Edinburgh Print Culture and the Construction of Scottish National Identity, 1688-1707

by

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Class of 2018

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Departmental Honors in History

Middletown, Connecticut April 17, 2018
With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately Dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Fam'd heroes! had their royal home:
Alas, how chang'd the times to come!
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam!
Tho' rigid Law cries out 'twas just!

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
Ev'n I who sing in rustic lore,
Haply my sires have left their shed,
And fac'd grim Danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led!

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs;
Where once, beneath a Monarch's feet,
Sat Legislation's sovereign pow'rs:
From marking wildly-scatt'red flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

Robert Burns, “Address to Edinburgh” (1786)
# Table of Contents

*Acknowledgements*  
Page 4

*List of maps and illustrations*  
Page 5

*Introduction*  
Page 7

  Chapter Outline / 10

*Chapter I. Historical and Print Culture Background*  
Page 14

  *The Union of the Crowns* / 14

  *Early Modern Edinburgh* / 19

*Chapter II. Crisis Point: Glorious Revolution and Reign of William & Mary*  
Page 31

  *Revolution Historiography* / 31

  *Causes* / 33

  *The Revolution in Scotland* / 37

  *A Highland Crisis in a Lowland Context* / 40

*Chapter III. Crisis Point: The Darien Colony*  
Page 47

  *A “Noble Enterprize”?* / 48

  *The Darien Colony* / 53

  *Nationhood After Darien* / 57

*Chapter IV. Crisis Point: The Worcester Incident*  
Page 63

  *Stormy Political Seas* / 63

  *The Trial* / 66

  *Popular Response* / 70

*Chapter V. Crisis Point: The Union of 1707*  
Page 80

  *The Crown in Crisis* / 82

  *The Terms of Union* / 85

  *Bought and Sold for English Gold?* / 87

  *Popular Response* / 89

*Conclusion*  
Page 95

*Epilogue*  
Page 96

*Bibliography*  
Page 102
Acknowledgements

As with any major undertaking, this thesis could not have happened without the help of countless others.

Thank you to the Davenport Committee for providing me with the summer funds to conduct research and live in what became my favorite city in the world. Thank you also to the archivists who allowed me to hold the past in my hands in the National Library of Scotland, National Archives of Scotland, and University of Edinburgh special collections.

And thank you to the amazing Wesleyan library staff, especially to my boss there, Mrs. Jackson.

To my family—my mom, Nana, and Uncle Dave—for always encouraging my curiosity and my love of history. Thank you for your love and support, and for listening to my ramblings.

To my love, my joy: Ilana, thank you for always being there. You are my favorite brunch buddy, thumb war opponent, and historian. I don’t know how I got so lucky.

And to my dearest friends, Elliot, Neel, Rocco, and Tori, whose company and laughter kept me sane this past year.

To Professor Pinch, whose guidance these last few years has been invaluable, as was his suggestion that I’d receive “the best possible tutelage” working with Professor Tucker.

Most of all, to Professor Tucker, for having faith in a student you’d never met before and beginning this journey with me over email from across the Atlantic. None of this would have been possible without your encouragement, patience, advice, and support.

Finally, to bonnie Scotland and the city of Edinburgh, may we meet again soon…
List of maps and illustrations

2. Alternative proposals for Union of the Crowns flags (1604) 17
3. James VI Scots 60 shilling coin (1604-1609) 17
4. Jan van der Straet, called Stradanus, *New Inventions of Modern Times [Nova Reperta], “The Invention of Book Printing,”* (c. 1600) 24
5. Map of Scottish colony of New Caledonia in Panama (c. 1699) 55
6. Example of an Edinburgh broadside about the *Worcester incident* 73
7. Engraving of Duke of Queensberry presenting Queen Anne with the Treaty of Union (1809) 80
Figure 1. “Scotland in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries” This map was originally published in the 1912 *Cambridge Modern History Atlas*, edited by Sir Adolphus Ward, G.W. Prothero, Sir Stanley Mordaunt Leathes, and E.A. Benians.
Introduction

When the English trading vessel the *Worcester* put into the port of Leith in July 1704, Thomas Green could scarcely have imagined the fate that awaited him.\(^1\) Already the captain of a merchantman at twenty-four years old, the Englishman Green must have had much on his mind as his ship moored in Scotland’s most bustling port. With the North Sea breeze at his back, he may have been mulling over trade figures in his head, or perhaps he was simply relieved to set foot on British soil again after his ship had undergone serious repairs in Bengal. He might have even heard of the escalating tensions between his own country and its northern neighbor. Of course, we will never know exactly what Captain Green was thinking that summer day, but shortly thereafter he and his crew were to find themselves at the center of an Anglo-Scottish controversy. In April 1705, Green and two of his crew were swinging from the gallows at Leith Sands on charges of piracy and murder. History is a tale of timing. While this seemingly routine execution may well have been ignored at a different time, it instead captured the attention and imagination of Scotland. As a later historian would describe the mood of 1705 in Scotland: “the verdict was found by men who were fighting for national independence, and avenging national wrong.”\(^2\)

This is a study of print, crisis, and identity.

The period from 1688 to 1707 was one of extraordinary upheaval in Scotland, characterized by succession disputes, rebellion, economic downturn, crop failures and

\(^1\) Leith served as the main port town for Edinburgh at the time, and is only a short distance north from the city center.

famine, trade wars, failed colonial ventures, and repeated attempts to unify Scotland and England. This thesis argues that it was in these tumultuous two decades, bracketed by the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689 and the Union of 1707, that a sense of Scottish national identity began to emerge. More specifically, I will be analyzing how this identity formation can be seen in—and was propagated by—the concurrent popular print culture, the output of which dramatically spiked during this time of crisis and controversy.

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The Scottish national identity revealed over the course of this thesis might appear rather foreign to the modern reader. Many of the symbols and historical narratives that we now associate with Scottish identity and culture—such as the kilt, tartans, the bagpipes, or the narrative of William Wallace as freedom fighter—were only “developed after, sometimes long after, the Union with England against which it is, in a sense, a protest.” Indeed, much of the distinctive Scottish symbolism we know today claims an ancient Highland past, yet “the entire concept of a distinct Highland culture and tradition is a retrospective invention.” Thus, prior to the late 18th century, most of the symbols and traditions we consider “Scottish” either did not yet exist or were mainly only present in the Highlands. This decoupling of Highland and Lowland cultures is not merely a historical concept, however. Scots themselves

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3 Throughout this study, I will be using phrases such as “national identity,” “conceptions of nationhood,” etc. fairly interchangeably for the sake of variety. I am aware that “national consciousness” has somewhat different connotations and therefore will refrain using it unless apt.


5 Ibid.
were likely to understand the distinction in the 17th and early 18th centuries—often even more likely to employ it than Englishmen. Imagined or not, the Highland-Lowland divide was real enough to Scots at the time, and it demonstrates just how little they saw in common with one another. Lowlanders, for their part, largely saw Highlanders as backwards and uncivilized savages, stigmatized further by perceived Catholic and Jacobite sympathies despite the sizeable Protestant presence in the Highlands.

Neil Davidson has pointed to this as a roadblock to early modern Scottish national identity formation, asking, “How could this triangular field of hostility between the Highlander, Lowlander, and the English be overcome sufficiently for the first two to consider themselves Scots?” But the premise of his question is erroneous. Rather than abiding by Scotland’s geographical boundaries, we should instead pay closer attention to the cultural boundaries that Scots at the time acknowledged and understood. Thus, if Scottish Lowlanders already had conceptions of an “us” and “them” in relation to the Highlanders and English in the early modern period, I have taken this as a cue to narrow the geographical scope of my inquiry.

It is for this reason that I have chosen to focus mainly on Edinburgh Scots and their conceptions of Scottish nationhood in this study. Although not representative of the Lowlands as a whole, Edinburgh’s status as the locus of Lowland culture and

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6 Murray Pittock, “To see ourselves as others see us: The Scot in English eyes since 1707,” European Journal English Studies (13:3, 2009), 295.
7 Neil Davidson, The Origins of Scottish Nationhood (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 75-76. As a cruel example of eighteenth century wit at the expense of Highlanders, Davidson cites a 1711 letter from Jonathon Swift, author of Gulliver’s Travels, to his wife expressing “his astonishment at finding two Highlanders actually acquainted with table manners.”
8 Ibid., 78.
Scotland’s capital and its total dominance of Scotland’s print output make the city the prime subject for this study. It is my hope, though, that this thesis might provide a template for a similar investigation into possible Highland conceptions of national identity in this period. While the available print culture source material would no doubt be leaner, I imagine such a study would not only be possible but also quite informative. Another benefit of my approach is that it shifts Jacobitism, which will be discussed in more detail throughout this thesis, away from the center of investigation. A large and excellent body of scholarly work already exists on the Jacobites, but their role in post-Revolutionary Scottish affairs can be overemphasized. Because Stuart sympathies were weakest in the southeast of Scotland, a focus on Edinburgh allows us to more easily discern other conceptions of Scottish national identity.

Chapter Outline

In order to better understand the development of Scottish national identity, I am focusing on a series of significant national events that occurred throughout the period 1688-1707, rather than a totally comprehensive study of this timeframe. With each event—or what I have termed “crisis point”—intricately linked to the others, however, this punctuated approach is nonetheless exceptionally thorough, while helping to quicken the pace of the narrative. In the chapters that follow, I will examine each of these crisis points in turn.

First, however, Chapter I serves to provide relevant historical context and to act as an exposition of our main setting: early modern Edinburgh. I felt this necessary,

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as the histories of both early modern Scotland and printing will no doubt be unfamiliar to many of my readers. Therefore, in this chapter, one can find historical background, an overview of early modern Scottish demographics, and the techniques, trade, and politics of early modern printing in Scotland.

Chapter II is somewhat unique among the crisis point chapters in that I saw fit to include more than one crisis: the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689 and the Glencoe Massacre in 1692. If the reader will forgive me, the reason is simply one of organizational convenience. The Revolution and the resulting Settlement that allowed William of Orange and Mary to ascend the Scottish throne is vitally important to the development of Scottish national attitudes prior to Union. By redefining the relationships between monarch and subject and between England and Scotland, the Revolution at once introduced rhetoric that would be used to construct a national identity, and yet also brought Union closer to fruition by revealing the untenability of the British multiple monarchy (discussed in the next chapter).

I also argue that the Revolution is the source of two competing conceptions of Scottish national identity: a Jacobite understanding based on allegiance to the deposed Stuart dynasty and rule of law and a Revolutionary understanding rooted in the Settlement’s primacy of parliamentary and national sovereignty. I have not seen this argued elsewhere. It is mainly the Revolutionary national identity that we see in Lowland print culture, and thus, unless explicitly mentioned, “national identity” and other such phrases will typically refer to the Revolutionary conception. The Glencoe Massacre, on the other hand is a fascinating crisis point: a Highland tragedy that is
co-opted by Lowland Scots, and, through a parliamentary inquiry and popular print, is employed when convenient to the Revolutionary narrative.

In Chapters III and IV, we see Scottish national identity actively expressed in the form of patriotism and enthusiastic support for Scottish overseas ventures. Chapter III examines the ways in which the directors of the Company of Scotland appealed to a sense of national identity in order to garner unprecedented financial support for a colony on the Darien isthmus in Panama between 1695 and 1700. It was viewed as a national endeavor and likewise, when this attempt failed and left Scotland in dire financial shape, Scots believed it to be a national tragedy.

Chapter IV, which most directly builds off of an earlier term paper of mine, investigates in more depth the Worcester incident with which I opened. The hanging of Captain Green and his men can be directly traced to a Scottish desire to avenge the Darien colony’s demise. The popular print output covering the trial and fate of Green and company is staggering, capturing the extent to which this story was followed. It is clear that Scots in 1705 understood this to be an extension of greater Anglo-Scottish tensions.

Finally, Chapter V examines the Union of 1707 itself and the public debates surrounding it. Pamphlets, broadsides, and the like brought high-level politics into the taverns and streets of Edinburgh. Anglophobia and questions of sovereignty especially pervade the Edinburgh popular print, while pamphlets from London often found their way north to antagonize or appeal to the Scots.

After a brief Conclusion, the Epilogue concludes this project nearer to the present day, at the tercentenary of Union in 2007. It is fascinating the extent to which
contemporary British and Scottish politics are historically informed, and with crises such as Brexit and Scottish independence, it is not difficult to see why the period 1688-1707 continues to be used by politicians to tie their agenda to the deep British past. An entire thesis could no doubt be written simply expounding upon the historical memory of this period and its effects on modern British politics; I only regret it cannot be this one.

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It is a common dilemma for the historian: how best to preface one’s work with the appropriate amount of context? Historical causes and effects simply cannot be confined to an author’s chosen timeframe, yet we as historians must make sense of the massive tapestry of history by only tugging on just a few of its loose threads. As historian David Daiches introduces his own work on the Union: “A full explanation of how the Union of Scotland and England came about in 1707 would require a full history of Scotland up to that date,” while “a full account of the consequences of the Union would require an equally complete account…since 1707.”\textsuperscript{10} While I do not find it necessary to author quite so comprehensive a narrative, I am compelled to begin my study roughly a century prior to this work’s stated timeframe, when England and Scotland were first joined in a union of a different, much looser kind than that of 1707…

Chapter I.

Historical and Print Culture Background

The Union of the Crowns

When Elizabeth I of England died in March 1603, the Virgin Queen had made secret provisions for her cousin, James VI of Scotland, to succeed her as monarch of England. Already king of Scotland since 1567 when he was practically an infant, James thus became James I of England and Ireland—uniting the three kingdoms of the British Isles under his person, though they in most other respects remained distinct and sovereign. This may be deeply confusing to the modern reader, whose modern world is dominated by the “principle of nationality” and the nation-state. In early modern Europe, however, this model of governance was not only possible but was indeed a very common method of state building: “sixteenth-century Europe was a Europe of composite states” according to J. H. Elliott. Elliott cites the seventeenth-century Spanish jurist Juan de Solórzano Pereira’s definitions of two types of union: an “accessory [or incorporating] union” and a union “aeque principaliter.” The former denotes a union whereby “a kingdom or province, on union with another, was regarded juridically [sic.] as part and parcel of it,” while the latter is a union of two kingdoms that continue “to be treated as distinct entities, preserving their own laws, fueros [codes] and privileges.” In the context of the British Isles, England’s acquisition and assimilation of Wales in the 1530s and 1540s resembles an

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13 Elliott, 52.
14 Elliott, 52-53.
incorporating union, while the Union of the Crowns that James’s English rule began typifies a union *aeque principaliter*.

The composite, or multiple, monarchy proved an effective way for rulers to maintain control over disparate and culturally or ethnically distinct lands. Britons could look to myriad examples throughout Europe at the time, such as Brandenburg-Prussia, Poland-Lithuania, and the unified Iberian kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Leon, and Catalonia, and for some time Portugal. Despite these typically successful examples and James’s lengthy experience as king of Scotland, therefore, he demonstrated what many English politicians at the time saw as considerable naiveté in proposing an incorporating union between Scotland and England when he finally reached London and opened parliament in March 1607.

Upon taking the English throne, James hoped to raise enthusiasm for his “perfect union” through royal pageantry and symbolism. He unilaterally styled himself “King of Great Brittaine, France and Ireland,” combining much older English claims to France and Ireland with new his unionist rhetoric—much to the chagrin of

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16 James took considerable time assembling his belongings and court before leaving Scotland for England. His journey south to London also lasted months as he stopped all along the way to meet with his new English subjects. Once he arrived in southern England in late 1606, plague in the city prevented him from entering, and prevented the English parliament from opening, until early 1607. It was then that he first officially addressed his new kingdom, and declared his wish for an incorporating union.
17 James VI and I, “His Majesty’s Speech to both the Houses of [the English] Parliament” (London, 31 March 1607).
the English Parliament. Before even arriving in London, he began redesigning a distinctly “British” flag, ultimately settling on the design that later came to be known as the Union Jack and which in an updated form still flies over Britain. Figure 1 shows several other design proposals, all of which were ultimately rejected due to various heraldic reasons. He also minted new coinage that acted as what one might call metal propaganda for the economic and political union he sought (see Figure 2). Although he was able to fix the exchange rate between English and Scottish pounds at twelve Scottish pounds to one English pound and made Scottish coin legal tender in England, little else came of an economic union. After arriving in London in 1607, he had commissioned a joint Anglo-Scottish committee to discuss the terms of a closer union, but due to foot-dragging on both sides, the group accomplished little. Thus, little real change resulted from the 1607 discussions, and by 1610 James’s speeches show his adaptation to the sobering realities of London politics—effectively walking back most of his unionist rhetoric.

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The Latin inscription reads ‘Nemo Separate Quae Deus Coniunxit,’ a phrase from the gospel of Matthew meaning ‘Let no one separate what God has put together.’ The phrase had particular potency as it was used in marriage ceremonies, and James often used marriage and other organic metaphors to explain his desire for closer union between Scotland and England.
Nevertheless, the Union of the Crowns marks an important milestone in British history. Scotland and England may have remained sovereign for nearly another century, but Scotland—along with the rest of the British Isles—was from thereon firmly locked in the political orbit of London. As historian Jenny Wormald puts it:

The Union of the Crowns was not simply the bringing together of two kingdoms, although that was how it was described, but the addition of another kingdom to the multiple kingdoms of England and Ireland, with the dependency of Wales thrown in.\(^{22}\)

With the addition of a northern kingdom fiercely defensive of its sovereignty, the unified Stuart monarchy forced the English to confront the fact that “Britain might be something other than an enlarged England.”\(^{23}\) Crises throughout the seventeenth century continually jeopardized the workability of the multiple monarchy, particularly the Wars of the Three Kingdoms (1639-1651) and Cromwell’s ensuing brief rule as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth during the 1650s, which saw an incorporating union of the entire British archipelago. In 1660, the Commonwealth was dissolved and the Stuart monarchy restored under Charles II, who ruled until his death in 1685 after which his brother ruled as James II and VII. Strained as it may have been, though, Britain’s multiple monarchy was finally dealt irreparable damage by the Glorious Revolution in 1688, which will be discussed in far greater detail in the next chapter.


Early Modern Edinburgh

Population and Language

Scotland’s was a rather scattered and sparse population relative to the rest of the early modern British Isles, let alone continental Europe. In 1700, it is estimated that the kingdom numbered no more than 1.2 million people, compared to England’s 5 million and Ireland’s 2 million. These figures are necessarily approximate, as regular and accurate censuses in Britain only date back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. What these numbers do demonstrate, though, is the demographic dominance of England in the British Isles—particularly the archipelago’s demographic center, London. While the English capital was home to perhaps 550,000 people in 1700 (likely already Europe’s largest city by this time), Edinburgh’s greater area had a population of at most 47,000.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland was linguistically split along a remarkably distinct Lowland-Highland divide. For much of the kingdom’s history, Gaelic had been “the medium through which information was communicated in the governmental, cultural and symbolic systems of the Scottish State.” English began to make inroads during the Middle Ages, during which time the much-debated “Scots”—a kind of dialect of English with distinct enough vocabulary that some consider it to be a different language—came to be spoken among Lowlanders, and

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“many Lowland Scots were bilingual in Scots and Gaelic in the Middle Ages.”\textsuperscript{27} By 1500, however, English had come to dominate the Lowlands, while the more isolated and independent Highlanders retained their Gaelic tongue.\textsuperscript{28} In fact, “for the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries the story is one of attempts to extirpate Gaelic and Catholic traces from Scottish society.”\textsuperscript{29} Print culture in particularly was used as an engine of marginalization and Anglicization—the first Gaelic bible was not even printed in Scotland, but in North America.\textsuperscript{30} While this war on Highland culture raged, Edinburgh Scots were speaking, reading, and especially printing in English.

Literacy

Because Scotland’s center of population skewed distinctly southward, English had become the main language of speech and certainly of printing by 1688. As Kenneth Levine puts it, “the Early Modern Period is best seen as a transitional phase between a predominantly oral medieval culture and the extensive literacy of post-industrial Britain” because, “the mass production of books (and, perhaps more importantly, ephemera) disseminated print sufficiently widely to alter profoundly

\textsuperscript{27} David Daiches, \textit{Scotland and the Union} (London: John Murray Limited, 1977), 5. Scots is still spoken in Scotland today and many Scots phrases permeate the culture. Its classification as a dialect of English or as its own distinct language is still hotly contested. Perhaps most famously, the Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote many of his verses in Scots during the later eighteenth century.
\textsuperscript{28} Mann, 76.
\textsuperscript{29} Mann, 77.
even the oral cultures in which the illiterate participated.”31 Early modern literacy is extremely difficult to quantify, and while there is much scholarship on the subject, data on “Britain” is almost exclusively confined to England.32 Works focused squarely on Scottish literacy are far more scant, with the somewhat controversial work of Rab Houston omnipresent in the historiography.

During the nineteenth century, as British lawmakers became increasingly determined to raise literacy and education levels, a history of Scottish former superiority in these areas began to take shape. According to this narrative, while the Scots were a “half-educated nation” in the nineteenth century, it was not always the case.33 Quite the contrary, according to Sir John Sinclair, who wrote in an 1826 report that, “in former times, the commons of Scotland were considered to be the most enlightened people of that rank in Europe.”34 While this fact may have been taken for granted during the nineteenth century, Rab Houston has more recently disputed this narrative. By analyzing the court document signatures over decades from across mainly Lowland Scotland, Houston’s figures estimated Lowland literacy to be around 65% in 1750—fairly average by that period’s standards.35

32 Many excellent works on literacy in early modern and modern England exist, and they do provide general insight into trends in the British Isles, but English trends can only be used to approximate Scottish literacy in the most general sense.
33 George Lewis, *Scotland a Half-Educated Nation, Both in the Quantity and Quality of Her Educational Institutions* (1834).
34 Sir John Sinclair, *Analysis of The statistical account of Scotland; with a general view of the history of that country, and discussions on some important branches of political economy* (1826), 83.
As T. C. Smout (among others) has noted, though, the ability of a person to write their name says remarkably little about their literacy.\textsuperscript{36} Indeed, writing and reading were far more independent skills in early modern Europe—far from the nearly symbiotic relationship they have today. Signing one’s name and being able to write much else were separate skills; and the capability to read and understand a pamphlet or road sign quite another. Crucially, high reading literacy but fairly low writing literacy appeared to be commonplace in northern Europe at this time. Eighteenth-century Swedes had an 80% reading literacy rate but only 5-20% could read, while a similar trend appears in Denmark.\textsuperscript{37} Although many of these figures are from slightly later than this study’s timeframe, they present a fairly clear understanding of early modern European literacy. Reading, particularly in urban areas and towns like Edinburgh, was fairly commonplace even if writing was a rarer skill.

In the case of southeast Scotland, this was in part due to education and in part due to occupational necessity. By 1700, all the parishes in the region had schools, and Karen Bowie estimates incredibly high literacy among “urban middling sorts:” 95% of Edinburgh tradesmen and craftsmen in the first decade of the eighteenth century and 77% among those groups in the city’s outlying areas.\textsuperscript{38} These demographics were very likely among those to be reading the popular print materials of the day, but not the only ones. It should be noted, though, that Bowie is also using signatures as her metric of literacy, and so these numbers can be no more than a guide. Still, because of

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 569.
the ubiquity of schools in the region and the fact that reading was taught before writing, Bowie believes reading literacy was also quite high among much of the Edinburgh population.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{Printing Technology}

The importance of the early modern printing press, invented by German printer Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-fifteenth century, cannot be overstated. Vastly more efficient than transcription by scribes or earlier woodblock print methods, the movable-type printing press thrust the written word from secluded abbeys and monasteries into the hands of millions of people across Europe. Within just a few centuries, it revolutionized the way information was spread and consumed. Until the invention of the steam-powered press in the early nineteenth-century, printing technology remained remarkably unchanged. Thus, printers in late seventeenth-century Edinburgh were using presses very similar to the one Gutenberg perfected centuries earlier.\textsuperscript{40} Before setting the scene of Edinburgh’s print culture, however, it seems fitting to give a brief overview of just how these print materials would have been manufactured at the time—a time-intensive craft likely not familiar to many readers.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39} Bowie, 21.
\textsuperscript{40} Mann, 214.
Figure 4. “New Inventions of Modern Times [Nova Reperta], The Invention of
Book Printing,” plate 4 Jan van der Stræt, called Stradanus, ca. 1600
(Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

The print above depicts a fascinating scene of an early-modern print shop and
the labor involved with the trade. Likely produced c. 1600, the print, called
“Invention of Book Printing,” was part of a collection of plates entitled Nova Reperta
(New Inventions of Modern Times) by Dutch artist Joannes Stradanus, who sought to
illustrate what he considered some of the most important inventions of the
Renaissance. The first step of the printing process, which can be seen on the left of
the print, was for workers called “compositers” to set the metal type for the pages one
row at a time. Then a pressman would place a page’s worth of type (locked into a
tightened frame called a “form”) into the press and vigorously apply ink to the type
using two large ink balls. This action can be seen to the rear-center of the image. Givenberg had developed an oil- and soot-based ink adapted to his press so that it would stick to the metal type, and this was still in use during the seventeenth century.

Next, another pressman, also called the “puller,” would place a sheet of paper onto the face of a leather sheet called a “tympan” strung over a frame with tacks used for aligning the paper when printing on the reverse side. Then, sliding all of this under the “platen,” the puller pulls on the handle (action shown on the right), turning the screw, and forcing the platen down. This applies pressure to create the impression of the inked type onto the paper. Finally, as shown front-center, print shops often hired proofreaders to ensure quality and to avoid misprints before printing large quantities with a typeset.  

Print Culture

As the kingdom’s political and cultural capital, as well as its largest town, Edinburgh seemed a natural place for an early modern printer to set up shop in Scotland. Indeed, when Walter Chepman and Andro Myllar established Scotland’s first printing press in 1507, they did so in Edinburgh.  

The establishment of Scotland’s first press comes later than much of the rest of western and central Europe, as printing had already begun throughout Germany, Italy, Spain and France by the end of the fifteenth century. But printing had begun spreading to Scandinavia at roughly the same time as its 1507 introduction to Scotland, and would not be established in much of eastern Europe for several more decades.
printed English goods.\textsuperscript{44} Despite only composing roughly 4\% of Scotland’s population, Edinburgh appears to have accounted for nearly 90\% of the kingdom’s press output (including books, single sheets, and pamphlets) during the last decade of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{45}

This is not to minimize the printing that was taking place elsewhere in Scotland. By the early seventeenth century, other prominent burghs (towns) like Aberdeen, St Andrews, and Glasgow also had printers. The burghs and colleges often hired official printers for their own needs, such as printing town records or college theses. Occasionally, other towns would even lure away well-known Edinburgh printers with more enticing salaries. One press in particular, the Anderson press, moved back and forth between Edinburgh and Glasgow no less than five times in the years 1637-1661.\textsuperscript{46} Still, Edinburgh was most certainly the hub of Scotland’s printing culture. The Andersons found this to be the case: once established more permanently in Edinburgh from 1661 onward, their press became a pillar of the Scottish printing scene well into the eighteenth century. The typical printing license permitted a licensee to, “print, reprint, vend, sell and import.”\textsuperscript{47} Therefore, most printers at this time also operated bookstores near their shops.

Although printing was introduced to Edinburgh in 1507, it was not until the mid-seventeenth century that printing really began to take off there. And from the Restoration in 1660 onward, a steady and marked increase in print output can be noted, reaching by far the highest levels to that point during the last decade of the

\textsuperscript{44} Alastair Mann, 215.
\textsuperscript{45} Mann, 215.
\textsuperscript{46} Mann, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{47} Mann, 95.
seventeenth and first decade of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{48} In 1661, Andrew Anderson moved his printing business—which he had inherited from his father George in 1647—back to the Scottish capital. Firmly established there by 1671, Anderson received the appointment of king’s, or royal, printer. Since Chepman and Myllar’s press in 1507, there had been a fairly continuous occupation of this station.\textsuperscript{49} With the appointment came a near-monopolistic stranglehold over Edinburgh printing, covering most items like government decrees and minutes, religious texts such as bibles and prayer books, and etc. The royal printer was permitted sell off or delegate duties to their partners or assignees, and the title could be inherited. Specifically, Anderson was granted the right as “his Majesties…onlie sole and principall printer” in Edinburgh for forty-one years.\textsuperscript{50}

One main reason for this late-seventeenth century print explosion is the loosening of this monopoly: “From almost the onset of the Anderson gift of 1671, the courts proceeded, step by faltering step, to strain the king’s printer in the interests of greater liberty of trade.”\textsuperscript{51} Although Anderson’s monopoly could be, and was, enforced by the city council, often times illegal printing was tolerated or even encouraged by new appointments from the king that blurred the legality of a printer’s actions. For example, James II and VII appointed James Watson, the elder, as “printer to his family and household” 1685-1687, and in 1687 he appointed one Peter Bruce as printer of almanacs.\textsuperscript{52} Even prior to becoming king, James, then Duke of York,

\textsuperscript{48} Mann, 215.
\textsuperscript{49} See chronological list of royal printers: Mann, 116.
\textsuperscript{50} Mann, 120.
\textsuperscript{51} Mann, 122.
\textsuperscript{52} Mann, 119-120.
granted David Lindsay the ill-defined post of “Typographi Ordinarii,” which the Edinburgh council used to reduce the powers of the Anderson monopoly, now under control of Anderson’s widow Agnes Campbell.\textsuperscript{53} Even before the expiry of the Anderson patent in 1712, Campbell contended with competitors—most notably James Watson, the younger, who himself gained the appointment with two partners in 1712.\textsuperscript{54} As national crises arose and Edinburgh Scots became increasingly engaged with current events, it grew difficult for Campbell to maintain her monopoly, even with law on her side.

The well-connected Watson was a powerful rival for Campbell in pamphlet and book printing, and in 1699 he went even further by bringing newspapers to Edinburgh, founding and printing the \textit{Edinburgh Gazette} with James Donaldson as editor. In 1705, he also began printing the capital’s second newspaper, the \textit{Edinburgh Courant}.\textsuperscript{55} His work is well known for being of high quality. One of the many disputes between himself and Campbell involved his printing the New Testament in direct violation of her monopoly, his main argument for doing so: that her copies were filled with errors.\textsuperscript{56} In a letter to the Privy Council, Campbell—referred to as “Mrs. Anderson” in the records—complains of this exact instance, frustrated that despite her granted monopoly, “James Watson, Printer in Edinburgh, hath for many Years been printing many Books, which he has no Privilege to Print.”\textsuperscript{57} Alongside the dueling Anderson and Watson presses, other printers such as John Reid, George

\textsuperscript{53} Mann, 120.
\textsuperscript{54} Mann, 120-121.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} NAS GD248/634/6 no.18.
Jaffray, and still others fill out the printing cast in Edinburgh during the period 1688-1707. That is to say, the politics and operations of print in early modern Edinburgh formed a far more complex mosaic than it might at first appear.

Censorship

The Scottish took a powerful hand in policing printed work in Edinburgh, as parliamentary minutes show countless times pamphlets or books deemed anti-government were ordered for public burning. From the Restoration to the Glorious Revolution, the government was able to keep a tight check on publishing, but this changed with the sharp rise in production in 1690s. From thereon, the government focused mainly on controlling blasphemous writing: in 1697 the Scottish government issued an act requiring political and religious works to be reviewed before publishing, and this was renewed again in 1699. The authors and printers, too, were typically punished. For instance, James Watson was banished from the capital for one year in 1700, while a 1701 crackdown on Jacobite sympathizers in the print industry resulted in the shuttering of John Reid and George Jaffray’s press and the arrest of Reid.

Censorship of pamphlets and books was somewhat relaxed beginning in 1703, but Scottish newspapers remained subject to governmental oversight. Thus, Edinburgh newspapers for the most part lacked the colorful political commentary found in London periodicals of the time. This is no doubt one reason London publications still routinely found their way to Edinburgh, despite the city’s own bustling print

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58 Mann, 188-189.
59 Bowie, 49.
60 Bowie, 50.
61 Bowie, 51.
62 Bowie, 52.
culture. Additionally, as we will see in later chapters, printers often pushed their legal boundaries in times of crisis—when Parliament’s attention was turned to more pressing national matters.
Chapter II.

Crisis Point: The Early Reign of William & Mary

Unlike the “crisis point” chapters to follow, this chapter examines two very intertwined crises that are paramount to understanding how Edinburgh Scots began to think about national identity. The first, the Glorious Revolution, dramatically redefined the relationship between subject and monarch. Without first understanding this, we cannot begin to examine how Scots came to understand themselves in the decades leading up to Union. Indeed, it spawned two competing conceptions of Scottish nationhood: Jacobite and Revolutionary understandings of Scottishness; and throughout this chapter, we see the interplay between them.

The Glencoe Massacre, a direct result of the Revolution’s untidy execution in the fringes of the British Isles, was perhaps the first major test of this new relationship and demonstrated the limitations of early modern Scottish nationhood. After a brief historiographical overview and background on the Revolution’s causes and effects in England, we move on to the Scottish experience before transitioning into the narratives constructed around the Glencoe Massacre and how the legacy of the massacre marred William’s reputation in his northern kingdom.

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Revolution Historiography

The Glorious Revolution that swept a Dutchman and his Stuart wife into power in Britain is an exceptionally well-covered topic by English, Dutch, and revolutionary historians. Yet, the kingdom in which the deposed James may well have had the most support is remarkably glossed over in these accounts. As recently as the
1970s, historian Robert Paul Burns lamented the lack of scholarship on Scotland’s role in the Glorious Revolution. And although the 1988 tercentenary renewed historical interest in the subject, the Revolution in Scotland remains surprisingly understudied.

This is at least in part due to the paralyzing historiography of the “Bloodless Revolution.” In England, it has been possible for the Revolution to be remembered as such—a highly civilized and bloodless eviction of a monarch who had violated the social contract. Indeed, the first person to describe the Revolution as “glorious” was an English MP in 1689. For Whig historians—who typically view history as an inevitable march towards greater liberty and enlightened governance—the Glorious Revolution is understandably a watershed. Lord Macaulay’s seminal five-volume work The History of England from the Accession of James the Second (1848) is truly stunning historical writing, but nevertheless does not venture beyond the confines of its author’s whiggish dogma. In 1938, G. M. Trevelyan’s The English Revolution, 1688-1689 acquainted a new generation of historians with the Whig interpretation of the Glorious Revolution:

The ultimate view that we take of the Revolution of 1688 must be determined by our preference either for royal absolutism or for parliamentary government. James II forced England to choose once for all between these two.

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64 Eveline Cruickshanks, editor, By Force or By Default? The Revolution of 1688-1689 (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1989), ii.  
For Whig historians, then, the Revolution’s glory derives from its bloodlessness and the triumph of parliamentary supremacy.

Fortunately, much work has been done since then to reassess and revise histories of 1688. Historians such as Eveline Cruikshanks and Murray Pittock have carved out a field for Jacobite studies, while others like Robert Beddard, John Miller, and J. G. A. Pocock have revealed the rich, colorful complexities of the event by throwing off the shackles of Whig teleology. We can now better appreciate that the Revolution was not, in fact, bloodless—full-scale war Jacobites and Williamites raged in Ireland for years and a 1689 rebellion by the Viscount Dundee in support of James garnered thousands of followers before being stamped out by government forces.

While the Revolution was being coordinated in London and The Hague, Edinburgh and Dublin were given little choice.

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The Glorious Revolution: Causes

The Stuart multiple monarchy in Britain had already come under significant strain by February 1685, but as Charles II drew his final breath on the sixth of that month a new crisis was looming. Because Charles had no legitimate heirs, his deeply controversial brother James, Duke of York, was next in line for the throne. Although Charles had repeatedly been accused of Catholic sympathies during his reign, he converted only on his deathbed. In contrast, James had converted as a young adult

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and had nearly been excluded from the line of succession because of it during the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-1681. Protestants in both Scotland and England therefore embraced their new king tepidly, skeptical of his intentions.

Charles had ensured that James’s two daughters, Mary and Anne, were raised Protestant; and it appears most in Britain, including James himself, believed he would not sire a son—allowing Mary to succeed him. There were fears among Protestants that he might alter the succession in order to secure a Catholic successor, but in a letter to a Catholic advisor James makes clear this was never his intention: “not only could it never enter my head to think of changing it, but I know well that it is not in my power to do it…His Almighty power alone can dispose of it.” Thus when James took the throne in 1685, a return to the Protestant Stuart line after his death seemed inevitable. Because of this, historian John Miller argues there was little threat of open rebellion—although James’s goals for religious toleration, namely repealing the Test Acts (which barred Catholics from taking public office) and the penal laws (which banned Catholic worship and education), were unpopular.

None were perhaps more interested in preserving this current line of succession than William III of Orange, Mary’s husband. Since their marriage in 1677, William “had long entertained a hope of inheriting the [English] throne.” As most

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67 Interestingly, the Exclusion Crisis, during which the English House of Commons repeatedly attempted to pass bills barring James from the Stuart succession, was a major contributor to the rise of the English two-party system. While the Whigs had been in favor of exclusion, the Tories opposed it.

68 James II to the Marquis of Albeville, 29 March 1687. (Doc. 3 Appendix of Miller).

69 Miller, 4-10.

marriages among royalty at the time were, his was a strategic move to increase his influence in Britain, and it was assumed that he would be the one in control when they acceded the throne.\textsuperscript{71}

Expectations of a quick return to a Protestant succession were upended in December 1687, however, when the palace announced James’s queen was pregnant. Protestants were convinced the Catholic court would stop at nothing to ensure it was a boy. Mary and Anne were especially convinced their father “was trying to rob them and that they must intervene” in order to secure their places in the line of succession.\textsuperscript{72} William was also troubled by the news, and his views towards invading England—which Protestant nobles had been urging him to do for some time now—altered substantially.\textsuperscript{73} According to biographer Stephen Baxter, William had been content to await the death of James, who by this time had become quite sickly, but the pregnancy seems to have forced his hand in order to protect both his claim to the throne and the Protestant cause.\textsuperscript{74}

Catholic hopes and Protestant fears were realized when a healthy James Francis Edward was born in June 1688, and rumors about the child’s legitimacy continued to swirl. Now faced with the real possibility of a Catholic dynasty into the

\begin{footnotesize}
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    \item \textsuperscript{72} Baxter, 229.
    \item \textsuperscript{73} Baxter, 230.
    \item \textsuperscript{74} Baxter, 231-233.
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\end{footnotesize}
foreseeable future, seven Protestant nobles—five Whigs and two Tories—wrote to William, “inviting” him to invade England.75 This time, he accepted.

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Before examining Scottish involvement, it is first imperative to briefly mention the Revolution’s unfolding in England, as comparison between the two experiences of Revolution is useful. For England, the Revolution began in November of 1688, when William and Mary landed at Torbay in the southwest with an army of over twenty thousand men, backed by a powerful naval force. Within weeks, support for James had crumbled. In December, the monarch and his family fled into exile in France, where his cousin and ally Louis XIV welcomed him. Because of James’s flight, matters became complicated. He had neither abdicated nor appointed a regent, and without a monarch an official session of Parliament could not be convened. In January 1689, then, a provisional Convention Parliament was called in London, although its “status and actions were, strictly speaking, illegal.”76 The Revolution Settlement, however, was a product of political expediency rather than strict legality.

After much debate, it was determined that James had “abdicated” his throne, leaving it vacant, and the Convention Parliament offered William and Mary a joint crown with an accompanying Declaration of Rights. This was a victory for William: upon his insistence, he had been given sole executive authority in the joint

75 The five Whigs were: Charles Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury; William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire; Richard Lumley, Viscount Lumley; Edward Russell; and Henry Sydney.
The two Tories were Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, and Henry Compton, Bishop of London.
monarchy.\textsuperscript{77} Even more, though, the Settlement was a Whig triumph. By offering the crown to a monarch on the condition of accepting the Declaration of Rights, true constitutional monarchy had come to England. The Declaration of Rights, put into law later that year as the Bill of Rights: barred Catholics from the throne, named Anne next in line, and limited the Crown’s power by spelling out certain individual rights, among other things.\textsuperscript{78} From 1689, sovereignty rested with “the Crown in Parliament.”

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The Revolution in Scotland

In Scotland, the events of 1688 in England had been observed with marked ambivalence. It was not until the flight of James in December, historian Ian Cowen argues, that Scots considered becoming involved in the Revolution.\textsuperscript{79} And only on 14 March 1689 did a Convention of Estates finally convene in Edinburgh—nearly a month after the Convention Parliament had offered William and Mary the throne in England. Once they picked up the revolutionary banner, however, the Scots did so with surprising zeal. Fully aware of events in London, the Convention of Estates showed itself to be a more radical body than its English counterpart, at the outset declaring its legality as Scotland’s government:

\textsuperscript{77} W.A. Speck, “William—and Mary?,” Lois G. Schwoere, editor, \textit{The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 135. In fact, Mary was also in favor of this, and informally ceded most authority to William out of devotion to her husband and her reluctance to sit on the throne of her deposed father.

\textsuperscript{78} English Bill of Rights

“they are a Free and Lawful Meeting of the Estates, and will continue undissolved, until they Settle and secure the Protestant Religion, the Government, Laws, and Liberties of the Kingdom.”

When first convened, the Convention had actually been composed of almost equal numbers of Jacobites and Williamites. Unlike the staunch and moderate Tories alike who remained as a vocal opposition in the English Convention, however, most Jacobites walked out of the Scottish Convention early on—instead following the Viscount Dundee to raise a rebel army. Left as a mainly unopposed congregation of Williamites, the Convention became naturally predisposed to a more radical agenda.

This led to a significant difference in how the Scots interpreted James’s flight in the Revolution Settlement, which in Scotland consisted of the Claim of Right and Articles of Grievances. Much of the Claim of Right mirrored its English equivalent, such as barring Catholics from the throne and ensuring individual liberties. While the English had agreed James had abdicated his throne, the Scottish Convention went further by declaring James had forfeited the Scottish throne in the Claim of Right, (emphasis added):

Therfor the Estates of the kingdom of Scotland Find and Declare That King James the Seventh being a profest papist Did assume the Regall power…and hath by the advyce of Evill and wicked Counsellors Invaded the fundamental Constitution of the Kingdome and altered it from a legall limited monarchy…and the violation of the lawes and liberties of the Kingdome inverting all the Ends of Government wherby he hath

80 “Act Declaring the Meeting of the Estates to be a free and lawful Meeting, March 16, 1689,” printed in The acts & orders of the meeting of the estates of the kingdom of Scotland holden and begun at Edinburgh, the 14th day of March, 1689 (Edinburgh: Heirs of Andrew Anderson, 1690).
81 Cowen, “The Reluctant Revolutionaries: Scotland in 1688,” in Eveline Cruickshanks, editor, By Force or Default?, 76-77.
forfaulted the right to the Croune and the throne is become vacant.\textsuperscript{82}

Unlike the English Convention, which had maintained the pretense of hereditary rule by use of the abdication clause, the Scots had thrown out the concept of divine right entirely: “given the circumstance of absentee kingship, the Scottish statement placed the rights of Scotland above those of personal monarchy.”\textsuperscript{83} This reassertion of Scottish sovereignty was instrumental in developing a Scottish sense of nationhood over the next two decades.

Other provisions in the Settlement, however, remind us of the limitations placed on this nascent national identity. In the Articles of Grievances, for example, the Convention complains of James’s “not taking an effectual course to repress the depredations and robberies by the Highland clans.”\textsuperscript{84} The Highlanders, still seen as brutish and apart from the Lowland nation, were certainly not included in any idea of Scottish nationhood at this time. The Claim of Right also restored the supremacy of the Scottish Kirk (the Presbyterian Church) over Episcopacy in Scotland, making the northern kingdom notably less tolerant of other Protestant denominations than England under William. With the Kirk supreme once more in Scotland, Scottish national identity had also become intertwined with Presbyterianism.

The Claim of Right and Articles of Grievances were passed in April 1689 and presented to William and Mary in London in May 1689, where a Scottish envoy

\textsuperscript{82} Scottish Claim of Right, 1689.
\textsuperscript{83} Burns, “Scotland and the Glorious Revolution of 1688,” 125.
\textsuperscript{84} Scottish Articles of Grievance, 1689.
administered the new coronation oath devised by the Convention. Once “reluctant revolutionaries,” the Scots were now building their own constitutional monarchy. While it may have been the case that, as historian Gordon Donaldson puts it, “the Revolution was made in England and imported into Scotland,” once imported the Scots created a unique Scottish Revolution that reflected their understanding of nationality and sovereignty.

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A Highland Crisis in a Lowland Context

After he and other Jacobite sympathizers walked out of the Convention in 1689, the Viscount Dundee was declared “a fugitive and a rebel” and it was then that he began recruiting a Jacobite army in the Highlands. The Scottish government placed a bounty on Dundee’s head, sure that Highland chiefs would turn on him for the reward, yet Dundee continued to garner support for his absent monarch. After several skirmishes, the Jacobites achieved a brilliant victory in July 1689 at Killiecrankie; however, it also ironically hobbled their cause in Scotland, as Dundee was killed in action. Fighting would continue for months after this battle, but it was mainly Dundee’s leadership and zeal that had given the Jacobite cause a chance in

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85 There are several interesting things to note within the coronation oath: “Empire of Scotland” etc.
89 For more on the tactics and unfolding of the battle, see: Roberts, Clan, King, and Covenant, 185-193.
Scotland. A Dr. Pitcairn penned the following dual elegy to Dundee and Stuart

Scotland in Edinburgh shortly after Dundee’s death:

Oh, last and best of Scots! who didn’t maintain
Thy Country’s freedom from a foreign reign;
New people fill the land, thou art gone,
New gods and temples, and new kings the throng.
Scotland and thou did in each other live;
Nor would’st thou her, nor could she thee survive.
Farewell, who dying didst support the state,
And could not fall but with thy country’s fate!90

Although it is clearly propaganda, this elegy nevertheless concisely captures the essence of the Jacobite cause.

While Dundee and the Jacobites represented only a fraction of the Scottish population, Jacobitism had nonetheless by this time emerged as a conception of Scottish national identity, in competition with the understanding of sovereignty that came with the Revolution Settlement. “As an international movement to restore a discarded dynasty,” Murray Pittock notes, “it was unusually strong and enduring.”91 He argues there were two main causes for this: first, that the Stuart claim to the throne was uniquely indisputable from a legal standpoint, and second, that the weakening of the Stuart multiple monarchy was an alienating feeling to many in Scotland and Ireland.92 Indeed, Jacobite ideology in Scotland appears, almost from the beginning, to have acquired a distinct anti-union component.93 In 1689, having just assumed the throne in England, William proposed Union in his letter to Scottish Convention as:

92 Pittock, 17-18.
93 Daiches, 42-43.
One of the best Means for procuring the Happiness of these Nations...they living on the same Island, having the same Language, and the same Common Interest of Religion and Liberty, especially at this Juncture, when the Enemies of both are so restless.\footnote{44}

The Convention did little to act on this invitation for Union, but the proposal betrays the extent to which his mind remained on the continent. For William, Union was an act of political expediency, as he aimed to quickly consolidate power in Britain in order to turn his attentions back towards Europe and his archrival Louis XIV. From then on, Jacobites associated William with unionism, “and after the Union was finally effected in 1707 this aspect of Jacobitism became even more pronounced.”\footnote{45}

Despite the collapse of organized resistance by 1690, the Highlands remained a hotbed of Jacobite activity. In August 1691, William proclaimed a pardon to all clans who had fought against him, provided their chiefs take an oath of allegiance to him by 1 January 1692.\footnote{46} Most chiefs had done so by the deadline, but those particularly loyal to James—such as Alasdair Macdonald of Glencoe, known at MacIain—awaited a letter from their monarch in exile granting permission to take the oath, and this letter did not arrive until December 1691.\footnote{47} Due to delays and bitter weather conditions, MacIain was not administered the oath until the 6\textsuperscript{th} of January.

The Secretary of State for Scotland, John Dalrymple, Master of Stair was determined

\footnote{44} “A Letter from William King of England, Directed for the Estates of the Kingdom of Scotland at their meeting at Edinburgh, March 16, 1689,” printed in \textit{The acts & orders of the meeting of the estates of the kingdom of Scotland holden and begun at Edinburgh, the 14th day of March, 1689} (Edinburgh: Heirs of Andrew Anderson, 1690).
\footnote{45} Daiches, 42-43.
\footnote{46} Daiches, 47.
\footnote{47} Daiches, 47.
to make an example of the Glencoe clan’s tardiness. His exact motives are unclear, but his decision was likely two-fold. He had demonstrated a distinct anger toward “papist clans,” and the Glencoe Macdonalds were among them. Additionally, Stair was a proponent of Union, and the pacification of the Highlands appeared a necessary step toward a more amenable joining of Scotland and England.

In February 1692, a detachment from the Earl of Argyll’s infantry under the command of Robert Campbell of Glenlyon was sent to Glencoe. The orders from Stair, which were signed by King William, were clear: “put all to the sword under seventy.” The troops billeted with the Macdonalds—which was commonly expected of Highland clans—and they welcomed the men into their village. Because of this, the massacre was seen as an especially heinous degree of murder in Scotland: “murder under trust.” On the morning of 13 February the troops killed 38 Macdonalds, including MacIain, and torched the village, letting reportedly dozens more die of exposure in the bitter Highland blizzard that had blown in.

While the operation had been conducted in secret, it did not take long for the news to cause a scandal. In March, the unit was quartered in Edinburgh and the remorseful Glenlyon was unable to keep tight-lipped in taverns around the city. Jacobite operatives in the Scottish capital obtained documents about the massacre and

102 Prebble, 251.
sent them at once to the Stuart court in exile in France, where it was published in the *Paris Gazette* in April.\(^{103}\)


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It caused little scandal, however, until three years later upon the publication of an inflammatory pamphlet *Gallienus Redivivus, or Murther Will Out, &c. Being a True Account of the De-Witting of Glencoe, Gaffney, &c.* by Charles Leslie, a Jacobite living in London with connections to the Scottish capital. Printed in Edinburgh in 1695, the pamphlet’s title is a play on the name of Johan de Witt, a Dutch leader whose death Leslie argues King William was involved in. Among the other charges Leslie levels at the monarch whose legitimacy he openly rejected was his complicity in the Glencoe Massacre. Typical of other Jacobite appeals, respect for rule of law is paramount in Leslie’s arguments. Thus, he writes that the King has imposed an unjust government in Scotland: “They dare not have a New Parliament but keep on the same Convention (only Changing the Name into that of a Parliament) to this day; Because no Free Parliament can be had in Scotland.”\(^{104}\) More than simply an accusation of William’s dubious involvement in Glencoe, then, the pamphlet served as an overall indictment of the post-Revolution government in Scotland.

It is not surprising that a Jacobite author would use this tragedy against him compatriots to garner support for his cause. What is perhaps more unexpected is that

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following the publication of this pamphlet, the Scottish government, which Leslie had called unfree, took action. A commission to find those responsible for the massacre was formed later that year, and its report was highly anticipated. Why would the Lowland-dominated Parliament leap to the defense of massacred Highland Jacobites three years after their deaths?

John Prebble argues this was a flexing of parliamentary muscle at a moment when the Parliament, “now stumbling toward extinction, had little real power, and that only in the voting of supplies.”\(^{105}\) This emplotment is deeply misleading, however, as Scots in 1695 were a world away from the Union of 1707. No negotiations were underway, and if anything, the two kingdoms were drifting further apart. What is more, Prebble’s argument is patently false—as we have seen, the Revolution Settlement granted the parliaments of both England and Scotland more power and independence. Rather than having no power, the Scottish Parliament was in fact more powerful in the 1690s than in the previous century.

Rather, it appears more likely that the mostly Williamite Parliament wished for an investigation in order to silence Jacobite criticism. If Parliament had known of William’s complicity, it’s certainly possible they would not have called for an investigation. For, once the truth was discovered, the investigation changed tack and the only result was Stair’s dismissal as Secretary of State.\(^{106}\) Having fully exonerated the King and instead pegging his chief agent in Scotland, Stair, as having exceeded his orders, Parliament seems not to have continued with such zeal. In other words, the


Massacre was dropped when it was no longer a useful political tool. Later in 1695, a petition from surviving Glencoe Macdonalds asking for recompense to rebuild their village was ignored.\(^{107}\) What is more, Stair was openly welcomed back into political life just a few years later—his dismissal was clearly for appearances. In fact, Stair would go on to be a member of the commission negotiating the terms of Union in 1706.\(^{108}\) It is no wonder that the Parliament had moved on: the founding of the Company of Scotland and its subscription campaign was to consume much of their time in 1695 and 1696.

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The Glorious Revolution in Scotland was a significantly disruptive event. Not only did it introduce new rhetoric that informed not one but two understandings of Scottish national identity, but it also threatened the multiple monarchy itself. It would become increasingly clear to officials in both London and Edinburgh that two sovereign parliaments under one king on the same island was simply an untenable situation. No event perhaps captures the deadly consequences of this more than the crisis point discussed in the next chapter: the Darien venture.


\(^{108}\) Prebble, 286.
Chapter III.

Crisis Point: The Darien Colony

As we have already seen, King William often played favorites when disputes between England and Scotland arose, while he subdued Ireland swiftly and savagely. The intrusion upon Scottish sovereignty that most angered Scots, though, was yet to come. The seventeenth century witnessed the rise of new empires alongside the established Iberian powers, as England, France, the Dutch, and even Sweden pursued their imperial ambitions across the world. As its neighbors and competitors established overseas colonies in this age of imperialism and mercantilism, Scotland may have appeared increasingly isolated. It became clear to Scottish officials by the 1690s that overseas empire was a demonstration of power, an exercise of sovereignty, and an opportunity to create captive markets. Although Scots had previously attempted to colonize the Americas in the seventeenth century, settling the jungle isthmus of Darien in Panama was by far the most concerted effort.109

Like many imperial endeavors of the time, a joint-stock trading company served as the main instrument for Scottish ambitions—in this case, the “The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies.” From the initial fundraising in 1695-1696 to the outcry that followed the colony’s demise in 1701, the Darien scheme was often portrayed in Edinburgh print culture as a national, patriotic

109 For more on earlier Scottish colonial ventures such as Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, and East New Jersey, see: George Pratt Insh, *Scottish Colonial Schemes, 1620-1686* (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson & Co., 1922).
effort. It was an event that truly gripped Scotland: in 1695 15% of all press output had to do with the Company, and that figure only increased in the next few years.

After failing on the world stage, Scots at home, particularly in the capital, were able to publically air their frustrations through print in ways that had not previously been available to them. A similar proportion of Scottish press output then, “some anonymous, expressed resentment with king and England at their opposition to the scheme, and this ran into 1700.”

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A “Noble Enterprize”?

The Scottish Company, as it is more commonly referred to, was formed by an act of Parliament on 26 June 1695 and was granted a monopoly on Scottish overseas trade in Africa, Asia, and the Americas for 31 years. Although founded with the intent to rival the English and Dutch East India Companies, the Company had originally been envisioned as a multinational project. Its initial investors were evenly split between merchants in Scotland and London; some had been cut out of the East India Company monopoly, while others even had investments in both companies.

In addition to the funds contributed by its founders, the Company hoped to take

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110 A note on the word “scheme.” In Scotland then, as well as now, “scheme” does not necessarily bear the negative connotation that it does for American readers; rather, it is typically a synonym for a plan of any kind.
112 Ibid., 217-218.
114 Parliament of Scotland, 26 June 1695, “Act for a company trading to Africa and the Indies.” http://www.rps.ac.uk
subscriptions in London, Amsterdam, and Hamburg as well as in Scotland, but all three of their foreign ventures would fall through in quick succession.  

An English House of Lords investigation, orchestrated by East India Company officials, frightened most of the Scottish Company’s London investors into backing out. In a meeting about this with English parliamentarians, William dryly uttered the now-famous comment that betrayed his growing impatience with his northern kingdom: “I have been ill-served in Scotland.” In Amsterdam and Hamburg, too, Company efforts folded from English pressures to protect the East India Company from Scottish competition. News of these failures pegged responsibility on the King and conniving ministers, as one pamphlet reported of the fundraising effort in Hamburg: “the English Ministers there, did, under Pretence of a special Warrant from His Majesty, put a Stop thereunto.” Of the London group, only William Paterson—already a somewhat controversial Scot, who had made a name for himself as a founder of the Bank of England in 1694 and an outspoken proponent of union—remained with the Company after this.

115 John Prebble, The Darien Disaster (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), 80-81, 85, 88. For more on these failed ventures, see also: George Pratt Insh, The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies (London: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1932), Chapters I and III.
116 Prebble, 40-41;
118 While London and perhaps even Amsterdam may seem logical places for a Scottish company to seek investors, Hamburg may at first appear a bit odd to the reader. In addition to being an active, cosmopolitan trading port at the time, it was also where the Company had commissioned several of its ships to be built.
119 Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, A short and impartial view of the manner and occasion of the Scots colony’s coming away from Darien (Edinburgh, 1699).
Perhaps unexpected by King William and English politicians, supporters of the Company in Scotland seem to have been emboldened by the opposition. Scottish patriot Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun asked the Parliament in Edinburgh:

Have not the Scots ever since the Union of the Crowns been oppressed and tyrannized over by a faction in England, who will neither admit of an Union of the Nations, nor leave the Scots in possession of their own privileges, as men and Christians?\footnote{Quoted in Prebble, \textit{The Darien Disaster}, 56.}

Company promoters in Scotland lost no time in rebranding the venture as a national crusade. In February 1696, the first subscription book was opened in Edinburgh and another soon after in Glasgow. The Company directors “announced like a defiant challenge” that they were calling for £400,000 sterling (£4,800,000 Scots) worth of subscriptions in Scotland alone. Historian John Prebble estimates that this was “perhaps half the available capital in Scotland,” but gives no indication of how he arrived at this figure.\footnote{Prebble, 56.} Although it was likely closer to a quarter of Scotland’s capital at the time, it was nevertheless a staggering sum.\footnote{Douglas Watt, \textit{The Price of Scotland: Darien, Union and the Wealth of Nations} (Edinburgh: Luath Press Limited, 2007), 83.}

What is more, the impulse to invest cut across social and economic divides as farmers, soldiers, lawyers, ministers, printers, and others joined the aristocratic elite in subscribing.\footnote{Dennis Hidalgo, “To Get Rich for Our Homeland: The Company of Scotland and the Colonization of the Darien,” \textit{Colonial Latin American Historical Review} (June 2001), 15.} Women, too, were enthusiastic investors—dozens of women’s names appear on the subscriptions list. Associations, workplace pools, and even burgh governments such as those of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews also
subscribed, “so that even the poor and landless, the thieves, whores and beggars could think themselves a part of the noble undertaking.”¹²⁴ This sense of a national common cause was noted even at the time, as one contemporary pamphleteer wrote: “the whole Kingdom of Scotland being more zealous for it, and unanimous in it than they have been in any other thing for 40 or 50 years.”¹²⁵

Subscriptions continued at a surprising rate throughout the spring and summer of 1696. Within just seven months, the Company had successfully raised the full amount of £400,000 sterling (£4,800,000 Scots), with pledges from over 1,300 investors.¹²⁶ How this almost unthinkable sum was raised with such swiftness and public enthusiasm is the subject of much historical debate. The nineteenth-century Romantic novelist and amateur historian Sir Walter Scott, whose novels often employed Scottish stereotypes, believed it to be an example of irrational Scottish mania: “There is no greater instance of this tendency to daring speculation, which rests at the bottom of the coldness and caution of the Scottish character, than the disastrous history of the Darien colony.”¹²⁷ On the other hand, twentieth-century histories of the Company—such as the work of Prebble (1968), George Pratt Insh (1932), and Francis Russell Hart (1929)—tend to attribute the subscription

¹²⁴ Prebble, 58-59.
¹²⁵ Walter Herries (or Harris), A Defense of the Scots Abdicating Darien: Including an Answer to the Defense of the Scots Settlement there (Edinburgh, 1700), 24.
¹²⁶ The total number of individuals invested in the Company is actually significantly higher than 1300, as this figure only includes the names listed in the subscription books. Many subscriptions were made by associations, pools from groups of associates or coworkers, and even whole towns that took up collections and then subscribed in the town’s name. Douglas Watt estimates the actual count of individuals directly invested in the Company at over 3000. Watt, The Price of Scotland, 81.
campaign’s success to a Scottish patriotic fervor. More recently, economic historian Douglas Watt has argued that the investment rush resembled an economic bubble that never quite burst. What the historiography makes clear is that subscription to the Company has not typically been seen as a financially pragmatic decision, and for good reason.

While some members of the merchant and landed elite who invested could have done so as a calculated risk with specie to spare, middling sorts such as artisans, doctors, and printers did not have the means to gamble on just any overseas venture. What is more, subscriptions were being taken before the Company’s directors had even decided upon a primary theatre of trade or a location for a colony, meaning investors would not have known what returns they could expect. A subscription may also have been for appearance’s sake. In late 1696, the subscription list was printed across Scotland. In Edinburgh, the Anderson press printed it under the title: *A Perfect List of the Several Persons Residenters in Scotland who have subscribed as adventurers in the Joynt-Stock of the Company of Scotland*. Sold in pamphlet form, the list displayed the names of the investors, often their occupations, and the amount subscribed for all to see. While a tailor from Edinburgh who subscribed the minimum £100 may have done so for the sense of adventure, a Lowland country aristocrat might have invested £1000 in order to maintain his social standing. Regardless of the

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128 Helen Julia Paul, “The Darien Scheme and Anglophobia in Scotland” (University of Southampton, 2009), 8.
reasons behind each individual’s investment, however, they were publicly lauded as Scottish patriots and adventurers.

And it is this patriotic tone, so pervasive in the print culture of the time, that likely fueled the incredible success of the Company’s subscription campaign, as people clamored to take part in the “noble enterprize of the valiant Scots.”\textsuperscript{130} In a letter to his brother, Lord Basil Hamilton directly ties Scottishness to support of the Company: “and he won’t be looked upon as a true Scotchman that is against it.”\textsuperscript{131} John Holland, an Englishman and the director of the Bank of Scotland in Edinburgh (founded in 1695) appealed to the Scottish Privy Council: “it is become a Sign of Disrespect to the Common Good of the Kingdom, not to be concerned in [the Company]; or at least, not to Approve of it.”\textsuperscript{132} This report of social policing against dissenting opinions of the Company typifies a nationalistic atmosphere, and support of the Company is again linked to support for the kingdom and being a good Scot. Although the Scottish Company was an almost exclusively Lowland venture, it was being used to construct ideas of Scottish nationhood in the 1690s.

\textbf{The Darien Colony}

With their coffers sufficiently brimming and their newly-built or purchased ships beginning to arrive in Scotland, the directors next needed to decide where to focus the Company’s energies. With so much of Scotland’s capital invested in the

\textsuperscript{130} Lady of honour, \textit{The golden island, or, the Darian song in commendation in all concerned in that noble enterprize of the valiant Scots} (London: John Reid, 1699).
\textsuperscript{131} NAS, GD406/1/7473.
\textsuperscript{132} John Holland, \textit{A Short Discourse on the Present Temper of the Nation with Respect to the Indian and African Company} (Edinburgh: John Reid, 1696).
Company, its directors “were wielding vast power and influence over the financial future of the nation.” \(^{133}\) The magnitude of this was understood at that time as well, as Lord Basil Hamilton writes in another letter to his brother: the amount raised was “as considerable a soum if not greater as any kingdome in the world ever begun such a trade with.” \(^{134}\)

As the full name of the Company clearly shows, its original ambitions stretched far beyond the isthmus that was to mar its reputation. Several of the directors had looked longingly to the Orient, and wished the Company to be a direct competitor with the East India Company there. \(^{135}\) William Paterson, however, had other ideas.

As early as the 1680s, Paterson had been obsessed with the idea of establishing a colony or trading post in Panama. In 1688, he had travelled to Brandenburg hoping to convince the Prussians of the virtues of his plans. \(^{136}\) Why Darien first caught Paterson’s interest is unclear, but we do know that he had met with pirates who had been there, including the “buccaneer surgeon” Lionel Wafer, who would go on to publish a journal of his journeys in Panama. \(^{137}\) That pirates were so active in the area may have led Paterson to believe the area was not strongly controlled by Spain, which had claimed it centuries ago. Although appearing remote, the Darien isthmus was actually “the fulcrum of the Spanish imperial economy,” where gold and silver arriving on the Pacific coast from South America was

\(^{133}\) Watt, 88.
\(^{134}\) NAS, GD406/1/7779.
\(^{136}\) Watt, 6.
\(^{137}\) Insh, *The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies*, 114.
Figure 5. New Caledonia map c. 1699 (National Library of Scotland holdings)
transported across land to the convoys on the Caribbean coast waiting to be loaded for Spain. Nevertheless, the thin strip of land had the promise of a colony capable of handling trade from both the Pacific and Caribbean. The directors were eventually swayed by Paterson’s idealistic plan for settling Darien and preparations were soon underway.

In July 1698, the first expedition, consisting of five ships carrying 1200 colonists set sail from Leith for the Eden that apparently awaited them. According to Insh, the first expedition received one of the most excited sendoffs the city of Edinburgh had ever seen. In November of that year, the colonists landed on the Darien Isthmus, named their colony Caledonia, and began building the main settlement of New Edinburgh and Fort St Andrew. By March of 1699, the directors in Edinburgh had received word of a successful start to their colony and they basked in what Watt calls their short-lived “imperial bliss.” Initial reports from the colonists were optimistic, such as the 1699 pamphlet *The History of Caledonia* that described the untapped natural resources and the high spirits of the colonists. However, the colony would not even last the year as disease, armed conflict with the Native

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138 Watt, 5.
139 Paul, 6. Prebble 95-96, 221. The five ships were named the *Saint Andrew, Caledonia, Unicorn, Endeavour*, and *Dolphin*. All named in a patriotic fervor when they were commissioned for building or purchased, the *Unicorn* had actually originally been christened the *Union*. After the English government proved hostile to the Company and the ship arrived in Scotland some months later, “the distasteful implications of her name, too, were quickly rejected, in favor of *Unicorn* in honor of Scotland’s ancient heraldic beasts.”
140 Insh, 118-119.
141 Watt, 13.
Americans and Spanish, and a lack of supplies quickly decimated the population.

Upon hearing that the Scots had engaged the Spanish, King William issued orders to his North American governors not to supply the struggling Darien colony in order to keep peace with Spain. A few hundred survivors abandoned the colony in June 1699 and fled to New York, where after a harrowing journey they finally arrived in August 1699 aboard the Caledonia and Unicorn. The second expedition of four ships and a thousand more colonists, which had left Scotland earlier that year before news of the colony’s abandonment, arrived in November to find only ruins.

Historians debate the exact causes of the colony’s demise: from poor planning on the Scots’ part to the English and Dutch refusal to trade with the colony to the unexpected military response by the Spanish, etc. The story of Darien is typically told through a “disaster” narrative, pointing out the ways in which it was doomed from the beginning. Thankfully, some recent scholarship has sought to counter this narrative and thus return agency to the Scottish planners and colonists. Regardless of the actual causes, though, the colony’s failure and the causes Scots perceived in 1700 resulted in an eruption of public dissatisfaction and put the kingdom in financial jeopardy.

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143 Watt, 155-156.
Nationhood After Darien

The Darien colony represented the pinnacle of a brief period of Scottish national optimism, due at least in part to the patriotic print culture surrounding the Company’s subscription campaign. The financial fate of the nation had been entrusted to the directors of the Company and they had failed fantastically. In 1700, Scots were furious over the loss of Darien, but it is telling where they directed their anger.

Although just enduring a national tragedy, with hundreds of colonists dead or missing and no doubt many loved ones still in Scotland grieving, many Scots considered the colony’s failure to be a reflection not upon the Company of the nation but upon the characters of the colonists who fled. As one survivor from the colony commented: “they were a sad reproach to the nation from which they were sent.”\(^{146}\)

Here the author implies that fleeing a tough situation like the Darien colony is cowardly and the Scottish way. Very few of the 360 or so survivors ever returned home to Scotland.\(^ {147}\) It is likely that many were ostracized or too ashamed to return. Alexander Stobo, a minister who also survived and resettled in New York, seems to have had no pity for colonists who had tried to desert the colony, only to drown in a storm during their escape: “they were such a rude company that I believe Sodom never declared such imprudence in sinning as they.”\(^ {148}\) According to this minister, these colonists were morally corrupt and not worthy enough to be a part of the colony’s divine mission.

\(^{146}\) Quoted in Prebble, 307.

\(^{147}\) Hart, 144-145.

\(^{148}\) Quoted in Prebble, 307.
Unsurprisingly, Scottish public opinion also blamed the English and the King for their part in the colony’s demise. In his 1700 letter to the Scottish Parliament, William seems determined to placate an increasingly angry kingdom, writing:

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\text{We are heartily sorry for the Misfortunes and Losses that the Nation has sustained in their Trade, and We will effectually Concur in any thing that may Contribute for Promoting and Encouraging Trade, that being so indispensably needful for the Welfare of the Nation.}^{149}
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He could not afford to lose Scottish support in his war efforts in Europe, as Scottish soldiers and supplies were vital and his curtailing the Darien colony had put the availability of Scottish troops in jeopardy. In his pamphlet \textit{Scotland’s Grievances relating to Darien etc.}, George Ridpath questions whether William’s role as both King of England and King of Scotland was properly adhered to when he refused to aid the colonists.\(^{150}\) William’s assumption of the role of “defender of the Protestant faith” had won over many Scots from the Catholic Stuart line in 1688, but his rejection of the Darien colony in order to placate Spain also left many feeling confused and angry. As Helen Paul Julia points out, Anglophobia in Scotland at this time was fairly commonplace, and the Darien project’s nationalist tone only further deepened the divide.\(^{151}\) Even prior to Darien, Scottishness had always to some extent involved non-Englishness.

Two of Scotland’s major institutions, however, appear to have remained mostly above reproach for their parts in the Darien scheme: Parliament and the

\(^{149}\) \textit{His Majesties Most Gracious Letter to the Parliament of Scotland in Minuts} (Edinburgh: Heirs of Anderson, 1700).
\(^{150}\) George Ridpath, \textit{Scotland’s Grievances relating to Darien etc., humbly offered to the consideration of the Parliament} (Edinburgh, 1700).
\(^{151}\) Paul, 13.
Church. In 1699, the Presbyterian General Assembly weighed in, stating that the Darien venture was “a national concern” and recommended, “to all Ministers within this National Church to be fervent in prayer to God for averting his wrath, and forgiving the sins of the Nation.”

Politics had entered the pulpit. The Church no doubt supported the colonial venture as a crusade against “heathen” Native Americans as well as Catholic Spaniards. The Scots certainly saw the mission as such, bringing 1500 English-language bibles on the first expedition for the colonists as well as to give to Native Americans. A 1700 pamphlet, which must have been published before word of the final abandonment reached Scotland, asks Scots to support the colony not just as a patriotic gesture but as “a mean to enlarge Christ’s kingdom, to benefit ourselves, and do good to all Protestant Churches.”

Never mind that Catholic Spain had already laid claim to the isthmus. Scots were eager to counter Catholicism, and religious nationalism was strong during this period—Scottishness and Presbyterianism were inseparably linked. The Parliament, too, seems to have avoided popular wrath because of its defense of Scottish sovereignty in the aftermath of the colony’s collapse.

An exceptionally angry survivor of the colony, a surgeon by the name of Walter Herries (or Harris), wrote a deeply controversial pamphlet entitled *A Defense of the Scots Abdicating Darien: Including an Answer to the Defense of the Scots*


153 Paul, 7.

154 *Scotland’s present duty; or, a call to the nobility, gentry, ministry, and commonality of this land to be duely affect with, and vigorously to acto for, our common concern in Caledonia as a mean to enlarge Christ’s kingdom, to benefit ourselves, and do good to all Protestant Churches* (Edinburgh, 1700).
Settlement there. In it, he argues against much of the Scottish public opinion described above—that it was the Company and government of Scotland that failed the colonists, as well as English pressures.\(^{155}\) Herries’s pamphlet acts as an excellent counterweight to Scottish patriotic opinions, but it must be emphasized his opinions appear to be in the minority. So inflammatory was this work, that the Parliament ordered the pamphlet publically burned and a bounty of £600 placed on Herries’s head.\(^{156}\)

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After 1700, the Company remained a shadow of its former self. Hopes that the colony could someday be resettled were dashed when King William categorically stated he would not affirm Scotland’s right to the colony; doing so would surely have meant war with Spain.\(^{157}\) The Company continued operations, albeit on a much smaller scale. As Prebble puts it, “The Company remembered that Africa was as prominent in its title as the Indies.”\(^{158}\) And so, in May 1702 they sent the Speedy Return and Content to Africa loaded with trade goods.\(^{159}\) Neither ship was seen again.

The Darien scheme had, within just a few years, taken Scotland from a patriotic high point to a financial nadir. Because of the economic devastation caused by the Company’s failure, the Darien scheme is general viewed as a contributing

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\(^{155}\) Walter Herries (or Harris), *A Defense of the Scots Abdicating Darien: Including an Answer to the Defense of the Scots Settlement there* (Edinburgh, 1700).


\(^{157}\) Prebble, 309.

\(^{158}\) Ibid., 311-312.

\(^{159}\) Ibid., 312. The supercargo of the Speedy Return was none other than Thomas Drummond, a hero of the relief effort to Darien, and his brother Robert was the ship’s captain.
factor for why Scots were ready for Union in 1707. As this chapter has detailed, however, it was also a deeply formative moment in Scottish national identity construction.
Chapter IV.160

Crisis Point: The Worcester Incident

Stormy Political Seas

The story of the Worcester actually begins not long after Scotland’s failed Darien venture, when the floundering Scottish Company continued its operations, albeit at a much smaller scale and with far tighter purse strings. Hoping to make up for some of their losses, the directors began looking longingly to the east. As Prebble puts it, “The Company remembered that Africa was as prominent in its title as the Indies.”161 And so, in May 1702, they sent the Speedy Return and the Content to the east coast of Africa, loaded not only with trade goods but also with the hope of the Company.162 Neither ship was ever seen again; after two years they were considered lost at sea. By this point the Company was in truly dire straits. Without any remaining ships of its own, and too destitute to commission the building of a new one, the Company moved to sponsor the privately-owned Annandale on a trade mission to India in 1704. Docked in London, the Annandale was never going to be the savior of the Company, but it quickly became far more trouble than it was worth when agents of the English East India Company seized it before it ever left the Thames.163

160 Much of this chapter builds upon an earlier term paper of mine, written on the micro- and macrohistorical implications of the Worcester incident and Professor William Pinch’s guidance on it was invaluable.
162 Ibid., 312. The supercargo of the Speedy Return was none other than Thomas Drummond, a hero of the relief effort to Darien, and his brother Robert was the ship’s captain.
Although it was well within the charter rights of the East India Company to seize the ship, it provoked an already incensed Scottish populace.\textsuperscript{164}

For several years, the parliaments of England and Scotland had also been engaged in what might be called a legislative cold war—passing threatening bills directed at protecting their own kingdoms, but also clearly designed to antagonize one another. The war-weary Scots had reason to be wary when William’s successor Queen Anne plunged England into the War of the Spanish Succession in 1702. In 1703, the Parliament of Scotland passed the Act of Security that provided they would choose the next monarch of Scotland, which the English feared would lead to a revival of the Catholic Stuart line.\textsuperscript{165} In 1704, the Act anent Peace and War was quickly pushed through as well, this act determining that the Scottish parliament was to make its own foreign policy decisions.\textsuperscript{166} The English parliament fired back in early 1704 with the Alien Act, declaring that if the Scottish succession was not realigned with that of the English crown, Scots would be treated as aliens in England and the import of their products immediately halted.\textsuperscript{167} Meanwhile, some within the

\textsuperscript{164} Sir Richard Carnac Temple, \textit{New Light on the Mysterious Tragedy of the Worcester 1704-1705} (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1930), 171-172. While docked in the Thames, the captain of the Annandale has been recruiting English sailors for his voyage under the Scottish flag, a practice prohibited by the English East India Company’s charter. What is more, Scots were barred from interfering in English trade by the 1660 Navigation Act—an act that treated Scottish merchants as foreigners in the English mercantilist system.


\textsuperscript{167} Daniel Paul Stirrat, “The Darien Scheme and the Union of 1707 between England and Scotland,” (Universitat Wien, 2010), 50-52.
Company of Scotland—particularly Roderick Mackenzie, the Secretary of the Company—were demanding reprisal for the seizure of the Annandale in London in 1704. It is into these stormy political seas that the Worcester sailed when it moored in Leith that patriotically fevered summer.

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After docking, many of the ship’s crew presumably went home (several of the crew were indeed Scottish) while others went ashore just to enjoy Leith’s and Edinburgh’s pubs or to rest. It was then that the Worcester would enter into the history of union. According to the deposition of boatswain James Burns (one of the crewmen who had remained aboard), after many of the crew had gone ashore Mackenzie, “together with several Scots Gentlemen and Servants... pretended they came aboard to see the ship.”\(^{168}\) The crew invited them aboard and “treated them with Punch... that Mackenzie brought aboard with him.”\(^{169}\) Mackenzie and his party then forcibly seized the ship at knife and gunpoint, and the sixteen members of the crew on board were immediately turned ashore. Far from a vigilante, Mackenzie had actually obtained a warrant for the seizure of the Worcester from the Company of Scotland’s directors, which cited the “repeated injurious acts of violence, oppression, injustice and indignity committed against them and their concerns by the English East India Company.”\(^{170}\)

Over the next few months, still other members of the crew returned to Edinburgh to find their ship at the center of controversy, while Scots like Mackenzie

\(^{168}\) The Case of the Owners and Freighters of the Ship Worcester, 108.
\(^{169}\) Ibid. Why the phrase “Beware a Scotsman bearing punch” never took off, I suppose we shall never know!
\(^{170}\) Temple, 183.
felt that the *Annandale* had been avenged. This was not technically correct, however. For although the *Worcester* was at the time reported to have belonged to the English East India Company, it was in fact privately owned—two of its principle charterers being one Elias Dupuy and the Anglo-Indian merchant Thomas Bowrey.\(^{171}\) Thus, a Company of Scotland official and his party had wrongly seized a private English trading ship in reprisal for an English East India Company action. As early as August 1704 (mere weeks after the ship had been seized on the 12\(^{th}\) of that month), Scottish authorities were made aware of this. In a letter from Thomas Green to the Queen’s High Commissioner in Scotland at the time, the Marquess of Tweeddale, Green makes clear that his ship is not with the East India Company and requests to immediately be “repossessed to my ship so unjustly and illegally seised.”\(^{172}\) None of this seemed to matter much to Scottish officials, however. In December 1704, Green and his men were locked up in an Edinburgh prison, the Tolbooth.\(^{173}\) And in March 1705, the crew were brought before the Scottish Admiralty Court in Edinburgh on charges of “Piracy, Robbery, and Murder.”

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**The Trial**

The trial of Captain Green and his crew that spring gripped much of the Edinburgh populace, as well as holding the attention of Scots and Englishmen in

\(^{171}\) Prebble, 313; Temple, 182, 195-196. In fact, the *Worcester* was one of many “Separate Stock” ships appearing at this time, trading in direct opposition to the East India Company’s monopoly. According to letters from Mackenzie, it was clear he realized soon after seizing the ship that it was in fact a private trading vessel. Nevertheless, he appears to have believed the value of the ship’s cargo to be a grand sum, and thus initially concealed his realization from the board of Directors.

\(^{172}\) Bowrey Papers; Temple, 200-201.

\(^{173}\) Temple, 198.
general. Though a comparison to our modern celebrity trials might be a bit of a stretch, the *Worcester* trial was certainly in this same vein of popular obsession. This is evidenced by the relatively significant media attention for the time; Edinburgh printers had arguably never been busier to this point. It is history’s great fortune that the trial’s court documents were compiled and published in not just one, but two sources of which the author is aware. Both were published in 1705 very shortly after the trial. One was compiled and published in Edinburgh at the behest of the main prosecutor Alexander Higgins.\(^\text{174}\) The other seems to have been put together at the insistence of the ship’s owners, and was published in London. Printed in pamphlet form for popular consumption, both of these sources wield the official court documents in very different ways for their own ends. What is more, their compilations are not identical—some depositions are included in both, while others appear in only one.

Court documents make clear that, from the outset, this was anything but a fair trial. The main, and in fact only, eyewitness was one of the ship’s Indian servants Antonio Ferdinando, whose testimony implicated Captain Green, first mate Madder, gunner Simpson, and others in boarding a ship “sailed by white Men, speaking English” and killing the crew and throwing their bodies overboard.\(^\text{175}\) Yet only the ship’s doctor, who was not on board during this supposed piracy and murder, and the captain’s Indian servant Antonio Francisco, who was chained below decks at the time, could corroborate Ferdinando’s testimony. Both the English and Scottish pamphlets included this testimony, but in the pages that follow their agendas are quite

\(^{174}\) *The Tryal [sic.] of Captain Green and his Crew* (Edinburgh, 1705), title page.

\(^{175}\) *The Tryal of Captain Green and His Crew*, 39.
explicit. Whereas the Scottish compilation includes every account collected by the prosecution, the English source simply states: “Here follows the Depositions of several other Witnesses, which being long, and only Circumstantial Proof, do therefore omit.” Suspiciously, the defense attorney’s speech in which he calls into question much of the evidence brought against Green and his crew is missing from the Scottish source, while the anonymous English compilers were sure to include it in their own pamphlet.

Many members of the crew were not allowed to testify, and the jury had evidently been stacked. The jury returned with a verdict of guilty on all counts: murder, robbery, and piracy. The judge pronounced the expected death sentence. The crew was to be hanged in groups staggered throughout that April, with the first hangings—Captain Green, first mate John Madder, gunner Simpson, steward George Haines, and the carpenter Henry Keigle—scheduled for April 4. Under threat of the noose, Haines, whose drunken bragging to a local girl at a pub had been used as evidence by the prosecution, “confessed.” He claimed to have kept a diary that he threw overboard when the ship was seized and confirmed the Scots’ worst fears: it was the long-lost Speedy Return that Green and his men had pirated and plundered.

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176 *The Case of the Owners*, 44. The other testimonies were indeed rather circumstantial. They included that of a man, one Archibald Hodge, who watched the Worcester’s goods being unloaded for confiscation in Leith. His deposition quite literally concludes with the fact that he saw nothing of note (*The Tryal of Captain Green and His Crew*, 46).

177 *The Case of the Owners*, 56-57.

178 *The Tryal of Captain Green and His Crew*, 38. Of the 15-man jury, five were local skippers of ships and the other ten were Edinburgh merchants, both occupations very much invested in the outcome of the trial and Scotland’s maritime trade interests.

179 *The Case of the Owners*, 74.

180 *The Tryal of Captain Green and His Crew*, 60.
“We hear that George Haines,” the *Edinburgh Gazette* wrote in late March, had further confessed “that the Vessel taken by them was a Ship belonging to our Indian and African Company, commanded by Capt. Drummond.”¹⁸¹ The confession and its shocking implications were also relayed by personal correspondence to the Earl of Melville, a Scottish statesman who was no doubt greatly interested in the developing crisis.¹⁸²

Facing death, several other members of the crew confessed in order to save their own skins, including one crewman who admitted to seeing Captain Green writing letters in code while in India. Although Green had indeed prearranged a cypher with his employers, this does not necessarily point to criminal activity, as the prosecution argued. Every confession is present in the Scottish compilation, while the latter half of the English one provides a collection of documents that resoundingly dispute the narrative constructed by the prosecution. Most of these are affidavits signed under oath disputing various aspects of the prosecution’s argument. Perhaps most damning are the affidavits of two crewmen from the *Speedy Return* itself, who verified that their ship had been lost in a very different drama off the coast of Madagascar and that they had never seen Green or the *Worcester* while in the Indian Ocean.¹⁸³

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As we have seen, no real case could be built against Green and his men, excepting confessions made under obvious duress. Bowrey and the ship’s other

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¹⁸¹ *Edinburgh Gazette*, March 1705; *The Case of the Owners*, 76-77.
¹⁸² Letter from Robert Forbes to the Earl of Melville (Edinburgh, 28 March 1705), National Records of Scotland GD26/9/551.
¹⁸³ *The Case of the Owners*, 77-80.
freighters believed as much also, at first reluctant to spend more money than necessary on legal fees. Nevertheless, when the threat became apparent, they provided for an adept defense, as Temple writes: “Green and his comrades were well defended, and the expense of such an array of Counsel on his side must have been great.” They had also likewise contacted Queen Anne herself, whom they convinced to stay the first round of hangings, postponing the April 4 schedule to April 11. Due to various acquittals and pardons of crewmen who had either come aboard after the alleged crimes or had confessed, only fifteen men remained imprisoned and three were scheduled to hang on April 11: Captain Green, first mate Madder, and gunner Simpson.

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Popular Response

In his 1852 *Narratives from Criminal Trials in Scotland*, Scottish historian John Hill Burton recounts the Worcester trial in a fashion typical of that era’s reexamination of Scottish history:

No one accustomed to observe justice in this country will now say that the evidence justified a conviction…But in reality the verdict was found by men who were fighting for national independence, and avenging national wrong, rather than deliberately weighing evidence.  

Though the jury was almost certainly not made up of idealistic Scottish patriots, Hill nevertheless hints at the truth of the Worcester case—Anglo-Scottish relations in 1705 condemned Green and his men, not the evidence presented in court. In a letter to

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184 Temple, 224.  
the Scottish Secretary of State, John Johnstone, Scottish parliamentarian George Baillie wrote “If the Queen shall grant them remission, it will spoil the business in Parliament.”\(^\text{186}\) That “business in Parliament” to which he refers was none other than the beginning of serious debate on the issue of Union, which had started in both parliaments in Britain. Many politicians at the time, then, seem to have felt their hands were tied in the *Worcester* matter. But why?

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Ever since the ship had been seized the city of Edinburgh had been consumed by the crisis, which is evident from the considerable level of print engagement at the time. The *Worcester* was covered in the Edinburgh newspapers, written about in personal correspondence, the subject of myriad broadsides, and even seems to have sparked the publication of a short-lived illegal periodical by the name of *The Observator*.

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We’ve ruined Scotland, and it justly may
Take (as we’ve taken its Trade) our Lives away:
And as we sometime shed the Scottish blood;
So now we shed our own for England’s good.\(^\text{187}\)
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In the anonymously penned poem *Captain Green’s Last Conference with Captain Madder his First Mate in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh*, a fictionalized dialogue between Green and Madder portrays Madder, a Scot no less, as understanding that his imprisonment and presumed execution have much more to do with Scottish grievances than rule of law. The first two lines quoted above imply a national

\(^{186}\) George Baillie to John Johnstone; Temple, 275

\(^{187}\) Anon., *Captain Green’s Last Conference with Captain Madder his First Mate in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1705), National Library of Scotland.
participation in the judgment of these men, and equate their deaths to the death of Scottish trade. Edinburgh had been particularly hard hit by withering trade, and the author is tapping into this sense of collective, national suffering in these lines. Printed in 1705 by James Watson, who has continually appeared throughout these chapters, this poem was to be popularly consumed. Much like daily news, its life in print must not have been a very long one as it was relevant for only the few months of 1705 during which the men were imprisoned. If it were a popular poem—as much of what Watson printed was—then it was likely printed in large numbers and distributed quickly throughout the city. Perhaps tacked up on signposts or read aloud in pubs or squares.

Walking down a major Edinburgh street like the Royal Mile in 1705, it is not difficult to imagine one might have seen a broadside under foot, blown by the winds that often barrel down the city’s winding roads. Any literate Scot who picked it up would likely have been familiar with the subject matter, such as this one pictured below: *A Seasonable Advice to all who encline to go in Pirrating; Drawn from What has happened to Captain Green*. This one too writes from the perspective of a fictionalized Green, “as it were from his own mouth.”188 Similar to the poem quoted above, the narrator understands his place in the larger Anglo-Scottish conflict: “Therefore my Country Men, I pray/beware ye wrong the Scots.”189 He also invokes a surprisingly early understanding of William Wallace as a “freedom fighter” national hero in the lines:

188 Anon. *A Seasonable Advice to all who encline to go in Pirrating; Drawn from What has happened to Captain Green; As it were from his own mouth, One of that Rank* (Edinburgh, 1705), National Library of Scotland.
189 Ibid.
And tho’ it’s true, Wallace is dead,
Yet take no hope from that,
For sure there are some in his stead,
Who some way fill his Hat.\textsuperscript{190}

\textbf{Figure 6. 1705 Edinburgh broadside about the \textit{Worcester} incident}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{A Seasonable Advice,} (168).
  \item TO ALL
  \item who encline to go in Tirraing:
  \item DRAWN FROM
  \item What has happ’n to Captain Green?
  \item As it were from his own mouth,
  \item One of that Rang.
  \item To the Tune of, To the Weaver if ye go, &c.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{My Country men who do intend
  \item on Tirraing to go,
  \item Before what e’er ye may pretend.
  \item The certain end is no,
  \item I know it by Experience.
  \item The better may I tell,
  \item Though my fall is sure defence,
  \item Be suddenly fell.
  \item Some open did me much perturb’d,
  \item No ill to me should come.
  \item Behold the child should make a trade,
  \item Even till the day of doom.
  \item But Oh! those thoughts are fraught, for now,
  \item I shall to my grief.
  \item Though SCOTS am made to bow,
  \item And they bring no Relief.
  \item They thought the SCOTS would never dar
  \item An English to Suffer,
  \item But they’re beguiled very fat,
  \item The they pretend’d Sense.
  \item They SCOTS, not Sea, as they did lay,
  \item Yes, Honest Men, and bold.
  \item Else for the Money I would pay,
  \item My life to me they’d fold.
  \item They scarce know how some them hate
  \item And here they’re not behind.
  \item They too would eat such as their Meat
  \item At occasion they could find,
  \item An’t ye’t its true, WALLACE is dead,
  \item Ye take no hope from that.
  \item For sure there are some in his stead,
  \item Who some way fill his Hat.
  \item And now for all the Great I won
  \item I certainly must die,
  \item And ought will my offence atone
  \item But Hanging on a Tree.
  \item A Death! I’m sure found out at first,
  \item for Dogs and not for Men.
  \item I’ll rather suffer what they list,
  \item Than thus my Name to blot.
  \item But this they flighting falsely intend
  \item A Strop to me to make.
  \item To every Man who has a mind
  \item Such coarse to undertake,
  \item What e’er we think to do against them,
  \item I know they will stand.
  \item For I can say and all my Men,
  \item GOD is at their Right Hand.
  \item Therefore my Country Men, I pray
  \item be sure we wrong the SCOTS.
  \item For GOD amongst them hath once Lay’d,
  \item What done against them in Pride.
  \item And thou’st made Sauls they old Reminisce
  \item of their great Captivity.
  \item Yet lately Made, themselves they’d quit.
  \item In Times of this Deuce.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid. The narrative portraying William Wallace as a national hero is generally thought to have arisen much later, in the Romantic era, when much of Scottish tradition was being rebranded and recontextualized within the Union. Yet, if this broadside makes such casual reference to him as such, he must have been understood in this way in Edinburgh prior to Union.
The reference to Wallace conflates myth and rallying cry, and compares the concurrent atmosphere as akin to that of the Wars of Scottish Independence fought centuries earlier. Written in verse and set to a popular tune, this broadside was not only meant to be read, but also sung aloud. No doubt, this verbal, public performance involved literate and illiterate Scots alike. Because of this, broadsides were among the more engaging and accessible forms of print culture, and printers at the time seemed to have been keenly aware of this as they targeted a wider swath of the city’s population.

It is telling that one J. G., whose full name I have not yet found, chose to print a dissenting opinion on the fate of Green in broadside form, perhaps hoping to appeal to a wider audience. Entitled Captain Thomas Green’s Last farewell to the Ocean and all the World..., yet another fictional version of Green narrates his final moments before being hanged. Unlike the others, however, this broadside’s narrator insists upon his innocence and the injustice of the court:

And before God and the World I can,

Truly protest I never knew the Man,

Whose Murderer I was said to be,

Nor ever saw him by Land or Sea:

Yet now by Malice of one, I must Hang

Anon., Captain Thomas Green’s Last farewell to the Ocean and all the World, who was Execute with two more of his Crew at Leith within the Flood-Mark, 11 April 1705, for Piracie and Murder (Edinburgh: J. G., 1705), National Library of Scotland
While this opinion may have been more prevalent in England, such a view in
Edinburgh was certainly in the minority in that city’s print culture. Nevertheless, it is
vital to note that none of the opinions expressed in print at the time were unanimous.

The fate of the *Worcester* and its crew was not just the preoccupation of the
Edinburgh townsfolk, but was also closely watched by Scottish aristocrats, many of
whom were politicians and had a tangible stake in the outcome of the crisis as Union
talks were beginning around the same time. In a 2 January 1705 letter to Chancellor
Seafield, the Marquess of Annandale—himself a member of the Privy Council—
wrote confidently, months before the trial, that Green would be found guilty:

> We have been for a week or ten dayes upon the searche of this ship and yett the Councill have not finished their enquirie either in to the Cargo or Evidences but I think all here are so far satisfied as to conclude that this is a Pyratt who has been privateering and guiltie of some verrie extraordinary Crime which yet is not so plain but in all appearance will at last be discovered. \(^{192}\)

According to a letter written to the Duke of Hamilton that same month, it’s clear that
a committee of politicians had been tasked with finding evidence to support the
seizure of the ship. \(^{193}\) The Earl of Mar, who would incidentally later go on to join the
1715 Jacobite rebellion, wrote to the Duke of Hamilton in March 1705 that he would
have written sooner, were it not for the fact that he “was, against my will, part of that
Comitty for searching Green’s ship.” \(^{194}\) Mar also sees Scotland as increasingly
isolated while England continues to fight in the War of the Spanish Succession, a war

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192 Letter from Annandale to Seafield (2 January 1705), National Records of Scotland GD248/571/6/no. 11.
that continued to strain Anglo-Scottish relations. Seeing this as a truly national crisis, Mar writes, “I hope all good Scotsmen will join together for the preservation of ourselves.” As a personal letter, this cannot be seen as political rhetoric so much as a genuine concern for Scottish sovereignty—one which draws upon a national sense of identity that cuts across class and geographic lines. But one still very much based around people, and in this case events, centered around Edinburgh.

Pamphlets, too, fanned the flames of the Worcester crisis, although it appears that it was mostly incendiary London pamphlets reprinted in Edinburgh in order to rile Scots. Take, for example, the very hostile An English Oiment to the Scotch Mange: A short Memorandum of the Scots Cruelty to Captain Thomas Gree &c. The English writer sees the Worcester incident as a Scottish attempt to attack England when it’s already engaged in a war in Europe, again showing the general understanding of this affair’s wider implications. The pamphlet also perpetuates the idea of Scottish fealty to England, deeply unpopular in Scotland but rooted in the founding myths of England, when he says “England, whose protection they have happily enjoyed ever since that Union between both Kingdoms [the Union of the Crowns in 1603].” Although since 1603 an increased interaction between Scots and England, particularly in the fairly cosmopolitan London, had led to more cultural tolerance, the author trots out offensive stereotypes and insults: “perfidious

195 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
wretches,” “poisoned pates and Freckely faces,” “their own barren Country.” It is no wonder this was reprinted in Edinburgh, no doubt held up as a sign of English hatred of Scots. Yet it attacks Scots as a “Country” and a people. Even in the London imagination behind this creative piece of mudslinging, Scots and Scotland were seen as a single entity. And Scots who read or heard of this and other London pamphlets like it were no doubt angered in part because their national pride had been bruised.

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On the foggy morning of April 11 1705, Privy Councilors convened in Edinburgh to discuss the fates of Green and his crewmates one last time. The Queen had requested a further postponement of the executions—the wishes of Her Majesty were clear. With only about half of the pusillanimous Councilors in attendance—the others absent for fear of being held accountable for the inevitable decision—they allowed the executions to go ahead to pacify a riotous Edinburgh crowd. And so at low tide that day on Leith sands, three bodies swung from the gallows to the braying and cheering of onlookers. But Captain Green, Madder, and Simpson would be the only three to hang; the rest of the crew was later pardoned with little protest.

The crowd had gathered earlier that day outside the Tolbooth prison where Green and company were being held, mostly incensed by rumors flying that the crew had been reprieved. In fact, this mob had assaulted Chancellor Seafield as he arrived at the Council meeting over these rumors, and the government had issued a

198 Ibid.
199 Prebble, 9: Letter from the London government ordering a further reprieve of hangings, “By Her Majesty’s Command” (23 April 1705), National Records of Scotland, GD348/640/7/no. 21.
200 Temple, 280.
threat of military action against the mob.201 At the gallows on the beach at Leith, troops were stationed to keep the peace during the hangings.202

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One of the latest references to Green and the Worcester incident we see is in a letter written by one Thomas Pain to his relative John Scattergood, a merchant then in Madras, India. Written almost exactly one decade later in March 1715, Pain’s letter shows how the incident was already being situated in the anti-Unionist narrative:

The rebels in Scotland are most of them dispersd and killd and I suppose som will bee hangd, which may in some measure make up for their murder of that honest man Captain Green.203

Referencing the first major Jacobite uprising since the Glorious Revolution, Pain’s idea of justice is telling. His decision to write “their murder” seems to simultaneously implicate the Jacobites in Green’s hanging and all Scots in fomenting rebellion. Even within the new structures of the recent Union, the English conception of Scots as the “other”—a separate nation—seems to have remained.

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It is clear that popular print culture at this time was drawing upon a foundation of Scottish national identity in Edinburgh that had already begun to develop in response to the earlier crises discussed. Although printers and politicians hoped to gain support through their publications, the evidence of a growing sense of national identity can be found in the rhetoric they used to generate the support they sought.

202 Ibid., 62.
203 Thomas Pain to John Scattergood, letter, March 15 1715 in Scattergood Papers (edited by Richard Carnac Temple); Temple, 16.
Scots in Edinburgh would respond in various ways; many of them would join the crowd that eventually witnessed Green’s, Madder’s and Simpson’s execution while others tried desperately to acquit those same men. Just two years later, however, Scotland and England would join in a political union often described as born out of economic necessity for Scotland but political necessity for England. In the pamphlet debates that saturated Edinburgh during these two years, we see a continuing development of this national identity, which would carry forward into the newly created Great Britain, and beyond.
In March 1707, James Douglas, Duke of Queensberry and High Commissioner of Scotland, adjourned the final session of Parliament with a laconic yet sincerely optimistic speech that ushered in a new era for the British Isles. By then an easy-going statesman of 44, Queensberry had been among the earliest and most fervent Scottish supporters of the Glorious Revolution as a young man. Loyally serving the Crown since 1689, there was no doubt a hint of pride in his voice as he reflected upon his Parliament’s achievement. “I am persuaded,” he said, “that we and our posterity will reap the benefit of the Union of the two Kingdoms” and he hoped that his countrymen would “promote an universal desire in this Kingdom to become one in hearts and affections as we are inseparably joined in interest with our neighbor
Less than two months later, the Treaty of Union officially took effect, politically uniting the kingdoms of Scotland and England. The resulting British state enabled both Scots and English alike to participate in the construction of a new, “British” national identity from 1707 on.

Before the creation of a unified Kingdom of Great Britain, though, Edinburgh witnessed an explosion of popular print discussion on the issue of Union—much like what we have seen surrounding the preceding national crises examined in previous chapters. In the twilight years of their kingdom’s existence as a sovereign state, Edinburgh Scots participated in printed, public debates over what Union would mean for Scotland. Edinburgh residents may have overheard or discussed the issue in taverns, read an inflammatory broadside tacked to a streetpost, or even participated in the petition and letter-writing campaigns mobilized by parliamentarians on both sides of the debate.

According to historian Karen Bowie, “the scale of popular involvement was remarkable for the time, whether assessed in a Scottish, British, or European context.” Because of this, the Union itself is the final crisis point examined here. This chapter analyzes the reasons that Union finally came to fruition and how discussion of the issue in the popular print culture elucidates Scottish understanding of national identity just prior to their absorption into the great British project.

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204 Duke of Queensberry, “Lord commissioner’s speech; parliament adjourned,” 25 March 1707. Accessed online: Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707 (University of St Andrews), http://www.rps.ac.uk

The Crown in Crisis

Like her predecessor and brother-in-law William, Queen Anne had from the very beginning of her reign in 1702 recognized “the Union of the two kingdoms of Scotland and England” as “being necessary for the Security and Happiness of both.”

In both her letter to the Scottish parliament and her first speech to the English parliament, Anne called for the creation of an Anglo-Scottish commission to begin hammering out the details of union. Although the commission met throughout the winter of 1702-1703, its members could not come to an agreement and it was disbanded amid a legislative tug-of-war between the kingdoms that began before she had even ascended the throne.

By 1701, it was apparent that the sickly William was not going to remarry and produce an heir. It was also becoming increasingly likely that Anne, the next in line as provided for by the Revolution Settlement, would be unable to produce an heir either. Despite at least seventeen pregnancies, she still had no adult children due to a tragic and traumatic series of miscarriages, stillborns, and sickly newborns. With the Protestant succession so recently saved by the Glorious Revolution appearing to be in jeopardy again so soon, the English Parliament passed the 1701 Act of Settlement, which detailed the line of succession if William did not have children by another marriage and heir-apparent Anne remained childless. Bypassing several

206 Queen Anne, *Her Majesties Most Gracious Letter to the Parliament of Scotland*, 15 May 1702 (Edinburgh: Heirs of Andrew Anderson), 4. Although she did not visit Scotland during her reign, Anne’s letters to the Scottish Parliament were always published in the *Minutes*.

207 Anne Somerset, *Queen Anne: The Politics of Passion*. Anne’s health has been a subject of great curiosity, as the condition at the root of her strife is still debated among historians today.
Catholics with far stronger claims to the throne—not least of who was James Francis Edward, the Old Pretender—the Act of Settlement named the distant royal relative Sophia, Electress of Hanover, and her descendants as next in line to the English and Irish thrones.²⁰⁸

This preempted a potential restoration of the Catholic Stuart line in England for the foreseeable future, but, critically, the Hanoverian succession needed to be separately approved in Scotland by its own parliament—an action that body seemed reluctant to take. In an opportunistic declaration of Scottish sovereignty, the Edinburgh government instead responded with the 1703 Act of Security, which granted parliament the power to choose Anne’s successor in Scotland and laid out their conditions for accepting another English monarch.²⁰⁹ Thus, just as England plunged into the War of the Spanish Succession, its dynastic union with its northern neighbor appeared at risk. Even worse, Louis XIV of France would no doubt have supported a Stuart restoration in Scotland in order to rekindle the Auld Alliance and distract the English from their war against him on the continent.²¹⁰

The following year, Scotland’s parliament passed the 1704 Act anent Peace and War, which declared that the Scottish parliament was to make its own foreign

²⁰⁸ Sophia was the granddaughter of James VI and I by his daughter Elizabeth, the so-called Winter Queen because of her husband’s brief rule as King of Bohemia in 1619-1620.
²¹⁰ Bruce Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain 1689-1746* (Scottish Cultural Press, 1995), 88. In fact, in 1708 James the Old Pretender attempted just this, with 30 ships and 6,000 troops of King Louis’s. The planned invasion, however, was turned back at sea and many of the ships lost in the retreat back to France.
policy decisions.\textsuperscript{211} The act frightened and angered English parliamentarians, who felt Scotland continuing to slip away in a time of war when Scottish troops and supplies were invaluable. The English parliament fired back with the Alien Act, declaring that if the Scottish succession were not realigned with that of the English, Scots would be treated as aliens in England and the import of their products immediately halted.\textsuperscript{212} In addition to distracting from the war effort, these acts were running counter to the unionist desires of their Queen.

Under pressure from the ramifications of the Alien Act, the Scottish parliament agreed to form a new joint commission with the English to begin negotiating the terms of union in early 1706. Similar issues remained sticking points as they had for the past century since James VI and I first attempted to unify the two kingdoms: namely, the preservation of Scottish civil law (which even today is distinct from English common law) and the continued independence of the Scottish Kirk. Previously, the English had either been indifferent or unwilling to accept anything less than a fully incorporating union. Much like had been done when England absorbed Wales in the Middle Ages, most English parliamentarians since the Union of the Crowns in 1603 had thought the same should be done with Scotland. The Scots, for their part, were unwilling to cede so much of their sovereignty. Thus, armed conflict from the Rough Wooing of Henry VIII’s late reign (1540s and 1550s) through the Wars of the Three Kingdom’s and Oliver Cromwell’s complete subjugation of Scotland in 1650s saw various attempts to bring Scotland in line, yet

\textsuperscript{212} Daniel Paul Stirrat, “The Darien Scheme and the Union of 1707 between England and Scotland,” (Universitat Wien, 2010), 50-52.
none ever truly succeeded. So if various peaceful and armed overtures toward union had been made for centuries, what made 1707 so different?

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The Terms of Union

From the English perspective, the most important new complicating factor was preserving a Protestant succession in Britain after Anne’s death. The 1701 Act of Settlement had allayed concerns for England and Ireland, but Scotland’s subsequent rejections of the Hanoverian succession made a union a much more pressing issue. As it was shown in Chapter III, William and Mary’s reigns had demonstrated the ebbing effectiveness of a dynastic union, and to lose even this was unacceptable for England—particularly once it went to war with Catholic France in 1702, arguably the most involved in continental affairs it had become since its medieval wars to preserve its lands in Brittany. An outpouring of Scottish patriotism over crises like the Worcester incident and the spectre of a Stuart restoration likewise reinforced English fears that their neighbor kingdom might leave the multiple monarchy. If it meant securing Britain as a Protestant nation into the foreseeable future, the English had become more willing to compromise on major issues such as the preservation of Scottish law and religion.

From the Scottish perspective too, things had become more urgent. As discussed earlier, the Darien colony had broken the back of Scotland’s economy. Added to this, the threat the Alien Act posed to Scottish trade and it is not difficult how many Scottish politicians came to see union as the most viable way to turn around Scotland’s fading economic fortunes. And although the Scottish parliament
remained fractured, the Duke of Queensberry’s statesmanship was a vital and often overlooked reason for the Union Treaty’s ratification in Scotland.  

It is striking the extent to which trade economics dominate the terms of Union. Of the twenty-five articles, over half are to do with the applicability of various taxes, the creation of a monetary and customs union, and the standardization of the two kingdoms’ trade laws. Other key articles include Scottish acceptance of the Hanoverian succession in Article 2, the preservation of an independent Scottish judicial system in Article 19, and a detailed description of how representation in the new Parliament of Great Britain would be apportioned in Article 22. Of paramount significance is Article 15, which guarantees the “Equivalent,” a payment of nearly £400,000 from England to Scotland. This large cash infusion, offered to such a devastated country like Scotland would have been exceptionally enticing to lawmakers. Notably absent, however, is a guarantee of Kirk independence, which was intentionally left out until it could be passed into law by the unified Parliament. Although accepting such an arrangement required quite a bit of trust on the part of the Scottish negotiators, they had secured every concession from the English they had desired. The English, though, were finally rid of a maverick Scottish parliament with a diverging national agenda. Union gave the English unprecedented demographic and political control over Scotland. The English-dominated Great Britain could now fully turn its attention to the war effort in Europe.

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214 Union with England Act, 1707.
Thus, on both sides of the border the Union “was an instance of early modern realpolitik: a practical agreement between unequal partners, born and made of political, economic, and strategic necessity, which served the needs of the politicians of both countries at the time.”\textsuperscript{215} In that moment, union was politically necessary for England and economically necessary for Scotland, but that is a claim easily made in hindsight by historians. As Christopher Whatley asks:

what is more relevant here, however, is whether or not the most ardent proponents of Union, or their supporters in the Scottish Parliament, envisaged all of the benefits it allegedly brought. Was it the prospect of these that persuaded them to support it?\textsuperscript{216}

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**Bought and Sold for English Gold?**

Whatley’s question hints at another that has contributed to the politicization of scholarship surrounding union: despite the novel factors in 1707 discussed above, was union finally accomplished through English intrigue and bribery of Scottish parliamentarians? This section’s title and Whatley’s book both refer to the oft-quoted 1791 Robert Burns poem “Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation.” In it, Burns laments what he sees as a loss of Scottish sovereignty and identity:

“Fareweel our ancient glory,  
Fareweel even to the Scottish name.”

Even more famously, he accuses Scottish politicians of accepting bribes:

“What force or guile could not subdue,  
Through many warlike ages,  
Is wrought now by a coward few,  
Fore hireling traitor’s wages.”

\textsuperscript{215} Whatley, 89.  
\textsuperscript{216} Whatley, 34.
He ends his inflammatory poem with its most famous lines:

“‘We’re bought and sold for English gold-
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!’” 217

But accusations of conspiracy had been fanning anti-English dissent long before Burns put quill to parchment, and they persisted in nationalist histories thereafter. A staunch nationalist, Burns’s agenda in writing such a patriotic, Anglophobic poem is clear. What is less clear, however, is to what extent these attitudes were shared at the time of Union itself, as Burns was nearly a century removed and the “political job” theory had clearly already firmly taken root. 218 It is not difficult to see the convenience of such a narrative for Scottish nationalists, as any signs of corruption weaken the bedrock of Anglo-Scottish union by testing that union’s legitimacy. But to what extent are these allegations true and to what extent were they known and discussed at the time of union?

Corruption charges against the union process rest, essentially, on the transfer of money by two different means from England to Scotland as a result of Union. The first—and more substantial—was the Equivalent discussed earlier. It was openly discussed among the public and politicians, as payment of this nearly £400,000 sum had an entire article of union devoted to it. This was ostensibly restitution on England’s part for the loss of the Darien colony and its effect on the Scottish economy. By absorbing the debts of the Scottish Company’s investors, the English were no doubt placing coin into the pockets of influential Scots who had backed the

218 Bowie, 159.
project in the first place. This appears to be deft political maneuvering on the English part more than outright bribery—ensuring at least some wealthy Scots supported Union out of financial self-interest. That the Equivalent may have changed the minds of some Scottish elites certainly cannot be discounted, however.

The second and more lurid possibility is English payment of individual Scottish parliamentarians in exchange for their votes in favor of the Union. According to Whatley, accusations of this has ebbed and flowed, but have mainly been raised in the century immediately following union and since the 1960s when the modern Scottish nationalist movement began in earnest. That bribery appeared on the historiographical scene during the two major periods of Scottish patriotism (the Jacobite era and the SNP movement) tellingly demonstrates the role activist historians play in shaping a people’s understanding of nation.

Nevertheless, Whatley’s study of bribery attempts to remove the issue from the mainly nationalist historiography it has been coopted by. His extensive analysis of Scottish parliamentary voting records shows that on the whole the parliament was for Union, even accounting for English bribes.220

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Popular Response

The outpouring of popular print during the Union debates of 1705-1707 took many forms. Many pamphlets dealt with heavier political topics, analyzing the various articles of Union closely or rehashing political theory. Shorter tracts and broadsides, on the other hand, often adopted sarcastic or humorous tones in order to

219 Whatley, 35-37.
220 Ibid.
poke fun at England or the Union process. Occasionally during this print frenzy, pamphlet writers engaged in dialogues with one another, whereby a pamphlet responded to a previous one’s argument. When quoting, I take care to keep these corresponding pamphlets together. What follows is only a sampling of the vast source material available to historians of Union. Most were printed in Edinburgh, but some were first printed in London and re-printed in Edinburgh, evidently controversial or interesting enough that the printer felt it worth setting the type for it. When a work is an Edinburgh re-print, I will note it as such.

In his 1706 pamphlet *The Advantages of the Act of Security, Compared with These of the Intended Union*, Patrick Abercromby understands the crossroads Scotland then found itself in. It could continue to abide by the Act of Security, becoming totally independent from England but certainly risking war. Or, it could accede to the Union, which many Scots including Abercromby feared could be easily overruled by England once Scotland had given up its sovereignty. 221 Instead, he sees the merits in pursuing alliances with others in Europe by remaining independent, particularly the Dutch and France, saying “Europe is wide.”222

Abercromby certainly caught the attention of Daniel Defoe, quite active in popular print at this time, who authored a tongue-in-cheek response entitled *The Advantages of Scotland by an Incorporate Union*... To the suggestion that Scotland rekindle the Auld Alliance with France, Defoe wryly replies: “But ah! Here’s a plaguie [sic.] Objection, France is Popish, the Scots Presbyterian. But that’s no

Matter, he tells ye, lay but Prejudice aside!” While meant to poke fun at Abercromby, Defoe’s jest reminds us of the link between Scottishness and Presbyterianism that we have seen before. A devout Presbyterian would be certainly have been uncomfortable with an alliance with Catholic France.

Scotland’s status as an equal of England is what most disturbed Abercromby, which is to be expected given the increased sovereignty Scots had enjoyed since the Glorious Revolution. Using the Act of Security and trade with other countries as leverage, Abercromby believed, “if we but ly by at present, till enabled by virtue of Our Act of Security to treat with them upon equal Terms.” Defoe, replying in his typical wit, believed the Union to be the best offer possible: “I would fain know of him or any Man else, what these better Terms are to be…unless we’d have them take the Coats from off their own backs, and put them upon ours?” Historically, Defoe is correct that these were the best terms yet presented to Scotland. Sir John Shotswood’s 1706 pamphlet *The Trimmer: or, Some necessary Cautions, concerning the Union of the Kingdoms of Scotland and England* shared similar fears as that of Abercromby’s: “If Scotland had no peculiar Concerns and Interests to be secured, the Union of the two Nations might be adjusted in that manner without much difficulty.” Protection of the Church, one of the “peculiar Concerns,” was on the minds of most anti-union writers.

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The popularly distributed poem “A Pil for Pork-Eaters: or a Scots Lancet for an English Swelling” by William Forbes of Disblair recalls the battle of Bannockburn, fought during the medieval Scottish Wars of Independence in a rallying cry to “oppress’d” Scots:

Let England Bully, but let Scotland Fight:
And let another Bannockburn redress,
Too long endur’d Affronts and Grievances
Our Country, now oppress’d.\(^{227}\)

The militarism and freedom fighter language with which some printed works approached the Union debates illuminates first that by Union the medieval independence wars were already being used by Scots to construct a national narrative. It also indicates the threat level perceived by anti-Unionists at this time, but we must remember that pamphlets cannot be mistaken as representative of the wider population’s views.

On the other hand, another popularly printed poem, called “Hocus-Pocus Called the French King to Life again or Old Nick blew Wind in his Arse,” takes a more financially pragmatic, if sarcastic approach to Union:

And Darien should with Interest be repaid
For tis not Courage, but the Cash we want
To make Proud England her base threats recant.”\(^{228}\)


\(^{228}\) Anon., “Hocus-Pocus Called the French King to Life again or Old Nick blew Wind in his Arse,” (Edinburgh: 1705), 6-7.
By this author’s humorous account, Scots should be happy to take the money from England: it was owed to them regardless. Even tongue-in-cheek poems such as this had underlying agendas. Printed works at this time were often anonymously written, making it difficult to establish the motives behind the pen, with only the work itself to understand its biases.

Scottish national identity could also be expressed as a connection with the very land itself. Revisiting Abercromby, he states that: “so true it is, that love to one’s native soil, is ingrafted in the very nature of man, and that our hearts move as naturally backwards to the origin of our blood, as the waters when they return to the sea.”229 This tended to be used more by Jacobites, but in 1698 the well-known “patriot Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun had also discussed a Scot’s relationship with the land in his Two Discourses concerning the Affairs of Scotland.

In 1715, as he sought to win back the throne of his native land in one of two major Jacobite Rebellions, James the Old Pretender himself uses this form of patriotism to delegitimize the Hanoverian monarch George I as a foreigner: “We have beheld a Foreign Family, Aliens to our Country, distant in Blood, and Strangers even to our Language, ascend the Throne.”230 Indeed, it was not until George III that Britain would again have a monarch whose first language was English. While “the Fifteen” failed, Jacobitism did not die, in part due to the fact that Scots could more easily relate to James than to their own monarch.

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230 James VIII and III, His Majesty’s most Gracious Declaration included as an appendix to the Dublin reprinting of A Compleat History of the late Rebellion (Thomas Humes, printer, 1716), 89.
The Union of 1707 was a supreme act of trust on the part of both kingdoms. By not only ratifying the Treaty of Union but also passing their respective Acts of Union, the Parliaments of Scotland and England voted themselves out of existence with the trust that their would reconvene as a united Parliament of Great Britain under the terms laid out in the Treaty. For the Scots, who—as the pamphlet literature demonstrated—were exceptionally nervous about the maintenance of their Church’s independence, this must have been particularly nerve-wracking. While the Union was in many ways British realpolitik to satisfy immediate concerns over succession, war, and trade, the Edinburgh popular print debates surrounding the issue contextualized it in a longer narrative of Scottish crisis and identity.
Conclusion

As we have seen, the period 1688-1707 was a remarkably disruptive one in Scottish history. But through a series of national crises, Scots in Edinburgh were clearly constructing a national identity centered on a firm defensiveness of their kingdom’s sovereignty, Presbyterianism, patriotism, and Anglophobia. That is not to say this was the only idea of Scottishness—indeed I argue that the Revolution produced the two competing conceptions of Jacobite allegiance to Crown and country and Revolutionary belief in the sovereignty of the people. Each of the crisis points covered in this project contributed to the construction of this Scottish national identity and the print culture surrounding each event elucidates this. The Glencoe Massacre demonstrated the limitations of Scottish nationhood, as Lowlanders co-opted the tragedy to advance a national agenda only so long as it was convenient. The Darien venture and the Worcester incident saw an outpouring of Scottish patriotism as the kingdom sought to flex its imperial muscle abroad. The Union debates in Parliament were paralleled in public with unprecedented levels of popular engagement as Scots scrambled to discover what could come of their kingdom if the Treaty of Union passed. Over the course of this project, Edinburgh print culture during the period 1688-1707 became a window into the soul of a nascent nation.
Epilogue

*We are four nations, but at heart we are one people.*
-Prime Minister Theresa May at the Scottish Conservative Party Conference, 3 March 2017

If the Duke of Queensberry could have witnessed the nonchalance with which the tercentennial of his parliament’s work was greeted, he would have surely been confounded. May 1, 2007 for the most part passed like any other day in the United Kingdom. Media outlets at the time seemed surprised, with *The Guardian* reporting, “there will be few celebrations to mark the occasion.”231 Earlier in the year, a column in *The Scotsman* aptly asked, “300 years on, and where is the big party to celebrate Union?”232 A collaborative effort between the Scottish Parliament and UK House of Lords produced a free public exhibit entitled “Making the Act of Union,” which was displayed in London during the summer of 2007 and in Edinburgh through the fall.233 As part of this exhibit, the two governments brought together the original Scottish and English copies of the Acts of Union for the first time.

One of the few major celebrations of Union that year was the unveiling of a commemorative £2 coin at a Whitehall reception on January 15. At Dover House in London (where the Scotland Office is housed), UK government officials presented the new Royal Mint coin and used the platform to speak on the strengths of union.234

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232 “300 years on, and where is the big party to celebrate Union?”, *The Scotsman*, January 17 2007.
Then-Chancellor Gordon Brown, who was also Master of the Royal Mint and one of the most vocal proponents of Union, had widely been expected to attend, but was instead away on a trade mission to India. His absence was quickly politicized by Scottish National Party (SNP) leader Alex Salmond, who remarked: “It is highly symbolic in terms of lack of enthusiasm for the Union in Scotland that Brown should decide to hold a party in London to launch a £2 coin and then proceed not to turn up.”\(^{235}\) The Conservative Party likewise leapt at the chance to lambast the ruling Labour government’s handling of the tercentennial. David Mundell, a Conservative MP from Scotland, tabled a motion on May 1, 2007 celebrating the Union, and on the floor of the House of Commons questioned then-Chancellor Brown’s decision.\(^{236}\)

These muted and heavily politicized celebrations of (or should we say lack thereof) the Union may have had much to do with the upcoming elections in Scotland for the devolved legislature. The Labour Party controlled not only the UK national government at the time (under Prime Minister Tony Blair), but also the Scottish government in Edinburgh. Polling at the time, however, suggested that the SNP would overtake Labour, which had been in power since Scotland first received a devolved parliament in 1999. And indeed, these polls turned out to be accurate, as the

\(^{235}\) Ibid. The location of the event likewise drew criticism from the SNP leader, who said it showed a "certain lack of sensitivity to launch a commemorative coin in London, considering the signing of the Treaty of Union took place in Scotland."


As the only Conservative MP from Scotland at the time, Mundell had much to say on the issue: “I would have been happier still had the Government backed my party’s calls to celebrate the Act of Union throughout the United Kingdom, rather than marginalising it by simply holding an event to introduce the new £2 coin to which the Chancellor did not even bother to turn up and which the Secretary of State graced for only five minutes.”
SNP garnered one more seat than Labour in the election and went on to form a minority government. Thus, a nationalist party that had campaigned on an independence referendum took power in Scotland, seemingly jeopardizing the very Union that had just days before turned three hundred years old.

The SNP have now maintained power for over a decade in Scotland, and during this time the unionist-nationalist divide has never been deeper in Scottish and British politics, despite the convincing “No” win in the 2014 independence

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Scottish National Party 2007 campaign poster referencing the Acts of Union. In front, then-party leader Alex Salmond (left) and then-deputy leader Nicola Sturgeon.

Gregor Young, “After 10 years of SNP power at Holyrood, Alex Salmond hails a political revolution,” *The National*, May 15 2017. http://www.thenational.scot/news/15287429.After_10_years_of_SNP_power_at_Holyrood__Alex_Salmond_hails_a_political_revolution/
referendum. In many ways, the 2016 UK referendum resulting in a British withdrawal (so-called “Brexit”) from the European Union thrust the nationalist issue once again into the spotlight. While the UK as a whole voted “Leave,” majorities in every constituency in Scotland had voted “Remain.” The pro-EU SNP was quick to point out this asymmetry as proof that Westminster would be pulling Scotland out of the EU against the will of its people and its devolved government. While it remains to be seen what exactly will result from the heated exchanges between Edinburgh and Westminster over Brexit, they are but the latest example of deeper national identity tensions that have been simmering for some time in the UK. Particularly since devolution, national identity politics has garnered increased attention in Britain, even becoming a question in the most recent Scottish census. According to that census, conducted in 2011, a large majority of Scots (nearly two-thirds) identify themselves as “Scottish only,” despite one of the other options being “Scottish and British.” This seems to have been a fairly steady number; polls as recently as 2015 (I could not find similar poll questions asked since the Brexit vote) have pegged Scottish national identification at similar levels.

But what exactly do modern-day Scots answering these questions believe “Scottish” to mean? This appears to be a much less commonly asked survey...
question, but one that is no less important to either scholars or politicians. For one, Scots have generally tended to be more liberal than the British on the whole. Long a Labour stronghold, Scotland further entrenched to the left of center during the Thatcher era, when successive Tory governments were perceived by many to be mistreating Scotland. More recently, the Scottish government has repeatedly come to blows over policy with Tory governments under David Cameron and now Theresa May.

These political conflicts with Westminster are often implicitly placed into a broader narrative of resistance to London control and defense of Scottish sovereignty, which invokes memories of the “freedom fighter” William Wallace. This works in tandem with the second main component of Scottish nationhood: the cultivation of a common national history, much of it spent in conflict with England. Finally, as part of this creation of a Scottish history, a plethora of distinctly Scottish symbols have come to embody the nation’s cultural identity, such as the kilt, the bagpipes, the Saltire (the cross of St. Andrew, also Scotland’s flag), Scotch whisky, the awe-inspiring Highland outdoors, etc.

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Events such as Brexit and the potential of another Scottish independence referendum are certainly modern crisis points, and politicians waste no time in connecting current events to the storied British past. It is actually quite remarkably

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241 Thatchism is broadly understood to have been a major contributing factor to Scottish feelings of alienation and louder calls for devolution, which would eventually come under the Tony Blair government.
the extent to which British politics is historically informed. In 2011, Alex Salmond provided an artful example:

So let me finish with the words of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, who addressed this parliament in 1706, before it was adjourned for 300 years. He observed that: “All nations are dependent; the one upon the many.” This much we know. But he warned that if the greater must always swallow the lesser, we are all diminished. His fears were realised in 1707. But the age of empires is over. Now we determine our own future based on our own needs.\footnote{Alex Salmond, “Time to seize the moment: Alex Salmond’s speech in full” \textit{The Herald} (18 May 2011). http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13030188.Time_to_seize_the_moment__Alex_Salmond___s_speech_in_full/}

Scotland has faced countless crisis points before and since the period 1688-1707. As Salmond says, they determine their own future, and today Scotland faces a modern crisis point. We are all anxious to see what they do next.
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