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BRIAN MURDOCH

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*Gude and Godlie Ballatis*

The "curious literary relic" known as the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* is usually characterized as a collection of Protestant church songs, some of them based on direct sources—portions of the Bible and liturgy as such, or similar continental adaptations, as well as original works, specifically from Germany. A second group of songs are original and satirical, and a third consists of popular songs adapted for religious purposes with a greater or lesser measure of success.¹ All these groups correspond, in fact, to the methods used by the continental reformers in the establishing of a Protestant hymnody. Luther himself wrote German versions of Bible and liturgical passages, original hymns, and adaptations for religious use.² More detailed studies of the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis,* notably the editions of the work by David Laing and A. F. Mitchell in the nineteenth century, draw attention to exact sources of the individual


songs, and the notes to the major edition—that of Mitchell—indicate that ten hymns in the collection derive from Luther's own work.\footnote{The first edition of recent times was that by David Laing (of the 1578 text), \textit{A Compendious Book of Psalms and Spiritual Songs Commonly Known as the "Gude and Godlie Ballatis"} (Edinburgh: N.P., 1878). This was followed by the edition of the 1567 text by A. F. Mitchell as STS 39, \textit{A Compendious Book . . .} (Edinburgh: STS, 1897; reprinted New York: Johnson, 1966). Both editions contain full notes and information on textual and editorial history of the work, with illustrations of many of the title pages. There is a selection from the text, including some of the works at issue here, in the Saltire Society edition, \textit{The Gude and Godlie Ballatis}, ed. Iain Ross (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1940). Texts are cited here from Mitchell's edition, and page references only are given to the notes of Mitchell and of Laing.}

Although the printed texts of the Scots collection reach back only to 1567, it has been suspected that earlier versions, perhaps smaller than those extant, may date from even as early as the 1540s.\footnote{See the introductions to the two major editions in general, and also that to Ross's edition, p. 5.} The authorship of the work has been and is disputed, but much of the text is thought to be the work of the Wedderburn brothers of Dundee, especially John Wedderburn. Questions of date and authorship are not the primary concern of the present paper, but John Wedderburn did apparently spend time in Germany, and worked with Luther's material. Calderwood's \textit{History of the Kirk of Scotland}, in a passage quoted both by Laing and by Mitchell, reports the following of him:

Being summoned, he departed to Almaine, where he heard Luther and Melancthon, and became verie fervent and zealous. He translated manie of Luther's dytements into Scottish meter, and the Psalm of David. . . . He returned after the death of the king, in December 1542, but was again pursued by the cardinall, and fled to England.\footnote{Text in David Calderwood, \textit{The History of the Kirk of Scotland} (Edinburgh: Woodrow Society, 1842/9), i, 142f., cited in Mitchell, p. xcivf. and Laing, p. xi.}

Whether the ten pieces in the \textit{Gude and Godlie Ballatis} are all the pieces that he translated must remain a matter of speculation.

There are several justifications, however, for a close study of the translation of Luther's work into Scots, and such a study may carry implications both for German and for Scottish studies. The comments of Laing and Mitchell on the translations are naturally not extensive,
as they are simply notes to the text itself, the main concern of both editors. Even so, the judgments of Mitchell, who deals with the comparison rather more fully than does Laing, are still sometimes in need of emendation. As far as German studies are concerned, the very existence of such early translations of Luther in Scotland is of interest as an illustration of the extent of his influence. The comparison of the original texts with their Scots versions is of literary value in its own right: how faithfully or effectively are the hymns rendered? Moreover, are there differences of emphasis which might be of theological or of literary significance? Luther's hymnody is powerful and of great literary merit, and it is a valid study to try to establish how this fares in Scots dress.

Of the ten hymns of Luther represented, five fall in the first portion of the Gude and Godlie Ballatis, that consisting of doctrinal passages in verse. The opening piece, dealing with the Ten Commandments, is linked by Mitchell with Luther's Dis sind die heylgen zehn gebot of 1524. The following four works all have possible origins in Luther's writing too: the Creed, "We trow in God allannerlie," links with Luther's Wyr gleuben all an eynen Gott (1524), the metrical Lord's Prayer with Luther's version in similar form of 1538–39, the song dealing with baptism with Luther's Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam (1541), and the hymn on the Communion with Jhesus Christus unser Heyland, which Luther wrote in Holy Week 1524. All but the graces, then, of this early portion, have Lutheran parallels, although in the context of Luther's work as such, the hymns are from his earliest and latest periods.

Two songs of the next section of the Scots collection, the "spirituall sangis" derive from Luther. Both are well-known, the

6 For convenience the text of Luther's hymns used here is the admirable small edition of Gerhard Hahn, Martin Luther, Die deutschen geistlichen Lieder (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967). I have translated the German texts (which are left in sixteenth-century spelling) wherever the meaning is not clear from the parallel Ballatis passage. The dating of the hymns concerned is based on the Weimar edition, and described by Hahn, p. 86f. Hahn gives, too, a clear survey of early Luther editions in the Wittenberg tradition. The hymns are found in the great Weimar edition of Luther's works (Bohlau, 1883–) in vol. XXXV, edited by W. Lucke. This edition is the arbiter of all textual problems. English translations of the hymns are included in the American Luther edition edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958–67).
first being a version of the hymn *Nu freut euch lieben Christen gmeyn* (1523), the second a text of the children’s carol *Vom himel hoch da kam ich her*, composed between 1533 and 1535. The Psalms are represented in the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* by three that may be connected directly with Luther’s own German adaptations: Psalm 12, Psalm 130 and Psalm 128, all of which Luther translated in this form in 1523–24. It might perhaps be noted that Psalm 124, which Luther also adapted, appears in the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* from a different German source. Finally, while the *De profundis* is taken from Luther’s well-known text, the celebrated version of Psalm 46, *Ein feste burg ist unser Gott* of 1526–28 is absent.

Seven works, then, are from Luther’s early hymn-writing, before 1524. Only three are later. It may be of significance that the only hymnbook in the Wittenberg tradition that contains all of these is the *Geistliche Lieder* printed by Joseph Klug in 1543, although the latest of the Luther hymns in question was written in 1541, and may have circulated separately before its inclusion in the printed collection by Klug. The seven earlier hymns are all found in the *Geistliche gesangk Buchleyn* of the same printer, from Wittenberg, 1524. Luther’s preface to this text is not unlike that of the Scots collection in places. Mitchell cites in this connection the Danish *Psalmebog* of 1530, and the passage he gives does indeed contain the notion that young persons may gain more from spiritual songs in the vernacular, and replace “baudrie and vnclene sangis” with these. The idea is there too, however, in Luther’s preface. The songs, says Luther, are given in four-part arrangement because

> ich gerne wollte/die iugent/die doch sonst soll vnd mus ynn der Musica vnd andern rechten kunsten erzogen werden/ettwas hatte/damit sie der bul liedr vnd hyschlichen gesenge los worde/vnd an der selben stat ettwas heylsames lernete. ... 9

The quality of the translation, even within the first section of the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis*, is uneven as regards the Luther hymns. Indeed, a kind of progression may be determined based on the extent

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7 Numbering as the Authorized Version, the text cited here throughout.
8 Mitchell, p. 240, with translation of the Danish preface.
9 Hahn, p. 56. “I wanted very much that young persons, who in any case should and must be brought up with a knowledge of music and of other of the arts, be given something to replace the songs of ‘love and lust, and have something useful to put in their place.”
to which the Scots versions are faithful to Luther’s original. In two cases the text of the Gude and Godlie Ballatis appears to owe little or nothing more to Luther than the simple idea of treating the theme in question in metrical form. These cases are the opening poem on the Commandments, and the metrical Paternoster. Mitchell admits that the rendering of the former is not close, and suggests the influence of Swedish or Danish versions of the original. If this is the case, then the original has been changed out of all recognition through these successive stages. The rhyme-scheme of the Scots poem differs from that of Luther, and the refrain, kyrioles in the German, is translated in the Scots version. A detailed comparison of the two versions (Mitchell, p. 7, Hahn, p. 20) shows that the only real connection between them lies in the Commandments as such. The first two strophes of the Scots text equate with the first of Luther’s quatrains, and the Commandments themselves follow. In the first of these, the Scots, “I am thy God allanerlie” is fairly similar to Luther’s Ich bryn alleyn deyn Gott der Herr, but it is not exact, and the shared source of Exodus xx 3 detracts from the parallelism. The strophe continues in a different fashion, in that the Scots text now incorporates the proscription regarding graven images, where the German stresses man’s total obligation to God. So too the treatment of the Commandment against taking the name of God in vain: even the rendering of Exodus xx 7 differs here, and the inclusion of a reference to 2 Corinthians i 17 is not in Luther. Nor is the interesting allusion to proper behavior before a judge, a motif which recurs in different forms in other verses of the Scots text. The Commandment relating to the Sabbath is rendered in Scots as: “Wirk na euill walk on haly day,” whereas Luther stresses only that the Sabbath as such is to be hallowed: Du sollt heylgen den siebend tag. The rest of the verse is again different. Judges are mentioned in the context of honoring father and mother and the stress on authority might have been appropriate in Luther, but it is not there. “Thou shalt not kill” is expanded in Scots with allusion to “thought, word and deed,” but in Luther it is linked with a reference to hatred in general. The Scots text, on the whole, is more allusive to biblical verses. These are absent from Luther’s text, and the German con-

10 See his notes, p. 242. See too, however, the note on the same page referring to the Danish studies of McAlpine (dubbed Macchabeus) and to their possible influence on Wedderburn and Coverdale.
sequently has a simpler and more direct effect. Thus the Command-
ment against adultery is linked in the Scots with 1 Corinthians vii
9—"better to marry than to burn"—and the treatment by Luther is
simply an urging towards chaste behavior. The remaining strophes
follow the same pattern. Only the idea as a basis links with the
German poem. The three final verses in the Scots text cover
the material of the last two in Luther, but the verbal parallels are not
close. Luther closes with a discussion of why the Commandments
were given to man at all: they are merely to show man that he is a
sinner and can accomplish nothing on his own. This is of course the
basic tenet of Luther's doctrine of faith alone with works as a means
to salvation, his sola fide. The lines

Die gebott all wns geben sind
das du deyn sund o menschen kind
Erkennen sollt vnd lernen wol
wie man fur Gott leben soll.11

are, it is true, quite close to the Scots:

Than quhy gaif God to vs this law,
The quhilk be na way we can keip?
That we, be it, our sin suld knaw,
Repent and mend, and for it weip.

The last line, however, is more specific than the German; this
difference may have been occasioned by the exigencies of rhyme.

Overall, the two versions of the Commandments may be said to
have little in common beside the shared biblical ideas and the
Lutheran rationale expressed at the close. Otherwise the differences
are strong, the Scots text stressing the role of judges, and making
more biblical allusions than the German. The same comments apply
too to the versions of themetrical Lord's Prayer (Mitchell, p. 11,
Hahn, p. 47). Mitchell (notes, p. 243) says that the Scots text is
"modelled on Luther's, and a line here and there is pretty similar,
but on the whole it is an imitation rather than a translation." Mitch-
ell's comment might be put rather more strongly. Only the idea of
a metrical exposition of the prayer seems to derive from Luther, the

11 "The commandments are all given us/that you, O child of man
should know your sin/and learn well/how man should live in God's sight." See
Luther's prose comments in tracts such as Von der Freiheit eines Christ-
enmenschen "On the Freedom of a Christian."
Scots work has ten strophes against Luther's nine, and the rhyme-
scheme is again different, although the works are metrically similar.
In content, the Matthew passage is of course common to both, and
even in the rendering of the biblical words the parallel is not always
close. The opening strophes are similar, but the non-biblical ideas are
put in rather different terms. Luther, for example, stresses the neces-
sity that prayer should come from the heart, a point which is not
made in the Scots text. The following two verses of the Scots are
quite unlike Luther's. The fourth contains the notion of destroying
the devil, which is perhaps from Luther's third strophe, although
there is no verbal parallel between "Destroy the Deuill, his Realme
and Regne" and Des Satans zorn vnd gros gewalt Zebrich. . . .

The fifth strophe of the Scots text presents a version of "Thy will
be done" which is rather different from Luther's, and it is not until
the fifth strophe of Luther's poem that we encounter a non-biblical
point that is mirrored in the Scots text, in the sixth strophe there.
The notion of "daily bread" is extended by Luther to cover all a
man needs: "Und was man darff zur leibes not . . ." which is the
exact equivalent of the Scots "And all things quhairof we haif need."
The lines are in different positions in respect to the poem as a whole,
though, and the echo might even be a fortuitous one. The idea is
certainly not original to Luther.

The eighth strophe of Luther's poem may be compared with the
ninth in the Scots text, in the expansion of "deliver us from evil" as
"l on allem vel vns erlows" [my emphasis] on the one hand, and on the
other "Deliver vs from euillis all," but this might again be accidental.
The only other possible parallel to Luther is the prayer for a
blessed death, the German "ein selige end" of the eighth verse being
perhaps translated as "ane blissid end" in the Scots ninth.

Overall, then, it seems as if the Scots poet had only the tune and
rhythm in mind, and possibly a version of Luther's original that
was imperfectly recollected, and which therefore provided only oc-
casional references. Luther's Vaterunser is not the source for the Scots
poem in any real sense. The essential difference is underlined, inci-
dently, by the Scots reference to the Lollards on the one hand, and

12 "Destroy Satan's anger and great power." It is interesting that
Hebrew names (or designations-turned-names) are on the whole more fre-
cquent in Luther than in the Scots texts. An exception is usually made, how-
ever, in the case of Satan.
the far more general (and historically appropriate) allusion to *unfried und streit*, "disruption and quarrel" in Luther.

The Creed is more plainly influenced by Luther’s version, although we may well disagree with Mitchell’s judgment that this is a “pretty close version” of the hymn (Mitchell, notes, p. 243; text in Mitchell, p. 10, Hahn, p. 37). In fact, the Scots text of the Creed here bears a relationship to Luther’s text that resembles that in other translations from Luther in the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis*. Mitchell appears to consider the German text to be composed in eleven-line strophes, however. There is a caesura in the ninth line of the Lutheran strophe (dependent, presumably, on the melody) that might lead one to consider the line as two short units, but normally the text is printed as ten-line strophes. There is no metrical equivalent in the Scots to this effect in Luther, and the rhyme in German demands that the short lines be read as a single line. The Scots poem does not imitate the German rhyme-scheme.

As far as the translation is concerned, the first strophe is extremely close, with only the second line of the Scots totally unparalleled in the German. The original wording of the Creed would of course have a standardizing effect, but we have seen divergences even against a biblical text in the poems considered already. Moreover, the syntactical patterns of the German are imitated here. Additions and omissions tend to be of little importance. The *all* of the German first line is left out of the Scots text, presumably through lack of metrical provision for it, and the rendering of *erdan* as “eird sa braid” comes about *metri et rhythmi gratia*. At the end of the strophe, the Scots text condenses two lines of Luther into one, and then adds a reference to Satan that is not there in the original. The Scots text has eleven lines, and the reference to Satan, justified neither by Luther nor by the Creed itself, is somewhat disturbing artistically.

The second strophe, however, becomes much freer as a translation, and this is striking after the closeness of the first. Two lines of the Scots version cover Luther’s opening tetrastich, and the Scots poem goes on to stress Christ’s role as a redeemer, against the Lutheran emphasis on eternity. Lines 5-9 of the Scots follow the Creed itself, as does Luther, and the liturgical text could as well be the source as the German. The last two lines have no parallel in Luther.
The final strophe is even more free, the major point of contact being once more the Creed itself, the first line providing an illustration of this. Of course, the fact that two lines have been lost from this strophe in the Scots work make judgments problematical. As a whole, though, a definite pattern emerges in the consideration of the texts: the closeness of the first strophe is very soon lost, and the translation becomes increasingly free as the work progresses, giving the impression of a translator unable or unwilling to sustain the initial standard.

The same progression is perceptible in the hymn on baptism, although here there is a more erratic pattern of close and free translation. The superscription to the hymn is similar, and Mitchell again deems the Scots work to be a quite close translation from Luther (Mitchell, p. 14, Hahn, p. 51). Mitchell points out rightly here, though, that strophes 3, 9 and 10 are additions in the Scots text. In fact the first strophe is again moderately close, though not so close as that of the Creed. The reference to the wounds and blood of Christ, dominant as a theme in the German, is absent from the Ballatis text. In the Scots there are some anticipations, too, of later points in the German, such as the joining of water and the word of God, from the second German strophe, which is as a whole quite dissimilar from the second Scots strophe. The homiletic tone of the German is not present, and it may be noted at this point that the rhyme and meter of the works are quite different.

The third Scots strophe is, as indicated, new, but the fourth and fifth are surprisingly close once more to Luther. The Scots fifth strophe expands the German fourth in the reference to the Trinity, but otherwise the texts are similar, and the sixth Scots strophe follows the German fifth, without the reference to penance. The German does, however, corroborate the reading of new rather than now in line 4. The seventh Scots strophe is close, but at this point the two texts diverge again, as the eighth introduces the idea of the living well (John iv 10), a biblical allusion not in Luther, as indeed that to the “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew viii 12 etc.) is absent from the German, though it is present already in the seventh Scots strophe. The final portions of the Ballatis text are new in any case.

13 Mitchell’s conjectural lines (p. 11) are not close to the German text. Ross omits them.
Only three strophes follow the German with great faithfulness, and towards the end of the poem the Scots text sometimes begins with some fidelity to the original, then develops it individually. The addition of the new verses stressing the nature of baptism is itself of interest.

The last poem in the section deriving from Luther is perhaps the closest, and in this case there is a known source at another remove, a Latin hymn ascribed to Hus (Laing, p. 219f., Mitchell, p. 244, Hahn, p. 76. Text of the German and Scots adaptations of Hus in Hahn, p. 28f., and Mitchell, pp. 16–18). Mitchell's formula of "pretty close" in the context of the translation is in this instance justified, for the most part at least, for the meter and rhyme are imitated in the Scots text on this occasion. The first two strophes are very close, and the third reasonably so, though there is some inevitable poetic loss: the Scots poem does not maintain the balance of leben and tod, "life and death," that Luther has, but refers only to "deide." There is a small variation in the fourth strophe, however, where Luther's second person singular is replaced with the first plural, du soll becoming "we sold," and giving a much more generalized tone, although in the next strophe the German is imitated. Questions of meter and rhyme do not come into play here at the beginning of the lines, and one can but wonder why the change was not maintained. From the fifth strophe onward, there is some alteration in the level of fidelity to the German. Six is close, seven less so, although Hus' medical image is maintained. The eighth strophe is in fact clearer in Scots, as Luther's rhetorical question is resolved. The final strophes are close as regards content, but are fairly free verbally, especially the last. On the whole, though, this hymn is truest to Luther's original compared with the others represented in the doctrinal section, and is in some contrast with the hymns on the Ten Commandments or on the Paternoster. This kind of variation within the same section is interesting in itself.

With regard to the spiritual songs, two of which derive from Luther, the level of fidelity to the German is high. In these cases we are able to compare fairly fully the aesthetic effect of the translation against that of the original. Both of the hymns are well-known within Luther's writings in any case, and this may account for the closeness. Luther's Nu freut euch lieben Christen gmein (Hahn, p. 17) is a concise expression of Luther's views on sin and
grace, and as such an important theological statement. This makes the closeness of the Scots translation, “Be blyth all Christin man and sing” (Mitchell, p. 46) the more interesting still. Mitchell points too (p. 248) to the rhyming in Scots of the seventh line with the second and the fourth, which is stronger than the German linking of those endings by a simple feminine cadence (-en in most cases). Otherwise rhyme and meter are identical.

In content there are some differences, though they are largely superficial. The Deuill drives the speaker to despair in the third strophe, against the angst, “fear,” of Luther’s text, and there is another learned allusion, this time to Isaiah, in the sixth strophe, although even this may be for the sake of the rhyme. At times the power of the German is lost. One example is the forceful paradox of Erwürge fur yhn den bittern tod (Luther v 6), “strangle bitter death.” The expression in Scots: “… ouerthrow sin, hell and deid” (v 6) is less vital. On the other hand, the formulaic chiasmus (known from very early German love-poetry) of Luther’s Denn ich byn deyn und du bist meyn (vii 5), “for I am thine and thou art mine,” is maintained in an effective, even if because of the rhyme not identical, fashion: “For I am thine and myne thow art” (vii 5). In this poem, the whole translation puts over Luther’s views admirably.

The handling of the carol Vom himel hoch da kom ich her is in some way less fortunate, and we are reminded that the test of poetry is that it cannot be translated. Luther’s original is of some interest of itself. For all that the supposed genesis of the work, written for Luther’s son, Hans, might well be apocryphal, the hymn has certainly enjoyed great popularity, and still does so. It is, moreover, an example of Luther’s Kontrafaktur, the adaption from a known folksong, in this case Ich kumm aus fremden landen her. We are told that the Scots song is to be sung to the lullaby tune Bow lula low.

Mitchell calls this “a singularly faithful and happy rendering of Luther” (p. 249) and refers to some especially felicitous passages. For Laing (p. 225) the work is simply a “literal translation.” As a straightforward rendering of ideas, the Scots version is indeed

14 Hahn, p. 82, cites a strophe and gives references. On the origins of the hymn, see the introduction to vol. xxyv of the Weimar edition (pp. 238–63).
15 See Mitchell, p. 249f. on the tune, and also Shire, Song, p. 27.
faithful, but much of the poetic value of the German text is lost. The Scots version seems to miss one point that is vital: that the hymn is conceived as a children’s song—*Ein kinder lied* (Hahn, p. 44; the Scots text is in Mitchell, p. 49).

The first strophe is very literal, even unto the rendering of the formulaic *singen und sagen* as “say and sing.” In the second strophe, however, one cannot but feel that the naming of the Virgin is unwise. Luther is unfolding a story gradually, without any assumption at all of prior knowledge, and this literary fiction is maintained in German. The Scots poet, on the other hand, assumes knowledge of the details in any case. The simplicity of Luther’s tone is lost entirely in verses like:

He is your right salvation
From everlasting damnation...

But the greatest problem that the Scots translator has to face is the question of the German diminutives, a problem which is probably insuperable. In Luther’s seventh strophe, for example, three of the four lines terminate in the -lein diminutive. For all the close rendering of the first line, and the brave attempt to get the tone with “babe” for *kindelein*, the effect is lost. There are clearly points at which the poet in Scots has attempted to come to terms with the problem on a wider scale—“sung Jesus” for *Jesulein* in xiv, even perhaps the “sempill swadillig clais” of xi to render *windelein*. But although, according to Mitchell, the German is sometimes effectively caught in terms of detail, the overall tone makes the Scots poem a quite different work. The song has ceased to be for children. It is interesting, nevertheless, to observe the Scots poet at work, trying to find equivalents in Scots for the German concepts in a manner of which the Luther of the *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* (“On Translating”) would have approved. One example of the replacing is that of *Susanim* with “Balulalow,” in the penultimate verse.\(^6\)

Three of the Psalm versions of the *Ballatis* may be linked with Luther’s own metrical adaptions. Psalm 12, which Mitchell admits (p. 256) is not especially close, is indeed linked with Luther to a very small extent indeed. The similarities, in fact, are almost exclusive to the biblical text, and even here there are some divergences. The image of the refined silver, for example, is in the Psalm itself.

\(^6\) See the Weimar Luther edition, xxxv, 259, on the *Susanim*. 
(xii 6), but the casting of that image in the two poems is different (texts in Mitchell, p. 88f., Hahn, p. 12f.). We may set lines like "Their tungis ar full of fenȝeines" (i 7) against "Sie leren eytel falsche list" (ii 1), "they teach empty falsehood," but even here the parallel is not close. The twelfth Psalm cannot be seen in Scots as a translation of Luther's version in any real sense.

The treatment of Psalm 128 is rather different (Mitchell, p. 130, Hahn, p. 30). The Scots text has one more strophe, and the third strophe of that version appears to be an original, expanding the thought of Luther's second strophe. The meter is similar to the German version, although the rhyme-scheme is different. There is, however, an interesting case, in the a-rhyme of the second Scots strophe, of the actual German rhyme being imitated.

The first strophe is once again the closest, although the loss of Luther's simplicity is again apparent. The second line serves as a touchstone: "And leif in his commandement always . . ." against "vnd auff seynem wege geht, . . . "walk in his ways."

The third Scots strophe expands the third line of Luther's second strophe into a full quatrains: "Vnd deyn kinder vmb deynen tisch, "and your children around the table." The image of the fruitful vine is retained, however. The third of Luther's quatrains, equated with the fourth in the Scots text, is very freely rendered, and the pattern noted already begins to emerge again. So too does the generally erratic nature of the translation after the initial falling-off of fidelity. For the fifth Scots quatrains is a close rendering of the German for three lines, with a sudden and rather different conclusion. In the final strophes, the content is close, but there is the same difference of tone already remarked: "Ane profitabilly sall be geuin thë" (vi 1) and "Fristen wurd er das leben deyn/vnd mit gutte stetts bey dyr seyn" (v 1–2) are not quite the same. The Scots text loses the sense of "fristen" "determine the time of," and it anticipates the idea of goodness in Luther's second line ("and will always be with you in goodness"). The last idea of the Psalm itself appears too to have been given new emphasis. One wonders whether the Scots "And peace in Israel sall thow find" is the same as Luther's "[ . . . du wirst sehen . . . ] das Israel fride sind, itself a more faithful rendering of the biblical "thou shalt see peace upon Israel" (Psalm cxviii 6). But if Luther is closer to the Psalm on this point, it might be noted that the six-strophe arrangement in Scots does correspond with the
breakdown into concepts in the Psalm itself. The present verse-structure of the Psalm (though there are six) does not reflect this. But the present verse 3 divides well into the two references to wife and to children. Overall, then, this Psalm-version can be linked with Luther's with more justification than can the version of the twelfth Psalm.

The version in the Gude and Godlie Ballatis of the De profundis (Psalm 130, Mitchell, p. 112, Hahn, p. 5f.) is somewhat more problematic than those already examined, since Luther wrote two versions of this text, one of which appeared in his earliest collection, the Nuremberg Achtliederbuch of 1524, and which has four strophes. This version was reprinted in the Erfurt Enchiridion, printed by Matthes Maler in the same year, as well as in the text printed by Johann Lobersfeld. The other version, which was the one to become established in the Wittenberg tradition, has an extra strophe and some variations. This text appeared in the Gesangbüchlein of Wittenberg, 1524, and in most of the later collections, in 1533, 1534 and 1543.

The Scots version is in four strophes (in spite of Mitchell, p. 263), and is metrically and in rhyme very close indeed to the German. Although the four-strophe pattern in Scots might prima facie point to the earlier Luther text, close examination tends to indicate that the Scots adaptor is producing a version of the longer text in a free fashion.

The expected pattern is demonstrated once again. The first strophe is the closest, although there are some omissions from the German, such as gnedig, "merciful," in Luther's third line. But these are small, and probably necessary casualties of the transmission from poem to poem. The idea of imputing sin is not made as specific in the German as it is in Scots, although this is in any case part of Luther's special area of doctrine. The variant in the two Luther texts at this stage, the replacement of sund und unrecht, "sin and evil," with manche sündt, "many a sin," is of no help here in the question of source.

The opening line of the second Scots strophe translates that in Luther's five-strophe edition, however, and the somewhat different idea in the earlier German poem is not there. The rest of the strophe is free in any case. Luther's stress on man's inability to carry out good works is replaced by an emphasis on repentance. It is possible that
this notion links with a line of the four-strophe German version: *Das dich fürcht beyde gross und klein*, “that you should be feared by all, great and small.” But the parallel is somewhat tenuous. The final lines of the Scots second strophe anticipate Luther’s fifth, with a change from “we” to “I” in this case: “Thocht I be full of sinfulness/gilt thou art full of faithfulness...; *Ob bey uns ist der/vnden vieI/bey Gott ist viel mehr gnaden...*”

The final strophes of the Scots text are a rearrangement of ideas from Luther’s three closing strophes, and the relationship may be expressed diagramatically:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scots</th>
<th>Luther (5-strophe)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iii 1</td>
<td>iii 1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3, 4, 5</td>
<td>5, 6, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5, 6, 7</td>
<td>iv 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv 1</td>
<td>iv 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>v 2 (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

Where a single line has been set against a single line in the original, the parallel is close. Others are freer. There is nothing to suggest that the Scots version owes anything to Luther’s four-strophe text apart from the debatable point mentioned already. Once again, then, the translation begins as a faithful one, and then becomes more free, taking the text as a general basis only. In this case, however, Luther has (unusually) a biblical allusion (in v 5 to Psalm xxxii 1) which is not reflected in the Scots.

Although the relevant hymns of the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* may be compared with the Lutheran originals in terms of the received texts, and their effects compared as such, it is of interest to consider briefly the position of these translations within the wider context of Renaissance and Reformation translation theory, especially in Scotland. The *Ballatis* texts provide, of course, no explicit statement regarding a theory of translation. While the reason for the translation of the hymns is self-evident in the context of the Reformation as a whole, the patriotic impulse that lies behind some medieval and Renaissance translations need not be taken into account here. The ambiguous combination of an assertion of the validity of
the language into which one is translating with an indication of its inadequacies is less relevant when the original is German than in cases where the original is classical or even French.¹⁷ Some general tenets of Renaissance theory may be noted, however: the insistence of the early humanists on fidelity towards the source; the generally purist attitude towards an exaggerated use of foreign words;¹⁸ the corollary attempt — emphasised so strongly by Luther — to match the written language to the spoken language of the people.¹⁹

The best-known explicit theory of translation in Scots in the period roughly contemporary with that of the *Gude and Godlie Ballaties* is, for poetry at least, that of Gavin Douglas in the preface to the first book of the *Eneados*. It would be outside the scope of this paper to go beyond the generally accepted views of Douglas's stated aims and the achievement of them, and reference may be made, rather, to the particularly clear introduction of David F. C. Coldwell to the STS edition.²⁰ Coldwell points out — and the statement is true for any metrical translation, of course — that "the choice really lies between on the one hand, translating as exactly as possible, and on


¹⁸ See Matthiessen, *Translation*, p. 31, citing Cheke as an instance of a sixteenth-century English purist approach.


the other, adding such expansion for emphasis or elucidation or meter-making as the translator sees fit.”21 Gavin Douglas insists for the most part on a close adherence to the original:

Rycht so am I to Virgillis text ybund,
I may nocht fie less than my falt be fund

(t, pro. 299f.)

while remaining aware that

... than be Latyn wordis mony ane
That in our leyd ganand translation hase nane.

(t, pro. 363f.)22

Douglas's attacks on Caxton for the latter’s excessive freedom of translation are also familiar, although the point is made too that Caxton’s translations are from a French rather than from a Latin text of Virgil. Of course, the _Eneadoes_ adapts the original in terms of cultural assimilation—the _nunnys of Bachus_ in IV, vi, 41, are probably the best-known instance.23 There are also expansions, for example for rhetorical effect; but by and large the translation is accepted as a close one.

The initial premises for the _Gude and Godlie Ballatis_ are plainly somewhat different. There is no implicit or explicit reverence towards the language of the original, and the metrical questions are somewhat more restricted.24 Even so, the Luther hymns in the _Ballatis_ seem to be generally uneven in the level of fidelity to the original and indeed in the choice of an appropriate word. While there is some attempt at cultural assimilation in, say, the _Balulalow_ carol, the use of learned words quite apart from the more intricate problem of the diminutives is detrimental. Against Gavin Douglas, the _Ballatis_ are closer to Caxton, or rather, since the method involved is presumably not that of Caxton, to Scots translations from the French in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The comments of

22 See however Coldwell's comments in the Douglas edition, i, 42, on the _Terens in englysh_ of c. 1520.
24 The whole context of the Ballatis must be taken into account here, and the tension implicit between _Liedkontrafaktur_ in general and the problems of faithful translation.
Janet M. Smith, for example, on the Scots translations in the Complaynt of Scotlande (chronologically close to the Ballatis) from Alain Chartier’s Quadrilogue might be applied to the treatment of Luther’s hymns in the Ballatis: “The Scottish author generally expands a little, and so loses the steady rhythm of Chartier’s prose. He often explains the metaphors instead of allowing them to speak for themselves. He supplements his original with scriptural and classical quotations, and makes much more parade of his learning.”

The judgment of critics such as Mitchell has indicated in broad terms that there is some variation in the translations—or better, versions—of Luther’s hymns in the Gude and Godlie Ballatis. It is apparent from this study that the variation is in fact very great. The range is from texts where the connection appears to be limited to the common biblical origin, to very close imitations with a greater or lesser degree of poetic effect. Frequently an initially close translation develops into a free version, or becomes erratic. This is all quite apart from the poetic point that Luther’s simplicity is more often than not lost. Of the ten hymns linked with Luther, only three may fairly be termed translations, and several are scarcely to be connected with Luther at all.

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25 Smith, *French Background*, p. 145.