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**ROBERT BURNS'S HAND IN "AY WAUKIN, O":  
THE ROY MANUSCRIPT AND WILLIAM TYTLER'S  
DISSERTATION (1779)<sup>1</sup>**

*Patrick Scott*

"Ay waukin, O" is among the most praised of Burns's songs, praised not only as voicing the emotions of a young woman separated from, abandoned by, or bereaved of, her lover, but also as voicing the experience of separation, abandonment, or bereavement that can be experienced by quite other speakers and in quite different circumstances. The song was, for instance, famously and movingly sung at the funeral service in 1994 for the Labour party leader John Smith. But critical discussion of the song has been ham-strung both by incomplete or erroneous information about the manuscripts and by the lack of hard information about just how much of it should be credited to Burns.

In his textual apparatus for the 1968 Clarendon edition, following information about three other manuscripts, James Kinsley notes, without fully collating, a fourth autograph manuscript. Kinsley's note does not encourage further investigation:

*A MS owned by G. R. Roy has two similar drafts [that is, similar to the Cowie manuscript], agreeing with Cowie at l.*

*14. One has That has my heart a keeping in l. 16.<sup>2</sup>*

Needless to say, the manuscript has since been more fully scrutinized, notably by the Glasgow editors for a forthcoming volume in the Oxford Edition of Robert Burns, which (along with other comment on the song) will provide the Roy manuscript collation lacking in Kinsley.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> This note is the fifth in an on-going series illustrating Burns manuscripts in the G. Ross Roy Collection. The manuscript is reproduced here courtesy of the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries.

<sup>2</sup> James Kinsley, ed., *Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), II: 510, item 287. While most editions and scholars cite the song, as here and in Kinsley, by its refrain, as "Ay waukin, O," it is sometimes indexed under the first line, as "Simmer's a pleasant time."

<sup>3</sup> Full textual apparatus and annotation are included in Murray Pittock, ed., *The Scots Musical Museum* [Oxford Edition of Robert Burns, vols. 2 and 3] (Oxford:

purpose of this fuller discussion is to supplement the necessarily succinct apparatus in the forthcoming edition, by fuller discussion both of Burns's sources and of his manuscripts. Among sources, the discussion highlights an often neglected and misdated printed source, William Tytler's "Dissertation," for two of the four stanzas. The discussion of manuscripts first considers the two full-length manuscripts, identifying one, collated as authentic by Kinsley, as being an Antique Smith forgery, and detailing the provenance, and so purpose, of the other (now at the Birthplace Museum). It then makes a detailed reexamination of the Roy manuscript and its pencilled additions, with illustrations, clarifying the relationship among the three genuine manuscripts to argue that the Roy manuscript represents a particularly significant composition stage.

Indeed, the significance of the Roy manuscript cannot be understood without at least some decision about Burns's source-text. As James C. Dick remarked, "the origin of this peculiar lyric has exercised the pen of numerous critics."<sup>4</sup> Nineteenth-century commentators canvassed a wide variety of cognate texts, but several of the suggested sources are undateable or were first printed later than Burns, so that most recent commentators have accepted the song as reworking a traditional rather than printed source.<sup>5</sup> From Cunningham onwards, one common assertion has been that Burns is responsible only for the first of the four stanzas, that

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Clarendon Press, forthcoming), vol. 2, song 213. I am grateful to Professor Pittock for corresponding with me about this song, and to him, Professor Kirsteen McCue, the OERB editor for Burns's songs from Thomson's *Select Collection*, and to the general editor, Prof. Gerard Carruthers, for sharing the edition notes in pre-publication form.

<sup>4</sup> James C. Dick, *The Songs of Robert Burns* (London: Henry Frowde, 1903; Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1962), 401.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., "Jess Macfarlan," proposed as source by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, in William Stenhouse, *Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1853), 299, uses Burns's refrain with quite different verses, and cannot be dated in print before 1796: see Ritter, as in n. 15 below, 3 n. 2. In addition to Kinsley, modern discussions include: Donald Low, ed., *The Songs of Robert Burns* (London: Routledge, 1993), 367 ("based on a traditional fragment in David Herd's manuscripts [discussed below] ... Burns has expanded this idea"); Carol McGuiirk, ed., *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), 259 (also quoting the Herd fragment); Kirsteen McCue, "Burns's Songs and Poetic Craft," in Gerard Carruthers, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Robert Burns* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 78 (a "fine example" of Burns's "creation of new lyrics from old fragments"); Andrew Noble and P.S. Hogg, eds., *The Canongate Burns* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2001: revd. ed. 2003), 326 ("transformed by Burns from an original song"); Robert Irvine, ed., *Robert*

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Ay waukin, O.

213 \* Sim-mer's a pleasant time, Flower's of ev'ry colour; The  
Slow

water rins o'er the heugh, And I long for my true lover! Ay waukin, O,

Waukin still and weary: Sleep I can get nane, For thinking on my Dearie.

When I sleep I dream, When I wauk I'm irie; Sleep I can get nane For thinking on my Dearie. Ay waukin &c.	Lanely night comes on, A' the lave are sleepin: I think on my bony lad And I bleer my een wi' greetin. Ay waukin &c.
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Fig. 1: “Ay waukin, O,” from *Scots Musical Museum*, III (1790)

beginning “Simmer’s a pleasant time,” while “the remainder had only the benefit of his revival.”<sup>6</sup> The Burns version of the song was first

*Burns: Selected Poems and Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 342 (“An old tune, and words that also draw on traditional materials”).

<sup>6</sup> Allan Cunningham, ed., *The Works of Robert Burns with his Life*, 8 vols. (London: James Cochrane, 1834), IV: 119; cf. Cunningham, *Songs of Scotland*, II: 231 (“This song is the work of several hands... Most of the chorus is certainly old, and part of the second verse”); Stenhouse, *Illustrations*, 206 (“the first stanza ... was written by Burns, and he even made some slight alterations on the very old fragment incorporated with his words”); P. Hatley Waddell, *Life and Works of Robert Burns*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: David Wilson, 1867-69), I: 189 (this “beautiful plaint” is “partly original, the first verse being by our Author, the last two verses revised by him”); George Farquhar Graham, ed., *The Popular Songs of Scotland*

published as song 213 in the third volume of James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* (Edinburgh, 1790).<sup>7</sup> Though it has been suggested that the volume appeared as late as July, Johnson's preface is dated February 2; even before that, Burns's letter to William Dunbar on January 14, 1790, assumes that Dunbar will already have seen the volume.<sup>8</sup> By then, Johnson seems to have had Burns's manuscript copy in hand for nearly a year: on April 24, 1789, Burns had sent Johnson a 4-page annotated list of songs for the volume, and item 20 on that list is "Ay waukin O," annotated (like many others in the same list) as "Mr. Burns's old words."<sup>9</sup> While this has routinely been taken to mean that Burns had revised an older song, it can also mean simply that he was transmitting or promising to transmit a song more or less without revision.<sup>10</sup> The song was not attributed to Burns in the 1790 index of contents.

The four stanzas (three stanzas and a chorus) are presented in different order in different sources, so the line numbering varies.<sup>11</sup> In the discussion

(Glasgow: J. Muir Wood, 1887), 25 ("the four lines added by Burns to the old words"); and several recent discussions, e.g., that on *EducationScotland*: <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandshistory/jacobitesenlightenmentclearances/robertburns/songs/aywaukino.asp>.

<sup>7</sup> James Johnson, *Scots Musical Museum*, III (Edinburgh: James Johnson, 1790), 222 (song 213); for variant tune, see *SMM*, IV (1792), song 382, discussed below.

<sup>8</sup> G. Ross Roy, ed., *The Letters of Robert Burns*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), II: 4. Egerer does not venture any exact publication date; almost everyone else gives the date of the preface; John Glen, *Early Scottish Melodies* (Edinburgh: J. & R. Glen, 1900), 130, dates publication of the volume in July.

<sup>9</sup> See facsimile in Dick, *Songs*, xlv-xlvii (p. xlvi), and cf. note on p. xxv. When Dick saw it, the manuscript list was owned by the Burns collector William Law, of Honresfield House, Littleborough, near Rochdale, and in the 1920s it was owned by his nephew: see Davidson Cook, "Sir A.J. Law's Collection of Burns Manuscripts. Part III," *Burns Chronicle*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ser, 3 (1928): 11-17, or Cook, *Burns Manuscripts in the Honresfield Collection* (Glasgow: printed for private circulation by W. Hodge and Co., 1928). Its present location is unrecorded, but see Patrick Scott, "A 'Lost' Collection of Robert Burns Manuscripts: Sir Alfred Law, Davidson Cook, and the Honresfield Collection," *Robert Burns Lives!*, 210 (February 3, 2015), revd. in *Burns Chronicle for 2016* (November 2015), 34-49.

<sup>10</sup> Dick (p. xxv) asserts that the Law MS list "definitely settles the authorship of many songs." Robert Crawford, *The Bard* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 322, describes the list's ambiguous phrasing as "felicitous," because "it is often hard to be sure just what is Burns and what is 'old words.'"

<sup>11</sup> On different stanza-orders, see table in Erich Schwebsch, *Schottische Volkslyrik in James Johnson's The Scots Musical Museum [Palaestra 95]* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1920), 105.

below, stanzas are treated, and lines numbered, in the order from Johnson and Kinsley:

Stanza 1: "Simmer's a pleasant time," lines 1-4

Chorus: "Ay waukin, O," lines 5-8

Stanza 2: "When I sleep I dream," lines 9-12

Stanza 3: "Lanely night comes on," lines 13-16

Only two precursor-texts are known in any printed or manuscript source that can confidently be dated earlier than Burns's own version. The first and shorter, which has been cited by a number of editors, was found among the manuscripts of the Scottish ballad collector David Herd. Herd had not included it in his *Ancient and Modern Scots Songs* (1769 etc.), but it was printed by Henley and Henderson among their annotations in 1896 (as "probably the true original"), and then by Hans Hecht in 1904.<sup>12</sup> Hecht noted several other Burns's songs for which Herd's manuscripts seemed to be the source and was confident that while Burns was in Edinburgh he had access, directly or through friends, to Herd's manuscript collections.<sup>13</sup> The Herd fragment has just seven lines, two of them repetitions:

O WAT, wat—O wat and weary!  
 Sleep I can get nane  
 For thinking on my deary.  
 A' the night I wak,  
 A' the night I weary,  
 Sleep I can get nane  
 For thinking on my dearie.<sup>14</sup>

This seems to have been at most the germ of Burns's song, rather than its source: of its seven lines, the only two to appear in the finished song are lines 2-3 (repeated as 6-7) which form lines 7-8 in the chorus.

The second, and more likely, source anticipates more of Burns, and it was publicly available before Burns was preparing his own version for Johnson. It was noted by a German Burns scholar, Otto Ritter, in 1903, but, perhaps forgiveably, it seems not to have caught the attention of Kinsley or other recent editors.<sup>15</sup> It was first published in 1779 by Burns's acquaintance William Tytler, anonymously, in the eighth appendix to

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<sup>12</sup> W. E. Henley and T.F. Henderson, eds, *The Poetry of Robert Burns* [The Centenary Edition], 4 vols. (London: T.C. and E.C. Jack, 1896), III: 338; Hans Hecht, ed., *Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts* (Edinburgh: W.J. Hay, 1904), 240.

<sup>13</sup> Hecht, p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> Hecht, p. 240.

<sup>15</sup> Otto Ritter, *Neue Quellenfunde zu Robert Burns* (Halle a. S.: Verlag von Max Niemeyer, 1903), 2-3, cited by Schwebsch, as in note 11 above, 99-105; and by Robert Donald Thornton, *Studies in Robert Burns and Scots Song* (unpub. PhD thesis, Harvard, 1949), 104-105.

someone else's book on an unrelated topic, Hugo Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*. This second, Tytler, source provides close parallels not only to Burns's full refrain but to his second stanza also:

Ay wa'king oh!  
 Wa'king ay and wearie;  
 Sleep I canna get,  
 For thinking o' my dearie.

When I sleep, I dream;  
 When I wake, I'm irie:  
 Rest I canna get,  
 For thinking o' my dearie.<sup>16</sup>

The chief difference is in the third line of each stanza (lines 7 and 11 in the Kinsley text), a line where the Burns version matches the Herd fragment. Tytler's essay containing these two verses, his "Dissertation on the Scottish Musick," was reprinted at least three times: in Tytler's own *Remains of James the First* (1783), in the second edition of Arnot's *History* (1788), and then as the preface to Napier's *Selection of the Most Favourite Scottish Songs* (1790).<sup>17</sup>

Quite aside from the fact that these verses had appeared in a volume published, and republished, by Burns's own publisher William Creech, Burns had known William Tytler himself during his first winter in Edinburgh. In May 1787, he had sent him one of the separate presentation

<sup>16</sup> [William Tytler], Appendix, "No. VIII: A Dissertation on the Scottish Musick," in Hugo Arnot, *History of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1779), 624-642 (p. 639). Tytler footnotes *irie*, in line 5, as "a Scots word that has no correspondent term in English. It implies that sort of fear which is conceived by a person apprehensive of apparitions."

<sup>17</sup> [William Tytler, ed.], *Poetical Remains of James the First, King of Scotland* (Edinburgh: J. And E. Blafour, 1783), 235; Hugh Arnot, *History of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1788), 639; William Napier, *A Selection of the Most Favourite Scottish Songs, Chiefly Pastoral* (London: William Napier, [1790]), 14. Tytler's text was also used in the engraved music in Napier (p. 61), below "The Ewe Bughts," but was not given in the facing letter-press. The publication date for the Napier is commonly given as February 1, 1790, but this is taken from the date on the engraved frontispiece, by Bartolozzi after Cosway, which only provides an earliest date: such engravings were usually prepared and dated in advance of the books in which they appeared, and were also offered for separate sale. The Tytler text appears a few years later in Joseph Ritson, *Scottish Song in Two Volumes* (London: J. Johnson and J. Egerton, 1794), I: 47, as taken "from a manuscript copy transmitted from Scotland" (I:v), but in his preface, in relation to other songs, Ritson cites Tytler's dissertation and acknowledges having received unpublished songs in manuscript from David Herd and Alexander Fraser Tytler (I: lxxx-lxxxiii).

Ay wa'king oh !	When I sleep, I dream ;
Wa'king ay and wearie ;	When I wake, I'm irie * :
Sleep I canna get,	Reft I canna get,
For thinking o' my dearie.	For thinking o' my dearie.

**Fig. 2: "Ay wa'king, O," from William Tytler's "Dissertation," in Hugo Arnot, *History of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Creech, 1779), 639. Image courtesy of the University of South Carolina Libraries**

copies of the Beugo engraving, together with a poem praising Tytler's defence of Mary, Queen of Scots. In August that same year, back in Edinburgh, Burns had sent Tytler some "old pieces ... found among our Peasantry in the West." In January 1793, writing to George Thomson about plans for his *Select Collection*, Burns had boasted "All the late Mr. Tytler's anecdotes, I have with me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him from his own mouth." Later, in his long letter to George Thomson in early September 1793, Burns mentions Tytler's published dissertation ("Tytler's Hist: of Scots Music").<sup>18</sup>

The Herd and Tytler versions provide, then, good sources for Burns's chorus and stanza 2, but no source-text for Burns's stanza 1 ("Simmer's a pleasant time") or stanza 3 ("Lanely night comes on"). As noted above, stanza 1 has long been attributed to Burns, but stanza 3 has been left unattributed. It is stanza three that constitutes the main text in two of Burns's autograph versions, the Cowie MS and the Roy MS, and the relation or sequence of Burns's manuscripts is therefore key evidence on the extent of his authorship.

However, one distraction needs to be dealt with before discussing the manuscripts in detail. Kinsley and others have noted and collated a manuscript headed "'Song for Miss Craig with the dutiful regards of Robt Burns," formerly owned by Robert Borthwick Adam (1867-1940), of Buffalo, and printed by him in transcription in 1922.<sup>19</sup> No Burns scholar has ever managed to track down who "Miss Craig" might have been, but Adam had appended a slightly desperate note, echoed by Kinsley, that she "was, I believe, a relative of Mrs. McLehose (Clarinda)." This manuscript was not among those that Adam had loaned for the great Glasgow exhibition in 1896, so one may infer that he acquired it subsequently.

<sup>18</sup> Roy, *Letters*, I: 112, 147; II: II: 181, 247.

<sup>19</sup> [R.B. Adam], *Autograph Poems and Letters of Robert Burns* (Buffalo: privately printed, 1922), p. 8; and cf. Kinsley, III: 1330, and Margaret M. Smith and Penny Bouhmela, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, III:1 (London: Mansell, 1986), 105 (BuR 61).



Shortly after publishing his transcriptions, Adam sold his Burns collection to Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach, from whom it passed to the Rosenbach Library in Philadelphia, but the “Ay waukin” manuscript was not to be included in either of the two splendid Rosenbach Burns catalogues.<sup>20</sup> During research for this article, I checked some recently-sorted files from Ross Roy’s home and found an apparently unrecorded facsimile fair copy of the song headed “Song for Miss Craig with the dutiful regards of Robt Burns.”<sup>21</sup> The facsimile was easily recognizable as taken from an Antique Smith forgery, but carried no publisher’s imprint to say if it had been made from the Adam/Rosenbach MS.<sup>22</sup> Inquiry to the Rosenbach, and an exchange of scans, quickly confirmed that it was and that the Adam MS (Rosenbach EMs 462/26.44) was indeed an Antique Smith.<sup>23</sup> It may even have been

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<sup>20</sup> *Memorial Catalogue of the Burns Exhibition held ... from 15<sup>th</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1896* (Glasgow: William Hodge and T. & R. Annan, 1898), part I, items 1038-1043, pp. 152-154; Rosenbach Company, *Robert Burns 1759-1796: A Collection of Original Manuscripts, Autograph Letters, and Association Copies* (Philadelphia: the Rosenbach Company, 1948; also reprinted as catalogue 46, in *The Collected Catalogues of Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach, 1904-1951*, 10 vols. (New York: Arno Press, 1967), vol. 7; 1996; Nicolas Barker and Wendy Van Wyck, *Robert Burns: the Poet’s Progress: a Bicentennial Exhibition* (Philadelphia: the Rosenbach Museum & Library, 1995).

<sup>21</sup> Manuscript facsimiles are not covered by Egerer, but cf. the partial list in *Catalogue of Robert Burns Collection, the Mitchell Library, Glasgow* (Glasgow: Glasgow City Libraries and Archives, 1996); Patrick Scott, “Collecting Burns Manuscript Facsimiles,” *Robert Burns Lives!* (May 2017, *forthcoming*); Scott, “Not in Egerer?”: (Some of) what we still don’t know about Burns bibliography,” *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Symposium on Burns Bibliography, ed. Gerard Carruther and Robert Betteridge, 43:2 (Fall 2017, *forthcoming*).

<sup>22</sup> J. DeLancey Ferguson, “‘Antique’ Smith and his Forgeries of Robert Burns,” *The Colophon, A Book Collector’s Quarterly*, 4, no. 13 (February 1933), unpaginated; Gerard Carruthers and G. Smith, “Daylight Rabbery: The story of Antique Smith’s Robert Burns forgeries,” *The Drouth*, 44 (2013): 10-15. Professor Carruthers was at South Carolina working in the Roy Collection when I came on the facsimile and was able to confirm my initial assessment.

<sup>23</sup> I gratefully acknowledge the responsiveness of Elizabeth Fuller, Librarian at the Rosenbach, for the information from the Rosenbach records, and of Jobi Zink in promptly providing scans. As noted above, the facsimile had no publisher’s imprint, but Adam’s 1922 catalogue did not include facsimiles, and in any case the page-height of the facsimile (35 cm.) would not have fitted the page height of the printed Adam catalogue (30 cm.). The facsimile would, however, have fitted nicely into an earlier volume of facsimiles, from the William K. Bixby collection (volume height 38 cm.), in which facsimiles are of varying dimensions, with no captions on the facsimile leaves, and in which the paper and general appearance match the Bixby facsimiles: Walter B. Stevens, ed., *Poems and Letters in the Handwriting of*

identified as such by Mr. Adam and Dr. Rosenbach at the time Adam sold the collection: a typed list in the Rosenbach Company’s Adam correspondence file describes in the item as a forgery, and the verso has a pencilled note that it is a Smith, and not to be included in the 1948 catalogue.<sup>24</sup> No future editor need hunt for a plausible Miss Craig or speculate on the possible significance of her to this song or of this song to her.

That leaves just three authentic autograph manuscripts of the song, the two with early drafts of the third stanza, and one with the full text:<sup>25</sup>

1. the Cowie MS (NLS 15957, f. 13v): a draft of stanza 3 (lines 13-16), with internal corrections;<sup>26</sup>
2. the Roy MS (University of South Carolina), with two successive drafts of stanza 3 (lines 13-16) and other text as discussed below;
3. the Alloway MS (Robert Burns Birthplace Museum: Object no. 3.6183), with the three stanzas and chorus.

Of these, the Alloway MS is the easiest to deal with. It provides a full text of the song, more or less as in the *Scots Musical Museum*, and its recent digitization includes annotation, unreported by Kinsley or other commentators. A note at the foot of the manuscript, not in Burns’s hand, gives the early provenance. The note reads in full “Presented to R.A. Smith by John Anderson, Engraver, Edinburgh, 22 Nov<sup>d</sup>: 1820.” Anderson had been Johnson’s partner, and in due course successor, partnering with Johnson’s widow in 1811-1815, and then with George Walker at Foulis Close, 42 High Street, from 1815-1826.<sup>27</sup> This was one of several Burns manuscripts that Anderson gave at this time to the composer Robert Archibald Smith (1780-1829), editor of *The Scottish Minstrel* (six volumes,

*Robert Burns reproduced in facsimile through the courtesy of William K. Bixby and Frederick W. Lehmann* (St. Louis, MO: Printed for the Burns Club, 1908). Some other Adam-Rosenbach Burns manuscripts had previously been in Bixby’s collection.

<sup>24</sup> Rosenbach Company records, folder RCo I:001:23; the pencilled note has been identified by Elizabeth Fuller as in the hand of William H. McCarthy, Jr., an employee of the Rosenbach Company and later first director of the Rosenbach Foundation.

<sup>25</sup> Kinsley, II: 510; Smith and Bouhmela, as in note 19, III.i: 105 (BuR 60-63).

<sup>26</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Ralph Maclean, Department of Manuscripts, NLS, for checking this item for me; variants are fully collated in Pittock, *OERB* II (forthcoming).

<sup>27</sup> For Anderson, see Patrick Scott, “‘As I Walk’d by mysel’: A Burns Autograph Manuscript and the Problem of Attribution,” *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 42:1 (Spring 2016): 101–109 (105 and n. 12); and *Scottish Book Trade Index*, Part 2: <http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index/allan-armour>.

1821-1824); others include the song “As I walk’d by mysel,” now in the Roy Collection, and “O gude ale comes,” that Smith presented to the Paisley Burns Club.<sup>28</sup> The “Ay waukin” manuscript was purchased for the Burns Birthplace Cottage by Col. Dunlop at Sotheby’s on February 15, 1937, with the sale catalogue giving priority to the item on the other side of the sheet (“An unpublished autograph poem of 8 lines, ‘Green Sleeves’”), rather than to this song, which is described as “lightly crossed through but perfectly legible.”<sup>29</sup> Despite the crossing out (a lattice of three diagonal lines in ink in each direction), it seems clear that the Alloway MS was the manuscript Burns sent to James Johnson.

The two earlier manuscripts, both with drafts of verse 3, nonetheless differ in character. The Cowie MS gives only one reasonably fair version of the stanza, while the Roy MS gives successive versions together with additional marginal annotations in pencil laying out the way the the new stanza will fit into the song as previously published by Tytler. Together, the Cowie and Roy manuscripts make a clear bridge between Tytler’s two-stanza version and the four-stanza version in the Alloway manuscript. The Cowie manuscript seems to be the earlier of the two, though it also has corrections to the text that match later variants in the Roy versions.

It is possible that Burns was working on the two simultaneously or in parallel. For this, a plausible scenario would have him sketching his first draft for the stanza on the Cowie manuscript (i.e. on the back of “Green Sleeves”), then getting a fresh sheet of paper to make a fair draft (Roy draft A), moving on to a second version of the same stanza, and then going back to the Cowie draft to insert a variant from the second Roy draft (“my” for “the” in line 15).

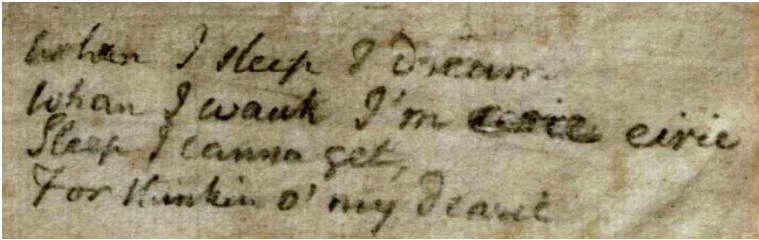
A second possibility is that the two Roy versions were not alternatives but were originally intended as successive stanzas, with significant repetition, but also significant variation. Why else, one wonders, if they were only alternative drafts, bother to write the opening words of the refrain under both versions? Such repetition with difference is a prominent feature not only in the Tytler song, but also in many of Burns’s other reworkings of older songs. A familiar example might be the repetitions in “O my love is like a red, red rose.” Using both stanzas from the Roy MS in this way would have made a song of three stanzas and refrain even without

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<sup>28</sup> Both carry similar presentation notes also dated November 22, 1820: see Scott, *loc. cit.*, and Thomas Hunter, *History of the Paisley Burns Club* (Paisley: J. & J. Cook, 1939), or: <http://www.paisleyburnsclub.org.uk/clubdocs1.htm>.

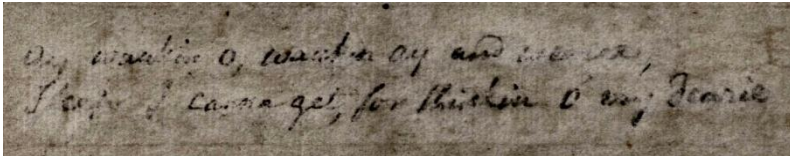
<sup>29</sup> *Book Prices Current*, 51 (1937), 151 (lot 217), which gives the hammer price as a then-substantial £100.





**Fig. 4: “Ay waukin O,” Stanza 1, penced addition to the Roy MS.**  
Enhanced image courtesy of the G. Ross Roy Collection,  
University of South Carolina Libraries.

have been cropped out in some previous reproductions.<sup>30</sup> The first addition (Fig. 4), at top right on the manuscript page, gives the the full text of Tytler’s second quatrain, beginning “Whan I sleep I dream,” but a corrected error in his transcription suggests that Burns was uncertain about spelling the word “irie” in Tytler’s third line. The second addition, now fainter, gives Tytler’s first stanza (“Ay waukin O”), positioned below the other stanzas, not ahead of them.



**Fig. 5: “Ay waukin O,” refrain, penced addition to the Roy MS.**  
Enhanced image courtesy of the G. Ross Roy Collection,  
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One difference among the early versions of the song is whether to print what is now the refrain first (Tytler, Napier, Ritson, Thomson) or to start with a regular stanza (as in the Alloway MS and in Johnson). The arrangement on the Roy MS would suggest that the decision to start with a regular stanza, not the refrain, preceded the decision to add the completely different opening found first in the Alloway manuscript. Notably, in both additions, the third line follows Tytler (“Sleep I canna get”), rather than the

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. G. Ross Roy, *Robert Burns* [Bibliographical Series No. 1] (Columbia, SC: Department of English, University of South Carolina, 1966), 13, annotated as “an apparently unpublished Burns manuscript”; Peter Westwood, ed., *The Definitive Illustrated Companion to Robert Burns*, 8 vols. ([Irvine]: privately published, in conjunction with the Distributed National Burns Collection Project, 2004), pt. 1A, 85; the uncropped MS is shown in Elizabeth Sudduth, *The G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns, An Illustrated Catalogue* (Columbia, SC: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2009), facing p. 1.

version (also in Herd) that Burns preferred both in the Alloway MS and in the Johnson text ("Sleep I can get nane").

The two kinds of evidence discussed here, the nature and dating of the written sources available to Burns, and the sequencing and purpose of the three genuine autograph manuscripts, have a significant bearing on any assessment of Burns's authorship. As noted above, most critics and editors have been slightly evasive about this, making vague gestures about "a traditional song," quoting the Herd version, or crediting Burns with the new opening stanza, and relegating the rest to his patching of traditional materials.<sup>31</sup> The availability of not just one, but four, published texts of Tytler's "Dissertation," with the 8-line "Ay waukin O," and the use of the Tytler text in the pencilled additions to the Roy MS, together with the absence from earlier printed sources of precursors to the stanza beginning "Lonely night comes on," strongly suggest that Burns added two full stanzas to the song, not just one. On the other hand, Burns's only editing or patching in the two earlier stanzas was to choose between Tytler's and Herd's versions in what is now line 7 and 11. It is also clear that Burns's expansion of the song came in two stages, the first represented by the Cowie and Roy MSS, adding a stanza that hews closely to the tone and situation of the traditional core, and the second, adding the new introduction ("Simmer's a pleasant time"), with its marked contrast of tone and imagery.

The Roy MS, particularly, shows Burns at work on the intermediate stage of this process. Familiarity has perhaps obscured the extent to which the song was significantly changed by Burns's subsequent addition of the new opening, and critics may reasonably differ in their response to the new introduction. Arguably, the Cowie and Roy MSS represent Burns in positive creative engagement with the traditional song, in a way that the later, perhaps more conventional, pastoral opening does not. Carol McGuirk suggests, however, that Burns added the new first stanza "to enlarge the emotional expressiveness of his source," and "intensified the mood by deferring the specific complaint of the lover until the second stanza," and so creating with "masterful reticence" "an effect of conclusive alienation between the 'pleasant' season and the weariness of the speaker."<sup>32</sup>

Finally, it may be useful for contrast to sketch briefly the subsequent history of the song, as published between 1790 and 1802, so highlighting the distinctiveness of the song that Burns sent to Johnson in 1789. The first

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<sup>31</sup> See references at notes 5 and 6 above.

<sup>32</sup> Carol McGuirk, *Robert Burns and the Sentimental Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 136-137.

in the sequence is of course Napier's *Collection* (1790), followed by a second occurrence of "Ay Waukin, O" in Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, volume IV (1792), as song 382, and then by Ritson's *Scottish Song* (1794). Notably, all three of these give just the eight-line Tytler text; all three, including Johnson, use the Tytler variant for the line "Sleep I canna get," not the Herd or Burns variant; and none of the three gives any part or version of Burns's two extra stanzas. All three also use the alternative tune, as first published by Napier, but reported to have come from Robert Riddell, of Friar's Carse, Burns's neighbour at Ellisland.<sup>33</sup> Johnson's purpose in repeating the song in 1792 was presumably to give the Napier tune, but for Ritson, as for Tytler, the 8-line text without Burns's additions represented the traditional song.

In 1795, for George Thomson's *Select Collection*, Burns wrote a completely new set of English verses, "On Chloris Being Ill."<sup>34</sup> While the new verses were to accompany one of the tunes for "Ay Waukin" (though it is not clear which), Burns kept the two sets of words distinct, by omitting the traditional refrain from Tytler, and replacing it with a brand new one:

Long, long the night,  
     Heavy comes the sorrow,  
 While my soul's delight  
     Is on her bed of sorrow (Kinsley, ll. 1-4).

Gone also are the pastoral opening and the allusions to summer. Only the first two lines of the refrain, and the third new stanza, seem to echo Burns's version for the *Scots Musical Museum*:

Ev'ry hope is fled;  
     Ev'ry fear is terror;  
 Slumber e'en I dread,  
     Ev'ry dream is horror (ll. 9-12).

Burns's new verses were not, however, published till six years after his death, and when they then appeared in Thomson's *Fifty Scottish Songs* (1802), Thomson put back the (Anglicized) title "Ay Waking, O!," relegated "On Chloris being Ill" to a small-type subtitle, and restored the traditional verses, heavily reworked, for a more familiar opening stanza:

<sup>33</sup> For critical response to the two tunes, see, e.g., McGuirk, *Selected Poems*, 258; Low, *Songs*, 367.

<sup>34</sup> Kinsley, II:774; III:1474. The Thomson version is more fully dealt with in Kirsteen McCue, ed., *Songs for George Thomson's Select Collection* [Oxford Edition of Robert Burns, vol. 4] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, forthcoming). For a further unexplained fragment relating to the tunes, see Burns's memo in the Gray MSS, about a different song "The Shepherd Adonis" (*SMM* II [1788], song 159), where he writes below the music "Mem.—To enquire of Dr. B— which part of Waukin o' suits the chorus": see D. M'Naught, in *Burns Chronicle*, 5 (1896), 45.

Ay waking, O!  
 Waking ay and wearie,  
 Rest I canna get  
 For thinking on my dearie.  
*O this love, this love!*  
 Life to me how dreary!  
 When I sleep I dream,  
 O! When I wake I'm eerie.  
*O this love, this love!*<sup>35</sup>

The new verses that Burns had written as a refrain are now repeated at the beginning rather end of each stanza after the first, and to fit the new setting of the music (with nine instead of eight lines to a stanza), Thomson has added a new refrain line, "*O this love, this love!*," varied in the very last line to read "Spare, O spare my love!" No critic has ever preferred Thomson's version, but the 1802 letterpress includes two notes that confirm the analysis given above on the extent of Burns's authorship in 1790. One, in a footnote, asserts Thomson's own role in the new 1802 version: "the line in the first stanza, 'Life to me how dreary,' and the lines printed in Italics, are supplied by the Editor for the sake of the Music." The more important one is in the header, where the bold-print claim that the song was "Written for this work ... By BURNS," is qualified by a small-print parenthetical note reading "The First Stanza Excepted." The first stanza, of course, is Thomson's reworking of the traditional core 8-line stanza from Tytler, and so, implicitly, the note confirms Burns's authorship of the other two stanzas in the 1790 *Scots Musical Museum*.

As so often in Burns research, many (though not all) of the individual pieces of information pieced together above have already been on record at sometime in the past two hundred years, but they have been mixed in with a great deal of material that is to some degree inaccurate, and dispersed so that they provide only part of the overall picture. The challenge for current Burns scholarship is not simply compiling information, but retrieving it and scrutinizing what is retrieved, so that everything relevant in the record has been retrieved, and even statements in long-respected scholarly works, such as the Kinsley edition, have been adequately reexamined, source by source, and manuscript by manuscript.

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<sup>35</sup> *Fifty Scottish Songs with Symphonies and Accompaniments, wholly by Haydn*, vol. III (Edinburgh: Printed for George Thomson, 1802), p. 11 (McCue's forthcoming *OERB* edition also notes a variant issue with page number 111).