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FOLK DRAMA IN SCOTLAND

submitted by

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for the degree of Ph. D.

The Department of Drama

at the University of Glasgow

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Volume I

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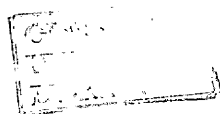
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The second group is made of those who have generously allowed me access to their personal collections of Scottish material. Chief among these is Brian Lambie of Biggar, whose research into the history of the Biggar play matches in vigour his work in revitalising the town's tradition. I am also indebted to Dorothy Dunbar of Dalrymple by Ayr, Peter T. Millington of Nottingham, Paul S. Smith of the University of Sheffield, and Marie Clark of New South Wales, Australia.

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Three members of the Department of Drama at the University of Glasgow have left their imprint on this work: the late Professor James Arnott encouraged me to begin the research, supported me with his deep understanding of the cultural traditions of the West of Scotland, and gave me the impetus of his own collection of folk drama records, which he had begun thirty years earlier; Mr. Graham Barlow gave a painstakingly critical reading of my manuscript and thereby wrought many changes, great and small; Dr. Sandra Billington has watched over the continuance and completion of the research, and her enthusiasm allied to her great patience has given me more help than a student has a right to expect.

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Finally, if this research wished for a dedication, it would look no further than to the late Dr. Anna Jean Mill, whose own research, published in 1927, has been seminal, and whose encouragement and interest in my work I have treasured.

Summary of Thesis

Volume One

Chapter One

begins by defining the subject area of the thesis, and terminology of the title. A brief review of the study of folk drama reveals two very significant gaps in our understanding, firstly that the folk play in Scotland has been conspicuously neglected, and secondly that no detailed study has been undertaken of the evolution of British folk drama. The importance of the Scottish element in the British and Irish context suggests that this thesis, in satisfying the first demand, would contribute in a major way to the achievement of the second.

Chapter Two

studies the mass of textual and other evidence collected and presented in Gazetteer form in Appendix One, and by careful textual study discovers that the basic literary form of the plays' final period was created in the second half of the seventeenth century.

There follows a consideration of the relative importance of oral transmission and the chapbook, and the chapter concludes with a study of the decline of the folk play. The important discovery here is that the tradition began to die c.1880, and the reasons are suggested to be the franchise and trades union legislation of the period which helped to convert Britain from a near-feudal to a near-democratic society. The importance of feudalism is developed throughout the thesis.

Chapter Three

maps the play, and uses the distribution pattern as a means of discovering the origin of the custom. Taking the resurrection motif

and the English language as being two diagnostic features of the custom, the ethnology of Scotland before 1300 is searched for a phase that corresponded to the three factors of language, rite, and place. The conclusion is reached that the folk play was a product of the Northumbrian Kingdom of c.700-c.900, and the feudalisation of Scotland c.1100-c.1300. The feudal society is shown to be an important influence in the making and shaping of the custom.

Chapter Four

examines the many expressions of combat, death, and resurrection drama in medieval Scotland, under the headings of animal cults, ceremonial dance, and Maying rites. The originality of this examination produces a new framework in which to understand many items of Scottish literature and history, but in particular illuminates passages in two important texts, the 'Plough Song', and the 'Jeu de Robin et Marion'. The central source of the folk action is considered to be the Summer and Winter King drama, but the clarity of the evidence is shown to be obscured by the conflux of resurrection, dance and Maying custom about the figure of 'Robin'. This conflux produced 'Robin Hood', an important and, to some extent, dislocating figure in the development of the folk play.

Chapter Five

is therefore devoted to an examination of the relationship of Robin Hood to the folk play, and reveals a substantial area of folklore pertaining to Robin Hood, ignored or misunderstood by scholars since the sixteenth century. He is shown, in ballad and play, to have attracted bird and horse resurrection drama, and to have absorbed Summer and Winter King attributes. His importance in Scotland is both measured and explained, and the Robin Hood of medieval play is distin-

Quished from the familiar Robin Hood of the ballads. Finally, he is shown to be the leading figure of an extremely popular version of the folk play in sixteenth-century Scotland, prohibited by Act of Parliament in 1555.

Chapter Six

completes the historical survey by covering the years between the Reformation suppression of the folk play (1610), and the emergence of the modern custom (1701). The century is shown to be one in which the custom was transformed almost out of recognition. Certain threads of continuity are shown, however, the chief of which is the trio of folk play figures, Peter, Paul and Judas.

Chapter Seven

offers an interpretation of the modern play, using the historical bases established by the foregoing chapters. The hitherto-enigmatic 'galoshan' is explained, and the term 'hogmanay' discussed in the context of the folk play. In the enquiry into the season of the play, the place of Hallowe'en in the Scottish year is defined. There follows a survey of the manner of the play's performance, and a systematic examination of the text and action of the Scottish play, explaining most, but not all, of the custom's obscurities. The chapter concludes with a detailed study of the disintegration of the custom, and the marks it has left on contemporary Scottish traditions.

Chapter One

Explanations

1. The Title

'Folk Drama in Scotland' is a title sufficiently novel to require some explanation. The 'folk drama' in question, in its latest and best-documented form, is largely a nineteenth-century phenomenon, a brief dialogue and action performed by boys aged between about ten and fourteen years of age, at Hallowe'en (31 Oct.) and Hogmanay (31 Dec.). The custom was known almost everywhere in Scotland by the name 'Galoshans' (or some close variant), and neither the text nor the action differed in any important way, even when a hundred miles and a hundred years came between their performances. Almost invariably, the action is that two combatants challenge one another and fight until one of them is killed. A doctor is summoned to cure the dead warrior, who rises to protest friendship and brotherhood with his former enemy. The players then wish fortune on their spectators, and request money, food and drink.

The notices of this folk drama are assembled in Appendix One in the form of a gazetteer, and together they constitute virtually all the primary source material for the modern custom. Gazetteer entries are therefore frequently cited as sources and examples, and the reader is directed by the appropriate label. This may be a precise location (e.g. Abbotsford House) or an unlocated example, identified by its collector (e.g. unloc. Chambers), its area

(e.g. unloc. Angus), or by both (e.g. unloc. Galloway: Arnott).

2. Folk

To describe such as drama as 'folk' is to employ a valuable but troublesome word. Its value lies in its three-fold implication that

- (i) the drama was for the most part performed by and for people unconnected with the professional theatre,
- (ii) the tradition persisted in localities for considerable periods without encouragement from external sources,
- (iii) the practice was orally-transmitted.

Although the notions of oral transmission and external sources come in for critical examination later in this work, the epithet 'folk' is still preferred to the alternatives 'traditional' and 'ritual', both of which have found, and still find, favour with critics and commentators. 'Traditional' is put aside for the reason that it implies a long-lasting and unchanging custom; one of the theories to be advanced in the course of this study is that the 'Galoshan' play is a late and distinct form, and the residuum of some widely-differing practices. 'Ritual' is discarded with regret, for it has the merit of suggesting that the drama had, in ancient times, a religious impulse, and in modern times an unchanging style and occasion. Nevertheless, it is an uneasy label for a practice which, by the eighteenth century if not long before, had lost any profound significance for performer or spectator.

3. Drama

A custom that in its last stages took the form of a playlet, with characters, eventful action and dramatic dialogue, might easily justify the label 'drama'. The usefulness of the word is

consolidated by its derivation (from Gk draein = to do), for the widely-held (but unproven) belief that the drama had a religious origin suggests that some act of cosmic empathy lay at the core of the ritual, in which case it would be more important for the 'act' to be done, than to be seen to be done. In other words, the 'doing', or 'drama' was important; the 'seeing', or 'theatre', less so. In this light, the alternatives of 'ritual theatre' and 'folk theatre', with their connotations that the custom made an interesting spectacle, have to be rejected, though this not to deny that in modern times an audience might gather for the performance (as at Stirling^c), or be amused by the entertainment (as at unloc. Galloway: Dunlop).

Appropriate though 'drama' is, it cannot entirely exclude the alternative 'play'. Besides encompassing the 'drama' associations, 'play' also embraces the sense of 'game', and this ambiguity preserves the more diffuse form of the custom before the Reformation, when it shared its occasion with what the twentieth century would term athletic contests, sports and games. Indeed, one of the earliest modern records (Bowden) knows the play as 'a game of guisarts'.

4. In Scotland

The justification for restricting the area of enquiry to Scotland cannot be made without first considering the history of folk drama research up to the present time.

Serious consideration of the British folk play was inaugurated about the year 1890 by T. Fairman Ordish's collection of documents and play texts. The Ordish Collection¹, now held by the Folklore Society, remains a treasury of source material. From this beginning, the study of the subject has been advanced by several full-length critical studies. The first of these

by Tiddy² and published in 1923, printed texts he had collected, and included an essay in which he supplied literary sources and analogues for passages from the folk play, from works dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. This book provided some of the material for Chambers³ in 1933, when the writer subjected the British play texts to a misdirected and therefore unrewarding analysis, and so contributed less to our understanding than had been given and promised by his monumental work on comparative folklore⁴ thirty years earlier.

A huge impetus was given to the study of British traditional customs by Cawte, Helm and Peacock by their assembly of geographical indexes of ceremonial dance and related practices (of which drama is thought to be one). One result of this labour was the publication in 1967 of English Ritual Drama,⁵ which listed all the known records of the play in the British Isles and North America, prefaced by some explanatory and interpretative comment. The work became a handbook for all subsequent researchers, a fact acknowledged by Gailey in his Irish Folk Drama,⁶ by Brody in The English Mummers and Their Plays,⁷ and by the present writer. Helm's untimely death in 1970 made it seem likely that his only other contribution to the study of the folk play would be his Collection,⁸ a most valuable store of documentary and photographic material on folk drama. In 1981, however, his two former colleagues brought about the publication of The English Mummers' Play,⁹ a volume based on his surviving lectures and notes. This important publication stresses the Sword-Dance, Wooing, and Hero-Combat ceremonies that Helm saw as underlying the English play texts, and supports a close analysis of the custom with a comprehensive selection of texts.

Several shorter, or less specialised, works command attention.

In the first place, both Ordish¹⁰ and Helm¹¹ contributed articles to the pages of Folklore. Baskervill's essays¹², written in the mid-twenties, never exercised their proper influence on British scholars, perhaps because they were obscured by their appearance in American philological journals. Alford's interest in folk dance and drama helped greatly to recognise their kinship,¹³ and comparative folklore study was considerably stimulated by her research in western Europe.¹⁴ Dean-Smith's essay 'The Life-Cycle or Folk Play',¹⁵ argued from a position of authority that British folk plays were fragments of an earlier 'life-cycle' drama, still preserved into this century in the Balkans, a view repeated in her survey of folk drama and its study eight years later.¹⁶

At the time of writing, the study of folk drama is being carried forward in different directions, and for different ends. Its relationship with the professional theatre in the later Middle Ages has brought the folk play to the attention of Wickham¹⁷ and Axton.¹⁸ The former, with his Bristol students, has advanced our knowledge of the nature of the folk play, in its wider sense, in medieval England: the latter has energetically traced the influence of folk tradition on the style and content of medieval drama, with a special enrichment from his awareness of French plays of the early Middle Ages.¹⁹

A different approach to folklore studies has been made by those universities that formally support the enquiry into cultural tradition, particularly Leeds²⁰ and Sheffield.²¹ At the latter, the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language has encouraged the use of the computer for the storing and analysis of folk drama data. From the same Centre has come the first-fruits of a study of the chapbook, the printed source for the folk play in modern times.²²

This survey of folk drama research in the last hundred years presents a very obvious justification for limiting the present study to Scotland: of the political units of the British Isles, it is an area of serious neglect. (The other unwritten country, Wales, seemingly has too little of the custom to warrant a full-length study.) The lack of attention given to the custom in Scotland is, to some extent, surprising, especially in view of the early and prestigious start it could have been granted by Sir Walter Scott in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The poet referred to the custom in his poetry (see Edinburgh^{ab}), exchanged notices of it with correspondents (unloc. Abbotsford Coll.), and encouraged performances of it at his home (see Abbotsford House). Incidentally, Scott's recollection of playing Judas c.1780 (see Edinburgh^{ab}) might qualify him to be Britain's first identifiable folk-play actor.

Although Scott's lead was not followed, this area of Scottish study can boast one conspicuous contributor. Mill's retrieval and elucidation of the primary resource material in her invaluable Medieval Drama in Scotland²³ has for fifty years provided students with detailed and comprehensive information, and seems unlikely to be superseded.

In the narrower field of folklore, three minor contributors deserve attention: MacRitchie 1905,²⁴ Robb 1925,²⁵ and Spence 1945²⁶ have risen at twenty year intervals to comment on traditional festivals (for example, Yuletide and May Day), and consequently their observations, though useful, fall obliquely on the folk play. Buchan has noted some newly-published references to the custom,²⁷ but the only serious field-work, apart from the careful enquires made by the local historians like Brian Lambie of Biggar (see Biggar), is being done by Emily Lyle, of the University of Stirling

and the School of Scottish Studies.²⁸ With some truth, Buchan could write that 'considerable scope yet remains for investigation of Scottish folk drama and associated customs'.²⁹

The making good of this considerable neglect is reason enough for the phrase 'in Scotland' in the title, but there is another intention in this study. Although folk drama has been an area of scholarly enquiry for a century, it remains a confused and contentious area. To give one example: it is an assumption, shared by most writers on the subject, that the origins of the custom are, to use the antiquarian's phrase, 'lost in the mists of antiquity'. On inspection, these concealing vapours are closer than one might suppose. So close, in fact, that Wickham (1974) gave a stern and necessary reminder when he wrote that 'almost everything to do with the Mummers' Play prior to the eighteenth century is speculative and hypothetical'.³⁰

There is an urgent need for some understanding of the origin and evolution of the British folk play before the eighteenth century, and it is the second aim of this thesis to attempt a sketch of the tradition from its earliest times, and yet, at the same time, confine the enquiry to Scotland. There is advantage and disadvantage in this narrowing of focus. To define the benefits first, it should be observed that when the folk play first came to public attention, in the nineteenth century, it was obvious that the English and Scottish practices had superficial differences but broad and detailed similarities. This fact has to be set beside the history of the political relations between England and Scotland which, almost from the time of their creation as kingdoms, were hostile. This hostility was at its height c. 1300, with the Wars of Independence, and continued intermittently for another three centuries. After the

union of the crowns in 1603, warfare in Britain followed religious, rather than political, promptings. The union of the parliaments in 1707 may have begun the slow processes of cultural integration, but it cannot be denied that four centuries of separation and hostility had cemented differences in popular culture, many of which are clearly evident to the present day. The folk play is, among other things, an expression of popular culture, and it follows that the similarities the Scottish and English versions exhibit must either have been laid down before 1300, or after 1707. If this homogeneity belongs to the earlier date, then it is the result of migration; if it is an eighteenth-century feature, one could look for the standardization brought about by the so-called 'mass media', in this case the printed word. In fact, among the contentions of this thesis both the early and late dates are significant, but at this stage it is enough to recognize that some aspects of the folk play are urged to have been present in Scotland before 1300: four centuries of isolation within the English-speaking world of medieval Britain makes Scotland a valuable model for a micro-study of the British folk play.

A second and more particular benefit from this regional approach centres on the fact that the northern frontier of the British folk play runs athwart Scotland, and it appears that a detailed study of the cultural environments north and south of this boundary reveals something of the determinants necessary for the custom's existence.

To turn to the disadvantages of confining the study to Scotland, the greatest obstruction is the conspicuous deficiency of written records from any time earlier than the seventeenth century. In Mill's words:

Any detailed comparison of the extant pre-Reformation records of Scotland with those of England leave us

hopelessly outclassed. The only burgh records which date back to the fourteenth century are those of Aberdeen; while even the fifteenth century is sparingly represented. Further, there is nothing in Scotland to set beside the English Churchwardens' Accounts, from which so much information regarding medieval drama in England has been derived.³¹

This absence of documentation absolutely precludes the possibility of a 'town by town' history of the folk play practice in medieval and Reformation Scotland; in its place the researcher has to supply an outline of the custom's development through this period by the best use of all other sources, of poetry and song, drama and folklore, art and sculpture.

The availability of English evidence, particularly that found in medieval and seventeenth century play-texts, has given cause for some heart-searching. I have tried to eschew it wherever possible, even though it might supply ready, and not entirely inadmissible, support for theories about the folk play's development in Scotland. Where there are grounds for recognizing a cultural bond between a Scottish and a non-Scottish source, the evidence is used without apology: on some few occasions, however, extraneous instances are adduced where Scottish evidence is believed to be unavailable.

Notes to Chapter One.

- 1 The Collection is held for the Folklore Society in the Library of the University College, London.
- 2 R.J.E. Tiddy, The Mummers' Play (1923; rpt. Chicheley: Minet, 1972).
- 3 E.K. Chambers, The English Folk Play (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933).
- 4 E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1903).
- 5 E.C. Cawte, Alex Helm, N. Peacock, English Ritual Drama (London: Folklore Society, 1967).
- 6 Alan Gailey, Irish Folk Drama (Cork: Mercier Press, 1969).
The writer has pursued this research with an article on the distribution of the play in Ireland in Ulster Folklife, 24 (1978), pp. 59-68.
- 7 Alan Brody, The English Mummers and Their Plays (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).
- 8 The Alex Helm Collection MS Add. 253, University College, London.
- 9 Alex Helm, The English Mummers' Play (Woodbridge: Brewer (Boydell & Brewer Ltd.); Rowman and Littlefield, for the Folklore Society, 1981).
- 10 T. Fairman Ordish, 'Folk Drama', Folklore, 2 (1891), 314-35, and 'English Folk Drama', Folklore, 4 (1893), 149-75.
- 11 Alex Helm, 'In comes I, St. George,' Folklore, 76 (1965), 118-36.
- 12 Charles Read Baskervill, 'Mummers' Wooing Plays in England,' Modern Philology, 21, No.3 (Feb. 1924), 225-72, and 'Dramatic Aspects of Medieval Folk Festivals in England,' Studies in Philology, 17, No.1 (1920), 18-87.

- 13 Violet Alford, Sword Dance and Drama (London: Merlin, 1962).
The same writer gave the Scottish aspect some attention in 'The Mummings' Play,' The Proceedings of the Scottish Anthropological and Folklore Society, 4, No.1 (1949), 21.
- 14 Violet Alford, 'The Basque Masquerade,' Folklore, 29 (1928), 68-90.
- 15 Margaret Dean-Smith, 'The Life-Cycle or Folk Play,' Folklore, 69 (1958), 237-63.
- 16 Margaret Dean-Smith, 'An Unromantic View of the Mummings' Play,' Theatre Research, 8, No.2 (1966), 89-99.
- 17 Glynn Wickham, The Medieval Theatre (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974).
- 18 Richard Axton and John Stevens, Medieval French Plays (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971).
- 19 Richard Axton, European Drama of the Early Middle Ages (London: Hutchinson, 1974); English Drama, Forms and Development, ed. Marie Axton and Raymond Williams (Cambridge: University Press, 1977).
- 20 The Institute of Dialect and Folk Life Studies, School of English, University of Leeds.
- 21 The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, University of Sheffield.
- 22 M.J. Preston, F.G. Smith, and P.S. Smith, An Interim Checklist of Chapbooks Containing Traditional Play Texts (Newcastle, History of the book trade in the north, 1976).
- 23 Anna Jean Mill, Medieval Plays in Scotland (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1927).
- 24 David MacRitchie, 'Christmas and New Year Customs in Scotland,' The Scottish Review and Christian Leader, 1, No.1

(21.12. 1905), 572-73; also, in the same periodical, 'Ancient Summer Festivals in Scotland,' 1, No.1 (10.8.1905), 87-88; 'Twelfth Day in Scotland,' 1, No.2 (11.1.1906), 47-48.

²⁵ T.D. Robb, 'Yuletide', The Scots Magazine, 4, No.3 (Dec. 1925), 167-68.

²⁶ Lewis Spence, 'Discovering the Scottish Christmas,' The Scots Magazine, 46, No.3 (Dec. 1945), 203.

²⁷ David Buchan, 'The Folk Play, Guising, and Northern Scotland,' Lore and Language, 10 (Jan. 1974), 10-14.

²⁸ Emily Lyle, 'The Goloshans,' Tocher (Edinburgh: School of Scottish Studies), 32 (Winter, 1979-80), 107-112. Audio and Video recordings made by Emily Lyle are held by the School of Scottish Studies. They include Broxburn (West Lothian), Kippen (Stirlings.), Earlston, Westruther and Whitsome (Berwicks.), Morebattle (Roxburghs.). A reference to the custom in Denny (Stirlings.) comes in a letter in Scots Magazine, May 1982.

²⁹ 'The Folk Play, Guising etc', p.14.

³⁰ Wickham, Medieval Theatre, p.148.

³¹ Mill, Medieval Plays, p.96.

CHAPTER TWO

The 'Modern' Period of the Folk Play

1. Modern History

(i) The Observed Practice

It is unusual to begin what is largely a history with the present, but such a course is compelled by a feature of the folk play already noted, that its existence prior to the eighteenth century is uncharted and unproven. This absence of record might be explained in three ways; (i) the folk play is an invention of the eighteenth century, and therefore has no earlier history to be discovered; (ii) it is ancient, but all proofs of its earlier existence have been destroyed; (iii) it is ancient but its earlier forms were so different from the modern versions that researchers have failed to see a relationship. Although some truth will be found in the first two explanations, it is the third that will supply one of the basic hypotheses of this study, and accordingly a beginning is made with the modern play in order to identify some of the characteristics of the custom, the better to seek them among the relics of earlier centuries.

The premise that the folk play is a descendant of ancient folk play, or plays, should not be presumed to carry with it the implication that the modern custom is merely a pale reflection of some former splendour, doggerel that, in Sir Walter Scott's words, bears 'traces of ancient mystery' (Edinburgh^a). Without in any way denying the phenomenal value of the modern

custom in its own right, it may nevertheless also be proper to view the folk play as the remains of other customs, and to regard it with the same respect of an archaeologist for an ancient site, not only for what it is, but also for what it can be shown to have been.

The Twentieth Century

In the context of these considerations of 'archaeological remains' it must be said that the folk play in Scotland is a living tradition, if now only in one community. The annual performance of the 'Galoshan' play at Biggar (q.v.) was linked with the town's Yule Fire, it being a tradition that the actors collected money to purchase coal for the community bonfire. This annual beacon in the town centre was discontinued in 1939 and for the duration of the Second World War, and the instrument for funding the fuel ceased with it. When the fire custom was recommenced in 1945, the folk play was not. Within ten years, however, interested members of the community succeeded in reviving the custom. The circumstances of the recommencement are critical in the eyes of scholars of the folk play, who distinguish carefully between the relatively few 'survivals' of folklore, and the more numerous 'revivals', some of which feature extraneous and misleading matter, and are motivated by non-traditional forces. Guidance in making this distinction is given by the editors of English Ritual Drama and, on the basis of their scrupulous definition,¹ the Biggar play qualifies as a genuine 'survival' on the grounds that it is the Biggar play, performed by Biggar people, revived without outside interference, and guided by ex-performers from within the community. The Biggar tradition therefore, although it survives only precariously at the time of writing, can be regarded as the last surviving folk play

in Scotland, and one of the very few such in Britain. Its success in exempting itself from the decline of the tradition in Scotland will recall it for attention in subsequent pages.

Apart from Biggar, the survival of the folk play into the twentieth century elsewhere is well-attested: the custom seems to have been widespread in Strathclyde in the first decade, and somewhat later in Fife, in all cases in industrial towns and villages; rural survivals are noted in the Borders and Galloway.

The Nineteenth Century

Most of the records refer to this period, and there is no need to insist on the play's presence after 1850. For the first half of the century, however, the records are less frequent. The notice for Galloway is only that of unloc. Galloway: MacTaggart, written in 1823. The Borders, on the other hand, are well documented: the Peebles record of 1840 is very informative, as is Scott's account of the guising at Abbotsford in the 1820s. For 1815, the Wilkie account for Bowden is comprehensive, and the same date is implied by the correspondent for Ancrum and Hawick. In 1805 a plain enough commentary was provided by the poet of Traquhair. Further north, there is evidence for Liberton in 1830, Falkirk in 1825, and north of the Forth, Dunfermline in 1815 and for Angus and the eastern counties (see unloc. Angus) in 1830.

Before moving into the eighteenth century, it is important to note how many of these early nineteenth century reports regard the folk play as venerable, traditional, and in a state of decay. For example, the Jedburgh^a report, penned in 1814 but referring to the previous century, believed that the custom dated from Reformation or pre-Reformation times. The author of the Traquhair report considered the play to be traditional in 1805, and the owner

of Spottiswoode, who was born in 1810, encouraged it as an 'old custom' in her old age. The correspondents for Liberton c. 1830 and unloc. Galloway 1823 both regard the play to be in a state of mortal decay. The writer of Abbotsford House (i) speaks of his host's wish to 'keep up these old ceremonies'. The burden of these comments is that the folk play custom, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was thought by its observers to be a custom decrepit with age, but worthy of preservation.

The Eighteenth Century

The supply of folk play records noticeably diminishes in this its first century of modern existence. The Stirling report, dated 1835, contains a note after the text explaining that 'Inky pinky' had been a name for small beer 'seventy or eighty years since'. The implication of this might be that the writer believed the text to date from the same period, i.e. c. 1760.

It is certain that the young Walter Scott was playing Judas in the Edinburgh version some time in the early 1780s, and much the same kind of date may be supposed for the reminiscence for Jedburgh. The only location with any known connection with the folk play prior to these dates is Falkirk. The Falkirk^b account was written in 1825, but in the description of the event reports that troupes could be refused admission by households who kept the 'Old Style'. By this is meant an adherence to the calendar of 1751 (a subject to which this study will return) and the implication that there was a tradition in the Falkirk area of visiting with the folk play before 1752. The Falkirk^a account is of great importance and interest. The report to the Kirk Session was that seven young men or boys (they are all described as 'son' or 'servant') went about 'in disguise acting things unseemly' on

the last night of 1701. The occasion, the disguise, the number in the troupe, the sex of the actors, the itinerant performance, and the Session's attitude to the content, are all consonant with the belief that the lads were performing the folk play. The Session's warning against their doing 'the like in time coming' suggests that it was a traditional event. If this Falkirk^a account is, as I believe, of the folk play, then it is the earliest modern record in Scotland.

In this way, the record of folk play performance can be traced from the present day, through a steadily diminishing set of references, to the year 1701. There is a second way, however, in which the existence of the folk play can be sketched, and the results of the second, which now follows, makes an interesting comparison with the first.

(ii) Internal Dating

The oral transmission of the folk play text is the product of two opposite impulses, on the one hand the stubborn adherence to tradition and the solemn repetition of the rhymes, even when they are apparent nonsense, and on the other hand the vitality of invention, and the welcomed opportunity to make topical reference. The result of these two impulses is that words and phrases impelled into the text by their topicality are preserved there long after their significance has waned.

To give a modern example: the recent Biggar^a reports refer to the interpolation of 'liquorice all-sorts', and the adoption of the then popular Chuck Berry 'My-ding-a-ling' melody. If the Biggar performance were to continue another forty years in this form, a researcher of the twenty-first century could, with a little research into popular music and confectionery, date the musical

interpolation very exactly, though the sweets would deny anything more than a very general ascription.

By the same process, the corpus of the Scottish folk play can be examined for similar topical references which, with the passing of time, have formed sedimentary layers that can be shown to evidence almost three centuries of 'continuous occupation'. Although these topicalities exist throughout the period of the modern folk play, for the purpose of strengthening the record at its weakest point the technique will only be applied for the first quarter of the nineteenth century and before, the period when the historical notices begin to falter. A collection of them is given here, with the date of their topicality and the location and date of their recording.

- 1820-30 the Regency of Prince George (Falkirk 1840)
- c.1815 the eminence of Napoleon (Falkirk 1825, unloc. East Lothian 1850)
- c.1805 the naval war with France might have contributed the 'Blue Sailor' (Symington c.1900), or the offer to fight 'any Frenchman' (Cumnock 1883).
- 1759 the battle of 'Quinback' (Quebec) (Stirling 1835).
 Wolfe, the hero of Quebec, was a much-travelled soldier, and was granted the freedom of Banff in 1749², in part, at least, for his services at Culloden.
- 1745 the vigour of the anti-Gael sentiment in 'take down a Highlander's breeks etc' (Stirling 1835) may have been prompted by the clan army of the '45, although it should be added that Montrose's Highlanders of 1644 were similarly distrusted. The reference may not have a specific stimulus; c.1725 Highlanders were known to

indulge in systematic plunder of the Lowlands³.

- 1739 The Spanish Wars were fought 'around the Spanish shores' (unloc. Angus 1888). The phrase might more easily refer to Nelson's sea war (see c.1805 above).
- 1730-40 The clearing of the room for the play, demanded by 'Haul away rocks, and haul away reels, / Haul away stocks and spinning wheels' (Peebles 1841, but see also Falkirk 1825, and unloc. Abbotsford) is from this time. Rocks and reels began to go out of fashion in the Lowlands in 1730 and had virtually disappeared by 1740; they were replaced by spinning wheels⁴.
- c.1725 the 'tirling-pin' (Falkirk 1825) was an early eighteenth-century door-knocker.
- 1702 In this year died Benbow, 'the admiral.... who fought the battle on the deck' (unloc. Angus 1888), 'Bol Bendo' (bold Benbow) (Liberton c.1830), and the sailor who 'fought upon his stumps' (unloc. Robb). (The heroics of Admiral Benbow are related in folk song: 'Brave Benbow lost his legs, / But still on his stumps he begs, / Fight on....' It is noteworthy that this feat is mimicked by a combatant in unloc. Robb, and also recorded in a Border battle over a century earlier. The headstone for the 'Maid of Ancrum' in St Boswells churchyard recorded that, in the battle of Ancrum Moor in 1545, 'Upon the English loons she laid many thumps, / And when her legs were cuttit off, / She fought upon her stumps'⁵).
- 1662- Stirling 1835 demands 'groats'. Two coins were known
- c. 1750 by this name: from 1836-56 silver fourpenny pieces were unofficially known as 'groats', but these come

too late for this reference, and seem too valuable to be solicited. It seems more likely that the groat, in circulation from 1662 to c.1750, is the currency intended.

- 1655 The doctor's 'hocus-pocus' (Peebles 1840) is assumed to be sham Latin, 'a corruption of "hoc est corpus", by way of ridiculous imitation of the priests of the Church of Rome in their trick of Transubstantiation, first noted in 1655, when it accompanied a trickster's every device'.⁶ Although 'hocus-pocus' has become the standard form for the phrase, the Scottish texts have versions closer to the Latin original, and therefore at least as venerable, for example, the 'hockey-pockey' of Balmaghie. (See also Chapter Six, pp.239-40)
- 1644-48 the years of the last visitation of plague to Scotland, when it devastated many parts of the country,⁷ might have prompted the inclusion of 'plague' in the list of cures at Spottiswoode.
- c.1600 The combatants speak of carrying 'a sword and buckler' or, more frequently, 'a sword and pistol'. The former was the infantry equipment in general use in the first half of the sixteenth century, and survived in a reduced form until c.1600. 'Sword and pistol' was a cavalry armament for the Heavy Cavalry in the second half of the sixteenth century, and for the Light Cavalry thereafter.⁸

At this point in time textual references associated with particular moments in history fade (though in later chapters other textual elements will be associated with earlier periods

of Scottish history at appropriate points). As far as the writer is aware, the foregoing is the first attempt to investigate folk play texts for their internal evidence of origin, and the findings are highly significant. In the first place it will be noted that there is good evidence for 'continuous occupation' of the folk drama custom as far back as the first years of the eighteenth century (1702), a date remarkably consonant with the first notice of the custom (1701). Before that, the topicalities are rarer and less convincing, but an exception to this must be made for the weaponry of the combatants, which can be dated to have come into use at the time of the Reformation in Scotland, and to have become obsolete during the religious wars that preceded the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in Britain.

My conclusion is therefore that the records and texts combine to persuade that the text of the folk play in its modern form was first devised in the second half of the seventeenth century, when the weaponry carried by the combatants had become suitably old-fashioned for what was, as this thesis will argue, already an old-fashioned pastime. As far as I am aware, this is a novel theory, and arrived at in a manner, if not original, at least novel in its systematic application. It will be observed also that the evidence for the folk play in Scotland in 1701 allows it to pre-date the Union of Parliaments, and therefore formally opens up the possibility of an origin for the custom before the divisions between the Kingdoms c.1300.

It is sufficient at this stage to establish by the evidence of record and text that the modern period of the folk play began in the second half of the seventeenth century, and to note that this notion has been arrived at only by a retrospective approach. Later chapters will approach the late seventeenth

century from the other direction, and thus complete what will seem to be the two phases of the folk play's development. Before that, however, this chapter will continue with further consideration of the modern folk play texts.

2. Oral Transmission and the Chapbook

Oral Transmission

So far in this Section the assumption has been made that the text of the Scottish play is traditional and generated in Scotland. This assumption now has to be questioned in an enquiry into the respective importance within the tradition of 'folk', or oral, transmission and that by printed forms, in particular the type of book known as the 'chapbook'.

The evidence from the collectors and performers of the custom is resoundingly on behalf of oral transmission, at all points in its modern history. In fact, only one source acknowledges the inspiration of the chapbook; in a report belonging to the early years of this century the boys of Glasgow^e purchased penny copies of the play in a bookshop called 'The Poet's Box'. No other notice of a published source is made; on the contrary, the informants are often at pains to insist on the traditional nature of the material, and occasionally volunteer ignorance of printed forms (see for example Blantyre, of the same period as Glasgow^e). The notices collected by Carpenter in the 1930s, often of performances c. 1870, are frequently explicit on the absence of printed forms, presumably because the collector made a point of enquiring on the manner of transmission.

The evidence from the first half of the nineteenth century is similar. The correspondent for Falkirk^b in 1825 writes out the text for what he believes is the first time, almost at the same

time as Scott and his contemporaries are going to the trouble of making copies of the text for their own interest (see Abbotsford House, and unloc. Abbotsford Coll.). The poet of Traquhair stated in 1805 that the tradition was passed down 'from father to son' and, as with Scott, the fact that a man of letters was unaware of printed sources must have significance. Maidment, the recorder of Stirling^a, wrote out the folk play text for fear it would be lost to knowledge; he too was a literary man. To return to the youthful Scott and Edinburgh^a of the 1780s, he writes that the verses were 'repeated, but by rote, and unconnectedly'; the implication of 'by rote' is that the lines lived only in the memory of the performers, and the addition of 'unconnectedly' tends to confirm the notion that the sequence of verses lacked the co-ordination of a chapbook version, though perhaps one should not discount entirely possible gaps in Scott's own recollection.

A tradition that can be handed down by oral transmission can be disseminated by the same process, and the Scottish corpus furnishes suitable evidence on this point. The correspondent for Hawick^a implies that the version used in the town was imported by the Turnbull family who moved there from Ancrum c. 1815; to draw a long bow at a venture, the 'second' play collected at Icomb (Gloucestershire)⁹, first ascribed to a Scottish source by Chambers,¹⁰ could well have been carried there by the boy who played Alexander in Stirling^a. There are sound textual reasons concerning the name 'Galoshan' (to be considered later) for believing that the play in Moniaive, and in Scremerston, Northumberland,¹¹ was imported from central or eastern Scotland.

Despite the evidence of this nature, there are similarities in folk play texts of such a marked nature that it seems impossible

that oral transmission and migration of people could have brought them into being. For example, Beelzebub describes his club and pan in identical lines not only in Inkerman, Melrose and Galloway, but also in Sussex, Cornwall and Belfast, and in very many places in between. Such precise similarity, in such separation of time and space, raises the question of the influence of printed forms of the play.

The Chapbook

It is now generally recognised that the printed form of the folk play was circulated in chapbooks, the cheap, pocket-sized, popular literature on sale in Britain from the seventeenth century to the twentieth. Their influence on the modern folk play is supposed to be great, but relatively few have survived for scholarly inspection. The reason for this may be easily guessed at: chapbooks were not the treasured possessions of bibliophiles, but rather the 'prompt copies' for the guiser bands, no doubt passed from hand to hand in the urgency of rehearsal, and kept in the pocket of the guiser's coat.

Their scarcity is only one source of difficulty. Folk play editions were frequently undated and if their printing was ever recorded, these records are almost everywhere lost or destroyed. Attempts to discover the provenance of play editions by textual analysis are confounded by the ease with which they could be transported hundreds of miles,¹² to locations where they could become mixed with indigenous material, or with other chapbooks, the resulting blend perhaps taken up by another printer, whose output would recommence the cycle.

With this sketch of the problems in mind, the area of the

Scottish chapbook is best approached via Helm, who first investigated the subject in a study that confined itself to the north-west of England.¹³ Among his findings were the facts that the folk play appeared in chapbooks from c.1770 until c.1914, and that publishing was concentrated in industrial towns. Helm linked the second point with the growth of these centres, partly the result of the immigration of agricultural workers from different areas, with the consequent lack of a common popular cultural tradition, for which the chapbook play was a remedy.

Helm's theory is tenable, and relevant to Scotland where, for example, the industrial revolution brought multiplying populations to Falkirk and the manufacturing towns on the Clyde in the first two decades of the nineteenth century,¹⁴ and it is therefore in the light of his remark that the chapbooks are investigated.

Three of these present themselves for examination. The first of these is the earliest chapbook yet identified as a source for the conventional folk play, titled 'Alexander and the King of Egypt: A Mock play as it is acted by the Mummers every Christmas', which was printed in Newcastle in 1771 and 1778, and, slightly modified, in Whitehaven in 1826.¹⁵

The opening lines of the Newcastle text,

Silence, brave gentlemen; if you will give an eye

Alexander is my Name, I'll sing the Tragedy;

A Ramble here I took, the Country for to see,

Three Actors here I've brought so far from Italy...

are closely related to the corresponding passages in three of the earliest Scottish texts (Hawick^a, Stirling^a, unloc. Abbotsford Collection^b), all of which were noted in or ascribed to the years 1815-1835.

Another connection is made by the postscript to the unloc. Galloway Mactaggart (1823) text, 'Thus is a fellow struck out of five senses into fifteen', and the line, 'A man driven out of seven senses into fifteen!', from the Newcastle/Whitehaven chapbook.

Apart from other, later-recorded resemblances (as at Glasgow^a, Hawick^b, Helensburgh, and Inkerman) which are omitted from this consideration, the cited text seems to be the total connection between the first British chapbook and the Scottish texts noted within thirty or forty years of its publication.

The conclusion has to be that this chapbook, though evidently popular east and west in northern England, was not brought north. In fact, in the light of the admittedly slender evidence, it is probable that the link between the chapbook and the Scottish locations is created by the migration of Scottish workers to the industrial north-east of England, carrying these four lines of the play text with them. Support for this is given by the name of 'Alexander', of Scottish association, and most common in Scottish texts from the earliest record.

The second of these three chapbooks to be considered is a compilation made in 1842 by Henry Slight, called 'Christmas: his pageant play, or Myserie, of 'St George', as played by the itinerant Actors and Mummers in the Courts of the Nobility, and Gentry, the Colleges, in the halls of the ancient Corporations and Guild Merchants, and the Public Hostelries and Taverns'.¹⁶ A footnote adds that the lengthy text was 'compiled and collated with several curious Ancient black-letter editions'. Its particular interest here is that it contains text recognisably Scottish in provenance and, as black-letter was a type face in common use, broadly speaking, from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries, the suggestion is that Slight's sources included at

least one Scottish chapbook, of unusually early date.

Upon examination, however, it becomes obvious that Slight's obscurantism over his originals was designed to conceal the fact that he had commingled the Newcastle/Whitehaven chapbook, the Falkirk^b text (published by Hone in 1827), and a third, non-Scottish source from which he has taken the doctor's vaunt and Snapdragon.¹⁷

The last of these three chapbooks has already been the subject of a study by Preston, Smith, and Smith.¹⁸ Their findings are that a chapbook called The Peace Egg; or St George's Annual Play for the Amusement of Youth, of which two copies are known to have survived, was published by Gage and Gray of North Portland Street in Glasgow c.1864. A third chapbook survives, printed from the same standing type, but bearing the name of James Kay & Sons, Enoch Wynd, Glasgow, and published in 1873, or slightly earlier. The implication of the type-face and dates is that both the standing type and the published play text were marketable commodities. Furthermore, a similarity between the text of the Glasgow chapbooks and the texts of near-contemporary chapbooks printed in Preston and Manchester is convincingly demonstrated to be the result of the former being 'Scottished' from the Lancashire originals.

Further proof of this last point is supplied by the chapbook title, for the label 'Peace Egg' is, in modern times, a phrase little known outside Lancashire. As far as I am aware, its last use in Scotland was to name the Robin Hood play at Linton in 1610 as a 'Pash' play.¹⁹

The search through the Scottish corpus for the influence of this 'Peace Egg' chapbook reveals one location heavily indebted

to it. The Inkerman version has approximately 80 lines that correspond closely with this chapbook, about 60% of the total text. The remaining 40% includes the doctor's cure,²⁰ and the incursion of Bruce, Wallace and Menteith (which heroes also occur in the east of industrialised Strathclyde, at Wishaw 1910).

The circumstances provide exemplary evidence to support Helm's theory that chapbooks served immigrant urban populations, for Inkerman, as the details in the Gazetteer relate, was a nineteenth-century 'new town', founded in 1858 to exploit the ironstone discovered there. The children of families so abruptly brought together would have no traditional play to perform, and for them a chapbook would be an authoritative arbiter among the babel of different dialogues. An orthodox argument would be that the Glasgow chapbook, imported to meet the same need it had satisfied in industrial Lancashire, arrived in newly-built Inkerman fresh from the presses, c. 1864-73, and founded an oral tradition. Perhaps as a reaction to its 'Englishness', a trio of Scottish heroes was grafted on, together with a more favoured cure. As the custom was confined to boys who seldom spent more than two years in the troupe,²¹ in the thirty years before the text was collected the tradition would have passed through ten or fifteen generations of Inkerman children, and 'folk transmission' preserved 60% of the original text.

This is a very credible interpretation of the facts, and may well be the truth. Nevertheless, theorising about the provenance and movement of the play texts has always to be ventured in the shade cast by the chapbook, the instrument of mediation whose influence is as little understood as it is much suspected. In the case of the Inkerman, for example, it cannot be known for certain that the text collected in 1900 had not been in chapbook form only

a few years before. Admittedly, this is unlikely; much more probable, for example, is that a new (and maybe 'English') chapbook was responsible for the Falkirk^c text collected in 1841, which differed so much from the Falkirk^b of 1827. One conclusion, at least must be drawn from the circumstances of Falkirk and Inkerman: extreme caution needs to be observed in determining the 'Scottishness' of the 'Galoshan' play texts, at least from the middle of the nineteenth century.

In full awareness, therefore, of the shadow of the chapbook, the following observations are offered on the recurring elements of the first Scottish texts. In the matter of characters, Alexander and Galatian are prominent, and Judas only appears in the drama before 1841. Conversely, Dr. Brown and Beelzebub, almost inescapable in the post-1841 plays, make no appearance in the early records, except in the late-written Hawick^a. In terms of 'action', the all-important cure is made twice by a 'rod', and once by the 'club', but never thus in the post-1841 texts. Finally, in the matter of text, conspicuous in the early plays are the passages demanding the clearing of the room (noted in the internal dating to derive from before 1740), and the descriptions of the 'Land of Marvels and Plenty'. The foregoing, and some few other, aspects of the early Scottish plays are taken to be intimations of an eighteenth-century Scottish chapbook, very influential on the texts in performance prior to 1840. Though this putative chapbook is almost certainly beyond recovery, the textual elements will serve, at a later stage in this study, to help construct the bridge that connects the modern phase of the folk play with the age immediately preceding it.

In conclusion, this chapter has so far traced the beginning

of the modern folk play to the late seventeenth century; the next stage in the enquiry is to discover when the modern period ended.

3. The Decline of the Folk Play

At the beginning of this chapter, the continuity of the custom at Biggar was cited as proof that the folk play tradition in Scotland was not yet extinguished. It is also possible to view the Biggar play, not as the last of the modern period, but rather as an example of a new phase in the evolution of the folk play. The novelty of the play at Biggar, and at other locations in Britain, is that it is in the hands of adults who are aware of its history and importance, and who believe that they have a responsibility to preserve a local tradition, and with it the distinction that the custom confers on the community.

This concept of the folk play as a concern for caring civic leaders is a world away from the custom noted in the nineteenth century. There is no reason to believe that the youthful performers had any notion of the antiquity of their pastime. For them it was a week or a night of excitement and enjoyment (see, for example, Glasgow^b), but the evidence of the texts, the performers, the audience, and the Collectors is that the main stimulus of the custom was the collection made at the close of the performance. For the purposes of this study, therefore, the modern period of the folk play is deemed to have come to an end when the children and the young people ceased from performing the play for material gain.

In seeking this point of time, the most obvious and voluminous source of information, the opinions of the Collectors, has to be disregarded. Although some Collectors reported the play to be vigorous at the time of their writing (for example,

Abbotsford House, and unloc. Roxburghs. MacRitchie), the majority feared the imminent demise of the custom, or mourned its passing. This is as true of the early reports as of the late. For example, the Falkirk^b 1825 account concludes with this foreboding:

'The above practice, like many customs of the olden time, is now quickly falling into disuse, and the revolution of a few years may witness the total extinction of this seasonable doing',

and the Stirling^a 1835 correspondent begins with this justification:

'As the Schoolmaster is so busy in effacing any vestiges of ancient customs and habits, the preservation of this relic of the olden time will afford gratification to those who take pleasure in their early recollections of what happy Britain once was'.

The custom lamented in these two extracts lived on in each town for at least another seventy or eighty years.

Although these and other commentators exaggerated the reports of the folk play's death, it is nevertheless true to say that they saw the patient wane in several measurable respects. What is at the same time both a cause and a register of the play's decline is the loss of status of the performer. In the first notice of the modern tradition, in Falkirk^a 1701, the Kirk Sessions moved against a half dozen youths, labelled 'servants' and 'sons'. It is very likely that this description was favoured because responsible adults (as masters and parents) were thus implicated in the shame, and therefore enlisted on the side of the Kirk Session, but it serves to reveal to us that the players were old enough to leave home for work, and thus probably in their mid-teens. 'Servants' also labels the players in the Bowden 1815 account, and the account from unloc. Teviotdale 1835 calls them

'young men'. By the end of the century, the custom was in the hands of 'children' (at Crieff^b 1884) and 'bairns' (in Glasgow^b c.1875). The decline^a is observed by the correspondent for Crieff^a; writing in 1881 of events in the first half of the century, he notes that 'guizors have deteriorated from full-grown men and women to children'.²² There was another downward step from tradition with the admission to the custom of girls, as at Prestonpans 1914.

The conclusion to be drawn from these dates and ages is that by the third quarter of the nineteenth century the custom had, virtually throughout Scotland, passed to children. This is the broad interpretation of the picture, though it must be noted that, in some places (for example, Abbotsford House 1825), children were known earlier, and that throughout the modern record, from Edinburgh^a c.1780 to the late Barrhead and Leith 1898, younger children assisted as non-speaking supernumeraries to the older boys.

The foregoing is the register of decline; as a cause of decline, the effect of the play in performance by children needs next to be considered. Without wanting at this stage to discuss in any detail the purpose of the custom, it would be sufficient for the argument to note the comment by Wilkie (Bowden 1815) that

'tradition says that it is very unlucky to let the gysarts go out of the house, where they have performed that tragedy without giving them some money to drink, to the success of the family'.

Wilkie seems here to be alluding to a traditional belief that the 'gysarts' bring fertility and prosperity, or at least an absence of misfortune, to the houses in which they perform, and

that this 'luck' would somehow be forfeited if the players were allowed to leave unrewarded.

The 'fertility-bringer' needs to be one with vitality, strength of body and voice, and expressive personality. Once the custom fell to the children, this traditional purpose was beyond recall, for in the land of post-pubertal vitality, the younger boys and girls were innocents abroad. The play as performed by children lost its essential appeal, and diminished in importance.

As the players diminished, so did the reception of their audience, for the lower the status of the performer, the lower its regard in the eyes of the community, and as these two aspects of the custom declined, so each hastened the other.

It is possible to discern different threads in the audience's decreasing interest. There is the scorn of the educated man, as at Liberton 1864:

'Of anything I have heard of the theatrical literature of our Scottish guisards, there is little but sheer common city vulgarity, and little worth noting even for its grotesqueness'.

There was the contempt of the adult for the affairs of the young:

'The boys would be invited into the kitchen. Mother would certainly remain as audience and any grown-ups who could be bothered with the ploys of children' (Crieff^b 1884).

Later still, the house-proud bourgeoisie of unloc. Vale of Leven could intimidate the performers:

'Had the Goloshans selected a season other than round about the close of the year, they might have evoked more enthusiasm. The truth is that the Vale housewives tried to have their homes spotlessly clean -

especially at that period - and they simply were not going to allow a wheen laudies wi' glaury feet to come in and make a mess of their kitchens...'

In tandem with this decline^e in performer and audience is a detectable change in the notion of the reward asked for and offered at the close of the performance. The first mention of reward is by Scott in the Edinburgh^a account, where he collected plum-cake. A tradition of bread or cake as reward extends to unloc. Galloway MacTaggart 1823 and Abbotsford House 1824-5, but in these places, as in Falkirk^b 1825 and Peebles^a 1840, both food and money are solicited. The reward of money becomes standard during the nineteenth century; it is first mentioned at Traquhair in 1805 and not until Hurler of c.1900 is the addition made of nuts, and elsewhere of fruit and cake. Falkirk^f, of 1905-10, best represents the transformed reward, with its varied assortment of foodstuffs, and no mention of money. Ten years later, the Johnstone 1920 account epitomises the folk play reward of money, when a performance is suggested as a fund-raising event.

The audience response to the request for money changed markedly in the course of the century. At the beginning of the period, the Bowden 1815 account repeated the tradition that it was considered 'unlucky' not to give the guisers money: Sir Walter Scott (Abbotsford House 1824-5) was careful to give the players the correct sum of money, and the unloc. Berwickshire^a c.1860 account recalled that 'known' players were given extra pence. The change in the patrons' attitude is expressed by the unloc. Wife correspondent, who wrote that c.1850 the boys were welcomed by the householders and given coppers, but that at the time of his writing (1903) they had come to behave and be regarded as beggars. A more exact pointing of the moment of

change comes in the Crieff^b 1884 account:

' performances were mostly to grown-ups at home, or to friends of the family, as anything like begging was frowned upon by his mother'.

As the gathering of money was the chief incentive for the continuation of the custom, this stigma of 'begging', which had grown so powerful by 1884 as to limit the performance of the play, would ultimately prove fatal.

So far the decline in the folk play has been shown, by a reading of the accounts, to be brought about by a growing disdain by the audience, noted c.1864-1900, the increasing youthfulness of the performer, noted almost everywhere by the 1870s, and more importantly, the animadversion towards begging, noted in 1884. One more angle on the decline of the folk play may be taken, by a calculation of the years of the last performances of the traditions.

Before this important assessment is taken, it must be admitted that the evidence in this area is not as accurate as one would wish. It is difficult to secure a date for the last performance of a folk play; most ended with a whimper, withered and unregarded, and even if all the households of a community were interrogated, it would be difficult for people to recall, maybe at a distance of some decades, the precise Hallowe'en or Hogmanay in question. Nevertheless, an approach to the problem is made, with sufficient caution to render the findings useful.

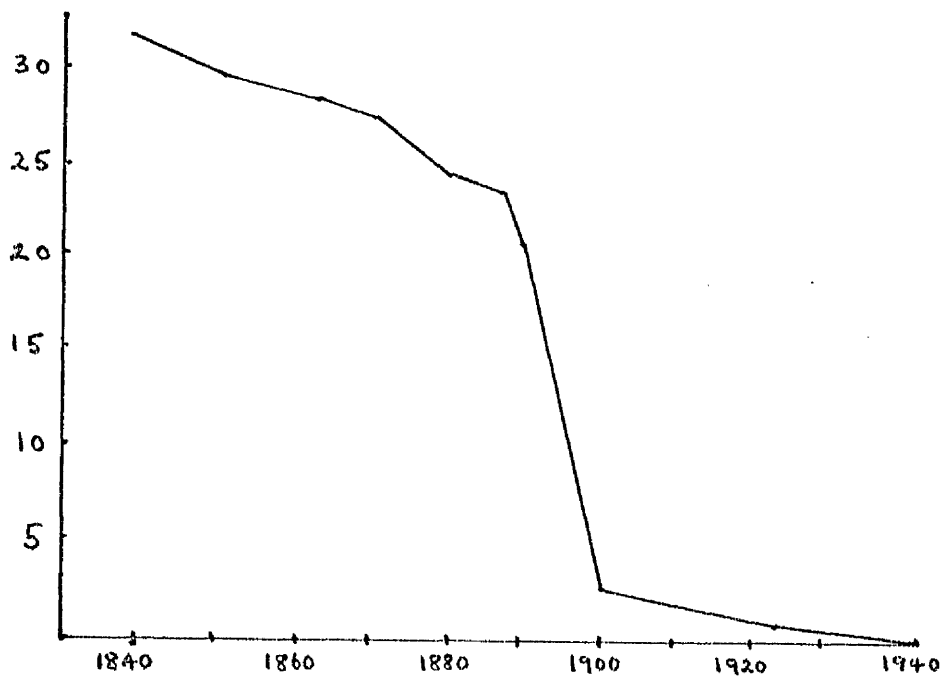
In fact, two angles on the demise of the tradition have been taken. For both of them, the assumption is made that each of the recorded traditions was in existence in 1840 (unless

there is good evidence to believe otherwise, as at Inkerman). Three types of record are recognised on the basis of their usefulness in calculating their demise: about fifty of them are deemed to be too vague to warrant consideration; in thirty-one instances, the information is enough to provide the grounds for a reasonable guess for the year of the play's demise; in thirteen other cases the correspondent (and/or other negative evidence) suggests a more precise year for the tradition's last performance. (The thirteen reports in question are Edinburgh^b, Crieff^b, Ballater, Peebles^b, Linton, Stirling^c, Jedburgh^d, unloc. Roxburghshire, Falkirk^f, Prestonpans, Newtown St Boswells, and Leven).

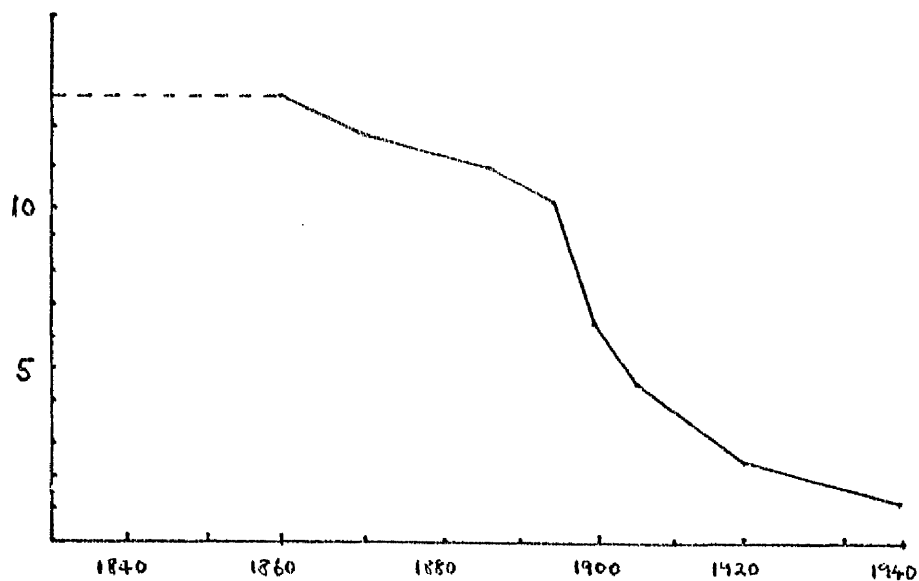
The thirty-one plays for whose demise can be made a reasonable guess are represented on Graph One; the thirteen more precise deaths are shown on Graph Two. It will be noted that their intimations are broadly similar; there was a slow decline in mid-century, and a sudden acceleration which began about 1880, keeping its momentum for about thirty years, in which time the destruction of the folk play custom was virtually completed. Of the three aspects of decline already noted, that of begging seems the most relevant to this pattern, for the opprobrium attached to begging seems to have grown up after 1850, and have become a moral imperative by 1884.

The reasons for this rapid decline need to be established. In the first place, it must be accepted that the imported English chapbooks, with their alien characters and dialogue, were not harmful agents. There is no comment to be found to suggest that they weakened the Scottish custom, and the evidence of the popularity of the Glasgow 'Peace-Egg', both with the printers and with the boys of Inkerman, is that they were rather a source of strength.

The Decline of the Folk Play



Graph One: Thirty-one traditions for which the year of the last performance can be estimated.



Graph Two: Thirteen traditions for which the year of the last performance is given or implied.

Another, in this case, recommended, ~~reason~~ needs to be dismissed. The Falkirk^b 1825 account relates how the folk-actors visit farmhouses 'unless denied entrance by being told that the OLD STYLE is kept'.²³ The calendar change of 1752 may indeed have had a damaging effect on the extent of the reception for the folk play, but it is not the instrument for the decline c.1880.

The reasons for the swift decline^c of the folk play in the second half of the nineteenth century have to be sought in the changes in the social, political and economic climate of those decades, and in particular those that would affect the lives of those whose families would make up the performers and the bulk of the audience for the folk play.

The changes are plainly evident, for the years 1867-1884 saw the legislative processes that brought about modern Britain, and the exchange of the almost feudal²⁴ society of the mid-century for the almost democratic²⁵ government of the century's end. Although the political powers of the 'feudal' establishment were slightly eroded by the Reform Act of 1832 (which was marked in Scottish cities with the parade of a folk totem²⁶), the real impact came with the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884 which, broadly speaking, enfranchised the urban and rural working-class respectively. The effect of these two Bills was consolidated by legislation in 1872 introducing secret ballot, and in 1883 prohibiting the use of wealth to influence the voter corruptly. In the same years, the effect of industrialisation on the traditional attitudes of employer and employee was acknowledged by a series of Trades Union Acts, in the years 1871-76, which lifted the restrictions hitherto laid on workmen who wished to negotiate the terms of their employment.

One of the results of this democratisation of British society was a fundamental change in the attitude towards charity. The new pride of the working class, their feeling that 'Jack was as good as his master', their new-found dignity that came with the responsibility of negotiating their wages and working conditions, all came to be expressed in a refusal to accept charity, hitherto the badge of the helpless. As the prime impulse for the folk play tradition was the collecting of money, so it came under the ban of begging. The reaction of the democratised householder to the tradition was now markedly different: in the Hawick^a 1875 account

'the first of the five had to be a "ferritsome" lad, as he had the doors to open and begin the play. He often got a reception as rude as his own entrance had been [i.e. unannounced], and had many a time to rush out more eagerly than he had dared to enter in';

to repeat the Grieff^b 1884 comment, 'performances were mostly to grown-ups at home, or to friends of the family, as anything like begging was frowned upon by his mother'.

Begging was more easily pardoned in the very young, especially if the reward was inconsiderable nuts and apples. The Hurlet account is representative of the final indignities of the Galoshan play. There, probably about the turn of the century, it was performed by six-year olds, in their own houses, with the help of 'two big girls' to dress them and coach them in their parts. The two hundred year tradition was on the brink of collapse, for its participants were now too young to maintain it without the assistance of their seniors. When this was not forthcoming, the custom disintegrated, and although some names and rhymes for a time remained, each of the troupe now gave solo recitations or

songs, for the reward of the nuts and apples. In this form is the Hallowe'en guising carried on at the present time, and it is fortunate that the New Stevenston account captures the moment in which the 'Galoshans' evolved into the 'Guisers'. Gradually, over the next twenty or thirty years, the new form of guising replaced the old, and the folk play was finished.²⁷

Biggar alone exempted itself from this extinction, an example of the exception proving the rule. The folk play died because it had come to be seen as an instrument for begging; by tradition, the Biggar play was performed in order to collect money to buy coal for the town's Yule Fire, and thus to gather the common wealth for the common good. This was not begging, but a fit pastime for young men and boys, and therefore Biggar survived the passage from the 'feudal' to the 'democratic' society.

This chapter on the modern folk play has tended to certain conclusions. The more important of these are that the period of the modern play is approximately the two centuries from 1680 to 1880, and that the corpus preserved a recognisably Scottish flavour throughout this period, and particularly before c.1840. English chapbooks were influential in the new industrial areas in the second half of the nineteenth century, but elsewhere and at other times the custom seems to have survived in oral tradition, though apparently always in decay. Of significance was the growing money-making motive of the players, instrumental in bringing about a rapid demise of the custom when Britain moved from 'feudalism' to 'democracy' by Acts of Parliament extending the franchise and the rights of the working man to negotiate his wages and conditions of work.

The central purpose in beginning this history of the Scottish folk play with the present was to discover some determining

characteristics of the custom that could be recognised in the very different conditions of medieval Scotland. Two other advantages have accrued: the next chapters of this study will advance the folk play through centuries for which the evidence is often less firm and unambiguous; the modern phase, as defined and described in the fore-going pages, can now remain as a firm landfall for the voyage. The second advantage is that the twentieth century transformation of the custom, with the total loss of text and characters, and only the date, the reward, and the disguise remaining, will prepare the reader for other, earlier transformations, hardly less extreme than the one so clearly documented and in living memory.

Notes to Chapter Two

¹ Cawte, Helm and Peacock, English Ritual Drama,^{pp.} 15-16. It might be thought that the motivation to perform the play should also feature among these criteria.

² The Annals of Banff, ed. W. Cramond (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1891-3), I, p.129.

³ T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People (London: Collins/Fontana, 1972), pp.207-8.

⁴ Henry Grey Graham, Social Life in the Eighteenth Century (London: Black, 1950), I, 186 (quoting Henderson, Annals of Dunfermline).

⁵ The New Shell Guide to Scotland, ed. Moray McLaren, 2nd Edn., (London: Ebury Press, 1977), p.90.

⁶ Oxford English Dictionary.

⁷ Smout, pp.152-53.

⁸ George Gush, Renaissance Armies 1480-1650 (Cambridge: Stevens, 1975), pp. 9, 10, 13-14, 36, 38.

⁹ The opening lines of this fragment are,

Silence, merry gentlemen,

Unto my conscience say,

For my name is Alexander

And I'll show you thrice to tie;
 We are six of us all.
 Six merry boys are we,
 We come to take a ramble
 In your houses for to see,
 And some treasures for to give,
 For what you freely give to us
 We freely shall receive.
 The next young man that I call in
 He glowren of me now, (He is Galatian of renown)
 And he shall slay the Admiral
 And then he'll take the Crown.

No date is given for the custom, but most of the examples Tiddy collected were taken down about the turn of the century. The Icomb text is given in Tiddy, The Mummers' Play, p.178.

¹⁰ Edmund Chambers, The English Folk Play (Oxford: University Press, 1969), p.60.

¹¹ The Scremerston play is given in Helm, The English Mummers' Play, pp.66-67.

¹² The furthest-travelled on record is the Tiverton (Devon) version of 'Alexander and the King of Egypt', a copy of which was recovered in Philadelphia: Alex Helm, The Chapbook Mummers' Plays (Ibstock: Guizer, 1969), p.25.

¹³ The Chapbook Mummers' Plays (see above)

¹⁴ Smout, pp.242-43.

¹⁵ The information and quotations used here are from Helm, pp.39-45.

¹⁶ Henry Slight, The Archaeologist and Journal of Antiquarian Science, 1 (September 1841 - February 1842), 176-83.

¹⁷ His fraud is only too apparent in the difference between the vitality and rhythm of the original, and Slight's flaccid translation. For example, the widespread begging-rhyme makes up the first four lines of the Falkirk play:

Rise up gudewife and shake your feathers!

Dinna think that we are beggars,

We are bairns com'd to play

And for to seek our hogmanay,

appears in Slight's version thus:

Rise up, good wives, shake your feathers;

Don't you think that we are beggars!

We are gentles, come to play,

And seek your English good money.

¹⁸ M.J. Preston, M.G. Smith, and P.S. Smith, 'The Peace Egg chapbooks in Scotland: an analytic approach to the study of chapbooks', The Bibliothek, ed. Douglas S. Mack, 8, No.3 (1976), 71-90.

¹⁹ Mill, pp.257-60.

²⁰ The 'doctor and cure' episode from the chapbook, which belongs in Inkerman, is found instead and at the same date, at Old Kilpatrick, about seven miles north, across the River Clyde.

It is temptingly easy to suggest that the 'doctor' moved home, and allowed an incomer to take his place.

²¹ Probably local practice varied, but the time served in the custom was governed by competition for the places. A boy might well be ten years old before he could be entrusted with the role; soon after he would consider himself too old to ally himself with the younger boys. The practice in mid-nineteenth century Lancashire was for boys to join the custom when they were ten, and leave on reaching the age of twelve: Helm, Chapbook Mummers' Plays, p.30..

²² Although the style of guising referred to at this point has no obvious connection with the folk play, its kinship is sufficiently close to offer a useful parallel.

²³ In 1752, Britain adjusted to the Gregorian Calendar by omitting September 3rd - 13th, the accumulated deficiency of the Julian Calendar being then eleven days. At the same time, England and Wales made the change that Scotland had made in 1600, of moving the beginning of the New Year from March 25th to January 1st, 'Old Style' and 'New Style' were the labels consequently attached to the dates before and after 31st December 1751.

²⁴ It might be said that the society of the first half of the nineteenth century was 'feudal' in the sense that, in the main, the employers owned the land, and the means of production, determined the terms and conditions of work for their employees, and took a paternalist attitude (with whatever that might imply) towards their workmen and their families. Likewise, in the wider political sphere, power was in the hands of the monarchy and

aristocracy, or purchased.

This surviving feudalism has been well noted. Peter Nichols, the playwright, believes (like Matthew Arnold fl. c.1860-1880) in the democracy of travel, and approvingly quotes the poet's welcome to the railway for the reason that it would bring about the end of feudalism (Peter Nichols, The Freeway (1974), Foreword). Arnold's hope was, however, vain: 'The close of Queen Victoria's reign and the end of the century saw the so-called 'feudal' society of the countryside still in being': George Macaulay Trevelyan, English Social History (London: Longmans, 1978), p.511.

²⁵ For example, women had not yet been given the vote.

²⁶ King, originally Saint, Crispin, the head of the Cordwainers' Guild, occasionally paraded the streets, as a sign of popular rejoicing. In Aberdeen 'an attempt to abolish the custom in the year 1785 occasioned much rioting, and several persons were incarcerated on the 8th of August, 1832, it was revived to celebrate the passing of the Reform Act'; F. Marian McNeill, The Silver Bough, (Glasgow: MacLellan, 1961) III, 111 (quoting Joseph Robertson, The Book of Bon Accord). In Glasgow, 'the last King Crispin pageant occurred at the passing of the Reform Bill, and attracted great attention, King Crispin being splendidly arrayed in royal robes', (Andrew MacGeorge, Old Glasgow: The Place and its People (Glasgow: Blackie, 1888), p.210.

²⁷ In some places, the folk play term has been preserved as the name for the modern custom. At the present time, the children of Port Glasgow (NS3274) know Hallowe'en guising as 'doin yer Gloshens', and the same term is known in Greenock and Barrhead.

I am told by the actor Robert Trotter that c.1935 the guisers in Dumbarton (NS4075) were known as 'Gloshins'. An informant in Gartocharn (NS4286) reports that 'Galoshans' was the title of the boys in all kinds of old clothing, who went guising with cabbage stalks; this village is in the area of unloc. Strathendrick (q.v.)

Also:

'The word "Galoshan" itself means nothing to most Scots people. Here and there it is preserved, as in the village of Law, in Lanarkshire (and not in neighbouring towns or villages) in the form of a Hallowe'en greeting, "Will you help the Galoshans?", or, "It's the Goloshens. Please for wir Hallowe'en". '(A.L. Taylor: 'Galatians, Goloshan, and the Inkerman Pace-Eggers', Saltire Review, 5, No.16 (Autumn 1958), 42.

Braidwood, recalling his experience as a guiser in the 1920s, referred to himself as a 'Galoshie', and remembers the boys asking, 'Please help the Galoshies' (source as for Hurler).

CHAPTER THREE

The Origins of the Folk Play in Scotland

1. The Lessons of the Map

In the first chapter the point was made that the political and social history of Britain dictated that the folk play in Scotland must be either a post-1707 importation, or the modern version of a practice known in much of Britain by the end of the thirteenth century. In the second chapter, textual evidence was adduced to show that the modern folk play text was in existence by the end of the seventeenth century, and the record of Falkirk^a in 1701 was interpreted as the first notice of the folk play in performance. On these grounds it follows that the search for the origin of the play must be made in the years before 1707, and therefore also before 1296, the year that saw the beginning of two hundred or more years of separation and hostility between Scotland and England.

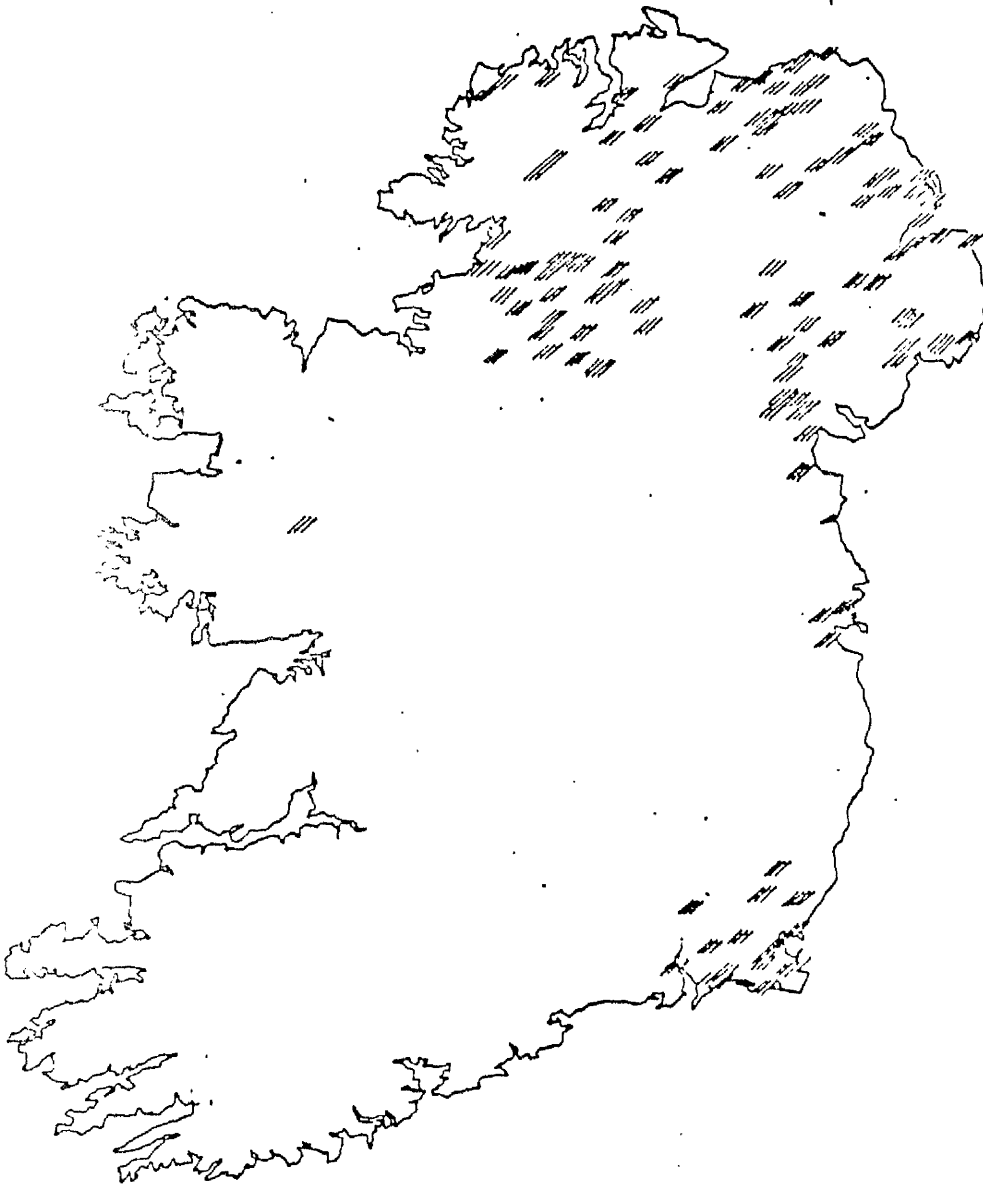
To that end, this chapter begins with a survey of the history of Scotland, or at least that part of it that belongs to the folk play. The matter of the geography of the play is of the greatest importance, but before studying the map of Scotland, it is useful to begin by viewing the Scottish folk drama in the context of the British Isles. In this task, Maps One and Two (reprinted from English Ritual Drama¹) are invaluable. They reveal two important facts: firstly that the custom exists only in English-speaking areas, in England, Lowland Scotland, Ulster (planted with



MAP ONE

Folk Play Locations in Britain

(reprinted from English Ritual Drama, ed. Cawte, Helm & Peacock (1967), p.32)



MAP TWO

Folk Play locations in Ireland

(reprinted from English Ritual Drama, ed. Cawte, Helm
& Peacock, p.34)

English and English-speaking Scots in the seventeenth century), in the Pales of Dublin and the south-east of Ireland, and in anglicised South Wales; secondly, that the custom is by no means uniform, even in England, for south-east England, East Anglia and north-west England have little or no record of the play. It should be added that the custom is also riven with differences of style and season, and that these differences are generally thought to be derived from early medieval patterns of settlement.² From this larger context, therefore, it will be presumed that the distribution of the play in Scotland will be influenced by (i) the introduction of the English language, and (ii) early medieval population shifts.

The preparation of a 'folk-play' map of Scotland first required the gathering of, as far as was possible, a comprehensive list of the records of Scottish folk play, and a substantial period of research was devoted to this end. The starting-point was the list given by Cawte et al., the first and only such index, which listed for Scotland 27 locations and 8 unlocated plays.³ A lengthy search in printed records and personal memories, and access to private and archive collections, have made possible the enlargement of the Scottish corpus. Although examination showed that two of the originally-listed locations were erroneous,⁴ it was still possible to increase the locations from 25 to approximately 70, and for the unlocated plays to be augmented from 8 to 26. The play locations are shown on Maps Three and Four.

The locations and the unlocated plays are obviously the best information on the extent of the custom, but two lesser sources of knowledge should not be ignored. The first of these, the places where the word 'galoshans' has apparently survived the

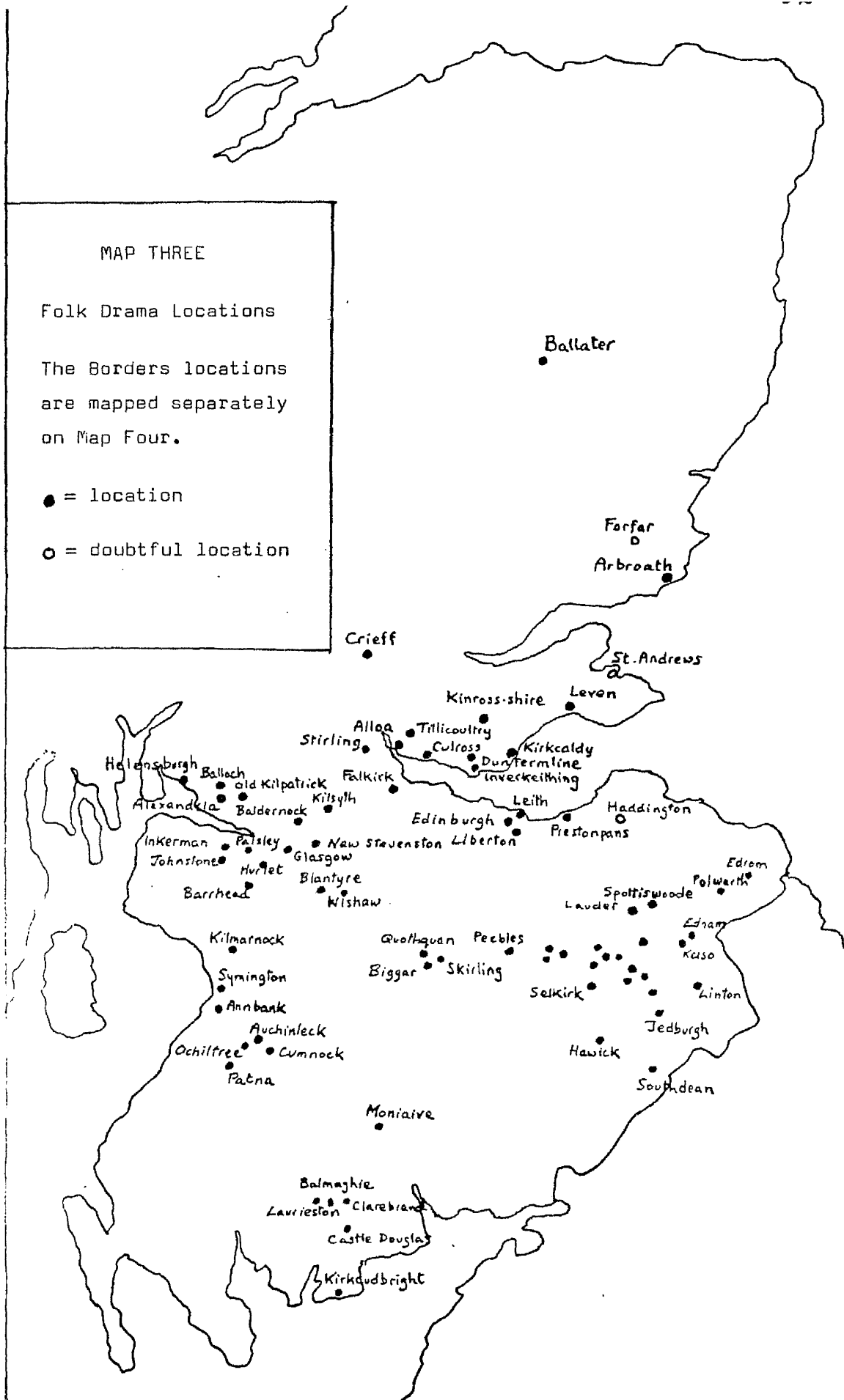
MAP THREE

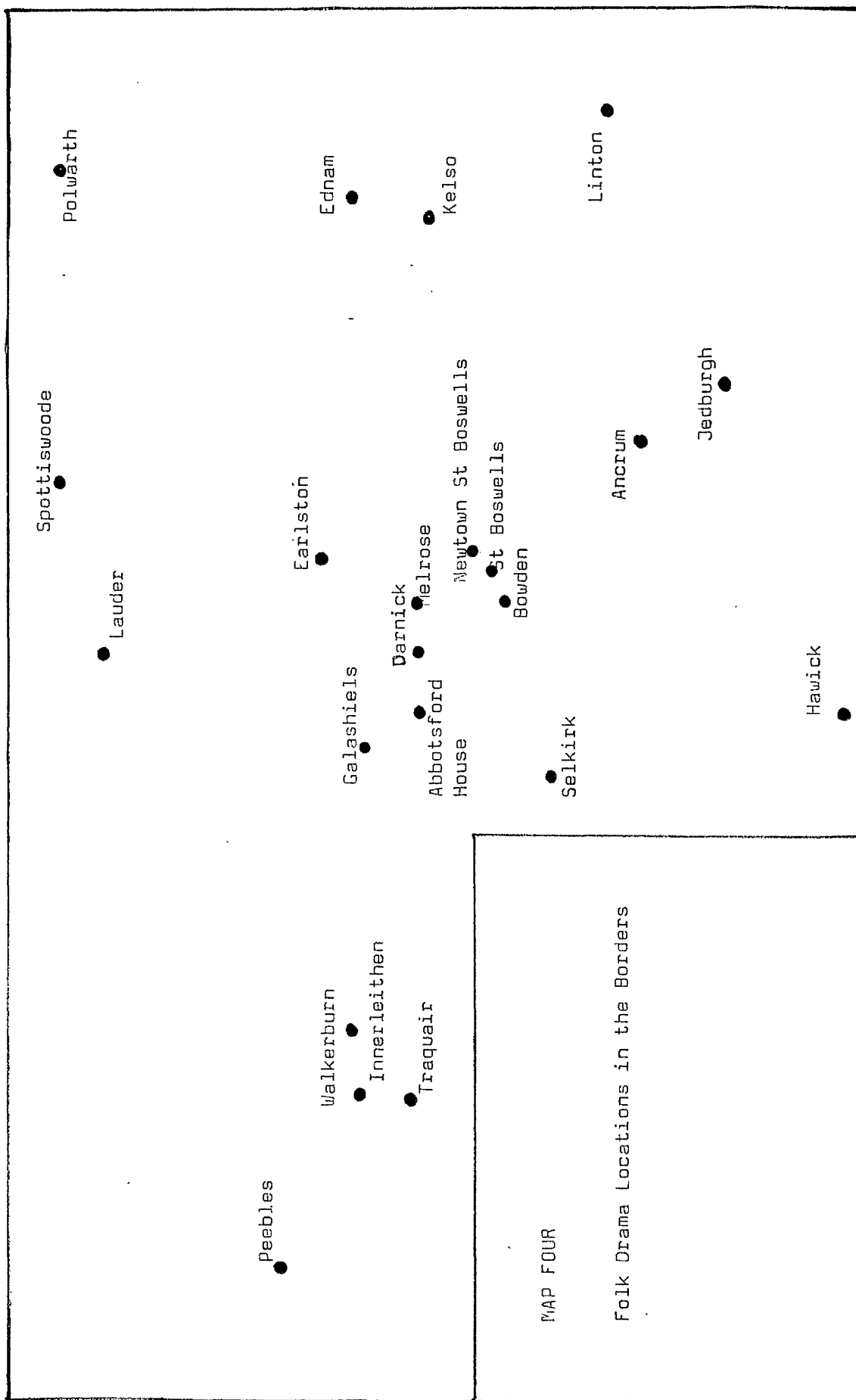
Folk Drama Locations

The Borders locations are mapped separately on Map Four.

● = location

○ = doubtful location





denise of the drama, mostly found in the valley and estuary of the Clyde, have already been listed⁵. The second comes from the opinions given by collectors of the folk play on the extent of the practice. To begin in the south of Scotland, the custom was 'in full force' in Roxburghshire (unloc. MacRitchie) and 'most popular' in Teviotdale (unloc. Teviotdale). The countryside surrounding Abbotsford House, c.1825, could provide seventy performers, and an estimate of three or four hundred in the neighbourhood. The Bowden account of 1815 regarded the custom as widespread in 'the Southern Counties of Scotland', preferring this phrase to the 'Lowlands' of the manuscript's title. Robert Chambers (see unloc. Chambers) stated that the drama, wholly or in part, 'exists in every part of Lowland Scotland'. The unloc. East Lothian account includes the comment that the play was 'universally in fashion among the peasantry of East Lothian in the writer's early days' (c.1860), and was 'still very common' at the time of writing (1896).

Only two such comments apply to the west of Scotland: the Clarebrand account, presumably speaking of the Kirkcudbright, Galloway region at the beginning of this century, states that 'Hallowe'en's dramatic performance was almost universal'; the Glasgow^b (1878) account says that the play 'was acted throughoutGlasgow'.

Further north, the author of the unloc. Stirlingshire account, writing with some care about the Stirlingshire of 1880, claimed the play 'in the villages at least of the county'. Unloc. Angus (1888), referring to 1830, describes the play as being 'said, sung, and acted ... in Forfarshire and the eastern counties of Scotland'.

The mapping of the Scottish folk play has been a most revealing process in this research, and the distribution map is to bear the weight of some crucial interpretation. It is therefore important

that this map is accepted as a reliable and meaningful chart, and not merely the record of some random relics of a tradition.

On three points, the map can command respect. The number of locations are, as has already been said, the product of lengthy and extensive research. Moreover, the 'negative' areas of the map are no less compelling than the 'positive', for the blank spaces have been assailed through scores of regional histories, local reminiscences and works of folklore. These authorities have declared against the folk play with such conviction that the researcher can have confidence in excluding such areas from consideration.⁶

The third point concerns the continuity of research. The skeleton of a distribution pattern observed in the first mapping¹ was systematically fleshed out during the period of research, implying that it was indeed the real pattern, and would be revealed in more or less detail according to the amount of available data. In fact the new locations produced by current research⁷ continue to augment the distribution pattern already recognised, and I would predict this state of affairs to continue.

No use is made in this argument of the collectors' general ascriptions, most of which enthusiastically apportion the custom to areas large and small. It is clear that the writers shared a conviction that the practice was widespread and vigorous, but their opinions on its distribution are never justified by acceptable evidence. It is very natural to magnify the importance of one's recollection by extending its territory (and its antiquity), or by exaggerating the imminence of its demise. This is not to deny the good faith of any one of the correspondents, whose opinions are, as it happens, for the most part, borne out by the map. More serious consideration, however, is given to those who confined

themselves to their own immediate neighbourhoods (e.g. Abbotsford House, unloc. Teviotdale, and Glasgow^b). Such comments on the popularity of the custom offer confirmation for what is readily suspected, that the locations map shadows forth an earlier and greater density of observances; in this instance the folklorist, like an archaeologist, can see a larger picture of the past in the shadows thrown by relics at the sunset of a tradition.

To assist the interpretation of the play's distribution, certain geographical features have been added to Map Five. The play locations in the adjoining areas of northern England and Northern Ireland have been added as reminders of the larger context of the custom. The 600' contour usefully excludes the sparsely-inhabited uplands from further consideration. Two other internal boundaries require some comment. The Highland Line⁸ is the frontier between the English and Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland, and in view of the assumption that the folk play is related to the English-speaking areas of the British Isles, it might have been expected that this boundary would have served for both language and play. This is clearly not the case. Curiously, it is in fact rather the Highland Boundary Fault Line (which in geological terms demarcates the Highlands and Lowlands) that provides the frontier that its demographic brother denies.

The curiosity of this geological frontier, and the apparently random distribution of the folk play in the south and south-east of Scotland, are therefore the two problems posed by the mapping of the custom. The answers to these problems are to be found in the history of pre-1300 Scotland,⁹ particularly in the population movements before this date. At the same time, the opportunity is

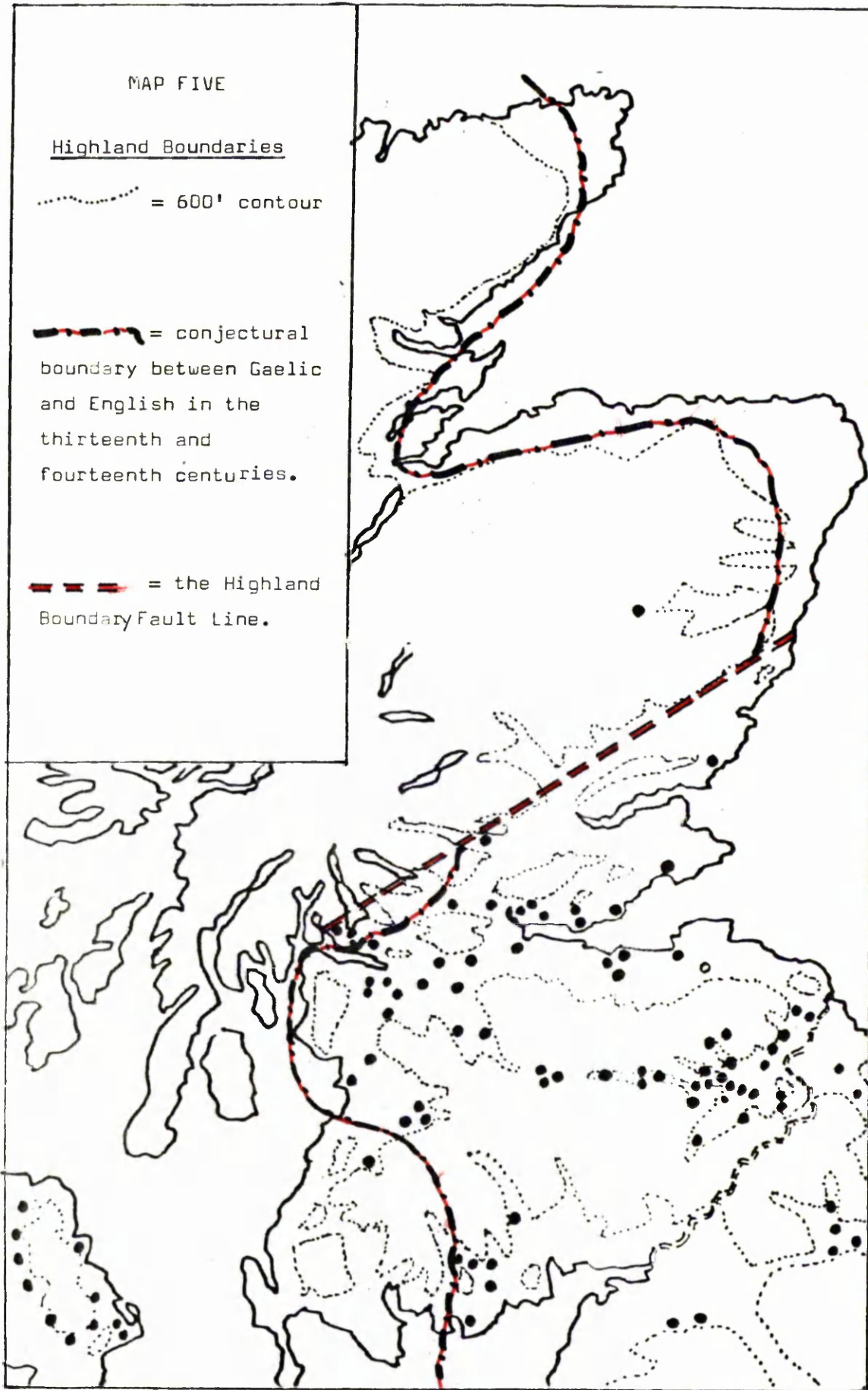
MAP FIVE

Highland Boundaries

..... = 600' contour

—•—•—•— = conjectural
boundary between Gaelic
and English in the
thirteenth and
fourteenth centuries.

— — — — — = the Highland
Boundary Fault Line.



taken to notice cult and ritual observance that relates to the central action (of death and resurrection) in the modern folk play.

2. The Ethnology of Lowland Scotland

The Celts¹⁰

The Celts in Europe stretched in a band from Asia Minor (Galatia) through Greece, Northern Italy, France and Spain to the British Isles, in fact, through most of the lands that in the nineteenth century possessed the resurrection drama. Unfortunately for the clarity of this parallel, the relationship between the folk play and Celtic influence in Britain is at best ambiguous.

Two waves of Celtic migration before the fourth century B.C. brought the Goidelic Celt (the originators of Irish, Scottish and Manx Gaelic), and the Brythonic (speakers of the Gallic spoken in Gaul before A.D. 600, and now only in Wales and Brittany). The Celts in Britain were Brythonic, and as the later waves of Teutonic immigrants pushed westwards, they were squeezed into three western extremities, Cornwall, Wales, and mid-north-west Britain (present-day Cumbria and Strathclyde). Further pressure caused these northern Britons to migrate to their southern refuge in Wales.

It is becoming increasingly evident that Celtic practices in the Teutonic areas were by no means extinguished by the change in political control, and that settlements retained their identity throughout the medieval period and beyond.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine, at least in the field of folk drama, what was properly Celtic from what was of their successors. In modern times, Wales presents no record of a combat, death and resurrection drama that cannot be explained by English immigration or influence. Yet the Welsh mythology contains allusions to the theme, which

presumably date from very early times. Cavenish has recently investigated the motifs of the Arthurian cycle, drawing attention to the vegetation and climatic dramas of Welsh legend. For example, the story of Culhwch and Olwen, in the Mabinogion (circulating c. A.D. 1100, known in part A.D. 800), conceals the nature myth of Olwen (the Earth or Spring Maiden) and her father Ysbaddaden, the stone giant (of Winter), who must die when his daughter marries.¹² Much the same myth pervades the story of Creiddylad, the most majestic maiden in the British Isles. She eloped with Gwythyr son of Greidiawl (=Victor, son of Scorching - a summer king), but while still a virgin was abducted to the north by Gwynn son of Nudd (the winter king). By negotiation, it was agreed that the two warriors would fight for her every succeeding May Day.¹³

The beheading game, probably most familiar in the 'Gawain and the Green Knight' version, came from Celtic legend. In its north-west England form it could have been a Brythonic relic, though the oldest surviving version is an Irish story, 'Bricriu's Feast', in which Cuchulain beheads the giant, but is repaid with a gentle axe-blow, blunt side downwards.¹⁴ From whichever region, this is a product of a Celtic combat, death and resurrection drama. Resurrection was also the gift of the Welsh god Bran, who reanimated fallen warriors by placing them in his cauldron.¹⁵

Clearly, at an early stage, the Brythonic Celts had anthropomorphised the struggle of winter and summer for the earth, and had agreed on a ritual date, May Day, for the combat. At least one technique for resurrection was known to them. It is clear, too, that by the early Middle Ages these motifs were the stuff of story-making. I share Robertson-Smith's view that myth is a literary version of ritual acts,¹⁶ and speculate that the Welsh

romances imply that Celtic vegetation drama once existed, but that their society lacked the requirements for its preservation. Therefore although there is a totally negative correlation between the folk play and the Britons (in Wales and in the Strathclyde area of Scotland), the possibility that the mythology of the Brythonic Celts influenced the culture of non-Welsh Britain should not be discounted.

The Romans

The boundary of the Roman Empire was, from A.D. 142 to A.D. 200, extended northwards from Hadrian's Wall to the Antonine Wall, drawn across Britain at its narrowest point, between the estuaries of the rivers Forth and Clyde.

The high status of Latin in the last two thousand years has tended to magnify the cultural importance of the city of Rome, both in the Middle Ages and in the modern period. For example, Bernheimer, in his discussion of folk drama, writes:

the widespread distribution of these rituals -- over the Balkans, Greece, Asia Minor, North Africa, Gaul, and Southern Germany -- is a key to their origin and age, for it cannot be a matter of chance that their geographic dispersion should coincide as it does with the limits of the Roman Empire.¹⁷

It is in Scotland with the Romans as with the Celts: although a connection seems apparent, there is in fact no useful correlation in northern Britain between the Roman territory and the folk play. Knowing the Roman use of auxiliaries to man the imperial frontiers, the most that could be expected from the Roman presence would be the mingling of continental traditions with the Brythonic, but even this admixture could only survive in areas of dense occupation in Roman times, with some continuity into the Middle

Ages. Neither of these conditions is satisfied by the Scottish situation.

The Goidelic Celts

The Celtic migratory wave, eastwards from Ireland in the fifth and sixth centuries, moved first into Galloway, and into Strathearn and Menteith in A.D. 768. These 'Irish Gaels',¹⁸ or 'Scots', grew steadily in influence, allied with the Brythonic Celts of the north c. 860, captured Edinburgh c. 960, and the rest of Lothian by 1018.

Gaelic became the dominant language of Southern Scotland, and by 1100 was probably in general use everywhere except the Lothian (i.e. between the Forth and Tweed). The supremacy of Gaelic was encouraged by the immigration of the Irish and Hebridean Norse, who colonised Galloway and Carrick.

The Goidelic Celts share of seasonal drama has already been broached with the mention of Cuchulain. A much closer parallel with the 'Galoshan' scenario is given by Wood-Martin in this description of an Irish wake-game:

...the actors entered, wearing masks, and fantastically attired, carrying long poles for spears, plaited straw on the arms, to represent shields, and went through the form of building a fort....Whilst thus engaged, a new set of actors, also masked and armed, representing their enemies, appeared, and a general fight..... to save further bloodshed, it was proposed that a single combat should be arranged between the leaders of the hostile forces. After a well-sustained fight one combatant fell, as if mortally wounded, and was immediately surrounded by women in cloaks...who keened over the fallen warrior....It was then suggested

that the prostrate man was not dead, and an herb-doctor....
 was led in, and went through sundry strange incantations.
 The fallen man then came to life, and was carried off by
 his comrades with shouts of triumph.¹⁹

The rare and crucial resurrection motif is most plain in this combat drama, observed in the Ireland of the nineteenth century. So unlike is it to the 'Galoshan' folk drama of the same country, it might well be construed to be an unrelated Goidelic antecedent. Any further speculation is obstructed by the absence of any such performance in the Goidelic parts of Scotland. Indeed, the only to come to my notice is the dramatic jig 'Gailleach an Dúdain' ('The old Woman of the Mill-dust') in which the two dancers, disguised as an old man and an old, hag-like woman, mime a combat as they dance. The woman is killed by a thrust, and the man laments over her body. He discovers that he can resurrect her by touching parts of her body, and he does so, laughing uproariously, until the two are happily reunited. The man is said to have a 'druidic' or 'magic' wand in his right hand, and it is interesting that the same instrument 'kills' and 'revives'. This dance was only recorded in the Outer Hebrides (N. and S. Uist, Benbecula and perhaps Eriskay), and despite its striking nature, not noted until 1900, although the accompanying tune was known in the mid-eighteenth century.²⁰

Although these two sightings suggest that the combat/resurrection motif was known to the Scottish Gael, the isolated and rare jig is so far removed from the 'Galoshan' area that no connection between the two customs can be made, and the case for a Gaelic origin for the folk play in Scotland cannot be sustained. Moreover it is inconceivable that the Teutonic lowlands of Scotland could host a Gaelic custom, for from the Middle Ages into modern times relations between the two peoples has varied

between hostility and indifference. John of Fordun, a chronicler from Aberdeen, was the first to identify the cultural schism. Writing in 1380, he noted that 'Teutonic...is the language of the seaboard and the plains'.²¹ King James I and VI regarded the Gaels as slightly subhuman, and attempted, without success, to colonise parts of the Highlands with Lowlanders.²² The Scottish historian and patriot Andrew Fletcher noted that even 'at the end of the seventeenth century, the Highlands of Scotland were foreign country, not merely to Englishmen but to Lowland Scots as well'.²³ The cult of the romantic Highlands came in with Sir Walter Scott and Queen Victoria, but an Aberdonian of the same century could reminisce on the traditional attitude to the Highlanders in the following terms:

The city of Aberdeen and more than three-fourths of the country have been for some centuries devoid of Celtic character. Indeed, there are few districts in which the feeling of antagonism of race has been kept up more strongly, or at least used to be some years ago, than the Lowlands of Aberdeen.²⁴

In its last phase, the folk play was an instrument of popular Lowland culture, and as such occasionally included remarks abusing Highland manners.²⁵

The Norsemen

In the Viking onset on Britain, the Danes are known to have settled in the Dumfries area, and to have raided in Lothian.²⁶ Their incursion into north-east Scotland is not precisely understood, though the current belief is that there was some settlement on the coastal plain, and in the river valleys.²⁷

Evidence of medieval Danish cult has been gathered by Davidson. There was a horse cult in connection with Freyr, and she quotes

Saxo Grammaticus to show that some form of ritual drama was practised.²⁸ The Balder myth is generally recognised to be a nature regeneration story²⁹ (which may have had antecedent drama), and she also notes the incidence of brother-kings who fought one another for the kingdom.³⁰

The tradition of sword-dancing is believed by some to be an ancestor of the folk play. The two types of sword dancing known in Northumbria, the 'long sword' of Yorkshire and the 'rapper' of the Tees-Tweed area, have been thought to be Danish and Scandinavian respectively, introduced by medieval immigration.³¹ Alford is one of many writers to refute this notion by pointing out that the practice is unknown in modern Denmark and Scandinavia, though recorded elsewhere in Europe.³²

The Norse ruled Shetland until the fifteenth century, at which time the islands came to the Scottish crown and were settled by people mostly from Angus and Fife.³³ Shetland guising is markedly different from mainland forms, but it is hardly possible to distinguish the Norse from the medieval Lowland influences.³⁴

The Northumbrians

The story of Northumbria, and the introduction on a major scale of Teutonic language (a determinant for the folk play) into Scotland, deserves a brief summary.

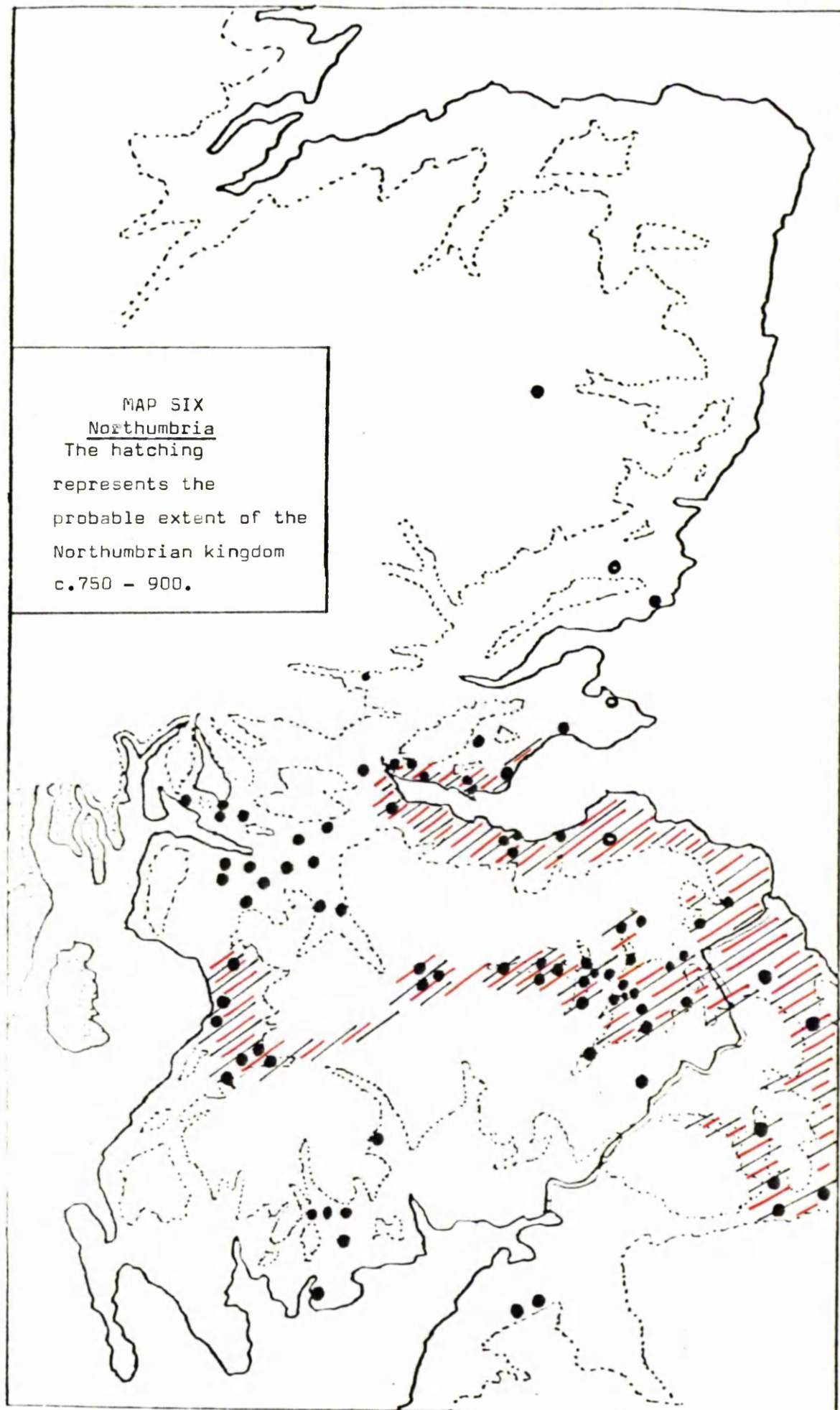
The kingdom of Northumbria enlarged its northern territory in the seventh century, taking in the Lothian, until halted at Dunnichen (Angus) in 711.³⁵ Thereafter the boundary between the Northumbrians and the Picts was either the Forth, the Carron (north of Falkirk), or the Pentland Hills.³⁶ There was a perceptible Northumbrian influence on the southern shores of Fife, and a movement westwards through Clydesdale, culminating in the annexation of Kyle in 752.³⁷ In the south-west, the

northern shores of the Solway may have come under Anglian influence in the mid-seventh century.³⁸ The northern, 'Scottish' half of Northumbria was taken by the Scots between 960 and 1018.

The intensity of Northumbrian settlement is hard to assess, but may have been strong only in East Lothian and the Tweed valley. Of the placenames recorded in the other Lothians in the Middle Ages, in the West Lothian 70%, in the Mid-Lothian 35%, are British, indicating a weakening of Northumbrian influence to the westward.³⁹

The Northumbrian influence did not end with the collapse of the southern kingdom: in 1068 members of the Northumbrian aristocracy fled into the Scots-controlled Lothian in the face of William's advance, though the records give no indication of the strength of their following.⁴⁰ Edgar's royal writs, however, continued to be addressed to his subjects 'Scots and English', and one of these, c. 1100, is attested by the names of witnesses. These men all have Anglian, Northumbrian or Cumbrian names, indicating a continuing line of Anglian overlordship in the Lothian, and the possibility is that Edgar allowed Anglian immigration into this area to continue.⁴¹

The salient features of the Anglian invasions, with hatching to indicate areas of dense and continuous settlement, are shown on Map Six. The map tests the theory that the play is to be associated with the peoples of Northumbria: it will be seen that the correlation between the two is excellent for Lothian and Kyle, dubious for Fife, and totally negative for Galloway, Strathclyde, and the regions north of the Forth. The conclusion must be that the evidence goes a very long way in supporting a theory that the custom was introduced into Scotland by the Northumbrians. Particularly favourable is the intensity of play location in the Borders and Lothian, and the connection with Kyle



and the southern shores of Fife. There remain, nevertheless, isolated locations and groups of plays which cannot be related to the Northumbrian Kingdom, in particular the group in Galloway, and it is clear that there are other factors bearing on the distribution of the folk play that remain to be revealed.

3. Feudalisation⁴²

This search for a pre-thirteenth century origin for the folk play has so far moved forward through fifteen hundred years without success, from the Celts of the Fourth century BC to the consolidation of the Lothian by the Scottish King throughout the eleventh century. Only two hundred years remain as a proving-ground for this thesis, two centuries that witnessed the last major cultural change to take place in Scotland. The event in question was the feudalising of Lowland Scotland, and if this process altered the face of Scotland with its flurry of motte and castle building (see below), very much more profound were the changes it brought in language, culture, and the framework of society.

Feudalism is at first sight an extremely promising area of enquiry, for three reasons. In the first place, it fits into the 1100-1300 period with remarkable accuracy:

feudalisation may be said to have lasted for almost exactly two hundred years, from 1094 or 1097 to 1296 when . . . 'a general war between England and Scotland' broke out, one of whose consequences was to make English settlement in Scotland . . . almost impossible for over three hundred years.⁴³

Moreover, as the quotation states, feudalisation was only ended by the severing of sympathetic links between the two kingdoms, and the

beginning of the cultural rift on which this thesis of medieval origin is based.

Secondly, 'Anglo-Norman settlement greatly reinforced the Middle English elements in Scots speech and culture',⁴⁴ and this extension of English is clearly of importance in the investigation of a custom already noted to require the language as a determinant.

The third reason is that the preceding chapter recognised that the modern version of the folk play declined at the same time as the 'feudalism' of nineteenth-century Britain. It would be of considerable interest to discover that the society that had given the custom life-support had also nourished its birth.

The story of feudalisation is, as might be expected, not fully known: in Professor Barrow's words, the 'evidence is variable in quality and will never seen sufficient in quantity'.⁴⁵ What will be found here is only a selection from that evidence, and one is therefore well aware of the risk of distortion. Nevertheless, the following argument is pursued in the belief that the evidence is sound enough to warrant the conclusions.

The purpose of the exercise was to modernise Scotland on the European model, introduced into England and Wales by the Normans. The Scottish Kings therefore brought in younger sons from landed families in England, Brittany, and north-west France, men reared in feudal society with little hope of inheritance at home.⁴⁶ To operate their fiefs, these new feudatories brought with them tenantry to work on the estates, servants for their strongholds, and tradesmen and artificers for the needs and skills of the castles and burghs. Little is known of the identity or strength of these underlings, but the assumption is that they came in strength, for the new society demanded new skills, and the new rulers, planted in an alien land, needed people they

understood and trusted to support and defend them. A large household, for one of high rank, could number half a hundred;⁴⁷ farm-servants and tradesmen, and the families of all these, might bring the total into three figures. The size of this working population is important, for a popular custom, in this case the folk play, required a substantial population for its support.

The cultural heritage that these people brought is also important, and therefore their geographical and ethnic roots are of interest. The feudatories are Anglo-Norman, French, Flemish and Breton (with some later Scots); where the greater immigrant population is concerned, it might be presumed that the larger number travelled overland from England, and the English estates of these feudatories (whatever their 'nationality') were mostly in Cumbria, Yorkshire, Shropshire and Somerset. Greater than these, however, was the Honour of Huntingdon, which had come to the Scottish crown by marriage in 1114, and remained under its sway until 1286:

It is of course a commonplace of Scottish history that the Honour of Huntingdon, with estates scattered across ten or eleven counties, though concentrated chiefly in the shires of Huntingdon, Cambridge, Bedford and Northampton, formed the main catchment area from which the stream of feudal entrepreneurs flowed into Scotland.⁴⁸

Huntingdon is important here, and its significance in another aspect will recall it to attention in the following chapter.

For a summary of the colonization of Scotland in this period, it is easiest to turn again to Professor Barrow:

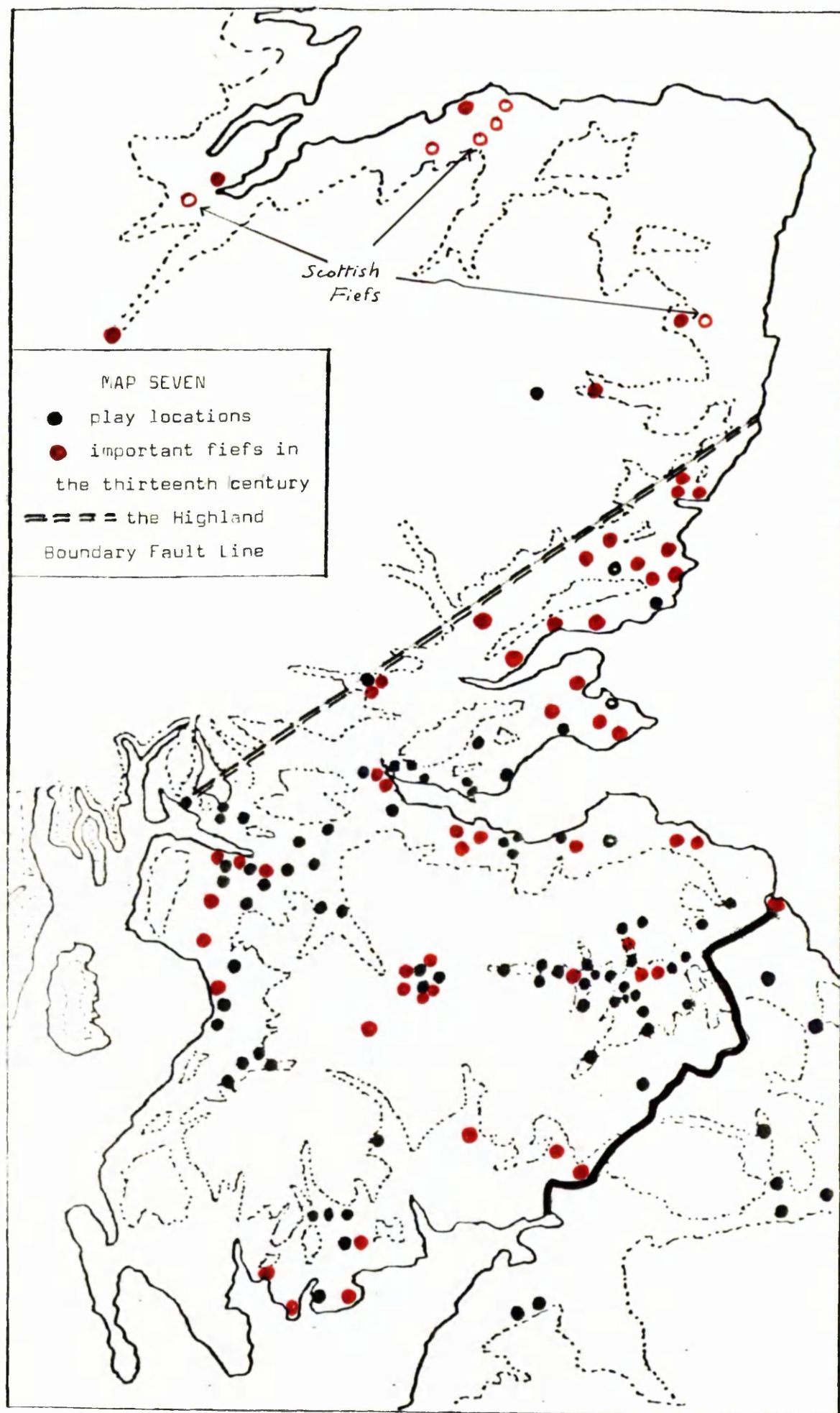
Surviving record shows incomers from the south in almost every parish of southern Scotland except in

Galloway and Carrick, while north of the Forth there was fairly intensive settlement in Fife, Gowrie, Angus, and Mearns, the Aberdeenshire districts of Garioch and Formartine and across most of the lowland country between the Spey and the Beaully river.⁴⁹

This summary is a fair commentary on a map which I arrived at by noting those feudal centres of seeming importance, established before 1265, a year which marks the high water mark of the tide of immigration, and a time when the most desirable land had been granted (these fiefs are listed in Appendix Two). These feudal centres (and the locations of the modern folk play) are given in Map Seven, and it will be perceived that for the second time there is correlation between an historical event and the pattern of the custom. This correspondence, moreover, is consolidated by a more detailed examination of the fief and play relationship, and this is now undergone, looking at the separate regions of Scotland, beginning in the south.

The Borders

'The Borders' is the modern name for an area that might be more properly described here as Tweeddale, Teviotdale and the Merse. The distinction of this region is that it is dense in folk play, intensive in Anglo-Norman settlement, and strongly Northumbrian in character. The latter two are probably related, for Barrow infers that 'feudal settlers in that (south-east) corner of Scotland could more easily be fitted into existing settlements',⁵⁰ and Duncan suggests that the king was able to translate the Anglian landholdings into the new style of tenure without having to introduce a new feudatory.⁵¹ Another indication of the security of the social order comes with the presence of



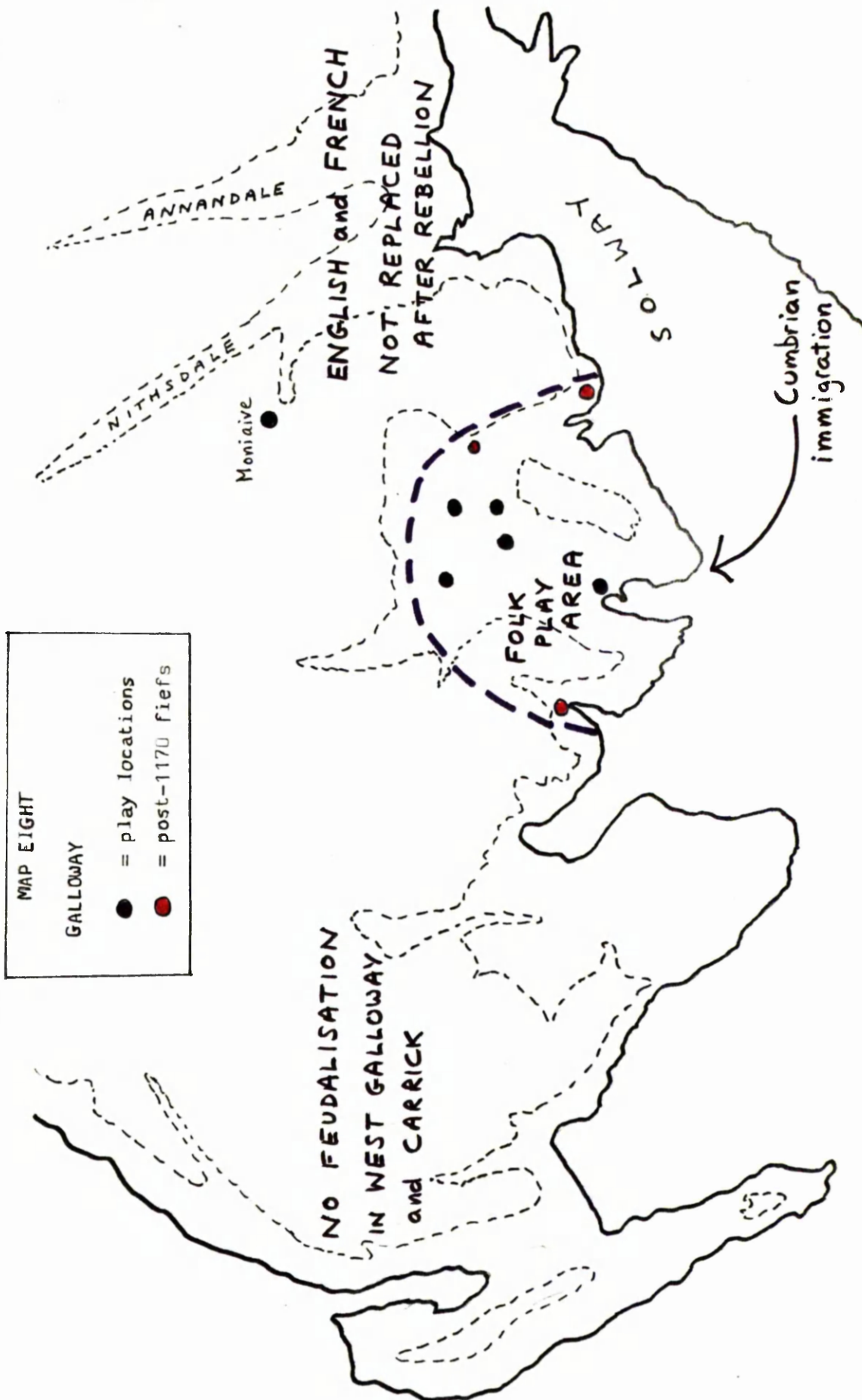
religious houses, wealthy and relatively unprotected institutions: in a twenty mile triangle of the Tweed and lower Teviot, on the southern boundary of the kingdom, were four monasteries and two nunneries, all founded before 1165.

The evidence of this area indicates that the folk play in Scotland has survived most strongly where post-Northumbrian society has been overlaid by feudalisation.

South-west Scotland (Galloway, Carrick, Annandale and Nithsdale)

Map Eight shows three differing areas. The western area is the simplest to describe, for west Galloway and Carrick had little or no feudalism and furnish no evidence of the folk play. The central area shows both fief and play, and so aligns itself on the side of the theory that relates the play to a feudal society. The eastern area, where there is fief but no play, offers more resistance.

An interesting solution to the apparent disparity is offered by a small excursion into the history of the area. In 1174, a rebellion led by Uhtred and Gilbert, the Lords of Galloway, brought about the destruction of the king's castles, and the death of all the English and French in the area, in other words, an abrupt reversal of the feudalising process. Such, at least, was the report made by Roger Howden, Henry II's ambassador, although modern historians have accused him of exaggerating the seriousness of the revolt. The first independent verification of Howden's report came with the discovery of fire damage in an archaeological excavation at the Motte at Urr. A second vindication might be granted by this absence of folk play in Nithsdale, Annandale and the dales further east, for Professor Duncan writes that later events in Galloway 'may' most plausibly be explained by Henry II's



agreement that those expelled in 1174 would not be restored.⁵²

As for the knot of plays and fiefs in central Galloway, their presence is explained by the fact that these fiefs were all established in the decade following the rebellion by the restoration of Henry II's power in the area, and his precarious agreements with later lords of Galloway, one of whom (Roland) brought in feudatories from English Cumbria in the 1180s.

This explanation of the Galloway problem is broad and simple, but leaves some unresolved problems. The chief of these is the position of the fiefs in the Dales. It is well-known that the Annandale fiefs continued after the rebellion, and the same may be true for Nithsdale and the others,⁵³ and the question remains why one set of fiefs could produce the folk play and not another. Moreover, Galloway remained Gaelic-speaking into the fourteenth century, and it has been established that the English language is a determinant for the play. It is likely that the answer to these problems lies in the quantity of English speakers in the region. If the Lords of Galloway were successful in expelling the majority of the Anglo-Normans, without imperilling the existence of the Dales' fiefs, then they may have removed the necessary population base for the custom. The Cumbrian English immigration into central Galloway, however, alert to the dangers of insurrection, may have been accompanied in strength. Some proof of this might be seen in the number of mottes in the area,⁵⁴ and in the presence of a medieval town in 1220 in the vicinity of Urr motte. We might therefore consider the situation of an island of English-speaking peoples within Galloway, nourishing a non-Gaelic custom, but sensitive to the cultural climate. In the later discussion on the 'season' of the play, it will be noted that only in 'old' Galloway was the play performed at

the Celtic festival of Hallowe'en.

Finally, in this discussion of Galloway, it should be noted that Moniaive is an isolate between the 'play' and 'non-play' areas. It is also an isolate in another sense, for its text includes the word 'Galoshans', which a later passage will show not to be a Galloway term. The possibility that this tradition is a late importation should therefore be entertained.

Strathclyde

Three distinct areas require comment. The most valuable, for the theory now being advanced, is the group of play and fiefs around Biggar, in Upper Clydesdale, where there is the closest congruence between a cluster of five Flemish fiefs and Scotland's most enduring tradition. To the west lie the Ayrshire districts of Kyle and Cunningham, and to the north, the Glasgow conurbation. Kyle was, as has been said, a part of the Northumbrian kingdom, and the evidence of the Borders is that this, with the extensive feudalisation of the area, should produce folk play in some quantity. The coastal folk play of Kyle might well be so ascribed, for there was infertment of a kind similar to that of the Biggar variety. The folk play customs in the Kyle uplands, however, are in the coal-mining villages, and introduce the problem of eighteenth and nineteenth century population shifts of Lowland workers, and their ability to transfer local cultures over large distances. The poet Robert Burns, an early folklorist, who spent his youth only a few miles from the northern trio of folk play locations, failed to include the custom in his catalogue of 'Hallowe'en' folk customs in his poem of that title.⁵⁵

Further north, in the Glasgow region, the problem is more acute, with the vast sprawl of urbanisation and influx of population swamping the character of the medieval fiefs. The

custom as recorded at Helensburgh has some of the 'archaic' features of the Scottish play, but the new town was laid out as recently as 1776, and it grew as a dormitory suburb for Glasgow in the nineteenth century. The story of Inkerman, as told in the last chapter, must serve here as an example of the rapidity of change in the industrialized society.

The Lothian

In Mid- and West-Lothian there is a fair correlation between fief and play, although here too the urbanisation of the modern period forbids too clear-cut a conclusion. The situation in East Lothian is more interesting, for here is an 'Anglian' district, with some record of infestment, yet in its eastern coastal area remarkably barren of the folk play.

The explanation here requires the introduction of a new factor, the distinction between the jurisdiction of the king and the earls of Scotland. In the words of Professor Barrow:

It was at the highest levels of society and in certain aspects of royal government that preservation and continuity were most sharply contrasted with the English experience. The earldoms survived intact. Five of them, admittedly, were by 1286 in the hands of families of continental origin . . . But the remainder, Caithness, Ross, Mar, Atholl, Strathearn, Lennox, Fife, and Dunbar, were still possessed by native comital dynasties.⁵⁶

It is not possible to be precise on the facet of societal organisation that differentiated the monarchic and comital systems and, presumably with other effects, permitted or forbade the folk play custom, but with remarkable consistency it will be noted that the earldom was inhospitable ground for the tradition.

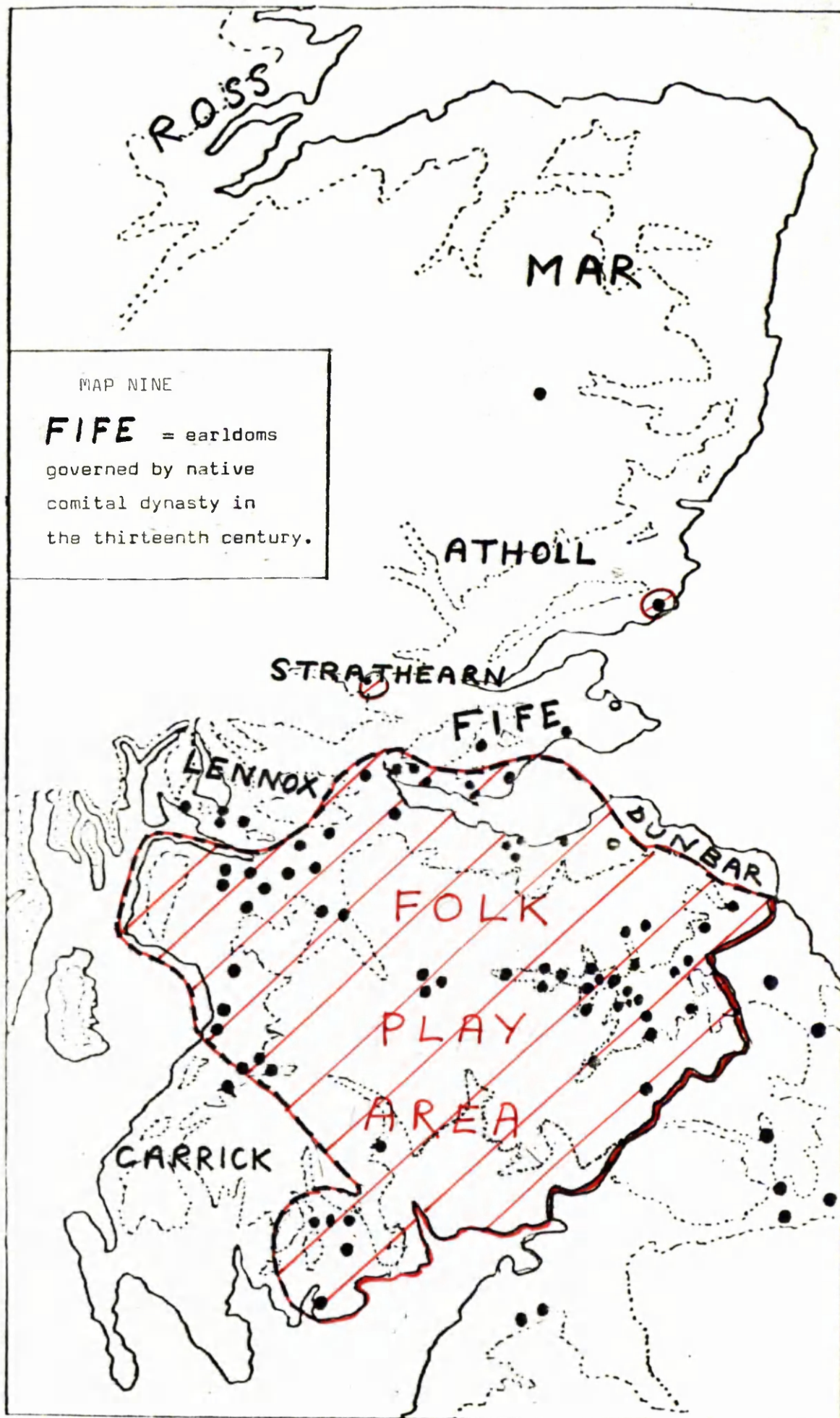
At its simplest, the reason may be that the earls carried out their own brand of feudalisation, and in doing so merely changed the ground rules for their client landlords, who had less need to import foreigners for support and defence, and no cause to disrupt the local culture. For whatever reason, the East Lothian contribution is to posit that the earldom is an inhibition for the folk play, even when the Northumbrian and feudal factors are present, as they are in Dunbar (see Map Nine).

Fife

Map Seven shows folk play on the south shore and in the industrial areas north of the Forth estuary, and fiefs in the east. The presence of the plays on the south shore could be the result of the Anglian influence at the time of the kingdom of Northumbria, augmented, as in the Borders, by later infeftment. The absence of the play elsewhere in Fife, even where there were fiefs, must be explained by the fact that Fife was an earldom, that feudalisation there was carried out by the earls, and that the political flavour of the old 'kingdom' was unchanged in these two centuries.

Lennox, Menteith, Strathearn and Atholl

Apart from Menteith, which was in the hands of the Stewarts, these earldoms remained intact, and so fall into the pattern predicted by Dunbar in East Lothian. The Lennox, north of Glasgow and the Clyde estuary, 'remained free of Anglo-Norman incomers',⁵⁷ and it may be presumed that the plays in the industrialised Vale of Leven, and in Helensburgh, are nineteenth-century importations. Infeftment in Menteith was limited to a few places in the south-west of the area, and in the absence of precise information, these might be associated with reports of the tradition in the villages of Stirlingshire (unloc. Stirlings.). Strathearn was moderately



affected by immigration. I have been able to note two feudatories, and trace two of the fiefs: both are within seven miles of Crieff, the only location for the folk play between Stirling (20 miles) and Arbroath (50 miles). Atholl has no folk play and was not feudalised (the charters of the Earls of Atholl were attested by Athollmen of Celtic name and origin). While it is therefore possible to make out a case for Crieff as a feudal centre, it must be recalled that the town was completely destroyed in 1716 by the Jacobites, and not restored until after 1731. The town was an industrial centre in the eighteenth century, and a spa in the nineteenth: the break in continuity and the immigration this history reveals combine to persuade me that Crieff is not a feudal survivor.

Dee Valley

The dominant factor in the discussion of this large area is the increasing Celtic or Gaelic influence, and the corresponding decrease in Anglo-Norman presence, even where the English language is spreading. To begin in the north of the Highlands, the fiefs were in the main granted to Scots, albeit first-generation immigrants. There was some resistance to the incomers: the Berwickshire feudatory south of Loch Ness was killed and his castle razed in 1228. The renaissance of Gaelic power in the fourteenth century reversed the direction of the feudal society, both to the north and the east of the mountains. In the words of the social historian, T.C. Smout, 'Many a family in the east with a Norman pedigree likewise transformed themselves into Highland chiefs, either to preserve their power in a new environment or to further their banditry'.⁵⁸

In short, then, although there was feudalisation north of the Tay, a combination of 'Celticness' in the inhabitants, and a period of relative weakness of the Edinburgh monarchy, and strength of

the Gaelic earls, united to oblige the 'new' society to recede to the 'old'.

To explain the phenomenon of the folk play in this region it need only be said that Ballater is not to be derived from the ancient fief of Aboyne, ten miles down the valley, but from the fact that it is a new town, growing up after 1760 when one with an eye for business discovered 'healing waters' there, and created a spa. The other location, Arbroath, survives on the extreme south of this area, on the coast, away from the Gaelic mountains. It is difficult to judge whether this is a genuine survivor from the thirteenth century, or a late transplant from Central Scotland. Later in this work it will be shown that the influence of Glasgow in the nineteenth century spread the Hallowe'en season in eastern Scotland, and the suspicion remains that Arbroath (and Leven) may be affected by immigration from Strathclyde.

The Mounth

At the close of this geographical and historical excursion, it is convenient to refer again to the Highland Boundary Fault which, it will be remembered, was earlier suggested to be an obvious though inexplicable boundary to the folk play. In the light of the inspection of feudalised Scotland, it is clear that the folk play depended for its existence on a combination of fief and Anglo-Norman population, either imported (as in Galloway) or resident (as in the Scotland south of the Forth-Clyde line). In this connection, it would be useful to discover some evidence that the granting of fiefs by the King somehow took the Highland Boundary Fault into consideration.

Such a document has been preserved. In 1213, King William stated in a grant that the recipient was to receive twenty marks

'until I or my heirs give him 20 merks' worth of land on the south side of the Scottish Sea [the Firth of Forth] or between the Mounth [the mountains] and the Scottish Sea'.⁵⁹

The implication of the terms of this grant is that the king had exhausted the supply of suitable land for fief-making south of the mountains, or the Highland Boundary Fault. The reasons for not offering land north of this line may be two-fold. It has already been suggested that the land to the north lay largely in the power of the earls, and that infeftment there was largely their responsibility.

There is, however, another factor. Kapelle has pointed out that the settlement of Norman barons often depended on whether the land they were offered could grow wheat for bread: in his words, 'despite their wealth, bread was the primary item in their daily diet, and second the quality of one's bread was a symbol of personal status'.⁶⁰ If, as he suggests, the oats/wheat-growing line determined the advance of Norman settlement, then this would be relevant to Scotland also, and to the qualification of the fiefs that the king could offer to incoming feudatories. One of the Bruces is alleged to have complained of Annandale that it could not provide wheaten bread.⁶¹ This apparent inconsequentiality returns with some importance in a later discussion, at this point it is sufficient to observe that the quality of the soil and climate were significant criteria to incoming Anglo-Normans.

Conclusion

The distribution of the folk play can now be explained.

Ignoring those districts into which the custom might have spread as a result of the eighteenth and nineteenth century industrialisation, the pre-thirteenth century origin depended on a community

willing to support the prosperity of Anglo-Norman, French or Flemish fiefs. The boundary between the 'Anglian' and the Celtic parts of Scotland is drawn by Professor Barrow between the Forth and the Clyde estuaries: 'in the thirteenth century the whole of Scotland north of Forth and Clyde was still Celtic in low country and highlands alike'.⁶² The earlier examination of the Northumbrian kingdom claimed some southern influence on the north shores of the Forth⁶³, and this is borne out by the folk play map: this addition is therefore made to the 'Anglian' area. To be subtracted from this area are Galloway and Carrick, in the south-west, where Gaelic remained in use for another hundred years.

Within this broad outline there are certain exceptions. Dunbar, as an earldom within the 'Anglian' area, resisted the custom. Within the Celtic area, feudalisation succeeded in creating the necessary conditions in south-central Galloway. This conclusion is summarised on Map Nine.

Feudal Traces in the Modern Folk Play

The conclusion of the foregoing examination of the modern history and pre-thirteenth century origin of the folk play is that in part it owed its existence to the feudal society created on the Anglo-Norman model in the thirteenth century and came to its demise through the destruction of that society by the reforming legislation of the nineteenth century. In short 'feudalism' is the frame and setting for the folk play, and it would be strange if the play custom did not reflect this in its text and action, and in the circumstances that attend, and have attended, its performance.

To investigate the attendant circumstances first, it should be recognised that feudalism was a powerful influence in the creation of the class system in Britain, and the notion of divisions on the

basis of a hierarchy of 'worth'. Barrow contends that the gulf that opened up in England between the powerful and the defenceless, those that bore arms and those that were expressly forbidden to so do, was less wide in Scotland:

Of course, the king and the great magnates dominated the land and its people, as they were to do until the eighteenth century, but the majority of baronies were small, knighthood remained comparatively rare, and there seems to have been much less intensive villanization of the peasantry.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, there was a new hierarchy in Scottish society which led from the King himself to the humblest members of the fiefs:

Among lords, knights and lairds the appearance of a meaningful "feudal" relationship was maintained over many years by, for example, the giving and taking of homage, by wardship and marriage of the person as well as wardship of the land, all of which reinforced the social relationships among these men, the clientage of one and the protection of another. This appearance, however, was surely selective: it ignored the much greater legion of homages and fealties and tenures which led to no such relationship, which were devoid of any content except the payment of feu duty and relief and the giving of sasine.⁶⁵

My view of the folk play custom is that it served to make good the deficiency that Duncan notes here, and to 'reinforce the social relationships' in the 'greater legion of homages' that existed further down the social scale. Proof at such a distance in time is necessarily difficult, but not impossible. Duncan goes on to

indicate ways in which the feudal relationship could be symbolically expressed:

Even better if it were renewed each year by a symbolic transaction, the handing over of gloves or spurs, to remind the parties and outsiders that a title and guarantee of title still existed.⁶⁵

At the close of the Bowden play, the boys sing a song whose significance is obscure:

As we came by yon well we drank
We laid our gloves upon yon bank
By came Willie's piper to play
Took up our gloves and ran away
We followed him from town to town
We bad him lay our bonny gloves down
He laid them down upon yon stone
Sing ye a carol, ours is done.

The Bowden text is one of the earliest, possibly dating from the close of the eighteenth century, and it may be that this song contains a relic of the forgotten feudal duty of bringing a pair of gloves to the landlord host.

If the gloves were a 'legal' reminder, there was also a need to remind employers of their obligations. The 'Plough Song' (discussed in detail in the following chapter) seems to be a traditional 'death and resurrection' ceremony, functioning as a means by which the ploughmen and herdsman present themselves to the 'Lord' for service, or hire.

Almost as important as the legal and industrial relations would be the purely social interactions, whereby the lower tiers of society could assure their leaders of their loyalty and obedience,

and the upper tiers could re-state their benevolence. Relics of this interaction may be discerned in modern times in the Spottiswoode account. There we read that the Lady of the House 'encouraged the observance of the old custom', one of these being the performance of the folk play 'at Spottiswoode House in presence of her ladyship and her guests'. The reporter's choice of 'observance' and 'in presence', and the place of performance, all have class (and ritual) overtones. The sense of hierarchy is also apparent in the Polwarth account, where the visits are first to the Manse and second to the 'laird's big house', though the rank order here has perhaps been altered by the Reformation (see Chapters Four and Five). One further example illustrates both the attitudes prevalent during the Reformation and the continuity of this 'feudal' practice: the Selkirk^a account notes the custom of the folk play visiting the 'shirra's home' ('shirra' = sheriff); in Elgin in 1604 two girls were accused by the Kirk elders of dancing before the Sheriff's gate.⁶⁶ The remembrance here is close to the core of feudalism, for the Sheriff was the King's Officer.

The tradition of the folk play would be, to some measure, protected by its patrons, the upper class, because as the inheritors of the feuars' privilege, they would incline towards a conservatism that protected their position, and reject new, more democratic forms of government and reformed religious practice. In January 1640, the Moderator at Elgin could put on record a question and answer on the success of the prohibition of (presumably) non-dramatic guising in the town, thereby revealing that the Session's powers did not extend over the door-step of Lady Murray's house:

...there was publick guysing and great disorders in the town of Elgine thir festival tymes past, he inquired

of the provost whether there was anie such thing or publick going to masse as was reported, answered ther was no such thing within the town except it had bene within Lady Murrayes house.⁶⁷

These are signs that the folk play, and other traditional customs, were used as gestures of obeisance in work and play. As the working class grew rebellious, however, the same structures served as vehicles for popular feeling in matters of morality, and also for expressions of defiance against the upper classes. Examples of this might be seen in the emergence of King Crispin at the time of the nineteenth century Reform Act,⁶⁸ and in the depositing of a dead horse outside the door of a Glasgow minister.⁶⁹

The lower classes thus displayed their loyalty (or disloyalty); the upper classes demonstrated their benevolence, and with this point is rejoined the notion of begging, already noted to be the mainstay of the folk play custom in modern times. No evidence can be adduced to show that begging was an important aspect of the custom in the thirteenth century, though few would doubt that some show of liberality by the feudatory would be expected by his impoverished tenants. Nevertheless, it is useful to note that it was in keeping with the nature of Norman society that wealth could be redistributed by this form of alms giving:

a marked peculiarity of Norman lords was their impulsive, somewhat spectacular charity to the poor, with the consequent spread of the donor's fame.⁷⁰

It is not unreasonable to suspect that this Norman trait would be exploited by the poor, and that the folk play, and other traditional customs, would be their instruments.

The best evidence that the rewards to the folk players were feudal in origin comes in two modern accounts. Sir Walter Scott,

in the Abbotsford House^b 1826 account, says that the reward for the 'ancient custom' was a silver penny and white bread for children residing on the laird's land, and a copper penny and a farle of oat-cake to each stranger^c. What Scott is describing here is a differential reward for petty-feuars and tenants, and others.

He goes on in the account to say that this was 'regularly', that is, by regulation, the dole, which suggests that the formality of the transaction of social obeisance had become time-honoured. Much the same conclusion can be drawn from the unloc. Berwickshire account, dating from the middle of the nineteenth century, where children who were known were given an extra reward. 'Children who were known' I interpret as a weakened form of 'children residing on the laird's land', a re-stating of 'tenants' families'.

To turn from the 'attendant circumstances' to the text and action of the play, it is possible to present the evidence under the same headings of obeisance and defiance. There is only one overt expression of defiance, but one is at a loss to account even for that in the dialogue of a custom designed to show deference and loyalty to the King's feuars. These people raised mottes⁷¹ and later castles, as their strongholds in the country they had come to rule over. These castles are mentioned in two plays from the earliest stratum of Scottish play texts (Peebles^a and Falkirk^b), in a couplet implying them to be hostile and uncharitable:

When I gaed to the castle yett, and tirlled at the pin,
They keepit the keys o' the castle, and wadna let me in.

The basis of Norman power was, of course, the mail-clad knight. I believe that this concept is the origin of a recurring verse (with many variations):

My head is made of iron.

My body's made of steel,

Also my hands and knuckle bones,

No man can make me feel.

These lines have been taken by other commentators to refer to the frost-bound earth of winter, to the scaly hide of the dragon, and to parts of the plough, but I take them to be a gesture of obeisance to the all-powerful Norman knight, in helmet and hauberk. The Normansⁿ themselves were well aware of their military superiority:

Scottish spears are long, but their shafts are wood.

Our arms are steel and we are clad in mail.⁷²

The foregoing quatrain often occurs in the vaunt before the combat, in which the two champions fight to decide which of them is to 'wear the crown'. In effect, the combat is seen as a duel to decide the moral or political right, and it is entirely relevant to point out that duelling in Britain derived from 'Trial by Battle', brought to these shores by the Normans, and first recorded in Britain in 1096.⁷³ My inference is that the struggle between Summer and Winter, for possession of the land (see Chapter Four), was in the context of Norman society re-interpreted as the Summer King proving his right by 'Trial of Battle'.

It is possible, too, that 'Alexander', the name for one of the combatants in many of the Scottish texts, originated in Scotland (though it is also known in England). There were three kings of Scotland with this name, their reigns occupying the years 1107-1124, and 1214-1286. If the folk play champion were thus known as early as the thirteenth century, it would prefigure the loyalty extended to the monarchs George and William in the nineteenth century. A strong contender for the honour here,

however, is Alexander the Great, of Macedon, who is often specified in Scottish texts. He, too, has Norman support, for he was esteemed by them as the very flower of chivalry and military skill.⁷⁴

Conclusion

Although the search for an origin for the modern folk play has come to its goal in the two hundred years preceding 1296, some care has been taken to avoid implying what form the custom may have taken at this time, or indeed in the five hundred years that followed. The previous chapters have constructed a beginning and an end for the 'Galoshan' folk drama: the next stage will be to study the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in Scotland for indications of the nature of the popular dramatic form at those times, for one of the premises of the following chapters is that inasmuch as the 'Galoshan' play is the chief dramatic custom to survive into modern times, it may have inherited the remnants of failed customs, as well as evolving its own.

It will be observed that although the case for some kind of dramatic custom is made, and a half dozen lines, a character's name, and an attitude to the combat cautiously attributed to the thirteenth century, good evidence for the antiquity of the custom is found in the nature of the reception of the visitors. This is a reminder that the custom has to be perceived in its totality of season, place, and function, and that this wider perspective must needs be maintained in the next stages of this enquiry.

Notes to Chapter Three

¹ Cawte, Helm & Peacock, English Ritual Drama, pp.32,34.

² *ibid.*, pp.31-36.

³ *ibid.*, pp.66-67.

⁴ Law (Lanarks) is not known to be a play location (see Chapter Two, n.27). Deerness in Orkney is a false entry: Leishman (the source for Linton) wrote that the folk play had been 'said, sung, and acted in living memory, all over Scotland, from Cheviot to Cape Wrath'. The first seven words of this claim (and some passages in the text that Leishman published) are taken from the unloc. Angus account, the geography is his own. The inclusion in his text of a Deerness begging-rhyme misled the editors of English Ritual Drama into crediting Orkney with the play custom. Violet Alford doubted the veracity of Leishman's claim (Violet Alford, 'The Mummers' Play', The Proceedings of the Scottish Anthropological and Folklore Society (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1949) 4, 1, p.21.

⁵ See Chapter Two, n.27.

⁶ The conspicuous lack of record for the area north of Stonehaven, for example, is confirmed by almost fifty likely sources, including Walter Gregor, Notes on the Folk Lore of the North-East of Scotland (London: Folklore Society, 1881). Gregor was a knowledgeable folklorist, and responsible for the records of Balmaghie and Laurieston. (The absence of record for this area has also been noted by David Buchan, 'The Folk Play, Guising, and Northern Scotland', Lore and Language (University of Sheffield, Survey of Language and Folklore), 10 (Jan. 1974), pp.10-14.

⁷ Dr. Emily Lyle's fieldwork, referred to in Chapter One (see n.28), has not, at the time of writing, disputed the pattern.

⁸ The 'Highland Line' drawn on Map Five is based on the information given by Professor A.A.M. Duncan, Scotland, The

Making of a Kingdom, The Edinburgh History of Scotland, I (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1975), p. 450. Duncan has doubtless been mindful of John of Fordun's comment in 1380 (see n.21 below).

⁹ The foundation for this survey of early Scottish history is taken, unless otherwise stated, from Duncan, The Making of a Kingdom (see previous note).

¹⁰ For a recent survey of the Celt in Britain and Europe, see D.B. Gregor, Celtic: A Comparative Study (Cambridge: Oleander Press, 1980).

¹¹ This theme was explored by Dr. Anne Ross (of Southampton University) in a television programme, 'Chronicle: Twilight of the English Celts'. BBC2, 27 October 1977.

¹² Richard Cavendish, King Arthur and the Grail (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978), p. 20.

¹³ *ibid.*, p.21.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.97.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.136.

¹⁶ Gaster prefers the view that ritual is idealized by myth, and thereby 'substantized', to Robertson-Smith's opinion that myth is the literary version of ritual acts, and Jane Harrison's concept of myth being the spoken correlative of 'things done': Theodor H. Gaster, Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East (New York: Schuman, 1950), p.5.

¹⁷ Richard Bernheimer, Wild Men in the Middle Ages (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1952) (distrib. in G.B. by O.U.P., London), p.74.

¹⁸ In a later, tenth-century, immigration of 'Scandinavian Gaels' from Ireland, there were settlements in Galloway and north-west England (around Chester). Galloway (= 'land of the foreign Gael') gained its name from this event (John Geipel, The Viking

Legacy (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971), p. 71.

It is interesting to consider this dual migration in conjunction with the presence of the beheading motif in 'Gawain and the Green Knight', a medieval poem written in dialect forms thought to belong to north-west England, and note the possibility that the theme in the Irish 'Briciu's Feast' might have been a legacy of this incoming (see above, under 'Celts').

¹⁹ W.G. Wood-Martin, Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902), I, 315-16.

²⁰ Alexander Carmichael, Carmina Gadelica (Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd, 1928), pp.206-07. I speculate whether the reference to the 'mill dust' denotes a black-face disguise, for the threshing of Hebridean oats is said to have blackened the thresher's face.

There is a note of a combat dance in the Cath nan Cursaidh (contest of warriors), 'where a Celtic Saul slays his thousands, and a Celtic David his tens of thousands' (ibid. p.207), but there is no element of resurrection.

²¹ T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830 (London: Collins/Fontana, 1972), p.39.

²² ibid., p.105.

²³ Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, ed. W.C. Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Porpoise, 1935), p.60.

²⁴ A correspondent in Notes and Queries, 5th ser., 9 (January-July 1878), 5.

²⁵ See, for example, the doctor in Stirling^a. The particular stimulus for such remarks was suggested in Chapter Two, in the passage on internal dating, to be Highland rebellion and cattle-stealing.

²⁶ Duncan, p.88.

²⁷ Some tentative evidence for Scandinavian/Danish settlement in north-east Scotland is given by R.A. Dodgshon, 'Scandinavian "Solskifte" and the Sunwise Division of Land in Eastern Scotland', Scottish Studies, 19 (1975), pp.1-13.

²⁸ H.R. Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p.64, citing Saxo Grammaticus, Gesta Danorum, trans. Elton (1894), 6, 185, p.228.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.36.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.98.

³¹ Hugh Rippon, Discovering English Folk Dance (Aylesbury: Shire Publications, 1975), p.22.

³² Violet Alford, Sword Dance and Drama (London: Merlin, 1962), p.35.

³³ David Murison, The Guid Scots Tongue (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1977), pp.36-37.

³⁴ The best survey of the guising practices in the northern islands is Ernest W. Harwick, The Folklore of Orkney and Shetland (London: Batsford, 1975).

³⁵ Duncan, p.53.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.61.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.65.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.64.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.119.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.126.

⁴¹ Evidence of the later presence of the Anglian population in south-east Scotland comes from the note of the army invading England in 1217 under Alexander II: it was said to be comprised of 'English, Scots and Galwegians', of which the 'English' were the men of Lothian'. A.A.M. Duncan, 'The Making of Scotland', in Who Are the Scots?, ed. Gordon Menzies (London: EBC, 1971), p.129.

⁴² The material for this view of feudalisation is taken from Duncan, The Making of the Kingdom, pp.133-409; Barrow, The Kingdom of the Scots, pp. 279-361; R.L.G. Ritchie, The Normans in Scotland (Edinburgh: University Press, 1954); William E. Kapelle, The Norman Conquests of the North (London: Croom Helm, 1979); Barrow, The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History (Oxford: O.U.P., 1980).

⁴³ Barrow, Anglo-Norman Era, p.7.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.117.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.33.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 12, 31f.

⁴⁷ 'Under the household officials a large staff of servants operated. In 1265 the king's sister Eleanor de Montfort, Countess of Leicester, had more than sixty, while in the 1270's the household of Bogo de Clare . . . included two knights, "numerous" squires, thirteen grooms, two pages, a cook, a doctor, and many clerks and lesser servants': Joseph and Frances Gies, Life in a Medieval Castle (London: Abclard, 1975), pp.96-97.

⁴⁸ Barrow, Anglo-Norman Era, pp.97-98. Barrow later queries the truth of this 'commonplace'.

⁴⁹ Barrow, Anglo-Norman Era, p.30.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p.41.

⁵¹ Duncan, p.384.

⁵² *ibid.*, p.183.

In view of the importance of English in the cultural context of the folk play, it is interesting that southern Annandale was resistant to the language, being still strongly Scandinavian: Barrow, Anglo-Norman Era, p.49.

⁵³ Conversation with Professor A.A.H. Duncan has been helpful on this point.

54 There are sixty-five mottes between Annandale and the Cree, and Duncan suggests that most of them were built in the half-century after 1186: Duncan, p.185.

55 Robert Burns' prestige as a poet has overshadowed his pioneering work in folklore. Much of his collecting was from his mother, and his mother's elderly woman servant: see Mary Ellen B. Lewis, '"The Joy of My Heart", Robert Burns as Folklorist', Scottish Studies (School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh), 20 (1976), pp.46ff.

Burns' omission of the 'Galoshan' play seems powerful negative evidence, though the play custom is easily overlooked, even in districts where the tradition is practised. Alternatively, a learned Ayrshire man advised me not to attach too much attention to the omission; the poet's part of Ayrshire forecasted its weather by Goat Fell, the highest point on the Isle of Arran, a dominating feature of the seascape: Burns never mentioned Goat Fell, either.

56 Barrow, Anglo-Norman Era, pp.157-58.

57 Duncan, p.199.

58 Smout, History of the Scottish People, p.41.

59 Duncan, p.181.

60 Kappelle, Norman Conquests, p.220.

61 Barrow, Anglo-Norman Era, p.8. Modern farming methods grow wheat no further north than Humberside.

62 ibid., p.137.

63 Duncan, p.62.

64 Barrow, Anglo-Norman Era, pp.167-68,

65 Duncan, p.408.

66 The Records of Elgin (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1909),

I, 119 (3.1.1604).

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, I, 354.

⁶⁸ See Chapter Two, n.26.

⁶⁹ An explanation of this circumstance will be offered in Chapter Four, in connection with the 'Resurrected Horse'.

⁷⁰ Ritchie, Normans in Scotland, p.71.

⁷¹ Approximately 250 mottes have been identified in Lowland Scotland: Duncan p.436.

⁷² Ritchie, Normans in Scotland, p.264, citing Ailred of Rievaulx, De Bello Standardi, ed. R. Howlett (R.S., 1886), 'Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I,' III, 181-189.

⁷³ 'Trial by Combat' was not officially abolished in England until 1819, but it was abandoned in Scotland much earlier, probably in the thirteenth century (see Ritchie, Normans in England, p.346n.).

⁷⁴ A Scottish version was made from the French some time between 1360 and 1390 by the poet Barbour (see John Barbour, The Bulk of Alexander, ed. R.L.G. Ritchie (Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1925)).

CHAPTER FOUR

Folk Play Forms Before the Reformation

1. The Role of Christianity

So far, the modern folk play has supplied all the evidence; its text has measured its modern history, and its locations its time of origin. It has shown itself to have been in existence in the thirteenth century, and to have emerged into the light of day during the eighteenth century. The next challenge of this enquiry is to write the history of the five hundred intervening years.

Clearly, this history will not be that of the 'Galoshan' play, for that has been shown to have evolved c.1700. Instead, the search must be made for earlier forms of this drama. The eighteenth-century folk play was fleshed out with patriotic, comic and 'archaic' verse; when this is stripped away we are left with the skeletal action of regeneration, of death and resurrection. To discover the dramatic forms from which the 'Galoshan' play evolved, the need is to discover other, earlier skeletons. The search will be not for the play, but for the action, and it will be made in dramas, and fragments of dramas, whose kinship with the 'Galoshan' play may sometimes seem remote.

'Regeneration', as a dramatic theme, has already been introduced (in the previous chapter) in the mythologies and

rituals of the earlier inhabitants of Scotland. To show how these rituals continued in medieval Scotland, when Christianity was the dominant cultural influence, it is helpful to rehearse the fashion in which Christianity made its way in Britain, in the face of pagan, or pre-Christian, belief and practice.

In brief, the conversion of Scotland to Christianity was in two phases, the first gradual and relaxed, the second (the Reformation) brief and violent. The gradualist approach was taught in the well-known letter from Pope Gregory to Abbot Melitus in A.D.601, advising on the conversion of the southern Britons by Augustine:

the temples of the idols in that country should on no account be destroyed. He is to destroy the idols, but the temples themselves are to be aspersed with holy water, altars set up, and relics enclosed in them. For if these temples are well built, they are to be purified from devil worship, and dedicated to the service of the true God. In this way, we hope that the people, seeing that its temples are not destroyed, may abandon idolatry and resort to these places as before, and may come to know and adore the true God. And since they have the custom of sacrificing many oxen to devils, let some other solemnity be substituted in its place, such as a day of Dedication on the Festivals of the holy martyrs whose relics are enshrined there. On such occasions they might well construct shelters of boughs for themselves around the churches that were once temples, and celebrate the solemnity with devout feasting¹.

In the fashion recommended in this letter, Christianity systematically invaded and absorbed the whole apparatus of paganism, occupying the sites (with the substitution of the 'relics' for the 'idols'), re-assigning the local rites to the appropriate saints, and preserving the sacrificial ox and the 'shelters of boughs' (later to be called 'May bowers') under new names. In the same way, pagan festivals of calendar, solstice and equinox were over-stamped with Christian occasion, and the widespread 'caroles' of Yule re-written as the carols of Christmas. In all of these (and I suspect other) ways, Christianity overlaid paganism, with such thoroughness that the student of folklore learns to read the medieval church calendar as a commentary, at only one remove, on the presence of a pagan occasion and ceremony.

Such a 'reading' is obligatory, in the absence of any plain description of the folk play either before or during the Reformation. The reason for this absence of record is simply that the central mystery of the old, as of the new, religion was regeneration and resurrection. To the churchman, a resurrection drama was first paganism, and afterwards a parody of the Risen Christ, in either case a blasphemy to be abhorred. In the early Middle Ages, the art of writing was virtually the monopoly of the Church, so much so that 'priest' and 'scribe' ('cleric' and 'clerk') were synonymous. With this absolute control of the written word, the Church had the power to make the record of pagan resurrection drama a blank. On one occasion, the involvement of a priest in a May Game allowed the veil to be lifted; elsewhere the reader has to depend on the pagan sub-text to the Christian ceremonial, and on the inferences to be drawn from a miscellaneity of medieval reference.

A secondary source of material is to be found in the Craft

and Guild records. It is reasonable to believe that when the Church specifically forbade pagan rites, the customs were not immediately abandoned by their adherents. It is likely that these believers, unwilling either to flout the religious authorities or to desert rituals they had learned to trust, would continue their practices privately rather than publicly, and in the presence only of those concerned with the purpose of the rite, whose work or profit depended on the 'blessing' invoked. In this way, scraps of ritual practice would pass easily from the general community to the workers concerned, and thence to the Guild, the medieval organisation that came to represent the interests of the labourer, the tradesman, and the merchant. This theory provides an acceptable explanation for the constancy (to be noted in this chapter and the next) with which the Guilds and their members appear as sponsors of surviving paganism.

Nevertheless, while Church and Guild records may provide the mainstay of the information for this investigation, no source of information is disregarded in a search that sweeps across the broad face of medieval ceremony. This search is organised in the following pages as a survey of those relics of medieval ceremony that hint at death and resurrection actions for totems from the plant and animal kingdom.

2. Animal Cults

Birds and Fish

The search begins with a focus on what I would call the 'vaunting of parts'. There survives, in poetry and song, verses that seem to share a common theme, which I would explain as the exaggeration of the size and utility of the parts of the cult

animal. To begin with fish, a good example of the type is the traditional song 'My Old Herring', well-known on the eastern seaboard of Britain. The song lists the parts of the fish, and specifies the uses to which they might be put; 'my old herring's head', for example, would 'make as fine an oven as ever baked bread'. Fish feature in at least one midwinter custom: children are noted to have carried fish dressed as dolls in their New Year's Day visiting custom in Brechin,² but fish rites have no discernible influence on Scottish folk drama, and retire from our attention.

Of more importance are the birds, in particular the robin and the wren. For both, there exists a 'vaunting of parts' set of verses. That for the robin is called 'Robin Redbreast',³ or 'Robin Redbreast's Testament',⁴ and is cast in the form of the dying words of the robin, bequeathing the parts of his body (his beak, feathers, right leg, left leg, etc) for specified purposes. In the final verse, 'like a little king', he turns Lady Wren away, calling her a 'little cutty-queen'. The parallel poem for the wren is entitled 'Wise Willie',⁵ in which the hunter of the wren makes confident but extravagant claims for the uses to which he will put parts of the bird's corpse.

The link between the birds, hinted at in the close of 'Robin Redbreast' is of some importance. From the robin's turning away of the wren at the point of death, it would be correct to infer an earlier 'marriage', for in the medieval period it was believed that the two birds were supernatural kin. ('The robin and the wren are God's cock and hen'⁶). The crucial reference in this connection was made in The Complaynt of Scotland (1549), in the remark that 'Robeen and the litil vran var hamely in vyntir',⁷ which suggests that the two birds were winter wooers. This

reference is the second in Scottish literature to name the robin, and associate it with the wren. The first reference, c.1450, preceded notice in England by over 200 years:

Robyn redbrest nocht ran
But raid, as a hensman,
And the litill we wran
The wretchit dorche was.⁸

The name 'Robin' for the red-breasted bird is known only in Britain, and in the Netherlands, where it is recorded in Dutch and Frisian dialect.⁸ In other languages of Europe, the distinguishing red front grants the name (e.g. Du. Roodborst; Ge. Rotkehlchen; Fr. Rougegorge), and it is of importance to this study to observe that 'Robin' has been added to, and has come to supplant, the descriptive name of the 'dying' bird, so chosen, I presume, by virtue of the blood-stained breast it may be fancifully said to display. The most familiar representation of the Robin as a 'dying' bird is in the traditional song 'Who Killed Cock Robin?', where the death of the 'cock' bird is mourned by 'all the birds of the air'. From this detail of the lament, it should be inferred that the Robin is understood to be a favourite among birds, and his death lamented by all his fellows. The reasons why this bird should come to be known as the 'Robin' will be sought in the following chapter.

The naming of the wren is also of interest. The attachment with 'king' or 'ruler', which is arguable in its English form,⁹ is very obvious in Dutch (winterkoning, winter king) and German (zaunkönig, hedge king). Moreover, the wren has been noted as the centre of a midwinter custom in which it is trapped, decorated with feathers and ribbons, and used as a totem in a visiting/collecting custom, before being released.¹⁰ In earlier centuries, the wrens were killed.¹¹ The custom was noted in Galloway c.1825, when boys caught a wren, and decorated its legs and neck with feathers before releasing it.¹²

The contribution made by this survey of the robin and the wren is three-fold. Firstly, the 'vaunting of parts' for both birds occurs when their respective deaths are imminent, and is voiced as a death-bed speech by Robin Redbreast, and as a vaunt by the slayer of the wren. Secondly, the setting of these vaunts implies that the two birds were considered emblems of a 'midwinter marriage', and that eminence (as chief, king, or queen) was ascribed to each. Thirdly, this eminence was rewarded by a ritual and lamented death; in the following chapter, it will be this feature that will be related to the choice of the name 'Robin' for the redbreast.

The Ram

The version of 'vaunting of parts' most popularly known is probably the song known as 'The Derby Ram', which celebrates the monstrous size of its subject's features. This song is, however, merely a version of the lyric that accompanies the 'Old Tup' ceremony of the Sheffield area in England, sometimes a partner of the folk play in that area.¹³ The Scottish version of this lyric is known as 'The Ram of Dirham',¹⁴ in which the location is presumably Durham, a town about fifty miles from the Scottish border, and with no known connection with the song or custom.

The 'Old Tup' of the Sheffield area is frequently made by fixing a sheep's head to a pole, which is held by an operator concealed with a sheep-skin, or sacking. The same practice could be recognised in sixteenth-century Scotland with the sheep's head on a stick used to frighten a character in Lindsay's 'Cupar Banns' of c.1540.¹⁵ The frightening aspect of the sheep disguise seems to have been of lasting popularity: a rhyming couplet written in 1696 uses the guiser's 'black tup' costume as a basis for

comparison;

Thou would terrify the souterkines

More than a gyzard in black sheep skins.¹⁶

In only one of the modern folk play accounts is the disguise noted: in the unloc. MacRitchie material the Beelzebub character is said to have worn a sheepskin coat with the wool turned outwards. The ram disguise is also recollected in the Falkirk^b account, where masks with crooked horns are said to have been most favoured.

The fore-going gives ground for associating the 'vaunting of parts' with the slain ram, but the addition that this cult animal makes to this progress towards the 'death and resurrection' scenario comes with a consideration of the name (as with the robin and wren), and in the ram's role in Scottish folklore. The name 'Tup', in its Scottish form 'Toop',¹⁷ signifies the male of the species, and is extended to contain the meaning of 'copulate'. The death of the tup can only precede its resurrection into a greater vitality in which it can perform its required acts of regeneration. At the present time, in the sheep-farming area of the Scottish Cheviots, the rams are put to the ewes at the end of November. The patron saint of Scotland, St. Andrew, has his feast day on November 30th, and the traditional meal for that day is sheep's head.¹⁸ A possible explanation for these circumstances is that, before the date was ascribed to St. Andrew, its importance in the sheep-farming calendar made it the occasion for the celebration of the sheep-cult, of which the only modern reminder is the relic of the ceremonial feast.

It is helpful for this theory that faint traces of 'ram cult' remain in the 'Cure' episode of the folk play. In the Quothquan account, the 'Greek Doctor' vaunts his ability to

rejuvenate an old woman 'by giving her three drops of my Juniper ink, tine and horn which is commonly called the ram's horn'. This obscure, gin-based potion, known as the 'ram's horn', is given here as a sexually-reinvigorating medicine.

Also of the Cure is the doctor's frequent claim to salve the 'root', 'rout', or 'rot', which I interpret as 'sheep rot', and possibly a memory of the time when a doctor raised the tup, and was therefore skilled in all the ailments that afflicted sheep. No doubt the Church moved against such ceremonies: Chanteloup of thirteenth-century Worcester prohibited 'ram-raisings' (arietas levare); Wickham suggests that this ban might refer to the horns on a maypole,¹⁹ but it might be simpler to understand it as a ban on the 'death and resurrection' ceremony for the tup.

This consideration of the ram as a cult animal in Scotland has found echoes for the 'vaunting of parts', 'marriage' (or copulation, or 'wooing' for alternatives), and death; it has added 'resurrection', and, with St. Andrew and the 'Cupar Banns', a particular attention to the (severed) head of the animal. This particular focus is maintained in the consideration of the next cult animal.

The Ox

Douglas was kindly received, and admitted to the King's table; but in the midst of the feast, some armed men beset him, quite defenceless as he was, and put a Bull's Head upon him, which, in those times, [c.1440] was a messenger and sign of death.²⁰

This opaque anecdote from the historian Buchanan is explained by an understanding of the ox's part in the development of folk

drama. The importance of the animal for paganism was made evident in the 'many oxen' of Pope Gregory's letter,¹ and the notices of ox 'sacrifice' in medieval (and modern) Scotland.²¹ The vital evidence for folk drama, however, is to be found in the remarkable 'Plough Song', brought to contemporary attention by Shire and Elliot.²² Their chief concern, like that of Fenton,²³ is with the plough, and with the pastime (of which the 'Song' is a relic) as an ancestor of the 'Plough Play',²⁴ and whilst this is a useful and reasonable stance, it has resulted in the aspect of the ceremony most important to this study, that of the 'Plough Song' as a 'death and resurrection' play, being overlooked.

Before this interpretation is made, it is useful to summarise the information relating to the argument already set out. The 'Song' (printed in Appendix Three) has been assembled by Shire and Elliot from a publication of 1666, and other manuscripts. It was compiled by Thomas Wode, the vicar of St. Andrews (1575-92), presumably when the Reformation had brought about its prohibition. The inclusion of 'Christian' phrases, as for example 'in the rood's name', shows a willingness to conform with the Reforming spirit, which harmonises with the view that the text (in the form in which it has come to us) derives from c.1500,²⁵ though the music seems slightly older.²⁶ The 'Song' is located firmly in the feudal society, the text clearly demonstrating that the ploughmen and others are asking to be hired, by the 'lord' to whom they are offering their 'heartly service'. In other words, the ceremony is a formal social interaction, and an expression of obeisance, in the manner suggested for the folk play in the previous chapter.

To turn to what is, at least for this study, the central act

of the 'Plough Song', two reasons (or excuses) are given for the killing of the ox. After two lines expressing the speaker's (or singer's) dutiful loyalty, there follows a dozen demanding the beast's death on the grounds that he is old, toothless, too weak to move, and unworkable. This description is at odds with the accusations (in ll. 19-20) of wrenching the plough-bolts and disturbing others' cattle, sins for which death is the requested penalty. Taken together, these contradictory reasons embrace both the 'dying ox' and the 'scapegoat'²⁷ death ceremonies.

The actual slaying of the old ox has its commentary in lines 40-45, in paraphrase: 'Ask (all the Lord's servants and workmen) if they will crowd round me, and make me as fast and secure as if I were bound with osiers, so that I may be despatched by having my head severed from my body. The old ox, Trip-free, is dead'. Despite the corruption of the text (which one might suspect to be at its height in the 'resurrection' aspect of the song), it might be possible to see in this description of the death, a parallel with the figure in the ceremonial sword dance, in which the dancers circle about the 'victim', locking their 'swords' tightly about the neck, and withdrawing them sharply, the victim sometimes doffing his headgear to indicate decapitation.²⁸ Having crowded around the old ox for the slaying, we must presume that the assistants spread themselves again, so that the spectators may view the 'decapitated ox' lying on the ground.

The resurrection of the ox is, as might be expected, made almost unrecognisable. After a promise to 'bring with me my fair fresh ox' (l.50) there follows a description of the plough, and the brief 'the goad is sharp to poke his belly until he moves' (l.63). Even this reduced version, however, preserves the structure

of the 'resurrection'. The incitement to 'brod' (poke) his belly recalls the instruction to 'brod' the old ox until he is dead' (1.14), and suggests that the instruments referred to as 'gad wands' (1.62) were used as ceremonial 'swords', and were the tools of both death and resurrection.²⁹ The instruction to 'poke his belly until he moves' (1.63), moreover, implies that the New Ox is lying on the ground, and requires to be roused, for a standing ox would be goaded on the rump, to be urged forward. These two details confirm that there is one ox, which is killed and resurrected, a fact implied already in the announcement of the death (1.48), where the old dead ox is called 'Trip-free'. This name is obviously that of the lively, capering New Ox, and indicates that when the revision of the ceremonial was undertaken the reviser forbore to invent a name for the redundant animal.

In brief, then, in its rudimentary form, the action was that the dancers danced round the weak and aged ox (a performer wearing an ox head or disguise³⁰), and mimicked the severing of its head. While the dancers then offered the audience some distraction, the ox dancer replaced his disguise, ready for the moment of resurrection and the occasion for his vigorous dancing and gambolling.

Valuable though the 'Plough Song' is as an example of 'death and resurrection' of the cult animal, the verses make a crucial contribution to this thesis in the addition they make to our understanding of the nature of the 'vaunting of parts'. It will be noted that the 'Plough Song' contains no such passage, nor has one been noted for the ox elsewhere. Instead, the death of the ox and its resurrection are separated by nine lines (11.51-59) which merely list the parts of the plough, and do so in a prosaic

style, more like a catalogue than a song, indifferent to the claims of alliteration, rhythm or rhyme. This 'plough parts' passage has every sign of being a late and hasty interpolation, and Fenton points out that it appears for the first time in the published version of 1666.³¹ The conclusion must be that an impoverished 'naming of parts' for the plough has replaced the customary 'vaunting of parts' for the ox. This exchange might be seen as an expression of satisfaction with the technology of the plough, but I am inclined to believe that the 'vaunting of parts' which, from the evidence of the 'Plough Song' provided the distraction for the audience between the death and the resurrection of the cult animal, was an aspect of the pastime to which the religious authorities took especial exception. In the manner suggested in the introduction to this chapter (under 1. The Role of Christianity), the 'workers with oxen' (ploughmen), who preserved the ox cult longest, were compelled to make this adaptation, and to present the revived ox (who during the 'parts' episode had prepared himself) not as an embodiment of fertility, but as a more docile and agile draw-ox.

The importance of the 'Plough Song' to this study is that it is the only surviving text for a 'death and resurrection' drama in pre-Reformation Scotland. The substitution of the 'plough parts', moreover, irradiates the folklore of the herring, robin, wren and ram, because it suggests that the 'vaunting of parts' for these creatures are the remnants of 'death and resurrection' ceremonies in their cults.

An indication of how well-known or widespread the ex ceremony once was is found in the explanation of the quotation that heads this Sub-paragraph. According to Buchanan, writing of the death of

Douglas c.1440 (the earliest date ascribed to the 'Plough Song' by Shire and Elliot³¹), his enemies 'put a Bull's Head upon him, which, in those times, was a messenger and sign of death'. The apparent opacity of this reference to the 'Black Bull', or 'Black Ox';³², custom vanishes in the light of an understanding of the 'Plough Song'. The 'bull's head' put upon Douglas could hardly have been real, but more likely an example of the ox-mask worn by the ox-guiser. Familiarity with the pastime made it common knowledge in the fifteenth century that the wearer of the ox-mask was put to death, and Buchanan's story implies that such ox-disguises were not difficult to obtain if needed, and that the custom was therefore widespread and common. In the same passage, Buchanan adds that Douglas was believed to be an 'enemy', and a danger to the 'publick peace'; these details explain the circumstances in which a murder victim was reconciled to his fate, for the ox-mask signifies that the wearer deserves to die for his misdeeds (as in the second set of reasons for Trip-free's death, the threat to public peace), and that this death is countenanced by (in Buchanan's story), the King himself, or (in the 'Plough Song') the local representative of the King's law, the chief feudal landlord. Furthermore, it is recognised that it is a 'legal assassination' and that, as in the 'Plough Song', no one of the assassins would bear guilt for the death.³²

The intimation that Buchanan's story gives the strength and familiarity of the ox pastime in medieval Scotland suggests that it played a considerable part in shaping the modern folk play. The most interesting evidence for this belief is, unfortunately, not to be found in the Scottish corpus, but in the 1616 text of Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, where Pettitt³³

has noted an unambiguous reference to the folk play. In a comic episode, three men lie in wait for Faustus who, unknown to them, is carrying a false head. They strike him down, hew off his 'head', and vie in their treatment of it, which will include nailing horns to his head, selling his beard to a chimney-sweep, for whom it would wear out ten birch brooms, and using his eyes to make buttons for his mouth, to prevent his tongue from catching cold. Faustus then comes to life, to their astonishment. Pettitt recognises the 'death and resurrection' action of the folk play, and notes that the conversation following the 'death' is reminiscent of verses in 'The Cutty Wren', 'The Derby Ram', and 'Poor Old Horse'. Measured against the 'Plough Song', however, the similarities extend to a 'death for guilt' (Faustus had previously publicly ridiculed one of his assailants), the wearing, or carrying, of a false head to be struck off in death, and the 'vaunting of parts' that provides the distraction between the 'death' and the 'resurrection'.

I have suggested that the substitution for the 'vaunting of parts' in the 'Plough Song' was a sign that this episode of the ox pastime was particularly offensive to the Reformist conscience. It is maybe a sign of the strength of the Reformation in Scotland that an episode which could be parodied on a London stage in 1592 could not, fifty years later, be printed in the verses of a song (assuming that it could have been collected in the last quarter of the sixteenth century), in Scotland.

No hint of the 'vaunting of parts' survives in the modern Scottish folk play, and relics of the ox pastime are scanty. Three texts (Hawick^a, Peebles^a, unloc. Abbotsford Coll.^b) have a recollection of the 'scapegoat' sword-knot decapitation, where each dancer protects his personal innocence: at Peebles, for

example,

I'm sure it was not I, sir, I'm innocent of the crime,

'Twas this young man behind me, who drew the sword sae fine.

Helm associated these lines with the Dionysos bull-slaying, in which each participant was absolved, and only the axe was left to shoulder the guilt.³⁴

Two Scottish texts contain references to the animal: unloc. Galloway MacTaggart, in a text I suspect to be largely the invention of the contributor, has an adversary who threatens

'To fell thee like a horned bull'.

In Biggar^c, one of the combatants is compared to a 'stirk' (= young ox), but this could be explained as a corruption of 'Turk'.

The evidence is that 'horned animal' cults were extremely popular and widespread in medieval Scotland, and the meagreness of the survival in modern pastime is an indication not of their unimportance, but of how severely they were discountenanced at the time of the Reformation.³⁵ It should be realised that these cults were a large channel of folk expression, and that a considerable energy flow of pastime was diverted elsewhere when this channel was denied.

The catalogue of cult animals is not yet exhausted, however, and attention is now turned to the horse, to whose cult religious objection was early and powerfully lodged, and whose celebrants therefore had time to modify their ritual, before the machinery of civil and religious regulation became too powerful to need to negotiate.

The Horse

Available evidence for the horse, the last of the cult animals to be considered, is concentrated at the very end of the medieval

period, in the sixteenth century and later. The silence of the Middle Ages on this subject, and a hint of the detestation in which the horse was held by the Northumbrians,³⁶ suggest that the horse also was regarded with great opprobrium by the Church.

No 'vaunting of parts' has survived for the horse. In its stead is the lyric 'Poor Old Horse', the lament by the creature for its age and weakness, in one version with a second stanza very reminiscent of the opening of the 'Plough Song':

You are old and you are cold
 Your pace it is but slow
 You eats all my hay
 And you breaks all my straw
 And neither are you fitten
 All in my team to draw
 We will whip him, cut him, skin him
 To the hounds we'll let him go
 Poor old horse, he must die.³⁷

The likelihood is that this is a relic of the 'dying Old Horse', whose resurrection had become a casualty of Church prohibition. Although the foregoing lyric is not Scottish in provenance, proof of the tradition in the Lothian is furnished by the poet William Dunbar in his 'Petition of a Gray Horse, Auld Dunbar' (c.1510), who reflects the custom by comparing himself to 'ane Youllis yald' (a Yule jade, or 'midwinter dying horse'), aged, worn out by labour, and neglected. He asks for the gifts of shelter and new clothing, hoping that the King will command.

Gar hous him now agains this Yull,
 And busk him lyk ane bishopis mull.³⁸

There is support for believing that this Old/New Horse custom, in

which the New Horse was presented with much finery, was also practised at Easter,³⁹ and 'bishops' mules' seem to have been proverbial for their coverings.⁴⁰

To my mind, the 'Old Horse' ceremony lies behind a curious circumstance recorded in Glasgow during the Reformation. It was noted on 22nd December 1586 that

'some persons,... upon the 20th December, called St. Thomas' even at 12 at night, went throu the Town with pipers etc. and laid a dead horse to the minister's yait'.⁴¹

It is plain from the hour, the day (the midwinter solstice), and the ceremonial procession through the town, that this was no mere random practical joke. My inference is that the citizens, annoyed by the prohibitions of the Reformers, had given the minister what in a sense he had demanded, an unresurrected horse.

Another expression of the horse cult was through the 'hobby-horse'. This companion of folk custom has a brief history, with only two points of reference, occurring almost simultaneously. The first of these is in a poem apparently commemorating 'The Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan',⁴² but in effect lamenting the Reformation, the poet implying that 'Merrie Scotland' and the piper died together at the end of the sixteenth century. Among the many convivial duties of the piper was that of bringing in the 'good play meir'.⁴³ About the same time, in 1617, on the occasion of the return of King James to Edinburgh, a hobby-horse was required to accompany the morris-dancers. The item had to be bought, at no little expense or trouble, from the nearest point in the southern kingdom (Berwick-on-Tweed),⁴⁴ the implication being that the hobby-horse was not to be found in Scotland, nor a man who could make one.

A third manner of presenting the horse was to ride upon its

back. Two such examples are recorded, each with a paucity of detail seemingly designed to deny knowledge of understanding of the custom on the part of scribe or reader. In the first of these, a man by the name of Tiberius Winchester, on the 26th December 1603 in Elgin, 'superstitiously and profanely rode through the town with a bedcod [pillow, pillow-case] on his head'.⁴⁵ To the Session, the man confessed to 'having a cod on his head through the town'.⁴⁶ Clues to the cult aspect of this event are perceptible in the 'superstitiously and profanely' of the charge, and the date of St. Stephen, patron saint (among other things) of horses. The meagreness of the detail makes it a matter of speculation whether the rider wore a pillow-case over his head and shoulders as a disguising hood, as a pillow as enlargement in a 'Big Head' (or giant) disguise, as a sack or receptacle for the collection or distribution of traditional gifts (for example, bread), or indeed for any other purpose.

The second example, more significant though hardly more patent, is the affair known as the 'St. Obert Pastime', on record in Dundee, St. Andrews, Perth, Edinburgh and Haddington (five towns on or near the sea in east-central Scotland), but detailed only in the Perth Kirk Session Minute Books at the time of its prohibition, 1577-8. St. Obert was the patron saint of the Baxters (or Bakers), and his pastime was enacted by members of the Guild on 10th December.⁴⁷ In the Perth event there were six participants, for only three of whom we are granted information: one acted as drummer, one wore 'the devil's coat', and one was 'riding upon a horse going in mumming', in the original, 'gangand in munchance'. The Kirk elders insisted on the 'amendment of the blasphemous and ethnic plays of St. Tobert's pastime', bewailing the 'great slander throughout the whole country of the Gospel, evil reporting of the town, and

disdain of the craft'.⁴⁸

In this last sentence, the outrage of the Reformer breaks through the blanket of silence to reveal something of the nature of the event. The use of 'ethnic' (= pagan) shows that the antiquity of the practice is not in doubt, but perhaps even more important for the present purpose is the charge that the performance was also 'blasphemous', and a 'great slander' on the 'Gospel'. The claim is therefore that the pastime ridiculed the New Testament, and since the 'gospel' (the good, or God's, story) was essentially that of the resurrected Christ, reasonable inference is that the custom involved a mock resurrection from the dead.

Of the three players particularised in the account, the drummer is the least interesting; his presence, here as elsewhere, was merely to draw attention to a public event. The second wore 'the devil's coat', and it is made clear by an earlier reference to this costume being cleaned at the burgh's expense that this was the conventional medieval devil's costume, possibly used in procession and pageantry on other occasions. For the third man, the obvious inference is that he represented St. Obert, but this is nowhere charged or admitted. Instead the charge is that he was on a horse 'going in mumming', and the confession is of being in 'sanct-tobertis play rydand'.⁴⁹ In other words, the crime was being on the horse. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the phrase 'gangand in mumchance' is ambiguous, referring to man, or horse, or indeed both together. One interpretation is that the central figure in the pastime was a version of the 'man-horse', of the same type represented by a tourney hobby-horse.⁵⁰

The rider, be it noted, confessed to riding in 'sanct-tobertis' play. The obscure Obert, unscriptural and unscripted, lived mostly

on the lips of the Baxters, who seemed uncertain where his title ended and his name began. Thus 'Sanct Obert' appeared in the writings of the time also as 'Tobert', 'Cobert', and with an aspirate, 'Hobert'.⁵¹ These variants, with some others, will later be shown to be of some importance.

So successful were the Reformers in obliterating this relic of horse cult that the search for a fuller understanding of the Perth Baxters' pastime has to be made in continental Europe. St. Obert is the canonised Bishop Obert (or Aubert, or Autbert), whose see was Cambrai-Arras in the seventh century.⁵² As 'St. Aubert', he was celebrated in Arras, and in Belgium and northern France, in a pastime that involved an ass loaded with panniers of bread,⁵³ an unexplained detail that presumably attached him to the Baxters.

The focus for the search for St. Obert remains in Arras, for that town was the birthplace and stage for a medieval play of great interest. 'Le Jeu de Robin et de Marion', written by Adam de la Halle of Arras c.1283, and performed in Arras in 1287, is considered to be a re-working of traditional material, and because it was written while the author was attendant on the Count of Artois in Sicily, may be considered as an idealised version of life in what was for some Normans the 'old country'.⁵⁴

For the sake of the reference to be made to the characters of this play, a brief summary of the action and dialogue is necessary: A knight, with a falcon on his leather gauntlet, comes upon Marion, or Marote. He accosts her, but she replies that she loves Robin, who plays the pipes and brings her bread and cheese. The knight offers Marion dalliance:

Tell me, pretty shepherdess,

Wouldn't you like to come with me,

And have a game on this nice horse

By the side of the copse in the valley there? (11.69-72)⁵⁵

Her reply is,

Please, please! Back your horse a little!

He almost did me an injury.

Robin's never kicks out at all,

When I walk behind the plough (11.73-76)

Pressed further, she answers,

Now, sir, keep your distance, please!

You've no business to stay here;

Your horse will do me damage soon. (11.79-82)

Learning his name, she persuades 'Sir Aubert' to desist. Robin enters, and the two share their bread and cheese, and fall to singing games, in which Marion gives Robin her garland as a love token, and he shows off his dancing skill. Needing other dancers and musicians, Robin goes off to fetch them. The knight returns, looking for his falcon, and is again rebuffed by Marion. When Robin returns, grasping the falcon he has found, Aubert beats him for mishandling the bird, so harshly that Robin wails,

Darling, he's killed me, he really has. (1.325)

Now Aubert abducts Marion, exclaiming

I don't want any other girl,

And this is the horse to carry you off (11. 334-35).

Marion's resolute virtue again obstructs Aubert, and he leaves her to Robin, and the friends he has brought - a woman (Peronnelle) and three men (Baudon, Huart, and Gautier). These six end the play with a 'Mock King' present-giving game, 'Kings and Queens' (an indecorous truth-telling game), much kissing and wooing talk, especially between Robin and Marion, who celebrate a greenwood wedding, and

dancing, interrupted only by a brief rescue of a sheep from a wolf by Robin.

This early text is of considerable interest in many ways, but for the present purpose, it is important to note the attention given to the horse throughout. It is reasonable that the knight should be mounted, but it is curious that the playwright keeps on horseback an actor whose role is that of seducer. It has been suggested,⁵⁶ and is most probable, that the actor is 'wearing' a tourney horse. The 'indivisibility' of man and horse, suggested above in the Perth pastime, is obtrusive in the 'Jeu'. The sexual encounter the knight offers is 'a game on this nice horse'; Marion seems to regard the veiled rape as being offered by the horse (11.73-4, 82), a notion seemingly accepted by Aubert (1.335). The violence of Aubert's horse is contrasted with the gentleness of Robin's plough horse (and the absurdity of the shepherd and shepherdess ploughing is a commentary on the lengths to which the author felt driven by the need to satisfy the demands of the covert horse drama).

What I am suggesting is that, for the thirteenth-century audience, these passages of the play reflected on forbidden horse cults in which there was, or had been, a wooing action,⁵⁷ and, moreover, a combat, death, and resurrection, of which the combat and Robin's claim to be mortally wounded are the only relics. (The horse combat and wooing pastime might well have originated with the Normans in their northern home.⁵⁸) Supportive of the identification of this play with horse cult are also the names of the characters. 'Baudon' relates to 'Baudet' (= ass⁵⁹) and 'Huart' with 'Hobert', which leads the discussion back to the central issue, the identity of 'Aubert'. Marion (also called 'Marote' (= a Fool's bauble, with grotesque face and bells⁵⁹) is careful to demand her would-be

seducer's name, and to call him 'Sire Aubert' (l. 83). The same process that interchanged the consonants of 'Sanct' Obert's title would operate with 'Sir Aubert', and produce 'Sir Robert', the proverbial partner of 'Robin'.⁶⁰ Between these three names was woven a web of language referring to horses, some of which is collected in Appendix Four, and which together constitutes a very considerable testimony to the popularity and endurance of the association, and also to the Church's diligence in finding suitably-named saints (in Outhbert, Hubert, and Obert) to occupy the horse-cult festivals and attract their energy.

The 'horse festival' of the Shetlands and Orkneys, performed by 'St. Mary's men', is most likely a survival of the St. Obert pastime. A direct link with the early medieval continental custom was maintained into this century for, of the five men who 'visited' on New Year's morning, one carried a basket on his back, a 'pannier', in which the food was collected, and was known as 'the carrying-horse'; the other named member of the troupe was the 'gentleman', who wore straw about his person and sang the pastime song.⁶¹ This version of the St. Obert pastime could have been transferred to the northern isles in 1468, when the islands came under Scottish rule, and took immigrants chiefly from Fife and Angus, the northern portion of the St. Obert area.⁶² In this manner, the pastime could have been transplanted from the folk play area, to survive the following century at a safe distance from the centres of the Reformation.

This northern 'horse festival' supplies another link between the 'Obert' of Perth and the 'Aubert' of Arras. The title of the northern guisers, 'St. Mary's men', or 'Queen Mary's men', is

considered to refer to the Virgin Mary, the Queen of Heaven.⁶³ This name and derivation is unmistakably pre-Reformation, and may even pre-date the southern title of 'St. Obert'. To disinter the earlier, pagan title, one would seek to make the smallest possible adjustment to the Christianising name of 'Mary'. A diminutive of 'Mary' is 'Marion',⁶⁴ and it seems likely that these 'horse guisers' were once known as 'Marion's Men'. Certainly Aubert and Robin in the 'Jeu' might have been so known, for they were both her suitors.

The effect of this interpretation of the 'horse festival' is to promote 'Marion', or 'Mary', the Mare (O.E. mere), to the dominant role in the wooing play, if not the combat drama. There are grounds for arguing the primacy of the mare in the other horse rite discussed in this section, hitherto called the 'Old Horse'. It will be recalled that Dunbar referred to himself as 'ane Youllis yald', or 'Yule jade'. Yald derives from the Old Norse yalda (= mare), and thus Dunbar's 'Yule yald' would make one of a party (with the 'Paysyad',³⁹ 'the Old Grey Mare (who) aint what she used to be' of the traditional song, and the Mari Imyd⁶⁵ (Grey Mare) of South Wales) of midwinter and Easter dying Jades.⁶⁶

The strictness of the Church's suppression of the horse cult has succeeded in obscuring the whole picture of its development in medieval times, and in eradicating it from the modern version of the folk play in Scotland. This, however, hardly diminishes its importance in this study, for the main profit of this investigation of the horse (and mare) rites is to discover that the notion of 'Robin' is related to the wooing and combat play for the horse, and to recall that the name is also to be linked to other cult animals; to the Ram (for which Robin is a traditional custodian⁶⁷),

to the redbreast (which took his name), and to the wren (who became his consort). The importance of 'Robin' is by ^{no} means confined to the bird and animal cults of medieval Scotland; later investigations in to dance form and vegetational totems will show that 'Robin' became the magnetic centre of the regeneration dramas.

3. Ceremonial Dance

To group the notices of ceremonial dance together in a separate section is again to make an artificial division for the sake of clarity; dance is a mode of expression already found in the examination of the animal cults (for example, with the 'Plough Song'), and due to re-appear in the following section on Maying rites. Again, as with the surrounding sections, this survey does not pretend to be comprehensive; consideration is limited strictly to those 'ceremonial' (as distinct from 'social' or 'display') dances that have a bearing upon the folk play. One further admission: this section will not attempt to explore the relationship between drama and dance. It is sufficient for the present purpose to acknowledge that a relationship does exist, whether or not one is the senior partner,⁶⁸ and to accept medieval dance as an earlier and variant form of the modern folk play.

The ceremonial dance form already suggested to be a part of the 'Plough Song' performance is known as 'longsword', a style in which the dancers make themselves into a chain, by grasping the swords at hilt and point, and in which they make a 'star', by locking the swords together. The only surviving example of this kind of dance in Scotland is the celebrated example first known on the Shetland isle of Papa Stour, and now continued on Mainland at Brae.⁶⁹ This tradition has been the subject of an essay by Allsop,⁷⁰

who found the two abiding problems to be the very existence of a longsword dance five hundred miles to the north of its nearest brethren (in Yorkshire), and the undoubted literary Englishness of the accompanying text.

The answer to the first of these problems, and a theory to derive the Papa Stour tradition from the Scottish folk play area, is found in the colonisation of the northern isles in the fifteenth century.⁶² In detail, the tradition of sword-dancing was noted in the eighteenth century at Buckhaven in Fife,⁷¹ in the area from which many of the colonists had set forth. The connection between the two eighteenth-century traditions and Yorkshire is perhaps to be found twenty miles along the coast from Buckhaven at Crail, where a Yorkshire landowner was infested in 1140.⁷² In the light of these facts, the simple but extraordinary history of the Papa Stour dance could be that it was carried from Yorkshire to Fife in twelfth century, and from Fife to Shetland in the fifteenth century.

The second problem is the origin of the lengthy text that accompanies the Papa Stour dance, in which the leader, St. George, calls upon the other dancers in the names of the patron saints of the home countries, and France, Spain and Italy, in terms suggesting that they are military 'Champions'. This patriotic and religious characterisation of the dancers may well be a device to deflect Church hostility from a custom that might well otherwise have come under suspicion. Later in this study it will be argued that, at the time of the Reformation (c.1550), texts were created to disguise the originals of these pagan customs (as has been suggested of the 'Plough Song'). The suspicion that the Reformation was less severe on traditional pastimes in the northern isles (from the evidence of such as 'St. Mary's Men'⁶³), and the relative lack of sources of

textual contamination in Shetland, assist the belief that the text may have been introduced from an English source, (by virtue of St. George) and preserved unusually exactly.

Another style of sword-dancing may be recorded at Elgin in 1623, where five men (the number occasionally nowadays employed for the style of dancing known as 'Rapper'⁷³) were apprehended on the 7th January for 'guising', in that they 'past in ane sword dance in Paul Dunbar his close and in the kirkyeard with maskis and wissoris on ther faces'.⁷⁴ From the details of this charge can be noted the midwinter date, the disguise of the dancers (more frequently noted with guising than with dance), the practice of dancing on the 'holy ground' (the churchyard) of the locality, and the custom of 'visiting' the houses and enclosures of the citizens.

Douce noted in England sword-dancing 'in a wild manner, and as it were in armour, at proper intervals striking upon each other's staves',⁷⁵ but no such tradition has come to my attention in Scotland.⁷⁶ Such a style would be the ancestor of the unloc. Perthshire (c.1870) play account, where the boys line up 'in two parties... standing opposite each other', and engaged in 'stick-thwacking', until one fell down and pretended to be wounded. This emphasis on the clashing of sticks, and the disregard for the narrative of the drama, locates this tradition nearer to dance than to drama. Other echoes of sword dance might be recorded at Biggar^a and unloc. Angus, where three of the players join their blades, and at Melrose, where all five or six performers carried a sword or stick, perhaps showing that the forgotten sword dance still outweighed the dramatic needs of the play.

To turn from the sword-dance to the morris-dance is less of a change of focus than might appear. 'Morris' dancing, very popular

in the Scotland of the sixteenth century,⁷⁷ could in theory include any style of dance that was performed by dancers with blackened faces, as it is now generally believed that the term derives from an earlier 'Moors' Dance'.

Of all the references to morris-dancing in Scotland, one slight and hitherto-unregarded remark by an anonymous sixteenth-century poet is of great importance to this study. Writing at the time of the Reformation, in the part of the Protestant attack on the priesthood of the Church of Rome, the poet lists the ways in which dissolute ministers rid themselves of female consorts of whom they had tired. To indicate the extremes to which they went, he writes,

'Sum for the hure garris heid thameselff, and is not that a morreis?'⁷⁸ (= some, in order to escape their whores, behead themselves! What a morris-dance that is!).

Behind the rough humour of the Reformer's sarcasm is the familiarity of writer and audience with a morris-dance (perhaps with a wooing action) in which the central figure allows himself, more or less willingly, to be beheaded, by the swords or sticks of his fellow-dancers. The value of this one line of poetry is that it links the practice of ceremonial dance with the beheading motif, already noted in this chapter in connection with the blood-stained breast of the Robin, and the death of the Old Ox in the 'Plough Song'. The Reformer-poet seems aware of this 'resurrection' element in the morris-dance, for he uses the name itself as a by-word for contempt.

Finally, the wooing action in the 'Cupar Banns'¹⁵ shows every sign of being founded on a traditional dance form. While her elderly and untrusting husband sleeps, Bessy is wooed in turn by a courtier, a merchant, a clerk, and a Fool, the last-named

being the chosen suitor. The dance form is patent, as the Old Man and Bessie are required to enter dancing, and the stanzas given to each of the suitors strongly suggests that each enters and dances his proposal. This sequence of solo entrances and dances is reminiscent of the 'Champions' of Papa Stour, and also of certain of the modern folk play texts (for example Stirling^a, unloc. Abbotsford Coll.^{ab}), where the 'Farmer's Son' is called on in the role of lover, and has a quatrain to himself in the same vein.

This dance form introduces the idea of the 'wooing action', virtually lost to the modern versions of the play in Scotland. Nevertheless, the wooing drama had a role in the development of the folk play, and that role is among the additions to be made by a consideration of the medieval rites of May.

4. The Rites of May

Summer and Winter

It may seem a digression to seek the origins of the Hallowe'en and Hogmanay folk play in the ceremonies that heralded summer, but in truth the distinction between the two (or three) seasonal rites was blurred as early as the fourteenth century,⁷⁹ and will later be shown to have been totally confounded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Moreover, the argument to be advanced in the remainder of this chapter is that the main impetus of the folk play in the sixteenth century came to be expressed within the many pastimes with which the end of winter and the arrival of summer were celebrated. In the manner of this chapter, attention will be given only to those aspects of the May Games that relate to the development of the folk play; what follows

lays no claim to be a complete view of the medieval Scottish pastime.

Thirteenth-Century Maying

An entry in the Chronicle of Lanercost for the year 1282 is the earliest record of a Spring rite in Scotland, and warrants being given in full:

Moreover, at this time, near Inverkeithing in Easter week (March 29th - April 5th), the parish priest, John by name, by way of celebrating the profane rites of Priapus, gathered together the little girls from the area around the town, and compelled them to form a circle, and dance round in a ring in honour of Father Bacchus. When he had these females in position, in order to inspire immodesty, he carried a representation of a phallus on a stick in front of the dancers, himself dancing and stamping with the singers, by his miming and lewd language inciting all those who saw him to lust. Those in the honourable estate of matrimony, on account of their dignified station, although unaccustomed to the practice, tempted others to evil out of respect for the principal actor. If any of the bystanders, not participating in the dance, began to speak out amorously on their own account, he became worse, and loudly insulted them.

The sins of some men are obvious before they are judged. In the same year, when his parishioners were gathered together in the church in the dawn light of the (last) week of Lent as is the custom, in

his teaching hour he proved that people could be brought to repentance by having their skin pricked by sharp points. The townspeople, indignant of this insult against them, turned on the man responsible, and he, the author of the wicked dead, and still unrepentant of his part in it, in the same churchyard where he had begun the ring-dance, had a knife driven through his body. He sank to rest the night, God having requited him as his crime deserved.⁸⁰

The involvement of a priest is the excuse for the chronicler to raise the curtain on pagan practice in Lowland Scotland, and it is for the student of folklore to infer the custom from the crime, and interpret the commentary.⁸¹

Inverkeithing, in southern Fife, is on the northern boundary of the Anglian and Feudal area, and the shell of paganism is plain in the use of the 'holy ground' of the community, now the churchyard, for the 'ring-dance', and in the choice of Easter, the Church's over-stamping of the pagan Spring festival. It was also a calendar festival, for in Scotland until 1600 the New Year was deemed to begin on March 25th.⁸²

Priest John carried 'a representation of a phallus on a stick'. My interpretation of this accoutrement is that it was an early 'bauble', the essential property of the Fool,⁸³ and therefore supportive of the theory that the instrument at one stage in its development was a stick adorned with bladders and a phallus.⁸⁴ In this light, Priest John can be seen as the Fool of the Inverkeithing ceremony, and the first on record in Scotland. The association of the Fool and the prominent phallus recurs in the Cupar play of 1540, where the young wife Bessy chooses the Fool from her suitors on account of the size of his phallus.¹⁵

Priest John seems to have directed his attentions to the virgins of the Inverkeithing district ('the little girls'⁸⁵), and to have had the co-operation of non-virgins (the married women) in his efforts. This degree of co-operation is one of the discordant notes in the account, for it implies that the older, married women were familiar with the custom, and played the appropriate role in support of the 'principal actor'. This is at odds with the chronicler's stance that they were 'unaccustomed to the practice', and that the priest 'compelled' the participation of his young parishioners in his supposedly bookish revival of the rites of Priapus⁸⁶ and Bacchus. This discrepancy offers the choice of believing that the priest, perhaps recently raised from the laity, was attempting to continue a traditional practice with himself in the leading role, or that he was an incomer, and appointed by an alien feudal authority, and that what we have here is an account of the transfer of Anglo-Norman customs to Fife. Insofar as Fife was feudalised more than a hundred years before the event at Inverkeithing, it is more likely that the chronicler's inconsistency about the role of the married women is a result of his unwillingness to admit that the custom was at all common, and his consequent effort to make the priest a scapegoat for the whole affair.⁸⁷

Certainly Priest John was credited with total responsibility for the pastime, to the extent of playing four sub-roles in its leadership. Apart from that of Fertility Fool (or wooing fool), he was the Actor, and Leader of the Dance, and of the Song. To take these sub-roles in turn, the 'dramatic' element is clear, though unstressed. He is described as being the leading 'actor' or 'mask', and as communicating by mimetic movement. Whether there was any formalised dialogue we are not told, neither can

we be certain whether or not the player wore a mask; the dual meaning of persona is most apt in the matter of folk play, for only rarely in the records of medieval guising are encountered guisers who do not wear masks or visors. Those who have worn masks know of their liberating effect; the item would be invaluable to a man leading such a ceremony as this, especially if he was a priest.

As Leader of the Dance, he led a file-dance (much as Robin in 'Le Jeu...' ended the proceedings with a farandole). He also organised the ring-dance,⁸⁸ and in this capacity he was also the Leader of the Song. Each of these activities came to be the province of 'Robin'. Chaucer, writing c.1370, made the 'Robin', the leader of the 'carole', a by-word for the extremes of licence and hilarity, much as the Jacobins represented the extremes of religious denial:

This folk, of which I tell you so,

Upon a carole wenten tho.

.....

... he, that whylome was so gaye,

And of the daunce the Jolly Robin,

Was tho become a Jacobin'.⁸⁹

The proof that the leader of the singing came to be known as 'Robin' is adduced from two important footnotes. The first of these was attached to one of the earliest surviving Scottish lyrics:

Maydens of Englonde, sore may ye morne

For your lemans ye have loste at Bannockisborne,

With heve a lowe.

What wenyth the kyng of Englonde

So soone to have wonne Scotlande

With rumbylowe.

'This songe was, after many daies, song in dannces in the carols of the maidens and mynstrelles of Scotland'.⁹⁰

This note is a clear statement that this is a 'traditional' or 'folk' verse, and that it was performed by a minstrel, the solo-singer, and the chorus of maidens, in the 'carol', a singing-dance. It is equally clear from the verse that the chorus of maidens supplied the refrains of 'With heve a lowe', and 'With rumbylowe',⁹¹ and that the minstrel supplied the verse, in this case inspired by the battle in 1314. Almost three centuries later, this style of singing is acknowledged to have taken its name from 'Robin': 'Chanson de Robin, a merrie and extemporall song, or fashion of singing, whereto one is always adding somewhat, or maye at pleasure adde what he liste'.⁹²

The relevance of the 'carole' to the folk play lies chiefly in its use as an expression of lamentation⁹³ and exultation by the chorus of 'maidens' in the medieval versions. Echoes of these may be discerned, and the enduring quality of the verse quoted above may in part be due to the clever fashion in which the 'Robin' has taken the rejoining in the battle, and re-worked around it the traditional elements of the folk drama. In the previous chapter, in the section on the Goidelic Celts, notice was taken of a resurrection drama in which the women keened over the fallen warrior: the same lamentation by maidens for fallen warriors (with a defeated king) is found here, but neatly turned to the service of enhancing the love-longing of the Scottish maidens, whose 'lemans', one presumes, are neither dead nor distant.

The lament for the death could easily become the cry of

exultation for the resurrection. In the Maying poem 'Christis Kirk on the Green', a man left for dead after the communal fighting is discovered, like the Irish warrior keened over, to be not dead, and he is brought back to life by three 'routs', or shouts, by the women:

The wivis come furth and up they paisit him,

And fand life in the loun;

And with three routis they raisit him

And coverit him of a swoun

Agane

At Christis kirk on the green.⁹⁴

The conclusions to be drawn from this thirteenth-century incident at Inverkeithing are two-fold. Firstly, there was a 'dramatic' element in the summer-heralding pastimes from the earliest record, though neither early nor late is the folk drama precisely defined. Secondly, the leader of the festivities occupies an area shared in later accounts by 'Robin' (though rarely named as such in Scottish accounts⁹⁵), and by the 'Fertility Fool', and the importance of this will lie in the addition to the roll of Robins that the leader of the summer-heralding pastime makes. Before a summation of the 'Robin' aspect of medieval folk drama is made, however, two other features of the May Rites will be reviewed.

The Green Tree

The totem of the May rites was the hawthorn, which produces its sweet-scented white or pink flowers in early May. It had solid associations with fertility customs in medieval Scotland,⁹⁶ especially at Polwarth, where the finale to the Yule guising

was a dance about the thorn trees by the folk play performers.⁹⁷ It is reasonable to suppose that the first maypoles were branches of hawthorn (or may), and that these were set up in the centre of communities where needed. When this practice was prohibited in Scotland,⁹⁸ a substitute was sought and found in the instrument that stood at every cottage door - the brush which, as a bundle of brushwood, birch or thorn fixed to a short stake, was hardly more or less than a miniature, inverted 'may pole'.

All the fertility significance of the Maypole was transferred to the brush (and its close cousin the broom, generally made from green broom), and they became potent symbols in folklore.⁹⁹ Of particular interest in this study is the alternative name for the broom, the 'besom', itself also a term for a woman,¹⁰⁰ 'implying general slatternliness, laziness, impudence or unscrupulous energy'.¹⁰¹ In my view, the word 'besom' attracted the name 'Bessie' to the female character who represented the fertility spirit in maying ceremonies, and in this light the wooing play of the Cupar Proclamation¹⁵ becomes more obviously a re-working of the wooing play of the Fertility Fool and his 'Bessy'. Although the wooing play has been banished from modern versions of Scottish folk drama,¹⁰² the broom was still carried in by the 'Devil' (see for example unloc. Galloway: Johnstone), always with the justification that it would be used to sweep away the ungenerous.

Another symbol of the 'green tree' was a freshly-gathered branch, but for the carrier of this totem, another group of personages have to be introduced.

Wild Man and Woodwose¹⁰³

The 'wild man of the woods', or woodwose (= wood-dweller) was an anthropomorph of the forest. He and his wife lived apart from the haunts of men, often in the recesses of the woods, where they communed with and presided over the wild animals. They were in human shape and naked, but leaves grew from their bodies, and they were excessively hairy. For fighting and building love bowers they used the branches of living trees, giant 'wands' (in the original sense of the Danish word¹⁰⁴).

Britain has a place in the study of the woodwose, for one of the earliest 'wild man' disguises was noted in fourteenth-century England,¹⁰⁵ and only in the Scottish version of the ballad 'Hind Etin' (noted also in Scandinavia and north Germany) is 'the creature who carries the maiden off on his horse ... a "forester", that is, a wild man and protector of the woods, who uproots tall trees to build a bower for his leve'.¹⁰⁶

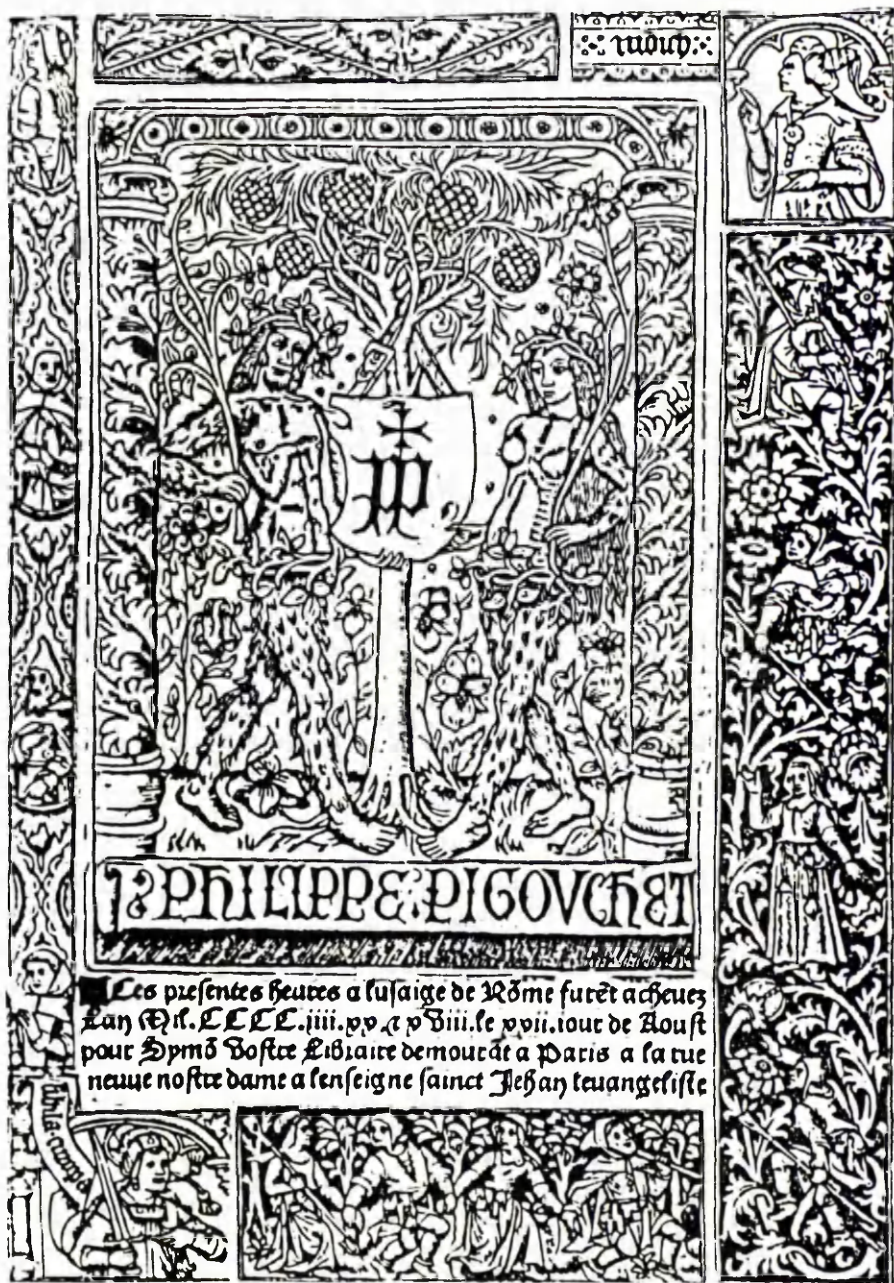
Despite this evidence of a Scottish acquaintance, and the presence of the Wild Man in European wooing/combat plays (see Plate One), the creature is as secretive in the Scottish records as he was in the forests. The Edinburgh printer Walter Chapman, licensed in 1507, chose for his device his monogram suspended from a tree, and supported on each side by a woodwose and his wife, each bearing a branch of greenery. The 'Scottish' significance of this symbol is diminished by Bernheimer's observation that the heraldic device of the wild man and his wife was known in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and was especially popular with printers. He reprints the mark of the printer Philippe Pigouchet, who was active 1488-1512, and it is obvious that the design (which Bernheimer says was followed by

PLATE ONEThe 'Wild Man' Wooing / Combat Play

These two illustrations are Nos. 14 and 16 in Bernheimer's Wild Men in the Middle Ages. Each shows the Wild Man being lured (to his death) by the Woman, who holds a ring. The Archer and the Bishop await their turn in the action, while the audience cower in their houses, visited by the Collectors.

Both illustrations are the work of Pieter Brueghel the Elder, c.1560.

PLATE TWO:

The Woodwose and his Wife

Pigouchet's mark (above), made in Paris in 1498, is taken from Bernheimer's Wild Men of the Middle Ages (illustration No. 48). Chepman's mark (right) was made in Edinburgh in 1507.



printers in Paris, Caen, Lyons and Cologne¹⁰⁷) was that used by the Edinburgh man (see Plate Two).

About the time that Chepman was borrowing the woodwoose for his advertisement, the creature was making disguised appearances in quasi-dramatic folklore, and two such occasions (with the 'Droich' and 'Sir Guy of Gisborne') will be investigated in due course.

The Green Man

A close relative of the woodwoose, the Green Man, is another anthropomorph of the forest, and a popular figure in medieval pastime, to judge from the frequency with which his image appears in medieval church carving. (An example in Glasgow Cathedral is of the type that had greenery issuing from its mouth). The fourteenth-century poem, 'Gawain and the Green Knight' is generally supposed to have been inspired by a 'Green Man' drama, in which the 'giant' Green Man, covered with greenery and wearing an extra 'head', was beheaded and revived. Green Men, no less than their dramas, are without record in Scotland, however, and only in such figures as the 'Burryman' of South Queensferry¹⁰⁸ can such a tradition be hinted at. Despite the blank in the Scottish records at this point, the Green Man is noted here, to be glanced at later as a stage in the evolution of the folk play hero.

Summer and Winter Kings

A nearer approach to the surviving 'combat' drama is made by the introduction of the struggle between the representatives of summer and winter for the land. This tradition has been identified in northern Europe and Sweden,¹⁰⁹ and it may be possible to see a Saxon transplant in England in the 'conflictus veris et Hiemis',¹¹⁰

in which Summer and Winter exchange vaunts before the latter is overwhelmed, and of which the style was 'apparently reminiscent of its popular source'.¹¹¹

There is an early note of the Summer King in Scotland, in connections with King Robert the Bruce. It is reported that his wife, on the occasion of his coronation in 1300, was moved to remark, 'Aestimo quod rex aestivalis sis, forsitan hyemalis non eris'.¹¹² ('I think (because) you are a summer king, perhaps you will not be a winter king'). Uncertain though the translation is, on the basis of the 'Summer King' ceremony of the 'conflictus', one can infer the wife's pride in the public joy and thanksgiving at her husband's coronation, her allusion to his vitality and sexual vigour, and her hope that he may never grow old and impotent, and suffer defeat at the hands of a popular adversary.

This set of ideas was still vigorous in Scotland some three hundred years later. Falkland Palace, in Fife, has a portrait of Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia, a daughter of James VI, born in the Palace in 1596, at a time when Falkland was a royal residence. Information attached to the portrait reveals that Elizabeth and her husband Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate, were known as 'the Winter King and Queen' during their exile in the Hague after being driven from Prague (the capital of Bohemia) in 1620.¹¹³

In 1432, the University of St. Andrews forbade the custom (enjoyed by masters and students) of bringing in summer. The authorities deplored the folly and danger of the practice, in which the King of Summer was escorted by an armed retinue, bearing banners.¹¹⁴ The 'danger' of the custom must have resided in the risk of injury from the weapons, and implies that some sort of combat was ⁿundergone, perhaps between the rival kings and their

supporters, in the woods beyond the town.

There seems to have been a tradition of public participation in the battle of Winter and Summer. The ninth-century 'conflictus' is ended by a chorus from the audience of shepherds, drowning Winter's voice, and calling on the cuckoo and Spring to occupy the land.¹¹⁵ The St. Andrews' riding has been noted as a source of public disorder, and in the next century, the humorous poem 'Christis Kirk on the Green',⁹⁴ describes Maying festivities which begin with dancing and ^awrestling match, and degenerate into a ludicrous mêlée. Archery is much abused: one tries to shoot another through both cheeks, but misses; another in a fury fires an arrow that disintegrates in mid-air; a man struck full in the stomach by a shaft has his life saved by his leather doublet: not so fortunate is the priest, a mile away, killed by an arrow shot over a house by one of the Mayers. After this dangerous comedy, the company fall to with cudgels, and it is a victim of this fracas raised by the 'routs' of the women in the manner already suggested to be a 'resurrection'.

There is no doubt in my mind that the combat of the Summer and Winter Kings is the essential source for the action of the modern folk play, and the ritual has left traces in text and costume. The two kings are joint heirs to the land, and rule alternately in half-year reigns. In this light, they are brothers,¹¹⁶ and this relationship makes sense of such laments (by the victor over his victim's body) as:

Oh! Oh! What's this I've done?

I've killed my brother Jack, my father's only son. (Peebles⁸)

Moreover, as these kings rule in turn over the whole world, they pave the way for such as 'Alexander, king of Macedon',

'Who has conquered the whole world save Scotland alone' (Peebles^a).

In respect of costume, the Germanic summer king was costumed in ivy and carried a garland, and the winter king wore moss and straw;¹¹⁷ in the ninth-century English 'conflictus' Summer is 'girdled with a garland', and Winter is noted for his 'shaggy hair'.¹¹⁰ Distinct echoes of these motifs are noted in the modern 'Galoshan' play: straw buskins and beards are conspicuous in the Falkirk^b account, the Beelzebub of the unloc. MacRitchie account wears a straw belt, and 'Jack Straw' is a character at Oumnock.¹¹⁸ The summer garlands survive vestigially, in the cry for room for 'Gorlands' (Peebles^a) and 'Gorlings' (unloc. Abbotsford Coll.^a).¹¹⁹

Summer and Winter Queens

A combat-drama has been noted in the Isle of Man,¹²⁰ and a vestige of the half-year term of office can be seen in the 'Hallowmas Bannock' custom, observed in Rutherglen (Glasgow) in the nineteenth century.¹²¹ The 'Queen of May' is on record as the recipient of a king's gift in 1506, in June at Holyrood and in August at Ayr,¹²² details that suggest a longer term of office than her title would nominally allow, and that the tradition was widespread. In Edinburgh in 1554, the Queen, Mary of Guise, surveyed the morris dancing and the 'clerk' plays from a pavilion of flowers, birch and rushes.¹²³

Closer to the crones of the modern folk play (discussed in Chapter Seven, pp. 318-9) are those hags who become nubile, on the pattern of the doctor's boast at Peebles^a and Stirling^a. The medieval

model for these is the hag Eriu who, in Irish legend, became beautiful when made love to by Niall. Her name, 'the Sovereignty of Ireland', shows that the story combines the action of a Summer/Winter Queen drama with a kingship rite.¹²⁴ It is likely that this drama is remembered in the characters of Dame Douce in 'Le Jeu de la Feuillie',¹²⁵ and Dame Jane of the Lincolnshire Ploughboys' play,¹²⁶ the former pregnant and the latter carrying a baby, both of them past child-bearing age.

The Winter Dragon

The struggle between Summer and Winter was also represented emblematically as the contest between a warrior and a dragon. The familiar soldier in British folklore is St. George, but the choice of this combatant for the patron saint of England has distorted this custom within Britain, for George is only one among many local and national heroes from Russia westwards who overthrew troublesome dragons, serpents and worms.

One such local hero was John Somerville, who subdued the monster-serpent that terrorised Linton (Roxburghs.) by riding to its den with a burning peat fixed to a wheel at the end of his spear, and thrusting it down the creature's throat. The date of this deed is supposed to be 1174, and Somerville was rewarded for his heroism by the gift of the lands about Linton.¹²⁷ In one sense this is a folk-rationale of the infertment of the Somervilles, but from the viewpoint of this study it is the scenario of a Summer-heralding combat-drama, where the Winter Dragon is overcome by the widespread sun-symbol of the wheel of fire.

By the time of the following century, the 'winter' symbol of the dragon, and its connotations of dearth, had been formalised in

the emblemology of war. To 'raise dragon' in medieval warfare, signified by raising a banner thus emblazoned, declared the intention of bringing 'dearth', by waging war on crop, beast, property and person. This banner was an all-too-familiar spectre in Scotland: on five documented occasions the 'dragon' was 'raised' in the country in the years 1244 to 1346.¹²⁸

In later centuries, the dragon appears on the periphery of folk pastime. In the earliest records for Lanark, for the year 1488, payments are made for the repair, transport and display of the Dragon (and St. George) in the Corpus Christi procession of the town.¹²⁹ This event occurred within a fortnight of Easter Sunday and the descriptions that remain (of Lanark and elsewhere) indicate a mixture of pagan and Christian elements.

The poet Dunbar (c.1513) wrote an Easter Hymn, beginning, 'Done is a battel on the dragon blak', in which Christ's resurrection is interpreted in the imagery of the May Game, and the Summer King's victory over the Winter Dragon: Christ is the 'champion', newly raised from the dead; Lucifer is the 'deidly dragon', the 'crewall serpent' whose dungeon is emptied, and treasure seized.¹³⁰

The final pre-Reformation notice of the dragon comes in connection with a pastime at Perth. A cave on the heights of Kinnoull Hill above the town was known in the sixteenth century as the 'Dragon's Hole', and was the goal of an annual pilgrimage by a procession of young men and women who made their way to the accompaniment of drums and pipes. That this Maying custom had fertility association is made plain at the time of its prohibition in 1580, when the Perth elders admitted that they were 'not without suspicion of filthiness after to follow thereupon'.¹³¹ Again the curtain of silence has been drawn, but it is reasonable

to suspect that the young people of Perth formally gathered at the Dragon's Cave one day in Spring for some kind of ceremony, and that the choice of venue indicates a combat between the Dragon and a 'Summer King', supported by those in the procession.

Whatever role the dragon may have had in the British folk play has vanished,¹³² as a result of the religious opposition, and perhaps the costume difficulties it presents to the guiser. The choice of St. George as the patron saint of England must have affected his popularity in Scotland, and the few Scottish play-texts with references to dragons and Georges (for example, Biggar, Bowden, and Inkerman) may well have gained them from English chap-books.

Conclusion

It has been the task of this chapter to search the records of medieval folklore for those customs and practices which, when subjected to decay and prohibition, might have contributed fragments for the mosaic we know as the modern version of the folk play. The search has not been vain. The May Wooing has contributed its besom or broom as an accoutrement, and its garlands (as 'gorlings') have lodged in one text. The resurrection pastimes for the ram and the ox established the death by beheading, carried forwards by the sixteenth-century morris dance. Most important of all, the Summer and Winter King pastime has shadowed forth the brother kings, who ritually contest the sovereignty of the world at six monthly intervals, each going into death or exile for a half-year, to be revived or banished with rejoicing or lamentation.

This combat of the Winter and Summer King might have been

the direct link with the modern folk play, were it not for the extraordinary energy generated by the coming together of different strands of pastime, linked by the name of 'Robin'. In this chapter we have noted the blood-stained bird, the redbreast, that took the name of 'robin' with his reine the wren; in the world of men, 'Robin' has appeared as the proverbially-happy shepherd, and a patron saint of sheep, as an equine Sir Obin, and as the leader of the May Wooing pastime, as the 'Joly Robin' of the dance and as the singer of the 'Chanson de Robin'.

The magnetic quality of 'Robin', the vigour of the horse-cult, and the pure pleasure of the May Game (for the summer-welcoming pastime was the best-loved) in turn produced the greatest 'Robin' of them all, Robin Hood. The following chapter will show how the 'Robin' lore produced Robin Hood, and demonstrated the unsuspected importance of Robin Hood in the history of the Scottish (and British) folk play.

Notes to Chapter Four

¹ Bede, A History of the English Church and People, trans.

L. Sherley-Price (Harmonsworth: Penguin 1955), p.86.

² In the context of adults visiting with gifts, the writer's childhood memory is that 'we took kippers and smokies dressed as dolls in crepe paper': Amy Stewart Fraser, Dae Ye Min' Langsyne? (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p.178.

³ Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads etc., comp.

David Herd (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), p.166.

⁴ A Scots Handsel, ed. J.K. Annand (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd,

1980), pp.8-9.

⁵ Andrew Crawford's Collection of Ballads and Songs, ed. Emily

B. Lyle (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1975), p.60. Another wren-hunting song is noted by D. Herd, Collection of Scottish Songs etc (1776), II, pp.210f.

⁶ The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs, rev. F.P. Wilson,

3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p.680.

⁷ The context of the quotation in n.7 is 'The dou croutit hyr

sad sang that soudit lyik sorow, robeen and the lital wran etc, suggesting that this was a lament for one or both of the birds:

Robert Wedderburn, The Complaynt of Scotland (Edinburgh:S.T.S. 1979), p.31.

⁸ Richard Holland, The Buke of the Howlat (c.1450), ll.647-51. In keeping with the author's surname, OED suggests that 'robin' derives from the Frisian robyn(tsje), robynderke, and the Dutch dialect robiyntje, all three designating the red-breasted linnet. With regard to dorche (=dwarf, little fellow), see pp. 192-3, below.

⁹ OED records OE werna c.725, and suggests that the name is 'obscurely related' to OHG wrendo and Icel. rindill. It is noteworthy that the Dutch and German names are male, whilst the British bird is female (Jenny Wren). An Anglo-Norman influence may be visible here, from the Fr. reine (Lat. regina), which may have displaced the more obvious gold-crest from the role of 'monarch bird'.

¹⁰ Notices for the Isle of Man and south-west England are given by Christina Hole, A Dictionary of British Folk Customs (St. Albans: Granada, 1978), pp.163, 166-7.

¹¹ Noted in the seventeenth century, near Letterkenny in County Donegal: Oliver Lawson Dick, Aubrey's Brief Lives, 3rd ed. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), p.ci.

¹² Report of the 67th Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science held at Toronto in August 1897 (London: Murray, 1898), App. 1, p.457.

¹³ E.C.Cawte, Ritual Animal Disguise (Woodbridge: Brewer; Rowman and Littlefield; Folklore Society, 1978), pp.110-17; Ian Russell, 'A Survey of Traditional Drama in North-East Derbyshire',

Folk Music Journal, 3, No.5, pp. 399-478.

¹⁴ T.G. Stevenson, ed., Choice Old Scottish Ballads (Edinburgh; 1827) (Wakefield: E.P. Publishing, 1976), III (The Ballad Book), 80, no.xxvi.

¹⁵ The Bannatyne Manuscript, ed. W. Tod Ritchie (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1928), III, 'Proclamation made in Cupar of Fife', pp.87-100. The reference to the sheep's head is on p.99.

¹⁶ Maidment, Scottish Pasquils, 1696, under 'gysar', in the Dictionary of the Scottish Tongue.

¹⁷ Ramsay and the Earlier Poets of Scotland, ed. Cunningham and Mackay (London: Virtue, n.d.), p.97, 'The Ram and the Buck'. The poem probably composed before 1700, tells of a combat between 'honest Toop' (the ram), and 'sneaking Buck' (the goat).

¹⁸ F. Marian McNeill, The Silver Bough (Glasgow: Maclellan, 1961), III, 50.

¹⁹ Wickham, Medieval Theatre, p.141.

²⁰ George Buchanan, History of Scotland (London: n.p., 1773), 3rd ed. II, 15-16.

This story, referring to the Earl of Douglas's murder at the instigation of James II, has been suggested to be an invention of Boece, and the original of a story about Campbell of Glenurcha (? 1550-? 1631), who is said to have produced a black bull's head

before a murder, the victim making use of the warning to escape. Hume of Godscroft, a seventeenth-century historian, noted that 'a bull's head is a token of death'. All the fore-going information is taken from A.M. Sheriff Mackay, in 'Queries', Scottish Antiquary, 13, No. 50 (October 1898), 89-90. In Kirkcudbright (from 'Kirk Cuthbert') in 1164, 'a bull, the marvel of the parish for its strength and ferocity, was dragged to the church, bound with cords, to be offered as an alms and oblation to St. Cuthbert': Arthur Mitchell, The Past in the Present (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1880), p.275. Ox sacrifices were known as late as 1656 on Inch Maree, Loch Maree, in the parish of Applecross (Ross and Cromarty): *ibid.*, pp.147, 271-73. In eighteenth-century Hawick: 'the day before the arrival of the Duke of Buccleuch's commissioners to let his land at Hawick, which took place annually, and was called the Land setting, a fatted ox was purchased for their entertainment, and that of their guests. On this occasion the children, and not a few of the older inhabitants, were waiting for the approach of the victim, and accompanied it from its entrance into the town to the butcher's door, where it was slaughtered. I have heard from old people in Hawick that, as in heathen sacrifices, it had long been the practice for the devoted animal to be adorned with a chaplet of flowers, and that music was not wanting - the town piper leading the procession, playing on his pipes': Thomas Somerville, My Own Life and Times: 1741-1841 (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861), p.332.

²² Helena M. Shire and Kenneth Elliott, 'Plough Song and Plough Play', Saltire Review, 2, 6 (1955), 39-44. (A text is given in Appendix Three).

²³ Alexander Fenton, 'The Plough-Song: A scottish Source for Medieval Plough History', Tools and Tillage, ed. Axel Steensberg, Alexander Fenton and Grith Lerche (Copenhagen: B.E.C. Gad Publishers), I, 3,(1970),pp. 175ff.

²⁴ These versions of the folk drama, which include a 'ploughboy' as a central figure in a wooing action, and frequently feature a plough were known in modern times chiefly in the Lindsey area of Lincolnshire. (see also n.126).

²⁵ Shire and Elliott, 'Plough Song and Plough Play',pp.39, 40.

²⁶ 'Its general style suggests the late fifteenth century, but it probably contains fragments of much older tunes': *ibid.*, p.43.

²⁷ The 'scapegoat' carried with it into death all the unproductive and destructive attributes of its kind; the extreme obstinacy of the Old Ox was more 'scape-goat' than old age. (see also n.34 below).

²⁸ The Grenoside (Yorkshire) Sword Dance: '... the captain is the seventh man wearing a rabbit-skin cap with the animal's head to the front. At one point in the dance the captain falls over and the cap is knocked off. The dance carries on but the captain comes back to life again': Hugh Rippon, Discovering English Folk Dance (Aylesbury: Shire Publications, 1975) p.9.

²⁹ Norman Peacock has pointed out to me that in the surviving sword dances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the swords

are used as instruments both of death and resurrection.

³⁰ Ox masks and horns were worn by ox-wassailers in Gloucestershire: E.C. Cawte, Ritual Animal Disguise, pp.142-48.

³¹ 'Unfortunately the section that names the parts of the plough and its yoke and trace attachments is found only in Forbes Cantus, Songs and Fancies of 1666, and the possibility cannot be ruled out that this is a later addition': Fenton, 'The Plough Song...' p.176. (For the 'substituted vaunting of parts' theory, one would change the first word of this sentence to 'fortunately').

³² The Scottish novelist Robert Louis Stevenson uses a very similar device in Treasure Island, where the pirates signify to one of their number his imminent assassination by giving him the 'Black Spot'.

³³ Thomas Pettitt, 'The Folk Play in Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus"', Folklore, 91, No.1 (1980), 72-77.

³⁴ Alex Helm ed., Eight Mimmers' Plays (London: Ginn, 1971), p.53. I speculate that the holding aloft of the sword-knot, almost always the climax of contemporary performances of longsword dancing, might have originally demonstrated that it could hold its pattern without human aid, and therefore by extension take life and bear the guilt without human involvement.

³⁵ Two other horned animals deserve mention. In folklore, King David founded the Abbey of Holyrood as the result of an en-

counter with a remarkably large stag, for when he grasped its huge antlers, the beast disappeared, leaving him holding a crucifix: David Daiches, Edinburgh (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), pp.14-15; the tradition is first noted in the Chronicle of Melrose, and I interpret it as a symbolic expression of the monarch espousing Christianity in place of the old religion of the horned god.

The stag is unimportant to this study, but the goat has some significance. Under its name 'Buck' (see n.17 above), or 'Buck' (as in Puck Fair at Killorglin, Ireland), it survived into Renaissance folklore as an alias for 'Robin Goodfellow', or 'Hobgoblin', in Midsummer Night's Dream. Although Ben Jonson never completed The Sad Shepherd (his play about Robin Hood), he included in his Argument for Act III the role of 'Puck-Hairy', a woodland spirit whose name recalls more strongly his goat origin: R.B. Dobson and J. Taylor, Rymes of Robin Hood (London: Heinemann, 1976), p.235.

The goat is connected with the shoemakers, or Cordwainers, who take their name from Cordoba, a Spanish town famed for its workers in goat-leather, via 'cordovan' or 'cordwain', a name for a goat-skin leather. (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary).

³⁶ The horse cult may have fostered the attitude that the horse was an 'unclean' animal, and therefore not to be eaten. The Venerable Bede was obliged to quote Maccabees to prove to the Christians in Northumbria (which included much of southern Scotland) that the angels rode on horseback: The Holkham Bible Picture Book, ed. W.O. Hassall (London: Drogheda Press, 1954), p.75.

³⁷ James Reeves, The Idiom of the People (London: Heinemann, 1961), p. 175. A localised version of the Dying Horse song in old Northumbria is that collected in Richmond, Yorkshire: Bell's Ancient Poems, Ballads & Songs, pp.184-86.

³⁸ The Poems of William Dunbar, ed. James Kingsley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), No.43, pp.126-28: the lines quoted occur in the final quatrain. The appellation 'Yeël's jaad' survived into the nineteenth century: Banks, British Calendar Customs: Scotland, III, 216.

³⁹ Banks, British Calendar Customs: Scotland, I, p.39.
 'The person who does not wear something new on Easter Sunday will be unlucky throughout the year. In Scotland she is called a Paysyad.' (Lean's Collectanea (1903) II.pt.1.p.226.)

⁴⁰ 'More ryche arraye is, now, with frenzies fyne,
 Upon the bardyng of ane Byscheopis Mule,
 Nor ever had Paule or Peter agane yule':
Works of Sir David Lindsay, ed. D. Hamer (Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1931-36), I, p.87, ll.1050-52.

Lindsay seems to be discussing the midwinter figures of Peter and Paul (to be discussed in the following chapter).

⁴¹ Mill, Medieval Plays, p.245.

⁴² Penguin Book of Scottish Verse, ed. T. Scott (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p.234. The author is Sir Robert Sempill of Beltrees, and Kilbarchan is a small town 15 miles west of Glasgow.

There is an interesting discussion of Sempill's poem in Kenneth Buthlay, 'Habbie Simpson', Bards and Makars, ed. A.J. Aiken, M.P. McDiarmid, D.S. Thomson (Glasgow: University Press, 1977), pp.214-20.

⁴³ I suspect this poem to be the source that Sir Walter Scott used when he added the 'play-mare' to the galaxy of folk figures in his novel The Abbot, I, xiv, the only other reference to the Scottish play mare that I have found.

⁴⁴ Cawte, Ritual Animal Disguise, pp.61-3 (quoting from the MS Master of Works Accounts of Edinburgh Castle, vol.15).

⁴⁵ Mill, Medieval Plays, p.240

There had been a prohibition in the burgh two decades earlier for those who wanted to 'ryd in a disagysit manner' on the Eve or Day of St. Nicholas: *ibid.*, p.236.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.241.

⁴⁷ His day is in fact the 13th December: The Book of Saints, comp. the Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate, 5th edn., (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966), p.95.

⁴⁸ Mill, Medieval Plays, p.280.

⁴⁹ Mill, Medieval Plays, p.277.

⁵⁰ A 'tourney horse' is made of a framework draped with a cloth hanging to the ground, with a model horse head at the front and a tail at the rear: see Cawte, Ritual Animal Disguise,

p.8. Worn waist high, and perhaps with dummy legs for the rider at the side, it can be an effective device.

51 Mill, Medieval Plays, p.276n.

52 Book of Saints, p.95

53 Banks, British Calendar Customs: Scotland, III, 194-5, 197.

Among the collection of St. Obert references gathered here is the information that in Ghent Cathedral, St. Obert is represented with a baker's shovel: (p.197).

54 The information in this paragraph is taken from the discussion of the text in Richard Axton, European Drama of the Early Middle Ages (London: Hutchinson, 1974), pp.140-43.

55 The line numbers given here are as for the text printed in Medieval French Plays, trans. Richard Axton and John Stevens (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), pp.263-301.

56 *ibid.*, p.262.

57 The wooing element of the horse play, it may be believed, fell early into disgrace. The story of the tenth-century abbot, journeying from Ely to Winchester, who had the misfortune to come upon the West-Saxon queen disguising herself as a mare to mate with the horses in the New Forest, is used by a thirteenth-century chronicler as a deliberate slander, according to C.E. Wright, The Cultivation of Saga in Anglo-Saxon England (Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd, 1936), pp.158-59.

The indecency of the custom might have prompted 'the riding of the green mare' as a punishment for adulterers, as in Aberdeen in 1656 (Selections from the Records of the Kirk Session, Presbytery, and Synod of Aberdeen (Aberdeen, Spalding Club, 1846), p. 137.

It is very possibly beyond proof, but I suspect a relic of the Aubert - Robin - Marion horse wooing and combat drama to have survived at Elsdon, a village a dozen miles from the Scottish border in Northumberland. When the demolition of the church belfry was undertaken in 1877, the masons discovered a closed cavity under the bell-tower, of the exact size to contain three horse skulls, propped against one another in triangular pattern, jaws uppermost.

The most probable explanation of this extraordinary discovery is that it represents an extension of Pope Gregory's advice (see n.1) and that the people of Elsdon needed the relics of 'Old Religion' among those of the new. The settlement of Elsdon is first noted in the thirteenth century when 'Normanisation' of the area brought about the building of a castle.

Enquiry into this phenomenon reveals two remarkable facts, in the light of the arguments advanced in this chapter. The church is dedicated to St. Cuthbert, a dedication explained by the belief that his body rested there on its journey from Lindisfarne to Durham; it is easier to believe that the dedication represents an accommodation of the power of the horse cult in the neighbourhood. The second fact concerns the results of the measurements made of the horse skulls: two are large and the third conspicuously smaller; in the words of the source, 'The heads look to be of two draught horses, and one of a cob'. Apparently it is impossible to tell the sex of the animal from the skull, and I incline to the opinion that the two large skulls were used by the guisers who

played the combatants, and that the smaller one was for the wooed female. The source for all the factual matter in this footnote is the 'History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, 1879-1881' (Alnwick: The Club, 1882), p.510.

58 Davidson lists pairs of twin gods and brother kings for the Vandals, the Langobards, the Swedes, and for the Anglo-Saxons Hengest and Horsa (which she translates as 'stallion' and 'horse'), adding that 'the association with horses is characteristic of the Dioskouri, so that these two are of special interest'. The twin gods (like Romulus and Remus) always fight one another to the death: H.R. Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp.169-71.

59 Larousse Dictionnaire Encyclopedique. The same source explains Marotte as 'a Fool's bauble'. 'Peronnelle', the other woman involved in the ceremony, has a name used by Dunbar in the sense of 'wanton young woman': The Poems of William Dunbar, Glossary, under peronall.

60 Chaucer could use the two names to imply total opposites:

'Now am I Robert, now Robyn,

Now frere Manour, now Jacobyn'. (Romannt of the Rose, II.

A sixteenth-century proverb noted in Scotland.

6337-8)

'Robin that herds on the height

Can be as blyth as Sir Robert the knight' (Ramsay and the

Earlier Poets of Scotland, p.317, preserves the name, titles

occupations and dispositions of the characters in the thirteenth-century 'Jeu'.

The association between 'Robin' and 'Robert' is pursued in the next chapter.

⁶¹ McNeill, The Silver Bough, III, 107-9, 137; Ernest W. Marwick, The Folklore of Orkney and Shetland (London: Batsford, p.102.

⁶² David Murison, The Gaid Scots Tongue (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1977), pp.36-37.

'The St. Obert area' denotes that part of Scotland marked by five towns in which the Baxters celebrated his pastime.

⁶³ McNeill, The Silver Bough, III, p.107.

⁶⁴ Marote, by which the Marion of 'Le Jeu' is called, is also a diminutive of 'Mary'. 'Marionette', a diminutive of 'Marion', has become the generic word for a kind of puppet. It may be relevant to note that the 'obin' words, (hobby-horse, cob, and obin) all refer to small horses (see Appendix Four).

⁶⁵ Hole, Dictionary of British Folk Customs, pp.185-87.

⁶⁶ The Society of Horsemen, the equivalent of the medieval guild for those who worked with horses, were in possession of the secrets of horse-craft. One of these was the trick of immobilising a horse, a process known as 'jading': Dave Arthur, 'Heritage', BBC Radio 3, 1300-1315 hours, 11 February 1978.

⁶⁷ Reference was made to the perfunctory interpolation in the

'Le Jeu', where Robin interrupts the games and dances to exit briefly and reappear with a sheep, which he has allegedly rescued from a wolf (1.586).

In my research into the ancestry of Saint and Sir (R)obin, I visited a shrine of a cognate saint, the church of La-Ferté-Saint-Aubin, a few miles to the south of Orleans. The brief guide to the town, given to tourists, reported that the church 'kept until recent years recollections of sheep-farming in bygone days' (La Ferté-Saint-Aubin (Loiret: n.p., 1980). Still to be seen in the church were a stained-glass window behind the altar, showing the Saint against a background of sheep grazing on a hillside (said in the town guide to be commemorative of St. Roch's grass, a preserver of sheep health), and a prominent carving of a grazing sheep (not an Agnus Dei) on the front of the altar. These two items could not have been moved without causing damage to the church; other 'superstitious' relics, more portable, had been taken away.

⁶⁸ Violet Alford, Sword Dance and Drama (London: Merlin Press, 1962) provides a substantial enquiry in this area.

⁶⁹ It is at the time of writing taught to the boys of Brae School by George Peterson, English teacher. The author saw the troupe performance at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in the late 1970s.

⁷⁰ Ivor Allsop, 'The Sword Dance of Papa Stour - Shetland', Folk Music Journal, 3, No.4, 1978, 324-342.

71 John Gibson Lockhart, Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1837), III, 162. The Buckhaven dance is described as 'war-dance or sword-dance'.

72 The feuar, Ada de Warenne, married Earl Henry, the son of David I, and was mistress of extensive English estates.

73 The authoritative account of 'Rapper' dancing is E.C. Cawte, 'A History of the Rapper Dance', Folk Music Journal, 4, No.2, 1981, 99-116. One of Cawte's conclusions is that the style of dancing originated in the eighteenth century (p.110).

74 Mill, Medieval Plays, p.242.
The authentic note of the manliness still affected by sword and morris dancers is detected in the detail that one of the five being summonsed 'baid the officer tell the provest and bid him hing himself': The Records of Elgin 1234-1800, I, 177.

75 Francis Douce, Illustrations of Shakespeare and Ancient Manners etc (London: Tegg 1839), p.579, quoting Wise, Concerning the First Inhabitants, Language, etc of Europe, p.54.

76 Similar unsuccess attended the correspondent who asked for information about 'an old Scotch dance, danced with sticks, and popular about the time of the '45 [1745]': The Scottish Antiquary, 1895, 9, p.188.

77 Mill, Medieval Plays, pp. 11, 12, 13, 84. See also McNeill, Silver Bough, II, 77-78.

⁷⁸ Satirical Poems at the Time of the Reformation, ed. J.

Cranston (Edinburgh: S.T.S. Blackwood, 1890), I, No.29, 'A Lewd Ballet', l.35.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Robert Mannyng of Bourne, 'The Dancers of Colbek' (c.1325) The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse, ed. C. and K. Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp.145-154, where the carol the dancers sing at Christmas has the refrain, "By the leved wode rode Bevoline" (l.34).

⁸⁰ Translated from Chronicon de Lanercost, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1839), p.109. An English version also exists in The Chronicle of Lanercost, trans. Sir Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow: Maclehose 1918), pp.29-30.

⁸¹ The chronicler is writing in a classical, Rome-orientated stance, interpreting the events as indulgences of Bacchus, or his predecessor Liber. The Roman god of liberated behaviour was replaced by Bacchus, a horned god of harvests and plenty, especially of the grains and fruits that could be fermented to make stimulants. In Scotland he was represented by John Barleycorn and Allan a Maut. Almost three hundred years after the events at Inverkeithing, it could be written, 'Bacchus . . . requireth at men's handes . . . maygames, shrovings . . . (Sir Thomas Chaloner, The Praise of Folie (1550) (Oxford: O.U.P., E.E.T.S., 1965), p.21).

⁸² McNeill, Silver Bough, III, .99.

⁸³ 'A fool will not give his babill for the toure of Iune':

Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs, ed. E. Beveridge (London: Blackwood, 1924), p.13. The proverbs were collected c.1575, and published in 1641.

⁸⁴ William Willeford, The Fool and his Sceptre (London: Arnold, 1969), p.37.

⁸⁵ The place of the 'little girls' seems to have been of enduring importance, Three hundred years later and a hundred miles away from Inverkeithing, they appear in the Church copy of the event in the Lanark Corpus Christi procession as 'Ursula and her Maidens'. With bureaucratic precision, the nymphets have been translated into the virgin acolytes of 'Ursula', an obscure British saint, who all chose death rather than dishonour by the Huns in the Rhineland in 238, or perhaps 451: Hutchinson's New 20th Century Encyclopedia, ed. E.M. Horsley (London: Hutchinson, 1971).

⁸⁶ The 'profane rites of Priapus' continued in their association with Scottish Mayings, at least in literature, until the end of the sixteenth century:

Quhen that priapus out foirth fair,

That god of garding gay,

from Poems of Alexander Montgomerie, Supplementary Volume, ed.

G. Stevenson (Edinburgh: S.T.S., Blackwood, 1910), p.215 'In Somer Quhen the Fieldis ar fair' (1590).

⁸⁷ The attachment of guilt to the priest is complete, for his murder at the hands of the parishioners is viewed as a

poetic and divine retribution.

⁸⁸ The medieval ring-dance was known as a carole, an Anglo-Norman word derived from Lat. chorus, and GK. choros. For notes of caroles in Scotland, see Mill, pp. 9, 10, 22.

⁸⁹ The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. W.W. Skeat (London: O.U.P., 1912), 'Romaunt of the Rose', I, p.124, ll.743-44; p.255, ll.7454-56.

⁹⁰ Ancient Scottish Melodies, ed. W. Dauney (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1836), p.43.

⁹¹ 'Rambylowe' is obscure. It occurs in two Maying contexts. In 'Peblis to the Play', a generally fanciful account of the May Games at Peebles, it occurs like a 'carole' refrain:

With hey and how, rumbelow

The young folk were full bald (Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse, pp.92ff.

in this context it seems to underline the licentiousness of the young folk as they danced and made their way into Peebles.

The word has survived in Maying to the present day, in the Mayers' song at Helston in Cornwall, with the refrain of 'jolly rumbelow'. Its meaning is unknown, but I theorise that it might be linked with the word 'ramble', which once had the meaning of 'to move around vigorously': 'rumble' in contemporary English has the non-standard sense of 'fight', or 'brawl'. I suspect that in medieval Britain 'rumbelow' carried the sense of vigorous action, particularly in amorous dancing. A sixteenth-

century Scottish song 'Sal I go vitht zou to rumbelo fayr' (Complaynt of Scotland, p.101) may use the term in the sense of 'blanket-fair', or bed.

⁹² Randle Cotgrave, A dictionarie of the French and English tongues (London, 1611; rpt. Menston: Scholar Press, 1968).

⁹³ The traditional robin song 'Cock Robin' has for its refrain, 'All the birds of the air fell a-sobbing and a-sighing, When they heard of the death . . .'. One of the earliest modern 'carols', the 'Coventry Carol', is a lament for the slaughtered children.

⁹⁴ Penguin Book of Scottish Verse, p. 185, ll.115-20.

⁹⁵ A significant Scottish use is ironic, showing a familiarity with the role of 'Robin'; Robert Henrysoun (c.1420-c.1490), in his poem 'Robene and Makyne', has Robin come with his woods-visiting invitation in the normal way, but the maiden is cool, and Robin goes back to his sheep: Penguin Book of Scottish Verse, p.107.

⁹⁶ At Errol, in 1593 and 1595, men and women were censured for singing carols around the thorn trees at Yule: perhaps it is token of the fertility aspect of this practice that the Errol kirk resolved to punish the carollers as they would fornicators: Mill, p.243.

⁹⁷ The thorn trees were also danced around after weddings, a custom that was claimed in practice from c.1500 to c.1800.

A nineteenth-century poem claims May-Eve dancing, and subsequent sexual congress, about the thorns in living memory, but at this late date it seems unlikely: Minstrelsy of the Merse, ed. W.S. Crockett (Edinburgh: Menzies, 1893), pp. 324-25.

The connection between the hawthorn and forsaken virginity, which seems inherent in the May rites at Inverkeithing and Errol, and in the bridal ceremony at Polwarth, underlies a brief poem, 'The Hawthorn Green', in which the writer remarks that the green leaves, renewed by the 'finest dew', come fresh each year, unlike a maid's virginity, which is once gone: Andrew Crawford's Collection of Ballads and Songs, I, p.14.

98

'... gif ony wemen about simmer trees singing, make perturbation in the passage through burghs for skafrie of money, they shall be taken, handelit, and put upon cuckstules': A. Maxwell, The History of Old Dundee (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1844), p.416.

99

To give one example from a rich store of possibility, 'to hang out the besom' means 'to have a fling when your wife is gone on a visit': Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (London: Cassell, 1977).

100

A 'derogatory term': Collins English Dictionary, 1979, O.E.D. opines that the two words are 'apparently different, and 'quite distinct' in S. Scots pronunciation: this difference I would ascribe to five centuries of separated application.

101

Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary.

102 Some possible remnants of the lost Wooing Play are discussed in Chapter Seven, 6.

103 This section leans heavily on Richard Bernheimer, Wild Men in the Middle Ages (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952). Distrib. in G.B. by O.U.P.

104 The association between these boughs and 'wands' in the modern sense of the word is explored in Chapter Seven, 6, in the discussion of Beelzebub, and the Cure.

105 An English 'capita de woodwose', appearing in a masque in 1348, is the earliest note of a woodwose disguise in Europe, excepting Italy: Bernheimer, Wild Men, pp.70-71.

106 Bernheimer, Wild Men, p.128.

107 Bernheimer, Wild Men, p.179.

108 The Burryman perambulates the community on the occasion of the Ferry Fair in late summer, completely covered in the seed-pods of the burr-thistle: McNeill, Silver Bough, IV, 190-91. Research in England in the same area has tended to concentrate on last two centuries: see R. Judge, The Jack in the Green (Woodbridge: Folklore Society, 1980).

109 Grimm, Teutonic Mythology, pp.764, 765, 779.

110 Medieval Latin Lyrics, ed. Helen Waddell (London: Constable, 1929), pp.82-87.

¹¹¹ Charles Read Baskervill, 'Dramatic Aspects of Medieval Folk Festivals in England', Studies in Philology, 17 (1920), p.33, citing Allen, Mod. Phil., xiv, 30.

¹¹² E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (London: O.U.P., 1903), I, 173, citing Flores Historiarum (R.S.), iii, p.130; also George Buchanan, Rerum Scotticarum Historia (Edinburgh: 1762), III, - 130. Bruce's enemies seized on the remark and, ignorantly or deliberately, used it to devalue the coronation, by claiming that even his wife had considered it an unserious piece of rustic revelry: in a mocking poem after Kyrkenclif in 1306,

Hii maden kyng of somere, so hii ner ne sholde,

Hii setten on ys heved a croune of rede gold,

And token him a kyne-yerds (sceptre), so ner kynge sholde.

Baskervill, 'Dramatic Aspects of Folk Festivals', p.54, citing Harl, MS 2253; also printed in Ritson, Ancient Songs and Ballads, ed. Hazlitt, pp.25-33.

¹¹³ The generally-accepted interpretation of this title is that it refers to their having ruled for only one winter, but this overlooks both the source of the title, and its applicability to monarchs ousted from their realm.

¹¹⁴ Mill, p.284.

¹¹⁵ Medieval Latin Lyrics, p.87.

¹¹⁶ European folklore offers many examples of brothers, and brother-kings, who fight for, and share, a kingdom.

117 Grimm, Teutonic Mythology, p.764.

118 Two other instances of straw-costume might be the 'coat stuffed with straw' on a staff, carried by the dancing guisers that welcomed in the New Year at Elgin in 1615 (Mill, p.241), and the 'Straboots' (? Strawboots, i.e. straw-buskinned) character referred to in the list of hired men in the 'Plough Song'. The same kind of costume might be visible in Clackmannan in January 1713, when a guiser was accused of wearing 'straw ropes on his legs' (Northern Notes and Queries, 3 (1889), p.3, quoting from the Kirk Session Records of Clackmannan, Fife).

119 This is speculative. In fact, the 'gorlands' may be related to the costume described in the fore-going note, for the use of 'gorland' to signify a straw rope has been recorded in Stirlingshire (Linguistic Atlas of Scotland, ed. J.Y. Mather, H.H. Speitel, and G.W. Leslie (London, Croom Helm, 1975), Scots Section I.

120 Douce, Illustrations of Shakespeare etc. p.589, citing Waldron, History of the Isle of Man, 12mo, p.95.

121 The chief foaster in this rite is known as the 'Bride' (or 'Queyn' or 'Maiden') and is replaced on the morrow for six months by the 'Cailleach', or 'Auld Wife': McNeill, Silver Bough, III, 22.

122 Mill, p. 323.

¹²³ *ibid.*, p.180.

¹²⁴ Cavendish, King Arthur and the Grail, p.140.

¹²⁵ Medieval French Plays, p.222, ll. 276-9.

¹²⁶ Examples of this version of the folk play are found in Philip Spratley, Midland Mumming (London: English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1977).

¹²⁷ The Border Magazine, 25 (Jan-Dec 1920), p.189. The Somerville coat of arms shows the burning circle and a green wyvern.

In the past year I have inspected the tympanum of Linton Church which is supposed to depict the event. The relief is badly eroded (and now protected by a glass case); the figuration of the carving is extremely difficult to determine, but the horseman riding with the spear or, more likely, lance appears to be attacking two animals.

Sir Walter Scott, who had the advantage of inspecting this relief almost two centuries earlier, also entertained doubts on the relation of sculpture and folk tale:

The sculpture itself gives no countenance to this fine story; for the animal, whom the knight appears to be in the act of slaying, has no resemblance to a serpent, but rather to a wolf, or boar. . . . An inscription, which might have thrown light upon this exploit, is now totally defaced. (Sir Walter Scott, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (Kelso: Ballantyne,

1802), p.91.

128 The Scottish Antiquary, 2, 50 (October 1898), pp.147-52.

129 Mill, p.261.

130 Poems of William Dunbar, p.11, No.4, 'Surrexit Dominus
de Sepulchro'.

131 Mill, p.278.

132 Jacqueline Simpson in British Dragons (London: Batsford,
1980) provides an admirable overview of the dragon in folklore
and elsewhere, including some mention of the dragon of the folk play.
Little or no reference, however, is made to the dragon as a winter
symbol.

CHAPTER FIVE

Robin Hood

1. The Pagan Connection

The viewpoint to be advanced here, that the full flower of the Robin Hood corpus owed much to the inheritance of the vast body of pagan lore, is set forth in the full knowledge that it is counter to prevailing orthodoxy, which holds that Robin Hood is largely the creation of the ballad-makers,¹ with some claims to historicity.² It is fair to add, however, that much of the difference between the viewpoint of this chapter and that of other students of the Robin Hood tradition can be bridged by the understanding that there are in reality two Robin Hoods, and that in the following pages the attention is not on the familiar figure of the bulk of the balladry, but on the much more elusive character in the pre-Reformation folk play.

The first and important business of this section, therefore, is to establish the connections between the body of pagan folklore in the previous chapter and the proto-Robin Hood of the folk play, and thereby discover what has been, hitherto, an important and undiscovered link in the development of the folk play. The manner of proceeding will be simply to consider the aspects of paganism in the same order as they were taken in the previous chapter, and to note their point of contact with, and their

contribution to, the Robin Hood corpus.

The link with the bird cult is discovered in one of the more primitive ballads of the Robin Hood canon. In 'Robin and Gandeleyne', the two men of the title spend the day hunting deer in the wood. At the end of the day, Robin brings down a fat deer with his bow, but hardly has begun to flay the carcass when he is killed outright by an arrow 'out of the west'. The assassin announces himself as 'Wrennok of Donne', and is described as 'a lytil boy'. In the subsequent duel Gandeleyne is shot 'through the fork of his breeches' (according to Dobson and Taylor's tentative explanation), and Wrennok is killed.³

The debt of this ballad to the bird cult is clearly visible. 'Robin' is named, and the 'wrennok' (= little wren) has its diminutive quality insisted on in the description 'lytil boy'. To add that the wren is 'of Donne' is perhaps to contribute a deliberate ambiguity, for the River Don waters the Robin Hood country,⁴ and the word carries the hint of 'dun',⁵ very fitting for the 'little brown wren'. The (unexplained) enmity between the birds⁶ is transferred to the men without the addition of motivation, and the very opacity of the ballad supports the theory that it derives from the time when the 'robin and wren' cult was being absorbed by the 'forester Robin' balladry, when the deer-hunters were still moving to the alien pattern of the bird ritual.

In respect of the horned animals, Robin Hood's link with the ox was in the horn which he customarily carried and which, though he may have worn it as a hunter, was more frequently employed in summoning his companions.⁷ The most important horns to Robin were those that crested the stag, his eternal quarry (as in 'Robin and Gandeleyne'), and which in saints' tales

represented the antithesis of Christianity.⁸

The conspicuous document to link Robin Hood with the horse cult is the ballad 'Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne', which is believed to preserve late medieval material, and to be archaic in language and narrative.⁹ This theme receives more discussion later, and it is sufficient at the moment to outline the opening narrative, in which Sir Guy, 'cladd in his capull [horse] hyde, Topp, and tayle, and mayne', is worsted in athletic competition, and killed in swordfight by Robin Hood, who then exchanges his 'green' for this horse costume, and severs and mutilates Sir Guy's head, in order to pass himself off as his own murderer. This ballad seems to preserve a very rare example of the 'dying horse' action, and to vouchsafe a precious glimpse of the transition of the Robin of the horse combat drama to the Robin Hood of the forest.

Robin Hood and horse-riding are linked in an early mention of the outlaw hero in Scottish burgh record, for in Aberdeen in 1508 the 'riding out' in honour of the Lords of Bonaccord was ordered in favour of Robin Hood and Little John.¹⁰ The particular value of a later entry, in 1535, lies not so much in the 'horse' connection as in the added injunction that the young men should wear 'green coats' and the old men 'honest coats',¹¹ which I interpret as 'sober, respectable coats', and therefore dark, dun-coloured garments. By this detail of the young men wearing green and the old men wearing brown is the Robin Hood ceremony attached to the tradition of 'Green and Brown Robin', the Summer and Winter King.

'Brown Robin' appears in three Scottish ballads. In 'Rose the Red and White Lily',¹² two sisters who find themselves separated

from their lovers decide to disguise themselves as boys, and venture forth. 'White Lily renames herself 'Sweet Willy' and goes to the Court; 'Rose the Red' calls herself 'Roge the Roun', and goes

' . . . to the good greenwood

Brown Robin's man to be'.

After staying with Brown Robin, Rose gives birth to a baby and the sisters are re-united.

'Brown Robin' is the name of the ^{second} ballad and the hero who is secretly admitted to the castle of his enemies, so that he might pass the night with his sweetheart. To make good his escape the next morning, his lady has to disguise him in women's clothing, of green colour, and herself carry and conceal his bow, arrow and sturdy sword.¹³

The third of these poems, 'May-a-roo',¹⁴ has a confused narrative in which Hynde Henry loves May-a-roo, who deserts him for his brother, Brown Robin. He therefore revenges himself by decoying her to the forest, and killing her with a sword, although she is eight months pregnant. He nurtures the child, whom he names after Robin Hood. When the boy grows up, he seeks his mother, going to the greenwood, climbing from tree to tree to gather leaves. He accosts Hynde Henry at the very place where his mother was killed, and avenges her death with an arrow through her murderer's heart.

The constant factor in these three 'Brown Robin' narratives is his role of 'wooer'. Combatant he is not; in fact, the second of these three ballads presents the character in what is almost a situation of risible cowardice. Nevertheless, in each of the three ballads is the vestige of what might have been a rivalry situation, of the 'greenwood' versus the 'Court', of the hostile

castle,¹⁵ and the rival lover, and in the second ballad is preserved the vital (though much disguised) exchange of clothing, from brown to green. When this motif is searched for in the third poem, it is noted that 'Robin Hood' the son is in a sense also 'Green Robin', for on the way to the 'ritual' location in the greenwood he has been gathering green leaves. To subject the mythic content of the third poem to one more interpretation, Brown Robin (who disappears from the narrative) has his role of avenger pursued by his 'regenerated self', his son, who in becoming the 'Green Robin', seems to have ancestral knowledge of the crime and its location. By this logic, the role of 'Brown Robin' in the poem is taken on by 'Green Robin', and it might be therefore argued that in the second and third ballads 'Brown Robin' becomes 'Green Robin'.

This change of Robin's colour, particularly remarked in Scotland,¹⁶ is a crucial point of contact between the summer and winter wooers of May (-a-roe) and the Robin Hood of the balladry, where there is early evidence that the dual nature of the outlaw was readily acknowledged. The earliest printed version of a Robin Hood ballad (1510), 'A Gest of Robyn Hode', has Little John tell the Nottingham cook,

'Cowdest thou shots as well in a bowe,
To grene wode thou shuldest with me,
And two times in the yere thy clothinge
Chaunged shulde be'.¹⁷

The colours are named by Robin Hood in the ballad 'The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield':

'O wilt thou forsake the pinder his craft,
And go to the greenwood with me?
Thou shalt have a livery twice in the year,

The one green, the other brown'.¹⁸

Although 'Brown Robin' can thus be reconciled to the Robin Hood balladry, 'Green Robin' proves more elusive. The best sighting of this figure is in the sixteenth-century poem describing the May games of Peebles, 'Peblis to the Play', in which a Mayer appears who seems to combine the attributes of the 'Jolly Robin' and Robin Hood:

Ane young men start into that steid,
As cant as any colt
Ane Birken hat upon his heid (birch)
With ane bow and ane bolt (arrow)
Said, 'Merrie maidens, think not lang:
The weddir is fair and smolt'.
He cleikit up ane hie rough sang, (struck)
THERE FURE ANE MAN TO THE HOILT (went; wood)

Quod he,

Of Peblis to the play.¹⁹

The detail of this stanza is extremely valuable. The 'Jolly Robin' role of the Mayer is clear in that he leaps into the performing space, and leads the singing ('There went a man to the wood' is presumably the first line of a 'carole'). He woos the 'merrie maidens', urging them not to hesitate, but to act impulsively, and the words of the song seem to imply that he is about to lead a file-dance to the greenwood. His 'Green Robin' attributes are in his clothing and accoutrements. The hat of birch is unusual, but of Robin Hood significance;²⁰ the bow and arrow, which with Robin Hood would be merely the tools of the trade of outlaw, are here emblematic. The longbow is part of the imagery of the crescent, and therefore with fertility connot-

ations.²¹ Arrows are phallic,²² and the most appropriate demonstration of this is a sixteenth-century Scottish proverb, 'Sho hes a quiver for every woodman's arrow',²³ presumably to be spoken of a woman of easy virtue. In conclusion it may be said that this *Mayer* stands at the junction of the Robin of the May Game with the Robin Hood of balladry, another crucial junction in this development. The figure is dense with emblem (he even reminds the poet of a small horse!), but at no point is he described as wearing green. The 'Lincoln green' of the Robin Hood balladry was in evidence at Scottish Mayings, however, worn by the young ladies of apparently assailable virtue who dance (a carole) at the opening of the (Maying) poem 'Christis Kirk on the Green'.²⁴

The ancestry of Robin Hood in the summer and winter wooer-kings of the greenwood, and in the pagan animal cults, is revealed also by his companions who, much in the way of some of the characters of the modern folk play, should be viewed as illustrations of separate strands in a complex web of origin. Before considering the named members of the Robin Hood band individually, it should be noted that it was the practice of their leader to summon them, often at moments of personal crisis, with the sound of the horn. This dependence on his 'merry men' is in the tradition of the 'Summer King' ceremony at St. Andrews of 1432,²⁵ of 'Le Jeu de Robin ...' of 1287 (where Robin gathered friends to help him defeat Sir Aubert),²⁶ and most distinctly of the ninth-century 'Conflictus', where the victory of Summer is only made possible by the intervention of the chorus of shepherds.²⁷

To begin with Robin Hood's closest ally, Little John in name at least belongs to a European tradition of 'lesser'

guisers.²⁸ Under his pseudonym 'Grenelefe',²⁹ however, he is clearly a 'Green Man'. The company furnish another in George a Green, a schoolboy whose gang wore his badge, a sprig of green leaves, on their caps. He joined Robin Hood's band in the forest when a cruel schoolmaster tried to birch him.³⁰ His name is that of the winter-dragon slayer, his badge the token of the 'Green Man' costume, and his true home is the greenwood. The place in story of the birch (or besom) may be accidental.

The woodwose tradition in the Robin Hood legend is more deeply buried. The forest was the home of the outlaw, because it lay outside burgh law, and beyond the effective reach of shire law, and consequently the man who made his home there lived 'out of law'. The woodwose dwelt in the forest (because it was the natural world) according to the law of Nature, free and unfettered, for to him the laws of men were of no account. He was, from the human viewpoint, 'un-lawed' rather than 'out-lawed'. Will Scarlet, of the Robin Hood band, bears a name that in earlier forms was written as 'Scalok', 'Scarlock', 'Scadlock', and 'Scathelocke'.³¹ I derive this name from scathe (= injure³²) and 'lock', and represent the name as 'Will Break-lock', the name of one that cannot be confined in men's buildings, whether they be palaces or prisons: by this reasoning it can be seen that Will Scarlet represents the woodwose in the Robin Hood tradition.

Will 'Scarlock' is believed to have fore-run Allen a Dale in the latter's ballad action by a hundred and fifty years, the Scarlock version known by 1600,³³ and the ballad called 'Robin Hood and Allen a Dale' first noted in 1750.³⁴ In the ballad, a young man is deprived of his sweetheart by her betrothal to an elderly knight. With Robin's help the wedding service is

interrupted, and continued on Allen's behalf by Little John, now wearing the bishop's coat. The ballad ends,

And thus having ended this merry wedding,
The bride she look'd like a Queen,
And so they returned to the merry greenwood,
Amongst the leaves so green.

If this is not merely conventional romance, then it is the re-working of the wooing drama of the May-game, where the maiden, wooed by Old Winter and the King of Summer, is restored to the latter by his supporters, and given a 'greenwood' wedding befitting a King and 'Queen'.

The character of Allen a Dale is not recorded before the seventeenth century, and it may be that his immediate ancestor gave his name to the sixteenth-century poem, 'Allen a Maut'.³⁵ In paraphrase, this allegorical poem says, 'When Allane was young, clad in green, with long hair, living on the hills, men and women esteemed him. His foster-father came and saw him prostrate, and called a nurse, who came with fifty-five men of war, who cut him with sickles and bound him in a cradle of wood. Then he was brought into the town, where everyone liked him, for he made heroes of the greatest cowards. His helmet is a cup with feather, and when a man sings a carol at Yule, with Allane (= ale) in a barrel beside him, he fears no danger on land or sea'.

This allegory parallels the verses known as 'John Barleycorn', and celebrates the making of ale or beer from barley. In the details of the narrative, it is almost a scenario for a 'summer king' drama, for the long-haired wild man in Lincoln-green is decapitated by men of war, bound in wicker and brought into town, and there resurrected into a greater life that confers so much

real and apparent comfort on his supporters. It should be noted also that Allane, like the Father Bacchus in whose honour were performed the sports of thirteenth-century Inverkeithing, is both a vegetation and alcohol deity.

The 'Friar Tuck'³⁶ of the company is probably descended from the 'Fertility Fool' figure first discerned at Inverkeithing, for he wears the long dress of the clown,³⁷ the girdle of rushes,³⁸ and carries the 'ring o' bells' or tambourine;³⁹ Dobson and Taylor noted that there was an anonymous 'friar' connected with the morris dance, who was 'an altogether more jovial and buffoon-like character, at first unconnected with the greenwood legend at all'.⁴⁰ The 'wooing' and 'fertility' aspects of this 'friar-fool' are clearly in evidence at the close of the play 'Robin Hood and the Friar', where Robin gives him for a dancing-partner

'. . . a trul of trust

To serve a friar at his lust'.⁴¹

This female person is without a name, and therefore a suitable introduction to the one character of the Robin Hood corpus who cannot be traced through pagan practice. Maid Marion might be suggested to derive from the Marion of 'Le Jeu de Robin et de Marion', but the line of descent is difficult to establish, and it is easier to argue that Maid Marion had an independent existence before she was joined with Robin Hood.⁴² I have found no mention of Maid Marion in medieval Scottish record: significantly Henrysoun's satiric inversion of the 'Robin and Marion' wooing theme is titled 'Robene and Makyne'.⁴³

The last associate of Robin Hood to be examined for pagan antecedent is his adversary, the Sheriff of Nottingham. It has to be agreed at the outset that such a governor would be unlikely to

have the care of a forest, and certainly not one outside his county, in neighbouring southern Yorkshire. Several sheriffs of Nottingham have been suggested for the original, but in my view the trick of association that connected sheriff with outlaw preferred Sir Robert Ingram, mayor of Nottingham and several times sheriff of the county, not so much because of his notorious connection with the Coterel gang of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire⁴⁴ as for his name. To oppose the Robin of the forest with a Sir Robert of the castle allowed the two to pursue their rivalry in the new area of balladry, as a finale to the opposition that had begun in the thirteenth-century 'Jeu', had been noted in the fourteenth century by Chaucer, and which had survived as a byword for difference in sixteenth-century Scotland.⁴⁵

This case for demonstrating that Robin Hood became the recipient of so much of the energy generated by pagan custom is completed by returning to the central figure of the legend, and explaining how this blend of animal cult and May game came also to be an outlaw and a robber.

The 'outlaw' aspect has already been explained in the woodwose aspect represented by Will Scarlet, but this in itself is not a sufficient cause for Robin becoming a robber, for he might as easily have been a beggar, or a hermit. The starting-point for this explanation is in the practice of alms-collecting, already established (in Chapter Two) as the motivating force of the folk play in the post-pagan era, and related to the establishment of a feudal society (see Chapter Three). To convert the 'alms-collector' of the May game to the bandit of the forest was merely a matter of re-interpreting the emblemology of the 'Robin' figure: the green and brown costume, at first the definitive garb of the summer and

winter king becomes the camouflage of the guerrilla; the 'supporters' of the summer king in his overthrow of the monarch of winter become the outlaw gang; the symbols of horn, bow, and arrow are given sinister usage; with the help of all of these the basic principle of the adaptation of surviving paganism, that it was an instrument by which the poor received money from the rich, is elevated in the May game into a moral principle, that Robin Hood only stole from the rich so that he might give to the poor.⁴⁶

It is interesting that this principle was first stated by a Scottish writer, John Major, in 1521 ('He would allow no woman to suffer injustice, nor would he spoil the poor, but rather enriched them from the plunder taken from abbots'⁴⁷), and this admission of violence on Robin Hood's part has to be set in the tradition of belligerent begging. Nineteenth-century begging on one Edinburgh Hogmanay was so violent that it defeated the police,⁴⁸ and even the women who danced about the Dundee maypole three centuries earlier were accused of 'skafrie of money', that is, too-forceful demand for alms.⁴⁹ The grand climax of the 'Robin Hood Pastime' in Scotland (see below) came with the condemnation of a cordiner to be hanged for 'playing with Robene Hud';⁵⁰ his crime was made clear and unforgivable by John Knox himself: 'he could not be absolved, for he was the chief man spoiled John Moubry of ten crowns'.⁵¹ This venerable tradition of robbery in the guise of begging can be perceived in the 'roberdesmen', linked in a Statute of Winchester in 1285 with another kind of thief known as a 'drawlatch', and defined as 'a certain class of marauding vagabonds that infested the country in the 14th cent.', with the addition that the word derives 'probably from . . . Robert, but the allusion is obscure'.⁵² 'Robin' and 'Robert' were alternatives

for the outlaw Hood, before the former became the accepted form,⁵² and the intimation of the Statute is that belligerent begging on behalf of 'Robert' was known (in England) at a time contemporaneous with 'Le Jeu de Robin ...' in Arras.

This notion of the charitable re-distribution of wealth is the last of the endowments of paganism to the legend of the outlaw Robin Hood to be adduced here. Once again, the 'begging' aspect of the tradition has exercised a lasting influence on the folk play tradition, for although the trappings of Robin Hood were to be stripped from the custom (see the following sections), the modern folk play washed its performers of the stain of extortion, and charity once again became optional:

And what you freely give to us

We freely will receive.⁵³ (unloc. Abbotsford Coll.^b)

To derive so much of the Robin Hood legend from paganism is to move counter to orthodoxy; to relate the development of the Scottish folk play to a figure firmly associated with the English Midlands is hardly less controversial. The next stage, therefore, will be to establish Robin Hood's credentials in Scotland.

2. Robin Hood in Scotland

In the light of the traditional view of the Robin Hood of balladry, it would have indeed been curious if the Lowland Scots, in centuries when the relations between the rulers of Scotland and England were not always cordial, had chosen a patriotic⁵⁴ English outlaw to lead their most favoured public merry-making. Dobson and Taylor express the dilemma exactly: 'Precisely how and why the Robin Hood legend should have struck such deep roots north of the Border has never been satisfactorily explained'.⁵⁵

Before attempting an explanation, let the depth of these roots be measured. The first mention of the 'rymes of Robyn Hood' (by Langland in 1377⁵⁶) and the second (c.1410⁵⁷) are both made in England. Thereafter, for one hundred and thirty years, the more informative observations are made by four Scottish writers, Wyntoun (1420), Bower (1440), Douglas (1501), and Major (1521).⁴⁷ Another proof of Scottish interest lies in the provenance of the two surviving copies of the earliest printed editions of the ballads, dated to c.1510, one of which was found in Edinburgh.⁵⁸

Scottish interest in Robin Hood was by no means merely scholarly: Robin Hood and Little John were appointed leaders of revelry in Aberdeen in 1508,¹⁰ and in the same century were noted as features of the May games in thirteen other towns and villages in southern and central Scotland,⁵⁹ and evidence of the zeal and tenacity with which the citizenry clung to their pastimes is given in the following section.

The apparent problem of Robin Hood's popularity in Scotland melts away with the realisation that the outlaw and his band evolved from a miscellany of ritual cults, popular throughout Lowland Britain and therefore pursued equally north and south of the Tweed. The 'Englishness' of Robin Hood only became a problem when the folk hero emerged from the folk pastime, and required a local habitation and a name. His habitations were three in number, and moved progressively southwards, from the Scottish/English border to the English Midlands: Wyntoun in 1420 ascribed the exploits to the forest of Inglewood in Cumbria, and later stories were set in Barnsdale⁴⁷ in southern Yorkshire and in Sherwood Forest, with the connection with Nottingham Castle.⁶⁰

There was, however, a fourth 'home', further south, yet more Scottish, and not one in which he dwelt, but one from which he was exiled. A tradition noted in the late-sixteenth century identified Robin Hood as the dispossessed Earl of Huntingdon. The title is familiar here, for the 'Honour of Huntingdon' has already been identified as one of the chief sources of tenants and feudatories for feudalised Scotland,⁶¹ and in the Scottish kings' gift more or less continuously from 1114 to 1286. With this title, therefore, Robin Hood, though of England, is the King of Scotland's man,⁶² and the structure of the feudal society, already demonstrated to be the nurse and upholder of the folk play, operates as a counter to the burgeoning nationalism of the fourteenth century by providing a dual nationality for a hero who would otherwise bestride these medieval frontiers in an inconvenient fashion.

It has to be recognised that the first references to the Huntingdon origin come late in the Robin Hood evolution and that, if they were signs of Scottish claims to a share in the folk hero, they might have been looked for two centuries earlier, before the Wyntoun ascription (given above). Additional colour to the Scottish claim would have come from the tradition that the Earl of Huntingdon had been dispossessed by an unjust king's deputy, for by the end of the thirteenth century Scottish claims on the 'Honour' were being resisted by Edward I. From this time onward, the Scottish kings were at one with the Robin Hood of the ballad in saying that their right to the 'Honour of Huntingdon' had been usurped.⁵³ The particular relevance of this detail is made clear by the general theme of this chapter, that Robin Hood derived from the May hero and Summer King, for the latter also was a monarch exiled from his domain by a brother king.

3. The Robin Hood Folk Play

The burden of the argument of this chapter is that much of the energy of surviving paganism flowed in the direction of the May Games and the Robin Hood pastimes. A thorough examination of these celebrations is not intended here, for they occupied several Sundays and holy days at the beginning of summer, and were an umbrella under which many different games and sports were enjoyed. Amongst this miscellaneity of festival, however, was a species of Robin Hood drama, and it is the contention of this study that the Robin Hood play was for a period of time the most vigorous version of the medieval folk drama. The history of the Scottish folk play is closely bound to the development and demise of the Robin Hood play, and it is to that history that the chapter now turns.

The dramatic element in the Inverkeithing Maying has been noted (see 4. Rites of May: Summer and Winter), and 'Le Jeu de Robin...' seems to be a sophisticated working of a May play, but these thirteenth-century summer plays are separated by one hundred and fifty years from the first reference to the Robin Hood folk play in Scotland. This raising of the curtain is by a Scottish historian, Bower, the continuer and annotator of Fordun's Scotichronicon c.1440. He made the valuable observation that the stolidum vulgus (= the foolish people) preferred tales, mimes and songs about 'Robertus Hode and Littill Johanne' to those about other heroes.⁶⁴ From this remark we learn that the two outlaws were popular with the 'folk', or uneducated class, and that their deeds were relayed in story, drama, and song. Bower might be seen to insist on the vigour of this dramatic tradition; under the year 1266 he enters the rise of Robin Hood and his company,

'whom the foolish people are so inordinately fond of celebrating in tragedy and comedy'.⁶⁵ The interpretation of this remark is debatable,⁶⁶ but I incline to the belief that Bower is using 'tragedy' and 'comedy' to indicate a dramatic form which might in its 'tragic' moments show the death or exile of kings, and in its 'comic' aspect bawdry and ribald horse-play. I note too that Bower believes the 'folk' to be 'inordinately' enthusiastic for these dramatic pastimes, and take that to be his reaction to the outflow of pagan energy of whose source he had no suspicion.

Bower's attestation to the popularity of Robin Hood folk plays in fifteenth-century Scotland is the only available evidence: for an example of the text of the plays of the period, an English text of c.1475, titled 'Robin Hood and the Sheriff',⁶⁷ furnishes the only surviving example. What survives is only a fragment, or rather, two fragments. In the first, a knight promises the sheriff that he will apprehend Robin Hood. There follows a dialogue between the same knight and Robin Hood from which it is apparent that they are competing with one another in archery, stone-throwing, axle-tree throwing, wrestling and, finally and in earnest, sword-fighting.⁶⁸ Each of these competitions is won by Robin Hood who, at the last, decapitates the knight, exchanges clothes with him, and places the knight's head in his (Robin's) hood, or headgear. (The second fragment of the text is a dialogue reporting the capture and imprisonment of Robin Hood and his men by the Sheriff; this second fragment has no coherence with the first, and I believe it to be from another Robin Hood play, one more nearly allied to the later ballad tradition).

The extraordinary events of the first fragment will be noted to share their detail and sequence with those of the ballad 'Robin

Hood and Guy of Gisborne'⁹ (see above, I. The Pagan Connection), already noted to reveal archaic features. It is a reasonable belief that both the ballad and the fifteenth-century play derive from an earlier horse drama, in which the beast was beheaded and resurrected. The subsequent events of the Robin Hood drama of 1475 have to remain an area for speculation: one theory would be that it was the opening scene of the folk play action a century later to find its way into Marlowe's Doctor Faustus (see Chapter Four, I, The Ox), in which Robin would be ambushed whilst carrying the knight's head in his hood, and 'beheaded', only to come back to life. Such a play would be the product of animal cult, the pastime of the indestructible Green Man, the athletic contests of the May Games, and the cunning of the outlaw, and as such would mark an important crossroads in the progress of the folk play.

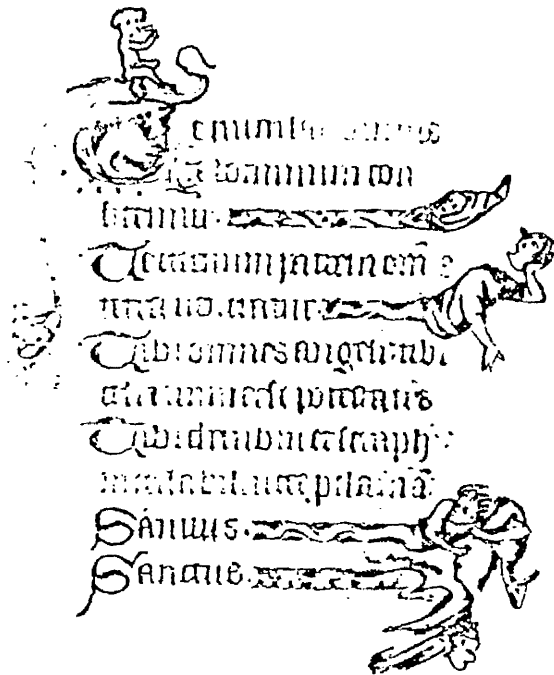
Remarkably, there is graphic evidence for this drama: a page of early fourteenth-century graffiti portrays the dominant motifs of the action, a head in a hood, a man holding his own severed head, and a man holding a deer and a head in a hood (see Plate Three). The inclusion in this set of the (slaughtered) deer makes another connection with the forest outlaw.

There is yet one more aspect of pagan folklore in this ballad and story of the severed head, and it is one that draws the discussion back to Scotland. Neither the name 'Sir Guy of Gisborne', nor the unusual prominence that the ballad gives to one of Robin Hood's brief adversaries has, to my knowledge, been the subject of editorial comment. Both his name and his domain, however, are of interest:

'I dwell by dale and downe', quoth Guye,

'And I have done many a curst turne;

PLATE THREE

The Beheaded and Resurrected Man

The illustrations are six in number, including the cherub playing the pipe, and the figure in the first letter (top left). The remaining four are associated with the theme of the beheaded and resurrected man: from top to bottom these are the severed head in a hood, a man holding his own severed head, a man carrying a deer on his shoulders, and a severed head.

The page is from the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, before 1328, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and is here reprinted from Meyer Schapiro, Late Antique, Early Christian and Medieval Art (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980), p.196.

And he that calles me by my right name

Calles me Guye of good Gysborne'.⁶⁹

By his own testimony, Guye lives 'by dale and downe', and is therefore a woodwose, a wildman, and one, moreover, of malevolent aspect. This choice of the name 'Guye' for the malevolent woodwose and horse-guiser irradiates a small but important corner of the Scottish play, for the name occurs only twice in Scottish records, and both in circumstances of redolent of the ballad.

One of these occurs in the Cupar Proclamation of c.1540, a text already noted to have considerable folk play association. 'Fynlaw of the fute band', the boastful foot-soldier, is frightened by the sheep's head on a stick, carried by the Fool. He exits (with dialogue reminiscent of the folk play, 'Wow mak me rowne and lat me gae'), fearing that the apparition might be 'Merlin', or the 'spreit of gy'.⁷⁰ Precisely this phrase is used by the guiser in the 'Crying' of a Robin Hood pastime in 1515 (see below), who makes a surprising and comically menacing entrance; offers possible identities for himself, adding

And yit gif this be nocht I

I wait I am the spreit of gy (Appendix Five, II, 13-14).

In the context of these three references, the best explanation of the enigma is that by the end of the fifteenth century, 'Gy' had become the name of the composite folklore devil-figure, embracing the King of Winter, the woodwose and the dragon.⁷¹

This discussion of 'Gy' has introduced the 'Robin Hood Crying', a text of major importance to this study, for it appears to be the only Scottish survivor of Robin Hood text. Sadly what survives is only a prologue, and though it survives in two versions,⁷² only one makes the connection with the Robin Hood pastime; the

reasons for this meagre survival are to be made clear below. The 'Robin Hood Crying' is reprinted in Appendix Five; the lines quoted here are the proof that it served to gather together the celebrants for the 'Riding' to the pastime;

Ye noble merchandis ever ilkane
 Address you furth with bow and flane (arrow)
 In lusty grene lufraye; (livery)
 And follow furth on Robyn Hude,
 With harts coragiouss and gud,
 And thoocht that wretchis wald ga wod
 Of worschipe held the way. (11.138-44)

This invitation to the merchants (presumably of a Guild) to set out in their green livery, with their bows and arrows, riding in procession behind Robin Hood, ends with a plea for high spirits as an antidote to unremitting respectability, and since the lengthy poem has been a humorous and occasionally ribald parody of Irish folk tales,⁷³ the reader cannot avoid the thought that these merchants needed many promptings to be cheerful.

Apart from this slender link with Robin Hood, the verses grant some valuable insights into the Scottish folk play at the dawn of the sixteenth century, as combat drama and Summer game. The opening lines are particularly valuable, and seem to have the idiom of traditional material:

Harry, harry, hobillschowe!
 Se quha is commyn nowe,
 Bot I wait never howe, (know)
 With the quhorle wynd?
 A soldane out of Seriland land (Sultan, Syria(-land)).⁷⁴
 A gyand strang for to stand,

That with the strength of my hand

Beres may bynd.

.

Qyha is commyn heir, bot I

A bauld bustuoss bellamy (noisy friend)

At your corss to mak a cry,

With a hie soun? (Appendix Five, ll. 1-8, 25-28)

Noteworthy in this passage is the reference to 'coming in', and the introduction of himself as a black-faced warrior (a Sultan from Syria), which places him in a direct line of ancestry to the 'Turkish Knights', 'Black Princes of Morocco', and the rest, so common in the modern texts. Later dialogue vaunts his descent from a line of kings, and his travels in Europe, features that in the modern texts are normally shared by the combatants and the doctor. It is also of interest that the speaker refers to an entrance that is sudden, surprising and noisy; the tradition of entering unexpectedly can be seen to survive in the modern tradition, for example, at Helensburgh. The boast that the speaker could bind bears with the strength of his hand links the character with the woodwose tradition, for wildmen were reputed to have the power to subdue bulls and bears.

The speaker of the 'Crying' has two names. He calls himself 'Wealth', and names his three brothers as 'Welfare', 'Wantonness', and 'Play', and says that they have come to banish care, dearth, and distress. These names and promises belong to the Summer Game, and the downfall of the Winter King. The second name attributed to him is 'Droich', and this occurs only in the title and finis given to the piece in the Bannatyne version, 'Ane littil Interlud of the droichis pairt of the play'. The best clue to the meaning

of the name comes in the Bannatyne manuscript itself, where in the title the writer has deleted the word 'fule' and interlined 'droichis', an apparently arbitrary emendation that suggests that the two terms were indistinguishable. In the context of a summer-welcoming pastime, and the role of the Fool in such sports, I would contend that 'droich' is related to the Scots 'drouk' or 'drook', a transitive verb in the sense of 'drench',⁷⁵ and relates to the widespread custom of squirting or spraying water over spectators and participants.⁷⁶

The opening line of the interlude has to my mind not received its proper interpretation. 'Hobillschowe' I would locate among the 'fool and dancing' words (see Appendix Four), and I would surmise that it denotes the 'show' performed by a 'hobbil' or Fool (which is, of course, exactly what follows). In this context, the 'Harry, harry', or 'Hiry, hary', (in the Bannatyne version) would be a summoning cry.⁷⁷ Admirable support for this theory is found in the account of the Battle of the Standard, fought in 1138 in northern England by Normans of England and Scotland. The important sentence comes in the telling of how Gilbert de Lascy won fame by rallying the wavering troops to the Royal Standard:

cum enim illis satirice sua propria 'jry, jry, Standard' quasi obice tel confunduntur repercussi.

(for when it was said to them satirically in their own language, 'jry, jry, Standard', they came thronging together as if they had been propelled by a weapon).⁷⁸

My reading of this sentence is that Gilbert rallied the foot soldiers at a critical moment in the battle, and drew them to the defence of the Standard, by shouting the Norman French colloquialism that drew spectators and supporters to the ensign of the Summer King.

at the May game. If this is a true reading, it explains the boost to morale that this 'satirical' mocking of danger gave to the Normans, and from the point of view of this chapter, suggests that the combat of the Summer King was well-known to the Normans of north Britain as early as the twelfth century, and that the traditional shout of the May game hardly altered in the following four centuries.⁷⁹

Thereafter, however, change was rapid. In the discussion of the Robin Hood 'Crying' it was noted that it was the only surviving text to refer to the outlaw, and that the reference was in 1515 Asloan manuscript, but not in the 1562 Bannatyne version. The explanation of these circumstances is patent. The power of the Reformation had been gathering head in the sixteenth century, and was developing into a formidable combination of zealous leadership strongly supported by responsible citizenry at parish level. The Church's attitude towards surviving paganism moved from the tolerant to the repressive, and Robin Hood came under a ban by Act of Parliament in 1555, when it was

statute and ordanit that in all tymes cumming na maner of persoun be chosin Robert Hude nor Lytill Johnne Abbot of unressoun Quenis of Maij nor utheryse nouthur in Burgh nor to landwart in ony tyme to cum.⁸⁰

It is accepted in this study that the May game and the Robin Hood pastime were in the sixteenth century the mainstream of popular festival, and pastimes of which the people, to use Bower's phrase, were 'inordinately fond'.⁶⁵ This mainstream was peremptorily dammed by the Reformation in 1555 and, to pursue the metaphor, the dam was at first broken, but repaired so strongly that the currents were obliged to find other channels.

The celebrated breaking of the statute came in Edinburgh in 1561, when the apprentices of the city defied both the Act and a timely reminder of it from the City Council, and entered in at the East Port and proceeded to the Tron, where they were met by the magistrates. These they turned 'violently and contemptuously' aside, and passed on to Castle Hill where for some hours they enjoyed the 'Robin Hood' pastimes. A cordiner was later arrested, and condemned to be hanged, no less, for 'playing with Robene Hud'. When popular appeals to the baillie and the minister John Knox fell on deaf ears, the crowd took the matter into their own hands, and rescued the man from prison.⁸¹

The City Council complained of the danger to the public peace of men in coats of mail, carrying 'weapons invasive', including swords and culverins, but no note is made of any injury caused by this weaponry and, as has been shown already, the chief crime of the man condemned to hang was 'begging with violence'.⁵¹ No addition to our knowledge of the Robin Hood play is made by the report of these events in Edinburgh, but it might be conjectured that the armed men were the supporters of the Summer King, and that what fighting took place did so as sport or 'dramatic game'. Nevertheless, in the following year, the disregard for the authority of the City Council was alarming, and the Queen was persuaded to issue a proclamation banning 'Robene Hude's play' on the grounds that it fostered sedition and tumult.⁸² At this time it may be said that Temporal and Spiritual power in Scotland were united in opposition to the folk play in its context of the May games. In this way, the obstruction to the flow of tradition was shored up, and the statute of parliament became an immovable object for what had hitherto been an irresistible force.

When the capital had been made secure, the rest of the country had to submit. Despite the Statute, the country people had gone on with the time-honoured custom. The poet Alexander Scott, lamenting the hold that the Reformation had taken on Scotland, noticed that the observance of the Robin Hood ceremonies had been extinguished, except perhaps with the unregarded peasantry, in his phrase, the 'cloven Robbynis'.⁸³ It might be noted that, at this point in history, the pastime had reverted to the folk, having been within the century first raised to a civic entertainment by the burghs and then prohibited by the monarch.

As we might guess, the Robin Hood pastime was extinguished with difficulty, burgh by burgh and village by village.⁸⁴ There was a particularly resistant custom at Samuelston,⁸⁵ near Haddington, which was played annually on the first Sunday in May. There was much unrest in 1589 when the Laird, under pressure from the kirk, confiscated the ensigns and drum but even so could not persuade the celebrants to desist. This village attracted so much attention in kirk session records that, for one and once only, a name was attached to the Scottish folk play. The play at Samuelston was known as 'The Trik'; to relate this title to the argument of this chapter, my suggestion is that it relates to the central 'trick' or crucial subterfuge of the drama, in which Robin Hood evades death by tricking his enemy into severing his 'spare' head.

Twenty years later in 1610, at the village of Linton, a few miles from the border with England, the Robin Hood play loses its last battle. The miscreant players cited included a yeoman farmer (a small farm freeholder) and the Lord's ploughman (hardly 'unregarded peasantry' in the social scale of village life), and the plays roles included Robin Hood, Little John, the Sheriff,

and the Lord of Unreason.⁸⁶ Apart from the interest of the age and relative dignity of the players, also to be noted is the proof of the obduracy of custom, which in 1610 even preserved the 'Lord of Unreason', a full century after he had been discarded elsewhere.¹⁰

Forbidden the performance of the folk play, it may be that the action was remembered in ballad form. This, at least, is the basis for my interpretation of 'John Thomson and the Turk',⁸⁷ a poem first noted c.1586. In the confused narrative, John Thomson, a Scot, after three years of crusading in the East, is visited by his wife, whom he sends home to Scotland. She instead goes to the castle of a Turk, called 'Violentrie'. Thomson disguises himself as a pilgrim to enter the castle, and is received by his wife, who then turns him over to the Turk. The infidel takes Thomson to the wood in order to kill him, but the Scot leaves a trail by hanging 'a ribbon on every branch'. He blows his horn, whereupon three thousand of his followers come, burn down the castle, and hang his wife on the greenwood tree.

Beneath this farrago, it is possible to see the basic scenario of a Summer folk play, in which a Scottish hero combats with a 'Turkish Knight', for the favours of the Spring Bride. The Hero avoids death by decorating the greenwood with ribbons, in Maying style, and by blowing his horn (in the manner of Robin Hood) to summon his supporters to secure him the victory, in the manner of the friends of the Summer King.

This chapter has sought to establish the challenging view of Robin Hood as an inheritor of pagan pastime, and as a dominant character in the phase of the folk play prior to the Reformation. In my view, the misunderstandings of the role of Robin Hood in

this area have been brought about by the misreading of the rubric to 'a new playe' of 'Robin Hood and the Friar', published by William Copland c.1560. This text (which in fact includes another known as 'Robin Hood and the Potter') is said by the printer 'for to be played in Maye games',⁸⁸ and this recommendation, coupled with the fact that the two pieces have a very evident origin in balladry, has persuaded scholars that it was by such means as this that the hero was introduced into the dramatic pastimes of the May games.⁸⁹ In truth, these ballad-plays are a world away from the bloodiness of such as the c.1475 'Robin Hood and the Sheriff',⁶⁷ and its echoes of cult action. In my view, Copland was adjusting to the hostility of the Reformer towards the pagan relics by providing plays that exchanged the resurrected 'Green Robin' for the more contemporary (and harmless) Robin Hood of the balladry. Copland and his contemporaries were successful, the exchange was made, and the 'ballad-play' made the transition from medieval to modern times, surviving the Reformation.⁹⁰

For Scotland, however, the adaptation came too late. By the time that Copland's new 'ballad-plays' left the presses, civil and religious authority in Scotland had for five years been prosecuting, according to Queen Mary's statute, those who impersonated Robin Hood. As we have seen, the ban was vigorously applied, and thus a schism opened up between the English folk drama, with its ballad-plays and, more frequently, 'stray' Robin Hood characters,⁹¹ and the Scottish drama where such actions and characters are not to be found.

The dam to hold back Robin Hood held firm. There was, nevertheless, some seepage, invisible to the watchdogs of the time, but enough to warrant the belief that the tradition flowed on

through the wilderness that the Reformation made of popular pastime in Scotland. The faint signs of this subterranean movement, which connects the heritage of paganism with the 'modern' play of the eighteenth century, are to be traced in the following chapter.

Notes to Chapter Five

¹ Rymes of Robin Hood, ed. R.B. Dobson and J. Taylor (London: Heineman, 1976) provides a lengthy commentary on a comprehensive collection of Robin Hood material, and insists on Robin Hood as a hero of balladry, with no reference to pagan folklore..

² A vigorous case for the 'historical' Robin Hood is made by J.W. Walker, The True History of Robin Hood (1952; rpt. Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1973).

³ Rymes of Robin Hood, pp.255-57.

⁴ Dobson and Taylor's map, 'Sherwood and Barnsdale', reveals that the River Don divides the two forests: Rymes of Robin Hood, p.69.

⁵ Parallels to this 'dun' are the place-names on the Don of Barnby Dun, and Dunscroft, eight miles north of Doncaster.

⁶ As in the closing lines of 'Robin Redbreast's Testament' there is hostility between wren and robin (See Chapter Four, 2), so too the lament that the robin and the wren were 'friendly in winter' (Chapter Two, n7) might imply that they were hostile at another season of the year, when the wren slew the robin. This would motivate the wren-hunt as a revenge slaying, the course followed by Gandeleyne in the ballad.

⁷ The bow and the horn are suggested to be the badges of the poor man, who lacks ox, cow and cart: Early English Carols

ed. R.L. Greene, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), pp.230, 487-8.

⁸ The motif is of a good king, or saint, who in the forest is confronted by a stag of immense proportions. When the man boldly grasps the antlers, he discovers a crucifix. The story is told of King David I in the Melrose Chronicle, repeated by Daiches, Edinburgh, pp. 14-15.

⁹ Rymes of Robin Hood, pp.140-45.

¹⁰ It was the practice to 'ride' in the winter for St. Nicholas, and in the summer for Robin Hood: Mill, pp.137, 140.

¹¹ Mill, p.144. The costume for the winter riding for St. Nicholas in 1522 was to be 'water-cloaks': *ibid.*, p.141.

¹² A Scottish Ballad Book, ed. David Buchan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p.73.

¹³ Scottish Ballad Book, p.62.

¹⁴ Ramsay and the earlier poets of Scotland, p.650.

¹⁵ The idea of the 'hostile castle' occurs in the folk play in Judas's speech in Falkirk^b (see p.87)

¹⁶ It was Child's opinion that the popularity of Robin Hood in Scotland 'was in all probability mediated by the name Brown

Robin': F.J. Child, ed., The English and Scottish Popular Ballads,
5 vols. (New York: Dover, 1965), II, 305-06.

17 Rymes of Robin Hood, p.91.

18 Rymes of Robin Hood, pp.148, 149.

19 Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse, pp.92ff.

20 The poet Alexander Scott, writing c.1590, speaks of men going out with Robin Hood and Little John to bring in branches and seed pods of birch (n86, below). Another reference to the birch as a Maying emblem comes in the Edinburgh Hammermen's Accounts in 1501 (Mill, p.229n).

21 Theseus recognises this in his choice of wedding night for his marriage with Hippolyta:

' . . . the moon, like to a silver bow

New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night

Of our solemnities'. (Midsummer Night's Dream, I, i, 11.9-11.)

22 Cupid fires what Blake called 'arrows of desire'.

23 Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs, p.93.

24 Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse, pp.83f.

25 Mill, p.284.

²⁶ See Chapter Four, 2, The Horse.

²⁷ See Chapter Four, 4.

²⁸ This tradition of pairings includes Jack and the Giant, the Wren and the Robin, the Prior and the Abbot, Robin and Sir Robert, the servant and the Doctor.

²⁹ Rymes of Robin Hood, pp.90f.

³⁰ His ballad, under his pseudonym of 'The Pinder of Wakefield', is given in Rymes of Robin Hood, pp.146-48.

³¹ Rymes of Robin Hood, p.329. The clearest glimpse of the proto-Robin Hood as a woodwose comes in lines by Dunbar,

Was never wyld Robein under bewch

.....

So baulde a berne as he '(Poems of Dunbar, p.99, ll.

25-27)

³² O.E.D.

³³ Rymes of Robin Hood, p.172.

³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 172-73.

³⁵ Penguin Book of Scottish Verse, pp.192-94. The poem also goes under the title of 'Why Suld Nocht Allane Honorit be?'

³⁶ The name may derive from the manner of the 'active friars' of tucking their habits up into a girdle, to facilitate movement.

³⁷ William Willeford, The Fool and His Sceptre (London: Arnold, 1969), p.22.

³⁸ Walker, True History of Robin Hood, p.41, citing Scott's Ivanhoe for a source.

³⁹ Perhaps the earliest illustration of this item is in the window formerly at Betley, Staffs, and now in Minsterley in Shropshire, which is tentatively dated to the mid-fifteenth century. It is illustrated in Old England, ed. Charles Knight (London: n.p., ?1875), I, frontispiece. (see also Rymes of Robin Hood, p.62n).

⁴⁰ Rymes of Robin Hood, p.41.

⁴¹ ibid., p.214.

⁴² ibid., p.41.

⁴³ Penguin Book of Scottish Verse, p.107.

⁴⁴ This paragraph leans heavily on the discussion in Rymes of Robin Hood, pp. 14-15, where the point is made that seldom after 1250 was the care of a forest entrusted to a sheriff. The editors add, 'one is left with an overall impression that it was the sheriff's presence in Nottinghamshire that drew Robin to that county' (p.14).

⁴⁵ See Chapter Four, n60.

⁴⁶ It is noticeable that the creation of Robin Hood was controlled to avoid the inherent class war in the opposition of rich and poor: 'From the moment he first steps on to the historical stage Robin Hood is presented as a yeoman hero for a yeoman audience': Rymes of Robin Hood, p.34.

⁴⁷ Rymes of Robin Hood, pp.4-5, 21.

⁴⁸ See Chapter Seven, 8.

⁴⁹ 'Gif ony wemen about simmer trees singing, make perturbation in the passage through burghs for skafrie of money, they shall be taken, handelit, and put upon cuckstules': A. Maxwell, The History of Old Dundee (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1844), p.416. The edict was made in 1555; in 1542, the Aberdeen Lords of Bonaccord were accused of being 'common beggars and skaffars': Mill, p.148.

⁵⁰ Mill, pp.221-22, 223n.

⁵¹ "ane of the principall of that misordour, namit Gillone, a cordinare . . . he could not be absolved for he was the cheif man that spoillit Johnne Mowbray of ten crownis . . ." The Works of John Knox, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1846-64), II, 158.

⁵² Bower and Andrew of Wyntoun, in the first four decades of the fifteenth century, use the 'Robert' form: Rymes of Robin Hood, pp.4, 5.

53 Other more persistent solicitings exist. Contrast, for example, the lines in Falkirk^b: 'If ye pit nought sillar i' my bag, for gude sake mind our wame'.

54 Robin Hood became an outlaw as a result of unjust action by the true king's incompetent and inadequate deputy, but retained his allegiance to the absent monarch. Thus the outlawry was in a sense true service to his King.

55 Rymes of Robin Hood, p.40.

56 *ibid.*, p.1.

57 *ibid.*, p.2.

58 *ibid.*, pp. 71-2.

59 Namely: Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth, St. Andrews, Ayr, Dumfries, Dumbarton, Haddington, Peebles, Arbuthnot, Lasswade, Cranston, Linton: Mill, p.24.

60 Rymes of Robin Hood, p.18.

61 Duncan, Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom, pp.134-35.

The importance of the Huntingdonshire connection for the Robin Hood of Scotland has been recognised for some years. In elaboration of this theme, Lewis Spence also referred to a tradition which he claimed to have found in Hector Boece that Little John was buried in Moray 'in the kirke of Pette', and to what he described as 'a curious rhyming latin poem written

in 1304 by a prior of Alnwick, quoting "Willelmo Wallace, Scotico illi Robin Whood" (William Wallace, the Scottish Robin Hood): Lewis Spence, 'Robin Hood in Scotland', Chamber's Journal, 9th Ser., 18 (1928), pp.94-96.

⁶² Barrow, The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History, p.18

⁶³ Duncan, Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom, p.533.

⁶⁴ Rymes of Robin Hood, p.5.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p.7.

⁶⁶ The debatable area concerns the translation of these Latin terms. An awareness of classical tragedy and comedy grew up in Europe in the third and fourth decades of the fifteenth century, and proof of Bower's meaning depends on the modernity of his knowledge at this point. Mill is cautious on the matter, warning that 'mimi' did not necessarily carry a dramatic connotation, any more than did 'comedioe' and 'tragedioe': Medieval Plays, p.34.

⁶⁷ Rymes of Robin Hood, pp.203-07.

⁶⁸ Athletic contests were part of the May Games, and this scenario could be interpreted as a triangle forged from the Robin Hood of balladry, the horse-cult resurrection-drama, and the May Games.

For a linking of the athletic contest and the 'wooing' aspect of the May-Game, note these lines from a medieval carol:

Atte wrastlinge my lemman i ches,
and atte ston-kasting i him for-les;

Rymes of Robin Hood, pp. xlix-mlx.

⁶⁹ Rymes of Robin Hood, p.144.

⁷⁰ Bannatyne Manuscript, III p.99, ll. 251-52, p.100, l.269.

⁷¹ The editor of the Bannatyne Manuscript (see previous note) suggests that 'Gy' might derive from 'guise' a sensible suggestion in my view, and supportive of my theory that its force comes from grotesque or frightening guisers.

In 'The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie', Dunbar abuses his victim's appearance, saying that it is so ugly it

'Garris men dispyt thar flesche, thow spreit of Gy'.

The editor explains this reference to 'Gy' as "the spirit of Guido de Corvo, which haunted his widow and was ultimately exorcized by four Dominican friars (Scotichronicon, xiii. 6-9; Mackenzie)": Poems of Dunbar, p.82, l.172; p.29ln.

⁷² The earlier version, given in Appendix Five, was collected by John Asloan c.1515. The second, later version was collected by William Bannatyne in 1568 (Bannatyne Manuscript, II, ll. 315ff).

⁷³ This mockery of Irish hero-legend fits well the anti-Gaelic comedy of the modern folk play (see, for example, Stirling^a (The Doctor)), and the speaker's admission that he has come to Edinburgh because he could not bear to live where 'Irish' (Gaelic) was spoken (Appendix Five, ll. 125-131). Later, in amorous mood,

he demands a wife from Lothian or Fife, the English-speaking south-east of Scotland (ll.162-63).

⁷⁴ I take it as evidence that these lines were in oral tradition in the sixteenth century that the version collected by Bannatyne a half-century after Asloan differed slightly. Asloan's 1515 'A Soldane out of Seriland' had by 1568 become, 'A sargeand out of Sowdown land' (a sergeant from the land of the Sultan). The exotic vocabulary had confounded the uneducated guisers, but they had nevertheless managed to preserve the sense of 'a high-ranking, black-faced military officer'.

⁷⁵ Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary. OED supports droich = dwarf, from Gaelic duergas.

⁷⁶ The fertilising effect granted to Spring showers was mimicked in Summer-welcoming pastime by squirting or throwing water over participants and spectators, and by immersing them in ponds and rivers. Emblematically, the action of the Fool in squeezing bladders of water over women was seen as ejecting semen.

⁷⁷ There are other examples of summoning cries associated with popular custom. In the present century, there has been noted a Basque shout of 'Irritzina', and another with notional phonetic resemblance to 'hiry, hary' is the English 'A revel, a revel', recorded in 1381: Norman Simms, 'Ned Ludd's Mummers Play', Folklore, 89 (1978), 2, pp.166f.

⁷⁸ Sir Thomas Gray, Scalachronica (Edinburgh: Maitland Club,

1836), p.240.

79 I consider that the chanting of 'here is he, here is he' in the Biggar^a folk play to welcome the Doctor is the only descendant of the Maying cry in the modern folk play versions.

80 Mill, p.30n.

81 Mill, p.214.

82 The Queen's letter, reminding the city of the Act of Parliament against Robin Hood, was communicated to the City on 30 April 1562: Mill, pp.223, 224.

83 In May quhe men yeid everich one
Wt Robene Hoid and Iitill Johne,
To bring in bowis and birkin bobbynis;
Now all sic game is fastlingis gone
Bot gif it be amangis clovin Robbrynys.

The Poems of Alexander Scott, ed. J. Cranston (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1896), 'Of May', p.23.

Little is known of the poet: he is associated with Dalkeith, near Edinburgh, and is believed to have lived 1520-1590.

84 Some burghs were slow to prohibit Robin Hood and Mock Lords of Misrule: Arbroath, Dumfries and Aberdeen are three examples quoted by Mill, pp.31-32.

85 Mill, pp.254-56.

⁸⁶ Mill, pp. 257-60.

⁸⁷ Ramsay and the earlier poets of Scotland, p.633.

In his notes to this poem, Child remarks that John Thomson was a famous soldier in 1333, and a byword for a submissive husband c.1600. The poem was first noted in 1586, is derived from a story of King Solomon and his Queen, and was known in variants in Europe in the twelfth century: The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, ed. Francis James Child (New York: Dover, 1965), V, 2, 8.

⁸⁸ Rymes of Robin Hood, pp. 208-09.

⁸⁹ "... at least there can be no doubt that Robin entered the world of play from that of the medieval tale or ballad": Rymes of Robin Hood, p.37.

⁹⁰ Discussing the midwinter Robin Hood plays that survived into modern times, Lowe notes that each is based on 'the late sixteenth century version of Arthur A' Bland': Barbara Lowe, 'Robin Hood in the Light of History', Journal: The English Folk Dance and Song Society, 8, No.4, (Dec. 1955), p. 238.

⁹¹ In the surviving Marshfield (Glos) play for example, which is not a 'Robin Hood' play, one of the characters is called 'Little Man John'.

CHAPTER SIX

The Age of Transition

1. Introduction

This account of the Scottish folk play has in effect spanned thirteen centuries, from the seventh-century expansion of the Northumbrian kingdom to the present. Of these thirteen hundred years, less than a century remains unexamined, the ninety years between the censure of the Robin Hood players at Linton in 1610 and the admonition of the actors of 'things unseemly' at Falkirk in 1701. Less than a century thus separates the medieval from the modern periods of folk drama, but in that century such changes were made to the tradition that modern eyes have been unable to perceive the continuity. In brief, these changes were two-fold: what had hitherto been pastime for all the population, young and old, became restricted to youths and children, and what had hitherto been scattered throughout the Christian, pagan, and seasonal calendar became confined to two dates, at the end of October and December.

These are sweeping changes, and it would be misleading to imply that they were made within these ninety years, for some were in progress long before, and some were completed long after. Nevertheless, these ninety years were the years of change, of convulsive activity, and not merely in the field of folk tradition.

The century was ushered in by a high tide of Puritanism, and the turbulence that accompanied the reign of Mary Queen of Scots. It saw the union of the kingdoms of Scotland and England under James, civil and religious wars, Cromwell, the Restoration, and the struggles of the Covenanters. To the disruption caused by warfare were added the miseries of famine and plague. In such a tempestuous century, Scotland moved from the medieval to the modern world, and it should not seem surprising that the folk play, in making the same transition, did so unnoticed. With such great matter for the scribes' pens, and with such havoc and destruction wrought by civil commotion on written records, it is less of a disappointment that so little report of the changing folk play has survived.

Indeed, lack of record would be unremarkable, except in the kirk session records of the time. The influence of the Church has touched on this study at three places: in its early-medieval invasion of the places and times of ritual and cult; in its post-Conquest deflection of pastime; in its condemnation of custom during the Reformation. Church-derived records have in these three areas provided invaluable observations of local tradition, and it seems doubly strange that these observations should cease, or that the Church, having triumphed so resoundingly over these (as they saw) relics of paganism, should have allowed them to recover in such strength. The answer to these questions emerges from a survey of the role of the Kirk at this period.

First, the waxing and waning of the Kirk's power and authority throughout this period should be charted.¹ The Reforming zeal grew in power from 1555 (the year of the Act of Parliament against Robin Hood), reaching a high plateau of influence which lasted from 1574 until c.1612. There was then a slight recession, and

in 1618 the Articles of Perth restored the observance of the five main festivals of the Christian year (including Christmas). This more relaxed phase lasted until 1638, when the Covenanters' ethics proved to be even more rigorous than those at the turn of the century. No relief from this authoritarianism came with the Cromwell regime in 1653, or even from the Restoration of Charles II, for the established Church in Scotland (unlike that in England) deliberately controlled the pendulum of popular feeling. There was a gradual groundswell towards more liberal philosophies towards the end of the century, and in the 1690s the Church was making vigorous efforts to restore the ethical climate of the 1640s. The power of the kirk session over the lives of ordinary people was finally broken by the Toleration Act of 1712: in Smout's words, the

Act 'expresly prohibited and discharged' civil magistrates 'to force or compel any persons' to answer kirk censures or summonses. . . . Inevitably the terrors of church discipline thereafter began to wane in the popular eye.²

Of the later years he writes:

Some time in the 1720s puritanism seems to start to lose some of its impetus. By 1750 it was obviously declining even in the south of Scotland relative to the position fifty years before.³

This picture of changing Kirk authority suggests that the animus against folk pastime was exercised very powerfully in the fifty years or more that followed the Act that prohibited Robin Hood. It seems likely that this long period of aggression would have very seriously undermined traditional customs, and it makes

the occasion of a Robin Hood play, as late as 1610, even at such a place as Linton, secluded and remote from Edinburgh, unexpected. At a much earlier date, one would look for evidence of attempts to evade the Kirk's attention which, for something as noisy, populous, and as 'May Sunday' obvious as a Robin Hood game, would be inescapable.

There are grounds for believing that the Kirk, at any rate by the end of the seventeenth century, believed that the long crusade against the 'relics of paganism' had been successful. In 1694, the General Assembly itemised the nation's frailties as being

profane and idle swearing, cursing, Sabbath-breaking, neglect and contempt of Gospel ordinances, mocking of piety and religious exercises, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, blasphemy and other gross and abominable sins and vices.⁴

The list is comprehensive and yet does not include the 'pagan' practices investigated in the two foregoing chapters; one possible explanation is that the Church no longer considered such pastime to represent a danger to the souls of the people and that, in its opinion, the long war had been won. The Toleration Act of 1712 came, I believe, almost a century too late to protect the adult celebrant of Robin Hood and other pastime. The kirk session records after 1700, which have survived in this more peaceful period in far greater numbers, reveal an obsessive interest in punishing sexual misdemeanours,⁵ and it seems that the Kirk's wish to purify society was by the dawn of the eighteenth century expressed in this fashion, rather than in the searching out of 'pagan' pastime.

The two main changes in the tradition of folk drama, listed

at the beginning of this chapter, were brought about by the force of the Reformation, and it is against this chart of Puritanism, from c.1550 to c.1750, that the decisive events of 1610-1700 have to be studied. The first of these is the enquiry into the Robin Hood pastime.

2. Whatever happened to Robin Hood?

The previous chapter demonstrated that the Robin Hood pastime was the chief popular festival of the year, pursued with so much enthusiasm that it was represented by some as endangering the stability of the state. Yet within fifty or so years, it had apparently been wiped from the face of Scotland. The pace and extent of this banishment is hard to believe: Robin Hood generated immense energy in popular custom, and energy, here as elsewhere, cannot be destroyed. The premise at this point has therefore to be that the Robin Hood ceremonies were not simply destroyed, but changed into other forms in other places, and it is for these alternatives that the search must be made.

The first aspect to be considered is that of the age of the performer. Men were active in the custom throughout its time, and even in the last performance (Linton 1610) working-men and a farmer were cited as the leading players. Adult males were probably the most vulnerable of all to the Kirk's persuasion: they could be excommunicated; baptism could be withheld^h from their children;⁶ in cases where their Craft made common cause with the Kirk, they could be denied the right to work.⁷ With such powers as these, and the willingness to use them, the Kirk effectively ended adult participation in folk drama, and the Linton villagers of 1610 should be regarded as the last of the line (though as a

matter of historical fact, the two men featured in the Leith 1898 account take the honour).

The fact that men were figuring in the Robin Hood play as late as 1610 is itself astonishing, even in so remote a place as Linton. In the towns and country in central Scotland, it is not far from the mark to say that young men and children had replaced men within twenty-five years of the Act of Parliament of 1555. The change was assisted by the custom which, as in Aberdeen in 1533, required the young men to wear green, and the aged men to wear 'honest', coats,⁸ and thus insisted on young and old taking part. When the 'old' were constrained, the 'young' were left in possession of the custom. So it was in Edinburgh in 1561, when the affair was largely in the hands of the apprentices. Even apprentices, however, could be attacked through their craft, and were so, for example in Edinburgh in 1579, when the craft deacons added their voice to that of the Provost, baillies and Council.⁹

When the apprentices were denied the pastime, it descended to 'unorganised' labour and the young. At St Andrews in 1575, the Church Commissioners reproved the fact that 'of Robin Huids pl(ayis) certane servands and young children plaid ym certane days'.¹⁰ This is the first reference to 'servants', a class of person to recur in this account: at Lasswade in 1583, the Robin Hood play was laid at the door of a man's servant 'and the rest of his father's servants and tenants';¹¹ when the modern play emerged at Falkirk^a in 1701, servants and farmers' sons were the players, and at Bowden a century later 'servants' were again prominent.

The role of the 'young children', referred to at St Andrews in 1575, had seemingly by 1578 become a national problem. In that

year, the General Assembly petitioned the King and Council to forbid May plays performed by 'bairnes at the schools or others'.¹² With this petition, the progress of the Robin Hood play downwards, from working men, to apprentices, to servants, youths, and finally children, is shown to be complete. It could go no further and, as children were elusive quarry for the kirk session, it remained with them. In the relative calm that followed in the years after the Articles of Perth (1618), six years later in the same city the Council approved that bairnis should go about each week in May, with their bows and arrows.¹³ It is most likely that these schoolchildren would be requesting money for the maintenance of the school, merely collecting money in fancy dress, for no mention is made of the 'play'.

There is, however, a tantalising glimpse of a Robin Hood play tradition maintained by children fully two hundred years after the General Assembly had called for a national ban. It comes in Robert Fergusson's poem 'Leith Races' (published in 1773), where the poet writes of jockeys being unseated in the hurly-burly of the competition:

Siclike in Robinhood debates
When two chieles hae a pingle
E'en now, some coulie gets his aits,
And dirt wi' words they mingle.¹⁴

The image in the poet's mind of 'two chieles' (~~youths~~) in dispute, and one of them having to 'bite the dust' is very much a figure of a Robin Hood play, where vaunts and confrontation are followed by blows and 'death'. In the Edinburgh district, the phrase 'Robinhood debates' would have another resonance, because 'Robinhood' was the name given to one of the city's debating societies (after-

wards called the 'Pantheon').¹⁵ There is value in the choice of name for a debating society; it gives a welcome emphasis to the 'language of conflict' in the Robin Hood pastime where previously, as in the reports by its enemies in the kirk, only the weaponry and physical danger had been promoted.

Further evidence of the efficiency of children as carriers of tradition might be furnished by the 'Singing Game'. This is a title given to a traditional children's game in which 'Gentle Robin' selects his choice of fairest girl from the group to dance with, having first offered her 'sugar, cakes and wine'.¹⁶ If the 'Robinhood debate' is the descendant of the combat play, then the 'Singing Game' could be the modern form of the Wooing pastime, which this study first encountered in the Inverkeithing incident of 1282.

It is my contention that the prohibited combats and wooings of the Robin Hood pastime were passed down to the children by parents and schoolmasters at the time of the Reformation. Not all adults, however, were able to accept that the customs were barred to them, and it is my belief that concerted efforts were made to continue with 'Robin Hood' elements, legally and illegally, in disguised form.

To take the 'legal' version first, there were aspects of the Robin Hood pastime that had been encouraged by the burgh earlier in the sixteenth century, and which were blameless in the eyes of the Church except, of course, that they were called 'Robin Hood'. Chief among these were the athletic contests, and the simple practice of 'riding out' of the town.

It will be recalled from the discussion of the Robin Hood 'Crying' in the foregoing chapter that the difference between the 1515 Asloan and the 1562 Bannatyne versions was that the latter excised

the reference to Robin Hood. The implication is that the 'noble merchants' continued to 'follow forth' out of the town, though no longer dressed in green and in honour of Robin Hood. There was a convenient substitute, however, in the medieval practice of processing about the parish or burgh in order to confirm boundaries and establish rights of passage. These customs, now known as 'Common Ridings', absorbed the blameless elements of the Mayings.¹⁷ For example, in a typical contemporary version, the leader of the ceremony is called the 'Cornet' (a word with 'horn' and 'cavalry officer' association but here probably referring to the pennant he bears) and his companion the 'Lass', 'Beltane Queen', or 'May Queen'; only virgins (i.e. unmarried men and women) are eligible for these roles. These two lead the populace, or as many as will follow, on horseback in the style of the burgh-Robin Hoods, except that the bearing of weapons is frowned upon. Much is made of ensign-carrying,¹⁸ and banner-waving, and other rites of summer are remembered by ducking people in, and riding horses through, water.¹⁹ At Langholm they were careful to carry a spade through water, and to process around a tree known as 'Bet's thorn'.²⁰

The 'Riding' ceremony at Kelso may preserve a stratum of pastime older than Robin Hood. There the riders visit Roxburgh Hall at the beginning of the tour. They are known as the 'Society of Footmen', but are remembered to have once been 'Ploughmen', the 'Society' of those who carried whips.²¹ Here remain traces of the visit to the chief feudatory's home (strangely out of place in a 'Common Riding'), and a possible instance of the celebrants of an ox ceremony being absorbed in an acceptable pastime.

These now blameless activities could be performed openly on a summer's day. Those who persisted with the prohibited pastime were obliged to conceal themselves with secrecy and night. It is my belief that witchcraft is, at least in part, the Maying ceremony performed at night.²² Part of the grounds for this belief is the remarkable coincidence between the time of the Puritan assault on the May Game, and the persecution of witchcraft in Scotland:

It is an extraordinary fact that in the centuries before the Reformation, and again in those since the Union of the Parliaments, the number of recorded executions for witchcraft in Scotland could be counted on one man's fingers: but in the years between 1560 and 1707 considerably more than 3,000 people, and perhaps as many as 4,500, perished horribly because their contemporaries thought they were witches.²³

Some of the connections between the forbidden folk pastimes and witchcraft are clarified by Larner's recent study of the Scottish witch. The 'devilish' element, which the Church often saw in the animal cults, appears in witchcraft as the 'Demonic Pact', in which the witch renounces her Christian baptism, and dedicates her soul to the Devil in return for certain worldly advantages.²⁴ It is interesting that the most common promise of the Devil to his followers is that they 'shall never want',²⁵ a blessing similar to that called down on the household by the folk players of the modern age.

The more specific connection between witchcraft and the celebrations at the country Mayings are more obvious in the reports from the witch trials at Auldearn and Forfar (to the north of the 'Caloshan' area) in 1661 and 1662:

The part played by the Devil was in eating, drinking, dancing, kissing, and copulating with them. Superficially they provide the best case for those who wish to maintain the reality of witches' meetings and they conform more closely than other Scottish confessions to a continental stereotype in that they refer to the number of their gathering being thirteen, and they refer to regular meetings: 'at Candlemas, Rood Day, Lammas and Hallowmass'.²⁶

Larner makes no mention of the witch's broomstick, an item in the 'continental stereotype', already noted as the cult object of the Maying ceremony.

The conclusion, therefore, is that when the Robin Hood pastime was prohibited in 1555, the combat was given over to the children, the processional horse-riding continued under another guise, and the 'Wooring' game went 'underground'. There was also a fourth refuge, in that some of the custom could be removed to another part of the year, where the Reformers would not think to find it, or discover it easily.

3. The Coming of Hogmanay

One of the more obvious differences between the post- and pre-Reformation folk drama is that, whereas the medieval plays had occurred in May, and on sundry festival days throughout the year, the modern versions had for the most part congregated about Hogmanay and Hallowe'en. To modern eyes, this difference is not only obvious, but so huge that it would deny any relationship between the winter and the summer ceremonies. This is a modern error of perception, the natural mistake of twentieth-century urban man, whose life and work is the same in June and

January, and for whom a common calendar provides the cue and setting for the annual round of rituals and pastimes.

For medieval rural man there was no such simple routine. For him the four seasons were the frame for other series of birth and fruition, a wheel in which turned other wheels. The most vivid image of this medieval attitude to time survives in the medieval cathedral clocks, which measure their hours against the courses of the sun, the moon's phases, and the turning band of the zodiac. To give one small example: in Chapter Three, in the enquiry into the ram cult in Scotland, it was suggested that the traditional meal of a sheep's head on St. Andrew's Day (30 November) might derive from the time of the ewe-tupping. For the shepherd, this was the beginning of his year, which then moved on through to the lambing and shearing. 'Winter', for the shepherd, would be the 'dead' time between shearing and tupping.

There is much evidence from the fifteenth century and perhaps earlier to show that ceremonies occurred apparently irrespective of season. Dancing caroles round the green wood, for example, a Spring rite in modern eyes, was well-known in midwinter. Two late-sixteenth century examples of particular interest come from Errol where in December 1593 a man was found guilty of the 'singing of carols at the thorns', and where in January 1595 a woman admitted the same act.²⁷ The account of the modern play at Polwarth reports that the troupe ended the night by dancing and singing around the thorn trees on the village green.

This (to modern eyes) strange conformity of multi-seasonal practice was helped, or reflected by, the habit of choosing a master of revelry to serve for the whole year. For an example, the 'Abbot',²⁸ (whose origin is most likely ecclesiastical, deriving

from the Feast of Fools in the three days after Christmas Day) was appointed for the year in April or May (in Aberdeen, Dumfries, and Haddington, at least) and in later years was replaced or partnered by Robin Hood. Whatever his name, he would preside over, or take part in, midsummer and midwinter celebrations with equal right. For an indication of the confusion of winter and summer traditions that this brought about we need only look again at the records of the 1610 Linton play of Robin Hood, where the first reference was to 'the May plays ... called Lord, or Abbot, of Unreason', and the second to the 'Pasch plays'.²⁹ The important conclusion is that the people were as accustomed to see combat drama in snow as in sunshine, and that we should view the appearance of 'Robin Hood' style drama at Hogmanay, not as a movement of a ceremony, but as the restriction of a ceremony to one of the many yearly dates on which it had always been practised. This argument, it will be noted, is parallel to the contention that the Robin Hood game was not so much transferred to, as restricted to, the young. Even so, these 'annual' masters of revel, and the medieval attitude to the year, made it easy enough to transfer customs across the months. Statutes of the Faculty of Arts at the University of St Andrews, for the 26 November 1414, pronounce the transfer of the St. Nicholas pastime:

Likewise it was concluded that the celebrations which the Grammarians hold on the feast of St. Nicholas should be transferred to the same feast day as the one already transferred, because that one takes place in summer.³⁰

More than a hundred years later, these 'summer' customs came under attack, and it was natural for them to return, or concentrate around, the other great pastime festival of the year. The joint eminence

of Pasch (meaning 'Easter' but extended to cover 'early summer' festivals) and Yule is proclaimed in an early-sixteenth century poem by Dunbar, where he derides a nobleman:

Quhairfoir ever at Pesche and Yull

I cry him lord off evere full

That in this regeone duellis.

.

He wantts no thing bot bellis.³¹

Yule, however, proved a short-lived refuge for the pastime of summer. 'Robin Hood' was prohibited by Act of Parliament in 1555; twenty years later the General Assembly drew up a petition for the Regent, asking for the abolition of all holy days but the Sabbath, and for the punishment of those who kept Yule and other festivals by ceremonies, playing and other 'vanities'.³² Six years later, in 1581, the matter was regulated by an Act of Parliament which prohibited the observance of such festivals, including the feast days of the saints.³² One effect of this Act was that the 'Robin Hood' relics, which for twenty-six years had been 'legal' at Yule, were moved on once more. Popular resistance to the prohibition seemed as strong with Yule as it had been with Pasch, and at Glasgow, for example, the kirk session sternly cautioned the citizenry against the keeping of Yule in 1594, and reiterated their warning in 1600, 1602 and 1604.³³

About this time, however, the Yule ceremonies were given an escape route. Sixteenth-century Britain had two New Year dates, and for some purposes the New Year was deemed to begin on March 25 (much as the contemporary financial New Year begins in April). The change to 1 January was made in Scotland in 1600³⁴ (but not until 1752 in the remainder of Britain). This

calendar-change would have encouraged the movement of Spring 'New Year' customs to the new date and if March 25 seems an early date for the Pasch ceremonies, it needs only to be recalled that Priest John of Inverkeithing achieved his notoriety in a Spring rite at an Easter of this date.³⁵

The value of this new emphasis on 1 January as a 'New Year' date is that it provided a new home for the pastimes, and one therefore not already under ban by the Reformers. This secular feast was moreover during the dark days and long nights, when the eyes of the zealots might be more easily avoided.

Nevertheless, within a few years of the calendar-change, there was a response to the new festival. In Elgin, 3 January 1604, a man was accused of 'singand hagmonayis',³⁶ and in the following year in Aberdeen the parishioners were warned from the pulpit not to 'gang throch the towne on Newyeiris evin singing any songis'.³⁷ The response to the transfer can be gauged in Glasgow, where the cautions concerning Yule in 1594, 1600, 1602 and 1604³³ were repeated in 1609, but

with this addition, that no playes, nor gysings, nor pypings, nor drinking, nor any superstitious exercise be used the dayes following Yuil, on pain of censure.³⁸
(my underlining).

The reference to 'playes' in this Glasgow 1609 note might be the first reference to Hogmanay, or at least post-Yule, folk drama for adults. The second, and more important, reference is as valuable as it is oblique. There are grounds for believing that the direct ancestor of the 'Galoshan' folk drama was in performance in parts of southern Scotland by 1610, and that the tradition was taken by the emigrants to the plantations set up by James VI and I

in Northern Ireland in 1611. (The evidence for this claim is given in detail in Appendix Six). If this claim is sound, then one implication is that the Scottish emigrants regarded the Hogmanay 'Galoshans' as an indispensable part of their heritage as early as 1610. With this date, the sequence is made complete: the ban on Robin Hood in 1555 moved the pastimes to Yule; the ban on Yule in 1581 displaced them to the days following Yule; the consolidation of Hogmanay in 1600 confirmed 31 December/1 January as the new festival.

The result was that Hogmanay became the chief guising festival in eastern Scotland, an eminence it has never lost. In western Scotland, Hallowe'en revealed itself as the modern date for the folk play, for reasons that will be explained in the following chapter (2. The Season of Performance). Although the celebration of Christmas was permitted for two decades after 1618, renewed waves of the reforming spirit again submerged it, and Yule was never again allowed (as it was in England at the Restoration) to take its place as a pastime date.

4. The Guising Tradition

The emphasis so far in this chapter has been the travels of the dramatic pastime sent wandering by the 1555 Act of Parliament, and its arrival at Hogmanay. If this emphasis has suggested that Hogmanay was an empty land, and open to immigration, then this would be misleading. New Year pastimes were already traditional and our precise knowledge of the days on which the midwinter pastimes were played is frustrated only by the ^{lack of} correct medieval documentation.

This frustration is felt nowhere more keenly than in the attempt to discover a dramatic guising tradition before the

Reformation. The one record on which such a belief might be based concerns the Aberdonian sutor (shoemaker) who was blamed in January 1445 for having had 'the players of evil plays (or games) (lusores malorum ludorum) in his house'.³⁹ The arena, the season, the mode are all consonant, but it is a tantalisingly brief and unique notice, and Aberdeen lies well to the north of the 'Galoshan' area, if one discounts the antiquity of the Ballater tradition (see Chapter Three, 3).

There are, however, relatively numerous references to the practice of guising in Reformation Scotland, and since this word in modern times labelled the activity of the folk play performer, it is worth examining the earlier records for notices that could imply a dramatic dimension.

The word was first recorded by the Lord High Treasurer's department in August 1488, when reward was given to 'dansaris and gysaris'.⁴⁰ 'Guise' is considered to derive from ME gise or gyse (c.1300) and gyse (c.1275), from OF guise (= manner, fashion, habit). Gyse, with the meaning of 'disguise', is noted in use c.1400, and noted as an abbreviation of 'disguise', from OF desguiser.⁴¹

I can detect no consistent application of the term 'guising' in the renaissance accounts. Although the first use at Lanark seems to distinguish between dancers and guisers, other scribes write of 'guisers who dance'. It is safe to conclude that 'guisers' altered their dress, and occasionally smeared their faces; they frequently danced, played musical instruments, and sang, but on other appearances they might have not 'performed' at all.

The unbalance of the surviving records has already been claimed. In the context of guising it is particularly obvious,

and in giving the following selection of instances, it is well to be conscious of their late period, and their **distance** from the 'Galoshan' area. They are chosen because of their detail of costume and disguise which, it will be noted, is most often transvestite' in style.

Such was noted in Glasgow in June 1595 and February 1605,³⁸ and in Lanark (where the guisers came from Douglas) in the New Year of 1627.⁴² Beyond the folk play region, in north-east Scotland, the instances are more frequent. In Elgin, at the end of December 1598, men confessed to dancing and guising in houses, with black faces, female clothing and, in one case, a face about his loins and a kerchief about his head;⁴³ at the New Year in 1615 some guisers were dancing, with 'a coat stuffed with straw on a stick';³⁶ about Yule in 1629 one guiser had a beard and another a woman's dress;⁴⁴ in 1667 five men were accused of guising, one dressed as a woman, one in straw, and the remaining three wearing masks, or 'false faces'.⁴⁵ Much later, and further south, in Clackmannan in 1713, two young men were found guilty of guising with black faces, one in a woman's dress, and the other with straw ropes round his legs.⁴⁶

Although this evidence is partial, and mostly distant from the 'Galoshan' area, it has some value in this study. There seems to be a vein of relationship, and therefore characterisation, running through the recurrence of the Straw Man and the Lady, and it may not be too far from the mark to conjecture that these players were relics of the Summer and Winter Kings' wooing play.

Instances have been given (in Chapter Four) of the survival into modern times of the straw, beard and 'false face' disguise, but not, it will be recalled, of any 'female impersonation'. The

severity with which the kirk sessions of the north-east (and presumably elsewhere) punished this guising had biblical (Deuteronomy 22v.5) authority, as the Aberdeen Kirk Session record of 4 August 1605 made clear: 'quhilk is accompted abhominatioun be the law of God that ony man suld put on wemennis rayment'.⁴⁷ It is a reasonable belief that it was the vigour with which this 'abhominatioun' was purged throughout the seventeenth century that accounts for the infrequency of young men in female clothing in the modern Scottish play (compared, for example, with the Dame Jane character of the Lincolnshire Plough Play).

One other notice of midwinter guising requires attention, one that brings together the tradition of Yule and New Year, and the passing of the folk play custom to the children.

5. The Protection of the Parent

Perhaps the most interesting notice of dramatic guising in Reformation Scotland is the entry for 19 December 1566 in the Burgh Records of Lanark:

Ellesone Tayis deponit be hir grit aith that scho hard
 Besse Tuodall call the minister commoun theiff; quhay
 wald stoip thair barnis fra the plaj for him, for he
 trouit that the volger wald gef him ane fie, bot devill
 haif it all that his suld **get**, mensuorne theif that hie
 wes.⁴⁸

My interpretation of this is that the minister had forbidden the children to guise in the folk play that Yule-time, whereupon a mother, angry at the loss of money annually collected by her children at that time, alleged that the money had therefore been as good as 'stolen' by the minister, which 'theft' she would repay

by not contributing to the customary gift for the minister raised by the contribution of his flock.

The personal animus behind the mother's response, and the lack of any parallel event, suggest that the Lanark cleric was acting independently in the matter, and anticipating the anti-Yule movement fourteen years later to be expressed in the General Assembly in 1575, and by Act of Parliament in 1581. At the risk of overburdening this item with interpretation, the logic of the mother's response is that the money collected by the children, and the money collected for the minister, are somehow equivalent, and make a tit for tat retaliation. This equivalence should rest in the 'traditional' value of the collection, and in the sense of customary and rightful dues, in each case.

This Lanark event is unique in the hint it gives of midwinter, child-generated (i.e. 'folk') drama in southern Scotland. Its uniqueness makes it valuable and at the same time, unhelpful, because it has no context to assist its interpretation.⁴⁹ It might be possible to view it as an instance of the transfer of adult practices to children, but it comes a mere ten years after the prohibition of Robin Hood as an adult pastime, and the sense of a traditional right infringed, in the bitterness of the mother's complaint, is too deeply-felt to be ten, or even twenty, years in the making. The more likely inference is that the tradition of child folk drama was well-established in the 1560s, though for how long, and of what kind, are questions which seem unlikely to be easily answered.

It is consonant with the findings of this study that the mother's objections are stimulated solely by the loss of earnings; this impetus for the folk play is to be set beside the crime of

the condemned man in the Edinburgh 'Robin Hood' of 1561, who had 'spoiled' people of money, and the crucial importance of money-collecting in the modern custom.

Perhaps the most valuable inference to be drawn from this brief entry, however, is the measure of Bessie Tuodall's anger. Two debts are owed to the strength of her indignation. Firstly, and this has been a recurrent theme in this search for information about the folk play, this rare scrap of information about the Yule 'play' comes not as a record of the custom, nor even the banning of it, but as evidence for the charge of calumniating a minister. A milder-natured woman would have left us uninformed. In the second place, the hostility generated by the minister's decision would not, we may believe, be assuaged by the withholding of the minister's pence. Such mothers would, if they could, circumvent the Kirk's animosity by secrecy. In the manner already suggested for the relics of Robin Hood, the people would entrust the guising pastimes to the children, and the Bessie Tuodalls of the Reformation would defend their children's right to perform them. Indeed, the children could not have maintained the customs without the parents' help in costuming, hosting, and rewarding the custom, from the Lanark of 1566 to the high watermark of the 'Galoshan' play over three hundred years later.

Three other instances of adult support for youthful guising are recorded in this first phase of the Reformation. One of these, the playing of Robin Hood, has already been noted in St Andrews in 1575, and in Perth in 1624.¹³ Although the parental help at St Andrews is only implicit, the organisation at Perth was by the schoolmaster, and consented to by the Council and by the adults who were invited to contribute.

The schoolmaster and the Council were not everywhere of one mind. Controversy attended the performance of 'the comede . . . of the forlorn sone' by the pupils of the St Andrews grammar school in 1574. The drama of the Prodigal Son was a well-known 'clerk' play in medieval times, and the St Andrews Kirk Session was prepared to contemplate a performance on condition that the script had first been approved by two eminent churchmen.⁵⁰ If we wish to find the source of the Session's doubts about the story from the Gospel of St Luke (15, vv 11-32), we might look at the conclusion of the story, where the son is welcomed home with 'musick and dancing', and the fatted calf is brought in to the command 'kill it; and let us eat, and be merry' (vv 23-25). The celebration of the killing of a beef animal with music and dancing forms a link between the 'forlorn sone' and the 'Plough Song', a connection that is strengthened by the shared context of a 'resurrection', 'for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again' (v 32). The particular interest of these parallels lies in the location, for the 'Plough Song' is attached to St Andrews, being first compiled by Thomas Wode, who was vicar there from 1575 to 1592,⁵¹ thus taking up his incumbency at precisely the time 'clerk' plays were prohibited by the General Assembly.⁵²

Schoolmasters became more ingenious in their attempts to smuggle traditional folk play to the young. In 1600, the schoolmaster at Elgin was directing his boys in a comedy by Terence, but the classical mode did not deceive the Kirk Session, for the performance had aspects already made familiar by this study. The theatre was 'the freir kirkyaird' (a playing space that first made its appearance in the Inverkeithing account), and the schoolmaster was accused of summoning an audience by having

someone play 'on the gryte pype', furnishing his boys with bells and dancing clothes, writing the 'infamous' text, and encouraging the performers to 'seik silver' while the comedy was being played.⁵³ Three years later, kirk and schoolmaster had come to an accommodation: eight days were allowed for the performances, but they were to be given only in the school, and not in the Chanonry churchyard, the church itself, or in the street. The times of year that this was to happen were May and Yule,⁵⁴ and it seems clear enough that the kirk's intention was to confine the pre-pubertal drama within safe limits of time, place and content, and in that way to deflect the continuance of tradition.

It is clear that Elgin Kirk Session recognised the device of using children to continue the prohibited adult pastime, and acted accordingly. Elgin, however, was probably the most vigilant Session in the land (even in the year of the Articles of Perth, they forbade throwing snowballs⁴⁴). Elsewhere the ruse worked, and the tradition was safely passed to the children. The reason for the success lay in the public attitude to children which was, and which remained for another three centuries (until the Factory and Education Acts), indifference. There is no reason why the Kirk elders should not have shared the common view that children were empty vessels, 'ignorant of all godliness' in the words of the Book of Discipline,⁵⁵ and therefore likewise ignorant of blasphemy, incapable of possessing any pastime of significance, demanding either admiration or prohibition. Like Fagin's pickpockets, the bairns of the seventeenth century were raised in the sinful practice of the traditional folk drama, and collected their ill-gotten gains, because they were protected by adults, and relatively inconspicuous to the eyes of the law.

Their 'invisibility' was greatly assisted by the darkness of midwinter, and had they presented themselves in the full light of day, it is certain the reforming conscience would have been aroused. An Englishman in the retinue of James VI and I mockingly described the reformist baillies of Edinburgh in 1617 in these terms:

...they stop their eares yf you talke of a playe
To conclude, I am persuaded that yf God and his angells at the last day should come down in their whitest garments, they would run away and cry, 'The Children of the Chappell are come againe to torment us; let us fly from the abomination of these boyes, and hide ourselves in the mountaynes!'"⁵⁶

Whether the 'Children' were to perform a 'clerk' play, or sing such as the 'Plough Song', the horror of the Reformers at these guisers in their white clothes is real enough.

6. The Seventeenth-Century Folk Play

In Chapter Two, a combination of play-sightings and textual references traced the folk play from the twentieth century back to the very beginning of the eighteenth. Now is the opportunity to identify those aspects of the folk drama that evidence their origin in the century of transition from the medieval to the modern form.

A useful place at which to begin is within the theme of parental protection, the subject of the preceding section. In modern times, the guisers at Forfar were offered 'a red hot poker'; at Barrhead the host instructed his wife to heat the poker in the fire. In both cases, the remark is jesting, and accompanies a

welcome. A red-hot poker would be an offensive weapon, but that is surely not its purpose here, for the visitors are children, performing a harmless play. At Forfar, the poker is the answer to the question 'Anything for the guisers?', and at Barrhead, the poker is set to heat in the fire at the point when the Collector of the troupe makes his appearance. The connection between the 'begging' element of the folk play and the branding-iron, for that is what the poker is, is as old as the Reformation. Branding was a punishment for beggars, and even a mark by which an employer could possess a servant.⁵⁷ More particularly to the matter of guising, in Elgin in 1597 it was ordained that for any traditional celebration of Yule, or 'enormiteis', 'disordour or baudice' in the 'obseruation of superstitious dayis and vaniteis thairrof', the punishment was to be the 'burnyng of thame on the cheik'.⁵⁸ The best interpretation of the host's riposte at Forfar, and the sly jest at Barrhead, is that this is a time-honoured welcome for the guisers, dating from the end of the sixteenth century, acknowledging the exhortations of the Puritans, but conniving with the guisers in disregarding them. The survival of this jest for over three centuries is an indication of the determination with which the parents and other adults conspired to resist the edicts of the Reformers.

Much has been made in this chapter of the importance of the Robin Hood and Maying ceremonies in the development of the folk play, and it is to be expected that, even with the change of season described above, some Maying elements would survive. The Grieveff^a account seems to provide an example of the May caroles transferred to the New Year, the musical leadership given to the charge of one who, by name (Doctor), costume, and perhaps accoutrement (staff),

is a folk play figure.

The Peebles^a text (1.3) demands 'Redd [clear] room for Gorland', where the unloc. Abbotsford Collection Text^a, of a similarly early-nineteenth century date, has 'Red room for Gorlings'. I interpret these two as variants of 'garlands', and understand them as textual survivals of the flowery wreaths borne by the Mayers. The garlands themselves may survive in the hats worn by the combatants at about this period. The Carse illustration (see Plate five and accompanying discussion) shows two examples of this hat, circular, broad-brimmed, and decorated, and the nature of the decorations may be those described in the Peebles^a text as being 'human profiles' and 'penny valentines', both capable of 'fertility' interpretation, and therefore appropriate to the Spring lovers.

By the far the most enduring and obvious of the Maying survivals is, however, the maypole, in its inverted form of the broomstick, carried by the devil-figure at the close of the Galoshan text. A full discussion of these survivals is given in the following chapter.

Certain textual elements can also be demonstrated to have an origin in this transitional time; a selection of what are arguably seventeenth-century textual remnants are given here in their dialogue sequence. To begin with the prologue to the play, that at Bowden promises 'activous and activage', a phrase that Tiddy translated as 'activity of youth and activity of age', quoting Ben Jonson's jest,

Now if the lanes and allies afford

Such ac-ativity as this . . . (Ben Jonson, Masque of Christmas, 1616),

to suggest that 'activity' was a promise that guisers of the

early-seventeenth century found difficult to articulate.⁵⁹

Further, it is a customary boast of Alexander that he has 'conquered the world, all, but Scotland alone' (Bowden); this notion of 'the unconquered Scotland' was expressed by the historian Buchanan in the mid-sixteenth century:

Here stopt the Gothic fury; here was crost
The Saxon bravery and the Danish lust,
And all the efforts which Normandy could boast.
If you the mouldy annals will survey,
The Roman Conquest here was at bay . . .⁶⁰

It is likely that Buchanan's authority propelled the belief into the national consciousness.

The combatants of the folk play speak of carrying 'a sword and buckler' or, rather more frequently, 'a sword and pistol'. The former was the infantry equipment in general use from 1500 to 1550, and survived in a reduced form until c.1600. 'Sword and pistol' was a cavalry armament for the Heavy Cavalry c.1500 to 1600, and for the Light Cavalry thereafter.⁶¹ It is debatable whether the authors of the lines chose the most modern and formidable weaponry for their combatants, or preferred arms of a slightly archaic kind: the former opinion would give an original date of c.1600, the latter perhaps c.1650.

The death of one of the combatants brings in the doctor, and his recitation of diseases within his cure. Such ailments as 'the root, the rout, the skit, the scurvy' (Prestonpans) are reminiscent of such verse as the 'Flyting betwixt Montgomerie and Polwart' (published in 1621, but probably written c.1600), in which Montgomerie pens some twenty-seven lines of illnesses. Two of these lines,

The coch, and the connoch, the colic and the cold,

.....
 The rot, the roup, and the auld rest,⁶²

demonstrate the alliterative style, and suggest a relationship between the dialogue of the folk play and the manner of the 'Flyting'.

At Spottiswoode, the doctor includes 'the plague' among his cures, and it may be that this is a memory of the last instance of plague in Scotland, and the devastation it caused in many parts in the years 1644 to 1648.⁶³

When he embarks on his cure, the doctor frequently proclaims the force of his medicine. At Laurieston, for example (but see also Biggar^a, Old Kilpatrick, and Quothquan), the doctor speaks of the ingredients of his bottle in these terms:

I have a bottle by my side,
 All mixed with polks and eggs;
 Put it in with a mouse's blether,
 Steer it with a cat's feather.

This kind of fancy is only a step away from the jocularity of the five 'Dias' of the Bannatyne Manuscript (1568), where two doctors vie to create the most extraordinary medicine in comic, and almost dramatic, dialogue, for example,

The gaw of ane grene dow the leg of ane lowss
 fyve unce of ane fle wing the fyn of ane fluke.⁶⁴

At the moment of the cure, the doctor's incantation often includes such phrases as 'hockey pockey' (Balmaghie), or 'hocus-pocus' (Peebles^a). This latter phrase was explained in 1694 as a Reformation-born gibe on an office of the Roman church;

a corruption of "hoc est corpus", by way of ridiculous imitation of the priests of the Church of Rome in their

trick of Transubstantiation, first noted in 1655, when it accompanied a trickster's every device.⁶⁵

The popularity of this phrase in mid-seventeenth century may well have impelled it into the folk play text, most usefully at the point where the 'trick' (with echoes of the Samuelston May play⁶⁶) of raising the dead man takes place. In connection with this, it is worth noting that the minister penning the Jedburgh^a account thought that the 'mode of celebrating' 'Valentine's E'en and Hallowe'en were 'the remnant of the customs of our fathers in Roman Catholic times, or had been introduced to throw contempt on Roman Catholic usages'; most probably this opinion was born from hearing the phrase 'hocus-pocus'.

There is a curious interlude following the cure, noted at Bowden, Crieff^b, Falkirk^b, Peebles^a, and vestigially at Helensburgh, where the revived victim complains of a hole in his back, insisting on its size, that the doctor's fist or tongue could be turned round ten times in it, that a coach and four could be driven through it, and that it could hold three horses' heads. The meaning of this apparent nonsense is investigated in the following chapter, but at this point it is important to note that in Sir John Vanbrugh's The Relapse (1696), there is a patent borrowing from the folk play, when the wounded loser of a duel is cured by a comic doctor called in from the street. 'This 'Dr. Syringe' will 'fetch him to life again', and grossly exaggerates the scale of his patient's sword wound by saying that 'a man may drive a coach and six horses' into his body.⁶⁷ It is clear that the 'hole in back' motif was very familiar in folk play before the end of the seventeenth century, at least in Cheshire, where Vanbrugh most probably encountered folk drama a decade or so before the

writing of the play.

Certain other remarks made by the revived man require mention here. Frequent at this point are images of plenty, especially of food. The revived man at Bowden saw 'roast upon rungs' (= roast meat on a gridiron), a phrase that appears as 'rost upon runges' in a list of proverbs collected c.1575 and published in 1641.⁶⁸ Much more extensively, in lines most often spoken by Judas, a picture of a land of plenty is evoked, where the very buildings are made from foodstuffs. In the following chapter, these passages will be shown to be much older than the sixteenth century, and therefore they stand slightly aside from the purpose of the section so far, which has been to demonstrate the considerable portion of the modern folk play text that proclaims its origin in the period c.1550 to c.1700.

Finally in this chapter, attention is turned to an element of the folk play which can be said to bridge this transitional period, being noted in pre-Reformation Scotland and in the modern folk play, and the cue for this is the name of Judas.

7. Peter, Paul and Judas: the bridge from medieval to modern

The starting-point for this enquiry is the report by Sir Walter Scott (given in Edinburgh^a), referring to the folk drama of the city c.1780:

we were wont, during my boyhood, to take the characters of the apostles, at least of Peter, Paul, and Judas Iscariot; the first had the keys, the second carried a sword, and the last the bag, in which the dole of our neighbours' plumb-cake was deposited.

Some addition is made to this in the Edinburgh^b account:

"I remember in childhood playing judas and bearing the bag - the part assigned to me an account of my lameness though how that corresponded with the traditionary idea of the Apostate I cannot tell".

Scott's accounts are among the first detailed reports of the modern folk play in Scotland, and prove that the trio of Peter, Paul and Judas made up part of the midwinter child folk drama. The value of this trio to this account is that they can be shown to have existed before and after the Reformation, and thus constitute an important element in the changing tradition of folk drama in its transitional stage.

There is no other record of the three appearing together, and Scott's account is the last mention of Peter and Paul. Consequently, this enquiry will begin with these two folk figures in pre-Reformation times.

The first reference is found in the accounts for the Lord High Treasurer in 1504: '... the ix of Maij, to the barbour helit Paules hed quhen he wes hurt with the Abbot of Unresoun'.⁶⁹ My interpretation of this is that the guiser in the role of Paul was injured in the head while performing the May Drama organised by the Abbot of Unreason for the King's entertainment. The injury was probably the result of some over-rumbustious fun, but it would be pleasant to think that the accident happened while Paul was being 'beheaded'.

Evidence that the figures were also the midwinter guisers at the same period is furnished by a scornful comparison from Lindsay:

More ryche arraye is, now, with frenzies fyne,

Upon the bardyng of ane Byscheopis Mule,

Nor ever had Paule or Peter agane yule.⁷⁰

The intimation of these lines is that the costumes worn by the two guisers in the Yule guising were a byword for finery.

Their role in the 'prosperity-bringing' games of May and Yule was probably the impetus in propelling them into other 'good-luck' situations. A late medieval ballad suggests that they were regular guests at weddings, with a special responsibility for the giving of alms, a gesture intended to confer prosperity on the bridal pair. Hynd Horn, a baffled lover who gave his name to the ballad, wishing to speak privately to the bride at the wedding, takes his disguise and advice from a beggar. His instructions are to walk straight in at the door and, while requesting alms, to

Take nane frae Peter, nor frae Paul,
Nane frae high or low o' them all;
And frae them all ye will take nane,
Until it comes frae the bride's ain hand.⁷¹

Peter and Paul form a 'guising pair', in the manner of the Kings of Summer and Winter, the mock Abbot and Prior (for example, of Bonaccord in Aberdeen in 1440⁷²), and Robin Hood and Little John. Three factors recommended their choice. It must be presumed that the pressure of the Reformers drove the people towards more Christian expressions of the popular traditions. To replace the combatants of the folk drama with warrior saints was a natural move, and another brief quotation from the early-sixteenth century Lindsay demonstrates their suitability in this respect:

Saint Peter, carved with his keys
.....
Saint Paul, well painted with a sword
As he would fight at the first word.⁷³

It is clear from this early-sixteenth image that Paul was recognised as one who came with a sword; Peter's bellicosity was demonstrated in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he drew his sword, and sliced off the ear of the High Priest's servant (John, 18, v.x): both saints, nevertheless, carried a symbolic sword in the Middle Ages.⁷⁴

They were assisted into their roles in a popular folk tradition by their reputation for being uneducated, and 'of the people'. 'In what school were Peter and Paul graduate?' was the angry and rhetorical question put by those irritated by the rise of the university schoolmen in the hierarchy of the reformed church after the death of John Knox in 1572.⁷⁵

The third factor that bonded them in popular pastime was the fact that they shared a common feast-day, on the 29th June, a date near to midsummer. This, of course, was an important occasion in the year and Peebles, for example, held a fair on that day and its octave in the sixteenth century.⁷⁶ Midsummer regeneration and sun festivals continued under the Christian calendar, in the same manner as those discussed in Chapters Three and Four. No Scottish instance of a midsummer resurrection has yet come to light, but there is a documented example in England of 'Risin' and buryin' Peter', in which a supposed effigy of St. Peter was dug up on the 29th June, and buried again a week (or 'octave') later.⁷⁷ Some recognition of the festival in Scotland comes with the action taken against those who built 'bein, midsummer and Peter fyris' at Elgin in 1591,⁷⁸ but there is no elucidation of the ceremony attached to these bonfires.

Peter and Paul have a place in nursery rhyme and proverb which might seem disproportionate to their importance as saints. In essence they typify 'shared totality', and their power and

authority in Christianity is apportioned as precisely as the reign of the Summer and Winter Kings. The numerous sayings and proverbs that feature their names are claimed to originate in their ecclesiastical positions, but my own belief is that their currency in popular speech is due more to their eminence in folk pastime than the disquisitions of theologians. Thus the saying 'Don't rob Peter to pay Paul' is explained as a warning that admiration for St. Paul must in no way diminish the veneration owed to St. Peter, but its vernacular energy is more likely drawn from the observation that two guisers who share a combat should be rewarded equally, irrespective of whether they win or lose, or represent Winter or Summer.⁷⁹ It is easier for this argument to cite the Scottish proverb 'Peter in, and Paul out' (or 'Peter's in, and Paul out',⁸⁰), a saying that seems to lack any Christian meaning, but points at the eternal alternation between Winter and Summer, the Old Year and the New. It may be that the sixteenth-century popularity of the 'Peter and Paul' guising pair has left more mark in popular speech than in the written records of this pastime.

The same is not true of Judas, the third member of Sir Walter Scott's trio of early Christians. From the time of Scott's own performance in the role, Judas seems to have kept his place in the custom for the best part of a century, although references are confined in the main to two decades. The first of these is the 1820s. The Carse illustration of Judas, in the beard and robe of the contemporary Father Christmas, comes from this period (see Chapter Seven) though, of course, the painter may have been working from memory. Scott's own interest in folk drama (noted under Abbotsford House and Edinburgh) was expressed in the years 1821 to 1826, and it is likely that the texts found among his

papers at his death (see unloc. Abbotsford Coll.) were sent to him about this time. The fullest account of the role is given in the Falkirk^b report of 1825, and this version closely resembles that of Peebles^a, referring to the year 1840. The 1840s are also represented by the vague Haddington notice of 1844, in which the only detail is the presence of Judas, and this place and date should be set alongside the unloc. East Lothian account which, though written in 1896, refers to the author's early days at his home near Haddington.

Judas may seem an interloper in the folk play, but his place there was awarded on two counts. He was the 'Collector', responsible for the begging, for which purpose it has been shown the custom existed. Throughout his appearances this role is undisturbed, save the unloc. Abbotsford Coll., where he doubles as 'Presenter', and in the last notice, of unloc. East Lothian, where he is a combatant.

No record of his role as 'Collector' in pre-Reformation Scotland has yet come to notice, but Pettitt has pointed out that the tradition has been more adequately documented on the continent. He quotes the 'Marmion' note, and adds the following:

The traditional status of this part of Scott's account is confirmed by the appearance of precisely the same figure "Judas med pungen" (Judas with the bag) accompanying the traditional folk play of the Three Magi and the Star performed at Epiphany in Scandinavia and Germany, a tradition which can be traced back to the sixteenth century.⁸¹

Presumably, Judas made his way into popular pastime in the same way as Peter and Paul, as part of the attempt to reconcile the custom of the people with the desire of the preachers. The clue for his

qualification is in John, 12, v.8, where it is written, 'he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein', a reference to 'selfish greed' taken up in some detail by the commentary in the Falkirk^b account.

His second qualification for a role in the folk pastime is his ranking as Fool. Billington has demonstrated that biblical authority, in 'the fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God' conferred Folly on the unbeliever and devil-follower.⁸² That Judas was familiar in his role of Fool by the beginning of the sixteenth century is made clear by the ease with which the poet Dunbar can indicate the act of treachery with the phrase 'to gyngill Judas bellis';⁸³ the inseparability of fools and bells in the mind of the same author has already been noted.³¹

There will be more discussion of the role of the Fool in the final passages of the folk play in the following chapter; it is sufficient at this point to conclude that Peter and Paul (as combatants in the May and Yule pastime) and Judas (as Fool with bells) were well-known in Scotland from the beginning of the sixteenth century, and that they survived the Reformation to appear together in the modern folk play c.1780, with Judas surviving until c.1850, and perhaps almost to the end of the century. In doing so, they provide proof of the continuity of the folk practice from medieval times and, in the character and dialogue of Judas, a distinctively 'Scottish' element in the British folk play. The position of Judas, in fact, is a basis on which to reject the suppositions that the folk play is an eighteenth-century invention, or that it was imported from England.

With this conclusion, this historical account of the folk play in Scotland from time of the Northumbrian Kingdom of the seventh

to the ninth centuries, and the feudalisation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, through to the survivals of the twentieth century, is complete.

Notes to Chapter Six

¹ The basis for this summary is P.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830 (Collins/Fontana, 1972), pp.49-80.

² *ibid.*, pp.74-75.

³ *ibid.*, p.214.

⁴ *ibid.*, pp.213-14.

⁵ *ibid.*, pp.75-77.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 92, 170.

⁷ *ibid.*, p.281.

⁸ *ibid.*, p.144.

⁹ *ibid.*, p.244.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.286n.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.169.

¹² *ibid.*, p.32.

¹³ *ibid.*, p.269.

¹⁴ Ramsay and the Earlier Poets of Scotland, p.553.

¹⁵ ibid., p.558.

¹⁶ The Hogarth Book of Scottish Nursery Rhymes, ed. W. & W. Montgomerie (London: Hogarth, 1970), 'Singing Game', p.64.

¹⁷ Banks, Calendar Customs, I, 99f, lists fifteen 'Ridings'.

¹⁸ The bogus patriotic justification given to so many folk pastimes occurs interestingly in the Selkirk festival, where the banner-waving or 'beating', so much a part of Spring festival in Britain and in continental Europe, is related to the battle at Flodden.

¹⁹ The summary of 'Riding' ritual given in this paragraph is taken from McNeill, Silver Bough, IV, 35-38, and Peebles Beltane Festival (1977), one of the annual handbooks published in Peebles by the Peebleshire News.

²⁰ Hyslop, Lansholm As It Was (Edinburgh: Menzies, 1912), p.543f.

²¹ The British Connection: Kelso, BBC TV, 29 Mar 1978.

²² May Eve in Germany, Walpurgisnacht, is an example of Maying ceremony never dissociated from witchcraft.

²³ Snout, pp.184-85.

²⁴ Christina Larner, Enemies of God (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), p.11.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.95.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p.152.

²⁷ Mill, p.243. Cp. Chapter Four, n.79.

²⁸ 'Abbot' was the more usual title; other names are listed in Mill, p.21.

²⁹ Mill, pp.257-60.

³⁰ Mill, pp.283-84.

³¹ Poems of Dunbar, p.99, ll. 49-51, 54.

³² Mill, p.91.

³³ Mill, pp.245-46.

³⁴ McNeill, Silver Bough, III, 99.

³⁵ The earliest date for Easter is 22 March, known as Primum Pascha.

³⁶ Mill, p. 241.

³⁷ Mill, p. 163.

³⁸ Mill, p.246.

³⁹ Mill, p.157.

⁴⁰ Mill, p.313.

⁴¹ OED

⁴² Mill, p.263.

⁴³ Mill, p.239.

⁴⁴ Mill, 242.

⁴⁵ Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (under guising)

⁴⁶ Northern Notes and Queries (1889), III, 3.

⁴⁷ Mill, p.163.

⁴⁸ Mill, p.262.

⁴⁹ When Yule and the New year were over, on 21 January 1567, Thomas Moit, William Dalryell, Jhone Watsone (menstrell) and Sir Thomas Hetoun, together with Besse Tuodall, were all made to kneel in the church and ask the minister for forgiveness: in the event of a second offence, they were to be banished from the town. Another man, who so far exceeded Besse Tuodall as to attack the officer who came to collect the minister's fee, was imprisoned

38 Mill, p.246.

39 Mill, p.157.

40 Mill, p.313.

41 OED

42 Mill, p.263.

43 Mill, p.239.

44 Mill, 242.

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for eight days: Extracts from the Records and Charters of the Royal Burgh of Lanark (Glasgow: Carson & Nicol, 1843), p.34.

50 Mill, p.285.

51 Fenton, 'The Plough Song etc', Tools and Tillage (1970) I, No.3, 175.

52 Mill, p.93n.

53 Mill, pp.236-7.

54 Records of the Kirk Session of Elgin 1584-1779, ed. W. Cramond (Elgin: n.p., 1897), pp. 62-3, 115, 147.

55 Smout, History of the Scottish People, p.68.

56 Mill, p.111n. (See also Chapter Seven, p.291)

57 An Act of 1605 allowed a master to seize 'all maisterful and strong beggars' and 'set his burning iron upon them': Smout, History of the Scottish People, p.169.

58 Records of the Kirk Session of Elgin, p.47.

59 Tiddy, The Mummers' Play, p.87.

60 Buchanan, 'Epithalamium' (1558) James Watson's Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems (1st ed. 1706), ed.

H.H. Wood (Edinburgh: S.T.S., 1877), Pt. II, .61.

⁶¹ George Gush, Renaissance Armies 1480-1650 (Cambridge: Stevens, 1975), pp. 9, 10, 13-14, 36, 38.

⁶² James Watson's Choice Collection, Pt. III, .13.

⁶³ Smout, History of the Scottish People, pp.152-53.

⁶⁴ The Bannatyne Manuscript, III, 28-30.

⁶⁵ OED

⁶⁶ Mill, p.255.

⁶⁷ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, II, i.

⁶⁸ Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs, p.89.

⁶⁹ Mill, p.322.

⁷⁰ The Works of Sir David Lindsay, I, "The Testament of the Papyngo", p.87, ll.1050-52.

⁷¹ Ramsay and the earlier poets of Scotland, p.659.

⁷² Mill, pp.16-19, 21, lists these pairs of guisers.

⁷³ The Works of Sir David Lindsay, I. p.267, ll.2285, 2293-94.

74 St. Peter: "His peculiar symbols are the keys, and a sword (Matt. xvi, 19, and John xviii, 10)". St. Paul: "His symbols are a sword and an open book, the former the instrument of his martyrdom": Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.

75 Gordon Donaldson, The Scottish Reformation (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), p.192.

76 Charters and Documents Relating to the Burgh of Peebles (Edinburgh: Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1872), p.68.

77 Chambers, The Medieval Stage, I, 187 (citing Dyer, 333).

78 Records of the Kirk Session of Elgin, p.11.

79 The earliest recorded use of this proverb is by Wyclif in 1380: Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.

80 Book of Quotations, ed. W.C. Benham (London: Ward & Lock, 1924), p.825a.

81 Thomas Pettitt, 'English Folk Drama in the Eighteenth Century: A Defense of the Revesby Sword Play', Comparative Drama, 15 (1981), p.14.

82 Sandra Billington, 'Suffer Fools Gladly', in The Fool and the Trickster, ed. P.V.A. Williams (Ipswich: Boydell Press, 1979), pp.36-54.

83 Poems of Dunbar 'The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie',

p.93, l.506.

CHAPTER SEVEN

An Interpretation of the Modern Folk Play

1. The Name 'Galoshan'

There is no more obvious starting-point for this chapter than an enquiry into the origin and meaning of the term 'Galoshans' (and its variants), for the word, despite its currency throughout the modern period of the folk play, remains the custom's most impenetrable mystery.

To give the context of the problem, the first fact to notice is that 'Galoshan' is of limited territorial application, for it is known only in Scotland, and there only in the central and eastern areas. In Galloway, the south-west of Scotland, the evidence is consistent that the word was neither known nor used: the Castle Douglas account reports that the town's guisers did not know the word 'Galoshans'; the unloc. Galloway Johnstone account states 'the boys are locally known as White Boys . . . in the border counties they are called . . . Galatians'.¹

The word was not recorded until the early nineteenth century. It does not feature in Scott's recollections of his boyhood experience in Edinburgh^a, c. 1780, and this may be explained by the (expectedly) vague and confused memory of the event. Neither does it occur in the Traquair reference to 1805, although it is

significant that 'Caesar' appears (uniquely) as a combatant, and it is likely that the author was unfamiliar with the word 'Galatian', and substituted a classical hero as a suitable adversary for Alexander. Indeed, the Traquair Caesar is armed with a 'claymore'.

Thereafter, however, 'Galatian' makes steady progress through the custom. The first note of the word is made by Wilkie, in the report attached to Bowden, where he was born in 1789. The author was keen to record the 'ancient customs' of his manuscript's title, and gives 'Galashen' as a combatant, adding the note that the name was sometimes pronounced 'Slashen' (though I would regard this a variant of 'Slasher', who would slash with his shable or sabre). He notes that the 'tragedy' was sometimes called 'Galatian, or Alexander of Macedon', but himself labels the whole entry 'The Game of Guisarts'.

The Falkirk^b account of 1825 gives the combatant's name as 'Galgacus' or 'Gallacheus' (repeated by the Peebles^a 1840 report), but in my opinion this is, like Traquair, an educated 'improvement' of an unfamiliar name. The unloc. Teviotdale Roxburghs account, credited to the same year of 1825, but written fifty years later, remembers 'Galatian' as a character.

The Abbotsford House^{ab} reports (1824-5) give 'Galashan (Galatian perhaps)' as a 'regular character' in the plays performed by the dozens of children that came to Sir Walter Scott's home; at Dunfermline^a in 1826, the play seemed to be known by the line in which 'Gallashan' announced himself.

Two additions are made by the Stirling^a account published in 1835, where the name of the play, and that of the combatant, is given in the plural form 'Galatians'. The Peebles^a 1840 account also has play and combatant as 'Galatian', but the plural form of

the name is known at the same date at Arbroath and Quothquan, and is subsequently recorded at more than a dozen locations.

The Blantyre account relating to c. 1860 has a curious variation of the word, referring to the two combatants as the 'first' and 'second' 'galoshans'. Elsewhere the usage after the mid-century seems to follow the practice of referring to the participants of the custom as 'Galoshans', and this evidence is strong in Glasgow and its environs. The Glasgow^c account of c. 1850 introduces the usage: 'In Glasgow the party were sometimes called "Galatians"'; in later years the application was noted in Barrhead, Glasgow^e, unloc. Strathendrick, and unloc. Vale of Leven.

In the present century, two further developments have been noted. The Johnstone report, referring to the non-dramatic guising of the 1920s, knew the guisers as 'Galoshies', where the original 'Galoshans' has been given the more colloquial last syllable, and at the present time in Port Glasgow, the same non-dramatic Hallowe'en guising is known as 'doing your Galoshans'.

The fore-going survey of 'Galoshan' usage furnishes the evidence for several helpful conclusions. In the first place, it seems to be a matter of no significance whether the word was used in its plural or singular form. Conversely, the two forms of the word determined by the pronunciation of the second syllable (for the first and third are neutral), are separated by an easily-drawn isogloss² (see Map Ten), a frontier that corresponds very closely to that which separates the Hogmanay and Hallowe'en areas (see Map Eleven), and suggests a period of separate development, before the modern period of improved communications and printed play texts. It needs to be pointed out in this connection,

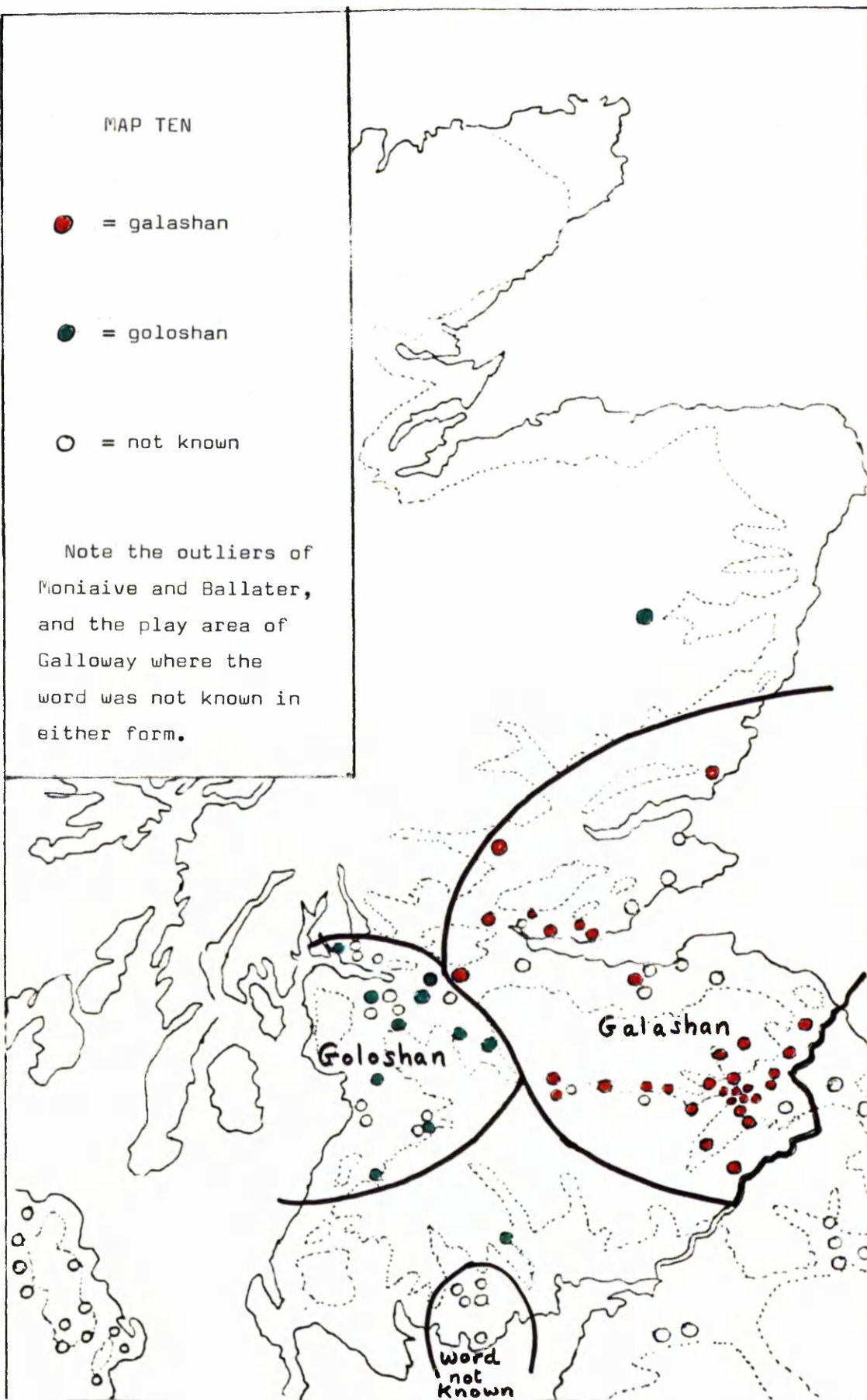
MAP TEN

● = galashan

● = goloshan

○ = not known

Note the outliers of
Moniaive and Ballater,
and the play area of
Galloway where the
word was not known in
either form.



however, that all the early records are of the eastern *gə'leɪʃən* form, and that the western form, *gə'ɪʃən*, is not noted until the third quarter of the century, at Blantyre and Patna. These, however, are retrospective, and the 'western' form was not committed to writing until the twentieth century.³ The gap of over a hundred years between the record of the 'eastern' and 'western' versions is a remarkable disparity, and is brought about by a time-lag of sixty-five years between the first records (Bowden and Glasgow^a), and the curious circumstance that the first Glasgow record refers to 'Galatian'.

The second significant conclusion is that 'Galatian' was in the first instance the name of a combatant, important enough to confer his name first on the play, and thereafter on the cast and custom. There is no need to labour the uniqueness of the name: in the cast list given for the Borders play of the early nineteenth century (in unloc. Teviotdale) Galatian stands removed from 'Sir Alexander, the admiral, the farmer's son, and the doctor', each one of familiar name, rank, or station in life.

The clearest image of the figure will be found in the earliest accounts (Bowden, Falkirk and Abbotsford House, all noted in the years 1815-1826), and when these are perused for details, it emerges that Galatian is the contender, for the crown or the love of a woman, and the one to suffer death. When revived by the doctor (and earlier at Falkirk) he is known as 'Jack', complains of a hole in his back of unusual size, and professes brotherhood with his former enemy. He is also distinguished by his costume, in particular his headgear. In the Peebles^a (1840) account, he wore 'a large cocked-hat of white paper, either cut out with little human profiles, or pasted over with penny valentines'.

In the Melrose^a version of 1862, 'Golashin wore a "Golashin-hat" made from gilt wallpaper, rounded and gothic shaped, decorated with "gum-flowers" [imitation flowers] with a cock's feather stuck in the top'. The Carse illustration (see Plate Five) shows two of these hats, one of them worn by 'William Wallace', a combatant.

The third conclusion that must be drawn from the early evidence is that Galatian was attached to the folk play in an important and inseparable fashion from the dawn of textual record (i.e. the beginning of the nineteenth century), and that already at that time the name was inexplicable to the best authorities. Wilkie (Bowden 1815) is clearly unhappy with the name, but his comment 'Sometimes I have heard Galashen pronounced 'Slashen' is unavailing. The authors of Falkirk^b (1825) and Traquair (1805) take refuge in historical emendation, to Galgacus and Caesar respectively. Maidment, in the Stirling^a account, will explain 'Inky Pinky' as weak Stirlingshire beer of c.1860, but will offer no gloss on 'Galatians'. Most significantly of all, Sir Walter Scott writes in the Abbotsford House (1826) account that the play included in its cast 'one Galashan (Galatian perhaps) who is a regular character though who he may be I cannot guess'. This observation is of great value, for it makes plain three important facts. Firstly, Galashan was 'a regular character', firmly embedded in the custom. Secondly, the name had no accepted spelling: Scott had never seen it in print, and was here apparently writing it for the first time, proof that the word had existed until that time only in oral usage. Thirdly, Scott's admission that he could not even 'guess' at the word's meaning reveals its sense eluded the understanding of the one man of the time who, by virtue of his wide reading, his antiquarian interests, and his love for all things Scottish, would

have known. If Scott did not know, we may conclude, no-one knew.

The ignorance on this point by these educated and literary men of the early nineteenth century points at a class or social division between the educated gentry, and the uneducated and poor who carried on the custom. We must note the vigour with which it was sustained: while known names were corrupted almost beyond recognition (for example Bold Benbow became 'Bol Bendo' at Liberton, and Bold Hector of Castle Douglas is 'Bell Hector' and 'Bauldie' at Balmaghie), 'Galatian' and 'Galoshan' survive almost intact, even though they lack 'meaning' and (unlike Beelzebub and Dr Brown) the support of a rhyme. Indeed, as has been shown, the word grew in connotation throughout the hundred years of the play's record. The reservation 'almost intact' has to be made: in Melrose^b (1875) and Crieff^b (1884) the hero is called McGlashan, a not-unusual Scottish surname.⁴

Scott was unable to guess at the meaning, but later commentators have shown more imagination. Chambers (in Peebles^a) followed the Falkirk suggestion that Galgacus was intended. The spelling 'Galatian' directed the attention to Galatia, a part of modern Turkey anciently settled by Celts: Geddes read the word in the literal sense of Celt, Gaul and Gael.⁵ Dean-Smith identified him as 'the Galatians who had a greater fear of the falling sky than of the conqueror of the world';⁶ the McGlashan of Crieff^b is suggested by the recorder to be the 'Mac' or son of the famous Galatian St. George; the churchman responsible for the Kilsyth record ventured a Biblical source ('Galatians. I suspect now that he must have belonged to the tribe of Gath, and so the chronology is obscure'). Jesse Weston also looked to the Old Testament, and suggested that 'Golishan' might be a pseudonym for Goliath,⁷

a lead followed by Helm.⁸

It is probable that these educated writers have been baffled by the simplicity of the names given to the performers of folk customs. Guidance in these matters comes from two Scottish accounts. In the non-Galoshan area of the south-west 'the boys are locally known as White Boys' (unloc. Galloway: Johnstone); the Irish 'troupes on the manor of Ridgeway' were known as 'Hogmanaymen' (see Appendix Six). These two names, and others,⁹ show that folk players were christened according to some outstanding feature of their pastime, usually their clothing, their season, or the thing they collected. The meaning of 'Galoshan' can be expected to follow this pattern.

To conclude this first phase of the investigation, it has to be recognised that the study of the name 'galoshan' in modern times has discovered the following:

- (i) the word was in popular and oral use, though not in educated and written English, by the end of the eighteenth century:
- (ii) the name, in its first recorded sense, referred to the contender, victim, and resurrected man - the 'hat' wearer:
- (iii) though 'meaningless', the word was inseparably attached to the play custom in Central and Eastern Scotland:
- (iv) comparative study strongly suggests that the word derives from a point of costume, season, or collection.

The direction that the pursuit of 'galoshan' takes at this point mirrors that of the whole study, for having worked back from the present, the researcher comes to a blank in the eighteenth century. As with the greater study, so again the search for 'galoshan' is begun in the medieval period, where attention is focussed on the

only word¹⁰ likely to provide a source for our quarry.

The word in question is 'galosh', which came into English as the Old French galoche,¹¹ itself derived from Late Latin gallica, meaning 'a Gallic shoe'. That 'Gallic' in this application signified 'wooden' is clear from the word galopedium, med. Latin for 'wooden shoe'.¹²

The earliest reference for this word in OED is taken from Langland, and dates from 1377.

Ne were worthy to unbokel his galoche,
from which it is clear that the (wooden) shoe was fitted with a strap. Other versions of the footwear more resembled clogs, in that the complete shoe was made of wood, or pattens, into which the shod foot was slipped for protection when walking through mud, or other enemies of fine shoes. The modern sense of 'overshoe', which developed from the patten, is not recorded until the seventeenth century, and since this search for the meaning of 'galoshan' is for a word that had lost all meaning by the eighteenth century, the likelihood is that the earlier 'clog' or 'patten' should be the object of attention.

The word can be presumed to have been introduced into the British Isles by the Normans and French in the post-Conquest era, and into Scotland in age of feudalisation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The first records are in medieval Latin, calecha and galochia in 1297 (and one notes the two variant second syllables at this earliest date), galochia from 1328, and galoga (perhaps an early form of 'clog') in 1364.¹²

Following the Langland 1377 reference (see above), the word occurs in many forms, the more significant from the point of view

of this enquiry being galoge and galache (1440), galatch and galeach (C.16th), and golosse (?golossian) (C.17th). The first Scottish records, in the form gallas(c)h, are noted in 1636 and 1670.¹³ The earlier (1636) gallashes was written in Edinburgh, and is consistent with the findings of this enquiry in that the second syllable is in the 'eastern' form.

The Scottish record is, nevertheless, very late, and one explanation might be that the word did not exist in Scotland until the Union of the Crowns in 1603 brought about a greater linguistic transfer. My conclusion is rather that the word, with its connotations, was in use in the late medieval period throughout 'Norman Britain', and that it died out, probably in the seventeenth century (with the change of meaning to 'overshoe'), preserving its antique sense only in eastern and central Scotland. Some reason for this belief is given below, but at this point we should observe the commonsensical point that the tenants and servants of the French and Anglo-Norman landowners would hardly abandon this admirable footwear for no other reason than their new lands lay to the north of the River Tweed. No other kind of footwear replaces the galoche in Scottish writing, so it is wisest to believe that the shoe made its way through these three centuries without comment by poet, and without surviving in document.

In identifying 'galoshan' with galoche, and having noted that the variant second syllable has appeared as early as 1297 in Latin, and by 1440 in English, the enquiry is confronted by the problem of the third syllable. The nineteenth-century knew the custom as 'galoshans' (ge'loʃən(s)) and 'galatians' (ge'leɪʃən(s)), indifferently in the singular and plural, and the source and meaning of this final syllable is difficult to establish.

There are four possibilities. The first for consideration is that the original is *galosh-ane, i.e. the one with galoshes. Such a label would imply that the troupers were remarkable for their footwear, presumably for the noise their wooden shoes, clouted with iron, would make as they processed or danced. The credibility of this kind of name is demonstrated by a modern parallel, where the cartoonist Bill Tidy has in the last decade achieved a small fame as the chronicler of 'The Cloggies', a fictional troupe of clog-dancers.

A model formation is 'wean' (= small child), from 'wee ane', though it must be admitted that, although 'wee' is recorded in the thirteenth century, 'wee-one' does not find its way into print until 1692. The poet Fergusson is still writing 'wee-anes' (= children) as late as c.1770¹⁴, when 'galoshan' has already lost all significance.

A second possibility is that 'galoshan' is the result of a mistaken plural. Seventeenth-century forms of 'galosh' are given as galloshios and galloshoes, where 'shoe' has been added to the root syllable. To extend the error further, the Scots plural word 'shoon' would give the form *galloshoon. So rare a form, however, could hardly become so widespread.

The third possibility is on firm record. In the wardrobe account for Prince Henry, the eldest son of James VI & I, in 1607-8 (four years after his father's leaving Edinburgh), there is a list of the youth's footwear: 'One hundred and fifty-seven pair of shoes at 3s 6d: one ditto laced 3s 6d: One pair of galossians 6s.¹⁵ Here is the word itself, at a suitable time, and in a London/Edinburgh context. The use of the term in this, its only appearance,¹⁶ is surprising, for these wooden shoes seem

to be worth twice as much as any other pair of shoes, even those with laces. The implication is clearly that 'golossians' are very splendid shoes, expensively produced, and set apart in a wardrobe inventory. In the absence of information, the enquiry becomes conjecture, but it seems reasonable to believe that this special and expensive pair of shoes was worn on ceremonial or ritual occasions.¹⁷ Equally clearly, possession of such shoes as these would be beyond the reach of the impoverished guisers, of Prince Henry's time or later, but this by no means precludes the possibility that the dressing-up for the guising pastime involved the mimicking of finery (see for example, Scott's remarks in *Abbotsford House*^b), and that the 'galoshan' shoes at some time in the history of the custom were as conspicuous as the 'galoshan' hat in the early nineteenth century (see Melrose^a).

The fourth possibility is that 'galoshan' is the corrupt survival of a verbal form. 'Galash' (= to galosh) is on record,¹⁷ but I would postulate the verb earlier to have also carried the sense of 'to go around in wooden shoes'. Such a verb would have appropriate forms:

In older Scots, the present participle, which is an adjective, ended in - and, often reduced to -an, while the gerund, which describes the action of the verb and is a noun, ended in -in(g).¹⁸

Thus, people who went around in clogs could be said to be

*galoshin, and described as *galoshan.

This conjectural form might be brought into the realm of fact by reference to an hitherto obscure phrase in Dunbar's poem 'To the King', written c.1509, at a point when he is attacking a man he plainly detests, a prelate who, in the poet's opinion, has

risen too high in the King's regard. Dunbar's abusive description provides the man

With gredy mynd and glaschane gane.¹⁹

'Gane' is glossed as 'ugly face', but no suggestion is ventured for 'glaschane'.

In my view, this reference by Dunbar is the only printed form of 'galoshan' to survive from the pre-1800 years. It fits the mould extremely accurately: it has the correct 'eastern' form befitting a writer believed to have lived in Lothian and Fife: the loss of the first syllable (also noted at Biggar^b, Crieff^b, and Darnick^a) is dictated by the iambic rhythm; the 'Galatian' central vowel heightens the assonance of the final phrase.

The balance of the line lies also in the meaning. Dunbar is abusing a man greedy for unwarranted preferment, and he stigmatises the man as showing avarice in mind and feature. 'Glaschane' is an approximate synonym for 'greedy', and in the context of this enquiry we can suppose that what Dunbar had in mind was the image of the poor townsman or peasant, who disguised himself, perhaps in a hood or gown, and who begged or demanded alms and charity. The verse paragraph develops the idea:

That wout was for to muk the stabell-

Ane pykthank in a prelottis clais

With his wavill feit and wirrok tais,

With hoppir hippis and henchis narrow

And bausy handis to beir a barrow;

With lut schulderis and luttard bak

Quhilk natur maid to beir a pak;

With gredy mynd and glaschane gane,

Mell-hedit lyk ane mortar stane.²⁰

If this interpretation is sound, then Dunbar is using g(a)laschane as an adjectival present participle of a verb with something of the sense of 'to go about in clogs demanding money' (with the insistence in this study on the importance of money-collecting to the survival of the folk play, this is a highly acceptable meaning), and 'glaschane' could be glossed to mean 'peasant-beggar's (face)'.

In my view, this obscure Dunbar phrase is the key to unlock the 'Galoshan' problem. It reveals two interesting facets of the usage. Firstly, it is clear that by early in the sixteenth century the word was capable of very free ascription, and it is helpful in understanding its loss of meaning in modern times to realise that three centuries earlier it was being used in a metaphorical sense at a remove from its literal meaning. Secondly, this interpretation clarifies the oddity of the character 'Galoshan' in company with Alexander, the Farmer's son and the rest. My supposition is that the guiser originally announced that he had arrived on the 'wooden shoe', money-requesting business:

I come here gallashin(g);

this line is then made to follow the pattern of the other introductions, with the result that

Here come I gallashin

can become

Here comes I, Galashan (Bowden)

and

Here comes in Galashon (Selkirk^b)

There is a parallel to this development with the kindred pastime of wassailing, where what the visitors are alleged to have said ('Waes hael!') became the name of the activity, and the verb for the action, was applied as an adjective (e.g. wassel bread), and within

the last two decades has become a 'show-business' name for a group of entertainers whose act lay within the genre ('The Wurzels', from the variant 'worslin').

Although Dunbar remains the sole Scottish testimony to this galoche-based pastime, some very useful corroboration is supplied by Randle Cotgrave's French/English dictionary, published in London in 1611.²⁰ He is prolific in the matter of the galoche.

The word itself he defines thus:

Galloshes Fr. galoche f. A wooden shooe or patten, made all of a piece, without any latchet, or tye of leather, and worn by the poor clown in winter.²¹

Cotgrave clearly has the clog in mind, but he is ambiguous about its wearer. 'Poor clown' probably denotes the 'impoverished peasant' but it might equally describe a 'begging comedian', for the dual sense of 'clown' was present in the sixteenth century. Certainly the winter season matches the custom.

One would be happier with this kind of information from an avowedly British source: sadly, Blunt's Glossographia of 1656 owes a debt to Cotgrave, without imposing any of its own:

Galloches (Fr) wooden shoes, or patens made all of a peece, without any latchet or tye of leather, and worn in France by the poor Clowns in Winter. What our English Galloches are, and by whom worn, everyone knows.²²

To return to Cotgrave: he supplies definitions of Galloches (similar to galoche), Gallochier (a foot-post, messenger), and Gallochier (a maker of Galloches). There is also Galochier, an adjective:

Base, meane, poore; also clownish, rude, uncivill, rusticall,

without manners; as those are that, ordinarily, weare
those wooden shooes.²¹

This notion of making the clog diagnostic of a mode of conduct is further extended by Cotgrave's verb Galocher:

To behave himself rudely, uncivilly, rustically to play
the clowne; also, to trot, or wander undiscreetly up
and down.²¹

The addition of this gloss is the element of 'voluntary behaviour', present in the phrase 'to behave himself'. 'Rustically to play the clowne' draws the sense much closer to the idea of a man deliberately playing a comic role associated with the rural, 'antique' way of life. The addition of 'trot, or wander undiscreetly up and down' invokes the idea of going about in clogs in an 'undiscreet' or public way.

These shadowy hints of a practice by poor (and therefore money-collecting) rustics, acting like clowns, wearing clogs, and clattering around in public, are extended once more by Cotgrave's offer of another galoches form, in which the meaning is entirely metaphorical:

Galloches: m. Schollers in Universities, admitted of no colledge, but lying in the Towne, and being at libertie to resort unto what (publike) Readers, or Lectures they please; tearmed thus, because, in passing the streets, they commonly weare Galloches.²¹

This university slang for the non-residential student or day scholar is not, in my opinion, merely an expression of the fact that 'those who come in from outside wear outdoor shoes'. For a nick-name to achieve such prominence, it requires an emotive area of connotation. If we view Cotgrave's entry in the light

of the findings of this chapter, and the meaning of the *galoshin(g) in medieval Britain, we can note the following points of similarity between the guiser and the day-scholar:

each is poor, for the guiser asks for alms, and the day-scholar cannot afford to live in a college;

each comes into a 'Big House', for the colleges were organised on the lines of the 'Household';

each comes into the company of the sons of wealthy and aristocratic men, or those enjoying their benefaction and protection;

each has the 'libertie' of entry to the House, by membership or custom;

for each the clogs would be a badge of poverty;

winter was the season of the University term, and for the visiting pastime.

When the correspondences are itemised in this way, it is easy to see that the nick-name would have readily occurred to the wealthy, residential students, who doubtless appreciated the deftness with which their intellectual snobbery could lay at the feet of the day-scholars all the rustic, old-fashioned, superstitious practice of the peasantry. It is valuable to note that, with Cotgrave in 1611 and with Dunbar in 1509, the galloches and the glaschane had brought their titles down to the level of scorn.

The business of this chapter so far has been to identify the wooden clog with the midwinter visiting pastime. This being done, the significance of the attachment needs to be discovered, for it must be believed that these protective clogs were worn throughout the inclement months, and whenever the ways were miry, and not reserved for ceremonial wear on one or two nights of the year.

If indeed, the wearing of clogs was significant, then there are two possibilities. In the first place, the 'golossians' of Prince Henry might be the unique record of the galoshes that were worn for the purpose of *galoshin(g), and therefore known as *goloshan (shoes), or simply 'galoshans'. One might conjecture that the young Prince Henry had guised that midwinter, and that the shoemaker had made him a pair of *galoshans fit for a prince. Alternatively, the clogs could have been conspicuously noisy on the flag-stones of the halls and kitchens, as the troupes of guisers 'trotted' (in Cotgrave's word) in, and perhaps danced. Maybe also, like Prince Henry, these clogs were specially decorated for the occasion.

Without denying the fact that clogs were worn, we must take account also of the metaphorical meaning of shoes, and of the essential glaschane, or begging, element. Shoes are, in folklore, celebrated as gifts themselves, and as the receptacle for gifts.

To demonstrate 'shoes as gifts', there is a note that the King gave members of the Scottish court gifts of boots, shoes and gaiters in May 1508, and it is particularly relevant to the argument that the recipients were in the main if not wholly the celebrants in the guising time. First on the list is 'Sir Cristiern, from Alhaloday bipast to Candilmes' (presumably the master of the revels that year), and the later names include 'Martin the Spaniard', 'John Bute' (a Fool), and 'The Mores'.²³ This may well be a record of the traditional reward for the winter guisers, and the idea of the 'luck' that comes from rewarding guisers may lurk behind two stanzas of 'A Lyke Wake Dirge', a funeral song that Scott prints in his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border:

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon

Every night and alle;

Sit thee down, and put them on;

And Christe receive thye saul.

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gavest nane,

Every night and alle;

The whinnes shall pricke thee to the bare bone... . 24

This giving of shoes became traditional in Scotland, and frequently figures as part of a bargain, as an extra demonstration of goodwill between master and servant. For example, a Jedburgh farmer of the mid-eighteenth century customarily 'hired his female servants for 10s, with a pair of shoes, for the half-year, and his ploughmen for £1:5s, with the like gift, or bountith, as it was then called'.²⁵

Apart from being useful gifts, shoes were, and still are, symbolic gifts of good fortune, and were given at the commencement of an enterprise. They are familiar tokens at weddings, but in Scotland they were also thrown after a sailor making his first voyage, and the logic of this association with 'beginnings' demands that they also figured in the Midwinter, or New Year, custom. Any such role played by shoes must needs be symbolic, for the number of people involved would make the giving of shoes, even old ones, impossibly burdensome.

Only one Scottish record supports the theory that the celebrants carried with them 'lucky shoes'; in Laurieston^a the Beelzebub says,

Here comes I, old Beelzebub,

And over my shoulder I carry my clogs.

No kind of theory can be based on this instance, however, for it is the only such phrase and it occurs moreover in the non-Galoshan area of Galloway. The practice may have died out as a result of

the inconvenience of the tradition. The guisers may have carried shoes as good luck tokens for their hosts, and the latter may have responded by putting gifts in them. The disadvantage for the visitor would be the small size of the receptacle. Although the contemporary practice in Britain is to put the Yule gifts in stockings, the Dutch, in Holland and in North America have preserved the custom of placing gifts in shoes, in the manner of St Nicholas, whom they have given us as Santa Claus. (see Plate Four).

By way of summary of this enquiry into the meaning of 'galoshan', my conclusions are that the Anglo-Norman, French and Flemish landlords of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were visited by their tenants at midwinter for mutual expressions of goodwill. The clogs worn by the visitors became symbols of the relationship, of the poverty of the well-wisher and the wealth of the host, of the travelling of the celebrant and the domestic comfort of the house-holder. The sound of clog on flagstone, heard only once a year, emphasised in all probability by dancing, became for the audience the keynote of the custom. With the help of the association between well-wishing, giving and shoes, the practice of poor yokels going round the Big Houses in winter, demanding entrance in their unmannerly way brought about, in Cotgrave's exposition, the identification of the custom as *galoshin(g). By the end of the fifteenth century in Scotland, the Judas-like avarice of these clumsy peasants had brought the custom into some disrepute, so much so that Dunbar could use g(a)laschane pejoratively. The name was now firmly attached to the custom, and remained so during the following hundred years or so, even though 'clog' came to replace 'galosh' as the name for the wooden shoe, leaving galasch to start a new life

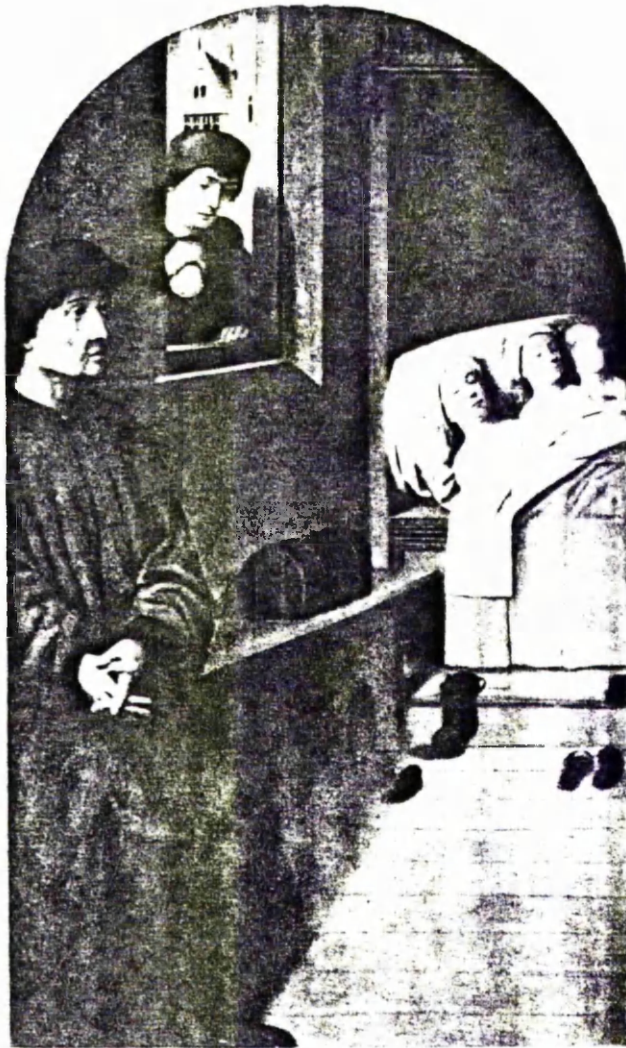


PLATE FOUR

St Nicholas Providing a Dowry : National Gallery of Scotland

The illustration is of the story of the poor man with three beautiful and virtuous daughters, whom St Nicholas saved from disgrace by his provision.

The shoes, the receptacles for the bounty, are conspicuous.

in the sense of 'over-shoe'. Consequently, when the custom came to be re-written in the second half of the seventeenth century, 'galashan' was an inseparable term for the midwinter pastime in the language of the uneducated poor who maintained the custom, though not to its educated hosts, for whom it was by this time meaningless. I suspect that some such opening statement as 'Here come I, galoshin(g)' was effortlessly misinterpreted by the text-makers as a parallel to such as 'Here comes I, Bellzebub'. Such a mysterious and ancient character must needs become the central figure in the drama.

2. The Season of Performance

It is very clear from the accounts of the folk play that the season of its performance became standardised and restricted during the last decades of its vigorous life. Its former extent is best measured against the theory that the original European season for regeneration ceremony lasted as long as the winter months themselves, from the beginning of November to approximately mid-February,²⁶ for the Scottish evidence accords very neatly with this broad reach.

In fact, this period has already made its way into this chapter with the reference to the royal dispensing of boots and shoes as reward to, among others, 'Sir Cristiern, from Alhaloday bipast to Candilmas',²³ which, in modern calendar terms, is from 1 November to 2 February, and suggests that the Scottish court based its winter revelry on this over-all period.

Although no modern tradition of the folk play encompasses these three months, by combining the seasons of a handful of customs in the south of Scotland, this period can be marked out. The eve of the season is, of course, the Galloway date which, without deviation occupies Hallowe'en, the evening of 31 October. This date finds an

early notice at Jedburgh^a where, in the second half of the eighteenth century the two popular holidays were "Valentine's E'en" (13 February) and Hallowe'en, which two dates this enquiry would see as marking the beginning and the end of the winter revel. Two communities within ten miles of Jedburgh share out this season. The first part is noted with the Hawick^c account, where the folk-players were out from Martinmas (11 November) until the New Year (1 January); the second part is detailed at Bowden, where 'every evening from Christmas to Fasternse'en is allowable for the Gysarts to make their perambulations' (Fasternse'en = Shrove Tuesday, in modern times generally occurring from mid-February to early March).

Within this grand design, other communities had smaller shares of the season. At Earlstoun, for example, a half dozen miles to the north of Bowden, the players guised for about ten days, ending on Christmas night. At Biggar^d, the practice was to perform the play in the week that separated Christmas and New Year's Eve.

The concentration on Hogmanay as the occasion for the folk play in the east of Scotland was found to have begun in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see Chapter Six, 3). Geographically, it seems to have originated in central Scotland and the north-east. The 'Hogmanaymen' and their Scots origins have already been discussed (see Appendix Six), but in modern times, the earliest reference comes with Falkirk. The earliest note of all (Falkirk^a) accuses the young men of going about on the last night of 1701; one hundred and twenty-five years later Falkirk^b speaks of Hogmanay callers being refused on the grounds that the 'Old Style' was kept, by which we understand that the change in 1752 from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, with the consequent 'loss' of eleven days, had provoked a resistance which expressed itself

by the celebration of Hogmanay and the New Year on 12 January.

Having established the importance of the Hogmanay date, and its absorption of the folk drama in eastern Scotland, this occasion will serve for a glance at the relation of the custom to the date. The name 'Hogmanay' is generally believed to derive from a French word, with several regional variations, all with the meaning of 'a New-Year gift'. The comment in OED under Hogmanay disguises neither the difficulties nor the editorial confidence:

Although the phonetic difference between aguillanneuf and the Sc. word is great, the Norman form hoguinane is much closer to hagmane, hogmanay, and it cannot be doubted that both the custom and the term are from the French.

It is not unhelpful for this study that the occasion is seen to be another Norman importation into Scotland, and without challenging the accepted derivation, it might be useful to measure the interaction between the folk play and the customary date, particularly if this would assist in discovering the source of the - man syllable of hogmanay.

The first notice of the word that I have discovered is of the man accused of singing 'hagmonayis' in the New Year of 1604 in Elgin²⁷. According to the OED definition, this man was singing for a New Year present; my suggestion is that this gift was, symbolically at least, solicited in the form of bread.

The grounds for this belief are in the alternative names for the season in parts of Fife: 'In St Andrews, for instance, Hogmanay is still known as Cake Day';²⁸ To make the case for the interchangeability of 'cake day' and 'hogmanay', I would first establish that some form of bread or cake was the traditional

gift for the Hogmanay singing-guiser. The clearest evidence for this comes in the Abbotsford House^b account:

The dole for such it is to these little performers is regularly . . . a silver penny and a regular portion of what is call'd white bread (household bread vizt.) to each child who is residing on the lairds land a copper penny and a quarter-circle of oat-cake call'd a farle to each stranger.

The feudal distinction between 'tenant' and 'stranger' was noted in Chapter Three, 4; of more interest here is the ritual place of the farle of the coarser oat-cake, and its pairing with the more esteemed white bread.

Two guiser chants from the first part of the nineteenth century repeat this distinction between the types of bread. At Craigforth, near Stirling, the guisers sought only white bread:

Hogmanay

Trollolay

Gie me o' your white bread,

I'll hae nane o' your grey.²⁹

Adjoining the information for Glasgow^d, the writer supplies a verse that links white, brown and grey bread:

Hogmanay, Troll-ol, Troll-oll aye,

Gi'e us a piece o' your white bread

And eke a bittoc o' your grey,

Wi' brown laif dawds for Hogmanay.³⁰

The three types of bread differ according to the quality and refinement of the flour with which they are made. The distinction is claimed to have been of particular importance to the French and Anglo-Norman feudatories of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,

who are believed to have attached great significance to the quality of their bread, and to have, in some way, defined their status by the refinement of their wheat flour.³¹ It would be consistent with the findings of this study if the reward that the feudatories gave to their tenants reflected their sense of status in the way that Sir Walter Scott has indicated.

There is a very early notice of this hierarchy in bread. Early in the fourteenth century, in the reign of Robert the Bruce (d.1329), the Priory of Restenneth in Angus enjoyed a review of its rights and privileges:

Besides the revenues of certain lands, the jurors also found that the canons were in full possession of the curious privilege of 'uplifting on each coming of the king to Forfar, and for each day he abides there, two loaves of the lord's bread, four loaves of the second bread, and six loaves, called hugmans'.³²

This is a notice of remarkable interest for it seems to record (the) three grades of bread, and to label the third and cheapest as 'hugmans'. A variant of the same word occurs in the Household Book of Edward IV, where there is provision in 1483 for 'hogman' bread to be made from the bran of ^a bushel of flour for the king's horses.³³

If it were possible to identify the course, grey bread, or oatcake with this low-grade 'horse bread', the traditional reward to 'strangers',³⁴ who called in midwinter would be the 'hogman' bread of Edward IV, and the day on which it was baked and given *hogman day, *hogman(d)ay or, as in Fife, 'cake day'. Again, the rise of Hogmanay came with the fall of Christmas, and it is consonant with these findings that one of the effects of the

Reformation was to ban the baking of Yule bread, noted in Glasgow and in Perth in the 1580s.³⁵

This side-light on the manner in which the midwinter guising tradition could have contributed to the naming of 'Hogmanay' is incidental, however, to the central point of this section, which is that the Hallowe'en and Christmas/Hogmanay areas of the folk play are clearly marked (see Map Eleven). The frontier that divides them closely resembles that of the Northumbrian kingdom (see Map Six), and the isogloss that separated 'galosh' and 'galash' (see Map Ten), and it is probable that these features of guising in eastern Scotland are connected with the Northumbrian settlement of the seventh-ninth centuries.

The Hallowe'en season of western Scotland almost certainly derives approximately the same period. Early in the tenth century, a migration from Ireland descended on Britain in two prongs, the northern fleet landing in Galloway (to which the incomers, the Gall-Ghaidhil, are said to have given their name), and the southern in north-west England, near the mouth of the Dee.³⁶ Within the mainland of Britain, the only localities to feature their folk drama at Hallowe'en are Galloway, and Cheshire, and I theorise that both owe this distinction to this ninth/tenth century immigration (see Map Twelve).

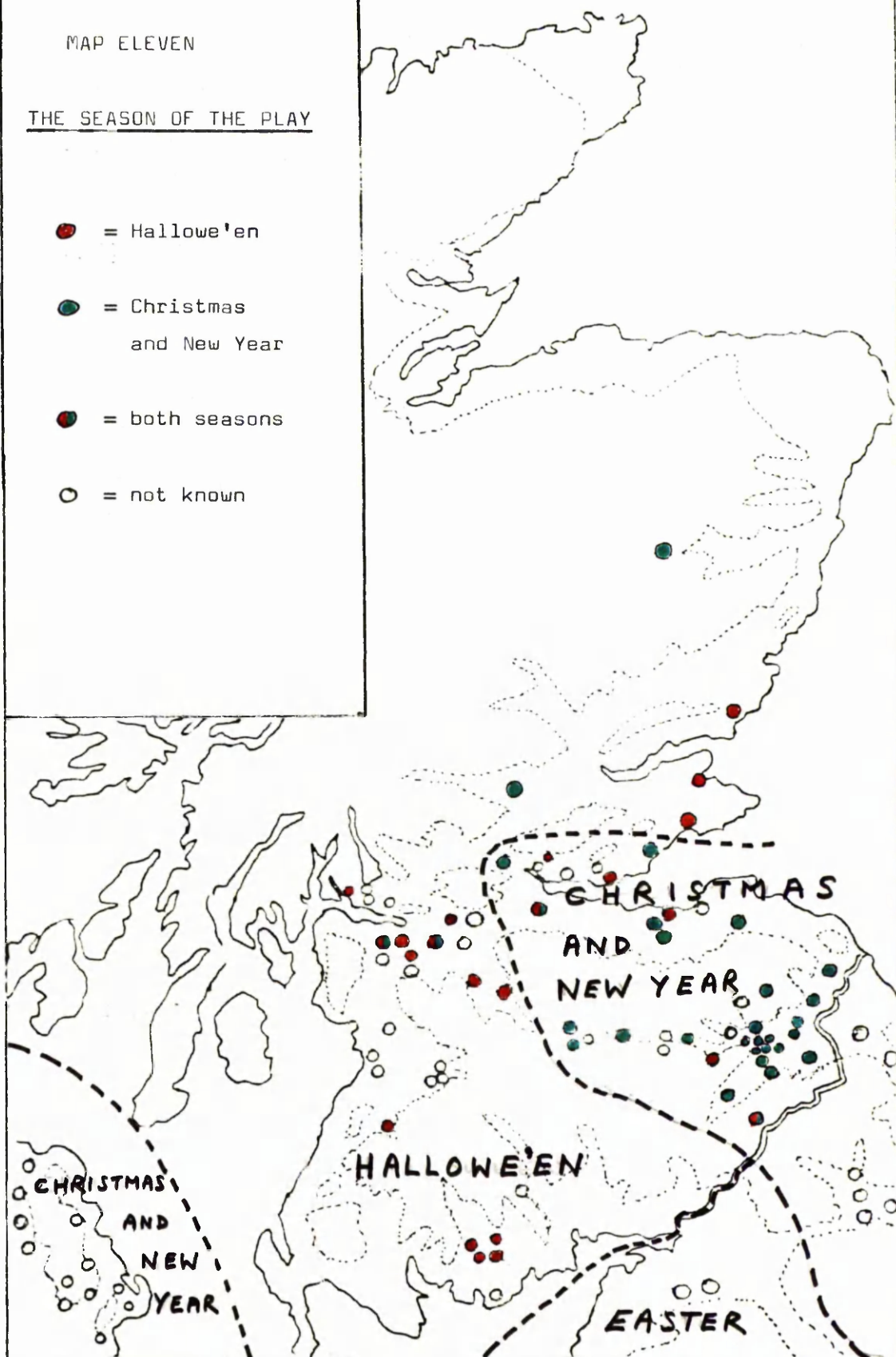
There is a disparity in the cultural impact that these two settlements made on their hosts, for whilst in England the 'eve of winter' season was confined more or less to Cheshire, in Scotland the occasion has become pervasive. There is some interest in the Scottish increase.

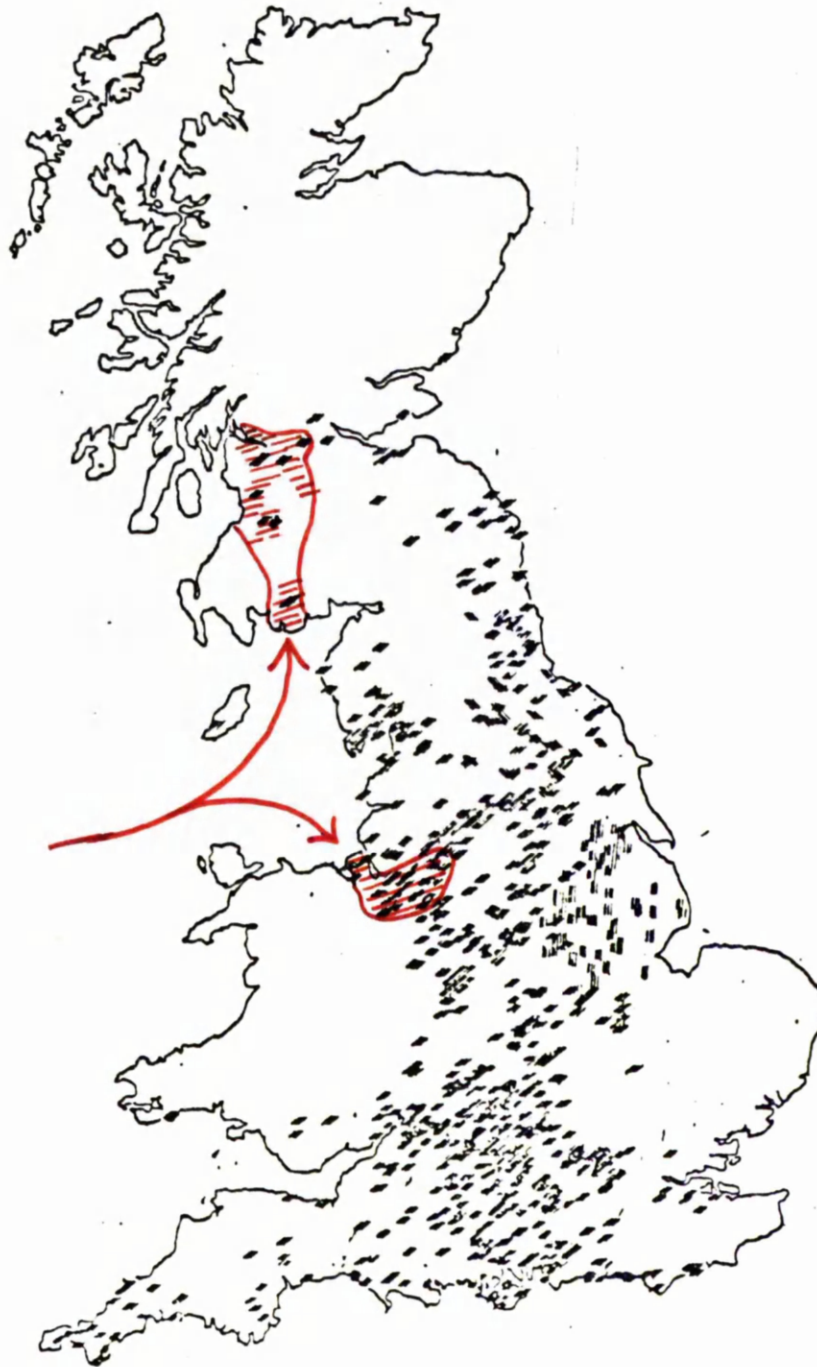
In the first place, Galloway in medieval times was a larger

MAP ELEVEN

THE SEASON OF THE PLAY

- = Hallowe'en
- = Christmas
and New Year
- = both seasons
- = not known





MAP TWELVE

The Tenth century Gaelic immigration, and the two areas in Britain where the folk play occurs between 31 October and 2 November.

Based on the map published by Cawte, Helm and Peacock in English Ritual Drama, p.32.

area than it is in the present day, and included at different times Ayrshire and parts of Renfrewshire.³⁷ In modern times, the Kyle district of Ayrshire was the home of the poet Robert Burns, whose work acquired a national status, and whose Ayrshire culture was thus granted wider currency. (One of his poems lists the practices of 'Hallowe'en'.) The third factor was the rise of Glasgow, on the northern fringe of the medieval Galloway. In its growth into the 'second city of the Empire', the city and its satellites became the home of 80% of the Scottish population and, despite the mix of cultures, the Glaswegian and Gaelic remained strong. When the conurbation began to disperse its population, they carried the Hallowe'en season with them. In two towns of the Borders there is evidence of this: in Selkirk^a the Hallowe'en season and the spelling 'Goloshan' betray a Strathclyde origin; at Jedburgh^b the informant volunteered the information that the change to the Hallowe'en season was the result of influence from Glasgow and the nearby towns of industrial Lanarkshire. These reports of Glaswegian cultural interference were made at the time the custom was about to decline; had it continued in strength it is highly probable that the Hallowe'en season would have spread further.

Around the Forth, and northwards, other Hallowe'en locations occur among those of midwinter. It is noticeable that there is a tendency for Hallowe'en to occur on the coast, and it may be that this is an effect of medieval settlement, where the stronger incomers ousted the Celts from the good land, and left them to make their living on the sea. Alternatively, Leven, in Fife, is a late report (1930), and may well be a post-Burns, ex-Glasgow pastime. Arbroath, to the north, is more debatable. It is well removed from the cultural influence of Strathclyde, and lies in the

territory already argued to have been reclaimed in the Middle Ages from the introduction of feudalism. Whereas Crieff, to the south, can be argued to be an heir to Normanisation, Arbroath may well be Anglo-Norman practice returned to a Celtic calendar.

3. Areas and Arenas

Many of the accounts of the modern folk play refer to the area or territory covered by the troupe. It has been suggested in this study that these territories were originally those belonging to the estate of the chief feudatory, or his local representative, and that the 'good luck' brought by the troupe would be visited upon the lands and livestock of the magnate, as well as upon him or herself. In this early phase, the troupe would be drawn from the estate, and the 'Plough Song', with its list of labourers, furnishes a good example of the kind of ceremonial performed outside the landowner's home, by his tenants. The same kind of visiting is perceptible in Reformation times with the midwinter visit to Lady Murray's house in Elgin in 1640,³⁸ and in modern times with the accounts of Abbotsford House, Selkirk^a, and Spottiswoode.

There are, of course, sound financial reasons for visiting the 'stately' homes of the district, for their occupants had the ability, and seemingly felt an obligation, to reward guisers liberally. This pattern of visiting is recorded most clearly at Newtown St Boswells^b, where the boys complemented the tour of the village with visits to 'neighbouring houses such as Eildon Hall, Whitehill, Brundenlaws, Bowden and Holmes'.

This balance of rich and poor seems to have been thought of as good practice, and several accounts speak of comprehensive visiting, throughout the community, though at this range it cannot

be determined whether this was undergone for pleasure, for reward however meagre, or out of an atavistic need to carry 'good luck' throughout the community. The Polwarth report seems an almost idealized progress down through the local community, from the Manse and the 'laird's big house', through farmhouse to the humble cottage. There is a touch of pride, perhaps, in the Melrose^b recollection of having played in all the houses, 'gentry and peasants'.

It was suggested in Chapter Three, 4, that traditional ceremonial such as the folk play was a valuable cement for community relations. There would clearly be a difference between rewarding the son of a poor neighbour, with whom the householder stood in some relationship, and giving money to youths whom one neither knew nor recognised. The distinction in reward between neighbour and stranger has been cited from Abbotsford House^b; it exists in a weakened form in the unloc. Berwicks^a account, where the householder, not trusting to recognise the labourers' children, especially in disguise, went to the lengths of asking for their surnames, and giving a larger reward to those known in the vicinity.

Such procedures became necessary when guisers travelled great distances. The Biggar troupes were known to visit neighbouring villages within a five mile radius, but the distinction of being the furthest-travelled troupe should go to Edrom, if the report can be believed, whose guisers played at Spottiswoode, fully fifteen miles to the west.

There is far less information about the territory covered by the urban troupes, and only the Falkirk^d account gives any detail. It is curious that reports of fighting between troupes, for ownership of territory, not uncommon in the English accounts, are unknown

in the Scottish corpus. One might suspect the situation to be different in the urban environment, but in the country at least troupes co-existed, sometimes (as for example at Abbotsford House) in great numbers, though at that location the infinite generosity of the host defused any potential rivalry.

There was no traditional 'stage' for the folk player. The older texts speak of removing implements of work (e.g. spinning wheels), but this may have been a symbolic rather than a real direction. In the 'Big Houses' it seems to have been rare for the guisers to be admitted to the drawing-rooms of the wealthy, and no doubt the flailing wooden swords and muddy boots were much of the reason. The Melrose^d account gives the 'servants' hall' as the location, and the drift of evidence is that the kitchen was in most cases the stage most suitable for its warmth, large size, stone floor, outside entrance, availability of bread and cheese for reward, and a common ground on which servants and family could congregate. Each of the two illustrations of the modern custom (unloc. Galloway Johnstone and the Carse Drawing) show the performance in such a room.

The urban guisers of the later nineteenth century had to compress their performance into the tenement rooms, as the Falkirk^f information reveals: 'The kitchen would be made full of neighbours, the youngest children watching from the top of the recessed bed'. Where the confines of the cottage or tenement made an indoors performance impossible, then the guisers performed in the street, 'around the doors' as at Prestonpans or occasionally, as in the Stirling^c, a formal outdoor performance would be given for the benefit of all the dwellers in a tenement block.

4. The Performers

The previous chapter set out the way in which the folk drama came to the young player as a result of the Reformation. A phrase like 'young player' usefully disguises a vagueness concerning the age of the boys concerned, for there was doubtless great variation from time to time, and from place to place. The lower age limit might have depended on whether there was an elder brother in the troupe, and younger sons might well have been useful walk-ons in the piece, especially if their demands on the night's rewards were less. The upper age limit was probably dictated by size and puberty: householders might be unwilling to admit burly, disguised strangers, especially those proposing to fight with weapons; from the youths' point of view, coming to (the threshold of) man's estate would be reason enough for putting away childish things, like guising.

The descent of the play to younger boys, and girls, has already been outlined in Chapter Two, 3. This descent can be taken as an indication of the lack of status that the pastime enjoyed, and it should be evident from this study that the guising dramas and dances were throughout their history performed by the tenants, the hired labourers, the servants, and their sons, so much so that when the custom emerged into public attention, the educated classes were unaware of the traditional term 'galoshan'.

There are two exceptions to this 'working class' cast for the folk play: Sir Walter Scott brushed with the custom when he was a boy (see Edinburgh^{ab}) but his ignorance of the term 'galoshan' in later life argues that the pastime was not part of his culture; the informant for Jedburgh^b was Provost, but his pride was in a family as well as a burgh tradition.

5. Costume and Disguise

The guiser's white overgarment is traditional in Scotland, and indeed in much of the British Isles, and parts of Europe. The earliest note of it in the folk drama area of Scotland is in the mocking remark made at the expense of the 'reformed' Edinburgh baillies of 1617:

I am persuaded that yf God and his angells at the last day should come downe in their whitest garments, they would run away and cry, "The Children of the Chappell are come againe to torment us".³⁹

In the nineteenth century, the boys found their white garments in the white shirts of their fathers, or white gowns of their mothers, in either case bound at the waist with a sash to hold the sword. The white 'sark' is noted early (at Traquair 1805) and continues throughout the century, declining in the women's gowns of various colours: at Glasgow^b c.1880, and disappearing with the nightshirts of Melrose c.1890.

These garments were generally unadorned (see Bowden), and the decorative energies of the guisers were directed on their headgear. The guiser's hat, particularly that of the combatant, seems to have been the totem of the custom. Its first note, at Traquair 1805, is to 'paper helmets', but thereafter we read of the 'fantastic caps' of Abbotsford House^a 1825, the high, paper hats of Falkirk^b, the mitre hats of Hawick^a, the cocked hats of Stirling^b and Peebles^a, and the kite-shaped hats of Earliston, with their fancy colours and fringes of paper.

The most illuminating of all the descriptions of this headgear comes in the Melrose and Peebles accounts. The Melrose^a c.1860 account states that 'Golashin wore a "Golashin-hat" made from gilt

wallpaper, rounded and gothic shaped, decorated with "gum-flowers" (imitation flowers) with a cock's feather stuck in the top'. The Peebles^a Galatian of c.1840 had 'a large cocked-hat of white paper, either cut out with little human profiles, or pasted over with penny valentines'. The Carse drawing (see Plate Five), of twenty years earlier, shows two versions of a broad-brimmed hat, decorated around its rim.

The Melrose and Peebles examples point towards a tradition of a special hat for the 'Golashan' character, and known by his name. The particularity appears to rest in the manner of its decoration. 'Penny Valentines', which I take to be akin to 'gum-flowers', and small, adhesive illustrations of flowers, birds, hearts and 'human profiles', suggest an amatory motif, and may well relate to one of the roles identified at the beginning of this chapter as belonging to Golashan, that of Lover. If this role is sought in the medieval antecedents discussed in Chapter Four, then his ancestor would be the Summer King, choosing the Earth Bride as his mate, in defiance of the Winter King.

Other versions of the guisers' headgear included the 'fools' hats' of Darnick^a c.1865, remembered as being a foot high, and fringed with coloured paper, and the 'slouch hats' of Hawick^c c.1870. These last had feathers as decoration, and the cocked hats of Stirling^b c.1880 had paper plumes.

A style of dress that was as widespread in Europe as the white overgarment, and yet rare in Scotland, was the wearing of reflecting material, for example, glass, mirror and silver paper. The clearest description of this is Scott's Abbotsford House^b account, where the boys are 'all disguised like chimney sweeps on the first of May with such scraps of gilt paper and similar trumpery which

they have collected for months before'. Maybe the labour and preparation required made this a neglected tradition, and it may have survived vestigially in the badges of the Benbows, Admirals, and Bold Sailors who, as at Galashiels^b, wore 'a star on his breast'.

Two other traditions of dress competed with the white overgarment. One of these, known as 'Rags and Tatters' in parts of north-east England, requires the wearing of old clothing. It made its appearance towards the end of the century, and is recorded at Crieff^b 1884, in Hawick^c of about the same period, and in Biggar^b c.1900. The last style to manifest itself was the 'theatrical' manner of dressing up to suit the character, noted at Peebles^a c.1840 in a slight way, but more comprehensively at Falkirk from 1895, Balmaghie in 1897, and at Helensburgh c.1900.

The periods of popularity of these three styles make it clear that the white overgarment is the most ancient and traditional fashion, and that the 'theatrical' style the most recent, and a patent sign that the significance of the custom had been entirely lost. The 'Rags and Tatters' fashion is the least easy to explain. The most reasonable explanation is stimulated by the information attached to Glasgow^c, where the boys are described as wearing 'humble' costume. At a period when the play custom was seen by performer and spectator as a vehicle for begging, it may have seemed appropriate to the actor to look as needy as possible, and to dress in a pauper's rags.


There is of course one character in the play who is an exception to this summary of costume. One way of describing the doctor's dress is to say that he was the first of the 'theatrical' costumes for, throughout most of the period of the modern play, he

contrived to appear in top hat and morning coat (or some close cousin). The earliest description of this costume comes in Peebles^a, of 1840; two accounts, both early, offer variants on this stereotype: unloc. Galloway MacTaggart (1823) has Beelzebub as the doctor, healing with his club; Glasgow^a, of unknown date but possibly early nineteenth century, dresses the doctor in the white shirt and sash, and equips him with a rod. The significance of these two early reports will emerge in the subsequent discussion of the cure.

An important part of the disguising was the covering of the face. Blacking the face is noted early; at Bowden 1815 the writer includes dark blue in the face make-up, but at Abbotsford House 1825 the comparison with chimney-sweeps points at soot or burnt cork as the commodity. Like the white overgarment, the blackening of the face is widespread in folk ceremonial, in Scotland from Ballater and Arbroath to Balmaghie and Jedburgh, in Britain, and in Europe.

Its purpose is ambiguous. At the most obvious level, it is the cheapest and quickest way of disguising one's identity, and that was important for the guiser. In the theatrical sense, it represented a black man, and if this is an error of interpretation, then it came about early in the Scottish tradition, for the 'Droich' of the 'Robin Hood Calling' (see Chapter Five, 3) describes himself in the Asloan version as a 'Soldane out of Seriland' (a Sultan from the land of Syria), and in the Bannatyne version as a 'sargeand out of Sowdown land' (a sergeant from the lands of the Sultan).

I believe that this error led to the Turkish Knights and Black Princes of the modern folk play, and that the original impulse for the blackened skin related to the notion that the black man was sexually more vigorous than the white, and that the brown-

skinned King of Summer was a more deserving suitor for the Earth Bride than the pallid King of Winter.⁴⁰ The confusion with the Moslem warriors of the modern folk play could have been compounded by the scimitars,  that they carried, for these were crescent shapes, and therefore fertility images.

White faces occur in two accounts: Peggy at Balmaghie has a white face, and Johnny Funny, the young clown at Blantyre a floured face; the rarity of this disguise makes it impossible to judge whether it relates to the Winter Queen, or Crone, whether it is an imitation of clown make-up, or whether it was a random innovation.

There was, of course, another manner of disguising the face. The wearing of masks is an ancient practice in Scottish guising. There may once have been a distinction between disguising (= the concealment of self) and guising (= the impersonation of other), and it may have been apparent in the choice of the visor, which covered the face, or the mask or 'false face', worn in order to assume another identity.

If there was such a distinction, it was soon lost. Among the early records, Aberdeen women in 1605 were warned against being 'maskit and digysit',⁴¹ and the Elgin sword-dance of 1623 was performed by men with 'maskis and wissoris on their faces'.⁴² In neither reference does the writer seem to be making a distinction between two types of face-cover.

In the modern accounts of the folk play, the two types do occur. In the unloc. Stirlingshire account, the players wore paper visors, and at Balmaghie black masks, sometimes with stylised decoration. The Falkirk^b 1825 account refers to the preference for

masks with crooked horns or beards, but implies that this was ^a practice only in the town; the rural difference, if any, is undisclosed. The weight of the evidence is that the earlier practice was to black the face, especially in the Border area; the use of the mask seems to have been a later development, or at the most, a lesser tradition.

Before closing on the matter of the guisers' costume and disguise, the importance of its effectiveness should be mentioned. In other parts of Britain, great importance was attached to being unrecognisable, much in the manner of our contemporary attitude to the men who disguise themselves as Father Christmas. Curiously, only two accounts refer to this, neither of them early. In the Hurlet player's words: 'We had to disguise ourselves as much as possible with clothes, also our manner of speaking, so as to deceive the people in the houses'. In the unloc. Galloway Niall account: 'One of the things that provided great amusement was identifying the players. Anyone who got away without being identified was very proud of himself'.

This need for anonymity is, I believe, ancient, and points to the 'cosmic empathy' of the Summer/Winter combat, where the guiser 'is' rather than 'represents' the natural forces. It is a world away from theatre, where part of the pleasure is in recognising the performer, and admiring the skill of the impersonation, rather than contemplating the thing impersonated. It is in opposition to the matter of rewarding the tenants and strangers differently, as at Abbotsford House^b, and it may be that the 'feudalism' of the Scottish pastime has warred on the guisers' need for anonymity.

6. The Play Performed

Said, Sung and Acted

This heading is taken from the description of the performance in the unloc. Angus account, and almost matches the mode of performance Sir Walter Scott saw at Abbotsford House^b, where the children were said to 'recite verses sing songs . . . and recite or act little dramatic pieces'.

The extent of the sung element is not easy to gauge. The Bowden 1815 report begins with a singing guiser who, if the text can be taken literally, is prologue to a sung entertainment:

Redd room, and redd room
And gies room to sing
We'll shew ye the best sport
Acted at Christmas time.

Many of the accounts specify that the resurrected guiser sings his gratitude to the Doctor, and his professions of friendship to the other combatant. Equally clearly, the doctor's episode could not be sung, at least not the short dialogue exchanges concerning the fee and his qualifications. The early Traquair report (1805) says that the play was acted.

From the performers' point of view, a tune for the words would be a valuable aid to memory, and also a carapace of form to shield them from the self-consciousness of a dramatic performance. Scott's description of the 'merry masquers' in 'Marmion' (quoted under Edinburgh^a) though unflattering, is illuminating:

If unmelodious was the song
It was a hearty note, and strong.

Numerous accounts testify that the guisers' voices were 'strong', and to be 'unmelodious' was no great crime. Perhaps the effect

was rather that of doggerel chanting at maximum volume, 'roared like a battle slogan', in the words of the Jedburgh^c informant.

Of the traditions collected in this study, only Prestonpans (which see) includes a tune. In the matter of the sung text, the recent (post 1979) research by Emily Lyle will turn a new page in the study of this tradition.⁴³

Making an Entrance

At Hawick^e, the performance of the play depended on a welcoming answer to the First Man's request, 'Will ee let oo ack?' (will you let us act), a predictable and proper overture for boys who wish to perform the folk play for money. There is a most revealing difference between this beginning, c.1880, and the fashion in the same town a half-century earlier, found in the information for Hawick^a:

The first of the five had to be a 'ferritsome' lad, as he had the doors to open and begin the play. He often got a reception as rude as his own entrance had been, and had many a time to rush out more eagerly than he had dared to enter in.

In other words, the guiser entered the house uninvited, and began the performance unasked. This is the authentic and traditional invasion of the guiser.⁴⁴ the bringers of fertility and fortune are not to stand on the threshold and timidly ask for permission to enter; they are rather the possessors of the Life Force, and temporarily above human laws and civil manners. That half-century in Hawick spanned the decline from the relic of the 'luck-bringer' to the advent of the 'money-collector'.

Only one other Scottish location records this ancient mode of entry: the Helensburgh account of c.1900 states that the boys

'practice was to go "round the doors" lifting up the sneck [latch] and walking in'. Unlike the boys of Hawick^a, 'they were never refused entry'.

The survey of medieval folk drama in Scotland in Chapter Five provided an excellent example of this traditional entry. In the 'Robin Hood Crying' (printed in Appendix Five), the 'Droich' is introducing a Robin Hood play. He begins by irrupting into the audience, noisily and unexpectedly:

Harry, harry, hobillschowe!

Se quha is commyn nowe,

But I wait nevir howe

With the quhorle wynd?

Later lines reinforce the idea of his arriving in the audience's midst, violent, noisy but not dangerous:

Quha is commyn heir, bot I

A bauld bustuoss bellamy

At your corss to make a cry

With a hie sounne?

Two other entry rituals are noted. At Forfar, 'when guisers called, they said "Onything for the guisers?" The correct reply was, "Nothing but a red-hot poker". At Balmaghie

the practice was for all except the Doctor to enter the kitchen. One being asked 'What do you want?' they would reply by singing 'Gentle Annie' or any other song, before beginning the dialogue.

The opening lines of the text occasionally preserve reference to traditional activity of the first-comer. At Cumnock, the first speech commands,

Stir up the fire and give us light

For in this house there'll be a fight.

At Falkirk^f, Talking Man 'picks up the poker and suits the action to the words' as he says,

Stir up the fire be on your mettle

For in this house will be a battle.

In these cases, the 'stir' given to the fire is only one part of the general stir of warmth, liveliness and welcome that the guisers generate. The thought is several centuries old; it occurs in a carol found in a group of Welsh poems written down c.1500,

Mende the fyre, and make gud chere

Fyll the cuppe, Ser Botelere.⁴⁵

Bowden and Kilsyth preserve another ancient and widespread tradition where a guiser begins by sweeping the playing area. At Bowden, the action is accompanied with the line,

Redd up rocks redd up reels,

and this, coupled with the description of the player as 'a servant', makes for a simple matter of clearing and tidying the acting area. Kilsyth may glance back at the earlier tradition for there the play 'began by the entrance of an old wife, who, with her besom, swept out the floor and retired'. I take this crone to be a surviving beldam from the May games.

The entrance made, and the introduction spoken, the play moves without delay to the combat.

The Combat

The vigour and liveliness shown by the First Man is exceeded by the combatants, whose physical bearing, boldness of voice, vaunts and threats are, or should be, of the highest order, in the language of the reporters 'fiercely' (Arbroath); 'blustering, boastful'

(unloc. Roxburghs); 'roared like a battle slogan' (Jedburgh^d). Though this style may well suit the boastful soldier of comedy, I prefer to ascribe it to the archetypal battle of Winter and Summer, as belonging to those kings who had the power to bind the living earth to their rule.

Winter and Summer, as combatants, faded from the folk play in the sixteenth century, if not before, and were replaced by champions more acceptable to the religious authorities. In England St. George was an admirable substitute: for the Church he was a Christian saint; for the civil government he was the national patron saint; for the people he was by legend a dragon-slayer, and since the dragon was a winter symbol, this deed made him a Summer King.

In Scotland, one of the chief roles was given to Alexander. This is and was a very popular first name in Scotland, noticeably so in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when its popularity was secured by three kings of that name, who reigned from 1107 - 1124, and 1214 - 1286. The Alexander of the Scottish play is not a king, however, but 'Alexander the Great of Macedon', an inspired choice in that he alone of all generals could match the boast of Summer and Winter of conquering all the known world.⁴⁶ If the change of name was made in the thirteenth century, as the kings' name would suggest, then the Normanisation of Scotland plays another part in this study: for the knights of the later Middle Ages Alexander the Great was both the flower of soldiery and chivalry.⁴⁷ Thus Alexander satisfied the popular, civil and patriotic requirements, and his place in antiquity freed him from entanglement with the Church.

He became the basis for variation. The classical hero appeared as Hector, and Caesar (at Traquair). The conqueror was updated to

Napoleon, and localised to Robert the Bruce, Sir William Wallace, Graham, Douglas, Menteith, and Galgacus. The influx of Hanoverians (King George of Macedonia, Prince George, and King George IV) were probably the outcome of St. George, patriotism and English chapbooks. The warrior could be unnamed, like the 'General' of Balmaghie, or sea-going, like Bol Bendo (Bold Benbow), the Admiral, and Blue Sailor, and although these sailors might be encouraged by sea-going relatives of the guisers, or pride in the Royal Navy, the black or tarry skins of these 'Jack Tars' might relate to the black-faced warriors mentioned above. Of the remaining heroes, 'Buckteeth' of Wishaw is a humorous variant for 'Mentieth', and 'Farmer's Son' the popular, local hero of the country districts.

There is a textual reminder, even in the ferocity of the vaunts, that the activity is regarded by its performers as a 'game', for one combatant will vow 'to win the game' and his opponent answer

The game, sir, the game, sir is not within your power! The early Bowden report is titled 'The Game of Guisarts'. This should be taken to demonstrate that the boys regarded the 'Galoshans' as one of the year's pastimes, like others of a semi-dramatic nature, but not 'theatre'. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the change of attitude that brought in 'theatrical' costume enabled the correspondent for the Glasgow^b report to describe the activity as 'play-acting'.

There was much variation in the style of the combat. Stirling^c had 'a stately exchange of blows rather than an exhibition of fencing'. At Cumnock and Glasgow^b, the combatants struck their swords three

times upward and once downward, a pattern they had learned from the popular theatre of the day, according to the Glaswegian account. Other pairs showed more improvisation, as perhaps in the 'hash smash' of Falkirk^b.

The death, at Arbroath the wounding, of one of the combatants quickly brings about changes. It has already been pointed out that Galoshan becomes 'Jack' during the combat or after the resurrection. The manner of the victor switches suddenly from direst cruelty to compassion and lament. He discovers his victim to be a kind of brother: at Falkirk^b the appropriate dialogue is

Down Jack! Down to the ground you must go -

Oh O! What's this I've done?

I've killed my brother Jack, my father's only son!

Call upon the doctor.

The recognition of the 'brother' I take to be another illustration of the archetypal combat of the Kings of Winter and Summer, a pair of brother kings who shared the kingdom of the earth for six monthly terms.

In two of the Scottish plays, the victor improbably denies responsibility for the death. These two (unloc. Angus and Peebles^a) resemble the scenario of some of the sword-dance dramas of north-east England⁴⁸ and elsewhere, where the unwillingness of the individual to accept the blame for the killing has been related to the community killing a 'scape-goat'.

The lamentation over the death, however, is swiftly followed by the call for a doctor, whose appearance sets in train the second part of the drama, the resurrection.

The Doctor and the Cure

The doctor's episode is the central action of the play and it is worth noting, at the outset, how distinctive the passage is. It is a prose passage in an otherwise versified text, and the freedom from rhyme assists a variation in text and action; its central character, the doctor, has already been shown to differ from the rest of the players in the style of his costume, and the same apartness is evident in three of the Gazetteer accounts: at Balmaghie, all except the doctor enter the room at the beginning; in the unloc. Perthshire version, the six strike their sticks together before the doctor is called to the scene; in the Crieff^A account, the Doctor is the only survivor of the tradition, still wearing much of the recognised costume, with a staff attached to his coat, leading the festivity with his fiddle.

In my view, this Crieff relic preserves the original role of the doctor, which was to promote festivity. This rejoicing followed his action, which was to raise the Summer King, or the recumbent cult animal, and restore them to the full vigour of their strength and sexual vitality. Reflections of this primal role are perceptible in the rare glimpses of this character in medieval times.

The best of these comes in a fifteenth-century miracle play, believed to originate in the East Midlands of England. It is an anti-Semitic piece, a story of some Jews divinely punished for their contempt for the theory of transubstantiation. An episode with a doctor is interpolated into the play, introduced by the doctor's comic servant 'Colle', who vaunts his master's skill in lines reminiscent of the 'Galoshan' text in its alliteration, veterinary colouring, and sexually-transmitted diseases:

What hath the canker, the colick, or the lax,

The terciar, the quartan, or the burning aches,
 For worms, for gnawing, grinding in the womb or in the
 boldiro . . . 49

Almost immediately, the doctor's offer to help is refused, and he leaves the play. That he is given this brief and purposeless 'guest' appearance is a sign of his popularity with the fifteenth-century audience. That the Christian propagandist shows him offering help to the Jews indicates the distaste with which Christians viewed a character who mimicked Jesus in raising the dead. Further illumination comes from this item. The doctor is called 'Mayster Brendyche of Braban' (Brabant); Brabant baths were believed to spread syphilis,⁵⁰ and the doctor's name may be read as 'burned itch', or perhaps 'burned dick', though the use of 'dick' for 'penis' is not recorded before the nineteenth century.⁵¹ This theme is rejoined below.

The only Scottish notice is the record of the monarch's payment in 1506 for a doctor's gown, hood and hose for his Fool, John Bute, who was accompanied by his man 'Spark'.⁵² My grounds for recognising him as a doctor of 'physic' (rather than Divinity) lie mainly in this subsidiary companion. Though no such character appears in the modern Scottish play texts, elsewhere in Britain (for example, the Cotswolds) the comedy between the doctor and his man forms one of the major attractions of the performance.⁵³ 'Spark' would be a suitable name for an over-lively serving man who, like 'Colle' of almost the same period, was ever something between a hindrance and a help.

These two medieval precursors of the folk play doctor offer solid support to the theory that the role belonged to the 'revel-

maker', or Fool, for 'Mayster Brendyche' is a comic doctor, and John Bute is a Fool, given doctor's clothing. The function of the cure is to bring rejoicing where there was lamentation, and joy where there was misery. Accordingly, amongst the ailments that the Scottish folk play doctors volunteer to cure are griefs of the mind. The Bowden doctor can cure 'the maligrumphs', defined as bad temper, spleen, or sulking, and 'the blaes' - sometimes the 'blue devils', or the blues, depression, especially in connection with delirium tremens. Elsewhere, the doctor offers to cure 'mallincholy', or 'melancholia'.⁵⁴

The second function of the 'Doctor as Fool' was to restore the regenerative capacity of the world with the coming of summer, an aim first observed in this study with the actions of Priest John at Inverkeithing (see Chapter Four, 4). The Bowden doctor vaunts a cure for 'the burning pintle' ('pintle' is an archaic term for 'penis'), and 'pip', which was both roup in poultry and a slang word for syphilis. The doctors of the unloc. Abbotsford Collection^{ab} can cure the 'pox' and the 'clap' (i.e. gonorrhoea). Many of the texts have a variation on 'root', 'rot', 'rotting of snout', or 'broken snout', with its double meaning of 'sheep rot', and 'the disfigurement brought about by venereal disease'.

More general claims for sexual regeneration are made in respect of women. The claims to make a woman of sixty like one of sixteen (Peebles^a), or to 'gar an old woman of seventy look as gay as a young woman of sixteen' (Stirling^a) probably derive from the Summer and Winter Queen drama (see Chapter Four, 4), where the crone of Winter dies to be reborn as the Bride of Summer.⁵⁵

To examine the manner in which laughter and sexual energy was

regenerated, we turn to the cures employed. It is a reasonable hypothesis that the King of Summer would be revived by Spring weather, that is, sunshine and showers. No 'sunshine' remedy has come to my attention in the Scottish texts (although in England some instances of doctors giving 'sun discs' in the form of yellow pills are noted); rain, however, may well be apparent, in two forms.

The most common name for the doctor in Scotland is Brown. Indeed, his practice is interrupted only by Dr Jones of Edinburgh^c, the 'Greek Doctor' of Quothquan, and Dr Gore of unloc. East Lothian. 'Brown' may simply be chosen for its rhyme with 'town', but if it has any deeper significance, it may lie in its possible derivation from the Anglo-Norman bruin (= cloud), and bruine (= rain).⁵⁶ It may be believed that revivifying ceremonies in the May Games, where the 'Droich' (see Chapter Five, 2) squirts water over the celebrants, may well have been modified when the custom was moved to midwinter. Finally, in this connection, the name of the seventeenth-century Relapse doctor, Dr Syringe, might preserve the name of the instrument used for squirting liquid (see below, in the passage on 'hole in the back').

The medicament is a liquid (except for the 'magic snuff' at Innerleithen), and for the majority of cases applied externally, in two drops (three at Quothquan). The points of application are 'brow and eyes', 'nose and bum', 'nose and chin', 'nose and toes', 'nose and thumb', 'head and bum', and 'back and head'. On analysis, this list reveals itself as variations on 'nose' (e.g. brow, chin) and 'bum' (e.g. thumb, back, toes).

Each of these features is sexually symbolic. The hooked noses and pointed chins of the Commedia dell'Arte masks are thought to have

had phallic significance,⁵⁷ and modern folklore popularly equates the length of the nose with the sex organ. The 'bum' or anus serves for the female sex symbol. In this respect it appears in the doctor's vaunts as the 'rumpel-grane', where 'rumpel' = 'rump',¹⁷ and 'grane' = 'division',¹⁶ in company with promises to cure the 'rumelgumption in an old man's belly' (unloc. Abbotsford Coll.^a). Elsewhere this promise is made for 'the rumplegumption of the big toe' (Hawick^a), and 'of a man seven years in his grave' (Peebles^a). 'Gumption', a word of obscure origin,⁵¹ has a general sense of shrewdness, common-sense.

In summary, the doctor is applying his remedy to the emblems of the male and female sex organs, repairing the 'rotting of snout' and restoring the 'rump-ability' of the crone to that of a 'woman of sixteen'. This promise of sexual regeneration and joyfulness is found at its most complete in the garbled verse of the early text given under unloc. Abbotsford Collection^a:

I can cure the pox and the blue Devils
 The rumelgumption in an old man's belly
 The rumpel-grane and the Brandy-whirls (= writhings from
 And can raise the man fresh and hale excess of Brandy)
 That had lain seven year in his grave.

 . . . now I'll put a little to his nose
 And a little to his Dum

The liquid is called 'inker-pinker', 'inky-pinky' and 'eensky-peensky-pansky-po'. The only explanation offered for this name is that of eighteenth-century small beer (Stirling^a). 'Inky-pinky' in all probability prompted 'the magical touch of my little finger'

(Peebles^a), from the use of 'pinky' for 'little finger'. The true origin of this medicine, however, is to be sought through the details of the cure from Quothquan, a version which dates from c.1840, and which was noted by a man who had performed in the role of 'the Greek Doctor' in the village. There the boast is that he

can make an old woman o' three score look like ane o'
 sixteen, by giving her three drops of my Juniper ink,
 tine and horn which is commonly called the ram's horn.

Here the translation of crone into nymph is made with the aid of the 'ram's horn' (which is obscure but may have some phallic significance) and the 'Juniper ink'. 'Juniper' I take to be a reference to the fruit base for the making of gin. Of more interest is the straight forward use of ink, which was presumably Indian, or China, ink, originally lamp-black mixed with size or glue, and rubbed down in water for use.

With this detail, the picture of the sexual regeneration cure is now complete -- the 'Fool-as-Doctor' applied black, the colour of fertility and rebirth,⁵⁸ to the male and female sex organs. It is possible that this cure may have given rise to the black-faced guiser in the role of the resurrected man, for several performances of the drama would have brought about this result.

There is a second cure in the folk play, of which there only survive hints and echoes. The curiosity of the 'hole in the back' of which the resurrected man complains in some of the older texts, has already been touched upon in Chapter Six, 6, but it reappears here as the reminder of a cure at least as venerable as the one already discussed. It is spoken of at Crieff^b, Falkirk^b, Peebles^a, Bowden and (vestigially) Helensburgh, always in terms of its large size, that the doctor's fist or tongue could be turned round ten

times in it, that a coach and four could be driven through it, or that it could hold three horses' heads. Anatomical detail is added at Bowden, where the hole is said to be in the lumbar region of the back, and at Helensburgh, where it is in the loins.

These last two details persuade me that this obscure detail of the cure belongs with the 'rumpel-grane', or anal, activity, and the point at issue is to discover how this large hole, or enlarged orifice, has been created.

To begin the explanation, we should look first at a nineteenth-century record of an Irish wake-game that shared the theme of the 'Galoshan' play. The combat between the two heroes has ended with the apparent death of one, and his fall is lamented with the proper degree of grief and ceremony until the mood is changed:

It was then suggested that the prostrate man was not dead, and an herb-doctor, arrayed with white flowing beard, carrying a huge bundle of herbs, was led in, and went through sundry strange incantations. The fallen man then came to life.⁵⁹

In my view, the 'huge bundle of herbs' carried by the doctor is not the sign of a 'herb-doctor', for they tended not to carry huge bundles, nor to cure by 'sundry strange incantations'. It is rather a substitute for the 'living bough', already noted as the symbol of the Green Man (see Plate Two), and carried on the shoulder like a club. It is an important etymological point that the word 'wand' derives from a Scandinavian word for 'the living shoot of a tree',⁶⁰ and this same word is used for the doctor's instrument of cure at Bowden:

and immediately he touches him with a small rod or wand, orders him to rise up, Jack.

The others are re-animated with a touch of the wand,
and instantly spring up, all except Poor Jack, who rises
slowly and complaining of a severe pain, in the lumber
regions of his back.

The only other instance of this cure is found in another early text,
that of Glasgow^a, where the Doctor carried a rod, which he used to
resuscitate Galatian.

It is clear from the descriptions that the 'living bough' has
shrunk to a mere stick, but the regenerating strength of the 'green
wood' symbol has survived into modern times in these two early texts.

The argument is advanced to a different stage by consideration
of a second metamorphosis of the 'living tree'. In Chapter Four, 4,
it was noted that the living trees that the Wildman and Woodwose
uprooted were used for fighting as well as house-building. In the
first use they were also therefore 'clubs', and this second line of
development is illuminating, for the character in the modern play
that carries the club is, of course, Beelzebub, and it will be
necessary to digress from the cure at this point to discuss this
character's ancestry.

The presence of this Old Testament god of the Philistines
(2 Kings 1:2) has never been explained, even in the more general
application of the name to mean 'Satan or any devil or demon'.⁵¹ My
own explanation is that the name, in earlier form 'Belzebub', was
created in the seventeenth century from the popular description
of a folk fool. In the manner of folk name-calling discussed at
the beginning of this chapter, the name is made up of the obvious
and inseparable elements of his costume, his bells and his club,
or 'bauble'. Two lines from a ? c.1540 poem, 'The thrie Tailles
of the thrie Priests of Peblis', make it clear that these

accoutrements were inseparable from the sixteenth-century Scottish

Fool:

Unto the kirk he came befoir the king,
With club and cote, and mory bel to ring.⁶¹

Such a figure amongst the guisers might well be known as 'bells and bauble', later corrupted to Belsnbaub(le), and with the printing of the chapbook, 'corrected' to Beelzebub.

More will be written about Beelzebub in the discussion of the end-play. It is sufficient at this point to link the character with the Fool and his club. This instrument has been noted in Chapter Four, 4, as a phallic item, and thus it associates itself with the regenerative power of the 'living branch' of the Green Man. It also appears in the modern versions of the folk play as the Doctor's instrument of resurrection, and if its appearance is ambiguous, then that must be expected for the representation, and the description of the representation, of the application of the phallus, the male symbol, to the anus, the female symbol. Such a description is given by Rossiter in his account of an early-twentieth century folk play in Gloucestershire when he says of the cure that 'the club was poked into the corpse in a way that struck me as improbable even in doctors'.⁶²

No parallel description is found in the Scottish corpus, and the only appearance of Beelzebub as the doctor is in the unloc. Galloway MacTaggart account. Here, however, the club is the healing instrument:

What can you cure?

(Belzebub answereth -)

All disorders to be sure,
The gravel and the gout,
The rotting of the snout;

.

Cut off legs and arms

Join them too again

By the virtue of my club.

The researcher is entitled to feel more disappointment than surprise in finding so little record of this symbolic act of copulation, either in the modern folk play, or in its medieval antecedents. What glimmers there are tend to remain with the animal cults. In the 'Plough Song', the dead ox was revived by being 'brodded', and whilst this action is representing the goading of the animal into action, it is interesting to note the use of the word 'wand' at the resurrection moment of the ceremony:

the gad wand is both light and sharp

To brod his belly while he start, hey. (Appendix 11.59-60)

To find support for the same mode of revival in the Horse cult, one could look as far afield as the conspicuous "'Obby 'Oss" custom of Padstow in Cornwall, where a horse-guiser is the leading totem of a Spring festival. The 'Obby 'Oss dances through the streets, occasionally collapsing as from fatigue, and being revived by his 'Teaser', who dances with him, carrying the ceremonial club: in this repeated action it is possible to see the relics of a 'death and resurrection' action. If one were to look for a Scottish parallel to this, one would look in vain, for the St. Obert Riding of Perth (see Chapter Four, 2), the most likely source, has so few details.

If, as I believe, a prominent action of the Doctor-as-Fool was to apply the phallic club in this symbolic manner, then this would provide the original reason or purpose for the 'hole in the

back'. It is possible also to discern another, later, justification. In many English versions of the folk play, the dead combat hero is brought back to life by the extraction of a tooth. For this cure, the doctor has frequently to enlist the whole team of mummers, for the tooth is of huge size, and has a lengthy root.

A sixteenth-century Commedia text, called 'Zanni at the teeth-puller',⁶³ though geographically removed, is textually remarkably close to the British folk play. The scene begins with the doctor boasting of his skill gained with conversations with foreigners, and of the power of his elixir, which he claims will give an old woman large breasts and a fertile womb. The Zanni enters, complaining about his toothache, and the length of the tooth's root, which he says grows so deeply that it would be easier to extract it through his anus, with the help of clysters, than through his mouth. The Doctor compromises by making the extraction through the Zanni's stomach.

The most likely interpretation of the 'tooth-pulling' episode is that it represents a medieval variant of the indecent action with the phallic club. When the insertion and extraction of the Fool's phallic club became too indecent an act to perform, the folk players had to find a substitute item to extract. The farcical tooth-extraction might well have belonged to the time when the role of Healer was being transferred from the Fool to the Doctor. I theorise that originally the tooth was extracted from the anus, later from the stomach, and finally from the mouth. The original of the extraction would have left the empty space, and this would have been the subject of the revived combatant's complaint. When the action had to be abandoned, the retention of the words of complaint would have served, for a generation or so,

to remind the onlooker of the rough comedy.

In conclusion, therefore, the original cures of the folk play were sexual, and involved the smearing of black, the colour of regeneration, on the symbols of the male and female sex organs, or the symbolic act of copulation with the Green Man's living bough, or the Fool's phallus-substitute.

It is a curiosity of the folk play text that the resurrected hero is called 'Jack', no matter how grand a title he enjoyed before combat. Indeed the Falkirk^b 1825 text begins the translation at the point when the 'great King of Macedon' is gaining the mastery over the still-fighting Calgacus:

Down Jack! Down to the ground you must go --

Oh O! What's this I've done?

I've killed my brother Jack, my father's only son!

After the cure, the Doctor's command is, 'Jack, start to your feet and stand!'

The name 'Jack' is widespread in folk play. In England, troupes of mummers take the name (e.g. 'Plough Jacks', 'Jolly Jacks'), and several individual characters, usually Fools, incorporate it into their title (e.g. 'Farmer Jack', 'Jack Finney'). The references to the *Commedia dell'Arte* have included 'Zanni', a Venetian corruption of 'Giovanni'⁵² that spread the name of this particular Fool until, as 'zany', it has entered the language to refer to clown-like behaviour.

The change of name remains unexplained, for the erstwhile brother-king and combatant does not become a 'Fool' after the resurrection. In the light of the 'hole in back' enquiry, it would appear that the resurrection of the hero has retained some elements from the revival of the zanni.

Once the cure has taken effect, the Falkirk^b injunction to 'start to your feet' is obeyed, and the revived man demonstrates the full return of his vigour. At Bowden, for example, 'the others are re-animated with a touch of the wand, and instantly spring up'. The same degree of healing has been exercised on the combatant's mind, for in place of the murderous intent has come sorrow, forgiveness and a wish to be re-united with his 'brother' and indeed with all men:

Oh brother! Oh brother! why didst thou me kill?

I never would have thought that you my precious
blood would spill.

But since we're all revived again

We'll all shake hands and 'gree --

We'll all shake hands and 'gree;

And we'll never fight no more,

And we will be like brothers,

As we were once before. (Hawick^a)

The Broom-Bearers

With the reconciliation of the combatants the action of the drama comes to an end; the text, however, continues. The final phase is made up by a miscellany of characters who enter merely to recite their verses and assist in the *quête* (or collection)⁶⁴. There can be no doubting the former significance of these characters, powerful enough to compel their inclusion in the modern version, even though the compiler could find no place for them in the action. From the point of view of the performer, the characters were a positive disadvantage, for they prolonged,

and therefore decreased the number of, the performances, thereby diminishing the collection while increasing the beneficiaries from it.

In my view, these characters are relics from earlier ages of the folk play, figures whose action and dialogue have been lost, but whose presence in the annual pastime was, at the time of the modern compilation, considered indispensable, and who have therefore been fitted out with suitable verses, and attached to the combat drama. This view of these characters is different from that strongly canvassed by Dean-Smith, in which she sees British folk plays as the wreckage of an archetypal 'Life Cycle' drama.⁶⁵ This scenario would have included the conception, birth and growing to manhood of the hero, his fight for his lover, his death and resurrection. The models for this comprehensive metaphor for regeneration were noted by British scholars in the Balkans in the early years of this century -- the 'continental analogues' referred to in the first chapter. I prefer to see the modern folk play as the descendant of the pre-Reformation folk play forms discussed in Chapter Four, and to view the 'stray characters' as relics of other pastimes and seasons, agglomerated with the combat action at some point in the seventeenth century by a compiler of the fragments left of popular pastime at the Restoration.

If this view is correct, then the image of the modern folk play as a decayed 'Life Cycle' drama would be a delusion brought about by a compilation brought together for the first time at the dawn of the modern period. Nevertheless, in the following discussion of these characters, it will be noted that they in some cases originated in birth and marriage actions, and it would

be helpful at this point to refer to a conspicuous survival of such a scenario in the British folk play.

The tradition in question is that centred on the Lindsey area of Lincolnshire, where the folk play features an action in which the crone Dame Jane presents the young hero with a baby she claims to be his, with the demand that he acknowledge his fatherhood by becoming her husband. He decides instead to heed the Recruiting Sergeant, and enlist for the army. Below the surface of this drama lie the new-born, the New Year symbol noted in connection with Robin Hood (in Chapter Five), and the crone who alternates with the nymph (or Maiden) in the Summer and Winter legend; it is these archetypes that underlie the first set of characters to be discussed.

The antecedents of these characters were introduced into this study in Chapter Four, 4, in the passage on medieval Maying ceremonies, where notice was taken of the crone or Winter Queen, and the progress of the living bough of the Green Man's consort, first into the 'summer tree' or maypole, and subsequently into the broom or besom.

These two occur together at Kilsyth, where the play was begun 'by the entrance of an old wife, who, with her besom, swept out the floor and retired'. The action of sweeping I take to be a rationalisation of the carrying of the emblem, related to the need for an uncluttered space for the performers. At Balmaghie, the cast included 'Peggy' and 'Wean' and, although these two had no surviving action or text, their appearance strongly echoes the Dame Jane and her baby of the Lincolnshire play; 'Peggy' wore an ankle-length dress and an old mutch, and carried an old umbrella, while 'Wean' wore a small frock and a be-ribboned hat. Both of them had whitened faces, a very rare feature in the folk play,

and perhaps a reminder of their 'Winter' aspect. Two other 'children' are found in the Scottish corpus: in Biggar^a 'Wee Yin' has some of the presenter's lines; at Bowden, 'Boy' has grown into the ranks of the combatants, and kills St. George.

The 'crone' is thus plainly evident, the 'nymph' or 'Maiden' less so. The discussion of the doctor's cure has already laid out grounds for believing that a lost action of folk play involved the transformation of a woman of sixty into a girl of sixteen (Peebles^a), and my opinion is that, in the modern versions of the folk play, the untranslated crone represents both varieties of the female. The grounds for this opinion lie in the emblem of the broom or besom, which in the Maying pastime was carried by the Summer Queen. So diagnostic is this accoutrement that it has given its name to the carrier: at Spottiswoode the room is cleared by 'Bessy with a besom'; in the decayed version given under unloc. Chambers (a), the guiser dressed as a girl wore an old woman's cap, carried a broomstick, and was called 'Bessie'. I venture also that the strength of the attachment brought about the usage of 'besom' as a disparaging term for a woman,⁶⁶ from the licence of the behaviour of the Summer Queen after her transformation from the crone. It is significant that the young wife of the 'Cupar Banns', who cuckolds her elderly husband with the tup-bearing Fool, is called 'Bessie' (see Chapter Four, 2).

'Bessie' is not the only 'braem-bearer' of the folk play. At Stirling^a, the last words are spoken by 'little diddlie dots'; in unloc. Chambers (c) the quôte verse is given as follows:

Here come I, auld Diddletie -- doubt.

Gi'e me money, or I'll sweep ye a' out.

Money I want, and money I crave;

If ye don't gi'e me money, I'll sweep ye till your grave.

With this character, the broom becomes a weapon to threaten the audience. The name is a corruption of 'the old devil to do out, or dout', or 'de'il tae dae oot', in which the 'devil' element is derived from the black face of the character. Again, the discussion of the earlier forms of the doctor's cure suggested that blacking was rubbed on the face, and if the modern re-interpretation of this character is ignored, we are left with the figure of the revived Summer King, the black of fertility smearing his features, and the green tree symbol in his hand.

Beelzebub

The origin of this character as a Fool, and his earlier role in resurrection ceremony, have already been introduced in the passage on the cure. In the course of this, the origin and function of the 'club' were explained; there remains now the other inseparable accoutrement of this character, the 'dripping' or 'frying' pan.

The etymology of the name demands that the 'club and pan' be equated with the 'bells and bauble', and I therefore accept the likelihood that the frying pan is carried as a substitute for a bell, which it would more closely resemble when it was rattled with the club, or shaken with the coins collected from the onlookers (as at Hawick²).

The choice of a 'frying' or 'dripping' pan for Beelzebub is not arbitrary, for it draws into the folk play the considerable fertility attachment of cooking pans and utensils. In Chapter Three, 2, reference was made to the Welsh regeneration ritual achieved by immersing the dead hero in a cooking pot, or cauldron,

and in the same category belong the ovens and griddles which, through the feminine art of cooking, share the procreative mystery of the fertile womb in giving new life; so, at least, it must have seemed, when the mixture of flour and water, with the addition of yeast, and granted warmth and time, swelled into bread. A very clear example in modern times of the survival of this metaphor comes in the eighteenth-century poem 'Clout the Cauldron' (i.e. rivet the cooking pot) where the double entendre of repairing a cooking pot and the sexual act is methodically exploited.⁶⁷

Apart from the rivet, male emblems included spoons, ladles (from their action of stirring cooking pots), candlesticks and the spouts of kettles. The kettle spout has at least eight centuries of tradition. The twelfth-century Anglo-Norman play Le Jeu d'Adam features the devils welcoming Adam and Eve to Hell by reminding them of the carnal knowledge that brought their Fall -- 'they shall bang their cauldrons and kettles together', states the stage-direction.⁶⁸ Eight hundred years later, young Hallowe'en guisers in Lowland Scotland are still reciting a begging-rhyme also recorded for St. Valentine's Day:

Bang a kettle against a pan

.

Up with the kettle and down with the spout

Give us a penny and we'll get out.⁶⁹

Other variants of this fertility emblem have been noted in Elgin in the early seventeenth century: in 1604 some women were punished for welcoming the New Year by ringing pans, griddles and chandlers;⁷⁰ in 1636 a man was guilty of 'clinking of basens through the town on Uphaly even'.⁷¹

In conclusion, therefore, the 'Bell and bauble' that Beelzebub

carries should be viewed as the female and male sexual symbols, and the ringing of this bell, by banging the club in the pan, an image of the sexual act, and therefore a disguised fertility wish for the onlooker.

The Land of Cockayne

The 'Wonderland' verses have already been broached in this study (at the close of Chapter Three) by virtue of their medieval date. They hold a further interest in the way in which the motif is adapted to the need and function of the folk drama. The land of Cockayne (or Cockaigne⁷²) is a place of plenty and idleness, essentially a country where an abundance of food is available without effort, and is visited (in the Scottish play texts) by the Combatant, the Doctor, and Judas.

For the Doctor, the country resembles that of the medieval poem in its plentiful food. At Crieff^b, he has seen 'cocks and hens with knives and forks in their backs, running down the streets calling out, "Who'll eat me? Who'll eat me?"' 'Mountains of beef and rivers of gravy' are sights noted at Darnick^{ab} and Melrose^{ac}, the mountains being of 'blue snow' at Ednam, and of 'beer' at Melrose^b. The Crieff^b doctor has also seen 'mountains of porridge and rivers of butter milk', and he of Inkerman (ii), 'houses white-washed with sour milk and built with pancakes'.

In the modern texts, the experiences of the doctor are little more than embellishments of his travels, through which he secured his status. In earlier versions, however, these experiences might have had more significance. It is helpful to involve the Combatant's contribution at this point. At Bowden, the revived Galashen seems to speak of his journeys in death:

I have been east, I have been west

I have been at the Sherkle-dock,

and he describes the bizarre and (judging by the informant's omissions) indecent sights of that place. My interpretation of the name 'Sherkle-dock' is 'the land of idlers' (from shirk = avoid work; shark = sponging parasite;⁷³ dock = place of immobility), and this would equate the name with 'Lubberland' (from lubber = idler, lazy fellow,⁷³ + land), a country of plentiful food referred to in Ben Johnson's comedy, Bartholomew Fair:

Good mother, how shall we find a pig, if we do not
look about for't. Will it run off o' the spit into
our mouths, think you? as in Lubberland? and cry we,
we? ⁷⁴

The Jonson reference firmly connects the 'land of the idlers' with Cockayne, and allows us to relate the Combatant's 'vision in death' with the Doctor's skill in resurrection. Cavendish has suggested that we should view this Cockayne as a medieval version of the Celtic 'Isles of the Blessed', to which the dead heroes were carried for their eternity of bliss, and which was visited by the living hero only as a Great Exploit, in the case of Gawaine to secure the girdle of invulnerability.⁷⁵ Whatever the validity of this suggestion, it is enough for this fertility-conferring folk play that one of its number, most frequently the Doctor, has visited the land of plenty, and can invoke its aura in the household of the host.

One other instance of the Cockayne speech occurs; in the early Falkirk^b and Peebles^a texts, the motif is given to Judas:

When I gaed to the castle yett and til^rl't at the pin,
They keepit the keys o' the castle wa', and wad na let me in.

I've been i' the east carse,

I've been i' the west carse,

I've been i' the carse of Gowrie,

Where the clouds rain a' day wi' peas and wi' beans!

And the farmers theek houses wi' needles and prins!

Two points are noteworthy: the 'land of plenty' is given a local habitation, on the north shore of the Tay estuary, in a fertile tract that became locally famous for the prosperity it brought its farmers;⁷⁶ the stance of the speaker is that of the outcast, the rejected, and the difference is that Judas has seen Cockayne, but forfeited this Eden by his treachery. In this fashion, the reviser of the folk play text has accommodated an ancient Celtic legend to the presence of the treacherous disciple, whom we suppose to be included to justify the traditional quôte to the reforming conscience of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Fools of the Quête

In the Crieff^b version, the collection is taken up by Johnny Funny:

Here am I, wee Johnny Funny,

Wi' my tunny,

I'm the man that takes the money.

The character's name is made up of a variant of 'John', already noted as the 'European' first name for the folk-player, and 'Funny', which may derive from ME fon (= fool), fonnyshe (= foolery),⁷⁷ a straightforward title for yet another version of the Fool in the modern folk play. The 'tunny', or 'tin', rattled with the coins of the collection, is the bells-substitute.

'Johnny Funny' occurs in Galloway (at Clarebrand and Castle

Douglas), in the Borders (at Darnick), in Strathclyde (at Barrhead and Biggar), and in Tayside (at Crieff). There are also some local variants of the name. 'Betty Funny', itself perhaps a corruption of 'Bessy' Funny, is found in the Borders at Edrom and Selkirk^{bc}, 'Keekum Funny' in Strathclyde, in Glasgow^c, Old Kilpatrick, Paisley, and unloc. Robb, and 'Tootsie Funny' at Auchinleck. I am at a loss to explain the two last-named, but both 'toot' and 'keek' have the sense of 'peep', 'peer', 'pry', and it may be that these two names drew attention to the amusing way in which the boys' eyes were prominent in their blackened or (in the case of Blantyre) whitened faces.

The collection was received into a variety of receptacles, the most frequent being pouches or bags:

Great big pooches doon tae ma knees,

Fine for haudin' bawbees. (Cumnock)

The only description of these articles comes at Hurlet, where Mickey Funny 'was so funny with his very long coat and big sugar-bag pouches'. I suspect that the begging element was diminished if the bags were attached to the guisers' costume, and therefore not thrust at the donors. Sugar bags, having held foodstuffs, would be ideal for holding the bread, cakes, cheese and apples of the collection.

One other character warrants discussion. He appears, or is described, as 'Big Head and Little Wit' at Auchinleck and Cumnock, but in the earlier texts as 'Meikle Head and Little Wit' at Bowden, and 'Muckle Head and Little Wit' at the closely-related Falkirk^b and Peebles^a. It is evident that the compiler's attempt to justify this character's presence and appearance are unsuccessful, and this very failure promotes our interest in a character deemed important and yet (as at Falkirk^b) left 'behint the door'.

Despite the 'little wit', I do not regard 'Muckle Head' as yet another variant of the Fool. The only clue we have for the origin of the character is the 'big head' which, when we recall the high head coverings of the guisers, must have been very large indeed to have become the focus of attention. My suggestion is that this name refers to the 'extra' head worn by the character to be beheaded in the drama, in the company of the Green Knight in the Gawaine story (see Chapter Four, 4), Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne (see Chapter Five, 2) and the Old Ox of the 'Plough Song' (see Chapter Four, 2). This origin would explain his importance in the earlier forms of the folk play, and his irrelevance in the post-seventeenth century version.

In the information accompanying Falkirk^b, we are told that when the collection has been taken,

One of the guisards who has the best voice, generally concludes the exhibition by singing 'an auld Scottish sang' or the group join in a reel to the merry sound of the fiddle, which used to form part of the establishment of these itinerants.

Fortunately, there is in existence an early-nineteenth century illustration of this part of the proceedings, and to a consideration of this art work this study now turns.

7. The Alexander Carse Drawing⁷⁸ (See Plates Five and Six)

The Carse drawing is, at the time of writing, the only illustration of the Scottish folk play to survive from the early nineteenth century. It must be said at the outset that the drawing is far from illuminating, a disappointment brought about by our ignorance of the painter's life and the provenance of his subject,



PLATE FIVE. 'The Guisers.' by Alexander Carrap. (National Galleries of Scotland)

his carelessness as a draughtsman and the unfinished nature of the work, doubts concerning the painter's knowledge of his subject, and the peripheral interest of the folk play itself for the painter. Nevertheless, the drawing is uniquely interesting for students of the folk drama, and is here commented upon.

The Painter

Little is known of Carse's life, and the place and date of his birth are not on record. He was a pupil of the painter David Allan (d.1807), and applied to the Trustees Academy in 1806. In adult life he moved to London in 1812, and returned to Edinburgh in 1820, where he lived until his death in 1843. Two Lothian locations occur in his titles: 'Oldhamstocks Fair' (1796) features a village in East Lothian, 8 miles south-east of Dunbar; Lasswade, also referred to in a title, is in Midlothian, five miles south-east of Edinburgh.

The Picture

The monochrome technique was used by the artist on several occasions, possibly when he was making studies for a larger picture, and one theory is that this pen and wash drawing is a preparatory stage, a suggestion strengthened by the labelling of three of the guisers (see below), and the carelessness of the drawing in some places. Although the work has come to be known as 'The Guisers', Carse left the drawing without a title.

Date and Provenance

The best clue to the date of the work is the watermark in the paper for 1822. A search through the play accounts of this period shows that the closest parallel to the events of the drawing are

found in the Falkirk^b 1825 account, where the finish of the play brings fiddle-playing, singing and dancing, and a Judas to collect the 'wassel' bread (in the bowl on the table) and cheese (being carried in).

Elsewhere, Haddington (1844), almost mid-way between Lasswade and Oldhamstocks, preserved a Judas, and further south, Peebles^a (1841) and Bowden (1815) mention decorated hats (see below). On the other hand, Traquair (1805) and Stirling^a (1835) bear few if any points of resemblance, and thus the drift of the evidence is towards a Lothian setting, either drawn from the painter's memories of c.1880-1890, or modelled on the practice in the Edinburgh area in the 1820s.

The figures are discussed separately, as troupe and spectators, in two groups, according to the numbers they are given in Plate Six.

The Troupe

Judas (1) The name 'Judas' is written on the bag. With the beard, lined hood and gown, his costume resembles that of the modern 'Father Christmas', believed to have been introduced into Britain from America in the early years of this century. As the Collector, Judas has entered last, and is therefore nearest the door.

Hatless Guiser (2) The face is simply drawn, is in shadow, and may therefore be blackened, or a mask. His position suggests that the guiser may be hiding behind the fiddler, possibly because his hat (and disguise) has been taken.

Fiddler (5) He is dressed in a woman's gown and mutch, and is playing for the singing and dancing that concluded the performance.

Sir William Wallace (4) His name is written on the hem of his costume.

He is wearing the traditional white over-garment, and the wide-brimmed hat with be-ribboned brim, noted only in Lothian and the Borders. He appears to be singing and waving his sword.

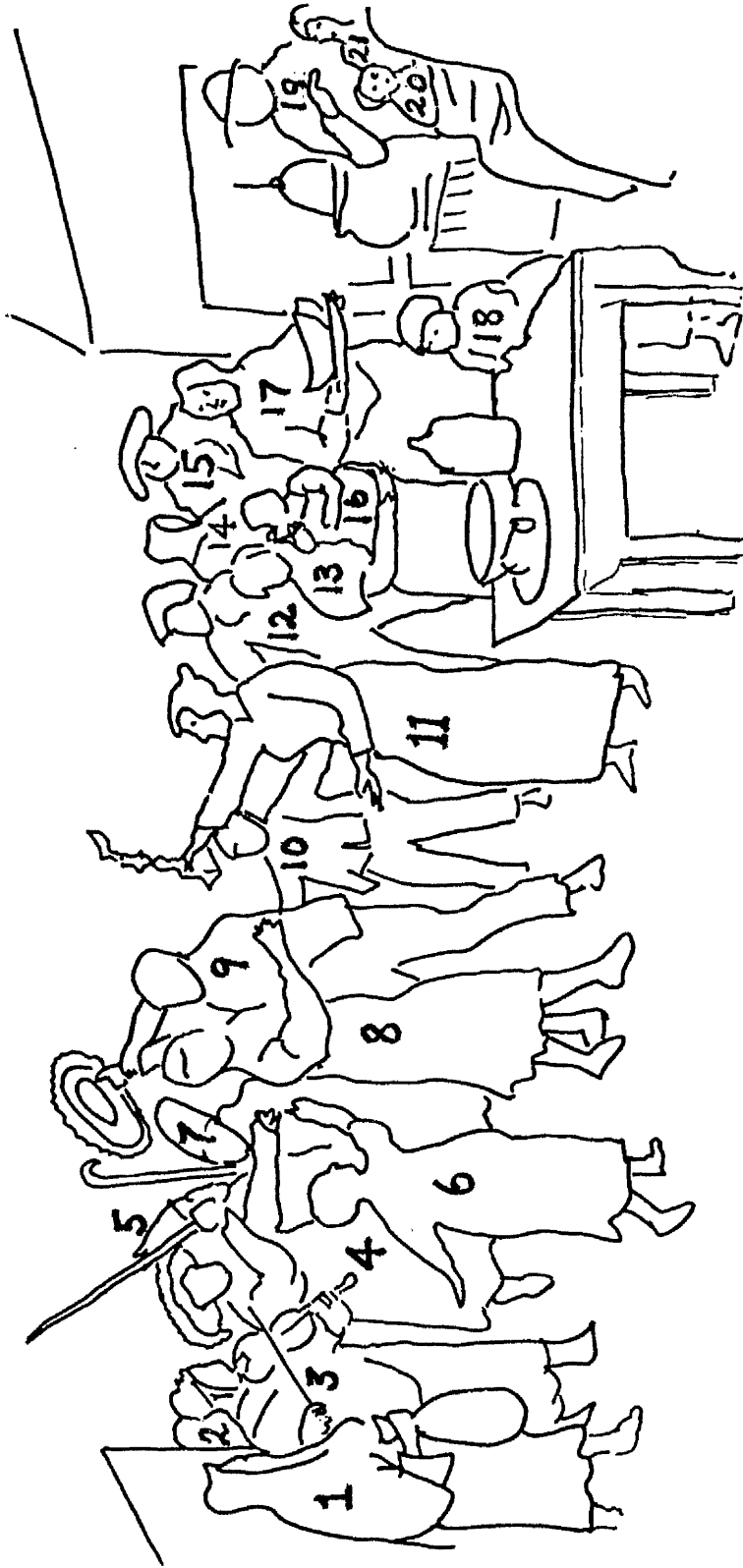
Tall-Hatted Guiser (5) Little can be seen of this guiser, apart from his high hat, which is divided laterally, at the point where the sword covers it. It is possible that this large hat signifies 'Muckle Head and Little Wit', who was on record at Falkirk in the 1820s.

The Bishop (7) His title can with difficulty be deciphered on his garment, and his identity is consolidated by his mitre hat and his crozier. There is no record of a 'Bishop' in any of the modern play accounts, and his presence here casts some shadow on the accuracy of Carse's illustration.

The Spectators

Three generations are represented. Grandfather (19) and Grandmother (21) are extreme right; the Farmer/Householder (15) stands between the fire and the door, and his wife (17) brings in a half cheese for the guisers' reward. On their left stand three (12, 13, 14) who could be family, but who are more likely servants. The five younger children (6, 10, 16, 18, 20) are unmistakable, but doubt surrounds the identity and actions of the three central and significant figures (8, 9, 11). The young man is fashionably dressed and presumably therefore prosperous; the two women are hatless and therefore deemed to be unmarried, though the candle-bearer (11) seems matronly in her figure and dress. The central interest of the painting, however, lies in the amorous tussle between the young man and woman.

PLATE SIX The Carse Identities



- | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Judas | 2 Hatless Guiser | 3 Fiddler | 4 Sir William Wallace | 5 Tall-hatted guiser |
| 6 daughter | 7 Bishop | 8 young woman | 9 young man | 10 son |
| 11 unmarried woman | 12 servant | 13 maidservant | 14 woman servant | 15 farmer |
| 16 fourth child | 17 Farmer's wife | 18 third child | 19 grandfather | 20 fifth child |
| 21 grandmother | | | | |

The Event

My interpretation of the action is that the two young people are dancing to the song and fiddle music. The young man has taken one of the combatant's hats, taking it off his head at the front, from the evidence of the position of the thumb and the ribbon (compare with Wallace's hat). In all probability the hat belonged to Galoshan, the second combatant, possibly the hatless guiser behind the door. The young man is attempting to place this hat on the young woman's head, an act she is coyly resisting by turning her head away and restraining his forearm.

The young man's attempt is clearly significant, for it is the centre of the artist's composition, and viewed with satisfaction bordering on encouragement by the onlookers. The indication that the young man's action is ritualistic is given by Grandfather by pointing at Grandmother, demonstrates that he and she performed the same action two generations earlier. The most obvious explanation, therefore, is that the 'Galashan hat' represents a fertility or marriage emblem, and that placing it on one's sweetheart's head is symbolic in the same way as putting a ring on her wedding finger, or a mistletoe wreath overhead. This use of the headgear complements the prominence of the 'Golashin hat' of Melrose^a (c.1860), and the fertility association of the guisers' hats (see above, 5. Costume and Disguise).

This central 'fertility-conferring' act is echoed throughout the drawing. The folk play is over, and the songs of reconciliation have been sung. The 'luck' that the guisers bring is being used, and on the far right the cheese is being brought in for the guisers' bag on the far left, symbolising the interchange of goodwill between visitor and host. A large cooking-pot hangs over the fire, and the

room is full of children and long life. The scene of union and goodwill is lit by a candle giving off an unusually bright flame.

Although we learn disappointingly little from this early illustration, the one message that comes through very clearly is that although the play itself was perhaps too commonplace for the artist's attention, its semiotic force was felt to be traditional and undimmed.

8. Decline and Disintegration

The decline of the folk play in modern times has already been charted in Chapter Two, 3; the contribution of this Section is to delineate the manner in which the drama broke down into the solo guising that represents the folk play tradition at the present time.

The greatest single enemy of the drama tradition has been seen to be the hostility towards the begging motive, and before proceeding to a more detailed consideration of the way in which this hostility was felt, it is helpful to assess the strength of the guisers' motivation. One of the recurring points in this study has been the importance of the reward to the continuance of the tradition, so much so that it became a popular belief that the receiving of money or food was a kind of right or due on certain ritual occasions. It was argued in Chapter Five that 'Robin Hood' was in part an invention to rationalise the element of compulsion in the transfer of money from the rich to the poor, and that the Edinburgh riot of 1561 was in one aspect the confrontation between the historic right to steal on ritual occasions, and the determination of public authority to subjugate this tradition to the criminal law.

This sense of ancient right did not die in the sixteenth century, for the same phenomenon is apparent in Edinburgh (and Stirling) in

the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1811, Hogmanay in Edinburgh was marked by riot and robbery in circumstances that strongly suggest that youths who had outgrown the Galoshan pastime formed troupes in which every player (like Beelzebub) carried a club, and collected alms in a more direct fashion:

After eleven o'clock at night the principal streets were taken possession of by bands of rough young men and boys from the lower part of the town. Armed with bludgeons they assaulted and for a time overcame the police. They also knocked down and robbed of their money, watches and hats respectable inhabitants.⁷⁹

The training ground for this behaviour may be perceived at Craigforth (near Stirling) eleven years later, where the younger and admissable guisers seemed hardly less belligerent:

the verses we hear, every returning Christmas, recited by our young people, who, about that time, run about the streets in antic dresses, with vizards on their faces, and cudgels in their hands, repeating the following uncouth lines:

Hogmanay

Trollolay

Gie me o' your white bread,

I'll hae nane o' your grey.²⁹

Four years later in Edinburgh, Sir Walter Scott drily noted the interest the police were taking in the folk drama troupes who were failing to distinguish between begging and theft:

In Edinburgh these Exhibitions have been put down by the police in a great measure the privilege of going disguised having been of late years so much abused that one party in

particular who call'd themselves Rob Roy's gang went so far into the spirit of their part as actually to commit theft. (Edinburgh^b).

Although theft and assault disappear from the records as the police influence made itself felt, Edinburgh managed to preserve to the end a dourness of style, a concentration on the business of collecting, that could still intimidate householders:

On Hogmanay night I was somewhat disturbed by the guisers who rang the bell for admission, then charged up the stairs with lowered heads, and at the door of the flat revealed soot-blackened features and masks called 'false faces'. Given pennies and sweeties, they clattered downstairs and on to the next block of flats.⁸⁰

It is reasonable to believe that the early-nineteenth century campaign against the too-vigorous begging brought about some changes in the folk play performance, possibly a widespread use of the pouches attached to the costume which, unlike Johnny Funny's tin or Beelzebub's pan, could not be thrust at a spectator, and the addition of some such disclaimer as,

And what you freely give to us

We freely shall receive. (Darnick^a c.1865)

This suspicion of dishonesty was the cutting-edge of the growing public disquiet with the custom's begging motivation which grew in strength, as was shown in Chapter Two, with the new attitude of the late-nineteenth century. Powerful though this animus against begging was, the war was won by the child-beggar; the casualties of the war were the older children, and the folk play itself.

The passage of hostilities followed this course. The pressure against too-sturdy begging acted most strongly on the older boys,

driving them from the custom, and leaving it in the hands of younger children in whom the wickedness of begging was less reprehensible. The six-year old 'champion' of Hurlet represents the extreme of this effect. Once the play was accepted without the combative vigour of the older boy, it became available to girls: Tillicoultry, the first account to include girls as players, is contemporaneous with the early-twentieth century Hurlet. These were extremely damaging developments: a drama based on the combat between two world-conquering heroes rapidly lost its savour when performed by the very young and girls.

The ailing folk drama was simultaneously under another pressure. At the same time that the social legislation was creating a new society, the technological developments were making a new physical environment. The last quarter of the nineteenth century was an era of Progress, and a time in which relics of pastime and superstition were despised for being old-fashioned. It was therefore time to discard the folk play, which was in any case beyond the powers of the young children, to organise and rehearse, or to perform,

The logical alternative was the guising of the present day, where the child performs whatever he can, and costumes himself in any fashion he may, and where the 'troupe' can be any number from one to half a dozen. The seeds of this solution are visible as early as Falkirk^b of 1825, where singing and dancing continued the entertainment when the play was over. There is an extension of this practice at Auchinleck, where it was assumed that the cast would provide solo entertainment at the close of the drama:

After the Doctor has cured them all, each individual entertains the company in his own way by singing, playing a musical instrument, or by any means he can.

The next stage in the disintegration of the play would be for the cast to abandon the drama, and merely perform their solo pieces. Fortunately, there is a remarkable record of this moment in the New Stevenston account, at the point in time when the drama is being abandoned, but the structure of the troupe preserved:

The performance took the form of a procession, with each of the characters taking his or her turn and saying a rhyme, the recognised leader of the party beginning.

With the exception of Johnny Funny, the invention of the character and the rhyme was the responsibility of each guiser. Johnny Funny always remained the same, and had a large bag in which the takings, the nuts and fruit etc., were deposited.

New Stevenston preserved Johnny Funny as the Collector, very probably to maintain a continuity of reward during the transitional stage of the custom. The lengthy Crieff^a account can in the same light be read as a description of Hogmanay guising in which the same process of disintegration has happened, the difference being that Crieff retained the Fiddler -- very properly inasmuch as he accompanied the singing and dancing at the close of the play -- at the same time calling him by the name of the Doctor.

Always excepting Biggar, the folk play vanished from the Hallowe'en and Hogmanay celebration, replaced by the solo performances of children of both sexes at Hallowe'en. For the most part, this practice is known as 'guising', but in a handful of communities a tiny echo of the past is preserved.⁸¹ At the time of writing, the children of Port Glasgow (a town 20 miles west of Glasgow) speak of Hallowe'en guising as 'doin' yer Gloshens', though no-one knows why.

Notes to Chapter Seven

¹ The exception in Galloway is Moniaive, but this location is separated from the rest of the Galwegian plays, and I consider the play there to be a late importation from Strathclyde or the Borders.

² There are two obstructions to the 'easily-drawn' isogloss: in the Abbotsford House^a account, Scott's visitor, who had journeyed to Abbotsford from Edinburgh, names the hero in the 'western' form of 'Goloshin'; the Glasgow^a account, the first to name the character in the west, uses 'Galatian', though this may be justified by the fact that the same account deals also with Kelso.

³ The first example of the 'western' form comes in Neil Munro, Doon Castle, a novel published in 1923. In chapter thirty-five, one of the characters remarks, 'I thoct the Coont looked gey like a galoshan in't': cited in Scottish National Dictionary under 'Galatian'.

⁴ 'MacGlashan' is derived from mac (= the son of) = glashan (from Gaelic glaisean, the grey lad, or man).

⁵ William Duguid Geddes, "The Burlesque of 'Galatian': The Guisards of Scotland", Scottish Notes and Queries, 1st Ser., 2, May 1889, pp. 177-79.

⁶ Margaret Dean-Smith, 'An Un-Romantic view of the Mummers' Play', Theatre Research, 8, No.2 (1966), 98.

⁷ Jessie L. Weston, From Ritual to Romance (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), p.96.

⁸ The combatant 'Goliath' at Scremerston in Northumberland is a variant of 'Galatians': Alex Helm, The English Mummers' Play (Bury St Edmunds: Brewer; Rowman & Littlefield, 1981), p.67.

⁷ ~~Margaret Dean Smith, 'An Un-Romantic view of the Mummers' Play',
Theatre Research, 8, No. 2 (1966), 98.~~

⁸ ~~Jessie L. Weston, From Ritual to Romance (New York: Doubleday
Anchor, 1957), p. 96.~~

⁹ For example, troupes in Gloucestershire were known as the
'Paper Boys', and the 'Christmas Boys',

¹⁰ I reject 'gallus' (= mischievous, high-spirited), because the
stress falls on the first syllable. Neither can I entertain Gaelic
words, because the custom is so clearly of Lowland provenance. There
are, nevertheless, two Gaelic words of interest in this connection.
Callais, (pronounced kælɪʃ) in the sense of 'buffoonery' has been
recorded in mid-Perthshire, and is possibly related to calaiseachd,
an obsolete term for 'juggler'. It is well possible that these words
were noted in the area of Crieff, a folk play location in mid-
Perthshire, and that they represent 'Galoshan' in a Gaelic form.
Glashan is recorded as the name of a water-horse in folklore in the
Isle of Man (N. Arrowsmith and G. Moorse, A Field Guide to the Little
People (London: MacMillan, 1977) p. 247) and in north-east Scotland
(George L. Gomme, Ethnology in Folklore (London: Kegan Paul, Trench,
and Trübner, 1892), pp. 73-74, 78). In both connotation and provenance
the word is clearly unconnected with the Galoshan play.

¹¹ Unless otherwise stated the galoche forms are taken from the
Oxford English Dictionary.

¹² Information from Revised Medieval Latin Word-List: From British
and Irish Sources, ed. R.E. Latham (London: O.U.P., 1965).

- 13 A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue, ed. W.A. Craigie
(London: O.U.P., 1937).
- 14 'Wi' wives and wee-anes gablin': 'Hallowfair', v.8.
- 15 OED, citing Archaeologia, 11, p.95.
- 16 I am discounting the entry in T. Wright, Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English (London: Bohn, 1857), where the editor defines Golossians as Galoshes, but gives no precise source for the word, apart from the general statement preceding the dictionary that the words are culled 'from written and oral sources'.
- 17 Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language ed. John Jamieson, (Faisley: Gardner, 1880).
- 18 David Murison, The Guid Scots Tongue (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1977), p.44.
- 19 The Poems of William Dunbar, ed. J. Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p.132, and Glossary.
- 20 ibid., pp.132-3, ll. 48-60.
- 21 Randle Cotgrave, A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues (1600) (Menston: Scholar Press, 1968).
- 22 Thomas Blount, Glossographia (1656) (Menston: Scholar Press, 1969).

23 Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, IV, v. 116.

24 Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, ed. Sir Walter Scott (Kelso: Ballantyne, 1802), I, 'A Lyke Wake Dirge', vv. 3, 4, pp. 232-33.

25 Thomas Somerville, My Own Life and Times, 1741-1814 (Edinburgh: 1861), p. 341.

26 Dean-Smith, p. 94.

27 Records of Elgin (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1903), II, 119.

28 McNeill, Silver Bough, III, 97

29 Archaeologia Scotica (Edinburgh: 1822), II, p. 1 (item by John Callander, of Craigforth).

30 Senex, Glasgow, Past and Present, III, v. 464.

There is also a reference to 'grey bread' in James Watson's Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems (1706), ed. H.H. Wood (Edinburgh: S.T.S., 1977) I, v. 57, in the poem 'The Mare of Collington', where one owes 'five shillings for six grey bread'.

31 See Chapter Three, n. 60.

32 A. Jervise and J. Gammack, Memorials of Angus and the Mearns (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1885) II, 212.

³³ Cited in OED.

³⁴ Senex, p.464, in connection with the Restenneth reference to 'hugmans' adds 'which is said to have been 'strangers' bread' or 'alms bread'.

³⁵ McNeill, Silver Bough, III, 59. In Glasgow in 1588 the statute that the bakers should not bake the special 'wastellis' bread was reinforced: Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow 1573-1642 (Glasgow: S.R.B.S., 1876) p.122.

³⁶ 'Those who arrived in the English north-west, under their leader Ingimundr, obtained permission from the Lady Aethelfled, daughter of Alfred the Great, to settle near Chester': John Geipel, The Viking Legacy (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971), p.46.

³⁷ Duncan, Scotland: The Making of a Kingdom, p.89.

³⁸ See Chapter Three, n.63.

³⁹ Mill, p.111n.

⁴⁰ Two proverbs to this effect appeared in Fergusson's collection made c.1575: they were reprinted in 1924 in the form given here:

The red is wise

The brown trusty

The pale peevish

The black lusty.

.....
With a red man read thy rode

With a brown man break thy bread

At a pale man draw thy knife

From a black man keep thy wife.

Reprinted from the Kelso Chronicle in the Border Magazine 1924, XIX;
originals in Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs, ed. E. Beveridge (Edinburgh
& London: Blackwood, 1924), p.104.

⁴¹ Mill, p.163.

⁴² *ibid.*, p.242.

⁴³ See, for example, Emily Lyle, 'The Goloshans', Tocher, 32,
Winter 1979-80 (Edinburgh: School of Scottish Studies), pp.107-112,
where three versions of the revived man's song are given.

⁴⁴ Robert Weimann, Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the
Theatre, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore & London: John Hopkins U.P.,
1978) p.26, suggests that free access to private houses was 'another
libertas decembris'.

⁴⁵ Early English Carols, p.xxxi.

⁴⁶ cf. Skelton, Magnyfycence, ll.1466-7,
Alexander, of Macedony kynge,
That all the Oryent had in subleccyon.

⁴⁷ Two works that enshrine this reputation are John Barbour,
The Buik of Alexander, ed. R.L.G. Ritchie (Edinburgh & London: 1925),
and The Anglo-Norman Alexander (Le Roman de toute chevalerie) by
Thomas of Kent, 2 vols, Publications of the Anglo-Norman Text
Society, XXIX -- XXXIII.

48 Helm, The English Mummers' Play, p.25.

49 The Non-Cycle Mystery Plays, ed. O. Waterhouse (Early English Text Society, 1909), Extra Series, CIV, 11.449-51.

50 Erasmus Colloquies, trans. C.R. Thompson (Chicago: University Press, 1965), p.18.

51 Collins Dictionary of the English Language.

52 Mill, p.223.

53 The Cotswold Doctor is often called John Finney, which may relate to Johnny Funny, a Fool's name.

54 Scottish National Dictionary

55 There may be an echo of this regeneration in the pantomime Mother Goose when the eponymous crone is transformed into nymph by stepping into the magic pool.

56 C. Hippeau, Dictionnaire de la Langue Francaise: au XII^e et au XIII^e Siecle (Paris: 1873).

57 Enid Welsford, The Fool (London: Faber, 1935), p.300.

⁵⁸ Black as the colour of fertility is recognised as early as c.1400 BC in Egypt: 'Black was the colour associated with regeneration, a conception which probably owes its origin to the black colour of the fertile soil of Egypt as a source of plant-life': Treasures of Tutankhamun (London: British Museum, 1972), 1. Wooden Statue of Tutankhamun.

⁵⁹ W.G. Wood-Martin, Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland (London: Longmans, 1902), I, 315-6.

⁶⁰ Oxford English Dictionary

⁶¹ The Asloan Manuscripts, II, 175.

The indispensability of the bauble to the Fool is the basis for the sixteenth-century Scottish proverb 'A fool will not give his babill for the toure of Lune': Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs p.13 (see n.40).

⁶² A.P. Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans (London: Hutchinson, 1950), p.25.

⁶³ I witnessed a performance of this text by the Teatro della Commedia dell' Arte a L'Avogaria, Venice, at Glasgow University in 1977. Signora Poli, the wife of the Theatre Director, was kind enough to give me a detailed explanation of and commentary on the scene.

⁶⁴ An exception to this organisation is the text of unloc. Abbotsford House^a, where the 'superfluous' characters are spread

through the action.

65 Dean-Smith, 'Un-Romantic View of the Mummers' Play',

66 'In Lowland Scots, 'besom' is a name applied to a prostitute or woman of low character': Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Table (London: Cassell, 1977).

67 Ramsay and the Earlier Poets of Scotland, p.209.

68 Axton and Stevens, Medieval French Plays, p.36.

69 Given to me by one who had recited it in the 1960s in Peebles.

70 Records of Elgin, I, p.119-20.

71 ibid., p.230.

72 Cockayne is derived from O. Fr. cocaigne and M.L.G. kokenje,
= a small cake.

73 Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary.

74 This connection was first made by Tiddy, Mummers' Play, p.117;
the reference comes in Ben Jonson, Bartholomew Fair, III, ii, 11.73-75.

75 Cavendish, King Arthur and the Grail, p.97.

76 Graham, Social Life in the Eighteenth Century, 213n states

that farmers in the Carse of Gowrie were rich enough to purchase their own estates.

77 Collins English Dictionary, under fun, and fond.

78 The Alexander Carse pen and wash drawing is held at the National Gallery of Scotland, in Edinburgh. It measures 13" x 20½", and though left unnamed by the painter, it is now called 'The Guisers'. The existence of the painting was communicated to me by Dr Emily Lyle, and I am indebted also to Dr L.M. Errington of the National Gallery and her staff for much useful information about the work, and for access to other of the artist's output. Other biographical detail was furnished by David and Francina Irwin, Scottish Painters: At Home and Abroad: 1700-1900 (London: Faber, 1975), ^{pp} 190-191.

79 Edinburgh Life in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (Edinburgh: Lang Syne Publishers, c.1978), quoting the Edinburgh historian, W.M. Gilbert.

80 Amy Stewart Fraser, The Hills of Home (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p.228.

81 See Chapter Two, n.27.



FOLK DRAMA IN SCOTLAND

submitted by

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for the degree of Ph. D.

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APPENDIX ONE

The Gazetteer

In this appendix are collected together notices made of the folk play from 1700 to 1977 (thereby omitting the field work in this area by the School of Scottish Studies from 1977 onwards).

The information is presented, as often as possible, on the following pattern:

name of city, town, village or area

four figure National Grid reference for the location

the appropriate local government Region

text

information

source

comment.

Plural notices for a single location are listed, as far as possible, in chronological order of performance.

Unlocated notices, and unacknowledged references are listed separately at the end.

Entries are made under the following headings:

Abbotsford House	Culross
Alexandria	Cumnock
Alloa	Darnick
Ancrum	Dunfermline
Amnbank	Earlston
Arbroath	Edinburgh
Auchinleck	Ednam
Baldernock	Edrom
Ballater	Falkirk
Balloch	Forfar
Balmaghie	Galashiels
Barrhead	Glasgow
Biggar	Haddington
Blantyre	Hawick
Bowden	Helensburgh
Castle Douglas	Hurlet
Clarebrand	Inkerman
Crieff	Innerleithen

Inverkeithing	unloc. Abbotsford Coll.
Jedburgh	unloc. Angus
Johnstone	unloc. Bannockburn/Dunfermline
Kelso	unloc. Berwicks
Kilmarnock	unloc. Buckie
Kilsyth	unloc. Chambers
Kinross-shire	unloc. East Lothian
Kirkcaldy	unloc. Fife
Kirkcudbright	unloc. Galloway: Arnott
Lauder	unloc. Galloway: Dunlop
Laurieston	unloc. Galloway: Johnstone: Plate One.
Leith	unloc. Galloway: Niall
Leven	unloc. Kincardineshire
Liberton	unloc. Galloway: MacTaggart
Linton	unloc. Lauderdale
Melrose	unloc. MacRitchie
Moniaive	unloc. North Ayrshire
New Stevenston	unloc. Perthshire
Newtown St. Boswells	unloc. Robb
Ochiltree	unloc. Roxburghs. Cook
Old Kilpatrick	unloc. Roxburghs. MacRitchie
Paisley	unloc. Stirlingshire
Patna	unloc. Strathendrick
Peebles	unloc. Teviotdale, Roxburghs
Polwarth	unloc. Vale of Leven
Prestonpans	<u>Unacknowledged References</u>
Quothquan	Banks M.M.
St. Andrews	Cheviot C.
St. Boswells	Cumming A.D.
Selkirk	Guthrie E.J.
Skirling	Leishman J.F.
Southdean	Morrison O.
Spottiswoode	Petrie W.M.
Stirling	Sl ight H.
Symington	'The Scotsman'
Tillicoultry	
Traquair	
Walkerburn	
Wishaw	

ABBOTSFORD HOUSE (NT5034: Borders)

(a) Information

'Yesterday being Hogmanay there was a constant succession of Guisards - i.e. boys dressed up in fantastic caps, with their shirts over their jackets, and with wooden swords in their hands. These players acted a sort of scene before us, of which the hero was one Goloshin, who gets killed in a "battle for love", but is presently brought to life again by a doctor of the party'.

'As may be imagined, the taste of our host is to keep up these old ceremonies.' Thus, in the morning, yesterday, I observed crowds of boys and girls coming to the back door, where each one got a penny and an oaten cake. No less than 70 pennies were thus distributed - and very happy the little bodies looked with their well-filled bags'.

Source

Captain Basil Hall's 'Journal' (MS) Abbotsford, January 1st, 1825, printed in John Gibson Lockhart: Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1837), v.385.

(b) Information

'In our country there are carried on at Christmas time a sport call'd Mummery by the English Borderers and Guisardery by the Scotch which have still relish of the ancient Mystery. Sacred characters are sometimes introduced though rather nominally than with any exact idea of personification.....At this day there are remnants of the same ancient custom. Every new years day there appear in the Courtyard of my House at Abbotsford and in the same way in other gentlemen's houses in the country perhaps three or four hundred children in different bands larger or smaller according to their pleasure but all disguised like chimney-sweeps on the first of May with such scraps of gilt paper and similar trumpery which they have collected for months before. They recite verses sing songs some of them very well and recite or act little dramatic pieces which seem to allude to the Nine Worthies for you have Alexr. King of Macedon and God knows who besides. Not to mention one Galashan (Galatian perhaps) who is a regular character though who he may be I cannot guess. A gentleman who was with me on a visit wrote down some of these rhymes. If they would give you the least interest I would with pleasure send you a copy. The dole for such it is to these little performers is regularly.....a silver penny and a regular portion of what is call'd white Bread (household bread vizt.) to each child who is residing on the lairds land a copper penny and a quarter-circle of oat-cake call'd a farle to each stranger'.

Source

Sir Walter Scott: Letter to Thomas Sharp dated 7.3.1826, bound in BM Add. MS 43645, f.346 v., and The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1825-1826, ed. H.J.C. Grierson (London: Constable, 1935), IX, 445f.

ALEXANDRIA (NS3979: Strathclyde)

Information

None

Source

James Arnott Collection.
(See also 'Vale of Leven')

ALLOA (NS8893: Central)

Text

Wallace The game, sir, the game, sir, is not within your
 power. I'll cut you down in inches in less than
 half an hour.

Information

A lady remembered these lines from her childhood.

Source

(Annie Dunlop): 'Ayrshire Notes' in The Kilmarnock Standard and
Ayrshire Weekly News, 1st May 1948, p.3, col. 1.

ANCRUM (NT6224: Borders)

Information

Although no Ancrum performance has been noted, the clear inference
from the Hawick⁸ information is that the tradition was known in the
village early in the nineteenth century.

ANNBANK (NS4020: Strathclyde)

Text and Information

James Brown throughout his life had the nickname of 'Dr. Brown'.
"The origin may be traced back to his schooldays. It arose from a
favourite game, and the part in it which he always played. Many
historical figures were represented in the game - Wallace, Bruce,
the Douglas and others according to the numbers of players available.

There was a battle with wooden swords, and hostilities continued
until the ground was strewn with the dead. Then the doctor was
called in, and he appeared with the announcement:-

Here comes in old Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

One being asked what he could do, he replied in a long rhyme, and then he proceeded to apply a magic phial to the lips of the slain with the result that they all stood on their feet again alive and well".

James Brown was born in Ayr in 1862, and soon afterwards the family moved to Annbank, five miles inland, so that the father, a miner, could be near work.

Source

Alexander Gammie, From Pit to Palace (autobiography of James Brown) (London: Clarke & Co., 1931), pp.17, 32.

Comment

No indication is given of the season, but this account is separated from the list of Hallowe'en practices.

It is interesting to perceive the insistence that the practice was a 'game'.

ARBROATH (NO6340: Tayside)

Text and Information

"Dramatic Games.

The old Scotch method of celebrating Hallowe'en.... recalls to our recollection the annual reproduction by our Arbroath youth of the old Scotch drama, yclept "Gallashuns". The 'get-up' was simple enough. All that was required of the actors was to blacken their faces and furnish themselves with wooden swords, and they were then ready to go to their audience, for their audience did not go to them. The play began by the hero Gallashuns thus fiercely and boastingly announcing his determination to withstand 'all-comers':

Gallashuns! Gallashuns! Gallashuns is my name!
With a sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game!

But the others soon find a champion, who as fiercely confronts the braggart exclaiming:

The game, sir! The game, sir! is not within your power.
I'll slash you and slay you in less than half-an-hour!

They fight desperately, till, amid derisive laughter, Gallashuns falls, sorely wounded. Then enters the doctor:

Here comes I, Doctor Brown,
The very best doctor in all the town
who very soon cures the wounded warrior."

Source

J.M. McBain, Arbroath, Past and Present (Arbroath: Brodie & Salmon, 1887), 341-2.

AUCHINLECK (NS5521: Strathclyde)

Text and Information

The text is supplied by Dr. William Boyd, who had collected it from a man who on many occasions played the part of Tootsie Funny.

Here comes I, bold Slasher,
Bold Slasher is my name,
Sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game.

The game, sir, the game, sir,
It lies within my power,
I'll cut you up in inches
In less than half an hour

Here comes I, King Robert the Bruce,
The battle-axe over my shoulder,
England and Ireland to reduce,
And Scotland to run over,

Here comes I, the Black Prince
From England have I sprung
.....
.....
Here comes I, old Beelsebub,
Over my shoulder I carry a club
And in my hand a dripping pan,
I think myself a jolly man.

Here come I, never won yet,
Big head and Little Wit,
My head so big, my body so small
I'll do my best to please you all.

Here comes I, old Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.
What can you cure?

All sorts

What is all sorts?

The root, the scoot, the scooring oot,
The rainbow and the curvey.

(After the Doctor has cured them all, each individual entertains the company in his own way by singing, playing a musical instrument, or by any means he can. Then finally --)

Here come I wee Tootsie Funny,
The best wee man to carry the money,
All coppers, no brass,
Bad money won't pass.

Source

(Annie Dunlop),: 'Ayrshire Notes' in The Kilmarnock Standard and Ayrshire Weekly News, 14 Feb. 1948, p.3, col.2.

BALDERNOCK (NS6073: Strathclyde)

Text and Information

'Hallowe'en was a splendid time for fun, with "guizards" and "Galoshins" - an old rhyme sung at hallowe'en [sic] time was

In come I, Galoshin of renown,
A sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win my crown'.

Source

Profile of a Parish (Baldernock), ed. Jean Stewart (n.p.: Baldernock Amenity Society, 1974), p.34.

Comment

The parish of Baldernock is a collection of scattered dwellings centred on the community of Balmore.

The reminiscences are not dated, but might be presumed to refer to the end of the last century and the beginning of the present one.

BALLATER (NO3695: Grampian)

Text and Information

"In Ballater, in the early 1890s, possibly later,* writes Mabel, 'the great excitement that night was the arrival of the village lads with blackened faces and wearing weird costumes, who called at every house to perform a traditional play, which had among its characters, Goloshan with his sword and pistol, Sir William Wallace, who "shed his blood for Scotland's rights", and "Good auld Dr. Broon, the best auld doctor in the toon", who was asked "And what made you the best auld doctor in the toon?" His reply was "My travels, Sir.

Hickerty Pickerty hedgehog
Three times round the West Indies
And back tae Auld Scotland again,
I have gone from fireside to bedside".

Source

Amy Stewart Fraser, Dae Ye Min' Langsyne? (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975) p.181.

Comment

The most northerly of the play locations, forty miles from its nearest neighbour, Arbroath. Ballater is on 'Royal Deeside', and hardly existed before 1760, when 'healing waters' were discovered. The play custom was presumably brought with the influx of residents after that date. The lines quoted here are found in the unloc. Angus account. The night in question was the last of the year.

BALLOCH (NS3981: Strathclyde)

Information

The folk play was noted.

Source

James Arnott Collection.
(see also 'Vale of Leven').

BALMAGHIE (NX7166: Dumfries and Galloway)

Text

Bauldie	Here comes I, Bell Hector; Bold Slasher is my name. My sword is buckled by my side, And I am sure to win this game.
General	This game, sir! This game, sir! It's far beyond your power. I'll cut you up in inches In less than half a hour.
Bauldie	You, sir!
General	I, sir!
Bauldie	Take out your sword and try, sir! (They fight and the General is killed.)
All	The Doctor. (One runs and calls the doctor. He enters)
Doctor	Here comes I, old Doctor Brown, The best old doctor in town.
All	And what diseases can you cure?
Doctor	I can cure all diseases to be sure.

All

What are they?

Doctor

Hockey-pockey, jelly-oakey,
Down amongst the gravel.

(The Doctor gives the General a draught from his
bottle, and he starts to his feet).

Information

The performers were school-children, seven in number. Three of them, Bauldie, the Captain, and the General were dressed alike, in a 'fause face', (a mask) commonly black, a big coat, and an ordinary cap. Each of the three carried a stick as a sword. The Doctor also wore a mask (Black with red spots on his chin, cheeks and brow), a big 'tile' hat, and he carried a stick in one hand and a bottle of water in the other. For Peggy, the face was painted white, and she wore an old ankle-length dress and an old mutch, and she carried an old umbrella. The Policeman had a blackened face, a big brown paper-bag on his head, a stick in his hand, and wore a big black coat. Wean had a whitened face, and wore a small frock, and an ordinary hat with ribbons. The practice was for all except the Doctor to enter the kitchen. On being asked 'What do you want?', they would reply by singing 'Gentle Annie' or any other song, before beginning the dialogue.

Source

Rev. Walter Gregor. 'Further Report on Folklore in Scotland', App.1, Report of the Sixty-Seventh Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Toronto in August 1897 (London: Murray, 1898), 259.

BARRHEAD (NS5058: Strathclyde)

Information

'....our boyhood experiences as 'Goloshans'. I can remember seeking an entrance to give a performance - although I was only a camp-follower, and the real performers were my elder brother and others of his age. When St. George, the Black Prince and all the other leaders had made their several appearances and exits from the kitchen-stage, and it was coming on for the last turn of 'Wee Johnny Funny' - whose function was to 'collect the money' our host, and chief member of the audience would say in a loud whisper to his wife - "Mary, pit the poker in the fire". And that, of course, was the signal for the..... departure.....But.....'Willie' (the host) would find out who was treasurer of the gang, and make a contribution of as much as a whole sixpence - a lordly sum! - to the funds'.

Source

Robert Murray, Annals of Barrhead (Glasgow: Gibson & Son, 1942), p.15.

Comment

The chief value of this notice in its reference to the 'poker' custom, possibly a relic of the branding of beggars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see Chapter Five).

BIGGAR^a (NT0437: Strathclyde)

Text

Room	A room, a room, a Gallant Room! A room tae let us in, Stir up the fire and mak a light, For in this house there'll be a fight: If ye don't believe these words I say, I'll call in King George to clear the way.
King George	Here am I, King George, the great King of Macedonia, Who conquered all the world around Until he came to Scotland, And when it grew cold, To see such a little nation So frank, so free, so bold. The next man I call in to fight with me is Sir William Wallace.
Wallace	Here am I, Sir William Wallace, a noble knight, Who spent his blude for Scotland's right, And Scotland's freedom. And here I draw my shining weapon.
King George	Your shining weapon shines so clear What made you so bold as to venture here.
Wallace	To venture here you are not able, And by the point of my broadsword I'll make you disable.
King George	You, sir?
Wallace	Yes, I, sir.
King George	Draw your sword and try, sir.
Enter Wee Yin	Here two warriors going to fight, Who never fought before. I'll fix my sword between them both And what can I do more? Fight on, fight on, ye merry men, Fight on with all your speed. I'll give any man a thousand pounds Who kills King George quite deid. (They fight and King George falls.)

And here go I, Tea Toast and Butter,

Room

Do you see that spider up on the wall?
Ladies and gentlemen, that is all.

Johnny Funny

Here comes in wee Johnny Funny,
He's the man that collects the money:
Twae lang pooches doon tae his knees,
Yin for siller and yin for bawbees.
Ladies and gentlemen, ye' never grow fat,
If ye dinnie put a copper in Wee Johnny Funny's
Hat!

Information

The traditional performance ceased in 1938; the town New Year's Day bonfire was an early casualty of the war, and the performers had come to regard the play as the means by which was customarily collected to buy the ton of coal that sustained the fire for seven days. The play was revived in 1954, in this text compiled from the Biggar versions, and performed at the Bonfire.

The oldest tune known for the 'Once I was dead etc' is the polka tune called 'My sister Jane', though a few years ago the guisers spontaneously changed to a then popular tune called 'My ding-a-ling'.

It is possible that the part of 'Tea, Toast and Butter' was created c.1910 By Mr. Robert Moore (see below BIGGAR^b) a performer who had a natural stammer.

Source

Brian Lambie: Collection.

It was collected from Mrs. E.C.Graham (nee Brown) (b.1902) and her sister Agnes, in 1952.

BIGGAR^b

Text

The Glashins, the Glashins, the Glashins is my
name,

With sword and pistol by me side
And hope to win the game.

The game, sir, the game, sir,
It's not within your power,
I'll lay you down in inches,
In less than half an hour.

Mr hands are made of iron,
My body's made of steel.....

The reel, the rout,

The skitter, the scout,
The ringworm and the scurvy.

Information

The fragments were supplied by Mr. Robert Moore (b.c.1892), in 1954. The words probably date from c.1902, when he began guising, or 'seguising' as it was known in Biggar. Half a century later, he would seize a stick from the Bonfire, turn his jacket inside out, pull his bonnet on his head, and show the young generation how the 'Glashins' should be acted. In the matter of costume, he said that performers used the trimmings from wallpaper for adornment.

Source

Brian Lambie: Collection.

BIGGAR^c

Text

The Room	Step in, King George.
Turkish Knight	Here am I, Turkish Knight, From Turkey Land I come to fight. I fight you, King George, Who are a man of courage bold.
King George	Oh, my little fellow, You talk very bold. Just like stirks I've been told. Put out your purse and pay. I'll have satisfaction before I go away.
A Room	Here's two warriors come to fight, Who never fought before. I twixt my sword between you both, And what can I do more?

(The text concerning the fight, the cure, and the collection is not given, but it is said to be similar to that of BIGGAR^a)

Beelzebub	Here come I, Beelzebub, And over my shoulder I carry a club, And in my hand a drinking pan, And I think myself a jolly good man.
-----------	---

Information

This text was supplied by Mr. Jimmy Macmahon (b.1870), and was in performance in the early 1880s. It was performed in Biggar, but also taken to the village of Coulter and Symington, a few miles to the south-west. This is the earliest Biggar text.

Source

Brian Lambie: Collection.

BIGGAR^d

1928

New Year

Information

'towards the end of the year the boys perform a little play from door to door for the purpose of raising funds to buy coal for the New Year Fire, so that it may last throughout the following day. In this play such diverse characters as Sir William Wallace, Alexander, King of Macedon, and King George IV.....engage in mortal combat.....Doctor Brown raises the slain to life again with the contents of his marvellous box, and Johnny Funny takes the contributions.'

'Hogmanay'

.....

An' gin the day
Had dwined away,
'Seguised' to pay oor coal'.

Source

W.B. Pairman, Ballads o' Biggar (Glasgow: Millar & Lang, 1928), pp.5, 10.

Comment

At the time of writing, the play custom is being revived, led by Mr. Brian Lambie, and was performed in public by pupils of Biggar Primary School in 1982. The Biggar play, directed and performed by Biggar residents, without the interference of outsiders, is the only upholder of the 'Galoshan' custom in Scotland.

One of the many distinctions of the Biggar tradition is the use of the term 'seguised' which, it represents the transition from 'disguise' to 'guise', could be several centuries old, and a unique formation.

(see also SKIRLING)

BLANTYRE (NS6958: Strathclyde)

Text

Introduction (outside door)

Get up, auld wife and shake your feathers,
Dinna think that we are beggars;
We're only bairnies oot to play,
Get up, and gie us oor Hogmanay.

Two Goloshans Goloshans, goloshans, goloshans is my name,
A sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game.

1st Galoshan The game, sir, the game, sir,
Is not within thy power,
= I'd slay you down in inches
In less than half an hour

2nd Galoshan What's that you say?

1st Galoshan I say what I may.
Pull out thy purse and pay.

2nd Galoshan No, but with my good broad sword
I shall clear the way.

(they fight and one is 'killed'. A doctor enters, wearing a top hat.)

Chorus Here comes good old Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

2nd Galoshan What can you cure?

Doctor I can cure

2nd Galoshan Then what the devil can you cure?

Doctor The itch, the stitch, the scurvy and the scaw.
Take a taste of this bottle,
And pour it down thy throttle,
And if thou art not quite slain,
Arise, Jack and fight again.

1st Galoshan (jumping up and singing with Chorus:)
Once I was dead, and now I am alive,
Blest be the doctor that made me alive.
Bless the master of this house,
And the mistress too,
And all the little children who round the table grew,
With their pockets full of money,
And their table full of cheer,
I wish you all good Hogmanay,
And a Happy New Year.

Clown (enters, wearing a funny hat, his face dipped in flour, turning
somersaults)

Here comes wee Johnnie Funny
He's the boy that gathers the money,
With long, long pouches down to his knees,
Can hold twopence or threepence or three bawbees.

Information

The informant had received the text from her mother, who had received it from her mother. She was unaware that it was printed.

My body's clothed wi' steel
 My buckler's made o' knuckle-bone (huckle-bone)
 My sword is made o' steel
 I call for great St. George of England and he will fight wi' me.

(Some Gysarts in the character of Galashen, repeat the lines thus My head is made o' iron, my bodies made o' steel, my a - e is made o' knuckle-bone etc. Galashens is next killed by St. George.

Enter St. George of England.)

Here comes I, great St. George of England
 See my bloody weapon, it shines clear
 It reaches up to my very ear
 Let any man come fence me in

(Enter a boy)

As I was at a fencing school
 I saw a boy turn out a fool
 A fool, a fool, as you may see
 I deliver him up to fight wi' thee

(This dragon, of a boy, enters the list with St. George and stabs him, to the astonishment of the party present. He falls down on his knees, repeating as he looks at the dead body of St. George)

Ohou, ohou, I've killed a man
 I've killed my brother's eldest son.

(The servants are ordered to take up the body of St. George, but to their surprise, He says -)

I am, I am, I am not slain
 For I'll rise and fight that boy again

(The boy says to him)

To fight wi' me ye are not able
 For my sword will split your holy table.

(Then the boy transfixes him with his spear, as he is in the act of rising to fight him.
 A Doctor is next called for, by another of the company, and a second cries fifty pounds for a doctor
 Enter a doctor.)

Here comes I, a doctor, as good a doctor as Scotland ever bred

What diseases can you cure?

I can cure the itch, the stitch, the maligrumphs, the lep [probably leprosy] the pip, the roan, the blaen, the merls, the nerels, the blaes, the splaes, and the burning pintle

(Another asks him.)

What more diseases can you cure.

I can cure a man that has lain seven years in his grave
and more

They What will you take to cure this man?

I will take £10 to make a complete cure.

(They offer him six pounds which he refuses, then 8, and
lastly 9.)

Nine pounds and a bottle of wine will do

(and immediately he touches him with a small rod or wand,
orders him to rise up, Jack.

The others are re-animated with a touch of the wand, and
instantly spring up, all except Poor Jack, who rises
slowly and complaining of a severe pain, in the lumber
regions of his back)

Doctor What ails your back.

Jack There is a hole in it wad hold a head of a horse three fold.

Doctor Nonsense, Jack, you must tell me a better tale than this.

Jack I have been east, I have been west
I have been at the Sherckle-dock
And many were there, the warse o' the wear
And they tauld me, the Deel there, marries a' the.....
.....poor folk.

They What did you see at the Sherkle-dock?

Jack I saw roast upo' rungs, - upon tongues, ladies p-----g
spanish needles, ten ells lang auld wives flying in the
air, like the peelings o' ingins, swine playing upo' bagpipes
cats gaun upon pattens, and hens drinking ale.

(Scene last

At the termination of Jack's speech, the gysarts are
desired to drink with the family, after which they are
presented by each person in the house with a small sum
of money for their trouble. They lastly form themselves
into a ring, and as they dance round, all of them sing the
following carol.)

As we came by yon well we drank
We laid our gloves upon yon bank
By came Willie's piper to play
Took up our gloves and ran away
We followed him from town to town
We bad him lay our bonny gloves down
He laid them down upon yon stone,
Sing ye a carol, ours is done.

(Sometimes each of the gysarts sings a carol of the preceding sort.)

Information

'In the southern counties of Scotland, a number of young men dress themselves in a fantastic manner and paint or disguise their faces and in this situation go through towns, villages, farmsteads etc, enter into every house, where they think the inhabitants will allow them a small pittance, for which they perform a kind of dramatic game and call themselves 'guisarts'. Tradition says that it is very unlucky to let the gysarts go out of the house, where they have performed that tragedy (which they sometimes call Galatian, or Alexander of Macedon) without giving them some money to drink, to the success of the family.

'The Gysarts always dress themselves in white. They appear - like so many dead persons, robed in their shrouds, who have risen from their narrow homes, and the simile is still improved from their faces being all painted black or dark blue:- their mutches are sometimes adorned with ribbons of diverse colours, but these seldom enter into their dresses; as the plain mutch is most common. A sword is a necessary article of their dress, which they wear below their shroud or gown. The evening is the usual time for their appearance, though I have seen them perform in the sunshine, in some villages.

.....

'Every evening from Christmas to Fasternse'en is allowable for the Gysarts to make their perambulations'.

The extract is called 'The Game of Guisarts'. In a list of performers, all except the boy are labelled 'servants'.

Source

Thomas Wilkie, Ancient Customs and Ceremonies of the Lowland Scots, 1815, pp.148-154, National Library of Scotland MS. 123.

Comment

I have ventured to ascribe this text to Bowden, where Wilkie was born c.1789, in the belief that he is writing from his own experience.

This is the earliest detailed account of the Scottish folk play, and extremely valuable for the picture it gives of the Border custom about the turn of the century.

Wilkie may be mistaken in thinking 'Slashen' to be a variant of 'Galatian': it is more likely a corruption of 'Slasher' who slashes with his scimitar, shable or sabre (see for example LEITH).

The significance of the carol which closes the performance may lie in the symbolism of the well and the gloves. Wells were symbols of purity: gloves were used in contracts of vassalage by enfeoffing with a glove, or by securing a fief by presenting a glove. In view of the feudal colouring of the custom (see Chapter Three), it may be that the carol remembers the presentation of a glove by vassals renewing their tenancy, and therefore demonstrates the use of folk pastime to decorate social transactions.

CASTLE DOUGLAS (NX7662: Dumfries and Galloway)

Text

Here come I, Bold Hector;
Bold Slasher is my name;
Sword and pistol by my side,
I mean to win the game.

Here come I, King Beelzebub,
And over my shoulder I carry a club,
And in my hand a frying-pan,
And I am a better man.

Dear Sir.

I, sir.

Take out your sword and try, sir.

(One is wounded)

£10 for a doctor!

Here come I, old Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

What diseases can you cure?

All diseases to be sure,
The rout, the gout, the ringworm and the scurvy.

Cure that man.

A touch on the nose, a touch on the toes.
Rise up, Jack, and there he goes.

Here come I, wee Johnny Funny,
The best wee man to gather a' the money.
Lang pooches down to my knees,
I'm the wee boy to gather a' the bawbees.

Information

The boys sang a variant of the song recorded in Ayrshire. They did not know the word 'Goloshans', nor did the informant say by what name, if any, they knew the play. The informant had played at Hallowe'en, c.1888.

Source

(Annie Dunlop): 'Ayrshire Notes' in The Kilmarnock Standard and Ayrshire Weekly News, 20th March 1948, p.3, cols 1,2.

CLAREBRAND (NX7666: Dumfries and Galloway)

Text

Here comes I bold Hector
Bold Slasher is my name,
With sword and pistol by my side
I'm sure to win the game.

You, sir?

I, sir.

Take out your sword and try, sir.

Die, sir.

(he 'dies')

Oh, what is this that I have done?
I've slain my father's only son.
Is there a doctor in the town?

Here comes I old Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

What can you cure?

The rout, the gout, the broken snout.
If the devil's in a man, I knock him out.
Get up, Jack, and sing a song.

Oh, once I was dead, and now I'm alive
God bless the old doctor that made me survive.

Here comes I, wee Johnny Funny,
I'm the wee boy to gather the money.
Big lang pouches doon tae my knees
I'm the wee boy to gether bawbees.

Information

'As at Hogmanay, the young people went out guising. Hallowe'en's dramatic performance was almost universal. The cast included two duellists with wooden swords, a doctor and a wee fellow in charge of the money bag'.

Source

Clarebrand District: A History (for Scottish Rural Women's Institutes),
Clarebrand Women's Rural Institute (Castle Douglas: McElroy, 1965)
p.37.

CRIEFF (NN8621: Tayside)

Information^a

'Hogmanay in the Olden Times. This ancient festive evening used

to be observed with great ado on the Saturdays previous to Auld Hansel Monday; but since the modern arts of civilisation shifted the New Year's festivities to the first days of the Year, guizors have deteriorated from full-grown men and women to children. At one time bexies of young men and women decked themselves in the most antic and ridiculous apparel their imaginations could suggest. All the available musical talent was pressed into service, and when at all possible, each squad secured the services of a fiddler, who also donned antic habiliments, of which the following is a sample, worn by a Bridgend fiddler known as 'The Doctor': Shoes, with spats, blue duffel trousers; with spatter-dashes; long drab coat, with short body, high collar, and long tails, with clear brass buttons that would do for lids to ale tumblers, a la mode 1800 - the whole being surmounted by a red Kilmarnock nightcap with a black top as large as a dahlia. To one of the coat buttons hung a staff or cormack, which dangled on his knees. These parties generally made it a point to visit the different houses in the country at different times, where they sung and danced.....The songs....(included) 'Bold Brannin on the Moor' etc. This latter continued long a favourite.....

Source

Crieff: Its Traditions and Characters with Anecdotes of Strathearn (Edinburgh: Macara, 1881), p.232.

Comment

The justification for including this account is in the name accorded to the fiddler of Bridgend, and its comment on the decay of custom. The book is claimed to cover the years in the main 1801-60. Note that the 'Fiddler' who plays for the pst-play singing is here called the 'Doctor'; and still wears some of the costume, and carries the 'rod' or 'wand', of the folk-play doctor. 'Auld Hansel Monday' was the first Monday after New Year's Day O.S.

CRIEFF ^b

Text

'(But now the ring is formed and the play begins.
Jack Macglashan swaggers forward and pronounces in a
round voice:)

Macglashan

Macglashan, Macglashan, Macglashan is my name,
My sword and buckler by my side, I hope to win the
game.

The King

The game, sir, the game, sir, is not within your power,
I'll draw my bloody dagger and slay you to the floor.

...

(a brisk fight ensues, and Jack falls wounded)

Then call for Doctor Brown, the best old greasy doctor
in the town.

(Out springs Doctor Brown with suitable medical props....)

Doctor Here am I, Doctor Brown,
The best old greasy doctor in the town.

King How far have you travelled?

Doctor Oh, round the world and back again.

King What did you see there?

Doctor Mountains of porridge and rivers of butter milk.

King Anything else?

Doctor Yes, cocks and hens with knives and forks in their
backs, running down the streets calling out,
'who'll eat me? Who'll eat me?

King Anything more?

Doctor No.

King Anything less?

Doctor No.

.....

King What'll you take to cure a man?

Doctor Ten pounds and a bottle of wine.

King I'll give you three.

Doctor Ten pounds and a bottle of wine.

King I'll give you three.

Doctor Ten pounds and a bottle of wine.

King Cure him then.

.....

Doctor Two drops to your nose and one to your toes.
Rise, Jack, and sing.

Macglashan I can't

Doctor Why not?

Macglashan I've got a hole in my side that would let a
coach and four through it.

Doctor How did you get that?

Macglashan Fighting the French.

Doctor How many did you kill?

Macglashan All but one.

Doctor What happened to him?

Macglashan He ran away.

(The Doctor once more stoops over Jack with a slightly stronger potion.)

Doctor Three drops to your nose and two to your toes.
 Rise up, Jack, and sing.

..Jack..
(and all)

Once I was dead and now I'm alive,
Blessed be the doctor that made me alive.
We'll all join hands and we'll never fight no more,
And we'll be as brothers as we were before.
Bless the master of this house and bless the mistress,
too,
With their pockets full of money and their bottles
full of beer,
We wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New
Year.

(...clapping and congratulations.....)

..JohnnyFunny.. Here am I, wee Johnny Funny,
 Wi' my tunny,
 I'm the man that takes the money.....'

Information

'....an old man's memory - the Guisers' play of Macglashan as performed in Crieff, Perthshire, about 1884....the last of the year that saw the performances of the Disguisers or Guisers.

There were several large families in Crieff in the eighties. Some time before the end of the year, a group of boys get together from one or two families of playmates, and prepare the well-known Guisers' play. The leader would take the part of Macglashan. That is the Galgacus character, according to E.K. Chambers, although it has been suggested that he is Mac, that is to say the son of, the Galatian, Saint George himself.

.....other parts of the King, the Doctor and Johnny Funny.... There were also a few supernumeraries. The play was rehearsed..... disguisings, crude ones, were chosen... a grown-up jacket, turned out, and old grown-up hats squashed or folded upon the head.

....performances were mostly to grown-ups at home, or to friends of the family, as anything like begging was frowned upon by his mother.

....The boys would be invited into the kitchen. Mother would certainly remain as audience and any grown-ups who could be bothered with the ploys of children. The age of the players was much younger

than the (Thomas) Hardy band.....'

Source

M.J.P. Lawrence, 'Guisers' Play', Scots Magazine, N S 66, No.3 (Dec. 1956), 197-201.

Comment

The custom in Crieff may not be ancient. The town was completely destroyed in 1716, and repaired in 1731. The town became an industrial centre for a while in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and a spa later in the nineteenth century. The interruption in the town's history, and the cause for immigration in the nineteenth century, may well mean that the play in this location is a relatively recent transplant.

CULROSS (NS9885: Fife)

Text

Here come I, the great King of Macedonia,
Conquered all the world round.
When first I came to Scotland my heart was so cold
To see this little nation so proud and so bold,
So proud and so bold, so frank and so free,
That I called upon Gallachen to fight along with me.

Here come I, Gallachen --
Gallachen is my name --
My sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

The game, sir, the game, is not within your power,
For with this little weapon I'll slay you in less than
half-an-hour.

What's that you say?

I say what I mean.

Well, let us begin. (dead man)

Any doctors in this town?

Yes, here come I, the little Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

What can you cure?

The rout, the gout, the ringworm, and the scurvy!

Do you think you could cure a dead man?

Oh, well, I'll try. Here's a little box of inkey-

pinkey I got from my great-grandmother-in-law. Put
a little on his back, put a little on his head. Rise
up, Jack, and sing a song.

Once I was dead, but now I'm alive -
Blessed be the doctor who made me alive! -
And we'll all join hands, and we'll never fight no more,
And we'll be happy comrades, as we were before.

Information

The informant was taught the text by an uncle from Culross in 1893.

Source

The Border Magazine, 25, No.295 (July 1920), 108, Walker & Son, Galashiels,
and Menzies & Co., Edinburgh and Glasgow. (Reprinted contribution by
G.B.C. to the 'Weekly Scotsman', which edition I have been unable to
trace.).

CUMNOCK (NS5620: Strathclyde)

Text

A--room! A--room! ye gallant boys; and give me room to rhyme.
Ye think we're of the dirty crew; we're of the royal prime,
Stir up the fire and give us light for in this house there'll be
a fight.

If you don't believe these words, I say: Step in, Sir William
Wallace, and clear the way.

Wallace Here come I, Sir William Wallace, stout as I am brave.
Many a bold Englishman I've sent to his grave.
'Tis forty years since Bruce's fa'. If I'd him here
I'd lay him low.

Bruce Here come I, King Robert the Bruce, my battle-axe over
my shoulder.
England, Ireland to reduce, and Scotland to reign over.
I killed a dog in yonder field, who tried to make a
Scotsman yield;
I'd rather see my blood to flow, and lay Sir William
Wallace in the snow.

Wallace You, sir?

Bruce I, sir.

Wallace Take out your sword and try, sir.

(They draw swords and engage with three strokes upward
and one downward. This is repeated till Bruce is
slain with a stab and lies down).

Goloshans Here comes I, Galoshans; Galoshans is my name,
With sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the
game.

A penny or tippence 'll dae ye nae hairm, Sixpence
or a shillin' 'll no break your aim.
Ladies and gentlemen, you'll never grow fat, if ye
don't put a penny in my auld hat.

(Collection)

Dr. Broon Here comes I, sauld Dr. Broon, the best sauld doctor in
the toon.
I cured a man wi' a broken thoom, sae whit dae ye
think o' Dr. Broon?

Wallace Say on, sir!

Dr. Broon As I was going over the long bridge of Belfast, and the short one of Derry, I met my Auntie Pat. She roars 'Pat', I roars 'What?' She took me up three stairs and down five. She gave me a big bowl of broth which took me three nights to get to the bottom of it.

Wallace Say on, sir'.

Dr. Broon The joint of a flea's leg. I broke it in two, and put a half in one pocket and another in that. Now the next day, as I was going over the same old bridge, I met a big Newfoundland dog. It came sniff, sniff, sniff, till it sniffed one of the bones out of my pocket, and then it ran. It ran and ran over hitches and ditches near 200 miles. At last I caught him by the tail, and swung him three times round my head. He spit in my fist. Do you feel the smell of it yet, sir?

Wallace Say on, sir.

Dr. Broon Rise up, all ye dead men, and sing a song.

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Source

(Annie Dunlop): 'Ayrshire Notes' in The Kilmarnock Standard and Ayrshire Weekly News, No.4422, Dunlop and Drennan, Kilmarnock, 13.3.1948, p.3, cols 1,2.

Comment

It has been suggested that the Irish element was added to this text in manuscript rather than in performance by an Irishman called Lorimer (1872 - 1954).

Source

Alex. Helm Collection.

DARNICK^a (NT5334: Borders)

Text

McGlashan	Here comes in McGlashan McGlashan is my name With sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
Black Knight	The game, sir, the game, sir, It's not within your power, I'll lay your body low, sir, In less than half an hour.
McGlashan	If you lay my body low, sir, I'll lay your body high; I don't care a button I'll conquer or I'll die.
Black Knight	Here comes in the Black Knight The King of Macedone, Who conquered all the known world, But let Scotland alone. When I came to Scotland, My heart grew weak and cold, To see a small nation Look so stout and bold. So startling and so bold, So frank and so free, Call in McGlashan to fight with me.
McGlashan	You, sir?
Black Knight	I, sir.
McGlashan	Take your sword and try, sir. (They draw their swords and start fighting. One falls to the ground.)
Actor	Oh horrible, horrible, what have I done? I've kilt my father's only son. Round the kitchen, round the hall, A very good doctor I do call.
Dr. Brown	(Comes in with stick) Here comes in old Dr. Brown The best old doctor in the town.
Actor	How far have you travelled?
Dr. Brown	From York to Cork.
Actor	How much further?
Dr. Brown	From knife to fork.
Actor	What have you seen in your travels?

Johnny Funny Here comes in Wee Johnny Funny,
 I'm the boy for a' the money;
 Long pooches doon tae his kneees,
 Fine for haudin bawbees.

Information

The text was given by Mr. William Hastie, of Darnick, who had learned it sixty years earlier (i.e. c.1865) from older boys. He had never seen it in print. The boys wore their fathers' shirts, tied round with gaily-coloured sashes, and blacked their faces, or wore false faces. They made 'fools' hats' from wallpaper, a foot high, with fringes of different coloured paper. The fighters had wooden swords, and Dr. Brown wore a tailed coat and lum hat. The guisers went about from Christmas to the New Year.

Mrs. Hastie, who came from Galloway, talked of turnip lanterns, and said that Belzebub had a 'tattie chapper' (potato knife), but it is not clear whether this last item of information refers to Darnick or to Galloway.

Source

James Carpenter Collection.

DARNICK ^b

Text

Sir William Here comes in Sir William Wallace Wight
 Wallace Who spent his sword in Scotland's right;
 Within a right, within a ree,
 I draw my bloody weapon.

My bloody weapon shines so clear,
 I venture here, I venture there;
 The next I call in the Black Knight.

Black Knight Here comes in the Black Knight
 The Great King of Macedonia,
 Who conquered all the world around
 But left Scotland alone,

When I first came into Scotland
 My heart was so cold,
 To see that great nation
 So stout and so bold

So stout and so bold
 So frank and so free,
 Call in Galashen to fight with me.

Galachen Here comes in Galashen
 Galashen of great renown
 Who first went through the army
 Any then took the crown.

(or 'Galashen is my name/ With sword and pistol
by my side/ I hope to win the game'.)

Black Knight You, sir?

Galashen I. sir.

Black Knight Take your sword and try, sir.

(They spar with wooden swords, and Galashen falls.)

O see, o see what I have done,
I've killed my father's oldest son.
Around the kitchen, around the hall,
A medico doctor I do call.

Dr. Brown Here comes in Old Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

Black Knight How far have you travelled?

Dr. Brown From knife to fork.

Black Knight What have you seen in your travels?

Dr. Brown Mountains of beef and rivers of Gravy.

Black Knight Anything else?

Dr. Brown Yes, sir. I once seen a cat chase a rat
Round my father's old tiled hat.

Black Knight Well, how much will ye take to cure this dead man?
Five pound?

Dr. Brown Five pounds! Five pounds widna put a button on
 my shirt.

Black Knight Ten pounds?

Dr. Brown Ten pounds! Ten pounds widna put a tacket on my
 old shoe.

(Line(s) forgotten about 'Jack coming down him
and eating them all up')

Black Knight A hundred pounds!

Dr. Brown Well, perhaps that might do.
I have here in my pocket a little bottle of
Hoxy Croxy.
Put a little to his nose, and a little to his toes
(bun)
Rise up, Jack, and sing a song.

Jack (singing) Once I was dead, sir,
 But now I'm alive,
 Blessed be the doctor

That made me to revive.

There's four of us all
And all Darnick boys are we
And we're all going around
Some houses (lasses) for to see
Some lasses for to see,
And some pleasure for to have,

God bless the master of this house
The mistress and require
And all the little babies
Around the kitchen fire.

Go down to your cellars
And see what you can find,
Your barrels be not empty
I hope you will provide.

I hope you will provide,
With some whisky and some beer,
I wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy, happy New Year.

(After a 'concert', either Belzebub or Johnny Funny enters.)

Belzebub Here comes in Old Belzebub
 And on his shoulder he carries a club
 And in his hand a frying pan
 And thinks himself a jolly old man.

Johnny Funny Here comes in Johnny Funny
 He's the boy for all your money
 Lang pooches doon tae his knees
 Fine for haudin Bawbees.

Information

The text was supplied by William Shiel, of Darnick, who had learned it as a boy c.1890. He had never seen it in print.

Source

James Carpenter Collection.

DUNFERMLINE ^a (MT0987: Fife)

Information

The children gave much consideration beforehand to the disguise to be adopted, the houses to be visited, and the drama they would perform. Three dramas competed for the children's interests, 'the conflict between Norval and Glenalvon', 'Rob Roy', and the Gentle Shepherd' apart from the one the writer referred to by the line 'Here Comes I, Gallashan, Gallashan, is my name'. Their disguises were sometimes as

gypsies, and they blackened their faces, made long beards from yarn unravellings, and obtained pieces of hoop iron from the cooperage for swords.

Source

A. Stewart, Reminiscences of Dunfermline, Sixty Years Ago (1886), pp. 151-3.

Comment

The 'conflict between Norval and Glenalvon' comes from Home's melodrama Douglas (1756), Rob Roy was recreated for the stage in from Scott's novel, and The Gentle Shepherd, written by Ramsay 1720-23, was noted in school performance in Haddington as early as 1729.

Source

Terence Tobin, Plays by Scots 1660-1800 (Iowa: University of Iowa, 1974).

DUNFERMLINE ^b

Text

Here comes I, Gallashan,
Gallashan is my name,
My sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

'Inkie pinkie' was used in the cure.

Information

The writer is insistent on the prevalence of the custom "30-40 years ago". The play was in the possession of "every Dunfermline child", and was performed "in almost every house in the city and districts on hogmanay night". The play's combatants brandished the Cooper's hoop-metal.

The play was extinct at the time of writing.

Source

The Dunfermline Journal, 1 Jan 1887, p.4, col. 2.

EARLSTON (NPF5738: Borders)

Text

First man Radd up sticks, radd up stills
 Here comes in a pack o' fills,

A pack o' fills ahint the door,
The lack was never seen afore.

(sometimes

Silence, silence, gentlemen,
Upon me cast an eye,
My name is Alexander,
I'll sing a trage-die.)

The next that I call in
He is Galashins bold
He fought the battle of Quebec
And won the crown of gold.

Galashins

Here comes in Galashins,
Galashins is my name
Sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game.

First Man

The game, sir, the game, sir,
It's not within your power,
I'll cut you into inches
In less than half an hour.

Galashins

You, sir?

First Man

Yes, I, sir!

Galashins

Take your sword and try, sir,
(They fight with wooden swords, and Galashins is
killed.)

King George

Here am I, King George,
A man of courage bold,
And now ye've killed Galashins,
And on the floor he's laid
You'll suffer for it now
I'm very sore afraid.
Is there a doctor to be had?

Dr. Brown

Yes, Dr. Brown.

First Man

Call in Dr. Brown.

Dr. Brown

Here comes in old Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.
I've been in France, I've been in Spain
I've come to cure the dead again.

First Man

How far have ye travelled?

Dr. Brown

From the bed to the pisspot.

First Man

What have ye seen on yer travels?

Dr. Brown

Trees blown up by men's ass
And women raking.....

First Man

What can ye cure?

.....

What'll ye take to cure this dead man?

Dr. Brown

Ten pound ten.

First Man

Would eight not do?

Dr. Brown

Eight! Eight wouldna put on as guid a coal fire as the Divil could go up tae the top of the lum and pish it out.

First Man

Would nine not do?

Dr. Brown

Perhaps nine, with a bottle of wine.

First Man

What's yer cure?

Dr. Brown

Hoxxy Croxy.

First Man

What's it made of?

Dr. Brown

Hen's feathers, turkeys blethers,
All mixed up with the grey cat's tail.

First Man

Gang on wie yer cure!

Dr. Brown

I've a little bottle by my side called Hoxxy Croxy.
Put a little to his beak and a little to his bum
Rise up Jack and sing a song.

All

Once I was dead,
But now I'm alive,
Blessed be the hand
That made me to revive.

Bless the master of this house
The mistress also
And all the pretty babies
That round the table go.

This night is called Christmas
A happy good New Year
And have as many guineas
As the days are in the year

Blinkin Jock the Cobbler
He had a blinkin eye
He sold his wife for half a crown
And what the waur wis I.

Belzebub

Here comes in Old Belzebub
Over my shoulder I carry a club,
In my hand a frying pan,
And thinks myself a jolly old man.

or

Here comes in Johnny Funny
I'm the man that takes the money
Lang pooches doon tae my knees
Grand for haudin bawbees.

Information

The text was given by David Hogg, a handloom weaver, who had learned it some sixty years earlier, c. 1865, from older guisers. The costume had been man's white shirts, kite-shaped paper hats, in fancy colours, with fringes of paper. They blacked their faces, or wore false faces. The combatants carried their wooden swords in sashes. Dr. Brown wore a long-tailed coat, and preferably a lum hat. They performed for about ten days, ending on Christmas Night.

Source

James Carpenter Collection.

EDINBURGH (M2573: Lothian)

Information (a)

Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;

It seems certain, that the Mummers of England, who (in Northumberland at least) used to go about in disguise to the neighbouring houses, bearing the then useless ploughshare; and the Guisards of Scotland, not yet in total disuse, present in some indistinct degree, a shadow of the old mysteries, which were the origin of the English Drama. In Scotland, (me ipso teste) we were wont, during my boyhood, to take the characters of the apostles; at least of Peter, Paul and Judas Iscariot; the first had the keys, the second carried a sword, and the last the bag, in which the dole of our neighbours' plumb-cake was deposited. One played a champion, and recited some traditional rhymes, another was

.....Alexander, King of Macedon,
Who conquered all the world but Scotland alone;
When he came to Scotland his courage grew cold,
To see a little nation courageous and bold.

These, and many such verses, were repeated, but by rote, and unconnectedly. There were also occasionally, I believe, a Saint George. In all, there was a confused resemblance of the ancient mysteries, in which the characters of Scripture, the Nine Worthies, and other popular personages, were usually exhibited.

Source

Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott, Baronet (Edinburgh: Constable, 1821), VI, 'Marmion', pp. 308-9, 487.

Information (b)

"I remember in childhood playing judas and bearing the bag - the part assigned to me on account of my lameness though how that corresponded with the traditionary idea of the Apostate I cannot tell.

.....

In Edinburgh these Exhibitions have been put down by the police in a great measure the privilege of going disguised having been of late years so much abused that one party in particular who call'd themselves Rob Roy's gang went so far into the spirit of their part as actually to commit theft".

Source

The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, ed. H.J.C. Grierson, 1825-1826, IX (London: Constable, 1935), 445.

Comment

Scott was born in 1771, and was a schoolboy in Edinburgh 1779-1783. The above reminiscence is of these years, I believe, and probably make Scott the first 'known', and the most celebrated, participant in the British folk play.

EDINBURGH ^c . . .Text

Galation	Here am I, Galation; Galation is my name, With sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
St. Andrew	The game, sir, the game, sir, is not within your power, I'll cut you down in inches in less than half an hour.
Galation	My body's made of iron, my head is made of steel, I'll draw my bloody weapon, and slay you on the field.
St. George	Here am I, St. George. I shine in arms bright, A gallant champion and a worthy knight.
St. Patrick	Who is St. George but St. Patrick's knave, Who stole his horse, and was sold for a slave?
St. George	I say, St. Patrick, you lie, sir. (They fight, St. Patrick goes down.)
Doctor	Here am I, the good Doctor Jones, With a leek for the lug and a salve for the bones, Dominum romanum nickitum segs, Take up the drink, and get upon your legs.

St. Patrick Once I was dead,
 But now I'm alive
 Bless'd be the doctor
 That made me revive.

(They all joined hands and sang some popular chorus.)

Information

The text was in use in Edinburgh c.1870.

Source

A letter from James M. Thompson in The Scotsman, 6th Jan 1903, p.6, col. 2, noted by Sam Callander, and communicated to me by Paul Smith.

Comment

A century of tradition is covered by these three accounts, from c.1770 with young Sir Walter, the police action of c.1825, and the ascription of (c) to c.1870.

EDNAM (NT7337: Borders)

Text

First Man	Let's ack the Guisarts? Rad up sticks, rad up stools, Here comes in a pack o' fools, A pack o' fools ahint the door, The like was never seen afore.
Galashan	Here comes in Galashan, Galashan is my name, Wi' a sword and a pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
Belzebub	Here comes in old Belzebub, And over his shoulder he carries his club, And in his hand a frying-pan, And he thinks hisself a jolly old man. The game, sir, the game, sir, It's not within your power, I'll cut you into inches In space of half an hour.
Galashan	Yes, sir.
Belzebub	I, sir.
Galashan	Take your sword and try, sir. (They fight; Belzebub gives him a punch in the guts with a stick.)

Source

David Anderson: James Carpenter Collection.

Comment

The idea of the guisers being disguised as girls is a misinterpretation of the white overgarments traditionally worn by the players.

The hump-backed guiser appears in Scotland only here and in Kelso^a. David Anderson's address was noted by Carpenter as being 'Edraman, Kelso', which the Kelso Post Office inform me is most likely Ednam.

EDROM (NT8255: Borders)

Text

Galashen	Here comes in Galashen, Galashen is my name, A sword and pistol by my side I hope to win the game.
Second	The game, sir, the game, sir, It's not within your power, I'll cut you into inches In less than half an hour.
Galashen	You, sir?
Second	I, sir.
Galashen	Take your sword and try, sir! (They fight with wooden swords and one falls.)
Player	Is there a doctor in the town?
Dr. Brown	Here comes in old Doctor Brown The best old doctor in the town. I have a bottle in my pocket called hoxy croxy. Put a little to his beak and a little to his bum Rise up, Jack, and sing a song (or, 'fight again').
All	Once he was dead But now he's alive Here's to the doctor That made me to revive.
Belzebub	Here comes in old Belzebub, And over his shoulder he carries a club And in his hand a frying pan, He thinks himself a jolly old man.
Betty Funny	Here comes in old Betty Funny

Take all your bread and money,
 Long pooch doon till her knees,
 Fine for haudin the bawbees.

Information

The text was supplied by John Lyall of Galashiels, who had learned it in Edrom sixty-three years earlier (in 1862). The guisers blacked their faces, or wore false faces. One was dressed as a girl.

He reported that the guisers used to go to 'the houses of the gentry', and included among these Spottiswoode House (q.v.).

Source

James Carpenter Collection.

Comment

Some doubt is cast on the claim that the Edrom troupe visited Spottiswoode House by the fact that the two places are fifteen miles apart.

FALKIRK ^a (NS8880: Central)

Information

Falkirk Jan. 4 1702.

This day the Session being informed of John Martin and Andrew Russell servants to John Walker at Carsebank, George Morrison servant to Carsebank, David Smily, servant to William - , John Walson servant to Alison Gardiner in Milnerhall, William Finlay in - and James - , son to Robert - Mason they did upon the last night of December last bypast go about in disguise acting things unseemly, they appoint their officer to - them to appear before them that eighteenth inst.

Falkirk Jan. 18 1702.

This day the Officer reported to the Session that according to their appointment he - John Martin, Andrew Russell, George Morrison, David Smily John Walson, William Finlay and James - who being compeared and being examined confessed that upon the last night of December last they went about in disguise in an unseemly manner, the Minister having laid before them the sinfulness of their deed, they professed they were sorrowful for the same, wherefore they were past with a Sessional rebuke, being notified if they should be found guilty of the like in time coming, that the Session would proceed after another manner with them'.

Source

Falkirk Kirk Session minutes, (CH2/400/4 at p.31), Scottish Record Office.

Comment

A full transcription of the minutes is given, the device - indicating an illegible word.

The question of whether this is in fact the earliest reference to the 'modern' folk play in Scotland, and perhaps in Britain, hinges on the use of the word 'acting' in the first passage. I am inclined to believe that some kind of drama was being performed, and that the Kirk Session chose to withdraw the charge in the second instance, and substitute the more acceptable crime of 'disguising', in return for a plea of guilty, and a promise never to repeat the offence.

FALKIRK ^b

Text

(Given here with the original notes.)

Rise up guidewife and shake your feathers!
 Dinna think that we're beggars,
 We are bairns com'd to play
 And for to seek our hogmanay;
 Redd up stocks, redd up stools,
 Here comes in a pack o' fools.
 Muckle head and little wit stand behint the door,
 But sicaset as we are, ne'er were here before.

(One with a sword, who corresponds with the Rollet¹,
 now enters and says:)

Here comes in the great King of Macedon,
 Who has conquered all the world but Scotland alone.
 When I came to Scotland my heart grew so cold
 To see a little nation so stout and so bold,
 So stout and so bold, so frank and so free!
 Call upon Galgacus to fight wi' me.

(If national partiality does not decide us, we think this speech points to the origin of the story to be the Roman invasion under Agricola, and the name of Galgacus, (although Galacheus and Saint Lawrence are sometimes substituted, but most probably as corruptions) makes the famous struggle for freedom by the Scots under that leader, in the battle fought at the foot of the Grampians, the subject of this historical drama.)

Galgacus enters Here comes in Galgacus -- wha does not fear my name?
 Sword and buckler by my side, I hope to win the game!

(They close in a sword fight, and in the 'hash smash' the chief is victorious. He says:)

Down Jack! Down to the ground you must go --
 Oh O! What's this I've done?
 I've killed my brother Jack, my father's only son!
 Call upon the doctor.

Doctor enters Here comes in the best doctor that Scotland ever bred.

very influential, both directly and, I suspect, indirectly through the Peebles^a version published about fifteen years later.

FALKIRK ^c

Text

Open your door and let us in,
We hope your favour for to win;
We're none of your roguish sort,
But come of your noble train.
If you don't believe what I say,
I'll call in the King of Macedon,
And he shall clear his way!

(Enter King.)

Here in come I, the great King of Macedon;
I've conquered this world round and round;
But when I came to Scotland, my courage grew so cold,
To see a little nation so stout and so bold;

If you don't believe what I say,
I'll call in Prince George of Ville, and he shall
clear his way!

(Enter Prince George of Ville.)

Here in come I, Prince George of Ville,
A Ville of valiant light
Here I sit and spend my right
***and reason:
Here I draw my bloody weapon,
My bloody weapon shines so clear,
I'll run it right into your ear.
If you don't believe what I say
I'll call in the Slasher, and he shall clear his way!

(Enter Slasher.)

Here in come I, Slasher; Slasher is my name;
With sword and buckler by my side, I hope to win the
game.

Source

Robert Chambers: Select Writings of Robert Chambers, Vol. VII, Popular Rhymes of Scotland, 3rd Edition, with additions, (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1841), 299-304.

FALKIRK d

Text

Stir up the fire and give us light
For in this house there'll be a fight
If you don't believe a word I say,
I'll send for Bob Slasher to clear the way.

Slasher Here comes in Bob Slasher,
Slasher is my name,
With my sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game.

Jack You, sir?

Slasher I, sir.

Jack Take out your sword and try, sir.

Dr. Brown Here comes in old Doctor Brown, the best old doctor
in the town.

Slasher What can you cure?

Dr. Brown The rout, the tout, the ringworm and the scurvy.

Slasher Can you cure a dead man?

Dr. Brown I'll try, sir.
(he approaches the 'corpse' with a medicine bottle)
Put a little to his nose,
And a little to his tongue,
Rise up, Jack, and give us a song.

(Jack rises, all join hands and sing, to the tune of
the chorus from 'Oor Guidman cam' hame at e'en'.)

All Once we were dead but now we're alive,
Thanks to the doctor who made us all revive.

(Each performer sang at least one song before the
final speech.)

Johnny Funny Here comes in wee Johnny Funny,
The best wee man tae draw the money,
Wi' long, long pooches doon tae his knees,
Please spare us a ha'penny, a penny, or three bawbees.

Information

The custom was performed at Hallowe'en and Hogmanay, and the information refers to the year 1895. At the time of writing (1925), Hogmanay guising by children did not involve the folk play. For costume, Slasher and Jack usually wore tin helmets, old soldiers' tunics, and wooden swords. Dr. Brown wore a swallow-tail coat and a 'lum' hat. Johnny Funny contrived to look as funny as possible. The informant's troupe started from their homes in Howgate and visited all the houses in the Arnothill direction.

Source

Our Christmas Annual, 'The Guisers', 'The Falkirk Mail', December 1925,
p.81.

FALKIRK e

Text

1st Entrant Here comes in the Rameroo Boy,
The Rameroo Boy is my name.
Stir up that fire and give us light,
For in this house shall be a fight.

2nd Entrant Here comes in Sir William Wallace,
Sir William Wallace is my name,
A sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

3rd Entrant The game, sir, the game, sir,
Is not within your power.
I shall lay you down in inches,
In less than half an hour.

William Wallace You, sir?

3rd Entrant Yes, me, sir.

Wallace Draw your sword and try, sir. Friend or Foe?

3rd Entrant Foe.

Wallace Then down you must go.

(He makes a thrust with his sword, and the third
entrant falls.)

Doctor Here comes wee Doctor Brown,
The best wee doctor in the town.

Wallace What can you cure, sir?

Dr. Brown I can cure Rout, Gout, Lumbago, and Scurvy.

Wallace Can you cure that man, sir?

Doctor Yes, sir.
Eenty peenty on his nose,
Eenty peenty on his nose (?toes)
Get up, Jack, and give us a song.

(The man rises and all sing.)

Tommy Funny Here comes in wee Tommy Funny,
The best wee man to gather the money.

Long, long pooches doon tae my knees,
Tuppence, or threepence, or three bawbees.

Source

James Arnott Collection.

Comment

'Rameroo' probably derives from 'Room, a room.....'

FALKIRK f

Text

Talking-Man

Rise up, auld wife, and shake your feathers,
Dinna think that we are beggers;
We are but bairnies out to play,
Rise up and give us our Hogmanay
And I will show you the prettiest thing
That e'er was seen at Christmas time.

(Picks up the poker and suits the action to the words)

Stir up the fire be on your mettle
For in this house will be a battle
If you don't believe a word I say
I'll send my players all away.

(Sir William Wallace then enters and in swashbuckling style declares he is the rightful King of Scotland. He and Bruce duel, Wallace falls and Bruce is told to cheer up by the Talking-Man who brings in the Doctor.)

Here comes in old Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

Talking-Man

What can you cure?

Dr. Brown

The rout, the tout, the ringworm and the scurvy.

Talking-Man

Can you cure a dead man?

Dr. Brown

I can try.

(He takes a medicine bottle from his bag, removes the cork, and suiting the action to the words, says,)

Put a little to his nose,
Put a little to his tongue,
Rise up Sir William and give us a song.

All sing

(to the tune of 'Oor Guidman cam' hame at e'en')

Once we were dead but now we are alive,
Thanks to the doctor who made us all revive.

(After the revival, the dancer danced the sword-dance with the wooden swords, and the singer sang music hall songs, including 'Skinnymalink was very thin, he was as thin as a hosepipe'.)

Johnny Funny

Here comes in wee Johnny Funny,
The best wee man to draw the money,
Lang, lang pooches doon tae his knees,
A penny, or tuppence, or three bawbees.

(The cast were then given lemonade, Christmas Cake, shortbread and black bun, and their bag was filled with apples, oranges and nuts. On leaving, the Talking-Man said),

Bless the maister o' this house,
The Mistress bless also,
And a' the bonnie bairnies
That roun' the table go.

Information

The players marched through the streets headed by a boy playing a penny whistle. They arranged beforehand to visit houses where they would be made welcome. The kitchen would be full of neighbours, the youngest children watching from the top of the recessed bed. The gas-light was turned off during the performance, which seemed more eerie in the fire-light.

The combatants were dressed in knights' armour, with wooden shields and swords. Bruce wore a paper crown. The Talking-Man was dressed like a circus ring-master, and carried a dog-whip. The doctor wore a paper hat, and carried a 'wee black bag'. Johnny Funny wore an over-large adult jacket and a cloth cap. The performance was well-rehearsed.

The performance was remembered in the years 1905-10, in the poorer part of Falkirk, where there were numerous tenements housing working-class families.

Source

John M. Anderson, 'The Galoshauns and the Guisers', Edinburgh Tatler and a letter by the author to Paul S. Smith in March 1977.

FORFAR (NO4550: Tayside)

Information

When guisers called, they said "Onything for the guisers?" The correct reply was, "Nothing but a red-hot poker". In spite of this, they got in and did their guising.'

Source

Jean C. Rodger, Lang Strang, (Forfar: ?, 1972).

Comment

The 'guising' did not include the play, but this reference is included for the reference to the 'hot poker' (cf. BARRHEAD).

GALASHIELS ^a (NT4936: Borders)

Text

Black Knight	Here comes in I, the Black Knight
Galashens	Here comes in Galashens, Golashins is my name; My sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
Black Knight	The game, sir! The game, sir! It lies not in your power, I'll cut you into inches, In less than half an hour.
Galashens	You, sir?
Black Knight	I, sir!
Golashens	Draw your sword and try, sir. (They fight, and the Black Knight falls.)
Dr. Brown	Here am I, old Dr. Brown, The best old doctor in the town.
Golashen	What can ye cure?
Dr. Brown	Fee - fi - fo - fun, Pit a little to his nose, And a little to his bum, Rise up, Jack, and sing a song.
Black Knight	Once I was dead, Bit noo I am alive, Thanks to the doctor That made me revive.

Information

The text was given by Wm. Snowden of Selkirk, who had learned it sixty years earlier (c.1865) in Galashiels.

Source

James Carpenter Collection.

GALASHIELS ^b

Text

The guisers would often enter singing,
Here comes in the Guisers,
Tae sing ye a wee bit sang,
If ye gie us a ha'penny,
We'll sing ye a wee bit sang,
If ye gie us a penny,
We'll sing ye twenty one.

Galashins Here comes I, Galashins,
 Galashins is my name,
 A sword and pistol by my side,
 I hope to win the game.

Bold Sailor Here comes in Bold Sailor (or 'Here comes I, little
 Boy Blue')

Bold Sailor from the sea,
With a bunch of blue ribbons tied under his knee,
A star on his breast, and a sword in his hand,
He'll fight any man that stands in the land.
The game, sir, the game, sir,
It lies not in thy power,
I'll cut thee into inches
In less than half an hour.

Galashins You, sir?

Sailor I, sir.

Galashins Take your sword and try, sir.

(They fight with w^oden swords, and one falls.)

Victor Call the Doctor!

Dr. Brown Here comes in old Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

Victor What can you cure?

Dr. Brown All diseases. (Some nonsense in an altered word-order)
Here, hand me the medicine.
Put a little to his nose, put a little to his bum,
Rise up, Jack, and sing a song.

(Sometimes the doctor sticks a pin into the victim,
making him jump.)

Victim Once I was dead, sir, but now I'm alive,
Blessed be the doctor that made me to revive.

(All the cast then sang songs.)

Johnny Funny Here comes in Johnny Funny,
I am the man for all the money.
Lang pooches doon tae my knees.

Fine for haudin bawbees.

Information

The text was supplied by Rbt. Snowden of Selkirk, who had learned it in Galashiels 1870-80. He remembered the false face being made of cloth, and having a large nose. Sometimes they blackened their faces. They wore paper cocked hats.

Source

James Carpenter Collection.

GLASGOW ^a (NS5964: Strathclyde)

Text

Galatian With sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

My head is made of iron,
My body made of steel,
I'll draw my bluidy weapon,
And slay ye on the field.

(The Doctor cures Galatian with the touch of a rod.)

Information

There were six performers: Galatian, three other knights, the Doctor, and Beelzebub. The boys wore loose frocks or shirts, with coloured sashes around the waist and across the shoulders. A star, made of coloured paper was worn on the breast. They wore high-peaked hats, with stars of coloured paper pasted on. Some had painted masks. The Doctor was dressed in the same manner as the knights, but carried a rod instead of a wooden sword. Beelzebub's manner was described as 'morose'.

Source

George Ritchie Kinloch Ballads, Vol. 7, pp.283-301: MS 25242.12*, Houghton Library, Harvard University. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Comment

The text and information given here has been abstracted from a short essay comparing the Glasgow and Kelso (q.v.) plays, and relating them to medieval English 'pageants'. The date of the observation appears to be mid-nineteenth century, on the basis of a reference to an item that "was lately discovered about 1790", in which phrase the writer has deleted the word 'lately', presumably deciding to be more exact. George Ritchie Kinloch was born c.1796 and died in 1877.

GLASGOW ^b (NS5964: Strathclyde)

Information

'I was pleased to come across an article on 'goloshans' with all the verses intact. It brought many happy memories of my boyhood days, when a few of us boys dressed up in our mothers' short goons of various colours, and with swords that we bought in a wee blacksmith's smiddy for tuppence each, made of half round with a sheet iron handle to protect our hands while we did our fencing - three up and wan doon, as we saw it done in the penny geggie or, as some called it, the penny gaff. After rehearsing our parts we sallied forth at Hallowe'en to do or die in our effort to give a good account of ourselves among the folk we called the gentry. We enjoyed ourselves as well as the audience; and after all was over our play-acting we got back home to divide the money received amongst us. And how proud we were to take home the few bawbees we secured with our acting of Goloshans - which kept us talking about it for days after. I am speaking of it seventy years ago and more; and the same Goloshans was acted long before my time and long after it..... Of course many mothers did not approve of their boys going about the houses play-acting and earning a few coppers. Within ma ain ken there were a few who did not approve o' us deils play-acting amang their bairns.....'

The writer, who describes himself as a 'Glesca keelie', writes that 'it was acted throughout our city of Glasgow'.

Source

(Annie Dunlop): 'Ayrshire Notes in The Kilmarnock Standard and Ayrshire Weekly News, 14 Aug 1948, p.3, col. 2.

GLASGOW ^c

Information

'.....the well-known and, as we now think, very innocent practice of young men and boys going about at Christmas masked or disguised, and enacting in the halls or kitchens of the better classes a rude sort of play or mystery.The custom, I believe, dates from a very early period. In Glasgow the party were sometimes called 'Galatians', no doubt from the opening words invariably used by the first performer, 'Here come I, Galatian'.

Source

Andrew MacGeorge: Old Glasgow: The Place and its People, (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1880), p.210.

GLASGOW d

Information

'It has been an immemorial custom in Scotland for numbers of young boys to go from house to house on the evening of the last day of the old year and the first of the new one in ludicrous apparel, and from being so disguised they received the name of 'guisearts', or 'guiseards'. Their practice was to sing and dance, and sometimes to perform some coarse, irregular interlude, for which they generally received a trifling gratuity from each family they visited.'

Source

Senex, Glasgow, Past and Present, Vol.III, (Glasgow: Robertson & Co., 1884). p.464.

GLASGOW e

Text

St. George

I am St. George, that noble champion bold,
And with my glittering sword, I won two thousand
pounds in gold.
Twas I that fought the fiery dragon, and brought
him to the slaughter.
And by these means I won the King of Egypt's
daughter.

Beelzebub

.....Reelzebub,
Over my shoulder I carry a club.
Money I want, money I crave,
If you don't give me money
I'll sweep you to the grave.

(They fight, and St. George is killed. Everyone shouts.)

A doctor, a doctor, ten pounds for a doctor!

Doctor

Here am I, old Doctor Brown.
The best old doctor in the town.

Everyone

What can you cure?

Doctor

I can cure all sorts,
The itch, the pitch, the palsy and the gout,
If a man has nineteen devils in his skull
I'll cast twenty of them out.

(The Doctor then gives him medicine and says.)

Rise up and fight again.

(The dead man rises, and money is collected by one of the company)

Here am I, old kee-cum-funny.

I'm the man that takes the money,
Two long pouches down to my knees,
Two pence or three pence or three bawbees.

Information

The play was performed by four boys (c.12 years old) who went from door to door. They wore 'false faces' bought for a few pence, and 'humble' costume. The boys bought their copies of the play in booklets costing about a penny from a shop called 'The Poet's Box' on London Street (New London Road) near Moir Street. The word 'Galoshans' was used to mean 'guisers', and also to refer to the play.

Source

James Arnott Collection.

Comment

This account is unique in that it is the only one to acknowledge the existence of the chapbook, the printed version of the folk play.

GLASGOW ^f

Information

Miss Dorothy Dunbar's father, who was born in 1878, and spent his childhood in the Bridgeton and Riddrie districts of the city performed in the Goloshan play. He could remember the characters Beelzebub and the Doctor.

Source

Hayward Collection.

HADDINGTON (NT5174: Lothian)

Information

'Our present guisards, or masks, during the daft days (who still have their Judas) are the only remains of these mummeries'.

Source

James Miller, The Lamp of Lothian or the History of Haddington (Edinburgh: Boyd, 1844).

Comment

Although this sentence gives no direct evidence of the existence of a play, the reference to Judas suggests that one was, or had been, in existence.

HAWICK ^a (NT5014: Borders)

Text

Alexander Silence, silence, gentlemen,
And down I cast mine eye;
My name is Alexander,
I sing a tragedy.
My men they are too young, sir;
They never fought before;
But they will do the best they can -
The best can do no more.
The next I call upon is the farmer's son.

Farmer's Son Here comes in the farmer's son;
Although I be too young, sir,
I have a spirit brave,
And I will nobly risk my life
My country for to save.

Alexander The next I call upon is Galashuns.

Galashuns Here comes in Galashuns,
Galashuns is my name:
My sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

Farmer's Son The game, sir, the game, sir,
It's not within your power;
I'll cut you down in inches
In less than half-an-hour.

Alexander The next I call upon Sir William Wallace.

Wallace Here comes in Sir William Wallace.
Scotia's glory, death, or victory.

Alexander What cheer?

[Wallace] Good cheer. I lay my hand upon
This awful blade; I vow, I vow,
I make a vow - I vow before you all,
That since Galashuns has come in
I'll make him down to fall.

(A combat in which Galashuns falls. Then the first
two actors (Alexander and Farmer's Son) chaunt in
vengeful strains:)

Now that young man is dead, sir,
And on the ground is laid;
And you shall suffer for it,
I'm very sore afraid.

Wallace Well, well, if I have slain Galashuns,
I'll bring him back to life again.
Bring in Dr. Brown.

Dr. Brown Weep, weep, says I, old Doctor Brown,
I'm the best old doctor in the town.

Wallace How far have you travelled?

Dr. Brown From the bed to the water-pot.

Wallace What have you seen in your travels?

Dr. Brown I have seen old women flying in the air
like 'tato-peelings and geese going on
pattens.

Wallace What can you cure?

Dr. Brown I can cure all sorts of diseases, from
the howt, rowt, and the gout, to the
rumblegumptions of the big toe.

Wallace What will you take to cure this young man?

Dr. Brown Fifteen pounds.

Wallace Will not five do?

Dr. Brown Five would not get a good kit of brose.
Jack would come o'er the bed and sup them
all out.

Wallace Will not ten do?

Dr. Brown Ten would get a bottle of hoxy-croxy. A
little to his nose and a little to his chin
-- rise up, Jack, and fight again.

(Galashuns rises up and sings.)

Oh brother! Oh brother! Why didst thou
me kill? I never would have thought that
you my precious blood would spill.

(All join hands and sing.)

But since we're all revived again
We'll all shake hands and 'gree -
We'll all shake hands and 'gree;
And we'll never fight no more,
And we will be like brothers,
As we were once before

There is five of us all -
Five merry boys are we;
And we are all going a-roving,
Our lasses for to see.
Our lasses for to see,
And some pleasures for to have;
And what you freely give to us

We freely will receive.

God bless the master of this house,
And mistress, too, likewise:
And all the pretty babies
That round the mother flies

Go down to your cellars,
And see what you can find;
If your barrels be not empty
I hope you will prove kind

I hope you will prove kind,
With some apples and some beer:
I wish you all good Christmas,
Likewise a good New Year.

(At this, the conclusion of the drama,
the best singer of the company was
called upon to sing a song; and then
the hat went round by the last of the lot,
who enters with a direful dress, and
introduces himself by saying:)

Here comes in old Belzebub,
Over my shoulder I carry a club;
And in my hand a frying-pan -
I think myself a jolly old man.

(The collection is then made, and then they
march off to the next likely place to get a
performance).

Information

'Year after year, the companies of Guisards are becoming fewer and far less fanciful than what they used to be at this festive season....The enacting of a drama has been the general duty of these hilarious bands. Several of the dramas have in recent years found their way into the printing-press; and although there is a family likeness in them all, each of them varies according to their respective periods and geographical position. The version of the said drama which has been most popular in upper Teviotdale during the last sixty years was introduced into Hawick by a stocking-maker family bearing the name of Turnbull, that came from Ancrum, and as it now seems to be dying away, it may perhaps be interesting to some readers to preserve it in the columns of the Border Treasury. The actors, five in number, were generally dressed with large white shirts and mitre-shaped hats of paper and decorated with flaunting ribands. The first of the five had to be a 'ferritsome' lad, as he had the doors to open and begin the play. He often got a reception as rude as his own entrance had been, and had many a time to rush out more eagerly than he had dared to enter in'.

Source

R. Murray (of Hawick). 'The Teviotdale Guizards', The Border Treasury of Things new and old, 1, No.24 (2 Jan 1875) (Galashiels: Brockie), p.271, col. 2, p.272.

Comment

It makes satisfactory sense of the action if 'Wallace' is presumed to speak the five lines of dialogue preceding the combat.

I presume that The Border Treasury is the origin of the text published in Winifred M. Petrie, Folk Tales of the Borders, (London & Edinburgh: Nelson & Sons, 1950), pp.64-68.

HAWICK ^b

Text

Sir Alexander enters	Silence, silence, gentle men, and on me cast an eye; My name is Alexander, I'll sing you a tragedy. My men they are but young, sir, they never fought before, But they will do the best they can - the best can do no more. The first I call in is 'the Farmer's Son'.
Farmer's Son	Here comes I, the farmer's son, Although I be but young, sir, I've got a spirit brave, And I will freely risk my life My country for to save.
Golaschin	Here comes I, Golaschin -- Golaschin is my name; My sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
Farmer's Son	The game, sir, the game, sir! it is not in your power; I'll cut you into inches in less than half an hour.
Golaschin	My body's like a rock, sir. My head is like a stone, And I will be Golaschin till I am dead and gone.
Wallace	Here come I, Sir William Wallace Wight, Who shed his blood for Scotland's right. Without a right, without a reason, Here draw I my bloody weapon, (They fight and Golaschin falls.)
Farmer's Son	Now that young man is dead, sir, And on the ground is laid, And you shall suffer for it, I'm very sore afraid.
Wallace	It was not me who did the deed -- I don't know how he was slain.

Farmer's Son How can you thus deny the deed?
 As I stood looking on,
 You drew your sword from out its sheath,
 And slashed his body down.

Wallace Well, well, if I've killed Golaschin, Golaschin
 shall be cured in the space of half an hour.
 Round the kitchen, round the town,
 The next I call in is Doctor Brown.

Dr. Brown Here comes I, old Doctor Brown,
 The best old Doctor in the town.

Wallace What can you cure?

Dr. Brown I can cure all diseases.
 I've travelled through Italy, France and Spain,
 And I've come to Scotland to raise the dead again.

Wallace How much would you take to cure this young man?
 Would £5 do?

Dr. Brown turns £5! No. £5 would not get a good kit of brose.
 away Jack would come over the bed and sup them all up.

Wallace Would £10 do?

Dr. Brown Well, ten pounds might get a little hoxy-croxy
 to his nose and a little to his bum. Rise up,
 Jack, and fight again.

 (Golaschin rises up and sings.)

Golaschin Once I was dead, sir,
 But now I am alive;
 O, blessed be the doctor
 That made me to revive.
 O brothers, O brothers,
 Why drew you your sword to me?
 But since I am revived again
 We'll all shake hands and gree.

All We'll all shake hands and gree
 And never fight no more.
 But we will be like brothers,
 As we were once before.
 God bless the master of this house
 The mistress fair likewise,
 And all the pretty children
 That round the table flies.
 Go down to your cellar
 And see what ye can find.
 Your barrels being not empty,
 We hope you will prove kind;
 We hope you will prove kind,
 With some whisky and some beer,
 We wish you a Merry Christmas
 Likewise a Good New Year.

(After this was sung, another appeared to make the collection)

Here comes I, old Beelzebub.
Over my shoulder I carry a club,
And in my hand a frying pan,
And I think myself a jolly old man,
I've got a little box which can speak without a
tongue;
If you've got any coppers, please to pop 'em in.

Information

The writer added a superscription to the text: '..the above play, which I have written out from memory, and which I have often as a boy assisted to perform in the town of Hawick. The only bit of it about which I am not sure is the part where Wallace denies having slain Golaschin.....'

Source

John Young Scott: 'Golaschin' in The Scotsman, 2 Jan 1889, p.6, col. 7.

HAWICK °

Text

Black Knight Here comes in the King of Macedon,
Conquered the world sixteen hundred years ago
So bright and so bold,
So fash and so free,
Send for Galashins to fight with me.

Galashins Here comes in Galashins,
Galashins is my name,
Sword and pistols by my side,
I hope to win the game.

Black Knight The game, sir? The game, sir?
It lies not in your power.
I'll slash you and dash you
In less than half an hour.

Galashins You, Sir?

Black Knight I, Sir!

(They fight. Father kills son.)

Black Knight Horrible, horrible, what have I done?
I've ruint myself and kilt my son.

Third Actor Call upon Old Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

Information

In performance c.1880. The players wore 'polonaise', 'Paddy don't care' (swallow-tail) coats.

Source

Robert Bell: James Carpenter Collection.

HAWICK f

Text

Similar to Text A, but starting with the entry of 'Galashen'.

Information

The boys wore old-fashioned clothes, and blacked their faces. The performance took place at Hallowe'en.

Source

Richard Laidlaw: James Carpenter Collection.

HAWICK g

Text

First Man Rad up stalks, rad up stools,
 Here comes in a pack o' fools,
 A pack o' fools ahint the door,
 The like wis never seen before.

Black Knight Here comes in the Black Knight,
 The King of Macedonia.
 I've conquered all the world
 But Scotland alone.
 When I came into Scotland
 My heart grew cold,
 To see the little nation
 So stout and so bold;
 So stout and so bold
 So frank and so free.
 So I call in Galashen
 To fight with me.

Galashen Here comes in Galashen,
 Galashen is my name,
 A sword and pistol by my side,
 I hope to win the game.

Black Knight The game, sir, the game, sir,
 It's not within your power,
 I'll lay your body low, sir,

In space of half an hour.

Galashen You, sir?

Black Knight I, sir.

Galashen Draw your sword and try, sir.

(They fight and the Black Knight is knocked down.)

First Man Through the kitchen, through the hall,
Is there any good doctors to be found at all.

Doctor (outside) Yes, one, but he canna fin' the snick.

First Man Put it up a bit;
It's all hen pen;
Pit it doon a bit,
It's all dick pick.

Doctor Brown Here comes in Old Doctor Brown
The best old doctor in the town.

First Man What can ye cure?

Doctor All sorts of diseases
.....

First Man Can you cure a dead man?

Doctor Yes.

First Man What'll ye take tae cure a dead man?

Doctor Ten pounds.

First Man Won't you do it for five pounds?

Doctor Yes.
I've a little bottle in my pocket
Called Hoxxy Croxy. (Takes it out.)
A little to his nose and a little to his toes/bum
Stand up, Jack, and sing a song.

Jack (sings) Once I was dead, but now I am alive,
But blessed be the doctor that made me to revive;
We'll all shake hands - and we'll never fight no more,
We'll all gree like brothers - as once we did before.

Additional Text

Belzebub Here comes in Old Belzebub.
Over my shoulder I carry a club,
In my hand a frying pan,
I think myself a jolly good man.

Final Song Blinking Jock the Cobbler
 He had a blinking ee
 He selt his wife for sixty pounds
 And what the waur was he.

 Wie his pockets full of money
 And his barrels full of beer
 Here's a health to the Guisarding ('Guyserton')

 A happy guid New Year!

Information

The boys wore men's jackets, turned inside-out, and either blacked their faces, or wore 'false faces'. The doctor wore a 'tile hat'. They played for every house, and sometimes performed a sword dance.

Source

Robert Wood: James Carpenter Collection.

HAWICK ^h

Text

Similar to Hawick^f, but without the prologue, the comic dialogue surrounding the doctor's entrance, and Belzebub. The combatant is called here, uniquely, 'Galaughan'.

Source

William Scott: James Carpenter Collection.

HELENSBURGH (NS2982: Strathclyde)

Text

Room Room (entering without knocking)
 Room! Room! Brave gallants give us room to sport,
 For in this house we must resort,
 Resort, resort to make a merry time.

Slasher Here comes I, Slasher,
 For Slasher is my name,
 My sword and buckler by my side,
 I hope to win the game.

? The game, sir, the game, sir,
 It's not within your power,
 I'll cut you up in inches
 In less than half an hour.

(A fight ensues and one is slain, and falls on the floor.)

? A doctor, a doctor, ten pounds for a doctor.

(The Doctor enters.)

? Are you a doctor?

Doctor Yes, I'm a doctor.

? What can you cure?

Doctor I can cure all sorts.

? What's all sorts?

Doctor The itch, the pitch, the palsy and the gout,
And if a man has nineteen devils in his head,
I can cast twenty out.

(The doctor bends down to the wounded man.)

Here, Jack, take a little out of my bottle,
Let it run down thy throttle.
And if you are not quite dead,
Rise, Jack, and fight again.

(Jack rises, and putting his hands round his loins,
says,)

? Oh, my back, my back is wounded,
My heart's confounded.
To be struck out of seven senses into four score -
The like was never seen in Great Britain before.

(St. George enters)

St. George I am St. George, of noble England sprung,
Many mighty deeds and wonders I've made it known.
I've made the tyrant tremble on his throne.
I followed a fair lady to a Giant's gate,
Entombed in dungeons deep, there to meet her fate.
The giant always struck me dead,
But by my sword I knocked off his head,

(Enter the Black Prince)

Black Prince I am the Black Prince of Paradise, born of high
renown,
Soon will I fetch St. George's lofty courage down.
Before St. George shall be (? rescued) by me) These two
St. George shall die to all eternity.) lines were
) said with
special emphasis

(the next passage is forgotten)

Johnny Funny Here comes I, Johnny Funny,

I'm the man that draws the money,
 Twa wee pooches doon to my knees,
 Can only haud tuppence or three bawbees.

(The collection was then taken, and the cast formed a circle, crossing their arms across their bodies, and holding hands. The words of the song were forgotten, but the informant remembered that the song ended with a promise that they 'would never fight again'.)

Information

The informant played in 'Gallochan' when he was a boy. Their practice was to go 'round the doors', lifting up the 'sneck' (latch), and walking in, not all at once, but as their cues arrived. They were never refused entry.

The boys dressed as well as they could in accordance with the characters they played, with paper hats and wooden swords. The Doctor wore a 'lum' (top) hat, and a frock coat. Johnny Funny wore a large leather pouch, suspended around his neck like a bib, with a slot across the front in which could be deposited the 'bawbees'. The money collected was divided equally between the cast at the end of the evening.

Source

James Arnott Collection.

Comment

This and Hawick^a are the two examples of 'traditional' entry. The crossing of the arms for the singing of the song of friendship strongly recalls the contemporary fashion of singing the Hogmanay 'Auld Lang Syne'.

HURLET (NS5161: Strathclyde)

Text and Information

'I was six years of age....There would only be about five of us and we were told that we would get in five houses including my own. We had to disguise ourselves as much as possible with clothes, also our manner of speaking, so as to deceive the people in the houses. On Hallowe'en night we all met in a little sort of harness room attached to Renfrew's Cartwright and Smithy....There we dressed, and in a little fire we burned a lot of corks which were used to colour our hands, legs and faces. Two big girls helped to dress us....We all had our wee part to play. Each of us began with the words 'Here comes': ' - Somebody. I can only remember my own part:

Here comes I Sir Robert the Bruce
 I've spent my life in English juice
 English juice is Scotman's glory

Who is the man who will stand before me?

Immediately another from the end of the queue stepped out armed with a frail wooden sword and challenged me to battle. From under my cape or cloak I pulled out a tattie champer and smashed it (opponent's sword) to smithereens...The only other piece I remember was Wee Mickey Funny:

Here comes I, Wee Mickey Funny
I am the man that lifts the money
I've got pooches doon tae ma knees
An' we'd be thankful to take what you please.

As you would expect he was so funny with his very long coat and big sugar-bag pooches. My dress by the way was a girl or lady's red hat with all the rim cut off, an old cape over my shoulders, a girl's short skirt, and white tape wound round my legs. I should have stated that as we entered the houses we all shouted: 'Hallowe'en,/ Hallowe'en,/Three wee witches on the green,/One black, one white,/ And the other dancing on the dyke'. Needless to say that with apples 8 to 10 lbs per 1/- and our pockets rattling with nuts and bawbees we had a happy time'.

Source

Scottish Studies The Journal of the School of Scottish Studies, University Press, Aberdeen, 14, 1970, 94-6 (J. Braidwood, quoting Alexander Mackenzie, of Barrhead.)

INKERMAN (NS4565: Strathclyde)

Text (1)

Master of
Ceremonies

Make room, make room, and give us room to rhyme,
For in this house we'll fight this time.
Stir up the fire and give us light
For in this house we mean to fight.
If you don't believe the word I say,
Call in St. George to clear the way.

St. George

I am St. George and from old England spring.
Many deeds of wonder I have made and won.
I followed a fair maiden to a Dragon's gate,
That concealed in deep dungeons to meet her fate.
Oft times the Dragon almost struck me dead,
But I drew my trusty blade and cut off its head.
I travelled this world all round and round,
And a man to equal me I never have found.

Master of
Ceremonies

I call in Slasher

Slasher

I am a gallant soldier and Slasher is my name.
With sword and buckler by my side I hope to win the
game.

St. George The game, sir! The game, sir, 'tis not within thy
power.
I could cut you up in inches in less than half an
hour.

Slasher Nay .

St. George What's that you say?

Slasher Take out your purse and pay.

St. George I have no purse to pay.

Slasher Then draw your sword and prepare for the fray.

(They fence. Slasher is killed.)

Master of Ceremonies I call in Sir William Wallace.

Wallace Here am I, Sir William Wallace, underneath disguise.
Where was Sir John Menteith who took me from the
 battlefield,
When I had neither sword nor shield.
But now I have both sword and shield,
To meet my enemies on the battlefield.

Menteith Here I come, Sir John Menteith,
Ne'er a robber, nor a thief.
Sir William Wallace I'll betray,
Before the sun rises at break of day.

Wallace Menteith, Menteith, beware of the day
When trumpets will sound and the bugles will play!
Will you be prepared to meet your foe,
Or will you turn your back and go?

Bruce I am King Robert the Bruce,
 Battle-axe over my shoulder,
 England and Ireland to reduce,
 And Scotland to renoble.
 When first I came to Scotland,
 They treated me very cold,
 But now I'm in my native land
 And feeling very bold.

Master of
Ceremonies The Black Prince of Paradise.

Black Prince I am the Black Prince of Paradise,
 Born of high renown,
 Soon I'll have St. George,
 And all his lofty courage down.
 Before St. George will be received by me,
 He shall die by all eternity!

St. George Stand back you morrica dog,
And let no more be said,
For if I draw my glittering blade,

I'm sure to strike you dead.

Black Prince How can you strike me dead?
My heart is made of iron, my body's made of steel.
Also my hands and knuckle-bones--
I challenge you draw your steel!

(They fence. Black Prince falls.)

Black Prince Hector, Hector, come with speed,
Never was I in greater need.
Standing there with sword in hand,
Come and fight at my command.

Hector Nay, my prince, I'm not your bodyguard.

(Black Prince dies. Enter the King of Egypt.)

King of Egypt I am the King of Egypt, as plainly doth appear.
I have come to seek my only son and heir.

St. George He is slain.

King of Egypt Who did him slay? Who did him kill?
And on the ground his blood did spill?

St. George I did him slay. I did him kill.
And on the ground his blood did spill.

King of Egypt Cross swords with me for what you have done.
You've ruined me and killed my only son.

St. George He gave me challenge. No-one that denies.
See how high he was and see how low he lies!

(They fence.)

King of Egypt Hector, Hector, come with speed.
Never was I in greater need.
Standing there with sword in hand --
Come and fight at my command.

Hector Yes, yes my King, I will obey,
And by my sword, I hope to win the day.
Argue with me, you who spilled his blood
And made it gush in royal flood.

St. George Stand back, Hector. Don't be so hot!
What I can do thou knowest not.
I can tame you of your pride.
So lay your anger to one side!
I can cut the smallest flies,
Send them overseas to make mince-pies.
Mince pies hot, mince pies cold,
I'll send you to the black charm
Before you're nine days old!

(They fence. Hector dies.)

Beelzebub Here comes I, old Beelzebub.
 Over my shoulder I carry a club,
 In my hand a dripping-pan.
 I count myself a jolly old man.
 It's money I want and money I crave,
 If I don't get the money, I'll sweep you to your grave.

Johnny Funny Here I come, wee Johnnie Funny,
 I'm the man to collect the money.
 Two deep pockets down to my knees.
 Will you help to fill them, please?
 Silver or copper, but no brass.
 Bad money will not pass.

St. George A doctor, a doctor! £5 for a doctor!

Doctor No doctor at that price.

St. George £10 for a doctor.

Doctor Here I am, old Doctor Brown,
 The best old Doctor in the town.

St. George What can you cure?

Doctor All sorts.

St. George What's all sorts?

Doctor If there were nineteen devils on one man's head
 I could knock twenty of them off.

St. George Is that all, sir? Can you cure dead men?

Doctor Yes, sir, I have a small bottle of inky-pinky
 in my waistcoat-pocket, so rise up,
 all you dead men and sing a jolly song.

All Once we were dead but now we are alive.
 Blessed be the doctor that made us all survive.
 We'll bless the master of this house, the mistress also,
 And all the bonnie bairnies that round the table go.
 We'll all join hands and never fight no more.
 We'll be better brothers than we ever were before.

Source

Carnegie Library, Ayr. (in typescript, with some minor corrections by hand).

Text (ii)

"Galoshans".

Make room, make room, ye gallant boys,
 Give us room to rhyme,
 For remember and don't forget
 That this is Hallowe'en (or Christmas) time.
 Stir up the fire and give us light

For in this house we've met (or we're yet) to fight.
 If you don't believe the word I say,
 I'll call in St. George to clear the way.

St. George

I am St. George and from old England sprung.
 Many deeds and wonders I have made and done.
 I followed fair lady to a Giant's gate.
 He concealed her in deep dungeons to meet her fate.
 The Giant almost struck me dead
 But with my trusty blade I cut off his head.
 I've travelled this world round and round
 And a man to equal me I have never found.

Call Slasher

Slasher

I am a gallant soldier and Slasher is my name,
 And with my trusty sword and spear
 I hope to win the game.

St. George

The game, sir, the game, sir, that is within my power,
 I'll cut you up in inches in less than half an hour.

Slasher

May.

St. George

What's that you say?

Slasher

Take out your purse and pay.

St. George

I have no purse to pay.

Slasher

Then draw your sword and prepare for the fray.

They fence; Slasher dies. St. George calls Menteith.

I am Sir John Menteith, ne'er a robber nor a thief,
 Sir William Wallace I'll betray before the sun rises
 next day.

Wallace

Menteith, Menteith, remember the day
 When the bugles did sound, and the trumpets did play,
 When I had neither sword nor shield.
 But now I have both sword and shield
 And prepared for enemies on the battlefield.

St. George

I challenged you mortal combat but you refused.
 Have you anything to say that you should be excused?
 Or have you thought to fly?
 If not, draw your sword, for one of us must die.

Menteith dies. Enter Wallace.

I am Sir William Wallace underneath disguise.
 Where have I to wander, where have I to fly?
 It was Sir John Menteith who led me from the battle-
 field.
 When I had neither sword nor shield,
 But now I have a sword and shield
 To protect me on the battlefield.

Wallace dies. Enter Bruce.

I am King Robert the Bruce, battle-axe over my
shoulder,
England and Ireland to reduce, and Scotland to
renoble.
When first I came to Scotland, my blood ran very cold,
Until the Countess of Buchan crowned me with a collar
of pure gold.

They fence and Bruce dies.

Black Prince I am the Black Prince of Paradise,
Born in fiery known. [pres. 'of high renown]
Sooner than love St. George whose love of courage
 dawns,¹

Before St. George will be received by me,
He shall die by all eternity.

St. George Stand back, you black Morocco dog;
And let no more be said,
For if I draw my glittering blade,
I'm sure to strike you dead.

Black Prince³ How can you strike me dead when my head is made of iron,
My body's made of steel,
My hands and feet and knuckle bones,
I challenge you in this field.

They fence: the Black Prince dies. Enter King of Egypt.

I am the King of Egypt, and plainly doth appear,
I've come to seek my only son and heir.

St. George He is slain.

[illegible]

St. George I did him slay, I did him kill,
 And on the ground his precious blood was spilled.

King Cross swords with me for what you have done,
You've ruined me and killed my only son.

St. George He gave me challenge. Why should I deny?
See how high he was and see how low he lies.

They fence.

King Hector, Hector, come with speed.
 I was never in such need.
 Standing there with sword in hand,
 Come and fight at my command.

[illegible]

Cross swords with me, you who hath slain my master's
son and heir, and on the ground spilled his precious
blood.

I'll make yours gush in royal flood.

St. George

Stand off, Hector, don't be so hot.
Thou dost not know what I have got.
I can tame you of your pride,
Lay thy anger to the side.
I can cut the smallest flies,
Send them overseas to make mince pies.
Mince pies hot or mince pies cold,
I'll send you to the black charm
Ere you're more minutes old.

Hector dies.

St. George

A doctor, a doctor. Five pounds for a doctor.

A Voice

No doctor at that price.

St. George

Ten pounds for a doctor.

Doctor enters on horse-back.

Here am I, old Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

St. George

What can you cure?

Doctor

All sorts.

St. George

What's all sorts?

Doctor

If there was nineteen devils on one man's head, I
could knock twenty of them off.

St. George

Is that all?

Doctor

No. As I was walking along a quiet road, I heard
a shout of 'Hy! Pat! I turned around and said
'Hey! What?', but I could see nobody.

St. George

Well, anything more?

Doctor

Yes. I went further on, a mile or so, and came to
a house whitewashed with sour milk and built with
pancakes. I took a hop, step and a jump, and
swallowed the whole lot up.

St. George

Enough. What cure have you for these men?

Doctor

A small bottle of Inky-Pinky. Rise up you dead men
and sing a merry song.

All sing

Once we were dead but now we are alive.
Blessing on the doctor who made us all alive.
We'll bless the Master of this house,

We'll bless the Mistress too.
 We'll all join hands and never fight no more,
 And be better brothers than we ever were before.

Some songs are sung.

¹ possibly a corruption of 'Soon I'll have St. George,/ And all his
 lofty courage down'.

Source

Duncan Frew's handwritten text: Carnegie Library, Ayr. (copy in Norman Peacock's Collection.)

Information

Duncan Frew, latterly a road-sweeper in Ayr, died in 1963, aged 77. He played Johnny Funnay as a boy, and wrote down the words of the play at the instigation of J.W. Forsyth, Librarian at Ayr. The village of Inkerman was founded c.1858 in connection with the working of ironstone mines. It flourished in the latter half of the nineteenth century (the population in 1881 was 948). The village stood 2 miles WNW of Paisley, perhaps on the site later occupied by the Linwood car factory.

Comment

The debt owed by these Inkerman versions to the chapbook text published in Glasgow c.1860-70 is important proof of the importance of the chapbooks to the fast-growing communities of industrialised Britain. (see Chapter Two).

INNERLEITHEN (NL3336: Borders)

Text

1st Player	Here comes in Galatian, Galatian is my name; My sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
2nd Player	The game, sir, the game, sir, Is not within your power; I'll cut you down in inches In less than half an hour.
1st Player	You, sir?
2nd Player	I, sir.
1st Player	Take our sword and try, sir.
	(They each draw wooden swords and after some fencing, one falls dead. Old Doctor Brown then enters and says-)
Dr. Brown	Here comes in old Doctor Brown, The best old doctor in the town etc.

(Dr. Brown produces magic snuff, which brings the corpse to life again. At Dr. Brown's request the player sings-)

Once I was dead, but now I'm alive;
Blessed be the Doctor, who made me revive, and so on.

(After this a song or two were sung, and then another actor came to the front, and exclaimed -)

Here am I, Johnnie Fummy,
I'm the boy that gathers the money.

(and held out a small tin box or other receptacle, into which the housefolk dropped their coins, generally pennies. The guisards expressed their thanks, and passed out to look for another audience....)

Information

'I think that we called them Guisers in Innerleithen in my young days... I played Galatian many times as a boy. As far as I can recollect the play was as [above]'

Source

Peeblesshire News and County Advertiser, 27 Dec. 1940, p.2, col. 3,

INVERKEITHING (NT1383: Fife)

Text

In comes I, Galashan,
Galashan is my name,
Sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

You, Sir?

Yes, Sir.

Take your sword and try, Sir.

(They fight with wooden swords. Galashan knocks the other man down.)

Call in a doctor.

In comes Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town
Put a little * to his nose,
And a little * to his toes,
Rise up, Jack, and sing a song.

Once I was dead, and now I am alive,
Blessed be the doctor that made me to revive.

Information

The guisers blacked their faces, and the performance took place at Hallowe'en.

Source

Robert Waugh: James Carpenter Collection.

Comment

The handwriting is obscure in the doctor's dialogue.

JEDBURGH ^a (NT6520: Borders)

Information

Two popular holidays were 'Valentine's E'en' (13th February) and Hallowe'en. The 'mode of celebrating' on these two days is not described by the author, but dismissed with the suggestion that the practice was a 'remnant of the customs of our fathers in Roman Catholic times, or had been introduced to throw contempt on Roman Catholic usages'.

Source

Thomas Somerville, My Own Life and Times: 1741 - 1814 (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861), p.344.

Comment

The tone of the writing in this brief quotation and elsewhere in the work reflects the attitudes of a man who was, like his father, a minister of the Church of Scotland. I suspect that either the element of 'resurrection' in the folk play coloured the family's attitude to the guisers, and prevented them from taking any close or sympathetic interest in their custom, or that the presence of 'Peter' and 'Paul' in the group of guisers prompted the reaction that the guising might be guilty of hagiolatry.

The period of the reminiscence is vague, but is later than 1757 (when the family moved to Jedburgh from Hawick), and before 1800. The lack of detail in the notice is disappointing, for it is the earliest record in the Border region.

JEDBURGH ^b

Text

Galatian	Here comes in Galatian, Galatian is my name, A sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
----------	--

Second Actor The game, sir, the game, sir,
It lies not in your power,
I'll slash you and dash you
And lay you on the floor.

Galatian You, sir?

Second Actor I, sir.

Galatian Take your sword and try, sir.

(The Second Man falls.)

Galatian Hello, hello, what's this I've done?
I've killed my mother's only son.
Is there a doctor in the town?

Third Actor Yes, there's good old Dr. Brown.

Galatian Call in Dr. Brown.

Dr. Brown Here comes in old Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

(Bending over the dead man.)

First Man What can you cure, Doctor?

Dr. Brown Humph, gumph, and gingo.

Third Man How much'll ye take to cure a dead man?

Dr. Brown Ten pounds.
I have a little bottle in my pocket
Called hoxy poxy puddin and pie / elephant pain
Put a little to his nose
And a little to his bum.
Rise up Jack and fight again.

All Once he was dead
And now he's alive,
And blessed be the happy man
That made him to revive,
God bless the master of this house,
His wife and bairnies too,
And all the little children
That round the table go.

Information

The informant gave the text he had learned from his father c. 1870, adding that the family had been in Jedburgh for four generations. There were three actors, who blacked their faced, and wore men's shirts, women's white nighties, coloured shirts, and a battered lum hat - anything to appear grotesque.

Performances were given from Christmas to the New Year. The custom of celebrating Hallowe'en had been introduced from the Glasgow and Lanarkshire districts.

Source

Provost W. Wells Mabon: James Carpenter Collection.

Comment

The remark about the 'four generations' in Jedburgh in association with the folk play, and knowing that the informant had a professed interest in the traditions of Jedburgh and Roxburghshire (this I was told by his daughter, the informant for Jedburgh^a), might be taken to indicate that the folk play had been traditional in the town for four generations of the Mabons. Assuming that the account refers to c. 1870, and that this was the third generation, Hogmanay guising had for the Mabons begun c. 1820.

Of particular interest is the observation that Hallowe'en guising spread eastwards from Glasgow and Lanarkshire in the nineteenth century.

JEDBURGH^cInformation

'On Hogmanay evening bands of young men called guizards, grotesquely dressed, go from door to door singing and acting the very curious old play of Golaschin. The....[above]...version [is] prevalent in the Border district.

.....

'The costume of the actors in this old world play is generally on the following lines. Three of the mummers are attired in long white shirts coming down below the knee, and girt by a gaudy scarf. Each man has a wooden sword attached to the scarf, and hanging by his side; hideous false-faces of grotesquely - painted pasteboard conceal their features; and tall paper helmets, gaily-decorated with bright-coloured ribbons, complete their disguise. Another is oddly conspicuous in a woman's black gown, tied round the waist with a red handkerchief, and with an old military, or police helmet for headgear. The doctor in the play wears a suit of rusty blacks, with a battered tall hat on his head, and carries on his arm a basket, presumably carrying the paraphernalia of his craft.

'The versions of the play, as used in different districts of the country are not absolutely identical, and the names of the actors and their dresses also vary, but not to any great extent.

'Another form of salutation on entry is -

Hery, Hary, Hubblihow,
See ye not quha is come now?

or -

Oh! ledly help your prisoner,
The last night of the passing year'.

Source

Andrew Cheviot, Proverbs, Proverbial Expressions, and Popular Rhymes of Scotland, (Paisley: Gardner, 1896), pp. 169-173.

Comment

The text given by 'Andrew Cheviot' (the non de plume of Border historian James Hiram Watson) is compiled from the Hawick^a and Unlocated Angus texts, and is therefore not reprinted here. The passage is useful, however, for the detailed picture of the costume, which I guess was observed in Watson's home town of Jedburgh.

The alternative salutations I take to be a little antiquarian coat-trailing. The first is a garbled version of the opening lines of the 'Robin Hood Crying' (see Appendix Five); the second is listed in The Complaynt of Scotland (1549), Song 55, as 'Lady, help your prisoneir'.

JEDBURGH ^d (NT6520: Borders)

Information

The informant's father, Mr. William Wells Mabon, was interested in preserving customs. He had arranged for the guisers to visit his house, and had his family seated ready around the walls of the room he used as an office. Mrs. Reid, who was four years old at the time, has a vivid memory of the waiting, of the knock at the door, and the irruption into the room, accompanied by the shout of 'Here comes in Galashun, Galashun is my name', roared like a battle-slogan, and 'Galashun' strongly stressed on the second syllable. The five or six boys, black-faced, wearing old country felt hats, old jackets and long trousers, immediately began to batter one another with sticks, and the young girl sat petrified by the waving of the sticks, and the clatter and noise of the fighting. Then one of the combatants fell, the boys performed their party pieces, and were given lemonade and things to eat. She does not remember any further noise or dialogue, and did not, at the time, realise that it was a play.

She could not remember the time of the year, though it was dark, and therefore perhaps mid-winter. She could not associate it with either Hogmanay or Hallowe'en, and referred to it as 'Guisarts' Night', as though it were a separate occasion. She wondered whether it might have been Guy Fawkes' Night, but then thought that this might have been a mere verbal association.

Source

Mrs. Reid (March 1977); Hayward Collection.

Comment

The Carpenter Collection reveals that Mrs. Reid's father had been the American's informant (for Jedburgh^b).

JOHNSTONE (NS4263: Strathclyde)

Information (i)

When A.L. Taylor was a boy in Ayr in 1920, he was one of a group of boys who wanted to raise funds for a football team. Two brothers in the group, who were called Smith and who came from Johnstone, suggested that they performed a play involving St. George and the Black Prince. (In the event this suggestion was not adopted.)

Source

Norman Peacock: Collection.

Information (ii)

In the 1920's, the Hallowe'en guisers, said, 'Please help the Galoshies'. No knowledge of the play remained.

Source

J. Braidwood (as for HURLETT)

KELSO^a (NF7234: Borders)

Information

The Beelzebub character indulged in coarse jests, and resembled a Punchinello, with a hump-back, a huge paunch, a large club or stick, and a frying-pan. He wore a large, painted mask. He also filled the role of the Doctor.

Source

See Glasgow^a

Comment

The hump-backed guiser, common in some areas of southern England, is known in Scotland only in this and the Ednam account.

KELSO^b

Text

- | | |
|------|--|
| No.1 | Here comes in Galashin
Galashin is my name.
A sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game. |
| No.2 | The game, sir, the game, sir,
It's not within your power,
I'll run a dagger through your heart
In less than half an hour. |

No.1 You, sir!

No.2 I, sir.

No. 1 Take your sword and try, sir.

 (Then No.2 pushes his wooden sword 'through'
Galashin who falls to the floor with a mighty
wallop!)

No.2 O what is this I have gone and done.
 I've killed my sister's only son.

 (I forget the next few lines but he (No.2)
 sends for the doctor.)

Doctor Here comes in old Doctor Brown,
 The best old doctor in the town.
 I have a little bottle in my inside pocket
 called 'Hoxy Croxy'.
 A little to his nose
 A little to his toes.
 Rise up Jack and sing a song.

Galashin Once I was dead
 But now I'm alive
 Blessed be the doctor
 That made me to revive.
 Auld Jock the cobbler
 Had a blinkin' ee
 Selt his wife for fifty pounds
 What the waur was he.
 His pockets full o' money
 His barrels full o' beer
 Here's to the guisers
 We wish you a happy New Year.

 (exeunt Omnes)

Information

'When I lived in Kelso, Roxburghshire, as a boy (1907-1911), we used to group together at New Year -- somewhat randomly -- and disguise ourselves -- blackened faces, sashes -- long-tailed coats, fancy waistcoats etc., and go from door to door with the question 'Will you let the guisers act?' The answer was invariably "Come in." All but one, Galashin, would remain hidden as far as possible from the room where our audience were sitting.'

Source

The Alex Helm Collection, Vol. XXII, p.235, Manuscripts and Rare Books Room, The Library, University College, London.

KILMARNOCK (NS4238: Strathclyde)

Information

The first boy to enter was Goloshans. A second boy responds to his challenge and kills him, whereupon Dr. Brown makes his appearance and brings him back to life.

Source

As for Auchinleck.

KILSYTH (NS7177: Central)

Information

'In the evening the mummers, dressed in character, went round the houses and acted their drama. The thing died out when I was very young, but I have a vague remembrance of it. It began by the entrance of an old wife, who, with her besom, swept out the floor and retired. Then came in the first warrior, 'Alexander the Great', conqueror of the whole world, who spoke words of defiance to all within the limits of the earth, and challenged them to mortal combat. I do not quite remember who it was marched in and took up the gage of battle, but there was a fierce fight, with swords of lath, and a famous victory. In the course of the play there was one of the warriors, who announced himself as 'Galatians'. I suspect now that he must have belonged to the tribe of Gath, and so the chronology is obscure. It would have been an interesting bit of folk-lore had I been able to give an accurate picture of this detail of the olden times.'

Source

Rev. Robert Anderson: A History of Kilsyth and a Memorial of Two Lives, 1793 - 1901, (Kilsyth: Duncan, 1901), p.107.

KINROSS-SHIRE (NS1100: Fife)

Text

Here come I, Golashans,
Golashans is my name,
Sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

The Game, sir, the game, sir,
It's not within your power,
I'll draw my bloody dagger
And slay you on the floor.

(They fight)

What's this I've done?
 I've killed my brother Jack,
 My father's eldest son.
 Is there a doctor to be found?

Yes, here comes Doctor Brown,
 The best doctor in the town.

What can you cure?

The pout, the gout, and the scurvy.

Can you cure a dead man?

Yes, we will cure him.
 Put a little on his nose and a little on his thumb.
 Rise up, Jack, and sing.

Once I was dead, but now I'm alive,
 And blessed be the doctor that made me alive.

We'll all join hands and never fight again,
 And blessed be the doctor that made you alive.

Source

The Paul S. Smith Collection.

Comment

The informant knew only the text. She was aged 69 at the time of her letter in 1977, and stated that she had heard the text more than sixty years earlier from her grandmother who, she presumed, had learned it as a child in Kinross-shire. These facts suggest that the play was in performance c. 1870-80.

The decision not to list this location among the 'Unlocated' is based on the fact that Kinross-shire is the smallest but one of the counties, with an area of only 82 sq. m., similar in size to the city of Glasgow.

KIRKCALDY (NT2791: Fife)

Information

There were five performers. One fought and killed another, a third was the Doctor, but nothing could be discovered of the other two.

Much of the verse they recited was topical and extempore, and therefore forgotten by the informant.

Source

Information from Peter Opie, from Myra Beath of Kirkcaldy as remembered by her grandmother: Alex Helm Collection.

The ascription of this report to Kirkcaldy depends on the domicile of the informant's grandmother.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT (NX6851: Dumfries and Galloway)

Text

Beëlziebob	Here come I, Beëlziebob And over my shoulder I carry my club, And in my hand a frying-pan. Don't you think I'm a jolly old man.
Belhector	Here come I Belhector, Belhector is my name, My sword and pistol in my hand, I'm sure to win the game.
Beëlziebob	The <u>game</u> , sir, the game, sir, It's not within your power, I'll smash you up in inches, In less than half an hour.
Belhector	<u>You</u> , sir.
Beëlziebob	I, sir, die, sir. (Knocks Belhector down) Oh what have I done? Killed my own beloved son. £10 for a doctor.
Dr. Brown	Here come I, old Dr. Brown, The best old doctor in the town.
Beëlziebob	What can you cure?
Dr. Brown	All diseases to be sure, The <u>rout</u> , the <u>gout</u> , and the <u>great big snout</u> . And if the Devil's in him, I'll soon put him out. (Bends down to Belhector and waves his arms over him.) Jump up, Jack, and sing a song.
Belhector	We'll all shake hands and we'll never fight no more. We'll be as good brothers as we were before. (All sing together)

Source

James Arnott Collection.

LAUDER (NT5347: Borders)

Text

Galashan	Here comes in Galashan,
----------	-------------------------

Hector Here comes I, bold Hector:
 Bold Hector is my name,
 With my sword and my pistol by my side
 I'm sure to win the game.

Slasher The game, sir! The game, sir!
 It's not within your power;
 For I will cut you up in inches
 In less than half an hour.

Hector You, sir!

Slasher I, sir!

 (They draw swords and fight. Slasher falls.)

Hector Do, sir! die, sir!

 (Slasher falls.)

 Oh, dear! What's this I've done!
 I've killed my brother's only son.
 A Doctor! A Doctor! Ten pounds for a doctor!
 What! No doctor to be found?

 (The Doctor enters.)

Doctor Here comes I, old Doctor Brown,
 The best old Doctor in the town.

Hector What diseased can you cure?

Doctor All diseases, to be sure.
 I have a bottle by my side,
 All mixed with polks and eggs;
 Put it in a mouse's blether,
 Steer it with a cat's feather;
 A drop of it will cure the dead.

 (The medicine is administered.)

Hector Get up, old Bob, and sing a song.

 (Slasher jumps up.)

Slasher Once I was dead and now I'm alive;
 God bless the old Doctor that made me survive.

 (Beelzebub comes forward.)

Beelzebub Here comes I, old Beelzebub,
 And over my shoulder I carry my clogs,
 And in my hand a frying-pan;
 So don't you think I'm a jolly old man?
 And if you think I am cutting it fat,
 Just pop a penny in the old man's hat.

A second text is given under the same place-name.

Text (b)

Hector Here comes I, bold Hector;
 Bold Hector is my name;
 A sword and buckler by my side,
 And I'm sure to win the game.

Slasher Here comes I, Bol Slasher;
 Bold Slasher is my name;
 A sword and buckler by my side,
 And I shall win the game.

Hector You, sir!

Slasher I, sir!

Hector Take out your sword and try, sir!

 (They fight and Hector falls)

Slasher Oh dear! Oh dear! What's this I've done?
 I've killed my brothers all but one.
 A doctor, a doctor, ten pounds for a doctor!

 (The Doctor enters.)

Doctor Here comes I, old Doctor Brown,
 The best old Doctor in the town.

Slasher What can you cure?

Doctor All diseases to be sure --
 Gout, skout, bully gout, and the carvey.

 (He administers medicine to Hector.)

Slasher Rouse up, sir; sing us a song.

 (Hector rises)

Hector Once I was dead, and now I'm alive.
 God bless the doctor that made me survive.
 Up and down the mountains, underneath the ground,
 Eating bread and biscuits all the year round.

 (Johnny Funny enters.)

Johnny Funny Here comes I, wee Johnny Funny,
 The very wee boy to gather the money;
 Pouches down to my knees,
 And I'm the boy to gather the bawbees.

Source

As for BALMAGHIE, above.

LEITH (NT2070: Lothian)

Text

The text began, Here come I, Bol Slasher,
 Bold Slasher is my name,
 A sword and pistol by my side,
 I hope to win the game.

 The game, sir, the game, sir,
 It's never in your power,
 I'll slash you and slay you
 In less than half an hour.

Information

'I saw "guizers" in my home town of Leith ... about 1898. They performed at Hallowe'en, and I well remember the last time I saw them. They arrived and were ushered into our kitchen, where we were ducking for apples. The group consisted of two men and several boys carrying lanterns. The men were disguised ... with large false moustaches and wigs. They were belted and carried large swords in their belts. [They spoke the text above and they] then fought a rousing battle with their large wooden swords, cheered on by their followers, and with much banter between them which I cannot recollect. At last one fell flat on his back and the victor waved his sword over him and so ended the play.

Both men took off their disguises, sat with us and were given refreshments (whisky at 3/6 a bottle !!!) and the children joined us in our Hallowe'en games and left later on for another show elsewhere.

I have the strong impression that there was no written record of these plays - the words were handed on from father to son in certain families, at least in Scotland....'

Source

Alex Hood, Bermuda, 1977: the Paul G. Smith Collection.

Comment

The information is unusual, and is therefore given in full. I am inclined to believe that this was a unique event, and that the two men were re-living their boyhood practice, rather than teaching the tradition to the boys, or even allowing them to play the Doctor and the supporting roles. Their reception, the social mixing, and the whisky, suggest that the two men were known to the host, and had been invited to demonstrate the (West of Scotland) folk play to their 'eastern' hosts. These two men are the only adult participants in the modern folk play, and the first noted since the Robin Hood players of Linton in 1610 (see Chapter Five).

Leith was a separate township in 1898, the year of the reminiscence; it was incorporated with Edinburgh in 1920.

LEVEN (NO3700: Fife)

Information

The informant was a performer, aged eight. He remembered that they blacked their faces, and wore ordinary clothes, unless fancy dress was available. He could remember the Doctor and the Sweep, but none of the text.

The information related to a Hallowe'en custom in 1930.

Source

Alex Helm Collection.

LIBERTON (NT2769: Lothian)

Text

1. I am Bol Bendo -- who are you?
2. I am here, the King of France,
Come for a battle to advance.
3. I am here, the King of Spain,
Come for a battle to maintain.

Information

'Of anything I have heard of the theatrical literature of our Scottish guisards, there is little but sheer common city vulgarity, and little worth noting even for its grotesqueness. An ingenious friend remembers in his youth the beginning of a sort of Hogmanay drama, in which there enter three boys, as appropriately armed and costumed as a village can afford, and commence a trialogue.....'

Source

John Hill Burton, The Scot Abroad, (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1864), I, 309.

Comment

Liberton, at the time of the reminiscence, a village outside Edinburgh, is now a suburb of the city.

Apart from 'Bol Bendo' (Bold Benbow), these fragments are found in Melrose^a.

LINTON (NT7726: Borders)

Information

"Last Yuletide, for the first time on record, [the guisard's]

knock was unheard at our door".

Source

J.T.L. 'The Dying Guisard', The Scotsman, 31 Dec 1902, p.8, cols. 1, 2.

The article with some addition was reprinted in James Fleming Leishman, A Son of Knox (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1909), pp.103-116. See also unloc. Berwicks^b.

MELROSE ^a (NT5433: Borders)

Text

First Man	Redstalks, redstools, Here comes in a pack of fools, A pack o' fools no to be here, A pack o' fools ahint the door.
Galashen	Here comes in Galashen, Galashen is my name, A sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
King of Macedonia	The game, sir, the game, sir, And that I'll let you know, Within a moment's time, sir, I'll lay your body low. Here comes in the great King of Macedonia, Who has conquered all the world around Except Scotland along. To see that little nation So frank and so free And so stout and so bold, It made his heart within him faint, And his blood run cold.
King of France	Here comes in the King of France For a battle to advance.
King of Spain	Here comes in the King of Spain, For a battle to remain. Fight on, fight on, my merry men, Fight on, fight on with speed, I'll give any man a thousand pound Who kills the King of Macedonia dead.
	(Galashen and the King of Macedonia fight: the King falls.)
King of France	Now the King of Macedonia is dead, And now on the ground is laid, And you will suffer for it, I'm very sore afraid.

Information

The version was played in 1862. The boys wore their fathers' white shirts, which reached their knees, blacked their faces or wore 'false faces', and stuck their wooden swords in a coloured sash or ribbon round their waists. The doctor wore a black coat and a lum hat. Golashin wore a 'Golashin-hat' made from gilt wallpaper, rounded and gothic-shaped, decorated with 'gum-flowers' (imitation flowers) with a cock's feather stuck in the top.

Source

Peter Nisbet: James Carpenter Collection.

MELROSE ^b

Text

McGlashen	Here comes in McGlashen, McGlashen is my name, Sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
Second Actor	The game, sir, the game, sir, Is not within your power, I'll lay your body low, sir, In the space of half an hour.
McGlashen	You, Sir!
Second Actor	I, Sir!
McGlashen	Take your sword and try, sir. (They fight with wooden swords; Second Actor falls.)
Third Actor	And now he is dead, And on the ground is laid, I'm very sore afraid. Round the kitchen, round the hall, For a good doctor I do call.
Dr. Brown	Whoop, whoop, here comes in old Dr. Brown, The best old doctor in the town.
Third Actor	How far have you travelled?
Dr. Brown	From Paddy to Cork.
Third Actor	Any further?
Dr. Brown	From knife to fork.
Third Actor	What have ye seen in all these travels?
Dr. Brown	Mountains of beer and rivers of gravy.

Third Actor Any more?

Dr. Brown Yes. An old wife lying at the seaside
Like tatie peelins fleein in the air.

Third Man How much will ye take to cure a dead man?

Dr. Brown Ten pounds.

Third Man Too much. Will ye do it for five?

Dr. Brown Five pounds wouldna.
I've a little bottle in my pocket
Called Hoxxy Croxy.
Put a little to his nose
And a little to his bum.
Rise up, Jack, and fight again.

Jack Once I was dead
But now I'm alive,
Thanks be to the doctor
That made me to revive.

(Song) O brothers, O brothers, O brothers are we,
And since we've all revived again,
We'll all shake hands and gree.

 God bless the master of this house,

 Go down into your cellar
And see what you could find,
The barrels will not be empty
I hope you will provide;
I hope you will provide
With some whisky and some beer,
We wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy, happy New Year.

 (Round of singing, then Belzebub with a hat takes up
a collection.)

Belzebub Here comes in old Belzebub,
And over his shoulder he carries a club,
And in his hand a frying pan,
He thinks himself a jolly old man.

Information

It was played from Christmas to New Year, c.1875. The boys wore paper hats, men's shirts, women's nightgowns, and blacked their faces, or wore 'false faces'. Dr. Brown wore a tiled hat, and whiskers. They played in all the houses, 'gentry and peasants'.

Source

George Brown: James Carpenter Collection.

MELROSE ^c

Text

- (Galatian) Here comes in Galatian, Galatian is my name,
A sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
- (a challenger) Your names is not Galatian, and that I'll let you know,
And in a moment's time, sir, I'll lay your body low.
- (Then the swords were crossed, and after a few passes, the challenger fell on the floor. The survivor then shouted for the Doctor, who was invariably left outside till the critical moment arrived.)
- (Galatian) Round the house and round the hall
For a good doctor I do call.
- (And then the sound of tackety boots was heard in the kitchen passage, and the Doctor entered. Sometimes he appeared with:)
- (Dr. Beelzebub) Here comes in Beelzebub
And over his shoulder he carries a club
And in his hand a frying pan,
And he thinks himself a jolly fine man.
- (Or in a milder moments he was simply announced as Dr. Brown:)
- (Dr. Brown) Here comes in Dr. Brown,
The best doctor in the town.
- (Before being allowed to touch the victim, who was still lying motionless on the floor, he was cross-examined as to his qualifications. Where had he been? He had been to Cork. What had he seen? Mountains of beef and rivers of gravy. How much will you take to cure this dead man? The fee was invariably fifty pounds, which was invariably paid without demur. This ceremony over, he touched the prostrate figure with the words:)
- (Dr. Brown) A little to his head, a little to his bum,
Rise up, Jack, and be a better man.
- (Whereupon the dead man sprang to life again, and the whole party joining together ended the play with a chorus:)
- (All) O brothers, O brothers, we'll all take hands and 'gree
For we are going a rovin some houses for to see.
Some houses for to see and some pleasure for to have,
And what you freely give to us we freely will receive.
God bless the master of this house, the mistress also,
And all the little babies that round the table go.
Go down into your cellars, and see what you can find.
Perhaps you will propine with whisky or some beer,

And we wish you a Merry Christmas
And a happy happy New Year.

(They were never rewarded with whisky or beer, but pennies were put in the Doctor's hat. If they were asked to sing an extra song, they would attempt 'The Three Jolly Butchers', and be quickly stopped by the parlourmaid.)'

Information

'In this county - Roxburghshire - I am afraid the Guisers, or, as they were often called, "The Galawtians", have disappeared; but thirty years ago, and perhaps later, they were still in evidence. They made their appearance in the weeks which preceded Christmas. The party rarely numbered more than five or six. Their equipment was simple; most of them wore a nightshirt over their garments, and on their heads a cocked hat decorated with wallpaper, masks covered their faces. In their hands they carried sticks or swords made from laths. There was one sinister figure among them - the Doctor - sometimes he appeared as "Beelzebub" who wore a tall hat and whose face was blackened.

'The performance usually took place in the evening in the servants' hall, under the management of the parlourmaid. The leading actors faced each other, and the play began'.

Source

James Curle (of Priorwood, Melrose), The Times Literary Supplement, 26 Nov 1931, p.960, col. 2.

Comment

'The Three Jolly Butchers' is a traditional song which narrates the adventures that befall the three travellers when they meet a naked woman.

MONIAIVE (NX7791: Dumfries and Galloway)

Text

Goloshuns, Goloshuns, Goloshuns is my name,
Sword and pistol by my side
I want to know your game.

The game, sir, it's this, sir.
(The second player draws his sword, and they fight to the death, the first speaker being the victor. He places his foot on the chest of the fallen man, and improvised some verses. The hat was then passed round.)

Information

There were also some supporters, but they had no part in the play. The word 'goloshuns' was believed to be equivalent of 'guisers'.

Source

James Arnott Collection.

Comment

The Moniaive custom stands apart from the knot of Galloway plays in three ways: (i) geographically (ii) in its garbled text and action (iii) in its use of the term 'Goloshuns', not known in Galloway (see Castle Douglas). For these three reasons, but especially the form of the word 'Goloshuns', I consider this tradition to a relatively late importation from the Strathclyde area.

NEW STEVENSTON (NS7659: Strathclyde)

Text

I'm wee Johnny Funny
I'm the man that takes the money.

Information

The guisers were of both sexes. The boys wore their jackets turned inside out, and a brown paper hat, something like a cocked hat. A metal or wooden sword was stuck in the belt. Quite often the boys wore girls' clothing, and vice versa. They blacked their faces with burnt cork.

The performance took the form of a procession, with each of the characters taking his or her turn and saying a rhyme, the recognised leader of the party beginning. With the exception of Johnny Funny, the invention of the character and the rhyme was the responsibility of each guiser. Johnny Funny always remained the same, and had a large bag in which the takings, the nuts and fruit etc., were deposited.

Source

James Arnott Collection.

Comment

This sighting marks the last stage in the change from the folk play to the contemporary manner of Hallowe'en guising, in which a small group of children, two to five in number, dress up in their own choice of fancy dress, and recite a poem, or sing a little song, quite often of some relevance to their choice of costume. Each child carries a bag, to collect the fruit, nuts, sweets etc., that the householder contributes.

NEWTOWN SL. BOSWELLS ^a (NT5832: Borders)

Text

Galashon Here comes in Galashon,

Galashon is my name,
With sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

Second Actor The game, sir, the game, sir,
 It's not within your power,
 I'll lay your body low, sir,
 In less than half an hour.

Galashon You, sir!

Second Actor I, sir!

Galashon Draw your sword and try, sir.

(They fight with wooden swords: Galashon falls.)

Third Actor Now you've killed Galashons,
And on the ground he's laid,
And you will suffer for it,
I'm very sore afraid.
Is there a good doctor in the town?

Dr. Brown Here comes in old Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

Second Actor What can you cure?

Dr. Brown I can cure a' things,

 I have a little bottle in my pocket called Hoxy Proxy.
 Put a little to his nose, and a little to his bum,
 Rise up, Jack, and sing a song.

Jack Once I was dead, sir,
 And now I'm alive,
 Blessed be the doctor
 That made me to revive.

Information

The informant learned this text c.1865.

Source

Andrew Kerr: James Carpenter Collection.

NEWTOWN ST. BOSTWELLS ^b

Text

Galashan Here comes in Galashan, Galashan is my name
With sword and pistol by my side I hope to win the
game.

PAISLEY (NS4864: Strathclyde)

Text

Who am I?
I'm Keekum-Funny,
I'm the man that takes the money.

Source

James Arnott Collection.

PATNA (NS4110: Strathclyde)

Information

Mr. David Adamson told me that his father, who was born in Patna in 1860, knew the play that began 'Here come I, old St. George', and continued with a duel, and the entry of other characters. He called it 'Galoshans' and remembered it as being a 'mysterious' affair.

Comment

The village of Patna owes much of its size to coal-mining in the nineteenth century.

Source

Hayward Collection.

PEEBLES ^a (NT2540: Borders)

Text

'Galatian, a New-Year Play

Talking Man
enters

Haud away rocks, and haud away reels,
Haud away stocks and spinning wheels,
Redd room for Gorland, and gi's us room to sing,
And I will show you the prettiest thing
That ever was seen in Christmas time.
Muckle head and little wit, stand ahint the door;
But sic a set as we are, ne'er were here before.
Show yourself, Black Knight!

Black Knight
enters

Here comes in Black Knight, the great King of
Macedon,
Who has conquered all the world save Scotland
alone.
When I came to Scotland my heart it grew cold,
To see a little nation so stout and so bold -
So stout and so bold, so frank and so free:
Call upon Galatian to fight wi' me.

Galatian enters Here comes I, Galatian; Galatian is my name;
Sword and buckler by my side, I hope to win the game.

Black Knight The game, sir, the game, sir, it is not in your power;
I'll hash you and slash you in less than half an hour.
My head is made of iron, my heart is made of steel,
And my sword is a Ferrara, that can do its duty weel.

(They fight, and Galatian is worsted, and falls.)

Down Jack, down to the ground you must go.
Oh! Oh! what is this I've done?
I've killed my brother Jack, my father's only son.

Talking Man Here's two bloody champions that never fought before;
And we are come to rescue him, and what can we do
more?
Now, Galatian he is dead, and on the floor is laid,
And ye shall suffer for it, I'm very sore afraid.

Black Knight I'm sure it was not I, sir, I'm innocent of the crime.
'Twas this young man behind me, who drew the sword
sae fine.

Young Man Oh, you awful villian! to lay the blame on me;
When my two eyes were shut, sir, when this young
man did die.

Black Knight How could your two eyes be shut, when you were
looking on?
How could your two eyes be shut, when their swords
were drawn?
Is there ever a doctor to be found?

Talking Man Call in Dr. Brown,
The best in all the town.

Doctor enters Here comes in as good a doctor as ever Scotland bred,
And I have been through nations, a-learning of my
trade;
And now I've come to Scotland all for to cure the
dead.

Black Knight What can you cure?

Doctor I can cure the rurvy scurvy,
And the rumble-gumption of a man that has been
seven years in his grave or more;
I can make an old woman of sixty look like a girl
of sixteen.

Black Knight What will you take to cure this dead man?

Doctor Ten pounds

Black Knight Will not one do?

a play in Peebles when he was a boy.

Source

Norman Peacock Collection.

POLWARTH (WF7450: Borders)

Information

'Hogmanay'.

'The best o' a' the Guizard time.....an' mony nichts before, we'd
aye/Oor costumes to prepare;/ While a' oor sangs we maun rehearse/An'
eke - the time-worn play,/O' "Here comes in Gilashon.", wha/Gets killed
on Hogmanay./ Dressed in oor gaudy paper hats,/Wi' sarks ootside oor
claes,/And mimic swords hung by oor sides,/ At mirk we took oor ways;/
An' first we took the Manse by storm,/ For there a welcome aye/ Frae
minister to maids we had/ On ilka Hogmanay!

[Then at the] 'laird's big house'we sang, an' acted there,/
A second time Gilashon fell/To hansel Hogmanay'. The guizards went
on to 'farm and cottar's hoose'.

There was a thorn tree on Polwarth village green that featured in
traditional custom. The practice of dancing around it to celebrate
weddings was reputed to have begun in the fourteenth century. The
same was known at harvest-time, 'Our forebears oft were seen/To dance
about the Thorn,/When they get in their corn,' and had also concluded
the Hogmanay celebration for the returning guizards, 'roun' the thorn
we tripped a fit/ To wind up Hogmanay'.

R.M. Calder was born in Duns in 1841, and moved to nearby Polwarth
in 1846.

Source

W.S. Crockett (Ed.), A Berwickshire Bard: The Songs and Poems of
Robert McLean Calder, (Paisley: Parlane, 1897), pp.27, 28, 31,117-19.

PRESTONPANS (WF3874: Lothian)

Text

Stir up that fire and give us light,
For in this house there'll be a fight.

Here comes in vee Doctor Brown,
The best vee doctor in the town.

What can you cure?

The root, the rout, the skit, the scurvy.

How do you do it?

Rub his nose and rub his bum,
And he'll rise up and sing a song.

And we'll all join hands and we'll sing a merry song,
And we'll be as good brothers as we were before, as
we were before.

Stir up that fire and give us light, For in this house there'll be a fight.

Here comes in wee Doctor Brown, the best wee doctor in the town.

What can you cure? The root, the rout, the skit, the scurvy. How do you do it?

[tune indistinct for this section.] And we'll all join hands and we'll sing a merry song, and we'll

be as good brothers as we were before, as we were before.

Information

Two or three children made up the troupe, and they did the 'guising around people's houses, around the doors'.

Comment

It is not certain whether the performance was given in song, or a combination of song and speech. When first asked for the play, Mrs. Wason started to speak it, stopped, and then sang the whole text through, without pausing. When asked to repeat the text, she began in a strongly-accented chant. After the first two lines, she stopped and asked for time to remember what happened. She then supplied a description of the action, and continued the text in a more normal speaking voice. She said, "Then they said, 'Here comes in wee Doctor Brown.....'", but this may have been influenced by the enquirer's saying, 'What did you say then?'. She used the word 'sang' of the final two lines.

I am inclined to Hamish Henderson's suggestion that she had used the text as a dandling song, and her second interpretation of the rhymes had overlaid her first.

Source

Source

Mrs. Mason (Born c.1902) of Prestonpans. Recorded by Hamish Henderson, Tape Recording 5A 1954/103, item 61, The School of Scottish Studies, 27 George Square, Edinburgh 8.

QUOTHQUAN (NS9939: Strathclyde)

ST. ANDREWS (NO5016: Fife)

Information

'Apparently the usual time for these mummers to appear is Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) but at St. Andrews they come out on Hallowe'en, and in Kincardineshire on November 2nd'.

Source

A.J.B. Wace, 'Mumming Plays in the Southern Balkans', The Annual of the British School at Athens (London: MacMillan) 19 (1912-1913), p.263.

Comment

A good deal of doubt is attached to this entry, for it occurs in the context both dramatic and non-dramatic guising, and there is a suspicion that Wace's information is second-hand. Wace began his university-lecturing career at St. Andrews c.1905.

ST. BOSWELLS (NT5930: Borders)

Information

In a letter to Richard Heber, Sir Walter Scott reported that he had seen guisers during the Christmas festivities at Mertoun House in 1807. Mertoun House is two miles north-east of St. Boswells.

Source

As for Linton (p.108).

SELKIRK ^a (NT4728: Borders)

Information

'The children from Selkirk were wont to dress in the motley of 'guisers' and visit the Shirra's home. There they played 'Goloshan', and received their Hallowe'en bounty'.

Source

Peebleshire News and County Advertiser, 27 Dec 1940, p.2, col.3.

Comment

In the spelling of Goloshan, and in the Hallowe'en season, Selkirk shows a susceptibility to the cultural influence of Glasgow (see Jedburgh^b).

SELKIRK ^b

Text

Prologue	Dear Friends, if ye wull gie an ear, Then very sin ye wull hear How Scots defend their honour, And pit tae rout a' foreign foes Whae tread upon her.
Black Knight	Here comes in Black Knight, King of Macedonia; I have conquered all the world around, And when I came to Scotland, I found the people so brave and so free, That I call on Galashen In fight with me.
Galashen	Here comes in Galashen, Galashen is my name; Sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
Black Knight	The game, Sir! The Game, Sir! It lies not in your power, I'll cut you into inches, In less than half an hour.
Galashen	You, Sir!
Black Knight	I, Sir!
Galashen	Take you sword and try, Sir! (Duel. Both fall dead.)
Third Player	A doctor, a doctor, Who can find a doctor?
Dr. Brown	Here comes in old Doctor Brown. Best old doctor in the town.
Third Player	How much will you take to cure a dead man?
Dr. Brown	Five pounds.
Third Player	The fee will be yours if you succeed.
Dr. Brown	I have a potion in this bottle, Rub a little to their nose, And a little to their toes; Now, arise up, men, and sing a song!
Galashen and Black Knight	Once I was dead, Sir, But now I'm alive, Blessed be the doctor That made me to revive. Revived, Sir! Revived, Sir! who once was slain, We'll all shake hands, Sir, and never fight again.

(Sometimes) In comes I, Old Beelzebub,
Over my shoulder I carry a club.

Betty Funny Here comes in Betty Funny
That gathers in the breid and money.

God bless the (master) of this house,
The mistress likewise,
And all the little Babies
That their mother lies.

Information

The text was supplied by Mr. Brydon, at the Library, who had learned it from older guizards when he was a boy.

Source

James Carpenter Collection.

SELKIRK ^d

Text

Rise up ald wife an shake yer feathers
Dinna think that we are beggars
We're jist poor bairns come oot tae play
Rise up and gie's oor hoguiney.

An if ye gie's a ha'penny, a ha'penny, a ha'penny,
We'll sing ye a bonnie wee song,
And if ye gie's a penny, a penny, a penny,
We'll sing ye twenty one

Information

This guizards' 'song' was contributed by Sergeant Anderson, of Selkirk. The guizards numbered five or six, and had black faces or masks.

Source

James Carpenter Collection.

SELKIRK ^e

Text and Information

'I remember some of the home-made entertainments of my youth. The "guisers" of today were not a patch on their grandfathers. Who can forget Galashen?

Here comes in Galashan
Galashan is my name.

With sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game.

The game, sir, the game, sir,
I will let you know
That in a moment's time, sir,
I'll lay your body low.

Do boys of today perform a play like that? I'm afraid not.'

Source

John Brydon, A Souter Looks Back (Selkirk: Advertiser, 1951), p.28.

Comment

This informant also contributed Selkirk^c.

SKIRLING (NT0437: Strathclyde)

Information

The play is noted in connection with Skirling, identified by the informant as 'a tiny village two miles from Biggar'.

Source

A letter from Mrs. H.D. Shepherd (an ex-resident of Biggar), in the Paul Smith Collection.

Comment

In all probability this was a performance by the Biggar troupe. In correspondence with me, the informant said that she had no idea of the origin of the troupe, and was unaware that Biggar had a troupe wont to tour surrounding villages.

SOUTHDEAN ^a (NT6309: Borders)

Text

First Man Rad sticks, rad stools,
 Here comes in a pack of fools,
 A pack of fools behind the door,
 Was never seen here before.

Galashen Here comes in Galashen,
 Galashen is my name,
 With sword and pistol by my side
 I hope to win the game.

Second Man The game, sir, the game, sir,
 It's not within your power,
 I'll lay thy body low, sir,

In space of half an hour.

Galashen: You, sir?

First Man: I, sir!

Galashen: Take your sword and try, sir!

(They fight: Galashen falls.)

Third Man: Now, Galashen, you're dead,
And on the floor you're laid,
And you will suffer for it,
I'm very sore afraid,
Is there any doctor in the town?

Doctor: Here comes in old Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.
He cured the man wi' the broken thumb,
What d' ye think o' old Dr. Brown?

Third Man: What'll ye take to cure this dead man?

Doctor: Twenty pound and a bottle of wine.

Third Man: Too much. Would five not do?

.....

What can you cure?

Doctor: The rout, scout, skitter and scurvy.
I have here in my pocket a little bottle called Hoxxy
Croxy.
Put a little to his nose, and a little to his bub,
Rise up, Jack, and sing a song.

Jack: Once I was dead, but now I'm alive,
Blessed be the doctor that made me alive.

We'll all shake hands and gree,
As we have done before,
And we'll all be like brothers,
As we were once before.

God bless the master of this house
And the mistress also,
And all the pretty babies
That round the table go.

Information

The custom was in performance c.1865. The performers wore gay colours, any kind of ridiculous garment, and (the doctor) a lun hat.

Source

John Bothwick: James Carpenter Collection.

SOUTHDOWN^bText

Galashan Here comes in Galashan,
Galashan is my name,
With sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

Second Man The game, sir, the game, sir,
It's not within your power,
I'll hash you and I'll dash you,
And lay you on the floor.

Galashan You, sir?

First Man I, sir!
Take your sword and try, sir.

(They fight with wooden swords, and First Man falls.)

Galashan O dear, dear, what's this I've done?
I've killed my father's only son.
Round the kitchen, round the hall,
Here I call for Dr. Brown.

Doctor Here comes in old Dr. Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

First Man How much 'll ye take to cure a dead man?

Doctor Ten pounds.

First Man I'll give ye five pounds.

Doctor Five pounds wouldna mend a hole burning in my pocket.

First Man Go ahead. What diseases can ye cure?

Doctor All sorts of diseases, such as
I have here a little bottle in my pocket
Called Hoxxy Poxxy.
It cures all diseases.
Put a little to his nose,
And a little to his bum.
Rise up, Jock, and fight again / sing a song.

Jock Once I was dead, but now I'm alive,
Blessed be the doctor that made me to revive.
God bless the master of this house,
And the mistress also,
And all the pretty babies
That round the table go.
With their pockets full of money
And their barrels full of beer,
I wish ye a merry Christmas,
And a happy guid New Year!

Information

The guisers performed at Hallowe'en and the New Year. The doctor wore a luri hat and a long coat, and the others blacked their faces or wore 'false faces', carried long staves, and dressed in their fathers' long shirts. Children were sometimes frightened of them.

Source

Mrs. Robson: James Carpenter Collection.

SPOTTISWODE (M16049: Borders)

TextAlexander and Galatian

Enter Bessy with a besom.

Bessy Redd up stocks, redd up stools,
 Here comes in a pack of fules,
 A pack o' fules that were never here before,
 Little head and mickle wit stands ahint the door.

Enter Alexander)

Alexander Here comes Alexander, a gallant man is he,
 Wi' his crown upon his head, his gude sword at
 his knee.

(Enter Galatian)

Galatian Here comes I, Galatian, Galatian o' renown,
 I'll slay King Alexander and I will take his crown.

Alexander My crown indeed! My crown! its no within your power,
 I'll fell ye where ye stand in less than half an
 hour.

Galatian Ye'll fell me where I stand! Draw your sword and try.
 I'll gar ye beg your life ere half an hour gae by.

(They fight. Galatian falls.)

Chorus Now Galatian he is dead and on the ground is laid,
 He'll never fight nae mair, of this I'm sore afraid.

Alexander If I hae killed Galatian, Galatian I will cure,
 I will bring him to life again in less than half
 an hour.
 Is there any good doctor to be found here?

(Enter Doctor)

Doctor Here comes I a doctor, a doctor o' renown.
 The best doctor in this or any other town.

Alexander What can you cure?

Doctor I can cure the fever, the plague and madness of the
 brain,
An' only broken bone I can make whole again.

Alexander How muckle will ye tak' to cure this dead man?

Doctor Ten pounds

Alexander Will no five do?

Doctor No.

Alexander Will six no do?

Doctor No.

Alexander Will seven no do?

Doctor No.

Alexander Will eight no do?

Doctor No.

Alexander Will nine no do?

Doctor Ay, that will do.
 I have a little bottle by my side called Hoxy Poxo,
 Drap a drap o' t on his brow and anither on his e'en,
 And he'll rise up a living man, and that will sure
 be seen..

(Galatian comes to life).

Galatian

Ance I was dead but now I an alive,
And blessed be the doctor that made me to revive,
We'll a' join hands the gither, and we will fight
nae mair,
But we'll gree again and dance and sing as if we
brothers were.
The morn's the New Year, but this is Hogmanay,
Sae gie us our cakes and we'll bid gude nicht to
a' and gang away.
Here's a blessing on the Master and the Mistress
ilk ane,
An' a blessing on this house where we hope to meet
again.

Source

Ivor Gatty, 'The Eden Collection of Mumming Plays', Folk-Lore, 59, No. 1 (March 1948), 26-27. (from a manuscript of Lady John Scott Spottiswoode, of Spottiswoode.)

A note on Lady Spottiswoode: 'She encouraged the observance of the old customs in connection with the New Year, such as the play of 'Galatian, which was usually acted by the 'Guisards' on New Year's night at

Spottiswoode House in presence of her ladyship and her guests'. Lady Spottiswoode died 12 March 1900, aged 90. (from 'The Late Lady John Scott Spottiswoode', The Scotsman, 13 March 1900, p.5, col.1.)

STIRLING ^a (NS7993: Central)

Text

Galatians

Sir Alexander	Keep silence, merry gentlemen, unto your courts said I - My name's Sir Alexander, I'll show you sport, said I. Five of us all, fine merry boys are we, And we are come a rambling your houses for to see - Your houses for to see, sir, and pleasure for to have, And what you freely give us freely will receive. The first young man that I call in, he is the farmer's son, And he's afraid he'll lose his love because he is too young.
Farmer's Son	Altho' I am too young sir, I've money for to rove, And I will freely spend it before I lose my love.
Sir Alexander	The next young man that I call in, he is a hero fine, He's Admiral of the hairy caps and all his men are mine.
The Admiral	Here am I the Admiral - the Admiral stout and bold, Who won the battle of Quinbeck and wear a crown of gold.
Sir Alexander	The next young man that I call in is Galatians of renown, And he will slay our Admiral and take his golden crown.
Galatians	Here comes in Galatians, Galatians is my name, With sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
The Admiral	The game, sir, the game, it is not in your power - I'll draw my bloody dagger, and slay you on the floor.
Galatians	My head is made of iron, my body's made of steel, I'll draw my bloody weapon, and slay you on the field.
Sir Alexander	Fight on, fight on, brave warriors, - fight on with noble speed,

I'll give any man ten hundred pounds, to slay
Galatians dead.

(Here Galatians and the Admiral fight, and Galatians
falls, being stabbed.)

Sir Alexander Galatians ye have killed, and on the floor have
slain --
Ye will suffer sore for him, as sure's your on
the plain.

The Admiral On no, it was not I, sir, I'm innocent of the
crime,
'Twas that young man behind me that drew his
sword so fine.

Farmer's Son Oh, you awful villian, to lay the wight on me,
For my two eyes were shut, sir, when this young
man did die.

Sir Alexander How could your eyes be shut, sir, when you stood
looking on?
When their two swords were drawn, you might have
sindereed them.
Since Galatians ye have killed, Galatians ye must
cure --
Galatians ye must raise to life, in less than
half an hour.

(Spoken) Round the kitchen, and round the hall,
For an old greasy doctor I do call.

Doctor Here comes I, the best old greasy doctor in the
kingdom.

Sir Alexander What can you cure?

Doctor I can cure the rout, the gout, the ringworm, cholic,
and the scurvy -- and can gar an old woman of seventy
look as gay as a young woman of sixteen.

Sir Alexander What will you take to cure this dead man?

Doctor Ten pounds and a bottle of wine.

Sir Alexander Will not five do? -- nor six.

Doctor Six won't take down a Highlandman's breeks, to
let the devil fart out fire.

Sir Alexander Seven? Eight? Nine?

Doctor No.

Sir Alexander Ten?

Doctor Yes ten! and a bottle of wine.

Sir Alexander What will you cure him with?

Doctor I'll give him.....: and I have a small bottle in
my breek pouch full of Inky Pinky* (sings) a little
to his nose, and a little to his toes (applying it
accordingly.) Start up Jack and sing.

Galatians Once I was dead, and now I'm come alive,
Blessed be the doctor that made me to revive.

Omnes We will all join hands, and never fight more,
But we will all 'gree as brethern as we have
done before;
We thank the master of this house, likewise the
mistress too,
And all the little babies that round the table
grow.
Your pockets full of money, and your bottles full
of beer,
We wish you a good Hogmanay, and a Happy New-Year.

(Exeunt)

Epilogue

Here comes in little diddlie dots,
With his pockets full of groats,
If you have anything to spare
Put in there.

*Inky Pinky, about seventy or eighty years since, was used by the
brewers in Stirlingshire to designate the smallest kind of beer; the
medium was termed Middle-moy; and the best or strongest Rantambling.

Information

'As the schoolmaster is so busy in effacing any vestiges of
ancient customs and habits, the preservation of this relic of the
olden time will afford gratification to those who take pleasure in
their early recollections of what happy Britain once was'.

Source

(James Maidment): Galatians (Edinburgh 1935), B.M. Shelf No. 4406
g 2 f.60.

Reprinted, with two minor alterations, as 'The Guisers in Stirling',
The Stirling Antiquary ed. W.B. Cook (reprinted from The Stirling
Sentinel 1888-1893) (Stirling: Cook & Wylie, 1893), I, 67-9.

Comment

James Maidment was born in London in 1794, and qualified as a Scottish
lawyer in 1817. It has been suggested that the above report was
written c.1815 (Principal Geddes, 'The Burlesque of Galatian',
Scottish Notes and Queries (May 1889), Is, II, 177). Whether or not
this is true, this is an early report in the Scottish corpus.

STIRLING ^b

Text

All Here comes in Galashans -
 Galashuns is our name,
 With sword and buckler by my side
 We hope to win the game.

St. George the Here comes in Galashans,
 valiant man Galashans is my name,
 With sword and buckler by my side,
 I hope to win the game.

The Moorish, or The game, sir, the game, sir,
 Black Knight Is not within your power
 I'll cut you down in inches
 In less than half an hour.

 (They fight to the death, and a doctor is
 summoned.)

Doctor And I am Doctor Brown,
 The very best doctor in all this town.

(With appropriate actions)

A little inky pinky on the nose
 A little hanky panky on the toes
 Get up, Jack, and sing.

Once I was dead, but now I am alive,
 Blessed be the doctor who made me to revive.
 Now we will join hands and never fight more.
 But all be brothers, as once we were before.

(The performers then joined hands and danced.
 A collection was taken, and the customary well-
 wishing rhymes for Hogmanay and the New Year
 spoken.)

Information

The performers were boys aged 12-14, and were known as 'Guisers' or 'Galashons'. The two combatants were costumed in paper cocked hats, paper plumes, gay coloured sashes or cloaks and leather belts, and carried swords that were invariably of wood. The doctor wore black, a tall black hat, and enormous spectacles. The Moorish Knight's face was blacked. The fourth member of the troupe was Father Christmas, but the account gives no detail of his costume, or any indication of his contribution.

Source

Stirling Journal, 1 Feb 1927, p.11 (article by Daniel McEwen, who was presumably a performer at the time in question.)

STIRLING C

Information

'In the course of my investigations, an elderly gentleman recalled for me a performance of the play in which he took part sixty years ago in Stirling. As it was a fine moonlight night, the proceedings took place outside and the population of a large tenement building came out to see them. The players were drawn up in a semi-circle with the open end towards the spectators, rather like a formation of the Salvation Army. As each character spoke his entry lines, he marched round in a circle. The combat was a stately exchange of sword-blows, rather than an exhibition of fencing and there was no horse-play. The line spoken by the Doctor, "Rise up, Jack, and sing!" and the song which followed were the only words actually recalled by this witness, who was very young at the time and had not been honoured by a speaking part'.

Source

A.L. Taylor: 'Galatians, Goloshan, and the Inkerman Pace-Eggers' in Saltire Review, 5, No.16 (Autumn 1958), 42, 44.

SYMINGTON (NS3341: Strathclyde)

It was reported that in the Symington version Blue Sailor gave a 'fujy' to Wallace, a word the unnamed correspondent derived from the Gaelic 'fuidsa' = a coward's blow. Another correspondent said that Jamieson gave 'cudger' or 'cudgie' to mean a schoolboy's blow to dare another to fight.

Source

(Annie Dunlop), 'Ayrshire Notes', The Kilmarnock Standard and Ayrshire Weekly News, 27 Mar 1948, p.3, col.1.

TILlicOUNTRY (NS9197: Central)

Text

I am the King of Macedonia,
I have conquered all the world except Scotland,
But since I came to Scotland,
My heart has grown cold,
To see such a nation
So stout and so bold,
So frank and so free,
So step in Galatians
And fight with me.

Galatians

Here steps in Galatians,
Galatians is my name,
Sword and pistol by my side,
I hope to win the game.

The game, sir, the game, sir,
Is not within your power,
I will lash you and dash you,
Within a half an hour.

You, sir?

I, sir.

Draw your sword and try, sir.

(Here you do a little fencing with wooden swords and
one falls to the ground.)

Horrible, horrible, what have I done?
Ruined myself, and killed my son.
Is there a doctor in the town who can cure this man?

Here steps in Dr. Brown,
The finest doctor in the town.
I have a little Inky-Pinky in my waistcoat pocket.
I'll put a little to his nose,
And a little to his toes,
Now rise up, Jack, and sing a song.

Once I was dead, now I'm alive,
Blessed be the doctor who made me revive.
We'll all join hands and we'll never fight no more,
And we'll be good friends as we were before.

Information

The informant and her sisters went guising on Hallowe'en. They wore boys' caps and scarfs, to look like boys. They were welcomed into houses, and rewarded with money.

Source

Peter T. Millington Collection.

Comment

Dr. Emily Lyle has elicited more information from Mrs. Agnes Smith, the informant.

TRAQUAIR (NT3334: Borders)

Information

'Then gloamin gray comes frae the east,
Through a' the gysarts venture'
In sarks and paper helmets drest,
They for their bawbees enter,
His gude claymore here Caesar wheels,
An' here raves Alexander!

.....

* A company of boys, generally about half a dozen, blacken their faces, put on their shirts uppermost, and with a helmet and sword, armed cap-a-pie, go to the neighbouring houses, and personating the characters of Alexander, Caesar etc. act a certain interlude, which is handed down from father to son. A few pence reward their innocent endeavours to please'.

Source

Rev. James Nicol, Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect (Edinburgh: Mundell, 1805), I, 29n.

Comment

This is an early report, and unique in its inclusion of 'Caesar'. I am inclined to believe that the writer was unfamiliar with the name 'Galashan', and substituted an appropriate opponent for Alexander.

WALKERBURN (NT3637: Borders)

Information

'It is many years since I have seen any attempt to act this play (Galatian). I recollect many visits from the Guizards round about Christmas, and not in October or November'.

Source

Peeblesshire News and County Advertiser, 8 Nov 1940, p.2, col.6.

Comment

The writer, Mr. J.K. Ballantyne of Tweedholme House, Walkerburn, was born in 1872, presumably a relation of Henry Ballantyne, weaver, who founded the village of Walkerburn in 1854.

WISHAW (NS7954: Strathclyde)

Text (known as 'Galoshchins' Play)

Leader	Stir up the fire and give us light For in this house there will be a fight. If you don't believe the words I say, I will call Sir William Wallace, And he will clear the way.
--------	---

Wallace	Here comes in Sir William Wallace, Dressed in disguise. Where shall he wander? Where shall he fly? The last time he was on the battlefield He had neither sword nor shield. But now he has his sword and shield,
---------	--

He will fight the best man on the field.

(He fights with the leader and some others;.)

Bruce Here comes in Robert the Bruce,
He spent his life on English use,
England's use and Scotland's glory.
He'll fight the best man
That stands before you.

(He joins in the fray)

Beelzebub Here comes in Old Beelzebub
And over his shoulder he carries a tub
And in his hand a dripping can.
He thinks himself a jolly old man.

Buckteeth Here comes in big buckteeth,
If you don't clear all your table
I'll eat all your beef.

Dr. Brown Here comes in old Doctor Brown,
The best old doctor in the town.

Bruce What can you cure?

Dr. Brown I can cure all ills.

Bruce How much will you take to cure these men?

Dr. Brown A hundred pounds.

Bruce Then cure these men.

Wee Johnny Funny Here comes wee Johnny Funny,
He's the man to gather the money,
Long leather pooches down to his knees,
He'll take tuppence or thrupence, or three bawbees.

Source

James Arnott Collection.

UNLOC. ABBOTSFORD COLL.

Text ^a

Galatian

Personages

Judas - carrying the bag or purse.
Belzebub)
Black Knight)
Prince George) in appropriate dress
Farmer's Son)
Galatian)
The Doctor)

(Enter Judas)

Judas Had awa rokes had awa reels
 Had awa stocks and spinning wheels
 Red chairs red stools here comes in a pack of fools.

Sic as was never seen here before.

Red room for Gorlings
 Red room in a ring
 And I will let you see the prettiest show
 That was ever seen in Christmas time.

I call upon Belzebub - Belzebub!

(Enter Belzebub)

Belzebub Here comes in Belzebub
 Over my shoulder I carry my club
 And in my hand my drying pan
 Don't you think I'm a jolly young man.

Judas I call upon Black Knight -- Black Knight)

(Enter Black Knight)

Black Knight Here comes in Black Knight the great
 King of Macidonia come to conquer the
 whole world but Scotland alone his courage
 is so great. He is so bold and so stout
 and so courageous and able. His head
 is made of Brass and his body of steel
 and his back - of Rumpel bone.

Judas I call upon Prince George - Prince George!

(Enter Prince George)

Prince George Here comes in Prince George
 Without a right without reason.
 Here I draw my bloody weapon
 My bloody weapon shines so clear
 It makes my body venture here
 To venture here or venture there.

Judas I call upon poor Jack -- poor Jack!

(Enter poor Jack)

Poor Jack Here come I Poor Jack
 I am a Farmer's son
 And I am like to lose my love
 Because I am too young
 Although I be too young
 I've got money for to rove
 And I will freely spend it all
 Before I lose my love

Judas I call upon Galatian. - Galatian!

 (Enter Galatian)

Galatian Here comes in Galatian
Galatian is my name
With sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game

 (Here Galatian and the Farmer's son draw their
swords and fight - Poor Jack falls)

Galatian Alack Alack whats this that I have done
I have slain his fathers only son.
And now he's dead and died in his gore
He will never rise to fight me more

Farmer's Son Oh you dirty dog you are mista'n,
Although I'm hurt I am not slain
I'll rise and fight with you again.

Galatian You dirty dog you are not able
You with my sword I will dischevle
I'll fill thy body full of wounds
And make thy buttocks fly.

Judas Ten pounds for a doctor

 (Enter doctor)

Doctor Here comes in a Doctor
The best that Scotland ever produced.
I have gone from nation to nation to learn my trade.
And now I've come back to Scotland to cure the dead.

Judas What will you take to cure Poor Jack.

Doctor Ten pounds

Judas Will not seven do?

Doctor No.

Judas Will not eight do?

Doctor No.

Judas Will nine not do? I'll give you nine.

Doctor Yes - I have a little bottle here that
hangs by my side they call it Hoxxy Croxy
now I'll put a little to his nose

 (The Doctor here suits the action to the words)

 And a little to his Bum and I say
Jack rises up and fight again and
it is done.

(Jack here springs from the ground and all the actors that can sing join in some Christmas or popular song.)

Information

None.

Comment

'Gorlings' (= nestlings) is recorded in Kircudbright, Dumfries, the Carlisle area, and the Cumbrian/Northumberland border, (Linguistic Atlas of Scotland (1977), p.24). It is resembled only by the 'Gorlands' of Peebles^a: both may be corruptions of 'gallants', or 'garlands'.

Text ^b

1. Silence silence gentle men
Upon me cast an eye
My name is Alexander
I'll sing a tragedy.
My own actors they are but young
And they never fought before
But they will do the best they can
What can the best do more
The first that I call in
He is a Farmers son.
And he is like to lose his love
Because he is but young.
2. Altho I am but young
I've got money for to rove
And I will freely spend it all
Before I lose my love.
1. The next that I call in
Is galoshin of renown
With sword and pistol by his side
He hopes to gain the crown.
3. Here comes galoshin
Galoshin is my name
With sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game.
Will you take my love from me
Yes and I'll have her too.

(Fight)
1. Now Galoshin you have killed
And on the ground is laid
Young man you'll suffer for it
I'm very sore afraid.
2. Oh you villain bold
Don't lay the blame on me

I'm sure that both my eyes were shut
When this young man did die.

1. Oh how could your two eyes be shut
When I stood looking on
I saw you slip behind his back
And draw your sword so fine.

2. If galoshin I have killed
Then Galoshin I will cure
Galoshin shall be cured
In the space of half an hour.

1. Are there doctors to be found here, I say are
there any doctors?

(Enter Doctor)

Yes, here come I, as good a doctor as ever
Scotland bred.

What can you cure?

The clap and the gangrene and an old man in his
grave seven years and twenty more.

What will you take to cure this dead man?

Doctor Ten pounds

Will nine not do?

Doctor Yes, perhaps nine and a bottle of wine. I
will have a bottle of Hoxxy-Croxy at the head of
my breeches. Put a little in his nose and a
little in his bur. Rise up Jack and fight.

3. Now once I was dead
But now I am alive
And blessed are the hands of those
That made me to revive.

2 & 3 Now we will shake hands
And we will fight no more
And we will gree like brothers
As once we did before.

Bless the master we all sing together
And the mistress also and the pretty babies
That round the table go.

Bless the men and maidens
That ever were here
I wish you all a good Xmas
Likewise a good new year.

There are four of us all
And merry boys are we

And we are gone a rambling
Your houses for to see.

Your houses for to see
And pleasure for to have
And what you freely give to us
We freely will receive.

Information

None.

Source

National Library of Scotland, Abbotsford Collection, MS.893 (Ballads and Songs), ff.85-90.

Comment

These two texts were found amongst Scott's papers, with no indication of their provenance. There is little internal evidence to help place them, and neither relates to the description of the custom at Abbotsford House. I assume that correspondents sent these papers to Scott some time in the 1820s, when his other writings evinced his interest in the custom.

UNLOC. ANGUS...

Text and Information

"The New Year Mummings' Tale of Golaschin."
Hamilton, December 27, 1888.

Sir,

The following version of this ancient and curious play (of which, I believe, traces are found in most countries in Europe) I have taken down from the lips of an old lady relative, according as she remembers it to have been said, sung and acted in her young days in Forfarshire and the eastern counties of Scotland.

I do not know whether it has ever been printed in its present form, but it is worth preserving. Though the rhyme is somewhat halting, I give it in its original doggerel form as recited to me.

Dramatis Personae: Sir Alexander, Farmer's Son, Admiral, Golaschin,
Doctor Brown.

Sir Alexander (sings)	Good people all come round And listen to my song My name is Sir Alexander I won't detain you long; There are but five of us, sirs, And merry boys are we, And we are going a-hunting Some houses for to see:
--------------------------	---

Some houses for to see, sirs,
 Some pleasure for to have,
 And what you freely give to us
 We freely shall receive,
 The first young man that I call in,
 He is a farmer's son,
 He is afraid he'll lose his love
 Because he is too young.

(Calls, Farmer's Son enters.)

Farmer Son's
 (sings) Though I be too young, sirs,
 I've money for to rove;
 And I will freely spend it all
 Before I lose my love.

Sir Alexander
 (sings) The next young man that I call in
 He is a hero fine;
 His cap is to the Admiral,
 And all his men are mine.

(Calls Admiral, who enters)

Admiral (sings) Here come I, the Admiral,
 The Admiral stout and bold,
 Who fought the battle on the deck,
 And gained three crowns of gold.

Sir Alexander
 (sings) The next young man that I call in,
 Golaschin is his name,
 The bravest knight in all the land
 Of glory and of fame.

(Calls Golaschin, who enters.)

Golaschin (sings) Here come I, Golaschin,
 Golaschin of renown;
 With sword and pistol by my side,
 And hope to gain the crown.

Admiral (sings) The crown, sir, the crown, sir,
 Is not into your power;
 I'll slay you and slash you
 In less than half-an-hour!

Golaschin (sings) He head is made of fire, sir,
 My body is well steeled,
 And with my bloody weapon
 I'll slay you on the field.

Admiral (sings) I'll do the best that I can do
 While I have power to stand;
 While I have power to wield my sword
 I'll fight with heart and hand.

Sir Alexander
 (sings) Here are two champions going to fight
 That never fought before;
 I'm not going to separate them,
 Pray, what could I do more?

Fight on, fight on, my merry boys,
 Fight on, fight on with speed
 I'll give any man a thousand pounds
 To lay Golaschin dead.

(They fight, Farmer's Son joining the mêlée. Golaschin is slain)

Sir Alexander Oh what is this, oh what is this,
 Oh what is this you've done,
 You have slain Golaschin
 And on the ground he's lain!

Farmer's Son It was not me that did the deed,
 Quite innocent of the crime,
 It was the fellow behind my back
 That drew his sword so fine.

Admiral Oh you are the villian,
 To lay the blame on me,
 For my two eyes were shut, sir,
 When that young man did dee!

Sir Alexander Why could your eyes be shut, sir,
 When I was looking on,
 When could your two eyes shut be
 When both the swords were drawn?

Admiral If I have slain Golaschin,
 Golaschin I will cure,
 And I will make him rise and sing
 In less than half-an-hour.
 (shouts) Call for the doctor, Is there any doctor
 to be found?

(Enter Doctor Brown, stout and portly)

Doctor (speaks) Yes, here come I, Doctor Brown
 The best doctor in all the town.

Admiral (speaks) What makes you so good, sir?

Doctor Why, for my travels.

Admiral And where have you travelled?

Doctor From Hickerty-pickerty-hedgehog, three
 times round the West Indies, and back to
 old Scotland.

Admiral Is that all, sir?

Doctor No, sir.

Admiral What more?

Doctor Why, I've travelled from fireside to
 chairside, from chairside to stoolsides,

from stoolside to tableside, from tableside to bedside, from bedside to press-side, and got many a good lump of bread and butter from my mother, and that's the way my belly's so big.

Admiral Is that all, sir?

Doctor Yes, sir,

Admiral What will you take to cure a dead man?

Doctor Nine pounds and a bottle of wine.

Admiral I'll give you six.

Doctor Six won't do.

Admiral I'll give you eight.

Doctor I wouldn't take it.

Admiral Nine then, and a bottle of wine.

(Doctor takes bottle, and putting it to Golaschin's nose, says,)

Put the smell of the bottle to his nose, and make him rise and sing.

Gólaschin (rises and sings) Once I was dead, sir
And now I am alive;
Blessed be the doctor
That made me revive

(And then with hands joined, dance round, singing:

Bless the master of this house,
The mistress good also
And all the little children
That round the table go.
We'll all shake hands
We'll never fight no more;
With our pockets full of money,
And our barrels full of beer,
We'll all go a-drinking
Around the Spanish shore.
Hooray, for a Happy New Year!

I am etc.

W.G.D. "

Source

W.G.D., 'The New Year Mummers' Tale of Golaschin', The Scotsman
31 Dec 1888, p.5, col. 4.

Comment

'Forfarshire' is now known as 'Angus', in which the only known play location is Arbroath. Otherwise this ascription to 'Forfarshire and the eastern counties' is unsupported by particular evidence. The text given here closely resembles Stirling^a, and may represent the version favoured c.1820 in east-central Scotland.

UNLOC. BANNOCKBURN/DUNFERMLINE (Bannockburn is NS3190: Central)

Text

Here come I, Galayshun,
Galayshun is my name,
Sword and pistol by my side,
I mean to win the game.

The game, sir, the game, sir,
'Tis not within your power,
I'll cut you up in slices
In less than half an hour.

(They fight)

Oh dearie me, what have I done?
I've killed my brother's only son.
Go, call for Dr. Brown, the best doctor in the town.

Information

The text was communicated to the informant by her grandfather, whose parents were married in Stirling in 1842, who was born in Bannockburn in 1845, and married in Dunfermline in 1871, where he lived until he moved to Middlesbrough in the 1880s. The chief industry in the Bannockburn of his day was coal-mining, and he worked as a mining engineer in Fife.

Comment

On the assumption that he had learned the text as a player, the problem of location is the question of whether he spent his boyhood in Bannockburn or the Dunfermline area. As far as the frail weapon of textual comparison may serve, the opening of the fragment compares closely with the Dunfermline lines of the same period.

Source

From Marie C. Clark, Fairlight, New South Wales; in the Collections of Brian Hayward, Alex Helm, and Emily Lyle.

UNLOC. BERWICKS ^a

Information

' ... many happy recollections spent in a Berwickshire town, many years ago, on the eve of Hogmanay, acting the Guizards. It was a regular institution at that time, and we were always sure of a hearty welcome. The version was much abridged from that of your correspondent, but very much the same. At the beginning of each season we had regular rehearsals. I remember as yesterday taking the part of Golishan, with sword at my side, dressed in a white nightshirt: the doctor with his face blackened. At the end of the performance our names were enquired, and if well known we received an extra collection. One regrets to see these customs becoming a thing of the past ...'

Source

An unsigned letter in The Scotsman, 2 Jan 1903, p.7, col. 2.

Comment

The 'correspondent' referred to I take to be the author of the information for Linton and unloc. Berwicks^b.

UNLOC. BERWICKS ^b

Information and Comment

A text is given which is claimed to be a collection of personal knowledge, oral tradition and two plays collected by James Hardy L.L.D. (who was a local historian of merit, and Secretary to the Berwickshire Naturalists Club in the latter half of the nineteenth century). Much of Leishman's text can be found elsewhere; the two Hardy texts cannot now be traced. The handful of lines that do not appear elsewhere in the Scottish corpus are given here, but no use is made of them in the textual discussion, for Leishman is an unreliable witness, and his information cannot be assumed to be of Scottish origin.

Golishan	My name is made of fire, sir,
Doctor	Here comes I, old Hector Protector, The Devil's own picture..... Sheepskins and camel's hair. (I've seen geese going on pattens,) And mice eating rottens. (rats) I can cure the scout, the scur, and the kink-host. I'll touch his eyes, nose, mouth and chin.

The cure is by snuff, as at Innerleithen.

Source

James Fleming Leishman, A Son of Knox (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1909)
pp. 103-06.

(see also Linton).

UNLOC. BUCKIE (NJ4265: Grampian)

Text

Here come I, Wee Keekum Funny,
I'm the lad wha tak's the money.

Information

'Flora quotes further lines from the Guisard play'

Source

Amy Stewart Fraser, Dae Ye Min' Langsyne? (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p.181.

Comment

The author's method of identifying her sources leaves the reader in doubt whether a Shetland or Buckie informant supplied this couplet. Even if the Buckie ascription is correct, there is no proof that there was a tradition of performance in the town.

UNLOC. CHAMBERS

Information

(a) At the time of writing, masquers, known as 'guisards' were a conspicuous feature of New Year celebrations throughout Scotland, and were observed on Christmas Day, Hogmanay, New Year's Day, and Handsel Monday.

They wore men's shirts, hats made of brown paper in the shape of a Bishop's mitre, and masks of brown paper attached thereto which concealed the whole of their faces, with holes cut for eyes, nose and mouth.

The boys went about in pairs: one sang, and the other was dressed as a girl. The latter wore an old woman's cap and carried a broomstick, and was called 'Bessie'. His function was to open the door, sweep the floor, and perform amusing antics during the singing.

Sometimes the boys were turned away, but the usual reward was a half-penny. The two boys took equal shares in the collection.

(b) Apart from the activity described above, there was also a play which 'in various fragments or versions' existed in every part of Lowland Scotland. It normally had between three and six performers, and was enacted in kitchens, watched by the family.

(c) 'In the west of Scotland, instead of Judas and his speech, enter a Demon or Giant, with a large stick over his shoulder, and singing -

Here come I, auld Beelzebub
 Over my shoulder I carry my club,
 In my hand a dripping pan;
 Am not I a jolly old man?

Here come I, auld Diddletie - doubt
 Gi'e me money, or I'll sweep ye a' out.
 Money I want, and money I crave;
 If ye don't gi'e me money, I'll sweep ye till
 your grave.'

Comment

The information given under (a) is not, of course, descriptive of a drama, but is included on the strength of its similarity in costume and action. By 'the West of Scotland', I take Chambers to mean the Strathclyde area.

Source

As for Peebles^a.

UNIOC. EAST LOTHIAN

Information

The poem 'Hogmanay' may be paraphrased thus:

Noisy gangs of guisers rehearse their play. They wear fause-faces, and sarks over their trousers. The boldest boy, he who is not afraid or 'blate', though timmer tuned, plays Judas. He shouts, 'Goloshan is my name! With sword and pistol by my side. It's me shall win the game. Napoleon strides out, waves a wooden sword, and says, 'Goloshan, follow on! The game, sir, the game, sir! It's not within thy power, For with this - my bloody dagger - I shall flay thee on that floor'. Goloshan is slain, but is restored by Doctor Gore, 'wi' a funk'. The performance concludes with songs, scones, and halfpennies.

The author provides this note:

"The customs and practices described in the above were universally in fashion amongst the peasantry of East Lothian in the writer's early days. Nor are they altogether forgotten, or obsolete yet in the rural parts of the country. The 'big bands' of mummers or guisers, indeed, may not be met with now as often as formerly, but this time-honoured species of frolic is still very common amongst the country and village children during 'Yule-Tide' - and especially on the evening of Hogmanay".

Source

James Lunsden, Sheep Head and Trotters (Haddington: Sinclair, 1896), 'Hogmanay', pp.21-3.

Comment

blate = shy: funk = kick: timmer = tone deaf.

The author's home was at Nether Hailes (NP5678), a dwelling-place between the communities of Haddington and East Linton.

UNLOC. FIVE

Text

(The first actor steps into the middle of the floor, and speaks.)

Here Come I, Galoshans, Galoshans is my name,
Sword and pistol by my side I hope to win the game.

The game, sir, the game, sir, is not within thy power:
I'll draw my bloody dagger and slay you on the floor.

(Galoshans is slain with a blow from the dagger.)

What's this I've done?
I've killed my brother Jack, my father's eldest son.
Is there a doctor to be found?

Yes, here comes Doctor Brown,
The best doctor in the town.

What can you cure?

The rout, the gout, and the scurvy.

Can you cure this dead man?

Yes, we'll cure him.

(The doctor kneels, and touches him on the nose and the thumb.)

Put a little on his nose, and a little on his thumb.
Rise up Jack and sing.

(He rises and sings,)

Once I was dead, but now I'm alive,
And blessed be the doctor that made me alive.

(All join hands and sing,)

We'll all join hands and never fight again
And blessed be the doctor that made you alive.

..... One of the rhymes the young people used to say went:-

Here comes I Johnny Funny
I am the lad for the money.

Hands in pooches doon to my knees,
 Ain for pennies and ain for bawbees.
 A penny or tuppence I'll no dae nae ill,
 A shilling or sixpence wud gae me a gill.

Information

The writer adds that forty years earlier the boys were welcomed by householders and given coppers, but that at the time of writing they had come to behave and be regarded as beggars.

Source

A Correspondent: 'Hogmanay now and Fifty Years Ago', in Edinburgh Evening Dispatch, 31 Dec 1903, p.4 col. 4.

UNLOC. GALLOWAY: Arnott

Text

Here come I, old Doctor Brown,
 The best old Doctor in the town.
 What can I cure?
 All diseases, to be sure,
the gout.....

Here come I, wee Johnny Funny,
 I'm the man that lifts the money.

Information

The play was enacted by half a dozen small boys who dressed up to suit their parts. The last to speak, Johnny Funny, was dressed as a clown, and collected the money in a cup.

Source

James Arnott Collection (from a letter to the 'Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald')

Comment

Note the similarity with the following entry,

UNLOC. GALLOWAY: Dunlop

Information

The drama 'was enacted in Galloway in living memory at Hallowe'en, the quote made by "wee Johnny Funny" in a cup'.

Source

(Annie Dunlop): 'Ayrshire Notes' in The Kilmarnock Standard and

Ayrshire Weekly News, 1 Jun 1948, p.3, col.1.

Comment

Note the similarity with the preceeding entry.

UNLOC. GALLOWAY: Johnstone

Information

"Smart folk rush off to see the fantastic mummers of Carnival time or the gay kaleidoscope of the Battle of the Flowers. Yet if you ask them of the customs of their own country they can tell you nothing - perhaps regarding them as common or unclean.

Some of our customs are of so ancient an origin that even the oldest inhabitant is but a broken reed as an authority. During Christmas week a band of boys go from house to house and act a drama in the various kitchens. The boys are locally known as White Boys, a name of Irish origin. In the border counties they are called Guizards or Galatians, the last name being the name of the play which they act. From the structure of its verse I believe it dates back to the time of Ralph Royster Doister.

The boys are dressed with large hats decorated with coloured paper, supposed to be a ludicrous copy of the Bishop's mitre, long white shirts and wooden swords complete their costume. Alexander of Macedon sometimes appears, ornamented with curtain rings in nose and ears, which is supposed to surround him with a pleasing Oriental atmosphere. The devil appears at the close with a broom and a sooty face, and sweeps bad luck in or out, with a guileless impartiality, according to the douceur which he receives".

The accompanying illustration (Plate One) shows a kitchen performance. One player is exulting over the body of another: both are dressed in white gowns, ties with a sash at the waist, wear white pointed hats, and carry wooden swords. Another actor, dressed similarly but without a sword, waits outside the open door, accompanied by a fourth in black, wearing horns and carrying a besom. The clock shows 4.40 pm. The audience is a mother with a child in arms, and two young children at her knee.

Source

Miss E.M. Johnstone, 'Galloway New Year's Customs', The Graphic, 47, No.1206 (7 Jan 1893), p.14, col.3.

Comment

The writer makes a careful distinction between the title by which the custom was known in Galloway ('White Boys') and in the Borders (Galatians). In the matter of season, this and the unloc. Galloway MacTaggart are the only two Galloway reports to credit a Midwinter occasion; neither is localised.

PLATE ONE

The 'White Boys' of Galloway

The drawing is one of five in a composite illustration labelled 'Some New Year Customs in Galloway!', by the author of unloc. Galloway: Johnstone, which account it accompanies.

UNLOC. GALLIOTAY: MacTaggart

Text

(Enter Belzebub, and proceeds --)

Here come I, sauld Belzebub,
And over my shoulder I carry a club;
And in my hand a frying-pan,
Sae don't ye think I'm a jolly sauld man.
Christmas comes but ance in the year,
And when it comes it brings good cheer,
For here are two just going to fight,
Whether I say 'tis wrong or right.
My master loves such merry fun,
And I the same to never shun;
Their yarking splore with the quarter-staff.
I almost swear will make me laugh .

The Knights enter now, dressed in white robes, with sticks in their hands, and so they have a set-to at sparring, while one of them accompanies the strokes of the sticks with this rhyme --)

Strike, then, strike my boy,
For I will strike if you are copy,
I'm lately come frae out the west,
Where I've made many a spirit rest;
I've fought in my bloody wars,
Beyond the sun, among the stars,
With restless ghosts, and what you know
Flock there when ere the cock doth crow;
I've elbow'd thousands into hell.
My ears delight to hear them yell.
I've broke the back of millions more
Upon that grim infernal shore;
So strike if you're a valiant knight
Or I shall knock ye down with might.
Your proud insults I'll never bear,
To inches I'll your body tear;
If you, my love, can keep, can keep,
You first must make me sleep, sleep, sleep.

(The second Knight now speaks, and the sparring becomes keener.)

Lash, dash -- your staff to crash,
My fool, have you the water brash?
If you have not, I soon shall know,
I soon shall cause you tumble low;
So thump away and I shall fling
Some blows on you, and make ye ring
Like ye sounding belly buts.
To start the music of thy guts;
Or clinkers on thy hairy skull,
To fell thee like a horned bull.
Reel away, who first shall fall.
Must pardon from the other call;
Though you have fought beyond the sun,

I'll find we'll have some goodly fun;
 For I have boxed in the East,
 To solar furnace tossed the beast.

(First Knight falls and sing out -)

A doctor! doctor, or I die -
 "A doctor, doctor, here am I

(Wounded Knight sayeth -)

What can you cure?

(Belzebub answereth -)

All disorders to be sure,
 The gravel and the gout,
 The rotting of the snout;
 If the devil be in you,
 I can blow him out,
 Cut off legs and arms,
 Join then too again
 By the virtue of my club,
 Up Jack, and fight again, etc, etc.'

(Thus a fellow is struck out of five senses into
 fifteen.)

Information

'YULE - BOYS - Boys who ramble the country during the Christmas holidays. They are dressed in white, all but one in each gang, the Belzebub of the corps. They have a foolish kind of rhyme they go through before people with, and so receive baybees and pieces. This rhyme is now-a-days so sadly mutilated, that I can make little of it as to what it means, but it evidently seems to have an ancient origin: and in old Scottish books I see some notice taken of Quhite boys of Zule. The plot of the rhyme seems to be - two knights disputing about a female, and fight; the one falls, and Belzebub appears and cures him. I may give here a sketch of something like the scene, with the attending rhymes.

Source

John MacTaggart, Scottish Gallowilian Encyclopedia, 2nd edn. (London; Hamilton Adams, 1876), pp.502-3.

Comment

The first edition of MacTaggart's Encyclopedia (1824) had a very limited circulation, and the second edition is more frequently encountered. Recently, however, the original has been reprinted, in an edition by L.L. Arden in 1981, printed by the Clunie Press at Old Ballechin in Perthshire.

There are several points of interest about this information:

1. This is by far the earliest of the Galloway accounts, preceding the others by c.75 years.

2. The first seven and the closing thirteen lines appear in other versions; the remainder I take to be the author's invention.
3. This report, and the unlocated Johnstone account, are the only two to ascribe the Galloway play to the midwinter season.
4. The phrase 'Yule Boys' is not known from any other source, and I have been able to trace no 'old Scottish books' that take notice of 'Cuhite Boys of Zule'.

The 'irregularity' of MacTaggart's account has to be set against his admirable credentials as an informant. His biography, which he himself gives under the heading 'MacTaggart', informs us that he was born in 1791, the son of a farmer, at Borgue (a feudal seat), and moved to Torrs when he was seven. Torrs is north of Borgue, five miles from Kirkcudbright (a play location), where he attended school until he was thirteen. Then he travelled widely in Britain, had a spell at Edinburgh University, and returned to Torrs from Canada c.1820, at which place he composed the Encyclopedia, and died in 1830.

Although MacTaggart lived as man and boy in a farmhouse in a folk play area, he gives no hint of having either seen or taken part in the folk play.

In only one area is MacTaggart consonant with the remainder of the Galloway information: the Encyclopedia does not include the word 'Goloshan'.

UNLOC. GALLOWAY: Niall

Information

'My father used to tell me how delighted the family was when a group knocked on the door of the house; they were never refused permission, and crowded in to perform, heavily disguised. One of the things that provided great amusement was identifying the players. Anyone who got away without being identified was very proud of himself.

'The characters varied in different localities, I think, I was never given the exact pattern of the Hallowe'en performances in my father's time, but I can just remember a group coming to the farm and singing, shouting and laughter they brought with them.'

Source

Ian Niall: 'A Countryman's Notes' in Country Life, 132 (1 Nov 1962), p. 1065, cols. 2, 3.

Comment

Although no mention is made of a dramatic performance, the above passage was occasioned by a reference to a Cheshire Souling Play, and it is obvious that the writer was supplying a Galloway equivalent.

The informant appeared to obstruct the discovery of the precise

location. Niall's autobiographical A Galloway Childhood, Heinemann, London, 1967 is evasive, and says merely that the family home was in Galloway, Wigtownshire, on the hills, 'up the Clutag'. In correspondence with Norman Peacock, Niall said that his father lived at different times at Monreith, Wigtown, and Garlieston.

He added that the time referred to would be between 1885 and 1900. The plays were not 'acted'. According to his father, the performers stepped forwards and said 'I am so-and so' before reciting his lines and stepping back to give place to another character.

Since Niall was over 70 at the time of the correspondence (1962), I presume he was born c.1890.

Source

Norman Peacock: Collection.

UNLOC. KINCARDINESHIRE

Source

See St. Andrews.

Comment

The reference is geographically vague as well as being uncertain in nature.

UNLOC. LAUDERDALE (NT5040: Borders)

Text

First Man	Noo ye've killed my brother Jake, And on the ground he's laid, And you will suffer for it, I'm vera sore afraid.
Second Man	Is there any good doctor tae be found in this town?
Doctor	(Hidden behind door) O yes, bit he canna find the snick.
Second Man	Put yer hand a little lower.
Doctor	O yes, it jist comes intae my han like a dram glass. Here comes in Old Dr. Brown, The best old doctor in the town.
First Man	How far have ye travelled?
Doctor	From Dublin to Cork.

Information

The performance was c.1862, and took place from Christmas to the New Year. They wore long white shirts, and blacked their faces or wore 'false faces'. The soldiers wore red coats, and helmets, like dunces' caps, and the doctor wore a great coat, a tiled hat, and (possibly) a 'false face'. Each tried to look the most ridiculous.

Source

Andrew Roberts: James Carpenter Collection.

Comment

This informant reported sixty-five years after the 'geyserton', or 'guisarding', and much of this account is taken from a second, 'corrected' version that he gave.

UNLOC. MACRITCHIE

Text (a)

Here come I, auld Beelsebub,
And over my shoulder I carry a club,
And in my hand a frying-pan,
Sae am I not a jolly old Man?

Information

Groups of boys, known as Yule Boys, or the White Boys of Yule performed the play. All were dressed in white, except Beelsebub, who had a black face, and wore a sheepskin coat turned wool outwards, belted with a straw rope.

Text (b)

Here comes Goloshin, Goloshin is my name,
With sword and pistol by my side
Its me shall win the game.

Information

This was reported in the West of Scotland.

SourceSource

David MacRitchie, 'Christmas and New Year Customs in Scotland' in The Scottish Review and Christian Leader, 21 Dec 1905, pp.572-3.

The text and almost all the information in (a) could have been taken from Unloc. Galloway: MacTaggart. The 'West of Scotland' implies a Strathclyde provenance.

UNLOC. NORTH AYRSHIRE

Information

A correspondent remembered the lines.

Here comes I, Galoshans, Galoshans is my name,
With sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the
game.

The location given was 'north Ayrshire'.

Source

(Annie Dunlop), 'Ayrshire Notes', The Kilmarnock Standard and Ayrshire Weekly News, 1 Jun 1948, p.3, col. 1.

UNLOC. PERTHSHIRE

Information

'An interesting thing.....is to find in Perthshire what is evidently a small remnant of a Humming Play, which took the part of the stick-thwacking, common in other districts to mark the visitors' presence. The performance was described as follows by one who had often in his boyhood taken part in it.

One was chosen to be "Doctor", the others, divided into two parties, were each provided with a lath sword. On arriving at a door these guisers, guizards, standing opposite each other, recited --

'Here comes I Colossians, Colossians is my name,
A sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the
game'.

to this was answered --

'The game, Sir, the game, Sir, is not into your
power,
For I'll slay you down in inches, in less than
half an hour'.

A sham fight ensued, and one of the combatants, pretending to have been wounded, fell to the ground and was immediately attended to by the "Doctor", the others leaving off fighting, and singing

'Here comes little Doctor Brown
The best little doctor in the town.
Gie's oor carol an' let us run,
Gie's oor carol an' let us run'.

The actors were then rewarded by such Hogmanay gifts as the guid-wife found in her heart to bestow on them, and then passed on to another house to repeat the ceremony.

Source

R.C. MacLaglan, 'Additions to "The games of Argyleshire" ', Folk-Lore, 16 (1905), pp.210-11.

Comment

This is an interesting form for the play, at a mid-point between a morris-style stick dance, and a drama.

The only other Perthshire record is at Crieff.

The second syllable in 'Golossians' suggests that this name has been brought from the West of Scotland.

UNLOC. ROBB

Text

'As I remember it - vaguely now - it began with the entry of a Herald crying

Room, room, brave gallants,
Give us room to sport,
For in this place
We wish to resort,
Resort, resort and merry be.

Then came St. George or.....Slasher.....

I am a valiant soldier,
And Slasher is my name,
A sword and pistol by my side
I hope to win the game.

Enter a sailor....he fought Slasher till he himself was wounded in the knee....fought on till he was wounded in the other leg so that... at last "he fought upon his stumps"....As he fell over on his side, he called for a doctor,

A doctor! a doctor! or I die.

....Beelzebub

A doctor, a doctor, here am I.

(Slasher)

What can you cure?

...Beelzebub

All diseases to be sure
From the cramps to the gout,
Cut off legs and arms,
Join them to again.

A happy cure followed. Then round the company went the smallest boy in the cast, with

Here comes I, old Keekum Funny,
I'm the man that lifts the money,
Great big pouches down to my knees,
Threepence, tippence, three bawbees.

Of course, this Keekum was the latest metamorphosis of Judas Iscariot, but instead of a bag, he would hold out his little cap. Sometimes, I think, he was called Devil Doubt, and called upon his audience to "turn their pockets inside out".

Information

The writer thought 'Goloshins' was the latest surviving form, and he derived it from 'The Galatchan'.

Source

T.D. Robb, 'Yuletide', in The Scots Magazine, 4, No.3, (Dec. 1925), 167-8.

Comment

The term 'Goloshins' might indicate a Strathclyde setting, but ll. 10-16. I presume to be taken from Unloc. GALLOWAY: MacTaggart.

UNLOC. ROXBURGHIS. Cook

Informations

"the version....in the county of Roxburgh was....less elaborateOnly three persons....took part.....Galashon was a blustering, boastful....person. (The other was) some popular hero - Sir John Graham, Sir James Douglas....no recollection of Judas.....in the play".

Source

The Stirling Antiquary, ed. W.B. Cook (Stirling: Cook & Tylie, 1909), V (1906-1909).

UNLOC. ROXBURGHIS. MacRitchie

Information

'A Roxburghshire friend, however, informs the present writer that in that county the dialogue and action of the play are, or were quite recently, in full force; the ordinary actors wearing white shirts and tall conical caps, and 'the doctor' befittingly attired'.

Source

D. MacPitche, Scottish Review and Christian Leader, 11th January 1906.

UNLOC. STIRLINGSHIRE

Information

'....in the villages at least of the county...parties of boys go about from house to house disguised in old shirts and paper visors. They act a rustic kind of drama, in which the adventures of two rival knights and the feats of a doctor are conspicuous; finishing up by repeating a rhyme, addressed to the "gudewife", for their "hogmanay".'

Source

William Nimmo, The History of Stirlingshire, 3rd ed. (Glasgow: Morrison, 1880), II, 386-7.

UNLOC. STRATHENDRICK (west-central Stirlingshire)

Information

"In the main, my Scots is the speech that I was familiar with as a boy in Strathendrick, and I seldom use a word that would not come as readily to my tongue as to my pen".

'Hogmanay'

"He.....
.....meets some lads in orra duds
Oot for goloshans".

The poet glosses 'orra duds' as 'odd, old worthless clothes', and 'goloshans' as 'New Year numbers'.

Source

W.D. Cocker, Poems, Scots and English, (Glasgow: Brown, 1932), pp.5, 119.

Comment

Another poem in the collection, 'Glesca' (p.137) talks of 'going hore to Kippen', which town may be the location for the custom.

UNLOC. TEVIOTDALE Roxburghshire

Information

'Fifty years ago parties of young men, under the name of Gizards or Guisards, used to make a round of all the country houses in Teviotdale at Christmas - time, and perform a rude play, always in nearly the same words, of which the dramatic personae were Sir Alexander, Galatian, the admiral, the farmer's son, and the doctor'.

Source

Notes and Queries, 5th Ser. (25 Dec 1875), p.506, (author 'W.E.')

UNLOC. VALE OF LEVEN (Dumbarton)

Information

"Only once did I hear a troupe of Goloshans in the Vale go through their entertainment. It was a pretty crude performance, the artistes being backward and cowed, doubtless due to their alleged efforts not being too welcome in houses where they had previously visited. Had the Goloshans selected a season other than round about the close of the year, they might have evoked more enthusiasm. The truth is that the Vale housewives tried to have their homes spotlessly clean - especially at that period -- and they simply were not going to allow a wheen laudies wi' glaury feet to come in and make a mess of their kitchens.....even if they were talented performers of the 'C.C.C.' or Queen's Minstrels..."

The authors say that the book deals with events between 40 and 60 years ago before the date of publication.

Source

James Ferguson and J.G. Temple, The Old Vale and its Memories (London: G.W. Jones, 1928), p.83. (privately printed).

(see also Alexandria; Balloch)

UNACKNOWLEDGED REFERENCES

It may be of assistance to other researchers to note that the following have printed first-hand sources without their correct identification:

M.H. Banks, British Calendar Customs: Scotland (London: Folk Lore Society, 1939), II, 70, quotes a letter which uses Jedburgh^c and Unloc. Fife.

A. Cheviot, Proverbs, Proverbial Expressions and Popular Rhymes of Scotland (Paisley: Garner, 1896), pp.169-73, uses Hawick^a and Unloc. Angus (see Jedburgh^c).

A.D. Cumming, Old Times in Scotland (Paisley: Gardner, 1910) uses Unloc. Galloway: MacTaggart.

E.J. Guthrie, Old Scottish Customs etc. (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1885), p.165, uses Unloc. Galloway: MacTaggart.

J.F. Leishman, A Son of Knox (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1909), uses, among others, unloc. Angus.

O. Morrison, 'The Guiser Gangs of Hallowe'en', Country Life (28 Oct 1965), uses Falkirk^b.

W.M. Petrie, Folk Tales of the Borders (London: Nelson, 1950), pp.64-8. uses Hawick^a.

H. Slight, The Archaeologist and Journal of Antiquarian Science, I (1841-42), 176-183, uses, among others, Falkirk^b (see Chapter Two).

The Scotsman (27 Dec 1899) published an anonymous article on the folk play, including a text. Neither the text nor the commentary appears to derive from a Scottish source.

L. Spence in The Scots Magazine, 44, No. 3, (Dec 1945), 203, uses Peebles^a.

Note also that the informant for Hurlet (q.v.), writing in Scottish Journal refer to three texts of Anna Jean Mill, and Irving's 'evidence' for Langholm. Miss Mill wrote me a most generous letter, saying that the three fragments she had collected had been destroyed, with other of her papers, in the U.S.A. The 'evidence' for Langholm is the result of an unfortunate misreading of Irving's use of Sir Walter Scott.

APPENDIX TWO

This list of important feudal centres has been abstracted from Duncan, The Making of a Kingdom, Barrow, The Kingdom of the Scots, Barrow, The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History, and Ritchie, The Normans in Scotland. A full entry contains the location, the name of the feudatory, nation (where N = Norman, E = English, F = Flemish, A/ = Anglo-, and S = Scots), his/her origin, and the earliest record of the settlement.

Galloway, Dumfries and Carrick.

Annandale: Brus (N) (Yorks) 1124
 Borge: Moreville (N) (Hunts) 1124
 Eskdale: Avenel (N) (Northants) 1141
 Liddesdale: Soules (N) (Northants) 1142
 Urr: Berkeley (E) (Som.) 1174
 Anwoth: Teri (E) (Cumbria) 1186
 Colvend: Gospatrick (E) (Cumbria) 1186

Lothian

Berwick-on-Tweed: Lindsey (E) (Lincolnshire)
 Innerwick: Avenel (N) (Northants) 1184
 Innerwick: Berkeley (E) (Som.) 1140
 Lauderdale, St. Boswells, Mertoun, Dryburgh: Moreville (N) (Hunts) 1128
 West Lothian: Melville (F) (Northants) 1145
 West Lothian: Olifard (N) (Northants) 1145
 Cranston: Riddell (N) (Northants) 1142
 Strathbrock: Freskin (F) 1128
 Bo'ness: Berowald (F) 1128
 Haddington: Waremme (E) (Yorks) 1150
 East Lothian: Hervey c.1170
 pt. of Peebleshire: Fraser 1170
 West Linton: Comyn (N) 1142
 Hakerstoun: Berkeley (E) (Som.) 1174
 Tranent: Ness (F/S) 1145
 Hawick: Lovel 1145
 Peebles: 1125
 Lilliesleaf: Riddell (F) (Northants) 1125

Jedburgh:
 Crailing:
 Kelso: Corbet

Upper Clydesdale

Bothwell: Olifard (N) (Hunts) 1144
 Libberton: Somerville (N) (Yorks) 1144
 Crawfordjohn, Robertson, Lamington, Wiston, Symington, Thankerton, Biggar:
 (Fl) 1140

Kyle and Cunningham

Cunningham, Renfrew, Paisley, Pollok, and parts of Renfrewshire:
 Moreville (N) (Hunts) 1124
 North Kyle: Walter (A/Fl); Moreville (above); The Steward (S) 1150 (also
 Bute)
 Symington: Simon (Fl) 1124

Lennox

No infeftment

Marfith and Strathearn

Kincardine: Montfiquet (N) 1200
 Strathday: Malise (A/Fl) 1178
 pt of Stirlingshire: Fraser 1170
 Muthill and six other places: Malise (A/F) 1175
 Dolpatrick (Madderty): Lovetoft (E) (Hunts) 1178

Fife

Fife (earldom of): Duncan (S) 1100
 Leuchars: Ness (F/S) 1170
 Lochore: Robert (F) or (S) 1125
 Craill: Warrene (E) (Yorks) 1140
 Pitmillly: Hay (N) (Northants) 1178
 Naughton: " " " "

Atholl and Gowrie

Errol: Hay (N) (Northants) 1190

Powgavie: Gifford 1190
 Cargill: Mushet (N) 1180 (also Muschet)
 All three in Gowrie, Atholl was not feudalised.

Angus

'Newtun' Inverkeilor: Berkeley (E) (Som.) 1174
 Fowlis Easter: Mortimer 1190
 Benvie, Pannure: Valognes 1180 (Monikie)
 Guthrie: Carnall 1180
 Tealing: Gifford (E. Loth., Northants) 1174
 Tannadice: Melville (F) (Northants) 1174
 Dun: Hastings (A/N) 1180
 Ruthven: London (A/N) 1180
 Rossie: Clerk 1180
 Ogilvy: Angus (S) 1180

Mar (The Heams)

Fordoun, Laurencekirk: Berkeley (E) (Som.) 1174
 Kinneff: Montford 1180
 Arbuthnott: Olifard (N) (Hunts) 1180

Mar (Buchan)

Aboyne: Bisset (E) (Notts) 1220
 Garioch: Gifford (E) (E. Loth., Northants) 11200 (also subinfeuded)
 Inverurie: Malcolm (S) 1180 (or possibly from Chester).
 Lumphanan: " " "
 Strathbogie: Duncan (S) 1250

Morey

Duffus and extensive northern territory: Freskin (Fl) (Strathbrock, W. Loth.) 1130
 Innes, Nether Urquhart: Berowald (Fl) (Bo'ness) 1130
 Elgin, Forres, Inverness: The Steward (S) 1240
 Rothes: Muriel (S) (Pollock) 1240
 Dallas: Ripley (E) (Yorks) pre-1214

Inverness and the North

Aird, Redcastle: Bisset (E) (Notts) 1220

Abertaff (Loch Ness): Thirlestane (E) (Lauder) 1228

Appendix ThreeThe Plough Song

The version given here is one I have compiled from the text given in Musica Britannica, XV, p.141f, and that printed by Fenton in 'The Plough Song etc', Tools and Tillage, 1, No. 3 (1970), pp 175ff.

My heartly service to you, My Lord,
 I recommend as should accord;
 There is ane ox into your pleugh
 It is right so mot he go
 and he is waxed old eneugh 5
 ye say the sooth he has not a tooth
 And he no langer may be drawn
 bot he be led I dare lay wedd (=lay bets)
 bot he was never half so thrawn (stubborn)
 nor yet so acwart but goeth backward 10
 now is he weak and wonder sweer (reluctatnt)
 I tak on me
 out of ane house he may not stire;
 suppose ye brod him while he die,
 while he die, while he die, 15
 Hey down a down . . . duna die.

Yet better it war that some remeid
 were found in time ere he be dead
 for causes for skentling of bowts (wrenching of pleugh bolts)
 and startling of other men's nowts (disturbing:cattle) 20
 And I am woe your pleugh should lye,
 And I might come and be near by
 To yoak another in his steid
 To drug and draw whill he be dead
 out of an uncouth fair leasure (very releasing pastime) 25
 and if it be your proper will
 gar call your hyndis all you till.
 Ginken and Wilken, Higgin and Habken
 Hankin and Rankin, Robert and Colin
 Nicol and Colin, Hector and Aiken, 30

Martin Hauer, Sandie Sawyer
 Michael and Morice, Falselips Fergus
 Reynard and Guthrey, Symon and Jafrey
 Orphus and Arthur, Allan, Morice
 Downie, Davie, Robert, Richard, 35
 Philpie Foster and Macky Miller
 Ruffie Tasker and his marrows all
 Strawbots, Tarboys and Ganzel
 all that hes most domination
 and pastorie of your common 40
 before you, one and one present
 and thoreto show them your intent.

Desire them all if they will be
 Appeasit for to mell with me,
 And mak me als so fast and sicker 45
 As I wer bound evin with a wicker
 for to deliver me be the heid;
 the old ox Trip--free he be dead.
 Then sall I come be robes cocks (?by rood-blessed God)
 And bring with me my fair fresh ox 50
 With all that belongs to the plough;
 Soms of iron start eneugh (harness chains: strong)
 the couter and the pleughhead,
 sok sheet and mowdie bread
 rack, rest, and the gluts and the slee band 55
 the missel and the pleugh-bowl,
 the pleugh staff and the pleugh shoon,
 the well and the stilt and the beam and the heel-wedge,
 the chock, the yoke, the ring, th. sling,
 mine oxen bolis is wreathed and pind, 60
 this whole year saw no sun nor wind;
 the gad wand is both light and sharp
 To brod his belly while he start.
 Now in the rood name call about
 our pleugh so graiths with a shout 65
 Hey, call about, wind about,
 And a brod, brod about Hakey
 wind about Brandie
 call the brown Humly

Trow belly Chow-bullock . 70
 White horn, Grayhorn and Cromack,
 Wind narrow-garie
 Wind about hey
 Brod futt thee further
 I sall brod him whill he rair 75
 The red stot and the dun
 Wynd about again sune
 Wind narrow, wind about
 hold, draw him forth in the brood's name.
 Not ane of them for sic draught (drawing power) 80
 In all Scotland is there sic aught (such an eight)
 And if ye please this pleugh of mine
 Tell me shortly into time
 or I contract and hired be
 With others that desires me 85
 No else but the Trinitie
 conserve you into Charitie. Amen.

Note

The lines that accompany the capering of the revived ox (ll. 66-79) show some similarity to those that accompany the dance of the hobby-horse in a version of the Summer King drama written in London in 1599:

About, about, lively! Put your horse to it, rein him harder, jerk him with your wand! . . .

Thomas Nashe, The Unfortunate Traveller and Other works, ed. J.B.Steane (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p.153.

Appendix Four

Robin and Robert

Behind the more obvious aspects of the interplay of the 'Robin' with folk drama lies a sometimes obscure web of language connecting Robin and Robert with the horse ritual. Many if not all of these obscurities can be explained by the hypothesis that Robin and Robert were the names through which a north European version of the ritual horse combat was translated into other, less overtly pagan forms. This hypothesis is outlined in this Appendix. All linguistic detail and examples are taken from OED, unless otherwise stated.

1. Scandinavian Horse Ritual

Brother kings (sometimes twin gods) customarily fight and kill one another. An association with horses is a characteristic of the dioskouroi, most obviously in Hengest (=stallion) and Horsa (=horse), the legendary Anglo-Saxon kings: Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern Europe; see Chapter four, n58.

2. The Brothers, Robin and Robert

'Robert' is a French name, from Germanic 'fame-bright'. 'Robin' is the friendly diminutive. The pairing is parallel to the Swedish twins, Alrik and Eirek (see Davidson, above).

Note the folk play lamentation for having killed 'his father's son', and the revived man's sorrowful 'Oh brother, Oh brother, why didst thou me kill?' (Hawick).

The names are frequently corrupted: for example, Robert - Obert, Hobert, Roberd, Hoberd; Robin - Obin, Hobin, Hobby.

3. Medieval and Modern French and English Horse Words

The word for 'a small horse' was in ME hobyn, hoby, in OF hobin, hobi, haubby . . . The OF was adopted from English where the word is app. native, in all probability it is the by-name Hobin, Hobby, var. of Robin".

In modern French: aubère = horse whose coat is a mixture of red-brown and white; aubin = a small, ambling horse. One which gallops with front legs, and trots with rear legs. From OF hober = to jump: (Grande Larousse de la Langue Francaise). aubin = little horse of England and Ireland, 13th cent (Trésor de la Langue Francaise). aubère (also aubert) = a horse between white and bay; little esteemed. and thought to go blind (Larousse Dictionnaire Universale du XIX^e Siecle).

Hobin, first noted in Barbour's Bruce 1375 (hobynis), was frequent name for carthorse c.1695. Now occurs as 'Dobbin'.

4. Jeu de Robin et Marion

This play is the clearest survival of the horse ritual combat: Robin and (Sir) Aubert contend for the love of Marion (?the Mare). See Chapter Four.

5. Good and Evil

Robin is 'good'; Robert is 'bad'.

In the Jeu (see above), Robin is the (poor, rustic) hero, and Sir Aubert the (wealthy, powerful) villain – a relationship closely mirrored three hundred years later in Britain by Robin (Hood) and Sir Robert (Ingram), the Sheriff of Nottingham (see Chapter Five, 1).

'Robin Goodfellow' was a nickname given to the woodland sprite; 'Sir Robert' (in the form 'sere hoberd') was a term of reproach c.1450.

Robin's men were the 'merry men', who stole from the rich to give to the poor; conversely the roberdsmen and robertsman were thieves c.1331.

6. Hobble

'Robin' is the hero/lover, the fool/dancer, gambolling about in horse disguise. 'Hobby-horse' is open to several interpretations, but appears to be constructed from the words for 'small horse' and 'Robin'.

The action of cavorting about in a hobby horse has appropriate verbs in relevant languages: Du. hobbelen means 'to toss, rock from side to side, ride on a hobby-horse'; hober was OFr. verb 'to jump' (Grande Larousse); (See also mod. Fr. aubin above.) 'Hobble' = to ride a hobby-horse (14th cent.) parallels hobelar a 'lightly-armed horseman' (1308) (Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue).

The Fool dancing probably gave rise to hobble = dance (1535), and Hoball = clown, fool and idiot (1553). Note that the Lincolnshire Easter Horse was known as '(Old) Ball' (Cawte, Ritual Animal Disguise, p.140). The 'Fool's display' I suggest could be the hobbilshow in the Robin Hood Crying (see Appendix Five).

Hobbididance and hoberdidance are explained as "the name of a malevolent sprite or fiend, one of those introduced in the morris dance", first noted in 1603. One the lines of the hypothesis, the malevolent aspect would belong to the Hoberd

(Robert) rather than the Hobby (Robin).

6. Redness

A theme of redness is perceptible in the mod. fr. aubère (Grande Larousse), and in the Robert Redbreast (1425), or Robin Redbreast (c.1450). The Du. dialect robi_jnt_je (= robin redbreast) has the literal meaning of 'red stone', an informant tells me.

7. Outsiders

(i) The mocking lines on the fugitive Robert the Bruce:

Now Kyng Hobbe in the mures yongeth,
For te come to toune nout him ne longeth. (c.1325)

may use 'Hob' in the sense of 'rustic countryman', rather than a recapitulation of the regard of Bruce as a 'Summer King' (see Chapter Four).

(ii) Barbara Lowe (in 'The Final Truth about Robin Hood') has pointed out that 'Robin' is used in the sense of 'penis'. The source is Gascoigne's farewell to his youth and vitality:

Eke Lullabye my loving boye
My Little Robyn take thy rest . . . (A Hundreth Sundrie

Flowres (1573), Gascoignes Lullabye, pp.201--202)

This may relate to the role of Robin as Wooer, and to Priest John's emblem at Inverkeithing (see Chapter Four); alternatively, it may be a unique and idiosyncratic use of the name by Gascoigne.

(iii) 'hobbledehoy' is defined as 'clumsy or bad-mannered youth', from hobbard de hoy (16th cent.), "of uncertain origin" (Collins English Dictionary). The awkwardness of the 'hobble dance' is explicable, the 'de hoy' not.

Appendix Five

The Robin Hood 'Crying', as given in The Asloan Manuscript,
ed. W.A.Craigie (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1925), II, pp.149-154.

Heir' followis ye maner' of ye
crying of ane playe

Lij

harry harry hobillschowe
Se quha Is cummyfi howe

Bot I wait nevir' howe

With ye quhorle wynd

A soldane owt of scriand land

5

A gyand strang for to stand

That with ye strenth of my hand

Beres may bynd

3it I trowe yat I wary

I am ye nakit blynd hary

10

That lang has bene in ye fary

ffarleis to fynd

And 3it gif yis be nocht I

I wait I am ye spreit of gy

Or ellis go by ye sky

15

Licht as ye lynd

The god of most magnificence

Conserf yis fair' presens

And saif yis amyable audiens

Grete of renovne

20

Prowest ballies officeris

and honorable Induellaris

Marchandis and familiaris

Of all yis fair' towne

Quha Is cummyn heir' bot I

25

A bauld bustuofs bellamy

At 3our corfs to mak a cry

With a hie sowne

Quhilk generit am of gyandis kynd

ffra strang hercules be strynd

30

Off all ye occident of ynd

My eldaris bair' ye crovne

My foregrantschir' hecht fyfi m'kowle

That dang ye devill and gart him 3owle

The skyis ranyd quhen he wald scowle

35

And trublit all ye aire

He gat my grantschir' gog magog

Ay quhen he dansit ye warld wald schog

ffive thousand ellis 3eid in his frog

Of hieland pladdis of haire

40

ȝit he was bot of tender' ȝouth
 Bot eftir' he grewe mekle at south
 Ellevyne ell wyde met was his mouth
 His teith was teñ myle squaire
 He wald apoñ his tais stand 45
 And tak ȝe sternis dovne with his hand
 And set ȝam in a gold garland
 Abone his wyfis haire

He had a wyf was lang of clift
 Hir' hed wan hiear' ȝan ȝe lift 50
 The hevyne rerdit quhen scho wald rift
 The laß was no thing sklender'
 Scho spittit lochlomond with hir' lippis
 Thunner and fyreflaucht flewe fra hir' hippis
 Quhen scho was crabit ȝe soñ tholit clips 55/
 The fende durst nocht offend hir'

For cald scho tuke ȝe fever' cartane
 ffor all ȝe claith of fraunce & bertane
 Wald nocht be till hir' leg a gartane 60
 ȝocht scho was ȝing and tender'
 Apoñ a nycht heire in ȝe north
 Scho tuke ȝe grawell and stalit cragorth
 Scho pischit ȝe mekle watter of forth
 Sic tyde ran eftir hender'

A Thing writtin of hir' I fynd 65
 In Irland quhen scho blewe behynd
 At noroway costis scho rasit ȝe wynd
 and gret schippis drownit ȝare
 Scho fischit all ȝe spanȝe seis
 With hir' sark lape befor' hir' theis 70
 Sevyne dayis saling betuix hir' kneis
 Was estymit and mair

The hyngand brayis oñ athir' syde
 Scho poltit with hir' lymmis wyde
 lassis mycht leir' at hir' to stryd 75
 Wald ga to lufis laire
 Scho merkit syne to land with myrth
 And pischit fyf quhalis in ȝe firth
 That cropyñ war' in hir' count for girth
 Welterand amang ȝe waire 80

My fader' mekle gow makmorne
 Out of yat wyf's wame was schorne
 ffor litilneß scho was forlorne
 Sic a kempe to beire
 Or he of eld was 3er's thre
 He wald stepe oure ye occeane se
 The mone sprang neuer abone his kne
 The hevyñ had of him feire

85

Ane thousand 3ere Is past fra mynd
 Señ I was generit of his kynd
 ffull far' amang ye desertis of ynde
 Amang lyoun and beire
 Baith ye king arthour & gawane
 and mony bald berne in brettane
 ar deid and in ye weris slane
 Señ I couth weild a speire

90

95

I haue bene forthwart euer in feild
 And now so lang I haf borne scheld
 That I am all crynd In for eld
 This litill as 3e may se
 I haue bene bawnist under ye lynd
 ffull lang yat no man couth me fynd
 and now with yis last southin wynd
 I am cummyñ heir' parde

100

My name Is welth pairfor be blyth
 I come heire comfort 3ow to kyth
 Suppoß yat wretchis wryng & wryth
 all dath I sall gar de

105

ffor sekerly ye treuth to tell

I come amang yow heire to duell

110

ffra sound of sanct gelis bell

Nevir think I to fle

Sopheia and ye soldane strang
 With weris yat has lestit lang
 ffurth of yar' boundis maid me to gang
 And turñ to turky tyte
 The king of frauncis gret army
 Has brocht in dath in lombardy
 and in ane cuntre he & I
 May nocht baith stand perfyte

115

120

In denmark swetherik & noroway
 Na in ye steidis I dar' noch't ga
 amang pain Is bot tak & sla
 Cut thropillis and mak quyte
 Irland for evir' I have refusit 125
 all wichtis suld hald me excusit
 ffor neuer in land quhar' erische was vsit
 To duell had I delyte

Quharfor' In scotland come I heire
 With zow to byde and perseveire 130
 In Edinburgh quhar' Is meriast cheire
 Plesans disport & play
 Quhilk Is ye lampe & A per se
 Of yis regioun in all degre
 Of welesaire & of honeste 135
 Renovne & riche aray

Sen I am welth cummyfi to yis wane
 Ze noble merchandis euerilkane
 address zow furth with bow & flane
 In lusty grene lufraze 140
 and follow furth on robyfi hude
 With hartis coragiouss & gud
 and yocht yat wretchis wald ga wod
 Of worschipe hald ye way

ffor I and my thre feres aye 145
 Weilsaire wantoneß & play
 Sall byde with zow in all affray
 and cair' put clene to flicht
 and we sall dredleß ws address
 To banniss derth and all distreß 150
 and with all sportis and meryneß
 Zour hartis hald euer on hicht

I am of mekle quantite
 Of gyand kynd as ze may se
 Quhar' sall be gottin a wyf to me 155
 Siclyke of breid and hicht
 I dreid yat pair be noch't a maide
 In all yis towne may me abyd
 Quha wait gif ony heir' besyd
 Micht suffer' me all nycht 160

With zow sefi I mon leid my lyf
 Gar' serß baith louthiane & fyf
 and vale to me a mekle wyf
 a gret vngraciouss gan
 Sefi scho Is gane ye gret forlore 165

APPENDIX SIX

The Irish Hogmanaymen

The starting-point for this enquiry was a passage in Gailey's Irish Folk Drama, p.12:

Another name for the mummers is Hogmanayman used about Lisbellaw, Fivemiletown and Ballinamallard, that is, mainly in east county Fermanagh, but also in the neighbouring fringe areas of south county Tyrone. There was some Scots settlement here in the seventeenth century; it is significant that this is one area where there is departure from the usual time for the performers to appear. Hogmanaymen are apt to perform their plays any time between 26th December and 6th January, but often about New Year, a further indication of Scottish influence.

To discover more precisely what this 'Scots settlement . . . in the seventeenth century' had been, a search was made in George Hill, The Plantation of Ulster (Belfast: M'Caw, Stevenson & Orr, 1877), a comprehensive account of the manner in which James I & VI changed the character of Northern Ireland by planting English and Scottish settlers. His method was to give Irish estates to the new British landlords, on the understanding that they would encourage numbers of their countrymen to join them, as workers on the estates. (It will be noted that this is a mirror to the policy of the Scottish kings during the feudalisation of Lowland Scotland).

Hill, basing his information on the Inquisitions of Ulster (Tyrone, Car. I), states that the estate in question here was a tract of land known, after the Plantation of 1611, as 'the Manor of Ridgeway', 'described in . . . 1628 as lying in both the counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh' (pp.265-66). I have studied the details of the estate description: it is triangular in shape and the three townships named by Gailey lie in the three angles of the estate boundaries. Clearly, therefore, there is the closest correlation between the area noted by Gailey as being the province of the Hogmanaymen, and the 1611 land grant.

The second stage of the enquiry was to attempt to establish the identity and origin of the landlord and the tenants of this estate. In his description of the estate, Hill reports that the estate in question was given to two brothers, of 'obscure descent', with the surname of Edney. The only channel of enquiry is through the surname, with the help of George F. Black, The Surnames of Scotland (New York: N.Y. Public Library, 1946), whose entry reads:

'Edney: from Ednie in Aberdeenshire: surname recorded in Fife. . . still exists in Edinburgh and Kirkcaldy' (p.240).

The first indication is, therefore, that the Edney brothers were from Fife, possibly from the Kirkcaldy area. Hill, however, adds that Edney brothers put the estate in others' hands soon afterwards, and indeed, King James' plan was jeopardised by lax landlords who simply rented back the land to the Irish from whom it had been taken. The monarch therefore was obliged to despatch Commissioners seven years after the initial Planting to discover how diligently his intentions had been carried out. Hill quotes from Pynnar's Survey of 1618-19 to the effect that the investigator of the Manor of Ridgeway found a 'castle in earthwork' inhabited by 'a Scottish gentleman'. On the estate were nineteen 'British' families, able between them to furnish 'sixty Men with Arms'. Pynnar names two of the major landlords: James Hamilton is cited as owing one half of the manor, and Michael Balfour is mentioned as a lessee (p.542). According to The Surnames of Scotland, 'Balfour' originates from Markinch in Fife, and 'Hamilton', another old Scottish name, from a place-name in Lanarkshire.

The recurrence of Fife in the backgrounds of the Edneys and Balfour, is re-inforced by M. Perceval-Maxwell (in The Scottish Migration to Ulster in the Reign of James I (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), when he points out that Michael Balfour came from Kinross, 15 miles north-west of Kirkcaldy (p.333). He writes that

immigrants with names associated with a specific district of Scotland very often settled near to one another (p.286).

Although the evidence of the names suggests that Fife may have provided the first Hogganaymen in this district (see Map One) it is

by no means compelling, and is moreover contradicted by other factors. In the first place, although immigrants indeed tended to go among their own folk, very many did not. Secondly, Fife features very little in the reckoning of the Plantation historians:

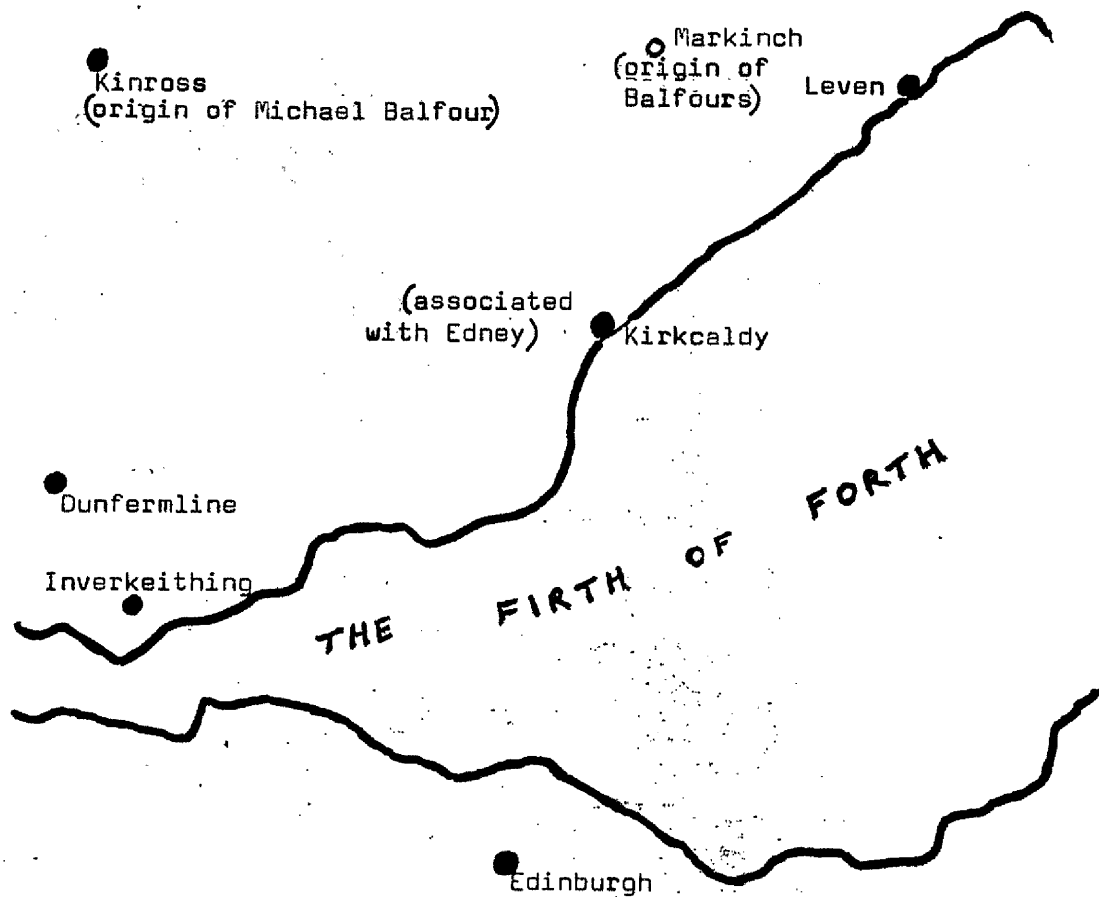
County Fermanagh provides the most striking example of the practice [of grouping according to homeland]. The names occurring most frequently in the muster of this county were.....all Border names (Perceval-Maxwell, pp. 286-7).

The muster referred to was made in 1630, and was in the main of the Jacobean immigration, believed to be mainly from the Borders and the south-west coast of Scotland, up to Argyllshire (p.289).

In the 1630s, however, there was a heavy immigration of Scots (p.313), and this doubtless changed the identity of the settlements yet again.

Looking a little beyond the Manor of Ridgeway, the barony of Clogher, lying on its north-east boundary, attracted many immigrants at this time, and Clogher and Strabane were the only two towns where all the burgesses had Scottish names (p.143).

The curiosity of the Manor of Ridgeway preserving the Hogmanay season is best explained by recognising the dominance there of eastern Scots, with the Borders and perhaps Fife providing the population. The immigration was begun in strength in 1609, and doubtless strengthened in the 1630s, but it is impossible at this remove to prove that Hogmanay was as important to the first settlers as it was to the second wave. Nevertheless, the evidence of the Plantation gives good grounds for believing that the Hogmanay folk play existed in some form, in south-east Scotland, if not in southern Fife, in the first decades of the seventeenth century.



KEY

● = modern folk play locations

The juxtaposition of the names associated with the Jacobean settlement of the Manor of Ridgeway, and their relationship with modern survivals of the folk play, suggest that the original 'Hogmanaymen' may have come from this part of Fife.

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