A NEWLY DISCOVERED MANUSCRIPT FRAGMENT OF SIR DAVID LYNDSAY'S <u>THE TESTAMENT OF THE PAPYNGO</u>

The earliest known witness to Sir David Lyndsay's <u>The Testament and Complaynt of our Soverane Lordis Papyngo</u> (*c*. 1530) is an anglicised quarto edition published by the London printer John Byddell in 1538 (STC 15671). Two closely-related editions of the original Scots text – a quarto and octavo – subsequently appeared in 1558, printed at Rouen by Jean Petit or one of his immediate successors (STC 15673 and 15674). The layout and page-breaks of the 1558 quarto correspond to those of Byddell's 1538 edition, but because the 1538 print was anglicised, each of the editions must have derived its layout from a Scottish archetype with the same design. Douglas Hamer, who first studied the relationship between these prints, argued that this archetype was printed in Edinburgh by Thomas Davidson in December 1530, the date preserved in the double colophon of Byddell's 1538 edition.[1] One of Davidson's Edinburgh successors, John Scot, published a new edition of the poem in 1559 (STC 15675), and although this edition does not share the layout of the earlier quartos, Hamer argued that it was effectively a reprint of the lost 1530 edition, since John Scot seems to have inherited Thomas Davidson's back catalogue.[2] Scot's text (S) is free from the anglicisations of Byddell's text (B) and free from the errors introduced by the compositors at Rouen (P and P^8), so it has thus been taken as the best witness to the 1530 edition, and has been used as the base text for modern editions of the poem.[3]

---

[1] See Douglas Hamer, 'The Bibliography of Sir David Lindsay (1490-1555)', <u>The Library</u>, 4th ser., x (1929), 1-42.

[2] See Hamer, 'The Bibliography of Sir David Lindsay', 3-4.

[3] These editions are <u>The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount 1490-1555</u>, ed. Douglas Hamer, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1931-36); and <u>Sir David Lyndsay: Selected Poems</u>, ed. Janet Hadley Williams (Glasgow, 2000). John Scot printed a further edition of the poem for Henry Charteris in 1568 (STC 15658), which corrects some of the typographical errors in S, while a scribal copy of several of Lyndsay's poems survives in Edinburgh University Library, MS Dk. 7. 49. The Lyndsay poems in the manuscript were copied between *c*. 1563-66 by David Anderson of Aberdeen, and are derived from printed editions. See Hamer (ed.), <u>Works of Sir David Lindsay</u>, IV, 8-11. The earlier part of the manuscript is a copy of Gavin Douglas's <u>Eneados</u>, transcribed by John Elphynstoun before 1527.

There is, however, a manuscript fragment of <u>The Testament of the Papyngo</u> that has not previously been recorded. The first four lines of Lyndsay's satire are to be found on the rear fly-leaf of the Protocol Book of James Foulis (National Records of Scotland, B48/1/3), a paper quarto of 77 leaves (185 x 268 mm). The manuscript contains notarial instruments relating to Linlithgow between 1546 and 1553, and is one of nearly a hundred pre-Reformation protocol books now housed at the National Records of Scotland (formerly the Scottish Record Office). The manuscript was edited for the Scottish Record Society in 1927 by James Beveridge and James Russell,[4] but the editors did not record the contents of the verso of the rear fly-leaf. When turned upside-down, the page reveals several pen-trials and inscriptions in a selection of sixteenth-century hands. The words 'gud begyni*n*g makis sua þe ending', a common proverb, are written twice in an engrossed secretary hand,[5] along with the words 'Om*n*e gadderum'. The inscription 'Liber Rogary Vodde' is written out twice in a decorative secretary hand.[6] In a smaller cursive hand are the words 'dum sumus in mu', presumably the beginning of the Latin proverb 'Dum sumus in mundo | Vivamus corde iocundo' ('While we are in the world | Let us live with a merry heart'). Amongst these inscriptions, two sloping lines of verse are written in a brown ink (Fig. 1). Because the lines have been smeared, if not partially crossed out, the end of the second line is all but illegible:

> Suppois I had i*ngy*n and gelicall with sapiens sup*er* s<a*lo*>monicarll
> I not q*uha*t mat*er* to put in memory y' poetis [   ][7]

---

[4] <u>Protocol Books of James Foulis (1546-1553) and Nicol Thounis (1559-1564)</u>, ed. James Beveridge and James Russell (Edinburgh, 1927).
[5] See Morris Palmer Tilley, <u>A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</u> (Ann Arbor, 1950), B259. See also <u>Digital Index of Middle English Verse</u>, <https://www.dimev.net>, 53: 'A good beginning | Maketh a good ending'.
[6] The identity of this owner is unclear. One possible candidate is Roger Wood, the son of David Wood of Craig, Comptroller of Scotland from 1538-1543. See, for instance, <u>The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland,</u> ed. John Stuart et al., 23 vols (Edinburgh, 1878–1908), XX, 445 (dated 1573). But there is no plausible reason why the Protocol Book of James Foulis (d. 1560) should be connected with him. An act of 1567 required protocol books to be surrendered to the magistrates of a burgh upon the death of a notary. See entry 1567/12/98 in <u>The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707,</u> ed. K.M. Brown et al (2007-20), <https://www.rps.ac.uk>.
[7] Letters that have been obscured through damage to the MS have been supplied in angle brackets (roman type where traces of the letter are discernible, italic where not). A presumed abbreviation mark in the penultimate word of my transcription has been indicated by an inverted comma. The reading of the word in question is uncertain: it appears to be a **y/þ** followed by an -*er* abbreviation (Scots -*air*), but the formation of this abbreviation mark is not

The lines are written in a current secretary hand that has several distinguishing characteristics. The **h** in 'had' begins with an upward stroke rather than a loop, and has a vertically descending shaft; there are thick loops on **d** ('had', 'and'); the tail on **g** curves into a distinctive oval shape ('i*ngy*n'); and long **s** is cursive between the bottom of the shaft and the rounded head, which loops downward to form the **a** in 'sapiens' and 's<a*lo*>monicarll'. The leftward pen movement in 'gelicall' produces a hairline effect, contrasting markedly with the thicker strokes. The sample is too small to be certain, but the hand does not immediately resemble that of James Foulis himself. His instruments do not feature the oval-shaped tail of **g** or the distinctive duct of 'gelicall', and he often favours a more slanted shaft for long **s**, with the head formed into a point.

The two lines of the fragment correspond to the first four lines of Lyndsay's <u>Testament of the Papyngo</u>, and when collated with the early printed editions, they reveal the following substantive variants:

> and gelicall] Angelicall BSPP[8]
> sup*er*] super B more than SPP[8]
> to] *om*. BSPP[8]
> y'] The BSPP[8]
> *illeg.*] auld in style Heroycall BSPP[8]

Most of these variants suggest that the scribe is somewhat unreliable. Instead of reading 'Ingyne Angelicall', the manuscript reads 'i*ngy*n and gelicall', with a clear gap between the latter two words. This error seems to be consistent with a mishearing rather than a misreading, and suggests that the lines may have been written from memory. A faulty memory may also account for the fact that the concluding words of the fragment do not seem to resemble the words 'auld in style Heroycall'; there is no evidence, for instance, of the long **s** that would have begun the

---

consistent with the -*er* abbreviation for mat*er* in the same line. Because the printed texts all read 'the', it is possible that the scribe intended to write a superscript **e**.

word 'style'. Indeed, the scribe's grasp of Lyndsay's fourth line is unreliable for a further reason: by presenting the line as the conclusion of a stand-alone distich, he has ignored the fact that the fourth line of Lyndsay's opening stanza in fact begins a new sentence. The scribe also includes the word 'to' in the line 'I not q*uha*t mat*er* to put in memory', whereas all surviving prints feature an elliptical infinitive: 'I not quhat mater put in memorie'. Although the manuscript's extra-metrical 'to' does create a metrical pattern elsewhere favoured by Lyndsay,[8] it is more likely that the variant is again owing to the scribe.

The most surprising variant, however, is 'sup*er* s<a*lo*>monicarll', which differs markedly from SPP[8] ('more than Salomonicall') but which agrees with B ('super salomonicall'). Regardless of the manuscript's scribal idiosyncrasies, this variant proves that the lines could not have been copied, remembered, or misremembered from any of the surviving Scottish or continental prints. Two scenarios may thus account for the 'super' reading: either the scribe had access to Byddell's anglicised edition of 1538, or he had access to an earlier Scottish text of the opening lines, which B alone has preserved. The circumstantial evidence of the fragment's Linlithgow provenance and Scottish orthography ('Suppois', 'q*uha*t') cannot definitively rule out contact with the English edition; indeed, if writing from memory, a Scottish scribe would naturally de-anglicise the text's orthography. But the theory of a Byddell-derived manuscript fragment would only be necessary if 'super salomonicall' were clearly an error brought about by Byddell's process of anglicisation. Even without the evidence of the fragment, however, B's 'super salomonicall' would seem to be the correct reading. The sixteenth-century currency of this construction is shown by two phrases in John Harvey's <u>A discoursiue probleme concerning prophesies</u> (1588): 'Superplatonicall Intelligence' and 'Superaristotelicall intendiment'.[9] The polysyllabic usage is also consistent with Lyndsay's fondness for compound

---

[8] Compare <u>The Dreme of Schir Dauid Lyndesay</u>: 'This sempyll mater, for laik of Eloquence' (52); 'Sic subtell mater I man on neid lat be' (544).
[9] Cited in <u>OED</u>, 'super-', prefix 2c.

adjectives: in a similar vein to 'sapience super salomonicall' (B), he refers to Solomon's 'superexcelland Sapience' in <u>Ane Dialog betuix Experience and Ane Courteour</u> (line 5019). What is more, for Byddell to change an otherwise inconspicuous phrase like 'more than' into the Latinate 'super' would be entirely at odds with his editorial practice. The London printer sought to make Lyndsay's poem more accessible to an English audience by anglicising Scottish forms like 'quhat' ('what'), 'Quhydder' ('Whether'), or 'heych' ('hie'), and by rephrasing unusual idioms into plainer English versions: 'rang nocht in to the eird' (489) thus becomes 'raygned not in erd', while the French tag 'vailȝe quod vailȝe' (161) becomes 'chaunce what be chaunce me'.[10] Although it would have been comprehensible for Byddell to have changed 'super' into the plainer 'more than', he would not plausibly have done the reverse.

The most likely scenario is that 'super' is in fact the correct reading, and that the Linlithgow fragment preserves it independently of Byddell's edition. In order to understand how B could have preserved a more accurate reading of Lyndsay's second line, it is necessary to revisit some the editorial assumptions that have previously served to marginalise the textual value of the London edition. In 1929, Douglas Hamer argued that B and P were derived from the same Scottish archetype, and that S was a reformatted reprint of that archetype. Hamer was thus able to correct some of the 'foolish errors' that appeared in the typesetting of S using the alternative texts of P or P^8.[11] He was also able to disregard B entirely, since any accurate readings that might have survived the anglicisation process could be found in a more reliable Scottish form in P or P^8. Following Hamer, Janet Hadley Williams agreed that 'B and P appear to have used the same (now lost) exemplar' but that the anglicised text of B makes it 'less useful' to an editor.[12]

---

[10] This phrase, reading 'quod' instead of 'que', is itself a corruption of the French. See <u>DOST</u>, <https://dsl.ac.uk>, 'Va(i)lȝe, Vail(l', v. 1b.
[11] Hamer, 'The Bibliography of Sir David Lindsay', 11.
[12] Hadley Williams (ed.), <u>Sir David Lyndsay: Selected Poems</u>, 238.

There are, however, several points in the text that cast doubt on Hamer's theory. In a number of cases, B seems to provide readings that could not plausibly have arisen from Byddell's process of anglicisation. When the Papyngo is praising the Dominican priory at Sciennes, for instance, she says that the nuns will remain in a state of perfection as long as they are 'Unthrall to ryches, or to pouertie' (960). The wording of this line is the same in SPP[8], but at this point in the narrative it does not make sense for the nuns to be resistant to 'pouertie'. In Lyndsay's allegory, the church had formerly been married to the figure of Poverty, but is now married to Dame Property, whose daughters Riches and Sensuality dominate clerical life. When Lady Chastity finds refuge at Sciennes, she is reunited with her mother, Poverty, and her sister, Devotion. From the safety of the convent, these personifications are able to withstand the allegorical attacks of Property, Riches, and Sensuality. In this context, B clearly provides the correct reading when it describes the nuns as needing to be 'Unthrall to ryches or to properte' rather than 'pouertie'. Indeed, it is clear from the raven's gruff response that the Papyngo has impugned Riches and Property by name: 'Thow rauis vnrockit, the rauin said, be the rude, | So to reproue ryches or propertie' (969-70). It is unlikely that Byddell himself corrected 'pouertie' to 'properte' at line 960, not least since all subsequent editors and commentators have overlooked the error. There is another variant a few lines later that suggests Byddell was indeed preserving correct readings rather than correcting his exemplar. When the raven again insults the Papyngo, the text in SPP[8] is substantially the same:

> Than said the Rauin one replycatioun,
> Syne said; thy reasone is nocht worth ane myte
> (976-77)

Douglas Hamer (following David Laing and George Chalmers) emended 'said' at line 976 to 'laid',[13] but the word 'replycatioun' invariably collocates with 'make' rather than 'lay',[14] so once again, B provides what is clearly the preferable reading: 'Than made the rauen a replicacion'.

Two other variants further support B's claim to independent authority. In SPP[8], the character of the *gled* introduces himself as a 'holy freir' (669), while B has the more distinctive 'cordilere', a term for a Franciscan friar that refers to the knotted cord circling the friar's waist. This term was comparatively rare in Middle English: only two quotations are given in *MED*, and in each case, the OF *cordeler* is being used as a loan-word in an English translation of a French text (fragment C of The Romaunt of the Rose and John Lydgate's Dance of Death). But *DOST* shows that the term was more widely attested in Older Scots sources, and Lyndsay himself uses it twice in his other works.[15] Byddell's editorial standpoint is again significant: although he might plausibly have changed 'cordilere' to the more straightforward 'holy freir', it is unlikely that he would have done the reverse.[16] The same is true for another variant, found in the Papyngo's attack on scurrilous courtiers. In SPP[8], the dying parrot laments the influence at court of 'Blasphematours, beggaris, and commoun bardis' (390), whereas B reads 'Blasphematours braggars and common bardes'. Before 1530, the more pointed insult 'braggars' is chiefly recorded in alliterative collocations, and here resembles Dunbar's outburst against 'Bostaris, braggaris, and barganeris'.[17] Indeed, it makes more rhetorical sense for the

---

[13] See Hamer (ed.), Works of Sir David Lindsay, III, 109. Hamer's notes to the poem appeared in 1934, three years after the text, and as such, several of his emendations (including 'laid') are recorded at III, 64 rather than being included in the published text. Hadley Williams avoids making an emendation by using elaborate punctuation: '"Than," said the ravin, "one replycatioun."'

[14] MED, 'replicacioun', n. 1.

[15] Ane Dialog, 5685; Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis, 2616. See John Skelton's Howe the Douty Duke of Albany, line 375, in The Complete English Poems of John Skelton, ed. John Scattergood, rev. edn (Liverpool, 2014).

[16] The obvious satirical context precludes the possiblity that Byddell wanted to avoid using the phrase 'holy freir' in Reformation England. Indeed, it is more likely that 'cordilere' was at some point changed to 'holy freir' to make the target of the satire even more obvious.

[17] William Dunbar, *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, 2 vols (Glasgow, 1999), I, 150.

Papyngo to excoriate 'braggars' rather than 'beggaris', since she is attacking those who vie for influence at court rather than those who seek charity. Line 1015 in <u>The Testament of the Papyngo</u> confirms that the pairing of 'braggars' and 'bardes' is authorial:

> Allace, that euer one braggar, or ane barde,
> Ane hure maister, or commoun hasarture,
> Sulde in the kirk get ony kynde of cure.
> (1015-17)

Once again, although Byddell might plausibly have changed 'braggars' to 'beggaris', he is unlikely to have done the reverse.

When taken together, these variants suggest that Byddell was working from an exemplar that contained a small number of better readings than the exemplar that was used for SPP[8].[18] This reassessment of B's textual status helps to explain how the Protocol Book of James Foulis could have preserved the reading 'sup*er* s<a*lo*>monicarll' without being derived from B. Douglas Hamer's theory of a single lost edition of 1530 must thus be slightly modified. The exemplar of B is still likely to be the lost Scottish edition of 1530, since Byddell preserves the date of the earlier edition in his double colophon. Because B and P still share an identical format, the exemplar of S, P, and P[8] must have been a lost reprint of the 1530 edition, produced at some point between 1530 and 1558. This reprint is likely to have introduced the 'properte'/'pouerte' error, the 'made'/'said' error, and is likely to have changed 'braggars' to 'beggaris', 'cordilere' to 'holy freir', and 'super' to 'more than'. It may also have introduced some of the minor typographical errors shared by SPP[8] but which are absent from B.[19] Although Byddell's edition remains highly unreliable, it nevertheless seems to be an independent witness to Lyndsay's

---

[18] That SPP[8] used the same exemplar is strongly suggested by the shared typographical errors that appear at lines 379, 409, 957, and 1061. Unlike the other variants discussed, these errors might plausibly have been corrected by Byddell when the relevant lines were being anglicised.
[19] See above, note 18.

satire.[20] The same is true of the manuscript fragment in the Protocol Book of James Foulis.

Although the fragment features a number of scribal idiosyncrasies, the available evidence

suggests that the lines derive from an early Scottish text of the poem, possibly the lost edition

of 1530, or a lost manuscript tradition.

The fragment's Linlithgow provenance is also suggestive. Lyndsay refers to

Linlithgow several times in his poetry, most memorably in The Testament of the Papyngo itself,

when the dying parrot bids farewell to the landmarks of Scotland:

> Adew, Lythquo; quhose palyce of plesance
> Mycht be one patrone in Portingall or France.
> (638-39)[21]

Lyndsay spent time at Linlithgow Palace in his role as usher to the infant James V, and he was

reputedly present in 1513 when a robed figure appeared to James IV, warning him against going

to war.[22] Most notably, there is strong evidence that an early version of Lyndsay's Ane Satyre

of the Thrie Estaitis was performed for James V and Mary of Guise at Linlithgow in 1540.[23]

The earliest instruments in James Foulis's Protocol Book date from 1546, six years after this

performance, and the entries conclude in 1553, two years before the death of Lyndsay. It is

difficult to know when exactly the lines of Lyndsay's poem were copied onto the rear fly-leaf

of the protocol book. But if they date from the period when the manuscript was in regular use

---

[20] It can thus be compared to the text of Robert Henryson's Testament of Cresseid in William Thynne's 1532 edition of Chaucer's works, which preserves a small number of better readings in spite of being heavily anglicised. See The Poems of Robert Henryson, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford, 1981), xciv-xcv, ci-cii.

[21] Further references to Linlithgow appear in The Complaynt of Schir Dauid Lindesay, 243, 356; and The Tragedie of the Cardinall, 164.

[22] See J. K. McGinley, 'Lyndsay [Lindsay], Sir David (c. 1486–1555)', ODNB, 2004; online edn, 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.

[23] See Hamer (ed.), Works of Sir David Lindsay, III, 109. This association led to a revival of Lyndsay's play being staged in the grounds of Linlithgow Castle in June 2013. See Greg Walker, 'Reflections on Staging Sir David Lyndsay's Satire of the Three Estates at Linlithgow Palace, June 2013', Scottish Literary Review, v (2013), 1-22.

(1546-53), then they are the only known manuscript witness of Lyndsay's poetry to survive
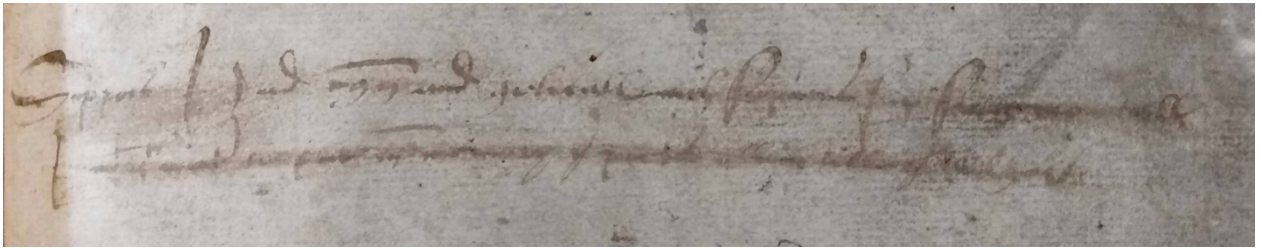
from the author's own lifetime.[24]

Fig. 1 National Records of Scotland, B48/1/3, rear fly-leaf[v]