

**Monuments and the Margins:
Old Age and Memories of Scottish Jacobitism in the
Epitaph of Marjory Scott, 1700-1900**

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Abstract

In *c.* 1728, the Edinburgh poet Alexander Pennecuik (1684-1730) published an epitaph on the centenarian Marjory Scott of Dunkeld. Over the next two centuries, this text was widely circulated in a variety of media. This thesis argues that the Scott epitaph functioned as a textual monument to the anti-Union and Jacobite politics of Pennecuik's day, over a period when Jacobite memory was delimited and trivialised in the public sphere. Close study of the epitaph's original context and its transmission reveals such sources of memory to be highly portable and also flexible, suitable to the heterogeneous identities and memories of Scottish people. As a tribute to a centenarian, the epitaph further opens up an exploration of old age as a conduit for diverse memories and as a multivalent symbol of Scottish identity.

Keywords: Scotland; memory; textual monumentality; old age; Anglo-Scottish Union; Jacobitism

To the dead: “In my heart’s a memory, and there you’ll always be.”

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From Alexander Pennecuik, *Entertainments for the Curious*, no. 1 ([Edinburgh]: [1728?]): 1. Edited. Image reproduced with permission from the Faculty of Advocates Abbotsford Collection Trust.

Chapter 1. Introduction

On the Grave stone of Marjory Scot[t] of Dunkel[d].

STOP, Passenger, until my Life you read,
The Living may get Knowledge from the dead;
Five Times five Years, I liv'd a Virgin Life
Five Times five Years, I was a virtuous Wife;
Ten Times five Years, a Widow grave and chaste;
Tir'd of the Elements, *I'm now at rest:*
Betwixt my Cradle, and my Grave were seen,
Eight mighty Kings of *Scotland*, and a Queen;
Three Commonwealths successively I saw,
Ten Times the Subjects, rise against the LAW;
And which is worse than any civil War,
A KING arraign'd before the *Subjects Bar*;
Swarms of *Sectarians*, hot with hellish Rage;
Cut off his Royal HEAD on *open Stage*;
Twice did I see, old *Prelacy* pull'd down,
And twice the *Cloak*, did sink beneath the *Gown*.—
I saw an End of STEWART Race; nay more,
I saw our Country *sold* for *English Ore*;
Our num'rous Nobles, who have famous been,
Sunk to the lowly Number of *Sixteen*.—
Such *Desolations* in my Days hath been,
I have, *An End of all Perfection seen*.¹

The above epitaph might have proved a study in ephemerality. Available evidence suggests that it was never inscribed in stone. Sir Walter Scott's library at Abbotsford preserves the only known surviving copy of its original publication in a short-lived, modestly-subscribed magazine with the trifling title *Entertainments for the Curious* (c. 1728). *Entertainments* was the Edinburgh poet Alexander Pennecuik's (1684-1730) final attempt at publishing in a form of print more prestigious than the broadside press. He was shortly to die in a state of poverty, apparently unnoticed by the few Edinburgh newspapers of the day. Although Pennecuik's works achieved some popularity, the quality of his output was uneven, and the epitaph for Marjory Scott is not among his

¹ Alexander Pennecuik, *Entertainments for the Curious*, no. 1 ([Edinburgh]: [1728?]): 1. While some scholars and primary sources use the Scottish *Stewart*, I will use the spelling ("Stuart") more common in modern scholarship.

technically-superior efforts. A few lines are recycled from a poem by Pennecuik's late uncle.² The subject matter is not strikingly original; indeed, there is another poem in *Entertainments for the Curious* which takes a centenarian woman and her reminiscences as its subject.³ It does not seem to have been reprinted. This thesis is about why Marjory Scott's epitaph, from such an unpromising beginning, enjoyed a long life and secured a place of modest note in Scottish literary history. I argue that this text belongs to a narrative of the Scottish past which endured on the margins of Scottish public memory throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: a narrative which expressed quiet doubt on the place of the nation within the British state.

1.1. The Scottish Past

In *Remembering the Past in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, James J. Coleman revisits the fraught question of Scottish national identity, this time through the lens of commemoration: in the observation of anniversaries, and in discourses surrounding the building of commemorative monuments.⁴ Coleman's account largely accords with Graeme Morton's notion of "Unionist-nationalism." Where earlier scholars puzzled over the absence of agitation for a Scottish nation-state in the nineteenth century, Morton exposed a vibrant "abstract" Scottish nationalism that celebrated the advantages of the 1707 Union with England and evinced no particular need for the independent parliament forfeited in that year; the robust institutions of Scottish civil society were sufficient to sustain a sense of self-definition.⁵ In Coleman's commemorative culture, the grand narrative of the Scottish past was directed towards "providential unionism"; even the great medieval hero William Wallace was framed as a defender of a broader British liberty, whose preservation of an independent Scotland had allowed Scotland to enter the

² Alexander Pennecuik [senior], "Upon the Death of Alexander Pennecuik of New-Hall," *The Works of Alexander Pennecuik, Esq., of New-Hall* [. . .], ed. Robert Brown (Leith: A. Allardice, 1815), 366-67.

³ Pennecuik, "Inscription for the Grave Stone of Mrs Tod," *Entertainments for the Curious* no. 2: 9-10.

⁴ Coleman, *Remembering the Past in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Commemoration, Nationality and Memory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 4.

⁵ Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 10.

1707 Union as England's equal.⁶ Commemorations especially centred the Williamite Revolution of 1688-89 as the making of British civil liberty, secured through the prolonged revolutionary sacrifices of Scottish Presbyterians.⁷ As a consequence, Scottish nationality "had no place for the Jacobite[s]" who actively resisted this Revolution Settlement well into the eighteenth century. Theirs was "the ideology of the villains," the last gasp of Catholic despotism in Britain. Their monuments were few, and were strictly focussed on the romanticisation of Jacobitism's misguided Highland adherents, whose virtues were redeemed through their later service to the British Empire.⁸

Coleman and Morton are participants in what Alasdair Raffe characterises as "a unionist turn" in Scottish historiography, which seeks to rescue the 1707 Union from its broadly negative portrayal in mid-to-late twentieth-century scholarship.⁹ In 1993, Colin Kidd, one of the leaders of the unionist turn, described the declining prestige of Scottish history in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries as one impact of the forging of the British state, due to the inability of Scottish historians to construct a narrative of Scotland's past to suit the Whig conception of history that increasingly prevailed.¹⁰ Scottish historians turned instead to the more respectable and ideologically-satisfying history of England; "[t]he usable past was truly a foreign country,"¹¹ and Scottishness was subsumed by Anglo-Britishness. Marinell Ash similarly found a fragmentation of and detachment from the Scottish past in the historiography and academic settings of the

⁶ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 35, 51, 187.

⁷ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 34-35.

⁸ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 42-43, 35, 156-59, 165, 177. Jacobites were adherents of the Catholic Stuart dynasty in exile, unseated by the co-regents William II (1650-1702) and Mary II (1662-1694) of Scotland in 1689. This crux of Whig history is commonly referred to as the Glorious Revolution—a contemporary label which refers to the relative absence of revolutionary violence in England, writing out the violence in Scotland and Ireland. Pittock, "The British People: Description or Denial?", in "Scotland 2014 and Beyond – Coming of Age and Loss of Innocence?", ed. Klaus Peter Müller, special issue, *Scottish Studies International* 39 (2015): 81.

⁹ Raffe, "1707, 2007, and the Unionist Turn in Scottish History," *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 4 (December 2010): 1071-83.

¹⁰ Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹¹ Kidd, "The Strange Death of Scottish History' Revisited: Constructions of the Past in Scotland, c. 1790-1914," *The Scottish Historical Review* 76, no. 201 (April 1997): 87.

nineteenth century.¹² Coleman and Morton, among others, have heavily revised this narrative with their depictions of the Scottish past as it lived in the patriotic memories¹³ of the nineteenth-century Scottish public sphere. There, at least, the Union did not mark the subordination of the Scottish past, or of its corollary: Scottish identity.

It is not my aim in this thesis to undermine the side of nineteenth-century Scottish identity described by Morton and found by Coleman to be reflected in the public monuments of the same period. My intentions, rather, are to attempt to look through dominant public discourses, and especially to question the significance of public monuments as vessels of collective memory. I will do this by demonstrating the existence and the meaningfulness of alternative forms of monumentality and memory through the example of Marjory Scott's epitaph. This *textual* monument retained a nineteenth-century currency while telling a story of Scotland that is in many ways the opposite of that told by the builders of public monuments: Jacobite, anti-Union, and declensionist. From this point of view, Scottish nationality was endangered by the Union rather than preserved through it. The text also represents another medium of memory with the potential to contradict dominant narratives: the personal recollections of the aged.

1.2. Memory and Monumentality

Coleman bases his reading of national memory on the nineteenth-century ideal of a community bound together by a "common purpose, inherited from the past, articulated in the present, and projected into the future." These visions of past, present, and future were presumed to be the products "not [of] privileged elites but [. . . of] the masses."¹⁴ However, this latter aspect is not especially compatible with the expression of national identity through public monuments.¹⁵ In fact, in claiming to depict so broad a collective

¹² Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1980).

¹³ According to Pierre Nora's problematic distinction, memory is an actively-expressed "bond" between the past and the present, whereas the discipline of history objectifies and distances the past through its aims of "analysis and criticism." Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 8-9.

¹⁴ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 7, 9.

¹⁵ It should be noted that the PhD dissertation on which Coleman's book is based is more nuanced, acknowledging the heterogeneity of national identity and at one point drawing attention to the

sense of Scottish identity, Coleman is staking a bolder claim than Morton; the latter is clear that the phenomenon he describes was the nationalism of Scotland's urban middle class, and was one among multiple "stories of Scottish national identity in the nineteenth century."¹⁶ The urban middle class, as the chief beneficiaries of the economic revolution and imperial access Union entailed, had the most reason to celebrate it.¹⁷ I make no claim to have uncovered some alternative Scottish nationality that fell along lines of class or other identities; I expect the picture is far more complicated than that. I do think it is important to remember that the benefits of Union and empire were unevenly distributed, and the processes of improvement that transformed the Scottish economy were often felt as traumas.¹⁸ This does not necessarily mean that such grievances would have been directed at the Union or the Hanoverian crown. Both were "settled realit[ies],"¹⁹ but acceptance of a *fait accompli* cannot be conflated with the enthusiastic approval of Unionist-nationalism and the Whig narrative of history. The Whig narrative looked to the past as a story of advancement towards what were perceived as the liberties of the capitalist present—commercialization, industrialization, and the expansion of a beneficent empire.

Other scholars have foregrounded the power dynamics involved in collective memory,²⁰ of which public monuments are a quintessential display. Even if they can be said to represent a majority view, they are "products of elite manipulation"²¹ that

representative limitations of the commemorative practices he describes. Nevertheless, since the monograph is likelier to be the basis for further research it must be treated on its own terms. Coleman, "The Double-Life of the Scottish Past: Discourses in Commemoration in Nineteenth-Century Scotland" (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2005), 268, 297.

¹⁶ Morton, *Unionist Nationalism*, 20.

¹⁷ Robert Crawford, *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and Literary Imagination, 1314-2014* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 100.

¹⁸ E.g. Stana Nenadic, "Industrialization and the Scottish People," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, ed. T. M. Devine and Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 408.

¹⁹ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 34.

²⁰ Some shy away from the very notion of collective memory, which tends to obscure the complexities and conflicts of memory as experienced by individuals. Anne Rigney, "Portable Monuments: Literature, Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans," *Poetics Today* 25, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 365; Charles W. J. Withers, "Place, Memory, Monument: Memorializing the Past in Contemporary Highland Scotland," *Ecumene* 3, no. 3 (1996): 325.

²¹ John Bodnan, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 20.

“represent selective historical narratives [. . .] that are comfortable with political elites.”²² Charles W. J. Withers has explored one of the most pointed examples of this dynamic in Scottish history: the still-controversial monument to the first Duke of Sutherland (1758-1833), completed in 1834. The monument’s inscription declares that the towering figure, “Of Loved Revered and Cherished Memory,” was “Erected by Tenants and Friends.” Sutherland was and is one of the most despised figures of what later became known as the Highland Clearances—a long period of localized depopulations in the Scottish Highlands, for various reasons and with widely varying degrees of coercion.²³ While it is true that some of Sutherland’s tenants contributed funds to the monument, their donations were solicited in a period when the implicit threat of eviction was ever-present. “They were evicted anyway.”²⁴

None of the monuments examined by Coleman have such flagrantly troubled origins, although the public sphere exerts its own, more subtle pressures. These innumerable complications render the gaps “between private and public modes of remembrance [. . .] difficult, if not impossible, to record.”²⁵ While the leaders of the mid-century movement for the National Wallace Monument at Stirling possessed a range of views on Union and on the meaning of Wallace’s legacy, public discourse was reined in by the “moderate” majority.²⁶ Beyond the self-policing of the Scottish middle class, English opinion was highly influential. When an initial plan for the design of the monument symbolically depicted Wallace’s victory over the English, the disapproval of the Scottish press was dwarfed by that from the London *Times*, which dismissed Wallace as “the merest myth” and condemned his memorialisation as “the perpetuation, under the

²² Federico Bellentani and Mario Panico, “The Meanings of Monuments and Memorials: Toward a Semiotic Approach,” *Punctum* 2, no. 1 (2016): 29.

²³ For a balanced assessment of these phenomena and the construction of simplified narratives surrounding them, see Eric Richards, *Debating the Highland Clearances* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), especially 23, 52-53, 64.

²⁴ Withers, “Place, Memory, Monument,” 330.

²⁵ Craig Lamont, “Allan Ramsay and Edinburgh: Commemoration in the City of Forgetting,” *Scottish Literary Review* 10, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2018): 124.

²⁶ Coleman, “Double-Life of the Scottish Past,” 297.

name of nationality, of a silly provincialism.”²⁷ While Coleman acknowledges that this monument ended up as “an exercise in not annoying the English,” he does not allow this to complicate the monument’s representation of “Scots’ perception of themselves as [England’s] equal partners.”²⁸

This is not to say that the commemorative discourses Coleman explores were not influential or reflective of widely-held beliefs. The malleability of historical memory is well-established, and middle-class domination of the public sphere alongside Presbyterian domination of Scottish religious life were surely formidable tools for shaping views of the past. Commemorations of the seventeenth-century militant Presbyterian Covenanters, especially, were rooted in a long-held popular memory which achieved even wider purchase over the course of the century.²⁹ The picture Coleman paints, though, is of an almost monopolistic hold on Scottish memory. By framing national memory as it was defined in the nineteenth century—unidirectional and essentialist—Coleman at times comes close to portraying the Scottish people as “a homogen[e]ous mass.”³⁰ A few exceptions are made for views outside of the dominant paradigms, but in the narrowness of the public sphere these dissenters appear as lonely, renegade eccentrics.³¹ It does not necessarily follow that their opinions were quite so rare in the wider population.

²⁷ “The Wallace Monument,” *The Times* 14 February 1859, quoted in Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 55-56. The charge of provincialism was an especially stinging insult, as from the time of Union some Scots worried that Scotland, far from being England’s equal, was “England’s province.” Crawford, *Bannockburns*, 89.

²⁸ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 56.

²⁹ The Covenanting movement, named for two Covenants drawn up in 1638 and 1643, began in opposition to the Episcopalian religious policies of Charles I (1600-49). These commitments to Presbyterian religion in Scotland and the British Isles were revived with the return of Episcopalianism at the Restoration of Charles II.

³⁰ Christopher Whatley and Derek J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 55. This limiting tendency in describing national memory was present in the pioneering works of Nora. See: Michael Rothberg, “Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de Mémoire to Noeuds de Mémoire,” in “Noeuds de Mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture,” special issue, *Yale French Studies*, no. 118/119 (2010): 4-6.

³¹ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 59-60, 177, 180.

Not all of Coleman's methods of demonstrating the deep-seatedness of public commemorative culture are convincing. Coleman cites impressive figures of attendance at anniversary celebrations and unveilings of monuments, but Christopher Whatley recommends caution in analyzing motives for participation in public spectacle and leisure.³² Even donations towards the building of the National Wallace Monument do not necessarily indicate subscription to the interpretation of Wallace's legacy that won out in the public sphere. The simple fact is that the sources historians are left with give little indication of the private thoughts of the vast majority of people in the nineteenth century and before, and this silence should not be filled in with assumptions on the basis of dominant voices. Even if we accept that certain viewpoints were as marginal in the lived experience of the past as they are in the archives of the present, the history of the margins also deserves to be told, as far as it is possible to do so.³³ Such an examination of alternative memories cannot depend on the kind of bold and coherent outward significations that characterise Coleman's commemorative culture. I look instead to the existence of media which were actively perpetuated even though they would not pass the political scrutiny applied to organized public commemoration. While there are some examples of stated adherence to these counter-memories, my focus is more on how Jacobite and anti-Union narratives *might* have been able to speak to the concerns of the present.

Jacobitism and anti-Unionism were marginalised from the beginning, in part through their opposition to the state, but also through constructed and actual associations with marginalised groups. Jacobite ideology and opposition to Union were pragmatically aligned, and pro-Union rhetoricians used this fact to discredit anti-Unionists who would not wish to be seen as Jacobites.³⁴ Jacobitism, in turn, was often portrayed as the ideology favoured by religious minorities, women, the criminalised, the backwards Gael, and the

³² Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 2; Whatley, "Memorialising Burns: Dundee and Montrose Compared" (working paper, 2010): 7, http://www.glasgowheart.org/media/media_183298_en.pdf.

³³ Murray Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2.

³⁴ Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 54.

enemies of proto-capitalist developments.³⁵ Following the defeat at Culloden in the Jacobite uprising of 1745-6, a punitive campaign and occupation of Scotland saw the final decline of serious hopes for a Stuart restoration, which were ended in 1788 by the death of Charles Edward Stuart (Charles III to Jacobites). “Sentimental” Jacobitism is what remained. With the dynastic threat of Jacobitism defeated, the Jacobite past was trivialised in the nineteenth century through a widespread appropriation—including by the reigning monarchs—of its romantic trappings, collectively labelled tartanisation.³⁶ While this helped to mark Scottish cultural difference from the English, Coleman argues that this was “a veneer, a simple shorthand for Scottish nationality,” rather than “the thing itself.” Whatever Jacobitism contributed in aesthetic terms, its historical role was at odds with the story of the Scottish nation emphasised in public commemoration.³⁷ Just as Jacobitism meant different things to different people in the eighteenth century, however, it is not too much to suspect that the same was been true of Jacobite memory in the nineteenth century.

There were some Scottish communities whose adherence to Jacobitism in the eighteenth century translated to Jacobite memory in the nineteenth. For example, in chronicling the survival, and slight revival, of Scottish Episcopalianism in the nineteenth century, Rowan Strong finds hints of the importance of Jacobite heritage to this minority religious identity. The Episcopal kirk, disestablished at the Williamite Revolution, was strongly associated with Jacobitism. As a consequence, the community endured cycles of repression at the height of the Jacobite political threat. After a Jacobite restoration became politically impossible, the church officially renounced its Jacobite past and was able to operate with fewer restraints.³⁸ The small rural communities of the north-east,

³⁵ See especially Carine Martin, “‘Female Rebels’: The Female Figure in Anti-Jacobite Propaganda,” in *Living with Jacobitism, 1690-1788: The Three Kingdoms and Beyond*, ed. Allan MacInnes, Kieran German, and Lesley Graham (London: Pickering and Chatto: 2014), 85-98; Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Routledge, 1989), ; Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

³⁶ Morton, *Unionist Nationalism*, 20; Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland: The Stuart Myth and the Scottish Identity, 1638 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1991), 99-105.

³⁷ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 155-56.

³⁸ Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Religious Responses to a Modernizing Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 32, 153, 157-58, 295-96.

however, maintained an oral tradition of the persecutions of the Jacobite era, and the Episcopalian fisherfolk remembered with pride how their smuggling activities had been a thorn in the side of the eighteenth-century state.³⁹ There was also a national dimension to this memory. Without the resources of an established church, the Episcopalian establishment was financially dependent on its Anglican counterpart. The result was the near total Anglicisation of what had been a distinct national confession. However, in the resistance to Anglicisation, expressed with greater confidence towards the end of the century, Jacobite memory seems to have played a role.⁴⁰

While the revisionists of Jacobite history have shown the ideological apparatus of Jacobitism to be far more complex than the dynastic contest at its core,⁴¹ there is a tendency among some historians to read all sentimental Jacobitism as a frivolous pastime entirely robbed of social and political implications. In the realm of memory, Jacobitism is consigned to the category of nostalgia, a futile longing for something belonging to a past beyond reach of the present. In a recent discussion, Cairns Craig suggests that Scottish nostalgia is worth a closer look. While the temporal dimension of nostalgia was especially characteristic of the nineteenth century, the concept of nostalgia, dating from the late seventeenth century, was conceived as an affliction of spatial separation from an often-national home. While some scholars have treated the temporal and the spatial dimensions as separate, Craig shows how they can interact, so that even temporal iterations of nostalgia can have national significance.⁴² Putting the question of nation aside, I suggest that the “nostalgic attachment to the feudal certainties of a bygone age” which Coleman ascribes to sentimental Jacobitism should not be read as insignificant.⁴³

³⁹ Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 63, 67, 90. The fisherfolk slur on Hanoverians as “Egyptians” echoes the eighteenth-century metaphor of Episcopalian Jacobites as persecuted Hebrews: Niall MacKenzie, “‘Dougal MacCullony, I Am Glad to See Thee!’: Gaelic Etymology, Jacobite Culture, and ‘Exodus Politics,’” *Scottish Studies Review* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 46.

⁴⁰ Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 291, 310-11.

⁴¹ With the narrowly-defined political goals of Jacobitism beyond reach, Jacobite ideology filtered into diverse political movements, from the “conservative” to the “radical.” Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland*, 113.

⁴² Craig, *The Wealth of the Nation: Scotland, Culture and Independence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 157-64.

⁴³ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 156.

Even if it did not find obvious political expression, and even as it represents a misreading of past realities, imagined alternatives to the capitalist industrialism of the nineteenth century might have been at least some respite and even inspiration to those who suffered under it. As Craig posits, nostalgia can be “the recollection of values by which the future ought to be shaped.”⁴⁴ While the Scott epitaph does not offer much of a vision of futurity, its damning criticism of the path Scotland took at the Union belongs to a broader framework of anti-commercial discourse.

It is nevertheless clear that a great many nineteenth-century Scots enjoyed the romantic elements of Jacobitism while entertaining little to no sympathy with its social and political outlook. For example, the Home Rule campaigner and Gaelic revivalist John Stuart Blackie (1809-95) remarked on the popular enjoyment of Jacobite song with praise for its celebration of Scottish character but with condemnation of the historical movement. Coleman concludes that Jacobite song had nothing to contribute to nineteenth-century Scottish identity aside from admiration for the “bravery and loyalty” of Scottish Gaels.⁴⁵

While Coleman is right to point out that “being open to the drama of [Jacobite] stories and songs did not make one a de facto Jacobite,” this is too swift a dismissal of the potential for more meaningful readings of a central aspect of Scottish culture. Songs and poems, transmitted orally or in print, are certainly among the most pervasive and accessible of commemorative media. Scottish poetry, and especially song, have been credited with maintaining a distinct Scottish identity in the eighteenth century and beyond.⁴⁶ Those works that engage with the eighteenth-century past are overwhelmingly couched in the Jacobite perspective, even though the repertoire was much changed from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ It could even be suggested that the Jacobite

⁴⁴ Craig, *Wealth of the Nation*, 170.

⁴⁵ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 163-64.

⁴⁶ E.g. Ruth Perry, “‘The Finest Ballads’: Women’s Oral Traditions in Eighteenth-Century Scotland,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 32, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 82-5.

⁴⁷ The best-known representative of the Scottish song tradition, Robert Burns (1759-1796), remarked that “the Scot[t]ish muses were all Jacobites.” “Burns MS.,” in *The Songs of Robert Burns and Notes on Scottish Songs by Robert Burns*, ed. James C. Dick (Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates, 1962), 4-5.

epoch of Scottish history was better told through the contemporary record of song, “still thrilling in a nation’s ears,” than in the scholarly histories of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ What is more, Jacobite songs still had the potential to ruffle feathers long after the Stuart dynasty became extinct. When the writer James Hogg (1770-1835) was commissioned by the Highland Society of London to produce a collection of Jacobite songs, his patrons were displeased to find the results (published in 1819 and 1821) more incendiary than the pleasant, romantic ditties they had desired.⁴⁹

Rather than taking such statements as Blackie’s as a reflection of popular appraisal, we might ask why it was necessary to circumscribe the enjoyment of Jacobite song in a public forum: that is, whether such statements were prescription as much as description. Songs and poetry were believed to have persuasive power. These were the “humble weapons”⁵⁰ with which Jacobitism had been sustained as an active threat to the British state for more than half a century. The writer and politician Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1653-1716) had once famously remarked that “if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation.”⁵¹ Verse had the advantages of emotionality and mobility, but its mnemonic properties were also considered vital. Songs might be the last things remembered in the amnesia of old age.⁵² In childhood, they were “the first things committed to memory,” and so long as that was true they would “form and influence ways of thinking.”⁵³

In 1861, a proponent of the Whig narrative of history described “a foolish, sentimental generation, whose only ideas of Scottish history are taken from novels,

⁴⁸ [Elizabeth Youatt?], “Scottish Song,” *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* 15, no. 178 (October 1848): 671.

⁴⁹ Hogg enhanced the political charge of his collection by weaving in criticism of the transformation of the Gaelic Highlands. William Donaldson, *The Jacobite Song: Political Myth and National Identity* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 105-09.

⁵⁰ Alexander B. Grosart, “Introduction,” in *English Jacobite Ballads, Songs and Satires, etc. From the MSS. at Towneley Hall, Lancashire*, ed. Grosart (Manchester: the editor, 1877), xii.

⁵¹ Quoted in Crawford, *Scotland’s Books: A History of Scottish Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 217.

⁵² Elizabeth Youatt, “Old Songs,” *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* 15 169 (January 1848): 58.

⁵³ John Struthers, “Preface,” *The Harp of Caledonia: A Collection of Songs, Ancient and Modern (Chiefly Scottish)* (Glasgow: Archibald Fullarton, 1819), 1:iii, quoted in Donaldson, *Jacobite Song*, 3.

songs, and ballads. It is impossible to speak the truth about [. . .] the Revolution [. . .] without giving offence to such persons.”⁵⁴ Even allowing for an element of anxious exaggeration in this observation, it is clear that not everyone imbibed Jacobite romance with passive enjoyment. While the interventions of Blackie and others give due warning that the significance of these remnants of Jacobite culture cannot be assumed, there is more work to be done to understand how Jacobite verse operated on nineteenth-century memories of the Scottish past. By following one Jacobite verse—Marjory Scott’s epitaph—from its origins to its circulation in the nineteenth century, I hope to demonstrate how a closer reading of Jacobite and anti-Union texts, as *loci* of meaningful memory, might be carried out. Scholars of Jacobitism have already demonstrated how the “language and themes” of broader Jacobite discourse diffused into different “form[s],”⁵⁵ and my study will likewise explore how the message of the epitaph continued to reflect discourses in Scottish society: those which, as Coleman puts it, “were predicated as much on what Scotland had lost as on what it possessed.”⁵⁶

Chapter 2 will pick up the threads of the historical background introduced above, in order to understand what is at stake in the epitaph’s perspective on the Scottish past. The examination of context will then narrow to the immediate circumstances of the epitaph’s production, from what little can be known of its subject to the character and concerns of its author. I will then analyze the text as it may have been interpreted by contemporary and later readers.

In chapter 3, I will place the epitaph in the context of what Whatley has called “the struggle for the soul of Scotland,” between the Whig and Jacobite visions of Scottish identity.⁵⁷ This ideological battle was played out in part through efforts to preserve Whig

⁵⁴ James Mackenzie, *Our Country: A History of Scotland for the Young* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1861), iv. Another historian similarly imputes to “even sober students” the fault of taking “poetical myths . . . as grave and indisputable facts.” Willmott Dixon, *The Jacobite Episode in Scottish History and Its Relative Literature* (Edinburgh: John Menzies, 1874), 1-2.

⁵⁵ Pittock, “Jacobite Literature and National Identities,” in *British Identities and the English Renaissance Literature*, ed. David J. Baker and Willy Maley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 242.

⁵⁶ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 179-80.

⁵⁷ Whatley, “Reformed Religion, Regime Change, Scottish Whigs and the Struggle for the ‘Soul’ of Scotland, c. 1688-1788,” *The Scottish Historical Review* 92, no. 233 (April 2013): 66-99.

or Jacobite memory for posterity. The commemorative media available to Jacobites were limited by the seditious nature of Jacobitism, but these limitations fit into a discourse, stretching from antiquity into the modern era, on the ideal medium of remembrance. As Ann Rigney points out, “[t]he idea that texts resemble monuments is very old.”⁵⁸ While recent scholarship tends to assume that “a monument is a tangible, material construction,” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the word referred at least as often “to written texts.”⁵⁹ However, if public monuments announce power in part by taking up “space,”⁶⁰ the epitaph, which existed as a material monument in the imaginations of many of its readers, is a particularly compelling example of how textual monuments might also have something like a three-dimensional presence. The last section of chapter 3 will examine significant moments in the epitaph’s wide circulation. Like any other monument, the epitaph’s meaning was flexible.⁶¹ In some encounters with the text, the meaning that is made of it may be inferred, but others are more ambiguous. Nevertheless, I hope to show how Jacobite and anti-Union texts might have been able to speak meaningfully to some Scots even in the nineteenth century.

As well as being a source of memory in its own right, Marjory Scott’s epitaph provides a window into another medium of memory prominent in the nineteenth century: the personal memories of elders, both as eyewitnesses to history and as purveyors of cultural memory. Chapter 4 will explore the role of such memory-bearers in constructions of the Scottish past and Scottish identity. At times viewed as figures of authority and anchors of community identity, the aged, as literary symbols and as a social group, could also be connected in various ways to a perceived fragility and inferiority in Scottish culture. Discourses on the Scotland of the past and the Scotland of the future were often framed in terms of a generational divide, with the old as the embodiments of a past some wished to remember while others preferred to forget. If the Whig interpretation of history

⁵⁸ Rigney, “Portable Monuments,” 383.

⁵⁹ The word was applied even more diversely, in accordance with its Latin etymological source: “reminder.” Wayne R. Dynes, “Monument: The Word,” in *Remove Not the Ancient Landmark”: Public Monuments and Moral Values*, ed. Donald Martin Reynolds (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1996), 27-28.

⁶⁰ Bellentani and Panico, “Meanings of Monuments,” 29.

⁶¹ Bellentani and Panico, “Meanings of Monuments,” 36.

dominated through the marginalisation of local narratives and oral history,⁶² the old were an important source of potential resistance. These diverse readings of old age add dimensions of possible meaning to the Scott epitaph, and likely facilitated its continuing popularity among Scots with diverse views of the past.

1.3. Complexity and Ambiguity

From the last quarter of the nineteenth century, under slowly and unsteadily changing circumstances, a more conventional nationalist movement began to build in Scottish politics. Memory of the Union seemed to have soured. To nationalist campaigners, the legacy of William Wallace had not been fulfilled by Union, but had been betrayed by it. In fits and starts, Jacobite memory became increasingly prominent in expressions of this nationalism.⁶³ This turn has been portrayed, in the shadow of nineteenth-century Unionist-nationalism, as something “new.”⁶⁴ It was not, strictly speaking, new—it was a discourse that developed in response to the Williamite Revolution and the Union. The Jacobite uprising of 1745-6 was in part a culmination of this discourse. Scholars who write about the absence of a nationalist movement in nineteenth-century Scotland sometimes forget that Scotland had already experienced a nationalist uprising in the eighteenth century. It was, as nationalist movements often are, extremely divisive,⁶⁵ and its consequences were disastrous. Its memory was first attacked and then it was appropriated and trivialised, and to some extent this effected the abeyance of meaningful Jacobite and anti-Union memory. I argue that this memory did not entirely lose its capacity to reflect meaningfully on the Scottish present. As much as the nationalist uses of Jacobitism have required reshaping, some degree of continuity might also be part of the story.

⁶² Pittock, *Culloden (Cùil Lodair)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 11.

⁶³ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 176-79; Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 122.

⁶⁴ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 179.

⁶⁵ On the question of whether the Jacobite uprisings were civil wars or national wars, Pittock observes that in history these have nearly always been the same thing. “Description or Denial?”, 81.

In the reading of the epitaph in chapter 2, it is not my aim to enumerate all of the events to which the text alludes. It is more important to understand that the epitaph describes a period of radical instability, evoking memories of considerable gravity for a broad Scottish audience. As the epitaph endured in textual transmission, it seemed to reflect the changes that unfolded around it, most especially the defeat of the Jacobite cause in 1746 and the transformations of Scottish society attached to it. This period encompassed by the epitaph's text and context witnessed dramatic rotations of power, with political and religious parties exchanging the roles of persecutor and persecuted, engendering traumatic memories passed down through generations. While practicality obliged most people to get along regardless of their differences,⁶⁶ on either side—Episcopalian or Presbyterian, Royalist or Covenanter, Jacobite, Williamite or Hanoverian, Tory or Whig⁶⁷—there were extremists willing to deploy violence when tensions strained. Expressions of political and religious opinion in this period are often difficult to interpret, considering elements of state censorship and community coercion—seditious expression was disguised, and self-preservation caused many people to “perjure” themselves making claims of loyalty or taking state-imposed oaths against their true beliefs.⁶⁸ As substantially as things had changed by the following century, one of the questions of this thesis is whether it is possible to take statements on these matters entirely at face value, or whether they were still invested with some amount of political danger. Another question is whether such historical experiences are easily reduced to a unified national memory, as suggested by the confident assertions of the nineteenth-century guardians of public memory.

Even at the level of the individual, ideas about the past may have been more ambivalent than Coleman suggests. One prominent point of reference for the difficulty of reading genuine and consistent opinion is Walter Scott (1771-1832), whose novels

⁶⁶ Clare Jackson, “Union Historiographies,” in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 358.

⁶⁷ Although individual allegiances could be complex, these are broadly consistent oppositional groups. Members of the Episcopalian church were likely to be Royalists in the War of the Three Kingdoms, and Jacobites and Tories following the Williamite Revolution of 1688-89. In Scotland, Whiggery was aligned with Presbyterianism, and this segment of society was likely to support William II and, from 1714, the Hanoverian succession as a preferred alternative to the Stuarts.

⁶⁸ Donaldson, *Jacobite Song*, 29.

occupied the imaginations of a global readership, shaping both internal and external perceptions of Scottish identity. Although often portrayed as an assured Unionist and Whig historian,⁶⁹ Scott's internal struggle to justly reconcile with the past is reflected in his historical fictions, which are subject to continuous debate and reinterpretation. This tension has often been depicted as one "between head and heart," and to some degree between public and private.⁷⁰ While we have precious little access to the thoughts of ordinary people, for others, such as Scott, there exists a superabundance of evidence which does not entirely eliminate ambiguity. Beyond uncovering distinguishable commemorative factions, then, this thesis suggests that the historical memories of Scottish people were context-dependent and capable of accommodating complications.

The Unionist turn has produced much convincing, or at least problematising, evidence. Overcorrection, however, carries the risk of writing out complexities. Most scholars now recognize the nineteenth century as the most harmonious phase of Scottish and English co-existence within the British state. Even then, however, while the architects of public commemoration were telling a largely consistent story, counter-memories, such as those expressed in the Scott epitaph, circulated on the margins, if not to negate then at least to complicate the dominant narrative.

⁶⁹ "Whatever his secret Miltonic sympathies," Scott followed the Whig view of history as an "irreversible" evolution towards liberty, which in the Scottish case was secured through Union as well as the Williamite Revolution. Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 88.

⁷⁰ Ash, *Strange Death of Scottish History*, 14.

Chapter 2. “Divided hearts, united states”¹

*Not for Tearlach² alone the red claymore was plying,
But to bring back the old life that comes not again.*

Andrew Lang, “Culloden,” 1898

Before showing how Marjory Scott’s epitaph functioned as a monument in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is necessary to understand some of the meanings that could be made of the text. This chapter will explore the epitaph’s relationship to Scottish historical narratives, first by reviewing some historical background. Next, I will explain the immediate context out of which the epitaph arose. Finally, I will present a reading of the epitaph and its relationship to Jacobitism, anti-Unionism, and Scottish experiences in the period of the epitaph’s circulation. While this chapter analyses the original version of the epitaph and occasionally notes variations that occurred in textual transmission, the textual instability of the epitaph is addressed more fully in chapter 3.

2.1. Background and Historiography

The epitaph is embedded in two related and highly contentious topics in Scottish history: the Anglo-Scottish parliamentary Union of 1707, and the Jacobite era retrospectively seen to have ended with the battle of Culloden in 1746. These two years came to play symbolic roles, representing transformative experiences which in reality were long-term and complex processes. 1707 was often shorthand either for Scotland’s salvation or its demise. 1746 put the seal on the Union, and became the year in which Scotland’s Gaelic culture went into final remission, and with it Scotland’s stubborn resistance to “British modernity.”³ Since these narratives intersect with the memories invested in the epitaph, a brief overview is necessary.

¹ Jonathan Swift, “On the Union,” in *The Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Walter Scott (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1814), 14:69.

² Charles Edward Stuart (1720-88), Jacobite claimant to the British and Irish thrones and leader of the rebellion of 1745-6.

³ Pittock, *Culloden*, 140.

The Union occurred after centuries of conflict between England and Scotland; indeed, it was often against England that an early sense of Scottish national identity was defined.⁴ In 1603, the Scottish monarch ascended to the English throne, from which point the crown tended to favour the interests of the larger and wealthier southern kingdom.⁵ From the 1690s, a series of economic and political blows directed Scotland towards Union as a solution—not necessarily permanent—to its ills.⁶ While the material significance of the Scottish parliament has been questioned,⁷ it is nevertheless clear that many people received the Union as a meaningful national loss at least on a symbolic level. What evidence exists of popular opinion shows an overwhelmingly negative reception of the Union, especially as an incorporating rather than a federal arrangement. While the *vox populi* was not allowed to weigh on the final parliamentary decision, it did influence negotiations on the Union's particulars, to the cautious satisfaction of some concerned parties.⁸ After a half-century of painful economic adjustment to the Union, Scotland's expanding economy and increasingly prominent role in the British Empire led a growing number of Scots to see the Union as a beneficial arrangement.⁹

While recent histories have emphasised the fact that various parties—Scottish as well as English—had for the preceding two centuries entertained plans for some kind of union between the two nations,¹⁰ and that Scots increasingly accepted and even celebrated the Union, the context of 1707 should not be disregarded. Even the historians

⁴ Michael Lynch, "A Nation Born Again? Scottish Identity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Image and Identity: The Making and Re-making of Scotland Through the Ages*, ed. Dauvit Broun, Richard Findlay, and Lynch (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1998), 82, 98; Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 152.

⁵ John R. Young, "Scottish Parliament and National Identity, 1603-1707," in Broun, Findlay, and Lynch, *Image and Identity*, 107.

⁶ Jackson, "Union Historiographies," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 341, 348-9.

⁷ T. C. Smout, "Scotland as North Britain: The Historical Background, 1707-1918," *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, ed. Susan Manning, vol. 2, *Enlightenment, Britain and Empire*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 1.

⁸ Karin Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union, 1699-1707* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: 2007), 159-69.

⁹ Young, "The Parliamentary Incorporating Union of 1707: Political Management, Anti-Unionism and Foreign Policy," in *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives*, ed. Devine and Young (Phantassie, East Linton: Tuckwell, 1999), 25

¹⁰ Kidd, *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 39-80.

of the nineteenth century who enumerated Scottish gains through the Union were unable to tell a narrative in which the Scottish people consented to the loss of an independent state.¹¹ While prudence motivated succeeding generations to look to the present in judging the merits of Union,¹² it was apparently difficult entirely to let go of bitter memories of 1707. For example, in 1854 an anonymous pamphleteer compiled a list of Scottish grievances driving widespread agitation for fortified Scottish prerogatives; although this movement sought remedies through the Union rather than calling for Scottish independence, the pamphleteer caps the otherwise pragmatic list with the uniquely unresolvable complaint that the Scottish people had resisted Union in 1706-7.¹³ Likewise, in the 1880s and '90s Scottish Home Rule activists could jostle with Ireland for attention to their cause on the basis that Scotland's was the "older and deeper grievance," dating from 1707 rather than 1801.¹⁴

The Union also had far-reaching effects on Scottish culture, generating a "turn to the [pre-Union] past" among popular and elite cultural producers looking to sustain a distinct Scottish identity.¹⁵ As much as the Unionist-nationalism of the nineteenth century promoted a distinct Scottish identity, not everyone agreed that this was a secure element of a British future. The novelist Walter Scott, the writer Alexander Smith (1829-67), and the aforementioned anonymous pamphleteer are just a few to express continuing beliefs that the Union—as it was constituted in 1707 and as it was interpreted by the English—put Scotland on a path to cultural assimilation.¹⁶

¹¹ Kidd, "'Strange Death of Scottish History' Revisited," 94-95.

¹² Jackson, "Union Historiographies," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 354.

¹³ It is not clear whether this is intended to lend moral weight to the present-centred grievances or to suggest the potential for renewed resistance of the kind seen prior to the Union. *A Vindication of Scottish Rights Addressed to Both Houses of Parliament* (Edinburgh: Murray and Stuart, 1854), 30.

¹⁴ A. N. Cumming, "Scotland and Her Home Rulers," *The National Review* 18, no. 104 (October 1891): 145.

¹⁵ Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 152.

¹⁶ Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1802), 1:cx; Smith, *A Summer in Skye* (Edinburgh: W. P. Nimmo, Hay, and Mitchell, 1870), 47, 51; *Vindication of Scottish Rights*, 5; Michael Fry, "The Whig Interpretation of Scottish History," in *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, ed. Ian Donnachie and Whatley (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), 82.

It should be noted that Scotland was able to negotiate surprisingly fair terms for Union, in part on the grounds of English strategic interests. The Union prohibited the Stuarts from the Scottish succession and prevented the resurrection of Scotland's troublesome "Auld Alliance" with France.¹⁷ However, the Union was then used as a recruiting tool for Jacobitism, due to the Stuarts' self-interested commitment to its repeal. Although the Jacobite movement by no means represented all Scots who opposed the Union, it did pose the most serious challenge, and the Jacobite rebellions or attempted uprisings from 1708 to 1745-6 all found support in Scotland on this basis.¹⁸

While Jacobitism was a cross-national phenomenon, it was nevertheless nationally distinctive.¹⁹ The Scottish proto-nationalist interest in the uprisings, combined with the reluctance of English Jacobites to support the cause militarily caused some to consider all Scots as potentially rebellious,²⁰ contributing to the endurance and intensification of English Scotophobia into the late eighteenth century. As much as Jacobitism had divided Scottish society, the retribution for the 1745-6 uprising was felt as a national affront.²¹ While the military occupation of Scotland in the decade following the final Jacobite rebellion is just beginning to receive attention,²² at the end of the century it was possible for at least some Scots to regard themselves as "a foreign and [. . .] a conquered nation" within the British state.²³

Coleman finds Jacobite memory in the nineteenth century incompatible with the dominant national narrative in large part because the Stuarts were the antagonists in Covenanting memory. If Scottish Jacobitism had been about patriotism as much as

¹⁷ Young, "Incorporating Union," in Devine and Young, *Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, 41-46.

¹⁸ Whatley and Patrick, *Scots and the Union*, 60-61.

¹⁹ For a concise overview: Allan I. Macinnes, "Jacobitism in Scotland: Episodic Cause or National Movement?," *The Scottish Historical Review* 86, no. 2 (October 1997): 225-52.

²⁰ Devine, *The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed, 1600-1900* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), 58.

²¹ Leith Davis, *Acts of Union: Scotland and the Literary Negotiation of the British Nation, 1707-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 55; Pittock, *Culloden*, 105.

²² Pittock, "Description or Denial?," 82.

²³ Timothy Thunderproof [James Thomson Callender], "Miscellaneous Remarks on the Political Progress of Britain," *The Bee, or Literary Weekly Intelligencer* 7 (February 22, 1792): 265, quoted in Pittock, "Description or Denial?," 83.

dynastic legitimacy, this was, according to Coleman, largely forgotten in the nineteenth century. Pittock finds the opposite to be true.²⁴ In fact, both views were well-represented, and it would take a systematic survey to achieve a better sense of which interpretation was dominant. Since Coleman's is the interpretation I aim to complicate, a few illustrations of the anti-Union, patriotic view will be instructive. A biographer of Burns explained the poet's Jacobitism as "the symbol of all who regretted that Scotland had ceased to be a separate kingdom" and whose people were thereby subjected to English ill-usage.²⁵ The socialist and anti-Unionist John Morrison Davidson (1843-1916) believed that Scottish Jacobitism was almost entirely a vehicle for anti-Unionism, and the involvement of the Stuarts actually fatally weakened the cause.²⁶ Likewise, a contributor to *Blackwood's* suggested that Jacobitism was connected to the Stuarts "only accidentally."²⁷ Although the legitimist concerns of leading neo-Jacobite nationalists of the late nineteenth-century show that memories of the Stuart dynasty and memories of Scottish independence were often closely related,²⁸ they could also be considered separately. As a memorial from the Jacobite times, the Scott epitaph resolves the tension between Stuart dynasticism and Scottish patriotism in favour of the latter.

²⁴ Pittock suggests that the '45 was easily framed as a national uprising in the nineteenth century because such a memory emphasised the triumph of Britishness, and was unlikely to cause disturbance in an age of secure Unionism. While this makes sense, to the extent that the Union was questioned during the nineteenth century it may have been a dangerous game to play. *Culloden*, 136, 146; Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 177.

²⁵ Allen Cunningham, "Life of Burns," *The Works of Robert Burns*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Tegg, 1840), 73.

²⁶ Davidson, *Scotia Rediviva: Home Rule for Scotland* (London: William Reeves, 1890), 7-8, 29, 32-33.

²⁷ John Buchan, "Prince Charles Edward," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 168 (October 1900): 536-37. Some other examples of Jacobitism remembered as a national cause: Cumming, "Scotland and Her Home Rulers," 147; Donald McLeod, *Gloomy Memories in the Highlands of Scotland* [. . .], 2nd ed. (Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair, 1857), vi-vii; "History of a National Mistake," *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, n.s., no. 140 (September 5, 1846), 245-46; "The Scottish Loyalists," *The Scottish Review* 4, no 7 (July 1884): 99; Scott, *The Tales of a Grandfather: Being the History of Scotland* [. . .] (London: A. and C. Black, 1933 [1827-30]), 771, 778, 782.

²⁸ Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 120-27.

2.2. Origins of the Epitaph

Commemoration necessarily involves forgetting. The details of a memory—only ever a shadow of reality—are reinvented, or they fade into the background.²⁹ This is no less true of Marjory Scott. Some readers did imagine the epitaph’s subject as a real woman, going so far as to invent aristocratic relations.³⁰ A few even implicitly or explicitly attributed authorship of the epitaph to the woman herself.³¹ At least one reader, doubting her purported age and other factors, took her for a literary invention.³² It is unclear how Alexander Pennecuik knew of Scott; unlike the deaths of some other centenarians, her does not seem to have been not recorded in the few Edinburgh newspapers of the time.³³ She was, however, a real woman. The *Statistical Account of 1798* mentions a descendant “who recollects to have seen” Scott.³⁴ Interment records do not survive, but a locally-produced 1826 history of Dunkeld claims that a “Marjory Scott was actually interred here in 1728.”³⁵ Only a few stones from the period remain in local burial grounds, and none name Marjory Scott.³⁶ However, in 1936, a group of “legal gentlemen” combing through the belongings of a recently-deceased Dunkeld resident discovered a “copy,” dated 1835, “of a tombstone inscription” from Dunkeld Cathedral:

The inscription is:—
MARJORY SCOTT,
WIFE OF ANGUS WILLIAMSON.
BORN 13TH MARCH, 1627.
DIED AT DUNKELD,

²⁹ Rigney, “Plenitude, Scarcity and the Circulation of Cultural Memory,” *Journal of European Studies* 35, no. 1 (2005): 17.

³⁰ E.g. “Varieties,” *The Stirling Observer*, March 23, 1865, 3; T., F. I., “Margery Scott,” *Notes and Queries* 193, no. 9 (May 1948): 192.

³¹ E.g. *The Album of Literature and Amusement* [. . .], (London: W. Strange, 1831), 2:189; “Epitaphs,” *The Reformer and Herts, Beds, Bucks, Essex, Cambridge and Middlesex Advertiser*, February 1, 1840, 4.

³² Archibald Sparke, “Epitaph on a Sampler,” *Notes and Queries* 150, no. 17 (April 1926): 303.

³³ *The Caledonian Mercury*, the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, and *The Echo, or, Edinburgh Weekly Journal*. Some issues are missing from the National Library of Scotland’s collection.

³⁴ George Baird, “City of Dunkeld, and Parish of Dowally,” in *The Statistical Account of Scotland* [. . .], vol. 20, ed. John Sinclair (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1798), 423.

³⁵ *A Description of the Ancient City of Dunkeld, and Its Environs* (Dunkeld: D. M’Donald, 1826), 10.

³⁶ The absence of any such marker is specifically recorded in Alison Mitchell, ed., *Monumental Inscriptions (pre-1855) in North Perthshire*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Scottish Genealogy Society, 1974), 111.

28th NOVEMBER, 1727.³⁷

Whether or not this stone was contemporary with Marjory Scott's death, the precision of the birth and death dates, as well as the accuracy of Scott's spouse's name, suggest that the inscription is based on reliable information. A few more details about the life of this woman are known, which roughly fit the epitaph's chronology. Marjory Scott married Angus Williamson *c.* 1653, and in 1663 they bought a house on Dunkeld High Street. They had at least one son. Williamson died *c.* 1688.³⁸

I include this spare evidence of Marjory Scott's existence so that Pennecuik's politics are not assumed to represent the unknown views of the woman he ventriloquises in the epitaph. From the national historical record, one further significant event in Scott's life is known. In 1689, the cathedral city of Dunkeld was the site of a crucial battle in the first Scottish Jacobite uprising. It was a desperate, drawn-out conflict between outnumbered Lowland Covenanters and ill-led Jacobite Highlanders. When Jacobites barricaded themselves in houses, their opponents set fire to the town. An eyewitness account records the "hideous cries" that "fill[ed] the Air." The residents either "fled to the Fields" or hid in the cathedral.³⁹ All but two or three of Dunkeld's houses burned, and Marjory Scott almost certainly lost her home. Although Dunkeld resisted the imposition of Presbyterianism for at least two decades after the revolution, and a Whig observer in 1750 labelled it "a little place full of Disaffection,"⁴⁰ one wonders whether anyone who had endured such a scene would agree with the epitaph's ranking of the trial of Charles I as "worse than any civil War." Indeed, although the residents of Dunkeld celebrated the

³⁷ The copyist then records the epitaph of Pennecuik's composition, although it is not clear whether it is included for the sake of illustration, or if the verse is supposed to have been inscribed. Certainly no eighteenth-century searchers found an inscription. If a headstone with the epitaph was installed in the nineteenth century, I have found no proof of it. "She Lived in Nine Reigns," *Evening Telegraph and Post* (Dundee), February 7, 1936, 3.

³⁸ The late local historian A. M. Robertson was the first to connect these archival details to the epitaph's subject. Robertson, annotated copy of sketch pertaining to 1829 sale of Williamson property, box 88, envelope 9, 1997.0226, Dunkeld Community Archive; Copy of property record catalogue entry for Williamson property, box 88, envelope 3, 1997.0230, fol. 14r, Dunkeld Community Archive.

³⁹ *The Exact Narrative of the Conflict at Dunkeld* [. . .] (Edinburgh: 1689), 6-7.

⁴⁰ Lang, ed., *The Highlands of Scotland in 1750* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1898), 128.

early Jacobite successes of 1745, they were marked for their reluctance to join the Jacobite army.⁴¹

Some of the reasons for Pennecuik's convictions become clear in his works and biography. Although I am able to give him only cursory treatment here, he makes for an interesting case study in a Jacobite and anti-Union personality, and the modest popularity of his works in Edinburgh and farther afield throughout the eighteenth century may indicate some popular attitudes. Like most Jacobites, he was of necessity dissembling. He was also pragmatic; in one poem he pledges Scottish loyalty to the Hanoverian line in return for the dissolution of the Union.⁴² Writing in both Scots and English, Pennecuik took part in the literary movement, triggered by Union, for the preservation of the Scots language. The vitality of Scots was considered one of the key elements in the preservation of a distinct Scottish identity against English hegemony, and continued to concern promoters of Scottish culture in the nineteenth century.⁴³ Nevertheless, English progressed as the "language of cultural prestige" and social advancement, and the use of Scots among the upper and rising classes had declined markedly by the end of the eighteenth century, although it survived and adapted as a domestic and literary language, and even made its mark on the English language.⁴⁴

The epitaph's theme of Scottish vulnerability is common in Pennecuik's works, and his views were perhaps exacerbated by the misfortunes of his own life. By trade a merchant, and evidently not a prosperous one, Pennecuik was at least valued by Edinburgh's trade community, whose waning prerogatives and grievances against some of the effects of Union and the Whig ascendancy he chronicled in his poetry and in a carefully-researched prose history. In religious matters, also, Pennecuik had reason to

⁴¹ Leah Leneman, *Living in Atholl: A Social History of the Estates, 1685-1785* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986), 221-22.

⁴² Pennecuik, "An Address to His Majesty K. Geo: 2d," in *Entertainments for the Curious* no. 3: 17.

⁴³ Craig, "The Literary Tradition," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 100; Davis and Maureen N. McLane, "Orality and Public Poetry," in Manning, *History of Scottish Literature*, 128; Charles Jones and Wilson McLeod, "Standards and Differences: Languages in Scotland, 1707-1918," in Manning, *History of Scottish Literature*, 29-31.

⁴⁴ Crawford, *Scotland's Books*, 240; Jones and McLeod, "Languages in Scotland," in Susan Manning, *History of Scottish Literature*, 27-9.

resent the Revolution Settlement. Possibly a member of the suppressed Episcopalian kirk, he enjoyed harping on alleged Presbyterian hypocrisy and the kirk's intrusive presence in daily life. One of his poems, about a bird who offends both church and state by whistling a Jacobite tune on the Sabbath, is an apt metaphor for the strain Pennecuik must have lived under as a reprobate as well as a Jacobite.⁴⁵

2.3. Reading the Epitaph

Even in the limited imaginary space of a short text, setting is significant. Although it was small in terms of population, Dunkeld had an outsized presence in narratives of the Scottish past. In addition to playing host to events and stories of national importance, Dunkeld was a geographically and linguistically liminal space in the ill-defined boundary between the English- and Scots-speaking Lowlands and the Gaelic-speaking Highlands.⁴⁶ The cultural difference marked by this boundary was artificially rigidified and homogenized over time, but a high degree of cultural exchange also existed.⁴⁷ As a prominent example of many such border spaces, Dunkeld was sometimes a location of both difference and exchange.⁴⁸ These in-between places were marked as significant in Jacobite love songs which often involved a woman-as-nation figure living on the border of Highlands and Lowlands, obliged, by following her Highland lover, to choose one identity over the other.⁴⁹

In Scottish Jacobite propaganda, the Highlander was a symbol of patriotism and loyalty, and elements of Highland culture were appropriated in the post-Union desire to maintain a distinct Scottish identity within Britain. In a contrasting image that to a degree

⁴⁵ Pennecuik, *The Criminal Stirling Imprisoned for the Crime of High Treason* ([Edinburgh?], [1725?]).

⁴⁶ By the nineteenth century, Gaelic had declined markedly in Dunkeld and the surrounding area. Leneman, *Living in Atholl*, 124; Withers, "A Geography of Language: Gaelic-Speaking in Perthshire, 1698-1879," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 8, no. 2 (1983): 130, 132, 139; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland: The Geographical History of a Language* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984), 57, 172, 256-57.

⁴⁷ Withers, *Gaelic Scotland: The Transformation of a Culture Region* (London: Routledge, 2016 [1988]), 41; Withers, *Urban Highlanders: Highland-Lowland Migration and Urban Gaelic Culture, 1700-1900* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), 23, 233.

⁴⁸ Pittock, "The Jacobite Cult," in *Scottish History: The Power of the Past*, ed. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 198; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 40.

⁴⁹ Pittock, ed., *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 2:509.

followed political fault lines, Highlanders were the embarrassing and barbarous internal “Other.”⁵⁰ Both of these opposing constructions of the Highlands have deeper roots in Scottish history, and both were carried into the nineteenth century.⁵¹ In part through its exaggerated relationship with a failed Jacobitism, Gaeldom became the location of Scotland’s valorised, but finally tragic, past. In the 1760s, the publication of poems which were allegedly the surviving products of the legendary third-century Gaelic bard Ossian took the literary world by storm and made indelible the impression of romantic and moribund Highland primitivism.⁵² Dunkeld, as the picturesque “mouth of the Highlands,” became a centre of Ossianic tourism and an ever more suitable backdrop to the epitaph’s Jacobite lament.⁵³

Closing in on the setting, the epitaph places the reader in a conceptual graveyard. These sites are fruitful to the imagination not just for spiritual reasons, but also for the earthly links they provide to the past. Reformation strictures and the increasing affordability of materials saw memorials migrate from inside to outside of the church, but until crowding became an issue kirkyards were places of community business and even conviviality. This was one of the ways in which the dead were kept in the community of the living.⁵⁴ Even as these spaces became sacralised, kirkyards were favoured “playgrounds” for children.⁵⁵ More subdued leisure potential was also available for

⁵⁰ Complicating the sense of Scottish nationhood, Highlanders and Lowlanders were progressively racialised as Celts and Saxons, especially in the nineteenth century. While it is important to bear this mind, not everyone defined nationhood along the lines of race. Krisztina Fenyő, *Contempt, Sympathy and Romance: Lowland Perceptions of the Highlands and the Clearances During the Famine Years, 1845-55* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 17-42, 56, Kidd, “‘Strange Death of Scottish History’ Revisited,” 93-4; W. E. Aytoun, “Scotland Since the Union,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 74, no. 455 (September 1853): 266.

⁵¹ Edward J. Cowan, “The Discovery of the Gàidhealtachd in Sixteenth Century Scotland,” *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 60 (1997-1998): 259-284; Fenyő, *Contempt, Sympathy and Romance*, 46-92, 165-76.

⁵² Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 74, 80.

⁵³ Baird, “City of Dunkeld,” in Sinclair, *Statistical Account*, 445; Betty Hagglund, *Tourists and Travelers: Women’s Non-fictional Writing about Scotland, 1770-1830* (Bristol: Channel View, 2010), 25-27.

⁵⁴ The culture of commemorating the dead in the post-Reformation era, known as *memoria*, helped to close the traumatic rupture between the living and the dead created by the loss of the idea of purgatory. Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c. 1500 – c. 1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991), 26-28.

⁵⁵ Betty Willsher, *Understanding Scottish Graveyards*, ed. Edwina Proudfoot (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1995), 4, 6.

adults; meandering through and reading or copying down epitaphs was a common pastime, and many resulting collections of epitaphs were published throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵⁶ National distinctions in commemorative practices were recognised, and it could be “said that the Scottish headstones are tablets of Scottish history and registers of Scottish character.”⁵⁷ In the Scottish literary fixation on the past, the graveyard accordingly had a role to play. Cairns Craig points to a trend of “necromancy” in nineteenth-century Scottish fiction, where “the dead are raised from their graves to speak” to the modern audience.⁵⁸ Similarly, Sarah Sharp has observed how, in the influential writings of the early-nineteenth-century *Blackwood’s* group, “the idealised figure of the rural kirkyard” often featured as a site of Scottish traditional culture and collective identity.⁵⁹ We may read the epitaph, with the setting it evokes and its plea for the value of “knowledge from the dead,” as part of this cultural metaphor.

Readers of the epitaph can hardly be faulted for assuming the existence of a stone bearing the text. The original title, “*On the Grave stone of Marjory Scot[t]*” is possibly a fanciful projection, or it could suggest that Pennecuik was inspired to compose an epitaph by an encounter with Scott’s gravestone, although there is no evidence of Pennecuik travelling to Dunkeld. “STOP, Passenger,” also suggests a material presence; this conventional phrase is derived from *Siste viator*, a common element of Roman roadside memorials intended to arrest passers-by.⁶⁰ Scott L. Newstok finds significant rhetorical impact in this common epitaphic element, as it demands attention to the message the epitaph conveys.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Karl S. Guthke, *Epitaph Culture in the West: Variations on a Theme in Cultural History* (Lewiston, N. Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 29-30, 56, 58-59.

⁵⁷ W. T. Vincent, *In Search of Gravestones Old and Curious* (London: Mitchel and Hughes, 1896), 84.

⁵⁸ Ina Ferris makes the same observation on Scott’s novels. Craig, *Wealth of the Nation*, 172; Ferris, “Melancholy, Memory, and the Narrative Situation of History in Post-Enlightenment Scotland,” in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, ed. Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 88.

⁵⁹ “Digging up the Kirkyard: Death, Readership and Nation in the Writings of the *Blackwood’s* Group, 1817-1839” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2015), 217.

⁶⁰ Guthke, *Epitaph Culture*, 118.

⁶¹ Newstok, *Quoting Death in Early Modern England: The Poetics of Epitaphs beyond the Tomb* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009),

Even in collections of literary epitaphs selected for their interesting qualities,⁶² the Scott epitaph stands out. The great majority of epitaphs, unless they are humorous or interested in peculiar biographical details, are concerned with reminding the reader of the inescapable fact of mortality and the prospect of an afterlife, often accompanied by bluntly moralistic observations about how one ought to conduct one's life.⁶³ Very few refer to history of national importance. The conflation of biography and national history in the epitaph's invitation to "read" Marjory Scott's "life" is especially unusual given that Scott is a common person without any conventionally prominent role in the events.

What personal biographical information the epitaph does provide is shaped to fit the author's multiplicative scheme ("Five Times five Years," etc.), but what may seem a trite account of a life is nevertheless purposeful. We are told that Marjory Scott has been a "Virgin," a "virtuous Wife," and "a Widow grave and chaste"—imbuing her with moral authority as the contemporary ideal of domestic womanhood in each stage of life. Although until recently Scottish historiography has tended to emphasise the masculinity of Scottish culture,⁶⁴ to contemporaries Marjory Scott might have struck a familiar chord as a feminine narrator of Scotland's past and as a poetic voice in general. Women were dominant figures in Scotland's oral cultures. Even in the collection of oral traditions and their transmediation into a male-dominated print culture, women were recognized as sources of cultural cohesion.⁶⁵

As noted in the introduction, women were prominent representatives of the Jacobite cause. Often cast as unseemly for transgressing gender boundaries, feminine Jacobitism fell more into line with the final defeat of Jacobite hopes, and the female voice was increasingly used to mourn the cause and to indicate its passage from active rebellion

⁶² For collections containing the Scott epitaph, see entries under "Books" in "Scott Epitaph" section of the Bibliography.

⁶³ Willsher, *Scottish Epitaphs: Epitaphs and Images from Scottish Graveyards* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1996), 3

⁶⁴ Esther Breitenbach and Lynn Abrams, "Gender and Scottish Identity," in *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700*, ed. Abrams et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).17.

⁶⁵ Adriana Craciun, "Romantic Spinstrelsy: Anne Bannerman and the Sexual Politics of the Ballad," in Davis, Duncan, and Sorenson, *Borders of Romanticism*, 204-24; Ruth Perry, "'The Finest Ballads,'" 81-97.

into passive sentimentality.⁶⁶ The Scott epitaph anticipated this trend. If feminisation is most obviously read as a misogynist metaphor for weakness and irrelevance, the frame of memorialisation offers some room for maneuver. Fundamentally, mourning, and inscribing the mourned subject in memory, is an indication of the “enduring value” of whatever or whomever has been lost.⁶⁷ Mourning “constitutes communities” and defines relationships to the past, and women have often been instrumental in this process.⁶⁸ The centrality of the feminine mourner in Scottish Gaelic commemorative traditions, made familiar to a wide audience through *Ossian*, was anything but devoid of power.⁶⁹ Women composed songs and poems so that future generations might remember their subjects; unlike their male counterparts, constrained by professional expectations, women were permitted to communicate anger as well as loss.⁷⁰ The masculine register may have better suited Jacobitism as an active military threat, but the female voice helped to ensure Jacobitism’s commemorative longevity.

In its turn towards feminine elegy, Scottish Jacobite verse—including the epitaph—echoed a literary tradition of embodying Scotland as a woman in peril or mourning.⁷¹ This is similar in concept to the Irish poetic tradition of the *aisling*, in which

⁶⁶ Donaldson, *Jacobite Song*, 66; Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 175, 177.

⁶⁷ Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 203.

⁶⁸ If, as Esther Schor illustrates, mourning was masculinised in the nineteenth century, Jacobite texts such as the epitaph further memorialise a time when women were more prominent in this important cultural exercise. Schor, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3, 21, quoted in Juliet Shields, “Reviving Ossian’s Female Corpses: Mourners and Warriors in *The Poems of Ossian*,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 2 (2016): 216.

⁶⁹ Shields, “Ossian’s Female Corpses,” 212-16.

⁷⁰ Roxanne L. Reddington-Wilde, “Violent Death and Damning Words: Women’s Lament in Scottish Gaelic Poetry,” in *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, *Language, Literature, History, Culture*, ed. Ronald Black, William Gillies and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 265-86.

⁷¹ Michelle Ann Smith, “‘A Wedow in Distress’: Personifying Scotland,” in *The Shaping of Scottish Identities: Family, Nation, and the Worlds Beyond*, ed. Jodi A. Campbell, Elizabeth Ewan, and Heather Parker (Guelph: Centre for Scottish Studies, 2011), 97-111; Cowan, “Mistress and Mother as Political Abstraction: The Apostrophic Poetry of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, and William Lithgow,” in *The European Sun: Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature*, University of Strathclyde 1993, ed. Graham Caie, Roderick J. Lyall, Sally Mapstone and Kenneth Simpson (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), 534-544. For Jacobite examples, see: Grosart, ed., *Jacobite Ballads, Songs and Satires*, 51, 67, 540,

the troubled land appears as an embodied woman and urges the masculine dreamer to come to her aid. This genre was revived in the Jacobite period, and Pittock has argued that it was also echoed in Scottish verse.⁷² While the woman-as-nation is a widespread phenomenon,⁷³ the Scottish trope was realised in a new way through Union, which was often conceptualised as a marriage with Scotland as the less-than-happy bride.⁷⁴ Given this literary tradition, the venerable, mournful figure of Marjory Scott is easily read as an example of the woman-as-Scotland, who, like Scott, was also constructed as “a perfect, sexually virtuous vessel” for men’s ideas of Scotland.⁷⁵ Scott’s name, while quite common for the time, contributes to this impression: Marjory or Margaret being the name of an iconic eleventh-century queen and patron saint of Scotland,⁷⁶ and Scott being a surname obviously descriptive of nationality.⁷⁷ This relationship will be developed further in chapter 4, where I discuss the intersection of gender and age in matters of cultural vitality and national incarnation.

The mixing of the personal and humble with the political and grand continues with the lines: “Betwixt my Cradle, and Grave were seen, / Eight mighty Kings of *Scotland*, and a Queen.” If history as a rule was broken down by regnal period, here instead monarchs are subordinated to Marjory Scott’s lifespan. The count of kings has been the occasion of much puzzling over by readers, and is often amended to either six or seven kings. Further complicating the matter is the variation of Marjory Scott’s age and date of death.⁷⁸ Often, depending on the combination of these variables, the count produces one extra king, conceivably including the Jacobite claimant as well as his

⁷² Pittock, “The Jacobite Song: Was there a Scottish *Aisling*?”, *Review of Scottish Culture* 19 (2007): 45-53.

⁷³ However, the Scottish tradition has the less typical element of a pseudo-historical female progenitrix, *Scota*, the “illustrious mother of Scots” exiled from Egypt. Smith, “Personifying Scotland,” 98-99.

⁷⁴ Crawford, *Scotland’s Books*, 314; Davis, *Acts of Union*, 27; Peter Dignus Garside, “Union and the Bride of Lammermore,” *Studies in Scottish Literature* 19, no. 1 (January 1984): 77-78.

⁷⁵ Smith, “Personifying Scotland,” 103.

⁷⁶ Perhaps this is why John Arbuthnot (1667-1735) gave the name Peg, short for Margaret, to the representation of Scotland as the sister of England’s John Bull. Crawford, *Scotland’s Books*, 58.

⁷⁷ Jean Dunlop, *The Scotts*, W. and A. K. Johnston’s *Clan Histories* (Edinburgh: W. and A. K. Johnston, 1957), 7.

⁷⁸ In most versions she is 100 or 125 years old, less commonly she is 120 years old, and in a few cases she is 150, 105, or 75. Her death is usually placed in 1728 or 1738.

Hanoverian rivals. This is an example of what Howard Erskine-Hill terms “twofold vision,” whereby people living in the period of a plausible Jacobite dynastic claim would sometimes acknowledge both the exiled and the reigning monarch at the same time.⁷⁹ As Pennecuik puts it elsewhere: “LONG have we had two kings, I do assure ye, / A George *de facto*, and a James *de jure*.”⁸⁰ I have found only two instances where the Jacobite claimant is recognized in print, while several suggest that the pseudo-republican rule of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) makes up the extra number.⁸¹ Since the original epitaph actually has two extra kings, it is possible that Pennecuik intended both.

The epitaph’s tabulation of historical events (“Three Commonwealths” and “Ten Times the Subjects, rise against the LAW,” and the exchange of an Episcopalian for a Presbyterian kirk) is also sometimes amended, but its accuracy is mere trivia—what concerns us here is the emphasis on history’s repetitions and rotations of power. The idea of history as circular rather than linear was common in pre-modern belief, reflecting an awareness of ancestry and the cycle of generations, as well as the observation of time through the changing of the seasons and the turning of day and night.⁸² This reminds us that it is only with hindsight that Presbyterianism, Hanoverianism, and the Union appear as finalities in the trajectory of Scottish history. Pittock describes the continued expression of circular history as “[t]ypological history, history as recurrence and renewal.” Unlike “incremental” or Whig history, which sees the direction of history as a providential moral “victory,” typological history was often the refuge of “the marginalized,” and could take on a kind of talismanic quality—“speaking history trusting to hear its echo.”⁸³ Essentially, if a thing has been, it may be again. Jacobites made

⁷⁹ Howard Erskine-Hill, “Twofold Vision in Eighteenth-Century Writing,” *Early Literary History* 64, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 903-924.

⁸⁰ “On the Sign of the Three Kings,” *A Collection of Scots Poems on Several Occasions* [. . .] (Glasgow: Alexander Buchanan, 1787), 46-7.

⁸¹ *The European Magazine, and London Review* 26 (December 1794): 439-40; William Graham, ed., *A Collection of Epitaphs and Monumental Inscriptions, Ancient and Modern* (Carlisle: William Graham, 1821), 233.

⁸² Michael Newton, *A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 162-63. Again, the gendered voice of the epitaph may reinforce its message; Julia Kristeva has linked the circular model of time to the biological and cultural functions of women. “Women’s Time,” in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 190-93.

⁸³ Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 2, 8-10.

particular use of this kind of rhetoric, and would especially refer back to the Restoration of the monarchy as a coded expression of their hopes for the future.⁸⁴

With little room for the optimism of restoration, the epitaph instead presses the horror of the Regicide. This Jacobite trope is an example of what Pittock terms “false loyalism.” Jacobites could bemoan the termination of one reign—that of Charles I—without fear of censorship, while in their minds they were also rejecting the revolution which had ousted his son, James VII (1633-1701).⁸⁵ In condemning not just the Regicide but the very notion of a king subjugated before the people, Pennecuik exposes his flirtation with absolutist principles.⁸⁶ While it is difficult to access folk beliefs of the past, monarchy seems to have been a central component of many people’s identities and worldviews. Disruptions could create a sense of profound disorder,⁸⁷ and in a society where natural phenomena were habitually attributed to divine or magical sources, subsequent misfortunes seemed to confirm the error of executing Charles I and exiling James VII. In Scotland, the Williamite Revolution was followed by the severe famines of the 1690s, while the Stuarts were associated with the fertility of the land.⁸⁸ Even stripped of such magic, in rhetorical and material reminders of this folk image Jacobitism remained associated with an idyllic rural past, which, despite or because of Scotland’s

⁸⁴ Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 1-6.

⁸⁵ Pittock, *Material Culture and Seditious Objects, Secret Places* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 25-6, 82.

⁸⁶ Pennecuik’s history of Edinburgh trades depicts a paternalist relationship between tradespeople and kings, and suggests that a king with absolute power restrains the petty tyrannies of aristocrats. *An Historical Account of the Blue Blanket: Or, Crafts-Mens Banner* [. . .] (Edinburgh: John Mosman, 1722), 22, 25-26.

⁸⁷ Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 54-62. This was amplified in Scotland, where the Stuarts were regarded as native kings in an ancient, unbroken line which was a central component of early national myths and international recognition of Scottish sovereignty against English claims of suzerainty. Donaldson, *Jacobite Song*, 7.

⁸⁸ This was less likely to have featured in nineteenth-century remembrance of the Stuarts, when the sacred or magical elements of monarchy had receded. While the popularity of the crown in the nineteenth century was propped up through an appropriation of Jacobite symbolism, the Stuart dynasty was the last to practice “mystic” monarchy. Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 10-13, 41-45.

rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, Scotland itself was often held to represent.⁸⁹ The Edenic resonance of the epitaph's "*End of all Perfection*" fits into this broad schema.

With the epitaph's lament for "an End of STEWART Race," Pennecuik takes further care to avoid crossing a seditious line, framing an affection for that dynasty as something belonging to a departed past rather than a revolutionary future.⁹⁰ The line is also ambiguous for its failure to specify whether the Stuart reign ended naturally with the death of the last monarch of that family—Anne, in 1714—or with the ousting of the Jacobite Stuart claimants. Some later versions of the epitaph press the latter narrative by having the Stuarts "thrust out."⁹¹ As well as being more forcefully Jacobitical, the evolution of this line provides a further link to Scottish historical experience. While it is important not to accept uncritically the air of victimhood that often adheres to narratives of Scottish diaspora, many emigrants experienced environmental pressures or direct coercion in leaving Scotland.⁹² The Jacobite experience and literature of exile thus provided a point of cultural reference throughout the nineteenth century.⁹³

Whatever the strength of the epitaph's dynastic complaint, the following "nay more, / I saw our Country *sold* for *English Ore*" positions the Union as a matter of even greater consequence, as was the case for many if not most Scottish Jacobites.⁹⁴ It might be assumed that "*English Ore*" refers to the infamous charge of bribery haunting the parliamentary passage of the Union. Although money did change hands, Whatley has convincingly defended pro-Unionists against accusations of short-term thinking and self-

⁸⁹ Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 108; Nenadic, "Industrialization and the Scottish People," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 405, 412.

⁹⁰ By mid-century, with the military defeat of Jacobitism, such sentiments were even more widely expressed, and perhaps even encouraged, because they emphasised the pastness of Jacobitism while allowing reconciliation through sympathy. Pam Perkins, "The 'candour, which can feel for a foe': Romanticizing the Jacobites in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Lumen* 31 (2012): 131-43; Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 91.

⁹¹ This variation seems to have been introduced by Pennecuik's posthumous editor. *A Compleat Collection of All the Poems Wrote by [. . .] Alexander Pennecuik* (Edinburgh: [1750?]), 4.

⁹² Devine, "A Global Diaspora," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 159-60.

⁹³ Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 70-72, 109.

⁹⁴ Daniel Szechi, "Scottish Jacobitism in Its International Context," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 356-57. The line about Scotland's nobles being reduced in number is also a complaint about the conditions of the Union.

interest. The decision to vote for Union was a matter of deeply-considered ideology, with Scotland's benefit in mind.⁹⁵ At any rate, the narrative of the mercenary pro-Unionists does seem to have been favoured, although it was not uncontested, in popular memory,⁹⁶ and Pennecuik may well have intended the accusation. However, the "bought and sold for English gold" narrative runs deeper than the issue of personal bribery. The association of English Whig politics with mercenary interests and corruption was a well-worn line of Jacobite propaganda, and indeed Whig ideology was entwined with new formulations of property rights and the power of a rising commercial class over older land-based hierarchical structures.⁹⁷

In Scotland, anxieties over the shift to commercial culture were tied to national identity. Although typical of a European country of its size, Scotland's poverty was highlighted by contrast with the exceptional wealth of neighbouring England.⁹⁸ Perhaps partly to reconcile with a sense of inferiority, many Scots enjoyed equating national poverty with national virtue. It was even suggested that the hard work required of people in "countries less richly endowed" engendered a more devout patriotism, because people were obliged to depend more on one another.⁹⁹ This remained an aspect of identity to some nineteenth-century Scots, even after an economic revolution in which Scottish philosophies were paramount.¹⁰⁰ The Highlands especially were supposedly a region free

⁹⁵ Whatley, *Scots and the Union*, 50-51

⁹⁶ The seed of this memory, the growth of which was no doubt encouraged by a general narrative of the authors of the Union as unpatriotic, was probably the exceedingly partisan account published by the Jacobite George Lockhart of Carnwath in 1714. Whatley and Patrick, "Contesting Interpretations of the Union of 1707: The Abuse and Use of George Lockhart of Carnwath's *Memoirs*," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 27, no. 1 (2007): 24-47.

⁹⁷ This myth, fostered by both Jacobites and anti-Jacobites, is not entirely baseless, but in reality the burgeoning culture of capitalism was embraced to varying degrees by adherents of both parties. Frank McLynn, *The Road Not Taken: How Britain Narrowly Missed a Revolution, 1381-1926* (London: Bodley Head, 2012), 255, 275.

⁹⁸ Devine, "Reappraising the Early Modern Economy, 1500-1650," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 236-38.

⁹⁹ James Currie, *The Life of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh: Macredie, Skelly, and Muckersy, 1815) 27-28, cited in Davis, "Negotiating Cultural Memory: James Currie's *Works of Robert Burns*," *International Journal of Scottish Literature* 6 (Spring/Summer 2010): 2

¹⁰⁰ Carol McGuirk, "Jacobite History to National Song: Robert Burns and Carolina Oliphant (Baroness Nairne)," *The Eighteenth Century* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 271-2, 275-6.

“of such modern preoccupations as ‘Commerce,’” and the corruption of spirit that came with it.¹⁰¹

The changes brought by Union both disrupted and contributed to the construction of this image. The role that Union played in making Scotland wealthy is complicated, but it can certainly be seen as “accelerating” an economic revolution involving vast, and often traumatic, social restructuring.¹⁰² The attraction of Scottish elites and Scottish talent to monied lifestyles and the market pull of London was seen as socially and culturally damaging throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰³ This criticism was never more urgent than in its application to the forces of “commercial corruption and imperial interest” blamed for the Highland Clearances.¹⁰⁴ Even as Lowland Scotland was celebrated for its enterprise and prosperity, the Paisley poet John Mitchell (1786-1856) could write nostalgically about pre-Union days “ere Scotsmen cared / Wha commerce, or its imposts shared.”¹⁰⁵ Scots could well celebrate the end of violence between Scotland and England,¹⁰⁶ but for some who remembered too strongly the many battles fought to preserve Scottish independence against English domination, there was another side to the coin, most famously expressed by Robert Burns: while England’s “force or guile” could never “subdue” Scotland, in a moment of widespread impoverishment the attractions of “English gold” proved their undoing.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Crawford, *Scotland's Books*, 306; Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 129.

¹⁰² Alex Benchimol and Gerard Lee McKeever, “Introduction: Mapping Cultures of Improvement in Scottish Romanticism,” in *Cultures of Improvement in Scottish Romanticism, 1707-1840*, ed. Benchimol and McKeever (New York: Routledge, 2018), 4.

¹⁰³ Devine, *Scottish Clearances*, 362; Crawford, *Scotland's Books*, 265.

¹⁰⁴ Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 110-11. Donald McLeod, a Highlander who witnessed one of the worst phases of the Clearances, explicitly blamed the destruction of a patriarchal ideal on the unseating of the Stuarts and the “treacherous union” with its “sacred” regard for private property. *Gloomy Memories*, vi, vii, ix, 121.

¹⁰⁵ When an interlocutor scorns the sentiment by reminding how the Union has made Scotland rich, the speaker counters that Scotland’s wealth does not go to those who work hardest for it. Mitchell, “The Broom and Dahlia,” *The Wee Steeple's Ghaist, and Other Poems and Songs* (Paisley: Murray and Stewart, 1840), 170-71.

¹⁰⁶ Or, more accurately, the export of violence to the empire. Pittock, “Description or Denial?”, 83-84.

¹⁰⁷ Burns, “Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation,” *Robert Burns: Selected Poems and Songs*, ed. Robert P. Irvine, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 179.

These are just some of the possible reasons for the pessimism of the epitaph's concluding lines ("Such *Desolations* in my Days hath been, / I have, *An End of all Perfection seen.*") both as expressed by Pennecuik and perhaps as they resounded with later readers who witnessed pertinent developments long after Pennecuik's death. However, while the epitaph's claim that Marjory Scott had "*An end of all Perfection seen*" seems fatalistic, this utterly nostalgic phrase may have an alternative Jacobitical meaning. Pennecuik is quoting Psalm 119:26. In this verse, the speaker expresses that God's will exceeds earthly imperfection, such that His people can only continue to observe His laws in spite of their present miseries and the efforts of the unfaithful to drive them towards disloyalty. What may seem like an expression of resignation to an undesirable end contains the potential for a restoration of once-cherished hopes. As Craig reminds us, nostalgia is only futile where history is interpreted as linear.¹⁰⁸

2.4. Conclusion

Following the defeat of the final Jacobite uprising, Scottish Enlightenment thinkers constructed a narrative of the pre-Union past which "was to be remembered only to be rejected."¹⁰⁹ While this "excessive self-denigration" receded in the nineteenth century,¹¹⁰ it remained common to attribute Scottish progress out of "backwardness" to the Union and its completion through the defeat of Jacobitism.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, nostalgia for this same maligned past was a marked feature of Scottish literary expression in the two centuries following the Union.¹¹² In the Jacobite case, this is partly attributable to the enthralling figure of royalty cut by a Bonnie Prince, and the celebration of the virtues of Highland militarism which had come to serve the British empire. But the epitaph says little in relation to the latter tradition, and the former is subordinated to its condemnation of the Union and its expression of disappointed Scottish patriotism. As with the wider

¹⁰⁸ Craig, *Wealth of the Nation*, 159-60.

¹⁰⁹ Craig, *Wealth of the Nation*, 31.

¹¹⁰ Kidd, "'Strange Death of Scottish History' Revisited," 91;

¹¹¹ Devine and Wormald, 'Introduction: The Study of Modern Scottish History,' in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 4; Pittock, *Culloden*, 117-18.

¹¹² Craig, "The Literary Tradition," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 109

tradition of Jacobite elegy, the epitaph is easily folded into the narrative of a triumphant Whig and Unionist order. But it may also have functioned, as Pittock argues of Jacobite memory more broadly, as an “expression of self-doubt” towards Scotland’s place in British modernity.¹¹³ The next chapter illustrates the epitaph’s presence as an often-encountered monument to these contested views of the past.

¹¹³ Pittock, “Jacobite Cult,” in Cowan and Finlay, *Power of the Past*, 204.

Chapter 3. “No Epitaph we need on stone”¹

[I]t is in the power of many a man to raise a monument that cannot write an epitaph.

“A Lady,” *Journey to the Highlands of Scotland, 1776*

While an epitaph is distinct from an elegy in the former’s adherence to the conventions of tombstone inscription, many if not most early modern epitaphs were never inscribed on stone. The commemorative impulse was too pervasive to be accommodated by the restrictions of churchyard space and the costs of stonemasonry.² Even most epitaphs that *were* once inscribed survive now only if they were copied down.³ Although stone is often deployed as a metaphor for permanence, stone memorials are highly vulnerable to the elements: digested by lichens, torn by ivies, sunk in soil, eroded by bird droppings, rain, and frost, and subjected to deliberate or accidental violence.⁴ As with public monuments, the illusion of imperishability conceals a “counterintuitive frailty.”⁵ This chapter will show that textual media are far more accessible, and often more durable, media of commemoration.

First, the chapter will set Marjory Scott’s epitaph in the context of oppositional commemorative discourses of the eighteenth-century, and will show how contemporaries engaged critically with various modes of monumentality. While not necessarily intending to speak to posterity, the politically-charged literature of this time bequeathed many textual monuments such as the Scott epitaph. Memory is largely determined by the needs of the present, and as such, monuments built in the present to commemorate the past may well be regarded as “*lieu[x] de mémoire par excellence*.”⁶ But monuments might also be

¹ Pennecuik [senior], “Inscription to be Put at the Foot of Jonas Hamilton of Coldcoat’s Picture, Drawn by ———,” *Works of Alexander Pennecuik*, 360.

² Amanda Brunton, personal communication, December 17, 2018, on the basis of PhD research on early modern English epitaphs (Anglia Ruskin University); Willsher, *Scottish Epitaphs*, 5.

³ Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 101.

⁴ In kirkyards, most depend on private maintenance. Willsher, *Scottish Graveyards*, 15-16.

⁵ James F. Osborne, “Counter-Monumentality and the Vulnerability of Memory,” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 17, no. 2 (2017): 164.

⁶ Coleman, “Double-Life of the Scottish Past,” 14-15.

objects from the past which are designated as monuments in the present.⁷ The monuments of the present must share space with those left behind by the people of the past, who might have some agency in their own remembrance.

In the next section, I follow the epitaph's transmission as a textual monument. In the history the epitaph passes through and the personalities it encounters, we will see how a text published in 1728 could continue to reflect, however fleetingly, Scottish views and experiences, and to reflect perceptions of Scotland itself, for more than a century. While Tim Edensor is right to observe that "elites are more able to memorialise" their preferred narratives of the past in some public forms, while "subaltern" memories "become marginalised,"⁸ the textual and oral media of commemoration available on the margins are no mean tools for the preservation and construction of counter-memories. The Scott epitaph was one among many memorials to sustain Jacobitism's complex place in Scottish national narratives.

3.1. Contest of Commemoration

Pennecuik's religious and political partisanship directed his writings, including the epitaph, into the fray of a broad cultural struggle which often took place at the level of commemoration. Epitaphs and elegies were a useful medium in this ideological battle—epitaphs especially, with the weight of death and the notion of inscription behind them, might be imagined as communicating "truth" and "finality," imparting the "'last word' [. . .] about a person or subject."⁹ Newstok argues that the peculiar and frequently-deployed power of the epitaph in the art of discursive persuasion "help[ed] poetics subsume rhetoric" over the early modern period.¹⁰ In spite of legislative protection, inscribed epitaphs were targeted by Reformation iconoclasts, for fear that "merely reading" them

⁷ Mark Stocker, "Public Monument," Grove Art Online, 2003.

⁸ Edensor, "National Identity and the Politics of Memory: Remembering Bruce and Wallace in Symbolic Space," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15, no. 2 (1997): 176.

⁹ Guthke, *Epitaph Culture*, 6-7, 100.

¹⁰ Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 1, 5, 8, 30, 134.

would inspire a return to Catholic devotion.¹¹ By “allowing the dead to speak,” epitaphs were also a primary means of understanding the past.¹² In the traumatic disturbances of the seventeenth century, the epitaph was used to represent the “gulf between the living and the dead” as an intensely nostalgic expression of the diminished present compared with the departed past.¹³ Through the epitaphic genre, the dead continued to weigh in on “the sociopolitical struggles of the living” throughout the eighteenth century.¹⁴

Upon learning of the execution of Charles I, James Graham of Montrose (1612-50), the poet and Scottish Royalist commander, pledged to “write [Charles’s] epitaph in blood and wounds.” Fortunately, the tradition of political epitaphs in which this promise is embedded relied on more conventional materials, although they were perhaps hardly less inflammatory for that. Epitaphs or elegies on well-known figures often emphasise the detrimental impact of their loss to a community, but a select few are represented as a loss to the nation, and even as synonymous or coterminous with the loss *of* the nation. The habit seems especially characteristic of Jacobites and anti-Unionists, who were prone to thinking of Scotland in elegiac terms anyway.¹⁵ The heroicised Montrose and John Graham of Claverhouse (1648-89)—the first Scottish Jacobite commander—were given this treatment.¹⁶ Plebeian figures were also eligible subjects, as in Allan Ramsay’s (1686-1758) extremely popular “Elegy on Maggie Johnston,” a publican and an old woman like Marjory Scott.¹⁷ The tradition went beyond the commemoration of humans. Pennecuik elegised a tree featured in national legends, the death of which he explicitly links to the

¹¹ Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 17-18.

¹² Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 2, 17.

¹³ Scodel, *Commemoration and Conflict*, 8, 202-48, 203.

¹⁴ Scodel, *Commemoration and Conflict*, 248.

¹⁵ Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 54.

¹⁶ Iain Lom (John MacDonald), “*Cumha Mhontrois / A Lament for Montrose*,” in *Orain Iain Luim: Songs of John MacDonal, Bard of Keppoch*, ed. and trans. Annie M. Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), 56-59; Archibald Pitcairn, trans. John Dryden, in Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 35.

¹⁷ Pittock, “Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre,” *The Review of English Studies* 58, no. 235 (2007): 321-25.

Union.¹⁸ Each of these poems, among others, takes the opportunity of an individual death to press a narrative of Scotland's decline.

Jacobites were not alone in deploying the literary memorial to stake a claim on the landscape of national memory. In 1701, the United Societies—the self-proclaimed remnant of the Covenanters—formally agreed to take systematic measures to cement a commemorative tradition centred on Covenanter martyrs, killed in the persecutions of the previous century. Those who continued to claim the Covenanting mantle were no enthusiasts for the Revolution Settlement, which satisfied moderate Presbyterians but ignored the terms of the Covenants. They were even more in opposition to the Union, yoking Scotland to a more powerful partner whose national church they viewed as insufficiently reformed from Catholic tradition.¹⁹ In their political marginalisation, the United Societies elaborated and sought to inscribe memories of their long-held martyrological culture. The inspiration of unyielding, self-sacrificing forebears subtly encouraged continued resistance and, even more explicitly, refuted Jacobite idealisation of the Stuart past and rejected Jacobitism as a way out of the Union.²⁰

The often-remote sites of martyrdoms had been marked closer to the immediate aftermath of the violence with blank stones, their stories known through “word of mouth.” In the years after 1701, “when the political climate allowed,” these stones were engraved with literary epitaphs, and previously unmarked sites were also graced with engraved memorials.²¹ Print culture, however, supplied the keystone of this “martyrology

¹⁸ Pennecuik, “On the Ruins of Wallace’s Tree in the Torwood,” in *Streams from Helicon: or, Poems on Various Subjects*, 2nd ed. (London: Alexander Pennecuik, 1720), 40-43.

¹⁹ See especially: Kidd, “Conditional Britons: The Scots Covenanting Tradition and the Eighteenth-Century British State,” *English Historical Review* 117, no. 474 (Nov. 2002): 1147-1176; Emily Moberg Robinson, “Sacred Memory: The Covenanter Use of History in Scotland and America,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2013): 135-57.

²⁰ Valerie Wallace, “Radical Objects: Covenanter Gravestones as Political Protest,” History Workshop Online, April 4, 2017, <http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/radical-objects-covenanter-gravestones-as-political-protest/>; Mark Jardine, “The United Societies: Militancy, Martyrdom and the Presbyterian Movement in Late-Restoration Scotland, 1679-1688” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2009), 246, 254.

²¹ Dolly MacKinnon, “‘This humble monument of guiltless Blood’: The Emotional Landscape of Covenanter Monuments,” in *Writing War in Britain and France, 1370-1854: A History of Emotions*, ed. Stephanie Downes, Andrew Lynch, and Katrina O’Loughlin (London: Routledge, 2019), 165-66.

project,” in the form of, among other texts, *A Cloud of Witnesses* (1714).²² This textual monument featured the Covenanter martyrs speaking directly to posterity through dying speeches,²³ and was also the way in which most people were likely to encounter the epitaphs—included as an appendix—otherwise scattered throughout the land.²⁴

Covenanter commemorations seem to have touched a nerve with Pennecuik, who had little patience for the dramatic flair of their self-image, and a nostalgic regard for the kings the Covenanters cast as devilish persecutors. Pennecuik more than once referred contemptuously to martyr graves. In one satirical poem, a wife buries her husband’s accidentally-removed genitalia “at the Martyrs Tomb,” so that “When *Cammeronians* come with Groans / And sigh, upon their Martyrs Bones, / To mourn with them I will not fail.”²⁵ The martyrs may not have been entirely out of Pennecuik’s mind when he composed the Scott epitaph—the surprisingly rare rhyme of “hellish rage” and “stage” (lines 13 and 14) also appears in a Covenanter epitaph.²⁶ Perhaps the epitaph, along with other texts authored by Pennecuik, was on some level composed in conscious response to the Presbyterian construction of oppositional memories.

The Covenanter narrative was challenged by others besides Jacobites like Pennecuik. Over the eighteenth century, moderate Presbyterians and the Enlightenment intelligentsia attempted to banish from national memory the “embarrassing” militancy of the Covenanters.²⁷ Outside of this public sphere, folk memory in the southwest resisted erasure; the “lower echelons of society” continued reading texts which had come out of

²² Jardine, “The United Societies,” 246; MacKinnon, “Covenanter Monuments,” 165-66.

²³ Jacobites also took advantage of dying speeches. It was in the century from the War of the Three Kingdoms to the last Jacobite uprising that the scaffold turned from a place of penitence and reconciliation following political rebellion to a “stage” from which to ensure the cause was not forgotten. These aims seem to have borne fruit, as the dying speeches of Covenanters as well as Royalists and Jacobites were remembered in the nineteenth century. Daniel Szechi, “The Jacobite Theatre of Death,” in *The Jacobite Challenge*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks and Jeremy Black (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1988), 60, 70.

²⁴ *A Cloud of Witnesses* went into ten editions by 1779, and was reprinted throughout the nineteenth century. Kidd, “Conditional Britons,” 1160.

²⁵ The Cameronians were an exceptionally zealous sect of Covenanters. Pennecuik, “The Wife’s Tears,” *A Collection of Scots Poems*, 18.

²⁶ “INSCRIPTION *On the Stone lying on John Wharry and James Smith, who are buried at Inchbelly-Bridge,*” *A Cloud of Witnesses for the Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ* [. . .] ([Edinburgh?]: 1714), 286.

²⁷ Kidd, *Subverting Scotland’s Past*, 67-9, 203-4.

or on the heels of the Covenanting era.²⁸ The Covenanter narrative publicly reasserted itself under the aegis of a few champions in a controversy touched off by Walter Scott's *The Tale of Old Mortality* (1816). Old Mortality was the sobriquet given to Robert Paterson (c. 1715-1801), a stonemason who took it upon himself to continually renew the fading inscriptions of the Covenanter memorials. Although Scott's novel was generally well-received, in its sympathetic treatment of both Covenanters and Royalists and its condemnation of extremists on both sides, it clashed with the folk memory of former Covenanting regions.²⁹ Coleman traces how, throughout the century, this public debate combined with other religious and political circumstances to fuel a surge in public monuments dedicated to Covenanters, "no longer lurk[ing] on the fringes of Scottish-national commemorative culture." As with Jacobitism in the nineteenth century, Covenanting memory required some reshaping in order to mirror the values of the present as expressed through public commemoration,³⁰ but it may only have been eligible for such treatment because it had been guarded and nurtured over the previous century. Perhaps also like Jacobitism, the public face of nineteenth-century memory concealed continuing diversity in the meaning made of Covenanting memory.³¹

For all of the stateliness of the Victorian commemorative style, the earliest Covenanter memorials maintained their hold on the imagination. In verse and prose, they were compelling for their isolation, their unadornment, even their decrepitude.³² The solitary, eccentric figure of Old Mortality, as mythologised in text by Scott and others, helped to keep the Covenanter memorials inscribed in the national imagination, even as

²⁸ Finlay, "Keeping the Covenant: Scottish National Identity," in Devine and Young, *Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, 126.

²⁹ See especially: Valerie Wallace, "Fictions of History, Evangelical Whiggism and the Debate over *Old Mortality* in Scotland and Nova Scotia," in *Historical Writing in Britain, 1688-1830*, ed. Ben Dew and Fiona Price (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 182-199.

³⁰ Somewhat ironically, they were credited for bringing about the Williamite Revolution and its sequel, the Union, both of which many of them had in fact opposed or at best accepted with grave reservations. Coleman, "Double-Life of the Scottish Past," 286; Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 131-50.

³¹ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 134-36, 148-50.

³² E. g. Robert Munro, "Lines, on a View of the Covenanters' Tomb in the Bog of Loch In-Kett, Galloway," in *Poems and Translations, in Verse* [. . .] (Edinburgh: James Brydone, 1843), 75; Smith, *Summer in Skye*, 214-15; Robert Louis Stevenson, "To S. R. Crockett," in *The Poems and Ballads of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 264.

Paterson's inscriptions "hasten[ed], like all earthly memorials, to fall into ruin or decay."³³ In spite of the Victorian recasting of the Covenanters as history's victors, validated by the *status quo*, the "[t]he grandeur of loss,"³⁴ or sense of embattled marginality, gilded both Covenanter and Jacobite memories.

While Covenanters were able to build modest material monuments in the early eighteenth century, Jacobites in the same period, as the greater threat to the censoring state, were more limited in the media available to them. There was a rich material culture of Jacobitism at all levels of society, but with some exceptions these were private, often secret, objects.³⁵ A few publishers of the Scott epitaph speculate that the epitaph was never inscribed "for fear of giving offence."³⁶ Whether this was the primary reason, it is certainly possible that the text would have been undesirably provocative for so fragile a thing as a stone memorial. Peter Sherlock observes that "controversial matters on tombs continued to be an issue long after" the Reformation and through the turmoil of the seventeenth century.³⁷ There is no reason to think this attitude was relaxed in the Jacobite era. Risky as they were to circulate, though, Jacobite memories and expressions of ideology ultimately proved impossible to stifle entirely in print, manuscript, and oral forms.³⁸ Contemporaries were unlikely to have viewed this body of messaging and memory as inferior to those manifested in material monuments—the opposite may have been true.

³³ Walter Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, ed. Douglas Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 13. For a rather more prosaic account of Paterson, see the letter from Paterson's son reproduced in Craufurd Tait Ramage, "Old Mortality," *Notes and Queries*, ser. 4, 6, no. 140 (September 1870): 187-89.

³⁴ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 6, 156; Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 185.

³⁵ For discussions of the commemorative aspects of this surviving material (and gestural) culture in the nineteenth century, see Neil Guthrie, *The Material Culture of the Jacobites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 143-66; Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition*, 151-58.

³⁶ E. g. James Mitchell, *The Scotsman's Library; Being a Selection of Anecdotes and Facts Illustrative of Scotland and Scotsmen* (Edinburgh: J. Anderson, 1825), 67.

³⁷ Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2008), 193.

³⁸ For a brief account of government censorship and its limitations, see H. T. Dickinson, "The Jacobite Challenge," *Jacobitism and the '45*, ed. Lynch (London: Historical Association Committee for Scotland, 1995), 11-12.

The “psychologically charged fantasy” of permanence expressed through stone and metal monuments is an enduring metaphor,³⁹ but the fragility of such media has also long been recognised in a discourse on the ideal medium of commemoration represented by the likes of the Roman poets Horace, Martial, and Ovid, who designated text as the superior memorial.⁴⁰ The question was reinvigorated during the Reformation, when the spiritual and textual battled the material manifestations of Christian belief, leaving a legacy of Protestant “ambivalen[ce]” towards material monuments.⁴¹ Still reeling from a culture of orgiastic iconoclasm which had destroyed so many material traces of the past, post-Reformation poets, playwrights, and philosophers often grappled with the theme of memorialization, with a focus on the desirability of commemoration in hearts, minds, and works rather than concrete monuments which, if the commemorated subject is not loved and respected, are at risk of destruction.⁴² Although private material monuments actually proliferated in this era, they were viewed as “vehicle[s] for words,”⁴³ and it was considered irresponsible to neglect to record the text elsewhere.⁴⁴ In the realm of memory, words reigned supreme; outlasting even nations, they were “of all Monuments the most permanent; for of all things else there is a vicissitude.”⁴⁵

³⁹ Sharon Hecker, “Fleeting Revelations: The Demise of Duration in Medardo Rosso’s Wax Sculpture,” in *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, ed. Roberta Panzanelli (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 132.

⁴⁰ Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, 206. An Egyptian scribe made the same claim more than a thousand years earlier: Dynes, “Monument: The Word,” in Reynolds, *Monuments and Moral Values*, 28-29.

⁴¹ Simone Hanebaum, “Historical Writing? – Richard Wilton’s ‘Booke of particular remembrances’, 1584-1634,” *The Seventeenth Century* (August 28, 2018): 12; Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, 117; see also: Stephen Greenblatt, “Memory and Monumentality,” *The Threepenny Review* 64 (Winter 1996): 35-36. Even the nineteenth-century builders of Covenanter memorials were accused of Protestant hypocrisy for raising idols to memory: Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 113.

⁴² Brian Chalk, *Monuments and Literary Posterity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 22-25, 32-37; Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 7, 18-19. This discourse included criticism of the wealth and political power of those who built opulent monuments: 400; Scodel, *Commemoration and Conflict*, 16-20.

⁴³ Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, 206. It is something of a cliché for tombs to disclaim the need for ornament, or materiality itself, in order for the subject to be remembered. Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, 154-58; Willsher, *Scottish Epitaphs*, 8, 51, 83, 91.

⁴⁴ Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 7.

⁴⁵ John Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Islands Adjacent* (London: Thomas Harper: 1631), 3, quoted in Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 7.

While Protestant cultures continued building monuments in spite of such thinking, the uneasiness about material monuments had not subsided even in the “Monument Mania”⁴⁶ of nineteenth-century Britain. Apologies were made in 1832 for Edinburgh’s monument to Walter Scott, whose “own works had raised himself a more imperishable monument” than anyone could build for him.⁴⁷ The Wallace memorial was similarly labelled an extravagant redundancy, because Wallace already lived eternally in the minds of Scots—to survive even “after stone and brass have crumbled”—and no monument could do justice to his legacy.⁴⁸ From quite a different perspective, the monument was said to be a futile effort to remind Scots of a symbolic figure they were on their way to forgetting: “It is only when the memory of a hero ceases to be a living power in the hearts of men that” anyone “think[s] of raising a monument to him.”⁴⁹ While genuinely popular figures were commemorated in public monuments, it was still recognised that there were political limits on public commemoration, and some heroes or cherished causes would receive no such public sanction.⁵⁰ Public monuments are valuable windows into dominant commemorative cultures, but, as Coleman recognizes, should not necessarily be read as “reflection[s]”⁵¹ of the memories of people clearly capable of rejecting not just the message, but the medium.

Jacobite commemorative culture was, in at least one example, capable of overwhelming the narrative embodied by material monuments. In the aftermath of Culloden, one Jacobite bitterly invoked the reality recognised by today’s scholars—that public monuments are “inscribed by power” of various kinds and degrees. In a poem addressed to the Duke of Cumberland (1721-65)—the Hanoverian commander and

⁴⁶ Paul Pickering and Robyn Westcott, “Monuments and Commemorations: A Consideration,” *Humanities Research* 10, no. 2 (2003): 1.

⁴⁷ Christoph Ehland, “The Scott Monument and Scottish Cultural Memory,” in *Literature and Cultural Memory*, ed. Mihaela Irimia, Manca Dragoş, and Andreea Paris (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2017), 236.

⁴⁸ Coleman, “Double-Life of the Scottish Past,” 58.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Summer in Skye*, 50.

⁵⁰ Pickering and Alex Tyrell, “The Public Memorial of Reform: Commemoration and Contestation,” in *Contested Sites: Commemoration, Memorial and Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Pickering and Tyrell (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2004), 1; Frederick Dixon, “Sarsfield: A Jacobite Rapparee,” *Temple Bar: with Which is Incorporated Bentley’s Miscellany* 92, (1891): 30, 64.

⁵¹ Coleman, “Double-Life of the Scottish Past,” 17.

George II's son—after the punitive campaign that followed the battle, the anonymous poet suggests that Cumberland will be remembered as a villain in spite of his attempt to portray himself as a hero in monumental form:

Go MONSTER, raise to Gold thy Monument,
And near the Basis place base TREACHERY
Veiled in a mantle of eternal Shame.
Then POINTING, shew the World from whence you reap'd
These Execrable Laurels which have damned
Your Name to INFAMY ETERNAL.⁵²

Cumberland *was* “feted,” and monuments were raised in his honour. Among anti-Jacobites deeply unsettled by the rising, Cumberland was the hero who had secured their safety and their ideological supremacy.⁵³ To Jacobites and many Scots, however, he was *Butcher* Cumberland, and the wider acceptance of this reputation was influenced considerably by the publication in 1834 of *The Lyon in Mourning*. This textual monument was the obsessive project of the Episcopalian bishop Robert Forbes (d. 1775), who in the years after the 1745-6 uprising solicited a wide range of eyewitness testimonies of the episode, including the atrocities committed by Cumberland's troops.⁵⁴ Although Cumberland still had his defenders, when a London statue of Cumberland was removed for repair in 1868, it was not thought fit to raise it again, and it was destroyed instead.⁵⁵ Another, erected in Birr, Ireland, was removed in 1915 to answer the protests of Scottish soldiers stationed there.⁵⁶ The plinth of the former and column of the latter monument remain as testaments to the limitations of such memorials. The potency of Scottish folk memory, especially in the latter case, no doubt owes much to the privileged position of

⁵² “Verses addressed to the Pretended [*sic*] Duke of Cumberland,” in Grosart, *Jacobite Ballads, Songs and Satires*, 84.

⁵³ Pittock, *Culloden*, 101-2.

⁵⁴ See the editor's remarks on Cumberland's reputation and the anticipated impact of the *Lyon in Mourning*: “Preface,” *Jacobite Memoirs of the Rebellion of 1745* [. . .], ed. Robert Chambers (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1834), xviii-xix.

⁵⁵ Evan Charteris, *William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, His Early Life and Times (1721-1748)* (London: Edward Arnold, 1913), vii.

⁵⁶ William Laffan, “From Paper to Pillar: *Miscelanea Structura Curiosa* and the Cumberland Column,” in Samuel Chearnley, *Miscelanea Structura Curiosa*, ed. Laffan (Tralee, Co. Kerry: Churchhill House Press, 2005), 19-20.

Scots as partners in empire.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the 1915 episode especially demonstrates how much Scottish memory was steeped in the Jacobite period and how these memories could vie with forms of public memory, vested with political authority, that told a rosier story of the making of Britain. The epitaph was one such source of memory.

3.2. The Epitaph as Monument

As Coleman notes, monuments require “recurring acts of commemoration” in order to maintain their relevance.⁵⁸ In the case of the Scott epitaph, each reproduction and each reading may be counted as a commemorative act. This does not mean that it was read in the same way each time—as with material monuments, interpretations of the text would have depended on readers “following their own opinions [. . .] and emotions.”⁵⁹ While I am able to illustrate the epitaph’s popularity, only in a few cases is it possible to speculate on the meaning that is made of it or the function it fulfills, through its context and through what is known of the person reproducing it. The thoughts of most readers of these reproductions are inaccessible, but in the portability of the textual monument the Scott epitaph, with its various possible meanings, would have been seen by more eyes than most material monuments.

It will be noticed that the epitaph is often reproduced in English contexts, and these examples may be read as external projections irrelevant to Scottish memory. This may be true to an extent. However, as Davis argues, Britishness and the boundaries of its component nationalities have often developed in “a dialogue” between Scotland and England.⁶⁰ Perhaps in its border-crossing the epitaph was one very small piece of this broad and complex process. It is also the case that evidence of the epitaph’s popularity rarely extends beyond middle-class media; how the epitaph relates to narratives of folk

⁵⁷ As a “symbol of Protestant authority,” the Birr statue had long been a source of irritation to Irish Catholic locals. The county newspaper gleefully recorded the removal as a “hanging drawing and quartering,” with the “decapitation” as the “piece de resistance.” Laffan, “Cumberland Column,” 27; “The Birr ‘Duke’ Deposed,” *King’s County Chronicle*, March 25, 1915, quoted in Laffan, “Cumberland Column,” 33.

⁵⁸ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 16.

⁵⁹ Bellentani and Panico, “Meanings of Monuments and Memorials,” 33.

⁶⁰ Davis, *Acts of Union*, 1.

memory is a question beyond the scope of this thesis, although the commemorative diversity represented by the epitaph suggests the potential of textual monuments in other class contexts.

Rigney points out that textual monuments have the distinct advantage of portability.⁶¹ Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the epitaph appeared scores of times in newspapers, magazines, collections of poetry, collections of epitaphs, and books on Scotland's national or local history and culture.⁶² It is even remarked that the epitaph appeared "in [Scottish] school-books,"⁶³ although I am unable to say where or when this was true. Sometimes an author refers to the epitaph allusively, apparently assuming audience familiarity.⁶⁴ In many cases, the epitaph's propagator suggests the physical existence of the epitaph on stone in a kirkyard,⁶⁵ while others have searched for such a stone to their disappointment.⁶⁶

Pittock observes the degree of wear—the result of extensive handling—on commemorative Jacobite medals as a sign of intimate interaction and wide circulation.⁶⁷ An analogy is the extent to which a text undergoes alteration, which was very often the case with the Scott epitaph. It is not possible to catalogue these variations here, and most are of little discernible significance, but each change bears the mark of a discrete interaction. Some seem deliberate, and are perhaps intended to improve the verse's frequently-deprecated quality. Other changes may be accidental slippages in copying either by hand or in type, or perhaps even in oral transmission. The epitaph appears in a handful of commonplace books—that is, notebooks in which quotations and

⁶¹ Rigney, "Portable Monuments," 383.

⁶² See the subsection "Scott Epitaph" in the Bibliography. It is not possible to discuss all of these, and I expect there are examples that have eluded my searches.

⁶³ Gershom Cumming, *Views at Dunkeld with Descriptive Illustrations* (Dundee: G. Cumming, 1839), 10.

⁶⁴ E.g. William Hone, *The Every-Day Book and Table Book* [. . .], vol. 1 (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1838), 907; J. Orton, "York Races," *The Yorkshire Gazette*, September 3, 1836, 3.

⁶⁵ "It has been asserted in a hundred books that on a tombstone in the cathedral might be read a rhyming epitaph to the memory of a person called Margaret Scott." *Oliver and Boyd's Scottish Tourist* [. . .], 20th ed. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyds, 1860), 291.

⁶⁶ E.g. Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides*, 2nd ed, vol. 2. (London: Benj. White, 1772), 63.

⁶⁷ Pittock, *Treacherous Objects*, 126, 128.

compositions were recorded.⁶⁸ Commonplace books can be read as reflections of individual interest, but they were also stores of material to be memorised and recited in company.⁶⁹ The epitaph's presence on ballad broadsides suggests another tenuous link to oral culture—it is difficult to imagine the epitaph put to music, however, and since no air is provided it may simply be included as filler on these cheapest of printed materials.



Figure 3.1. A ballad broadside image of Margaret Scott in what appears to be crudely-represented tartan.

Tailor and the Treacle Cask [detail] (Preston: J. Harkness, n.d.), National Library of Scotland.⁷⁰

One of the most significant and persistent alterations to the text is the elimination of the lines concerning the Regicide and the downsizing of the Scottish peerage under the Union. Whatever the reasons for these changes, in the political climate of nineteenth-century Scotland these omissions would have softened Jacobite memory as presented in the epitaph; in most of the epitaph's appearances, gone are Pennecuik's intense royalism

⁶⁸ This includes only commonplace books that have been fully catalogued. The epitaph also appears in loose-leaf manuscript collections of prominent Perthshire Jacobite families. See manuscript entries in the "Scott Epitaph" section of the bibliography, which lists only those I have seen in person or are available digitally—the Folger Shakespeare Library's *Union First Lines Index* lists six manuscript versions I have not been able to view.

⁶⁹ David Allan, *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 145-49.

⁷⁰ The Bodleian Library possesses a further three copies of this broadside. The four copies together represent at least three different print runs, and were printed "between 1840 and 1866." See entry under "Broadside and Advertisements" in "Scott Epitaph" section of Bibliography.

and concern for the prestige of Scotland's unpopular aristocracy.⁷¹ As Coleman shows, this kind of pruning is often necessary to make the past palatable in a much-changed present.⁷²

Another common variation was introduced when Marjory Scott of Dunkeld became Margaret Scott of Dalkeith, probably occurring first in 1739.⁷³ The error was widespread, and Dalkeith became another site for the phantom headstone. This divergence introduces an element of regionalism into readings of the epitaph, as Dalkeith raises quite a different picture than Dunkeld. Where Dunkeld was relatively remote, Dalkeith was a busy market town by Scottish standards, and became something like a genteel, salutary suburb to Edinburgh. Although both boasted long histories and settings increasingly valued for rural beauty,⁷⁴ Dalkeith lacked any association with the Gaelic-speaking Highlands. Through this variation, then, the Scott epitaph might have served as a reminder, even without attribution to its Lowland author, that Jacobitism was not the strictly Highland preoccupation that nineteenth-century romanticisation implied.

As a further illustration of the Scott epitaph's renown, a few hands made deliberate and conspicuous changes to the text. Pennecuik's poem may have inspired at least one imitation, more brazen in political dissidence than the original. The epitaph of Rowland Deakin, who died at age 95 in 1791 or 1751 in Astley, England, reads:

Many years I've seen, and
Many things I have known,
Five Kings, two Queens,
And a Usurper on the throne;
[. . .]⁷⁵

⁷¹ Finlay, "Heroes, Myths and Anniversaries in Modern Scotland," *Scottish Affairs* 18 (Winter 1997): 115, 121.

⁷² Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 109-10, 145.

⁷³ Some sources also have Mary or Marion Scott, while other corruptions of Dunkeld are (not counting misspellings): Dilkirk, Dunholm, Dunkeith, and Dunkirk. "An Inscription on the Tombstone of One Margaret Scott Who Died at Dalkeith, Twelve Miles from Newcastle, Feb. 9, 1738," *The London Magazine, and Monthly Chronologer* 8 (June 1739): 306.

⁷⁴ See Sinclair, *Statistical Account*, vol. 12 (1794), 18-27, and John Gordon, ed., *The New Statistical Account of Scotland* [. . .], vol. 1 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1834), 451-533.

⁷⁵ The editor includes this epitaph as a kind of afterthought to Marjory Scott's "well-known" one. William Andrews, ed., *Curious Epitaphs*, 2nd ed. (London: William Andrews, 1899), 156-57. The first six lines of

Although the uncertain date of death makes it impossible confidently to identify the “Usurper,” this could very well be a Jacobite text. The Scott epitaph was again repurposed in an epitaph dedicated to John Mitchell of Dallyfour, possibly inspired by his simple gravestone which records only his initials and the years of his life: 1596-1722. Here the lines from the Scott epitaph are more closely reproduced, but are tweaked and expanded to tell an assertively Presbyterian narrative of Scottish history, although it still registers a complaint against the Union.⁷⁶ Whoever was responsible for this modification clearly understood and disapproved of Pennecuik’s Jacobite perspective on Scottish history. Lastly, the pious Jeremiah Hubbard, a school-teacher in Indiana, evidently found the epitaph insufficiently spiritual, and so appends an extra four lines in which Scott piously enjoys heaven.⁷⁷

One of the more unexpected adaptations of the epitaph comes from Aaron Belisarius Cosmo Sibthorpe (d. 1916), author of the first written history of Sierra Leone (1868). Sibthorpe may have been born in Sierra Leone, or he may have been among the “recaptives” (or “Liberated”) born in what is now Nigeria and settled in Sierra Leone after escaping the illegal slave trade.⁷⁸ Sibthorpe became a school-teacher, an artist, and a loyal, although not wholly uncritical, subject of the British Empire. In an expanded edition of *The History of Sierra Leone* (1906), Sibthorpe reflects pessimistically on the state of Sierra Leone since his youth in the 1840s or ’50s. He finds fault with the younger generations, but also observes that something seems to have gone awry in the nation’s stadial progress, possibly due to inconsistent, but often mercenary, European interest in

the Scott epitaph, adjusted for age, were also borrowed for Elizabeth Hadkins of Nottinghamshire and Jane Clarke of London: Askew, H., “Epitaph on a Sampler,” *Notes and Queries* 150, no. 19 (May 1926): 340; William Snow, ed., *Sepulchral Gleanings, or, A Collection of Epitaphs, Ancient, Modern, Curious, Instructive, and Moral* (London: William Snow, 1817), 108.

⁷⁶ The editor took the reworked epitaph from an undated manuscript on the flyleaf of an unspecified volume. Andrew Jervise, ed., *Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North East of Scotland*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1879), 163. Another version inverts the epitaph’s politics with less alteration: Ernest R. Suffling, ed., *Epitaphia: Being a Collection of 1300 British Epitaphs, Grave and Gay, Historical and Curious* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1909), 210.

⁷⁷ Hubbard, *A Teacher’s Ups and Downs from 1858 to 1879* (Richmond, IN: Palladium Steam Printing House, 1879), 82-83.

⁷⁸ Christopher Fyfe, “A. B. C. Sibthorpe: A Tribute,” *History in Africa* 19 (1992): 327-38.

the prospects of the land and people.⁷⁹ In wrestling with his country's sufferings, which he takes to be a worthwhile price for the hoped-for advantages of "civilization,"

Sibthorpe inserts the following lines:

I saw the Liberated thrust out—nay more,
I saw my country sold for English ore;
Such desolations in my time have been,
I have the end of all perfection seen.

Tracing Sibthorpe's verse quotations reveals his source as James Grant's (1822-87) novel of Jacobite adventure, *The White Cockade*, wherein the four concluding lines of the epitaph appear as an epigraph.⁸⁰ It would be a gross distortion to see this as any kind of analogy of colonisation between Scotland and Sierra Leone—Scotland, after all, was among the colonial powers which had shaped Sierra Leone, first through extensive Scottish participation in the slave trade and later in hollow attempts to atone for it. It is noteworthy nevertheless that a Scottish text on the making of Britain should supplement Sibthorpe's conflicted account of colonialism.

Back in Britain, the epitaph appears in a few major, image-forming texts on Scotland. At the time of the Union of 1707, "Scotland was an unknown land to many people in England," often imagined disparagingly and essentially as not *worth* knowing.⁸¹ The popular genre of literary tours, eventually followed by a growing swell of tourism, was one way in which England came to know—or, perhaps more accurately, to construct—Scotland.⁸² Of course, Scotland was a large and diverse country, so such descriptions may also have been part of "how Scotland came to know itself."⁸³ One of the earliest and most popular entries in this genre was Daniel Defoe's (1660-1731) *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-27). Defoe had earlier been a paid spy and

⁷⁹ Sibthorpe, *The History of Sierra Leone*, 4th ed. (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 190-91, 197-205, 215-20.

⁸⁰ Sibthorpe, *History*, 218. Grant, *The White Cockade; Or, Faith and Fortitude* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1868), 40.

⁸¹ Betty Hagglund, *Tourists and Travelers: Women's Non-Fictional Writing about Scotland, 1770-1830* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 210), 13.

⁸² John Glendening, *The High Road: Romantic Tourism, Scotland, and Literature, 1720-1820* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 1.

⁸³ Withers, "How Scotland Came to Know Itself: Geography, National Identity, and the Making of a Nation, 1680-1790," *Journal of Historical Geography* 21, no. 4 (1995): 371-97.

propagandist for Union, but he was also a genuine believer in the Union, and the *Tour* was meant to bring Britain's nations together in a proud family portrait. Unfortunately, the work is deeply Anglocentric. The portion on Scotland is markedly rushed, and Defoe is unable to conceal his embarrassed "puzzlement" at Scotland's non-conformity to his vision of British greatness.⁸⁴ After Defoe's death, the third edition of the *Tour* was reprinted under the editorship of Samuel Richardson, in his early days "a printer of crypto-Jacobite material." Richardson expanded the Scottish section into its own volume, "'doing some further Justice to that Country.'"⁸⁵ Departing from Defoe's dogmatic investment in modernity, Richardson "is more alert to the downside of progress," and is even critical of some elements of Anglicisation.⁸⁶ The epitaph is included in this and subsequent editions, its themes in apparent concord with Richardson's aims.⁸⁷

The epitaph appears again as one of many Scottish cultural curiosities in Thomas Pennant's (1726-98) *Tour* of 1776, which looks at Scotland with an eye for improvement. Pennant resisted the trend of "largely Scotophobic" accounts of Scotland following the 1745-6 uprising. The plaintive epitaph, providing a nod towards the divisions of the recent past as well as a note of sympathy for the defeated, fits well into his efforts to reconcile the Scottish and English peoples.⁸⁸ The Scottish John Sinclair (1754-1835) was another proponent of improvement, in the interest of which he compiled the colossal *Statistical Account of Scotland* (1791-99) with information from local correspondents in each of Scotland's 938 parishes. While not in the tour genre, the *Statistical Account*, as much as it looked to the future, allows a uniquely coherent and detailed glimpse of Scottish cultures at this moment in time, and the epitaph is included for its well-known association with Dunkeld. It is coincidentally well-placed, following a discussion

⁸⁴ Glendenning, *The High Road*, 23, 25-27, 39, 50, 53.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Tom Keymer, "Smollett's Scotlands: Culture, Politics and Nationhood in *Humphry Clinker* and Defoe's *Tour*," *History Workshop Journal* 40 (Autumn, 1995): 122.

⁸⁶ Keymer, "Smollett's Scotlands," 122-23.

⁸⁷ Defoe, ed., *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* [. . .], 3rd ed., edited by Richardson (London: J. Osborn et al., 1742), 4:144-45.

⁸⁸ Pennant, *Tour in Scotland*, 63; Nigel Leask, "Thomas Pennant, National Description and the Project of Improvement," in Benchimol and McKeever, *Cultures of Improvement*, 96-98.

“lamenting” the “desolation” of Dunkeld’s medieval cathedral in the violence of religious conflict.⁸⁹

Lastly, the epitaph is included in the travel account of the intensely patriotic Alexander Campbell (1764-1824), whose chief occupations were Scottish music, song, and poetry. While its author has sentimental Jacobite tendencies, the *Journey* is conscientiously non-partisan, and is framed as a Scottish interjection in a genre dominated by “stranger[s]”; a “native,” Campbell suggests, is more able than the most careful researcher to preserve aspects of Scottish culture that he perceives as being on the edge of “oblivion.” While Campbell is optimistic about Scotland’s British future, his characterisation of the defeat of Jacobitism mirrors the tone of the epitaph; “The Scots,” he suggests, “quietly submitted” to defeat in the confidence that they tried “to the utmost of their power” to achieve a Stuart restoration and an end to Union. Even if such pragmatism led to peace and prosperity for many,⁹⁰ Campbell remained keenly aware of the losses that accompanied the new order. His next work was *The Grampians Desolate*, a poem which voiced an “early protest” against the Highland Clearances.⁹¹

Although Campbell “regarded himself as a Highlander” and had some understanding of Gaelic, his family had settled in Edinburgh when Campbell was young. While this seems to have imbued Campbell with a sense of alienated “heritage,”⁹² another recorder of the epitaph provides a stronger link to the *Gàidhealtachd*. Uilliam MacMhurchaidh (or William McMurchy/ie, d. 1778), native of Kintyre, was a musician, a poet, a scribe, and a manuscript-collector: arts practiced against a background of social and cultural upheaval.⁹³ MacMhurchaidh was among those Highlanders swept into the

⁸⁹ Baird, “City of Dunkeld,” in Sinclair, *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. 20, 423.

⁹⁰ *A Journey from Edinburgh through Parts of North Britain* (London: A. Strahan, 1802), 1:iii-iv, 287-88; 2:332.

⁹¹ Francis Watt and John Purser, “Campbell, Alexander,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004.

⁹² Karen McAulay, *Our Ancient National Airs: Scottish Song Collecting from the Enlightenment to the Romantic Era* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 79-80.

⁹³ Hugh Cheape and Keith Sanger, “‘Mock Eulogy on a Bard and His Pipe’ / *Moladh Magiudh air Droch Phibaire agus a Phib*,” *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 25 (2009): 23.

British army in unprecedented numbers in the 1750s.⁹⁴ He found the transition from farming to soldiering nearly intolerable, especially when his new occupation proved insufficient to support the family he left at home.⁹⁵ Perhaps his artistic dedication was due in part to his all-but-certain membership in “[w]hat is probably the longest-lived literary dynasty in Europe,” the MacMhuirichs. Uilliam MacMhurchaidh was not alone among offshoots of this family to attempt to sustain a traditional role in a new era, but the family was subject to the same disruptions that touched all of Gaelic society in this period.⁹⁶

In one of MacMhurchaidh’s commonplace books, the Scott epitaph is one of three English-language items, appearing opposite a page of archaic Gaelic scribal hand which MacMhurchaidh was among the last to employ.⁹⁷ The version of the epitaph he encountered gave Margaret Scott of Dalkeith as the dedicatee, so any Gaelic association is absent; nevertheless, it is not difficult to imagine why a figure such as MacMhurchaidh—resilient and adaptive though he was—could relate to the epitaph’s melancholy reflection on dramatic change. Certainly the epitaph’s conceit would have been familiar to the Gaelic scribe; one of the poems he preserved rehearses the sorrows of the Irish lands of Maine, personified as a vulnerable woman in mourning.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ The Jacobite rebellion provided justification to intensify Scottish recruitment, which had occupied the government’s interest for generations due in part to the construction of Gaels as a martial race. Pockets of resistance were eventually subdued, and military service became a primary means by which Gaels were able to resuscitate their image within Britain, and to rise materially, often through the violent dispossession of indigenous peoples throughout the empire. See most recently: Matthew P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015).

⁹⁵ MacMhurchaidh appealed for relief to multiple patrons at home: “Spiritless and sad is my awakening [. . .] With looking back on my folly / Full of grief and horror / That I sold my freedom, / My family, and my peace.” Translation from W. M. Conley, “A Poem in the Stewart Collection,” *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 11, no. 1 (December 1966): 29. While the Highland soldier was a celebrated figure of Unionist-nationalism, the rare anti-Union voice of the radical John Morrison Davidson denounced the disproportionate losses of Scottish soldiers in Britain’s predatory imperial wars: Davidson, *Scotia Rediviva*, 18-19.

⁹⁶ Derek S. Thomson, “The MacMhuirich Bardic Family,” *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 63 (1960-63): 281-82, 302.

⁹⁷ Pádraig Ó Macháin, “Scribal Practice and Textual Survival: the Example of Uilliam Mac Mhurchaidh,” *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 22, (2006): 99.

⁹⁸ Ó Macháin, “Scribal Practice and Textual Survival,” 110-121.

Another to record a meaningful encounter with the epitaph was the seed-selling entrepreneur Grant Thorburn (1773-1863). Born in Scotland, Thorburn had emigrated to the United States as a young man, having faced persecution for his republicanism in the fraught climate that followed the French Revolution. Flush with the social capital of his fame as the inspiration for John Galt's (1779-1839) *Lawrie Todd, or, The Settlers in the Woods* (1830), in which Thorburn's fictional counterpart is portrayed as a model Scottish settler, Thorburn returned to Britain in 1833-34 and composed *Men and Manners in Britain*, in response to the English Frances Trollope's censorious *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832).⁹⁹ Thorburn's observations on the English are often unflattering, but he is more generous to fellow Scots, and even makes a connection between Scottish national character and republican values.¹⁰⁰ Thorburn also recalls the spirit of Anglophobia and the long-lived resistance to Union—now subsided—in his native Dalkeith. Seemingly in illustration, he calls up a quotidian image from his childhood:

I remember to have seen, in my school-boy rambles through the church-yard, the following epitaph:

[The text of the epitaph is reproduced.]

In my late visit to my native place I looked among the tombstones for this, but it could not be found—time and change no doubt has been its ruin.¹⁰¹

This wistful remembrance of a thing that never was is almost too neat a representation of the pitfalls of nostalgia. Evidently, the invented association between the epitaph and Dalkeith had stuck in Thorburn's mind to create this rather personal false memory.

⁹⁹ Catherine Kerrigan, "Thorburn, Grant [*pseud.* Lawrie Todd]," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004.

¹⁰⁰ For example, see Thorburn's reading of the Declaration of Arbroath and his remark that "the world is indebted" to the Covenanters "for the rational liberty it enjoys." Thorburn was raised in the Whig tradition common in Dalkeith, which makes the epitaph's echo with his sentiments all the more interesting. Thorburn, *Men and Manners in Britain; or, A Bone to Gnaw for the Trollopes, Fidlers, &c., Being Notes from a Journal, on Sea and on Land, in 1833-4* (New York: Wiley and Long, 1834), 94-95, 116.

¹⁰¹ Thorburn, *Men and Manners*, 130-31. Thorburn is not the only Scottish emigrant to imagine a connection to the epitaph. Samuel Patten (b. 1735) claimed to have been descended from the epitaph's subject, although he knew her as Margaret Stuart of Argyllshire. William Willis Hayward, *The History of Hancock New Hampshire 1764-1889* (Lowell, MA: Vox Populi Press, 1889), 799.

Even if the epitaph never appeared on stone, it was represented in material culture.¹⁰² The unfinished sampler pictured below, made c. 1840,¹⁰³ hangs on a wall of the Community Archive at Dunkeld.

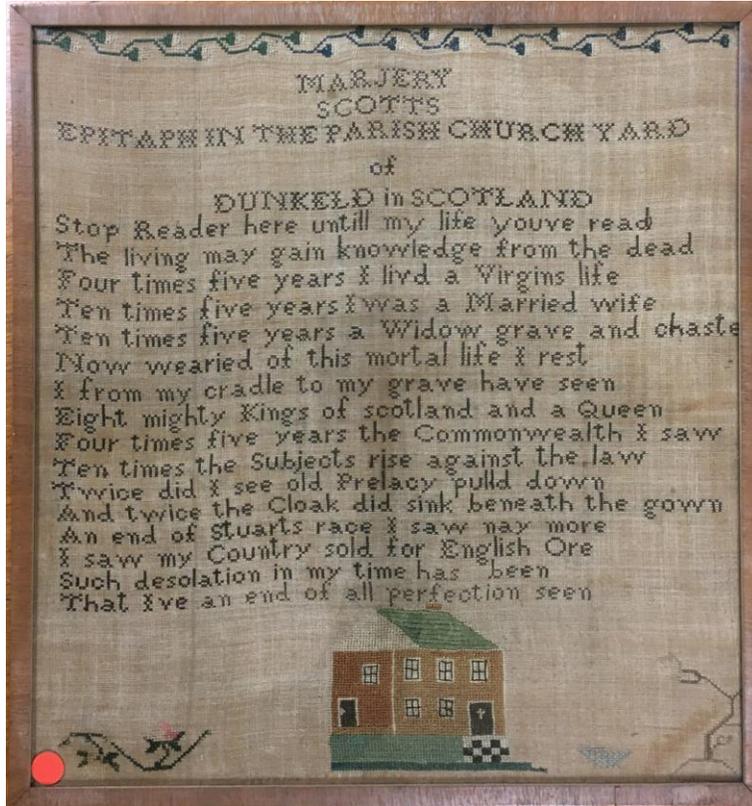


Figure 3.2. The epitaph on an embroidery sampler, found in the attic of Dunkeld Cathedral’s manse in 1999.

c. 1840, wool on linen, 47.5 x 45 cm, Dunkeld Community Archive. Picture by author, included with permission of Dunkeld Community Archive.

Sewing was an important component of most women’s domestic and working lives throughout the nineteenth century, and girls of all classes produced samplers as a common rite of passage. Although they incorporate established motifs, samplers were also highly individual creative expressions which often reflected aspects of their makers’ lives. While the Dunkeld sampler is characteristic of Scottish samplers in its depiction of a building—sometimes real, sometimes imagined—it is strikingly unusual for being

¹⁰² Print and manuscript are increasingly considered for their place in material culture, but for this thesis it is not possible to consider their material properties.

¹⁰³ Letter from Naomi Tarrant, National Museums of Scotland curator, and acquisition record, Box 67, 1999.0411, Dunkeld Community Archive.

dominated by text. Verses were normally short and either biblical or moralistic, and alphabets were preferred for displaying letter-forming skills.¹⁰⁴ Scottish verse itself is also quite rare, with Tarrant's survey recording "only one quotation each" from Burns and Walter Scott.¹⁰⁵ It is not known whether the epitaph's maker had any association with Dunkeld, and we can only guess what attracted her so to the epitaph.¹⁰⁶

In a further transmutation, the text took a fully three-dimensional shape. In a c. 1850 advertisement for a Worcester department store called The Civet Cat, the Scott epitaph is reproduced beneath the promise that at The Civet Cat one might view:

A SPLENDID
MODEL OF MARGERY SCOTT
AS LARGE AS LIFE.¹⁰⁷

At a waxworks exhibition near Smithfield market in London in 1874, she again appeared in a motley collection of historical and literary characters, alongside a centenarian husband, possibly the figure of an old man recycled to suit his more famous wax wife:

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the two next are a wonderful couple, John and Margaret Scott, natives of Dunkeld, in Scotland; they lived about ninety years ago; John Scott was a hundred and five years old when he died, and Margaret lived to be a hundred and twelve; and, what is more remarkable, there is not a soul living can say he ever heard them quarrel.¹⁰⁸

A contributor to *Notes and Queries* in 1948 asked for information on "Margery or Margrett Scott," the "old Scottish lady" whose wax figure he had encountered at a travelling show in Lancashire when a child.¹⁰⁹ Whether these accounts represent separate

¹⁰⁴ Naomi Tarrant, "Remember Now Thy Creator": *Scottish Girls' Samplers, 1700-1872* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2014), 17, 31, 65, 68, 97, 183.

¹⁰⁵ Tarrant, *Remember Now Thy Creator*, 142.

¹⁰⁶ As strange as this sampler is, there is another sampler which records the epitaph. This sampler, dated 1815, gives Mary Montgomery of Dunkeld as the name of the epitaph's dedicatee. The sampler ended up "in the possession of an M. P.," and from there I cannot trace it. M. P. B., "Epitaph on a Sampler," *Notes and Queries* no. 233 (September 1922): 272; C. E. Baker, "Epitaph on a Sampler," *Notes and Queries* 150, no. 15 (April 1926): 262.

¹⁰⁷ Civet Cat advertisement, box 43, envelope 17, 1999.0267, Dunkeld Community Archive.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Frost, *The Old Showmen, and the Old London Fairs* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1874), 293.

¹⁰⁹ T., F. I., "Margery Scott," *Notes and Queries* 193, no. 9 (May 1948): 192.

wax figures or just one,¹¹⁰ this is impressive evidence of Marjory Scott's fame, even in the frivolous distortion of the London example.¹¹¹ The illusory capabilities of these "uncanny" representations of the human form¹¹² had for centuries been the preserve of "religious ritual" and the politically powerful, but by the time of Margery Scott's appearance in wax the medium was shaped more by popular demand; waxworks were accordingly declared to be in bad taste,¹¹³ but while they could certainly cater to less-than-lofty interests, waxworks could also retain the moral and "educational" role they had played for centuries prior. Chiming with the epitaph's insistence on the value of "knowledge from the dead," it was thought that wax figures could bring the past to life in such a way that the lessons of history would not be forgotten.¹¹⁴

3.3. Conclusion

The Covenanter counterbalance to Jacobite memory explored in section 3.1 serves as an example of why marginalised communities of memory should not be ignored, if only because they may form the basis for elite or public memory when their narratives become acceptable to a wider population and a political class. While it is certainly possible for narratives of memory to be constructed out of entirely new materials, it is probably more practical to build on a foundation of historical evidence and to tap into continuity with already-existing constructions of the past. Even though Covenanter memory was co-opted and some of its central tenets forgotten, the remnant who had

¹¹⁰ Most waxworks shows did not keep records. Although intended to be "monumental," waxworks were often quite fragile, and Marjory Scott's wax figure(s) is unlikely to survive. Margaret E. Owens, "John Webster, Tussaud Laureate: The Waxworks in *The Duchess of Malfi*," *ELH* 79, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 854, 865.

¹¹¹ While it is possible that the wax Scott was in Scotland at some point, its presence is only verified in England. This may speak to the suitability of the epitaph—or Scott as its decontextualised monumental figure—to English objectifications of Scottishness.

¹¹² The verisimilitude of wax was far more convincing to audiences who had very little exposure to photorealistic imagery. Uta Kornmeier, "Almost Alive: The Spectacle of Verisimilitude in Madame Tussaud's Waxworks," in Panzenelli, ed., *Ephemeral Bodies*, 67.

¹¹³ They also fell afoul of the ahistorical neoclassical ideal of all-white statuary. Owens, "Tussaud Laureate," 852-53, 863.

¹¹⁴ Kornmeier, "The Famous and the Infamous: Waxworks as Retailers of Renown," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (2008): 277, 280-82.

carried it forward for a century continued to hold it in their own way.¹¹⁵ I argue that the same could be said for Jacobite memory.

As the transmission of the epitaph shows, it is not true, as “Horace and many others after him” imagined, that textual monuments go through time unaltered.¹¹⁶ As the price of portability, change is almost inevitable in textual or oral transmission. Even if a text arrives in something like its original form or is reproduced precisely, it will be read differently by different readers in different contexts. Where the Scott epitaph seems to be meaningfully situated, its implications are flexible. It can act as a gesture of reconciliation to a British present that leaves the past behind even as it regards it with sympathy—as in Pennant—or, as in Campbell, it can express the kind of regret that some Scots carried with them into the same British future—which is to say, it is as capacious as the notion of sentimental Jacobitism. Sometimes the epitaph is reproduced as a curiosity, a puzzle, or simply because it is already famous—in this last capacity, it is like material monuments that become mere background noise, their presence fixed but their meaning lost.¹¹⁷

The epitaphic genre evolved during the period of the Scott epitaph’s travels. Epitaphs had been a respected literary genre, composed as reflections on contemporary issues or carefully selected for quotation and framed to convey a message.¹¹⁸ In the nineteenth century, the genre was almost abandoned by serious writers, and epitaphs were more often presented as diversionary than cogitative material.¹¹⁹ This does not mean that they lost their capacity to move or to inform, and they certainly never lost their function as sign-posts of place and time.¹²⁰ But on some level, and with notable exceptions, the influence on British society of the past as represented by the dead receded into the

¹¹⁵ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 134-36.

¹¹⁶ Rigney, “Portable Monuments,” 383.

¹¹⁷ Pickering and Westcott, “Monuments and Commemorations,” 6.

¹¹⁸ Scodel, *Commemoration and Conflict*, 6, 248; Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 1, 5, 8, 30.

¹¹⁹ Scodel, *Commemoration and Conflict*, 286, 385; Guthke, “Talking Stones: Anthologies of Epitaphs from Humanism to Popular Culture,” *Harvard Library Bulletin* n.s., 10, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 30, 34, 36.

¹²⁰ Newstok, *Quoting Death*, 134; Guthke, *Epitaph Culture*, 79-80, 325.

background.¹²¹ Appropriately enough for the Scott epitaph, the genre itself became an expression of nostalgia.¹²²

Whatever the motivations of those who reproduced the epitaph, the fact remains that its many readers would have encountered in the text a voice from the Scottish past—though not unmediated or unaltered—as opposed to forms of commemoration which are clearly present-day interpretations of the past. Pennecuik’s protest against the Union and of the Revolution Settlement echoed through the decades to trouble the story of “unproblematic Britishness” told by Scotland’s material monuments.¹²³ Of course, the imagined voice of the epitaph is not Pennecuik’s, but Marjory Scott’s. The next chapter will explore a further dimension of the epitaph as a monument: Marjory Scotts multivalent old age.

¹²¹ Scodel, *Commemoration and Conflict*, 408-09.

¹²² Scodel, *Commemoration and Conflict*, 410; David F. Venturo, review of *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth*, by Joshua Scodel, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26, no. 2 (Winter 1992-93): 342.

¹²³ Coleman, “Double-Life of the Scottish Past,” 151.

Chapter 4. “The old people say”¹

“Old age is dark and unlovely.”—Ossian.
*O SAY not so! A bright old age is thine;
[. . .]
thy fire-side chair appears to me
A peaceful throne—which thou wert form’d to fill;
Thy children, ministers who do thy will;
And those grand-children, sporting round thy knee,
Thy little subjects, looking up to thee
As one who claims their fond allegiance still.
Bernard Barton, “To a Grandmother,” 1849*

As Pat Thane demonstrates, in historical sources “representations of old age are as often metaphorical as literal.” The above epigraph conveys some of the flexibility of symbolic old age, which can be applied to things as well as living beings. Conceptions of old age are “not fixed,” and have “different meanings in different contexts.”² While representations and experiences of old age have inevitably interacted, they are also often at odds, and historians have struggled to separate imagined age from the reality.³ While I will maintain this distinction for the sake of clarity, this chapter is not concerned with exposing the social experience of old age; it focuses on a range of images of old age, the fruits both of cultural ideals and social realities, which might have informed Pennecuik’s writing of the epitaph and would have inflected readings of Marjory Scott as a monumental figure. The relevance of the Scott epitaph was enhanced by how it fit into

¹ A common phrase—with many variations—especially in folklore studies. E.g. Archibald Campbell, *Records of Argyll: Legends, Traditions, and Recollections of Argyllshire Highlanders* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1885), 378; J. F. Campbell, ed., *Popular Tales of the West Highlands, Orally Collected*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1860), 89; Walter Gregor, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the North-East of Scotland* (London: The Folk-Lore Society, 1881), 136; George Henderson, ed., “Introduction,” in *Dain Iain Ghobha: The Poems of John Morison*, vol. 2 (Glasgow: Archibald Sinclair, 1896), xv; Smith, *Summer in Skye*, 362, 369, 464.

² Thane, *Old Age in English History: Past Experiences, Present Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5-6.

³ Thane, *Old Age in English History*, 16; Susannah R. Ottaway, “Introduction: Authority, Autonomy, and Responsibility among the Aged in the Pre-Industrial Past,” in *Power and Poverty: Old Age in the Pre-Industrial Past*, ed. Ottaway, Lynn Botelho, and Katharine Kittredge (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 226, 2367.

other narratives of Scotland and Scottishness that were simultaneously being told through the lens of senescence.

Rather than surveying the multiplicity of perspectives on old age, in the discussion below I adhere to readings which seem to illuminate the possible significances of the epitaph. There is very little secondary scholarship on the topic of old age in a specifically Scottish context, so English, British, and European histories of old age are used provisionally. My analysis focusses on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although it is apparent that old age continued to feature prominently in considerations of Scottish culture in the twentieth century.⁴ Although this thesis concerns Jacobitism, in my wider research it is clear that old age does not tell one political narrative, but is an important symbol in competing visions of Scotland. This chapter also returns to issues of gender approached in chapter 2, but, while female-gendered images of old age are most germane, some important notions are less anchored to gender.

I argue that the Scott epitaph spoke through three overarching themes of old age: age as a source of authority and collective identity, age as a vehicle for memory and tradition, and age as an image of infirmity and irrelevance. The illustrations I provide sometimes straddle these categorical boundaries, and I suggest that such ambiguity is also at the heart of the epitaph's popularity; monuments which can bend to multiple and changing views of the past, present, and future, are likelier to continue to call attention to themselves.⁵ While some scholarship describes shifts over time in perceptions of old age, with regard to the epitaph as a monument I do not wish to suggest a linear narrative of changing interpretations. Widely divergent constructions of age are a constant throughout (and beyond) my period,⁶ and interpretations of Marjory Scott's longevity would have been coloured by individual prejudices towards old age and narratives of the Scottish past. From these multiple perspectives, Marjory Scott's longevity contributed to the

⁴ The work of Iain Crichton Smith is one obvious example, from his series of poems on old women to the canonical *Consider the Lilies* (1968), which depicts the Highland Clearances from the perspective of the septuagenarian widow Mrs. Scott.

⁵ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 16.

⁶ Thane, *Old Age in English History*, 32, 44, 64.

epitaph's capacity for meaningful commentary on the Scottish nation, which also carried associations of old age.

Although I do not suggest national embodiment as the primary interpretation of Marjory Scott as a monumental figure, in the course of this exploration what emerges is an underexplored aspect of the woman-as-Scotland: the *old-woman-as-Scotland*. In *Bella Caledonia: Woman, Nation, Text*, Kirsten Stirling prunes back the often-exaggerated claims for the existence of a female representative of Scottish nationhood.⁷ Caledonia or Scotia has been overshadowed by the ultimately Anglocentric figure of Britannia, whose “institutional” representation highlights the absence of a Scottish nation-state. Britannia was frequently represented in visual media, while Scotland’s woman-as-nation was confined to the realm of literature and was “necessarily multi-faceted and fragmentary.” To Caledonia’s inconsistent representation as “virgin,” “mother,” “protectress,” and “victim,”⁸ I add Beldame Caledonia, who shared symbolic space with Marjory Scott. Old age was rarely an incidental quality; although often overlooked by historians, it was as tenacious and meaningful an aspect of identity as childhood.⁹ While the old-woman-as-nation overlaps with Stirling’s other categories, the symbol of old age was nevertheless uniquely qualified to convey certain shades of the authority, memory, and vulnerability that fed into contested images of the nation.

4.1. Age, Authority, and Nation

First, the epitaph might be read as couched in a voice of authority. Marjory Scott’s life is worth reading because of the span of time encompassed by it. Her centenarian status was a small marvel, without which she probably would have escaped Pennecuik’s attention. In a time of repeated disruptions her survival provides the consolation of continuity.¹⁰ Authority has accrued to age in some social contexts, but

⁷ Stirling, *Bella Caledonia* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 28-29.

⁸ Stirling, *Bella Caledonia*, 11, 16-18.

⁹ Ottaway, *The Decline of Life: Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 279; Thane, *Old Age in English History*, 2.

¹⁰ This theme is treated humourously in the popular song on “The Vicar of Bray”—an entrenched and highly adaptable office-holder—and seriously in the fascination surrounding the case of Thomas Parr, who

especially in expressions of cultural ideals. The notional authority of age was pervasive in the early modern era, when the weight of experience and precedent went almost unquestioned.¹¹ Deference to age was a biblical injunction.¹² By contrast, the inexperience and perceived rashness of youth were often portrayed as dangerous, and power in the hands of the young was associated with periods of “radical upheaval.”¹³

The authority that came with age was more substantially a male privilege, but Scotland was not lacking in examples of aged female authority, among whose ranks Marjory Scott might be counted. It would be tedious to list them, but one historical and one literary example will give a sense of the power old women could wield. Màiri Nighean Ian Bhain (Mary MacPherson, 1821-1898), also known as Màiri Mhór nan Òran (Big Mary of the Songs) only started composing verse when she was past 50. Her creativity was sparked by her sense of injustice for being imprisoned on a charge of theft. The experience led her to write on broader political issues impacting the Gaelic community, and, while she is not recognised for technical sophistication, the forcefulness of her personality and her works ended up at the forefront of the Highland land agitation of the 1880s.¹⁴ In the character of Augusta Macalbin of Christian Isobel Johnstone’s *Clan-Albin: A National Tale*, aged femininity is almost deified.¹⁵ She is the benevolent matriarch of a Highland clan which might be read as the nation in microcosm. She

was supposed to have lived through much turbulence from 1483 to 1635. Alexandra Walsham, “The Reformation of the Generations: Youth, Age and Religious Change in England, c. 1500-1700,” *Transactions of the RHS* 21 (2011): 93-95.

¹¹ D. R. Woolf, “In Praise of Older Things: Notions of Age and Antiquity in Early Modern England,” in *Historians and Ideologues: Essays in Honor of Donald R. Kelley*, ed. Anthony T. Grafton and J. H. M. Salmon (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 123-153; Keith Thomas, “Age and Authority in Early Modern England,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 62 (1976): 207-10.

¹² E.g. Job 8:8-10 and Deuteronomy 32:7 (AV).

¹³ Thomas, “Age and Authority,” 212.

¹⁴ Sorley MacLean, “Màiri Mhór nan Òran,” in *Ris a’ Bruthaich: The Criticism and Prose Writings of Sorley MacLean*, ed. William Gillies (Stornoway, Isle of Lewis: Acair Limited, 1985), 250-57.

¹⁵ A child under her care actually mistakes her for God, so much does she resemble descriptions of Him. Johnstone, *Clan-Albin*, ed. Andrew Monnickendam (Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2003), 41.

possesses the attributes of the idealised clan chief of former times, and she condemns the forces of Clearance with the passionate journalistic voice of her author.¹⁶

At times, the ages of exalted figures of the Scottish past are exaggerated—just as Marjory Scott’s age grew—perhaps to enhance their distinction. Saints often bore the authority of old age, and Mungo, a Scottish favourite, was at the upper end of the scale at the improbable age of 185.¹⁷ The Protestant reformer John Knox (c. 1513-1572) is described, in an almost canonizing portrayal, as prematurely aged in John Galt’s *Ringan Gilhaize* (1823), “like the ancient patriarchs who enjoyed immediate communion with God.”¹⁸ The age of Jenny Geddes, the “Protestant Dame Scotia”¹⁹ who was supposed to have jump-started 50 years of Presbyterian insurgency by lobbing her stool at the head of a clergyman, was usually unspecified, but on occasion she was presumed to have been “an old woman.”²⁰ In a common enough error for the time, the poet Màiri Nighean Alasdair Ruaidh’s (Mary MacLeod, c. 1615 – c. 1707) age was bumped up to 105, but even at the less remarkable age of 92 she could be counted among the Gaelic bards who, it was claimed, “almost without exception . . . lived into extreme old age.”²¹

The virtue of age complements Marjory Scott’s virtuous femininity. With age came wisdom and a depletion of the corrupting impulses of youth.²² Mortality was one of the consequences of the expulsion from Eden, and the longevity of human life gradually decreased in the descendants of Adam and Eve, but old age—especially extreme old

¹⁶ Johnstone, *Clan-Albin*, 16-17, 29, 68, 72, 84-89, 101-02, 103, 495, 530.

¹⁷ Robert Kastenbaum, “The Age of Saints and the Saintliness of Age,” *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 30, no. 2 (1990): 95-118; David Farmer, “Kentigern (Mungo),” *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁸ Galt, *Ringan Gilhaize, or the Covenanters*, ed. Patricia J. Wilson (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1995), 88.

¹⁹ Lynch, “A Nation Born Again?”, in Broun, Finlay, and Lynch, *Image and Identity*, 97.

²⁰ Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather*, 446.

²¹ J. Carmichael Watson, “Introduction,” in *Gaelic Songs of Mary MacLeod*, ed. and trans. Watson (London: Blackie and Son, 1934), xiv; Magnus MacLean, *The Literature of the Celts; Its History and Romance* (London: Blackie and Son, 1902), 285

²² Thomas, “Age and Authority,” 208, 210.

age—was a heritage of humanity’s original perfection.²³ The proximity of death in the upper reaches of old age might also have lent weight to the judgments of the old; the looming prospect of the hereafter created space for pious reflection, attracting special attention to the speech and behaviour of those about to die.²⁴

It is perhaps for such reasons that political and moral condemnations were occasionally delivered from the imagined vantage-point of venerable old age. This central feature of the Scott epitaph is repeated in Burns’s “Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation.” The “auld gray-head[ed]” singer, a witness to the Union of 1707, wishes they had not lived to see an end to Scottish independence, but promises to declare the error of the Union with “pith and power, to [their] last hour.”²⁵ Likewise, the speaker in Scott’s “On the Massacre of Glencoe” closes the poem in a tone of belligerence appropriate to the intense feelings aroused by that event so deeply inscribed in Scottish memory:

Were each gray hair a minstrel string,
Each chord would imprecations fling,
Till startled Scotland loud should ring,
“Revenge for blood and treachery!”²⁶

The validating power of age was transferable, lending respectability to texts, ideas, customs, institutions, people²⁷—and nations.²⁸ Antiquity was foremost among justifications for Scottish exceptionalism. Patriots looked to establish the antiquity of Scottish constitutional and religious practice in the battle to define the nation. The story of an unbroken line of kings of unrivalled antiquity was a premise not only for adherence to the native Scottish Stuarts, but also, from the Wars of Independence to the debate

²³ Lucian Boia, *Forever Young: A Cultural History of Longevity*, trans. Trista Selous (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 11-15.

²⁴ Sarah Sharp, “A Death in the Cottage: Spiritual Improvement in Romantic-Era Scottish Death Narratives,” in *Cultures of Improvement*, ed. Benchimol and McKeever, 213-232; Thane, *Old Age in English History*, 44; Walsham, “Reformation of the Generations,” 116.

²⁵ Burns, “Parcel of Rogues,” in Irvine, *Selected Poems and Songs*, 179.

²⁶ Scott, “Massacre of Glencoe,” in *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Frederick Warne, n.d.), 385.

²⁷ Woolf, “Praise of Older Things,” 127, 130-31, 134, 135-39.

²⁸ The construction of European metropolises as old and colonies as young suggests the power dynamic of ascribing age to nations. Karen Chase, *The Victorians and Old Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 100-01.

surrounding Union, for claims of Scottish independence from England.²⁹ In a period of intense Scotophobia, James Macpherson sought to prove the worth of Scottish culture with the publication of his *Ossian* poems, presented as the translated work of the aged third-century Gaelic bard Ossian. England had no such claim to ancient literary heritage, and the *Ossian* poems did much to bolster Scottish national—and Gaelic cultural—pride.³⁰

The antiquity of Scotland's institutions and cultures was on occasion attached to the fleeting image of the woman-as-Scotland. Perhaps most famously,³¹ the melodramatic parliamentary speech against Union delivered by Lord Belhaven conjured the image of an "ancient Mother Caledonia" about to be betrayed by her children.³² Pennecuik compared Scots elites who gravitated south to "Bairns that forget their auld Mither," a vernacular construction more intimate and affectionate than Belhaven's matriarch.³³ If these figurative phrases do not quite coalesce into the image of an old woman,³⁴ the embodiment is carried further in Jacobite propaganda and in the works of Burns.³⁵ Carol McGuirk, examining Burns's depiction of the Highlands as the location of essential

²⁹ Donaldson quotes from contemporary sources that suggest popular investment in this national claim. *Jacobite Song*, 7-8; Kidd and Coleman, "Mythical Scotland," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 64.

³⁰ Donald E. Meek, "The Sublime Gael: The Impact of Macpherson's *Ossian* on Literary Creativity and Cultural Perception in Gaelic Scotland," in *The Reception of Ossian in Europe*, ed. Howard Gaskill (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004), 40-66; Crawford, *Scotland's Books*, 312; Davis, *Acts of Union*, 191n12. Although Macpherson sought to portray Gaelic antiquity as a source and common pride of British culture (Davis, *Acts of Union*, 76-77, 83-86), the ensuing controversy over the authenticity of *Ossian* was bogged down in the heated Anglo-Scottish politics of the day. Dafydd Moore, "The Reception of *The Poems of Ossian* in England and Scotland," in Gaskill, *Reception of Ossian*, 24, 28, 30, 38.

³¹ On the circulation of this speech, see Davis, *Acts of Union*, 20, 44.

³² John Hamilton [Lord Belhaven], *The Lord Beilhaven's [sic] Speech in Parliament [. . .]* (Edinburgh: 1706), 6. In James Clark's *Scotland's Speech to Her Sons* (1706), the woman-as-nation similarly rebukes her sons for being "so unnatural and devoid of Respect to your Old Mother." Quoted in Davis, *Acts of Union*, 28.

³³ Pennecuik, "Merry Tales for the Lang Nights of Winter, in Dialogues betwixt the Tinklarian Doctor and his Grandam," in *Streams from Helicon*, 82.

³⁴ William Wright's *The Comical History of the Marriage-Union Betwixt Fergusia and Heptarchus* (1706) comes closer, with Scotland in the Union-as-marriage metaphor portrayed as ill-matched to her English suitor, by reason of her "venerable Antiquity" and his youth. Quoted in Davis, *Acts of Union*, 27.

³⁵ Pittock reads the following as examples of Scotland as an old woman in Jacobite song: "When the King comes o'er the Water", "The Highland Widow's Lament," and "O'er the Water to Charlie," in Hogg, *Jacobite Relics*, 1:45-47 and 441, 2:174-76 and 520, 2:76-77 and 500-01.

Scottishness, observes Burns's representations of the Highlands (and, thereby, Scotland) through a series of "crones." In one example, the crone is explicitly "Mither Scotland," neglected by wayward Scottish parliamentarians. More often, as in the Scott epitaph, the crones "narrate Scottish historical experience as personal experience." Manifesting Burns's nationalist grievances, these old-women-as-Scotland are somewhat "grotesque" and reduced from former glory, but in their self-reliance and hardiness they are nevertheless capable of commanding respect and even instilling a "spirit of resistance."³⁶

This habit of imagining the nation as an old woman was more common in Ireland, which is worth considering here. Although it is not clear how their respective old-women-as-nation are related, Scotland and Ireland have a long history of cultural exchange and also possess comparable, though fundamentally divergent, experiences of English cultural imperialism. The most prolific iteration of the aged Irish national woman is the *Sean Bhean Bhocht* (Poor Old Woman), first appearing in a song dating to the failed 1798 uprising against British rule. While often read as an expression of the defeat which precipitated the Union of 1801,³⁷ in her original appearance the *Sean Bhean Bhocht* actually prophesies national liberation, drawing on the trope of old age as a conduit to the supernatural.³⁸ The latent power of this figure was realised most forcefully in Augusta Gregory (1852-1932) and William Butler Yeats's (1865-1939) 1902 play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, wherein Ireland takes the shape of an Old Woman traversing the nation in 1798 to recruit an army to her cause. The Old Woman, played originally by the formidable Maud Gonne (1866-1953), captivates young men with her store of song, her deep memory of national heroes, and her promise of eternal remembrance for her

³⁶ McGuirk, "The Crone, the Prince, and the Exiled Heart: Burns's Highlands and Burns's Scotland," *Studies in Scottish Literature* 35, no. 1 (2007): 185-86, 187-194.

³⁷ Catriona Moloney, "The Hags of 'Ulysses': The 'Poor Old Woman,' Cathleen Ni Houlihan, and the Phallic Mother," *James Joyce Quarterly* 34, no. 1/2 (Fall 1996 – Winter 1997): 108, 111. Many songs featuring the *Sean Bhean Bhocht* are mourning songs, drawing on Irish mourning traditions. Kathryn Conrad, "Keening the Nation: The *Bean Chaointe*, the *Sean Bhean Bhocht*, and Women's Lament in Irish Nationalist Narrative," in *Irish Literature: Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Coughlan and Tina O'Toole (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2008): 39

³⁸ Rosalind Clark, *The Great Queens: Irish Goddesses from the Morrígan to Cathleen ní Houlihan* (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1991), 168-69. This was the optimistic connotation in the naming of the radical, women-run nationalist magazine *Shan Van Vocht* (1896-99): "The Shan Van Vocht," *The Shan Van Vocht* 1, no. 1 (15 January 1896): 1.

followers.³⁹ The problematic outcome of 1798 is rectified through the Old Woman's long view of time; one defeat signifies little for a woman, a nation, who is ancient and notionally eternal, and so the victory foreseen by the Old Woman in 1798 may be in the cards for the audience of 1902.⁴⁰

These aged women-as-nation—a group to which Marjory Scott belongs, as I argued in chapter 1—would have found peculiar resonance among the Gaelic-speaking populations of Scotland and Ireland. Just as the power of masculine old age was most compellingly represented to Christians in the image of God,⁴¹ Gaelic traditions long sustained an image of aged *female* divinity known as the *Cailleach*. Gearóid Ó Crualaoich argues that this Gaelic deity derived from the Indo-European *Magna Mater* (Great Mother), an expression of a female-centred cosmos.⁴² While “pervasive” in the popular and elite traditions of Scottish and Irish Gaeldom, the *Cailleach*'s long survival from Gaelic mythology into medieval and modern Gaelic cultures has resulted in her fragmentation into many incarnations. Particularly in later folklore, she often appears as a witch-like figure, isolating the aspect of the “Terrible Mother” often joined with the “Good Mother” in female divinities.⁴³ Even stories which recount her downfall, however, remember her great power; she possesses longevity beyond human comprehension and controls the forces of winter, storms, and seas. In some stories, she is responsible for forming the mainland and islands of Scotland, and she embodies the wildernesses—especially the mountains—which came to represent the Highlands and Scotland as a whole.⁴⁴

Divine or symbolic femininities sometimes have the effect of disempowering flesh-and-blood women.⁴⁵ However, Ó Crualaoich sees a link—through story-telling

³⁹ [Gregory and] Yeats, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1911), 9-10, 13-14.

⁴⁰ [Gregory and] Yeats, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, 12.

⁴¹ Thomas, “Age and Authority,” 210.

⁴² Ó Crualaoich, *The Book of the Cailleach: Stories of the Wise Woman Healer* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2003), 26-27.

⁴³ Ó Crualaoich, *Book of the Cailleach*, 27, 28, 82, 84, 88.

⁴⁴ Ó Crualaoich, *Book of the Cailleach*, 51, 82, 90, 113.

⁴⁵ Stirling, *Bella Caledonia*, 110.

conventions—between surviving ideas about the power of the *Cailleach*, whose name became the common appellation of old women, and the traditional social roles of real Scottish and Irish women. These healers, midwives, and mourners challenged patriarchal authority and attempts at cultural control by England and Britain and especially by the church.⁴⁶ Although they were not exclusively old,⁴⁷ the perceived wisdom and supernatural abilities of the old seem to have been assets in such occupations, and literary wise-women are almost always old.⁴⁸ Chapter 2 introduced the significance of women’s roles as mourners in the Gaelic world, but the elegiac voice of the Scott epitaph is even more fitting in light of the preference for *old* women as mourners.⁴⁹

Such idealised functions of old age may have helped in overcoming one of age’s disabilities: infertility. Childbearing was central to the social lives of women,⁵⁰ and has often constituted the limited role of women in the nation.⁵¹ Notwithstanding, the maternal role of childbearing women was sometimes aggrandised rather than cut off by age, as grandmothers might be credited for generations subsequent to their immediate offspring.⁵² For a literary example, Eve, though usually pictured in her youth, was sometimes titled “grandmother.”⁵³ For an historical example, we might take the noteworthy 1759 funeral of the octogenarian Janet Cameron, whose “grandchildren,

⁴⁶ Ó Cruaíoch, *Book of the Cailleach*, 29, 71-72, 75-77, 81, 94. In at least two examples, one fictional and one folktale, even witchcraft was celebrated for using magic to resist the Clearances: Johnstone, *Clan-Albin*, 90-91; Campbell, *Records of Argyll*, 378.

⁴⁷ Angela Bourke suggests that younger women mourners were “apprentices” to more seasoned professionals. “More in Anger than in Sorrow: Irish Women’s Lament Poetry,” in *Feminist Messages: Coding in Women’s Folk Culture*, ed. Joan Newlon Radner (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 164.

⁴⁸ For the apotheosis of the old wise-woman, see Johnstone’s Moome, the “prime mover” of the clan: *Clan-Albin*, 8, 12, 14-16, 24, 26-27, 32-33, 38-39, 50, 78, 101, 123, 531.

⁴⁹ This preference—and female mourning in general—is better documented in the Irish case. However, a few contemporary observers suggest the same was true in Scotland. James Fraser, *A Genuine Narrative of the Life, Behaviour, and Conduct, of Simon, Lord Fraser, of Lovat* (London: B. Cole, 1747), 69; Scott, *The Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Supplementary Volume: Containing Notes, Historical and Illustrative* [. . .] (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1834), 10n70 [to *Waverley*]; Elizabeth Isabella Spence, *Letters from the North Highlands, during the Summer 1816* (Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, 1817), 207.

⁵⁰ Ottaway, *Decline of Life*, 40.

⁵¹ Stirling, *Bella Caledonia*, 21.

⁵² Ottaway, *Decline of Life*, 158-59.

⁵³ See “2. A female ancestor,” in *OED*, “grandmother, *n.*” last modified December 2015, <https://www-oed.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/view/Entry/80693?rskey=JuX5wy&result=1#eid>.

great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren,” considered to have been “descended of her own body,” numbered above 200.⁵⁴ While these generations presumably would have come into being with or without Janet Cameron’s survival past childbearing age, the unspoken factor is the impact of the presence of an aged figure; grandmothers often provided an experienced hand in raising children.⁵⁵ Through this combination of vicarious fertility and aged wisdom, the post-reproductive old could be said, in the words of Old Tom Parr’s verse biographer, to “breed nations.”⁵⁶

The old could further contribute to local and national pride through their mere presence. Old age has long been regarded as deeply connected to place. Wholesome cultural habits certainly contributed, but the more fundamental aspects of landscape and climate were equally crucial.⁵⁷ Apparently inhospitable environs—cold and barren—were thought to contribute to bodily hardiness and longevity. The “mountains of Scotland” were one such locale.⁵⁸ Màrtainn MacGilleMhàrtainn (Martin Martin, d. 1718), in his landmark description of Scottish Gaelic society, remarked proudly on the tendency towards long life exhibited in the Highlands and Islands.⁵⁹ The *Statistical Account of Scotland* also regularly takes stock of the elderly and their relative hardiness,⁶⁰ and Sinclair elsewhere expressed his belief that “no country in Europe” exceeded Scotland in

⁵⁴ “Deaths,” *The Scots Magazine* 21 (February 1759): 101.

⁵⁵ Ottaway, *Decline of Life*, 156-65; Jill Quadagno, *Aging in Early Industrial Society: Work, Family, and Social Policy in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Academic Press, 1982); Andrew Blaikie, “A Kind of Loving: Illegitimacy, Grandparents and the Rural Economy of Northeast Scotland, 1750-1900,” *Scottish Economic and Social History* 14, no. 1 (September 2010): 49, 54-55.

⁵⁶ John Taylor, *The Old, Old, Very Old Man* (London: Henry Gosson, 1635), 18.

⁵⁷ In vaguer geographical terms, extreme old age was often portrayed as a feature of distant or peripheral lands—perhaps because, as rare as this commodity was, it existed primarily in the imagination as it conjures an “Other.” Scotland, and particularly the Highlands, existed to many as just such an imagined periphery. Boia, *Forever Young*, 15-19, 68-70.

⁵⁸ For similar reasons, poverty and premodern lifestyles, discussed in chapter 2 as aspects of some configurations of Scottishness, were also considered favourable to long life. Boia, *Forever Young*, 26-28, 77, 90, 93, 96-97.

⁵⁹ E.g. Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (Stirling: Observer Press, 1934), 93, 146, 237, 268, 373. The claim was often repeated, for example in James Logan, *The Scottish Gaël: or, Celtic Manners, as Preserved among the Highlanders* (London: Smith and Elder, 1831), 1:89, 2:163, 174-76.

⁶⁰ Reflecting the connection to the land, the elderly of Fraserburgh are recorded not under population, but under “Climate, Woods, Hills, etc.” Alexander Simpson, “Parish of Fraserburgh,” in *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, ed. Sinclair, vol. 6 (1793), 3.

producing healthy, long-lived people.⁶¹ The potential for national boasting afforded by such facts of demography is on display in the poem on Thomas Parr's life: "No kingdom sure compare with Britain can."⁶² Marjory Scott was surely the most famous Scottish person known by reason of great age, and was thereby a reason for pride and a likely magnet for the associations of old age discussed in this chapter.

Another way the old might have helped to define community character was in the reciprocal ties which obtained between them and the young. In addition to tabulating their numbers, the *Statistical Account* asked what structures were in place to provide care for elders. In her widely-read, ambassadorial account of Gaelic culture, Anne MacVicar Grant (1755-1838) suggests that Highlanders exhibited marked respect for older members of the community—a social habit she links to their carefully-maintained admiration for ancestors.⁶³ While there may be reason to believe that Gaels were more gerontocratic in word or deed than other Scots and Britons, it is also possible that Grant was idealising; reverence for age belonged to the same conservative, romanticised pastness to which Grant and others consigned Gaelic culture.⁶⁴ Adam Smith (1723-1790) suggested reverence for the old as a characteristic of primitive societies.⁶⁵ As the next section

⁶¹ Sinclair, *An Essay on Longevity* (London: A. Strahan, 1802), 12

⁶² Taylor was writing to please the still newly-British Stuart monarchy, so, while Parr was English, Taylor is sure to note the exceptional sturdiness of the "Highland Scots" and the "Wild Irish," "Long liv'd with Labour hard, and temperate fare." *Very Old Man*, v, 20. Peter Laslett also notes that "local patriotism comes out strongly" in attention to centenarians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Devoney Looser marks long-lived British female authors in the nineteenth century as "a badge of national pride," Laslett, "The Bewildering History of the History of Longevity," in *Validation of Exceptional Longevity*, ed. Bernard Jeune and James W. Vaupel (Odense: Odense University Press, 1999), 27; Looser, *Women Writers and Old Age in Great Britain, 1750-1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), xi.

⁶³ "The old people, treated with unvaried tenderness and veneration, feel no diminution of their consequence, no chill in their affections. Strangers to neglect, they are also strangers to suspicion." Grant, *Letters from the Mountains; Being the Real Correspondence of a Lady between the Years 1773-1807*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1807), 1:55-56. For other examples: Johnstone, *Clan-Albin*, 9, 70; John Macculloch, *The Highlands and Westerns Isles of Scotland* (Longman, Hurst, Hees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824) 4:253-54

⁶⁴ Showing old and young in harmony was a common trope to express universal approval or a "utopic" order. Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 231. A few Scottish examples: Campbell, *Records of Argyll*, 501; Alan Gray, *Memories* (Winnipeg: Bulman Bros., 1923), 2-3; Johnstone, *Clan-Albin*, 8, 37, 48; Donald Smith, *Storytelling Scotland: A Nation in Narrative* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2001), 97.

⁶⁵ Smith maintained that where all else was equal between two persons age decided authority, even in advanced stages of society. In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), quoted in Quadagno, *Aging in Early Industrial Society*, 2.

suggests, to value elders was perhaps not just to display moral rectitude in caring for the needful, but to pay respect to the past itself.

4.2. Age, Memory, and Culture

One of the characteristics of the woman-as-nation is her status as “the receptacle and transmitter of tradition and history.”⁶⁶ While chapter 3 treated the Scott epitaph as a textual monument, in appropriating the voice of great age Pennecuik reproduced another vital source of memory: what Parr’s poet called “living mortal Monument[s].”⁶⁷ One of the key ways in which the old maintained a profile within the community was by providing a sense of connection to the past, in practical as well as cultural matters. In a society “still much dependent on oral tradition,” community elders were “repositories of history and custom, of pedigree and descent.”⁶⁸

The concept of *living memory* resides in the very oldest. According to Jan Assmann’s subdivision of collective memory, the older generation exists on the edge of the shifting “gap” where “communicative” memory becomes “cultural” memory. Cultural memory is ritualised, institutionalised, and performed by specialists. It concerns the distant past and condenses its meaning for the present. Communicative memory is “everyday,” eyewitnessed, and democratic in participation. It can only touch on the recent past and eludes thematic organisation.⁶⁹ Communicative memory should not be read as more reliable than cultural memory.⁷⁰ Individual human memory is a matter of incessant construction and revision, shaped by external influences including agents of cultural memory,⁷¹ as we saw in chapter 3 with Grant Thorburn’s memory of Margaret Scott’s grave in Dalkeith. However, the constructed memories of the old actively shaped

⁶⁶ Stirling, *Bella Caledonia*, 21.

⁶⁷ Taylor, *Very Old Man*, 10.

⁶⁸ Thomas, “Age and Authority,” 233-34.

⁶⁹ Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 109-18.

⁷⁰ Davis, “Negotiating Cultural Memory,” 2; Rigney, “Circulation of Cultural Memory,” 13.

⁷¹ Aleida Assmann, “Memory, Individual and Collective,” in Goodin and Tilly, *Contextual Political Analysis*, 211-13; Rigney, “Circulation of Cultural Memory,” 16-17.

cultural memory and had the potential to provide a counterweight to other sources of collective memory and identity. These were issues with which eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scots engaged, and the epitaph's performance of aged memory would have been recognised as an entry in a wider discourse. While the epitaph itself is a piece of cultural memory—an imaginative account of the past passed down in relatively stable form from an author who died in 1730—the epitaph is voiced as communicative memory: “Betwixt my Cradle, and my Grave were *seen*,” “Three Commonwealths successively *I saw*,” “*I saw* an End of STEWART Race,” “*I saw* our Country sold,” “*I have*, An End of all Perfection *seen*.”⁷²

The old were not just eyewitnesses to the past—in cultural representations, they were compelled, through the cliché that age produces garrulity,⁷³ to act as transmitters of memory. The gap between this constructed identity and the diversity of individuality is illustrated by Walter Scott's depiction of Old Mortality, the stonemason whose contribution to the commemoration of the Covenanters was mentioned in chapter 3. In the novel *Old Mortality*, the eponymous character is one of the wellsprings of the narrative, although when a young Scott actually encountered the man, he was distinctly reticent.⁷⁴ Both he and Marjory Scott required posthumous intervention to turn them into stereotypical elders seeking an audience for their stories.

With reference to the Scott epitaph, a contributor to *Note and Queries* suggests that instances of the old as witnesses to history “might be termed ‘historical longevity.’”⁷⁵ The testimonies of the old took on a great deal of weight from the latter half of the eighteenth century, as their memories became the raw material for history and national identity in a period when Scots struggled to define themselves. In a post-script to *Waverley*, Walter Scott observes the dramatic social and cultural changes in Scotland in

⁷² Italics mine.

⁷³ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 141. For some Scottish examples: Thomas Campbell, “The Pilgrim of Glencoe,” in *The Pilgrim of Glencoe, and Other Poems* (London: Edward Moxon, 1842), 5; Simon Fray, *Edinburgh, or, the Ancient Royalty: A Sketch of Former Manners* (Edinburgh: J. Johnstone, 1810), 18.

⁷⁴ Scott, “Introduction,” *Waverley Novels*, vol. 9, *Old Mortality* (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1830), 226-27.

⁷⁵ Blown, “Curious Epitaph in Dalkeith Churchyard,” *Notes and Queries*, ser. 1, 4, no. 100 (27 September 1851), 230.

the years since the '45. Scotland's recent past, imagined as almost another world, becomes worth examination because it is possible to reconstruct from living memory a picture of radical transformation from one stage of civilisation to another.⁷⁶

While Scott largely sought to portray the direction of history as positive, the aged Lady Augusta of *Clan-Albin* delineates both a Whig narrative of broad social improvement and a declensionist narrative of the destruction of a virtuous Gaelic society, both occurring within her lifetime.⁷⁷ The latter perspective was also the crux of Mary Macpherson's verse protests; the creation of a lost "Eden" of Scottish Gaeldom echoes the claim of an "*End of all Perfection*" in the Scott Epitaph.⁷⁸ Putting old age to a somewhat different purpose, John Galt's *Annals of the Parish* (1821), following the 50-year career of a rural minister, slows down time with day-to-day observations that render historical change as a gradual, if occasionally jarring, process.⁷⁹ The attenuated memories of the old are not only capable of telling narratives of linear, irreversible change. They are especially well-suited to depictions of circular history on display in the Scott epitaph—the repeated risings, the establishment and disestablishment of the Presbyterian and Episcopalian kirks, etc. A further example of this ability appears in the story of an unfriendly encounter between a centenarian lady and the great villain of Covenanter legend, John Graham of Claverhouse:

[. . .] the officer observed to the lady, that [. . .] she must in her time have seen many strange changes. "Hout na [no], Sir," said Lady Elphinstone, "the world is just to end with me as it began. When I was entering life there was ane *Knox* deaving [deafening] us a' wi' his *clavers* [talking], and now I am ganging out, there is ane Claver'se deaving us a' wi' his *knocks* [violence]."⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Scott, *Waverley*, ed. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 363.

⁷⁷ Johnstone, *Clan-Albin*, 84-88, 158, 174, 555.

⁷⁸ MacLean, "Màiri Mhór," in Gillies, *Writings of Sorley MacLean*, 255. A few other examples in this vein: Campbell, ed., *Popular Tales*, vol. 4, 235; *Clan-Albin*, 24, 65; McLeod, *Gloomy Memories*, 122-23; Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, ed. Claire Lamont (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 45-46, 49-50.

⁷⁹ Craig, "The Literary Tradition," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 115; Nenadic, "Industrialization and the Scottish People," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 408.

⁸⁰ Scott, *Prose Works, Supplementary Volume*, 10n18 [to *Old Mortality*].

This witticism subjugates Claverhouse to the rotation of time, which, as later readers of the anecdote knew, eventually restored Knox's Presbyterian order. Karen Chase also notes the usefulness of the aged perspective through depictions of the old, both visually and literarily, as "peripheral" observers of central action. This occurs often in the fiction of the prolific Scottish novelist Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897).⁸¹ Lastly, as Looser discovers in her study of aging British women writers, looking at history from the perspective of the old frustrates the project of periodization; whatever retroactive label historians and literary scholars apply to a period, no segment of time is actually experienced in such isolation, as the old carry the past into the present.⁸²

While the special perspectives of the old were important in Scottish reflections on the lived past, in the arena of cultural memory the old were pursued almost obsessively in the song- and story-collecting which shored up Scottish and Gaelic identities.⁸³ By virtue of age, they were the specialists required for the transmission of cultural memory. McLane observes that the recorded ages of tradition bearers "indexes authenticity" in collections.⁸⁴ Collectors often had occasion to marvel at the powers of memory produced by a predominantly oral culture, and the old were the best preserved from the scourge of literacy.⁸⁵ In the high-stakes trial of oral culture represented by the investigations into the origins of Macpherson's *Ossian*, the memories of "persons of extremely advanced age" were crucial evidence.⁸⁶ The ability to cite an old woman as her source for Scottish

⁸¹ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 148-50, 230.

⁸² Looser, *Women Writers and Old Age*, 6-7, 169.

⁸³ It would be difficult to overstate how common this was. For some examples: Hannah Aitken, ed., *A Forgotten Heritage: Original Folk Tales of Lowland Scotland* (Totowa, N. J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 137-38, 140; Martin MacGregor, "The Genealogical Histories of Gaelic Scotland," in *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain 1500-1850*, ed. Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 209-11; Campbell, *Records of Argyll*, 319, 343, 423, 425; William Motherwell, *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern* (Boston: William D. Ticknor, 1846 [1827]), 1:36-37, 86, 167, 2:9, 74, 104, 108, 126, 134, 143, 144, 180, 188, 194, 201, 212, 222-23, 236.

⁸⁴ McLane, *Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 65-66.

⁸⁵ Campbell, ed., *Popular Tales*, vol. 1, xxvii, xix; vol. 4 (1862), 237; Mackintosh Mackay, ed., "Memoir of Robb Donn," in *Songs and in the Gaelic Language by Robert Mackay* (Inverness: Kenneth Douglas, 1829), x, lviii.

⁸⁶ Henry Mackenzie, ed., *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, Appointed to Inquire into the Nature and Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1805), 12.

tradition may have had a kind of legitimating effect on the Jane Porter's (1776-1850) *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810), an enormously popular Scottish national tale told by a relative outsider.⁸⁷ Robert Burns even declared that he received "Auld Lang Syne" from an old man,⁸⁸ although versions of the song had long been in print. Likewise, the Jacobite songwriter Carolina Oliphant (1766-1845) was able to maintain her anonymity and give her songs a faux-folk gloss by allowing the belief that they were "taken from the withered lips of auld kimmers and carls, whose bluid yet warms at the remembrance of Prince Charlie."⁸⁹ The conflicting testimony of the old was even enough to introduce a note of doubt regarding the still-contentious repertoire of Anna Gordon (1747-1810), the celebrated font of folksong who claimed to have received her songs from older heads as a child.⁹⁰

Song and story were raised in chapter 2 as the preserve of women. If, to collectors, age was perhaps the main qualification, gender was still a significant factor. The Lowland collector Motherwell (1797-1835) set out on one mission with a list of "old singing women" to track down.⁹¹ In his collecting, Hugh Miller (1802-56) remarked that "greyheaded men," but "especially old women, became [his] books."⁹² To pass off forgeries, Robert Surtees (1779-1834) went to the trouble of inventing individual identities for the old women he claimed as sources.⁹³ Undermining the current vogue for

⁸⁷ Crawford, *Bannockburns*, 117.

⁸⁸ Crawford, *Scotland's Books*, 355.

⁸⁹ Quoting Oliphant's editor, Robert Purdie: McGuirk, "Jacobite History to National Song," 258-59.

⁹⁰ Although he is necessarily careful not to accuse the respectable lady of deliberate deception, Robert Anderson notes the curiosity that "the greater part of" Brown's songs were "unknown to the oldest persons in this country." In a letter to Thomas Person, September 14, 1800, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century* Vol. 6, ed. John Bowyer Nichols (London: J. B. Nichols, 1848), 88-90 (90).

⁹¹ Mary Ellen Brown, "Old Singing Women and the Canons of Scottish Balladry and Song," in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, ed. Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 44. This chapter considers gender, but not age.

⁹² Miller, *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland, or the Traditional History of Cromarty*, 7th ed. (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1835), 2.

⁹³ Perry, "Women's Oral Tradition," 93.

courtly, masculine minstrelsy, John Leydon (1775-1811) argued that Scotland's ballads were rather the productions of "spinstrelsy."⁹⁴

The concept of the "floating gap" would seem to impose a limitation on this reliance on the old for a picture of Scottish tradition and the Scottish past; living memory can only go back so far as a human lifespan. Beyond this gap, according to the theoretical division of communicative and cultural memory in oral cultures, the past becomes hazy, until the events of the more distant past consolidate into cultural memory.⁹⁵ First, it is worth pointing out that belief in extreme longevity (well in excess of 100 years) only came under systematic scrutiny—which was not kindly received—in the late nineteenth century.⁹⁶ The "concept of a biological, universal human lifespan" is quite recent.⁹⁷ Claimants to extreme age were not altogether uncommon,⁹⁸ so in the minds of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century people living memory could be longer than we now conceive it to be, albeit still rarely.

However, oral culture supplied a more widely applicable means of traversing, or at least blurring, the gap between communicative and cultural memory. It is not unusual to find anecdotes bearing the distinctively personal stamp of communicative memory but stretching back much further than living memory, through a kind of chain-linking of memory which still relies on old age. The memory will be related by an old person who, when they were young, received the memory from an old person. In the oft-cited interaction between Walter Scott and the "living miscellany of old songs,"⁹⁹ Margaret

⁹⁴ Adriana Craciun, "Romantic Spinstrelsy," in Davis, Duncan, and Sorenson, *Borders of Romanticism*, 207.

⁹⁵ This limitation was originally conceptualised by the anthropologist Jan Vansina. Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in Erll and Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 112-13.

⁹⁶ Laslett, "History of Longevity," in Jeune and Vaupel, *Exceptional Longevity*, 29.

⁹⁷ Helen Yallop, *Age and Identity in Eighteenth-Century England* (Bookfield, VT: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), 49.

⁹⁸ Laslett describes a "cult of centenarians." "History of Longevity," in Jeune and Vaupel, *Exceptional Longevity*, 23-40, 25.

⁹⁹ Letter from James Hogg to Walter Scott, 30 June 1802, in *Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. David Douglas (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1894), 1:12

Laidlaw (approximately 71 in 1801), this chain-linking of memory could authenticate the age of an artefact of cultural memory. Laidlaw sang a ballad and remarked that:

my brothers an' me learned it an' many mae frae auld Andrew Moor, and he learned it frae auld Baby Mettlin, wha was house-keeper to the first laird of Tushilaw." [. . .] "The first laird of Tushilaw, Margaret?" said he, "then that must be a very old story indeed?" "Ay, it is that, sir! It is an auld story!"¹⁰⁰

Or the retrieval of such distant memories could be for purely practical reasons, as in the following illustration of the severity of the famine of 1696:

The agedest people doe not remember that the aged of the former generation told of their seeing so late a seison. . .¹⁰¹

In addition to the utility of these chain-linked memories, we must consider the potential emotional impact of such pseudo-personal recollections of the past. Morton, in depicting the nineteenth-century Union as a "stable reality," notes the extinction of the generations who had resisted the Union in the Jacobite risings; their descendants "had the stories and promptings from their elders, but no direct experience."¹⁰² However, in his enormously popular *Summer in Skye* (1865)¹⁰³ the writer Alexander Smith (1829-1867) contemplates how contact with the old might bring the past out of the alien distance and

¹⁰⁰ James Hogg, *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1834), 123-24. Further examples of this phenomenon in the transmission of cultural memory: Campbell, *Records of Argyll*, 501; Campbell, ed., *Popular Tales*, vol. 1, 148; vol. 2, 19, 128, 229, 256, 467; vol. 3, 390; vol. 4, 235, 237.

¹⁰¹ Letter from Patrick Hume of Polworth to Sir James Ogilvy, 5 December 1696, cited in Michael F. Graham, *The Blasphemies of Thomas Aikenhead: Boundaries of Belief on the Eve of Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 74. Further examples of this phenomenon in the transmission of eye-witness memory (on topics other than the weather): Campbell, *Records of Argyll*, 430, 447; Gray, *Memories*, 30-32; Motherwell, *Minstrelsy*, 2:144; Margaret Oliphant, *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*, ed. Elisabeth Jay (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002), 73; "Reminiscences of the '45'," *The Scottish Antiquary, or, Northern Notes and Queries* 10, no. 38 (1895): 71-82; William Sidney Gibson, "Longevity; and Traditions through Few Links," *Notes and Queries* ser. 2, 2, no. 51 (December 1856), 483-84. Taylor also invokes the possibility: *Very Old Man*, 15.

¹⁰² Morton, "Identity within the Union State, 1800-1900," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 475.

¹⁰³ Simon Berry, *Applauding Thunder: Life, Work and Critics of Alexander Smith* (Inverness: FTRR Press, 2013), 186.

into the present.¹⁰⁴ In one of these passages, in a visit to the battlefield at Culloden with an aged guide, the chain-linking effect comes into play:

The old gentleman, with a mournful air—for he is a great Jacobite, and wears the Prince’s hair in a ring—pointed out the burial-grounds of the clans. Struck with his manner, I inquired how he came to know their red resting-places. As if hurt, he drew himself up, laid his hand on my shoulder, saying, “Those who put them in told me.” Heavens, how a century and odd years collapsed, and the bloody field [. . .] unrolled itself from the horizon down to my very feet!¹⁰⁵

The effect of the memory of Culloden on the old man and Smith, neither of whom personally experienced it, is close to what Marianne Hirsch calls “postmemory,” whereby memories so emotional or traumatic are felt as real and personal to those who receive them at second or third hand.¹⁰⁶ The emotionality involved in family or community memory potentially complicates interactions with conflicting memories which occur at the broader collective level.

Of course, affect might also be an important element of cultural memory.¹⁰⁷ Accounts of storytelling include observations on the emotions of the enraptured audience, ranging from laughter to terror to tears.¹⁰⁸ The powerful emotional sway involved in the transmission of stories, songs, and personal memories of the old is of even greater potential consequence when we consider that children were often on the receiving end; if restricted from other forms of labour, old people, like women, were often charged with the care of the young.¹⁰⁹ At least in cultural cliché, it could be said that “[t]he instructor

¹⁰⁴ Smith is an example of two apparently distinct models of Scottish identity existing in one person. He was a thoroughly British and modern man in his urban life, but for the duration of his summers in Skye he became a romantic Jacobite. His memoirs of Skye showed others how they too could indulge latent longings for the past through travel to the Highlands—and the old are an integral part of this picture. *Summer in Skye*, 72, 98-100, 155-57, 172, 178-79, 214-15, 258-59, 285, 286, 295, 412-13, 415; Berry, *Applauding Thunder*, 210-11.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Summer in Skye*, 157-58.

¹⁰⁶ Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 106.

¹⁰⁷ Aleida Assmann, “Memory, Individual and Collective,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 216.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. Campbell, *Popular Tales*, vol. 1, xiii.

¹⁰⁹ Perry, “Women’s Oral Traditions,” 89, 91-93. Perry’s focus is on gender, but age is a factor in her observations and in other sources.

of youth is the grey-haired sage.”¹¹⁰ Skilled tradition bearers were said to take “special pleasure in [. . .] impressing the memory of the young with what they were reciting.”¹¹¹ In the Highlands, children and adults sometimes paid for the service in kind.¹¹²



Figure 4.1. A scene from Walter Scott’s *The Pirate* (1822).

George Paul Chalmers, *The Legend*, c. 1867, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 180.3 cm, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/4745/legend>.

For those with no direct experience of this kind of relationship, the power of the old over youthful imaginations was illustrated in literature, as in James Beattie’s *The Minstrel* (1771, 1774) with the character of “the beldam” who holds the young protagonist of James Beattie’s under her sway.¹¹³ Such scenes were also a staple of nineteenth-century fiction.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Campbell, *Records of Argyll*, 501. Gregor even suggested that old men and especially “[o]ld women were . . . the most numerous class of teachers” in the domestic schools for poor children known as Dame schools. *An Echo of the Olden time from the North of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Menzies, 1874), 35-40.

¹¹¹ Campbell, ed., *Popular Tales*, vol. 4, 235.

¹¹² Tobacco was a common currency. Campbell, ed., *Popular Tales*, vol. 1, 217-18; vol. 2, 3-2; vol. 3 (1862), 21; Archibald Clerk, “Dissertation on the Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian,” in *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*, ed. and trans. Clerk (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1870), 1:xxvi.

¹¹³ Beattie, *The Minstrel; or, the Progress of Genius: and Other Poems* (London: John Sharpe, 1816), 28-29, 33, 70.

¹¹⁴ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 113.

The relationship to the storyteller could be at least as important as the experience of listening to the stories. Robert Cuthbert Johnstone (1857-1934), recounted how the family stories that his wife told to their children became, on her death, memorials of *her*.¹¹⁵ John Francis Campbell suggested, with romantic exaggeration, that the stories of childhood became “the bright spot in a dull round of hardship and toil,” and adults “never forg[ot]” them.¹¹⁶ Many who went on to tell their own stories in print to broader audiences remembered an old relative, nurse, or member of the community upon whom they depended for entertainment, intimacy, and education, with lasting inspiration.¹¹⁷

Historical memories were part of this transmission, and could also follow children into adulthood. David Stewart of Garth (1772-1829) referred to himself as “sometimes a Jacobite in theory, particularly when” he thought of his “grandmothers [*sic*] stories of the forty five.”¹¹⁸ Robert Cuthbert Johnstone, a man of self-described “strong Jacobite tendencies,” was moved to convert to the Episcopalianism by his aged uncle’s family stories of sheltering Jacobite Episcopalianism from persecution.¹¹⁹ The conflict between head and heart in Walter Scott’s conception of the nation and its past was seeded by the stories of his grandparents and other “superannuated friends.”¹²⁰ It would be nonsensical, not to mention disheartening, to suggest that such influences were inescapable. Scott clearly chose the version of the past imparted by his Enlightenment education over that of his romantic upbringing. But the stories of his childhood were the “Delilahs of [his] imagination,”¹²¹ and whatever enlightened, Whig version of the past he gave precedence

¹¹⁵ Gray [pseudonym], *Memories*, 32.

¹¹⁶ Campbell, “On Current British Mythology and Oral Traditions,” *The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* 2, no. 3 (1870): 331-32.

¹¹⁷ Robert Burns in Margaret Bennett, “The Roots of Living Tradition,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Traditional Literatures*, ed. Sarah Dunnigan and Suzanne Gilbert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 7; Robert Chambers (1802-71) in Aitken, *Storytelling Scotland*, 142; Janet Hamilton (1795-1873) in Margaret Forsyth, “Looking for Grandmothers: Working-Class Women Poets and ‘Herstory,’” *Women’s Writing* 12, no. 2 (2005): 259, 261.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Donaldson, *Jacobite Song*, 95.

¹¹⁹ Gray, *The Gentle Persuasion: Sketches of Scottish Life* (Winnipeg: Bulman Bros., 1918), 27-30.

¹²⁰ John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott: A Critical Biography* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 13.

¹²¹ Quoted in Davis, *Acts of Union*, 149.

to in his stories, on the verdict of many readers he was never quite able to escape the prejudicial bent of his grandparents' stories.¹²²

While the above examples involve deliberate transmission of memory, the old were sometimes regarded as passive signifiers of the past. Smith called them "human antiques."¹²³ Much of Smith's musing on the past occasioned by encounters with old people was purely imaginative and unbidden by his interlocutors. The bodies of the old were sometimes written about as though they are inscribed by time, passively waiting to be read. Of a hypothetical "old Highlander," whose oral traditions were weighed against textual sources, John Francis Campbell described "skin like crumpled parchment."¹²⁴ In other cases, this embodiment of the past is more specific, as in the case of battle scars borne by soldiers of Culloden who survived into the first quarter of the nineteenth century, "still ready to fight for the 'auld Stewarts back again."¹²⁵

The old are sometimes made to represent the practices of the past, no doubt reflecting reality to some extent. For example, Chase observes that old people in Victorian fiction were associated with the rural past as opposed to the urban present, and it was true that younger people were more apt to leave the country for the city, likely aging the remaining rural population.¹²⁶ At least in the fiction of Dickens, as read by Chase, the old who do move to the cities are unable entirely to adapt, and so bring the country with them, creating rural enclaves in the urban landscape.¹²⁷ Dickens's scenario was anticipated by Scott, whose Chrystal Croftangry in *Chronicles of the Canongate*, unable to return to his alienated past as a country laird, manages to recreate a country estate in miniature within Edinburgh.¹²⁸ In this way and through their knowledge of the

¹²² E.g. Smith, *Storytelling Scotland*, 106, 114-115.

¹²³ Smith, *Summer in Skye*, 286.

¹²⁴ Campbell, *Popular Tales*, vol. 4, 301.

¹²⁵ Logan, *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands: The Costumes of the Clan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, [1845] 1980), 84.

¹²⁶ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 27, 37; Devine, "A Global Diaspora," in Devine and Wormald, *Modern Scottish History*, 172.

¹²⁷ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 57.

¹²⁸ Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, 45-46, 49-50.

pre-industrial past, age was portrayed as “a resource” to the young “against the abrasions of industrialism.”¹²⁹

As Scott suggests in *Waverley*, manners and minute behaviours also change over time, and might be marked in differences between generations.¹³⁰ In Scotland, perhaps no such evolution bore more significance than that of language. In the nineteenth century, both of Scotland’s distinctive national languages were attached, albeit in different ways, to the elderly. While the Scots language thrived in oral and print forms, its relative decline among the middle and upper classes caused it to be stigmatized as vulgar, in both senses of the word. Walter Scott was obliged to point to his friend Anne Murray Keith (1736-1818) as proof that Scots had once been the language of the entire Lowlands, not marked by class.¹³¹ In the case of Gaelic, at least according to contemporary observations, it was possible to chart the language’s decline as much by age as by geography: first by the older generations’ lack of English, and at a later date by their speaking Gaelic fluently or at all.¹³² Detractors of Scots and Gaelic would have viewed this progression with satisfaction, while others observed the same process with varying degrees of alarm. This tension is the subject of the next section, which considers the old not as guarantors of identity and memory, but as symbols and gauges of their disintegration.

4.3. Age, Frailty, and Marginalisation

Pittock observes that the decline of the Jacobite cause was communicated in late eighteenth-century Jacobite verse through the symbolic deployment of the voices of

¹²⁹ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 61.

¹³⁰ Scott, *Waverley*, ed. Garside, 364.

¹³¹ Quoted by Lamont, ed., *Chronicles of the Canongate*, 405n63.31. Samuel Johnson remarked in the late eighteenth century that in elevated society Scots was “not much to be heard, except now and then from an old lady.” Withers suggests that women may have resisted learning English for longer than men because they were less likely to be required to do so in public and working life, and perhaps this was also the case with Scots. Johnson, in *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* [. . .], ed. Peter Levi (London: Penguin, 1984), 151; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 236.

¹³² Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 7, 236, 238-391; Withers, *Urban Highlanders*, 200, 201, 205.

“impotent” old men.¹³³ Likewise, Crawford suggests that however “resolute,” the resistance to the Union in Burns’s “Parcel of Rogues” is cut off by the imminent mortality of its aged singer.¹³⁴ While I hope this chapter complicates such readings of aged voices, these are interpretations worth exploring in greater detail. As much as the Scott epitaph conjures ideas of venerable, memory-bearing age, Marjory Scott’s terminal old age would also have functioned as a symbol of the perceived fragility, and perhaps even the death, of Scottish cultures, reinforcing the epitaph’s declensionist message. To Pennecuik, the violence of succeeding revolutions and the final tragedy of the Union had “[t]ir’d” Scott of life, but this vision of decline had its successors in the next century, and the old continued to act as vectors for that story.

The complaint of declining respect for elders is perennial,¹³⁵ although at least in European history there never has been any “golden age of aging.”¹³⁶ Even societies which loudly proclaimed gerontocratic values were liable to treat their older members poorly, whether through neglect of principle or through the construction of pejorative ideas of old age. While a “‘green’ old age” was something to be admired, the disabilities that often attend the later stages of old age were the objects of contempt and condescension.¹³⁷ Interpretations of hale old age as the reward for moral uprightness and temperate living often meant that a decrepit old age was the consequence of sin and irresponsible behavior.¹³⁸ Old age was often synonymous with poverty, as the eventual physical toll of age cut off all but the most marginal forms of work.¹³⁹ Positive constructions of age were often the privilege of those who already possessed authority through class or gender, so it is possible that most people experienced some loss of authority—especially in economic terms—as they aged.¹⁴⁰ Misogyny and gerontophobia were mutually reinforcing, as

¹³³ Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 220-21.

¹³⁴ Crawford, *Bannockburns*, 89.

¹³⁵ Thane, *Old Age in English History*, 1, 6, 32, 36.

¹³⁶ Ottaway, *The Decline of Life*, 1.

¹³⁷ Thane, *Old Age in English History*, 4.

¹³⁸ Yallop, *Age and Identity*, 47-49, 60.

¹³⁹ Ottaway, “Introduction,” in Ottaway, Botelho, and Kittredge, *Power and Poverty*, 10; Thane, *Old Age and English History*, 7.

¹⁴⁰ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 102.

women lost the social capital of reproductive capacity and youthful beauty and took on ugly and marginalizing stereotypes. Their aging bodies and minds were frequently the objects of disgust, fear, ridicule, and pity.¹⁴¹ The authority of aged femininity is a more fragile construction than aged masculinity. For instance, in Beattie's *The Minstrel*, the beloved beldam is displaced as her pupil grows up; while an aged *masculine* authority becomes the ideal teacher for a maturing mind, the beldam, a dealer in "fancy" rather than legitimate and applicable subjects of study, is suitable only as the teacher of childhood.¹⁴²

While it is clear that early modern social realities never matched an inconsistently-promoted gerontocratic ideal, the modern era, even as that ideal persisted,¹⁴³ arguably introduced new kinds and degrees of marginalization. If the old were not necessarily worse off than they had been in the past,¹⁴⁴ they were at least perceived by contemporaries as victims of modernity, especially through the increasing pace of technological change. The aged were widely viewed as a cohort forced into irrelevance and dependency through their inability to adapt to the industrial workplace.¹⁴⁵ Longevity and the quality of life in old age were also imperiled by urban and industrial conditions which shortened life and caused the body to wear out prematurely. If, as John Francis Campbell and many others supposed, traditional life allowed one to "live slowly and live long," the pace of modern life spelled an end to prolonged and happy old age.¹⁴⁶

Enlightenment and nineteenth-century Liberal values may have produced the most direct challenge to the utility of old age. The improvement-minded were inclined to

¹⁴¹ L. A. Botelho, "Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print: Women, Witches, and the Poisonous Female Body," in Ottaway, Botelho, and Kittredge, *Power and Poverty*, 226, 236; Kittredge, "'The Ag'd Dame to Venerly Incl'n'd': Images of Sexual Older Women in Eighteenth-Century Britain," in Ottaway, Botelho, and Kittredge, *Power and Poverty*, 248.

¹⁴² Beattie, *The Minstrel*, 60, 69.

¹⁴³ Ottaway, *Decline of Life*, 4.

¹⁴⁴ For criticisms of the assumption that modernization has disadvantaged the old materially and in terms of social standing, see: Thane, *Old Age and English History*, 1-12; Quadagno, *Aging in Early Industrial Society*, 3-8, 191-210.

¹⁴⁵ Quadagno, *Aging in Early Industrial Society*, 140, 154-55, 183.

¹⁴⁶ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 206; Campbell, "British Mythology and Oral Traditions," 331.

look to the future more than the past, and “oldness,” while it retained some prestige and was paid much lip-service, “was but a decayed shadow” of its former place in society and culture.¹⁴⁷ According to the new intellectual order, “knowledge was to be advanced rather than hoarded.” Simone de Beauvoir posited that a condition of modernity is that knowledge, rather than being proved by endurance over time, “grows out of date.”¹⁴⁸ As a consequence, the capacity for the old to represent the past became for many more of a liability than an asset. In an 1842 editorial, Marjory Scott herself was anonymously reprimanded for her association with the idealisation of a bygone era:

“Auld Margery Scott,” of Dunkeld notoriety, concludes the history of her eventful life by the moralizing reflection—

“I have an end of all perfection seen.”

So far from sympathizing with this worthy dame, I could rather have wished that the beginning of my earthly career had been postponed for some fifty years, so that I might have flourished in that age of perfection which Time is now ushering into the world.¹⁴⁹

Age is a useful symbol for conservatism, and in the inculcation of new ideas it was sometimes necessary to foment or portray a generational rift.¹⁵⁰ Journalists explicitly encouraged the old to die in order to allow the new sense of “rupture, break, and liberation” from the past to be reified.¹⁵¹ As Gaelic-speaking society was remade in the image of modern Britain, some ministers and schoolteachers encouraged gerontophobia in young people in order to disrupt the transmission of traditions which were thought to

¹⁴⁷ Woolf, “Praise of Older Things,” 142; Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 6.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas, “Age and Authority,” 246-47; de Beauvoir, *La Vieillesse*, trans. Patrick O’Brien (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), 210, quoted in Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, “No Country for Old Women: Gender, Age and the Gothic,” in *Women and the Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Horner and Zlosnik (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 184.

¹⁴⁹ “London Reminiscences: Notions on Human Perfectability,” *Bradshaw’s Journal: A Miscellany of Literature, Science, and Art* 3, no. 14 (August 1842): 216. The first issue of *Blackwood’s Magazine* contained a mock announcement of the death of a woman of “great age,” who had lost the ability to relate to the changing world. This extended metaphor targeted the new magazine’s much older rival, the *Scots Magazine*, and so the woman’s name was “Maggie Scott.” While this is an obvious pun on the name of the magazine, it may also be another allusion to Marjory Scott as a reference point for old age’s conservatism. David Stewart, “The Death of Maggie Scott: *Blackwood’s*, the *Scots Magazine*, and Periodical Eras,” in *Before Blackwood’s: Scottish Journalism in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Alex Benchimol, Rhona Brown, and David Shuttleton (Abingdon, Oxon: Pickering and Chatto, 2015), 118.

¹⁵⁰ This was not new, as Walsham shows: “Reformation of the Generations,” 102, 116, 118-119.

¹⁵¹ Chase, *Victorians and Old Age*, 186.

keep Gaels in a backwards state.¹⁵² Scotland was more broadly accused of excessive attachment to the past, and, in the controversy over the Wallace monument, this was represented as having “nothing better to do but masquerade in the garments of their grandfathers.”¹⁵³

As discussed in chapter 2, in Scotland the stultifying past was often represented by Jacobitism and the pre-Union condition of the nation. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Jacobitism was frequently attributed to an older generation with whose death the movement would at last become entirely irrelevant.¹⁵⁴ To the extent that that the Jacobitism of this generation was considered actively political rather than sentimental, it is easy to see this as empirical observation. However, it was also observed that Jacobitism had a continuing appeal to young people in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.¹⁵⁵ Apparently, Jacobite memory was the preserve of all but sensible middle age!

The above-mentioned imputation of loquaciousness to old age is easily imagined as a product of scorn—if one does not care what the old have to say, they talk “too much” if they talk at all.¹⁵⁶ The cliché of the old prattling tiresomely about the good old days was the cause of much eye-rolling.¹⁵⁷ This perhaps accounts for the failure of Pennecuik’s tribute to another centenarian woman, a kind of companion piece to Scott’s, to be reprinted at all. Even Marjory Scott could be brushed off for her “moralizing”

¹⁵² Newton, *Scottish Gaelic World*, 105.

¹⁵³ *The Times*, 4 December 1856, quoted in Pittock, *Invention of Scotland*, 116.

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Thomas Campbell, “The Pilgrim of Glencoe,” 10-12, 33-34; Robert Chambers, “The Last of the Jacobites,” *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal*, no. 120 (May 17, 1834): 125-26; Grant, “Preface” to *The White Cockade*, iii; Miller, “The Centenary of ‘The Forty-Five,’” in *Essays, Historical and Biographical, Political, Social, Literary and Scientific* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1862), 89-92.

¹⁵⁵ Caroline McCracken-Flesher points out that Scott’s Jacobite stories centre on “young men drift[ing] along on a tide of unregulated reading and stories of the past.” “Scott’s Jacobitical Plots,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Walter Scott*, ed. Fiona Robertson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 51. See also: Scott, review of *Reliques of Robert Burns*, ed. R. H. Cromek, *Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (February 1809): 30; Mackenzie, *History of Scotland for the Young*, iv; Miller, “Centenary of ‘The Forty-Five,’” in *Essays*, 87; “The Scottish Loyalists,” (1884): 97.

¹⁵⁶ Looser, *Women Writers and Old Age*, 14-15.

¹⁵⁷ E.g. Alexander Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 242; Karina Williamson, “The Emergence of Privacy: Letters, Journals and Domestic Writing,” in Manning, *History of Scottish Literature*, 70; Karen O’Brien and Manning, “Historiography, Biography and Identity,” in Manning, *History of Scottish Literature*, 151; “Old Scottish Society,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 129, no. 786 (April 1881): 518.

nostalgia, but her narrative is at least set on a grand stage of national affairs. Pennecuik's puppetry of the 106-year-old Mrs. Tod, on the other hand, was perhaps ignored because of the focus on more mundane complaints.¹⁵⁸ If Marjory Scot could become an icon as the idealised vector of memory who could “by word of mouth tell most famous things,” Mrs. Tod was just a typical old woman whose range of observations were limited to her daily life.¹⁵⁹

The old could be doubted not only as moral authorities, but also as reliable transmitters of memory. The ever-more ubiquitous medium of print was seen to be the ideal technology of a new stage of society. The arch-improver Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782) opined in 1774 that the advent of print had deprived the old of their former “pristine importance” as repositories of memory in oral cultures.¹⁶⁰ Samuel Johnson (1709-84), famously derisive of oral transmission, put the case more bluntly. When an old Hebridean man presented him with an historical anecdote, Johnson judged the story false, but conceded it was the best that could be had in “a nation with no historians.”¹⁶¹

Not everyone shared Johnson's disdain for oral culture, but those more open-minded to it were not immune to doubts stoked by Enlightenment stadialism. According to Moore, the view of Macpherson's *Ossian* as an artistic argument for the robustness of oral transmission is belied by Macpherson's own musings on the subject, subtly woven into *Ossian* itself. In one Ossianic story, Macpherson has the old perpetuating memories through their knowledge of the stories attached to a stone monument which on its own conveys no meaning. However, the stone's lack of text and “the stress on the aged status of those who remember” express Macpherson's anxiety over dependence on oral culture—what happens when the aged communicators of tradition die or forget? To

¹⁵⁸ Pennecuik, “Grave Stone of Mrs *Tod*,” 9-10.

¹⁵⁹ Taylor makes this distinction between the imagined treasures of aged memories and the example of Parr, a labourer whose interests were local and practical, not national and political. *Very Old Man*, 17.

¹⁶⁰ Home, *Sketches of the History of Man* (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1813), 2:58.

¹⁶¹ Johnson, *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 68. By contrast, a character of Scott's represents people disconnected from the ways of the past as having “no grandfathers.” *Saint Ronan's Well*, ed. Mark A. Weinstein (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 140.

Macpherson, the solution was in text.¹⁶² Scott, in spite of his tendency to foreground oral transmission in his own works,¹⁶³ marked literacy as one of the chief ingredients for progress, facilitating the transfer of knowledge “from the inaccurate recollection of the aged.”¹⁶⁴ Even William Motherwell, whose collections relied extensively on the old, saw himself as transposing traditions “to more imperishable records than the decaying memories of Ancient Women and Time-crazed Men.”¹⁶⁵ Far from being looked on as reservoirs of memory, collectors sometimes highlighted the danger of memory loss among the aged.¹⁶⁶ Cultures of communal song and storytelling which had given the old some measure of influence were also perceived to be in decline: “Tradition [was] out of fashion and books [were] in.”¹⁶⁷

The collectors who sought to preserve the Scottish past did so in the belief that Scottish cultures—especially Gaelic culture—were undergoing rapid and permanent changes brought about by the urban, industrial, and literate conditions of modernity.¹⁶⁸ The degree of regret for this loss varied, but the perception was nearly universal, and the sense of a culture in decline was tied through collecting efforts to images of old age. With Gaelic culture on the verge of disintegration, it stood to reason that the older generations were the last bastions of tradition, and with them the traditions would die. Collecting was an urgent necessity, because otherwise “many a fine old legend perish[ed] with the death of its only possessor.”¹⁶⁹ The materials themselves could be cast in this fading light. Frances Tolmie (1840-1926), who began as a young girl to collect songs from the old women of her Skye neighbourhood, sensible that they were on the verge of being

¹⁶² Moore, “‘As Flies the Unconstant Sun’: Tradition, Memory and Cultural Transmission in *The Poems of Ossian*,” *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 23 (2008): 77, 80-84.

¹⁶³ Sutherland, *Life of Walter Scott*, 17.

¹⁶⁴ Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather*, 374.

¹⁶⁵ *Minstrelsy: Ancient and Modern*, 2:81.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. Campbell, ed., *Popular Tales* vol. 1, 188.

¹⁶⁷ Campbell, *Popular Tales*, vol. 1, xxxi.

¹⁶⁸ Davis and McLane, “Orality and Public Poetry,” in Manning, *History of Scottish Literature*, 125, 127; Gilbert, “Tradition and Scottish Romanticism,” in Dunnigan and Gilbert, *Scottish Traditional Literatures*, 107-08.

¹⁶⁹ Campbell, *Records of Argyll*, vii-viii. Also: 428, 501.

forgotten, remarked that “[t]hese songs made their truest effect when heard in the tremulous tones of age.”¹⁷⁰

This whiff of death emanating from Scottish Gaelic culture was carried far and wide by Macpherson’s *Ossian*, which overshadowed a still-living, evolving culture. As much as Macpherson boosted the prestige of Gaelic oral culture, he also wrongly conceived of it as a thing of the past,¹⁷¹ embodied in a bard who often dwells on his physical infirmity and his status as the last of a heroic kind.¹⁷² Scott’s *The Lay of The Last Minstrel* (1805) repeats the Ossianic type for Lowland oral tradition.¹⁷³ Scottish literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is punctuated with images of feeble age accompanying notions of cultural decay, defeat, and—as the epitaph has it—desolation.¹⁷⁴ The old harper already encountered in Scott’s “Massacre of Glencoe” is a solitary figure playing to the ghosts of an abandoned landscape, whose wish to stir Scotland into a retributive mood is couched in the impossible subjunctive, and is preceded by:

Long have my harp’s best notes been gone,
Few are its strings, and faint their tone,
They can but sound in desert lone
Their gray-haired master’s misery.¹⁷⁵

The association of old age with Scottish tragedy was not confined to imaginative literature—it was also embedded in the developing narrative of the Highland Clearances. Stories of moral outrage or tragic inevitability often foregrounded the harm done to passive aged bodies and the abandonment of the old, presumably too feeble to endure the

¹⁷⁰ Frances Tolmie, “Notes and Reminiscences,” *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 4, no.16 (December 1911): 143-45.

¹⁷¹ Crawford, *Scotland’s Books*, 300.

¹⁷² E.g. Macpherson, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, 2nd ed., (Edinburgh: G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1760), 37.

¹⁷³ Crawford, *Bannockburns*, 102.

¹⁷⁴ E.g. Meg Batemen, “Women’s Writing in Scottish Gaelic since 1750,” in Douglas and McMillan, *Scottish Women’s Writing*, 661; Campbell, *The Grampians Desolate: A Poem* (Edinburgh: John Moir, 1804), 58, 61; Johnstone, *Clan-Albin*, 57, 65, 168, 220, 360, 521-22.

¹⁷⁵ Scott, “Massacre of Glencoe,” in *Poetical Works*, 385.

trials of emigration, to an increasingly desolate landscape.¹⁷⁶ Age also enters the narrative when land agitation took shape in the late nineteenth century, with journalists suggesting that, while the “older people . . . were sometimes timorous and meek,” the younger generation was “bold, defiant and truculent.”¹⁷⁷



Figure 4.2. “DUNCAN.—‘Oh! but my mother is frail, and can’t be sent out of the country in that ship; will you not let Flora and her——’ FACTOR.— ‘No, no lad—move on with the old woman; she will not be here in the way of his Lordship’s sheep and deer.’” Originally published in Donald Ross’s influential *Real Scottish Grievances* (Glasgow: 1854).

A Real “Scottish Grievance.” Collection of Museum nan Eilean. From: Malcolm MacLean and Christopher Carrell, eds., *As an Fhearann / From the Land* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1986), 12.

The disruptions to Scottish life perceived in the nineteenth century revived the figure of the old-woman-as-nation. In “The Highland Widow,”¹⁷⁸ Walter Scott, with his fortunes and his regard for the Union at a low ebb, represents Scotland’s vulnerability within the Union in the form of the widow McTavish, whose son enlists in the British

¹⁷⁶ Fenyő, *Contempt, Sympathy and Romance*, 88-89, 123, 135, 148, 154-55; Richards, *Debating the Highland Clearances*, 74, 122, 167, 169, 194, 197; Norman MacLeod, *Reminiscence of a Highland Parish* (London: Alexander Strahan, 1867), 140-41, 163, 381-85.

¹⁷⁷ Devine, *Scottish Clearances*, 43-46. This narrative has only recently been questioned: Iain MacKinnon, “The Invention of the Crofting Community: Scottish History’s Elision of Indigenous Identity, Ideology and Agency in Accounts of Land Struggle in the Modern *Gàidhealtachd*,” *The Scottish Historical Review* 98, no. 245 (April 2019): 75-76.

¹⁷⁸ In Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, ed. Lamont, 68-122.

army as the only escape from poverty.¹⁷⁹ In her obsessive love for her son and her inability to move beyond the Jacobite past, McTavish hatches a deceitful plan to stop him, resulting in his death. As punishment, she is left to face a wretched old age in utter loneliness. The idea of a Mother Caledonia stuck in the past and who had to be abandoned in order to move into the future was revisited in Jane Findlater's (1866-1946) "Charlie Over the Water."¹⁸⁰ The old-woman-as-nation is the Hebridean widow MacKay, who longs for her last surviving child Charlie, a successful emigrant to America—her other children have died in the empire, in war, and in the insalubrious city. The story hinges on the physical and mental danger of moving the feeble MacKay, deeply connected to the land and to her community, while the ambitious grandson who calls her mother single-mindedly pursues emigration to America. Findlater rejects the misogyny and gerontophobia of "The Highland Widow" by turning that narrative on its head—the deceit and obsession are the young man's failings. Findlater's tortured characters are able to find a compromise which avoids the tragedy of Scott's story, but it is still necessary for MacKay to die before her grandson can "turn his face towards the future."¹⁸¹

As much as the old-woman-as-nation might be vested with authority, she is also suited to perhaps the most limiting form of female national embodiment, and the most common in Scottish literature: the victim.¹⁸² Just prior to the enactment of the Union, an epitaph was circulated declaring the death of Scotland, "full of years," who, though physically well, was "losing control of her mind," and "yielded helpless to fate."¹⁸³ Depicting the nation as aged in order to communicate a sense of peril and loss was nothing new. Israel was depicted as old in her trials, as was Juvenal's Rome in the

¹⁷⁹ This reading is indebted to McCracken-Flesher's argument that the Scottish past and Scottish culture reside in McTavish's femininity, although McCracken-Flesher does not comment on the factor of old age. "Pro Matria Mori: Gendered Nationalism and Cultural Death in Scott's 'The Highland Widow,'" *Scottish Literary Journal* 21, no. 2 (1994): 69-77.

¹⁸⁰ The "water" in this case is the Atlantic, but the Jacobite resonance is unmistakable. "O'er the Water to Charlie" is a Jacobite song narrated by an old-woman-as-nation who sacrifices her children to the cause.

¹⁸¹ Findlater, *Seven Scots Stories* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1913), 147-239, 239.

¹⁸² Stirling, *Bella Caledonia*, 73, 109.

¹⁸³ Quoted in Pittock, *Scottish Nationality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 45.

moment of trepidation when Julius Caesar crosses the Rubicon.¹⁸⁴ Kim McCone suggests that the former provided inspiration for an aged, colonised Ireland.¹⁸⁵

The *Cailleach* herself was supposed to have had the power of rejuvenation, representing the cycles of endless time, but was frozen in old age at least from the ninth-century Irish poem “The Old Woman of Beare.” In it, the formerly great pagan deity laments her aging body and her marginalisation. Although she is not without criticism for the new Christian order, she ultimately submits to it.¹⁸⁶ The revitalisation of the *Cailleach* underpins Gregory and Yeats’s *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, as at the end of the play the Old Woman is transformed by the power of youthful patriot devotion into a young woman. Marion Quirici places *Cathleen ni Houlihan* in a discourse which positioned the Irish as “disabled” in various ways and consequently “unfit for freedom.” Although Quirici acknowledges that the Old Woman is not written with the physical feebleness of old age, the implication of restored ability or at least prolonged life is inherent in the notion of rejuvenation.¹⁸⁷ And although it is not her only or even foremost appeal, pity is one of the emotions the Poor Old Woman plays on in her recruits.¹⁸⁸ Yeats elsewhere insisted that “mother Eire is always young.”¹⁸⁹ In her nationalist invective “The Famine Queen” (1900) Maud Gonne, who went on to play the Old Woman in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, positions a young and vigorous Mother Ireland against a hag-like Queen Victoria.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Lucan, *Pharsalia*, trans. Jane Wilson Joyce (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 9.

¹⁸⁵ McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: Department of Old Irish, National University of Ireland, 2000), 154.

¹⁸⁶ The poem was copied in several medieval manuscripts, but was first published in print in 1899; still, its cultural life is suggested by the presence of the *Cailleach* of Beare in Scottish and Irish folklore. Gerard Murphy, “The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature* 55 (1952/1953): 84, 85, 88-107.,

¹⁸⁷ Quirici, “*Cathleen ni Houlihan* and the Disability Aesthetics of Irish National Culture,” *Éire-Ireland* 50, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2015): 75, 81. The necessity of rejuvenation is echoed in the Jacobite song “When the King comes o’er the Water,” where the old-woman-as-Scotland waits on a Jacobite restoration which will bring her a second youth. Pittock, ed. *Jacobite Relics*, 1:441.

¹⁸⁸ [Gregory and] Yeats, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, 8, 11.

¹⁸⁹ Yeats, “Into the Twilight,” in *The Celtic Twilight* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1902), 235.

¹⁹⁰ Andrea Bobotis, “Rival Maternities: Maud Gonne, Queen Victoria, and the Reign of the Political Mother,” *Victorian Studies* 49, no. 1 (Autumn 2006): 73-75.

While the antiquity of the nation was not necessarily intended to suggest weakness, the trope is nevertheless subject to this pitfall. The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who contributed much to the modern conception of nationhood, believed that nations followed a timeline analagous to the human lifecourse. Eventually, they would grow old and die, especially when they lost vital cultural characteristics such as language. This framework was applied to the Highlands of Scotland, even by one of the more determined voices against the Clearances.¹⁹¹ In this reading of old age, commonly applied to Jacobite literature couched in aged voices,¹⁹² the Scott epitaph is less a protest than a surrender.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has considered three primary images of old age likely to have coloured readings of the Scott epitaph. Marjory Scott would have been read as a venerable figure whose words carried moral weight, whose age reflected the antiquity of the nation, and whose centenarian status was a reason for Scottish pride. Her eye-witness testimony to the Scottish past would have been a familiar medium of memory to readers whose conception of the Scottish nation was substantially formed not only through the crucial role of the old in communicative memory, but in their contributions to cultural production. These positive or neutral constructions of old age vie with negative tropes which cast old age as a degraded stage of life and view historical change through the lens of generational conflict. Scott was among many images of old age to symbolise the Scottish nation in decline. While it might have been Pennecuik's intent to portray a venerable Scotland damaged by Union through the metaphor of old age, as we have seen from the example of Ireland's old-woman-as-nation, this register of nationalist rhetoric can be perceived as debilitating more than mobilising. At any rate, through Marjory Scott's old age the epitaph benefited, just as material monuments do, from the availability

¹⁹¹ Fenyő, *Contempt, Sympathy and Romance*, 173-75.

¹⁹² Crawford, *Bannockburns*, 89; Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*, 220-21.

of multiple interpretations, and had the potential to reflect narratives of Scottishness and the Scottish past throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

*no need to invoke
That troublemaker, Memory, she's everywhere
Norman MacCaig, "Return to Scalpay," 1972*

This thesis has argued that memories of the Scottish past were diverse, complex, and derived from a tremendous store of possible sources, inherited from the past as well as deliberately crafted in the present. Coleman's treatment of historical memory in nineteenth-century Scotland is a valuable starting-point for further exploration. However, his underlying assumption, that it is possible to read public commemorative culture as an indication of how "the majority of Scots" remembered the past,¹⁹³ is problematic. While groups can create and provide highly effective frameworks for remembering, ultimately remembering takes place at the level of the individual, who belongs to multiple groups and encounters diverse opportunities for remembering the past in different ways and at different times.¹⁹⁴ If the memory framework Coleman explores was hegemonic, it was not inescapable. Its uniformity is not especially surprising or reflective of universal consensus, but is characteristic of the operation of what Aleida Assmann categorises as political (often national) memory, which addresses people as artificially homogeneous groups rather than as individuals.¹⁹⁵

With Coleman having so carefully delineated this public commemorative culture, one thing historians might do next is interrogate the intentions of those who shaped it. Whatley, for instance, has suggested that the very uniformity of Scottish public memory might have been a requirement in a society that, under the surface, contended with deep and potentially destabilising rifts in its relationships to the past.¹⁹⁶ Since memory consolidation necessarily involves exclusion, this thesis has tried to engage with some of the reasons—beyond those put forward by Coleman—that Jacobitism was delimited in

¹⁹³ Coleman, *Remembering the Past*, 187.

¹⁹⁴ Aleida Assmann, "Memory, Individual and Collective," in Goodin and Tilly, *Contextual Political Analysis*, 211, 216, 223.

¹⁹⁵ Assmann, "Memory, Individual and Collective," in Goodin and Tilly, *Contextual Political Analysis*, 217, 221.

¹⁹⁶ Whatley, *Immortal Memory: Burns and the Scottish People* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2016), 16.

public memory. I have argued that this exclusion could not be entirely successful. While political memory is highly organised, communicative memory and alternative media of memory available through the wider culture are far more diverse.¹⁹⁷ Experiences of the present, which determine the relevance of the past, are also diverse—even, as Alexander Smith testified through his account of Skye, within the same individual at different times and in different places. It has not been my contention that there was in the nineteenth-century an underground culture of discontent directed at the secure and largely unobtrusive Anglo-Scottish Union. But, partly because of the baggage of the Scottish past, the relationship to Union might have been more complex than the public face of Unionist-nationalism suggested. I put forward the survival of Alexander Pennecuik’s epitaph on Marjory Scott in Scottish cultural memory as one way in which this complexity was sustained and expressed.

Chapter 2 explored the epitaph’s origins in the politics of the Union and Jacobitism and showed how the text spoke to those politics and how it may have spoken to readers for two centuries after its initial publication. The epitaph was one text in a much wider discourse, and as much as it obscures the real historical existence of its subject, Marjory Scott, it expresses the practical frustrations of one critic of the Union, Alexander Pennecuik. The epitaph’s recounting of shared traumas, its performance of circular history next to the disruptive force of incremental history, and its invocation of the “bought and sold for English gold” tension in the Anglo-Scottish relationship provided the material for the epitaph’s enduring relevance. Through the mental world of Jacobitism, the deep nostalgia of the text is not necessarily entirely backward-looking. However, even as an expression of a mournful attitude towards an unrecoverable past, nostalgia *is* ideological, whether or not it is expressed through political action. However inaccurate the construction of Jacobitism as a fundamentally pre-modern ideology may have been, Jacobite memory may have been given extended life as a vehicle for criticism and doubt surrounding the supposed gifts of Union and modernity.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Assmann, “Memory, Individual and Collective,” in Goodin and Tilly, *Contextual Political Analysis*, 215, 221-22.

¹⁹⁸ Pittock, “The Jacobite Cult,” in Cowan and Finlay, *Power of the Past*, 204.

Chapter 3 approached Scottish memory as a matter of contestation, not only between rival Scottish patriotisms and diverse commemorative media but also between monuments constructed in the present and those inherited from the past. The chapter followed the epitaph as a widely-viewed monument that was able to travel and adapt to changing political circumstances. While the epitaph shared in the failings of material monuments in its potential to become trivialised, it nevertheless functioned as a reminder of Jacobitism as a Scottish ideology rather than as a matter of blind loyalty. Textual monuments also have a long-recognised quality of exceptional durability over time, and may outlast the vicissitudes of hostile politics. While the epitaph was a minor, and eventually forgotten, piece of Jacobite literature, this analysis also functions as a comment on the body of Jacobite song and verse which survived and was repurposed in the active nationalist politics of the twentieth century.

Chapter 4 showed how Marjory Scott's old age contributed to the epitaph's ability to continue to speak to discourses of Scottish nationality throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The authority of age has never been stable, but has always been present in certain contexts. The age of the nation and the aged *of* the nation, both represented through Scott, were sources of pride and identity both before and beyond the period encompassed by this thesis. The Scott epitaph centres an essential component of the social and symbolic role of age: the association of age with memory. Memory is essential in constituting identities, and this was perhaps never so consciously recognized as in this period when Scotland took its modern shape, and the old came into focus in the pursuit of national self-definition. The old not only had a central role in the shaping of Scottish culture through songs and stories, but they stood as special representatives of the communicative memory which complicates the more unified narratives of cultural memory. The old could also be seen as representatives of Scottish identity insofar as select aspects of Scottish identity were seen as enfeebled and fading into the past—this was the story Pennecuik told through the epitaph, and it was a story that continued to be told in the nineteenth century.

There was no single narrative of the Scottish past in the nineteenth century, even if there was, as far as historians are able to interpret available evidence, a dominant one.

Even the Scott epitaph told multiple stories in its ability to speak to the unfolding Scottish present between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. By looking closely at this one small unit of memory, I have argued that the past it represented lived a more complex life than some histories allow.

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