Scotland and Europe, Scotland in Europe
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PRESENTATION

The IVth annual conference of the Société Française d’Études Ecossaises, the society grouping all French academics specialized in the field of Scottish studies was held at the University of Toulon in October 2005. The aim of the conference was to explore the long-standing and multi-faceted relationship between Scotland and the societies and cultures of the European continent, in various epochs and from a large diversity of viewpoints and problematics. During two days the conference gathered more than fifty researchers coming mostly from France, Scotland and Spain, and working in a wide range of scientific domains, from social history to art history, from language to literature, from politics to civilization and cultural studies.

The interdisciplinary ambition and cross-cultural perspective are reflected in the present volume, which collects most of the contributions to the conference. The book is divided into four main sections, although the themes presented must not be considered as totally watertight.

The first part of the volume explores several aspects of the exchanges, influences and interactions between Scotland and continental Europe throughout the centuries. To start with John R. Young discusses the very nature of the pre-union Parliament of Scotland in relation to its remote French model and within a wider European context. Following the path of John Dury, the Scot whose dream was to establish a universal Church in Europe, Sabrina Juillet explores the religious alliances between the Church of Scotland and European reformed churches during the first part of the XVIth century. Steve Murdoch then considers Gallic-Caledonian connections across the early modern period and more particularly the Scottish network development in the Bordeaux area while also considering the impact of political upheavals on those relations. From another perspective Marion Amblard analyses the effects of the artists’ interactions on Scottish painting and European art in the XVIIIth century, taking as major examples the work of the portraitist Allan Ramsay and of the history painter Gavin Hamilton. Philippe Laplace for his part examines how Scotland and his literature proved to be a major influence on XIXth century European literature, as illustrated by the central place occupied by Scottish mythologies within the poetical imagination of continental authors like Verne, Foscolo or Monti. Exploring the roots of the cultural identity of the early Scottish socialist movement, Bill Findlay argues that far from being confined at the parochial backwater on the periphery of Europe, Scottish socialism saw itself as a major
player inside this international movement and found some inspiration in revolutionary movements and struggles for independence on the continent. Eventually Ingrid Mosquera Gende and David Clark Mitchell give evidence of a sizeable amount of research undertaken at the University of A Coruna since a decade about the links and convergences between Galicia and Scotland and they explore the specific examples of translation from one minority language (Scots and Galician) to the other.

The second part of the volume focuses on some Scottish visions of Europe. Taking the example of Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, Christian Auer illustrates how some influential parts of the Scottish Lowland society perceived European neighbouring peoples at that time and saw Celtic communities within the British Isles. The Victorian period is also in the background of Lesley Graham’s contribution which reappraises Alison Cunningham’s diary and her discovery of foreign mentalities and ways of life during her extended tour of Europe with the Stevenson family. Finally David Leishman explores contemporary Scottish literature and analyses how a new generation of Scottish writers uses Europe to reassess some core elements of Scottish identity, reaffirm the cultural ties between Scotland and Europe and reassert Scotland’s place as a fully European nation.

The third part of the volume concentrates on Scottish voices in Europe. The place of the Gaelic language in the European concert of nations, its recent renaissance in the Highlands in the context of the support to minority languages from the European Union, is analyzed in detail by Jean Berton. Through the study of history painting over the centuries, Danièle Berton looks for signs of Scottishness and demonstrates how contemporary Scottish artists have emblazoned and promoted values and virtues that they considered not only as theirs but also as their nation’s. Innes Kennedy explores the influence of continental thought on the cosmopoetics of Kenneth White, one of the most celebrated examples of ‘Scottish European’, while reasserting White’s personal contribution to the resistance of Scottish and European postmodern literature to the homogenising forces of angloamerican neoliberal culture. Bernard Sellin studies Janice Galloway’s second novel ‘Foreign Parts’, set in France, arguing that the discovery of France is not only an invitation to travel but also a pretext for a meditation on the meaning of otherness. The interactions between Scottish and European influences and sources of inspiration are also evoked by Jacques Rabin in his study of the multi-faceted work of Muriel Spark, for whom Europe is the theatre in which a human comedy is played novel after novel but with a definitely Scottish accent and intonation. Eventually Jean-Pierre Simard pays tribute to the European dimension of contemporary theatre in Scotland, arguing
that Europe has triggered the creativity of Scottish artists, and deciphering the reception of Scottish playwrights on the continent as well as the representations of Scotland conveyed.

Lastly the fourth part of the volume deals with current political concerns, tackling the issue of the assertion of Scotland’s national political identity with the European Union framework in the post-devolution environment. Arguing that devolution has already had an impact on Scotland’s relations with the EU, Michael Tatham examines the case study of Scottish EU interest representation as an indicator of the nature and character of these changes, claiming that the gradual evolution of Scotland from a so-called northern English colony to an influential European nation will be partly driven by the effectiveness of its EU involvement. Elizabeth Gibson considers the specific role of the European Committee within the new Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, stressing its growing importance in the process of European integration. Nathalie Duclos closely looks at the relationships between Scottish and European institutions and between the different institutions from the angle of the ‘CalMac’ saga, which has recently given rise to a twofold debate on Scotland’s political place within Europe and within the United Kingdom. Edwige Camp’s contribution aims at assessing how Scottish interests have been defended by Scotland’s representatives since 1999 within the forum of the European Parliament whether in the devolved areas or in the reserved matters. Philippe Brillet argues that the Scottish executive has not displayed a keen interest in European matters yet, except as a support to alter Ango-Scottish relationships in its favour, one possible explanation being the lack of pertinence of the notion of euro-region promoted by the EU as applied to the Scottish case. Eventually the attitude of the Scottish opinion towards the latest developments of European integration is deeply scrutinized in the last two contributions. Carine Berberi takes the example of the recent debates on the European constitution and of the evolution of the Scottish National Party to stress the growth of some kind of euroscepticism among the Scottish population and political elites. While Annie Thiec analyzes the comprehensive institutional networks and ‘paradiplomacy’ that connect the Scottish political stage to the European governance, and discusses to what extent an independent Scotland, member in its own right of the EU, would have greater influence on the European decision-making process.

On the whole the volume illustrates the richness and complexity of the dialogue between Scotland and the European continent over the centuries. Although located in the ‘outer periphery’ of the British Isles and at the geographical margins of Europe, Scotland has been constantly enriched and changed by cross-Channell influences just as Scottish values and ideas, intellectuals and
artists, traders or politicians have taken part to continental debates and contributed to shape a common European identity throughout the ages. After 1707 the integration of Scotland within a British framework and ethos that the Scots have largely contributed to forge, has not altered the European profile of Scotland, as the emblematic episodes of the Enlightenment and Romanticism have notably demonstrated. Over the last decades the process of economic and political integration in Europe has struck a particular chord in Scotland: the country wished to see itself as a confident and jubilant European nation, partly as a way to outflank anglocentric pressures from the British state and in order to take distance from the growing eurosceptical tune of the London governments. Eventually the volume goes against some constricting essentialist definitions of Scottishness, which have tended to confine Scotland to a fixed, determined and monolithic nature. On the contrary it underlines the open, fluid and dynamic character of the identity process, resulting from permanent interactions within Scotland —itself a multicultural and multilingual society— as well as between Scotland and other cultures and communities.

Gilles Leydier
PART I

LINKS WITH EUROPE
The relationship between monarchs and their parliaments was an important feature of the political landscape of early modern Europe and it has been subjected to some scrutiny by political and constitutional historians of early modern Europe as well as historians of individual countries.1 The 1707 Act of Union between Scotland and England resulted in the creation of the kingdom of Great Britain and the creation of a new British Parliament in London. Theoretically the Scottish and English Parliaments voted themselves out of existence, giving birth to the new British Parliament, but in reality the new parliament in London was a de facto extension of its English predecessor.2 Until recently the study of the pre-1707 Scottish Parliament was a neglected area of study in the history of Scotland. Traditionally regarded as ‘weak’, it has been compared unfavourably with its English counterpart and Scottish political and constitutional historians of the early twentieth century continued this trend by justifying the abolition of the national parliament by the success of Scottish participation in the post-1707 British Union, Westminster as the model and mother of democracy for other countries, and by the influential role played by Scots in the British Empire.3 In recent decades, however, there has been a resurgence in serious historical research of the Parliament of Scotland, especially among younger scholars, and it would be fair to say that there has been a re-evaluation of the Parliament of Scotland and that this is an ongoing scholarly process.4 The establishment of a devolved assembly in Edinburgh, sanctioned by the democratic will of the people of Scotland in a referendum in 1997, and the construction, albeit controversial, and opening of a new Parliament building at Holyrood in Scotland’s capital, have further inspired this scholarly interest. This is reflected in the location of the History of the Scottish
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Parliament Project, funded by the Scottish Executive, at the University of St. Andrews.5

There was no uniform structure for representative assemblies in early modern Europe. Single-chamber institutions existed, alongside two-chamber, three-chamber and four-chamber institutions. Furthermore, provincial assemblies (such as those in France) existed alongside national assemblies (such as the Estates General in France, although it did not meet between 1614 and 1789). Richard Bonney, a prominent historian of early modern France, has argued that “each institution has to be viewed in terms of its own relative success and failure” and that “structural differences were bound to affect the capabilities and functions of assemblies in each country”.6 It is therefore important to identify two key points that relate to the position of the Scottish Parliament within a wider continental European context. First, the Parliament of Scotland was a single-chamber unicameral institution. This was unlike the English Parliament and the Diets of Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia. The Scottish Parliament did not have separate Houses of Commons and Lords and in this structural context it was therefore a different institution from the English Parliament. Second, in common with other European assemblies the Scottish Parliament was a parliament of estates. This was derived from the French model of états. As noted by Robert Rait, the leading Scottish constitutional historian of the twentieth century, “The Parliament of Scotland, in its origin and throughout its history, was definitely and avowedly a Parliament of Estates”.7 These estates consisted of the clergy (clerical estate), the nobility (noble estate), the barons (the estate of barons or shire commissioners) and the burgesses (burghal estate).

In the aftermath of the sixteenth century Reformation with its strong Calvinist impact, the clerical estate (consisting of bishops and archbishops) was particularly controversial in the seventeenth century. This was closely related to the issue of whether or not the Church of Scotland should have bishops and archbishops, in terms of a presbyterian or episcopal structure, whether or not clerics should participate in state activities, and the controversial political role played by clerics when they did participate in such activities. Officers of State (such as the Treasurer, Clerk Register and Lord Advocate), whose number was defined as eight in 1617, were also present in parliament, but they did not constitute a separate parliamentary estate.8

The succession of King James VI of Scotland to the English throne in 1603 (thereby becoming James VI and I of Scotland and England) created a new political environment in which the Scottish Parliament had to operate. The Anglo-Scottish dynastic union or the Union of the Crowns was created, but Scotland was still an independent kingdom. With the exception of incorporation into Oliver Cromwell’s English Commonwealth and Protectorate in the 1650s (in the aftermath of the Cromwellian conquest of Scotland), this is the form of
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union that existed until the 1707 Act of Union. The dynastic union resulted in absentee monarchy, with the monarch of Scotland now resident in London and the demise of the Scottish court has often been seen as having a negative impact on Scottish cultural life and the arts. Despite promising to return to Scotland every three years, James VI an I only returned to Scotland once, in 1617, prior to his death in 1625 and it took eight years for his son and successor, Charles I, to come to Scotland for his coronation as King of Scotland and the controversial 1633 Parliament. As a result of the negative effects of absentee monarchy over several decades, the dictatorial behaviour of Charles I, the political role played by clergics in the government of Scotland, and unpopular policies, especially the drive towards British uniformity in matters of religion, the Covenanters emerged as an opposition movement seeking to rectify the perceived abuses in the mismanagement of Scotland under Charles I. The Covenanters’ objectives included political and constitutional reform and the demand for free parliaments (parliaments being held without royal interference) was included in the 1638 National Covenant, the document incorporating the ideology of covenanting that laid out a reordering of the relationship between God, the Scottish crown and the Scottish people. The failure of Charles I to defeat the Covenanters militarily in the First Bishops’ War of 1639 resulted in the 1639 Treaty of Berwick. The provisions of the Berwick treaty stated that a parliament was to be held in Scotland, the first since 1633. Meeting on 31 August 1639, this Parliament met in several sessions until November 1641. The Parliament of 1639-41 enacted a constitutional settlement that restricted the royal prerogative of Charles I as King of Scotland and considerably enhanced the powers of the Scottish Parliament. In the wider context of continental Europe in the 1640s, the Scottish constitutional settlement deserves recognition as an important settlement that curtailed the powers of the Scottish monarchy. In terms of the Bonney criteria described above, this should therefore be regarded as a ‘success’ in its own right. It should also be regarded as a ‘success’ in terms of European assemblies of the time. Within a narrower British perspective, it also provided a model of reform and evidence of parliamentary success against monarchical power for the English Parliament in London as a growing political crisis developed for Charles I as King of England. This article therefore provides an overview of the main features of this settlement as a Scottish contribution to wider debates in European history about the relationship between parliaments and monarchs.

Charles I did not attend the 1639 parliamentary session that met from 31 August to 14th November, and he was represented instead by John Stewart, first Earl of Traquair, in the official capacity of King’s Commissioner. The Covenanting movement had already prepared a large amount of proposals for enactment and when Traquair saw that the royal prerogative was under attack he
prorogued the session. Important legislation that was later enacted by parliament in the 1640s had already been prepared or was in preparation in 1639. The June 1640 session, meeting from 2-11 June, met in defiance of royal authority, the Covenanters arguing that the prorogation was illegal, and the session met in the absence of a King’s Commissioner.\(^{11}\) The impact of legislation passed in this ten day period was profound. Sir James Balfour, a contemporary commentator noted that the parliamentary session represented:

> the reall grattest change at ane blow that euer hapned to this churche and staite thesse 600 years baypast; for in effecte it ouerturned not onlie the ancient state gouvernment, bot fettered monarchie with chynes and sett new limitts and marckes to the same, beyond wich it was not legally to proceed'.\(^{12}\)

In the absence of a royal commissioner, the estates took the unprecedented step of electing their own president. Robert Balfour, second Lord Burleigh, a Covenanting nobleman, was elected to this office.\(^{13}\) It is therefore important to note that the Scottish Parliament had an official president, elected by the estates, from 1640 to 1651 during the period of Covenanting rule, and this can be deemed to be an important aspect of constitutional innovation. Legislation of 2 June 1640 redefined the estates of the Scottish Parliament. This was contained in the act anent the constitution of this parliament and all subsequent parliaments. The act stated that the “Nobility, Barons and Burgesses and their Commissioners” were the “true estates of this kingdom”.\(^{14}\) The clerical estate had been abolished. Within the wider political and religious context of the time, the settlement gave constitutional sanction to the proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland of 1638 and 1639 that had abolished bishops and archbishops and established a presbyterian church. The 1638 General Assembly in Glasgow had sanctioned presbyterian reformation and the General Assembly of the following year in Edinburgh had further endorsed this. Parliament now ratified these proceedings.\(^{15}\)

The abolition of the clerical estate and the redefinition of the estates had important ramifications. The first related to the estate of barons or shire commissioners. Legislation of 1587 had allowed for the shires to be represented by two commissioners, although they did not have an individual vote and voting power was invested in the shire. As a result of the 1640 legislation, however, each baron or shire commissioner was given an individual vote. The political impact of this was that the estate of barons or the shire commissioners doubled their voting power compared to the other two estates (nobles and burgesses). This had important implications for the operation of Scottish parliamentary politics in the 1640s within the context of a single chamber institution and it can be argued that the 1640s witnessed the emergence of a “Scottish Commons”.\(^{16}\) The doubling of the shire vote was a pragmatic recognition of the important role
played by the lairds and barons within the Covenanting movement. Some empirical data can be used to highlight the importance of this doubling of the vote. The parliamentary membership of the June 1640 session consisted of 36 nobles, 43 barons/shire commissioners representing 23 shires, and 52 burgesses representing 51 burghs. The total membership of the session therefore amounted to 131. The barons/shires, as an estate, now had 43 votes compared to only 23 had the older system remained in operation. A case study of Aberdeenshire in the north-east of Scotland also highlights this point. Sir William Forbes of Craigievar and John Forbes of Leslie represented Aberdeenshire in the June 1640 session. Under the pre-1640 system, Aberdeenshire only had a single vote, despite the fact that it was represented by two commissioners. According to the system adopted from 1640 onwards, both commissioners now had an individual vote and the voting power of Aberdeenshire was therefore doubled.

The abolition of the clerical estate also had an important impact on the committee structure of the Scottish Parliament. This related to a committee known as the Lords of the Articles or the Committee of Articles. The Lords of the Articles have been traditionally regarded as providing the mechanism by which the crown controlled the legislative agenda of parliament and the committee had been very controversial in promoting the crown’s agenda in the 1621 Parliament and especially the 1633 Parliament. The Articles consisted of 40 members (eight clerics, eight nobles, eight barons/shire commissioners, eight burgesses, and eight officers of state). The clerical estate elected the eight nobles and the nobility elected the eight clerics. This combined group of 16 then elected the 16 shire and burgh members. The monarch or his commissioner then nominated the eight officers of state. The abolition of the Lords of the Articles was one of the main constitutional demands of the Covenanting movement.

The Articles were effectively made redundant by legislation of 6 June 1640. The act anent choosing committees out of every estate empowered the estates to elect their own representatives to committees. Hence, the estates themselves, and not the monarch or his appointees would be responsible for electing committee members. The use of the Lords of the Articles was to be optional and not compulsory:

All subsequent parliaments may according to the importance of effaires for the Tyme either choose or not choose severall Committies for Articles as they shall thinke expedient.

Furthermore, if employed then any such committee or committees were to have a preparatory remit only. Such a committee or committees could only deal with issues referred to them by parliament. Such committees would be restricted to dealing with issues presented in open parliament and all their deliberations
would have to be reported back to parliament for discussion before voting took place. All voting on any legislation prepared by this committee/these committees was to take place in open parliament. This was the theoretical legislative position as stated in the act, but the political reality of the situation was that the Articles had been abolished. Indeed, the Lords of the Articles, as a parliamentary committee, did not resurface until the first parliamentary session (1661) of the Restoration Parliament (1661-3) when the royal prerogative was restored with the restoration of the monarchy in the aftermath of the collapse of Cromwellian rule. The de facto abolition of the Articles resulted in the emergence of a new committee structure that was a defining feature of the Scottish Parliament in the 1640s. This was based on session committees (which sat during parliamentary sessions) and interval committees (which sat between parliamentary sessions or parliaments and reported back to the next session or new parliament). First deployed in 1640, this was the committee system that was in operation until 1651. These committees dealt with a wide range of issues such as the domestic Covenanting administration of Scotland, including rebellion against the regime, and military and diplomatic commitments in England and Ireland during the British Civil Wars.

A key feature of the intricate system of parliamentary committees was the Committee of Estates. The Committee of Estates was first established by an act of 8 June 1640 and was initially intended to be a temporary expedient geared towards the needs of the Second Bishops’ War of 1640. It was intended to sit after the 1640 session until the next session of parliament. Nevertheless, Committees of Estates were appointed on a regular basis until 1651. Membership of the committee was not restricted to parliamentary members and the committee consisted of different components. An Edinburgh section administered the country, co-ordinated links with the Scottish localities, and acted as a provisional government between parliamentary sessions or parliaments. An army section or sections accompanied the Covenanting armed forces on a British basis. A separate diplomatic section conducted negotiations with the English Parliament. The Committee of Estates was also involved in the conduct of European diplomacy. First, in 1640-1 it was involved in negotiations for a tripartite confederation with the United Provinces of the Dutch Republic and the English parliament. Second, in 1644 it sanctioned the “Cunningham mission” to the Dutch Republic in attempt to extend the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant on a European basis and create a defence league for the Protestant cause in Europe. Third, in 1644-5 it was proactive in diplomatic negotiations with the Swedes that sought to create a British confederation with Sweden.

The 1640 session passed a Triennial Act on 6 June. This incorporated the wish for frequent parliaments to be held in Scotland and it stated that a “full and frie” parliament must be held at least every three years with the king in
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attendance. Prior to the conclusion of future parliaments, the time and place of the next parliament was to be given by the king’s commissioner with the approval of the estates (after 1640, however, the king’s commissioner was supplanted by the President of Parliament). Furthermore, these details were to be constituted in the final enactment of future parliaments. The Scottish Triennial Act provided a model for the English Triennial Act later enacted by the Long Parliament in London. Parliaments were held on a regular basis in the 1640s as a result of this legislation. Conventions of Estates (which had more limited powers than a parliament) were held in 1634 and 1644 to secure and then oversee Covenanting military intervention in the English Civil War. The First Triennial Parliament met over six sessions between 1644 and 1647. The Second Triennial Parliament met over eight sessions between 1648 and 1651. The motives behind the 1640 Triennial Act were primarily twofold. First, there was a desire to return to the practice of frequeats parliaments before the departure of James VI to England in 1603. Second, the legislation was intended to prevent a return to arbitrary government under Charles I.

The proceedings of parliament in 1641 consolidated and enhanced the gains of the 1640 session. Taken collectively, the proceedings of the 1640 and 1641 sessions had important procedural developments. All grievances were to be given in open parliament. All parliamentary books, records and registers were to be made available for inspection by members. In addition to subscribing the 1638 National Covenant in order to be allowed to sit in parliament, all members were required to take a parliamentary oath (introduced in the 1640 session) recognising the authority and freedom of parliament. Present in the Scottish Parliament for three months from 17 August 1641, Charles I was forced to acknowledge the proceedings of the 1640 session and he was forced, albeit reluctantly, to agree to greater parliamentary control over judicial and executive appointments. Privy Councillors, Officers of State and Ordinary and Extraordinary Lords of the Session (judicial appointments) could only be appointed with parliamentary approval. Officers of State were deprived of the right to sit ex officio.

By the end of Parliament on 17 November 1641, real political power in Scotland now lay in the hands of the Scottish Covenanters and the Scottish Parliament had enhanced its powers considerably. Charles I returned to England as a growing British crisis emerged with the outbreak of the 1641 Ulster rebellion. In the wider European context of the relationship between monarchs and parliaments, the royal prerogative of Charles I had been curtailed by the Scottish Parliament and it can be argued that these constitutional developments should be placed within this wider picture. Paradoxically, the same can also be argued for the Restoration settlement of 1661-3, which can be examined within a European perspective of absolutist tendencies and the assertion of monarchical
powers over parliaments and estates. The Scottish Restoration settlement rescinded the constitutional gains of the 1640s, brought back the Lords of the Articles and redefined the relationship between the Scottish monarchy and the Scottish Parliament. This involved the aristocratic surrender of many of the achievements of the 1640s as part of a move back towards the monarchy and royalism in the aftermath of Cromwellian conquest and occupation. Nevertheless, the 1640-1 settlement provided a model of constitutional reform for later developments, notably the reform programme of ‘The Club’ at the Revolution of 1689-90 and the ‘Limitations’ of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun in 1703-4. Saltoun’s reform programme attempted to enhance the powers and integrity of the Scottish Parliament, to eliminate court interference from London in Scottish parliamentary affairs, and to limit the prerogative powers of the monarchy vis-à-vis parliament. In essence, the 1640-1 settlement was an important feature in the move towards constitutional nationalism in the parliamentary sessions of 1703-4 in the last Scottish Parliament of 1703-7, albeit the 1707 Act of Union resulted in an incorporating union and the abolition of the Scottish Parliament. Given the theme of this conference and subsequent publication of papers, my final point would be to stress that the pre-1707 Scottish Parliament should be compared to the experiences of other parliaments and assemblies in early modern Europe, including of course to those of the English parliament. It is therefore my final contention that the Scottish constitutional settlement of 1640-1 represents an important case study for the curtailing of monarchical powers in early modern Europe.

Notes
The Scottish Parliament and the Constitutional Settlement of 1640-41


5 See http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~scotparl/ for further details.


7 R.S. Rait, The Parliaments of Scotland (Glasgow, 1924), p. 165.


10 Young, The Scottish Parliament, chapters one and two;


13 APS, V, p.259. Presidents of parliament who were appointed between 1640 and 1651 are listed in D. Stevenson (ed.), The Government of Scotland Under the Covenanters (Edinburgh, 1982), pp.175-6. For further information on the mechanism for electing presidents, see Young, The Scottish Parliament, pp. 20, 90-1.

14 APS, V, pp. 260-1.


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M. Young (ed.), *The Parliaments of Scotland, Burgh and Shire Commissioners*, two volumes (Edinburgh, 1992-3), volume one, pp.245-6, 249.


Ibid.


See Young, *The Scottish Parliament*, for a detailed analysis of these parliamentary committees. A selection of committee registers have been transcribed and printed in Stevenson (ed.), *The Government of Scotland under the Covenants*.


APS, v, p.268.


The relations between Scotland and Europe have always been very rich. More than simple relations, they often were genuine military alliances that progressively changed into cultural, philosophical and theological bounds. However, in any of these cases, it cannot be ignored that Scotland looked for allies to fight against England or to oppose its principles regardless which they might have been. These bounds and alliances also enabled the spreading of ideas in Europe, especially during the Reformation. Special links were created with the French Huguenots, the Dutch as well as with many other European divines. From that moment on, the main aim was not to have a military association against England, but to create an alliance of all the reformed Churches to re-establish religious peace in Europe. Many divines went all over Europe to find support and help for that project. Among them, John Durie (1596-1680), a Scot who became a strong defender of the Irenic movement which dreamt of building a Universal Church in Europe. When Durie died in 1680, few people were aware that Europe had lost one of its main defender of religious peace. Today still, this Scot is not very well known, if not ignored, by historians despite the fact that for over fifty years, his name was famous in all the reformed courts and Churches of Europe.

Born in Scotland at a critical time of religious unrest, he experienced religious conflicts and divisions in which his family was involved. As an exile on the continent, he decided to put an end to this situation that had led Europe into a war that was to last thirty years. Therefore, he started to think of a project of union of all the Protestants of Christendom. This project took him through a journey over Europe and brought him friendship and support as much as hatred and suspicion, but it also enabled him to shed new hopes of unity and harmony in that divided Europe. Thanks to a wide network, John Durie soon became the spokesman of the irenic divines such as Samuel Hartlib and Jan Amos
Komensky, also known under the name of Comenius. Nevertheless, although he believed in a universal Church, his actions were often influenced by Scottish principles. This allows us to put forwards the idea that this project was above all the enterprise of a Scot for Scotland more than the one of a divine in favour of a European and Universal Church as he claimed it was. This is quite intriguing if we consider that he was a Scot who spent only few years in his native country. Thus, how could his actions reflect the worries and hopes of the Scottish nation during the first half of the 17th century? We will answer this question through the study of Durie’s character and work within the context of the European theological and social crisis. First, we will deal with the reasons and influences that led Durie to begin that irenic project. This will help us to analyse the way he proceeded to try to impose it in Europe in order to understand finally how this project profited or at least put to the fore the Scottish interests in England and Europe.

An education surrounded by religious conflicts

John Durie was born in Edinburgh in 1596 in a family deeply involved in the Presbyterian cause. Indeed John was not the first member of his family to act for the reformation. His grandfather and father had both been two emblematic figures of the defence of Presbyterianism and supporters of Andrew Melville. John got from his father his love for theology and a critical sense of comparison of the various reformed Churches in Europe. This education was at the origin of his project to create a universal reformed Church. Of course, this idea was not innovating at this time in Scotland. James VI had also tried to establish a certain unity between the European Churches in order to organise the universal Church. This had been the dream of many divines ever since the beginning of the Reformation. Nevertheless, contrary to Durie’s family who was involved only in the evangelical Churches and in the crusade against Catholicism, King James wished to establish a universal Church with the participation of Rome. This dissension in opinion sent the Duries in exile on the continent in 1606. John was 10 years old. His family joined the French Huguenots in Bordeaux before moving to Holland where they settled in Leyden in 1609. This city was at the time one of the main European centres of religious toleration and many Scottish exiles could find shelter there. But soon, the family moved again to be with Melville exiled in Sedan, a town which had become the English and Scottish Presbyterian stronghold on the continent. Thus, John Durie spent his childhood and teenage surrounded by religious controversies and conflicts both in Scotland and on the continent at a time when the religious situation in Scotland was particularly ambiguous. Indeed, James VI of Scotland, though he had been brought up as a Presbyterian, seemed to
favour Episcopacy ever since he started to perceive the possibility of claiming
the throne of England. With this aim in view, he led secret negotiations with
Rome. However, King James could not oppose the Presbyterian majority of his
subjects and despite several sentences to exile or prison and several anti-
Presbyterian laws soon cancelled, he often made compromises in favour of the
Presbyterians. The Scottish ecclesiastical policy was destabilising for everyone
in Scotland and Europe, especially for the Calvinist States, which did not know
any longer what to expect of the Reformation in Scotland, and after 1603, on
the British Isle in general. Their only link with Scotland was soon limited to the
only exiles or the suspicious and anxious Presbyterians, limited in their actions
by the vagueness of King James’s ecclesiastical policy.
When the king added the English crown to his Scottish one, the worries of the
Presbyterians increased. This feeling was justified when James, made confident
by his English title, decided to establish officially and deliberately the
Episcopal system in Scotland in 1610. The Presbyterians reacted, of course, but
this time, they were more pacific than they used to be. Most of the new
Presbyterian voices were inspired by the work of John Forbes. The latter
advocated a pacific opposition to the king’s policy which would be organised
by assemblies in which dialogue and toleration would be the bases to find an
agreement on the reforms and to re-establish peace and harmony in the Church.
John Durie was a supporter of this movement. Although he lived on the
continent at the time, he kept an eye on the religious situation in Scotland and
like his fellow exiled Scots, he saw a logical link between the religious crisis in
Scotland and the increasing theological tensions on the continent. Indeed, in
1618, the Palatinate was invaded by the Catholic Emperor Ferdinand II
Hapsburg (1578-1637). In solidarity with the Protestant cause, Scotland
developed a strong paranoia about the threat of a Catholic invasion. Durie was
aware of the importance of the situation on the continent and the consequences
of a Scottish intervention in the crisis. He was geographically and personally
involved in these divisions. More than ever, someone had to act to re-establish
peace in Christendom. Durie found himself inspired by this mission that from
then on, became his raison d’être.

Irenism as a means for peace in Europe:
the irenic mission of Durie

When he decided to work on his project of reconciliation within Christendom,
Durie already knew where and how to start. He had to meet and convince the
Reformed States in Europe to join his cause together with as many divines and
leaders as possible. He needed contacts and luckily, he was hardly short of
those. His early experiences in exile, his family background and his studies
brought him in close contact with many people preoccupied by the religious situation in Europe. During his studies in Leyden, he met Elder Robinson and many of the Puritan Pilgrims who were to move to the New World and create the Plymouth Plantation where they could practice their religion freely. Durie built his reputation as he secured contacts with these influential divines and soon became minister of a small congregation of English and Scottish Presbyterians in Elbing in 1624. This position enabled him to spread his principles and theories and to give them credibility in the Reformed societies in Holland, which acted as intermediaries with all the other reformed States in Europe. However, more than these theologians, his own family was at the origin of his network. Composed of many divines and State officers, his family introduced him in many key royal courts of Europe, which became the basis of his network of contacts and support. Thanks to this, Durie managed to impose himself in Sweden where his project was welcome and gained King Gustavus Adolphus, the champion of the defence of the Reformed Churches. This support appealed many divines such as Samuel Hartlib and Comenius. The latter were to open new horizons for his project and were to motivate him in trying to introduce it on his native Isle.

Convinced by the programme of reunion of the Churches of Christendom as presented in Durie’s project and the proposition for a reformation in education advocated by Comenius, Samuel Hartlib decided to become the intermediary between the two men. He believed their principles could complete each other and that together, they could restore the religious harmony divines so hoped for. Hartlib met Durie in 1627. He proposed to him to be his agent and to speak on his behalf to King Charles I and to the parliament of England. Indeed, England was a strategic Protestant State: it had not finished its reformation yet but given its importance on the political European stage, it was essential to convince and help the young king to reform the Churches of his kingdoms, since it would set an example for the other Protestant State and would be a good start to promote the solutions they proposed in their irenic projects. Indeed, the Church of England used Lutheran doctrines and therefore, it could influence the Lutheran States on the continent. More, since England was united by the crown to Scotland, a traditionally Calvinist country, the Isle could also interfere in the Calvinist communities on the other side of the Channel. Together, the two kingdoms had a great potential for action that could not be neglected at that time in the European Christendom.

The support of these divines and his family confirmed Durie’s confidence in the belief that his mission was well-founded. He wrote to all the leaders and divines of Europe in order to inform them of his project. His correspondence with Roe in England is a good example of his prolific writing activity. Unfortunately, the German Princes did not show any interest and England did
not do any official gesture in his favour. For the latter, the religious crisis on the continent could only be solved by the German Princes. This crisis had no link with the one the Isle was experiencing. In fact, Charles I could not financially afford to intervene in the European conflict. This would have indeed obliged him to send an army on the continent at a time the State coffers were at their lowest. Durie spent months trying unsuccessfully to convince England to help him to promote his project despite the devoted help of Samuel Hartlib, John Davenant, Joseph Hall and William Bedel. But Durie did not give up and in 1631, started a long journey across the continent to gain more support. This was for him the opportunity to write many tracts that were meant to be read by all the Evangelical States. He wrote a narrative of his journey in which he explained his pacific project. The latter was followed by a tract De Moto Procedendi (1632) in which he explained the method he believed to be the best to promote the reunion of Christendom. He proposed to all the Reformed Churches to gather into an assembly, which would discuss the differences and the common points of the various confessions. Only several of these common points would then be kept to create a common confession. This project was first meant for the Lutheran Churches, which were divided in Germany and were at the origin of the conflict there, but from 1632, he advocated this method could be applied to the whole continent.

His ideas reached Sweden where Gustavus Adolphus declared himself ready to subscribe to the project. Unfortunately, the king died before he had time to act officially in Durie’s favour. The death of the champion of Protestantism was a reversal of situation since many lost confidence in Durie’s project. They believed that no one but Gustavus Adolphus had enough authority and influence among the Protestants to bring the project to reality. Durie did not lose faith and went to defend his project to the Convention of Frankfurt in May 1634. But there again, his project provoked interest but nothing was organised to put it into practice. Therefore, Durie changed his strategy.

Gustavus Adolphus had been involved in the recovery of the Palatinate. His victories made him the champion of the Protestant cause. Durie knew that his only chance to gain back the trust of his supporters was to find a new champion for the Protestant cause in the Palatinate crisis. Thus, he turned to his king once again. Charles I was personally concerned by the crisis. His sister, Elizabeth, was the wife of the Elector Frederic V and Scotland remembered her dearly. The Parliament of Scotland had expressed many times its will to help its Princess and her husband but there had never been enough money to cover the expenses of an army. Despite all that, Durie decided to meet the king personally in order to convince him to intervene on the continent. He left for England in November 1633.
intervention by Charles in Europe\textsuperscript{21}, supported him in his enterprise. All believed Charles I had to become the new champion of the protestant cause, but was he able to do so?

Indeed, the king was accumulating mistakes in his ecclesiastical policies. He had decided with his councillor William Laud to make the Churches of his kingdoms uniform, imposing on Scotland the system and doctrines used in the Church of England. But Scotland had remained deeply Presbyterian despite the religious reforms by King James. It hardly accepted any royal authority on its Church. Tensions between the Kirk and the king were increasing dramatically, especially after the project was made official in 1634. These extended to the Puritan community\textsuperscript{22} in England who saw in Laud’s policy a disguised way to re-establish Catholicism on the Isle. The gap between the Calvinists and the Episcopalian Church was widening. Durie was then in a very ambiguous situation, since he was a Presbyterian and had to deal with the Church of England. This position could play against his project. Therefore, he accepted to put his confession aside and to become a member of the Episcopal Church. He wanted to obtain the considerations of the king and his councillor, so that he could be able to make them put his programme into practice in the two kingdoms\textsuperscript{23}. This pragmatic decision was not in contradiction with his convictions. On the opposite, he believed in a via media between the various confessions. This would imply a sort of toleration of the numerous religious groups, which were in a process of confessionalisation. Of course, the toleration would be provisional, the time for the universal Church to be established. European divines did not express themselves against his change of confession\textsuperscript{24} apart from Robert Baillie who accused him of being influenced by Laud and to be his emissary. As far as the Scots were concerned, they only accused him of having an affinity with Episcopacy but they still trusted him. They certainly hoped that this Scot would defend their interests. Thus, supported by the European Protestant community, Durie became the mediator for the unity between England and Scotland. This unity would be without precedent in Europe and could become an example for all.

**A Scottish or a European project?**

From 1634, Durie concentrated exclusively on the Anglo-Scottish question, but the task promised to be difficult. The gap between the two kingdoms was widening because of Laud’s reforms in Scotland. Therefore, Durie decided to intervene in both Laud’s policy and reformation process on the Isle. He went first to Scotland\textsuperscript{25}. He wanted indeed to act with the help of his countrymen. He visited the very influential Aberdeen Doctors. The latter, though quite suspicious about several points of the project, declared themselves in favour of
They called many divines to join the cause. The most influential ones were John Forbes, William Forbes, William Leslie (Durie’s uncle), Robert Baillie, Alexander Henderson and Archbishop Spottiswood. Nevertheless, the latter feared that one of the confessions could take ascendancy over the others. This situation would provoke jealousy and therefore, new tensions. They believed Durie should remain discreet the time his programme was made official and regulated by the king. More, to them, Durie was somehow too often in contact with Laud. They suspected him of trying to establish the English religious system in Scotland in a roundabout way. Thus, it was during that period of unrest between Laud and the Presbyterians, being aware of the consequences of his project in Scotland, that the Scottish divines decided to slow voluntarily the realization of Durie’s irenic programme. Disappointed, Durie left for Sweden. He was to stay there for the next five years before joining other supporters in Holland, where he wrote one of his most important tracts in favour of a Church reunion, but the Bishop War called him back on the Isle in August 1641.

In order to solve the conflict between the king and the Scottish Presbyterians, Durie called the Swiss Calvinists for help. He wanted them to act alongside the Scottish Presbyterians and to promote their reformation abroad. The Swiss divines sent a series of letters to William Laud to convince him to respect the Church of Scotland or at least to do nothing against it. The main aim is to show every party the importance of reconciliation and of an action in favour of Protestantism, whatever the confession, in order to work together to establish peace in religion. Following Durie’s example, many divines, among whom were Scottish Episcopalians, exchanged correspondence with the Protestant Church of Switzerland. More than the question of confession, the Scots wanted to defend their identity, which they believed was threatened by the presence of the English army in their land. Durie took profit of this national paranoia to convince them to act for the defence of their Church and at the same time, to bring back peace in the two kingdoms. He advised them to propose to England to create an assembly, which through discussion, would establish harmony between the two national Churches. It was then obvious that Durie was trying to involve the Scots in the process of reunion of the Churches and to make them believe they were at the origin of it.

Since the signature of the National Covenant of Scotland in 1638, the Presbyterian Church seemed strong enough to be a model for a common Church on the Isle. What is more, the Covenant put forward the idea of an expansion of the Presbyterian Church across the border. Durie contacted the influential members of the General Assembly. Among those were Robert Baillie and Alexander Henderson who also dreamt of unity, if not of religious union, by means of a common religion to both England and Scotland – this Church being...