed by Thomson in 1818 was written to the same tune, but avoided any political reference.

[175] Discussion of the Whigs in this chapter refers to the political party and not to the continuing movement in Scottish society which developed from the Covenanting wars of the seventeenth century.

The Flowers of the Forest (**SII/81**)[176] was subtle, for Thomson simply noted above the two lyrics that they referred to the battle of Flodden in 1513, which had 'proved so fatal to James IV and the Scottish Army' (see **Ex. 17**). No other historical note was necessary, for the defeat of the Scots at the hands of the English, even though it had happened over two hundred years before the publication of Thomson's volume, was still an open wound. While this particular song was slipped quietly into the collection, Burns's lyric **Scots wha hae** - the musical history of which has already been examined at length[177] - was presented differently (see **Exx. 15a, 15b & 15c**). It was much more difficult for Thomson to be quiet and ambiguous with this song when it dealt with the only significant victory of the Scots over the English. Its subject was the battle of Bannockburn, which took place in 1314, and in which Bruce and the Scottish army overwhelmingly defeated the English under Edward II.

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[176] See Chapter IV, i: The Lyricists, p. 157.

[177] See Chapter III, iv: Songs Without Words, pp. 139-43.

Scots, wha ha'e wi' WALLACE bled,
Scots wham BRUCE has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!
Now's the day, and now's the hour,
See the front of battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power-
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor-knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!
Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins!
But they shall be free!
Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in ev'ry blow!
Let us do, or die!

It was virtually impossible, on national grounds, for Thomson to exclude the lyric which Burns had sent to him, but he was most uncomfortable about presenting a song so blatantly anti-English. He printed it first of all in 1799 (**C/74**) along with the lyric **Lewie Gordon** (to the tune of the same name), which was a Jacobite song, but made no reference to its history. However, when he published it in 1802 with the tune Burns had originally chosen (**Hey Tutti Taiti**), he stated that it could easily be transformed into an English song, if several of its words were changed:

> By changing wha into who, hae into have, wham into whom, aften into often, and sae into so, the following Song will be English; and by substituting GALLIA for EDWARD and BRITAIN for SCOTLAND it will be adapted for the present time.

That Thomson chose to change specific words, rather than rely on his English client's discretion in choosing one of the alternative lyrics provided, is illustrative of his anxiety. The two songs presented alongside **Scots wha hae** were **The Land o'the Leal**, which Thomson was unable to attribute, but which had been written by Carolina Oliphant, and a Jacobite lyric originally associated with the melody **Hey Tutti Taiti**. Although the second of these glorified 'the gallant Scottish clans', and as such would have been offensive to some,[178] **The Land o' the Leal** (see **Ex. 15c**) was harmless in political and nationalistic terms and was most certainly a viable alternative. But Thomson made equally uncomfortable decisions in other volumes of the Scottish collection. **The Flower of Chivalry** (**SIVf/181**) by Patrick Fraser Tytler also presented a story which referred to the tensions between the Scots and the English, and again Thomson printed a note explaining that a peaceful reconciliation was not an impossibility, and moreover suggesting that it was, perhaps, worthwhile (**Ex. 32**):

> In the year 1332, William Douglas, called 'The Flower of Chivalry', was taken by the English in a Border foray, and cast into a dungeon, being commanded to be kept in iron fetters, by a special order of Edward III. After two years he was ransomed, and returned to Scotland, where he conducted himself most gallantly against the English.[179]

An even better example of Thomson's uneasiness was found with Lockhart's lyric **The Broad Swords of Old Scotland**, printed in 1826 (**SV/247**). It was set to the tune entitled **Oh The Roast Beef of Old England** and was presented with the following note:

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[178] The Jacobite Rising of 1745 had led to a government ban on the Highland way of life, which related directly to the network of the clans.

[179] Historical notes were also presented with lyrics such as **The Pibroch of Donuil Dhu** (**SV/234**), which referred to an incident of 1431, and with **The bonnie house of Airly** (**SV/249**) which was concerned with the decay of the house of Airly at the hands of the government in 1640.

> Though an English Air may be thought out of place in a Scottish Collection, yet the Editor hopes that the introduction of this excellent one, in union with a Song so thoroughly Scottish, so happily adapted to the air, and written purposely for it, needs no apology.[180]

Perhaps no apology was needed, but Thomson obviously believed that an explanation was. He was unable to present such songs without some kind of reasoning, for fear that their overtly nationalistic content would offend too many buyers. He was also at pains to emphasize the benefits of the Union. Lyrics such as Anne Grant's **Wise and valiant Willy** (**SIV/153**) (**Ex. 33a**) and **When Willy Pitt as he thought fit** (**SIII/27** or **127**) rejoiced in the powers of the government, as did Burns's alternative to **When Willy Pitt**, which was entitled **When Guildford good, our pilot stood** (**Ex. 33b**). Other lyrics referred to the valuable combination of Scottish and English forces in fighting for Britain's good. Soldiers who were involved in military activities after 1707, when Highland troops were sent abroad to fight for Britain, became the heroes of several of the songs. The narrator in Hogg's **Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie** (**SV/207**) questioned whether or not the Highland laddie had been to Waterloo.[181] **The Highland Watch** (**SV/205**), also by Hogg, was subtitled 'On the Return of the 42nd Regiment from Waterloo', and Anne Grant's **O where, tell me where, is your Highland Laddie gone?** (**SIII/35** or **135**) - subtitled 'On the Marquis of Huntly's departure for the Continent with his Regiment in 1799' - expressed the delight of the Highland soldier as he set out to fight - 'for his King and Country dear with pleasure he would die'. Even though Grant's lyric referred to the Scottish Highlands, the King and Country was clearly intended to be George III and Britain

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[180] This was highly reminiscent of Thomson's earlier statement. Here he is clearly intending to popularize an English melody in Scotland by presenting it with a Scottish lyric.

[181] Thomson wrote to Hogg: 'Your Highland laddie my dear Sir is an admirable fellow, and I shall have great pleasure in introducing him to the Public'. Thomson to Hogg, 18 March 1818: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/20-1.

(**Ex. 34**). Likewise MacNeill's **My love's in Germany** (**SIVf/181**), which appeared alongside **The Flower of Chivalry** (see **Ex. 32**), was concerned with the disappearance of a Scottish soldier who had been sent to Germany to fight for George II, as so many Highland troops were seconded there in the 1740s. While Highlandry was at one with the heights of Scottish national feeling during this period, Thomson stressed its connection with British militarism and thus with the development of Britain as a nation. It is noticeable that, with the obvious exception of Jacobite songs, there were almost no lyrics which lamented the Union. Pro-Scottish lyrics appeared in the collection, particularly in Thomson's later issues, with songs like Tytler's **The Broad Swords of Old Scotland**, Vedder and Gardiner's **Scotland's Hills for me** (**SIVf/163**), or more importantly Byron's **Lochnagar** (**SVI/296**), singing the praises of Scotland as opposed to Britain. But these were nostalgic visions which could bring little offence, and which did bring a great deal of sentimental pleasure, and songs like Byron's were to become increasingly popular as the nineteenth century progressed.

The discomfort Thomson felt when presenting blatantly political and nationalistic songs was also revealed in his choice of alternative lyrics to be presented alongside them. Burns's **Where's he for honest poverty**, which was printed with the tune **Up and war them a' Willie** (**SIV/163**) rather than Burns's first choice **For a' that and a' that,**[182] was given an alternative lyric entitled **But are you sure the news is true** - also known as **There's nae luck about the house**. It was a description of domestic activity when the gudeman is away from home, and was thus far removed from the humanitarianism of Burns's lyric. In any case it seems strange that Thomson should feel the need to present a second lyric with Burns's **Where's he for honest poverty**, for the song was not written in broad Scots nor was it offensive. In the case of Burns's

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[182] In 1831 Thomson eventually printed Burns's choice of lyric and melody (**SIIf/55**).

strong statement of British patriotism, **Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat**, the choice was even more absurd. Burns's lyric first appeared in the 1803 issue of Vol. I (**SIb/47**), calling for unity and devotion to the British cause, as stated in its second stanza (**Ex. 35**):

O let us not, like snarling curs,
In wrangling be divided,
'Till slap come in a foreign loon,
And wi' his sword decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Among ourselves united:
For never but by British hands
Must British wrongs be righted.

But here Thomson apparently feared offending some of those Scots who were against unification, for the alternative lyric, although it praised the physical strengths of the gudeman, failed to express any aspect of British military strength:

It was about the Martinmas time;
And a gude time it was than,
When our gudewife had puddings to make,
And she boil'd them in the pan.

It was not until 1831 that Thomson had the courage to present **Does haughty Gaul** on its own (**SIg/46**). In fact, after 1826 many of these political songs, which had previously been presented with unrelated alternative lyrics, were printed alone. **Tullochgorum** (**SV/246**), which did not appear until 1826, called for agreement between the political factions of Whig and Tory and was printed without an alternative (see **Ex. 24**). But it was 1831 before Thomson was willing to print the traditional lyric for the staunch Jacobite song **Kenmure's on and awa' Willy** (**SVc/203**), choosing to print a simple song by Smyth entitled **O thou art the lad of my heart Willy** alone until this time (**Ex. 39**). Likewise it was 1841 before Thomson decided to include a Burns lyric with strong Jacobite overtones, entitled **Awa' Whigs awa'** (**SVI/258**), which was staunchly anti-Whig and which he printed without an alternative: 'Our thistles flourish'd fresh and fair,/

And bonny bloom'd our roses,/ But Whigs came in like a frost in June,/ And wither'd a' our posies'.

The continuous battles between the Whigs and the Tories were highly complex. Royal and religious loyalties became hopelessly intertwined with general political problems of economy, industry and education; and to confuse matters, pacts were frequently made between individuals of one party and those of the other. The Scottish songs of the period were inspired much more by the Jacobite cause, which called for the return of the Stuarts to the throne and therefore leant heavily towards French Catholicism, than with the preoccupations of the Whigs, who fought for Protestant stability and for the Hanoverian crown. Initially Thomson was reluctant to include such pieces in his collection, the first sets of which were produced fewer than 50 years after the '45 Rising. Even Burns, who was so inspired by Jacobite song and who had written many himself, was sympathetic to Thomson's nervousness, and asked 'would it give no offence?'.[183] But it was his suggestion to include comic songs in the collection that had inspired Thomson to think about Jacobite songs. Thomson wrote to Burns on 20 January 1793:

> Many of the Jacobite songs are replete with wit and humour, might not the best of these be included in our volume of comic songs?[184]

Thomson chose in favour of the inclusion of Jacobite songs in his collection, but there were far more songs in his earlier issues of the Scottish volumes which were concerned with Highlandry rather than Jacobitism. He included the Jacobite song **Lewie Gordon** in his Third Set (**C/74**) and printed Burns's lyric entitled **Thickest night o'erhang my dwelling** (**SIV/178** to the tune **Srathallan's Lament**) in his fourth volume of 1805, but he removed any obvious political pressure by presenting it

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[183] Burns to Thomson, January 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 181-2 (535).

[184] Thomson to Burns, 20 January 1793: Currie, Works, iv. 26-9 (XI).

with the following note in which he quoted Burns:

> This air is the composition of one of the worthiest and best-hearted men living, Allan Masterton, Schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As he and I were both sprouts of Jacobitism, we agreed to dedicate the words and air to that cause. But, to tell the truth, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely be way of vive la bagatelle.

Thomson seems to have been worried about revealing any obvious support for the Jacobite cause, and chose initially to present songs such as **Argyle is my name** (**SII/78**), **O where, tell me where is my Highland laddie gone** (**SIII/135**) (**Ex. 34**), **The Cruel Chief** (**SIV/162**), **Come under my plaidy** (**SIV/171**) (see **Ex. 29**), and even **A Highland Lad my love was born** and **My love was born in Aberdeen** (**SIV/183**), which sang the praises of the Highland men and the Highland way of life rather than directly celebrating associations with Jacobitism. One or two of the lyrics even touched upon the tensions in Scotland between the Highlands and the Lowlands. The matching lyrics entitled **The lawland lads they think they're fine** (**SII/78**) and **The lawland maids gang trig and fine** (**SIV/189**) celebrated the superiority of the Highland men and women in comparison with the 'vain and idly gaudy' Lowlanders, and Hogg's **Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie**, was presented along with an anonymous song beginning, 'Ye are but some lawland loon,/ Silly body, lawland body' (**SV/207**). Even more powerful was Thomson's inclusion, later in 1831, of Scott's **On the hero of Killiecrankie** to the tune **The Campbells are coming** (**SIIf/100**), which was concerned with the Viscount of Dundee's Highland victory over the Lowlanders led by Mackay at Killiecrankie in 1689 (**Ex. 36**). While this battle was the beginning of the Jacobite Rising which came to a head in 1715, it was something of an embarrassment to the Lowlanders, whose military tactics and expertise left much to be desired in comparison to those of the Highlanders. This lyric emphasised the problems which existed in the first half of the eighteenth century between Scotland's two distinctly separate cultures. There were huge

problems facing the peaceful reconciliation of the unique areas of Highland and Lowland Scotland, and it is no surprise that Thomson waited until the 1830s, by which time the relationship between the two had greatly improved, before including such a song in his Scottish collection.

Thomson's inclusion of Highland songs, or songs which he noted had been translated from the Gaelic - including Anne Grant's **My sorrow, deep sorrow** (**SIV/176**), **Chro Challin** (**SIV/198**), and **Glencoe** (**SV/210**), and Scott's **The Maid of Isla** (**SV/209**) (see **Ex. 13b**) - reflected popularity as much as personal choice. By the early nineteenth century the Highlands and her ancient language had, primarily through Macpherson's work and Scott's Waverley (1814), taken on mythic proportions. The failure of the risings of 1715 and '45 had proved that few of those in favour of the Stuart cause were in fact prepared to lay down their lives for Bonnie Prince Charlie and his new monarchy. Instead, as time wore on and the physical presence of the Jacobite warrior dwindled, Jacobitism became the strongest outlet for general Scottish national feeling. Scots who were in favour of the Whigs and the Union found themselves equally drawn to Jacobitism, simply because of its sentimental nationalism. Burns could write Whiggish lyrics like **Does Haughty Gaul Invasion threat** (**Ex. 35**) at the same time as creating songs like **Awa' Whigs awa'**. He was typical of many Scots of the period who, as William Donaldson has stated, could be 'a Whig and a Jacobite at the same time'.[185] Jacobitism, by the 1820s and '30s, when Thomson produced his later issues, was at one with 'glamorous Highlandry, love-ambience, and sentimental focus upon exile and loss'.[186] It has been suggested that the death in 1803 of Henry Benedict Stuart, the Cardinal of York and the last Stuart pretender of the direct line, brought the reality of the return of a Stuart

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[185] W. Donaldson, The Jacobite Song: Political Myth and National Identity, Aberdeen, 1988, p. 69.

[186] Donaldson, p. 67.

monarch to an end, and thus had a direct influence on the vision of Jacobitism portrayed by Scott in his first Waverley Novels.[187] Thomson's inclusion of such songs from the early 1820s followed the patterns set by Hogg's Jacobite Relics of 1819 and, more especially, by Scott's portrayal of the Jacobites and Highland culture in Waverley. While Jacobitism had been a powerful political belief during most of the eighteenth century, by the mid-1810s it had become the most popular medium of stating love for one's nation. Many of the best love songs in the collections were connected with the bonnie Highland laddies on their way to fight for Charlie, even if the Prince was not mentioned by name. Moreover, Thomson was able to inspire Donaldson's 'sentimental focus upon exile and loss' with his songs of farewell and the two particularly powerful lyrics which were concerned with the battle of Culloden of 1746, namely Burns's **The Lovely Lass of Inverness** (**SV/210**) and Tobias Smollett's **Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn** (**SII/86**). Culloden was seen as the last bastion of hope for the Scots who sought a return to independence and was to be a particularly potent symbol in Scottish song throughout the nineteenth century (**Exx. 37 & 38**).

Thomson's later issues of the Scottish volumes reflect this relaxation towards the Highlands and Jacobitism in general. Lyrics which celebrated Scotland and her Highland region became more and more common, running parallel with Thomson's inclusion of more lyrics which were written in the Scots tongue (without English alternatives). By the 1810s and early 1820s he was beginning to ask his lyricists, just as he had asked them to include names of places and rivers, to refer to the Highlands and her inhabitants in their new lyrics. This was undoubtedly due to the popularity of the Highlands and the Jacobites which had been shaped almost single-handedly by Scott. It was important for Scottish unity that the natural

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[187] See Peter Davidson's and Jane Stevenson's 'Introduction' to Walter Scott, Old Mortality, Oxford, 1993, p. xxiii.

prejudices between Highlanders and Lowlanders were dismantled, and it was in the interest of Scotland in general that editors like Thomson and writers like Scott popularize this hitherto awesome terrain and its inhabitants. Highland dress, which had been banned by the government as a direct result of the '45 Rising, now came into vogue. Thomson wrote to Hogg in 1821 with regard to his song **The Lament of Flora Macdonald**, which had appeared in his Jacobite Relics:

> You have brought the Tartan so much into fashion, and such is the admiration for the prowess, enthusiasm and fidelity of the Highlanders in the cause of Prince Charlie, that you could give nothing which would be more relished than a ballad on that theme to the canty tune of 'Woo'd and married and a'.[188]

He also wrote to John Richardson in 1821, asking that Richardson 'select any thing connected with the wandering, concealment, or escape of the importunate Prince for the theme of your new song'. The realization that Jacobite songs appealed to Scots of varying social status and political bias was enthusiastically accepted by Thomson, who immediately began to commission and print them in his collections:

> I would beg leave to mention to you that the taste for Tartan,- or admiration of the prowess, enthusiasm, & fidelity of the Highlanders in the cause of Prince Charlie is prodigious. Nothing now seems to be more acceptable than a Jacobite ballad; it delights the Tories, amuses the Whigs, and finds especial favour I am told in the royal family.[189]

In 1826 Thomson included four blatant Jacobite songs in the new issues of his volumes: **Welcome Royal Charlie (SIf/39)**, **Charlie is my Darling (SIf/49)**, **Wha will be King but Charlie (SIIe/96)**, and **My Loyal heart is light and free** or **Over the**

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[188] Thomson to Hogg, 30 November 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/72-4.

[189] Thomson to John Richardson, 16 November 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/69.

Water to Charlie (**SVbii/250**); and in the late issues of the 1830s and the last volume of 1841 he printed the powerful Jacobite lyrics **Cam ye by Athole Donald MacGillavry** to the tune called **Bonnie Prince Charlie** (**SIIf/98**), **Kenmure's on and awa' Willie** (**SVc/203**) (**Ex. 39**), **Wae's for me Prince Charlie** (**SVd/250**), **Johnie Cope** (**SVI/253**) (**Ex. 40**),[190] **Awa' Whigs awa'**(**SVI/258**), and **Prince Charles Edward** or **A Fugitive in the Highlands** (**SVI/274**).

In the 1790s and even up till the mid-1810s Thomson was anxious about including lyrics in raw Scots without English alternatives, and was afraid to present Jacobite songs without being able to change them, for fear of offending an anti-Jacobite audience. By the 1830s he was much more courageous. By this time the Scots were generally more confident about their identity and status, for the domestic problems with the Highlands had greatly diminished and the effects of unification were beginning to be apparent for all to see. It is important to realize, however, that there were few Jacobite songs in comparison to Thomson's moralistic love songs or harmless pastorals. Thomson's decisions to include songs written in both Scots and English was balanced by his editing of nationalistic lyrics. Songs which sang the praises of the beauties of Scotland were included alongside those which sang the praises of Britain. Songs which celebrated the victory of the Scots over the English were presented alongside lyrics which undermined that victory, or which at the very least transformed it into an English one. Jacobite songs, which were the closest Thomson came to printing anti-English lyrics, were only included after the practical problem of Jacobitism had wellnigh disappeared, and even then those songs which gloried in the prospect of Charlie as King were printed alongside those which sang the praises of the new British Queen, Victoria - one of the last songs in the sixth volume was Beethoven's setting of **God Save the Queen** with new overtly

[190] This is one of the only songs from Thomson's collections which was published as a single song-sheet.

British monarchal verses commissioned by Thomson and written by David 'Macbeth' Moir (**SVI/301**).

Some of Thomson's editorial decisions, the most memorable of which must be his presentation of **Scots wha hae**, resulted in the transformation of a song's content and the destruction of its national identity. Others, like **Does haughty Gaul**, were undermined by the alternative lyrics which were presented alongside them. But every decision made, almost without exception, displayed the problems of Thomson's Scotland and the preoccupations of his public. The new pastorals were the fantasies which allowed them to escape from the arduousness of city life to the ardour of the existence of the noble savage. Their thirst for, and obsession with, propriety and acceptability was portrayed in their love songs, which were the most popular of all. Songs which had traditionally revelled in the joys of physical, and most often pre-marital, love, became respectable effusions of love's immortality. Contrasted with this were the practical problems of the artist, the song-writer, whose linguistic armoury was transformed by the Union and who fought to express himself in a new language. At one with this battle was the physical fighting of political parties, Highlands and Lowlands, and the bringing together of the once notorious enemies of England and Scotland.

Thomson found himself faced with all of these issues because he had decided to produce a collection of national songs. His ultimate goal was the satisfaction of all potential buyers, but this meant that he had to produce a collection which would appeal to men and women who spoke different languages, who stood on politically opposing sides, and whose nationalistic feelings were diverse and often in conflict. Thomson's achievement was that he did indeed produce a collection which

included songs for everyone; but not everyone was satisfied by the collection as a whole, and what appeared to be the ideal formula in theory, proved less successful when it was presented to the public at large.

CHAPTER V - RECEPTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Little is known about the contemporary reaction to Thomson's collections. One review appeared in the Edinburgh Review in October 1823, written by George Hogarth and specifically related to Thomson's new octavo edition which had been published in 1822. Hogarth took the opportunity of writing an essay on the moral significance of song to the lives of the educated men and women of the 1820s, recommending it as 'an oblivious antidote to weary and ruffled spirits, and minds harassed with fatigues or cares of a public or private kind'.[1] Hogarth, like Thomson, felt that 'these songs must contribute essentially to the progress of refinement',[2] but the early part of his review was more of an historical essay on Scots song than a review of Thomson's collections. His comments on Thomson's work - he had married Thomson's daughter by this time[3] - were understandably favourable, though he was not afraid to list those songs in which he felt the combination of words and music was unsuccessful, or to comment that he thought Thomson sometimes included lyrics which were not of a high enough quality.[4] Importantly, however, he did believe strongly in Thomson's new musical arrangements - 'many of which are exceedingly beautiful'[5] - and was at pains to emphasize that a 'consummate musician of any country' was the

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[1] 'The Select Melodies of Scotland, interspersed with those of Ireland and Wales &c. by George Thomson, F.A.S. Edinburgh. 5 Vols. royal 8vo. 1822', Edinburgh Review, October 1823, pp. 67-84. Although Hogarth's name is not printed on the review itself, he is listed as the author in The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900, Toronto, 1966, i. 464.

[2] Ibid., p. 68.

[3] Hogarth married Thomson's daughter Georgina on 1 June 1814. Their daughter Catherine was to marry Charles Dickens in 1836. Hadden, Thomson, p. 12.

[4] Edinburgh Review, October 1823, pp. 83-4.

[5] Ibid., p. 73.

best person to produce settings of national airs, whether they be airs of his own nation or not.

This point was sorely contested by George Farquhar Graham in his Essay on the Theory and Practice of Musical Composition of 1838. Graham's appendix to the article on music which had been published in the Encyclopaedia Britannica had a section entitled 'Accompaniment' in which he concentrated closely on the 'absurd incongruity which is often found between certain national airs and their modern accompaniments'.[6] Graham had already warned Thomson that the settings in his volumes were too difficult for most amateur players in Scotland.[7] He did not name Thomson's collection in his appendix, but Thomson was convinced that Graham's criticisms were aimed at his work. He believed that Graham had 'err'd in musical perspicacity' and that he

> might as well assert that Jeffrey and Scott have written ungrammatically and inelegantly, as that Haydn & Beethoven in writing Accompaniments, have fallen into incongruities and monstrosities.[8]

Graham's article, rather than degrading the works of specific composers, gave a detailed description of, or even a lesson in, what he regarded to be the most appropriate way to accompany a national melody. Graham was concerned with the modal qualities of many of the airs, stating that often they were best sung unaccompanied, or at most with octaves or unisons only, and emphasizing simplicity at all costs. In fact Thomson, had he not taken immediate offence, might have agreed in principle with much of Graham's argument. At any rate, Graham had pinpointed the musical problems of Thomson's

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[6] G.F. Graham, An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Musical Composition including the article 'Music' in the seventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and with an Introduction and Appendix by G. F. Graham, Edinburgh, 1838, p. 68.

[7] Thomson to Graham, 29 October 1814: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/125-6.

[8] Thomson to W. Dauney, 7 September 1838: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/58-9.

collections. The love-hate relationship between Scottish national music and that of the European mainstream clearly still existed in the 1830s.

Criticism was aimed more specifically at Thomson himself than at his collections. He received mixed reviews in the first biographies of Burns and accounts of the poet's work. Currie was naturally amiable towards the editor, since Thomson had given him first refusal in the publication of his correspondence with the poet, albeit pre-edited by Thomson.[9] Allan Cunningham, who had contributed several lyrics to Thomson's collections, was likewise sympathetic towards him, especially on the issue of Thomson's non-payment to the poet, for which the editor was continually upbraided.[10] Thomson was held responsible for Burns's ultimate poverty, and was never forgiven for failing to pay Burns for his work, or to send him more than the amount for which he asked when on his deathbed. This issue is still controversial in Burns scholarship, though James MacKay has rightly commented that Burns 'seems to have been too other-worldly or singularly unbusinesslike ever to have made a success in commerce'.[11] Though Thomson offered to pay a fee for his contributions, Burns refused payment.[12] Thomson decided to send him money with his letter of 1 July 1793,[13] but, although Burns accepted it, he angrily commented, 'it degrades me in my own eyes' and warned Thomson that he would stop writing songs if more money was sent.[14] The most vitriolic attack on Thomson came, however, in John Wilson's

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[9] Currie referred to Thomson's collection as 'the beautiful Work'. Currie Works, iv. v.

[10] A. Cunningham, The Life of Robert Burns, London, 1835, pp. 335-6.

[11] J. MacKay, A Biography of Robert Burns, Edinburgh, 1992, p. 77.

[12] Burns wrote: 'In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright Sodomy of Soul'. Burns to Thomson, [September] 1792: Roy, Letters, ii. 149 (507).

[13] Currie, Works, iv. 60 (XXIV).

[14] Burns to Thomson, July 1793: Roy, Letters, ii. 220 (569).

The Genius & Character of Robert Burns.[15] Thomson was distraught at Wilson's treatment of him and took up correspondence with another Burns biographer, namely Josiah Walker, who accommodated Thomson's side of the story in his Account of the Life and Character of Robert Burns.[16] Wilson was critical of Thomson's failure to pay his poets for their contributions, and was horrified that Thomson seemed unable to treat his poets as artists, always reminding them of the value of his editing time. He found Thomson spineless with regard to Burns's refusal to accept payment, failing to understand why Thomson did not insist on sending the poet cash rewards for his efforts. Wilson concluded his account with the statement that no reader could view Thomson with favour, since his volumes 'for nearly half a century must have been yielding him a greater annual income than the Poet would have enjoyed had he even been a Supervisor'.[17] Wilson was wrong, for Thomson was not making a profit on his collections.

The financial organization of Thomson's publications, even though the information is incomplete, tells us as much about the reception of Thomson's collections as the literary reviews above. As Hadden explained,[18] Thomson was initially helped in the venture by two important Edinburgh men, one of whom was Andrew Erskine, brother of the Earl of Kelly, and the other William Tytler of Woodhouselee. Hadden is, however, the only source of information concerning their involvement with the collections. When Thomson wrote to Burns on 20 January 1793,

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[15] J. Wilson, 'The Genius and Character of Robert Burns', Essays Critical and Imaginative, Edinburgh & London, 1857, iii. 191-201. Wilson's criticism was most inconsistent, for his The Land of Burns, Edinburgh, 1840, included Thomson's autobiographical letter, and here Wilson referred to Thomson as 'this distinguished friend and correspondent of Burns' (p. 38).

[16] J. Walker, An Account of the Life and Character of Robert Burns: with Miscellaneous Remarks on his Writings, Edinburgh, 1811, pp. cv-cxii.

[17] Wilson, 'The Genius & Character of Robert Burns', p. 200.

[18] Hadden, Thomson, p. 29.

he enclosed a postscript written by Erskine,[19] but in his letter of 1 July 1793 he informed Burns that 'the business now rests entirely on myself, the gentlemen who originally agreed to join the speculation having requested to be off'.[20] Thomson was obviously disappointed, but he was confident that 'the superior excellence of the work' would 'create a general demand for it as soon as it is properly known'.[21] The nature of the roles played by Erskine and Tytler are therefore impossible to determine. Far easier to estimate is the extent of the Arbuthnot connection, for the Arbuthnot accounts at Coutts & Co. are full of payments relating to Thomson's collections, and the Thomson letterbooks are also replete with receipts to and from Robert, George and William Arbuthnot.

The Arbuthnots were involved in the collections solely in financial terms, and had nothing to do with the artistic content. It has been assumed that Robert, who worked with Thomson at the Board of Trustees, showed interest in Thomson's proposed venture at the very beginning.[22] Thomson's account at Coutts & Co. involved only three transactions during 1786, but the Arbuthnots had extensive links with Coutts. Robert's account from 1799 until his death in 1803 included a payment to Alexander Straton on 2 July 1801,[23] which matches a payment of the same amount mentioned in Coutts's letter to Thomson of 28 May 1801.[24] However, not all payments relating to Thomson's

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[19] Currie, Works, iv. 26-9 (XI). Some of the Burns/Thomson letters in **GB-Gm** include annotations which appear to be Erskine's: The Cowie Collection, SR241.

[20] Currie, Works, iv. 60 (XXVI).

[21] Ibid.

[22] See Chapter I, pp. 8-9.

[23] Coutts Ledger 1801-2, Account of Robert Arbuthnot Sen. Payment to A. Straton, £22 19s. 1d.

[24] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/126. This letter informed Thomson of Straton's bill for £22 19s. 1d., which 'will become due on 3rd June', although it was George Arbuthnot's name which was mentioned in relation to this payment.

collections appear in the Arbuthnot accounts, for a letter from Coutts of 4 June 1801, which informed Thomson that £15 had been transferred from Robert's account to pay Straton's bill of £11 9s. 2d., is not noted in Robert's account of this date.[25] Because these accounts and the letterbooks present information of some, but not all of the transactions, it is impossible to give the complete picture of the financial organization of the collections, but it is possible to discover the basic pattern of payments, and to draw conclusions from this alone.

The Arbuthnot payments ran from the early 1790s until the mid-1820s. While the majority of these payments were connected with the musical commissions - a great many passed through the hands of Fries & Co. - some of them were made to publishers. During the period 1797 to 1805 George Arbuthnot's account noted regular payments to Alexander Straton, Charles Stuart and Leopold Kozeluch, and there was also a payment to the Dublin music seller Maurice Hime.[26] William's account during the period 1804 to 1809 included regular payments to Haydn, Kozeluch and Fries & Co.;[27] but his payments from 1810 until

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[25] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/127.

[26] George Arbuthnot's account: Coutts Ledgers 1797-8 - payment of £45 8s. 9d. to Fries & Co. for L. Kozeluch. Coutts Ledgers 1800 - payment of £37 on 10 January for G. Thomson/Mr Hime, Dublin, and a second payment of £27 19s. 2d. to the same dated 15 July; payment of £8 11s. 2d. to Alexander Straton on 31 October. Coutts Ledgers 1801-1805: payment of £11 9s. 2d. to Alexander Straton on 2 February 1801; another payment of £22 19s. 1d. to Straton on 27 May 1801. Account of Messrs Arbuthnot D'Monte & Co. (re: George Arbuthnot): Coutts Ledgers 1815-16 - payment of £100 in connection with Beethoven. Coutts Ledgers 1822-3 - payment of £20 17s. 2d. to Thomson on 12 April 1823. Coutts Ledgers 1823-4 - payment of £17 8s. 6d. to Thomson on 15 January 1824. Coutts Ledgers 1827-8 - payment of £20 to Thomson on 5 April 1828. Coutts's records of 'Letters of Credit' from 1795-1801 also contain payments to Charles Stuart, Kozeluch and Straton which bear the name George Arbuthnot. There is also a Fries & Co. account at Coutts which includes relevant payments.

[27] William Arbuthnot's account. Coutts Ledgers 1804-5 - payment of 3s. 2d. 'for portage of a packet from Mr Thomson to Dr Haydn, Vienna' on 9 November 1804; payment of £24 13s. to Haydn on 21 November 1804; payment of £30 to C.R. Broughton on 8 April 1805. Coutts Ledgers 1805-6 - payment of 12s. 'for portage of a packet for Dr Haydn' on 14 July 1805. Coutts Ledgers 1806-7 - payment of £10 for Thomson dated 4 October 1806. Coutts Ledgers 1807-8 -

1825 were mostly made directly to Thomson, and so may have been retained by Thomson to pay his papermaker, engravers and/or publishers, though this is not clarified by the receipts in Thomson's letterbooks.[28] Most importantly, these details from the accounts and letterbooks verify that the Arbuthnot family acted as Thomson's benefactors. It would be no exaggeration to suggest that without their help in the early 1790s the volumes might never have appeared, for Thomson did not possess the necessary capital for such a venture. Added financial help was given by Charles Broughton, whose letters of 25 March, 6 April, 26 May, 18 September and 15 November 1802 dealt with payments to Haydn of £43 3s. 6d., and 60 Ducats (or £31 17s.).[29]

While the Arbuthnots dealt with many of the payments to composers during the period 1797-1825, Thomson did make an attempt to pay them back for their generosity. There was most probably an agreement between Thomson and the family that they would help him initially only if they were ultimately repaid for doing so.[30] Within time Thomson did repay them. On 17 September 1810, for example, Thomson paid £157 17s. 9d.

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payment of £23 3s. 9d. for Kozeluch through Fries & Co. on 17 October 1808. Coutts Ledgers 1808-9 - payment of £5 17s. 6d. to Kozeluch through Fries on 31 October 1808 and of £12 9s. to the same dated 3 May 1809; also 15s. for 'postage of a packet of music for Mr George Thomson' on 23 May 1809. Payments from William Arbuthnot to Thomson alone continued until 1825 and included a payment of £95 5s. to cover Beethoven fees dated 27 August 1810 and another payment of £95 to Thomson on 24 January 1825. Most other payments were for sums less than £25.

[28] The Arbuthnot accounts in the Coutts Ledgers also include numerous payments to William Forbes (see Chapter I, p. 15), who may have been involved in the financial organization of Thomson's volumes, for Thomson knew Forbes from EMS activities. But Forbes's personal involvement with the publications is difficult to prove.

[29] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/148-151; 153; 156-7; 160-3.

[30] No written statement has been found in Thomson's letterbooks, although the Arbuthnot family papers now kept at Aberdeen University may include other information. No references concerning the payments from Thomson to the Arbuthnots are found in the letterbooks. The Coutts & Co. ledgers are the only evidence that Thomson did repay the family.

into William's account and followed this with a payment on 1 May 1813, also to William, of £53 3s. 11d., which was to cover bills from Thomas Preston whom William had been paying on behalf of the editor. These payments may not represent the total Arbuthnot expenditure up to this date, but they were still substantial. Likewise the Arbuthnot, D'Monte & Co. account, which was basically George's account,[31] included deposits from Thomson from the year 1810-11 amounting to £150,[32] and he paid another £60 into George Arbuthnot's account on 24 June 1813. It is remarkable that Thomson was able to pay the Arbuthnots at this particular time, for he was beginning to suffer seriously from financial difficulties. Perhaps Thomson's decision to pay the Arbuthnots such a large amount between 1810 and 1811 (£157 17s. 9d. to William and £150 to Arbuthnot, D'Monte & Co.) induced the problems that he began to face two years later.

Early in 1812, during the production of the Welsh collection, Thomson became aware that he was short of capital. Preston's half-yearly account of the sales of Scottish volumes amounted to £97 9s., with which Thomson was apparently content, and when Preston announced that he was running short of copies of the fourth Scottish volume, Thomson immediately ordered the production of 100 more.[33] Yet, in the same letter, he informed Preston that there were financial problems with the Welsh volumes, only two of which had been published. He offered Preston the opportunity of buying the property of the collection, namely the plates and the copies already printed, for a reduced price, but Preston showed little interest,

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[31] This was the name of a bank in Madras, where George was a partner. He originally worked for Lautour & Co., then became involved in Arbuthnot, D'Monte & Co., which in turn became Arbuthnot & Co. There were active accounts at Coutts & Co. connected with all three banks.

[32] Messrs Arbuthnot, D'Monte & Co.'s account: Coutts ledgers 1810-11 - payment from 'Thomson on W. Forman' of £43 on 13 August 1810; payment from 'Thomson on W. Forman' of £43 on 30 March 1811; and payment from Thomson on W. Forman of £44 on 5 August 1811.

[33] Thomson to Preston, 1812, n.d.: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/36-7.

believing that Thomson's price was too high. This year saw the start of a long and involved correspondence in which Thomson tried to sell the property of the Welsh collection. In desperation, the editor followed his letter to Preston with one to John Gunn, a London publisher, in which he stated that the cost of manuscripts, music, poetry and engravings, in addition to that of paper and printing, had resulted in the necessity of selling the property of one, if not both, of the Welsh volumes.[34] Although he estimated, in this letter, that the outlay for each volume had amounted to £252, he offered 350 copies of the letterpress of Vol. I and 624 copies of the letterpress of Vol. II to Gunn for a total of £81 3s. 4d. Thomson's information concerning the cost of production and the numbers of sales was always contradictory. While he was clearly in financial straits at the time of writing to Gunn, he stated in his next letter of 22 March 1812 that although the first Welsh volume (1809) was not yet three years old, it had already sold 600 copies.[35] He asked Gunn for £81 3s. 4d., but he offered the property of the Welsh volumes to Corri in Edinburgh, in the same month, for a total of £500.[36]

On 14 June 1814 he wrote again in desperation, and in confidence, to Preston and stated that he had demands for bills amounting to £400 which had to be paid by August. Inexplicably, for it was difficult enough to sell the property of the Welsh volumes, Thomson had forged ahead and produced the first of his two Irish volumes by this time. His new sales package included the properties of both the Welsh and Irish collections. The prices listed in his letter to Preston of 14 June 1814 were far beyond Preston's pocket: 800 copies of letterpress and frontispieces for the 3 Welsh volumes would cost £794, with the copyright and all plates etc. amounting to

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[34] Thomson to John Gunn, 12 March 1812: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/37-8.

[35] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/40-1.

[36] Corri also refused the offer. Thomson to Corri, 20 May 1812: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/41-2.

£300 for Vols. I and II and £290 for Vol. III; and the first Irish volume, which had cost Thomson £290 10s. to produce, would cost (with the copyright and 650 copies of the letterpress) £200, with the choice of the second volume, yet to appear, standing at £294 10s.[37] Thomson fatally concluded his letter by stating that although the Welsh collection was not yet fully 'circulated', he believed that when people laid their eyes upon it 'it could not fail to become a standard book'.[38] He was unable to give any prospective buyer a guarantee of successful sales. Understandably Preston once more refused to accept Thomson's offer. Gunn was requested to offer the package to all London publishers of his acquaintance, and Thomson's brother David was asked to approach both Clementi & Co. and Longman, Rees & Co.[39] When Preston criticized Thomson for asking too high a price, Thomson was mortally offended, believing that Preston's refusal would result in the refusal of other publishers to buy. He explained that the price he asked for the collections was but a fraction of the amount that he had spent on their production. Regardless of his reducing the price of the property, no publisher showed interest in buying.

The desperation to sell the Welsh and Irish collections disappeared from the correspondence after Preston's criticism and Thomson's outburst. There were still huge financial difficulties, which were a result of Thomson's choice of sophisticated production, and there were also problems with sales of the volumes. Many of Thomson's distributors were failing to return their revenue from sales, or even to give him an estimated number of copies sold. Yet Thomson decided to go ahead with the production of the second Irish volume in 1816 (**IrII**), a fifth Scottish volume in 1818 (**SVa**), and a brand new commission for airs from other countries.

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[37] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/107-8.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Thomson to David Thomson, [July] 1814: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/109-11.

Enthusiasm for completing the collections already started, and for producing more works to add to his collections was admirable, but Thomson's business skills left much to be desired.

Although song arrangements for his Scottish, Welsh and Irish collections were Thomson's most important concern, he was also interested, from the beginning, in the prospect of contracting his composers for other, non-vocal works. He had initially asked Pleyel and Kozeluch to produce some piano sonatas, at least one movement of which was based on a Scottish folk melody, and he published six piano sonatas by Pleyel (in two sets of three) in 1793-4,[40] and six piano sonatas by Kozeluch in 1797.[41] These particular sonatas were commissioned alongside arrangements of national melodies, but although Charles Stuart sent Haydn's variations on six Scottish airs in 1802 - which Thomson duly sold to Preston in 1805[42] - there was no other discussion of instrumental pieces throughout the correspondence with Haydn. Likewise Thomson commissioned Weber, Hummel, Henry Bishop, George Hogarth and George Farquhar Graham for song settings alone.

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[40] Thomson described the sonatas in the preface to his First set of 1793 (**A**): 'he engaged Mr. Pleyel to compose another work, wholly instrumental, viz. Twelve Sonatas for the piano forte with Accompanymnents: in which a variety of favourite Airs, both plaintive and sprightly, are introduced for themes or subjects'. Pleyel completed only six of the sonatas: **GB-Lbl** Add. Ms 35263/1-4.

[41] Thomson to Kozeluch, 15 November 1799: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/74-5.

[42] Broughton to Thomson, 26 May 1802: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/156-7. Copies of Haydn's variations are now in the British Library: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35275/27-38. Thomson noted at the top of the manuscript that he sold them to Preston in 1805. The first of the six variations was based on the famous Scottish song **The Blue Bell** (see Haydn to Thomson, 2 January 1802: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/138-9). This song, also known as **The Blue Bells of Scotland**, was apparently popular in Europe at the time. A music book belonging to Ulrica von Pogwisch, now in Weimar, included copies of **The Blue Bell**, of **Rule Britannia**, and of the song beginning 'A chieftain to the Highlands bound' all dated 1824: **D-WRgs** GNM 942.

Beethoven was, however, initially asked for piano sonatas incorporating Scottish themes,[43] and throughout the correspondence he was questioned by Thomson about the possibilities of producing all kinds of different works including symphonies, sonatas and ariettas,[44] quintets,[45] canzonettas,[46] cantatas,[47] and even spiritual songs and hymns.[48] Thomson wanted the composer to produce sixteen English songs based on Thomas Campbell's famous poem The Battle of the Baltic,[49] which he abandoned later because Campbell withheld his agreement.[50] Thomson also discussed the possibility of an overture on a Scottish theme,[51] and an opera based on Burns's cantata The Jolly Beggars or Love and Liberty, which Thomson entitled 'Les Gueux enjoués'.[52]

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[43] Beethoven to Thomson, 5 October 1803: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/189-90.

[44] Beethoven to Thomson, received June 1804: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/240-1.

[45] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/308-9.

[46] Beethoven to Thomson, 19 February 1813: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/84-5.

[47] Thomson apparently wanted Beethoven to compose music to a cantata which William Smyth had written. Thomson to Beethoven, 2 January 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/134-5. Also Thomson to Smyth, 3 January 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/135.

[48] Thomson to Beethoven, 15 October 1814: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/122-4.

[49] Beethoven to Thomson, 20 July 1811: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/24-6. Thomson mentioned Beethoven's English songs in his letter to William Smyth of 6 November 1813 (35267/85). In a letter to Beethoven of 23 April 1814 he also discussed the possibility of Beethoven arranging The Mount of Olives for piano and voice with English words: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/96-7.

[50] Thomson to Thomas Campbell, 22 July 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/100.

[51] There was also discussion of overtures for piano based on Scottish themes, or melodies of other countries: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/39-40.

[52] 'Les Gueux enjoués' was first mentioned in Thomson's letter to Beethoven of 20 December 1816: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/183-4. But the opera was also discussed in another letter in the letterbooks (35269/154). There is no evidence that this second letter, which probably dates from 1814-15, was more than a draft of a letter which was never sent, though normally such correspondence is marked in the letterbooks. It is included at the back of Thomson's last letterbook and has consequently often been overlooked by scholars. It does not appear in D. MacArdle, 'Beethoven and George Thomson', Music & Letters, xxxvii (1956), i, 27-49.

Neither this plan nor Thomson's suggestion that Beethoven write a cantata on William Collins's 'An Ode for Music' from The Passions materialized,[53] though Beethoven showed great interest in the latter and asked specifically that Thomson send a copy of the ode, which he intended setting as an oratorio.[54] But the commission for arrangements of foreign airs did transpire.[55]

Willy Hess believes that the notion of arranging melodies from a variety of countries came from Beethoven, and that Thomson was unenthusiastic about it.[56] In fact it was Thomson who first mentioned the idea, writing of it in 1815 in a letter to the lyricist William Smyth.[57] His plan was to produce an appendix to his last volume of Scottish songs (then supposedly the fifth volume), which would include arrangements of melodies from other countries with English verses, and he already had the idea of publishing two or three Russian, Polish, Cossac, German, Venetian, Spanish and Persian airs - 'the best I can procure'. Thomson forged ahead, and at the same time as making contact with Beethoven, he wrote to John Hunter in Madrid in the hope that Hunter would find

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[53] The Poetical Works of William Collins, ed. S. Johnson, London, 1800, pp. 69-74. Thomson first suggested the cantata in his letter to Beethoven of 25 June 1817: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/8-10.

[54] Beethoven to Thomson, 21 February 1818: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/7-9.

[55] There is some confusion about the number of airs. Thomson asked Beethoven for 18 settings in a letter written before January 1816, and he sent another 6 airs on 1 January 1816: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/169-70. By 25 June 1816 Beethoven had sent 'about 20' of the settings as Thomson noted in his letter to Smyth: 35267/171-2. The copies of the settings sent are now in Darmstadt: **D-DS** Mus. MS. 976.

[56] Hess wrote: '[Beethoven] schlug Thomson sogar eine diesbezügliche Sammlung vor, aber der schottische Verleger wollte sich auf die Lieder seiner Heimat beschränken. Trotzdem hat Beethoven im Verlaufe der Jahre eine stattliche Anzahl von solchen Liedern bearbeitet'. Willy Hess, Beethoven, Zurich, 1976, p. 254.

[57] 12 December 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/165. There is no extant reply from Smyth, nor any letters from him, during the period 1815-19, concerning the foreign airs.

'a dozen of the best Spanish melodies', and to ask whether 'the misses Hunters have picked up any beautiful national airs of other countries, particularly Venetian ones'.[58] He also wrote to John Gibson who was living in Potsdam near Berlin to explain that he was looking for the best German, Swedish, Polish, Russian and Cossac songs.[59] Beethoven was encouraged to find interesting melodies to set, particularly those from the Tyrol, and the final 24 songs comprised settings of melodies from 10 different countries: 4 Tyrolean, 3 Russian, 3 Spanish, 2 Danish, 2 Venetian, 2 Polish, 2 Portuguese, 2 German, 1 Swiss, 1 Swedish, 1 Cossac and 1 Hungarian.

Thomson's insoluble problem was finding English lyrics which he could publish alongside the settings. William Smyth had originally shown interest in helping Thomson in his mission: Thomson reminded him in his letter of 25 June 1816, that Smyth had agreed 'some time ago' to do six or a dozen songs if Beethoven would set the melodies.[60] There were more letters mourning the impossibility of finding suitable verses than those in which Thomson tried to secure some. As early as October 1816 Thomson abandoned the idea.[61] He suggested that

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[58] Thomson to John Hunter, 16 December 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/165-6.

[59] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/166-7.

[60] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/171-2. Thomson asked Smyth, again on 18 July 1816, if he would write some lyrics for these airs (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/174-5), and again in November of that year (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/180-1), but Smyth was apparently unenthusiastic. On 20 February 1817 Thomson wrote again to Smyth, and discussed specific airs, suggesting that Symth had written some lyrics for them (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/188), and in June he asked again about them (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/4). Finally, on 19 January 1818 Thomson wrote to Smyth to thank him for his words to the Russian songs, stating that he was sure the foreign airs would be very popular, yet mourning the fact that there were so few poets who could produce lyrics for them - 'So few are the Poets who have the true relish & feeling for elegant music': **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/16-7.

[61] Thomson wrote to Beethoven on 20 October 1816: 'C'est avec beaucoup de chagrin que je me trouve obligè de vous dire, qu'après m'être donnè une peine extreme, en essayant de faire ècrire des Vers Anglais pour les 19 Airs de differentes Nations que vous m'avez envoyès j'ai été forcè d'abandonner mon dessein d'en faire des Chansons, parsque la mèsure et le Style singulier de ces Airs ne s'accordent pas, ni avec la forme ni avec le genie de la poesie

Beethoven use the melodies in 'overtures mêlés' for the piano alone or, if he preferred, with accompaniments for violin and cello, asking that he incorporate 19 of the airs in six overtures. These 'overtures mêlés' became Beethoven's 12 variations for piano and flute (Op. 105 & 107),[62] nine of which (in three sets of three) were published by Thomson in 1819.[63]

The publication of these variations suggests that the reason for abandoning the settings of foreign airs resulted from Thomson's failure to find suitable verses in English, and that it had little to do with his financial insecurity. But only shortly after the publication of the variations Thomson decided to try and sell the arrangements of foreign airs and the variations to the German publisher Breitkopf & Härtel - in Thomson's opinion this was a work which 'could not fail to be popular in Germany'.[64] Thomson believed that Breitkopf was interested in purchasing the plates for the songs and variations, and he explained, in his letter of 25 October 1819, that he would accept a violin - 'a Stradivarius or Joseph Guarnerius' - as payment.[65] Breitkopf, however, refused the offer only two months later.[66] In 1821 Thomson approached

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Anglaise. C'a ètè donc en vain que nos poetes ont essayè de les unir avec les vers.' **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/178-9.

[62] Thomson received them in 1818 as he informed Beethoven on 28 December 1818: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/33-4. By January 1819 he had heard all of them and was delighted: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/33-4.

[63] The first two sets of Twelve National Airs were entered at Stationers' Hall on 12 May 1819 and the third set on 27 May 1819. They were printed/published by Preston, but, like the song volumes, bore Thomson's name on the title-page. Coventry & Hollier released them in a new edition after acquiring Preston's plates. See C.B. Oldman, 'Beethoven's Variations on National Themes: their composition and first publication', Music Review, xii (1951), 45-51.

[64] Thomson to Breitkopf, 14 July 1819: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/41-2.

[65] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/42-4.

[66] Thomson tried to change the publisher's mind in his letter of 9 December 1819: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/46-7.

Boosey & Hawkes with the same manuscripts, also with no success,[67] and it was 1823 before he attempted to sell them again. This final sale to the London publisher Paine & Hopkins was successful, but ironically it developed from Thomson's attack on their pirated edition of Beethoven's variations for flute and piano. Paine & Hopkins had released an edition of the variations which had been brought to Thomson's notice. He wrote to the publisher demanding that they send the plates to Hallet in London, otherwise the company would be compelled to face court action.[68] In the next paragraph, however, Thomson explained that he was 'weary of the business of publishing' and that he would be happy if Paine & Hopkins would legally acquire the plates for 'Sixteen themes - seven of which are still in manuscript' and a 'plate with Beethoven's portrait', which Thomson was also unable to use. To his surprise and relief, Paine & Hopkins accepted, and they also bought the settings of foreign airs.[69]

It was probably because of Thomson's lack of success in selling the properties of his various collections legally, that piracy became such an important issue for him. David Hunter has remarked that booksellers of this period 'were more concerned with their copyright shares and other booksellers than with the authors',[70] and this was undoubtedly the case with Thomson. Though rules of copyright did exist in Britain during the eighteenth century, they were mostly concerned with the publication of books rather than music. No detailed principles were commonly understood by music

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[67] 8 June 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/53-4.

[68] 23 May 1823: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/121-3.

[69] Thomson to Paine & Hopkins, 17 June 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/125. See also the copies of the manuscripts of the settings now in Darmstadt: **D-DS** Mus. MS. 976. Breitkopf were the first to publish the songs, but not until 1941. It is still something of a mystery how these manuscripts, which bear the name Paine & Hopkins, reached the German publisher.

[70] D. Hunter, 'Music Copyright in Britain to 1800', Music and Letters, lxvii (1986), 271.

publishers, and they played, to their advantage, on this area of confusion. Works were never safe from the hands of greedy publishers who hoped to make a quick profit with little work and even less expenditure. From the 1820s piracy was the bane of Thomson's life as a publisher.[71] He spent a great deal of time arguing with those who had pirated his work, firstly trying to reason with the publisher who had stolen his material before threatening him with legal action. In 1820 Ganiewiez of Edinburgh copied, without Thomson's permission, some of the arrangements by Haydn and Beethoven. Thomson's first letter to the publisher drew attention to the fact that this material was Thomson's property,[72] and he wrote again only four days later to explain that Ganiewiez's piracy might give other publishers the impression that they too could steal material thus 'vindicating my right of property'.[73] He asked that Ganiewiez send him the plates, or agree to print 'From Mr Thomson's Scottish songs by his permission' on the copies of the songs he had pirated. The remainder of this correspondence is not extant, but the next battle, with Paine & Hopkins, mentioned above, was much more severe, for Thomson threatened them with court action. Thomson's letters to Clementi & Co., who had pirated some of his songs,[74] and to Gerock,

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[71] Edmund Poole wrote: 'Copy was not difficult to come by in this ramshackle world. It could be stolen from a composer via an unscrupulous copyist; it could be stolen by engraving an edition already published (preferably by a colleague in some other country); it could be manufactured by attributing to a well-known composer a few movements thrown together by a musical hack...Finally it could be acquired honestly by purchase either directly from the composer or from his authorised agent, and published bearing the cachet "with authority"'. Music & Bibliography, ed. O. Neighbour, London, 1980, p. 99.

[72] 15 January 1820: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/47.

[73] 19 January 1820: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/48.

[74] 5 March 1830: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/12-14. Thomson accused them of having published a copy of Joanna Baillie's song **O swiftly glides the bonny boat**, which they had printed with music by one I.J. Hance. He wrote to inform them that the verses were his 'sole property'.

Astor & Co.[75] in 1830 also discussed the possibility of legal activity. The lawyers Purday & Pellet were used in association with Clementi's piracy. Thomson was furious that such a reputable house had stolen his material, and in his letter of 10 May 1830 he demanded that Clementi send the plates of the pirated songs to Preston or Hallet in London

> with a written declaration upon your honour of the number of copies printed; and that you do pay to him [Preston or Hallet] such a proportion of the price of those copies, as he shall consider just and reasonable & customary when such invasions of copy-right are settled by parties.[76]

Clementi obviously failed to do so, for there was a second letter to Purday written in June 1830, in which Thomson gave the lawyer and the publisher a last opportunity to repay him, otherwise the prosecutor, one Mr Power, who had dealt with copyright cases, would be called upon.[77] No lawsuit took place, and we must assume that Clementi paid Thomson and avoided further action.

Thomson's battle against the London publisher Jones & Co. in 1832 was the closest he ever came to appearing in a court of law. Rather than pirating one or two of Thomson's songs, Jones & Co. decided to produce a new edition of the volumes.[78] Thomson explained to John Richardson in his letter of 21 July that Jones & Co. of Finsbury Square, London had

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[75] Also 5 March 1830: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/14-15. They had apparently also published **O swiftly glides the bonny boat** and **O Mary at thy window be**.

[76] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/15-16.

[77] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/16-17.

[78] This edition was entitled The National Melodies of Scotland: united to the songs of Robert Burns, Allan Ramsay and other eminent lyric poets; with symphonies and accompaniments for the pianoforte, by Haydn, Pleyel, Kozeluch etc. A copy dated 1834 is held in **GB-Lbl**: F.1821.h.

> laid violent hands upon my national collection of Music & Song, & have already published 4 numbers, which their Agents and Runners are hawking about from house to house & selling at a shilling the number, with a title page artfully contrived to lead the Public to suppose that it is my Work they are selling.[79]

Thomson was obviously serious about his intentions to take Jones & Co. to court, for he told Richardson that he had already drawn up a case against the publisher which he had given to the lawyer William Dauney, and he inquired if Richardson would ask his attorney the cost of an injunction. In his next letter to Jones & Co. of September 1832 he stated: 'I am convinced that you are not aware of the strength of my Case, otherways that you would not have proceeded to publish my work'.[80] Thomson asked Jones & Co. to remove all Beethoven and Haydn settings from their publications, but did give them permission to continue the publication of pieces by Pleyel and Kozeluch. Threats of legal action continued until the end of 1832, though, in November Thomson realized that he would be unable to afford a lawsuit.[81] In December he asked once more for the withdrawal of Haydn's arrangements from Jones's publications, but there is no further information concerning this case.[82] British pirates infuriated him, but as discussion of Thomson's correspondence with Beethoven has illustrated, there were also problems for Thomson in relation to foreign editions of his collections. British copyright rules, flimsy as they were even in their native country, did not stretch to France, Germany or Austria. This distressed Thomson and forced him to take stronger action with his British publishing colleagues: 'I cannot prevent people on the continent from publishing my works, but I can & will prevent

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[79] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/31-3.

[80] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/34-6.

[81] Thomson to Thomas, the Attorney at Crane Court, London, 10 November 1832: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/36-8.

[82] 15 December 1832: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/38-9.

their publication or circulation in England'.[83] Ironically, Thomson's main difficulty with foreign editions arose from the artist and not the pirate: it was Beethoven and Weber who had instigated German editions of their songs.

Before the British Copyright Act of 1814, the owner (either the author, or the publisher who had legally acquired the author's work) held the property of that work for a period of 14 years from the date of publication, but it could be renewed when this period expired. From 1814, however, the law changed and the emphasis lay much more on the author than on the owner. The author was granted property of his/her work for 28 years and thereafter, on application, for life. It was primarily due to the pending lawsuit with Jones & Co. that Thomson began his fight to be recognized, in legal terms, as the author of his collections. He appealed first of all to the London lawyer William Dauney, who was involved in the battle with Jones & Co. Dauney's immediate opinion was that Thomson was simply the assignee of the work:

> In the ordinary sense of the term and in the meaning of the Statute, a bookseller or Publisher who has had no share in the production of a work farther than in giving it to the world after it has been transferr'd to him completed by the hands of the author, is what is understood as an assignee.[84]

However, Dauney continued his statement by concluding that Thomson's close

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[83] Thomson to Mr Collard, 5 March 1830: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/12-14.

[84] Thomson to John Thomson, 30 October 1837: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/47-52. Thomson quoted a long passage from William Dauney's statement concerning his authorship of the collections in this letter.

> personal exertions ought to place him beyond the hazard of contingencies, and entitle him to vindicate the exclusive property of it [the collections] in whole or in part as its author in the sense of the act under the 9th section of that act.[85]

Thomson was delighted with the outcome of Dauney's investigation, but in reality his ownership, or authorship, made little difference to the sales of his collections, or to those who wished to pirate his material. The involvement of so many individuals in the collections - there were almost 100 contributors - meant that copyright protection was impossible and piracy inevitable.

Thomson made valiant efforts to protect his works. Almost without exception, he entered every publication at Stationers' Hall,[86] in the hope that this official registration would dissuade pirates, but Stationers' Hall itself had somewhat confusing legislation. Publishers like Thomson who worried about illegal copies of their material paid a fee and registered their publications at Stationers' Hall, clearly expecting some copyright protection in return. But Stationers' Hall had little power. Many publishers chose not to enter their works but would simply print 'Entered at Stationers Hall' on their title-page, thus claiming the same legality as those who had paid their fee and registered properly. As Alan Tyson has remarked, 'one is left with the impression that the phrase was engraved on music in a somewhat indiscriminate manner, without much consideration being given to it'.[87] An entry at Stationers' Hall meant nothing to those who pirated material already in print. Thomson went further, however, and attempted to draw up contracts with his contributors. As already discussed, he always secured a declaration of

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[85] Ibid.

[86] See Appendix 1.

[87] A. Tyson, The Authentic English Editions of Beethoven, London, 1963, p. 138.

copyright from his composers.[88] He demanded a similar statement from some of his lyricists,[89] though, contrary to his strict procedure with composers, he was constantly urging that the lyrics published in his volumes be included in collections of poems published by his lyricists.[90]

He was also fastidious about receiving written permission from writers whose work he wished to include in his volumes. Although there is no letter from Thomson concerning the song **Up in the morning early**,[91] for example, there is a reply dated 22 June 1803 from John Hamilton, the song's creator, authorizing Thomson's publication of the song and acknowledging receipt of Thomson's payment to him. In the correspondence with Byron, which was conducted through the publisher John Murray, the question of permission was also raised. Byron initially showed interest in writing songs for Thomson, but quickly changed his mind.[92] Thomson asked instead for permission to take material from Childe Harold (the first two cantos of which had appeared in 1812) and from The Giaour of 1813. Murray granted permission and Thomson ultimately printed two of Byron's lyrics: **On Parting** or **The kiss, dear**

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[88] See Chapter II, iii: Transportation and Distribution, p. 63, and Chapter III, iv: Songs Without Words, pp. 135-6.

[89] Such declarations were sent to Thomson by Alexander Boswell (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/73-4), Walter Scott (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/75-8), Joanna Baillie (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/79-80), and Mrs Campbell for Mrs John Hunter, her mother (**GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/81-2).

[90] Amelia Opie to Thomson, 4 September 1807: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35263/292-3. William Smyth to Thomson, 11 April 1815: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35264/201-5. See also Smyth to Thomson, 27 March 1826: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/162-4.

[91] Thomson first published the song in the Third Set of 1799 - **C**/59 - with two sets of lyrics by Robert Burns: 'And O for ane and twenty, Tam' and 'Thine am I my faithful fair'. Hamilton's words were not published until Thomson's octavo edition of 1822: Burns's 'And O for ane and twenty, Tam' appeared as the alternative lyric.

[92] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/ 42-3/ 62/ 66-9/ 81. These letters were from Thomson to John Murray and were written between July 1812 and September 1813.

maid, thy lip has left (IrII/37),[93] and **Oh had my fate been join'd with thine (SVa/214)**.[94] Thomson also wrote to Owen Rees, of Longman, Rees, Orme & Brown, to ask for permission to publish several of Thomas Campbell's poems,[95] and he corresponded with Robert Cadell and James Ballantyne to ask if it would be possible to use several of Scott's lyrics.[96] Some poets, including Scott and Hogg, gave Thomson free access to their published material, since they had already written new pieces for inclusion in his volumes.[97] Permission was also frequently sought from the Gow family, for Thomson often wished to publish melodies included in their volumes.[98]

Sadly Thomson's time and effort securing permission and demanding declarations of copyright did not bear fruit in terms of his sales. Pirated copies of single songs or, in the case of Jones & Co., complete volumes did, however, suggest that other publishers regarded Thomson's collections as a commercially viable product, which Thomson's sales had not proved. Yet while publishers were happy to steal pieces and issue them independently, they were reluctant to acquire the collections as a whole. When Thomson realized in the early

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[93] This song was supposedly written in 1811, but was initially printed alongside the first two cantos of Childe Harold in 1812.

[94] This song was apparently a love song written by Byron for Mrs Chaworth Musters and may have been included in his 'Hebrew Melodies'. It first appeared in Byron's Hours of Idleness in 1807.

[95] The lyrics mentioned were **A chieftain to the Highlands bound, O heard ye yon Pibroch sound sad in the gale**, and **The Soldier's Dream**: 27 February 1822: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/86. Also Thomson to Rees, 10 April 1813: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35267/76.

[96] Thomson to Ballantyne, 26 November 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/70. Thomson to Cadell, 30 November 1831: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/71-2. Also Thomson to Ballantyne 22 December 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/77.

[97] Scott to Thomson, November 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/96-7. Hogg to Thomson, 14 December 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35265/98-9.

[98] Thomson to Nathaniel Gow, 3 December 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/75-6. Thomson to Neill Gow, 22 December and 25 December 1821: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/77-8. Also Thomson to Neill Gow, 4 April 1826: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/161.

1810s that no one wished to buy the property of his work, he abandoned the idea of selling the Welsh and Irish collections and decided to produce new volumes in the hope that sales would improve. The publication of the fifth Scottish volume of 1818 and Beethoven's variations of 1819 prove that there was still enough capital to produce new publications, and the appearance of a new set of the first five Scottish volumes in 1826, and again in 1831,[99] suggests that Thomson had indeed established some secure financial foundation. Between 1815 and 1825, the accounts of both William and George Arbuthnot reveal that around £490 was paid to Thomson, although there were no payments from Thomson to the Arbuthnots during this period. While there seems to have been enough revenue to cover the production costs of Vol. V, Beethoven's variations, and the new five volumes of 1826, letters to Cowan show that Thomson's print runs had diminished in size.[100] If he was producing new issues of his volumes, he was printing fewer of them, and using cheaper, thinner paper. Regardless of the optimism suggested by the new issues, by the mid-1820s Thomson was compelled to return to the possibility of selling parts of the collections.

In 1823 he sold the plates for Beethoven's variations and the manuscripts of the settings of foreign melodies to Paine & Hopkins. In 1825 he approached Hallet, the London publisher, about the possibility of buying the property of The Jolly Beggars which Thomson had decided to remove from his fifth volume, choosing to publish 25 new Scottish songs in place of the cantata in his new volumes of 1826. He was under the impression that if the cantata were published separately it would be much more successful than it had been when it appeared with numerous other Scottish songs.[101] It was strange that Thomson did not decide to publish it himself as a single

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[99] See Appendix I.

[100] See Chapter II, ii: Thomson's Publishing House, pp. 48-9.

[101] 18 March 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/140-1.

slim volume. He doubtless thought that because Henry Bishop had written the music the cantata would therefore be easy to sell to another publisher, thus giving Thomson some added revenue. Hallet, however, showed no interest. Three months later Thomson asked if J. Willis, the London bookseller, might be interested in acquiring the cantata at a cost of 50 guineas,[102] and the following month he approached Goulding, D'Almaine & Co. with a similar proposition, this time pricing the piece at 40 guineas.[103] No one was interested in the combination of Burns and Bishop. Thomson quickly became side-tracked by the problems of piracy and ownership, and it was the late 1830s before he returned to the frustrating business of trying to sell his collections. By this time, now in his eighties, he was beginning to feel the strain of the continual financial pressures of his venture. He offered the property of the Welsh collection to D. Williams on 9 May 1837 for a total of £150, when the price had been almost three times this amount in 1814.[104] Then in 1840 he wrote to Coventry & Hollier, his new London publishers, to ask if they might be willing to purchase the collections. As Coventry & Hollier were already involved in the publication of the new Scottish volumes, this seemed viable, but like Preston before them, Coventry & Hollier showed little interest in acquiring the collections, even though Thomson pleaded with them, and offered them a substantial discount:

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[102] 1 June 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/144-5.

[103] 10 July 1825: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35268/150.

[104] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/41-3.

> I am convinced that an active Trader could make a good thing out of such works, if I were to make him a present of the copyright, and of the letterpress of the Songs (some hundred copies) in my possession, on condition of his paying me merely the original price of about 900 Tin plates and 30 copper plates of engravings or Embellishments - thus asking no part of the money paid to me to composers & poets for the Syms and Accomps & songs which exceeded £1000.[105]

The sale of the volumes still left much to be desired. Thomson's offer to Coventry & Hollier included a huge number of published volumes yet unsold. If Thomson and his distributors had sold hundreds of volumes, there were thousands which had remained on their shelves. The 'letterpress of Poetry to the amount of 3,423 volumes, of which 2,295 volumes belong to the folio songs, & 1,128 volumes to the Octavo work', were listed in his offer.[106] Even the octavo edition, produced more cheaply than the folio volumes, so that it would sell, was proving disastrous.

Thomson thus moved to others with his offer. Whittaker & Co. were informed that Thomson wished to retire from the publishing business and that he wanted a reputable company to assume responsibility for his collections,[107] and two years later Robertson & Purdie were offered the collections as 'a very great bargain'.[108] Approaching the publishers with whom he was personally acquainted resulted in little success, and in 1843 Thomson asked Coventry & Hollier if it might be advisable to advertise the sale of his collections in a

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[105] Thomson to Coventry & Hollier, 10 September 1840: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/68.

[106] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/69-70.

[107] Thomson to Dowding, January 1841: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/71-2.

[108] Thomson to A. Robertson and R. Purdie, 31 October 1843: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/86-7.

national newspaper at regular intervals.[109] This advertising campaign did little to boost the sales of the collections. In 1847 Thomson approached Williams once more about the possibilities of buying the Welsh collection which he had further reduced in price, offering the publisher a 20% discount.[110] In 1848 he pleaded again with Coventry & Hollier, giving them his ideas on marketing the volumes for a new clientele - producing smaller volumes and single sheets.[111] Eventually in 1848 Thomson received an application from one Mr Grub[b], a music seller with premises on Princes Street in Edinburgh, to whom Thomson sent a volume for consultation.[112] Grub was not Thomson's first choice of proprietor, which was clear from the tone of his letter to W. F. Watson, who was working for Grub, of 18 December 1848. Grub was under the impression that the terms of copyright for the collections, with the exception of the sixth Scottish volume, would have expired. Thomson replied by explaining that this was not the case, for 'there are many additional songs that came into my possession from time to time, which are scattered through the different volumes, that were not in the early editions'.[113] In the same letter Thomson sent Grub a list of the various publications on offer, but he was obviously happy to receive another enquiry the following summer from George Wood & Co., a much more reputable publisher also based in Edinburgh.[114] The tone of this letter to Wood, when compared with the above

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[109] 31 October 1843: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/87-8. A copy of Thomson's proposal is found as 35269/90-4.

[110] Thomson to Williams, 16 January 1847: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/125-6.

[111] Thomson to Coventry, no date 1848: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/127. Coventry & Hollier had already decided to produce smaller volumes containing 25 songs, as Thomson had done in the 1790s. See Thomson to Coventry: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/126.

[112] August 1848: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/128-9. Thomson addressed his letter to 'Mr Grub, Musical Saloon [sic], Princes Street, Edinburgh'.

[113] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/129-31.

[114] Thomson to George Wood, 18 July 1849: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/132-3.

letter to Grub, is illustrative of Thomson's attitude:

> I should be very glad if you see it fit to become the Purchaser, as it would give me much satisfaction to leave the noblest Scottish Work, musical and poetical, that ever has been produced, in the hands of a Scotsman whose position and connexions enable him to keep it in the public eye and to promote its circulation in all parts of the country, instead of my disposing of it to an English Vender who cannot appreciate its Singular or as I may justly say its plural merits.[115]

To Thomson's relief - he had been trying since 1837 to sell to a reputable publisher - Wood decided to buy the property of the three collections, though for only £150. Thomson sent him the copies in print, and those still in manuscript. The plates were shipped from Coventry & Hollier to Edinburgh during September 1849,[116] and when Thomson discovered illustrations - plates of Allan's sketches, Paton Thomson's engraving of Nasmyth's portrait of Burns, and a lithographic stone of Stothard's 'Farewell to Lochaber' - in November of that year, he ordered them to be sent on to Wood in Edinburgh. In his letter of 29 September 1840 Thomson had sent Coventry & Hollier an outline of the costs of the production of his collections, which did not include the price paid for his musical settings, new lyrics, or paper and printing:[117]

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[115] Ibid.

[116] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/134-6.

[117] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/69-70.

The engraved Musical Plates of those Three works in 10 volumes folio, with the Accompaniments, one 698 in number, many of them recently re-engraved, & the whole generally in good condition, cost 8/6 each is

£369. 15. --

The engraved Music Plates of the Selection from those works in 6 volumes Octavo, two Melodies on each plate, one 171 in number, cost 10/ each is

£ 85. -- --

£454. 15. --

The Engravings in Copper of the Illustrations of the six Scottish folio volumes are 18 in number, and cost as follows; the six large ones £25 each, the 8 smaller ones £8 each, newly added, and the six Title pages with a Vignette below, £5 each, making the whole 18 Engravings

£214. -- --

The Engravings on copper of the Illustrations of the six Octavo volumes are 16 in number, the 12 only are yet published and £5 each, making for the 16

£ 80. -- --

Total cost of Music Plates & Illustrations £748. 15. --

Add [on] 60 Musical Plates for Vol. 6 at 8/6 each for Embellishments

£ 55. -- --

£803. 15. --

When the cost of his musical commissions - Thomson estimated that he had paid over £1,000 for the settings, though the literary contributors were usually paid with books, shawls, India handkerchiefs and snuff boxes - and the price of paper and printing is added,[118] then we must assume that the overall

[118] The letters to and from Cowan, Thomson's papermaker, and his printers Moir, Walker and Balbirnie never include prices for paper or print runs, but refer rather to the size of orders or the numbers of copies which Thomson wished printed.

expenditure for the collections was at least £2,000. In 1849 Wood had apparently offered Thomson a total of £150 for the collections, £50 less than Thomson had asked, but the editor immediately accepted Wood's offer.[119] After producing over one hundred volumes at a single print run in the 1810s, Thomson advised Wood in 1849 that the printing of the music 'need not exceed 12 or 15 copies at a time, unless there is a brisk demand'.[120] At the age of 92, almost 40 years after he had first tried to sell the property of the Welsh volumes, Thomson managed to interest another publisher in the collections, but Wood was only prepared to acquire the Thomson legacy at a fraction of its value.

Thomson's lack of salesmanship skills had a vital role to play in the financial, and thus to some extent the artistic, failure of his publications. In 1831, when the lack of sales had become a severe problem to the venture, he wrote to David Vedder:

> I felt it a duty both to myself and the Public to aim at excellence in every instance as far as I possibly could: if I have sometimes miss'd my aim or err'd in judgement, as who will not, I maun just thole the blame.[121]

Thomson aimed at excellence with the contents of his collections, from the arrangements of eminent European composers to the lyrics of Britain's most important literary figures. The musical commissions had cost around £1,000, while the cost of the literary contributions was impossible to estimate, but Thomson's manufacturing costs were prohibitive, as excellence was also a prerequisite for the presentation of his collections. Paper and printing costs cannot have been cheap, and the engravings, from musical settings to

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[119] **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/133-4.

[120] Thomson to Wood, 26 September 1849: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/135-6.

[121] Thomson to Vedder, 18 June 1831: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/23-5.

illustrations, were expensive. In order to pay his manufacturers for their share in the production process, Thomson was thus left with little alternative but to inflate the selling price of his volumes. A book of 25 songs in the 1790s, according to Thomson's estimate, cost approximately £79 to produce, though hundreds of volumes were printed from each set of plates.[122] Thomson sold each set for 10s. 6d., but he had to sell approximately 158 copies to cover his production costs before making any profit. By 1801 Thomson sold one volume, now containing 50 songs, for 1 guinea or 21 shillings (£1 1s.), with instrumental parts sold separately at 6 shillings per part. Each of these volumes cost approximately £136 to produce, by Thomson's estimate, though the price of his musical settings rose from the early 1800s, owing to Beethoven's demands and rising inflation.[123] Now Thomson had to sell approximately 130 copies of a volume in order to cover its manufacturing costs. Any profit was used to pay for new arrangements, the subsequent engraving of new plates and for the printing of new issues. Between 1801 and 1826 1 guinea (£1 1s.) was the standard price of every folio volume.

These prices were comparable with similar contemporary publications. Johnson's SMM was understandably cheaper, at 6 shillings per volume, because Johnson set out to produce a collection which was simple in content, appearance and price. Napier's volumes, produced in 1790 and 1792, which included more sophisticated musical settings and which were larger in

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[122] By following the prices listed by Thomson in his letter to Coventry & Hollier, the manufacture of the volume cost approximately £55 and the 25 musical settings, for which Thomson had paid approximately 2 ducats (about 18 shillings) each, amounted to approximately £24.

[123] An account of the fees Thomson paid to composers is complex due to the rapid inflation in Vienna during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Prices fluctuated so much that even an estimate is virtually impossible to give. See J. Moore, 'Beethoven and Musical Economics', Ph.D thesis, University of Illinois, 1975, iii. Moore states that 'hyperinflation caused a fortyfold reduction in the purchasing power of Beethoven's income between 1795 and 1816'.

size, were as expensive as Thomson's volumes, for Napier charged £1 6s. per volume. Whyte's first volume of 1804, which included 40 double-pages and, like Thomson's volumes, was lavishly produced, was priced at £1 3s. Urbani's early volumes (1792-1804), which differed slightly in appearance from Thomson's and which contained fewer songs, were priced at 12 shillings per volume, but his fifth and sixth volumes, which changed to the double-page format of Thomson's volumes, and which also contained 50 songs, cost 24 shillings, or £1 11s. 6d. if instrumental parts were included. Moore's Irish Melodies, which appeared in a series from 1808 until 1834, was priced at 15 shillings per volume. Thomson followed William Power, the publisher of Irish Melodies, by reducing the price of his folio volumes after 1826 to 15 shillings. In addition to lowering this price, Thomson also created his octavo edition in the early 1820s, so that he was able to offer the public an affordable product: these smaller volumes were priced at 10s. 6d. per volume without illustrations, or 12 shillings per volume with illustrations added. This collection had been much cheaper to produce - Thomson stated that production costs had amounted to £165 - since he used settings and lyrics most of which he had already paid for in connection with his folio volumes.

These prices were beyond the means of most, as the average salaries of the period illustrate. Details of Thomson's salary are given by Hadden.[124] In the early 1790s Thomson was earning £100 per annum, or a little more than £8 per month. One of his books of songs would therefore have cost him a quarter of his weekly wage. By 1824 his yearly salary, Hadden noted, had risen to £300. One of his volumes, then priced at 1 guinea, would have cost him a sixth of his weekly wage. Thomson's salary, which was that of a senior civil servant, was less than that of the professional classes, but anyone earning less than Thomson would be have been unable to afford his volumes.

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[124] Hadden, Thomson, p. 9.

The clergy at the turn of the century were rarely earning more than £120 per annum, or £2 10s. per week;[125] during the mid nineteenth century school teachers were earning approximately £55 per annum, or approximately £1 per week (women earned an average of £20 less than men in education);[126] and labourers, such as masons, carpenters or blacksmiths in the 1820s and 30s were earning approximately 14s. 4d. per week.[127] One of Thomson's volumes was thus about 7 shillings more than a workman's weekly wage, and it was usually a substantial proportion of the weekly salary of the educated men and women of the period. This information clarifies two important points: it emphasizes the fact that Thomson's clientele was a specific section of the British upper classes, who were earning on average more than £300 per annum; but, if those who could afford it were failing to buy Thomson's volumes, there must have been another reason for their lack of success.

There is little information concerning the success of Thomson's rival collections. Johnson's SMM appeared in a new edition in 1853,[128] which suggests that it was popular, though there are no details of how many copies were sold. The collections of Urbani, Napier, Corri and Whyte seem to have

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[125] L. Davidoff & C. Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English middle class 1780-1850, London, 1992, p. 127. £120 p.a. was the salary paid to the clergyman John Angell James, which Davidoff and Hall believe was enough to support a bachelor in lodgings prior to his marriage in 1806. Davidoff and Hall argue that it is 'notoriously difficult to pinpoint income bands which will clearly define a specific group' and that historians have often provided unstable information: p. 23.

[126] Ibid., p. 295. Davidoff and Hall note that teachers working in public schools in the early nineteenth century had incomes ranging between £200 and £400 per annum, but that they were, almost without exception, ordained clergymen.

[127] Smout, History of Scotland, p. 374. The wages listed here are taken from Smout's comparison of the daily wages of labourers in Glasgow and Arbroath. The wage given above is the average of that earned by the Glasgow workers during 1830-1.

[128] William Stenhouse's Lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland was produced to match the SMM, by David Laing in 1853. A facsimile of this edition of the SMM was published in 1991, ed. D.A. Low.

disappeared from all records after their first editions. Only Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies appears to have been successful, for it was produced continuously from its early editions until the beginning of this century. But because of the lack of information concerning the success of similar publications, it is impossible to determine the reasons for its popularity, as opposed to that of Thomson's, Napier's or Urbani's volumes. In Britain the vogue for Irish song came later than the interest in Scottish or Welsh song, and this, in addition to Moore's popularity, may account for the success of this collection during the second part of the nineteenth century. Derek Scott has commented that 'while enthusiasm for Scottish song began to wane in the 1860s, interest in Irish song was sustained by the popularity of the minstrel shows, and a craze for Irish melodrama'.[129] Ironically William Power had apparently been inspired originally by Thomson's Select Collection, yet he chose an all-Irish combination of music and poetry with Moore and Sir John Stevenson, who produced the musical arrangements for the volumes. This combination proved far more successful, in both the short and the long term, than the multiple combinations of poets and composers of different nationalities in Thomson's publications.[130]

The problems of finance and sales and his battle against the pirates of his profession doubtless had an important part to play in the failure of Thomson's publications, but we are forced to return to the content of the collections in an

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[129] D. Scott, The Singing Bourgeois: Songs of the Victorian Drawing Room and Parlour, London, 1989, p. 101. Scott has stated that 'Moore showed greater concern for the suitability of his songs to the drawing room than did his Scottish counterpart Burns' (p. 99). This is undoubtedly true, but Moore was born 20 years after Burns and lived until 1852, thus finding himself in a completely different society from that in which Burns had lived. The drawing room in the 1790s was a different place from that of the 1840s.

[130] John Warrack in his article on 'Thomas Moore' in the The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, claims that Power was inspired not only by the idea of Thomson's collections, but by their success. Derek Scott also assumes that the success of Moore's Irish Melodies was comparable with that of Thomson's collections. Scott, The Singing Bourgeois, pp. 28-9.

attempt to account for their lack of public popularity. It has been shown that Thomson's preoccupation with serving the diverse tastes of his prospective buyers, in relation to the musical and literary content of the collections, resulted in huge editorial problems, and gave rise to a work which was something of a multi cultural mélange. Thomson's variety of lyrics - with their mixture of languages, emotions and contradictory political opinions - all of which were shaped to satisfy the different, often antagonistic, feelings and tastes of his buyers, present a fascinating social history of their own. Thomson's editorial process in relation to the literary content of the volumes was complicated because it reflected the complex cultural nature of a certain group of Scottish/British men and women at the turn of the century. Musically the collections were also an unusual cultural mixture, though the problem was not that foreign musicians had arranged the melodies, but rather that the Scottish/British musical tastes and skills were neither as sophisticated nor as flexible as Thomson thought. Blinded by his own musical knowledge and preferences, and those of a small group of colleagues, Thomson forged ahead with his commissions without taking time to enquire what the public at large wanted. But how was he to know that the settings of his collections, or those of Urbani, Corri, Napier and Whyte, would prove to be unsuccessful? As is so clearly illustrated by the activities of societies and musical organizations such as the EMS, Thomson was following a prescription for popularity by publishing such settings, just as his new lyrics were following patterns already proven in Ramsay's or Johnson's volumes.

If one had to give a single reason for the failure of Thomson's collections it must be the difficulty of the musical settings he published. There was more controversy surrounding Beethoven's unplayable arrangements than there was discussion of any other musical characteristic, and Thomson's obvious distress at Beethoven's failure to simplify his settings

illustrates the gravity of the problem. While Beethoven thus becomes the centre of this issue, it should be noted that there were settings by Pleyel, Kozeluch, Haydn, Weber and Hummel which were also too difficult for amateurs in Britain. The basis of this problem lay in Thomson's initial aim: to produce a collection for professional and amateur musicians alike. A setting created to satisfy the demands of a professional ensemble was unplayable for an amateur one: no arrangement was too easy for Thomson's amateurs. Hoping to find fun and enjoyment in these elaborate volumes, which bore the creations of the most famous of literary and musical names, Thomson's men and women paid a great deal of money for little more than an evening of total frustration. Understandably, only those who were musically skilled then returned to the music seller for the next volume in the collection.

Thomson's collections also failed to change with the new developments in British musical taste. It took Thomson almost 50 years to complete his collection of Scottish songs, and although he made use of new publishing techniques, including lithography, which slightly changed the appearance of his volumes, the content of his collections generally remained the same from his first issue in 1793 to the last volume of 1841. Thomson chose a group of prestigious composers, whose works were greatly admired by Britain's musical connoisseurs, but he never considered commissioning those new composers whose works became increasingly popular with the majority during the 1820s. We cannot say that this change would have resulted in an improvement in Thomson's sales, but it might possibly have made a difference. British musical tastes changed dramatically during this period, as references from Thomson's own letters and the writings of observers such as George Croall have shown. By the 1820s, when Thomson was in his seventies, the musical content of his volumes was no longer fashionable. The works which Thomson loved and regarded so highly had been replaced by the florid and showy pieces of 'the Rossini

school', and were now performed by the 'finely cultivated voices of Grisi, Persiani, Rubini, Tamburnini or Lablache'.[131] Anger and incomprehension became common emotions in Thomson's letters to friends, but he also voiced his opinions in his last publication and in letters to the trade. He agreed with Richard Eastcott and other scholars that 'a great deal of the music of the present day, is calculated more to astonish than to please', and that 'expression and simplicity are often sacrificed to execution'.[132] Ironically, the difficulties of execution, in terms of Beethoven's compositions, had been one of Thomson's main problems.

After a lifetime devoted to his collections, Thomson's frustration was understandable, but he could do nothing to change the new musical tastes of his clientele. He refused to support the new popular composers and performers, and was determined to stick with the product he had worked so hard to create. This determination and single-mindedness was Thomson's greatest attribute, but it was also responsible for the ultimate failure of his collections to satisfy public demand. He was sensitive enough to realize that there were problems with his collections. In a letter to David Vedder of 1829, he referred to the 'miserable state of Public Taste at present and for a number of years past', and explained that he was thus finding the preparation of his new edition of 1831 something of a personal struggle.[133] But until his death in 1851 Thomson believed that

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[131] Thomson's preface entitled 'On Scottish Music and Song' from the 1841 sixth volume of the Scottish collection (**SVIa**).

[132] R. Eastcott, Sketches of the Origin, Progress and Effects of Music with an account of the Ancient Bards and Minstrels, Bath, 1793, p. 159. See also William Crotch, Substance of several courses of Lectures on Music, London, 1831, p. 20. Crotch commented that he had noticed 'undeserved applause on some new trifle' in concerts he attended, and he quoted Sir Joshua Reynolds who had stated that 'popularity always accompanies the lower styles of painting'.

[133] 21 December 1829: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/9-10.

> Good Sense may in time triumph over Fashion, and bring back a taste for simple, expressive, and touching Music, in union with exquisite Poetry: but this will only be effected I think gradually and very slowly: people will not be scolded into a reform of their superficial and tasteless pleasures, but they may tire of their insipidity.[134]

Thomson was a man of principle. His collections were created to bring together the best of Scottish, Welsh and Irish melodies, the best of contemporary poetry and the best of contemporary musical composition. Sadly Thomson lived long enough to see that his creations were not the commercial success he had hoped. The history of Scottish music publishing would have been different, had these collections been financially profitable, for Thomson would then have been able to publish the other works he longed to commission. But one is left with the conclusion that success in financial terms meant little to the editor. Thomson's contribution to musical and literary history was the creation of these collections, and no one was more aware of this than Thomson:

> He [the editor] has spared neither pains, nor time, nor expense, in rendering every part of the three Works as perfect as possible, he trusts that they will do lasting honour to the musical and poetical characters of the three countries. He looks back with great satisfaction upon his humble exertions, because he had the happiness of eliciting from Poets and Musical Composers, who adorned the age in which they lived, what otherwise would never have been given to the world.[135]

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[134] Thomson to Vedder, 18 June 1831: **GB-Lbl** Add. MS 35269/23-5. That Thomson still believed this in 1849 is shown in his letters to Wood discussed above.

[135] Preface to the first Irish volume of 1814 (**IrI**).