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David Crawford – an Unrecorded Broadside

G. Ross Roy

University of South Carolina

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David Crawford—an Unrecorded Broadside

Mr. David Macaree in an article published in the pages of this journal, "David Crawford: A Forgotten Man of Scottish Letters" (*SSL*, V [July 1967], 28-45) dismissed the usually ascribed date of Crawford's death (1726) as highly improbable, and suggested 1708 as the correct date. Macaree showed that Crawford's estate was sold by his daughter to her great-uncle, Patrick Crawford, in 1726, thus giving rise to the assumption that the estate had been directly inherited from David by Patrick. Macaree also pointed out that Crawford's appointment as Historiographer Royal of Scotland had been made for life in 1705, and that in mid-1708 a new such appointment had been made. Finally, Macaree suggested that the non-publication of promised second and third parts of his *Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland* pointed to an earlier death than 1726.

An article which Macaree cites, "The Historiographers Royal in England and Scotland" by Denys Hay,¹ suggests 1706 as the date of Crawford's death, but without substantiation beyond the fact that this was the date of his last publication, the *Memoirs* mentioned above. If 1706 is the correct date, then the post remained vacant for two years, until David Symson [or Sympson] was appointed to it in 1708. This is not impossible, of course; if so the date on the document here reproduced must be taken as a misprint. In lieu, however, of other evidence it seems more probable that Crawford did not die until 1708. An incorrect date which figures prominently as part of the title of such a broadside is not likely to elude the notice of printer, proofreader, and author alike.

The broadside is in the possession of the National Library of Scotland² and apparently gives us the precise date of Crawford's death: January 16, 1708. The text measures 27.8 cm. overall, and is reproduced on the page facing in an approximate type facsimile—somewhat reduced, and without the long S.

G. R. R.

¹ *Scottish Historical Review*, XXX (1951), 15-29.

² NLS Ry.IIIc.35(124). I wish to thank the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland for their permission to publish this poem.

E P I T A P H

On the much Lamented Death of
Mr. David Crawford of Drumsay,
Her Majesty's *Historiographer,*
Who Died the 16th of *January* 1708.

THE Gods Resolv'd a Master-Piece to show,
Such as our Vulgar Wonders would outdo:
They Will'd the Thing; and *CRAWFURD* did appear
Great as *Corneille*, as *Racine* Soft and Clear:
Each Deity did some Great Gift bestow,
Apollo gave his Quill, *Love* lent his Bow:
Fast Friendship and Stiff Honesty Conspir'd,
And with their Flaming Zeal his Entrails fir'd:
The Sacred *Genius* of Old *CALEDON*
Boasted the Rising Glories of his Son;
Our Tut'lar God could easily perceive
That by him *SCOTLAND* would evade the Grave,
That *Wallace*, *Bruce* and the Victorious *Grahame*
Would in his Writings Rise to Life again;
That Matchless *Mary*, and Her Royal Line
Would, spite of Treason, to all Ages Shine,
And their Rights, as they are, be thought *Divine*.
But Hell, and Hell's best Friend, *Rebellion*, fear'd
He'd Undermine the Structure they had Rear'd:
The Ghosts of the *Four Regents* Cry'd aloud,
Oh! he'll Unmask us to the Giddy Crowd,
In vain Mean Hirlings have Proclaim'd us Good:
The *Dæmon* that *Buchanan* once Possess'd,
His Cutting Terrors most of all express'd;
He fear'd this Daring Upstart would Undo
His double Right to Wit and Slander too,
By Dint of Thought with his Fam'd Numbers vie,
And with True Vouchers give his Prose the Lie.
Amongst the rest, a Treach'rous Shade appear'd,
And said, *A Dead Man is not to be fear'd*:
He spoke, and straight a Fiend flies Post to Earth,
And Blasts the Blooming Youth with Baneful Breath;
Breath? that the Choicest Cordials could spoil,
And Life's best Guardians in a Minute foil:
His Body falls an early Sacrifice,
But's Better Half soars high above the Skies,
Crown'd with Unenvy'd, never Fading Bays.

The Two
most Eminent
French
Poets.

He design'd
to give us a
Compleat
History of
Scotland.

Vid. his Me-
moirs.

An Allusion
to the Mo-
tive that ha-
sten'd Qu.
Mary's
Death.