

Allan I. Macinnes and Douglas J. Hamilton, eds., *Jacobitism, Enlightenment and Empire, 1680-1820*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014. £60. ISBN 9781848924665.

Jacobitism provides the principal common thread to this volume of essays, although in truth it features marginally in several of them, and barely, if at all, in others. The underlying theme that the editors propose is an important one: namely, that the role of Jacobitism in the integration of Scotland and Scots within Britain's burgeoning empire, and to the history of that empire, can be characterized by positive adaptation, great reserves of ingenuity and fixity of purpose; and that, looking at the relationship in reverse, empire, and the prospects for advancement and prosperity with which it was associated, played a crucial part in denuding the Stuart cause of support from the Scottish landed classes.

Probably the first of these propositions will be a bit less familiar than the latter. It is useful, nevertheless, to have the arguments developed strongly in a number of the chapters, especially those by one of the editors, Allan Macinnes and George K. McGilvary. An interesting tension to emerge between Macinnes's chapter and one by Stuart Nisbet, on the rise of Captain William McDowall of Garthland and James Milliken as Caribbean plantation owners, bears on another of this volume's recurrent themes, the nature of Scottish patriotism. For McDowall and Milliken, their Scottishness played an apparently very limited role in their activities or indeed modes of operation; and that they ended up as Scottish landowners in the 1720s was partly accidental, although it also reflected the growing power of Glasgow in the Atlantic trades. Partly this was a function of chronology – they were operating before Scottish networks had become entrenched in the Caribbean – but it also bears on how we think about Scottish global adventuring in this period, and the degree to which Scottish activities in this context were distinctive. Esther Mijers looks at Scottish-Dutch connections, tracing and exploring not just their huge significance to Scottish society both before and after the Union, but also the degree to which they contributed to an essentially cosmopolitan habit and disposition especially amongst Scottish merchants. This undoubtedly aided them powerfully in building networks that, before 1707, helped them circumvent the impact of the Navigation and Alien Acts, but also provided a springboard to success in the imperial trades and adventuring post-1707. Sarah Barber writes about the growing opportunities that existed for Scots and Irish on the Caribbean islands as Church of England clergy.

Several of the chapters, including those by Daniel Szechi and Nicola Cowmeadow, concern Jacobitism as it has been more conventionally examined – as a subversive political force and important element in Scottish society. In what is a typically robust contribution, Szechi reconsiders the military reputation of James VIII and III, usually cursorily dismissed by historians relying on essentially Whiggish accounts of the final stages of the 1715 rebellion. Szechi makes a strong case for a rather different appraisal of James as a competent, even courageous and rather strategically astute military commander. Cowmeadow offers a shrewd and thoughtful account of the role of Margaret, Lady Nairn in supporting the interests of her husband and family before and after the '15 rising, raising a series of broader questions about the role of noblewomen in Scottish politics and society in this period, and neatly aligning Scotland with similar kinds of studies for noblewomen elsewhere in the British Isles. In perhaps the most original and compelling of the chapters, Jeffrey Stephen provides a detailed and rich reading of the famous Greenshields case of 1711.

The final three chapters are, like so much else in this volume, of considerable interest, but varied in focus. Liam McIlvanney's is the one that sits most oddly, exploring the 'global horizons' of Burns's verse and his reception in New Zealand, including his influence on Scottish diasporic writers in that country. Jean-Francois Dunyach uses the career of William

Playfair, brother of the much better known John, to probe the nature of enlightenment below the level of ‘charmed circle’, as Lord Dacre once referred to the Moderate literati of Edinburgh. Douglas Hamilton concludes the volume with a suggestive account of those Scots who campaigned against abolitionism, a topic that within the wider British context has begun to receive much closer attention. Hamilton argues, very plausibly, that Jacobitism had a submerged role to play in this, in that returned Jacobite gentry and plantation owners retained powerful memories of an earlier loss of property rights that conditioned their responses to the new threat posed by Thomas Clarkson and his abolitionist movement.

Uniformly scholarly and based on some careful and often intriguing research, viewed as a whole the essays in this volume will serve to draw wider attention to a very important project being led by Professor Macinnes on Jacobite adventuring and networks in the first British empire. Collections like this frequently suffer, however, from problems of overall coherence and uneasy editorial compromises; and I’m afraid this is true of this one. Some of the essays, nevertheless, undoubtedly deserve a wide readership.

Bob Harris
University of Oxford