M. J. GRANT

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For my parents,
Mark and Maryalice

Er stieg vom Pferd und reichte ihm den Trunk
Des Abschieds dar.
Er fragte ihn, wohin er führe, und auch warum, warum es müßte sein.

<div align="right">

Wang Wei (ca. 699–759 C.E.), translated by Hans Bethge,
as adapted by Gustav Mahler, *Das Lied von der Erde*
(*The Song of the Earth*), 1911.

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You and I must have one bumper to my favorite toast—May the Companions of our Youth be the friends of our Old Age!

<div align="right">

Roberts Burns, letter to Captain Richard Brown,
4 November 1789.

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Contents

Introduction

> One more song, and I have done.—Auld lang syne—The air is but mediocre; but the following song, the old Song of the olden times, & which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, untill I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.[1]

The story goes that Irving Berlin, having just penned a song with the title *White Christmas*, called excitedly to his assistant with the announcement that he had just written his greatest ever song. Indeed, *White Christmas* was, for a long period, the most commercially successful recorded song of all time, and for many people in the English-speaking world it is now as much a part of Christmas as decorated trees and the man in the red-and-white suit. Given this emotional significance, the idea that Berlin immediately recognized the song's potential is attractive, suggesting as it does that the song's success had less to do with the machinations of the music industry, and more to do with the song's own particular qualities.

Compare, then, this story to the quotation above from the Scottish poet and songwriter Robert Burns, talking about this book's subject. The remark came in a letter to the publisher George Thomson, who, possibly inspired by Burns's comment, promptly ditched the tune Burns talks of and united the words to another. This new version appeared for the first time after Burns's death, in 1799, and three years after the verses had originally been published—in a volume edited by James Johnson—with the tune Burns provided.[2] The new tune promptly extinguished the old for close on two centuries, despite occasional philological protests to the contrary.

Now let us spring forward to January 1974, and cross the Atlantic to New York, and consult an altogether different source: a review of a concert in a series celebrating cross-cultural exchange, written for *The Village Voice* by its then regular critic for new music events, the composer Tom Johnson:

> Last Tuesday the featured artist was Avery Jimerson, a Seneca Indian, who came down from the Allegany Reservation upstate to sing a few of the 1000 or so songs he has composed during the past 30 years [...] He has a strong voice with a slightly pinched sound, and he never moves his lips more than a fraction of an inch as he makes his way

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1   Robert Burns, letter to George Thomson, September 1793; *Letters*, No. 586. All references to Burns's letters are taken from the 1985, revised Clarendon Press edition, as noted below.
2   Johnson (ed.) 1796, Thomson (ed.) 1799.

through his intricate melodies, always accompanying himself on a drum. The songs are all short, some scarcely a minute long, but they are not at all repetitious and generally have lots of shifty rhythms and complex formal structures. Most of them have no words, making do simply with hi-yo-way and other non-verbal syllables common in American Indian music. I found all of this contemporary Seneca music absorbing and intellectually challenging, but for me the emotional high point of the evening was Jimerson's version of 'Auld Lang Syne.' This melody is taken directly from the white man, yet it was so thoroughly integrated into Jimerson's own Seneca style that I probably would not have recognized it if the singer had not clued us in. It sounded pretty strange, but it was somehow deeper and more communicative than any 'Auld Lang Syne' arrangement I ever heard at a New Year's Eve party.[3]

How did an eighteenth-century Scots song, the name of which not even most Scottish people understand, end up being sung in the late twentieth century by a Native American in a programme of songs from his own, very different, tradition? The answer has to do, first and foremost, with colonization: European settlers stole lands and the right to govern over them from the Seneca and others, and installed themselves as the dominant culture. That now dominant culture dictates, through a now dominant tradition, that at New Year *Auld Lang Syne* is sung. But given that nothing in the song's lyrics references New Year, where did this tradition come from? And what about other traditions associated with the song, such as singing it at parting, and the related tradition found across the Pacific in Japan of the tune of *Auld Lang Syne* being played to signal the close of business in department stores and clubs?

As these and countless further examples testify, *Auld Lang Syne* is one of the most well-known songs in the world. It would be easy to attribute this infamy to the international culture of commercial, recorded music and other aspects of twentieth-century globalization. But in 1892, in a pamphlet dedicated to the song, the great Burns scholar James Dick could already comment that

> Perhaps it is not too much to say that 'Auld Lang Syne' is the best known and most widely diffused song in the civilised world [...] Our brethren in every quarter of the earth know it better than we do ourselves: and I have heard a mixed company of Scots, English, Germans, Italians and French Swiss sing the chorus in an upland hotel in Switzerland.[4]

Dick was one of the first to pursue in-depth enquiries into the origins of the song, but even he does not ask what happened next—and this, in many ways, is more interesting. Literary historians have debated continuously whether Burns merely edited an existing song, or whether his contribution was more substantial. Burns himself always denied authorship of the text of *Auld Lang Syne*; however, he often denied authorship of other lyrics now known to be by him, and we have no convincing sources to suggest that this text, with the exception of a few stock phrases, was an adaptation rather than a new composition. Only after his death did editors begin to suggest that the lyrics might

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3   Johnson 1974.
4   Dick 1892, 379.

have been his own creation. What impact did this link between Burns's name and the song have on its reception? And given that many songs by Burns became extremely popular in the years which followed, what helped raise *Auld Lang Syne* in particular to the stature it now enjoys? Moreover, there is nothing in the original publications featuring the song, nor in the song itself, to suggest that it be used at the end of social gatherings, by people standing in a circle, with their arms crossed and their hands joined, as is often the tradition; and, as already mentioned, there is nothing to suggest an implicit connection to New Year's Eve, either. Where did these traditions come from, and what impact did they have on the further spread of the song, gluing it to a ritual context which ensured its repetition, its transmission through time, up to the present day?

<p align="center">***</p>

The myth about music being a universal language would provide another explanation for the transcultural success of *Auld Lang Syne*. However, as Johnson's review of Jimerson's concert shows, said myth has little or no basis in fact, and does no justice at all to the complexity, multiplicity and variability of musical forms, structures, genres and practices that we humans have come up with. What is certain, however, is that "music" in the broadest sense is a universal human practice, in the sense that it is found in all known societies.[5] Singing, whatever form this takes, is one of the most common of all musical activities, and the singing of what may be very simple and repetitive songs—such as lullabies, or counting songs, or hymns—is possibly the most common of all types of singing. In fact, and as Burns scholars are often first to admit, Burns's enormous fame and popularity is due in no small part to the fact that so much of his output consists of songs. The last half of his active life was dedicated to collecting songs, adapting some of them and creating many new ones by writing a new lyric to accompany an existing instrumental tune. Burns understood very well how powerful song can be, and that old Scots tunes were more likely to survive if accompanied by a memorable set of words.

This book will focus on music as social practice in order to explore and explain just how *Auld Lang Syne* could become so significant, in so many ways, for so many people and communities. In addition to surveying a significant portion of the occurrences of *Auld Lang Syne* from the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth and up to the present day, it will draw on the expertise which musicologists have developed in the field of song research. Since music is fundamental to human life, and since so many people have direct experience of singing, or hearing, or whistling, or trying to drown out the sound of *Auld Lang Syne*, it seems obvious that this book is not directed only, perhaps not even primarily, at musicologists. Where possible, I have tried to

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5   This "broadest sense" starts from the modern western connotations of the word "music", which covers many phenomena that in some cultures are regarded as conceptually separate. See Nettl 2001 for more details.

explain any musical terminology used, and to make it possible for those who can't read modern western music notation to follow the argument wherever the inclusion of a music example was unavoidable, for example by making corresponding sound examples available. I trust that readers who do understand musicological jargon will be patient with the explanations and, sometimes, generalizations this entails.

Chapter 1 introduces some key issues and concepts which can help us to understand the different social contexts in which songs are used, and why, and what the effects can be. Chapters 2 and 3 gather together older and newer information on the various elements which lay behind the song as it was published in the late eighteenth century, whilst Chapters 4 to 8 trace the establishment of the song and the traditions associated with it through the nineteenth and into the earlier twentieth century. Chapter 9 uses the reception of the song in Germany as a case study for its adoption into other national cultures, while Chapter 10 surveys some other aspects of its travels round the world and into a whole series of frankly incongruous contexts. Chapter 11 asks what all this information tells us, and Chapter 12 adds a coda bringing the story up to the early twenty-first century, and back to Scotland, by looking at a number of recent versions of the song from its country of origin.

It was, in fact, these many contemporary versions that inspired this study in the first place. I came upon these recordings by chance at a time when I was looking for a way to write about song in Scottish culture, and my initial reaction—mirrored by some people's responses when I tell them about this book—was one of surprise that *Auld Lang Syne* could prove so inspiring. When we are used to singing it in a tired and oftentimes inebriated circle at the end of parties, or to hearing snippets of it in Hollywood films, it is easy to wonder what a modern musician (or musicologist) could do with it, how it is possible to interpret and bring new meaning to something which is such an extensively popular cultural good—not to mention why anyone would want to do so. No wonder, therefore, that the recordings I refer to consciously provide another reading of this song, either slowing down and solemnizing the famous tune or, indeed, using a different tune. They also tend to sing all of the words published by Burns, words which are more specific in content than the verses generally sung—with the usual variations of oral tradition—at social gatherings.

A recording of a well-loved song, specifically interpreted by an established musician; a gathering of people, none of whom normally sing, but who belt out a few verses or at least the chorus of this song at New Year or at the end of parties; amateur poets and other writers who borrow the now famous phrase *Auld Lang Syne* in their own works; pedants who criticize the "wrong words" sung supposedly by most of the masses, particularly if the accuser is Scottish and the accused English or American—for all of these people, *Auld Lang Syne* means a great deal, and it is my assertion that the significance of the song, no matter how much we try to preserve or restore the "original" version, has everything to do with the social contexts in which it is most frequently sung, and most frequently sung wrongly.

The story of *Auld Lang Syne*, then, is not so much the story of its origins—although this, too, will be explored in this book—but of what came next, and as such this story is much more than the sum of its many, many parts. Put simply, it is a testimony to the force of song and of singing in human culture. It is also a history of traditions of popular music before these became worthy of official histories and the attention of musicologists, and the way in which songs so often cross genres and social classes, and borders. *Auld Lang Syne*'s story is a testament to Burns's instinct as a songwriter, and it is also a social history of how song is passed back and forth between oral and literate traditions to the extent that the categories become problematic in the extreme. It is a tale of the social, economic and aesthetic factors that make a good tune and an affective lyric become a cultural phenomenon. It is also a story with relevance for our own time: the original text of *Auld Lang Syne* is rarely sung in its entirety, but even in its most reduced form it is clear that it is about those very factors which make tradition so important in everyday life—the need for identification with a social group; the importance of the close ties of family and friends; nostalgia and the basic human need for an amount of familiarity and the stability of ritual. More specifically, it is a song about losing these ties, about the pull of the past, about the effects of emigration, about the separation of individuals from the land and people they hold dear. It is also a tale about the ties which, through this song, link music publishers with Freemasons, Ludwig van Beethoven with Frank Capra, Scotland with the rest of the world, and you yourself with just about anyone you will ever meet, who will almost certainly produce a smile of recognition when you hum the first few bars of the tune.

Note on the Text

The bibliography to this book is divided into three parts. Bibliography I contains details of the main Burns editions used here, James Kinsley's 1968 edition—referenced in the footnotes as "Kinsley"—and the 1985, revised Clarendon Press edition of Burns's letters—referenced "*Letters*" in the footnotes.[6] Primary musical and poetical sources which have a date but not an identifiable author, are listed by date in Bibliography II: footnotes reference this in the style "Bib. II/[date]", with additional numbering where more than one source has the same date. Bibliography III contains all the remaining primary and secondary text sources, and is referenced in footnotes using the "Author-Date" system. An exception are newspaper sources, the details of which (publication and date) are given in the footnote only.

One of the nightmares I faced in conducting this study was incomplete or non-existent referencing to sources in some of the secondary literature I consulted: for this reason, and in an effort to ease future referencing to some of the more obscure

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6   Kinsley's edition is gradually being superseded by the new Oxford Edition of Burns's works, under the general editorship of Gerard Carruthers. I had access to the relevant volumes of this Edition (Pittock (ed.) 2018/1, 2018/2; McCue (ed.) 2021) only in the final stages of editing this book.

items consulted, I have erred on the side of extensive bibliographic information where possible.

Whenever I refer to "Burns's song", or "Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*", I mean the modern song text with five verses first published in 1796 (see Chapter 3 for more on this). The epithet "Burns's song" refers not to authorship but, if one likes, ownership of the song—the distinction is discussed in Chapter 1—and refers to his responsibility for presenting this song to the world, regardless of the actual authorship of its constituent parts (but see my concluding comments on this, in Chapters 11 and 12).

Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own. Occasional assistance has been given for Scots words and phrases cited.

References to the works of Burns are to Kinsley's edition, and referenced with "K" and the number in that edition; thus, *Auld Lang Syne* is K240. Further information on some shorthand I have used (M-1, M1, M2, SΩ, S∞, S$_{NY}$, B1–B5) is explained towards the end of Chapter 1.

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Notated music examples and midi files for the integrated audio examples have been created using the open-source notation software MuseScore: https://musescore.org/en.

Hetian Li's illustration for the cover of this book is based on a photograph by Ros Gasson of a rendition of *Auld Lang Syne* at a ceilidh in Trafalgar Square, London organized by Ceilidh Caleerie in 2009: my thanks to Ros Gasson and the Scots Music Group for permission to use the image in this way.[7] The colour scheme of Hetian's illustration is based on the "Auld Lang Syne" tartan created in 2002.[8]

A whole series of other people have helped in matters great and small, too many to be listed here. Help on specific issues, which was invaluable given the scope of the project, is credited at relevant points in the discussion. For putting me up, and putting up with me, during several research trips, I am particularly grateful to Aileen Carson and John Keillor, and to Bettina Schergaut. Further and personal thanks are due to many good friends who assisted in various ways and at various stages while I was working intensively on this book: Tressa Burke, Wolfgang Fuhrmann, Dorothee Haßkamp, Ines Mayfarth, Tobias Overath, Stefan Peim, Deniza Popova and Tracey Sinclair. Ruth Finnegan's gentle nagging, and the inspiration provided by her work on communication, have encouraged me to persist with this project through to publication: I also owe my introduction to Open Book Publishers to Ruth. My brothers and sisters provided, variously, advice on tunes, moral support, accommodation, and general interest; my nephews and nieces taught me more about music than they will ever know.

The dedication of this book indicates my continuing debt to my parents, for their unfailing support even when I did things that they really thought I shouldn't—such as studying musicology.

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7   The original photo was published by the Scots Music Group on Flickr, and can be viewed at https://www.flickr.com/photos/8482716@N04/3791258313.

8   The number of this tartan in the Scottish Tartan World Registry is 240, which—presumably coincidentally—is also the number of the song in the Kinsley edition of the work of Burns, https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=131

1. Elements of a Theory of Song

song (n.) that which is sung; a short poem or ballad suitable for singing or set to music; the melody to which it is sung; an instrumental composition of similar form and character; singing; the melodious outburst of a bird; any characteristic sound; a poem, or poetry in general; a theme of song; a habitual utterance, manner, or attitude towards anything; a fuss; a mere trifle (as in *going for a song* being sold for a trifling sum).[1]

There we have it: a song is a mere trifle, a thing of little value. Songs were indeed bought and sold for a penny as long ago as the sixteenth century; used, abused, and paraphrased in popular operas and musicals as the dictates of fashion recommended; hijacked for political rallies and played *ad nauseum* in the background of cafés and bars and offices, not to mention being sung in public by drunken football fans and in private by part-time divas in the shower. The more annoyingly banal songs are, the more likely to get stuck in our heads like a scratched record: the German word *Ohrwurm*, ear-worm, wonderfully captures the way songs seem to crawl into our aural cavities and nest there. Thus these tenacious morsels of human communication flit across social, geographical, temporal, and musical boundaries in the manner of what song researchers once called a migrating melody, "one of those winged little things which you will find everywhere and nowhere, which you pick up in the street and which, in polymorphous versatility, appear today in a rambunctious Broadway dance and tomorrow in a solemn Mass".[2] Songs, it seems, are no trifles at all.

1.1 The Social Functions of Song

But of course songs are no trifles. Indeed, David Huron, exploring the role music may have played in the evolution of the human species, draws particular attention to them:

> Consider the following question: What is the most successful piece of music in modern history? Of course the answer to this question depends on how we define success—and this is far from clear, as esthetic philosophers have shown. Nevertheless, I want to use a straightforward criterion: let us assume that the most successful musical work is the one that is most performed and most heard. Using this criterion, you might be surprised by the answer. The most successful musical work was composed by Mildred and Patti Hill in 1893, and revised in the 1930s. The piece in question is, of course, "Happy Birthday".

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1   Definition from the 1998 edition of *The Chambers Dictionary* (Schwarz et al. 1998, 1576).
2   Nettl 1952, 29.

"Happy Birthday" has been translated into innumerable languages and is performed on the order of a million times a day. It remained under copyright protection until the middle of the twentieth century. For many people, the singing of "Happy Birthday" is the only time they sing in public. For other people, the singing of "Happy Birthday" constitutes the only time they sing at all.[3]

Happy Birthday is just one of the examples Huron uses to demonstrate that if music did have an evolutionary function—and he is not convinced that it did—this was almost certainly related to social bonding. His exploration, which draws on evidence from biology, developmental psychology, and anthropology, echoes what song researchers in particular have long felt to be the key role played by singing and song in consolidating personal and group identity.[4]

Auld Lang Syne is a slightly more complex example than *Happy Birthday*. The song's text has more serious literary pretensions, for one thing, and is linked to one of the world's most famous poets. The development of the traditions surrounding the song are less self-explanatory than the habit of singing *Happy Birthday* on birthdays. Moreover, for many people, not only those of Scottish heritage, *Auld Lang Syne* is firmly linked to their sense of who they are. In other ways, however, *Auld Lang Syne* is very much in the mould of *Happy Birthday*: sung routinely at specific events, and at specific points in time, by people who never otherwise sing, it is a social song *par excellence*. The paths taken by *Auld Lang Syne* and its constituent elements, the myriad contexts in which it appears, and the sundry ways in which people have sought to inject new meaning and significance into it, present a casebook example of the cultural connections and disconnections which can be traced by following a simple song on its journey through history, and through the mouths, minds and hearts of those who come into contact with it.

In tracing the history of *Auld Lang Syne*, this book will draw on a number of earlier studies of song and of singing generally. In particular, my approach is influenced by a long tradition of song research in Germany. This tradition began, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as research into "folksong", conceived of originally as songs which had emerged, at some distant point in the past, in agrarian communities and had been transmitted orally down the generations since. As time went on, however, researchers became increasingly uneasy about the standard conception of what a folksong was. They began to realise that what many people regarded as their own local and ancient folksongs were often songs written or published only ten or twenty years earlier by someone from a very different area and tradition. This did not stop people in a particular locality from claiming these songs as their own, however; this

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3   Huron 2006, 55–56.
4   Of the many other indicators Huron mentions in his exploration of music and evolution, one is the sheer amount of time afforded to music in many human societies, including—and this is important—in subsistence societies. It has long been recognized that musical activity is as characteristic of the human species as language is, being found in every known society; the fact that even societies which face a day-to-day struggle for existence often still dedicate a significant amount of their resources to music gives added credence to the central role music plays in human social relations.

led John Meier, founder of the German Folksong Archive (*Deutsches Volksliedarchiv*), to suggest that the real difference between a "folksong" and, say, an art song by Robert Schumann, was this relation of "ownership" (Meier's term is *Herrenverhältnis*; my translation is closer to Ernst Klusen's term *Eigentumsverhältnis*).[5] In other words, the song was the folk's song, and not, for example, Schumann's. Later, Meier's pupil Ernst Klusen suggested that the term "folksong" should be replaced by "group song", further shifting the emphasis onto the songs people actually sing, regardless of origin, and why they sing them.[6]

The term "group song", as Klusen defined it, should not be confused with "group singing". Singing certain songs in a group context can be a highly significant factor in what makes these songs important for the group, but the term "group song" specifically focuses on the significance of the song for the group, as opposed to group singing per se. (Group songs do not, in fact, have to be *sung* in a group to make them songs of a group). A growing body of research is exploring social and psychological aspects of group *singing*, primarily though not exclusively in more formalized contexts in which the group comes together specifically for that purpose (for example, choirs).[7] Group *songs*, on the other hand—songs with which groups identify, and regard as *their* songs—are often more powerful in contexts where musical communication is not the group's *raison d'être*, but is nevertheless one of the practices which help consolidate and express that group's identity. The groups concerned may be primary groups, but very often they are secondary groups—in other words, larger groups or communities who may not be in personal contact, but share certain aspects of identity.

The personal relationships people have to particular songs, including within the social groups with which they identify, can be very powerful. People of a certain age in Britain will remember "Our Tune", a spot in a radio broadcast of the 1980s when a listener's own touching story of love and/or loss was told on air, concluding with the song which the listener unequivocally connected with the experience. And as Adela Peeva explored in her award-winning film *Whose Is This Song* (2003), heated debate can ensue regarding national or ethnic ownership of a song: Peeva's example is a song claimed by multiple Balkan nations as their own. Similarly, to attempt to prescribe or proscribe what songs a group may use to identify themselves can be perceived as a direct attack on the identity of the group in question, as J. Martin Daughtry has discussed in the case of the Russian national anthem, and as I have also explored with regard to football songs in Scotland.[8]

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5   See, e.g., Meier 1906; Klusen 1989, 167. For more on these historical developments, see Heimann 1982, Linder-Beroud 1989. In the year 2000, the yearbook published by the *Deutsches Volksliedarchiv* changed its name from *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung/Yearbook of Folksong Research* to *Lied und populäre Kultur/Song and Popular Culture*. The Archive itself was reconstituted as part of the new Zentrum für Populäre Kultur und Musik (Centre for Popular Culture and Music) of the University of Freiburg from 2014.

6   Klusen 1967.

7   See, e.g., Ahlquist (ed.) 2006; Davidson & Faulkner 2019.

8   Daughtry 2003, Grant 2014.

There are any number of types of social groups for whom "their" songs are a crucial part of who they are, and very many ways in which this musical interaction can happen. Perhaps everyone sings together; or perhaps one person, or a number of people, sing while the rest listen and contribute in some other way. The contexts of group song may be very informal (for example, a group of children singing as they play) or they may be slightly more institutionalised (for example, a group which always leads the singing during a church service). Nowadays, musical interaction in groups might involve no-one singing live, but recorded music being played in the background. In the most general of terms, musical interaction—in Walter Heimann's view, any interaction through music—also takes place when two teenagers talk about their favourite bands, or, at a distance, when I read a review of a concert in the local newspaper.

Figure 1.1 shows just some of the ways that this interaction may occur, from the relatively simple form where everyone takes part in the singing, through various other forms including the introduction of external musicians playing live or via recording. It is not irrelevant for the present discussion that the context shown in Figure 1.1a, which Klusen and other scholars such as John Blacking regard as being the most fundamental and probably also the most widespread throughout human history, can be demonstrated with the typical setting of *Auld Lang Syne*;[9] but how *Auld Lang Syne* arrived in that particular group setting has a lot to do with the more complex set-ups detailed in the other diagrams. The examples also demonstrate that musical interaction is not limited to situations in which those involved themselves sing or play.[10] Another possibility, which Klusen called *Stellvertretung* or "proxy", is shown in Figure 1.1c: at this party, or at least at this point in the party, the music is not generated by the people there, but comes from a playlist chosen by someone present (not pictured is the group of women in the kitchen who are joining in at the chorus). A non-technical version of this "singing by proxy" occurs when certain members of the group have a particular role as the ones who always create or lead the music for the rest of the group (such as the guitarist who has to accompany Jim in Figure 1.1b). Figure 1.1d shows a more institutionalized, but still non-professional version of this. In Figure 1.1e, individuals and groups of friends attending a concert form one part of a larger group of people with whom they are not acquainted and may never come together again; in this professional context, their control is generally limited to showing their appreciation or displeasure (including by the purchase of tickets). And Figure 1.1f? Our homesick exile may be associating *Auld Lang Syne* with Scotland or another native land or the people they left behind there; the relationship to the song which they shared with these people recalls their relationship to them, even though the people concerned are absent.

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9   Blacking 1973.
10   Heimann 1982.
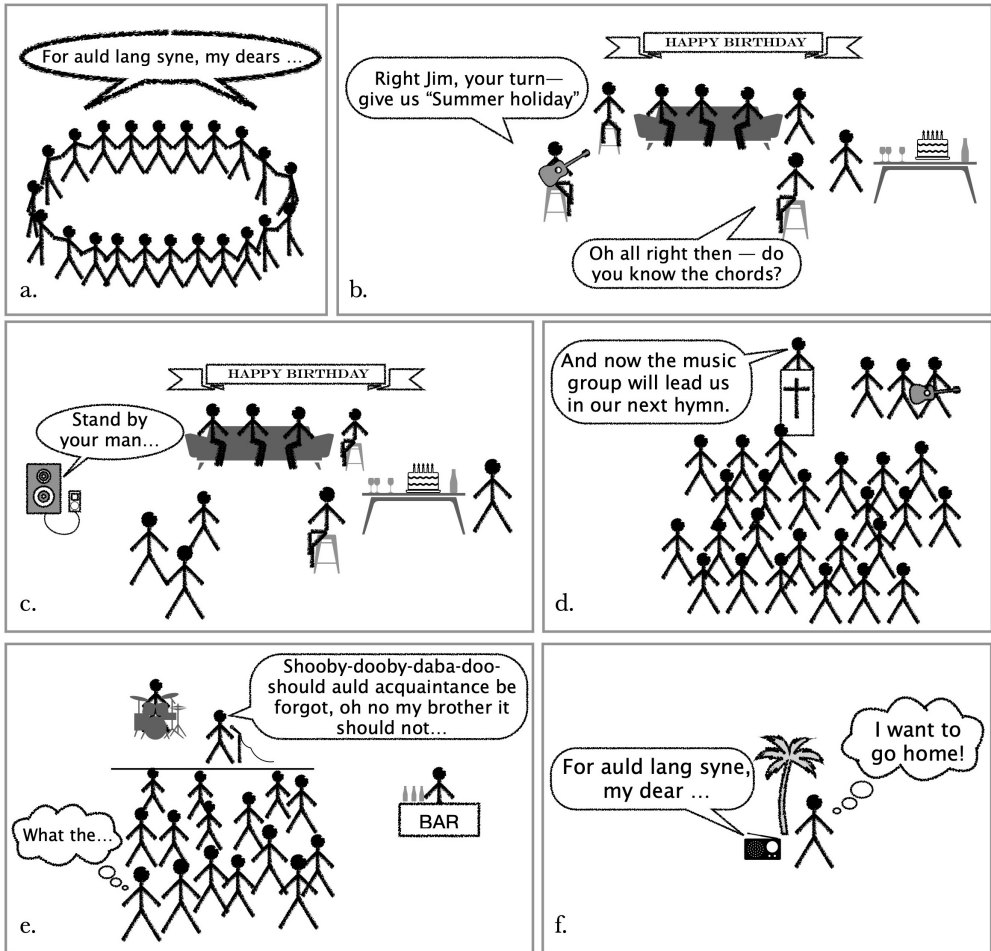
Fig. 1.1 Group songs in various interactional contexts. Figure created by author (2021).

Most of the examples above deal with what anthropologists call *primary groups*, in which each individual has at least the potential of a direct relationship with the group's other members. However, some (particularly Figure 1.1e) also touch on the notion of *secondary groups*, a term used to describe larger groups of which I can be a member without necessarily having an active relationship with other members (for example, the group of "Scots"). Research into group song has traditionally focussed on primary groups for a number of reasons, including the fact that such groups are small and relatively stable. One key function of song is not addressed by this approach, however: communication across larger regional, national, and international communities. As the history of *Auld Lang Syne* will demonstrate, however, primary or "face-to-face" groups can also play a significant role in this transmission over a wider area, particularly in the case of groups which are themselves part of larger national or transnational networks.

The transmission of songs between different social groups can take many forms. When a song is taken from one group context into another, particularly when these groups are separated in time or space, there has to be some way of it getting there. The physical carrier of the song may be a human being, a book or other written document, a radio broadcast, or a sound recording, to take just some examples. Some of the basic ways in which songs can be transported or "carried" from one context or group to another are illustrated in Figure 1.2. Figure 1.2a shows groups which see themselves

Carriers of song

Group

a. Using a common repertoire

b. Being given a repertoire

c. Choosing freely from what is available
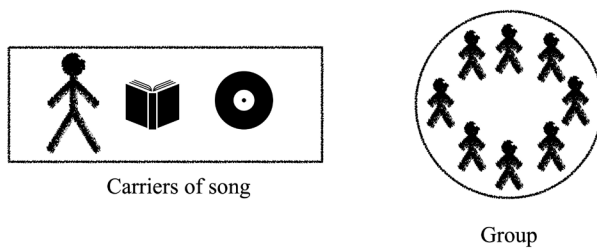
Fig. 1.2 Some carriers of song and scenarios of transmission. Figure created by author (2021).

as part of a larger entity or network, and the use of a common repertoire of songs—for example, from the same book—is one way in which they express this. A typical example of 1.2b would be intergenerational, such as when repertoire is passed on from teachers to pupils; while Figure 1.2c shows the more informal process by which, say, a group or an individual decides which recording or item of sheet music to buy from the stock available, or which songs to adopt into their own repertoire from the many that they have heard or sung.

Taking the processes represented in both Figures 1.1 and 1.2 as a starting point, some fundamental questions arise. Who decides what songs are used, and on what basis? How do some songs become available for use, and others not? How is our attention drawn to particular songs, and how does our own use of or attitude to particular songs impact on other people's use of these songs? And finally, why do some songs prove much more successful than others? Looking at the historical evidence is a useful starting point for answering some of these questions.
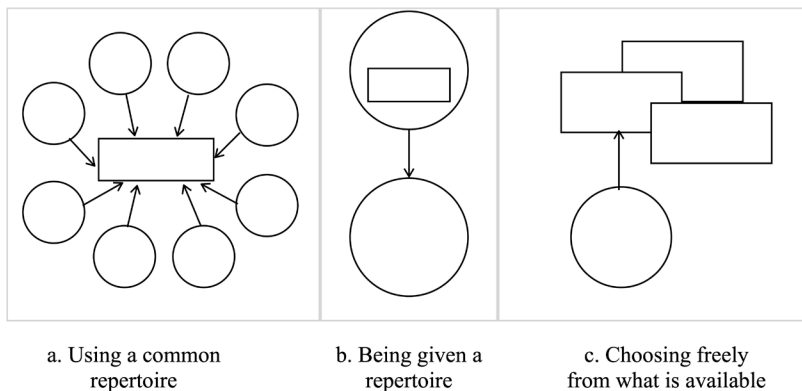
1.2 The Songs Folk Sing: Some Historical Evidence

"Play it once, Sam, for old time's sake [...] Play it Sam. Play *As Time Goes By*."[11]

Familiarity does not always breed contempt. The songs folk sing, or choose to have sung to them, are generally the songs they know and love. But how do these songs get known in the first place?

The first point to note is that among the songs folk sing, there is a strong preference for familiar tunes, and this in turn can increase familiarity with the tune itself by encouraging its use in new contexts. Parodies of existing songs, and contrafacta—new words written to an old tune—are very important, including as indications of familiarity with a particular tune or the song with which it is more commonly associated. Neither of these aspects say anything about the structure of the song itself, except in relation to other songs of its ilk. They merely reiterate one of those common-sense statements about music that conceal a richness of important information: everybody likes a good tune, and particularly a tune that they know.

To see how important this is, let us look again at Figure 1.2. This is the area in which we might expect quite radical transformations over the course of human history, given that musical media, and the social contexts in which music is made and received, have undergone untold revolutions, probably the most important being the invention of music printing (fifteenth century, extensively modernized in the early eighteenth century), the establishment of the modern music publishing industry (eighteenth century, greatly expanded in the nineteenth century), and the invention of sound recording and replay technologies (late nineteenth century onwards). So what, then, has altered? In the sixteenth century, everyone loved a good tune, and particularly

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11   Ilse Laszlo (Ingrid Bergman) in the film *Casablanca,* dir. Michael Curtiz (1942).

a tune that they knew. For example: in a study of the use of music as a vehicle for spreading and consolidating the message of the Reformation of Christianity in the sixteenth century, Rebecca Wagner Oettinger argued that song played a fundamental role, and many of the examples she traces are either parodies or contrafacta of existing tunes or would have been sung to any tune that fit.[12] She suggests that, as well as making the songs easier to distribute, the familiarity of the tunes and the structure of the texts could have helped consolidate the identity of the Protestant community, particularly since people may yearn for something stable and recognisable in an era of great upheaval. Jumping forward in time, it is equally clear that publishers of music and songs in the nineteenth century realised that everyone loved a good tune, and particularly a tune that they knew: this helps account for the abundance of sets of variations on particular tunes, such as those on *Auld Lang Syne* discussed later in this book, and the frequency of the phrase "To the tune of …" in chapbooks, broadsides, and songbooks of this era, particularly those without printed music. It would seem that there is no putting a good tune down, and the best tune for achieving this is the one you already know—or think you know.

There are a number of reasons for this, and the first is purely practical. Relatively few people are musically literate in the sense that they can read music notation. The mass distribution media for song in earlier centuries—broadsides, pamphlets, chapbooks—most often did not contain written music. Many studies have therefore concentrated on the texts of the songs as vehicles for a certain content, but the vehicle itself—the singing of a song, with a tune—has often been swept over. How, then, was the music transmitted? Just like we learn most music today: by hearing it. The hawkers selling the song on the street would sing it, for example, and while the reach of this would not even nearly approximate that of transmission via broadcast media, it would certainly have given people a chance to learn the tune, particularly if it was catchy. In many cases, however, the answer is even more simple: the tune wasn't directly or consciously transmitted at all, because it was already known, either by the individuals themselves or by others in groups within which they sang, where processes of oral transmission could ensure that a repertoire be passed on without recourse to printed music (notably, learning the words of songs is a more tricky process, which is another reason why there are so many songbooks in existence which include the text only). Where a completely new song is to be introduced, it makes sense to use a tune that people already know. This may be indicated by the instruction to sing the song "To the tune of…"; in some cases, the tune intended would be apparent from the fact that the new lyrics presented were an obvious parody on existing ones (which is how "On top of Old Smokey / All covered with snow / I lost my true lover / For courting too slow" became "On top of spaghetti / All covered with cheese / I lost my poor meatball / When somebody sneezed").

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12   Oettinger 2001.

The use of a single tune, or very similar tune, for many different songs, is still widespread. Think for example of the tune known in English as *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, and in French as *Ah! Vous dirai-je maman*, a tune also arranged by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.[13] With very few alterations this is also the basic tune for another very common children's song, *Baa Baa Black Sheep.* As Figure 1.3 shows, the only difference in the opening line is that the second bar of *Baa Baa Black Sheep* is slightly more ornamented, which accommodates the text: there are more syllables, hence more notes. The examples also demonstrate how simple the tunes are: they open with what in music theory is called the interval of a fifth, one of the strongest harmonic intervals in European tonal music; the tune then goes up to the next note in the major scale, before coming back down in simple steps: soh-fa-mi-re-doh. Parents and teachers of young children in English-speaking countries may also have noticed the similarity between the traditional *Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush* and the rather more post-lapsian *The Wheels On The Bus Go Round And Round*. I have also known that tune used for *The Present For X Goes Round And Round*, created for birthday parties: simply insert the name of the birthday girl or boy.
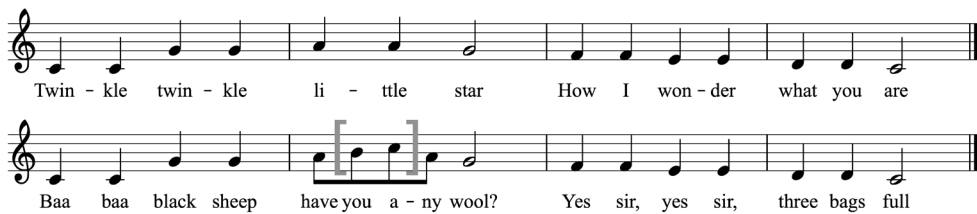
Fig. 1.3 The opening of the nursery rhymes *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* and *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (and *Ah! Vous-dirai je maman*). Set by author using MuseScore (2021).

Another example occurs when we grow out of our childhood fascination for farm animals and public transport, grow into the reality of social injustice, and take to the streets in protest. A study by Barbara James of songbooks which appeared in the context of the German anti-nuclear protests at Wyhl in the 1970s shows that the majority of songs used were based on familiar songs or tunes, and Leslie Shepard noted the same practice used by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1950s Britain.[14] In the 1920s, before they came to power, the German National Socialists or Nazis were extremely adroit in using songs to spread their message: one anecdote concerns their own version of the socialist anthem *The Internationale*, which Nazi radicals sang on a march through a decidedly left-wing area of Berlin.[15] More recently in the same city, people demonstrating against the 2003 Iraq War joined in the chorus of *George Bush We*

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13   *Twelve variations on "Ah ! Vous dirai-je maman"*, K[oechel] 265.
14   James 1977, Shepard 1962.
15   Dithmar 1999.

Will Stop You—to a tune more commonly associated with the words *We Will, We Will Rock You*.[16]

These examples should make clear how important this phenomenon is on many different levels and in many aspects of social life—and how persistent and consistent it is. From a historical point of view, the texts of songs found in broadsides and chapbooks may appear of prime importance since it is they, indeed, that provide information—in most cases, it is the texts alone that are "new". But this has led to a widespread neglect of the fundamental question—why songs? And why these songs? Not just, as Simon Frith asked (1989), why do songs have words, but why do words have songs? As Otto Holzapfel described,

> Quite unlike prose, which can be read and discussed with a sense of distance, a song is a "Trojan horse" whose ideological content it is all too easy to accept without question. In the act of singing, there is rarely thinking: the physical process of singing distracts us, the sound alone enthuses us and thus suppresses our critical distance.[17]

People talk about the power of song, and by the same token underestimate exactly what role it can play. History warns us against complacency here: in the description of the late German journalist Carola Stern, the "Third Reich" was the "singing dictatorship".[18]

The use and abuse of the notion of tradition—"traditional values" or "traditional song"—for political ends has rightly led many people to be wary. In the 1980s, British historians drew attention to the ideological bases of many an apparently innocent appeal to "the folk" and to "tradition"—this critique was most clearly focussed in the concept of "invented tradition" discussed by Eric Hobsbawm, David Cannadine, and others, while in song research, Dave Harker coined the term "fakesong" to describe how English folksong researchers from the later nineteenth century purveyed the ideal of rural folksong at the expense of the music actually used and enjoyed by working people in cities and towns.[19] Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, meanwhile, have argued convincingly for the importance of the "mobilization of tradition" as a key factor in unifying and motivating social movements. Social movements, they suggest, provide a space and a mechanism by which elements from "tradition" are reinterpreted and recombined, a process which often results in cultural transformations not necessarily directly related to the aims of the movement, and which remain in place even after the movement itself has faded into historical memory. Their study focuses on the relationship between music and a number of social movements in the twentieth century, particularly the American civil rights movement, which played a key role in the "folk music revival" of the mid-twentieth century. Although the mobilization of tradition can take on many forms, they argue that it is no accident that music seems to play such an important role here. As they describe,

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16   Personal recollection.
17   Holzapfel 1998, 67.
18   Quoted in Niedhart 1999, 5.
19   Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Harker 1985.

it is often the seemingly simplest songs that evoke the strongest emotions, primarily because they are the bearers of musical tradition. Indeed, part of the power of many protest songs stems from their use of familiar tunes, both sacred and secular. And while no doubt serving as magnets, they also open channels of identification through which the past can become the present.[20]

In the most simple and banal sense, one of the reasons why familiar tunes can have this effect is that, when someone recognizes a tune, they themselves feel recognized; through being able to sing the tunes, or appreciate the parody, they feel invited to participate; *they feel they belong.*

Whether at a Christmas carol service, or a reunion event, people time and again want to sing "the old songs". These "old songs" may not be old at all: what is important is that *they are old for those who sing them*. A song which I associate with my childhood, because I sang it then or heard it sung then, will generate associated feelings of being and of belonging. It is irrelevant when the song was written, and those who have been the most successful as propagandists and in attempting to structure the minds of a nation have recognized that the trick is to get them when they are young—no wonder Martin Luther put so much emphasis on singing in schools; no wonder, in more recent times, both the government and Maoist troops in Nepal insisted on children singing, respectively, the national or Maoist anthems.[21]

Heimann uses another example to illustrate this very basic function of song. As he discusses, throughout history there have been many reports of people who have been sentenced to death starting to sing just before execution. Referring to one report regarding people on death row in Pretoria at the height of apartheid, Heimann asks what songs these condemned men sang, and concludes that they were

> undoubtedly the "old" songs, in other words the ones they have known for years, perhaps since their childhood, and which in their function as bearers of feelings, values and reminiscences represent part of their own prevailing order to which they can orient themselves with some sense of purpose as they await death.[22]

This is conjecture, of course: Heimann does not know what songs were sung, but the suggestion is convincing. In the face of a cruel and inhuman power structure, people react with a retreat into what they know and love, and into what confirms their humanity despite all treatment to the contrary.[23]

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20   Eyerman & Jamison 1998, 43.
21   As shown in the documentary film *Schools in the Crossfire* (dir. by Deepak Thapa, 2004).
22   Heimann 1982, 164–165.
23   For further examples, see, e.g., https://www.cantoscautivos.org/en/index.php, relating to political detention under Pinochet in Chile; there are also many examples pertaining to the Holocaust. In both these cases and many more, singing and music have also been used by perpetrators as a form of persecution and ill-treatment against prisoners, including in the form of forced singing. See, e.g., Fackler 2007.

1.3 Implied and Inherited Significance

The preceding discussion has emphasized how important songs are for groups and the individuals who make up groups; it has indicated that simple tunes, and tunes that are already familiar to at least some individuals, have the best chance of becoming adopted and adapted by more and more people in turn; and that part of the appeal of familiar songs is the sense of recognition they bring—when people recognize the song, they themselves feel recognized. Here, we are beginning to move beyond logistical reasons why certain songs become popular, into the realm of meaning and significance—why people identify with certain songs, and why this in turn can be so important for their sense of identity as individuals and as groups.

A sense of identity is one of the most basic needs people have—not so much in the static sense of "being" someone, but in the more dynamic sense of identifying with someone or something. We are social animals: we need the security of groups, and most of the world's problems start when we exclude people from groups, or they feel excluded from them. Identification therefore has to do with a sense of community: it is an understanding of personal identity with reference to a particular social group.

There are many ways in which music is used to express identity.[24] Personal identity is a complex thing, and we identify with several social groups and practices simultaneously. We sing *Happy Birthday*, for example, because that is what people do on birthdays, and we belong to this group of "people". On a more localized level, we might identify with particular songs and want to sing them because they have always been sung in our family.[25] Repetition, ritual, continuity over time, in whatever context and whatever the steering forces may be, can be an essential factor in creating identification with a song. There are other possibilities too: for example, a new song may appear which reflects a sentiment important to the community involved; for this reason, it can very quickly create a sense of identification, and consequently be absorbed readily into the social practices of the group.

In this study, I will use the terms *implied significance* and *inherited significance* to indicate two of the main ways that songs can start to become significant for a particular group.[26] *Implied significance* means that the song's use in a particular context is at least implied in the content of, for example, its words or tune: *White Christmas* is a Christmas song, *Happy Birthday* is a song for birthdays. *Inherited significance* occurs where there is apparently little or nothing to link a song to a particular circumstance, event or tradition to which it has nevertheless gained an association over time: for example, *Auld Lang Syne*'s use as a song signifying New Year. Songs become significant through a number of different processes, and why particular songs are significant may not be

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24 And many, many recent academic discussions on identity generally and identity and music specifically: I will not attempt to list or even sample them here.

25 I have discussed this phenomenon in more depth in Grant 2018.

26 These terms are inspired in part by the discussion in Heimann 1982, who talks of "elementary-rational" and "aesthetic-rational" orientations.

immediately apparent to an outsider: this is demonstrated by the experience of many folksong collectors who were surprised by a particular community's traditional use of a certain song as part of a ritual celebration where to the outside observer there was no apparent link between the content of the song and the meaning of the ritual or occasion in question.[27] Particular songs are sung specifically because they have taken on added meaning in this context, and thus can help generate or regenerate positive feelings of belonging.[28] As noted, this additional meaning of the song may only be apparent to those directly involved in the tradition, and not to an external observer. For example, an outsider who happens to be invited to a family party may not quite understand the enthusiasm with which a particular uncle's version of a particular song is greeted. One of the characteristics of a strong social group is that there is an element of the hermetic in it; and that annual rendition of *Summer Holiday* sung by Jim in Figure 1.1b is not mere entertainment, but part of the ties that bind.

The potential of singing in the formation and consolidation of groups is generally recognized and cannot be overemphasized. As Klusen puts it, singing is "the acoustic declaration of unquestioned commonality" and is therefore an act of emotional identification, the "form of unified behaviour par excellence".[29] Different types of groups will have different attitudes to singing, however—middle managers may not rate singing too highly on the list of team-building exercises, though this will doubtless pop up in motivational management manuals one of these years (in Japan it is standard practice). In compulsory groups such as these, singing is often promoted to strengthen binds that may not occur naturally. However, group-building depends on several factors: singing is not a magic wand that brainwashes people into signing up for a group identity they would not otherwise adopt; the workings of group song are much more subtle than that. Songs and singing cannot of themselves generate a group identity, but they can help reinforce what is already there. In part, this is related to the action of coordinating ourselves in time—physically and mentally—which occurs when we sing together (or when one of our number does so, and we afford this our full attention). In addition, by triggering the emotional centres associated with identity and community, song may make the claims or agenda of a particular social group seem more appealing than they otherwise would be; moreover, as any advertising executive will tell you, a catchy tune will stick in your memory much longer than even the most carefully structured image of a tube of toothpaste, or a family car, or whatever else it is that we are supposed to buy.

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27 Klusen regarded this as typical of group songs. He suggested that groups tend to be "uncritical", "unhistorical", and "unreal" in their choice of songs: uncritical, because there are no clear aesthetic criteria—very different songs are brought together; unhistorical, because the feeling that a song is an "old song" may have nothing to do with its actual age, but the fact that those singing it have done so for as long as they can remember (and therefore tend to think it is older than it possibly is); unreal, because the content of the song is not intended to express the actual situation of the person or persons singing. C.f. the discussion in Heimann 1982, 68–75; 139ff.

28 See also Heimann 1982, 63–64.

29 Klusen 1989, 170.

One final point is important here. People do not just sing as an expression of who they are, but *who they want to be*, and *what they aspire to*, individually or in a group. The "utopian" use of song—*We Shall Overcome!*—is one aspect of this. It is also a basic feature of karaoke, which, in at least some cases, links the success of a particular performer specifically to their ability to mimic the original performer of the song in question.[30] The less technically advanced version involves singing in front of a mirror, holding a hairbrush instead of a microphone.

The challenge of any theory of song which could do justice to the real role played by singing in human social life is to be open to all of the contexts in which a given song appears; to analyse them as objectively as is possible; and to avoid, as far as possible, statements of value which present one rendition of the song as "better" or "more authentic" than another, or one group of people as more qualified to understand or sing the song than another. Songs mean real things to real people, and to understand these meanings is to better understand these people. This, then, is the programme of the present study of *Auld Lang Syne*.

1.4 *Auld Lang Syne* as an Object of Research: Some Issues

Auld Lang Syne may be a Scots song, but its success has always extended far beyond the geographical and cultural boundaries of Scotland and the Scottish people. Much research into the functions of song has enjoyed the luxury of being able to focus on small and, to an extent, homogeneous groups or communities which are distinctive enough to allow for close empirical analysis both of the repertoire of the songs used and other aspects of the group's activity, from how songs are learned to how they are sung. In the case of *Auld Lang Syne*, we are faced with a problem: to analyze the social context of *Auld Lang Syne* is to attempt to analyze processes of informal and spontaneous singing among social groups which may only come together incidentally (and leave little or no records of having done so), and to understand what links these primary groups with one another, and why.

Another problem is that components of songs—the text and the tune, and the sentiment, and other things besides—have a habit of separating and reforming in different contexts. Broadside ballads, as noted above, could have been sung to a whole variety of tunes, or were specifically parodies of earlier songs. So when is a song the same song, and when is it not a song at all? What is the relationship between a mobile phone ringtone using the common tune of *Auld Lang Syne*, and the song published to this tune in 1799? Does it make any sense to consider this ringtone within a theoretical framework based on the importance of singing and song? And does a set of classical piano variations on the most common tune of *Auld Lang Syne* have anything to do with the way it is sung at the end of the annual Trades Union Congress in the United Kingdom? Ostensibly, no. And yet there is a connection, and at a very fundamental level. To understand it, we need to view *Auld*

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30   See, e.g., Wienker-Piepho 1996.

Lang Syne not simply as a song, but as a cultural phenomenon—a phenomenon driven, to complete the circle, by the special position of singing and song in human social life.

The many elements of this phenomenon are connected to each other by sometimes only the most delicate of threads, threads so long and fine that they may be invisible to those encountering the element in question in their day-to-day life. Sometimes it may seem that the threads have been broken, or are no longer relevant: the centre of the web is also dependent on your perspective. Traditionally, we would suggest that the centre of the web is the origin—the point from which all further strands are strung. This is why it may seem important to know what the song was originally (and who the spider was). But then, what does "originally" mean here? If, as many Burns scholars argue, we can trace forerunners of *Auld Lang Syne* back to the fifteenth century, then does our modern song itself become trivial, a poor cousin of the original? Hardly. And is the modern Japanese acceptance of the tune as a Japanese folksong any less "authentic" than the Scottish insistence that the song is Scottish in origin? It all depends on what we want to find out. If authorship and aesthetics are important, then the focus is quite specific and tight. If social practice and human behaviour is our subject, then there is no end to what can happen. What becomes interesting, then, is when the same kinds of things happen again and again and again.

This study will, therefore, take a multifarious form of *Auld Lang Syne* as its fluid centre. The most important recurring elements in this complex, and the shorthand I will use for them, are as follows:

The Tunes

M1 (Fig. 1.4) is the tune as published with the words in James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* in 1796. This is what people sometimes refer to as "the original tune" or "the tune Burns intended".

(**M-1** is closely related to M1 and was the tune widely known as "Auld Lang Syne" in the eighteenth century, and also used for a number of related songs from the eighteenth century onwards. This tune will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3.)

Fig. 1.4 Tune M1, based here on the version printed in vol. V of the *Scots Musical Museum* transposed from D to C and with minor changes to the rhythm. Set by author using MuseScore (2021).

Audio example 1.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/e67100a5

M2 is the tune that became associated with the song following its publication with Burns's words in George Thomson's *Select Collection*. This is the tune most commonly associated with the song today, and the tune that we will be dealing with almost exclusively from Chapters 4 to 10. The example is notated here from memory.

Fig. 1.5 Tune M2, basic tune from author's oral memory.[31] Set by author using MuseScore (2021).

Audio example 2.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/f9e46c97

M3 is the tune introduced more recently by the Tannahill Weavers and sung by Eddi Reader at the opening of the new Scottish Parliament building in 2004. This tune will be discussed at the very end of this book, in Chapter 12.

Fig. 1.6 Tune M3, based on the Tannahill Weaver's recording.[32] Set by author using MuseScore (2021).

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31   The tune as published by Thomson has some slight differences in terms of rhythmic emphasis from the tune as it is broadly used today—hence my opting for a more modern rendering here.

32   The Tannahill Weaver's rendition is fluid, with some variations between verses: I have standardized and slightly simplified this for the purposes of this example.

Audio example 3.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/8f8589f3

In order to keep things simple, minor variations on these tunes will be assimilated into the main complexes, unless there are good reasons for not doing so. In other words, there are generally slight rhythmic or melodic variations between printed versions of M2, but as long as the tune can be recognized as M2, this is the term used to refer to all of them.

The Words

Burns left several versions of *Auld Lang Syne*: those that are still available are given in Appendix 2, and numbered **B1-B5**. The most important of these are **B2** and **B4**, being the texts as published by, respectively, James Johnson in 1796 and George Thomson in 1799. The main difference between B2 and B4 is the order of the verses. B4 was the most common version in the nineteenth century, while twentieth-century editions and many more recent versions have favoured B2. Again, versions of the text in later publications show any number of mostly minor variations, which are only highlighted when they are significant.

The Traditions

S∞ is the tradition of singing the song in a circle, with joined (crossed) arms.

SΩ is the tradition of singing the song at the end of gatherings—and related to this, the use of the song as a song of parting.

S$_{NY}$ is the tradition of singing the song at New Year.

Other aspects of the phenomenon *Auld Lang Syne* include the iconography of the song and references to, in particular, "auld lang syne" and "auld acquaintance" in speech and literature. These will be discussed in Chapters 4, 7, and 10 in particular.

Any instance of these phenomena can be analyzed to see what relationship, however tangential, it has to the rest. The emphasis is on the social processes in which songs and singing play a role, and the significance which the song accumulates for different groups. In this sense, the question of what is "correct" or "authentic" is, to a certain extent, irrelevant. Having said this, the reasons why a song becomes integral to a particular social practice may—patently—have to do with certain elements within the song, whilst certain contradictory elements will be ignored. It is a complex process, but all the more fascinating and revealing because of this. Elements of it seem random; others seem—once we have the benefit of comparison with others—quite predictable. Tracing how this happens is fraught with difficulties when we are dealing with practices

which go back over hundreds of years, and which may be only casually recorded if at all. But here, conversely, the popularity of *Auld Lang Syne* is a great assistance to us, and it is to this particular history that we now turn.

2. *Auld Lang Syne*: Context and Genesis

Those who think that composing a Scotch song is a trifling business—let them try.[1]

In 1787, the Edinburgh publisher James Johnson presented the public with the first of six volumes bearing the collective title *The Scots Musical Museum*.[2] Johnson's undertaking was only the latest in a series of such publications of "national song", which, though particularly fashionable in the 1780s and 1790s, had a long tradition. The most famous publications from the first part of the century, both published in London, were Allan Ramsay's *The Tea-Table Miscellany* of 1723, which did not include music, and William Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius* of 1725, which did, and which borrowed heavily from the *Tea-Table Miscellany*, much to Ramsay's chagrin (Ramsay subsequently published the music to his *Miscellany* in a separate volume).[3] The *Scots Musical Museum*'s title reflects the more antiquarian interests of the later eighteenth century; its own place in history was assured by the man with whom Johnson became acquainted just after the first volume was published—a young and recently celebrated poet by the name of Robert Burns.

Burns's life story has so often been recounted that it will suffice for the moment to sketch only the broadest of outlines here.[4] He was born in 1759 in Alloway, near Ayr on the south-west coast of Scotland, to a farming family, an aspect of his biography which has played no small part in the reception of his work and which he was the first to exploit. He received enough of a formal education to awake his passion for literature, particularly the sentimental literature of the day, and started writing poetry and song lyrics in young adulthood. Burns's poems and songs, initially described as "chiefly in the Scots dialect" are in fact oftentimes an elegant balance of Scots and English.[5] His work both reflects and utilizes local tradition and is famously scathing in its attacks on, in particular, the local church—Ayrshire at the time still boasted a severely moralizing and, in parts, inhumane Calvinist tradition; Burns, famous for his way with women, more than once had to suffer its retributions following the birth of yet another child out of wedlock.[6]

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1 Robert Burns, letter to James Hoy, 6 November 1787; *Letters*, no. 149.
2 Johnson (ed.) 1787.
3 Ramsay (ed.) 1723, Thomson (ed.) 1725, Ramsay & Gardyne (eds) ca. 1725.
4 The most comprehensive and reliable biographies of Burns are Mackay 1992, Crawford 2009. For a concise introduction to Burns's life and works, see Carruthers 2006.
5 *Poems, Chiefly in the Scots Dialect* was the title of Burns's first published volume, 1786.
6 The retributions which "fornicators" faced—including forcing them to sit, in full view of their community, on a "stool of repentance" each Sunday for weeks, months, or even years—were so harsh

Burns, like so many of his contemporaries, considered emigrating to a place with less stifling climes—for him, at least, since his plan would have seen him emigrate to Jamaica to work, as a white citizen of a colonial power, on plantations that profited from the forced labour of enslaved people.[7] Encouraged by the local reception of his poetry, he published a collection of his poems in 1786 which would have helped pay his passage: the success of the collection was the main reason that his plans changed, and he remained in Scotland until his death just ten years later.

Burns was in many ways in the right place at the right time—well capable of satisfying the contemporary trend for all things pastoral, but close enough to people's lived experience to be read across the social fabric; satirical enough to amuse, political enough (but not too much) to appeal to the socially aware in the era of revolutions, radicalism, and the Rights of Man. Thus, his plans changed: instead of emigrating, he traveled to Edinburgh, where he was immediately celebrated and made many important new contacts, including James Johnson. The friendship with Johnson, and his own new-found celebrity status, gave Burns the opportunity to turn from poetry to his other great passion, song.[8] In the following and last ten years of his life, he dedicated himself almost exclusively to collecting, editing, and writing song lyrics for Johnson and another publisher, George Thomson—always, however, as a sideline to his day-job as a farmer on the small-holding of Ellisland, near Dumfries, and later as an exciseman in Dumfries itself. After recurring bouts of ill health, he died in July 1796 at the age of thirty-seven.

Burns's contribution to the repertoire of Scots song cannot be overstated. The songs he contributed to *The Scots Musical Museum*, and to the collections produced by Thomson, still form the backbone to this tradition. That Burns was so successful has a lot to do with the way his work was embedded in the culture of the time: it was with the musical and literary elements of that culture that he worked, absorbing and reforming the myriad songs around him, and giving new life to these and other tunes. For the most part, he worked from existing publications, including books of instrumental tunes which provided airs for his own original lyrics, though he also integrated songs he had heard sung, including those he encountered on extensive journeys through Scotland undertaken in the wake of his success.[9] He occasionally concealed the extent of his own contribution to the songs he published, and in general Burns's work reflects the processes at work in society at large, where the boundaries

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      that they have been linked to extremely high rates of infanticide. When the stool of repentance fell out of use, rates of infanticide dropped dramatically. See Graham 1937, Chapter 8, IX, and Chapter 14, I.

7   Although the history of slavery is engraved in the very street names of its major cities, Scotland and its institutions have only recently begun to acknowledge their part in the slave trade, and the role slavery played in the wealth of this nation. See, e.g., Palmer 2007, Devine (ed.) 2015. On Burns's prospective involvement specifically, see Crawford 2009, 222–223; Morris, 2015.

8   As Crawford put it in discussing the role of song in Burns's life from childhood on, "Burns did not just make songs: songs made Burns" (Crawford 2009, 22).

9   For more on Burns's working methods and travels, especially his work with existing song and tune sources, see Campbell & Lyle 2020.

between "oral" and "literate", "urban" and "rural", "high" and "low" culture were far from clear-cut.

There could hardly be a better example of this than *Auld Lang Syne* itself. Burns's authorship of the song we now know under this title has been disputed for centuries, with Burns's own statements regarding its origin often quoted in evidence: "There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled thro' my soul" he wrote to his correspondent Mrs Dunlop in 1788, introducing the song for the first time;[10] and in a letter to the publisher George Thomson, already quoted in the Introduction, he claims to have taken down the song from an old man's singing. Over the years, Burns experts have tended to divide into one of three camps as regards *Auld Lang Syne*: some take him at his word; others believe that the modern text is almost exclusively the work of Burns; the largest, middle ground is adopted by those who believe that Burns's contribution is restricted to the two "childhood" verses in which the early exploits of the two old friends are recalled. Most commentaries on the history of *Auld Lang Syne* to date have focussed on the question of Burns's authorship, and the predecessors of the modern song.[11] For this reason, and in particular thanks to the efforts of James Dick in the late nineteenth century, we have a steady supply of material to support the various claims.

This chapter and the next will draw on much of this information. However, though I will certainly make my own suggestions as to the genesis of the song, my primary interest here is how the song became assimilated into tradition in the years that followed; thus, the focus will be the extent to which Burns's song or any of its elements was known in wider circles previous to its publication at the end of the eighteenth century. Whatever the actual truth behind the song's origins, Burns's association with it clearly had an enormous impact on its subsequent distribution. For those unfamiliar with the "Burns Cult" which arose soon after his early death and continues to this day, it is difficult to appreciate just how synonymous Burns's name has become not merely with Scottish literature and song, but with Scottish identity *per se*. Moreover, Burns's fame and the ritualistic celebration of it are not limited to Scotland and the Scottish diaspora: in pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russia, for example, Burns was and is one of the most loved of foreign poets.[12]

The impact of Burns on the transmission of *Auld Lang Syne* will be discussed in later chapters. This chapter, meanwhile, will sketch some of the social settings in which songs were used and transmitted in the later eighteenth century. It will also introduce some of the textual and contextual precursors of the modern song, while the next chapter will go into more detail on the musical precursors of both the tune Burns used for *Auld Lang Syne* and the tune that replaced it. The present chapter will, of necessity, also raise the involved issue of Scottish identity and nationality. The eighteenth century

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10   Burns, *Letters*, no. 290.
11   See, e.g., Dick 1892; Roy 1984.
12   For a discussion of Burns in Russian, see Levin 1985.

began with an independent but financially precarious Scotland and proceeded through political union with England to a reversal of economic fortunes and the forging of a new take on Scottish identity. This process would be sealed in the early nineteenth century, at exactly the same time that *Auld Lang Syne* became established, and thanks in no small part to the efforts of another great literary figure, Sir Walter Scott. As is so often the case, these social and cultural developments are reflected in the way the society used its songs; the development of the genre of Scots national song, and the claims made for it, is one aspect of this process.

2.1 Being a Short Discourse on Song in the Eighteenth Century

The song we now know as *Auld Lang Syne* started its journey towards us thanks to a project of song collection and creation which swept across Europe in the eighteenth century. At times the orientation of these collections was antiquarian, at times commercial, but in both cases—and despite their editors' frequent claims to the contrary—the bulk of the songs were no more ancient than the late seventeenth century and oftentimes much more recent still.[13] Songs, or at least their words, had been distributed in print for decades or even centuries before, on literally thousands of broadsides and other cheap formats which were well within the price range of most people; this tradition continued until well into the nineteenth century. Around the start of the eighteenth century, however, publications containing music also started to hit the market, the result both of developments in music printing technology, and increasing affluence. These newer songbooks were directed at the more financially secure middle classes, who had both the disposable income and the educational background required to appreciate and use them.

By far the most famous early eighteenth-century songbook, which can itself function as a textbook for the musical preoccupations and predilections of the day, is *Wit and Mirth, or, Pills to Purge Melancholy* (now often referred to by this subtitle alone). Published in several volumes between 1698 and 1720, and edited first by Henry Playford and then by Thomas D'Urfey, it contains more than a thousand songs from countless sources, including the theatre music of Henry Purcell; the volume itself became a source for other theatrical works thereafter. The book's title gives us some indication of its purpose: songs to be sung in the hours of leisure, probably under the influence of a glass of port or punch, and which oftentimes would not have satisfied the censors of a later era. Ideas of national identity, or the preserve of a cultural tradition, are hardly relevant, though the epithet "Scotch" is attached to several of the songs. This is quite typical: throughout the eighteenth century, we find songbooks published in various parts of the British Isles which contain, by their own admission, "English, Scots, and Irish" songs. These distinctions were more stylistic than ideological or historical in nature: a "Scotch" tune was one that was "Scottish" in style, not necessarily one by

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13   For a fuller discussion of this topic, see, e.g., McAulay 2013.

a Scottish composer. "Scottish" characteristics could include particular rhythmic features, such as dotted "scotch snap" or strathspey rhythms, or the use of grace notes and similar ornamentation in reference to piping traditions. The use of pentatonic or five-note scales is another common feature. (The pentatonic scale is typically described as being what happens when only the black notes on a modern piano are played: this, in fact, is the way Burns's musical colleague Stephen Clarke is said to have jokingly described how to write a Scots tune.) Many of these features are apparent in the tunes with which Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* initially appeared, and in related tunes from a number of sources that will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Publications such as D'Urfey's are testimony to a lively, and probably pretty noisy, participative musical culture of the day. Songs which then and now are regarded as "traditional" Scottish songs were published side-by-side with songs and anthems from the leading English composers of the day, and songs "as sung by" various famous singers at the musical entertainments held at the pleasure gardens in London and other metropolitan centres, or at the opera. These operas, too, both reflected the enthusiastic audience for songs, and played an oftentimes decisive role in distributing them. The most successful theatrical piece of the eighteenth century, and indeed one of the most successful of all time, was John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). It set out to parody the theatrical and operatic conventions of the day, subverting the usual tales of pastoral love by setting the action in the middle of London amongst an assortment of salt-of-the-earth types and petty criminals. The text is humorous even today, but the real attraction of the piece was the music: almost exclusively, Gay used well-known songs and tunes and wrote new texts to them, often with the original meaning of the text providing an ironic, silent counterpoint. The music of *The Beggar's Opera* includes, for example, a song to a march tune from Handel's *Rinaldo*, and to the tunes of English, Scottish, and Irish songs such as *The Lass of Patie's Mill, Chevy Chase, Bonny Dundee*, and *Greensleeves*. *The Beggar's Opera* started a new theatre craze, and "ballad operas" as they were called continued to be extremely popular until well into the nineteenth century.

Theatre generally formed an arena in which people from all walks of life could come together and be treated to the same musical fare. Nor was it limited to the major cities, since travelling companies also brought many of the same offerings into rural areas, and as a result the only surviving scores of these works are often in the reduced keyboard format which these companies would have used.[14] Theatre history took a slightly different course in Scotland, thanks to the efforts of the Scottish Presbyterian church to suppress it, but by the later eighteenth century they were fighting a losing battle.[15] Allan Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725), also a drama incorporating popular songs, is sometimes said to be the real inspiration for Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, though *The Gentle Shepherd* initially fell foul of the Kirk and was only revived at a later date. Songs from *The Gentle Shepherd* are found in numerous songbooks from the eighteenth century. Burns, too, famously tried his hand at the genre, in *Love and Liberty—A Cantata*

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14   Fiske 1973.
15   See, e.g., Scullion 1998.

(also known as *The Jolly Beggars*; K84); it includes a song on the tune of *For A' That* sung by the visiting songster:

> I am a bard of no regard
> Wi' gentle folk an' a' that
> But HOMER LIKE the glowran byke,
> Frae town to town I draw that.

The kind of tavern scene which Burns portrayed in *Love and Liberty* was just one of the social contexts in which these songs would have been sung, heard, passed on, sometimes orally, sometimes in writing. These contexts would also include gatherings at homes, or singing in the fields or at the loom. The song sung was perhaps an old song, or one picked up from travelling actors, or bought from a hawker on the street or at the fair. Gentlemen and would-be gentlemen would spend their leisure time as members of several different clubs, including clubs dedicated specifically to the singing of glees and other polyphonic songs such as catches (the first volume of *The Scots Musical Museum* is dedicated to The Catch Club of Edinburgh). In terms of pieces written and used, glees and catches were probably amongst the most successful forms of the Georgian age, and well into the nineteenth century concert programmes often specifically advertise that a glee was to be sung. Although the music was often newly composed, glees based on existing songs, particularly Scottish songs, were highly popular.[16] In other clubs and associations as well, singing was an integral part of the proceedings; not least of these was the Freemasons, whose role in the spread of *Auld Lang Syne* will be discussed in Chapter 5. Taverns, which hosted many of these groups, would also provide an opportunity for more informal singing; at home, meanwhile, the womenfolk of the leisured classes would also sing to the harp or keyboard, and their repertoire, though often bowdlerized, crossed over with these other repertoires at many points.

Scots songs had been popular for years, but as ideals of nationhood and history developed in the eighteenth century, accompanied by an aesthetic preference for the "simple" and "natural" as Enlightenment ideals gave way to Romanticism, the supposedly pastoral songs of Scotland were awarded a particular, and sometimes peculiar, affection.[17] Both John Aiken and the more famous Joseph Ritson were quick to insist that *real* pastoral songs had nothing to do with the uncouth, unwashed types currently tending the livestock; *real* pastoral songs were ancient and worthy.[18] Simultaneously, however, there was both learned and colloquial bickering about the presence of countless Chloes, Daphnes, and other such Elysian figures in British songbooks of the time—not to mention "hills and rills, doves and loves, fountains and

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16   See Rubin 2003 for a stimulating discussion of the Georgian glee and its social context.

17   For a full discussion, see Gelbart 2007.

18   Aiken 1772, particularly the "Essay on ballads and songs": the problem as he sees it is meteorological— shepherds in softer climes have softer ways than the "coarse" shepherds of England and Scotland. Ritson is rather more restrained, noting that "The pastoral simplicity and natural genius of former ages no longer exist: a total change of manners has taken place in all parts of the country, and servile imitation usurped the place of the original invention". Ritson 1794, cx-cxi.

mountains, with a tolerable collection of garlands and lambkins, nymphs and cupids, *bergères* and *tortorellas*", as philosopher and man of letters James Beattie put it.[19]

It is at this point that a distinct idea of "ancient music", or as it was later termed, "folk music", begins to emerge, with the result that other popular traditions were eventually all but suppressed out of existence in academic discussion. This was a European phenomenon, and not limited to the issue of music. Scholarly interest in the idea of the distinct linguistic, cultural, and therefore musical traditions of the peoples of the earth was enormously important in eighteenth-century thought. In the Scottish philosophical and critical tradition, enquiries into the nature of humankind also led thinkers to consider the difference between nature and culture, with a particular focus on the concept of genius and even more particularly "natural genius", something which Burns was quick to utilise to good effect. In the specific field of song, there were moves towards publications which sought to preserve songs believed to be ancient, or to be from rural traditions, the most significant early publication in this line being Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765).[20] Though the editorial values of this volume were questionable even by eighteenth-century standards, it had a profound influence, including on Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and through him the next generation of German folksong researchers. To Herder is often attributed the establishment of the term "*Volkslied*" or "folksong", and his *Stimmen der Völker in ihren Liedern* (1778–1779) is one of the most important early scholarly collections, containing song texts from many countries and earlier collections. These include his translations of Scots songs and ballads, such as the well-known *Waly, Waly* (*O Weh, O Weh,* no. 10, taken from the version published by Percy). An important motivation for the volume was Herder's frustration at the lack of comparable collections of German song. "*Volkslied*", as the full title of his work indicates, is generally but not absolutely translatable by the term "folksong": "*Volk*" carries the strong implication of the entire people of a particular country, not just the lower or rural classes, although many researchers nevertheless regarded the urban population as inherently more degraded, in every way, than countryfolk. In Britain the term "folksong" only came into common parlance much later, in the nineteenth century, and in connection with the songs of a particular region or shire as opposed to the "national songs"—mostly Scottish and Irish—which dominate the title pages of earlier publications.[21] One important difference is that "national" songs need not be ancient, though it is significant that it was the "ancient" Gaelic tradition of Ossian, as packaged and purveyed by James Macpherson, which initially won the hearts and minds of European intellectuals.[22]

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19 Beattie 1778, 163. See also the first verse of a drinking song published in 1783 in a volume owned by Burns (Bib. II/1783):

> PHO! pox o' this nonsense, I prithee give o'er,
> And talk of your Phillis and Chloe no more;
> Their face, and their airm and their mien—what a rout!
> Here's to thee, my lad!—push the bottle about!

20 For more on the genesis and impact of this publication, see Groom 1999.

21 Gregory 2010, Gelbart 2007.

22 James Macpherson's Ossian publications of the 1760s claimed to be direct translations of ancient poetry from a bard called Ossian, but from very soon after their publication their authenticity was

The upturn in interest in song collections in the last decades of the eighteenth century in Scotland was not, however, purely antiquarian. Edinburgh's music publishing trade was booming. Songs and other short vocal items were a frequent feature of the concerts put on in Edinburgh and elsewhere, and Scotch songs received a particular boost around this time from what may appear to be an unusual source—the renditions of them by Italian singers, notably Domenico Corri and the famous castrato Giusto Fernando Tenducci. Even William Tytler, who otherwise insisted that only a Scottish voice could do justice to Scots song, succumbed to Signor Corri's interpretations, and it was the experience of hearing Tenducci sing that inspired George Thomson to begin publishing Scots songs in a project that would accompany him, in his free time, for the rest of his life, and which will be discussed in full later.[23]

Into this climate waltzed Burns. Often working together with the composer and organist Stephen Clarke, who assisted Burns in those musical matters that were beyond his own capabilities (for example, Clarke provided simple bass accompaniments for Johnson's volumes, and assisted Burns with noting down previously unrecorded melodies), Burns set about gathering together hundreds of songs, often expanding those that were mere fragments, or modifying those that were not quite right for polite society. Burns is less likely than others to be criticized for changing the texts of the songs he collected, simply because the texts Burns left us are so beautifully crafted: we regard him as a poet and songwriter in the first instance, and only secondly—if at all—as a collector. That he was so successful, however, is probably due not only to his talents as a writer but to the fact that he understood what made songs so important in human social life, and, in consequence, how to make songs important for generations to come.

2.2 *Auld Lang Syne* before Burns

The predecessors of the lyric which we now know as *Auld Lang Syne* have been traced back as far as a fifteenth-century poem, *Auld Kyndnes Foryet* (or *Foryett*) found in the sixteenth-century Bannatyne Manuscript (National Library of Scotland, MS Adv.1.1.6), compiled by a merchant named George Bannatyne and one of the most important sources of medieval Scottish poetry. The relationship of the fifteenth-century poem to the modern song is one of general sentiment rather than any direct textual similarity (the connection only becomes clear when we compare it to other versions of *Auld Lang Syne* than Burns's), though James Dick argued that the phrase "auld lang syne" itself originally meant "auld kindness". In Dick's description, this poem is "the soliloquy of one in straitened circumstances, whose condition is much aggravated by reflections on the ingratitude of those who professed themselves friends in his former prosperous

called into question. This debate has continued ever since, though it is now generally held that Macpherson was at least drawing on a very long-standing, oral Gaelic tradition. For more on this topic, see, e.g., Moore (ed.) 2017.

23   Tytler 1825, 284; McCue 1993.

days".[24] As Dick noted, there is at least one print source for this poem in Burns's time, an edition of the full manuscript published in 1770: I have quoted from this edition below. The poem itself, which is eight verses long, is rather more to the point than Dick's description, as the second verse makes clear:

> Quhill I had ony thing to spend,
> And stuffit weill with warldis wrak [worldly goods],
> Amang my freinds [*sic*] I wes weill kend:
> Quhen I wes proud, and had a pak [wealth/fortune],
> Thay wald me be the oxtar tak
> And at the hé buird [high table] I wes set;
> Bot now thay latt me stand abak
> Sen auld kyndnes is quyt foryett.[25]

This sentiment (and fate) is one of two strands which lie at the heart of a group of eighteenth-century songs associated with *Auld Lang Syne*—songs which either describe rejection, bitterness, and loss of the old friendship when hard times are encountered, or on the other hand fulfilment and the re-establishment of old ties. The sentiments of "auld kindness" and "auld lang syne" are closely related throughout the history of the song, though the link between financial status and friendship is rarely stated as explicitly as here.

Dick also cites one of the earliest mentions in print of the phrase "auld lang syne", from *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd* (1690s): "The good God said, Jonah, now billy Jonah, wilt though go to Nineveh, for *Auld lang syne* (old kindness)";[26] he notes that the conflation of the temporal and emotional elements of the phrase here captures the sense of what *Auld Lang Syne* is all about, and suggests that the italicization of the relevant phrase may be a reference to a popular song of the day. Many commentators have maintained that there was an earlier popular song with the title, and the earliest printed source we do have does indeed talk of the song it contains as being amended and enlarged. The song contained on the broadside concerned, *Old Long Syne*—with the instruction "To be sung With its own proper Musical sweet Tune"—and a slightly different version of basically the same text which was published in James Watson's *Choice Collection* in 1711, are given in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 respectively. These are the earliest known, extant texts to demonstrate a clear relationship to the modern song through the shared, key phrases "Should auld acquaintance be forgot" and "auld lang syne". The text concerned, variously attributed to Robert Aytoun (1570–1638) and Francis Sempill (d. 1682), is a learned lyric, offering us a quite affected response to the removal of a loved one's affections. The text of the broadside version is slightly longer than that published by Watson, and the verses are in a different order. There is, however, a more important difference, for the early broadside version is printed with a refrain, and as far as the text goes, it is much the same refrain as the one we sing today.

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24 Dick: 1892, 380.
25 Taken here from Bannatyne 1770, 184–186. Translations of terms drawn from the Dictionary of the Scots Language, https://dsl.ac.uk/.
26 Quoted in Dick 1908, 435.
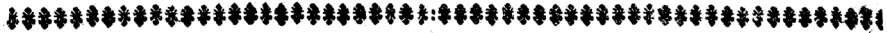
An Excellent and proper New Ballad, *Entituled,*

OLD LONG SYNE,

Newly corrected and amended, with a large and new
Edition of several excellent Love Lines.

To be sung with its own proper Musical sweet Tune.

SHould Old Acquaintance be forgot,
   and never thought upon ;
The flames of Love extinguished,
   and folly past and gone :
Is thy sweet Heart now grown so cold,
   that loving Breast of thine ;
That thou canst never once reflect
   on Old long syne.
On Old long syne my Jo,
   on Old long syne ,
That thou canst never once reflect,
   on Old long syne.

My Heart is ravisht with delight,
   when thee I think upon ;
All Grief and Sorrow takes the flight,
   and speedily is gone :
The bright resemblance of thy Face,
   so fills this Heart of mine ;
That Force nor Fate can me displease,
   for Old long syne
For Old long syne my Jo,
   for Old long syne,
That thou canst never once reflect,
   on Old long syne.

Since thoughts of thee doth banish grief,
   when from thee I am gone ;
Will not thy presence yeild relief,
   to this sad Heart of mine :
Why doth thy presence me defeat,
   with excellence divine ?
Especially when I reflect
   on Old long syne.
On Old long syne my Jo,
   on Old long syne :
That thou canst never once reflect,
   on Old long syne.

Oh then Clorinda pray prove more kind,
   be not ungratefull still :
Since that my Heart ye have so ty'd,
   why should ye then it kill :
Sure Faith and Hope depends on thee,
   kill me not with disdain :
Or else I swear I'le still reflect,
   on Old long syne.
On Old long syne my Jo,
   on Old long syne ;
I pray you do but once reflect,
   on Old long syne.

Since you have rob'd me of my Heart,
'tis reason I have yours ;

Which Madam Nature doth impart,
   to your black Eyes and Browes :
With honour it doth not consist,
   to hold thy Slave in pain :
Pray let thy rigour then resist,
   for Old long syne.
For Old long syne my Jo,
   for Old long syne ;
That thou canst never once reflect
   on Old long syne.

It is my freedom I do crave,
   by deprecating pain ;
Since libertie ye will not give,
   who glories in his Chain :
But yet I wish the gods to move
   that noble Heart of thine ;
To pity since ye cannot love,
   for Old long syne.
For Old long syne my Jo,
   for Old long syne ;
That thou may ever once reflect,
   on Old long syne.

Dear will ye give me back my Heart,
   since I cannot have thine ;
For since with yours ye will not part,
   no reason you have mine :
But yet I think I'le let it ly,
   within that breast of thine,
Who hath a Thief in every Eye,
   to make me live in pain.
For Old long syne my Jo,
   for Old long syne ;
Wilt thou not ever once reflect,
   on Old long syne.

THE SECOND PART.

WHere are thy Protestations,
   thy Vows and Oaths my Dear ;
   Thou made to me and I to thee,
in Register yet clear :
Is Faith and Truth so violat,
   to immortal Gods divine,
As never once for to reflect,
   on Old long syne,
On Old long syne my Jo,
   on Old long syne ;
That thou canst never once reflect.
   on Old long syne.

It's Cupid's Fears or Frostie Cares
that makes thy Sprits decay :

Or is't an Object of more worth,
   hath stoln my Heart away ?
Or some desert makes thee neglect
   her, so much once was thine,
That thou canst never once reflect,
   on Old long syne.
On Old long syne my Jo,
   on Old long syne ;
That thou canst never once reflect
   on Old long syne.

Is Worldly cares so desperat,
   that makes thee to despair ?
Is't that, that thee exasperate,
   and makes thee to forbear ?
If thou of Ty, were free as I,
   Thou truely should be mine,
If this were true we should renew
   kind Old long syne.
For Old long syne my Jo,
   for Old long syne,
That thou canst never once reflect,
   on Old long syne.

But since that nothing can prevail
   and all hopes are in vain ;
From these rejected Eyes of mine,
   still showers of Tears shall rain :
Although thou haf me now forgot,
   yet I'le continue thine :
And ne'r neglect for to reflect,
   on Old long syne.
On Old long syne my Jo,
   on Old long syne ;
That thou canst never once reflect,
   on Old long syne.

If ever I have a house my Dear,
   that's truely called mine ;
That can afford but Countrey chear,
   or ought that's good therein :
Though thou wert Rebell to the King
   and beat with Wind and Rain,
Assure thy self of welcome Love,
   for Old long syne.
For Old long syne my Jo,
   for Old long syne,
Assure thy self of welcome Love,
   for Old long syne.

FINIS.

Fig. 2.1 *Old Long Syne*, facsimile of broadside published ca. 1701 and held in the National Library of Scotland, shelfmark Ry.III.a.10(070), CC BY 4.0. The image can also be viewed online at https://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/view/?id=14548, where a transcription can also be found.

Fig. 2.2: *Old-Long-Syne* from James Watson (ed.), *A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems*, III (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1711), 71–74.

FIRST PART

Should old Acquaintance be forgot,
And never thought upon,
The Flames of Love extinguished,
And freely past and gone?
Is thy kind Heart now grown so cold
In that Loving Breast of thine,
That thou canst never once reflect
On Old-long-syne?

Where are thy Protestations,
Thy Vows and Oaths, my Dear,
Thou made to me, and I to thee,
In Register yet clear?
Is Faith and Truth so violate
To the Immortal Gods Divine,
That thou canst never once reflect
On Old-long-syne?

Is't *Cupid's* Fears, or frosty Cares,
That makes thy Sp'rits decay?
Or is't some Object of more Worth,
That's stoll'n thy Heart away?
Or some Desert, makes thee neglect
Him, so much once was thine,
That thou canst never once reflect
On Old-long-syne?

Is't Worldly Cares so desperate,
That makes thee to despair?
Is't that makes thee exasperate,
And makes thee to forbear?
If thou of that were free as I,
Thou surely should be Mine:
If this were true, we should renew
Kind Old-long-syne.

But since that nothing can prevail,
And all Hope is in vain,
From these rejected Eyes of mine,
Still Showers of Tears shall rain:
Although thou hast me now forgot,
Yet I'll continue Thine;
And ne'er forget for to reflect
On Old-long-syne.

If e'er I have a House, my Dear,
That truly is call'd mine,
And can afford but Country Cheer,
Or ought that's good therein;
Tho' thou were Rebel to the King,
And beat with Wind and Rain,
Assure thy self of Welcome Love,
For Old-long-syne.

SECOND PART

My Soul is ravish'd with Delight
When you I think upon;
All Griefs and Sorrows take the Flight,
And hastily are gone;
The fair Resemblance of your Face
So fills this Breast of mine,
No Fate nor Force can it displace,
For Old-long-syne.

Since Thoughts of you doth banish Grief,
When I'm from you removed;
And if in them I find Relief,
When with sad Cares I'm moved,
How doth your Presence me affect
With Ecstasies Divine,
Especially when I reflect
On Old-long-syne.

Since thou has rob'd me of my Heart
By those resistless Powers,
Which Madam *Nature* doth impart
To those fair Eyes of yours;
With Honour it doth not consist
To hold a Slave in Pyne,
Pray let your Rigour then desist,
For Old-long-syne.

'Tis not my freedom I do crave
By deprecating Pains;
Sure Liberty he would not have
Who glories in his Chains:
But this I wish, the Gods would move
That Noble Soul of thine
To pity, since thou cannot love
For Old-long-syne.

Both the medium of distribution—the broadside, accessible to all but the very poorest, as long as they could read or knew someone who could read or sing it to them—and the presence of the refrain make it plausible that elements of the song in Figure 2.1 were picked up and distributed. A refrain, after all, is an invitation to join in, and could also be used to connect people to a newer parody or contrafactum based on an older song. But if Burns did base his version in whole or part on a song extant only in oral tradition, his is still a song with significant differences in structure and sentiment to these earlier eighteenth-century versions. By the time Burns was working, however, another *Auld Lang Syne* was well-established: the version written by Allan Ramsay and published first in the *Tea-Table Miscellany*, thereafter in many eighteenth-century sources including the first volume of the *Scots Musical Museum* (discussed further in Chapter 3). The text of Ramsay's version is given as Figure 2.3. From Ramsay's song onwards, most songs on the theme of "auld lang syne" give as context the return of one of the acquaintances after a long sojourn abroad. Ramsay's version—in which the old acquaintances are lovers who had been separated by war—is the only known version previous to Burns's to have so positive an outcome: the lovers consequently marry and are therefore put out of *pine* (Ramsay's rhyme) or *pain* (according to some popular printings). The more pessimistic sentiment—exile followed by estrangement—was much more prevalent, though, and continued to be circulated and reinvented throughout the nineteenth century, as I shall discuss in more depth at the end of this chapter.[27]

Fig. 2.3 Allan Ramsay's *Auld Lang Syne*, as printed in *The Tea-Table Miscellany*
(Edinburgh: Thomas Ruddiman, 1724), 97–99.

Should auld Acquaintance be forgot,
Tho they return with Scars?
These are the noblest Heroe's Lot,
Obtain'd in glorious Wars:
Welcome, my Varo, to my Breast,
Thy Arms about me twine,
And make me once again as blest,
As I was lang syne.

Methinks around us on each Bough,
A thousand *Cupids* play,
Whilst thro' the Groves I walk with you,
Each Object makes me gay:
Since your Return the Sun and Moon
With brighter Beams do shine,

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27 Even a song immediately following Ramsay's version in a songbook called *The Scots Nightingale* (Bib. II/1778), and to be sung to the "Same Tune", is, for all its affected pastoralism, just as tragic as its other predecessors: it tells of Chloe, who swore undying love, only to then run off with another swain. Apart from the tune, the song does not have any reference to either "auld lang syne" or "Should auld acquaintance be forgot", though the sentiment of faithful and unfaithful love marks both *Old Long Syne* and Ramsay's poem.

Streams murmur soft Notes while they run,
As they did lang syne.

Despise the Court and Din of State,
Let that to their Share fall,
Who can esteem such Slav'ry great,
While bounded like a Ball;
But sunk in Love, upon my Arms
Let your brave Head recline,
We'll please our selves with mutual Charms,
As we did lang syne.

O'er Moor and Dale, with your gay Friend,
You may pursue the Chase,
And, after a blyth Bottle, end
All Cares in my Embrace:
And in a vacant rainy Day
You shall be wholly mine;
We'll make the Hours run smooth away,
And laugh at lang syne.

The Heroe pleas'd with the sweet Air,
And Signs of gen'rous Love,
Which had been utter'd by the Fair,
Bow'd to the Pow'rs above.
Next Day, with Consent and glad Haste
Th' approach'd the sacred Shrine,
Where the good Priest the Couple blest,
And put them out of Pine.

What about the music? Again, the earliest extant sources come from the late seventeenth century, and again there are both more exclusive and more popular sources. The earliest source for a tune known then as *Old Long Syne* is an elaborate arrangement contained in the Balcarres Lute Book, a manuscript dating from the late seventeenth century which contains music from a number of national sources. Some of the arrangements in the Balcarres manuscript, including this one, may be by a German musician called Mr Beck, who was active in Edinburgh around this time and transcribed or supervised many of the tunes that appear in the manuscript.[28] The opening of the arrangement wavers between the major and minor keys, which is not untypical for Scottish music of this time, particularly when arranged by non-Scots.[29] In the version of M-1 included in

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28 David Johnson (1984) believed Beck had been a music tutor at Balcarres House, but more recently Evelyn Stell has suggested that Beck's involvement in the manuscript was probably limited to transcribing melodies in Edinburgh which were then sent to Balcarres, where they were copied into the manuscript by an amateur, but competent, lute player (Stell 1999, I, 20–37). Kenneth Elliott drew my attention to Stell's findings.

29 Lute variations of this kind on popular songs of the day were common throughout Europe at this time. Nehlsen (1990) refers to a similar source in his discussion of a late seventeenth-century song, *Est-ce Mars,* the tune of which reappeared with German words in the later nineteenth century. As

this source, the contour of the melody is recognisable although highly ornamented in the style typical of lute variations. The basic tune is very similar to an unnamed tune found in a music book known as the Sinkler Manuscript (National Library of Scotland, MS 3296 (Glen 143 (i))), written around 1710; the tune from the Sinkler Manuscript is given as Figure 2.4.

Fig. 2.4 M-1 as it appears in the Sinkler Manuscript, early eighteenth century. Set by author using MuseScore (2021).

Audio example 4.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/3fc220ff

Just as there is speculation regarding an earlier popular song on the theme of "auld lang syne", the tune on which Mr Beck based his variations was also very possibly a popular tune, even a song tune, of the day. There is really no way of knowing for sure: the scarce number of sources we have from this period is no true reflection of the music actually in circulation. There are, however, indications that the basic tune M-1 was more widely distributed, since the other early source for the tune is Henry Playford's *A Collection of Original Scotch Tunes, (Full of the Highland Humours) for the Violin*, published in 1700 with an expanded second edition in 1701 (Fig. 2.5). The tune transmitted there, and called "For old long Gine my *Joe*" is closer to that which appeared with Ramsay's text in the 1720s. This volume came at a time when Playford was struggling to maintain the successful publishing trade begun by his father John, since advances in printing meant that other, newer publishers were stealing much of his market; other attempts at improving sales included the earlier editions of *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, discussed earlier.[30]

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regards the harmony, filling out the notes of the pentatonic scale could make it either major or minor in character; also, in Scottish fiddle music of the earlier eighteenth century, Johnson has noted the frequent use of two Italian chord progressions, one of which is characterized by alteration between major and minor chords; see Johnson 1984. Kenneth Elliott has suggested that this interpretation of the opening melodic motif as in a minor key may indicate that Beck, who as a German was less familiar with the vagaries of Scottish tune structures, was the arranger in this case; most of the arrangements in the manuscript seem on the other hand to be the work of somebody with an in-depth understanding of the Scottish tradition. See Elliott (ed.) 2008.

30 Smith & Temperley 2001.

Fig. 2.5 "For old long Gine my Joe" (M-1), in Henry Playford's *A Collection of Scotch Tunes* (London: Henry Playford, 1700), 11, https://digital.nls.uk/94577928, CC BY 4.0.

Audio example 5.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/5ea3e4e1

The tune M-1, introduced as "Air XV. Auld Lang Syne" also appeared in Act I, Scene II of Joseph Mitchell's ballad opera *The Highland Fair, or, Union of the Clans* (1731). It is used for a single verse of text, the contents of which are not out of keeping with the general sentiment, and the close of which seems to preempt, in uncanny fashion, the ritual uses of Burns's song that emerged in the nineteenth century, and which are discussed in Chapter 5:

> Tho' rosy Lips and lovely Cheeks
> In Time's small Compass come,
> Love alters not with Days and Weeks,
> But bears it out till Doom.
> True Minds, unshaken as the Stars,
> Their Constancy maintain:
> Their Joys no Turn of Fortune mars,
> Nor breaks their golden Chain.

We will return to M-1 in the context of the tunes that replaced it, in the next chapter. Between the sources just discussed and the appearance of Burns's song, however, more than half a century elapsed. Given Burns's claim to have noted his version of the song from oral tradition, it becomes important to know what happened to these elements in the intervening period. And it is far from irrelevant that the period in question was one of great political and social upheaval triggered by the Act of Union between England and Scotland of 1707, which marked—in the words spoken by the Chancellor of the old Scottish Parliament at its last session—"the end of an old sang."

2.3 The Jacobite Songs

The movement known as Jacobitism sought to reinstate the House of Stuart to the monarchy of England and Scotland:[31] the name derives from the would-be monarchs concerned, James II and VII—who was exiled after being defeated by William of Orange in 1688—and then his son, James Francis Edward. Although Jacobitism was not explicitly linked to the Act of Union of 1707, which saw Scotland and England enter into a political union as well as a royal one, it did give Jacobitism an extra boost in Scotland. Both the Act of Union and the removal of the House of Stuart, ultimately as a result of the religious upheaval of the Reformation, posed fundamental challenges to the Scots' view of themselves and their place in the world. As Donaldson writes, Scots in the early eighteenth century had

> an alternative history, quite different from our own, and it expressed who they thought they were, where they thought they had been, and where they thought they were going to. It was made up of a tissue of myth and legend stretching back into the remotest antiquity, and provided a heroic backdrop against which they viewed themselves, a frame for their thinking, and the driving force behind their politics. They called it "Guid Auld Lang Syne".[32]

One of the central tenets of this version of history was the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings, which was seen to stretch right back to Adam. Although many of the kings through whom Scots traced this history never existed, the framework was powerful, particularly since it meant that Scots could claim that "their country, by virtue of the succession, was the most ancient political fabric in Europe".[33] It was this belief which was so firmly and definitively flouted, in the eyes of the Jacobites, when the terms of the English Act of Settlement of 1701 laid down strict guidelines for the line of succession, the most important being that a Catholic could never become monarch. The eventual result was that the crown passed over to the House of Hanover, and

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31 James VI, Scottish King of the House of Stuart, had acceded to the English throne following the death of Elizabeth I in 1603.

32 Donaldson 1988, 5. See also MacKenzie 1998 on the relationship between myth-building and the emergence of specifically national consciousness.

33 Donaldson 1988, 7.

the first Jacobite Uprising of 1715 came in the aftermath of the accession of George, Elector of Hanover. The Jacobite cause became a focus for resistance to political union with England, a union which was viewed by some as the definitive death-blow to Scotland as an independent nation with a distinct identity. According to Donaldson, "It was during these years that the theme of 'Guid Auld Lang Syne' began to make its appearance in political poetry, recalling golden ages of political independence, social autonomy, and pure uncomplicated heroism tragically compromised and lost".[34]

Given a dire financial situation (Scotland, which had suffered severe famine, and was barred from England's trading routes to its new colonies) and political uncertainty (England, afraid that James VII and II's Catholic son James Francis Edward Stuart would attempt to regain power with help from Scotland's old ally France), the Act of Union which united the Parliaments of Scotland and England in 1707 seemed, for those that sanctioned it, not only a logical but also an unavoidable response. The decision, taken when the majority of Scots were disenfranchised, was controversial among the nobility as well, including among those who saw the previous capital of an independent nation, Edinburgh, turned into a provincial centre with no real standing in Europe. For many Scots, the Act of Union was nothing less than the bartering of their own identity, their sense of who they were, and their sense of their own history, a sentiment later captured (and mythologized) by Burns in the song *A Parcel Of Rogues In A Nation*: "We are bought and sold for English gold".[35]

The Jacobite Uprisings of 1715 and, more famously, 1745 demonstrated that hopes for a peaceful political settlement were optimistic. It was the population of the Highlands which paid the biggest price for the Jacobite Uprisings, not so much terms of the lives lost on the field of Culloden, but in the ensuing measures brought into place to suppress and to humiliate them, including a ban for a time on most outward signs of their culture, including their language and their dress: repeated violations of the ban were punished by transportation. The lasting irony is that, less than a hundred years later, these symbols would be firmly in place as hallmarks of a unified Scottish culture, with the image of the fearless Highlander rehabilitated in the service of a different King. The cultural consequences of the Union and the resistance to it were not, in the end, all negative; if Scotland was afraid of losing her political influence in Europe, she quickly regained it in the fields of art and science. By the end of the eighteenth century, Scotland had re-established itself as a major force in European intellectual, cultural, and scientific life; in the following century this influence became global due to the key role played by Scots in the British Empire. A common national (Celtic) identity was in the process of being forged, and thus Scotland, in her race

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34   Donaldson 1988, 11–12.
35   As Christopher A. Whatley has shown, this song—another to have been based on earlier fragments and sentiments—has played no small part in cementing certain misunderstandings regarding the Act of Union and the political context. "A Parcel of Rogues: Politicians, Poets and Proselytisers and the Invention of Scottish Political Identity", lecture given at the Burns International Conference, Glasgow, 13 January 2007; see also Whatley 2006.

to hang onto her identity, had a definitive impact on other nations' concepts of their own identity and origins as well. This process was assisted by the modernization and renewal that swept Scotland in this period, including new agricultural methods and improvements in communication; these sped up the rate of change in Scottish society, though at the expense of many rural communities. By the end of the century Scottish society was in general more affluent and more urban; some have argued that it was also more clearly socially stratified, with less direct interchange between the landed gentry and the lower classes than previously.[36]

The lasting cultural impact of the Jacobite period can be traced in other, more specific areas as well. One of its most significant musical legacies is the British national anthem *God Save the King*, which began to be played in London theatres in 1745 just after the start of the second Uprising, and which famously included the lines "May he sedition hush / And like a torrent rush / Rebellious Scots to crush"; along with *La Marseillaise*, it became a prototype for national anthems the world over. The signature tune of the BBC World Service was until recently *Lillibulero*, an Irish song which formed the basis for countless parodies and contrafacta in the eighteenth century, and was (and is) closely associated with the Protestant, Unionist cause. Songs also played a highly significant role in conveying and consolidating Jacobite sentiment, and the sentiment and tune of *Auld Lang Syne* found its way into a number of Jacobite contrafacta.

Appendix 1 gives the full text of a grand total of eight "Jacobite" songs related to *Auld Lang Syne.* All post-date either the first Jacobite Uprising or the second; many Jacobite songs still in common currency have been shown to be more modern inventions. Moreover, Jacobitism and the general sentimental view of Scotland prevalent around the turn of the nineteenth century can only be separated one from the other with great difficulty, particularly since Jacobitism was "rehabilitated" as a topic for the drawing room at this time. The eighth song given here is entirely the creation of a later day, by the writer and anthropologist Andrew Lang, but this too is based on earlier versions. By the time Lang wrote it, the association of an older *Auld Lang Syne* with the Jacobite cause had been documented in at least two important collections, R. A. Smith's *The Scotish Minstrel* (*sic*, 1820–1824; Appendix 1, song 7) and James Hogg's *Jacobite Relics of Scotland* (1819; Appendix 1, song 3). The tune which appears with the song in Hogg's edition is M2, but we need not read more into this than that by the time of Hogg's publication, the older tune had been practically eclipsed in the common consciousness.[37] Of the other eighteenth-century contrafacta, the song *O Caledon* (Appendix 1, song 2) is specifically "To the tune of AULD LANG SYNE": there is otherwise little obvious connection to the earlier or later songs. The other texts, however, end more or less each verse unit with the phrase "auld lang syne" and open it with some plea regarding a thing that shall be forgot or lost for evermore. It would have been normal practice for these songs to be sung to other

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36   See Graham 1937 (1899); Smout 1998 (1969).
37   See Chapter 4, below.

tunes as well—unless the tune was well enough known to be synonymous with the phrase "auld lang syne".

How close or specific the connection between the older songs of *Auld Lang Syne* and the Jacobite tradition was, is difficult to establish with any degree of certainty. The general interest in Jacobitism as a whole means that contrafacta and parodies on this topic were more likely to be snapped up, bound, referenced and archived than other popular sources. In the absence of other evidence to the contrary, though, we are left with these Jacobite contrafacta, and only these contrafacta, to bridge the gap between the earlier eighteenth century and the time when Burns got his hands on the "glorious fragment", as he himself termed it. More recent histories have suggested Jacobitism was much more widespread and more culturally significant than is generally suggested, and if popular song really was its most important vade-mecum, the case of *Auld Lang Syne* and its potential links to Jacobitism becomes even more complex—because in order to function at all, and to avoid prosecution, much of Jacobite culture operated via symbol, allegory and allusion.[38] The main features of Jacobite song—particularly, the use of familiar tunes, and the appeal to popular sentiments and ideas of heritage and community—are also the main features of group political song *per se*.

The older tune of *Auld Lang Syne*, M-1, is not well-suited to collective singing, as we will explore more closely in the next chapter. On the other hand, much Jacobite song in this early period could have been solo song, arguing for the Jacobite position rather than cementing group ties. It has been suggested that there were ballad hawkers who were, in effect, political campaigners: their job was to ensure the spread of Jacobite texts. Political ballad hawkers followed in a long tradition—so effective were they that street balladeers were banned in England during Cromwell's Commonwealth; after the Restoration they had to be licensed. From the 1680s onwards, women were favoured for this role as they were less likely to suffer serious prosecution.[39] Jacobite culture was not limited to popular forms, however: Allan Ramsay was a Jacobite, and in his edition of Jacobite songs James Hogg suggested that many of Ramsay's new texts to old songs were written in order to preserve the tunes of songs currently sung with Jacobite texts: *Here's A Health To Them That's Awa,* for example, has according to Hogg

> always been a popular air, and one of those songs that Allan Ramsay altered into a love song for the sake of preserving the old chorus, which he has done in many instances, and for which he can scarcely be blamed; because to have published any of the Jacobite songs at that day, was risking as much as his neck was worth.[40]

It is worth at least considering whether this applies to Ramsay's version of *Auld Lang Syne*. It is not hard to find hints at a Jacobite subtext—we have already noted that his version introduces the separation of the two lovers, a common Jacobite metaphor for

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38   See, e.g., Pittock 1998.
39   See Pittock's introduction to Hogg 2002 (1819).
40   Hogg 2002 (1819), 217.

the exiled King; when the male protagonist does return, the marriage ceremony is carried out by a (Catholic) priest rather than a (Protestant) minister. The unabashed pastoralism of Ramsay's text can also be read in Jacobite terms, since the pastoral tone was a favoured way of expressing Jacobite sentiments of renewal. We should be wary of reading too much into this, however (though, incidentally or not, a verse of *Here's A Health To Them That's Awa* immediately preceded Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* in volume V of the *Scots Musical Museum*).

Quite apart from the overtones of the key phrase "auld lang syne", it is very easy to understand how the words of the early eighteenth-century *Old Long Syne* (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2, above) could be read politically, and Thomas Crawford goes so far as to include this text in his survey of Jacobite songs.[41] If we take Scotland or her true King to be the jilted lover, there is little in *Old Long Syne* that cannot be interpreted in this way. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that the specifically Jacobite versions maintain very little material from this text—not necessarily an indication that the old broadside song was not or no longer well-known, but it is a possibility we must bear in mind. Also, although many of the features of this and later versions of *Auld Lang Syne* share ideas common to many Jacobite songs—many were framed as songs of love and exile, the lover in question often being specifically named as "Jamie"—these were hardly uniquely Jacobite sentiments.

It is difficult, therefore, to establish what connections there may tween the songs in Appendix 1 and other versions of *Auld Lang Syne*, but a few observations can be made. Most of them keep to the eight-line verse structure familiar from the other pre-Burns versions we have looked at. None has a chorus, though the earliest, with the recurrent "on old long sine &c" closing each eight-line unit, suggests that here a commonly known chorus is to be sung. In some respects, the most interesting of these songs is number 4: it is the only one with a four-line verse, and although there is a passage also found in another version, it is also quite different in character to the other broadside versions. It is clearly not so much a polemical song as a social or communal song sung by soldiers, and is attributed to Lochiel's regiment, which made up a significant part of the forces that supported Charles Edward Stuart in 1745–1746: the remains of the decimated regiment fled to continental Europe after Culloden.[42] Some of the textual references are very loosely related to Burns's version, a vague similarity recognized by Andrew Lang in his version of this Lochiel song. The chorus again reflects the principle of the Divine Right of Kings.

An implicit connection to the Jacobite cause did not necessarily mean that a song would always have that taint. The tune "The White Cockade", for example, the name of which references the dress code of the Jacobites, became so popular in its own right that it occurs frequently with completely unassociated texts in songbooks of the later

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41   Crawford 1970.
42   Taken here from Clan Cameron Achives, http://www.lochiel.net/archives/arch124.html. I have been unable to check the authenticity of the source.

eighteenth century.[43] It is probably a lucky coincidence that the ballad opera based on Walter Scott's novel set just before the first uprising, *Rob Roy*, was subtitled "*or, Auld Lang Syne*".[44] On the occasion of George IV's famous visit to Scotland in 1822—he was the first Hanoverian monarch to set foot in Scotland—Scott presented the King with a snuff-box made of the wood of old and historical Scottish trees, and which was inscribed with the first verse and chorus of Burns's *Auld Langsyne*, as it is called in this case.[45] The box was the idea of Lord John Campbell, second son of the Duke of Argyll, whose forebears protected the real Rob Roy. The King also visited the theatre to see the opera *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* during his visit (on which opera see Chapter 4, below). But it is hard not to see the snuff-box as something more than a memento of a night at the opera, and the inscription of *Auld Lang Syne* is at the very least a suitable metaphor for the symbolic and clever cultural transfer of legitimation from the House of Stuart to the House of Hanover.

Burns's Jacobite sympathies, and his Radical leanings, are well established, though it is also true that he knew when to play these sympathies up or down depending on the company he was in. Burns's father had left the north-east of Scotland immediately after the Uprising of 1745, the last in a long line of Episcopalian tenant farmers, while his grandfather on his mother's side was a servant on the estate of the Earl of Marischal, a leading Jacobite. The circumstances which necessitated the move may have made Burns sensitive to the injustice of the way the Stuart cause continued to be treated.[46] His own reworkings of Jacobite songs helped establish the modern genre, not to mention significantly influencing later perceptions of the Jacobite cause up to the present day. According to Donaldson, Burns "effectively mythologised Jacobitism by accommodating it to the heroic legendary past in a way that was entirely traditional".[47] By the time he did so, the Jacobite Uprisings were long past, though the movement was by no means dead—the last Jacobite riots in England took place in the 1770s. Though Jacobitism was much less of an imminent threat, tirades against the Jacobites did still occur. Burns himself published a letter condemning this tendency—albeit anonymously, and not insignificantly signed "A Briton"—in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* in 1788, around the time of the centenary celebrations of the "Glorious Revolution" which overthrew the House of Stuart, and at the end of the year in which Charles Edward Stuart, the "Young Pretender", had died. William Donaldson

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43 Though Pittock also notes an incident which took place in Ireland in 1793, when the MP Arthur Cole-Hamilton threw a glass at a blind fiddler who was playing it. See his introduction to Hogg 2002 (1819).

44 The detailed discussion of this in the next chapter will show, however, that the song was probably included for another reason.

45 According to Brown 1893, the box was made by Daniel Craig, a member of the Paisley Burns Club, on the request of Lord John Campbell, second son of the Duke of Argyll. I am grateful to the curators of the Decorative Arts section of the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle for providing pictures of the box and the engraving (see Fig. 4.1 in Chapter 4).

46 Donaldson 1988, Chapter 8.

47 Donaldson 1988, 89.

notes that this letter is much milder in manner than the comments Burns made in a
private letter to his correspondent and friend Frances Dunlop soon afterwards. In the
newspaper letter, Burns says that he "cannot join in the ridicule" against the Stuarts,
and suggests that it is time to draw a veil over it—"let every man, who has a tear for
many miseries incident to humanity, feel for a family, illustrious as any in Europe,
and unfortunate beyond historic precedent". In the letter to Mrs Dunlop, on the other
hand, he admits to have been slightly carried away when writing the letter, but not in
"the tarantula-frenzy of insulting Whigism [...] mine is the madness of an enraged
Scorpion shut up in a thumb-vial".[48]

What Donaldson doesn't mention in his comparison of these passages is that this
particular letter to Mrs Dunlop is more famous for another reason.[49] In response to
her recent letter to him, the oft-cited passage, which comes at a later and unconnected
point, is as follows:

> Your meeting which you so well describe with your old Schoolfellow & friend was truly
> interesting.—Out upon the ways of the World! They spoil these "Social offspring of the
> heart." Two old veterans of the "Men of the World" would have met with little more heart-
> workings than two old Hacks worn out on the road.—Apropos, is not the Scots phrase,
> "Auld lang syne", exceedingly expressive.—There is an old song & tune which has often
> thrilled thro' my soul. You know that I am an enthusiast in old Scots songs.—I shall give
> you the verses on the other sheet, as I suppose Mr Ker will save you the Postage.[50]

The song which Burns includes is only slightly different from the version of *Auld Lang
Syne* published some eight years later in the *Scots Musical Museum*.

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48   Burns, *Letters*, no. 290.
49   Crawford (2009, 308) also makes this connection.
50   Burns, *Letters*, no. 290.

3. Burns's Song

3.1 Mrs Dunlop's Song

"My friend, come in this sacred mansion know,
A secret few are ever taught below
(Though Cupid always like a child appears);
Friendship can live to more than forty years."
Fair Stuart's secret I to you impart,
And thank the friendly hand that warm'd my heart.[1]

The correspondence between Robert Burns and Frances Anna Dunlop, née Wallace, has been commented on widely, not least since Burns's letters to Mrs Dunlop reveal much about his life, views, and method of working. His remarks to her on *Auld Lang Syne,* quoted at the end of the previous chapter, are well-known, but practically no attention has been paid in previous accounts of the genesis of *Auld Lang Syne* to the incident related by Mrs Dunlop to which Burns was responding, even though their correspondence was published in 1898.[2]

Mrs Dunlop's account of the meeting with her "old school friend" is spread across a long letter written over several days, starting on 26 November 1788, while she was staying at the estate of Morham Mains in East Lothian.[3] A long narrative poem from her own pen introduces the subject, and describes in moving if derivative lines her state of mind at the time. Mrs Dunlop had been suffering from illness and depression since the death of her husband in 1785; at the time this letter was written, she had been, in her own words, "almost blind and wholly deaf for a fortnight past".[4] Burns was alarmed enough by this statement for her to be moved to reassure him, in a subsequent letter, that she had no plans to die just yet (in fact, she outlived him by nearly twenty years). She also repeatedly asked him to comment on her poem; Burns was civil enough not

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1 Frances Anna Dunlop, from the poem included in her letter to Burns, 26 November 1788; Wallace (ed.) 1898, 118.
2 Wallace (ed.) 1898.
3 Occasionally, Dunlop gives the name as "Morhame Mains". After Burns's death, her son would offer Burns's brother Gilbert the management of Morham West Mains farm. In 1803, the estate was sold off and Gilbert moved to Grants Braes on the Lennoxlove estate, and began working for Katherine, Lady Blantyre, the sister-in-law of the old friend to whom Mrs Dunlop refers in the letter under discussion. Anon. 1896.
4 Wallace (ed.) 1898, 177.

to. The poem describes her walking out from Morham Mains one inclement day, only to find herself almost overwhelmed by the black, looming trees and the threatening sky; she is duly pelted with rain. She seeks refuge from the storm, and finds it in the shape of nearby Lennoxlove House, and in the renewal of an old acquaintance. A subsequent prose section of the letter explains this incident, and its significance for her, more fully:

> That you may understand the former pages of this, I must tell you in plain prose that I found in Miss Stuart of Blantyre the companion of my childhood. We met as we parted after an interval of forty-five years. She showed me my name sewed at that time in her sampler, inclosed in a heart, and amid those of her parents and seven brothers and sisters, most of whom are now dead—and so small and finely wrought that I could not perceive it without glasses. Our dialogue on this occasion was much as follows. Indeed the only poetic fiction is the thunder, for the incident of the letter was real, as it supplied the place of a wet stomacher to a very clay-cold, shivering, lifeless heart, after the only shower I have seen in this country in seven months.

She.	Behold the pledge of Innocence and Youth;
	Work'd in true blue, the emblem of pure truth,
	Your name there stands!
I.	That little name that fills so small a space
	Stands highly honoured midst your royal race.
She.	Mark where it stands: my fondness fixt your part,
	Just in the centre of my inmost heart.
	My father, mother, brothers, sisters round;
	Alas! How many strew the fatal ground!
I.	Alas! How vain for past events to mourn,
	Then let us welcome what we cannot shun,
	To her your moral, you her kindness I disclose,
	And bless in dreams each friend of my repose.[5]

Miss Stuart of Blantyre was probably Margaret Stuart (1732–1794), of whom little is known other than her family connections. She did not marry, and lived at Lennoxlove until her death.[6] The house, previously named Lethington, was renamed when bought by Frances Teresa Stewart, Duchess of Richmond and Lennox: the mistress of Charles II, she was the model for the original image of "Britannia" on coins of the period. The house was a gift for her nephew Lord Blantyre, given on condition that it be renamed "Lennox's Love to Blantyre".[7] His son, Robert Stuart, was Margaret's father. There is no information to account for the years of separation of Frances and Margaret, though

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5   Frances Dunlop, letter to Robert Burns, begun 26 November 1788, from Wallace (ed.) 1898, 118–119.
6   Sources: http://www.thepeerage.com/p12643.htm; www.lennoxlove.com/estate/history-of-the-house, last accessed November 2007, page no longer available.
7   In a touching irony, there is also a tune known as "Lenox love to Blantyre", which is taken to be the tune to which Burns composed one of his last ever songs, *Oh Wert Thou In The Cauld Blast.* The song was written for Jessie Lewars, who nursed him through his final illness. According to Carol McGuirk, he asked her to sing her favourite tune, and then wrote the verses to suit. See McGuirk 1985, 142–144.

it must have occurred around the time that Frances's education was coming to a close, and also around the time of Margaret's father's death in November 1743, leaving his wife with ten children under the age of seventeen.[8]

The Stuarts of Lennoxlove were related to the Royal House of Stuart; Mrs Dunlop own's lineage could be traced back to the family of William Wallace. The dialogue passage from Mrs Dunlop's letter, cited above, mentions the "royal race" of Stuarts, and Margaret has embroidered Frances' name in "true blue, the emblem of pure truth"—and of the Jacobites. It is tempting to speculate on whether Burns made the connection between this historical legacy and the Jacobite legacy of *Auld Lang Syne*, but there is no evidence to back this up even given the wider context of his letter to her, discussed at the end of the previous chapter. Burns was likely aware of at least part of the Jacobite heritage of the song, however, since one of the Jacobite songs discussed in the previous chapter was printed in *The True Loyalist*, which Burns used.[9] However, most of the songs in *The True Loyalist* are set to tunes which were among the most well-known of the day, so that no explicit connection could be inferred from this source alone. All we do know for certain, then, is that this meeting of two school friends after a period of some forty-five years provides the context, and perhaps the inspiration, for the first version of *Auld Lang Syne* in Burns's hand.

3.2 Burns's Text

Appendix 2 gives the text of five versions of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne,* most from existing autograph sources.[10] These include the version sent to Mrs Dunlop, the version published in vol. V of the *Scots Musical Museum* (presumably the same as the version he sent to James Johnson, which is no longer extant); the version Burns wrote into a copy of vol. I of the *Scots Musical Museum* (known as the *Interleaved Scots Musical Museum*); the version he sent to George Thomson and which was published in the *Select Collection*; and finally, what may have been a working copy, now held in the Burns Cottage museum in Alloway.

The first two lines of the version Burns sent to Mrs Dunlop (B1) correspond to the older text of *Old Long Syne* (see Figs 2.1, 2.2); more significant, perhaps, is that Burns includes a refrain of the same type as the broadside version (Fig. 2.1). Refrains are

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8   Source: http://www.lennoxlove.com/estate/history-of-the-house, accessed October 2007; the current version of the website no longer holds this information.

9   Donaldson 1988, 79.

10 A further autograph source, mentioned by Davidson Cook (1927) in his discussion of A. J. Law's collection of Burns manuscripts—often referred to as the Law Manuscript—is not currently available to researchers. Cook mentions *Auld Lang Syne* only in passing as consisting, in this source, of four verses (verses 2–5, in the order of B2/K240), but does not provide any further detail. Since the article containing this information focuses on discrepancies between the autographs in this collection and published sources, it might be presumed that this source did not diverge in any significant way from other known sources. My thanks to Patrick Scott for alerting me to this, and for his speedy response to my enquiries on the various manuscript sources of the song.

very important in terms of the social functions of song: they are generally the easiest part of a song to remember, being repetitive and often simple in structure; they are also the part of any song that most clearly invites people to join in, which is why the word "chorus" is now often used as a synonym for "refrain". Indeed, the refrain of *Auld Lang Syne* was specifically described as a "chorus" in the *Scots Musical Museum*, and it is set for three voices in Leopold Koželuch's arrangement for George Thomson (discussed later). Many nineteenth-century sources for *Auld Lang Syne* indicate that often, the verses would be sung by one singer or a small group of singers, with the audience joining in only at the refrain.

In songs of this period, refrains often reiterated the closing lines of the verse just sung. This can be clearly seen in the verse of B1, which reiterates the invitation to a slug of Malaga with which the first verse concludes. In the reworkings of the song, however, Burns changes the older "never thought upon" to "never brought to mind", thus creating an approximate rhyme with "syne"; he also replaces the "Malaga" line with a reiteration of the new first line. The chorus then given would, in the first version, have been the version sung after the second verse, the third line of which introduces the phrase "we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet".

This second version (B2) is broadly the same as the version Burns wrote into the "Interleaved" copy of the first volume of the *Scots Musical Museum* (B3). The only significant changes are alterations to the last line of the first verse, which now reads "And days o' auld lang syne" (this also appears in B4), and the introduction of the word "And" at the beginning of the chorus. In the interleaved *Scots Musical Museum*, Burns introduces "his" version as a comment to Ramsay's version, noting that "Ramsay here, as usual with him, has taken the idea of the song, and the first line, from the old fragment, which may be seen in 'The Museum', vol. v."[11] He then introduces the version given as B3.

It is possible, indeed likely, that Burns in fact did exactly what Ramsay had done, and what he often openly did on other occasions: reworked or expanded elements of an existing song. This would explain the changes to the first verse between the letter to Mrs Dunlop and the version published in 1796, even if the material used is clearly derived from earlier sources. Otherwise, though, the changes between all the existing versions in Burns's hand are minimal—the most significant is the change in the order of the verses in B4. Throughout the nineteenth century, the song would be published almost exclusively in this order, though more recent editors have reverted to the order of the previous version. Some have been quick to assume that Thomson wilfully changed the order, but he was only going by what Burns had sent him.

From a very early stage in its reception, most Burns scholars have agreed that, at the very least, the two verses which recount the childhood exploits of the protagonists

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11   Dick regarded this comment as "spurious", as it was missing from the edition of the interleaved *Scots Musical Museum* he was working with, but it was later confirmed by Davidson Cook in an article in *The Burns Chronicle* in 1922, and reproduced in the 1991 Scolar Press edition of the *Scots Musical Museum;* Cook 1991 [1922], 12.

are his alone. These are, indeed, very new elements compared to the earlier songs we have discussed above. As regards the pint-stoups and the cups o' kindness, Jacobite songs on *Auld Lang Syne* often invoke a toast, and the later Jacobite versions, discussed in Chapter 2, are also more clearly songs for the social round rather than propaganda songs. The song Burns based his version on may therefore have developed through these Jacobite usages—it certainly would help explain the difference in sentiment and function from other *Auld Lang Synes*.[12] Finally, the protagonists of Burns's song are more generalized than the earlier eighteenth-century versions: although the chorus still bears the reference to "my jo", generally taken to refer to a lover (though it can also simply mean "my dear", which is how it appears in B4), the remainder of the text is not specifically romantic. The result is a song in which the opening, rhetorical question is answered by the sentiment which Mrs Dunlop provided: "Friendship can live to more than forty years".

3.3 Burns's Tune

The tune that Burns had Johnson publish in vol. V of the *Scots Musical Museum* is related to, but not identical with, the tune to which Ramsay's text was published in vol. I.[13] Both are reproduced in Figure 3.1; Ramsay's song is taken here as representative of M-1 as it appeared in a number of sources through the eighteenth and very early nineteenth centuries.[14]

Since Burns himself was a poet and lyricist, and did not actually compose the tunes of his songs, the difference between the tune given in other earlier and contemporary sources as "Auld Lang Syne" and the tune which appeared in volume V of the *Scots Musical Museum* has not received much consideration in discussions of the song's genesis. These differences are significant, however: even readers without a good knowledge of musical notation should be able to see some of them at a glance, or to hear the difference from the audio examples.

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12 Crawford 1970 also traces the song *Go Fetch to Me a Pint O' Wine*, which Burns also included in this letter to Mrs Dunlop, to Jacobite sources.

13 Johnson 1787, 1796.

14 Songbooks and tunebooks consulted that feature M-1 include the following, listed in the bibliography: Bib. II/1730 contains Ramsay's song, entitled *The Soldier's Welcome Home* and with the note "To the tune of Auld Lang Syne" (now digitized at https://digital.nls.uk/special-collections-of-printed-music/archive/90374349); McGibbon's *A Select Collection of Scots Tunes*, two editions of which were consulted (1746 and 1762), has the tune and chorus of M-1 followed by an ornamented variation (the 1762 edition is digitized at https://digital.nls.uk/special-collections-of-printed-music/archive/105869988); Bib. II/ca. 1802 has Ramsay's text, and the tune has many similarities to McGibbon's version (now digitized by the British Library, Digital Store E.1709, http://access.bl.uk/item/viewer/ark:/81055/vdc_100049557049.0x000001); Dale ca. 1795 (now digitized at https://digital.nls.uk/105809261) is also based on Ramsay; Smith 1820–24, III has M-1 as the tune for the song *Shall Monarchy Be Quite Forgot;* the title is given in the index as *The Days of Yore*, suggesting that by this point, *Auld Lang Syne* was increasingly associated with M2 (now digitized at https://digital.nls.uk/special-collections-of-printed-music/archive/91354851)*.

Fig. 3.1 The tunes published with (a) Ramsay's and (b) Burns's texts in vols I and V respectively of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*. Reproduced here from the National Library of Scotland's digitization of the 1787 and 1839 editions: Glen Collection of Printed Music. Shelfmarks Glen.201 and Glen.201d, https://digital.nls.uk/87794113, https://digital.nls.uk/87802617. CC BY 4.0.

Audio example 6 gives the tune only for (a): the faulty rhythm of the second-last bar, which as notated is short one half beat, has been corrected in the audio example; the tune for (b) has already being introduced as Audio example 1, in Chapter 1.

Audio example 6.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/671c2f96

To further aid the comparison, in Figure 3.2 I have overlaid both tunes and transposed M-1 into the same key as M1; the rhythmic values of M1 are doubled relative to the version in Figure 3.1. I have also added some arrows and boxes to highlight points of correspondence between the two tunes, which are explained in the next paragraph.

Fig. 3.2 Comparison of M-1 and M1. Set by author using MuseScore (2021).

The first thing to note is that M1 is much shorter. Burns's verses are only half the length of Ramsay's, and both the verse and refrain in Burns's song have the same music, with only slight differences in the rhythm reflecting the way the text falls. Thus, while both M-1 and M1 can be described as made up of two basic phrases, how they are organized is different: M-1's phrase A repeats before moving on to phrase B, therefore giving the impression that the tune has two distinct strains: A-A-B-B. M1 on the other hand consists of a simple alteration of the two phrases, thus giving the impression of a much more compact lyrical unit: the two phrases make up one strain, repeated (A-B-A-B).

M1 is thus not merely a curtailed version of M-1: despite other structural connections between the two tunes and the fact that they share much of the same motivic material, it appears in slightly different ways. For example, one of the hallmarks of both tunes—and other related tunes to be discussed later—is the pentatonic descent (5-3-2-1 or soh-me-re-doh) marked by rectangles in the example. M-1 includes versions of this in both phrases and thus both strains, greatly elaborated and rhythmically diminished in the second strain.

There are other significant differences as well. M-1 is much more elaborate in terms of the many inflections of the basic melodic line, and it also features some very wide leaps for the voice. Elaborate tunes, which flex the voice in all directions, are far from unusual in Scottish singing traditions. However, they still require a particular kind of strength in the voice and a particular type of context. M-1 was as likely to appear in instrumental collections as in vocal collections, and is one of many Scottish melodies that demonstrate the fruitful, reciprocal relationship between the vocal and instrumental traditions (not to mention between "traditional" and "classical" music). M1, on the other hand, more easily recalls the simple melodic structure of many narrative ballads. In fact, one wonders if Burns called this version of *Auld Lang Syne* a "glorious fragment" because the tune seemed to belong to a longer ballad rather than the short lyric it became.

M1, then, is a good deal simpler in every way. Whether M1 was, as Burns himself believed, the original version of the tune M-1, or a variant of M-1 from oral tradition, or derived from an unknown predecessor that also formed the basis for M-1, will almost certainly never be ascertained. What is more important is that the tunes also point to different social contexts. If a song is to be sung by a random group of people, some of whom may not have the strongest of voices, it follows that the tune cannot be too complicated. Furthermore, the more adaptable and memorable the tune, the more likely it is to be distributed across a wide area and a wide cross-section of the community. It is not an exclusive rule: a song which is extremely popular and therefore very often sung, played, or printed, has more chance of becoming well known even if the tune is quite complex. Some researchers have suggested that the tunes of Scots songs became much simpler as the nineteenth century progressed; earlier researchers, including those writing in the eighteenth century, conversely thought that the simpler melodies were more ancient, believing that older vocal melodies had only one strain, and that the second strains of many eighteenth-century tunes were a product of instrumental variation at a later stage.[15] What is important for us is that the relative complexity or simplicity of a tune is one of the most important factors in indicating how it was likely used. M1, for example, is almost completely syllabic: in other words, each syllable is sung to only one note rather than being stretched over several notes. Songs which are suitable for general and collective singing tend to be syllabic; solo songs, particularly those sung by better singers, can afford to allow the voice to show

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15   See, for example, Tytler 1825.

off a little more. To return to examples introduced in Chapters 1 and 2—*Happy Birthday*, *God Save the Queen*, and *On Top Of Old Smokey* (or *Spaghetti*, depending)—the first and third are totally syllabic, and the second is almost totally syllabic. When songs are not completely syllabic, the extra notes often take the form of gentle ornamentations, fluctuations of the vocal line which add interest and colour to it, and which show off the flexibility and the tone of the voice. In many Scots songs, there is the added issue of the interchange between vocal and instrumental traditions, the latter being much more given to elaborations on a basic pattern. But the more inflections in a tune, the longer and more elaborate they become, and in some cases all the more difficult to remember.

However, just as additional syllables may make a song more syllabic, additional notes can also make a song easier to sing. Extra notes sometimes sneak into tunes to allow less able singers to master tricky leaps, or to add variety in the case of note repetitions.[16] The tendency to syllabic singing also means that extra words can slip in: a case in point is the singing of "for the sake of auld lang syne" rather than just "for auld lang syne", over the same number of notes, when Burns's song is sung with M2.

The simplicity of M1 compared to M-1 makes it much easier to believe that it was known in oral tradition, though how old this tradition was is another question entirely. Also, although most eighteenth-century sources consistently link the name "Auld Lang Syne" with the tune M-1, it is difficult to imagine this tune being used for the kind of social songs suggested by later Jacobite sources.

One final comment on M1 as presented in volume V of *The Scots Musical Museum*: it concerns the simple bass accompaniment. This switches from crotchets to quavers as we reach the chorus, clearly differentiating this from the verse, and adding emphasis to it—making it, in many ways, livelier (as, indeed, a chorus should be). This may be an indication of the way the tune was perceived by those responsible for its appearance here; and it should be borne in mind that Burns and Stephen Clarke, who was responsible for most of the accompaniments in the *Museum*, collaborated closely.

Burns would not live to see the publication of this *Auld Lang Syne*. Although he still oversaw the production of the fifth volume of the *Scots Musical Museum*, he died a few months before it appeared. It is unclear why there was such a long gap between Burns's first reference to the song and its publication in *The Scots Musical Museum*. In the meantime, Burns had set about having it published elsewhere, by sending it to his other publisher, one who would prove to be a pickier editor than Johnson, but who would also leave his mark on world history by changing the tune of the song to the one it is most commonly sung with today.

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16   See, e.g., Klusen et al. 1978 for an empirical discussion of this phenomenon.

3.4 What Thomson Did

> I am far from undervaluing your taste for the strathspey music; on the contrary, I think it highly animating and agreeable, and that some of the strathspeys, when graced with such verses as yours, will make very pleasing songs, in the same way that rough Christians are tempered and softened by lovely women, without whom, you know, they had been brutes.[17]

Burns's first mention of the song *Auld Lang Syne* to George Thomson comes in response to a long list of queries from Thomson on songs which the latter appears to have been interested in publishing.[18] Burns's often detailed answers demonstrate his familiarity with the song repertoire: he gives sometimes more, sometimes less information on a total of seventy-four song titles—occasionally he writes only "nothing". The following, longer quotation gives a flavour of this, and also indicates that Thomson himself does not seem to have asked about *Auld Lang Syne*: rather, Burns simply takes the opportunity to mention it:

> Nos. 72 & 73. Nothing—
>   No. 74 & last—Tranent Muir—I am altogether averse to.—The song is fine, & eke the tune, but it is not of a piece with the rest of your pieces. Instead of it allow me to mention a particular favorite of mine, which you will find, in the Museum—"I had a horse, & I had nae mair"—It is a charming song, & I know the story of the Ballad.—
>   One more song, and I have done.—Auld lang syne—The air is but mediocre; but the following song, the old Song of the olden times, & which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, untill I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.[19]

The cynic may wonder how on earth Burns, even with his great knowledge of printed sources, could be so sure that the song had never been written down or printed before; but he certainly would have got Thomson's attention by saying so (what publisher can resist an exclusive?). More interesting is Burns's apparent indifference towards the tune, an indifference which Thomson would also come to share, particularly after *Auld Lang Syne* had become established with the tune to which it was published in his *Select Collection*, M2.

Song lyrics and song tunes—or songs and airs, to give them their eighteenth-century designations—only infrequently enjoyed a monogamous relationship. Thomson often changed the tunes to which songs were to be sung, something for which he has been almost universally condemned by Burns scholars. From an eighteenth-century perspective, however, this was hardly a misdemeanour. Before Burns's death, Thomson often consulted him before he set the words of a song to a different air. A passage from

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17   Letter from George Thomson to Robert Burns, ca. November 1794, quoted in Hogg & Motherwell (eds) 1834–36, III, 167.

18   For a detailed discussion on Thomson, his relationship with Burns and his work as a publisher and editor, see Kirsteen McCue's introduction to McCue (ed.) 2021, xvii-xcvi.

19   Burns, *Letters*, no. 586.

a letter of 19 November 1794, in which Burns responds to one such query, has been taken as proof that Burns was either consulted in the case of *Auld Lang Syne*, or that the song was in any case being sung to both tunes:

> The two songs you saw in Clarke's, are, neither of them, worth your attention.—The words of, Auld lang syne, are good: but the music is an old air, the rudiments of the modern tune of that name.—The other tune, you may hear as a common Scotish [*sic*] country dance.[20]

There is, however, little corroborating evidence to suggest that the "other tune" is M2. Burns specifically talks of "two songs", which in eighteenth-century terms implies either two sets of words intended for music, or those words *with* the music. It is just possible that the other *song* was to the tune of M2, but again, difficult to prove, and probably unlikely when we look at the larger context.

The "Clarke" mentioned by Burns is almost certainly Stephen Clarke, the organist and composer who collaborated with Burns on musical matters for the *Scots Musical Museum*.[21] In a letter to Thomson written in October 1794, Burns had mentioned that Stephen Clarke "goes to your town by today's Fly, & I wish you would call on him & take his opinion in general: you know his taste is a standard".[22] It is possible, therefore, that the "two songs" were shown to Thomson by Clarke during this visit. In his exchanges with Thomson, Burns frequently referred to Clarke's expertise as a professional musician to back up his own preferences.

Clarke and Burns's cooperation also played another role in the story of *Auld Lang Syne*. It was first published with the new tune in the third set of Thomson's very first, 1799 edition, and thereafter appeared as number 68 in the second volume of the later editions. Number 91 in the same collection was an air accompanied by two song lyrics—something which Thomson did very frequently, the first set of words generally being Scots and the second English. The first song printed with air number 91, *Now Spring Has Clad Her Groves In Green*, had been written by Burns at the request of Clarke, who intended to compose music to it.[23] Clarke, however, barely outlived Burns, and Thomson seems to have taken the opportunity to publish the song as a Burns original. The air to which he set it he called "The Hopeless Lover", but it is none other than M1 (see Fig. 3.3).

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20 Burns, *Letters*, no. 647.
21 For detailed biographical information on Clarke, see Campbell & Lyle 2020, Chapter 7.
22 Burns, *Letters*, no. 644.
23 The song was one of two that Burns enclosed, on a separate sheet, in a letter to George Thomson in August 1795, with a request to pass the sheet on to Alexander Cunningham; in the letter to Thomson, Burns states: "Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last? He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself.—The inclosed sheet contains two songs for him: the sheet please present to my very much valued friend whose name is at the bottom of the sheet." *Letters*, 676.

Fig. 3.3 Burns's *Now Spring Has Clad Her Groves in Green*, set to M1 as Thomson's song No. 91 arranged by Koželuch; first published 1799, taken here from the edition published as *Fifty Scottish Songs*, vol. II (Edinburgh: Printed for G. Thomson by J. Moir, 1801). Digitized by Western University, Ontario—University of Toronto Libraries.[24] CC BY-SA 4.0.

Thus, Thomson did not *not* publish Burns's tune M1, but rather used it for two new sets of words. Piecing together his motives for doing so is difficult. Having employed the German composer Ignace Pleyel to provide "Symphonies [i.e., introductions and codas] and Accompanyments" to his first volume of songs, Thomson enlisted the help of the Bohemian composer Leopold Koželuch for the second volume. Thomson seems to have much admired Koželuch, who was then working at the Imperial Court in Vienna, and agreed to the sum Koželuch demanded even though it was much higher than expected. He employed Koželuch to produce six sonatas, the latter movements of which were to introduce Scots airs which Koželuch himself was to choose from a large batch sent by Thomson. Koželuch was also to provide the symphonies and accompaniments to all the airs Thomson sent.

Problems soon arose, however. Thomson originally wanted the symphonies and accompaniments to a total of seventy airs by September 1797, since he had the poetry and embellishments all ready for publication.[25] In August 1797, however, Robert Stratton, the Scottish diplomat who was Thomson's go-between in Vienna, was told by Koželuch that it was impossible for him to continue since there were so many copyists' errors in the airs he had been sent.[26] He disagreed with Stratton's typically diplomatic suggestion that such a great musician as Koželuch could certainly rectify the errors, and consequently wrote to Thomson asking for a corrected set to be sent.[27] This put Thomson into some difficulty, as he himself described to Stratton:

> I had not kept a copy of the 50 songs sent to Mr. Kozeluch, so that it has cost me a fortnights [*sic*] labour to select & write from memory those not sent 64 in number: but I have bestowed such particular care & attention on every one of this number as to be certain they are perfectly what they ought to be. If Mr. K should still find any little defects in some of the modulations, he must impute such to the peculiar nature of the compositions, and make as much of them as he can.[28]

Unfortunately, Thomson did not note what airs had been sent to Koželuch in his own file copies of the correspondence, so that it is unclear if the airs M1 and M2 were among those sent in this first batch, or in a second smaller batch sent from May 1798. Likewise, it is difficult to know just how much Thomson had to recreate from memory, always presuming that he could at least remember what tunes he had intended. M1, for example, he would have had readily available via the *Scots Musical Museum*. M2 is a different thing entirely, since the version of this tune which appeared as "Auld Lang Syne" in the *Select Collection* in 1799 is slightly different from any of the known printed sources for this tune. We shall return to this issue below.

The fact that Thomson published M2 with the name "Auld Lang Syne", and M1 as "The Hopeless Lover", could suggest at least some sort of mix-up, or change of mind.

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25   Copy of letter to from Thomson to Koželuch, April 1797, BL manuscript Add. 35263.
26   Letter from Stratton to Thomson, 16 August 1797, BL manuscript Add. 35263.
27   Letter from Koželuch to Thomson, August 1797, BL manuscript Add. 35263.
28   Copy of letter from Thomson to Stratton, 18 September 1797, BL manuscript Add. 35263.

He stated in his letter of 1797 that the poetry was all ready for publication: it could be that he changed his mind about the tunes for each set of words, but did not change the titles originally intended. This explanation is lent credence by the fact that when, in a later edition published in the early 1820s, he printed *Now Spring Has Clad* to a different tune, he did not change the name of the air—it is still given as "The Hopeless Lover". He does however add a note to the effect that "The Air here united to the following beautiful Verses is substituted for the one in the former Editions, as being, in the opinion of the Editor, much superior to it, and better suited to the poetry".[29]

Alas, poor M1! No-one, it seems, liked it. Burns was indifferent to it, Thomson printed it and then removed it in favour of a "superior" tune. In his own notes on the tunes he sent to Beethoven in June 1822, Thomson goes even further in describing this newer tune as a "Manuscript Air of the Strathspey kind, to be attach'd to Burns's beautiful Verses 'Now Spring has clad the groves in green' [in] Vol. 2. instead of the meagre Air to which [they] are at present set".[30] And this is the last we are to hear of M1 for almost two hundred years, as it was soon eclipsed by the tune Thomson chose to accompany the words of M2. We now need to look at the background to that tune.

3.5 From M1 to M2

In an essay on *Auld Lang Syne* published in 1898, James Dick argued that the most common tune of the song—M2—is derived from a group of tunes which he gathers under the name "The Miller's Wedding" after its name in the earliest of the publications he surveys.[31] This group also includes the tune best known nowadays as *Coming Through The Rye*, one of the most popular Scottish songs (particularly in America).[32] There are certainly strong similarities between the tunes of *Coming Through The Rye* and *Auld Lang Syne*, and also some evidence—introduced below and in later chapters—that the two tunes were occasionally mistaken for one another. Despite their close relationship, however, the two tunes are distinct in other ways, and were regarded as separate tunes by a number of key figures in musical Scotland at this time. (The main contenders discussed in this section are collated and compared in Figure 3.5, below.) Why, then, was Dick so insistent? And why did John Glen, in his study *Early Scottish Melodies*,[33] reiterate much of Dick's argument? Perhaps both were keen to refute the assertion that the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*, by then one of the most iconic of all Scottish songs, was written by an Englishman.[34]

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29   Thomson 1822, note to song 91.
30   BL MS Add.35268, folio 24 verso.
31   Specifically, Bremner 1757–1761.
32   As indicated not least by the key role played by the song in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951).
33   Glen 1900, 188–191.
34   This reading is certainly supported by the fact that, in the introductory chapters to his collection *Early Scottish Melodies* (1900), Glen expends considerable effort on refuting many of William Chappell's claims regarding the English origins of many tunes considered Scottish. With regards to M2, Glen lays the blame for attributing the tune to Shield on William Stenhouse (Glen 1900, 189).

William Shield was one of the most successful English composers of the later eighteenth century. Born near Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1748, he led theatre bands at Scarborough and Durham before gravitating to London in the 1770s, where he played in the orchestra of the King's Theatre. By the time he became house composer to the Theatre Royal Covent Garden in 1784, he had already chalked up two operatic successes with *The Flitch of Bacon* (1778), and, more importantly, the comic afterpiece *Rosina* (1782). Shield was also the musical advisor to the song collector Joseph Ritson, and travelled on the continent with Ritson in the early 1790s. Shield seems to have been enthusiastic about this undertaking, his methods becoming more rigorous as time progressed. His work with Ritson, his interest in folk tunes and his knowledge of their style, would have put him in good stead to satisfy contemporary audiences at the time of a revival of operas integrating popular and folk-style tunes. Shield's operas, particularly *Rosina*, helped instigate this revival, though *Rosina* is most well known nowadays for being the first known source in print for what is basically M2.

Rosina, to a libretto by Frances Brooke, was first performed at Covent Garden on—ironically, with hindsight—31 December 1782. The action takes place in northern England and is the unspectacular tale of a country girl of concealed noble birth, of the local lord who takes a fancy to her (the feeling is mutual, but unspoken), and of his dastardly brother, who has Rosina kidnapped in order to have his wicked way with her. All turns out well when a rustic Irishman, complete with rustic Irish accent, saves Rosina from this fate; the story is complete when the lord hears of her noble origins, and therefore feels in a position to marry her.

The music of *Rosina*, recently published in a modern version, consists for the most part of straightforward arrangements of the songs.[35] M2 appears only in the last movement of the overture (see Fig. 3.4), but has a prominent position there, both in terms of its position and the orchestration, which is clearly designed to mimic bagpipes: the first oboe, which has the tune, is supported by a C drone consisting of a second oboe, two bassoons and two horns; the repeated notes of the tune are carefully prefixed by a grace note in the style of Highland bagpipe playing.

Why did Shield use this tune at exactly this point in the overture, with an instrumentation clearly suggestive of the bagpipe, considering that, although the setting is given only as "A village in the north" it is actually Northumberland and not Scotland? There are several possible explanations, one being that the Northumbrian pipes, and not the Highland bagpipes, are to be evoked. This is the explanation favoured by John Glen, and by Roger Fiske, who refutes Dick's assertion that the source of the tune is Robert Bremner's book of reels, and suggests that Shield may have remembered the tune from his younger days in the north of England.[36] This does not in itself settle the issue of whether the tune is Scottish or English, since Northumbrian pipers often incorporated Scots tunes into their repertoires (and the region of Northumbria was

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35   Shield 1998 (1782).
36   Fiske 1973, 457–458.

Fig. 3.4 M2 as given by William Shield in the overture to *Rosina*, from an edition for keyboard instrument published by J. Dale, ca. 1786–1791; EUL Special Collections, shelfmark Mus.s.624/3. Image by author (2021), with permission from Edinburgh University Library.

Audio example 7, based on the edition shown, with the instrumentation indicated.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/3da3fc3f

in any case at times Scottish, at time English: the distinction is many ways pointless). Another suggestion is that the tune may only have been added to the overture at a later date, on the occasion of the Edinburgh premiere.[37] However, the tune's appearance may be due solely to the general popularity of "Scotch" tunes at this time: Shield's first opera, *The Flitch of Bacon*, also includes a Scottish tune in the overture even though it is set in a village in Essex; the habit of including Scottish tunes in English operas may go back to the great success of the "Scotch Gavotte" which closed the overture to Thomas Arne's *Thomas and Sally* (1760).

Rosina was enormously successful, being performed seventy times in its first two seasons in London alone. Along with Sheridan's *The Duenna*, it helped kick-start the ballad opera tradition, as George Thomson noted in the same letter to Burns quoted at the beginning of this section:

> Here let me ask you, whether you never seriously turned your thoughts upon dramatic writing? That is a field worthy of your genius, in which it might shine forth in all its splendour. One or two successful pieces upon the London stage would make your fortune. The rage at present is for musical dramas: few or none of those which have appeared since the "Duenna" possess much poetic merit; there is little in the conduct of the fable, or in the dialogue, to interest the audience. They are chiefly vehicles for music and pageantry. I think you might produce a comic opera in three acts, which would live by the poetry, at the same time that it would be proper to take every assistance from her tuneful sister. Part of the songs would be to our favourite Scottish airs; the rest might be left to the London composers—Storace for Drury-Lane, or Shield for Covent-garden: both of them very able and popular musicians. I believe that interest and manoeuvring are often necessary to have a drama brought on: so it may be with the namby pamby tribe of flowery scribblers: but were you to address Mr Sheridan himself by letter, and send him a dramatic piece, I am persuaded he would, for the honour of genius, give it a fair and candid trial. Excuse me for obtruding these hints upon your consideration.[38]

An opera as popular as *Rosina* always sent ripples through the popular song culture of the day. A songbook published in Glasgow in 1786, for example, contains lyrics of several songs from *Rosina*, though it does not attribute them to this source.[39] In the case of a tune from the overture, it is more difficult to establish what impact the opera would have had, but it is worth noticing that the second instance in print of a tune very directly related to M2 comes less than two years after the opera's premiere, and in the same year as its Edinburgh premiere. This tune comes in Niel Gow's *A Collection of Strathspey Reels*, where it is called "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey"—a name still used for M2 to this day.[40] Niel Gow is probably the most famous fiddler Scotland has ever produced, and his family—particularly his son Nathaniel, who was actually responsible for publishing many of the volumes bearing Niel Gow's name—continued

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37   A conjecture introducecd by Glen 1900, 190, and picked up by Farmer 1947, 205.

38   Letter from George Thomson to Robert Burns, ca. November 1794, quoted in Hogg & Motherwell (eds) 1834–36, vol. III, 167–68.

39   Bib. II/1786/1. Several lyrics from *Rosina* also appear in Bib. II/1780s.

40   Gow 1784.

to play a very important role in Scottish music until well into the nineteenth century.[41] Glen argues that Gow published the tune "as slightly altered by Shield" from parts of "The Miller's Daughter" as published by Angus Cumming ca. 1780. Glen's comparative table is reproduced as Figure 3.5.[42]

Fig. 3.5 Comparison of possible sources for M2 according to Glen's *Early Scottish Melodies* (Edinburgh: J. & R. Glen, 1900), https://digital.nls.uk/special-collections-of-printed-music/ archive/94645804, CC BY 4.0. Note that Glen gives 1780 as the date of Cumming's volume, although in his own bibliography it is undated: the National Library of Scotland, which now owns Glen's of Cummings, dates that volume as 1782; Glasgow University Library has an earlier edition, dated 1780.[43]

The term "strathspey" refers to a type of dance tune from the Highlands which became popular in the central and southern parts of the country in the mid-eighteenth century.[44] The personal names often attributed to tunes in collections of this time could indicate

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41   Farmer (1947, 341ff.) argued that the fame of the Gow family eclipsed many other musicians whom he personally believed to have been better or at least more consistent composers. These include Robert Mackintosh, who also published a tune called "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey". Farmer implies that this is the same tune, but the only tune with this name that I have located in available sources of Mackintosh's music is a different one. It appears in Mackintosh 1793; Don subscribed for two copies.

42   Glen 1900, 189.

43   The Glasgow University Library's edition of Cummings has been digitized and is available at https:// hms.scot/prints/copy/3/

44   On the contested origins and the spread of the strathspey, see Lamb 2013, 2014; Newton 2014; Macdonald n.d.

that it was composed by the person named, or that it was a particular favourite, but in many cases it was simply a way of getting the person concerned (or their parents in the case of many tunes named for young ladies) to buy copies of the publication. Tunes therefore often went through a number of names in different publications. Sir Alexander Don (1751–1815) was himself reputed to have been a fine fiddler (another tune in Gow's 1784 collection is titled "The Caledonian Hunt by Sir Alexander Don"—not to be confused with "The Caledonian Hunt's Delight", to which Burns wrote the song *Ye Banks And Braes*.) Don subscribed for three copies of Gow's 1784 collection, which also includes "The Miller's Daughter"—one of the tunes Dick listed in his analysis—in what it specifically refers to as the "Old Setting" (a common way of distinguishing an older tune or variant associated with a particular name and dance).

The tune published as "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey" in 1784 is slightly different from both the tune in *Rosina* and that later published as *Auld Lang Syne*. No composer is named initially, but this changes in later volumes. In *The Beauties of Niel Gow,* which was published in several editions from ca. 1819 onwards, "Sir Alexr. Don's Strathspey" is said to be "From the Opera of Rosina by Mr. Shield". This volume also comments that "The Song Auld Langsyne is taken from this Tune". In Part II of *The Vocal Melodies of Scotland*, a collection of airs from well-known songs, M2 is published as "Auld Langsyne" and accredited "Modern. by Shield".[45] It is also placed at the end of the volume—one of the earliest instances of this, but quite possibly coincidental.[46]

Returning to the time of Burns, the story of M2 is about to get even more complicated. The fourth volume of the *Scots Musical Museum*, published in 1792, contained a song by Burns called *O Can Ye Labour Lea, Young Man* (hereafter: *Can Ye Labour Lea*; also known as *I Fee'd A Lad At Martinmas*, K382).[47] According to Burns, it was currently very popular in the Nithsdale district where he then lived, but its only obvious claim to fame in print before or since is that the tune given in the *Museum* is M2: the chorus is sung to the first part of the tune, and the verse is sung to what would become the chorus tune of *Auld Lang Syne*.[48] This is not the only *Can Ye Labour Lea* that Burns left us with: a bawdy version is included in *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*, a collection Burns made in honour of the Crochallan Fencibles and which was eventually published in an unexpurgated version in the 1950s.[49] However, to add further to the general confusion, the version of *Can Ye Labour Lea* included in *The Merry Muses* is not to be sung to

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45 Gow 1820.

46 See Chapter 4, below.

47 Johnson 1792, 407 (song 394).

48 Stenhouse 1853 says that "This old tune [that of *Can Ye Labour Lea*] was modelled into a strathspey, called the 'Miller's Daughter,' which Shield selected for one of his airs in the overture to *Rosina*; and Gow afterwards printed the air from that overture, under the name of 'Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey.' It is now called 'Auld Lang Syne'", 358. However, it is just as likely that the song tune derived from Shield or Gow's usage.

49 Low, in his commentary to Low (ed.) 1993, notes that there has long been a tradition that Burns himself wrote very few of the lyrics in *The Merry Muses*, but that this misconception is due to the early editor James Currie altering one of Burns's letters to this effect.

"Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey" but to a tune known as "Sir Archibald Grant's Strathspey" (which may be the same tune also known today as "Moneymusk"), while another bawdy song again, *Errock Brae*, is indeed to be sung to a tune referred to as "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey".

Can Ye Labour Lea is one of the couple of hundred of songs contributed by Burns to the publications of the day which seems never to have enjoyed widespread popularity. Again, this makes it difficult to gauge the actual age of the song and its elements. We need not presume, just because the song was apparently established in a local oral tradition, that the air to which it was sung had a long history. The tune could equally well have come to the area fairly recently, either as a dance tune, or through a local performance of *Rosina.* There is a dearth of documentary sources on theatrical life in Scotland outside the metropolis, but we know that *Rosina* was available in a vocal score, which would have made possible its performance even by smaller travelling groups, and there was a vibrant theatre culture in Dumfries even before the opening of its Theatre Royal, with Burns's patronage, in 1792.

As mentioned, M2 and the tune of *Coming Through The Rye*, which Dick protested were one and the same, were occasionally confused, and there is at least one documented instance of confusion between the latter song and *Can Ye Labour Lea*. Burns's version of *Coming Through The Rye*, together with another version which may have been his model, were like *Auld Lang Syne* both published in the fifth volume of *The Scots Musical Museum*. A songbook published just a few years later in Glasgow, called *The Musical Repository,* also gives two versions of the words, with the second pertaining to be the "Original words of the foregoing tune". In actual fact, the first three verses derive from Burns's version, but *The Musical Repository* adds a fourth verse, which is also the last verse of *Can Ye Labour Lea*:

> Kissin is the key of love,
> And clappin is the lock,
> And makin o's the best thing
> That e'er a young thing got.
>   *Oh Jenny's a' weet, &c.*[50]

Many years before the publication of *Can Ye Labour Lea*, Burns had introduced this verse into a letter, stating it was from "An auld Sang o' my Mither's", though there is no further context.[51] The date of publication of *The Musical Repository* makes it impossible to determine whether this verse reflected an existing tradition (or an existing mix-up between the two songs) or whether it is a more recent confabulation of the two songs published by Burns. In any case, the similarity of the two tunes seems the most logical explanation for this to have happened.

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50   Bib. II/1799.
51   Burns, *Letters*, no. 85. Mackay also quotes this verse and states that the ballad it came from was "His mother's favourite—and Robert's too"; he notes also that it is strange to think that she would have sung this song in his presence, given the sexual overtones. Mackay 1992, 31–32.

Thus, the most direct predecessor of the tune that would soon go down in history as "Auld Lang Syne" would have been fairly widely circulated across Britain, and not just in southern Scotland, in the 1780s and 1790s. Despite the wide number of sources he cited, Dick could not find an earlier printed version than Shield's that demonstrates the key difference that distinguishes the tune from *Rosina*, the tune Gow published as "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey", and the tune of *Can Ye Labour Lea* from the earlier tunes and from the common tune of *Coming Through The Rye*. A particular characteristic of that tune is the recurrent return to the motif on which, nowadays, the key phrase "coming through the rye" is always sung. The tunes following *Rosina* are none of them identical, but they are marked off by not returning to this low register, and the tonic, at the mid-point of the first strain; instead, they ascend to the fifth or—in the cases of *Can Ye Labour Lea* and the tune that Thomson published as *Auld Lang Syne*—sixth degrees of the scale.

All that remains is to ask why Thomson chose this tune, where he got it from, and who was responsible for a number of small yet significant changes to the melodic structure of M2 when compared with the tune of *Can Ye Labour Lea*. These changes make the tune easier to sing by replacing most of the larger leaps with more gradual progressions. For example, *Can Ye Labour Lea* expects singers to make an octave leap from the highest note of the melody at the end of the first half of the strain. In the tune as published by Thomson, the singer instead trips lightly down in the most obvious way possible—via a major triad arpeggio. This is similar to what happens at the same point of the second strain of *Can Ye Labour Lea* and the other tunes most closely related to it. However, that second strain also contains a descent to the tonic and then an upwards leap of a fifth just before the tune's highest point: in Thomson's tune, instead of descending to the tonic, the tune rests on the third, from where it is a mere skip back up to the dominant and beyond. These changes may appear minor, but they give M2 its final shape, character, and potential. Given that Thomson normally took his tunes from available sources, and that no other source for this version of the tune has yet been traced, the question that then arises is whether he had another source, or whether he or somebody else consciously or unconciously made these final tiny changes which are so significant for the overall character of the melody.

When it comes to providing very, very speculative answers to both this question and the general question of why Thomson came up with this tune for *Auld Lang Syne*, we should bear in mind the type of circles that our poets and publishers moved in. Although contemporary fiddle music—the type played for dances—was and is generally monodic (in other words, where there is more than one fiddler they all play the same tune) with perhaps a simple bass accompaniment, many of the musicians someone like Thomson would have contact with were primarily at home in the European classical tradition, as indeed was Thomson himself. Earlier, it was mentioned that Koželuch, who provided the first accompaniment for *Auld Lang Syne* in the *Select Collection*, demanded a second copy of the tunes and that Thomson claimed he had often to resort to his own memory to recreate them, though it is not entirely clear whether this meant he had no copy of the tunes themselves, or simply no record of

which air was to go with which song. If he had to recreate a tune he knew from *Can Ye Labour Lea* from memory, it's very possible that his classical brain or inclination smoothed out some of the more jagged Scots corners. It is also possible that it was Koželuch's attempt to tame the *musique barbare* he had complained about to Stratton.

And why this tune? There are some motivic and structural similarities between M1 and M2, which become obvious if we simplify the rhythm in both cases so that both tunes proceed at exactly the same rate (see Fig. 3.6) The opening bar is different by only one pitch—in M1, we rise stepwise from D to F via E, whereas in M2 we jump from D to F; the music for the third line of the verse, however, is basically the same, although an octave higher in M2: this is also one of the points in M2 that differentiates it from the related tunes discussed in this section. Moreover, if we add a basic harmonic arrangement, both tunes can be played together. There is a method in this madness: in German folksong research, the idea of *Übersingen* (literally "over-singing") posits that some tunes may start off being second voices sung to a well-known tune which then become independent of it. While this is not the case here, it is certainly possible to imagine a situation in which, at some informal musical gathering in Edinburgh's new town in the late eighteenth century, someone came up with the idea that these tunes could be played as complementary voices. This is wild conjecture—though perhaps not wilder than the idea that Thomson merely got the two tunes mixed up, something that seems unlikely for someone as musical as he was, especially considering the difference in character between the tunes as they are generally performed.

Fig. 3.6 M1 and M2, combined, with the rhythm synchronized, and harmonized. Set by author using MuseScore (2021).

Audio example 8.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/50ddb0cd

It should also be borne in mind that Thomson's principal interest was in publishing the airs with appropriate words. Rather than seeking a tune for *Auld Lang Syne*, then, he may simply have been looking for a text for M2, and realised that *Auld Lang Syne* not only fitted rather well, but that this tune gave the song a whole new potential. Whether or not he intended the arrangement to become quite as upbeat as Koželuch and others after him made it, is another story. Strathspeys, for all that they are dance tunes, are generally to be taken at quite a steady pace, as witness the tempo indications for the tunes in the *Scots Musical Museum*: "Slow" for *Can Ye Labour Lea* and "Very Slow" for *Coming Through The Rye*.[52]

Whatever the real reasons why this tune was chosen, and how it ended up in this precise form, one thing is clear: Thomson did not merely change the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*—he changed the whole future course of the song's history. M2 is structurally even more simple than M1. Though it introduces a second strain for the chorus, so that it is longer than M1, M2 has much more internal repetition. If we break M2 down into units made up of a single bar, and disregard minor rhythmic changes, we find that one bar appears four times (in other words, it accounts for a quarter of the tune), and always as the second bar of each four-bar phrase; another bar appears three times (twice in the chorus). By comparison, each corresponding unit of M1 is featured twice—once in the verse, once in the chorus. Also, the repeated bars of M2 are in themselves very, very simple: one is a turn around the second degree of the scale ("be forgot and") and the other is a descent through a major triad (as sung at the first chorus occurrence of "auld lang": the "syne" that follows is again on the turn around the second degree).

The contour of the melody is also quite different. It was noted previously that one of the most distinctive features of M-1 and M1 is the stepwise descent which pulls the melody down from the high, bright pitches on which it started.[53] The dramatic changes in tone colour we know from both M-1 and M1 now give way to a fine melodic curve which reaches gradually upwards and then back downwards, both in the verse on its own, and in the verse and chorus treated as a unit. Although it reaches just as high as the other tunes, it is, on the whole, set in a much more grounded register. In the years and decades to follow—years in which its typical strathspey rhythms and style would gradually fall away, or become less obvious—M2 would reveal itself to be a remarkably pliable tune, suitable for interpretation in a whole range of different styles, and for adoption in a whole world of cultures. Thomson thus matched the universal sentiment

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52   Johnson 1792, 407; 1796, 430.

53   In Ramsay's version of *Auld Lang Syne*, the low and resonant beginning of the second strain of M1, which contrasts so starkly with the previous strain, more than matches the text of the first version of the song: "Welcome my Varo to my breast" sings the faithful woman, just as her voice also descends into the chest range.

which lies at the heart of Burns's song to a tune that itself had universal qualities, though to what extent he himself was aware of this remains a moot point.

3.6 The Legacy of the Old Songs and Two Contemporaries of the New

Two groups of songs in the Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection, one of the most important documentary sources for Scottish songs in use in the early twentieth century, show that the legacy of older versions of *Auld Lang Syne* continued for quite some time after Burns's version (with the tune M2) began its ascent in the early nineteenth century. These song groups are No. 538, *The Nabob* (Volume III), and No. 1143, *Auld Lang Syne* (Volume VI). The four song versions in the latter group have the titles *Aul' Langsyne* (tune and text), *Langsyne* (tune only), *On Longside Road* and *Old Long Syne* (both text only). The first tune is clearly related to M-1/M1, as is the opening of the second section of the second tune, which is also related to a tune used for the other group of songs, those given the collective title *The Nabob*: the tunes for the *Auld Lang Syne* group are reproduced in Figure 3.7. The texts of the songs in this group, like the old text of *Old Long Syne* (discussed in Chapter 2), tell of a jilted lover; two have a chorus of the same structure as that in the old broadside and in the modern song, and all end with a verse which recalls the earliest known version of *Auld Lang Syne* (this one is taken from the first song in the group, collected by Duncan from a man called Robert Alexander):

> But if I ever do hae a hoose
> That I can call it mine
> Ye aye's be welcome into it
> For aul' langsyne.[54]

While these songs seem to indicate the further existence of the oldest known text of *Old Long Syne*, the source of the other group—No. 538—is exactly contemporary with Burns's song. *The Nabob* was written by Susanna Blamire (1747–1794),[55] and takes as its title a common eighteenth-century term for a European who became wealthy in the east. Blamire's other songs include *The Chelsea Pensioners*, a song which, to a tune known as "The Days o' Langsyne", was popular in songbooks of the Napoleonic period.[56] The first collected edition of her works, published in 1842, names the tune of *The Nabob* as "Traveller's Return", and the song is also known under this title. Most nineteenth-century songbooks I have seen which print the song do so with M-1 as the tune, though the tunes in the Greig-Duncan collection are all versions of one also used

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54   Shuldam-Shaw et al. (eds) 1981-, VI, 184 (song 1143/A).

55   The figure of the nabob appears in several literary guises around this period, including in Samuel Foote's play *The Nabob* (1772). It is worth bearing this broader cultural aspect in mind given the lure of finding Jacobite double-meaning in songs dealing with travellers' returns.

56   See also Chapter 6, below.

Aul' Langsyne

Fig. 3.7 The tunes of (a) "Aul' Langsyne", collected from Robert Alexander, and (b) "Langsyne", collected from John Johnstone, as published in *The Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection*, VI (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1981ff.), 184–185. © University of Aberdeen; reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

Audio example 9, Audio example 10.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/db715dff

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/85a8a5c4

in a volume called *The Select Songs of Scotland*, published in 1848.[57] Two of the songs in Greig-Duncan also include a chorus, which Blamire's song does not.

Blamire's song is almost exactly contemporary with Burns's, being written with great probability in 1788, but only published in 1802.[58] According to her half-sister, the song was based on "a real incident", probably the experience of another sister's husband, Thomas Graeme, who spent thirty years abroad with the Black Watch before returning to Duchray Castle in the Trossachs—which, Blamire's biographer believes, may be the delapidated stately home mentioned in the poem.[59] Blamire's nabob is disturbed to find almost none of his old acquaintances there; the poem finishes with the observation that, perhaps, the old songs alone can take us back to days lang syne:

> In vain I sought in music's sound
> To find that magic art,
> Which oft in Scotland's ancient lays
> Has thrill'd through a' my heart:
> The sang had mony an artfu' turn;
> My ear confess'd 'twas fine;
> But miss'd the simple melody
> I listen'd to langsyne.
>
> Ye sons to comrades o' my youth,
> Forgie an auld man's spleen,
> Wha' midst your gayest scenes still mourns
> The days he ance has seen:
> When time has past, and seasons fled,
> Your hearts will feel like mine;
> And aye the sang will maist delight
> That minds ye o' langsyne!

Blamire's published poem is derived from several different autograph sources, and the editor notes the number of different verses in contemporary sources and the difference even between the song's 1802 publication in *The Scots Magazine* and its 1803 publication in the same journal. Patrick Maxwell, in his notes to the 1842 edition of Blamire's collected works, describes *The Nabob* as a song that "has so long clung to the affections of the lovers of song on both sides of the Border—which has charmed the social meetings of all classes in the community, and claimed for its simple beauties, and touching imagery, the willing tear from both old and young. I have heard it sung in the south of Scotland, when both singer and auditors were weeping".[60] In

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57 Bib. II/1848.

58 The editor of the 1842 edition states that one of the early versions in Blamire's own hand is found on the same sheet of paper that contains her *Song for The Carlisle Hunt, November, 1788*, leading him to suggest this as a possible dating for the early version of *The Nabob* as well.

59 Maycock 2003, 46–47.

60 Quoted in Lonsdale (ed.) 1842, 198. A digital edition created by the British Women Romantic Poets Project at the University of California at Davis, can now be found at http://name.umdl.umich.edu/

another publication from the 1840s, we read that "This simple, natural, and affecting production is to be found in almost every Scottish song-book of the present century".[61]

Another *Auld Lang Syne*, which appears to have been written ca. 1801, was for a time attributed to John Skinner (1721–1807), whose *Tullochgorum* Burns believed to be the best of all Scots songs. An article published in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* in 1921, however, made a convincing argument that this song, the text of which is given in Figure 3.8, was in fact the work of Anna Brown, the source of many an old song recorded by Walter Scott and others. The 1921 article argues that the locations mentioned in the last verse of the poem correspond exactly to Brown's places of residence as a young girl and since her marriage, and that the poem was written for John Harper, a musician and friend of her youth.[62] A letter published in a later issue of the same newspaper confirmed this theory, reproducing a letter from Brown's cousin Robert Scott to Harper which, on her request, includes a "poetic remembrance" she had written for him; the letter was dated 12 November 1801.[63]

Fig. 3.8 The text of the "Aberdeenshire" version, quoted here from Anon., 1921, "'Auld Lang Syne': The Authorship of the Old Aberdeenshire Version'", *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 16 July, 3–7.

> Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
> Or friendship ere grow cauld?
> Should we not tighter draw the knot;
> Aye, as we're growing auld?
> How comes it then, my worthy friend,
> Wha used to be sae kin'.
> We dinna for each other speer,
> As we did lang syne?
>
> Tho' many a day be past and gane
> Sin' we did ither see;
> Yet gin the heart be just the same,
> It matters not a flee.
> Gin ye hae not forgot the art
> To sound your harp divine,
> Ye'll find still I can bear my part,
> And sing as lang syne.
>
> I think upon the mony days
> When I, in youthfu' pride,
> Wi' you aft rambled o'er the braes
> On bonny Bogie side.

BlamSPoeti. The note in question is given is linked as "superscript 1" from the page containing *The Nabob*.

61 Whitelaw 1848, 104. A misremembered quotation from the song appears in a speech given by Mr. Leckie at a Conservative soirée in Paisley, as reported in *The Times*, 30 October 1839.

62 Anon. 1921.

63 Letter in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* in response to Anon. 1921; copies of the article and the letter are held at NLS shelfmark 5.1002.

The birdies frae the Arn tree,
Wha mixt their notes wi' mind,
Were not mair blyth, nor fu' o' glee
Than we were lang syne.

I think upo' the bonny springs,
Ye used to me to play;
And how we used to dance and sing,
The live-lang simmer day.
Nae fairies on the haunted green,
Where moonbeams twinkling shine,
Mair blythly brisked around their Queen,
Than we did lang syne.

What tho' I be some aulder grown,
And ablins not so gay;
What tho' my locks o' hazel brown
Be now well mixed wi' grey;
I'm sure my heart's nae caulder grown,
But as my years decline,
Still friendship's flame mair kindly glows
Than it did lang syne.

Tho' ye live on the banks of Don,
And I besouth the Tay,
Well might ye ride to Falklan's Town
Some bonny simmer's day.
And in that place where Scotland's Kings
Aft birl'd baith Beer and Wine,
Let's meet, an' laugh, an' dance, an' sing,
And crack of lang syne.

Unlike the other songs and ballads which Brown transmitted or created, her own very personal *Auld Lang Syne* does not seem to have filtered into common usage, though it is very occasionally referred to in connection with the more famous version of the song (and then often as "Skinner's" *Auld Lang Syne*). Taken along with Blamire's version, however, and bearing in mind again the circumstances of Burns's letter to Mrs Dunlop, it further indicates that the ideas of the older songs discussed in this and the previous chapter were still present among, at the very least, literary persons with a keen interest in Scots tradition. Brown may have been inspired to her version by the recent publications of the modern song, but the structure and sentiment of her own version are more closely related to earlier versions, some of which at least she would almost certainly have known. Furthermore, the *Auld Lang Syne* songs in the Greig-Duncan collection suggest that elements of the oldest known version of *Old Long Syne* continued to be transmitted until late in the nineteenth century, though it is impossible to say if this was a continuous oral tradition or one revived or refreshed by printed sources.

Such myriad connections, such multiple lines of influence as become apparent through all these different versions, are testimony to the pliability of songs, and the vivacious nature of human social connections and interconnections. If we regard this as the rule rather than the exception, then what becomes truly interesting is how some of these ephemeral cultural artefacts can solidify into something more stable, more universal, and ultimately more significant. The following chapter will ask just what were the catalysts for the establishment of the song and the customs we now associate with *Auld Lang Syne* as one of the most widely recognized musical phenomena in the world today.

4. *Auld Lang Syne* in the Early Nineteenth Century

4.1 "We'll toom the cup to friendship's growth"

George Thomson's new version of *Auld Lang Syne* was first published in 1799, and then in a slightly altered edition in 1801, in which the accompaniment provided by Leopold Koželuch was simplified.[1] Providing arrangements which did not scare off amateurs with a surfeit of little black notes was a recurring issue for Thomson. His constant harrying on the subject must have been frustrating for the composers he worked with, but alongside his respect for the music of the composers he commissioned, Thomson was equally concerned that their music be appreciated and played by British amateurs. He dared suggest to Ludwig van Beethoven that he write music that was easier to perform, since even music professors in Britain would not play his music because it seemed too much effort.[2] The same letter commissioned Beethoven to provide an arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne*, and Beethoven in this case seems to have followed Thomson's meticulous description of how to keep the music simple enough for "la Chanteuse" to sing with pleasure, and possibly accompany herself at the same time.[3]

The exact role of Thomson's publications in the spread of Robert Burns's songs is not clear. His earlier editions were elaborate and expensive, and their circulation relatively small, but the influence of the various editions of the *Select Collection* stretched far beyond the physical volumes themselves. They formed the basis for several other publications, including at least two published in Philadelphia—Benjamin Warner's *The Scottish Minstrel* (1818) and J. Dobson's *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice* [...] *The Whole Collected by George Thomson F.A.S. Edinburgh in Five Volumes* (1842?)[4] Not all publications acknowledged their debt in this way: Thomson complained bitterly of plagiarism, and had procured a signed statement from Burns to the effect that Thomson alone had sole copyright for the songs Burns submitted to his collections.

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1   Thomson 1799, 1801.
2   Letter from Thomson to Beethoven, 22 June 1818, copy in BL MS Add.35268, folio 22 verso ff. Thomson and Beethoven corresponded in French.
3   See also Chapters 6, 9, below.
4   McCue 1993, Chapter 2.

When Thomson first published *Auld Lang Syne* in 1799, he merely stated that it was "From an old ms. in the editor's possession", apparently only changing this position in the edition published from 1815.[5] The idea that the song had actually been written by Burns began to be propagated earlier, however. James Currie, whose multi-volume edition of the life, works, and correspondence of Burns first appeared only a matter of years after the poet's death, only includes *Auld Lang Syne* in the context of Burns's correspondence with Thomson, but notes that "This song, of the olden time, is excellent—It is worthy of our bard".[6] Robert H. Cromek, writing in 1810, was more decisive:

> Burns sometimes wrote poems in the old ballad style, which, for reasons best known to himself, he gave the public as songs of the *olden time*. That famous Soldier's song in particular, printed in this Collection, vol. ii. p. 98, beginning
>
>> "Go fetch to me a pint o'wine,
>> An' fill it in a silver tassie,
>> That I may drink before I go,
>> A service to my bonnie lassie;"
>
> has been pronounced by some of our best living Poets an *inimitable relique* of some *ancient Minstrel!* Yet the Editor discovered it to be the actual production of *Burns* himself. This ballad of *Auld lang syne* was also introduced in an ambiguous manner, though there exist proofs that the two best stanzas of it are indisputably his. He delighted to imitate and muse on the customs and opinions of his ancestors. He wished to warm his mind with those ideas of felicity which perhaps, at all times, are more boasted of than enjoyed. The happiness of rustic society in its approach to modern refinement—his delight in the society and converse of the aged, all tended to confer on him that powerful gift of imitating the ancient ballads of his country with the ease and simplicity of his models. This ballad of "Auld lang syne" would have been esteemed a beautiful modern in the days of Ramsay: its sentiments and language are admirably mixed with the sweet recollections of boyish pranks and endearments.[7]

The "evidence" for the attribution of the verses was supposedly a letter from Burns to James Johnson, now lost.

That both Currie and Cromek picked out *Auld Lang Syne* for commentary in this way suggests that the song had, for some reason, attracted their attention. This corroborates other surviving evidence for the circulation and use of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. The evidence includes both chapbooks and also more elaborate song collections with music, coupled with occasional appearances in theatre listings which will be discussed later. Thomson's edition, and not Johnson's,

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5   The quoted text appears above the song in early editions; references to Burns being the (probable) author appear from Thomson 1815–1817.

6   Currie 1800, IV, 124. This notice is repeated in later editions; I have not been able to consult earlier editions.

7   Cromek (ed.) 1810, 128–129. The other song Cromek mentions here is also included in the same letter to Mrs Dunlop which contains the first Burns holograph of *Auld Lang Syne.*

seems to have provided the original model for these versions, as can be surmised from the fact that those with music all use M2, and some of the sources without music name the tune as "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey". They also present the verses in the same order as the *Select Collection*, which naturally is also the order printed by Currie, based on the same letter from Burns.

There is one slight snag, however. The chapbooks in particular indicate that the song being distributed in early nineteenth-century Scotland often differed very slightly, but very consistently, from any of Burns's versions. In each case, two lines are completely different. The first of these is line 3 of the second childhood verse, in the Kinsley edition,

> We twa hae paidl'd in the burn
> Frae morning sun till dine

which in these versions takes the following basic form:

> We twa hae paidl'd in the burn
> **When simmer days were prime**

or sometimes:

> **When simmer days were fine.**

The second is the third line of the subsequent verse:

> And there's a hand my trusty fiere!
> And gie's a hand o' thine!
> And we'll tak a right gude-willie-waught
> For auld lang syne.

which becomes a variant of the following:

> And there's a hand, my trusty frien'
> And gie's a hand o' thine
> And we'll **toom the cup [or: toom the stowp/stoup]** to friendship's
>   growth
> For auld lang syne.

In all these versions—which I will term the "toom the cup" versions—the reference to "a gude-willie-waught" still appears, but as the third line of the second (B2) or last (B4) verse, replacing the line "And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet".[8] Some chapbooks

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8   This, of course, is aside from the usual, minor differences in punctuation and in the spelling or rendering of Scots words. Sources consulted which are based on the "toom the cup" version include Bib. II/1805/3, Bib. II/ca. 1815, Bib. II/1810/2, Bib. II/1810/3, Bib. II/ca. 1810/4, Bib. II/1817, Bib. II/1819/4, Bib. II/1819/5, Bib. II/ca. 1820/2, Bib. II/ca. 1820/3, Bib. II/ca. 1820/4, Bib. II/ca. 1820/5, Bib. II/ca. 1820/6. The post-1818 publications (which may include those only approximately dated to 1816) may have been influenced by the song as it appeared in the musical drama *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* (see Chapter 4.4, below). This also helps explain why the "toom the cup" version

from this period do include the song with the "original" form of these lines, but these seem to be in the minority.[9] There are comparatively few sources which include Allan Ramsay's *Auld Lang Syne*, and at least one of these is drawn directly from a publication which predates the relevant volumes of the *Select Collection* and possibly also the *Scots Musical Museum*.[10]

There are also a few parodies or contrafacta which seem to take Burns's song as the basis. One of these, *Come Auld Acquaintance, Stop Awee,* contained in a chapbook that has been dated to around 1820, is a harbinger of the use of the phrase "auld lang syne" to invoke a more wholesome rural past which occurs frequently in the later nineteenth century:

> The folk were cautious o' their ways,
> And never dressed our [*sic*; = "ower/over"] fine;
> Substantial were the hamespun claes,
> They wore in langsyne,
>   They wore in langsyne, my friend,
>   They wore in langsyne,
>   Th' were unco sweer to rin in debt,
>   In days o' langsyne.[11]

Another and possibly slightly later contrafactum is advertised as the "new way" of *Auld Lang Syne,* and is more closely modelled on the sentiment of Burns's song: the first verse is the same, and the others describe the childhood pleasures of the now elderly friends. This song appeared in at least two chapbooks from the Peterhead publisher Peter Buchan, who became more famous for his collection *Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland*, published in 1828.[12] A chapbook published in Falkirk, on the other hand, also advertises a "new way" of *Auld Lang Syne* which turns out to be Susanna Blamire's *The Traveller's Return*, with the tune listed as "Auld Lang Syne".[13] We cannot be absolutely sure whether the "old way" in this case was presumed to be Ramsay's text, or Burns's.

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pops up in some later English publications as well, e.g. Bib. II/1825, Smart 1875. Very occasionally, there are versions which include either the "When summer days were prime" variant or the "toom the cup" variant, but not the other.

9   Those consulted which come into this category are Bib. II/ca. 1800/2, Bib. II/ca. 1810/1.

10   One of these is included in Bib. II/ca. 1800/1, which contains seven songs linked by the themes of returning from sea, war, parting, and faithful/unfaithful lovers; Ramsay's song fits well in this context. The other publications are Bib. II/1806, Bib. II/ca. 1812–22. The catalogue of Oxford University Library also lists an example using Ramsay's text and M1, reprinted from book 2 of Dale's *Collection of Sixty Favorite Scotch Songs*, the first edition of which appeared ca. 1795.

11   Second verse; Bib. II/ca. 1820/1; this publication also includes a version of *Coming Through The Rye*.

12   Bib. II/ca. 1831 (estimate by NLS based on the Scottish Book Trade Index); Bib. II/ca. 1820/ *The Sorrowful Husband. To which are added, The New way of Auld Langsyne, and Tarry oh the Grinder* (Peterhead: P. Buchan, ca.1815–1831; the earlier date is from the BL, the later from the NLS, which bases its estimate on the Scottish Book Trade Index).

13   Bib. II/ca. 1810.

Chapbooks and broadsides are notoriously difficult to date. Most do not give a year of publication, often so that they could be reprinted several years running and not appear out of date. The estimates given by libraries—generally to the nearest five or ten years, and based on what is known of the printer's activity—can vary quite radically even for the same volume. Those discussed here can be dated to some point in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, but it is difficult to establish from these sources alone if there was a particular point at which the song became more established. *Auld Lang Syne* is not particularly prominent in those existing sources where it does appear—it is rarely the "headline song" as it were (it differs in this respect from big hits of the day like *Crazy Jane* and *Poor Jack*).[14] Also, with the exception of those chapbooks that name the tune as "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey", none can give us hard and fast knowledge of the tune to which they were to be sung. The picture becomes a little fuller if we look, first, at publications including music from the same period, and second, at that other useful source for gauging a song's popularity, the theatre and concert listings of the day.

4.2 The Establishment of M2

The tune M-1 was well-enough known by the name "Auld Lang Syne" in at least some quarters of Scottish society for it to seem surprising that another tune could supplant it so easily, but this is exactly what M2 did. Within the first two decades of the nineteenth century, *Auld Lang Syne* came to mean M2, and not M-1. This process-in-motion can be seen from a collection called *The Caledonian Museum* [...], published in three volumes in Edinburgh around 1810.[15] Book 1 contains "Auld Lang Syne", the tune in question being M2, while Book 3 contains "Auld Langsyne (Old Sett.)", this being M-1. Another publication, volume I of the similarly titled *Caledonian Musical Museum* (London, 1809), and two Paisley chapbooks published around 1810 called *The Canary* and *The Robin*, state that *Auld Lang Syne* is to be sung to "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey".[16] Volume III of the *Caledonian Musical Museum* (which claims to be edited by Burns's son) also contains a completely new set of words for the song, stating that the tune to which they are to be sung is "Auld Langsyne".[17]

Printed music books and songsheets were intended for a very different market than chapbooks, and would have made use of different channels of communication. This could be one reason why the few early printed sources after Thomson that include both text and music do not have the "toom the cup" versions of the song. Arguably the most significant is the setting by Joseph Haydn, which was published by William Whyte in volume I of *A Collection of Scottish Airs* [...] in 1806. This volume contained

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14 On the former, see Grant 2011/1.
15 Bib. II/ca. 1810/2. There are several publications with very similar titles.
16 Bib. II/1810/1, Bib. II/1810/2.
17 Bib. II/1809.

exclusively settings by Haydn (and is thus generally catalogued under his name), not long after George Thomson had issued Volume III of his own collection which likewise contained only Haydn settings.[18] What little is known of the history of Whyte's collaboration with Haydn suggests that Whyte initially tried to publish tunes which had not already been set by Haydn in Thomson's collection—*Auld Lang Syne* falls into this category. The setting probably dates from late 1802 to early 1804.[19]

Another setting is found in John [Joseph] Elouis's *First Volume of a Selection of Favorite Scots Songs* […], which appeared in Edinburgh and London in 1807; Henry Farmer suggests that this volume was quite widely sold.[20] Elouis was a harpist, originally from Switzerland, and probably the same listed in 1802 as "Harp Master to Her Royal Highness, Princess Sophia of Gloucester and several of the Royal Family";[21] later he was active in Dublin and Scotland, and died in Edinburgh around 1817. A third early *Auld Lang Syne* with music is William Knyvett's four-voice, glee-style version, dated by the British Library at 1813. Knyvett belonged to one of the most important musical families in London, succeeding his father Charles as composer to the Chapel Royal in 1808; he was a well-known singer in both London and the provinces. Charles Knyvett had started the popular Vocal Concerts in London in 1791 and they continued until his death in 1822. The title page of William Knyvett's arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne* announces that it was "Sung by Mrs Vaughan, Messrs. W. Knyvett, Vaughan & J. B. Sale at the Vocal Concerts". This arrangement was also performed in Edinburgh no later than 1815, at the fourth vocal concert of the season held at the Assembly Rooms on George Street, sung by "Messrs. Elliotts, King, and Evans".[22]

It is one indication of the gradual rise in popularity of the song that three such prominent musicians, all active across a broad geographical area, published versions of it at such an early stage, and that it was well enough received in London for Knyvett to publish his glee version. Another source of a slightly different kind is T. C. Wilson's *A Companion to the Ball Room* (1816). It includes a large selection of tunes for dancing, along with descriptions of how the dances go. *Auld Lang Syne*, listed as "Old Scotch", is included in the section on "Scotch tunes", and while there is nothing to indicate a particular significance attached to this tune, the preface tells us that "care has been taken to select […] the greatest National Favorites, for the gratification of lovers of Scotch Music".[23] That M2 would be included here seems more a nod to its current popularity than to its being based on a dance tune, given that the book also includes other popular Scottish song tunes not normally immediately associated with dancing, such as *There's Nae Luck About The House* and *Ca' The Ewes*. What is interesting, however,

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18   Thomson 1802. Thomson's previously published volumes had also included Haydn settings.
19   Friesenhagen 2004, 2005. See also Chapter 9, below.
20   Farmer 1947, 355–356.
21   Source: notice first published 23 August 1802 and reprinted in the *Worcester News*, 23 August 2002.
22   Source: *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, Thursday 9 February 1815; the concert was to take place the next day.
23   Wilson 1816, v.

is that while the first strain in the version published here takes the basic form of M2 as now known, the second strain or chorus is reminiscent of the version in the overture to *Rosina*—specifically, the second bar of the chorus is the same as in *Rosina*. Similarly, the melodic line of an arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne* for voice and piano or harp by John Gildon probably published in the second decade of the nineteenth century is reminiscent of the older versions of the tune, particularly *Rosina*, at one point in the chorus—it includes the leap down of an octave which is missing in the version of the tune published by Thomson (it also features the "toom the cup" version of the text).[24] While later arrangements and settings of *Auld Lang Syne* certainly also present small melodic variations on the tune, these tend to take the form of chromatic inflections, particularly in the first two bars, and differences at the highpoint of the tune: some peak on the sixth degree, some on the tonic. The two examples just mentioned may indicate that the overture to *Rosina,* and possibly Niel Gow's version of the strathspey tune, were still having an oblique influence on the reception of the song at this point.

4.3 Performance and Periodicals

Like chapbooks and other publications, theatre and concert listings can only give us an imperfect picture of the songs in circulation and use at any given point, but a useful picture nonetheless. For logistical reasons, most of the information in this section relates to Edinburgh, and particularly the advertisements which appeared in the thrice-weekly *Edinburgh Evening Courant*. These sources have their drawbacks: when the singer and impresario Mr Corri advertised one of his vocal concerts, for example, he would not necessarily list all of the items to be performed by name. We are often told merely that a certain singer will sing "A Scotch song" or perhaps "A favourite song". These would be interspersed in a programme also featuring items from, for example, Handel's oratorios, and instrumental interludes. These interludes themselves could well have featured *Auld Lang Syne*, since they often took the form of improvisations on a popular song or tune. One of the most famous flute virtuosos of the day, Charles Nicholson, is cited as a composer of many an instrumental piece performed in Edinburgh in the early nineteenth century, and he also composed a set of variations on *Auld Lang Syne*.[25] Whether the tune was also introduced in his own appearances in Edinburgh and elsewhere in the early nineteenth century is harder to establish.

When they do name individual items, theatre and concert listings provide not only definite references to (planned) public performances of the song, but also the contexts in which this happened. This is information that we simply do not have for more informal and private uses of the song in this period. Concerts would only have been accessible to a certain sector of the population; theatre's audience was wider,

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24 Gildon ca. 1815. There are two copies of the song in the BL, one dated roughly as ca. 1810, the watermark on the other is from 1815.

25 For more on variations on the theme of *Auld Lang Syne*, see Chapter 7, below.

however, particularly since after about nine o'clock tickets were generally sold at a greatly reduced price, so that the afterpiece at least (and generally, a part of the main billing, particularly if it was quite long) would have been experienced by a broader cross-section of the community. The relevance of this is that *Rosina* is an afterpiece. It was performed at least a couple of times a year at the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh in the first two decades of the nineteenth century—not enough to contribute substantially to the establishment of M2, perhaps, but still a steady trickle.

The first clear reference to a song called *Auld Lang Syne* in the Edinburgh press that I have found comes in 1805: it is one of the songs listed for Mrs Ashe's benefit concert at Corri's Rooms on 8 February.[26] Advertised as a "Scots Song, 'Auld Lang Syne'", she herself would sing it at the end of the first half of the concert, which apart from other songs and instrumental pieces would also include a "Grand Finale" by Haydn. In 1806, another benefit concert featured *Auld Lang Syne*: this time the proceeds would go to Mr MacGregor, the Edinburgh Theatre Royal's box book-keeper and treasurer; *Auld Lang Syne* was to be sung by Miss Jones.[27] In the same year, an advert for another benefit in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* provides a further clue: on Saturday, 15 March 1806, "MR SCHETKY most respectfully informs his Friends and the Public, That his THIRTY-TH ANNUAL CONCERT is fixed for Friday [22 March], when he trusts that Auld Lang Syne will not be forgot." *Auld Lang Syne* is not, however, listed on the programme, which includes a glee, several instrumental pieces (including a sonata for pianoforte introducing a Scots air), a vocal piece by Handel, and "the well-known Free Masons Anthem, with variations".[28] And on March 12 1807, the following advertisement appeared on the front page of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*:

"AULD LANG SYNE"

GENTLEMEN educated in GEORGE HERIOT'S HOSPITAL, who may wish to assist in forming the plan of a Respectable Club, and Anniversary Dinner at Oman's Hotel, in honour of their ILLUSTRIOUS TOWNSMAN and BENEFACTOR; also to contribute as much as possible to the present and future Prosperty [*sic*] of that NOBLE INSTITUTION, will learn some particulars already digested by personal application to DR JOHN BORTHWICK GILCHRIST, at NO. 22, Prince's [*sic*] Street, or NO. 7, Hunter's Square.

In the same edition of the newspaper, we learn that Mrs Kemble will sing: "By Desire, End of Act III. 'Auld Lang Syne,'" at a performance of *Belle's Stratagem* at the Edinburgh Theatre Royal, for the benefit of the Edinburgh Charity Workhouse.

Two important points emerge here. Firstly, these listings correspond almost exactly to the earliest post-Thomson publications of the song that can be dated with accuracy. Secondly, all these examples specifically link the phrase and, by implication, the song,

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26   *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, February 7 1805. Mrs Ashe was probably Mary Ashe née Comer, who was the principal singer at the Bath concerts: she was a pupil of their director, Venanzio Rauzzini, and then married his successor, Andrew Ashe.

27   *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 13 April 1806.

28   *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 15 March 1806.

to charitable events. The principle of honouring auld acquaintances was a sentiment that featured strongly in some eighteenth-century versions of *Auld Lang Syne*, and the connotations of the phrase "for auld lang syne" have always included this aspect as well as the more limited implication of times long past or "the good old days". There is clearly no way of knowing whether the *Auld Lang Syne* sung on these occasions was Burns's song with M2, though it seems likely given the larger context of other publications in this period. Caution is called for, however, particularly since the song was not well-enough established at this point to guarantee that it might not get mixed up with other songs with different titles. In January 1807, for example, a concert given by Mr Kelly at the King's Arms Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh "will conclude with the Days of Langsyne, and Fitzmaurice's Ramble to Scotland, as played by him with the greatest applause in Edinburgh".[29] This is, in all probability, a reference to Blamire's *The Chelsea Pensioners,* to the tune "Days of Langsyne", which was also very popular at this time, but we cannot be completely certain.

There is one more channel to be considered. In 1813, a new theatrical source for the distribution of the song enters, thanks to the great flexibility demonstrated by theatre companies when it came to chopping and changing a score according to fashion or the whims of a favourite singer. This was the popular burletta *Midas* by Kane O'Hara, which dates back to the 1760s, and was, like John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, a whimsical piece (this one in verse throughout) incorporating songs to well-known tunes. According to the preface to an 1825 London edition of the libretto, "Liston is very great in Midas; and Madame Vestris's Apollo is exquisite. Sinclair sung 'Pray Goody' much better than she can do; but in every other respect he was far inferior".[30] The Sinclair referred to here is the tenor John Sinclair, engaged at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden from 1811, and who also regularly appeared at the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh from 1813 onwards. The role of Apollo in *Midas* seems always to have been a great favourite during his engagements in Edinburgh, and the advertisements for these performances from 1813 and 1818 list not only *Pray Goody* but also *Auld Lang Syne* amongst the songs featured in the performance. Indeed, the Midas touch which may have started the acceleration of *Auld Lang Syne* from just another popular song to world classic may have had everything to do with this particular Apollo.

4.4 Mr Sinclair's Song

One night, during Sinclair's performance in Edinburgh, a curious incident occurred. After the crowd of coaches at the box-door had diminished, and left the portal clear, an old woman from the causeway-side, dressed in a clean mutch, a red cloak, and white apron, after the fashion of poor Scottish women on gala occasions, moved slowly and decently up to the box-keeper, whom it appears she took for an elder "herd in the penny,"

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29   *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 19 January 1807.
30   Anon. 1825/1, vi-vii.

and thus addressed him—"Oh, Sir, is there ane John Sinclair sings here?" "Ay, ay," quoth Cerberus. "Aweel, aweel, I'm glad I've fund him at last, after sic a lang tramp. But, Sir, whare's your brode? I dinna see't here, and troth I maun put in a bawbee or a penny, for auld acquaintance sake wi' John: for ye see, Sir, I kend John langsyne, when he was just a bit callant, rinnin' skirlin' about the doors amang our ain bairns! Deed, Sir, I was at John's kirsinning!" So saying, she rummaged the "guld profound" of a pouch hung by her side, which resembled in shape and size Mr. Hunter's violoncello, and was about to affront the box-keeper with the offer of a douceur, when that worthy gruffly told her to be gone about her business, and directed a police-officer to turn her out of doors. The poor woman of course exclaimed loudly against this treatment, and said something about seeing "John himsel;" but the harsh order was rigorously enforced. However, a gentleman, who was then entering the theatre, and heard the whole proceeding, interested himself in her cause, and though he could not in etiquette introduce her to the boxes, generously made her happy by a ticket to the lower gallery.[31]

In 1811, John Sinclair, who was originally from Edinburgh and who had bought himself free of military service with a view to pursuing a musical career, tread the boards at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden for the first time, having made his London début at the Haymarket Theatre a year earlier.[32] It was the start of almost a decade of appearances not only at Covent Garden, but also at the Theatres Royal in Bath and in Edinburgh, and most probably elsewhere.

Opera in Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was a very different affair to what we are used to today. A typical evening's entertainment would consist of at least two separate productions, generally a more serious play or opera followed by a shorter ballad opera or musical farce. Occasionally, additional songs would be sung in the course of the evening which did not officially belong in either of the main pieces performed, and generally these were very popular songs sung by the stars of the day with whom they were particularly associated: for example, in the era when Sinclair began singing at Covent Garden, an enormous number of playbills tell us of the success of Mr (Charles?) Incledon's rendition of the song *Black-Eyed Susan*.[33] Scottish songs were also popular additions, including one which might seem a surprising choice for a predominantly English audience—Burns's *Scots Wha Hae*. Sinclair himself would often sing a favourite duet, William Boyce's *Together Let Us Range The Fields*, and also seems to have become associated with the song *The Death of Nelson*. In 1815, however, Sinclair also sang *Auld Lang Syne* at a number of Covent Garden benefits, including his own. The first programme in which he is recorded as doing so was the benefit for Mr Broadhurst (presumably William Broadhurst), who would himself become closely associated with the song a few years later. In the next two years, Sinclair sang *Auld Lang Syne* at each of his own benefit nights, but not at any of the others—at least as far as the documentary evidence of the playbills shows us.

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31   *The Times*, 9 October 1824, quoting from a report in the *Edinburgh Observer*.
32   Husk & Warrack 2001; Farmer 1947, 443–444.
33   Originally titled *Sweet William's Farewell To Black-Ey'd Susan*, and taken from John Gay's *The Wife of Bath*.

Sinclair moved from Scotland to England at around the time when *Auld Lang Syne* was becoming established in Scotland. He may have heard the song performed at Knyvett's local concerts or at other events in London, but the evidence points to him having sung a "toom the cup" or rather: "toop the stowp" version of the song, which suggests that he picked it up in Scotland.[34] He probably began introducing the song at benefit concerts for the same reason that this had happened some years earlier in Scotland, though the fact that he sang it so often in *Midas* in Edinburgh (and possibly elsewhere) suggests an affection for the song which went beyond this. The connection between Sinclair and the song almost certainly led to its inclusion in John Davy's score for the opera *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* (1818), which contributed in no small measure to the song's firm establishment both nationally and internationally.

It is the nature of research into these events that the surviving documentary evidence can only tell us so much, but it is possible to make some surmises from theatre playbills. For example, from around 1810 until 1818, that perennial favourite *Rosina* was performed several times a year at Covent Garden and elsewhere. In the period immediately before the premiere of *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne,* however, *Rosina* seemed on its way to a mini-revival at Covent Garden, with the playbills boasting of an entirely new set, and a number of performances in a very short space of time. It may be pure coincidence that this happened just as *Auld Lang Syne* was becoming a London theatre song, but it is equally possible that either Sinclair or one of the composers associated with the theatre recognized the melodic connection and realised that the song had theatrical potential.

Contemporary reviews of *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* testify to the immediate popularity of the piece amongst critics and punters alike. It was based on the novel *Rob Roy* by Sir Walter Scott, adapted by Isaac Pocock. Though Scott has never enjoyed anything like the kind of cult status afforded Burns, his influence on contemporary ideas of Scottish history, identity, and culture, not to mention on nineteenth-century literature as a whole, cannot be overstated. In his own time, Scott's novels were a publishing sensation, and his stories of Highland intrigue and Jacobite bravado frequently triggered what we nowadays would call spin-offs—in particular, theatrical versions, including music dramas and operas. In this way, his works and his image of Scottish culture reached a much larger audience than even the novels themselves would allow for, and these dramatic representations were also the vehicle for presenting other hallmarks of "Scots" culture, including Scots songs. In Scotland, they triggered a new genre, the "National Drama", which satisfied contemporary yearning for theatre on Scottish themes; in Europe, they would inspire operas, ballets, and symphonic works to an extent not even achieved by Ossian.[35]

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34   See the text as given in the libretto of *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne*, quoted below. Several, though not all, of the many editions of the song which specifically refer to it being sung by Sinclair in the opera, likewise give a "toom the stowp" version of the words: these include the arrangements by Dieter (ca. 1820) and Bishop, as well as the version published by G. Shade (Bib. II ca. 1820/9), which is based on Dieter but with some differences.

35   See Bell 1998.

Scott himself was no stranger to the art of staging culture. A committed Unionist, he was largely responsible for the pomp and circumstance surrounding George IV's visit to Scotland in 1822.[36] A published record of the event unfortunately gives little information on the music played at the various celebrations, though it notes that three bands—a vocal band, a military band, and [Nathaniel] Gow's band—were stationed at different points of the room at the banquet held in the King's honour by the Lord Provost.[37] As already noted in Chapter 2, the King attended an Edinburgh performance of *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne,* and was later presented with a snuff-box engraved with the words and music of *Auld Lang Syne*: specifically, M2 underlaid with the first verse and chorus (Figure 4.1). Apart from a rhythmic deviation in one bar, the music as engraved on the box is typical of early publications of the song and seems most closely modelled on Thomson's 1801 edition. It is encircled by a wreath of Scottish thistles.[38]

Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne was staged at Covent Garden immediately following the success of another Scott adaptation, *Guy Mannering* (later productions of *Guy Mannering* are sometimes advertised as including *Auld Lang Syne*). The reference to *Auld Lang Syne* in the subtitle may have been introduced solely to distinguish the piece from other dramatizations of the same novel. A melodrama called *Rob Roy, or, The Traveller's Portmanteau* had been produced at the Olympic Theatre in London

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36   In his much-cited essay on this topic, Hugh Trevor-Roper said that the pageantry surrounding this visit was "a bizarre travesty of Scottish history, Scottish reality. Imprisoned by his own fanatical Celtic friends, carried away by his own romantic Celtic fantasies, Scott seemed determined to forget historic Scotland, his own Lowland Scotland, altogether". Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland" in Hobsbawm & Ranger (eds) 1983, 15–41 (30). Two contemporary comments from other leading figures in Edinburgh in the years immediately preceding this event can however be taken as evidence that, far from being swallowed up in some mist-swathed Ossianic dream sequence, Scott and others were being extremely canny (see also Grant 2010, where I discuss these examples). In *Peter's Letters to His Kinsfolk*, published in 1818 and actually written by John Gibson Lockhart, one of the founders of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, "Peter" describes a visit to Scott's home of Abbotsford in the Scottish Borders, and how, as the great man of letters recited one of the many ballads he had collected, his own personal piper could be heard playing outside. As Peter (Lockhart's alias) describes, "It is true, that it was in the Lowlands—and that there are other streams upon which the shadow of the tartans might fall with more of the propriety of mere antiquarianism than on the Tweed. But the Scotch are right in not now-a-days splitting too much the symbols of their nationality; as they have ceased to be an independent people, they do wisely in striving to be as much as possible a united people", Morris [Lockhart] 1819, 304–305. The second example is a letter from George Thomson to Scott written in November 1821, asking Scott to provide some lyrics for a new collection of airs: "You know that the present taste for Tartan, or the admiration of the prowess, enthusiasm, and fidelity of the Highlanders in the cause of Prince Charlie, is prodigious. No lyric production seems now to be more acceptable than a Jacobiteish ballad, which I am told finds especial favour among the Royal family. I should be extremely glad therefore if you were pleased to select any thing connected with the wandering, concealment, or escape of the unfortunate Prince for the themes of the two Sons; or any incident during the tide of his success, or a convivial Clan meeting, such as may have taken place in the Highlands on the Exiles [*sic*] return to their respective estates." BL MS Add. 35268, folio 69 recto. For the record, Scott declined to write the songs.
37   Anon. 1822, 18.
38   Bar 7 starts with two quavers instead of a dotted quaver and a semiquaver.

Fig. 4.1 A snuff-box presented to King George IV on his trip to Scotland in 1822, engraved with the first verse and music of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021.

in February 1818,[39] and *Rob Roy, The Gregarach* was premiered at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane on March 25 1818, only a fortnight after the premiere of Pocock and Davy's version at Covent Garden. In Edinburgh, the Pantheon had announced a new "spectacle" called *Rob Roy* in January 1818.[40]

Of all these productions, however, it was *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* which would generate the most success, even if the review of the premiere in *The Times* was lukewarm:

> It was received throughout with scarcely a dissentient voice, and is a remarkable instance of theatrical success on the smallest possible stock of original materials: not only has the author (if he may be called so) borrowed his chief incidents from the novel, but he has derived nearly all his dialogue from the same source; the poetry of the songs is made up in great measure from BURNS and WORDSWORTH; and the musician, as if unwilling to disgrace his colleague by any gratuitous labour, has formed out of Scotch airs, selected and harmonized, it must be confessed, with great taste, the chief music of the opera. Notwithstanding this, we are disposed to think that the piece will be a favourite, though it now and then languishes dreadfully for two or three scenes together. SINCLAIR, on account of the absence of BRAHAM, is its principal male singer; he was much applauded, and would have been more so had his taste been equal to his execution.[41]

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39   Nicoll 1955, 92.
40   Source: *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 January 1818.
41   *The Times*, March 13 1818.

This review suggests that John Sinclair took on the role of Francis Osbaldistone merely because of the absence of Covent Garden's real star, John Braham. However, since Braham was the same week appearing regularly in the theatre's Lent oratorio season, it seems likely that he was never intended for the role of Osbaldistone. It is somewhat ironic that the Scottish tenor played the only main character in the whole story who is English, particularly since, according to Covent Garden oboeist William Parke, Sinclair's Scottish accent was unmistakeable.[42]

The manner in which *Auld Lang Syne* is introduced into the opera is rather incongruous—but then, seamless dramatic logic was hardly the point in such productions. The setting is a tavern scene which takes place at the end of Act II. Francis Osbaldistone and Bailie Nicol Jarvie have arrived at an inn at Aberfoyle, and disturbed the meeting of two Highlanders. The discussion gets heated, quite literally—Bailie Jarvie grabs a red-hot poker at one point. In the very much distilled stage version, the conflict is resolved largely due to this intervention from Osbaldistone (in the novel, it is not Osbaldistone, but another Highlander, who calms the waters—without bursting into song):

> *Bailie.* Let Glasgow flourish!—I'll hear no language offensive to the duke of Argyle, and the name of Campbell—remember the poker—my conscience!—I say, he's a credit to the country, and a friend to our town and trade! (*they all rise*)
>
> *Galbraith.* Ah! there'll be a new world soon. We shall have no Campbells cocking their bonnets so high, and protecting thieves and murderers, to harry and spoil better men, and more loyal clans!
>
> *Bailie.* More loyal clans, I grant you—but no better men.
>
> *Galb.* No!—(*laying his hand on his sword*)
>
> *Frank.* Pray, gentlemen, do not renew your quarrel—in a few moments we must part company.
>
> *McStuart.* That's true; why should we make hot blood? but we are plagued and harried here, sir, with meetings, to put down Rob Roy! I have chased the McGregor, sir, like a red deer—him at bay—and still the duke of Argyle gives him shelter—it's enough to make one mad!—but I'd give something to be as near him as I have been.
>
> *Bailie.* You'll forgive me for speaking my mind—but it's my thought, you'd ha' given the best button in your bonet to have been as far away from Rob Roy, as you are now!—my conscience! my hot poker would have been nothing to his claymore.
>
> *McStuart.* A word more o' the poker, and my soul, I'll make you eat your words, and a handful o' cold steel—
>
> *Frank.* Come, come, gentlemen, let us all be friends here; and drink to all friends far away.

SONG—FRANK
(*words by Burns*)

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my friends,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.
    Chorus. For auld lang syne, &c.

An' here's a hand, my trusty friend,
An' gie's a hand o' thine,
An' we'll toom the stowp to friendship's growth,
An' days o' lang syne.
    Chorus. For auld lang syne, &c.

An' surely you'll be your pint stowp,
An' surely I'll be mine;
An' we'll take right gude willy-wacht,
For auld lang syne.
    Chorus. For auld lang syne, &c.
    (*a drum heard without*)

JEAN McALPINE *enters in alarm.*
Jean. The red coats! The red coats!

Save adding to the drama of the entrance of the redcoats, there is little to explain why *Auld Lang Syne* should be sung here. Although the dialogue mentions that the quarrelling factions will soon part company, the song is not specifically sung as a song of parting (in any case, and as I will discuss in Chapter 6, this tradition was almost certainly established later) and little love has been lost between them. For the same reason, it is unclear why a group of men who otherwise have little to do with each other should feel the need to raise a glass together to absent friends. Everything points to the song's being included specifically so that Sinclair could sing it, and possibly to cash in on its increasing popularity. In this regard, it is worth noting that the compacted version sung in the opera is based on the "toom the cup" (or here: "stowp") version of the text. This is also the first version I have found in which the "childhood" verses are missing—not insignificant for the future reception and use of the song.

Auld Lang Syne is not the only popular Burns song to make an appearance in the opera: it also incorporates *A Red, Red Rose* (K453), and a song texted by Pocock, *We Part To Meet No More,* is sung to the tune to which Burns wrote *Ye Banks And Braes* (K328).

The *Times*' reviewer's prognosis proved correct. After Covent Garden, *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* had a successful run at the East London Theatre, with Mr

Webber in the role of Osbaldistone.[43] In 1819, it was a favourite choice for the end-of-season benefits at Covent Garden.[44] In 1819 and 1820, Mr (John?) Duruset took over from John Sinclair as Francis Osbaldistone, and Duruset also sang *Auld Lang Syne* in other contexts including at Miss Stephen's benefit night on 23 June 1820 and during an evening consisting of *Guy Mannering*, *Where Shall I Dine?* and *Bluebeard: or, Female Curiosity* on 18 June 1819.[45] As early as April 1818, *Rob Roy MacGregor* was performed in the theatre in Sunderland, as a benefit for Mrs Faulkner; this performance featured Mr and Mrs Darley, who would play the roles of Francis Osbaldistone and Diana Vernon in the first American production in New York in June of the same year.[46] It was also performed in Philadelphia, the premiere there being on New Year's Day 1819.[47]

Following what by then was standard practice, both the British and American productions spawned sheet music editions of the most popular songs "as sung by Mr Sinclair" or "as sung by Mr Darley", both official and unofficial. An edition of *Auld Langsyne* [*sic*] published in Edinburgh, presumably within a short period of the opera's performance there, lists it "As sung with unbounded applause, by Mr Sinclair in Rob Roy MacGregor" but seems in fact to be based on one of Thomson's editions of the song, with the addition of a great deal of ornamentation in the top line of the last verse and chorus, possibly to mimic the way Sinclair sang.[48] Another edition of the song, arranged by I. Dieter, who worked at the King's Theatre in London, also mentions both the opera and Mr. Sinclair; there are at least three other editions bearing similar attributes, but all slightly different in the arrangement.[49] The song's popularity also explains why Henry Bishop, also composer at Covent Garden, made his own arrangement of it which is quite different from Davy's, and which was also advertised as "Sung by Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Norris & Mr. Comer, in Rob Roy Macgregor, or Auld Lang Syne at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden".[50] It is possible that at some point, Bishop's version was substituted for Davy's in the Covent Garden production itself.[51] *Auld Lang Syne* had not appeared in the collection of Scottish melodies arranged by Bishop published around 1812.[52]

Performances at the Theatre Royal in Bath—to some extent an outpost of the London scene, where gentry from the metropolis went to take the waters—are recorded both

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43   *The Times*, 28 September 1818 and thereafter.
44   It was presented for the benefits of Mr Taylor, the Misses Dennett, Mrs Gibbs and Mr Emery. Source: playbills held in the BL.
45   Source: British Library, General Reference Collection Playbills 97, UIN BLL01015176563.
46   Source: playbill held in the NLS, shelfmark APS.4.90.28.
47   Albrecht 1979.
48   Bib. II ca. 1830/1
49   Dieter ca. 1820; Bib. II/ca. 1830, Bib. II/ca. 1820/8.
50   Bishop n.d.
51   There is some confusion about the composition of the opera, with some sources attributing it at least in part to Bishop, who was the main house composer at Covent Garden at the time. The first edition of the original score implies, however, that the original production solely used music compiled or composed by Davy; Bishop's contributions may have been integrated later.
52   Bishop 1812.

in playbills and editions of the song. *Auld Lang Syne* was for example listed to appear in "The Festival of Apollo" which would follow a performance of *Love in a Village* for the benefit of Mrs Baker, held on 13 May 1820.[53] The singer in that instance could well have been Mr Broadhurst, who towards the end of that year would also star in a Bath production of *Guy Mannering* in which he would introduce *Auld Lang Syne, Green Grow The Rashes O* and *Scots Wha Hae* as well as an Irish song (13 November 1820).[54] The year after, Leoni Lee sang the part of Francis Osbaldistone in a performance of *Rob Roy MacGregor* for his own benefit. The arrangement he sang may well not have been that published by John Davy, but his own glee arrangement.[55]

The first performance of the opera at the Edinburgh Theatre Royal came at the relatively late stage of February 1819, though it may have been produced at other theatres in Scotland, including provincial theatres, before then. As the *Scotsman* review of that performance put it:

> He who is without local attachments is also without affections. He who is without affections does not deserve the name of man. But he who is at once a man and a *Scotsman*, must be delighted with "ROB ROY MACGREGOR, or AULD LANG SYNE." This is our dramatic-syllogistic mode of reasoning. And why should not we indulge in some harmless peculiarities?—Why should not we be proud of our national genius, humour, music, kindness and fidelity—*Why not be national?*[56]

The reviewer was particularly enamoured of Charles Mackay's performance as Bailie Jarvie, and the scene at the inn: "In making up this brawl, Burns's song, "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot," was happily introduced, and sung and heard with enthusiasm".

The piece was a roaring success in Edinburgh, and saved the Theatre Royal from financial ruin—and the same seems to have been true for other theatres thereafter.[57] Smaller-scale performances offered by travelling theatre troupes would oftentimes still be expected to present "all the well-loved music", even if this meant casting a woman in the role of Osbaldistone if there was no decent male tenor in the company.[58]

Not long after the success of *Rob Roy Macgregor*, John Sinclair left for the continent, in particular Italy, where he worked with the composer Gioachino Rossini—the role of Idreno in Rossini's *Semiramide* (1823) was written for him. He returned to the British stage for brief periods in the 1820s, introducing *Auld Lang Syne* as well as *Scots Wha Hae* into an 1823 production of *Guy Mannering* at Covent Garden, and singing it at his own benefit at the same theatre the following year. After another absence, he sang the role of Osbaldistone at a performance in Bath in 1828 which also included *John Anderson My Jo* (the afterpiece in this case was *Midas*, with Sinclair again appearing

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53   Source: British Library, General Reference Collection Playbills 179/1.
54   Source: British Library, General Reference Collection Playbills 179/1.
55   Lee ca. 1820.
56   *The Scotsman*, 20 February 1819.
57   Bell 1998, 144.
58   Bell 1998, 155, 162.

as Apollo). In 1830, he sang the song again, but listed as *Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot*, at a "Tribute of Friendship" which formed part of the farewell benefit night for Mr Fawcett.[59] Sinclair retired from the stage the same year, and moved to Margate to become director of the Tivoli Gardens.

4.5 After *Rob Roy Macgregor*

The most convincing argument for the role played by Davy and Pocock's *Rob Roy Macgregor* in the dissemination of the song is that by the mid- to late 1820s, *Auld Lang Syne* was firmly established on both sides of the Atlantic. The opera may not have been the only factor, and we should certainly not presume any kind of simple cause-effect relationship. However, research into other songs has demonstrated a link between theatrical usage and wider dissemination, in some cases leading to the lasting establishment of the song.[60] Sources for the use of *Auld Lang Syne* in this period are scant and scattered, and must be treated with caution, but they do testify to a sudden peak in references to the song in the period immediately following the opera's enormously successful runs. It is also noticeable that from around this period, collected editions of Burns's writings start to include *Auld Lang Syne* much more consistently.[61] Thomson first did so in 1815, from which point the following text appeared with the song in his collections:

> The following most beautiful Song was sent by BURNS to the Editor, with the information that "it is an old song of the olden times, which had never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until he took it down from an old man's singing". It seems not improbable, however, that he said this merely in a playful humour; for the Editor cannot help thinking that the Song affords evidence of our Bard himself being the author.[62]

The opera's London premiere came only a few months before Thomson commissioned Beethoven to make an arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne* and other songs. That these were to be arrangements for three voices may suggest that Thomson was hoping to profit from the popularity of concert glees in this period: Davy's was the second such setting after Knyvett's in 1813.

Other sources from around this period in Scotland suggest the song was popular, but not yet consolidated as a song "by Burns" (and therefore sacrosanct).[63] In the second

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59   The song appears under this title on other occasions as well, including on the playbill of a 1826 benefit performance of *Rob Roy Macgregor* at Covent Garden.

60   Grant 2011/2.

61   Those consulted which include the song are Bib. II/1815, Bib. II/1819/1, Bib. II/1819/2, Bib. II/1819/3. All these editions print the verses in the order of B4. By contrast, the following earlier editions do not contain the song: Bib. II/1801, Bib. II/1802/1, Bib. II/1802/2, Bib. II/1805/1, Bib. II/1805/2, Bib. II/1807, Bib. II/1808. Currie, as already noted, includes the song merely in the context of Burns's correspondence.

62   Thomson, *Select Collection*, vol. II, edition of 1818.

63   Though see the review of the first Edinburgh Theatre Royal performance, cited above.

volume of R. A. Smith's *The Scotish Minstrel*, one of the most important collections of Scottish songs to appear in the 1820s,[64] *Auld Lang Syne* was published with additional verses which emphasize the underlying sentiment of the song: "*Blest be the pow'r that still has left / The frein's o' lang syne.*"[65] The second edition clearly attributes the first set of words to Burns and the second set to "B. B", but another edition, possibly the first, conflates these two texts and does not attribute either; the refrain is written according to the old formula whereby the last two lines of the verse are repeated at the end of the chorus.[66] A variant of one verse of the text published by Smith is also found in a much longer version of the song published ca. 1818 in the second volume of *The Miniature Museum of Scots Songs and Music* [...].[67] This version also introduces three new verses, one after the standard first verse, and two more after the childhood verses and before the two closing verses. All the new verses are modelled on the form of the "childhood" verses. The tune in this edition is named as "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey" and the text as "Corrected by Burns". A note at the end also points out that the second, fifth and sixth verses have never before been published. There seem, then, to have been various elongated versions of the text in circulation around this time. If it was indeed the first edition of Smith's collection that included the additional and unattributed verses, this could suggest Smith then "cleaned up" the text on the basis of the gathering consensus on Burns's authorship. The third volume of Smith's collection also includes the Jacobite text *Shall Monarchy Be Quite Forgot* with the tune M-1, named "In Days of Yore".[68]

Verses which expand a given song may or may not be attempting to capitalize on that song's existing popularity: parodies and contrafacta, on the other hand, are a fairly reliable indication of familiarity with the model song, since they rely on it for their effect. In volumes II and III of *The Universal Songster, or, Museum of Mirth*, published in 1829, there are no less than seven parodies and contrafacta on *Auld Lang Syne*. These could hardly be more different from each other in structure, subject and tone, and since they are also often very funny (sometimes unintentionally), they are reproduced in Appendix 3.[69] Evidence that the song was known and loved in Scotland can be found earlier than this, however. In 1822, for example, a letter from Andrew White was published and circulated in broadside form in Glasgow. White was one of sixteen men sentenced to transportation to Australia (three others were executed) for their part in an attempt to seize the Carron Iron Works in Falkirk during the so-called

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64   Now digitized at https://digital.nls.uk/91519874
65   Smith 1820–1824, II, 82–83.
66   This edition is held in the NLS, shelfmark Glen 217. The second edition is held in Glasgow University Library. Neither has been dated. The first edition appeared from 1820–1824; the British Library estimates the date of the second edition as being 1825.
67   Bib. II/ca. 1818/2.
68   Another song in volume V of this collection, *O Cam Ye, Friend, Across The Hill* (*The Flower of Amochrie*) is also to a very different tune named "Days of Yore".
69   Bib. II/1829, vol. II, 309.

"Radical War" of 1820.[70] White's letter home, at least as printed, is largely a description of life in Botany Bay, which by his own account seems rather better than the conditions he left behind. However, this does not stop him being homesick:

> My sentence has been mitigated to seven years, and my master and mistress has [*sic*] promised to bring me home with them; so these things keep me in good spirits, and I flatter myself with the hope that I shall soon see you again, when we will spend another New-year's day morning, singing, "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," or "Auld lang syne," or "Willie brew'd a peck o' maut.[71]

This is the first direct reference I have found to *Auld Lang Syne* being sung at New Year, though what is more significant is that it is classed among favourites sung in an informal and festive context. By 1826, the tune of *Auld Lang Syne* was one of those to which children sang their hymns at an institution set up by Robert Owen, founder of the cooperative movement, in Orbiston in Lanarkshire; the visiting reporter recognized it along with two other tunes used for this purpose, those of *God Save The Queen* and *Rule Britannia*.[72]

These references provide a slight balance to the main source of evidence for the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* in this period, most of which comes from newspaper accounts of formal dinners and other public events. Again, these accounts start to creep in just after *Rob Roy Macgregor* began doing the rounds. Initially, the song's link to Scotland and the Scots was still apparent, but it rapidly starts to lose this narrow association. In April 1818, Mr Broadhurst sang the song during the toasts at the Scottish Hospital Dinner held at the Freemason's Tavern in London, in the presence of the Royal Family.[73] It was also sung at the Pitt Dinner held in the City of London Tavern in May 1821, following the toast to "Lord Kenyon and the Pitt Club of Wales" (*The Times* notes that singing a Scottish song here was a "strange arrangement").[74] In 1822, it was again sung by Mr Broadhurst at a dinner to mark the anniversary of the accession of the King, again at the City of London Tavern, and following a toast to "The other Members of Parliament who have this day honoured us with their presence"; after *Auld Lang Syne*, a toast was then raised to "The Rose, the Shamrock, and the Thistle".[75] The song's appearance here may have been a matter of Broadhurst's personal preference, but it also reflects later incidences of the song's use at political gatherings. It became particularly prominent as a tribute to elder statesmen at public rallies and meetings, and as a sentiment invoked in gratitude by a politician who had been successfully returned to Parliament.[76] An early example comes in September 1822, at a dinner in Berwick celebrating the visit of

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70 For more on the context see, e.g., Smout 1998 (1969), 412–420.
71 White 1822.
72 Source: *Edinburgh Advertiser*, citing from the *Glasgow Free Press*, 17 November 1826. This is not the last time that this triumvirate appears: see Chapter 6, below.
73 *The Times*, 27 April 1818.
74 T*he Times*, 29 May 1821.
75 *The Times*, 30 January 1822.
76 See also Chapter 7, below.

the radical politician John Hume: in the course of a series of toasts to, amongst others, "The Liberty of the Press, without its licentiousness" and "Civil and religious liberty all over the world", the tune of *Auld Lang Syne* followed the toast to "The Burghs who had the good sense and good fortune to return Mr. Hume to parliament".[77] On the other hand, when the Whig MP Charles Calvert lost his Southwark seat at the 1830 General Election, he "returned thanks to the electors for past favours conferred upon him, and expressed his disappointment at their not being renewed for the sake of 'auld lang syne'".[78]

Not all of the renditions reported in the press took place in such ordered and salubrious surroundings. When Charles Capet, the ex-King of France, spent some time at Holyrood in 1830, some would-be supporters made use of the song as well, as *The Scotsman* reported with some disdain:

> On Saturday night, a singular and foolish fracas took place, which originated in a change-house in the Abbey. "A mixty maxty motley squad," congregated under the pretence of celebrating the return of the ex-patriated King to the place of his former residence. A number of "loyal and constitutional" speeches were delivered, a number of "patriotic" songs sung, and about midnight, when "hot with the Tuscan grape, and high in blood," the whole party repaired to the palace square, and quite forgetful of the exhausted state of the strangers after their journey, and their great need of a night's sound repose, and wholly regardless of the sanctity of the midnight hour, they sung that social old Scottish song, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot," *led*, says the account, "by a gentleman from *Sheffield*." (Shade of Burns! was your slumber sweet at the time?) The party concluded their nocturnal orgies in the square with three tremendously anti-christian yells. Had it not been for the lateness of the hour, there is a strong probability that the whole party would have been apprehended, and obliged to answer at the bar of the Police Court for disturbing the public peace.[79]

Around this time, *Auld Lang Syne*—more specifically, M2—begins to appear as the subject of instrumental arrangements and variations.[80] Many of these have not been dated exactly, so that it is again difficult to establish if *Rob Roy Macgregor* was the sole factor pushing the song to prominence, or indeed how quickly this occurred. However, watermarks and other external evidence again point to an upsurge in the early 1820s, which is corroborated by American sources discussed in the next section. This was in addition to the various editions of the opera and arrangements of the song, with or without a direct reference to Mr Sinclair's performance.

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77 *The Times*, 1 October 1822. The report lists the "Tunes" played, so that it is unclear if the songs were actually sung.
78 *The Times*, 5 August 1830.
79 *The Scotsman*, 27 October 1830.
80 These are: Weidner 1810, Valentine ca. 1819, Burrowes ca. 1820, Viner ca. 1820, Wright 1820, Nicholson & Taylor 1811, Bochsa ca. 1820, Grossé ca. 1821, Newton ca. 1821, Holst 1822, Kalkbrenner 1822, Crouch ca. 1825, Reddie ca. 1825, Kiallmark 1825. There is a falling-off thereafter, though variations and other instrumental arrangements would continue to appear at intervals throughout the nineteenth century; see Chapter 7, below. Some sources have been dated from watermarks, which do not necessarily mean the item was published in that year, but certainly no sooner. These include Steil ca. 1816.

Within the space of a few years, *Auld Lang Syne* had become one of the songs most frequently produced whenever a Scots song was called for, the other being *Scots Wha Hae*. Both songs had by that point a track record of popularity on stages in London and elsewhere. It seems appropriate, then, that Walter Scott, who contributed so much to the success of Scottish themes at this time, was himself hailed with this song when recognized at a theatre in Dublin in 1825: in tribute to his presence, between the acts the clamouring crowds were treated to "'Lord Moira's Welome,' 'Scots wha ha'e,' 'Auld Lang Syne' and other delightful Scottish airs".[81] A little over ten years later, Scott's memory—he had died in 1832—was toasted with *Auld Lang Syne* at a festival banquet in the Edinburgh Theatre Royal to mark the fourth centenary of the invention of printing.[82]

4.6 American Sources

Early sources for the reception of *Auld Lang Syne* in the USA consolidate what British sources reveal: that within a very short period, M2 became unequivocally associated with the name *Auld Lang Syne*; that the song's enormous rise in popularity coincided with the opera *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne*; and that by the 1830s, the song was common currency. The similarity in the fate of the song on both sides of the Atlantic is testimony to the constant cultural interchange between Britain and America at this time, due not merely to migration but more importantly to the trade in cultural goods and practices, including music.

Public concerts and ballad operas had became well established in major American centres in the 1730s, and from around 1750 the concerts were drawing much of their performers and repertory from the theatre.[83] Before 1780, America's musicians had to rely almost completely on imports from Europe for secular music, but a new influx of European immigrants in the period following the Revolution led firstly to a change in the musical culture and secondly to the establishment of secular music publishing in America itself. Publication of sheet music was firmly established by the 1790s, and often had a link to the new theatrical companies set up around that time.[84] The publication of a song "as sung in" a particular opera is not necessarily evidence for a performance of the opera in that locality, but it is still worth noting that songs from *Rosina* were being published as such in New York by the late 1790s, and Harvard College Library's collection of early playbills show that *Rosina* was being performed in Boston, New York and elsewhere from no later than 1797.[85]

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81 *The Times*, 21 July 1825, original source the *Morning Register*.
82 *The Scotsman*, 15 July 1837.
83 Wolfe 1980, 39.
84 Krummel 2001.
85 The LOC catalogue lists *Sweet Transports, Sung in the Opera of Rosina*, and *When Bidden to the Wake or Fair: A Favorite Song in Rosina*, both ca. 1798, and *Her Mouth with a Smile. A Favorite Song as Sung by Mr. Darley in Rosina*, and *Whilst with Village Maids I Stray. Sung in the Opera of Rosina,* both probably from

The first major American centre of music publishing was Philadelphia, then the largest city. The first publication to use the new method of engraving using punching tools was a collection of Scots tunes with variations published by Alexander Reinagle, who had recently emigrated from Scotland, and it was engraved by another Scot, John Aitken, who had emigrated some time before 1785.[86] Reinagle's father was Austrian, one of the many continental performers working in Edinburgh in the late eighteenth century, where Alexander was born and brought up. Alexander Reinagle had led concerts in Glasgow in the 1770s, and had published a collection of tunes there in 1782 which might have formed the basis for the American volume.[87] Reinagle is said to have persuaded Aitken to branch out into music publishing, and they collaborated on many publications in the years to follow;[88] Aitken was the sole music publisher in Philadelphia until 1793. Around 1797, he published a volume with the partly familiar title *The Scots Musical Museum: Being a Collection of the Most Favorite Scots [sic] Tunes: Adapted to the Voice, Harpsichord and Piano by John Aitken.* Since many of the tunes are "adapted by Pleyel", it would seem that Aitken helped himself to Thomson's publications amongst others. The book also contains probably the first American printing of a song entitled *Auld Lang Syne*, the tune in question being M-1 and the text, as we may expect, Ramsay's.[89]

The database *Early American Sheet Music and its European Sources* (EASMES), which catalogues over a thousand different printed editions and manuscripts up to 1830 in mostly American libraries and archives, gives twenty-two different sources for a tune named "Auld Lang Syne" or "Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot".[90] Nine of these—mostly the earlier sources—are from the British Isles. EASMES cites the incipit (or start) of each tune, and makes it possible to check if these tunes at least start off as M-1, M1, or M2. The only source for M1 is volume V of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, but there are seven for M-1, including Aitken's *Museum*. All date from the eighteenth century, include most of the standard sources, and cover a date

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the first decade of the nineteenth century; all four songs were printed at J. Hewitt's Musical Repository, 131 William Street, New York. According to Wolfe 1980, Hewitt's was one of the most important music circulating libraries at the time. Mr Darley, who would later appear in early American performances of *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Langsyne,* was singing at the Federal Street Theatre in Boston around 1804–1805. Another edition of *Whilst with Village Maids I Stray* was published in Philadelphia by G. Willig, a prominent publisher, around 1798. Harvard University Library holds playbills for performances of *Rosina* in February 1794 at the John Street Theatre in New York; in January 1797 at the Hay-Market Theatre in Boston; in October and December 1800 at the Federal Street Theatre, Boston; in 1802 at the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore; in December 1805 at the Charleston Theatre; and in January 1806 at the New Theatre in New York.

86 Wolfe 1980, 41.

87 Farmer 1947. Both volumes were called *A Collection of the Most Favourite Scots Tunes with Variations for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord.*

88 Reinagle also set up a theatre company in Philadelphia, with Thomas Wignall, which was successful enough for them to open another theatre in Baltimore at a later point. See Lawers 1964, 95 ff.

89 I am grateful to the staff of the Winterthur Library, Delaware for quickly providing a copy of the song as Aitken printed it.

90 The database can be found at https://www.cdss.org/elibrary/Easmes/Index.htm

range from 1724 (the music to Ramsay's collection) to ca. 1798 (*The Caladonian* [*sic*] *Muse*, published in Philadelphia); most are from around the time when Ramsay's and William Thomson's collections appeared. Then, there is a gap, and when the name "Auld Lang Syne" appears again, in a commonplace book dated roughly to 1811 or later, the tune referred to using this name is consistently M2. Three sources appear to be elaborated forms of M2, in collections of military band music.[91] Most of these later sources are American.[92] The EASMES database is interesting because of the very clear distinction it presents—a kind of "before" and "after" relating not only to Thomson's publication of the song, but also the appearance of Davy's opera. The sources listed include several tutors for various instruments—M2 also pops up in tutorial books in later decades as well.

Other bibliographic sources confirm this general pattern. The song was in circulation from no later than the second decade of the nineteenth century: at least two Baltimore songbooks printed it in 1812, and an American edition of N. C. Butler's arrangement *Auld Lang Syne. A Much Admired Scotch Ballad* can be dated with certainty to July 1817.[93] There is then an upsurge in publications of the song or which use the tune from ca. 1818. One source frequently published in America was D[aniel] Ross's variations on *Auld Lang Syne*, probably the earliest of the many sets of instrumental variations on the tune: Wolfe notes twelve different editions of this piece issued by a number of American publishers in the period from ca. 1818–ca.1825 (the end date of his survey). Ross's variations were originally published in Edinburgh and probably predate Davy's opera.

Again, the degree to which we can trace the development to the opera or to other factors is something of a moot point. These other factors would include an increase in the total number of publications, and possibly also an increase in the number that have survived. Anne Dhu Shapiro notes that the popularity of Scots songs in America at this time, and their general significance, is completely disproportionate to the actual number of Scots and descendants of Scots living there (emigration to Canada was much more popular). She also suggests that "it was the double impact of Burns and Sir Walter Scott that made Scottish sounds so important in early nineteenth century America"; Burns provided the songs, but "it was Scott [...] who brought the idea of the romance of Scotland to the fore and gave the singing of Scottish song a political and cultural significance".[94]

Bibliographical aids such as EASMES and Wolfe's bibliography are dedicated to sources with music, so they give only a general clue as to the distribution of the song. Parodies and contrafacta pad out this image. American broadsides and sheet music in

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91   Two are from publications by Edward Riley, whose various tune books include over 700 of the most popular tunes of the day and may have been the source for the third source, a manuscript collection (Beach manuscript). See Camus 1982 for more on this source, and the cultural context.

92   Interestingly, Thomson's *Select Collection* is not included in this list

93   Wolfe 1964, 141 (record 1417); date is taken from a newspaper advertisement.

94   Shapiro 1990, 74.

this period are rarely dated, but there are at least two contrafacta on *Auld Lang Syne* in the collections of the Library of Congress which deal with events from the early 1830s. The earlier of these is a broadside song telling the sad tale of Mr Joseph White, murdered in his bed at the age of eighty-two on 7 April 1830. The song proper is prefixed with the following:

> Shall auld acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind?
> Shall "horrid murder" be forgot, in the days of Auld Lang Syne!
> No! let this tale be treasured up, that young and old may know,
> That they taste not the bitter cup of sin, death, and wo.
>   Tune, "Auld Lang Syne"[95]

The broadside itself is not dated, but was published by L. Deming of Boston, Massachussetts, who was active as a publisher of broadsides from ca. 1831–1837 as a sideline to his work as a "trader and barber".[96] Deming also published the "second part" of *Auld Lang Syne*, consisting of five new verses which are of interest primarily since they tell of an imminent parting.[97] The other contrafactum tells the tale of the murder of Sarah M. Cornell, whose body was found in a small community in Rhode Island in December 1832.[98] It is one of two ballads on the incident published on this broadside, the other to be sung to the tune of *The Star-spangled Banner*. Cornell, it was discovered, had been pregnant and the trail led to a local (married) minister, who was later tried for her murder but exonerated; the case provoked national attention, and the contrafactum calls for him to be hung. Another early American parody, a rallying call for the Republicans, appears in the *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg, PA) of 17 October 1836 and is given with "Tune—Auld Lang Syne, or Coming thro' the Rye". Also around this time, two instruction books for elementary school teachers suggest that children might be taught the alphabet to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*.[99]

M2 also became one of the most frequently used tunes for songs of the American temperance movement. In his extensive survey of temperance parodies and contrafacta, Paul D. Sanders gives the lyrics for no less than twelve different sets of temperance lyrics to M2 from the 1840s alone, with even more appearing later in the century. Several appear in the publications of John Pierpont, more famous as the writer of *Jingle Bells* (or *A One-Horse Open Sleigh*, as it was originally called). Since temperance meetings often aimed to recreate the social atmosphere of the tavern without the alcohol, songs

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95   LOC, Collection "American Song Sheets", digital ID as109040.
96   Howay 1928, 71 n.2.
97   See Chapter 6, below. These verses seem to have formed the basis for another broadside published by J. Andrews in New York, who was active until at least the late 1850s. It contains four of the five verses published by Deming, with minor changes. While the chorus in Deming's version includes a repetition of the last two lines of the chorus, the chorus of the later version is taken from the original song. LOC, Collection "American Songs and Ballads", digital ID sb10012b.
98   LOC, Collection "American Song Sheets", digital ID as103610.
99   McGuirk 1997, who gives these books as being Ephraim Bacon, *Infant School Teacher's Guide to which is Added, a Source of Instruction Suited to Infants' Sunday Schools*, published in Philadelphia in1829, and Samuel Read Hall, *Lectures to Female Teachers on School Keeping*, published in Boston in 1832.

and singing were a vital part of their programme, and again most were parodies and contrafacta. The popularity of Scottish songs generally around this time meant that they were often used as a basis: apart from *Auld Lang Syne*, Sanders also notes the very frequent use of the tunes and lyrical structure of *Scots Wha Hae* and *Coming Through The Rye*.[100]

There is also evidence of the tune being used in religious contexts. Two hymnbooks in common use in Illinois used the tune of *Auld Lang Syne* for a hymn called *Hark From The Tombs*; the tune is printed under the name "Plenary".[101] And in November 1841, the hymn *When I Can Read My Title Clear* was sung to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne* by a group of thirty-five Africans about to embark on the journey home: they had taken part in the revolt on the Spanish slave ship Amistad off the coast of Cuba in 1839.[102]

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By the 1830s, the Scots phrase "auld lang syne" had firmly entered the English vernacular, introduced most frequently when writers to *The Times*, or speechmakers, felt obliged to remind readers how much better things were in years gone by.[103] A poem printed privately in Dublin in 1830, of extremely questionable quality, and dedicated "To good and kind Aunt Margaret", is called *Auld Lang Syne* and recounts the poet's childhood memories, including a verse eulogising the family spaniel.[104] When the new baronet Sir John Leman made a visit to Castle Donington in Nottinghamshire, and proved full of sympathy for the dire straits of its locals, "many a bumper was drunk to his health and the days of 'auld lang syne'".[105] An 1839 performance of *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* at the Theatre Royal English Opera House was followed by "an entirely new Burletta, entitled THE TURN-AMONG THE KNIGHTS OF CHIVALRY IN THE DAYS OF NOT LANG-SYNE",[106] while a report of a collection of Gothic armoury to be auctioned in London ends with the remark that "those who unite good taste to wealth will do well to lay out a part of the latter in obtaining some

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100 Sanders 2006.

101 These are *Missouri Harmony*, which appeared in several editions from the 1820s, and *Southern Harmony*, which first appeared in the 1820s. I have been unable to establish whether M2 was used in the earlier editions of the former. Information derived from Peter Ellertsen, "At Springfield's First Public Hanging" (12 February 2006, http://hogfiddle.blogspot.com/2006/02/at-springfields-first-public-hanging.html. Ellertsen is relating a story told by the singer Terry Hogg of how the condemned man sang the hymn immediately before execution.

102 "Departure of the Mendi Africans", *New York Journal of Commerce*, 27 November 1841.

103 For example: (a) "Are these utopianists aware of the expense of attaining even a fair medical education? If not, let the following be a criterion of what it was in 'Auld lang syne'." Letter to *The Times*, signed "A MASTER MASON, Twickenham, No. 21, 1836", printed in *The Times*, 28 November 1836. (b) "I was lately [...] taken to see two fountains, by the side of which a tale of auld lang syne was related", unnamed Bishop at a meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in Walsingham, *The Times* 1 November 1837; the tale is of a warrior knight leaving for Palestine.

104 Bib. II/1830/1.

105 *The Times*, 2 November 1838.

106 Advertisement in *The Times*, 9 September 1839.

relics of the warfare of 'auld lang syne'".[107] The motif of "auld acquaintance" also crops up, for example in a caricature now held in the Wellcome Library and featuring the reunion of Wellington and "John Bull", the prototypical Englishman.[108] And by the 1840s, the first of at least two racehorses to bear the name Auld Lang Syne began to run—rather too slowly as it would appear, thus causing it to unexpectedly live up to the developing traditions of the song by frequently coming last.[109]

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107 *The Times*, 29 April 1841.
108 J. Doyle (artist), 1831; available at https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hcf5rp3y/items
109 Various articles from the Sporting Intelligence section of *The Times*, 1842–1846. The second horse with this name ran in the 1860s, and won at least one race; various articles in *The Times*, 1868.

5. The Song of Union

The myriad sources discussed in the previous chapter suggest that Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* first came to attention in Scotland in the early years of the nineteenth century, and then, largely due to the influence of theatre, became firmly established throughout Britain and America in the course of the 1820s and 1830s. However, this was also the fate of many other songs, few of which have achieved, or retained, anything like the same status. At some point, however, *Auld Lang Syne* left these songs behind. This development is linked to the traditions that arose around the song, which redefined it and ensured its continued use and dissemination right through the twentieth century. The most important of these are the traditions of singing the song while standing in a circle with arms crossed and hands joined ($S\infty$), of singing it at parting ($S\Omega$), and of singing it at New Year (S_{NY}). $S\infty$ and $S\Omega$ possibly developed in tandem, and will be discussed in this and the next chapter. S_{NY} developed slightly later, and will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The difficulties faced when trying to trace how and when the song of *Auld Lang Syne* became established are compounded in the case of traditions such as these. Most of the little available evidence is anecdotal and sketchy at best. Nevertheless, some patterns and contexts do start to emerge, and among the most important of these is a particular type of social group, or rather network, which seems to have had a decisive impact on the international distribution of the song: fraternal organizations—or "fraternal-type organizations" as I will also call them, since not all are fraternal in the strict sense. The common features of this type of social organization are that the members generally subscribe to a common goal or purpose (often self-improvement and/or mutual support) rather than sharing a common heritage; that members are admitted to this organization through oftentimes very elaborate initiation rituals; and that each individual group within the organization is connected to others in a national or transnational network, expressed through shared rituals and symbols. One of the most famous, or infamous examples of this type of organization is also the first one to have an implicit link to *Auld Lang Syne*.

5.1 The Freemasons

In every regular assembly of men, who are convened for wise and useful purposes, the commencement and termination of business is attended with some form. Though

ceremonies are in themselves of little importance, yet as they serve to engage the attention, and to impress the mind with reverence, they must be considered as necessary on solemn occasions. They recall to memory the intent of the association, and banish many of those trifling associations which too frequently intrude on our less serious moments.[1]

That Burns was a Freemason is well known, though the role played by the Freemasons in assisting Burns during his life, and supporting his legacy after his death, is less generally recognized. For this reason, and because Freemasonry became a conscious or unconscious model for so many other fraternal and fraternal-type organizations, it is worth looking at Freemasonry in more detail.

Freemasonry originated in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, either in England or, more probably, Scotland.[2] Scotland had a long tradition of social networks built on trust and mutual support which are reflected in some aspects of Freemasonry.[3] However, speculative Freemasonry—as distinct from operative Freemasonry, the system employed by actual stonemasons—only became widely established in the early eighteenth century, with the foundation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. Even by this point, the secrecy of Freemasonry was a source of much unease, and as early as the 1720s the first of many "exposés" of their rituals and practices was published. As David Stevenson has noted, the symbolism and secrecy of the organization demonstrate the late Renaissance origins of the movement and seem to run counter to the spirit of the Enlightenment; at the same time, however, the ideals of Freemasonry encapsulated much Enlightenment thought.[4] Liberty, equality, and of course fraternity were among the watchwords of Masonry, which is one reason for frequent speculation on the role of Freemasons in the American and French revolutions.

These are not the only aspects of eighteenth-century Freemasonry which show it to be a phenomenon very much of its time. Freemasonry developed in an age when the structure of social life was changing. Coffee houses and taverns were becoming more and more the centre of social life, and many early Masonic Lodges met in taverns. By the eighteenth century, these trends were well established, further advanced by the general spirit of affluence and self-assuredness which characterised Georgian life.[5] Freemasonry's development can also be linked back to the seventeenth-century cult of friendship, as demonstrated in an address given by Brother Charles Leslie on the occasion of the consecration of Vernon Kilwinning Lodge in Edinburgh in 1741:

When friendship is firm and cemented, we enjoy a high degree of pleasure; when it deadens or declines, we experience an equal degree of pain. In every breast there reigns a propensity to friendship, which, once properly established, sweetens every temporal enjoyment, and removes the disquietude to which the infirmities of our nature expose us [...] Nevertheless, though the influence of friendship, considered the source of

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1   Preston 1775, 47–48.
2   Stevenson 1988/1, 1988/2.
3   See, e.g., Mackenzie 2003; Caterall 2004.
4   See Stevenson 1988/1.
5   See Rubin 2003.

benevolence, is unlimited, it exerts itself more or less vehemently as the objects it favours are nearer or more remote. Hence springs true patriotism, which fires the soul with the most generous flame, creates the best and most disinterested virtue, and inspires the public spirit and heroic ardour, which enables us to support a good cause, and risk our lives in its defence.[6]

Strong words indeed, but loyalty to King and Country, and the integrity which distinguishes the patriot from the mere warrior, are merely the extreme end of the spectrum:

> Friendship not only appears divine when employed in preserving the liberties of our country, but shines with equal splendour in the more tranquil hours of life. Before it rises into the noble flame of patriotism, aiming destruction at the heads of tyrants, thundering for liberty, and courting dangers in a good cause, we shall see it calm and moderate, burning with an even glow, improving the soft hours of peace, and heightening the relish for virtue. Hence it is that contracts are formed, societies are instituted, and the vacant hours of life are cheerfully employed in agreeable company, and social conversation.[7]

Lodge meetings were a critical element in the process of cementing these ties of friendship and association. Theoretically at least, religious doctrine and political affiliation were to be left at the Lodge door, just as social class and standing were to play a secondary role to personal virtue and integrity, self-improvement and the attainment of truth. While this did not mean that princes and ploughmen were treated exactly the same in the Lodge—a certain deference to rank was still practised—it did mean that Freemasonry provided a singular opportunity for ploughmen and their like to enjoy the advantages of the chattering classes, giving them access to an exclusive social network at a time when the old structures of aristocratic patronage were in decline. In the particular case of Burns, this was important on several levels. His Lodge brothers helped him raise the subscription necessary to publish his *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* in 1786. Many of the connections he made during his subsequent sojourn in Edinburgh, which were to be so important for the rest of his career, came through Masonry. Finally, after his early death, the Freemasons played a central role in commemorating his legacy—indeed, the specific ways in which we remember Burns owe more than a little to traditions and practices common to the club and Lodge life of the eighteenth century.

The most obvious example of this is the widespread practice, amongst Burnsians and Scots worldwide, of celebrating Burns's birthday with an annual dinner. The Burns Supper, with its formalities, its long and standardized series of toasts, its tendency to overindulgence and to still being a predominantly masculine affair, is the legacy of the kind of suppers so popular in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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6   First published in 1765 in the *Edinburgh Free-Masons Pocket Companion*, it is quoted here from Preston 1775, one of the most influential of early Masonic publications, where it appears under the title "A Vindication of Masonry", 7–8.

7   Preston 1775, 9-10.

We see them echoed in the proceedings of London's Catch Club, for example, or the Anacreontic Society, as described here by William Parke:

> This fashionable society consisted of a limited number of members, each of whom had the privilege of introducing a friend, for which he paid in his subscription accordingly. The meetings were held in the great ball-room of the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, once a fortnight during the season, and the entertainments of the evening consisted of a grand concert, in which all the flower of the musical profession assisted as honorary members. After the concert an elegant supper was served up; and when the cloth was removed, the constitutional song, beginning, "To Anacreon in Heaven", was sung by the chairman or his deputy. This was followed by songs in all the varied styles, by theatrical singers and their members; and catches and glees were given by some of the first vocalists in the kingdom.[8]

Like the Anacreontic Society, eighteenth-century Masonic Lodge meetings also often feature a division between the "primary" part of the evening and a more informal "social" part. After the conclusion of "work", which in many cases meant the initiation or raising ceremonies, the Lodge would conclude in more informal surroundings. Some, notably those with links to the military, specifically took the form of so-called table lodges, where the banquet and its associated toasting were an integral part of the proceedings;[9] elaborate, formal banquets were also the main event of the annual Lodge meetings held on feast days such as St. John's Day, one of the major dates in the Masonic calendar. On such days, as a song for this particular feast puts it,

> My glass will be yours
> And your glass will be mine
> In token of friendship,
> Our hands let us join:
> And with this chearing glass,
> With pleasure round we'll pass,
> The mem'ry of the Great
> And the Good Divine. [...]10

This typically Masonic sentiment is copied here from a book called *The Young Free-Mason's Assistant*, published in 1784—specifically, the copy once owned by Burns, and now held in the National Library of Scotland.

Masonic songbooks and pamphlets from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century tend to mix Masonic songs with popular songs of the day. There is a fixed core of songs which recur, including *The Entered Apprentice's Song*, and a number of Masonic contrafacta both on this tune and on *God Save the King* and *Rule Britannia*; the latter also provides the tune for another very common Masonic song, *Hail! Mysterious! Hail!*

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8   Parke 1830, 80–81. The bacchanalian song *To Anacreon in Heaven* is one of the most famous examples of a migrating melody: its tune later became the tune of *The Star-Spangled Banner*.
9   Tarbert 2005.
10   Bib. II/1784, 114.

Glorious Masonry. As regards the popular, non-Masonic songs in these volumes, some publishers claimed they were for the benefit of non-Masons who may have come upon a copy of the book.[11] However, there are also a good many non-Masonic songbooks that contain Masonic songs, and both factors taken together indicate the purchasing power obviously ascribed to the Masons themselves, the general interest in Masonry at this time, and the natural interchange which occurred between the Lodges and the larger world of which they were part.

Music, and singing, played an important role in Lodge meetings, and thus Masonry and other fraternal-type organizations modelled on it were capable of playing a key role in the establishment and transmission of songs. Not only did they offer a group context in which singing took place, but in many cases also a common set of songs which formed one of the many links to other Lodges. In the words of Simon McVeigh, the increasing centralization of Lodge life from the early eighteenth century onwards "engendered a rare universality across the nation, and, in the form of Masonic songs, a universality of musical culture that few organizations, perhaps not even the church, could match".[12] The most important Masonic songs, including *The Entered Apprentice's Song*, are found across the world right up to the present day. Though the Lodges were not the only context in which people (or rather, men) would come together in a group and affirm their allegiances through song, Freemasonry differed from many other clubs and societies of the time by the sheer number, quality, and structure of the connections. These connections were, firstly, to other Lodges at national and international level, but also to other groups and clubs of which the Masons were members. Many of these other clubs and societies closely mirrored certain aspects of Masonic practice. Freemasonry differed from many, though, in its secrecy and its more extensive use of elaborate and theatrical ritual. These features of Lodge life were so appealing that when the anti-Masonic movement led to a dramatic decrease in the number of American Masons in the 1830s, other secret societies very obviously influenced by Masonic symbolism and ritual sprang up like mushrooms. This process of adoption and adaption of symbolism and ritual, made all the more fluid given that individual men were often members of several different clubs and associations, has been widely commented on.[13]

The Masonic symbolism behind one of the traditions now associated with *Auld Lang Syne* is hinted at in a small and otherwise inconsequential report from the Burns Anniversary celebration held by members of the Burns Lodge I.O.G.T. in Mauchline some time around 1879: "After spending about three hours in the most happy manner,

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11   Thus, the advertisement from the start of *The Young Free-Mason's Assistant* states that "As this COLLECTION may fall into the hands of some who are not initiated into the mysteries of Free-Masonry, of course, to them, many of the songs will be unintelligible. It was therefore thought advisable to subjoin a few of the most Celebrated Scotch and English Songs for their amusement", 6. Another interesting example is provided by Hale 1775: ostensibly a general songbook with Masonic songs added, its title page is covered in Masonic symbols.

12   McVeigh 2000, 73.

13   See, e.g., Gist 1940; introduction to Axelrod 1997.

the evening's proceedings were brought to a close by forming the circle of unity, and singing part of 'Auld langsyne'".[14] What is referred to here as the "circle of unity" is almost certainly what is more commonly known as the "Mystic Chain", described by Albert G. Mackey in the standard work *A Lexicon of Freemasonry* as follows:

> **Chain, Mystic** To form the mystic chain is for the brethren to make a circle, holding each other by the hands, as in surrounding a grave, & c. Each brother crosses his arms in front of his body, so as to give his right-hand to his left-hand neighbour, and his left hand to his right-hand neighbour. The French call it *chaine d'union*.[15]

A French dictionary of Masonry elaborates further, stating that the *chaîne d'union* is practised at the close of ceremonies in the French Rite and the Rectified Scottish Rite, both of which were established in the later eighteenth century; the practice was also adopted in the newer rites of French Freemasonry established in the early nineteenth century.[16] Apart from the "closed" form of the chain, in which the arms are crossed, there is also a less common "open form" in which the arms are held loosely at the side of the body.[17] The closed form, however, results in a particularly strong circle, whose individual members must move closer together than if they had joined hands in any other way. Another source, this time from Germany, states that the tradition was rare in English Lodges, but more common in Germany and other countries on the continent. This source also states that the practice generally takes place at the end of Lodge meetings, that it was referred to in 1817 as being one of the oldest Masonic rituals, and that it was taught to the Lodge in Magdeburg by Ferdinand von Braunschweig (1721–1792).[18] It is unclear, however, if the form of the chain referred to is the same "closed" form we now associate with *Auld Lang Syne*, and to which Mackey referred.

The symbolism of the chain is important for Freemasonry and for other fraternal orders, notably the Oddfellows. The *chaîne d'union* or mystic chain links not only the Brothers present, but also represents the mystic tie uniting Masons throughout the world and Masons past, present, and future. How and when *Auld Lang Syne* and this tradition came together is difficult to establish. For this reason, it is also impossible to know whether the tradition S∞ helped engender the tradition of singing the song at parting, or whether conversely the Masonic tradition of forming the mystic chain at the end of Lodge meetings was transferred to *Auld Lang Syne* precisely because

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14   Original source untraced, cutting in Mitchell Library Burnsiana, cat. no. 52943 (52940), 68.

15   Mackey 1883 [1858], 50–51.

16   The "Scottish" Rite originated in France, but on the basis—so the story goes—of traditions which came from Scotland. Although French Freemasonry probably started as an offshoot of English Masonry, there is also a tradition that the first French Lodges were those around the court of James II after 1689.

17   Lhomme et al. 1993, 89.

18   Lenhoff & Posner 1932, 832. Ferdinand von Braunschweig became a Freemason in 1740, in the Lodge of the Prussian Emperor Frederick the Second, and was Grand Master of the "Scottish", i.e., Scottish Rite Lodges from 1772.

it, too, had become associated with the end of gatherings and civic events.[19] What is clear is that *Auld Lang Syne* is now as established within Masonic tradition as it is in other social contexts. By the 1870s, Mackey could write that the song "has met with the universal favour of the Craft, because the warm fraternal spirit that it breathes is in every way Masonic, and hence it has almost become a rule of obligation that every festive party of Freemasons should close with the great Scotsman's invocation to part in love and kindness".[20] Contributions from several present-day Lodges (three American, one English) to a now defunct Masonic music website indicate that *Auld Lang Syne* is a favourite song in many Lodges;[21] it is also sung, in French, by French Masons.[22] A recent description of the Masonic use of *Auld Lang Syne*, from a journal published by the Southern States Ancient and Accepted Masons in the USA, gives further information on the practice and what it symbolizes:

> The Masonic routine is to form a circle in which everyone is equidistant from the centre, demonstrating they are all equal. In this regard, the practice adopted by some lodges by placing Masters or other distinguished Brethren in the centre defeats the purpose of the ceremony associated with the song.
>
> At the beginning, the Brethren stand with hands at their sides, symbolizing they are relative strangers. The early verses should be sung (or hummed) very softly as Brethren reflect both on cherished memories of earlier times together and those Brethren who have since passed to the Grand Lodge Above.
>
> When they come to the last verse, "And there's a hand, my trusty frier [*sic*] (friend)", each Brother then extends his right hand of fellowship to his Brother on his left, and the left hand to the Brother on his right.
>
> This symbolizes two things: First, that they are crossing their hearts, second that they automatically form a smaller and more intimate circle of friendship.[23]

Masons in this Rite at least, then, sing several verses of the song, and not just the first verse as has been common oral tradition in English-speaking countries except Scotland

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19   In his *History of Freemasonry and the Grand Lodge of Scotland* (2nd ed., 1859), William A. Laurie makes no reference to *Auld Lang Syne* in his list of songs most typically associated with Masonic ceremonies. Laurie 1859, 212.

20   Mackey 1905 [1873/78], 725–726.

21   In detail: the programme of the Annual Table Lodge of Instruction of Jacques DeMolay Londge No. 1390, Houston, Texas; Cincinnati No. 3 Lodge, Morristown, New Jersey; Table Lodge Bulletin of the Grand Lodge of Indiana; *Festive Board Traditions and Songs* of the Norfolk Broads Lodge No. 8368. Information from www.masonicmusic.org, accessed May 2006 (link no longer active).

22   Ligou 1972. The version which Ligou prints is not, as he points out, the version used by French Masons, but the more common French version which we will encounter in Chapter 9. In the introduction to his collection, he explains that one of the aims of his collection is to encourage singing in French Lodges again, and for this reason he has often favoured texts which still have resonance for present-day Masons. I have been unable to locate the French Masonic version, although the now defunct website *Chansons et Chansonnier Maçonniques,* which provided digital access to a sample of French Masonic songbooks going back to the eighteenth century, suggested that the song's use in French Lodges may be more recent than Ligou implies; http://chansmac.ifrance.com/docs/xii/xii.html, last accessed September 2007 (link no longer active).

23   Paterson 1997, quoted here from Hugh Fraser, "Tracking down Auld Lang Syne", *The Hamilton Spectator*, 31 December 1998; I have been unable to access Paterson's original article.

since around the later nineteenth-century. In Scottish communities, the first and last verses are generally sung when the song is used at gatherings, and the arms are crossed only at the second verse. To the defence of other English-speaking communities, often chastised for "getting it wrong" and crossing the arms immediately, it should be emphasized that since they tend to know and sing only one verse, crossing the hands at the first verse is only logical; this may have replaced an earlier tradition of doing so at the chorus.

Many of the records of Burns suppers in the first century after Burns's death are attached to Masonic Lodges, and even a cursory glance through reports of various Burns Festivals, Anniversary Celebrations and the like throughout the nineteenth century shows that the Freemasons had a privileged position in the many processions and ceremonials which accompanied them. They were also very active in raising funds for the public memorials to Burns which, from a certain point in the nineteenth century, were found almost wherever there were Scots. Given the multifarious connections between the Masons and Burns before and after his death, and the very specific nature of this practice, it is highly likely that S∞ is directly related to this Masonic tradition. The role of Freemasonry in engendering this practice would help explain why it could be spread so easily—whether consciously or unconsciously, in Masonic circles themselves or among other groups and gatherings that picked up on particular aspects of Masonic practice. Quite apart from the traditions S∞ and SΩ, this applies to the song *Auld Lang Syne* itself, whose content and sentiment made it the perfect fraternal song.

5.2 The Fraternalist's Song

Studies of fraternal organizations have often noted that they are not given to radical ideas. On the contrary, Gist notes that they "usually emphasize the conventional moral and ethical values of the larger social order of which they are a part. They become, therefore, bulwarks of the *status quo*, conservers of traditional morality, transmitters of existing social values."[24] Again, it is this combination of the small, stable group context and the way in which these groups communicate both with other similar groups and, on occasion, with a wider public, that make them so effective in the establishment or maintenance of social practices.

There are several aspects of the implied and inherited significance of *Auld Lang Syne* that help explain why it was so appropriate for these types of association. Firstly, it is a song of friendship. Secondly, as noted in Chapter 4, the sentiment "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?" was often linked to benevolent and charitable endeavours, two areas in which fraternal associations were traditionally very active; in some cases, such as the friendly societies, this was their whole *raison d'être*. Thirdly, these

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24   Gist 1940, 13.

associations were often also concerned with the continuation of tradition, which also resonates with the sentiment of "auld lang syne". Finally, the song explicitly mentions the act of raising a toast and the symbolic act of joining hands, practices which had a particular significance in associations of this type.

Apart from Freemasonry, another well-known example of fraternal organizations is American college fraternities, and it is probably no coincidence that one of the earliest and most consistent uses of *Auld Lang Syne* as a song of parting comes from American college life. The *New York Times*, which began publication in 1851 as the *New-York Daily Times*, lists at least seven incidences of *Auld Lang Syne* being used as a song of parting in the 1850s, and almost all relate to college events and associations. The earliest detailed in this source is the alumni celebration held at Harvard University in July 1852: *Auld Lang Syne* was sung in this instance on the suggestion of the then Harvard president, Edward Everett, but he may have been acting on an existing tradition.[25] The long-standing tradition of singing *Auld Lang Syne* at the commencement ceremonies of American universities (what in Britain are called graduation ceremonies), a tradition picked up by academic institutions in other countries including Taiwan and Japan, is also represented.[26] In 1859, the Packer Institute in Brooklyn (a women's college) and William's College are both reported to have used the song in this way, while at Yale University, a poem written by a graduand was sung to the tune; at William's, the graduating class gathered around the college green to sing it—almost certainly to allow a large circle to be formed.[27] The same thing happened at one of two commencement dinners at Harvard in 1867:

> At length, about four o' clock, this jovial company of students dissolved, and, forming a ring outside Music Hall on the green under the trees, sang "Auld Lang Syne" with tremendous enthusiasm, *hugging in college fashion* [my italics]. Then, preceded by the Italian Band, they marched in decorous procession to the college yard. This was the formal end of the Music Hall dinner; but about fifty of the younger Alumni, who did not like to "give it up so" while the sun was still shining, marched from room to room under the Bandmaster aforesaid, (who by this time had become immensely wealthy from donations,) and completely disposed of all the large stock of rum and claret punches and cigars which had been left by the various classes, enlivening their economic task, meanwhile, with songs. When this duty had been done, and nought was left to swallow or smoke, the dwindling numbers once more joined in "Auld Lang Syne" in the college yard. Half-past six had now come, all had departed, and the yard was deserted.[28]

What "hugging in college fashion" means is unclear, but it could be a way of explaining the practice S∞.

Three of the four remaining incidences reported relate directly to college fraternities. The original American Greek-letter fraternities, as they are also known,

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25   *New-York Daily Times*, 24 July 1852.
26   On the Japanese case, see Chapter 10, below.
27   *New York Times*, 21 June 1859, 30 June 1859.
28   *New York Times*, 23 July 1867.

borrowed many elements from Masonry including controlled membership, complex rituals and symbols, and a greater or lesser amount of secrecy surrounding these, not to mention fraternal aims which include promoting the development of the individual, and providing mutual support in a social network. Most developed quickly into a network of "chapters" across a wide geographical area. College fraternities in their present form date back to the 1820s and 1830s, although the very first such fraternity can be dated back to the Phi Beta Kappa society founded at the College of William and Mary in 1776. The later societies arose partly as a reaction to college literary societies, which had sprung up in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. Like the literary and debating clubs of the eighteenth century, which in Scotland counted a certain Robert Burns amongst their most enthusiastic members, these offered a chance to practice skills of oratory and rhetoric, and to read papers on literary subjects. However, according to the students who inspired the first wave of Greek-letter fraternities, one vital element was missing: socialization and through this, friendship. Thus, when the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity was founded at Hamilton College in 1832, the vision was of "a fraternity whose aim should be to supplement the college curriculum by literary work outside of and beyond that prescribed by the college course, and also to develop the social nature and affections of kindred spirits by the cultivation of a fraternal bond of friendship," as one nineteenth-century text put it.[29] *Auld Lang Syne* is reported to have been sung at the end of the Alpha Delta Phi convention at Harvard in 1855, and by the fraternity's Yale chapter at their supper, followed by the society Doxology, in 1856.[30] It also closed the ceremonial dinner of the Psi Upsilon convention held in 1854;[31] the Psi Upsilon fraternity was formed in 1833. Whether these fraternities picked up on existing college traditions, or whether the college traditions were spawned by fraternal use, is unclear. It is also possible that they both derived the practice from sources they had in common.

The other early incidence listed in the *New-York Daily Times* comes from a dinner held in 1856 to celebrate the anniversary of Andrew Hamilton by the Hamilton Literary Association of Brooklyn.[32] This report, which quotes from another in *Boston Star*, states that "with the full chorus of the company, this fine old song was sung 'in the Society's old style,' and then they adjourned", implying that the tradition had been going on for some time. Literary associations are yet another recurrent feature of the club and association landscape of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although they are not "secret societies" or fraternities proper, many other aspects of their organization recall those of the other groups we have looked at here: membership tends to be strictly limited; the association provides a forum both for the self-improvement of members (through honing skills in creative writing, criticism, or debating) as well as a context for socializing with like-minded people. Some of these

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29   Baird 1879, 26.
30   *New-York Daily Times*, 27 July 1855, 2 August 1856.
31   *New-York Daily Times*, 3 July 1854.
32   *New-York Daily Times*, 16 January 1856.

associations were specifically dedicated to the memory of an important writer. Though most of these literary associations have come and gone over the years, a remarkable and lasting exception to this general rule is the practice, established soon after his death, of clubs dedicated to the memory of Burns.

5.3 Immortal Memory: The Burns Clubs and the Burns Cult

By 2020, the Robert Burns World Federation was listing over 340 affiliated clubs worldwide; though most of these were in Scotland, there were also clubs in England, Ireland, mainland Europe (including school groups in Russia and Ukraine), the Americas, and Oceania.[33] Controversy has raged for almost two hundred years regarding whether the first Burns club was the one officially constituted in Paisley in 1805, or the one which members say was unofficially constituted in Greenock in 1801. Most of the information given in this section is derived from Robert Brown's study *Paisley Burns Clubs* (1893), not because of any partisanship on my part but simply because of the general lack of consolidated historical studies of the phenomenon of Burns clubs generally. Brown's book also gathers together much information from clubs outside Paisley.

Again, most of the available information regarding the activities of the Burns Clubs and the other fraternal-type organizations discussed here focuses on major annual celebrations and public ceremonials. These larger-scale public events could involve anything up to several hundred people, or even more in the case of the Burns Festival at Alloway in 1844, and the 1859 centenary celebrations. This contrasts with the regular meetings of these groups, all of which operated a very tight membership: entrance was generally only on recommendation of an existing member, and after a vote had been taken.

The first recorded meeting of the Paisley Burns Club was on 29 January 1805, which for many years was regarded as Burns's birthday until R. A. Smith got hold of Burns's birth certificate in 1818. Around seventy were present, including Smith and the poet Robert Tannahill—both were amongst the most active members of the club. The minutes of this meeting as given by Brown make no reference to any Burns poems or songs, but include a poem by Tannahill and a song by John King written for the occasion. Burns Clubs, after all, were literary clubs where members felt encouraged in their own poetic aspirations. In addition, however, and as the speech in honour of Burns held on that occasion by William McLaren makes clear, the fans of Burns also saw a pressing need to protect the reputation of the Bard from "the poisonous tongue of angry calumny" which emphasized what were seen as Burns's failings (wine and women) at the expense of his virtues (song).[34]

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33   Robert Burns World Federation 2020.
34   This address, which goes on to praise Ossian and James Thomson, was published as a pamphlet in 1815.

Reports from the Burns Clubs in this period give a fascinating insight into the way music and song were integrated into social events of this type. They also demonstrate the similarity between even the earliest celebrations held by different Burns clubs. Again, this can be accounted for by the common pool of social practices on which they drew, and also by interaction between the Clubs. Here, for example, is a description of the 1807 celebration held by the Paisley Burns Club, from a letter written by Tannahill to James Clark, bandmaster of the Argyllshire militia at Edinburgh:

> Eighty-four sat at supper; after which Mr. Blaikie addressed us in a neat speech, calculated for the occasion, concluding with a toast 'To the memory of Burns.' The ode which you gave the first spur to, the writing of was well done. The plan was something novel. Mr McLaren spoke the recitative parts very well, and Messrs' Smith, Stewart, and Blaikie sung the song, harmonized in glees by Smith in their styles. In the course of the night were toasted the Kilbarchan meeting and yours. We had a number of original pieces. Smith sang an appropriate song, by the author of 'The Poor Man's Sabbath', who was out from Glasgow joining us.[35] Not one disagreeable occurrence happened, all was harmony, enthusiasm, and good-will. We had two rounds of toasts—one of sentiment and one of authors. We broke up about one, and were all pleased and happy.[36]

The Kilbarchan club which Tannahill mentions was nearly as old as the Paisley club, being founded in 1806. In the course of his study, Brown interviewed some of its surviving members in 1877: one of them, an eighty-one-year-old man named John Wilkie, explained that "the annual meetings about Burns were regarded in the village as of an aristocratic kind", and that this led to the founding of a New Burns Club in Kilbarchan in 1820, at the height of the Radical rising. So committed were members of this new club to the political cause that only bread, cheese and water were served at their Burns Suppers: thus "they did not take anything that was taxed, their object being to starve the Government and cause them to submit to the views of the inhabitants".[37] The Paisley Gleniffer Burns Club, founded in the later nineteenth century, was also set up with the express intention of being less restrictive in its membership: the Chairman of the first Burns anniversary celebration it held in January 1893 noted that "We find no fault with the older club, but we fear it too much resembles the politics of—shall I say Paisley, which never changes, being too conservative. Our times demand a more popular club, which shall be open to every admirer of the poet."[38]

Returning to the early clubs, a report of the first anniversary celebration held by the Johnstone Burns Club in 1813 also gives some flavour of the evening:

> On concluding the address each of the company was presented with a glass of 'Scotch drink' with oaten cakes and Dunlop cheese, in the good old style of Scottish hospitality. The company were honoured with the assistance of the Johnstone Instrumental Band, ably conducted by Mr. Davey, whose merits as a performer are well-known in the district.

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35   The poet in question was John Struthers (1776–1847).
36   Letter from Robert Tannahill to James Clark, 2 February 1807, quoted in Brown 1893, 66.
37   Brown 1893, 97.
38   Quoted in Brown 1893, 284.

A good variety of instrumental pieces, vocal performances with appropriate toasts, sentiments, etc., enhanced the festivities of the night.[39]

Similarly, at the Kilbarchan anniversary celebration of 1816,

A band of native amateurs, filled up the intervals of hilarity by a rich and judicious entertainment of Scottish music. The display of vocal music for tasteful and scientific arrangement surpassed that of any former anniversary. The songs in general were in unison with the feelings of the company, and many of them ever calculated to awaken the finest sensibilities of the heart.[40]

A similar mix of vocal arrangements and instrumental tunes was also found on the programme of the Paisley club in 1815:

A select instrumental band of amateurs favoured the company by performing national airs appropriate to the toasts and songs, several of which were original, and of considerable merit [...] In the course of the evening several fine glees were sung by the gentlemen present, which added much to the enjoyment of all present.

The company broke up highly pleased, 'sorry to part' but anticipating 'happy to meet again'.[41]

This is not the only time there is an allusion in these reports to the phrase "happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again": it occurs in 1811 as well. Often taken as a translation of "Bon Accord" (amongst other things, the motto of the city of Aberdeen), the phrase is also common in Masonic circles up to the present day.[42] Another recurring feature is the singing of the canon *Non nobis domine*: Messrs. Smith, Stewart, and Urquhart sang it at the Paisley celebration of 1816, and in Edinburgh in the same year it was given by Messrs. King, Elliott, and Grant.[43] This Edinburgh celebration could boast the attendance of a long list of lords, politicians and captains, with Walter Scott and George Thomson acting as stewards (Thomson is described in the *Glasgow Chronicle* report as "the well-known correspondent of Burns"; but he was also the subject of a toast that evening, the man "to whose enterprise and exertions chiefly it was owing

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39   Report in the *Glasgow Chronicle*, 13 February 1813, as quoted in Brown 1893, 81.

40   Unnamed press source, quoted in Brown 1893, 95. The epithet "scientific" applied to music was, at this stage, a compliment, and probably implied a skillful use of harmony.

41   Quoted in Brown 1893, 83, 86.

42   It forms part of what is called "The Tyler's Toast", which was a concluding toast in some Lodges. It ends:

"Dear brethren of the mystic tie, the night is waning fast
Our duty's done, our feast is o'er, this song must be our last
Good Night, Good Night, but ere we part,
all join in the farewell strain:
Happy to meet. Sorry to part. Happy to meet again."

This year's Paisley celebration was also marked by the presentation by the local MP of an "ale coup" made from the wood of the so-called Wallace Oak: "The inspiration of the moment gave birth to many affusions worthy of the occasion, and the round was finished with a joyous three-times-three, hands linked in hands round the festive board." Quoted in Brown 1893, 93.

43   Quoted in Brown 1893, 89–90; 98.

that the great number of the exquisite lyrics of Burns had been produced").[44] Although this report lists not only the toasts, but also the accompanying music and songs, *Auld Lang Syne* is not among them. Indeed, the first explicit reference to *Auld Lang Syne* in the sources collated by Brown comes from the 1822 meeting of the Paisley Burns Club: the air is played between the toasts to "The memory of Douglas and Barbour, and the Bards of the Olden Times" and the toast to Mrs Dunlop and other early patrons (quite fitting, given the genesis of Burns's song in a letter to Dunlop). There are scant reports for the following years, but in 1825, according to a long report in the *Paisley Advertiser* quoted by Brown, the air of *Auld Lang Syne* was played after the toast to "The Early Patrons of the Bard".

Mary Ellen Brown has listed the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of the gathering as being one of the new elements of the Burns Supper tradition that became established via the 1859 centenary celebrations.[45] This anniversary was a major public event, not only in Scotland: over 3,000 people are said to have celebrated in New York. However, though the scale of these events may have cemented the tradition SΩ once and for all, it was certainly becoming established before this—and not only at Burns events, as its use in American college circles demonstrates. The Literary and Convivial Association (L. C. A.) founded in Paisley ca. 1808, which also celebrated Burns's birthday for a while, sang *Auld Lang Syne* before parting at the end of their 1855 celebration.[46] An earlier incidence is noted in a report of a Burns celebration in Wisconsin in 1851, though only published in 1901: it took place on 24 January, and as midnight approached,

> the company arose and ushered in the 25th of January—the birthday of Burns—by joining hands around the table and singing "Auld Lang Syne." After this ceremony the next regular toast was announced. […] At three o'clock the company again joined hands, and again lifted their hearts and voices with the noble strains of "Auld Lang Syne." The following additional verse was sung and the ceremonies closed, with an agreement to meet "twelve months from date" for a repetition of the scene:—
> > An' what though we be far awa',
> > An' in a foreign clime,
> > We'll ne'er forget Auld Scotland's shores,
> > Nor the days o' Auld Lang Syne.[47]

The 1859 celebrations were of another order completely, not least in the amount of coverage the events received. Even here, however, there is contradictory evidence regarding the tradition of singing *Auld Lang Syne* as the last song. It was certainly sung at end of the major celebration held by the Boston Burns Club, one of whose speakers was Ralph Waldo Emerson. It had already been sung in the course of the evening as

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44   Report in the *Glasgow Chronicle*, undated, as quoted in Brown 1893, 99.
45   Brown 1984, Chapter 6.
46   *Paisley Journal*, 10 February 1855, quoted in Brown 1893, 177.
47   Shiells 1901, 56, 64.

well, following a toast to the sentiment "the Past lives in the Present", and led by John P. Ordway's Aeolian band, "the company standing, and joining in the choral verses." The "Aeolian band" mentioned was a blackface minstrelsy troupe established by Ordway the previous decade. There is no indication that they performed in blackface on this occasion;[48] acknowledging this context nevertheless puts quite a different slant on the report, which continues thus:

> This was one of the most striking incidents of the evening, and one of the most gratifying tributes to age and worth. As the chorus arose it was taken up outside the hall, and the streets rang with the outpourings of the heart which always accompany the singing of this universal song of friendship.[49]

Many of the smaller centenary gatherings in Paisley are reported to have sung *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of the proceedings.[50] By contrast, the programme for the major event held at the Paisley Exchange Rooms does not place *Auld Lang Syne* at the end, but after the toast to "Our Local Celebrities in Literature and Art"; the parting song was *Good Night And Joy Be With You All*, which was still the traditional song of parting in many sectors of Scottish society.[51] Very formal events such as this tend to put more emphasis on proper protocol, so it is possible that what we are witnessing here is a moment of transition between the old tradition and the new. As regards the many early instances in North America, the fact that the newer tradition seemed to become quickly established among the diaspora (or those who were not Scottish at all) is comparable to what seems to have happened when *Auld Lang Syne* became a New Year song, as will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The report of the Exchange Rooms centenary celebration is interesting for another reason, however: it describes that the event was attended by around ninety Freemasons, who had marched in procession, and in full Masonic costume, to the Exchange Rooms from St. Mirin's Lodge.[52] The prominent position adopted by the Masons during events such as this is indicative of the efforts they made generally to commemorate Burns. So self-evident was this that the Masons were also characterized in the dramatization which accompanied the unveiling of a statue of Burns at Glasgow's Theatre Royal in 1877. The overture to this dramatization, featuring many Scottish airs, "wound up appropriately" with *Auld Lang Syne*, and "the introduction of this national lyric influenced the belief that it must lead up to something", as it did:

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48 See Tucker 2012 for a discussion of Ordway and his position in the musical culture of 1850s Boston. Tucker notes that early performances by Ordway's group included sections advertised as being performed without blackface.

49 Boston Burns Club 1859, 42.

50 Specifically, the gatherings which took place in the homes of Mr James Holms and Mr John McKenzie, also those organized by The Drapers' Assistants of Paisley and by the employees of the Arkleston Print Works; Brown 1893, 246–248. Brown does not, however, cite his sources for this. There is a slight possibility that he is interpreting events from the perspective of 1893.

51 Report and programme in Brown 1893. The programme again features the canon *Non nobis domine*. On *Good Night And Joy*, see Chapter 6, below.

52 Brown 1893, 192.

> Accordingly, just as the orchestra had made a fresh start in a hymn which chiefly concerns the "Merry Masons," the act-drop rose and disclosed a scene which appealed at once to every reader of the poems of Burns. It depicted the "Twa Brigs" of Ayr [...] The round of cheering elicited by the picture had scarcely subsided when the beginning of a juvenile masonic procession was seen marching on the stage. There were masons of all grades, rifle volunteers of various ranks, magistrates in gorgeous official robes, trades which embraced a competent representation of what is locally known as the "Black Squad," British tars of many classes, soldiers marching to the tune of "The British Grenadiers," and Highlanders, shoulder to shoulder, keeping step to the animated strains of "The Campbells are Coming." As the youngsters entered they took up their positions in various parts of the stage, and when they were all massed they sang "The Merry Masons" in unison with a suitable accompaniment by the orchestra.[53]

Military regiments are also implicated in the spread of *Auld Lang Syne*, as will be discussed in a later chapter, and it is worth bearing in mind that many features of military ceremonial and ritual reflect similar practices in fraternal organizations.

None of the sources referred to here make explicit reference to the manner in which *Auld Lang Syne* was sung. Of interest, however, is that the musical programme on offer is focussed not on communal singing but on instrumental pieces and songs performed by a small group, typically the "glee" arrangement of three singers. This is an arrangement much more suited to the kind of large-scale public event presented by Burns Suppers and other Burns celebrations—events often organized by, but not limited to, the tighter social groups formed by the members of a local Lodge or a local Burns club. The aim on such occasions is celebration, and entertainment, with well-known personalities and musicians drawing in the crowds. In such contexts, it is sufficient for the group gathered for the celebration to actively participate in only a few items of the musical programme. Indeed, the fact that they are led by, or sing along with, local stars of the stage actively fosters the sense of community, of inclusion and of privilege, which is an important function of rituals such as these.

5.4 Solidarity

Dinner and concert programmes, and newspaper reports on them, give a small but solid body of evidence for the establishment of SΩ, but are rarely specific regarding how the song was sung. Thus, of all the traditions associated with the song, references to S∞ are most thin on the ground of all, and it is consequently difficult to date its origins with any degree of accuracy. Once the custom had become established, it was again equally unlikely that it would be referred to directly.

There are, however, a few indications that the tradition was becoming established no later than a decade or so after the tradition of singing the song at parting. Given this temporal closeness, it is reasonable to posit that the rise of the two traditions may have been linked, though possibly also that S∞ took slightly longer to become generally

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53   Original source unknown, cutting in Mitchell Library "Burnsiana" album, Mitchell cat. no. 52942, 34.

established. The oblique reference to the "circle of unity" at the Burns anniversary celebration held by a Lodge in Mauchline in 1879 has already been mentioned. Twelve years earlier, in 1867, a report of a concert at the English public-school Marlborough describes how, after the traditional singing of the college song *Carmen Marlburienne,* those gathered sang the national anthem, and then,

> with crossed hands, concluded by singing "Auld Lang Syne" in a manner which few who have heard it forget. The verses were well kept up by the lead of the old members who stood on the orchestra, and the chorus was given as only the voices of 500 boys can give it.[54]

A more oblique indication comes in a piano arrangement by Jules de Sivrai, *Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot. Transcription brillant*, published in 1871. The introduction to this piece is specifically "to be played with the left hand alone": this ends with a flashy cadenza which then leads into the presentation of the main M2 theme, which is played twice. In the chorus, the main theme is in the octave below middle C, and the score specifies that the accompaniment, which lies above it, is to be played with the left hand. This means that the arms must be crossed over while playing. While this is not uncommon in piano playing, the two score instructions together do imply that some sort of symbolism was intended in this case.

Although it is fair to presume that the tradition S∞ has its origins in Freemasonry, uncertainty surrounds the origins of the closed form of the Mystic Chain itself. One suggestion is that French Freemasons may have absorbed this tradition from the practices of the *Compagnonnage*, the French equivalent to the British guilds.[55] Freemasonry itself developed from the masonic trade guilds, with the systems of initiation, secret ritual and symbolism directly deriving from the practices whereby stonemasons, whose work meant they were generally itinerant, could best look out for themselves by accordingly looking out for others of their own trade. By the early nineteenth century, those British guilds that still existed had a more symbolic or ceremonial than practical purpose, but many of the older practices continued in the trade societies set up at this time, which in turn are among the immediate forerunners of trade unions. In a study of the development of early trade unionism, Malcolm Chase has argued that tracing a lineage back to the guilds, however tenuous this may have been, helped such fledgling trade societies to validate collective action in the workplace.[56] Thus, workers' societies, like other societies, tended to pick up on existing aspects of group social practice, just as Masonry's symbolism derived in part from

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54   *The Times*, 23 December 1867.
55   Lhomme et al. 1993, 90.
56   Chase 2000. Chase also traces relationships between trade societies and other fraternities, including (in Ayrshire collieries in particular) the Freemasons. He notes that probably the most typical feature of fraternal organizations, their initiation rites, were also used in many trade societies. It was only the negative public impact—in the case of the Tolpuddle Martyrs—of revelations regarding initiation ceremonies involving blindfolds and life-sized skeletons that led to such societies being more careful about their practices.

the guilds, college fraternities from Masonry, and so on. In time, of course, workers' movements would lend a very different tone to the ideas of fraternity and solidarity, linking it to a form of struggle and activism in which, as two closing examples not immediately related to *Auld Lang Syne* will show, the chain of unity gains a renewed and pragmatic use.

Figure 5.1 shows a lithograph created by the German artist Käthe Kollwitz in the Spring of 1932. According to her own account, it was produced when Russian acquaintances asked her to make a statement regarding threats of an imperial war against Soviet Russia. Though often given the name *Solidarity*, the original title that Kollwitz gave this lithograph was *Wir schützen die Sowjetunion* (*Propellerlied*),[57] a title which is directly related not just to her sentiment in creating it, but to what she was in fact depicting. The song referred to in Kollwitz's subtitle is better known in English—at least among old Marxists—as the *Song Of The Soviet Airmen* or *Song Of The Soviet Airforce*. Dating back to World War I, it became emblematic for post-revolutionary Russia's attempt to establish itself against hostility from other countries and political systems. The German version, officially called *Rote Flieger*,[58] was the work of Helmut Schinkel, a pedagogue. As a student, Schinkel had come into contact both with communism and with communist efforts to build up a youth movement for workers' children, culminating in the foundation of the *Jung-Spartakus-Bund* (JSB)[59] in 1924. The JSB's methods were based on those developed by the highly successful Boy Scout movement, of which more in a later chapter.

Fig. 5.1 Käthe Kollwitz, *Solidarität / Wir schützen die Sowjetunion* (*Propellerlied*), 1931–1932; lithographic crayon, NT 1229, Cologne Kollwitz Collection © Käthe Kollwitz Museum Köln.

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57   *We Are Defending the Soviet Union* (*Propeller Song*).
58   *Red Planes.*
59   Young Spartacus League.

In 1926, Schinkel started to work for the central office of the JSB, producing a children's magazine, several original songs and several translations of Soviet communist songs. He also pioneered agit-prop in Germany, with the idea of a "*lebende Zeitung*" or "living newspaper"—basically, short sketches acted by children and demonstrating central tenets of the communist system and beliefs. It was such a "living newspaper", acted out by Schinkel's own group, the *Rote Trommler*,[60] that introduced *Rote Flieger* or the *Propellerlied* to the German public. As one former "Drummer" recounted:

> The applause was always enthusiastic. But it is almost impossible to describe the overwhelming enthusiasm that the *Aeroplane Song* [*Fliegerlied*] inevitably produced. "We were born / To do these deeds / To Conquer Space and the Universe" That was the song of the young Soviet airforce. [Like *Dunja* and the *Tractor Song*] it was first performed and popularised in German by the Red Drummers. It spread through Berlin like wildfire. And after the Youth Day in Chemnitz [...], workers all over Germany were singing the *Aeroplane Song*.[61]

There was one problem, however. The song, due to its refrain ending on the phrase "We are defending the Soviet Union", was banned. It was, of course, sung regardless, and thus, according to another contemporary testimony, it became "the trigger for many a street battle [...] the police would get their rubber truncheons out and the singers would have to form a front against the attacks". This scene, the same source recounts, is what Kollwitz used for her picture: "Three workers and a woman, shoulder to shoulder, clasp each other's hands with crossed arms—the unbreakable chain of solidarity."[62]

Masonic use had already recognized the inherent symbolism of a human chain which, simply by crossing the arms before joining hands, is much more difficult to break. Kollwitz's lithograph, with the focussed, determined stance of the participants, is at once a reminder of the practical aspect of this chain of solidarity and also its representative power. Again, given the complex interactions and borrowings between the associations and movements introduced in this chapter, it may not be possible to demonstrate direct lineage from other social uses, but it is also highly probable that there were connections—and there may even be a connection back to the tradition

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60 *Red Drummers.*

61 "Der Beifall war immer groß. Doch fast unbeschreiblich war die Begeisterung, wenn das Flieger-Lied vorgetragen wurde. 'Wir sind geboren, Taten zu vollbringen, zu überwinden Raum und Weltall ...' Das war das Lied auf die junge sowjetische Luftwaffe. Es wurde damals, wie auch [Dunja, Traktorenlied], erstmals in deutscher Sprache von den Roten Trommlern vorgetragen und popularisiert. Wie ein Lauffeuer verbreitete sich das Lied in Berlin. Und nach dem Jugendtag in Chemnitz [...] sangen in ganz Deutschland viele Arbeiter das Fliegerlied." Lotte Wendt, former Red Drummer, in a letter to the Pioneer group at the Wilhelm-Pieck-Schule in Berlin, 6 May 1956; reproduced in Plener 1996, 106. One of the surest indications of the popularity of the song is that it was parodied by the Nazis.

62 "Um das 'Propellerlied' [...] spielten sich damals sogar Straßenschlachten ab [...] die Polizei [zog] die Gummiknüpel, und die Sänger mußten Front machen gegen die Schläger. Von diesem Zusammenhalt hat sich Käthe Kollwitz [...] zu einem fesselnden Bild anregen lassen: Drei Arbeiter und eine Frau, Schulter an Schulter, halten sich mit verschränkten Armen fest an die Hände—die unzurreißbare Kette der Solidarität." Hansgeorg Mayer, quoted in Plener 1996, 72.

of S∞ as it specifically relates to *Auld Lang Syne*. By the time the workers' movement had developed into an international alliance, the British-wide use of *Auld Lang Syne* as a song sung at the end of larger gatherings was well established. At the end of the International Miners' Congress held in Brussels in 1890, for example, the band played *La Marseillaise*, and

> the English delegation sprang to their feet, joining lustily in the chorus [...] The Germans, not to be outdone, clambered on the stage and sang in chorus the "Marseillaise" in German. Finally, the English delegation, joining hands, with creditable harmony, vigour, and ensemble sang "Auld Lang Syne," ending with a British cheer for the International Miners' Federation.[63]

By the time of the 1893 Congress, also held in Brussels, "The foreign delegates showed that they had learnt to stand hand in hand and sing 'Auld Lang Syne' and the British delegates lustily intoned the 'Marseillaise.'"[64] The tradition, familiar to this day, of *Auld Lang Syne* being sung at the end of the annual Trades Union Congress in Britain goes back to at least 1895,[65] and the International Workers' Congress held in London in 1896 concluded with the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*, *La Marseillaise*, and *La Carmagnole*.[66]

Whichever form and whatever course the lines of influence, imitation and appropriation may have taken, S∞, with or without *Auld Lang Syne*, thus demonstrates perfectly the way that social groups, formalized groups in particular—groups bound around a common ideology or behind a common struggle—reflect one another's modes of expression and communication. Most traditions are not so much inventions as reinventions of traditions already practiced elsewhere, in other contexts—traditions which are eloquent enough or self-evident enough to provide a sense of unity, or solidarity, for another group as well. The connection Kollwitz illustrates between the tradition of S∞ and one of the most popular of Soviet songs is one example; in the United States, meanwhile, crossing arms and joining hands became the most usual form adopted by civil rights activists at demonstrations and marches when singing possibly the most well-known protest song of the twentieth century, *We Shall Overcome*.[67]

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63   *The Times*, 28 May 1890.
64   *The Times*, 27 September 1893.
65   *The Times*, 9 September 1895.
66   *The Times*, 3 August 1896. Both *La Marseillaise* and the most famous anthem of socialism, the *Internationale*, have been claimed as Masonic songs, since their authors were Masons (Ridley 1999, 45–46), though the reality—especially in the case of the authorship of *La Marseillaise*—is rather more complex.
67   Eyerman and Jamison 1998.

6. The Song of Parting

When George Thomson published Ludwig van Beethoven's arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne* in 1841, it was followed by what may seem a surprising addition to his Original Scottish Airs—*God Save the Queen*. According to Thomson himself, "Tho' Scotland has no claim to this national Air, yet its beauty, with the pure harmony of Bishop, & the elegance of the Scotch Verses, will, the Editor hopes, render it an acceptable Finale to his Collection."[1] Nevertheless, if Thomson's intention of providing a fitting finale to his life's work via the national anthem is interesting, the conjunction with *Auld Lang Syne* is interesting indeed. Whether it reflects existing practice is difficult to tell. What is certain, however, is that the development of *Auld Lang Syne* into the definitive song of parting coincides with its becoming one of the most important of Scottish, but also of British, patriotic songs. This chapter will explore these developments, and the broader social and political developments of which they are a manifestation.

6.1 *Good Night, And Joy Be With You All*

> The meeting went off in grand style, the procession was dignified and attractive, and then the convivial fraters, encircling the table drank the usual round of toasts until it came to the call of "Our Poet-Brother Burns." Then the man of genius and humour arose. All awaited the fun and frolic, the olio of song and anecdote, of quip and quirk and snipsnap, which, when his exhilarated imagination came into play, made Burns "the soul of good fellows." It was the prime piece of the feast to hear Robert Burns. The visitors had come—some of them—expressly for this purpose. Imagine, then, the surprise of the hearers when the tall, swarthy, broad-shouldered songster arose, flashed his black eyes upon the expectant circle, and, with a slow, melancholy cadence that went to every heart, sung his most celebrated hymn [...]

In the interest of dramatic effect, this quotation is paused here. The occasion described, with a hefty dose of poetic licence, is Burns's last Lodge meeting in Tarbolton before his planned departure for the West Indies. And the song he reputedly sang on that occasion was...

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1   The additional Scottish verses were by D. M. Moir. In some editions, *God Save the Queen* is followed by two other Irish songs arranged by Bishop, *The Merry Men Of Anster* and *The Barring Of The Door.* The song before *Auld Lang Syne* in Vol. VI is *The Emigrant's Farewell*, poem by T. Pringle, arrangement by Beethoven.

"The Freemason's Farewell." For nearly a century that song has delighted English-speaking people in all climes, and given life and spirit and pathos to their feasts. In the annual festival held on St. Andrew's Day by the Grand Lodge of Scotland a moment is chosen to give fullest effect to the sentiment from the oldest Mason present.[2]

Burns's *Masonic Farewell* as it is often called (K115, full title *The Farewell. To the Brethren Of St. James's Lodge, Tarbolton*) is to the tune of *Good Night And Joy Be With You All*, which he would later instruct James Johnson to use to close the last volume of the *Scots Musical Museum*. After the poet's death, Johnson honoured this wish, printing two sets of words to the tune: an earlier eighteenth-century version, and Burns's Masonic song.[3] In honouring *Good Night And Joy* in this way, Burns was following the practice of many songbooks and tunebooks of the eighteenth century.[4] Accepted by many authorities as the traditional song of parting at Scottish gatherings before *Auld Lang Syne* displaced it, the tune is old enough for versions to be included in Henry Playford's *Original Scotch-Tunes* (1701); it also appears, named only as "Good Night", in the Sinkler Manuscript (National Library of Scotland, MS 3296 (Glen 143 (i)), ca. 1710). One of the most interesting aspects of the song is that there are numerous very different texts to it—not, as is more often the case, a standard text and then a number of variations, but completely separate sets of words, several of which seem to have been accepted by various groups or authorities as the "real" text. Even Walter Scott, who published a version in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, had difficulty with pinning down the song, noting that

> The following verses are said to have been composed by one of the ARMSTRONGS, executed for the murder of Sir JOHN CARMICHAEL of Edrom, warden of the middle marches [...] The tune is popular in Scotland; but whether these are the original words, will admit of a doubt.[5]

The verses Scott included were also those that appeared along with Burns's text in the *Scots Musical Museum*, one of the earliest existing versions. Another eighteenth-century version appears in at least two songbooks of the 1760s and 1770s, including in a book used by Burns;[6] the first verse of this version begins by noting "How happy is he, whoever he be / That in his lifetime meets one true friend."

Probably the most frequently circulated text for *Good Night And Joy* in the nineteenth century was the version written by Sir Alexander Boswell (1775–1822), son of the more famous James Boswell, but there are also versions of the song by or attributed to many of the most well-known Scottish songwriters of the period—Carolina Nairne,

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2   Clipping from the Mitchell Library Robert Burns Collection, shelfmark 52947, which names the author as Rob Morris and the source as *The Voice of Masonry*, a periodical edited by Morris from 1859. I have been unable to access the original source.

3   Johnson 1803, 620 (song 600).

4   For example, McGibbon ca. 1759, III; Murray 1778 (last song in the main section, before a collection of catches and glees); Bib. II/1786/2, Bib. II/1791.

5   Scott 1802, 183.

6   Bib. II/1765; Bib. II/1778.

Joanna Baillie, James Hogg, and Robert Tannahill, as well as Burns. The versions by Nairne and Hogg have much in common, and one verse in particular is interesting for a certain similarity to the childhood verses of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*. In the version attributed to Hogg, this reads:

> O we hae wander'd far an' wide,
> O'er Scotia's land of firth an' fell,
> An' mony a simple flower we've cull'd,
> An' twined them wi' the heather-bell:
> We've ranged the dingle and the dell,
> The hamlet an' the baron's ha',
> Now let us tak a kind farewell,
> Good night an' joy be wi' you a'.

In the version attributed to Nairne, it reads:

> Oh, we hae wander'd far and wide,
> O'er Scotia's lands o' frith [*sic*] and fell!
> And mony a simple flower we've pu'd,
> And twined it wi' the heather-bell.
> We've ranged the dingle and the dell,
> The cot-house, and the baron's ha';
> Now we maun tak a last farewell:
> Gude nicht, and joy be wi' you a'!

Many of the texts to *Good Night And Joy* are specifically the song of one who is due to depart the next day, and who must now take leave of his or her friends. In the Armstrong version alluded to by Scott, the "departure" is the protagonist's execution; in Lady Nairne's version, the last verse's reflection on the imminent death of minstrelsy has Jacobite connotations (and perhaps connotations of the Act of Union's "end of an old sang"), while Hogg's version is more tightly constructed as a minstrel taking leave after the evening's entertainment. Tannahill's version features a soldier who is about to depart for the wars. It is impossible to know which version would have been sung whenever it was announced on concert programmes or mentioned in newspaper reports of formal dinners; such sources show, however, that *Auld Lang Syne* did not fully replace this multilayered *Good Night And Joy* until well into the mid-nineteenth century. At the 1825 Alloa Burns Club Anniversary meeting, for example, *Auld Lang Syne* was sung following a toast to early departed friends of the Bard; at the end of the celebration, those present sang *Good Night And Joy*.[7] We have also seen how the same applied at the largest of the Burns centenary celebrations to have taken place in Paisley in 1859. The song or its tune also continued to close many publications even after the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of gatherings became widespread.[8] *Good*

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7   Anon. 1825/2.
8   For example, Cameron 1857; Bib. II/1858; Surenne 1883. Aitken 1874 places *Auld Lang Syne* and *Good Night And Joy* together, but neither at the end.

Night And Joy's popularity and standing is also reflected in the number of texts on it contained in Alexander Whitelaw's *The Book of Scottish Song* (1848). This collection claims to be comprehensive both in scope (the preface speaks of some 1,270 songs) and in historical coverage: for example, it includes *Old Long Syne* as it appears in Watson's collection as well as both Ramsay and Burns's versions of *Auld Lang Syne*. Whitelaw places Hogg's version of *Good Night And Joy* at the very end, immediately preceded by Burns's *Masonic Farewell*; he also prints three other sets of words to the song which appear to be of more recent provenance.

Though Anne Dhu Shapiro has suggested that the tradition of singing *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of public gatherings was established by the time *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* was premiered, she does not give evidence of this and I have not found anything like consistent sources before about the 1840s.[9] The earliest song collections to place *Auld Lang Syne* at the end do come from much earlier in the nineteenth century, but such examples are scattered and inconclusive. The first may be the tiny *The Diamond Songster: Containing the Most Approved Sentimental Scottish Songs*, published in Baltimore in 1812: this also includes *Good Night And Joy,* but places it earlier.[10] *Auld Lang Syne* is also the last tune in a volume of Scots, English and Irish songs published in Edinburgh around 1818–1820, which gives it as being "Sung by Mr Sinclair".[11] It also comes last in the second part of Nathaniel Gow's *The Vocal Melodies of Scotland* of 1820, and in Duncan McKercher's *A Collection of Strathspeys and Reels* of 1824. It is interesting that two out of the three are in books of instrumental tunes only—perhaps M2 was felt more appropriate for the last dance. Viewed statistically relative to the number of books in circulation, however, it is dangerous to draw too far-reaching conclusions.

The earliest source I have found for the specific use of *Auld Lang Syne* to mark a parting comes from the *Edinburgh Advertiser* in 1822, reporting on the departure from Leith of the 41st Regiment, *en route* to India:

> An immense crowd had assembled on Castle-hill, to witness their departure, by whom the brave fellows were loudly cheered, which their conduct during their stay here well entitled them to. In the street the crowd was so great that the regiment could not move for some minutes, its fine bugle corps at the same time playing "Auld Lang Syne".[12]

The choice of this song, at the height of its post-*Rob Roy* popularity, is not surprising, particularly when we consider that regimental bugle calls very often started with melodic motifs structured exactly like the opening of *Auld Lang Syne*.[13] These links between *Auld Lang Syne* and the military are important, as is the larger historical context which saw these troops leaving for India at all.

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9   Shapiro 1990.
10   Bib. II/1812/2. The publisher of this volume, F. Lucas Jr., was better known as a cartographer. In the accompanying volume, Bib. II/1812/1, the last song is called *Katy, Will Ye Marry Patie* though the text mentions only "Menie" and "Johnie". In the song, Menie laments their imminent parting.
11   Bib. II/1818/1.
12   *The Edinburgh Advertiser*, 16 February 1822.
13   See Murray 2001.

6.2 The Song of Empire

As the popularity of *Auld Lang Syne* increased, so too did the tendency to refer to M2 musically in the many early romantic operas, ballets and symphonic works to have Scottish themes.[14] Such references are mostly found in works which have fallen out of use, an exception being Herman Severin Løvenskjold's music for the highly influential ballet *La Sylphide* (1836). In this case, M2 appears in adapted and abbreviated form in the overture and first scene of the first act. Only the first part of the tune is heard, and this in a form related to its appearance in both *Rosina* and the earliest versions of "Sir Alexander Don's Strathspey". M2 also appears in the ballet music for Hippolyte André Jean Baptiste Chelard's opera *Macbeth* (1827), and in another ballet set in Scotland, *La Gipsy*, which premiered in 1839. The reviewer of this last work complained that

> The music, which is announced as the work of three composers, I could not well understand, for even "God save the King," "The Campbells are coming," "Auld Lang Syne" and other "auld acquaintances" introduced into it, were like the young whiskered Englishmen one meets on the boulevards, so much disguised and disfigured as to forbid the belief that they claimed to be of British origin.[15]

Much the same criticism is levelled by the *Times* reviewer at the vocal quintet based largely on M2 which appeared in Louis Niedermeyer's opera *Marie Stuart* (1844). Arias and themes from Niedermeyer's works were a popular choice for arrangement by other composers writing in the main for the domestic market. Probably the most popular piece to be excerpted from *Marie Stuart* was one called *Les adieux de Marie Stuart*, but it was another, the vocal quintet *Pour les attraits de belle dame*, which introduced M2, and probably for this reason it became a popular concert item in both England and Scotland in the 1850s and 1860s. Critical opinions of it varied, however: a writer in *The Scotsman* found it "well written and rather remarkable",[16] while the reviewer of *The Times* accused Niedermeyer of "utterly spoiling" the melody,[17] though with reference to the score it is difficult to see how exactly it has been spoilt except by association. An earlier review in *The Times* noted that the quintet "always pleases, because the venerable Scotch air, 'Auld Lang Syne,' is one of its principal themes", but he also suggests that neither the piece nor the opera as a whole have anything else to recommend them.[18] When M2 appears, interspersed with a duet between Marie Stuart and Bothwell, it is sung by Marie Stuart and then echoed in a straightforward quartet arrangement for the characters Georges, Kennedy, Bothwell, and Rizzio. The text expresses the Queen's suffering: only absence can remedy it, she says. An English version of the text, though not a direct translation, was made

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14   See Fiske 1983 for more on this general phenomenon.
15   *The Times*, 2 February 1839.
16   *The Scotsman*, 11 October 1869.
17   *The Times*, 8 September 1854.
18   *The Times*, 24 September 1852.

by George Linley, who takes the opportunity to specifically call the song *In Days Of Langsyne*.[19]

Increasingly, M2 began to be used not merely to refer to Scotland, but as a sort of Scottish anthem. An early example is Joseph Labitzky's *Great Quadrille of All Nations*, dedicated to Prince Albert and performed at Her Majesty's Theatre in London in 1850 by an enormous musical force which included the orchestra of the Grand National Concerts, the Bands of the 1st Life Guards, the Grenadier Guards, the Scots Fusilier Guards, and choristers from the Berlin Chapel Royal.[20] *Auld Lang Syne* appears in the "Grand Finale" which also featured *Rule Britannia*, *St. Patrick's Day*, *Yankee Doodle*, an unnamed German air, *Vive Henri Quatre*, the German and Austrian national anthems and *God Save the Queen*. N. C. Bochsa also introduced M2, along with *God Save the Queen*, the *Marseillaise*, *Yankee Doodle*, *St. Patrick's Day* and *Hail Columbia* in his harp piece *The Nations, a Melange Containing Six Melodies*, published in New York in 1854. M2 appeared as a matter of course in specifically Scottish medleys: Edward Roeckel's *Highland Dreams* for solo piano, published in 1852, introduces several Scots airs and closes with M2, which is given a disproportionately large build-up and ends "con fuoco";[21] Another piece, Henry Oakey's *Recollections of Scotland* (1855), starts rather than concludes with *Auld Lang Syne*.[22]

What of the Scots themselves? Was *Auld Lang Syne* merely used in these other contexts because it was one of the most well-known Scots songs abroad, or did it enjoy a similar status within Scotland itself? In the earlier nineteenth century, *Auld Lang Syne* was one of the most popular Scots songs, but around the mid-century this begins to change. It is as if one of those eponymous racehorses, having run most of the distance with the rest, suddenly breaks away from the field. It is also noticeable that so many Scots writing about the song specifically refer to the affection in which it was held, almost as if they are in ignorance of what it increasingly meant to people from other countries as well. Many such references point in particular to the effect the song had on Scots residing or sojourning in other countries. As a speech at the Burns Supper held by the Garnock Burns Club in Ayrshire in 1872 puts it:

> When in a foreign land, whose heart does not glow with warmer emotions at the singing of Auld Langsyne. Even in our own family circles, when it is sung, it recalls to our imagination the place of our birth, the haunts and connexions of our childhood; and it is with no small degree of pleasure we look back with lingering fondness and mingled feelings to these hallowed and endeared associations. Away in the wild African desert, when that noble, brave, and intrepid Scotchman Livingstone, bade good-night to the energetic Stanley, and retired to read the tidings from home that the young American

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19   Linley 1873.
20   According to the advertisement in *The Times*, 13 November 1850.
21   The other tunes are named as "The ewe bughts", "The bonnie house o' Airlie", "We're a' noddin", and "Queen Marie".
22   The other tunes are "Mrs McLeod", "John Anderson My Jo", "Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch", and "Tullochgorum".

had brought him, we can fancy the gush of feeling that would thrill through his whole being when he thought of the days of auld langsyne. Auld langsyne has become our national air. By it Burns has bound Scotchmen more to Scotland; and wherever they may be, they can never forget auld acquaintance or the days of auld langsyne.[23]

Studies of Scottish nationalism since the Act of Union have noted that developments in Scotland took quite a different path from other countries. Despite the turmoils of the Jacobite period, and the persistence of Jacobite feeling in many parts of Scottish society even in the later eighteenth century, a distinctively Scottish nationalism, a concerted movement for Scottish sovereignty over Scotland's affairs, only really developed in the last three to four decades of the twentieth century.[24] These later developments will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 12; important for the present chapter are the factors which led to Scotland not merely retaining a distinct sense of its own identity, but also situating that identity within a larger context of being both "Scottish" and "British". And "British", in this regard, generally meant "British Empire".

The Act of Union left much in Scottish civil society intact—its legal system, its education system, its church. Though the actual autonomy of these institutions would gradually become eroded, by the early nineteenth century the Scots were not only profiting from, but also contributing disproportionately to, the growth of the British Empire. Moreover, by this point Scottish identity had also became linked to another area in which they were seen to be highly successful, the military: the combination of distinctly Scottish regiments fighting for the British cause is a further reason why a sort of Scottish and British "dual nationality" became possible.[25] The reception of *Auld Lang Syne* in mid-nineteenth century Britain provides a remarkably concise example of these processes at work. Conversely, this larger picture helps explain why, by the later nineteenth century, *Auld Lang Syne* could become one of the most important of *British* national songs.

The military and patriotic uses of *Auld Lang Syne* demonstrate both implied and inherited significance (in the sense discussed in Chapter 1). The tune M2 lends itself very well to interpretation as a slow military march, and this remains one of the most frequent styles in which *Auld Lang Syne* is interpreted, particularly in purely instrumental versions. Such interpretations may also be a way of referencing the specifically Scottish origins of the song: after all, it is the pipes and drums of Scottish regiments that, for many people, define what Scottish music "is".[26] M2 may well have been used in a military context at an earlier stage.

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23 *The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald and West Coast Advertiser,* 1 February 1873 (clipping held in ML "Burnsiana", cat. no. 52940, 29–30).

24 See McCrone 2017; Harvie 1998.

25 McCrone (2017) suggests that the end of conscription may have contributed to the reduced sense of "Britishness" which triggered Scottish nationalism in the later twentieth century. National service was abolished in the United Kingdom in 1960.

26 The same would apply, in the later twentieth century, to the tune of *Amazing Grace.* This has been presumed Scottish ever since a recording of it by the Pipes and Drums of the Royal Scots Dragoon

That Scottish identity, and specifically dual Scottish and British identity, should have become fused with the image of the fearless Scottish soldier is not so surprising when we consider the impact that wartime has on a society, and that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Britain was very often at war. The Highland regiments were set up in the later eighteenth century as a way to channel energy and, more importantly, loyalty after the second Jacobite uprising, and as the Jacobite threat waned, so the Jacobite star rose in terms of cultural artefacts and symbolism. That this happened at the time of the Napoleonic Wars is surely no coincidence, and the surprising popularity on the London stage of *Scots Wha Hae*, a song about the defeat of the English army at Bannockburn, begins to make more sense from this angle. Indeed, in some editions of George Thomson's *Select Collection*, vol. III, he specifically appealed to this new-found sense of patriotism, noting that "By changing *wha* into *who*, *wham* into *whom*, *aften* into *often*, and *sae* into *so*, the following song will be English; and by substituting *GALLIA* for *EDWARD* and *BRITAIN* for *SCOTLAND*, it will be adapted for the present time".[27]

Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*, with M2, also appeared in the period of the Napoleonic Wars, with the first concrete evidence of its usage occurring in the years around the Battle of Trafalgar, and the second flurry of interest coming close to the Battle of Waterloo and the period of social upheaval which followed. Songs often become established in the popular memory at a moment of national crisis, or in the context of a social movement. Sometimes, they have an implied link to the events or struggle in question, but in other cases they may simply drift into this constellation because they were then popular. This is the case with many songs used in by soldiers in wartime— there is even a theory that the Mexican word for an American, *gringo*, derives from the Scots song they were most likely to hear American soldiers singing during the US-Mexican war, *Green Grow The Rashes O*.[28]

There is, however, very little direct evidence to connect *Auld Lang Syne*'s ascent with the Napoleonic Wars specifically. Later in the century, there are some references linking the song or phrase to this period, but these probably have more to do with later cultural conventions and a kind of nostalgia for the solidarity of the war effort. Thus, a newspaper commentary from the early 1850s, which argues for the setting up of a permanent British militia, invokes "that 'Auld lang syne,' when volunteers, and militia, and balloting, and substitutes, and exercise days, and militia colonels and majors, and the *feux de joie* on the 4th of June, were household words, as inseparable from our idea of England as ships of the line";[29] this comment comes two years before the Crimean War ended the long period of peace which seems to have ignited this strange nostalgia

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Guards became a major hit in the 1970s. Though there are certainly musical reasons for suggesting that the tune may have derived from Scottish Gaelic music, *Amazing Grace*'s use as a specifically "Scottish" tune does not predate the recording in question. See Turner 2002.

27   Thomson [1802?], III, preface to song 133, *Scots Wha Ha'e* (here called *The Royal Scot's Address To His Army At Bannockburn*).

28   Dichter & Shapiro 1977, 82.

29   *The Times*, 17 February 1852.

for war. Another reference comes in the title of a novel published in 1878 by William Clark Russell, set during the Napoleonic wars, in which a young man is press-ganged and thus separated from the woman he has secretly married: the final chapter cites the lines "But seas between us braid hae roar'd / Sin' Auld Lang Syne" [*sic*]. It is one of several later nineteenth-century novels to refer to "auld lang syne" in its title.[30]

However, if chapbooks and other publications from the Napoleonic period are anything to go by, it was not *Auld Lang Syne* but two other songs not entirely outwith its orbit that defined these conflicts in song. The first of these is Burns's own *The Soldier's Return* (K406). This recounts almost exactly the same story as Ramsay's version of *Auld Lang Syne*—a soldier returns home to find his true love is still true—and is thus one of the more positive of the songs of war in Burns's collections (compare it, for example, to *Logan Water* (K409) with its attack on the war-mongering politicians who have left the narrator's children effectively fatherless). Songs of reassurance are common in wartime—*We'll Meet Again* is one well-known example. The other song often encountered in this period, Blamire's *The Chelsea Pensioners,* employs another common sentiment for wartime propaganda: that everyone, even the old and apparently weak, has their part to play. Blamire's song was probably written in 1776 and may refer to the call-up of war pensioners to fight on the British side during the American War of Independence.[31] In that period, there were at least two different versions of the song doing the rounds, one placing the two old soldiers on the Jacobite side, one on the Hanoverian side; the former seems to have been the more popular.[32] *The Chelsea Pensioners* is sung to an unrelated tune called "The Days o' Langsyne."

It was not "The Days o' Langsyne", however, but "Auld Lang Syne" that was played on the fife and drums when a later generation of Chelsea pensioners marched for inspection at Woolwich in 1845.[33] By this point, the second great surge in the popularity of the song was well underway, a surge to which many different factors probably contributed. One of these may have been the communications revolution initiated by the construction of railways: the increased mobility of all types of "carriers of song"— people and print—had a natural impact on the ability of songs to quickly fuse across a large cross-section of the population. The rise of *Auld Lang Syne* is comparable in time to the establishment of a number of other songs which remain popular to this

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30   See Chapter 7, below.
31   Maycock 2003, 79–80.
32   Thus, according to Patrick Maxwell, "The author's fine taste perceived that, however gallant the conduct of William Duke of Cumberland might have been considered by his countrymen, his fearful proceedings at Culloden, and subsequently, would never allow a song, in which his military career was commemorated, to become popular in Scotland; and thus 'The Duke' was altered to 'the Prince,' and 'William' to 'General'. It may be more fittingly adapted to our own times by retaining 'the Duke,' and substituting 'Arthur' for 'William'"; Maxwell, notes in Londsale 1842, 175–176. Maycock 2003 adopts this explanation and states that the song only became popular in Scotland when this change was made. However, it is more convincing to link the popularity of the song to the rehabilitation of the figure of the Highland soldier around the time of the Napoleonic Wars, with the express intent of persuading Scots to join up.
33   *The Times*, 1 June 1846.

day, including the Christmas carol *Stille Nacht/Silent Night*, and a song which in many ways is comparable to the position and popularity of *Auld Lang Syne* in the nineteenth century, *Home, Sweet Home* (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7).

This era, and the transformations in social life that would gather speed in the decades that followed, have become inextricably linked with the name of the young woman who became Queen Victoria in 1839. Given Victoria and Albert's love of Scotland, and the influence which they and their family had on the development of other British customs—such as the Christmas tree—it is only reasonable to wonder if the further dissemination of *Auld Lang Syne* and its traditions were under a similar influence.[34] Victoria's own published diaries and reminiscences at no point mention the song, however, and other evidence linking the Royal Family to the song or its sentiments can generally be explained with reference to its general use and popularity. This applies, for example, to the phrase "For auld lang syne" which appeared on a wreath sent by the Prince and Princess of Wales on the occasion of the death of the wife of the Chancellor of Bath and Wells in 1899.[35] Victoria herself would frequently have heard *Auld Lang Syne* on her birthday, which, in her later years, she often spent at Balmoral: the choir from the nearby village of Crathie often treated her to a concert of Scottish songs, and *Auld Lang Syne* was there among them, right before *God Save the Queen*.[36]

On the other hand, Victoria's reign, and particularly the start of her love affair with Scotland, had an impact in other ways. As Alex Tyrell has discussed, the veritable "Balmorality" triggered by Victoria's trip to Scotland in 1842 represented "a form of Scottishness that, unlike contemporary visions of Irishness, carried no threat to the Union."[37] Those with a keen eye for the commercial interest were quick to capitalize, and not only in the British Isles: tartan was soon all the rage in Paris. This period also saw the ascendancy of a number of entertainers whose repertoire was dedicated to Scottish song and culture. Chief among these was John Wilson (1800–1849), who performed for the Queen in 1842 and cannily dedicated his edition of *The Songs of Scotland* to her. The official record of Victoria's first visit to Scotland in 1842 dedicates more space to the attire worn by the female guests at a reception in Dalkeith Palace than it does to the musical entertainments on offer, but it does mention the songs sung by Mr Wilson "at her Majesty's request": *Auld Lang Syne* is not among them. *Auld Lang Syne* is also conspicuous by its absence from the published programmes of Wilson's "Scottish Entertainments".[38] *Good Night And Joy* appeared as the last song on

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34 The Christmas tree, a tradition that Albert brought with him from Germany, became generally popular in Britain after the Royal Family were pictured gathered round their tree in the *Illustrated London News* of 1846.

35 *The Times*, 20 April 1899.

36 See, e.g., *The Times*, 27 May 1872, 26 May 1873. In 1885, the choir sang to the Queen in October, and this time the programme started rather than finished with *Auld Lang Syne*—and was immediately followed by *Coming Through The Rye*. See *The Times*, 24 October 1885.

37 Tyrell 2003, 71.

38 See various programmes and books of words relating to Wilson's entertainments, primarily in Edinburgh, held in the NLS, shelfmarks S.218.c.(1–18), APS.1.87.84, APS.1.78.

at least one of his programmes, though his preferred song of parting seems to have been *Tak Yer Auld Cloak About Ye*. That *Auld Lang Syne* was not billed could indicate that the song's zenith had not been reached; it could also indicate that its current or recent popularity ran counter to the historical tone that Wilson was aiming for in his entertainments. Another purveyor of Scots musical fare, John Templeton, was more closely associated with the song, possibly since appearing as Francis Osbaldistone in *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne* in the 1830s.[39] A dinner given in Templeton's honour in Edinburgh in 1844 is one of the earliest recorded instances of the song being used at the close of a gathering: the evening "was wound up by Mr Templeton singing 'Auld Lang Syne,' the company joining in chorus [*sic*]".[40]

As the example of Labitzky's *Quadrilles* has already indicated, the Victorian era was also the era of the mass choral and orchestral event, a trend facilitated both by changes in the way music was taught, using the tonic sol-fa system, and by a movement towards promoting organized singing for moral and social betterment.[41] *Auld Lang Syne* was one of the items to be sung by a massed choir of, reputedly, 6,000 voices at the Great Choral Festival held at the Crystal Palace—previously home to the Great Exhibition—in June 1859. The conductor of this event, G. W. Martin, seems also to have been involved in concerts held the next year in Exeter Hall in London, where it was advertised that "Auld Lang Syne and the Last Rose of Summer with be performed by 1,000 voices";[42] his arrangement also featured in another Crystal Palace concert of one thousand voices that took place in August 1860.[43] At the earliest of these three concerts, *Auld Lang Syne* was played immediately before the national anthem.

By the later 1850s, then, *Auld Lang Syne* was probably the most well-known of all Scottish songs; the Scottish regiments, meanwhile, were synonymous with British military prowess and the glory of Empire. There could hardly be a more succinct exemplar of both these facts than a song and piano fantasia written in the late 1850s and republished in Britain and America in several versions right up until World War I. *Jessie's Dream*, composed by John Blockley to a text by Grace Campbell, integrates programmatic references to *Auld Lang Syne*, *The Campbells Are Coming*, and *God Save the Queen*. The advertisement for the ballad that appeared in *The Times* of 15 March 1858 claimed it "moved the audience to tears": where, it does not say. Most editions of the song include a lengthy note explaining the incident on which it was based, which occurred in 1857 toward the end of the first stage of the Siege of Lucknow in India.[44] This note purports to derive from a letter written by a French doctor and published in a journal called *Le Pays.* The doctor recounts a tale told him by one of the women

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39   *The Scotsman*, 21 November 1838.

40   *The Scotsman*, 25 September 1844.

41   See, for example, Mackerness 1964, Pearsall 1973, McGuire 2009.

42   *The Times*, 18 July 1860.

43   *The Times*, 3 August 1860.

44   The Siege of Lucknow occurred during the First War of Indian Independence (generally termed the Indian Mutiny/Indian Rebellion by British historians).

rescued. She describes how, after almost a hundred days of siege and with many at death's door, a Scottish corporal's wife called Jessie Brown developed a fever and went into a trance:

> Suddenly, I was aroused by a wild unearthly scream close to my ear; my companion stood upright before me, her arms raised, and her head bent forward in the attitude of listening.—A look of intense delight broke over her countenance; she grasped my hand, drew me towards her, and exclaimed, "Dinna ye hear it? dinna ye hear it? Ay, I'm no dreamin', 'tis the slogan o' the Highlanders! We're saved! we're saved!"

The Englishwoman recounting the tale heard nothing, and after a short while Jessie sank to the ground again—only to jump up again:

> "Will ye no believe it noo? The 'slogan' has ceased indeed, but 'the Campbells are comin'! D'ye hear, d'ye hear?" At that moment we seemed indeed to hear the voice of God in the distance, when the pibroch of the Highlanders brought us tidings of deliverance, for now there was no longer any doubt of the fact. No, it was indeed the blast of the Scottish bagpipes, now shrill and harsh, while threatening vengeance on the foe, then in softer tones seeming to promise succour to their friends in need.....To our cheer of "God save the Queen," they replied by the well known strain that moves every Scot to tears, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot".[45]

The ballad *Jessie's Dream* takes the form of a first-person narrative in which Jessie dreams of her home in the Highlands, and then awakes to realise that the "slogan" she hears is real, at least for her (her English companions cannot hear it). This slogan marks the break between the first and second stanzas, while the verse tune of M2 marks the transition from the second to the third verse; the beginning of *God Save the Queen* functions as a coda. Blockley's music and Grace Campbell's text conflate elements of the two stages of the Siege: at the end of the ballad, Jessie toasts "Bold Havelock and his Highlanders", referring to the 78th Highlanders, who were indeed implicated in first relief; Blockley's programmatic fantasia, however, talks of the "Advance of the 93rd Highlanders", who were involved in the second relief rather than the first. Both the ballad and the piano fantasia version of *Jessie's Dream* were republished several times over the next half century, including in a semi-dramatised version for schoolgirls.[46] Many other documents testify to the contemporary popularity of the tale: a broadside published in New York, for example, paraphrases the account, and mentions the coming of the Campbells and their playing of *Auld Lang Syne*.[47] There is also another song on the event, by Thomas Crawford and Mrs Weir, published in the

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45 As excerpted in Blockley 1860. Several elements of this legend are interesting for the picture they give us of the image the Highlander possessed by this point in the nineteenth century—note, for example, the faintly supernatural qualities attributed to Jessie; note also the difference in language, and in dress (Jessie wears a plaid).

46 Other sources consulted were Blockley & Campbell 1903/1, 1903/2, 1914, 1915. C.f. also Murray 2001 on the military use of the song.

47 Bib. II/ca. 1858.

same year, with almost the same title, and a title page too similar to be accidental.[48] It, too, takes the opportunity to include a snatch of *Auld Lang Syne*.

Jessie's Dream was published at a time when the forces of the British Empire were being put to the test in several places in the world at once, and this return to war after a relatively long period of peace, coupled with an upsurge in emigration, may also have had an impact on the establishment of SΩ, as two British military traditions also demonstrate. The first has already been mentioned with regard to an early incidence in Leith—the practice of playing *Auld Lang Syne* as troops were leaving barracks or a town where they had been stationed. The other is the practice of the tune being played when military regiments receive new colours: specifically, *Auld Lang Syne* is played when the old colours are being taken away.

The playing of *Auld Lang Syne* as ships leave port may or may not have begun in a military context, but it certainly would have taken on new significance following the outbreak of the Crimean War. The earliest references in *The Times* to the song being played when ships leave dock date from the summer of 1852, the first coming in a report of a race held by the Royal London Yacht Club. The six yachts which competed were accompanied by a steamer, the Meteor, presumably carrying spectators along with a military band:

> At Gravesend the Meteor passed a large emigrant ship, and the band of the Royal artillery [*sic*], who were on board the steamer, and added very much to the pleasure of the day by their excellent music, struck up "Auld Lang Syne." The old familiar air must have touched a responsive chord in the hearts of many of the emigrants who crowded her sides, as was evidenced in the hearty cheer they gave.[49]

Shortly afterwards, another report relates the departure from Cork of the Channel fleet. Again, a steamer—this time the river steamer Prince Arthur—carried an enthusiastic crowd to watch the proceedings:

> After steaming close to the flag-boat [...] the course of the steamer was altered, and she approached the men-of-war, which were sailing south with all sails set. She went alongside the Prince Regent, 90, Captain Hutton, with the blue flag of Rear-Admiral Corry flying from her peak. The German brass band on board the steamer played "Rule Britannia," and the passengers saluted the officers and crew of H.M. ship with three hearty cheers and cries of "The British navy forever!" The excellent band of the Prince Regent was piped on deck by her gallant commander, when they played "St. Patrick's Day," and concluded with "Auld Lang Syne."[50]

From 1854, and the outbreak of war, the number of reports of *Auld Lang Syne* being played for departing troops increases significantly.

The playing of *Auld Lang Syne* as regiments bade farewell to their old colours goes back to at least the mid-1860s. Thus, when the Prince of Wales witnessed the removal

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48   Crawford & Weir 1858.
49   *The Times*, 28 June 1852.
50   *The Times*, 31 July 1853.

of the old colours of the Honourable Artillery Company at Finsbury in 1864, the new colours "were borne high in the air to the front, with a slow and stately march, under an escort, the band playing the 'National Anthem,' and the time-worn banners which they supplanted, and which were some 50 years old, were carried to the rear to the tune of 'Auld lang syne.'"[51] This tradition would appear to derive from the by then widely established tradition of using *Auld Lang Syne* at parting; it also indicates, however, the kind of status *Auld Lang Syne* was rapidly achieving in the national consciousness. In 1877, for example, a *Times* report on the visit of the Conservative foreign secretary, Lord Salisbury, to Bradford could state without any irony or further commentary that "The magnificent gallery was crowded an hour before the meeting commenced, and the interval was spent by the audience in singing 'Rule Britannia,' the 'National Anthem,' 'Auld Lang Syne,' and other national airs to an accompaniment on the organ."[52] When William Gladstone visited Leeds in 1881, the organist played *Rule Britannia*, *Auld Lang Syne*, and *God Save the Queen* as well as a classical selection while the crowd were waiting.[53] Reports that the National Anthem was sung after *Auld Lang Syne* become more frequent outside Scotland from the 1880s, but must also be read in conjunction with other evidence, such as the use of the song at the changing of regimental colours. This presents us with a new chicken-and-egg dilemma: a song which achieves this status is, quite naturally, the song that is chosen to mark the climax of related public and artistic events; this begs the question of what role this status played in the wider establishment of $S\Omega$, or whether it was the other way around.

6.3 The Song of Parting

One of the difficulties in tracing the establishment of $S\Omega$ is that benefit and bane of the historian's life: hindsight. What may now appear to be logical steps towards the one common goal actually mask a number of different possible motivations among a number of different social groups, living on opposite sides of the world, sharing some aspects of a common cultural heritage but often interpreting it in different ways. In this context, exactly how a particular practice occurred initially is less significant than the factors that lead to it being adopted, and sometimes spontaneously adopted, by a number of other groups and eventually by large numbers of the population. For this to happen, there needs to be some sense that the tradition "makes sense", in a frame which may be provided by the inherited or implied significance of the elements of the tradition in question. The next stage is the focussing of this tradition in such a way that other related traditions either fade away, or become tangents to the mainstream practice.

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51   *The Times*, 30 June 1864. The many other recorded instances in *The Times* include the changing of the colours of the 89th Regiment at Aldershot, presided over by Queen, reported on 6 April 1866; 67th Regiment at Portsmouth, reported 26 August 1868; 53rd (Shropshire) Regiment, reported on 7 April 1877.

52   *The Times*, 12 October 1877.

53   *The Times*, 8 October 1881.

At this point it is worth reminding ourselves that the full text of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* implies a reunion rather than a parting. This is important not least because the use of *Auld Lang Syne* as a song of greeting continued for quite a long time, in parallel to the tradition which eventually overtook it. Much of the evidence for this comes from political rallies: this relates back to the use of the song to pay tribute to elder statesmen and the like, and it also emphasizes historical continuity, just like the many references to the phrase "auld lang syne" which pepper the speeches of British politicians standing for re-election from around the second quarter of the nineteenth century.[54] In 1856, for example, the arrival of General [Lewis] Cass at the rally at which Democratic candidates for the US Presidential Election were chosen, prompted the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*; Cass had been the Democrat's presidential candidate eight years earlier.[55] In Britain, meanwhile, the song's use as a song of greeting was particularly established in connection with the Liberal Party, and two politicians in particular, John Bright and William Gladstone. In 1858, *Auld Lang Syne* greeted T. M. Gibson and John Bright when they arrived at a *soirée* in their honour in Manchester. Bright was also greeted with *Auld Lang Syne* at a Liberal peace rally in 1878, and at rallies in Lancashire, Manchester, and Birmingham in the 1880s.[56] The earlier references to Bright are important since we might otherwise logically presume that the song's great tradition in Liberal circles at this time was related to the Scottish credentials of Gladstone, who was also very frequently greeted by *Auld Lang Syne* after his re-election to Parliament in 1880; this followed the so-called "Midlothian campaign", often regarded as the first modern political campaign, and named after the Scottish constituency he stood for.

The specifically Liberal tradition of greeting Bright and Gladstone with *Auld Lang Syne*, which may have had an element of "welcoming back" these men into power, is seen in quite sharp relief if we compare it to other reports of the song being used in the presence of Gladstone as Prime Minister. Liberal meetings at Nottingham in 1887, and at Birmingham in 1888 used the song on Gladstone's arrival or ascent to the platform; in the Birmingham case, the crowd had also sung *Auld Lang Syne* and *For He's A Jolly Good Fellow* after a speech by Gladstone given a few days previously.[57] At the Borough Road College reunion in London in 1880, however, he heard *Auld Lang Syne* in its by then more usual context—one verse sung at the end, just before *God Save the Queen*.[58] In 1888, when the Gladstones stopped briefly in Dover on their way back from France, "a portion of the crowd sang the refrain of 'Auld Lang Syne'" as the train was leaving

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54 The practice of singing *Auld Lang Syne* on confirmation of election candidates was still in evidence in 1875, as demonstrated by a Conservative meeting in the Free Trade Hall in Manchester in December of that year. See *The Times*, 7 December 1875.

55 *New-York Daily Times*, 9 June 1856.

56 *The Times*, 19 December 1883 (Lancashire), 28 July 1884 (Manchester), 5 August 1884, 30 January 1885 (both Birmingham).

57 *The Times* 19 October 1887, 8 November 1888, 11 November 1888.

58 T*he Scotsman* 30 December 1880. The report specifically comments that *one* verse of *Auld Lang Syne* was sung, suggesting that this was not standard practice in Scotland, but may already have been normal in England.

the station.[59] On the other hand, a meeting of Non-Conformists in London in the same year did as the Liberals did and sang *Auld Lang Syne* to greet Gladstone.[60] And when Gladstone was unable to attend the 1893 National Liberal Federation, it sent him the following telegram:

> We, the members of the National Liberal Federation, in annual meeting at Leicester assembled, desire to greet you on your return home, and to assure you that now, as in Auld Lang Syne, you hold the supreme place in our confidence and affection.[61]

What makes this Liberal tradition so interesting is that it demonstrates how a song as widely adopted and significant as *Auld Lang Syne* can still generate another, and possibly deeper level of significance for individual groups of people within the larger conglomeration we call "society". The remainder of this chapter will introduce some more individual manifestations which contribute to that larger tradition of SΩ.

As the previous chapter indicated, it is difficult to pinpoint the emergence of SΩ, particularly when we realise that the positioning of *Auld Lang Syne* towards the end of public events and, in Thomson's case, select collections of airs, could well have been a nod to the general status of the song by that time. Such incidences become more common in the 1840s, however. The 1844 Burns Festival held in honour of the sons of Burns at his birthplace, Alloway, was probably the single most important Burns celebration before the centenary of 1859: some reports said that the procession was three-deep and a mile long.[62] According to the official report of the event, when the procession finally reached its destination, "A large circle was then formed round the platform for the musicians in the field, and the whole company, led by professional vocalists, joined in singing 'Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,' and 'Auld Langsyne.'"[63] *Ye Banks And Braes* was sung in the pavilion as well, after the toast to the memory of Burns, but there is no mention of *Auld Lang Syne* among the toasts or at the end of the evening. Whether the use of *Auld Lang Syne* at the close of the open part of the proceedings is related to its being used as a song of parting, or simply because, even by that point, it was probably the most well-known Burns song and one of the most-loved of all Scots songs, is therefore a moot point.

In America, early occurrences of *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of social gatherings are not limited to college commencements and fraternities.[64] In 1846, for example, a

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59   *The Times*, 9 February 1888.
60   *The Times* 10 May 1888.
61   *The Times*, 23 March 1893.
62   Reports of the event include Anon. 1844/1, Anon. 1844/2, and a clipping entitled "Full report of proceeedings at the Burns Festival" held in the Mitchell Library collection, shelfmark 209646.
63   *The Scotsman*, 19 August 1844. The report in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* waxes much more lyrical: "Descending from the Platform, we entered the meadow-ground beyond, where the multitude was now assembled. One of the bands struck up the beautiful air—'Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon;' and immediately the People, as if actuated by one common impulse, took up the strain, and a loftier swell of music never rose beneath the cope of heaven [...] Few could abstain from tears as the last glorious note died solemnly away into the skies". Anon. 1844/2, 375.
64   See Chapter 5, above.

benefit held in Boston for the composer Anthony Philip Heinrich concluded with the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*. The music critic Cornelia Walter, who was also a personal friend of Heinrich, noted that the company announced their intention "to express their regard for the beneficiary by singing a song together, and, in accordance with this announcement ... united in making the welkin ring with the touching and appropriate strains of 'Auld Lang Syne'"; this she regarded as "a hearty compliment and a most suitable finale". (Heinrich himself was not so enthralled: he wrote to Walter that "'Auld Lang Syne' can hardly atone for the incongruous manner, with which my 'Ouverture to the Pilgrims' was performed").[65] This example again brings together some by now common tropes: firstly, the tradition of using the song as a tribute to a colleague or former colleague; and secondly, *Auld Lang Syne* is marked off as a communal song, and it may be this that leads to it being sung at the end of the evening's entertainment.

Two other early references to SΩ come from Milwaukee. In 1848, a supper held for a Mr Tillotson on 22 January ended with the singing of the song, and in 1850, a supper attended by descendants of the Pilgrims featured the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* before the party broke up.[66] It was also sung at a Pilgrim celebration banquet held at Plymouth in Massachusetts on 31 July 1853, not at the end but following the toast to "The embarkation of 1620, and its results".[67] This could suggest that the tradition of playing the song when ships left port was already familiar. There are, however, some contradictory indications. In 1852, at the sixth annual dinner of the St Nicholaus Society of Nassau Island, celebrating the memory of the original Dutch emigrants to the US, *Auld Lang Syne* was sung not at the end but following a toast to "Our Sister Societies", the St Jonathan and the St Patrick Societies (incidentally, the next song on the programme, following a toast to "The Sword and the Sickle", is *Coming Through The Rye*).[68] In 1858, American residents in Liverpool celebrated Independence Day with a banquet at which *Auld Lang Syne* was certainly sung, but not at end.[69] In both 1858 and 1860, the first toast at the annual dinner of the St Andrew's Society in New York was accompanied by *Auld Lang Syne*; in 1858, the last item on the programme was *Say Will We Yet*, a Scottish version of the Irish nationalist song *The Wearing Of The Green*.[70] By contrast, at the 1859 St Andrew's celebration at Oxford, the last toast was followed by *Auld Lang Syne*.[71] When Sir James Outram, who as a general had played a prominent role in quashing the First War of Indian Independence in 1857, visited Brechin in 1861, he was greeted with *See The Conquering Hero Comes* and *Auld Lang Syne*;[72] when Gladstone made a brief stop in Hawick in 1886 en route to Edinburgh,

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65   Both quoted in Lawers 1964, 209.

66   *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel and Gazette*, 26 January 1848, 25 December 1850.

67   *New-York Daily Times*, 3 August 1853.

68   *New-York Daily Times*, 8 December 1852.

69   *New York Times* 22 July 1858.

70   *Sae Will We Yet*, a British patriotic song, was written by Walter Watson (1780–1854). Murray 2001 notes its popularity amongst soldiers and its use in Scottish military contexts.

71   *The Scotsman*, 5 December 1859.

72   *The Scotsman*, 23 August 1861.

the band played the former on his arrival and the latter on his departure.[73] There are also references to Union troops leaving to the strains of the song at the beginning of the American Civil War.[74] However, it was also played when the 93rd Highlanders arrived back in Aberdeen in 1870, and when the 21st Fusiliers disembarked at Burntisland in 1872.[75]

Collections of newspaper clippings relating to Burns held by the Mitchell Library, and dating from the later 1870s and early 1880s, confirm that by this point it was established practice to sing *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of Burns Suppers.[76] Tracing the more private, informal or local uses of *Auld Lang Syne* in this period is another issue. Literary sources offer some material, though this must be treated with caution: we can never be sure if the author is representing actual practice, or if they are projecting onto their characters or personal memories what in the meantime they or their audience would hold to be appropriate behaviour in the context. That being said, such accounts can themselves contribute to the development of traditions, which often arise through a haphazard mix of authority, selective memory, and inclination.

The later nineteenth century saw the publication of a number of books of "reminiscences" on Scots rural life, which have been generally subsumed into what is known as the "kailyard" tradition almost universally lambasted by twentieth century commentators. William Donaldson has argued that these books were intended for a southern or emigré market, a point which is perhaps not entirely irrelevant when it comes to the fact that they often had the phrase "Auld Lang Syne", or a variant thereof, in either the title or the subtitle. Donaldson suggests that readers in Scotland itself were more likely to satisfy their inner bookworm by reading journals, which purveyed a slightly different view of Scottish culture.[77] Both aspects should be borne in mind in the case of *The Chimney Corner, or Auld Langsyne* by "A. T. B.", published in 1866, since the book was made up of sketches which had previously appeared in the Edinburgh-based magazine *Hogg's Instructor*. The first sketch, "Settlin' for Crummie", includes a description of the sing-song that inevitably results whenever neighbours gather for a bowl of punch. After a while, the women present start to get anxious about the state of intoxication of their menfolk, but the host continually thwarts their attempts to leave:

> The bowl has been drained again; but the instant he lays his hand on the bottle to fill it anew, the storm, which had only been lulled before, threatens to break out with increasing violence. Men and women now start to their feet; they can stay "nae langer; they can stand nae mair; the roads are lang, an' dirty, an' dreich," etc. Against all this, he argues, commands, begs, and beseeches. "Honour him, honour him; please him, only please him, for ance; half a bowl, then, if it mauna be a haill ane; surely they canna leave

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73   *The Scotsman*, 23 August 1861, 4 April 1872.
74   *New York Times*, 27 August 1861, 22 December 1861.
75   *The Scotsman*, 6 September 1872.
76   See, for example, cuttings relating to Burns celebrations in Dundee, Cumnock, Hamilton, Sheffield, Madison, Otago, Kilmarnock and others, in Mitchell Library Burns Collection cat. no. 52942.
77   Donaldson 1986.

him without singing 'Auld Langsyne,' an' that canna be done wi' a toom bowl." This staggers them, and ere they can recover themselves, Blackmyres, with great tact, comes up to his friend's rescue, by striking up in a spirit that the late lamented John Wilson or Templeton would have admired, a lilt of the merry old drinking-song of "One bottle more." The shock is electrifying; every man and woman joins in the chorus, and bawls out "One bottle more; one bottle more."[78]

It is difficult to interpret the exact significance of *Auld Lang Syne's* use here—whether the host is insinuating that no party is complete without it, or that they must in any case sing it before parting. Another sketch tells of a different sing-song, which takes place at the end of the normal working day in a farmhouse. "Grannie" is asked repeatedly to sing, and repeatedly refuses, but would tell a story once she had thought of one—they should carry on singing until she does: "Well do we remember the songs which were then sung, and the singers. When it had come to 'Auld Langsyne,' 'Grannie' indicated that she was prepared to tell a story, as desired [...]"[79]

Another source—an English one this time—comes from a children's novel called *Auld Lang Syne: Our Home in the Marsh Land* whose author is named only as "E. L. F." Told from the perspective of one of the elder children in the family, the relevant passage comes towards the end of the novel. It is the narrator's birthday, and after a celebratory picnic, the mother of the family suggests it is time to return home:

> "Wait one moment," I exclaimed, springing from my throne; and Mr. Helmore [the narrator's godfather] at the same time said—
>
> "Yes, indeed, you must allow us five minutes more, Mrs. Elfindale. We cannot neglect old customs on the last night, of all others. Join hands all of you."
>
> It was an odd habit of ours, perhaps, but it had been our habit ever since I could remember. No family or friendly gathering had been ended without this joining of hands and singing in concert of Auld Lang Syne—that old sweet song which so many, and I among them, can never hear without a responsive thrill at heart.
>
> Auld Lang Syne!
>
> We have sung it with merry voices, breaking off now and then into irrepressible laughter. We have sung it carelessly, wandering in the old home garden before we went to bed. We have sung it with husky voices, trying to keep from tears. We have sung it—Margie and I, when we were in Switzerland together—under one breath to each other when we came back with large excursion parties in the twilight; or when we cared not who heard us, with full voices up between the towering pines to the silent heaven and the stars. We have sung it, as we sang it now, with joined hands standing on the charmed circle, in the still forest temple, where the dusk was gathering beneath its golden domes and spires; singing with a deep thrill of remembrance in every tone. The very little ones seemed awed as the circle broke up with loosening hands, here and there two or three grasping tighter as they went off into low-toned memories of Auld Lang Syne; and they stole away to the dying fire, where Frank, sending showers of sparks from a smouldering log, soon roused them again into noisy merriment.[80]

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78   "A. T. B." 1866, 32–33.
79   "A. T. B." 1866, 80–81.
80   "E. L. F." 1876, 140–141.

A fitting description of how the old songs become old, and why.

As the next chapter will discuss in more detail, the nineteenth century iconography of the song tends for the most part to refer to some part or all of the wider theme suggested by the "childhood" verses, which, with the exception of the score and libretto of *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne,* are included in most printings of the song in this period. Again, such sources are of a very different nature to informal renditions of the song. At Burns' Suppers and other formal events, *Auld Lang Syne*, like the other musical offerings, was often sung by professional singers, with the audience generally joining in at the chorus. What happened on other occasions is anyone's guess,[81] but one of the earliest ever recordings of the song suggests that, by the late nineteenth century, the common tradition outside Scotland of singing only the first verse and chorus was already established. This recording emanates, somewhat ironically, from one of the earliest ethnographic projects to use this very new technology; it is now available via the digital collections of British Library Sounds.[82] Recorded by A. C. Haddon and C. S. Meyers on 15 February 1898 in England, it comes at the start of the Torres Strait Cylinders, a collection documenting the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the islands lying between Papua New Guinea and northern Australia. At the beginning of the recordings, however, there is a slightly stylised farewell to "Mr Ray" (Sidney Herbert Ray) before he leaves on the expedition, and those present sing *Auld Lang Syne*. A piano is just audible in the background, one voice dominates slightly, and just as we might expect or have oftentimes experienced, some people sing "for the sake of auld lang syne", some people don't, and there is some hesitancy when, at the end of the first verse and chorus, some launch into a repeat of the chorus.

By the end of the nineteenth century, then, SΩ was firmly established—not necessarily at the expense of other traditions associated with the song, but it was certainly beginning to supersede them in evocative power. The next stage in the development of the song as a song of parting comes when it is translated for use in foreign countries: many of these versions are translations not of Burns's text, but of the tradition SΩ with which it became intimately linked. This topic will be treated in more detail in Chapters 9 and 10.

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81 Mackay 1877 refers to people joining hands "as they sing the chorus", suggesting a slightly different practice to nowadays. He also claims M2 is an old Roman Catholic cathedral chant, but does not give any further source or evidence.

82 British Library Sounds, shelfmark C80/1485, recording available at 'Ethnographic Wax Cylinders' (2013), *British Library Sounds*, https://sounds.bl.uk/World-and-traditional-music/ Ethnographic-wax-cylinders/025M-C0080X1485XX-0100V0

7. The Folk's Song

Mr Sims Reeves was announced to appear, and the rarity of his presence in Glasgow caused quite a rush for tickets [...] His finishing number was "Auld Lang Syne", in which he was assisted by a chorus from Glasgow Choral Union. An incident causing some amusement here occurred. In the programme it was stated in parenthesis that "the audience will oblige by singing the chorus." The audience did join at the chorus of the first verse, drowning Mr Reeves and his choristers, and falling nearly two bars behind him. Mr Reeves looked quite bewildered, turned to his choristers, and then addressed the audience in the following terms:—"Ladies and Gentlemen,—There must be some mistake here. If the audience has been requested to join in the chorus, it was unknown to me. I have gentlemen here to sing the chorus, and I pray the audience will allow us to go through the song as originally intended." The song was thereafter allowed to go on unassisted by the audience, and Mr Reeves had another round of applause.[1]

Somehow or other everybody some time or other wants to sing "Auld Lang Syne," and only one man in a million knows the words. And he only knows the first verse, and he doesn't sing it right.[2]

The previous chapter demonstrated how *Auld Lang Syne*'s star rose through the nineteenth century, and detailed some of the factors that contributed to this ascent and to the traditions that rose, and sometimes waned, along with it. Before addressing the last of the three major traditions associated with *Auld Lang Syne*—its use at New Year—this chapter will discuss some other aspects and a number of tangents which contribute to, and help illustrate, the larger story and themes under discussion.

7.1 Mr Micawber's Song

God knows how infantine the memory may have been, that was awakened within me by the sound of my mother's voice in the old parlour, when I set foot in the hall. She was singing in a low tone. I think I must have lain in her arms, and heard her singing so to me when I was but a baby. The strain was new to me, and yet it was so old that it filled my heart brimful, like a friend come back from a long absence.[3]

Auld Lang Syne is mentioned four times in the course of *David Copperfield* (1848–1850), Charles Dickens' novel of the eponymous hero's life from birth till established

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1   *The Scotsman*, 28 September 1875.
2   Anonymous writer in the *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, quoted in the *New York Times*, 8 August 1885.
3   Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (1848–1850), Chapter 8. Dickens was married to George Thomson's granddaughter.

adulthood. The song David's mother sings in the quotation above, as he returns from boarding school to find her nursing his new half-brother, is never named, but indicates how music and singing is woven into Dicken's narrative. Songs appear in this novel as memorials of times past, snatches of popular verses put into the mouths of some of the most colourful characters in nineteenth-century fiction.

In this novel, *Auld Lang Syne* is always associated with one of Dickens' most famous creations, the incorrigible Mr Micawber, who borrows and debts his way through a great many court appearances and even a jail sentence, accompanied by his loyal, long-suffering wife (who, as she tells us on several occasions, never would leave Mr Micawber) and a huddle of children. As sung by Wilkins Micawber, *Auld Lang Syne* epitomizes his overly sentimental nature and ability to delude himself and others that things are much better than they actually are. It is first sung when Mr Micawber, who had given lodges to David Copperfield in London, stumbles on him by chance in Canterbury and invites him to dinner. This dinner is followed by Mr Micawber's specialty, and a constant companion of the song in this novel—a seemingly rather potent punch:

> As the punch disappeared, Mr Micawber became still more friendly and convivial. Mrs Micawber's spirits becoming elevated, too, we sang "Auld Lang Syne." When we came to "Here's a hand, my trusty frere," we all joined hands round the table; and when we declared we would "take a right gude Willie Waught," and hadn't the least idea what it meant, we were really affected.[4]

The episode is followed, as becomes inevitable, with David receiving a letter from Micawber informing him of impending insolvency and certain doom.

This rendition of *Auld Lang Syne* is as classic as it gets in this period (see also the section on iconography, below): it accompanies a series of toasts, a bowl of punch, and hands are joined around the table at the last verse. It is unclear which verses were actually sung, though the next incident implies that several if not all were. Having encountered Mr Micawber again, in London some years later, David invites him for dinner at his lodgings, along with Mrs Micawber and David's school friend Tommy Traddles. Again, Mr Micawber provides a bowl of punch. And Punch, says Mr Micawber,

> "[…] like time and tide wait for no man. Ah! It is at the present moment in high flavour. My love, will you give me your opinion?"
>
> Mrs Micawber pronounced it excellent.
>
> "Then I will drink," said Mr Micawber, "if my friend Copperfield will permit me to take that social liberty, to the days when my friend Copperfield and myself were younger, and fought our way in the world side by side. I may say, of myself and Copperfield, in words we have sung together before now, that
>
>> We twa hae run about the braes
>> And pu'd the gowans fine

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4   Dickens 1848–1850, Chapter 17.

—in a figurative point of view—on several occasions. I am not exactly aware," said Mr Micawber with the old roll in his voice, and the old indescribable air of saying something genteel, "what gowans may be, but I have no doubt that Copperfield and myself would frequently have taken a pull at them, if it had been feasible."

Mr Micawber, at the then present moment, took a pull at his punch. So we all did; Traddles evidently lost in wondering at what distant time Mr Micawber and I could have been comrades in the battle of the world.[5]

Traddles may well wonder: on the previous occasion when the song had been sung, Copperfield was a schoolboy and Mr Micawber a married man with children, and when they first were acquainted Copperfield was an even younger schoolboy and Mr Micawber even then a married man with children.

Mr Micawber's attachment to the song perfectly captures the kind of over-arching sentimentality to which it is so often subject. However, if we smile at Micawber's grandiose emotions, we do so with a certain amount of sympathy and understanding, even more so on the third occasion on which the song appears. Between times, much has happened. Mr Micawber is now in the employ of Uriah Heep (rhymes with creep), and Heep's immoral, indeed illegal activities have left Micawber facing a huge dilemma. Such is the distress that it is even causing a rift between Mr and Mrs Micawber, and at the height of this distress Micawber visits London and meets Copperfield again. The old ritual is repeated: ingredients are fetched for Mr Micawber to make punch, but he is so distracted that disaster ensues—lemon-peel ends up in the kettle, and he attempts to pour boiling water from the candlestick. He breaks down, rejecting Copperfield's attempts at assistance:

> "No, Copperfield!—No communication—a—until—Miss Wickfield—a—redress from wrongs inflicted by consummate scoundrel—HEEP!" (I am quite convinced he could not have uttered three words, but for the amazing energy with which this word inspired him when he felt it coming.) "Inviolable secret—a—from the whole world—a—no exceptions—this day week—a—at breakfast time—a—everybody present—including aunt—a—and extremely friendly gentleman—to be at the hotel in Canterbury—a— where—Mrs Micawber and myself—Auld Lang Syne in chorus—and—a—will expose the intolerable ruffian—HEEP! No more to say—a—or listen to persuasion—go immediately—not capable—a—bear society—upon the track of devoted and doomed traitor—HEEP!"[6]

Indeed, on each of these occasions, the punch and the song are also linked to the villains of the piece, Uriah Heep, James Steerforth and his accomplice-cum-butler Littimer. In the first case, when Mr Micawber and David discover each other in Canterbury, David is having tea with Heep and his mother. On the second, Littimer interrupts looking for his master, who—as is later revealed—is in the process of running off with, and (according to the moral standards of the day) ruining, David's beloved childhood friend Em'ly. Now, at the denouement of many tragedies, the mention of the song takes

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5   Dickens 1848–1850, Chapter 27.
6   Dickens 1848–1850, Chapter 49.

on tragic qualities. The story does, however, end happily, for the old acquaintances together see off the scoundrel Heep, and the Micawbers, having borrowed from practically everyone in England, emigrate to a new life in Australia (accompanied by the two "fallen women" Em'ly and Martha, and Em'ly's faithful uncle Mr Peggotty). On parting, they do not sing *Auld Lang Syne,* although punch is certainly drunk. After all, for Mr Micawber, *Auld Lang Syne* is a song of reunion, not parting.

There is, however, a coda. Many years later, Mr Peggotty returns briefly and shows Copperfield an open letter published by the finally flourishing and respectable Mr Micawber in an Australian newspaper:

> TO DAVID COPPERFIELD, ESQUIRE,
> THE EMINENT AUTHOR.
> MY DEAR SIR—Years have elapsed since I had an opportunity of ocularly perusing the lineaments now familiar to the imaginations of a considerable portion of the civilised world.
>
> But, my dear sir, though estranged (by the force of circumstances over which I have no control) from the personal society of the friend and companion of my youth, I have not been unmindful of his soaring flight. Nor have I been debarred,
>
> > Though seas between us braid ha' roared,
>
> (BURNS) from participating in the intellectual feasts he has spread before us.
>
> I cannot, therefore, allow of the departure from this place of an individual whom we mutually respect and esteem, without, my dear sir, taking this opportunity of thanking you, on my own behalf, and, I may undertake to add, on that of the whole of the Inhabitants of Port Middlebay for the gratification of which you are the ministering agent [etc.][7]

Whenever *Auld Lang Syne* appears in this novel, it is always tongue-in-cheek—one cannot approach Mr Micawber otherwise. But for all the burlesque quality of these references to it at key points in the novel's progress, the song's sentiments echo much further. Dickens has distilled the essence of the song, and its sentiment pervades *David Copperfield* on practically every page.

7.2 The Song of Conflict and Reconciliation

David Copperfield is not the only novel by Dickens to contain references to *Auld Lang Syne.* In *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–1865), the song briefly appears in a scene featuring two characters who are not so much auld acquaintances, as new partners in crime, Silus Wegg and Mr Venus. Wegg is fond of paraphrasing from songs and poems, as if to give a rhetorical sheen of authority to his underhand schemes. The game is to some extent given away, though, by the fact that his quotations are fairly wide of the mark:

> "We'll devote the evening, brother," exclaimed Wegg, "to prosecute our friendly move. And afterwards, crushing a flowing wine-cup—which I allude to brewing rum and water—we'll pledge one another. For what says the Poet?

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7   Dickens 1848–1850, Chapter 63.

> And you needn't, Mr. Venus, be your black bottle,
> For surely I'll be mine,
> And we'll take a glass with a slice of lemon in it to which you're partial,
> For auld lang syne."[8]

References to popular song are far from unusual in Dickens, and also play an important role in the works of several other nineteenth-century authors, not least among them Walter Scott. In a study of this topic, C. M. Jackson-Houlston quotes from Scott's *Redgauntlet*, in which Scott writes that "in Scotland, where there is so much national music, there is a kind of freemasonry amongst performers, by which they can, by a mere choice of a tune, express a great deal to the hearers."[9] For writers of novels, on the other hand, it is important that readers understand the connotations of the song or tune introduced into the narrative. This in turn can provide us with further information on what scholars of hermeneutics would call the horizon of expectation of the audience in question.

An interesting case in this regard is *Auld Lang Syne*'s appearance in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886). Hardy is another author who often uses musical references to underline central themes in his work. He was writing at a time when a sense of English vernacular or "folk" song was emerging, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* provides a timely reflection on this. The central conflict in the novel is between the mayor, Michael Henchard, and a young Scotsman called Donald Farfrae. Farfrae is passing through Casterbridge on his way to emigrate, but Henchard is impressed by him and convinces him to stay and enter his employ. The relationship turns sour, however, when Henchard becomes increasingly bitter at the success of Farfrae's modernizing measures and his general popularity.

Shortly after his arrival in Casterbridge, Farfrae delights the locals in the tavern The Three Mariners with his renditions of Scots ballads, causing one to comment that he is "Danged if our country down here is worth singing about like that!" Farfrae sings on, "winding up at their earnest request with 'Auld Lang Syne'." As Hardy's narrator describes it,

> By this time he had completely taken possession of the Three Mariners' inmates, including even old Coney, notwithstanding an occasional odd gravity which awoke their sense of the ludicrous for the moment. They began to view him through a golden haze which the tone of his mind seemed to raise around him. Casterbridge had sentiment—Casterbridge had romance; but this stranger's sentiment was of differing quality. Or rather perhaps the difference was mainly superficial: He was to them like the poet of a new school who takes his contemporaries by storm; who is not really new, but is the first to articulate what all his listeners have felt, though but dumbly till then.[10]

The analogy Hardy draws between the ballad singer and the new-fangled poet is not simply a clever swipe at the claims of Scots song to antiquity: it also hints at a more

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8   Dickens 1864–1865, Book 3, Chapter 6.
9   Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, Chapters 9–10, quoted in Jackson-Houlston 1999, 34.
10   Hardy 1886, Chapter 8.

important analogy in the novel. For Farfrae is not merely a stranger: he is a modernizer and an opportunist, a man whose purpose is to go out in the world to seek his fortune. He is, to sum up, a prototypical Scot, and personifies the two big threats that English folklorists of the period perceived for local culture—industrialization, and the creeping domination of non-local song cultures, whether these be Scots, Irish, or simply modern urban.

The real threat, as the novel makes clear, is simply that the songs Farfrae sings are irresistible. As Hardy's narrator tells us, they seem strange and yet also resonate with the people that listen to them. Even the emotionally blunt Henchard is not immune, as becomes apparent when he sets out to settle matters with Farfrae once and for all through the only medium he can think of—physical violence:

> Farfrae came on with one hand in his pocket, and humming a tune in a way which told him that the words were most in his mind. They were those of the song he had sung when he arrived years before at the Three Mariners, a poor young man, adventuring for life and fortune and scarcely knowing whitherward:
>
> > "And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,
> > And gie's a hand o' thine."
>
> Nothing moved Henchard like an old melody. He sank back. "No: I can't do it!" he gasped. "Why does the infernal fool begin that now!"[11]

In the fight that nevertheless ensues, the two auld acquaintances grasp at each other's hands and arms in a way that has nothing whatsoever to do with friendship. And yet Henchard cannot bring himself to kill Farfrae, as was his intention.

This example may be fictional, but it is not far removed from reality. Songs as general in their sentiment, and as familiar across communities, as *Auld Lang Syne* can be used to stir up divisions, or to quell them. Several broadsides from the time of the American Civil War use *Auld Lang Syne* as the basis for parodies and contrafacta; there are both Union and Confederate examples, and at least one which is a general plea for the war to end.[12] There are also abolitionist songs on *Auld Lang Syne*,[13] and it was one of the tunes played when Abraham Lincoln's funeral cortège proceeded through Albany.[14] At the major Peace Jubilee held in Boston in 1872, following the success of one in 1869 to celebrate—belatedly—the end of the War, a correspondent reports how the British Grenadier band closed their set with *Auld Lang Syne*:

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11   Hardy 1886, Chapter 38.

12   See for example the ballads *Death of Col. Ellsworth* (Gay ca. 1860s; Ellsworth was the first major casualty on the Union Side); *John Bell of Tennessee* (Bib. II/ca. 1860s; Bell was a southern slaveholder who had also been a candidate in the 1860 presidential election won by Lincoln. Although he was personally against the secession of his own state, Tennessee, this happened anyway after raids by the Union forces; the song text talks of "Traitor Lincoln" and "N[*****] Lincoln"); and *I Wish The War Was O'er!* (Anderson 1862).

13   See, e.g., William L. Gallard, *Song of the Abolitionist*, manuscript, http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/03/0319002r.jpg

14   *New York Times*, 27 August 1865.

[this] produced an electrical effect on the audience, who jumped to their feet, and took part in the chorus, singing at the top of their voices, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot," while the enormous organ sent forth its tremendous peals, nearly drowning everything else.[15]

As in Britain, *Auld Lang Syne*'s use in American political contexts was frequent and cut across party lines. It was more than once used to restore harmony where there had been discord: it was played in an attempt to soothe a heated exchange at the Democratic convention in Saratoga in 1880,[16] and a report on the Republican Party meeting in Albany in 1881 also draws attention to the irony underlying the sentiment:

> The scenes in which the long struggle at Albany closed on Friday cannot be called edifying. The affectation of general harmony, the pathetic recital of a verse from "Auld Lang Syne," the effusive cheers for Messrs. CONKLING and DEPEW and for the Senators-elect, the protestations of unswerving fidelity to the "grand old Republican Party," cannot possibly have concealed from those who took part in them the very serious elements of discord and discredit which have been created by this tedious and bitter contest.[17]

Perhaps by that point the business of day-to-day politics had subsumed (or suppressed) the memories of more violent conflicts. Only a few years earlier, a report in *The Times* on the centenary commemoration of the Battle of Bunker Hill during the American War of Independence noted the particular poignancy of an event which saw "the fraternization of soldiers who ten years ago were fighting against each other in the war of the Rebellion". At a formal reception hosted by the Governor and Mayor of Boston, "the brotherly process of clasping hands by North and South reached a climax" and a particularly warm reception was given to General Fitz Hugh Lee, son of the famous Confederate commander, who had this to say:

> I came here with the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues, a Confederate organization. Those guns have roared on many a hard-fought field. As we arrived before your city this afternoon and were steaming up your beautiful harbour the first notes that reached us from the band of music sent to meet us were of that good old tune called "Auld Lang Syne," and I felt that I was not going to Boston, but that I was returning again to a common country and a common heritage.

"Then, again," continues the report in *The Times* "there was a tumult, and the orchestra played 'Auld Lang Syne' amid silence that was as significant as the previous shouts".[18]

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15   *The Scotsman*, 11 April 1872. The visiting musicians included Johan Strauss, who was besieged by lady autograph hunters. For more on the original Peace Jubilee in 1869, see Branham & Hartnett 2002, Chapter 4.

16   *New York Times* 29 September 1880 (Saratoga incident); 24 July 1881 (Republican). Earlier incidences are noted in the *New-York Daily Times*, 9 June 1856 (Democrat), *New York Times*, 7 June 1867 (Republican); in the latter, it is noted that "A colored delegate suggested that the band play 'Auld Lang Syne' while the audience were going out, and the suggestion was adopted".

17   *New York Times*, 24 June 1881.

18   This and previous quotations: *The Times*, 30 June 1875.

7.3 Variations on a Theme

Around 1867, and following what he calls "a long immunity from the dreadful insanity that moves a man to become a musician in defiance of the will of God that he should confine himself to sawing wood", the narrator of what is supposed to be "A Touching Story of George Washington's Boyhood" by Mark Twain tells instead how he acquired an accordion on which he learned to play the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*. "It seems to me, now," he continues

> that I must have been gifted with a sort of inspiration to be enabled, in the state of ignorance in which I then was, to select out of the whole range of musical composition the one solitary tune that sounds vilest and most distressing on the accordeon. I do not suppose there is another tune in the world with which I could have inflicted so much anguish upon my race as I did with that one during my short musical career.[19]

If the fellow boarders and landlady of his place of residence were displeased enough with his renditions of the tune itself, they were even less amused when, after about a week, he decided he could add some variations: half of the boarders left "and the other half would have followed, but Mrs Jones saved them by discharging me from the premises." Two lodgings later, things again went from bad to worse: "the very first time I tried the variations the boarders mutinied. I never did find any body that would stand those variations." And so he ended up moving again:

> I went to board at Mrs. Murphy's, an Italian lady of many excellent qualities. The very first time I struck up the variations, a haggard, care-worn, cadaverous old man walked into my room and stood beaming upon me a smile of ineffable happiness. Then he placed his hand upon my head, and looking devoutly aloft, he said with feeling unction, and in a voice trembling with emotion, "God bless you, young man! God bless you! For you have done that for me which is beyond all praise. For years I have suffered from an incurable disease, and knowing my doom was sealed and that I must die, I have striven with all my power to resign myself to my fate, but in vain and the love of life was too strong within me. But Heaven bless you, my benefactor for since I heard you play that tune and those variations, I do not want to live any longer & I am entirely resigned and I am willing to die and in fact, I am anxious to die." And then the old man fell upon my neck and wept a flood of happy tears.

Surely enough, the old man soon died, and eventually, the narrator himself got bored of the instrument, although on reflection he noted that "I derived some little benefit from that accordeon; for while I continued to practice on it, I never had to pay any board and landlords were always willing to compromise, on my leaving before the month was up."

Twain's characteristically sardonic take on how a favourite tune becomes, for those not currently in possession of an accordion, a despised tune, is quite believable if we look at the many sets of variations on *Auld Lang Syne* and other tunes which made

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19   All quotations from Twain 1867.

up a not insignificant part of the music published in the nineteenth century. Many of these are not for the faint-hearted—not because they are shockingly chromatic or progressive (the harmony is almost always straightforward, and most follow the same pattern of presenting the tune, and then presenting it again in broken chords, or *presto*, and so on) but because they are designed to flex a musician's muscles and show off her or his skills. If these proved any kind of model for Twain's very amateur performer, it's hardly surprising that it was more than his housemates could take.

The art of taking a simple, often popular tune and adding elaborate variations is one of the constants of musical practice across a number of eras and cultures. As Chapter 2 recounted, the earliest known written source for a tune called "Old Long Syne" was a set of variations from the late seventeenth century; and in the eighteenth century and beyond, Scots fiddlers would play at a society ball one day, at a rural wedding the next, in both cases being accustomed to spinning out a well-known tune for the extenuated delight of the dancers. The practice of using a popular tune as the basis for a set of variations had lost none of its popularity some two hundred years later, and constituted one of the largest sectors in the nineteenth century's booming music publishing trade. The number and type of variations on M2 which appear over the course of the nineteenth century are testimony to this general phenomenon. And although these pieces are ostensibly products of a "written" tradition, belonging to those sectors of the population with access to instruments and the education necessary to read music, the way the melody is stated and treated reflects the types of minor deviations and developments from the source that are also well known from studies of the oral transmission of song. It is hard, therefore, to find two renditions of M2 which are exactly the same here. There is, however, a certain statistical "constant" which ensures that the same basic elements recur again and again, though not necessarily in the same way. For example, very many sources for the melody have at least one "Scotch snap" rhythm, and the earlier publications in particular have several; however, there is a great deal of variety in the points at which these actually appear. As the century proceeds, there is also an increasing tendency to "square" the rhythms of the melody—often, but not exclusively, where the arrangement adopts a clearly march-like style. An exception would be Alexandre Croisez's *Military Rondo on the Air Auld Lang Syne* for pianoforte, published in 1848: the arrangement retains the Scotch snap rhythm at the first and second lines of the chorus. Another feature in many of these pieces is the tendency to alter the first bar of the tune so that its melodic shape is similar to that of the second bar. Thus, sometimes the opening motif features a dip down to the (un-pentatonic) leading note from the tonic (Figure 7.1a); and in what may be a related development, some versions also present the 2-1-2-3 pattern of the second bar as 2-1#-2-3, a descent of a semitone rather than a whole tone (Figure 7.1b). All these tendencies contribute to the loosening of the tune from a specifically "Scottish" genre—its "internationalization", if we like.

Fig. 7.1 (a) and (b) Some typical alterations to the opening of M2 in nineteenth-century instrumental variations. Figures created by author (2021).

Audio example 11. Audio example 12.

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/36abf7d5

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/38357cc4

The earliest instrumental variations on M2 as *Auld Lang Syne* seem to have been Scottish in origin, written by Daniel Ross, of whom little is known other than that he published numerous piano variations on Scottish tunes.[20] One edition has been dated by Aberdeen University Library at 1809, but most other editions in British libraries come from around 1820, when there is also an upsurge in editions published in the USA.[21] Ross's variations are fairly typical of those that come later. There is no development of the theme as such: instead, it forms the clearly audible skeleton around which semiquaver arpeggiation, triplet-style rhythm, or varying styles of accompaniment are added like swirls on a wedding cake. Interesting in the case of Ross is, however, the surfeit of little black notes that once caused Thomson (and his ladies) to shrink in commercial terror. It is one indication that the variation style, like the style of performance improvisation it was derived from, was aimed at showing off the skill of the instrumentalist in question. And unlike the Scots songs, the ladies would be able to concentrate on their playing, without the added difficulty of singing at the same time.

The bias of western music aesthetics towards the act of composing rather than performance, and towards professionals rather than amateurs, has meant that pieces such as these do not figure very strongly in official histories of music, though this is gradually changing. However, if performance, and not just composition, is seen as a driving force in musical culture, we can begin to appreciate this preponderance of instrumental variations and fantasias, which serve a double purpose of delighting the audiences with a tune they know well, and using this as a springboard to demonstrate technical virtuosity. Both composition and virtuosic performance are linked in the

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20   Catalogues sometimes list him as being John Ross, who was Professor of Music at Aberdeen and also a composer. The confusion may derive from the fact that Daniel Ross's music is generally published under the name "D. Ross", which occasionally becomes "Dr. Ross".

21   See Chapter 3, above. One of the editions held by the British Library is available online: BL Digital Store g.1529.g.(30.).

practice of improvisation on a given theme, which was a recurrent feature of concert programmes at this time. One of the earliest sets of variations on *Auld Lang Syne* is by the flautist Charles Nicholson, whose playing is said to have inspired the instrument maker Theobold Boehm to develop the modern-day concert flute. Though he may well have improvised on the tune at one of his appointments at Corri's Rooms in Edinburgh in 1807, his take on *Auld Lang Syne* was first published in the 1820s, as part of his *Preceptive Lessons for the Flute* (the tune is used to exercise the key of B♭ major) and in a more elaborate version with piano accompaniment provided by John Bianchi Taylor and published in 1821.[22] Another flautist, Johann Carl Weidner, presented at least two compositions which included *Auld Lang Syne*—his *Three Solos for a German Flute* op. 9, which also includes *Corn Riggs Are Bonny* and *The Caledonian Hunt's Delight*, and *A Medley for the German Flute* op. 29, advertised in *The Times* of 31 August 1819.[23]

Although variations on *Auld Lang Syne* appeared throughout the nineteenth century, the publishing pattern seems to reflect the general surges in popularity of the song witnessed elsewhere. Thus, while there are a few appearances of the tune early in the century, there is a surge around the time of Davy and Pocock's opera.[24] Thereafter, there is a decline in the number of pieces on *Auld Lang Syne*, with a slight surge occurring in the 1850s, particularly if we include dance pieces also based on or incorporating the tune.[25] In the later nineteenth century, there are more pieces for solo instrument accompanied by piano, for example flute or violin, while in the earlier part of the century, variations for piano or harp predominate: these are almost invariably written by men, and dedicated to women. This reflects very accurately the contemporary division of labour, or rather division of labour and leisure: young ladies of a particular standing were expected to play the piano or the harp, and they were taught to do so by men. But many women were also active as composers, as witness Charlotte Newton's set of harp variations, published in 1821 and dedicated to Miss Harriet Kerslake, and Julia Woolf's *Auld Lang Syne: Fantasie on the Favorite Scotch Melody* (1862) for piano, which is dedicated to Alfred Mellon. Newton seems to have published very little music, but Woolf (1831–1903) was a well-established composer of instrumental music, song, and the comic opera *Carina*.[26]

One of the more interesting sets is that written by Gustavus Holst (1799–1871), grandfather of the more famous Gustav. In his harp variations on *Auld Lang Syne*,

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22   Nicholson ca. 1821, Nicholson & Taylor 1821.

23   In this case, the other tunes introduced are named as being "Sul Margine, Welch [*sic*] Air, Oh still remember me, Auld lang Syne [*sic*], Petersburgh Bells".

24   See Chapter 4, above.

25   There are a few such pieces in the 1840s (e.g., Harris 1840, Holmes 1840, Bayley 1845, Croisez 1848), then a small cluster in the 1850s and early 1860s (Sulzner 1851, Wallace 1851, Wrenshall 1853, Osborne 1854, Grobe 1854, Rziha 1855, Streather 1857, Favarger 1860, Dawes 1860, Praeger 1862, Woolf 1862, Murillo 1862), thereafter a slight falling off again. This survey is based largely on the holdings of the British Library and the digital collections of the Library of Congress, and may not therefore be entirely representative.

26   A detailed biography can be found, in German, at Silke Wenzel, "Julia Woolf", *MUGI*, 25 April 2019, https://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/artikel/Julia_Woolf.pdf

published in 1822, the air is only directly recognizable in the opening statement, and the variations are peppered with gentle chromatic inflections of the type so typical of early Romantic chamber music. Other titles such as Felix Reinhold's *Auld Lang Syne, Reverie for the Pianoforte* (1869), some *Fantasias*, including Nicholson's, and pieces called *Transcription brillant* (Jules de Sivrai, 1871 and J. J. Freeman, 1898) or *Brillant transcription* (Jules Favre, see below) indicate other, freer ways of introducing the tune: in Nicholson's case, for example, it is hinted at in the introduction, but only introduced in its entirety about two thirds of the way through.

Many of the composers mentioned here have faded into oblivion. The compositions which they wrote—transcriptions of more complicated works and operas, variations and fantasias on airs taken from songs, arias, and the themes of symphonies—seemed to have outlived their use, while the airs themselves have lived on in other forms and in other arrangements. These pieces were intended for day-to-day musicianship in a social context which has changed dramatically since. Aesthetic standards were also changing: a review in *The Times* of a concert given by the violinist Joseph Joachim in 1889 lauds his performance but berates the "egregiously bad taste" demonstrated by a Mademoiselle Janotha (probably the composer and pianist Nathalie Janotha) at the same concert, noting that "Neither the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne' nor Beethoven's variations on 'God save the King' are suitable for impromptu performance at such concerts as these".[27] Playbills for Covent Garden, which a few decades before had boasted of the many popular songs in their productions, now reflected its status as the Royal Italian Opera, which it became in 1847.[28] And in the 1890s, the impresario Robert Newman and the conductor Henry Wood set out to educate the public with a series of promenade concerts which became, in time, *the* Promenade Concerts, the Proms, which are in fact a latter-day survivor of the garden concerts and musical extravaganzas that were such an important part of musical public life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Two composers closely associated both with the Proms and what is often called the "English Musical Renaissance" produced sets of orchestral variations relevant to the present discussion. We can start with what is undoubtedly the most famous set of variations associated with *Auld Lang Syne*—and one which in all probability is not on *Auld Lang Syne* at all. This is the *Variations on an Original Theme* op. 36 by Edward Elgar, commonly known as the *Enigma Variations*. The "enigma" of Elgar's subtitle was never revealed by him, but has often been presumed to be a popular tune which formed the basis of the theme. This, too, may have a basis in the practice of improvisation: according to his own account—albeit related very much after the fact—Elgar came home on 21 October 1889 after a hard day's teaching, and, refreshed by a cigar, started to improvise on the piano. His wife overheard him just as his casual playing had evolved into what

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27   *The Times*, 20 March 1889.

28   Continental operas had long been a feature of London's musical life, but earlier in the century they often had popular songs and the favourite numbers of the star singers woven into them. See Fend 1993.

is now the "Enigma" theme, and she commented positively. On the first performance, Elgar suggested that "through and over the whole set another and larger theme 'goes', but is not played" and that "the principal Theme never appears. Even as in some late dramas […] the chief character is never on the stage". Later, in exchanges with friends, he suggested that the "Enigma" is a tune to which the "Enigma" theme itself forms a counterpoint.

The *Enigma Variations* are a series of musical portraits of friends and colleagues, and given the cultural connotations of *Auld Lang Syne* it is hardly surprising that this tune has so often been posited as a solution to the puzzle.[29] One of Elgar's friends suggested at a very early stage that the hidden theme was *Auld Lang Syne*, but Elgar insisted that this answer "won't do"—a rebuke which, however, has also been read as being a smokescreen.[30] Many commentators have suggested that the "larger theme" mentioned by Elgar is not a theme in the musical sense, but may simply be "friendship". "In such circumstances", asks Roger Fiske, "what else could the 'hidden' tune be but *Auld lang syne*, with its nostalgic opening, 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot'?"[31] Fiske argues that M2—in this case, transposed into a minor key, and played twice before the refrain, which is in the major—works very well as a counterpoint; other suggestions have left the tune in the relative major key.[32] Eric Sams provided a more complex solution, suggesting that Elgar may have used the principle pitches of the tune to create a musical cipher which appears, sometimes chordally, sometimes melodically, in the "Enigma" theme, similar to the manner in which Robert Schumann also built motivic material from the pitches associated with the letters of his name and those of his friends.[33]

Fiske argues that Elgar's unwillingness to admit that the tune used was *Auld Lang Syne* may have come from embarrassment that his *Variations*—which by that point had become one of the most successful English orchestral pieces of all time—could be based on such a musical banality. The same could be true of many other tunes suggested as solutions for the enigma at various times, including *Rule Britannia*. Indeed, the presumption that *Auld Lang Syne* holds the key to this enigma tells us as much about the status of the song in popular culture as it does about Elgar's work.

Elgar himself "appears" in another set of variations for orchestra which were definitely based on the tune. Joseph Holbrooke (1878–1958) wrote his *Auld Lang Syne: Variations no. 3* (*Scotch*) op. 60 in 1906. The frontispiece declares it to be "An impression of my musical friends and their work": they are identified only by their initials. Like Elgar's *Enigma*, these are much more elaborate variations than those which make up the

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29 A compact survey of various answers to the Enigma is provided in Rushton 1999. Rushton however misinterprets Elgar's description of the Enigma being a "dark saying" as implying that the solution must involve a saying, phrase or sentiment that is dark in nature. As Eric Sams had already pointed out, "dark saying" is in fact a translation of the Greek source word that gives us the term "enigma". See Rushton 1999, 66; Sams 1970/1, 1970/2.

30 Fiske 1969.

31 Fiske 1969.

32 See Rushton 1999.

33 Sams 1969/1, 1969/2.

bulk of the pieces discussed in this section. New ideas are introduced and developed which do not have any directly obvious relationship to *Auld Lang Syne*. For example, the variation dedicated to "E. E." is an "Allegro giacoso" featuring an anthem-like tune which sounds like a combination of *There'll Always Be An England* (which was written later, during World War II), *We Wish You A Merry Christmas*, and the nursery rhyme *Polly Put The Kettle On*. The latter is not so unlikely as a possible basis considering that another set of variations by Holbrooke, which proved a hit at the Proms, was on the nursery rhyme *Three Blind Mice*.

Variations on *Auld Lang Syne* are less frequent in the twentieth century, though instrumental and band arrangements of the tune continue to appear, mostly in collections. One exception to this rule is worth mentioning, however, not least because it provides a very different sort of answer to Elgar's *Enigma* and its ruse of deriving the material from a tune which is never actually heard. According to Ernest Tomlinson, composer of a *Fantasia on Auld Lang Syne* (1983) which is available in a version "for two pianos and two turner-overs" as well as the original version for saxophone orchestra,

> It is a well-known fact that the "Enigma" theme […] was based on the famous Scottish air "Auld Lang Syne." What is not generally known is that all other important sets of variations were also based on this song. Indeed, all the greatest tunes in musical history were based on "Auld Lang Syne".[34]

Accordingly, and in a spirit which Twain would no doubt have applauded, he proves his point in a set of variations introducing a total of 129 different tunes—always accompanied, in logical musical fashion, by *Auld Lang Syne*. Some of the more obvious tunes include the Toreador theme from *Carmen*, the *Ode to Joy* from Beethoven's Ninth, and *Good King Wenceslas*. There is also a twelve-tone version in a distinctly Webernian style.

7.4 Iconography and Reminiscence

The increasing popularity of *Auld Lang Syne* through the nineteenth century naturally led to representations of the song in the form of drawings, paintings, and also sculpture. To start with a particularly imposing example: in advance of the Burns centenary celebrations in 1859, and demonstrating the song's status in Burns's oeuvre by that point, the Royal Scottish Academy commissioned George Harvey to create a set of engravings based on the song; these were published in a lavish book, interspersed with the words of the text.[35] The five prints demonstrate the contrast built into the childhood verses of the poem. The first, illustrating "We twa ha'e run about the braes / And pu'd the gowans fine" shows two young children (possibly a girl and a boy) reclining on an obviously Scottish hillside, pulling the gowans; the second part of the verse ("But we've wander'd mony a weary foot / Sin' auld lang

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34   Tomlinson 1983.
35   Royal Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland 1859.

syne") shows a young man, obviously in a much warmer climate, looking intently at what appears to be a wilted flower. Similarly, the third print shows the same two children, but slightly older, standing in a burn—they appear to be filtering water through a handkerchief similar to the one they gathered the gowans in; this print illustrates the lines "We twa ha'e paidled i' the burn / Frae morning sun till dine". The verse's conclusion, "But seas between us braid ha'e roar'd / Sin' auld lang syne" again shows the grown man, in the hat and galoshes of a seaman, perched on the rigging of a ship at sea and staring intently in the direction of some imagined shore. The final print shows this same man, much older (bald patch), and apparently recently arrived from a journey (his bag, hat and stick are beside him). He is raising a glass with another man, apparently some years older again: "And we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet / For auld lang syne."

With the exception of the two engravings of the young man alone, these images correspond to many other visual representations of *Auld Lang Syne*. The statue "Auld Lang Syne" which for many years from the 1860s stood in Central Park, New York also shows two men in later middle age, seated at a table, joining hands and raising their glasses; of the two, one is slightly smarter in dress, and has a bag at his feet; his "man of the world" appearance contrasts with his old friend's smart, but slightly rustic, attire.[36] A depiction of *Auld Lang Syne* preserved in one of the Mitchell Library's many collections of cuttings relating to Burns (unfortunately, no source is given) shows three men seated at a table in a tavern: the two at the front are shaking hands and raising their drinks, and one of these has a knapsack, a stick, and is slightly smarter dressed than his friend, who is wearing a Scots bonnet and is accompanied by a sheepdog.[37] A similar picture is found in *The Illustrated Book of Scottish Songs* (1854): the scene is a tavern, with three men seated at a table. Two are shaking hands, with one simultaneously raising his tankard.[38] The men are apparently in early middle age, and are dressed in the garb of the late eighteenth century. There is a walking stick at the feet of the man raising the tankard, but no other suggestion of a journey. Another group of three men are standing in the background, raising their tankards to one another.

Another publication, a pocket-sized yet lavish edition of the song published in London and New York in 1905, presents two rather different interpretations (Fig. 7.2). The frontispiece shows a rural scene with a young couple sitting on a bench by the banks of a stream. Two further illustrations within the book, which presents a verse per page, show typical Scottish landscapes.[39] The picture at the book's end, on the other

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36 The *New York Times* noted that this statue was "presented by a number of gentlemen, residents of this city"; 10 December 1864. My description is based on a photograph of the statue in the Mitchell Library. Burnsiana collection, cat. no. 343195, folio 41 verso; see also, e.g., https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-f16c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99

37 Mitchell Library Burnsiana, cat. no. 343191, pasted on page 52.

38 The book has been digitized by Google: see https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=zZYlAAAAMAAJ&vq=syne&hl=de&pg=PA238#v=onepage&q&f=false

39 One features a river, the other a hilly landscape with flowers: possibly, these were intended to illustrate the two childhood verses, with their burn and their gowans, but their placement within the book does not reflect this.

hand, facing "And surely ye'll be your pint-stoup" (the final verse in this publication), shows a group of wigged Georgian gentlemen standing around what appears to be a large bowl of punch, raising a glass together.[40] The linking of the song specifically to Georgian social life is interesting; another, slightly later book by the same publisher, containing several poems by Burns as well as *Auld Lang Syne*, also portrays men standing round a punchbowl, raising their glasses, but in a slightly later style of dress.[41] While the illustrations discussed in the previous paragraph deal specifically with the song's text, these images reflect its use in society, and the perceived age of the song. The frontispiece, meanwhile, reflects the storyline of three different light novels of the later nineteenth century with *Auld Lang Syne* in the title, all of which tell the same basic story of a boy and girl, close since childhood, who then mature and fall in love, only to suffer a separation (in two cases, the male protagonist is press-ganged, while in the third the separation is one of domestic rather than military drama).[42]

The phrases "auld lang syne" or "Should auld acquaintance be forgot" also appear in the title of several volumes of poetry, personal reminiscence and local history. Generally speaking, novels and volumes of poetry using the title are slightly earlier than volumes of reminiscence—personal, fictional, or relating to local history—which do the same, the latter tending to be published around 1890–1905 and again from around 1920–1940. The preface to one of the poetry volumes speaks for many:[43]

> The Author of the following Songs and Poems died in the Spring of 1864.
>
>   The Title "Auld Langsyne" is prefixed to them, because, though presented to the Public now for the first time, at least in a collected form, the most of them were written 40 or 50 years ago. To the few surviving members of the Author's circle of early friends these pages may recall old times; but it is hoped that they will also be generally acceptable at least in the locality to which they refer, and among the class for which the Author wrote, and to which he belonged—the working population.[44]

Most of the volumes, however, relate to people from a quite different background. The most well-known of the autobiographical volumes is by the German-born orientalist F. Max Müller (1823–1900), an expert on Indian culture who lectured at Oxford from the 1850s (he moved to Britain around the time of the second peak in the reception of *Auld Lang Syne*).[45] Among the other autobiographical volumes is one from a member of the English aristocracy, and one from the Glaswegian writer and journalist William Power (1873–1951), who went on to become leader of the Scottish National Party, and who also wrote a perceptive essay on *Auld Lang Syne*.[46] Alongside the personal volumes of

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40   Bib. II/1905.
41   Bib. II/1908.
42   Russell 1878 (also mentioned in the previous chapter), Watson 1880, Weber 1889.
43   Hamilton 1865, Dryburgh 1865, Latto 1892, Beck 1902, Hay 1920.
44   Dryburgh 1865, 3.
45   Müller 1898.
46   Russell 1925, Power 1937. Others include Watson 1903, Tiplady 1926. The article on *Auld Lang Syne* is Power 1926.

Fig. 7.2 (a) Frontispiece and (b) final verse images from a book edition of *Auld Lang Syne* published in 1905 (NLS shelf mark T.8.g); artist not credited; and (c) an alternative frontispiece image, by Gordon Browne, from an edition published in 1908 as *Auld Lang Syne and Other Poems* (London: Ernest Nister; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.). Image for (c) from a copy in the author's possession; also held in the British Library, UIN BLL01000543385.

reminiscences, the title crops up in books dedicated to local history,[47] and there is also a song dedicated to *Old Norwich* written to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*, and published in 1885. Its first verse and chorus sets the scene and the connection to the other song:

> To dear old Norwich, Boys, a toast
> One glass before we go;
> To the Royal City we can boast,
> The friendly Town we know;
> > CHORUS
> > To dear old Norwich, Boys we'll raise,
> > Our brimming goblets high;
> > Now chorus forth our City's praise,
> > We here would live and die.[48]

The phrase also crops up in one of the classics of Scottish "kailyard" literature, Ian Maclaren's *The Days o' Auld Langsyne*.[49] By this time, it had become synonymous with a particular type of misty, heather-tinged recollection of Scotland's rural past.[50] It also appears in the poetical effusions of non-Scots as well, such as a poem written by Augusta Webster published in a volume for private circulation which also refers to the phrase in its title.[51] Entitled *Auld Lang Syne. Where Home Was* and written in 1874, Webster's poem bemoans the changes that have replaced "elm-trees and the linnet's trill" with a "flaunting grimy street" and the "thud and roars of wheels and feet". This brings us to another song whose subject was home, and a cottage home at that, and which in many ways can be compared with *Auld Lang Syne*.

7.5 The Sentimentalist's Song

That the nostalgic song *Auld Lang Syne* should have become so popular in the mid- to late nineteenth century is no surprise, particularly when we compare it to another song that ticks most of the same boxes: *Home, Sweet Home*. Like *Auld Lang Syne*, *Home, Sweet Home* also owed its initial success to the theatre. The tune is generally attributed to Henry Bishop, who initially claimed the melody was Sicilian; it has also been suggested that Bishop based the melody on another by the German composer Johann Abraham Peter Schultz.[52] Bishop's first version of the melody, with four eight-line verses, came in the first volume of his *Melodies of Various Nations* in 1821. Two years later, he shortened the melody and brought it together with John Howard

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47   Penicuik 1899, Neilson 1935, McNeil 2003 (written from 1955).
48   Taylor & Campling 1885.
49   Maclaren 1895.
50   See for example also a song called *The Days o' Auld Langsyne*, to a tune called "The Burnside", which is published in Whitelaw 1848.
51   Pen & Pencil Club (London) 1877. The first verse of *Auld Lang Syne* appears on the title page, where it is attributed to Burns.
52   Underwood 1977, whose starting point is a comment made by William Parke to the effect that the tune came from a German opera.

Payne's poem *Home! Sweet Home!* for the opera *Clari, or the Maid of Milan*, which premiered in London in 1823.

In both Britain and America, *Auld Lang Syne* and *Home, Sweet Home* vie for the position of the most important sentimental song in this period. Histories of music in the Victorian era are much more likely to discuss the impact of the latter, however. As Pearsall puts it, *Home, Sweet Home*

> was a song for bringing the house down, sung as an encore by Jenny Lind, the song [Adelina] Patti elected to sing when she was discovered sitting on a sofa in the Arundel Hotel, Norfolk Street. At a charity concert at the Albert Hall, a lady in the audience was so overcome that she immediately handed over a cheque for £1,000.[53]

Derek Scott also notes that *Home, Sweet Home*, as played by Billy Bolden's band when troops were leaving for the Spanish-American war in 1898, caused so many soldiers to jump ship that the US Army banned it from being played at future departures.[54] It was often played together with *Auld Lang Syne* when British troops were leaving port as well. In an address to a meeting attended by Gladstone in 1879, a Scottish Liberal said that

> We are proud of our Scottish ballads, and think we can challenge any nation to beat our pathetical [*sic*] "Flowers of the Forest," our patriotic "Scots wha hae," our spirited "A man's a man for a' that," our homely "Auld Lang Syne." But there is one thing that we cannot match, and that is "Home, Sweet Home."[55]

(At this point, his audience cheered). In his *Stories of Famous Songs*, published in 1898, which also contains a chapter on *Auld Lang Syne*, S. J. A. Fitzgerald found it "inevitable" that he should begin with *Home, Sweet Home* and end with *God Save the King*.[56] *Home, Sweet Home*'s sentiment has featured in countless needlework samplers, not to mention its refrain becoming further immortalized in the twentieth century as spoken by a girl with pigtails and ruby slippers, carrying a dog called Toto: "There's no place like home."[57]

Comparing these two songs helps put into sharper focus those qualities of *Auld Lang Syne* that have contributed to its lasting success. Possibly the biggest difference between the two is that while *Home, Sweet Home* remains indelibly connected to the sentimental milieu of the nineteenth century, and is nowadays more likely to be encountered in the form of a biting parody, *Auld Lang Syne* has to some extent transcended this—it always was something more than just a sentimental song, despite

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53   Pearsall 1973, 163.
54   Scott 2017, 188**.**
55   Speech given by "Mr Tod of St Leonard's Hill" at a Scottish Liberal meeting; reported in *The Scotsman*, 27 November 1879.
56   Fitzgerald 1897, xv.
57   In the novel by L. Frank Baum on which the film *The Wizard of Oz* was based, published in 1900, Dorothy is not transported back to Kansas after reciting these words, but with the rather less poetic: "Take me home to Aunt Em!"

the best efforts of many an interpretation to the contrary. Ostensibly, the texts of the two songs deal with broadly the same topic, but while *Auld Lang Syne* focuses on the maintenance of personal relationships, specifically friendship, the exile of *Home, Sweet Home* reflects on a thatched cottage, birds that sing there, "a fond father's smile" and the "cares of a mother". It is not irrelevant in this regard that one of the most popular of all Burns's poems in the nineteenth century was *The Cotter's Saturday Night*: this too depicts a domestic scene, with a family gathering around a humble meal and then listening to the head of the family read from the Bible. On the other hand, like *Auld Lang Syne*, *Home, Sweet Home* also has the virtue of conjuring up many associations with the simple three words of its title, and of expressing the most fervent wish of many an exile or emigré. Meanwhile, changes were afoot that would present new means of maintaining contact with both those distant and those passed.

7.6 *Auld Lang Syne* at the Threshold of the Information Revolution

In 1877, the Scots emigrant Alexander Graham Bell presented a new invention, the telephone, to a number of audiences in North America and Britain. In February of that year, he demonstrated the new device in Salem, and a report on the proceedings was then transmitted, by telephone, to Boston, for publication in the *Boston Daily Globe*:

> Professor Bell briefly explained the construction of the instrument, and then sketched his studies of the system of transmitting sounds. He explained that it was his first attempt before an audience to try these different experiments. An intermittent current was first sent from Boston by Mr Thomas A. Watson, Professor Bell's associate. This caused a noise very similar to a horn from the telephone. The Morse telegraph alphabet was then sent by musical sounds and could be heard throughout the hall. The audience burst into loud applause at this experiment. A telephonic organ was then put into operation in Boston, "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot" and "Yankee Doodle" were readily heard through the hall and heartily recognized. At this point Professor Bell then explained how he learnt to transmit the tones of the human voice, and paid a grateful tribute to Mr. Watson. Professor Bell asked Mr. Watson for a song, and "Auld Lang Syne" came from the mouthpiece of the instrument almost before his words were ended.[58]

Much the same procedure was repeated in London, when Bell presented the telephone to a meeting of the British Association:

> Mr. Preece, communicating with the Post-office, asked an operator to put the section into telephonic connexion with the Guildhall, and in a very short time a verse of "God Save the Queen" as played on a harmonium, was distinctly heard. A song with the chords was afterwards played, and the operator at the Post-office sang "Auld Lang Syne," repeated several times the sentence "To be, or not to be—that is the question;" and read a paragraph from a newspaper. The song and the sentence were easily and clearly heard by considerable numbers of the audience seated in proximity to the instrument, but the articulation of the paragraph was not so successfully followed.[59]

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58   *Boston Daily Globe*, 13 February 1877 as cited in *The Times*, 28 February 1877.
59   *The Times*, 22 August 1877.

And again in Canada, later in the same year:

> At Hamilton, Canada, nine telephones were placed on the same circuit, on a line connecting three private houses. Speaking or singing from any one of the telephones came distinctly to all the listeners at the other houses on the circuit. "Auld Lang Syne" and "Old Hundred," sung at the same time at two of the houses, were heard simultaneously at the third. On holding a telephone against the sounding board of a piano at one house, the music was enjoyed by six listeners at the other houses.[60]

What is notable in these three excerpts from the many reports on Bell's invention and distribution, is that there are always two songs played, and one of them is always *Auld Lang Syne*. The other songs are often regionally specific: the British national anthem; the popular song *Yankee Doodle*, so quintessentially American (although the tune is of British origin); "Old Hundred" is more generally known—perhaps Bell could not think of any typically Canadian tunes. For all these communities, however, *Auld Lang Syne* enjoyed the same level of significance. This is probably the reason why Bell chose it, the more poetic explanation being that he recognized that this invention would transform the way people keep in touch with even the most far-flung of auld acquaintants. (Not to mention that, as a migrant from Scotland, the song would have particular significance for him personally.)

In the early days of telephone, one of its projected uses was to be the transmission of music, and not just voices. For technical reasons, however, it was other innovations such as radio which would bring music to the masses through new channels. Another step in this revolution came in the years just after Bell's invention, with the first scratchy but promising attempts to record sound in such a way that it could be played back exactly as it had sounded. Of several innovations in this direction, the one that eventually succeeded was based on an invention by Emile Berliner, a German who at the time was, like Bell, working in the United States. In 1890, he made a small number of recordings to demonstrate the potential of his "gramophone". It is presumed that many of these are of his own voice, including what is without a doubt the world's first recording of the first verse and chorus of *Auld Lang Syne*, making it one of the first songs ever to be recorded.[61]

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60   *The Times*, 16 November 1877.
61   Now available online at https://archive.org/details/EmileBerliner

8. The Song of New Year

First, what did yesternight deliver?
"Another year is gone for ever."
And what is this day's strong suggestion?
"The passing moment's all we rest on!"
Rest on—for what? What do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?[1]

The last of the three major traditions associated with *Auld Lang Syne* is that of singing it in the first minutes of the New Year (S_{NY}). In America, this is probably now the most prominent of all the *Auld Lang Syne* traditions, and the song is often found on Christmas/holiday albums for this reason. S_{NY} has also helped cement familiarity with the song: nowadays, whenever New Year arrives in a Hollywood film, M2 is not far behind. Many people's first instinct is that this tradition must have been established via broadcast media and film, with a key role given to Guy Lombardo (1902–1977) and his band The Royal Canadians, whose New Year's Eve broadcasts became an integral part of the American holiday. The material analysed in this chapter, however—mostly from newspaper reports of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century celebrations in Scotland, London, New York and other parts of North America—shows that the tradition was becoming established well before this. Radio played a part, but merely amplified, or in every sense broadcast, what was already tradition for many groups and communities.

The second thesis that needs to be tested is that the tradition S_{NY} developed in Scotland and was transported abroad when Scots emigrated. Here again, there is a lack of evidence: it seems more likely, from the material collated here, that the Scottish diaspora did not merely transport the tradition, but possibly created it.

8.1 *A Guid New Year To Ane And A*': The Scots and New Year

[...] however much the observance of Christmas may be gaining ground on this side of the Border, the New Year is still the great season of festivity in Scotland.[2]

That *Auld Lang Syne* should have become the song of New Year is perfectly reasonable when we consider the importance that festivity held, and holds, for the Scots. New Year

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1   Robert Burns, "Sketch. New Year's Day. To Mrs Dunlop", 1789 (K249).
2   *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1890.

is one of the major events in the Scottish calendar. Within living memory, it was much more important than Christmas for many Scottish communities: Calvinist tradition did its best to keep Christmas as a purely religious feast, and the main focus of the winter celebrations subsequently remained New Year for longer than in other parts of Britain.[3] Perhaps because of this, the traditions associated with New Year's Eve—or Hogmanay, as the Scots call it—have retained a much more local feel up to the present.

In many regions of Britain, older traditions linked the last day or days of the year with singing carols. In the area around Forfar and Angus in the east of Scotland, Hogmanay was long known as "Singing-E'en" for this very reason.[4] Many regions practised the tradition which became known as *wassailing*. This term originates from central and southern England: the word "wassail" is said by William Dyer to come from the Saxon toast "wass hael" or "your health". In former times, "the head of the house assembled his family around a bowl of spiced ale, from which he drank their healths, then passed it to the rest, that they might drink too".[5] Poorer people would carry their wassail bowl, decorated with ribbons, from door to door asking for something to fill it. Dyer gives specific information on the tradition as practised in Nottinghamshire, Gloucestershire and the Isle of Wight. Among the many Scottish traditions he discusses, he notes that Hogmanay was often celebrated with a supper. He also refers to a tradition still known in Scotland today, that of "first footing"—going to visit friends or relations immediately after midnight on New Year's Day.[6]

The tradition of first footing may unwittingly be linked to the establishment of *Auld Lang Syne* as a New Year song. In the mid- to late nineteenth century, people in Scotland often gathered in a public place, generally at a clock tower, to bring in the New Year, but the street party only continued until the bells had struck midnight; then, the crowd would break up to go home or go first-footing. By this point in the century it would have been second nature to sing *Auld Lang Syne* at parting, and the song's reflection on the passing of time, and on relationships that have stood the test of time, mean that *Auld Lang Syne* would fit the general sentiment of New Year. However, the celebration was just as likely to be marked by another song, *A Guid New Year To Ane And A'*. The text of this song was written by Peter Livingston (born 1823), whose *Poems and Songs* (1845) went through several editions in the nineteenth century. Like Hogg's version of *Good Night And Joy*—also a song related textually to the end of the

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3   The newspaper report quoted at the start of this section notes that "Christmas as a time for the exchange of seasonable greetings has quite taken the place of the New Year". Reports of the state of affairs at the main post office sorting centres were generally included in the round-up of events published each year in *The Scotsman*. Twenty years later, the report in *The Scotsman* again mentioned that Christmas was continuing to rise in popularity—an indication that, in fact, the older tradition of New Year was proving more resilient than people had thought.

4   Banks 1939.

5   Dyer 1876.

6   There are various customs associated with this practice: for example, bringing a piece of coal or some whisky to bring warmth and prosperity to the house; and it is traditionally lucky for the "first foot"— the first person over the threshold in the New Year—to have dark colouring.

year—one verse of *A Guid New Year* is similar to Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* (Fig. 8.1: the relevant lines are emphasized).

Fig. 8.1 Text of Peter Livingston's *A Guid New Year*, taken here from Livingston 1873 [1846], 126–127; textual similarities to Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* in bold.

A Guid new year to ane an'a',
O' mony may you see,
And during a' the years that come,
O' happy may you be!
And may you ne'er hae cause to mourn,
To sigh or shed a tear—
To ane an' a' baith great an sma'
A hearty guid New Year.

O' time flies fast, he winna wait,
My friend for you or me,
He works his wonders day by day,
And onward still doth flee.
O! wha can tell gin ilka ane
I see sae happy here,
Will meet again and happy be,
Anither guid New Year.

We twa hae baith been happy lang,
We ran about the braes—
In ae wee cot, beneath a tree,
We spent our early days;
We ran about the burnie's side,
The spot will aye be dear,—
And those wha used to meet us there
We'll think on mony a year.

Now let us hope our years may be
As guid as they hae been;
And let us hope we ne'er may see
The sorrows we hae seen;
And let us hope that ane an' a'—
Our friends baith far and near—
May aye enjoy for time to come
A hearty guid New Year.

The apparent connection between individual lines of this song and *Auld Lang Syne* should not be exaggerated, but it is not the only curiosity we have to deal with. For although the version of *A Guid New Year* which became established was to music composed by Alexander Hume (1811–1859), the song is listed in Livingston's own *Poems and Songs* as sung to the tune of *When Silent Time*. These are the opening words of Susanna Blamire's *The Nabob* (see Chapter 3): in other words, Livingston may have intended this song be sung to M-1. This also accounts for the difference in structure

between the version given here, and that generally sung in Scotland (and published by Hume), in which the first four lines are treated as a sort of chorus, and repeated after each verse. The question this raises is whether Livingston implicitly made a link between the sentiment of "auld lang syne", in the widest sense, and the New Year. Some of his poems are directly derivative of Burns—the poem that opens the volume, *Sabbath in a Scottish Cottage* is designed as a counterpart to Burns's *The Cotter's Saturday Night*—and the lines resembling Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* could be a conscious or unconscious paraphrase (or, indeed, a reference to Hogg's *Goodnight And Joy*). As discussed in previous chapters, Blamire's song was very well known in Scotland at this point, and Livingston may have been appealing to knowledge of that song, and its sentiment, rather than Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* itself. It is also possible that the intended tune was the alternative to M-1 for Blamire's verses already discussed in Chapter 2: the earliest published source I have seen for this other tune with Blamire's words comes from 1848, but this might imply that the tune was doing the rounds at this point.[7]

In any case, *A Guid New Year* became well-known with a different tune, written by Hume. Initially a church composer, Hume also published and wrote tunes or arrangements for many Scots songs. The first publication to include his version of *A Guid New Year* may have been *The Lyric Gems of Scotland*, which appeared in 1856.[8] By the later 1860s, the song was familiar enough to receive centre-stage billing at a "Great Scotch Festival" to be held in the Queen Street Hall, Edinburgh on 1 January 1869: it was to be sung at the very start, by the entire company.[9] One of this company was Hamilton Corbett, who is mentioned by name in a sheet music edition of the song published in 1885. A very brief review of new music publications in *The Scotsman* of 22 May 1872 describes Hume's version of *A Guid New Year* as "A pretty well-known song, deserving the popularity it enjoys". A concert to be played at Waverley Market in Edinburgh on 1 January 1878 was to start with a *Grand March "A Guid New Year to Ane An' A"*, presumably integrating the song, the march being attributed to "Hewitt"; the concert was to end with a "Selection of National Melodies" that concluded with *Auld Lang Syne*.[10]

References to *A Guid New Year* at public Hogmanay celebrations start to appear around the same time as references to *Auld Lang Syne* in this context—in the 1880s—so it is difficult to say if one had chronological precedence. *The Scotsman* of 1 January 1880, for example, provides reports from Edinburgh, Leith, Dundee, Glasgow, and London, the most extensive being the report for Edinburgh. Two reports refer to *Auld Lang Syne*: in Glasgow, "On the hour having been struck, the carillon of bells in the

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7   Bib. II/1848.
8   Bib. II/1856. The British Library attributes this volume to Hume, though no editor is named on the book itself.
9   *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 30 December 1868.
10 *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1878.The concert featured the Band of the 75th Highlanders. At 2 p.m. on the same day, another concert was to be played by the Band of H. M. Scots Guards. The programme of that concert was to include "War Songs of Europe", the last one being *Auld Lang Syne*.

steeple pealed 'Auld Lang Syne,' many of those in the streets below joining in the chorus"; at St. Paul's in London, meanwhile, "some of the more enthusiastic Scotsmen were to be heard singing 'John Barleycorn' and 'Auld Lang Syne' just a little before the witching hour, but such demonstrations were not common."[11] We will return to the London celebrations again later.

Other reports show a slightly different emphasis. In the more extensive reports of New Year 1883 from all corners of Scotland which appeared in *The Scotsman* on 2 January 1883, only one—from the town of Crieff—specifically mentions the song being sung after the chimes had struck, and before people dispersed for first-footing. For New Year 1887 there are four separate mentions of *A Guid New Year*,[12] with *Auld Lang Syne* mentioned in three cases. In the Borders town of Earlston,

> The great event of this festive time is the ball of the Volunteers, which is held on the old year's night. [...] When 12 o'clock struck dancing was suspended and the whole company sang "Auld Lang Syne," which was followed by rounds of lusty cheers for the new year. The ball-room was then deserted for half-an-hour, the dancers going to their own homes or those of friends to exchange the compliments of the season.

This report, then, links the song specifically to the chiming of the New Year rather than the end of the party itself. In Kirkwall, Orkney, the same year, the Artillery band played *God Save the Queen* at midnight, and "afterwards paraded the principal streets playing 'Auld Lang Syne.'" In Linlithgow, meanwhile, the crowds who had gathered at the town hall heard the town band play both *Auld Lang Syne* and *A Guid New Year* after the bells.[13]

On 31 December 1888, *The Scotsman* published an article on *Auld Lang Syne*, without mentioning any link to the day's celebrations; this year marked the centenary of the first datable version of the song in Burns's hand, as the article's author notes.[14] The report from Glasgow for the following year again indicates the tradition of playing song tunes on the church bells at midnight, but this time it is *A Guid New Year* that is played first:

> The time-honoured custom of ushering in the New Year at the Cross steeple showed no signs of waning popularity, and long before the stroke of twelve the vicinity of the Cross was occupied by a vast swaying multitude. To while away the last few minutes of the fastly dying year, snatches of popular songs were taken up in different parts of the crowd, and the burning of coloured lights from windows in the vicinity was the cause of an outbreak of cheering every few minutes. As the hour approached, the excitement grew in intensity, and the low murmur of the thousand voices made it practically impossible for those at any distance from the steeple to hear the striking of the hour [...] The chimes in the Cross steeple rang merrily "A Guid New Year," and the chorus of the well-known

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11   *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1883.

12   Specifically, at the Lord Provost's dinner for the poor in Glasgow; in Portobello/Musselburgh; in Linlithgow; and in Tarbert.

13   All quotations from *The Scotsman*, 3 January 1887.

14   *The Scotsman*, 31 December 1888, 9; author given as "H.H."

song was rendered in the heartiest manner by the good-humoured throng. Bottles were also much in evidence, and not without much difficulty from the swaying of the crowd, the New Year was pledged by not a few. The steeple bells afterwards chimed "Auld Lang Syne," and the crowd broke up with the usual cheering and singing.[15]

As at a later day in Japan, it is possible to imagine that this was the authorities' way of telling the good people of Glasgow to go home to their beds. In Paisley the same year, the striking of the midnight hour was followed by "profuse hand-shaking, and a general rendering of 'Auld Langsyne,' after which the assemblage broke up, and many went in pursuit of the pleasures of 'first-fittin'."[16] In the first few minutes of 1891 in Glasgow, the chimes rang out *Auld Lang Syne*, "and the refrain was taken up by some of the younger and noisier portion of the crowd."[17] In the same city, 1894 was welcome by the pealing of *A Guid New Year* before *Auld Lang Syne* was heard; on this occasion, the reporter estimated the crowd as numbering ten to fifteen thousand.[18]

Although the reports from Edinburgh's New Year are consistently the longest in *The Scotsman*'s annual review, as befitting a newspaper based in that city, *Auld Lang Syne* is rarely mentioned. An exception is the description of the relatively low-key celebrations of New Year 1892–1893, when "A half-dozen young men in a state of picturesque intoxication made a feeble attempt to lead off 'Auld Lang Syne,' but it was a melancholy failure".[19] In Aberfeldy that year, the crowds congregating in the town square sang *A Guid New Year*, while in Melrose, the small crowd sang *Auld Lang Syne* and then dispersed.[20] The crowd gathered in Coldstream to welcome 1895 sang *Auld Lang Syne* when it arrived, while in Dornoch, "The New Year was welcomed in time-honoured fashion by the town's brass band parading the streets playing 'A Guid New Year' and by the other usual demonstrations." In both Earlston and Melrose, balls were held in the towns' Corn Exchanges, and in both cases *Auld Lang Syne* was sung at midnight.[21] Reports from throughout the 1880s and 1890s also show that the holiday was used as an opportunity for gatherings of fraternal organizations including the Oddfellows, with mentions of processions held by such organizations in several towns.

These reports indicate that *Auld Lang Syne* was, at this point at least, not universally or at least not exclusively linked to the welcoming of the New Year in Scotland. They also indicate that although the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* at New Year was certainly practised in Scotland, people were just as likely to sing *A Guid New Year,* albeit often in conjunction with *Auld Lang Syne*. Clearly, we only have the reporting journalists' word for any of this, yet the consistency of the reports from many different towns over a long period does suggest that this was indeed the case. Later sources also indicate

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15   *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1890.
16   *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1890.
17   *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1891.
18   *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1894.
19   *The Scotsman*, 2 January 1893.
20   Source for all quotes in this paragraph: *The Scotsman*, 2 January 1893.
21   *The Scotsman*, 2 January 1895.

the continuing tradition of the other song: of only three records held for Hogmanay in the School of Scottish Studies archives that mention singing, two mention *A Guid New Year* and none specifically mention *Auld Lang Syne*.[22] As recently as 1989, an album called *Auld Lang Syne: A New Year's Party* used *Auld Lang Syne* to dance out the old year (in waltz time); after the chimes of Big Ben have been carefully blended in, the company switches to *A Guid New Year*.[23] Such practices remind us of *Auld Lang Syne*'s use as a song of parting—this time, saying farewell to the passing year—and given that many parties would break up just after midnight, there is again the possibility of a link between that tradition and the emerging tradition of singing the song at the turn of the year.

That Glasgow crowds figure strongly in reports of *Auld Lang Syne* at New Year, particularly when compared with Edinburgh, may have something to do with the structure of the city's population. The "Second City of the Empire" was home to many migrant workers from Ireland and the rural Highlands; more generally well-known songs may have had a better chance at such occasions in consequence.[24] On the other hand, in most of the cases mentioned here the singing is led from a central point, be it a carillon or a brass band. It is a different story when we turn to Scottish communities elsewhere, and the first place to look is London.

8.2 New Year at St. Paul's

The close relationship between Scotland and the celebration of the New Year can be seen nowhere more clearly than in comparison with England, specifically London. A report in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* describing the holiday season in London in 1884 describes the cultural differences:

> It is almost unnecessary to remind Scotch readers that their festive season—the New Year time—is very little observed in the metropolis. On New Year's Day the shops are open, and business goes on just as usual. The Scotch and French colonies, of course, make an exception as far as they can; but just as when in Rome you must do as the Romans do, so in London you must conform to the customs of the Londoners. There is one way in which Scotchmen here infallibly distinguish themselves on the last night of the year. Towards midnight it is their custom to assemble in large numbers round St Paul's Cathedral, and join in the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" as the stroke of the bell proclaims the death of the old and the birth of the new year. It is a very simple ceremony, and yet an agreeable

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22 The twentieth century archive recordings of the School of Scottish Studies focus mostly on Scotland north of the Highland fault, which may be one reason for the lack of records. It is also possible that those interviewed focussed on aspects of the tradition which are not so common nowadays.

23 Jim MacLeod & His Band, *Auld Lang Syne: A New Year's Eve Party*, State Records 1989, British Library Sounds call no. 1CD0025101.

24 Paul Maloney has suggested that the tradition of amateur singing performances in Glasgow public houses, a forerunner of music hall, may have become so established because of the number of people living there who did not otherwise have an extended family or social network. See Maloney 2003, especially Chapter 2.

reminiscence of the "folks at home." To miss it would in the eyes of some Scots amount to little less than a crime.[25]

Just when this tradition became established in London is not clear—the report in *The Scotsman* from 1880, quoted previously, implied that it was by then a routine occurrence. The earliest report in *The Times* to mention the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* at New Year comes from 1886–87, and does not specifically link it to the Scots:

> The bells of St. Paul's began a merry peal soon after 11 o'clock, and continued ringing until midnight. As 12 o'clock approached a large crowd congregated around the cathedral to witness the heralding of the new year. As most of the people had been holiday making, the crowd was somewhat jovial, and groups were to be seen singing scraps of songs and snatches of "Auld Lang Syne". The magnificent peal of bells rang out loudly in the frosty air, and must have been heard for a long way round London. Just on the hour of midnight the bells ceased to allow the clock to strike the hour, which it did in solemn and measured tones. As the last note was sounded the bells recommenced with a jubilant peal, and the new year was greeted by the crowd with a loud shout and a more or less general singing of "Auld Lang Syne." Many other city churches added their peals.[26]

It is unclear at what point word got out and more and more people started to take part in the annual gathering at St. Paul's. *The Scotsman*, reporting on 1893–1894, noted that the crowd had indeed increased to the point where the Scots were in the minority, and that the chorus of *Auld Lang Syne* was sung immediately after midnight by the "various groups" present, who then generally proceeded to the nearest pub.[27] The report of the same event in the *New York Times* goes into slightly more detail: it notes that, previous to midnight, "the crowd gulped down whisky and shouted music-hall choruses, drowning the voices of the few who tried to sing hymns or make religious addresses", and that the songs sung at midnight included *Auld Lang Syne*, *Rule Britannia*, *God Save the Queen*, the *Marseillaise*, "and a hundred other songs". There was also a scuffle involving a group of unemployed people who aimed to steal the show, though their demonstration was kept under control by the police.[28]

The festivities at St. Paul's mirror many of the elements that marked Hogmanay celebrations in Scottish towns as well: the crowds gather in a central location for the purpose of hearing the bells strike the New Year; almost immediately afterwards, they disperse. The one difference is that while none of the reports from London mention the singing of *A Guid New Year*, they almost always mention the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*. There could be several reasons for this: *A Guid New Year* was not likely to be recognized by non-Scottish reporters, and for the same reason, when the percentage of Scots to non-Scots in the crowd diminished there would have been little hope of starting a rendition of that song. Similarly, while it is difficult to trace at what point *A Guid New*

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25   "Our London Letter", *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 30 December 1884.
26   *The Times*, 1 January 1887.
27   *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1895.
28   *New York Times*, 1 January 1894.

Year became popular in Scotland, there is a good chance that this occurred after an alternative tradition had become established in London. Whatever the reason, we are left with *Auld Lang Syne* as an even more integral part of the New Year's celebration at St. Paul's than it was north of the border.

The fact that *Auld Lang Syne* was always sung at New Year at St. Paul's does not of itself explain the subsequent strength of the connection between this celebration and this song, which may however have to do with the development of New Year celebrations as a distinct event. Here as well the Scots played their part—for example, in the form of a "Grand Hogmanay Concert" at the Queen's Hall in London on New Year's Eve 1897: the advertisement informs us that *Auld Lang Syne* was to be sung at midnight.[29] The *New York Times*, reporting on events at St Paul's in 1898–99, noted that "The majority of those who had assembled were evidently Scotchmen, as was evidenced by the constant whistling of 'The Cock o' the North'". The crowd, less than in previous years, numbered about two thousand, and sang *Auld Lang Syne* at midnight; they slowly dispersed "as the notes of the song died out."[30]

The reports for 1900–1901 in *The Times* are more extensive than most in that newspaper, probably because this New Year marked the start of the new century. By this time, watchnight services in churches, common for many years in Scotland, had become well established in England as well, and the report for the most part discusses the services at St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. There is, however, also mention of the less devout celebrations outside St. Paul's:

> For three hours last night—from half-past 9 to half-past 12—a dense crowd, numbering several thousand people, surrounded St. Paul's Cathedral for the purpose of celebrating the opening of the new century outside the historic building. The crowd, which was much larger than that of many years past, was a very heterogenous one, but was fairly orderly until about 11 o'clock, when the rougher element commenced to assert itself. Anything in the nature of a disturbance was, however, prevented by the strong force of police which had been posted outside the Cathedral. As the first stroke of 12 o'clock was struck by the Cathedral clock the opening strains of "Auld Lang Syne" were struck up, but the rest was drowned by the shouting of the crowd, and the considerable number of Scotsmen present, who make it a practice to place themselves outside the Cathedral on New Year's Eve, soon realised that they were in a minority. The Scottish air gave place to such patriotic songs as "The Absent-Minded Beggar" and "They all love Jack," and the National Anthem, and the great concourse began to disperse as soon as the last stroke of the midnight hour had sounded.[31]

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29   *The Times*, 31 December 1897.
30   *New York Times*, 1 January 1899.
31   *The Times*, 1 January 1901. *They All Love Jack* by Stephen Adams and Fred E. Weatherly was published between 1890 and 1899 and tells of Jack sailing off, much to the distress of the women at the shoreline. *The Absent-Minded Beggar*, composed by Arthur Sullivan to a text by Rudyard Kipling, was a plea for money for the war effort.

This report, written at the height of the Boer War, presents an early indication that the British patriotic connections of *Auld Lang Syne* were starting to wane. The report for 1904–1905 notes that "Just before midnight the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne' and the strains of the National Anthem made a curious medley, and as the midnight hour was struck on the bells in the tower of the Cathedral loud cheers were raised." The crowd then began to disperse.[32] Given the frequency with which *Auld Lang Syne* and *God Save the Queen* appeared together in the mid- to late nineteenth century, the reporter's comment is interesting. But as that tradition was waning, so another arose. 1910 saw "the customary scene of merriment outside St. Paul's Cathedral as the clock boomed out the hours of midnight":

> At the first stroke of midnight loud cheers broke forth from the crowd, to the accompaniment of various musical instruments and the bagpipes. Then followed a general clasping of hands and the singing of "Auld Lang Syne".[33]

At the Hotel Métropole the same year, a supper was followed by a formal ceremony welcoming the New Year:

> To "Auld Lang Syne," led by professional singers, or the strains of the National Anthem, with lights almost extinguished as the chimes of midnight broke upon the air, the guests at the special parties marked the incoming of 1910.[34]

The "migration" theory for the establishment of the tradition S_{NY} thus appears proven to the extent that the Scottish diaspora in London seemed to have had a major hand in establishing it. They celebrated in Scots style, and used the song that was one of the strongest of Scottish symbols. It could also be that the diaspora's stock of ethnic or national "symbols", including songs, was more stable and possibly more clearly defined. And unlike in Scotland, this public celebration was more spontaneous, led neither by carillons nor town bands, and for this reason too more likely to fall back on a song of the status of *Auld Lang Syne*. The traditional association between the song and the theme of absent friends is a further reason why it should be sung—compare, for example, this quotation from a letter published in *The Scotsman* in 1864, from a Scot in China:

> Our Christmas went off very well here. Plum-puddings out from home, cakes from Calcutta, and every delicacy Fortnum & Mason could invent, loaded the tables of most of the worthy hosts in Shanghae [*sic*]. The old folks at home were not forgotten, and "Auld Lang Syne" sung in a manner befitting sons of Scotland, and late inhabitants of the "grey metropolis of the north".[35]

Once the connection was made, and the song sung regularly on this occasion, a new inherited significance of S_{NY} would have every chance of becoming established, even

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32 *The Times*, 2 January 1905.
33 *The Times*, 1 January 1910.
34 *The Times*, 1 January 1910.
35 "Letter from China", *The Scotsman*, 29 February 1864.

while the direct influence of the Scots on the proceedings diminished. In 1906, *The Scotsman* reported that

> Though these gatherings were originated by Scotsmen, little of the Scottish element in them now survives. Scots Guardsmen, all the way from Chelsea Barracks, were freely sprinkled thoughout the crowd, and a party of people occupying a balcony on Ludgate Hill were enabled to start "Auld Lang Syne" with the assistance of a cornet.[36]

Likewise, in 1910–1911, "the Scottish element in the gathering here no longer predominates, and the cockney element is more in evidence, while the pipes have given place to the mouth organ". Nevertheless, it was *Auld Lang Syne* that the crowd sang at midnight, though it is not mentioned in connection with the other parties and celebrations described, nor in an adjacent article in the same publication, on the custom of celebrating New Year. That there was still a discrepancy between Scottish and English attitudes to the celebration can be seen from the fact that in 1911–1912, although New Year parties continued at larger hotels, and those gathered at the Criterion Restaurant enthusiastically sang *Auld Lang Syne* at midnight,[37] there were also serious riots at the Longmoor military camp on New Year's Day—triggered, it was said, by the refusal of English commanding officers to allow Scottish troops to celebrate in the manner to which they were accustomed.[38]

8.3 America and the Bells

> From a time when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary it has been the custom to ring in the new year with the Trinity chimes, and to hear this fine music the people come not only from all parts of New-York, but from neighbouring cities.[39]

Across Great Britain, many people now rely on a live broadcast of the bell affectionately known as Big Ben for a sign that the New Year has started; in Scotland, the moment when the New Year arrives is still known as "The Bells". In the late nineteenth century, the carillon in Glasgow led the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* and *A Guid New Year*. In nineteenth-century America, meanwhile, elaborate bell-ringing programmes were an important element in public celebrations and festivals, including New Year's Eve.

A typical chimes programme for an American holiday celebration would consist of at least ten different tunes, with a strong focus on the most universally known songs: Scots and Irish songs, and airs from classical music, were mainstays of the programme, along with more specifically American songs. The Metropolitan Church of the Trinity in Lower Manhattan, the focus for New Year's Eve celebrations in New York until they moved to the newly named Times Square in 1904, had a long-established practice of marking holidays with a bell-ringing programme. In 1860, for example, local

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36   *The Scotsman*, 1 January 1906.
37   *The Times*, 3 January 1912.
38   *The Times*, 4 January 1912.
39   *New York Times*, 1 January 1891.

councillors are reported to have had a long debate about the upcoming Independence Day celebrations—as is the way of councillors, they mostly debated the cost—and one of the arguments for supporting the ringing of bells was that it was such an old tradition. The programme of the tunes to be played in that case is similar in substance and actual content to those played around New Year later in the century, and includes *Auld Lang Syne*:

> The following tunes will be performed on Trinity Church chimes at 6 A.M. and at noon, by James E. Auliffe: 1. Ringing the changes on eight bells. 2. Hail Columbia. 3. Yankee Doodle. 4. Gentle Zetilla. 5. Airs from "Fra Diavolo." 6. Airs from "Norma." 7. Samson, from Handel's chorus, "Then round about the starry Heavens." 8. A Concerto in Rondo, with various modulations in major and minor keys. 9. Old Hundred. 10. Ringing the changes on eight bells. 11. Blue Bells of Scotland. 12. Airs by De Beriot. 13. Days of Absence. 14. Last Rose of Summer. 15. Auld Lang Syne. 16. Happy am I. 17. Home, Sweet Home. 18. Airs from "Child of the Regiment". 19. Airs from "Lucretia Borgia." 20. Evening Bells. 21. Hail Columbia. 22. Yankee Doodle.[40]

Popular tunes would also ring out at Thanksgiving: in 1880, for example, *Auld Lang Syne* was played alongside *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow* as people gathered for the service.[41]

By New Year's Eve 1890, the crowd around Trinity numbered around 5,000 people, and the celebration had turned into quite a spectacle. But "Although hundreds listened, no one heard the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne' with which the New Year was welcomed", the reason being that the sound of horns drowned out the bells.[42] Things had got so out of hand by 1892–1893 that the vicar, the Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix, cancelled the programme the next year, but by the year after that he had relented because of the strength of public feeling. Estimates put the crowd on that occasion, 1894–1895, at around 15,000. The programme—chosen by Rev. Dix—positioned *Auld Lang Syne* immediately before the last tune, *Home, Sweet Home*; there is no mention of singing at midnight.[43] This time, the tunes were audible, largely because the police had been busy confiscating several hundred tin horns.

The statement from 1890–1891 implies that *Auld Lang Syne* was played at midnight; other programmes, including those from other churches, suggest that the connection was anything but firm. The programme for St. Andrew's Church in the same year, for example, places *Auld Lang Syne* in the middle of the programme (which may, or may not, have coincided with midnight); again the last song is *Home, Sweet Home*.[44] A comparison of the programmes of various churches on New Year's Eve 1898, published in the *New York Times* (see Fig. 8.2), also throws up conflicting information. The

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40   *New York Times*, 3 July 1860.
41   *New York Times*, 26 November 1880.
42   *New York Times*, 1 January 1891.
43   *New York Times*, 1 January 1895.
44   *New York Times*, 30 December 1894.

first—for Grace Church—has *Home, Sweet Home* being played at midnight, preceded by *Auld Lang Syne*, which in turn is preceded by *Coming Through The Rye*. The next programme—for St Michael's—includes *Auld Lang Syne* part of the way through, and the programme for St. Andrew's Protestant Episcopal Church does not include *Auld Lang Syne* at all. Neither did the programme for Trinity in 1898, which had been published the previous day: there, again, the last song was *Home, Sweet Home*.

One of the important services of the evening was held at St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church, where the old year was watched out and the new year in. Another such service took place at the Church of the Heavenly Rest, the rector preaching in each case. There were chimes at Trinity, the programme of which was printed yesterday; Grace Church, St. Michael's, and St. Andrew's. The programme at Grace Church, rendered by Miss Bertha Thomas, assistant organist, was as follows:

1. A Few More Years Shall Roll.
2. Chime Again, Beautiful Bells.
3. Bonnie Doon.
4. Selections from Verdi.
5. The Old Oaken Bucket.
6. Robin Adair.
7. Selections from Handel.
8. March of the Men of Harlich.
9. My Old Kentucky Home.
10. Coming 'Thro the Rye.
11. Old Lang Syne.
12. Home Sweet Home.
    12 O'CLOCK.
13. The Heavens Are Telling.
14. My God Our Help in Ages Past.
15. Angels of Jesus.
16. He Shall Feed His Flock.
17. America.
18. Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow.

The programme at St. Michael's was:

1. English chime changes.
2. A Few More Years Will Roll.
3. Auld Lang Syne.
4. Robin Adair.
5. Hail Columbia.
6. Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean.
7. Yankee Doodle.
8. America.
9. Home, Sweet Home.

Several hundred people gathered at One Hundred and Twenty-seventh Street and Fifth Avenue last night to hear the chimes of St. Andrew's Protestant Episcopal Church. There were a good many tin horns in the crowd, and everybody was having a good time. The chimer was J. Grant Senia, and the programme, which was begun at 11:15 o'clock, and concluded at midnight, consisted of "English Chime Changes," "Red, White, and Blue," "Old Folks at Home," "Unfurl the Banner," "Rule, Britannia," "See, the Conquering Hero Comes," "Hail, Columbia," "Star of Freedom," "Yankee Doodle," "Sherman's March," "The Star Spangled Banner," "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," and "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow."

A number of people went to St. Patrick's Cathedral at midnight, expecting that there would be a service there, and were much disappointed to find the doors locked. The service had ended some time before. There was a watch night service at the Metropolitan Temple, ending with prayer at midnight.

CELEBRATION IN BROOKLYN.

**Chimes in the Old "City of Churches"
Ring in 1899.**

From tower and steeple the bells of Brooklyn, erstwhile the City of Churches, rang forth a wild tumultuous greeting to the new-born year last night. The bass-voiced bells in the lofty steeple of the Church of the Messiah flung out a booming welcome, in which the chimes in the belfry of St. Ann's melodiously joined. Then one upon another the church bells throughout the borough gave tongue until all were joined in a mighty chorus.

The ringing of the chimes at St. Ann's began at 11 o'clock. They were rung for half an hour, and then watch night services were held. At midnight the chimes were rung again. The bells played "O God, Our Help in Ages Past." "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night," "While with Ceaseless Course the Sun," "Days and Moments Quickly Flying," and "A Few More Years Shall Roll."

A programme similar to that at St. Ann's was tendered by the chimer at the Church of the Messiah.

The following programme was given by the bell chimer of the Church of Christ, on Bedford Avenue: "Auld Lang Syne," "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," "Ein' Feste Burg," "The Old Oaken Bucket," and "Scots Wha Hae Wi' Wallace Bled."

The close of the old year was celebrated with a solemn evening service in St. James's Pro-Cathedral, on Jay Street.

Watch night services were held at the Hanson Place Baptist Church, the Baptist Temple, and many other Brooklyn churches.

New Year's Eve entertainments were held at the Union League, Hamilton, Aurora Grata, Cortelyou, Midwood, Montauk, Norombega, and Stuyvesant Heights Republican Clubs.

Fig. 8.2 Church bell programmes from New York, New Year 1898–1899. *New York Times*, 1 January 1899. Public domain.

All these programmes indicate that the vast majority of tunes played were among the most popular songs of the day: *Robin Adair*, for example, had been popular since the early nineteenth century. Also noteworthy is the inclusion of airs from Verdi and Handel, and one or two songs which may seem incongruous in this context (such as *Rule Britannia*: good tunes tend to be used despite the national tendencies of their words). That *Auld Lang Syne* appeared on these programmes is therefore not surprising. The prevalence of religious tunes after midnight may be explained by the fact that in 1899, New Year's Day fell on a Sunday.

The lack of any emphasis on *Auld Lang Syne* in 1898–1899 is all the more interesting considering that it had played a central role in the festivities the previous year. These were particularly special since, on the stroke of New Year, the new city of Greater New York was born. At the conclusion of a series of elaborate processions and celebrations, detailed in the *New York Times* the day before,

> The united bands will play dance music until the hour of midnight, when they will accompany the voices of the singing societies with "Auld Lang Syne." As the words of the song announce the departure of the old year, the new flag of the city will be hoisted and a salute of 100 guns given.[45]

The same paper goes on to give the programme for Grace Church—*Auld Lang Syne* is second-last, before *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow*. It is therefore unclear if the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* by the collected forces relates to a New Year tradition as such, or if it was simply seen as appropriate to mark this historic moment. And if anything, the tendency in many of these reports is towards *Home, Sweet Home* as a song of New Year *and* as a song of parting, rather than *Auld Lang Syne*.

There are, however, other reports that suggest that the tradition S_{NY} was practised in some groups and communities. Not all of this evidence is linked to major public events, and much of it comes from other parts of the USA. A report of a party held by a Mr and Mrs Moore on New Year's Eve 1891, published in the *San Antonio Daily Light* (Texas) on 2 January 1892 tells us that "as the clock tolled the hour of 12 the company in one voice sang *Auld Lang Syne* and closed by wishing each other a bright, happy and prosperous New Year." The party had a "phantom" theme, and given that an old Scottish Hogmanay tradition involved children dressing in sheets and going from door to door, it is possible that the hosts were of Scots extraction.[46] At a Scottish party held by Mr and Mrs David Yule (*sic*) in Sandusky on New Year's Eve 1901, those attending sang *A Guid New Year* at midnight; this was followed by coffee, cakes and games, the party singing *Auld Lang Syne* before breaking up.[47]

Other references to the song seem to point more to its existing social functions than to a specific link with New Year. A report in *The Constitution* (Atlanta, Georgia)

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45   *New York Times*, 30 December 1897.
46   This tradition, the origins of the Hallowe'en tradition—Hallowe'en was New Year's Eve in the Celtic year—is still practiced in some parts of north-eastern Scotland.
47   *Sandusky Daily Star*, 2 January 1902.

of 5 January 1895 mentions a New Year's reception held by the Capital City Club, the supper ending with the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*. In Richmond, Indiana on New Year's Eve 1901, the well-known comedian Adelaide Thurston gave a performance, after which she and her company entertained the audience until midnight: then "Miss Thurston recited a New Year's poem to the accompaniment of chimes, wished the audience a happy new year and requested all to rise and sing 'Auld Lang Syne'".[48] In the same year, the report of a party given at Calvary Baptist Church in Waterloo, Iowa says that "The evening was passed in music, readings and New Year's resolutions and at the close of the old year all the company joined in singing 'Auld Lang Syne'".[49] Another report from Iowa implies that the tradition had taken hold there by the first decade of the twentieth century. This is a short story published in *The Tribune* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) on 30 December 1910, which contains the following description of the festivities: "New Year's eve we saw the old year out with a lot of merrymaking, singing 'Auld Lang Syne' hand in hand standing in a circle." The story in question is being recounted by a father to his young children, and recounts an incident before any of the children were born (in fact, it is the story of how their father and mother got together).[50]

Back in New York, the use of *Auld Lang Syne* seemed well established in some contexts, but not others. One of the earliest consistent uses of S_{NY} comes from the annual New Year's ball held by the Tuxedo Club. The Tuxedo Club was part of an exclusive country retreat to the north-west of New York City; founded in 1886, it has been described as a reaction of the old established New York rich to the influx of "new money" following the Civil War.[51] This is certainly reflected in their manner of using *Auld Lang Syne*, which would not have been out of place fifty or more years earlier. According to a report of their New Year's Eve Ball in New York, 1901, "all joined hands in the centre of the ballroom, the punch bowl was brought in, and all sang 'Auld Lang Syne', drinking the new year in."[52] In 1902, the same thing happened:

> At midnight, after two hours of dancing, the annual custom was observed. Before the stroke of 12 a punch bowl and many trumpets were brought in, and as the clock struck all joined hands in the centre of the ballroom and joined in singing "Auld Lang Syne". Then they blew their trumpets, and from the stage dropped an emblem inscribed "Happy New Year. 1903." Supper was served in the dining room at 1 o'clock.[53]

There are further reports in this style from 1903, 1913–1914 (subheading reads "Dancers Join Hands Around Big Punch Bowl and Sing 'Auld Lang Syne'") and 1914–1915

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48   *The Mansfield News*, Mansfield, Ohio, 2 January 1902.
49   *Waterloo Daily Times/Tribune*, 2 January 1902.
50   John C. Gassoway, "A New Year House Party. The Trick That Resulted in a Wedding", *The Tribune* 8/6 (30 December 1910).
51   For a brief history, see Kintrea 1978.
52   *New York Times*, 1 January 1902.
53   *New York Times*, 1 January 1903.

(again, the subheading refers to the tradition: "Sing 'Auld Lang Syne' at Midnight, Before Punch Bowl, in Tuxedo Club").[54]

Another group that traditionally sang the song at midnight was the Author's Club. A report from their festivities for New Year 1909–1910, states that

> As the big clock began striking midnight the lights were lowered and the members, on the last stroke of the chimes, toasted the new year and sang "Auld Lang Syne," a custom which has obtained [at] the Author's Club for twenty year.[55]

(The tradition of lowering the lights was followed by many hotels as well.) Again, the implication is that the custom was either still not general, or only recently developed elsewhere. The reports of other celebrations in the city that night describe the oftentimes theatrical arrangements made to mark the occasion, but none mention the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*.[56] The link between the song and taking refreshments, so ceremonially done at the Tuxedo Club, is probably not irrelevant: more than two decades later, in the film *Klondike Annie* (1936) starring Mae West, the band also plays and sings *Auld Lang Syne* when refreshments are served at the rather unconventional religious reform meeting West's character has managed to organise at a settlement in Alaska.[57]

S_{NY} seems also to have become established tradition at certain of the hotels that staged elaborate New Year's celebrations: reports from the St Regis hotel in particular refer to *Auld Lang Syne* being sung there at midnight each New Year from 1911–1912 to 1913–1914. And given the prestige of some of the events listed, it is safe to presume that the tradition found other followers as well, much as fraternal organizations organize many of their rituals on the model of other fraternities. There are certainly occasional references to other celebrations and clubs using the tradition, though perhaps not as consistently as the examples just cited.[58]

Despite the publicity given to these celebrations, many of which were attended by several hundred people, they are only one side of the story, and of particular interest must be how a consolidated tradition could arise. Here it is important to look again at the major public celebrations. In 1904–1905, the *New York Times* moved into its new building on what then became Times Square. This was the first year to witness the now legendary New Year tradition of a Waterford crystal ball dropping from the top of the Times building. Although Times Square clearly attracted large crowds, the reports testify that people continued to gather at other places as well, including at the older, traditional centre of Trinity. Around the second decade of the century, *Auld Lang Syne* appears more consistently at the end of the programmes played on the bells of Trinity

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54   *New York Times*, 1 January 1915.
55   *New York Times*, 1 January 1910.
56   *New York Times*, 1 January 1910.
57   Dir. by Raoul Walsh (1936).
58   For example, in 1911–1912 at the Hotel Plaza; in 1912–1913, at celebrations held at Webster Hall, sung by Madame Nordica; and in 1913–1914 at the celebration held by the Atlantic Yacht Club. See various articles in the *New York Times*, 1911–1914.

and other churches, but the end of these programmes did not necessarily coincide with midnight itself.

Other changes were afoot, however. In 1912, in an attempt to overcome the rowdyness that had become associated with New Year's Eve, the photographer and reformer Jacob Riis and twelve other citizens announced plans for what the *New York Times* called a "safe and sane" celebration:

> Singers from various societies are to give concerts in Herald Square, Madison Square and City Hall Park, and the Salvation Army will give a concert in Union Square. There are to be band concerts at all these places, and as near midnight as possible the buglers are to sound "taps" as a signal for the audience to join in the singing of "America". The programme of singing will be "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Guide Me, Thou Great Jehovah," "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Nearer, My God to Thee," and "Auld Lang Syne".[59]

Auld Lang Syne is the only one of the songs not to refer in some way to religion, but is placed at the end of the programme rather than at the more significant point (in this case at least) of midnight. The wider background to this event, and the trend it represented, becomes clearer when we look at reports of the following year. In 1913–1914, the *New York Times* sensed something of a new epoch in the way New Year was celebrated, partly because the police were now adept at arresting pedlars selling tin horns and buzzers. As a result, "There was a marked absence of rowdyism, and the confiscation by the police of New Year's Eve instruments of torture prevented the hundreds of squabbles and the scores of small riots that usually mark a New Year's Eve".[60] At Times Square,

> It may be said of the crowd that, at this moment, though their means of making themselves heard were comparatively slender, they made wonderful use of the material at their command. Considering that there were ten times as many human voices as tin horns in the midnight racket, it was a fine effort. Those who heard it generally came to the opinion that New York has not yet advanced to the point where chimes and carols were prized by a New Year's crowd like plain noise on a large scale.[61]

This may explain why previous celebrations at Times Square do not mention the crowd singing—clearly, the point was to make a very different kind of noise. Simultaneously, though, we see the development of a different attitude to policing (literally) and leading the New Year's celebrations, with more emphasis on singing and less on squawking. This year again saw a programme of music being organized at Madison Square Gardens, starting with a band and proceeding to vocal music: the words of the songs were projected on lantern slides, and almost four thousand singers from various choirs and choral societies took part. At the stroke of midnight, *America* was

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59   *New York Times*, 24 December 1912.
60   *New York Times*, 1 January 1914.
61   *New York Times*, 1 January 1914.

sung; the same practice was followed at an open-air concert held in front of Borough Hall in Brooklyn, the report of which mentions many songs but not *Auld Lang Syne*. Meanwhile, the bell-ringing at Trinity ended again with *Auld Lang Syne*, and the song was again sung at midnight at the party held in the St Regis hotel.

Taken together, these reports indicate that the tradition S_{NY} was established in some localities and in some group contexts by the late nineteenth century, and, increasingly, in the early twentieth century. Yet the song by no means had the kind of exclusive relationship with the celebration that it would begin to enjoy only a few decades later. How the tradition finally gelled is a more international story, again featuring bells, and now also featuring broadcasting.

8.4 Traditions Come Together

> And suddenly it was the New Year, the dancing stopped and folk all shook hands, coming to shake Chris and Ewan's; and Long Rob struck up the sugary surge of *Auld Lang Syne* and they all joined hands and stood in a circle to sing it, and Chris thought of Will far over the seas in Argentine, under the hot night there.[62]

In 1907, the songwriters Henry E. Pether and Fred W. Leigh published a song called *For Auld Lang Syne, Or, My Home Is Far Away*, one of many newer songs to refer to *Auld Lang Syne*, but possibly the first to explicitly relate this to New Year.[63] The song was recorded by Robert Carr for Edison Records around the same time it was published.[64] It tells the story of a man sitting at a camp-fire on New Year's Eve; his thoughts, as expressed in the second verse, are as follows:

> "I see them", he murmurs, "the friends old and dear,
> The good friends I left long ago;
> Tonight they will think of me, lonely, out here,
> And warmer their true hearts will glow.
> And now they are singing the time-honour'd song.
> And clasping their hands as they sing;
> While, rising and falling, I hear the ding-dong
> Of the bells as their welcome they ring."[65]

After the third verse, the first verse and chorus of *Auld Lang Syne* are introduced, with the piano accompaniment mimicking the sound of bells; in the recording, an actual carillon is used to chime M2 before the song's finale.

This song's content suggests that the tradition S_{NY} was well established by this point. Further indications of its spread are found in the Jamaican newspaper *The Gleaner* in

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62 From *Sunset Song* by Lewis Grassic Gibbon. This part of the story is set on the eve of World War I. Gibbon 1986 (1932).
63 See Chapter 10, below, for a fuller discussion of this phenomena.
64 Recording available at https://archive.org/details/ForAuldLangSyneByRobertCarr
65 Pether & Lee 1907.

1902: several issues from December that year hold advertisements for a set of New Year cards called "Auld Lang Syne", probably directed at the island's sizeable Scottish community. A further report comes from Winnipeg, suggesting that the tradition was established there no later than the first years of the twentieth century; immigrants to Canada in this period were overwhelmingly British, and the country had attracted many Scots:

> As the old year departed and the new year marked another epoch in the advancement of the world many in Winnipeg were awake and the advent of 1907 was hailed joyfully in many ways. At the fire halls the year was rung out on the stroke of midnight, at many a social gathering healths were pledged, and in the workshops and offices that are busy during the night hours hands were clasped and greetings exchanged. The streets were alive with people and as the big clock in the city hall chimed out the fleeting moments of the old year there was a solemn stillness. Somewhere in the distance a dog howled and then with one accord the whistles of the railway shops and factories of the city started to salute the new born year.
>
> Music came over the night air and the strains of "Auld Lang Syne" could be heard in many parts of the city. The streets were full of noise and as society had made a night of it, there were many out to be reminded by the shrill whistles that according to the calendar the world was a year older and they stopped on the sidewalk and shook hands, uttering wishes for another prosperous year.[66]

With so many communities over such a wide area now recognising the practice of singing *Auld Lang Syne* at New Year, the mould would seem to be set. World War I may have dampened the tradition and its exchange, or provided new channels for it to spread—it is difficult to tell. In the period after the War, however, a new element enters the mix, as witness this report from Trinity Church in New York from 1923. While people inside the church listened to a sermon condemning the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, people outside were gearing up to listen to the traditional programme of bell-ringing; and this year, those people may have been very far away indeed:

> Through transmitters arranged in the steeple and mechanism installed in the crypt the New Year's carols were carried to the American Telephone and Telegraph Company Building in Broadway, and from there broadcast from the high-power wireless on the roof.
>
> Walter A. Clarke, the chimer, began to play the bells at 11:45 o'clock, and he continued until 12:15, swinging from one air to another. First, he played "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Then came the solemn tones of "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almight [*sic*]." In succession there followed "Lead, Kindly Light," "O Come All Ye Faithful," "America," "Old Kentucky Home," "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton," "We Three Kings of Orient Are," "Auld Lang Syne" and last, "Home Sweet Home".[67]

The programme for the event printed the week before, however, stated that the last song would be *Auld Lang Syne*, with *Home, Sweet Home* beforehand; the same was

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66   *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 January 1907.
67   *New York Times*, 1 January 1923.

programmed to happen at Grace Church. The bells of St Patrick's Church were also broadcast: its programme placed *Auld Lang Syne* second, and the mostly religious songs ended with *The Star-Spangled Banner*.[68]

Radio broadcasts from the New York churches were probably not as significant for the spread of the tradition as the broadcasting of another bell. On the same New Year's Eve, 1923, Big Ben was broadcast all over Britain to announce the New Year. A report in the *New York Times* of the events in London mentions that "A crowd of 10,000 gathered around St. Paul's Cathedral, where Scottish sings [*sic*!] were sung, in accordance with custom, to the strains of bagpipes." Continuing to describe how all the best hotels had put on special dinners, the report concludes that "Everywhere there was dancing and singing of 'Auld Lang Syne,' and the diners cheered one another and laughed as if there was no such thing as a Labor [*sic*] Government in sight and big income taxes waiting to be paid."[69] By the end of the 1920s, a special New Year's message to the Empire was broadcast around the world by radio, and there were reports that Britons abroad were often timing their own celebrations to coincide with this.[70] In 1930, the *New York Times* reports that both Big Ben's chime and the chimes of Southwark Cathedral were broadcast by American stations working together with the BBC, and the chimes were followed by the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*. Though weather conditions meant that only Big Ben itself could be heard properly, the message would nevertheless have been clear enough. Perhaps, however, New York had already and finally succumbed to the tradition S_{NY}. In 1929—the year when Guy Lombardo started his soon infamous New Year gig—the main focus of the celebrations was Times Square. The crystal ball dropped as ever; simultaneously, the electric bulletin running along the Times Building carried a New Year's greeting from the staff of the newspaper, preceded by a line from *Auld Lang Syne*.[71]

<div align="center">***</div>

I break the search off at this point because the critical moment has clearly been passed and the critical point made. There can be no doubt that the advent of broadcasting and recording played a role in finally establishing the tradition of singing *Auld Lang Syne* at New Year. It built, though, on a practice which was already firmly established in many communities, quite possibly beginning in the Scottish diaspora, but reiterated through adoption by a number of other groups and communities, including ones with a high level of prestige. The many implied and inherited significances of the song up to that point seem to have fed into this new tradition: as the most famous Scottish song, but also a song that strengthens awareness of connections back to Scotland; as a song about the passing of time, and about raising a glass to friendships that have stood the test of time.

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68   *New York Times*, 23 December 1923.
69   *New York Times*, 1 January 1924.
70   *New York Times*, 1 January 1928.
71   *New York Times*, 1 January 1929.

The more centralized and publicized a celebration becomes, the more likely that its traditions are to be reproduced de-centrally as well, not only because of the numbers of people involved at major, central celebrations, but because of the kudos that they possess. If broadcasting played a role, it did so by focussing attention: the countless local celebrations would have continued, but more and more may have chosen to tune into the few, centralized broadcasts of the New Year bells, joining in that moment with a larger community perhaps not visible, but certainly real; not merely imagined, but also—at least in part—heard.

What is perhaps most striking is the tenacity of this tradition, and the singularity of the connection, though I disagree with Anne Dhu Shapiro's comment that it is unexplainable.[72] Many songs are associated with Christmas, and there are other songs dealing with New Year, but the connection between New Year and *Auld Lang Syne*, particularly among the people of America, goes beyond any of this. It is this connection that makes Tom Johnson's account of the performance by Avery Jimerson, a Native American of the Seneca people, quoted in the Introduction, so poignant. Indeed, there is something quite special about a tradition and a song so self-explanatory that even musicians whose names we would more normally associate with challenging accepted norms and traditions, with breaking with convention, and with not giving two hoots about popularism, could without any noticeable hint of irony launch into their very own and personal readings of M2 when the clock strikes twelve at their New Year's Eve gigs. The MC at a gig played by Jimi Hendrix and the Band of Gypsys at the Fillmore East on 31 December 1969 read New Year's greetings from the concert's promoter, Bill Graham, while an archive recording of Lombardo's version was played over the sound system; but this was merely the upbeat to Jimi Hendrix's own rendition of the song.[73] Frank Zappa played *Auld Lang Syne* at his New Year's Eve concert at the UCLA Pauley Pavilion in Los Angeles on 31 December 1977—or rather, 1 January 1978.[74] Sun Ra and his Arkestra, playing at the Jazz Center Detroit on 31 December 1980–1 January 1981 sent the crowd wild with their version, which begins with an upbeat hammond organ, proceeds with the brass section, and is overlaid with fragments of spoken text, some hardly distinguishable, but others very clear: "We'll drink a toast to auld lang syne.... HAPPY NEW YEAR!"[75]

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72   Shapiro 1990.

73   *Jimi Hendrix/Band of Gypsies Live at the Fillmore East*, Universal MCA/MCD 11931 (1999).

74   Source: bootleg recording held by British Library, call no. 1LP0048577

75   Source: bootleg recording held by British Library, call no. C833/4.

9. Take Leave, Brothers: The German Reception of *Auld Lang Syne*

His best poems are no less loved and quoted in England for being written in a southern Scottish dialect. For generations to come, his "Auld Lang Syne" [...] will sound as the song of friendship and joy, and his "Is there for honest poverty", so well conveyed in German by our own Freiligrath, will sound like a Marseillaise of spiritual freedom and love for humankind.[1]

I first heard "Nehmt Abschied Brüder Ungewi[ß]" when I was a small boy and in my imagination it became a German traditional folksong. Then I realised it's not.[2]

In the first of two chapters which lay a stronger focus on the reception of *Auld Lang Syne* beyond Britain and North America, Germany will be used as a case study.[3] Though Germany was primarily chosen for practical and logistical reasons—I speak German, and lived in Germany during the research for this book—this example brings many of the factors already discussed into further focus. In Chapter 1, it was argued that to understand *Auld Lang Syne* we must regard it as a phenomenon whose constituent elements may at any one time and place demonstrate only a tenuous link to one another. Many of the German versions of the song discussed in this chapter show how, as a song of parting, *Auld Lang Syne* developed a life of its own, at one step removed from the text published in the 1790s, and yet repeatedly referring back to this and its legacy.

9.1 The Art Composer's Song

Scottish poetry, song and literature had an enormous influence on the Romantic movement in Germany—a subject too immense and too fascinating to be discussed at

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1 "Die besten seiner Gedichte, obgleich in einem südschottischen Dialecte, sind darum in England nicht minder beliebt und sprüchwortlich. Wie viele Generationen noch wird sein Auld Lang Syne, ''S ist lange her, mein Freund' klingen wie das Lied der Freundschaft und Freude und sein 'Ein armer Mann, ein Ehrenmann', von unserm Freiligrath so schön nachgedichtet, wie eine Marseilleise der geistigen Freiheit und Menschenliebe." Silbergleit 1869, 8.

2 The musician Bros II, introducing his *Abschied Brüder* (*Happy Little Auld Lang Syne*) on the compilation *Auld Lang Syne* produced by Comfort Stand Recordings (www.comfortstand.com); see Chapter 12, below, for more on this compilation. *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, discussed further below, is one of the most well-known German versions of the song.

3 The latter part of the chapter focuses on developments in West Germany.

length here.[4] Aided in no small part by the cult of Ossian, the ancient Gaelic bard whose texts were supposedly published in an English "translation" by James Macpherson in the later 18th century, Scotland came to be revered as representing one of the most ancient and noble cultures in Europe. The spirit of Ossian, many presumed, lived on in contemporary Scots, who were taken to be of solid, unsentimental stock, with firm and unchanging moral values. The influence of this view was only strengthened by the contributions made by other Scottish writers, particularly Scott, and of course Burns.[5]

The first German translations of Burns come only a year or so after the publication of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* in 1786; and at an early stage, the works of Burns, and other Scots songs, found their way into the hands of some of the most influential German writers and thinkers.[6] The philosopher and man of letters Johann Gottfried Herder, who is credited with coining the term *Volkslied* or folksong, owned volumes 1–3 of the *Scots Musical Museum* and also made a translation of *John Anderson My Jo*, possibly without realising it was by Burns. He may have become familiar with Burns through his friendship with the Ossian promoter James MacDonald, who in turn was friendly—over-friendly, gossips said—with Emilie von Berlepsch: she had included a large section on Burns in an account of her travels in Scotland, published 1802–1804.[7] A greater influence on the reception of Burns in Germany was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. His interest in Burns was probably due in part to the efforts of another Scottish writer, Thomas Carlyle, who introduced the great German man of letters to his work. Goethe was an enthusiastic supporter of translations of Burns, which however—with the exception of a few isolated translations from the late eighteenth-century onwards— only started appearing consistently after Goethe's death.[8] The cultural exchange went both ways: Carlyle translated Goethe and Friedrich Schiller into English; and as we have already seen, George Thomson's publishing efforts demonstrated a Scots enthusiasm for continental art music, and Austro-German composers in particular.

The arrangements of Scots songs made for Thomson and other publishers by composers of the standing of Joseph Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven may seem an obvious route for the dissemination of Scots song in continental Europe. Regrettably, the general disregard of these arrangements in academic discussions makes it difficult to establish whether they had any real impact on musical life. A broader analysis of their reception goes far beyond the remit of this study. In the specific case of *Auld Lang Syne*, the impact does not seem to have been significant. Beethoven appears not to have thought particularly highly of his own setting of *Auld Lang Syne*: though he pushed for continental publication of many of his other settings, which appeared as the *25 Scottish Songs*, op. 108, *Auld Lang Syne* was not among them: it first appeared in a set of

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4   On music and song specifically, see, e.g., Fiske 1983; Gelbart 2007.
5   On the impact of Ossian on European composition in the nineteenth century, see, e.g., Fiske 1983, Daverio 1998, Gelbart 2007.
6   Kupper 1979, to whom I am indebted for much of the background for this section.
7   Gillies 1960.
8   Kupper 1979, Chapter 1.

songs drawn from his *Select Collection* that Thomson published in the 1820s, and then in vol. VI of the *Select Collection*—now named *The Melodies of Scotland*—in 1841 (where he claimed, in fact, that this was its first publication).[9] Thomson commissioned the setting in a letter written on June 22 1818, in which the songs are listed with reference to their previous publication in other volumes of the *Select Collection*. When publishing the airs for a second time, however, Thomson generally set them together with a new set of lyrics, and of the eight songs in this letter, only two were published to the same texts, *Auld Lang Syne* and *Duncan Gray*.[10] Thomson appears to have sent Beethoven French versions of the originally intended texts, and he certainly summarised their content. *Auld Lang Syne* is described as follows: "Un recontre des amis après plusieurs années de separation, se rapelant avec delices le passetemps innocens de leur jeunesse" (Cooper's translation: "A meeting of friends after several years of separation, recalling with delight the innocent pastimes of their youth.")[11]

Neither Beethoven's setting, nor Haydn's for William Whyte, nor indeed that by Leopold Koželuch originally published by Thomson, are particularly elaborate. All three composers provide an eight-bar introduction: Koželuch and Beethoven state the tune's opening in these introductory symphonies, Haydn presents a delicate variation on it. Haydn's version is the only one of the three for solo voice throughout—Koželuch's chorus is written for two voices—and while Koželuch and Beethoven both give the tempo marking *Allegretto*, Haydn prefers a statelier *Andante*. Beethoven's setting, which is in F major, has one melodic variation: at the start of the second line of the chorus, the melody descends via a brief B flat, rather than jumping from C to A. Barry Cooper concludes that he probably misread Thomson's handwriting; Thomson changed the "wrong" note B flat back into a C and had to change the harmony accordingly; likewise, he changes the first E in the preceding bar's third voice to a D. Figure 9.1 shows these changes and also flags examples of how Thomson altered the rhythm at some points, too: the simplification of the piano part at the end of this example demonstrates Thomson's terror of the little black notes, as mentioned in Chapter 4. The Beethoven *Gesamtausgabe* of 1862–1865 included the setting of *Auld Lang Syne* complete with the B flat.[12]

Though the arrangements commissioned by Thomson, Whyte, and others do not seem to have made a great dent on the German musical market, other channels for distributing Burns's song, at least in text form, proved more successful. From the 1840s, Goethe's new-found enthusiasm for Burns found echo in a series of German translations. In his study of these, Hans Jürg Kupper has drawn attention to two aspects

9   McCue (ed.) 2021, xciv; Thomson 1841, note above song 300.

10   For example, in the same letter Thomson also asked Beethoven to arrange *Now Spring Had Clad*—in other words, the Burns poem he had originally published to the tune M1. The tune he indicated was not however M1, but a version of "Ye're welcome Charlie Stuart", and was in any case published to a completely different text, *Polly Stewart*. See Cooper 1994.

11   Cooper 1994, 79.

12   Beethoven 1862, 29.

Beethoven's original (according to the *Gesamtausgabe* of 1862):

Thomson's adaptation as published in 1841:

Fig. 9.1 Comparison of Beethoven's setting as published in the *Gesamtausgabe* in 1862 with the version published by Thomson in 1841. Main differences are highlighted with boxes; arrows point to melodic/harmonic differences specifically. Figure created by author (2021).

of this craze: firstly, the non-lyric poems and satires received much less attention from translators than the songs; and secondly, although interest in Burns peaked around the centenary celebrations of 1896, it diminished rapidly thereafter. In a pattern which is echoed in other countries as well, Burns's works inspired interest by sheer dint of being Scottish, but also because of his democratic reputation—this was, after all, the era of European revolution—and because he dared to write in a language which was considered a dialect. The many editions of Burns's works which appeared between the

1840s and the century's close included several which use Low German to approximate to Scots dialect, and also some Swiss-German translations. Most of the translators include *Auld Lang Syne* in their collections, though none of those that I have seen—the vast majority—give it any degree of prominence.

For means of comparison, Appendix 4 contains eight different German translations of *Auld Lang Syne* from the nineteenth century, including one Low German version. All stay close to the content and, generally, structure of Burns's text, but many could not be sung to any of the common tunes for *Auld Lang Syne*. These "songs" were, in any case, intended for readers rather than singers. None of the nineteenth-century editions consulted include music, and only Wilhelm Gerhard's edition gives a list of the tunes, noting that these are "known throughout Scotland and England, and available there both individually and in complete collections". He also suggests, however, that "It is possible, indeed even desirable, that composers could create new compositions in order to make the songs present here suitable (*mundrecht*) for German singers".[13]

This is exactly what Robert Schumann did. Only a few years after Beethoven's arrangement was first published, and at the height of the democratic movement in Germany which included Burns among its heroes, he published a choral setting of Burns's text. Nowadays, Schumann is known primarily for his solo songs with piano, his solo piano music, and his symphonies, but he wrote around seventy pieces for choir which, in terms of later critical reception, have fared almost as badly as Beethoven and Haydn's folksong settings. This is in stark contrast to the popularity of these works at the time: *Der deutsche Rhein* (1840) for solo voice and piano with a part for choir, for example, was Schumann's most frequently published work in his own life-time.[14] Schumann scholars often regard these pieces as marking a general change in the aesthetic direction of Schumann's work, relating to events preceding and following the failed German revolution of 1848.[15]

Schumann's *Five Songs by Robert Burns* for mixed choir, op. 55, were written in 1846 for the Leipziger Liederkranz, an amateur singing association that developed out of another, the Leipziger Liedertafel, which had counted Schumann's good friend Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy among its members. Schumann based his settings on Gerhard's translations, which were among the first to be published; Schumann and Gerhard were also personally acquainted. Aside from *Auld Lang Syne*, which appears as the fourth song in the set, op. 55 sets *Highland Lassie O* (K107), *Address To The Tooth-Ache* (K500), *I'll Ay Ca' In By Yon Town* (K574), and *Highland Laddie* (K578).[16] Like much of Schumann's choral writing, these songs have received little attention in the critical literature on Schumann, partly due to an only recently contested view that they

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13 "Es ist möglich, ja wünschenswerth, daß Tonkünstler vorstehende Lieder durch neue Compositionen deutschen Sängern mundrecht machen", Gerhard 1840, 367.

14 Synofzik 2006, 458.

15 See, e.g., Mahlert 1983.

16 The corresponding German titles in Gerhard's translation are *Das Hochlandmädchen*, *Zahnweh*, *Mich zieht es nach dem Dörfchen hin*, and *Hochlandbursch*.

are merely "functional" compositions.[17] The delicate, melancholy setting of *Die gute alte Zeit*, however, offers us an interpretation of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* at a tangent to the mainstream of the song and its reception, since the music bears no relation to either M1 or M2.

Whether or not Schumann was aware of these other tunes, he was certainly aware of other settings of Burns's songs which had been published in the preceding years. According to a review attributed to Schumann of H. F. Kufferath's *Sechs Lieder von Robert Burns* op. 3, published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1842,

> Burns is the favourite poet of today's young composer. The poetical "ploughman of Dumfries" most probably never presumed that his songs, to which he was mostly inspired by old folk melodies, would almost a hundred years later inspire so many other melodies, including on the other side of the Channel.[18]

A month later, in the same periodical, there is a review of another set of compositions on songs by Burns, Henry Hugh Pearson's *Six Songs by Robert Burns*, op. 7. Here, the reviewer complains that Pearson has been slightly over-enthusiastic in his treatment of the songs: "there are too many notes for the simple words". He continues:

> Burns's songs, for the most part, disavow from the outset the more expansive type of treatment apparent in composition; although these are the outpourings of a true poetic spirit, they are always straightforward, short and succinct; this is why composers love them so much, this is why his words seem to marry themselves so effortlessly to song, most naturally in that form which comes closest to true folksong.[19]

Pearson's settings, however, he finds too dramatic for this purpose, although some of them do reflect "a certain something, a strong sense of nobility of the sort we are acquainted with from so many of his countrymen [...] Weeping and wailing is not the way of our Englishman; he produces more striking melodies than one normally finds in German songbooks, and this is what we find so worthwhile here".[20] The review of Schumann's own op. 55 by A. F. Riccius which also appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* focuses on exactly those qualities which Pearson apparently lacked:

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17 Synofzik 2006 discusses this issue in more detail.

18 "Burns ist der Lieblingsdichter der jetzigen jungen Componisten. Gewiß hat der poetische 'Pflüger von Dumfries' es nie vermuthet, daß seine Lieder, zu denen er meistens durch alte Volks-Melodien angeregt wurde, nach beinahe hundert Jahren so viele andere Weisen erwecken würden, auch jenseits des Canals". Anon. [Schumann?] 1842, 207.

19 "[...]es sind zu viel Noten zu den einfachen Worten. [...] Die Burns'schen Gedichte lehnen vornherein, zum größten Theile wenigstens, jene breitere Form der Behandlung ab, wie sie in der Composition ersichtlich ist; es sind wohl Ergüsse einer wahrhaften Dichterstimmung, aber immer schlicht, kurz und bündig; darum lieben ihn die Componisten auch so sehr, darum fügen sich seine Worte wie von selbst zum Liede, und am natürlichsten in jene Form, wie sie dem wirklichen Volksliede eigen ist." Anon. 1842, 33.

20 "[...] ein charackteristisches Etwas, eine kräftige edelmännische Gesinnung, wie wir sie an so vielen seiner Landesleute zu finden gewohnt sind. [...] Schluchzen und Weinen ist die Sache unsers Engländers nicht; er giebt märkigere Melodieen [*sic*] als man sie gemeinhin in deutschen Liederheften findet, und dies macht ihn uns werth." Anon. 1842, 33.

Just as Burns effortlessly pours his thoughts straight into our hearts, just as he keeps a distance from verbal braggartism and lofty analogies and instead moves us with true, unadorned feeling, so the composer here also endeavours to free himself from the chains of all that is superficial and artificial. He gives us simple melodies, as free of ornament as are the words they support. Contrapuntal and harmonic artistry and punctiliousness are nowhere to be found. There is even less trace of the texts being spun out into a repulsive torrent of words: we hear the words as the poet gave them, and so it should be, for no-one has the right to distort the intellectual products of another in a manner that runs counter to their meaning.[21]

More interesting from the point of view of the history of Burns's songs in Germany are the comments the reviewer makes regarding the songs actually set:

When I read the poet's name on the title page, I was afraid I was going to encounter old acquaintances [*alte Bekannte*] among the texts, for though Burns left us with a relatively large number of songs, our German composers have bestowed their attentions on only a few of them. I was delighted to find, then, that I had been wrong [...] When it comes to the suitability of the texts for use by a choir, it took quite a long time before I could warm to all of them. As regards the first, "Das Hochlandmädchen", and the third, "Mich zieht es nach dem Dörfchen hin", I still have my doubts: they are to be regarded as the outpourings of an individual soul, and thus, were we to be true to the poetic content, should only ever be set as solo songs. Nevertheless, both these songs will quickly win everyone's heart: the folk-like style that permeates them make them the most compelling and understandable of the whole collection.[22]

Schumann's setting of *Die alte gute Zeit* was written on the evening of 4 February 1846.[23] It has been suggested that the strictly homophonic style and the regular alteration to triple time are Schumann's attempts to "historicize" the music:[24] the homophony may, however, also be explained by the fact that these songs were written for a choir

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21 "Wie Burns seine Gedanken einfach uns in das Herz gießt, wie er fern von aller Prahlerei in Worten und hochtrabenden Gleichnissen uns mit wahren, ungeschminkten Empfindungen rührt, so sucht auch hier der Componist sich von den Fesseln aller äüßeren, künstlichen Mittel zu befreien. Er giebt uns einfache Melodien, eben so schmucklos als die Worte, denen sie zur Unterlage dienen. Von contrapunctischen und harmonischen Kunststückchen und Spitzfindigkeiten findet sich nicht die leiseste Ahnung. Noch weniger sind die Texte zu einem widerlich langen Wortschwalle ausgedehnt: wir hören die Worte wie sie der Dichter gab, und so sollte es immer geschehen, denn es steht Niemand das Recht zu, geistige Produkte Anderer auf sinnwidrige Weise zu entstellen." Riccius 1847, 159.

22 "Als ich auf dem Titel den Namen des Dichters las, fürchtete ich, in den Texten alte Bekannte zu finden, denn ob auch Burns eine ziemlich große Anzahl Lieder hinterlassen, so haben doch unsere deutschen Componisten nur wenigen derselben Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Ich sah mich jedoch zu meiner großen Befriedigung in dieser Meinung getäuscht [...] Was die Wahl der Texte bezüglich ihrer Anwendung für den Chor betrifft, so bedurfte es längerer Zeit, ehe ich mich mit allen zu befreunden vermochte. Über das erste: 'Das Hochlandmädchen', und das dritte: 'Mich zieht es nach dem Dörfchen hin', hege ich noch meine bescheidenen Zweifel: sie sind als Seelenerguß eines Einzelnen zu betrachten, und so dürfte ihnen, liegt uns daran, poetisch Wahres zu geben, nur der Einzelgesang zu gestatten sein. Aber dennoch wird diese beiden Lieder Jeder recht bald liebgewinnen: sie sind durch das ächt [*sic*] Volksthümliche, was sie durchweht, die eindringlichtsten und faßlichsten der ganzen Sammlung". Riccius 1847, 159.

23 Schumann 1982, 413.

24 Synofzik 2006, 465.

which included amateurs. Gerhard's translation misses out the second verse (in the order of K240), resulting in a four-verse structure, the first three of which deal with reminiscence, while only the last focuses on the actual reunion of the two friends.[25] Schumann's setting reflects this: the first three verses and chorus are set identically, aside from a few rhythmic alterations following the textual stress (the setting is mostly syllabic). Each verse is sung by a quartet of four soloists, with the refrain taken up by the whole chorus. According to the reviewer already cited, it is

> an amiable, heart-warming poem: the composition fully does it justice. The melancholy that always accompanies the remembrance of things past, grips us and moves us to the brink of tears: but we pull ourselves together: the old days were good, and so they live on in our charged glasses! This song is difficult to perform, due to the frequent changes of tempo (C to 3/2); at the same time, the performance demands the most precise of nuances.[26]

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Schumann's rendering of *Auld Lang Syne* is its reflective mood. Though the chorus's reference to a Germanic "cup of kindness" is suitably rambunctious, this only serves to contrast with the tone of the rest, and in particular with the verses, each line of which seems to end with what the Germans would call a moment's "Innehalten", or pause for reflection. In this sense, the interpretations of *Auld Lang Syne* that come closest to Schumann's are those from the later twentieth century that will be discussed in Chapter 12.

9.2 Active and Passive Reception

It is highly unlikely that *Auld Lang Syne* or elements thereof was not known in Germany by the later nineteenth century; tracing the extent of knowledge of the song is, however, very difficult. Gerhard termed it "der so beliebt gewordene Sang" ("that now so well-loved song") but this statement could well have been plucked from his Scottish sources rather than reflecting the degree of popularity of the song in Germany at the time.[27] Though a later editor and translator, Wilhelmine Prinzhorn, noted that "many of [Burns's] creations are now as at home among us [*heimisch geworden*] as our own folksongs and will be sung and sung again for as long as the German tongue prevails",[28] there is very little evidence of *Auld Lang Syne* being among them. It is possible that the tune was known and sung with a different set of words, but I have

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25 Gerhard's translation differs from contemporary translations in other ways as well, in not beginning with a more or less direct translation of "Should auld acquaintance be forgot" but asking—if translated very literally—"Who is not inclined to cast a glance into the past?"

26 "[...] ein gemuthliches herzsinniges Gedicht; die Composition ist vollkommen entsprechend. Die Wehmuth, als stete Begleieterin der Erinnerung an Vergangenes, sie erfaßt uns und netzt das Auge mit Thränen, aber wir ermannen uns: Die alte Zeit war gut, darum lebe sie im vollen Becher! Die Ausführung dieses Gesanges ist durch den öfteren Zeitmaßwechsel (C in 3/2) schwierig; nicht minder verlangt der Vortrag die saubersten Schattierungen." Riccius 1847, 159–160.

27 Gerhard 1840, 361.

28 Prinzhorn 1896, v.

found no direct evidence of this and considerable grounds to suggest that the song, even if known, was not used in German-speaking countries to any great extent. Equally, the text may have been sung to different music. The Scottish Reverend W. Macintosh, who lived in Germany for several years and wrote about the reception of Burns there, commented that, before World War I, it was common in German households "to hear one of the songs of Burns sung, it may be with piano accompaniment by the daughter of the house, the music by Mendelssohn or some other German composer".[29] He does not, however, mention *Auld Lang Syne*, and Schumann's choral setting would preclude it from being used in most domestic contexts.

The comment by L. G. Silbergleit which opened this chapter names two songs which he obviously felt to be the most universal, and universally known, of Burns's creations: *Auld Lang Syne* and *Is There For Honest Poverty*. The latter is commonly known in Germany through Ferdinand von Freiligrath's free translation, *Trotz Alledem*, which became one of the key political songs of the ill-fated 1848 revolution. The success of this song may have linked the name of Burns too closely to radical politics. Another Scots song which shared some degree of popularity in later nineteenth-century Germany was *Robin Adair*, which also became linked to the workers' movement.[30] *Robin Adair* is one of the "Scottish" songs included in some later editions of the elaborate *Musikalischer Hausschatz der Deutschen*, which appeared from 1843. Others include *The Bluebells Of Scotland* (described as the "Scottish national song"; the German title is *Auf deinen Höh'n du mein liebes Vaterland*), *The Lass o' Gowrie*, and one which seems based on an Irish song, *The Rejected Lover*.[31] Neither does *Auld Lang Syne* appear in Carl and Alfons Kissner's *Schottische Lieder aus älterer und neuerer Zeit* (*Scottish Songs Old and New*) of 1874, nor in any other publication I have seen. I have found only one source for it in German songbooks from the first half of the twentieth century, a book of shanties and other English-language songs published in 1938.[32]

The apparently passive reception of *Auld Lang Syne* at this point is perhaps not so surprising, but certainly interesting when compared with the later twentieth century. Before turning to this, then, it makes sense to reflect again on what conditions lie behind the active adoption of a song by a group, or a larger community. Three mechanisms in particular can be important for the *active* adoption rather than merely the distribution or transmission of a song: through connection to a social movement, conflict, uprising, and so on; through attachment to a particular social practice, tradition, or ritual, including in specific groups and networks rather than wider society; and through being absorbed in childhood. The first of these accounts for the continued success of *Trotz Alledem*. With regards to the second mechanism, there are good grounds for saying that there was

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29   Macintosh 1928, 18.

30   I am indebted to Barbara Boock of the *Deutsche Volksliedarchiv* in Freiburg for her informed suggestions on this topic. Lederer 1934 notes that Haydn's arrangement of *Robin Adair* includes a coda which quotes from the German song *Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär'*, reflecting, suggests Lederer, a certain similarity between the two tunes.

31   Based on the 1901 edition: Fink & Tschirch (eds) 1901.

32   Müller-Iserlohn (ed.) 1938.

no need for *Auld Lang Syne*, since there already were a wealth of songs in Germany which fulfilled many of the functions that would be so important for its establishment in English-speaking countries. Again, we can take German Masonic songbooks as an example: these flout names such as Schubert, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart, the latter often presumed to be the composer of the music to *Brüder, reicht die Hand zum Bund* (probably erroneously; the music is now used, with a different text, for the Austrian national anthem). *Brüder, reicht die Hand zum Bund* (*Brothers, Join Your Hands In Union*) is among the most frequent to appear, in later Masonic books particularly, in the section containing "Kettenlieder", i.e. songs specifically relating to the mystic chain or *chaîne d'union*. Another very popular German song, *Wahre Freundschaft soll nicht wanken*, is very similar in sentiment to *Auld Lang Syne*, though the song—which also dates from the eighteenth century—is implicitly a song of parting in the way that *Auld Lang Syne* is not.[33] That *Auld Lang Syne* does not appear in these books is not of itself so significant, given that it rarely appears in nineteenth-century Masonic songbooks published in Britain either. The popular strength of the songs that are included, however, gives some indication of why there was no real need to turn to *Auld Lang Syne*.

The third mechanism—being absorbed in childhood—is of particular relevance in Germany, given its long history of using songs and singing for the moral and personal betterment of children and through them, their communities. Luther's programme of singing in schools helped cement the message of the Reformation,[34] and the educational singing movement of nineteenth-century America which, amongst other things, helped establish the song *America*, was inspired in part by the educational reforms of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi in nineteenth-century Prussia.[35] In Chapter 5, above, we also saw how children's choirs were promoted in the communist youth movement of the 1920s, leading directly to the establishment of the *Propellerlied*. This movement in turn built on youth organizations such as the *Wandervögel*, which promoted singing and music in a context also dedicated, much like the Scouts, to the appreciation of nature and the building of character.

Alongside the pedagogical benefits, these examples also demonstrate a very fine line between education and propaganda. We only tend to perceive something as "propaganda" if we disagree with its message or the intention of those behind it, and the most effective propaganda is that which is subtle enough or targeted enough not to awake these suspicions. The understanding of the social functions of song and singing which pedagogues, reformers, and musicians had developed were certainly exploited

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33   The first verse is as follows:

Wahre Freundschaft soll nicht wanken,	True friendship should not falter
wenn man gleich entfernet ist	just because one is far away
lebet fort noch in Gedanken	it lives on in the thoughts
und der Treue nicht vergisst.	and loyalty is not forgot.

34   Oettinger 2001.
35   Branham & Hartnett 2002, Chapter 2.

in the extensive and sophisticated state propaganda of the Nationalist Socialist state.[36] And when *Auld Lang Syne* does start to appear more consistently in Germany, it does so to fill the vacuum left by songs which, having been used by Nazi propagandists, were for a time at least no longer sung. *Auld Lang Syne* became one of the songs used frequently in the endeavour to promote understanding between nations through the education of the new generation of German citizens. In this process, the three mechanisms just discussed—the link to social crisis and social movements, the attachment to a particular social group or organization, and the link to children and young people—are fulfilled in almost textbook fashion. In addition, we encounter another familiar element as well: the role of fraternal-type organizations, in this case the Scouts.

9.3 The Scout's Song

> Brother Scouts, I ask you to make a solemn choice. Differences exist between the peoples of the world in thought and sentiment, just as they do in language and physique. The war has taught us that if one nation tries to impose its particular will upon others, cruel reaction is bound to follow. The Jamboree has taught us that if we exercise mutual forbearance and give and take, then there is sympathy and harmony. If it be your will, let us go forth from here fully determined that we will develop among ourselves and our boys that comradeship, through the world-wide spirit of the Scout Brotherhood, so that we may help to develop peace and happiness in the world and goodwill among men. Brother Scouts answer me. Will you join in this endeavour?[37]

> A series of Jamborees, and other meetings of Scouts from many countries, showed what a firm link the Scout Law is between boys of all colours, nations and creeds. We can camp together, go hiking together, and enjoy all the fun of outdoor life, and so help to forge a chain of friendship and not of bondage.[38]

The first World Scout Jamboree, held some thirteen years after the movement was founded, took place in London in 1920; represented were Scouts from twenty-one countries. At the end of the meeting, they joined hands and sang *Auld Lang Syne*, to the accompaniment of a Scout band from Denver. Many of the Scouts from other countries would not have been familiar with this tradition. It was quickly adopted, however, and Scouts across the world to this day sing *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of jamborees, camps, and other such events. Through their use of this tradition, their various foreign-language versions of *Auld Lang Syne* have often seeped into the general repertoire of songs in those countries.[39]

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36   See, e.g., Niedhart & Broderick (eds) 1999.
37   Lord Robert Baden-Powell, from the speech given at the end of the first Scout World Jamboree in London, 1920; quoted here from Baden-Powell 1942, 291. I am grateful to Pat Styles of the Scout Association for her speedy response to my bibliographic enquiries.
38   Baden-Powell 1942, 291.
39   M2 is also used for another favourite Scouting song, *We're Here Because We're Here*. This is the full text of the song, simply repeated again, and again, and again. This song was published in 1909, the

Fig. 9.2 Scouts from several nations join hands to sing *Auld Lang Syne* at the first World Jamboree, 1920. Image: The Scouts (UK) Heritage Service, CC BY 4.0.

This is certainly the case for the most well-known French version of the song. The *Choral des Adieux*, or *Ce n'est qu' un au revoir,* was texted by Jacques Sevin, a Catholic priest and one of the founders of French Scouting, around 1920. By the mid 1940s, the French version of the song was common enough outside Scouting to be included in a songbook called *Jeunesse qui chant* (ca. 1946).[40] It was also the direct model for several German versions of the song, including probably the most well-known German version today, *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*.

Scouting played a significant role in the international spread of *Auld Lang Syne* in the twentieth century. Seen in the broader context of the transmission of the song through fraternal-type organizations discussed in Chapter 5, this makes perfect sense. Long before Robert Baden-Powell held the first Scout camp in 1907, *Auld Lang Syne* was a standard song for many such organizations, and also for the military. For an organization that adopted much of the symbolism, discipline and camaraderie of regimental life, and possibly also from Freemasonry, it would have been completely natural to adopt the tradition SΩ.[41] In Germany at least, only those who are wearing the Scout neckerchief—in other words, only those who have taken the Scout's oath—are allowed to cross their arms before joining hands with their neighbours, a symbolic act that reminds us of the ritual of initiation that Scouting

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copyright being held by "Sig. Niederberger". Bib. II/1909. It later became popular among British soldiers during World War I: see Chapter 10 for more details.

40   Bib. II/ca. 1946.

41   One of Baden-Powell's close friends and inspirations for Scouting was Rudyard Kipling, who was a Mason, though Baden-Powell does not seem to have been (the United Grand Lodge of England has no records of Baden-Powell being initiated into any of its affiliated Lodges or any other Lodge); information collated on http://www.pinetreeweb.com/bp-freemason-england.htm, last accessed October 2007 (link no longer active).

shares with many fraternal-type organizations.[42] In many countries, the adoption of *Auld Lang Syne* was closely tied to its use in Scouting, and this is reflected in many foreign-language versions of the song.

Figure 9.3 gives the text of Sevin's French version. The text is more a free translation based on the traditions S∞ and SΩ rather than being based on Burns's text itself. The version of the song sung by Scouts in Spanish-speaking countries is an almost direct translation of the French version, and the version used by Polish scouts—also given in the example for comparison—echoes similar sentiments.[43] Thus, through a process of assimilation into group contexts and transmission through them, a song about the reunion of old friends becomes a song about young people gathering around the campfire, forging new friendships and going their separate ways. (Not surprisingly, the references to a gude-willie-waught or any other kind of drink are gone.) Introduced to the song in their childhood, all the conditions are present for it to be absorbed into their own repertory of songs and thus to migrate into other groups and contexts as well.

Fig. 9.3 Sevin's French version (quoted here from *Jeunesse qui chant*, 1946); variants of the third and fourth verses (quoted from *Passant en Paris*, 1948), are given in brackets; for comparison, the version by Jerzy Litwiniuk sung by Polish scouts.

Faut-il nous quitter sans espoir	*Must we depart without the hope*
sans espoir de retour?	*The hope of ever returning?*
Faut-il nous quitter sans espoir	*Must we depart without the hope*
de nous revoir un jour?	*Of seeing each other one day?*
Refrain:	Refrain:
Ce n'est qu'un au revoir, mes frères	*It's only an au revoir, my brothers*
ce n'est qu'un au revoir	*It's only an au revoir*
Oui, nous nous reverrons mes frères	*Yes, we will see each other again, my brothers*
ce n'est qu'un au revoir.	*It's only an au revoir.*
Formons de nos mains qui s'enlacent	*Let us form, with clasped hands,*
Au déclin de ce jour.	*At the end of this day*
Formons de nos mains qui s'enlacent	*Let us form, with clasped hands,*
Une chaîne d'amour.	*A chain of love.*

Amis, unis par cette douce chaîne [or: *United by this gentle chain* [*or: this chain*]
    cette chaîne]
Tous, en ce même lieu [or: Autour du   *All together, in this one place* [*or: around this*
    même feu]   *one fire*]
Amis, unis par cette douce chaîne [or: *United by this gentle chain* [*or: this chain*]
    cette chaîne]
Ne faisons point d'adieux.   *We are not saying goodbye.*

Car Dieu qui nous voit tous ensemble   *For God, that sees us gathered together*
Et qui va nous bénir   *And who will bless us*
Car Dieu qui nous voit tous ensemble   *For God, that sees us gathered together*
Saura nous réunir   *Will reunite us.*

[*Alternative fourth verse:*   [*Alternative fourth verse:*
Car l'idéal qui nous rassemble   *For the ideal that brought us together*
Vivra dans l'avenir   *Will live on in the future*
Car l'idéal qui nous rassemble   *For the ideal that brought us together*
Saura nous réunir.]   *Will reunite us.*]

Jerzy Litwiniuk, *Ogniska już dogasa blask***; text and translation provided here by**
Alicja Weikop

Ogniska już dogasa blask,   *The glow of the fire is dying*
Braterski splećmy krąg.   *Let's join in a ring of brotherhood*
W wieczornej ciszy w świetle gwiazd   *In the evening silence, in the starlight,*
Ostatni uścisk rąk.   *The last handshake.*

Kto raz przyjaźni poznał moc   *Whoever has ever experienced the friendship's*
                                                     power
Nie będzie trwonił słów.   *Will not waste words*
Przy innym ogniu w inną noc   *We'll meet together again*
Do zobaczenia znów.   *At a different fire on a different night.*

Nie zgaśnie tej przyjaźni żar,   *They will not die, the embers*
Co połączyła nas.   *Of the friendship that connected it*
Nie pozwolimy by ją starł   *We will not let merciless time*
Nieubłagany czas.   *Wipe it out.*

Przed nami jasnych ścieżek moc   *So many bright paths in front of us*
Za nami tyle dróg.   *So many roads behind*
Przy innym ogniu w inną noc   *We'll come together again*
Do zobaczenia już.   *At a different fire, on a different night.*

If *Auld Lang Syne* never seems to have been established in Germany until the 1940s
and thereafter, then perhaps because there was no specific group context in which

this song, rather than any number of German alternatives, could become established. Even the Freemasons, as we have seen, had enough local Masonic heroes to do without Brother Burns. After World War II, however, things had changed, as this comment from the editor of a songbook published in 1949 makes clear:

> The German youth of today want to go rambling again, not marching, they want to see nature, and not the parade ground. They are looking for what is real and true, for a life of their own. They should be able to find this in song, too, and this book, which is the fruit of years of collecting and singing, is intended to help them. It cannot select the same songs as a half century ago, for this is a different time. The same spirit of truth and reality will be sought in it, nonetheless.[44]

The book from which this quotation comes contains a three-verse, trilingual version of *Auld Lang Syne*, and describes its origins as follows: "Tune from a Scottish folksong, French text heard in 1943 from a young French refugee." This is only one of several versions of the song, all based on the French Scouting version, to appear in German songbooks for children and young people in the years immediately after the war. In Germany, this period belonged in many ways to a self-styled "young generation": in the aftermath of the "Third Reich", the young generation of Germans had more cause than most to wish for a clear separation from the deeds of older compatriots, which accounts in many quarters for a sharp historiographical divide in the work and culture of those born from the late 1920s onwards and those born before.[45]

Youth organizations had a long tradition in Germany, and the practices and structure, the symbols, and often the songs and the songmakers associated with them had been transferred wholescale to the Hitler Youth and the *Bund Deutscher Mädels*; the organizations from which these were culled included Scouting, which like other youth movements was first suppressed and then banned outright from the mid-1930s. After the war, the old threads and the old societies were re-established, but the song programme was slightly different: internationalism and friendship between nations was pushed to the fore. A song popular in France, and a Scouting song at that, was an obvious choice. One of the first German post-war sources for *Auld Lang Syne* is a songbook called *Passant par Paris*, a selection of twenty-three French songs also rendered into German.[46] The last song in this book is the *Choral des Adieux*, described in the notes to the song as "Vieux chant écossais adopté par les scouts du monde entier" ("Old Scots song adopted by

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44 "Heute will der deutsche Jugend wieder wandern und nicht mehr marschieren, sie will die Natur sehen und nicht mehr das Aufmarschgelände. Sie sucht nach Echtheit und Wahrheit, nach Eigenleben. Auch im Liede soll sie es finden, und dieses Büchlein, die Frucht jahrzehntelangen Sammelns und Singens, will ihr dabei helfen. Es kann nicht mehr die gleiche Liederwahl sein wie vor einem halben Jahrhundert, denn die Zeit ist eine andere. Aber der gleiche Geist der Wahrheit und Echtheit wird in ihr gesucht." Pollatschek (ed.) 1949, 4.

45 See Grant 2001, Chapter 1.

46 Soutou (ed.) 1948. Another source may have been a songbook produced for the German-speaking Girl Scouts in Switzerland in 1944 (Bib. II/1944). The French text given here is slightly different from other versions.

scouts the world over"). The illustration shows a camp, with the Scouts standing to attention (not, however, joining hands) around the campfire.

The most well-known German version of *Auld Lang Syne* has an even stronger connection to Scouting. *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* was written by Claus Ludwig Laue, who for many years before the war had been an active Scout. At the war's end, he met Hans Riediger in a British prisoner-of-war camp, and the two began writing songs together while they were still prisoners; their most famous song is probably *Das Lautenlied*. Some of their songs were published in *Die große Fahrt*, the magazine of the Deutsche Pfadfinder Sankt Georg, the Catholic Scouting organization in Germany. Songs, with music, were often published in this magazine, though not as often as we might expect given that the editorial for the April 1950 edition, probably written by Laue, specifically bemoans the state of singing amongst Germany's youth. The songs printed included some new compositions, and some from other sources: the edition for June 1950, for example, includes the words and music of *Loch Lomond*, which remains one of the most common Scottish songs in German publications.

A later edition of *Die große Fahrt* tells us that Laue was a journalist, originally from the Saarland region of south-west Germany; the edition prints a photograph of him, from which he can be presumed to have been then in his forties or thereabouts.[47] A frequent contributor to *Die große Fahrt,* Laue was its editor for around two years from September 1950, a post he held on a voluntary basis. In November 1950, *Die große Fahrt* published Laue's version of the French *Choral des adieux*, along with the French text; the music is included, and described as an "old Scottish melody", but there are no further references to the origins of the song (including the originator of the French version) or to its precise use.

A few months before *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* was published, the German Scout Association had finally been accepted as a full member of the international organization; there had, however, been links between the refounded German Scouts and the international movement for several years previously. The then director of the Boy Scouts International Bureau in London, Colonel John S. Wilson, had visited Germany at the start of 1949, carrying the disappointing message that the German Scouts could not at that point become full members of the international organization again, though they were invited to visit the next World Jamboree. The article on Wilson's visit in *Die große Fahrt* makes no secret of how the German Scouts felt at this news: "Please do not disappoint us again—it would break our hearts!" On the occasion of Wilson's visit, the gathering had closed with one of the most well-known German songs, *Kein schöner Land in dieser Zeit*, which proclaims that there is "No land more lovely at this time, as our land here, so far and wide".[48] The article concludes that the song, sung in this context, was "quite a profession of faith".[49]

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47 *Die große Fahrt* III/12 (December 1951).
48 First published in 1840, the song would later become a favourite of the German youth movement in the early twentieth century. See the article on the song in *Liederlexikon* of the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv (http://www.liederlexikon.de/lieder/kein_schoener_land_in_dieser_zeit).
49 *Die große Fahrt*, I/2 (Februar 1949), 18–19.

In the early twentieth century, *Kein schöner Land* had often been used by the *Wandervögel* as an evening song, or a song of parting. Something of its sentiment, and not only its use, reappears in *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, the text of which is reproduced along with two other main post-war versions in Figure 9.4. Although Laue's *Abschiedslied/ Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* was specifically published as a German version of the French Scouting song, it is not a direct translation of it. Many Scout versions of *Auld Lang Syne* specifically allude to the campfire setting, but Laue's song is much more detailed in its references to the natural surroundings: this is common in songs associated with the German youth movement. Moreover, despite the allusions to the rising moon and the peacefulness of the setting, an underlying darkness of tone resonates through even the song's brighter moments. The Scots version of the song is an insistence on the importance of friendship; in the French version the friends are already looking forward to the next meeting. *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* strikes on the whole a very different note, emphasizing the uncertainty of the future.[50] The ambiguity of the text reflects closely the state of mind in post-war Germany.

Nehmt Abschied, Brüder was published again in 1951 in *Laute, schlag an!*, a collection of songs by Riediger and Laue which, though directed at Scouts, became a source for many other songbooks as well; later songbooks generally name this as the copyright source of the song. It was quickly adopted: in November 1951, a brief report in *Die große Fahrt* tells of the visit to Düsseldorf of five English Scouts, who were on a cycling tour through western Europe. Apart from the German scouts, the evening was also spent with some English Cub Scouts from the nearby British military base, and a Scout who came from Indonesia via Holland. As the report concludes,

> Lots of singing and games ensured the meeting went as it should, though it was over far too soon. After the evening meal, they all met in the home of one of the boys, and talked over tea. At a late hour, all together sang "Nehmt Abschied Brüder, ungewiß..." Just as it had done at the Jamboree, so too here it united these hearts that were beating for a common idea. Sadly, the guests had to be on their way again. The separation came after about 30 km. The leader of the English brothers was in tears when it came to this farewell, and he asked us to use our deeds to help secure world peace. His boys would have to become soldiers the next year; it would be too horrible if we were to meet each other again as soldiers. Some of the boys accompanied the guests for another good distance; the others had to turn back.[51]

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50   This is also a feature of the translation published in Bib. II/1948:

Nun laßt uns scheiden ohne Trost	Now let us part without the consolation
ob wir uns wiedersehn.	of knowing that we will see each other again.
Und keiner weiß, ob wir getrost	And no-one knows if we will stand confident
im neuen Lage stehn!	in the new situation!

   This is roughly comparable to the first version of the song as published in Pollatschek (ed.) 1949, which, however, also had the Scots version as basis, and in which the opening question is maintained as such.

51   "Viel Gesang und einige Spiele brachten das rechte Verhältnis in die Runde, die aber leider zu schnell vorüber war. Nach dem Abendessen trafen sie sich alle in der Wohnung eines Jungen, wo sie sich

Fig. 9.4 The three most common post-war German versions of *Auld Lang Syne*.

Claus Ludwig Laue, *Abschiedslied* (**Nehmt Abschied, Brüder**)

Nehmt Abschied, Brüder,	*Take leave, brothers,*
ungewiß ist alle Wiederkehr,	*Every return is uncertain,*
die Zukunft liegt im Finsternis	*The future lies in the gloaming*
und macht das Herz uns schwer.	*And makes our hearts heavy.*
Chorus:	*Chorus:*
Der Himmel wölbt sich übers Land,	*The sky curves over the land,*
ade, auf Wiedersehn,	*Adieu, till we meet again,*
wir ruhen alle in Gottes Hand,	*We all rest in God's hand,*
lebt wohl, auf Wiedersehn!	*Farewell, till we meet again.*
Die Sonne sinkt, es steigt die Nacht,	*The sun sinks, the night arises*
vergangen ist der Tag.	*The day is done.*
Die Welt schläft ein und leis erwacht	*The world falls asleep, and quietly*
der Nachtigallen Schlag.	*The nightingale begins its song.*
Chorus: Der Himmel wölbt sich übers Land...	*Chorus: The sky curves over the land...*
So ist in jedem Anbeginn	*Thus, in every beginning*
das Ende nicht mehr weit,	*The end is already near,*
wir kommen her, und gehen hin	*We come, and we go,*
und mit uns geht die Zeit.	*And as we pass, so does time.*
Chorus: Der Himmel wölbt sich übers Land...	*Chorus: The sky curves over the land ...*
Nehmt Abschied, Brüder, schließt den Kreis,	*Take leave brothers, close the circle,*
das Leben ist ein Spiel,	*Life is a game,*
und wer es recht zu spielen weiß	*And whoever knows how to play it*
gelangt ans große Ziel	*Will reach the greater goal.*
Chorus: Der Himmel wölbt sich übers Land...	*Chorus: The sky curves over the land ...*

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beim Tee unterhielten. Spät in der Nacht sang man gemeinsam das Lied: 'Nehmt Abschied, Brüder, ungewiß...' Wie auf dem Jamboree, so schloß es auch hier die Herzen zusammen, die dem gleichen Ideal schlugen. Leider mußten die Gäste wieder abfahren. Man trennte sich erst nach ca. 30 km. Dem Führer der englischen Brüder kamen die Träne, als es zum Abschied kam, und er bat, daß wir durch unsere Tat am Weltfrieden mithelfen sollten. Seine Jungen müßten nächstes Jahr Soldat werden, es wäre trostlos, wenn wir uns später einmal als Soldaten wiederträfen. Einige begleiteten die Gäste noch eine weite Strecken, die anderen mußten leider zurück." "novi" [=Norbert Viezenz?] 1851, 14–15.

Oswald Schanowsky, *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht*

Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht,	*A lovely day reaches its end,*
die Sterne sind erwacht.	*The stars have awoken.*
Wir reichen uns die Hände nun	*We offer each other our hands*
und sagen gute Nacht.	*And say goodnight.*

Chorus:	*Chorus*:
Von Ort zu Ort, von Land zu Land	*From place to place, from land to land,*
ertönt ein Lied darein,	*A song can be heard*
reicht eure Hände fest zum Bund,	*Reach out and hold each other's hands tight,*
wir wollen Freunde sein.	*We want to be friends.*

Ein neuer Tag bricht bald herein,	*A new day will soon break,*
der weit uns sehen soll,	*Which will see us travel far,*
zum Abschied reicht euch nun die Hand	*Reach out your hands as we part*
und saget Lebewohl.	*And say farewell.*

Chorus:	*Chorus*:
Von Ort zu Ort...	*From place to place...*

Ob Nord, ob Süd, ob Ost, ob West,	*Whether north, south, east or west,*
wo du auch stehst ist gleich,	*It makes no difference where you stand,*
ein Freundeskreis durchzieht die Welt.	*A circle of friendship goes round the world,*
Horch auf, die Zeit ist reif!	*Pay attention, it's time!*

Chorus:	*Chorus*:
Von Ort zu Ort...	*From place to place...*

Hans Baumann, *Wie könnte Freundschaft je vergehen*

Wie könnte Freundschaft je vergehen	*How could friendship ever dissipate*
und nicht im Herzen stehen?	*And not remain in the heart?*
Wie könnt, was uns vereint, vergehn,	*How could the things that bind us, ever dissipate*
bis wir uns wiedersehen?	*Until we meet again?*

Wie Hand in Hand sich schließt im Kreis	*As hand-in-hand the circle is closed*
so sei es alle Zeit,	*So it is at all times,*
ob ferne auch, ein jeder weiß	*Even when far away, one knows*
sich an des anderen Seit	*That the other is at one's side*

9.4 Closing the Circle

Von Ort zu Ort, von Land zu Land
ertönt ein Lied darein
reicht eure Hände fest zum Bund
wir wollen Freunde sein.[52]

The most well-known German version of *Auld Lang Syne* after *Nehmt Abschied Brüder,*
and almost exactly contemporary with it, is *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht*. The text, by
Oswald Schanowsky, is again a very free translation picking up on the traditions of S∞
and SΩ. It is occasionally referred to as the Austrian version of the song,[53] although
Austrian Scouts sing another version again, *Nun Brüder dieses Lebewohl*. Widely sung
to M2, and with most print sources linking the text back to Burns, Schanowsky's
version does however have the added complication of being the basis for a setting by
the prolific song composer Robert Götz. Götz, who had dedicated himself to song for
young people since around the end of World War I, stated that his version of *Ein schöner
Tag zu Ende geht* was composed at a camp close to the town of Hemer in Nordrhein-
Westfalen in 1949.[54] By his own account, it became one of his most well-known songs.[55]

This raises an important question. The other German-language versions discussed
so far have all been accepted as versions of *Auld Lang Syne*—that is, they are recognizable
as deriving from that song and the traditions surrounding it. There surely comes a
time, however, when the threads that tie these versions to each other are stretched
almost to breaking point. Schanowsky's very free translation is still obviously related
to the original song when sung with M2. When the text is joined to a completely
different tune—provided in this case by Götz—then to what extent can the song still
be understood as *Auld Lang Syne* at all?

In practice, though, it would seem that however stretched the threads may be, they
are as likely to rebound in bungee fashion as they are to break. Though Götz's setting
is certainly popular, Schanowsky's version is also still sung to M2, and is occasionally
mixed up with other German versions of the song. Before looking at some examples of
this, we need to introduce another, later German rendition of *Auld Lang Syne*.

Wie könnte Freundschaft je vergehn is the only post-war version yet discussed that
has an explicit textual connection to the Scots song, and in keeping with the common
practice in English-speaking countries, there is only one verse and chorus; it is possible

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52 "From place to place, from land to land / A song can be heard / Reach out and hold each other's
    hands tight / We want to be friends." Oswald Schanowsky, *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht* (ca. 1940s);
    full text in Figure 9.4.
53 For example, in Bib. II/1970/1, itself an Austrian publication.
54 According to the song index he provided for Götz 1975, in which the author of the text is given
    as Robert Bruns [*sic*]. Götz's dates are to be treated with caution—he flatly denied having written
    anything but localized, dialect songs under National Socialism, but other researchers have cast doubt
    on this assertion. However, given the other evidence on the spread of *Auld Lang Syne* in Germany, the
    date for this song seems reliable.
55 See Götz 1975.

that its use is related to greater familiarity with *Auld Lang Syne* itself. This version was written by Hans Baumann, previously the most prolific songwriter of the Nazi regime. He was summoned to Berlin during the "Third Reich" precisely because, in his previous work for the Catholic youth movement, he had proven himself to be a brilliant songwriter. In the 1950s, he attempted to make good by dedicating himself to writing children's books; he could not write songs for many years.[56] The exact context of his version of *Auld Lang Syne* is unclear, but it would appear to date from 1968, and was possibly written for the *Liederbuch für Schleswig-Holstein*, to accompany the Scots and French texts of *Auld Lang Syne* given there; the book also contains *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder.* At least two other sources likewise give Baumann's text and both the French and Scots versions: both appeared soon after the *Liederbuch für Schleswig-Holstein*, one in a book from the same publisher, and one in a privately published booklet printed in memory of a woman who died in late 1969.[57] Although on the face of it Baumann's version seems not to be as widely disseminated as the others, several later sources use it as the first verse of a version which then proceeds with elements of either *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* or *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht*.[58]

All the immediately post-war sources discussed here (see Fig. 9.3 for the texts) are in books directed at children and young people. *Nehmt Abscheid, Brüder* in particular quickly left the Scout campfire behind and appeared in books published for other youth organizations, many of them with links to churches. Only in the later 1960s do versions begin to appear which are directed at adults—the same adults that may have come to know the song in summer camps and other activities in the 1950s. In the same year that Baumann's version was published, a version of *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* for male choir was published by Heinrich Poos.[59] By 1980, *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* was one of the songs included in Ernst Klusen's *Deutsche Lieder* (1980); in 1984, it was deemed to be one of *Die bekanntesten Volkslieder im Odenwald* (*The Best-Known Folksongs in Odenwald*; Slama 1984), based on songs "collected" in the region. During the 1980s, it also appeared in some other songbooks aimed at adults, and in an East-German collection of songs for Christians.[60] The increasing frequency with which the various versions of the song appear from the early 1980s can in part be explained by the general increase in the number of publications aimed at adults from around this period. On the other hand, there are relatively few recordings of *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, and most of these are arrangements for children's choir. An exception comes in a recording also made in the 1980s, by the German folk duo Zupfgeigenhansel.[61]

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56   Biedermann 1997.
57   Bib. II/ca. 1969.
58   E.g. Karl/Deutscher Alpenverein (eds) 1974, Bib. II/1997,
59   Poos 1968.
60   Slama (ed.) 1984.
61   Zupfgeigenhansel, on the album *Kein schöner Land* (originally released on the label Musikant in 1983).

One of the surest signs of the informal familiarity with the song is the very fact that the various versions of the text are so often muddled up. This is hardly surprising: the version of the song most often in use in English-speaking countries—first verse and chorus—boasts only a total of about thirty different words and only five different textual phrases: "Should auld acquaintance be forgot", "And never brought to mind", "And days of [auld] lang syne", "For [days of] auld lang syne", and "We'll tak a cup of kindness yet". Of the German versions, however, only Baumann's text even attempts to replicate this level of simplicity, and even he manages eight different phrases in the eight lines available. In some cases, changes to the most well-known versions seem to have the aim of making the song more appropriate to the context or to the singer's own world-view (removing the references to God, for example). The version of *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* recorded by Zupfgeigenhansel, for example, completely changes the refrain and some lines of the verses as well—the refrain in their version is

> *Der Abend neigt sich übers Land*
> *Die letzte Schatten ziehen*
> *Und alles was uns wohl bekannt*
> *Geht in das Dunkel hin.*
>
> The evening inclines over the land
> The last shadows draw down
> And all that we know well
> Goes into the darkness.

A version collected from a school class in south-west Germany by R. W. Brednich and Klaus Roth in 1971 shows that only small portions of the text were remembered, and some of these are different from any of the published versions: the first lines are as usual, but the second half of the verse is conflated with the first part of the refrain, and the second line of the refrain bears the text "ade mein Heimatland", which does not appear in any of the other sources consulted here.[62] In printed sources, deviations from the three main post-war texts are for the most part not confined to individual words or phrases, or omitted verses, but are instead conflations of the three most popular versions.

Another interesting conflation is that occasionally found between *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht* and another song, *Ein schöner Tag ward uns beschert*, which is generally sung to the tune of *Amazing Grace* but occasionally also listed as sung to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*. These tunes are not infrequently mistaken for each other: for example, a track listed as *Auld Lang Syne* on an LP produced by an Austrian youth big band turns out to be *Amazing Grace*.[63] The confusion between these tunes may lie as much in

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62 DVA Mag. 278, No. 9564.

63 *Swingtime: Evergreens and Superhits*, performed by the Swing Und Musical Orchestra Graz, 1989: label no. ATP LP 42; British Library Sounds 1LP0027503.

their attribution as "Scottish", and some structural similarities in the tonality (both are pentatonic) as much as anything else.

Despite these myriad confusions, conjunctions, and constructions, the relationship of the German versions to the Scots and French versions continues to be recognized. Of around forty printed sources consulted which included a German version of the text, twelve also included at least one verse of *Auld Lang Syne* and ten included at least one verse of the French version. Three sources—*Liederbuch der Bergsteiger*, *333 Lieder*, *Komm und sing*—included the Scots version but not the French;[64] both *Passant par Paris* and the version published in *Die grosse Fahrt* have only the French and German versions. Another book, *Lieder kennen keine Grenzen* (Fenninger 1982), dedicated to German and French songs from the Alsace region, also includes the French version, without any German equivalent, though it also refers to the melody as Scottish.[65] None of the sources give the entirety of the text of *Auld Lang Syne*, but instead the one or two-verse variants most commonly used in English-speaking countries. Thirteen sources specifically relate the song to Burns.[66]

There are many other signs of a recognition of the song's heritage. When a school in Kiel put on their own version of the Last Night of the Proms in 2006, the programme ended with *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* in place of the Albert Hall's now traditional *Auld Lang Syne*.[67] A recording which conflates elements of *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, and *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht*, called *So nehmt denn Abschied*, by the Düsseldorfer Mädchenchor is subtitled *Auld Long Syne* [*sic*] and begins with an attempt at mimicking Scottish bagpipes using a low string drone and, to mimic the chanter, an oboe—not unlike William Shield's tactic over two hundred years earlier.[68] These connections back to the Scots song—manifested either through recognition of its "Scottishness" or its use in English-speaking cultures—are hardly surprising given the song's global presence, particularly in recorded media. It is also hardly surprising in Germany, a country whose love of Scottish culture does not seem to have abated in recent years. This love affair is, admittedly, normally expressed in more lofty terms than a recent German recording of the song in English, by Die Roten Rosen, a pseudonym of the punk band Die Toten Hosen. This version, which comes on a Christmas album, also starts with an attempt at bagpipes, but proceeds in the band's more usual style, and with lyrics sung in a thick Scottish accent which relate more closely to certain other aspects of Scottish culture, particularly on Hogmanay:

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64   Karl/Deutscher Alpenverein (eds)1974, Bib. II/1987/1, Bib. II/1991.

65   Fenninger (ed.) 1982.

66   Bib. II/1957, Götz 1960, Bib. II/1965, Bib. II/1966, Bib. II/ca. 1969, Bib. II/1970/2, Bib. II/1970/2, Bib. II/1987/1, Karl/Deutscher Alpenverein (eds) 1974, Bib. II/1983/1, Bib. II/1985/1, Markmiller (ed.) 1985, Brikitsch et al. (eds) 1986.

67   This was organized by the Humboldt Schule in Kiel: the source for this information was the older version of the school's website, now deleted. The school's current website, https://www.humboldt-schule-kiel.de/, indicates that the tradition of staging a "Last Night" was revived in subsequent years. On this Proms tradition, see Chapter 10, below.

68   From the compilation album *Volk Masters: Gold und Silber*, Carinco 2005.

> When it gets to closing time
> And if you still want more
> I know a pub in Inverness
> That never shuts its door.[69]

The German reception of *Auld Lang Syne* thus demonstrates very well the difference between the passive reception of a song and its active use in a local context. The two are interconnected: passive reception leads to familiarity with the song, especially the tune, which can therefore increase the chances of the song's being appreciated and used in a group context (recognition and identification are linked). The active use of a song, and its absorption into a repertoire of group songs, depends more than we might realise on its actual use in a group context. A number of other socio-cultural factors are implicated as well, though, which will always be specific to that context. All the more interesting, then, that the three main German-language versions discussed here introduce elements already familiar from the establishment of the song and its associated social practices in the nineteenth century. Laue, Schanowsky, and Baumann's versions, so different from one another as they are, reflect this in the one reference in the text that they all share: "*schließt den Kreis*" ("close the circle", Laue), "*reicht eure Hände fest zum Bund*" ("reach out and hold each other's hands tight"), "*ein Freundeskreis durchzieht die Welt*" ("a circle of friendship goes round the world", both Schanowsky) and "*Wie Hand in Hand sich schließt im Kreis*" ("as hand-in-hand the circle is closed", Baumann). Thus, though it is SΩ that defines these songs, it is the practice S∞ that helps explain their impact.

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69   Die Rote Rosen, from the album *Wir warten aufs Christkind*, JKP 1998.

10. A Song Abroad

A piece for two pianos by Gregory Stone, published in 1934, claims to show *Auld Lang Syne as it Would Be Played in Various Nations*: in rumba style in Cuba, in Celtic harp style in Ireland, as a Hungarian dance, an Italian tarantella, and as a "Marcia alla Turca" from the Russian orient (*sic*). The piece begins and ends with *Auld Lang Syne* as supposedly played in England: first time "Pomposo", second time "Grandioso".[1] Is this what really happen when a song "migrates"? Does it take on characteristics of its new surroundings, and how? What comes in the baggage, what is thrown overboard? The previous chapters have given some clues to the answers in the specific case of *Auld Lang Syne*, beginning with traditions in Britain and America in the main but expanded, in the last chapter, by a case study looking at the history of the song in Germany. This chapter explores some of the other threads spun out in the course of the history of a song abroad and at large. The examples introduced in this section cannot go into nearly as much depth as the previous chapter's analysis of German-language versions of *Auld Lang Syne*. Nor can they be viewed as in any sense comprehensive: the song is too common for that. Those examples reviewed here provide, however, further corroboration for many of the points already revealed as significant in explaining the spread of the song, and for many of the specific contexts in which it has done so. In this way, as the final section of this chapter discusses, these threads lead back to the centre of the web as much as they expand outwards from it.

10.1 Princess Constance Magogo's Song

Princess Constance Magogo (ca. 1900–1984), a member of the Zulu royal clan, was widely regarded as one of the foremost experts on Zulu musical traditions, in addition to being a highly regarded composer and musician. Magogo's repertoire included songs going back at least to the eighteenth century, and in her later years she was probably the last player of the type of musical bow known as the *ugubhu*: Magogo also played several other types of musical bow and further instruments including the autoharp, which features on the recording discussed below.[2] Magogo was a primary informant to ethnomusicologist David K. Rycroft, and also a musical consultant for the film *Zulu*,

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1   Stone 1934.
2   Rycroft 1975, Joseph 1983.

which portrayed the 1879 Anglo-Zulu war from the perspective of the British.[3] Other researchers who beat a path to her door included the South African composer Kevin Volans: like Rycroft's extensive fieldwork recordings, including hundreds featuring Magogo, Volans' recordings were later gifted to the British Library's sound archives.

It is in Volans' recordings that we encounter a song composed and sung by Magogo which uses the verse melody of M2, along with a second section presumably by Magogo herself.[4] The words, meanwhile, are her own, and given with English translation in Figure 10.1. The verses are sung to the verse section of M2, with the refrain sung to different music. "I know that song" says Volans on the recording, when Magogo has finished singing it; he tells his translator that it was originally a Scottish song. Emphasizing that the words were her own, Magogo in response relates that before FM radio,[5] she had an extensive collection of gramophone records: "I received this song from a music record, which I got directly from a white soldier...which is the reason why I sing the way/tune that I sing in it".[6]

Fig. 10.1 Text of *Jesu Nkosi Yokuthula* by Princess Constance Magogo, from a recording made in 1976; transcribed and translated into English for this book by Mmangaliso Nzuza with assistance from Magogo's granddaughter.

Jesu Nkosi Yokuthula	Jesus Lord of Peace
Nkosi enomusa	Lord who has kindness
Jesu Nkosi Enothando	Jesus Lord who has love
Nkosi enathando	Lord who has love
Ngiyeza nkosi kuwe	I am coming to you my Lord
Umdluli kaSomandla	Lord of all Lords
Ngiguqa esiphambanweni	I kneel at the cross
Ngihawukele Nkosi yami	Have mercy on me my Lord
Izitha ziyangihleka	My enemies are laughing
Ngoba ngingazali	because I have not given birth
Abamise 'kabhile	Mine have wept
Ngoba ngingazali	because I have not given birth
Ngiyeza nkosi kuwe ...	I am coming to you my Lord ...
Umsindisi owavula	Jesus Christ who opened
Endulo 'izinyuka	those who could not conceive

3   Rycroft 1975; Jorritsma 2001.

4   "Princess Magogo: Songs and self-accompaniment on autoharp. 'Auld lang syne' (sung in Zulu)", Kevin Volans Southern African Music Collection, shelfmark 2CDR0005462 (copy of C740/5/25). Digital version available at https://sounds.bl.uk/World-and-traditional-music/Kevin-Volans-South-Africa/025M-C0740X005X25-0100V0

5   Perhaps meaning before radio generally, given the timeline suggested here.

6   "Manje keleliculo ngalithatha kelinye'irecord lamasoldier yesilungu...indlela". Transcription and translation by Mmangaliso Nzuza.

Vula nanini Nkosi Jesu	Open anytime for me Jesus my Lord*
Ngimithe ngizalwe.	So I may be pregnant and give birth.

*figurative

Magogo married into the Buthelezi clan in 1926, and her first child, future Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, was born in 1928. If the song relates directly to her own experience, this gives a date of composition of around 1927, which would correspond to the technology she mentions. She gives no further information in the recording made by Volans as to why she chose this melody as the basis for her song, though the fact that she specifically remembered the source around half a century later might suggest a fondness for that particular gramophone record and its contents. The story of her song is a further demonstration that, even in the age of recording, it is often direct, personal connections that bring us to "our" music. And this is, very much, *her* song: the British Library Sounds catalogue may refer to this as *Auld Lang Syne*, but this is not a translation, nor even simply a contrafactum given that the chorus is sung to a different tune. It is both her own work and a beautiful, unique thread among the many others which this chapter explores.

10.2 Foreign-Language Versions of *Auld Lang Syne*

Foreign-language versions of *Auld Lang Syne* can be broadly divided into two groups: those which translate Burns's text, and those which are new creations referring to the traditions with which the song is connected, most notably SΩ. Denmark and Japan can be taken as representative of these tendencies, respectively.

The most common Danish version of *Auld Lang Syne* goes back to the 1920s, and is an almost direct translation of Burns's text, into the dialect Jutlandish, by the poet Jeppe Aakjær (1866–1930); it is reproduced in Figure 10.2. It was first published in 1927, with one source—the fifth edition of the *Arbejder Sangbogen* (Worker's Songbook)—stating that it was written on 31 January 1922.[7] Aakjær was a strong promoter of the regional culture of Jutland, and Burns is said to have been an inspiration for him in this regard. Non-Danish speakers like myself who however have knowledge of adjacent languages like English, Scots, and German, may gather that the text is a reasonably faithful translation of Burns's song in the verse order of B2, adapted at points in keeping with the sentiment in order to ensure rhymes and the correct scansion. In the 1950 edition of the *Arbejdersangbogen*, some words in Aakjær's text are provided with translations into standard Danish.

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7   Bib. II/1950. Research on Danish versions used resources in the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv.

Fig. 10.2 Aakjær's translation of *Auld Lang Syne*, attributed to Burns, as published in *Syng: Gesangbog for Danmark*, ca. 1943, 52.

Skuld gammel venskab rejn forgo
og stryges frae wor mind?
Skuld gammel venskab rejn forgo
med dem daw så læng, læng sind?

Chorus:
Di skjøne ungdomsdaw, åja,
de daw så swær å find!
Vi'el løwt wor kop så glådle op
for dem daw så læng, læng sind!

Og gi så kuns de glajs en top
og vend en med di kaw'.
Vi'el ta ino en jenle kop
for dem swunden gammel daw.
    Chorus: Di skjøne ungdomsdaw, åja...

Vi tow—hwor hår vi rend om kap
i'æ grønn så manne gång!
Men al den trawen verden rundt
hår nu gjord æ bjenn lidt tång.
    Chorus: Di skjøne ungdomsdaw, åja...

Vi wojed sammel i æ bæk
frae gry til høns war ind.
Så kam den haw og skil wos ad.
Å, hvor er å læng, lång sind!
    Chorus: Di skjøne ungdomsdaw, åja...

Der er mi hånd, do gamle swend!
Ræk øwer og gi mæ dind.
Hwor er æ skjøn å find en ven,
en håj mist for læng, læng sind!
    Chorus: Di skjøne ungdomsdaw, åja...

The publications reviewed here suggest that Aakjær's translation, called *Skuld gammel venskab rejn forgo*, became established quite quickly, and that it was generally recognized to be a translation of Burns's text. Several editions of the *Arbejdersangbogen* published by the Arbejdernes Oplysningsforbund (Worker's Educational Association) include the song, from no later than 1936 onwards.[8] This may suggest that the song was

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8   The earliest source I had access to is an edition of the *Arbejder Melodiebogen* (Ring 1936), which provides the music for the songs contained in the *Arbejder Sangbogen*. It gives the music as M2 and includes one verse of the Danish text (the full text presumably being in the *Sangbogen* itself); the contents page also refers to this song under the additional title *Auld Lang Syne*. The earliest edition of the *Arbejdersangbogen* itself which I had access to is from 1950, and contains the full Danish text (Bib. II/1950).

known already from the context of workers' associations and their meetings, perhaps the British Trades Union Congress specifically which, as previously mentioned, has traditionally ended with *Auld Lang Syne* since the late nineteenth century. These were not the only sources to print Aakjær's Danish text, however: around 1943 it appeared in *Syng: Gesangbog for Danmark*—attributed to Burns, but with no mention of Aakjær as translator.[9] In 1948 it appeared in the *Nordens Sang Bok,* with music and text again attributed solely to Burns.[10] The 1996 edition of the army songbook *Sangbog for forsvaret* includes both the first and last verses of the Scots song, along with Aakjær's full text: the text in both cases is attributed to Burns, with the Danish/Jutlandic version listed as a free translation by Aakjær.[11] This book also includes a few other foreign-language songs, including *Loch Lomond* and *My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean*—perennial favourites in German publications as well. The 1972 edition of the same book also had the full Danish version and two verses of the Scots, with the Danish version being printed first.[12]

The course taken by the Danish song would seem to be the exact opposite to that taken in German-speaking countries: whereas in that case the song finally became established in versions aimed at young people and Scouts in particular, in Denmark it appears first to have been introduced in books intended for adults, and only later, as part of an established tradition, in books aimed at younger people or a broader cross-section of the community. Another difference is the way that the Danish sources more coherently maintain a sense of the song's Scottish origins, including its links to Burns. For example, the 1963 edition of a songbook called *Lystige Viser*, vol. I, contains four verses of the Scots song, with music; the chorus text is given as the syllabic "And days of auld lang syne, my dear" rather than "For auld lang syne, my dear". The text is illustrated by line drawings featuring two cheerful men in kilts in the foreground, a couple of sheep grazing the hills in the background; and also by hands raised in a toast beside an open whisky bottle.[13] The pint-stowp verse is missing, and the second of the childhood verses has "sported i' the burn" rather than "paidl'd"– a "translation" which also appears in some recent American versions (see Chapter 12, below). There are a number of other Scots, English and international songs in this volume, including *Coming Through The Rye*. Volume VIII of this collection, from 1983, contains Aakjær's Danish version of *Auld Lang Syne*, with a picture of two boys fishing at a burn. The 1964 edition of the *Folkehøjskolens Sangbok*, for students at high schools and agricultural colleges, contains the Danish version; the 1978 edition contains both the Danish version and, separately, the full text of the Scots version.[14]

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9   Bib. II/ca. 1943.
10   Bib. II/1948.
11   Bib. II/1996.
12   Bib. II/1972.
13   Bib. II/1963.
14   Bib. II/1964.

Possibly the most interesting publication relating to Aakjær's version is a bilingual edition of the song published in 1966. The verses of the Scots and Danish language versions are on facing pages, and the book is illustrated with pictures by Povl Christensen appropriate to each stage of the song. These also indicate the two different countries represented: the two boys, and the two men they grow into, are the same in each instance, but the landscapes are different—either a land of hills (Scotland), or a flat, marshy terrain (Denmark). There are also two frontispiece pages with corresponding pictures. The first, in Danish, names Aakjær, and states that the publication marks the hundredth anniversary of his birth; this frontispiece features a picture of a young man sitting on a plough, reading a book. The second reads "Robert Burns: Should auld acquaintance be forgot, Ellisland Farm 1788": Burns is depicted, side on, standing near some cliffs, and to underline that these are Scottish cliffs, it's raining.[15]

All the Danish sources reviewed therefore show a strong tendency to attribute *Auld Lang Syne* to Burns, and to recognize the melody as a Scottish folktune. The army songbooks mentioned are interesting for their inclusion of two verses of the Scots version—this occasionally happens where *Auld Lang Syne* appears in songbooks from non-English-speaking countries, and reflects how the song has tended to be sung in communal contexts in Scotland (as opposed to the single verse that is more common in other English-speaking countries). These Danish publications give no clues as to exactly how the song was sung, but I have heard anecdotally of at least one instance of it being sung at the end of a wedding in Denmark, where the guests made a circle and joined and crossed their arms in the usual fashion.[16]

In Japan, by contrast, the origins of the local version are much older, and are firmly linked with the tradition SΩ. Travellers to Japan will know that the symbolic use of M2 as a song of parting goes quite beyond what is normal practice elsewhere: it is played in shops, clubs and other establishments at the close of business. Like the German *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, the origins of the common Japanese version are not simply SΩ, but a particular context in which the tradition appears: its use at graduation ceremonies.

The text sung to M2 in Japan is *Hotaru no hikari*, or *By The Light Of Fireflies* (Fig. 10.3). It dates from the later nineteenth century, and therefore coincides with the major period of modernization and Westernization instigated by Japanese leaders from the 1860s. This modernization included an overhaul of the education system, with Japan's first university established around this time. The song, sometimes attributed to Inagaki Chikai, was published in the first songbook produced for the new Japanese primary schools in 1881, but in his study of this songbook Mark Jewel (2018) notes that *Hotaru no hikari* was widely available in printed sources before this point.

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15   Aakjær & Burns 1966.
16   Personal communication.

Fig. 10.3 *Hotaru no hikari* (*Fireflies*); translated by Mark Jewel. Copyright (c) 2018 by The Liberal Arts Research Center, School of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University. Reproduced by permission of the translator.

hotaru no hikari / mado no yuki	*After spending so many days and months in study*
fumi yomu tsukihi / kasanetsutsu	*By the light of fireflies and window's snowy glow,*
itsushika toshi mo / sugi no to o	*On this morning—the years having somehow passed by—*
akete zo kesa wa / wakareyuku	*We open the cedar doors and go our separate ways.*
tomaru mo yuku mo / kagiri tote	*Both those who are leaving and those who stay behind,*
katami ni omou / yorozu no	*Mindful that the time they've shared has come now to an end,*
kokoro no hashi o / hitokoto ni	*Gather together the strands of their countless thoughts*
sakiku to bakari / utau nari	*And join in singing a heartfelt message of farewell.*
Tsukushi no kiwami / Michi-no-oku	*Though separated far, by mountains or by seas,*
umiyama tōku / hedatsu tomo	*In remote Tsukushi, or in Michi-no-oku,*
sono magokoro wa / hedate naku	*Let no distance come between your hearts,*
hitotsu ni tsukuse / kuni no tame	*But devote yourselves wholly to the country as one.*
Chishima no oku mo / Okinawa mo	*The far reaches of the Kuriles, and Okinawa, too,*
Yashima no uchi no / mamori nari	*Are outposts that protect the homeland of Japan;*
itaran kuni ni / isaoshiku	*No matter what your destination, dear friends,*
tsutomeyo wa ga se / tsutsuganaku	*Go in good health, and serve with firm resolve.*

Hotaru no hikari is a song about student life, and about graduating from this life into wider society. It may be, therefore, that the arrival of *Auld Lang Syne* and its traditions in Japan comes by way of, or in deference to, the American tradition of singing the song at graduation. If this is true, and the song was introduced along with the introduction of universities and their associated Western-style traditions, then the use of *Auld Lang Syne* as a song of parting in Japan would be almost as old as it is in any English-speaking country.

This long history and, again, the linking of the song to a particular ritual, would help explain why the song could have become so well established in Japan. As noted in Chapter 1, it does not take very long for a song to become established as an "old"

song: a generation or two can suffice. Again, we see how the use of a song in one context—originally limited to those attending university—is transferred into a new, broader one in the commercial sphere. And from there, the Japanese branch of the web continues to expand: for example, *Hotaru no hikari* has recently been used as the name of a Japanese television series adapted from a Manga, about the exploits of a twenty-something woman called Hotaru.[17]

Hotaru no hikari underlines, again, that *Auld Lang Syne*'s successful transmission and adoption is linked to the tradition of singing the song at parting, and the human tendency to copy the best practice of other humans. Link a song to a particular tradition, especially a particular ritual, and its repeated use is not only almost guaranteed, but guaranteed in a way that makes it significant for those who experience it. As with the twentieth-century German versions discussed in Chapter 9, the text of *Hotaru no hikari* picks up on the *inherited* significance of *Auld Lang Syne* as a song of parting, and renders this as a text which has this significance *implied*.

French translations of *Auld Lang Syne* reflect this tendency for the song to become established as a translated tradition rather than simply a translated text. There were French translations of *Auld Lang Syne* before Jacques Sevin wrote his version (discussed in Chapter 9), yet it is the latter which is most often associated with the song in France today. Several translations of Burns's poetry appeared in France in the nineteenth century, though not all include *Auld Lang Syne*. Two that do come in the edition by Léon de Wailly published in 1843, and in the translations published by Richard de la Madelaine in 1874: in both cases, it is titled *Le bon vieux temps*. Madelaine's translations are in prose; Wailly's are not, but his translation of *Auld Lang Syne* still cannot be sung to M2.[18]

In the British Crown Dependency of Jersey, the situation is a little different. Several versions of the song exist in Jèrriais, the local dialect of the Norman language, and would appear to have been written around the time that the song and its traditions were becoming widely established in Britain and elsewhere. One is a translation attributed to Ph'lippe Langliais, who died in 1884. To the extent that a knowledge of French enables one to read Jèrriais, his text appears to be a direct translation of Burns's text, in the verse order most common in the nineteenth century (i.e., B4). In Langliais' manuscript, held in the library of the Société Jersiaise and dated 2/2/ [18]72, he specifies "Air: Auld Lang Syne".[19] A version contributed by John D. Hubert, a resident of Gaspé, to the *Nouvelle Chronique de Jersey* in 1895 differs in many respects to that by Langliais, and a further version was published in the *Nouvelle Chronique de Jersey* in 1902: this appears to be a contrafactum extolling the local dialect and

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17   Written by Hiura Satoru, directed by Yoshino Hiroshi, Nagumo Seiichi, and Shigeyama Yoshinori (2007).
18   Wailly 1843; Madelaine 1874.
19   I am indebted to Geraint Jennings of the Société Jersiaise for providing a copy of this manuscript, and the other information on this version given here. He has also suggested that the Jersey versions may be related to one of the versions in use in the neighbouring island of Guernsey.

culture. A few years later, Mathilde dé Faye—pen-name *Georgie*—composed a further version, with six verses: this is the basis of the song as sung on a field recording made by Peter Kennedy in Clair Val St. Saviour's, Jersey, on 24 April 1960, and held in the National Sound Archive.[20] In the recording, two verses are sung by a mixed group, to the accompaniment of an accordion; in Appendix 5, the verses in question are marked by an asterisk.

Of the four Jèrriais versions given in Appendix 5, it is notable that all but one use the same basis for the refrain: "Pour l'amour du vieir temps/vier temps"; the contrafactum version (the third in the example) uses this phrase as the basis for the beginning of each verse as well. Given the many differences in the lyrics apart from this, this seems to suggest that the refrain was in some sort of common use—perhaps from French: the two pre-Sevin French versions mentioned above were published under the name *Le bon vieux temps.* The name *Not' Bouon Vieir Temps* is commonly used for the song as now known in Jersey. Though it was noted that neither Madelaine nor Wailly's French versions could be sung to M2, this raises the possibility of a further and more familiar, sung French version which may have inspired the chorus of the Jersey versions.

Translating Burns's poetry has always been a favourite pastime of Burns enthusiasts with a talent for languages, as in the case of an unnamed Scot in Honolulu who translated *Auld Lang Syne* into Hawaiian in the 1890s; they noted that "This is the first attempt, so far as I am aware, to give in Hawaiian any of Burns's songs".[21] Given a steady stream of Scottish and other immigrants to the islands, and some persistent royal connections—King David Kalakaua visited Scotland in 1881, and his sister was married to a Scot; their daughter would have become queen had the monarchy continued—it is entirely possible that the song was sung in the original language quite apart from this.[22]

10.3 Bells and Anthems

In 1948, authorities in the Maldives decided that it was time to replace the previous state anthem, which had no words, with a new anthem, the text of which was provided by Mohamed Jameel Didi. A tune had to be found. According to legend, the poet's uncle, chief justice Husain Salahuddine, had just acquired a new clock which chimed a tune at midday. Didi noticed that this tune would function very well to the poem he had written, and until 1972 the anthem of the Maldives, *Guamee Salaan*, was sung to a

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20   From field recordings made by Peter Kennedy; British Library Sounds call number T7991/05 C 5.

21   Anon. 1893, which notes that it was originally published in *The Paradise of the Pacific* in 1891.

22   Information from http://www.mauiceltic.com, which in turn derives its information from various sources, including Rhoda E. A. Haeckler (ed.), *The Story of Scots in Hawai'i.* The website also describes the annual Burns supper on the island of Maui. An arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne* for Hawaiian guitar was published by A. P. McKinney and R. F. Tomlinson in 1936. The cover shows palm tree, beach, sea, and a local couple waving to a distant ship: this image was used for several arrangements by McKinney. I have been unable to obtain any more information on this arrangement.

tune better known in other countries as *Auld Lang Syne*.[23] There is a rumour that the tune was only changed when it was pointed out that a song normally associated with drunken farewells at parties was perhaps not suitable for a royal anthem, particularly in an Islamic country. The real catalyst for change, however, seems to have been the visit to the Maldives of Queen Elizabeth II, the first time since full independence in 1965 that a foreign head of state had visited the country. The new tune was written by the Sri Lankan composer Pandit Amaradeva.

The Maldives was not the first Asian country to turn M2 into an anthem: the words of the Korean national anthem, written around the turn of the twentieth century, were also originally sung to M2. The Maldivian example, however, brings us back very neatly to the subject of clock chimes and bell towers as musical media, as already discussed in Chapter 8. The simple structure of M2 makes it very amenable to this form of transmission, as the following tale also makes clear: When the eighteenth-century church of St. Martin's in Birmingham fell into disrepair, the steeple in particular was at risk, and in the 1850s it was restored at great expense. As part of this renovation, the clock and chimes were renewed and played *God Save the Queen*, *Rule Britannia*, *The Blue Bells of Scotland* and some hymns. The chimes did not prove durable, however, and fell into disuse by the late 1860s. In 1878, they were repaired and put into service again, but with one change: the revamped chimes could no longer play *God Save the Queen* and so this was replaced by a tune that could be played—*Auld Lang Syne*.[24]

This is not the only instance of *Auld Lang Syne* trumping *God Save the Queen.* In Chapter 7, we saw how, in nineteenth-century Britain, *Auld Lang Syne* often formed a triumvirate of patriotic songs along with *Rule Britannia* and the national anthem, whereby traditionally, the anthem came last. It was noted, too, that in Thomson's 1841 volume of the *Select Collection*, Beethoven's arrangement of *Auld Lang Syne* was followed by Henry Bishop's arrangement of *God Save the Queen*. At the Last Night of the Proms however—the gala concert which ends the series of summer concerts in the Royal Albert Hall originally staged by Henry Wood, and now hosted by the BBC— *Auld Lang Syne* is now traditionally sung after *God Save the Queen*. It is not actually on the official programme of the Last Night, but has developed as a Proms tradition, possibly beginning during Scottish conductor James Loughran's stint as conductor of the Last Night in the 1970s and 1980s.

The continuing tradition of playing *Auld Lang Syne* either as the last song of the evening, or—at official events—as the last before the national anthem, occasionally leads to confusion. David Cookson, who made his debut as a conductor during the centenary festival of the D'Oyly Carte opera company in 1975, reminisces as follows:

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23   Information taken from www.maldivesroyalfamily.com/maldives_anthem.shtml. The Maldives have been a republic since the late 1960s: this site appears to be maintained by descendants of its previous monarchy.
24   Harmon & Showell 1885.

Our percussionist, Gerry, had been ill for a long time, and made his comeback on centenary night. Royston Nash and Glyn Hale (M[usical] D[irector] and chorus master) were to go on stage to take their bows, along with Bridget D'O[oyly]C[arte] and Harold Wilson (the then PM, and a fan [of Gilbert and Sullivan]), amongst others. It fell to me to conduct at the end, firstly Auld Lang Syne and then the National Anthem. I had rehearsed and rehearsed, in my mind, the upbeat for Auld Lan[g] Syne, and all the band and company had been told what would happen. All except Gerry.

When I gave the upbeat for Auld Lang Syne, Gerry thought to rescue me by giving the drum-roll for the National Anthem. My world fell slowly apart. Half the audience started to stand up, and half the band, taking their cue from Gerry, started to play the National Anthem. The other half started into Auld Lang Syne, and what followed sounded like a Charles Ives seminar.

Harold Wilson looked alternately nostalgic and patriotic, the company looked confused, and I wanted the floor to open up and swallow me [...][25]

10.4 Quotation and Quodlibet

In the nineteenth century, and as discussed in Chapter 7, domestic musicians were most likely to enjoy their *Auld Lang Syne* in the form of variations and other musical arrangements of the song itself. Around the later nineteenth century and increasingly in the early twentieth, these publications recede and are replaced by the new type of popular song which, in the USA, was most at home on a street known colloquially as Tin Pan Alley. Textual or musical references to *Auld Lang Syne* in these songs occur for a number of reasons: some explicitly appeal to the sentiments of the song itself, or directly sing its praises; some include musical or textual quotations from *Auld Lang Syne*. They divide neatly into four groups: love songs; social songs; Christmas or New Year songs; and songs dealing with the difference between olden and modern times.

Not surprisingly, most of the love songs deal with the parting of lovers, or less frequently with a lover's return. Some contain at least a passing reference to M2, but at least half do not—as for example *The Girl I Loved In Auld Lang Syne* by Verna Wilkens and Robert F. Roden.[26] One the most interesting songs from this period takes the sentiments of *Auld Lang Syne* right back to its early roots as a song about charity as well as friendship: this is *You Used To Be A Friend To Me* (*For The Sake Of Auld Lang Syne*), advertised as being sung by Ida Barr, a music hall singer born in 1882.[27] The verse of this song begins with a direct quotation from M2, and again makes frequent use of its opening rhythmic motif, though the song's chorus—which switches to 3/4 time—has little in the way of clear reference to the tune. It is the text, however, which

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25   From an online discussion on the Gilbert and Sullivan opera *Utopia Limited* compiled by Nick Sales, at *The Gilbert and Sullivan Archive*, https://www.gsarchive.net/utopia/discussion/9.html

26   Wilken & Roden 1913. The song is now out of copyright and can be freely downloaded at https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4202&context=mmb-vp

27   Pelham, Lang, & Barr 1910.

is most interesting, and it is copied here in full in Figure 10.4. "Friendship can live to more than forty years", as Mrs Dunlop once put it.[28]

Fig. 10.4 The text, and the verse music and start of the chorus, of Paul Pelham and J. P. Lang's *You Used To Be A Friend to Me* (*For the Sake of Auld Lang Syne*) (1910).

etc...

🎧 **Audio example 13.**

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/b176d2db

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot"
Is quoted near and far,
And when you're down upon your luck
What welcome words they are!
Two old acquaintances once met
One rich, the other poor;
One hid his face with shame because
The wolf was at his door.
The rich one said, "Give me your hand,
For, rich or poor, just understand,

CHORUS
"You used to be a friend to me
In the days gone by
Whether the sun was shining bright,
Or clouds were in the sky,
And now the times have changed,
And the sun has ceased to shine,

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28   See Chapter 3.

> I'll always be a friend to you
> For the sake of auld lang syne."
>
> "We'll take a cup of kindness yet
> As oft we've done before.
> You're just as good a man to me
> As in the days of yore.
> I'm still your friend, and you are mine,
> No matter what betide.
> It's not the coat that makes the man,
> It is the heart inside.
> For old time's sake I don't forget,
> True friendship never faded yet."

In Chapter 8, it was noted that a song published in London in 1907 is an early indication of the establishment of S_{NY} as a general tradition. Thomas Walter Partridge's *The Bells of Auld Lang Syne*, published in 1905, could similarly be a reference to the song's use at New Year. It is written for piano and bells, and was published as an "Intermezzo" with vocal parts *ad libitum*. The voices, if included, are to sing two verses of the song (not, however, the chorus) and the score carries the following instruction: "In singing cross arms (right over left) and join hands and shake to the time of the music".[29] Another song from the period when S_{NY} was generally established in Britain is the *Snowball Song* (*Auld Lang Syne*), from 1923, written by Max Darewski and John Graham;[30] according to the score, it is "From J. L. Davies' production The Nine O'Clock Revue at the Little Theatre, London. Sung by Anita Elson". The introduction includes a direct reference to M2, and although most of the text focuses on the fun to be had with snowballs, the song also includes a "special chorus" which we may presume was intended specifically for the New Year Period:

> Can't you hear those Ragtime Ringers
> Cuttin' out the Carol Singers
> But the same old melody is here (Yes it's here! Yes it's here! Don't you hear?)
> You can do your best to change it,
> Turn it round and rearrange it,
> But the same old sentiments appear!
> In the hour of season's greetings
> And of alcoholic meetings [*sic*!]
> Come along and drink a glass of wine, (Pass the wine! Pass the wine! Pass the wine!)
> If the final touch of kindness
> Brings a final touch of blindness,
> Lap it up! It's just for Auld Lang Syne!

Yet again, one realises why the Temperance movement was so keen to produce new sets of words to M2.

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29   Partridge 1905.
30   Darewski & Graham 1923.

Several songs specifically introduce *Auld Lang Syne* as the archetypical "old song", or use the phrase in this way. C. Crawford's *The Song Of Auld Lang Syne* (1903), for example, features a traveller reflecting on "the old, old folks / As they were long ago", while the chorus contains the invitation to "sing the song, that dear old song, / The simple song of auld lang syne." The melody refers rhythmically to M2, and the bassline of the chorus begins with an echo of the beginning of M2. Another song, Eugene Claire and Samuel A. White's *A Sweet Farewell to Auld Lang Syne* (1908) is a sort of *John Anderson My Jo* meets *Auld Lang Syne*, with an elderly man asking his wife to sing him "A song of long ago". The music's only clear reference to M2 is the frequent use of the rhythm of M2's first bar.

Other songs take a slightly more tongue-in-cheek look at *Auld Lang Syne* and what it represents. *The Days Of Auld Lang Syne: A Song Of The Colonial Days* by Harry von Tilzer and Eddie Moran (1917) quotes a little too convincingly from the "jazz talk" of the day for its yearning for the days when "Dresses were not scant and men were gallant" to be taken seriously; the music has little in the way of reference to M2. A thematic riposte is found in a song published three years later, in 1920, by J. Worth Allen: *I Like A Little Jazz In My Auld Lang Syne* is the grandson's response to the visiting grandfather's request for a song round the family piano; the chorus of the "real" *Auld Lang Syne* is sung in the bass, and the story ends happily with grandfather conceding to dance a foxtrot with the rest.

The title of A. Solman and G. Brown's *When You Played The Organ And I Sang "Auld Lang Syne"* (1931) is probably a reference to an older and more popular song called *When You Played The Organ And I Sang The Rosary,* although the commonalities between the songs end there. Again this is a tale of days long past:

> Gone are the songs we used to know
> We're out of place in the world of today,
> But we still have our yesterday.

There is no obvious reference to M2 in the tune, the simple style of which is perhaps purposefully reminiscent of hymn tunes, given the title's reference to the organ.

Finally, we come to songs that focus on the social sentiments and contexts of *Auld Lang Syne*. Hubert W. David's *Hands Together (For The Sake Of Auld Lang Syne)* (1926) is another appeal to the general sentiment of SΩ, though there is only a passing reference to a phrase from M2 and hardly any textual reference. The song, "Sung with great success by Victoria Carmen" according to the score, was obviously intended to be sung in the theatre with at least some participation from the audience. *Dear Old Pals (For The Sake Of Auld Lang Syne)* by Roy Regan and Rob Scott (ca. 1929) announces its general tone on the front page, which features four gentlemen gathered around a guitar rather than a punchbowl. The verse notes that

> Old Songs bring memories
> Of Pals that I once knew

and when the chorus specifically quotes the line "Should auld acquaintance be forgot", it does so to the appropriate music from M2.

None of these songs make any reference to the Scottish origins of their model. An exception is *For Auld Lang Syne. A Toast* by Edith Harrhy and John McGlashan (1931), which is written in very derivative "Scots"; the music, unrelated to M2, has a corresponding sprinkling of Scotch snaps. *The Stein Song* (*Fill The Stein For Auld Lang Syne*), from 1955, was published with a reference not to a theatre production or music hall performer, but to the recording of it made by Michael Holiday. This is in fact an adaptation of a song known as *The University of Maine Stein Song* or simply *The Maine Stein Song*, by E. A. Fenstad and Lincoln Concord, originally published in 1910.[31] The 1955 adaptation, it can be surmised, aimed to make the song more universal by replacing the reference to Maine with one to "auld lang syne". Like several other twentieth-century sources, including the iconography mentioned in Chapter 7, and the song's rendition in *Klondike Annie* (discussed in Chapter 8, and below), this is a further indication of the long-standing connection between *Auld Lang Syne* and gentlemanly toasts. Indeed, the line of toasts suggested in the second verse of *The Stein Song*—to the trees, the sky, God, the fates, to the lassies, and quite a few more besides—would not look out of place at nineteenth-century formal dinner, or indeed at a Burns Supper.

10.5 The Song of War and Peace

In Chapter 1, we discussed how parodies and contrafacta on popular tunes have often proved significant in the context of campaigning, whether to political, religious or other ends. Not surprisingly, a song as popular and as easy to sing as *Auld Lang Syne*, and with the resonances provided by both its implied and inherited significances, has also generated more than a fair share of such extended usages. For example: a *World Peace Song* published in Boston in 1912 is a contrafactum on M2. The text was written by James E. Campion,[32] who clearly understood how to write a successful campaign song: the structure of each of the four verses is kept simple to reiterate that verse's main message, and—like its model—the same phrase is reiterated for three of the verse's four last lines. The third verse can be taken as an example, also for the way in which it reflects some of the "larger themes" (to borrow Elgar's phrase) that we have encountered, and of which Burns himself would no doubt have approved—the sentiments are those he himself expressed in *Is There For Honest Poverty*:

> The nations all, shall brothers be,
> The poets' dreams come true,
> The nations all, shall brothers be,
> And each shall have its due.

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31   The earlier version is digitized at https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mmb-me/200
32   Campion 1912. It is unclear if this was the same James E. Campion who in the 1890s was active in the Populist Party and stood for Congress.

> And each shall have its due from all,
> And each shall have its due,
> The nations all, shall brothers be,
> And each shall have its due.

And yet as we know now, the dream expressed in this song was to be spectacularly frustrated just two years later; and *Auld Lang Syne*, too, was pushed into war service.

In both World War I and World War II, the Australian armed forces made use of a song called *For Auld Lang Syne: Australia Will Be There* by W. W. Francis; slightly different texts were used in each war. The sentiment *Australia Will Be There* is a staple of Australian war songs. *Motherland! Australia Will Be There* by Felix McGlennon, for example, was published during the Boer War, while Harold Betteridge and John Beuker's *Australia Will Be There* also dates from World War I. It was the version quoting *Auld Lang Syne*, however, which was adopted as "The Official March Song of the Australian Expeditionary Sources. Sung by command before the Govenor [*sic*] General of the Commonwealth".[33] The words and music were written by W. W. Francis, or, as he was named in an early edition, "Skipper Francis (The British Channel Swimmer) to whom the Full Theatrical Performing Rights are Secured and Reserved". A recorded version featuring Stanley Read, now published on the website of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, includes the original sheet music's quotations from both the *Marseillaise* and *Rule Britannia* in its instrumental introduction. In the chorus, at the words "Should auld acquaintance be forgot", the music slows, quotes M2, and the soloist is joined by other voices; the answer to the question is a resounding "No! No! No!"[34]

The text of *For Auld Lang Syne: Australia Will Be There* makes it clear that Australians are to participate in the far-off war not because they themselves are threatened, but out of respect for the plight of "Old England" [*sic*]. Hence the reference to *Auld Lang Syne* in the title, text, and music—not so much a case of an old friend, but an entire continent, returning to fulfil the ties of auld lang syne. The instrumental introduction to the World War I versions begins by quoting *La Marseillaise* before striding forth with a reference to the chorus of *Rule Britannia*. The original version of the song is even more directly propagandistic, dealing with the question of whether "England" should have gone to war at all—presumably this was an argument heard against Australian troops getting involved. The text was later changed to include a reference to what for Australians was the defining moment of World War I, the action at Gallipoli. Even by that point, 1916, *For Auld Lang Syne. Australia Will Be There* was being advertised as "The Song That Has Become Historical"; the score of this newer version—published in London—lists the different troops that had already sung it, and the occasions.[35] The

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33 Francis 1915. The original sheet music is available at https://digital.collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/nodes/view/3582
34 The recording is available at https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/australia-will-be-there
35 Francis 1916.

song was resurrected in World War II, though with some changes: in the published version, the references to the *Marseillaise* and *Rule Britannia* are missing.[36]

As a well-loved song, and one whose sentiment could only too well be appreciated in times of war, it is not surprising that *Auld Lang Syne* should also be included in the US army songbook issued by the War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities in 1918. The book also includes the French, Belgian and Italian national anthems, some religious songs, and some old favourites including the Scots songs *Annie Laurie* and *Scots Wha Hae*.[37] The version given there of *Auld Lang Syne*—the tune being described as an "Old Scotch Air", and Burns named as author—is a shortened version of Burns's text including the first verse, the second "childhood" verse, and the "here's a hand" verse.[38] In the edition of the book produced for World War II, however, only the first and last verses are printed.[39]

World War II also produced further musical references to the song. *Let Us All Sing Auld Lang Syne* by Lew Brown and Ray Henderson, published in 1946 but with copyright in 1945, clearly appeals to the experience of all those separated from their loved ones, with the words "I know you're waiting but they're waiting too". This song may have been specifically intended for the war's end, given that its text says "we'll all give a toast with a cup full of cheer". The piano introduction is based on a motif from M2, and the first line of the main melody is based on the first line of M2. *Auld Lang Syne* also played a prominent role in a feature film released in 1940, *Waterloo Bridge*.[40] It is set just before the outbreak of World War II, and features a man reminiscing on the woman he met and loved just before leaving for the front during World War I: *Auld Lang Syne* appears as the *Farewell Waltz* which they dance the night before. This formed the basis for *Vals de Adios* by Melle Weersma and Enrique Cadicamo, published in Argentina in 1941, which includes both a Spanish translation of the text and also the two most standard verses of the Scots song. The Spanish translation in this case is directly related to the imminent parting, the first two lines, for example, reading

Adiós...Adiós...Me voy Amor...	Goodbye...Goodbye...I am going, Love,
Pronto...Pronto volveré	Soon...Soon I will return

Of all the wartime renditions, parodies and contrafacta, the final two discussed here are perhaps most poignant. As mentioned in Chapter 9, a Scouting contrafactum on

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36   Francis ca. 1941. A World War II edition of the song is available at https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-164862247/view?partId=nla.obj-164862252#page/n0/mode/1up

37   Bib. II/1918. See also Grant 2019.

38   The same three verses were those sung many years later in one of Kenneth McKellar's recordings of *Auld Lang Syne*, released in 1983 on the album *McKellar in Scotland* (Lismor, LIDL 6009).

39   Bib. II/1941.

40   Dir. by Mervin LeRoy (1940).

M2, using only repetitions of "We're here because we're here", was picked up by soldiers in World War I as well (soldiers, perhaps, who a few years earlier would have sung the song as Scouts). This so simple of contrafactum texts takes on wholly new resonances in the context of servicemen on campaign: it is typical of the dark humour and resilience of many soldiers' songs, and captures only too well what for many, as the war continued, must have seemed the genuine futility of their situation. In 2016, during the centenary commemorations of the war, the song became a central part of a performance memorial conceived by Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris: over 19,000 men dressed as World War I soldiers appeared, flashmob-style, at central locations in major British cities on the hundredth anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme, one of the most deadly and iconic battles in British history. Each soldier represented one of the British servicemen who died that day; at certain points through the day the "soldiers"—otherwise engaged in that most frequent of military activities, simply waiting—would sing the song after which the event was named.[41]

Auld Lang Syne, a song of parting but implicitly also of reunion, was naturally disposed to be significant in wartime; further significance comes from its power as one of the "old songs", in the sense discussed by Walter Heimann (Chapter 1)—a old song of reminiscence, of absence, and of hope. This is certainly true of the arrangement by Margaret Dryburgh for the vocal orchestra she and Norah Chambers organized in a Japanese internment camp in Sumatra in the 1940s. This and many other arrangements made by Dryburgh were rediscovered in the 1980s, and a film, *Paradise Road*, was made about the story.[42] Helen Colijn, whose sister Antoinette sang in the vocal orchestra and who herself was interned, described in liner notes to the accompanying CD how singing helped the women and girls deal with the inhumane conditions of the camp:

> Groups of women sang popular songs in English or Dutch. When after a year no one could remember any new ones, two of the British women created the vocal orchestra. Margaret Dryburgh, a Presbyterian missionary in Singapore, long-time piano teacher, choir director, and church organist, wrote from memory scores of piano and orchestral works. Norah Chambers, a government engineer's wife in Malaya, helped Miss Dryburgh rearrange the scores for four voices and, during secret rehearsals, conducted a new Dutch/English choir of thirty women, including my sisters. The impact of the first concert on December 27, 1943, on all of us was tremendous. Instead of the popular songs we expected, the glorious sounds of the Largo of Dvorak's *New World* filled the compound, followed by more music by Bach, Beethoven and Chopin, and Tchaikovsky. The music seemed a miracle among the hunger, disease, rats, cockroaches, bedbugs and smell of latrines. The music reinforced our sense of human dignity. We could rise above it all. We would struggle on.[43]

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41 The memorial event is documented at https://becausewearehere.co.uk
42 Dir. by Bruce Beresford (1997).
43 Liner notes to the soundtrack CD recorded by the Malle Babbe Women's Choir, *Paradise Road. Song of Survival*, Sony CD, 1997.

Auld Lang Syne, one of several songs sung by the vocal orchestra in the camp in the years that followed, is sung without a text. After the first verse—a simple, quiet homophonic setting with the tune sung by the middle voices—it plunges briefly into a loud and harrowing minor key before resolving back into a major tonality by the end of the second line. A third complete rendition of the verse is then sung, and only after this is the chorus tune heard. The arrangement concludes with another verse and chorus, with some more movement in the voices accompanying the main tune, and sung on the open, resonant vowel "o". Even without the larger context of the story, it would have to go down in history as one of the most moving arrangements of the song ever made. Most of those who originally sang it would never see the song's hope of reunion realised: when almost half its members had died from malnutrition and tropical diseases, the vocal orchestra sang no more.[44]

10.6 Threads Lead Back to the Centre

> *Harry*: What does this song mean? My whole life I don't know what this song means. I mean, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot", does that mean we should forget old acquaintances or does it mean that if we happen to forget them, we should remember them, which is not possible, because we already forgot?!
> *Sally*: Well, maybe it just means that we should remember that we forgot them or something... Anyway, it's about old friends.[45]

> Now at midnight, we're all going to sing *Auld Lang Syne*, right? And I don't know about you, but I've always wondered what it meant! [laughter from crowd]. So, I looked it up. It was written in old Scottish by a very famous poet, Robert Burns, and "auld lang syne" means "time remembered with fondness." But to me it's a song about remembering people who have meant something to you in your life—a mentor, a teacher, a friend from your childhood.[46]

The discussion in this chapter of early twentieth-century popular songs referencing *Auld Lang Syne* has already shown that many of them seem to draw a direct line back to usages of the phrase in song that predate even Burns. The quotations above demonstrate likewise that, even in the context of the newer tradition $S_{NY,}$ and with Burns's original five verses abbreviated in most cases to just the first verse and chorus, the song's original content continues to resonate. And yet, one of the questions I have been most frequently asked when introducing this study—and everyone recognizes the song by the third line of the melody at the latest—is "What does 'auld lang syne' actually mean?" The irony is that most people who claim they do not know the meaning

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44   More information on the orchestra, its members and its music can be found at https://singingtosurvive.com, created in connection with a 70th anniversary concert of the repertoire.

45   Dialogue (by Nora Ephron) from the New Year's Eve denouement of the film *When Harry Met Sally*, dir. by Rob Reiner (1989).

46   Barbra Streisand, transcribed from the recording of her concert on 31 December 1999, commercially available on both CD and DVD.

of "for auld lang syne" demonstrate, in the way they use the song, that they do. Their actions speaker louder than the strange words, as it were, and often hark back to some of the oldest contexts in which the song was sung. When Barbra Streisand sang the song at the close of 1999 and in the first few minutes of the year 2000, leading into it as quoted above, she introduced a countermelody, the text of which focussed on "friends that stand the test of time". This is not quite the same story as the friends that return after a long absence, but the underlying principle is the same, despite her claim not to know what the song is *actually* about. The countermelody is sung by her while the audience (supported by her backing singers) sing the main tune: unlike Sims Reeves in the nineteenth century, she not only tolerates this, but invites them to do so.[47]

Thus, while *Auld Lang Syne* has accumulated several new layers and shades of meaning as the years have passed, older meanings and significances of the song have not merely died away. Sometimes, they are replicated in the actions and explanations of a whole new generation of users. This section will look at some further evidence of how the song's uses and significances have changed and yet not changed over the twentieth century,

Earlier, it was noted that *Auld Lang Syne* was one of the first songs ever captured using the new technology of sound recording. The song is also very well represented in the first years of the commercial recording industry. The famous Australian soprano Nellie Melba recorded it in 1905, taking great care to roll her "rs" and do everything else she could to make the song sound authentically Scottish (she was actually of Scottish descent).[48] Melba sings only the first verse and the first of the "childhood" verses; the chorus is repeated each time, with additional voices joining her for the repeats—not dissimilar to the glee-type arrangements of the early nineteenth century. The recording proceeds at an unusually slow and stately pace. It is accompanied by the band of the Coldstream Guards: military bands feature on a significant proportion of early commercial recordings, for technical as much as cultural reasons (instruments had to be loud to be registered at all). A military band also forms the accompaniment to the recording made by the Dutch mezzo-soprano Julia Culp in 1914; the band was conducted by Walter B. Rogers, who also published a cornet fantasia on *Auld Lang Syne*.[49] Culp, too, sings only two verses in addition to the chorus, but in this case they are the two verses most commonly sung nowadays. This is also the case in bass-baritone Peter Dawson's recording of 1930: like Melba, he sings each chorus first as a solo, and then with accompaniment of other singers.[50] The orchestral accompaniment is reminiscent of the simple style of accompaniment which appears in the earliest settings of the song.

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47   See the quotation at the beginning of Chapter 7.

48   The recording can now be accessed at https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/1000003575/7201b-Auld_lang_syne

49   Culp's recording is now available at https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/200014657/B-14381-Auld_lang_syne. Roger's cornet solo version (1936) was published in the series "Famous cornet solos with piano accompaniment".

50   Re-released on *Ae fond kiss: Songs by Robert Burns Performed by Singers from Yesteryear*, Greentrax 2004.

Another nod to more recent practice comes in Dawson's version, though: while his recording, too, is slow and stately, the last chorus breaks into a more vigorous tempo. (This is the part of the song where, in my personal experience, the crowd start to yank their neighbours' hands up and down, or run into and back out of the centre of the circle they have formed.)

These recordings are interesting not least because they demonstrate a continuation in practice from some of the earliest publications and, presumably, performances of the song—the practice of singing the verse as a solo, the chorus as a part-song, is a feature of Beethoven's arrangement, and of that in the opera *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne*. At the same time, the recordings also demonstrate a continuity from the late nineteenth century through to today of some elements of the song in performance. Such documents, then, are links between the song's performed present and its past in an era before recording.

Films are another important source for tracing the developing traditions of the song. They are useful not just for actual instances of the song being performed on the screen, but also for the way it is integrated into soundtracks, which thus can provide useful information on associations with the song at the time the film was made. Feature films from the early to mid-twentieth century provide further evidence regarding prevailing significances of the song other than $S_{NY,}$ which is the most frequent context for the song's use in more recent films. As mentioned in Chapter 8, the song is sung as refreshments are served at the reform meeting organized by Mae West's character in *Klondike Annie* (1936). In *The Little Princess* (dir. by Walter Lang, 1939), set at the time of the Boer War and starring Shirley Temple, the crowds on the London street break into the song in best patriotic fashion when news comes that the Siege of Mafeking has ended. *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (dir. by John Cromwell, 1936), like *The Little Princess* based on a book by Frances Hodgson Burnett, integrates M2 into the score when the youngster Ceddie, now Lord Fauntleroy, and his great friend, the grocer Mr Hobbs, reflect on Ceddie's imminent departure from New York for England. All these films feature storylines which take place some considerable time before the films themselves were made. They raise the question of the extent to which the song itself was associated with these earlier times not just by virtue of its implied significance, but also as a song which itself seemed "old" or even "old-fashioned". What is certainly clear is that the connection between *Auld Lang Syne* and the New Year, although already well established by the early twentieth century, did not begin to dominate in film references until much later, although films contemporary with those just discussed do already use the song in this way—for example, the 1938 film *Holiday* (dir. by George Cukor) starring Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant.

A similar transition takes place in literature. While in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century references to *Auld Lang Syne* in the title of a book normally indicated a collection of reminiscences, or a tale of exiled love, in the 1960s it graced the covers of two detective novels. In Jack Sharkey's *Death for Auld Lang Syne*, the murder takes place

on New Year's Eve, and is discovered at five to midnight (which perhaps explains why those present seem to have forgotten to sing the song).[51] In Doris Miles Disney's *Should Auld Acquaintance*, on the other hand, a recently widowed woman fakes an old acquaintanceship with the dead wife of an apparently eligible man whom she is eager to meet. Little does she know (though most readers have already guessed) that the woman's death was no accident; the guilty party is arrested on New Year's Day.[52] A rather more positive tale of love second time around comes in Pamela Browning's *For Auld Lang Syne,* a romantic novel published in time for Christmas 1991 in the USA, and Christmas 1992 in the UK. It is the tale of two old lovers who are separated and reunited by a quirk of fate; the story unfolds over the Christmas period and culminates in a marriage proposal made just after midnight on January 1st.[53]

Times change, and modes of communication have changed dramatically. The radio programme "Commonwealth Christmas", which was broadcast for an hour preceding the King's speech on Christmas Day 1949, included a report from Liverpool Street Station in London, where emigrants had just boarded a train taking them on the first stage of their journey to Australia.[54] As the train left the station, the band on the platform played *Auld Lang Syne*; it may have been missing when Mr Micawber made the same journey, but it had certainly been played on at least some such occasions when the tide of emigration had swept high in the nineteenth century. When Judy Garland performed at the Palace Theater in New York for the last time after an incredibly successful run in the early 1950s, the orchestra and audience took their leave with *Auld Lang Syne*, just like all those countless occasions in the nineteenth century when stars of the stage were closing their runs, generally before a long period abroad; John Sinclair himself sang the song at the farewell concert for Mr Fawcett, who was about to retire, in 1830.[55] And just as the song, in its earliest phase, was typically sung at the benefit concerts of singers and musicians, so the phrase *For Auld Lang Syne* was used, in 1938 and 1939, as the title of short appeal films in which stars of the screen asked cinema audiences to donate to the Will Rogers Memorial Hospital, a specialist institute for pulmonary disorders set up after actor Will Rogers' death in a plane crash.[56] Likewise, as the song of friendship and charity, it was quite naturally *Auld Lang Syne* which the friends and acquaintances of film character George Bailey struck up after emptying their piggy banks, savings accounts and mattresses to help him in his hour of need, reassuring him that, for all that, *It's a Wonderful Life*.[57]

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51   Sharkey 1963.
52   Disney 1963.
53   Browning 1992.
54   British Library Sounds call number T7540WR TR1-TR2.
55   *Judy at the Palace*, Wiley BCD 1402 (1997); source for Sinclair information: playbill for Theatre Royal Covent Garden, May 20 1830, BL Playbills 101, UIN: BLL01016661273; available at http://access.bl.uk/item/viewer/ark:/81055/vdc_100022588879.0x000002#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=111&xywh=-316%2C502%2C3586%2C2367
56   Both released by Warner Bros.
57   Dir. by Franz Capra (1946).
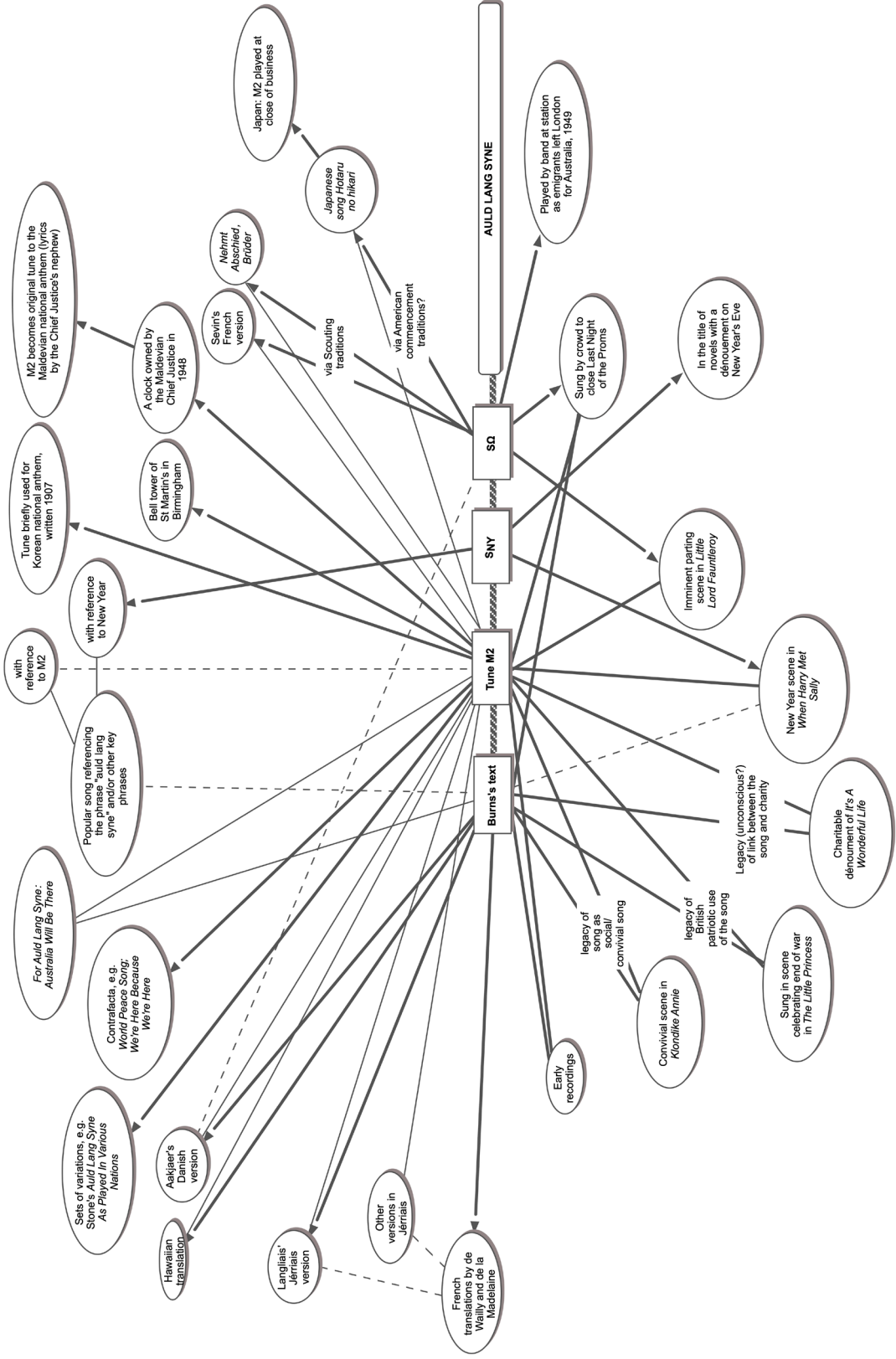
Fig. 10.5 A song abroad. Relative weighting of lines indicates relative significance/import: stronger lines indicate clear adoption of the tradition/element concerned. Figure created by author (2021).

Figure 10.5 attempts a visual representation of this expanding web of associations, threads leading back to the centre while the meanings and contexts continue to expand and shift. For all its complexity, it is a simplified diagram, drawing only on some of the instances of *Auld Lang Syne* discussed here, which in turn are a mere fraction of a larger whole. It is a summary of the musical communications and interactions around and through this song which lead us back to the questions posed at the beginning of the book: why, and how, has *Auld Lang Syne* proved so successful? Some conclusions are drawn in the next chapter, before a final chapter discussing the song's legacy in Scotland in the early twenty-first century.

11. Preliminary Conclusions

A Song and Its Culture

> If a song, or piece of music, should call up only a faint remembrance, that we were happy the last time we heard it, nothing more would be needful to make us listen to it again with peculiar satisfaction.[1]

The song published by James Johnson at Robert Burns's request in 1796 marked, from one point of view, the latest in a long string of developments that go back to the seventeenth century at least. A set of lute variations, possibly by a German musician known only as Mr Beck, and a ballad distributed around ten years later, possibly based on the work of Robert Aytoun or Francis Sempill, are the first definite indications of a tune and song called *Old Long Syne*. Whether or not there is any connection between these artefacts and the debate on the Scottish monarchy and the Act of Union of 1707, is a moot point; the tune was certainly being distributed in a much different context, as one of Henry Playford's *Original Scotch Tunes*, in early eighteenth-century London. The later eighteenth-century reception of *Auld Lang Syne* was influenced by the song written by Allan Ramsay to the tune then known by that name, here called M-1. Ramsay was himself a Jacobite, and a leading figure in the cultural revolution that was to prove more successful than military action in retaining a sense of Scotland's nationhood and identity, and which, through figures including James Macpherson ("Ossian"), Robert Burns, and Walter Scott, was to have a fundamental impact on European romanticism. This cultural environment, in turn, would ensure the success of anything bearing the name of Scotland, and particularly the name of "Robert Burns". Even though his authorship of *Auld Lang Syne* was mooted only after his early death, its success undoubtedly owes much to this, too. And yet, the story of *Auld Lang Syne* and in particular, its success, is much more complex than that.

The connections between the Jacobite sentiment of "auld lang syne" and the tune bearing that name continue to be strong throughout the eighteenth century, as a number of contrafacta testify. The later Jacobite songs in particular reflect the development of Jacobitism into less an active revolutionary movement, and more a social movement celebrating these old affiliations and hopes. This may help to explain why early eighteenth-century songs on *Auld Lang Syne* are stories of love requited

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1   Beattie 1778, 174.

or unrequited, while the song published by Burns is a social song, maintaining the theme of reunion after a long separation, uniting two childhood friends rather than two lovers.

Where, then, did Burns get his inspiration for this song, other than the known sources mentioned above? He claimed to have taken it down from an old man's singing. There can be no sure way of knowing the extent to which this is true, or how extensive were the changes Burns made to what he termed the "glorious fragment". The most convincing evidence for attributing at least some truth to his story is the tune with which "Burns's song" was originally published in 1796, a tune for which Burns himself had little time. This tune, M1, is clearly related to M-1, but is not known from any printed or written source prior to the *Scots Musical Museum*. Burns himself believed it to be the original tune from which M-1 derived, a plausible explanation given that the first written sources for M-1 are instrumental sources, which traditionally included elaboration and variation on a basic model. However, it is also possible that M1 is a version of M-1, or of a common predecessor, which achieved its modern form through the usual processes of oral transmission. Either way, there seems to me little ground to dispute Burns's assertion that he heard an old man singing the song; we can only be disappointed that he gave no more information on who this man was.[2]

Unclear also is why George Thomson, the man Burns purists love to hate, chose the tune M2 to replace what both he and Burns felt to be the much inferior tune M1. Structural similarities between the two tunes may have provided the initial inspiration. Also, through the overture to *Rosina*, and very possibly through the influence of Niel Gow's publications, there is every chance that a tune which to all intents and purposes is M2 was well-enough known in the closing years of the eighteenth century to be a fairly safe bet for a lyric which clearly had potential. If Burns is to be believed, M2 had already been picked up for a song popular in Nithsdale, where he lived from the late 1780s onwards—a few years after its first publication in Shield's opera and Gow's collection of strathspeys. Just who was responsible for the final few tweaks which turned the tune of Burns's *Can Ye Labour Lea* into the tune now universally known as

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2   It is poetic licence indeed—and complete conjecture on my part—to wonder whether there was a connection to Burns's attendance at a dinner in Edinburgh celebrating the sixty-seventh birthday of Charles Edward Stuart, which would have taken place in the year before Burns's first version in the letter to Mrs Dunlop (the birthday in question having fallen on 31 December 1787). As Crawford recounts, according to a journal entry by the Reverend James MacDonald telling of a conversation with Burns the month during Burns's final illness, Burns had attended that dinner; Burns was moved to tears when telling MacDonald of the meeting, there, of two elderly gentlemen who had fought side by side at Culloden. Burns told MacDonald this in the context of promising to send him an ode he had composed for this occasion (as opposed to after it); there is no mention of *Auld Lang Syne* being sung (Burns's version had however not been published at this point). Crawford does not suggest any connection to *Auld Lang Syne* (Crawford 2009, 284, 395). Given the emotional impact on Burns of this event, it is perhaps likely that he would have made some reference to it in his letter to Mrs Dunlop containing his first written version of the song, a letter which as discussed specifically references the fate of the Stuart cause. The main evidence in favour of this conjecture relates to the Jacobite heritage of the song, and the hypothesis, derived from sources including Burns's first and working versions, that it may have derived from a Jacobite drinking song then extant in oral tradition.

Auld Lang Syne is unclear. It may have been Thomson himself, or the composer he had employed to arrange it, Leopold Koželuch.

Thus, we have a net which even at this stage has gathered together at least two continental musicians (Beck and Koželuch), some of Scotland's most famous poets, and publishing houses in both Edinburgh and London. The initial breakthrough for the song seems to have come in Scotland, however. Early references to the song or the phrase "auld lang syne" in the Edinburgh press in the very early nineteenth century link it to benefit evenings and charitable endeavours, suggesting that this aspect of the song's sentiment led to its initial performance on the stage. The sentiment is one that Burns's song shares with many of its eighteenth-century predecessors, not to mention Blamire's exactly contemporary version, *The Nabob*. From an early period, we find the song in a number of Scottish chapbooks—almost exclusively, however, with a text which shows consistent variation to Burns's song. It is tempting to suggest a missing link for this "toom the cup" version of the song. It could be as simple as a particular printer publishing the song with this version of the lyrics, and becoming the source for others (including for the tenor John Sinclair, who, as we have seen, played a not insignificant part in establishing the song outwith Scotland). There is certainly a big difference between the more lavish publications of the song including printed music, which seem to derive closely from the version published by Thomson, and the more modest chapbooks. The more expansive publications seem quickly to have accepted M2 as being *Auld Lang Syne*, despite the long tradition associating M-1 with that name. As chapbooks do not generally contain tunes, we cannot know for certain what tune(s) their contents would have been sung to, but the structure of the lyrics suggest M-1 would have been an unlikely choice, and the balance of evidence suggests that Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* and its derivatives very quickly became associated with M2.

One reason for this could be that many of the first musicians associated with the song in the sources consulted here were not Scottish and did not have close links to its musical traditions—Mrs Ashe for example, at whose 1805 benefit the song was programmed, or the composer and harpist Elouis, whose setting was published in 1807. The speed at which the phrase "auld lang syne" becomes associated with M2 does suggest that its previous linkage with M-1 was not widespread beyond a certain sector of the population. M1, meanwhile, does not seem to have become established until the later twentieth century, as the next and final chapter will discuss in detail.

Auld Lang Syne's real breakthrough almost certainly came with the opera *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne,* which also introduced audiences to the abiding image of men in a tavern, raising a glass to friends far away. Theatre's role in establishing songs in the popular consciousness cannot be separated from the activities of publishers and purveyors of songsheets and chapbooks; the two together demonstrate that many elements of what we now regard as the music or culture industry were already functioning in the nineteenth century and even in the eighteenth. Both these media can however only function if the people that pick up songs and tunes from such

sources proceed to carry them into new contexts, and develop relationships to them that ensure their continued existence over a longer period.

Just as Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* was published in a period marked by increasing Scottish self-confidence, and also increasing interest in Scotland from outwith its borders, and just as the initial peak in *Auld Lang Syne*'s wider reception comes in tandem with a music drama which encapsulated the Jacobite craze, so the second flush of the song, and the development of one of its most distinctive cultural usages—its use as a song of parting—comes around the time of a further cementation of the Scots' own image of themselves and others' images of them. The ascent of the tradition SΩ—the use of *Auld Lang Syne* at parting—occurs roughly in the later 1840s and especially the 1850s: the song rises, as it were, with the Victorian age itself, with its love of all things Scottish, but also with the Scots' contribution to the project of Empire.

Thus, the continued existence of *Auld Lang Syne* seems to have become guaranteed at a relatively early stage. In an 1883 edition of some of Burns's poems, it was commented that "This song is one of the best known of Burns's; and is sung with fervour at all kinds of social gatherings of Scotsmen before parting. Its characteristic melody is now also familiar in England".[3] This is radically understating the point. The melody M2 was known not only in Britain but in many other parts of the world by the 1820s. Within British society—which was approaching the height of its colonial powers—it was one of the most important British group songs of the mid- to late nineteenth century, for a time closely linked to *God Save the King/Queen* and *Rule Britannia* at national events and celebrations. Sung quite naturally as a song of tribute alongside *See The Conquering Hero Comes* and *For He's A Jolly Good Fellow*, it also became the song of parting, and this even though the song and the key phrases that make it are in a language that not even most Scots speak. It remained a song of parting for key British institutions even when it began to seem less appropriate as a British national song *per se*. And as the century wore on, it was also still used as a song of union and reunion, with these traditions coming together to form the basis, from the later nineteenth century, of the traditional use of *Auld Lang Syne* as *the* song of New Year.

What role did migration and colonization play in the spread of *Auld Lang Syne*? Undoubtedly a large one, not least because the subject matter of the song makes it so appropriate to the experience of living far from one's homeland. That *Auld Lang Syne* should become so expressive of this, is thanks to its gradually becoming freed of the tethers of the "childhood" verses which link it so explicitly to a particular context. The fact that, aside from the first verse and chorus, it is the verse beginning "And here's a hand" that is nowadays most likely to be sung, is linked to S∞ and to a tradition of singing the song in the round with joined hands which seems to go back to the 1840s at the very latest. One wonders very much how the song was performed in that tavern scene in Davy and Pocock's operatic version of *Rob Roy*: the stage directions, unfortunately, give no hint.

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3   Burns 1833, 31.

The traditions S∞, SΩ and S$_{NY}$ are the real reason for the "globalization" of the song at such an early stage. It's no good simply making a song available: there are lots of songs out there, and relatively few become highly popular, let alone reach the kind of heights that *Auld Lang Syne* has. Indeed, the reception of the song in many countries around the world, and especially in countries where the factors of migration and colonization play no direct role, are amongst the best indication of the importance of tradition and ritual for the establishment and continuous reestablishment of the song. It became a Japanese folksong most probably because it was already being used at American graduations. It became known and used in Germany via the Scouting movement. In other cases, for example Denmark, it became known because of the credentials of the man responsible for it ever getting into print at all.

Thus, all the evidence points to the social functions and significances which became attached to *Auld Lang Syne* as being of prime importance in helping the song achieve and maintain the important position it holds in world culture, a position which very few other songs enjoy. Yet these uses and associations could not have become established if the components of the song itself had not been amenable to them. We have variously seen how such diverse factors as the cult of Burns, nineteenth-century views of Scottish culture and identity, and global social networks fed into the appreciation of the song; the sentiment expressed in the song's text is both universal enough and specific enough to the trials of day-to-day life to make it an obvious candidate for a song which carries across political and social divides. Not all of these factors have been equally important in all instances of the song's use. Indeed, the multiplicity of these contexts and traditions, however interrelated their development, would seem to be at least as important as the fact that they exist at all.

<div align="center">***</div>

The sheer number and variety of contexts in which *Auld Lang Syne* and other songs like it crop up may seem surprising. But what happens when we turn this idea on its head? What happens when we view *Auld Lang Syne* not as the exception to a general rule about the ephemerality of songs—mere trifles, remember—and instead suggest that *Auld Lang Syne* is a prime example of an alternative set of rules? Three aspects of the story here told, three factors in particular, may be of particular importance in helping explain *Auld Lang Syne*, and much more besides:

1. Firstly, there is **the role of fraternal-type organizations**, exemplary here of the more general way in which groups and communities so often copy the successful practices of other groups and communities.[4] Fraternal-type organizations are among the most obvious examples of this simply because they are so obvious in the level of importance they give to symbolism and ritual; but other examples have been noted here as well, such as the use of *Auld Lang Syne* at graduation ceremonies, first in America and then

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4   See also Grant 2011/2.

in several Asian countries. The phenomenon is almost certainly more fundamental even than this. People copy each other—from birth on. Groups of people copy other groups of people—or share their repertoires, as Charles Tilly would have put it.[5]

Fraternal-type organizations also underline the importance of the "group song" approach to song research. Fraternities may meet, in the first instance, on a local level, and they may integrate references to a common national or ethnic heritage, but people are not born members of fraternities—they subscribe to them, join them, are elected and initiated into them. Moreover, their significance in the case of *Auld Lang Syne* is also that they operate over national boundaries. Otherwise, they do much of what "tradition bearers" do in the narrower field of folksong research.

Personal relationships to songs are not necessarily formed in the context of formalized groups, or with the express intention of being "group songs". This process can take on other, more individual forms as well—forms which may still imply identification with a particular group, or the desire to adopt a particular identity, or a reflection of who one is, but the term "group song" does not necessarily carry the full implications of this.[6] *Auld Lang Syne*, however, is most emphatically, and in its modern form always has been, a group song. It is a song implicitly about human beings' connections to one another, about their mutual obligations to one another: this is one reason why it is so natural that it be picked up by fraternal-type organizations, and many others. Moreover, this example emphasizes the importance of primary groups— and the importance of singing in a group, even if it is only after a few drinks at the end of a party—for the active reception of a song, and, even more importantly, for raising this song onto a new level of significance; this, in turn increases the likelihood of the song's transmission beyond the temporal and geographical boundaries of that small local group.

2. Secondly, the rapid spread of *Auld Lang Syne* at key points in the nineteenth century is testimony to **the role of theatre and print media** in establishing songs in the public consciousness before the era of broadcasting. Indeed, *Auld Lang Syne* challenges us to revise many of our assumptions about the role of modern, audiovisual mass media. Previously it was the stage; now it is the screen, or the radio, that provides the focus and the common point of orientation for a broad public: important in all of these instances, however, is this orientation towards a central point (or rather, central points). We can refer back to Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1, and the example of fraternal-type organizations, to help explain this: gathered at a central point—the jamboree—the Scouting song is picked up; and, in the future, Scouts around the world will orientate themselves to all those other absent Scouts by singing this one song. Freemasons, likewise, pass on many of their traditions orally, and this is probably how most of their

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5   See, e.g., Tilly 2006. Tilly's particular interest was political dissent and how it is expressed, but his use of the term repertoire to indicate the possibilities open to social groups to behave and express themselves, is more widely useful.

6   See also Crafts et. al. 1993.

songs are communicated nowadays. The number of Masonic songbooks in existence is testimony not only to a taste for ever more songs about the Craft, but also coordination of some elements between Lodges, as an expression of that larger network of which each Lodge is a part. The difference between picking up a song from the reservoir offered in print media, and active performance, is that only when it is performed does it become memory, and only when it is part of memory does it have the potential to be of personal significance. But there are also ways of triggering this memory—a false memory, if we like—before this happens. If, for example, we are told that a particular song is sung by people round the world to mark the end of social gatherings, we are more likely to invest the song with a sense of significance even before we have got to know it at all. The same thing applies when publishers are sly enough to publish a "famous song" or a "favourite song", possibly "as sung by Mr Sinclair/Mr Broadhurst/ Mr Darley" or whoever else: this attracts attention precisely because it indicates that *this song has found favour*, ergo, it must be worthwhile.

We can cry salt tears about globalization, about the loss of local traditions, about authority and power and the culture industry and the rest, but what is happening here has been going on for centuries, and relates to some of the most basic features of human social life, which is to say: human life. People are social animals. They like to communicate with each other, they *need* to communicate with each other. They also want and need to be accepted—it's all part of the same parcel. The historical focus of this book has been the nineteenth century, because this is where the international reception of the song and its traditions have their roots, but also because of the importance of drawing attention to the recurrent mechanisms that help steer human communication through music. The chapters on the eighteenth century should also have demonstrated that what is true of the nineteenth century is to a large extent also true of the eighteenth, the only differences being that the channels of communication may have been slightly slower, or not quite so technically elaborate—or perhaps, merely different. The changes of degree that changes to these channels bring about are important, but can oftentimes be explained with reference back to the older channels and models. S_{NY}, for example, was not invented by broadcasting. It had already spread and become established in many groups and communities before this reached a new level through broadcasting. What broadcasting did was to provide a focus though which, more and more quickly, more and more people across a wider and wider area could coordinate their actions at what humans have decided is a point of great symbolic significance: the chiming of a clock, distinguishing a new stage in what is basically an artificial system of marking time.

3. So why is time so important? *"Why regard the passing year?"* Rituals are part of what it means to be human; they help us make sense of that humanity. And **group songs are not just often essential parts of ritual, they are in themselves forms of ritual**: this is the strength of inherited significance; this is why group songs are imbued with such meaning. The "old songs", in Walter Heimann's sense, are important because

we define ourselves by where we come from—auld lang syne—not just where we are going. And I dare say the evolutionary theorists will tell us one day that these kinds of memories are important because of the function they fulfil with regards to the obligations people have to one another, and without which it may be so much more difficult to survive. Auld acquaintances are quite simply not meant to be forgot. Auld songs help us remember.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In Chapter 1, I suggested that it is better to view *Auld Lang Syne* as a phenomenon rather than a song, given in particular the very mobility of the individual elements associated with it and the fact that when we say *Auld Lang Syne* we could of course be referring to any one of at least three different tunes, or several versions of a basic text, even before we arrive at the issue of translations of that text, or the ritual significances associated with the song. But, at least in terms of the international establishment of the song, there is one element which, though not necessarily present in each rendition, recurs with by far the greatest frequency, to the extent that it is, by anyone's reckoning, absolutely synonymous with the phenomenon. That element is the tune M2.

Songs work best when they have a pleasing and memorable tune. It is recognition of the tune that leads audiences to be delighted by the introduction of it, or an improvisation on it, or to buy a set of variations on it for the piano in the parlour. This is the basic force of a well-known song, and any power it has derives from this. The well-known tune of a song will carry that song's sentiment with it even when the rest of the song is missing, at least for people who have come into contact with it. The social significance of *Auld Lang Syne* and the structure of M2 are thus closely interrelated. While M2 would almost certainly not have achieved this level of renown without becoming linked to a song of union, a song of parting, and a song of New Year, it is equally true to say that these significances of the song could not have come about with just any tune. By the simplest means of comparison, if *Auld Lang Syne* had continued to be associated with M1 alone, it would never have achieved the standing it has today.

What makes M2 so special is not only its simplicity, already commented on in Chapter 3, but also the exact form this simplicity takes. And this, in turn, is linked closely to the tune's very flexibility. M2 is an incredibly adaptable tune, by turns a Scottish dance or a military march, very conveniently pitched for clocks, as we have seen, but also for humans (and not only those struggling to learn the accordion) who would have, and have, less problem with memorising and singing this tune than with many another. It is variously played and sung fast, and slow, like a dance, like a dirge. It is universal not because of some unwritten rule of musical behaviour, but because it can be adapted so well to fit all sorts of musical behaviours.

It has already been noted that M2 has march-like and anthemic qualities. Like national anthems, military music in most states—European and post-colonial—is broadly or in some cases very similar. Secondly, M2 in its modern form—and this

is the big difference made by all those small changes between the sources from the 1780s, and the tune published by Thomson in 1799—is not only much less obviously "Scottish" in style but also, ironically, maintains just enough of a feature common to Scottish music to lend credence to some Asian countries' claims over the tune as one of their own: in other words, the tune uses only the five notes of the pentatonic scale. On the other hand, however, it does not sound particularly pentatonic, particularly when certain other markers of a "Scottish" style—"Scotch snap" rhythms, or appoggiaturas before the downbeat—are absent. More particularly, for most listeners whose habits have been trained on seven-note, Western tonality, other tonal patterns overweigh the missing fourth and seventh degrees of the scale: one of the facts that makes the structure of M2 so simple is the steady concentration on the notes of the major triad; the larger spans in this tune are crossed by triadic rather than by stepwise motion, which would make the absence of certain scale degrees much more obvious.

When people sing *Auld Lang Syne* nowadays they do not generally hold to the rhythms of the tune as published in 1799. This is in part a result of the natural process by which tunes are adapted over time, but also (and relatedly) marks the move away from specific markers of a particular culture (Scots) towards what appears to be a more general constellation (even though this generality may itself be the result of cultural and historical events rather than any "naturally" general form of expression). Similarly, the text has also been reduced to its most general elements; and it is these elements, and the traditions that have grown up around them, that so often form the basis of foreign translations. The tune on its own continues to resonate with this sentiment even when these other elements are missing. But even meanings can get tired. What happens when something is so familiar that we stop seeing or hearing it, or wanting to? What happens when the meanings we attach to something are contradicted by the meanings that other people attach to it? Whose song is it anyway?

12. Auld Acquaintance

Auld Lang Syne Comes Home

This is the start of a new sang.[1]

In July 1999, the Scottish Parliament reconvened in Edinburgh almost three hundred years after it had been suspended following the 1707 Act of Union. The new Parliament, set up following a referendum on devolution from Westminster in all issues affecting Scotland alone, came around a quarter century after a previous referendum on the issue had been defeated. On the day the Parliament met again, many of the speakers drew explicit links back to the dissolution of the old Parliament—done without the vote of the people—and the democratic decision to reinstate it. These sentiments came together in the singing by Sheena Wellington of Burns's *Is There For Honest Poverty* (*A Man's A Man For A' That*).

This was not the only of Burns's auld sangs to mark the new sang of the reconvened Parliament. Five years after it reconvened, the Parliament moved into its new building at Holyrood in Edinburgh. The official video of the opening ceremony effectively has *Auld Lang Syne* as its theme music: it concludes with shots of those in attendance singing the song in the now traditional manner, accompanied by musicians from the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. The video begins, however, with a very different version of the song, sung by Eddi Reader, who the previous year had released an album of songs by Burns, also accompanied by the RSNO and premiered at that year's *Celtic Connections* festival in Glasgow.[2] Reader's version differed markedly in using not M2, not even M1, but a different tune that I will here call M3. It is just one of a slew of recent recordings of the song which demonstrate a reappraisal of it in Scotland that coincides—not accidentally, I would suggest—with more general reappraisals of Scottish culture, politics, and identity.

This chapter will focus on nine versions by Scottish singers and musicians recorded from 1980 to 2004, including recordings by some of the most prominent musicians working in Scotland today; it will also briefly discuss two other, very different Scottish

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1   Lord David Steele, at the reconvening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999; he is referring back to the famous phrase used by the then Lord Chancellor at the last session of the Scottish Parliament in 1707.
2   *Holyrood: The New Scottish Parliament Building. Opening Ceremony Highlights* (Scottish Parliament, 2005).

versions as well as some recent interpretations from other countries for comparison. By placing these recordings in the wider context provided by a number of historical, literary, and sociological commentaries on Scotland published in this period, it will also ask what these developments tell us about Scottish culture and identity at the start of this new era.[3]

12.1 The Road to Devolution

Scottish nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon. This may seem surprising given the extensive discussion of Jacobitism in Chapter 2, above; but from well before the end of the eighteenth century until fairly late in the twentieth, there were relatively few calls for Scottish independence.[4] Why this should be the case, and why such a movement should then emerge in the later twentieth century, has been discussed in a number of studies; these became noticeable from the early to mid-1990s, when it had become abundantly clear that changes in the political relationship between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom were inevitable. Since this period coincides almost exactly with the versions of *Auld Lang Syne* discussed in this chapter, it is worthwhile making a detour into this wider context.

We have already seen that the place the Scots carved for themselves in the British Empire, coupled with the maintenance of separate legal, religious and educational systems after the 1707 Act of Union and the sense of a unique Scottish cultural identity forged from the Jacobite period onwards, helped to ensure that Scots were able to celebrate their Scottish and British identities simultaneously. When the sun finally did set on the British Empire, there were economic and political consequences for all of the United Kingdom. David McCrone has argued that, though the emergence of Scottish nationalism is linked to a number of fundamental social changes in the mid- to late twentieth century, there is little evidence to suggest that these changes were more dramatic in Scotland than in England in the same period. The real difference, he suggests, is that they were diffracted through diverging political agendas, leading to quite different social outcomes. These agendas had their roots in the specific myths—in his sense of "self-evident truths" rather than "falsehoods"—with and through which the Scots identified themselves. Scottish cultural identity had always been distinctive, but central Scottish myths—such as that Scotland was inherently a more egalitarian society than England—meant that they also reacted differently to the transformations in economic fortune that marked post-war British society.[5] And as the Empire declined, and with it Britain, so Scotland, in a sense, arose again as an alternative.[6]

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3   See here also the essays in McKerrell & West (eds) 2018.
4   And, to reiterate, Jacobitism was not merely a Scottish cause.
5   McCrone 2001, especially Chapter 4. I referred to this earlier version of McCrone's work on the sociology of Scotland when writing this book; the arguments are considerably expanded in McCrone 2017, where the main discussion of class and egalitarianism in Scotland is in Chapter 9.
6   See also Scott 1996.

The key decade here was the 1970s.[7] The upsurge in the fortunes of the Scottish National Party (SNP) had begun earlier, in the 1960s, largely as a result of wider social change: the increased mobility of the workforce, the creation of new towns, and several other factors led to a lessening of traditional political, social and religious allegiances among younger voters in particular, and it was they who tended to vote for the pro-independence SNP at this point. Then, three things happened. Firstly, oil was discovered in the North Sea, and the ensuing political debate on who should benefit triggered a debate on Scotland's position within the wider Union. Secondly, in 1979 there was a referendum on Scottish devolution: a majority of the votes cast were in favour, but a hurdle of 40% of the entire electorate had been set and was not attained. And thirdly, Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party—traditionally the party most closely aligned with Scottish Unionism and Presbyterianism—had been experiencing a decline in support before then, but Thatcher's free-market politics, her attack on state intervention, and the southern-English focus of her new brand of nationalism led to a significant decline in support for the party in Scotland. The SNP, too, lost some of its ground at this time; but under Thatcherism, the question of constitutional change for Scotland became a key political issue for other parties as well. By the end of the 1980s, only the Conservative Party favoured the constitutional status quo; and after the 1997 general election, not a single Scottish Conservative MP remained. The manifesto of the Labour Party, which won that election, contained a promise to hold a referendum on devolution; this time, support for devolution was overwhelming.

The reimagining of the nation that led to devolution also found expression in a number of polemics and debates on Scottish culture and national identity. Most of these focussed on the two elements that were seen to present exactly the kind of romanticized, backward-looking view of Scottish culture that had little relevance for contemporary Scottish life: "kailyard" literature and "tartanry". Yet critiques of these two elements were often still partial to what had been called the "Caledonian antisyzygy", a term established in the earlier twentieth century describing a perceived dichotomy at the heart of Scottish culture: a belief that Scottish culture was essentially paradoxical, torn, caught between its romantic heart and its rational head, between its own heritage and culture and that of its dominant southern neighbour.[8] Whatever Scottish culture was, the diagnosis—so it seemed—was not healthy.[9]

Cultural and artistic movements tend to anticipate and precipitate social and political changes, and so it is in this case: the reaction against kailyard and tartanry,

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7   The discussion in this paragraph draws in particular on McCrone 2001, Chapter 5; in McCrone 2017, these issues form part of Chapter 19. A lot has happened in Scottish politics since 2001 (to put it mildly), and this is reflected in this more recent discussion by McCrone.

8   The term was introduced by Gregory Smith in 1919; Hugh MacDiarmid used it as the title of an essay published in the early 1930s. The term is so influential that it features in the *Dictionary of the Scots Language*: https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/sndns677

9   See also Daiches 1964.

and the continued instrumentalization of the "antisyzygy" idea, began much earlier than serious calls for constitutional change. In an essay on Scottish literature in the twentieth century published two years before the 1998 referendum, Douglas Gifford traced three key stages leading to a point where, perhaps for the first time in a long time, the Scots' image of themselves is no longer concerned with looking backwards to a mythical past or downwards, into their own navel, but with looking forward, around, abroad, and into the realm of an imagination in which Scotland can be, quite possibly, anything it wants to be. According to Gifford, the first stage in this process is what is known as the Scottish Renaissance, a term used to characterize the work of a number of quite different writers who shared an interest in readdressing "Scotland" and its relationship to its past, generally with nationalist and Marxist leanings. Gifford suggests that one of the most significant unifying aspects of literature in this period— the 1920s and 1930s—was the way in which its main characters were portrayed as actors in a much longer and more significant history. These characters had archaic and archetypical qualities: not only the past, but also the future of Scotland rested heavy on their shoulders. This type of writing fell out of favour after World War II, however, possibly because its use of symbolism and national mythology were felt to be much too close to the ideology of National Socialism. Instead, Scottish literature became realist and urban; characters now had to fight with the accepted ideas of their culture. The highpoint in this stage of the development came in the starkly prosaic works of James Kelman.

   And then, Gifford suggests, something changed. Taking Edwin Morgan's *Sonnets from Scotland* (1984) as a starting point, Gifford argues that these mark a decided move away from the cynicism of much post-war literature. Instead, they demonstrate

> a rediscovered sense of the limitless imaginative possibilities of the *idea* of Scotland, or Scotlands, a matrix of myths, attitudes, possibilities, histories [... Morgan creates] new attitudes, new mythologies. The new myths don't, however, pretend to any other source of authority than the human imagination; identity is not perceived as an almost magical creation of past communities and their dreams handed on through collective unconscious, nurtured by a presiding Mother Scotland, but a web of rational and irrational meanings consciously constructed and acknowledged as such, delicately balancing the claims of Scottish and international cultures, and insisting gently on an ultimately more than rational basis for living relationships.[10]

Several aspects of this new stage have been picked up in other commentaries as well.[11] Firstly, there is the idea that "Scotland" has been replaced by "Scotlands", marking both a more inclusive attitude to Scottish identity and a sense of its limitless possibilities. Thus, while mythology is *en vogue* again, this is no longer or not merely the mythology of a glorious past, but the possibility of strange parallel universes, futuristic scenarios, and the like. Secondly, and simultaneously, Scottish writers have

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10   Gifford 1996, 32.
11   See, e.g., Crawford 1997, Motz 2000.

become more consciously international in their ideas, inspirations, and aspirations. Gifford also notes that this period saw an upsurge in the publication of older and previously marginal Scottish literature, which enabled a broader view of "Scotland" to emerge but also boosted confidence by "reasserting the validity of Scottish fictional and literary tradition" (a process which can also be observed with regard to Scottish musical traditions).[12] As he continues,

> the underlying forces of insistent Scottish identity-making were moving, and are moving, inexorably in the direction of synthesis, but a synthesis which is permissive of multiple perspectives and a plurality of approaches through different genres.

The crucial point, however, is that

> there is a desire to retain amidst the plethora of possible Scotlands a unifying sense of a force-field or web of connections which hold together what would otherwise deconstruct into meaningless regional variants, each of them susceptible to further reconstruction, so that as "authenticity" is lost, so also is any awareness of identity or permanence.[13]

Thus, there is a "desire to hold together 'Scotlands' in a net of deliberate casting", redefining what community is, and pushing the idea of "Scottishness" as far as it will go.

Cultural commentaries and research on Scottish themes seem now to be catching up with this altogether less neurotic approach to Scotland's past, present, and future. In his study of Scottish music hall, for example, Paul Maloney has argued that music hall "offered a more rounded and varied interpretation of Scottish culture than the predominance of Scottish comic caricature has led us to expect", and that the standard images of the tartan-clad Highlander contributed as much to Scots' understanding of their role in the Empire as it did to encapsulating this image for the outsider (as we have seen in the case of *Jessie's Dream*).[14] The suggestion is that the importance of these stereotypes for Scots was simply that they were identifiable *as Scots*. Understanding, and accepting, that Scots embraced the opportunities of Union and Empire—and its crimes—would seem the first step towards a mature idea of what to do *next*.

What is striking about the commentaries listed here, and many more besides, is that their analyses of Scottish cultural and political life in the later twentieth century often converge on a single point: namely, that Scottish society is moving towards a reassertion of its autonomy within, or possibly even apart from, the Union. This trend accelerated around the time of the referendum on Scottish independence held in 2014, not least because of the mobilization of previously quiet voices in the electorate in the form of numerous grassroots organizations, and ensuing debates both public and private about what Scotland is, and what her future might be. Those discussions lie a

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12   Significant institutional markers of this include the establishment of an undergraduate degree in traditional and folk music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. The past decades have also witnessed a significant increase in academic studies relating to music in Scotland.

13   Gifford 1996, 37.

14   Maloney 2007, 163. On *Jessie's Dream*, see Chapter 7, above, and Grant 2010.

stage ahead of the recordings to be discussed below, but help situate and contextualize Scottish musicians' reappraisals of that most ubiquitous of Scottish songs.

12.2 The Return of M1 and the Rise of M3

In Chapter 10, it was noted that foreign-language versions of *Auld Lang Syne* can be broadly divided into two groups: translations based on the text of Burns's song, and versions that translate the inherited significance of the song, particularly as a song of parting. This division between what we could call "lyrical" and "social", or between "solo" and "collective" approaches to the song, also applies in the case of recent Scottish recordings. "Social" and "collective" approaches continue to make up the lion's share of contemporary recordings, and can be taken to cover everything from sing-along karaoke versions to two more interesting takes on the song which will be discussed later. Generally, these versions can be recognized by the use of only the most commonly sung verses (if they are vocal versions at all), and they use M2. These contrast with "lyric-oriented" versions which will be the main focus here: their homage is to the text of Burns's song, and almost all use not M2, but M1 or a completely new tune, M3.

M3 (see Fig. 1.6 in Chapter 1), was introduced by the group the Tannahill Weavers, and appeared on their album *The Tannahill Weavers IV* which was recorded in 1980–1981. According to the note that accompanied that recording,

> It is sad to say that the beauty and sadness of the lyric [of *Auld Lang Syne*] is usually forgotten, glossed over or, at best, never conveyed by the popular melody. It is to be hoped that this version carries the story line to the listener as much as it does to us.[15]

In order to further sharpen the focus on the long version of the text, the Tannahill Weavers' version begins not with the usual first verse, but with the two childhood verses, then proceeding to what in B4 are the fourth and fifth verses. Only then is the chorus introduced; the first verse is not sung at all.

At the time when this quite different version of *Auld Lang Syne* was recorded, the Tannahill Weavers were not aware that Burns's song had originally been published to a different tune. Though many sources attribute M3 to the band itself, band member Roy Gullane has stated that another Scots song, *May Colvin*, provided the melody, one they felt to be much better suited to the lyrics. When they later discovered M1, they were, as Gullane puts it, "relieved" to find it was so similar to the one they had chosen.[16]

May Colvin is related to the fourth group of Child Ballads, "Lady Isobel and the Fause Knight"; the earliest known version in print of the Scottish version also cited by Child is David Herd's *Ancient and Modern Ballads*. Though the tune often given for English versions of this ballad is not related to M3, Betrand Harris Bronson's *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* includes a tune for *May Colvin* the second half of which matches M3. According to Bronson,

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15   Source: Tannahill Weavers, 'Auld Lang Syne', *Bandcamp*, https://tannahillweavers.bandcamp.com/track/auld-lang-syne

16   Personal communication; I am grateful to Roy Gullane for his quick response to my enquiry.

The tune appears in *The Scots Musical Museum* with a version of "Cowdenknowes" (Child 217) called "Bonnie May" (No. 110). It is also virtually the same as "The Bonny Mermaid" in Motherwell, 1827, App'x. p. xxx, as Barry has observed in a MS. note. The tune is given by G. P. Jackson, *Spiritual Folk Songs of Early America*, 1937, p. 100, as from *Missouri Harmony*, 1820, with a text attributed to Isaac Watts, and with half a dozen other references, of which the most interesting is that to a copy of "Little Musgrave" (Child 81) collected by Sharp […].[17]

The Tannahill Weavers came across this tune in a music session.

That M3 became associated with *Auld Lang Syne* at all is very much a matter of timing: it came only a short while before the musical resurrection of the tune M1, formerly described as "mediocre" (Robert Burns) and "meagre" (George Thomson). The majority of the recordings of *Auld Lang Syne* discussed in this chapter use M1, which had circulated only briefly to accompany Burns's text in the *Scots Musical Museum*, and was published with a different text in Thomson's volumes (Figure 12.1 lists all the recordings discussed here). Contemporary singers using this tune seem to share with the singers of M3 an interest in rediscovering the original character of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*; and they share with the philologist and the antiquarian an interest in the tune to which Burns wrote his own version of the song. Both Burns and Thomson were very musical men who were well acquainted with some of the more unusual characteristics of Scottish tunes. The question then, is this: what has changed in the course of two hundred years that M1 could now become so successful, so well interpreted, so well loved?

Fig. 12.1 The thirteen recorded versions of *Auld Lang Syne* by Scottish musicians discussed in this chapter. Further details of the recordings can be found in the Discography.

Artist	Album	Date of recording or release	Tune
The Tannahill Weavers	*The Tannahill Weavers IV*	1980/81	M3
Jean Redpath	*The Song of Robert Burns*, vol. II	1986	M1
Gill Bowman	*Toasting the Lassies*	1995	M1
Dougie MacLean	*Tribute*	1995	M2
The Cast	*The Winnowing*	1996	M1
Rod Paterson	*Songs From My Bottom Drawer*	1996	M1
Ronnie Browne	*The Complete Songs of Robert Burns*, vol. 3	1997	M1
Ian Bruce	*Alloway Tales*	1999	M1
North Sea Gas	*Dark Island*	2003	M1/M2
Salsa Celtica	*El Agua de la Vida*	2003	M2
Martin Treacher	*Burn It Up! Red Hot Rabbie Burns Dance Tracks*	2003	M2
Eddi Reader	*Eddi Reader Sings the Songs of Robert Burns*	2003	M3

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17   Bronson 1959, 73.

After the Tannahill Weavers' version, the earliest of the recordings discussed here is by Jean Redpath (1986). Redpath was one of the most successful and well-known singers of Scottish traditional music in the recent past. This recording by Redpath comes in the context of a larger appraisal of the songs of Burns in the edition created by the American composer Serge Hovey. Hovey, who had studied with Hanns Eisler and Arnold Schoenberg, created new arrangements for the songs, using in each case the tune to which they had originally been set. His chamber-style arrangements work best with those tunes most clearly relatable to the classical tradition in which he himself was trained. Significantly, however, in this edition Redpath sings *Auld Lang Syne* unaccompanied, as if to draw particular attention to the old tune.

Redpath's is the only unaccompanied version to be discussed here, but apart from the use of M1 her rendition shares another feature with many of these versions: they tend towards using the verse order of B2 or B3 rather than B4, which had dominated in the nineteenth century. In so doing, they are adopting the approach taken by most recent and standard editions of Burns's works, including Kinsley's edition of the collected works, and Donald Low's complete edition of the songs, which—not insignificantly— was also published in this period (1993); two years before, a modern facsimile edition of the complete *Scots Musical Museum* had also been published. Redpath follows the text published in the *Scots Musical Museum* exactly, with the exception of a single word: "seas atween us" rather than "between us". Indeed, this one line seems to present something of an issue for many of the singers discussed here. Gill Bowman also sings the text B2 with the tune M1, and like Redpath, she follows the text almost exactly— until it comes to this line, which is given as "But **the** sea between us". Similarly, the recordings by Ian Bruce, North Sea Gas, and The Cast all sing "But **the** seas between us". Ian Bruce's version was released on an album containing those recordings he had contributed to the edition along with some other Burns songs; the album is suggestively titled *Alloway Tales*; the recordings by The Cast and North Sea Gas will be discussed further below. Though few of these versions follow the text slavishly, the fact that four of the nine alter this same line in the same way is interesting. The reason is probably that when sung to M1, the word "But" must be stretched over two syllables. Introducing the definite article solves the problem.

Bowman's version is one of the earliest discussed here, the context being a show she premiered at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1994. Called "Toasting the Lassies", its subject was Burns's women.[18] The album taken from the show, released in 1995, places *Auld Lang Syne* about half-way through. Relatively few of the original albums on which these recordings appear place it at or towards the end—The Cast, for example, place it first.

Exactly contemporary with Bowman's CD is Dougie MacLean's rendition, the only one of the nine to use the tune M2 the whole way through. MacLean's version comes on an album entitled *Tribute*, in which he also pays homage to Robert Tannahill

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18   It must have been a long show.

and Niel Gow. While *Auld Lang Syne* is the last song on *Tribute*, it is not the last track, being followed by a well-known fiddle piece, *Niel Gow's Farewell To Whisky* (MacLean is an accomplished fiddler as well as singer-songwriter). And although he uses M2, MacLean's interpretation of *Auld Lang Syne* is as slow and reflective as most of the others discussed here. He sings the two childhood verses together immediately after the first chorus; then, after a second chorus, he takes the final two verses together, but places them in the reverse order to B4, so that the verse "here's a hand" comes at the end.

This kind of flexibility—for example, deciding when and where to sing the chorus—is a general feature of the nine recordings. Though many show deference to the "original" tune, and though there is a tendency towards B2 rather B4, none of the singers slavishly follow the detail of the text. Some even slip up at the end of the first verse, creating a sequence of words which makes rather less sense than the original: "Should auld acquaintance be forgot for auld lang syne" in the case of The Cast, for example, or "Should auld acquaintance be forgot sin' auld lang syne" in the case of North Sea Gas, a statement that brings to mind Harry's confusion about the meaning of the song in *When Harry Met Sally*. The Cast's own version would become famous through inclusion in another film: in *Sex and the City* (dir. by Michael Patrick King, 2008), a film continuation of the successful American TV series of the same name, the recording appears as the soundtrack to a reflective sequence showing the four central protagonists on New Year's Eve. According to David Francis, who with singer Mairi Campbell is The Cast, *Sex and the City* star Sarah Jessica Parker asked for this version to be used in the film after hearing it in concert.[19]

The most relaxed of all the versions, textually and otherwise, is that by Rod Paterson. Paterson is another leading singer of Scottish traditional music. His *Auld Lang Syne*, again with M1, appears on an album called *Songs from My Bottom Drawer*. The picture on the album cover shows this bottom drawer, into which he seems to have shoved quite a few things he wants to keep but perhaps not openly display—including a portrait of Burns. Of all the versions discussed, Paterson's is the one which comes closest to what we may presume to have been the spirit of the eighteenth-century song which formed the model. Though still reflective, it has much more movement and slightly less pathos than the other versions; this, we feel, is a social song, even a group song. North Sea Gas's version also nods to this part of *Auld Lang Syne*'s inheritance: although they use M1 for the main body of the song, their rendition ends with two rousing, unaccompanied choruses of M2. It is tempting to suggest that this version, one of the most recent of those discussed here to be released (in 2003), marks a new stage in which singers are more relaxed about referring back to the social significance of the song with M2.

Just a little over a decade after Redpath and Hovey's edition of Burns's songs, a new complete edition was published under the curatorship of Fred Freeman. This

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19   Personal communication.

edition, which stretches to thirteen CDs, is significant in bringing together many of the most established singers and musicians working in Scottish traditional music at present. The recording of *Auld Lang Syne* is not set off from the rest as is Redpath's version in her edition with Hovey, but the choice of musician is perhaps significant: Ronnie Browne, one half of The Corries, possibly the most important and most famous Scottish folk group of the later twentieth century. Browne's Corries partner, the late Roy Williamson, wrote *Flower of Scotland,* one of the most important Scottish national songs of the present day.

The recordings of the songs by Redpath and Hovey, and the edition coordinated by Freeman, can be understood in the more general context of republishing and reassessing lesser-known aspects of Scotland's literary and musical heritage, in this case drawing attention to the full range of Burns's song output. They also make it slightly easier to contextualize M1 itself, and possibly to begin to understand why neither Burns nor Thomson thought much of it. If Burns thought of this *Auld Lang Syne* as a fragment, then perhaps because he instinctively felt that this tune, as simple as many a children's rhyme, belonged to a longer ballad; and what makes Redpath's solo version so convincing is that she was herself an accomplished singer of ballads. Burns's preference as a songwriter was for shorter, lyric songs, however. He also shared Thomson and Clarke's interest in the quality of the tunes as such—this was a prime motivation for Thomson's collections, in contrast to James Johnson's more documentary approach. Listening to the full range of the songs Burns edited or wrote as displayed by these recent recorded editions, I am also struck by the number that would not be out of place in the European classical music of the day, tunes at which a composer like Koželuch most certainly would not have turned up their noses.[20] Many of the tunes of Burns's songs are from instrumental collections, and thus also in the main longer and more elaborate than the short strains of M1. Seen from this point of view, the verdict reached on M1 begins to make more sense; indeed, in a way it is surprising that Thomson published it at all, albeit with a different set of words.

The musical contexts of the later twentieth century are different, however, not least because of the richness of styles, techniques (including recording techniques) and genres on which musicians can draw, weaving a melody like M1 into as rich a tapestry as desired—and doing so with an understanding of Scottish tonality which few if any continental composers would have had. With the exception of Redpath's solo version, all these recordings show a striking similarity in the instrumentation used. The guitar—one of the defining instruments of contemporary popular and folk song—is everywhere in evidence. None of the eight recordings discussed above feature fiddle, but many have some sort of flutes or whistles. Dougie MacLean and the Tannahill Weavers prove themselves musical children of the 1980s by introducing electronic

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20   This is, of course, the essence of the point made by David Johnson (1972) and others, including Gelbart (2007): the divide between "art" and "folk" or "popular" music is to a large extent a creation of later historians with a particular ideological axe to grind.

keyboards, and both Ian Bruce and Gill Bowman's recordings include an accordion. These are some of the main instruments of Scottish traditional and folk music in the present day (fiddles and pipes being the others); this is just one of the ways in which these versions situate themselves quite specifically within a local, Scottish, tradition.

These new and creative takes on *Auld Lang Syne* also reflect a new and wider imagining of Scottish music and its relationship to other traditions, as two recordings released in 2003 show. Salsa Celtica, for example, are known for merging elements of Scottish traditional music with Latin American traditions.[21] Their instrumental version of *Auld Lang Syne*—with M2—comes at the end of a CD called *El Agua de la Vida* (water of life = in Gaelic *uisge beatha* = whisky). Martin Treacher's version, on the decidedly tongue-in-cheek *Burn It Up: Red Hot Rabbie Burns Dance Tracks*, offers a direct contrast to the more serious renditions discussed above: *Auld Lang Syne* (*Highland Belushi*) uses M2 and the two most commonly sung verses; there is a brief intro on the bagpipes, but this quickly gives way to saxophone and an interpretation in the style of *The Blues Brothers*. As different as this version and the album on which it appears are from the approaches taken in the recordings discussed above, Treacher's liner notes indicate that he, too, was motivated by respect for Burns's achievement and legacy:

> To me, Rabbie's sentiments and observations feel just as contemporary as those of the great modern songwriters such as Lennon & McCartney or Elton John, so I wanted to try and create an album to show that Burns is as relevant at the start of the 21st Century as he was at the end of the 18th Century.

The last recording to be discussed here is by Eddi Reader, whose version brings us full circle in the context of these thirteen recordings since it uses M3. While the musicians previously discussed above identify more or less directly with the "traditional" or "folk" music scene in Scotland,[22] Reader's background is slightly different. She came to prominence with the band Fairground Attraction, and has pursued a successful solo career for several years. Her version appears on an album called simply *Eddi Reader Sings the Songs of Robert Burns,* released in 2003 to coincide with a concert at the annual *Celtic Connections* festival in Glasgow. On this album Reader is accompanied by a number of musicians from quite different traditions, including—as on *Auld Lang Syne*—the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Reader's version is by far the slowest of all those discussed here. It starts as a solo, with the orchestra entering at the second verse. Reader sings *Auld Lang Syne* in the verse order B4, and is the only singer of those discussed here to commit what many would regard as the fatal *faux pas* of singing "for the sake of auld lang syne". Introducing *Auld Lang Syne* in the liner notes, she says

> I was informed by a friend that her mother knows, that this old tune came from a dance that was brought over to Scotland by Hebrew dancers. I will investigate further... I love

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21 See Alexander 2018 for a detailed discussion of the band.
22 On these terms and for a modern Scottish take on the controversies surrounding them, see several of the essays in McKerrell & West (eds) 2018.

singing this old tune and I will never forget the amazing sight of two thousand linking arms and singing with me in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall [...] What a wonderful thing that man did...to write a song that makes everyone sing together and hold each other at the dawning of a new year, in ALL languages...

With the RSNO accompanying, and a debut at one of Scotland's largest concert halls during one of its most important music festivals, this version is clearly on a larger scale than most of the others discussed here. Its significance goes further than this, though. When the Scottish Parliament reconvened, initially in the chambers of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland until the new parliament building was built, Sheena Wellington's solo rendition of *A Man's A Man For A' That* (*Is There For Honest Poverty*) marked the occasion in song. It was Reader, however, whose rendition of *Auld Lang Syne* marked the opening of the new Parliament building at Holyrood in Edinburgh in 2004. She initially sang the song with the tune M3 much as she had recorded it—again, the RSNO was on hand to accompany her. At the end, though, the orchestra signalled the transition into the more familiar version of the song, while Reader asked those present, "Will you sing it with me?" They would.

The singing of *Auld Lang Syne* with M3 at the opening of the Parliament building ensured that this version of the song reached a much wider public than had heard the song in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, or on Reader's album. Once again, M1 was absent. And this brings us to the final question which needs be posed in relation to contemporary versions of the song, and the song's history in general.

12.3 What Does *Auld Lang Syne* Have to Do with Burns?

[...] remember this, never blow my songs amo[ng] the millions, as I would abhor to hear every Prentice mouthing my poor performances in the streets.—Every one of [my] Maybole friends are welcome to a Copy, if they chuse; but [I w]ish them to go no farther.[23]

Many of the arguments for the use of M1 rather than M2 focus on the fact that this is the tune Burns intended for the song—the "original" tune. As Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated, however, all the evidence suggests that M1 (as opposed to M-1) only became established in the later twentieth century, for the reasons detailed previously. The song would not have risen to international prominence with the tune M1, and the textual elements of the song which are most widely used in English-speaking countries, particularly the first verse and the chorus, are those parts of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* that are clearly not his invention. Moreover, many international versions refer only tangentially to his text, building instead on a tradition that arose around the song several decades after his death. So what are we left with? When we talk of it as Burns's song, do we mean only those five verses that he was, at the very least, responsible for publishing? And aside from the assistance that the Burns cult gave to

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23   Robert Burns, letter to William Niven, 30 August 1786; *Letters*, no. 42.

the song's establishment and use, what did Burns himself really have to do with the phenomenon of *Auld Lang Syne*?

There is certainly more than a small dose of irony in the fact that those elements of Burns's song that have slipped into most widespread use, and into the common consciousness, are also the oldest and most original of the textual elements, dating from long before Burns—the opening line "Should auld acquaintance be forgot" and the refrain, with its reiteration of the sentiment "for auld lang syne". This process does owe a lot to Burns, however. On the basis of the available evidence, particularly the difference between M1 and the tune once commonly known as "Auld Lang Syne", M-1, it is reasonable to conjecture that Burns may indeed have based his song on elements from oral tradition. We should note, however, that he gives absolutely no details as regards the "old man" he cites as bearer of this tradition: we immediately presume, like the artist of one representation of Burns taking it down, that this is an old man from a simple and rural background; but for all we know it could have been a member of one of Burns's clubs, or one of the gentry he mixed with in Edinburgh. It is also possible that the song whose elements he notated was derived from the many later Jacobite versions, since these specifically introduce the important element of drinking a toast which is missing from earlier eighteenth-century versions.

Bearing all this in mind, however, let us look again at the opening verse of Burns's *Auld Lang Syne* in, firstly, the form Burns originally sent to Mrs Dunlop:

> Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
> And never thought upon?
> Let's hae a waught o' Malaga,
> For auld lang syne.—

and the form he then published:

> Should auld acquaintance be forgot
> And never brought to mind?
> Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
> And auld lang syne!

Burns may have changed nothing of the chorus other than bringing it into line with the new verse, but this new, published first verse differs from all previous versions of the song in its internal repetition, and in its repetition of one of the two key phrases of the song: "Should ... be forgot" is one of the standard elements of almost all the eighteenth-century versions. It is a simple enough change, but one that is nevertheless testimony to Burns's natural skill as a songwriter; it grants the song a generality and longevity that a reference to a now largely unknown fortified wine is unlikely to have garnered.

Auld Lang Syne has more to do with Burns than this, however. The song and the poet cannot be anything but entangled, one in the other, like a veritable Celtic knot, for the simple reason that both have been, since the nineteenth century, two of the

strongest signifiers for Scottish culture and identity. To this extent, modern Scottish reappraisals of *Auld Lang Syne* are modern Scottish reappraisals of Burns and are thus modern Scottish reappraisals of what "Scottish" means at all. That the author of this book is as much implicated in this process as her subjects goes without saying.

The case of Eddi Reader is an interesting one in this regard. Reader's approach to Burns is by force of circumstance different to the approach taken by other singers. While Jean Redpath, for example, grew up in Fife and derived much of her initial knowledge of Scots song from the living traditions she was brought up with there, Reader's childhood began in a deprived area of Glasgow before her family was rehoused in Irvine, Ayrshire, one of the designated "new towns" set up in Scotland in the 1950s and '60s as an overspill from the crowded slum areas of Glasgow. Reader thus spent her formative years living close to where Burns was born and raised, but this geographical proximity did nothing to bridge the social and cultural differences which she felt existed between her and the National Bard. As she notes in the introduction to her recording of Burns's songs,

> [...] at school I learned some of his poetry but I often thought Robert Burns was for the highbrow and not the likes of me, the hardly educated, council estate, overspill girl...now I see that I was wrong and that I am precisely the person Burns wrote for. As I read more and more about him, I get the sense that he was the same as the rest of us, a spokesman for the glorious in the ordinary, the sublime in the mundane. I have met many, I guess, who might be like him, in that county of Ayrshire, and in the rest of Scotland. We are all Robert's babies.[24]

Reader's description of her childhood distance to Burns is somewhat ironic considering how many Immortal Memories and other eulogies have been dedicated to presenting Burns as the man of the people. On the other hand, her view of affairs says a lot about the effective canonization of Burns and how this took the "heav'n taught ploughman" and put him firmly back in heav'n where he belonged (Presbyterian protests notwithstanding). This problem also extends to how Burns's songs in particular are used (and abused, some would say). He had a talent for taking and remoulding elements of vernacular tradition, reactivating them for a much wider community, thus ensuring their continued use; but this has also meant that they often end up back in vernacular tradition in a very different state to the one he left them in. This applies to *Auld Lang Syne* more than any other song he touched. Yet Scottish commentators, who in general are quick to recognize the role that Burns's songs have in ensuring his worldwide popularity, are oftentimes equally quick to find fault with many renditions of the songs, criticizing the "wrong words", the "wrong accent" or—with a sideswipe at George Thomson—the "wrong tune". In the case of *Auld Lang Syne*, there is even the charge of people appealing to the "wrong sentiment". In actual fact, however, the persistence of its sentiment—of "auld acquaintance" and "auld lang syne"—is, as I

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24   From the liner notes to *Eddi Reader Sings the Songs of Robert Burns*.

hope this history has shown, one of the most stable elements of all, and the one which most clearly unites Burns's song to all those other songs of "auld lang syne" discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. It prevails even where people claim not to be sure what they are actually singing about—their actions, as it were, speak louder than their words.

So what of those "wrong" words, that "wrong" tune? We can hardly be surprised if people who speak English with little or no knowledge of Scots do not use or pronounce the words as the lexicographers would have them; nor is it surprising, from a musicological perspective, that the "wrong" tune they sing is easily adaptable (and adoptable) in a way that M1 is not. There are reasons, however, why critiques and claims such as these are made: they are not simply an attempt to bring the song back home, to shield it against the "ways of the world" in that peculiarly aggressive-defensive manner that can sometimes be a Scottish character trait. As Walter Heimann described—correcting John Meier's assertion that songs cease to be folksongs when people try to sing them "correctly" or exactly as they used to be—arguing over the "right" version is an essential part of the relationships people have to their songs. Like other customs and rituals, people hold on to a specific way of doing things "because this particular version is linked to particular emotions or values which are connected to experiences in the past (staying true to the *value*) or because someone wants to fulfil the rules of behaviour of a group to which they want to belong (staying true to the *norms*)".[25] He concludes that the very fact that people hold on to certain things with such persistence is an important clue as to what is significant about the songs concerned, and the culture in which they are embedded.

What, then, are the most significant aspects of *Auld Lang Syne* as seen from the perspective of these debates? They are Burns, and they are Scotland itself. The distinguishing lines between the two can be fuzzy. What continues to make Burns such a powerful cultural figurehead for Scotland is the way in which his biography (real and fabricated) and his work encapsulate the essential myths of Scotland identified by McCrone: that Scotland is essentially egalitarian, an open society, one which allows mobility through education to a "lad o' pairts" like Burns. Add to this that Burns has been variously called a Radical, a Jacobite, a Unionist, and several other things besides, and we begin to see how the mythologies surrounding Burns can be adapted to suit whatever particular Scottish identity is required. He was the rural poet with international literary aspirations, assisted by his father's belief in the importance of education. He criticized the twisted morality of some parts of the Kirk, he criticized pretension and frippery. He wrote in Scots mostly, and brilliantly. And last but not least: he wrote songs.

Music was for a long time the elephant in the room as far as discussions of Scottish identity and Scottish nationalism are concerned. Even Christopher Harvie, who makes frequent reference to balladry in his important study of Scottish nationalism,

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25 Heimann 1982, 42.

goes little beyond discussing these ballads as literature, or metaphor.[26] Yet music, not only song, was one of the areas in which Scotland presented its unique face to the world even before the Act of Union, as Playford's publications make abundantly clear. That the recordings discussed in this chapter coincide with such a critical period in Scotland's political history—from just after the first, failed referendum on devolution to the opening of the new Scottish Parliament building in Edinburgh—is clearly no coincidence.

There is a strong philological urge in attempts to find out what Burns originally intended or meant, or what tune he wanted; but not only this. Underlying such endeavours is not least the need to clear away the Ossianic mist from the binoculars through which Scotland views itself. The only question remaining is: what direction are the binoculars pointed in—to the past, or to the future? I ask the question pointedly, and I do so because it has long been recognized that Scotland has had an almost fatalistic interest in her past, in that auld lang syne that continued to exist, or possibly only ever existed, in the memory of a nation whose cultural identity was for so long dependent on that memory alone. As Douglas Dunn put it,

> There is something about Scotland which insists on living in the past, a species of national selfishness; it is the opposite of the spirit of Burns and his poetry: he was progressive and, in using the verse materials of tradition, experimental and courageous, given the tenor of his times.[27]

To what extent this latter claim is true, is open to debate given the wider context of romanticism, which fed so voraciously on ideas of Scotland with Burns, Scott, and others only too happy to keep the food coming. Dunn's main point of contention is the modern attitude to Burns and his work however:

> Burns 'cults', Burns Suppers, and other phenomena of a like nature, are of very little consequence. What does it matter if those who otherwise do not read or care for poetry meet once a year to eat and drink in honour of Burns's memory? Is it even worth mentioning that Robert Burns's is the only poetry that they care to read or listen to? In this bicentenary year of Burns's death, the Scottish literati have once again raised their voices in complaint at the spectacle of celebrations deemed false or Philistine, and the sound is as disagreeable as that of a dimwit trying to recite Burns after a dram too many (or one too few). To rescue Burns for poetry means paying attention to the significance of how he wrote as well as what he said.[28]

And yet, one wonders whether rescuing Burns for poetry is sufficient: the more remarkable feature of the Burns cult, as this study has shown, is that through it a number of traditions from his own time and the period after his death continue to be practised regularly, even ritually.

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26   Harvie 1998.
27   Dunn 1997, 83.
28   Dunn 1997, 83–84.

The question remains of whether recent versions of *Auld Lang Syne* can be seen as a signal of Scotland's coming-of-age; and, as the title of this chapter indicates, of *Auld Lang Syne* itself coming home. There is an element of truth in this, but it is not the whole truth, for reappraisals and reassessments of *Auld Lang Syne* have not been limited to Scotland. The American singer Kate Taylor recorded the song in 1999. Taylor, herself the descendant of Scots who emigrated to North Carolina around the time that Burns's song was first published, sings it to M2, with four of the five verses (as in so many cases, the "pint stowp" verse is missing); she transposes them into American English at points. It is rare to find recent renditions of the song outwith Scotland that use more than a couple of verses, and Taylor herself did not know these other verses until she decided to record the song. On finding them and discovering in them a song "about reconciliation, forgiveness, and recognizing what's important", she also decided to give the proceeds of the sale of the single to charity—without, it would seem, realising that here too there is significant historical precedent.[29] Taylor's arrangement is suitably reflective, but with unusual harmonic turns; the idiom here is American rather than Scottish. The backing vocals in the chorus are sung by her brother, James Taylor, who went on to record his own version of this arrangement for an album of Christmas songs first released in 2004. Another American interpretation, made by a band then called Wild Mountain Thyme (and now called 3 Pints Gone), is a fairly direct interpretation of the Tannahill Weaver's recording, using not only M3, but also beginning with the two childhood verses. Unlike the Tannahill Weavers' recording, this one also includes the first verse, but at the end. This recording was made in 1995 and released in 2001; the arrangement is again dominated by guitars and flutes.

A very different type of tribute to *Auld Lang Syne* appeared in time for New Year's Eve 2006. Released online by the now defunct net label Comfort Stand, the compilation *Auld Lang Syne* invited twenty-five artists to offer their own reflection on the song itself, or the celebration of New Year. The label's own wish, it states, is that

> as you play this compilation, you will take the time to reflect on the world that we live in, and what your role is in that world. As you ponder these things, we hope that you will make the decision to join us in living well, taking care of others as well as yourself, and enjoying all of the happiness that is there for the taking in 2006.[30]

The style of most of the tracks compiled is what could be most loosely termed electronica, and the use of sampling makes for some very interesting conjunctions indeed: in some ways, this compilation presents a potted history of everything that has been said in this longer history. What is most interesting is that two of the tracks—that

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29   Kate Taylor, as quoted by Chuck Taylor in *Billboard* magazine, as quoted in turn by Laura Hightower in 'Kate Taylor Biography', *Musician Guide*, http://www.musicianguide.com/biographies/1608002761/Kate-Taylor.html

30   'Auld Lang Syne', *Comfort Stand*, http://www.comfortstand.com/catalog/071/index.html

by JR, and that by Kaffeinik—include M1. The former includes it as a tinny keyboard sample, which makes me surmise that it was taken from one of the many websites offering midi files containing the "original" tune; the other sample mainly used on this track is the version of *Auld Lang Syne* recorded in the 1960s by the Beach Boys (M2). Kaffeinik's version also includes samples of M2 and an excerpt from a recording of M1 which is not among those discussed here and which I have not been able to trace. And M3 is also represented, as a sample taken from Eddi Reader's recording in the track provided by Chenard Walcker. This compilation thus typifies new methods of production and new channels of distribution, and with them the first signs that both M1 and M3 are also, perhaps, on their way back out into the wider world again. What impact digitalization will have on the future course of the song and its traditions remains to be seen; but the very different takes on the song in this compilation—also including references to Guy Lombardo, to *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, and to the eternally recurring question of what the words actually mean—is a testimony to the layers of meaning and significance which the song already has, and will no doubt continue to have, and to accrue, in the years to come.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Light be the turf on the breast of the heaven-inspired Poet who composed this glorious fragment.[31] We have a great, great deal to be thankful to Robert Burns for: it was he, after all, who set in motion the events, the renditions, the traditions, and the sentiments which this study has attempted to partially reconstruct. Clearly, though, we also owe a vote of thanks to George Thomson; and not only to these gentlemen, and the ladies they wrote for, and whatever other poets and musicians and women and men lay behind the versions of the song that they published. For without the actions and the singing of a whole host of individuals and groups, only some of whom have been introduced here, *Auld Lang Syne* would never have reached the kinds of levels of significance for so many individuals that result, in turn, in the individuals introduced in this chapter feeling the need to turn the old song back into *their* song, and then to push it back out into the world with new wind in its sails. Our individual worlds are casting their nets wider, and drawing us all closer in the process. The more this happens, the more pressing the need to find a common level between us on which to communicate, one identity in common of the many we possess. And perhaps this identity, too, can be expressed and emphasized, established or remembered, in the act of interaction with and through a song held in common by us all.

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31   Burns, letter to Mrs Dunlop, 7 December 1788, *Letters*, no. 290.

Appendix 1

Eight Jacobite Songs Related to *Auld Lang Syne*

1. "The true Scots Mens Lament for the Loss of the Rights of their Ancient Kingdom", published by John Read of Pearson's Close Edinburgh, 1718.[1]

Shall Monarchy be quite forgot,
and of it no more heard?
Antiquity be razed out,
and Slav'ry put in Stead?
Is *Scots* Mens Blood now grown so cold
the Valour of their Mind,
That they can never once reflect
on old long sine, &c?

What shall become now of our Crown
we have so long possest?
Is it no more fashonable,
that we Should have it dress'd?
Shall we it for Tobacco sell,
and never once repine?
Ah! then it's late for to reflect
on old long sine, &c.

How oft have our Fore-fathers spent
their Blood in its Defence;
Shall we than have it stol'n away
by *English* Influence?
We'll curie the Acters of the Deed,
when under Yoke we pine:
Why will ye not again reflect
on old long sine?

Old *Albion*, what will become of thee
when *England* sits thy Judge?
May thou not only then expect,

Oppression but Refuge?
It's their Design to ruine thee,
as clearly may be seen:
Why wilt thou not again reflect
on old long sine &c.

How shall our crazy Shoulders bear,
the Burden of their Tax;
Tho' they be rich, and we but poor
they will not us relax;
Unless some skilful one ov'rturn
the Ground of their Design;
But then it's late for to reflect
on old long sine, &c.

The Name of *Britain* shortly will
thy Body hence possess.
England thy Head will flourish great
thy Body will decrease,
The Union will thy Ruine be,
thou'll know in future Time;
Yet still you seem for to forget
good old long sine &c.

Was not our Nation sometime brave,
invincible and stout;
Conquering *Cesar* that great King,
could not put it to Rout;
Nor not to much as Tribute get,
for all his great Design:
These Men I think thought to maintain
good old long sine, &c.

Did not *Romish* Ambassadors,
before our King kneel down?
I mean *Carbredus Claudius* great,
most valiant of Renown;
And the Proposals of a Peace,
unto him did resign;
These Actions may make us reflect
on old long sine, &c.

The Royal *Bruce*, if now alive,
he surely would regrate,
And blame our Grandees irefully
of *Scotland*'s wretched State;
And tell them he priz'd Monarchy,
while he was in his Prime,
And bid them look right speedily
to old long sine, &c.

May not Experience teach thee well
in *Edward Lang-shank*'s Reign,
How they pretended Good to thee,
yet since mean'd no such Thing;
But meerly stole from us the Chair,
we did so much esteem:
It's strange to me ye should forget
good old long sine, &c.

Yet it was not by their own Strength,
that they gain'd such a Prise;
But by our base Malecontents
who did them well advise;
I mean, the *Cuming*, *Kilpatrick*,
Vallange of Treach'rous Mind,
Such Men I fear have now the Cause,
that we must now so pine.

Do not you mind the Barns of *Air*,
where eighteen Score were kill'd,
Under the Colour of a Truce,
our Worthies Blood was spill'd?
And what by Force they could not win
by Fraud they did obtain:
Me wonders you should so forget,
good old long sine, &c.

Remember *William Wallace* Wight,
and his Accomplicies,
Scotland they undertook to free,
when it was in Distress.
Likewise Sir *James* the Black *Douglas*
under the *Bruce*'s Reign;
These Men spar'd not their Blood to spill
for old long sine, &c.

Why did you thy Union break
thou had of late with *France*;
Where Honors were conferr'd on thee?
but now, not so is thy Chance:
Thou must subject thy Neck unto
a false proud Nation;
And more and more strive to forget
good old long sine, &c.

Was it their seeming Riches that
induced thee to sell
Thy Honors, which as never yet
no Monarch e're could quel?
Nor our Integrities once break,

in all the bygone Time?
Yet now ye seem for to forget
good old long sine, &c.

The elder Brother let him read,
the Neighbour Margin Line;
The second than let him look back
to ruin'd *Darien*:
I'm hopeful then you will remorse,
on former Ill that's done;
And strive in Time for for to maintain
good old long sine, &c

Now mark and see what is the Cause
of this so great a Fall:
Comtempt of Faith, Falshood, Deceit,
and Villany withal;
But rouse your selves like *Scotish* Lads,
and quit you selves as Men:
And more and more strive to mantain
good old long sine, &c.

2. "A SONG To the tune of AULD LANG SYNE"[2]

O CALEDON, O CALEDON,
How wretched is thy fate!
I, thy St. ANDREW, do lament
Thy poor abandon'd State.
O CALEDON, O CALEDON,
How griev'd am I to think,
That my sad story written is
With *Blood* instead of *Ink*.

IN days of Yore you was renown'd
Conspicuous was your FAME,
All Nations did your Valour praise,
And Loyalty proclaim:
You did your ancient Rights maintain,
And Liberties defend,
And scorn'd to have it thought that you
On *England* did depend.

UNTO your Kings you did adhere,
Stood by your Royal Race;
With them you Honour great did gain,
And Paths of Glory trace:

---

2   Source: NLS Call no. BCL.AA509, collection of "Rebellious pamphlets" relating to Jacobite Uprising
     of 1745–1746. A slightly different printing can be found at NLS Ry.III.a.10(071).

With Royal STEWART at your Head,
All Enemies oppose;
And, like our brave courageous *Clans*
In Pieces cut your Foes.

YOUR Kings did Justice then dispense,
And led you on to Fight;
And your heroick Valour was,
Like their Example, bright.
An happy People then you were,
In Plenty did [abound],
And your untainted Loyalty
With Blessings great was crown'd.

BUT, oh! alas! the Case is chang'd,
You're wretched and forlorn;
The Hardhips now impos'd on you,
By Slaves are only born:
Your ancient Rights, which you so long
Did with your Blood maintain,
Are meanly sold and given up,
And you dare scarce complain.

FOR Justice now hath fled away,
With Taxes you're opprest,
And every little pratling Wretch
May freely you molest:
The choicest of your noble Blood
Are banish'd far away,
And such as do remain at home
Must truckle and obey.

YOUR martial Spirit's quite decayed,
You're poor contented Slaves;
You're kick'd and cuff'd, oppress'd, harrass'd,
By Scoundrels, Fools and Knaves.
You did against your King rebel,
Abjur'd the Royal Race;
For which just Heaven did punish you
With Woes, Contempt, Disgrace.

THIS Prince alone the Crown should wear,
And Royal Sceptre sway;
To him alone you should submit,
And your allegiance pay.
A Prince indu'd with Virtues rare,
So Warlike, Just and Great,
That, were it not to punish you,
He'd have a better Fate.

O CALEDON, O CALEDON,
Look back from whence you fell,
And from your Suff'rings learn your Guild,
And never more rebel:
Regain your ancient Liberties,
Redeem your Rights and Laws,
Restore your injur'd lawful King,
Or perish in the Cause.

YOUR Reputation thus you may,
Thus only can retrieve;
And, till you Justice do to him,
You need not think to thrive.
O may th'Almighty King of Kings
His sov'reign Pow'r extend,
And his Anointed's precious Life
From Perils all defend.

O may just Heav'n assert his Right,
    Him to his own restore,
And may the *Scottish* Nation shine
    Illustrious as before.
O CALEDON, O CALEDON,
    How joyful would I be!
To see the King upon the Throne,
    And you from Chains set free.

FINIS

3. "A ballad for those whose honour is sound, Who cannot be named, and must not be found. Written by a Sculpter in the Year 1746"[3]

Should old gay mirth and cheerfulness
Be dash'd for evermore,
Since late success in wickedness
Made Whigs insult and roar?
O no: their execrable pranks
Oblige us to divine,
We'll soon have grounds of joy and thanks,
As we had lang syne.

---

3   Acc. to James Dick, this is from *The True Loyalist*, 1779; here quoted from James Hogg: *Jacobite Relics*,
    vol. II, Song LXXXVI. Murray Pittock states that there are very similar songs found in other sources,
    including NLS MS 2910 26v (*Should auld honour be forgot / And mirth thought on no more*): see the
    editorial notes to *Jacobite Relics*, 519. In Hogg's *Jacobite Relics,* the tune given is M2.

Though our dear native prince be toss'd
From this oppressive land,
And foreign tyrants rule the roast [*sic*],
With high and barbarous hand:
Yet he who did proud Pharaoh crush,
To save old Jacob's line,
Our Charles will visit in the bush,
Lik Moses lang syne.

Though God spares long the raging set
Which on rebellion doat,
Yet his perfections ne'er will let
His justice be forgot.
If we, with patient faith, our cause
To's providence resign,
He'll sure restore our king and laws,
As he did lang syne.

Our valiant prince will shortly land,
With twenty thousand stout,
And these, join'd by each loyal clan,
Shall kick the German out.
Then upright men, whom rogues attaint,
Shall bruik their own again,
And we'll have a free parliament,
As we had lang syne.

Rejoice then ye, with all your might,
Who will for justice stand,
And would give Caesar his true right,
As Jesus did command;
While terror must all those annoy
Who horridly combine
The vineyard's true heir to destroy,
Like Judas lang syne.

A health to those fam'd Gladsmuir gain'd,
And circled Derby's cross:
Who won Falkirk, and boldly strain'd
To win Culloden moss.
Health to all those who'll do't again,
And no just cause decline.
May Charles soon vanquish, and James reign,
As they did lang syne.

4. Jacobite "Auld Lang Syne" attributed to Lochiel's Regiment (Le Régiment d'Albanie), 1747[4]

Though now we take King Lewie's fee
And drink King Lewie's wine,
We''ll bring the King frae ower the sea,
As in auld lang syne.

For, he that did proud Pharaoh crush,
And save auld Jacob's line,
Will speak to Charlie in the Bush,
Like Moses, lang syne.

For oft we've garred the red coats run,
Frae Garry to the Thine,
Fra Bauge brig to Falkirk moor,
No that lang syne.

The Duke may with the Devil drink,
And we' the deil may dine,
But Charlie's dine in Holyrood,
As in auld lang syne.

For he that did proud Pharaoh crush,
To save auld Jacob's line,
Shall speak to Charlie in the Bush,
Like Moses, lang syne.

5. "Ballad. Tune *Auld Lang Syne*"[5]

Should auld honour be forgot
And mirth thought on no more
Since late success in Wickedness
Makes Whigs insult and roar
Nor will we though the Jails are crammed
With loyal men repine [?]
But soon we'll hope to be as blythe
As we were lang syne.

Though our dear native Prince is chaced
From this oppressed land
And foreigners do rule the roost
With a Barbarian's hand
Though might oer Right doth tyrannize

---

4   Source: http://www.lochiel.net/archives/arch124.html, apparently found in the collection of Andrew Lang**.**

5   Source: NLS MS 2910, "Poems composed since the attempt. 1745.", 32–33. Handwritten MS from various sources.

And perjured rogues Combine
Never to let us be as free
As we were lang syne.

Observe though by lord a while thus graced [?]
Those that on mischief dote
Yet his perfections near well let
A just cause be forgot
If we with patience do submit
Erelong he will incline
To make our just cause trumpet yet
Like auld lang syne.

Brave royal Charles will soon return
With twenty thousand stout
And those with his highlanders
Will kick the German out
Then Truth and Justice now knock'd down
Shall rear their head and then
We shall have a Scots Parliament
As we had lang syne.

When once the grant Proprietor
Enjoys his right and place
His subjects that have valid rights
And can just titles trace
Each man shall sit in peace below
His fig-tree and his vine
And Tories shall be favourites
For auld lang syne.

Clean up your hearts ye that do sculk [?]
For king and country's cause
The righteous Lord regards you with
Compassion and applause
Your suff'rings [pall r??d] with bliss
Both human & divine
And punish some for crimes they've done
Even not long syne.

Rejoice I say all ye that flee
Incog. through hill and dale
And drink a bumper to the King
And to the Prince each meal
Though water's oft your liquor now
We'll shortly drink good wine
Well-pleased we'll think then on the straits [?]
That we had lang syne.

A health to those that Gladsmuir gain'd
And [d??d??dared??] at Darby Cross
A Health to those that won Falkirk
And faced Culloden moss
A Health to all that steadfast stand
And neer from truth decline
May Heaven smile on James's son
As on Charles lang syne.

6. "Song. To the same Tune" [i.e., *Auld Lang Syne*][6]

Should Scotland's Glory be forgot
Of it nae mair be heard
Our independence rooted out
And slavery put instead
Are Scotsmen's spirits now so broke
Their bold and gorgeous mind
That they should not at all reflect
On auld lang syne.

In days of old we were renownd [*sic*]
Conspicous was our fame
All nations did our valour prize
And loyalty proclaim
We did our native rights maintain
And liberties defend
Nor would we have it said that we
On England should depend.

Our ancient nation then was brave
Invincible and stout
Her sons even Rome's great Emperor
Could never put to rout.
Nor not so much as tribute get
Though Caesar was his name
Should not the thoughts of acts like these
Rekindle such a flame.

Nor was it only then we made
The World's proud depart [??] yield
Corbredus Galdus spite of Rome
Did always keep the field
He with his men did so behave
Romans themselves did deign
Humbly to Scots to offer peace
But this was lang syne.

---

6   Source: NLS MS 2910, "Poems composed since the attempt. 1745.", 33–34. Handwritten MS from various sources.

The great Sir William Wallace with
His comrades stout and bold
Scotland freed when twas enslaved
By English Edwards Gold
Sir James the Black Douglas likewise
Under the Bruce's reign
When danger calld [*sic*] always stood firm
For auld lang syne.

Sir John the Graham's unspotted fame
Shall never be forgot
He was an honour to his name
A true and valiant Scot.
The great Montrose The brave Dundee
Were heroes in their time
And never spard [*sic*] their blood to spill
For auld lang syne.

Alas our case is now much changd
We're wretched and forlorn
The hardships vile impos'd on us
By slaves are only born
O Caledon O Caledon
It grieves my soul to think
That thy sad story written is
With blood instead of ink.

O Scotland What becomes of thee
When England sits thy judge
Mayst thou not then expect to be
Oppress'd without refuge
What would our ancient nobles say
Could they behold the scene
Will ye not for shame reflect
On auld lang syne.

How oft have our forefathers fought
In Liberty's defence
Shall we then have it stoln [*sic*] away
By German influence
Well curse the actors of the deed
When under yoke we pine
But were't not best once more to risque [?]
For auld lang syne.

Your great ancestors valiant deeds
Sit full before your eyes
And bain [??] to emulate each act
In native glory rise
Be but yourselves nor Germans dread

Though hell with them combine
In spite of both you shall enjoy
Your auld lang syne.

7. "Shall Monarchy Be Quite Forgot"[7]

Shall monarchy be quite forgot
As it has never been?
Antiquity be rooted out,
As an inglorious thing?
Are Scotsmen's hearts now grown so cold,
the veil so o'er their mind,
That they can never once reflect
On auld lang-syne?

In days of yore ye were renown'd,
Conspicuous was your fame;
All nations they did honour you,
Your loyalty proclaim.
Ye did your ancient rights maintain,
And liberty defend,
And scorn'd to have it said, that you
On England would depend.

But now, alas! your case is chang'd,
You're wretched and forlorn;
The hardships now impos'd on you,
By slaves are only borne.
Oh, Caledon! oh, Caledon!
It grieves me sair, to think
That thy sad story written is
With blood, instead of ink.

Scotland, what will become of thee,
When England sits thy judge?
Thy banish'd Prince, so long from home,--
O! where is thy refuge?
To ruin thee, 'tis plainly seen,
Must be their black design;
And will you not, alas, reflect
On auld lang-syne?

How oft have our forefathers bled
In Liberty's defence!
And shall we have it stol'n away
By German Influence?

---

7   Source: R. A. Smith, *The Scotish Minstrel*, vol. III [1821].

The price of so much Scotish blood
Shall we consent to tine?
And will we not, alas! reflect
On auld lang-syne?

When great Sir William Wallace liv'd,
And his accomplices,
Scotland he undertook to free,
When she was in distress.
Like wise Sir James, the black Douglas,
Who liv'd in Bruce's reign;
These men spar'd not their blood to spill,
For auld lang-syne.

Sir John the Graeme, of lasting fame,
Shall never be forgot;
He was an honour to his name,
A brave and valiant Scot.
The great Montrose, the brave Dundee,
Were heroes in their time;
They spar'd not ev'n their mother's sons
For auld lang-syne.

Then, let the ever glorious name
Of Wallace lead you on;
Wallace, to save his country, oft
Engag'd near ten to one:
Then, rouse, my valiant Scottish lads,
Behave yourself like men,
And Scotland yet again shall see
Her auld lang-syne.

8. Jacobite "Auld Lang Syne", by Andrew Lang (1844–1912)[8]

Shall ancient freedom be forgot
And the auld Stuart line?
Shall ancient freedom be forgot
And Auld Lang Syne?
Though now we take King Louis' fee
And drink King Louis' wine,
We'll bring the King frae o'er the sea
For Auld Lang Syne.

We twa hae waded deep in blood,
And broke the red-coat line,
And forded Eden white in flood

---

8   Lang 1923, 64–65.

For Auld Lang Syne.
And we hae fought the English coofs
Frae Garry to the Rhine,
Frae Gledsmuir to the field o' Val
In Auld Lang Syne.

The Butcher wi' the deil shall drink
And wi' the deevil dine,
But Charles shall dine in Holyrood
For Auld Lang Syne,
For He wha did proud Pharoah crush
And save auld Jacob's line,
Shall speak wi' Charlie in the Bush
Like Moses, lang syne.

Appendix 2

Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*—The Five Versions (B1-B5)

This Appendix contains the five extant versions of the text of *Auld Lang Syne* from Burns himself;[1] they are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3:

B1 The version sent to Frances Dunlop, 7 December 1788; *Letters*, no. 290; the manuscript can be viewed at http://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/general/VAB6977.[2]

B2 The version published in *The Scots Musical Museum*, 1796.

B3 A version written by Burns into a copy of vol. I of the *Scots Musical Museum* (the so-called "Interleaved Scots Musical Museum"); taken here from Dick (ed.) 1906.

B4 The version sent to George Thomson, September 1793; *Letters*, no. 586; the manuscript can be viewed at https://www.themorgan.org/collection/Auld-Lang-Syne/8

B5 What may have been a "working version", now held in the Burns Cottage Museum in Alloway; the manuscript can be viewed at https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/auld-lang-syne

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1 As noted in Chapter 3, a further, partial version in Burns's hand which formed part of the Law MS is not currently accessible to researchers.

2 This manuscript was previously on deposit at the Library of Congress; some sources list this as two separate MSS, one in Washington and one in Indiana.

B1 The version sent to Frances Dunlop, 7 December 1788

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never thought upon?
Let's hae a waught o' Malaga,
For auld lang syne.—

Chorus
For auld lang syne, my jo,
For auld lang syne;
Let's hae a waught o' Malaga,
For auld lang sy[n]e.—

And surely ye'll be your pint-stoup!
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.—
For auld &c.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou't the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin auld lang syne.—
For auld &c.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn
Frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.—
For auld &c.

And there's a han', my trusty fiere,
And gie's a han' o' thine!
And we'll tak a right gudewilly waught,
For auld lang syne!—

B2 The version published in *The Scots Musical Museum*, 1796

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Chorus
For auld lang syne my jo,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a *cup o' kindness yet
for auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint stowp!
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.
For auld &c.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fitt,
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld &c.

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld &c.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right gude-willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.
For auld &c.

*Some Sing, Kiss, in place of Cup

B3 A version written by Burns into a copy of vol. I of the
Scots Musical Museum

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

Chorus
And for auld lang syne, my jo,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp!
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.
And for, &c.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin auld lang syne.
And for, &c.

We twa hae paidl'd i' the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.
And for, &c.

And there's a hand my trusty fiere!
And gies a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right gude-willy waught
For auld lang syne.
And for, &c.

B4 The version sent to George Thomson, September 1793

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintaince be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

CHORUS.
For auld lang syne, my Dear,
For auld lang syne,
We"ll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne—

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu't the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot,
Sin auld lang syne.—
For auld &c.

We twa hae paidlet i' the burn,
Frae mornin sun till dine:
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin auld lang syne.—
For auld &c.

And there's a hand, my trusty feire,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right gude-willie waught
For auld lang syne.—
For auld &c.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.—
For auld &c.

B5 What may have been a "working version", now held in the Burns Cottage Museum in Alloway

And surely ye'll be your pint stoup,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.—

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou't the gowans fine;
But we've wandered mony a weary fitt
Sin auld lang syne.—

We twa hae paidl't in the burn
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin auld lang syne.—

And there's a hand, [paper torn]
And gie's a hand[paper torn]
And we'll tak a righ[paper torn]
For auld lang [paper torn]

Appendix 3

Seven Parodies and Contrafacta from
The Universal Songster, vols. II-III (1829, 1834)

1. "I'll drive dull sorrow from my mind"[1]

Air—"Auld Lang Syne"

My wife she died three months ago,
And left poor I to moan;
My wife she died three months ago,
And now I sleep alone.

I'll drive dull sorrow from my mind
With wettings of my clay;
And, should I meet a lass that's kind,
I'll have a wedding-day.

Then banish sorrow from my heart,
I'll be so blithe and gay;
And when sly Cupid points his dart,
I will not run away.

2. "'Tis true this life's a languid stream"[2]

Air—"Auld Langsyne"

'Tis true this life's a languid stream,
How dark its course would keep,
If friendship's sweet and sunny beam,
Smiled not on its cold sleep.
 For auld langsyne, my friend,
 For auld langsne,
 We'll quaff a cup
 Of friendship up
 And auld langsyne.

---

1 Vol. II, 309.
2 Vol. III, 80.

Behold this brimming sparkling bowl,
To friendship quaff it up;
This pure libation, where the soul
 Is hovering o'er the cup.
     For auld langsyne, &c.

Then mem'ry shall bring back the days
When smiling hope was ours;
Her white wings shedding fairy rays
To light our path of flowers.
     For auld langsyne, &c.

But give us Jove's ambrosial wave,
For we should quaff that stream,
When toasting her, whose ripe lip gave
The kiss of "love's young dream."
     For auld langsyne, &c.

3. "Winny won't be mine"[3]

Air—"Auld lang syne."—(O'Brien)

I have my goats, a cow, and horse,
And Sunday suit, that's fine;
And I have something that's not brass,
Still Winny wo'n't [*sic*] be mine.
Still Winny wo'n't [*sic*] be mine, I fear.
Still she'll not be mine;
O Winny wo'nt [*sic*] be mine, my dear,
No, Winny wo'nt be mine.

We both have gambolled o'er the vale—
I helped to milk her kine,
And quaffed with her my home-brewed ale,
Still Winny wo'n't be mine.
Still Winny, &c.

On yon high rock we sat to view
The wide spread rolling brine;
It's there I vowed I would be true,
Still Winny wo'n't be mine.
Still Winny, &c.

O'er Erin's western hills so blue,
We see the sun's decline,
Though grass and spray woo maiden dew,
Still Winny wo'n't be mine.

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3   Vol. III, 110–111.

Still Winny, &c.

The moon, low trembling in the wave,
Where sailing barks gay shine;
And, like the moon, I trembling crave,
Still Winny wo'n't be mine.
Still Winny, &c.

She is as placid as she's fair,
Her person's beauty shrine;
With me all pleasure she will share,
Still Winny wo'n't be mine.
Still Winny, &c.

I stopt away, to try my skill,
It chanced to tell; in fine,
We met by chance, —she cried I will,
Indeed, I will be thine.
Indeed, I will be thine, my Taff,
I'll willingly be thine;
I vow I will be thine, my Taff,
If you'll be only mine.

4. "Should brandy ever be forgot? A parody"[4]

Air—"Auld langsyne"

SHOULD brandy ever be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should brandy ever be forgot,
For port or sherry wine?
For port or sherry wine, my friend,
For port or sherry wine;
We'll tak' a glass of brandy yet,
And kick away the wine.

And, surely, you'll your quatern be,
And, surely, I'll be mine;
And we will drink so merrily,
But we'll not call for wine.
But we'll not call, &c.

And here's six-pence, my own good friend,
Give me six-pence o' thine;
We'll for another quartern call,
To wile away the time.
To wile away, &c.

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4   Vol. III, 160.

5. "Auld lang syne" (J. H. Dixon)[5]

O, aft I've thought upon the hours
I spent in early years,
When Fancy strewed my path wi' flowers,
An' life was free frae cares!
Oh, aft I've thought upon the days
When a' was bliss divine,
The days o' youth, the happy days
Of auld lang syne!
    Of auld lang syne sae dear,
    Of auld lang syne;
    Oh, dear to me shall ever be
    The days o' lang syne!

When late I sought the village where
I roamed, a careless boy!
How changed, alas! a' seemed sa drear
An' sad, where once was joy!
The trees were felled which graced the brook,
Yet still the sun did shine,
An' sported o'er its breast as erst,
In auld lang syne!
    In auld lang syne, &c.

No more upon the village-green
The sportive children played;
No more the aged sires were seen
Beneath the hawthorn's shade!
The dial fra' the kirk was ta'en,
That told me aft the time,
And a' seemed altered sin the days
Of auld lang syne!
    Of auld lang syne, &c.

The cot where did my parents dwell
Was mould'ring in decay;
No more its smoke rose in the dell
But a' in ruin lay!
No cheerfu' fire glowed on the hearth,
Where once, wi' friends o' mine,
I sat at eve, an' heard the tale
Of auld lang syne!
    Of auld lang syne, &c.

Yet still I love the school-boy spot,
Though a' my friends are gane

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5   Vol. III, 31.

(Those friends who ne'er can be forgot,)
An' I am left alane!
The well-known scenes o' boyish sports,
To cheer me a' combine,
An' recollection, pleased, looks back
On auld lang syne!
    On auld lang syne, &c.

Sweet village! ne'er I'll leave thee more;
When a' my days shall cease,
In thy kirkyard, my troubles o'er,
I'll rest mysel' in peace!
Ah! though I've lang a wand'rer been,
Yet, in my life's decline,
No more I'll leave the spot which tells
Of auld lang syne!
    Of auld lang syne, &c.

6. "Should lovers' joys be e'er forgot?"[6]

Air—"Auld lang syne"

SHOULD lovers' joys be e'er forgot,
Or ever out of mind?
Should lovers' joys be e'er forgot,
An' vows sae saft an' kind?
For vows sae saft an' kind, my love,
An' days o' lang syne,
We'll tak a glass for pleasures past,
An' vows o' lang syne.

We twa hae run about the groves,
And pu'd the flow'rets fine,
But parting scenes hae wrought na change
Sin' auld lang syne,
For vows sae saft an' kind, my love, &c.

We twa hae run about the glade,
When simmer days were prime;
But time has broke wi' us no squares
Sin auld lang syne.
For vows sae saft an' kind, my love, &c.

An' there's a hand, my sonsie lass,
And gies a hand o' thine,
An' we'll taste of bliss before we part,
For auld lang syne.
For vows sae saft an' kind, my love, &c.

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6   Vol. III, 254.

An' surely you'll gie me your heart,
As surely I'll gie mine;
And we'll tak a kiss before we part,
For auld lang syne.
For vows sae saft an' kind, my love, &c.

7. "War was proclaimed 'twixt love and I"[7]

Air—"Auld lang syne."—(K. O. B.)

WAR was proclaimed 'twixt love and I,
He shot his arrows keen,
Said I, you over-match me, boy,
We'll rest upon the green.
We'll rest upon the green, my lad,
We'll rest upon the green.
A truce he signed, and I was glad,
A willow stood between.

Now many years had passed away,
Secure from Cupid's smart,
Though age bore part, ah! lack-a-day,
Sigh-tingle went my heart.
Sigh-tingle went my heart, ha, ha!
Sigh-tingle went my heart;
The frigid thing commenced to thaw
Through Cupid's fervid dart.

Another truce, cried I, sweet child,
I hope you'll grant to me;
With guile, he answered very mild,
To that, I'll not agree.
To that, I'll not agree, when down
I fell, upon my life,
And felt a tingling on my crown
Through tumbling on a wife.

She died one day, in Cupid came,
Saying, gray-beard, there you be,
You'll require another dame,
Here's ansother touch at thee;
Here's another touch at thee, old boy,
Here's another touch at thee;
His darts he shot, ah! let him plot,
He'll never more touch me.

---

7   Vol. III, 398.

Appendix 4

Eight Nineteenth-Century German Translations

1. "Die alte gute Zeit" (Wilhelm Gerhard)[1]

Wer lenkt nicht gern den heitern Blick
In die Vergangenheit?
Wer denkt nicht alter Freundschaft gern
Und alter guter Zeit?
Der alten guten Zeit, mein Herz!
Der alten guten Zeit!
Im vollen Becher lebe sie,
Die alte gute Zeit!

Wir pflückten Blumen uns im Wald,
Auf Rainen schmal und breit,
Und denken pilgermüde noch
Der alten guten Zeit.
Der alten guten Zeit, mein Herz! *etc.*

Wie freut' als Knaben uns am Bach
Der muntern Welle Streit!
Doch Meere brausten zwischen uns
Seit jener goldnen Zeit.
Der alten guten Zeit, mein Herz! *etc.*

Gieb, Bruder, gieb mir deine Hand;
Die meine sieh bereit!
Ein Händedruck, ein froher Blick
Der alten guten Zeit! *etc.*

---

1   Gerhard 1840.

2. "Soll alte Freundschaft vergessen sein" (Eduard Fiedler)[2]

Soll alte Freundschaft vergessen sein,
Versenkt in Dunkelheit,
Soll alte Freundschaft vergessen sein,
Und die Tag' aus alter Zeit?

Auf die alte Zeit, mein Freund,
Auf die gute, alte Zeit,
Laß trinken uns einen Becher noch,
Auf die gute alte Zeit.

Einst rannten ringsum durch die Höh'n,
Gänsblümchen pflückend, wir Beid',
Nun hat uns das Wandern müde gemacht,
Seit der guten alten Zeit.

Einst spielten wir zwei Beid' am Bach
Vom Morgen bis Mittagszeit,
Doch brüllten schon Meere zwischen uns
Seit der guten alten Zeit.

Hier ist meine Hand, mein treuer Freund,
Die Deine zu drücken bereit.
Hoch leben möge bei gutem Trunk
Die gute alte Zeit.

Und ein Maßbecher muß es sein,
Ein Becher groß und weit,
Und wir leeren ein Glas in Freundschaft noch
Auf die gute alte Zeit.

3. "Die alte Zeit" (Heinrich Julius Heintze)[3]

Sollt' alte Lieb' vergessen sein,
Und nimmermehr erneut?
Sollt' alte Lieb' vergessen sein
Und Tag' aus alter Zeit?

Der alten Zeit, mein Freund,
Der alten Zeit,
Noch weih' ein freundlich Glas mit mir
Der alten Zeit!

Da streiften wir auf grünen Au'n,
Vom Maslieb schon erfreut;
Doch müde ward oft unser Fuß
Seit alter Zeit.

---

2   Fiedler 1846.
3   Heintze 1846.

Da schafften wir vom Morgenroth
Bis schon die Sonne weit:
Doch tobte zwischen uns das Meer
Seit alter Zeit.

Hier meine Hand, mein treuer Freund,
Und deine Hand mir beut,
Laß einen guten Zug uns thun
Der alten Zeit!

Du stehst dein Fläschchen doch gewiß,
Ich stehe meins noch heut;
So weih' ein freundlich Glas mit mir
Der alten Zeit.

Der alten Zeit, mein Freund,
Der alten Zeit,
Noch weih' ein freundlich Glas mit mir
Der alten Zeit!

4. "'S ist lange her" (L. G. Silbergleit)[4]

Soll man vergessen alter Lieb',
Nie ihrer denken mehr?
Soll man vergessen alter Lieb'
So lang, so lange her?

'S ist lange her, mein Freund,
'S ist lange her.
Ein Glas nur noch, und stoße an,
'S ist lange her.

Zusammen liefen wir so froh
Im Busch und Feld umher.
Drauf trennten wir uns, weit so weit
'S ist lange her.

Zusammen fuhren wir im Teich
Vom Walde bis zum Wehr.
Drauf rauschte zwischen uns die See.
'S ist lange her.

Hier meine Hand für Freud' und Leib,
Und reich' mir deine her.
Ich trink dir zu, thu' mir Bescheid.
'S ist lange her.

Nun noch ein Maß, ein Doppelmaß
Zu trinken ich begehr'

---

4   Silbergleit 1869.

Dies letzte Glas, nun stoße an.
'S ist lange her.

'S ist lange her, mein Freund.
'S ist lange her.
Dies letzte Glas, nun stoße an.
'S ist lange her.

5. "Die liebe, alte Zeit" (Otto Baisch)[5]

Soll alte Freundschft untergehn
Im Schoß der Vergessenheit?
Soll je zerstieben, je verwehn
Das Bild der alten Zeit?

Nein, auf die alte Zeit stoß' an,
Auf die liebe, alte Zeit!
Laß klingen den Becher, so voll er kann,
Auf die liebe, alte Zeit!

Wir beide hüpften durchs Geheg
Im flatternden Kinderkleid;
Doch zogen wir manch beschwerlichen Weg
Seit der lieben, alten Zeit.

Wir beide gaben im Heimatbach
Den Wellen ein froh Geleit;
Doch trennten uns Fluten des Meeres, ach!
Seit der lieben, alten Zeit.

Nimm meine Hand, du treues Herz,
Und gib mir nun Bescheid,
Was du erfahren an Luft und Schmerz
Seit der lieben, alten Zeit.

Die Gläser schummern blank und rein,
Die Kanne steht bereit,
So laß einen traulichen Trunk uns weihn
Der lieben, alten Zeit.

Auf die liebe, alte Zeit stoß' an,
Auf die liebe, alte Zeit!
Laß klingen den Becher, so voll er kann,
Auf die liebe, alte Zeit!

---

5   Baisch 1883.

6. "Lang, lang dohin" (Gustav Legerlotz)[6]

Soll alte Lieb vergesse [sic] sein?
Nit frisch erblühn im Sinn?
Soll alte Lieb vergesse sein?
Und die Zeit, die lang dohin?

Die Zeit, die lang dohin, mein Freund,
Die lang, lang dohin,
Druf leere wir e Bruderglas:
Uf lang, lang dohin!

Wir zwei han Thal und Hald durchstreift,
Und pflückten Primele drin.
Nu isch der Fuß vom Stapfe müd
Seit lang, lang dohin.

Wir han im Bach bis mittags patscht,
Er schlug uns bis ans Kinn.
Manch Meer hat zwischen uns nu braust
Seit lang, lang dohin.

Hier isch e Hand, mei [sic] Herzkumpan,
Schlog ein mit treuem Sinn!
Und nu e Krafttrunk schlecht und recht
Uf lang, lang dohin!

Gelt, Mann, du hälst dei [sic] Doppelquart,
Auch ich vertrink nit drin.
Druf leere wir e Bruderglas
Uf lang, lang dohin.

Die Zeit, die lang dohin, mein Freund,
Die lang, lang, dohin,
Druf leere wir e Bruderglas:
Uf lang, lang dohin!

7. "Die gute alte Zeit" (Wilhelmine Prinzhorn)[7]

Soll alte Freundschaft nicht bestehn
Für alle Ewigkeit?
Soll alte Freundschaft je verwehn
Und gute alte Zeit?

Der guten alten Zeit, mein Freund,
Sei dieser Trunk geweiht!

---

6   Legerlotz 1886.
7   Prinzhorn 1896.

Ja, bringen wir ein volles Glas
Der guten alten Zeit!

Beim Primelpflücken einst im Wald
Gabst du mir treu Geleit—
Ach, rauh ward unser Pfad dann bald
Nach jener alten Zeit.

Wir plätscherten voll Übermut
In manchem Bach zu zweit;
Dann trennte uns die Meeresflut
Für lange, lange Zeit.

Gieb mir die Hand mit festem Druck
Auf Treue fernerweit!
Dann einen herzhaft tiefen Schluck
Der guten alten Zeit.

Du stehst doch deinen Mann jetzt noch?
So trinke mir Bescheid!
Hier dieses Glas und dieses Hoch
Der guten alten Zeit!

Der guten alten Zeit, mein Freund,
Sei dieser Trunk geweiht!
Ja, bringen wir ein volles Glas
Der guten alten Zeit!

8. Auf gute alte Zeit (K. Bartsch)[8]

Sollt' alte Freundschaft untergehn
Ganz in Vergessenheit?
Sollt' alte Freundschaft untergehn
Und gute alte Zeit?

Auf gute alte Zeit, mein Freund,
Auf gute alte Zeit!
Ihr sei ein Becher noch gebracht—
Auf gute alte Zeit!

Wir liefen über Berg und Thal
Und pflückten Blumen beid',
Und gingen manchen schweren Weg
Seit jener alten Zeit.

Wir plätscherten von früh bis spät
Im Bach voll Fröhlichkeit;

---

8   Bartsch 1899.

Doch wilde Meere trennten uns
Seit jener alten Zeit.

Gib mir die Hand, mein treuer Freund,
Die mein' ist hier bereit;
Wir bringen einen tüchtigen Schluck
Der guten alten Zeit.

Du thust mir wohl mit vollem Krug,
Und ich thu' dir Bescheid;
Hier dieser Becher sei gebracht
Der guten alten Zeit!

Auf gute alte Zeit, mein Freund,
Auf gute alte Zeit!
Ihr sei ein Becher noch gebracht --
Auf gute alte Zeit!

Appendix 5

Four Versions in Jèrriais[1]

1. Version by Ph'lippe Langliais (died 1884)

Oubllierait-nou ses viers accoints
Ses anmins, ses parens?
Oubllierait-nou ses viers accoints
Les jours du vier temps?

Chorus:
Pour l'amour du vier temps, allons,
Pour l'amour du vier temps,
J'bérons ensemblle ocouo, j'bérons,
Pour l'amour du vier temps.

Par les côtis j'avons couoru,
De belles flleurs cuillant;
Mais j'avons travailli bein du
Depis l'vier temps.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vier temps, allons …

Nouos deux j'avons jouè l'long des doûts
D'solèi l'vant à couochant;
La mer a ronnè entre nous
Depis l'vier temps,

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vier temps, allons …

Ne v'là ma main, man vier garçon,
Et la tqienne je prends;
De bouan coeu j'nouos divertirons
Pour l'amour du vier temps.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vier temps, allons …

De convier tu ne r'fus'ras pon,
Bein seux j'en f'rai autant;

---

1   Quoted here from *Les Pages Jèrriais*, https://members.societe-jersiaise.org/geraint/jerriais/auld[1-4].html (link no longer active), last accessed 25 July 2007.

J'bérons ensemblle ocouo, j'bérons,
Pour l'amour du vier temps,

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vier temps, allons ...

2. Version by John D. Hubert (1895)

Oublié thious les viers anmins,
Et toutes nos boûones viels gens?
Oublié thious les viers anmins,
Et l'amour du vier temps?

Chorus:
Et tout chu bouan vier temps,
Le bouan vier temps.
J'béthons une fêt mon vier garçon
En mémouêthe du vier temps.

J'avons té à la plîse ensemble,
Y-ya pus d'quarante ans,
Remplie ta mogue man vier garçon,
Comme dans chu bouan vier temps.

Chorus: Et tout chu bouan vier temps ...

Donne mé ta main man vier garcon,
Y-ya du Jerriais là d'dans.
Une bouane pouognie man vier garçon,
Pour l'amour du vier temps.

Chorus: Et tout chu bouan vier temps ...

3. Version published in *Nouvelle Chronique de Jersey*, 15 November 1902

Pour l'amour du vièr temps, garçons,
J'm'adresse à touos Jerriais,
Arm'ous dé pliummes ou bein d'crèyons
Et rimèz en patoiès.

Chorus:
Pour l'amour du vièr temps, allons,
Pour l'amour du vièr temps.
Une pliummée d'encre oquo prenons
Pour l'amour du vièr temps.

Pour l'amour des bouans temps d'aut'fais
Dé vot' langage rapp'lous,

N'ayis pas d'honte du vièr patoiès,
En Jerriais rimèz tous.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vièr temps, allons ...

Pour l'amour du vièr temps, garcons
R'souvnous d'not' almanâ
Envièz-nous rimes, vers et chansons
Qué l'monde rie à ha-has.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vièr temps, allons ...

Pour l'amour du vièr temps; si'en cas,
S'ou z'êtes d'esprit rassis,
Ecrivez nous, j'n'les r'fusons pas,
D'belles sérieuses poésies.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vièr temps, allons ...

Pour lé bouan vièr temps, m'est avis,
Mesdames, que vous ètou
Pouorriez nouos dounner sign' de vie...
N'laissiz pas l's'hommes faithe tout.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vièr temps, allons ...

Pour l'amour du bouan temps jadis
Rapp'lèz toutes vos idées;
Mais dépêchous, jé vouos en prie,
Pas un moment n'perdèz.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vièr temps, allons ...

Pour l'amour d'aut'fais, êcrivèz
Mais qu'dans vos vers n'y'ait rein
Partchi autchuns s'saient offensés;
Dé chonna gardous bein.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vièr temps, allons ...

4. Version by Mathilde dé Faye, "Georgie"[2]

*Jamais n'ou n'pouora oublié,
Les jours de ses jeunes ans;
Quand n'ou 'tet d'giées comme des peinchons;
Les jours de ses jeunes ans.

Chorus:
Pour l'amour du vieir temps, chantons,

---

2   Asterisks indicate the verses sung in the field recording made by Peter Kennedy in 1960.

Pour l'amour du vieir temps,
J'nos entre donnons eunne poiegnie d'main,
Pour l'amour du vieir temps.

Quand n'ou couothait dans les valleaies,
Dans les près, sus les haies,
Dans les kios parsémeais de fieurs;
Comme dans le bouan vieir temps.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vieir temps, chantons …

J'oublîethons t'y nos vieirs anmeins?
L'zanmeins de nos jeunes ans;
J'oublîethons t'y nos vieirs pathents?
Les gens du bouan vieir temps.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vieir temps, chantons …

*J'avons souvent couothu ensembyïe;
En chantant et riant,
Et j'avons travailli bein du,
Depis chu bouan vieir temps.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vieir temps, chantons …

J'soauticotaîmes le long du qu'mein,
En allant à l'êscole,
Et j'èrvenaîmes contents au sai.
Quand l'soleit se qu'ouochait.

Chorus: Pour l'amour du vieir temps, chantons …

La leune s'est leveaie bein des fais,
Et le soleit étout,
Et les aîstelles ont aîskiéthi,
Sus l'ruissé et sus l'dout.

Bibliography

A comprehensive bibliography of sources consulted in the course of research for this book would turn it into an encyclopaedia, and a multi-volume encyclopaedia at that. The bibliography that follows does, however, endeavour to give good source information for those publications cited, or used in reaching conclusions in the main text. For ease of reference, it is divided into three sections:

I.   Main Burns editions cited.
II.   Sources for songs and tunes where no editor or author is named on the edition, including editions of Burns's works, where no editor is given.
III.   Other sources, including music/song sources and secondary literature, using the Author-Date system.

In **Bibliography II**, shelfmarks to editions consulted are often included, since so many of these sources are easily confused and/or difficult to trace. Other libraries may well have the same publications. Where it seemed necessary, I have also added shelfmarks to sources in **Bibliography III**.

Where exact dates are given for a source or publication, these are either stated on the source itself, or have been dated reliably by the holding library. Where two dates are given, with the second in brackets, this is the date of original publication.

Manuscript sources, newspaper reports, playbills, and websites are referenced at the appropriate point in the main text only.

Abbreviations used are as follows:

Libraries:

BL	British Library
DVA	Deutsches Volksliedarchiv
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
GUL	Glasgow University Library
ML	Mitchell Library Glasgow
LOC	Library of Congress
NLS	National Library of Scotland

Other:

n.p.	no (other) publishing details stated or traceable

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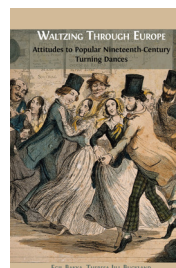Follow @OpenBookPublish

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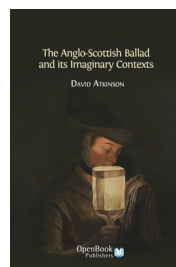*Egil Bakka, Theresa Jill Buckland, Helena Saarikoski and Anne von Bibra Wharton (eds)*

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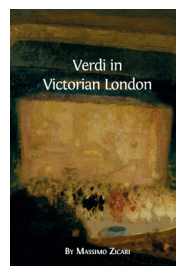
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