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ALEXANDER ARBUTHNOT AND THE LYRIC IN POST-REFORMATION SCOTLAND¹

Joanna M. Martin

A small collection of poems attributed to one M. A. Arbuthnot survives in a group of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century manuscripts associated with the Maitland Family of Lethington, East Lothian. These poems have attracted little critical attention, having been overshadowed by the sizable and important collections of Older Scots verse by William Dunbar and Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington contained in the same manuscripts.² The poems attributed to Arbuthnot, however, have considerable literary and cultural significance and yet, as this article demonstrates, represent the early stages of the development of a distinctive Protestant poetics³ in the first two decades following the Reformation Parliament in Scotland, when a Calvinist catechesis became the formal framework of the Kirk's teachings.⁴ Previous studies of Older

¹ I am extremely grateful to Dr Nicola Royan and Dr Jamie Reid Baxter for their comments on an earlier version of this article.

² On the significance of the Maitland Folio for William Dunbar's verse, see Priscilla Bawcutt, "The Earliest Texts of Dunbar," in Felicity Riddy, ed., *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 183-98; Priscilla Bawcutt, ed., *The Poems of William Dunbar*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 1998).

³ This is not to deny the importance of the extensive Calvinist prose tradition in Scotland post 1560, and more work is needed on its influence on Arbuthnot's poetry and later devotional verse. However, this is beyond the scope of the present article.

⁴ Alec Ryrie, *The Origins of the Scottish Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 189-92. On Reformation piety of the early seventeenth century, see Louise Anderson Yeoman, "Heart-work: Emotion, Empowerment and Authority in Covenanting Times," unpublished Ph.D. thesis (St Andrews, 1991); and David George Mullan, *Narratives of the Religious Self in Early Modern Scotland* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 94.

Scots Protestant verse have focused on writing from the period after 1590 and as a result Arbuthnot's contribution to the development of this tradition has been neglected. The survival of his poems in the Maitland family manuscripts provides considerable insight into the nature of the creative and intellectual networks in which landowning and lairdly families with Protestant sympathies, read, composed and collected poetry in Scotland at the beginning of the personal reign of James VI.

The largest group of poems attributed to Arbuthnot appear in the Maitland Quarto Manuscript (now Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys Library MS 1408), which is dated to 1586. Some of the poems also appear in the earlier miscellany, the Maitland Folio Manuscript (Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys Library MS 2253), which was probably the copy text for parts of the Quarto and which was compiled between c. 1570 and c. 1585.⁵ Some also appear in the Reidpeth Manuscript (Cambridge, University Library, MS Ll.5.10)⁶ and the Drummond Manuscript (Edinburgh, University Library, MS De. 3.71), partial copies of the Folio and Quarto respectively which were made in the 1620s.

Due to the significance of the Quarto as a repository for Arbuthnot's verse, a brief description of its nature and contents is necessary here. The Quarto is a paper manuscript containing ninety-five verse items, mainly of Scottish origin, though with a couple of works of English provenance and others which show the influence of French and Italian sources. Its texts are neatly copied in Secretary and Italic scripts and, despite its large number of texts, it has a high degree of thematic coherence, with poems referring to political events, including those of relevance to the Maitlands, or treating themes of kinship, friendship, love, and religious faith in a moral or advisory manner. Thirty-eight of its poems are unattributed; and the others which are ascribed can be clearly associated

⁵ See W. A. Craigie, ed., *The Maitland Folio Manuscript*, STS, new ser., 7, 20 (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1919-27); Craigie, *The Maitland Quarto Manuscript*, STS, new ser., 9 (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1920); Joanna M. Martin, ed., *The Maitland Quarto, A New Edition of Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys Library MS 1408*, STS, 5th ser., 13 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press for the Scottish Text Society, 2015). Quotations here from the Quarto's texts are from the 2015 STS edition.

⁶ On Reidpeth's scribe see Sally Mapstone, "Older Scots and the Sixteenth Century," in Sally Mapstone, ed., *Older Scots Literature* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), 175-88 (pp. 181-83).

with family members or associates. Most notably, the Quarto contains the earliest and most complete collection of Richard Maitland's poems, forty-three in total: Maitland died in 1586, a date which appears at the front of the Quarto,⁷ suggesting that the manuscript was designed to be, at least in part, a commemorative collection.⁸ In addition to these poems, the Quarto contains two works attributed to "J.M.," which on the evidence of the fuller attributions in the Maitland Folio, is John Maitland, Richard Maitland's heir, who became vice chancellor to James VI in 1586, another significant family event which the manuscript may have been intended to mark. The Quarto scribe (or scribes) seems to favour abbreviated attribution rather than full names, probably because of the intimacy of the audience for which the collection was designed: Richard Maitland is named in full only on seven occasions in the manuscript and is elsewhere designated "S.R.M". Attributions to A. Montgomerie and "A.M." for a pair of unique epithalamia probably indicate the court poet Alexander Montgomerie, whose family was related to the Maitlands via the Seton family.⁹ There are epitaphs for Richard Maitland attributed to "T.H." and "R.H.," who again on evidence of the Folio are Thomas and Robert Hudson, musicians and writers at James VI's court. There is one poem attributed to "G.H.," who has not yet been convincingly identified. There is also one poem attributed to "Jacobus Rex" (James VI) which is attested in other witnesses with fuller ascriptions to the King of Scots.¹⁰

⁷ This date is written twice on the manuscript's first folio.

⁸ See A. A. MacDonald, "Sir Richard Maitland and William Dunbar: Textual Symbiosis and Poetic Individuality," in Sally Mapstone, ed., *William Dunbar, 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2001), 134-49 (p. 139).

⁹ The two poems in the Quarto attributed to Montgomerie (items 63 and 64 in the manuscript) are *epithalamia* on the marriage to Margaret Montgomerie, eldest daughter of Hugh Montgomerie, third earl Eglinton, to Robert, Lord Seton in 1582.

¹⁰ These are London, British Library, Additional MS 24195, where the poem is given the title "Song. the first verses that euer the King made," and Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, MS RH 13/38. This witness was identified by Sally Mapstone (unpublished research). See also R. J. Lyall, "James VI and the Sixteenth-Century Cultural Crisis," in Julian Goodare and Michael Lynch, eds., *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), 55-70 (p. 60); and Lyall, *Alexander Montgomerie: Poetry, Politics, and Cultural Change in Jacobean Scotland* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 98.

Amongst these attributed poems in the Quarto are six poems ascribed to M.A. Arbuthnot, twice the number to be found in the earlier Folio manuscript. Although half a dozen texts is a small number of attributed poems in the total contents of the Quarto, this nevertheless makes Arbuthnot the second most frequently attributed poet in the manuscript after Sir Richard Maitland. He thus has a degree of significance in the anthology. His poems appear in a section of the manuscript immediately following the longest run of poems by Richard Maitland, along with those by John Maitland, and a few anonymous texts. They are numbers 35, 36 and 37, and 41, 42, and 45 in the manuscript's sequence. Numbers 35 and 36 are amatory poems while the others are complaints of the times which include reflections on the role of the poet, piety (of a clearly Protestant nature) and personal ethics.

But what of the identity of M. A. Arbuthnot? The name is not particularly distinctive but there are two prominent individuals bearing the name who were active in the years immediately preceding the compilation of the Maitland Quarto, and whose name the careful scribe of this collection might have wished to record. The first is Alexander Arbuthnet (d. 1585), the Edinburgh printer involved with the production of the Geneva Bible in Scots with Thomas Bassandyne, and who was in 1579 appointed as royal printer, and licensed to print other texts associated with the reformed church, including collections of the psalms.¹¹ He was also associated with the Presbyterian printer, Henry Charteris. There is no evidence, however, that he composed his own poetry. The other likely candidate is the prominent churchman who became the first Protestant principal of King's College Aberdeen (1538-83).¹²

¹¹ Robert Dickson and John P. Edmond, *The Annals of Scottish printing 1507–1610* (Cambridge: Macmillan & Bowes, 1890; repr. Amsterdam: Van Heusden, 1975), 275–88; A. J. Mann, “Arbuthnet, Alexander (d. 1585),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004): <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/606> [accessed 14 Oct 2014]; A. J. Mann, *The Scottish Book Trade 1500-1720: Print Commerce and Print Control in Early Modern Scotland*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), 19, 37-8 and 140; P.B. Watry, “Sixteenth-Century Printing Types and Ornaments of Scotland with an Introductory Survey of the Scottish Book Trade,” unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1992, 83-4.

¹² James Kirk, “Arbuthnot, Alexander (1538–1583),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004): <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/605> [accessed 14 Oct 2014].

It is worth reviewing the evidence for the identification of the Quarto's Arbuthnot with this figure. The Quarto attributions to "M. Arbutnat" or "M.A. Arbuthnat," indicate a recipient of a university degree.¹³ Indeed, the single poem attributed to Arbuthnot to the Maitland Folio gives the full attribution, "ffinis quod masiter Alexander arbothnat". It also dates the poem to 1571, which, as we will see, fits broadly with what is known of his biography and the most active period of his intellectual life in Scotland. The poems themselves suggest a poet of skill, learning, and keen and knowledgeable interest in contemporary theological debates and the devotional writing they inspired.¹⁴

Alexander Arbuthnot, the churchman, and brother of the laird of Arbuthnot, trained in civil law at St Mary's College, St Andrews University, where he was licensed to teach by 1556. Arbuthnot left to study law at Bourges in c. 1560,¹⁵ and returned to Scotland in 1566 to become minister of Logie Buchan in Aberdeenshire. He contributed to the *Second Book of Discipline* in 1568, and was made Principal of King's College Aberdeen in 1569, where he supported Andrew Melville's programme to reform the university along Protestant and humanist lines.¹⁶ Andrew's nephew James Melville, who also knew Arbuthnot personally, described him as "a man of singular gifts of lerning, wisdom, [and] godliness."¹⁷ Throughout the 1570s Arbuthnot was involved in the reform of the constitution and policy of the Kirk,¹⁸ and examined the religious content of publications for orthodoxy, including the 1567 print made by John Scot for Thomas Bassandyne of *The Gude and Godlie*

¹³ *DOST*, Maister, n., sense 17 b and 21.

¹⁴ Terence C. Cave, *Devotional Poetry in France c.1570-1613* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 18-23.

¹⁵ Marie-Claude Tucker, "Scottish Students and Masters of the Faculty of Law of the University of Bourges in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in Theo van Heijnsbergen and Nicola Royan, eds., *Literature, Letters and the Canonical in Early Modern Scotland* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2002), 111-20.

¹⁶ Steven J. Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism: Andrew Melville and the Universities of Scotland, 1560-1625* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 95-6; Steven J. Reid, "Early polemic by Andrew Melville: the *Carmen Mosis* (1574) and the St Bartholomew's day massacres," *Renaissance and Reformation*, 30: 4 (2006-2007): 63-82.

¹⁷ R. Pitcairn, ed., *The Autobiography and Diary of Mr James Melvill* (Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1842), 53.

¹⁸ *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland*: A1575/3/6; 1578/7/18; 1578/7/19. Accessed at www.rps.ac.uk.

Ballatis or *Ane Compendious Buik of Godlie and Spirituall Songs*.¹⁹ In 1572, Arbuthnot published *Orationes de origine et dignitate juris* at Edinburgh, of which no copy is currently known, although a Latin poem survives by Thomas Maitland, addressing this book and describing its author as the learned and eloquent “fosterer” of the law.²⁰ Apart from his professional intellectual activities Arbuthnot had an interest in family history writing. Like Richard Maitland who wrote a history of his mother’s family, the Setons, he wrote a Latin prose history of the Arbuthnot family (*Originis et Incrementi Familiae Arbuthnoticae, Descriptio Historica*).²¹ There is some additional evidence external to the Maitland manuscripts that he was a poet: the early seventeenth-century historian and Archbishop of St Andrews, John Spottiswood, mentions his talents for poetry alongside his gifts in other branches of learning.²² The

¹⁹ A.F. Mitchell, ed., *A Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs Commonly Known as ‘The Gude and Godlie Ballatis’*, STS, 39 (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1896-97). A new edition by A. A. MacDonald is forthcoming with the Scottish Text Society (2015). Arbuthnot’s involvement in checking the content of *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis* is discussed by MacDonald in his new edition of the texts, p. 53. I am grateful to Professor MacDonald and the Scottish Text Society for allowing me pre-publication access to this material.

²⁰ See Thomas Maitland, *Elegia VII. Alexandri Arbuthnaei orationibus de origine et dignitate juris praefixa*, (“Elegy VII. Preface to Alexander Arbuthnot’s Speeches on the Origin and Dignity of Law”), ed. and trans. David McOmish and Steven J. Reid, in *The Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum: an electronic critical edition and translation*, www.dps.gla.ac.uk/delitiae/display/?pid=d2_MaiT_007 [date accessed: 23/02/2015]. On Thomas Maitland, see W.S. McKechnie, “Thomas Maitland,” *Scottish Historical Review*, 4:15 (1907), 274-93.

²¹ The University of Aberdeen, Special Collections Catalogue describes [MS 2764/3/1/1](#) as a “Leather-bound volume containing a manuscript history of the family of Arbuthnott, written in Latin by Principal Alexander Arbuthnott, King’s College, University of Aberdeen c. 1567, translated [“Scotice conversa”] by [William] Morrison, minister of Benholme, between 1577 and his death in 1587. These were transcribed on facing pages into this volume, possibly by Robert Arbuthnott, parson of Arbuthnott, son of Robert Arbuthnott of that ilk and younger brother of Andrew Arbuthnott to whom the volume is dedicated.” See <http://calms.abdn.ac.uk>. Also see P. S-M. Arbuthnot, *The Memoirs of the Arbuthnotts of Kincardineshire and Aberdeenshire* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1920), p. 43.

²² David Stevenson, *King’s College Aberdeen, 1560-1641: From Protestant Reformation to Covenanting Revolution* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990), p. 27. Andrew Melville’s epitaph for Alexander Arbuthnot in the *Delitiae*

only extant poetry associated with an Alexander Arbuthnot in the mid- to late sixteenth century, however, appears in Maitland family manuscripts.

Given the fact that Arbuthnot's poems survive only in Maitland sources, it seems likely that they came into family hands through close personal, intellectual and professional networks. Both Principal Arbuthnot and the Maitlands were lairdly rather than magnatial in origin, and yet rose to positions of prominence having trained in civil law. At St Andrews, Arbuthnot may have encountered John Maitland,²³ a law student of St Salvator's College in the mid 1550s, and his younger brother Thomas Maitland, who matriculated at St Mary's in 1559, and connections between them could plausibly have been sustained into the early 1570s, the Folio date of one of the attributed poems. It seems significant in this respect that the pair of poems in the Quarto attributed to "J.M." (John Maitland), poems 43 and 44, are immediately preceded and followed by poems clearly attributed to Arbuthnot, as if to suggest a relationship between the two poets, one living and one dead, at the time of the manuscript's compilation: this is not signalled at all by the compiler of the Folio, but is entirely appropriate to the memorialising and formal nature of the Quarto. Arbuthnot died in 1583 at the age of 45, so his poems were almost certainly collected for inclusion in the Quarto in order to commemorate their author and mark his significance as a family associate of great distinction.

The texts of Arbuthnot's poems reveal little about their wider circulation outside Maitland sources. Three of the poems in the Quarto attributed to Arbuthnot were apparently copied from the Maitland Folio. These are poems 37, 41 and 42, and they correspond to items 79 (pp. 2, 361-63), 29 and 30 (pp. 41-50) in the Folio. There are only minor, non-

Poetum Scotorum mentions the latter's piety, eloquence and intellect, and medical knowledge; the joint epitaph for Arbuthnot and Thomas Smeaton contained in same collection the praises both men for the light they brought to the reformist cause. Neither mentions Arbuthnot's skill as a poet. For editions, see McOmish and Reid, eds., Andrew Melville, *Epitaphium Alexandri Arbuthneti* (1583), www.dps.gla.ac.uk/delitiaie/display/?pid=d2_MeLA_050 [accessed: 26/02/2015], and Andrew Melville, *In Alexandrum Arbuthnetum et Thomam Smetonium, duo nostrae gentis lumina, ad Septentriones & Meridiem nuper extincta* (1583: "On Alexander Arbuthnot and Thomas Smeaton, two lights of our race in the North and South, recently extinguished"), www.dps.gla.ac.uk/delitiaie/display/?pid=d2_MeLA_051 [accessed: 26/02/2015].

²³ John Maitland also completed his education in France, although it is not known exactly where.

substantive, differences between the texts in each manuscript. For example, in the case of poem 37, the Quarto has just one problematic reading: line 16 of the text in the Quarto exhorts the reader to “rander to thy maker grace” while the Folio’s version reads “Calling on him [God] to grant the grace,” a more precise description of the proper relationship between God and the faithful soul. The Quarto’s reading seems to be a careless scribal echo of line 3 of the poem, “And rander to thy maker gloir.” This sort of error does not, therefore, hint at a different exemplar being available for the Quarto scribe. Poems 41 and 42 are extremely close to the versions in the Folio with the exception of non-substantive variants in word order or the use of adverbs or pronouns which do not alter the sense or metre. On the matter of attribution, though, the witnesses do not correspond so closely. One of the poems is unattributed in the Folio (Quarto poem 41 and Folio item 29), and another is attributed to Richard Maitland, rather than to Alexander Arbuthnot as it is in the Quarto (Quarto poem 37 and Folio item 79), a point which will be revisited below and discussed in more detail. The textual history of the other three poems which do not appear in the Folio (Quarto poems 35, 36 and 45) is even more shadowy: they survive only in the Quarto and in the partial copy made of it, the Drummond Manuscript.

This article now turns to the poems themselves, their place in the Maitland Quarto in particular, what they indicate about the literary networks which produced this family anthology, and the nascent tradition of Scottish devotional verse writing of a Protestant nature in the decades immediately following the Reformation Parliament. The first two poems in the Quarto attributed to Arbuthnot, are not, however, at first glance, the most obvious candidates for the authorship of a leading Protestant scholar. Poems 35 and 36 are on amatory themes. Nevertheless, they take a moral and didactic approach to their subject matter and would have had considerable appeal for a virtuous and godly audience. Furthermore, they are clearly composed by a poet of some erudition and literary skill. Poem 35 is described by its manuscript title as a “Contrapoyssoun” (a “counter poison” or antidote)²⁴ to another (as yet unidentified) poem which is said to be falsely entitled “the properteis of gud wemen”.²⁵ It is written in an

²⁴ The term is apparently specialised. Arbuthnot’s poem is the only citation given in *DOST*. The word seems to have had restricted medical usage in English texts of the mid to late sixteenth century. See *OED*, Counter-poison, n.

²⁵ Plentiful examples of misogynistic verse can be found, for example, in the Bannatyne Manuscript’s “Remeidis of Luve”. The so called “ballatis of the

intricate stanza ($abab^3c^4b^3d^4b^3$), its line lengths varying between trimeter and tetrameter, with internal rhyme in the fifth and seventh lines. It is tonally sophisticated, its narrator subtly shifting between laudatory rhetoric and more ambiguous argumentative strategies which at times seem to undermine this praise of women. On the one hand, therefore, women are said to be “The wysest thing of wit / That euer nature wrocht” (9-10) and “fair, sueit, plesand, trew, meik, constant” (95). On the other hand, there is condescension reminiscent of contemporary misogynistic discourses suggested by the account of women as bonny in bed, and obedient “lyik ane willie wand” (34, a willow branch, a pliable stick, a phrase used in a derogatory fashion of a weak individual)²⁶ and in need of proper rule by men (98-100). The second half of the poem is highly allusive, employing many biblical and classical references, albeit of a fairly standard kind for poems on the nature of women. However, once again, its catalogue of examples is not straight forward. The examples of two goddesses, Minerva and Ceres, renowned for wisdom and creativity, are adduced, and then the narrator turns to the negative examples of the biblical women Jezebel, Delilah and Herodias (known for cruelty, betrayal and incest). He then returns to paragons of feminine virtue and power, restarting the collection. The enumeration of good women begins by naming one endowed with a unique level of blessedness, the Virgin Mary. The concluding stanza of the poem is cautionary, acknowledging that there are “wemen vitious” (217) who can never be the subject of praise. At this point the poem echoes Dunbar’s *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*,²⁷ a work which survives in the Maitland Folio (pp. 81-96): in particular, the Widow’s characterisations of women as “dragounis baytht and dowis ane in dowbill forme” (263),²⁸ and the narrator’s concluding question as to which of the three women the reader

prayisis of wemen” also include items of ambiguous or ironic tone. However, I have not been able to find a poem with exactly the title and contents suggested by the Arbuthnot poem. On misogynistic verse in sixteenth-century Scottish manuscripts, see Evelyn S. Newlyn, “Images of Women in Sixteenth-Century Scottish Literary Manuscripts”, in Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle, eds., *Women in Scotland, c. 1100-c.1750* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 56-66.

²⁶ See *DOST*, Will(i)e, n. and Wand, n. The phrase is also usefully glossed in Bawcutt, ed., *Poems of William Dunbar*, II, p. 356.

²⁷ Quoting from the Maitland Folio text, p. 89. The poem is found on pp. 82-96.

²⁸ The quotations are from the Maitland Folio text; see Bawcutt, ed., *Poems of William Dunbar*.

would like as his wife, is recalled in the narrator's injunction in Arbuthnot's poem that "ilk man cheis him ane dow" (224). Thus the poem constructs a feminine identity which is partly centred on providing comfort and merriness for men, through beauty, sweetness, and fidelity, whilst also warning women against moral complacency and pride: as is common in the "querelle des femmes" tradition, the superlative example of the Virgin, "that blisssed bird Marie" (146), and her humility, is adduced to trump the significance of the existence of any wicked women. However, at its most empowering for the female readers of the Quarto, the poem produces examples of chastity (Lucretia), feminine eloquence (Cornelia), prophecy (Anna), sapience (Asphasia), prudence (Portia), courage (Judith), and exemplary leadership and teaching (Hester, Deborah). There is no way of being certain that poem 35 was composed especially for readers in the Maitland circle. Yet its rhetorical strategies, its closing reference to Dunbar, a poet of great significance in the Maitland household,²⁹ and its emphasis on female wisdom, creativity and articulacy would have made it appealing to Marie Maitland, daughter of Sir Richard Maitland, whose name appears on the title page of the manuscript. She is described in one poem in the Quarto (number 69)³⁰ as abundant, pure and learned – a combination of the qualities of Minerva and Ceres, goddesses of wisdom, plenitude and chastity:

Marie, I thocht, in this wod did appeir,
 Mait, land, and gold scho gave abundantlie; *food*
 Syne in hir hand ane flourishit trie did beir,
 Quhairin wes writtin, with letteris properlie,
 'This is in sing of trew virginitie ...' (41-5)

Here, as others have noted, Marie is associated, in the pun on her family name, with the provision of food ("Mait"), and landed and monetary wealth; and her association with virginity is interestingly signalled through the written text she is holding, which recalls references made to her in another poem in the Quarto (poem 85) as an apprentice poet who is

²⁹ See MacDonald, "Sir Richard Maitland and William Dunbar," pp. 135, 138.

³⁰ On this poem, see Sarah Dunnigan, "Undoing the Double Tress: Scotland, Early Modern Women's Writing, and the Location of Critical Desires," *Feminist Studies*, 29.2 (2003), 298-319; Evelyn S. Newlyn, "A Methodology for Reading Against the Culture: Anonymous Women Poets, and the Maitland Quarto Manuscript (c. 1586)," in Sarah M. Dunnigan, C. Marie Harker and Evelyn S. Newlyn, eds., *Women and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 89-103.

urged to emulate the achievements of Olimpia Morata, the Italian scholar, poet and Protestant convert.³¹

The next poem attributed to Arbuthnot in the Quarto, Poem 36, is a short lyric on the rewards of virtuous and reciprocated affection, “mutuall loue” (10), a theme explored in several Maitland Quarto texts (poems 49, 72 and 95, for example). Poem 45 is a complaint against circumstances that have disrupted the poet’s life. It is addressed to a “maistres” (25), (perhaps a *lapsus calami* for “maisters”?) who is apparently waiting in anticipation of the narrator’s further poetic production. She is warned to expect little: “luik na mair for onye frutt / Or onye worke to cum of my ingyne” (25-6). The poem continues with a meditation on the challenges facing the poet in times of social and moral disorder. Its narrator laments that languor, a troubled heart, and the distance from his friends (“thame ... / quha wes my onlie confort,” ll.15-16; “that gud cumpanie,” l.15) deprives him of the ability to write eloquently. But in addition to this, social decay, the “warldis wickednes” (14), is so overwhelming that it is no longer possible to compose poems of praise and celebration in support of friends, or poems of censure for his enemies:

My fais fall and freindis gud succes	<i>enemies</i>
Sumtyme my pen wes bessie till endyite;	
Of nobill men the valiant prowes	
Sumtyme my courage zairnit for to wryte;	<i>yearned</i>
The laud, honour, and the prayses greit	
Of thame, sumtyme, I wissed till advance,	
Quhom now, of neid, my hairt hes in dispyte,	
And quhome I wyit of this vnhappie chance. (17-24)	<i>blame</i>

The poem is a renunciation of the public duties of the poet, and a lament for the loss of poetic inspiration of a more personal kind. The compiler of the Quarto has placed it after a highly public and topical poem by John Maitland, an address to John Erskine, earl of Mar, regent of Scotland from 3 September 1571 to 28 October 1572, which praises Erskine’s personal qualities and pedigree, but also offers cautionary advice about his policies. Given the attempts at the chronological grouping of material evident in the work of the compiler of the Quarto,³² this positioning may

³¹ See Sarah M. Dunnigan, “Scottish Women Writers, c. 1560-1650,” in Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, eds., *A History of Scottish Women’s Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 15-43. On Morata see K. Stjerna, *Women of the Reformation* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 197-212.

³² Joanna M. Martin and Katherine A. McClune, “The Maitland Folio and Quarto Manuscripts in Context,” *Tudor Manuscripts, 1485-1603*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards,

suggest both a close link between John Maitland and Arbuthnot and something of the date of Arbuthnot's poem: the references to the world's decay and personal misery in his poem probably refers to the events of the civil war following the deposition of Mary Queen of Scots, a period which was extremely ruinous to Maitland family fortunes and reputations.

The other poems attributed to Arbuthnot in the Quarto (poems 37, 41 and 42) are complaints of the times, a genre favoured by other poets whose works are showcased in the family manuscripts, particularly Richard Maitland. However, like poem 45, they also turn from social complaint to introspection, using the narrator's own experience as a paradigm of spiritual and philosophical self scrutiny and improvement. These poems are clearly influenced by contemporary theological debates and provide evidence of Arbuthnot's wider influence on the Maitland circle of readers and poets, and of the Protestant sympathies of this network. As mentioned earlier, poem 42 is given the date of 1571 in the Folio, and it and poem 41 make unambiguous reference to the "ciuill weir" (23) of 1567-73. Both poems are spoken in the first person, composed in the same stanza (*ababbcC*),³³ are approximately the same length (189 and 182 lines respectively), and poem 42 is designed to provide a resolution to the complaints voiced in poem 41: they are grouped as a pair in both the Folio and Quarto. Poem 41 is a poem about the difficulty of behaving according to one's conscience in a society which is morally impoverished and politically unstable. The speaker insists on his "love" of the "trew religioun" (15) despite the prevalence of "atheisme and superstitioun" (17) around him: post-1560 such diction has definite Protestant connotations, referring to the practices and unscriptural teachings of the unreformed church.³⁴ He goes on to present his values, which include "larges" (50), "Chastitie" (57), "Temperance" (92), and "Iustice" (148), as at odds with those of contemporary society. Like many contemporary poems which consider the nature of friendship, his lament observes the difficulty of establishing the "leig of amitie" (163) with his fickle contemporaries.³⁵ He presents himself as a patient

English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700, 15 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 237-63.

³³ However, poem 42 abandons its refrain after line 84.

³⁴ See *DOST*, Atheisme, n.; Superstitio(u)n, n.

³⁵ For a discussion of Scottish "anti-aulic" satire in context, see Lyall, *Alexander Montgomerie*, 195-226 (as in note 10 above). The theme of trust and friendship is found in the poems of John Stewart of Baldynneis, and there are many examples

and obedient crown servant, and devoted to plain speech (“wordes plaine”, 71). Yet he complains that he is compelled to participate in practices he disapproves of—flattery, extravagance and so on—in order to survive at court.³⁶ At the end of the poem, the narrator reveals that despite his love of plain words, he passes his time “In poetrie” (169), perhaps both as a reader and practitioner. The penultimate stanza of the poem is a complaint about the lack of respect given to writers and scholars in contemporary Scotland: “Letteris ar lichleit [despised] in our natioun” (180). The narrator never proposes a resolution for the troubles he sees: the poem’s refrain throughout reiterates complaint—“Quhat mervell is thocht I murne and lament.” Like poem 45, then, poem 41 suggests, pessimistically, the impotence of reforming voices in an ungodly society.

To begin with, poem 42 is tonally rather similar, with the narrator lamenting contemporary ungodliness and injustice. However, at lines 89-91 its narrator abandons despair in the ways of an impious world for hope in God’s providential plan—what he refers to as the “deipis bothumles / Of Goddis secreit” (89-90). This change in direction comes close to the centre of the poem with a powerful “cry for mercy” (91) and the abandonment, at line 84, of the bewildered expression of the refrain, “O leving Lord this chainge is wonder nyce.” Here he distances himself from “ethnik outhouris, full of ignorance” (93) and embraces “Goddis nichtie providence” and accepts his “supreme sapience” (100-102).³⁷ The Augustinian doctrine of Providence, and related thinking about Providence and Predestination in the work of philosophers including

in the Maitland Quarto (see, e.g., poems 23, 49, 52 and 75). The Maitland Folio contains “The thochtis of men dois daylie chyng” (MF pp. 258-59), a version of Thomas Churchyard’s “Of the Fickle Faith of Men,” 1580.

³⁶ For a comparable account a narrator’s desire for a quiet, honest life, and godly life, despite the conduct of “warldlie wights to wickednes inclinid” (107) around him, see Hume’s account of “the experience of the authors youth” (subtitle), in his *Ane Epistle to Maister Gilbert Mont-creif* printed in his *Hymnes and Sacred Songs* (1599). For Hume’s poems, see Alexander Lawson, ed., *The Poems of Alexander Hume (?1557-1609)*, STS (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1902).

³⁷ Compare Alexander Hume’s rejection of “dissolute ethnike poets” (12-13) in his address “To the Scottish Youth” which opens his *Hymnes and Spiritual Songs*. See below for further analysis of Hume’s poems.

Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308),³⁸ was important to pre-Reformation and reformed traditions alike, but in this poem it is combined with discussion of “conscience” (134) and salvation through election (predestination to eternal life), in such a way as to generate a devotional language of distinctly Calvinist colouring.³⁹ For example, the narrator counsels his reader to abandon complaint and to have the conviction of the righteous:

Thocht God haue not in erthe appointit the
 To bruik worschip and honour with the laif, *enjoy, rest*
 ȝit he will and hes ordanit that thow be
 Ane quhome his sone the Lord Iesus sall saif.
 Quhat gretar gift, I pray the, can thow craif?
 With him he sall the na gud thing refuis:
 Desist, thairfoir, thy fortoun till accus. (169-75)

The stanza resounds with confidence in its use of the language of divine power (“appointit”, “ordanit”), and the separation of the “laif” (the rest) from the elect. The meaningless enjoyment of worldly honours is set against the gift of God’s eternal favour, in a pattern which is repeated frequently in texts in the Quarto which allude to the Maitlands’ political and personal losses during the civil war period.

The theme and devotional lexis of poem 42 provide additional evidence for the correctness of the Quarto attribution of poem 37, “Ceis hairt, and trowbill me no moir,” to Arbuthnot, rather than Maitland, as in the Folio. This poem counsels its reader to preserve a “conscience clein” (34), to accept tribulation, and to seek the consolations of studying scripture.⁴⁰ It demonstrates that the path to self knowledge lies in the rejection of worldly pleasure (“ane pest / quhilk drawis ȝou from the king of kingis,” 55-6) and suggests that personal trouble is “chastning” (57), teaching the sufferer to cleave to God, depend on Providence, and to patiently await heavenly joy because he is amongst the chosen. The reader is positioned as one sent by God to spend his time “Among the

³⁸ Alexander Brodie, *The Shadow of Scotus: Philosophy and Faith in Pre-Reformation Scotland* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 54-5.

³⁹ Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 124-5. For an account of the development of Calvin’s thinking on Providence and Predestination in the revisions to the *Institutes of Polity*, see Paul Helm, *Calvin at the Centre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 132-59.

⁴⁰ There are a number of analogues to this poem, including poem 47 in the Quarto. Also see “Go, hart, vnto the lampe of lycht,” in the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis*, ed. Mitchell, ed., 162-63 (as in note 19 above).

rest” (11) until called back to Him: he is imperfect, of course, with “blindit wit” (25) which cannot comprehend God’s wisdom. Yet, he is assured that despite the loss of “geir [and] land” he is promised heavenly gifts. The passage just quoted from poem 42 is closely paralleled in the closing stanza of poem 37:

Thocht God hes not appointit the
 To bruik honouris amang the laif *enjoy*
 zet hes ordanit that thow be
 Ane quhome his sone Iesus sall saif (MQ 37, 113–16).

Even more strikingly, one stanza of poem 42 (lines 155–161), concerning the repose of the faithful in God, is a close reworking of the opening stanza of poem 37: poem 42’s “Ceis the my Saull” becomes “Ceis hairt” in poem 37, its decasyllabic lines become octosyllables, and its seven-line stanza becomes an eight-line stanza. Apart from this the stanzas are almost identical. Given such evidence, the shared authorship of these poems seems incontrovertible, yet oddly there remained some uncertainty about poem 37’s authorship in family circles: the scribe of the Reidpeth Manuscript did not trust the Folio’s attribution of the poem to Maitland, and apparently did not know of its link to Arbuthnot, and so instead merely ascribed it to “sumbodie” (fol. 54v).

The connections between poems 37 and 42, particularly in their shared theological lexis, opens up the hitherto unexplored possibility that further poems in the Quarto may be by Arbuthnot or at least influenced by him. The lack of attribution may not necessarily be a hindrance to this. Implicit or unexpressed authorship in manuscripts of this date probably indicates that poems were clearly signed in the minds of a close readership, and it is evident from its contents that the Quarto was compiled for family and close friends.⁴¹

It seems very possible that Quarto poems 46 and 65 are candidates for Arbuthnot’s authorship, or at least show his influence and echo his concerns. Both poems suggest their author’s knowledge of Maitland family affairs, particularly during the early 1570s, and betray respect and affection for its members. Poem 46 is unattributed in both the Quarto and Folio, although the Folio’s witness is followed by a deleted and now illegible ascription (p. 348). The poem is a consolatory address to Richard Maitland, with allusion, through Old Testament analogy (especially to Tobit), to Maitland’s old age, failing health and family’s

⁴¹ Jason Powell, “Marginalia, Authorship and Editing in the Manuscripts of Thomas Wyatt’s Verse,” in Edwards, ed., *Tudor Manuscripts*, 1–40 (p. 32).

bereavement, a “loss, alace, so lairge of linage” (11). The loss of wise and virtuous children (two of Maitland’s sons predeceased him: Thomas had died in 1572, and William, Secretary Lethington, in 1573) and the survival of a “burdalene” (112, a lone child)⁴² unite Maitland with the likes of Tobit and with his own predecessor, “Renowned Richard” (105): “ȝour cairfull caice to his is so conforme” (129). Yet, as the narrator notes, Maitland’s loss of seven, rather than three sons, even surpasses the misery of his ancestor and his Old Testament precursor.⁴³ Nevertheless, the narrator points out that just as God comforted Job and Tobit and once again increased their lineage, so can Richard Maitland expect the comfort, “Peace, perfyte plesour and prosperitie” (140), which will allow him to “go to the grave / With better hairt” (135-36) and with blessings assured for his heir. The poem is almost certainly to be dated after 1573, and it clearly belongs to a period when Maitland’s health was failing: it concludes by repeating its permission for Maitland’s “gray heid” to “with glaidnes go to grave” (200).

Central to the religious perspectives of poem 46 is the positioning of Maitland as one of the “elect” (62) who reposes in the confidence of God’s providential plan. The narrator presents Maitland as his own exemplum of perfect wisdom and patience: “nane I find so fit / as perfyte patroun to ȝow to propone / As ȝe ȝourself...” (70-2). Like poems 37 and 42, poem 46 insists that God will “prove” (20) or test his faithful servants and allow them to participate in his passion by carrying their own “cairfull croce” (26): “Think it not baill bot blessing from above / And singe maist suir that ȝe ar not forsakin” (21-2). Thus poem 46 again alludes explicitly to the theology of election: though “lothsum is the lot of the elect / Bot thay at lenth with ioy salbe relevit” (54). And in considering the detail of this theology, poem 46 is stylistically similar to poem 42. Both poem 42 and 46 make striking use of the imagery of the cleansing or perfecting fire, echoing various Biblical texts including Revelations 3: 18 (“I counsel thee to bie of me golde tryed by the fyre, that thou maiest be made riche,” *Geneva Bible*, 1560), to demonstrate that for good men, tribulations are preparation for salvation and reawaken their commitment to God. Thus, in poem 42, the reader is instructed that,

In warld the prince of darknes hes impyire,	<i>governance</i>
And gud men thoillis tribulation;	<i>suffer</i>

⁴² See *DOST*, Birdalane, Burdalane, adj. and n.

⁴³ As already noted, the reference is surely to the deaths of Maitland’s sons: Thomas in 1572 and William in 1573.

Bot sic tryall lyik ane [clengeing] fyire *cleansing*
 Then to prepair to thair saluatioun,
 To walkin thame in thair vocatioun, *waken*
 And monische thame thair missis to amend, *admonish, sins*
 And to remember on the latter end (120-26).

The Quarto's text of the poem has substituted the Folio's reading of "clengeing" (cleansing) with "chainging" (transforming), a plausible reading, though one that does not so carefully echo biblical sources such as Numbers 31: 23.⁴⁴ In poem 46, the discussion of perfection through trial dwells longer on the analogy of the suffering individual being like a raw material melted in a furnace to produce something precious, but the verbal similarities are clear:

For as the mas, misforme of mudie mold,
 Be quelling dois fair qualiteis acquyre, *melting*
 And grethed in gleid growis glorious, gleting gold;
 Sa in afflixioun, as ane furneis fyire,
 We ar prepared be prove to the impyre
 Quhair God sic schreudis sall from his sanctis dissever *wicked ones*
 That hevin hes heir, and hence none other hyire *servant*
 In warldlie welth wrapit in woe for euer.

Quhair, as the chosin be correctioun,
 As in the fyire are fraimed to his feir,
 Bot euer, with so fatherlie affectioun,
 That in thair paine his pitie dois appear ... (33-44)

A particularly striking idea here is that of the individual being "chosin be correctioun," being one of those elected to be God's companion ("feir") through the experience of correction, reformation or restraint, albeit that this chastisement is tempered by divine benevolence. These ideas appeared in poem 37: here the "quhippis of the Lord" are said to be felt by the fallen man because "we daylie brak his law" (59-60), yet this "rigour" (28) is tempered by patience for those God loves, who are distinguished from "the wicked" (63). This stance is also extremely important to the devotional poetry of later sixteenth-century Scotland, as will be explored shortly.

Finally, poem 65 in the Quarto is also strongly reminiscent of the poems attributed to Arbuthnot in its style and treatment of devotional themes. Unlike the other poems discussed so far, the numerous imperfections of its unique copy in the Quarto gives evidence of its wider

⁴⁴ "Euen all that may abyde the fire, ye shal make it go through the fire, and it shal be cleane," *Geneva Bible*, 1560.

circulation, but suggests that the exemplar available to the Quarto scribe was clearly corrupt and difficult to read. It contains several evident errors including the reading “nor Phaetusa nor murning Phaeton” (30) when the Greek myth referred to clearly calls for ‘Phaetusa murning for Phaeton’; “tyrit” for “fyrie” (31); “berent” for “brent” (49, scorched); and “In wrape” for “Vnwrape” (65, reveal); “duill” for “duell” (125, dwell), and, even more confusingly, a reference in a hypermetric line to a “betfull [perhaps ‘baleful’] forrest” (148) which is not fully elucidated by the context.⁴⁵ Most striking of all is the momentary breakdown of the pattern of *vers enchainés* between 177 and 178.

The poem is a framed dream vision in which a distressed narrator dreams of a woman, “ane cative full of cair” (26) who is stricken by grief for a dead “freind” (95, 110), perhaps a companion or a kinsman, who is said to be the protector of justice and embodiment of faith and wisdom.⁴⁶ As Pinkerton suggested in *Ancient Scottish Poems*, this would be a fair description of the long-serving judge and former Keeper of the Great Seal and the Privy Seal, Sir Richard Maitland himself.⁴⁷ The grieving woman is a terrifying spectacle of “dolour” (47), withered by grief, her face corroded by her tears, and her voice roaring hoarsely at the sky.⁴⁸ The narrator encourages her complaint, and tries to comfort her, but acknowledges the impenetrability of what he beholds: since neither the scriptures nor pagan authorities can help him interpret his dream, he asks her to put her pain into words. The poem’s device of a supernatural encounter, in which a troubled figure offers herself as an exemplum, may

⁴⁵ Given that, in line 140, the weeping woman has fallen “doun flat vpon the ground for vo,” the line may originally have read “Into (i.e. in) thy bed full fest” or even “into thy bed for rest.” I owe this suggestion to Dr. Reid Baxter.

⁴⁶ See *DOST*, Frend(e), n.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Craigie, ed., *Maitland Quarto*, p. 290.

⁴⁸ A possible analogue for the lady is the vision of Dame Scotia that appears to the narrator in chapter 7 of *The Complaynt of Scotland* (1549). Scotia appears in ragged clothes, with her hair disordered, and in a desolate state, weeping and despairing of remedy for the barren lands she surveys. Scotia, however, carries a moral and didactic authority entirely absent from the protagonist of the Quarto poem. See A.M. Stewart, ed., *The Complaynt of Scotland*, STS, 4th ser., 11 (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1979). A likely successor to poem 65’s lady is the personified Kirk of James Melville’s *Black Bastell: A Lamentation in the Name of the Kirk of Scotland*, now known only in an abridged version (probably the work of David Calderwood), printed in Edinburgh in 1634 (STC, 2nd ed., item 17815).

recall a pre-Reformation legend known as *The Trental of Saint Gregory* in which the Pope's (or sometimes an unnamed priest's) mother returns from the dead to her son in a terrifying vision to confess to her sins and beg for intercession.⁴⁹ Any Scottish poet born sufficiently long before the Reformation of 1560 (when Arbuthnot, for example, was already 22) is very likely to have been familiar with this legend. Another well-known example of the trope (though less likely to have been known to a sixteenth-century poet) is found in *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn*, in which a hideous apparition of Guinevere's dead mother comes from purgatory to counsel her daughter.⁵⁰ In the Scottish poem under consideration here, however, it is by no means clear that the woman is returning from the dead: the narrator remarks that her "visage pale declarit hir to be schent" (51), but "schent" has the possible senses of "ruined" or "distressed," as well as "damned" (the verb is used in this sense in poem 37 at line 64).⁵¹ Although her body shows grotesque physical manifestations of grief, it is not clearly a body corrupted by death, and there is no mention of purgatory (which would not suit its post-Reformation origins) or any explicit mention of hell in the poem, although the "[baleful] forrest" where the woman is condemned to reside and the "cruell bandis of cair" which hold her in a "prisoun strang" have infernal connotations (123-24). Nevertheless, that the narrator has to turn away in horror from her final scream "that scho all tyme and houris did bewray" (156) is indicative of his awareness of her perpetual suffering. The figure remains condemned to desolation, like the unquiet spirits of the aforementioned analogues. Although she presents herself as a "mirroure" (126) there is no movement from exemplariness towards amelioration as there is in other Older Scots texts in which the distraught female complainant offers herself as a mirror or example of misfortune but also as a model for self-reform: this pattern is found in, for example, Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*,⁵² *The Laste Epistle of Creseyd to*

⁴⁹ See Richard Pfaff, "The English Devotion of St Gregory's Trental," *Speculum*, 49.1 (1974): 75-90.

⁵⁰ Ralph Hanna, ed., *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1974), 24-32; David N. Klausner, "Exempla and *The Awntyrs of Arthure*," *Medieval Studies*, 34 (1972): 307-25.

⁵¹ See *DOST*, Schent, v.

⁵² Denton Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), ll. 452-69.

Troyalus (sometimes attributed to William Fowler),⁵³ and Montgomerie's *A Ladyis Lamentatione*.⁵⁴ The female speaker of Quarto poem 65 is unable to come to terms with her misfortunes: in this she resembles the narrator of Arbuthnot's poem, MQ 41, who is unable to move beyond self-pity. She regards herself as predestined (l. 122) to sorrow. The narrator attempts to counsel her and the poem concludes with a stylistically adept exposition of the salvation of "the Lordis elect" (169), which has verbal similarities to both poems 37 and 42. The narrator also attempts an explanation of knotty details of election: the elect are those who "elect ane lyf efter his will" (170), and are obedient to divine laws, because God's will is truth.⁵⁵ Like poem 42, this section of poem 65 makes elaborate use of *vers enchainés* in its final stanzas to foreground teachings on the rewards of the faithful. Thus Poems 46 and 65 seem to hint at Arbuthnot's poems having had a wider influence and importance than manuscript attribution alone can confirm. Poem 65, however, partly due to its textual ambiguities, is the least coherent of this group of related texts in Quarto. It is strained in what it is trying to achieve: its teachings on death as the reward of sin, yet as a perfect rest for the elect, emerge strongly at its conclusion, yet it also acts to emphasise the great virtue of the lost friend, whose associations with wisdom and justice plausibly relate him to Richard Maitland or one of his sons. He deserves to be mourned fully, but the poem condemns unrestrained sorrow.

The devotional lexis of Arbuthnot's poems is present to some extent in other near contemporary and therefore immediately post-Reformation Scottish poetry, including that by the nobleman John Stewart of Baldynneis, whose poems survive in a single witness dated to the 1580s (Edinburgh, University Library, MS Advocates' MS 19.2.6). Stewart's allegorical vision, *Ane Schersing Ovt of Trew Felicitie*, follows the pilgrimage of the soul through an educative meeting with a number of allegorical figures representing the virtues. During this journey the soul reviews biblical history, Christ's teachings, and the Acts of the Apostles, and is brought to a spiritually renewing audience with "The famus fair

⁵³ Henry W. Meikle, ed., *The Works of William Fowler*, STS, new ser., 6 (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1914), 379-87.

⁵⁴ David Parkinson, ed., *The Poems of Alexander Montgomerie*, 2vols, STS, 4th ser., 28, 29 (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2000).

⁵⁵ On the Scottish understanding of this tenet of Calvinist doctrine, see David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 105-10; and on predestination, see Mullan, ch. 7.

felicitee” (stanza 235).⁵⁶ Crucial to the poem is a demonstration of the status of the poem’s intended reader, James VI, as a “Guid king” and “cheif elect” (stanza 264), already dedicated to charity, verity, constancy and justice. However, the narrator is reminded that because of God’s service to “his awne” the faithful must “nocht desdaine / At his guid plesour for to suufer paine” (stanza 58). He is to embrace the Christian life of labour as a purifying if “irksum voyage” (stanza 23): “As flamme of fyre dois mak the gould to scheine, / Brycht purifeit and plesand to the eine” (stanza 23). The reference to the cleansing fire recalls the prominence of this imagery in the poems attributed to or associated with Arbuthnot in the Maitland manuscripts. Nevertheless, Stewart’s use of explicitly denominational diction is sparing, perhaps because he is certain of James’s own commitment to Calvinism, albeit it combined with a cautious, and anti-Presbyterian, outlook in the 1580s fostered in response to the Ruthven Raid and by the king’s Chancellor, James Stewart, Earl of Arran, and his secretary, John Maitland of Thirlestane.⁵⁷

Arbuthnot’s position on the rewards awaiting fervent religious optimism for the elect, if not his stylistic elegance, is also much more apparent in the work of the his fellow- minister William Lauder, whose works circulated in print in Edinburgh during the early 1570s.⁵⁸ Lauder’s powerful opening to his treatise, *Ane Prettie Mirrou* (c. 1570, STC, 2nd ed., 15315.5), positions the audience in precise terms: “The chosin children of God, and sones elect, / Reiosis cheiflie to heir his blissit wourd” (13-14). Its spiritual advice polarises the “godlie” who patiently

⁵⁶ References are to Thomas Crockett, ed., *The Poems of John Stewart of Baldynneis*, STS, new ser., 5 (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1913). See also Kate McClune “The Poetry of John Stewart of Baldynneis (?1540-?1607)” (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 2006).

⁵⁷On the theological heterogeneity of James’s court see Lyall, *Alexander Montgomerie*, 282 (as in note 10 above); J. P. Croft, *King James* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 14-18; Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland. James V to James VII* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965 repr. 1978), 180-82, 188-96; David George Mullan, *Episcopacy in Scotland: The History of An Idea, 1560-1638* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 56-61.

⁵⁸ Fitzedward Hall and F. J. Furnivall, eds, *The Extant Poetical Works of William Lauder*, EETS (London: Early English Text Society, 1864-1870). “Reiois”: rejoices. On the Calvinist poetry of the Perthshire minister James Anderson (c. 1582), see Jamie Reid Baxter, “Elizabeth Melville, Calvinism and the Lyric Voice,” in David J. Parkinson, ed., *James VI and I, Literature and Scotland. Tides of Change, 1567-1625* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 151-72 (pp. 156-57).

sustain “Dew chaistiment for their Sin and offence” (21-2) and the “wekit” (23), those hypocrites who are led by the vices. *Ane Godlie Tractate or Mirroure* (c.1569, STC, 2nd ed., 15315) is similarly divided between expounding the punishments of the wicked and the “the riche rewaird / The godlie gettis” (27-8): the Godly are those who embrace God’s word and patiently endure “earthlie trubill” (138) in full knowledge of their innocence. Lauder’s work is explicitly anti-Catholic, and adduces plentiful biblical verses to illustrate his teachings on election. Though dogmatic and hortatory, however, *Ane Godlie Tractate* is also intended to provoke self-examination and reflection in the reader, particularly on the matter of his or her election:

To tell quho ar Eleckit or refusit,
 I can nocht saye; thairin hald me excusit;
 Can nane thair-of haue sik experience
 As man him self, grapand his awin conscience (185-88).

The language of election and reprobation is also found to a lesser degree in the work of the Catholic convert Alexander Montgomerie, whose upbringing as a Scottish Calvinist left deep traces,⁵⁹ and whose reading included continental Protestant writers such as Theodore Beza and Clement Marot. His “Iniquitie on eirth is so increst,” a sonnet complaint on the times, echoes Matthew 24:24’s theme of the deliverance of God’s “auin elect” (172) from the “lave” (9, the remainder, the unfaithful) and Satan’s deception.⁶⁰

While there is an immediate contemporary context for the devotional language and themes of Arbuthnot’s poems and the related material in the Maitland manuscripts, they also strikingly anticipate the concern with Elect status found in the Calvinistic verse that flourished in Scotland from the late 1590s far into the seventeenth century. Arbuthnot’s poetry comes from a time before the consequences of Arran’s ecclesiastical policy, including the “Black Acts” (1584), which extended the Crown’s authority over the Kirk, began to be strongly apparent. For this reason, perhaps, his verse would have appealed to those producing devotional poetry in a more oppressive climate. Such poetry includes that associated with Alexander Hume, minister of Logie, his friend Elizabeth Melville, Lady

⁵⁹ Mark Sweetnam, “Calvinism, Counter-Reformation and Conversion: Alexander Montgomerie’s Religious Poetry,” in Crawford Gribben and David George Mullan, eds., *Literature and the Scottish Reformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 143-60.

⁶⁰ Parkinson, ed., *Alexander Montgomerie*, p. 101.

Culross, and James Melville, to whose family Principal Arbuthnot had close connections.⁶¹ Hume's prose, such as his *Christian Precepts*, systematically sets out the five "infallible markes" (233) of his reader's election, but it is his verse that encourages greater introspection and reflection on these points. For example, "To His Sorrowfull Saull, Consolation," from *The Hymnes and Sacred Songs* (to which the *Christian Precepts* was appended, printed by Robert Waldegrave in 1599, STC 13942), contains a vision granted to the soul of the salvation of the Lord's "awin elect" (157) and the damnation of the wicked. In the "Thankes for the Deliverance of the Sicke" in the same collection, he reminds his reader of the "needefull whipping rod" (60) of sickness and suffering that a fatherly God uses to elicit penitential complaints from his children, repeating the notion found in Arbuthnot's poems, and the related material in the Quarto, that even God's chosen people have to suffer: "While to the glorie of the Lord, and ioy of his elect, / He fullie to their health restore, them whom he did deiect" (93-4). The *Christian Precepts* explicitly refers to the "correction" (238) that even the elect must accept for their sins, in diction which is reminiscent of Quarto poem 46. The dedicatee of Hume's work, Elizabeth Melville, Lady Culross, deals extensively with consolation and guidance for the "sillie Sancts" that are God's "awin elect" in *Ane Godlie Dreame* (printed by Henry Charteris in 1603).⁶² Jamie Reid Baxter also finds the theme of election to be prominent in a body of poetry in the Bruce Manuscript (Edinburgh, New College Library, MS Bruce 2) which he attributes to Elizabeth Melville.⁶³

As loyal supporters of regal authority, Sir Richard Maitland and his sons had a reputation for religious moderation rather than fiery godliness. Moreover, their networks included both Catholics, such as the imprisoned

⁶¹ See *A Spiritual Propine* and *A Morning Vision* printed by Waldegrave in 1598. On these texts see Sally Mapstone, "James Melville's Revisions to *A Spiritvall Propine* and *A Morning Vision*," in Parkinson, ed., *James VI and I*, pp. 173-92. On James Melville's work and the related religious verse tradition of the later sixteenth century, see Jamie Reid Baxter, "Liminary Verse: The Paratextual Poetry of Renaissance Scotland," *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 3 (2008): 70-94, especially pp. 82-85.

⁶² See Deanna Delmar Evans, "Holy Terror and Love Divine: The Passionate Voice in Elizabeth Melville's *Ane Godlie Dreame*," in Dunnigan, Harker and Newlyn, eds, *Women and the Feminine*, pp. 153-61.

⁶³ Reid Baxter, "Elizabeth Melville," 157-58.

Queen Mary and their kinsmen the Setons, and by extension, Montgomerie, and more committed Protestants, such as the Cockburn and Lauder families, to whom they were connected by marriage.⁶⁴ The presence of the Arbuthnot poems in the Maitland Quarto suggests an effort by the compiler to shape a confessional identity for the family which was unambiguously ‘godly.’ If Richard Maitland can be styled “the lordis elect” (62, poem 46) in one of the poems in his manuscript, then it is perhaps right to see him, and his immediate circle, as more receptive to radical Protestant thinking than has been hitherto recognised.⁶⁵ A number of poems in the Quarto, other than those by and associated with Arbuthnot, certainly suggest the Maitland family’s engagement with types of literature that became popular amongst Protestants at the Reformation such as *contrafactum* and psalm paraphrase.⁶⁶ Although Maitland generally avoid matters of doctrine in his verse, preferring critique and exhortation of both sides of the religious divide,⁶⁷ he has been identified as the author of a sober but compelling narrative poem on the Creation and Fall which is contained uniquely in the Bannatyne Manuscript (National Library of Scotland, Advocates’ MS 1.1.6): it is the only one of his attributed poems not to be found in the Quarto. The poem is entitled “Ane Ballat of the Creatioun of the Warld, Man, his Fall, and Redemptioun, maid to the tone of ‘The Bankis of Helecon’” (fols 12-14), and it is found amongst Bannatyne’s “ballatis of theologie.” Helena M. Shire described the poem as a “moralisation and harnessing of the dance-tune measure to godly usage.”⁶⁸ Maitland also composed a sacred parody of a secular poem associated with Henry VIII,

⁶⁴ On the connections between the Maitlands and Cockburns of Ormiston, a local protestant family see Emily Wingfield, “The Familial, Professional and Literary Contexts of Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, Manuscript 13/35,” *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts and Interpretation*, 71 (2012): 77-96.

⁶⁵ Maurice Lee, *John Maitland of Thirlestane and the Foundations of the Stewart Despotism in Scotland* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 156-57.

⁶⁶ Family ownership of a Psalter and bible was encouraged by protestant leaders; see Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁶⁷ For example, Poem 12 in the Quarto comments on the hypocrisy of reformers and Catholics alike and warns the Protestant faction against complacency.

⁶⁸ Helena Meenie Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry of the Court of Scotland under James VI* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 35.

“Pastyme with godlie companie.”⁶⁹ This poem, like other texts in the Quarto, engages with Protestant themes such as reading and owning the bible: “Gud is to luik in Goddis buik” (5), its narrator muses, pledging to turn to the Bible above “plesour vaine” (9), and to “reid or heir” (17) its words in the pursuit of “trew knowlege” (18). Poem 77 in the Quarto describes an elaborate book cover given as gift to a copy of the Bible by its pious “mistress” (11).⁷⁰ The Quarto also anthologises penitential lyrics (for example, poems 73 and 81), which draw extensively on the psalms. The Maitlands certainly had access to printed texts associated with specifically reformed thinking. The Maitland Folio contains one complete poem, and an excerpt of another, from the popular collection of Lutheran lyrics, *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*, which was printed in 1565, 1567 and 1578, and which, as already noted, Alexander Arbuthnot was involved in censuring.⁷¹ The Quarto also contains several poems which may show the influence of this collection.⁷²

That the amatory, ethical and devotional poems of Arbuthnot appear in the Quarto is testimony to the Maitlands’ interest in contemporary lyric writing and their concern to preserve the poems of their distinguished associates. The presence of his philosophical poems, which provide such clear evidence of their author’s theological convictions, surely also reflects their religious own concerns. These poems, and those related to them with their strong interest in conscience, providence and election, would have offered Maitland readers consolation and Protestant catechesis in a way that is highly appropriate to the various aims of the Maitland Quarto – a book of family commemoration and celebration, and an assertion of both the family’s “godly” credentials, and its connections with the prominent intellectuals and writers of the day. But Arbuthnot’s poems do not merely provide an insight into the literary and spiritual

⁶⁹ This is poem 24 in the Maitland Quarto, and is also contained in the Folio. See MacDonald, “Sir Richard Maitland and William Dunbar,” p. 145.

⁷⁰ Joanna Martin, “Women as Readers, Writers and Book Owners in Late Sixteenth-Century Scotland: The Maitland Quarto,” *The Bottle Imp*, 14 (2013): <http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/ScotLit/ASLS/SWE/TBI/TBIIssue14/Martin.html>.

⁷¹ The lyric, “Now man behald þis warldis vaniteis” (MF, p.236) also appears in the 1578 edition of *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*; cf. also Martin and McClune, “The Maitland Folio and Quarto Manuscripts in Context,” pp. 46-7.

⁷² See footnote 37 above. Poem 67, attributed to “Jacobus Rex”, appears in a variant version in *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*; see Mitchell, pp. 238-239 (as in note 19 above).

concerns of one family. Despite their small number and apparently restricted circulation, they constitute an eloquent and compelling witness to the consolidation of the practice of writing Calvinist verse in Jacobean Scotland.

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