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A. J. Aitken

Progress in Older Scots Philology

This paper will describe some of the advances in various departments of Older Scots philology from James Murray, the pioneer of the modern study of Scots in 1873,¹ down to the present. Even if I had the competence, there are aspects of this field of study which I have no time or space to treat: the external history of Older Scots; its vocabulary and idiom; its metrics; and its graphology and punctuation. On all of these there is work which could be reported, but it will not feature in this paper.

I regret also having to leave out pre-literary Scots. There have been several important recent contributions to the external history of pre-literary Scots.² On the internal development of pre-literary Scots virtually nothing has yet been done, but much could be, by collecting and describing the visible changes in orthography, phonology, morphology and vocabulary, even,

¹J. A. H. Murray, *The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland* (London, 1873).

²L. W. Sharp, "The Expansion of the English Language in Scotland," Ph.D., Cambridge, 1927; M. G. Williamson, "The Non-Celtic Place-names of the Scottish Border Counties," Ph.D., Edinburgh, 1942; W. F. H. Nicolaisen, e.g. *Scottish Place-names* (London, 1976); D. Murison, "Linguistic Relationships in medieval Scotland," in *The Scottish Tradition*, ed. G. W. S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 1974), pp. 71-83; G. W. S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History* (Oxford, 1980).

in at least one source, in syntax, in the early fragmentary passages.³ More, too, could be learned of the external history, especially from the thirteenth century onwards.⁴

Nor have I time to talk about stylistics. An impressionistic model of stylistics exists for verse,⁵ one is, it appears, adumbrated for literary prose,⁶ but nothing has been done for non-literary prose, including the many snatches of reported direct speech in sixteenth century verse and narrative prose and law-court records. These snatches, if gathered up and studied, would reveal a very different prose style from that of literary prose.

What I will talk about is Older Scots phonology, a very little on orthography, almost nothing on syntax but a little on morphology, rather more on the internal history of anglicization.

Phonology. In 1949 Angus McIntosh invited me to give two courses on, respectively, the history of Scots, and Middle Scots, in Edinburgh University's English Language Department. For both of these I would, I believed, need some reasonably student-friendly account of the historical phonology of Scots, including Older Scots. Much the fullest of the potentially usable accounts of Older Scots phonology, orthography and grammar then in existence was Gregory Smith's of 1902.⁷ On phonology, Gregory Smith's Introduction offers a somewhat randomly ordered list of superficially obvious Older Scots differences of word-form from modern Standard English, with a few examples of each, but without any link with the history of

³I would expect two sources, the Aberdeen Court Roll (1317), in *Early Records of the Burgh of Aberdeen*, ed. W. C. Dickinson, Scottish History Society, III, 49 (1957), 3-17; and the so-called "Scone Gloss," in *Facsimiles of the National Manuscripts of Scotland* II, 19, to figure largely in this, along, of course, with much else.

⁴Such as by further examination of the distribution of newly appearing place-names in Scots in formerly Gaelic-dominated areas after the thirteenth century. And all that can be deduced about the general linguistic ambience in early Aberdeen from a study of the personal and place nomenclature and other terminology in the 1317 court roll (see preceding note).

⁵A. J. Aitken, "The Language of Older Scots Poetry," in *Scotland and the Lowland Tongue*, ed. J. D. McClure, (Aberdeen, 1983), pp. 18-58.

⁶So I deduce from various remarks on matters of style in several essays in R. D. S. Jack, ed., *The History of Scottish Literature . . . Origins to 1660* (Aberdeen, 1988), notably that of R. J. Lyall, "Vernacular Prose before the Reformation," pp. 163-82.

⁷G. Gregory Smith, *Specimens of Middle Scots* (Edinburgh, 1902).

English or the subsequent history of Scots. It did not seem adequate for my purposes.

There also existed several dissertations by students in German universities between 1877 and 1918 on the phonologies of individual authors or groups of texts, and some similar pieces in Scottish Text Society editions, most importantly James Craigie's essays on the language of William Fowler and of Hudson's *Judith* in 1940 and 1941.⁸ Works of this sort consist mainly of partial collections of the rhymes of their authors, organized etymologically according to the presumed underlying Middle English or Old English or Old French or other source of each sub-group of words. So the words containing a particular phoneme are not grouped together but scattered through the dissertation according to their particular source-sounds. Though these are collections of rhymes, none of them organizes its material in rhyme order, according to the final phonetic segment(s) and pre-final phonetic segment. Had this been done, it would have made them a lot easier to consult for purposes of systemic phonology. These are neogrammarian works, devoid of the notion of structure. Since all are based on recensions at some remove from the authorial original, and some only on modern editions of these, they display various sorts of unreliability.

On the other hand, there are some, such as F. J. Curtis's 1894 study of the rhymes of *Clariodus*, which make useful phonological discoveries or suggestion, or, notably those of James Craigie, which supply useful insights into ongoing phonological developments. Curtis was one of the first to discuss the important Northern Middle English lengthening of short /i/ and short /u/ to give forms like *spere* (to ask) and *door* and *duir* (a door), and the very first to notice that, and explain why, certain Scots words such as *kynd* and *mynd* have different vocalisms from others such as *blind*, *find*, *wind*.

Of the several more general studies of problems of phonology before 1950, much the most useful are those by Paul Buss⁹ and Wilhelm

⁸Phonology: e.g. F. J. Curtis, *An Investigation of the Rimes and Phonology of the Middle-Scotch Romance Clariodus* (Halle, 1894); Heinrich Gerken, *Die Sprache des Bischofs Douglas von Dunkeld* (Strassburg, 1898); H. B. Baildon, *On the Rimes in the Authentic Poems of William Dunbar* (Edinburgh, 1899); A. H. Sander, *Die Reimsprache in William Stewart's Chronicle* (Berlin, 1906); K. Lenz, *Zur Lautlehre der Französischen Elemente in den schottischen Dichtungen von 1500-1550* (Marburg, 1913); E. A. Sheppard, "Studies in the Language of Bellenden's Boece," Ph.D., London, 1936; James Craigie, "Fowler's Language," in *The Works of William Fowler*, STS, 3rd Series, 13 (1939), li-lxxix; James Craigie, "The Language," in *Thomas Hudson's Historie of Judith*, STS, 3rd Series, 14 (1941), xlviii-lxxxv.

⁹Paul Buss *Sind die von Horstmann herausgegebenen Schottischen Legenden ein Werk Barbere's?* (Halle, 1886).

Heuser.¹⁰ Buss's problem was whether the *Scottish Legends of Saints* and the *Scottish Troy-book* were by Barbour. He easily demonstrates that they were not, by presenting a lengthy list of phonological and other differences. He was the first to observe that Barbour never rhymes such words as *de* (to die) and *e* (an eye) with such others as *be*, *me*, *se(e)*, and he has a number of other such discoveries.

The most important of several articles published by Heuser in 1896 and 1897 was one on the rhyming of Middle English long open /ē/ e.g. in *hede* (head) and long close /ē/ e.g. in *hede* (heed) in two Northern Middle English and three Older Scots poets (the latter are Henryson, Blind Harry and Douglas). Heuser's problem was to discover whether these two sounds have merged in each text, as they have in many dialects of later Scots, and, if so, in what parts of the lexicon. To solve this he used an invaluable technique which I propose to call the technique of "rhyming sets," which I think he may have adapted from ten Brink's treatise on Chaucer's language.¹¹ To use this method, you assemble the rhyming words as far as possible into mutually exclusive sets, rhyming only with one another. So in *Anglia*, 18, pp. 114-116 Heuser lists, from Blind Harry's *Wallace*, (1) a set of some 135 rhyme-pairs (of close /ē/) containing the words *bleid* (bleed, 4 rhymes), *deid* (deed, 56 rhymes), *dreid* (dread noun, 48 rhymes), *weid* (garment, 25 rhymes), *zeid* (went, 63 rhymes), and 18 other words, and (2) a set of 82 rhyme-pairs (of open /ē/) containing nine entirely new words, albeit overlapping in spelling with the words of set (1), namely *brede* (bread, 2 rhymes), *dede* (dead, death, 70 rhymes), *hede* (head, 7 rhymes), *ramede* (remedy, 20 rhymes), *stede* (place, 59 rhymes), and four other words; members of the latter set also rhyme exclusively together in the plural-rhymed stanzas of book 2, along with one additional word *leid* (lead noun, 1 rhyme). Two rhymes traverse both sets, both containing *zeid* (went), with, respectively, *deid* (death) and *steid* (place). Otherwise only one word *leid* (lead verb) rhymes with members of both sets: that is, it had doublet pronunciations. This technique, applied in this case to vowels before /d/, is also applied in all the other phonetic environments, before /c/, before /l/, word-finally, and so on. Heuser found that /ē/ and /ē/ rhymed apart in all except word-final environments in all his poets, except that they had fallen together before /r/ in Douglas. Later they merged more generally.

¹⁰W. Heuser "Offenes und geschlossenes ee im Schottischen und Nordenglischen," *Anglia*, 18 (1896), 114-28, and 19 (1897), 319-47; W. Heuser, "Die Lautveränderung von z, z, z im Mittelschottischen," *Anglia*, 19 (1897), 405-8.

¹¹B. ten Brink, *Chaucers Sprache und Verskunst* (Leipzig, 1884), pp. 7-63. Ten Brink groups his vowel examples in rhyme order.

In a second article Heuser examined Lyndesay's rhymes. He found that Lyndesay merged former long open /e/ and long close /e/ before /e/, like Douglas, and in some words before /d/, but that in other environments open /e/ as in "feast" or "head" had merged with Early Scots long /a/ as in "ghost" or "raid," leaving close /e/ as a separate set,—pretty well the same arrangement as we find in the modern dialect of Cellardyke, Fife.¹²

In essence, Heuser's approach through the rhyming sets is the same structural polysystemic approach as was devised afresh for the Phonological Survey of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland, Scots Section, fifty years later. Evidently the 1890s was a good time for Older Scots phonology among the Germans and, counting Karl Luick, the Austrians. Later, in 1932 and the early 1940s, we had three impressive studies of modern Scots dialects by three Swiss scholars—Dieth, Wettstein and Zai.¹³ These studies list quite fully the Middle English-Early Scots antecedents of the modern dialect phonemes, with some historical discussion. But, like everything else I have been describing, though very valuable for the researcher, they were much too advanced for my 1950s beginner students.

So, more or less perforce, I found myself producing, for the most complex part of the total system—that of the stressed vowels—an outline history of my own. The starting point, Early Scots, I took as more or less given by the authors I have just been mentioning and by the historical phonologists of English, especially Jordan.¹⁴ Between that and my goal, which was a composite version of the vowel system of Modern Scots south of the Moray Firth, I had to fit, *inter alia*, l-vocalization, the disappearance of Early Scots /e/ as a separate phoneme, the Great Vowel Shift and the Scottish Vowel-length Rule. I took a fresh look at the reconstruction evidence—rhymes and direct and reverse spellings for dating phonemic mergers, and, for the realizations, the statements of foreign commentators such as Erasmus and Sir Thomas Smith and the representations of English dramatists such as Shakespeare. The outcome of this was a series of class hand-outs from the early 1950s, including, from 1962, a short narrative history of the Scots vowels in four closely printed pages, accompanied by the table called "Vowel Systems

¹²See *The Linguistic Atlas of Scotland*, Vol. III, ed. J. Y. Mather and H. H. Speitel (London, 1986), pp. 108-9.

¹³E. Dieth, *A Grammar of the Buchan Dialect* (Cambridge, 1932); Paul Wettstein, *The Phonology of a Berwickshire Dialect* (Bienne, 1942); Rudolf Zai, *The Phonology of the Morebattle Dialect* (Lucerne, 1942).

¹⁴Richard Jordan, *Handbuch der Mittelhochdeutschen Grammatik*, I: Lautlehre, bearbeitet von H. Ch. Matthes (Heidelberg, 1934).

of Scots" reproduced herewith as Table 1, along with a two-page account of what later came to be called "The Scottish Vowel-length Rule."¹⁵ In 1975 and 1976 I produced a heavily revised version of all this.¹⁶ Some, but as yet not all, of this material has been published in various manifestations from 1977, beginning with the paper which I gave to the first of these international conferences in 1975.¹⁷

This was the first, and until 1979 the only, comprehensive account of the history of the vowels of Scots from the fourteenth century to the present, albeit intentionally summary and as transparent as I could make it. It differs from all previous historical treatments of Scots phonology in being fully systemic, having grown up alongside the Linguistic Survey of Scotland's polysystemically organized phonological investigation.

Paul Johnston's chapter in his 1979 thesis¹⁸ on the history of the Early Scots long vowels differs from mine—it was evidently compiled quite independently—in being concerned more with changing realizations and less with systemic rearrangements, and also in ignoring some evidence, including all of the Older Scots rhyme and spelling evidence.

The numbering of the several items in "Vowel Systems" is a device I may have got from David Abercrombie, who had his own numbered table of Modern Scottish English and RP vowels.¹⁹ It offers a convenient and unambiguous way of referring to any item at any chronological stage, in any dialect or idiolect, without having to specify a particular realization. So it avoids the ambiguity of labels like, say, "long tense ē," as used by James Craigie, for example, or the clumsiness of the unambiguous label "the 16th century Scots reflex of Middle English long tense ē"; you simply call this

¹⁵ *Notes on some characteristic features of the phonology of Scots* (1962); *Vowel-length in Modern Scots* (1962); *OE <h> and <g> in Older Scots* (1973).

¹⁶ Including *The Scottish Vowel-length Rule* (1975); *Notes on the history of the vowels of Scots* (1976).

¹⁷ A. J. Aitken, "How to pronounce Older Scots," in *Bards and Makars*, ed. A. J. Aitken *et al.* (Glasgow, 1977), pp. 1-21; A. J. Aitken, "The Scottish Vowel-length Rule," in *So meny people longages and tonges*, ed. M. Benskin and Michael Samuels (Edinburgh, 1981), pp. 131-57.

¹⁸ Paul A. Johnston, Jr., "A Synchronic and Historical View of Border Area Bimoric Vowel Systems," Ph.D., Edinburgh, 1979.

¹⁹ Eventually published in David Abercrombie, "The Accents of Standard English in Scotland," in *Languages of Scotland*, ed. A. J. Aitken and Tom McArthur (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 72.

Table 1: VOWEL SYSTEMS OF SCOTS (1962)

		ESc.	MSc.	Mod.Sc.	MSc. Spellings
Long Vowels					
<u>bite</u>	1.	\bar{i}	$\text{ə } i$	$\text{ɔ}^{\circ} \text{e}, \wedge i$	<u>i/(e, y/(e; y)</u>
<u>heed</u>	2.	\bar{e}	\bar{i}	i	<u>e/(e; ei, ey</u>
<u>head</u>	3.	\bar{e}			
<u>made</u>	4.	\bar{a}	\bar{e}^l	e	<u>a/(e; ai, ay; (e)</u>
<u>before</u>	5.	\bar{o}	\bar{o}	o	<u>o/(e; oi, oy</u>
<u>cow</u>	6.	\bar{u}	$\bar{u} \longleftrightarrow \bar{u}$	u	<u>ou, ow; ul</u>
<u>full</u>		ul			
<u>good, do</u>	7.	\bar{u}	\bar{u}	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} i \\ \phi \\ e:, 1 \end{array} \right.$	<u>o, o(n, u/(e; oi, oy; uy, uy, wi, wy</u>
Diphthongs in -i					
<u>bait</u>	8.	$ai \rightarrow \bar{e}^2$	\bar{e}^1	$e:(e3)$	<u>ai, ay, a/(e</u>
<u>pay</u>	8a.	$-ai \rightarrow \bar{e}^1$	ei	$3i, (\wedge i)$	<u>oi, oy, o/(e</u>
<u>joy</u>	9.	$oi \rightarrow ?$	oi	$\text{ɔ}^{\circ} \text{e}, \wedge i$	
<u>poison</u>	10.	$\bar{u}i \rightarrow \bar{u}$	ui	$\wedge i$	As no. 7
			\bar{u}	$(p, f)u$	
<u>die</u>	11.	$ei \rightarrow \bar{e}$	\bar{i}	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} i \\ \phi \\ e:, 1 \end{array} \right.$	As no. 2
Diphthongs in -u					
<u>snow</u>	12.	$au \rightarrow \bar{a}$	\bar{a}	$\text{ɔ}, \text{ɔ}$	<u>au, aw; al</u>
<u>all</u>	12a.	al			(<u>halk, walter</u>)
<u>grow</u>	13.	$ou \rightarrow ou$	ou	$\wedge u$	<u>ou, ow; ol</u>
<u>knoll</u>	13a.	ol			(<u>nolt, golk</u>)
<u>true</u>	14.	$eu \rightarrow iu$	iu	iu	<u>eu, ew</u>
Short Vowels					
<u>lid</u>	15.	\bar{i}	\bar{i}	$3 (1)$	<u>i</u>
<u>bed</u>	16.	\bar{e}	\bar{e}	ϵ	<u>e</u>
<u>lad</u>	17.	\bar{a}	\bar{a}	a	<u>a</u>
<u>God</u>	18.	\bar{o}	\bar{o}	o	<u>o</u>
<u>bud</u>	19.	\bar{u}	\bar{u}	\wedge	<u>u, o(n), o(m)</u>

The above are phonetic symbols, representing approximate pronunciation.

The above are the usual MSc. spellings.

vowel 2. I will be using these numbers in this way in the rest of this paper. As a framework for presenting an Older Scots author's rhymes and spellings this system relates directly to the author's own presumed phonemic system and not in the cumbersome way imposed by some of the earlier presentations based on fragmented lists of Old English and/or Middle English etymological sources.

This system has been used by several scholars of late, among whom Catherine van Buuren and Jonathan Glenn²⁰ adopt a best-of-both-worlds approach by presenting their lexical lists in Vowel Systems order, but subdivided by the several etymological sources of each phoneme. Dr. van Buuren complements her examination of the rhyme-attested vowels of the *Buke of the Seven Sages* with comprehensive data, arranged in rhyming sets, on the rhyming of vowels 4 and 8 in fifteenth-century verse, though unfortunately, presumably for space reasons, without references. As she shows, rhymes of 4 and 8 become much more frequent in the later part of the century, before /l/, /n/ and /r/, and, in Gavin Douglas, /d/. Among other people who have made recent contributions to Older Scots phonology are Denton Fox and Caroline Macafee.²¹

The phonology of Scots and, in particular, the Scottish Vowel-length Rule, which must have arisen around the early sixteenth century, is used as demonstration material by several theoretical linguists. In one of these²² Roger Lass sees the emergence of the Scottish Vowel-length Rule as the last of a series of vowel lengthenings and shortenings in the history of English, all of which, he proposes, share in an unconscious "conspiracy" to convert the vocalic organization of English from a West Germanic type in which vowel-length is phonemic or inherent in the vowel, to a Scandinavian type, as in Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic, in which vowel-length is allophonic or dependent on the phonetic environment following the vowel. Since the Scottish Vowel-length Rule is the latest of these quantitative changes and is

²⁰C. C. van Buuren-Veenenbos ed., *The Buke of the Sevyne Sages* (Leiden, 1982), pp. 43 ff.; J. A. Glenn, ed., "Sir Gilbert Haye's Buke of the Ordre of Knychthede," Ph.D., Notre Dame, Indiana, 1987.

²¹*The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford, 1981), Appendix: Henryson's Rhymes, pp. 492-4; C. I. Macafee, "Middle Scots Dialects—Extrapolating Backwards," in *Bryght Lanternis: Essays on the Language and Literature of Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, ed. J. Derrick McClure and Michael R. G. Spiller (Aberdeen, 1989), pp. 429-41.

²²Roger Lass, "Linguistic Orthogenesis? Scots Vowel Quantity and the English Length Conspiracy," in *Historical Linguistics*, 2 vols., ed. J. M. Anderson and C. Jones (Amsterdam, 1974), II, 311-43.

all but unique to Scots, so it follows that, of all the varieties of English, Scots is furthest advanced towards what Lass calls a Scandinavian type of vowel-length arrangement.

On the great debate on "-i as a sign of vowel-length," as it used to be called, I can only just touch. In 1873 James Murray opined that spellings like <aith> (one such occurs in 1398) for <athe> (oath) were reverse spellings due to a previous merger of vowel 8 and vowel 4 in Early Scots, and that similarly the other /-i/ diphthongs, vowels 9, 10 and 11, had merged with corresponding long front vowels, 5, 7 and 2 respectively. In this way, he believed, the characteristically Scottish i-digraph or "-i as a sign of vowel-length," arose. Except for a few dissentients like Wilhelm Heuser,²³ this speculation was long accepted as God's truth, until, in 1964, the Murray theory was exploded by Klaus Kohler.²⁴ In a series of recent papers, thoroughly researched and closely argued, Veronika Kniezsa explores some possible external sources of the i-digraph device, and in an important paper given at the 1987 Aberdeen conference²⁵ she argued convincingly that the i-digraph spellings had spread north from Yorkshire and explains how they arose there. I suggest that this was very likely the trigger to the new way of spelling but several other contributory factors, including those advanced by Kohler, and also the fifteenth-century merging of 4 and 8 before /l/, /n/ and /r/, may have re-inforced this tendency.

So we have made some progress in the phonology of Older Scots, in providing, for the first time, a simple and transparent presentation of the changing vowel-system, with some other new vowel history and a probable solution to the ancient i-digraph conundrum. Two further advances could be made. First, a much fuller overall description than the existing summary ones, with detailed and referenced statements of the evidence, and taking in the findings of the *Linguistic Atlas of Scotland*, vol. 3 (LAS3), only available since 1986.²⁶ Second, we need to collect the rhymes of as many Older Scots poems or stretches of the longest poems as possible, arranged initially in rhyming sets—exhaustively for those vowels like 2, 3, 4 and 8, which were involved in mergers, perhaps only selectively for other vowels whose history

²³W. Heuser, "Die Ursprung des Unorganischen / in der Mittelschottischen Schreibung," *Anglia*, 19 (1897), 409-12.

²⁴K. J. Kohler, "Aspects of Middle Scots Phonemics and Graphemics: The Phonological Implications of the Sign <I>," *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1967, 32-61.

²⁵Veronika Kniezsa, "The Sources of the <I> Digraphs: the Place-name Evidence," in *Brycht Lanternis*, 442-50.

²⁶See note 12.

is less problematical. In this way we could draw up what I will call a phonemic profile for each poem, arranged in polyphonemic subsystems, like those of the modern dialects in LAS3. This would give us a much clearer moving picture than we now have of the changes in the vowel-system—through the lexicon, through time, and, for example in the case of apparent Fife features in Lyndesay, through space. One possible outcome would be a pronouncing dictionary of Older Scots, with supporting evidence for each entry, far surpassing the indications for Older Scots pronunciation in the *Concise Scots Dictionary* (CSD).

Orthography. Probably the fullest and most frequently consulted of the numerous more or less brief general surveys of Older Scots orthography is Gregory Smith's of 1902 (see fn. 7). This is observant and quite informative, albeit it continues to perpetuate some long-standing errors: the belief²⁷ that Older Scots scribes distinguish <y> and <þ> as symbols—only a very few early scribes do so—and that it was the printers who were responsible for the <z> / <3> confusion—these were written alike long before printing. In addition to Gregory Smith, there are also more specialist studies—comparisons of different MSS of the same text, such as Barbour's *Brus*, and from the late nineteenth century down to 1989 detailed lists of the spellings of individual, mostly prose, texts.²⁸ Most of these are set out in etymological, or, more recently, structurally phonological, order much as the rhyme-studies. Some of the early studies suffer from the draw-backs of textual dubiety—being dependent on modern normalized editions—and in-built inconsistency—having not single texts but agglomerations of differently edited texts as their sources (the studies of Ackermann, Sprotte and Müller). Even so, all have turned up some useful nuggets of information. And the more recent spelling-collections—of James Craigie, Cornelis Kuipers, and Jonathan Glenn—avoid the unreliabilities of the earlier works. Of all these collections, Jonathan Glenn's of the spellings of Hay's *Buke of Knychthede* is a model of what is desirable. With the help of an exhaustive referenced

²⁷ Stated, for example, in *The History of Scottish Literature*, I, 16.

²⁸ Orthography: e.g. A. Ackermann, *Die Sprache der ältesten schottischen Urkunden* (Göttingen, 1897); O. Sprotte, *Zum Sprachgebrauch bei John Knox* (Berlin, 1906); E. Glawe, *Der Sprachgebrauch in den altschottischen Gesetzen der Hs. 25.4.16* (Berlin, 1908); P. Müller, *Die Sprache der Aberdeener Urkunden des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1908); Fr. W. Mühleisen, *Textkritische, metrische und grammatische Untersuchungen von Barbour's Bruce* (Bonn, 1913); James Craigie, "The Three Texts," 88-116, and "The Language of MS Royal 18 B. XV," 117-35, in *Basilikon Doron*, STS, 3rd Series, 18 (1950); C. H. Kuipers, "Kennedy's Language," in *Quintin Kennedy (1520-1564): Two Eucharistic Tracts* (Nijmegen, 1964), pp. 75-103; J. A. Glenn (see note 20).

glossary, Dr. Glenn provides an admirably accessible and complete inventory of every spelling of every word, each word entered under its appropriate stressed vowel phoneme.

There also exist several general essays, taxonomic rather than historical, on the variability and overall character of Older Scots spellings—a quite comprehensive one by myself in 1971, and more recently several shorter ones by Dr. Agutter, that dispute some of my suggestions.²⁹ But there is no substantial general historical survey of Older Scots spellings.

Grammar. Easily the fullest and most observant general treatment of Older Scots grammar is now that of Caroline Macafee in her module on Older Scots in the Glasgow Scottish Literature MPhil course.³⁰ Gregory Smith's 1902 version (see fn. 7) is observant and quite full on the points he treats, but highly selective. But neither of these is of course more than an outline.

There exist only a few other writings on syntax, all of them selective but more or less detailed.³¹ Treatment of Older Scots in the standard historical syntaxes of English is in all cases very scanty.

There is more on morphology, albeit at present this mostly comes in a dozen or more separate packages,³² treating of individual authors or groups

²⁹ A. J. Aitken, "Variation and Variety in written Middle Scots," in *Edinburgh Studies in English and Scots*, ed. A. J. Aitken et al., (London, 1971), pp. 177-209; A. Agutter, e.g. "A Taxonomy of Older Scots Orthography," in *The Nuttis Schell*, ed. C. Macafee and Iseabail Macleod (Aberdeen, 1987), pp. 75-82.

³⁰ C. Macafee, "A short grammar of Older Scots," in *Origins and Development of Older Scots*, Unit 1A of M.Phil. in Scottish Literature, Dept. of Scottish Literature, University of Glasgow, c 1988, pp. 193-227.

³¹ Syntax: M. Kolkwitz, *Das Satzgefüge in Barber's Bruce und Henry's Wallace* (Halle, 1893); J. L. Larue, *Das Pronomen in den Werken des schottischen Bischofs Gavin Douglas* (Strassburg, 1908) (Douglas: Pronouns and do); S. J. C. Caldwell, *The Relative Pronoun in Early Scots* (Helsinki, 1974); S. Romaine, e.g. "The Relative Clause Marker in Scots English: Diffusion, Complexity, and Style as Dimensions of Syntactic Change," *Language in Society*, 9 (1980), 221-47, and *Socio-Historical Linguistics* (Cambridge, 1982).

³² Morphology: Fr. H. Henschel, *Darstellung der Flexionslehre in John Barbour's Bruce* (Leipzig, 1886); R. H. Hudnall, *A Presentation of the Grammatical Inflexions in Andrew of Wyntoun's Orygynale Chronykil of Scotland* (Leipzig, 1898); W. Meyer, *Flexionslehre der ältesten schottischen Urkunden 1385-1440* (Halle, 1907); H. Heyne, *Die Sprache in Henry the Minstrel's "Wallace"* (Kiel, 1910); Elizabeth Walsh, "The Language of the Poem," in *The Tale of Ralph the Collier* (New York, 1989), pp. 61-88; also Sheppard (note 8); van Buuren and Glenn (note 20); and Müller (note 28).

of texts, some of them the same as for the rhyme and spelling collections. Recent examples of this, enhanced by full glossaries, are the descriptions of the morphologies of their texts by Kuipers, van Buuren, Glenn and Walsh. Most of these list quite fully, some with accompanying citations and references, the closed system inflections and forms, say of the personal pronouns, and here and there there are smatterings of syntax as well, referring, for example, to the Northern present tense rule (inflexion in all person and numbers in the absence of an adjacent governing personal pronoun), to occasional occurrences of the subjunctive, to the rules for the use of the pronouns *thou* and *ze*, to the inflexion of adjectives, and to deletion of *have* in, for example, "My self, who tymelie suld foirsene To opned wpp the . . . windowis of my ene" (Fowler). All of these morphologies could be quarried for their authors' preferences between variable features like plural forms of nouns of the class of *mile*, *yere*, *fiute*, forms of the relatives, present tense inflexions of verbs, inflected or uninflected imperatives, present participle and verbal noun forms, the numerous variant forms of past tenses and past participles, and much else.

For truly complete histories of Older Scots spelling and morphology, we would be well served if we also possessed a copious scattering of "linguistic profiles" of chronologically, regionally and stylistically identified texts, holograph if possible, like those provided so far mainly for Middle English by the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English (LALME)*.³³ A linguistic profile is a list of a given text's choices between alternative variants, say forms of "she" (*scho*, *sche*, etc.), "which" (*quhilk*, *qwilk*, *whilk*, etc.), the present participle (*-and*, *-ing*, etc.), "give" (*gif*, *geve*, etc.), and so on up to 280 variables in *LALME*. And indeed we already have in *LALME* the profiles for 18 mostly short, as yet mainly early, Older Scots texts, like that in figure 1.

An extension of *LALME*'s work on Older Scots is being planned in the Gayre Institute of Medieval English and Scottish Dialectology in Edinburgh by Dr. Keith Williamson. This, which is being organized electronically, will, I understand, take in many more variables than *LALME*'s mere 280, and so will include all the many specifically Scots variables missing from *LALME*'s present questionnaire, such as i-digraph spellings, added *t* spellings, the indefinite article, and so on. Meantime we have a foretaste of this in *LALME*'s 18 Scots profiles.

³³"Linguistic Profiles," in *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, ed. Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, Michael Benskin. 4 vols. (Aberdeen, 1987), Vol. III.

East Lothian

LP 401.

Letters from the earl of March. (1) London, British Library, Cotton Faustina A vi, f. 87r. Letter from the earl of March to the prior of Durham. Written at Colbrandispath (Cockburnspath), 23 May ca. 1390. Ed. Slater 1952, pp. 49-50; and J. Raine, *The Priory of Coldingham*, Surtees Soc. 12 (1841), p. 65. (2) Cotton Faustina A. vi, f. 97r. Letter from the earl of March to the prior of Durham. 12 Nov. ca. 1390. Ed. Slater 1952, p. 53; and J. Raine, *The Priory of Coldingham*, p. 67. (3) Cotton Vespasian F vii, f. 22. Letter from George, earl of March, to King Henry IV, claiming kinship, and for redress against the duke of Rothesay. Written at Dunbar Castle, 18 Feb [1400]. Facsimile. *Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Scotland*, part 2, no. LIII. Ed. Slater 1952, pp. 129-131; Sir William Fraser, *The Douglas Book* iv, no. 53, p. 59 (Edinburgh, 4 vols., 1885); and for other editions see Slater, p. 232. Grid 368 679.

THE:	ye ((yhe))
HER:	hyrre
IT:	it (yt)
THEM:	yaim
THEIR:	yare
SUCH:	swylk, swilk
WHICH:	ye-quhilk ((ye-qwyk, ye-quylk, quhilk))
ANY:	any, ony, oni
ARE:	are
WERE:	vare
IS:	ys
WAS:	was
SHOULD sg:	suld
WILL pl:	will, wyll
WOULD pl:	wald
TO + sb + c:	to (tyll)
+ h:	tyll
+ v:	tyll

TO + inf + c:	to (tyll)
+ h:	tyll
+ v:	tyll
FROM:	fro
AFTER:	efter
THEN:	yan
IF:	gif (gyf) ((gyff, giff))
AS:	as
AS + AS:	als + as
AGAINST:	ageynes
SINCE conj:	syn-yat, syn
YET:	3ete
WHILE:	qwyll
WH-:	quh- ((qw-, qu-))
NOT:	nocht ((nowt))
NOR:	na
A. O:	a
THINK:	thynk
THERE:	yare, yar
WHERE:	quhar-, qware
MIGHT vb:	mycht
THROUGH:	thruh
Sb pl:	-es (-s, es) ((-3))
Pres part:	-and
Vbl sb:	-yng
Pres 3sg:	-es ((-es, -ys))
Weak pt:	-it
Weak ppl:	-it ((-yt))
Str ppl:	-yn ((-en))
ALL:	all
ANSWER sb:	answere
ASK:	ask- (hask-)
AT + inf:	at
BE ppl:	bene
BEFORE adv-t:	before
pr-t:	before
BUSY adj:	besy-
BUT:	bot
BY:	be
CALL ppl:	callit
CAN:	can
CHURCH:	-kirc
DAUGHTER:	douchter
DAY:	day
DOWN:	doun
EITHER + OR:	outhor + ore

Figure 1: Reprinted from *LALME III*,
Linguistic Profiles, p. 684.

Anglicized Forms. In treating briefly of the anglicization—or, as some prefer to call it, standardization—of Older Scots, I will not be at all concerned with its external history—the circumstances surrounding the linguistic events—as treated by, for example, M. A. Bald and Gordon Donaldson.³⁴ I will be concerned only with the internal history—the actual changes in the language itself. As usual, we lack a comprehensive account of this process, though several useful contributions exist, virtually all achieved since 1950.

In his 1873 book (see fn. 1) James Murray listed a few anglicized spelling features—*o* for *a* and so on—and highlighted John Knox as a leading anglicizer. Gregory Smith in 1902 (see fn. 7) has only one short paragraph on *o* for *a*, and otherwise only a note to his selection from *Lancelot* on what he calls "the co-existence of Northern and Southern forms." Thereafter we get accounts of varying lengths on the anglicization habits of particular texts, mostly verse.³⁵ More generally I have five pages on anglicization in my "The Language of Older Scots Poetry"³⁶ (1983), which list the verse anglicization features along an implicational scale from the most widespread—the *o* for *a* forms—to the least widespread—endless past participles.

For prose, there are five important contributions.³⁷ Marjory Bald's 1927 essay "The Pioneers of Anglicised Speech in Scotland" is despite its

³⁴M. A. Bald, "Vernacular Books imported into Scotland: 1500-1625," *Scottish Historical Review* (hereafter *SHR*), 23 (1926), 254-67; "Contemporary References to the Scottish Speech of the Sixteenth Century," *SHR*, 25 (1928), 163-79; G. Donaldson, "Foundations of Anglo-Scottish Union," *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays Presented to Sir John Neale*, ed. S. T. Bindoff (London, 1961), pp. 282-314.

³⁵Anglicized Forms in Verse: e.g. M. M. Gray, "Linguistic Characteristics," in *Lancelot of the Laik*, STS, 2nd Series, 2 (1912), xx-xxxiii; James Craigie (see notes 8 and 28); A. McIntosh, "Some notes on the Language and Textual Transmission of the *Scottish Troybook*," *Archivum Linguisticum*, NS, 10 (1979), 1-19; also in Angus McIntosh *et al.*, *Middle English Dialectology* (Aberdeen, 1989), pp. 237-55; C. D. Jeffery, "Anglo-Scots Poetry and the *Kingis Quair*," *Actes du 2^e Colloque de Langue et de Littérature Ecossaises (Moyen Age et Renaissance)*, ed. J.-J. Blanchot and Claude Graf, (Strasbourg, 1978), 207-21; C. D. Jeffery, "Colkelbie Sow: An Anglo-Scots Poem," *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance)*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling/Glasgow, 1981), 207-24.

³⁶See note 5.

³⁷Anglicized Forms in Prose: M. A. Bald, "The Anglicization of Scottish Printing," *SHR*, 23 (1926), 107-15; "The Pioneers of Anglicised Speech in Scotland," *SHR*, 24 (1927), 179-93; L. E. C. MacQueen, "The Last Stages of the Older Literary Language of Scotland," Ph.D., Edinburgh, 1957; M. Robinson, "Language Choice in the Reformation: The Scots Confession of 1560," in *Scotland and the Lowland Tongue*, ed. J. D. McClure (Aberdeen, 1983), 59-78; Amy J. Devitt, *Standardizing Written English: Diffusion in the Case of Scotland 1520-1659* (Cambridge, 1989).

title mostly about writing not speech. It is couched in the broadest of generalizations: Knox's letters were "fundamentally English with a mixture of unpremeditated Scotticisms," or "Fowler's writings were always somewhat Scots." Her earlier essay, "The Anglicization of Scottish Printing," is only a little less vague—"in a mixed diction, more English than Scots"; "his inflections and syntax were completely English"—supported however by *ad hoc* counts of, for example, (unspecified) "definitely Scots forms." All the same, both essays provide generally useful if vague guides to roughly the admixtures of features of the several protagonists in the story, and the 1926 essay a clear and conclusive general picture of the progress to the virtual final demise of printing in Scots c. 1625. The collection of quotations and historical data in these and Bald's two other well-known essays on the externals of anglicization are of course invaluable (see fn. 34).

Lilian MacQueen in 1957 supplements her study of various aspects of the competition of Scots and English in the eighteenth century with a broad impressionistic survey of the progress of anglicization between the mid-sixteenth century and the late seventeenth. This is based on an examination of three short texts of the mid-sixteenth century (literary, national official and local official) and a more varied selection of seventeenth-century specimens, none more than a few hundred words long, with only vague generalizations reminiscent of those of Bald by way of commentary. Her examination of some 32 thousand-word specimens of private letters and journals between about 1637 and 1700 is somewhat more forthcoming of examples and impressionistic analysis of the progressing anglicization of various classes of linguistic feature (spelling, grammar, word-form, vocabulary, idiom). This quite cursory investigation at least permits her to draw the general conclusions, not unexpected, that all seventeenth-century texts were markedly more anglicized than her sixteenth-century specimens, and that printed works were in the van of the anglicization: an examination of some 22 late seventeenth-century printed texts establishes that by that date most, though not quite all, of these were virtually totally anglicized. However, even by the late seventeenth century anglicization in most manuscript writings was far from total. Different categories of Scotticism appear to anglicize at different rates according to the class of document. In the record literature spelling and grammar become de-Scotticized more rapidly than word-form, vocabulary and idiom, whereas in the private letters and memoirs it is Scottish spellings, word-form and grammar which are most durable and vocabulary which anglicizes most. But there is also wide variation not only between classes and sub-classes of document, but apparently also between subject-categories or genres in the same class of documents or the same writer. Sketchy and

lacking in specifics as this account is,³⁸ it is the nearest we have to a comprehensive description of the anglicization of Older Scots prose.

MacQueen examines in considerably greater detail some 27 thousand-word samples of various official records—of Parliament, the General Assembly, two kirk sessions and three burghs—between 1532 and 1695. These, she finds, anglicize in the order: Assembly most rapidly, Parliament, kirk session, burghs; with spelling and grammar becoming de-Scotticized most rapidly (see above). Like other investigators she finds much "promiscuity" or fluctuation between alternative options for the same variable in single documents.

Neither MacQueen nor Bald have any detailed observations to offer on anglicization in speech in the seventeenth century, even though there is quite a lot of this awaiting excavation: like Sir Robert Ayton's rhymes of <now> with <doe>, implying the pronunciations /nu/ (Scots) and /du/ (English), or of <know> with <show>, both non-Scots pronunciations,³⁹ or the spelling <tow> (two) in 1629,⁴⁰ or Lauder of Fountainhall's spelling <no> (know) in 1665,⁴¹ implying the non-Scots pronunciations /tu/ and /no/ respectively, and other occasional spellings of the same type between these dates. A sustained study of the letters of the landed gentry of this century would reveal not only changing practices in writing such as those treated by MacQueen and by Devitt (see below) but also frequent glimpses in occasional spellings of the mixed Anglo-Scots dialect the gentry were now beginning to speak: for example, the letters of a single family in some such collection as *The Red Book of Grandtully* (Ed. by Sir William Fraser [Edinburgh, 1868]) with a linguistic (including anglicization) profile for each letter and a narrative overview.

Mairi Robinson in 1983 supplied a detailed impressionistic examination of variations in orthography, more or less anglicized, in the several texts of the 1560 Confession of Faith, as a diagnostic of the Scottish Reformers' attitudes to this question. She finds a lot of what she calls "uncontrolled variation," no consistent trends, little or no evidence of a conscious attempt on

³⁸This is not a criticism. She treats exhaustively and in detail her main topic, the processes of anglicization in the 18th century and their social background.

³⁹Taken from the quotations on p. 146 of *The History of Scottish Literature*, Vol. I (see note 6).

⁴⁰*Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, Vol. V., *The Manuscripts of . . . Sir Archibald Edmonstone of Duntreath* (London, 1909), p. 126.

⁴¹*Journals of Sir John Lauder Lord Fountainhall*, SHS, 36 (Edinburgh, 1900), 54.

anyone's part to control spelling practice in either an anglicized or a Scotticized direction. In short the Reformers were pretty apathetic on this issue.

Unlike all other writers on this topic, Amy Devitt in her short book of 122 pages in 1989 limits her investigation to only five specific variables of form, to wit: *quh-* or *wh-* as relative clause marker (*quhilk*, *quha*, *quhich*, etc./ *which*, *who*, *whilk*, etc.), *-it* or *-ed* preterite ending, *ane* or *a/an* indefinite article, the negatives *na*, *nocht* or *no*, *not* and the respective variants, and *-and* or *-ing* in present participles. By counting incidences in specimens of 1000 words every 20 years from five "genres" of prose between 1520 and 1659 she comes up with patterns of decline of Scottishness or increasing standardization like MacQueen's but naturally with much greater certainty and precision. She finds that the variables which anglicize early, and by the end of her period most nearly completely, are the present participle in *-ing* and the negatives *no* and *not*. In the middle stage of the anglicization process, transitional or "mixed" forms and promiscuity of choice between forms are normal, followed by a period when the main English form is strongly preferred. Her genres of religious treatises, official correspondence, and private records (diaries and memoirs), in that order, anglicize earlier and ultimately more completely than her other two genres, private correspondence, and national public records (including Privy Council and General Assembly records). Printed texts of all sorts anglicize earlier and more rapidly than manuscript texts, and anglicization (for the variables here treated) is total in print by 1620. Since the religious treatises are nearly all printed works by Protestants, it is unsurprising that the pattern of anglicization for this group of texts is virtually identical with that for printed texts generally (which are rare or non-existent in the other categories). It is a pity that greater account was not taken of this factor in planning the investigation, so that printed and unprinted specimens could have been examined separately. Though it is unlikely that the general picture would be much altered, one wonders how far the detailed picture would be affected by a different or expanded choice of variables—say *o* for *a*, or variables of vowel orthography such as <ee> or <ea> against <ei/ey>, or anglicized present tense forms, none of which Ms. Devitt mentions—or a different choice of texts—the *Acts of Parliament* do not figure among the national public records. Since there is very little overlap between Devitt's texts and those examined in detail by MacQueen, and since MacQueen does not display the behavior of individual variants, as Devitt does for her much smaller set of variables, the results of these two studies are scarcely comparable.

Of these four commentators only MacQueen considers more than fleetingly features of syntax, vocabulary and idiom, and the only approximately complete listing of all the anglicized features to be found in the prose is that of MacQueen, whose work unfortunately remains unpublished. But a partial

list of some of the formal features can be gleaned from Robinson's article and from Devitt.

A comprehensive narrative of anglicization in Older Scots, when it comes about, will of course be furthered by data on the occurrences or not of anglicisms in a wide range of texts, which we may expect in due course in the Gayre Institute's forthcoming survey (see p. 30).

Dictionaries. One body of contributions to these fields of study that I have so far failed to mention is the dictionaries, especially *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (DOST)*, and *CSD*. For many points of detail *DOST* is much the most conveniently accessible and readily consultable source of information and for many more the only source of information there is. For example, I opined earlier that we are starved of coverage of the historical syntax of Older Scots. Of some features, say the operations of the tenses, moods and aspects of verbs, or the degree of strictness of adherence to the Northern present tense rule, this remains true. But for the forms and uses of the modal verbs, as in *DOST*'s six pages on the verb *may*, or the syntax of negation, in the four pages on the adverb *nocht* and the similar entries on all the other negatives, you will find, I dare say, as much information in *DOST* on Older Scots as you would find for English over a comparable period in the standard historical syntaxes of English of Jespersen and Visser. *DOST* even treats zero-realizations of grammatical features, such as the zero-form of *have* (in the supplementary entry on that verb), or the zero-form of the relative pronoun, planned for the entry *that*. Very many entries contain phonological notes, rhyme-lists or other rhyme indications in the quotations, as well as notes on chronological, regional or stylistical distribution: for example, for the noun *lord*, the verb *mak,maik* and the noun *morow*. The dictionary will not give you the spelling or morphological profile of a particular text, but the overall morphology of each verb is there, and there is an abundance of easily discovered indications on the histories of single spelling features: for the <al> for <au> spellings, for example, you simply look up a selection of appropriate words, such as *hawk* and *hautane*. Furthermore, *CSD* includes Older Scots as well as Modern Scots pronunciations, something which no other dictionary has offered.

Conclusion. In all of the fields I have been considering, I dare say that quite notable improvements in our knowledge and understanding of Older Scots philology have indeed been achieved since the time of James Murray, and especially since 1950: in an overall view of the historical phonology of the vowels and in a good many of the details of this; in orthography and morphology, in the shape of numerous more or less well-organized bodies of data on particular texts and groups of texts, and also in one quite extensive

taxonomic survey of the orthographical and some other variable features of Older Scots; and on anglicization, we have several substantial contributions towards a full account.

Backing this up we now have the little on Scots in *LALME*. To come there is the still more ambitious investigation at present in planning in the Gayre Institute,⁴² which will add very largely to our knowledge of ongoing surface events of every kind in the linguistic performance of the writers and copyists of Older Scots.

And along with all of this we have the dictionaries, especially *DOST* and *CSD*, as handy, easily accessed banks of every kind of information.

Which is not to say that, as I hope I have also shown, there is not also an abundance of investigation and synthesizing still to do.

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⁴²Unfortunately funding for the Gayre Institute is no more—one might say even less—secure than funding for *DOST* and for the Scottish National Dictionary Association. It will be a major loss to Older Scots philology if its work, on the lines I have sketched, has to be suspended or wound up when its present supply of funds runs out, as it may before long if some new source is not found. The Institute's address is: Gayre Institute for Medieval English and Scottish Dialectology, Department of English Language, University of Edinburgh, 24 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LN, Scotland.

Since I first wrote this note it has been decided that in December 1991 the Institute will be transferred from the Department of English Language to the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, with the new title "Institute for Historical Dialectology."