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To contact the editor:
The Editor, International Review of Scottish Studies
Centre for Scottish Studies
Department of History
University of Guelph
MCKN 1008
50 Stone Road East
Guelph, Ontario, Canada
N1G 2W1

scottish@uoguelph.ca
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DIGITAL HUMANITIES INITIATIVES IN SCOTTISH STUDIES

EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION TO THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES SPECIAL FEATURE

To mark the inauguration of the new Digitization Centre in the University of Guelph’s McLaughlin Library, funded by the Scottish Studies Foundation, the journal has commissioned this special feature in order to highlight some of the current digital humanities projects being developed in the field of Scottish Studies. IRSS invited the scholars involved in four separate projects, one at Guelph, and three further afield, to contribute short articles describing their research.

One of the goals of the new digitization centre is to make the resources of the Guelph Scottish Studies Collection accessible to a world-wide community. History professor Kevin James at the University of Guelph, along with Melissa McAfee, Special Collections Librarian, involved undergraduate students in a project to digitize the collection of travel ephemera, primarily postcards, in the Guelph Scottish Studies Collection. The article highlights the value of such sources and demonstrates how students can be involved in creating digital resources.

The following three articles discuss exciting initiatives in Scottish Studies research being carried out beyond Guelph. Two focus on the digitization of specific sources. Dr. James Ambuske describes the Scottish Court of Session Digital Project, a collaboration between the University of Virginia Law Library and colleagues at the University of Edinburgh. This project provides access to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century papers from Scotland’s supreme civil court, and facilitates new research into everyday life in Scotland, Britain, and North America. Dr. Lucy Hinnie explains her
project to create a digital edition of the Bannatyne Manuscript, one of the most important sources of medieval and early modern Scottish poetry, and places issues of digitization in the broader context of editorial practice in general. Finally, Drs. Michelle Brock and Chris Langley discuss *Mapping the Scottish Reformation*, a new digital humanities project that will bring together information from a diverse range of ecclesiastical history sources. This project will provide new insights into the first few generations of Protestant ministers and their families, 1560–1689, and provide researchers with powerful mapping tools to carry out their own research into clerical careers in this period.

The projects described in this special feature are only a few of the digital humanities initiatives being carried out in Scottish Studies internationally. *IRSS* looks forward to publishing research based on such projects in the years to come.

*Elizabeth Ewan*

*University of Guelph*
GREETINGS FROM SCOTLAND: POSTCARDS AND THE DIGITIZATION OF TRAVEL EPHEMERA IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH’S SCOTTISH COLLECTIONS

DIGITAL HUMANITIES SPECIAL FEATURE

Kevin J. James, University of Guelph
Melissa McAfee, University of Guelph
Aritra Bhattacharjee, University of Guelph
Alexandra Kurceba, University of Guelph
AND
Ainsley Robertson, University of Guelph

ABSTRACT

This article describes the background context and process of the digitization of travel ephemera contained within the University of Guelph’s Scottish Studies Collection. Developed as an experiential learning opportunity for undergraduate students at the University of Guelph, this project explores the place that postcards held in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Scotland, the technologies involved with the printing and creation of postcards, their intended purpose, and what can be learned about Victorian, Edwardian, and postwar society based on postcard design, descriptions, and use. Through the creation of an Omeka online exhibit, those involved with this digitization project were able to share their analysis with the public, while making these materials digitally available for consultation and review.

Keywords: Scotland; travel; ephemera; postcards; 19th century; 20th century; digital humanities; digitization
Everyday ‘throw-away’ items surround us. They fill our pockets and weigh our fridge magnets, gain us entry to shows, advertise products and record our purchases of them. They are also subjects of consternation as we deliberate over the sheer volume of material that we produce for landfill and recycling, ponder the extent to which many have migrated to digital formats, and agonise over the extraordinary depth and range of documentation that we produce about our lives. In contrast to the medieval historian, who is often left to work with quite limited evidence, in one hundred years’ time, scholars may encounter a deluge of sources with which to reconstruct everyday lives as we lived them. They will be swimming in sources.

Historical acts of travel produce their own distinctive sets of records, from passports to hotel visitors’ books. The focus of a growing collection of material at the University of Guelph’s renowned Scottish Studies Collection, held in its Archival and Special Collections unit at McLaughlin Library, is travel ‘ephemera’—those everyday materials that are often deemed without value when their designated period of use and function ends. In the context of travel, consider luggage tags, hotel stationery, trip itineraries, menus, promotional pamphlets and similar material. When the travel ends, the meal is eaten, the business winds down, their immediate purpose—the function for which they are produced—is lost. Yet ephemera’s rich evidentiary status is revealed when historians use them to explore historical practices of travel.

Consider the postcard—as two undergraduate classes did at the University of Guelph in fall 2019, when they delved into the Scottish Collections.1 When it was introduced in continental Europe in 1869 and then adopted as a popular

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means of communication in the last decades of the twentieth century, the postcard was a cheap and efficient way of ‘keeping in touch’, in the days when the postal services were often remarkably speedy, with cities such as London offering many postal deliveries throughout the day. Early postcards bore little resemblance to those with which we are familiar today: they may have featured an image, but no written message on the back, which was limited to the address of the recipient. Over time, however, the physical characteristics of the postcard changed and uses of the postcard expanded, reflecting changes in postal service practices and policies, developments in photographic and reprographic technologies, and travellers’ embrace of this textual form as a means of conveying condensed information, adopting new epistolary conventions that forsook the formalities of the letter form. Gone were the valedictions of the letter, often composed of grandiloquent expressions: ‘I remain, Sir, your most humble and obedient servant’. The postcard offered no space for such magniloquence when a simple and concise ‘Yours fondly’ would suffice.

In the UK, as elsewhere, one critical set of factors behind the rise of the postcard was institutional: in particular the decision to allow a different size of card beyond the standard dimensions, as well as loosening of restrictions which had initially granted the postal office a monopoly over manufacture of the cards. With an end to this monopoly in 1894, the market was open to private firms, which in turn

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adopted new innovations as they competed for custom. This also encouraged technological experimentation, as well as a widening of the subject matter that featured on the front of cards. An additional change resulted in even more creative uses of the card as a means of personal correspondence: the lifting of restrictions on the use of the back of the card in 1902, creating a ‘split’ back which allowed for the address and stamp on one side and a personal message on the other. While there were restrictions on where correspondence could appear, very often senders flouted them: their writing wrapped around the front of the card, their scrawl often surrounded front matter too, and when the cards directed that only written correspondence could appear on inland postal deliveries, many writers ignored these restrictions.

This was the ‘Golden Age’ of postcards, lasting up to the war, when the extraordinary expansion in their use was accompanied by a remarkable diversity of card types, photographic and illustrated (and sometimes hybrids of the two), often showcasing new technologies or techniques of reproduction: ‘real photo’ postcards, tinted and colourised cards, Raphael Tuck and Sons’ famous illustrated ‘oilette’ cards, to name a few. Following its Golden Age, the postcard enjoyed a vibrant, if not entirely genteel, dotage, epitomised by the saucy seaside postcards of Donald McGill, whose ribald creations, and the receptions they received, offer fascinating insights into vacationing, gender and racial stereotyping, broad humour and both subtle and not-so-subtle lampooning of dominant class-conditioned and legally enforced norms.

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The production of postcards involved a number of separate functions, often performed by different people in different places: the person who produced the image, often for a studio, which might then both issue the cards and grant licences to the images to other firms; the printer, which before the war was often a German firm, given the country’s superiority in photomechanical processes; and the retailer of the cards. In Scotland there was a boom in small firms engaged in the trade, though two major manufacturers have attracted the lion’s share of attention: George Stewart and Co. of Edinburgh and, most famously, Valentine and Sons, which was one of the leading companies in the United Kingdom for many decades. But for a desire to maintain the famous alliteration, postcard manufacture may well have lent Dundee a fourth industry to add to ‘jam, jute and journalism’.

How did students approach the over 50 cards of Scottish scenes and other subjects that they examined in fall 2019? They began with attention to the composition of the images on the front, and to the diversity of postcard design, interrogating how they reflected technologies and commercial strategies. Many featured the tropes of ‘biscuit-tin’ Scotland: tartan, heather, Highland cows, castles and sublime mountain scenery. Burns and Scott lent their inspiration to more than a few postcards, too: images of the Burns Cottage, for instance, and the Library at Abbotsford abound. But there was other subject-matter that bespoke the diversity of the postcard’s uses: one advertised the Glasgow Exhibition of 1908, another claimed to have been made of the oak of a tree planted by the Wizard of the North himself, while other postcards advertised

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Gleneagles and sometimes less grand hostelries, promoted Gretna Green using a marriage certificate, and reproduced a menu of Scottish fare. Even Scotland’s industrial triumphs figures on postcards: the Forth Bridge, of course, but also the Kilwinning Ironworks. Students then turned their attention to technologies of production: was the card an example of Tuck’s oilette? Was the image one that had been licensed, and thus appeared on other cards, and indeed printed matter (here eBay proved its worth!)? What was the meaning of the postcard border, of the juxtaposition of images, of the presence or absence of people and animals?

No less important, students underscored, was the back matter: was the printer identified, or the artist or photographer? Where was it made? What does that tell us about such themes as technology transfer, or the co-existence of various card styles in an increasingly diverse marketplace? What was the meaning behind those cards that proclaimed themselves to be ‘Of British Manufacture’—could that telegraph the entwining of patriotic messaging and the movement of printing to Britain after 1914? How often did the postcard have a ‘didactic’ element that explained the subject-matter on the front, and did it also feature examples of how it was to be used: for inland correspondence only, for instance? Was it part of a series (often much valued by collectors), and, if so, what was the unifying theme, if any could be detected? When it came to the presence of manuscript, did it conform to instructions as to where to write, or were there ways that writers transgressed those prescriptions, and why? What form did their communications take, given the limited space afforded to them, and the public nature of the card? How did they engage textually with the image on the postcard—and how did the card mediate their correspondence and their relationship to Scottish space? Did they buttress or undermine Scottish representational tropes? Several, we discovered, had been posted from the United States, and the Netherlands. One was likely exchanged
personally, or perhaps never sent, as it bore a message but no address or postage stamp. Some bore the marks of age, while others were pristine in condition. All somehow survived for many decades, in collections or amongst personal effects, to serve as rich sources for the study of travel and the repertoire of Scottish representations.7

The students, each choosing their own physical cards for independent analysis, then collaborated in developing a public exhibit, using the Omeka platform, to showcase their research, using digitised versions of their cards, created through the library’s new Digitization Facility, funded by the Scottish Studies Foundation. They learned technical skills navigating the platform, as well as communication strategies as they reflected on their audience, and how to develop consistent formats across their analysis. By the end of the semester, they had also learned more about the postcard, drawing connections to Instagram and other social media platforms that convey images and short messages simultaneously, and enable speedy exchanges between people at points around the world. And we had whetted appetites for the critical exploration of the caricatural kilted Highlanders and other figures in comic postcards, which did not feature in this exhibit, and demand one of their own. The postcard, to the historian, is of immeasurable value as a window onto technology, social practices, cultural conventions, and travel codes. In its heterogeneous forms, the postcard serves as testament to a broad range of uses, and wide range of users, and can be used to decode how the postcard was used not just to convey greetings, but also to circulate ideas about Scotland itself.

7 While there has been a substantial and rich scholarship generated on this topic, we still owe a debt to the landmark study by John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, Imagining Scotland: Tradition, Representation and Promotion in Scottish Tourism Since 1750. (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995).
“OURS IS A COURT OF PAPERS”:
EXPLORING SCOTLAND AND THE
BRITISH ATLANTIC WORLD USING THE
SCOTTISH COURT OF SESSION DIGITAL
ARCHIVE PROJECT

DIGITAL HUMANITIES SPECIAL FEATURE

James P. Ambuske, The Fred W. Smith National Library for the
Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon

ABSTRACT

This essay describes the Scottish Court of Session Digital
Archive Project (SCOS), a multi-institutional collaborative
research initiative into Early America and the British
Atlantic world. Developed by the digital scholarship team at
the University of Virginia Law Library, in partnership with
colleagues at the University of Edinburgh, SCOS explores
everyday life in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries
through Session Papers, the printed documents submitted to
Scotland’s supreme civil court during litigation. The project
provides scholars, genealogists, and the public with open-
access digital copies of Session Papers held by the UVA
Law Library, the Library of Congress, and other institutional
partners. By digitizing these documents, contextualizing
them with comprehensive metadata, and providing users
with interpretative entry points, SCOS is designed to foster
new research on this formative period of Scottish, British,
and American history.

Keywords: Scotland; America; Atlantic World; 18th century; 19th century;
court records; digital humanities; digitization
The Scottish Court of Session Digital Archive Project (SCOS) is a multi-institutional collaborative research initiative into Early America and the British Atlantic world. Developed by the digital scholarship team at the University of Virginia Law Library, in partnership with colleagues at the University of Edinburgh, SCOS explores everyday life in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through Session Papers, the printed documents submitted to Scotland’s supreme civil court during litigation. The project provides scholars, genealogists, and the public with open-access digital copies of Session Papers held by the UVA Law Library, the Library of Congress, and other institutional partners. By digitizing these documents, contextualizing them with comprehensive metadata, and providing users with interpretative entry points, SCOS is designed to foster new research on this formative period of Scottish, British, and American history.¹

SCOS’s origins lay in the UVA Law Library’s acquisition of a Session Papers collection nearly forty years ago. In the mid-1980s, the library purchased 58-linear feet of these documents from a San Francisco rare book dealer. At least part of the collection once sat on the shelves of the Society of Advocates Library in Aberdeen. The documents belonged to at least two different men: William Craig, Lord Craig (1745–1813), an advocate and later judge on the Court of Session, and

Andrew Skene (1784–1835), an advocate and briefly Scotland’s solicitor general. Unlike the thickly bound volumes of Session Papers held by the Faculty of Advocates Library, the Society of the Writers to the Signet Library, or the Centre for Research Collections (CRC) at the University of Edinburgh, the documents in the UVA Law Library’s collection were disbound sometime in the past. The reasons for this dismemberment are unclear, although a few volumes do survive intact. Fortunately, the assailant separated the documents by case, which ironically makes it easier for twenty-first century researchers to identify specific litigation and digitize the documents.

Achieving the project’s goal of making Session Papers widely available for new research and teaching opportunities means reckoning with their intended purpose for the making of Scots law. Session Papers were never meant for general public consumption. In 1710, the Court of Session ordered litigants to submit legal briefs, evidence, and other case materials in printed form. Copying manuscripts by hand risked introducing errors into legal proceedings in which precision mattered. Theoretically, printing Session Papers produced a uniform set of documents for distribution to the relevant parties. In other words, printing helped to ensure that everyone was on the same legal page. Appellant cases heard by the full court’s Inner House generated the vast majority of surviving Session Papers,

Craig and Skene’s handwriting and signatures appear on a number of Session Papers in the UVA Law Library’s collection. Recent investigations of documents from the 1790s suggests that a portion of the collection may have also belonged to Matthew Ross, of Candie (1750–1823). See their individual entries on SCOS: (Craig), http://scos.law.virginia.edu/explore/people-organizations/william-craig-lord-craig%28787%29; (Skene), http://scos.law.virginia.edu/explore/people-organizations/andrew-skene%282846431%29; and (Ross). http://scos.law.virginia.edu/explore/people-organizations/matthew-ross-candie%282828041%29.
including nearly 25,000 quarto pages of printed material in 1789 alone. The judges and legal counsel involved in a case received copies, as did the Advocates Library and the Signet Library. Men like Craig, Skene, and James Boswell assembled curated personal collections, keeping the cases they participated in and others they considered significant. The Advocates and Signet libraries sought to collect copies of each case that came before the court. Many documents feature extensive marginalia representing an individual’s engagement with a case’s facts and legal arguments, or a librarian’s attempt to catalogue them. Occasionally, marginal notations reveal how the court ruled. The judges delivered decisions orally, which advocates sometimes recorded on their Session Papers. Unless a decision appeared in a published case report or legal digest, something not guaranteed given that civil law societies like Scotland placed significantly less importance on judicial precedent than common law countries such as England, marginalia on Session Papers might represent the only surviving record of the court’s judgement.3

What can (largely) uncatalogued Scots law documents, complete with formulaic titles and filled with commentaries on the Justinian Code or Acts of Parliament, reveal about life in

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Scotland and the British Atlantic world? Quite a lot, actually. As civil court records, Session Papers offer a social, economic, and political portrait of the British Atlantic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The documents, which can include printed evidence such as extracted correspondence, account books, ship logs, and even maps, offer a wealth of information about the people who inhabited or engaged with Scotland in this period.

Repositories with major Session Papers collections include: The Faculty of Advocates Library (Edinburgh); The Writers to the Society of the Signet Library (Edinburgh); Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh); The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University (New Haven, CT); The Firestone Library, Princeton University (Princeton, NJ); The Huntington Library, (San Marino, CA); The Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.); and The Wolf Law Library, College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, VA). The vast majority of Session Papers are catalogued at the major collection level only, while some smaller collections do have item level description. One of the most comprehensive catalogues (with an index) to date was published during World War I. See Alexander Mill, *Index to the Session Papers in the Signet Library, 1730–1820*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Privately printed by the Signet Library, 1916–18), https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22WS+Society%22.

Session Papers testify to the lives of individuals both ordinary and powerful. They include brief glimpses of people like John Moffat, a sixty-nine year-old bleacher and former resident of Carmyle, who gave a deposition in 1777 as part of dispute over water rights, or deeper insights into the private lives of people like Dumfries residents Agnes and George Mortimer, whose letters tell the story of their troubled marriage. They reveal how noblemen such as Alexander, fourth Duke of Gordon, claimed title to land confiscated by the crown following the 1745 Jacobite Uprising, as well as how the young sisters Elizabeth and Barbara Cunningham defended their interest in their late father’s slave-powered Maryland tobacco firm. They demonstrate how James Graham, a formerly enslaved man, resisted impressment into the Royal Navy. Using Session Papers, we can reconstruct individual lives, whole communities, and the historical context in which they lived.6

SCOS strives to make Session Papers both accessible and enticing through digital technology and scholarship. To accomplish these goals, the project team is pursuing two interrelated, collaborative strategies to provide users with copies of the documents and the context in which to interpret them.

cited below all appear in Scottish Court of Session Digital Archive Project. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Law Library, 2015–19).
First, the team developed a custom-designed database using Drupal, an open-source content management system, to organize the UVA Law Library’s digitized Session Papers and accompanying metadata.7 The court case is the database’s primary intellectual unit. Using case titles imported with permission from the British and Irish Legal Information Institute (BAILII), determined through marginalia, or assigned after conducting research, the team created ‘case shells’ for each identified case in the library’s collection.8 Like flesh and muscles on a skeleton, all metadata relevant to each case are attached to these shells.

Completed case records appear as individual pages on the SCOS website. A case page features a number of elements, including legal, biographical, and spatial data.9 The project team designed this page to give users a holistic overview of a case. A case abstract provides researchers with a basic summary of the legal dispute at hand. A structured list of the people involved in the case features the names of the litigants, their counsel, judges who played a critical role in the proceedings, and other individuals mentioned in associated Session Papers. Short biographical statements indicate a person’s relationship to the case. Selecting an individual’s name opens a new page with additional biographical information about the person, the cases in which they were involved, and Session Papers they might have authored.

The team also worked with The Gazetteer of Scotland to import historic place names and geographic coordinates into the database, allowing the team to associate cases, individuals,

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and corporate bodies with specific places. These locations populate a digital map on each case page, allowing visitors to see the litigation’s spatial dimensions. In instances when the court’s decision appears in a law report or legal digest, the case page includes a citation and hyperlink to the publication. Session Papers appear as separate records listed below the map on each case page. Selecting a record opens a new webpage containing digital images of the document and associated bibliographic data. Finally, subject tags index each case by area of law.

Initially, the project team intended to host its Session Papers on the UVA Law Library servers and offer digital copies as downloadable PDF documents. Subjecting them to Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software would have made the PDFs fully text-searchable.

In 2017, however, the SCOS team shifted course in response to new collaborative opportunities and technological developments. The team began working with colleagues at the Centre for Research Collections (CRC) at the University of Edinburgh, who are heading up an initiative to digitize Session Papers located in various Edinburgh libraries. Given the size of the collections in Edinburgh, and the lack of any standard catalogue for these documents, the CRC team adopted a ‘digitize first’ strategy for its project. It is teaching computers how to identify key elements of the digitized documents such as titles, individuals’ names, and locations. If successful, this will expedite the creation of a comprehensive catalogue and make Session Papers more accessible. As part of this process, the CRC team uses the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF), a new technology that makes it easier to display and distribute high-resolution images on the web. In

light of these developments, the SCOS team made the decision to upload its digitized images to the CRC’s IIIF server.

SCOS’s Session Papers now live on servers in Scotland. This has two benefits. First, it enables the two teams to ‘re-unite’ Session Papers in Edinburgh, allowing them to build a more complete digital archive and reassemble cases whose constituent parts were scattered across the Atlantic. IIIF will allow other scholars and the public to import the documents into their own digital projects. Second, it makes it possible to process the SCOS team’s material through the CRC team’s advanced machine-reading software.\textsuperscript{12} This will allow for far more efficient searching than standard OCR, permitting keyword searches across multiple high-resolution images and returning results down to the line on the page. This opens up a world of possibilities beyond producing a better catalogue. Imagine what we might learn about Scotland and the slave trade, the transformation of Highland clan society, or the evolution of Scots law by performing text mining or geospatial analyses on digitized Session Papers.

Second, the SCOS team created ways for researchers to explore Session Papers as historical artifacts and as sources for asking new historical questions. While SCOS does let patrons peruse the documents by repository and archival box, SCOS’s mission is to drive new scholarship by asking researchers to see Session Papers and their content in different ways. Besides an extended introductory essay examining the history and role of Session Papers in the legal process, the SCOS team developed ‘entry points’ into documents’ content. For example, the “People and Organizations” page indexes the individual people and corporate bodies identified to date in fully processed case records. Eventually, the “Legal Geography” page will feature a global map of all locations mentioned in SCOS’s documents.

\textsuperscript{12} Michael Bennett of the University of Edinburgh Library developed Whiiif – Word Highlighting (in) IIIF. The code is freely available on Bennett’s GitHub page: https://github.com/mbennett-woe/whiiif.
The “Curated Themes” page does much of the interpretative heavy lifting by organizing case records into coherent historical themes. Based on a reading of current scholarship, and the documents themselves, the SCOS team designed the themes to inspire new research in a number of areas. “Jacobite Legacies,” for example, features litigation stemming from the failed Jacobite uprisings. “The Church and Religion” includes disputes that arose in local parishes, especially highly personal battles between clergymen and their flock. “Women Litigants” encourages scholars to investigate questions of gender, power, and authority from the late eighteenth through the early nineteenth centuries through the eyes of women who were the primary litigants in lawsuits. “Scottish Virginia” examines the commercial and familial links between Scotland and Britain’s former colony in the era of the American Revolution. Lastly, cases in “Elections” address local and parliamentary contests, revealing candidates’ machinations, and often the names of the men who voted for them.13

SCOS is an on-going project that welcomes new individual and institutional partnerships.14 By working collaboratively, we can resolve common technical and bibliographic challenges that will increase access to Session Papers and the rich histories they contain. Scots and numerous other litigants in the British Atlantic world pursued civil justice before the Court of Session in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their voices lie hidden in obscure legal documents. Through a combination of technology and research, we can hear them again.

13 For the entry points, please see http://scos.law.virginia.edu/scos/explore.
14 Please contact SCOS’ project directors (James P. Ambuske, Randall Flaherty, and Loren Moulds) if you would like to discuss potential collaborations. Ambuske can be reached directly at jambuske@mountvernon.org
ABSTRACT

This essay introduces the Bannatyne Manuscript as an historical and literary artefact and describes the process through which it is being digitized. The importance of this project lies in its goal of making this important manuscript more easily accessible. In addition to discussing the method behind the manuscript's digitization, it also examines issues related to the creation of digital editions more broadly while examining the editorial process behind the manuscript’s creation by George Bannatyne.

Keywords: Scotland; Bannatyne Manuscript; Scottish literature; Scottish verse; digital humanities; digitization; digital edition

The Bannatyne manuscript (c. 1568) is a crucial artefact for the study of Older Scots literature and late-medieval Scottish history. The manuscript is currently held in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh as Adv MS 1.1.6. The Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts describes it as:

A formal anthology of Scottish poetry, including 51 poems presently attributed to William Dunbar, largely in a single secretary hand, with a few later additions in other hands, in two tall folio volumes, with differing series of pagination and foliation, vol. I comprising 192 leaves (paginated 1–385), vol. II
comprising 205 leaves (paginated 387–795), all leaves now mounted separately in window mounts, each volume in 19th-century green morocco elaborately gilt.1

These leaves are divided into thematic sections – theology, morality, comedy, love and fables. The manuscript was compiled by George Bannatyne, a young man of high Edinburgh society, during an outbreak of plague ‘quhen we fra work were compeld to rest’ (when we from work were compelled to rest). The manuscript holds a great deal of literature that may otherwise have been lost. It is the sole source for a number of poems such as ‘the Wyf of Auchtermuchty’ and an authoritative witness for poems by William Dunbar, Robert Henryson, Gavin Douglas and, particularly in the fourth section, Alexander Scott.

It is time to bring this manuscript up to date by producing a functional digital edition. My postdoctoral project is entitled “Digitising the Bannatyne MS c. 1568,” but this title is misleading. Having received funding from the Leverhulme Trust, the first iteration of this project running to January 2021 will digitize the fourth section of the manuscript, ‘love’.2 This paper outlines the process of theorizing and conceptualizing this project, as well as providing an overview of the technology and principles used in bringing the text into the twenty-first century. The key focuses of this project are accessibility and facilitating understanding, not only of the content of the


2 Please note that all images of the manuscript itself within the project come from the National Library of Scotland’s IIIF image, under a Creative Commons 4.0 license at http://bit.ly/38qzUyN. This project is built on the principles of creative commons, specifically the idea of share and share alike, and remixing content to mutual benefit.
manuscript, but of the unique qualities of Bannatyne’s own editorial process, and his rudimentary ‘information technology’.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROJECT

The reality of the present moment is multiply troubling, especially for an early-career researcher. Digital humanities promises much in terms of opening up scholarship. However, the possibility of longstanding and enduring work is tied up in the mire of problems which plague the academy: the precarity of scholars in academic positions, the paucity of funding for large scale projects and the expense of maintaining and producing a viable product. Much of the appeal of digital humanities is the threat it poses to traditional systems of academic authority: removing knowledge from the traditional ivory tower and placing it into the hands of the user. On a practical level, the idea of a project as a ‘standalone’ entity that can be compartmentalized is appealing in maintaining independence and accessibility.3 To this end I have made some considered decisions in how to make this project something that can be self-contained and travel with me, wherever this path leads.

BANNATYNE AND HIS TEXT

George Bannatyne himself looms large as a contributor to this project. At various points I have designated Bannatyne a compiler, an author, an anthologist. I believe now that editor is the best term for his practice – in categorizing his anthology so meticulously, so much so that it was arguably suitable for

3 For an informative and intersectional overview of issues facing the field at present, please see Dorothy Kim and Jesse Stommel, eds. Disrupting the Digital Humanities (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2018).
print.\(^4\) Bannatyne places himself ahead of his time in terms of organizing and quantifying information. His system of numbering and distinctive efforts to group poems thematically, not only as the five sections, but as groups within those larger divisions, indicate an understanding and processing of information that is in many senses a binary or digital process. In conversation with Professor David Parkinson we mooted the idea of Bannatyne as the original information technologist for Scottish literature. So many projects start with the sifting of wheat from chaff, decisions regarding the content and purpose of the collection – unusually, many of these questions have already been dealt with by Bannatyne in his process. In this very real sense, the remit of the digitisation becomes editing an editor.

**EDITIONS**

A problem that has plagued the manuscript as an entity in and of itself is the siphoning of anonymized verse and the streamlining of ‘big names’ into smaller collections. That is not to say that the end results have been lacking, but it has proven to me the need to approach the manuscript as a corpus, an entity of cohesion despite its enormity. Just as Bannatyne’s original act of anthologizing is rooted in a need to preserve a canon, so too is this act of digitisation an act which will preserve the enormity as well as the specificity of the collection. As regards extant editions of the text, the Scottish Text Society edition (1928-1934), edited by William Tod Ritchie in the interwar years is, to my eye, the most authoritative and detailed edition of the text to date. This edition has stood scholars in good stead, and its replication in .pdf format on the NLS website is a crucial

resource,\(^5\) despite the limitations of the search functions on individual PDF pages. The introduction of new International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) images of the manuscript in January 2019 was exceptionally well timed.\(^6\) The IIIF offers a repository of high quality images, ‘collaboratively produc[ing] an interoperable technology and community framework for image delivery’.\(^7\) The core of this digitisation is a fresh transcription of the text, which will add to the utility of these images and is valuable in myriad other ways: it draws focus towards the content of the manuscript, rather than its codicology, which opens up the potential for new scholarship, and shedding light onto a manuscript that is often skirted around.

This is not the first time that the Bannatyne has been approached in a digital framework. Curiously, the Oxford Text Archive (OTA), a large corpus of electronic texts based at the University of Oxford, has a rudimentary COCOA encoded transcription of the Manuscript. COCOA is an early format of text encoding dating from the 1960s and rarely used now. According to the OTA, although the most recent documentation regarding the Bannatyne file dates from the late 1980s and early 90s, the original “notes for instructing operator” were written in 1964. This makes the Bannatyne one of the very oldest texts in the archive.\(^8\) This file was used to create a concordance of the text, which was integral in the

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\(^8\) My thanks to Martin Wynne of the Oxford Text Archive for access to these files and his sound advice regarding the history of the Bannatyne.
making of the Dictionary of the Older Scots Tongue, now known as the Dictionary of the Scots Language (DSL).9

TECHNOLOGY

Simplicity and accessibility has been the key consideration in establishing the framework for this project and its lifespan. The Textual Encoding Initiative (TEI) has had a bad press over the years; yet having a grasp of this technique and the opportunity it affords the Bannatyne is crucial. Dr Peter Robinson’s Textual Communities project, based in part on a customized TEI schema, was pivotal in showing me the potential as a basis for progressive digitizing work.10 TEI is a diplomatic, objective system of tagging values and allowing for multiple displays of the same core text. It is something that has endured over the years, which allows for both editor and reader to benefit. It is text based and most of all, is something which chimes with Bannatyne’s own praxis, and his focus on thematic engagement and guidance for the reader. In viewing my own project as a descendant of the work done by Bannatyne, Ramsay and Ritchie, I feel that this is a project which has natural roots which grow and entwine in numerous interesting ways. It is, in many ways, a living text.

I have taken further practical steps to work towards a goal of collaborative self-sufficiency: acquiring an institution-neutral domain name, using open access technology at ever practicable juncture [a list of specific resources is located at the web address provided below].11 I have further utilized open-access models for website creation, sharing code with fellow

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10 Textual Communities, accessed 11 December 2019.
https://textualcommunities.org/app/.
11 http://bit.ly/2We8vdz
digital humanists, such as Dr. Robyn Pritzker (Edinburgh), Camille Villa (Stanford), and Lisa Baer-Tsarfati (Guelph). IIIF images have been incorporated with a rudimentary link to Universal Viewer. Collaborative participation has been implemented where possible: thus far limited to a focus group, and supervisor input, and aided by my undergraduate collaborator, Tiana Kirstein, who has worked hard with the existing COCOA files and new transcriptions. In the spirit of collaboration and interdisciplinarity, I ran an online focus group over the summer of 2019 to establish a sense of the utility of a digitisation. Nine participants from a cross-section of Older Scots and manuscript studies participated, with varying degrees of familiarity with digital humanities. A digest of findings can be viewed at the link below.¹²

CONCLUSION

The idea of taking these practices and expanding them beyond the fourth section, depends on collaboration and common goals. The past year at the University of Saskatchewan, in collaboration with the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, has allowed me to envisage a future for this project that encompasses a pedagogical approach, a community of scholarship and an entity which offers utility to those who need it most, free of access and simple to use. This is a timely interjection for the field of Older Scottish literature, and I look forward to sharing more in due course.

MAPPING THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION: TRACING CAREERS OF THE SCOTTISH CLERGY, 1560–1689

DIGITAL HUMANITIES SPECIAL FEATURE

Michelle D. Brock, Washington and Lee University
Chris R. Langley, Newman University

ABSTRACT

This article introduces readers to Mapping the Scottish Reformation, a digital prosopography of ministers who served in the Church of Scotland between the Reformation Parliament of 1560 to the Revolution in 1689. By extracting data from thousands of pages of ecclesiastical court records held by the National Records of Scotland, Mapping the Scottish Reformation (MSR) tracks clerical careers, showing where they were educated, how they moved between parishes, their age, their marital status, and their disciplinary history. This early modern data drives a powerful mapping engine that will allow users to build their own searches to track clerical careers over time and space. In short, Mapping the Scottish Reformation puts clerical careers – and, indeed, Scottish religious history more generally – quite literally on the map.

Keywords: Scotland; Scottish Reformation; Scottish clergy; digital humanities; digitization; digital mapping

Mapping the Scottish Reformation is a digital prosopography of ministers who served in the Church of Scotland between the
Reformation Parliament of 1560 to the Revolution in 1689. By extracting data from thousands of pages of ecclesiastical court records held by the National Records of Scotland, Mapping the Scottish Reformation (MSR) tracks clerical careers, showing where they were educated, how they moved between parishes, their age, their marital status, and their disciplinary history. This early modern data drives a powerful mapping engine that will allow users to build their own searches to track clerical careers over time and space. In short, Mapping the Scottish Reformation puts clerical careers – and, indeed, Scottish religious history more generally – quite literally on the map.

Scottish history has no shortage of colorful characters. From (in)famous presbyterian firebrands who took up the sword in defense of their faith to lesser-known preachers who guided their congregations through poverty and plague, few groups loom as large in the historical record as the clergy. Of course, not all relationships between the government and clergymen, or between ministers and their parishioners, were harmonious. The records of the ecclesiastical courts—local kirk sessions, regional presbyteries and provincial synods—are littered with tales of ministers behaving badly, showing up at the pulpit inebriated or arguing on the streets with a congregant.\(^1\) The annals of Reformation-era Scotland also remind us that clerics who defied the directives of the state sometimes lost their positions, fled their parishes, and worse, found their necks in a noose. In short, Scottish clergymen were complex individuals deeply entrenched in their local communities, as well as key players in national and international movements. Throughout the early modern period, they served as a fulcrum around which religious, social, and political change pivoted.

\(^1\) On the relationship between ecclesiastical courts, communities, and the clergy, see Margo Todd’s seminal *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
The Reformation of 1560, among the most important events in Scottish history, sparked a revolution not only of theological ideas and religious practice, but also of leadership. The clergy were at the forefront of this change. Increasingly, members of the newly Protestant clergy in Scotland were expected to be formidable scholars: to hold university degrees, to read multiple languages, and of course, to understand the nuances of theology and doctrine. At the same time, clerics needed to be active in their parishes: these men could marry and have exemplary, godly, families; they were to be persuasive preachers giving three or four sermons a week; they assessed their neighbors’ poverty, visited the sick, comforted the dying; and, above all, they helped people to know and understand God. Ministers, even those who had quieter careers and did not leave behind any publications, were thus critical figures in the daily lives of ordinary men and women.2

The careers of Scottish ministers in the generations following the Reformation varied widely and in ways that historians have yet to fully chart or comprehend. William Adair, for example, was minister of Ayr, a thriving port-city in southwest Scotland, for a remarkable forty-four years. During his tenure there, he presided over a mass confession intended to stave off an outbreak of plague, provided poor relief to scores of Irish men and women fleeing political turmoil, encouraged witch-hunting in his parish, and fought in battles against royalist forces. Throughout, and for reasons that remain unclear, he held on to his post at Ayr and seems to have been beloved by his congregation, despite (or, as likely, because of)

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his radicalism and consistent opposition to the British crown’s ecclesiastical policies.³

On the opposite end of the spectrum, other ministers were remarkably mobile. The firebrand Andrew Cant was born in Aberdeenshire in the final quarter of the sixteenth century and flourished as a student at King’s College, Aberdeen. After short-term positions in the ministry in the rural north east, Cant was invited to the parish of Newbattle over one hundred and thirty miles to the south. His work in Newbattle was cut short by war as Cant enlisted to preach as a minister in the army that invaded England in 1640. He preached in pulpits as far south as Newcastle in England, and, upon his return, he was invited north again to the principal charge at St Nicholas, Aberdeen. In contrast to Adair’s career in Ayr, Cant’s ministry was characterized by mobility: shifting between rural and urban parishes across the length of Scotland and beyond.⁴

These are only two examples of the thousands of ministers whose words and actions forever altered Scotland’s local, national, and international histories. Though academic interest in the interrelated role of ecclesiastical courts and the ministry during the Scottish Reformation has flourished, and a few excellent academic studies of individual ministers have been written in recent years, we still know remarkably little about this massive and diverse group.⁵ Moreover, the most

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comprehensive collection of biographical data on the clergy—Hew Scott’s *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ*—is limited by its vague index, lack of any comprehensive search function across volumes, and errors and inconsistencies.6 Though the *Fasti* remains a work of tremendous value to Scottish historians, it provides no references to manuscripts and is thus entirely unreflective of the archival material and unhelpful as a guide to primary sources. Therefore, a new, modernized resource is needed to aid scholars, archivists, and genealogists in researching the Scottish clergy and navigating the data from the voluminous archival that helps us piece together their lives. We hope *Mapping the Scottish Reformation (MSR)* will be that resource.

Once complete, *Mapping the Scottish Reformation (MSR)* will be one of the largest databases of Protestant thinkers, theologians, and preachers in the world. This is the first project to ever comprehensively chart the growth, movement, and networks of the Scottish clergy between 1560 and 1689. It is also the first project of this type to map clerics’ careers allowing users to easily visualize where a cleric served and where his ministry took him over the course of his life. For scholars and students of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this provides new ways to understand religious beliefs, political conflicts, and institutional change. For those interested in family history on both sides of the Atlantic, MSR will provide unprecedented information on individuals whose

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outsized archival footprints make them critical figures for genealogical research.

Using the records of presbyteries and synods housed at the National Records of Scotland (NRS), our project team is currently focused on the pilot phase of MSR, which concentrates on the four hundred parishes of the synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, an important region that includes almost a third of Scotland’s parish churches and contains the relatively wealthy parishes of Edinburgh. This phase, funded by a grant from the National Endowment from the Humanities, has involved the messy but essential work of accounting for the unevenness of ministerial careers, making complex editorial decisions about who to include as clergy, and wading through some very difficult paleography. To date, we have gathered data from over two and a half thousand pages of material from the Presbytery records and detailed our progress at www.mappingthescottishreformation.org. In the coming year, we plan to make this data available in a fully searchable online database and corresponding mapping layer. During the next stage of the project, we will expand our focus beyond Lothian and Tweeddale to encompass clerical careers throughout Scotland.

Currently, we are still gathering and standardizing our data for the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale using Google Sheets, but soon we will begin the process of uploading it to Wikidata. The benefit of using Wikidata at this phase in our project is that it is a linked open data platform and is already used as a data repository for the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft, which captured information on most of the parishes and a number of the ministers in our project. Using the Wikidata plugin in Open Refine will help us reconcile ministers in our data set with those already appearing in the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft. Once our data is uploaded to Wikidata, we will run some initial queries using SPARQL and generate basic data-driven maps, with the eventual goal of working with a web
developer to build our own Mapping the Scottish Reformation interface. Stay tuned!

Taken as a whole, Mapping the Scottish Reformation invites us to re-examine traditional interpretations about the ministry. For example, historians consistently characterize the southwest region of Scotland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as ‘radical’ and dogmatically Presbyterian, while depicting the northeast as more ‘conservative’ and Episcopal. These assumptions likely contain a grain of truth, but the near impossibility of tracking the careers of ministers in any comprehensive or comparative way makes it very difficult to sustain these arguments with certainty. We do not know, for example, if most ministers in the southwest were educated in Glasgow, Edinburgh, or St Andrews, if this changed over time, and how these patterns of education may have influenced the political and religious leanings of the clergy in specific areas.

Moreover, the pilot phase of MSR has revealed that, despite common assumptions about the rigidity and consistency of the Church of Scotland’s structure, there was in fact tremendous diversity over time and space in the career paths of the post-Reformation clergy. In these volatile years, ecclesiastical policy was hotly debated; parishes were created, dissolved, or united with each other; and ministers’ roles changed, from mere exhorter to preacher of God’s word. As such, our records reflect frequent deviation from the typical

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path from student to expectant to parish minister, and instead suggest greater informality and flexibility in clerical careers than has previously been appreciated by historians. One of the core goals of Mapping the Scottish Reformation is to capture essential data while remaining sensitive to messiness of clerical experiences between the Reformation of 1560 and the Revolution of 1689.

By combining new technologies with rigorous examination of archival evidence, *Mapping the Scottish Reformation* will provide a transformative way to ask questions about the clergy, trace their careers and movements, and unpack the complex networks of men whose words and works forever altered the politics, piety, and daily lives of the Scottish people and their descendants.

We invite everyone to follow the latest updates at our website, www.mappingthescottishreformation.org, and on Twitter at @MappingScotsRef.
GENDER, AUTHORITY, AND CONTROL: MALE INVECTIVE AND THE RESTRICTION OF FEMALE AMBITION IN EARLY MODERN SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND, 1583–1616

Lisa Baer-Tsarfat, University of Guelph

ABSTRACT

Sixteenth-century discourse is filled with criticisms about the ambition of women and the proletariat. This article explores the connection between gender, ambition, authority, reputation, and the language of condemnation at the Jacobean court. It argues that the prevailing rhetoric vilifying female ambition reflects contemporaneous anxieties about female dominance and authority. In turn, male invective, libel, and slander, directed toward politically active elite women, represent men’s attempts to re-exert their authority over women perceived to be subverting established hierarchies of power. By tracing the use of invective in letters, court poetry, and moral essays, this paper reveals the ways in which abusive language was used to damage women’s reputations in order to establish and maintain male authority over women and other men in the court of James VI/I.

Keywords: Scotland; women; slander; libel; 16th century; 17th century; power; authority; social control

By 1584, Elizabeth Stewart, the countess of Arran, had attained the height of her political influence in Scotland. Her husband,
James Stewart, first earl of Arran, dominated government affairs, for, having been made acting Lord Chancellor in May, he was appointed Lord Chancellor in September following the death of the previous incumbent, the ailing sixth earl of Argyll. The countess herself was recognized by the political community in Scotland as a powerful and manipulative presence in the Court of Session, Scotland’s highest civil court, and her perceived ambition was viciously attacked in the commentaries of and correspondence between members of this political community.\footnote{Ruth Grant, “Politicking Jacobean Women: Lady Ferniehirst, the Countess of Arran and the Countess of Huntly, c. 1580–1603,” in 
\emph{Women in Scotland, c. 1100–c. 1750}, eds. Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 97–100.} Almost thirty years later, Frances Howard, the countess of Somerset, was similarly targeted in the wake of the Overbury murder scandal for her perceived ambition. These two ‘ambitious’ women, one Scottish and one English, both courtiers of James VI/I, led astonishingly parallel lives. In examining the ways in which both women were the victims of male invective during a critical period in the formation of Britain as a tangible reality, it is possible to contextualize the social control of women and the regulation of women’s behaviour in British terms rather than in Scottish or English terms alone.\footnote{For further reading on social control and reform in early modern Scotland and England, see: Harriet Cornell, “Social Control and Masculinity in Early Modern Scotland: Expectations and Behaviour in a Lowland Parish,” in \emph{Nine Centuries of Man: Manhood and Masculinity in Scottish History}, eds. Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Ewan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 183–202; Cheryl Butler, “‘Incontinent of Her Body’: Women, Society, and Morality in Tudor Southampton,” \emph{Local Historian} 47, no. 2 (2017): 96–110; Laura Gowing, “Giving Birth at the Magistrate’s Gate: Single Mothers in the Early Modern City,” in \emph{Women, Identities and Communities in Early Modern Europe}, eds. Susan Broomhall and Stephanie Tarbin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 137–52; Herman Willem Roodeburg and Petrus Cornelis Spierenburg, eds., \emph{Social Control in Europe: vol. 1, 1500–1800} (Columbus, OH: Ohio State}
the issue and takes into consideration similarities that might otherwise remain hidden from our view.

Elizabeth Stewart was the daughter of the fourth earl of Atholl and Elizabeth Gordon, daughter of the fourth earl of Huntly. She was first married to Hugh Fraser, fifth Lord Lovat, widowed in 1577, and then married in 1578 to Robert Stewart, earl of Lennox, and later, earl of March. Elizabeth was described as young and beautiful; she was also more than twenty-five years younger than her second husband. She soon found her marriage to March to be unsatisfactory and she began an affair with James Stewart, who, in 1581, was created earl of Arran. That same year, Elizabeth had her marriage to March annulled on the grounds of his impotence. She then married Arran, though both were required to “do ecclesiastical penance…much against her will” as Elizabeth had been pregnant with Arran’s child at the time of their marriage. Following this third marriage, “the countess’s prominent and

decidedly non-traditional role in Scottish national politics between 1583 and 1585 earned her opprobrium from across the political spectrum”, for, even before Arran had been made Lord Chancellor in 1584, Elizabeth was noted to have involved herself in factional politics, urging James VI in 1583 to strike off the earl of Bothwell’s head following a brawl between Bothwell and Lord Hume.4

Like Elizabeth Stewart, Frances Howard’s personal life invited scandal and the censure of court gossips and commentators. Frances was the daughter of Thomas Howard, first earl of Suffolk, and Catherine, daughter of Sir Henry Knyvett. In 1606, at the age of fourteen, she married the thirteen-year-old Robert Devereaux, third earl of Essex; however, the couple were initially considered too young to be allowed to consummate their marriage. Essex went abroad for three years, but the union remained chaste even after his return to England. By 1611 or 1612, Frances had become romantically involved with Robert Kerr, youngest son of Thomas Kerr of Ferniehirst and Janet Scott.5 Kerr was later made the earl of Somerset in 1613. That same year, Frances petitioned for a divorce from Essex on the grounds of the nonconsummation of their marriage, and three months later, she and Somerset were wed.

This marriage became the subject of a number of early Jacobean court libels, and though the relationship between Frances and Kerr was supported (with varying degrees of enthusiasm) by James VI/I and Frances’s Howard relations, it was unequivocally opposed by Kerr’s friend and client, Sir Thomas Overbury. Overbury viewed the marriage between Frances and Kerr with hostility, fearful that the countess and

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5 N.B., the English spelling of Somerset’s surname is “Carr”; however, the Scottish spelling, “Kerr”, has been retained throughout this article.
her family would usurp his own influence over the earl.\(^6\) As Overbury’s relationship with Somerset became increasingly strained, his position at court became increasingly tenuous. A man noted for his arrogance, he had offended Anna of Denmark by laughing at her, and the withdrawal of Somerset’s support led James VI/I to offer Overbury an ambassadorship as a mechanism for removing Sir Thomas from court. Overbury refused the offer and was subsequently confined to the Tower of London on 21 April 1613.\(^7\) Six months later, he was dead.

When Overbury died in the Tower of London on 14 September 1613, it was widely believed that his death had been orchestrated by Frances Howard. For two years, rumours of the countess of Somerset’s involvement in Overbury’s demise circulated at court until a confession was obtained from one of the Tower’s warders, who admitted to bringing Sir Thomas poisoned food and medicine at the instigation of the countess of Somerset and her husband. An anonymous tract detailing this, as well as two other confessions and executions connected to Overbury’s apparent murder, was published in late 1615 under the title, The Iust Downefall of Ambition, Adultery, and Murder. While reflecting upon the conspirators’ evil natures and the appropriateness of the sentences passed down, the author of this tract also placed particular emphasis upon the wickedness of ambition in women. Ambitious women, according to the author, “shew [themselves] to be troublesome disturbers of the world, powerful to make small things great and great [things] monstrous.”\(^8\) This use of the word


\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Anonymous, The Iust Downefall of Ambition, Adultery, and Murder... (London: R. Higgenbotham, 1615), 9.
‘monstrous’ to indicate the perverting influence of ambitious women upon the natural world echoes the anti-gynecocracy sentiments of John Knox, George Buchanan, and Christopher Goodman; here, the pamphlet’s author co-opted the established rhetoric of these sentiments, which declared female authority to be unnatural and women to be unfit rulers, in order to establish that women who even just desired power were not only troublesome but unnatural and prone to disturbing the balance of the affairs around them.

This early modern discourse on the nature and legitimacy of female authority provides considerable insights into the cultural anxieties of early modern men. Both Sir Thomas Smith and Christopher Goodman held that it was the natural order of things for women to be excluded from holding office, writing, “we do reject women, as those whom nature hath made to keepe home and to nourish their familie and children, and not to medle with matters abroade, nor to beare office in a citie or common wealth” for, “God is not contrarie to him self, [Genesis 3] whiche at the begynninge appoynted the woman to be in subiection to her housbande, and the man to be head of the woman (as saithe the Apostle) who wil not permitte so muche to the woman, [I Corinthians 14:1; Timothy 2] as to speake in the Assemblie of men, muche lesse to be Ruler of a Realme or nation.”\(^9\) Of course, it was legally possible for women to inherit both peerages and crowns in Scotland and England; however, female peers were prohibited from sitting in the House of Lords and queens regnant, according to the rhetoric, should have been prohibited from ruling their kingdoms. That the validity of female rule and authority should be thus questioned with the frequency and ferocity with which it appeared in contemporaneous discourse

suggests both an unwillingness to reconsider traditionally defined worldviews and a real fear of the repercussions of male submission to demonstrations of female dominance. According to Ruth Kelso, the traditional view of authority during the Renaissance was predicated on authority that had been bestowed upon the male sex directly by God. This, then, was the foundational argument upon which every early modern anti-gynecocratic writer eventually relied: that women, by nature, were subject to the authority of men according to the will of God, therefore, it should not be possible for a woman to wield political authority, particularly if she was also a wife. Sharon Jensen, Constance Jordan, and Armel Dubois-Nayt have all written excellent treatments of the debates surrounding women and power in early modern Britain that go into this subject in far greater depth and detail than this article has space for. For that reason, it can only introduce the existence of these debates and suggest that such debates reflect the presence of a certain level of cultural anxiety surrounding the notion of female authority or dominating behaviour.

Women perceived to be dominating or self-serving were often called ‘ambitious’ by the men opposing them and this indicates a similar kind of cultural anxiety surrounding the concept of ‘ambition’ in this same period. Derived from the Latin *ambitio* (the canvassing for votes), ‘ambition’ was understood in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain to be the desire for power. In modern usage, ‘ambition’ has assumed a synonymous relationship with words like ‘goal’ and

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‘objective’, yet early modern Britons would have associated ‘ambition’ with the concept of ‘power’ and with sins like pride, avarice, and envy.12

If, therefore, we understand ‘ambition’ to be largely interchangeable with ‘pride’, ‘avarice’, ‘envy’, and ‘vanity’, and to moreover be inextricably linked with the concept of ‘power’, it is unsurprising that the anonymous author of The Iust Downefall of Ambition, Adultery, and Murder coded female ambition as a trait that was intrinsically negative. Male ambition was also vilified in this period, but to a lesser extent, and with less violently gendered language. Consequently, it is proposed that the prevailing rhetoric describing the objectionable and offensive nature of female ambition reflects contemporaneous anxieties about female dominance and authority. In turn, male invective, slander, and libel, directed at politically active elite women represent men’s attempts to re-exert their authority over women who were perceived to be subverting established hierarchies of power by damaging, or attempting to damage, these women’s reputations.

Libels, in particular, open a window into the political world and culture of early modern Britain. Alastair Bellany suggests that “[l]ibels—acting in concert with other

12 This semantic characterization of ‘ambition’ has been demonstrated through the text embedding of early modern discourse material. Text embedding uses a mathematical vector to plot the semantic ‘distance’ between the words contained in a particular corpus. It is then possible to measure this semantic distance and determine which words are the most semantically similar to one another. The smaller the distance between words, the more closely related their meanings. Thus, in the text embedding of ‘ambition’, it was determined that this word had the closest semantic relationships with the words, ‘pride’, ‘envy’, ‘avarice’, and ‘vanity’ in early modern Britain. For a more detailed explanation of the process of text embedding and its application as a tool for the excavation of historically appropriate semantic characterizations, see L. Baer-Tsarfati, “To Control a (Wo)Man’s Ambition: Gender, Class, and the Maintenance of Customary Authority in Early Modern Scotland, 1500–1625,” PhD diss. (University of Guelph, 2020/1, forthcoming).
‘underground’ genres—such as newsletters, manuscript separates, and surreptitious print—played a critical, subversive role in shaping public perceptions of political events and personalities.” Yet, C.E. McGee argues in turn that “Although [libels] sometimes expressed a populist rejection of oppressive authorities, [they were] more often a means by which one group of people pressured others to conform to established social and sexual mores. Libel broke the law to enforce another law, the entrenched codes of conduct of a patriarchal order. In this context, libelous poetry was a powerful medium for the transmission of gender stereotypes.” In arguing that male invective directed at ‘ambitious’ women was intended to control the behaviour of these women, this article builds on McGee’s argument and expands it by looking at other male writings beyond the literary genre of verse libels. Of course, the success of these attempts at exerting control depends upon the importance of women’s reputations in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain. Adam Fox notes that “[t]he effect of this kind of ridicule could be devastating on its victims” for “they were exposed to a public shaming from which there was no escape and little redress.” Moreover:

Libels were obviously an effective way in which people might jeer at and wound [others]. The effects might be just as damaging to victims as any physical assault, indeed, perhaps much

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more so, for, whatever the widening horizons and affiliations of the ‘better sort’ in this period, the loss of reputation…still mattered greatly to most…Often they were inspired by malicious and spiteful motives and had no justification other than petty personal jealousies. But they might also be a powerful articulation of popular opinions and sensibilities, the communal expression of a sense of justice. Brought to bear upon those who offended against perceived norms, they could be an informal censor and regulator of the most potent kind.16

Premodern writers took note of this, commenting upon the importance of reputation and the damage that slanders and libels could inflict. Christine de Pizan, still widely read in sixteenth-century England and Scotland, emphasized that talk about a person could do great damage, a cautionary note with distant antecedents, in, for example, the depictions of reputation in Virgil and Ovid, whose works were similarly well known to early modern elite readers.17

By examining examples of male commentary, verse libels, and their correspondence to one another, we can see the ways in which abusive language was used to damage women’s reputations in order to establish and maintain male authority over women in the court of James VI/I. Both Elizabeth Stewart and Frances Howard were frequent targets of male vitriol in those periods of their lives during which they were politically active or prominent at court. Elizabeth Stewart was active in

16 Ibid., 329.
Scottish politics as the wife of James VI/I’s favourite, the future Lord Chancellor of Scotland. Frances Howard achieved prominence as the English wife of another one of James VI/I’s Scottish favourites. While Frances Howard was targeted by the male authors of verse libels, Elizabeth Stewart appears in the abusive commentaries and correspondence of Scotland’s political elite.

John Colville was a Presbyterian minister who had taken part in the Raid of Ruthven and then supported the earl of Gowrie’s 1582–3 administration; this put him at odds with the earl of Arran whose political ascendancy followed the disgrace of Gowrie and his supporters. His hostility toward Arran and his wife is not surprising, then, and in a letter written to Lord Burghley in February 1584/5, Colville reported that “[t]he Erll of Arran gydis all togidder with his lady quho is maid Lady Controller.”\(^\text{18}\) Although there is no formal record of the countess of Arran assuming the position of Comptroller before, during, or after her husband’s appointment to the office of chancellor, Colville’s casting of her in this way reveals concerns within the political community that Elizabeth Stewart had grown too powerful for their liking. The countess of Arran was frequently characterized as rapacious, her avaricious nature itself suggesting her unbridled ambition and desire for influence and power.

Patrick, Master of Gray was yet another political rival of the Arrans who was ultimately responsible for their fall from power. He was the recipient of a letter reporting on court affairs sent by William Davison, an English diplomat sent by Elizabeth I to Scotland. In it, Davison wrote of Elizabeth Stewart’s role in selling pardons within the Court of Session, noting that “the Master of Marr…hath obteyned his pardon, though with much difficulty, bycause that booth fell not into

the hands of my Lady my commere” but that “[o]ne Hamilton
gudman…has made his composicion with her for 3000lb
Scottish, and procured his exemptcion out of the sentence.”19
Effectively, Davison claimed that the Master of Mar’s
difficulty in obtaining a pardon stemmed from his failure to
bribe the countess of Arran while the Hamilton goodman’s
bribe of £3000 Scots secured his pardon for a similar offense
to Mar’s. The implication therefore is that Elizabeth Stewart
accepted bribes in order to exert influence upon her husband
who then applied pressure where necessary to obtain the
desired results. In so doing, she would have effectively
executed the intercessory functions of queenship without the
authority of rank and for the sole purpose of personal gain. That
is, one of the traditional roles played by Scottish queens was
the act of pleading for mercy on the behalf of supplicants to the
crown. In this ritualized act of intercession, the queen’s pleas
allowed the king to exercise mercy without himself appearing
weak while allowing the queen to demonstrate her own virtue,
couched within traditional expressions of femininity.20
Elizabeth Stewart’s acceptance of bribes to influence the
outcomes of cases heard by the Court of Session follows this
paradigm; however, Elizabeth was not the queen, her husband
was not the king, and rather than signalling virtue, the Arrans’
actions were instead perceived to be wholly self-interested.
Before the creation of Arran’s government in 1583, there had
been no serious female influence at court since Mary, Queen of
Scots’ abdication in 1567, and the “dexterity with which the

19 Thomas Thomson, ed., Letters and Papers Relating to Patrick Master of
Gray, Afterwards, Seventh Lord Gray (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club,
1835), 2–3.
20 For a discussion of queens as intercessors and as sources of influence
upon kings (both husbands and sons), see Fiona Downie, She Is But a
Woman: Queenship in Scotland, 1424–1463 (Edinburgh: John Donald,
2006).
countess filled this vacuum made her all the more conspicuous and perhaps prey to greater criticism.”

In April 1584, a man from Atholl claimed that “he heard a witch say that the Ladie Arran had used witchcraft against him, and if he provided not for contrare venome, it would come to his destruction.” Later that month, the Lords Enterprisers gathered at Stirling and described the countess of Arran as “depending on the response of witches and [an] enemie to all human society.” In Davison’s letter Elizabeth Stewart is said to have consulted witches, and a year later, she was called a “laciuous viccked woman, and one blundered of witchcrafte.” That so many of these commentaries accuse the countess of Arran of associating with witches cannot be seen as idle or insignificant in this period. The Witchcraft Act had been passed in Scotland in 1563, making the conviction of practicing witchcraft or of consulting with witches a capital offense. Although the first of the major Scottish witch-hunts did not begin until 1590, an accusation of witchcraft in 1584 still carried a very real and tangible threat of physical harm, let alone loss of reputation. It is possible that Elizabeth’s status as the wife and daughter of earls may have insulated her against an actual prosecution for witchcraft; however, the act of calling her a witch or of accusing her of consorting with witches cannot be seen as anything other than an intentional attempt to

21 Grant, “Politicking Jacobean Women,” 98.
23 A name given to the group of Presbyterian nobles who had supported the first earl of Gowrie in his opposition to the coalition formed by the duke of Lennox and the earl of Arran in 1582, and who had likewise participated in the Raid of Ruthven during which James VI was abducted and then held captive until his escape the following year.
damage her reputation and good standing within the community.\textsuperscript{26} Indeed, it is telling that this was the preferred slander employed against her as it completely devalues her perceived influence by ascribing its source to the supernatural, once again stressing the unnaturalness of female ambition. There is a sort of logic to this connection. If ambition in a woman was perceived as inherently ‘unnatural’, then it only makes sense that an ambitious woman would choose to pursue her unnatural desires by using unnatural, or supernatural, means. The emphasis placed on the role of witchcraft in Elizabeth Stewart’s rise to power can also be seen as a sly attack upon the integrity of her husband. As a man who failed to control his ‘ambitious’ wife, one who, moreover, regularly sought the guidance of witches, Arran could only be viewed as an ineffective governor of his own household. How then, could he be trusted to govern Scotland?

The slanders and libelous correspondence levelled at the countess of Arran very rarely took aim at her sexual character despite the salaciousness of her affair, divorce, and premarital pregnancy. This contrasts sharply with the treatment that Frances Howard received in England. Though she too was called a witch by her detractors, most of the verse libels in which she was the principal subject focus primarily upon her perceived immoral and lustful sexuality. Few of these poems overtly describe Frances as ‘ambitious’, or ‘proud’, yet the fact that she was perceived by contemporaries as ‘ambitious’

\textsuperscript{26} It is worth noting that status did not save Janet Douglas, Lady Glamis from accusations of witchcraft and treason in 1537. She was burned at the stake after being tried and convicted of attempting to poison the king. The likely difference between the two women is that the malice directed at Elizabeth Stewart came from non-royal members of the political community who were in opposition to her husband as well. Janet Douglas, by contrast, was the victim of James V’s targeted desire to break the power of the Douglases. For all of the hatred that Lady Arran endured, it appears that neither she nor her husband ever fully forfeited James VI’s goodwill.
cannot be questioned. As Frances was a member of the politically powerful Howard family, any union with an equally politically prominent figure would have been perceived as arising from both personal and dynastic ambition. This is explained by Allastair Bellany and Andrew McRae in their overview of the Essex divorce case and Frances Howard’s remarriage to Robert Kerr. As the “intimate favourite of King James I, this marriage would tie the increasingly politically ambitious favourite to the powerful Howard faction, signalling a shift in [Kerr’s] hitherto anti-Howard political leanings, and providing the Howards with a massively increased opportunity to influence royal policy in both domestic and foreign affairs.”

Accordingly, the first court libels attacking Frances Howard were circulated during and immediately after the proceedings that nullified her first marriage, suggesting that such libels may have had an influence upon how she was later portrayed. These poems primarily attacked the countess’s sexual purity—for instance:

A page a knight a Vicount, and an Earle
was matched Lately to an English girle
But such A one as nere was seene before
A mayde, a wife, a Countesse and A whore

and

Letchery did consult with witcherye
how to procure frygiditye
upon this ground a course was found

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28 Early Stuart Libels, “F1”.
to frame unto a nullatye
And gravitye assuming lenytye
gave strength to this impietye
hoping thereby a way to spye
to rise to further dignyte
But whats the end both foe and frend
cry shame on such austeretye
And booke and bell do dam to Hell
the Lord and Ladyes lechery.29

This second verse is particularly interesting in that though its primary aim is an attack upon Frances Howard’s perceived sexual transgressions, it does so by accusing her of causing her husband’s impotence through the use of witchcraft, either her own or someone else’s. The purpose of doing so was evidently her desire to procure a divorce and thus satisfy her unnatural ambition (“hoping thereby a way to spye / to rise to further dignyte”) by attaching herself to the king’s favourite.

Yet, this libelous association of Frances Howard with witchcraft cannot be read as being as wholly sinister as the slanders against the countess of Arran discussed above. This is because prosecuting a woman for witchcraft and securing a conviction for the crime was more difficult in England due, in part, to the centralization of the law courts in England and the relative freedom exercised by church authorities and local elites in the prosecution of witchcraft in Scotland.30 The poem remains, however, a nasty assassination of Frances Howard’s character that was intended as much to damage her reputation as it was to damage the reputation of her husband in another parallel between the two women. Just as the casting of Elizabeth Stewart as an associate of witches can be viewed as

29 Early Stuart Libels, “F2”.
30 See, Brian P. Levack, Witch-hunting in Scotland: Law, Politics, and Religion (London: Routledge, 2008) for further discussion of these differences.
an attack on the earl of Arran, the casting of Frances Somerset as a witch or an associate of witches can be seen as an attack on the earl of Somerset. English courtiers were undoubtedly well-acquainted with James VI/I’s interest in matters pertaining to witches, as well as his reputation as the “greatest enemy [the Devil] hath in the worlde.”31 The king was known to have participated in the North Berwick witch trials of 1590 thanks to the publication of the pamphlet, Newes from Scotland in London in 1591, and editions of James VI/I’s Daemonologie were in print in London by at least 1603, inspiring and influencing English treatises about witch-finding and prosecution.32 Knowing, then, the king’s feelings about witches and witchcraft, it is possible that the authors of these libels were motivated by a desire to remove the earl of Somerset from within James VI/I’s inner circle. After all, if the king wished to maintain his reputation as the Devil’s greatest enemy, then how could he justify maintaining a relationship with a man whose wife was a witch? Still, most of the libels directed at the countess of Somerset continued to focus upon her scandalous sexuality. The emphasis placed upon Frances Howard’s sexual immorality speaks to the perceived effectiveness of policing female sexuality as a method of exerting control in early modern England. Laura Gowing’s examination of female sexual slander in London demonstrates just how powerful attacking the sexual reputation of an Englishwoman could be. She notes that:

31 Anonymous, Newes from Scotland, Declaring the Damnable Life and Death of Doctor Fian a Notable Sorcerer, Who Was Burned at Edenbrough in January Last 1591... (London: E. Allde for William Wright, 1592), 11.
as the primary targets of insult, women occupied a very particular place in the negotiation of sexual guilt and honour. Insults of women played on a culpability for illicit sex that was unique to them. The personal, verbal, social and institutional sanctions against ‘whores’ and ‘bawds’ had no counterpart for men. Men were less likely than women to be presented for illicit sex. Men’s adultery was never an accepted ground for marital separation as women’s was. And the word ‘whore’ had no male equivalent.33

Following the death of Sir Thomas Overbury, the libelous verses directed at the countess of Somerset began to accuse Frances of murder as well as sexual immorality and witchcraft. One of the earliest of these was a simple modification of the first verse quoted above:

A page, a knight, a viscount and an Erle
All foure weare wedded to one lustfull girle
A match well made, for shee was likewise foure
A wife a witch, a murderer, and a whore34

It is difficult to prove that the circulation of verses like these, which explicitly named Frances Howard as Sir Thomas Overbury’s chief assassin, was responsible for the countess’s eventual arrest and conviction, as well as the arrest and conviction of the earl of Somerset, for the murder (and

34 Early Stuart Libels, “H5”.
complicity with the murder) of Sir Thomas in the Tower of London. That said, it is not difficult to imagine that the circulation of these kinds of libels at the court of James VI/I played a significant role in damaging the couple’s reputation in London and abroad. Perhaps most interesting is that the libels directed at Frances Howard did not cease when she was convicted of Overbury’s murder. A final poem, dating from 1615/16 appears to revel in the downfall of the Somersets:

From Roberts coach to Robins carr  
Franke, flings, and climes, and Travells farr  
And Tom attempts the Carr to staye  
Whom Weston whipps out of the way  
Moone, sunne, and many a starr beesyde  
Lends Franke there [sic] light, her Carr to guide  
Olde Venus with her borrowed light  
Finds beasts, and riders passing right  
Att length an Elvish trick is showne  
That Franke, and carr, are overthrowne,  
The Turner, and then quickly spye  
Where coaches creepe and Carrs doe flye.  
To four fierce beasts this race did trust  
Call’d pride, ambition, murder, lust;  
Wonder all men, is itt not strange  
Tyme should make so greate a change  
Of Gods wrath it is a token  
That the greatest Carr is broken  
Sinn did loade itt, honnor top’itt  
Tyme disclos’de itt, vengeance cropt itt.35

In twenty lines, the author of this verse traces the history of Frances Howard’s involvement with Robert Kerr, playing upon a pun of the earl’s surname to chart the couple’s swift decline.

35 Stuart Court Libels, “H3”.
Here, ambition and pride are explicitly added to the charges of murder and lust, and the author seems to enjoy pointing out that these sins were justly punished by God in an act of divine vengeance. Most importantly though, this verse serves as both a celebration of the Somersets’ disgrace and as a warning to other women to avoid any appearance of ‘ambition’.

Both Elizabeth Stewart and Frances Howard were perceived to be ambitious women, eager to exercise power, though both did so through the exertion of influence upon their politically prominent husbands. Arran was Lord Chancellor from 1584 to 1585 and in that time Elizabeth Stewart was derisively called the kingdom’s first “Lady Comtroller” while it was suggested that she dominated her husband in the governance of Scotland. Frances Howard was accused of using her influence over the earl of Somerset to further the interests of her family and to arrange for the murder of his one-time client and friend. Though politically prominent for a time, both women were toppled from their positions and grew increasingly insignificant. The earl of Arran became entangled in a murder scandal in 1585 that resulted in the forfeiture of his title and in the removal of both him and his wife from court. Frances Howard and her husband spent six years in the Tower of London before they were pardoned by James VI/I and allowed to retire into obscurity in the English countryside.

In targeting the reputations of women perceived to be overly ambitious and guilty of exercising too much authority or influence over their husbands, male authors sought to maintain control over these women’s behaviour. Damaging women’s reputations in this way was a deliberate act of punishment for transgression with the intent of ‘correcting’ that transgression by either altering these women’s behaviour or by precipitating their disgrace, thus stripping them of the ability to exercise any significant power at court. The earl of Arran and the earl of Somerset had both been royal favourites of James VI/I. It is worth considering, then, whether male abuse and
invective directed at politically active elite women might be seen as an attempt to exert control over these women through the damaging of their reputations. Likewise, male abuse and invective directed at politically active elite women might also be seen as an attempt to exert control over men perceived to have not only failed in properly exerting their own authority over their wives, but also who might themselves be perceived to be demonstrating illegitimate forms of ambition. Certainly libels were directed at men as well as at women; however, the language in these verses, slanders, and gossip is less violent, and men are likely to be depicted as foolish, incompetent, or cuckolds. As C.E. McGee explains, “…men were to be responsible for the containment of women whose concupiscence made them an abiding source of anxiety. This presumed ‘frailty’ of womankind gave libellers the purchase needed to strike a blow at other men.” We see, then, that male invective, directed at women, was a tool for exerting male authority over not only women, whose sexual morality and identities as properly Christian women might be called into question as a threat of loss of reputation, but also over the men in these women’s lives who were themselves perceived to have failed patriarchal social structures through their inability to control their wives. Women’s speech was highly policed in early modern society but through the use of invective to

36 McGee, “Pocky Queans and Hornèd Knaves,” 147.
threaten women’s reputations, men’s speech could be used to control women’s behaviour, reasserting male dominance and authority over those women perceived to be subverting established hierarchies of control.
GENDER, RESISTANCE, AND CONFORMITY IN EARLY MODERN SCOTLAND, 1560–1650

Ryan Burns, Northwestern University

ABSTRACT

This article claims that men and women in mixed marriages often subverted patriarchal norms when attempting to escape ecclesiastical censure in early modern Scotland. Ministers held husbands responsible for ensuring the conformity of their households, and they insisted that Protestant husbands bring their wives into the fold. These husbands then argued that they had no right to compel their wives in matters of conscience. Some even insisted that they had no control over their wives whatsoever. They were willing to appear failing in their patriarchal duties in order to protect their wives from the kirk, which was loath to interfere much further in marital relationships. Married women risked excommunication for their defiance, but local authorities were unable to confiscate any of their assets, which were held in trust by their husbands. Catholic women thus used the patriarchal assumptions of religious authorities as a means of undermining religious conformity.

Keywords: Scotland; religious history; women; marriage; 16th century; 17th century; power; authority; social control

In December 1600, the presbytery of Aberdeen decided to settle a matter that had long troubled them. John Leslie, the
laird of Wardes, had not only failed to attend sermons at his parish kirk in Dyce; he had also ignored repeated summons to appear before his local kirk session, the committee of parish elders tasked with enforcing discipline. The presbyters, suspecting him to be a Catholic, threatened Leslie with excommunication if he refused another call, and they duly ordered him to appear on 2 January 1601. This time he came. He seemed remorseful for his absence from church, and he pleaded that he no longer considered himself to be a Catholic. He meekly “offereit to satisfie the kirkis desire in all thingis,” agreeing “noch onlie to subs cryve, bot to sweir to the religioun” presently professed in Scotland. The presbyters ordered Leslie to formally subscribe to the Scots Confession of Faith on 6 February, and they hoped that he would not do so alone. Leslie’s Catholic wife, Elspeth Gordon, had not accompanied her husband to the presbytery that day, but the presbyters were determined to win her conversion as well. Unfortunately, when they asked Leslie whether “he wald causs his ladie be present with him, and to be partaker with him, and to subs cryve as he did,” the would-be convert answered that he would not. He cloaked his refusal in high-minded language, reminding the presbytery that “in thingis concerning hir saull and conscience, he had na powar to command her”. He offered to speak with her about the possibility of converting, but pointedly left any further prodding to the presbyters themselves. If she would not comply, Leslie added, “let the ministeris deal with her utherways according to the discipline of the kirk”.  

John Leslie and Elspeth Gordon were effectively exploiting a gendered loophole. They relied on the patriarchal
assumptions embedded in Scottish custom, which offered husbands considerable authority over their wives, to shield recusant wives from any prosecution for nonconformity. Elspeth Gordon’s status as a married woman offered some protection from the harsher penalties that would have accompanied excommunication, despite the manifold summons that she received. The state could not confiscate any of her property, which was formally administered by her husband, nor could it fully cordon her off from other Protestants in her community. Ministers held husbands responsible for ensuring the conformity of their households, and they insisted that Protestant husbands bring their Catholic wives into the fold. These husbands then argued that they had no right to compel their wives in matters of conscience. Some even insisted that they had no control over their wives whatsoever. They were willing to appear to be failing in their patriarchal duties in order to protect their wives from the kirk, which was loath to interfere much further in marital relationships. Catholic women thus used the patriarchal assumptions of religious and secular authorities as a means of undermining religious conformity.

Above all, Catholic women in mixed marriages relied on the inherent protections such unions afforded them. The very existence of mixed marriages challenged the confessional order in church and state, raising awkward questions about apostacy, conformity and the education of one’s children. Nevertheless, Biblical injunctions on the inviolability of marriage significantly circumscribed the kirk’s ability to intervene, at least once the marriage had been solemnized.4

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4 While kirk sessions sometimes prohibited couples from marrying, usually on account of age, religious ignorance (ministers required each couple to demonstrate their mastery of the Lord’s Prayer or the Apostles’ Creed before banns could be published), or consanguinity, they routinely dismissed familial objections to prospective marriages. The First Book of Discipline insisted that fathers had no right to veto their daughters’ choice
Kirk sessions forcibly separated couples married after 1560 by a Catholic priest, compelling husband and wife to live apart until they were married according to Protestant rites, but any marriage celebrated by a minister was recognized as valid in Scottish law. The General Assembly forbade ministers from performing mixed marriages, censuring or dismissing those who did so, but many couples prudently declined to advertise their religious differences until after the marriage was performed. And while some relationships between Protestants and Catholics were genuinely mixed, a partnership between two believers of different faiths, many “mixed” marriages in early modern Scotland were between covertly Catholic men and overtly Catholic women. The husband’s conformity safeguarded the family’s standing and inheritance, which enabled the wife to preserve the family’s beliefs and pass them on to the next generation.

Such arrangements were common among religious minorities in early modern Europe. Historians of England and elsewhere have increasingly turned to mixed marriages, probing the practical limitations on confessional uniformity. John Bossy, Alex Walsham and Michael Questier have demonstrated that English women in mixed marriages enjoyed a wide latitude to practise their underground faith, the product of legal loopholes and official reticence to interfere in domestic affairs. Local authorities were unable to impose recusancy of husband (so long as that husband was sufficiently godly) on the grounds that “the work of God ought not to be hyndered by the corrupt affectionis of worldlie men”. See, for example, David Laing, ed. The Works of John Knox, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1846–64), 2:246; Margo Todd, The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 267.

5 For an example of forcible separation, see: Synod of Moray Minutes, 1668–1686, CH2/271/3, 31, National Records of Scotland [hereafter NRS], Edinburgh, UK.

6 Alexandra Walsham, Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England (Woodbridge: Boydell...
fines directly on married women, who were classified in English common law as “femmes covert,” with property vested in their husbands. And while a 1606 statute permitted the dismissal of officeholders with recusant wives, on the grounds that such men were likely secret Catholics themselves, local JPs were generally reluctant to levy any further penalties on married couples.  

Matters were even more lax elsewhere in Protestant Europe. In the Netherlands, where a handful of parish elders and even ministers were reputed to have Catholic wives, the authorities in church and state showed little reticence in accepting the validity of mixed marriages. As Ben Kaplan notes in his *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, mixed couples were permitted to marry in the Dutch Reformed Church, so long as the Catholic partners promised not to interfere in the Protestant faith of their spouse and the Protestant education of their children. If a Protestant service offended the sensibilities of the Catholic partner, the couple could even opt for a civil ceremony performed by the local magistrate.  

In Scotland, however, there was no question of having a civil marriage ceremony in lieu of a Protestant service. Catholic women in mixed marriages did indeed possess certain privileges, but the overreliance of many historians on civil evidence can obscure the very real pressures such women faced. Scholars have traditionally approached Catholicism in Scotland by analyzing the country's penal laws and their rather

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Walsham, *Church Papists*, 80.  

Secular authorities did not levy punitive fines on conforming men for having recusant wives, and they refrained from imposing any restrictions on officeholding as well. Yet the nation's campaign to suppress Catholicism was directed not by the state, but by the kirk, which had absolutely no compunction on summoning women who hailed from mixed marriages, even if it could not punish them in exactly the same way. When Alastair Roberts explored these issues in his 1991 article “The Role of Women in Scottish Catholic Survival,” his focus on secular persecution led him to underestimate the pressures that Catholic women faced from zealous kirk sessions. Relying in part on conclusions drawn from mixed marriages in England, whose interplay with the state he assumed to be broadly similar to the situation prevailing in Scotland, Roberts argued that the Scottish government had little interest in the conformity of recusant women. According to Roberts, as long as a couple committed to raising their children as Protestants, much like the concessions offered to mixed couples in the Netherlands, Scottish authorities generally looked the other way if a wife worshiped as a Catholic. Roberts pointed to the examples of Jean Gordon, Countess of Sutherland, and Henrietta Stewart, Marchioness of Huntly, whom James VI actually permitted to hear mass so long as the priest was not a Jesuit.

When clerical authorities are considered alongside secular ones, it becomes clear that Scottish Catholic women were not granted as much latitude as historians have suggested. Dispensations of the sort granted to the Countess of Sutherland and the Marchioness of Huntly were vanishingly rare, even among the very elite. The king demurred when Margaret Seton,

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Lady Paisley, asked for similar privileges in 1610, offering no support to the aged noblewoman when the kirk demanded her conformity. She was married, but her husband had apparently gone insane, and was therefore deemed incapable of ensuring the godliness of his household.\textsuperscript{11} Seton penned a moving letter asking for help, forlornly hoping that “his Majesty, who hath always had a gracious regard to me and mine, will not think me unworthy in my extreme of sickness”.\textsuperscript{12} James was unmoved, and her letter plainly reveals the rigour by which the kirk, if not the state, sought total religious uniformity. Seton discussed her illness at length, complaining that “these four years past I have been subject a vehement payne, arising from distillations and humours in my head, with a continual toothache, giving me [such] torment as scarce I have half-an-hour’s release by night or by day”. She lamented that these torments provided no respite from a determined kirk, since “to aggravate my payne, I am summoned by the Church to confer and attend on the Presbyteries and other dyets”.\textsuperscript{13} The kirk clearly had no sympathy for her pleas of sickness, whatever her temporal rank.

Scholars are beginning to appreciate the importance of ecclesiastical sanctions in securing religious uniformity in Scotland. Margo Todd and Michael Graham have incorporated cases against Catholics into their wider studies on kirk discipline, while Paul Goatman and Dan MacLeod have engaged with kirk session minutes for their studies on Catholics in Glasgow.\textsuperscript{14} Catherine McMillan recently examined

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\item \textsuperscript{12} “Dame Margaret Seton, Lady Paisley to the Queen's Majesty, 1 September 1610”, in \textit{Original Letters Relating to the Ecclesiastical Affairs of Scotland: 1603–1614}, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1851), 257.
\item \textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid}.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Michael Graham, The \textit{Uses of Reform “Godly Discipline” and Popular Behavior in Scotland and Beyond} (Leiden; Brill, 1996). For urban histories, see Michael Lynch, \textit{Edinburgh and the Reformation} (Edinburgh:}
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ecclesiastical efforts to secure the conformity of Catholic women in the northeast, noting the tenacity with which kirk sessions pursued even high-born women. Nevertheless, McMillan’s conclusion that ministers pursued men and women with equal vigour leaves unresolved the question of how certain women, married or not, managed to deflect unwanted attention, apart perhaps from individual courage. Married women were not without protection if they sought to defy the kirk, but this did not stem from reluctance to convert them. Kirk sessions summoned women whose husbands had conformed roughly as often as anyone else and they were prepared to excommunicate them if they proved recalcitrant. Yet married women were protected by the patriarchal conventions that governed their society, where husbands administered the heritable property that their wives brought to a marriage. Although the estates of excommunicated persons were legally considered forfeit, Scottish authorities typically did not confiscate any of a wife’s estate as long as her husband was in good standing with the kirk. Ministers recognized that a Protestant spouse was an indispensable ally in winning the conversion of a recalcitrant Catholic, though crypto-Catholics could certainly exploit this situation. Men who only grudgingly conformed to the kirk had no interest in forcing their wives to renounce a religion that they still, in secret, continued to call their own. They safeguarded their own positions by slyly inverting their patriarchal authority, complaining to the kirk that they had no

power or influence over their wives. Scottish Protestants eventually grew wise to this strategy, and in 1642 the Privy Council passed a measure that held husbands responsible for the religious proclivities of their wives.17 Presbyterian ministers expected all Scots to attend church on Sundays, and they could no longer stomach this gendered loophole.

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One cannot fully grapple with the kirk’s treatment of Catholic women without first appreciating Scotland’s unique approach toward religious uniformity. Scottish Catholics faced enormous pressure to conform to the new order but, unlike their co-religionists in England or elsewhere in Protestant Europe, they almost never faced the possibility of state-sanctioned violence. This anomaly was well known at the time, with Catholic missionaries in Scotland candidly admitting that “the heretics extol their own clemency in not shedding blood, like our Inquisitors [do]”.18 The Scottish Parliament passed a series of stringent anti-Catholic measures at the Reformation, but many of these laws had little impact on the kingdom’s actual religious policy. These included the aptly titled Act Anent the Mass, which levied severe penalties on those who participated in Catholic worship. Priests and lay attendees would lose their lands and titles on the first offense, followed by banishment for the second and execution for a third.19 Such punishments, however, were seldom levied. Although a handful of Scottish

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Catholics were indeed imprisoned in the century after the Reformation, no Scot was ever executed for harbouring a priest. And with the sole exception of James Ogilvie, a Jesuit priest hanged in 1615, no clergyman faced the scaffold for saying mass within the kingdom.20

Scotland’s reluctance to enforce these laws hardly suggests that Catholics enjoyed a kind of quasi-toleration. The Presbyterian kirk rigorously sought to achieve doctrinal uniformity in every parish, and it hoped to achieve genuine conversions from recalcitrant Catholics. While their remit did not extend very far into the Highlands, kirk sessions effectively governed religious life in the Lowlands, home to all of Scotland’s major towns and burghs, and they certainly did not leave Catholics alone to contemplate reformed theology. Instead, they embarked on a sustained campaign of psychological pressure designed to wear down Catholic resistance, refusing to relent until suspected papists swore that they accepted reformed theology. If Scots informed the kirk session of any Catholics in their midst, the session would require those individuals to appear and explain their theological beliefs. Those who refused to attend could eventually be forcibly brought before them. If their beliefs ultimately proved wanting, ministers would often provide remedial instruction of varying levels of intensity. The Ellon presbytery, for instance, compelled the recusant George Gordon of Gicht to confer with his minister every Monday and Thursday, where they discussed a range of theological topics.21

20 Scotland’s treatment of its Catholic minority sharply contrasts with the punishments meted out to Catholic clergy in England, where as many as 116 clergy and 75 laymen and women had been put to death. Marie Rowlands, “English Catholics in the Reign of Elizabeth,” History Review 59 (December 2007): 7–12. John Ogilvie, Scotland’s sole Catholic martyr, was technically executed for treason rather than for saying mass.

21 Presbytery of Ellon Minutes, 1607-1628, CH2/146/2, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
old recusant Alexander Elphinstone renounced popery in 1601, he was forced to undergo a five-month course with the fearsome preacher Andrew Melville, who promptly saw to it that Elphinstone never considered backsliding again.\textsuperscript{22}

Ministers preferred to employ tactics that were deemed to rely on persuasion rather than force, even though to Catholics those tactics could seem rather forceful. Ministers were also willing to continue with measures of persuasion even when they did not appear to be having any immediate effect. The Aberdeen session advised in 1573 that “transgressors agains ye Religion…be first handillit and travellit wt gentilly, gif be ony meanis possible yai may be von” (be first handled and laboured with gently, if by any means possibly they may be won).\textsuperscript{23} Although Aberdeen possessed a substantial Catholic and crypto-Catholic population well into the seventeenth century, it was no outlier in adopting such a cautious approach. St. Andrews had adapted rather quickly to Protestant reforms, and the city’s kirk session boasted as early as 1564 that “the face of ane perfyt reformed kyrk hes beyn seyn within this cite be the space of five yearis”.\textsuperscript{24} Nevertheless, the elders shared their Aberdeen brethren’s patience, proclaiming their willingness “to wyn synneris wyth quietness rather nor sevirite to repentans, evir hoping from day to day willing obedience and satisfaction”.\textsuperscript{25} They readily displayed this forbearance on several occasions, even when dealing with defiant parishioners. The St. Andrews kirk session summoned the recusant David Dischington in 1568, but the recusant promptly

\textsuperscript{22} William Fraser, \textit{The Elphinstone Family Book of the Lords Elphinstone, Balmerino and Coupar} (Edinburgh, 1897), vol. 1, 180–1.
\textsuperscript{23} St. Nicholas Kirk Session Minutes, Aberdeen, 1562–78, CH2/448/1, 25, Aberdeen Council Archives, Aberdeen, UK.
\textsuperscript{24} David Hay Fleming, \textit{Register of the Minister, Elders and Deacons of the Christian Congregation of St. Andrews, 1559–1600} (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1889), 203.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}, 473.
“departit wytht fume and anger” when the elders pressed him on his religious allegiances. Rather than excommunicate him or appeal to the magistrates for his arrest, the session “being of mynd to repress his stubburnes and be al meanis possible to wyn hym” simply ordered him to appear once he had calmed down.26

The kirk's patience was far from boundless, however. Catholics eventually risked excommunication if they refused to comply, a dreadful sentence that most sought to avoid. It lurked in the background only as an absolute last resort, when resolute delinquents would be cast out of the Church of Scotland and all but their nearest kin forbidden to interact with them. Their lands and possessions were considered forfeit, and excommunicates could be imprisoned or banished at a moment's notice. A few enterprising kirk sessions went even further, levying curfews, confining excommunicates to a certain radius around their homes, and sometimes even passing ordinances designed to keep them off the streets altogether. In Glasgow, for example, the St. Mungo kirk session ordered excommunicates to “keep themselves closed within their house” until they were ready to recant their errors.27 In 1585, the Glasgow session actually disciplined one Marion Andro for speaking with her excommunicated son, who was also rebuked for leaving his house.28 In practice, however, excommunication added yet another layer of intrusive preaching and proselytization, one much more onerous than before. Ministers were perfectly aware that excommunicates would attempt to contact friends and associates, and rather than ban such interactions outright, many kirk sessions sought to turn them into yet another opportunity for evangelization. Protestants who wished to transact business with excommunicates had to

26 Ibid., 297.
27 St. Mungo Kirk Session Minutes, Glasgow, 1583-1593, CH2/550/1, 213, Glasgow City Archives, Glasgow, UK.
28 Ibid., 69.
receive permission from their kirk sessions in advance, and they were required to set aside a period of time to discuss the truth of the Protestant religion. Indeed, the Aberdeen kirk session expressly forbade any interaction “except it be knawn and prowin for the reconciliatioun and wynning of tham to God”.29 Any potential meeting was closely regulated by the kirk, which took steps to ensure that religious discussions actually took place. In 1584, for instance, the Protestant James Blackwood applied to the Stirling presbytery for permission to visit his excommunicated brother’s home, which Blackwood claimed offered the perfect opportunity to persuade his brother “to renounce that damnablle religioun of papistrie and imbrece the trew lycht of the evangell”.30 The presbytery granted Blackwood’s request on the condition “that he makadvertisment of befoir to ane of the ministeris in Dunblane,” which further also required him to provide a full report on what transpired at their meeting. Moreover, the presbytery granted an additional “lycence to the said James to pas with ane minister and ane elder conjunctlie to the presens of the said excommunicate, at sic tymis as thai thocht meit to confer with him anent the religioun”.31 The minister and elder were to act as chaperones, guiding the discussion to ensure that it met with the kirk’s rigorous standards. The Blackwood brothers thus managed to conduct their business without incurring the wrath of the kirk, but it came at a price.

Scottish excommunicates routinely applied for these licenses, accepting humiliating restrictions on their movement in exchange for the freedom to move at all. They consented to the same regimen of preaching and conferences that they had previously defied, and the experience unsurprisingly led some excommunicates to consider conforming to the kirk. Those

29 Stuart, Aberdeen Selections, 35.
31 Ibid., 219.
who refused to participate were eventually condemned as incorrigible, leaving room for the state to confiscate their assets and imprison them. The kirk may have been slow to recommend this course, but confiscation and imprisonment occurred often enough for Catholics to fear it.

Scottish Catholics therefore had little choice but to deal with an intrusive, overbearing kirk. After observing the activities of kirk sessions in Edinburgh, the priest William Crichton complained that in Scotland “the power of the heretical ministers is so great that they can compel every one to subscribe their false confession of faith, attend their sermons, and take the profane supper of the Calvinist rite”. He lamented that “the Catholics are so unnerved by this severity that very few of them remain firm,” and he feared that their numbers would dwindle until they finally faded away.32 Yet the kirk's patient “travelling” with those it hoped to convert offered an unintended benefit to Catholics who were anxious not to abandon their faith. They needed only to pretend interest in the reformed religion, since the kirk would almost immediately halt excommunication proceedings if there was even the slightest chance of their conversion. Ministers continued to confer with accused Catholics even when they suspected that they were merely buying time and had no intention of actually converting to the Protestant religion. The Synod of Fife admitted in 1612 that George Gordon of Gicht's “making some shew of ane desire to be resolved in the headis of religion hes bein for no vther end but to illude the Kirk, and slew the further executioune of the lawes against him” (making some show of a desire to be resolved in the points of religion has been for no other end than to elude the kirk and slow the further execution

of the laws against him). Yet the synod was so committed to winning Gicht’s conversion, despite his almost transparent disinterest in the reformed religion, that it dropped its objections as soon as he offered, once again, to confer with a minister and consider the Confession of Faith.

Catholics who chose this course still had to contend with frequent, and often tense, interrogations before officious kirk sessions. Unsurprisingly, more than a few suspected Catholics were not quite as prepared as their interrogators expected. The Aberdeen recusant Robert Lang unfortunately did not have an answer when his kirk session asked him “quhat poynyt of the confessioun of Fayth he doubtis upon, and to tell his scruples” (what point of the Confession of Faith he has doubts about, and to tell his scruples). The session was not impressed, and it ordered him to study for several more weeks before he appeared before them again. Catholics of both sexes often endured this maelstrom together, for the kirk routinely expected women, as well as men, to demonstrate their mastery of Calvinist doctrine. The Perth kirk session refused to sanction the marriage of one couple in 1593 “because both the one and the other, the man and the woman, are ignorant of their Belief” and lacked a proper understanding of the Apostles Creed. Its elders offered further instruction, but they would not allow the marriage to go ahead “unto the time that they learn to give a confession of their faith”. The Culross kirk session even refused to allow one woman, Margaret Dawson, to repent for committing fornication until she better understood the scriptures, finding her “altogether ignorant of god and His commandments” and wholly “unworthy to enter the place of

33 Ecclesiastical Records: Selections from the Minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1611-87 (Edinburgh: Abbotsford Club, 1837), 55.
34 Ibid., 71.
35 Stuart, Aberdeen Selections, 89.
36 St. John’s Kirk Session Minutes, Perth, 1587–1596, CH2/521/2, 117, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
publick repentance til [she offered] greater evidence of hir knowledge”.37

The kirk closely monitored those Scots whom they forced to undergo remedial education. The Perth kirk session thought that the recusant Bessie Glass might come to a better understanding of the Protestant faith by watching others undergo their own examinations, ordering her to “be every day an hour before noon hearing the examination public in the kirk in the rudiments of religion, and so to learn”.38 When the Rhynie minister George Chalmer conferred with the Catholic Lady Strabane in the autumn of 1643, the presbytery of Strathbogie ordered him to “watch her hous as narrowlie as he could,” hoping to ensure that she received no underground priests, Jesuits, or “any excommunicate persones quhatsomeuer” in the meantime.39 These women risked excommunication if they failed to comply, and if they were single, widowed, or married to an excommunicate themselves, potentially faced all of its attendant consequences, up to and including their own imprisonment. Yet if they were married to a Protestant, or to a crypto-Catholic who feigned just enough interest in Calvinism, they risked substantially less by defying the kirk. Ministers were determined to win a married woman’s conversion, but their threats of excommunication carried less weight when the kirk could take no further measures against her. The experience of Isabel Wood, the recusant wife of George Gordon of Gicht, neatly encapsulates the advantage of having a husband in (relatively) good standing with the kirk.

As we have seen, George Gordon of Gicht endured long discussions with his minister on the merits of Calvinist

37 Culross Kirk Session Minutes, 1646–1657, CH2/77/2, 81, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
38 St. John’s Kirk Session Minutes, Perth, 1577–1586, CH2/521/1, 74, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
39 Presbytery of Strathbogie Minutes, 1631–1654, CH2/342/2, 44, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
theology without ever formally converting to the Protestant faith. His wife, however, flatly refused either to meet with the minister or to appear before the presbytery in Ellon, a move that unsurprisingly led to her excommunication. Isabel Wood was prohibited from interacting with any Protestant Scots thereafter, with the exception of her husband, who pointedly reminded the kirk that he would refrain from meeting with any excommunicate, his “bed-fellow being exceptit”. Nevertheless, Wood’s excommunication was not as debilitating as it might have initially appeared. She almost certainly would have faced some social isolation, but neighbours who were prepared to overlook her Catholicism could still meet with her under the pretense of visiting her husband. Although she was forbidden from conducting any business on her own, she could accompany her husband on visits to local markets and rely on him to purchase any needed goods. Wood therefore had less of an incentive to submit to the grueling licensing system faced by most excommunicates, and she risked none of the civil penalties for refusing to do so. The Ellon presbytery repeatedly asked Gicht to bring about his wife's conversion, but the troublesome laird responded by implying that he had little control over the religious affairs of his household. When the couple secretly baptized their newborn child into the Catholic faith, for instance, Gicht strategically shifted the blame onto his wife, informing the presbyters that “whether his bairnes were baptized or not, or be whom he knew not. To that his wyffe alone wes privie”.41

Gicht surely knew that his child had been baptized into the Catholic faith, and his claim that Wood had arranged it without his knowledge was no more than a transparent attempt to escape kirk censure. Wood was already excommunicated, so there was little the kirk could do to discipline her for this

41 Presbytery of Ellon Minutes, 1597–1607, CH2/146/1, 9–10, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
transgression. Yet if Gicht shouldered the blame himself, he risked his own excommunication and would expose his family to the full might of the Scottish church and state. This inversion of the patriarchal order was often, though not always, carefully crafted to enable husbands to avoid such an eventuality, thus preserving their wife's Catholicism as well as the husband's own tenuous relationship with the kirk.

Some conforming husbands took this strategy even further, arguing that they had no control over their wives whatsoever. The Essilmont crypto-Catholic John Cheyne told the presbytery of Ellon that he was powerless to prevent his wife from seeing a priest, and therefore could not be expected to stop her. Cheyne's wife, a formidable woman named Elspeth Garioch, kept a tavern in Aberdeenshire that doubled as a meeting place for underground priests. She ignored repeated summons to appear for papistry, and would not even pretend to be interested in the reformed religion. Her minister, John Mercer, asked his congregation to pray for her conversion, but he eventually had little choice but to excommunicate her, a sentence he pronounced in May 1608.

The Ellon presbytery sought to emphasize the severe disabilities that Garioch would face as an excommunicate, sternly condemning her as a woman worthy of total exclusion from the kirk. Her minister justified this fearsome sentence, warning his flock that she was nothing but “ane rotten member of the Misticall body of Christ, noysum and hurtfull to the congregatioun, and behoveit to be cut off as ane Rotten member”. The presbyters hoped to limit her interaction with other Scots, but they were hamstrung by her husband's occasional conformity. As long as John Cheyne avoided excommunication himself, the authorities could not confiscate

42 Ibid., 106.
43 Presbytery of Ellon Minutes, 1607–1628, CH2/146/2, 19, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
44 Ibid., 19.
any of her property, nor could they do much to encourage her to emigrate. They were unable to requisition the tavern she kept as a meeting place for the Catholic underground, even though they warned Protestants against patronizing it. Moreover, the presbytery made several unsuccessful attempts to force Cheyne to exert tighter control over his wife, both before and after her excommunication. Cheyne swore an oath not to invite Jesuits or other priests into his home, but he claimed that he could not prevent his wife from doing so. Indeed, Cheyne pleaded that “she would do nothing for him in that point,” averring that he could not be held responsible if priests visited at her invitation.45 Cheyne was therefore willing to appear to be failing in his patriarchal duties in order to shelter his wife from prosecution for her nonconformity. He further declared that there was no chance that he could ever convince her to attend church or obey the presbytery, noting that she “wald not be [made] be him to be obedient to the voce of the kirk”.46

Cheyne's minister eventually came to believe that it was Elspeth Garioch, and not her husband, who determined the religious affiliations of their household. Indeed, when Mercer finally decided to move against him, Cheyne went so far as to claim that “he had na hope of his [settled] conformity since his wyf was excommunicated,” a statement that awkwardly elides the sixteen years that had elapsed since her exclusion from the kirk.47 Mercer could have excommunicated Cheyne quite a bit earlier if he truly had no hope of his conversion, but the minister's claim that Garioch ruled their household is not so easy to dismiss. Cheyne might indeed have been telling the truth when he argued that his wife “would do nothing for him” in religious matters. Some early modern Scottish women really did shape the religious allegiances of their families, over and above their husband's objections. The Aberdeenshire apostate

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 187.
Thomas Grant, for instance, appeared voluntarily before the Strathbogie presbytery in June 1654, craving forgiveness for his conversion to Catholicism. He claimed that his wife and her family had led him astray, explaining that “that through evill companie, example, and allurements of his father-in-law, wife, and preists, he hade bein drawen to scruples”. Happily, however, “now they wer removed,” and he promised “that he sould continue constant in the true religion”.48 Grant's voluntary appearance lends credibility to his claims, and there is no reason to doubt the strong influence of his wife and her family.

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While married women enjoyed some protection from the worst effects of excommunication, single or widowed Catholics were exposed to the full might of the Scottish kirk. This was true even of elite Catholics, whom kirk sessions were determined to bring to heel. The General Assembly insisted on discipline “without exception of persons,” and as Margo Todd has noted, “there were enough cases of the well born failing to buy their way out to suggest that this message was the overriding one”.49 Marion Boyd, countess of Abercorn, was among those who failed to overawe the local ministry. The presbytery of Paisley summoned her on multiple occasions after her husband’s death in 1618, exhorting her to abandon her erroneous past and embrace the Gospel. Abercorn made a few halfhearted gestures toward conformity, offering at one point to “resort to the hearing of god's Word preached” and agreeing to meet privately with several presbyters.50 Unfortunately, the intrepid

49 Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 176.
50 Presbytery of Paisley Minutes, 1626–1647, CH2/294/2, 21, NRS, Edinburgh, UK
countess did not get along well with the parish minister, Robert Boyd, who confessed to his wife that the countess was “so coldly disposed toward me that I expect no friendship or courtesy on her part”.51 The presbytery might have continued to patiently reason with her, but a rash announcement from her son, who had inherited the earldom at his father's death, soon laid bare the family's religious allegiances. The earl of Abercorn announced his conversion to Catholicism in April 1627, shocking Protestant opinion throughout the entire region. The presbytery of Paisley fumed that the earl had unmasked himself as an apostate, a man who “doth openly avowe himself a papist, and verie contemptuously despiseth the word of god, preached publickly or read privately…to the great dishonor and offense of God and of all truly religious hearted Christians”.52 The countess of Abercorn might have admired her son's resolution to remain steadfast in his Catholic faith, but she was perhaps less enamoured with his subsequent decision to depart for self-imposed exile on the continent, which undercut her support network. The countess now enjoyed virtually no legal protection from a vengeful kirk, but she still would not be moved to accept the Protestant religion. Excommunicated in May 1628, she was taken to Edinburgh and imprisoned in the city’s fearsome Tolbooth. Her aristocratic upbringing scarcely prepared her for life in a dank cell, where she was soon overcome with “many heavy diseases,” and a “daily decay and weakness in her person”.53 Her health grew so pitiful that she was eventually released on compassionate grounds, on the condition that she confer with a minister and refuse any contact

51 “Robert Boyd to Marion Boyd, 1 February 1626”; Wodrow Fol. Quatro xx, NLS, Edinburgh, UK.
52 Presbytery of Paisley Minutes, 1626–1647, CH2/294/2, 20, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
with priests or Jesuits. She returned to Paisley, broken in body and spirit, where she died on 26 August 1632.

The countess of Abercorn's husband had occasionally conformed to the church of Scotland, and she would likely have never met this unfortunate fate had he remained alive. Nevertheless, married women were safe from the kirk only if their husbands decided to play along. Spouses of excommunicated women needed to remain in good standing with the kirk, conforming often enough to avoid their own excommunications for papistry. Although Catholic missionaries allowed their flocks to attend their parish kirks without threatening them with the loss of their immortal souls, some Catholics struggled with their decisions to feign outward conformity. The Aberdeen recusant George Gordon of Gicht once grew so tired of his dealings with the presbytery that he offered to die as a martyr, informing the bemused presbyters that "giff it sall pleis Majestie and your wisdoms of the Kirk of Scotland sa to tack my bluid for my professioun, quhilk is Catholick Romane, I will maist willinglie offere it for the same". The Aberdeen presbytery did not take the bait, and Gicht eventually thought better of his challenge, agreeing shortly thereafter to confer with a minister. He knew that his excommunication, let alone the crown of martyrdom, would "ondoubtitlie…prejudge my wardlie estait" (undoubtedly… prejudice my worldly estate) and leave his already excommunicated wife with nothing.

Gicht never seriously considered converting to the Protestant religion, though he made a grand show of feigning enough interest to avoid losing his family's lands and possessions.

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54 Some crypto-Catholics attended communion but assuaged their consciences by dropping the host. Others passed each other Catholic devotional books during the sermon. See, for example, Minutes of the Synod of Fife, 48.
55 Stuart, Aberdeen Selections, 180.
56 Ibid.
Gicht’s wife, Isabel Wood, managed to sustain her nonconformity in relative peace, and she died without ever accepting the Protestant faith. These protections, however, would not last very far into the next generation, as the kirk’s patience with Catholic women in mixed marriages was wearing thin by the late 1630s. In the wake of the National Covenant, Scottish Protestants renewed their efforts to purge the nation of any semblance of popery. Half-measures would not suffice, and anxious ministers could no longer stand aside and wait for Protestant husbands to bring around their recalcitrant wives. Scottish authorities especially feared that excommunicated women might entertain priests in their homes, where they could easily “corrupt the children and servants of the house in their religion”.57 The Privy Council, which by 1642 included Covenanter stalwarts like the earl of Loudon and the marquess of Argyll, sternly condemned the mixed marriage loophole in Scottish religious policy. Although “the resset of Jesuits, seminaria and messi priests has been oft prohibit and discharged,” the Privy Council lamented that “the execution of the saids lawes have been illudit be the wyffis of persones repute and esteemed to be sound in religion, who pretending misknowledge of the actions of their wyffis in thir cases, thinke to liberat thamselfes of the danger of the resset as if they were not to answer for their wyffes doings”.58 They sought to quash this deceitful excuse by making husbands formally responsible for their wives’ behaviour, forthrightly declaring “that the husband sall be answerable to his Majesties Counsel and Justice of the kingdome that his wyffe, being a profest papist or under processe for poperie, sall not resset, supplie nor entercommon with Jesuits nor priests, and that he nor she sall not be served be papists, and that nane sall be admitted to their service but suche as have a testimonial frome the minister

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58 Ibid., 296.
quhair they duell of the soundnesse of their religion”. Married women were still exempt from any property confiscations, but their conforming husbands would now be held accountable if their wives decided to visit a priest. These men could no longer plead, as Gordon of Gicht did earlier in the century, that their wives kept them in the dark about secret baptisms and encounters with priests.

Protestant men now faced significant consequences for participating in mixed marriages. In 1649, for instance, the presbytery of Peebles levied a £5000 fine on the Protestant John Stewart, Lord Linton, for marrying the Catholic Henrietta Gordon, imprisoning them both and excommunicating the presiding minister. This newfound impatience led many families to think twice before engaging in open defiance against the kirk. The crypto-Catholic William Douglas, marquess of Douglas, once insisted to the presbytery of Lanark that although he was “content to admit conference for himself,” he would “not be answerable for his Lady, nor cause his dochter to goe to the church against her will”. He argued that his wife, Mary Gordon, and daughter could decide for themselves whether they wished to conform or not, adding that while he would not force either woman to go, “for his pairt [he] will not hinder hir”. The marquess sang a rather different tune by the early 1640s, when he could longer plead disinterest in the conformity of his household. The presbytery of Lanark had appointed the elders Alexander and William Somerville to discuss Protestant theology with the truculent marquess, and they reported that not only had he “beene at churche himselfe,”

59 Ibid.
61 Selections from the Registers of the Presbytery of Lanark (Edinburgh: Abbotsford Club, 1839), 10.
but also “undertakes for himselfe, his ladie, and children, that they shall be constant and ordinar hearers of the worde”. 62 Although the presbyters recorded that they had “gladlie heard” the news, nobody in the Douglas household had actually experienced a Damascene conversion. 63 All parties continued to drag their feet, hoping, like so many other Catholics throughout their early modern period, to delay their conversion for as long as they possibly could. Nevertheless, Lady Douglas had to play the same game as her husband, scrupulously avoiding her own excommunication from the kirk, since her husband’s conformity would no longer protect them both.

Unsurprisingly, the presbytery of Lanark struggled for quite a long time to win her conversion. The presbyters sometimes grew rather frustrated with her progress, observing in July 1644 that she “doethe still continue obstinate, notwithstanding the pains the presbyterie hath taken verie frequentlie for her informatione and conversion”. 64 The minister John Wilson publicly admonished her for resisting the kirk, while threatening to begin proceedings that might end with her excommunication. Yet the presbytery promptly set aside these efforts several weeks later, when “shee came with her children and the rest of the famillie obedientlie to church”. The marquess of Douglas personally vouched for his wife once again, promising that “she shalbe ane ordinar hearer of the time to come”. 65 The presbyters accepted this excuse, viewing her conversion as their ultimate, overriding goal. Indeed, when Lady Douglas finally agreed to sign the Confession of Faith and the Solemn League and Covenant, the elders Robert Birnie and Richard Inglis warned her not to submit unless she truly accepted the reformed religion reminding her “how fearfull a sinne it was, to sweare with equivocation or mentall

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62 Ibid., 33.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 35.
65 Ibid., 36.
reservation”. They added that “if shee desired any further satisfaction, or had any scruples or doubts, that shee desired further resolution in, that they were readie to wait vpon her La[dyship]”. Lady Douglas, at last, signed the documents and swore to uphold the Protestant faith. She had endured years of intrusive proselytization alongside her husband, but at least she avoided excommunication and the penalties that might have accompanied it.

The kirk's relentless pursuit of Catholic women forced at least one conforming husband to perform a near-Herculean task. The Paisley presbytery threatened the Protestant John Wallace with grave consequences if he refused to bring his recusant wife to church, and because she had continually pleaded illness as the reason for her non-appearance, the presbytery explicitly demanded that Wallace bring her there on her bed. Wallace's wife, Margaret Hamilton, had renounced her attachment to Catholicism the previous year, “first of one point, then on another,” swearing a rather detailed oath that she rejected “all the points of poperie”. The presbyters put little stock in her sincerity, remembering that she had once sought to demonstrate her Calvinist leanings by asking her minister for a copy of the National Covenant, which she ostentatiously “read over and over again”. Hamilton did nothing to assuage their fears when she stayed home from church the following Sunday, informing the increasingly impatient presbytery that she was far too ill to get out of bed. The presbytery eventually dispatched ministers to read the Gospel at her bedside, but they soon suspected that her illness was a sham. It was not the first time that she had used such an excuse to explain her absence, though she was no more successful now than she had been.

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66 Ibid., 81
67 Presbytery of Paisley Minutes, 1626–1647, CH2/294/2, 275, NRS, Edinburgh, UK.
68 Ibid., 234.
69 Ibid., 250.
before. The minister Henry Calvert had bluntly asked her during a previous occasion “whether it were inability of her body onlie that restrains her from coming to God's house for hearing His Word or if she [had] scruples of conscience anent the religion professed in the kirk and kingdom”. 70 Hamilton pleaded that she truly was too ill to attend church, and sent an excuse signed by the physician James Fleming, who testified “on his conscience that she is unable to travel either on foot or horse”. 71 She begged to be left alone, repeatedly insisting that she would dutifully attend church as soon as her health would permit.

Hamilton’s ordeal, however, was far from over. The presbyters doubted the veracity of Fleming's report, and their suspicious were confirmed when he failed to produce another one several months later. 72 They rebuked her husband, John Wallace, coldly demanding that he carry “her to Paisley by next Presbytery day, either by land or by water”. 73 They ordered Wallace to bring her before them on her bed, which he carried with help from several attendants on 2 June 1647. 74 Hamilton seems to have conformed thereafter, and her long, humiliating spectacle was finally at an end.

John Wallace had a clear interest in satisfying the kirk's demands. By 1647, married women no longer possessed the protections they once enjoyed, and Wallace himself could be held accountable if his wife ever decided to worship as a Catholic. Unlike Elspeth Garioch, Isabel Wood, and a host of other Catholic women earlier in the seventeenth century, Margaret Hamilton could not take shelter behind her husband's outward conformity. Yet the persistence of this gendered loophole into the Covenanter era, despite the kirk’s relentless

70 Ibid., 192.
71 Ibid., 250.
72 Ibid., 253.
73 Ibid., 255.
74 Ibid., 277.
pursuit of religious uniformity after the Reformation, offers an intriguing window into the roles of gender and faith in early modern Scotland. It demonstrates the ways in which Scottish women sought to use patriarchal assumptions to their advantage, and how more than a few men readily undercut them in order to ensure the safety of their families. Mixed marriage couples in Scotland lacked the *de facto* toleration afforded their counterparts in England and the Netherlands, forcing both men and women to respond creatively to an overbearing ministry. Kirk sessions and presbyteries did not shrink from summoning Catholic women, and ministers believed that with sufficient instruction and edification, they could be persuaded to abandon their old beliefs. Some women, however, managed to resist those efforts without suffering the requisite penalties for doing so. Their marriages protected them from the worst effects of excommunication, and from the full might of an intrusive, Presbyterian kirk.
REVIEW


While modern scholars have examined at length the feuds and conquests between English, Gaelic and Norse kings in the medieval period, few have analyzed the Manx and Hebridean kingdoms of Man and the Isles in depth. R. Andrew McDonald successfully fills this void by providing a fascinating retrospective look at the history of these kingdoms in *The Sea Kings: The Late Norse Kingdoms of Man and the Isles, c. 1066–1275*. McDonald examines a variety of contemporary and non-contemporary sources, taking on the challenge of revealing the forgotten history of these maritime kingdoms. He argues that the Manx and Hebridean kingdoms are significant for many different reasons.

Presenting a detailed timeline of this history can be rather daunting. McDonald chooses to present this information chronologically and thematically to the reader. The first part of the book focuses primarily on a timeline of the Manx and Hebridean kingdoms, beginning by providing background information on the Gaelic kingdom of Dál Riata and its conflicts between Picts, Scotti (Irish), and Saxons c. the fifth century. The introduction of the Norse in Scotland follows, with McDonald detailing the eventual rise of the first Kingdom of the Isles in the tenth century under Godred Crovan (d. 989). McDonald then looks to the sources to detail the history of the kingdoms, many of these sources being documents such as the thirteenth-century *Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles*, twelfth to thirteenth-century Scandinavian sagas such as
Orkneyinga saga and the Saga of King Hakon, and more. Many of these documents are not completely contemporary to events, and there are several dating errors throughout. McDonald acknowledges these errors and strives to use a variety of other sources to present a timeline of Manx and Hebridean kingship in a more organized fashion. He then examines the many kings that ruled the Isles. From brotherly feuds for the throne, to kings establishing connections with English rulers, McDonald reveals that the Kingdoms of Man and the Isles truly had an extensive and interesting history.

In the second part of his book, McDonald establishes a more thematic approach in his analysis of the Kingdoms of Man and the Isles. He explores social and economic aspects of this history. For example, he examines the use of coins as currency for the period in his eighth chapter based on coin hoard discoveries on the Isles of Man and the Hebrides. Previously, scholars believed that it was highly unlikely that the coins found on the Isle of Man were used in this period. However, modern scholars have discovered an increasing number of coin hoards on the Isle of Man, and technology has allowed them to discover more and accurately date them. McDonald expertly reveals that the economy of these maritime kingdoms appears far more advanced than scholars initially believed. McDonald also provides a fascinating discussion on gender and social factors of the Kingdoms in his tenth chapter, examining how sources such as the Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles reveals notable female figures like the unnamed Queen of the Isles married to King Rognvald of Man (d. 1229) After she learned that the marriage of her sister to Rognvald’s brother was uncanonical, the document reveals that she wrote a letter to the King’s son, impersonating her husband and demanding that his son kill Rognvald’s brother. McDonald argues that her name was likely censored as it is probable that the scribe believed that she caused disharmony in the Kingdom. This section of the Chronicle also reveals how
heavily involved the church was in the Isles. McDonald delves into this further in his eleventh chapter, revealing how religion was an important aspect of this maritime society.

He concludes his book by detailing the final efforts to consolidate the kingship of Man by the last Manx king, Godfrey, in 1275. While Godfrey was successful in reclaiming Man, his reign did not last long. Battles for control of Man and the Isles raged on following this event between English and Scottish kings, proving that the Isles were truly a power base sought after by neighbouring kingdoms. McDonald reiterates this point quite succinctly with the statement, “… whoever sought to dominate the western seaways would first need to control Man and the Isles.” (p. 304) In this final sentence of the book, McDonald expertly wraps up his argument for the significance of Man and the Isles, largely determined from the development of its kingdoms.

McDonald successfully presents a detailed summary of the Manx and Hebridean rulers of Man and the Isles from c. 1066 – 1275 in a well-organized manner, and those interested in Norse-Gaelic relations and kingship of the Isles should certainly consider reading it.

Amy M. Poole
Independent Researcher
REVIEW


Despite recent valuable work, the eighteenth-century British army continues to be rather ill-served by historians, but in her scholarly and nuanced account of Scotland’s relationship with the army, Victoria Henshaw seeks to fill this lacuna. The book covers a turbulent period, encompassing the 1707 Union and two unsuccessful Jacobite rebellions which prepared the way for consolidation of the Hanoverian monarchy and Scotland’s cooption into Great Britain and her Empire. The subject is unavoidably controversial, and much contemporary historical work has been undermined by fairly transparent partisanship.

The book’s core consists of five chapters, ranging from the nature of the military presence and experience in Scotland, to issues of loyalty and identity, and Scotland’s developing military infrastructure. Dr. Henshaw’s main focus is on the army within Scotland and (less prominently), Scots serving in the army. A lengthy bibliography and useful illustrations detail an impressive body of research, though a few more illustrations would have been helpful. Conversely, the introduction is unnecessarily lengthy, and, together with 68 pages of endnotes, betray the book’s origins as a doctoral thesis, as do the rather formulaic “conclusions” to each chapter.

An emphasis on Scottish distinctiveness fittingly permeates the book but one of the key organizing themes and aims is to (successfully) dispel the pervasive but simplistic Highland/Lowland dichotomy. Unlike Ireland, with its separate establishment, Scottish integration was a logical and key element of political union. In explaining the transition of
Scottish troops from mercenaries to loyal regimental troops, Dr. Henshaw identifies numerous concentric loyalties and identities, including the Covenanting tradition of military service, and broad support for the Protestant Succession. It is convincingly argued that, for many Scots, assimilation was facilitated by clan loyalty to a military aristocracy being in some ways analogous to the hierarchical and class dimensions of the British military establishment.

For those of higher social status, patronage and clientage might induce loyalty but they did not always succeed. Dr. Henshaw demonstrates how decisions to support or oppose Jacobitism arose from a multitude of factors—from a principled defence of Scotland’s ancient rights and privileges to naked self-interest, and many points in-between. Even loyalists like Forbes and Argyll were troubled and conflicted in responding to events, while others, most famously and emblematically Lovat and Murray, struggled to reconcile old clan loyalties to the new realities of Hanoverian centralized power. These dilemmas also underscored formation and strength of auxiliary forces, whose existence was additionally blighted by legal, constitutional, and financial complexities. The loyalty and efficiency of auxiliaries was variable—perhaps charitably, Dr. Henshaw suggests inexperience and resource misallocation as explanations for mediocre performance. The remit and conduct of irregular forces deserve further research, though it may be laborious work tracing organizations whose origins and administration were highly localized.

The final chapter on military installations details how, after 1715, purpose-built barracks (the first in mainland Britain), and Wade’s Highland road-building program transformed Scotland’s military infrastructure and landscape. Prevailing political, geographical and social conditions led to increasing militarization with Fort William, Fort Augustus, and the Vauban-inspired Fort George in the Great Glen.
representing a formidably uncompromising statement of military power and political authority. Dr. Henshaw resists using emotive terms like “army of occupation” but the main *raison d’etre* for the presence of military forces in Scotland was to neutralize Jacobitism rather than, as in England, repelling foreign invasion. Fine granular detail is provided of the operational capacity, placement, and strategy of fortifications, while the military and commercial value of road-building is well-delineated and contextualized.

There are a few significant omissions. There is little explicit content on Scotland’s place within the fiscal-military system, either before or after 1707. The colonial experience is not pursued very far, an omission that may have been remedied through discussion of Hechter’s theory of ‘internal colonialism,’ and there is no discussion of foreign troops serving the Hanoverian army in Scotland. Occasionally, the book tends toward a survey, especially when departing from the chronology, and though the prose is generally crisp there are some instances of passive voice and repetition. More rigorous proof-reading and copy-editing would have been beneficial, as there are a few egregious errors, such as “Adams family” rather than “Adam family”. (p. 157) Despite these shortcomings and omissions, Dr. Henshaw has produced a fine, scholarly account which is even-handed in its approach and conclusions. The continuous threat of Jacobitism frames every aspect of the subject, and while it cannot realistically be otherwise, inclusion of hitherto neglected areas impacting and influencing the relationship between Scotland and the British army represent a valuable addition to the existing literature. As such, the book will interest specialists and general readers alike, while providing a solid basis for further research.

*Gordon Bannerman*

*University of Guelph-Humber*
Dr. Eric Graham’s most recent effort entitled *Burns and the Sugar Plantocracy of Ayrshire* is as useful an addition to Scottish Enlightenment-era literature as it is to local Ayrshire history. Yet, the book may also serve as a functional tool for those scholars examining the ‘Black Atlantic’ through a Scottish lens. Building on previous works (including ‘Abolitionists and Apologists: Scotland’s Slave Trade Stories’, *Discover NLS*, 6, Winter 2007, 20–22 and ‘Black People in Scotland during the Slavery Era’, *Scottish Local History*, 71, 2007, 11–16), Graham’s monograph is complemented with several illustrations (nearly one for every two pages) and six helpful appendices that map out the lineages of the families involved.

While the author’s overview of the participating Ayrshire families is sometimes *Numbers-esque*, his use of contemporary sources is to be commended. In particular, Graham utilizes an impressive collection of private letters from the various family estates. As the centerpiece of Graham’s research, these correspondences flesh out the zeniths and nadirs of Ayrshire’s Hamiltons, Fergussons, Hunter Blairs and Cunynghames; a group who won their riches in Jamaica and St. Kitts. The author’s meticulous recounting of the travails of these tobacco lords and sugarcane ladies, and his ability to locate the pulse of the greed-driven social circle in which they thrived are the central strengths of *Burns and the Sugar Plantocracy*. 

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**REVIEW**

The work also brings to life the various career trajectories of certain young Scottish men-of-means who – given the worrisome survival rates in the ‘white man’s grave’ – chose to gamble in the West Indies as physicians or, more commonly, in administrative positions such as plantation overseers and bookkeepers. By virtue of such examination, Graham succeeds in exposing the regrettable hands-on role that some Scots had in those plantation economies born of the odious slave trade. The plainness of Scottish complicity subtly peaks out of the corners of Graham’s clever narrative.

Refreshingly, the author also affords the slaves their own agency within the Scottish-run plantations. Making the most of a precious few sources that actually mention the slaves themselves, Graham is able to convey the cold, matter-of-fact manner in which the ‘property’ were regarded by their owners. (p. 54) The author, however, might have made more of the Scottish-centric Abolitionist movement than he did. To this end, some of the more compelling footnotes might have worked better in the narrative proper. (p. 58) Readers also have to wait until the conclusion before a meaningful discussion on Scottish distaste for the slave trade is undertaken. Still, it should be noted that the concluding review of Inveraray’s Zachary Macaulay, anti-slavery meetings in Glasgow, and fugitive-slave/Burns-aficionado Frederick Douglass makes for one of the book’s more engaging sections. (pp. 94–8)

Perhaps the monograph’s main weakness was the author’s choice for a title. Where the work is strong on ‘sugar’ and ‘plantocracy’, it is rather light on ‘Burns’. And when the Bard does appear, Graham often chooses conjecture over content. While the benefit of having Burns’ name in the title needs no explanation, its inclusion has exploited the limitations of the study. Specifically, Graham attempts to massage Burns into his study under a ‘what if Burns had gone?’ approach: the author queries how ‘Rab the humanist’ might have coped with the reality of slavery had he gone to Jamaica as planned. (p. 19
and p. 94) Unfortunately, at least for the title in question, Burns stayed in Scotland, and the too few and tenuous references to him throughout the book do not fulfill the promise of the cover. Indeed, Burns’ ‘Ode, Sacred to the Memory of Mrs. Oswald of Auchencruive’ was perhaps the only tangible example of the poet’s relations with any of the Ayrshire Plantocracy. (pp. 61–2) Nevertheless, while he may have failed to pin the Bard to the story, Graham has provided plenty of reasons to consider Burns and the Sugar Plantocracy of Ayrshire a highly readable account of an under-explored area of Scottish and Caribbean history.

J. Jason Wilson
University of Guelph
REVIEW


The Scottish aristocrats, John Campbell Gordon (1847–1934) and Ishbel Marjoribanks Gordon (1857–1939), known as the Aberdeens, have attracted attention from the late nineteenth century because of their writing as well as their political and reform activities. Lady Aberdeen previously emerged as the more dominant, dynamic, and interesting of the pair, important for her leadership in the women’s movement and her political tactics. In an extensively researched and densely written book, Veronica Strong-Boag now re-examines the lives and times of the Aberdeens, emphasizing the partnership and shared principles that supported the domestic, imperial, and global undertakings of this privileged couple.

In an era when science challenged traditional religion, the Aberdeens drew strength from their evangelical and ecumenical faith. Another Scot, the theologian Henry Drummond, who is described by Strong-Boag as a charismatic, middle-class Glaswegian and a close friend of the Aberdeens, was very influential in providing an optimistic doctrine of Christ’s love. Strong-Boag analyzes how the message of social harmony inherent in Drummond’s evolutionary theology of care for others melded with the Liberal reform philosophy attractive to the Aberdeens. Whether dealing with domestic arrangements at the Haddo estate in Scotland, with Home Rule agitation in Ireland, or with politics and women’s organizations in Canada, the Aberdeens sought the way of reconciliation and
inclusion. The concept of social harmony was not intended to eliminate class distinctions. Secure in their assumption of class superiority, the Aberdeens found their work to be “all-important in giving meaning to life and justifying rank and privilege” (p. 126). With their ecumenical faith, however, they tried more directly to bridge the deep divide between Protestants and Roman Catholics in both Ireland and Canada.

Scottishness mattered for the Aberdeens. Although ethnicity is not an integrated theme in Liberal Hearts and Coronets, Strong-Boag frequently points out the significance of a Scottish identity for both John and Ishbel. John, the third son of the fifth Earl of Aberdeen, inherited the title in 1872 after the premature death of his older brothers. From birth, however, he drew strength from a powerful Scottish family lineage, which Strong-Boag traces. At Westminster he championed Scottish interests and Strong-Boag suggests that his transition to the Liberal party may have been easier in Scotland where it was not a radical choice. Family was also important for instilling in Ishbel a love for Scotland, along with Ireland, even before her marriage. In recognition of her mother’s family roots, Ishbel’s name was the Gaelic version of Isabel, her mother’s name. When Ishbel’s father, a wealthy London brewing magnate, bought a large Highland estate north of Inverness as a country property, Guisachan quickly became Ishbel’s favourite place. Strong-Boag describes how the Aberdeens shared a sentimental view of Celtic culture but also a practical interest in addressing both rural and urban poverty in Scotland. Ishbel’s enthusiasm for domestic handicraft revival was one remedy and another was emigration to Canada, where the Aberdeens visited Scottish settlers on their tours.

Strong-Boag’s analysis of class-based gender relations in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British World is central to her interpretation of the Aberdeen partnership. In particular she draws upon the work of historians of masculinity to argue that John’s role has not been fairly
appraised. John possessed many desirable qualities most frequently attributed to the ‘good man’ of the rising middle class but he did not conform to the image of virile masculine authority often associated with challenges of Empire. At a time when the ‘new woman’ seemed to threaten the patriarchal structure of society, John’s personality, principles, and support of Ishbel easily led to charges of effeminacy and weakness. Significantly, Strong-Boag notes that “it is sometimes difficult to discern whether John or Ishbel took the first step in thought or action” (p. 5). Strong-Boag’s work may have been enhanced by a more in-depth analysis of the important but elusive issue of influence and emotion in the spousal relationship.

With its careful documentation and its consideration of recent historiography, *Liberal Hearts and Coronets* will appeal to historians interested not only in the Aberdeens but also in the changing political context and reform agendas of the society in which they lived.

*Marilyn Barber*

*Carleton University*

The Great War (1914–1919) has been the subject of renewed historical interest due to the many recent centennial commemorations throughout Allied nations. The military medical services are among the neglected areas of study, especially the various nursing services that became the backbone of care giving for sick and wounded soldiers as well as civilian casualties. Like women’s work in general, the nursing care of soldiers has remained relatively invisible, marginalized, and relegated to footnotes within larger war stories.

Yvonne McEwen’s *In the Company of Nurses* is one of several recent contributions to the emerging international historiography on Great War nurses.¹ The author builds upon her earlier publication titled *It’s a Long Way to Tipperary: British and Irish Nurses in the Great War* (2006). The Army Nursing Services (United Kingdom) commissioned this centennial history and as McEwen acknowledges, “This book

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is as much about today’s nurses as it is about the military nurses who served a hundred years ago....” (p. vii) She suggests that the existing historiography at the time of her research did not “contextualise the work of nurses within the larger wartime or professional issues” (p. 3). She, therefore, focused her research on addressing this gap – the professional, personal, and political consequences of Great War nursing related to military care giving (broadly defined) as situated within the larger war contexts (p. 3). McEwen problematizes the paucity of primary sources from nurses’ perspectives – concluding that “it is the unsaid that has proved to be much more interesting and worthy of further investigation” than “what was said in letters, diaries, memoirs and autobiographies....” (p. 4).

Prior to focusing on the Great War period, McEwen covers a formidable scope of time from early Greek and Roman empires, through the religious Crusades of Europe and Byzantium as well as Florence Nightingale’s Crimean experience, leading up to the formation of Britain’s Army Nursing Service. She then turns our attention to the hotly contested conflicts between newly-professionalizing trained nurses and unpaid women who sought to provide care to soldiers as volunteers during the Great War. These conflicts were part of larger societal debates over who could be considered a qualified “nurse.” The author intersects these professional tensions with underlying class issues as well as ambivalent relationships between trained nurses and early feminists, while exposing the military medical services’ chaos and slowness of response to a rapidly escalating war. McEwen’s middle chapters deal more with the day-to-day nursing experiences and administration in both the European and Mediterranean theatres where nurses confronted the challenges of treating victims of new war technologies such as chlorine and mustard gas, and more. The final chapters consider the personal and professional costs of the war for nurses.
In the Company of Nurses achieves its goal of contextualizing the Great War nursing experience for nurses associated with the British Army whether they served as members of Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service (as regulars or as reserves), the Territorial Force Nursing Service, as Voluntary Aid Detachments, or as part of privately-funded and controlled hospital units. McEwen includes some primary sources from Australian and Canadian nursing services although the latter two cohorts were not her primary focus. More recently published, fuller histories of these two nursing services suggest that there were significant differences from the British experience, including imperial-colonial tensions.²

The author is to be commended for taking on this project, and for building on previous attempts to prepare a more comprehensive history of Great War military nursing. We all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. In the Company of Nurses provides a valuable portrayal of the relationship of care-giving women to war over the centuries. It will be of particular interest to readers of medical and nursing history, women’s history, and military history.

Cynthia Toman
University of Ottawa (retired)

² Harris, More Than Bombs and Bandages; Toman, Sister Soldiers of the Great War.
REVIEW


Civilian masculinities in the Second World War were long omitted from both historical investigation and cultural memory. Over the past decade or so, however, at least the academic lacuna has begun to be addressed, particularly from a Scottish perspective, in publications by Arthur McIvor and Juliette Pattinson (the supervisors of the PhD on which this monograph is based) and Linsey Robb. This contribution by Alison Chand to the Scottish Historical Review Monograph series focuses on masculinities on Clydeside, the region around the river Clyde that encompasses Dumbarton, Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, and Argyll and Bute. As both agricultural and industrial labourers could be reserved under the Schedule of Reserved Occupations, focus on this region allows engagement with both rural and urban occupations, with shipbuilding in particular reinvigorated by rearmament. The source base for this study is oral history, including interviews conducted by the author or held in oral history archives, as well as evidence drawn from Mass Observation, parliamentary debates, official publications, newspaper articles, and a smattering of cultural representations, particularly in prose.

Chand’s study is divided into four main chapters focused on ever-widening constructions of masculine subjectivities after an introduction providing context. The author asserts that such subjectivities should not be understood only through cultural materials, an argument which seems
somewhat superfluous, and that the ‘lived’ meaning of everyday existence is paramount to understanding subjectivities, a term Chand prefers over ‘identity’. The first chapter examines masculine subjectivities at the level of the individual, the second at a local/regional level and the third examines collective influences including nationality, religion, political beliefs and social activities that widen the focus from gender. The final chapter offers a rare examination of the experiences of women in reserved occupations in Clydeside and in relationship to civilian males. The emphasis on the significance of local and regional factors offers a particularly valuable contribution to the field because of the attention it draws to specificities of context and their impact on individuals’ experiences. In reserved occupations adopted by fathers and sons across generations and shared by other fit young men of service age, such as dock workers, the pull of the military and its particular version of masculinity had much stronger competition in occupational camaraderie and hierarchies of skill. For example, there is a report of men paying the foreman to make sure they continued to be reserved (p. 43). In that context it would have been interesting how civil defence (not only home defence through the Home Guard) featured in the interviews to illuminate attitudes to the war effort on the Home Front.

The author returns in the conclusion to the factors contributing to subjectivities, including not only gender, but nationality, ethnicity, class consciousness, political belief and religion, contrasting real and imagined subjectivities. While social, cultural and official discourses affected how gender identities were imagined, the author concludes ‘it is in everyday life, the necessities and contingencies of day-to-day tasks and relationships’ where male and female subjectivities were ‘lived’, ‘although in fluid and inseparable alliance with their ‘imagined’ subjectivities’ (p. 132). The fluidity of that ‘alliance’ is paramount: Chand’s argument is least convincing
when it veers towards dichotomy (contrast, for example, the argument on p. 83 or p. 102 with the latter citation): the circuit between lived experience and cultural representation is more subtle and more resistant to disentangling than the author sometimes suggests.

The significance of the temporal context is another interesting dimension worthy of further development. Chand argues that wartime cannot be claimed as a watershed for workers of either sex, noting, for example, that many female interviewees did not distinguish between their time working in factories during the war and after it (p. 84, p. 127). Rather, continuity and everyday life were the more dominant factors, an argument significant to cultural memory—or amnesia—also. The analysis of the interviews would benefit from a more critical engagement with context, both of the Second World War and contemporary to the interview. This is particularly significant in the discussion of British/Scottish identities which were re-considered both during the war and more recently in deliberations of independence, both relevant to the interview context.

The conclusion of greatest significance to understandings of gender in the Second World War is the support this author provides to the argument that gender boundaries were fluid and ‘fuzzy’, not fixed, contingent on the exigencies of war. This monograph would thus be of greatest interest to any scholar working on gender identities in the Second World War, occupational identities and oral history. It is a particularly welcome addition to understandings of the lived experience of both masculinities and femininities in the war from a regional perspective.

Corinna Peniston-Bird
Lancaster University
ERRATA AND CORRIGENDA TO IRSS 43 (2018)

Changes have been made to the online version of Volume 43 (2018) as follows:

**Errata**


- On pages 1–40, the header was corrected to accurately reflect the authors and title of this article.
- On page 16, paragraph 2, the word ‘Gales’ was corrected to ‘Gaels’.
- On page 24, paragraph 3, a missing ‘we’ was inserted in the first sentence.


- The article was updated in its entirety to reflect changes that had been made to an earlier draft. Please visit https://doi.org/10.21083/irss.v43i0.4101 to access the most current version of this article.


**Corrigenda**


- On page 42, paragraph 1, the author of *The New Age* was corrected from Major Douglas to A.R. Orage.
- On page 65, paragraph 1, the title of the poem was corrected from ‘The Topic of Cancer’ to ‘The Project of Cancer’.