

A Recently-Discovered Poem in Scots Vernacular: 'Complections of Men in Verse'

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In the National Library of Scotland there are two bound folio transcripts of the Historical Collections of Sir Lewis Stewart of Kirkhill (1586–1655) (Advocates' MSS 34.3.11; 34.3.12). Searching these for evidence of a familial connection between Sir Lewis Stewart and William Stewart, the sixteenth-century court poet, I found that the only non-factual item in the Collections was a poem in early Scots vernacular. Also in the National Library is Sir Lewis's original manuscript of his Legal and Historical Collections (Adv.MS 22.1.14). The transcripts are of the latter part only, the Historical Collections, which contain historical notes and copies of ancient charters.

The Scots vernacular poem and some other parts of the transcripts do not appear in the original manuscript. However, it was found that this manuscript lacks sixteen folios. Instead of 256 folios, as expected from its sixteen 16-leaf gatherings, there are only 240. Eight folios are missing from the Historical Collections, five near the beginning (where the stub of one remains) and three at the end of them, probably before the single remaining page of an index. The gap of five folios occurs in virtually the same place in the text as the poem appears in the transcripts (34.3.11, pp. 13–16; 34.3.12, pp. 14–17). It seems likely, therefore, that the poem was written on some of the folios now missing from the original manuscript.

The original manuscript is signed five times on a preliminary page by 'Maister Lues Steuart' in varying forms, and is inscribed:

Hic liber est meus. Possum producere testis.
Si quis me querite Lodouicus mihi nomen erat.
Stuart jungatur. Quis scripsit sic nominatur.

[This book is mine. I can produce a witness.
If anyone asks my name was Lewis.
Let Stuart be joined to it. He who has written this (book) is so named.]

Written at the foot of the leaf are the signatures Wm. Chalmers and Andro Hoge.¹

This leaf is followed by 239 folios of text, of which the last 87 folios are the Historical Collections; and at the end is the one surviving leaf of an index to them covering P, Q, R, S, T, and W. There is no mention here of the poem, and the previous leaves, presumably other index pages, seem to have been removed, as a stub remains. At the top of the first page of the text is the date 20 August 1606. The newer endpapers bear a

watermark of 1702 (Churchill 1935: no. 424), indicating a later binding of the manuscript.

Transcript 34.3.11 has 298 pages with a 1654 watermark at intervals up to page 236, clearly seen on page 92 (Churchill 1935: no. 110). After page 238 the watermark changes to 1684 (Heawood 1950: no. 348); and the writing also changes here from a cursive script to the distinctive hand of Robert Mylne, the antiquary (1643?–1747), continuing thus to the end of the manuscript.

Transcript 34.3.12 has 434 pages plus an index and, except for a few pages, is all in the hand of Robert Mylne. His signature is on the title-page with a note in his older hand that after page 351 the volume contains additions from the collections of Mr Richard Hay, canon regular of St Genevieve in Paris, 'All preceeding that page being sir Lewis collectiones,' which, of course, includes the poem on pages 14–17. Mylne's note seems to confirm that the poem was in Sir Lewis's original manuscript from which he may have made his copy: he certainly did not copy from 34.3.11, for Mylne's transcript of the poem contains two lines (157, 291) which are lacking from the poem in 34.3.11. Mylne's transcript must have been completed after 1705 as there is mention on page 356 of the late Lord Whytlaw, the Court of Session judge who died that year; and page 383 has a watermark similar to Heawood no. 71, in use in 1718. Incidentally, Father Richard Hay (1661–1736), canon of St Genevieve, was cousin to one of Sir Lewis Stewart's grandsons; and in the title to his copy, all in bold letters, Mylne identifies Sir Lewis as 'great-grandfather to Lady Margaret Cuninghame Countess of Lawderdale' (m. *circa* 1680, d. 1742).

Though the order differs over the first few pages, the transcripts have the same contents, except that 34.3.12 has the Hay additions. The two copies of the poem are almost identical, with minor variations in copying and in spelling. The poem is written in double columns in rhyming couplets (with a few aberrations) and comprises 345 lines in 34.3.12; and 344 lines in 34.3.11, including one line repeated. Mylne's transcript 34.3.12 has a main index in which the poem is listed under 'Vertues and vices of persons showin from the featers of thr bodyes the tones of thr voices etc. In a Monastick Ryme'; and the poem is also listed in a short secondary index under 'Complections of men in verse'. No author is given in either of the transcripts.

Sir Lewis Stewart was an eminent advocate and a loyal adherent of Charles I, and by his arms he proclaimed his descent from Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan, the Wolf of Badenoch, son of Robert II of Scotland. No record has been found of Sir Lewis's ancestors beyond his grandfather, William Stewart, elder, depute clerk of Edinburgh 1560–81, though there are clues to his line of descent from Alexander Stewart. Sir Lewis's mother was Katherine Bannatyne. Her brother, George Bannatyne, made a collection of old Scottish poetry in 1568, now called *The Bannatyne Manuscript*, which contains several poems by the sixteenth-century court poet, William Stewart. William Stewart was a great-great-grandson of the Wolf of Badenoch, and there is a possibility that William was Sir Lewis Stewart's great-grandfather.²

The transcript of the poem which follows was made from Advocates' MS 34.3.12. The transcript and the reproduction of a page from the manuscript appear with the permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

Omitted letters and expansions of abbreviated words are given in square brackets, except for *w* which is simply given as *with*. Two forms of ampersand appear in the poem (e.g. 3, 16), but both are represented here by the sign &. In the right-hand margin is a glossary of some of the words, and suggested corrections (in italics) of apparent transcription errors. To the left, line numbers have been inserted for the purpose of reference.

	The first complectioun is called flew[m]leg[?]	phlegmatic
	The tother sanguinle, the thrid is colerik	
	The feird & the last is called Melancholly,	
	Thir four all nature Governs all generally	
	flewmen is fatt, & slaw sweir & sliparie	lazy; sleepy
	whyt spittand ay bluntwittit, and drasie	sluggish
	sanguin is fair & fat be measur, reid & whyt	in moderation
	Luifand & larg & lachand with delyte	loving & liberal
	in blythnes ay singand and wyss hardy,	
10	It is the best complectioun soveranly	
	a crabit complectioun is colerik	
	a far mair noble is na flewmatik	than
	for it is frie, bayt[h] lairg, hardy, & stout,	
	Mair subtill wyss & mair worthy allout	
	bot small & lenyee ar they broun of face,	lean
	far mair of vndertakin, & hering[?],	
	The worst col[m]plection is melancholly,	
	for it is sour Invyous, cald & dry,	
	Gredie virtew, dreidfull & ay drowpan	untrew
20	& leidin hewit & full seildum lachand	
	alse of a thing I cou[n]sall the that thow	
	fra man mismaid in his person vmbethow	umbechow: eschew
	whilk is mankit fra members of mankynd	defective
	for col[m]monly they haue ane akwart strynd	disposition
	for wha falt bearis of his nativitie	
	in his col[n]ditioun faultles sall not be	
	bot give throw vertew him refrainyed	except if
	and throw his wit his wickit will col[n]strenyed	
	And first at mans hair thow take knowledge	
30	Gife they be young & not our tel[n]der of age	
	Gife it be dosk or yallow, broun or blake	
	efter the lauee the hair is not to lake	lave: rest; undervalue
	Gif it be reid be war for I warn yow	
	whair ane is trew twel[n]tie is not to trow	to be trusted
	whare head & beard is hewit of sindrie wyse	
	I red thow hald thame not in thy service	
	for to begyll they are ay wonder slee	sly
	And mekill tane of slicht & sitteltie	trick

- 40 Bot yallow is taken for guid ingyne token; ability
 and habill bayth to craft & clergie fyne learning
 with ma[n]suetude of swetnes & clemens gentleness
 and Governes be wisdom & prudence
 that is to say with vther properties
 As afterwart of th[alm]el declairit beis
 Right roch of hair betaikins stark nature
 and hee of blood bot langand ther figure
 have they guid collour welfavored in visage
 and als of guide fassioun in th[e]r corse
 with guidly ferys & giftis remanend points of appearance
 50 Thow may weill hald th[alm]el to thyne avin servan
 and be they ry[ch]t evill favored & vnfrie heavy
 and in th[e]r ferys als vngodly bee ways
 when beard & breist & brouis all overgroun
 Ry[ch]t vnfrilie with birnand eyn th[alt] glowis heavily
 and of the laife vngudlie of portiriture rest; form
 That is great taikin of mervellous nature concerned with the supernatural
 of nature horribille & vnreasonabill
 and perallus & till all vyces able. deadly
 I reid with sic men th[alt] thow have litill deall
 60 Na hald not in thy houshald speciall
 A large forehead with browis semlie set
 Nocht our fer out na mekill hair ourfreit adorned
 with uth[e]r guid bewties endlang the face all over
 The corpis inclynit till all guidlines
 with blak, or gray, or broun eyn & gryte great
 Not gogland over fair out na far inset
 thir are guid taikins with the remanend these
 of p[ro]p[er]teis q[ui]llk[il]s are after cidand which; cited

 The eyn of q[ui]llk[il]s the stern draws to the blew star
 70 whilk maist is liknit to the heavinlie hew
 That is guid taikin of peace & equitie
 of guid wit prudence & of cheritie
 And wha hes great eyn gogland over th[e]r face
 betaikins pryde & ire and wilfullnes
 Invy but shame, sweir in obedience
 and be they wa[n]will the war is th[e]r intent without
 wha hes eyn rinand ay co[n]tinuallie wanwitt: foolish; worse
 it is a full evill taikin traist trewlie
 Bot swa sa hes reid eyn within dout ?withoutin lcf 254l
 80 they shall be fundin, bald, hardie, & stout
 and be it woman she beis dowill hardie double
 I will not say that is in villany
 bot eyn of twyn cullors are not guidly
 bot are inclynit to vyce & villany
 gif th[e]r maister followis ther p[ro]p[er]ties
 That are inclynit to all iniquities
 They are inclynit meikill baill to brew harm, sorrow
 When ever ilk eyes of a sindrie hew
 bot if virtew have dominaltiolune
 90 That prudence mlast[e]r his co[m]plectioun

Be war with eyn whilk are of sindrie hews
 whilks god & nature & all guid men rewis
 with spots of whyte and reid blew blak betuein
 when alkin hewis are sprutit in the eyn
 ther followis misfassioun of vissage
 and mekill mair of coln]science and cur]alge

and aynslyk eyn oft shawis littill mude
 and our mekill whyte waule ey wes never guid
 and sand blind eyn are shamfull col]m]monlie
 100 and feynyeis oft for caus they are faultie

flinches, fails

and glowrand eyn are corssand in th]e]r sycht
 are thrawin & full [of] sutteltie and sly[ch]t
 and wha sa skellis with ane eye luikand by
 they are inclynit to vyces col]m]monly

crossing
perverse
squints

wha stutand glowres with a sembland stout
 they are not haill in harnes haif na dout
 sa in ther forehead fallis a banishing
 whilks brings them often in ramessing
 with sick a frenseis and a fantasie

stuttering; stubborn look
brains

110 makis thle]m but reddeour abill to foly
 and wha with said other hes eyn deid and still
 are reddely inclynit to vncouth ill

rushing about wildly

with sad cheir [34.3.11]: with sad countenance

And wha lurkand eyn hes ay lachand
 till licherie are mekill inclynand
 also to dissave and fleche thle]r natur is
 and make sembland that they can do na mis
 wha winkis with his eyn and nodis als
 it cumes them weill of kynd for to be fals
 wha luikis on syde and haldest his heid awry
 120 and fenyseis to Make a small eyn denyouslie
 they are dissembland coveit & vntrew
 of luf and abill to dissave anew

lowered

deceive and flatter

pretends; condescendingly [den]ge: deign, condescend

love

wha hes ane lenyee nois thin & weill made
 are ly[ch]t]lie breathfull of lichtlie heid
 bot great lang nos hauk beik befor dipand
 hee in the midis as gryffone beik rysand
 are wicht & manfull col]m]monlie & proven

fine nose

strong

And wha hes nos in midwart law & short
 kepand before men may weill knaw thle]r sort
 130 they are akwart & evill willy of kynd
 donsthothe crabit and angrie q[u]hel]n thai are tein
 To murther & to misdeid reddy are
 and nowther will keep kyndes lawtie na far
 and reddely will make a forfaltour
 bot grace & vertew brydill thle]r nature
 gif they be not our snak bot messurable

low
with turned-up tip
wily
donsoth: very truly; provokedloyalty
forfeiture

too quick, greedy

- vpset befor sick taking is worthie
 weill favoured in the visage the eyn
 of hyd & hair of voce & cullour cleir
 140 Blythe lachand their traist th[e]r guid co[m]pany
 and kynd for kynd[n]es shall be reddely
 and guid fellowship they loue utter all thing
 curteis and kend & gentill of th[e]r spending
 Gif they be narrow thirlit with speech rouff
 They are done soth of ans[we]r at Rebouff
 wha hes nos braid in the midle wart
 and short befor for keepand wpperwart
 hes mony fals wordis of littill effect
 with oth[e]r faltis foloand in the net
 150 when thow servandis to the wer suld waill
 do th[e]m na evill na haif with th[e]m na daill
- A midlin noss whilk nother hee na law is
 whilke in a guidlie phisnomy men knawes
 with uther properties as forsaide haue we
 before the laif suld maist co[m]mendit be
- Wha hes ane mekill mouthe & wyd & large
 with keppand noss or hingand as ane barge
 they are manfull & hardie men of praise
 and of Langage and worthie for to loue
 160 Wha hes gryte lips thik & vnguidlie
 ill maide vnhartfull laiche & vnlouelie
 are oft tyme full of foly & fulache
 nather wyse na weill tacht & of vnguidlie speich
- Wha se sour lipit is and sharpe & thin
 small in the neb & sharp als of the chin
 trust well they are baith narow & nedy
 baith cuvetous fasthaldand and gredy
 and hes a tung to set ther word sharplie
 To flyt & chyde and to speik villanie
- 170 Wha hes fatt face ill favoured & fleshy
 thik & threwyllie with lumpis vnlouely
 they seme to be vnhabill by natur
 ffor god gives of wisdom guid figur
- Wha hes a lang visage of guid fassoun
 well favoured betaikins guid perfectioun
 Sa hyde & hew and hair accord them till
 they suld be reasone haue a guidly will
 and abill als to craft and to clergie
 and well inclynit to vertew co[m]monlie
- 180 Wha hes an visage short & fatt & suollen
 and keepand noss with chekes boline
 with lytill hew of cullour wermelin
 orpie growis in his herbe all sessoun
- such
- love above
- have narrow nostrils
 very truthful
- tip-tilted
- to the worse should submit
 dealing
- high nor low
- the rest
- great
- cheerless; of low fortune
- taught
- tip of the nose
- scold
- learning
- ?boldine: rounded
 vermilion
 orpine [a vulnerary]

- Wha hes a blusit face of hevie corst
the sone of lichorie he mon be of first *corse* [34.3.11]: body
- Wha hes a visage short attour mesour above moderation
bayth neck & bodie short of portrature
with neis and lipis liftand vp agane
To flie fra his cumpany all suld be fane eager
190 wher nature failyeis his proportiouns fails
ther folies oftymes evill coln)ditious
- And wha visage has our lang vnfree not beautiful
Gif it evill favoured & evill cullorit be
traist weill that persone is vniurious
sutell invyous and eik malicious also
- What hes ane heid exceiding gryte and fatt
noth to his vther me[m]bers accordand that
it signifies bestiall coln)ditoun
of carnall apetyte and vnreason
- 200 Wha hes ane craig vncumly lang & small throat, neck
with lytill dottitheid [sic] & round with all dottit: silly
and our mekill bodie to the awennand to ?be handsome
they are not colm)monlie the maist e[me]n[n]and
- Wha hes short neck with shoulders hie & stricht straight
suppose the laue will fassonit be at ry[ch]t *al ryt* [34.3.11]
he is suttell false fletchand to his lord scolding
and of few men gude will he record
- Wha hes gryte heid craig and fat body
traist well they are inclynit to licherie
210 and to glutry sleathe & vyces ma gluttony; sloth
give they be not the tyme is passtt of they
- Wha hes mekill carrys thik & syde hingand
Gryte taikin is that he is unculnnland stupid, ignorant
- Wha eartis hes our lytill to his stature
it is gryte taikin of sume falt of nature
- And wha is of speikin gross and round
with words cleir vnwel[m]mit haill & sound pure
he is bayt[h] bald and stout & gude langage
gude witt gude eloquens & gude knowlege
- 220 And wha hes a py pand voyce & small
and waik & wandand in th[e]r speich with all
that is taikin of waik curage
and bayt[h] with falt of Lawtie and langage lack of honesty
- And wha sa stutes or mantis or speik haistie stutters or stammers
are cuvatus fast haldand and gredie
with mony wyles & suttelteis of mynd

- Invyous sturt & crabit and vnkynd
presumteous hastie & reddy to suppryse
and layt[h] to pairtt with geir in ony wyse
- 230 Wha whylum speiks swyft and whylum sla
Be that a divers nature men may knaw
for hid faultis in mony men ar not shawin
whill sick men in co[n]ditiounes be well knawin
- Wha hes ane sleikit voce & swyft & sweit
and in his mouthe melt butter will not lett
they draw oft out of men with th[e]r langage
and garis th[e]m weyn that they have a guid curage
as fouller when he wald his pluvars get
with his sweit not he draws th[e]m to the net
- 240 Wha alwyse speikand is & cracland new
he may never fail 3 ee of law and vertew
and wha sa seildin speiks & is our still
traist weill he hes a hyd vnworthie wyll
the rynand water is cleir and ky[n]dlic guide
and standand water is stinkand of the mude
- Wha hes a large breist with shulders braid
with me[m]bers meit th[e]rfore & manly maid
wicht lang armes & hands fair and sture
and vth[e]r me[m]bers all of guid measour
- 250 That is a taikin of great scremute
in deid of wer or battell for to be
- And wha sa hes a waldin suttill bak
is prydefull slee invyous leif to lak
- And wha lute bakit is within were
is hudpyk hurcheoun wrocht in all maner
thin narow shalders ay hurkland & figand
they are dispaireit of great god all weildand
and ever to want gude are in dreid & dout
and weimis the wardle will faylyet tha[me] all out
- 260 Lang armes in taikin of largenes
gentreis fredome with strenthe & hardines
and short armes are taikin of discord
and narow heart evill fittand to ane lord
- Lang armes with waldyn finger fair
till all crafts ry[ch]t wonder abill ar
- Bot short armes with short fingers & great
on suttell craft shall never be seimlie set
- And wha sa great swollin wame hes vtterly
- contentious
despise, oppress
money
sometimes
till
smoothly-spoken
makes them believe
gossiping
stout; strong
swift action, skirmishing
supple; slender
sly; willing to vilify
stoop-backed; without doubt
miser; hedgehog-like
always hunched up & fidgeting
governing
seek wealth
wenis [34.3.11; also *c.f.* 237]: believes; world
liberality
honourable nature; geniality
supple
stomach; outwards

- it is a taikin of pryde and lichourrie
 270 of Gluttoun presumptioun & arrogance
 and bot richts of simpill Governance only rights litself
- Thik braid hoches with filleris stark & sture
 great brandis & weill made at measour legs; thighs; firm; sturdy
 with gudlie fassioun baythe of fute & hand calves of legs
 And weill breistit, of visage well farand good-looking
 in hair all dosk, yallow blak or broun
 in midlin way of col(m)positioun
 with guidlie cheir weill favored in visage
 myngit with reid & guid messurage mixed
 280 broun blak or gray the roundall of the ey
 cleir voceit & haill th(a)lt is a man for the
- Wha hes fatt pudding leges vnfrielle maid heavily
 Lous flechit with misfassionit feit & braid loose-fleshed, flabby
 it is to traist th(a)lt the remanend
 suld not be weill whan th(a)lt is misfaradd *misfarand*: unseemly
 for after th(a)lt followis col(m)monly
 misgovernans wanwit & gryte folie
- And lytill feit is taikin of narrownes
 and hard of nature full of wrechitnes
 290 whilk our skant is of measo(u)r be nature
 Les na it all to be of portratur unless it all be lsmalll of form
- Wha sa in gangin hes a steadfast pace
 ther followis oft prosperitie and grace
- And wha sa nimlie gars & spedilie nimbly walks
 bot gife he have a rylchlt great cause & why
 and settis to do his deidis all in haist
 they are lyke guidlie purpose for to waist
 for they are inoportwn & of kittill will
 and oft th(e)lr purpose andis not will th(?) thamee till
 comes not weill thm till |34.3.11|
- 300 Wha ever be hyrt(?) of feris & cast of heid
 and haldis not purpose steadfast in a steid
 all men may will considder & vnderstand
 lightness of witt is after followand
 and when the witt is light & right chal(n)geable
 sic men sall never be to hono(u)r abill
- What man th(a)lt kekland copes vther men
 and smyrkand lauchand gois but & ben cackling copies
 in kirk & mercat or in vther place back & forth
 thow knaw be the figur of his face
 310 that of his deidis thair sall cum lytill prove
 wha luifis hono(u)r sick men suld umbethow effect
- What man of guidly fassioun that thow sees
 when thow will cheis a man with all v(e)rlchewis

- is manly maid of gude portiritur
 bayt(h) guidlie & weill favored of figure
 after the tennor of all proportioun
 as we haif said in our discriptioun
 weill cullourit & weill maid as effeiris
 weill favourit in his feiris and maners
 320 of hyd & hair and hew & eloquence
 with pleasant presenta[ti]one of prudence
 weill collourit & weill fleshit as effeiris.
 and in his visage guidlynes appears
 and in all thing is cu[m]and and manlyke
 and at na forsaid faultis entertryke.
- bot have in mynd thair vther properteis
 as in this book befor writtin thow sees
 and set int by of what hair that he be
 so doubill reid hair haue na daill with the
 330 of stadfast blyt(h) luik haill countenance
 in midlin way of all his Governans
 in all proportioun als betuixt the twa
 nather hee nor law nor fatt nor lyn alswa
 na in his sight th[e]r be na laik to see
 for mony a fault is knawin be the ey
 The guidlie sweit luik co[m]mounlie is kynd
 and soft of hyd is guid of witt & mynd
 of mesoured speeche & stadfast in ganging
 sic men as thir sould be about a king
 340 and guider in thy mynd thir poy[n]ts haill
 not all to lake na all to loss and waill
 Bot haue ay guid considderatioun
 of fforme and cullo[u]r & co[n]ditioun
 it sall be mekill profeit and availl
 in weir and peace in houshald or battell.

appearance

is fitting
ways

that; interfere

tall or short
deficiencygather; these
undervalue; be dismissed; make a choice

war

The tenor of the poem seems to be the poet giving personal advice ('I counsall the'; 'I red thow'; and so on: lines 21, 33, 36, 82), perhaps to a young king ('sic men as thir sould be about a king': 339). But there is no such personal touch in the source from which the poem is drawn.

The poem is derived from the *Secreta Secretorum*, which contains all manner of advice to princes, and in which the principles of physiognomy are plainly stated. The earliest known manuscript of the *Secreta*, which is in Arabic, is said to be of the tenth or eleventh century. The first translation into Scots was made from a French version by Gilbert of the Haye in 1456 (Stevenson 1914: II. 1). The discourse on physiognomy, the science of judging men's characters by their external appearance, appears towards the end of the *Secreta*, but Haye's manuscript lacks this section on Complexions and we have to look elsewhere for a comparison with the unknown poem. In 1422, James Yongue translated a French version of the *Secreta* into the English of the Pale, and this version can conveniently be used for comparison with the poem (Aristotle (pseudo-) 1898: 218–236).

Throughout the Middle Ages, when the study of physiognomy came to be considered of great importance, the *Secreta* was attributed to Aristotle. But it is now classed amongst pseudepigraphic literature as pseudo-Aristotelian. Yongue's translation contains two accounts of physiognomy, the first is designated pseudo-Aristotelian, and the second, a shortened version, is called the pseudo-Polemon treatise. The poem appears to be based on the latter, though its opening lines on the Complexions are derived from the longer pseudo-Aristotelian version. (p-Polemon and p-Aristotle hereafter.)

The Four Complexions

In his description of each of the four Complexions, the unknown poet (the Poet hereafter) extracts part only from the p-Aristotle, as exemplified in his treatment of the Phlegmatic:

flewmen is fatt, & slaw sweir & sliparie
whyt spittand ay bluntwittit, and drasie

5-6

whereas in p-Aristotle:

The fleumatyke by kynde he sholde be slowe, sadde, ful stille, and Slowe of answere: febill of body, lyghtly falle in palsey; be shalbe grete and fatte, he shalle haue a febill stomake, febil dygestion, and good delyueraunce. And as touchynge maneres he shal be piteuouse, chaste, and lytill desyre company of women. (p. 220, ll. 7-12)

The flevmatike whyte and Pale . . .

(p. 220, l. 28)

The Poet's descriptions of the Complexions all relate closely to lines in John Russell's *Boke of Nurture*, written c. 1450 (which may have been Russell's own improved version of an earlier Book of Nurture). Russell was in charge of the household of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and the *Boke of Nurture* covers all aspects of household management. At one point it gives inscriptions for a set of four novelties to be presented during the course of a meal for the entertainment of the guests; and they refer to the four Complexions. The Poet's lines (5-6) on Phlegmatic are close to Russell's:

Hic sompnolentus|piger, in sputamine multus,
Ebes hinc sensus|pinguis, facie color albus.

(Russell 1868: 170)

[This person sleepy|lazy, spitting much,
Lacking sense|fat, white-faced.]

Then in the poem,

sanguin is fair & fat be measur, reid & whyt
Luifand & larg & lachand with delyte
in blythnes ay singand and wyss hardy,

7-9

which accords closely with the *Boke of Nurture* where Sanguine is

Largus, amans, hillaris, ridens, rubeique coloris,
Cantans, carnosus, satis audax, atque benignus;

(Russell 1868: 169)

[Liberal, loving, blithe, laughing, red as to colour,
Singing, fat, bold enough, and benign;]

The Poet, incidentally, does not include the further observations which are made in p-Aristotle on the digestion of a sanguine man.

On Choleric, the poem gives:

a crabit complectioun is colerik
a far mair noble is na flewmatik
for it is frie, bayt[h] lairg, hardy, & stout
Mair subtill wyss & mair worthy allout
bot small & lenyee ar they broun of face,
far mair of vndertakin, & hering[?]

11-16

which is all synonymic with words in the fuller description in p-Aristotle; and is again close to the *Boke of Nurture*:

Hirsutus, Fallax|irascens|prodigus, satis audax,
Astutus, gracilis|Siccus, croceique coloris.

(Russell 1868: 170)

[Crabbed, deceitful|angry|liberal, bold enough,
Wise, lean|hardy, yellow as to colour.]

On Melancholy, the Poet has no good word:

for it is sour Invyous, cald & dry,
Gredie virtew [*untrew*], dreidfull & ay drowpan
& leidin hewit & full seildum lachand

18-20

In p-Aristotle, Melancholy is 'colde and dry aftyr kynde of erthe' (p. 219 l. 38), and:

The Malencoly man sholde be lene of body and dry, he sholde haue good appetyde of mette, and comonely he Is a glotoun and good delueraunce hathe of his belly. And as touchynge maneris, he sholde bene pensyfe and Slowe, and of stille wille, still and dredfull, and a smalle entremyttere. More latre Is he wourthe than a colerike man, but he holdyth longyr wreth; he is of sotille ymagynacion as of hand-werkys, And well arne wonyd the malencolik men to be Sutill werkmen.

(p. 220 ll. 19-27)

The malencolike sholde be Sumwhate blake and pale.

(p. 220 l. 29)

Again on Melancholy, the poem is nearer to the succinctness of the *Boke of Nurture*:

Invidus et tristis|Cupidus|dextre que tenacis,
Non expers fraudis, timidus, luteique coloris.

(Russell 1868: 170)

[Envious and dejected|greedy|of mean right hand,
Not without cheating, full of dread, pale as to colour.]

So in the case of each Complexion, the Poet extracts from p-Aristotle while his words adhere closely to the *Boke of Nurture*.

John Rolland's 'The Court of Venus'

In the prologue to his poem, *The Court of Venus*, written in the mid-sixteenth century, John Rolland describes the four Complexions in words almost identical to those of the unknown poem. It is as if he had lifted certain phrases from the Poet's work for his own use (or *vice versa*). It is perhaps appropriate to note here that in his poem, *The Seuin Seages* (The Seven Sages), written 1560, Rolland acknowledges the influence of four masters upon his work: David Lindsay, John Bellenden, William Stewart, and Bishop Durie of Galloway (Rolland 1932: 1-2).

The Court of Venus is known only from a unique printed copy of 1575 which is somewhat mutilated and is held by the British Library. (A photostat copy is in the National Library of Scotland [F6.b. 7(2)].) The 1884 Scottish Text Society version of this book gives suggestions for filling the *lacunae*. These are incorporated below into the 1575 version (as the STS version departs slightly from it).³ New, and perhaps better, ways of filling the *lacunae* are shown at the left-hand side; they have been arrived at after careful examination of the spacing and vestigial letters in the original 1575 version and comparing that version with the unknown poem.

PHLEGMATICVS

	[F] or Flewme is fat, slaw, richt slipperie and sweir,	
[---- a]nd	[A]nd drasie, to spit can not forbeir	
	[Sanguine]ane is fat and fair with measure,	
[And reid]	[Red] and quhyte, and lufeand with plesure,	20
[Wyse, hardie]	[Joyous and] in blyithnes ay singand,	
[----- lar]	[]genes, and with delyte lauchand.	

CHOLERICVS

[--- ch]	[]choleric is crabit of nature:	
[And far m]lair	[]In] air nobill of valure.	
[Na Phlc]	[]dolgmatike: for it is hardie and fre,	25
	Subtell and wyse, stouter and moir manlie:	
	Bot small of face, of body Lecherous,	
	Quik of Ingyne, of Lordschip couetous.	

MELANCHOLICVS

	The last and worst is callit Melancoly	
	Soure, sorrowfull, Inuious, cauld and dry:	30
	Drowpand, dreidfull, gredie and vntrew:	
	Heuie heidit, and seindill in game or glew.	

The last line can be compared with the unknown poem's

& leidin hewit & full seildum lachand.	20
--	----

P-Aristotle does not call the Melancholic heavy-headed, but says he is *Pale*—lead-

hued as the Poet accurately describes him; and the Poet's closer adherence to p-Aristotle favours the idea that it was Rolland who lifted fragments from the Poet rather than the other way round. It may be noted that William Stewart, the poet, gives a description of Melancholy as 'The perelous poyoun, mortiferus melancolie', likening it to the envious adder and the 'dullie dragone', in his *Buik of the Croniclis of Scotland* (1535) (Stewart 1858: ll. 672–675).

The first letter of *seindill* is ambiguous in the 1575 edition and the STS version gives it as *feindill*: but Rolland uses *seindill* for *seldom* again later (Rolland 1884: Bk. II. 156), and 'seindill in game or glew' corresponds to the Poet's 'full seildum lachand'.

Links with the pseudo-Polemon Treatise

Having dealt with the four complexions, the unknown poem proceeds to a discussion of the features of the body, almost exactly following the order of the p-Polemon treatise in a natural progression from head to feet. Sometimes the poem follows the p-Polemon closely, sometimes there is considerable divergence.

One close link between the two is the repetitive use of the phrase *who-so hath* in the p-Polemon, corresponding to *wha hes* or *wha sa hes* in the poem. It first appears in the p-Polemon in

who-so hath ful grete eyen . . . (p. 233 l. 15)

and at the corresponding point in the poem

And wha hes great eyn gogland over th[elr] face . . . 73

The last appearance of the phrase in p-Polemon is in

Whoso hath the Paas large and slow, he is wyse and wel spedynge in all his dedys, and who-so
hath the Paas litill and Swyfte, he is suspeccious, of euyl will, on-myghty to werkys.
(p. 235 ll. 32–35)

and similarly in the poem:

Wha sa in ganging hes a steadfast pace
ther followis oft prosperitie and grace

And wha sa nimlie gars & spedilie
bot gife he have a ry[ch]t great cause & why
and settis to do his deidis all in haist
they are lyke guidlie purpose for to waist
for they are inoportwn & of kittill will
and oft th[elr] purpose andis not will th[?] thamee till 292–9.

The Poet uses *wha* much oftener than *wha sa* as the compound relative pronoun *he who* or *whoever*. This follows Barbour's similar use of *quha* in *The Bruce* (1375):

Quha lufis his lord and his Cuntre
Turne smertly now agane with me:
(Barbour 1894: II. 72 ll. 599–600)

Only once or twice does the Poet come near to paraphrasing p-Polemon. At line 21, the Poet launches into the specifics of physiognomy, first dealing with deformity. The p-Polemon opens with some lines on the dangers of pale men (ignored by the Poet) and then discusses deformity:

So is he to enchue, and more, that fautyth any lyme atte his byrth, or hath in othyr manere the lymes dyfformyd out of kynde: Such bene to enchue as enemys, for to wickidnesse thay bene enclynet. (p. 232 ll. 33–36)

The Poet follows this closely:

fra man mismaid in his person vmbethow
whilk is mankit fra members of mankynd
for co[m]monly they haue ane akwart strynd
for wha falt bearis of his nativitie
in his co[n]ditioun faultles sall not be 22–26

adding his own comment,

bot give that throw vertew him refrainyed
and throw his wit his wickit will co[n]strenyed 27–28

(The Poet uses a similar conditional phrase in line 135, 'bot grace & vertew brydill th[e]r nature,' introducing a note of perhaps Christian optimism into a secular treatise: cf. 89–90.)

The other instance of near-paraphrasing is on voice characteristics. P-Polemon gives:

Who-so hath the Voyce grete and Plesaunt and well hardyn, he is chyualerous, Plesaunt, and eloquente. (p. 234 ll. 28–29)

The poem says:

And wha is of speikin gross and round
with words cleir vnwe[m]mit haill & sound
he is bayt[h] bald and stout & gude langage
gude witt gude eloquens & gude knowledge 216–19

Typical of the diversity between the poem and p-Polemon is the passage on eyes, corresponding to lines 65–122 of the poem. P-Polemon declares:

who-so hath ful grete eyen, he is enuyous and not shamefaste, slow and Inobedyente, and namely yf he haue Pale eyen: he that haue the eyen of meen gretnysse, blake or grey, he is of Parceuyng vndyrstondyng, courteyse and trewe; who-so hath longe eyen and straght, and the visage moch straght, Suche is malicious and felonous; who so hath eyen y-like an asse his eyen, he is a sotte and of harde vndyrstondyng; who so hath eyen meuyng and fleyng and sharpe lokyng, he is a dysceioure, a thefe, and a giloure: he that hath rede sparkelyng eyen, his fierse and corageous: Eyen that bene whit y-freklet, or I-sprotid, or blake, or reede y-spratelid throghe the eyen, bene moste to blame amonge al otheris, and moste reprouabill; and suche a man is worst amonge al otheris. (p. 233 ll. 15–27)

The Poet uses this in his own way but his comments in lines 98–122 do not appear in p-Polemon.

Sometimes the Poet adds a few apt words of his own to emphasise a point. On the visage, p-Polemon says:

Who-so hath the temples swollen and the chekis also, he is ful angri. (p. 234 ll. 21–22)
while the Poet expresses it with more subtlety,

Wha hes ane visage short & fatt & suollen
and keepand noss with chekes boline
with lytill hew of cullour wermelin
orpie growis in his herbe all sessoun 180–3

alluding to the aggressive man who has constant need of this vulnerable!

P-Polemon states:

A Softe spekere is a dysceyuoure (p. 234 l. 37)

The Poet expands this in proverbial terms:

wha hes ane sleikit voce & swyft & sweit
And in his mouthe melt butter will not lett
they draw oft out of men with th[e]r langage
and garis th[e]m weyn that they have a guid curage
as fouller when he wald his pluvars get
with his sweit not he draws th[e]m to the net. 234–9

In *The Kingis Quair* (early 15th c.), anent the seduction of a maiden, there is:

For as the foulere quhislith in his throte
Diuersely to counterfete the brid,
And feynis mony a suete and strangē note
That in the busk for his desate is hid,
Till sche be fast lokin in his net amyde:
(W. W. Skeat 1911: stanza 135)

Linguistic Features and Dating of the Poem

The language of the poem is sometimes archaic. Certain features indicate a range of possible dates for it.

There are several alliterative lines in the poem:

Luifand & larg & lachand with delyte	8
And throw his witt his wickit will co[n]strenyed	28
Wha hes fatt face ill favoured & fleshly	170
wha hes ane sleikit voce & swyft & sweit	234

The combination of rhyme and alliteration reached its height of popularity in Scotland by the middle of the fifteenth century. By the end of the sixteenth, the Scottish poets had forsaken its use. This suggests the poem is of the sixteenth or even fifteenth century.

In the poem the indefinite article appears predominantly as *a* before a consonant and *ane* before a vowel or *h* (as in 24 and 196). This was normal usage in the fifteenth century and earlier. Out of 36 cases in the poem there are only 7 exceptions to such usage: 6 where *ane* is used before a consonant, and one where *a* is used before *h* (123, 156, 180, 200, 234 and 263; and 243). In sixteenth-century Scottish literature *ane* came to be used in all positions.

The use of *at* for *that* in prose virtually ceased before the end of the fifteenth century, though it persisted longer in poetry. In the poem, *at* appears for *that* in line 325, which suggests the poem is not later than early sixteenth century.

In the poem *q[uhil]lk[i]s* is used (68, 69), never *the quhilkis*. The use of *quhilkis* alone does not appear till about the 1420s. The word also appears in the poem as *whilk* (70, 152), possibly a modernisation by Mylne in transcription. The use of *wh* for *quh* is not consistent between MSS 34.3.12 and 34.3.11: modernisation of spelling is more evident in 34.3.11, e.g. 'good beauties' for 'guid bewties' (63). Such discrepancies suggest some archaisms may have been lost in transcription.

An examination of the vocabulary also helps to date the poem.

Drasie (6) is of obscure origin. The only two sources given for this word in DOST are in *The Court of Venus* (mid-sixteenth century) (Rolland 1884: Prol. ll. 17, 74), the first being one of the lines perhaps lifted from the unknown poem.

Vmbethow or *Umbethow* (22, 311) is an error, probably in transcription, for *umbechow*. *Umbechow*, *umbechew*, *umbeschew*, were all used in the fifteenth century, changing form to *vmchow* or *vmshew* in the sixteenth. In 'Foly of Fulys' in *Ratis Raving etc.* (15th c.) (Girvan 1939: 65, l. 475) there is:

Quhay lovis honor suld thaim vmbeschew

which compares with the line in the poem:

wha luifs hono[u]r sick men suld umbethow 311

Na as used in the poem for *nor* (62, 66, 151, 152) was obsolescent in the sixteenth century. The poem's use of *na* for *than* (12) was obsolete from about 1550.

Waldyn and *waldin* appear in the poem (264; 252). Both forms were used in the fifteenth century, the use of *waldin* persisting into the sixteenth.

Entertryke (325) is a rare obsolete Scottish word listed in DOST as *intertrike* or *intertryik*. There are only two references given: Gavin Douglas' Scots translation of Virgil's Aeneid, made between 1501 and 1513, (1957: II. 17 l. 484), for *intertrike*; and William Stewart's *Buik of the Croniclis of Scotland* (1535) (1858: l. 59185), for *intertryik*. *Entertryking* appears in the *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland* in 1318 (l. 111-12).

Conclusion

While the poem is derived from the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum*, following the pseudo-Polemon treatise, it is not a simple metrical translation: the Poet adds to, omits from, and expands upon the treatise. It is an independent poem, apparently mainly set down in its original language of Middle Scots.

Judging from the use of words, it could have been written in the late fifteenth, or early sixteenth, century. Perhaps another clue to its date lies in Mylne's description of it as being 'In a Monastick Rhyme'. This would indicate that he believed the poem to be appreciably earlier than the Reformation.

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NOTES

1. In MS 22.1.14, the 240 folios comprise 238 consecutively numbered folios, plus a 'missed' folio numbered 61a, plus the index page: the signed pre-page is not included in the folio numbering. There are new folio numbers at top centre of the leaves, and faint old folio numbers at the top right-hand corners. From examination of these under ultra-violet light; by using the index entries; and from the position of stubs in the manuscript, it was possible to pinpoint the missing folios: old nos. 73-79, 132, 166-170, and probably 253-255 (between, respectively, new folio nos. 71 and 72, 123 and 124, 156 and 157 (where the poem should be); and next to the index page).
2. See 'Two Stewarts of the Sixteenth Century' and 'Robert Stewart of Arholl, Son of the Wolf of Badenoch' by Joyce M. Sanderson, in *The Stewarts* xvii, No. 1 (1984): 25-46; No. 3 (1986): 136-148.
3. In the first thirty lines of the STS edition of *The Court of Venus* there are twelve departures from the 1575 edition. Some are minor changes in spelling, but line 7, 'And that throw heuinlie Constellatiounis', is omitted altogether. Some changes alter the sense:
 1575: l.17 [Flor Flewme is fat
 STS: l.16 [Flor Flewme is flat
 1575: l.23 [ch]olerik is crabit of nature
 STS: l.22 [ch]olerik is calit of nature
 W. A. Craigie in *Modern Languages Quarterly* (March 1898: 9-16) gives a long list of corrections of STS 1884 edition of *The Court of Venus*.

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