**The ‘Lost’ Linlithgow Interlude of 1540**

Greg Walker

The relationship between the ‘lost’ interlude played in Linlithgow in 1540 (which is accessible only through the ‘notes’ and description sent to Thomas Cromwell by the English agent William Eure), and the full version of *The Thrie Estaitis* (which I will refer to here as the *Satire*), for which we have two surviving texts, has always been a matter for debate among scholars. Lyndsay’s first editor of the modern era, Douglas Hamer, argued in the 1930s that the 1540 Interlude was an earlier version of the *Satire* (Hamer, *Works*, II, pp. 1-6), but critics have not always agreed. Angus Calder thought the Interlude ‘had one or two features in common with the Satire’ (‘Introduction’ to Spence, p. vii), John MacQueen that the 1540 interlude ‘was only generally similar to the…[text] which has survived’ (p.135).[[1]](#footnote-1) Perhaps most powerfully, R.J. Lyall, while acknowledging that ‘the affinities between the interlude and *The Thrie Estaitis* are striking enough for the former to be widely accepted as the original version of the latter’, was nonetheless troubled by the ‘many differences’ he also saw between the two, and so on balance concluded with cautious pessimism about our ability to connect them.

Despite the many differences, Lindsay was most probably responsible for the Linlithgow interlude…and there are some points in the ‘Nootes’ at which we seem to see the very words of *The Thrie Estaitis* reflected in the abstract…[Yet] [w]hile it may well be that Lindsay wrote the Linlithgow interlude…the differences between the lost play and *The Thrie Estaitis* are so great that it would be extremely rash to associate any specific passage of the extant play with this earlier piece. (Lyall, ed., *The Thrie Estaitis*, pp, xi-xii)

What we set out to do in this part of the Staging the Scottish Renaissance Court project is to test the relationship between what we know about the Interlude with the later *Satire* carefully against the available evidence. Our conclusion is the perhaps rather ‘rash’ one that we can map very closely substantial parts of the 1552-4 text onto the ‘Notes’ of the 1540 interlude, revealing close and detailed continuities between both the political concerns and their suggested solutions in each. Thus it seems beyond reasonable doubt that Lindsay was the author of the Interlude as well as the *Satire*, and that the former is closely related to the latter.

But, as Lyall observed, there are also substantial differences between the two plays too, in terms both of their content and their dramatic form and structure, differences which reflect in great part the significant changes in the political and cultural shifts in Scotland between 1540 and 1552, and the very different conditions of performance of the two plays. The evidence, then, on balance, suggests that Lyndsay was determined to explore many of the same social and cultural problems in 1552-4 that he had identified in 1540, and to propose many of the same solutions to them, but that, as a result of changing circumstances, and a very different intended audience, he chose to pursue them through significantly different dramatic strategies and to rather different political ends. I shall say more about the similarities and differences in the rest of this paper. The evidence itself is presented in the document titled ‘The Interlude of 1540’, accessible elsewhere on this website, which sets out the description of the play in Eure’s letter and its ‘Notes’ against the relevant passages from the surviving text so that readers can judge the similarities for themselves.

What we know of the Interlude was that it was performed in the great hall at Linlithgow Palace on Epiphany night 1540, before an audience that included James V and his queen, Mary of Guise, their court, and a number of senior clergy. What also seems very likely is that the play was written to further James V’s ideals for an ‘Erasmian’ reform of the church – removing corruption and abuses from the body of the kirk, but leaving doctrine and liturgical practice roughly untouched. That is, the play was reformist but not protestant, it did not want to remove the Scottish church from obedience from Rome, nor to attack the principles of catholic belief. What it did was to launch a powerful attack upon church wealth, the practices of the church courts, church taxes and privileges, and the sexual activities of the supposedly celibate clergy, with a view to easing some of the financial burdens on the poor, cleaning up clerical morality, and putting practical pressure on the bishops to contribute more money to the crown, thus shifting the balance of power between king and church more in James’ favour.

This much is suggested by Eure’s letter, which claims that the play was sponsored by the king and council (‘they have had ane interlude played’, he writes, in a context in which ‘they’ must mean the king and council), and observes that as soon as the play ended, James, who must have known what was coming in advance, used it to berate the bishop of Glasgow and his peers in a stage managed piece of political grandstanding:

after the said interlude finished, the King of Scots did call upon the Bishop of Glasgow being Chancellor,[[2]](#footnote-2) and diverse other bishops, exhorting them to reform their factions/fashions and manners of living, saying that unless they so did, he would send six of the proudest of them unto his uncle of England, and, as those were ordered, so he would order all the rest that would not amend. And thereunto the Chancellor should answer, and say unto the King that one word of His Grace’s mouth should suffice them to be at commandment, and the King hastily and angrily answered that he would gladly bestow any words of his mouth that could amend them.

Much of this context is clear from the surviving documentary accounts of the interlude, which were written by the English agent, William Eure, to Thomas Cromwell, a few days after the performance. But there is also a good deal that the letter does not tell us, or is rather unclear about. William Eure’s task was (sadly for us), not to describe the dramatic culture of James V’s court, but rather to discover what he could about the position of James and his advisors regarding reform of the church (as Eure puts it ‘to know what mind the king and council of Scotland was inclined unto concerning the Bishop of Rome and for the reforming of the misusing of the spirituality of Scotland’). And it was in this context that his informant, Thomas Bellenden, told him about the performance of the Interlude, and thereby prompted him to seek out the eye-witness statement from the unnamed ‘Scotsman of our sort’ (i.e. a pro-English religious reformer), who could tell him what exactly that performance involved. The latter’s latter’s ‘notes’ of the performance no doubt reflect a similar agenda, which skews the account in favour of political and religious matter and away from anything that did not apparently address the issue of religious reform. Hence we learn relatively little about the first part of the play – which may indeed have been a lengthy section, amounting to half or more of the performance time - for this seems to have been broadly comic in nature and not directly related to religious policy. So the witness skips over it in relatively little detail. Some of what he says does imply a degree of continuity with the later *Satire*, however, as we shall see. His account begins with the observation that,

In the first entry came in Solace, whose part was but to make merry sing ballads with his fellows, and drink at the interludes of the play, who showed first to all the audience the play, which was a general thing, meaning nothing in special to displease no man, praying therefore no man to be angry with the same.

This seems to map very closely onto Diligence’s opening speech and equally formulaic apology for the *Satire*, which ends with a request to the audience:

Prudent People, I pray you all,

Tak no man grief in special,

For we shall speak in general,

For pastime and for play’ (70-73)

Such apologetic prologues, which both summarised the action of the play to come and assured their audiences that the actors would present no contentious, personalised satire or criticisms, were conventional in early-modern drama, even in the most contentious and personalised satires. They are thus best treated as a kind of generic ‘health warning’ that encouraged spectators to watch what follows with an open mind and take no offence, but which might also, of course, have teasingly aroused expectations that the play might well contain some close-to-the-bone satirical barbs at someone’s expense.

Significantly, as I have suggested, Eure’s witness is not very interested in such conventional elements, and thus dismisses Solace’s role as ‘but to make merry’. The ballads that he reports Solace singing, and the tantalising reference to his ‘drinking at the interludes of the play’, are thus, despite their interest to historians of the drama, not pursued any further. How many such interludes there were, whether they were the occasion of both the singing and the drinking, or whether the songs were separate, is not explained. We nonetheless get the impression that a quite significant proportion of the play is being passed over in relative silence. Likewise the next feature the notes mentions, the entry of the boasting courtiers, is also glossed with relatively little attention to detail.

With him [the king] came his courtiers, Placebo, Pickthank, and Flattery, and such a like guard, one swearing he was the lustiest, starkest [*stongest*], best proportioned, and most valiant man that ever was, another swearing he was the best with longbow, crossbow, and culverin [*firearm*] in the world, another swearing he was the best jouster and man of arms in the world, and so forth during their parts.

Again the account admits its own limitations. The witness has not given us the names of all the courtier characters involved, stopping after the first three and calling the rest ‘such a like guard’ (‘and others of the same sort’/‘a similar gang’), and summarising the action with a few examples of the kind of things boasted about, and again only gesturing to the rest of what happened: ‘and so forth during their parts’. Clearly this section was of little interest to him either. Hence we do not know how long this section of swaggering went on, or precisely how many characters it involved. We can perhaps gain a sense of the sort of thing involved from the Finlaw of the Footband episode in the surviving Linlithgow Banns, but clearly the 1540 interlude had a lot more of this sort of thing that we can only guess at today. It is only with the entry of the Three Estates figures and the subsequent intrusion of the Poor Man that the witness’s description becomes more detailed and exhaustive – and here the similarities with the later *Satire* become clearer and more substantial.

The entry of the three estates that the notes describe (‘Thereafter came in a man, armed in harness, with a sword drawn in his hand, a Bishop, a Burgess man, and Experience, clad like a doctor [i.e. a lawyer], who set them all down on the dais, under the King.’), sounds very like the entry of Temporality, Spirituality, Merchand and Good Counsel in the second half of the *Satire*, apart, that is, from the striking fact that in the latter play the Estates come in ‘gangan’ backwart’: a powerful symbol of the state ‘gan wrang’, led by the vices which dominate each sector of the community.

Once the Estates are set, and parliament is ready to begin, the Interlude, like the *Satire*, is interrupted by a petitioner from the people, who speaks up for the poor common folk of Scotland. In the Interlude it is the Poor Man, in the *Satire*, John the Commonweal and Pauper, but the things that they complain about, and the stories they tell, are very similar. As the notes reveal, the Poor Man protests that he has been ruined by taxes and exactions, particularly the new mechanism for land rental known as the *feu*, paid by a tenant to his landlord, and a variety of death duties due to the laird and the local vicar when a member of the family dies, which have forced him to abandon his farm and go begging for relief for himself and his family on the streets.

After them c[a]me a Poor Man, who did go up and down the scaffold, making a heavy [sorrowful] complaint, that he was harried through the courtier’s taking his feu in one place, and also his tax in another place, where through he had skailed [broken up] his house, his wife and children begging their bread, and so of many thousand in Scotland…

Worse still than these land taxes have been the death duties, paid in kind, usually in the form of produce or animals, to the vicar (hence their popular name of ‘corpse-present beasts’). Thus, when asked what the king needs to do to reform the state of the realm, The Poor Man ‘made a long narration of the oppression of the poor by the taking of the corpse-present beasts, and of the harrying of poor men by consistory law, and of many other abusions of the spirituality and church, with many long stories and authorities.’

These are exactly the same complaints that Pauper and John make in the *Satire*. Pauper is reduced to begging for alms for himself and his children (1934-5), and is on his way to the clerical consistory court in St Andrews to seek justice, having been ruined by the demands for the feu, the corpse-present beasts, and the herield (a death duty paid to the landlord on the death of a tenant-in-chief) which all became due on the deaths of, first his parents, and then his wife.

My father was ane auld man and ane hoar, *grey/white-haired*

And was of age four score of years and more,

And Mald, my mother, was four score and fifteen, *i.e. 95*

And with my labour I did thame baith sustain.

We had ane mare that carried salt and coal,

And every ilk year scho brought us hame ane foal. *produced*

We had three ky that was baith fat and fair, *cows*

Nane tidier into the town of Ayr. *better, (west Scotland)*

My father was sae weak of blood and bane *bone*

That he died, wherefore my mother made great mane. *moan*

Then scho died within ane day or two,

And there began my poverty and woe.

Our good grey mare was baittin’ on the field, *grazing*

And our lands laird took her for his hereild.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The vicar took the best cow by the head,

Incontinent, when my father was dead.

And, when the vicar heard tell how that my mother

Was dead, frae‑hand he took to him another.

Then Meg, my wife, did mourn both even and morrow,

Till at the last sho died for very sorrow.

And when the vicar heard tell my wife was dead,

The third cow he cleikit be the head. *grabbed*

Their ummest clays that was of rapploch grey,[[4]](#footnote-4)

The vicar gart his clerk bear them away. *made*

When all was gone, I might mak nae debate, *couldn’t argue*

Bot with my bairns passed for to beg my meat. *food*

Now have I told you the black verity,

How I am brought into this misery. (1980-2007)

Diligence’s comments suggest that Pauper is as unlikely to get satisfaction from the clerical courts in St Andrews as the Poor Man had from the consistory law.

Thou art the daftest fool that ever I saw!

Trows thou, man, be the law to get remeid

Of men of kirk?[[5]](#footnote-5) Na, not till thou be dead. (2015-7)

In both the Interlude and *Satire* the consequences of the impoverishment of the rural smallholders is described not only as a moral and social scandal, but also as a matter of practical power politics, in terms likely to appeal to the crown and nobility alike. A poor, itinerant and undernourished population is not only a drain on the nation’s wealth but also a liability when it comes to war, for it reduces the pool of strong men necessary to furnish an effective army. What the notes describe succinctly (widespread poverty ‘would make the King’s Grace lose of men if his Grace stood need’), the *Satire* spells out at greater length. But the point is the same. First Pauper raises the issue of military service in the context of bringing order to the border regions.

I pray you, sir, begin first at the border.

For how can we fend us against England, *defend ourselves*

When we cannot within our native land,

Destroy our own Scots common traitor thieves,

Wha to leal labourers daily does mischiefs. *honest*

Were I ane king, my Lord, by God’s wounds,

Wha-ever held common thieves within their bounds, *tolerated, territories*

Where-through that daily lealmen might be wrangit, *wronged*

Without remeid their chieftains should be hangit, *these landowners*

Whidder he were ane knight, ane lord, or laird,

The De’il draw me to Hell and he were spared. (2587-97)

Then Merchand argues for land reform on the grounds that a well-founded, healthy tenantry is the basis of a strong army.

My Lords, conclude that all the temporal lands

Be set in feu to labourers with their hands,

With sic restrictiouns as shall be devisit,

That they may live and not to be supprisit, *subject to (unexpected) taxes and fees*

Withane reasonable augmentatioun: *periodic increase in rent*

And when they hear ane proclamatioun

That the King’s Grace does mak him for the weir, *prepare himself*

That they be ready withharness, bow, and spear. *armour*

As for myself, my Lord, this I conclude. (2810-18)

So, in both the Interlude and the *Satire*, the grievances of the poor are essentially the same. Where the Poor Man’s experience and agenda differ from those of Pauper and John is in the degree of attention that he gives to the problems associated directly with the king and the court. This is no surprise, given that the Interlude was played at court before James V, for an audience for whom court politics were their meat and drink, and in a culture where seeking redress directly from the king – and the difficulties that stood in the way of so doing – were a real issue in ways that they would not be in 1552-54. In the latter period there was no adult male sovereign available to appeal to in the hope that he would promote justice, only a weak and compromised regent (the Earl of Arran in 1552, Mary of Guise in 1554) hemmed in by special interests, rival noble groupings, and religious partisanship. Hence, rather than appeal directly to the king, the petitioners of the *Satire* use Rex Humanitas as a means of promoting more pragmatic solutions such as legal reforms, parliamentary acts, and communal action in burgh and landed estate to right the wrongs they identify.

In 1540 the Poor Man saw the King as central to his hopes for a better Scotland. But the first problem was getting access to him to put his case through a web of court officers who restricted access to the throne to their friends and allies. Thus he voiced the fear that,

there was no remedy to be gotten; for though he would sue to the King’s Grace, he was neither acquainted with Controller nor Treasurer,[[6]](#footnote-6) and without them might no man get no goodness of the King.

Once inside the charmed circle of the court, he seeks out the King directly, but expresses dissatisfaction when he is pointed towards the player-king, turning instead to James V in the audience to issue his petition directly to the real political authority in the room.

And after he speired for the king, and when he was showed to the man that was King in the play, he answered and said he was no king, for there is but one King, which made all and governeth all, Who is eternal, to Whom he and all earthly kings are but officers, of the which they must make reckoning,[[7]](#footnote-7) and so forth much more to that effect. And then he looked to the King and said he was not the king of Scotland, for there was another king in Scotland, that hanged John Armstrong with his fellows, and Sim the Laird,[[8]](#footnote-8) and many other more, which had pacified the country, and stanched theft, but he had left one thing undone, which pertained as well to his charge as the other.

The Poor Man thus compliments James, gesturing towards his true example of earthly kingship (although also tacitly reminding him that he is only an agent of divine authority, with responsibilities to look after his subjects) and commending his policy of bringing rough justice to the Borders, but then chastises him for the ‘one thing’ that he has left undone. And when he is asked what that is, he launches into his condemnation of the church and demands for the reform of clerical morality, the ecclesiastical courts, and church taxes.

As is the case in the later *Satire*, then, it is clear that the bulk of the abuses that the Poor Man identifies in what the notes call his ‘many long stories and authorities’ are clerical, and the bulk of the reforms he calls for need similarly to be focused on the church. When, as in the *Satire*, the Bishop objects and tries to silence him with threats of the heresy courts ([And] then the Bishop rose and rebuked him, saying [it] effered not to him to speak such matters,[[9]](#footnote-9) commanding him silence, or else to suffer death for it, by their law.’), it is the Temporal Lord who intervenes to protect him and encourage him to continue (‘Thereafter rose the Man of Arms, alleging the contrary, and commanded the Poor Man to speak, saying their abusion had been over long suffered, without any law.’**)**. Thus emboldened, the Poor Man then continues to reveal,

the great abusion of bishops, Prelates, Abbots, reeving[[10]](#footnote-10) men’s wives and daughters, and holding them, and of the maintaining of their children and of their over buying of lords’ and barons’ eldest sons to their daughters,[[11]](#footnote-11) where through the nobility of the blood of the Realm was degenerate,[[12]](#footnote-12) and of the great superfluous rents that pertained to the church, by reason of over much temporal lands given to them, which they proved that the King might take both by the canon law, and civil law, and of the great abominable vices that reign in cloisters, and of the common bordellos that was kept in cloisters of nuns.

Again, all of this has its equivalents in the *Satire*, even down to the specific case of the nobleman’s objection to being shouldered out of the marriage market by bishops and abbots with hefty, ill-gotten dowries to spend on their illegitimate daughters (3194-3213). Similarly, the dramatic pay-off in the Interlude echoes that of the *Satire*, when Experience (in the *Satire* it is Good Counsel) uses the evidence of St Paul’s Epistle to Timothy to demonstrate that the bishops do not even deserve to hold their own offices, as they cannot fulfil the obligations to teach, preach, and live a moral life that are fundamental to the role. (‘All this was proved by Experience. And also was showed th’office of a bishop, and produced the New Testament with the authorities to that effect.’: compare with *Satire*, lines 2894-2958).

Finally, both Interlude and *Satire* end the disputation by descending from high principles and biblical injunctions to the pragmatic politics of parliamentary majority. For, when the Man of Arms and the Burgess agree with the Poor Man that parliament needs to redress his grievances, and ‘the Bishop said he would not consent thereunto. The Man of Arms and Burgess said they were two, and he but one, wherefore their voice should have most effect.’ Likewise, in the *Satire*, when Spirituality is presented with the decisions of the secular estates, and declares, ‘To that, my Lords, we plainly disassent’ (2836), Temporality brusquely dismisses his objections with the same cynical response:

My Lord, be Him that all the world has wrought,

We set not by whidder ye consent or not: *we do not care whether*

Ye are but ane Estait and we are twa,

*Et ubi major pars ibi tota.*[[13]](#footnote-13) (2838-41)

\*\*\*\*\*

What seems clear from his partial description of the early sections of the Interlude, then, is that, like the *Satire* itself, the 1540 performance fell broadly into two – probably unequal – sections. The first was broadly comic, may have involved intervals of singing and drinking, and focused on the boastful antics of allegorically-named courtiers, just as the first half of the *Satire* is courtly in focus and broadly comic in form, and contains at least one song.

The second section, again pre-empting the *Satire*, was markedly more serious and angry in tone, and with the entry of the three Estates and the Poor Man turned to more overtly political issues, widening its focus beyond the follies and foibles of courtiers to the concerns of the rural poor and the alleged failings and corruption of the church. In each case the grievances complained about were the same – a series of allegedly unfair taxes and impositions due to landlords and parish priests that impoverish the honest small-holder, the extravagant wealth and alleged sexual misdemeanours of priests, bishops and abbots, the failure of the clergy to preach the gospel to their charges, and the ‘prolix, corrupt and partial’ (*Satire*, 2671) practices of the lay and clerical courts, seemingly designed to deny justice to the poor while protecting the rich and powerful. What differs in the two plays is that in the Interlude the vehicle for reform is figured as a strong king – explicitly James V himself - who is pointed out from within the play in a metatheatrical gesture that makes clear that the Interlude is not the ‘general’ allegorical entertainment that the prologue claims, but a direct intervention in the real politics of the moment. In the *Satire*, with no strong king available to whom to appeal, the solution offered is more complex, and arguably more radical. The play imagines a programme of acts of parliament, fifteen in number, set out in daring – arguably undramatic – detail in the course of the play, aimed at dismantling the mechanisms of ecclesiastical privilege and embedding legal, economic, social, and moral reforms at every level of Scottish society. And, just in case the audience felt that they could leave the reforming initiative to the regent and parliament, the play ends with a timely warning from the vices and Folly that responsibility for the mess that Scotland is in, along with responsibility for putting things right, lies with everybody, not just the political elites.

So much for the similarities between *Interlude* and the Satire. The ‘many differences’ between them that Lyall identifies need also to be considered. They vary in their nature and significance. Some disappear on closer examination. Lyall suggests that there is nothing in the *Satire* which equates with the Poor Man’s powerful assertion in the interlude that the king in the play is no king,

For there is but one king, which made all and governeth all, who is eternal, to whom all earthly kings are but officers [i.e. God].

‘The dependence of temporal rulers upon divine authority remains a relevant commonplace’ in 1552, Lyall notes, so the fact that ‘it does not occur in the surviving text of *The Thrie Estaitis*’ is striking. But it does occur, more than once, in the *Satire*, and arguably to still more striking effect. ‘What is ane king?,’ Divine Correctioun asks on his arrival in Scotland, answering ominously,

Nocht but an officer,

To cause his lieges live in equity,

And under God to be ane punisher

Of trespassers against His majesty. (1613-16)

And he later tells Rex that,

…ye are but ane mortal instrument

To that great God and King Omnipotent,

Pre-ordinate by His divine Majesty,

To rule His people intil unity. (1886-9)

Moreover, unlike in the 1540 interlude, where the Poor Man simply uses the point to prompt James V in the audience to action, Correction goes on in the *Satire* to spell out the consequences of the king’s position as merely an officer of divine authority, should he fail to live up to divine expectations about the responsibilities of that role.

I have power great princes to down thring,

That lives contrair to the Majesty Divine. (1721-22)

Turn ye to Sensuality,

To vicious life and ribaldry,

Out of your realm right shamefully,

Ye shall be rooted out,

As was Tarquin, the Roman king. (1765-69)

He was degradit of his crown,

And banished aff his regioun;

I made on him correctioun,

As stories does express. (1772-76)

Far from using the argument that kings are God’s ministers to bolster royal authority, as James V and James VI would both do, Lindsay uses it to demonstrate the contingent, contractual nature of kingship in ways that later advocates of limited monarchy such as George Buchanan and John Ponet would later develop and extend.

Similarly, Lyall suggests that another difference between the two plays is that the king of the 1540 Interlude ‘was almost entirely passive’ (Lyall, p. xi). Eure’s witness, we might recall, having described Solace’s entrance and opening speech, notes that,

Next c[a]me in a king, who passed to his throne, having no speech to the end of the play, and then to ratify and approve as in plain parliament all things done by the rest of the players which represented the Three Estates.

This does present the player king as potentially a cypher to the estates (although, arguably it might be performed in such a way as to suggest his paternalistic concern for the events, and that Parliament could not decide anything if he did not approve and ratify them – his silence might be performed, that is, as a dignified aloofness from the political fray, rather than as impotence). Rex Humanitas in the *Satire* certainly says – and does - more, but he is no more assertive or powerful in practice. Indeed what he says and does arguably makes his passivity and malleability more obvious to audiences than if he had simply sat silently on his throne throughout the play. For Rex is very obviously led by whoever is around him at any given time, accepting on trust what they say to him, and enthusiastically falling in with their plans. As he says himself, he is like a clean slate (‘*Tanquam tabula rasa*’ (224)), there to be written on by those under whose influence he falls. And this is as true of his redemption by Correction and Good Counsel as it is of his earlier fall under the influence of Sensuality, Deceit, Falset, and Flattery. And, at the end of the play, he too, like the king of the interlude, explicitly ratifies and approves all the measures enacted by the Estates in his name.

*Correctioun*

With the advice of King Humanity,

Here I determine with ripe advisement,

That all thir prelates shall deprivit be,

And by decree of this present Parliament,

Thatthir two cunning clerks sapient,

Immediately their places shall possess,

Because that they have been sae negligent

Suff’ring the word of God for to decrease.

*Rex*

As ye have said, but doubt it shall be done:

Pass to and mak this interchanging soon. (3735-44)

The other more substantial differences between the interlude described in 1540 and that of 1552-4 for which we have the script, boil down to the fact that the later play seems to have been a much longer, more complex affair. Both Anna Jean Mill (p. 64) and Lyall note that, where there is only a single trio of named courtly vices in the interlude (although we must remember the ‘such a like guard’ who came in with them), there are three groups in the first half of the *Satire*, the relatively harmless (if carefully regulated) courtly vices, Solace, Wantonness, and Placebo, Sensuality and her ladies, Danger, Hameliness, and Fund-Jonet, and the political vices, Flattery, Deceit, and Falset, each of which draws Rex under their influence for a time. Where there was only one Poor Man in the interlude, there are two in the *Satire*, Pauper and John the Commonweal. And there were seemingly no figures in the Interlude analogous to Verity and Chastity, Divine Correction, Folly, the Sowter, Tailor and their wives.

And where there was only one dramatic locale in 1540, the royal throne room, analogous to the great hall at Linlithgow in which the play was being performed, in 1552-4 the open-air playfield was divided between many locales, thrones, and seats: the court, the parliament hall, the field, the tavern, the stank, the pulpit, stocks, and gallows, to name only the most obvious. Where in 1540 the interlude was focused on one sovereign spectator, James V, who was addressed directly by the Poor Man at a key moment in the action, in 1552-4, the audience was more diverse, scattered and divided, addressed collectively by various characters as ‘sirs’, ‘sovereigns’ (12), ‘my friends’ (14), ‘prudent people’ (70), and ‘ilk man’ (1921) and isolated for specific comment as ‘some…and some’ (1923), ‘ye ladies’ (1926), or named individually and identified as a particular example of vice or folly,

*Deceit*

Adieu the great Clan Jameson,[[14]](#footnote-14)

The blood royal of Cupartoon,

I was ay to you true;

Baith Anderson and Patterson,

Above them all Tam Williamson, (*A Cupar burgess)*

My absence ye will rue.

Tam Williamson, it is your pairt

To pray for me with all your hairt,

And think upon my works:

How I leerit you ane good lesson,

For to beguile in Edinburgh toon

The Bishop and his clerks. (4094-4105)

This shift and widening of focus reflects the very different political circumstances of the later play. Writing in 1552-4 in a realm without an adult sovereign, Lindsay could not look confidently to a strong king to bring about the reforms he wanted. That fact alone would have prompted him to look beyond the court for the answers to Scotland’s problems – to the Three Estates (for whom, as we have seen, he provides an entire draft legislative programme at the end of the play), to the law courts and a reformed kirk, and ultimately to the spectators themselves, representatives of the political nation at large, to take on the reforming agenda, beginning with their own sins and sharp practices, and ending in the thorough reform of the commonweal as a whole.

*References*

John Corbett, *Sir David Lyndsay’s A Satire of the Three Estates* (Glasgow: Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 2009)

Carol Edington, *Court and Culture in Renaissance Scotland: Sir David Lindsay of the Mount* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994)

Joanne Spencer Kantrowitz, *Dramatic Allegory: Lindsay’s Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* (Lincoln NA, University of Nebraska Press, 1975)

Sir David Lindsay, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, ed., R.J. Lyall (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989)

John MacQueen, ‘*Ane Satire of the Thrie Estaitis*’, *Studies in Scottish Literature* 3 (1966), pp. 129-43

Anna Jean Mill, ‘Representations of Lindsay’s *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*’, *PMLA* 47 (1932), pp. 636-49

Alan Spence, *David Lindsay’s The 3 Estaites: The Millenium Version*, with and Introduction by Angus Calder (Edinburgh: Edinburgh university Press, 2002)

1. John Corbett also concludes cautiously that ‘If Lyndsay did not actually write what was clearly an early version of *Ane Satyre*…, he was clearly strongly influenced by it when he later came to compose the fuller version.’ (9) Carol Edington is similarly careful, suggesting that, ‘though Lindsay’s association with the play…cannot be proven, it does seem that this was the case’ (p. 50), yet later noting that ‘This is not to suggest that the Epiphany performance was an early performance of *Ane Satyre* or even a prototype version. The two seem sufficiently distinct for them to be reckoned as separate works’ (p. 238, fn 30). Joanne Kantrowitz also argues for caution: ‘While it is true that Eure’s account, in general, sounds like Lindsay’s play, the difference in the characters’ names and in the scope of the action suggests a very different play indeed’ (p. 22) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Gavin Dunbar, Archbishop of Glasgow and Chancellor of Scotland. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ‘And our landlord took her for his heriot (the fee payable in kind on the death of the tenant-in-chief, usually the best animal on the farm).’ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ‘The uppermost garments that were made of grey homespun.’ ‘The umest clayis’ was another mortuary duty payable in kind to the parish priest. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ‘Do you think you’ll get redress against churchmen through the courts?’ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The chief officers of the royal household, who controlled access to the King. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. An account (of their performance). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The two border rievers (bandits), John Armstrong of Gilknockie, hanged at Carlinrigg in 1530, and Simon Armstrong, alias ‘Sym the La[i]rd’, hanged in 1536, both under James V’s jurisdiction. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. ‘It was not his role to raise such subjects.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Stealing/kidnapping. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The complaint that prelates were able to use large cash dowries to ‘buy up’ the sons of noblemen as husbands for their illegitimate daughters, thus ‘polluting’ noble blood-lines is a theme returned to in the 1552-54 play. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Contaminated. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ‘And where the greater part is, there is the whole.’ A legal principle whereby a majority decision is taken to be the view of the whole assembly. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Jamesons were a prominent family in Cupar. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)