

# Translation and Cultural Convergence in Late Sixteenth-Century Scotland and France

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Auger, P 2019, Translation and Cultural Convergence in Late Sixteenth-Century Scotland and France. in TA Sowerby & J Craigwood (eds), *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*. Oxford University Press, pp. 115-28. <[#https://global.oup.com/academic/product/cultures-of-diplomacy-and-literary-writing-in-the-early-modern-world-9780198835691?cc=gb&lang=en">#](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/cultures-of-diplomacy-and-literary-writing-in-the-early-modern-world-9780198835691?cc=gb&lang=en)>

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## Chapter 7

# Translation and Cultural Convergence in Late Sixteenth-Century Scotland and Huguenot France

*Peter Auger*

### Introduction

The impact of French on Scots language and literature is well-known.<sup>1</sup> During the period of the Auld Alliance (c.1295–1560) French ideas, analogues, and parallels moulded Scottish literary culture, as seen in medieval romances and the works of Robert Henryson, Gavin Douglas, William Dunbar, and David Lyndsay among others.<sup>2</sup> Mary, Queen of Scots, who was ‘effectively a Frenchwoman by upbringing’, embodied the Franco-Scottish literary connection in the mid-sixteenth century. She was bilingual in French and English, and wrote poetry in French from when she was seventeen until the year of her death.<sup>3</sup> The celebrated scholar George Buchanan was similarly immersed in French culture. His ‘outlook and his humanist ideals were shaped [...] by his sojourns in Paris and Bordeaux’ and the Pléiade, a group of French poets whose major figures included Joachim Du Bellay and Pierre de Ronsard, was a nourishing milieu for his poetry.<sup>4</sup> Even once the religious and dynastic crises of the later sixteenth century had removed the mutual benefits of a continued political

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. *Concise Scots Dictionary* (Edinburgh, 1985), esp. p. xv and J. Derrick McClure, *Why Scots Matters* (Edinburgh, 1988; rev. ed. 1997), pp. 39–42.

<sup>2</sup> William Calin, *The Lily and the Thistle* (Toronto, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Julian Goodare, ‘Mary [Mary Stewart] (1542–1587), queen of Scots’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; *Bittersweet Within my Heart: The Collected Poems of Mary, Queen of Scots*, ed. Robin Bell (London, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> I. D. McFarlane, ‘George Buchanan and France’, in J. C. Ireson, I. D. McFarlane, and Garnet Rees (eds.), *Studies in French Literature Presented to H. W. Lawton* (Manchester, 1968), pp. 223 and 231.

alliance between Catholic France and Scotland, French writing still provided vital precedents for the cultural renaissance that James VI (Mary's son and Buchanan's tutee) encouraged at the Scottish Court in the final decades of the century.<sup>5</sup>

The historical proximity of two cultures like those of Scotland and France creates opportunities for closer cultural convergence at moments of political significance. The term 'cultural convergence' is used by scholars in International Relations and related disciplines to refer to the contested thesis that national cultures adapt to international cultural movements over time through processes such as globalization.<sup>6</sup> This essay is devoted to literary gestures towards such assimilation (distinct from evidence of actual, permanent convergence) that specifically achieved the diplomatic ends of expressing shared cultural identity and strengthening political ties. Poetry was a suitably prestigious cultural form in early modern Europe for proclaiming such solidarity through choice of subject matter and poetics, through reflections on current affairs that built common understanding between nations and through gift-offerings of poems to foreign partners. A good example of such uses from early modern Franco-Scottish poetic relations is Buchanan's response to the Duc de Guise re-capturing Calais from the English in January 1558 in his Latin laudatory verse 'Ad invictissimum Franciae Regem Henricum II post victos Caletes' ['To the unconquered King Henry II of France after his victory at Calais'], a work that Philip Ford reads as evidence that at this time 'poetry was being used as an important strategic weapon in the fields both of international politics and of the domestic religious conflicts'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, R. D. S. Jack, 'Poetry under King James VI', in R. D. S. Jack (ed.), *History of Scottish Literature, Vol. 1* (Aberdeen, 1988), pp. 125–39.

<sup>6</sup> It is challenged, e.g., in Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Cosmopolitan Communications: Cultural Diversity in a Globalized World* (Cambridge, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Philip Ford, 'George Buchanan's Court Poetry and the Pléiade', *French Studies*, 34 (1980), 140.

As this essay will show, poetry still served a strategic function in subsequent decades once confessional divisions in France had hardened after the bloodshed of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572. Literary texts facilitated the ideological formation of international Protestantism by generating cultural capital that increased the movement's confidence and sense of identity. In particular, poetry could symbolize unity between the Protestant communities in Scotland and France, helping them discover a shared mentality, build personal friendships that created new opportunities for political communication, and promote their alliance abroad. Such poetic strategies for building a transnational community with a shared confessional identity are broadly similar to the methods for constructing 'forms of nationhood' that Richard Helgerson has described: both united literary form and content, identifying characteristic discursive and prosodic forms while appealing to a shared sense of the past.<sup>8</sup> Examining transnational rather than national communities leads to two significant shifts in emphasis, however. The first is that imitating and translating poetry must be foregrounded as a primary route for pursuing these aims across linguistic and national boundaries. The other, as José María Pérez Fernández stresses, is that these cultural interactions within and between individual courts could be driven by self-interest, fear, and aggression in face of a common enemy as well as more empathic and pacific intentions.<sup>9</sup> A good earlier example of an Anglo-French poetic exchange used to pursue hostile political agendas is the late-fifteenth century French humanist ambassador Robert Gaguin's interactions with poets at Henry VII's court.<sup>10</sup> In these ways poetry, especially poetry in translation, provided an arena for the international Protestant movement to deal with its allies and adversaries.

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood* (Chicago and London, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> See Pérez Fernández above pp. N–NN.

<sup>10</sup> David Carlson, 'Politicizing Tudor Court Literature: Gaguin's Embassy and Henry VII's Humanists' Response', *Studies in Philology* 85 (1988), 279–304.

Early modern translations written in diplomatic settings were a kind of oratorical act designed to make persuasive appeals in specific social, cultural, and political circumstances.<sup>11</sup> Translation held the expressive capacity for nuanced performance on the diplomatic stage: just as early modern diplomats could signal meaning indirectly through body language, gesture, costume, and other theatrical techniques, so too they could communicate in poems and translations through prosody, structure, diction, subject matter, rhetorical figures, and page layout. This essay identifies such signals at play in James VI's diplomatic-poetic performances of the poetry of Guillaume de Saluste Du Bartas and Du Bartas' reciprocal translations that affirmed the existence of a shared literary culture between the courts of James VI and the Huguenot leader Henri de Navarre (who would become Henri IV in 1589).

James and Du Bartas' literary friendship began when the Scottish King's translation of Du Bartas' *L'Uranie* (1574, 'Urania') appeared in his first collection, *Essayes of a Prentise* (1584). The poems that were subsequently written and exchanged in manuscript in the late 1580s and then printed in his second collection, *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises* (1591)—which included James's translation of Du Bartas' 'Les Furies' from *La Seconde Semaine* ['The Second Week'], his verse epic *The Lepanto*, and Du Bartas' translation of it, *La Lepanthe*—adopt a sophisticated repertoire of literary techniques that overtly bound Scots and French literature together. Through these translations the poets discovered a common voice and literary identity that they could promote to others. They were 'thick' translations that not

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<sup>11</sup> On translation and oratory, see Warren Boutcher, 'The Renaissance', in Peter France (ed.), *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation* (Oxford, 2000), p. 49. See also Raymond Cohen, *Theatre of Power: The Art of Diplomatic Signalling* (London, 1987).

only transferred the words and meanings of particular phrases across languages but also re-created the context of French Protestant suffering.<sup>12</sup>

Reading these translations as cultural diplomatic objects gives us new ways to understand how they created meaning when they were composed and published. The first section of this essay identifies some of the diplomatic gestures present in James and Du Bartas' literary encounters in texts which date from two significant years in Franco-Scottish political relations: 1587, when Du Bartas came to Scotland to discuss a possible marriage with Catherine de Bourbon, Henri de Navarre's sister, and the two poets exchanged poetry in manuscript; and 1591, a year after Du Bartas' death when the poems were printed in Edinburgh and La Rochelle as Protestant rulers were raising troops to assist Henri in northern France. The second section explores how the equally timely re-publication of versions of these texts in England (1603, 1604) and the Low Countries (1593, 1603) were opportunities for others to announce their participation in the same cause. In particular, the Dutch ambassador Adriaan Damman used his Latin translation of Du Bartas' most celebrated work, the creation epic *La Sepmaine* ['The Week'], to expand the community of readers around James and Du Bartas. Adopting a poetics of convergence allowed them to participate in the same cultural exchange and so strengthen the cultural foundations of international Protestantism and burnish James's credentials as the movement's protector at home and abroad.

## **I Translation and Diplomatic Signalling**

As a member of Henri de Navarre's court and one of Europe's leading poets after the international success of *La Sepmaine* (1578, a poem that retells the story of the Creation,

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<sup>12</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Thick Translation', in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader* (London and New York, 2000), pp. 331–43. See Pérez Fernández, pp. N–NN.

based on the account in the Book of Genesis and enriched with natural philosophical information) and the first part of its sequel *La Seconde Semaine* (1584, of which four parts were completed that narrate the earliest eras of world history from Adam to King David), Du Bartas was a worthy interlocutor with the King of Scotland. Du Bartas' poetry, like James's, had courtly origins. The idea for his first collection, *La Muse Chrestienne* (1574, 'The Christian Muse'), had come from Henri's mother, Jeanne d'Albret. After Jeanne died in 1572, Du Bartas found an alternative patroness for the poem in the new (Catholic) Queen of Navarre, Marguerite de Valois.<sup>13</sup> He continued to compose occasional poetry for Henri throughout his career, including 'Accueil de la Reine de Navarre' ['The Queen of Navarre's Welcome'], written when Catherine de Médicis and Marguerite visited Gascony in late 1578, and 'Cantique D'Yvry' ['Hymn of Ivry'], which celebrated Henry IV's decisive victory at Ivry in March 1590.<sup>14</sup>

James initiated their literary friendship by translating Du Bartas' *L'Uranie*, a poem in which the Christian muse Urania convinces the poet of the need for a renewal of scriptural verse. *L'Uranie* appears as the first item after the dedications in *Essayes of a Prentise*, making Du Bartas, whom James eulogizes as a 'deuine and Illuster Poëte' in his preface, the most prominent of the book's French voices. Du Bellay and Ronsard can also be heard in the

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<sup>13</sup> *The Works of Du Bartas*, ed. Urban Tigner Holmes, Jr. *et al*, 3 vols (Chapel Hill, 1935–40), vol. 1, pp. 10, 212–13, vol. 2, pp. 3–5; Katherine S. Maynard, 'The Faces of Judith: Nationhood and Patronage in *La Judit* of Guillaume Salluste du Bartas', *Romanic Review*, 100 (2009), 235–47.

<sup>14</sup> *Works of Du Bartas*, vol. 1, pp. 477–81, 490–505. A printing of the 'Cantique' in Lyon by Jean Tholosan dated 1594 is paired with a poem to the king celebrating his victory at Coutras in 1587, which may also be by Du Bartas but is not printed in Holmes' edition (I thank Una McIlvenna for drawing my attention to this text).

King's brief poetic treatise, *Reulis and Cautelis* ['Rules and Directions'].<sup>15</sup> Despite these French presences the collection's primary purpose was domestic. It promoted literary activity at the Scottish court to readers in the British Isles, who included English recipients of personalized copies such as William Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's closest advisor.<sup>16</sup> The *Essayes* also created an opening for Du Bartas to publicize James's support in France, which he apparently sought to do in July 1585 by arranging for *L'Uranie* to be printed with James's translation and Du Bartas' own translation of James's 'Schort Poem on Tyme'.<sup>17</sup>

From this informal engagement grew a larger cultural diplomatic initiative in the late 1580s. The clearest evidence of the involvement of other elite political figures in their continued literary exchange is the correspondence sent around the time of Du Bartas' visit to Scotland in the summer of 1587. James had sent an invitation to Du Bartas and Henri in early 1587. The French King wrote back from La Rochelle on 10 April accepting the request and alluding to 'autres partycularytés' to be mentioned to the King, i.e. negotiations for a marriage with Catherine.<sup>18</sup> Bringing one of France's most highly esteemed poets to Scotland

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<sup>15</sup> *Poems of James VI of Scotland*, ed. James Craigie (Edinburgh and London, 1955), vol. 1, pp. xx–xxv (xxiii).

Quotations from James's poetry and prose prefaces are from Craigie's edition and further page and line references are given in the main text.

<sup>16</sup> Sandra J. Bell, 'James VI's Cultural Policy', in Peter C. Herman (ed.), *Reading Monarch's Writing*, ed. (Tempe., Ariz., 2002), pp. 155–77; Sebastiaan Verweij, "'Booke, go thy wayes": The Publication, Reading, and Reception of James VI/I's Early Poetic Works', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 77 (2014), 115.

<sup>17</sup> *Works of Du Bartas*, vol. 1, pp. 20, 205–6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204. Henri Durel, 'Du Bartas, Jacques Ier et Francis Bacon', *Cahiers de l'Europe Classique & Néo-Latine*, 3 (1987), 75–110 (a facsimile of the letter is printed between 78 and 79); BL Add. MS 38846, fo. 18. Gilles Banderier, 'Le Séjour Écossais de Du Bartas: Une Lettre Inédite D'Henri de Navarre à Jacques VI', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 63 (2001), 307.



was a significant cultural diplomatic event in itself that was marked with due ceremony and courtesy. The diarist James Melville writes that Du Bartas

cam in Scotland to sie the King, of whome he was receavit according to his worthines, interteined honourable, and liberalie propyned [i.e. presented with gifts] and dismissed in the hervest [dismissed in the autumn], to his Majestie's grait praise, sa lange as the French tounge is used and understuid in the world.<sup>19</sup>

Melville gives an account of Du Bartas' excursion to St Andrews in which the bishops, led by Archbishop Patrick Adamson, prepared sermons and a banquet for the visitors. The French ambassador Courcelles reported that such largesse continued until the very end of the visit, when James 'gratefied Du Bartas at his departuer with a chaine of 1000<sup>v</sup> and as much in redie monie, made him knight, and accompanied him to the sea side, wher he made him promise to retourn againe'.<sup>20</sup> Reports survive from Henri III's secretary of state as well as from Scottish noblemen who wrote about the event in private.<sup>21</sup> Though the marriage never took place, James and Du Bartas remained in communication until the latter's death in July 1590. In his last letters, Du Bartas expressed his feeling of loss at being parted from James and regret that his country had not been as fortunate as Scotland was in its monarch.<sup>22</sup>

Poetry provided a reason for Du Bartas and James to keep writing to each other and talk about the common cultural ground on which they stood. It was probably on arrival in Scotland that James received an exclusive copy of the new Third and Fourth Days of *La*

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<sup>19</sup> *The Autobiography and Diary of Mr James Melvill*, ed. Robert Pitcairn (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 255.

<sup>20</sup> *Extract from the Despatches of M. Courcelles*, ed. Robert Bell (Edinburgh, 1828), p. 80.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80. Cited in Peter Auger, 'Du Bartas' Visit to England and Scotland in 1587', *Notes and Queries*, 59 (2012), 505–8, notes 3, 6, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Gilles Banderier, 'La Correspondence de Du Bartas', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 68 (2006), 122; *The Warrender Papers*, ed. by Annie I. Cameron, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1931–2), vol. 2, p. 96.

*Seconde Semaine* dedicated to him.<sup>23</sup> The two sections omitted from that manuscript, ‘Les Trophees’ (II.iv.1) and ‘La Magnificence’ (II.iv.2), were sent separately to James in 1589 and both contained references to Du Bartas’ happy visit to Scotland.<sup>24</sup> Such insertions, conscious of a Scottish readership (and some of which Melville annotated in his copy), announced his poetry as Protestant verse directed particularly towards Scotland as well to French and other Protestant readerships.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to these references in Du Bartas’ original verse, there are sustained gestures towards poetic convergence in James and Du Bartas’ imitations and translations of each other’s work, especially *Lepanto* and *Lepanthe*. James’ *Lepanto* is a thousand-line poem in the grand style that celebrates Don John of Austria’s triumph over the Ottomans at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The poem’s political intentions have been disputed. Peter Herman is one of several critics who detect ecumenical overtures to Catholic Spain in the poem’s subject matter, supposedly ‘a strategy for maintaining maximum diplomatic advantage while avoiding a firm commitment to either side’.<sup>26</sup> But the rhetorical thrust of James’s preface explicitly seeks to maintain diplomatic advantage by demonstrating solidarity with French Protestants alone, a reading advanced in recent work by Jamie Reid-Baxter and Astrid

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<sup>23</sup> BL, Royal MS 19 A XI.

<sup>24</sup> *Warrender Papers*, vol. 2, p. 9: II.iv.1.875-6, II.iv.2.1273-92.

<sup>25</sup> *Les Trophees* (British Library classmark C. 189 d. 8/1 and 2), B6v. On Melville and this copy, see Jamie Reid-Baxter, ‘*The Nynne Muses*, an unknown Renaissance sonnet sequence: John Dykes and the Gowrie Conspiracy of 1600’, in K. Dekker and A. A. MacDonald (eds.), *Royalty, Rhetoric and Reality* (Paris, 2005), pp. 197-218.

<sup>26</sup> Peter C. Herman, ‘“Best of Poets, Best of Kings”: King James VI and I and the Scene of Monarchic Verse’, in Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (eds.), *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I* (Detroit, 2002), p. 81. See also Robert Appelbaum, ‘War and Peace in *The Lepanto* of James VI and I’, *Modern Philology*, 97 (2000), 333–63.

Stilma.<sup>27</sup> In that preface James wrote that he had begun writing the poem in the same summer that the Treaty of Nemours ('the league') had been signed, which restricted the rights of Protestants in France:

The nature then of this Poëme is an argument, *à minore ad majus*, largely intreated by a Poetike comparison, being to the writing hereof mooued, by the stirring vppe of the league and cruell persecution of the Protestants in all countries, at the very first raging whereof, I compiled this Poëme, as the exhortation to the persecuted in the hinmost eight lines thereof doth plainly testifie, being both begun and ended in the same Summer, wherein the league was published in France. (p. 198)

In the previous sentences James denied that his epic poem was written 'in praise of a forraine Papist bastard', despite rumours based on copies that had already been allowed to circulate. Situating the poem in its specific historical moment of French Protestant oppression activated its diplomatic relevance.

It was appropriate that *Lepanto*'s chief historical source, François de Belleforest's translation of Pietro Bizzarri's historical account in *Cyprium Bellum* ['Cypriot War'], was French and that the poem has close parallels with James's translation of Du Bartas' 'The Furies' from *La Seconde Semaine*.<sup>28</sup> Though there is no conclusive proof that the translation

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<sup>27</sup> Jamie Reid-Baxter, "'Scotland will be the ending of all Empires'": Mr Thomas Murray (1564-1623) and King James VI and I', in Steve Boardman and Julian Goodare (eds.), *Kings, Lords and Men in Scotland and Britain: Essays in Honour of Jenny Wormald* (Edinburgh, 2014), p. 331; Astrid Stilma, *A King Translated* (Farnham, 2012), ch. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Pietro Bizzarri, *Histoire de la guerre*, trans. by François de Belleforest (Paris, 1573). The text is quoted extensively in Craigie (ed.), *Poems of James VI*, who discusses the dating of 'The Furies' translation on pp. xlviii–xlix.

of ‘The Furies’ was written before *Lepanto*, the translation is placed first in *Poeticall Exercises* and James refers to them as twinned works, identifying both in the preface to *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises* as the fruit of his ‘young and tender yeares’ (p. 98). ‘The Furies’ is introduced as ‘a viue mirror of this last and most decreeped age’ (p. 98) in which the poet describes the working of God’s providential wrath on earth through hunger, war, and sickness. A prefatory translation of the ‘Exord’ to the *La Seconde Semaine* (i.e. the opening of the first section, ‘Eden’) echoes Du Bartas’ invocation to the ‘mightie God’ (l. 1) and even repeats the dedication to Henri de Navarre (‘O SACRED Floure-delis’, line 33) that praises his military strength. James’s translation imitates the violence of the poem’s imagery and diction as, for example, when describing War’s arrival:

THE warre comes after, bruizing lawes,  
And bruizing maners all,  
Loue-tears, shed-blood, and burning Innes,  
And raizing euery wall. (lines 545–8)

*Lepanto* takes up the same providential perspective as ‘Les Furies’ and quietly brings Belleforest’s translated retelling into line with Du Bartas’ world-view, as the following three examples illustrate. When Belleforest recommends that a general should retreat in adverse circumstances, such as when running low on money or food (‘d’argent, ou de viures’), James instead takes the presence of two of the Furies, sickness and famine, as a divine omen that makes falling back advisable: ‘For sicknes sore or famine great | Then best is to abide’ (lines 227-8, cf. Craigie (ed.), p. 328). James also isolates the divine agency present at Lepanto when he truncates the list of the soldiers’ qualities in Don John’s speech to his soldiers (‘les richesses, l’honneur, la gloire, la liberté du pais, la foy, & religion Chrestienne’ [‘riches, honour, glory, liberty of peace, faith, and the Christian religion’]) to focus attention on ‘the glorie of God in earth’ (line 489, cf. Craigie (ed.), p. 331). Finally, public acts of

thanksgiving after the battle was won are re-located in James's telling away from Italian Catholic churches ('tous s'en allerent à l'Eglise') to the marketplace, in this way emphasizing the will of individual believers: 'At last the joyfull tidings came, | Which such a gladnes bred, | That Matrons graue, and Maids modest, | The Market place bespred' (lines 873-6, cf. Craigie (ed.), p. 334). The Choruses of the Venetians and the Angels that follow—the latter alluding to the 'erreur vaine' of transubstantiation, the Catholic belief in a 'God of bread' (line 986)—ensure that the reader does not miss the whole poem's Protestant orientation. And, as promised in the preface, the poem's conclusion (plausibly a later addition given James's fears about the poem's reception) 'declares fully my intention in the whole' to offer support and solidarity to his French Protestant counterparts:

Then though the Antichristian sect  
                     Against you do conjure,  
 He doth the bodie better loue  
                     Then shadow be ye sure:  
 Do ye resist with confidence,  
                     That God shall be your stay  
 And turne it to your comfort, and  
                     His glorie now and ay            (lines 1025–32)

This exhortation to 'resist with confidence' acknowledges Lepanto's significance as a common reference point for all Christians that transcended confessional divisions. In this telling it became a meditation on the salvation that will greet all 'Christians true' directed at French Protestant sufferers.

These touches to unite the ideologies of 'The Furies' and *Lepanto* have counterparts in James' form and rhetoric. Both poems are composed in rhymed fourteeners with line breaks after the eighth syllable that imitate Du Bartas' alexandrines (with medial caesura

after the sixth syllable). In the translation, James keeps the basic shape of Du Bartas' line: though individual periods in both poems can run on for many lines, each fourteener line and couplet most often contain a complete clause and only rarely do strong caesuras fall elsewhere in the line. This form encouraged a conservative method of translation, as James had advocated in his *Reulis and Cautelis*, that could retain the French caesuras while allowing an extra two syllables per line in translation to prevent the sense being trimmed. Both poems are printed with identical lineation, line numbering and use of running headers. Indeed, James's voices as translator and epic poet can be hard to distinguish:

O now inflame my furious Spreit,

That furiously I may

These Fyrues (mankinds plagues allace!)

With furious Pen display. (Translators Invocation, lines 9–12)

[I pray thee Father] To make thy holy Spreit my Muse,

And eik my pen inflame,

Aboue my skill to write this worke

To magnifie thy name (*Lepanto*, lines 21–4)

Later in the poems, evocations of howling employ a range of stylistic effects that are found in both throughout, including alliteration, asyndeton, repetition, vivid descriptions, and a climax at the end of the period:

Make murmuring, loudlie howle and bray,

And rummish fast and rore.

Such Pellmell dinnes, and ringing reards,

And tempests strange to heare. ('The Furies', lines 491–5)

The piteous plaints, the hideous howles,

The greeuous cries and mones,

Of millions wounded sundry waies,

But dying all at once (*Lepanto*, lines 625–8)

The words ‘bloodie’, ‘cruel’, and ‘horror’ are typical of shared items of vocabulary elsewhere in the two works. James makes a typically Bartasian digression when he compares warriors preparing for battle to wrights, smiths, glass-makers, painters, and other artisans getting ready for a working day (lines 431–40). Precision with factual detail is another common characteristic of ‘Les Furies’ (for example, in its description of leprosy, hydropsy, anorexia, and other diseases) and *Lepanto*, as in its accurate estimates of the numbers of troops at the battle (lines 285–9).<sup>29</sup> In these ways *Lepanto* was coded as a poem with structural, stylistic, and ideological principles identical to Du Bartas’ ‘Furies’.

It was fitting, then, that *Lepanto* should have become a French poem shortly afterwards when Du Bartas translated it as *La Lèpante*. In a prose preface to the reader Du Bartas praises James’s grandeur and admirable spirit (‘la grandeur, ains l’admirable esprit du Roy d’Escosse’), explains that he felt compelled (‘j’ay este contrainte’) to translate the poem into French, and excuses differences between the two texts that arose when James made further changes to the Scots poem after receiving the French version.<sup>30</sup> The translation begins with an original sixteen-line address to James that is printed on a separate page as the ‘Preface du Traducteur A L’Auteur’ [‘Preface from the Translator to the Author’] in the Edinburgh edition and as the opening lines of the poem in the La Rochelle edition printed in the same year. Often the effect of the translation is to hear Du Bartas writing poetry that sounds uncannily unlike Du Bartas. In the following couplet, for example, the pious

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<sup>29</sup> The figures are, as Craigie observes (pp. 330, 333), consistent with Belleforest and also agree with Ferrante Caracciolo’s *I commentarii delle guerre* (Florence, 1581).

<sup>30</sup> *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres* (Edinburgh, 1591), G4r. For comparisons between James and Du Bartas’ poems, see Craigie (ed.), *Poems of James VI*, vol. 1, pp. 283–9.

insistence that only the works of God are a suitable subject for poetry and the use of first-person pronouns and abstract nouns is typical of Du Bartas, but the lines are oddly prosaic, lacking the sense of wonder and might characteristic of his original poetry: ‘Je chante de grand Dieu la justice et bonté, | Un exploit de ses mains non encore chanté’ (lines 17-18; ‘I sing of great God the justice and goodness, | A deed of his hands never yet described in verse’). Du Bartas’ French often departs from the Scots in order to rewrite lines in a voice that adds rhetorical colour and strengthens the imagery, often in slightly different places:

This speech did so the Armie please,  
And so their minds did mooue,  
That clincks of Swordes, and rattle of Pikes,  
His speeches did approoue. (*Lepanto*, lines 553–6)

Le son enflambe-cœurs de ces motz heroïques,  
Est suivi quand et quand d’un branslement de piques,  
Du tin-tin des estocs, et d’une voix qui sort  
De tout l’ost sans ardeur, sans force, sans accord. (*Lepanthe*, lines 369–72)

‘Tin-tin’ for ‘clinks’ shows Du Bartas acknowledging their shared poetics by translating back into French prominent literary devices in the Scots that are themselves based on French. This occurs again shortly afterwards: ‘Et leur ton ton-tonant erre: & prompt, rompt le rond | Du plancher estoillé’ (lines 415–16), translating James’s intrusively alliterative and onomatopoeic (and, in these ways, Bartasian) ‘Like thunder rearding rumbling raue | With roares the highest Heauen’ (lines 621–2). Such self-conscious poetic effects evoke not just the crashing of thunder but poetic figures that each writer recognizes in the works of the other. The printed editions flag up this particular exchange with a marginal note recording that Du Bartas’ intention was to imitate the King’s onomatopoeia: ‘I’ay voulu icy imiter l’Onomatopœe de l’auteur’ (O1r, ‘I wanted here to imitate the author’s onomatopoeia’).



This moment marks the most blatant of the many gestures that James and Du Bartas made towards a poetics of convergence attesting to a single Protestant tradition of French and Scots divine poetry written in the grand style.

## II Forming a Protestant Literary Community

This marginal annotation was a strong visual marker of the poetic coalescence between the leading literary figures of Scotland and Huguenot France. It was timely to promote the congruence in the two editions of *La Lepanthe* printed in Edinburgh and La Rochelle in 1591 because an international coalition involving German princes, England, and Scotland was being gathered to provide support to Henri in northern France.<sup>31</sup> Printing editions in both nations helped to broadcast the literary unity between Navarre and Scotland widely beyond both courts and they were conceivably planned as a single publishing event to project James's support for international Protestantism in France, England, the Low Countries, and Germany.<sup>32</sup> Robert Waldegrave, the King's printer, must have been working under instruction when the *Poeticall Exercises* were printed early in 1591, probably before Jerome Haultin printed 'Les Trophees', 'La Magnificence', and *Lepanthe* together in La Rochelle (see Craigie, I, p. 282). Perhaps Haultin was too: Du Bartas could have given advice about the publication's timing around the time that the 'extraict du privilege du roy' ['extract from the King's privilege'] was completed in May 1590 (two months before the poet died). Haultin had received a copy of the poems when Du Bartas travelled through La Rochelle on his return from Scotland and knew to address the print edition to the King of Scotland.<sup>33</sup> The printer's

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<sup>31</sup> David Scott Gehring, *Anglo-German Relations and the Protestant Cause* (London, 2013), p. 133.

<sup>32</sup> For evidence that the *Poeticall Exercises* was sold at the Frankfurt Book Fair, see Roderick J. Lyall, 'The Marketing of James VI and I: Scotland, England and the Continental Book Trade', *Quaerendo*, 32 (2002), 211.

<sup>33</sup> *Les Trophees ou première partie du quatrième jour de la Sepmaine* (La Rochelle, 1591), a2r.

preface specifically recognizes the link between *Lepanto* and these poems as belonging to James, emphasized in having the address to the king at the ‘La Magnificence’ on the leaf preceding the start of Du Bartas’ translation of the same king’s epic poem. The three poems in Haultin’s publication serve as a French counterpart to *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises*.

New readers witnessing the collaboration between James and Du Bartas now had the creative resources to express their literary and diplomatic accord with Scotland and France too. Two Dutchmen took advantage of the opportunity around the time of the Spanish Blanks plot in late 1592 when the discovery of letters hinting at a conspiracy between Scotland and Catholic Spain gave the Low Countries reason to doubt how durable Scotland’s military support would be.<sup>34</sup> The Protestant minister Abraham Van der Myl produced a Dutch translation of James’ *Lepanto* that adopted similar strategies to Du Bartas in expressing solidarity with the Scottish King. As Astrid Stilma explains, *Den Slach van Lepanten* (1593) is described on the title-page as a poem by the King of Scotland and offers lofty tribute to James in a prefatory ode from the translator to James VI (‘Een Ode des Oversetters van Iacobo den Sesten, Coninck van Schotland’). This translation presents James as addressing the Dutch: ‘the Dutch translator’s message of comfort to European Protestants is presented as having been author(iz)ed by the King of Scotland’.<sup>35</sup> Van der Myl’s reading of the poem, guided in its content and style by Du Bartas’ French, amplified the ferocity of the battle, and ‘subtly but consistently emphasized God’s role in the outcome of the battle’ such that the translation is even more direct in its endorsement of the Protestant cause than the original poem was: ‘Van der Myl’s Protestant reading of the poem is a perfectly valid one that is supported by the text, but it was also a politically desirable reading that may well have been

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<sup>34</sup> Stilma, *A King Translated*, p. 122.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

prompted to some extent by a wish to believe that James would ultimately favour the Dutch.<sup>36</sup>

In emulating the poem's ferocious rhetoric and its providential outlook, the translation added a Dutch partner to James's Protestant literary coalition. Stilma notes that Van der Myl had friends in common with the other Dutch writer to participate in James and Du Bartas' project. Adriaan Damman was effectively a cultural attaché in Scotland, a scholar of classical languages who came to Edinburgh in 1589 and later became Ambassador of the States General of the Netherlands to Scotland.<sup>37</sup> He had composed Latin poems to celebrate James's marriage to Anne of Denmark, printed as *Schediasmata* (Edinburgh, 1590). The *Poeticall Exercises* printed in the following year contained Dutch representation through Damman's commendatory poem in Latin and Greek. Damman's work as cultural diplomat continued through his Latin translation of *La Sepmaine, Bartasias*, which survives in a print edition dated 1600 and a fair manuscript copy from 1596.<sup>38</sup> A full-page dedication in both texts indicates that the poem was sent as a gift to James and prefatory verses show that the translation was also read by an erudite group of Damman's acquaintances who received the poem and wrote in praise of it. These included readers in Scotland (Thomas Jack, John Johnstone), England (Robert Naunton), the Low Countries (Thomas Seget), and the Swiss Confederacy (Georg Rataller).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 123.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102, n. 66; Katrien A. L. Daemen-De Gelder, 'The Letters of Adriaan Damman (†1605), Dutch Ambassador at the Court of James VI and I', *Lias*, 31:2 (2004), 239–48.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 242-3. National Library of Scotland [NLS], MS Adv. 19.2.10.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, fos. 227v, 11r, 13r, 228r (Rataller's poem is absent); *Bartasias* (Edinburgh, 1600), B6r, B5v, B8r, B6v, B6r.

Evidence from the manuscript copy reveals other methods through which Damman made his translation converge with James and Du Bartas' poems. The first is that Damman made substantial corrections in the manuscript copy to produce a text closer to Du Bartas' French and to James's conservative principles of translation described in *Reulis and Cautelis*; gone in manuscript revisions and the printed edition are Damman's expansions on Du Bartas' French and his new verse arguments that introduce each section. Second, just as the *Poeticall Exercises* keyed the composition of *Lepanto* to a specific political incident, so Damman sought sympathy from his readers by situating his translation among the violence in Protestant Europe that he had experienced. A letter to the reader omitted in the print edition dates the translation's composition back to 1584, when the author sought comfort in translating Du Bartas while he was in Ghent as the Catholic forces of Alessandro Farnese, Regent of the Netherlands for Philip II of Spain, took control of the city. A passage inserted in the manuscript text, which survives in print, re-focuses the translation to 1596, when Damman lost his eldest son Theophilus, who was a captain who died defending the city of Hulst. In the prefatory letter inserted in the manuscript and later printed John Johnston offers condolences to Damman on his loss.<sup>40</sup> In these ways Damman re-purposed his translation so that through revision and dissemination he could make a Dutch contribution to a shared international Protestant culture.

James' accession to the English throne in 1603 led James's *Lepanto* to be published again to advertise the king's poetic talents and Protestant values. In that year *His Maiesties Lepanto, or, Heroicall Song* was re-printed in London as a new source for James's English subjects to learn about their monarch. In the same year in France, the final four parts of *Les Suites de la Seconde Semaine* ['The Continuation of the Second Week'] were printed with a

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<sup>40</sup> NLS MS Adv. 19.2.10, fos. 179a, 10r.

dedication to James. And in the Low Countries a new edition of *Den Slach van Lepanten* made reference to the King's new title. Finally, Thomas Murray's *Naupactiados* (1604), a Latin translation of *Lepanto*, also propagated a Scoto-French Protestant poetics that publicized James's concern for international Protestantism.<sup>41</sup> English readers before this time may have had the edition of 'Les Furies' listed in the Stationers' Register in 1589 to read, but more likely had to wait for copies of the *Poeticall Exercises* to travel to London. This happened rapidly enough for Gabriel Harvey to comment in *Pierces Supererogation* (1593, G4r) that James:

hath readd a most valorous Martial Lecture vnto himselfe in his owne  
victorious Lepanto, a short, but heroicall worke, in meeter, but royal meeter,  
fitt for a Dauids harpe. Lepanto, first the glory of Christendome against the  
Turke; and now the garland of a soueraine crowne.

Harvey, who also alludes to the King's translations from Du Bartas, had read the poem as a 'martial lecture', royal and divine poetry that celebrated the 'glory of Christendome' and 'the garland of a soueraine crowne' that projected James's support for international Protestantism abroad. The poem was still projecting these messages a decade after its composition.

## Conclusion

Yvonne Bellenger describes *Lepanto* as 'une épopée européenne [...] comme un condensé de l'idée européenne au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle' ['A European epic [...] like a digest of the European idea in the sixteenth century'].<sup>42</sup> It was an idea of a Protestant western Europe that the discursive forms of these poems and their paratexts produced and they did so at moments of particular

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<sup>41</sup> See Reid-Baxter, "'Scotland will be the ending of all Empires'".

<sup>42</sup> Yvonne Bellenger, 'Sur *La Lèpante* de Du Bartas', in David Cowling (ed.), *Conceptions of Europe in Renaissance France: Essays in Honour of Keith Cameron* (Amsterdam and New York, 2006), p. 116.

opportunity or threat. There is no easy way of knowing how much interest *Lepanto* and its translation may have aroused in the years between the publication of its editions, or how interest may have suffered once Henri de Navarre, who had become King of France in 1589, converted to Catholicism in 1593 for the sake of national unity. More could be learnt about the dynamics and processes of Franco-British poetic relations by comparing them with those of Italian-British interactions, for example through the activities of Giacomo Castelvetro, James's Italian tutor, to share intelligence and build contacts. The moments in a reception history discussed here, though individually significant, should not be assumed to connect into a continuous narrative of responses to these French and Scottish texts. This essay has emphasized poetic hints, signals, and gestures that were appropriate to specific moments in time and so probably had greatest impact when they were composed and published. There were wider ripples in contemporary culture: around the time that *Lepanto* was re-printed in 1603 there are other references to the Ottoman wars in the Mediterranean, most famously William Shakespeare's *Othello* (1604), which Emrys Jones has argued may respond to James's interest in relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. A parallel example is the *Merchant of Venice*, printed in 1600 at a time when Venice was particularly likely to have been in the popular consciousness due to negotiations with the English.<sup>43</sup>

As other essays in this collection show, poetry in translation offered early modern diplomatic actors a prestigious cultural form that enabled them to deploy a range of poetic and rhetorical strategies, many of them incidental and overt, to communicate solidarity with foreign partners and, indeed, hostility towards a common rival. This prestige—particularly the prestige of translated verse in the epic or grand style—gave such translations influence in shaping the sense of history and identity that individual, court-based language communities

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<sup>43</sup> Emrys Jones, "'Othello', 'Lepanto', and the Cyprus Wars', *Shakespeare Survey*, 21 (1968), 47–52.

possessed in relation to others. It also made translated poems durable literary monuments that honoured individual monarchs and other members of the nobility as well as the national or international movements they represented. Equally significant, however, was the immediate, practical benefit that literary translation provided as a reason for further communication and collaboration, beyond the business of current affairs, that could be publicized and imitated widely—poetry in translation was a topic for conversation as well as a mechanism for bringing cultures closer together. The transnational forces affecting early modern poetic translations were not just a matter of how foreign source material was used, but how authors made appeals to foreign readers. The composition and dissemination of such poetry was energized by its usefulness in the political sphere, and its signals and gestures were often all the more meaningful for being ephemeral.