

## The Reception of Robert Burns' poems in French Art<sup>[1]</sup>

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To paraphrase the poet himself, the name of Robert Burns had 'made a small noise' in early nineteenth-century France.<sup>[2]</sup> Small as it may have been, however, a noise remains a noise, and often echoes through time. Whereas Burns was largely unknown to the French public, to those *anglomanes* who dedicated themselves to the study of English literature his name was well-known indeed. It is among their works that one must look for texts and, as far as this article will be concerned, for images revealing an awareness of and interest in Burns's poetry.

Burns' popularity in nineteenth-century France never reached that of other Scottish writers such as David Hume, James Macpherson or Sir Walter Scott. The French even celebrated Lord Byron's Scottishness, which was considered as part of his identity, as in the engraved portrait depicting him in tartan, published in Paris and London soon after his death in Missolonghi.<sup>[3]</sup> But Burns was not part of this popular celebration of Scotland's major literary figures. The reason for this under-representation of Burns is first due to the fact that it was simply not easy to find his texts in French. French translations of Burns's works remained for a long time quite rare.<sup>[4]</sup> The first published translations, in 1824, were the work of the famous French *littérateur* and translator Amédée Pichot (1795-1877). In 1826, James Aytoun and J.-B. Mesnard published a selection of Burns's poems,<sup>[5]</sup> and in 1833 Léon Halévy (1802-1883) made available to the public an imitation of Robert Burns in his volume *Poésies européennes*, in which he mentions the existence of a complete set of unpublished translations of Burns's poems by Philarète Chasles (1798-1873).<sup>[6]</sup> Ten years later, in 1843, Halévy published his own translation of the complete poems, the first complete edition of Burns's works in French.<sup>[7]</sup>

Between his death in 1793 and the first publication of his translated poems in 1824, Burns was virtually unknown in France, and from 1824 to 1843, his works were only available as fragments. As a result, when the Romantic novelist Charles Nodier (1780-1844) published the account of his trip to the Highlands in 1821, he never mentioned the name of Burns, though he quoted one time

the name of David Hume, four times the name of Sir Walter Scott, and ten times the name of Ossian.<sup>[8]</sup> This lack of textual sources meant that Burns was doomed to be under-represented in the visual arts as well, as very few French artists could read English. However, the sources that do exist allow us to gauge his artistic reception in Romantic France. Artists developed an interest in Burns as the figure of a national poet tied to his national ground, but also concentrated their attention on the supernatural and fantastic elements in his poetry, through the huge success of 'Tam o' Shanter'.

### **Robert Burns and Scottish National Identity**

How was Robert Burns perceived and understood at that time in France? For the anonymous author of a biographical article published in *Le Globe* in October 1824, Burns was the essence of the anti-homeric poet: 'Robert [Burns], a customs officer, gave an absolutely new voice to elegies and the most original grace to songs.'<sup>[9]</sup> The depiction of Burns as a self-taught poet who captured in his verses the true nature of rural Scotland was, therefore, largely adopted. That is why Léon de Buzonnière, a French aristocrat who followed Charles X of France in exile in Scotland after 1830, advised French travelers to Scotland to first read the works of Walter Scott, Burns and Hogg, if they wished to fully understand the country.<sup>[10]</sup> And Amédée Pichot wrote in 1825 that:

Scotland is prouder of Burns than of any of her poets: Scotland is right; the poetry of Burns belongs only to her, it is the fruit of her ground, her climate, her customs...  
Everything [in Burns's poems] is direct and original.<sup>[11]</sup>

The perceived link between Burns' poetry and Scottishness was a truism at the time. Victor Hugo thought exactly the same, writing in June 1866 to the poet George Métivier (1790-1881), known as the 'Burns of Guernesey',<sup>[12]</sup> that there were, in his opinion, two kinds of poets, the universal poet and the local poet, Homer being the first, and Burns the second.<sup>[13]</sup>

The concept of a 'national poet' was not new, and was linked to the idea of national genius (*'génie national'*), developed in 1810 by Madame de Staël for Germany in her *De l'Allemagne*, and later by Chateaubriand, who used this notion for his study of British literature, published in 1836 under the title *Essai sur la littérature anglaise*. Chateaubriand stated that a 'national revolution' could be observed in Cowper's and Burns' works. He added that: 'The lyrical Burns and [Thomas Moore], the sailors' *chansonnier*, are both children of the British ground; they could not live, in their full energy and grace, under another sun.' By this, Chateaubriand also implied that, being so 'British', they could not be properly translated into French.<sup>[14]</sup>

The painter Francois-Alexandre Pernot (1793-1865), in his 1827 *Vues pittoresques de l'Écosse*, described how the interest of French readers towards Scotland was growing at the time, and how this interest expanded to include Burns and other lesser-known authors:

One cannot ignore this revolution of curiosity [towards Scotland]; it was first generated by Walter Scott's novels. No longer do solely the epic ghosts of Ossian capture the attention of the literary set, nor Thomson's didactic pomp, nor Beattie's elegant inspiration, but also Allan Ramsay's pastorals, the songs both spiritual and naive of Burns, and popular ballads written in the national dialect.<sup>[15]</sup>

This knowledge of Burns's existence and this appreciation for the value of his works did not hold much influence over French artists. There is, however, an interesting exception that can be found at the Department of Drawings in the Louvre Museum. Three albums are kept there, containing 245 drawings after British eighteenth and early nineteenth-century paintings and sculptures, all executed by Charles-Pierre Normand (1765-1840). Normand was a specialist in line-engraving, and this set of drawings was meant to be a precursor for a set of steel-engravings illustrating a four volume book by G. Hamilton. The book, published between 1830 and 1832, was entitled *English School, Album of Paintings, Statues and reliefs from the most famous English Artists, from Hogarth to those Days*.<sup>[16]</sup> Among these drawings, two are copied after Scottish paintings illustrating Burns's poems. The first<sup>[17]</sup> is a copy of David Wilkie's *The Refusal*, a painting exhibited in 1814 at the Royal Academy and now kept at the Victoria & Albert Museum.<sup>[18]</sup> The subject of Wilkie's painting, as G. Hamilton explains in the accompanying commentary of the print, is taken from Burns' *Duncan Gray* (1798). The other drawing<sup>[19]</sup> is entitled *Sweet memories* ('Doucees souvenirs'), after John Burnet's (1784-1868) painting, *John Anderson my Jo*. It shows an old man seated in a cottage, holding the hand of an old woman. Again, the commentary written by G. Hamilton explains to the French reader the origin of the subject:

The poet Burns described, in the dialect of his country, the innocent and peaceful life of an honourable couple. These verses, composed for one of the most beautiful national tunes of ancient Caledonia, are simple, soft and natural, and they inspired a similar feeling to the painter.<sup>[20]</sup>

This notion that Burns was the best author to read in order to understand rural life in Scotland was commonly shared at the time. In August 1827, an article signed CR appeared in *Le Globe*, comparing English and German Poetry. The article defined English poetry as essentially turned towards the true depiction of nature, in the following terms:

Verses of good [English] poets seem to have been composed out of doors; outdoor objects are faithfully depicted, and the impression that they produce is faithfully given. The simpler feelings, those of family life so well protected by rural existence, keep all their strength and all their purity. [...] Generally, none of the English poets, even those less famous, lacks this descriptive talent. It shines with the utmost brightness in Burns, in Crabbe, in Walter Scott (...).[\[21\]](#)

Burns' poetry also provided a new vision of Scottish landscapes, in the opinion of French literary critics, as the depiction of nature was of utmost importance in his works. In 1855, Hippolyte Lucas wrote about Burns:

The elegiac string resonates best under the hand of the bard; he was early permeated with the charms and wonders of nature; he knows all its aspects at the diverse hours of the day. He knows what birds say one to another; as was the fairytale princess, he seems to have been taught their language.[\[22\]](#)

The renewal of interest in the Scottish landscape inspired by Burns' poetry can be perceived in a wood engraving executed after Edwin Toovey (1826-1906), a Belgian artist with English origins. The engraving was published in *Le Magasin Pittoresque* in 1859, accompanying an article dedicated to the Burns Monument erected near Ayr.[\[23\]](#) It shows the monument overlooking Brig-o'-Doon, and the depiction of the landscape could derive directly from the background of Burns's 1828 portrait by Alexander Nasmyth, kept at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.[\[24\]](#)

It is also interesting to note that Burns's poems were read by the French painter who most deeply embodies the period interest in peasants and rural life, namely Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875).[\[25\]](#) In a letter written in Barbizon on 20 July 1863, Millet thanks his friend Michel Chassaing for sending him two books, one by Theocritus, the other one by Burns:

I have received the two volumes which you have sent me, Theocritus and Robert Burns, and I am doubly grateful to you, both for the kindness of your thought and for the pleasure which the works themselves have given me. First of all, I must tell you, I seized upon Theocritus and did not let him go until I had devoured his poems. [...] I must, however, add that Burns pleases me infinitely. He has his own special flavour; he smacks of the soil. [...] For my part, I am working hard, and the reading of Theocritus shows me every day more and more that we are never so truly Greek as when we are simply painting our own impressions, no matter where we have received them; and Burns teaches me the same. They make me wish more ardently than ever to express certain things which belong to my own home, the old home where I used to live.[\[26\]](#)

It is obvious from this letter that Millet identified himself with the vision of nature and origins developed in Burns' poetry, and which he explored at that time in his own painting, such as his *Shepherdess with her Flock*,<sup>[27]</sup> a pastoral scene painted in the forest of Barbizon the same year he was reading Burns' poems. As is common in Millet's works, there is no Romantic communion with the landscape in this picture; the figure seems simply rooted in her environment. She also 'smacks of the soil', and undoubtedly the same tenderness Burns manifested for his fellow Scots can be sensed here.

Gustave Doré's (1832-1883) views of Scotland 'smacked of the soil' as well. His 1873 trip led him to Aberdeenshire and the River Dee, Lock Muick, Loch Lomond and Braemar. In the elaborate oil on canvas landscapes he produced in the following years in his Parisian studio,<sup>[28]</sup> he inserted some elements, such as stags and deer, that definitely recall Burns's poetry and evoke a kind of 'Bonnie Scotland' which was then germinating in French minds. We do not know conclusively if Doré actually read Burns, but it is very unlikely that he'd spent his time in Scotland, with his Scottish friend Colonel Christopher Teesdale (1833-1893), without having heard of Scotland's national Bard.

Therefore, from Normand's drawings to Millet's interest in Burns expressed in his correspondence, we can conclude that the rural aspects of Burns's poetry were known in France. But it was a different aspect of his work that produced the most remarkable artistic response.

### **A Major Artistic Response: Delacroix and Burns's 'Tam o' Shanter'**

Burns's 1791 'Tam o' Shanter'<sup>[29]</sup> incited a very different reception from his previous works. Being a narrative poem, it conveyed a totally contrasted message to its European audience. As was stated in the 1859 article on Burns in *Le Magasin pittoresque*:

As almost all [the works of Burns] were composed in the Scottish dialect, we only can know them through translations: so we hardly manage to perceive their charm. Of all the poets, the epic and the tragic are the ones which lose the least by passing through the translation process. So as simplified as they can be, as unrecognisable as they become under their disguise, they still impose themselves on our curiosity and admiration, by the power of their invention and the events they tell.<sup>[30]</sup>

This, of course, applied perfectly to Burns's 'Tam o' Shanter'. The poem was first translated in French in 1825 by Albert de Montemont (1788-1861), who added the text to his volume primarily dedicated to the translation of Samuel Rogers' 1792 *The Pleasures of Memory*.<sup>[31]</sup> The very same year, the French Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) exhibited his first of three versions of 'Tam o' Shanter'. Delacroix was a young artist – 27 at the time – who had exhibited

his works for the first time only three years earlier at the Paris Salon. The scandalous success of his *Dante and Virgil in Hell*, now kept in the Louvre, solidified his reputation. In 1824, when he was working on his second manifesto on Romanticism in painting, *The Massacres at Chios*, Delacroix wrote in his *Journal*: 'What would thus be needed to find a subject, is to open a book capable of inspiring oneself.'<sup>[32]</sup> This is precisely what he did in 1825 when he discovered Burns's tale, which he read – and this is essential to know – in the original language. Delacroix chose to illustrate the most famous episode of the poem:

Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,  
And win the key-stane o' the brig;  
There at them thou thy tail may toss,  
A running stream they dare na cross.  
But ere the key-stane she could make,  
The fient a tail she had to shake!  
For Nannie, far before the rest,  
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,  
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;  
But little wist she Maggie's mettle -  
Ae spring brought off her master hale,  
But left behind her ain gray tail;  
The carlin claught her by the rump,  
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.<sup>[33]</sup>

Delacroix's [first version of this subject](#) is now kept in Nottingham.<sup>[34]</sup> It is a small oil on canvas, executed in 1825 for Mrs Dalton, a woman Delacroix met during his trip in London that same year, and who played an important part in his romantic life. She was the wife of an Irishman, a former dancer at the Opéra and an amateur painter. The painting was exhibited in Paris at the Galerie Lebrun exhibition in 1829. Delacroix painted a [second version](#) c. 1830-1831, exhibited at the 1831 Paris Salon.<sup>[35]</sup> This second version is painted on paper, and remained in possession of the artist until his death. The third version came quite late, as it was painted during one of Delacroix's stays on his property in Champrosay, near the river Seine and the forest of Sénart.<sup>[36]</sup> In his *Journal*, Delacroix noted that he had begun this work precisely in July 1849.<sup>[37]</sup> This [much larger oil on canvas](#) was never exhibited, but there is strong evidence that Delacroix gave it to his friend the art critic Charles Blanc in the early 1850s. It is now kept in Basel. Several drawings were also executed by Delacroix between 1825 and 1849 as preparatory drawings for painted versions. A beautiful drawing of Tam and his mare is notably kept in Cambridge at the Fitzwilliam Museum. It is usually dated c. 1825-1830, but we would be inclined to favor a later date of 1849.<sup>[38]</sup>

In an undated letter to an unknown recipient, Delacroix explains how he chose the subject:

My Dear Friend, I'm sending you the painting I promised to you. I had begun it as intended for you, but it went through various states, and was consequently hung for a long time. It is a very famous Scottish ballad by Burns, the popular poet of that country: Tam o' Shanter is a farmer who one night passes near a witches' Sabbath. The witches set upon his trail, led by a young witch who pulls the tail of his horse, until the tail comes off in her in hand. I omitted this episode. Varnish it only after some time. A thousand best wishes.[\[39\]](#)

In another letter, written in March 1831 to his friend Félix Feuillet de Conches (1798-1867), Delacroix explained:

I read Tam o' Shanter's story in the very ballad written by Burns, in Scots, with the local dialect – very difficult to understand – which was explained to me step by step by a person from the country.[\[40\]](#)

It has been proposed that Thales Fielding (1793-1837), a young British artist Delacroix shared a lodging with in 1823,[\[41\]](#) could be that 'person from the country'. Maybe Mrs Dalton herself, being the commissioner of the work, and the artist's lover, may have played a part in this choice too. Delacroix was likely inspired by visual examples as well. Abraham Cooper's version of *Tam o' Shanter*, exhibited at the British Institution in 1813, bears some significant resemblances to Delacroix's compositions. Cooper's painting was engraved by J. Rogers, and it is very likely that Delacroix saw the print.

What could Delacroix have found in Burns that captivated his attention up to the point that more than twenty years after his discovery of the text, he was still interested in it? Perhaps it was the dynamism of the scene, or the humour contained in it – although the French audience probably didn't catch that part – or the implicit sexual references, or maybe it brought to mind recollections from his London trip, during which he wrote to his friend Pierret:

I am involved in riding horseback, I am in great good spirits. I have just barely missed breaking my neck three or four times – but all that builds character.[\[42\]](#)

Regardless, through these three paintings, showing the same scenes with just a few variations, Delacroix created a genuine and original visual response to Burns' poem. His powerful brushstrokes[\[43\]](#) and an intentional lack of definition provoked the critics. An interesting thing happened when these paintings were exhibited; as the critics were unfamiliar with literary subject of the works, they concentrated their observations on the formal, picturesque and aesthetic

aspects of the canvas. This stood in contrast to the usual course of critical reception of paintings, when critics focused on analysing how the painter was able – or not – to transcribe the text, the narrative, with more or less naturalism and accuracy. Consequently, the critical reception was very abrupt. The anonymous critic of the *Journal des Artistes* wrote about the 1825 version: ‘If you stand far away, there is an effect, similar to decoration. If you stand closer, it is a formless scribbling.’<sup>[44]</sup> About the 1831 version, Béraud et Tardieu, in the *Annales du Musée*, wrote: ‘Monsieur Delacroix exposed several “sketches”, as, in my opinion, I couldn’t call any of these productions a “picture”. See in particular *Tam o’ Shanter*, ballad by Burns, supernatural composition.’<sup>[45]</sup>

### **A Romantic Theme: the Wild Ride**

The example of Delacroix shows us that Burns’s ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ was embraced by French Romantics as an opportunity to revive an old theme, the wild ride, of which Hector dragging Patroclus’s body under the walls of Troy was a primary example. The theme of the wild ride, heavy with symbolic content, was of great interest to the Romantic artists. They viewed it as a way to express their aspiration to loosen the reins of imagination and to evoke in melodramatic, metaphysical, and metaphorical terms the creative power of the artist. At the same time, foreign literature provided fresh subjects and new stories through which this new generation of painters and sculptors could embody the theme.

Byron’s 1819 *Mazeppa* was a major reference among French artists, inspiring several visual responses, such as Horace Vernet’s famous 1826 painting, kept in Avignon.<sup>[46]</sup> Delacroix also illustrated Byron’s poem, in a small watercolour kept in Helsinki.<sup>[47]</sup> Delacroix was also interested in Goethe’s 1782 *Der Erbkönig*, with a beautiful lavish drawing executed c. 1825 and kept in Amsterdam.<sup>[48]</sup> He also read Béranger (1780-1857), the French *chansonnier* to whom Burns was frequently compared in Restoration France. His *Fuite du contrebandier* (‘Flight of the Smuggler’), a lithograph edited in 1826, was executed after Béranger’s ballad *Les Contrebandiers*. Gottfried Bürger’s 1773 ballad *Lenor*, which was known in Great Britain thanks to Walter Scott’s 1796 translation, *William and Helen*, and in France thanks to Madame de Staël’s 1814 *De l’Allemagne* and Gérard de Nerval’s 1829 translation, also fascinated French artists who were captivated by its visual possibilities. Tony Johannot engraved a *Lenore* c. 1830, and published it in the journal *La Silhouette*. Louis Boulanger executed c. 1831-1837 an unpublished print on the same theme.<sup>[49]</sup> Horace Vernet’s 1839 *Lenore*, kept in Nantes, is probably one of the most striking images of this subject<sup>[50]</sup>, while Ary Scheffer’s c. 1825-30 *For the Dead Travel Fast*, which title is Bürger’s ballad catch-up line, bears some clear similarities with Delacroix’s composition for his *Tam o’ Shanter*.<sup>[51]</sup>



Even Millet, whom we mentioned before, exemplified this infatuation with wild ride stories. He drew c. 1852 *Simon Butler, the American Mazeppa*, a scene taken from the life of Simon Kenton, alias Simon Butler (1755-1836), an American pioneer and scout who had been captured by an Indian tribe, tortured and tied to a wild horse, then set loose. Millet's drawing was lithographed by Karl Bodmer (1809-1893), for a set of four lithographs illustrating the exploits of the American pioneers and published by Goupil.<sup>[52]</sup> All these foreign subjects, usually poems and ballads, inspired French Romantic writers, and most of them entered the French scene at the same period, c. 1825-1830, precisely when Delacroix painted his first *Tam o' Shanter*.

Regarding this phenomenon, one last text is particularly interesting to us. Exactly as Victor Hugo's 1829 *Mazeppa* derived from Byron's poem, we can consider that Burns's 'Tam o' Shanter' inspired a little-known novella by Philarète Chasles, called *L'œil sans paupières* ('The Eyelid-less Eye'). This short story then inspired a lithograph by the French Romantic painter Louis Boulanger (1806-1867), who clearly drew his inspiration from Delacroix's paintings of *Tam o' Shanter*.

*The Eyelid-less Eye* was published in 1832 in the journal *L'Artiste*,<sup>[53]</sup> then in volume form the same year, with other stories by Balzac and Charles Rabou, under the title *Contes Bruns* ('Brown tales').<sup>[54]</sup> What is the relationship between Burns' poem and this short story? First, it takes place in Scotland. A party of young Scots is celebrating Halloween, near the ruins of Cassilis-Downans, a direct reference to Burns's poem 'Halloween'. The description of the party, which, says Chasles, could have been painted by David Wilkie himself, draws from several songs by Burns; for example the ceremony of the kail is inspired by Burns's 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen'. The story goes on as Jock Muirland (the name is taken from Burns's 'Muirland Willie'), a farmer and a widower, famous for his jealousy, gets drunk and mocks the Spunkies, the description of whom is borrowed from Burns's 'Address to the Deil'. To the horror of all present at the scene, a spunkie materialises on Jock Muirland's shoulder. The terrified farmer jumps on his horse, and a wild ride begins. Jock tries in vain to get rid of the Spunkie, who looks like a young maiden with eyelid-less eyes – hence the title – and repeats endlessly: 'Marry me, Jock, marry me'. When Jock arrives at Cassilis kirk, he enters the ruined nave and sees a Sabbath of demons and skeletons, dancing and playing the devil's music on the bagpipe. Overwhelmed by the infernal clamour, Jock faints away. When he awakes, he finds himself in his home, surrounded by his friends, who tell him that during the night he took a new wife. Jock recognises the eyelid-less Spunkie whom he apparently married during the tragic night. The following months are hell on earth for poor Jock; his wife is intensely jealous and never sleeps. He ultimately runs away to Ohio where he finds a new home and a new wife among an Indian tribe, the Narrangansetts (an actual tribe, part of the Algonquin nation in North Carolina: it is important to remember that for the French Romantic generation, the Indian tribes of North America were the exact counterpart of the Scottish Highland clans). A few days after Jock's wedding, the Spunkie appears, having travelled all the way from Scotland to

Ohio to look for him. Jock Muirland commits suicide, drowning himself in the Ohio River. Chasles gives us the key to his tale: the eyelid-less Spunkie symbolises jealousy itself, 'The always-opened eye of the jealous woman, [being] the most terrible torture of all.'<sup>[55]</sup>

By comparing Boulanger's lithograph for Chasles' novel and Delacroix's painting, one can see the extent to which Delacroix's *Tam o' Shanter* made Burns known in France. Also, the reader should know that Delacroix and Chasles, once schoolmates, were great friends in the 1820s, which means that in this intertextual process of writing a short story inspired by Burns's poem, Delacroix's painting could have been present in Chasles' mind while writing his homage-to-Burns of a novella.

With Delacroix's picture serving again as intermediary, Gustave Moreau's *Le Cavalier écossais* ('The Scottish Rider') is probably the last visual incarnation of Burns's 'Tam o' Shanter' in nineteenth-century French painting. This painting<sup>[56]</sup> was executed c. 1870, after several preparatory drawings,<sup>[57]</sup> all kept, as is the final oil on canvas, at the Gustave Moreau Museum in Paris. Gustave Moreau (1826-1898), a Symbolist painter, could have known Burns' poem, which was available at the time in several translations. A careful search of his private library revealed, however, that he did not own any copy of Burns's works. Regardless, the composition of *Le Cavalier écossais* shows obvious reference to Delacroix's *Tam o' Shanter*. Though Moreau had introduced a dog running alongside the rider in early versions, he ultimately erased it from his final painting, indicating that he was not aiming to make a hunting scene. His horseman wears kilt and tartan, as did Delacroix's figures, but there are no bridge, no 'Cutty Sark' and no sorcerers in this image. The mare has a Japanese-like appearance not present in the horses we previously saw, which shows how Symbolist interest for Asian art could be combined in Moreau's work with the memory of the Romantic interest towards Caledonia.

Despite these divergences, one can conclude that Moreau's large-scale painting is the last remnant of Robert Burns's influence on French artists. Burns' work embodied a certain idea of Scotland for nineteenth-century painters. Despite the fact that this ideal and fantasised country had ceased to exist with the Industrial Revolution, it remained intact in the imaginations of those in French literary and artistic circles whose hearts were, indeed, still in the Highlands.

## NOTES

<sup>[1]</sup> This article develops a paper presented at the international conference *Robert Burns in European Culture* (Murray Pittock and Martin Procházka dir.), held in Prague, Universita Karlova v Praze, Filozofická fakulta, 6-8 February 2009. My deep thanks go to Anne Bast for her careful

re-reading of this text.

[2] 'My name has made a small noise in the country' (Letter to Dr John Moore, written at Mauchline in August 1787, London, British Library, Egerton Ms 1660)

[3] See A. Friedel's engraving, *Lord Byron*, 1827, lithograph, 31 x 25 cm, realized after Byron's portrait by Thomas Phillips (1814, Newstead Abbey). Friedel added a tartan plaid and the sword and helmet Byron commissioned to Giacomo Aspe in Genoa before leaving for Greece.

[4] About Byron's artistic reception in France, see Gilles Soubigou, 'French Portraits of Byron, 1824-1880', *The Byron Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2008, pp. 45-55. About French translations of Burns, see Dominique Delmaire, 'Translating Robert Burns into French: Verse or Prose?', in *Scotland in Europe* (ed. Tom Hubbard, Ronald D.S. Jack), Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2006, pp. 169-184. See also E. Margaret Phillips, 'Some French Translations of Burns', *AS*, 1934, p. 53-60.

[5] *Morceaux choisis de Burns, traduits par MM. James Aytoun et J.-B. Mesnard*, Paris, Ferra jeune, 1826.

[6] Léon Halévy, *Poésies européennes, ou imitations en vers d'Alfieri, Burger, Robert Burns...*, Paris, Alexandre Johannot, 1833 (3rd edition). Another French imitation of Burns's poems was published in 1865: *Poésies imitées de Robert Burns, par Louis Demouceaux*, Paris, J. Tardieu, 1865

[7] *Poésies complètes de Robert Burns, traduites de l'écossais par M. Léon de Wailly, avec une introduction du même*, Paris, A. Delahays, 1843. The next edition of the complete poems was published in 1874: *Burns traduit de l'écossais, avec préface, par Richard de La Madelaine*, Rouen, Impr. de E. Cagniard, 1874 (pl.). Another was published by Auguste Angellier in his PhD thesis: *Étude sur la vie et les œuvres de Robert Burns, thèse pour le doctorat présentée à la faculté des Lettres de Paris, par Auguste Angellier*, Paris, Hachette, 1892; rééd. *Robert Burns, t. 1 La Vie, t. 2 Les œuvres*, Paris, Hachette, 1893, 2 vol.

[8] Charles Nodier, *Promenade de Dieppe aux montagnes d'Écosse*, Paris, Barba, 1821. This book was quickly translated into English: *Promenade from Dieppe to the Mountains of Scotland, by Charles Nodier, translated from the French*, Edinburgh, William Blackwood and T. Cadell, 1822.

[9] 'Le douanier Robert [Burns] a su donner une voix toute nouvelle à l'élégie et une grâce toute originale à la chanson.', *Le Globe*, n° 22, jeudi 28 octobre 1824, article entitled 'Robert Burns, le dernier des poètes écossais', p. 86.

[10] Léon de Buzonnière, *Voyage en Écosse. Visite à Holy-Rood*, Paris, Delaunay, 1832, p. 178.

[11] 'L'Écosse est plus fière de Burns que d'aucun de ses poètes : elle a raison ; la poésie de Burns n'est qu'à elle : c'est le fruit de son sol, de son climat, de ses mœurs... Tout y est franc et original.', Amédée Pichot, *Voyage historique en Angleterre et en Écosse*, Paris, Ladvocat et Gosselin, 1825, vol. 3, Lettre XCII, pp. 444-473.

- [12] G. Métivier wrote in Guernésiais, the indigenous language (or patois) of Guernesey.
- [13] 'Il n'y a pour moi que deux poètes, le poète universel et le poète local. L'un incarne l'idée « humanité », l'autre représente l'idée « patrie ». Ces idées sont jointes. Homère a été l'un, Burns a été l'autre.' (Victor Hugo, *Correspondance*, Paris, Hetzel, t. II (1860-1866), p. 552).
- [14] 'Le lyrique Burns (...) et le chansonnier des matelots [Thomas Moore], sont des enfants de la terre britannique ; ils ne pourraient vivre dans leur énergie et leur grâce sous un autre soleil.' (Chateaubriand, *Essai sur la littérature anglaise*, 1836).
- [15] F.-A. Pernot, *Vues pittoresques de l'Écosse*, Paris, Gosselin, 1826: 'Cette révolution de curiosité, on ne peut le nier, ce sont les romans de Walter Scott qui seuls l'ont produite. Ce ne sont plus uniquement les fantômes épiques d'Ossian qui occupent l'attention des littérateurs, ni la pompe didactique de Thomson, ni l'élégante inspiration de Beattie, mais aussi les pastorales d'Allan Ramsay, les chansons tour-à-tour spirituelles et naïves de Burns, et les ballades populaires, dans le dialecte national.' (p. iv-v)
- [16] *École anglaise, recueil de tableaux, statues et bas-reliefs des plus célèbres artistes anglais, depuis le temps d'Hogarth jusqu'à nos jours, gravé à l'eau-forte sur acier ; accompagné de notices descriptives et historiques, en français et en anglais, par G. Hamilton, et publié sous sa direction*, Paris, Hamilton et Audot ; Bruxelles, Jobard et Londres, Charles Tilt, 1831-32, 4 vols.
- [17] Charles Normand, *Duncan Gray*, pencil on paper, 15,1 x 10,3 cm (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, RF 41709). F. Engleheart's engraving after this drawing is reproduced in G. Hamilton, III, p. 160.
- [18] David Wilkie, *The Refusal, or Duncan Gray*, 1814, oil on canvas (London, Victoria & Albert Museum, FA.226).
- [19] Charles Normand, *Douce souvenance*, after John Burnet's *John Anderson My Jo*, pencil on paper, 12,1 x 10,1 cm (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, RF 41711). This drawing is reproduced in G. Hamilton, I, 6e livraison, n° 32.
- [20] 'Le poète Burns avait décrit, dans le dialecte de son pays, l'innocente et paisible vie d'un honorable couple. Ces vers, composés pour un des plus beaux airs nationaux de l'ancienne Calédonie, sont simples, tendres et naturels, et ils ont inspiré au peintre un sentiment analogue.' (G. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, I, 6e livraison, n° 32).
- [21] 'Les vers de leurs bons poètes semblent avoir été composés en plein air ; les objets extérieurs y sont fidèlement dépeints, l'impression qu'ils produisent fidèlement rendue. Les sentiments simples, ceux de la vie de famille, si bien protégée par la vie champêtre, y conservent toute leur force et toute leur pureté. Les récits sont le plus souvent touchants et familiers ; ou quand ils roulent sur de grandes aventures, elles sont contées comme elles pourraient l'être dans une veillée d'hiver, devant le foyer d'un ancien château ou d'une humble chaumière. En général, le talent descriptif ne manque à aucun poète anglais, même aux moins renommés. Il brille d'un grand éclat dans Burns, dans Crabbe, dans Walter Scott ; lord Byron, qui en a tant d'autres, n'en

a peut-être aucun à un plus haut degré que celui-là ; et jusque dans les peintures éblouissantes de Thomas Moore, on le retrouve encore : seulement Moore semble avoir vu la nature à travers un prisme, toute diapréée de couleurs brillantes mais mensongères.' (*Le Globe*, t. V, n° 62, samedi 25 août 1827, p. 327).

[22] 'La corde élégiaque est celle qui résonne le mieux sous la main du barde; il s'est pénétré de bonne heure des charmes et des magnificences de la nature ; il en connaît tous les aspects, aux diverses heures du jour. Il sait ce que les oiseaux se disent entre eux; comme la princesse des contes, il semble avoir été initié à leurs langages.' *Curiosités dramatiques et littéraires par M. Hippolyte Lucas, avec une notice sur l'auteur*, Paris, Garnier Frères, 1855, p. 327. He also gives a translation of *To a Mountain Daisy* (under the title 'À une paquerette de montagne renversée par ma charrue'), pp. 328-329.

[23] 'Monument de Burns, près d'Ayr, en Ecosse. – Dessin d'Edwin Toovey', wood engraving published in *Le Magasin Pittoresque*, vol. XXVII, October 1859, p. 345.

[24] Alexander Nasmyth, *Robert Burns*, 1828, oil on panel, 61,10 x 44,50 cm (Edinburgh, Scottish National Portrait Gallery). Nasmyth painted this long after Burns' death. The poet is standing in front of the Brig o' Doon near Alloway in Ayrshire.

[25] On Millet's readings, see Robert L. Herbert, 'Naive Impressions from Nature: Millet's Readings, from Montaigne to Charlotte Brontë', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 89, 2007.

[26] Quoted in English by Julia Mary Cartwright-Ady in *Jean Francois Millet, His Life and Letters*, New York, MacMillan, 1902, p. 246-247. A copy of this letter, by Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, is kept in Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, Donation Moreau-Nélaton, inv. A 2654. See also V. de Chillaz, *Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, Musée d'Orsay, inventaire général des autographes*, Paris, RMN, 1997, Aut. 2654, p. 311.

[27] Jean-Francois Millet, *Bergère avec son troupeau* (also called *La grande bergère*), 1863, oil on canvas, 81 x 101 cm (Paris, Musée d'Orsay).

[28] Among these works can be signaled the following: *Paysage d'Écosse* (oil on canvas, Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, no. 37.2625), *Paysage montagneux aux cerfs* (also called *View at Braemar*, watercolour, Paris, Petit Palais), *Loch Lomond* (oil on canvas, St. Louis, St. Louis Art Museum, no. 88.13), *Paysage des Highlands* (oil on canvas, Toledo, The Toledo Museum of Art, no. 22.108), *Un lac en Écosse après l'orage* (oil on canvas, Grenoble, Musée des Beaux-Arts, no. MG711), *Glen Massan* (oil on canvas, Glasgow, Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, no. 3352). On this topic, see Robert B. Simon, 'Doré in the Highlands', *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 47 (1989), pp. 53-60.

[29] Written in 1790, it was first published in the *Edinburgh Magazine* for March 1791. In April of the same year, it appeared in the second volume of Francis Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland*, the book for which it was originally written.

[30] '[L]es œuvres [de Burns] étant presque toutes composées en dialecte écossais, nous ne

pouvons pour la plupart les connaître en France que par des traductions : aussi n'arrivons-nous guère à en bien pénétrer le charme. De tous les poètes, les épiques et les tragiques sont ceux qui perdent le moins à passer par l'épreuve des langues étrangères ; si dépouillés qu'ils soient, si méconnaissables qu'ils deviennent sous leurs travestissements, ils s'imposent encore à la curiosité et à l'admiration par la puissance de leurs inventions et de leurs péripéties.' (*Le Magasin pittoresque*, t. XXVII, Octobre 1859, pp. 345-6).

[31] *Les Plaisirs de la mémoire, poème de Samuel Rogers, traduit de l'anglais en vers français, avec le texte en regard et des notes, suivi de la Charte (de Mme Helena Williams) et d'un conte (Tam O'Shanter, ou le Paysan buveur, de Robert Burns) traduits également de l'anglais, par M. Albert Montemont*, Paris, Peytieux, 1825.

[32] 'Ce qu'il faudrait donc pour trouver un sujet, c'est d'ouvrir un livre capable d'inspirer.' (Eugène Delacroix, *Journal (1822-1863)*, Paris, Plon, 1996 [Dimanche 11 avril 1824], p. 64).

[33] Robert Burns, 'Tam o' Shanter', in Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of Scotland*, London, Samuel Hooper, 1789-1790, vol. II, p. 201.

[34] *Tam o' Shanter, ballade de Burns (also called Tam o' Shanter poursuivi par les sorcières)*, undated [c. 1825], oil on canvas, 26 x 30,8 cm (Nottingham, Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery).

[35] *Tam o' Shanter, ballade de Burns*, undated [c. 1831], oil on paper affixed on canvas, 25,6 x 31,7 cm (Zurich, coll. Mrs Charlotte Bührlé).

[36] A house Delacroix rented for the first time in 1844. His friend Villot lived nearby.

[37] *Tam o' Shanter poursuivi par les sorcières*, undated (c. 1849), oil on canvas, 38,5 x 46,5 cm (Basel, Kunstmuseum).

[38] *Tam o' Shanter*, undated (c. 1849?), pencil on paper, 17,5 x 22,3 cm (Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum).

[39] 'Mon cher ami, Je vous envoie la peinture que je vous ai promise ; je l'avais commencée à votre intention, mais elle a passé par toutes sortes d'états, et a été par conséquent longtemps accrochée. C'est une ballade écossaise très célèbre de Burns, le poète populaire du pays : Tam o' Shanter est un fermier qui passe la nuit près du sabbat des sorciers. Ceux-ci se mettent à ses trousses et en tête une jeune sorcière qui prend la queue du cheval jusqu'à ce que la dite queue lui reste en main : j'ai omis cet épisode. Ne le vernissez que dans quelques temps. Mille amitiés et dévouement.' E. Delacroix, *Correspondance générale*, vol. I, 1936, p. 264 (undated letter).

[40] 'J'ai lu l'histoire de Tam o' Shanter dans la ballade même de Burns, écrite en écossais avec le patois très difficile à comprendre, qui m'était expliqué à mesure par une personne du pays' (E. Delacroix, *Correspondance*, vol. I, 1936, p. 277-278, letter to Feuilleton de Conches, dated March 1831).

[41] Delacroix shared a lodging in Paris with Thales Fielding in October 1823 at No. 52, rue Jacob.

- [42] Letter to Pierret, August 1st, 1825, quoted in English by Frank A. Trapp, *The Attainment of Delacroix*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 1970, p. 54.
- [43] See *Journal des Artistes et des Amateurs*, 12 July 1829 and 26 July 1829.
- [44] 'De loin, effet à la manière des décorations. De près, barbouillage informe. Voyez (n° 44) une Sorcière qui arrache la queue d'une jument.' *Journal des Artistes et des Amateurs*, 12 juillet 1829, p. 19 et 26 juillet 1829, p. 62.
- [45] 'M. Delacroix a exposé plusieurs autres esquisses, car, dans ma conviction, je ne saurais donner le nom de tableau à aucune de ces productions. Ce sont : (...) *Tam o' Shanter*, ballade de Burns, composition fantastique ; (...)' (Béraud et Tardieu, *Annales du Musée et de l'Ecole moderne des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, Bureau des 'Annales', 1831, p. 47).
- [46] Horace Vernet, *Mazeppa aux loups*, 1826, oil on canvas, 100,5 x 139,5 cm (Avignon, Musée Calvet).
- [47] *Mazeppa* [also called *Mazeppa attaché au cheval sauvage lancé au galop*], undated [c. 1824], watercolour on paper, 22,9 x 31,5 cm (Helsinki, Ateneumin Taidemuseo).
- [48] At the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.
- [49] At the 1834 Paris Salon he exhibited a lost painting on the same subject. Felix Cottrau also exhibited a *Lénore ou les morts vont vite* at the Paris 1831 Salon (n. 403).
- [50] Horace Vernet, *La Ballade de Lénore*, 1839, oil on canvas, 61 x 55 cm (Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts).
- [51] Ary Scheffer, *Les morts vont vite*, c. 1825-1830, oil on canvas (Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts). He painted another version in 1830, oil on canvas, 56 x 98 (Paris, Musée de la Vie romantique).
- [52] Karl Bodmer was a Swiss artist who also resided in Barbizon, and probably associated Millet with the project. Four lithographs were issued in 1852, entitled *Rescue of the Daughters of Daniel Boone and James Callaway*; *Capture of the Daughters of Boone and Callaway*; *Simon Butler, the American Mazeppa* and *The Leap of Major McColloch*. The published editions, bearing legends in both French and English, were printed by Lemercier for Goupil and copyrighted in the United States by William Schaus the same year 1852.
- [53] Ph. Chasles, 'L'oeil sans paupières', in *L'Artiste*, vol. II, 25e livraison, 1831, pp. 255-262. Boulanger's lithograph illustrating this text is published on p. 254.
- [54] *Contes bruns, par une tête a l'envers* (Honoré de Balzac, Philarète Chasles et Charles Rabou), Paris, Urbain Canel, 1832. A pirated edition was published in Bruxelles, J.P. Meline, 1832.
- [55] '[L]’œil toujours ouvert de la femme jalouse, le plus terrible des supplices.', Ph. Chasles, *op. cit.*, p.262).
- [56] Gustave Moreau, *Le Cavalier écossais*, c. 1870, oil on canvas, 145 x 145 cm, (Paris, Musée Gustave-Moreau, Cat. 209).

[\[57\]](#) Four preparatory drawings are kept at the Musée Gustave-Moreau (Des. 53, Des. 407, Des. 416 and Des. 7470).