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Appendix Two: Canesco¹

¹ **Title** ‘Canesco’ is pseudo-Italian, of sorts, for ‘dogs’ language’; there is perhaps a counter-ironic play here on ‘dog’s eloquence’ meaning verbal abuse (*Und.* 33, 12), a phrase traceable to Quintilian (*CWBJ*, 7. 148). ‘Sleu dog’ and ‘lurg dog’ are terms for a sleuth hound or bloodhound, with the former and its variants found in both northern English and Scots while the latter, of Gaelic derivation, more distinctively Scots in its usage (*OED*, *Sleuth n.*², 1b; *EDD*, *Sleugh-hound sb.*; *DSL SND1*, *Sleuth n.* In combs. 1; *DSL DOST*, *Lurg-dog, Lurgg, n.*; *OED*, *Lurgg n.*). Boece claimed that ‘sleuthoundis’ were unique to Scotland, distinguishing them by their colour and markings (‘Reid hewit or ellis blak with small spraingis of spottis’); Topsell too distinguishes ‘the sluth-hound of *Scotland*’ from the ‘English Bloud hounde’, suggesting – as the reference here to its being carried on a horse in front of its master (line 1) confirms – that the former was smaller than the latter (Topsell, 1607, 150-1). The behavioural qualities of the sleuth hound as described by Boece are nonetheless consonant with those ascribed to bloodhounds generally (Boece, 1540, sig. Cii). By the mid-sixteenth century their characteristic use on either side of the border was well known, with John Caius commenting: ‘in the borders of England & Scotland, (the often and accustomed stealing of cattell so procuring) these kinde of Dogges are very much vused and they are taught and trayned vp first of all to hunt cattell as well of the smaller as of the greater growth and afterwarde (that qualitie relinquished and lefte) they are learned to pursue such pestilent persons as plant theyr pleasure in such practises of purloyning’ (Caius, 1576, 7; trans. Abraham Fleming – see ‘Foot Voyage’, line 54n). An Anglicised version of Boece’s account of the breed was included in the ‘Description of Britain’ by William Harrison published with Holinshed’s *Chronicles*. In his *Historie of Scotland* John Leslie also described the vital role played by ‘quick senting Slugh-hounds’ in the pursuit of ‘Cattaile-stealers’ in a passage quoted by Camden, but earlier in the work he noted (in the Scots translation of James Dalrymple) how ‘from the first sent quhilke the dog perceiues, eftir the crie of his Leidar, follow, rinn or gang vthir men sa fast as thay will, it moues him nathing, he is nocht drawin back, bot still followis the fute of the flier’ (Camden, 1610, 2.18; Leslie, 1888-95, 1.21; Leslie, 1675, 13-14). Following the union of the crowns, with the Borders redesignated the ‘Middle Shires’, sleuth hounds were accorded a vital role in their final pacification: a 1605 article of the Scottish Privy Council ordered ‘that in every parish there may be some lurgg dogges kept, one or moe, according to the quantite of the parish, for following of pettie stouthes [i.e. thefts]’, while a warrant of 1616 addressed to the provost marshal of Carlisle requested the implementation of an earlier royal order to provide for the maintenance of ‘slough dogs’ in each parish, in order to combat ‘the increase of stealths daily growing both in deed and report among you on the borders’ (Buron and Masson, 1877-98, 7.744; Nicolson and Burns, 1777, 1.131). In *Of English Dogges*, Caius notes how bloodhounds are trained to be ‘acquainted with their masters watchwordes, eyther in reuoking or imboldening them’

[6.4] *Canesco or the sleu doggs Language*

Lurg if a dogg, Mellin if a bitch

Hee cries first, horse *Lurg*, then the dogg leapes vp before him, and there will sitt vpon the necke of the horse² like an ape. Then hee bydds him *ga*³ downe sir, and make yee ford,⁴ then hee goe[th and] pisse[s] [and shitt] [or doeth his businesse]. Then hee bydds him cast for a fore gate of a night drift;⁵ then hee leades him in a lyne of cord,⁶ and as soone as hee

(Caius, 1576, 8); of what it spuriously calls the ‘Suth-hound’, a 1594 ‘Memorial of the most rare and wonderfull things in Scotland’ says, ‘when as hee is certified by words of Art spoken by his master, what goods are stolne, whether Horse, sheep or Neat: immediatly, hee addresseth him suthly to the sent, and followeth with great impetuositie’ (?Monipennie, 1594, sig. K2v). These ‘words of Art’ constitute ‘the sleu doggs language’; but the term presumably also includes the dog’s gestural and vocal responses, insofar as they communicate the progress of the pursuit. ‘Mellin’ is perhaps ‘mailin’, a diminutive or derogatory term for ‘an untidy or slovenly woman’ in use in the English borders (*EDD*, Mailin *sb.*); which may itself be an alternative form of Malkin, an ‘untidy or sluttish woman’, especially a ‘servant or country girl’; in Scots, a proverbial female name, sometimes specifically an ‘awkward, long-legged half-grown girl’. Also, a name for an animal, often a cat (cf. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.1.10), but in specifically northern English and Scots usage, a hare (*OED*, Malkin *n.* 1, 5; *DSL DOST*, Malkin, *n.*; *DSL SND1*, Maukin, *n.* 1, 2, 4).

² **horse** a command – ‘to horse’.

³ **ga** Scots and northern English: go (*OED*, Go *v.*; *DSL DOST*, Ga *v.*).

⁴ **make yee ford** There is perhaps a contraction here, attested in Northumbrian usage: thus, ‘make ye for it’, i.e. prepare for the pursuit (*EDD*, For *prep.*, *conj.* and *sb.* 2: Dial. contractions (7a); *EDD*, Make *v.*¹ II: Dial. uses 1 (6b); *DSL DOST*, Mak, Make, *v.*¹ 21b)

⁵ **cast ... drift** cast about for the scent indicating the path of a herd (of cattle) moved at night (*OED*, Cast *v.* 60-1; *DSL DOST*, Gate *n.*¹ 1a, 3; *EDD*, Gate *sb.*² and *v.*² 1, 3; *DSL DOST*, Drift, Dryft, *n.* 1; *EDD*, Drift *sb.* and *v.* 2).

⁶ **in a lyne of cord** ‘Lyne’ is possibly a variant of, or error for, ‘lyme’ or ‘lyam’: bloodhounds were ‘limers’ or ‘lyme-hounds’ (*OED*, Lyam | Lyme, *n.*, Limer *n.*¹; Jesse, 1866, 2.33; *Bart. Fair*, 1.3.10); hence, the leash on which this kind of dog is kept by its handler during the pursuit. Cf. William Somerville’s description of a borderer setting out to track reivers in *The Chace* (1735): ‘In a line, / his faithful hound he leads’ (Bk 1, lines 316-7).

5 sees him put downe his head; Hee cryes is that it chalice⁷ that. then hee barks. Then hee
 cryes chalice that, [the] The caple,⁸ and the cawd arne⁹ (that is the horse shewes) that drives
 the cow ptre¹⁰ ^ <.> [with it] Turne tha wood.¹¹ Go where shee gose; put hir tull a stall,¹²
 and thous¹³ ha blood on hir.¹⁴ keepe thee with thyne awne¹⁵ [6.4v] cove and change hir not.
 Is that shee that tha[t] first fand?¹⁶ keepe tha[t] with that and change hir not, but go where
 10 shee gose. Shame theefe¹⁷ hee'l shames bothe. Shame him that wood shame thee [am] and
 mee

Then when hee comes among other bests¹⁸ hee cries is tat¹⁹ [it] hit,²⁰ that tha first fand [?].

Its a night drift, and hee waps it in the day fewle,²¹ that is when other beasts crosseth the

⁷ **chalice** 'challenge' or 'challance', Northumbrian and Scots form of 'challenge', the cry of a hound on picking up the scent of its quarry (*OED*, Challenge v. 1c; *EDD*, Challenge v. and sb.; *DSL DOST*, Chalange, Chalance, v.).

⁸ **caple** a horse; most common in Scots usage by this time (*OED*, Capel | Capul, n. 1; *EDD*, Caple sb.; *DSL DOST*, Capill, n.): the horse, or one of the horses, used by those driving the herd.

⁹ **cawd arne** cold iron, in specifically northern spellings (*EDD*, Cold adj. sb.¹ and v.; cf. Scots 'cauld'); as the text says, figurative for horse shoes and, by metonymic extension, the scent trail of the horse.

¹⁰ **ptre** if a scribal contraction, unmarked in the ms and unidentified; possibly a moment of scribal, as well as editorial, bafflement.

¹¹ **Turn tha wood** 'tha' is a northern English form of 'thou' (*OED*, Thou pron. and n.¹; 'wood' a possible contraction of 'with it' (*EDD*, With prep. I Dial. forms (21)); so 'turn thou with it', i.e. keep to the herd's trail in its twists and turns.

¹² **put ... stall** 'bring her to a stand'; 'tull' is a northern English and Scots form of 'to' (*EDD*, Till prep. and conj.)

¹³ **thous** a contraction, in northern English and Scots usage: 'thou shalt' (*EDD*, Thou pers. pron. and v. 2 (23)); with 'ha', then, 'thou shalt have'.

¹⁴ **blood on hir** perhaps a promise of visceral satisfaction should the pursuit of the thieves be successful (though not, of course, at the expense of the recovered cattle); with reference to the sleuth hound's particular attraction to the scent of blood, and reputation for violently apprehending fugitives (Boece, 1540, sig Cii; Jesse, 1866, 2.171-2).

¹⁵ **awne** northern English and Scots: own (*DSL DOST* Awin, Awne, a.; *EDD*, Own, adj.).

¹⁶ **fand** northern English and Scots: found (*EDD*, Find v. I 2 pp. (2)).

¹⁷ **theefe** 'rascal', addressed to the dog (*EDD*, Thief sb. 3), but probably also with reference to the cattle-thieves.

¹⁸ **other bests** different herds or kinds of livestock, or their tracks and traces.

¹⁹ **tat** northern English: 'that' (*EDD*, Tat dem. adj. and pron.).

trod.²² Then when hee is troubled with an other trod. Hee cryes hast it? Keep thee woot²³
 15 then. Thats thine awne Bugle, ifayth tha garrst thy bugle blaw now.²⁴ Gathert gathert,²⁵ and
 goe thie way wootht,²⁶ and change not that.

When the dogg runnes this way and that way hee byddes turne tha[t] wood, and ert it, that
 is put it east weast north or south²⁷

This gentleman²⁸ gave eight pounds²⁹ for one of these doggs, and was offred for the same
 20 twenty whies,³⁰ that is, steeres of two yeeres ould.

²⁰ **hit** emphatic form of the pronoun 'it'; northern English and Scots (*EDD*, Hit *pron.* and *sb.*²).

²¹ **waps ... fewle** If not an error, then 'wap' is perhaps 'bark' or 'proclaim'; otherwise, to throw or knock or strike with force, or to shake, in a transitive usage more common in Scots than English (*OED*, Wap *v.*¹ 1a, 2, *v.*³; *DSL DOST*, Wap, *v.* 1, 2); a dog prone to barking was known as a 'wappe', according to Caius (1576, 34). 'Fewle' is a scribal error for 'fewte', the tracks or traces of an animal (*OED*, Feute | Fewte, *n.*). So, perhaps, the hound gives voice at the scent of the stolen cow even when it is overlaid by more recent or daylight trails.

²² **other ... trod** clarifying the earlier use of 'day fewle': 'trod' is track or trail (*OED*, Trod *n.* 1a; *EDD*, Trod *sb* and *v.*¹ 3; *DSL SND1*, Trod *n.*). Cf. the 'hot trod': 'the pursuit of Border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends with blood-hounds and bugle-horn, and was called the *hot-trod*' (Scott, 1805, 308).

²³ **woot** a contraction: 'with it'.

²⁴ **Bugle ... now** 'Bugle' is at its root a young bull, whence comes 'bugle-horn', shortened to 'bugle', vessel or wind instrument, and sometimes denoting the cry of a bull or cow (*OED*, Bugle *n.*¹ 1, 2; *DSL SND1*, Bugle, *v.*); bugle-horns were used with bloodhounds in the pursuit of border reivers (see l.12n above). 'Gar' is northern English or Scots for 'to cause' or 'make', while 'blaw' is a spelling and pronunciation of 'blow' from the same areas (*DSL DOST*, Gar, *v.* *EDD*, Gar *v.* and *sb.* 1; *OED*, Blow *v.*¹; *DSL DOST*, Blaw *v.*). Hence, 'you're making your own bugle blow now': the quarry is either literally audible, figuratively audible in its traces, or – most likely – punningly heard in a metaphor for the dog's own barking, which, with the huntsman's horn, indicates that the chase is on.

²⁵ **Gathert** a contraction: 'gather it', recover the trail, or catch the quarry.

²⁶ **wootht** a contraction: 'with it'.

²⁷ **ert it ... south** Scots: directs it along a particular bearing, with especial reference to the points of the compass (*OED*, Airt *v.* 1; *DSL SND1*, Airt, Art, Airth, Ert *v.*). The master is methodically guiding the hound's efforts to recover the trail.

²⁸ **gentleman** presumably the owner from whom this 'dogs' language' has been gleaned.

²⁹ **eight pounds** A 'slewe dog' stolen in 1590 from Catton in England by men from Liddesdale was valued at £10 sterling, whereas the horses taken were only valued at between 40

shillings and £5 (Bain, 1894-6, 1.347). The text describing 'Nithsdale' printed in Blaeu's 1654 *Atlas of Scotland*, which mostly reproduces Camden's description, adds a sentence valuing a sleuth-hound at 100 crowns (Blaeu, 2006, 69).

³⁰ **whies** variant form, perhaps reflecting English orthographic habits, of northern English and Scots 'quey', a young cow which has not yet calved, a heifer up to three years old (*OED*, Quey *n.*; *EDD*, Quey *sb.*¹; *DSL DOST*, Quy, Quey, *n.*¹; Ray, 1691, 81). A steer is male – this is presumably an interpretive error on the writer's part.