

# A Footnote to Lesley Graham “‘Scott’s Voyage in the Lighthouse Yacht’ and Intertextual Transmission”

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This response is a contribution to the debate on “‘Scott’s Voyage in the Lighthouse Yacht’ and Intertextual Transmission”

(<http://www.connotations.de/article/lesley-graham-scotts-voyage-in-the-lighthouse-yacht-and-intertextuel-transmission/>). Further contributions to this debate are welcome; contact [editors@connotations.de](mailto:editors@connotations.de).

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## Abstract

This note offers further examples of Stevenson’s awareness of disappearing Scottish culture and his desire to record examples of it in another remote area of the country.

Lesley Graham’s article suggests that the three authors linked in Stevenson’s 1893 article were all motivated by an awareness of social transformations and a desire to document and preserve the traditions of a remote area of Scotland.

A similar motivation lies behind Stevenson’s walking tour of southwest Scotland made in January 1876 and recorded in the unfinished essay “A Winter’s Walk in Carrick and Galloway” written shortly afterwards, and in the preparatory Notebook covering the whole walk. The transcription of the Notebook will be published in the near future in *Essays IV: Essays 1868–79* (New Edinburgh Edition, Edinburgh UP).

Stevenson was attracted to the area, he says, by “a curious interest” (*Letters* 2: 170). It was indeed a relatively remote region of Scotland with many distinctive and historic features: its associations with Burns (whom he had recently been studying for various projects), with the Covenanters (a constant interest of his), and with the Picts and their ‘heather ale’ (recorded on his page of preparatory notes in the notebook); its typical speech (recorded in his notebook); and such cultural features as make the country around Girvan “one of the most characteristic districts in Scotland,” features including speech, architecture and even “a remnant of provincial costume” (“A Winter’s Walk” 182). In the earlier “An Autumn Effect” (1875), where he is the detached aesthetic observer, conversations on the road are all in indirect speech; here he records direct speech for the whelk gatherer and the young men at the inn at Maybole, and his Notebook contains a number of other transcriptions and snatches of local conversation in Scots, including annotations of local pronunciation.

The same passionate personal involvement in maintaining a tradition that seems destined to dissolution can be seen in Stevenson’s publication of poems in Scots. In “The Maker to Posterity,” the introductory poem to the second part of *Underwoods* (1887) devoted to poems in Scots, he predicts a day will come when the words he is writing will no longer be understood and replies to a future puzzled reader that this is Lallans, and that the meaning of the poems “*aince braw an’ plain*” has now been completely lost “*Like runes upon a standin’ stane / Amang the heather*” (101).

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